How to Develop a Microtransit Program

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Mobility Planner, Mountain Line

Benefits of implementing inclusive planning techniques
Mountain Line – Flagstaff, AZ

- Flagstaff, Arizona
  - Located in northern Arizona
  - 72,400 population
  - Northern Arizona University
  - Small-Urban
- Mountain Line
  - Transit authority for Northern AZ
  - Fixed route, paratransit, subsidized taxi program, vanpool
  - 9 fixed routes
  - Over 2.5 million fixed route rides annually (pre-COVID-19)

Small urban, four seasons, directly operated
Objectives - Mountain Line GO!

• Utilizing on-demand microtransit technology
• Coordinating with the Mountain Line paratransit program
• Connecting people to the broader transit system
• Ensuring the program is accessible, equitable, inclusive, and usable by the diverse populations in Flagstaff

On-demand, connecting people, accessible, equitable
How Microtransit Works

- Flexible, real-time hailed
- Utilize emerging technology
- Alternative solution to big bus

Flexible, on-demand, partnerships
Pilot Area – Huntington & Industrial Corridor

• Identified transit gap
• Home to 10+ human services/clinics
• Suburban/industrial land use
• Challenges for fixed route
• Physical barriers to access nearby transit
  • Railroad tracks
  • 1-40
  • Lack of sidewalks/crossings

High need for mobility options, lack of transit access
# Planning Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Inclusion Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the corridor</td>
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<td>- Transportation challenges and travel patterns in the area</td>
<td>- Surveying</td>
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<td>- Existing conditions</td>
<td>- Pop-up events</td>
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<td>- Smart phone and banking capabilities</td>
<td>- Small focus groups</td>
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<td>- Stakeholder input</td>
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<td>- Steering Committee input</td>
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<td>Trade-offs discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Coverage vs. Convenience vs. Cost</td>
<td>- Steering Committee meeting</td>
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<td>- Service Size vs. Wait Times</td>
<td>- Zoom polls – Majority rule</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defining the details</td>
<td>- Determine hours, days, and fare of service</td>
<td>- Survey and pop-up event results</td>
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<td>- Steering Committee</td>
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<td>- Leadership final approval</td>
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Final Program

Mountain Line GO!

- Commingled service with paratransit
- First mile, last mile service
- Fare: $1
  - Payment on-board with cash
  - Through the app with credit card
  - Free promo codes
- Booking a ride: App, website, calling option

Mountain Line GO!
# Implementation Phase

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Inclusion Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>- Co-creating materials</td>
<td>- Steering Committee meetings</td>
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<td>- Identifying target audiences</td>
<td>- Zoom brainstorm break out groups</td>
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<td>- Defining types of materials</td>
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<td>Software Procurement</td>
<td>- Reading proposals</td>
<td>- 2 participants on committee</td>
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<td>- Scoring</td>
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<td>- Making decisions</td>
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<td>Testing</td>
<td>- Test service prior to launch</td>
<td>- Small testing group with participants and agency staff</td>
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<td>Training</td>
<td>- Travel training</td>
<td>- Travel training with students</td>
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<td>- Human service staff training</td>
<td>- Webinar and in-person trainings for staff</td>
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<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>- Develop scoring criteria</td>
<td>- Steering Committee meetings</td>
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<td>- Develop rider satisfaction survey</td>
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How to...
Outcomes

- Over 2,500 trips in 23 months
- Overall rider satisfaction: 4.75 out of 5
- 63% of riders are older adult and/or person with disability
- Percentage of trips from Flagstaff Shelter Services to:
  - Walmart: 25%
  - Medical Care/Services: 16%
  - Connection Center: 28%
  - Housing Authority: 5%

*On-demand, connecting people, accessible, equitable*
Continuing past the pilot…

- Grant funded pilot for 8 months
- July 1, 2022, became a permanent program
- Comingling: Minimal additional cost
  - Increased trips per hour by 3%
  - Average of 2% of trips are comingled

Cost effective, increases productivity, reduces downtime
Lessons Learned

• Community Champions
• Inclusion takes time
• Change is hard
• Creative outreach
• Increased oversight

Building community, communication