

# Ann Arbor SPARK Semi-Annual Report

City of Ann Arbor

January 1, 2017 - June 30, 2017



---

<http://annarborusa.org/>

Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing the area as a desired place for business expansion and location... by identifying and meeting the needs of business at every stage, from those that are established to those working to successfully commercialize innovations.

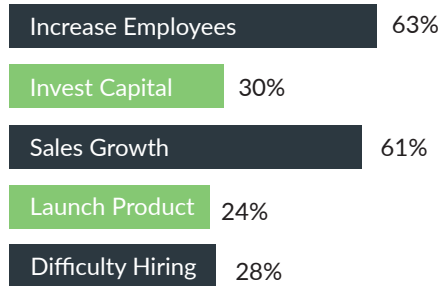
# 2017 Successes - Mid-Year Overview

## Project Successes

5

May Mobility, Inc., TUS International Limited, Lear Corporation, Ford Labs, Barracuda Networks, Inc.

### In 2017, companies in Ann Arbor plan to...



Increasing headcount and finding space continue to be areas where companies are in need of assistance. 2016 was a high growth year for Ann Arbor companies.

### Projected New Jobs - 2017 Projects



### Retained Jobs - 2017 Projects



### Growth Calls


35



# of full time staff at these companies:

3,090

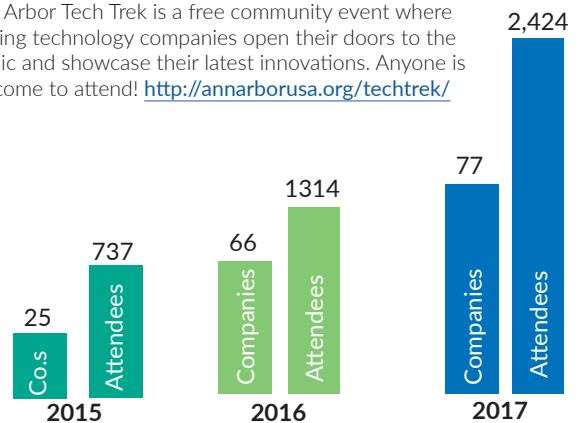
### Total Investment

 \$3.79 M

Main sources of investment:  
Barracuda Networks, Ford Labs

### A2 TechTrek - Continued Success

Ann Arbor Tech Trek is a free community event where leading technology companies open their doors to the public and showcase their latest innovations. Anyone is welcome to attend! <http://annarborusa.org/techtrek/>



2017 was a smash success - over 4,000 registrations, nearly 2,500 check-ins, and 70+ participating companies

# Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development Mission

---

Maximize **job creation** and **capital investment** by **growing** the region's GDP through the **retention** and **expansion** of established driving industry companies that sell goods and services outside the Ann Arbor region, and through the **targeted attraction** domestically and internationally of similar companies that could succeed in our region.

# Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development Metrics in the City of Ann Arbor

COMPANIES ASSISTED	Q1-Q2 2017
Number of retention visits	35
Number of attraction prospect site visits <sup>1</sup>	2
Number of responses to attraction prospect or site consultant requests for proposals <sup>2</sup>	13
<b>JOBS - 2017 PROJECTS</b> (see page 5 for more information)	
Projected to be created (over the next 3 years) <sup>3</sup>	211
Actual jobs created (in the first 6 months)	124
Jobs projected to be retained	219
Actual jobs retained	219
<b>INVESTMENT</b>	
Taxable value of new private investment	\$1,893,897
Total value of private investment	\$3,787,795
City of Ann Arbor funding in support of Business Development	\$75,000 (2017 full year)
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Number and value of investments leveraged through and including federal and state grants and incentives, foundations and other sources that assisted businesses or organizations	State of Michigan incentives totaling \$750,000
Number of facilitations, advocacy initiatives, and communication efforts by SPARK to address economic development needs and concerns	See Appendix

<sup>1</sup>Number of discreet projects that were physically toured around sites in the City of Ann Arbor.

<sup>2</sup>Number of requests to which SPARK electronically submitted properties located in the City of Ann Arbor.

<sup>3</sup>These jobs are projected to be added over the next three years, we will update the numbers as we interact with the companies and determine progress.

# Companies assisted during this semi-annual contract period

January 1, 2017 - June 30, 2017

SPARK acts as project manager for both Ann Arbor and the companies it serves. Our project management efforts can be fairly simple, such as conducting data analysis that a company may use in its business planning, or as complex as full project management for significant company expansions. This would include everything from:

- Connecting them to proper resources
- Working with the site selection community to help determine a location for a project
- Fully managing the tax incentive paperwork and the process it may require
- Creating communication plans
- Traveling to company locations outside of the state
- Making presentations to key public and private decision makers
- Talent recruitment efforts

When companies apply for Local or State incentives they fill out applications that require both job creation and investment estimates. SPARK considers these projects a success after it is publicly announced, or when the proper approval process has taken place for the incentive sought by the company. SPARK's jobs and investments numbers are based on these project announcements provided by the companies. SPARK monitors actual job creation and those results are shown in this report.

SPARK supports a company directly or it supports the consultants the company utilizes during its expansion. Whatever role SPARK might play, we capture jobs and investments for projects that we have played an active role in helping a company make a decision to move forward.

**SPARK celebrates all projects that may have an impact on our region. We do not count jobs and investments where SPARK was not directly involved.**

Specific Projects Unique ID#	Projected New Jobs (2016-2018)	Actual new jobs (created since beginning of project)	Projected retained jobs	Actual retained jobs as of 12/31/16	Current FTE (As of last contact)
8341*	10	10	NA	NA	10
8253*	1	1	NA	NA	1
7810*	15	7	NA	NA	7
8545*	70	75	NA	NA	75
1422	115	31	219	219	250
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>343</b>

\*Attraction project, company new to the area.

# Companies assisted during previous contract periods

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2017

Specific Projects Unique ID#	Projected New Jobs (2016-2018)	Actual new jobs (created since beginning of project)	Projected retained jobs	Actual retained jobs as of 12/31/16	Current FTE (As of last contact)
0704**	NA	NA	175	175	175
0794	20	40	180	180	220
0993	50	0	60	60	60
1422	115	31	219	219	250
1838	50	15	0	0	15
3279	1	2	12	12	14
4506	25	30	20	20	50
4507	297	246	154	154	400
6289	80	33	45	45	78
6926	75	67	51	51	118
7113*	5	5	NA	NA	5
7341*	2	2	NA	NA	2
7448*	2	7	NA	NA	7
7612*	7	8	NA	NA	8
7656*	1	2	NA	NA	2
7662*	1	1	NA	NA	1
7687*	2	2	NA	NA	2
7728*	1	4	NA	NA	4
7748*	1	1	NA	NA	1
7783*	8	8	NA	NA	8
7810*	15	7	NA	NA	7
7862	14	4	1	1	5
7869	20	0	145	145	145
8037*	4	2	NA	NA	2
8047*	2	1	NA	NA	1
8253*	1	1	NA	NA	1
8341*	10	10	NA	NA	10
8545*	70	75	NA	NA	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>1062</b>	<b>1666</b>

\*Attraction project, company new to the area. \*\*Retention project, company considering leaving the area.

# Ann Arbor SPARK Metrics – Investment

January 1, 2017 - June 30, 2017

Investments are recorded based on publicly available information of capital expenditures on real property, leasehold improvements, and furniture and fixtures. Companies may make additional capital investments that we are **not aware of**, or they may use alternative methods such as leasing equipment to acquire assets for growth opportunities. Recent changes to property tax law that allow for personal property exemptions make it less likely that a company would record all investment dollars at the time of an expansion or attraction project.

Specific Projects Unique ID#	Projected New Investment	Taxable Value	Incentives
8341*	\$0	\$0	NA
8253*	\$299,000	\$149,500	NA
7810*	\$513,000	\$256,500	NA
8545*	\$600,300	\$300,150	NA
1422	\$2,375,495	\$1,187,747.5	\$750,000
Total	\$3,787,795	\$1,893,897.5	\$750,000

The growth projects during this time period were based on growth or attraction projects that involved leases, leasehold improvements, and/or the installation of personal property like computers, furniture, etc. This information is **not** captured in a standard format. These projects did, however, involve the creation of **211** new jobs in the City of Ann Arbor.

# Ann Arbor SPARK growth visit program

**Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development team identifies companies for our growth program based on the following criteria:**



*You might be my favorite person right now - I'll be applying for awards like crazy and attending as many meet ups as possible. This is all so helpful for our company and I appreciate all of your help. Can't wait to build these connections!"*

- Growth visit client

1. Large Employers
2. Previous Investments
3. All firms from the previous year growth program with indicators of rapid growth (hiring, increased sales)
4. Firms with large infusion of capital or grant funding in the previous two years
5. Companies that were sold, or that are new to Ann Arbor
6. Companies that are having difficulty finding employees
7. Business Accelerator companies that have achieved sales or staff levels that graduate them to Business Development companies

# 35

Between January and June 2017, SPARK held growth visits with 35 companies in the City of Ann Arbor.

## Economic Indicators from Growth Visits\* 1/1/2016 -12/31/2016

- 63% of visited companies are projecting they will increase headcount
- 30% of visited companies indicate they will invest new capital beyond maintenance
- 61% of visited companies project new sales growth in the next year
- 24% of visited companies are planning to launch a new product or technology in the next year
- 28% of visited companies have difficulty finding new employees

\*SPARK updates these indicators at year end.



## Companies visited Jan 1 - Jun 30, 2017


Growth calls are a core economic development strategy that involve proactively outreaching and engaging with the existing employer base in our region to determine where they face opportunities and challenges. Growth calls recognize that businesses are dynamic entities that involve constant change. These calls allow SPARK to:

- (a) gather information about local businesses that can be aggregated to reveal trends,
- (b) determine valuable resources that could assist in the company's development,
- (c) identify growth projects that require assistance, and
- (d) serve as an ombudsman between businesses and government.

SPARK conducts hundreds of targeted growth calls each year that result in numerous referrals to resources, services and opportunities that companies are often unaware of. The most common referrals involve accessing talent, access to capital or business development/sales opportunities.

Proactive outreach helps companies address challenges before they become problems, supports their continued growth, and helps them see that this region is invested in their success.

SPARK held growth visits with 35 companies in the City of Ann Arbor from January-June 2017. These companies ranged from 2 to 700 employees and encompassed the following industries: Information Technology, Business Services, Education, Defense, Life Sciences, Automotive, and Manufacturing.



**Proactive outreach helps companies address challenges before they become problems, supports their continued growth, and helps them see that this region is invested in their success.**

## Companies visited Jan 1 - Jun 30, 2017

Company Name	Current FTE (as of growth visit)
248 Partners	17
Akadeum Life Sciences, Inc	4
Arbor Networks	170
Arbor Research Collaborative for Health	140
Arbormoon Software, Inc	7
Barracuda Networks, Inc.	250
Clinic Inc.	6
Compendia Bioscience, Inc	25
Criteo	62
DIY Collect LLC	8
Duo Security	400
Eleetus, LLC	4
Expedia	14
Fluency Media	15
Forever Labs, Inc	2
GenZe	40
Human Element, Inc.	31
IndustryStar Solutions LLC	9
LYONSCG	39
Magnetic	42
Menlo Innovations LLC	43
Merit Networks	100
Pillar Technology Group, LLC	75
ProQuest	618
Pyramid Consulting	20
SBD North America	13
Sequoia Applied Solutions, Inc.	7
SkySpecs, Inc.	13
Soar Technology, Inc.	52
Southwest Research Institute	10
Splitting Fares, Inc.	14
TD Ameritrade	118
Torrent Consulting, LLC	22
Zingerman's Family of Businesses	700
<b>Total FTE of all visited companies</b>	<b>3,090</b>

# Growth visit highlights

---

## 1. Fluency Media

Fluency Media has recently signed a lease to take space on the 3rd floor of SPARK Central, our downtown incubator. The space was recently vacated by Ann Arbor company Groundspeed, who had outgrown the space and graduated to individual office space.



## 2. Southwest Research Institute

Southwest Research Institute, which has locations in San Antonio and Ann Arbor, participated in Ann Arbor SPARK's Huskies in A2 Recruiting event at Michigan Tech in April 2017.



---

## 3. Local Company Downsizing

SPARK has been working closely with a downtown Ann Arbor company located on Main Street who has recently undergone restructuring that has unfortunately resulted in a few rounds of layoffs. We have worked both to help employees that have been laid off find new jobs, and with the company and their broker to help find new tenants for the space.

# Ann Arbor SPARK Attraction prospect activity

**When SPARK is contacted by the MEDC, consultants, individual firms, external referrals, and/or site selectors regarding attraction prospects and possible location requests we...**

- Respond with local area information: Demographics, industry sector information, university graduates, other useful information;
- Respond to site requests by searching for buildings, space, and vacant land based on site requirement, using site databases, broker blasts, and our knowledge of local real estate;
- Set up site visits with listing brokers and accompany company representatives on the site tour;
- Make introductions to local municipality officials to discuss the project and possible tax abatement;
- Work closely with MEDC on state incentives;
- Connect the attraction prospect with university, banks, attorneys, and other contacts to assist with integration into the business community.

**Between January 1, 2017 and June 30, 2017, SPARK responded to 13 attraction prospect requests and facilitated 2 attraction prospect site visits in the City of Ann Arbor.**

## Highlights

**Corporate Innovation Centers:** in the second half of 2016 SPARK identified and worked with a number of attraction prospects from larger businesses that are considering Ann Arbor for innovation centers. These centers are unique in many ways, but generally have similar qualities – namely that they want to tap into Ann Arbor’s tech community and leverage the City as a place to help them recruit students and higher level talent to their organizations.

In the first half of 2017 both Lear Corporation and Ford Labs opened offices in downtown Ann Arbor. SPARK anticipates the trend will continue.

[Search for new office space brings Ford Motor to downtown Ann Arbor](#)



# Ann Arbor SPARK Attraction prospect activity - continued

**Commercial Real Estate:** SPARK works to communicate effectively about the double-edged sword of downtown vacancy rates. Depending on the origin of an attraction company, the price of real estate can elicit polar opposite reactions. Downtown Ann Arbor is often attractive to a certain type of company, but not to all. We work diligently to learn as much as we can about the company's needs to communicate each site effectively. As part of this effort, we published a blog post (excerpted below) outlining the 2016 Swisher Vacancy Report:

## The Swisher Vacancy Report 2016 - 5 Takeaways:

- Overall, demand for office lease is growing (up 10% from 2015).
- Downtown vacancy rates are still very low, but have held steady at 2.1%, while the North Office Area's vacancy rate is decreasing.
- The change in vacancy rates (increase or decrease) in South Office, South Flex, and West Office Areas are mostly due to one or two large buildings either becoming vacant or being sold/leased. The majority of space in these areas remains stable. The change in % can therefore be deceiving.
- Prices per square foot are not included in the Swisher report, but vary widely across all sections of the city; not everything is as expensive as downtown.
- The picture painted by the report is one of a healthy commercial real estate market in Ann Arbor, indicating a vital, growing economy.

## What are the most common reasons for a company to decide **not** to locate in Ann Arbor?



Price point of real estate too high relative to where they're coming from



Found more suitable space somewhere else (either in MI or wider U.S.)



Project on hold - no response from company



Can't find the right talent (usually C level)

# A2 Tech Trek/ A2 Tech Talk - 2017 highlights

Ann Arbor's pre-eminent downtown tech open house and TED-style event 6/16/17

---

**Tech Trek 2017:** an annual community event where downtown tech companies opened their doors to the public to share their workplace, creations, opportunities, and culture in a family-friendly manner. Building on the success of Tech Trek 2015 and 2016, the scope of Tech Trek has grown significantly. Many companies and community organizations approached us to become involved in a variety of ways. The number of participating companies ballooned from 25 in 2015, to over 70 in 2017. Over 4,000 people registered for Tech Trek 2017, with approximately 2,400 ultimately attending. Much of this increase in engagement can be attributed to a strategic marketing campaign, which had a national focus. This resulted in a 230% growth in registration, with 30 states (see map below) and 8 countries represented. With the increased size and complexity of the event, new measures were taken to maintain and improve the experience of the trekkers, such as the development Tech Trek app, which was developed in collaboration with Ann Arbor software firm Arbormoon. Video for Tech Trek 2017 [here](#).

**Tech Talk 2017:** New to this year's Tech Trek was Tech Talk. Before walking the walk, community members were invited to hear talks by leading local innovators at the Michigan Theater. Modeled after TED events, speakers each had seven minutes to talk about their innovations, what they see happening in the world of tech, and what they foresee for the future. Tech Talk attendees also had the chance to submit questions for the speakers to answer. In this inaugural year, Tech Talk had 891 attendees. Participating companies included: Arbor Networks, Backyard Brains, Barracuda Networks, Duo Security, Girl Develop It, LLamasoft, Menlo Innovations, Nutshell, Spellbound, and Universal Robots. More information on speakers and format [here](#).



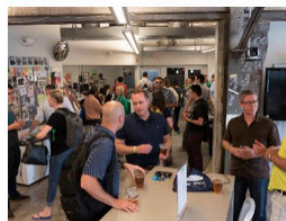
## Technology

Innovation and tech at every stop on the trek!



## Engagement

Tons of fun ways for everybody to interact with tech companies!



## Talent

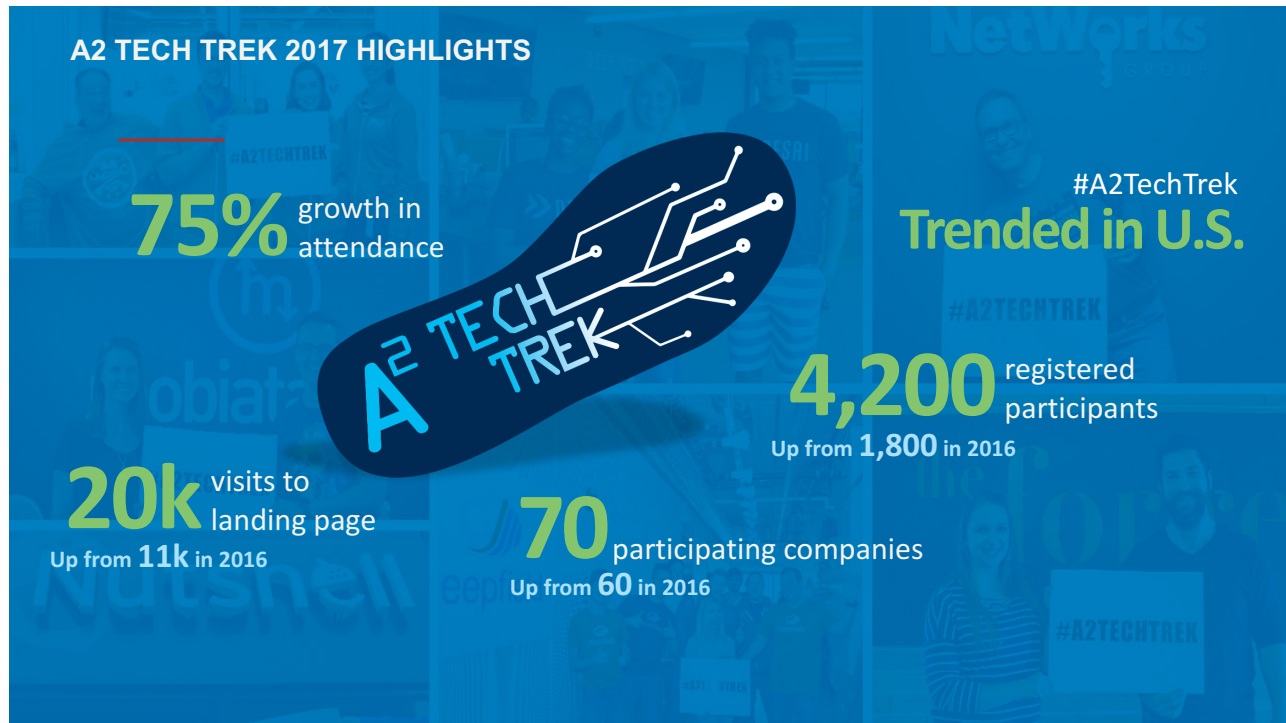
Connecting companies with skilled professionals



## Tech Talk

New Addition to the Trek!

# A2 Tech Trek/ A2 Tech Talk - 2017 highlights



## TRENDING NATIONALLY ON FACEBOOK & TWITTER!

**#A2TechTrek**

Due to the popularity of our Tech Trek Photo Challenge, #A2TechTrek trended on Facebook & Twitter for the entire day!

**SPARK**  
@nn arbor usa

**Trends** · Change

- Whole Foods**  
Amazon is buying Whole Foods Market for \$13.7 billion
- #A2TechTrek**  
@TechArb, @menloinnovation and 4 more are Tweeting about this
- #AMC2017**
- #NASCAR**  
@detroitnews is Tweeting about this
- #FridayFeeling**  
35K Tweets
- #NexstarCares**
- #WhatWomenWantin4Words**
- #OIEAHC17**
- #Amazon**  
@Reuters and @EconomicTimes are Tweeting about this
- Michelle Carter**  
Michelle Carter found guilty of involuntary manslaughter

# The American Center for Mobility

## Willow Run's Connected and Automated Vehicle Center Overview

---

**In Jan 2017 the site was designated by the US Dept. of Transportation as a national automated vehicle proving ground - the most ambitious of the 10 sites chosen and the only site in Michigan. Construction began in Q1 2017.**

The first phase of the project involves the construction of the high speed loop, which should be complete by the end of 2017. The groundbreaking builds on years of involvement by Ann Arbor SPARK, Ypsilanti Township, elected officials, the University of Michigan, the State of Michigan and numerous other partners to bring this project to the site.

SPARK is deeply involved in the ongoing work of the American Center for Mobility, helping to manage all aspects of the process, including:

- CEO Paul Krutko serves on the Board and as Treasurer of ACM;
- Providing back of the house support to ACM staff (human resources and finance management);
- Supervising the development of a technology park at ACM ;
- Development of funding solicitation proposals;
- Business development (lead generation and relationship management for both users and tenants of the site).

SPARK also creates and maintains marketing material for the site, including:

- [The American Center for Mobility - Driving the Future of Transportation](#)
- [Michigan's mobility research cluster](#)
- [Mobility companies in the region](#)
- [Mobility assets near the American Center for Mobility](#)  
A map of resources and local companies
- [In the news](#)  
Recent news about ACM, including a recent NY Times Article "[Michigan's New Motor City: Ann Arbor as a Driver-less Car Hub](#)"



Below are some of the activities and efforts related to this project, which began in 2013. Note that this project is a key strategic project for the organization and this list cannot capture all of the activity and work that has been conducted over the past several months.

### Key Timeline Activities:

#### 2017

- In April 2017, the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF) pledged an additional \$15 million to see the autonomous and connected vehicle research facility in Washtenaw County reach the next stage in development. This brings total funding from the MSF to \$32 million.
- In Q1 2017, construction officially began at the American Center for Mobility at Willow Run in Ypsilanti. Phase 1 of the project - the high speed loop - should be complete by the end of 2017.
- ACM competed with dozens of sites around the U.S. to receive federal designation, announced in January of 2017: **“American Center for Mobility designated by US Department of Transportation as national automated vehicle proving ground”**. The solicitation of proposals for the designation of the Automated Vehicle Proving Grounds Pilot program was announced in late November by the USDOT and 10 facilities were selected. More than 60 organizations applied to receive the designation.

#### 2016

- In the winter of 2016, the American Center for Mobility reached an agreement with AT&T as an exclusive cellular network provider until 2020 - teaming up with the Center, car companies and tech start-ups to test automated and connected vehicles. AT&T will also provide network service to allow the cars to talk to infrastructure, pedestrians and also to another car. The current partnership will now essentially provide the center with a lot more data.
- On November 21, 2016 Gov. Rick Snyder joined state officials and automotive technology leaders to celebrate the official groundbreaking of the American Center for Mobility at Willow Run in Ypsilanti Township. Earlier in November, Willow Run Arsenal of Democracy (WRAD) Landholdings Limited Partnership completed the purchase of the property from RACER Properties LLC, which paved the way for construction of the new facility. The property at Willow Run was acquired from Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response (RACER) Trust following a \$1.2 million purchase agreement that was reached in July with WRAD, which will then lease the property to the American Center for Mobility.
- On July 26, 2016 the Michigan Strategic Fund approved a \$17 million investment for the finalization of the acquisition of land at Willow Run, operations, and to facilitate the design and construction of phase one of a state-of-the-art global center for research, development and testing for automated vehicles.
- In January 2016, Governor Snyder announced the State’s intention to develop the site in his State of the State address. The American Center for Mobility was officially launched in January of 2016, ACM is a joint initiative among the State of Michigan – including the Michigan Department of Transportation and MEDC, the University of Michigan, Business Leaders for Michigan and Ann Arbor SPARK. The board of directors includes representatives from the university, BLM, and SPARK, which initiated the project and will play a key role in economic development tied to the center. Automotive industry and community advisory boards will also be established. CEO Paul Krutko serves as Treasurer of ACM and Ann Arbor SPARK provides back of the house administrative and managerial support to ACM.

## 2015

- Work began to organize a non-profit entity that would operate the American Center for Mobility, as well as begin the due diligence process for development of the site, owned by RACER Trust. In addition, outreach to industry partners continued.
- Continued outreach to stakeholders in Washington, DC and at the state level, as well as further development of the site plan and operating model.
- A working group was designated to continue work on the study, including the Center for Automotive Research, the Detroit Regional Chamber, Business Leaders for Michigan, MEDC, MDOT, Walbridge, the University of Michigan. The working group met several times over the course of 2015 to provide direction, develop materials and work on next steps for the site
- Ann Arbor SPARK and Walbridge were awarded a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to conduct a feasibility study for the former manufacturing site to serve as a national center for connected and automated vehicle (CAV) research, testing, product development, validation and certification facility.
- SPARK staff began a series of meetings with key officials at the federal and legislative levels, briefing them on the importance of the project to the region, and to the state. Meetings included: Regular calls and meetings with the Michigan Congressional Delegation, including Representative Dingell, Senator Peters, and Senator Stabenow, as well as other members of the Michigan delegation. Briefings in Washington, DC with officials from the Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, Department of Commerce and the White House. Briefings with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Michigan Department of Transportation, University of Michigan, Ypsilanti Township and other community partners.
- TASS International completed “The Willow-Run Automated and Connected Car Test Site: A Technical and Business Assessment,” which outlined the site plan and key elements of Willow Run as a test center.

## 2013

- In 2013, Ann Arbor SPARK released “Ahead by a Century: The Future of Automotive Technology” outlining how the Willow Run site could be utilized as a connected and automated vehicle testing center.



<http://www.acmwillowrun.org/>

Work continues on the project, which involves continued engagement with numerous stakeholders, including the federal government, industry and other partners.

## Press releases - City of Ann Arbor - 2017

**Ann Arbor SPARK Honors 18 Growing Companies with 2016 and 2017 FastTrack Awards:** At its annual meeting, Ann Arbor SPARK presented its annual FastTrack awards to 18 Washtenaw County-based companies that have demonstrated fast growth. Several of the 2016 and 2017 FastTrack award recipients were multiple year winners. One of this year's winners, LLamasoft, has won a FastTrack award every year since 2008. FastTrack awards are presented to companies with impressive records of growth. Recipients of 2016 FastTrack awards were required to have revenue of at least \$100,000 in 2012, with an annual growth of 20 percent for the following three years. Recipients of 2017 FastTrack awards were required to have revenue of at least \$100,000 in 2013, with an annual growth of 20 percent for the following three years.

**Ann Arbor SPARK's A2 Tech Trek 2017 Set for June 16:** More than 70 Downtown Ann Arbor Companies to Open Their Doors to Community... and Job Seekers!! Leading technology companies will participate in the third annual A2 Tech Trek on June 16, 2017, from 3 to 7 p.m. A2 Tech Trek, a free event, features open houses at downtown Ann Arbor's technology companies and organizations. Ann Arbor SPARK, with support from the Michigan Economic Development Corp, Ann Arbor/ Ypsilanti SmartZone (LDFA), and PNC Bank, is hosting the event. Each stop on the trek will create a fun, educational experience that reflects their unique culture and demonstrates their product or service. Those on the tour will also enjoy refreshments, prizes, t-shirts, and giveaways. Many of the participating companies are hiring, and job seekers will have the chance to learn more about open employment opportunities. Take the Trek and see for yourself why some of the world's most brilliant innovators are choosing to call Ann Arbor home!

**Consider the following: a small town + big city culture + a diverse innovation economy. Too good to be true? Think again....:** According to Ann Arbor SPARK's recently published Economic Benchmarking Report, Washtenaw County performs higher than the national average in driving industry employment. The diversity of companies here in the Ann Arbor region means that there's incredible variety in the types of jobs available. A quick scan of Ann Arbor SPARK's Job Portal shows open positions for everything from software developers and UI professionals to business development and sales. Ann Arbor boasts college town charm while also being home to global companies like Toyota, Google, TD Ameritrade, and Dyson. It's also home to a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, where startups – who've raised more than \$241 million in private equity in the last four years – are growing and hiring.

# Appendix

## Facilitations, advocacy initiatives, and communication efforts by SPARK to address economic development needs and concerns

- Ann Arbor SPARK leads the Greater Ann Arbor Region initiative, a six county economic development effort that is focused on regional opportunities and leveraging our region's combined assets to pitch opportunities for national and international projects. These efforts include specific marketing materials and social media channels. Our efforts have resulted in the region's ability to respond to new project opportunities.
- Ann Arbor SPARK held its Annual Meeting at the Eastern Michigan University Student Center on April 24, 2017. Richard Florida, author and urbanist, was the keynote speaker, and the focus was on the "new urban crisis;" making sure the opportunity and prosperity enjoyed by urban centers across the US can be accessed by all.
- Benchmarking Study: at the Annual Meeting, SPARK presented a comprehensive benchmarking study, analyzing the economic competitiveness of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County in comparison to competitor regions around the nation. The study measured performance on eight metrics, highlighting areas where our region succeeds, and areas where we can do better. Read the full study [here](#).
- Ann Arbor SPARK organized a legislative outreach for our local legislators and economic development partners in the Greater Ann Arbor Region to emphasize the importance of economic development and the importance of state and location incentives that support economic development. The meeting was held at Ann Arbor SPARK Central on April 21, 2017. Representatives Adam Zemke, Yousef Rabhi, Donna Lasinski and staff from Representative Ronnie Peterson's office attended the meeting.
- Ann Arbor SPARK, in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) took a delegation of five Greater Ann Arbor companies to the Michigan Technological University Design Expo in April 2017 to engage with students and promote the Ann Arbor region as a great place to start a career. As part of the event, the Ann Arbor delegation interacted with over 100 students and several companies hired people because of the event.
- SPARK Job Portal: In 2017, the SPARK Job portal underwent a transformation with the help of local Ann Arbor startup TrueJob. The newly designed portal is more user-friendly for applicants, and allows employers to post jobs quickly and efficiently to reach a targeted, local pool of talent. It went live on April 1, 2017 and already we have seen a 43% increase in job portal page views and a 285% increase in average time spent on the job portal. In the three months since launching our new job portal, 301 companies have signed up to post jobs, 178 jobs were posted, the posted jobs were viewed 22,627 times, and viewers have clicked the "apply" link 793 times. TrueJob also allows SPARK to collect more and better data, which we look forward to sharing as the portal becomes more established. Employers can view resumes submitted by becoming a "job manager" [here](#).

# Appendix - continued

## Connections Beyond our Region

- In April 2017, Ann Arbor SPARK hosted the North American Conference for the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP). The three-day conference brought representatives from the USA, Canada, China, Mexico, France, Spain, and Jamaica together to discuss global trends in science and innovation, and how economic development organizations can work to nurture innovation ecosystems.
- SPARK CEO Paul Krutko was in Stuttgart June 20-22, 2017 presenting at the [Autonomous Vehicle Test and Development Symposium](#). His focus was on the particular capabilities and methodology that will be utilized at the American Center for Mobility in Ypsilanti Township. It was also an opportunity to connect with potential users, vendors, partners and businesses around this work.



## Contact details:

**Phil Santer, SVP of Business Development, Chief of Staff**

[phil@annarborusa.org](mailto:phil@annarborusa.org)

734-527-9176

<http://annarborusa.org/>

Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing the area as a desired place for business expansion and location... by identifying and meeting the needs of business at every stage, from those that are established to those working to successfully commercialize innovations.