

Cozen Cities - July 2, 2024

Gig Economy & Technology

BALTIMORE – Gig Work on the Rise in Baltimore Area

Gig work is on the rise in the Baltimore area, becoming a predominant lifestyle choice for many individuals. The trend underscores a significant shift in employment dynamics, highlighting both the flexibility and challenges associated with this type of work, and reflects broader economic changes and their impact on local communities.

MINNEAPOLIS – Mall of America Adds Facial-Recognition Technology

The Mall of America says facial-recognition technology will only be used to look for persons of interest who have already been trespassed from the shopping center or who have been flagged by Bloomington police.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – City Officials Announce Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems

D.C. Chief of Police Pamela Smith and Mayor Muriel Bowser announced that the City would be utilizing new technology to help drive down the crime rate in the city. The drone will serve as an eye in the sky to assist searches for missing persons, crowd control, and the rerouting of traffic.

Labor & Employment

CHICAGO – City Issues Proclamation for “Chicago Workers’ Rights Week”

Mayor Brandon Johnson issued a proclamation declaring the June 24-28 work week “Chicago Workers’ Rights Week” to bring attention to upcoming labor law changes.

MINNEAPOLIS – Restaurateurs Ask Minneapolis to Drop Creation of Labor Standards Board

Minneapolis restaurant operators are ramping up their opposition to a proposed policy-recommending body that they fear could raise the cost of doing business.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – \$9.5M Gift Helps Prepare High-Schoolers for Medical Field

A new \$9.5 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies will help fund the training of D.C. high-schoolers interested in the medical field to help combat one of the biggest shortages in the healthcare industry. A new Advanced Technical Center site will allow students to get credits to become patient care techs and certified nursing assistants.

Policy & Politics

BALTIMORE – Will Discord Between Mayor, State AG Impact Upcoming Election?

The discord between the Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott and Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown — centered on issues of crime and justice policies — has raised questions about potential impact on the upcoming election.

BOSTON – Gov. Healey Bans Migrants from Sleeping in Logan Airport, Relocates Them to Former Prison



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Related Practice Areas

• Government Relations - Cozen

Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey announced that migrants will be banned from sleeping in Boston's Logan Airport. Transportation will be provided from the airport to a new overflow shelter in a former Norfolk prison intended to house up to 140 migrant families.

CHICAGO — City Reaches Deal with Protest Organizers Ahead of DNC

City officials reached a deal with protest organizers that will allow demonstrators to march along Michigan Avenue, adjacent to Grant Park, before the kickoff of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in August.

DETROIT — City Council Member Pushes Back on Cannabis Billboards

A push is on to stop the inundation of cannabis billboards in Detroit. The Detroit City Council member Angela Whitfield Calloway is pursuing legal action to prevent new signs from popping up downtown.

LOS ANGELES — Ballot Measure to Rework LAPD Officer Discipline System Clears City Council

The Los Angeles City Council approved a ballot measure that would give the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) chief the authority to fire officers outright for certain serious misconduct, but stops short of a broader overhaul of the LAPD's discipline system.

PHILADELPHIA — Judge Upholds City Ban on Convenience Store Skill Games

Although Common Pleas Court Judge Sierra Thomas-Street reaffirmed Philadelphia's ban on unlicensed casino-style games, state legislators and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court contemplate intervening in what seems to be a largely unregulated enterprise.

RICHMOND — City Council Considers Changing Sanitation Sound Control Rules, Citing Residential Complaints

The Richmond City Councilmembers Katherine Jordan (District 2) and Stephanie Lynch (District 5) proposed a new city ordinance that would modify Richmond's trash collection hourly schedule. While sanitation services currently maintain an exemption from the City's sound code, the Council members plan to change that after a series of residential sound complaints.

SAN DIEGO — City's First-Ever Youth Plan Clears Key Hurdle

A roadmap aiming to deliver San Diego youth extensive support systems and programming was unanimously endorsed by the City Council's Community & Neighborhood Services Committee.

SAN DIEGO — City Council Appoints New Police Practices Commission Director

San Diego's City Council named Paul Parker as the new executive director for the Commission on Police Practices. The appointment is a big step for a commission that struggled to find its footing in recent years.

SEATTLE — 20 Public Elementary Schools Set to Close

During a Seattle School Board meeting, Superintendent Brent Jones addressed the planned closure of 20 out of the 70 public elementary schools in the region.

Public Health & Safety

DETROIT — Violent Crime Fell in Areas Served by 4 of Detroit's ShotStoppers Groups

New data from Detroit's ShotStoppers community violence intervention (CVI) program shows that five of the City's six CVI Zones — areas that consistently experience the most violent crime — saw significant reductions in homicides and non-fatal shootings during the program's third quarter.

DETROIT — Detroit Restaurants to Post Placards Showing Food Safety Compliance

As the city gears up in requiring Detroit restaurants to post their food safety compliance grades under a new ordinance, the city health department wants to remind business owners of health and hygiene regulations to prevent violations and illnesses.

LOS ANGELES — LAHSA Reports Small Drop in Homeless Population

After a 10% jump in 2023, Los Angeles saw a 2.2% drop in its homeless population this year. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) estimates that the city of L.A. has about 45,252 homeless people, based on a count it conducted over three days in January.

NEW YORK — Proposed Cell Phone Ban in NYC Public Schools

In an effort to curb children's addiction to their cell phones, Mayor Eric Adams and the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools David Banks, announced a plan to ban cell phone usage in public schools starting in January.

PHILADELPHIA — Severely Limited Psychiatric Treatment Options Available for City Youth

With only sixty certified psychiatrists serving the Philadelphia metropolitan area, providers fear that the City lacks the necessary tools to address the growing nationwide mental health crisis within its own borders.

PHILADELPHIA — Mayor Parker Bans Bump Stocks

In response to a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that lifted a federal ban on rapid-fire gun devices and switches, known as bump stocks, Mayor Cherelle Parker swiftly enacted local legislation prohibiting the firearm applications in Philadelphia.

RICHMOND — Clear Backpacks Required for All Public School Students

The Richmond City School Board approved a clear backpack mandate for all students attending Richmond Public Schools. The rule will take effect this summer.

SEATTLE — Mayor Harrell Plans to Expand Alternative Response Department

Mayor Bruce Harrell announced his proposal to expand Seattle's Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Department to increase the number of first responders who are not law enforcement.

Real Estate Development

BOSTON — Office Space Conversion Program Receives Funding Boost

Governor Healey and Mayor Michelle Wu announced that the state has allotted \$15 million to convert unused office space into affordable housing in downtown Boston.

LOS ANGELES — L.A.'s Latest Homeless Housing Project Opens in Skid Row

The biggest homeless housing project so far in Los Angeles celebrated its grand opening last month, with elected officials and homeless services providers expressing hope that it will help improve and transform Skid Row, the epicenter of the region's homelessness crisis.

Taxes & Spending

BALTIMORE — Mayor Scott Signs \$4B budget; Taxpayer Watchdog Raises Federal Funding Cliff Concerns

Mayor Scott approved the city's \$4 billion budget, which includes provisions for various municipal expenditures. However, concerns have been raised by a taxpayer watchdog group regarding potential challenges related to federal funding in the future.

CHICAGO — Long-Awaited Revenue Hearing Yields Few Answers on Potential New Taxes

By the end of a long-awaited City Council Subcommittee on Revenue hearing, aldermen left City Hall with few answers on how additional funds might be raised. Instead, the early discussions centered mostly around municipal finance basics.

CHICAGO — Mayor Johnson, OMB Announce 2025 Budget Engagement Round Tables

Mayor Johnson and the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) announced the dates and locations for the City's annual Budget Engagement Round Tables, where residents and community leaders will be invited to share their budget priorities and engage in conversations with the Mayor, Budget Director, and City department leaders on key programs.

MINNEAPOLIS — City Council Delays Vote on Police Contract

The Minneapolis City Council announced that it will delay a vote on the City's police contract to allow more time for public comment.

NEW YORK — FY25 Budget Announcement

Mayor Adams and City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams signed the FY25 budget, restoring funding for the City's public libraries, art institutions, and preschool programs, as well as providing funding for new housing construction.

RICHMOND — City Library to Provide Assistance to Tenants Facing Eviction

Richmond's public library and the Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC) will partner to equip renters who face eviction with defense guidance. The public library will essentially act as an intermediary stepping stone, connecting tenants with the necessary information from VPLC.

SEATTLE — Utility Rates Set to Increase Amid Construction

Seattle Public Utilities proposed an increase in utility rates by 4.7% per year until 2030, as costs grow for the construction of a new storage tunnel and pump station.

ST. PAUL — St. Paul Public Schools Approves \$1B 2025 Budget

The budget, which passed in a 6-1 vote, includes more than \$707.5 million in general fund expenses, nearly \$114.6 million less than last year due to the expiration of the American Rescue Plan federal funding, according to district officials.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — City Council Approves Reparations Task Force

The D.C. City Council approved a task force that will study how reparations payments could be made to families that were affected by Jim Crow laws or the institution of slavery. Funding for the task force was included in the City's \$21 billion budget.

Transportation & Mobility

CHICAGO — Chicago Has 5th Worst Traffic in the World

Evening rush hours on the Dan Ryan and Stevenson Expressways were among the most congested commutes in the country last year, according to the study. The typical Chicago-area driver lost 96 hours in traffic last year.

LOS ANGELES — Ports of L.A., Long Beach Agree to Invest in Truck Charging Infrastructure

The Los Angeles and Long Beach harbor commissions voted last week to collectively provide \$25 million in a partnership with regional air quality agencies to jump-start charging infrastructure for electric heavy-duty drayage trucks.

MINNEAPOLIS — Metro Transit's Rapid Bus Lines Seeing Record Ridership

Ridership on Metro Transit's buses and trains is up 11% this year compared to last year at this time, with record numbers of trips taken on the agency's rapid bus lines fueling the growth.

MINNEAPOLIS — Minneapolis Named Best U.S. City for Biking

Minneapolis, Seattle, and San Francisco topped PeopleForBikes' list of best large cities for bicycling in 2024.

NEW YORK — MTA Votes to Delay Congestion Pricing

Following Governor Kathy Hochul's announcement that halted congestion pricing, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) voted 10-1 to delay the program. The MTA now faces a budget shortfall of \$16.5 billion.

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia Tops List of Most Walkable U.S. Cities

A panel of travel experts voted on a list of the most walkable cities in America, with Philadelphia taking the top spot for the second year in a row.

SAN DIEGO — Transportation Projects Win \$15M in Federal Funding

The federal funds will help upgrade the Port of San Diego's 10th Avenue Marine Terminal to improve its cargo business — and enable the North County Transit District to eventually increase frequency on the eastern portion of the Sprinter light rail.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — D.C. to Receive New \$25M Trail

D.C. received a \$25 million federal infrastructure grant to build a 1.8-mile trail connecting Fort Lincoln to the increasingly popular Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.
