

Electric truck maker Rivian says construction on 1st phase of Georgia factory will proceed in 2024

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A Rivian R1S is displayed outside of the auto manufacturer's new space at Ponce City Market on Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023 in Atlanta. Rivian Automotive will move ahead with construction on a factory in Georgia early next year, the company confirmed Thursday. Credit: Matthew Pearson/WABE via AP

Rivian Automotive will move ahead with construction on a factory in Georgia early next year, the company confirmed Thursday.

The California-based electric truck company made the announcement as it opens a retail location in an intown Atlanta development, the eighth in a network of what the company calls "spaces" that it's rolling out in select locations nationwide. The company plans additional locations in Colorado, Texas and California in coming months.

Customers can't buy a truck or SUV at Rivian's Atlanta location—the company only sells online to evade Georgia's rules requiring auto manufacturers to have dealers. But the company hopes people who have already reserved one of Rivian's vehicles or who are thinking about buying one will stop by to learn about [electric vehicles](#), climb inside, take a [test drive](#), and even buy a Rivian-branded jacket or backpack.

"We sell a physical product, so people want to experience it physically," said Denise Cherry, Rivian's senior director of design and retail development. "That's human nature."

Rivian currently produces its R1T pickup truck and R1S SUV at a factory in Normal, Illinois. The vehicles currently cost more than \$70,000 apiece. It plans a \$5 billion manufacturing complex for a site east of Atlanta, where it's supposed to produce R2 vehicles with lower price tags aimed at a mass market. The company is supposed to eventually hire 7,500 employees at the site near Social Circle, where grading of dirt is supposed to be complete by year's end.



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"We are thrilled with the progress we've gotten so far," Cherry said. "I mean, we are this close to finishing grading."

The first phase of Rivian's factory is supposed to make 200,000 vehicles a year, starting production in 2024, with a second phase capable of making another 200,000 a year being complete by 2030. The design of the R2 will be unveiled next year, Rivian officials said Thursday.

State and [local governments](#) have offered Rivian an incentive package

worth an estimated \$1.5 billion. The deadline for the company to complete its investment and hiring under that deal was extended to 2030 earlier this year, as Rivian said it would slow its pace of capital investment and as neighbors opposed to development of the Georgia site continued to pursue legal challenges. The [company](#) generated billions in cash with an [initial public offering](#) in 2021 but has faced questions about achieving profitability.

The Rivian space at Atlanta's Ponce City Market is aimed in part at easing potential buyer fears about whether they will be able to easily make long journeys in a Rivian truck while charging it, with potential journeys diagrammed on a wall.

"We want you to understand how to take your family on a [road trip](#), and what does charging look like, and how do we start to break down some of those barriers to EV adoption," Cherry said.

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