



Central Wasatch Commission

Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study

Update Memo

MEMO

To: Central Wasatch Commission Board
Chair: Jeff Silvestrini, Co-Chair: Erin Mendenhall, Treasurer and Secretary: Christopher F. Robinson, Monica Zoltanski, Bill Ciraco, Roger Bourke, Dan Knopp, Mike Weichers, Carlton Christensen, Annalee Munsey, Amber Broadway, Spencer Shaver

CC: Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Public Utilities

From: Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
Mia McNeil, Community Engagement Coordinator

Subject: Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study Update

The Millcreek Canyon Shuttle concept was originally introduced by Salt Lake County (Millcreek Canyon Road is a Salt Lake County-owned roadway) in its 2012 Regional Transportation Plan, followed by the 2015 Mountain Accord Charter, which identified the shuttle as a project for the Central Wasatch Commission to implement in Millcreek Canyon. In 2023, the Salt Lake Ranger District of the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest (UWC) requested that the Central Wasatch Commission assess the feasibility of a Millcreek Shuttle program to coincide with the construction in the upper portion of Millcreek Canyon associated with the Federal Lands Access Program funding that Salt Lake County and the UWC were awarded to make roadway improvements. That construction in the upper segment of Millcreek Canyon is slated to begin in 2025 and restrict access to upper Millcreek Canyon for the duration of the construction time (until 2027). A shuttle program could help preserve access to those public lands while roadway construction takes place.

The first step in the process of implementing the Millcreek Shuttle program is to conduct an update to the 2012 Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study that Fehr and Peers conducted at the behest of Salt Lake County. Following the update to the feasibility assessment, NEPA would be required. In discussions with the UWC, it is expected that the NEPA level for a shuttle program of this kind would likely be a Categorical Exclusion, meaning that there would be negligible impact to the lands resulting from a shuttle program. Following the update to the feasibility study and the environmental analysis, the final step in the implementation process would be to make any necessary infrastructure improvements for parking, staging, and shuttle storage, and funding shuttle program operational costs.

The CWC has not explicitly budgeted funding for an update to this feasibility study, however, we did build in a \$60,000 contingency fund in the current fiscal year budget, and there is ample funding in the CWC's reserve funding that we could draw from, if we decide to proceed with the needed feasibility plan update. We anticipate that the cost to update the 2012 Feasibility Study would be around \$34,000, and we could seek to work with Fehr and Peers, who performed the 2012 study, through sole source procurement. We could also begin work immediately after allocating the necessary funding.

There is no action item associated with this discussion during the December 2024 Board meeting, but if the Commission decides to move forward with this necessary first step of updating the feasibility study, we could have a project proposal and contract with Fehr and Peers, as well as a resolution ready for the January 2025 Board meeting.

Below is a broad scope for the work associated for the update:

Existing Conditions

We would need to review recent studies and any readily available data (e.g. count data from the toll booth located at the base of the canyon) that may be available to get a full understanding of the current parking conditions in Millcreek Canyon. Review the FLAP grant scope of work to better understand the closures/phasing for the upper canyon construction.

Parking Demand & Location

We would need to review previous findings for parking demand for potential shuttle service. This demand estimate will be based on a typical “busy” summer weekend. Identify a potential shuttle base for operations and user parking. The 2012 study and CWC have previously identified possible locations. Land ownership and on-going redevelopment may have changed some of the feasibility of those assumed locations. We would include discussions with the following agencies to develop a recommendation for the base location: UDOT, Salt Lake County, USFS, Millcreek City, and Skyline school.

Shuttle Service Plan

There could be two service scenarios: 1) during upper canyon FLAP (Federal Lands Access Program) reconstruction, and 2) subsequent full canyon operations.

The FLAP project will provide an opportunity to test and fine-tune a shuttle program. The intent is to provide a transportation option as mitigation to the reduction in parking during construction. This “pilot” will terminate service at the current winter gate. The fleet size and frequency will be determined along with planning level capital and operations costs. It is assumed that this service will be outsourced. Once the FLAP project is complete, the service plan will assume expansion to the Big Water parking lot area. A second service plan will be developed to accommodate this more robust operation.