



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Pursuing Agreement to Bring Company Headquarters and Advanced Manufacturing of Electric Autonomous Vehicles to Riverside

Agreement would bring Ohmio to city from New Zealand

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City Council voted 6-1 on Tuesday to pursue an agreement to bring an all-electric autonomous vehicle company called Ohmio to Riverside from New Zealand to set up its international headquarters here and manufacture the vehicles. The facility would be the only autonomous shuttle advanced manufacturer in the United States.

The company, which recently completed a pilot program at New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport, is interested in a 40,000-square-foot facility on Mount Vernon Avenue in the Hunter Park industrial area. Ohmio also would bring its research and development function to the city, test vehicles here and designate Riverside as its point of sale, which would direct future sales taxes to the City.

The facility is four miles from the Southern California headquarters of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which relocated to Riverside two years ago and is expected to spur additional vehicle-related research and development businesses. Ohmio also would benefit from proximity to UC Riverside, its Center for Environmental Research and Technology (CE-CERT), as well as California Baptist University, La Sierra University, and the Riverside Community College District.

“This exciting proposal is an opportunity to capitalize on our strengths as the City of Arts and Innovation,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “The world-renowned work being done at CARB is a beacon to companies operating in this arena and sets us up for continued success.”

Ohmio shuttles are in operation around the world, in New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, Luxembourg and New York. The company is expanding into the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Finland.

Ohmio plans to establish an advanced manufacturing facility in the City of Riverside, with the first locally produced vehicles available next year. The company expects to create as many as 10 jobs initially and expand to as many as 30 jobs during the next three years, from engineers to technicians.

Experts estimate that every job created in advanced manufacturing spurs the creation of 2.5 jobs in other sectors needed to support advanced manufacturing.

Having the company headquarters in Riverside would help the City further define itself as a hub for innovation and a leader in the sustainable, clean and green economy, drawing additional investment to Riverside. That translates into attracting new talent to the region while retaining professionals who might otherwise seek opportunity elsewhere.

The proposed research and development center could provide opportunities for the company to collaborate with local universities, giving those schools an opening to excel at autonomous vehicle technology research, attract funding, and shape the future of this industry. Other opportunities include career pathways for students, internship programs, and chances to obtain practical, hands-on experience and enhanced professional development.

“Autonomous vehicles show great promise in augmenting our existing transit systems by plugging the ‘last mile’ hole that sometimes exists between an existing transit option and a person’s final destination,” Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. “These vehicles can be the key to allowing us to experience our city by bus, bicycle or on foot.”

A conceptual framework for a potential agreement with the company involves the City spending as much as \$2.5 million to bring Ohmio to Riverside, which includes about \$1.5 million to lease or purchase three autonomous shuttles for testing on Riverside streets.

All-electric autonomous shuttles sell for roughly \$300,000, which would generate \$26,250 in sales taxes to the City for each vehicle.

“We are really thrilled about this potential partnership with the City of Riverside,” said Mohammed Hikmet, Executive Chairman of Ohmio. “Our company's vision aligns seamlessly with the city's forward-thinking direction. The prospect of collaborating closely with entities such as the University of California, Riverside, and others in the community heralds an exciting future for our shared commitment to innovation and advanced mobility solutions.”