



Central Wasatch Commission Requests from the Board's Transportation Committee 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 Broadaway, 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: Requests from the Board Transportation Committee Memo

The Transportation Committee of the CWC Board convened on November 20th to discuss transportation issues in the Central Wasatch Mountains. During this meeting, the committee discussed asking the full Board to consider the following:

- Releasing a statement in support of “Phase 1” of the Record of Decision (ROD) of UDOT’s Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (LCC EIS), or the “expanded bus service” alternative to address traffic congestion in Little Cottonwood Canyon.
- Revisiting the idea of requesting a collaborative conflict resolution (ECCR) process around the ROD. Remember, the Central Wasatch Commission sent the enclosed letter to UDOT in 2023, which requested an environmental conflict and collaboration process to resolve dispute of the ROD, which was declined. As conditions have changed over the past year, the Transportation Committee was interested in engaging the full Board in a discussion surrounding gathering the parties in dispute over the ROD for an ECCR process.

31 October 2023

Via Email and Confirmed via US Mail

Governor Spencer Cox
CC: Mike Mower
350 N. State Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 142220
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2220

Director Carlos Braceras
Utah Department of Transportation
4501 South 2700 West
PO Box 14141245
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-141245

Dear Governor Cox and Director Braceras,

The Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) and its stakeholders have been an engaged partner in the Utah Department of Transportation's Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (UDOT LCC EIS) process at each opportunity, since its inception. Disagreement over issues in the Central Wasatch has existed for decades, and that discord eventually led to a multi-year, bi-partisan effort that in 2016 became the Mountain Accord. It was the consensus of Mountain Accord that addressing transportation solutions had to occur in the context of impacts on lands and resources. A wide range of governments and interests came to the Mountain Accord process believing that transportation or lands and resource protection were the most important issues to be addressed, and by the end of that two-year effort, all parties agreed that both lands and resource protection and transportation problems needed immediate and coordinated action.

The CWC and its stakeholders have concerns that the EIS did not adequately consider the impact that the transportation alternatives identified in the Record of Decision (ROD) for UDOT's LCC EIS will have on the lands and resources in Central Wasatch, and that the ROD will increase conflict amongst impacted communities, stakeholders and governments with legal obligations and jurisdictional responsibilities in this region. We believe that through a different approach to these issues, we can better address the challenges that confront the Central Wasatch Mountains.

The CWC and its stakeholders respectfully request that UDOT engage in an environmental collaboration and conflict resolution (ECCR) process concerning its LCC EIS ROD, with the express aim of finding a mutually acceptable pathway forward for effective implementation of the goals of Phase 1. In the event there were to be any litigation by others (the CWC does not litigate), this ECCR process could become a means of settling those conflicts in an expeditious, collaborative, and cost-effective way. We support the ECCR as a good-faith process to narrow or resolve conflict concerning the EIS.

According to the John S. McCain III National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution, the environmental collaboration and conflict resolution process is a third-party assisted conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving in the context of environmental, public lands, or natural resources issues or conflicts, including matters related to energy, transportation, and land use. These processes directly engage affected interests and governmental decision makers in

conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving.

Through an ECCR process, the CWC seeks to engage the State, the public, and interested stakeholders in a collaborative approach to conflict resolution surrounding the LCC EIS ROD.


Benefits of an environmental collaboration and conflict resolution process:

- ✓ An ECCR process will demonstrate that the State is aware and responsive to the local governments, the community, and its stakeholders.
- ✓ An ECCR process can result in a path forward to implement Phase 1 of the ROD and avoid stalling the forward progress of the EIS.
- ✓ An ECCR process will save taxpayers a considerable amount of time and money if an ECCR process can create consensus amongst stakeholders.
- ✓ An ECCR process aligns with Governor Cox's [Disagree Better Initiative](#).


Through an ECCR framework we hope to ease conflict, and ultimately find the best solutions to the challenges facing the Central Wasatch.

The CWC respectfully requests a response from the State within 7 days, exploring the option of the ECCR process and extending the December 10, 2023 deadline to allow time for an adequate ECCR process. Should you have any questions, CWC Executive Director Lindsey Nielsen (lindsey@cw.utah.gov, 801-706-1004) or Board members are available for discussion. Thank you for your consideration.


Respectfully submitted,




Christopher F. Robinson, Central Wasatch
Commission Chair, Summit County Council
Member



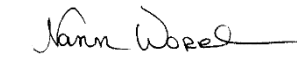
Jeff Silvestrini, Central Wasatch Commission
Treasurer, Millcreek Mayor



Erin Mendenhall, Central Wasatch
Commission Co-Chair, Salt Lake City Mayor



Monica Zoltanski, Commissioner, Sandy City
Mayor



Nann Worel, Commissioner,
Park City Mayor



Michael Weichers, Commissioner,
Cottonwood Heights Mayor



Dan Knopp, Commissioner, Town of Brighton
Mayor



Roger Bourke, Commissioner, Town of Alta
Mayor

Enclosures: July 31, 2023, Stakeholders Council Letter to the CWC concerning UDOT's LCC EIS ROD;
September 25, 2023, Stakeholders Council recommendation to the CWC

The Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) was created in 2017 by interlocal agreement and has since served as a convener for the jurisdictions, stakeholders, and public with interest and authority in the Central Wasatch Mountains. The CWC's mission is to preserve the Central Wasatch through providing canyon transportation solutions, pathways for concentrated development, environmental protections, and recreational stewardship.

The Board of Commissioners is currently composed of elected leaders from Summit County, Park City, Salt Lake City, Millcreek, Cottonwood Heights, Sandy City, the Town of Brighton and the Town of Alta with the Utah Transit Authority, Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy, and the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest serving as ex-officio members. The CWC's 35-member Stakeholders Council is composed of representatives from the Cottonwood Canyon ski resorts, the environmental and recreational communities, private property owners, transportation advocates, and representatives from the educational and cultural communities of the Wasatch Front and Back. The varied composition of the Central Wasatch Commission reflects the varied nature of the issues in the Central Wasatch Mountains, and no other entity like the CWC that provides a forum of ideas exists elsewhere.