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3 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
4 **COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY,**
5 **AUGUST 12, 2024, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-**
6 **PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS AT THE**
7 **CWC OFFICES LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE**
8 **CITY, UTAH.**
9

10 **Present:** Danny Richardson, Chair
11 Kurt Hegmann, Co-Chair
12 Roger Borgenicht
13 Mike Marker
14 Spencer Shaver
15 Linda Johnson
16 Tom Diegel
17 Mark Baer
18 Roger Bourke
19 John Knoblock
20

21 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
22 Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
23

24 **OPENING**
25

26 1. **Chair Danny Richardson will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the**
27 **Transportation Systems Committee of the CWC Stakeholders Council.**
28

29 Chair Danny Richardson called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council
30 Transportation Systems Committee Meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.
31

32 2. **Review and Approval of the Minutes from the July 8, 2024, Meeting.**
33

34 Chair Richardson reviewed information from the last Transportation Systems Committee Meeting.
35 He reported that there were meaningful discussions about the Big Cottonwood Canyon
36 Environmental Assessment, the lawsuits associated with the Utah Department of Transportation
37 (“UDOT”) Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”), timed entry,
38 shuttles, and national parks. He asked Committee Members to review the Meeting Minutes.
39

1 **MOTION:** Linda Johnson moved to APPROVE the Transportation Systems Committee Meeting
2 Minutes from July 8, 2024. Mike Marker seconded the motion. The motion passed with the
3 unanimous consent of the Committee.
4

5 **3. Chair Richardson will Welcome a New Committee Member.**
6

7 Chair Richardson welcomed the newest Committee Member, Mark Baer. He explained that Mr.
8 Baer is unable to vote at the current meeting but is encouraged to share comments. Mr. Baer
9 expressed his appreciation that he can participate on the Transportation Systems Committee.
10

11 **BIG COTTONWOOD CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**
12

13 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment.**
14

15 Chair Richardson reported that UDOT has formed a Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental
16 Study Stakeholder Working Group. It is exciting that work is being done to move the
17 Environmental Assessment forward. The first meeting will take place on August 21, 2024. John
18 Knoblock noted that he has looked at the UDOT website and there is no mention of the Big
19 Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. It is possible to encourage communication.
20

21 **LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**
22

23 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS.**
24

25 Chair Richardson believed the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS work is still on hold due to
26 the associated lawsuits. Mike Marker clarified that it is the phased activity that is on hold. Chair
27 Richardson reminded Committee Members that there are three phases proposed. Two years ago,
28 Salt Lake County submitted a strongly worded public comment to UDOT regarding the UDOT
29 Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. He felt that public comments were important to keep in mind.
30

31 **MILLCREEK CANYON SHUTTLE**
32

33 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Possibility of a Millcreek Canyon Shuttle.**
34

35 Chair Richardson reported that at the last Transportation Systems Committee Meeting, there was
36 a lengthy discussion about timed entry and shuttles. Over the last several years, there has been
37 talk of a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon. He asked for updates or additional comments on this matter.
38 There were no further Committee Member comments. Chair Richardson explained that the
39 Transportation Systems Committee will continue to monitor this issue because the Federal Lands
40 Access Program (“FLAP”) grant-related road work in Millcreek Canyon will move ahead soon.
41

42 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, stated that the Millcreek Canyon Committee will meet next
43 week. There will be more discussion about the FLAP grant work and potential shuttle at that time.
44

1 **WASATCH FRONT REGIONAL COUNCIL (“WFRC”) TRANSPORTATION**
2 **IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**
3

4 **1. Chair Richardson will Discuss the WFRC’s 2025-2030 Transportation Improvement**
5 **Program.**
6

7 Chair Richardson shared information about the Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”). Last
8 month, the WFRC released a request for comments, because there will be an update made to the
9 WFRC 2025-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (“TIP”). Input was requested and there
10 were meetings held in July 2024. Chair Richardson noted that some membership is shared between
11 the CWC and WFRC. He wondered whether any Committee Members are involved in WFRC and
12 asked how the WFRC ties into the CWC work. There was discussion about the WFRC meetings
13 and the ability to share comments. Linda Johnson believes all comments are considered. Mr.
14 Marker recalled that at the meeting related to Little Cottonwood Canyon, only 60 seconds were
15 provided for comment. Mr. Marker was also surprised at how little public comment was allowed
16 to be submitted for the recent request for input on the TIP. Only 1,000 characters were permitted.
17

18 Mr. Knoblock assumed additional public comment could be allowed in the future if these concerns
19 are communicated to those in power. He suggested there be discussions with certain individuals.
20 Mr. Marker reported that there is a policy that requires the WFRC to take public comment.
21 However, though there is a process in place, he finds that the process itself is somewhat limited.
22

23 Ms. Johnson stated that she has worked with WFRC over the years and has gotten to know most
24 of the staff. Input to staff has always been successful for her and the organizations she has worked
25 with. She acknowledged that this process is somewhat different than a public comment period.
26

27 Spencer Shaver shared what Save Our Canyons submitted as a comment. Most of the comments
28 were related to the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS and the implementation of the various
29 phases. Something there is a desire to see with the implementation of Phase One and Phase Two
30 is some sort of metric for success. Right now, the phases are planned sequentially, but the hope is
31 that WFRC will put forward some sort of metric for success as it relates to the first two phases.
32 For example, outlining what success would look like and then establishing criteria ahead of time.
33 In the comment submitted, there was a reference to the limited opportunities to engage in the EIS
34 process. There was a request that there be well-publicized opportunities for the public to engage
35 in any changes to the TIP, specifically anything related to the gondola or implementation of any
36 of the funds. Better communication about successful implementation was also encouraged.
37

38 Mr. Marker asked whether the comment was submitted outside of the website process since there
39 is a 1,000-character limit there. Mr. Shaver confirmed this and noted that the comment map was
40 limited. Mr. Marker reported that the website closed down almost a day ahead of time. Comments
41 were supposed to be open until August 3, 2024, but he heard of people unable to submit comments
42 on the dialogue window on that date. There was discussion about the comment map that was used.
43

44 Mr. Marker mentioned some of the individual comments that were submitted. One was similar in
45 terms of the request for metrics at the end of each phase. Mr. Shaver noted that the comment
46 period is now closed, but he believes this is an annual process and there is a legal requirement to

1 update the TIP each year. Ahead of the next update, it might be worthwhile to submit a letter
2 requesting that there be ample opportunity for the public to engage, as a month is not long enough.

3
4 Mr. Marker believed the listening sessions could have been improved as well as the ability to
5 submit comments online. It felt like the WFRC was simply checking the box on the public
6 comment requirement. Mr. Shaver reiterated that ahead of the TIP process next year, there could
7 be a suggestion made that the public comment process be more robust. Asking in advance could
8 be beneficial. For instance, it might be possible to request a 60- or 90-day public comment period.

9
10 Mr. Knoblock noted that the Executive Director of WFRC, Andrew Gruber, was involved in a lot
11 of the Mountain Accord meetings. He has also been engaged with the community over the years.
12 He believed if there was communication with Mr. Gruber about this issue, he would be responsive.

13
14 Tom Diegel noted that the CWC Board recently spoke about potential Ex-Officio Members. It
15 seems like having someone from the WFRC as an Ex-Officio Member would be worthwhile. He
16 wondered whether it would be possible to look into that further. Ms. Nielsen explained that the
17 current bylaws allow for four Ex-Officio Members. Currently, there are two Ex-Officio Members.
18 She suggested that those interested attend the next Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting
19 on Friday, as Ex-Officio membership will be discussed at that time. She reminded those present
20 that the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting is a public meeting and anyone can attend.

21
22 Mr. Marker pointed out that Mayor Monica Zoltanski is on the CWC Board and is also on the
23 WFRC. Ms. Johnson believed that many of the mayors are on the WFRC. She stated that the
24 purpose of the WFRC is to allocate the federal funds that come in and not necessarily to change
25 plans. Chair Richardson suggested that the CWC monitor, communicate, and participate. He
26 believes the organization should be engaged and work with the WFRC, as there are some common
27 interests. Ms. Johnson agreed with that comment and suggested that someone from the Planning
28 Department of WFRC be asked to attend a future meeting. Chair Richardson liked the idea. Mr.
29 Knoblock stressed the importance of there being additional communication moving forward.

30 **CWC PODCAST “IN THE WASATCH”**

31 32 33 **1. Chair Richardson will Discuss the CWC’s Newly Launched Podcast, “In the 34 Wasatch”.**

35
36 Ms. Nielsen shared updates with the Transportation Systems Committee. She reported that the In
37 The Wasatch podcast was launched by the CWC earlier in the month. This is an idea that has been
38 around for a few years, but Community Engagement Coordinator, Mia McNeil, recently brought
39 the podcast to life. The link to the podcast is in the signature on all of the CWC Staff emails. The
40 podcast is also linked directly on the CWC website or can be found by searching for it on Spotify.
41 Ms. McNeil has asked some members of the CWC to speak about different areas of interest.
42 Anyone interested in participating in an episode of the In The Wasatch podcast can also reach out.
43 Ms. Nielsen explained that the scope of the podcast relates to the work of the CWC, which includes
44 economy, recreation, transportation, and environmental issues within the Central Wasatch.

1 CWC Staff is planning a Legislative Field Trip in the middle of September to reintroduce State
2 Legislators to the work of the CWC. Additionally, work is continuing to move forward on a
3 Central Wasatch Symposium. The symposium will take place on January 9 and 10, 2025. Save
4 the dates will be sent out in September. RSVP and ticketing will also be live at some point in
5 September. Ms. Nielsen reported that the CWC Board Retreat is planned for November 1, 2024.
6 The location of the retreat has not been determined, but it will be discussed at the
7 Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting. A lot is happening in the next several months.

8
9 **OTHER ITEMS**

10
11 Ms. Nielsen discussed the Visitor Use Study. She reported that it was a multi-year academic study
12 led by Dr. Jordan Smith and the team at Utah State University. The Visitor Use Study looked at
13 visitation to public lands in the tri-canyons, including Big Cottonwood Canyon, Little Cottonwood
14 Canyon, and Millcreek Canyon, from 2021 to 2022. It was originally released to the public in
15 October 2023, but an updated version of the Visitor Use Study was recently released. She noted
16 that the latest version of the Visitor Use Study includes some updated data. In the originally
17 released report, the data on ski resort sites was skewed. There was a weighting problem when the
18 visitation was calculated. That has since been corrected by the Utah State University team. The
19 report that was recently released should more properly reflect visitation to those sites.

20
21 Ms. Nielsen reported that she will be at the Brighton Town Council Meeting tomorrow night and
22 at the Alta Town Council Meeting the following evening. She will be attending those meetings to
23 present the updated Visitor Use Study. The geographic focus for the Visitor Use Study includes
24 those jurisdictions, so there was a desire to speak specifically to those Councils. Anyone on the
25 Transportation Systems Committee interested in a more in-depth presentation can attend.

26
27 Mr. Diegel and Mr. Knoblock took a preliminary look at the Visitor Use Study and noticed that
28 there were some fundamental flaws in terms of its ability to recognize important recreational uses
29 in the canyons. For example, there was no differentiation made between road bicycling and
30 mountain bicycling. Mr. Diegel specifically asked Dr. Smith about this issue, and he explained
31 that the study had to be done in accordance with the National Forest Visitor Use Monitoring
32 protocols. It sounds like those protocols do not recognize backcountry skiing, climbing, or the
33 difference between road and mountain bicycling. There is good data in the Visitor Use Study, but
34 there is also a lack of certain information. The study should be considered with that in mind.

35
36 Mr. Knoblock noted that the Recreation Systems Committee could look further into the different
37 recreational uses. As for the Transportation Systems Committee, one data point he has not seen is
38 how many people are taking public transit versus carpooling versus single-occupant vehicles. He
39 has heard anecdotal data, but for transportation planning and advocacy, detailed data is needed.

40
41 Mr. Marker reported that the Visitor Use Study was first contemplated as a capacity study. There
42 was a desire to understand the environmental impacts that recreational use has and the impacts of
43 additional visitation. Based on the original objective of a capacity study, he believes the Visitor
44 Use Study misses the mark. The Visitor Use Study does not answer the core questions about
45 capacity within the canyons. If capacity issues are not considered, there may be more difficulties
46 as the population continues to grow. The National Park Service recognizes that the increased

1 visitation numbers over the last five years have had a negative impact on assets and visitor
2 experiences. He reiterated that the Visitor Use Study does not address the original objective.

3
4 Co-Chair Kurt Hegmann referenced Page 12 of the Visitor Use Study. There were numerous
5 activities listed with very few numbers. What each visitor does in the canyon will not necessarily
6 be addressed in the Visitor Use Study, as there would need to be a specific study conducted for
7 capacity as it relates to each specific use. For example, a study related specifically to backcountry
8 use to adequately address backcountry skiing. The Visitor Use Study is broader in nature. An
9 overall use question was addressed rather than looking at more specific types of interests or uses.
10 Ms. Johnson believes it is possible to obtain more detailed use data in the future. There was
11 additional discussion about the Visitor Use Study and some of the recreation use types.

12
13 Ms. Nielsen confirmed that the initial idea for a report originated at the Stakeholders Council level
14 in 2019. There was then a subcommittee of the Stakeholders Council created, which was the
15 Capacity Committee. In consultation with Dr. Kelly Bricker and the Commissioners, the idea
16 shifted from a capacity study to a Visitor Use Study. There were various reasons for that.
17 According to Dr. Bricker and other experts, capacity is difficult to define. Mr. Marker noted that
18 this does not solve the issue that the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS references, which is
19 the addition of 2,300 people to the canyon. UDOT did not look at the impacts of adding those
20 additional visitors. Mayor Roger Bourke noted that the UDOT focus was on moving visitors rather
21 than capacity.

22
23 Mr. Marker expressed his frustrations that there has been a lot of focus on Big Cottonwood Canyon
24 and Millcreek Canyon while UDOT determines what they want to do in Little Cottonwood
25 Canyon. It is very disheartening for those who believed in the Mountain Accord. Ms. Nielsen
26 asked how the CWC can refocus efforts and attention on Little Cottonwood Canyon. Mr. Marker
27 suggested that the organization look at the errors and omissions from UDOT. Their focus was
28 solely on transportation while all of the other issues people brought forward were ignored. That
29 is what many elements of the lawsuit are related to. Mr. Marker pointed out that the CWC has
30 been relatively silent about Little Cottonwood Canyon for the last 18 months or so. It would be
31 nice to see some questions raised about the decisions made by UDOT. The fact that the Visitor
32 Use Study does not address certain issues either is discouraging. He believes more should be done.

33
34 Mayor Bourke believed CWC could take a more comprehensive look at what is happening. He
35 wondered whether the CWC should look broadly at visitation to areas with limited capacity.
36 Though there is uncertainty about what the exact capacity is in certain locations, it is clear that
37 there is a capacity. To expect that the canyons can continuously absorb more visitors is unrealistic.
38 There has to be some limit, but it seems no one wants to discuss an exact number. Ms. Nielsen
39 suggested that Mayor Bourke attend the next Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting, as it is
40 possible for him to share some of these comments with the Committee Members. If there is a
41 desire to take a broader look at some of these issues, that suggestion can be made at the meeting.

42
43 Mr. Knoblock shared information about the U.S. Forest Service fee program. The Forest Service
44 will charge fees so there is funding for staffing. However, the fee program also makes it possible
45 to limit parking to the parking lot and prohibit parking within a quarter mile of the parking lot.
46 This is a tool that can be used to manage visitation to individual sites. Understanding the thinking

1 of the Forest Service is essential. Mayor Bourke reported that the tool the Forest Service is using
2 focuses on the number of parking spaces in Little Cottonwood Canyon. To some extent, that limits
3 the number of visitors. He pointed out that it is easier to calculate the capacity of a ski hill than
4 the capacity of an entire canyon since ski lifts can only have so many people on them per hour.
5

6 Mr. Knoblock informed those present that Patrick Shea previously encouraged the ski resorts to
7 make their comfortable carrying capacities public. Mr. Marker noted that the ski resorts are private
8 businesses. However, there needs to be a transportation system in place in order for skiers to reach
9 the resorts. He mentioned the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS, which includes an
10 assumption of growth. That assumption is something he feels should be challenged. Mr. Marker
11 stated that there is the Forest Service and National Park Service. The Forest Service has a different
12 purpose than the National Park Service, as the Forest Service's mission is to monetize the asset.
13

14 There was additional discussion about the Visitor Use Study. Mr. Knoblock noted that this is a
15 trail-related study. That being said, he does not disagree with the results of the study, which found
16 that most trails are not overly crowded, and visitors are generally satisfied with the number of
17 people they see. People visiting Donut Falls, for instance, expect to see a lot of other people. Mr.
18 Knoblock mentioned summer transit in the canyons. There were previous concerns expressed
19 about the capacity of the trailheads. The Forest Service felt that parking management was easier
20 for them to measure than buses full of visitors. Something in the Mountain Accord was providing
21 summer transit up the canyons, but the Forest Service has stated that they are not interested in that.
22

23 Mr. Knoblock read the Forest Service mission statement for the benefit of those present:
24

- 25 • The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity
26 of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.
27

28 Mr. Marker believed the Transportation Systems Committee will continue to struggle because
29 there is an overlap with bureaucracy and legislated boundaries. Mr. Knoblock wondered whether
30 the Committee should advocate for summer transit or let the Forest Service handle management.
31 He reported that this summer, a fee area was established at Silver Lake. This winter, there will be
32 a fee area at the White Pine Trailhead. That means next summer there will be no roadside parking
33 there. Mr. Diegel noted that it is unlikely the Forest Service will entertain a capacity study. If
34 there will not be a capacity study, there need to be discussions about how to manage visitation.
35 Creating a fee structure is a fairly effective way to manage visitation, but there are access issues.
36

37 Mayor Bourke explained that when there is a limited resource, there need to be limitations placed
38 by either regulation or price. As far as he knows, no one has sat down and addressed the issues
39 with that in mind. Chair Richardson thanked everyone for sharing comments about the Visitor
40 Use Study, capacity, and other transportation-related issues. There are future solutions that can be
41 considered. He reminded Committee Members that it is important not to love the canyons to death.
42

43 Ms. Nielsen shared an additional CWC update. She reported that a calendar invitation was sent
44 out with CWC Youth Council and Stakeholders Council events. There is an upcoming CWC
45 Youth Council/Stakeholders Council social on September 11, 2024, at the CWC Office. The first

1 half hour of that time block will be used for a CWC orientation for the new Stakeholders Council
2 Members or existing Stakeholders Council Members who wish to receive refresher information.

3
4 On September 18, 2024, there will be the CWC Youth Council Outdoor Film Festival. This is
5 something the CWC Youth Council is hosting at The Front Climbing Club in Salt Lake City. Ms.
6 Nielsen noted that payment is not needed to access The Front Climbing Club for the Outdoor Film
7 Festival. She reported that there will be youth-oriented outdoor films shown at 6:30 p.m. The
8 CWC Youth Council is also making strides with the Gear Shed project, which is in partnership
9 with the Gear Fund Collective and Mobile Moon Co-Op on the west side of Salt Lake City.

10
11 Mr. Knoblock asked whether anything was being done on vehicle traction control enforcement.
12 There is a UDOT program, but he has not seen any enforcement occur. It is an issue that the
13 Transportation Systems Committee could potentially tackle in the future. Mr. Marker stressed the
14 importance of common-sense solutions, such as traction enforcement. The available money should
15 be used to solve some of the existing problems. Mr. Knoblock suggested that there be a discussion
16 about potential actions that can be taken. Mr. Marker pointed out that enforcement can change
17 behaviors, but there needs to be enforcement done in order to bring about that necessary change.

18
19 Chair Richardson thanked Committee Members for their participation during the Transportation
20 Systems Committee Meeting. He noted that work can be done to address some of the suggestions.

21
22 **CLOSING**

23
24 **1. Chair Richardson will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation Systems**
25 **Committee Meeting.**

26
27 **MOTION:** Linda Johnson moved to ADJOURN the Transportation Systems Committee Meeting.
28 There was no second. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

29
30 The Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation Systems Committee
31 Meeting adjourned at 5:04 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 on*
3 *Monday, August 12, 2024.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: _____