

# TRANSIT INSIDER

MCTS NEWS FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



QTR 2, 2022



Our goal is to bring you informative transit news and insights that will assist your work with constituents and advocates.



# THE ROAD AHEAD

## SUPERVISOR PRISCILLA E. COGGS-JONES, MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, 13TH DISTRICT

At the beginning of the 2022-2024 term of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, I had the honor and privilege to be appointed as the Chairwoman of the Transportation, Public Works, and Transit Committee. This position gives me the opportunity and responsibility of leading the County Board's work on policy related to the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS).

I have a life-long dedication to working in this community. Most recently, I have had the pleasure during these past 14 months as a County Supervisor of building productive relationships, meeting residents, attending various Milwaukee County department meetings, and listening to the concerns that were raised.

With that in mind, I plan to use this platform as Chair of the Transportation Committee to be an outspoken voice to alleviate discrimination, inequities, and biases, and to bridge the gap and advocate for expanding sustainable employment.

I recently had the pleasure of touring the fleet and maintenance facility as well as the Fond du Lac location. I want to take this time to highlight the enthusiasm that I witnessed from the dedicated MCTS employees.

The care and passion that was displayed during our tour was an absolute joy to witness. It was incredible how much I learned on my tour. I found out how the bus operators select their bus routes and heard conversations about bus selection. I was educated

on how to determine the year of the bus and was shown the process of tire replacement, along with a host of other magnificent encounters with MCTS employees.

In addition to meeting these employees at their workplace, I have witnessed their professionalism in the community when managing driving buses during construction, when encountering reckless driving, and other everyday business.

Advocating for the expansion of public transportation to get people to job corridors, and maintaining the necessary County Paratransit services, is vital to low income and disabled residents.

As I continue my tenure as Chair of the Transportation, Public Works, and Transit Committee, I plan to remain engaged with the day-to-day workings of MCTS and its employees. Next, I look forward to making my way to the Kinnickinnic location.



**DIRECTOR OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DONNA BROWN-MARTIN, MCTS MANAGING DIRECTOR DAN BOEHM AND SUPERVISOR COGGS-JONES ON BOARD AN MCTS BUS.**

# ON BOARD

## NEW RESEARCH GIVES INSIGHT INTO NONRIDERS

Every few years, we gather the opinions of riders who don't use or infrequently use transit. This year, we thought it was a good time to see how the pandemic is shaping their views. We used in-person focus groups and an online survey to collect feedback. The goal was to explore the attitudes and opinions of non-riders to gain insight into hesitations about public transportation, and what MCTS can do to change perceptions and increase ridership. We also explored if COVID-19 has impacted their likelihood to ride in the future.

**The good news is that of riders who have ridden transit in the past, they are more likely than those who never ride the bus to:**



Have more positive experiences on their bus rides

Believe bus stops are safe



Think riding the bus is adventurous



Think the bus is reliable



Believe MCTS contributes to a vibrant Milwaukee

When non-riders were asked what MCTS could do to make them feel differently about riding the bus, the topics of safety, direct/faster routes and ease of use/education rose to the top.

### Non-riders would like to see:

Cleaner bus stops / shelters



More how-to ride campaigns to ease anxiety for new or infrequent riders



Direct routes to key locations / destinations



More high-frequency routes (fewer stops)



COVID-19 has had a direct impact on ridership. If infrequent transit riders were able to afford to buy car they did - and now use that as their primary mode of transportation. For 15 percent of infrequent riders surveyed, they indicated they would wait to return to transit until the pandemic was over.

Bottomline, is that a subset of riders who rode infrequently before the pandemic could be persuaded to return to transit.

# WHO'S DRIVING OUR SUCCESS

Each issue will spotlight an MCTS employee or department delivering on our mission.



**GERALD MORRISON**

Fond du Lac  
Garage Manager



*"Every time we're tasked  
with the impossible, we get  
it accomplished."*

**WATCH GERALD'S  
INTERVIEW HERE**



## How long have you worked at MCTS?

21 years, 11 months and two days.

## What has your career path been at MCTS?

I served in the army as a mechanic, but the only job available at MCTS at the time was a part-time, temporary cleaner/tanker position. I applied so I could get my foot in the door. I got hired for the position and kept my full-time job at another company until I became a full-time cleaner/tanker. Less than two years later, I became a "C" mechanic, then an "A" mechanic. Then in 2009, my proudest moment: I was awarded a shift supervisor position! It was challenging because we are like a family here, so I became in essence my family's boss! In 2015, I became garage manager at Fond du Lac. I believe if people have the skills and motivation to excel, there's opportunities to advance at MCTS.

## What do garage managers do?

I take care of the people at the Fond du Lac Garage — they are my #1 priority. Together with 63 employees and five supervisors, I maintain service for 191 buses, which is a great deal of responsibility. I review daily, weekly and monthly reports to help make sure that we keep our buses on the road every single day. I deal with vendors, fuel delivery, equipment and inventory. Soon, my team and I will have the opportunity to learn how Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) buses operate on a daily basis and learn how to work on them. We'll get safety certification to help make our electric buses operate properly. I am constantly learning something new at MCTS.

# WHO'S DRIVING OUR SUCCESS CONTINUED

**Describe something about your position that someone outside of transit would be interested to learn.** People who don't know the ins and outs of public transit may not realize how much work goes into managing a fleet to keep buses running properly. Today, we're bringing a new fleet of 6100s on the road. We've spent months getting these Gilligs ready. It's phenomenal to see how much bus technology has evolved, and as a result, the fleet is more complicated to fix and repair than ever. A simple repair that might have taken 8 hours now takes 12 to 16 hours because of the sophisticated equipment: diagnostic tools are more complex; laptops and troubleshooting 'trees' are part of daily bus repairs. There's hardware and software now, which costs more but delivers better service for our riders.

**What's your favorite MCTS memory, or your favorite thing about working at MCTS?** First and foremost, being able to provide for my family; to have things that we enjoy, is my favorite part of working here. Without MCTS, I wouldn't have the life that I have now. The second thing is the memories. Back in the day, we had a company outing at the Zoo. That's my favorite memory because my whole family could go and we'd see other MCTS families throughout the day. It felt like a big family picnic and was something we all looked forward to. I have many memories of pulling together, digging buses out snow, retrieving buses during heavy rainstorms and sudden floods...that was fun. Those are all good memories. Every time we're tasked with the impossible, we get it accomplished, and that's a moment I like to remember. We did it.

## MCTS PROMOTES CAREER PATHS

MCTS's latest advertising campaign leans into the career paths available to employees. Several long-term employees were selected to showcase where they started (as bus operators!) and where their journey led them. Ads will appear on social media, buses, bus shelters, billboards and online.



Two employees, **Ron McCorkel** and **Tanyelle Alexander**, are included in YouTube videos.



# TRANSIT ADVOCACY IN ACTION

## MOBILISE

MCTS is proud to partner with MobilISE – and we stand behind its work advancing regional transportation alternatives.

The organization formerly known as Regional Transit Leadership Council changed its name last fall, refocusing on its mission of uniting leaders across Southeastern Wisconsin around the value of multimodal transportation – and spearheading transformative projects to bring that mission to life. Here are some of their key projects:

### **Rail-Volution: Partnering with AARP on North-South BRT**

With work well underway on MCTS's East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route, MobilISE is partnering with AARP and local community, business and elected leaders to develop a vision for a second BRT route – this time a north-south route along 27th Street from Milwaukee to Franklin.

It's embarking on this through AARP's MOVE Roundtable program, as part of the organization's **Rail-Volution** initiative. The journey began on May 19, as MobilISE convened partners across the 27th Street Corridor to begin the visioning process. More sessions will follow over the summer, as it develops a vision for what the new corridor can look like, from a community and economic development standpoint.



# TRANSIT ADVOCACY IN ACTION **CONTINUED**

## MOBILISE

### Advancing Last-Mile Solutions

Mobilise is also partnering with organizations across the region to help connect Milwaukeeans with jobs through innovative last-mile solutions.

**FlexRide Milwaukee:** SEWRPC, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Mobilise and other partners are delivering a new microtransit service that connects City of Milwaukee residents with employers in Menomonee Falls and Butler.

**South and West Suburbs:** Mobilise is also hard at work trying to scale these solutions across the region, including partnering with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Waukesha County, the United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County, Mandel Group, the City of Franklin, GRAEF, and M7 to explore bringing last-mile service on a pilot basis to Milwaukee's south and west suburban communities. [View it here.](#)

### “Intersections” Series

Mobilise recently wrapped up its spring “Intersections” series – three virtual events that brought national leaders together to discuss tangible, practical solutions to transportation challenges.

**“Closing the Last Mile Gap”:** Kevin Muhs, Executive Director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), and Peter Costa, Urban Mobility Planning Manager for HNTB

**“The Future of Bus Rapid Transit”:** Maribeth Feke, Director of Planning, Greater Cleveland RTA; Cam Hardy, President, Better Bus Coalition, Cincinnati; Jacqueline Zeledon, Community Outreach & Internal Communications Coordinator, MCTS

**“Transportation, Equity & Innovation”:** Tim Slusser, Chief of Mobility Innovation, Detroit; Bakari Height, Co-Founder, MARTA Army Inc., Atlanta

### BRIDGING THE LAST MILE

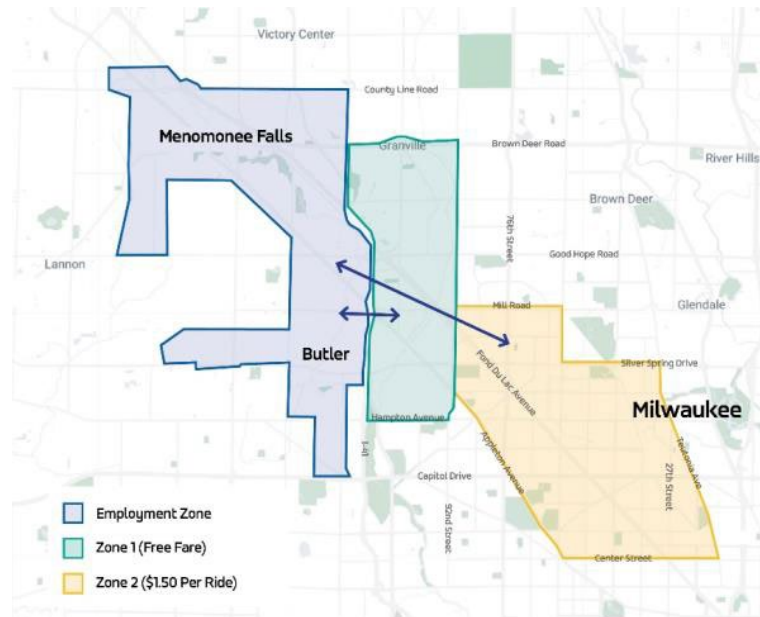


# TRANSIT SPOTLIGHT

## NEW FLEXRIDE MILWAUKEE SERVICE AREAS INCREASE ACCESS TO JOBS IN NORTHWEST SUBURBS

### STREET-CORNER PICKUPS NOW AVAILABLE IN LARGE PARTS OF THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST SIDES

**FlexRide Milwaukee**, the on-demand service that officially launched in March, has expanded to new service zones. Previously, FlexRide riders were limited to requesting rides to jobs or job interviews from one of five specified pickup points. These five points have now been expanded to two larger Milwaukee Neighborhood Zones, where riders can request a ride and board a FlexRide vehicle. For most locations in the two Zones, that means the driver will pick them up at the nearest street corner. They will then be taken to any workplace in the Menomonee Falls or Butler Employment Zone.



Take FlexRide to/from your job.



### FLEXRIDE HOURS & COST

FlexRide also recently extended its service hours and now operates weekdays from 4:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., with flexible scheduling based on demand.

All Milwaukee residents 18 and older are eligible to use the service, as long as they work or want to work in the Employment Zone. They do not need to live in one of the two Neighborhood Zones to use the service; they just need to get into one of the two Zones to request a ride. Depending on where they are traveling to and from, rides are free or \$1.50 each way.



# FLEXRIDE MILWAUKEE

## RICHARD'S STORY

New to Milwaukee and looking for a job, Richard Ellis had a problem: A lack of personal transportation.

Sure, he could borrow his friend's car, but he didn't want to count on that, and she worked the day shift. He could ride the bus, but that didn't get him to the front door of the companies he was applying to in the suburbs. His fix: "Flex," as in FlexRide Milwaukee.

"I wasn't getting around much at all because I didn't have a car," said Ellis, who moved from Chicago in early 2022. "One day I was borrowing the car and dropping my friend off, and I heard about 'Flex' on the radio. I took some information down, got home and Googled it. Then I downloaded the app. It was easy."

Within days, Ellis was riding FlexRide to work as a food safety technician at Cargill Meat Solutions in Butler. Without it, he was faced with having to walk a mile from the closest bus stop to work.

"I have always been on time to work, so it's been very helpful to me," he said. "It's

been nothing but positive. I would suggest it to anybody. You can't beat it – go do it."

In fact, Ellis is promoting the service with some of his co-workers, even as he is looking into purchasing a used car of his own – using money he saved from the job that FlexRide helped make a reality. Also, because of FlexRide, and because of the work Ellis does in inspecting the roast beef and hamburger bound for major local grocery stores, our food is a little safer.

"I would suggest it to anybody. That's why I shared it, planted the seed," he said. "Anybody in need of transportation to work, this will help you get there and better your life situation."



## ABOUT FLEXRIDE MILWAUKEE

Prospective riders can apply to start using the service at [www.flexridemke.com](http://www.flexridemke.com). After applying, eligible riders can download the FlexRide Milwaukee app and create an account. To book a trip, riders enter the pickup and drop-off locations into the app, which tells them where to meet the vehicle and when it arrives. Rides can also be booked over the phone.

FlexRide is accessible to all riders – including residents with disabilities, those without a smartphone, and those without a credit or debit card. For riders who prefer to pay with cash, vouchers can be purchased at the MCTS Fond du Lac Station and MCTS Administrative Building.

FlexRide is a pilot program funded by a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation obtained by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The pilot service will operate through fall 2022 and may be extended if successful and funding is secured.

# NEW BUS SHELTER ART COMING!

## MCTS BUS SHELTER ART PROJECT

The **MCTS Bus Shelter Art Project** adds to the colors of the season as several new installations will be unveiled in June 2022.

- As part of our sponsorship of the Marcus Performing Arts Center's 38th Annual **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration**, art contest winners will be featured on bus shelter murals located along Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, at W. Concordia Avenue and W. Pleasant Street, respectively. Students creatively expressed this year's theme, "We Must Speak," inspired by Dr. King's 1966 essay, "Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom." The art contest was hosted by Milwaukee Public Schools.
- **Mothers Against Gun Violence** will unveil two moving and interactive murals that address the impact gun violence has on survivors, including family, friends and the community. Each panel of the murals contain QR codes that allows the public to view personal testimonies from gun violence survivors – family members, friends and neighbors. The murals will be located at bus shelters on 6th & Highland near the MATC campus and at 12th & State Streets adjacent to the Aurora Mount Sinai Medical complex. They are tied to the upcoming play, "Voices of Gun Violence," also sponsored by the group. It will be performed at local venues this summer.
- Another set of interactive murals will be unveiled this summer are sponsored by the **City of Milwaukee Office of Early Childhood Development**. The artwork helps our youngest customers and their parents engage in creative learning while traveling with MCTS. The murals encourage young riders to identify shapes and colors, read and even play counting games. Several of the first series of murals will appear on bus shelters located within the 53206-zip code.



**THIS IS AN ARTIST RENDERING OF WHAT THE FINAL MURALS WILL LOOK LIKE.  
MANY THANKS TO MOTHERS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE FOR THIS MOVING ARTWORK.**

# MCTS IN THE COMMUNITY

## CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH DAY!

Watch for MCTS in Milwaukee's 51st Annual Juneteenth Parade on **Sunday, June 19** starting at 9:00 a.m. The parade route begins near 17th & Atkinson Avenue then onto Dr. Martin Luther King Drive to Locust Street. You can also watch the parade live on Milwaukee's TMJ4 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. MCTS is a proud sponsor and supporter of this annual event, which is among the longest running Juneteenth Day celebrations in the U.S.



**TEAM MCTS MARCHES IN THE 50TH ANNUAL JUNETEENTH DAY PARADE ON JUNE 19, 2021.**

## FESTIVAL SEASON ARRIVES AT THE LAKEFRONT, MCTS GETS YOU THERE

Milwaukee's lakefront is home to several festivals, including the world-famous Summerfest. Although our efforts to recruit and retain bus operators have been making gains, MCTS will not be able to provide shuttle or freeway flyer service from park-ride lots this year. However, you can still avoid traffic jams, ride share price surges and high parking fees by riding local routes:

MCTS's **Routes 14** (Humboldt – Forest Home), **15** (Holton – Kinnickinnic), **GreenLine** (Bayshore – Airport) and **GoldLine** (Wisconsin Avenue – UWM) all get you within walking distance of Henry Maier Festival Park. Plan your route, buy your fare and track your bus with **WisGo**, in the **UMO app**.

## NEXT STOP, THE WISCONSIN STATE FAIR!

Be sure to use our trip planning tools on the **UMO app** or **RideMCTS.com** to plan your travel to the **Wisconsin State Fair**, August 4-14. MCTS's **Routes 18** (National – Greenfield), **33** (Vliet – 84th) and **76** (76th Street) also get you close to the Fair grounds. MCTS shuttles and freeway flyer trips will not be available for service.



## MCTS VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETINGS

You're invited to the following virtual community meetings to learn about upcoming improvements and proposed changes starting in the fall.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Wednesday, June 8 at 6 p.m.

Thursday, June 9 at 12 p.m.

Monday, June 13 at 6 p.m.

Click the dates above to register or visit [RideMCTS.com/PublicMeetings](https://RideMCTS.com/PublicMeetings) for more information.



## MCTS IN THE COMMUNITY

### MOBILE MEET UPS WITH MCTS RETURNS FOR SUMMER OF 2022

Now entering its second year, **Mobile Meet Ups with MCTS** creates opportunities for Milwaukee County and Wisconsin elected officials to meet and talk with their constituents on board MCTS bus routes and at bus stops.

Mobile Meet Ups is designed to provide informal opportunities to connect with residents who live and/or work in legislative districts. The experience allows officials to hear directly about constituent concerns that impact them personally such as access to transportation and employment. In addition, Mobile Meet Ups participants are able to learn more about MCTS's services and how we keep Milwaukee County moving.

To learn more about the Mobile Meet Ups program, contact our Community Outreach & Internal Communications Coordinator **Jacqueline Zeledon** at [jzeledon@mcts.org](mailto:jzeledon@mcts.org) or **414-937-3253**.

## MCTS WINS PRSA PARAGON AWARD

On May 22, the best public relations programs and tactics implemented in 2021 were honored by the Public Relations Society of America's Southeastern Wisconsin chapter at its annual Paragon Awards.

In all, 17 awards were presented for PR programs and tactics to local agencies, corporations and nonprofits that exhibit industry best standards in research, strategic planning and results-driven execution that made an impact.

MCTS was recognized with an Award of Excellence for the entry: East-West BRT Groundbreaking (events and observances). **The groundbreaking event** was attended by more than 200 attendees, including local, state, and federal officials, county leaders, alderpersons, and the general public, both riders and non-riders.

MCTS shared the award with its agency, g. moxie and HNTB, who managed the successful event.



LEFT TO RIGHT: MIKE ZABEL, JACQUELINE ZELEDON, KRISTINA HOFFMAN, BRIANNE MUELLER, HEATHER WEBER, LAURA GORANSON, SOPHIA PHILLIPS



## SAY HELLO TO WISGO BY UMO

### 20,000 MOBILE APPS DOWNLOADED!

Riding the bus is easier than ever! We selected the Umo Mobility Platform by Cubic Systems in February 2022 for our new fare collection system. The first step in our journey began with the Umo app launched in April. Just download the new Umo app to plan your trips, track your bus, and pay your fare.

Visit [RideMCTS.com/WisGo](https://RideMCTS.com/WisGo) to learn more!

# THANKS MOM!

## MISS MILWAUKEE 2022 CREDITS HER MOTHER'S SUPPORT

Fond du Lac Station Platform Instructor Jacqueline Hughes has always encouraged her daughter, Jada Davis, to set and pursue her goals, and to always believe in her abilities. Jada listened carefully to her mother's words and as a result made Milwaukee history.

In March, Jada was crowned Miss Milwaukee 2022, and is the first African American woman to hold the title. The local scholarship competition is part of the Miss America scholarship organization.

Next month, the Marquette University Law School student will travel to Oshkosh, Wisconsin as a candidate for the state title. If she wins, Jada advances to the Miss America 2023 event, which will take place this fall in Hartford, Connecticut.

"My mom is super supportive of this new journey that I am on — competing in Miss Milwaukee and going on to the Miss Wisconsin event," said Jada. "She's given me her encouragement, which helps me put my best foot forward."

"When Jada was younger, starting at about three years old, I always kept her in some type of dance class. I was always kind of shy as a child, so I didn't want my daughter to grow up being silent or missing out on opportunities," said Jacqueline.

"As a working mom, I always encouraged Jada to follow my footsteps to be your best, work hard and follow your dreams. You can do both: go to school and still follow your dreams. I am proud that she is following her dreams. I will continue to encourage her to do anything she puts her mind to."

Congratulations, Jacqueline and Jada, from MCTS!

We salute Jacqueline and all moms with this special Mother's Day [video](#).



**MISS MILWAUKEE 2022 JADA DAVIS CREDITS HER MOM, PLATFORM INSTRUCTOR JACQUELINE HUGHES, FOR ALWAYS ENCOURAGING JADA TO BELIEVE IN HERSELF.**



## PLEASE SHARE THIS ISSUE.

NEW READERS CAN SIGN UP TO STAY INFORMED  
BY EMAILING [MARKETING@MCTS.ORG](mailto:MARKETING@MCTS.ORG)



### MISSION:

MCTS connects our community to jobs, education and life with essential transit services.



### VISION:

To be the preferred transportation choice through service excellence and innovation.



### VALUES:

Respect, Integrity, Excellence,  
Equity, Collaboration, Innovation

## SUMMER SERVICE CHANGES

Public transportation agencies typically adjust service four times a year to account for road construction, long-term detours, new commercial developments, school schedules, ridership trends, driver input, and staffing adjustments.

The new Summer Service Changes took effect on Sunday, June 5. Schedules that changed include the following routes: **20, 21, 28, 33, 51, 53, 54, 57, 58, 60, 63, 66, 92 & RedLine**. Check buses or [RideMCTS.com](https://www.rideMCTS.com) for updated schedules.

[LEARN MORE](#)

