MOUNTAIN TOWNS 2030

WORKSHOP · TUE, OCT 13 · 1:15-2:15 PM

Outperforming Their Size: How Mountain Towns are Rewriting the Rules of Sustainable Mobility

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Transit is often a town's third-biggest expense, and old fixed-route systems force a choice between wide coverage and efficiency. Via, the Town of Truckee and Drop Mobility showed how on-demand microtransit and e-bike share can serve more residents and visitors at lower cost per rider, often without a bigger budget.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Fixed routes alone force a bad trade-off.** Covering everything is costly and empty; covering little leaves people out. Few ride unless they live within about an eighth of a mile of a route.
2. **Pair fewer, faster routes with microtransit.** Sioux Falls cut 12 hourly routes to 6 running every 30 minutes, put the whole city in a microtransit zone, and raised fixed-route ridership 16%.
3. **Design microtransit to feed fixed routes.** Done wrong, on-demand service draws riders away from buses. Done right, it fills gaps and delivers people to frequent routes.
4. **A real pilot can win a tax vote.** Truckee's pilot showed locals, not just visitors, were riding. Voters approved funding to keep microtransit, and annual riders grew from under 30,000 to about 200,000.
5. **Grow bike share in phases.** Breckenridge started small in 2023 and expanded with demand; the Vail Valley joined five communities into one regional e-bike system.

WHAT LOCAL OFFICIALS CAN DO

- ☐ **Replace your least efficient routes first.** Swap low-density, low-ridership routes for on-demand service and reinvest in frequency.
- ☐ **Run a true pilot, ready to shelve it.** Truckee used local, non-federalized dollars, then rebid with Caltrans' approval.
- ☐ **Put all modes under one contract and platform.** Separate contracts kept Truckee from mixing ADA and microtransit rides; combining them raised shared rides from 27% to about 50%.
- ☐ **Poll before asking voters to pay.** Show locals the data on who rides. Truckee's tax measures passed with about 80%.
- ☐ **Set system goals, then get a service design.** Visitors, residents or economic development? A vendor can quickly estimate cost and routes.
- ☐ **Fund bike share from several pillars.** Municipal support, grants, private sponsors and memberships, plus rider revenue.

BY THE NUMBERS

~400%
Truckee ridership jump in the first week of its pilot

$13 to $15
Per microtransit rider, vs. ~$37 fixed route, ~$80 dial-a-ride

30K to 200K
Truckee annual riders, before and after microtransit

64%
Breckenridge bike share trips that replaced a car trip

155
E-bikes across 5 Vail Valley communities and 33 hubs

$0
Budget increase for most Via route conversions

WATCH OUT FOR

- ! Outside funders such as hospitals or foundations may attach service requirements, like a specific night route, to their dollars.
- ! Changing a federally funded schedule can take 6 to 9 months; on-demand service can flex weekly.

RESOURCES

Via
ridewithvia.com

Drop Mobility
dropmobility.com

Town of Truckee Public Transportation
townoftruckee.gov/278/Public-Transportation

Peer communities
Sioux Falls, SD and Rochester, MN (Via); Vail Valley and Breckenridge (Drop)

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Summarized from the session recording and presenter slides. Figures are as presented; confirm with presenters before citing.

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