

## Cozen Cities - December 13, 2023

### Gig Economy & Technology

#### BALTIMORE — New UpSurge CEO Bets on Baltimore, Tech

Tech entrepreneur Kory Bailey — who was recently named CEO of UpSurge, a nonprofit, professional ecosystem-building organization — spoke about his efforts to build a vibrant tech ecosystem in the city.

#### LOS ANGELES — L.A. Council Seeks Ways to Use AI in City Departments

The Los Angeles City Council approved a motion last week calling on staffers to find ways to incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) systems to improve operations citywide.

#### PHILADELPHIA — CHOP's Role in First FDA-Approved Gene-Editing Treatment

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) played a key role in the development of breakthrough gene-editing technology CRISPR, which was utilized in a sickle cell treatment that recently became the first of its kind to be approved by the federal Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

#### PHILADELPHIA — OIT Reveals New Strategic Plan, Priorities

The City of Philadelphia's Office of Innovation and Technology (OIT) released its strategic plan for the upcoming year, which intentionally centers Mayor-elect Cherelle Parker's stated priorities for the office.

### Labor & Employment

#### BOSTON — Police Union Approves New Contract Agreement

Boston Police Patrolmen's Association approved a new five-year contract agreement with the city, which now goes to the City Council for a vote. The contract includes cost-of-living adjustments and reforms in discipline, paid details, medical leave, union release, officer retention, and education initiatives.

#### DETROIT — MGM Grand Detroit Casino Workers Ratify Record-Breaking Labor Agreement, Ending Strike

As part of a recently ratified agreement, MGM Grand Detroit workers won the largest wage increases ever negotiated in the history of MGM Grand Detroit.

#### LOS ANGELES — \$3.6 Billion in L.A. Employee Payroll Goes to Workers Who Live Outside City, Report Shows

A recent payroll analysis of people employed by the city of Los Angeles found that nearly 64% of workers live outside of L.A. proper, resulting in \$3.6 billion exiting the city last year.

#### RICHMOND — Richmond, Unionized City Workers Negotiating New Contract

Richmond city workers are rallying for fair wages and job safety measures amid ongoing contract negotiations with the city, which has pushed back its deadline to January.

### Policy & Politics



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### Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen

**BALTIMORE – Baltimore City Council Blocks Resolution Condemning Hamas Attack**

Last week, the Baltimore City Council struck down a resolution that would have condemned the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas following an interruption by pro-Palestine demonstrators. Though nine members of Council supported the resolution, it required 12 votes to pass. Baltimore mayoral candidate Sheila Dixon denounced the City Council's failure to pass the resolution.

**CHICAGO – Chicago's New Paid Leave Policy to be Delayed**

Chicago's new paid leave policy is set to be amended by the City Council, which will delay implementation of the measure by six months until July 1, 2024. Changes include a 16-day cooling-off period before a worker could sue an employer for violating the ordinance and a narrower definition of who would be covered under the policy.

**CHICAGO – City Scrambles to Determine Next Steps for Migrants in Chicago After Camp Scrapped by State**

Chicago is scrambling to figure out next steps after the state called off construction of a military-style, winterized base camp meant to house 2,000 migrants after an environmental report showed highly toxic chemicals were found in the ground.

**CHICAGO – DNC Host Committee Names Key Staffers**

With the 2024 Democratic National Convention (DNC) just nine months away, Chicago's host committee announced senior staff hires.

**LOS ANGELES – L.A. Mayor Bass Kicks Off Week of Events to Highlight First Year in Office**

L.A. Mayor Karen Bass will travel across the city to highlight her work on homelessness, safety, business, climate, and city services during her first year in office.

**PHILADELPHIA – Interfaith Rally Against Antisemitism Held at Congregation Rodeph Shalom**

On Sunday, city and state officials and faith and community leaders held an Interfaith Rally Against Antisemitism at Congregation Rodeph Shalom in North Philadelphia. The rally comes in the wake of the Saturday resignation of University of Pennsylvania President Liz Magill following her testimony in front of the U.S. House Committee on Education.

**PHILADELPHIA – Mayor-Elect Parker Begins Assembling Intergovernmental Roundtable**

Philadelphia Mayor-elect Parker is assembling a first-of-its-kind Intergovernmental Roundtable composed of three dozen elected officials and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels who will be charged with devising strategies to address some of the city's toughest challenges.

**RICHMOND – Mayor Stoney Announces Candidacy for Governor of Virginia**

Last week, Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney officially launched his 2025 Virginia gubernatorial bid. He has since been backed by former Virginia Governor and mentor Terry McAuliffe.

**RICHMOND – Richmond City Council Proposes Tax Relief, Compensation Changes to City Charter**

The Richmond City Council is proposing two significant changes to its City Charter, which would allow the city to begin offering real estate tax relief to low- and moderate-income residents and allow an increase to its members' annual compensation. The changes would need to be approved by the Virginia General Assembly.

**Public Health & Safety****BALTIMORE – Baltimore City Council Makes Move Toward Gaining Control Over Baltimore Police Department**

The Baltimore City Council held public hearings to discuss a proposed charter amendment to move the city's police department away from state to local control. While many city residents have testified in favor, Councilmember Mark Conway shares how the process has been challenging due to the level of negotiation and coordination required between state and city government.

#### **BALTIMORE — Baltimore City Council Resolution Would Protect Abortion Providers From Out-Of-State Prosecution**

The Baltimore City Council is weighing legislation that would further protect abortion providers from out-of-state prosecution.

#### **DETROIT — City of Detroit on Track to See Fewest Number of Homicides in Nearly 60 Years**

According to data ending November 30, 2023, Detroit has seen an 18% reduction in homicides compared to the first 11 months of 2022. The City attributes this result to a gun violence reduction partnership that was set in motion in 2021 following a nationwide increase in violent crime.

#### **DETROIT — Detroit Earns Perfect 2023 MEI Score**

The City of Detroit received its eighth consecutive 100 score — the maximum possible — on the 2023 Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index (MEI) scoreboard.

#### **LOS ANGELES — Law Enforcement Cameras, License Plate Readers Incite Debate in Beverly Hills**

Real Time Watch Center, a system of roughly 2,400 cameras and 50 license plate readers placed in "strategic locations" throughout Beverly Hills, has incited some debate amongst community members despite their use in solving a number of prolific crimes in recent years.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia Leaders Announce Renewed Focus on Shoplifters, Retail Theft**

Following the fatal stabbing of a security guard at the Center City Philadelphia Macy's, District Attorney Larry Krasner was joined by several state and local officials and Philadelphia and transit police to announce a renewed focus on shoplifting and retail thefts. Though violent crime rates have been high in recent years, 2023 has seen a decline.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia City Council Passes Ski Mask Ban**

In an attempt to improve public safety, the Philadelphia City Council passed a ban on the wearing of ski masks in certain public spaces in a 13-2 vote.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — 2023 Philadelphia's Worst Year for Vehicle Thefts in More Than 15 Years**

Vehicle thefts have reportedly reached a new 15-year high in 2023, with thefts spiking 1,306% since they reached their lowest point in 2017.

#### **RICHMOND — Richmond Youth Homicides Have Dropped 75% Since October 2022**

Richmond experienced a precipitous 75% drop in youth homicides in the past year thanks to the implementation of its Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention plan.

#### **WASHINGTON, D.C. — D.C. City Council, Mayor Bowser Propose Public Safety Initiatives**

The D.C. City Council Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety heard public testimony this week on three proposed public safety bills. Meanwhile, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser announced a "real-time crime center," which would allow the Metropolitan Police Department to monitor metro-area surveillance cameras 24/7.

### **Real Estate Development**

#### **BALTIMORE — Baltimore Leaders Propose \$8 Billion Plan to Address Vacant, Abandoned Housing**

On Monday, Baltimore's faith, business, and City leaders announced an \$8 billion plan to revive thousands of vacant and abandoned homes to be funded by the city, state, and private donors.

## **BALTIMORE — Governor Moore Pauses Orioles, MSA Lease Agreement**

After what seemed like the end of a long saga, Maryland Governor Wes Moore paused a lease agreement between the Orioles, Baltimore's Major League Baseball team, and the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA).

## **CHICAGO — City Hall, Civic Groups Need to Plot a Downtown Rescue**

With vacancy rates rising and valuations falling hard, civic and business leaders are starting to discuss what can be done with the existing office space few companies want anymore.

## **LOS ANGELES — L.A. City Council Adopts Limits on Rent Hikes in 640,000 Rent-Controlled Units**

The Los Angeles City Council adopted an ordinance that, if approved by Mayor Bass, will limit rent increases on 640,000 rent-stabilized units to 4% in February — or up to a 6% rent hike if a landlord covers the costs of the gas and electricity.

## **PHILADELPHIA — Right to Counsel Program Expanded to North Philadelphia ZIP Code**

Philadelphia's Right to Counsel program, which provides eligible renters with legal help when facing eviction, has been expanded to a fifth ZIP code — 19132 in North Philadelphia.

## **RICHMOND — Richmond Outlines Proposal to Inspect Rental Housing Units**

The Richmond City Council is working with the Mayor's Office to devise a program to inspect deteriorating or blighted rental housing units, though the program's potential scope is limited by Virginia state law.

## **SAN DIEGO — San Diego County Moves Ahead on Turning Excess Land Into Affordable Housing**

The County of San Diego is working to address the region's housing crisis in a variety of ways, including by designating unused properties as excess land.

## **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.

## **WASHINGTON, D.C. — Alexandria Tries Luring Capitals, Wizards Away From D.C.**

Alexandria, Virginia, is reportedly planning to lure the Capitals and Wizards from their current arena in D.C.'s Chinatown to a new proposed arena in Potomac Yard, which could deal yet another blow to Washington's downtown economy.

## **Taxes & Spending**

### **BALTIMORE — Mayor Scott Highlights Administration Policies that Have Helped Grow Baltimore's Economy**

Last week, data released by the U.S. Department of Commerce showed Baltimore to be one of the fastest growing large economies in the nation, an accomplishment which Mayor Brandon Scott attributes to policies the administration has implemented to attract new business and talent and support the city's small, minority-owned businesses.

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

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

### **DETROIT — Detroit's Land Value Tax Plan Touted for Cutting Taxes; Feared as Risky "Experiment"**

Detroit is pinning its tax restructure hopes on a land value tax proposal that's been tried in only two other states in the nation — and never in a city as large as the Motor City.

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

New York Mayor Eric 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.

#### **LOS ANGELES — L.A. Mayor Bass Appoints Matt Hale as Deputy Mayor of Finance**

L.A. Mayor Bass announced the appointment of Matt Hale as Deputy Mayor of Finance, Operations & Innovation following the announcement that Deputy Mayor Jeanne Holm will retire from the City.

### **Transportation & Mobility**

#### **BALTIMORE — MTA Suspends Baltimore-Area Light Rail Service Indefinitely**

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) announced last week that it has indefinitely suspended light rail service on its Baltimore-area north-south line, citing recent mechanical issues that necessitate inspection of the entire fleet of 53 rail cars.

#### **BALTIMORE — Baltimore City DOT Enforcing Speeding, Red-Light Fines**

This week, the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT) began using newly installed cameras across the city to enforce fines for drivers who run red lights and speed.

#### **CHICAGO — As Fiscal Cliff Looms, CMAP Pitches Bold Plan to Overhaul Chicagoland Public Transit**

With the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and Pace expected to have a combined \$730 million budget deficit starting in 2026, state lawmakers passed a measure charging the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to devise a plan to improve service, make buses and trains more accessible, and make sure all lines and routes effectively link up with one another.

#### **DETROIT — MDOT, City of Detroit, Electreon Unveil Nation's First Public EV-Charging Roadway at Michigan Central**

Deputy Mayor Todd Bettison, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Director Brad Wieferich, and other partners celebrated a major milestone in the future of mobility and electrification as crews finished installing the nation's first wireless-charging public roadway.

#### **LOS ANGELES — Two High-Speed U.S. Rail Projects Bag \$6 Billion in Government Funding**

Both the Brightline West plan connecting Southern California to Las Vegas and the California High-Speed Rail project between Los Angeles and San Francisco will receive a total of \$3 billion and \$3.07 billion each in federal funding.

#### **NEW YORK — Traffic Mobility Review Board Makes Congestion Pricing Tolling Structure Recommendations**

The Traffic Mobility Review Board (TMRB) issued recommendations on a structure for the Central Business District tolling program, which include a \$15 base toll for passenger vehicles, discounted overnight pricing, discounts for motorcycles, and a \$24 to \$36 toll for trucks.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — SEPTA Unveils New Metro Website, Announces Completion of Bus Revolution Plan**

As part of a recent branding overhaul to improve wayfinding throughout its system, The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) launched its new Metro website. SEPTA also announced that it expects to implement changes included in its system-wide Bus Revolution redesign sometime late next year.

**WASHINGTON, D.C. — Select Metrobus Routes Now Running 24/7**

Metrobus has begun offering 24/7 service on more than a dozen of its existing routes, thanks to funds secured by the agency back in October.

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