



## **Amazon facility hiring, opening by end of 2021**

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February 25, 2021

The Amazon distribution facility planned off State Road 16 in St. Augustine is one step closer to opening.

St. Johns County approved a permit Monday for Ryan Companies US, Inc. to build an Amazon.com delivery station on 60 acres of land at 5100 Inman Road, near the St. Augustine shopping outlets.

The 125,000-square-foot project will be built at a cost of \$16 million, according to plans submitted to the county.

In September 2020, the St. Johns County Commission approved a major modification of the existing Planned Unit Development submitted, paving the way for the Amazon project, which is consistent with other uses along the busy commercial corridor which has easy access to Interstate-95.

Since then, a set of required documents required for the warehouse building, with details about infrastructure, engineering and environmental impacts, was submitted to the county's growth management division, according to Mike Roberson, interim director for the department.

The "last-mile" fulfillment center is the final stop before deliverers transport packages to area consumers. The center is expected to create about 350 jobs locally, starting at least \$16 an hour, including benefits. Amazon hopes to have the distribution facility in St. Johns County operational by the holiday season in 2021, according to Joy Andrews, the county's deputy administrator for economic development.

In a Dec. 3 interview with The Record, Andrews said: "This certainly is a testament to the number of rooftops we have here, similar to the number of hospitals that are going up over the next few years. It is a natural progression of the growth we've experienced in this county."

Andrews added that having a big corporate name attached to St. Johns County could help drive more interest in economic development in the area.

“It certainly gives us the opportunity to work with these types of business executives and to work with them to make sure the [approval] process is as smooth and expedited as it can be,” Andrews said.

Amazon has opened or indicated plans to operate at least 12 locations in Northeast Florida, including three large fulfillment centers; six delivery stations; a heavy bulk-freight center; and two distribution centers, including the one in St. Augustine.