



# A2SUCCESS ANNUAL REPORT 2009

[www.A2Success.org](http://www.A2Success.org)

January 14, 2010

The Ann Arbor Region:  
Where world-changing innovation happens...

# A2Success Annual Report 2009

With the completion of the Success Strategy in February, the first order of business for 2009 was to present the Strategy to community groups for validation. The Co-Chairs met with eighteen groups including the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the SPARK Board of Directors, and the Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau. A2Success was also the topic for discussion at the annual Chamber Impact Event. Over 250 people attended this event and participated in breakout sessions on transit, education, Washtenaw Avenue redevelopment, government efficiency and corporate leadership. We received great feedback on how people might become engaged and how to move forward on new actions.

Eleven Actions are underway with over 190 leaders and experts participating on Action Teams. While many of our actions will take years to complete some actions have already been implemented. The SPARK East incubator opened its doors in March of this year and has 15 tenants ranging from web design companies to alternative energy technologies. The Early College Alliance<sub>sm</sub> at Eastern Michigan University has expanded and now has 260 high school students earning undergraduate credits at Eastern Michigan University while completing their high school requirements.

In 2010, A2Success will shift its focus from getting the word out to moving the long range strategy forward. Our focus will be on continued progress for actions currently underway and begin work on three additional action items that are critical to our success: K-12 education; corporate involvement; and next generation leadership:

**K-12 Education** – With the defeat of the education millage, Co-Chair Mark Ouimet met with the Superintendents Association to discuss the importance of pre-K -12 education to A2Success leadership and the community. He also offered our assistance in any way we can to address not only the funding issue but the issue of ensuring highest quality K-12 education in our region. The superintendents are delighted that a large group of community leaders had this as a high priority and the Co-Chairs will continue meeting with this Association to identify the best way we can get other sectors involved in a meaningful way.

**Corporate Leadership** – Our research shows that communities with engaged private sector leaders have the greatest chance at sustained economic growth. While we have close to 200 leaders working on action teams, fewer than 25% represent the private sector. A priority for 2010 will be to develop an action plan for private sector engagement.

**Next Generation Leadership** – While we continue to enlist younger leaders, we need to find a way for the leaders of tomorrow to be engaged in a meaningful and sustainable way. Leadership models, communication strategies and other tasks will be developed in 2010 to meet this pressing need.

A snapshot of all the Actions currently underway is contained in this Annual Report. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to those community leaders that have joined an action team and look forward to engaging others in this long-term community effort.

A2Success  
Co-chairs



Martha Bloom



Jeff Irwin



Mark Ouimet



Paul Schutt



Rich Sheridan



Larry Voight

## ABOUT A2SUCCESS

A2Success is a long term strategy for achieving sustained economic growth and maintaining our high quality of living in the Ann Arbor Region. What started as a discussion by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners about what we might do to improve economic conditions in the county, has developed into a broad based community action agenda involving over 190 leaders from the community's private, education, government and not-for-profit sectors.

The A2Success Strategy was developed by over ninety community leaders and experts who evaluated over 65 of our community's existing plans to identify our most important long term goals and researched over 50 other successful regions with sustained economic growth and unique quality of place assets. This research was followed by in depth discussion about a vision for the future and identification of what we need to do as a community to ensure sustained economic growth and quality of place in the future.

*Our vision for our region is to be the place where world changing innovation happens.* With our world class Universities bringing in over \$1 billion in annual research funding, innovative economic delivery systems, our entrepreneurial spirit and high quality of living, our region has the ability to become the center of innovation in the mid-west.

To achieve this vision, our six Co-Chairs have enlisted champions from many sectors to lead Action Teams. These teams are working diligently to enhance those regional assets needed to succeed in a knowledge-based economy... *developing the best and brightest minds... converting innovative ideas into action... and enhancing our quality of living assets to retain and attract talent and foster innovation.*

## CURRENT A2SUCCESS ACTION TEAMS

- SPARK East Incubator
- Washtenaw Avenue Talent Center
- Expand to a Regional Transit System
- Coordinate Marketing Efforts
- Government and Education Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Improve K-12 Performance
- Expand Early College Program
- Washtenaw Success by 6
- Young Professionals Network
- Wireless Washtenaw
- Cultural Ambassadors
- Aerotropolis

To review the Success Strategy or to learn more about how to get involved, contact our project manager Tony VanDerworp at [vanderworpa@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:vanderworpa@ewashtenaw.org) or visit our website at <http://a2success.org>.

## SPARK East

### Action Outcome

Established in March 2009 as a high-tech business incubator in downtown Ypsilanti. The incubator, known as SPARK East, is leased and operated by Ann Arbor SPARK with an initial five-year term. Reduced rent and business accelerator services will help foster new innovative companies and employment in the area. The new incubator tenants will generate sales for local businesses along Michigan Avenue.

### Status

- ✓ SPARK obtained \$1,257,000 for the five-year operating budget from grants and key stakeholders.
- ✓ SPARK East has had 19 physical tenants and 8 virtual tenants since opening in March 2009. Companies range from voice imaging specialist and web design to live video streaming and green pest control.
- ✓ There are 34 jobs associated with SPARK East physical tenant companies.
- ✓ Home to the Shifting Gears program which helps former “big company” employees transition into “new economy” leaders.
- ✓ Revitalized Michigan Avenue building with business occupants and lofts above; daily foot traffic increased by 30 people per week.
- ✓ SPARK East has hosted over 50 events in 2009 including the entrepreneur marketing educational program Marketing Roundtable, career transition Brown Bag lunch series, business launch of Real Kidz, and community events such as “The B Side” graduations.

**For more information**, contact action manager Shamar Herron at [shamar@annarborusa.org](mailto:shamar@annarborusa.org) or visit <http://www.annarborusa.org/start-ups/spark-incubator/spark-east-incubator/>.



## Expand to a Regional Transit System

### Action Outcome

Develop a transit system that ensures all County residents and workers can get to jobs, lifeline, and leisure activities via transit service.

### Action Champions

Jeff Irwin, Commissioner, Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners  
Richard Sheridan, President, Menlo Innovations

### Status

- ✓ 30+ community leaders interviews to gauge support for public transit and identify other community leaders that might support/oppose transit.
- ✓ Established "Partners for Transit" – a transit support and advocacy organization and created a website and monthly newsletter (<http://www.partnersfortransit.org>) with information on need for regional transit and transit testimonials from the community.
- ✓ AATA adopted a resolution in November to direct staff to take steps toward developing a countywide service plan including transit solutions and funding sources.
- ✓ AATA approved contracting with consultant to develop a detailed service plan with capital, operating and human resource needs.

**For more information**, contact action manager Terri Blackmore, Executive Director, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study [blackmoret@miwats.org](mailto:blackmoret@miwats.org).



## Washtenaw Avenue Talent Center

### Action Outcome

Promote economic growth in the region by redeveloping Washtenaw Avenue as a compact, walkable, mixed-use transit corridor providing array of housing types connected to employment and educational centers.

### Action Champions

Mandy Grewal, Pittsfield Township Supervisor  
Dick Carlisle, Carlisle-Wortman Associates, Inc.

### Status

- ✓ Charter to commit over 30 members from local governments, transportation agencies, chambers, developers and other interest groups to develop a vision and action plan for the corridor.
- ✓ Re-Imagining Washtenaw Avenue Report completed with recommendations to improve the investment environment and retrofit Washtenaw Avenue through zoning incentives, transportation improvements, tax increment financing, fast track development approvals, consolidation and marketing sites.
- ✓ Joint Technical Committee formed by resolutions from the City of Ann Arbor, City of Ypsilanti, Pittsfield Township and Ypsilanti Township, AATA, WCRC and WATS to implement the report recommendations.

**For more information**, contact action manager Anya Dale, Washtenaw County, at [dalea@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:dalea@ewashtenaw.org).



## Coordinate Marketing Efforts

### Action Outcome

A collaborative and coordinated marketing and public relations of the Ann Arbor region that achieves optimum results in retaining and attracting talent, businesses, CEOs, site selectors, and tourists to the region while enhancing our public image on a global scale.

### Action Champions

Debra Power, Power Marketing and Research  
Daryl Weinart, UM Business Engagement Center

### Status

- ✓ Developing a web-based navigational system to like regional business and economic development organizations, educational institutions, arts and culture groups, and nonprofits.
- ✓ Developing key messages to market the region, talking points around key assets, and database of photographs and videos to promote the region.

For more information, contact action manager Debra Power at [debra@getmarketingpower.com](mailto:debra@getmarketingpower.com).

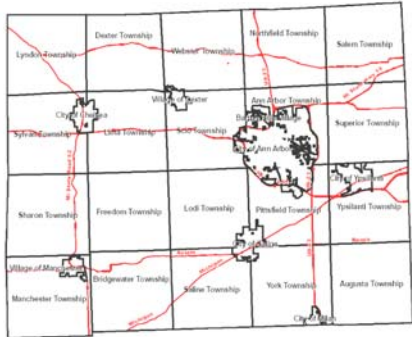
## Government and Education Efficiency and Effectiveness

### Action Outcome

Achieve efficiencies in governments and school systems through shared services, regionalized services, and structural change. Redeploy the savings to important community assets needed to retain and attract companies and talent to the region.

### Action Champions

David Behen, GDI Infotech  
Peter Fletcher, Ypsilanti Credit Union  
Ed Shaffran, The Shaffran Companies



### Status

- ✓ Identified "Best of Class" benchmarking and most likely candidates for shared or regionalized services.
- ✓ Developed research and white paper describing best practices from around the country. Prepared "Candidate Services for Collaboration" menu of services.
- ✓ Conducted 5 "listening tour" meetings with Washtenaw County regional groups to listen and gather their input and ideas.
- ✓ Delivered presentation at IMPACT 2009 on progress to date and importance of government efficiencies. Received positive feedback and solicited additional participation.
- ✓ Drafted 2010 Action Plan for Task Force and soliciting public sector champion

For more information, contact action manager Kyle Mazurek, Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, at [kyle@annarborchamber.org](mailto:kyle@annarborchamber.org).

## Improve K-12 Performance

### Action Outcome

Develop programs to ensure that students consistently achieve high attainment levels in all school districts.

### Action Champions

**Ypsilanti:** Ypsilanti Public Schools staff and faculty; WISD; Ann Arbor Community Foundation

**Willow Run:** Willow Run Public Schools, board, staff and faculty

**Lincoln:** Lincoln Consolidated Schools, board, staff and faculty

### Status

#### Ypsilanti

- ✓ *New Tech High* - The District is one of six districts in the State to receive State grant funding to develop a New Tech High. The District also received \$300,000 in grant funding from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation for program development. New Tech High is a national model that focuses on developing science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills. Visit the New Tech Network website at [www.newtechnologyfoundation.org](http://www.newtechnologyfoundation.org) for more information about this program.
- ✓ Developed a restructuring plan for Ypsilanti High School to:
  - Strengthen teaching and curriculum offerings in all core content areas with an emphasis science, technology, engineering and math,
  - Develop a pre-engineering program in grades 6-10,
  - Add double math options at the middle-school level,
  - Work with the Algebra Project supported by University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and Washtenaw Intermediate School District,
  - Redesign the middle and high school class schedules to provide options for focused instruction for any student who is not performing at grade level in a core academic area, and
  - Establish elementary and middle school STEM Academies.
- ✓ The District is a member of the *Early College Alliance<sup>sm</sup> at Eastern Michigan University*.

#### Willow Run

- ✓ Developing a staff development plan around collaborative leadership and effective use of data.
- ✓ Implementing a structured teacher mentor program.
- ✓ Providing students with extended learning through Michigan Virtual University and Sylvan Learning summer academies.
- ✓ Strengthening teaching and curriculum offerings through targeted professional development including Adolescent Literacy and Mathematics
- ✓ Working with the Algebra Project supported by UM, EMU and WISD

#### Lincoln

- ✓ Presented an updated 5-year strategic plan in May 2009 .
- ✓ K-12 summer enrichment program.
- ✓ Engineering summer program with Project Lead the Way and Eastern Michigan. University.
- ✓ Michigan Institute for Aviation and Technology started at the Willow Run Airport.
- ✓ Founding member district in the Early College Alliance at Eastern Michigan University.

**For more information,** visit <http://wash.k12.mi.us/elg/>.

## Expand the Early College Alliance<sup>SM</sup> at Eastern Michigan University Program

### Action Outcome

Increase the number of high school students that earn college credits during high school with the Early College Alliance<sup>SM</sup>; develop skilled workers in key growth areas like science, technology, mathematics and medicine.

### Action Champions

Eastern Michigan University  
Washtenaw County Area Chamber of Commerce  
Michigan Works!  
Chelsea Ypsilanti, Milan, Lincoln Consolidated and Whitmore Lake School Districts

### Status

- ✓ Participating school districts include Milan, Lincoln, Whitmore Lake, Ypsilanti and Chelsea.
- ✓ Currently 260 students enrolled in the program.
- ✓ Goal is to enroll 150 new students each fall in the ECA program (beginning in the fall of 2011) to reach a maximum of 400-500 students per year enrolled in the program.
- ✓ Grant funding from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation was awarded and there is a detailed action plan with milestones.



**FATIMA RAFIQ** is an Ypsilanti student in her second year at the Early College Alliance Program at Eastern Michigan University. At the end of next semester, she will have taken a total of 50 college credits. And, by the time she completes the ECA program, she plans to have earned a total of 60 college credits.

Fatima says the ECA@EMU has many advantages including getting two years of college credit at no cost, and having an amazing support system right on campus. She says the ECA staff has helped her grow. "They set higher standards for me to reach which challenges me to become a better person. They've also helped me realize that hard work does pay off. They're amazing, educated, open-minded teachers who I wish could be my college professors."

Fatima feels that "every high school student would be so much better prepared for college, if they went through a program such as the ECA because college is not only about grades, it's about a whole new lifestyle."

**For more information**, contact action manager David Dugger, ECA Director, at [ddugger@emich.edu](mailto:ddugger@emich.edu), or visit [www.emich.edu/eca](http://www.emich.edu/eca).

## Washtenaw Success by 6

### Action Outcome

Coordinate community resources and support that can serve all Washtenaw County families and children as they grow through the first years of life, and enter school ready to succeed, regardless of income, geographic community, language or culture.

### Action Champions

Washtenaw United Way  
 Washtenaw County Government  
 Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation  
 Washtenaw Intermediate School District

### Status

- ✓ Created a new three year strategic plan:  
<http://washtenawsuccessby6.org/pdf/Washtenaw%20Strategic%20Plan1.pdf>
- ✓ Published the “Status of Young Children in Washtenaw County Report” – a data-based report on the community context for children birth to six:  
[http://washtenawsuccessby6.org/pdf/Status\\_of\\_Young\\_Children.pdf](http://washtenawsuccessby6.org/pdf/Status_of_Young_Children.pdf)
- ✓ Established an active parent coalition with a newsletter and outreach to over 720 families.
- ✓ Launched a 14-month program of child care provider training.
- ✓ Through Washtenaw First Steps, served over 2,520 families in the county including 3,000 home visits, 29,000 play group attendances, 1,600 attending parent education events and 1,300 screenings for developmental delays.
- ✓ Head Start and Great Start Readiness Program Entry System starts in January 2010, increasing coordination and outreach for all publicly funded pre-school programs in the county.
- ✓ Continued to convene the Washtenaw Birth to Six ICC, five Early Childhood Task Groups and act as the United Way lead agency.
- ✓ Published “Partners for the Future of Washtenaw County: Early Childhood and Workforce Development” – data and information on the role early childhood plays in workforce development.:  
<http://washtenawsuccessby6.org/pdf/Business%20Brochure%20Final.pdf>

**For more information**, contact action manager Siân Owen-Cruise, Washtenaw Success by 6 Director, at [sowencruise@uwwashtenaw.org](mailto:sowencruise@uwwashtenaw.org), or visit <http://washtenawsuccessby6.org>.



Washtenaw  
**S**UCCESS **B**Y **6**™

## Cultural Ambassadors

### Action Outcome

Attract foreign born knowledge workers to the region and help integrate them into the cultural and social fabric of their new community. Foster international trade networks.

### Action Champion

Ron Perry, Executive Director, Michigan Israel Business Bridge

### Status

- ✓ Holding regular meetings of ad hoc SPARK subcommittee.
- ✓ Presented to UM's Ross School of Business in November 2009 to inform students about business and cultural opportunities in the Ann Arbor Region.
- ✓ Working to change prohibitive Federal Immigration Laws.



**For more information**, contact action manager Amy Cell, Ann Arbor SPARK, at [amy@annarborusa.org](mailto:amy@annarborusa.org).

## Young Professionals Network

### Action Outcome

Attract and retain young professionals by providing a convenient way for them to get connected in the region.

### Action Champion

Michael Nisson, President, MDN Holdings, Inc.

### Status

- ✓ Developing a web-based portal that connects young professionals with social, professional and community based groups/activities/sites.
- ✓ Identifying a "host" site for the network.



**For more information**, contact action champion/manager Michael Nisson, President, MDN Holdings, Inc., at [mnisson@gmail.com](mailto:mnisson@gmail.com).

## Wireless Washtenaw

### Action Outcome

Blanket the county's 720 square miles with wireless internet service and provide access to every resident, school, community organization, business, and visitor in Washtenaw County.

### Action Champions

Tom Crawford, Chief Financial Officer, City of Ann Arbor  
 Dan Rainey, Information Technology Director, City of Ann Arbor  
 David Behen, Vice President of Public Sector Practice, GDI Infotech  
 Rich Sheridan, President, Menlo Innovations  
 Ken Unterbrink, Supervisor, Lima Township  
 Bill Shell, Information Technology Director, EMU  
 Derrick Jackson, Director, Community Engagement, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office  
 Andy Palms, Information Technology Communications Director, UoM



### Status

- ✓ 20/20 Communications has built three pilots (Ann Arbor, Saline and the Village of Manchester serving 100 square miles). \$10 M needed to build out the remaining 620 square miles.
- ✓ National Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding was applied for in August with notice of award in January 2010.

**For more information**, contact action manager James McFarlane, Washtenaw County, at [mcfarlanej@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:mcfarlanej@ewashtenaw.org) or visit <http://wireless.ewashtenaw.org/>.

## Aerotropolis

### Action Outcome

The Detroit Region Aerotropolis is an exciting new concept to develop a global logistics hub and stimulate economic development in Michigan.

### Action Champions

Rolland Sizemore, Washtenaw County Commissioner  
 Bob Guenzel, Washtenaw County Administrator

### Status

- ✓ Inter-local agreements adopted by 9 local governments:
  - Cities of Belleville, Taylor, Romulus and Ypsilanti
  - Townships of Van Buren, Huron and Ypsilanti
  - Counties of Wayne and Washtenaw
- ✓ Incentive legislation introduced and passed State House.
- ✓ Corporation Board and Executive Committee are being formed.



**For more information**, contact Marsha Ennis, project manager at [mennis@co.wayne.mi.us](mailto:mennis@co.wayne.mi.us).

## Eastern Leaders Group

The Eastern Leaders Group (ELG) is a partnership between Eastern Michigan University and civic and private sector leaders who are collaborating to meet the immediate and long-term needs of Eastern Washtenaw County.

ELG members include business, education and government leaders from eastern Washtenaw County and the surrounding areas.

The **goals** of the Eastern Leaders Group are to:

- Use the University's prestige and resources to develop innovative programs to meet the pressing needs of the community.
- Revitalize and promote the City of Ypsilanti's historic downtown and Riverside Park as a location for county residents to enjoy as well as "the place" for innovation companies and the creative class to locate.
- Create the urban design, business climate and cultural identity to make the eastern portion of the county the "Gateway to Washtenaw County."

### Status

- ✓ To achieve these goals, ELG has established several Action Teams with more specific objectives, a few of which are shared by both ELG and A2Success.
  - SPARK East Incubator
  - K-12 Performance
  - Early College Alliance
  - University Area/Cross Street Revitalization
  - Block by Block Initiative
  - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
  - Land Bank
  - SPARK-Eastern Washtenaw County Micro Loan Fund
  - Center for Empowerment and Economic Development Micro Loan Fund
  - Improving the Area's Image
  - Aerotropolis
- ✓ The group's major achievements of 2009 include:
  - SPARK East, which opened in March. The business incubator will foster new innovative companies and employment in the area, as well as helping generate sales for local businesses along Michigan Avenue.
  - The Center for Empowerment and Economic Development Micro Loan Fund, which will assist existing and start up small businesses who cannot obtain conventional financing.
  - The SPARK—Eastern Washtenaw County Micro Loan Fund, a collaboration between ELG and SPARK whose mission is to support innovative, high-growth start-up companies throughout eastern Washtenaw County as they near commercial viability.

**For more information**, contact ELG project manager Tony VanDerworp, Washtenaw County Director of Economic Development and Energy, at [vanderworpa@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:vanderworpa@ewashtenaw.org) or visit <http://elg.ewashtenaw.org>.