



MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY, JUNE 9, 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
Mike Marker
Mark Baer
Doug Tolman
Roger Borgenicht
Tom Diegel
John Knoblock

Staff: Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations
Ben Kilbourne, Community Engagement Coordinator

Others: Eva De Laurentiis

OPENING

1. Chair Danny Richardson will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Transportation System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council.

Chair Danny Richardson called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Transportation System Committee Meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Review and Approve the Minutes of the May 12, 2025, Meeting.

Chair Richardson reviewed the Meeting Minutes from the May 12, 2025, Transportation System Committee Meeting. At the last meeting, the Committee discussed the transit and ski numbers for the Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”), Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”), and others. In addition, the Committee discussed traction laws and what can be done moving forward. There is a desire to have the rental car agencies included. This could potentially be done through future Legislation that would incentivize rental car agencies to register. In August, the plan is to start communication with the rental car agencies again. The Transportation System Committee

1 discussed the Baseline Study at the last meeting as well. The U.S. Forest Service has not been
2 forthcoming about parking space counts at the trailheads, so work will continue to be done on that.

3
4 The Transportation System Committee is also looking into vehicle counts. As for the letter that
5 was discussed about the Solitude Mountain Resort parking lot that was proposed, that has since
6 been approved at the Stakeholders Council level and will be forwarded to the CWC Board for
7 consideration. At the last meeting, the traffic pattern at Snowbird Entry 2 was also discussed.

8
9 **MOTION:** Kurt Hegmann moved to APPROVE the Meeting Minutes from May 12, 2025. Mike
10 Marker seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

11 **TRANSPORTATION/TRANSIT REPORT**

12 **1. Chair Richardson will Share a Report on Transit Use and Vehicle Counts in the** 13 **Canyons Over the Last Year, including UTA Buses, Vans, and UDOT Vehicle Counts.**

14
15 Chair Richardson asked that the Transportation/Transit Report be shared with the Transportation
16 System Committee. He stated that UTA supplied him with all of the van counts, which included
17 12 months of data. There are 140,000 riders being carried, with 50,000 riders during the summer
18 months. That means parking spaces are not needed for the employees utilizing the vans. He was
19 thrilled that the van count information was provided. During the winter, there are as many as 63
20 vans each day. The daily average number of passengers in March was almost 600. During the
21 summer months, there are 300 to 400 passengers being carried each day. This is exciting because
22 it increases safety and reduces the number of vehicles that are on the road. Chair Richardson
23 expressed his appreciation to UTA for providing this information to the Committee.

24
25 For the ski bus estimates, Chair Richardson looked into the actual number of buses. He asked
26 about the capacity and was told that as many as 70 can be loaded onto a bus. Passenger and bus
27 information was shared. Between the van information and bus information, there is a lot that the
28 Transportation System Committee can consider. Chair Richardson reported that he is still missing
29 the UDOT numbers for vehicle counts. That information has been requested, but if he does not
30 receive the information soon, he will make a formal GRAMA request for the vehicle count data.

31
32 Chair Richardson shared Ski Utah data related to skier days. The estimate is approximately 6.5
33 million skier days. It is not possible to obtain specific information by resort or by canyon, because
34 the resorts are adamant that those numbers should not be released. Chair Richardson reported that
35 last year, the skier day number was 6.7 million, 2022/2023 saw around 8 million, and previous
36 years were around 5 and 5.5 million. The last two years have had strong skier day numbers. Chair
37 Richardson thanked UTA and Ski Utah for the information that was shared. The finalized number
38 should be obtained within the next few days and that will be shared at the next meeting. Chair
39 Richardson reiterated that he will make a GRAMA request for the UDOT vehicle count data.

40
41 Tom Diegel reported that he has been tracking the skier numbers over the years. He found some
42 information from the last 40 or 50 years. It has been above 50 million skier days for most of those
43 years and the last few years have seen a gradual trend upward. This year was 61 million nationwide
44 and it was 60.5 million last year. The numbers over the decades have remained either flat or with
45 a slight increase. He pointed out that increasing from 50 million to 61 million is not that significant
46 a change. Between the national numbers and the Ski Utah numbers, there is some level of growth.

1
2 Co-Chair Kurt Hegmann pointed out that weather is a factor, but he would also be interested to
3 know how much the traffic in the Cottonwood Canyons is impacting the numbers. Chair
4 Richardson offered to stay in touch with Ski Utah, as there might be some information they can
5 provide. He added that it was a good snow year overall, but December was slow to start. It was
6 reiterated that the ski resorts will not provide numbers that are specific to the resorts themselves.
7 Discussions were had about estimates for Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon.
8 John Knoblock believed a reasonable estimate is around 10,000 people each day in each canyon.
9

10 Mark Baer left a comment in the Zoom chat box. He has anecdotally observed that during high
11 season, locals are less likely to travel to the Cottonwood Canyons. Chair Richardson believed that
12 once the vehicle count numbers are obtained, there will be a better idea of the canyon use overall.
13 Mr. Baer shared information about Deer Valley and wondered how much that would relieve the
14 traffic in the Cottonwood Canyons. It is possible it could attract more skiers to the area in general.
15 Chair Richardson pointed out that with the multi-area passes, there are more choices available.
16 Mr. Diegel wondered whether the statement that locals do not visit on holidays and busy powder
17 weekends is documented anywhere. It was clarified that this was an anecdotal observation.
18

19 A question was asked about a survey related to transportation use and visitation. Mr. Diegel
20 reported that the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance did a survey a few years ago for backcountry
21 skiers, but not for resort skiers. He offered to share the survey information with the Committee.
22

23 **WASATCH TRANSIT SOLUTIONS DISCUSSION**

24 25 **1. The Committee will Discuss an Emerging Organization called Wasatch Transit** 26 **Solutions.** 27

28 Chair Richardson reported that on May 30, 2025, an email was sent out by Doug Tolman about
29 Wasatch Transit Solutions. This is a new non-profit that has been formed and it includes Ralph
30 Becker and Mike Allegra. A presentation was made to the Brighton Town Council a few weeks
31 ago and it was stated that Wasatch Transit Solutions is looking to form a private-public transit
32 cooperative. Based on the presentation that he listened to, it seems Wasatch Transit Solutions is
33 focused on rail transit. There is a website for the non-profit, but there is no current information
34 available on the website. Chair Richardson reminded those present that as part of the UDOT Little
35 Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”), there were four alternatives that
36 were considered: gondola option one, gondola option two, enhanced buses, and cog railway.
37

38 Chair Richardson shared information from the Brighton Town Council presentation. At that time,
39 it was noted that it is approximately 2 miles between Alta and Brighton. He believes there might
40 be a desire from the non-profit to have a train in Little Cottonwood Canyon and have a two-mile
41 tunnel between Alta and Brighton. In the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS, the original
42 estimate for the second gondola option was between \$350 million and \$400 million and the cog
43 railway estimate was \$1 billion. Part of the Save Our Canyons lawsuit asked UDOT for
44 information about the numbers, as it was not released. Chair Richardson wondered if it would be
45 possible to ask Wasatch Transit Solutions to present to the Stakeholders Council or CWC Board.
46

47 Mr. Tolman noted that he saw the presentation and it seems that there is a focus on building
48 consensus. In addition, there was an emphasis on valley connections. It is not only the

1 Cottonwood Canyons that there is a focus on, but the Wasatch in general. Wasatch Transit
2 Solutions has been invited to have a conversation with Save Our Canyons in the future. He agrees
3 that this is something to pay attention to, but it seems that there are still a lot of unknowns. Mr.
4 Knoblock reported that Stadler Rail has a US office in Salt Lake and the company seems to know
5 a lot about trains in the mountains. He believes UDOT worked with them during the UDOT Little
6 Cottonwood EIS process and that is where the \$1 billion estimate was created for the rail
7 alternative. It might be worth asking for details on the UDOT estimates and rail alignment. More
8 study could be done and another alignment could be considered that might bring the estimate down.
9

10 Mike Marker stated that when the train was considered originally, the pathway was to the south of
11 the creek. He recalls that the numbers were significantly higher for the rail alternative so that
12 alternative was rejected based on the cost alone. Chair Richardson offered to do a GRAMA request
13 for the existing information so it is possible to understand how the estimates were determined. Mr.
14 Knoblock asked that Wasatch Transit Solutions be invited to present at a future meeting.
15

16 Mr. Baer stated that the Mount Washington Cog Railway is not a transportation system, but is a
17 tourist attraction. As a result, he does not feel that can be used as a relevant comparison to the
18 discussions in the Wasatch. His guess is that what is envisioned is more of a European model
19 where there is a train system that takes visitors to different resorts. This might not be a perfect
20 solution, but he feels it would be preferable to a gondola, as it would be less visually problematic.
21 It is hard to believe the railway alternative would cost so much more than a gondola alternative.
22 He believes the GRAMA request makes sense so the Committee can look into the numbers.
23

24 Co-Chair Hegmann echoed the comments shared by Mr. Baer. He added that cog rail technology
25 has been used for more than 100 years. It is his understanding that there would need to be a cog
26 rail for Little Cottonwood Canyon because of the grade. These are widely used systems in
27 Switzerland and are extremely efficient. He feels it is the best alternative behind enhanced buses,
28 but noted that enhanced buses do not solve the pollution issues. Additionally, he noted that the
29 costs of a train go down over time. Chair Richardson pointed out that a train could stop at
30 trailheads. Eva De Laurentiis explained that she is new to the Stakeholders Council and the
31 Transportation System Committee work. She asked whether Wasatch Transit Solutions is
32 proposing there be another EIS conducted or an update to the existing EIS. UDOT has a Record
33 of Decision (“ROD”) for the gondola, so there is a pathway forward to the design of a gondola. If
34 an alternative solution is being brought forward, she believes that would require a revisiting of the
35 analysis that took place as part of the ROD. Chair Richardson noted that it might come to that,
36 because of the lawsuit that is essentially arguing the gondola alternative was pre-determined.
37

38 Mr. Knoblock stated that Wasatch Transit Solutions is a non-profit that wants to do transportation
39 research and provide information. It was clarified that Wasatch Transit Solutions does not have
40 the power to implement a solution, but if there is funding for an alternative engineering analysis,
41 it could potentially be used to challenge the UDOT numbers. Mr. Diegel believes there are two
42 matters currently being discussed: the potential for a cog railway and a tunnel between the two
43 canyons. Those are very different and expensive projects. He does not feel it makes sense to lump
44 those two items together during any of the future transportation discussions.
45

46 Additional discussions were had about Wasatch Transit Solutions. Ms. De Laurentiis pointed out
47 that the EIS itself was only for Little Cottonwood Canyon. Something like a tunnel between the
48 two canyons would need to be separated from the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS work.

1 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the CWC Mountain Transportation System
2 (“MTS”) document and all of the preceding documents are on the CWC website. She requested
3 that all Transportation System Committee Members re-read those documents. The MTS project
4 started in 2020 and ended in 2021. During that time, there were discussions with SE Group, Stadler
5 Rail, and UTA. She asked that Committee Members review all of the MTS-related information.
6

7 Mr. Knoblock reported that the existing tunnel between Alta and Big Cottonwood Canyon comes
8 across and hits about a third of the way up in Silver Fork Canyon. It is not the right tunnel
9 alignment and is currently a water source for Solitude. There would need to be a different tunnel
10 alignment considered. There are concerns about a tunnel underneath the Twin Lakes Reservoir.
11 Mr. Knoblock agrees with the comment made by Mr. Diegel that the tunnel is a separate matter
12 from the cog railway alternative. TRAX connections would be another separate project. Chair
13 Richardson reiterated that he will make a GRAMA request for some of the relevant information.
14 He added that there is information about the UDOT Cottonwood Canyon EIS on the UDOT
15 website. It would be beneficial for Committee Members to review what is already available.
16

17 **RESORT TRANSPORTATION EFFORTS DISCUSSION**

18 19 **1. The Committee will Discuss Information and Suggestions Regarding Transportation** 20 **Information on the Websites of the Cottonwood Canyons Ski Resorts.** 21

22 Chair Richardson reported that he visited each of the ski resort websites to review the
23 transportation information available. He noted that on the Snowbird website, there is information
24 about driving, winter tire checks, carpooling, alternative transportation options, and the traction
25 law. He plans to correspond with the ski resorts to thank them for their efforts and provide some
26 additional suggestions. The resorts have shared a lot of wonderful information about how to access
27 the resorts, how to rent a vehicle, how to ride the bus, and how to carpool. There is a lot of positive
28 work being done. Ski Utah also has a lot of wonderful resources available on its website.
29

30 Chair Richardson made a comment about the rental car agencies. It was noted that the traction
31 law is missing a reference to “entity.” If the word “entity” were added to that, it would include
32 the rental car agencies. One of the Representatives suggested that there will be a push to add that
33 word in the future. Chair Richardson reminded those present that last year, he wrote a letter to
34 each of the rental car agencies asking them about a fleet of stickered traction law-compliant
35 vehicles. UDOT has five or six companies listed on their website that offer that. If the word
36 “entity” is added, it is more likely that other rental car agencies will participate. There is also
37 interest in seeing rental car agencies provide information about the traction law. Chair Richardson
38 reported that he will reach out to the rental car agencies again in either August or September.
39

40 **RESORTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE DISCUSSION**

41 42 **1. The Committee will Discuss a Recent Ski Utah Blog Article Titled, “5 Ways Utah** 43 **Resorts Are Adapting to Climate Change”.** 44

45 On the Ski Utah website, there is an article titled, “5 Ways Utah Resorts are Adapting to Climate
46 Change.” Chair Richardson summarized the article and reported that it mentions smarter
47 snowmaking, regenerative land and forest management, renewable energy and eco-friendly

1 designs, sustainable art and plastic-free culture, and transportation innovations. When he reaches
2 out to Ski Utah thanking them for the available information, this article will be mentioned
3

4 **COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- 5
- 6 1. **The Letter to the CWC Board Concerning the Solitude Parking Lot has Advanced**
7 **Through the Stakeholders Council and will be Presented to and Discussed by the**
8 **CWC Board at Its June 23, 2025, Meeting.**
9

10 Chair Richardson reported that the letter the Transportation System Committee drafted was
11 considered by the Stakeholders Council and forwarded to the CWC Board. He reminded
12 Committee Members that the letter opposed the Solitude Mountain Resort proposed parking lot.
13

- 14 2. **The CWC Board will Vote on Whether to Approve a Contract to Carry Out the**
15 **Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study Update at Its June 23, 2025 Meeting.**
16

17 Chair Richardson reported that there have been a lot of discussions about a potential Millcreek
18 Canyon shuttle. The CWC Board will vote on whether or not to approve a contract to update the
19 Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study that Fehr & Peers originally conducted back in 2012.
20 Ms. Nielsen noted that the update will be considered at the June 23, 2025, CWC Board Meeting.
21 If it is approved, then work will begin immediately on the update. Mr. Diegel explained that the
22 idea is to start this now so that when the Federal Lands Access Program (“FLAP”) grant work in
23 the upper portion of the canyon is complete, the shuttle could be implemented. He clarified that
24 the shuttle is not only needed in the summer but in winter as well. There is a year-round need.
25

26 **MEETING RECAP AND NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

- 27
- 28 1. **The Committee will Review the Action Items that Have Been Decided Upon for the**
29 **Next Meeting.**
30

- 31 2. **The Committee will Discuss Topics for the Next Meeting Agenda.**
32

33 Mr. Diegel reported that he has been speaking to Alex Fisher-Willis from UDOT about clarifying
34 the winter parking situation near Spruces and White Pine. He pointed out that the signs were
35 confusing and vehicles were being incorrectly ticketed. The problem has been recognized by
36 UDOT and Ms. Fisher-Willis is going to try to organize a meeting with the Wasatch Backcountry
37 Alliance, Salt Lake Climbers Alliance, UDOT, UTA, and the sheriffs so there is clarity provided.
38

39 Chair Richardson referenced an article in the Park City newspaper from May 18, 2025. It stated
40 that Matthew Prince bought the Town Lift Plaza and had set his sights on Park City Mountain
41 ownership. He read a quote from Mr. Prince and noted that it makes sense to monitor this.
42

43 Chair Richardson encouraged Committee Members to visit the UDOT website and review the
44 UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS information ahead of the next Transportation System
45 Committee Meeting. He added that there is currently an assessment taking place for Big
46 Cottonwood Canyon. Mr. Knoblock asked for an update on the Big Cottonwood Canyon
47 Environmental Assessment (“EA”). Chair Richardson reported that the UDOT website mentions
48 that it is in progress, but there is no preliminary information available on the website at this time.

1
2 **OTHER ITEMS**

3
4 There were no additional items.

5
6 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

7
8 Ms. De Laurentiis asked what would happen if the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study
9 update was approved at the next CWC Board Meeting. She wanted to know what the action items
10 would be for the Transportation System Committee. Ms. Nielsen shared background information
11 about the potential study update. Through the study, Fehr & Peers would be answering questions
12 that the Forest Service and other stakeholders have, including capital costs, parking, and staging
13 locations, and what a program would look like in the canyon. The CWC would likely have a public
14 engagement campaign around the study update, but those details are not finalized at this time,
15 because the CWC Board has not made a final decision. There will be more known after the CWC
16 Board Meeting on June 23, 2025. Mr. Knoblock asked about the additional infrastructure that
17 would be required in the lower portion of the canyon in order to run a shuttle without the FLAP
18 grant work there. Ms. Nielsen offered to look into the letter from Helen Peters about the grant.

19
20 Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, reported that Ms. De Laurentiis is an incoming Council
21 Member who introduced herself at the Stakeholders Council Retreat. Ms. De Laurentiis explained
22 that she works for Summit County and has been in the transportation industry for almost 15 years.
23 She moved to Utah approximately eight months ago. Ms. De Laurentiis is interested in
24 participating in the Stakeholders Council and learning more about transportation issues in the area.

25
26 **CLOSING**

27
28 1. **Chair Richardson will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation System**
29 **Committee Meeting.**

30
31 **MOTION:** Kurt Hegmann moved to ADJOURN. Danny Richardson seconded the motion. The
32 motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

33
34 The Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation System Committee
35 Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Transportation System Committee Meeting held on*
3 *Monday, June 9, 2025.*

4
5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes
7 T Forbes Group
8 Minutes Secretary

9
10 Minutes Approved: _____