



New Initiative Launched with Pontiac Community Foundation to Tackle Transportation challenges in Oakland County

PONTIAC, Mich., August 30, 2021 – In a unique partnership, the newly formed nonprofit Checkered Flag Challenge and the Pontiac Community Foundation announce **M1 Mobility**, a new initiative to provide multi-tier transportation solutions to ensure the people of the City of Pontiac have access to community programs and services.

M1 Mobility came out of a task force created by the Checkered Flag Challenge, the philanthropic component of M1 Concourse, and the Pontiac Community Foundation to further understand the needs within the community.

“Lack of access to public transportation is a critical issue throughout Oakland County, and particularly in Pontiac, and I look forward to supporting these two organizations as they combine their resources and expertise to tackle the inequities residents face in navigating the everyday challenges of getting to work, school and appointments,” said Oakland County Executive David Coulter. “Additionally, I will ensure that Oakland County’s representatives at the SMART request that SMART participate and provide resources where applicable.”

While the City of Pontiac boasts many outstanding community programs and services, one critical challenge became clear. A shortage of safe and reliable public transportation presents a significant setback for many Pontiac residents, especially those who rely on regular services from non-profit organizations and agencies in the city.

“Working with the Pontiac Community Foundation we knew together we could best identify a way to provide real help to our community members,” says Terese Zlotoff, Chair of the Checkered Flag Challenge Board of Directors. “M1 is proud of this initiative, and we are all grateful to have found a way to make a difference in people’s lives.”

Over 19% of Pontiac’s households have no access to a vehicle. This number compares to 5.2% for Oakland County and 7.7% for the State of Michigan. Among factors contributing to the inequities are

higher transportation costs, including auto insurance, which make it extremely difficult for residents to own and maintain vehicles. Pontiac residents therefore face challenges from traveling to their doctor's appointments to accessing healthy foods and resources, and for the city's youth, participating in recreational activities.

"Our work is deeply rooted in strengthening the City of Pontiac by targeting strategic community issues," said Dustin McClellan, Pontiac Community Foundation's Founder & CEO. "M1 Mobility will immediately begin tackling the issue of access to transportation this fall. In our first phase, we will service the community by transporting youth to after-school and recreational programming through a shuttle service. The program will then expand to serve other individuals in need beginning in January."

As a means of funding M1 Mobility, the Checkered Flag Challenge announces its first event, The Checkered Flag Ball on Saturday, October 2. Guests at the Checkered Flag Ball will be among the first to experience the brand new M1 Event Center while enjoying the finest cuisine, exceptional wines and spirits, and dancing to tunes of Ben Sharkey at an exclusive After Party overlooking the track.

This Ball is a focal point of M1 Concourse's American Speed Festival and will honor Jim Hall, who changed racing history with his bold and iconic Chaparral race cars that pioneered modern race technology. The Ball co-chairs are Paul and Terese Zlotoff and Tim and Cindy McGrane. The evening's emcee is David Hobbs. Guests will be the first to hear important announcements regarding how M1 Mobility will address the transportation gap experienced by the residents of Pontiac.

The Checkered Flag Ball starts at 6:30 p.m. Guests are asked to don groovy Black & White Dress Attire. Tickets are limited and are \$500 per person. Purchase tickets www.checkeredflagchallenge.org.

The Pontiac Community Foundation

The Pontiac Community Foundation is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to building a brighter future for the city through philanthropy, leadership, and collaboration. Developing Pontiac's leaders is at the core of what we do, in addition to supporting quality of life initiatives that help tackle the city's most pressing issues. Our vision is to make Pontiac a desirable place to live, work, and play.

The Checkered Flag Challenge

The Checkered Flag Challenge is the philanthropic arm of M1 Concourse designed to support M1 Mobility, a new initiative in partnership with Pontiac Community Foundation to provide transportation solutions that connect Pontiac residents with essential community services and programs. Checkered Flag Challenge is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.