



MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 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
Mike Marker
Eva De Laurentiis
Pat Shea

Staff: Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
Ben Kilbourne, Communications Director

Guests/Members of the Public: Dani Poirier
Caroline Rodriguez

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 July 14, 2025, Meeting.

Chair Richardson reviewed the Meeting Minutes from the July 14, 2025, Transportation System Committee Meeting. At the last meeting, he committed to working with the resorts so their websites have transit, rental, and traction law information. There is a desire for the ski resort websites to have specific information about what can and cannot be done. A letter regarding the Big Cottonwood Canyon parking proposal at Solitude Mountain Resort went to the Stakeholders Council and the CWC Board. There will continue to be discussions about parking. Chair

1 Richardson reported that the update to the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study will be
2 moving forward.

3
4 At the last meeting, Ralph Becker and Michael Allegra from Wasatch Transit Solutions presented.
5 Chair Richardson encouraged Committee Members to read the Meeting Minutes that summarize
6 the presentation and discussion. The priorities of Wasatch Transit Solutions are convenience and
7 accessibility, with an emphasis on rail as a backbone to a larger system. There is also a focus on
8 transit in the southeast part of the valley. What is envisioned is an integrated system rather than a
9 standalone transit type. Eva De Laurentiis asked whether the Committee expressed support for
10 Wasatch Transit Solutions at the last meeting. She pointed out that Wasatch Transit Solutions is
11 just getting started. Chair Richardson clarified that no approval was being sought. The
12 presentation was intended to share general information with the Committee.

13
14 It was noted that because there was no quorum, the Meeting Minutes were approved later. Once
15 there was a quorum of the Committee present, a vote was taken.

16
17 **MOTION:** Danny Richardson moved to APPROVE the Minutes from July 14, 2025. There was
18 no second. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

19 20 **TRANSPORTATION/TRANSIT REPORT**

21 22 **1. Chair Richardson will Share Updates to the Report on Transit Use and Vehicle** 23 **Counts in the Canyons Over the Last Year, including UTA Buses, Vans, and UDOT** 24 **Vehicle Counts.**

25
26 Chair Richardson shared the Transportation/Transit Report document with the Committee, which
27 is 11 pages. Some of the information was highlighted. He explained that the idea was to look at
28 current transit and future transit opportunities. There is information about the Utah Transit
29 Authority (“UTA”) ski bus. Chair Richardson approached UTA with a request for information
30 and a lot was shared. UTA has operated the ski bus for a number of years. Two years ago, UTA
31 cancelled the 953 Route. This was where FrontRunner connected to the transit system, so there is
32 no longer a direct FrontRunner connection at 5300 South. The reason behind this cancellation
33 largely had to do with a driver shortage. UTA contracted with another company for additional
34 drivers and CS1 and CS2 were added. Ms. De Laurentiis asked about the rationale for the
35 cancellation of the 953 Route. Chair Richardson reported that the 994 Route runs more or less
36 parallel to Little Cottonwood Canyon and the 972 Route runs parallel to Big Cottonwood Canyon.

37
38 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, believed the question was how the decision was made to
39 cancel the 953 Route. Based on the comments shared, it sounds like the 953 Route was duplicative
40 in some ways. Chair Richardson reiterated that the FrontRunner connection was lost and explained
41 that there were not enough drivers available to continue the 953 Route that was previously in place.

42
43 Chair Richardson reported that the buses carry approximately 50 passengers. Based on those
44 numbers, there is a capacity of 3,400 passengers. Ms. De Laurentiis asked about the percentage
45 of visitors arriving by bus. Chair Richardson was not certain about that number. Mike Marker
46 believed the question is related to capacity, but the ski resorts are not providing those numbers.

1 Based on his experience, a busy day at Snowbird has approximately 7,500 people on the slopes,
2 while a busy day at Alta has approximately 7,000. That means it is between 14,000 and 15,000.
3

4 Discussions were had about transit solutions. Chair Richardson acknowledged that buses are not
5 the only possible solution. Mr. Marker referenced the frequency of buses. At a certain point, the
6 buses were running at 15-minute intervals in the morning and afternoon, but that is not still the
7 case. Increasing the bus frequency will increase the capacity. Chair Richardson stated that
8 addressing the existing transportation issues will require multiple solutions to be implemented.
9

10 Chair Richardson explained that before the Committee promotes a specific solution, it is important
11 to have this kind of baseline information. The next section of the document looks at Little
12 Cottonwood Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon vans and vanpool information. UTA supplied
13 him some relevant data. The resorts are running quite a few vans. There is a total of 90,000
14 passengers being carried by vans in the winter and there are almost 16,000 van trips for the year.
15 He was surprised by that data, but this is an effective way to ensure that employees are present.
16

17 Another section of the document looks at UDOT statistics, such as vehicle traffic counts. Chair
18 Richardson asked Committee Members to look at the four charts that are included. He explained
19 that the charts show the monthly average, annual average, historic numbers, and so on. Co-Chair
20 Kurt Hegmann pointed out that the growth of traffic is very different between Big Cottonwood
21 Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. This is reflected in the different charts that are included.
22 Chair Richardson reported that these are UDOT numbers from cameras at the mouth of the canyon.
23

24 It was noted that Little Cottonwood Canyon may have reached capacity and there is simply more
25 opportunity for growth in Big Cottonwood Canyon. That might account for the larger increase in
26 traffic. Committee Members pointed out that it might have to do with Solitude joining the Ikon
27 Pass. Chair Richardson believed there were several possible reasons for the growth in traffic
28 shown.
29

30 Chair Richardson discussed available resort parking spaces. Co-Chair Hegmann thanked Chair
31 Richardson for seeking out this data. He added that each of the parking spots are used at least
32 twice a day, with many of them used three times per day. Ms. De Laurentiis asked about the
33 utilization rate. Chair Richardson explained that the available number of spaces are known, but
34 not necessarily the utilization rate. Additional discussions were had about parking spaces.
35

36 The UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS process started in 2017 and between 2019 and 2023, it
37 looked at various transportation solutions. Some of the options considered in the EIS include:
38

- 39 • Enhanced bus service with no road improvements;
- 40 • Enhanced bus service with major road improvements;
- 41 • Gondola Alternative A, which starts at the mouth of the canyon;
- 42 • Gondola Alternative B, which starts at a base facility;
- 43 • Cog railway.
44

45 Chair Richardson encouraged Committee Members to read through the information associated
46 with the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. The gondola was envisioned to carry 35

1 passengers every two minutes. That would not solve the problem, but could be part of the solution.
2 Co-Chair Hegmann pointed out that the gondola could only move 1,000 passengers per hour. He
3 added that the cog railway estimate in the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS was listed as
4 approximately \$1.1 billion, but that is around double the estimate of what it would cost if the
5 existing railway route was used. Chair Richardson noted that the Wasatch Transit Solutions
6 presentation acknowledged that the original estimate from UDOT was double what the actual cost
7 might be. The UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS work is on hold due to the current lawsuits.
8

9 Last year, the Legislature gave UDOT permission to declare snow days if it is going to snow.
10 Previously, UDOT had to wait until the road was bad, which could result in vehicles in the canyons
11 without snow tires because the snow didn't start until the afternoon. The Legislature has since
12 determined that UDOT can declare a snow day when snow is anticipated in the canyon. That
13 means a vehicle cannot enter the canyon on a snow day without the correct traction device. In
14 addition, the Legislature allocated substantial funds for UDOT to proceed with enhanced busing,
15 regardless of the EIS outcome. However, nothing has moved forward at this time. Chair
16 Richardson next shared information about Wasatch Transit Solutions and the desire to add to the
17 existing transit system. He reviewed a chart related to vans and vanpools in the document.
18

19 Chair Richardson reported that the Transportation/Transit Report also includes the Mountain
20 Accord goals. He reminded those present that the work of the Transportation System Committee
21 should tie into the Mountain Accord, as that is the guiding document for the CWC. There is a lot
22 of information in the report that Committee Members can review. Committee Members thanked
23 Chair Richardson for his efforts collecting the information and putting it together in one document.
24

25 Mark Baer mentioned that the numbers in Big Cottonwood Canyon are increasing. He believes
26 there are a few reasons for this, including the fact that there are many stops along the way. Lake
27 Blanche and Kessler Peak are more popular than before, which is likely reflected in the increased
28 numbers. Additionally, for six or seven months out of the year, traffic is coming both ways from
29 the Wasatch Back. He does not see either of those trends lessening. Mr. Baer pointed out that
30 there is more backcountry skiing in Big Cottonwood Canyon than in Little Cottonwood Canyon.
31 He added that the proposed gondola would only stop at the two commercial businesses, which
32 would not allow visitors to use other areas in Little Cottonwood Canyon, such as Red Pine and
33 White Pine.
34

35 Mr. Baer noted that there was an earlier comment related to the park and ride lots. He passes them
36 often, and those lots are completely full every ski day of the year, which means the utilization rate
37 is high. The lot near Big Cottonwood Canyon tends to be full within the first hour or two. This is
38 the reason the Transportation System Committee, the Stakeholders Council, and the CWC Board
39 need to push hard for the transportation hub area to be sufficient. There needs to be a lot of parking
40 available at the gravel pit in order to take some of the pressure off the roads and other areas.
41

42 Mr. Baer asked if there is a limit on the number of vans. It is clear that private businesses have
43 picked up a lot of the slack in the last few years. He wondered whether it would be possible to
44 expand the number of vans transporting passengers. It was reported that there have been some
45 discussions with UTA about the current program. The cost is determined by the mileage per
46 month. Since UTA has to supply the vehicles, there is a desire to understand whether there are

1 concerns about their ability to purchase vehicles, as well as any other potential limitations. The
2 Committee discussed whether the vanpools have four-wheel drive. A comment was made to state
3 that Enterprise has a vanpool program and is currently trying to break into the Utah market.

4
5 Chair Richardson noted that there is a lot of information included in the report. He asked
6 Committee Members to review the document when possible. Co-Chair Hegmann stated that, based
7 on the numbers that have been provided, the gondola alternative does not make sense. 1,000
8 passengers per hour will be a drop in the bucket compared to the total number of visitors. It was
9 stated that there will likely need to be several different modes of transportation implemented. Ms.
10 De Laurentiis asked if there had been any information provided about the next UTA schedule.
11 Chair Richardson believes the offerings from UTA will be similar to what was in place last year.

12
13 Ms. De Laurentiis asked whether anyone from the Transportation System Committee attends the
14 UTA Board Meetings. Chair Richardson denied this. It might be possible to listen in on those
15 meetings, as those can be informative. Ms. Nielsen confirmed that someone from the Committee
16 can attend these public meetings and report back with some of the discussion highlights.

17 18 **WASATCH TRANSIT SOLUTIONS FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION**

19 20 1. **The Committee will Review and Discuss Takeaways from the July 14, 2025,** 21 **Presentation from Wasatch Transit Solutions.**

22
23 Chair Richardson reminded Committee Members that the summary of the Wasatch Transit
24 Solutions presentation and discussion is included in the Meeting Minutes from the July 14, 2025,
25 Transportation System Committee Meeting. The intention is to continue to monitor the work of
26 Wasatch Transit Solutions. He is interested in seeing how this will move forward. Mr. Becker
27 and Mr. Allegra are neutral parties in any of the current lawsuits. Wasatch Transit Solutions would
28 like to see the rail option further considered, because it was the first one dismissed during the
29 UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS process. There is a belief that more can be done.

30 31 **LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON TRANSIT DISCUSSION**

32 33 1. **The Committee will Discuss Desired Transit Modes in Little Cottonwood Canyon and** 34 **a Possible Recommendation.**

35
36 Chair Richardson explained that the Committee will next discuss what can be done to address
37 transit in Little Cottonwood Canyon. For example, promoting more vanpools and buses. He
38 would like the Transportation System Committee to think about what can be done while the
39 lawsuits continue to move forward. Chair Richardson reminded those present that the Legislature
40 committed millions of dollars to enhanced buses, so it might be meaningful to promote that.

41
42 Co-Chair Hegmann believes that at some point, the Committee should take a stand on what Plan
43 B is as far as transportation. The data does not reflect favorably on the gondola alternative. If
44 there is no planning now for whatever Plan B is, then the solutions will not be implemented for
45 some time. He believes the Committee should take a position on potential next steps.

1 Dani Poirier explained that the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance has been trying to set up a meeting
2 with UDOT. There is a new parking plan that they have been working on with the Unified Police
3 Department (“UPD”) and the hope was to review that before the fall season to provide feedback
4 from public land users. It seems that might not happen before the season starts. Something the
5 Wasatch Backcountry Alliance is trying to push UDOT on is having equal roadside treatment
6 where Snowbird and White Pine are close to one another. White Pine was recently assigned No
7 Roadside Parking and the argument was that this is due to avalanche danger, but just up the road,
8 the shoulder was expanded to allow for more parking with double-sided signage based on the
9 conditions. There is a desire to have a meeting with UDOT to see if there can be equal treatment
10 in the roadside parking there, but it has been difficult to receive a response. Mr. Shea asked about
11 the UDOT position. Ms. Poirier explained that she has heard the plan is not quite ready to be
12 reviewed. However, there is no desire to review the final plan, but to provide input on the
13 preliminary draft. She offered to send an email to Mr. Shea with additional information.
14

15 Ms. De Laurentiis has not seen enough data at this point to state that rail is an appropriate transit
16 solution. There has not been a formal proposal from Wasatch Transit Solutions. It is possible for
17 the Committee to state that there are concerns about the gondola alternative without stating that
18 rail would be a preferable solution. Chair Richardson noted that some have pointed out that the
19 original study was inadequate. Discussions were had about the rail proposal. It was reported that
20 Mr. Becker previously shared information about the potential Lone Peak Wilderness impacts. Co-
21 Chair Hegmann believes the cog railway would be a suitable Plan B, but stressed the importance
22 of focusing on enhanced buses and other transportation-related solutions as well. Chair
23 Richardson suggested that the Transportation System Committee continue to think about transit
24 options.
25

26 **RESORT TRANSPORTATION PUBLICITY EFFORTS DISCUSSION**

27 28 **1. Chair Richardson will Share a Plan to Engage Ski Resorts Regarding their** 29 **Transportation Publicity.** 30

31 Chair Richardson reported that last year, he contacted the rental car companies at the beginning of
32 the ski season to encourage them to promote traction law-compliant vehicles. He would like to
33 see the rental car companies create a mirror hanger that describes the traction laws, so if someone
34 rents a vehicle that is not traction control compliant, that visitor will not be turned away from the
35 canyon or enter the canyon with an unsafe vehicle. Chair Richardson will write to the rental car
36 companies again. He discussed the sticker program that is in place for compliant vehicles. There
37 is a desire for the rental car companies and the ski resorts to promote traction law information.
38

39 Mr. Shea asked about the rental car company outreach that has taken place. Chair Richardson
40 reported that UDOT is promoting six rental car companies that have traction law-compliant
41 vehicles. On the UDOT website, those six companies are listed. He would like to see the rental
42 car companies and ski resorts have the same kind of information listed on their websites.
43

1 **MEETING RECAP AND NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

2
3 1. **The Committee will Review the Action Items that Have Been Decided Upon for the**
4 **Next Meeting.**

5
6 2. **The Committee will Discuss Topics for the Next Meeting Agenda.**
7

8 Chair Richardson reported that the Transportation System Committee has looked at some
9 transportation data and discussed Wasatch Transit Solutions. The Committee is also thinking
10 about a Plan B for Little Cottonwood Canyon transit. It is important for Committee Members to
11 continue to think about what can be done to promote enhanced busing, tolling, carpooling, and
12 other solutions. Mr. Baer offered to contact the Legislators whom he contacted last year about the
13 traction law. There could be a tweak to the statute so there is clearer liability on the part of rental
14 companies. He will reach out informally and report back to the Committee. Additional discussions
15 were had about the traction laws and sticker program. Outreach and education can continue.
16

17 Mr. Shea wondered if it would be possible to ask the rental car companies to place a sign on the
18 counter. It could state that anyone visiting the canyons needs to have a vehicle with snow tires.
19 Chair Richardson confirmed that it is possible to ask. In his previous communication, he suggested
20 a mirror hanger, but it would also be beneficial for the website to have information. Rental car
21 companies can handle this in slightly different ways based on their preferences, but the intention
22 is for there to be communication with visitors about the traction law and what is required.
23

24 **OTHER ITEMS**
25

26 There were no additional items discussed.
27

28 **PUBLIC COMMENT**
29

30 There were no public comments.
31

32 **CLOSING**
33

34 1. **Chair Richardson will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation System**
35 **Committee Meeting.**
36

37 **MOTION:** Kurt Hegmann moved to ADJOURN. Mark Baer seconded the motion. The motion
38 passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
39

40 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation System Committee Meeting adjourned at
41 4:40 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, August 11, 2025.*
3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8
9 Minutes Approved: _____
10