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3 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
4 **COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY,**
5 **MARCH 11, 2024, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON**
6 **AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS AT THE CWC**
7 **OFFICES LOCATED AT THE GATEWAY, 41 NORTH RIO GRANDE STREET,**
8 **SUITE 102, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**
9

10 **Present:** Danny Richardson, Chair
11 Amber Broadway, Co-Chair
12 Tom Diegel
13 Linda Johnson
14 Kurt Hegmann
15 Stuart Derman
16 John Knoblock
17 Patrick Nelson
18 Crystal Chen, Youth City Council
19

20 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
21 Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
22

23 **OPENING**
24

- 25 1. **Chair Danny Richardson will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Transportation**
26 **Systems Committee of the CWC Stakeholders Council.**
27

28 Chair Danny Richardson called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council
29 Transportation Systems Committee Meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.
30

- 31 2. **Review and Approval of the Minutes from the February 12, 2024, Meeting.**
32

33 **MOTION:** _____ moved to APPROVE the Transportation Systems Committee Meeting Minutes
34 from February 12, 2024. Amber Broadway seconded the motion. The motion passed with the
35 unanimous consent of the Committee.
36

1 **UDOT LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON EIS PHASE 1 PROGRESS REPORT**
2 **DISCUSSION**

3
4 1. **Committee Members will Review and Discuss UDOT’s Unofficial Comments on the**
5 **Status of Phase 1 of the LCC EIS Given at the March 4, 2024, Board Meeting.**
6

7 Chair Richardson shared information about Phase 1 of the Utah Department of Transportation
8 (“UDOT”) Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). He reported that at
9 the last CWC Board Meeting, Transit Project Manager, Devin Weder, addressed the CWC Board. At
10 that time, he shared a brief speech and handed out information about the proposed phases. The speech
11 from Mr. Weder stated that there were three phases proposed as part of the UDOT Little Cottonwood
12 Canyon EIS. The first phase is focused on: increased bus service, tolling, a mobility hub at the mouth
13 of Big Cottonwood Canyon, and improved resort bus stops. The second phase is focused on:
14 improvements to Wasatch Boulevard, construction of snow sheds in the canyons, and trailhead
15 improvements. The third phase is focused on the gondola.
16

17 The phased approach was in response to thousands of public comments received. According to Mr.
18 Weder, three legal challenges requested a stop to any further action. Originally, the plan was to start
19 Phase 1 with the mobility hub and purchase of additional buses. The idea was to be operational with
20 a better transit plan by the winter of 2025. All of that is on hold due to the litigation. Right now,
21 UDOT is doing some preliminary design work, purchasing right-of-ways, installing some additional
22 signage, and working on the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Study. Until the lawsuits are
23 adequately addressed, the Phase 1 work is essentially on hold. The quote at the bottom of the speech
24 stated: “We will not move forward with travel demand management tools, such as tolling, without
25 first providing an improved transit system, to avoid impacts to lower income populations.” Chair
26 Richardson asked for comments about the information presented.
27

28 John Knoblock reported that he recently spoke to Patrick Shea, who is one of the parties to the
29 litigation. He explained that there was no intention for Phase 1 to be put on hold and he does not
30 believe there is any language in the lawsuit that would stop Phase 1. Currently, there is an attempt to
31 consolidate the three lawsuits into one and also make it abundantly clear that Phase 1 is not intended
32 to be put on hold. The intention is to write a letter to UDOT, the Governor, and the Utah Legislature
33 to reiterate that there is no desire to put a hold on Phase 1 of the project in any way.
34

35 Mr. Knoblock noted that he asked Mr. Weder if items that were not part of the UDOT Little
36 Cottonwood Canyon EIS could move forward, such as items in the Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility
37 Action Plan (“BCC MAP”). Mr. Weder confirmed that items, other than tolling in Big Cottonwood
38 Canyon, could move forward. Anything not mentioned in the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS
39 could be addressed. Time will tell what will happen between UDOT and the litigants, as the UDOT
40 attorneys may have a different opinion about Phase 1 proceeding.
41

42 Chair Richardson went through all of the notes from the Legislature to find out more information
43 about the \$150 million available. There didn’t seem to be much that the Legislature was pushing for
44 or trying to encourage UDOT to do. Mr. Knoblock believed the bill stated \$100 million is approved
45 and \$50 million will be moved over from a different UDOT account to reach the \$150 million. He
46 noted that Mr. Weder stated there was another \$40 million available, so there was actually a total of
47 \$190 million. That could be used for a variety of transportation-related needs.
48

1 Tom Diegel reported that the Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) cut the bus service last season and this
2 season. He wondered whether there is any way to use the funds to restore the previous level of service.
3 Chair Richardson explained that the service cuts were largely a result of driver shortages. It seems
4 that the cuts were a result of personnel issues rather than equipment issues. Regardless of the reason,
5 Mr. Diegel felt it was necessary to restore the previous level of service. It is his understanding that
6 UTA previously had several buses on order and then canceled that order. He wondered whether that
7 was an accurate statement. Chair Richardson was not certain about that.

8
9 Chair Richardson asked Committee Members whether there is a desire to take action or if it made
10 sense to take a “wait and see” approach. It was suggested that the Committee monitor the situation.

11 **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE PRIORITIES SURVEY**

12 **1. Committee Members will Review and Discuss the Results of the Transportation Systems** 13 **Committee Priorities Survey and Determine Priorities for the Committee.**

14
15
16
17 Co-Chair Amber Broadaway discussed the survey results from the Transportation Systems
18 Committee Priorities Survey. The highest priority was implementing actions from the BCC MAP.
19 That was followed by the Millcreek Canyon shuttle, summer transit in the Cottonwood Canyons, and
20 a Central Wasatch Special Transit District. Those items were all fairly closely ranked. The lower
21 priority items were a bicycle lane in Big Cottonwood Canyon, transit improvements in Parley’s, and
22 a comprehensive cycling plan for the study area. It might be worth speaking to the Millcreek Canyon
23 Committee about the desired Millcreek Canyon shuttle. The second page of the survey results
24 highlighted the responses to a question about the vision and goals of the Transportation Systems
25 Committee. Those responses were included in raw form.

26
27 Mr. Knoblock noted that the Recreation Systems Committee might be addressing the bicycle-related
28 items mentioned. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, explained that it is possible to look through
29 previous Meeting Minutes and determine if that has been mentioned as a priority for the Recreation
30 Systems Committee. Mr. Knoblock stated that one section of the Mountain Accord referenced the
31 design and implementation of a comprehensive trails and cycling plan. He believed there was a desire
32 for the Recreation Systems Committee to look at that in the future. It was noted that there can be
33 confirmation with the Committee Chair about that possible priority.

34
35 Discussions were had about how to take action on the priority items. Mr. Knoblock suggested
36 coordinating with Mayor Dan Knopp to determine how to move forward with the BCC MAP items.
37 Regardless of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS, there is money available to start that work.
38 It makes sense to coordinate with Mayor Knopp and determine how the Committee can assist. Co-
39 Chair Broadaway noted that Mayor Knopp has great momentum. She hopes the next steps can be
40 navigated for the Environmental Assessment that will need to happen. The Committee discussed the
41 information shared by Mr. Weder and the potential for Big Cottonwood Canyon-related work to move
42 forward despite the recent litigation. Co-Chair Broadaway informed those present that there is an
43 active project called the Brighton Neighborhood Nodes Design Plan, which is something the Wasatch
44 Front Regional Council (“WFRC”) is part of. That particular project might make it possible to address
45 the recreational movement of people in the canyon.

46
47 Ms. Nielsen reported that she had a meeting with UDOT and others to discuss the prospect of a Central
48 Wasatch Special Transit District. In that meeting, UDOT seemed fairly certain that they would want

1 to manage a Special Transit District. Something like that would not be managed through the CWC
2 but would remain within UDOT control. That meant it would be focused on the Cottonwood
3 Canyons, SR-210, and SR-190. The next step identified for the BCC MAP is getting the document
4 in front of the State Transportation Commission. Mayor Knopp and Ms. Nielsen will share updates
5 with the Transportation Systems Committee when those are available.

6
7 Chair Richardson asked about the provider for a Central Wasatch Special Transit District. Ms.
8 Nielsen clarified that a provider for a service was not determined and is currently unknown. However,
9 there were discussions about who would ultimately manage the Special Transit District. Based on
10 those discussions, it sounded like UDOT wanted to maintain control of something like that if it were
11 to come to fruition. Finding providers for service under a Special Transit District umbrella is
12 something that would need to be finalized. It is not guaranteed that it would be UTA. While it could
13 be UTA, other providers may be considered if the district ultimately moves ahead.

14 15 **UTA SEASON UPDATE**

16 17 1. **Chair Richardson will Update the Committee on the Status and Trends of UTA for this** 18 **Ski Season.**

19
20 Chair Richardson informed Committee Members that he used to work for UTA. One of his
21 responsibilities from a marketing and ticketing standpoint was the ski bus. Chair Richardson recently
22 reached out to the UTA Government Affairs person, who is the main UTA Legislative liaison. He
23 reached out last week during the last week of the Legislative Session but has not heard back. He
24 offered to reach out again as there is a desire to better understand their perspective.

25 26 **US FOREST SERVICE DISCUSSION**

27 28 1. **Committee Members will Discuss the Role of the US Forest Service in Transportation** 29 **and Parking Solutions on Forest Service Land.**

30
31 Chair Richardson reported that a few weeks ago, there was an article in The Salt Lake Tribune by
32 Jack A. Stauss. The author believed the U.S. Forest Service is failing Utahans. The article stated that
33 the resorts are on Forest Service land, but other things are happening in the forest outside of the four
34 ski areas. The author suggested looking at parking issues, access, transit restrooms, and shuttles in
35 the summer season. Chair Richardson wondered whether there is an opportunity to work more closely
36 with the Forest Service. He wanted to discuss these matters.

37
38 Ms. Nielsen stated that the Forest Service maintains communication with UDOT. She is not privy to
39 those conversations, but she knows that there is close work done between the two. She believed the
40 question posed by Chair Richardson was whether there are ways the Forest Service can better work
41 to influence transportation and transit issues in the canyons. Chair Richardson confirmed this and
42 shared additional information about the article in question. Ms. Nielsen informed the Committee that
43 Mr. Stauss is a young recreator in the mountains. He frequently attended CWC meetings when the
44 meetings were held in person in Cottonwood Heights and previously spoke in support of the Central
45 Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area (“CWNCR”) Act.

46
47 Ms. Nielsen shared information about backcountry access and shuttles in the canyons. Various user
48 groups and organizations in the canyons run shuttles, such as backcountry ski shuttles and bicycling

1 shuttles. The idea is to reduce traffic congestion and remove visitors from personal vehicles. The
2 Forest Service often states that shuttles increase impacts on the land. As a result, there must be
3 adequate facilities wherever shuttles let people out in the canyons. The Forest Service has mentioned
4 impacts to the soil and impacts to the land when many people are let out all at one time. For something
5 like the Millcreek Canyon shuttle, the Forest Service would want there to be a Visitor Use Study to
6 assess the impacts of the increased visitation in one place at one time. Mr. Knoblock added that there
7 also needs to be compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. It is necessary to have
8 sufficient facilities to comply with the ADA requirements.

9
10 Mr. Knoblock encouraged Transportation Systems Committee Members to read the 2003 Wasatch-
11 Cache Revised Forest Plan. Something in the Forest Plan that relates to transportation is parking.
12 The goal is not to increase parking in the canyons. That has been a sore point over the years in terms
13 of determining what that means. For instance, if the size of the parking lots is increased to
14 accommodate more vehicles, it then becomes difficult to ensure that parking is not being expanded.
15 One example is the off-road parking lot that was built at the Rattlesnake Trailhead in Millcreek
16 Canyon. Adjacent to that parking lot, No Parking signs were posted. Through that process, parking
17 was not increased but was maintained, which was a goal of the Forest Plan. The Salt Lake Ranger
18 District is starting to look into fees for parking at developed trailheads. There will also be No Parking
19 signs for a quarter-mile stretch of the road adjacent to those trailheads.

20
21 The Forest Plan also discusses the tri-canyon area. Within that section, there is language that indicates
22 there is an understanding that improved transit is needed. It stated that there will be work with the
23 communities to attempt to improve year-round transit in the tri-canyon area. Mr. Knoblock noted
24 that while that is already in the Forest Plan, implementation can be a challenge. National
25 Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) must be followed to ensure that there will not be any negative
26 impacts on the resource. It was likely that an Environmental Assessment would be needed. However,
27 the Forest Service is short on funding and staff and that is likely not the highest priority. Mr.
28 Knoblock believed the Transportation Systems Committee can encourage, or possibly look into
29 funding, for an Environmental Assessment for year-round transit improvements.

30
31 Linda Johnson noted that the Forest Service has priorities that are likely not compatible with the
32 situation in the valley at this time. There needs to be a clearer understanding of what the citizens of
33 the valley want the canyons to be. It is important to have a distinct opinion and position.

34
35 Mr. Diegel reported that he is with the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance. The Wasatch Backcountry
36 Alliance has had a canyon shuttle the last few years, but the Forest Service has done as much as
37 possible to prevent that from happening. There was a request to do drop-offs at Spruces and Cardiff,
38 where there are UTA stops, but the Forest Service refused to give them a permit to do so. The Forest
39 Service only allowed there to be stops at the ski resorts. It is clear between that issue and the Federal
40 Lands Access Program (“FLAP”) grant in Millcreek, that the Forest Service wants everyone else to
41 handle transportation. It seems that the Forest Service is hiding behind regulations in an effort to
42 avoid controversial or challenging transportation solutions that could be enabled.

43
44 Chair Richardson noted that on the Priorities Survey for the Transportation Systems Committee, one
45 of the priorities was the Millcreek Canyon shuttle. If something like that worked in Millcreek
46 Canyon, it could also work in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon in a similar
47 manner. The Salt Lake Tribune article made him think about the Forest Service work and focus.

1 Ms. Nielsen reported that a Stakeholders Council Retreat is being planned to take place on the day of
2 a scheduled Stakeholders Council Meeting. It will be slightly longer and at a different time. That
3 agenda is still being finalized, but she had asked whether the Forest Service is amenable to sharing
4 information about the Forest Plan. For instance, what it is and what it does. It would be worthwhile
5 for Transportation Systems Committee Members to start reading the existing Forest Plan in
6 anticipation of that retreat. The Forest Service presentation could occur at the May meeting. If it did
7 not occur at that time, then it would likely take place at the July meeting.

8
9 Mr. Diegel pointed out that the Forest Plan was from 2003. A lot has changed in the last 21 years.
10 He is curious to hear how the Forest Service will explain how that plan is still relevant today. If there
11 are no plans to update the plan, it seems it is a challenging document to actually work from. Mr.
12 Knoblock explained that one of the motivations behind the CWNCRA is that a new Management
13 Plan would be required specifically for the Central Wasatch. The Forest Supervisor stated that even
14 though the Forest Plan is legally required to be updated every 15 years, there is no intention of
15 updating that plan soon because there are other Ranger Districts that are even further behind than the
16 Salt Lake Ranger District. Ms. Johnson believed there needs to be a clear plan from the CWC. It is
17 important to determine what the organization wants the actual outcome to be.

18
19 Mr. Diegel did not realize until recently that Lance Kovel from the Forest Service is the Forest Service
20 representative to UDOT. He likely knows the most about transportation and the forest. It was
21 suggested that he be invited to attend a Transportation Systems Committee Meeting in the future.
22 Chair Richardson thought that would be a good next step for the Committee to take. Ms. Nielsen
23 reported that she will be meeting with Mr. Kovel and others from the Forest Service the following
24 morning. She offered to ask him whether he would be willing to attend a future meeting.

25
26 Ms. Nielsen stated that the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest is larger than the area the
27 CWNCRA would cover. The bill would require the Forest Service to create a Management Plan or
28 Forest Plan specifically for the areas that are included in the Legislation. Ms. Nielsen took a moment
29 to recognize the Chair of the Youth Council, Crystal Chen, who was present at the meeting. Ms.
30 Chen introduced herself to the Transportation Systems Committee. She thought a lot of interesting
31 discussions had taken place. She is a Policy Associate with Save Our Canyons.

32
33 Discussions were had about next steps. Ms. Nielsen wanted to understand what the Transportation
34 Systems Committee is specifically requesting. For example, if the desire is to ask Mr. Kovel to attend
35 a Committee Meeting and speak to Committee Members about how the Forest Service looks at transit
36 issues in the canyons. Mr. Knoblock thought it was important for Mr. Kovel to address what is in the
37 Forest Plan with respect to parking management and transit in the tri-canyon area.

38
39 Mr. Knoblock reported that the Salt Lake Ranger District has recently published the Draft Tri-Canyon
40 Trails Master Plan and is seeking public comment. There will be a presentation at the March 20,
41 2024, Stakeholders Council Meeting. There is a large section of the Master Plan that talks about
42 trailheads, which are classified as major, minor, or primitive. Major trailheads would be open for
43 year-round parking. That work ties into the current Committee discussions.

44 45 **OTHER ITEMS**

46
47 Mr. Diegel stressed the importance of the Transportation Systems Committee. During the Mountain
48 Accord process, transportation and transit were considered difficult and controversial. That being

1 said, transportation and transit cannot be ignored. It is important for the Transportation Systems
2 Committee and the CWC Transportation Committee to continue to address these issues. Ms. Johnson
3 noted that the Transportation Systems Committee represents transportation in the canyons. For
4 citizen input, it might be worthwhile consulting with various members of the Salt Lake County
5 Council or other City Councils to find out what their citizens are interested in. There needs to be a
6 plan that ensures the work of the organization is supporting what others want to see.

7
8 Chair Richardson reported that the CWC Board includes Mayors from member jurisdiction. It might
9 be possible to request information from the Council Members of the member jurisdictions. Ms.
10 Nielsen liked the suggestion from Ms. Johnson. She noted that CWC Staff can assist with that. If
11 the Transportation Systems Committee wants to pursue the idea, in future meetings, there can be a
12 discussion about the details of that kind of approach. One option is that there could be a survey or
13 questionnaire released to the public through the existing communication channels. Ms. Johnson
14 suggested using the Transportation Systems Committee priority list as a starting point.

15
16 Mr. Diegel asked whether anyone had approached Salt Lake County about potentially rejoining the
17 CWC. Ms. Nielsen stated that there was an ongoing conversation about that. She offered to share
18 updates with the Transportation Systems Committee if there were relevant ones to share.

19
20 Ms. Nielsen reminded those present that one component of the CWC, Stakeholders Council, and
21 Committees, is to bring people together and have these kinds of conversations. Coming together to
22 discuss and deliberate is worthwhile and she appreciates the efforts of Committee Members. Director
23 of Operations, Sam Kilpack, asked that all present fill out the availability survey for the Stakeholders
24 Council Retreat. Once those have been completed, the venue can be confirmed.

25 26 **CLOSING**

27 28 **1. Chair Richardson will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation Systems** 29 **Committee Meeting.**

30
31 **MOTION:** Linda Johnson moved to ADJOURN the Transportation Systems Committee Meeting.
32 _____ seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

33
34 The Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation Systems Committee Meeting
35 adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation Systems Committee Meeting held Monday,*
3 *March 11, 2024.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: _____