



## Looking Back at the FlexRide Milwaukee Launch Event

Thank to you everyone who joined us at the March 9 FlexRide Milwaukee launch event at Sherman Phoenix.

We were honored to have so many local leaders lend their support to this innovative approach to connecting Milwaukee workers with jobs.

Please check out the full Facebook Live replay [here](#).

And here are some key comments from our partners.



### David Crowley Milwaukee County Executive

“By expanding mobility throughout Milwaukee County and connecting community members to job opportunities that exist way beyond their own neighborhoods, this is how we start the trend in reversing segregated communities right here in our own backyard. We have been working to improve the transit system with faster routes, more connections and an easier way to really navigate our system. But if you want to create more connected communities, you have to reduce the barriers that keep neighborhoods and our residents separated right now.”

“This is a good thing for everyone in this region. A more connected county, this will be key to our economic success, as we talk about recovering from this pandemic. This is going to give people the ability to find employment, to make sure they

can put food on the table, to make sure they can continue to pay for housing, to continue to provide for their families. The fact that we have both Waukesha County and Milwaukee County right here is a real testament to how important it is to invest in transportation, but also expand our transit system, so we can make sure we’re building our economy every day, but also focusing on improving the quality of life for all of our residents.”



**Cavalier Johnson**  
**City of Milwaukee Mayor**

“We have challenges in terms of transportation in our region, but FlexRide represents the hope that we can move forward to a better day, a better tomorrow, to connect people with opportunities here in our city.”

“Connecting people in Milwaukee with jobs is a fundamental part of this city’s economic future. I want residents in Milwaukee to be able to establish careers and have economic stability and build wealth for themselves and for their families. That’s so important to our future because the challenges that we face in Milwaukee... are all centered around the ability of people in our community to have access to family-supporting work, actual good-paying jobs. And this is a tool that is going to be able to help us meet those challenges.”

“I am the mayor of the city, and I want for there to be more jobs in neighborhoods like this. I want for employers to bring jobs to the 30th Street industrial corridor. I want to be a mayor that has more jobs and more growth and more development downtown. I want more jobs and more growth and development in our neighborhoods. But we have a problem right now. We have a problem today. We need people who need access to work, good-paying jobs today. So connecting them with jobs in areas where they don’t live is a critical part of making sure we reach that economic future for our city.”

“I have spoken about partnerships as our most effective path forward, as we work to solve problems and move our community forward. That’s represented here today. The partnerships are coming together, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, our partners with MobilISE, our partners with the counties. Today, we are standing together, representatives of communities, of counties, of the entire region because this is a regional problem. Together we are going to rise or fall as a region. No one community is going to stand alone. We have to do it together.”



**Lingqian (Ivy) Hu**  
**UWM Professor and Urban Planning Department Chair**

“We are so excited to bring \$1 million in National Science Foundation federal research funding to launch a project that can solve a long-term problem in our region.”



**Kevin Muhs**  
**Executive Director, Southeastern Wisconsin**  
**Regional Planning Commission**

“The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission exists to help the seven counties and the 147 cities, villages and towns in Southeastern Wisconsin to solve problems related to land use, housing, environmental resources and transportation that cross county or municipal boundaries. FlexRide is right in line with that problem-solving and planning mission.”

“We’ve used what we’ve learned during this testing period to make the service better, including expanding service hours, now from 4:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., to cover many more shifts at our partner employers. Our current focus is growing ridership – getting people to work. The grant we received from the National Science Foundation enabled us to try out this new service. Whether

FlexRide is to be sustained beyond the pilot program depends on how much support it receives, and whether riders and businesses find it valuable. So our ask today is simple: Spread the word to more people who need jobs or need better jobs, and to more companies in Menomonee Falls and Butler that need workers, so we can demonstrate the success of this project.”



**Chia Vang**  
**UWM Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

“I am so proud that this project, led by UWM, is bringing \$1 million to the Milwaukee region. The funding allows our team to conduct robust research. With research, we are constantly learning, experimenting and improving our work. The results will help to inform and enhance future permanent services that will effectively connect workers to jobs.”

“FlexRide Milwaukee is a very impactful example of UWM’s contribution to advance a more equitable and inclusive society. These community members deserve and need efficient and affordable transportation services. The UWM team brings a new, innovative form of transportation technology – on-demand microtransit – to meet their needs.”



**Allison Bussler**  
**Director of Public Works, Waukesha County**

“We’ve always known it’s going to take innovation and regional collaboration to solve the problem of the last mile. It’s something we’ve struggled with in Waukesha County for many years. You can just see by looking around the broad support for this program, and it couldn’t come at a better time. We hear from our employers in Waukesha County there are a lot of jobs they are having trouble filling and we’re hopeful we can partner with folks in the City of Milwaukee who might be looking for jobs. Transportation is just one piece of that puzzle.”



**Craig Armstrong**  
**President, Scan-Pac Manufacturing**

“We’re such a huge supporter of this program. As part of the community, as an employer, we really need to engage in breaking down some of the barriers that prevent access to job opportunities and financial growth.”

“Over recent years what we’ve experienced is some significant challenges not only for attracting new employees, but also when our employees run into transportation challenges, they really don’t have many options. We’ve seen employees showing up for work two hours early because that’s the only time they can get a friend or a family member to give them a ride. Similarly, they’ve had to wait that long after they finished their shift. We’ve paid for Ubers, we’ve paid for taxis. But we really see the FlexRide

Milwaukee program is a huge step forward in offering alternative solutions not only for new employees coming into our organization, but as a backup transportation opportunity.”



**Chytania Brown**  
**President and CEO, Employ Milwaukee**

“When I think of FlexRide, it comes at a terrific time. Prior to the pandemic, we were already challenge in connecting job seekers to employers. What COVID-19 and the pandemic did is exacerbate that. FlexRide becomes one more solution to trying to solve that problem of making sure we make a perfect match between employees and job seekers. I’m excited about everyone who has come to this table. I’m excited about what we can do in spreading the word.”



**Sam Ridders**  
**Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, WEDC**

“This is so cool. This is really a workforce solution, as much as it is a transportation solution. We suffer in this state from a demographics problem. And the solutions we employ with our demographics challenges are different all across the state. The solutions we have are really tailored. And this solution – connecting the dots and filling the gaps between where workers live and where jobs are – are precisely the regional and local solutions that are tremendous to see.”

“One of the strengths of this project is how it brings together leaders across Milwaukee County, across Waukesha County, across Washington County. Those are the ingredients typically of not what just is a successful pilot, but what we hope at the WEDC and with the state is a successful long-term solution.”



**Dave Steele**  
**Executive Director, MobilISE**

“We are a proud program partner of FlexRide Milwaukee. We have been working with all the partners here on this stage for many years to really build a regional coalition, not just Milwaukee County, not just Waukesha County, but the whole Southeastern Wisconsin region behind these issues.

“This is part of a broader vision. There are big improvements coming to transit in Milwaukee. This is not my uncle’s bus system. We’re going to see electric buses. We’re going to see new types of bus transit in Milwaukee. And FlexRide Milwaukee and programs like this help build that.”