

## Cozen Cities - May 31, 2023

### Gig Economy & Technology

**BOSTON — Running List of Layoffs in Boston Tech Sector** The Boston Globe has begun tracking layoffs at tech companies in the region.

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**LOS ANGELES — LA City Council Approves a Robot Dog Named ‘Spot’ Donated to LAPD**

A divided Los Angeles City Council [approved](#) the donation of a “robot dog” for the police department on Tuesday, May 23, over the objections of activists who claimed the controversial technology would be used for illegal surveillance — particularly of people of color.

**SAN DIEGO — Instacart's \$46.5M Gig Worker Lawsuit Payout Set to Begin**

Distributions are set to begin in Instacart’s \$46.5 million [settlement](#) with its drivers, following the agreement between the San Francisco-based tech company and the city of San Diego in October.,

### Labor & Employment

**CHICAGO — Johnson Makes Union Labor a Chicago Priority**

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson has [created](#) a new deputy mayor position for labor relations. However, some believe the job description is about boosting labor power rather than fostering relations and safeguarding taxpayers.

**DETROIT — Detroit Approves Workplace Standards Board for Arena Workers**

The Detroit City Council unanimously voted May 23 to [create](#) an Industry Standards Board for arena workers at Little Caesars Arena, Ford Field and Comerica Park.

**PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia AFL-CIO to Host “Strike School” for Union Leaders, Members**

In response to the increase in union organizing activity, the AFL-CIO Philadelphia Council will be [hosting](#) a “strike school” to share best practices and lessons learned from recent work stoppages.

**SAN DIEGO — San Diego MTS Bus Drivers Strike Over Forced Unpaid Breaks, Disrupting Dozens of Routes**

Hundreds of unionized bus drivers [picketed](#) outside the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System bus yard in Chula Vista on Wednesday, demanding an end to a longstanding policy around forced, unpaid breaks.

**SEATTLE — Amazon Employees Plan Walkout**

Amazon employees in Seattle have planned to walk off the job to display their frustration with recent layoffs, office return mandates, and a lack of action from the company on climate change.

### Policy & Politics



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### **BOSTON — City Council Passes New Redistricting Map**

Boston's City Council passed a new redistricting map, concluding a difficult process and preventing the delay of fall elections.

### **CHICAGO — Johnson Wins First Test of City Council Muscle**

Mayor Brandon Johnson on May 24 reshaped the City Council in his progressive image — and aced the first test of his legislative muscle. Presiding over his first City Council meeting, Johnson easily won passage of the compromise he forged, shrinking the number of committees from 28 to 20 and replacing the Finance Committee Chairman Scott Waguespack.

### **NEW YORK — Electeds Ask Biden to Fast-Track Migrant Work Permits**

Mayor Eric Adams, Governor Kathy Hochul, and Congressional representatives have called on President Biden to approve special federal work authorization for the tens of thousands of migrants in the state.

### **RICHMOND — Richmond City Council to Reconsider Controversial Casino Proposal**

Richmond City Councilmember Mike Jones is spearheading a controversial new effort to revive a proposal for a new casino in the city's south side. Richmonders narrowly rejected the proposal with 51% of the vote in 2021.

### **SAN DIEGO — A 'Major Step Forward': City Council Appoints 25 Members to New San Diego Police Oversight Commission**

Two and a half years after voters in San Diego approved a new police oversight commission, the City Council appointed 25 community members to carry out the work.

#### **Public Health & Safety**

### **BALTIMORE — Baltimore Sues Car Manufacturers Over Increase in Thefts**

The City of Baltimore has filed a lawsuit against makers of Kia and Hyundai cars, alleging that the manufacturers have caused a public nuisance by building cars that are too easily stolen. Thefts are nearly double what they were at this time last year.

### **CHICAGO — Chicago to Work with Biden Administration on Plan to Fight Homelessness**

The White House on May 18 announced a two-year, multiagency federal partnership with Chicago aimed at curbing unsheltered homelessness, placing a federal official within city government to organize response plans and help coordinate sources for additional federal funding.

### **DETROIT — Detroit, Federal Officials Announce Summer Crime Prevention Plan**

Following a wave of warm-weather mayhem that included multiple shootings downtown, federal and local law enforcement officials announced a "Summer Enhancement Strategy" aimed at reducing violent crime in two of Detroit's most dangerous neighborhoods.

### **LOS ANGELES — LA Extends Emergency on Homelessness Amid Frustration with Lack of Data**

The Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously on Tuesday, May 16, to extend Mayor Karen Bass' emergency declaration for the city's homelessness crisis, while city staff provided an update on Bass' Inside Safe program amid frustration from some council members who expect more frequent reports on the costly program.

### **SAN DIEGO — County Directs City of San Diego to Add More Restrooms to Combat Hepatitis A Among Homeless Residents**

Adding more restrooms downtown has long been a demand of advocates and those living on city streets, but a recent resurgence of hepatitis A infections among homeless residents forced the issue. The city plans to install 13 portable restrooms downtown, targeting locations with large homeless populations.

## **WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Biden Vetoes Congressional Block of D.C. Policing Bill**

President Joe Biden has vetoed a Republican-led effort to block D.C.'s controversial police accountability legislation, citing a need for the federal government to respect the District's right to implement its own public safety laws.

## **WASHINGTON, D.C. — Patient Activists Ask D.C. City Council to Change Prior Authorization Law**

Patient advocates are imploring D.C. City Council to pass legislation to change prior authorization laws, which can cause insurance delays and denials that hinder access to mental and behavioral health services.

### **Real Estate Development**

## **DETROIT — Lawmaker Wants 'Bird-Friendly Building Standards' for All New Construction in Detroit**

Angela Whitfield Calloway has asked the Legislative Policy Division to come up with a new ordinance "requiring bird-friendly building standards for all new construction and major renovation projects," to circumvent the ongoing issue of birds colliding with buildings.

## **SEATTLE — Tree Protection Ordinance up for Vote**

A long-discussed tree protection ordinance is up for a City Council vote. The ordinance would protect 88,100 trees in the city. It would also allow developers and property owners to "pay in lieu" to a central public fund rather than replacing a removed tree.

## **SEATTLE — First Carbon-Positive Hotel Coming to Seattle**

Seattle will be getting its first carbon-positive hotel next summer, inside a 1907 building that will be renovated as a hotel with a variety of amenities.

## **WASHINGTON, D.C. — Mayor Bowser Awards Grant for Revitalization of Downtown D.C.**

Mayor Muriel Bowser has awarded a \$200,000 grant to the DowntownDC Business Improvement District to create a "Downtown Action Plan" with the goal of reimaging the District's public spaces and revitalizing the area in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Taxes & Spending**

## **BALTIMORE — Baltimore Residents Weigh in on FY24 Budget During "Taxpayers' Night"**

Last week, Baltimore residents shared their opinions on the city's FY24 budget during the City Council's annual "Taxpayers' Night." Topics ranged from affordable housing and library funding to a proposed skate park in West Baltimore.

## **CHICAGO — Johnson Administration Distances Itself from \$12 Billion Tax Plan**

Mayor Brandon Johnson's administration on May 17 distanced itself from a new proposal to raise up to \$12 billion in annual revenue — enough to provide property tax and pension relief, free CTA service and child care — by taxing "income" and "wealth," making big business pay more and dramatically reducing police spending.

## **DETROIT — Water Department Proposes \$3.4M Initiative to Reduce Detroit Street Flooding**

The Detroit Water and Sewage Department said May 23 it is seeking approval of a \$3.4 million initiative to create bioretention areas in the city to reduce basement backups and street flooding that it hopes to complete by the end of 2024.

## **LOS ANGELES — LA City Council Adopts \$13 Billion Budget for New Fiscal Year**

The Los Angeles City Council has approved a \$13 billion budget for the new fiscal year that reflects a historic investment of \$1.3 billion to combat the homeless crisis – including \$250 million Mayor Karen Bass had sought for her signature “Inside Safe” homelessness initiative – and increased funding for both the police department and unarmed emergency response teams that officials say are redefining public safety.

#### **LOS ANGELES – City Council to Conduct Public Hearing on Increasing Fees, Taxes**

The City Council is set to conduct a public hearing on May 22 to discuss adopting the Fiscal Year 2024 schedule of taxes, fees and charges. According to the Department of Finance, the fee adjustments for 2024 will reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of all urban consumers in the Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Anaheim Counties.

#### **RICHMOND – Short-Term Rentals in Richmond to Be Taxed Like Hotels**

Richmond City Council has approved and adopted an ordinance to allow short-term rental accommodations, such as Airbnb and VRBO rentals, to be taxed the same way as hotels.

#### **Transportation & Mobility**

#### **BOSTON – New Street Safety Program Announced**

Mayor Wu and her Chief of Streets announced a new street safety program. “Safety Surge” will install speed humps on streets across 10 city zones per year.

#### **DETROIT – New Half-Mile Southwest Greenway in Detroit Opens**

The new half-mile Southwest Greenway bike/pedestrian path opened May 24, which links two of the city's widely heralded developments: the downtown RiverWalk and Ford Motor Co. Michigan Central campus in Corktown, and featured an announcement of more money to complete the Detroit riverfront.

#### **LOS ANGELES – LA Metro’s Long-Awaited Regional Connector Train Under Downtown LA Opens June 16**

After nearly 10 years of construction and numerous cost overruns, the long-awaited Regional Connector train beneath downtown Los Angeles will open to the public on Friday, June 16 and rides that day will be free not only on the new line but on the entire Metro system of bus, rail and bike share.

#### **NEW YORK – Subway Fares Increase for First Time in Four Years**

The MTA has announced an increase for subway and bus trips for the first time in four years. The fare will increase from \$2.75 to \$2.90 per trip (5%).

#### **PHILADELPHIA – SEPTA to Upgrade Bus, Trolley Fare Collection Boxes**

Last week, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) announced a \$22 million upgrade to no longer functional bus and trolley fare collection boxes that are not repairable.

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