

Oracle nears deal with Triangle competitor — Nashville



Nashville skyline on Friday evening May 6, 2021.

Martin B. Cherry | Nashville Business Journal



By Lauren Ohnesorge — Senior Staff Writer, Triangle Business Journal - July 7, 2021

Even with the Triangle surging, the market can't win them all. And it appears inevitable that Oracle Corp. will pick Nashville, Tennessee, for a \$1.2 billion office hub that could employ 2,500 workers by the end of 2027 and 6,000 additional workers by the end of 2031.

The Nashville Business Journal reported that executives from Oracle recently visited Nashville to finalize terms, and Oracle is targeting mid-August for the largest jobs announcement in Tennessee history.

But could the Triangle have been a real contender?

Maybe.

In 2019, The Nashville Post identified Raleigh as a candidate for the project too – though state officials in North Carolina never confirmed the rumors.

Since then, the Triangle has had its share of verifiable wins – including Apple and Google.

And with Oracle's presence in Durham, the Triangle would have made sense as a contender. Oracle bought out NetSuite, which bought out Bronto, an email marketing startup founded in Durham by serial entrepreneurs Joe Colopy and Chaz Felix.

Earlier this year, Austin, Texas-based Oracle notified customers it was phasing out the Bronto brand. Employees working on the Bronto platform would be transitioned to other roles within Oracle, a spokeswoman said at the time.

But even before Bronto, Oracle was active in the region. In 2013, Oracle acquired Morrisville communications company Tekelec.

It's unclear how many employees Oracle has in the Triangle. The company didn't immediately respond to a request to comment on its Triangle operation.

John Boyd, principal of The Boyd Co. of Princeton, New Jersey, said such a big project could mean challenges for Nashville, potentially putting Raleigh in line for future wins.

"Many companies will view Oracle's massive presence in that labor market as a recruiting and HR concern," he said, noting congestion and home affordability could also be a challenge for Nashville.

Nashville and the Triangle are frequent competitors. They were both, for example, on the short list for Vancouver-based ElectraMeccanica Vehicles Corp.'s search for its first U.S. assembly plant – a project that ended up in Arizona. Raleigh-based Pendo considered Nashville before picking Raleigh for its 590-job expansion. So did Ipreo for its last 250-job expansion.

But Nashville has scored some major wins, too, including a 5,000-job Amazon operations hub and AllianceBernstein, an investment research firm.

In North Carolina, officials decline to comment on whether North Carolina is under consideration for a particular project. But once the firm officially makes a pick, that information can be released, per North Carolina Department of Commerce practice.

And even if the Triangle was a serious candidate, it appears Oracle had zeroed in on Nashville from the start, with the first reports surfacing on the project two years ago.