

## Cozen Cities - July 31, 2024

### Gig Economy & Technology

#### CHICAGO — U.S. Steel South Works Site Wins Massive Quantum Project

Illinois is investing in quantum computing on the Far South Side of Chicago at the former U.S. Steel South Works plant on Lake Michigan. The goal is to transform this symbol of Rust Belt decline into a hub of high-tech prosperity, revitalizing an area that has struggled for years to attract investment and jobs.

### Labor & Employment

#### BOSTON — City Council Seeks to Protect Workers Amid Heat Wave

During a hearing to address the implications of recent record-breaking heat, Boston City Council's Labor, Workforce and Economic Development Committee pledged to find ways to mitigate the risks posed by rising temperatures on outdoor and indoor workers.

#### BALTIMORE — Report Details Poor Working Conditions at DPW

Baltimore's Inspector General released a 46-page report calling attention to its investigation of several Department of Public Works (DPW) facilities and demanding improvements. The investigation indicated that employees have worked in the heat without adequate water or cooling services.

#### MINNEAPOLIS — Park Board, Striking Workers Reach Tentative Agreement

Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 363 announced a tentative agreement with the Minneapolis Park Board, with the park board confirming both sides are at the bargaining table to "finalize details."

#### MINNEAPOLIS — City Approves Officer Pay Raise

The City of Minneapolis approved a contract that would make the city's police officers among the highest paid in the region, years after widespread calls to defund the police.

#### PHILADELPHIA — City Employees Express Concern Over Mayor's Return-to-Office Mandate

After more than a week of full-time, in-person work, Philadelphia municipal workers are reporting that they returned to dirty and overcrowded office space.

### Policy & Politics

#### DETROIT — City Leaders Propose Changes to City's Rental Ordinance

Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan was joined by City Councilmember Mary Waters to propose major changes to Chapter 8 of Detroit's City Code as it relates to rental properties in the city with the goal of ensuring more safe, quality housing for Detroiters.

#### LOS ANGELES — City Planners Hold Hearing on Density, Renting, Homeownership



Rose Christ

Co-Chair, New York Practice, Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

rchrist@cozen.com  
Phone: (212) 883-2248  
Fax: (646) 880-3654



John F. Dunn

Member

jdunn@cozen.com  
Phone: (312) 382-3165  
Fax: (312) 382-8910



Joseph Hill

Managing Director, Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

jhill@cozen.com  
Phone: (215) 665-2065  
Fax: (215) 665-2013



Katie Schwab

Co-Chair, New York Practice, Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

kschwab@cozen.com  
Phone: (212) 883-4913  
Fax: (646) 880-3652

During a public hearing hosted by Los Angeles city planners, Angelenos weighed in on proposed strategies and programs that would pave the way for hundreds of thousands of new housing units to be built over the next several years.

#### **NEW YORK — City to Launch New Outdoor Dining Guidelines**

Due to the City's new "Dining out NYC" initiative, restaurant owners will be required to apply and submit a \$1,500 fee by August 3 to keep their roadway or sidewalk cafes, which became staples during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **SAN DIEGO — City Council Considers Ending Virtual Public Comment**

The San Diego City Council's Rules Committee is considering ending virtual public comment for future meetings. Council President Sean Elo-Rivera (District 9) pushed the item to September.

#### **SEATTLE — City Council Approves Legislation Addressing Street Racing**

In partnership with the City Attorney, the Seattle City Council voted to amend the city code on illegal street racing. This legislation will adopt the state law and subject all those involved to a non-criminal traffic violation.

#### **SEATTLE — Mayor Proposes Temporary Incarceration for Misdemeanor Charges**

Faced with increasing pressure from the Seattle Police Department, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell announced a proposal for a pilot program that would temporarily incarcerate people arrested on misdemeanor charges in a Des Moines Jail at the South Correctional Facility (SCORE). The agreement would provide SCORE with an additional 40 beds, costing around \$3 million per year.

#### **RICHMOND — City Poised to Invoke Large-Scale Operational Overhaul**

Richmond City Hall devised a series of changes to its operational protocols for employees after reports detailed municipal staff's misuse of City purchasing cards. The changes will mirror the restructuring of the City's HR department, which increased staff salaries, optimized transparency, and streamlined operational performance.

#### **WASHINGTON D.C. — Political Appetite for Ranked Choice Voting, Open Primaries Grows**

D.C.'s Board of Elections received a petition of 40,000 signatures from all eight wards in support of implementing ranked choice voting and open party primaries. If passed, the initiative would go into effect in June 2026.

### **Public Health & Safety**

#### **CHICAGO — City Officials Do Not Plan to End 60-Day Migrant Shelter Policy**

While officials have more than halved spending on the migrant crisis in Chicago, they do not plan to end the City's 60-day shelter stay policy any time soon. With the Democratic National Convention (DNC) next month, Chicago is preparing for a possible surge in buses.

#### **MINNEAPOLIS — City Council Releases Plan for Public Safety Alternatives**

Last week, members of the Minneapolis City Council announced the city's first plan for public safety solutions that does not involve armed police officers.

#### **SEATTLE — King County Receives a \$50M EPA Grant**

King County was awarded a \$50 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of its Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program. The county will utilize the grant to implement climate initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and construction

in the Puget Sound region.

#### **SEATTLE — Monsanto to Pay Seattle \$160M Settlement**

After years in court, a 2016 case between the City of Seattle and chemical company Monsanto has been settled, with Monsanto agreeing to pay \$160 million for contaminating 20,000 acres of land, draining waste into the Lower Duwamish River.

#### **BALTIMORE — City Gun Violence Disproportionately Involves Youth**

Over the span of a year, Baltimore has experienced a total of twelve youth fatalities and 392 injuries related to gun violence. In the past two weeks alone, two Baltimore communities suffered shootings involving child victims.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — City Leaders Condemn Violence in Wake of West Philadelphia Mass Shooting**

Philadelphia leadership convened in West Philadelphia to condemn violence across the city following a mass shooting that claimed three lives and injured six. The City rolled out social and counseling services for those affected by the shooting.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — Annual Retail Theft Arrests on the Rise Amid Policy Uncertainty**

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner and the Philadelphia Police Department reversed the City's prior detainment practices of retail theft offenders. The administrative move to shelve the controversial policy comes as arrests have tripled in 2024.

#### **RICHMOND — Pandemic-Era Rules Reduce Inmate Access to Family, Representation**

Richmond's Chief Public Defender brought attention to burdensome limitations to attorney representation and inmate-family contact due to the continuation of the City Justice Center's COVID-era regulations.

### **Real Estate Development**

#### **CHICAGO — Reinsdorf, Wirtz Unveil \$7B Redevelopment Plan Near West Side**

The Reinsdorf and Wirtz families on July 23 unveiled a proposal to remake the Near West Side neighborhood around the United Center, replacing unsightly parking lots with publicly available green spaces, a 6,000-seat music hall and thousands of new homes.

#### **DETROIT — City Breaks Ground on \$1B Affordable Housing Project**

Mayor Duggan and The Community Builders — along with Michigan and federal officials — joined funders and Corktown residents to break ground on Preserve on Ash, which promises to bring more affordable housing to one of the city's fastest growing neighborhoods.

#### **NEW YORK — Governor Announces \$500M Affordable Housing Investment**

New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced a \$500 million state investment to build more affordable housing within New York City. The Battery Park City Authority made an agreement with Comptroller Brad Lander and Mayor Eric Adams to disburse the investment from excess operating funds.

#### **BOSTON — Governor Announces Plan to Transform Government Complex to Address City's Housing Shortage**

Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey announced plans to redevelop the Charles F. Hurley and Erich Lindemann buildings, both part of the downtown Boston government complex, to address the city's housing shortage.

## **PHILADELPHIA — Affordable Housing Options Continue to Dwindle**

A Pew Charitable Trusts study that sampled 700,000 city home sale records from 2000 through 2021 found that Philadelphia currently offers fewer affordable housing options than it did in years past. Although the average price for an entry-level home declined slightly between 2021 and 2023, median monthly mortgage rates for the same properties rose due to increased interest rates.

## **WASHINGTON D.C. — Bars Receive Mayor's Green Light to Extend Hours During Olympics**

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser signed a bill to allow certain bars in D.C. to sell alcoholic beverages until 4 a.m. and stay open to patrons for full 24-hour days during the Paris 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Establishments seeking to reap the benefits of the legislation must apply for extended hours through the Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Administration.

## **Taxes & Spending**

### **BALTIMORE — City Council Advances Key Bridge Collapse Economic Compensation Legislation**

The Baltimore City Council advanced a bill to safeguard the City against any economic losses posed by the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse. Under the legislation's administration, Boston's solicitor will have the power to diagnose liabilities, identify responsible parties, and authorize rules around securing necessary reimbursements.

### **CHICAGO — Education Board Passes \$9.9B Budget for Upcoming School Year**

The Chicago Board of Education passed a budget July 25 for the coming school year, following weeks of tension and opposition that reached as high up as the Mayor's Office.

### **CHICAGO — City's Pension Debt Soars to \$37B With Just 26% Funded**

Taxpayers in the City of Chicago now owe more than \$37 billion in unpaid pension costs after debts soared by at least \$1.8 billion over the last 12 months.

### **DETROIT — Detroit's First Competitive Bond Issuance Draws Strong Interest**

The City of Detroit's first bond sale under its new investment grade status was a huge success, generating strong investor demand and attracting 13 bidders.

### **SAN DIEGO — City Council Approves Sales Tax Ballot Measure**

The San Diego City Council unanimously approved a ballot measure which, if approved, would increase sales tax in the city by 1% to fund broad infrastructure and city services.

### **WASHINGTON D.C. — Budget Negotiations Stall Sports App Launches**

Mayor Bowser refused to sign the D.C. City Council-approved 2025 budget, pushing back against new tax hikes. In doing so, the mayor inadvertently delayed the launch of two new sports betting apps by Bet MGM and Caesars.

## **Transportation & Mobility**

### **BALTIMORE — Key Bridge One Step Closer to Reconstruction**

The Federal Highway Administration provided the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) and the State Highway Administration with the necessary environmental approvals to rebuild Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge. MDTA anticipates contracting an engineering consultant for the project in February 2025.

### **LOS ANGELES — L.A. Metro Board Adopts Technological Safety Barriers**

Last week, the L.A. Metro board approved several new technological safety barriers — including metal detectors, taller fare gates, and the addition of more tap-to-exist stations — in an effort to reduce crime trains and buses.

**PHILADELPHIA — SEPTA to Upgrade Market-Frankford Line Fleet**

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) awarded a \$724 million contract to Hitachi Rail STS USA to replace its Market-Frankford line cars featuring increased passenger capacity, digital displays, gangways, handholds, and staggered doors. The new fleet is expected in 2029.

---