



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

CC: Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Public Utilities; Kim Bell, Sandy City

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

Subject: Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study Update

Given that we've not spent any of the budgeted, unallocated funding in the current fiscal year budget, we'll be looking at roughly a \$60,000 budget surplus, staff are recommending that we contract with Fehr and Peers for the necessary update to the 2012 Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Plan before the end of the fiscal year. We anticipate that the cost to update the 2012 Feasibility Study will be \$34,000, and we could seek to work with Fehr and Peers, who performed the 2012 study, through sole source procurement. We could begin work immediately after allocating the necessary funding, which would last approximately four months. Additionally, the FLAP construction to the upper portion of Millcreek Canyon is slated to begin Summer 2025, and performing the feasibility analysis now before construction reduces vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the canyon will allow for a more accurate analysis of the feasibility of a shuttle.

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 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.

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

Task 1: Kick-off Meeting/Goal Setting

The goal of a possible shuttle program should be clearly stated at the outset of the study. There are likely a variety of expectations from the public and stakeholders, such as less congestion, less parking demand, environmental benefits, convenience, and so on. However, providing a means for more visitors without corresponding revenue increase could disrupt the current ability of the USFS to mitigate visitation. Therefore, it is important that the goal(s) and objectives of this study effort be clearly defined and agreed upon by the stakeholders. Fehr & Peers will develop a draft and final set of goals and objectives at a kickoff meeting (possibly on-site).

Task 2: Existing Conditions

Fehr & Peers will review recent studies and any readily available data (e.g. count data from the tool booth, trail data from USFS) that may be available to get a full understanding of the current parking and user conditions. We will also review the FLAP grant scope of work to better understand the closures/phasing for the upper canyon construction.

Task 3: Parking Demand & Location

This task will review previous findings for parking demand for potential shuttle service. The demand estimate will be based on a typical “busy” summer weekend. This important task will also identify a potential shuttle base for operations and user parking (staging). The 2012 study and CWC have previously identified possible locations. However, land ownership and on-going redevelopment may have changed some of the feasibility of those assumed locations. This task will include discussions with the following agencies to develop a recommendation for the base location: UDOT, Salt Lake County, USFS, Millcreek City, and Skyline High School. This task will include up to two on-site meetings. A high-level staging “footprint” will be developed.

Task 4: Toll Revenue Impacts

There is the possibility that the current fees collected may be reduced assuming some amount of vehicle demand shifts to a shuttle. Put another way; more visitors without the commensurate revenue needed for on-going mitigation. Fehr & Peers will develop up to three scenarios to analyze this possibility. The scenarios will rely on data that includes vehicle occupancy, proposed shuttle frequency and ridership, and overall demand.

Task 5: Shuttle Service Plan

There are two service scenarios: 1) during upper canyon FLAP reconstruction, and 2) subsequent full canyon operations. Fehr & Peers will develop two service plans.

1. 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 possible “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.
2. 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.

This task will also include discussions with possible private providers to ascertain levels of interest. These discussions will also include gathering ideas about how to include dogs and bikes on shuttle vehicles.

Task 6: Documentation

Fehr & Peers will prepare one draft and one final report, incorporating one round of comments from CWC. One (1) electronic copy of our findings and recommendations from all previously listed tasks will be submitted to you including all necessary text, tables, maps, and figures.

Additional Scope and Meeting Attendance

This scope assumes up to five coordination meetings (1 hour) in addition to the two onsite meetings described in Task 2. If additional work and/or meetings are determined to be needed beyond the scope of work stated above, additional tasks and/or meetings necessary beyond those identified will be performed and billed separately on a time and materials basis only upon prior written or electronic approval given by you.

Assumptions

The proposed scope of work and fee estimate is based on the following assumptions:

1. CWC or others are responsible for any community engagement efforts;
2. Outcomes regarding shuttle staging location/parking are not guaranteed;
3. This scope does not include work associated with necessary NEPA efforts or grant support. Fehr & Peers is capable of that but would do so under a separate agreement;
4. No new data, such as parking or traffic counts, will be collected;
5. Shuttle stop locations are already identified by the previously prepared 2023 Feasibility Proposal: Prospective 2025 Mill Creek Canyon Shuttle
6. The project will begin in May 2025, with access for any site visits provided as necessary in collaboration with USFS staff;
7. Fehr & Peers is not involved in the procurement process should a shuttle vendor need to be secured.

Cost Estimate

We anticipate that the cost to complete the six (6) tasks identified in the scope of work will be \$34,000.

Schedule

We will begin work immediately after we have received the written authorization to proceed. We anticipate the outlined tasks above to take approximately four months to complete.

The final report will be completed with due diligence following that date, but dependent upon scheduling of the meetings and number of revisions necessary.