

Cozen Cities – March 13, 2024

Gig Economy & Technology

CHICAGO – CTA Calls on Private Companies to Submit Tech Solutions to Improve System

Last week, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) launched the CTA Innovation Studio – calling on private-sector companies to submit ideas that could solve some of the transit agency’s problems.

NEW YORK – City Hires First Director of AI, Machine Learning

New York Mayor Eric Adams has hired the City’s first Director of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning, Jiahao Chen. He is tasked with developing the City’s comprehensive AI strategy.

PHILADELPHIA – DoorDash, Share Food Program Deliver Food to Seniors in Need

A partnership between DoorDash and Share Food Program helps deliver free monthly food boxes to seniors in need in Philadelphia and surrounding counties. The North Philadelphia pickup location is one of the company’s largest in the world.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – FanDuel to Replace GambetDC

FanDuel will replace GambetDC as D.C.’s sole sports-betting provider, aiming to improve revenue and service quality, ending the City’s troubled venture into sports gambling.

Labor & Employment

PHILADELPHIA – Mayor Parker Urges Businesses to Bring Employees Back to the Office

During her first address to the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, Philadelphia Mayor Cherrille Parker urged Philadelphia businesses to bring remote employees back to in-person work.

SAN DIEGO – School Board Votes in Favor of Major Layoffs

Last week, the San Diego Unified School Board voted unanimously to lay off hundreds of educators, bus drivers, food service workers, and administrators as the district faces a \$93.7 million budget shortfall.

Policy & Politics

BALTIMORE – City Council Members Ask Mayor Scott to Halt Proposal \$1 Home-Sale Policy

Baltimore City leaders are debating implementing a \$1 home sale proposal to address the vacant homes crisis. The proposal is backed by Mayor Brandon Scott, though some members of the City Council have called for a pause due to enforcement and gentrification concerns.

CHICAGO – Votes on Mayor Johnson’s “Bring Chicago Home” Referendum Should Be Counted, Judges Rule



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Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

An appellate court reinstated Mayor Brandon Johnson's "Bring Chicago Home" referendum on Chicago's primary ballot, overturning a previous ruling that ordered the votes not be counted. The proposal aims to fund permanent affordable housing to reduce homelessness.

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson Announces Promotion, New Appointment

Mayor Johnson announced the promotion of Ronnie Reese to Communications Director and the hiring of Joe Calvello as Chief Strategy Officer in the Office of the Mayor.

LOS ANGELES — Some City Council Races Likely Headed for Runoffs

Although votes are still being counted and the results of the primary election won't be official until after the Los Angeles County registrar's office certifies them later this month, incumbent Councilmembers Imelda Padilla (District 6), Marqueece Harris-Dawson (District 8), and John Lee (District 12) have already declared victory.

LOS ANGELES — Delegation Declares Economic Growth, Small Business Development Are Key Priorities for 2028 Olympic, Paralympic Games

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and a delegation of City Council members and civic leaders declared small business growth a key priority for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games during a meeting with Business France and French companies who have invested in Paris 2024.

RICHMOND — City Hall Implementing Adjustments in Response to Concerns Raised By Local Businesses, Residents

Richmond City Hall is working to increase transparency and public trust by tackling issues like the widespread business community criticism over the meals tax and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request delays, according to Chief Administrative Officer Lincoln Saunders.

Public Health & Safety

BALTIMORE — Mayor Scott Allocates \$30M in APRA Funds to Build Permanent Supportive Housing

Mayor Scott allocated \$30 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to 11 organizations to construct approximately 123 units of permanent supportive housing, aiming to address homelessness and provide stability for vulnerable residents.

CHICAGO — With Shelter Evictions Looming, Migrants Worry About Access to Housing, Work Permits

Dozens gathered in Pritzker Park at the beginning of the month to protest Mayor Johnson's long-delayed plan to evict migrants living in shelters longer than 60 days. The order will go into effect March 16.

DETROIT — DEGC Relaunches GGP to Increase Fresh Food Access

The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) is relaunching the Green Grocer Project (GGP) to increase walkable access to fresh and healthy food options across Detroit neighborhoods.

LOS ANGELES — More than \$9M Federal Dollars Secured to Confront Homelessness, Build Affordable Housing

Mayor Bass announced that the City of Los Angeles has secured \$9.34 million in congressionally directed spending to continue confronting the homelessness crisis and making affordable housing more widely available.

LOS ANGELES — Mayor Bass Announces Record LAPD Applicants, Bucking Nationwide Trends

Mayor Bass announced that the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) received more than 1,200 applications to join the department in January, a two-year high.

RICHMOND — Homelessness Conditions Increase as Emergency Support System Faces Capacity Challenges

Winter 2024 data from nonprofit Homeward indicates stable rates of homelessness in Central Virginia but a concerning rise in the number of people sleeping in unsafe conditions, emphasizing ongoing challenges in providing shelter despite efforts to address root causes.

SAN DIEGO — San Diego May Fall Short on New EPA Soot Pollution Rules

Only 15 counties in the United States currently fail to meet the existing soot pollution standard, also known as particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 119 counties, including San Diego, will likely fall short of the new lower standard.

SEATTLE — Sheriff's Office Will Not Enforce Expansion of Camping Ban

The Kings County Sheriff's Office stated that they will not enforce a new expansion of the camping ban, which includes "buffers" within 500 feet of schools, day care centers, libraries, and parks, citing concerns about constitutionality of the new rules.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Signs D.C. Crime Bill into Law

Mayor Muriel Bowser signed the Secure D.C. anti-crime bill, which was unanimously approved by the City Council last week. Critics argue the legislation grants police excessive power.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — City Receives Funding to Expand 211 Social Services "Warmline"

D.C. leaders announced a \$9 million grant to run a 211 "warmline" program to aid needy families with expanded access to rent, food, and cash assistance, aiming to prevent family crises and keep children with their parents.

Real Estate Development

BALTIMORE — City Council Approves Harborplace Development Bills

The Baltimore City Council approved bills to enable waterfront residential construction, paving the way for the Harborplace redevelopment project. A charter change proposal will be decided by voters in November.

CHICAGO — Chicago Bears Pitch \$2B for Publicly Owned Stadium on Lakefront to Replace Soldier Field

The Chicago Bears are prepared to provide \$2 billion in private funding for a new publicly owned, enclosed stadium and park space in the city.

CHICAGO — Loop Retail Vacancy Tops 30% for First Time

Nearly four years since the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of empty storefronts in the Loop has surpassed a daunting threshold: more than 30% of the central business district's retail space is vacant.

LOS ANGELES — California Governor Throws Weight Behind Massive Development in Downtown L.A.

A proposed housing development project in Los Angeles' downtown Arts District is the first to be certified under a California law intended to cut environmental red tape.

NEW YORK — City Planning Commission Advances "City of Yes for Economic Opportunity"

The New York City Planning Commission voted to advance a zoning text amendment, the "City of Yes for Economic Opportunity," which includes 18 changes to current zoning rules intended to

make it easier for small businesses to operate.

PHILADELPHIA — Comcast Spectacor Proposes \$2.5B Stadium District Transformation

Comcast Spectacor unveiled plans to transform South Philadelphia's stadium district into a vibrant sports and entertainment complex featuring hotels, residences, restaurants, shops, and a 5,500-seat performance stage over the next decade.

PHILADELPHIA — New Apartment Boom in Center City Accompanied by Corresponding Population Increase

Center City's residential population growth matches a similar surge in new apartments in the neighborhood, bucking citywide trends with 7,429 units built since 2021 and reaching a five-year high in 2023.

SEATTLE — Mayor Harrell Proposes Housing Density in Every Neighborhood

Mayor Bruce Harrell released a new housing plan to add density to every neighborhood in the city, including 24 new "neighborhood centers," more corner stores, and at least 100,000 new homes in the next 20 years.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Launches Housing in Downtown Program

Mayor Muriel Bowser introduced the Housing in Downtown program this week, offering tax breaks for office conversions to residences in hopes of attracting 13,500 new residents to downtown by 2028 and revitalizing the area post-pandemic.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — 11% of D.C. Home Buyers Are Investors

Residential real estate investors purchased approximately 11% of all homes sold in D.C. the fourth quarter of 2023, impacting the market for first-time homebuyers.

Taxes & Spending

CHICAGO — Chicago's Search for New Revenue Targets Video Gaming, Wealth Taxes, Heliport, Downtown Digital Ads

Several ideas are expected to be part of a report issued within 30 days by a Chicago City Council panel overseeing Mayor Johnson's search for new revenue.

DETROIT — Four takeaways from Duggan's budget plan

Mayor Mike Duggan's administration proposed a spending plan Thursday, March 5 for the city, which has been improving its fiscal health annually in the 10 years since it exited bankruptcy.

Transportation & Mobility

BOSTON — MassDOT, MBTA Plan to Extend Silver Line

Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) are moving forward with plans to extend the Silver Line route to Sullivan Square. The extension would include a six-mile extension and eight new stations.

DETROIT — Detroit Bus Drivers Average One Crash Per Day

The Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) drivers were involved in 369 collisions in 2023. More than two-thirds involved other vehicles, more than 30% were drivers hitting immobile objects, and six involved pedestrians, according to the reports.

LOS ANGELES — Voters Approve "Safe Streets" Measure HLA

Voters in Los Angeles approved Measure HLA, a widely debated initiative that would require the City to make roads and walkways safer from deadly car crashes.

RICHMOND — Progress Made Toward Vision Zero Traffic Safety Objectives

Richmond's Vision Zero plan, first adopted in 2018, aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2030 through infrastructure changes and collaborative efforts among City departments. Preliminary data indicates progress, though more work remains to be done.
