



# Development of Thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL Hybrid Detectors at Jefferson Lab

**Kondo Gnanvo**

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- ❖ Motivation for thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL Hybrid Detector
- ❖ Performance studies of thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL prototypes in test beam
- ❖ Thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL detectors for EIC ePIC MPGD Barrel Outer Tracker
- ❖ Proposal for double-sided thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL technology for HFCC Muon Detector



## Challenges with standard ( $> 3$ -mm drift gap) MPGD

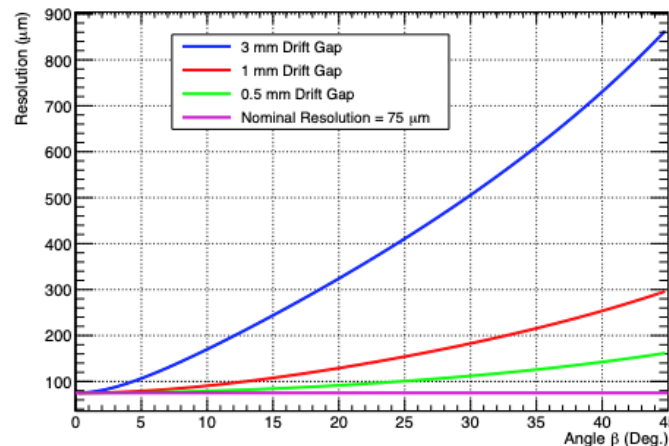
- ❖ Degradation of the spatial resolution with track angle .
- ❖  $E \times B$  in magnetic field negatively impact resolution

## Development of Thin-gap MPGDs:

- ❖ Smaller gap to minimize the dependence of resolution
- ❖ Smaller gap  $\rightarrow$  minimize  $E \times B$  effect in magnetic field
- ❖ Improve the detector timing performance

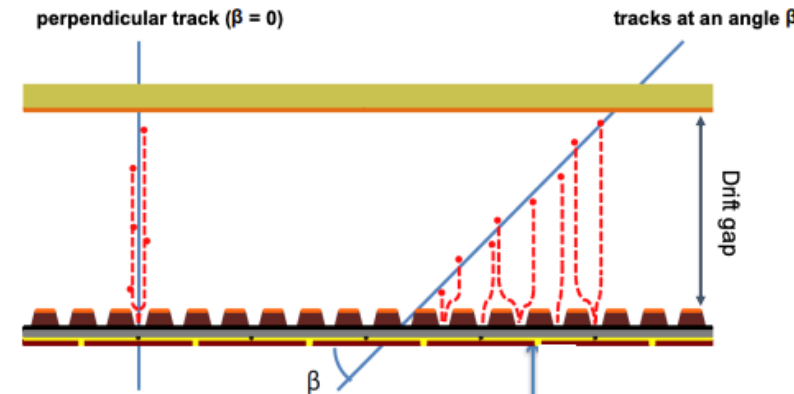
## Thin Gap MPGD R&D effort:

- ❖ Thin-gap triple GEMs developed @ UVa
- ❖ Thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL hybrid @ Jlab
- ❖ Thin-gap GEM-Micromegas @ Vanderbilt Univ.

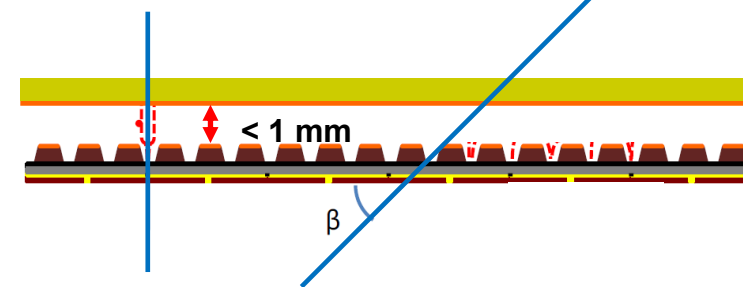


parametrization from *EPJ Web of Conferences* 174, 06005 (2018)

## standard Gap $\mu$ RWELL



## Thin Gap MPGD



## Development of Thin Gap MPGDs for EIC Trackers

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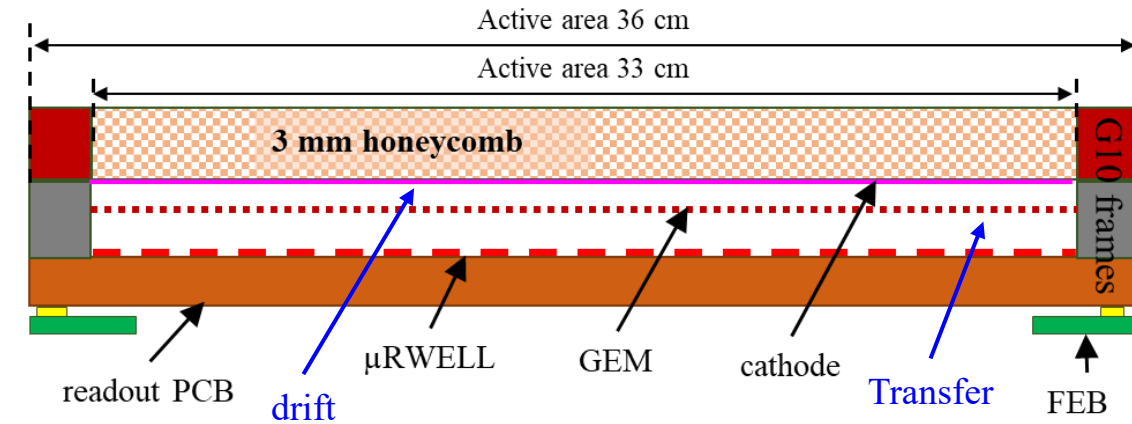
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## 3 thin-gap prototypes fabricated at Jefferson Lab :

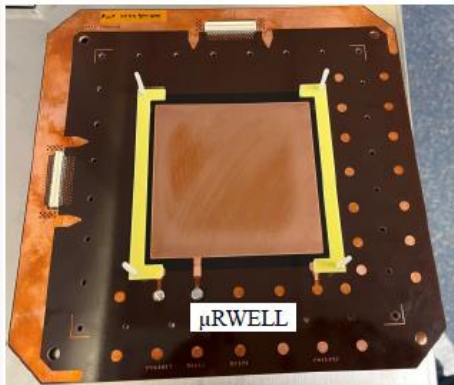
- ❖ **Proto1:** 1 mm drift gap & 1 mm transfer gap (between GEM &  $\mu$ RWELL)
- ❖ **Proto 2:** 1.5 mm drift gap – 1 mm transfer gap
- ❖ **Proto 3:** 0.5 mm drift gap – 1 mm transfer gap
- ❖ **Double amplification:** High gain & stable detector operation
  - Hybrid amplification  $\rightarrow$  GEM +  $\mu$ RWELL
- ❖ **X-Y strip readout with capacitive-sharing structures:**
  - 2 capacitive-sharing layers
  - Strip pitch = 800  $\mu$ m
  - <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2022.167782>



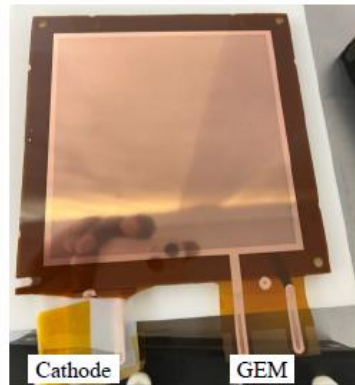
cross-section view of thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL detector

K. Gnanvo et al.: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2025.170791>

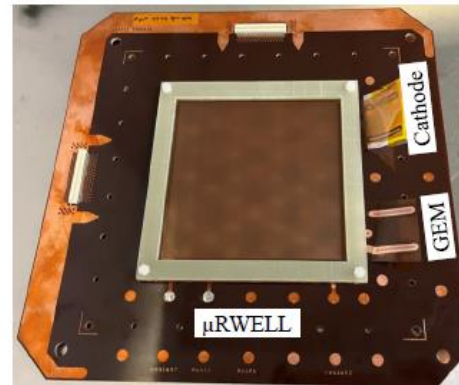
$\mu$ RWELL + readout PCB



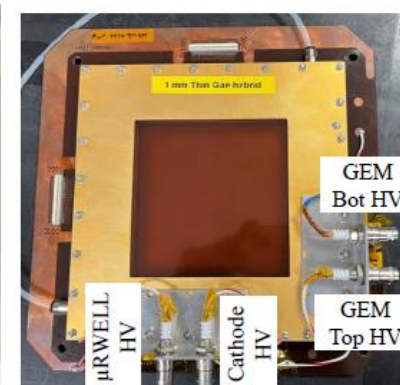
Cathode + GEM block



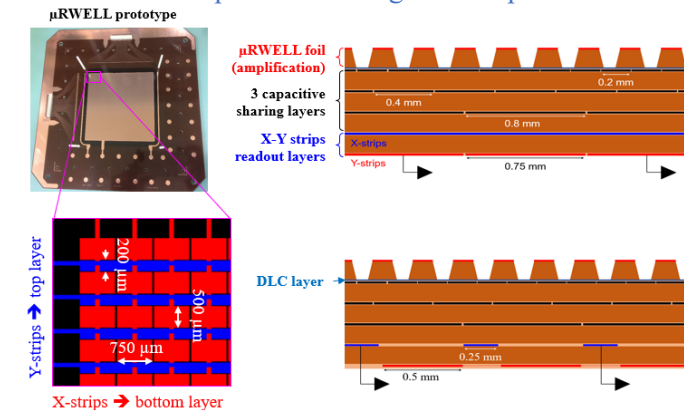
Stack of the hybrid



Final prototype



Capacitive-sharing X-Y strip readout



## Assembly of small (10 cm × 10 cm) thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL hybrid detector

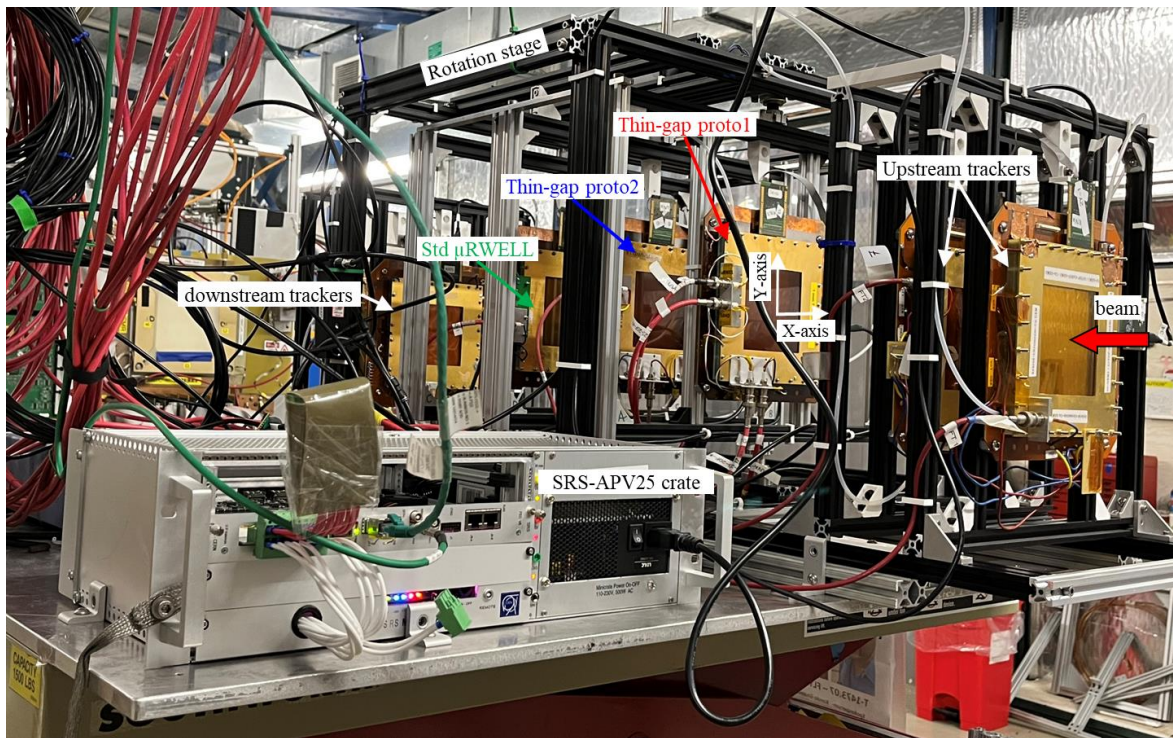




Test beam campaigns @ FNAL (2023) and @ JLab (2025) for performance study and optimization of thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL prototypes

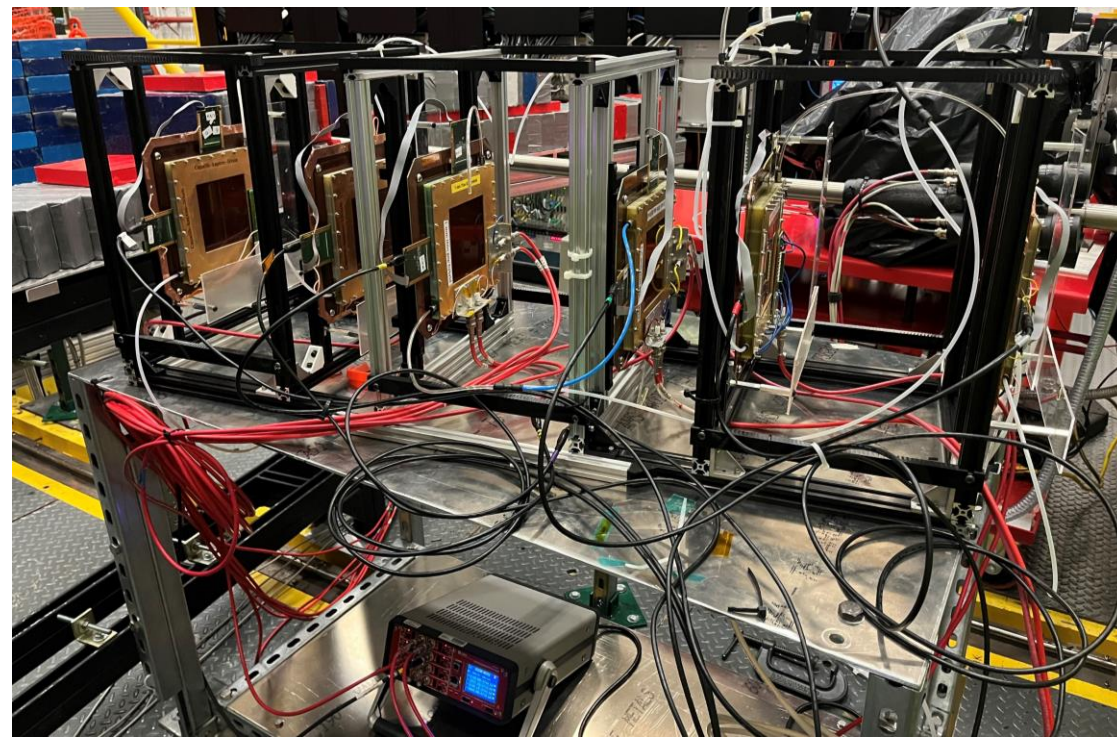
## FNAL test beam (06/2023): Position resolution vs. track angle

- ❖ 3 protos: 0.5 & 1 mm thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL, 3-mm std  $\mu$ RWELL
- ❖ 4 HV scans for efficiency study with Ar:CO<sub>2</sub> (80:20) gas mixture
- ❖ Track angle scan (0 – 45°) for position resolution comparison studies



## Jlab Hall D test beam (06/2025): - Efficiency vs. gas mixtures

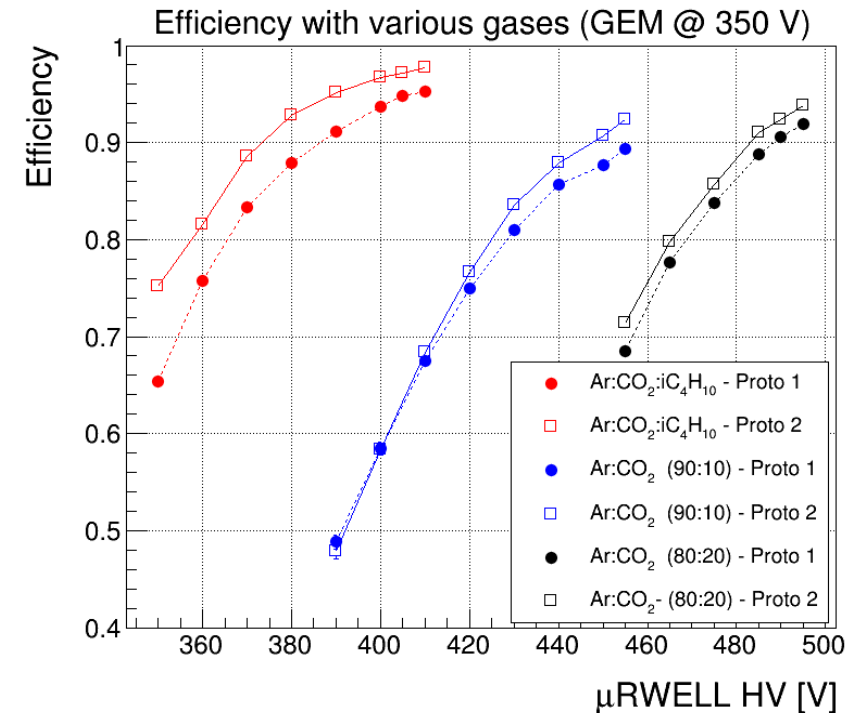
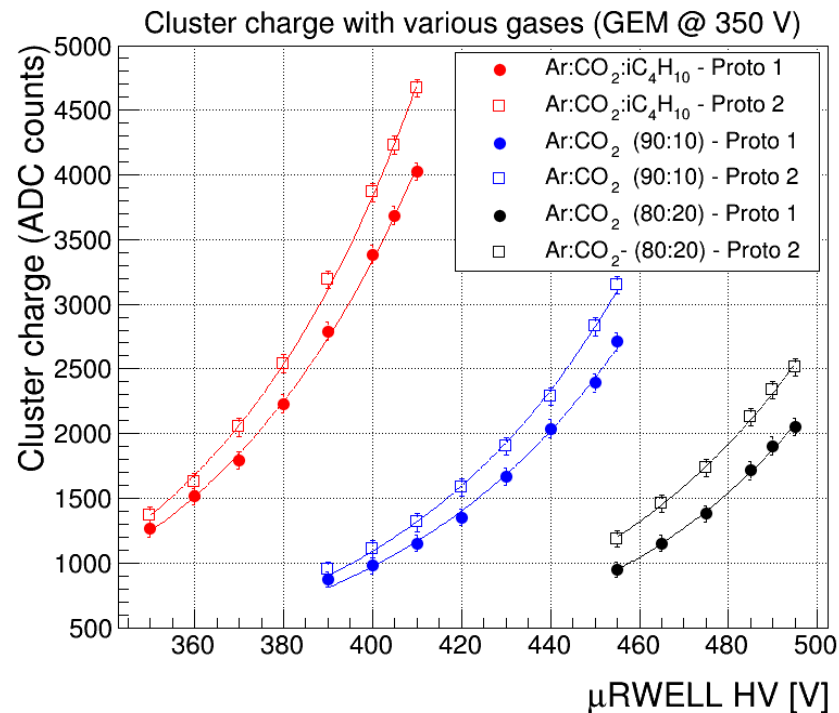
- ❖ 2 protos: 1-mm and 1.5-mm thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELLs
- ❖ HV scan for efficiency study various Ar-based mixtures
- ❖ Argon gas mixture: (Ar/CO<sub>2</sub> & Ar/CO<sub>2</sub>/Iso)



Third campaign is in preparation for the performance study of the prototypes in 1.5T field in the GOLIATH magnet in SPS H4 line @ CERN



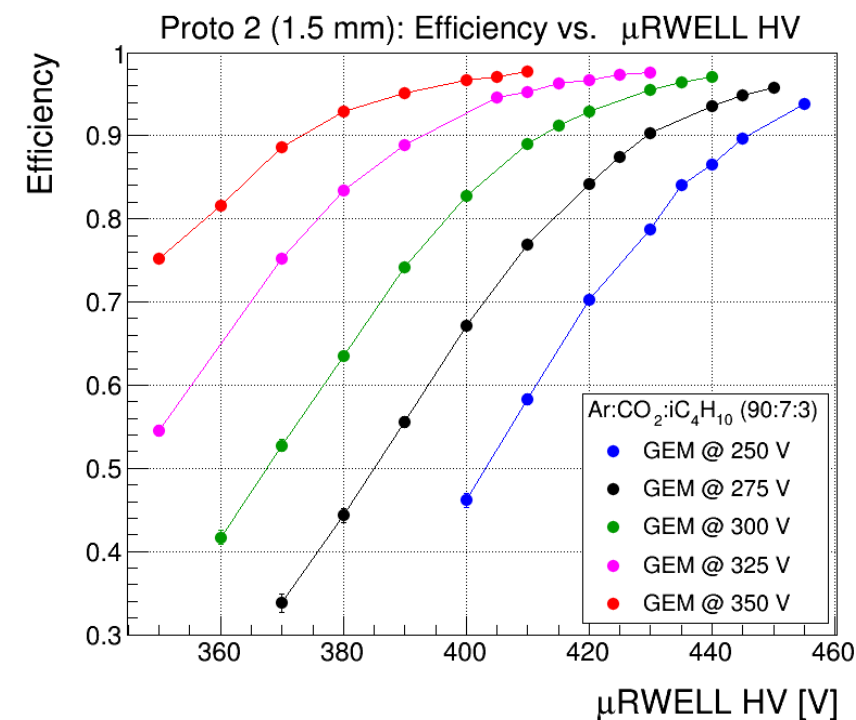
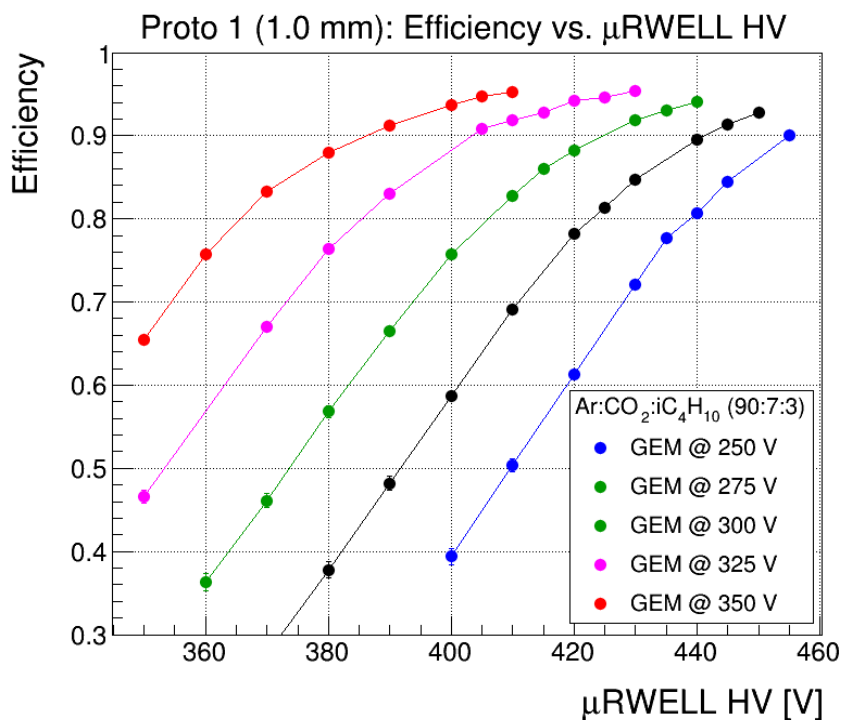
- ❖ Exponential rise of the cluster signal amplitude (mean ADC counts) for all three gases tested
  - ❖ High amplitude (red curves) signal at low voltages for the Ar:CO<sub>2</sub>:iC<sub>4</sub>H<sub>10</sub>, twice lower amplitude for Ar:CO<sub>2</sub> (80:20) at larger voltages
- ❖ High efficiency is achieved for both thin-gap prototypes even in Ar:CO<sub>2</sub>:iso at moderate voltage applied in both amplification layers
  - ❖ Proto 1 (1-mm gap): Efficiency ~96% at high voltage across both GEM (<350 V) and the  $\mu$ RWELL (< 450 V)
  - ❖ Proto 2 (1.5-mm gap): Efficiency ~98% at high voltage across both GEM (<350 V) and the  $\mu$ RWELL (< 450 V)







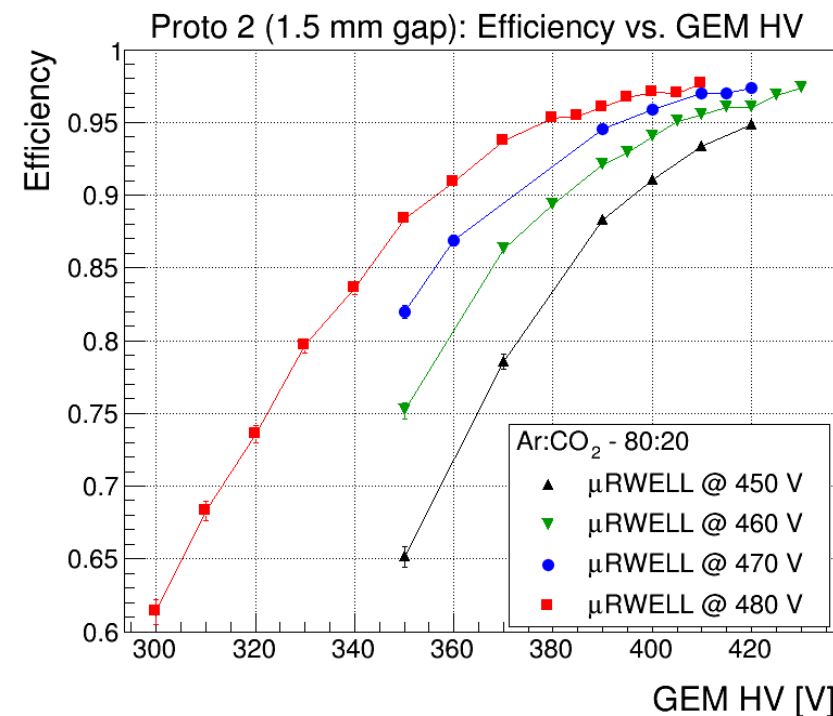
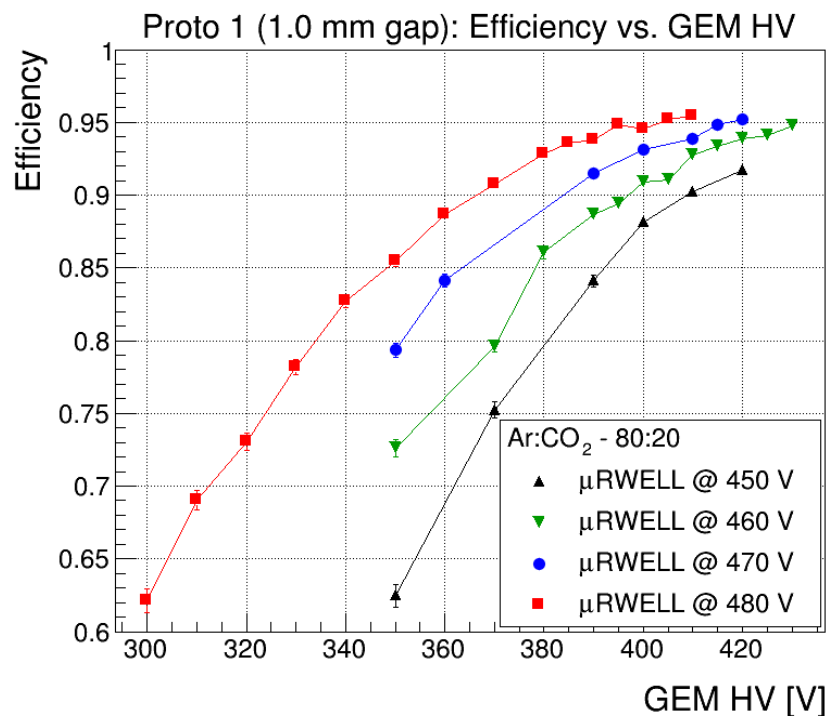
- ❖ High efficiency is achieved for both thin-gap prototypes even in Ar:CO<sub>2</sub>:iC<sub>4</sub>H<sub>10</sub> at **moderate voltage** applied in both amplification layers
  - ❖ Proto 1 (1-mm gap): Efficiency ~96% at high voltage across both GEM (<350 V) and the  $\mu$ RWELL (< 450 V)
  - ❖ Proto 2 (1.5-mm gap): Efficiency ~98% at high voltage across both GEM (<350 V) and the  $\mu$ RWELL (< 450 V)



Preliminary results → the analysis is still ongoing



- ❖ High efficiency is achieved for both thin-gap prototypes even in Ar:CO<sub>2</sub> but at high voltage in both amplification layers
  - ❖ Proto 1 (1-mm gap): Efficiency  $\sim 95\%$  at high voltage across both GEM (400 V) and the  $\mu$ RWELL ( $> 450$  V)
  - ❖ Proto 2 (1.5-mm gap): Efficiency  $> 97\%$  at high voltage across both GEM (400 V) and the  $\mu$ RWELL ( $> 450$  V)

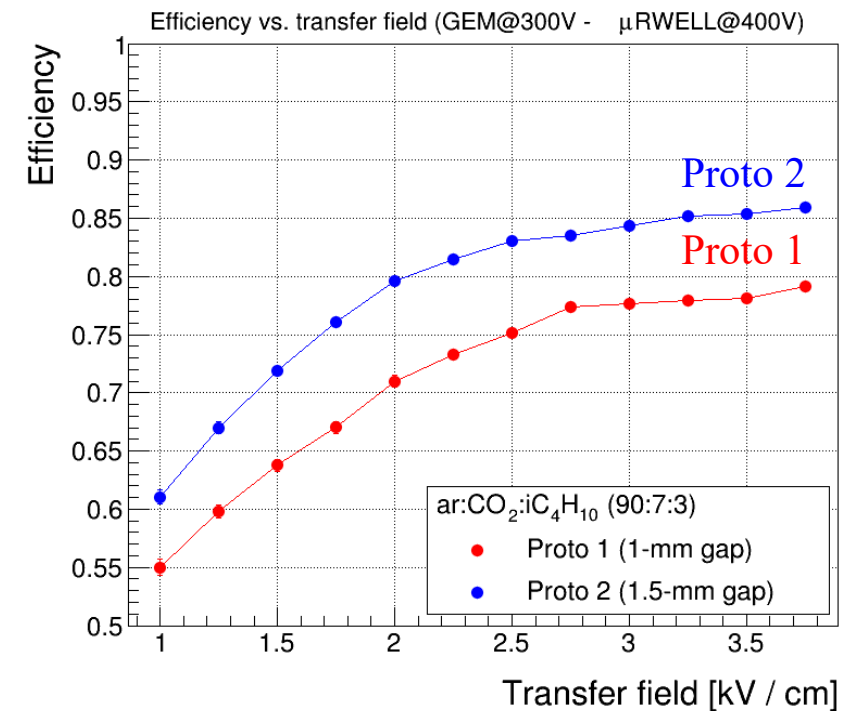
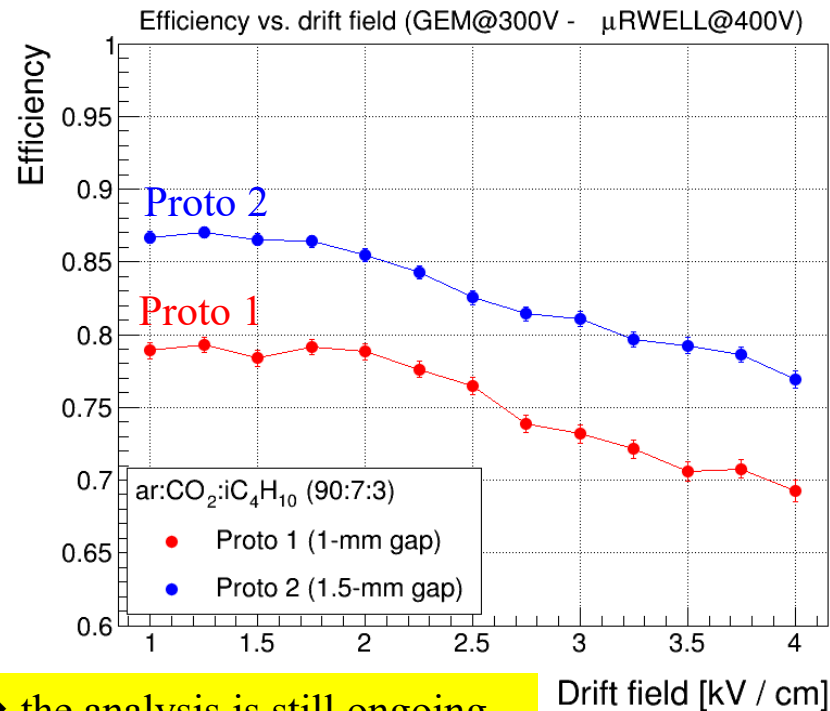


Preliminary results → the analysis is still ongoing





- ❖ Efficiency shows small dependence with the electric field in the drift region up to 2 kV / cm and slowly decreases above 2.5 kV / cm
  - We want to typically operate the detector at  $> 2.5$  kV/ cm to optimize timing performance and minimize  $E \times B$  effect
- ❖ Conversely, efficiency steadily increases from 1 kV / cm to  $\sim 2.5$  k /cm in the transfer gap between the GEM and the  $\mu$ RWELL PCB then reach a plateau above 2,5 kV /cm
  - We want to typically operate the detector at  $> 2.5$  kV/ cm to optimize timing performance and minimize  $E \times B$  effect
- ❖ Similar performance is observed for the Ar:CO<sub>2</sub> (90:10 and 80:20) that were tested



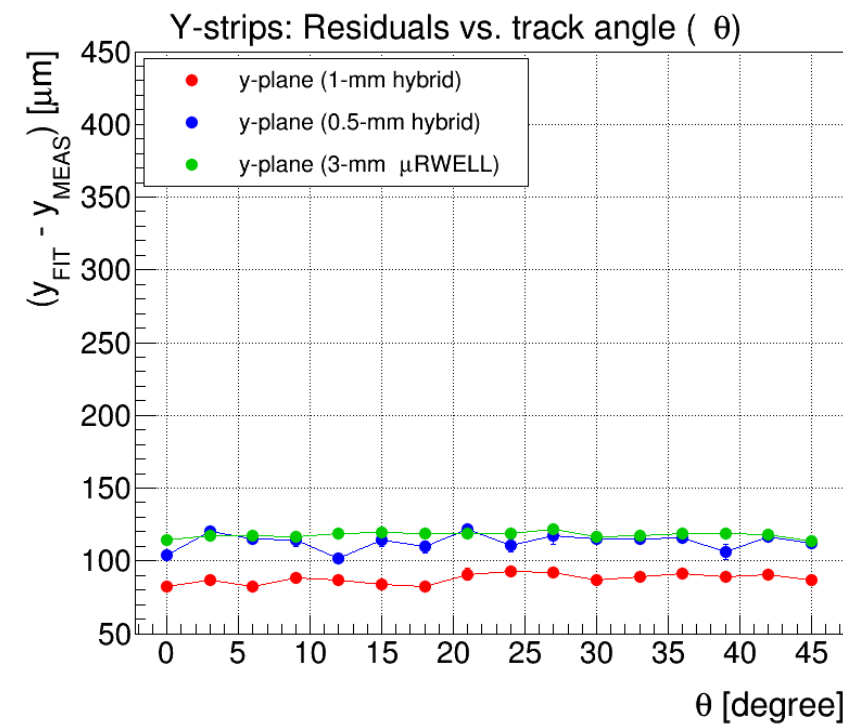
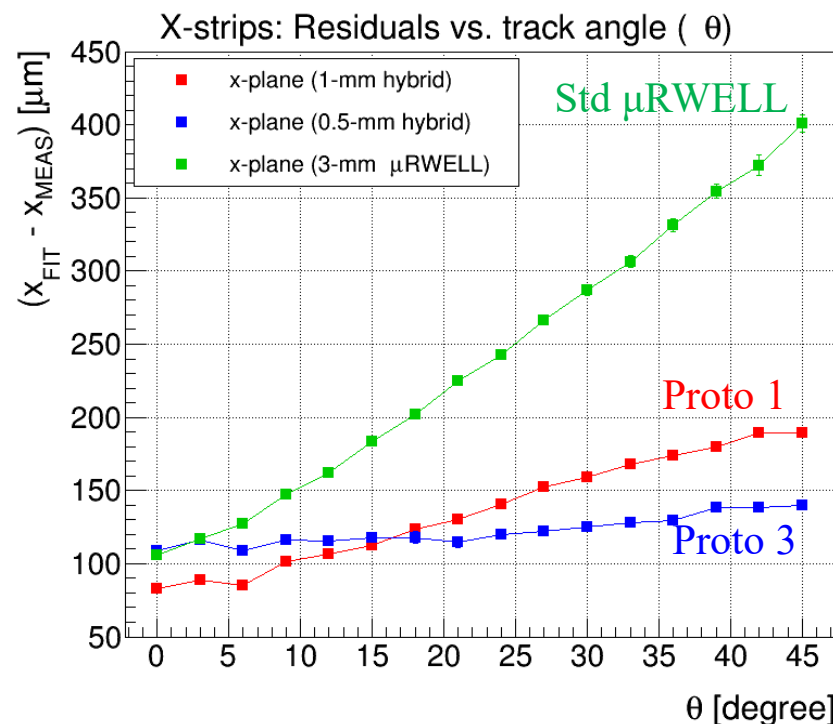
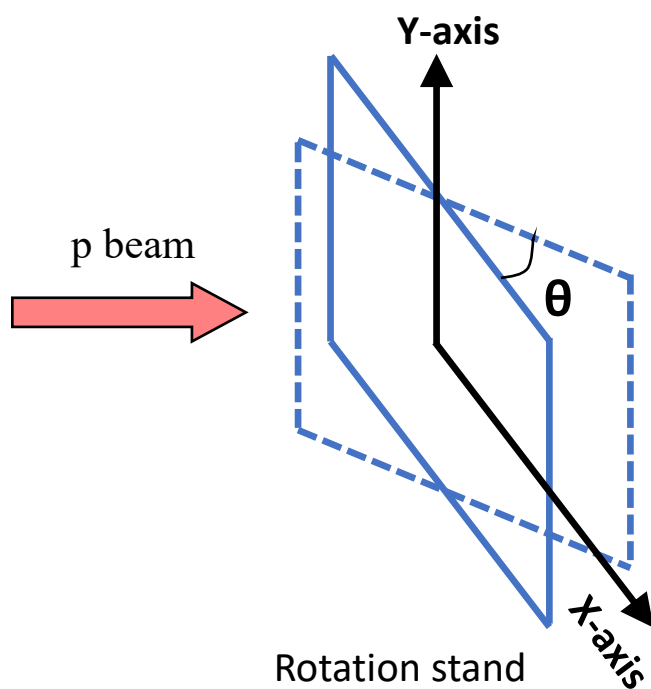
Preliminary results → the analysis is still ongoing

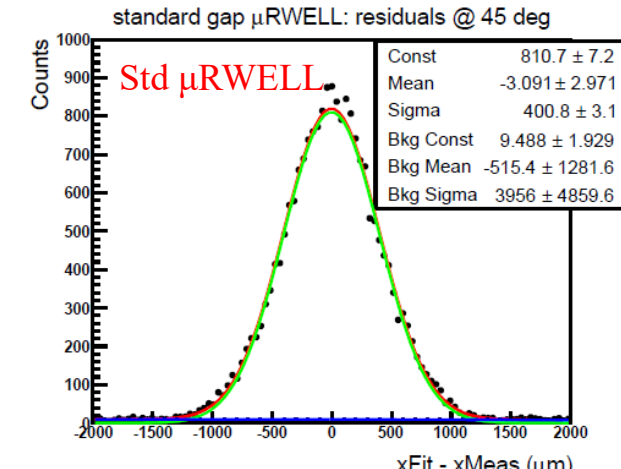
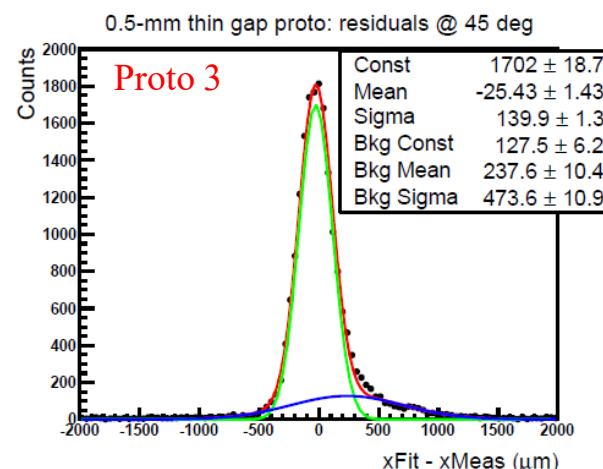
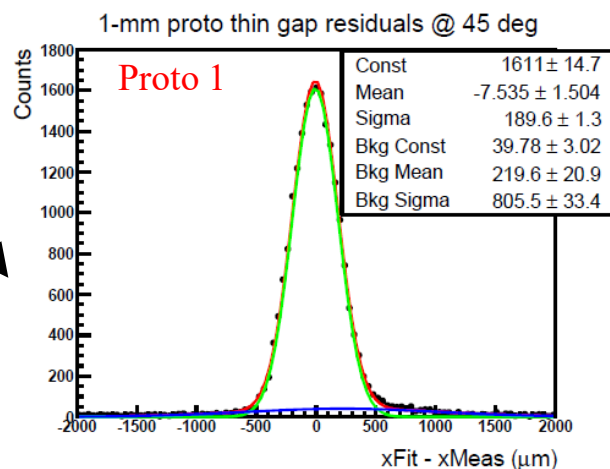
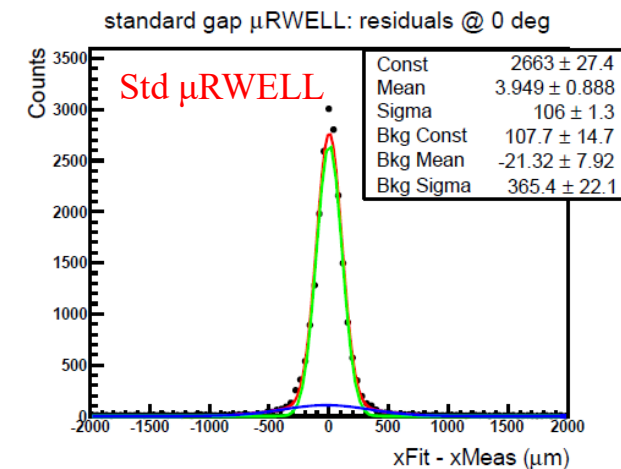
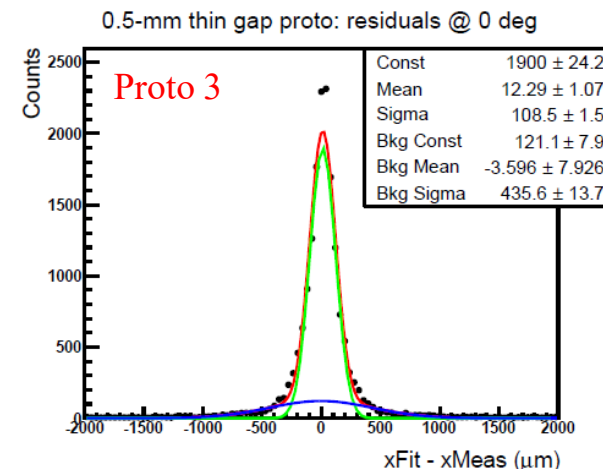
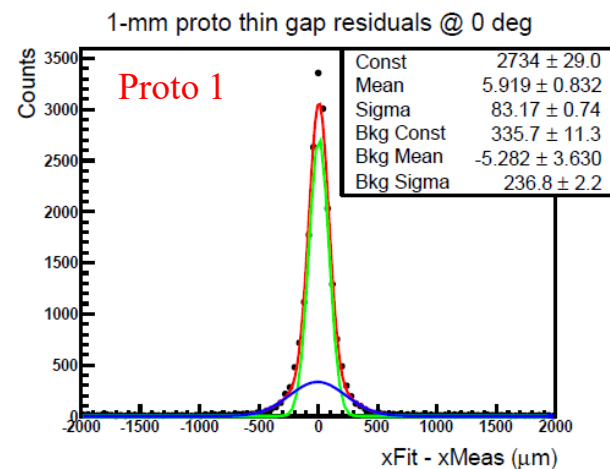
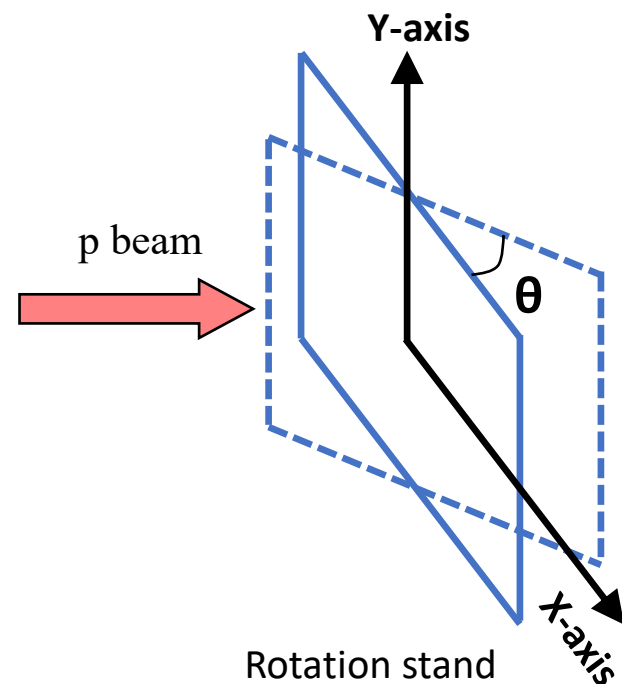


## FNAL test beam (06/2023): Position resolution vs. track angle

- ❖ Proto 1 (1 mm gap) and proto 3 (0.5 mm gap) and a standard 3-mm gap  $\mu$ RWELL detector installed in a rotation stand for a angle scan of the detectors plane w.r.t vertical axis
- ❖ Track angle scan ( $0 - 45^\circ$ ) for position resolution comparison studies
- ❖ Position resolution in X-strips significantly improves for the thin gap detectors (red and blue curves) with respect to the standard  $\mu$ RWELL
- ❖ Position resolution is constant for Y-strips (no plane rotation)

K. Gnanvo et al.: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nima.2025.170791>





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3 MPGD tracking subsystems in ePIC central detector:

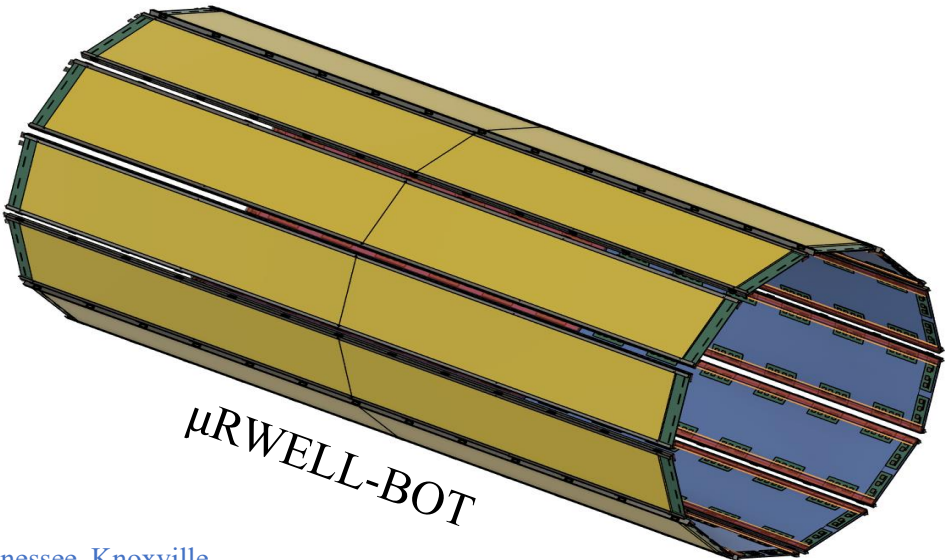
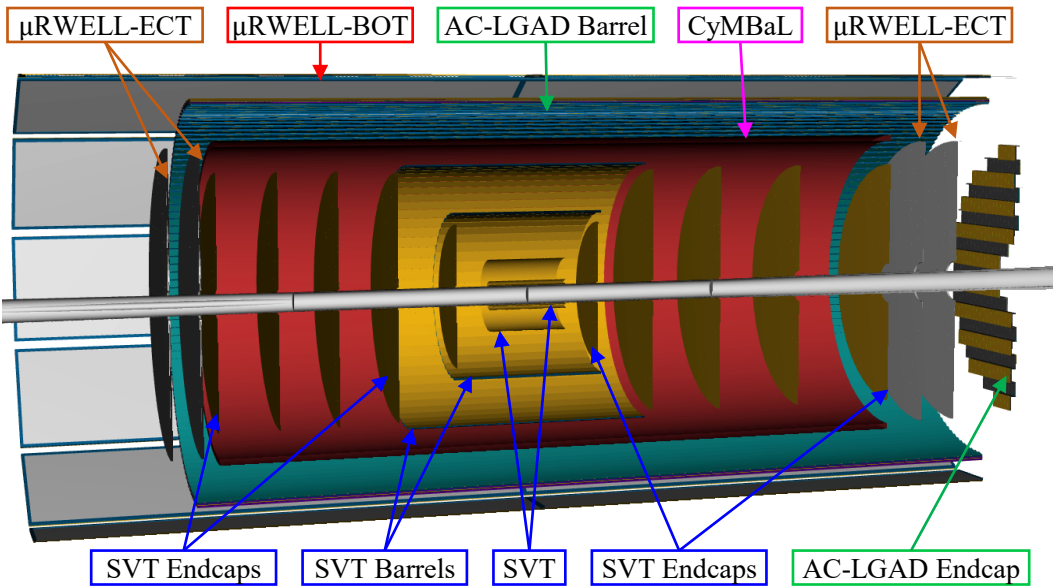
- ❖ CyMBaL: Barrel Inner Tracker (Cylindrical Micromegas Barrel Layer )
- ❖  $\mu$ RWELL-ECT: End Cap Tracker Disc (GEM- $\mu$ RWELL hybrid),
- ❖  $\mu$ RWELL-BOT: Barrel Outer Tracker (Thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL)

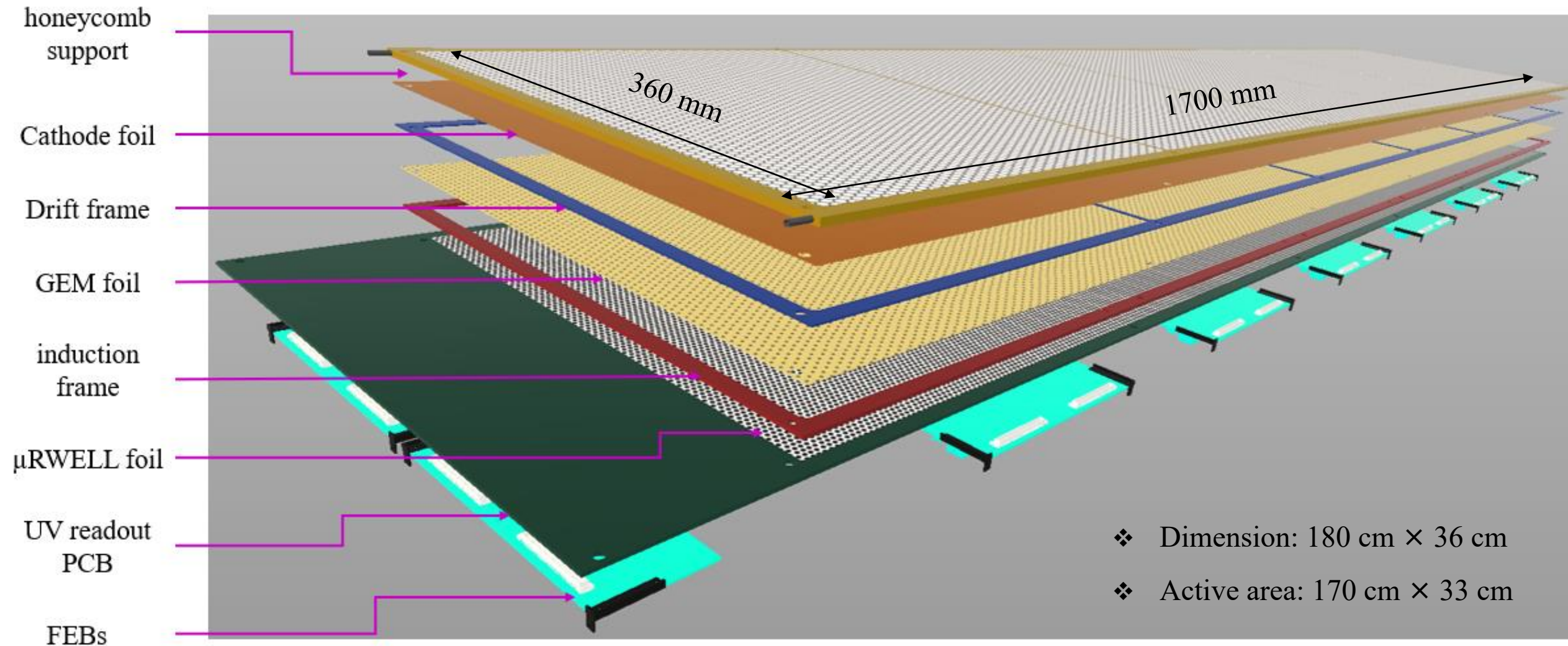
$\mu$ RWELL -BOT performance requirements:

- ❖ Fast timing for pattern recognition ( $\sim 10$  ns) time resolution
- ❖ Additional hit point to central tracker for redundancy (resolution  $\sim 150$   $\mu$ m)
- ❖ Good angular resolution for the event reconstruction at the hpDIRC
- ❖ Efficiency  $\geq 95\%$
- ❖ Material budget  $\sim 2\%$  X0

24 planar detector modules:

- ❖ 12 sectors in  $r^*\phi$   $\times$  2 modules in  $z$  @  $R = 72.5$  cm
- ❖ Based on Thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL hybrid technology
- ❖ ASIC: SALSA (under development @ Saclay): 64 chs
- ❖  $\sim 86$ k readout electronic channels



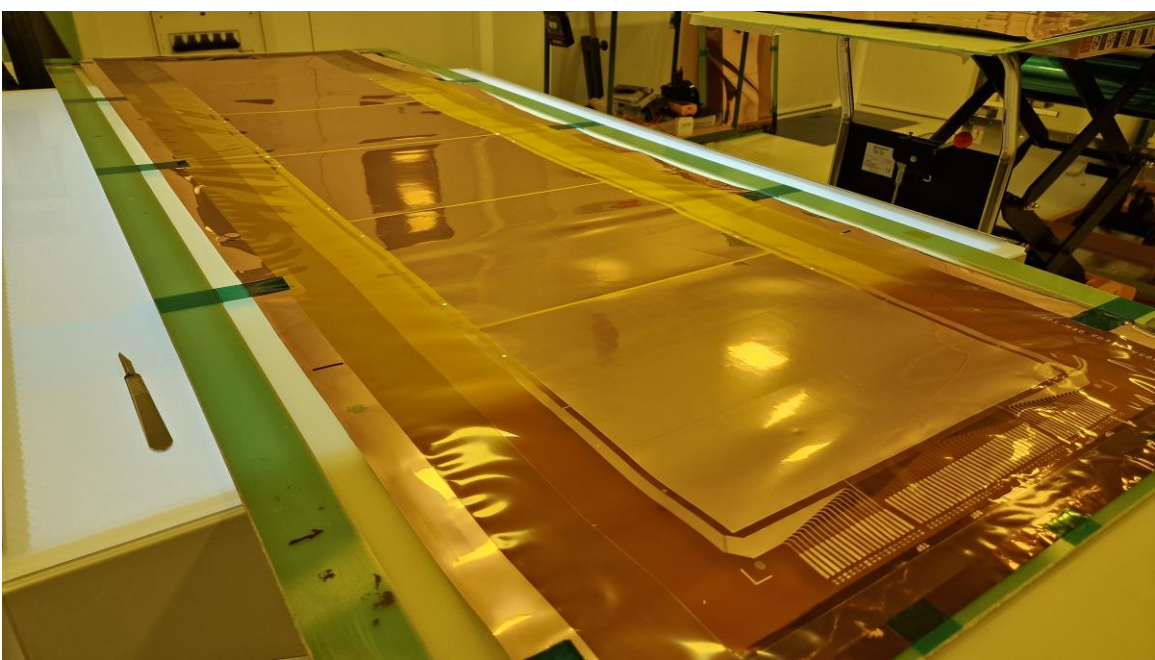


$\mu$ RWELL-BOT Test Article design



Detector major components are ready

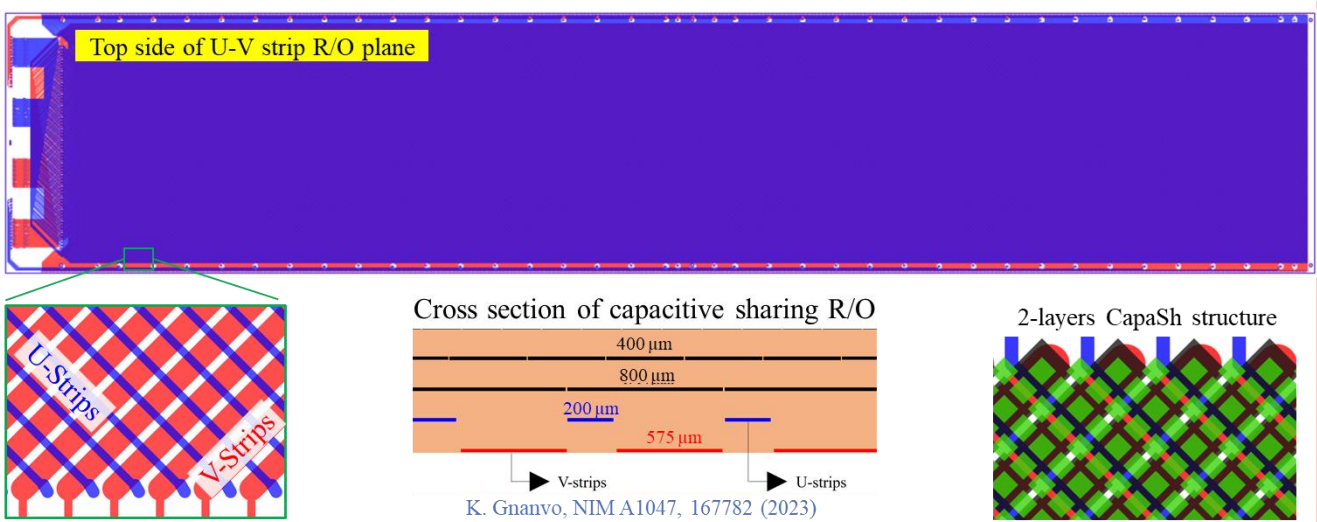
- ❖ GEM foil, μRWELL / CapaSh-X-Y strip readout PCB and detector support frames are all in hand at JLab
- ❖ Clean room infrastructure and equipment at JLab almost complete
- ❖ Assembly start week of Oct.13<sup>th</sup> → Completed by December 15<sup>th</sup>
- ❖ Plan to test performance in beam in Spring-Summer 2026
- ❖ Test article validation in 2026 → Pre-production modules in 2027



GEM foil



μRWELL / CapaSh readout PCB: Front view



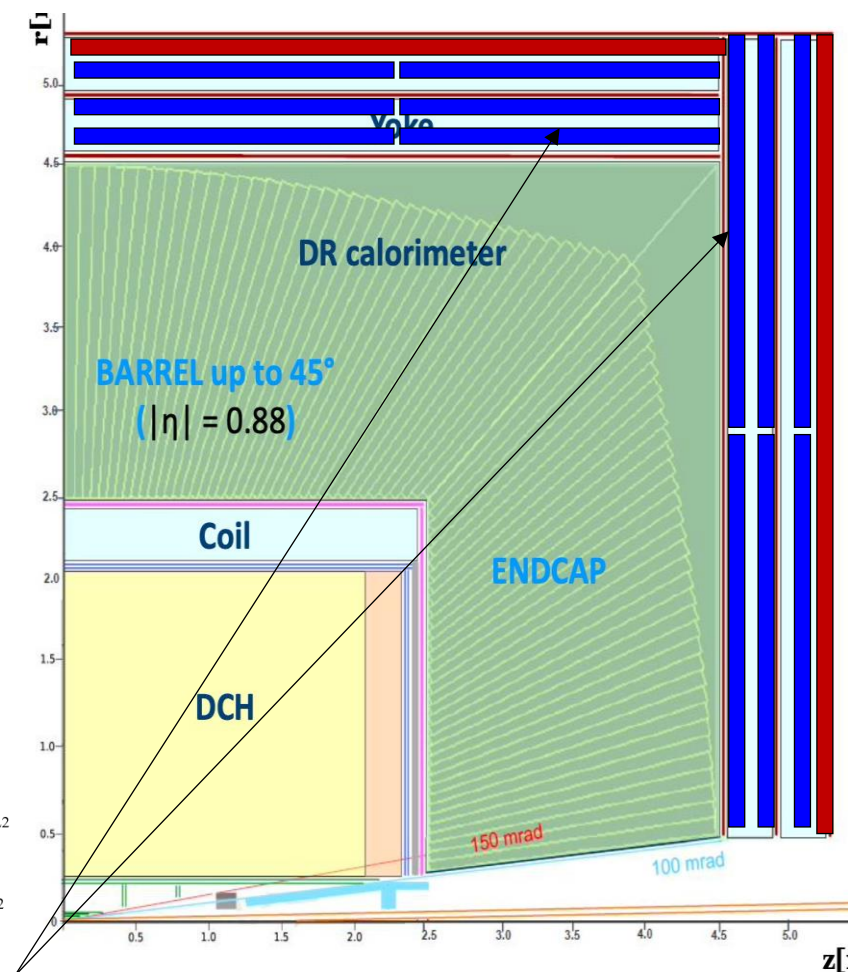
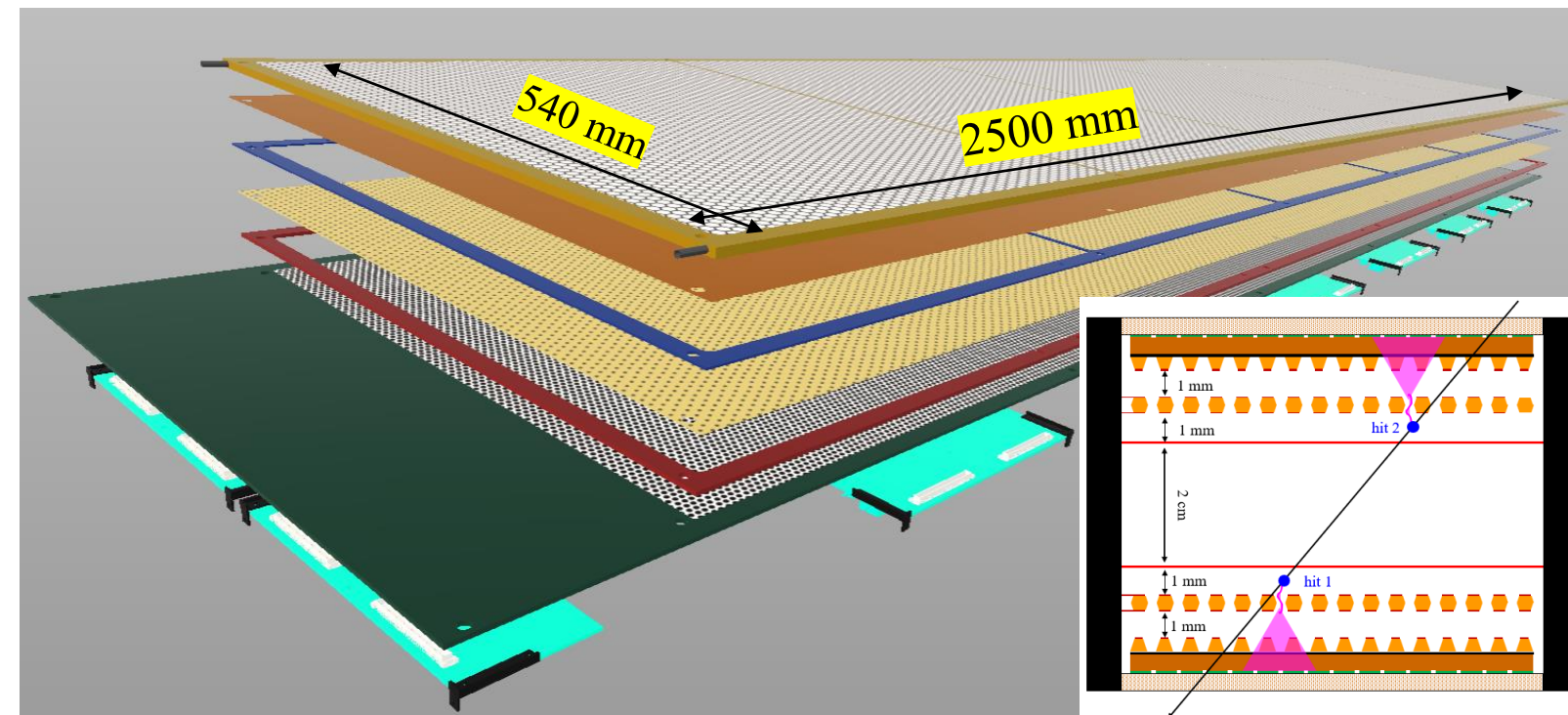
Capacitive sharing readout with X-Y strips @ 45°





**IDEA Muon Tracker Technology:** Large double-sided thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL hybrid

- ❖ **Detector layout:** 3 layers @ 5 m from IP  $\rightarrow$  720 modules,  $\sim 3$ M readout channels
- ❖ **Detector module:** Active area: 2500 mm  $\times$  540 mm ( $\sim 2.5 \times$  ePIC  $\mu$ RWELL-BOT area)
- ❖ **Double amplification:** GEM +  $\mu$ RWELL  $\rightarrow$  High gain and HV stability
- ❖ **Readout:** Capacitive-sharing U-V strips  $\rightarrow$  Low chs count / good spatial resolution
- ❖ **Double-sided:** 2-hit points per module  $\rightarrow$  Full efficiency, track reconstruction, redundancy



IDEA Detector concept @ FCC-ee



Dr. Xinzhan Bai, Dr. Kondo Gnanvo, Dr. Seung Joon Lee,  
Dr. Sourav Tarafdar



Prof. Marcus Hohlmann, Pietro Iapozzuto





Dr. Huong Nguyen, Prof. Nilanga Liyanage


This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Office of Nuclear Physics under contracts DE- AC05-06OR23177

See following talk from Sourav Tarafdar (RDC6 session)

Plans for EIC generic R&D based on MPGD technology

 Oct 9, 2025, 11:20 AM

 20m


 Regent

Parallel session talk

RDC 6 Gaseous Det...

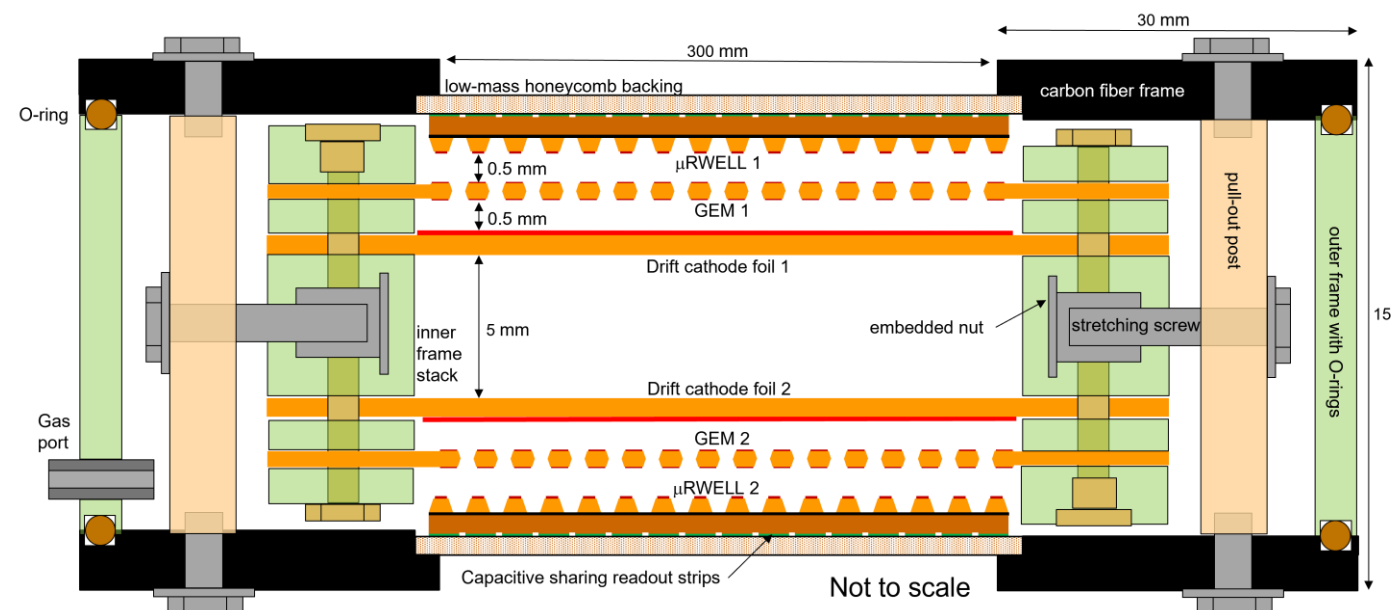
RDC 6 Gaseous Detect...

Speaker

 Sourav Tarafdar (Jefferson Lab)

### Description

The versatility of MPGD technology has drawn tremendous interest in both Nuclear and High Energy Physics communities to use as particle detector in experiments. Particle tracking detectors are integral part of Nuclear Physics experiment and MPGDs has established themselves as reliable tracking detectors due to their moderate material budget, low cost, moderate spatial resolution and relatively easier fabrication as large size detector. Many Nuclear and High Energy experiments including ePIC at EIC has incorporated multiple MPGD technologies as tracking detectors and there is possibility of utilizing same technology either as possible second EIC detector or any future Nuclear and High Energy Physics experiment. Apart from its role as tracking detector, MPGD technology has also demonstrated excellent timing performance with timing resolution of a few tens of picoseconds. Even it is in early stage of R&D, MPGDs has potential for being an alternate for currently existing technologies for Time-of-Flight Particle Identification Detectors in Nuclear and High Energy Physics experiments. Over the past decade significant progress has been made on this front in terms of optimizing the amplification structure, optimizing gas mixture, improving longevity of photocathode and increasing the active area of the detector itself. The EIC generic R&D program is focused on advancing cutting edge detector technologies for Nuclear Physics experiment and currently there are focus on advancement of MPGD technology both as tracking detectors and picosecond timing detectors in Nuclear and High Energy Physics experiments. This presentation will focus on overview of various ongoing R&Ds using MPGD technology under EIC generic R&D program.







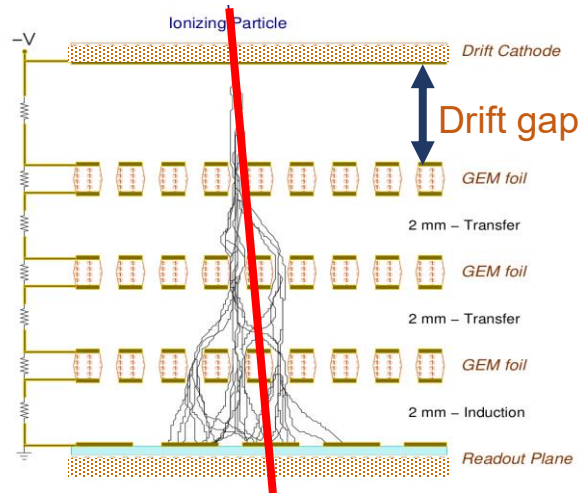
- ❖ Thin Gap MPGD is a new approach to improve spatial and timing resolution of Micro pattern Gaseous Detectors and achieved better than 150  $\mu\text{m}$  in a wide range of the impact angle of the incoming particle
- ❖ The development of thin gap prototypes and performance studies in beam test demonstrate that spatial resolution improvement by a factor two is achieved at 45° particle angle compared to standard MPGD
- ❖ Thin-gap GEM-  $\mu\text{RWELL}$  hybrid prototypes with GEM pre-amplification and  $\mu\text{RWELL}$  as second amplification coupled with capacitive-sharing readout structures show excellent efficiency and spatial resolution capabilities
- ❖ Recent test beam results show that efficiency of 96% and 98% could be achieved with 1-mm gap and 1.5 mm gap thin gap GEM- $\mu\text{RWELL}$  hybrid detectors with  $\text{Ar}:\text{CO}_2:\text{iC}_4\text{H}_{10}$  (90:7:5=3) gas mixture
- ❖ Large thin-gap GEM-  $\mu\text{RWELL}$  hybrid is the chosen technology for the barrel outer tracker of the ePIC detector at the EIC
- ❖ The technology is an ideal candidate for the muon tracking system for the future HFCC detector



# Back-up



## Structure of UVA Triple GEM Prototypes

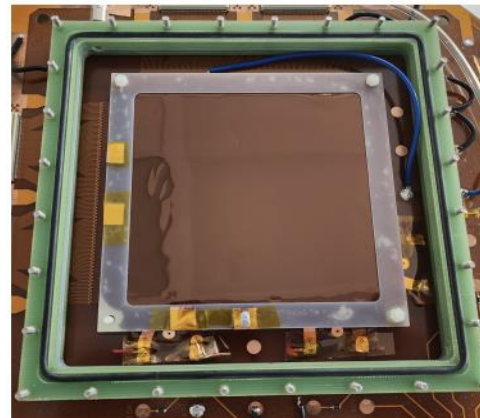


	Cathode	Drift Gap	Tested at FNAL in June 2023
Proto I	Copper-Kapton foil	1.0 mm	ArCO <sub>2</sub> , HV & Angle Scan
Proto II	Copper-Kapton foil	1.5 mm	ArCO <sub>2</sub> & KrCO <sub>2</sub> , HV & Angle Scan
Proto III	Copper-Kapton foil	3.0 mm	ArCO <sub>2</sub> , Angle Scan
Proto IV	400 $\mu$ m-pitch fine Copper wire	1.5 mm	ArCO <sub>2</sub> , HV & Angle Scan
Proto V	800 $\mu$ m-pitch fine Copper wire	1.5 mm	ArCO <sub>2</sub> , HV & Angle Scan

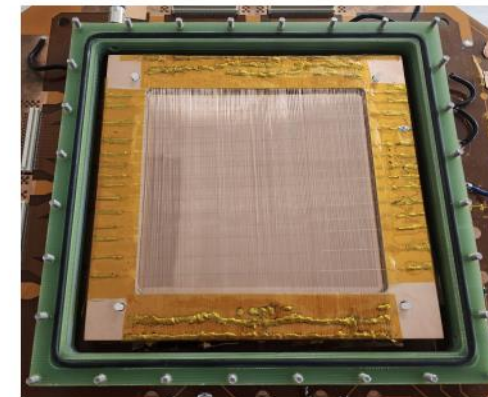
(a) Copper-Kapton Cathode

(b) 400  $\mu$ m wire-pitch cathode

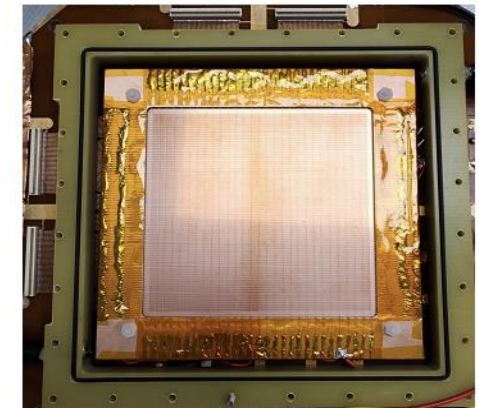
(c) 800  $\mu$ m wire-pitch cathode



(a)



(b)



(c)

CP.

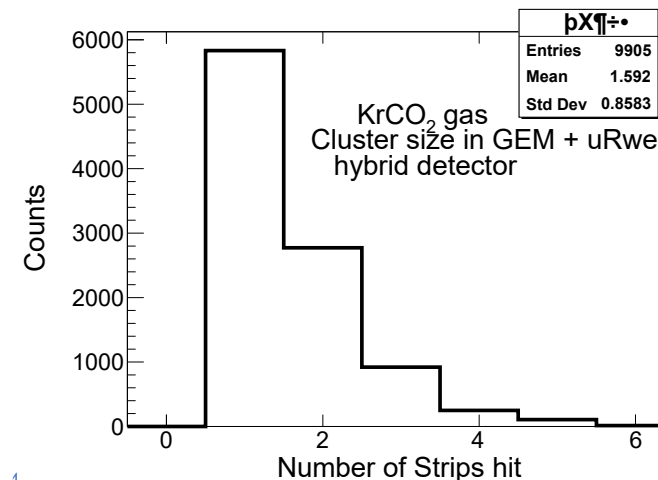
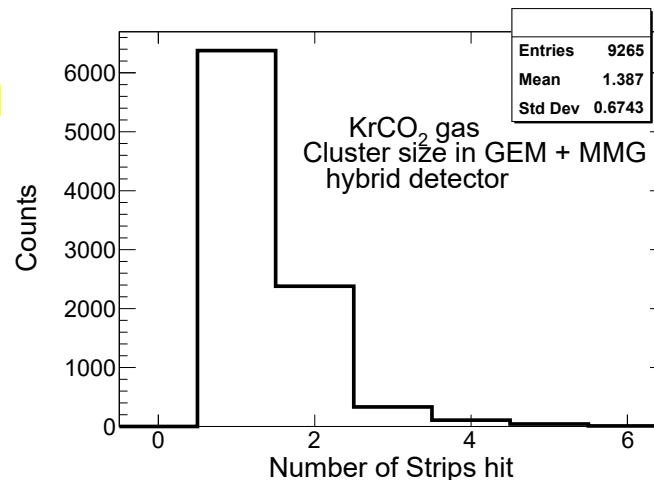
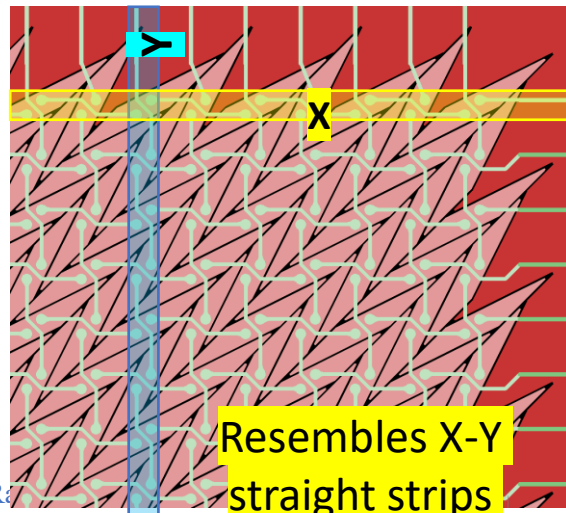
## ❖ UVA Tripple GEM Prototypes:

- Amplification: 3 GEM foils
- RO plane: 400  $\mu$ m-pitch X-Y strips
- Three prototypes having different drift gaps (1.0 mm, 1.5 mm, 3.0 mm), the same cathode
- Three prototypes having different Cathode structures, the same drift gap (1.5 mm)

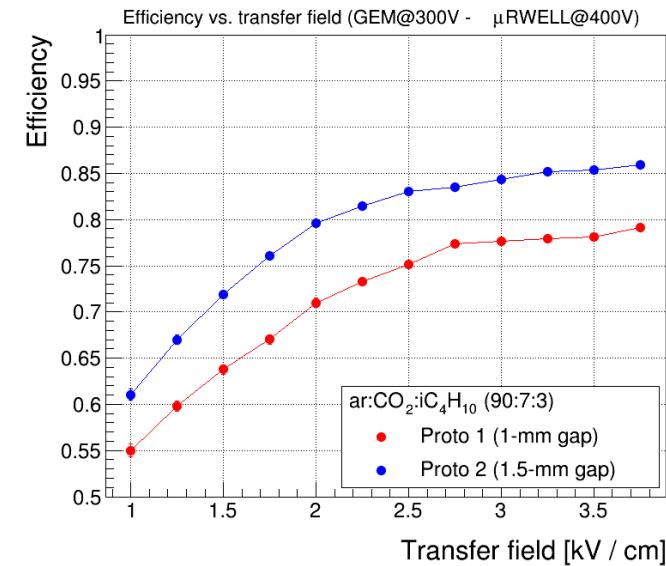
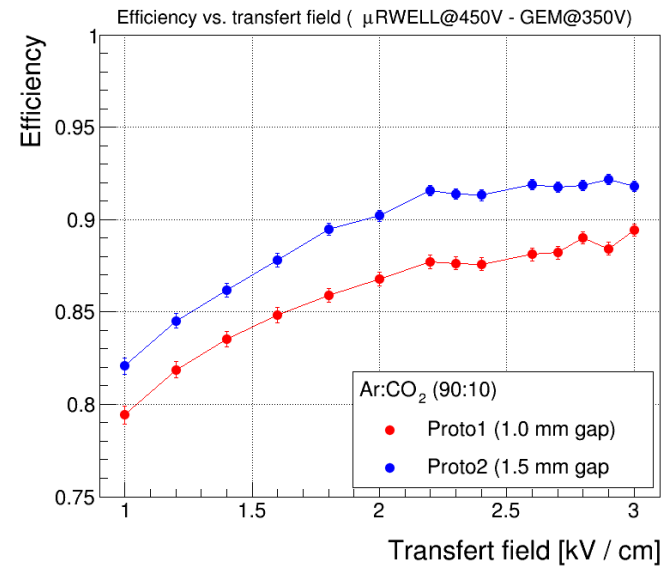
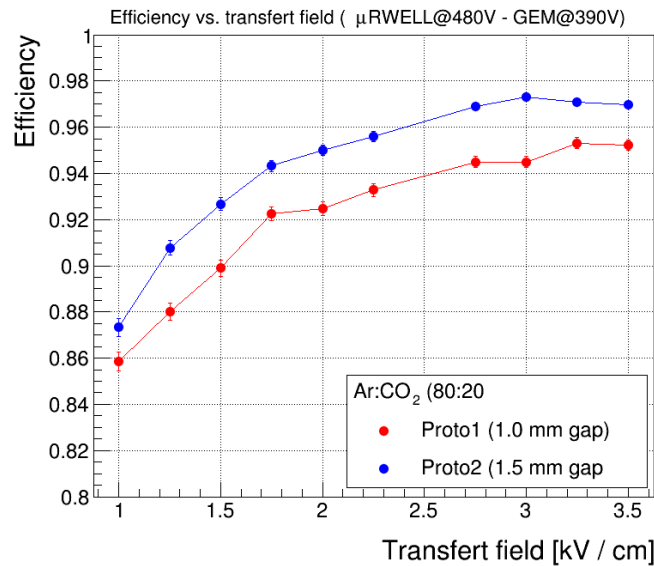
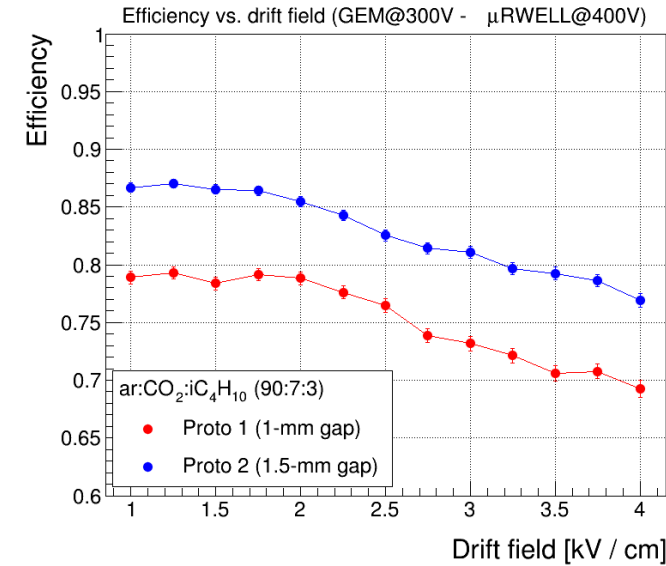
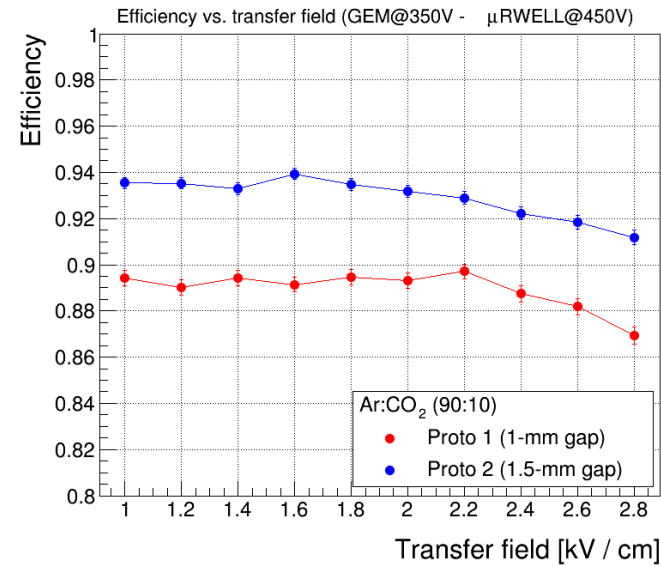
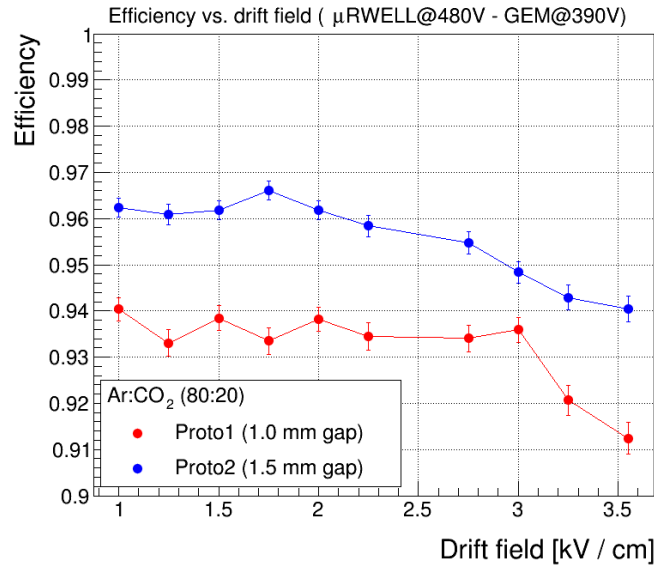




Prototypes	Specifications	Data taken (Fermilab test beam)
GEM +MMG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active area = 10 cm x10 cm</li> <li>Drift gap = 1 mm</li> <li>Transfer gap = 1 mm</li> <li>2D chevron R/O with 1.6 mm pitch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ArCO<sub>2</sub> gas (HV scan + track angle scan)</li> <li>KrCO<sub>2</sub> gas (HV scan + track angle scan)</li> </ul>
GEM + $\mu$ RWELL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active area = 10 cm x10 cm</li> <li>Drift gap = 1 mm</li> <li>Transfer gap = 0.5 mm</li> <li>2D chevron R/O with 1.6 mm pitch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ArCO<sub>2</sub> gas (HV scan + track angle scan)</li> <li>KrCO<sub>2</sub> gas (HV scan + track angle scan)</li> </ul>
$\mu$ RWELL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active area = 10 cm x10 cm</li> <li>Drift gap = 1 mm</li> <li>2D chevron R/O with 1.6 mm pitch</li> </ul>	No data taken



- ❖ Mostly single strips are getting fired most of the time
- ❖ Challenging to decipher hot channel with real hit
- ❖ Ongoing analysis





EIC is the flagship Nuclear Physics (NP) Facility in the US (2031+)

- ❖ **High Luminosity:**  $L= 10^{33} - 10^{34}\text{cm}^{-2}\text{sec}^{-1}$ , 10 – 100 fb<sup>-1</sup>/year
- ❖ **Highly Polarized Beams:** 70%
- ❖ **Large Center of Mass Energy Range:**  $E_{\text{cm}} = 20 - 140 \text{ GeV}$
- ❖ **Large Ion Species Range:** Protons – Uranium
- ❖ **Particle production rate:** ~5 @ 500 kHz
- ❖ **ePIC Detector:** Large Acceptance and Good Background Conditions

**Vertexing and Tracking:**

- Silicon Vertex Tracker (MAPS)
- MPGD ( $\mu\text{RWELL}/\mu\text{Megs}$ )

**Particle Identification:**

- TOF (AC-LGAD also for tracking)
- pTRICH (Aerogel/HRPPD)
- hpDIRC (Quartz/MCP-PMT)
- dRICH (Aerogel+C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>6</sub>/MCP-PMT)

**EM Calorimeters:**

- EEMCal (PbWO<sub>4</sub>/SiPM)
- Barrel EMCal (Pb+SciFi/SiPM) with imaging layers (Pb+SciFi/AstroPix)
- FEMC (W+SciFi)

**Hadronic Calorimeters:**

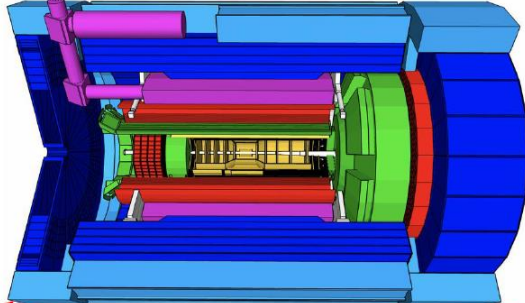
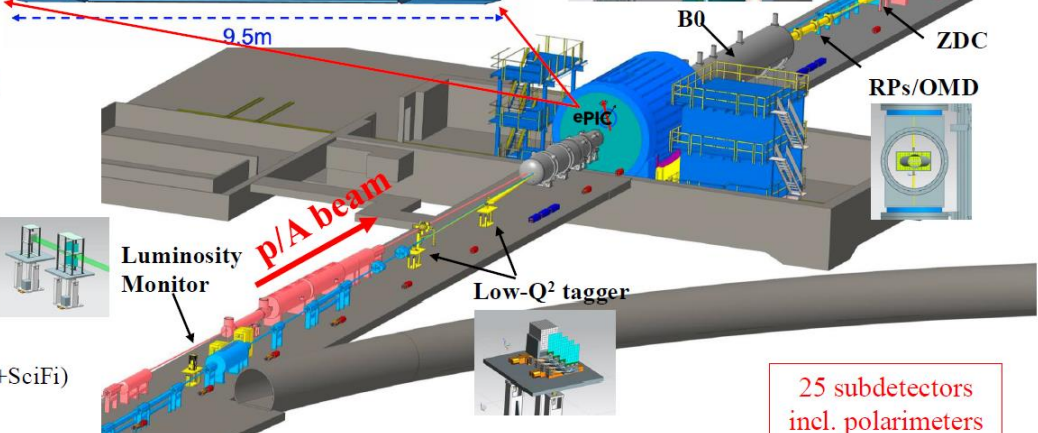
- Backward HCAL (Fe+Sc/SiPM)
- Barrel HCAL (sPHENIX re-use)
- LFHCAL (Fe+Sc&W+Sc/SiPM)

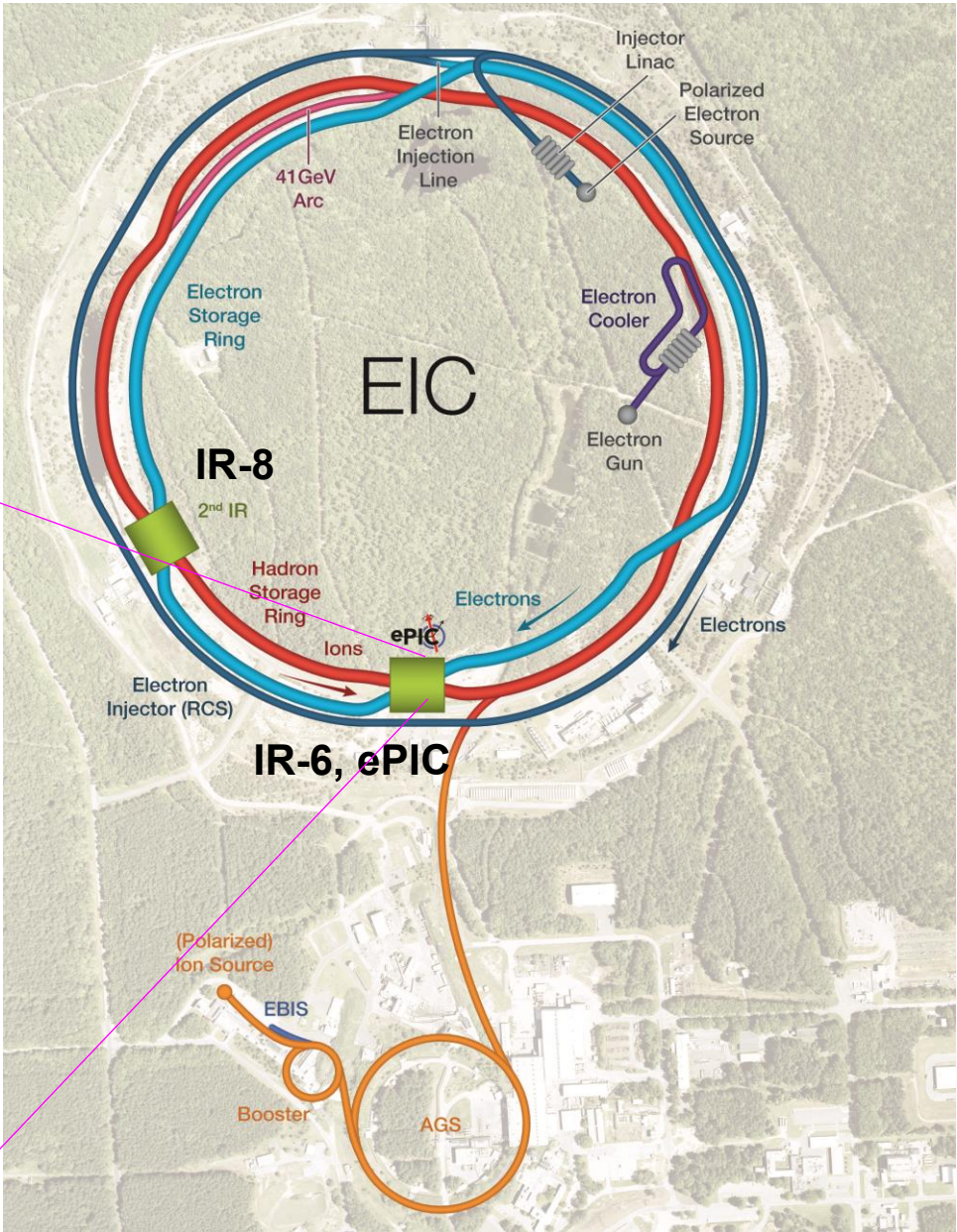
**Far-Backward:**

- Luminosity monitor (AC-LGAD, W+SciFi)
- Low-Q<sup>2</sup> tagger (Si/Timepix4)

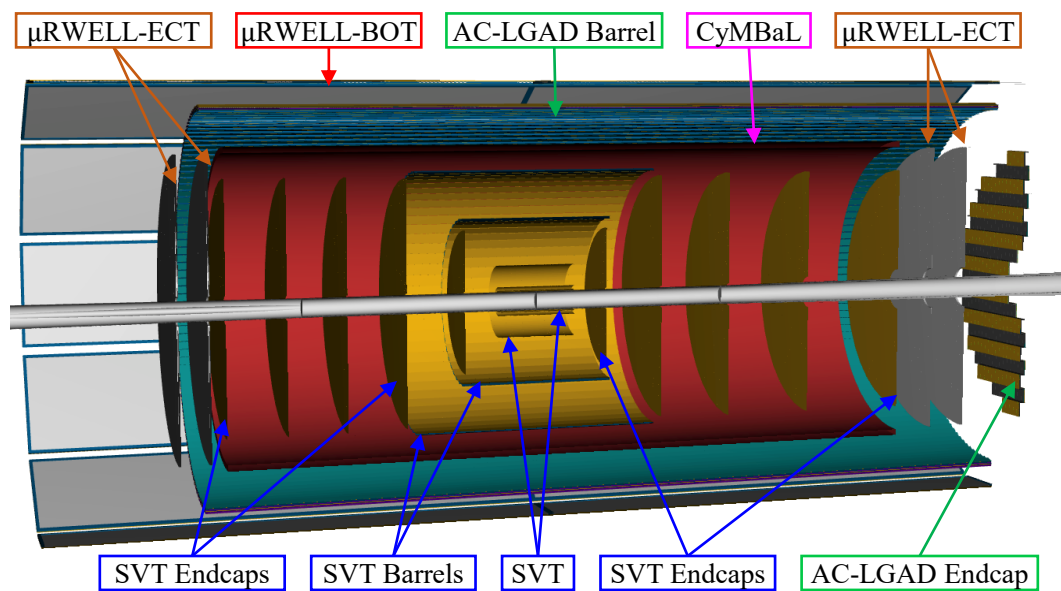
**Far-Forward:**

- Roman Pots (AC-LGAD)
- B0 Magnet Spectrometer (AC-LGAD, PbWO<sub>4</sub>)
- Off-Momentum Detector (AC-LGAD)
- Zero Degree Calorimeter (PbWO<sub>4</sub>, Fe/SiPM)







### Silicon Vertex Tracker (SVT): ~6 μm point resolution

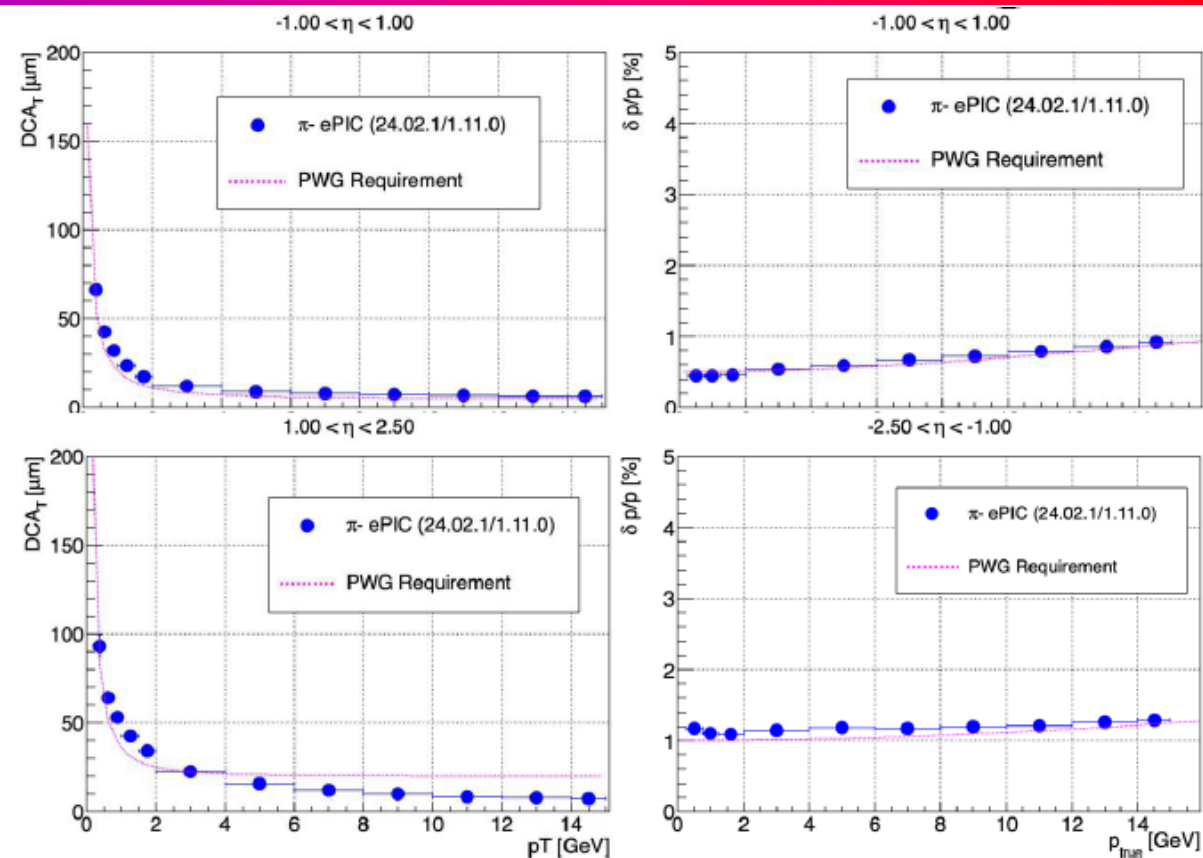
- ❖ 3 inner barrels: ITS3-curved wafer-scale sensor, 0.05% X/X0
- ❖ 2 outer barrels: ITS3-based sensors (EIC-LAS), 0.25/0.55% X/X0
- ❖ 5 disks (forward/backward), EIC-LAS, 0.25% X/X0

### Micro Pattern Gaseous Detectors (MPGD): 10 ns & 150 μm resolutions

- ❖ **2 × 2 End cap disks:** GEM-μRWELL hybrid detectors
- ❖ **One inner barrel layer:** Cylindrical Micromegas
- ❖ **One outer barrel layer:** Thin-gap GEM-μRWELL hybrid detectors

### AC-coupled LGAD TOF: 30 μm + 30 ps resolutions

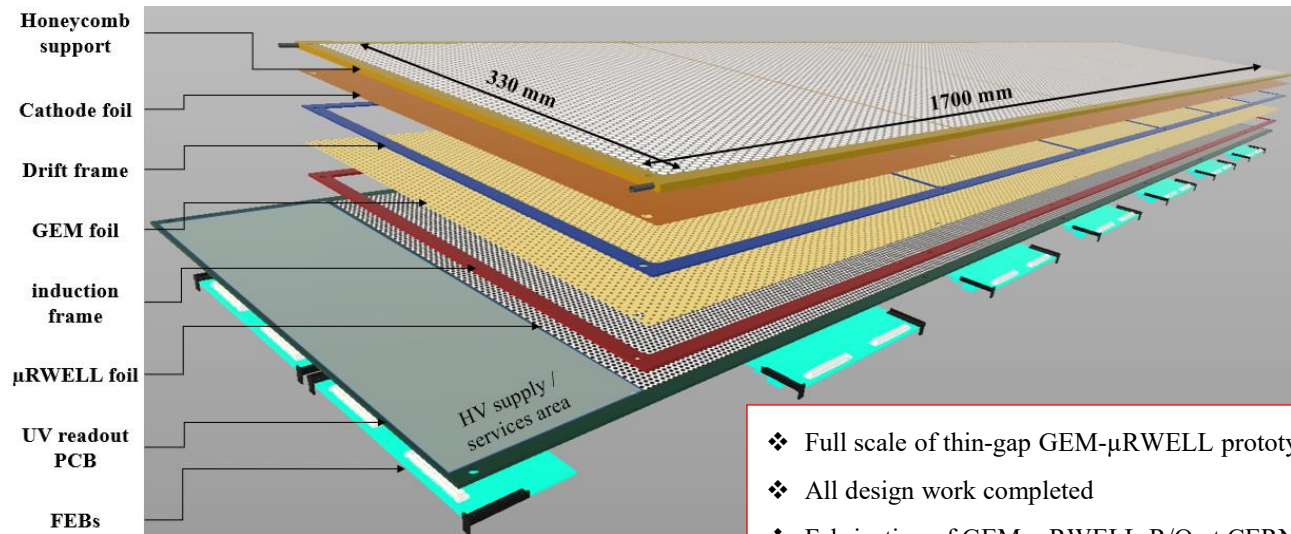
- ❖ Barrel TOF: 0.05 x 1 cm strip, 1% X/X0
- ❖ Forward TOF: 0.05 x 0.05 cm pixel, 5% X/X0



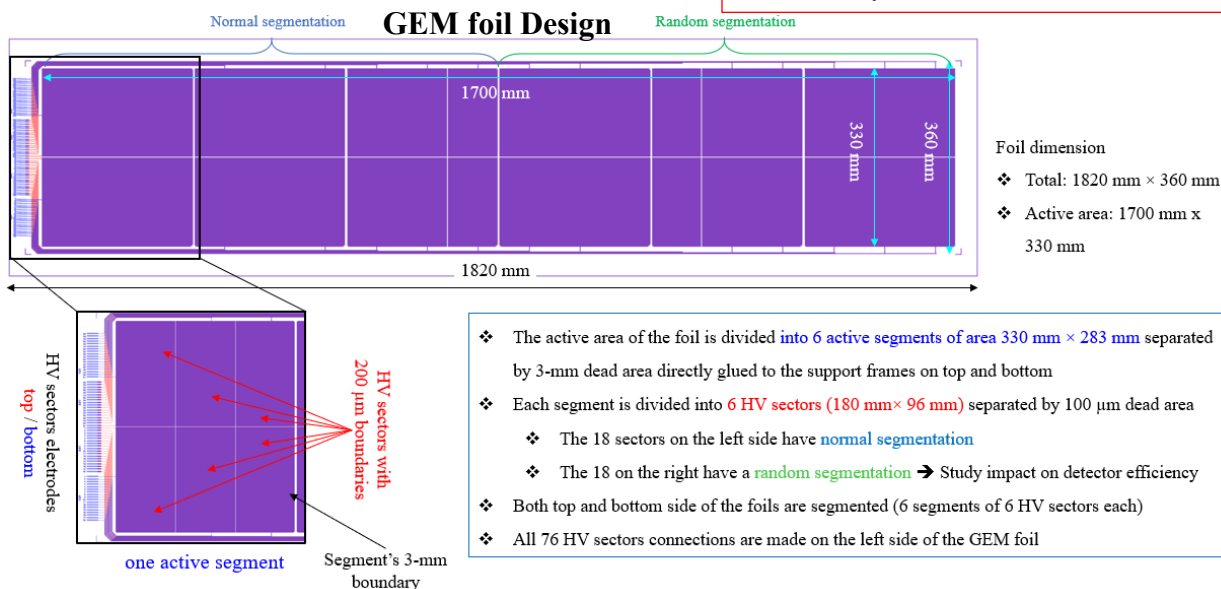
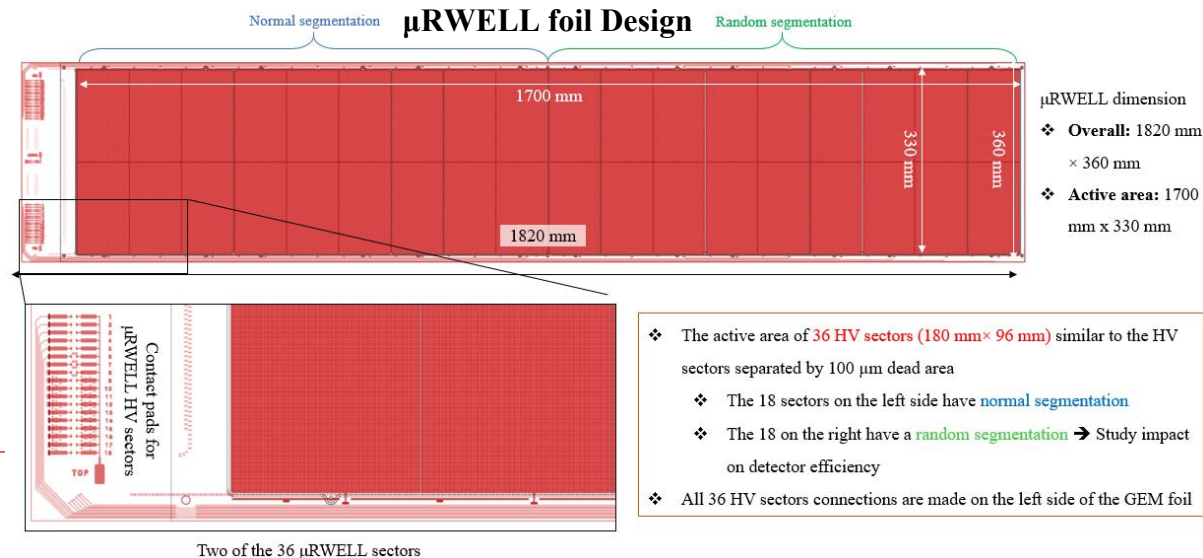
Rapidity Range	Momentum Resolution	Spatial Resolution
Backward (-3.5 to -2.5)	$\sim 0.10\% \times p \oplus 2.0\%$	$\sim 30/p_T \mu\text{m} \oplus 40 \mu\text{m}$
Backward (-2.5 to -1.0)	$\sim 0.05\% \times p \oplus 1.0\%$	$\sim 30/p_T \mu\text{m} \oplus 20 \mu\text{m}$
Barrel (-1.0 to 1.0)	$\sim 0.05\% \times p \oplus 0.5\%$	$\sim 20/p_T \mu\text{m} \oplus 5 \mu\text{m}$
Forward (1.0 to 2.5)	$\sim 0.05\% \times p \oplus 1.0\%$	$\sim 30/p_T \mu\text{m} \oplus 20 \mu\text{m}$
Forward (2.5 to 3.5)	$\sim 0.10\% \times p \oplus 2.0\%$	$\sim 30/p_T \mu\text{m} \oplus 40 \mu\text{m}$



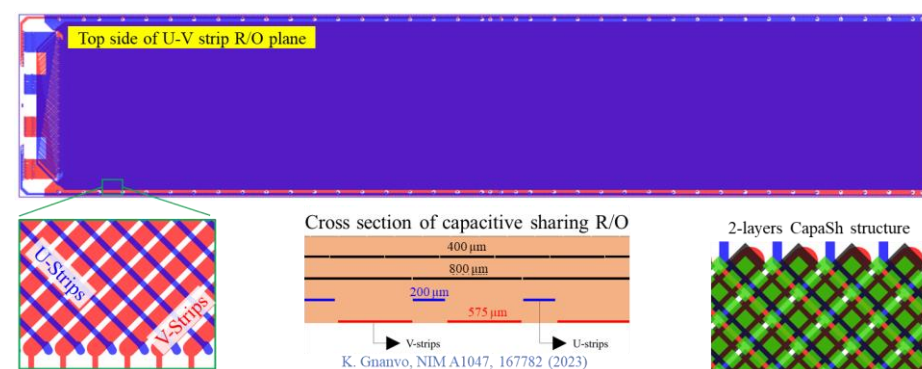
## CAD design of thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL engineering test article



- ❖ Full scale of thin-gap GEM- $\mu$ RWELL prototype
- ❖ All design work completed
- ❖ Fabrication of GEM,  $\mu$ RWELL-R/O at CERN
- ❖ Assembly and test at JLab → second half off 2025



## Capacitive-sharing U/V strip readout plane Design



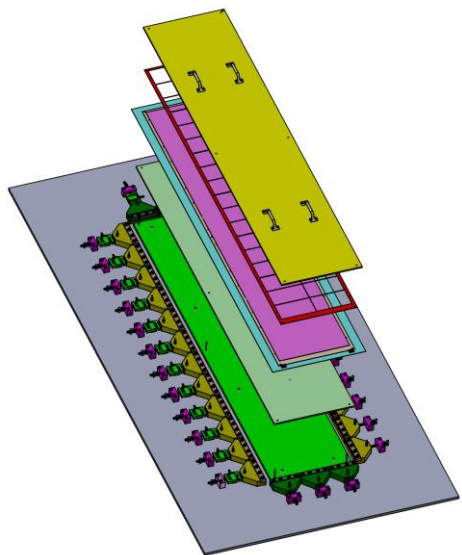




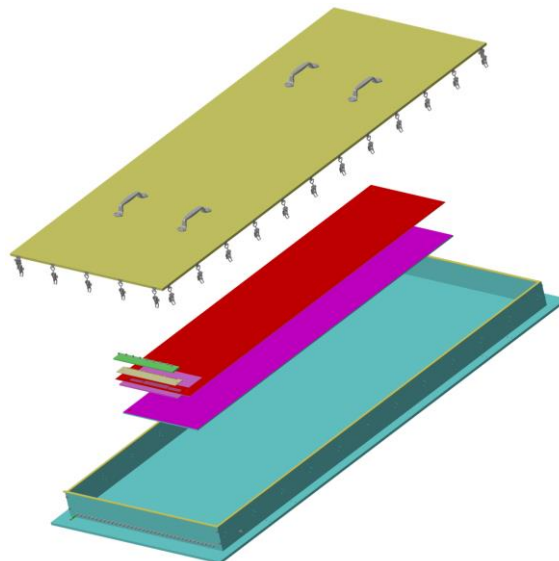
## MPGD Cleanroom in JLab Room EEL121

- ❖ Major instruments order delivered (Ultrasonic bath, Optical microscopes)
- ❖ Major instruments order placed
  - Fume Hood → purchase requisition in JLab procurement system
  - Instruments manufacturing job submitted to JLab machine shop

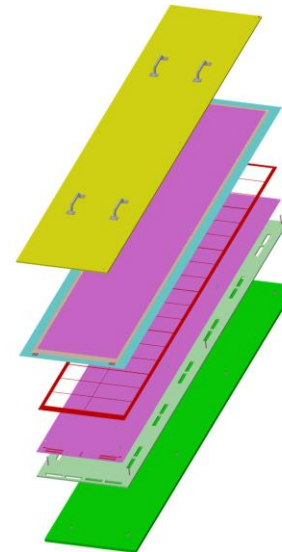
Under fabrication in machine shop @ JLab



**GEM Stretcher**

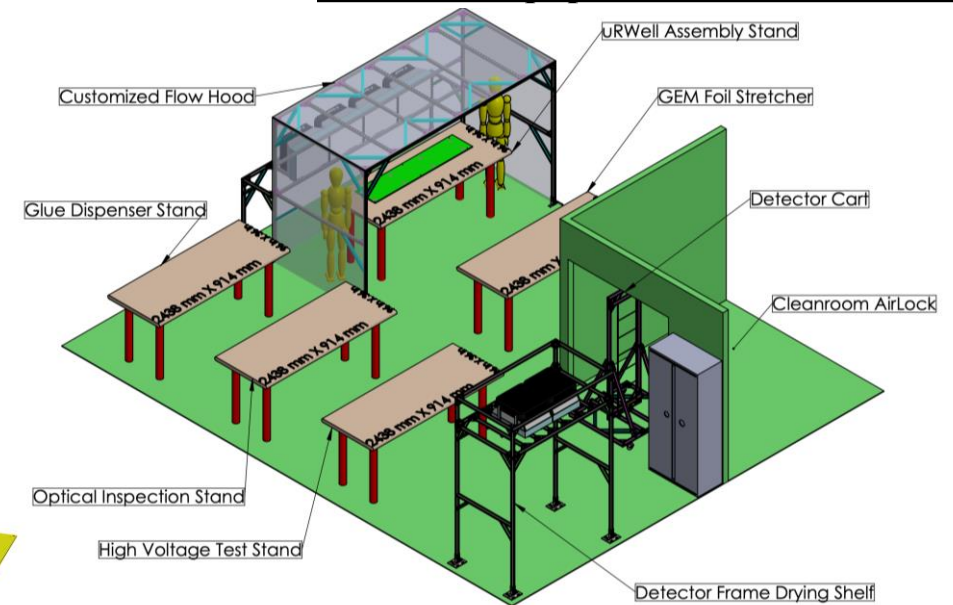


**N2 box for HV Test**

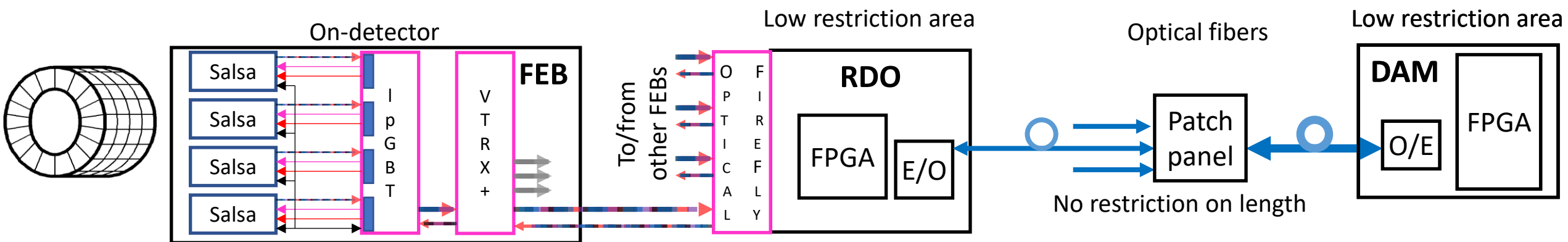


**Assembly Stand**

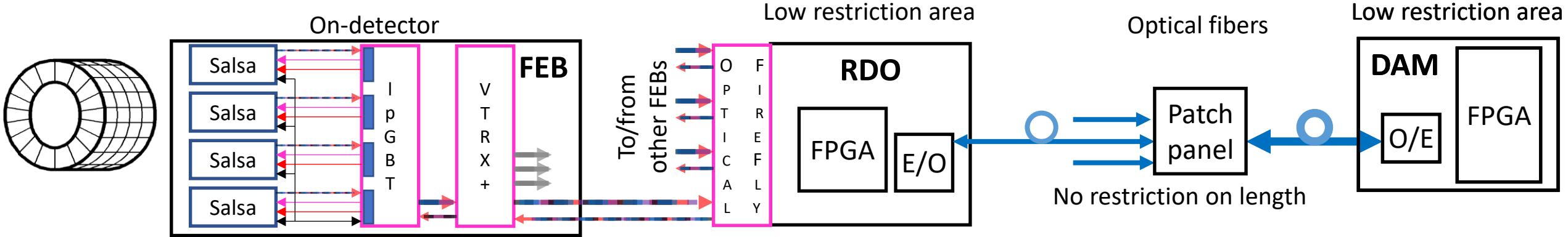
## Cleanroom layout with main equipment & instrumentation







- **FEB** – frontend board with readout ASICs  
→ Sub-detector specific
- **RDO** – readout module – first stage of FEB data aggregation, last stage to dispatch clock & control  
→ Common design between sub-detectors, different form factor
- **DAM** – data aggregation module – interface with computing and global timing and control unit (GTU)  
→ Common design for all sub-detectors
- Downstream towards detector : clock, control, monitoring
- Upstream towards storage : physics, calibration, monitoring data



## 256-channel FEB: On-detector Front End Board (4 SALSA ASICs)

- ❖ SALSA receives recovered **clock** and **sync** data from an lpGBT eLink group
- ❖ SALSA sends **physics, calibration and monitoring** data to a number of lpGBT lines of the eLink group
- ❖ SALSA's are configured over daisy chained I2C interface from lpGBT
- ❖ lpGBT provide a bidirectional interface between 4 Salsas and remote FPGA on RDO
- ❖ VTRX+ is used with only one  $T_X$  line
- ❖ All ASICs are radiation hard

## 1024-channel RDO : common hardware with adaptation based on FireFly transceivers from Samtec

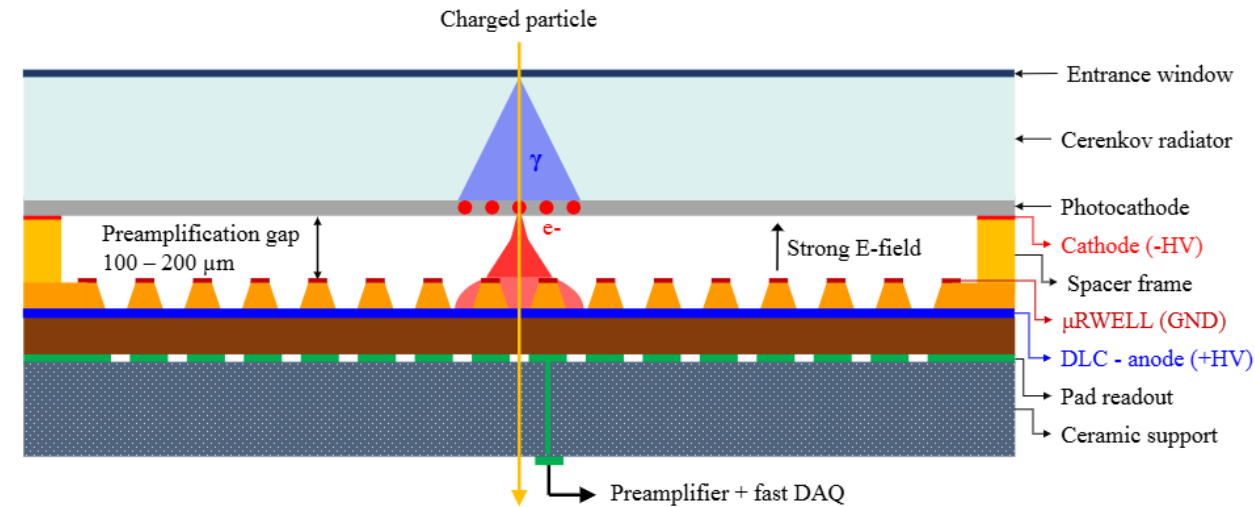
- ❖ Single 4-lane bidirectional FireFly is enough to serve 4 FEBs
  - Placed anywhere in user friendly area
- ❖ No particular restrictions on power consumption, cooling infrastructure, radiation, magnetic field



**Concept:**  $\mu$ RWELL-PICOSEC detector (MPGD with Cherenkov radiator)

## R&D Goals

- ❖ Fast timing detector (picosecond) based on  $\mu$ RWELL) technology.
- ❖ For application of Time-Of-Flight (TOF) detector for PID
- ❖ PID upgrades @ JLab, EIC detectors upgrade, medical field



[https://indico.phy.ornl.gov/event/510/contributions/2248/attachments/1787/4116/20241120\\_CPAD\\_Knoxville\\_PICOSEC\\_KG.pdf](https://indico.phy.ornl.gov/event/510/contributions/2248/attachments/1787/4116/20241120_CPAD_Knoxville_PICOSEC_KG.pdf)

