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# {r}evolution

James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to  
Nurture Community Leadership

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# Amazon HQ2 drops Detroit

## Statement from Mayor Mike Duggan on Amazon HQ2 announcement

We would have loved to have made it into the next round for Amazon's second headquarters but everyone here is incredibly proud of the proposal we submitted. It showed a clear vision for the future of our city and brought out the very best of our city and our region.

I want to thank Dan Gilbert, the Governor, County Executives, Windsor Mayor Drew Dikens and the entire bid team for an extraordinary effort in a short period of time. We learned a great deal from this process and it was a very valuable experience. We're going to keep building on the progress we've made and keep pursuing major developments. I expect that the lessons we learned in the Amazon process will help make us more successful on a number of other major potential investments that we are currently pursuing.

We're going right back to work today to work on those other projects

In Mayor Duggan's widely circulated response to Detroit being dropped from Amazon's HQ2 shortlist, he states "he's going right back to work." Since he's going back to work, here's **OUR SHORTLIST** of projects the city needs to get on right away:

- **Stop the Water Shutoffs NOW!**
- **Build a Detroit-centric transit system** that works for all.
- **Invest in neighborhoods in ways that support current residents and are welcoming to an economically diverse population.**
- **Build truly affordable housing** that answers real Detroiters needs.
- **Bring living wage jobs** to the city.
- **Invest in the commons;** schools, parks, libraries, and places of culture.



**Protect, Maintain & Empower  
#MajorityBlackDetroit**

## Thinking for Ourselves

Shea Howell

Valued Economy

Last week Detroit received the news that it did not make it on to the short list of cities being considered for the new Amazon headquarters. A total of 238 cities pitched their virtues to Amazon in the hope of becoming the new home of Amazon's second corporate center.

Amazon is the fourth largest company in the world and is planning on investing \$5 billion in the expansion. It asked cities to apply for consideration and said they were interested in education and skills of the workforce, transit and the built environment, and the livability of their communities. It also asked for a list of the tax

incentive programs each municipality would offer.

Reports of the conversation with Amazon said that one of the main factors in their decision was the lack of mass transit in the region. The response from Detroit apparently was that regional highways were able to handle any increased traffic. Such a response shows how much the thinking of our political leadership and business community is still dominated by the single car culture, and how out of step they are with the growing desire, especially of younger people, to be car free and able to have dependable public transport.

But more than the captivation of Detroit by the dying car culture, or the painful reality that almost everything Amazon considered part of a livable community has been defunded by our right wing legislature, the whole spectacle created by these kinds of dehumanizing competitions is repulsive. They erode our sense of what is important and are dangerous to the health of democracy.

The idea that we will rebuild our city by some magic infusion from a single corporation is an illusion. And a dangerous one.

Detroit would be much better off if elected leaders devoted their energies to working to help create local businesses to satisfy local needs. A strong, equitable, sustainable economy requires imaginative rethinking of business practices and economic needs. It requires the kind of thinking that has evolved into the largest urban agricultural center in the country, sparked remarkable cultural and artistic productions, culinary creativity, and ambitious enterprises. These efforts often draw on principles of cooperative economic production and regenerative practices that develop people and our communities as they produce for local needs.

We are well out of the Amazon race. We should be among the first cities to challenge this whole notion of placing communities in competition with each other to offer the biggest tax breaks to attract corporate dollars. Such efforts never work as a develop strategy. Study after study has demonstrated that the net benefit of giant tax breaks never goes to the city that offers them.

A recent [report](#) documenting the futility of these efforts to attract business noted that “When many localities compete to offer incentives for a new business facility, the economic consequences are likely to be perverse for all ... Because the leaders in each locality will offer incentives to avoid sending a discouraging signal about their business climate, everybody jumps into the competition – and the incentives escalate until the firm gets pay-offs equal in value to all of the economic benefits the new firm will create for its lucky home locality.”

These high profile spectacles are degrading distractions to the real business of recreating and redeveloping our economy. Thinking about developing our people, protecting our place, and strengthening our communities are the keys to creating economic relationships of real value.

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*- President Obama 2/7/14*

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