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New York City Council Members Grilled Amazon Executives Over HQ2 Deal

“When the light shines on this deal, it looks even worse.”

Council Speaker Corey Johnson demanded greater accountability on Amazon’s impact on housing prices, small businesses and infrastructure in New York communities.

“Has anybody asked how this going to affect housing prices? How about small businesses, already reeling from the impact Amazon has on their bottom line? How will this affect our transportation system in an area where its already limited?” (The Guardian, “[Amazon meets public opposition at first hearing for New York headquarters](#),” Edward Helmore, 12.12.18)

Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer called the deal simply “a bad for New York City.”

“The council and the people of the city and state were excluded from knowing any of the details of this deal, and we must now reclaim our rightfully oversight responsibilities,” said council member Jimmy van Bramer. “This is a bad deal. It’s a bad deal for Long Island City, it’s bad for Queens, and it’s bad for New York City.” (CBS 2 New York, “[NYC Council Looking Into Amazon Deal Made Behind Closed Doors](#),” Hazel Sanchez, 12.12.18)

Council Member Brad Lander said Amazon has “no intention of being a good neighbor” as seen in Seattle.

“I am deeply concerned that @amazon has absolutely no intention of being a good neighbor to NYC. After everything they have done in Seattle, how can we possibly believe that Amazon will not continue to abuse its monopoly power & erode our democratic capacity to govern our city?” (Twitter, [@bradlander](#), 12.12.18)

Council Member Jumaane Williams spotlights Amazon’s unwillingness to provide specifics on “cost — financial and otherwise.”

“Amazon is eager to focus on its big promises and hypotheticals, but not on the cost — financial and otherwise.” (Office of Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, [WILLIAMS' STATEMENT ON TODAY'S AMAZON HEARING](#), 12.12.18)

New York City officials were left in the dark as Amazon was busy “negotiating in private” and “signing NDAs.”

“We were brought in at the end of the process,” [New York City Council speaker Corey] Johnson told [Amazon Vice President of Public Policy Brian] Huseman. “The beginning started with negotiating in private, signing NDAs, avoiding the land use process. It doesn’t feel like the beginning of the process to me.” (Metro NYC, “[NYC council members express frustrations at first Amazon hearing on HQ2 in Queens](#),” Kristin Toussaint, 12.12.18)

Hearing showcases Amazon’s commitment to build a helipad for corporate executives “without any promise to improve public transit” in New York City.

“Johnson also ripped Amazon’s plan to build a helipad for its executives without any promise to improve public transit, such as the packed-to-the-gills No. 7 train. “This is like something out of The Onion,” Johnson fumed, referring to the satirical newspaper.

“So yes, [Amazon CEO] Jeff Bezos’ commute is all set. What about the rest of the New Yorkers crammed into the subways every day?”” (The New York Post, “[Corey Johnson: Amazon’s plan to build a helipad at HQ2 is a farce](#),” Rich Calder and Max Jaeger, 12.12.2018)

Amazon executives were “insulting, unacceptable” lack of willingness to show up at future hearings.

“It’s insulting. It’s unacceptable. It’s not how you be a good neighbor,” [New York City Council speaker Corey] Johnson said to [Amazon Vice President of Public Policy Brian] Huseman after pointing out Amazon’s memorandum of understanding says they will attend the hearings. “And I don’t understand the level of tone deafness in trying to give an acute, evasive answer on this.” (CNBC, “[NYC council members and Amazon executives got into a heated debate over the \\$3 billion in incentives offered for HQ2](#)” Lauren Feiner, 12.12.18)

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