

Scores protest against new Amazon HQ in Queens, NY

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Critics fear Amazon's arrival in Queens will accelerate gentrification in a city where affordable housing is increasingly rare and have questioned the tax breaks offered to the online giant

Around 100 people on Wednesday protested against Amazon's impending arrival in New York's borough of Queens, condemning \$3

billion in tax breaks and incentives, and worried ordinary families will be pushed out by gentrification.

The online retail giant announced on Tuesday that it had selected Long Island City and Crystal City, just outside Washington, for two new headquarters that will each hire 25,000 people.

While New York's Democratic state governor and mayor are delighted, critics fear it will accelerate gentrification in a city where affordable housing is increasingly rare and have questioned the size of the [tax breaks](#) offered to a company headed by the richest man in the world, Jeff Bezos.

According to New York officials the combined incentives offered for the Queens site total nearly \$3 billion, including both direct grants and tax breaks and commitments to improvements related to the project. In Virginia, the package reaches some \$2.5 billion according to The Wall Street Journal.

"I am steaming mad," elected Democrat councilor Jimmy Van Bramer told the rally near the prospective Amazon site on the East River overlooking Manhattan.

"We at the city council are going to be looking at every aspect of this," he said. "We are going to see how we can reengage in a process that we were deliberately excluded from."

New York state senator Mike Gianaris also complained about "secrecy" behind the deal, vowed that opponents would "go to court if we have to" to renegotiate the agreement and demanded a consumer boycott of Amazon.

Angela Tamura, a 47-year-old freelance artist who lives in nearby

Jackson Heights, said she was "very scared" that Queens will no longer be "affordable" but was skeptical about demands for a boycott.

"They have worked themselves into our lives so deeply it's very hard to let go of Amazon," she said.

Shawn Dixon, 35, who works at a nearby barber shop, demanded that the [city](#) and the governor change the terms of the agreement with Amazon and protect small businesses to stop them being pushed out by rising rents.

"I don't know what can happen but that's why we are here today, to properly put pressure on him (Governor Andrew Cuomo) to change it," Dixon said.

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