

Cities want a second shot at Amazon

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USA TODAY

After Amazon canceled plans for a second headquarters in New York City, other cities are making public attempts to get a slice of the tech giant pie.

Last week, Amazon said it would no longer pursue its HQ2 in New York amid local political opposition. The move came after reports that Amazon was re-evaluating its decision last year to put one of its two new headquarters in Long Island City in Queens.

The huge online retailer said in a statement that it did “not intend to re-open the HQ2 search at this time.” But that hasn’t stopped cities and states from giving an old college try.

Here are some of the areas that have reached out to Amazon:

Newark, New Jersey

As one of the 20 finalists for Amazon’s HQ2, Newark has received a lot of attention after Amazon’s cancellation plans. Both Newark and New Jersey officials have issued statements on potential investment from the tech giant.

“After learning of the decision to pull out of their chosen HQ2 location, I contacted Amazon and city of Newark stakeholders directly, continuing a constant dialogue that predates my time as governor,” Gov. Phil Murphy said in a statement to NorthJersey.com. “New Jersey is open for business, and now more than ever, Newark is the clear choice as the next presence for Amazon corporate offices. Amazon now has the opportunity to join in Newark’s story of a city on the rise.”

With the headquarters for Audible, an Amazon company, in Newark, some have argued that the city would make a good location for Amazon to establish a hub. Mayor Ras Baraka said his community “has been, and will continue to be, engaged” with Amazon.

“Given the city and state’s assets – a strong talent pipeline, a diverse tech base, unmatched infrastructure and a highly accessible location – we are well poised to accommodate Amazon should they want to relocate New York City’s portion of HQ2, in whole or part,”



Amazon last week decided to cancel its new headquarters in Long Island City in Queens, New York. DON EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Baraka told NorthJersey.com.

Bakara’s office did not respond to a request for comment.

Miami

Like Newark, Miami was a finalist in Amazon’s HQ2 extravaganza. Mayor Carlos Gimenez is again pitching South Florida as a viable destination.

“I understand that Amazon has decided not to pursue an additional headquarters at this time,” Gimenez wrote to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos. “However, I would be remiss if I didn’t take this opportunity to reopen the lines of communication because Miami, without a doubt, has the talent, technology and low taxes to serve Amazon’s needs.”

Gimenez also invited Bezos, and Amazon to come back down to Miami “to discuss how Amazon and Miami can continue to grow together,” he wrote in the letter.

Gimenez’s office declined to comment beyond the letter.

Chicago

Another one of Amazon’s HQ2 finalists, Chicago also has tried to court the tech behemoth.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker jumped at the chance

to try to persuade Amazon, writing a letter to the company on why it should reconsider Chicago.

“You should take another look at Chicago,” said the letter, obtained by the Chicago Tribune. “We will be happy to bring you back.”

Emanuel’s office did not respond to a request for comment.

Warren, Michigan

Warren was not a finalist for Amazon’s HQ2 search process – but that didn’t stop Mayor Jim Fouts from reaching out to the tech giant.

After watching the news of Amazon’s decision, Fouts had “off-the-cuff inspiration” to write the company a letter.

“If you’re going to move out of New York City, and that means they can go anywhere ... I said, ‘Why not Warren?’” Fouts told USA TODAY. “So I got on my Facebook and wrote down why I thought Warren would be good.”

Fouts tried to persuade Amazon with several of Warren’s attributes, such as its population of highly skilled workers who have been laid off by General Motors and its success at bringing the Cadillac world headquarters.

“Amazon, please consider dynamic Warren as your headquarters!” Fouts wrote. “You will not be disappointed!”

West Palm Beach, Florida

West Palm Beach originally had submitted a joint bid for Amazon’s HQ2 with Miami and Broward County. Outside of appealing to Amazon, West Palm Beach has been conducting a campaign in the northeast to attract businesses to the area, said Mayor Jeri Muoio.

Muoio said she wrote a letter to Bezos to “remind him that we’re here, and we have a lot of great things to offer,” she told USA TODAY.

“Recently dubbed ‘The Wall Street of the South’ by Newsweek, West Palm Beach has been quietly attracting businesses from New York City and the Northeast over the last few years,” the letter reads.

Localities in New York

Despite New York City losing Amazon, other parts of the state have reached out to the tech giant.

Rockland County Executive Ed Day wrote a letter to Bezos along with the Town of Haverstraw, the Town of Orangetown, the Town of Ramapo and the Village of Suffern to express interest.

“We are confident that we can offer all that is needed by Amazon; including airports in adjoining counties, a business-friendly environment and a multitude of transportation and infrastructure options,” the letter reads. “We previously applied as part of your HQ2 selection process and feel we offer a ‘Prime’ location near New York City but with room for development.”

Though Day is aware Amazon has said it will not be selecting a new HQ2 location, “we have also seen just how quickly plans can change,” John Lyon, Day’s spokesman, told USA TODAY.

Rochester also plans to try to impress Amazon. In 2017, Rochester submitted a joint application with Buffalo to become the destination for Amazon’s HQ2.

“We are going to try our best to make a second pitch,” Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren told the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.

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