



## Ford and Newlab Announce Startups to Pilot New Electric Vehicle Tech in Mobility Innovation Program

**DETROIT, Oct. 28, 2021** – Ford Motor Company and [Newlab](#), a community of experts and innovators applying transformative technology to solve the world's biggest challenges, today announced the five startups that will participate in the inaugural cohort of the Mobility Studio – a new program focused on supporting the advancement of technologies, product collaborations and business models that drive a cleaner transportation future. [Michigan Central](#), a new mobility innovation district being developed by Ford. This is the second of two studios opening as part of the partnership announced in 2020 between Newlab and Michigan Central.

As the U.S. looks to invest in infrastructure and build a more sustainable, energy-efficient economy, the electrification of transportation is critical. In its first year, the Mobility Studio will help the companies pilot the development of a range of transformative services and technologies to spur more widespread commercial adoption of electric vehicles. Combining Ford's storied excellence in advancing mobility solutions, especially its plans to bring electric vehicles at scale to customers, with Newlab's collaborative, transformative model of innovation, the Mobility Studio will convene an ecosystem of entrepreneurs, experts and investors to test new technologies in a "sandbox" environment to help electrify commercial fleets across the U.S.

"Together, Ford and Newlab are building upon our nation's goal of reducing carbon emissions and the effects of climate change by advancing commercial fleet electrification," said Matt Stover, director of charging and energy services, Ford Motor Company. "As Ford works to accelerate electric vehicle adoption and zero-emission transportation, the Mobility Studio is meeting the moment by identifying innovative solutions to enhance fleet management through connected data, integrate our vehicles into the energy ecosystem and advance urban charging for commercial fleets and support electric vehicle drivers at home. We are excited that we and our Ford Pro team can be linked to these potential solutions through Michigan Central – this is just the start of what this development can do not just for us, but for others working on the same challenges around the country."

Newlab and Ford selected the following companies from a competitive pool of global applicants to participate in the Mobility Studio's first cohort and help address major challenges faced by fleets as they consider transitioning to electric vehicles, such as connected fleet management, supporting drivers at home, multiuse charging hubs and vehicle-to-everything applications:

- **Autofleet:** Autofleet is a vehicle-as-a-service platform enabling companies, organizations and municipalities to optimize vehicle fleet management, launch new mobility services with their existing vehicles, and plan and design strategic shifts in operations, such as electrification. The platform centrally optimizes fleet operations, breaking the dependence on driver decision making, and is designed to achieve the benefits of an autonomous fleet, starting today with traditional vehicles. Autofleet has partnered with Avis-Budget Group, Zipcar, Revel and Keolis, and manages tens of thousands of vehicles in more than 12 countries.
- **EVPassport:** EVPassport is a leading electric vehicle charging company that is establishing a distributed fleet charging ecosystem incorporating multiunit dwellings through a cloud-based, application programming interface-driven hardware and software platform. Fleet owners can now pay for charging sessions at multiunit dwellings, while delivering their drivers a frictionless payment experience to charge any electric vehicle without requiring a separate app, account or top-up balance.

- **Fermata Energy:** Fermata provides a complete solution that lets electric vehicles receive power from and provide power back to the grid and to buildings by integrating software, hardware options and knowledge, turning electric vehicles into energy storage assets that combat climate change, increase resilience and dramatically lower cost of ownership.
- **Rhombus Energy Solutions:** Dearborn, Michigan-based Rhombus develops new electric grid infrastructure, energy distribution and management systems, as well as advanced charging solutions to speed the adoption of electric vehicles. Rhombus builds bidirectional charging networks for electric passenger cars and high-power electric fleets – such as buses, garbage trucks and delivery vehicles – along with energy management software, power conversion, storage systems and microgrid applications to maximize the efficient, clean energy distribution capabilities of electric vehicles.
- **SparkCharge:** “Currently,” by SparkCharge – a charging-as-a-service platform – is a mobile, on-demand electric vehicle charging network built to make charging easy and convenient while addressing gaps in the charging infrastructure. Through the company’s mobile app, Currently, subscribers can have the charge delivered to their vehicle on the spot, utilizing SparkCharge’s portable, modular charging unit, The Roadie. Currently is operating in Dallas, Los Angeles and San Francisco, with plans to expand to several more cities soon. You can download Currently today for both iOS and Android.

“We are excited to welcome the Mobility Studio’s first member cohort – an incredible slate of innovative companies determined to create a clean, electrified and connected future,” said Shaina Horowitz, vice president of product and programs, Newlab. “With zero-emission transportation and electrification at a tipping point nationwide, the Mobility Studio strategically sought out innovative teams that will accelerate electric vehicle adoption and help to slash greenhouse gas emissions through the development of cutting-edge mobility solutions.”

“Our vision for Michigan Central is a thriving innovation district that brings together the diverse talent needed to solve complex mobility challenges, especially around key areas like electric vehicle technologies and business models,” said Roshni Shokar, startup and entrepreneur engagement, Michigan Central. “That includes startups, researchers and technologists who are joining the Michigan Central community through the two launched studios in collaboration with Newlab to explore, develop and test new solutions that have the potential to improve access and equity for all.”

This past spring, the Mobility Studio announced an open call for companies developing frontier technologies and novel products to apply to participate in the first cohort. In the coming months, member companies will work closely with Newlab, Ford and industry stakeholders to deploy technologies and services that help make electric vehicle commercial fleets economically and logistically viable – underscoring the growing consensus that building a clean, resilient energy future means rapidly electrifying transportation. While the studio ultimately lives within Michigan Central, the startups in the first cohort will test in different locations across the country.

Michigan Central, a new mobility district under development in Corktown, and Newlab, home to more than 800 engineers, entrepreneurs and inventors applying transformative technologies to things that matter, are working to foster an innovation ecosystem committed to helping shape the future of transportation in a way that benefits everyone. Ford’s vision for its Michigan Central development, in Detroit’s oldest neighborhood, is to serve as an open platform for collaboration – drawing the best minds from around the city and around the world to co-create and test mobility solutions on real-world streets, in real-world situations.

Details about the studio can be found on the [Mobility Studio webpage](#). To learn more or get involved with any of the studio’s projects, contact the team at [mobility@newlab.com](mailto:mobility@newlab.com).

## About Ford Motor Company

*Ford Motor Company (NYSE: F) is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan, that is committed to helping build a better world, where every person is free to move and pursue their dreams. The company's Ford+ plan for growth and value creation combines existing strengths, new capabilities and always-on relationships with customers to enrich experiences for and deepen the loyalty of those customers. Ford develops and delivers innovative, must-have Ford trucks, sport utility vehicles, commercial vans and cars and Lincoln luxury vehicles, as well as connected services. Additionally, Ford is establishing leadership positions in mobility solutions, including self-driving technology, and provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. Ford employs about 182,000 people worldwide. More information about the company, its products and Ford Credit is available at [corporate.ford.com](http://corporate.ford.com).*

## About Newlab

Newlab is a community of experts and innovators applying transformative technology to solve the world's biggest challenges. Newlab membership and studios bring together entrepreneurs, engineers, inventors and industry leaders to create sustainable solutions and enterprises. Newlab employs technologies including robotics, AI and material science to transform what matters most – health, environment, media, cities, and infrastructure.

## About Michigan Central

Michigan Central is a new mobility innovation district in Corktown, Detroit. It is a sustainable community of new and revitalized buildings, shared spaces, a first-of-its-kind mobility testing platform, and 1.2 million square feet of commercial space. It will serve as an open platform for partnerships, drawing leading entrepreneurs, researchers, and technologists from Detroit and around the world to co-create and test new products and services on real-world streets, in real-world situations. It will be a place to solve urban transportation challenges, improve mobility access for everyone, and prepare for a more connected, autonomous and electrified world ahead. For more information, please visit [www.michigancentral.com](http://www.michigancentral.com).