

EDITORIAL

Amazon HQ2: potential vs. challenges

Amazon's prime plan to deliver at least 25,000 jobs by locating a regional headquarters in Long Island City is exciting for its potential to dramatically change our region and overwhelming in its scope.

The tech giant's decision to situate one of two new headquarters on the edge of the East River in western Queens promises not only new jobs and revenue for the city and state, but also a broader economic impact that should ripple through New York City and onto Long Island. That includes more jobs in construction and development, and others in the supply chain that supports all of it. Amazon ultimately could add up to 40,000 jobs. That's more than Grumman Corp. ever had on the Island.

Long Island will benefit, too. Some of Amazon's employees likely will live in the suburbs, boosting the region's economy and home values. Beyond that, tech companies often follow one another, growing as a cluster. Amazon's presence in Queens could certainly lead to other companies settling farther to the east.

But that hopeful picture is tempered by enormous challenges that must be addressed.

While it makes sense to have Amazon's planning process go through the Empire State Development Corp., which handles large-scale projects, rather than be guided by New York City's land-use procedure, the community and its representatives must be heard and their concerns answered. That also requires political leaders and residents to get beyond a reflexive "no."



Subway riders at Queensboro Plaza on the eastern edge of Long Island City.

COREY SIPKIN

But Amazon must meet the community partway. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio have provided the company with a lucrative package of tax breaks. They promise the city and state will take in \$9 in revenue for every \$1 in incentives they give away. But it's Amazon that must deliver on its grand promises.

A mammoth concern is the infrastructure and transportation required for a large corporate campus. Long Island City is a nexus for eight city subway lines, two Long Island Rail Road stops, 13 bus routes, a ferry landing and roads that all seem to lead to the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge. The promise of all that is what helped attract the folks from Seattle, but the subways are dilapidated and crowded, the roads are clogged, and neither LIRR station is a true commuter hub. Upgraded, expanded transit service is essential. That should include a new LIRR stop at Sunnyside Yards, a linchpin to connect the area to Grand Central Terminal once East Side Access is completed.

Long Island City already has grown exponentially, and employees might choose to live and work in the area. The company's promises of a new school, a start-up tech company incubator, parks and other improvements are a good start. The pledge to put 50 percent of its payments in lieu of taxes directly toward the area's needs is critical.

We often talk of dreaming big and planning for the future. Bringing Amazon to Long Island City does both. But this big dream will need to be matched with reality.

— *The editorial board*

MATT DAVIES



NEWSDAY/MATT DAVIES

■ See more Matt Davies cartoons: newsday.com/matt

LETTERS

Consider both sides of national politics

Seeing the headline of your Nov. 11 editorial, "Setting the table for compromise," I began reading a piece that I hoped would bring us all together. Shame on me. Instead, the headline proved a ruse.

The editorial focused on President Donald Trump and his misdeeds. One line was devoted to antifa and the vicious criminal trespass at the home of Fox News host Tucker Carlson. But what about Rep. Jerrold Nadler saying he might investigate Justice Brett Kavanaugh, perhaps to impeach him, and further probe Trump? No mention of that.

What about Rep. Nancy Pelosi saying she would not step in the way of investigations if she is chosen as speaker? No mention of that. Not even a mention of how moderate Democrats like my

member of Congress, Kathleen Rice, advocate a change to a less divisive speaker. No, the Newsday editorial board prefers to continue to fan leftist radical flames. Please do not insult readers by calling for compromise and then pointing the finger at just one side.

*Richard LePetri,
Rockville Centre*

Before the election, I endured countless commercials, persistent phone calls and multiple mailings from candidates whom I had seldom, if ever, heard from before. Most of this material contained accusations against opponents and lacked specifics on issues.

The election results basically reinforced that this country is pretty equally divided between both major parties. Yet both declared victory, vowed to confront the other and to push their agendas.

How can this type of poli-

tics be beneficial to our country? If all we do is elect officials who spend their terms trying to undo what previous administrations enacted, we are doomed to mediocrity at best and inertia and divisiveness at worst. What happened to the idea that the two-party system should foster civil debate about issues? What happened to compromise, tolerance and respect for those who have different opinions? How can our society identify as only "blue" or "red" and vote accordingly without regard to candidates' records and positions?

Unless we again embrace the aforementioned concepts, I fear for the country and world we leave to our children and grandchildren. It is our responsibility to give them better.

*Richard Plantamura,
Islandia*

■ I am a 73-year-old indepen-