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Pittsburgh has yet to get a second look from Amazon.

While the online retailer reportedly has paid second visits to Chicago, New York, Newark, and Miami in its hunt for a second headquarters, it has not returned to the Steel City, Mayor Bill Peduto said Tuesday. "There hasn't been any contact with Amazon, nor has there been any request by Amazon to meet with any city officials," Mr. Peduto told reporters.

In fact, the mayor said the last contact anyone has had with Amazon regarding HQ2 was in the spring, when the company visited potential sites, including the Strip District, Hazelwood Green in Hazelwood, and the former Civic Arena property in the lower Hill District. Site selection experts differ on just what that means for Pittsburgh's chances of landing HQ2, as Amazon moves into the stretch run of its search, with an announcement expected by the end of the year.

To Tom Stringer, a managing director at professional services firm BDO's New York office, it does not bode well. Those cities getting second dates, additional questions, or even visits by Amazon board members, as Washington D.C. did, probably are "much higher on the list" of potential winners than those that don't, he said. "I would think it's probably more beneficial for locations getting second visits," Mr. Stringer said.

But John Boyd, principal of The Boyd Co., a Princeton, N.J.-based site selection consultant, doesn't give much weight to the return visits — or

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the lack of one in the case of Pittsburgh. "I would not panic about that. Clearly you'd like to hear news of repeat visits. However, given Amazon's large presence in Western Pennsylvania, it's very likely they have all of the information they need already," he said. That local presence includes a tech hub at SouthSide Works, where more than 80 engineers are employed, and a sortation center in the city's Fairywood neighborhood.

In Chicago, Amazon paid a second visit to a 62-acre site along the Chicago River, according to the Chicago Tribune. In Miami, where Amazon CEO and founder Jeff Bezos attended high school, it toured the Park West and Overtown area, site of the Miami Innovation District and Miami Worldcenter, based on media reports. Mr. Boyd believes too much is being made of the visits, saying they may not be accurate barometers of the company's thinking. He would not dismiss Pittsburgh as an also-ran at this point. "No way. That would be foolish. This thing could go anywhere. Every day, I hear a rumor from someone that turns out to be complete nonsense," he said.

For the moment, the odds-on favorite to land HQ2 — and the 50,000 jobs and \$5 billion in investment Amazon is promising as part of it — appears to be northern Virginia. There are good reasons for that. It is close to Washington D.C. and the lawmakers and federal regulators who will be playing more and more of a role in Amazon's growing empire. Mr. Bezos owns the Washington Post and a mansion in the D.C. area. Mr. Stringer said that Northern Virginia has been his choice from the start because it "hit a lot of their business needs."

But Mr. Boyd doesn't see it as a lock. He is leaning more and more toward Newark, particularly in the context of social impact. Of the 20 finalists for HQ2, as the second headquarters has been dubbed, Newark, he said, is the poorest in terms of median income and has the highest poverty rate. Locating HQ2 there would give Amazon, which recently raised the minimum wage for all U.S. workers to \$15 an hour effective Nov. 1, a chance to make a statement — and perhaps curry favor with lawmakers and the public.

A year ago, the key drivers involving HQ2 were talent, transportation, and housing. "Now the big theme is this idea of social impact. When Amazon makes this decision, it's going to have to explain and put into context why it needs billions of dollars in incentives," he said. New Jersey is offering \$7 billion in subsidies to land Amazon. Of the publicly known bids, it is exceeded only by Maryland, which is dangling \$8.5 billion in incentives.

Pennsylvania is believed to have offered at least \$1 billion, although that has not been publicly disclosed. In fact, the Commonwealth, Pittsburgh and Allegheny County have gone to court to block the release of incentive details and the region's HQ2 bid after the state Office of Open Records ruled that they were public records.

As part of the local case, the city and county [**recently sent a private letter**](#) to Common Pleas Senior Judge W. Terrence O'Brien asking that details on incentives and real estate sites related to the second headquarters be kept secret even if he orders the release of the region's bid as part of a right-to-know appeal. The attorney for WTAE-TV, which is fighting for the release of the proposal, blasted the tactic, accusing the city and county of improperly communicating with the

judge and of trying to change their legal stance at the last minute. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette also has won a ruling before the state open records office on the HQ2 proposal that the city appealed to Common Pleas Court.

Mr. Peduto characterized the letter as “more a misinterpretation that was done either by our attorney or their attorney misinterpreting what the judge was asking for.” “I don’t think that there was any intent to be malicious on this. We basically are just trying to make the point of why it is necessary to keep certain parts of this private,” he said.

The mayor vowed not to back down on that point until Amazon has made a decision. Then, he said, the proposal would be made public. “I do believe that there is a warranted reason that we are trying to keep the information private, because we are in a competition with 19 other cities and there is a reason why the 19 other cities have also decided not to turn their cards over. They’re in a competition with us,” he said. —
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette; [see the P-G’s related editorial](#)

Verizon Communications Inc. added to its pool of wireless phone subscribers in the third quarter while pressing forward with its bet that it is better to focus on building a faster network than trying to own the content that flows through it.

The largest U.S. wireless carrier by subscribers added a net 295,000 new phone connections during the period, after adding a net 199,000 of those customers in the prior quarter. Revenue from Verizon’s wireless unit—its largest—grew, but the carrier reported declines in its wireline and Oath media and advertising businesses. It also acknowledged that it is unlikely to meet longer-term targets set for Oath, whose former leader Tim Armstrong [recently stepped aside](#).

Verizon has put building a faster, 5G network at the center of its long-term strategy. Meanwhile, it faces intense competition for subscribers in a saturated wireless market. To woo customers who pay for unlimited data plans, the company has promoted its mix-and-match plans, which allow customers to select from three unlimited packages. In August, it began offering customers on unlimited plans six months of free access to Apple Inc.’s music-streaming service.

Verizon topped some Wall Street estimates of its phone subscriber growth. Wells Fargo analysts expected the carrier to add a net 200,000 postpaid phone subscribers during the quarter. Shares rose 4% in Tuesday afternoon trading, even as the broader stock market tumbled. Verizon shares, at \$57.06, are trading near their highest levels since 2000. Verizon had 116.8 million wireless connections at the end of September, compared with 116.5 million at the end of June. It is the first major U.S. carrier to report quarterly results. Rival AT&T Inc. is slated to update investors on Wednesday.

Quarterly revenue in the Oath business, which houses AOL, Yahoo and other brands, was \$1.8 billion in the third quarter, down about 7% from the same period a year earlier. Last quarter, executives faced questions from analysts about when that unit would post revenue growth, and on Tuesday Verizon acknowledged that core parts of Oath’s business—search and desktop usage—are under pressure and that it is struggling to meet performance targets.

Verizon said Tuesday the unit's revenue is likely to be "flat in the near term", adding that it doesn't expect to meet its stated goal of Oath generating \$10 billion in revenue by 2020. Chief Financial Officer Matt Ellis said the business is focusing on news, finance, sports and entertainment content viewed on mobile devices. "When we do that, we'll be able to increase the monetization that comes through the ad technology" Oath owns, he said in an interview. In all, net income attributable to Verizon was \$4.92 billion, up from \$3.62 billion a year earlier. Revenue rose 2.8% to \$32.6 billion.

Verizon and other carriers have turned to gadgets such as smartwatches and connected vehicles to boost revenue. The company said it added 300,000 connections for smartwatches, connected vehicles and other gadgets, while losing 80,000 tablet connections. Verizon's primary focus is on so-called postpaid customers who pay their bill at the end of the month under long-term contracts and are seen by carriers as valuable because they provide a stable source of revenue.

In its landline business, Verizon added 54,000 home broadband connections during the third quarter and lost 63,000 Fios video customers, continuing to suffer from customer preferences shifting toward streaming video, rather than traditional cable television. Hans Vestberg became Verizon's new chief executive, partway through the quarter, succeeding Lowell McAdam on Aug. 1.

Since then, the company has begun installing its in-home, 5G broadband service to a small subset of its customers. As part of its cost-cutting efforts, it has offered voluntary severance packages to more than 40,000 workers and signed a \$700 million outsourcing agreement with Indian firm Infosys Ltd. Verizon said it was too early to quantify how much the severance packages would cost the firm during the fourth quarter or the savings the reduced headcount would deliver in 2019.

Verizon has also taken steps to add to its network infrastructure, applying to bid in the Federal Communications Commission's upcoming millimeter-wave auctions. Mr. Ellis said the firm was open to deals, but the carrier is "focused on running the business we have. We think most of the opportunities in front of us are ones we can develop ourselves.' – *Wall Street Journal*

Vice President Mike Pence touches down in the Keystone State on Wednesday where he'll campaign for a trio of Republican congressional candidates. President Donald Trump's second-in-command starts his day in northeastern Pennsylvania, with a bounce at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport, where he'll plug the case for 8th District GOP hopeful John Chrin.

[Chrin is challenging incumbent Democratic U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright](#). From there, Pence continues to Lancaster County with a 2 p.m. stop at Lancaster Airport in Littitz, Pa., where he'll campaign for U.S. Reps. Lloyd Smucker and Scott Perry. [Smucker, R-11th District, faces Democrat Jess King](#) on the fall ballot. [Perry, R-10th District, faces Democrat George Scott](#) in a race that's become a must-watch contest. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. If you want to go to the Lancaster event, [you can RSVP here](#). – *pennlive.com*



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