

Does Greensboro have a shot at Amazon's \$5B second HQ?

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Greensboro has joined the growing list of cities that want to be the new home for Amazon's proposed \$5 billion second headquarters that could employ up to 50,000 people.

On Thursday, Mayor Nancy Vaughn confirmed to Fox8 that the city had made its application in response to Amazon's public solicitation for North American sites that could house an initial facility of 500,000 square feet with a second phase of about 8 million square feet.

Charlotte and Raleigh are also among the dozen or more metro areas that are jockeying to land the new headquarters.

Asked Thursday about the likelihood of North Carolina being a viable suitor for Amazon, Gov. Roy Cooper cited "confidentiality" but added, "I guarantee you we are working for every opportunity."



Rebecca Troyer, Editor-in-chief, Triad Business Journal

Amazon's Seattle campus houses 40,000 employees and includes 33 buildings and 24 restaurants and cafes.

To replicate such a facility, Amazon needs both infrastructure and a ready workforce.

John Boyd, a site consultant with New Jersey-based **The Boyd Company** told Triad Business Journal's sister market in the Triangle that leading contenders could be Atlanta; Tampa and south Florida; Austin, Texas; Pittsburgh; the Northeast, such as Boston and Jersey City; and even Toronto.

He also noted that "The conventional wisdom is that Raleigh's labor market is a bit small," he says, though he notes those odds are not "insurmountable."

As for the scale of the facility, the 500,000 square feet needed for the facility would be approximately equivalent to the Wells Fargo Tower in Winston-Salem, which at 546,065 square feet is the largest Class A office building in the Triad. With a square-foot price of around \$21.50, Class A space would be far less expensive in the Triad than Atlanta or Boston.

John Schoettler, Amazon's vice president of global real estate and facilities, told the Puget Sound Business Journal that the company owns about half and leases about half of its inventory of 8.5 million square feet as of the end of 2016. In high-rise buildings, Amazon likes to control the restaurants and retail that occupies the ground floors.

He also mentioned Seattle's inclusive culture in an interview with the PSBJ after being honored as an Outstanding Voice in that market.

"I love living and working in a progressive city that's been at the forefront of LGBTQ issues for decades," Schoettler said.

For a company like Amazon that publicly values diversity, has it been long enough since North Carolina repealed the controversial HB2 that brought a dark cloud over the state's economy as it was rebounding from the recession?

The good news is that Amazon has already planted its flag here, including a recently announced, 600-job distribution center in Kannapolis and a wind farm in the eastern part of the state near Elizabeth City.