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Philly and neighbors among 238 entrants in race for Amazon's HQ2



Artist's rendering of part of the uCity Square complex being developed in University City, one of the sites pitched in Philadelphia's proposal to Amazon.



by **Jacob Adelman**, Staff Writer - October 23, 2017

Philadelphia and some of its neighbors are among 238 cities and regions across North America that are bidding to become home to Amazon's planned second headquarters campus, according to a tally posted on the company's website Monday.

Proposals to host Amazon.com Inc.'s new corporate home came from 54 states, provinces, districts, and territories across the continent, it said. Bids originated from all but six U.S. states (Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Arkansas), according to an accompanying map.

The tally was released four days after Amazon's Oct. 19 deadline for responses to its request for proposals to accommodate the company's expansion beyond its native Seattle. Locally, bids came from Philadelphia, Delaware County, Camden County, and the state of Delaware. Bensalem and Bristol Townships in Bucks County also each submitted a proposal

Amazon's headquarters-search team will review each of the proposals in the coming months, company spokesman Adam Sedo wrote in an email.

John Boyd, a Princeton-based location consultant, said the large volume of applications received by Amazon is a result of many bids coming from single metropolitan areas, such as the Philadelphia region.

Boston and its near neighbors in Massachusetts and elsewhere in New England also submitted separate pitches, as did municipalities in the New York City metro and San Francisco Bay areas.

Amazon had asked for one response per metropolitan region as part of its original request, in which it outlined its plan to employ 50,000 skilled workers at the second headquarters campus, nicknamed HQ2. The plans call for spending \$5 billion to develop millions of square feet of office space.

"At the outset of this process, Amazon certainly had a select group of cities they felt would show the most promise," said Boyd, whose company has helped Boeing Co., PepsiCo Inc., and others with site searches. "Now they have 238."

Boyd said that Amazon would probably generate a short list of 10 to 15 serious contenders for the new headquarters and that company officials would in coming months begin making in-person visits to specific sites. He predicted that Philadelphia would make the company's short list.

Philadelphia's pitch revolves around the Schuylkill Yards and uCity Square developments in West Philadelphia, and South Philadelphia's Navy Yard.

Camden County has a Delaware River waterfront site in mind for the retail giant, and Delaware has proposed a block of properties along Wilmington's South Market Street, a former steel mill in the New Castle County town of Claymont, and a business park in Fairfax.

Delaware County and Chester City, and Bensalem and Bristol Townships were also offering up stretches of their waterfronts for the retail behemoth.

If any of those sites makes Amazon's initial cut, local boosters will go out of their way to make sure the company gets a broad look at the overall region, said Matt Cabrey, executive director of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce's business-retention affiliate, Select Greater Philadelphia.

"When the Amazon team names Greater Philadelphia as one of their short-listed regions, we will host them as a unified community," he said.

Boyd said he did not expect Amazon to look any less favorably upon metro regions such as Philadelphia that submitted multiple bids.

"Amazon can walk and chew gum at the same time," he said. "They'll sort this out."