



Site-selection consultant: Amazon HQ2 is a ‘once-in-a-generation opportunity’

John Boyd's consulting firm, based out of Princeton, N.J., has advised companies like PNC Bank and AT&T on where to set up shop. How's he liking Philly for the massive project?

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Part of Amazon's Seattle campus. (Photo by Jordan Stead for Amazon)

As Amazon continues its wide-ranging selection process for a new, 50,000-employee headquarters, consultant John Boyd has had a busy week. The head of **The Boyd Company**, a Princeton N.J.-based firm that helps companies like **AT&T**, **Boeing** and **PNC Bank** pick the most ideal sites for their offices, has given statements to the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Baltimore Sun* — and the list goes on.

Take a wild guess what the outlets have been asking him about. That's right: Boyd has been riffing over an array of metros as possible sites of Amazon's HQ2 project: South Florida, Atlanta, North Carolina's Triangle Park. Boyd stresses he's mentioned Pittsburgh and Philly as prime contenders to the media thought it hasn't been included.

"This is 'the' project," Boyd told **Technical.ly** of HQ2, which another expert suggests might fit on the north end of Philly's Callowhill area. "It's a once-in-a-generation opportunity."

The idea of a second North America HQ that would be equal to the original is unusual, Boyd said, but that speaks to the vast growth Amazon has experienced in a relatively short time span.

In Philly, the possibility of a massive Amazon corporate campus in the City of Brotherly Love so far harvested mostly positive reaction, starting with local government which is unsurprisingly pro. *Daily News* columnist **Will Bunch** came out hard against the possibility in an op-ed, whereas the outlet's editorial board made a call for Philly pols to remain "clear-eyed" in a hypothetical negotiation with **Jeff Bezos'** corporate giant.

Through a more objective lense, Boyd starts to go through the shopping list.

"[Philly] fits a lot of the criteria in terms of what Amazon needs: strong university presence, strong skill set in the workforce, a public transit system and proximity to New York and Washington," the consultant said. "Philly also has enough land and a myriad of attractive options for Amazon, like 46th and Market and the Navy Yard. Also, the North Station District, which has a low cost profile and a lot of warehouses available."

What's the counterpoint? Consider the wage tax, Boyd said, and the cost of doing business and a regulatory environment that is less favorable than towns like Atlanta.

"A common denominators [behind successful pitches] is cities that have a mayor and governor that are proactive," said Boyd. "In recent days we saw Senator **[Bob] Casey** on how Pennsylvania would be a smart choice for Amazon. Mayor **[Jim] Kenney** was also been working to put together the case for Philly. That's what you want to see."



Roberto Torres became Technical.ly Lead Philly Reporter in May 2016. Prior, he was a freelance contributor to Technical.ly and Al Dia News. The native Venezuelan moved to Philadelphia in 2015 after reporting on research at his alma mater, the University of Zulia. Whenever he's not fencing deadlines, he can be found standing in line at Overbrook Pizza in West Philly, running Netflix/Hulu marathons with his wife or reading news from Venezuela.