



MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY, JULY 14, 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
Mark Baer
Roger Borgenicht
Doug Tolman
Eva DeLaurentiis
John Knoblock

Staff: Ben Kilbourne, Communications Director

Guests/Members of the Public: Ralph Becker
Michael Allegra
Philippe Grant
Jack Stauss
John Nelson
Katie Balakir

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 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the June 9, 2025, Meeting.

Chair Richardson reviewed the Meeting Minutes from the June 9, 2025, Transportation System Committee Meeting. At the last meeting, there was a Transportation/Transit Report shared with some of the Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) van count information. There was also a discussion about Wasatch Transit Solutions and the Resort Transportation Efforts. He will be working with the resorts in the next month or so to suggest transit information that can be added to the websites. A letter was forwarded from the Stakeholders Council to the CWC Board for consideration related to Solitude

1 parking. There was a discussion about the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study as well. Chair
2 Richardson heard recently that Fehr & Peers has been approved to update the study.

3
4 **MOTION:** Kurt Hegmann moved to APPROVE the Minutes from June 9, 2025. Mark Baer
5 seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

6 7 **WASATCH TRANSIT SOLUTIONS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

8 9 **1. Representatives from Wasatch Transit Solutions will Discuss Their Organization.**

10
11 Chair Richardson reported that representatives from Wasatch Transit Solutions are present at the
12 Transportation System Committee Meeting to share information about the organization. Ralph
13 Becker explained that he is with Wasatch Transit Solutions. Michael Allegra is attending the meeting
14 virtually. Wasatch Transit Solutions is a volunteer organization and is a non-profit 501(c)(3). The
15 intention is to promote more investment in transit in the Wasatch region. He referenced the Mountain
16 Accord outcomes, the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) Little Cottonwood Canyon
17 Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”), the work done in Big Cottonwood Canyon, and the work
18 that has been done by the CWC. While the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS litigation is
19 happening, it makes sense to step back and determine whether consensus can be achieved around a
20 transportation solution so that it can move forward.

21
22 There has been an enormous amount of work done to look at the Wasatch Mountains. Mr. Becker
23 guesses that the mountains are as studied and analyzed as any natural place in the State. There has
24 been a lot of work done on transportation as well. Wasatch Transit Solutions is not trying to reinvent
25 the wheel, but wants to see if there is a way to move forward with transportation solutions.

26
27 For approximately 15 years, Utah and the Wasatch area were the envy of the country based on how
28 quickly and thoroughly transit was developed. Since 2013, there has not been one new project.
29 Between 1999 and 2000, more than 150 miles of rail was built. There have been minor adjustments
30 and improvements, but in terms of fleshing out the system, the focus has been on maintaining the
31 service. Wasatch Transit Solutions wants to be an advocate to improve transit regionally. There is a
32 desire to step back, look at what has been done, and look at what is needed.

33
34 Mr. Becker shared presentation slides with the Transportation System Committee. He reviewed the
35 mission statement and explained that Wasatch Transit Solutions is a private-public partnership. There
36 is an emphasis on rail, because that is where the least amount of improvements have been made in
37 recent years. Mr. Becker introduced Mr. Allegra, who is the reason there is rail in the region, as he
38 worked on that from concept through to development. He was the head of UTA for several years as
39 part of that process. Additionally, he was very involved in the Mountain Accord.

40
41 Mr. Allegra explained that the priorities have been split into three goals, the first being convenience
42 and accessibility. This is primarily in terms of the infrastructure itself and the service. If these
43 solutions are not convenient and accessible, then they will not be successful or reach their full
44 potential. The second goal is to emphasize rail as a backbone to a broader system. It would
45 incorporate multi-modal transportation solutions for varying locations. The third goal is to initially
46 focus on the southeast part of the valley and the Central Wasatch Mountains. Mr. Becker pointed out
47 that there is rail in every quadrant of the valley, with the exception of the southeast quadrant.

1
2 Mr. Becker discussed the Mountain Accord and stressed the importance of being consistent with the
3 outcomes. This work is seen as integrally tied to what happens with the Congressional Legislation.
4 Wasatch Transit Solutions sees having a transportation solution as integral to the success of both land
5 and resource protections, as well as achieving transportation solutions. Wasatch Transit Solutions is
6 not part of any litigation against UDOT, but wants to look into filling a void that currently exists
7 around transit. Mr. Becker shared slides related to rail transit.

8
9 One of the key benefits of rail is that it has a unique ability to move a lot of people very efficiently.
10 Some of the preliminary work that has been done suggests this would potentially tie into the existing
11 rail lines. Mr. Becker mentioned the analysis conducted by the CWC, which looked at the different
12 modes and air quality impacts. Based on that, rail is a strong choice. In addition, he noted that rail
13 has a long history of safety. It could move people around efficiently and lessen the impacts of
14 personal vehicles. Buses are not as efficient in moving the same number of people.

15
16 Mr. Becker explained that Wasatch Transit Solutions is trying to introduce this to others to receive
17 feedback. The nice thing about rail is that it is possible to stop anywhere. It can also integrate
18 seamlessly into the existing transit system. Due to the volumes of people that rail can carry, it is
19 possible to dramatically reduce or eliminate vehicles for everyday use in some of the canyons.
20 Mr. Becker noted that because of the capacity, rail can meet peak demand. It is relatively easy to
21 expand capacity with rail. He shared information about the cog rail system, which has better traction.
22 In Europe, it is common to have cog rail because of the mountains and steep grades.

23
24 John Knoblock asked whether cog rail is needed for the grades going uphill in the canyons.
25 Mr. Allegra explained that the worst adhesion issues are related to foliage on the rail track itself.
26 Depending on the types of vegetation nearby and what kind of leaves might fall on the track, the cog
27 rail system might be beneficial. Those are the places where cog would be needed anyway for going
28 downhill. Mr. Knoblock asked whether ice in the winter would be a factor. Mr. Allegra denied this.
29 Mr. Becker commented that there is an assumption that cog rail would be used in Little Cottonwood
30 Canyon. Mr. Knoblock wondered whether the interconnecting rail would be the same. Mr. Allegra
31 reported that it is the same gauge as light rail and commuter rail. To the average consumer, it would
32 look like a TRAX vehicle, but the proposal is a battery electric one. There would be places without
33 overhead electric wire, so it would run on battery in those locations.

34
35 Eva DeLaurentiis wanted to know more about integration with multiple transit operators and agencies.
36 She asked if there would be work done with UTA. Mr. Becker reported that this is still to be
37 determined. It could be UTA or a different partner. It was pointed out that this would need to be part
38 of a system. It is not a standalone, independent solution that would run in the canyons. In order for
39 transit to work, there has to be connectivity. The rail line has to be connected to something else so
40 passengers do not have to deal with a transfer experience. Discussions were had about connectivity
41 within the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS and the cog rail alternative.

42
43 Mr. Becker shared information about the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS process. He
44 explained that it was a seven-year process from 2017 to 2024. When it first started, rail was
45 considered to be infeasible. During the scoping process, rail was brought in for consideration. UDOT
46 looked at rail that was completely separated from the road. During the Mountain Accord process,
47 when transportation issues were explored, there was uncertainty about the best alignment. It could
48 be on the south side of the creek, around where the road is located, or somewhere else. Since the

1 south side of the creek was considered a possible alignment, it would be against the edge of the Lone
2 Peak Wilderness. As part of Mountain Accord and the Legislation that was introduced in 2016 by
3 Representative Jason Chaffetz, there was a provision to take out an edge of the Lone Peak Wilderness
4 to provide for that corridor. When UDOT did the EIS, it was stated that there would not be a rail
5 alignment that would require Congressional Legislation. There are several examples of how UDOT
6 looked at rail in a way that was limiting and added costs. The price was essentially double what rail
7 experts stated it would be to put rail in Little Cottonwood Canyon.

8
9 Mr. Allegra stated that there is a fundamental difference between doing an EIS for the Federal
10 Highway Administration (“FHWA”), which is what UDOT followed, versus the Federal Transit
11 Administration. The latter looks at a system rather than one individual segment. The Federal Transit
12 Administration has a completely different approach and looks at the system. It has to connect to
13 something else. That is why Wasatch Transit Solutions is suggesting there is an opportunity to expand
14 the current line of thinking and look at a transit system in its entirety. Mr. Knoblock asked if the cost
15 of rail could potentially be cut in half if the southern alignment as selected, which would avoid a lot
16 of avalanche risk. Mr. Allegra confirmed this because the avalanche sheds were the most expensive
17 part of the proposal. He reported that the consultants typically used an average cost to build light rail.
18 He explained that most of the cost to build light rail is in utility relocation and adjacent property
19 owner impacts, which are not issues that exist within the canyon.

20
21 Mr. Becker reported that during the EIS, those involved in rail were looking at what UDOT was doing
22 and creating a conceptual proposal. That was submitted to UDOT and the final costs were
23 approximately half of the UDOT estimate. UDOT sent it back and suggested that it be submitted as
24 a comment on the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. Mr. Allegra stated that it was an unsolicited
25 proposal following the UDOT guidelines and there was confidence in those numbers. However,
26 UDOT thought it violated the spirit of the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) process at
27 the time. Mr. Knoblock asked for additional details about the conceptual proposal that was submitted.
28 Mr. Allegra reported that it was approximately half of the estimated UDOT cost.

29
30 It was noted that there was a question left in the Zoom chat box. The question was about the
31 transportation hub proposed to be built within the former gravel pit near Big Cottonwood Canyon.
32 Mr. Becker clarified that Wasatch Transit Solutions has not looked at that in detail at this time. There
33 is an awareness of what is proposed there. He reported that the land was recently acquired. Chair
34 Richardson asked if that would be where the connection to Little Cottonwood Canyon would start.
35 Mr. Becker stated that those details are still to be determined. Mr. Allegra shared the rail proposal
36 that was mentioned earlier. The cost estimate included in the proposal was \$600,000,000 for the north
37 alignment. For the south alignment, the estimate in the proposal was \$500,000,000.

38
39 Mr. Becker reported that UDOT did not look at a south alignment for rail and only looked at an
40 alignment that paralleled the road. He spoke about looking at the range of options associated with
41 rail to make it work efficiently. It is also possible to look at more than a 30% reduction in vehicles.
42 The idea is to review the different options more fully. There have been a lot of questions about bus
43 capacity and whether buses are able to serve the needs that exist. Wasatch Transit Solutions has
44 talked about integration into the rest of the transit system and what that would look like.

45
46 Regardless of the mode, it becomes more difficult from Snowbird to Alta. Mr. Becker reported that
47 the north side of the road has avalanche concerns, and the south side of the road is now developed.
48 How to bring rail from Snowbird to Alta would need to be considered further. Mr. Allegra explained

1 that many variations were looked at and there are some potential plans. Chair Richardson asked who
2 would be responsible for building something like this. Mr. Becker explained that Wasatch Transit
3 Solutions is interested in advocating for transit solutions.

4
5 Mr. Knoblock asked if work has been done with the Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”).
6 Mr. Becker confirmed that there has been a meeting with the WFRC Executive Director, Andrew
7 Gruber. He clarified that Wasatch Transit Solutions is in the early stages and is asking for feedback.
8 Ms. DeLaurentiis wanted to know if Wasatch Transit Solutions is focused only on advocacy work or
9 if a map will be released that shows where the system connections could be. Mr. Becker explained
10 that Wasatch Transit Solutions is envisioned as doing advocacy work, but is also pushing for the
11 facilitation of a process. Ms. DeLaurentiis thought it would be beneficial to be able to see the existing
12 system and where the potential connections to that system could be located. Mr. Becker stated that
13 the segmentation done by UDOT is limiting, as it needs to be thought of as a whole system. There
14 was discussion about areas that are underserved by transit.

15
16 Ms. DeLaurentiis referenced High Valley Transit and the desire to expand service. Park City is
17 evaluating various transit options as well. She stressed the importance of different connections. Mr.
18 Becker pointed out that an outcome of the Mountain Accord for the Wasatch Back was the kind of
19 work that is being completed now. Mr. Allegra stated that Wasatch Transit Solutions hopes to grow
20 and expand outreach so the community can be involved. The intention is to be action-oriented and
21 look for solutions. There is a desire to reach a consensus about how to proceed.

22
23 Mr. Knoblock mentioned Little Cottonwood Canyon and asked if it is critical to have the south side
24 alignment with the Lone Peak Wilderness adjustment made. Mr. Allegra explained that it is a
25 straighter alignment, is not as visible, is not as expensive, and avoids the avalanche sheds. There are
26 a lot of advantages to that alignment. Mr. Knoblock believed the wilderness adjustment would be
27 needed to pursue that, which was confirmed. Mr. Becker pointed out that this was worked out with
28 the conservation community during Mountain Accord and was reflected in the Legislation that
29 Representative Chaffetz introduced. The concern with removing wilderness is that there would be a
30 loss of wilderness, but in the Mountain Accord outcomes, there was a substantial expansion of
31 wilderness. Mr. Knoblock asked whether Draper and Cottonwood Heights have weighed in on the
32 possibility of further study. Mr. Becker reported that there have been discussions with some of the
33 jurisdictions so far, but there is more outreach to be done.

34
35 Mr. Becker reported that there was a portion of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS that looked
36 at air quality based on the mode. Buses, rail, and gondolas did well compared to personal vehicles.
37 There was additional discussion about air quality. Mr. Becker pointed out that rail technology has
38 come a long way, especially electrification and use of batteries with rail.

39
40 Ms. DeLaurentiis asked what the potential barriers would be to Congressional approval. Mr. Becker
41 explained that from the vantage point of the State and the Congressional Delegation, the Legislation
42 will not be considered until a viable transportation solution has been determined. Chair Richardson
43 thanked Wasatch Transit Solutions for the presentation and asked that there be continued
44 communication. He reported that the Stakeholders Council and CWC Board might also be interested
45 in hearing from the organization. Mr. Becker reiterated that Wasatch Transit Solutions is trying to
46 focus on outreach right now. There is a preliminary process and timeline that has been prepared. He
47 hopes that a more formal process will start in three to six months.

1 Mr. Allegra reported that he designed the original bus system in the canyons back in 1976, but at a
2 certain point, it reaches a limit. If four trains were running per hour, that would be the equivalent to
3 a bus every 30 seconds in the canyon. There is a stark difference in the capacity. He offered to run
4 some more detailed numbers for the benefit of the Transportation System Committee. Mr. Becker
5 explained that with rail, there are not the same kinds of limitations as there are with buses. He next
6 shared information about timed entry systems that are happening in other locations.

7 8 **TRANSPORTATION/TRANSIT REPORT**

9 10 1. **Chair Richardson will Share Updates to the Report on Transit Use and Vehicle Counts** 11 **in the Canyons Over the Last Year, including UTA Buses, Vans, and UDOT Vehicle** 12 **Counts.**

13
14 Chair Richardson has the bus numbers and van numbers, but is still waiting on information from
15 UDOT. He will further pursue the GRAMA request that he submitted for the vehicle counts. Chair
16 Richardson has the skier count numbers, but those numbers are not broken down by resort.

17 18 **CWC BOARD MEETING AND STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL RETREAT DISCUSSION**

19 20 1. **The Committee will Discuss the Outcomes of the June 4, 2025, Stakeholders Council** 21 **Retreat and the June 23, 2025, Board Retreat.**

22
23 Chair Richardson stated that the Solitude Mountain Resort parking lot discussion went well at the
24 Stakeholders Council level, but it was not as successful at the CWC Board level. He had a short
25 discussion with Amber Broadaway and informed her about his concerns related to road crossing. Ms.
26 DeLaurentiis asked about the discussions at the CWC Board and the rationale for not taking a formal
27 position. Chair Richardson explained that there was a conflict of interest with certain Board
28 Members. However, there was a lot of meaningful discussion about the proposed lot.

29
30 Mr. Knoblock pointed out that the proposed parking lot needs to go through a Planning Commission
31 process. The CWC Board seemed to think that a lot of the details would be discussed at that level,
32 and a determination would be made about whether the parking lot is actually feasible.

33
34 The Transportation System Committee discussed the gravel pit that was mentioned earlier. Doug
35 Tolman explained that there are two separate sections of the gravel pit. The northern section has been
36 approved for a mixed-use office space development. The southern half is the section UDOT is
37 looking into. Chair Richardson noted that the mobility hub appears to be moving forward.

38 39 **RESORT TRANSPORTATION EFFORTS DISCUSSION**

40 41 1. **The Committee will Discuss Information and Suggestions Regarding Transportation** 42 **Information on the Websites of the Cottonwood Canyons Ski Resorts.**

43
44 Chair Richardson reported that he will speak to Ski Utah, because Ski Utah has quite a bit of
45 information on their website about transit and transportation. Last year, Snowbird had some good
46 information about renting a vehicle and riding the bus. There is more of an acknowledgement now
47 that people can reach the ski resorts in different ways. Ms. DeLaurentiis asked if there are different
48 ways the ski resorts can incentivize visitors to use transit instead of arriving with a personal vehicle.

Discussions were had about carpooling and different forms of transit that are available. Ms. DeLaurentiis pointed out that transit solutions need to be accessible and easy for people to use. Chair Richardson reiterated that he will encourage the resorts and speak to Ski Utah.

MEETING RECAP AND NEXT MEETING AGENDA

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

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

Chair Richardson would like to encourage Wasatch Transit Solutions to present to the Stakeholders Council and CWC Board so everyone within the CWC understands what is envisioned. Discussions were had about a formal motion from the Transportation System Committee to support the continued efforts of Wasatch Transit Solutions. Ms. DeLaurentiis stated that there is not currently a proposal to support, so it would only be possible to express support for the overall idea. It was noted that the Transportation System Committee could support a systems approach. Mr. Tolman is not sure this is the appropriate time to express support. If there comes a time when Wasatch Transit Solutions asks for support, then that is something the Committee could consider.

OTHER ITEMS

There were no additional items discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CLOSING

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

MOTION: Kurt Hegmann moved to ADJOURN. Mark Baer seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation System Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:02 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 Monday, July 14, 2025.*
3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes
6 T Forbes Group
7 Minutes Secretary
8

9 Minutes Approved: _____