

Date: December 2nd, 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, Administrator

Subject: November 2019 Staff Report to the Central Wasatch Commission

Since this is the time of year when families, friends and colleagues are getting together to celebrate the season; we'd like to take a moment and let you know our gratitude for your ongoing support and contributions to preserving the beauty of this place we call home; hoping you have (or had) a warm and relaxing Thanksgiving break.

Overview

In November, the Central Wasatch Commission hosted its annual Commission retreat, hosted a press event with our partners to share the news of the enhanced ski bus service, began creating the three committee groups of the CWC, met with the Environmental Dashboard committees to review the data collected for each environmental indicator, began drafting a memo to UDOT with comments on the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS Purpose and Need and Screening Criteria, met with its Stakeholders Council and committees, and continued interaction and communication with Central Wasatch Mountain interests, community groups, and individuals.

Stakeholders Council

Leading up to the CWC retreat, CWC staff and Stakeholders Council leadership administered a survey to gather feedback on the direction and work of the Stakeholders Council. Questions about meeting structure, purpose, and how to improve were asked. The results of the survey were shared during the CWC retreat with Commission members to help provide some direction and feedback to the Stakeholders Council. The survey results were also shared with the Stakeholders Council during the November

meeting. Chair McCandless joined the Stakeholders Council meeting to share the outcomes of the CWC retreat and how those outcomes can help guide the Stakeholders Council moving forward.

After all information was shared the group discussed how to best move forward. It was decided that the SHC will start to pivot to a quarterly meeting. In addition to that change, committees with clear purpose and objective will be created and will meet more regularly. Projects and work that come out of committees will be brought back to the Stakeholders Council for approval to send to the CWC board for consideration.

The group broke out into smaller groups for a facilitated discussion about UDOT's Purpose and Need and Screening Criteria for their Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement project. A total of three tables with 8-10 people each had a facilitator and scribe. The intent of this exercise was to collect feedback and comments to potentially incorporate into CWC's formal memo to UDOT.

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

CWC has been working with Stakeholders, Commission members, and jurisdictional staff to collect comments for UDOT's Purpose and Need and Screening Criteria. CWC will submit a formal memo to UDOT for their consideration during this open comment period. CWC staff attended UDOT's LCC EIS purpose and need and screening criteria meeting. UDOT attended the 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 December.

A press event was held to announce the ski bus service increase for the upcoming season Central Wasatch Commission, UTA, and partners including CWC member jurisdictions, ski areas, Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, and Save Our Canyons all joined in on the press event. Salt Lake Tribune, KUER, Fox 13 are a few of the media outlets that picked up the event. **Starting November 29, 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.

Central Wasatch National Conservation Recreation Area Act

Pursuant to what was discussed at the CWC retreat, a Legislative Committee was formed and has begun to reestablish consensus. The first meeting was held and the time was used to discuss the major components of the legislation. The group discussed the parameters and context of why the group was meeting and also discussed the objectives and goals of the group.

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 has hired Community Engagement Intern.

Environmental Dashboard

Work sessions with the technical committees reviewed 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

CWC staff and attorney have begun to explore the process of adding a new member and creating ex-officio positions to the CWC. The Town of Brighton has expressed interest in joining the CWC. Their newly elected leadership will be sworn in on Monday January 6th. After that has taken place, the Town of Brighton would provide a written application for CWC membership. The CWC Board will then consider the application and vote to offer CWC membership. If membership is offered to Brighton, the legislative body of each of the CWC members would need to approve and the Brighton Town Council would also need to approve the CWC ILA.

There is no provision in the current CWC ILA in regards to ex officio members. The ILA could be amended to provide for new ex officio commissioners selected for the purpose of bringing desired expertise to the Board discussion and would participate in Board discussions but would not have voting

rights nor be counted towards quorum requirements. This amendment can happen in conjunction with a possible amendment to omitting “appointed commissioner” requirement.

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. The Finance Committee is working on establishing regular quarterly meetings beginning in January 2020.