



MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS AT THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

Present: Danny Richardson, Chair
Kurt Hegmann, Co-Chair
Linda Johnson
Mike Marker
Roger Borgenicht
Mark Baer
John Knoblock

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

OPENING

1. **Chair Danny Richardson will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Transportation System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**

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

2. **Review and Approval of the Minutes of the November 8, 2024, Meeting.**

Chair Richardson reviewed the Meeting Minutes from the November 8, 2024, Transportation System Committee Meeting. The Committee discussed rental cars at the airport, the \$400,000 that has been allocated for traction law enforcement, and the sticker program. Additionally, there was a discussion about snow day announcements, signage, and the location of informational signs. The Committee also discussed the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") and ski resorts.

MOTION: Kurt Hegmann moved to APPROVE the Minutes from November 8, 2024. Linda Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

TRACTION LAW DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Discuss Recent Traction Law Enforcement Efforts.

Chair Richardson reported that earlier in the day, KSL News announced that traction laws will go into effect. The Transportation System Committee has been talking about information sharing recently, so it was encouraging to see that announcement made to viewers. He assumes radio stations and others are also sharing information about the traction of law enforcement efforts.

John Knoblock noted that there was a snow day approximately one week ago and there was traction law enforcement in Big Cottonwood Canyon. At that time, tread depth was measured and traffic was backed up from the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon to the freeway. According to Tom Diegel, it took him 40 minutes to move from the gravel pit through the traction inspection station.

Discussions were had about the sticker program. Mr. Knoblock explained that in the past when tires were checked, there were no stickers handed out at that time. However, it would make sense for checked vehicles to receive a sticker to prevent slowdowns during future visits. Chair Richardson believed the Committee should suggest an express lane or something similar so those with a sticker can pass through. This will encourage visitors to obtain the sticker ahead of time. There have been several new stories about the sticker program in the last few weeks.

Chair Richardson reported that some locations ran out of stickers because of the increased popularity. Linda Johnson asked if it would be possible for CWC Staff to send out information about the sticker program and traction law enforcement. The ski resorts might be willing to share information with the news broadcasters. Mr. Knoblock asked CWC Staff if there are regular meetings with UDOT, which was confirmed. He suggested that vehicles with stickers be able to drive through or that the tread depth not be measured on every single vehicle. Vehicles that are obviously ill-equipped could be stopped rather than every vehicle attempting to access the canyon. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, clarified that there are meetings with UDOT as part of the Ski Bus Priority Access Program. There is a meeting tomorrow and this can be mentioned.

Ms. Nielsen asked if Committee Members were aware of issues in Little Cottonwood Canyon as well as the previously mentioned backups in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Chair Richardson assumed the conditions were the same in both canyons, as there were no express lanes. Co-Chair Kurt Hegmann suggested that in future years, there be a warning issued in October that those without a sticker will need to wait to access the canyons. Earlier education will prevent locations from running out of stickers in November and December. Ms. Nielsen noted that the backups in Big Cottonwood Canyon may be the result of the enforcement process starting. The conditions will likely improve in the future. However, she still offered to check in with UDOT and report back.

Chair Richardson stated that there is information about traction laws on the UDOT website. The ski resort websites have also linked to the UDOT traction law information. There is clear communication happening. Mr. Knoblock reported that he asked Amber Broadway to contact the other ski resorts to request the addition of information to the Snow Conditions Report page.

1 Chair Richardson explained that he reviewed the websites for Alta, Snowbird, Brighton, and
2 Solitude. All of the ski resort websites include a link to the traction law information, but that
3 information is not on the main page of the website. He suggested that it be highlighted in the
4 future.

5
6 **2. The Committee will Brainstorm Potential Solutions Regarding Traction Law**
7 **Compliance from Airport Rental Cars.**
8

9 **a. The Committee will Determine Potential Action Items and Next Steps**
10 **Regarding Airport Rental Car Compliance.**
11

12 Chair Richardson shared information about airport rental car companies. Several companies,
13 including Hertz, are not participating in the sticker program. There have been discussions about
14 whether or not this is something that needs to be legislated. Ms. Johnson suggested asking Ski
15 Utah to share information on their website to highlight the rental car companies with canyon-
16 appropriate vehicles. Co-Chair Hegmann pointed out that if vehicles with stickers can drive
17 through the inspection area, this will encourage residents and visitors to choose rental vehicles
18 with stickers. Discussions were had about potential incentives that could be provided to those
19 participating in the sticker program. Those incentives could be implemented for the next ski
20 season. Chair Richardson stressed the importance of an electronic pass and express lane.

21
22 UDOT has a social media account with information about the Cottonwood Canyons. There are a
23 number of ways to obtain the information and there seems to be a lot of momentum. The CWC
24 can find ways to share resources and publicize the information as much as possible.
25

26 The Committee discussed whether the traction law should be in place on snow days only or if it
27 should be in place throughout the winter season. Ms. Johnson is unsure whether it is permissible
28 to have the traction law in place all winter. Several Committee Members expressed support for a
29 blanket approach, as that will eliminate confusion about when the traction law is actually in place.
30

31 Chair Richardson believed anything that can make enforcement more efficient should be
32 considered, including electronic stickers and traction laws that are in place all winter. As for the
33 rental car companies, he suggested that those discussions continue. Ms. Johnson feels strongly
34 that there needs to be a reward system implemented to encourage compliance. Additional
35 discussions were had about incentivizing rental car companies. Mr. Knoblock wondered whether
36 there is a way to encourage the rental car companies that do participate in the sticker program to
37 use that as an advertising tool. That information could be promoted to visitors. Ms. Nielsen
38 thought that was an excellent action item for the Transportation System Committee to focus on.
39

40 There was a question in the Zoom chat box from Mike Marker. He asked whether the traction
41 requirement was shown on the Wasatch Boulevard reader board. This was confirmed. Ms. Nielsen
42 explained that one of the reasons the message signs were installed was to increase communication.
43

44 Committee Members discussed a possible action item. Ms. Nielsen noted that a letter could be
45 drafted where the Committee asks participating rental car companies to publicize the fact that they
46 offer vehicles with snow tires. The letter could also urge non-participating rental car companies

1 to start using them. Chair Richardson offered to look at the websites of the participating rental car
2 companies to see whether or not snow tire and sticker information has been shared there.
3 Ms. Johnson thought it would make sense to reach out to Ski Utah and others to ask that the
4 participating rental car companies be listed in the traction law section of their websites.

5
6 Ms. Nielsen believes the Committee wants to look into the participating rental car companies to
7 determine if their compliance is publicized. By the next meeting, that information will be
8 solidified and it will be possible to discuss whether a formal letter is necessary to draft and share.
9 Mr. Knoblock does not want to wait months to move this ahead. If there are rental car companies
10 that do participate in the sticker program, but there is nothing advertised on the website, it makes
11 sense to contact them. There was support expressed for that approach. Director of Operations,
12 Samantha Kilpack, reported that there can be continued communication in between meetings via
13 email. Some of this work can be done ahead of the next Transportation System Committee
14 Meeting. Chair Richardson offered to do the preliminary research and report back. It was noted
15 that the draft version of the letter could be reviewed and finalized at the next meeting.

16
17 Co-Chair Hegmann shared information about the laws in Colorado. He pointed out that it requires
18 four-wheel or all-wheel drive, but there is a weakness in their law, as all-season tires are allowed.
19 Mark Baer suggested that if information is going to be sent out to rental car companies, there be
20 something in there about the presumption of liability. The highway patrol can ticket anyone with
21 a motor vehicle that causes an accident. Mr. Marker expressed frustration about the enforcement
22 so far. It was previously anticipated that there would be backups related to the tire checks. If that
23 was already anticipated, there should've been a plan in place to address the anticipated issues.
24 Ms. Nielsen asked how that frustration can be turned into an action item for the Committee to work
25 on.

26
27 Mr. Marker noted that the elected politicians should be asking for better solutions. It is possible
28 for legislation to be passed that would require the non-participating rental car companies to post a
29 sign that states the vehicles may not be equipped to access the canyons given the traction law
30 requirements. Ms. Nielsen wanted to know what the Transportation System Committee can do.
31 Ms. Johnson pointed out that the Committee can comment on the Big Cottonwood Canyon
32 environmental study. There is a desire to implement a fee below Solitude where there is no place
33 to turn around. The Committee could submit a comment or individuals could submit a comment.
34 Mr. Knoblock felt that was a different topic and suggested that the focus remain on the traction
35 law. Co-Chair Hegmann thought the idea of a sign at non-compliant rental car company counters
36 is something that can be pursued. Ms. Nielsen asked how the Committee can encourage that.

37
38 Mr. Knoblock agreed that checking the tread on every vehicle is a slow and difficult process that
39 can cause traffic to slow. All of the four-wheel drive vehicles should be waived through and only
40 the two-wheel drive vehicles should be pulled over to check on the tread depth. Chair Richardson
41 stressed the importance of the sticker program and waiving stickered cars through. Mr. Knoblock
42 pointed out that stopping every vehicle without a sticker to measure the tread depth on the tires is
43 likely to cause issues. It was noted that Ms. Nielsen can ask UDOT about the plan to make
44 enforcement more efficient moving forward. Ms. Nielsen reminded Committee Members to focus
45 on what the Transportation System Committee can do to address the issues that have been raised.

1 Roger Borgenicht noted that there are known problems, but those problems are not well addressed
2 at this time. The sticker program is important, as are incentives for the rental car companies. He
3 pointed out that it is not possible to waive all four-wheel drive vehicles through, because all-season
4 tires are not appropriate. Mr. Knoblock explained that the all-season tires are legally appropriate
5 on a four-wheel drive. Ms. Johnson asked about the best way to share comments with UDOT.
6 Mr. Borgenicht suggested a letter that lays out the concerns and solutions discussed. That can be
7 followed by a face-to-face meeting. Ms. Nielsen stated that CWC Staff will speak to UDOT
8 tomorrow and information will be shared with the Transportation System Committee Members.

9
10 Ms. Nielsen shared information about the comment period for the Big Cottonwood Canyon
11 scoping phase. All comments must be submitted by December 13, 2024. As a result, there is no
12 time for the Transportation System Committee to submit a formal comment. She reminded those
13 present that comments need to move through the Stakeholders Council and CWC Board.
14 However, the CWC Board will submit a comment on the scoping phase, which has been drafted.

15
16 Mr. Borgenicht asked for additional information about the sticker program. Mr. Knoblock
17 reported that it is an annual program, so the tread depth needs to be re-checked each year. Mr. Baer
18 asked whether it is possible to ask UDOT to add the following language to the message boards:
19 “Failure to adhere to the traction law can result in fines and liability.” Ms. Nielsen believes this is
20 already being done. One of the original motivations for installing the boards was to be able to
21 share information about the traction law and enforcement, but this can be mentioned to UDOT.

22
23 Co-Chair Hegmann pointed out that the stickers are often difficult to see. He has one and had to
24 slow down to almost a stop before his sticker was visible. It might be better to have a reflective
25 sticker on the license plate instead because that will be easier to see from a distance. Chair
26 Richardson believed there should be something electronic in the future. Ms. Nielsen suggested
27 that Committee Member questions and comments for UDOT be submitted to CWC Staff. She
28 reminded those present that the meeting with UDOT is not about the traction law, but the Ski Bus
29 Priority Access Program. Committee Members offered to submit questions after the meeting.

30
31 Mr. Knoblock suggested that UDOT be asked about the ski bus process and where the buses will
32 be staged. Ms. Nielsen reported that the graphic created by CWC Staff can be shared with UDOT
33 tomorrow. At that time, UDOT can be asked if what is reflected in the graphic is still accurate.

34 35 **VISITOR USE STUDY**

36 37 **1. The Committee will Continue Discussions About Assessing Visitor Use in the Canyons** 38 **and the Letter Delivered to the CWC Board on this Topic.**

39 40 **a. The Committee will Discuss Potential Action Items and Next Steps Regarding** 41 **Visitor Use.**

42
43 Chair Richardson reported that at the last Transportation System Committee Meeting, there were
44 wide-ranging discussions about the Visitor Use Study. A letter was submitted to the Stakeholders
45 Council and moved forward to the CWC Board. Mr. Knoblock shared some of the feedback from
46 the CWC Board Meeting. There was no support to hire someone to assist with the Visitor Use

1 Study in the current fiscal year. Ms. Nielsen pointed out that CWC Board Members said this could
2 be a potential budget line item in the next fiscal year budget. Mr. Knoblock does not necessarily
3 want to wait on this work. He feels it is possible to make use of the information that already exists.
4 The ski resorts are aware of the number of resort skiers there are, the U.S. Forest Service has been
5 using trail counters to monitor hiker use, and the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance has been using
6 trail counters to monitor backcountry skier use. It is possible to look into already collected data.

7
8 Chair Richardson wanted to understand what the process could look like if a new study was
9 conducted. Ms. Nielsen noted that there could be a coalition. For example, the Big Cottonwood
10 Canyon Mobility Action Plan (“BCC MAP”) was a coalition of funding partners. Solitude
11 Mountain Resort, Town of Brighton, Cottonwood Heights, Brighton Resort, and the CWC all
12 contributed. There could be that kind of coalition of funding partners for this study as well.
13 Discussions were had about the Visitor Use Study and the potential for additional visitor study.

14
15 Mr. Knoblock reported that he has spoken to Kirk Nichols about the University of Utah potentially
16 assisting, but he said that no one in that capacity could do so. He pointed out that he was
17 disappointed with the scope of work from Utah State University. That means a consultant
18 company might be needed for a study of this nature, which would likely be expensive. It was
19 noted that other departments at the university could assist with this work. Ms. Nielsen reminded
20 Committee Members that Mr. Knoblock suggested amassing existing visitor data. Members of
21 the Transportation System Committee could conduct outreach with organizations that have those
22 metrics and see if there is a willingness to share the information.

23
24 The Recreation System Committee and Environment System Committee are interested in this work
25 as well. Mr. Knoblock suggested that the outreach be divided into the different System
26 Committees. For example, the Recreation System Committee could obtain data on recreational
27 uses. The Transportation System Committee could look for data related to the number of buses,
28 vehicles, formal parking spaces, and roadside parking spaces routinely used in each canyon.
29 Ms. Johnson believed Salt Lake County has a lot of the transportation-related data that is desired.

30
31 Mr. Marker noted that the CWC paid Utah State University for the Visitor Use Study work.
32 However, the end result was not what the organization anticipated. He expressed frustration about
33 the process and the issues with the data. Before the System Committees start reaching out to
34 organizations for visitor data, he feels there should be outreach to the Utah State University team.
35 Mr. Knoblock reported that the CWC contract with Utah State University did not explicitly outline
36 the data that was expected. Ms. Nielsen explained that once the decision was made to use the
37 Forest Service protocol in the Visitor Use Study, that impacted the information that was obtained.

38
39 Mr. Marker wanted to understand how the shift was made from a capacity study to what ultimately
40 became the Visitor Use Study. He tried to review past Meeting Minutes to determine how that
41 happened and did not find anything that talked about that decision. The first time he saw anything
42 related to the shift was in an Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting, where someone from
43 the Forest Service said that a capacity study would be ignored. Ms. Nielsen confirmed that the
44 comment shifted the focus. The CWC wanted to make sure the Forest Service would be able to
45 use the data. According to the Forest Service, to be able to use the data, it needed to be a result of
46 their protocol. That is the reason the decision was made. Co-Chair Hegmann explained that the

1 precision of the question asked will impact the answer received. It is important to be precise about
2 what is being asked and to be on the same page from the beginning.

3
4 Mr. Marker stated that a conscious decision was made somewhere within the CWC organization
5 and that decision process was not shared with the Stakeholders Council. He did not discover that
6 comment from the Forest Service until he read over two years of Meeting Minutes. The
7 Stakeholders Council was not fully informed about the changes made or the rationale for the
8 changes. He wants to understand why the Council was not better informed. As for the data, there
9 is a desire to collect now, he wants to understand what will actually be done with the data.
10 Mr. Knoblock noted that a capacity study can be considered political, so to avoid that issue, a
11 baseline study can be conducted instead. This study can include data about the number of formal
12 parking spaces that currently exist, the number of buses, and so on. That data will create a baseline.

13
14 Chair Richardson likes the idea of dividing up the data collection between the different System
15 Committees. The Transportation System Committee can look into the number of parking
16 locations, the Recreation System Committee can look into the trail counts, and so on. Different
17 pieces can be collected and then that information can be used. Support was expressed for this plan.

18 **FOREST PLAN DISCUSSION**

19 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan and Its Impacts** 20 **on Transportation and Transit in the Central Wasatch.**

21
22 Chair Richardson shared the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan with the Committee. The Forest
23 Plan is approximately 450 pages and there are relevant sections that Committee Members can
24 review. Ms. Nielsen reported that Adam Shaw will share the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan
25 101 presentation at the Central Wasatch Symposium, which is scheduled for January 9 and 10.

26
27 Mr. Knoblock believed the section on the Central Wasatch is only about 15 pages long. He noted
28 that it talks about parking. That is something that a lot of people have concerns about. In Millcreek
29 Canyon, it is not so much that there is slow traffic, but that there are limitations with parking. He
30 noted that the plan essentially states the goal is not to increase parking in the Central Wasatch
31 unless it is justified for transit or other concerns. According to Dave Whittekiend, amendments
32 can be made to the Forest Plan. If the CWC has amendment suggestions, those could be shared.
33 Discussions were had about parking in the canyons. Ms. Johnson noted that the parking language
34 in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan provides a certain level of flexibility and ambiguity.

35
36 Ms. Nielsen suggested that Committee Members read the relevant section of the Forest Plan and
37 come to the next Transportation System Committee Meeting with notes and discussion items.
38 Mr. Knoblock previously sent out the link to the plan and there is an index to show the Central
39 Wasatch portion. He reiterated that the Central Wasatch section is approximately 15 pages long.

40
41 Mr. Knoblock reported that Salt Lake County conducted a Wasatch Canyons General Plan several
42 years ago. He shared it with those present so the plan can also be read by Committee Members.

1 **TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

2
3 1. **Chair Richardson will Share Updates on Transportation Issues in the Central**
4 **Wasatch.**

5
6 a. **BCC Environmental Assessment.**
7

8 Chair Richardson discussed the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment and the
9 public comment period. It will be interesting to see what comes out of this process. He tried to
10 find information about Little Cottonwood Canyon, but that is still pending due to the lawsuits.
11

12 Mr. Knoblock shared information about the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental
13 Impact Statement (“EIS”). The Salt Lake City lawsuit against the UDOT Little Cottonwood
14 Canyon EIS specifically calls out enhanced busing. During the CWC Board Meeting, Laura
15 Briefer stated that there was not necessarily opposition to the buses, but providing water for the
16 transit stations at Alta and Snowbird. That is the reason enhanced busing was called out.
17

18 b. **Millcreek Canyon Shuttle.**
19

20 Ms. Nielsen reported that the CWC Board was asked about funding an update to the Feasibility
21 Study from Fehr & Peers. There was interest, but not until the next fiscal year budget. The CWC
22 Board was not interested in using the unallocated funds from the current fiscal year budget, because
23 it is a large percentage of what is unallocated. There was preference for a separate line item in the
24 next fiscal year budget. She explained that the fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. The budget
25 season starts in March and there will be work done with the Treasurer during that process.
26

27 Ms. Nielsen explained that the Tentative Budget for the next fiscal year is released during the
28 CWC Board Meeting in May. There is a comment period that is open for the Tentative Budget.
29 In June, there is a CWC Board Meeting to approve the Tentative Budget. Once that is approved,
30 it becomes the final budget for the fiscal year. Committee Members appreciated the outline.
31

32 **NEXT MEETING AGENDA**
33

34 1. **The Committee will Review the Action Items that Have Been Decided Upon for the**
35 **Next Meeting.**
36

37 Chair Richardson reported that several items have been discussed and will be added to the next
38 Transportation System Committee Meeting. Ms. Nielsen recapped the action items. It was
39 determined that Chair Richardson will look into which rental car companies publicize that snow
40 tires are used. Depending on the outcomes, a letter will be drafted to ask those who are not
41 currently publicizing that information to do so. That draft letter will be ready ahead of the
42 Transportation System Committee Meeting in January 2025. Chair Richardson will conduct
43 research on the promotion of rental cars on the ski resort websites. The next action item relates to
44 the baseline data that is desired and the information that is most relevant to the Transportation
45 System Committee. Mr. Baer offered to start looking into how to obtain some of that information.
46 Mr. Knoblock was asked to do some brainstorming and include it in the shared Committee drive.

1
2 **2. The Committee will Discuss Topics for the Next Meeting Agenda.**
3

4 Ms. Nielsen reported that the Transportation System Committee Meeting agenda in January will
5 be based on the action items that have been discussed. Other suggestions can be emailed in. She
6 reminded Committee Members that the Central Wasatch Symposium will take place in January.
7 The program for the symposium has been finalized and will be released later in the week. She
8 reported that breakout sessions will be recorded, but it is not possible to record the keynote address.
9

10 **3. The Committee will Determine its Meeting Cadence and Schedule for 2025.**
11

12 Ms. Kilpack wanted to check in with Committee Members about the meeting time for the
13 Transportation System Committee, which is the second Monday of the month at 3:30 p.m.
14 Committee Members expressed support for the current meeting schedule and meeting time.
15

16 In the fall, there are holidays that will create some scheduling conflicts for the Committee.
17 Discussions were had about the meeting schedule in those instances. Ms. Nielsen pointed out that
18 it is possible for the Transportation System Committee to meet on the Tuesday of the following
19 week. There were some conflicts with the Tuesday date, so it was suggested that the Committee
20 meet earlier on the following Monday. Committee Members expressed support for that approach.
21

22 **OTHER ITEMS**
23

24 Mr. Baer wanted to hear more information about tolling stations in Big Cottonwood Canyon and
25 Little Cottonwood Canyon. The money from the Millcreek Canyon fee booth has led to
26 improvements, so he would like to have a comprehensive discussion about why there are no
27 stations at Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Mr. Knoblock suggested that
28 it be added to the next meeting agenda. He reported that the Forest Service is putting in a fee
29 program for certain trailheads and UDOT is considering tolling as part of their transportation plans.
30 Millcreek is a County road whereas the other canyons have State roads. Ms. Nielsen asked if there
31 was a desire to have a brainstorming session or if there was a desire to hear from someone else
32 about this matter. It was determined that there will be a brainstorming discussion about fee
33 stations.
34

35 **CLOSING**
36

37 **1. Chair Richardson will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation System**
38 **Committee Meeting.**
39

40 **MOTION:** Linda Johnson moved to ADJOURN the Transportation System Committee Meeting.
41 Kurt Hegmann seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the
42 Committee.
43

44 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation System Committee Meeting adjourned at
45 5:06 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Transportation System Committee Meeting held on Monday, December 9,*
3 *2024.*

4
5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes
7 T Forbes Group
8 Minutes Secretary
9

10 Minutes Approved: _____