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Adler on Amazon: ‘Many conversations’ still necessary

The news that Austin is among 20 finalists under consideration for Amazon to build its second headquarters brought a measured response from the city’s top official on Thursday. Mayor Steve Adler gave a brief statement about the news at the start of a press conference announcing a new collaboration with the city’s tech community, saying there are still many conversations city leaders need to have related to the possibility of Austin landing the \$5 billion project that is projected to bring 50,000 high-paying jobs to whatever city it chooses later this year. “All of our economic development conversations are around the city’s greatest challenges and needs, and this is mobility and affordability, and that’s the lens that we’re going to use. I still not have heard any conversations about offering incentives. Ultimately there needs to be an open and transparent community conversation about Amazon and all these related issues.” The city is currently working to revamp its use of incentives packages away from large mother-ship corporation projects like Amazon or the deals that brought Apple and Merck to Austin in recent years. The preferred method going forward is to focus on tools to attract and grow small businesses and train middle-skill workers to increase their earning power and keep them from being priced out of the city as development pressure causes housing prices to increase.