Toyota Mobility Foundation Names Innovators in Clean Freight as Detroit Winners of Global Sustainable Cities Challenge

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DETROIT (April 23, 2026) – The Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF) and City of Detroit today announced three winners of TMF's Sustainable Cities Challenge in Detroit. The announcement marks the conclusion of the three-year competition, designed to accelerate sustainable and inclusive urban mobility solutions.

In Detroit, the Challenge focused on demonstrating clean freight solutions in the Eastern Market, the cornerstone of Detroit's food economy and a thriving commercial hub. The goal was to identify solutions that reduce fossil fuel use, lower freight costs, and support cleaner, more efficient movement of goods.

Each winner previously received $180,000 in implementation funding and will now share $1.5 million to scale their solutions across the city.

Detroit Mayor Mary Sheffield said, "Big ideas in clean freight technology have found their home in Detroit. This means cleaner air and a brighter future for residents. We are grateful to the Toyota Mobility Foundation for choosing Detroit out of more than 250 cities across the globe. Our residents gain cleaner air, innovators gain a city serious about sustainability, and together we embody Detroit's legacy of innovation."

City of Detroit's Deputy Chief of Business Innovation and Emerging Industries, Ryan Michael, said: "Globally, the need for advancement in clean freight technology is abundantly clear. Detroit values the opportunity to partner with TMF and the State of Michigan OFME on this vital emerging vertical.

Vince Keenan, Head of Engagement Innovation, City of Detroit's Office of Mobility Innovation, said, "The Mayor's Office of Mobility Innovation is designed to push big ideas. Whether it's zero-emission micro-freight solutions that can zip through traffic to avoid (and prevent) congestion, fleet charging solutions that can deploy the capacity to charge in the same time it takes to fill up with diesel and a peek around the corner to the hydrogen solutions that could one day eliminate emissions entirely. The SCC has enabled Detroit to kick the tires on the future of clean freight today."

Together, the winning cohort marks the beginning of a cleaner, more resilient freight ecosystem in Detroit's Eastern Market, with benefits that could extend beyond the city and region. TMF and the City of Detroit are proud to announce that Detroit's winners will include:

Civilized Cycles – A Detroit-based manufacturer of ultra-light electric cargo vehicles, Civilized Cycles is scaling its patented Semi-Trike as a practical alternative to gas-powered delivery vans. Since the finalists were announced, the company has been exploring applications for its Semi-Trike, most recently selling one to Detroit-based company Grounded EVs, where it will be used as a platform to build a mini-RV.

Zachary Schieffelin, Co-Founder and CEO of Civilized Cycles, said: "The Sustainable Cities Challenge gave us the platform to prove that ultra-light electric freight vehicles can meet commercial demand. Detroit offered an ideal opportunity to test and demonstrate their potential in a real-world commercial environment. With this support, we're expanding production and advancing a cleaner, more efficient model for how goods move through cities."

ElectricFish Energy Inc – A distributed energy infrastructure company advancing fast-charging EV solutions, ElectricFish recently launched **400squared™, a 400 kW battery-integrated fast charger** and introduced its Turbo Charge program to enable seamless deployment at gas stations and fleet sites. Since being named a finalist, the company has been third-party endorsed by MotorTrend and received coverage in high-profile news outlets such as Axios.

Anurag Kamal, Co-founder and CEO of ElectricFish, said: "Detroit showed us what is possible when public and private collaborators come together to build resilient approaches to our nation's critical infrastructure. We are excited to continue working with this forward-thinking city on deploying clean mobility to accelerate electrification, which may serve as a blueprint for the future of industrial growth and reducing carbon emissions at scale."

Neology – A clean technology startup developing power systems that can produce hydrogen and electricity independently, useful in applications where clean, off-grid power is necessary. Since being selected as a finalist, Neology has conducted **more than ten live demonstrations across Detroit**, generating approximately **300 kWh of clean energy** – enough to power an average U.S. home for 10 days – and producing approximately **20 kilograms of hydrogen from ammonia**. These demonstrations serve as an example of the opportunities for validation of transportation concepts offered by the Sustainable Cities Challenge.

Aris Maroonian, Founder and CEO of Neology, said: "Detroit is once again showing that it leads at the edge of industrial innovation. With the support of the Toyota Mobility Foundation, we are able to move ammonia-to-hydrogen technology from prototype to deployment – accelerating the city's growing hydrogen ecosystem. We believe scalable, affordable hydrogen solutions will play a critical role in the future of mobility, and we are proud to help position Detroit as a global showcase for that transformation."

Over three years, the Sustainable Cities Challenge has brought together innovators, policymakers, industry leaders, and community stakeholders to explore new, sustainable ways of moving goods through Detroit. Through multiple challenge rounds and collaborative development, ideas have evolved into practical, scalable solutions designed to support a cleaner, more efficient, and resilient freight system for the city and its communities.

Detroit, the only city chosen in the western hemisphere, is one of three global cities participating in the Sustainable Cities Challenge, alongside Venice, Italy and Varanasi, India. Across the three cities, TMF has invested a cumulative $9 million to tackle each city's unique mobility challenge.

In every location, the goal remains the same: to catalyze solutions that enhance quality of life, support economic vitality, and advance more sustainable systems of movement. The Challenge turns bold ideas into tangible impact by empowering local innovation and pairing it with global expertise.

Katy Trudeau, President and CEO of Eastern Market, said, "For over a hundred years, Eastern Market has been a place where businesses have adapted and grown to keep Detroit fed. This Challenge builds on that legacy by bringing fresh ideas and innovations into a real-world working environment, created with the needs of the people and businesses who are here every day in mind. These solutions don't just point to what is possible; they are already helping us move toward a cleaner, more efficient freight system that supports our community and can serve as a model for others."

Ryan Klem, Director of Programs for the Toyota Mobility Foundation, commented: "In strong collaboration with the City of Detroit and the Eastern Market Corporation, we are excited to announce today's winners as well as acknowledge the contributions of all innovators who played a role in shaping the effort. Whether here in Detroit or around the world, the Toyota Mobility Foundation will continue to promote pragmatic solutions to make communities more sustainable, efficient, and functional."

The Sustainable Cities Challenge is funded by the Toyota Mobility Foundation and conducted in collaboration with Challenge Works and the World Resources Institute. Detroit's winners illustrate how supporting local innovators can create meaningful impact in communities, with the potential to scale solutions across cities and beyond.

For more information, visit sustainablecitieschallenge.org