FlexRide Milwaukee

On-Demand Transportation to Connect Workers to Jobs

APA WI Conference
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263006

Welcome

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SEWRPC.org /SEWRPC @SEW_RPC

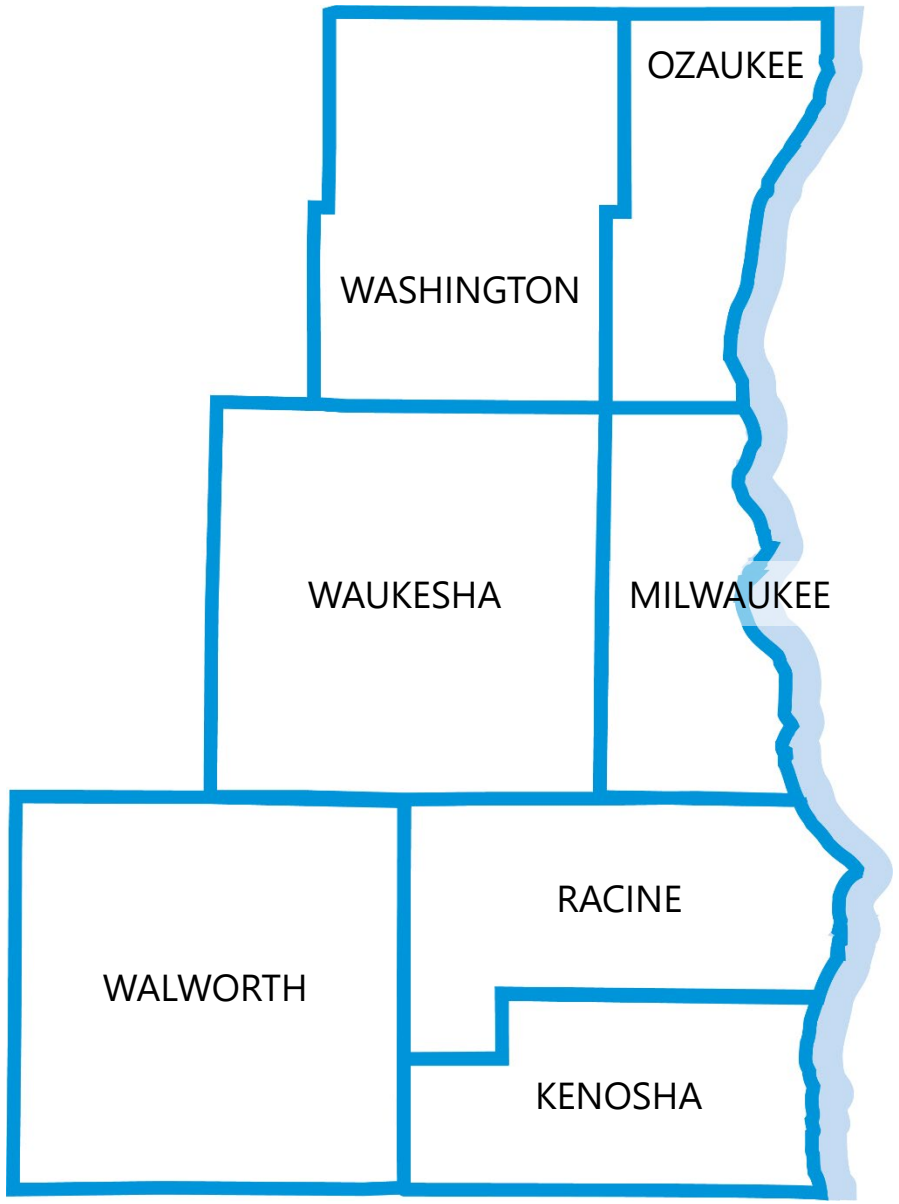
About SEWRPC

7 counties

147 local governments

2 million people

1.3 million jobs



About SEWRPC

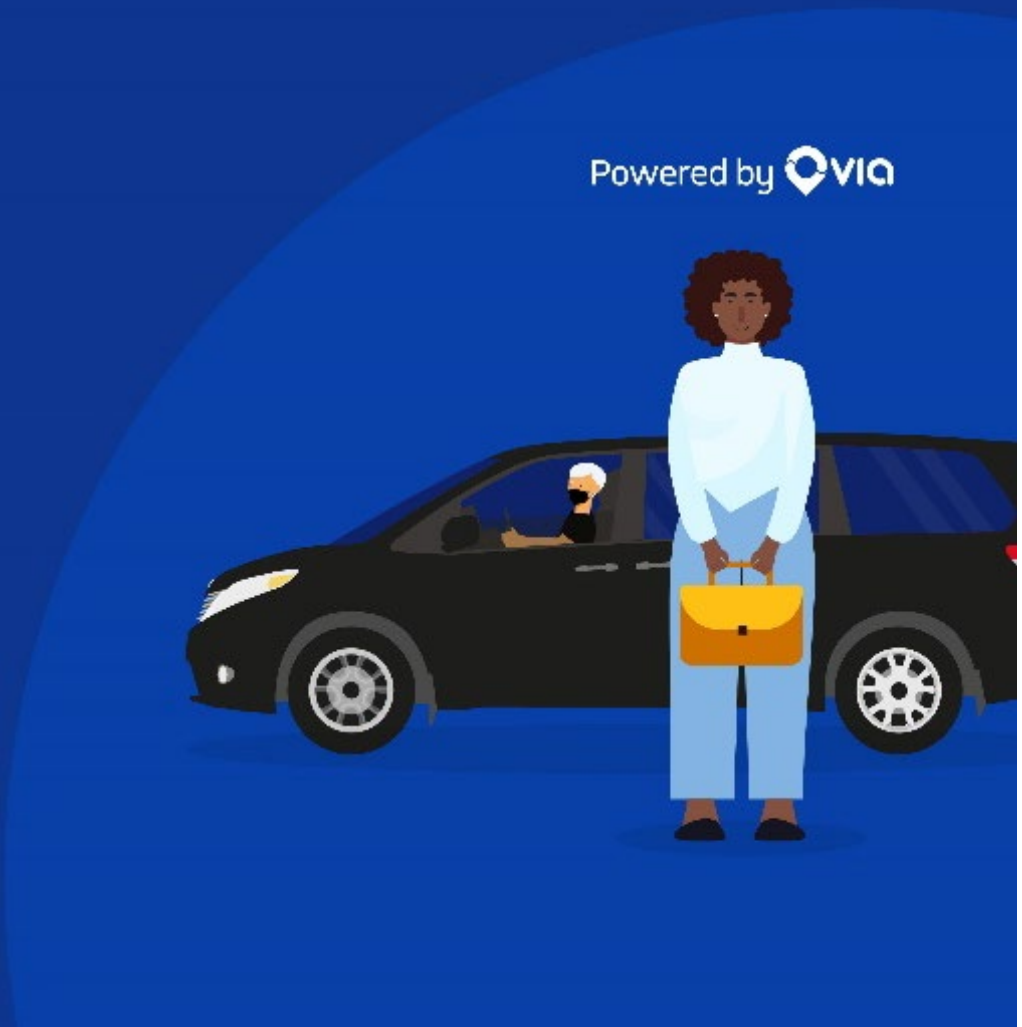
Official areawide planning agency for SE Wisconsin

Advisory planning to local, county, and State governments

Highways, transit, sewage treatment facilities, water supply, water quality, flood management, land use, environmental corridors, natural areas, and parks and open spaces

Greater Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau

FlexRide Milwaukee



Background

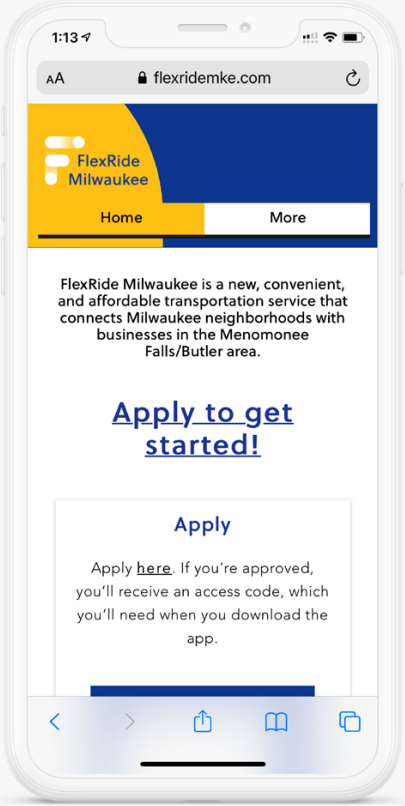
- New on-demand transportation pilot
- Funded by $1 million grant from NSF
- Led by UWM/SEWRPC and supported by numerous partners
- Connects workers from Milwaukee to jobs in NW suburbs
- All City of Milwaukee adults are eligible if they work or want to work in the Employment Zone

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
SEWRPC

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE

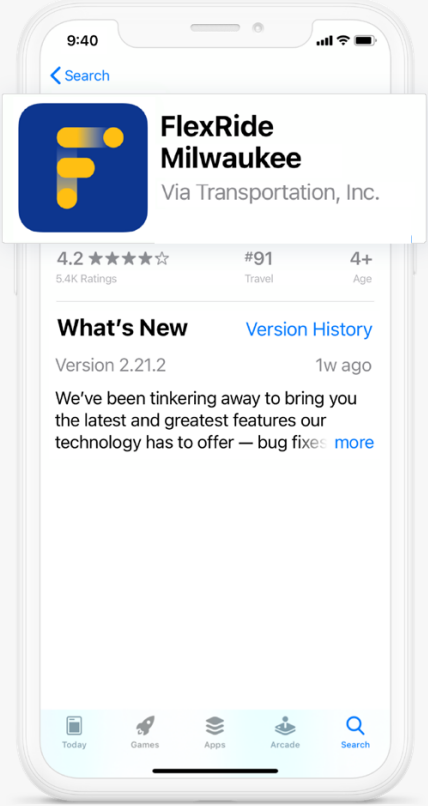
How to Ride

1. Apply



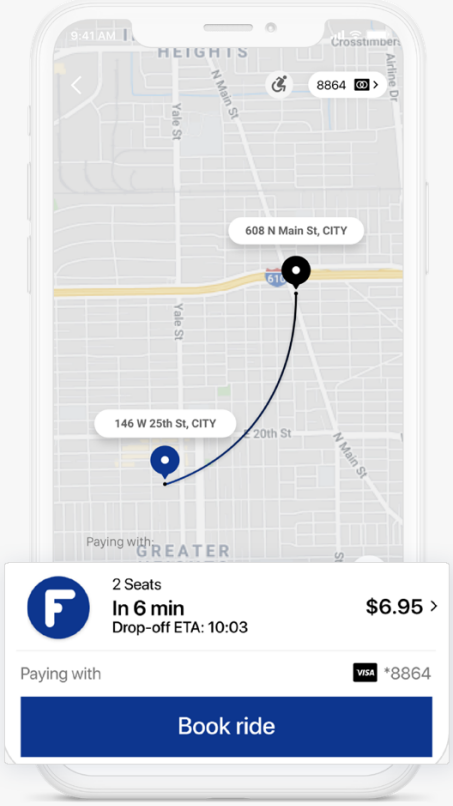
Apply at flexridemke.com. If you're approved, you'll receive an email with an access code.

2. Create an account.



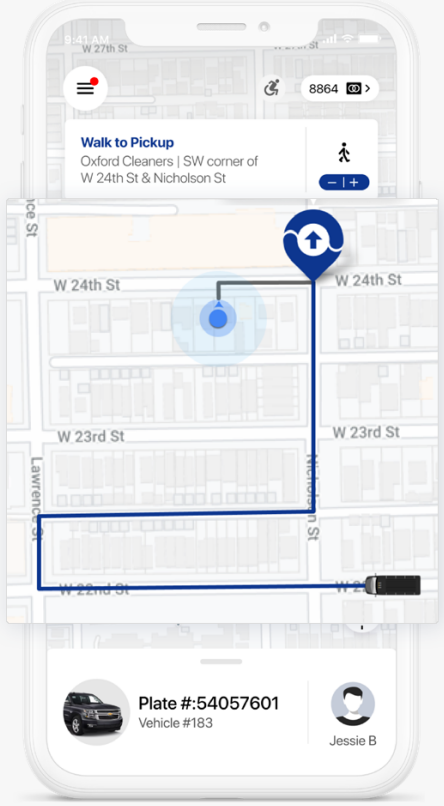
Download the FlexRide Milwaukee app from the App Store or Google Play Store. Follow the sign up steps, then enter your access code in the "Promo Codes" section of the app.

3. Book a ride.



Enter your pickup and dropoff locations, then choose the ride that works best for you. Be sure to tap the Wheelchair icon if you need an accessible vehicle!

4. Meet your driver.



Check the app to find out exactly where to meet the vehicle, which may be a short walk from the location you gave us.

FlexRide Milwaukee

The Basics

- **On-demand:** once a rider requests a ride, a vehicle will usually pick up within minutes
- **Microtransit:** may share rides
- **Service hours:** weekdays 4:30a.m. – 11:30p.m.
- **Fares:** to/from Zone 1 is free, to/from Zone 2 is $1.50 per one-way trip
- **Research:** participants asked to take surveys

Take FlexRide to/from Your Job

Employment Zone

Jobs in Menomonee Falls and Butler

Milwaukee Neighborhood Zones

Zone 1 (Free Fare)

Zone 2 ($1.50 Per Ride)

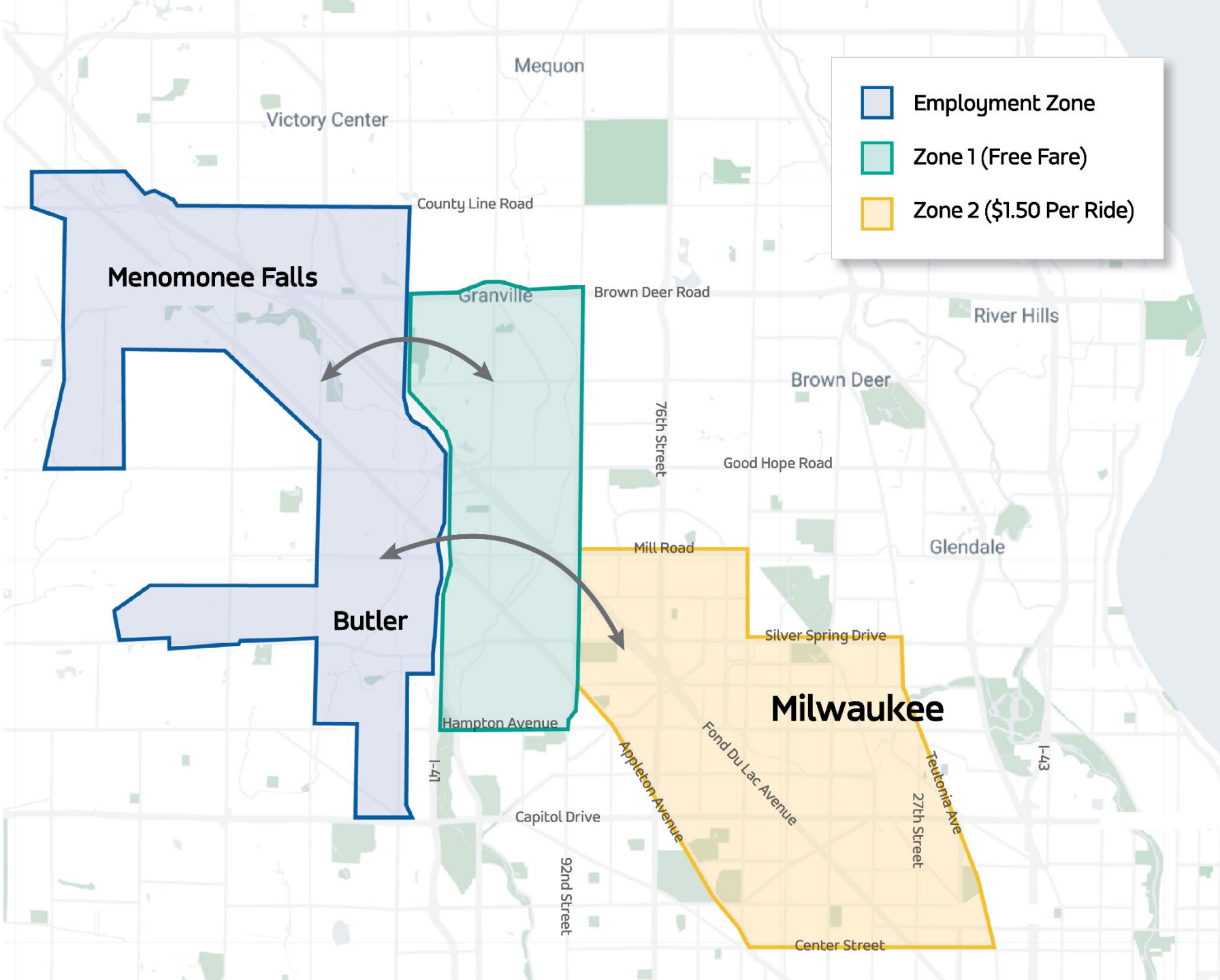
Accessible to All

- Wheelchair accessible
- Call-in option for those without a smartphone
- Cash payments for unbanked individuals

No credit card? No problem!

Buy ride vouchers with cash at the following locations

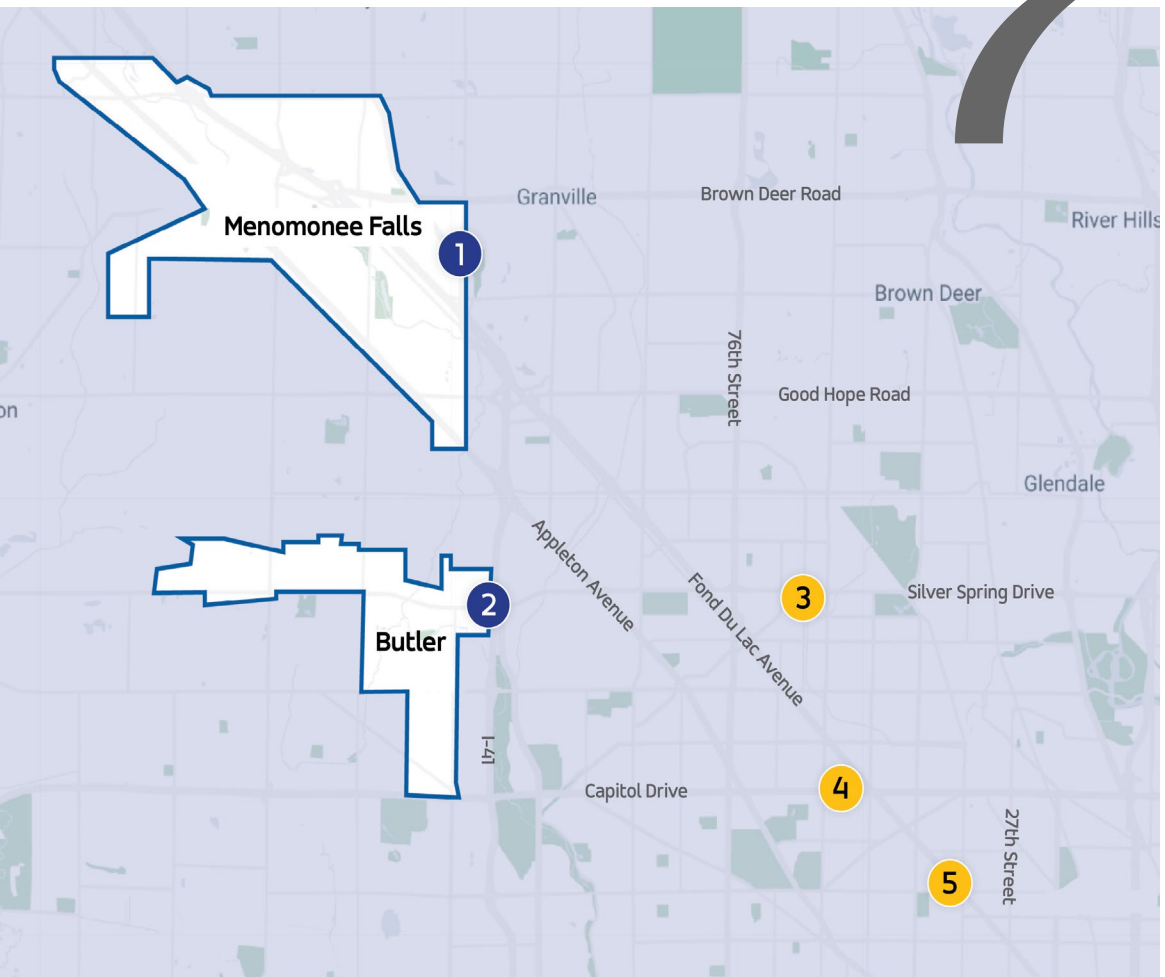
Where to Ride



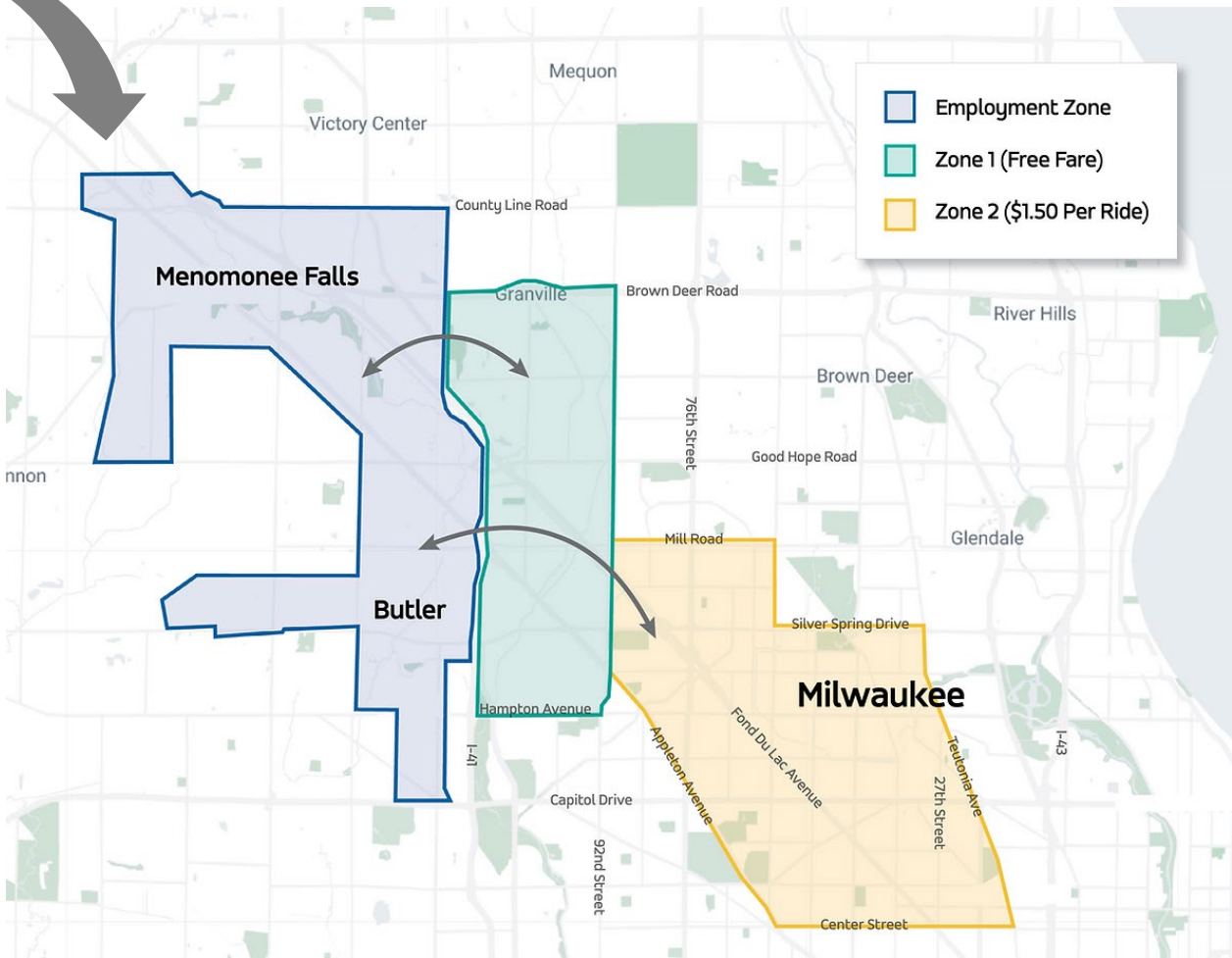
Service Model Evolution

- Started in February with 5 pickup points and two employment zones
- Switched in April to two pickup zones and one combined employment zone

ORIGINAL



CURRENT



Building a Partnership

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
SEWRPC

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
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NSF

MOBILISE

EMPLOY MILWAUKEE
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

MILWAUKEE COUNTY

WAUKESHA · OZAUKEE · WASHINGTON
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

WAUKESHA COUNTY
BUSINESS ALLIANCE
Advocate Develop Network Promote

WAUKESHA COUNTY
CENTER FOR GROWTH
Advancing business. Growing communities.

Powered by
via

Broad Support and Successful Launch Event

Cavalier Johnson, City of Milwaukee Mayor

We have a problem right now. We have a problem today. We have people who need access to work, good-paying jobs today.

David Crowley, Milwaukee County Executive

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.

Lingqian (Ivy) Hu, UWM

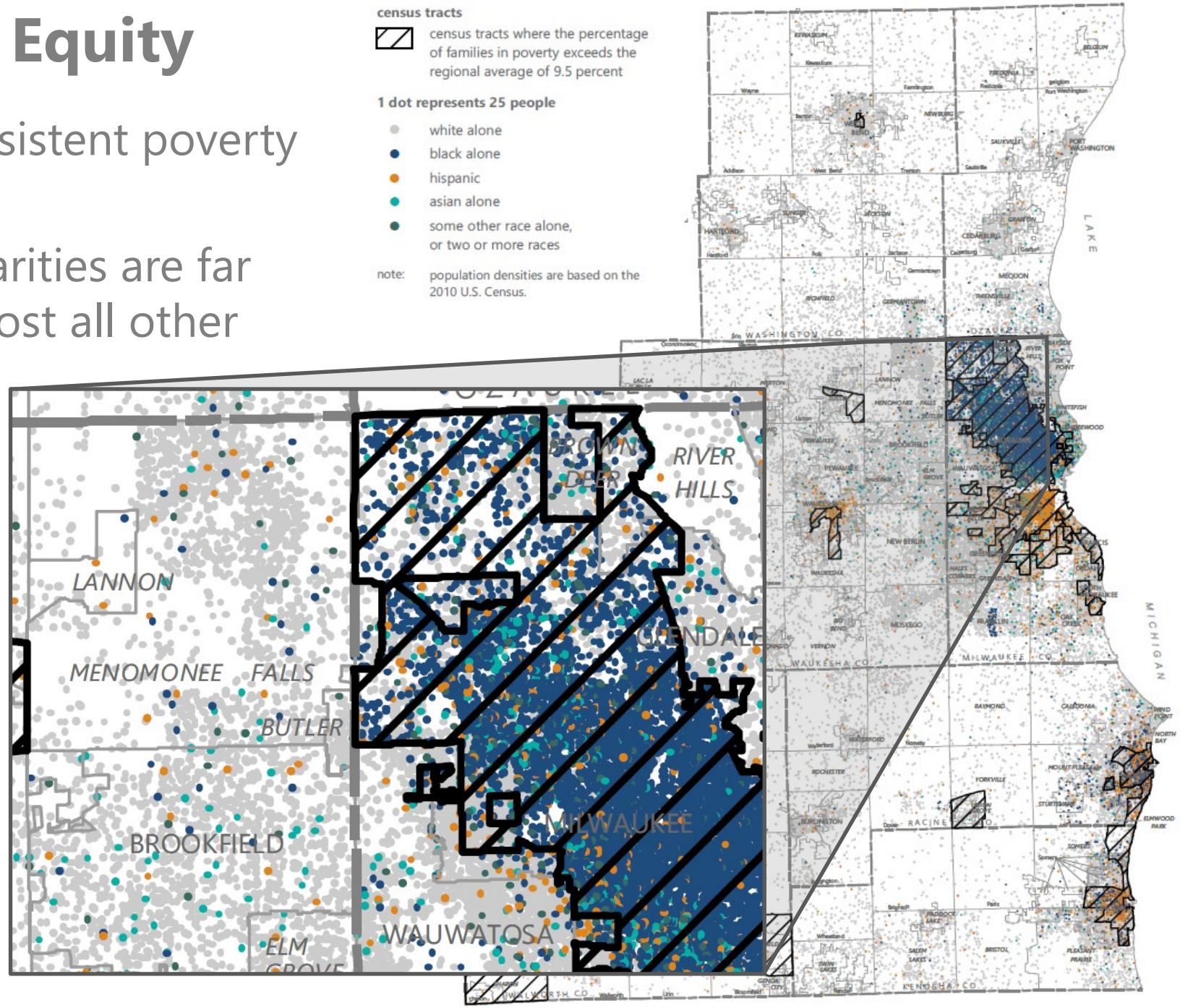
We are so excited to bring $1 million in National Science Foundation federal research funding to launch a project that can solve a long-term problem in our region.

Kevin Muhs, SEWRPC

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.

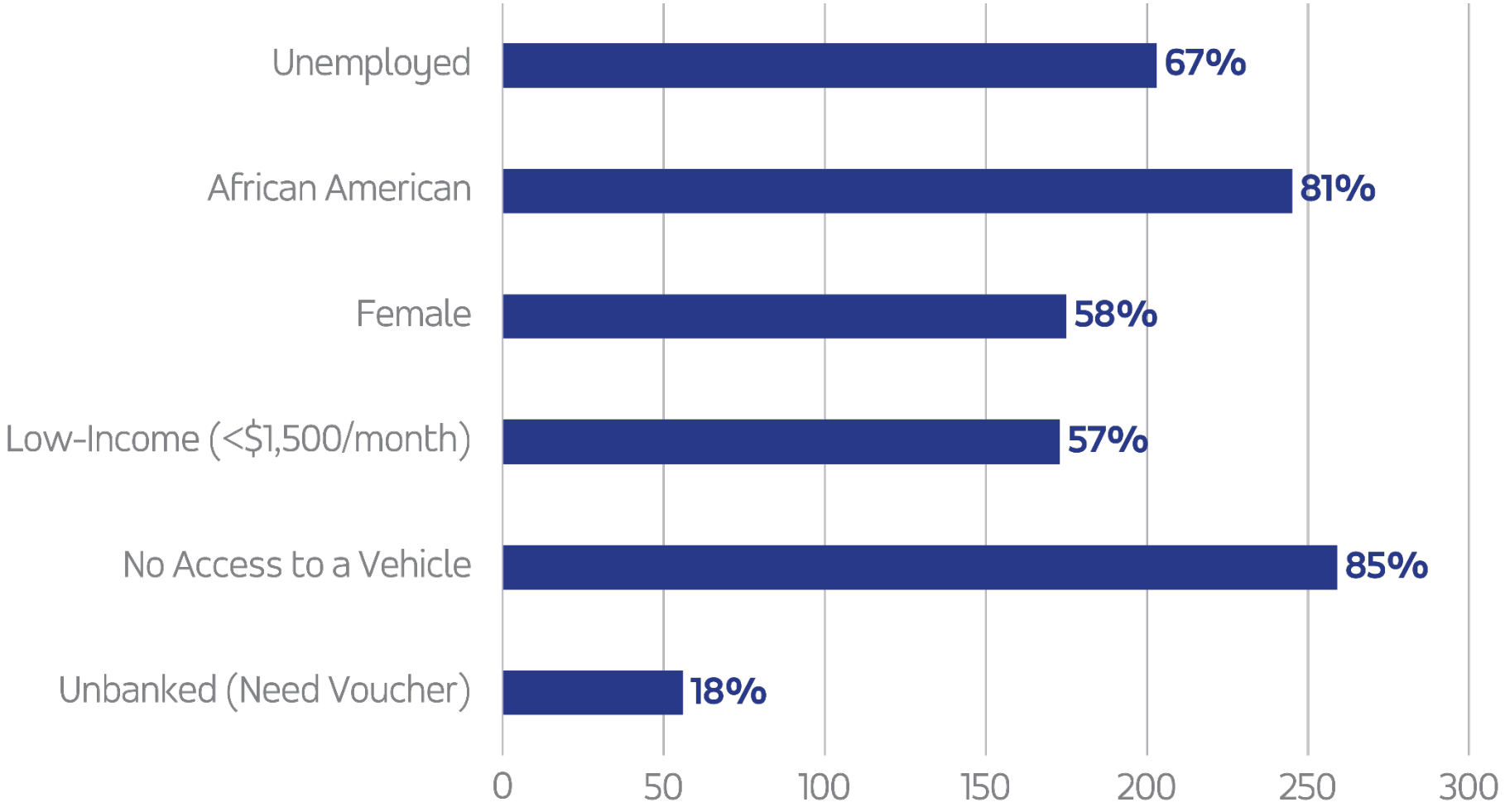
Racial and Economic Equity

- Increasing diversity, but persistent poverty among people of color
- Milwaukee metro area disparities are far more pronounced than almost all other metro areas
- FlexRide is trying to tackle transportation barriers that limit job opportunities for many Milwaukee residents



Rider Demographics

- 390 total applications as of May 17
- Characteristics of the 304 accepted applications:



Key Research Questions

1. How big is the potential market for a microtransit service in Milwaukee?
2. What are the challenges to establishing FlexRide and what practical lessons can we take away?
3. Who are the FlexRiders, why are they riding, and does FlexRide help them get or keep a job?
4. How does rider satisfaction change over time and what barriers are faced at different points in time?
5. What do employers think of FlexRide, how much are they engaged, and are they willing to contribute to support FlexRide in the future?

CIVIC INNOVATION CHALLENGE

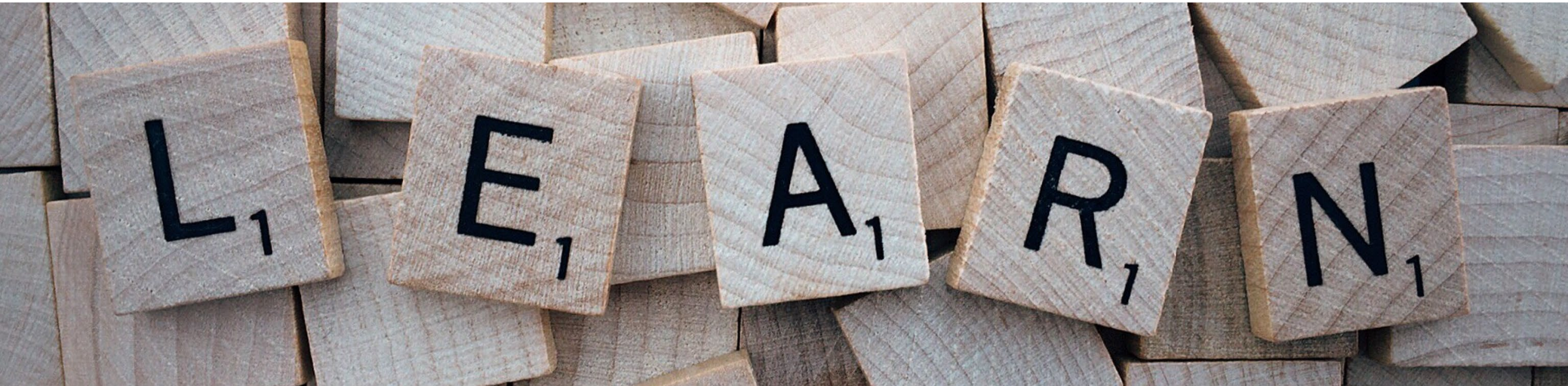
POWERING SMART & CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Challenges Faced

- Tight labor market
- Newness of service
- Research component complications
- Global service provider pros and cons
- COVID concerns
- Covering all shift times is difficult and costly

Lessons So Far

- Starting and running a new transportation service from scratch is a lot of work!
- It takes time to grow riders for a new service
- Marketing/promotion is a significant portion of the effort
- Need to play matchmaker connecting jobseekers to jobs
- Lack of a regional entity to operate a cross-county service presents a barrier



What Does the Future Hold?

- Need to answer three main questions:
  - Will ridership grow to levels sufficient to answer research questions and justify future investment?
  - Will widespread support for the concept of on-demand transportation translate into financial support?
  - Will partners be able to determine who will operate the service after the pilot?
- **IF** ridership, funding, and governance fall into place…
  …the plan is to extend the current service and expand to serve additional suburban employment centers

Bridging the Last Mile Study

- Plan for getting workers the “last-mile” to jobs outside the bus service area
- Developed by MobiliSE with support from SEWRPC and HNTB
- Focused on four suburban communities not covered by FlexRide
- Explores different types of last-mile service
- Identifies a sustainable model for governance and funding

FlexRide Milwaukee

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Get to jobs in the Menomonee Falls area for $1.50 or less.

@FlexRideMKE

Learn more and apply at **flexridemke.com.**