

DETROIT REGION

# ADVANCED MOBILITY

INSIGHT  
SERIES



**D**etroit reinvented mobility in the 20th century. To lead in the 21st, it will need to do so again.

The forces reshaping transportation today extend far beyond electric vehicles and the traditional automotive industry. Software-defined vehicles, artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, advanced manufacturing and connected infrastructure are transforming how products are designed, built and operated. At the same time, the definition of mobility itself is expanding to include aerospace, drones, logistics technologies, hydrogen systems and new forms of connected transportation.

For the Detroit Region, the challenge is no longer determining whether change is coming. It is understanding where the next generation of mobility value will be created—and whether the region is positioned to capture it.

**That is the purpose of the Advanced Mobility Signals,  
Risks & Opportunities Series.**



Commissioned by **Global Epicenter for Mobility (GEM)**, a signature program led by the Detroit Regional Partnership (DRP), and performed in collaboration with **Automation Alley** and **TEconomy Partners, LLC (TEconomy)**, the series is designed to help the mobility stakeholders operating in the Detroit region navigate change rather than react to it. Through research, market intelligence and stakeholder engagement, the initiative will examine the technologies, industries and competitive dynamics shaping the future of mobility while identifying the opportunities and risks most relevant to the Detroit Region's economy.

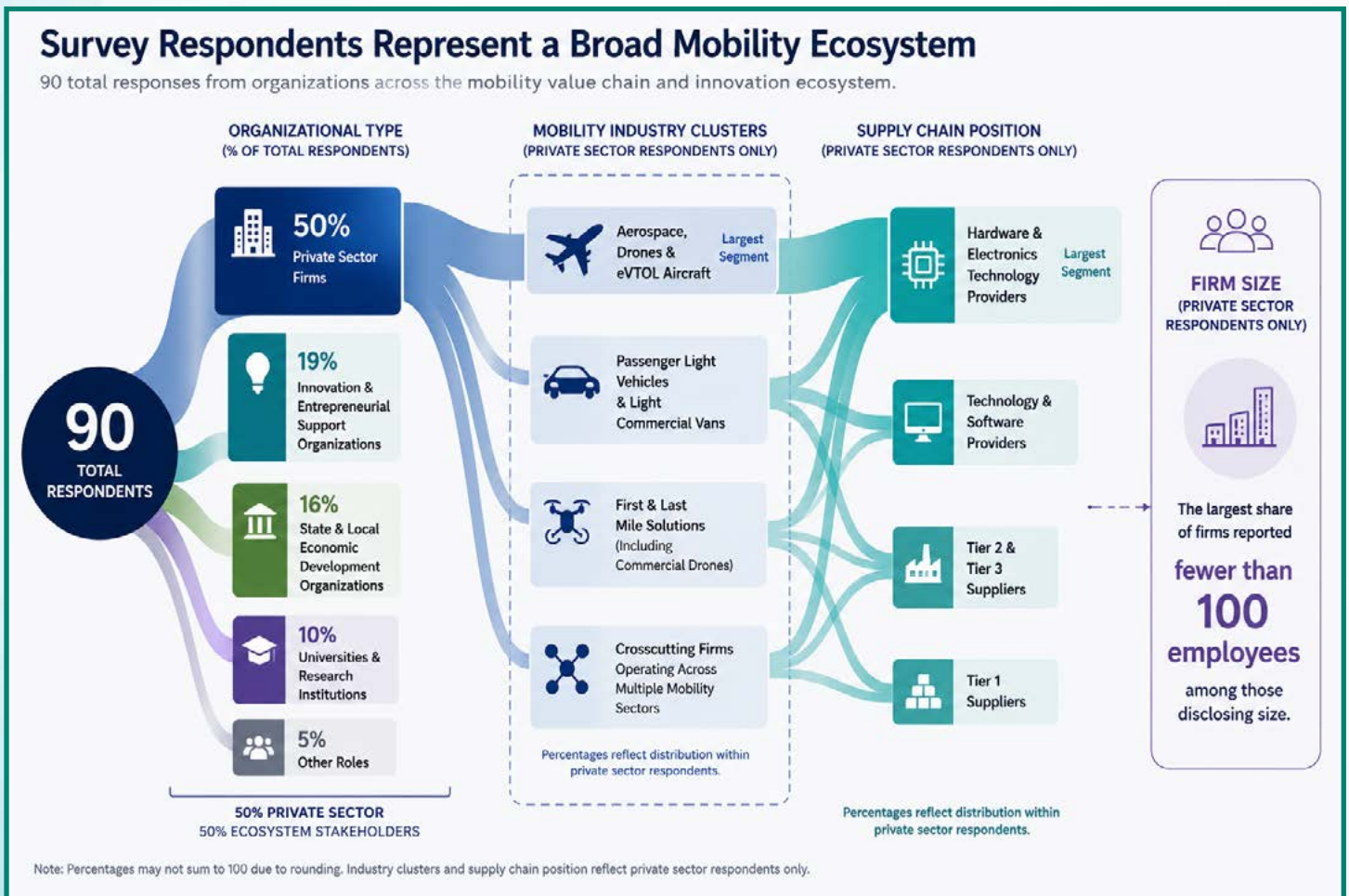
Over the coming months, the partnership will produce a series of research reports, market analyses and thought leadership briefings examining the technologies, trends, risks and opportunities most likely to influence the future of mobility.

To help guide that work, stakeholders from across the Detroit Region's mobility ecosystem were surveyed on the issues they believe will have the greatest impact on the region's future growth and competitiveness. Their responses reveal a strong focus on technology adoption, industrial transformation, and emerging mobility platforms, while also providing a roadmap for where future analysis, engagement, and investment should be concentrated.



# What the Survey Shows

The survey drew **90 responses** from across the Detroit Region's mobility ecosystem. Private-sector firms accounted for half of all responses, complemented by innovation organizations, economic development agencies, and research institutions. Aerospace, drones and eVTOL companies represented the largest industry segment, while hardware, electronics and software firms formed the largest supply-chain groups. The respondent base also skewed toward smaller firms, with most reporting fewer than 100 employees.



Respondents were asked to rank six strategic focus areas according to their importance to the future of the Detroit Region's mobility ecosystem. Technology Adoption and Industry Transformation emerged as the highest-priority category, followed closely by Future Frontiers of Mobility Systems. Together, these two areas outpaced all other topics, indicating that stakeholders are primarily focused on how emerging technologies, new mobility platforms and industrial transformation will shape future competitiveness.

## Topics Ranked in Order of Interest



**1** Technology Adoption & Industry Transformation



**2** Future Frontiers of Mobility Systems



**3** Regional Innovation, Research,  
and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem



**4** Workforce and Talent



**5** Trade and Supply Chain Impacts



**6** Governmental Policy and Regulation

The results suggest that regional stakeholders have moved beyond asking whether transformation is coming. Their focus has shifted to understanding where it is occurring, how quickly it is advancing, and what it means for long-term growth.

Within **Technology Adoption and Industry Transformation**, respondents expressed strong interest in automation, artificial intelligence, Industry 4.0 implementation and the broader pace of digital transformation across manufacturing. Stakeholders are seeking greater insight into how these technologies are being deployed and what they mean for productivity, workforce development and competitive advantage.

Interest in **Future Frontiers of Mobility Systems** reflects a similar desire to understand where the industry is headed. Electrification, battery technologies, software-defined vehicles, advanced electronics, hydrogen applications and autonomous systems were among the most requested topics, highlighting the technologies and platforms likely to shape the next generation of mobility.

The findings also highlight the continued evolution of the region's mobility ecosystem. While automotive remains central to Detroit Region's economy, the survey reflects growing engagement from aerospace, drone, defense and adjacent technology sectors. The result is a broader, more interconnected mobility landscape where organizations are evaluating not only which technologies to adopt, but also which emerging markets to pursue.

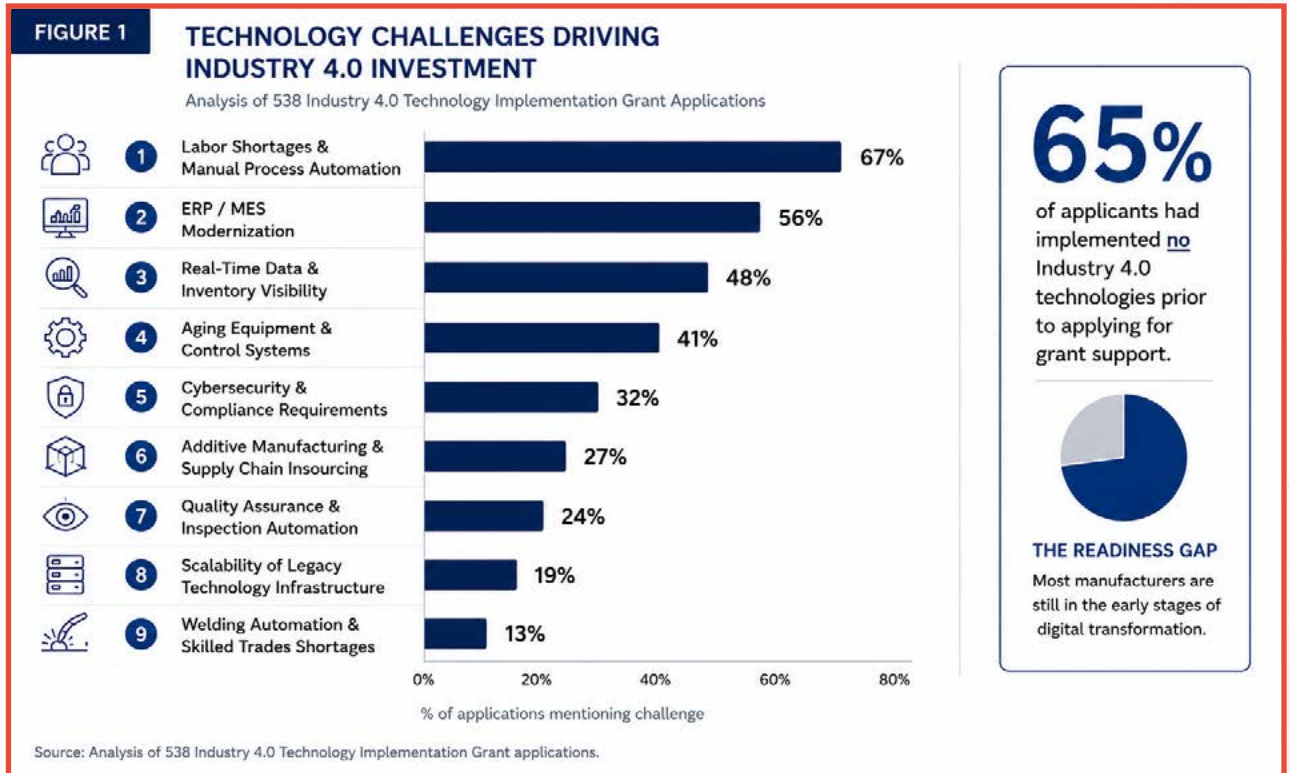
Across nearly every category, a common theme emerged: stakeholders are seeking practical intelligence that connects emerging trends to strategic decisions. They want to understand where markets are heading, which capabilities will matter most and how the region compares with competing mobility hubs.

Ultimately, the survey reveals a region looking for clarity; not on whether change is coming, but on how to navigate it successfully.



# Supporting Field Data

While the survey reflects where stakeholders believe the industry is heading, recent technology investment activity offers a snapshot of how manufacturers are responding today.



Analysis of 538 applications submitted to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Industry 4.0 Technology Implementation Grant program suggests that many firms continue to face challenges related to automation, digitalization and operational visibility. Notably, nearly two-thirds of applicants reported having no prior Industry 4.0 technologies in place before seeking assistance, highlighting the scale of the digital transformation opportunity across the region.

At the same time, grant-supported projects are expected to retain more than 7,300 jobs and create approximately 1,600 additional positions, demonstrating the potential impact of targeted technology investments.

Together, these findings reinforce the survey's central theme: the mobility transition is already underway, and continued investment in technology adoption will play a critical role in maintaining regional competitiveness.

## Regional Mobility Research Reinforces the Findings

The Detroit Region has already identified the technologies most likely to shape the future of mobility—and the stakes are significant. The Future Mobility Technology Study conducted by GEM Central, the Detroit Regional Partnership and S&P Global Mobility evaluated more than 30 emerging technologies before narrowing the field to seven priority areas expected to drive investment and employment through 2030.

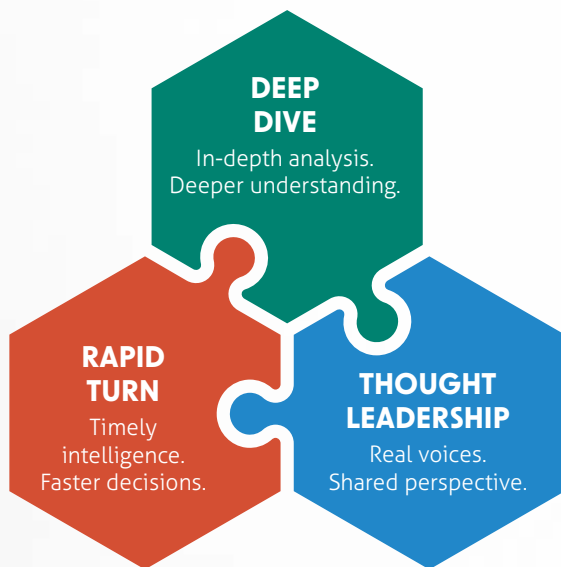
At the center of this transition are the “BEV 4” technologies—battery design and chemistry, e-motors, power electronics and propulsion thermal systems—which together account for more than half of a battery electric vehicle’s value. The study also highlights software-defined vehicles, hydrogen fuel cells, and advanced assembly automation as critical areas for regional competitiveness. If Michigan successfully captures its share of this transition, projections suggest gains of roughly 34,000 BEV-related jobs could offset approximately 32,000 positions tied to internal combustion technologies, while creating opportunities in entirely new mobility sectors.

However, technology alone will not determine the region’s success. A companion talent study conducted by GEM Central, SEMCA and PwC found that the Detroit Region’s greatest competitive advantage—and challenge—lies in its workforce. As mobility systems become increasingly electrified, automated and software-defined, demand is shifting toward workers who can combine mechanical expertise with software, electronics, data and advanced manufacturing skills.

While the Detroit Region maintains a strong concentration of engineering and production talent, employers are seeking significantly different skill sets than in the past, placing greater emphasis on digital fluency, automation and systems integration. The research concludes that the region’s ability to attract, retain, and upskill talent will ultimately be the determining factor in whether it captures the next wave of mobility investment and secures long-term economic growth.



## How the Series Delivers Insight



## What's Next?

The findings point to a clear need for deeper insight into the technologies, markets and competitive forces reshaping mobility.

The series will primarily focus on the two areas stakeholders identified as most important: **Technology Adoption and Industry Transformation**, and **Future Frontiers of Mobility Systems**. Additional briefings will explore workforce development, innovation ecosystems, supply chain dynamics, and other emerging issues shaping the mobility landscape.

Some reports will provide in-depth analysis of major technology and market trends, while others will deliver rapid intelligence on emerging developments, investment activity, and competitive shifts.

Together, these briefings are intended to help the region anticipate change, identify opportunity, and make more informed strategic decisions.

Together, they will form a growing body of practical knowledge intended to support businesses, policymakers, and economic development leaders across the region.

## Final Thoughts

The Advanced Mobility Signals, Risks & Opportunities Series is intended to serve as an ongoing source of intelligence for businesses, policymakers, investors and economic development leaders working to strengthen the Detroit Region's mobility ecosystem.

Ultimately, the goal is straightforward: help the region anticipate change rather than react to it. The Detroit Region's next chapter of mobility leadership will depend not only on the innovations it develops, but on its ability to recognize emerging opportunities, adapt to disruption, and compete in an increasingly dynamic global marketplace.

To access the full white paper developed to help inform the direction of this series, [click here](#).



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This effort was commissioned by GEM  
and done in collaboration with the partners:

