

Date: November 1st, 2019

To: Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) Board
Councilman Chris McCandless, Chair (Sandy City)
Mayor Jackie Biskupski, Vice Chair (Salt Lake City)
Councilman Jim Bradley (Salt Lake County)
Councilman Christopher F. Robinson (Summit County)
Mayor Mike Peterson (Cottonwood Heights)
Mayor Jenny Wilson (Salt Lake County)
Mayor Andy Beerman (Park City)
Mayor Jeff Silvestrini (Millcreek City)
Mayor Harris Sondak (Town of Alta)
Director Carlos Braceras (Utah Department of Transportation)

From: Ralph Becker, Executive Director
Blake Perez, Deputy Director
Lindsey Nielsen, Communications Director
Kaye Mickelson, Office Manager

Subject: October 2019 Staff Report to the Central Wasatch Commission

Overview

In October, the Central Wasatch Commission staff reviewed and considered comments on the next draft of Congressional legislation, worked with partners and UTA to expand the Cottonwood Canyon ski bus service for the 19/20 ski season, met with the Environmental Dashboard committees to review the data collected for each environmental indicator, met with its Stakeholders Council and committees, prepared for the CWC annual retreat scheduled for November 7th and 8th, and continued interaction and communication with Central Wasatch Mountain interests, community groups, and individuals.

Stakeholders Council

During the October Stakeholders Council meeting, Brian Hutchinson updated the Stakeholders Council on the progress of Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Committee. The committee is working to further develop its purpose and how the next steps can help support a shuttle program. Helen Peters, Salt Lake County, shared with the group the FLAP grant proposal that would enhance the Millcreek corridor and potentially help address necessary steps to allow for a future shuttle program.

Dr. Bricker provided a Visitor Capacity Proposal to the Capacity Committee at the September Capacity Committee meeting and to the Stakeholders Council for the October meeting. Discussion at the Capacity Committee meeting included how to move forward, potential costs, and the reasoning behind it. A motion to move a Capacity Study to the Stakeholders Council passed unanimously at the Capacity Committee. Further discussion was had at the Stakeholders Council meeting regarding a Capacity Study and more

information was requested before moving a recommendation forward. Information included previous Capacity Studies, their impacts, and how they were implemented.

The U.S. Forest Service led a discussion on an upgraded restrooms project. A determination was made that a conceptual plan was needed regarding what they want the restrooms to look like. Bekee Hotze presented the group with the potential design and layouts of the restrooms. Additional information was shared about costs and timeline.

CWC staff hosted a meeting with Wasatch Back Stakeholders, Commissioners, and jurisdictional staff. The goal of the meeting was to provide CWC staff with core interests of the group, potential projects, and new partners. The group will meet quarterly to further refine and develop action plans.

The Stakeholders Council meetings are the third Wednesday of every month from 3-5 p.m. at Cottonwood Heights City Hall in the Community Room. These meetings are open to the public, and we encourage you to attend. If you would like to listen to these meetings, you may access each meeting recording on the Utah Public Notice website.

Transportation

In October, the Central Wasatch Commission, UTA, and partners including CWC member jurisdictions, ski areas, Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, and Save Our Canyons made decisions and contributed financially to expand ski bus service in the Cottonwood Canyons for the 2019/2020 ski season. This service increase will more efficiently serve Utahns and visitors as they travel to recreate at Brighton Resort, Solitude Mountain Resort, Alta Ski Area, or Snowbird. **Starting November 23, 2019**, UTA's Cottonwood Canyon ski bus will be speeding up service and adding more trips to Snowbird, Alta Ski Area, Solitude Mountain Resort, and Brighton Resort. You can anticipate the following improvements:

- **A 26 percent increase in trips on Route 953** (to Snowbird and Alta Ski Area) thanks to funding provided by the Central Wasatch Commission.
- **A 28 percent increase in trips on Route 972** (to Solitude Mountain Resort and Brighton Resort) to 79 trips per day, up from between 61 and 65 on various days now.
- Route 972 (to Solitude Mountain Resort and Brighton Resort) will no longer serve the Bingham Junction Station on the TRAX Red Line, due to high traffic congestion which causes delays for ski bus riders. Riders are encouraged to use the Midvale Fort Union Station on the TRAX Blue Line.
- Route 953 and Route 994 (to Snowbird and Alta Ski Area) will no longer serve the park and ride lot at the base of Little Cottonwood Canyon, due to traffic congestion which causes significant delays. Bus riders are encouraged to use the park and ride lot located at 9400 South 2000 East. The Little Cottonwood Canyon Park & Ride lot will now be reserved for people carpooling.
- To increase efficiency and capacity for more riders, the ski racks will be removed on Routes 953, 972 & 994. Riders are advised to hold their ski gear while riding the bus.

CWC staff has also been pursuing a police escort service for buses this upcoming season. Cottonwood Heights invited the CWC staff to a town hall to hear and discuss the transportation challenges that residents of Cottonwood Heights endure during ski season. Additionally, the CWC staff has engaged with car rentals companies about how to improve communication with their customers about current traction and snow tires laws and ordinances.

Other short-term traffic congestion improvements have been pursued following list of potential efforts in the CWC Summary of Short Term Transportation Solutions document.

CWC staff attended UDOT's LCC EIS purpose and need and screening criteria meeting. UDOT will be attending November's CWC meeting to share the work to date. Commission members and staff will have an opportunity to provide feedback and comment with UDOT later in November.

Central Wasatch National Conservation Recreation Area Act

The 30-day comment period on the 8/19/2019 Draft Congressional Bill concluded on September 19th. Approximately 400 comments were made on the 4th draft of the legislation. Staff worked to provide comment summaries and responses. Throughout October, CWC staff worked through all the comments and have been working on recommended changes to the draft. The Federalism Commission and Natural Resources Committee of the Utah State Legislature remain interested in the work of the CWC and staff have met with and responded to questions and comments from those bodies. Each week CWC staff meets with governmental affairs consultants to share information and coordinate.

Outreach

CWC staff conducted grassroots outreach during the month of October with the public and community members at the Gear Room's three speaker series events in Cottonwood Heights, and at the Salt Lake County Mayor's Diversity Dinner in Salt Lake City. Staff attended the Ski Utah annual media open house in Salt Lake City, and toured water decontamination facilities at Snowbird. The CWC is currently hiring a Community Engagement Intern. For details on the internship, and how to apply, visit cwc.utah.gov.

Environmental Dashboard

Work sessions with the technical committees have been set up to review the datasets and the frameworks for each indicator: Soil, Water, Air, Plants and Wildlife, and Ecosystems took place during October with experts from the University of Utah, the U.S. Forest Service, the Utah Geological Center, the Departments of Environmental and Air Quality, and others.. The project team including Phoebe McNeally, Jim Ehleringer, and CWC staff met to review the outcomes of each of those worksessions and determine the scope and timeline for phase 2 of the project, which will be presented to the Commission during its regular December meeting. The Environmental Dashboard Steering Committee will meet for its tenth meeting mid-November to review the proposed changes to the framework, and confirm the scope of work for Phase two of the project. CWC staff met with leadership from ESRI to discuss the status and objective of the project. ESRI will fully engage with the project after the start of 2020. Staff will present a plan for public engagement to the Commission during its December meeting.

Administration

The Finance Committee met to review quarterly reports, Public Trust Investment Fund, and discuss budget policy for the Retreat. Staff worked to put together the CWC Board Retreat on November 7th-8th. Additional GRAMA requests have been responded to, public comments have been recorded and responses prepared, and administrative costs have been carefully monitored. CWC staff has been reviewing the costs associated with each CWC endeavor to assist the Finance Committee and Commission in potential efficiencies and re-prioritizing CWC resources.