**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2020 AT 2:00 P.M. IN THE SALT LAKE CITY COUNTY BUILDING, CANNON ROOM LOCATED AT 451 SOUTH STATE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

**Present:**  Committee Members:

Chair Mike Peterson, Mayor of Cottonwood Heights City

Mayor Andy Beerman, Co-Chair Park City

Mayor Dan Knopp, Town of Brighton

Chris Robinson, Central Wasatch Commission Chair

Others:

Dave Fields, Snowbird

Mike Reburg, Salt Lake County

Carlton Christensen, Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”)

Kyle Maynard, Friends of Alta

Grant Farnsworth, Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”)

Caroline Rodriguez

Tod Young, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Kim Mayhew, Solitude Mountain Resort

Lori Fowlke, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nathan Raffarty, Ski Utah

Chris Adams, Wasatch Backcountry Alliance

Randy Doyle, Brighton Ski Resort

Mike Maughan, Alta Ski Area

Greg Summerhays, South Valley Chamber of Commerce and Stakeholders Council Chair

Ashley Burn, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Caroline Morgan, Summit County

Carl Fisher, Save Our Canyons

Ned Hacker, Wasatch Front Regional Council

CWC Staff:

Ralph Becker, CWC Executive Director

Blake Perez, CWC Deputy Director

1. **OPENING**
2. **The Meeting will be Called to Order by Transportation Committee Chair, Mayor Mike Peterson**

Chair Peterson called the newly created Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

1. **INTRODUCTIONS**

Those present introduced themselves.

1. **PURPOSE**
2. **Chris Robinson, Chair of the Central Wasatch Commission, will Inform the Committee of the Purpose of Why the Committee was Created and the Work Done to Date.**

Chair Peterson reported that Mountain Accord set a precedent for the Central Wasatch Commission and refers to transportation, which is also an important part of the proposed federal legislation. For the past 12 to 18 months, the CWC set transportation as a very high priority. The intent of the Transportation Committee was to inform their partners and discuss the development of a framework for a mountain transportation system development process.

CWC Executive Director, Ralph Becker observed that many of those present were involved in Mountain Accord, which served as the foundation for the CWC. Within Mountain Accord there were two primary thrusts. One was to pursue federal legislation to encourage additional congressional action pertaining to the protection of the land in the Central Wasatch. It also looked to land exchanges and realigning public and private ownership for more sensible and beneficial outcomes for public and private parties. Mr. Becker was the first CWC staff member after being hired in June 2018. Over the following 18 months, the congressional legislation was the primary focus of the Central Wasatch Commission. The second focus was to address and find solutions to the transportation issues in the Central Wasatch Mountains.

Mr. Becker reported that a CWC Retreat was held in November 2019 where the CWC made the decision to refocus its attention on transportation issues. The intent was to complement UDOT’s work on the Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). Since November, CWC Chair Chris Robinson, Mr. Becker, Mr. Perez, and others addressed the new focus. It has refined the effort, which has been well received and supported. This year’s mission is to find solutions and pursue implementation to address the transportation issues that exist in the Central Wasatch Mountains. This year, the intent was to bring the parties together along with the best information staff has developed in an effort to arrive at a consensus about what mountain transportation should be.

Mr. Robinson commented that putting the federal legislation on hold was not intended to be construed as an abandonment. It was believed that in order to resolve the challenges that exist, a symbiosis between transportation and conservation efforts is needed. More progress needed to be made on the mountain transportation system before moving forward with federal protections. Mr. Robinson commented that the intent was not to upend, contradict, or interfere with the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. He explained that UDOT is on course to issue a record of decision by 2021. It was considered beneficial for the CWC and the Transportation Committee to brainstorm a system for the entire Central Wasatch. Mr. Robinson explained that public comment will be received through March 1 on the characteristics and traits of a mountain transportation system.

Chair Peterson reported that the comments received will be used to shape the concepts of the system.

Carlton Christensen asked how the information will be integrated into the process. He asked about next steps in the event there is a conflict. Mr. Becker explained that as part of the EIS, UDOT has taken a series of steps including tolling, parking, aerial systems, bus systems, and drainage systems. They have prepared a draft of an aerial system and they plan to issue drafts of the other reports in the spring. UDOT also offered to provide additional assistance.

Chris Adams commented that traffic seems to be getting worse and they need to think about the situation in the short, medium, and long term. He pointed out that some solutions will not be implemented for 10 or more years. He suggested that immediate steps be taken to address traffic concerns. Chair Peterson agreed and stated that the CWC has addressed short-term strategies including increasing bus service up the canyons.

Mr. Becker stated that the focus is through 2050. At the Retreat, there were three areas of focus. The first was the formation of the Transportation Committee. The second addressed legislature and land tenure issues and the third consisted of short-term projects. A group was established to look at short-term projects that can be done immediately and what the CWC can do to support that effort. Possible solutions included bus service improvements for this year, State legislation, and a State appropriation. Various short-term transit-focused issues were also being considered.

Mr. Becker reported that the previous day, the Short-Term Projects Committee recommended recreational and environmental improvement projects that can be completed this year. The categories included transportation, environment, recreation, and economy. A list of projects will be fleshed out. If the Transportation Committee comes up with a short-term priority, they will share it with the Short-Term Projects Committee.

Chair Peterson stated that the objective of the Transportation Committee is to provide feedback on a draft scoping document. It will focus primarily on the long-term, however, it will be necessary to have a short-term component as well. Mayor Beerman expressed an interest in the scoping.

Chair Peterson explained that in Cottonwood Heights they are dealing with issues on Wasatch Boulevard with regard to how to address situations involving motorists traveling from I-215 and Wasatch Boulevard who are unable to get through. As a result, they cut through neighborhoods, which prevents residents from getting out. They discussed signage, traffic control, legislation, escorts for buses, etc.

1. **OBJECTIVES AND GOALS**
2. **Chair Mike Peterson will Lead a Discussion on the Current Scoping Document.**

Chair Peterson clarified that the focus of the Transportation Committee is to pick up where Mountain Accord left off and add to what is being provided by the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS.

The scope of the committee was described as follows:

‘The group is intended to connect residents and visitors to mountain destinations, connect communities of people to jobs by way of efficient, sustainable transit choices. Solutions will manage the impacts of a rapidly growing population in ways that will reduce reliance on automobiles and decrease impacts on the environment. To impose a transit network would not only provide a more sustainable way to travel, it would also provide a powerful tool to shape growth, reduce sprawl, promote transit-oriented development, support economic growth, quality of life, and environmental protection.’

Chair Peterson reported that Mountain Accord looks at high capacity transit in Little Cottonwood Canyon, Big Cottonwood Canyon, and the Park City corridor. It also addresses transit incentives and disincentives including parking, pricing strategies, improved year-round local bus service to Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons, fast transit service from the airport to Park City, improved transit services on US 40 and I-80 between Quinn’s Junction and Kimball Junction, improved transit connections to Summit County, high-capacity transit connections to the eastern Salt Lake Valley via Wasatch Boulevard, and access improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. Chair Peterson explained that the scope is very general so they should look at specifics going forward.

1. **PROCESS AND TIMELINE**
2. **Blake Perez will Lead a Discussion on the Process and Timeline.**

CWC Deputy Director, Blake Perez addressed the process and timeline. He hoped the group would work in the spirit of coordinating with a consensus moving forward. He reported that currently, they are in a public comment period on the scope and project deliverables that will close March 1. Staff will then review the comments and make edits and present the comments at the March 9 CWC Board Meeting for formal approval. Over the next three or four months, they will explore mode alternatives and management options. They will obtain information from UDOT on various modes and engage with various vendors with respect to how it will look and where it will go. At that point, there will be discussion about a transportation panel with experts involving a Q&A with the public to kick off the public comment period on the modes. The modes will be weighed out against the criteria being established for the system.

Mr. Perez reported that an open house will be held mid-summer. There will be a proposal development refinement between July and September as well. A Transportation Summit was scheduled for later in the fall where they will decide on a locally preferred alternative. If they come out of the summit with a good proposal, there would be an additional 30-day comment period. By the end of the year, the CWC should approve and recommend a proposal to move forward with the federal designation.

1. **TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT**
2. **Ralph Becker, CWC Executive Director, will Lead a Discussion on the Tentatively Planned Transportation Summit During Fall 2020**

Mr. Becker reported that there are short-term issues that will hopefully help reduce traffic congestion. Many present had been involved in infrastructure projects with many long-term projects expected to be 10 years out or longer. If there is a consensus around an approach for a mountain transportation system from the CWC, it will likely be the catalyst for others to act. Key individuals involved were identified. Mr. Becker explained that the hope was that if they reach a consensus that the long-term implementation will be a collaborative effort.

Mr. Becker stated that many involved in the upcoming summit were involved with Mountain Accord. He commented that they ultimately achieved a consensus by having four different working groups addressing four major themes. Each came up with its own proposal. They then looked at common denominators and differences and brought them forward in a day-long session in an effort to identify a single proposal. Something similar was anticipated as they arrive at a plan. They will look at different modes and alternatives as well as the various impacts and the advantages/disadvantages of each as they reach an agreement on the best approach for a mountain transportation system.

The Transportation Summit was expected to take place on a Friday/Saturday the end of September or early October.

Chair Peterson commented that key stakeholders and partners have been invited who have expressed a willingness to participate. They had the same kind of diversity with Mountain Accord.

Mr. Robinson stressed the importance of looking at mode alternatives and management and weighing them against the scope. The metrics of a good system are what they are seeking public input on.

1. **ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

Chair Peterson reiterated that transportation was identified as a critical concern. The Transportation Committee was formed to create something of value with interim short-term goals and objectives including trails and the environmental dashboard. Various committees were formed to move the work forward.

Mr. Robinson reported that there are three CWC Board Members assigned to each of the three committees. He serves as a floating member of each.

A question was raised about how to manage short and long-term solutions. Mr. Robinson stressed that the Transportation Committee should focus solely on transportation issues. The Short-Term Projects Committee will have broader purview but not as keen an interest in transportation.

Mayor Beerman commented that similar conversations have been ongoing for a long time. He hoped the committee can help regain momentum. For example, the group can look at bus schedules on a more technical level and provide solutions for moving those forward, building political will, and financial means.

Mr. Becker reported that there has been a working group involving UTA, the CWC, ski area general managers, UTA staff, and others who have been focused on immediate work that can be done. The group continues to meet and work toward immediate action that can be taken. With regard to bus service improvements, many supported that idea and came forward with funding to move projects forward very quickly. Mr. Becker explained that they will continue to work on short-term solutions.

Carl Fisher had fundamental questions. He recognized that there is a transportation problem in the canyons and asked fundamentally who they are serving with the Mountain Transportation Plan. He questioned whether they were inducing or managing visitation. He also asked if the concept of capacity is something that the committee is willing to address and if those involved are financially invested in an outcome. Chair Peterson explained that Mountain Accord defers to each of the questions raised and they remain at the forefront.

In response to a question posed, Chair Peterson stated that the first step is to meet with all of the stakeholders. Resources will be introduced. A broad breadth of feedback is needed on what is proposed to determine whether they can reach a consensus.

Mayor Knopp stressed the need to address both short and long-term goals. It was confirmed that the Transportation Committee will meet monthly. He questioned whether they could wait one year for short-term projects. He suggested they substantially tighten up that timeline and encourage various cities to contribute. The first step should be to increase bus service and get cars off the road. Buses were thought to be the best way to accomplish that in the short-term. Dave Fields commented that two other groups are focusing on that. Mr. Robinson stated that the purview of the Short-Term Committee could be curtailed to exclude transportation issues.

Chair Peterson suggested they get an update from UTA on ongoing efforts. Mr. Becker commented that there are at least two groups focused on short-term transportation solutions. A working group began meeting last year and have come up with numerous ideas. They were able to get one of them accomplished this year. Additional ideas would be forthcoming. Many were involved and spent numerous hours evaluating various alternatives. It was suggested that perhaps it would be appropriate to have them report to this group. Ways to involve both groups were discussed. It was suggested that the Transportation Committee receive feedback on short-term or interim measures with respect to transportation as part of the Transportation Committee agenda going forward.

Mr. Robinson stated that in addition to some funding, UTA and UDOT have offered to lend their expertise as well as staff and others with regard to transportation and transit issues. There are vendors who can also provide ideas without jeopardizing future participation in the bidding process. He suggested they organize around the resources that are already in place. The primary challenge will be to reach a consensus.

Mr. Becker reported that staff discussed with CWC’s legal counsel at length ways to hold meetings while remaining in compliance with the Open and Public Meetings Act. He explained that the official members of the Transportation Committee are CWC Board Members. In the event that they get more than a quorum of the full board at a meeting, it is being noticed as both a Transportation Committee Meeting of the CWC and the CWC as a whole who will be the formal voting members.

Mayor Beerman commented on parameters and referred to the scope of Mountain Accord. He wanted to make sure the group was comfortable. A decision needed to be made about whether the group is seasonal or year-round. Another question pertained to visitors versus residents. The assumption was that it would focus on both. The question of who is served remained unresolved. Mayor Beerman assumed that because of growth they will be dealing with residents and visitors. The outstanding question dealt with whether to set thresholds. They should assume there will be growth but determine at what pace they can realistically accommodate that growth. Threshold issues were discussed. Chair Peterson reported that the Stakeholders Council is addressing capacity and may be a resource.

Mike Maughan raised the question of who has jurisdiction over capacity. Mayor Knopp pointed out that the one entity that is not represented is the U.S. Forest Service who has very definite opinions. It was suggested that they be encouraged to have a representative present.

Mayor Beerman stated that it has always been paramount that they protect the quality of the experience and the environment in the canyons. Any recommendation should be made through the filter of whether it will harm the natural environment.

Mr. Robinson suggested that when looking at modes of transportation they consider capacity, cost, and other metrics and determine which provides the most capacity. He believed that the dynamic tension that may exist involves the fact that those that brought the capacity are eager to have more and those who were worried about too much are eager to have less.

Kim Mayhew stated that this year the Unified Police Department (“UPD”)has taken it upon itself to protect the health and safety of visitors and chose to close the canyon. She pointed out that capacity involves being responsible and understanding that circumstances will guide decisions regarding capacity. Possible metering of transportation modes was discussed.

Mr. Becker commented that visitor management can be evaluated as they look at each mode and how it will work as part of a Mountain Transportation System. They can look specifically at how many people it delivers as well as the impacts relative to each mode. Mr. Robinson explained that capacity is a function of mode. They will not be able to resolve inflation or capacity until they better understand the modes.

Mr. Becker suggested that the Committee determine what they want to achieve in the mountains. Ms. Mayhew remarked that when they have single-occupancy vehicles traveling up and down the canyons on snowy days, the mode and conditions change the overall experience. Education should be provided regarding how to best get up and down the canyon.

Chair Peterson stated that all of the public comments received will be summarized and presented at the March 9, meeting. They will then begin meeting with experts.

Mr. Fisher asked if they can be successful without the involvement of the Governor and the Legislature. Mr. Becker stated that CWC staff have met with both and representatives have been assigned on their behalf.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Mayor Beerman moved to adjourn. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee Members.

The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:34 p.m.

***I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting held Tuesday, February 25, 2020.***

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes

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Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_