

## Cozen Cities - July 17, 2024

### Gig Economy & Technology

#### LOS ANGELES — LAUSD Moves Ahead with Troubled AI Platform

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said he is moving forward with an education platform driven by artificial intelligence (AI) designed to help students and families navigate the complexities of the district, despite the collapse of the company that designed it.

#### MINNEAPOLIS — Mall of America's Facial Recognition Tech Sparks Pushback

Privacy advocates and lawmakers from both sides of the aisle are raising concerns about the Mall of America's use of AI-fueled facial recognition technology.

#### NEW YORK — NYPD Begins Sending Drones to Crime Scenes

As part of its "Drone as First Responders" pilot program, the New York Police Department (NYPD) began sending drones directly to crime scenes in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan, all monitored from an NYPD command center.

### Labor & Employment

#### BOSTON — MBTA Reaches Agreement with All Labor Unions

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) announced they had reached a collective bargaining agreement with all 28 of their labor unions for the first time in 15 years.

#### CHICAGO — Clock Starts on 5-Year Plan to Raise Tipped-Worker Wages

Beginning this month, Chicago's tipped minimum wage increased from \$9.48 per hour to \$11.02. Wages for tipped workers will rise annually until 2028, to reach parity with the City's standard minimum wage.

#### LOS ANGELES — "Fair Work" Ordinance Introduced for Fast Food Workers

Los Angeles City Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez (District 13) introduced a motion aimed at providing the L.A.'s fast food workers with more stable scheduling and paid time off.

#### MINNEAPOLIS — Park Workers Strike Amid Ongoing Contract Negotiations

Contract negotiations between the Minneapolis Parks & Recreation workers and the Park Board are ongoing as a strike enters its second week. Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 363 demands include better wages, health insurance, and improved workplace safety.

#### MINNEAPOLIS — Proposed Labor Standards Board Raises Tensions Between Restaurant Owners, Unions

As the Minneapolis City Council considers a proposal for a new Labor Standards Board, there is a widening gap between what supporters and opponents think it will entail.



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### Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen

**PHILADELPHIA — Judge Rules in Favor of Full-Time, In-Person Work Week**

Judge Sierra Thomas-Street upheld Philadelphia Mayor Cherrille Parker's return-to-office mandate for City staff. This week marks the first since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that City employees will be required to work full-time from the office.

**RICHMOND — City Employees, Leaders Celebrate Historic New Contracts**

Richmond City employees and leaders celebrated a historic contract, effective this month, that provides new protections and benefits for workers, including labor-management committees, improved grievance and promotion processes, better training, and guaranteed raises.

**Policy & Politics****CHICAGO — City Council's Bid for Increased Autonomy Fails**

A push to expand the power of the Chicago City Council to operate independently from the Office of the Mayor and city attorneys failed to win the backing of a key city panel last week, preventing the yearslong effort from advancing.

**MINNEAPOLIS — City Council Moves Forward with Tentative Police Contract**

A Minneapolis City Council committee voted to move forward with the tentative police union contract that would give Minneapolis police officers a substantial boost in pay.

**WASHINGTON, D.C. — City Council Proposes Legislation for Truant Teens**

The D.C. City Council is considering emergency legislation to address truancy by initiating a pilot project at five high schools, redirecting frequently absent teenagers to social service programs rather than court.

**Public Health & Safety****CHICAGO — City, State Leaders Announce \$100M for Violence Prevention**

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson celebrated \$100 million raised for community violence intervention aimed at reducing shootings and homicides in Chicago's West and South side neighborhoods by 75% over the next decade.

**NEW YORK — New Trash Container Requirement for Small Residential Buildings**

Beginning this November, residential buildings with fewer than nine units will have to place their trash in plastic garbage containers, sold by the City for \$50 each.

**PHILADELPHIA — City Officially Launches New Public Safety Office**

The Parker Administration launched Philadelphia's Office of Public Safety (OPS). Featuring a series of new executive roles, OPS will effectively combine five distinct city offices under one jurisdiction to streamline operations.

**PHILADELPHIA — Unannounced Kensington Clean-Up Efforts to Continue**

Recent sweeps of Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood — which included ID checks, car towings, and street closures — have been unannounced. The coordinated police operations could continue monthly as part of Mayor Parker's broader public safety goals.

**RICHMOND — City Crime Data Show Decreasing Homicides, Increasing Theft**

The Richmond Police Department (RPD) released new crime statistics indicating that violent crime

incidents are on the downturn, while vehicle theft cases continue to rise. With a 29% decrease in homicides during the first half of 2024, RPD plans to shift their efforts to address a 32% spike in car thefts and a 15% increase in shoplifting.

#### **SEATTLE — City Council Chair Calls for Implementation of Drug Overdose Audit Recommendations**

Seattle City Council Chair Sara Nelson (At Large) is urging immediate implementation of recommendations from a recent audit to address drug overdose and crime issues in the Belltown neighborhood, emphasizing data-driven strategies and coordinated city plans.

#### **Real Estate Development**

#### **BALTIMORE — More Affordable Housing, Shared Equity Coming to West Baltimore**

Focused efforts are underway in West Baltimore to create affordable housing and promote shared equity initiatives for lower-income residents. Aiming to address local pre-existing housing challenges, discussions center around building community resilience and economic vitality.

#### **BOSTON — City Councilor Urges Mayor to Address Office Vacancies, Property Values**

Boston City Councilor Ed Flynn (District 2) is urging Mayor Michelle Wu to act on a recently passed City Council resolution that would establish a special commission to address office vacancies and declining property values. He highlights the potential revenue shortfalls that could negatively impact the city's commercial tax base.

#### **CHICAGO — Downtown Office Vacancy Reaches New Heights Again**

The downtown office vacancy rate wrapped up the first half of the year at an all-time high of 25.8%, up from 25.1% at the end of the first quarter.

#### **LOS ANGELES — City Council Backs Convention Center Expansion**

The Los Angeles City Council voted 13-1 to spend \$54.4 million on pre-design work to expand the Los Angeles County Convention Center ahead of the 2028 Olympic Games.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — Avenue of the Arts to Reap Major 10-Year Makeover**

A decade-long restoration project to “greenify” the Avenue of the Arts will begin in 2025, extending from City Hall to Washington Avenue on Broad Street. Funds will funnel to installments of lush plantings and creative boundaries between vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

#### **SEATTLE — City Council Approves Incentives for Office-to-Housing Conversions**

With support from Mayor Bruce Harrell, the Seattle City Council voted to cut development regulations and fees from projects involving the conversion of commercial buildings to housing to alleviate Seattle's housing shortage.

#### **SEATTLE — Federal Judge Dismisses MHA Policy Lawsuit**

A federal judge dismissed a Seattle homeowner's claim that the city's Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) law was unconstitutional due to its implementation of costly fees on private property construction, citing lack of proper foundation. Seattle's Office of Housing announced a review of MHA guidelines to address financial barriers for smaller construction projects.

#### **WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Delivers on Real Estate Office-to-Residence Conversion Promise**

The Elle represents the first of many planned office-to-residence conversions in D.C. A pioneer in Mayor Muriel Bowser's conversion initiative, the Elle will feature 163 units of residential space, converted from old office floor plans.

## Taxes & Spending

### **DETROIT – NFL Draft Generated \$213M in Economic Impact**

Visit Detroit and the Detroit Sports Commission released a third-party report that found April's National Football League (NFL) Draft generated \$213.6 million in economic impact for the City of Detroit.

### **WASHINGTON, D.C. – City Faces \$4.4M Penalty for Poor SNAP Administration**

D.C. was fined a \$4.4 million penalty for ineffective administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In response to the litany of operational errors, the D.C. City Council held a hearing to identify program issues.

Transportation & Mobility

### **BALTIMORE – Gov. Moore Celebrates Light Rail Decision, Offers Limited Funding Details**

Maryland Governor Wes Moore announced that Baltimore's revived Red Line transit project will be a light rail line, calling it the "right and fair choice." However, details on funding the up to \$7.2 billion project remain sparse amid state budget deficits.

### **BOSTON – City Council Discussing Congestion Pricing**

The Boston City Council is debating congestion pricing, with some members expressing interest in implementing peak-hour traffic fees — citing concerns about transit readiness and equity — while others remain cautious amid challenges seen in other cities like New York.

### **BOSTON – MBTA Contactless Payment System Launches in August**

MBTA recently announced a contactless payment option for riders using the buses, subway stations, and the Green Line and Mattapan Line trolleys beginning in August.

### **CHICAGO – Chicago Transit Leaders Resist Merger Proposal**

The leaders of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, Pace, and the Regional Transportation Authority laid out their strongest rebuttals yet against a proposal to combine them into a single agency.

### **LOS ANGELES – L.A. Metro to Launch Second Phase of Mobility Wallet Pilot**

The second phase of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority's (L.A. Metro) Mobility Wallet pilot program — an all-in-one way to pay for multiple modes of transportation throughout southern L.A. — will launch in August.

### **NEW YORK – Gateway Tunnel Project Receives \$12B in Federal Funding**

Lawmakers and transit officials are celebrating the commencement of the \$16.1 billion Gateway Hudson Tunnel Project, projecting 95,000 construction jobs and \$20 billion economic impact, thanks to a \$12 billion federal funding boost. Completion is expected by 2035.

### **NEW YORK – Citi Bike Announces Price Increase**

Citi Bike announced on their website that, due to the rising cost to operate in New York City, they would be raising their price from 20 to 24 cents per minute for members and from 30 to 36 cents per minute for non-members.

### **RICHMOND – Richmond, Raleigh High-Speed Rail Project in the Works**

Virginia and North Carolina have initiated the formative steps in getting the S-Line Raleigh to Richmond Project off the ground. Both states aim to work together in constructing a high-speed rail network that will offer passengers quick service between the two proximal cities.

**SEATTLE — \$1.55B Transportation Levy to Be Decided By Voters in November**

The Seattle City Council approved a record-breaking \$1.55 billion transportation levy aimed at funding extensive infrastructure upgrades, despite criticism over its size and impact on residents and businesses. Voters will decide in November whether to approve the tax measure.

**WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rebranded Metro Buses Coming to D.C.**

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) promised to revamp its bus operations, focusing on weekend and evening service. The agency also plans to rename routes and optimize running efficiency by spacing out stops.

**WASHINGTON, D.C. — Speed Cameras Contribute to Decline in City Speeding**

Data indicates that speeding citations have decreased by 95% following the installation of 477 speed cameras throughout D.C. Municipal traffic sensor and camera investments appear to follow an upward trend across the U.S.

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