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MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026, AT 1:00 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: Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion, Chair
Mayor Scotty John
Emily Gray
Caroline Rodriguez
Jack Stauss (Special Advisor)

Staff: Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
Will McKay, Communications Director

Other: Andrew Gruber

OPENING

1. Chair Gay Lynn Bennion will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Transportation Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission.

Chair Gay Lynn Bennion called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Transportation Committee Meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. and welcomed those present. She reported that this is the first Transportation Committee Meeting in the calendar year, and it was her first time serving as Chair of the Committee. She asked all Committee Members to introduce themselves.

Mayor Scotty John reported that he is the Mayor of Brighton, and transportation is what activated him politically. He believes this is the number one issue that needs to be addressed in Big Cottonwood Canyon. The experience for visitors, residents, and all stakeholders has continued to degrade over the years. With the Olympic Games planned for 2034, there could be additional motivation from stakeholders to solve the existing issues. He hopes to move transportation discussions forward.

Caroline Rodriguez is the Executive Director of High Valley Transit, which is the regional public transit provider in the Wasatch Back. It serves Summit County and Wasatch County. She was

1 involved during the Mountain Accord process. Information about High Valley Transit was shared.
2 She explained that a different public transportation solution was needed.

3
4 Emily Gray serves on the Holladay City Council. The Transportation Committee is the reason she
5 felt that Holladay needed to participate on the CWC. The City of Holladay is impacted by the
6 down canyon traffic throughout the ski season. There are situations where residents are trapped
7 in their neighborhoods and have to deal with various parking issues. She feels the Transportation
8 Committee will be able to address the transportation issues holistically.

9
10 Special Advisor, Jack Stauss, is the Executive Director of Save Our Canyons. He explained that
11 Save Our Canyons is dedicated to protecting the wildness and beauty of the Wasatch Mountains.
12 He explained that transit is increasingly becoming a core pillar of that. Save Our Canyons focuses
13 on equitable year-round solutions for the Central Wasatch. Connecting to regional transit hubs is
14 also a priority of Save Our Canyons. The idea is for people to be able to recreate, access, and
15 enjoy the mountains while still protecting the watershed and ecosystems.

16
17 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that Save Our Canyons and Solitude Mountain
18 Resort are both Special Advisors to the CWC Board. Chair Bennion stated that transportation is
19 important for Cottonwood Heights, as it is impacted by both canyons. It is key that Cottonwood
20 Heights remain involved. She expressed appreciation for the CWC's focus on transportation.

21 22 **PRIORITY IDENTIFICATION DISCUSSION**

- 23
24 1. **Commissioners will Discuss and Set the Vision for the Committee.**
- 25
26 2. **Commissioners will Discuss and Set Goals in Support of the Broader Vision.**
- 27
28 3. **Commissioners will Determine Specific Objectives to Help Achieve the Committee's**
29 **Goals and Vision.**

30
31 Chair Bennion reported that the CWC is holding meetings about a ski bus priority lane. This is
32 currently working well in Sandy City, and there is a desire to see it work in Cottonwood Heights
33 as well. She explained that there are situations where people are unable to leave their homes due
34 to the traffic. Wasatch Boulevard is essentially shut down between Fort Union Boulevard and
35 Little Cottonwood Canyon on a heavy snow day. If there is a ski bus priority lane in that area, it
36 would address a lot of the existing traffic concerns, so that is a priority for Cottonwood Heights.

37
38 Mayor John believed that, for this year, it would be beneficial for there to be additional clarity
39 about the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) proposal. He does not believe
40 construction on the mobility hubs will start until next year, so it would be meaningful to have a
41 clearer understanding of what that will look like, so there can be communication to residents. On
42 a larger scale, he would like to see a more regional solution for transportation. The mobility hub
43 at the mouth of the canyon makes sense because visitors can park there and then take public transit
44 up the canyon. However, the ability to take public transit to the canyons is something that should
45 also be focused on. Mayor John noted that there appears to be interest in a rail solution, as Ralph
46 Becker has been exploring some potential solutions. The Committee can discuss that.

1
2 Ms. Gray agreed that it is important to focus on the UDOT plan for Big Cottonwood Canyon.
3 Holladay has some concerns, so additional information would be beneficial. She pointed out that
4 some of the suggestions will change routes throughout the City of Holladay. There are also
5 questions about the current park and ride on Wasatch Boulevard. In addition, she is interested in
6 looking into regional solutions, such as regional hubs that are located throughout the valley.
7

8 Chair Bennion read a comment from the Zoom chat box, which encouraged Committee Members
9 to think about the transit and transportation needs of both the Wasatch Front and Wasatch Back.
10 Ms. Rodriguez stated that it would be beneficial for her to learn more from Committee Members.
11 That being said, she has a general understanding of the transportation issues in the Wasatch Front.
12

13 Mr. Stauss stated that there is a desire for the Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”) and
14 UDOT to clarify the operations and maintenance costs of enhanced bus service in the canyons.
15 Once the infrastructure has been built, which includes mobility hubs and bus stops, and the
16 additional buses have been purchased, it is vital to understand how to maintain those service levels
17 over time. Save Our Canyons is supportive of the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental
18 Assessment (“EA”) and UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement
19 (“EIS”) Phase I plans moving forward. Something that Save Our Canyons has been talking about
20 is another mobility hub on 9400 and Highland, which could spread out the traffic to the gravel pit.
21

22 Ms. Gray liked the idea of a hub that addresses Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood
23 Canyon. She feels the needs of the Wasatch Back also need to be taken into consideration. Mayor
24 John believed the Mountain Accord was formed in large part as a response to the proposed
25 SkiLink, which envisioned a resort connecting a gondola over U.S. Forest Service land. That
26 proposal inspired the Mountain Accord process, which eventually led to the creation of the CWC.
27 Connecting these areas seems to be a non-starter for most, but he is curious to hear feedback from
28 the Committee. It is important to be familiar with the different Committee Member perspectives.
29

30 Mr. Stauss referenced the rail alternative that was mentioned earlier. He believed it was possible
31 to start with enhanced buses first and then focus on bus rapid transit (“BRT”). Chair Bennion
32 shared information about the past SkiLink proposal. There was a lot of opposition because of
33 encroachment on the wilderness and changing the overall experience. She expressed support for
34 looking further into a rail alternative and noted that there have been meetings with Mr. Becker
35 about some options in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Mayor John noted that there could be rail
36 running east-west through the valley, but it makes more sense to focus on enhanced buses and
37 mobility hubs.
38

39 Mayor John noted that there is no support for the gondola alternative that has been proposed by
40 UDOT. Salt Lake City is still in a lawsuit with UDOT over that portion of the UDOT Little
41 Cottonwood Canyon EIS. Mr. Stauss reported that there is now a pathway forward for Phase I of
42 the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS, which is being done in concert with the Big
43 Cottonwood Canyon EA. However, the UDOT analysis only looks at the canyon corridors.
44

45 There was discussion about the need for regionality. Chair Bennion mentioned a suggestion about
46 light rail coming up I-215 toward the mobility hub. She discussed this with WFRC during a recent

1 meeting, and it was stated that a good place to start is with BRT. That would require less
2 infrastructure. There are monthly meetings with UDOT about the mobility hub, which is
3 scheduled to be finished in the fall of 2028. There are contracts in place and the work appears to
4 be on track. Chair Bennion clarified that the monthly meeting has been taking place with Devin
5 Weder and he is also responsive to emails. She offered to verify information and report back.

6
7 Chair Bennion mentioned the park and ride on Wasatch Boulevard. It is her understanding that
8 the plan is to leave that alone, but she is able to provide Committee Member feedback to
9 Mr. Weder. Ms. Gray is not certain it makes sense to have the park and ride as well as the mobility
10 hub less than one mile away. Chair Bennion believed the current plan is to have both, but she can
11 ask what the long-term plan looks like. There was discussion about potential Committee goals.

12
13 Ms. Gray noted that there has been a lot of Committee discussion about enhanced buses and
14 preparation for the mobility hub. She asked for additional information about what is envisioned
15 in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Parleys Canyon. Mr. Stauss explained that when the Big
16 Cottonwood Canyon EA was released, there was also an announcement that the UDOT Little
17 Cottonwood Canyon Phase I work would start to move forward. There has not been a specific
18 plan for that to be released, but the goal is to have the service levels and the service switched over
19 by the same date. 2028 will have similar service in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little
20 Cottonwood Canyon, which is a strategic decision to ensure there are not unintended consequences
21 in either canyon. There will be tolling, updated bus stops at Snowbird and Alta, and likely some
22 updated bus stops at dispersed recreation sites. There is currently input being provided from the
23 stakeholders in Little Cottonwood Canyon to determine the specifics of the bus stops. The bus
24 service frequency is proposed to be every 15 minutes to start and be every 10 minutes by 2030.

25
26 Mr. Stauss pointed out that there is flexibility in the system and the process. In time, it will be
27 possible to determine what does and does not work, and make adjustments as needed. As an
28 example, tolls could be higher or lower depending on the day of the week, the weather, and other
29 factors. Adjustments can be made to the system, which is the reason there is more support for
30 buses than transit solutions like trains and gondolas. Ms. Rodriguez asked about the mechanism
31 that enforces the service levels. Mr. Stauss explained that service times are outlined in the EA and
32 EIS, but there is no mechanism in place that states UDOT must have service at a certain frequency.

33
34 Ms. Rodriguez reported that it will be extremely difficult to achieve the service levels that have
35 been outlined in the documents. Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) has not been able to achieve
36 those frequency levels because there are not enough employees at the pay scale that the State is
37 willing to allow. She agrees that buses are a positive solution, but is concerned that there is nothing
38 in place that will ensure the proposed service levels actually move forward. Mr. Stauss believed
39 the allocated funds will be used to build the infrastructure. The Transportation Committee could
40 discuss how the operations and maintenance will be funded in the future. Ms. Rodriguez informed
41 the Committee that staff wages for High Valley Transit account for almost 80% of the budget.
42 Mr. Stauss informed those present that in 2028, the bus service will move from UTA to UDOT.

43
44 Ms. Gray suggested there be a discussion about specific objectives the Transportation Committee
45 can work on in the future. There could potentially be discussions at the Legislative level.
46 Ms. Rodriguez shared information about funding for operations and maintenance. There is an

1 opportunity to demonstrate to the State Legislature that funding is needed. Mayor John pointed
2 out that all of this works hand in hand with the Central Wasatch National Conservation and
3 Recreation Area Act (“CWNCRA”). There are solutions that clear the path for it to move forward.
4

5 Chair Bennion asked Andrew Gruber from WFRC to share updates with the Committee.
6 Mr. Gruber explained that he is present to provide information about the Regional Transportation
7 Plan. WFRC is a public agency that coordinates transportation planning for the Wasatch Front.
8 This is done with cities, counties, UDOT, UTA, and other community stakeholders. One of the
9 responsibilities of WFRC is to develop the Regional Transportation Plan. Regionally significant
10 transportation projects can't move forward unless they are included in the plan.
11

12 The current Regional Transportation Plan was adopted in 2023. Mr. Gruber explained that when
13 there is a detailed EIS process under the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), the
14 organization must reflect the results of that detailed process in the plan. When the current version
15 of the Regional Transportation Plan was released, it included the results of the UDOT Little
16 Cottonwood Canyon EIS. WFRC adopted a policy that expressed support for phased
17 implementation in Little Cottonwood Canyon, which meant that Phase I and Phase II should be
18 implemented and evaluated before Phase III moves forward. Mr. Gruber reported that the process
19 is underway to develop the next Regional Transportation Plan, which also includes the EIS.
20

21 There was a draft map released, and public comment was invited. Mr. Gruber expressed
22 appreciation for all of the comments that have been submitted on the map. It is estimated that
23 there are over 2,000 comments on projects throughout the region. Many of those comments have
24 focused on Little Cottonwood Canyon and have stated that the gondola is not supported.
25

26 Mr. Gruber reported that the Phase I work is moving forward in Little Cottonwood Canyon. There
27 is approximately \$300 million committed by the State of Utah to that work. The rough timeline
28 shows that Phase I will be completed by winter 2028. He offered to answer Committee questions.
29

30 Discussions were had about Millcreek Canyon and the proposed shuttle. Ms. Nielsen reported that
31 there was some concern expressed by Salt Lake County. She has been taking meetings with
32 Catherine Kanter and others from Salt Lake County to better understand their concerns. Those
33 conversations are ongoing. The update to the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study showed
34 that there is near-unanimous positive receptivity for the shuttle concept. If the CWC Board directs
35 CWC Staff to continue to work toward a shuttle, then the next steps include continued discussion
36 with Salt Lake County, so there is comfort with bringing an appropriations request to the State.
37

38 Chair Bennion believed the vision of the Transportation Committee is to address key challenges
39 and improve the flow of traffic while also considering a future capacity study. There is also a
40 desire to take a regional approach and consider a hub at the bottom of Little Cottonwood Canyon.
41 Some of the goals are to pursue State funding for the operations and maintenance needs. There
42 could also be an appropriations request made for a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. Ms. Rodriguez asked
43 if it would be effective to state that the vision of the Transportation Committee is to support the
44 implementation of Phase I and complementary programs. Chair Bennion liked that suggestion.
45

1 **DETERMINATION OF MEETING CADENCE**

2
3 1. **The Committee will Determine its Meeting Cadence.**

4
5 There was discussion about how often the Transportation Committee should meet. Ms. Nielsen
6 reported that in the past, there was no consistent meeting schedule for the Transportation
7 Committee. The meetings were scheduled on an as-needed basis. Committee Members expressed
8 support to meet once a month to work toward the transportation goals that have been outlined.
9

10 **OTHER ITEMS**

11
12 There were no additional discussions.
13

14 **CLOSING**

15
16 1. **Chair Bennion will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation Committee**
17 **Meeting.**

18
19 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:57 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the*
2 *Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, May 13,*
3 *2026.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

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10 Minutes Approved: _____