

1 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”)**
2 **TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2020 AT**
3 **12:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM**
4

5 **Present:** Committee Members:

6
7 Chair Mayor Dan Knopp, Town of Brighton
8 Mayor Andy Beerman, Co-Chair Park City
9 Mike Peterson, Mayor of Cottonwood Heights City
10

11 Others:

12
13 Carlton Christensen, Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”)
14 Kathleen Riebe, Utah State Senator
15 Carl Fisher, Save Our Canyons
16 Dave Fields, Snowbird
17 Mike Maughan, Alta Ski Area
18 Jessica Malone
19 Kim Mayhew, Solitude
20 Laura Briefer, Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities
21 Chris Cushing
22 Mike Allegra, Stanley Railcar Company
23 Nathan Rafferty, Ski Utah
24 Helen Peters, Salt Lake County
25 Tom Diegel
26 Patrick Nelson, University of Utah
27 Kyle Maynard
28 Casey Hill
29 Will McCarvil
30 Barbara Cameron
31 Julianna Christie
32

33 CWC Staff:

34
35 Ralph Becker, CWC Executive Director
36 Blake Perez, CWC Deputy Director
37 Lindsey Nielsen, Communications Director
38 Kaye Mickelson, Office Administrator
39

40 **1. OPENING**

41
42 **a. Commissioner Dan Knopp will Conduct the Meeting as Chair of the**
43 **Transportation Committee.**
44

45 Chair Dan Knopp called the meeting to order approximately 12:00 p.m.
46

1 **2. PUBLIC COMMENT AND DESIGN YOUR TRANSIT TOOL SUMMARY**

2
3 Chair Knopp opened the public comment period. There were no public comments. Chair Knopp
4 closed the public comment period.

5
6 **a. Committee Members will Receive an Update on Public Comments Received**
7 **and the Data Results from Design Your Transit Tool.**

8
9 CWC Deputy Director, Blake Perez reported that on September 18, 2020, the Central Wasatch
10 Commission (“CWC”) hosted an Expert Panel Discussion with several mode and demand
11 management experts. The CWC also released Draft Alternatives for a Mountain Transportation
12 System (“MTS”) that included three main alternatives and three sub-alternatives. The main
13 alternatives were as follows:

- 14
15 1. Comprehensive bus system;
16
17 2. Bus/gondola option; and
18
19 3. Bus/rail option.

20
21 The three sub-alternatives included the following:

- 22
23 1. Transit tunnel between Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon;
24
25 2. Aerial connections between Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood
26 Canyon; and
27
28 3. Aerial base-to-base connection between Brighton and Park City.

29
30 During the 30-day public comment period, there were 218 comment submissions from individuals,
31 groups, businesses, and local governments. Of the 218 submissions, approximately 1,300 topics
32 were categorized. Mr. Perez reported that the key findings from the public comments were as
33 follows:

- 34
35 • The most common comments were in support of bus options;
36
37 • There were more comments opposing aerial and rail modes than there were supporting
38 them. However, there were fewer comments in general about those modes;
39
40 • Most comments opposed connections between Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little
41 Cottonwood Canyon as well as between Big Cottonwood Canyon and Park City;
42
43 • Variable tolling was commented on favorably. However, there were questions raised
44 regarding implementation and the use of potential revenue;
45
46 • Broad support for a seasonal express bus in Big Cottonwood Canyon; and

- Opposition to any road widening.

Mr. Perez noted that most of the comments fell into two categories:

- Those supportive or opposed to a particular mode or demand management strategy; and
- Those that were neither opposed nor supportive but wanted a deeper level of analysis.

Mayor Peterson asked if the opposition to road widening was in a specific area. Mr. Perez noted that there were comments opposed to road widening on Wasatch Boulevard but the majority were specific to Little Cottonwood Canyon. CWC Executive Director, Ralph Becker commented that options were presented with and without road widening. Mr. Perez offered to provide the public comments in their raw form.

The CWC also administered the Design Your Transit Tool. This online interactive game allowed participants to invest in certain modes and demand management strategies. They were given a set budget and were allowed to invest in modes and strategies that would reduce congestion, limit impacts to the watershed and improve emergency egress and ingress. The Design Your Transit tool had been available for 30 days and there were 832 participants.

At peak investment, 482 participants chose a single transit option, equating to 58% of the total respondents. At minimum investment, nine people chose a single transit option, equating to 1% of the total respondents. The average investment in transit options was 33% of total respondents and the median investment in transit options was 38% of total respondents.

Mr. Perez showed the Transportation Committee graphs that contained data from the Design Your Transit tool. He shared some of the key findings:

- Improved bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure in the tri-canyons was the top investment;
- Tolling was a highly invested option in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon;
- Road widening was not a popular investment;
- There was a desire for a high-capacity transit option along 9400 South and for regional hubs to serve as transfer points to recreation nodes;
- Improved frequency and service on a SLC-PC Connect was a popular investment;
- Seasonal express buses to the Big Cottonwood Canyon resorts were a popular investment;
- Year-round local buses were a more popular investment in Big Cottonwood Canyon than they were in Little Cottonwood Canyon;

- Aerial was the most popular investment for both Cottonwood Canyon connections as well as the Brighton to Park City connection;
- There was a preference for high-capacity options, such as aerial or rail, over an enhanced bus option in Little Cottonwood Canyon; and
- The no-action option was the least invested option for both Big Cottonwood Canyon (3% of all respondents) and Little Cottonwood Canyon (1% of all respondents).

Mr. Perez shared results from the various segments in the Design Your Transit tool. Any investment in a transit option above the average and median percentages indicated a relatively high user investment. On the graphs shown, that number was 320 or above.

- Salt Lake Valley Connections: there were options such as high capacity transit, year-round bus, transit hub to recreation, enhance current transit, and no action. High capacity transit (367) and transit hub to recreation (391) were the most highly invested options;
- Wasatch Front to Wasatch Back via I-80: there were options such as express bus, enhance SLC-PC Connect, and no action. Enhance SLC-PC Connect (326) was the most highly invested option;
- Millcreek Canyon: there were options such as a shuttle program, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and no action. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (482) was the most highly invested option;
- Big Cottonwood Canyon: there were options such as seasonal express bus to resorts, tolling, year-round local bus, paid parking, reduce on-road parking, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and no action. Seasonal express bus (406), year-round local bus (341), and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (407) were the most highly invested options;
- Little Cottonwood Canyon: there were options such as snowsheds, enhanced bus, year-round local bus, enhanced bus and roadway, aerial, cog rail, tolling, paid parking, reduce on-road parking, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and no action. Snowsheds (429), enhanced bus and roadway (320), aerial (357), cog rail (371), tolling (335), and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (388) were the most highly invested options;
- Cottonwood Canyon Connections: there were options such as bus tunnel, rail tunnel, aerial, and no action. Aerial (335) was the most highly invested option; and
- Big Cottonwood Canyon (Brighton) to Park City: there were options such as aerial and no action. Aerial (409) was the most highly invested option.

Mr. Perez reported that there was a Stakeholders Council Meeting on October 21, 2020. During the meeting, the Stakeholders broke out into three separate groups with a facilitator and a scribe to discuss the transportation alternatives. There were several key findings found across the groups:

- Many felt it was important to have a regional transit system that connects to the MTS;
- Land management and transportation are tied together;
- A clear vision is needed for the Central Wasatch;
- Concerns were shared about growing visitation and associations with money, development, and financial profit;
- Summer bus service may limit access to dispersed recreation;
- There could be consideration for a combination of the modes; and
- Concerns were shared about road conditions. Many felt it was important to have a transit option that was not within the road corridor.

Chair Knopp raised several questions regarding how to use the information from the public comment period, Design Your Transit tool, and the Stakeholders Council Meeting.

Mayor Peterson wondered if comments had been received related to the environment. Mr. Perez reported that several comments were submitted during the public comment period that mentioned the need for further analysis as it relates to watershed impacts, square footage, and hydrology. Mayor Peterson asked for additional clarity about the suggestion to have a combination of modes. Mr. Perez explained that a bus could complement a high-capacity transit system. It was a matter of exploring how the various modes could work in conjunction with one another to address all transportation needs.

Mayor Peterson brought up the issue of road widening. He believed the opposition to road widening was for Little Cottonwood Canyon and not for Wasatch Boulevard. Mayor Peterson felt that road widening would be supported on Wasatch Boulevard to create for flex lanes and bus lanes. Mr. Perez stated that in the Design Your Transit tool, road widening was associated only with Little Cottonwood Canyon. However, during the public comment period, comments were received that were against road widening in general, against road widening in Little Cottonwood Canyon, and against road widening on Wasatch Boulevard.

Carlton Christensen from Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) asked Mr. Perez if there would be a second level of data analysis. For instance, those that were against road widening may also have been against another transportation option. Mr. Perez stated that staff could go back through to see if there were links or commonalities. Mr. Christensen felt this would help frame where people were coming from and potentially uncover common themes.

Utah State Senator, Kathleen Riebe commented that skiers and large families may have a difficult time moving from one mode of transportation to another. She felt there should be a drop off zone to make the transition easier and more appealing to users. Mr. Perez reported that similar concerns were mentioned in the public comment submissions.

1
2 Carl Fisher from Save Our Canyons reported that some people in the Cottonwood Heights area
3 were concerned about Wasatch Boulevard. He stated that there was a desire to incorporate an
4 active transportation corridor along Wasatch Boulevard. Many people believed the road widening
5 would be a barrier to active transportation. If the number of vehicles on the road was reduced
6 beforehand, a road widening would not be necessary. Mr. Fisher felt that the focus should be on
7 disincentivizing people from using vehicles rather than widening the road.
8

9 Mayor Beerman wanted more data about the traffic that comes from Park City and Summit County
10 to the Cottonwood Canyons. Mr. Perez reported that there was a Utah Department of
11 Transportation (“UDOT”) Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) that related to the traffic in
12 Summit County that enters into Little Cottonwood Canyon. On the high end, approximately 8%
13 of the traffic entering Little Cottonwood Canyon came from Summit County. This data did not
14 include the traffic coming from Summit County to Big Cottonwood Canyon. Mayor Beerman
15 noted that when he ran a hotel, a lot of skiers went to Alta or Snowbird because of the different ski
16 experience. He estimated that approximately 5% of the time, guests would either drive or take a
17 shuttle to Little Cottonwood Canyon.
18

19 Mayor Peterson mentioned that a few years ago, the State Legislature appropriated \$13 million to
20 acquire land at the gravel pit. The intent was to create a transportation hub that would incentivize
21 people in the development not to use their cars. Mayor Peterson addressed Mr. Fisher’s comments
22 and stated that active transportation along Wasatch Boulevard was a priority. He noted that mass
23 transit was also needed.
24

25 Senator Riebe asked about the Snowbird RIDE app. She also wondered whether the Ikon Pass
26 would be able to provide information about where people were skiing in Utah and asked about
27 Brighton and Solitude’s paid parking efforts. Dave Fields from Snowbird reported that the RIDE
28 app was a good way to enhance the conversation around carpooling and using the bus. Incentives
29 were given to those in rideshare vans, canyon transportation vans, UTA buses, and those
30 carpooling. He noted that COVID-19 caused a setback with the app but the main idea was to
31 change behaviors over time.
32

33 Mr. Fields addressed the Ikon question and stated that while information could be accessed, there
34 would be no indication of where users were staying. He noted that in the past, Snowbird surveyed
35 people in the parking lot to determine this information. Many stayed in Kimball Junction,
36 Cottonwood Heights, and Sandy City. Mr. Perez asked about the Ikon and Epic ski passes.
37 Mr. Fields clarified that the Ikon pass could be used on a varying number of days at the
38 Cottonwood Canyon resorts and Deer Valley. The Epic pass could be used in Park City, including
39 the canyon side of Park City, with limited days at Snowbasin.
40

41 Kim Mayhew from Solitude addressed Senator Riebe’s question about paid parking. She
42 explained that the initiative has been positive and bus ridership had increased by over 40% in Big
43 Cottonwood Canyon by the time the season finished on March 15, 2020. Ms. Mayhew noted that
44 a lot of the Ikon pass guests who did not live in the state of Utah stayed in Salt Lake City. She
45 also reported that Solitude launched a similar app to Snowbird and it had been successful. They

1 initiated a UTA rideshare van for staff, which removed as many as 60 cars from the road each day.
2 However, the rideshare van capacity would be reduced this year due to COVID-19 concerns.
3

4 Mike Maughan from Alta Ski Area shared that two years ago, the resort conducted a survey in the
5 parking lot. An estimated 30% of the cars came from Park City. Another survey was conducted
6 more recently, but only five days of data was collected due to shutdowns caused by COVID-19.
7 The data was incomplete but an average of 15% of the cars came from Park City.
8

9 **3. MTS SUMMIT PREPARATION**

10 11 **a. Julianna Christie and Blake Perez will Share and Discuss the Approach,** 12 **Development, Agenda, and Goals of the MTS Summit.** 13

14 Julianna Christie, Facilitator for the Mountain Transportation System (“MTS”) Virtual Summit,
15 reported that she spoke to many Commissioners and Stakeholders, including members of
16 conservation groups, recreation groups, the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, ski resorts, Ski Utah,
17 Forest Service, private property owners, UTA, Stadler Rail, watershed managers, CW
18 Management Corporation and Dr. Kelly Bricker from the University of Utah. Ms. Christie
19 reviewed some of the key findings from the discussions:
20

- 21 • There was unanimous acknowledgment that congestion is increasing in the canyons. This
22 is a year-round concern;
23
- 24 • Many wanted to see the transportation solutions presented alongside visitor use
25 management issues and environmental concerns;
26
- 27 • There was a desire for a Visitor Use Management Study that will update current
28 information, fill in any gaps, and incorporate climate change predictions. Many believe
29 this should be started before transportation decisions are made;
30
- 31 • Appreciation was expressed for the CWC and the fact that the MTS approach is regional;
32
- 33 • Many believed the transportation solutions should:
34
 - 35 ○ Reduce the number of cars in the canyons;
 - 36
 - 37 ○ Be as inclusive as possible and serve year-round and dispersed users;
 - 38
 - 39 ○ Consider who will be paying for the transportation solution versus who will benefit
40 from the transportation solution;
41
- 42 • There was largely universal support for expanded bus service and a mass transit system
43 that connects to that expanded bus service. There was some concern for the watershed due
44 to significant expansion of buses;
45

- Many supported tolling because it would disincentive vehicular traffic but there were some concerns about the social justice implications; and

- Mixed opinions were expressed about snowsheds. There were questions about the costs, visual impacts, and some watershed concerns.

Ms. Christie noted that some Commissioners and Stakeholders did not have a preference for the transportation mode selected, some had rejected the suggestions altogether, and others felt it was too early to weigh in on a decision. She shared some of the benefits and concerns that were shared:

- Benefits of choosing rail had to do with the fact that it could make multiple stops. This would support dispersed users. The downsides were related to the large footprint, high cost, the need for snow removal, questions about the base area, and concerns about the impacts of rail bringing increased visitors to the area;
- Benefits of choosing aerial had to do with the smaller footprint and the fact that there is less of an environmental impact. The downsides were related to there being service to the ski areas rather than dispersed users, high price tag, questions about the base area and concerns about the impacts of aerial bringing increased visitors to the area; and
- Benefits of connections between the canyons (aerial or tunnel) had to do with added appeal for resort skiers. The downsides were related to cost, impact on viewshed, and protections of the backcountry ski areas.

Ms. Christie discussed the agenda for the Mountain Transportation System Virtual Summit, which was to take place on November 13, 2020, and November 14, 2020. Day one would include the following:

- Opening remarks from CWC Chair Chris Robinson and Mayor Dan Knopp;
- Ms. Christie will share welcoming details including Summit objectives:
 - To review the MTS draft alternatives and updates, including learnings covered from the Design Your Transit tool, public comment, and findings from the October 21, 2020 Stakeholders Council Meeting;
 - To conduct dialogue among members of the public, Stakeholders, CWC Commissioners, and CWC Staff in order to fully understand all of the draft alternatives, the modes, and the demand management strategies, address questions, gather feedback, reach consensus where possible and where consensus is not possible, identify a framework to move forward for further consensus building.
- CWC presentation about the MTS process and the draft alternatives. Review what has been discovered from the expert panel, public comment period, and the Design Your Transit tool;

- 1 • Presentation by Mr. Perez about the MTS process. He will discuss why the CWC began
2 the process, review objectives, and do an overview of the draft alternatives. The
3 presentation would also cover the topic: “Can buses alone solve the transportation issue?”
4
- 5 • Presentation by Laura Briefer from Salt Lake City Public Utilities to discuss what is being
6 done to protect the watershed;
7
- 8 • Work as a group to establish a problem statement. Criteria will be identified to determine
9 how to judge each solution;
10
 - 11 ○ Problem Statement: “In what ways might we explore regional year-round
12 transportation solutions that minimize congestions and improve safety, while
13 addressing environmental concerns and incorporating input from all of you here at
14 the Summit?”
 - 15
 - 16 ○ Decision-Making Criteria:
17
 - 18 ▪ Minimize congestion both in the canyons and adjacent neighborhoods;
 - 19
 - 20 ▪ Provide emergency egress;
 - 21
 - 22 ▪ Address the needs of resort skiers and year-round dispersed recreation
23 users;
 - 24
 - 25 ▪ Take into account the needs of property owners, canyon residents,
26 employees, and businesses;
 - 27
 - 28 ▪ Protect the environment, the wilderness, and the watershed; and
 - 29
 - 30 ▪ Include all viewpoints.
 - 31
- 32 • Discuss each of the draft alternative elements. There will be clarifying questions to start
33 as well as a reaction round. For any areas where a consensus is not reached, plans will be
34 discussed in order to move forward; and
35
- 36 • Review the agreements and outstanding next steps.
37

38 Ms. Christie shared the outline for Day Two of the Summit:

- 39
- 40 • Review the agenda and the results from Day One;
- 41
- 42 • Detailed discussion of each alternative; and
- 43
- 44 • Recap all learnings and discuss next steps.
45

1 Chair Knopp wondered if there should be a brief presentation about the La Caille parking structure
2 at the bottom of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Mr. Perez commented that staff would look into
3 adding that item to the agenda. There was discussion regarding the unintended consequences that
4 transportation hubs and parking structures could have on Wasatch Boulevard. Mr. Becker asked
5 that the Transportation Committee inform staff about any additional items they feel should be
6 addressed during the Mountain Transportation System Virtual Summit.

7
8 **4. ADDITIONAL ITEMS**
9

10 No additional items were discussed.

11
12 **5. ADJOURNMENT**
13

14 **MOTION:** Mayor Beerman moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mayor Peterson.
15 The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

16
17 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately
18 12:55 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting held Friday, October 30, 2020.*
3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____