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Mountaineer Celebrates its Five Year Anniversary and Impact and Influence on Lake Tahoe's Transportation Solutions

The Tahoe region has embraced and expanded the free, convenient microtransit service operated by Downtowner that started in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows

OLYMPIC VALLEY, Calif. (Dec. 5, 2023) - When the free to the passenger, on-demand microtransit service called "[Mountaineer](#)" launched in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows in 2018, the goal was to make it easy to get around the Palisades Tahoe resort community during the winter months without a car. To accomplish this, Mountaineer Transit Company (MTC) was formed as a nonprofit collaborative effort of Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows' homeowner associations, lodging properties, and Palisades Tahoe ski resort. Five years later, MTC has not only achieved their goal, other regional Tahoe-Truckee jurisdictions and communities were inspired to adopt their own microtransit services operated by [Downtowner](#).

"When Mountaineer started, our immediate goal was to reduce in-valley traffic congestion, and make it easy to get around the Palisades Tahoe resort community without the need for a personal vehicle. This was needed for the North Lake Tahoe region to be competitive as a winter mountain destination," said Joy Doyle, Mountaineer executive director. "We are thrilled with the response the service, which is operated by Downtowner, has received, and that our broader community recognized its value, provided new service zones, and continues to invest in the expansion of microtransit in the Tahoe-Truckee region."

Mountaineer's success in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows prompted Placer and Washoe Counties to engage Downtowner and launch TART Connect in Eastern Placer County, Incline Village and Crystal Bay in Summer 2021. The Town of Truckee followed in June 2022 with the expansion of TART Connect, and in July 2022, South Lake Tahoe introduced its microtransit service, Lake Link.

Today, the cumulative effort of these microtransit services have provided rides to over 1,269,235 passengers (through Nov. 28, 2023). All Tahoe-Truckee microtransit services are expertly provided by Downtowner, whose software and operations are used to deploy on-demand, fixed route and flex route transit systems in communities of all sizes and types—from small mountain resorts to large urban cities.

In Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows alone, Mountaineer has taken 49,495 cars off the road and reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled by 83,556 miles since its inception. In a total of 506 operating days, nearly 300,000 passengers have taken over 143,000 rides, and

during the 2022-23 season alone, 87,219 passengers used Mountaineer to get around the two valleys.

“Mountaineer shifted the status quo. Tahoe used to be a destination where you absolutely had to bring a car — whether it was rented at the airport, or driven in from elsewhere,” said Stephen Murray, co-founder of Downtowner. “This is not so anymore, and we hear it from our passengers daily. Palisades Tahoe and the MTC board of directors had the foresight to launch a microtransit service like this and have become a shining example of how to reinvest in the community, inspire others, and achieve long-term goals.”

“Mountaineer pioneered the use of microtransit in North Lake Tahoe and showed our entire region what could be possible,” said Cindy Gustafson, Placer County District 5 Supervisor. “Since then, there has been statewide recognition of the incredible efforts North Lake Tahoe has made to address transportation issues—from traffic, parking congestion, microtransit and mass transit.”

This winter in Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows, Mountaineer’s free on-demand service will operate 12 nine-passenger, dog-friendly vans equipped with ski/snowboard racks from December 8, 2023 through April 7, 2024. Passengers can request rides through the Mountaineer app, which is [free to download](#).

Learn more about Mountaineer and view its operating schedule at MountaineerTransit.org.

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About Mountaineer Transit Company

Mountaineer Transit Company is the collaborative effort of Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows homeowner’s associations, lodging properties and Palisades Tahoe ski resort. Mountaineer’s mission is to provide transit within Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows to assessed businesses’ guests, employees, owners, and visitors to improve resort traffic congestion, guests’ experiences, and safety. Mountaineer is funded by a microtransit district which includes 1.5% assessment on Palisades Tahoe lift tickets and pack products, and on transient lodging and vacation rentals within Olympic Valley and Alpine Meadows.

About Downtowner

Specializing in microtransit, Downtowner helps clients accomplish transit goals through advanced technology and innovative strategy. With turn-key operations and software licensees throughout the United States, Downtowner is one of the most experienced firms in this new space. Learn more at ridedowntowner.com.

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