MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION ("CWC") TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 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.

Members:	Gay Lynn Bennion, Chair
	Commissioner Emily Gray
	Commissioner Bill Ciraco
	Mayor Scotty John
	Jack Stauss, Special Advisor
	Amber Broadaway, Special Advisor
	Caroline Rodriguez, Ex Officio
Staff:	Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
	Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations
	Will McKay, Director of Communications

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.

COMMITTEE VISION AND GOALS RECAP

1. The Committee will Review the Vision and Goals Discussed at the Last Meeting on May 13, 2026.

Chair Bennion explained that the Transportation Committee will start with a review of the vision and goals. At the last meeting, one of the priorities discussed is a ski bus priority lane. There was also a discussion about clarifying the operations and maintenance costs of enhanced bus service in the canyons. The third identified goal was to look into Legislation for the funding of those operations and maintenance costs. The proposed rail solution was discussed, but she is not certain this is a specific goal of the Transportation Committee. It might simply be an option to think about.

Chair Bennion acknowledged that it has been a difficult week because of the Sandy City Council discussion. She thanked everyone who attended the City Council Meeting on Tuesday. She couldn't attend, but she will be engaging with Council Members in the next week.

Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the last Transportation Committee Meeting was productive. The vision that came out of that meeting was to address key transportation challenges and improve traffic flow across the Central Wasatch region in concert with the broader regional goal of passing and implementing the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act ("CWNCRA"). The Committee seeks to support and enhance the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") implementation of Phase I of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") and the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment ("EA") with complementary programs, where appropriate and beneficial.

The goals that were outlined during the last Transportation Committee Meeting include:

- Draft language for a bill procuring State funding for operations and maintenance for Phase I of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS and the Big Cottonwood Canyon EA;
- Work with Salt Lake County and the State to procure Millcreek Canyon shuttle pilot program funding;
- Expand the Ski Bus Priority Access Program into Cottonwood Heights and Holladay; and
- Explore transit and connection needs between the Wasatch Back and the Wasatch Front in preparation for the 2034 Olympic Games.

LEGISLATIVE FUNDING FOR BUSING DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Discuss Securing Legislative Funding for Operations and Maintenance for the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment and Phase I of the Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement.

It was noted that ahead of the Transportation Committee Meeting, Special Advisor, Jack Stauss, sent out an email to Committee Members. Mr. Stauss explained that after the last Legislative Session, there were relationships made with some State Representatives and Senators. Representative John Arthur wants to work on a transit bill. The Legislature passed the ability for the mobility hub to have concessions, where a portion of all revenue generated there could directly support the bus operations and maintenance. There has been work done on a draft of a transit bill. UDOT cannot support or oppose a bill, but there would not be pushback on the proposal. This is a way for people to start thinking about how some of the ongoing bus costs will be covered.

During a conversation with UDOT, it was stated that it will likely cost between $15 million and $20 million for the bus service per year in both canyons. Mr. Stauss believed at some point, it will be possible to pass a bill that directs additional funds toward the operations and maintenance needs.

Mayor Scotty John reported that he has a breakfast with Representative Arthur on Monday, so it might be possible for him to ask some questions and better understand what is envisioned. He asked if it is mobility hub maintenance being considered or maintenance of the actual buses. Ex-Officio Member, Caroline Rodriguez, explained that operations and maintenance for transit refers

to all of the preventative maintenance that allows the system to continue to run. The maintenance piece is a significant part of operations. Generally, it is not considered capital, but operational funding, because it is ongoing and it can be planned for. Mayor John asked about the fleet size. Ex-Officio Rodriguez clarified that she does not know what the fleet size is proposed to be.

Mayor John wanted to know the fleet size for High Valley Transit. Ex-Officio Rodriguez reported that there are 28 full size buses. There is also a fleet of approximately 50 smaller vehicles. Mayor John asked about the operations and maintenance budget for the fleet of 78 vehicles annually. Ex-Officio Rodriguez explained that the total annual budget is $25 million. Mr. Stauss thanked her for providing additional context. UDOT has ordered 50 buses for ski service in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. His understanding is that these buses are more powerful than the current buses in the canyon. Discussions were had about transit riders and ski racks.

Commissioner Bill Ciraco believed that Park City Transit is at $31 an hour for new bus drivers. The human element is a significant cost that needs to be considered when it comes to transit options. Mayor John asked for information about ski lockers. Special Advisor, Amber Broadaway, reported that there is already complimentary overnight gear check. The locker expansion is tied to the mobility hub at the base and the proposed stops at Solitude and Brighton.

Commissioner Ciraco asked Ex-Officio Rodriguez about the number of bus drivers per vehicle in the High Valley Transit fleet. Ex-Officio Rodriguez reported that there are approximately 30 fixed route drivers, but acknowledged that turnover can be difficult. It is accurate to state that the human component is the main expense. Ex-Officio Rodriguez reported that labor costs are approximately 80% of the $25 million annual budget. Commissioner Ciraco mentioned the 50 buses ordered by UDOT. If there was one bus driver for each bus, that could result in a $5 million expense.

Mayor John believed it is possible to sit down with Devin Weder from UDOT. Mr. Weder might have an idea of Representatives and Senators to work with in the future. Chair Bennion noted that it might be best to have Representative Arthur work with a Republican Senator so the bill is bipartisan. Committee Members discussed the UDOT plan for obtaining the needed funding.

SKI BUS PRIORITY ACCESS PROGRAM EXPANSION DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Discuss Expanding the Ski Bus Priority Access Program into Cottonwood Heights and Holladay.

Chair Bennion explained that it is important to engage with the Sandy City Council so they better understand how the Ski Bus Priority Access Program benefits their city. The CWC has been providing funding for the program. Ms. Nielsen reported that on canyon closure days, along Wasatch Boulevard leading up to SR 210, the ski traffic is beyond what the road can handle. This came to a boiling point and the CWC convened a group with representatives from Utah Transit Authority ("UTA"), UDOT, Sandy City Police Department, and others to see if there was a creative solution. The traffic caused a lot of issues and there were people unable to leave their homes on Wasatch Boulevard on heavy snow days. The Ski Bus Priority Access Program was then created.

Since 2021, Sandy City has been given over $125,000 to administer this program. The CWC covers the overtime for the police officers. The Ski Bus Priority Access Program has been a wildly successful program so far. There was a heavy snow year in 2021 and over $75,000 was paid to the Sandy City Police Department, because the snow often fell on holidays and weekends. With the recent news from Sandy City, the continuation of the program with the Sandy City Police Department is unclear. However, it is possible this program could work in other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Emily Gray reported that she reviewed the Sandy City Council Meeting agenda. It sounds like the Council wants to cut this from the budget for a one-time capital expense. She wanted to better understand the rationale. Mr. Stauss believed there are Council Members there who think the contribution does not belong in the budget spot that it was placed in. Instead of putting it somewhere else that makes sense, the City Council is attempting to cut it completely. It seems some Council Members have an issue with the work done by the CWC, which is disheartening. It also seems that there is a misunderstanding about the outsized benefits received.

Ms. Nielsen explained that the proposal for the budget amendment came from the two newest Council Members on the Sandy City Council. She believes there might be an issue with Council Members being uninformed about the work that is done. For instance, Brooke Christensen did not know that the CWC paid the Sandy City Police Department for the Ski Bus Priority Access Program. Sandy is the only jurisdiction that receives direct funding from the CWC. This is because there is a need, but there is no intention for member jurisdictions to make direct income from the CWC membership. She reiterated that certain Council Members are likely uninformed.

Discussions were had about the Sandy City agenda item and how that impacts the Ski Bus Priority Access Program. Ms. Nielsen reported that Mayor Monica Zoltanski included approximately $90,000 for the CWC the proposed budget, which was a balanced budget. Since the Ski Bus Priority Access Program, there has been over $125,000 provided. After the heavy snow year, it was determined that there would be a cap on the amount that would be allotted to the program. Depending on the need and the weather conditions, there could be up to $30,000 provided.

Mr. Stauss reported that during the Sandy City Council Meeting, Mayor Roger Bourke shared the numbers that Alta contributes compared to their annual budget and population. While it is smaller than what Sandy gives from a dollar amount perspective, it is higher based on the budget amount and population. Chair Bennion believed it is important to communicate with the City Council. The new Council Members likely do not know that Mayor Zoltanski asked CWC Staff to create a formula that ensures there are balanced contribution amounts that take into account the benefits.

Director of Communications, Will McKay, reported that Council Member Kris Nicholl in District 3 and Council Member Christensen in District 1 have previously served terms, but there was a gap between their first and second terms. Commissioner Gray noted that in some of her other government responsibilities, there is an ideological shift being seen. Some communities are moving away from shared service models. It seems there is a desire to be isolated and self-sustaining rather than working in partnership. She asked if that was part of the decision made.

Ms. Nielsen heard that sentiment expressed during the City Council Meeting, specifically as it pertains to the CWNCRA. Council Member Cyndi Sharkey stated that it has taken a long time for

the CWNCRA to move forward, which is true, but there are reasons for the time it has taken. Council Member Sharkey felt it would be a better use of City funds for Sandy to hire lobbyists.

Ms. Broadaway asked if Sandy talked about solving for the delta in winter canyon management in another part of their budget. Ms. Nielsen reported that it was not addressed by the City Council. Chair Bennion noted that it is possible to mention that to the City Council. It is also important to remind Council Members that Mayor Zoltanski asked CWC Staff to look at the funding amounts to make sure the numbers are balanced and take impact into account. Assessments were done to ensure the membership amounts are fair. She sees this choice by the Council as a political one.

Commissioner Gray asked if it would be possible for additional information to be provided before outreach is conducted. She wants to ensure that accurate information is shared with the City Council. Chair Bennion confirmed that CWC Staff can send out that information. She would like the talking points to mention the benefits the CWC provides. It brings stakeholders together to brainstorm how to address certain issues. That process is how the Ski Bus Priority Access Program moved forward. Chair Bennion was able to join one of the Ski Bus Priority Access Program meetings back in March. At that time, she asked if the Cottonwood Heights Police Department could join. Assistant Chief, Chris McHugh, from Cottonwood Heights joined the meeting in May.

Ms. Nielsen shared information about the meeting with the UDOT and UTA representatives as well as Assistant Chief McHugh and others from Sandy and the CWC. There was a discussion about the possibility of lane metering to allow the prioritization of the ski bus on non-canyon closure days. That idea was not considered further because of how resource intensive it would be. However, there was also an idea for signal prioritization for the ski buses. Buses could be equipped with preemption devices to allow them to preempt a red light. The UDOT representatives offered to take those suggestions back and see what is possible. She will share a status update in future.

Chair Bennion pointed out that the Ski Bus Priority Access Program planning group is different from a lobbyist. The group allows for discussion between all of the stakeholders so there can be low-cost solutions brainstormed. It is troubling for Sandy to consider leaving those discussions.

Mayor John thought it was important to determine appropriate messaging for Sandy so the City Council is able to recognize what is in it for them. There is a lot of value in the CWC and that is something that needs to be outlined to each of the member jurisdictions. Commissioner Gray agreed and noted that there needs to be a focus on messaging to Sandy and other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Gray asked if the two Council Members from the Sandy City Council are open to sitting down with CWC Staff to have a discussion. Ms. Nielsen reported that Council Member Christensen has responded to communication. It is possible to try again with Council Member Nicholl. At this time, there is not a formal meeting scheduled with the two Council Members.

Chair Bennion noted that at the last Transportation Committee Meeting, there was a question from Commissioner Gray about the park and ride on Wasatch Boulevard. After a discussion with Mr. Weder, it seemed that the plan was to leave that park and ride. He stated that UDOT is looking into areas where buses can be prioritized. In addition, transit signal prioritization is being considered.

DETERMINATION OF MEETING SCHEDULE

1. The Committee will Discuss a Monthly Meeting Schedule.

It was determined that the Transportation Committee will continue to meet on a monthly basis. Chair Bennion took a moment to thank the Special Advisors and Ex-Officio Members for attending the Transportation Committee Meeting, because those voices add a lot of additional perspective.

OTHER ITEMS

Chair Bennion reminded the Committee Members that there will be talking points shared by CWC Staff to ensure accurate communication with the Sandy City Council. There will be as much engagement as possible with Council Members. She is glad there was not a final vote taken last night, because there is additional time to work with them. Ms. Nielsen asked if there were any next steps or action items associated with the operations and maintenance discussion item. Chair Bennion reported that there are Committee Members meeting with Representative Arthur. Mayor John will have a conversation with Mr. Stauss ahead of his meeting with Representative Arthur.

Ex-Officio Rodriguez pointed out that if Senator Wayne Harper was the Republican sponsor, the process would be much smoother. Mayor John asked what it is about Senator Harper that would be beneficial. Chair Bennion reported that he is the sponsor of all major transportation bills. Ex-Officio Rodriguez added that he was the primary motivation for switching a lot of transit from UTA to UDOT. The time is right to have him deliver on the goals he set when putting transit under UDOT. Chair Bennion explained that when she sponsored the traction legislation, it did not pass the House on the first try. It failed by two or three votes on the House floor and she had to bring it back. Without a relationship in place to bring it back, that would not have moved forward.

Chair Bennion acknowledged that the Sandy City situation is difficult and thanked CWC Staff for their efforts. She also took a moment to thank the Committee Members for their contributions.

CLOSING

1. Chair Bennion will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation Committee Meeting.

MOTION: Scotty John moved to ADJOURN the Transportation Committee Meeting. Emily Gray seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting held Wednesday, June 10, 2026.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____