



MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL RECREATION SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026, AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

Committee Members: Patrick Morrison, Chair
Barbara Cameron
Craig Williams
John Knoblock

Staff: Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
Will McKay, Communications Director

OPENING

1. Chair Patrick Morrison will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Recreation System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.

Chair Patrick Morrison called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Recreation System Committee Meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. and welcomed those present.

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

MOTION: John Knoblock moved to APPROVE the November 13, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Barbara Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

GOAL-SETTING FOR 2026

1. The Committee will Review and Discuss Takeaways from the December 2025 Stakeholders Council Meeting.

John Knoblock reported that Lindsey Anderson with the U.S. Forest Service has indicated that they are still on schedule with the final Tri-Canyons Trails Master Plan. It was expected to be ready the beginning of February. With regard to timing, the intent was to ensure that the Phase 1 projects will have completed the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), which allows them to apply for Division of Outdoor Recreation grants for various projects. Mr. Knoblock has also been in contact with Devin Weider about an item he claims does not fit into the Big Cottonwood Canyon Road Transit Environmental Assessment involving trying to fix the uphill bicycle/pedestrian lane all the way up

1 the canyon. There are three critical locations where it is sufficient including near the power plant,
2 Storm Mountain, and the S-curves. Mr. Weider indicated that it will not fit into the Environmental
3 Assessment because the Senate Bill allocating the funds is specifically for bus transit and transit
4 stations at the resorts. Mr. Knoblock was informed that they would have to be part of a separate
5 project. He and the outgoing Region 2 Engineer will visit those areas in person to prepare a cost
6 estimate and add the project to a project listing for consideration. Until they have a feel for the cost
7 of the project, they cannot prioritize it on a project listing. He asked for volunteers from the
8 Committee to provide assistance. Craig Williams volunteered as he serves as the Wasatch Mountain
9 Club Biking Director.

10
11 Mr. Williams reported that Chelsea Phillips informed him that the cog rail has disappeared and will
12 be a larger project than anticipated. Mr. Knoblock stated that the old railroad previously went where
13 the road is now. For that reason, the Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement
14 (“EIS”) estimated the cost at \$1 billion because they would have to cut a whole new alignment in
15 below or above the road, which is significant.

16
17 Mr. Knoblock also reported that two landowners are willing sellers who might be able to get the
18 Bonneville Shoreline Trail built from Golden Oaks Drive in Cottonwood Heights connecting into
19 Little Cottonwood Canyon. This would have the added benefit of allowing a public access trail into
20 Deaf Smith Canyon, which is a U.S. Forest Service system trail that has been widely unused due to
21 lack of public access.

22
23 With a Division of Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure grant of \$1,000,000, they will have to purchase
24 those lands. New Cottonwood Heights Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion will hopefully help make that
25 happen.

26
27 A question was raised regarding what kind of help is being sought with regard to road improvements
28 in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Mr. Knoblock explained that just below and above the power plant there
29 are places where the shoulder goes down to essentially six inches of shoulder before the guardrail.
30 Also, up and around Storm Mountain near the big rock before the upper stream crossing, there is no
31 shoulder at all. Around the S-curves, people frequently park inside the white line, which leaves no
32 shoulder for pedestrians and cyclists. Above the S-curve, there is an area where the shoulder is
33 reduced to less than one foot with a portion being the guardrail. In another location, there is no
34 guardrail at all where there is a drop-off to the stream. About once per year, a car goes over into the
35 stream. Resolving it will require engineering to figure out how to widen the road three feet, which
36 will be challenging. He estimated it to be a \$10 million project to prevent pedestrians and cyclists
37 from being forced into the lane of traffic on blind corners.

38
39 It was acknowledged that infrastructure development is very costly. A question was raised as to
40 whether this could be resolved through signage and education. There was some mention of Rocky
41 Mountain Power potentially trying to accommodate the work. Because it is a state road, the thought
42 was that the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) should pay for it.

43
44 Chair Morrison stressed that the discussion should focus on goal setting for 2026. He hoped to be
45 able to get someone from UDOT to spend time with the Committee and work on solving problems.
46 He commented that bike access in the canyons is mostly forgotten and he hoped to draw more
47 attention to riders. It was noted that from the turn lane into Big Cottonwood to the top can be

1 treacherous. It was envisioned as part of the Mountain Accord and has been discussed by the
2 Recreation Committee in the past, but nothing has ever moved forward.

3
4 Mr. Knoblock commented that the former Region 2 Engineer has moved on. Region 2 is currently
5 without a Road Construction Engineer, but he agreed to reach out and set up a site visit with
6 Ms. Phillips and Mr. Williams.

7
8 Mr. Knoblock was excused from the remainder of the meeting. From this point forward there was no
9 quorum present.

10
11 **2. The Committee will Identify and Discuss Goals for 2026.**
12

13 One potential goal identified was to increase membership. Director of Operations, Sam Kilpack,
14 indicated that others with expertise could participate without being an official member.

15
16 Barbara Cameron commented that the U.S. Forest Service needs to be more involved. She referenced
17 the historic trails that came from the Wasatch Mountain Club that they were trying to promote. She
18 felt that what was done with the historic trails may have satisfied that objective. Another objective
19 was to support year-round toilets with adequate maintenance, which has not been done. She
20 responded to the UDOT Environmental Assessment for Big Cottonwood Canyon and indicated that
21 they should not be taking sewer toilets off and putting in vault toilets. To her, that seemed to be
22 taking a step back and making Big Cottonwood a third-world canyon. With regard to remnant lands,
23 it has needed to be done since Mountain Accord. She explained that remnant lands are lands that are
24 surrounded by other ownership that are potentially to be put into public lands. For example, there is
25 land in Cardiff Canyon where there are willing sellers. The town of Brighton is looking for property
26 to purchase and convert to conservation easements. With regard to access, there is some, but it is
27 not on public roads. Access is primarily from old mining roads that have an easement. There was
28 further discussion about the creation of a Remnant Land Plan. Ms. Cameron suggested that a list of
29 willing buyers and sellers be compiled.

30
31 Reference was made to Utah Open Lands who Ms. Cameron has worked with; however, Mr. Williams
32 has been unable to get a response from them. He felt they could bring people and funding together
33 to purchase those lands. Wendy Fisher was identified as someone who could perhaps be asked to
34 come speak to the committee. She spoke at a recent Stakeholder Council Meeting and commented
35 that land is an asset and encouraged property be acquired by entities that will allow it to be designated
36 for recreation. Chair Morrison pointed out that the Committee has funding for land acquisition, but
37 it is a competitive process. In the past few years, they have helped fund Utopian lands with numerous
38 parcels on the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

39
40 Mr. Williams stated that he contacted various organizations such as Mountain Trails, Wasatch Trails,
41 Summit Trails, and all are aware of the Outdoor Recreation Initiative (“ORI”). Chair Morrison asked
42 for further discussion about what is achievable for this coming year. He noted that there are
43 organizations other than Utah Open Lands and the Trust for Public Lands. Ms. Cameron felt that
44 Goal #1 had been achieved with the exception of the remnant lands.

45
46 Goal #2 involves working with the U.S. Forest Service to improve travel conditions. She noted that
47 they are making progress on year-round transit and transportation nodes.
48

1 Mr. Williams submitted a request to UDOT regarding Big Cottonwood Canyon and transportation
2 nodes to stop and unload passengers. Bus lanes were to be located on the right-hand side to avoid
3 cutting off traffic. In a subsequent presentation, they indicated that it would be in the middle. He
4 questioned whether the Committee was being heard.

5
6 Mr. Williams mentioned the possibility of incentivizing backcountry skiers and summer hikers to be
7 picked up with pull cords or buses flagged down to encourage greater use of buses. Ms. Cameron
8 commented that Brighton is considering an upper canyon shuttle, which might be helpful for that type
9 of user. The intent was for it to commence in Cardiff Canyon. Mr. Williams spoke to one backcountry
10 skier who was interested in having access to the bus service beyond Brighton up to the toilet, where
11 they stop plowing. That would not be part of their loop around Brighton. It would, however, allow
12 backcountry skiers to take a bus and be able to ski the ridgeline. Otherwise, they will drive. Parking
13 issues were identified. The Committee supported maintaining that goal. Mr. Williams pointed out
14 that for day hikers to start at one of the trails and hike up would still reduce traffic. Ms. Cameron
15 suggested that objective remain as Brighton considers a shuttle.

16
17 Chair Morrison felt that in every meeting with the Conference of Mayors (“COM”) and the
18 Stakeholders’ Council he had not seen the involvement of the U.S. Forest Service. His goal was to
19 engage them going forward. One possibility was to have meetings at the U.S. Forest Service's new
20 office. It was suggested that the Committee engage Lindsey Anderson and Chelsea Phillips to help
21 promote the Committee’s ideas to the U.S. Forest Service. It was acknowledged that the U.S. Forest
22 Service is understaffed, but the hope was to engage them and perhaps have a meeting in their new
23 office, particularly with respect to the push for the Tri-Canyons Master Plan.

24
25 Mr. Williams reported that he and Dennis Goreham, along with Wasatch Mountain Club Hiking
26 Director Frank Bouchard, met with Chelsea and Zinnia from the U.S. Forest Service on several
27 occasions to discuss bicycle trails and how they could be worked into the overall plan. Staffing
28 changes were discussed among various organizations. The intent was to speak with Kelly Ward, who
29 was formerly with the Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”) and start making connections.

30
31 Ms. Cameron referenced Objective 3, Goal 2, which is to promote cyclist and pedestrian safety. She
32 suggested they remain on the list. She commented on a dangerous island on Wasatch Boulevard that
33 cuts off a bike lane. Possible remedies were discussed, such as signage and green lane paint. Possible
34 guest speakers were identified.

35
36 Goal 3 was to work with the U.S. Forest Service to enhance connectivity and access for a variety of
37 recreational experiences. Seek funding for a pocket guide to short 49-minute hikes and winter trails.
38 Ms. Cameron began working on that and then began working on the historic trail. Chair Morrison
39 considered that to be a good call because there are resources with short hikes. He hoped to find
40 opportunities to support the greater Central Wasatch Commission mission. Much of that might
41 include communication and making people more aware of what the CWC is doing and how they can
42 get involved.

43
44 Ms. Cameron was pleased with the Big Cottonwood Trail located at the mouth of Big Cottonwood
45 Canyon that was installed by Cottonwood Heights City. Chair Morrison offered to reach out to the
46 Utah State Historic Preservation Office for guidance.

Ms. Cameron identified Goal 3, Objective 2, which is to seek funding for a prioritized mountain bike trail list and an alignment app shared-use community trail connecting Cardiff Canyon with the Town of Brighton. She noted that it is part of the Tri-Canyons Master Plan. She suggested that Objective 1 be removed involving funding for pocket guides. Chair Morrison agreed and felt it might be antiquated as many people have trail maps on their phones. It could be changed to seek partners to post information such as AllTrails who works with local non-profits. Tangible things the Committee can do could were discussed, such as incorporating volunteerism into what they are doing.

Mr. Williams offered to get it on the Wasatch Mountain Club calendar. He is on every activity list in his capacity as Director of the Board. He could compile hike and conservation lists. He also knows someone who works for the State with invasive weeds from whom he could get input. Another idea was to pursue a historic hike outing and expand further on that idea. Ms. Cameron stated that feedback was received at the symposium from people who complained that the buses are overcrowded.

Chair Morrison reported that he serves as a Board Member with the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance and the Board of the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. He also works in funding and is very aware of the need for it. He has heard a lot of talk about various organizations developing a trust. He questioned the potential for a recreation trust and getting recreation groups on board with the idea of a master trust.

Ms. Cameron spoke with Scott Hotaling who is very interested in partnering with groups like the CWC. At Utah State University ("USU") Mr. Hotaling is establishing a group similar to the Kem Gardner Institute but for mountains throughout the Intermountain West. It was suggested that he be added to the list of guest speakers. Mr. Hotaling recently began serving on the Stakeholders Council.

In response to a question raised, Director of Operations, Sam Kilpack, reported that John Adams brought the Wasatch Legacy Initiative to the Board, which felt that it was a good idea. Unfortunately, the timing was not right if they were looking to get legislatively-appropriated funds now, which is not likely. As a result, it was paused.

Ms. Kilpack supported the idea of having an outing of some sort. While the timing may not be right for climbing, perhaps there will be an opportunity for that in coming years. Mr. Williams suggested the expansion of a noontime lunch area. Those who want to recreate can take advantage of what they can prepare within a two-hour window rather than one with a final presentation a bit later in the day. Ms. Kilpack offered to work on that this year.

CENTRAL WASATCH SYMPOSIUM DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Discuss the Recent Central Wasatch Symposium.

Ms. Kilpack reported that the Symposium went well with significant feedback received. A feedback form was also sent to all of the attendees.

OTHER ITEMS

1. The Committee May Discuss Other Topics, if Desired.

1 **NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

2
3 1. **The Committee will Discuss Priorities, Ideas, and Desired Topics for the Next Meeting**
4 **Agenda and Upcoming Meetings.**

5
6 The next meeting was scheduled for March.

7
8 Potential speakers were identified as Wendy Fisher and Scott Hotaling, among others.

9
10 **CLOSING**

11
12 1. **Chair Morrison will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Recreation System Committee**
13 **Meeting.**

14
15 **MOTION:** Barbara Cameron moved to ADJOURN the Recreation System Committee Meeting.
16 Craig Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the
17 Committee.

18
19 The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Recreation System Committee Meeting held Thursday,*
3 *January 15, 2026.*

4
5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes
7 T Forbes Group
8 Minutes Secretary

9
10 Minutes Approved: _____
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