

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024, AT 1:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM.  THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS MILLCREEK CITY HALL, 1330 EAST CHAMBERS AVENUE IN MILLCREEK.**

**Present:**  Amber Broadaway, Co-Chair

 Danny Richardson

 Kurt Hegmann

 Linda Johnson

 Roger Borgenicht

 Mike Marker

 Pat Shea

 John Knoblock

 Dan Knopp

 Tom Diegel

**Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director

 Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations

**OPENING**

1. **Co-Chair Amber Broadaway will Open the Public Meeting as Co-Chair of the Transportation Systems Committee of the CWC Stakeholders Council.**

Co-Chair Amber Broadaway called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Transportation Systems Committee Meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed those present. She noted that attendees were participating in the meeting both in person and virtually.

1. **Review and Approval of the Minutes from the November 6, 2023, Meeting.**

Both sets of Transportation Systems Committee Meeting Minutes were approved in one motion.

1. **Review and Approval of the Minutes from the December 11, 2023, Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Linda Johnson moved to APPROVE the Transportation Systems Committee Meeting Minutes from November 6, 2023, and December 11, 2023. Danny Richardson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

**SPECIAL SERVICE DISTRICT RECAP**

1. **The Committee will Recap the Last Meeting’s Presentation and Discussion on a Special Transit District.**

Co-Chair Broadaway shared information about the presentations from the last Transportation Systems Committee Meeting. Carlton Christensen from Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) and Caroline Rodriguez from High Valley Transit attended. A lot of interesting information had been shared. She had not realized how many passengers High Valley Transit moved annually. Linda Johnson was worried about the position UTA was taking on transit. UTA was founded to improve air quality in the valley and transport people effectively. She believed something needed to be done since there had not been any arrangement made with the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) to transport people in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon. It seemed UTA did not believe the traffic issues were theirs to solve inside or outside the canyons. That was something she felt the Transportation Systems Committee needed to discuss further.

Co-Chair Broadaway believed UTA would be a good partner, but right now, there was a lack of clarity about who had the authority to do what. That was one of the reasons she had reached out to Devin Weder, who was the new Project Manager for UDOT. She wanted to understand what to expect with Phase I since there were now some lawsuits. According to Mr. Weder, there was some uncertainty, but he hoped to attend a future Transportation Systems Committee Meeting. Co-Chair Broadaway noted that those who were in the canyons regularly lived with the existing issues. She was not overly optimistic that UTA would be able to return to the 15-minute ski bus service in the near term since there were still hiring challenges that the organization was facing.

Ms. Johnson had spoken to some residents in Big Cottonwood Canyon and there was interest expressed in a Special Transit District. The reason those residents wanted a Special Transit District was to ensure that proper and adequate service was provided. The impression she got from Mr. Christensen was that he wanted the canyons to form a Special Transit District and then pay UTA for that. She wanted to speak to the Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”) and the Legislators to determine whether that was what the intention was when UTA was created. Ms. Johnson reported that she had worked with UTA up until the COVID-19 pandemic and had been to their facility many times. The representative from High Valley Transit indicated that the UTA facilities were needed. A Special Transit District to support the efforts of UTA was not impossible, but it was not part of the original plan. She believed the Committee should look into that further.

Danny Richardson asked for additional details about the discussions with UTA. Co-Chair Broadaway reported that UTA had been good a partner to the resorts. UTA wanted to solve some of the specific challenges that faced the area, so some near-term employee solutions were established, as those were the most controllable elements. Mr. Richardson wondered whether there was a collaboration with High Valley Transit. Co-Chair Broadaway clarified that the reason Mr. Christensen and Ms. Rodriguez had been invited to the previous Transportation Systems Committee Meeting was so Committee Members could learn more. A Special Transit District would likely require coordination and collaboration between the towns, County, UDOT, and UTA. She did not believe there was opposition from UTA about a Special Transit District, but it was unlikely to be initiated by UTA. It could be initiated by other entities and then UTA could be approached about what that partnership would look like. Special Districts were discussed further.

Co-Chair Broadaway noted that funding was important to consider. The sales tax in Park City was very different than the sales tax in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. At the last meeting, Mr. Christensen pointed out that funding would be an important component. Having an opportunity to learn more about the Phase I work would be beneficial because there was money allocated in the Legislature. A lot would depend on how all of that worked out. In her most recent discussion with Mr. Weder, it did not seem that UDOT expected that the additional canyon service would necessarily come from UTA. That was not a given. As part of the UDOT plan, it was made clear that any additional or enhanced bus service could come from third-party operators as well. Ms. Johnson pointed out that UTA had the right of refusal. Co-Chair Broadaway had not gotten the impression that UTA would take that kind of approach at the current time.

Mike Marker was not sure how to reconcile some of the issues that had been discussed. He appreciated the perspective shared by Co-Chair Broadaway that UTA had been a good partner. However, this was the second year that UTA did not have enough drivers. It was surprising two years ago when UTA made the announcement mid-year to state that services would be cut and there were driver shortages. This year, there was the exact same issue. He believed UTA needed to anticipate staffing needs and focus on creative solutions. There was a tough employment market for every business across the valley. It was something that UTA needed to deal with creatively. Mr. Marker had also heard that UTA was hiding behind their union contracts. He had never seen a union contract that didn’t have a stipulation to state that a contract could be renegotiated. He had also never seen a union president or bargaining agent who wasn’t willing to sit down and discuss something if it meant there could be better wages and benefits provided. Mr. Marker believed it was unacceptable that this was the second year where there were not enough drivers. He also had little belief that UTA would adequately address those issues next year. Mr. Marker felt the general public or the Legislature should hold UTA accountable for delivering services.

Patrick Shea believed the Legislature had plans to have a consolidated public transportation system. John Knoblock agreed that it was disheartening that staffing issues were still impacting the level of UTA service. That being said, he understood the position of UTA. Within the union's scope, it was not possible to pay extra to some drivers without paying all of the drivers that wage. There were a lot of UTA drivers throughout the Wasatch Front. The canyon was not necessarily the highest priority for UTA as the bus service was also used to get people to work and school. He understood the difficulties facing the organization and believed that UTA was trying to address what was possible given the current market conditions and the budget that was currently in place. With a Special Transit District, it would be possible to pay the drivers more and hire seasonally.

Mr. Knoblock discussed funding options. The Cottonwood Canyons generated a lot between the transient room taxes, restaurant taxes, and sales taxes. It might be possible to work with the Legislature to take some of that and use it to address the transportation needs in the canyons. As for the High Valley Transit ridership numbers, he was surprised at how large those were. He wanted to see the math to understand how they could move that many per year.

Co-Chair Broadaway thought Special Transit Districts were interesting. There were opportunities for the CWC to have those kinds of discussions with the appropriate entities. The role of the Transportation Systems Committee was to introduce those sorts of ideas to the Stakeholders Council and potentially to the CWC Board. She did not believe the conversation about a Special Transit District was complete from a Committee standpoint or on a broader level. Co-Chair Broadaway appreciated that representatives from UTA and High Valley Transit had made time to share information with the Transportation Systems Committee during the last meeting.

Mr. Marker pointed out that the Phase I document referenced 10 to 15-minute intervals for buses. Co-Chair Broadaway explained that simply returning to the 15-minute frequency would make a lot of people happy at this point. Right now, her focus determining how to return to 15 minute ski bus service. She believed it could be done and all of the necessary resources were available. That was something she would be spending her time on outside of the CWC because it was a priority.

**MILLCREEK SHUTTLE UPDATE**

1. **The Committee will Hear Updates on the Millcreek Shuttle and Discuss.**

Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that Tom Diegel had asked to share an update with the Transportation Systems Committee. Mr. Diegel explained that he was not formally on the Committee, but he represented the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, which was interested in transportation in the canyons. He referenced the Federal Lands Access Program (“FLAP”) grant to work on the road in the upper canyon. Infrastructure would also be added to allow a shuttle to work in Millcreek Canyon. The reason there was not a shuttle currently was because the U.S. Forest Service did not feel the road or existing canyon infrastructure would accommodate one.

There had been discussions at the Millcreek Canyon Committee level about the proposed modification of the road in the upper canyon. Mr. Diegel reported that the issue would also be discussed at a Salt Lake County Council Meeting next week. He explained that a road design had been presented last summer, which was followed by a public comment period. Most of the comments were opposed to the major modifications that were proposed to be made to the road. Ms. Nielsen had put together a proposal to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) analysis for the shuttle happened concurrently with the FLAP grant project work.

Ms. Nielsen explained that the CWC was approached by Bekee Hotze with the Forest Service approximately six months ago. She asked that the CWC do some background research related to the feasibility of a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon. The Feasibility Proposal was created, which included rough shuttle stops, an estimate of the number of people the shuttle would need to accommodate, and cost estimates. She had spoken to different shuttle programs to better understand what would be needed to operate a shuttle program in Millcreek Canyon. Members of the Millcreek Canyon Committee had located potential parking and shuttle staging areas. What still needed to be determined was how to fund a shuttle program in the canyon. During the research process, it was estimated that 10 shuttle vans would be needed, which would cost $1 million. Operation costs after the initial capital investment would be $1 million for maintenance and to run the program. Ms. Hotze hoped the CWC could move the NEPA analysis forward so it could be completed before the FLAP grant construction started in 2025. She noted that timing was critical.

There were a number of firms in Salt Lake City that were well-equipped to run the NEPA analysis. Fehr & Peers had done the initial feasibility research and proposal that was part of the Salt Lake County 2013 Regional Transportation Plan. Fehr & Peers could theoretically be asked to participate in or do another NEPA analysis that was up to date in the next year or so. However, there would need to be a procurement process that was in line with the regulations from the State.

Ms. Nielsen explained that parking had always been the biggest hurdle for the shuttle program. It had been highlighted as one of the major obstacles in the 2013 study done by Fehr & Peers. She recommended that interested Committee Members read that study following the meeting. Mr. Shea wondered whether the NEPA would be for an Environmental Assessment or an actual Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). Ms. Nielsen explained that whatever level of NEPA was necessary would be determined through that process. It likely would not require a full EIS. She reiterated that parking and staging areas were always the major obstacles for the shuttle program, but funding was another obstacle that needed to be addressed. Mr. Knoblock pointed out that there could be impacts on the toll fees if a shuttle was implemented. Currently, Millcreek Canyon generates approximately $1 million per year from the toll fees. Those were mostly paid back to the Forest Service to maintain the picnic areas, trails, and other capital expenditures. It was also important to think about how the potential reduction in toll fees would be addressed.

Mr. Shea wondered whether an estimate of revenue generated by the shuttle had been included in the Feasibility Proposal. Ms. Nielsen confirmed this. While it would be wonderful to offer a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon for free, that might not be feasible, because of the existing toll there. In the proposal, there were fee levels shown based on the number of days that the shuttle would run. For example, if the shuttle ran every day, the fee would be lower, but if it ran only on the weekends, the fee would be higher. That had been proposed to recoup the lost toll fees. Mr. Shea asked what the base estimate was in terms of the fee. Ms. Nielsen did not recall the specific amounts but stated that if the shuttle ran only on weekends, it would likely be over $20 for a roundtrip ride. If it ran every day, then the amount would be much lower, at closer to $7 instead. Mr. Knoblock pointed out that if the price was too high, it was unlikely to incentivize ridership.

Co-Chair Broadaway explained that it was difficult to encourage people to leave their personal vehicles and utilize transit. There were certain demographics that were more inclined to use shuttles, but there were certain groups that were less likely to do so, which included destination visitors on holiday. It was difficult to change behaviors, but efforts needed to be made to encourage change. Ms. Nielsen reminded those present that the FLAP grant construction would start in the summer/fall of 2025. That was when the Forest Service wanted to see the shuttle service start. Mr. Knoblock noted that he had spoken to Zinnia Wilson at the Forest Service. She gave him the impression that Ms. Hotze had given up hope that the shuttle would run during the construction period. The reason for that had to do with the timing, but also that it would be difficult to keep a lane open for the shuttle bus during the construction process. There were some challenges there.

There was discussion about the car culture in Utah. It was difficult to change those behaviors, but people were more likely to leave their personal vehicles when there was extreme congestion or there was a reasonable alternative. It was also more likely that people would leave their personal vehicles when there was no parking available. Signs to state when parking was full could impact some of the choices made. Co-Chair Broadaway noted that those signs were in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Additionally, the reservation parking in Big Cottonwood Canyon had shifted behaviors.

Ms. Johnson shared a proposal that UDOT had mentioned, which was to have lockers at mobility hubs. That was not where the lockers needed to be for skiers as it made sense to have the lockers in the ski areas. She believed there needed to be another building at Brighton or Solitude where there were lockers, restrooms, and a bus center. That would be a better use for some of the parking spaces, as it was best to reduce the number of personal vehicles to lessen the air pollution. Co-Chair Broadaway noted that the Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility Action Plan (“BCC MAP”) identified possible locations for mobility hubs in the canyon that would serve that kind of purpose.

Co-Chair Broadaway shared information about what was happening in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Both of the ski resorts and the town now had parking reservations on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. There were also private buses for employees. She reported that traffic had largely changed on the reservation days. On Saturday, there was no traffic until halfway up the canyon. Last year, that would have been a two-hour experience and this time it was more like 45 minutes. Occupancy counts were done over the weekend and the average was 2.9 people. Co-Chair Broadaway noted that this was a lot. Some significant improvements have been made recently. There were still challenges associated with the reservations, but the ski resorts were committed. She added that a carpool app had been developed and it was getting a lot of usage. It was not possible to wait for UTA or UDOT to take action, so other actions had been taken in the meantime.

**BCC MAP UPDATE**

1. **The Committee will Hear an Update on BCC MAP and Discuss.**

Town of Brighton Mayor, Dan Knopp, was present to discuss the BCC MAP. He first gave credit to Co-Chair Broadaway for the changes that had been made to parking. It had worked far beyond his expectations. There was not a long queue at 8:00 a.m. to enter the ski resorts. The parking reservation system has been working well so far. He had spoken to Mike Doyle at Brighton Ski Resort and there was a commitment to continue with the parking reservation system three days a week. There was an adjustment period that needed to be considered, but it was working beyond expectations. Co-Chair Broadaway explained that a commitment had been made to share an update with UDOT at the end of the season. The idea was to show them what the measures were doing in the area. That information could be considered when the Phase I decisions were made.

Mayor Knopp explained that the measures taken were intended to be intermediate steps until Phase I moved ahead. However, Phase I is on hold currently as a result of the lawsuits. He hoped it would be possible to meet in the middle and move the transportation efforts forward. As for the BCC MAP, that had all started when a request had been made to the Legislature for $10 million for transportation for Big Cottonwood Canyon. The funding had not been awarded, because appropriate planning had not been done ahead of time. Mayor Knopp had later been informed that the best path forward was to commission a study related to transportation in Big Cottonwood Canyon. The money was raised quite quickly and the CWC assisted with the request for proposal (“RFP”) process for the consultant. Within a short period of time, the BCC MAP was drafted.

Mr. Knoblock referenced the $150 million appropriated by the Legislature. He did not believe it was directly tied to the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. This was confirmed as it was intended to assist in both canyons. He noted that the lawsuits had caused some difficulties in moving things forward. Nothing was likely to happen until there was some clarity about those. Co-Chair Broadaway believed the best thing in Big Cottonwood was that the people who had the authority to make decisions were on the same page and wanted to work together. She noted that there were some unintended consequences related to the parking reservation system. For instance, since parking was now free after 1:00 p.m. there was a rush of traffic at 1:00 p.m. up the canyon. There were also more people taking the bus down than there were taking the bus up. This indicated that there were more drop-offs taking place than there were before. Mayor Knopp explained that bus drivers had indicated that it was somewhat overwhelming towards the end of the day.

There was additional discussion about traffic in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Mayor Knopp reiterated that the parking reservation system was working well. This was the first step, but others would be pursued in the future. Co-Chair Broadaway asked whether there were any Committee Member questions related to the BCC MAP. Mr. Marker was pleased to hear about the success of the parking reservations so far. He had heard that Brighton received some pushback from long-term skiers as it was difficult to get a reservation and asked the Mayor to speak about that. Additionally, he wanted to know more about the comments made by Carlos Braceras from UDOT. Mayor Knopp explained that he had been asked not to speak for UDOT, so he would refrain from doing so. The sense that he got was that there was disappointment about the lawsuits because there had been a desire to move forward with Phase I. The first phase had common-sense solutions. Mr. Marker pointed out that UDOT had turned down the opportunity to have problem-solving conversations with the CWC. He was not sure what UDOT had anticipated given that decision.

Co-Chair Broadaway addressed the question Mr. Marker had asked about long-term skiers and the reservation system. Solitude had a paid parking program in place for several years, so the starting points between Solitude and Brighton were not the same. When dealing with parking, there was a finite amount of inventory, but the inventory needed to be managed. There were a lot of different factors to consider. What she believed happened in Brighton at the beginning was simply the learning curve for inventory management. Guests were also not used to dealing with a managed parking program at that point. It took time to address and understand the inventory needs. Mayor Knopp added that Brighton had put that in place seven days a week to start, which pass-holders did not like. After a week or so, the reservations were shifted to Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Mayor Knopp reported that in the past, 100 to 150 tickets were written per day for illegal parking, but now that number was at one or two per day. People were parking where they were supposed to.

Co-Chair Broadaway noted that not everyone liked the program. There had been some missteps where certain visitors did not believe there had been enough communication, there had been a difficult experience in the parking lot, or there was no support for the fees. While a lot of positive progress had been made, she wanted to make it clear that not all were in support. Mr. Knoblock believed the dry days made it possible for people to get used to the reservation system. The powder days could be a lot more complicated, so it was good that there was time for people to adjust.

Mr. Knoblock noted that something short-term that had been referenced in the BCC MAP was restriping the park and ride lot at the bottom of the canyon. He wondered whether that was something that would move forward. Mayor Knopp believed that was something that could be pursued. Mr. Knoblock pointed out that if there was a desire to have the done in the summer, then the discussions and plans would need to be further defined shortly. Mayor Knopp did not believe that the task would be too difficult to accomplish. It was possible to increase the parking spaces there. The BCC MAP also included suggestions for possible locations for mobility hubs in the canyon.

**COMMITTEE MISSION, VISION, AND GOALS DISCUSSION**

1. **Committee Members will Discuss Transportation Changes They Would Like to See Within One to Three Years.**
2. **The Committee will Further Refine its Mission, Vision, and Goals.**

Co-Chair Broadaway believed there was still some work to do to better define the mission, vision, and goals of the Transportation Systems Committee. She wanted to make sure everyone agreed with the Committee's work and goals. There was a desire to better understand what the vision of the Committee was for the next one to three years. Ms. Johnson suggested that everyone on the Committee send CWC Staff a short statement about what they wanted to see achieved through the Committee. From there, the Chair and Co-Chair could review the submissions and determine areas of consensus. Ms. Nielsen explained that a short statement could be submitted or a poll could be created. The latter might be easier for everyone to fill out. Ms. Johnson was supportive of whatever made it easiest for the Committee leadership to analyze the outcomes. Ms. Nielsen envisioned an open-ended poll with one question: “What are your priorities for the Committee?” Co-Chair Broadaway wanted to make sure the work represented all interests.

Mr. Knoblock asked how Mayor Knopp saw the CWC Transportation Committee's work dovetailing into the Stakeholders Council Transportation Systems Committee's work. Mayor Knopp explained that some of the Transportation Committee work was on hold because there was a desire to better understand what would happen with the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. Ms. Nielsen reported that there would be a CWC Board Retreat held later that day. During that retreat, the CWC Board would set priorities for 2024, which could include transportation-related priorities. Any transportation priorities identified would be assigned to the Transportation Committee. Once that Committee had its scope of work for the year, it would be possible to determine where the intersection between the Transportation Committee and Transportation Systems Committee was.

Ms. Nielsen informed those present that there were some transportation and transit-related projects outlined during the Mountain Accord that had not been addressed yet. There was a lot to do when it came to transportation work in the study area. There was discussion about growth in Utah.

**DETERMINATION OF THE CHAIR**

1. **The Committee will Determine the New Committee Chair, to be Approved at the Next Stakeholders Council Meeting.**

Ms. Nielsen explained that the way that the subcommittees were structured was that there was a Chair and a Co-Chair. There was an opening for the Chair of the Transportation Systems Committee. Co-Chair Broadaway would continue to serve as Co-Chair. Ms. Nielsen had spoken to Mr. Richardson who had an interest and willingness to serve in the Chair position. There was support for Mr. Richardson to take on the position. Ms. Nielsen explained that the appointment would be formally approved during the Stakeholders Council Meeting on January 17, 2024.

The next Transportation Systems Committee Meeting was scheduled for February 12, 2024. Co-Chair Broadaway noted that before the next meeting, Committee Members could answer the poll question. She felt it was worthwhile to have Mr. Weder attend a future meeting, so she offered to reach out to him again to schedule that. At the next meeting, the transportation goals set by the CWC Board for 2024 could be reviewed and discussed. The poll results will also be considered.

**CLOSING**

1. **Co-Chair Broadaway will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation Systems Committee Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Amber Broadaway moved to ADJOURN the Transportation Systems Committee Meeting. Danny Richardson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation Systems Committee Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

***I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation Systems Committee Meeting held on Monday, January 8, 2024.***

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes

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Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_