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**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024, AT 10:00 A.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

**Present:** Dan Knopp, Chair  
Mayor Mike Weichers  
Mayor Monica Zoltanski  
Carlton Christensen  
Bill Ciraco  
Tom Diegel

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

**OPENING**

**1. Chair Dan Knopp will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Transportation Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission.**

Chair Dan Knopp called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Transportation Committee Meeting to order at approximately 10:03 a.m. and welcomed those present. He acknowledged that this is the first Transportation Committee Meeting that has been held in some time.

**FUTURE CWC TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS**

**1. The Committee will Revisit the Transportation and Transit Projects Outlined in the Mountain Accord.**

Discussions were had about items outlined in the Mountain Accord. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the Mountain Accord mapped out action items and projects for the CWC to implement. She shared a document with bolded items and explained that these are the action items related to transit and transportation. Many have not been focused on, so there is a desire to have a Committee discussion about potential areas of focus. Chair Knopp believes the focus should be on Item 11 and Item 12. Ms. Nielsen noted that Item 11 has to do with Big Cottonwood Canyon transit and Item 12 has to do with the study of a Big Cottonwood Canyon/Park City connection.

1 Commissioner Bill Ciraco stated that the community and government in Park City is evolving and  
2 understands there needs to be more connection. Connections that are not vehicle-based are starting  
3 to be spoken about more frequently. The biggest concern for Park City is the roadway from Empire  
4 Pass down into Park City, as it is as narrow as 14 feet wide in some locations with no guard rails  
5 and a steep drop-off. There is support in the Wasatch Back for increased connectivity. Discussions  
6 were had about aerial connectivity and some of the challenges associated with that.

7  
8 Ms. Nielsen noted that it seems there is a desire for the CWC to focus on Item 11 and Item 12  
9 moving forward. She asked what that work would look like. Chair Knopp stated that there might  
10 need to be some long conversations because aerial connectivity can be a contentious item. Some  
11 people see it as ski area expansion rather than transportation. Ms. Nielsen wondered whether there  
12 were other connection types that could be considered. It was noted that a tunnel is an option.

13  
14 Ex-Officio Member, Carlton Christensen, explained that a few years ago when the Utah Transit  
15 Authority ("UTA") was short on labor, they removed themselves from the Park City connection.  
16 Arrangements were made with High Valley Transit to have some connection points in the system.

17  
18 Mayor Mike Weichers thought there was more value in focusing on Item 11 rather than Item 12 at  
19 this time. Based on the conversations, it sounds like there are a lot of barriers related to Item 12.  
20 There may be some value in the Item 11 work. Chair Knopp reported that studies indicate Big  
21 Cottonwood has substantially more traffic per year than Little Cottonwood. Ex-Officio  
22 Christensen reported that the UTA service to both canyons will be about the same, but during the  
23 ski season, there will be more of the surge service run this year. Chair Knopp shared comments  
24 about summer use. He pointed out that something needs to be done about the U.S. Forest Service  
25 and the ability to stop at trailheads because the summer use is more dispersed than the winter use.

26  
27 Mayor Weichers noted that the Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility Action Plan ("BCC MAP") had  
28 a lot of suggestions. He asked for an update about the BCC MAP work. Chair Knopp reported  
29 that he sat in on the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") presentation a few weeks ago  
30 and there is \$8 million in their program for Big Cottonwood Canyon. This includes the  
31 improvements and the transit hubs. The BCC MAP is in motion, but it will take some time to see  
32 the actual implementation start to occur.

33  
34 Discussions were had about Forest Service infrastructure at trailheads. Chair Knopp explained  
35 that infrastructure allows the buses to stop in certain locations. Ms. Nielsen reported that the Forest  
36 Service has stated previously that there are concerns about impacts. For instance, there are  
37 concerns about the impacts associated with letting 20 bus riders off at one trailhead at one time.

38  
39 Commissioner Ciraco shared additional comments about the Item 12 suggestion. He reported that  
40 from the west side of the Wasatch Back, during peak winter season, there are likely 1,000 vehicles  
41 or so moving into the Wasatch Front. He added that Park City has an asset called Bonanza Flat.  
42 There is some data on the use there. He offered to obtain that data and share it with members of  
43 the Transportation Committee. He believes approximately 8% of the use is from Park City  
44 residents. This kind of data could frame some of the conversation about aerial connections.  
45 Commissioner Ciraco reiterated that he will look for Bonanza Flat data and share it in the future.

1 Chair Knopp pointed out that many other items on the list are already underway, such as a trails  
2 plan. Ms. Nielsen believed that based on the discussions, the Transportation Committee wants to  
3 bring Item 5 forward to the CWC Board at the CWC Board Meeting scheduled in October, which  
4 is the shuttle service in Millcreek Canyon. There can be additional discussions about Items 11 and  
5 12.

6  
7 **2. The Committee will Discuss Necessary Steps to Implement a Millcreek Canyon**  
8 **Shuttle.**

- 9  
10 **a. Funding Sources.**  
11 **b. Parking.**  
12

13 Chair Knopp asked for an update about a potential Millcreek Canyon shuttle. Ms. Nielsen reported  
14 that the Millcreek Canyon shuttle was outlined in the Mountain Accord. The charter mapped out  
15 action items and projects for the CWC. The Stakeholders Council and CWC Staff have been  
16 investigating the feasibility of a shuttle program over the last several years. She reminded those  
17 present that Salt Lake County was awarded a Federal Lands Access Program (“FLAP”) grant to  
18 make road and infrastructure improvements in Millcreek Canyon. Before the construction  
19 associated with the FLAP grant funding, the Forest Service maintained that the canyon was not  
20 suitable for a shuttle. With the funding and improvements, it is possible that a shuttle program  
21 might be possible. However, there are unknowns when it comes to shuttle funding and parking.  
22

23 The Stakeholders Council and CWC Staff have done a lot of research into potential funding  
24 sources and parking locations. CWC Staff has identified a number of potential funding sources  
25 for at least the pilot year of a shuttle program. As for parking, the Stakeholders Council has done  
26 a lot of work to locate suitable parking and staging areas. Two potential areas have been identified.  
27 Some construction would be needed to pave those areas and make them more suitable. One  
28 parking option is the frontage road abutting the west side of I-215 East, which is across the street  
29 from Skyline High School. The other area is on the east side of I-215 East right off of Wasatch  
30 Boulevard. That is currently a parking lot that is used for access to the trail there. Ms. Nielsen  
31 explained that the second parking location is more involved, but both are promising options.  
32

33 Chair Knopp asked about the land development happening across from the Olympus Hills  
34 Shopping Center. He noted that there is supposed to be a Porche dealership there, but there is extra  
35 land. Ms. Nielsen does not believe that is a viable option for a Millcreek Canyon shuttle.  
36

37 Chair Knopp wanted to hear additional details about funding sources. Ms. Nielsen reported that  
38 she has spoken to the CWC Lobbyist about the potential to ask for State appropriations. He was  
39 receptive to the idea and thought it might land well with the Transportation Committee at the State  
40 Legislature as well as the broader Legislature itself. Another potential funding source is the Utah  
41 State Division of Outdoor Recreation. She explained that they have recently started a new grant  
42 fund related to access projects for recreation. After speaking to the person who runs that grant at  
43 the Utah State Division of Outdoor Recreation, there was a receptive response to the shuttle.  
44

45 Ms. Nielsen explained that none of the parking locations or funding sources are concrete at this  
46 point. That is the reason the Forest Service has been wary of the shuttle proposal. That being said,

1 she is enthusiastic about the prospect of a Millcreek Canyon shuttle moving forward. There is an  
2 appetite for the shuttle and she believes it is something canyon visitors would use. Solid options  
3 have been identified to address the two main issues the Forest Service had previously. In 2012,  
4 there was a Feasibility Study conducted by Fehr & Peers for a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. At that  
5 time, the issues identified were also parking and funding. Chair Knopp asked what can be done  
6 by members of the Transportation Committee. Ms. Nielsen reported that this matter can be taken  
7 to the CWC Board for discussion. Chair Knopp believes that should be the next step in the process.  
8

9 Mayor Monica Zoltanski suggested the Transportation Committee send a formal recommendation  
10 to the CWC Board to support a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. If all of the canyons have shuttle  
11 services in place, it will create the habit where people will be more likely to take a shuttle rather  
12 than a personal vehicle. She hopes shuttles will become a viable alternative. The shuttle is  
13 something that she supports in Millcreek Canyon and believes is important for the tri-canyons.  
14

15 Mayor Weichers expressed his support for a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. He wonders whether the  
16 CWC itself would apply for the grant funding in the event a shuttle moved forward. It was noted  
17 that cities and counties have personnel to move these types of transportation projects forward that  
18 the CWC does not. Chair Knopp believes the CWC should become advocates. Ms. Nielsen  
19 explained that while CWC Staff was putting together research for a potential shuttle program, it  
20 was always anticipated that the organization would do the preparation work leading to the actual  
21 implementation. If the implementation is able to move ahead, the CWC would contract with a  
22 shuttle service to run the shuttle. This would be in conjunction with the County and Forest Service.  
23

24 Mayor Weichers asked if the CWC has the resources and staff available to handle the shuttle  
25 preparation. Ms. Nielsen believes that the CWC Staff is capable. Chair Knopp feels this matter  
26 is worthy of a discussion with the full CWC Board. It was determined that the Millcreek Canyon  
27 shuttle item will be brought to the CWC Board for discussion at a future CWC Board Meeting.  
28

29 Mayor Zoltanski reported that Sandy City has been successful in obtaining funding through the  
30 State for traffic mitigation between Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon.  
31 Sandy supports shuttle programs in the canyons, including in Big Cottonwood Canyon. She has  
32 spoken to many hoteliers and tourist businesses and there is a reliance on shuttle service. Shuttles  
33 are beneficial for tourism and reduce the number of vehicles on the road. She has heard positive  
34 comments from hotel and restaurant businesses about the shuttle service impact in Sandy. She  
35 would like to see the service continue and see it grow in the other canyons, as shuttles create ease  
36 and convenience for people who want to enter the canyons.  
37

38 Ms. Nielsen pointed out that Mr. Diegel is the Chair of the Millcreek Canyon Committee and the  
39 Co-Chair of the Stakeholders Council. Mr. Diegel shared comments about a potential Millcreek  
40 Canyon shuttle. He reported that there have been mixed messages received from the Forest Service  
41 in the past. At one point, the Forest Service encouraged CWC Staff to create a shuttle proposal.  
42 CWC Staff did a lot of work last summer on that, but the Forest Service pointed out that parking  
43 and funding were issues. Since then, several ways to address those concerns have been identified,  
44 but Forest Supervisor, Dave Whittekiend has indicated that there is not a lot of support at this time  
45 for a shuttle. At the CWC Board Meeting that was held earlier in the summer, Mr. Whittekiend  
46 stated that Zion National Park and others were considering the removal of their shuttle programs.

1 However, the reality is that Zion is adding in electric shuttles. Mr. Diegel reiterated that some  
2 mixed messages have been received from the Forest Service about a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon.  
3

4 The Millcreek Canyon Committee and Stakeholders Council feel strongly about a shuttle in  
5 Millcreek Canyon. Mr. Diegel believes that with the closures related to the FLAP grant work,  
6 there will likely be an outcry about the lack of access to the upper canyon. He feels the shuttle  
7 should be a high priority for the CWC, as a shuttle is something that has been discussed and desired  
8 for some time. He referenced the Fehr & Peers study, which saw a shuttle as a solution for  
9 transportation issues in the canyon. It included details about how to best implement a shuttle there.  
10

11 Mr. Diegel explained that when the FLAP grant started to move forward, it seemed that the Federal  
12 Highway Administration (“FHWA”) wanted to focus largely on a road. However, users of the  
13 canyon recognize that it is not the road that is the issue, but the transit available on the road. It is  
14 disappointing that there will be \$20 million spent that could have been used for a shuttle system.  
15 Mr. Diegel believes it is vital to the community that a shuttle in the canyon be further considered.  
16 Chair Knopp informed those present that this matter will be discussed by the CWC Board.  
17

18 **3. The Committee will Discuss Expanding the Ski Bus Priority Access Program into**  
19 **Cottonwood Heights.**  
20

21 Chair Knopp asked for feedback from Mayor Weichers about expanding the Ski Bus Priority  
22 Access Program into Cottonwood Heights. He pointed out that there are no avalanche closures in  
23 that area like there are in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Mayor Weichers stated that there is support  
24 for the expansion of the program. Any priority system that encourages individuals to take a bus  
25 rather than a personal vehicle is something he believes is beneficial. Chair Knopp was under the  
26 impression that the Ski Bus Priority Access Program only ran when there was a canyon closure.  
27

28 Mayor Zoltanski shared information about the current Ski Bus Priority Access Program. She  
29 confirmed that the service is in place when there are closures. Chair Knopp is fine to support an  
30 expansion of the program but pointed out that there are not a lot of closures in Big Cottonwood  
31 Canyon. It was suggested that this matter be brought to the CWC Board for additional discussion.  
32

33 Mayor Zoltanski noted that this service is not only for UTA buses but also impacts employee  
34 shuttles. Ms. Nielsen shared additional background information with those present. She reported  
35 that the program works in partnership with the Sandy City Police Department, UDOT, and UTA.  
36 It has been in place for the last four ski seasons. When there is a road closure for avalanche  
37 mitigation, Sandy City, UDOT, and UTA work to implement the Ski Bus Priority Access Program  
38 in the morning. It is a successful program that incentivizes transit use, increases road safety, and  
39 allows the through traffic of local commuters. This program has been so successful on the Sandy  
40 side of Wasatch Boulevard that traffic has built up on the Cottonwood Heights side. That is what  
41 is being considered with the possible expansion of the program into Cottonwood Heights.  
42

43 The first Ski Bus Priority Access Program Planning Committee Meeting will take place shortly.  
44 Ms. Nielsen reported that it is internal with UDOT, UTA, and CWC Staff. The Cottonwood  
45 Heights Police Department has been invited to attend that meeting in order to devise a plan. She  
46 explained that the expansion is intended to move ahead. Not all of the allocated funding for the

1 program was used in the last fiscal year, so the budget is available for the expansion, assuming  
2 there is not another unprecedented snow year like there was a few seasons ago. Chair Knopp took  
3 a moment to express his support for the expansion of the Ski Bus Priority Access Program.  
4

5 Chair Knopp shared information about the Walker Gravel Pit, which is located at the bottom of  
6 Big Cottonwood Canyon. The area where mining has occurred is available for sale. UDOT is  
7 working with the owner and has the money to purchase the land. He has been told by UDOT that  
8 they want to move forward with a purchase. The development on the north side of the pit will start  
9 next week. Mayor Weichers reported that asphalt will continue to be produced, but the mining  
10 activities are coming to an end. The land will be available for development opportunities.  
11

## 12 **2034 OLYMPICS**

### 13 14 **1. The Committee will Discuss Transportation Issues in the Wasatch Front and Back** 15 **Related to the 2034 Winter Olympics.**

#### 16 17 **a. Connection with Previously Discussed Transportation and Transit** 18 **Improvements.**

- 19
- 20 **i. Transit and Transportation Needs.**
- 21 **ii. Potential Impacts.**
- 22

23 Chair Knopp reported that there will not be any Olympic events held in the Cottonwood Canyons.  
24 While that might change in the future, as it stands now, none are anticipated to take place there.  
25 In 2002, in Big Cottonwood Canyon, it was actually a slow year there when the Olympics took  
26 place because it shifted the use to other areas in Utah. He is not sure what to expect in 2034, but  
27 impacts on the Cottonwood Canyons will likely not be significant based on what was experienced  
28 previously. Ex-Officio Christensen explained that he was on the City Council for Salt Lake  
29 previously and there was a warning during that last Olympics that there would be an economic  
30 downturn that year. That being said, he acknowledges the long-term value of the games.  
31

32 Commissioner Ciraco pointed out that the events on September 11, 2001, impacted travel behavior  
33 and travel planning. That might have had an impact on the 2002 Olympics. It is possible that the  
34 conditions will be different for the 2034 Winter Olympics. Based on what he has heard in Park  
35 City, there is awareness that visitation can drop off in and around the Olympics for non-Olympic  
36 visitors. It sounds like there is an effort to address that and market towards that. Between that  
37 awareness and the lack of a global issue impacting travel, there will hopefully be a slightly different  
38 result this time around. Chair Knopp does not believe there will be a lot to worry about in the  
39 Cottonwood Canyons unless there is an event that is actually hosted in the canyons.  
40

## 41 **STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

### 42 43 **1. Legislative Field Trip on September 17, 2024.**

44  
45 Ms. Nielsen reported that the date of the Legislative Field Trip has changed to September 19, 2024.  
46 The CWC will take Utah State Legislators on a site tour on that date. Commissioners are welcome

1 and encouraged to attend, but she asked that those interested let her know ahead of time. The  
2 Legislative Field Trip is scheduled to take place from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The goal of the site  
3 tour is to reintroduce Legislators to the work of the CWC. There will be presentations from UDOT,  
4 the General Managers of the ski resorts, Save Our Canyons, and Wasatch Backcountry Alliance.  
5 There will also be information about the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation  
6 Area Act (“CWNCRA”) shared. UTA will be providing the bus for the Legislative Field Trip.  
7

8 **2. Minutes Approval Process.**  
9

10 Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, reported that the Meeting Minutes from the  
11 Transportation Committee Meeting will be sent out as soon as they are ready. The Committee will  
12 have three business days to read the Meeting Minutes and submit any corrections or edits. If any  
13 corrections or edits are proposed, those will be made, and the Meeting Minutes will be sent back  
14 out. There will be another three days provided to look at the Meeting Minutes again. After three  
15 business days pass with no edits, the Meeting Minutes will be considered approved. That is the  
16 protocol when there are sporadic meetings rather than frequent and scheduled meetings.  
17

18 **3. Scheduling the Next Meeting.**  
19

20 Ms. Kilpack asked Committee Members when there was a desire to meet again. It was suggested  
21 that a Transportation Committee Meeting be scheduled after the next CWC Board Meeting. Mayor  
22 Weichers believed it would make sense for the Committee to meet every two to three months. Ms.  
23 Kilpack offered to send out a scheduling poll to determine a meeting date in December or January.  
24

25 **4. Central Wasatch Symposium on January 9-10, 2025.**  
26

27 Ms. Nielsen reminded Committee Members that the Central Wasatch Symposium will take place  
28 on January 9 and 10, 2025. Terry Tempest Williams will provide the keynote address on January  
29 9, 2024. The Central Wasatch Symposium will be a two-day conference-style event where there  
30 will be presentations and panels from all of the major players in the mountains. For example,  
31 resort panels, a presentation from Save Our Canyons, presentations from the Forest Service, and  
32 so on. This will be an exciting event and she encouraged Committee Members to attend.  
33

34 **5. Board Retreat on November 1, 2024.**  
35

36 Ms. Nielsen reported that the CWC Board Retreat is scheduled to take place on November 1, 2024,  
37 at the River Oaks Golf Course in Sandy. The retreat will run from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
38

39 **OTHER BUSINESS**  
40

41 There was no additional business.  
42

1 **CLOSING**

2

3 1. **Chair Knopp will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation Committee**  
4 **Meeting.**

5

6 **MOTION:** Mike Weichers moved to ADJOURN the Transportation Committee Meeting. Bill  
7 Ciraco seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

8

9 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*  
2 *Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, September 10, 2024.*  
3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

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