

## Cozen Cities - November 6, 2024

### Gig Economy & Technology

#### PHILADELPHIA — City Council Moves to Ban AI Rent “Price-Fixing”

The Philadelphia City Council advanced legislation that would empower the City to sue landlords for alleged “price-fixing” of rental rates, particularly targeting the use of AI algorithms that may artificially inflate housing costs and negatively impact low-income tenants.

#### SAN DIEGO — City Leaders Propose Ban on AI Rent Pricing

San Diego leaders and housing advocates proposed a law to ban landlords from using AI technology to set rental prices, arguing it leads to unfair price manipulation that negatively impacts vulnerable renters.

### Labor & Employment

#### BOSTON — Hotel Workers End Strike

After a 24-day strike, more than 760 UNITE HERE Local 26 hotel workers from four Hilton properties in Boston — including the Hilton Boston Logan Airport and Hilton Boston Park Plaza — ratified a new contract and returned to work.

#### CHICAGO — City Workers Contract in Balance as Unions Spar, Point Fingers at City

Two unions representing two sets of Chicago city workers, who are bargaining their contracts jointly, are accusing each other and the City of playing politics and failing to hold up to their ends of the deal.

#### WASHINGTON, D.C. — D.C. Council Votes to Compensate Circulator Workers with Bus Sale Proceeds

The D.C. Council voted unanimously to use proceeds from the sale of Circulator buses to compensate workers affected by the service’s termination, overriding Mayor Muriel Bowser’s veto.

### Policy & Politics

#### BALTIMORE — Voters Decide on Harborplace Redevelopment, Police Control, City Council Resizing

On Tuesday, Baltimore City voters decided on several local ballot measures, voting to approve a proposal to allow residential development at Harborplace and transfer of control of the police department to the City, while rejecting a proposal to reduce the size of the City Council from 14 to eight seats.

#### CHICAGO — Embattled Chicago School Board President Resigns Over Social Media Posts

Reverend Mitchell Johnson, who was appointed to lead the Chicago Board of Education earlier this month, resigned amid revelations of antisemitic and misogynistic social media posts.

#### MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL — Mayor Unveils Long-Term Plan to Revitalize Downtown



Rose Christ

Co-Chair, New York Practice, Cozen O’Connor Public Strategies

rchrist@cozen.com  
Phone: (212) 883-2248  
Fax: (646) 880-3654



John F. Dunn

Member

jdunn@cozen.com  
Phone: (312) 382-3165  
Fax: (312) 382-8910



Joseph Hill

Managing Director, Cozen O’Connor Public Strategies

jhill@cozen.com  
Phone: (215) 665-2065  
Fax: (215) 665-2013



Katie Schwab

Co-Chair, New York Practice, Cozen O’Connor Public Strategies

kschwab@cozen.com  
Phone: (212) 883-4913  
Fax: (646) 880-3652

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey unveiled a list of strategies aimed at revitalizing downtown, but the City's 18-page plan indicates that determining the future of hallmark corridors and neighborhoods will likely take several years and millions of dollars.

#### **NEW YORK CITY – Judge Dismisses Mayor's Call to Investigate Probe Leaks**

A judge dismissed New York Mayor Eric Adams' claim that federal agents leaked grand jury information prior to his indictment, stating his lawyers provided no evidence of illegal leaks in media coverage of the corruption investigation.

#### **RICHMOND – City Electoral Board Chair Urges Action on Campaign Finance Oversight**

The Richmond Electoral Board chair is urging the City's top election official to address concerns over the accuracy of campaign finance reports filed by 6th District City Council candidate Tavares Floyd, as some reported donors deny having made contributions.

#### **SAN DIEGO – City Council Rejects Mayor's Proposed City Boards, Commissions Restrictions**

The San Diego City Council adopted a new code of conduct for its boards and commissions after rejecting a more restrictive proposal from Mayor Todd Gloria, which aimed to limit members' public criticisms and oversight of their communications with the press.

#### **SEATTLE – Former Police Chief Sues City for Discrimination**

Former Seattle police Chief Adrian Diaz filed a \$10 million tort claim against the City and its leaders alleging wrongful discharge and discrimination related to his sexual orientation and refusal to engage in illegal activities. Mayor Bruce Harrell's spokesperson denied the allegations.

#### **WASHINGTON, D.C. – Voters Approve Adoption of Ranked-Choice Voting, Open Primaries**

On Tuesday, D.C. voters decided to adopt ranked-choice voting and open primary elections to independents, a significant potential change for the City's electoral system 50 years after home rule.

### **Public Health & Safety**

#### **BALTIMORE – Surveillance Safeguards Bill Fails to Advance in City Council**

The Baltimore City Council chose not to advance a bill aimed at implementing safeguards for surveillance practices due to insufficient support.

#### **DETROIT – EPA Grants Port of Detroit \$22M for New Pollution-Cutting Equipment**

The Port of Detroit will receive nearly \$22 million for new pollution-cutting equipment thanks to a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Ports Program, which is aimed at improving air quality at ports throughout the country.

#### **SEATTLE – City Approves Overdose Medication for EMTs**

This month, Seattle becomes the first U.S. city where emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and firefighters are permitted to administer buprenorphine to people experiencing fentanyl overdoses. The new protocol aims to provide faster, potentially life-saving treatment.

#### **WASHINGTON, D.C. – D.C. Council Investigates Violence Intervention Grants**

The D.C. Council is examining the oversight of violence intervention programs amid allegations that Councilmember Trayon White Sr. (Ward 8) accepted bribes in exchange for extending an associate's violence-intervention contracts with the Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement (ONSE). A recent review found no evidence of misconduct within ONSE.

## Real Estate Development

### **DETROIT – City Council Approves Ordinances to Boost Affordable Housing, Rental Compliance**

The Detroit City Council unanimously passed an ordinance that backers say will spur more affordable housing development in the city.

### **LOS ANGELES – City Council Expands Eviction Protections to Rental Units Being Remodeled**

The Los Angeles City Council approved a motion aimed at preventing evictions as a result of a substantial remodeling effort to the housing unit.

### **NEW YORK CITY – City Council Proposes Alternative Housing Plan**

Last week, New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams (District 28) and members unveiled “City for All,” an inclusive housing plan aimed at addressing diverse housing challenges through affordability, tenant protections, and infrastructure investments. The plan is a response to Mayor Adams’ “City of Yes” zoning reform proposal.

### **PHILADELPHIA – City Council Advances Sixers Arena Legislation**

The Philadelphia City Council has begun the intricate legislative process to approve the development and construction of a new Center City arena for the Philadelphia 76ers.

## Taxes & Spending

### **BALTIMORE – City Council Advances Proposal to Raise Taxes on Vacant Properties**

The Baltimore City Council advanced a proposal to impose a significantly higher property tax rate on vacant properties, which could take effect by July 2026, following state approval earlier this year.

### **BOSTON – City Council Approves Property Tax Plan**

The Boston City Council approved a three-year plan to increase the commercial property tax rate, aiming to prevent a significant rise in residential property taxes anticipated in January. Mayor Michelle Wu advocated for this measure to maintain municipal services and mitigate the tax burden on homeowners.

### **CHICAGO – Mayor Johnson Unveils \$17.3B City Budget, Proposes Steep Property Tax Increase**

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson is breaking a campaign promise not to raise property taxes by proposing a \$300 million increase to deal with an expected shortfall next year of nearly \$1 billion.

### **RICHMOND – City Council Postpones Vote on Real Estate Tax Plan Until Mid-November**

The Richmond City Council has postponed its vote on a new real estate tax plan until mid-November, which includes proposals to reduce the tax rate or implement a rebate program.

### **SEATTLE – Historic Property Tax Increase on the Ballot**

Seattle voters approved Proposition 1, an eight-year property tax increase starting in 2025, to fund transportation projects, including safety upgrades, bridge maintenance, transit improvements, and pollution reduction efforts.

## Transportation & Mobility

### **MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL – Metro Transit Could Lower Fares for Most Buses, Trains**

Metro Transit is considering lowering fares for most buses and trains in an effort to simplify its

payment system and attract more riders to the Twin Cities' public transit system. If implemented, it would be the first fare change in seven years. Metro Transit will also be extending the \$505 million Gold Line bus rapid transit project to downtown Minneapolis in 2027.

#### **NEW YORK CITY — Port Authority Wins Federal Funding to Electrify Ports**

The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey secured \$344 million in federal funding to electrify its port infrastructure, aiming for net-zero emissions by 2050 through zero-emission equipment and shore power.

#### **PHILADELPHIA — City Bans Vehicles from Stopping in Bike Lanes**

The Philadelphia City Council passed a measure making it illegal for drivers to stop in bike lanes, imposing fines of \$125 in Center City and \$75 elsewhere, in response to growing concerns over traffic safety and recent fatal accidents involving cyclists.

#### **RICHMOND — Mayoral Candidates Outline Plans for Safer Roads, Expanded Transit**

The five candidates running to succeed Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney have each proposed different initiatives to improve transit safety and make the city more sustainable, including expanding bus services and developing safer infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

#### **WASHINGTON, D.C. — Metro Considers New Funding Model Amid High Bus Fare Evasion Rates**

Metro leaders are considering a new funding model that would give jurisdictions credit for paid ridership while subsidizing unpaid riders. Approximately 70% of D.C.-area bus riders do not pay fares.

---