



Help Your City Develop Seamless Transportation – Ford and Grand Rapids Work Together to Create the City of Tomorrow

- Grand Rapids City of Tomorrow Challenge will focus on identifying opportunities to create immediate impact for city residents in terms of improved mobility and support long-term enhancements to help people get around
- Ford and Grand Rapids, together with AT&T, Dell Technologies, Microsoft, PlanetM and The Right Place are facilitating the sharing of information, collaborating with key public and private stakeholders, and testing ideas through a program in which \$100,000 will be awarded to fund pilots for the top proposals in real-world settings
- City of Tomorrow Challenge is a crowdsourcing platform created to help prepare cities for the future and bring groups of people together to design and pilot new solutions to improve mobility in cities

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., June 27, 2018 – Ford Motor Company and Grand Rapids are working closely with public stakeholders as well as AT&T, Dell Technologies, Microsoft, PlanetM, and The Right Place to launch the Grand Rapids City of Tomorrow Challenge – a crowdsourcing platform for residents, businesses and community groups to propose and pilot solutions that improve mobility in Grand Rapids.

As urban populations surge and new technologies emerge, the ways people move around cities are changing. In Grand Rapids, for example, the use of public transportation continues to drop and most families have two or more cars, according to American Public Transportation Association. With Grand Rapids experiencing the largest population increase in Michigan percentage-wise, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, there is a need to alleviate congestion and reduce transportation wait times.

Solutions to many mobility issues already exist in some form, but the City of Tomorrow Challenge creates a more inclusive process in which residents can express their ideas as they participate in working to ensure a future where people and businesses can thrive. By working with communities to crowdsource new mobility designs and innovations, and funding pilots to test the top solutions, the program's goal is to help improve quality of life for Grand Rapids residents and visitors by providing dynamic mobility options that build on the existing transportation system.

“As our city grows, we want to ensure we are working with our community to make getting around Grand Rapids easier,” said Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss. “We also want to strengthen confidence in our existing transportation systems. We have joined the City of Tomorrow Challenge because we believe Grand Rapids is a place where innovative ideas can improve mobility in our city.”

Throughout the eight-month program, those who live, work and play in Grand Rapids are invited to explore dynamic mobility options, including making the city's streets more walkable and bike-friendly, extending the use of and the information that transportation systems provide, and enabling smart transportation choices. The Challenge includes a prize of up to \$100,000 to fund pilots that test the top solutions in a real-world setting.

“Grand Rapids is already on the forefront of transportation with our vision for mobility,” said Josh Naramore, City’s Mobile GR-Parking Services manager. “With the City of Tomorrow Challenge, we can create a place that is a beacon of growth for years to come – a place where everyone can thrive.”

Grand Rapids marks the third location for the City of Tomorrow Challenge, following announcements in Pittsburgh and Miami-Dade County earlier this month. Each challenge is tailored to a specific city or county and is focused on addressing its unique needs.

“What may work for one city might not work for another,” said John Kwant, vice president, Ford City Solutions. “Grand Rapids has its own unique needs, and it understands how seeking out new ideas to complement existing transportation systems can aid its effort to become a more accessible, walkable city. The City of Tomorrow Challenge will deliver that.”

By crowdsourcing ideas, the Challenge seeks to come up with ways for communities to employ technology to create the best mobility solutions that will underpin the city of tomorrow.

“The foundation for smarter city infrastructure of tomorrow is being laid today,” said Mike Geertsen, director, government solutions, Microsoft. “Ford, local government leaders in Grand Rapids and Microsoft all have a shared philosophy that in an effort to make cities smarter, safer and more sustainable, adopting innovative technology solutions will help bring positive and inclusive change citizens are asking for. Leaders in Grand Rapids recognize the time to elevate the conversation and invest is now.”

“The innovative mobility solutions deployed here in Grand Rapids will lead to real and meaningful improvements in the quality of life and access to transportation throughout the community,” said Trevor Pawl, Vice President of PlanetM, a mobility-focused brand and business development program at the MEDC. “We are proud to be a partner in this effort in Grand Rapids and look forward to the impact it will have in expanding Michigan’s mobility ecosystem.

How it works – and how you can get involved

People can go to the Challenge [website](#) to share their experiences, sign up for community working sessions, and offer insight into the ways they move around Grand Rapids today. Information about the Challenge will also be shared via [Twitter](#).

The week of July 23 marks the opening of the application period for participants to begin submitting ideas for new mobility solutions. Leading up to that, Ford and its partners will be combining insights from the online and offline communities with data analytics to help shape the challenge.

“Every city is different, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to solving the unique problems that impact its residents,” said Michael Zeto, vice president, AT&T internet of things and general manager, smart cities. “Through our collaboration with Ford, Grand Rapids residents will have the opportunity to influence how technology impacts the way they live, work and play.”

In September, semifinalists will be selected to attend a prototyping session and receive mentoring support to refine their ideas before submitting a final pilot proposal. At the concluding stage of the Challenge, \$100,000 will be awarded to fund pilots to test the top proposed solutions in collaboration with Grand Rapids, Ford and its corporate collaborators.

“The future of mobility and connecting people to jobs will be critical to our long-term economic growth potential,” said Tim Mroz, vice president of marketing and communications at The Right Place. “Working in partnership with the City of Grand Rapids and Ford will not only allow us to

test state-of-the-art mobility technology but, more importantly, it will let the world know we are embracing innovation in mobility.”

About Ford Motor Company

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