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City of San Jose Launches Autonomous Vehicle Initiative

City issues RFI for private-sector companies interested in deploying small pilot projects that will help San Jose explore the potential of AVs to address transportation challenges

San Jose, Calif. – The City of San Jose formally launched a new Autonomous Vehicle (AV) initiative this morning with the release of a Request for Information (RFI) that invites private-sector companies to provide information about how they might pilot AV deployment projects in San Jose. The goal of the initiative is to explore how the City can integrate AVs into its multi-model transportation network and leverage AVs as a solution to its transportation challenges.

“Autonomous vehicles have enormous potential to help cities improve traffic safety, relieve congestion, and improve transportation mobility for seniors, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups,” said Mayor Sam Liccardo. “Through this initiative, and our broader Smart City Vision, we’ll explore pilot projects that will provide us a deep, data-driven look at how autonomous vehicles might serve as a solution to our city’s transportation needs and improve our residents’ quality of life.”

Like many other large cities, San Jose faces numerous challenges that continues to stretch its existing transportation system. These challenges are likely to become even more severe in the years ahead as San Jose’s population is projected to grow an estimated 40% by 2040.

However, with much of the Autonomous Vehicle industry developing its technologies in Silicon Valley, San Jose has the unique opportunity to test how this emerging technology could serve as a potential solution to these challenges. In recent months, City staff have engaged in multiple roundtable discussions with dozens of AV-industry representatives to gain input on how to structure a potential RFI for autonomous vehicle pilot projects.

Through the RFI issued today, the City is inviting responses from private-sector companies interested in deploying small pilot projects in San Jose that would help the City assess the potential of AVs to help meet critical transportation needs. In particular, the City is seeking information about AV technologies and projects that align with the following transportation objectives:

- Eliminate all traffic related fatalities and reduce severe injuries
- Reduce the environmental impact of vehicle miles traveled
- Build a balanced and equitable transportation system
- Create a more livable and walkable city
- Share and utilize data to optimize our transportation system and protect privacy for our residents

“Autonomous vehicles are rapidly moving towards widespread testing and implementation,” said Kevin O’Connor, Assistant Director of Transportation for the City of San Jose. “Ultimately, they could have a tremendous impact on the safety, mobility, sustainability, and livability of our City. Therefore, the City of San Jose is taking a proactive approach to learning about autonomous vehicles and ensuring that they are tested and deployed in the safest, most effective way possible for the full benefit of our community.”

While the City will entertain a wide variety of project concepts, the RFI specifically outlined the City’s interest in partnering on AV demonstration projects that could:

- Provide the missing link between Diridon Station and the Airport
- Address the heavily-traveled Stevens Creek / San Carlos Corridor
- Integrate AVs into the rich, multi-modal downtown environment
- Integrate AVs into the jobs-heavy North San Jose Transportation Innovation Zone
- Connect the Homeless Veterans Emergency Housing Facility to Capitol Light Rail Station

Any AV pilot projects that result from the RFI will fall under the City’s Demonstration Partnership Policy and be evaluated on a wide range of criteria, including: the ease of implementation, ability to share data, potential to scale, and alignment with City transportation objectives. As part of the partnership, the City would provide a central staff contact, access to City infrastructure and data, and other forms of support during implementation of the pilot project.

The City will be accepting responses to the RFI through late July. The Administration will then review the information provided with the goal of beginning to develop one or more projects for implementation later this fall.

You can view the Autonomous Vehicle RFI here: <https://www.bidsync.com/bidsync-app-web/vendor/links/BidDetail.xhtml?bidid=2014573&roundId=null>

The Autonomous Vehicle initiative falls within the City of San Jose’s Smart City Vision, which seeks to embrace cutting-edge technologies in ways that will improve services, safety and quality of life for San Jose residents. For more information on the City’s Smart City Vision, please visit: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?nid=5289>.

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