

# Alert

November 30, 2023



## Cozen Cities - November 30, 2023

### Gig Economy & Technology

#### DETROIT – Electric Delivery Startup BrightDrop Becomes Part of GM

BrightDrop, a General Motors (GM) commercial electric vehicle startup formed in 2021, will no longer operate as a subsidiary and is now becoming part of GM itself.

### Labor & Employment

#### CHICAGO – Amazon Drivers Strike in Chicago, Accusing Company of Unfair Labor Practices

Drivers picketed outside an Amazon warehouse last week near 35th Street and Ashland Avenue, the latest in a string of unfair labor practice strikes that the Teamsters union began back in June.

#### DETROIT – Ford, Stellantis Workers Join GM Workers in Approving Contract Settlement that Ended UAW Strikes

The United Auto Workers (UAW) union overwhelmingly ratified new contracts with Ford and Stellantis, that along with a similar deal with GM will raise pay across the industry, force automakers to absorb higher costs and help reshape the auto business as it shifts away from gasoline-fueled vehicles.

#### LOS ANGELES – LAX Concession Workers Strike Over Wages, Heavy Workloads

More than 400 LAX concession workers launched a strike last week, lobbying for higher wages, affordable healthcare and “humane” workloads.

#### LOS ANGELES – Striking Hotel Workers Reach Tentative Contract Agreement with Fifth Hotel

Unite Here Local 11, the union representing hotel workers in Southern California who have been striking on and off for nearly five months, said it has reached a tentative contract agreement with Le Merigot Santa Monica.

### Policy & Politics

#### BALTIMORE – Baltimore Mayoral Race May Be Repeat of 2020

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott recently launched his re-election campaign by subtly drawing contrasts with challenger Sheila Dixon, whom he defeated by two percentage points during the 2020 Democratic mayoral primary.

#### CHICAGO – Chicago's New Shelter Stay Limit for Migrants Worries Volunteers

Migrants in Chicago who move into city-run shelters have 60 days to leave. It's part of a new policy



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the city announced this month to clear shelter space and speed up the process of connecting migrants to permanent housing.

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#### Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

#### **DETROIT — Detroit Joins Leading U.S. Cities in Adopting Energy, Water Benchmarking Policy for Buildings**

Beginning in 2024, the ordinance requires all municipal buildings, as well as commercial and multi-family buildings over 100,000 GSF, to annually report their aggregate energy and water usage data to the City of Detroit.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia City Councilmember Johnson Likely to Become Next Council President**

Last week, 11 current and four future City Councilmembers met for an unofficial “straw poll” to choose District 2 Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson as the next council president.

#### **RICHMOND — Richmond City Council Launches Search for Interim 9th District Representative**

Richmond City Council has begun the process of selecting an interim member after District 9 Councilmember and current Council President Michael Jones won an uncontested Virginia House seat in the November.

### **Public Health & Safety**

#### **CHICAGO — New Public Health Vending Machines Now Available at Five Chicago Locations**

The Chicago Department of Public Health officially kicked off a health vending machine program as a part of a new initiative to keep residents safe. These free machines are stocked with Narcan, fentanyl test strips, general hygiene kits, socks, and underwear.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — Kevin Bethel Named Next PPD Commissioner**

Last week, Mayor-elect Cherelle Parker announced West Philadelphia native and Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) veteran Kevin Bethel as the City’s next police commissioner.

#### **SAN DIEGO — Mayor Gloria Signs Smart Streetlights, New Safe Sidewalk Program into Law**

San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria signed into law two measures that allow for the City to activate 500 Smart Streetlight cameras, deploy Automated License Plate Recognition technology, and enact a new Safe Sidewalk Program, making it easier and cheaper for property owners to repair damaged and dangerous sidewalks.

#### **SAN DIEGO — Community Activists Call for Leadership Changes at San Diego Police Department**

Community leaders held a news conference last week outside of San Diego Police Department headquarters to call for the investigation and subsequent firing of top officers. Notably, they are accusing the department’s leadership of falsifying records.

#### **WASHINGTON, D.C. — D.C. Murder Rate Continues to Climb to Historic High as Police Solve Rates Decline**

With 250 murders so far this year, D.C. has reached its highest murder rate in two decades, seeing a 34% increase in this specific crime compared to the same time last year. Meanwhile, the percentage of homicides that are solved by the Metropolitan Police Department has declined sharply.

#### **WASHINGTON, D.C. — D.C. City Council Approves Emergency Declarations Addressing Rising Youth Violence, Drug Crisis**

Last week, in response to Mayor Muriel Bowser’s call to action on youth-related violence, D.C. City Council approved emergency declarations on the City’s surging drug abuse and juvenile crime

rates.

## Real Estate Development

### **BALTIMORE — Baltimore City Council Advances Affordable Housing Bills**

Last week, Baltimore City Council advanced a pair of bills that would require developers to build affordable housing in residential buildings that receive subsidies from the city and set up a tax credit to offset the cost of the measure. Council narrowly voted against an amendment that would have capped tax credits for inclusionary housing development.

### **CHICAGO — “Bring Chicago Home” Proposal Aims to Boost Funding for Homeless Services; Similar L.A. Measure Slowed Real Estate Sales**

Earlier this year, Los Angeles hiked a transfer tax imposed on pricey real estate purchases, a move designed to generate revenue to fund homeless services. The measure, which hits both commercial and residential properties, bears a striking resemblance to the “Bring Chicago Home” proposal, which is up for a citywide vote next March and has so far failed to fill Los Angeles’ coffers.

### **LOS ANGELES — Mayor Bass’ Plan to Fast-Track Affordable Housing Approved by Planning Commission**

The Los Angeles Planning Commission voted 5-1 in favor of a proposed Affordable Housing Streamlining Ordinance, which seeks to codify Mayor Karen Bass’ executive directive to fast-track qualifying projects.

### **SEATTLE — Eviction Cases Spike in Area**

Landlords in the Seattle area filed nearly twice as many eviction cases this past October than in October 2022.

## Taxes & Spending

### **BOSTON — Mayor Wu Exploring Cash Payment Program for Low-Income Families**

Mayor Wu is exploring a guaranteed basic income program for low-income families in Boston. The topic was discussed at a recent City Council Ways and Means Subcommittee hearing.

### **CHICAGO — Chicago City Council Approves Mayor Johnson's \$16 Billion Budget With no Property Tax Increase**

Mayor Brandon Johnson won his first budget test this month as the Chicago City Council easily approved his spending plan for the next year. The budget was praised for advancing the mayor’s progressive agenda.

### **NEW YORK — Mayor Releases November Plan with \$314 Million in Cuts**

Mayor Adams released the City’s November 2023 Financial Plan update. Every agency was required to find savings in their budgets, with \$546 million reduction for the Department of Education, \$321.9 million reduction for the Department of Social Services, \$131.9 million reduction for the New York Police Department, and \$9.3 million reduction for the Department of Cultural Affairs.

## Transportation & Mobility

### **RICHMOND — Street Improvements Begin in Richmond's Scott's Addition Neighborhood**

A \$1.2 million street improvement plan — which includes speed tables, bike lanes, and new and improved sidewalks — is underway and expected to be completed in Richmond’s Scott’s Addition

neighborhood by spring 2024.

**LOS ANGELES — Port of Los Angeles Moves Another Step Closer to New Cruise Terminal**

The L.A. harbor commission **heard** a report this month outlining steps to issue a final request for proposals for a large new Outer Harbor cruise terminal with two deep-water berthing spaces for the industry's newest and biggest passenger ships. The bid request will also aim to make the terminal versatile enough to accommodate other community uses.

**SAN DIEGO — Port of San Diego Bans E-Bikes, E-Scooters, Most Pedicabs from Embarcadero**

The Port of San Diego Board of Port Commissioners **approved** new regulations on electric bikes, scooters, pedicabs, skateboards, and hoverboards, citing pedestrian safety.

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