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CITY COUNCIL REPORT

Date: October 1, 2021

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

From: Robert J. Bruner, Assistant City Manager
Glenn Lapin, Economic Development Specialist

Subject: Automation Alley Awarded U.S. Economic Development Administration Grant

Automation Alley, Michigan's Industry 4.0 knowledge center and a World Economic Forum Advanced Manufacturing Hub (AMHUB) for North America, has been awarded a \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship through its *Build to Scale Program*. This is Automation Alley's first time receiving the grant.

EDA's *Build to Scale Program* presents grants to organizations that are aiding companies in developing the next generation of technologies. These organizations may be operating initiatives to unlock investment capital across a region or sector, operating programs to accelerate company growth, empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs, and/or enabling technology commercialization. Automation Alley's award is part of the Venture Challenge, which seeks to support entrepreneurship and accelerate company growth in communities, regions, or combinations of regions.

Automation Alley will use the money from the *Build to Scale Program* to grow the I4.0 Accelerator, aiming to attract best-in-class advanced manufacturing technology companies from around the world and find pathways for these firms to provide a meaningful impact to the domestic value chain, using Michigan's existing manufacturing base as a gateway catalyst. It will also work to provide high-value match-making and accelerated commercialization opportunities for domestic startups and small manufacturers to bring their I4.0 technologies directly into Michigan manufacturing operations.

The I4.0 Accelerator is powered by Lawrence Technological University's Centrepolis Accelerator and the Lean Rocket Lab. Its mission is to attract startups from around the world that are developing the next generation of manufacturing technologies. Manufacturing and technology startups that are accepted into the I4.0 Accelerator receive a combination of capital, programming, and contracted services from partner organizations.

The City of Troy, through its Joint Cities of Troy and Southfield Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) and Automation Alley SmartZone, has been a major supporter of Automation Alley since the adoption of the Automation Alley SmartZone Agreement in 2003. As a full partner, Troy's LDFA has provided Automation Alley with operational, marketing and infrastructure support through Tax Increment Financing generated by the Automation Alley SmartZone.