

Cozen Cities - February 14, 2024

Gig Economy & Technology

BOSTON – City Leading AI Industry

Boston-area companies are leading in the development of new artificial intelligence (AI) and managing data for AI use. A new report estimates that Boston's expertise in tech and health industries and proximity to universities will allow it to make strides in lesser-known areas of AI.

SAN DIEGO – San Diego Amends Surveillance Tech Rules

San Diego's Transparent and Responsible Use of Surveillance Technology (TRUST) ordinance gave a volunteer board the power to oversee how local law enforcement uses surveillance technology. New amendments to that ordinance take some of their review power away.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Mayor Bowser Signs AI Executive Order

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser signed an executive order establishing values for City agencies, aiming to leverage AI in government services while assuring accountability and transparency.

Labor & Employment

PHILADELPHIA – Subcontractor Protections Bill Introduced

The Philadelphia City Council is considering legislation that would implement new protections for "displaced" subcontracted building services workers. The original bill was pocket vetoed by outgoing Mayor Jim Kenney in December 2023.

PHILADELPHIA – IBX Modifies Hybrid Work Policy; City May Follow Suit

Independence Blue Cross (IBX), Philadelphia's 16th largest employer, is mandating that its approximately 3,000 hybrid employees work in the office three days per week beginning this spring. Mayor Cherrille Parker is considering instituting a similar mandate for City employees.

SAN DIEGO – San Diego Passes Sweeping New Labor Pact

The new project labor agreement sets wages, safety protocols and regulations for contractors and all their subcontractors and establishes goals for hiring disadvantaged local workers.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Mayor Bowser Advocates for Federal Employees to Resume In-Person Work

Mayor Bowser is urging the Biden Administration to require federal employees to return to the office most days. She has ordered D.C. City workers back to in-office work four days a week.

Policy & Politics

BALTIMORE – Council President Mosby Files to Run for Re-Election

Incumbent Baltimore City Council President Nick Mosby filed to run for re-election a day before the deadline. Former City Councilmember Shannon Sneed is also vying for the leadership position.



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Related Practice Areas

BALTIMORE — Proposed Legislation Suggests Involving Ordinary Citizens in Redistricting

The Baltimore City Council is considering a charter amendment for a civilian commission to oversee redistricting, aiming to increase community involvement and reduce political influence.

CHICAGO — No Migrants Camped Out at O'Hare for First Time Since Summer

O'Hare International Airport no longer has migrant encampments for the first time since families began sleeping there last summer, Mayor Brandon Johnson's administration said.

DETROIT — City Council Approves New District Boundaries

The Detroit City Council approved new district boundaries after weeks of public meetings and concerns from residents that the process would disrupt the fabric of their neighborhoods.

LOS ANGELES — Interim LAPD Chief Appointed

Assistant Chief Dominic H. Choi was unanimously appointed by the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners as the Interim Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

LOS ANGELES — LAUSD Bars Charter Schools from Using 350 Campuses Citywide

New rules presented during a school board meeting last month prevent charter schools from operating on campuses that serve vulnerable students, accounting for roughly 350 of about 770 school buildings in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

PHILADELPHIA — Parker Administration Splits City Departments, Duties

In addition to announcing several new cabinet appointees, Mayor Parker shared the strategic decision to separate both the Streets and Sanitation and Licenses and Inspections Departments in an effort to more efficiently deploy City services.

RICHMOND — Mayor Stoney Delivers Final State of the City Address

During his final State of the City address, Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney reflected on his administration's accomplishments, highlighting the city's transformation and bright future.

RICHMOND — City Council Approves Meals Tax Changes After Outcry by Restaurant Owners

The Richmond City Council unanimously voted to change the meals tax collection process, responding to restaurant owners' outcry over exorbitant bills and fees, with the new system billing for the current month instead of the previous month.

Public Health & Safety

BALTIMORE — Research Points to Initial Success of GVRs

New research suggests that Baltimore's Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs) may have reduced gun violence by 25% in Baltimore's western district, with scholars analyzing data to understand the early impacts of the program aimed at tackling gang-related gun violence.

LOS ANGELES — Mayor Bass Signs Declaration of Emergency in Response to Historic Storm

Continuing the City's urgent proactive and coordinated response, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass signed a Declaration of Local Emergency that will ensure the City has the required resources to respond to the storm's impacts.

PHILADELPHIA — New Kensington Caucus to Focus on Improving Neighborhood Conditions

The Philadelphia City Council passed a resolution establishing a Kensington Caucus, which will focus on improving conditions in the neighborhood. Among other initiatives, the caucus intends to seek funding for a “triage center” to help those suffering from substance use disorders get into recovery programs.

SAN DIEGO — San Diego County Looks to Expand Street Medicine Programs

In a recent meeting, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved initial discussions on what it would take to build a region-wide street medicine program for residents experiencing homelessness.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — City Council Advances Omnibus Public Safety Bill

The D.C. City Council approved a comprehensive public safety bill in response to rising violent crime, featuring numerous changes to criminal punishment and policing laws, despite significant debate and amendments.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Inaugurates "Safe Commercial Corridor Hubs" in Chinatown

Mayor Bowser introduced “Safe Commercial Corridor Hubs” in Chinatown, providing access to various City services and fostering community safety and cleanliness, staffed by multiple public safety and human services agencies.

Real Estate Development

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson Eyes Ways to Cut Red Tape for Real Estate Developers

Mayor Johnson is considering an exhaustive list of recommendations to speed up the City’s development approval process with hopes of cutting more ceremonial ribbons by slashing red tape at City Hall.

CHICAGO — New White Sox Park Would Bring Riverfront-Friendly Design, Big Economic Impact, Developer Says

Prospective developers envision a new White Sox stadium near downtown that would maximize the stunning views of the Chicago River and the Willis Tower and ignite explosive growth in the South Loop area.

LOS ANGELES — Tagger-Ravaged L.A. Skyscraper Spurs City Council Strategy

Los Angeles City Council members voted 14-0 to direct City departments to initiate an abatement process aimed at securing the site of an abandoned luxury skyscraper development. If property owners fail to respond by mid-February, the City will proceed with restoring the sidewalks.

LOS ANGELES — L.A.’s Weird Trick to Build Affordable Housing at No Public Cost

All 190 units of a proposed seven-story apartment building in Echo Park will be reserved for people making under \$100,000, which in Los Angeles makes the building an “affordable housing” project.

NEW YORK — City Collected \$636M Less in Real Estate Taxes in 2023

New York City collected \$636 million less through state real estate taxes in 2023 compared to 2022 due to a decrease in commercial sales and mortgage activity.

PHILADELPHIA — City Council to Consider Bill Trio Aimed at Protecting Renters, Homeowners

The Philadelphia City Council is considering a trio of bills aimed at protecting low-income residents from displacement. The legislative package would freeze property taxes, strengthen anti-discrimination laws for housing voucher holders, and officially allocate developer payments to the

City's Housing Trust Fund.

SAN DIEGO — City Council Takes Action to Support Housing Development

In response to San Diego's current housing shortfall and related socio-economic conditions, the San Diego City Council approved several changes to the City's existing Complete Communities infill development initiative.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Commercial Property Values Declined by \$11B in Recent Years

The latest financial report from D.C. indicates a notable downturn in commercial real estate values, leading to a significant loss in tax revenue over the past two years. This decline is compounded by persistently low commercial office occupancy rates and a reduction in new office construction projects, exacerbating the economic challenges facing the District.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Vows Legal Action if Monumental Sports Relocates Before Current Lease Expires

D.C. Mayor Bowser vowed to take legal action if Washington Capitals and Wizards owner Ted Leonsis attempts to exit his Capital One Arena lease early and move the franchises to Alexandria, VA. Negotiations with Monumental Sports and Entertainment are currently underway.

Taxes & Spending

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson Signs \$79M Spending Increase for Favorite Healthcare Staffing for Migrant Shelters

The Johnson Administration will use \$79 million in federal COVID-19 relief money to help pay for costs associated with Favorite Healthcare Staffing, the Kansas-based company the City hired to staff its migrant shelters.

DETROIT — Michigan Lawmakers Noncommittal on Detroit Property Tax Cut Plan

Mayor Mike Duggan's proposal to slash property taxes and discourage land speculation was among the many pieces of legislation lawmakers tried but failed to pass last year.

NEW YORK — Mayor Adams Asks State to Cover Half of Migrant Costs

While testifying at Albany's "Tin Cup Day" at the joint budget hearing on local governments, Mayor Eric Adams requested that the State cover at least half of the cost to accommodate asylum seekers.

PHILADELPHIA — What Governor Shapiro's \$48B State Budget Means for Philadelphia

This month, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro unveiled a more than \$48 billion state budget, which Mayor Parker endorsed for its potential to address Philadelphia's key priorities, including K-12 education funding and additional funding for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA).

SAN DIEGO — San Diego Exploring New Tax Measure to Fund Stormwater System Projects

This November, a measure to increase funding for San Diego's stormwater system through a proposed water quality tax could make its way onto the ballot.

SEATTLE — Social Housing Developer Suggests Payroll Tax on "Excess Earners"

Seattle's social housing developer filed an initiative to enact a payroll tax on businesses in the city with employees earning over \$1 million. If approved, the tax could raise \$50 million a year toward the construction of affordable housing.

Transportation & Mobility

BOSTON — Free Bus Route Pilot Extended

Mayor Michelle Wu announced that the City will be extending the fare-free bus program on three routes until March 2026.

LOS ANGELES — L.A.'s Mobility Plan Implementation up to Voters

A measure on the local ballot in March could force the City to implement its own mobility plan, which officials call “a guide, not a mandate.”

WASHINGTON, D.C. — City Council Passes Bill to Slow Down Dangerous Drivers

The D.C. City Council passed a first-in-the-nation bill mandating in-car technology called “speed governors” aimed at slowing down speeders and dangerous drivers, potentially serving as a national model for accountability.
