

# Ann Arbor SPARK Semi-Annual Report

City of Ann Arbor

Jan 1, 2018 - June 30, 2018



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<http://annarborusa.org/>

Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing it as a desired place for innovation, business location and growth, and for talented people to live and work. The Ann Arbor region will be recognized for its academic, business, and community resources, and its collaborative culture.

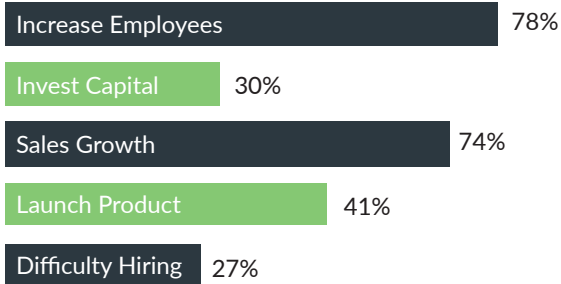
# 2018 Successes - Mid-Year Overview

**Project Successes**

**3**

CarmaCar, DERQ, Trillium Secure, Inc.

In the next year, companies in Ann Arbor plan to...



In the first half of 2018, the majority of Ann Arbor companies visited by SPARK reported that they were hiring, and that they predicted sales growth in the next year. .

## a2TECH360

BROUGHT TO YOU BY ANN ARBOR SPARK

**3 days of events:** 2028 Futurists Event, Meeting of the Minds Mobility Summit, FastTrack Awards, Tech Talk, Live at Tech Trek, Tech Trek  
**80+** participating companies for Tech Trek  
**6,000+** people registered  
**1,800+** attendees for 2nd year of Tech Talk



## Growth Calls

**29**



# of full time staff at these companies in Ann Arbor:

**1,141**

## Total Investment

**\$333,140**

Main sources of investment: Trillium Secure, DERQ

## City of Ann Arbor ROI (mid-year):

**\$4** / **\$1**  
 Private Investment / City Investment

## Projected New Jobs - 2017 Projects

**32**

## Retained Jobs - 2017 Projects

**0\***



\*All projects new to Ann Arbor

# Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development Mission

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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 2018
Number of retention visits	29
Number of responses to attraction prospect or site consultant requests for proposals <sup>1</sup>	12
<b>JOBS - 2018 PROJECTS</b> (see page 5)	
Projected to be created (over the next 3 years) <sup>2</sup>	32
Actual jobs created (in the first 6 months)	13
Jobs projected to be retained	0
Actual jobs retained	0
<b>INVESTMENT</b>	
Taxable value of new private investment	\$166,570
Total value of private investment	\$333,140
City of Ann Arbor Support	(2018 total) \$75,000
<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	One State of Michigan incentive of \$240,000
Number of facilitations, advocacy initiatives, and communication efforts by SPARK to address economic development needs and concerns	See Appendix
Number of start-up businesses assisted (exclusive of LDFA) <sup>4</sup>	-

<sup>1</sup>Number of requests to which SPARK electronically submitted properties located in the City of Ann Arbor.

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</sup>These are separate from the jobs reported on page 5 and refer only to jobs supported by grants received from Michigan Works! Southeast.

<sup>4</sup>All businesses that are start-ups in the region are assisted by the Business Accelerator division of Ann Arbor SPARK, funded through the LDFA.

# Companies assisted during this semi-annual contract period

Jan 1, 2018 - June 30, 2018

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 (2017-2019)	Actual new jobs (created since beginning of project)	Projected retained jobs	Actual retained jobs as of 12/31/17	Current FTE (As of last contact)
8834*	2	2	NA	NA	2
8774*	0	4	NA	NA	4
8143*	30	7	NA	NA	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>13</b>

\*Attraction project, company new to the area.

# Companies assisted during previous contract periods

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2018

Specific Projects Unique ID#	Projected New Jobs (at time of project)	Actual New Jobs (created since beginning of project)	Projected Retained Jobs	Actual Retained Jobs as of 6/30/18	Current FTE (as of last contact)
0513**	NA	15	60	60	75
0539	101	6	63	63	69
0704**	NA	47	175	175	222
0750	1	0	50	50	50
0794	20	40	180	180	220
0993	50	0	60	60	60
1379	1	0	25	25	25
1422	115	0	250	250	250
1717	9	10	10	10	20
1838	50	15	0	0	15
2280	9	0	9	9	9
3279	1	2	12	12	14
4506	25	30	20	20	50
4507	297	246	154	154	400
5091	5	-11	11	0	0
5510*	35	42	NA	NA	42
6289	80	162	45	45	207
6523	8	8	2	2	10
6926	75	89	51	51	140
7098	5	18	13	13	31
7113*	5	5	NA	NA	5
7152*	85	15	NA	NA	15
7162	1	1	1	1	2
7184*	12	13	NA	NA	13
7341*	2	9	NA	NA	9
7448*	9	9	NA	NA	9

(continued on next page)

# Companies assisted during previous contract periods

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2018

Specific Projects Unique ID#	Projected New Jobs (at time of project)	Actual new jobs (created since beginning of project)	Projected retained jobs	Actual retained jobs as of 6/30/18	Current FTE (As of last contact)
7511*	6	6	NA	NA	6
7612*	7	20	NA	NA	20
7656*	1	2	NA	NA	2
7662*	1	1	NA	NA	1
7687*	2	2	NA	NA	2
7728*	1	5	NA	NA	5
7748*	1	47.5	NA	NA	47.5
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	7	NA	NA	7
8047*	2	1	NA	NA	1
8143*	30	7	NA	NA	7
8253*	1	1	NA	NA	1
8341*	10	21	NA	NA	21
8359*	2	9	NA	NA	9
8454*	65	52	NA	NA	52
8521*	3	3	NA	NA	3
8545*	70	75	NA	NA	75
8774*		4	NA	NA	4
8834*	2	2	NA	NA	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,268</b>	<b>1,064.5</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>1,364</b>	<b>2,439.5</b>

\*Attraction project, company new to the area (therefore will not have retained jobs).

\*\*Retention project, company considering leaving the area.

# Ann Arbor SPARK Metrics – Investment

Jan 1, 2018 - June 30, 2018

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
8834	\$0	NA	NA
8774	\$4,140	\$2,070	NA
8143	\$329,000	\$164,500	\$240,000 BDP
Total	\$333,140	\$166,570	\$240,000

Some 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 **32** 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:

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

# 29

Between January and June 2018, SPARK held growth visits with 29 companies in the City of Ann Arbor.

## Economic Indicators from Growth Visits 1/1/2018 - 6/30/2018

- 78% of visited companies are projecting they will increase headcount
- 30% of visited companies indicate they will invest new capital beyond maintenance
- 74% of visited companies project new sales growth in the next year
- 41% of visited companies are planning to launch a new product or technology in the next year
- 27% of visited companies have difficulty finding new employees

## Growth visit highlights

SPARK held retention visits with 29 companies from January-June 2018. These companies ranged from 1 to 400 employees and encompassed the following industries: Information Technology, Business Services, Defense, Life Sciences, Optics, and Manufacturing.

Company Name	Current FTE (as of growth visit)
Ann Arbor T-shirt Company	100
Applied Dynamics International Inc.	69
Atomic Object	20
Barr Engineering Co.	40
Common Cycle	0
Digested Organics LLC	2
Duo Security	400
Expedia	14
Hagerty Insurance-Ann Arbor Office	9
Human Element, Inc.	31
HWA Analytics	2
Impellia, Inc.	4
May Mobility, Inc.	21
Mercedes-Benz Emission Test Lab	25
Micro-Tech	14
Pillar Technology Group, LLC	75
Pillar Technology Group, LLC	75
PolySync Technologies, Inc.	30
Q LTD	1
SBD North America	13
Secretary IgA, Inc.	0.5
SimuQuest, Inc.	7
Synecdoche Design	1
TD Ameritrade	140
Torrent Consulting, LLC	25
Ultrasound Medical Devices, Inc.	8
Workit Health, Inc.	9
Zoller	60
Zomedica Pharmaceuticals Inc.	20
<b>Total FTE of all visited companies</b>	<b>1,141</b>

## Ann Arbor SPARK Attraction prospect activity

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**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.

# Ann Arbor SPARK Attraction prospect activity - continued

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**Commercial Real Estate:** SPARK works to stay ahead of the curve to quickly identify new trends in the Ann Arbor real estate market in order to best inform attraction companies. In the first half of 2018, SPARK employees took part in multiple tours of local properties to gain a thorough understanding of all the spaces available. We use this knowledge, along with detailed conversations about a company's needs in order to effectively communicate and suggest appropriate sites. As part of this effort, we began publishing a blog post outlining the Swisher Vacancy Report each year. Below is an excerpt from the 2018 post, focusing on the most recent Vacancy Report:

- 1. Demand for office space in Ann Arbor continues to grow.**
  - The market is currently at 92.8% occupancy, up from 91.3% in 2016, and nearly 79% during the Great Recession, continuing an eight year trend of vacancy rate decreases.
- 2. Demand is highest in Downtown and North Ann Arbor.**
  - The Downtown vacancy rate is still very low at 3.6%, but slightly higher than 2016 (2.1%), while the North Office Area's vacancy rate has decreased even further to 1.6%.
  - These two areas are the most in-demand and currently command the highest price points. The North Office Area is 2.5 million square feet, with only 40,000 of that currently vacant. The vacancy in Downtown Ann Arbor represents only 26,000 square feet of space.
- 3. Supply and demand is pushing companies to seek more affordable office space.**
  - The East Office Area saw the most dramatic change, from 16.6% vacancy to 9.7% vacancy. This makes sense as part of the larger supply and demand narrative: as office space in Downtown and North Ann Arbor becomes harder to come by, it gets more expensive, pushing companies to look in other areas. The logical conclusion is that prices will begin to rise even in these historically lower-priced areas.
- 4. West Ann Arbor's vacancy rate doesn't tell the whole story.**
  - The West Office Area vacancy rate increased for the second year, from 13.9% to 17.2%. Most of this vacancy can be accounted for by one 18,000 square foot vacancy. There is ongoing demand for office space in the west part of town, with lots of activity in the 1,000-3,000 square feet range.
- 5. Speculative building projects indicate a high level of confidence that these trends will continue.**
  - Developers are responding to this eight-year trend of continued vacancy rate decreases; there are a number of speculative projects under construction expected to be completed in 2018. This demonstrates confidence that there will be company expansions, relocations, and new startups to occupy the space.

# A2Tech360

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In 2015, Ann Arbor SPARK launched Tech Trek to connect the local community with the emerging tech scene in their hometown, allow companies to showcase their innovations, and provide job seekers an opportunity to explore potential employers up close. This year, for the first time ever, SPARK turned Tech Trek into a week-long technology-fueled event dubbed A2Tech360. The week's festivities include events like 2028: What the Future Holds, Meeting of the Minds, the FastTrack Awards, Tech Trek, Tech Talk, and Mobility Row. This year, we recorded our highest attendance ever, with Tech Trek and Tech Talk attracting over 6,000 registrations alone.



More information can be found at the [A2Tech360 Website](#), including a list events, and more about Tech Talk speakers and Tech Trek participating companies.

Videos about [A2Tech360](#) and [Tech Trek](#), as well as all Tech Talk speeches can be watched on the [Ann Arbor SPARK YouTube channel](#).

## A2Tech360

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Tech Talk experienced a 110% increase in registrations from 2017. The Ted-Talk Style event attracted more than 800 attendees to Michigan Theater, eager to hear from the executives of 13 top-notch local tech companies. Much of the increase in engagement can be attributed to a strategic marketing campaign with national scope.

The A2Tech360 series of events saw representation from 32 states and 11 countries, meaning this year's events reached our widest audience yet! In re-branding Tech Trek to a week-long event, we hope to continue to expand our reputation as a nationally-recognizable technology hub.

## Press releases - City of Ann Arbor - 2018

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**Ann Arbor SPARK Honors 16 Fast Growth Companies with FastTrack Awards:** As part of the a2Tech360 series of events, Ann Arbor SPARK presented its 20th annual FastTrack awards to 16 Washtenaw County-based companies that have demonstrated fast growth. Several of the 2018 FastTrack award recipients were multiple year winners. For the first time, CEO Bhushan Kulkarni, accepted awards on behalf of two companies, GDI Infotech and InfoReady. “Over the years, SPARK has recognized 108 fast-growing companies from Washtenaw County with 270 FastTrack awards,” said Paul Krutko, president and CEO of Ann Arbor SPARK. “This year’s class exemplifies the tremendous talent and dedication that defines the Ann Arbor region’s thriving business community.”

**Pitch Club, for Entrepreneurs and Startups, Will be Hosted at Ann Arbor SPARK:** Kyyba Innovations and Bodman PLC are hosting Pitch Club on Tuesday, June 26th at Ann Arbor SPARK. Pitch Club is a mentoring and funding program aimed at connecting the various ecosystems and smart zones throughout Michigan. Pitch Club has ongoing monthly events that provide entrepreneurs the opportunity to learn from seasoned entrepreneurs and investors. As part of the events, 3 lucky entrepreneurs will receive the opportunity to practice their pitch and discuss business plan with funding experts, giving them a better understanding the mindset of an investor. The June 26th event at Ann Arbor will include 3 startup presentations, a pool of judges, and our special guest Mike Klein, CEO Genomenon, Inc. will be the keynote speaker.

**Ann Arbor SPARK Presents Second Annual Tech Talk on June 15:** Back by Popular Demand, Tech Talk Features 13 Presenters Offering Inspirational Talks on Innovation, Research, and Technology. From 9 a.m. to noon on June 15, Ann Arbor SPARK will present its second annual Tech Talk. The free event, to be held at the Michigan Theater, features inspiring “TED” style talks from leading innovators. Back by popular demand, Tech Talk, sponsored by PNC Bank, features some of Ann Arbor’s most interesting and impactful business leaders. Presenters will offer key insights on evolving innovations, research, and technology.

**Bank of Ann Arbor Announces Live @ Tech Trek Line-Up:** Bank of Ann Arbor is pleased to announce that it will present the first annual Live @ Tech Trek featuring live bands from noon to 3pm followed by a DJ spinning music until 7pm. The event will be held on Friday, June 15th at the corner of Washington and South Fifth Avenue in downtown Ann Arbor. Washington Street between S. Fifth Avenue and Division will be closed for the music festival and the inaugural Mobility Row featuring self-driving shuttles to leading edge connected car technology. As part of the 2018 A2Tech360 schedule of events, Bank of Ann Arbor will offer live music, food trucks, and a great time, immediately following the conclusion of the highly popular Tech Talk event.

## Press releases - City of Ann Arbor - 2018

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**Ann Arbor SPARK Celebrates Region's Economic Progress, Achievements at Annual Meeting:** At its annual meeting, Ann Arbor SPARK honored leading regional businesses and released its annual report as well as announced its new A2Tech360 program. The annual meeting also featured Ann Arbor SPARK's annual board chair awards as well as a keynote address by The Ralph Wilson, Jr. Foundation president and CEO David O. Egner. A highlight of the annual meeting was the unveiling of Ann Arbor SPARK's strategic plan. In this updated plan, the organization's previous five areas of focus – acceleration, talent, growth, leadership, and planning – were expanded to include communications and engagement. Key activities in these areas of focus were revealed to be funding to support startups and second stage companies, increasing angel activity creating new and supporting existing initiatives to connect employers and job seekers, and building on current marketing and communications efforts to further engage a national and global audience.

**Ann Arbor SPARK Presents First Annual a2Tech360:** At its annual meeting, Ann Arbor SPARK unveiled a2Tech360, an extension of its popular Tech Trek event, to be held this year on June 15, that includes extended programming designed to spotlight the region's innovative people and businesses. An Ann Arbor SPARK initiative, a2Tech360 dedicates itself to promoting the ecosystem of the Ann Arbor area of innovation. A week of tech-related events, a2Tech360 creates connections between key community actors – innovators, researchers, investors, businesses, education institutions, non-profits, job seekers and the general public – that meaningfully generates discussion, ideas, and new opportunities.



# The American Center for Mobility

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

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**In the first half of 2018, the American Center for Mobility held its grand opening, began testing on the high speed track, and gained Microsoft as another Founder level sponsor.**

The first phase of the project - the construction of the high speed loop - was complete by the end of 2017. Both Visteon and Toyota immediately began testing at the site in December. The opening builds on years of involvement by Ann Arbor SPARK, Ypsilanti Township, elected officials, the University of Michigan, the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, 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);
- Managing the entirety of the Request for Partnership process (to find a partner to develop the tech park and headquarters facilities).

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
- [Search available properties nearby](#)

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 December 2017, construction on Phase 1 of the project (the high speed loop) was completed, and American Center for Mobility opened its proving grounds for testing, with Visteon Corporation and Toyota Research Institute on site to begin testing operations.
- In September 2017, the American Center for Mobility and Ann Arbor SPARK released a Request for Partnership (RFP) for the development of its technology park which will include a headquarters and labs for the organization. The selected development partner will conceptualize and develop a world class tech park adjacent to the connected and automated vehicle proving grounds built on more than 500 acres at Willow Run. The partner will also manage the construction of the tech-park facilities. The 25 acre location for the 45,000 sq. ft. headquarters has already been selected based on its proximity to the ACM proving grounds. In addition to the headquarters, the project includes design and construction of a 13,500 sq. ft. lab that will be adjacent to the headquarters and the proving grounds. Ann Arbor SPARK is managing the RFP process.
- Throughout Q3 and Q4 of 2017, Toyota, Ford, Hyundai, and Visteon all announced their intent to support the American Center for Mobility (ACM) as Founder-level sponsors with a \$5 million contribution each.
- 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 brought 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 Township. 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.

# 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.
- SPARK sponsored the **A2 Tech Film Showcase** in January 2018 at the Michigan Theatre (focusing on highlighting art, technology and diverse filmmakers). The mission of the showcase was to increase cultural diversity and interest in tech films and to promote, discuss and educate in the medium of science fiction and technology.
- In May 2018, **Zoller Inc.** held a grand opening for its new facility on Research Park Drive. The 45,000-square-foot headquarters is the company's largest building outside of Germany, and was designed with the ultimate goal of employee satisfaction, coupled with cutting-edge technology. SPARK worked closely with Zoller through the expansion process.
- A team from Ann Arbor SPARK partnered with the Michigan House at **South-by-Southwest** in March 2018. While there, we participated in a series of panels about Ann Arbor, Mobility in Michigan, and scaling startups. It gave SPARK a chance to showcase Ann Arbor to a wide range of people in the technology, mobility, and AI industries.
- In April 2018, SPARK facilitated **two student "treks" through Ann Arbor**, both from UM and MSU. As Tech Trek happens in summer, college students don't get a chance to take the Trek. SPARK partnered with the Center for Entrepreneurship at UM and the James Madison school at MSU to create mini-treks in April. Students visited companies like Menlo Innovations, Barracuda, and Duo, and learned about employment opportunities right here in Ann Arbor.
- As part of the state's **Michigan China Week** May 6-9 2018, the delegation spent a day in Ann Arbor. The Ann Arbor portion included a mobility tour of Mcity and the American Center for Mobility, a Michigan-China Industry and Innovation dialogue with policymakers from Michigan and China, and a startup summit organized by TusLink involving startups from Michigan and China.
- In February, Ann Arbor SPARK was contacted by **FarmLogs** as Farmlogs announced that they were laying off a number of employees. SPARK worked with Farmlogs to help connect talent to other growing tech companies. As a result of our work, both SkySpecs and May Mobility were able to hire employees that otherwise may have left the region.

# Appendix

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

- SPARK worked closely with **Arbor Research** as they moved to Ann Arbor Township. The company was expanding in the region and had a location in downtown, but was unable to find space that matched budget and space needs. They moved 140 employees from the City of Ann Arbor to Ann Arbor Township. This particular example speaks to the issue of lack of space in Downtown and how Downtown is not for everyone. At the moment, the owner of the former Arbor Research building in Downtown does not have plans to lease out the 30K space that is being vacated by Arbor Research.



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Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing it as a desired place for innovation, business location and growth, and for talented people to live and work. The Ann Arbor region will be recognized for its academic, business, and community resources, and its collaborative culture.