MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION ("CWC") STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025, 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
	Pat Shea
	Ian Reddell
	Doug Tolman
	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 3:33 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the January 13, 2025, Meeting.

Chair Richardson reviewed the Meeting Minutes from the January 13, 2025, Transportation System Committee Meeting. At the last meeting, the Committee discussed the traction law. Some information was added to the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") website to state that Senate Bill ("S.B.") 2 specifies and directs UDOT to use certain funds allocated by the Legislature to "provide enhanced bus service, tolling, a mobility hub, and resort bus stops for Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons." There will be discussions about that during the current meeting. At the last meeting, the Committee discussed rental car companies, a baseline study, and the Forest Plan.

MOTION: Linda Johnson moved to APPROVE the Minutes from January 13, 2024. Kurt Hegmann seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

TRACTION LAW DISCUSSION

1. **The Committee will Review Results and Outcomes from the Last Meeting's Action Items Related to Traction Law Compliance, Including a Letter Sent to Car Rental Agencies Encouraging Traction Law Communication and Sticker Program Participation.**

2. **The Committee will Determine Next Steps and Action Items.**

Chair Richardson shared an update about the rental car companies. He went online and looked for the addresses for all 17 rental car companies in the area. He sent those companies a nicely worded letter asking them for feedback. However, a lot of the addresses listed for the companies are not accurate, since the airport address was listed. Chair Richardson reached out to the Airport Authority, who stated that they can take the letter and email it to each of the rental car companies.

It has been approximately 12 days since the initial outreach to the rental car companies. Chair Richardson has heard back from one company that is not on airport property. He is going to wait another week before following up with the other companies. The one response he received so far stated that it is not a decision that can be made locally, as it needs to be determined by the national office. Chair Richardson explained that his letter communicated that there is a desire to see all or some of the fleet approved with stickers. Additionally, there is a desire for mirror hangers with traction law information. He offered to do some follow-up and report back to the Committee.

Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, thanked Chair Richardson for the outreach that was conducted. Mike Marker reported that he spoke to a guest at Snowbird recently and that guest was pleased about having a four-wheel vehicle. The guest stated that when he went to the Hertz counter, the employee noticed their ski gear and informed them about the traction law requirements in the canyon. The guest was advised to upgrade their vehicle to a four-wheel one and everyone was satisfied with the outcome. Mr. Marker was pleased to hear that an employee was proactive.

Chair Richardson reported that there have been some discussions with Hertz. That company has a fleet of cars that is moving all over the place rather than a fleet of vehicles that remains in the area. However, this kind of proactive guest education about the kind of vehicle needed is also meaningful. The intention is to prevent people from entering the canyon with inadequate vehicles. He thanked Mr. Marker for sharing that story and noted that it is possible to encourage rental car companies to at least provide information at the counter, since visitors might not be aware.

Chair Richardson noted that last Friday, it was sunny in the morning and at 2:00 p.m. there was a lot of snow. In Big Cottonwood Canyon, there was a van that slid off the road and traffic was backed up for two hours. It is likely that it was a Utah Transit Authority ("UTA") employee van that Brighton was using. That two-wheel drive van was inadequate and slid off the road. He reiterated that issues can arise when inadequate vehicles enter the canyons. Knowing that weather events can happen at different times, it is important for the traction law to be in place all day.

Chair Richardson reported that during a previous meeting, it was noted that a tollbooth in Big Cottonwood Canyon has been contemplated right below Solitude. At that time, Committee Members wanted to understand the rationale for the location. Chair Richardson explained that the intention is not to toll those utilizing the canyon for backcountry skiing or hiking but to focus on the ski resorts instead. In order to avoid the toll, bus service to the ski resorts could be prioritized.

Director of Operations, Sam Kilpack, asked who operates the employee shuttle vans. Chair Richardson reported it is employee drivers. Ms. Kilpack believed UTA previously stated that all of their shuttles were equipped with traction devices. Mr. Marker denied this. He was in one of the employee vans at Snowbird. It was difficult to exit the parking lot because it was a two-wheel drive vehicle. Chair Richardson noted that UTA can make changes as the vehicles are replaced.

There are signs in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon about the traction law. However, there is not a sign in Millcreek Canyon, despite the fact that the traction law is in place across the State. Chair Richardson pointed out that Millcreek Canyon has a tollbooth. Some of the collected fees could be utilized to cover the cost of the traction law sign. Linda Johnson noted that it might also be possible to communicate traction law information at the tollbooth itself.

Chair Richardson explained that there are a lot of ongoing efforts related to traction law compliance. It is important to stay ahead of this issue so there is increased safety next year. Doug Tolman mentioned House Bill ("H.B.") 196, which is currently in the Legislature. It relates to vehicle traction amendments and was introduced by Representative Gay Lynn Bennion. It essentially codifies the traction law and will strengthen the ability to ticket and enforce. In addition, it will allow for enforcement before a storm that has been predicted. It narrowly passed the House after being shut down in the first attempt. It should be heading to the Senate next week.

"BASELINE STUDY" DATA GATHERING DISCUSSION

1. **The Committee will Discuss the Planning and Funding of a Potential "Baseline Study" Documenting Visitor Use Data in the Central Wasatch, and Progress on Data Gathering Discussed in Prior Meetings.**

2. **The Committee will Discuss Potential Action Items and Next Steps for Gathering Transportation Data.**

Chair Richardson shared information about the Visitor Use Study and explained that there was no specific information included for mountain bicyclists, climbers, and various other user groups. He believes the long-term request will be for some funding for additional data gathering. Ms. Johnson believes the baseline study data needs to be collected, but other options can be explored as well. It was noted that Ms. Johnson will share some comments later on in the meeting.

Co-Chair Kurt Hegmann would like to see this study done correctly. He is willing to do whatever work is necessary and involve others when it is appropriate to do so. It is important to have the data for baseline purposes. Ms. Johnson reported that when the Committee first discussed the baseline study, she sent around a list of the information that should be included. Other Committee

Members added to that list, so there is a good starting point the Committee can work from. Chair Richardson reminded those present that the Visitor Use Study followed the U.S. Forest Service protocol, which is the reason it is not as complete as the organization wanted it to be. Ms. Johnson acknowledged the reason the original study was incomplete but pointed out that the CWC paid for the study to be conducted. She offered to find the list mentioned and redistribute it to members.

Mr. Marker asked if there is a formal title for the baseline data-gathering effort. Ms. Kilpack reported that it has been referred to as a baseline study so far. Mr. Marker reported that he spoke to someone who has been part of this effort in the past. That person suggested it be called the Visitor Use Management Study. Mr. Tolman asked how the baseline study will build upon the last study that was conducted and what is envisioned to be added this time around. Mr. Marker explained that the intention is for this study to do what the last study did not. With the Visitor Use Study, there were a lot of elements left out. That study also failed to talk about the impact of visitation. John Knoblock commented that the previous study was essentially a satisfaction survey. For example, determining how satisfied visitors were with the overall experience. What the Stakeholders Council is interested in is data that determines the current conditions, such as the number of visitors in the canyons and the specific uses that are taking place. There is also a desire to look into specific transportation information, such as the number of vehicles and buses in the canyon, the number of formal parking spots, and the number of informal roadside parking spots.

Mr. Knoblock reported that in the 2003 Forest Plan, one of the goals listed was not to increase parking in the canyons except where needed for transit. No rule was established, but there was a goal outlined in the plan. Many involved in the Stakeholders Council want to focus on improved transit in the canyons and a decrease in the use of personal vehicles. Mr. Marker stated that it is important to determine how visitors are using the canyons, but also how the visitors are accessing the canyons. Mr. Knoblock explained that once the baseline information has been gathered, that information can be used comparatively. Every five years or so, it will be possible to look at the current data as well as the baseline data to determine whether positive changes have occurred.

Chair Richardson asked about some potential next steps. He wondered whether the Stakeholders Council should request a CWC budget line item for the baseline study data collection. Mr. Knoblock stated that this is a continuous improvement process. He believes the Stakeholders Council should work on pulling together the available data. It is possible to ask about a line item in the CWC budget as well. There is a new professor at the University of Utah who has a background in visitor use studies. He feels it would be best to start the process at the Stakeholders Council level and then have a professional participate in the process as part of the next budget.

Ms. Johnson agreed with the approach suggested by Mr. Knoblock. She does not believe the Stakeholders Council is ready to approach the CWC Board with a specific budget request at this time, because there is not a formal list of what there is a desire to see studied. She stressed the importance of having a list that the Stakeholders Council supports before anything is requested of the CWC Board. It is not possible to ask for funding before the details have been finalized. Mr. Knoblock reported that he added a list to the shared folder for the Stakeholders Council. Ms. Johnson informed him that she also wrote a list several months back with missing information.

Mr. Knoblock suggested that at the next Stakeholders Council Meeting, this item be on the agenda. The list can be discussed and approved. From there, it will be possible to move forward with a request to the CWC Board. Mr. Marker agrees with the overall objectives of the baseline study. The list shared by Mr. Knoblock seems to clearly outline what there is a desire to accomplish.

Ms. Kilpack noted that there is a lot on the list that can be handled by the Stakeholders Council and does not necessarily require funding. However, if there is a desire to make a budget request to the CWC Board, the next step would be to determine what the funding would be used for specifically. As mentioned by Ms. Johnson, a broad budget request is unlikely to be effective.

Mr. Knoblock asked for the timeline of the CWC budget discussions. Ms. Kilpack reported that the Tentative Budget is considered for approval during the CWC Board Meeting in early May, but the budget discussions start in March. The Executive/Budget/Audit Committee will also talk about the budget during their monthly meetings. A Council request should come in by mid-April. Ms. Nielsen suggested that there be a discussion at the Stakeholders Council Meeting in February. From there, it can be considered by the CWC Board at the CWC Board Meeting in March.

Discussions were had about who could handle the data collection for a baseline study. Pat Shea asked if a bid was received from the University of Utah. That was denied. Mr. Knoblock clarified that he simply heard from Kirk Nichols that a new professor was hired and that the professor has a background in visitor use studies. There has not been any contact with the professor at this time. Mr. Knoblock thought it made sense to look at the list that has been created and determine some areas where additional expertise might be needed for the baseline data collection process.

Roger Borgenicht feels the list shared by Mr. Knoblock is fairly complete. Obtaining estimates from the appropriate parties will make it possible to budget for any necessary data. He does not believe this needs to be a complicated process and stressed the importance of having the baseline data. Ms. Johnson pointed out that a lot of the items on the list that she created are not included on the list shared by Mr. Knoblock. She offered to find her list and share it again with the Committee. It was noted that the list from Mr. Knoblock does not mention homeowners. Mr. Knoblock asked that Committee Members consider how the data is intended to be used.

Additional discussions were had about items on the list. Mr. Knoblock noted that it might be worth looking into the number of private residences in the canyons. Mr. Shea pointed out that it is possible to obtain that information from the Utah County Recorder's Office. He feels it is important to determine the carrying capacity of the canyons. The Stakeholders Council wants to understand how many people can be in the canyon. Ms. Nielsen recommended that Committee Members review past Meeting Minutes from the Visitor Use Study Committee. It is possible to determine whether there is a desire to build upon the previous efforts. All of the Minutes are available on the Utah Public Notice website as well as the audio recordings. Mr. Marker pointed out that the committee was originally called the Capacity Study Committee. Ms. Nielsen explained that the name was changed when members determined that capacity was difficult to define.

Mr. Nichols, the new hire at the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department, and Phoebe McNeally will host a feedback session with the CWC. It will include the Stakeholders Council, CWC Youth Council, and members of the public. Participants can consider what exists on the

Environmental Dashboard, including the Human Element. Feedback will be gathered on what exists and what there is a desire to see in the future. A lot of what is being discussed at the Transportation System Committee Meeting could be included on the Environmental Dashboard in the future. The Environmental Dashboard discussion will take place on February 24, 2025.

Chair Richardson asked whether the Transportation System Committee should let the Stakeholders Council know about their discussions at the next meeting. Support was expressed for that approach. Ms. McNeil reported that the next Stakeholders Council Meeting will be pushed back one week. An email was sent out about the new meeting date and the Storyboarding Workshop.

CHAIR UPDATES

1. Chair Danny Richardson will Share Information Gathered from a Recent Meeting with UTA.

Chair Richardson explained that he is a former UTA employee. He made an appointment and recently met with some of his former co-workers. When he informed them that the UDOT website mentioned perhaps buying a fleet of buses to handle the ski transportation, UTA expressed support for that. During the meeting, he also mentioned the gravel pit at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Ms. Johnson noted that UTA has a contract that states it is not possible to hire other services. She expressed frustrations about the service that has been provided. She feels there should be a discussion with the Legislature to determine who is responsible for what and where the funding is supposed to come from. The canyons bring a lot of money into the State. She believes the Transportation System Committee needs to focus on existing transportation issues. It should be possible for visitors to be dropped off at trailheads. Additionally, there needs to be traffic lights on the streets where residents live. She wants to prioritize action items.

OTHER TOPICS

1. The Committee will Decide How and When to Discuss Other Topics that Have Been Raised in the Last Few Months:

a. Incentivizing Use of the Ski Bus.

b. Traffic Pattern for Ski Bus Near Big Cottonwood Canyon.

c. Revisiting Transportation Modes Based on the 2020-2021 Mountain Transportation System Discussions.

Ms. Johnson stated that there is a need to acknowledge the increased use of the canyons. In addition, there must be an increased focus on transportation planning. The canyons will benefit if there is more planning done now rather than additional studies and debates about what might work best. She stressed the need for physical improvements. For example, determining the number of buses that are needed and how to obtain those buses. Ms. Johnson suggested that the Committee work seriously to anticipate what will change and what can be controlled. There is an awareness

of what is needed, such as parking at the bottom of the canyons, larger buses in the winter months, smaller buses in the summer months, and permission to stop at trailheads. The people who live in the canyons need to have access in and out of the area. Traffic lights would work well for access and she believes a request can be made to UDOT. There needs to be a plan that is acceptable to almost everyone. People are in the canyons for recreation and the population numbers continue to increase. It is necessary to deal with current and future conditions through appropriate planning.

Mr. Marker believes Ms. Johnson is questioning the need to obtain additional data and that she feels it is better to move straight into the transportation issues. He feels both are needed: the baseline study data and action items for transportation. Ms. Johnson does not think a study is needed to know certain facts. For instance, the Recreation System Committee is aware of how busy the trails are and the Forest Service is aware of the most used trails. She thinks a study is fine, but she also believes there should be a focus on action. Chair Richardson pointed out that the baseline information is useful because it creates awareness and the data can be used for comparison. Data can be a useful starting point and can also highlight the need for certain actions.

Ms. Johnson believes there should be a list created that outlines what the Transportation System Committee wants to see in a study, but there should also be a list created that outlines what there is a desire to see in terms of transportation action items. Additional discussions were had about the items missing on the baseline study list, such as homeowners and rock climbers. Mr. Shea reported that he started Friends of Alta approximately 45 years ago. Since that time, there have been at least seven studies conducted. Data is generated, but no one has the political authority to make and enforce decisions. The solution is to have a toll booth at Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. There can be annual, monthly, or daily passes, and the money generated can be used in the canyons. He does not believe more data is needed, but more action.

The Committee discussed potential actions that can be taken. Mr. Shea suggested that a proposal be made to Salt Lake County and UDOT that there be an electronic tollbooth where it is possible to purchase a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual pass online for the canyons. Mr. Marker noted that there seem to be a lot of different conversations taking place at once. Mr. Shea reiterated that he does not believe more data collection is necessary, but that action should be taken.

Mr. Tolman noted that both the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") and the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Study have identified tolling as something envisioned in the near future. UDOT has taken a certain position about what can and cannot be done due to the current litigation. Mr. Knoblock stated that the Salt Lake City lawsuit specifically calls out opposition to enhanced buses. Mr. Shea believes if a solid plan is determined, Salt Lake City would likely drop that portion of their complaint. Mr. Tolman reiterated that tolling is already in motion due to the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS and Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Study. As a result, the focus should be on how to speed up those efforts.

Ms. Kilpack asked how the Transportation System Committee will prioritize all of the different items that have been discussed. Chair Richardson explained that the baseline study can provide relevant data, but it can also increase credibility when requests are made for different action items. It might be worthwhile to reach out to Devin Weder with UDOT with some questions.

Mr. Knoblock pointed out that it might be preferable to have a conversation during a meeting rather than to send him an official letter. Mr. Shea suggested sending him a list of questions and then inviting him to a Stakeholders Council Meeting to answer those questions. Ms. Johnson believes it is possible to reach a consensus on the data list as well as the list of questions for UDOT at the next meeting. She feels it is important for the Committee to make progress and take clear action.

Mr. Knoblock explained that there is an existing list for the baseline study data and that list can continue to be added to and refined. UDOT has professionals working to address various transportation matters. Transportation solutions are not simple, as different opinions make matters complicated. Mr. Marker pointed out that the opinion UDOT has about their efforts in the canyons appears to be different than the opinions some others have. He sat through the Transportation Meetings on Capitol Hill and listened to UDOT and UTA make their reports. The Legislature believes both UDOT and UTA are doing great work, but that is not necessarily what the general public experiences. Mr. Shea asked that Committee Members write down some questions they feel should be brought forward. Those questions can be consolidated and then shared.

Ms. Nielsen informed Committee Members that it is possible to ask questions as private citizens. However, it is not possible to send something on behalf of the CWC without approval from the Stakeholders Council and CWC Board. Mr. Marker noted that the CWC has a certain level of legitimacy and will carry more weight than five private citizens. Ms. Nielsen pointed out that the Transportation System Committee can forward something to the Stakeholders Council for consideration at the meeting scheduled for February 26, 2025. If approved, it can then move to the CWC Board for consideration at their meeting, which is scheduled for March 3, 2025.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA

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

Ms. Nielsen noted that there was a suggestion made to workshop the baseline study list shared by Mr. Knoblock. There can also be a brainstorming session on different talking points. Ms. Johnson wants whatever moves forward to be successful. Ms. Nielsen acknowledged that some members of the Transportation System Committee do not feel additional study is necessary. Mr. Tolman believes the studies are necessary, important, and timely. However, when it comes to tolling, UDOT already has full intentions of implementing that in the canyons at some point. As a result, the goal of any additional study should not relate to the implementation of tolling.

Chair Richardson summarized some of the conversations the Transportation System Committee had. There is a desire to look at the baseline study list that was shared. Committee Members can submit comments and suggestions. As for transportation, Committee Members can draft questions there is a desire to ask UDOT or UTA. Those questions can be submitted and refined. Ms. Johnson asked if there should be an additional meeting scheduled to handle the action items described. Ms. Nielsen reported that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on March 10, 2025, which is after the CWC Board Meeting. Chair Richardson suggested that there be a short 20-minute brainstorming meeting after the next Stakeholders Council Meeting. Ms. Nielsen clarified that it

would still need to be noticed as an official meeting of the Transportation System Committee. After some discussion, it was determined that the next meeting will take place on March 10, 2025.

Mr. Shea would like there to be a conversation about the proposed gondola at a future Transportation System Committee Meeting. Ms. Kilpack reported that there was a previous suggestion made to revisit the transportation modes discussed in the Mountain Transportation System ("MTS") process. In addition, there were suggestions about a potential modification to the traffic pattern for the ski bus near Big Cottonwood Canyon and incentivizing the use of the ski bus. While several suggestions have been made for future discussions, those items have not been officially added to a meeting agenda. Those items can be added to the agenda next month, but it is important to consider the time available at the next Transportation System Committee Meeting. Mr. Shea pointed out that there could be time to discuss those items in April or May 2025.

OTHER ITEMS

There were no additional discussions.

CLOSING

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

MOTION: Linda Johnson moved to ADJOURN the Transportation System Committee Meeting. Mike Marker seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation System Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation System Committee Meeting held on Monday, February 10, 2025.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____