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**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2023, AT 1:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES, LOCATED AT GATEWAY AT 41 NORTH RIO GRANDE STREET, SUITE 102, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

**Present:** Mayor Dan Knopp  
Mayor Michael Weichers  
Lance Kovel  
Kimberly Bell  
Dina Blaes  
Paul Diegel  
Carl Fisher

**Staff:** Blake Perez, Executive Director of Administration  
Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director of Policy

**OPEN TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**1. Chair Dan Knopp will Call the Meeting to Order and Welcome Committee Members and the Public.**

Chair Dan Knopp called the meeting to order at approximately 1:10 p.m.

**2. The Committee will Approve Minutes from the April 25, 2023 Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Mayor Weichers moved to APPROVE the Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes of April 25, 2023. Mayor Knopp seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

**BCC MAP UPDATE**

**1. The Transportation Committee will Receive a Briefing on the Next Steps for the Final BCC MAP.**

Executive Director of Administration, Blake Perez shared information about the Final Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility Action Plan (“BCC MAP”). He reported that the CWC Board approved the Final BCC MAP at the May 2023 CWC Board Meeting. Subsequently, CWC Staff

1 sent the BCC MAP to the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) and Salt Lake County  
2 leadership to ask for feedback and determine whether there was an opportunity to meet. Some of  
3 the upcoming steps were to send the document to the elected officials in the area, both House  
4 Representatives and State Senators. The Final BCC MAP would be presented for Stakeholders  
5 Council review at the next Stakeholders Council Meeting. The goal was now to share the  
6 document, obtain a consensus, and receive a broader level of support. Mayor Knopp reported that  
7 he had a conversation with UDOT Executive Director, Carlos Braceras. Their process was  
8 underway and he looked forward to seeing what they come up with.  
9

## 10 **MILLCREEK CANYON SHUTTLE RECOMMENDATION**

### 11 **1. The CWC Transportation Committee will Review the Recent Stakeholders Council** 12 **Recommendation to Pursue NEPA Analysis for a Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Program.** 13

14  
15 Mr. Perez reported that Lance Kovel from the U.S. Forest Service submitted a document that was  
16 distributed to the Transportation Committee. It would also be posted on the Utah Public Notice  
17 website. Paul Diegel from the Millcreek Canyon Committee shared background information. He  
18 explained that the Millcreek Canyon Committee recently discussed the Federal Lands Access  
19 Program (“FLAP”) grant and next steps. Someone realized that one of the rationales for the road  
20 improvement was to allow for a future Millcreek Canyon shuttle, which would be required to go  
21 through the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) process. It would take more than the  
22 road upgrades to move the shuttle forward.  
23

24 The Millcreek Canyon Committee believed that it would be productive to start laying the  
25 groundwork for the shuttle. For instance, identify funding, help find funding, and determine the  
26 necessary steps. Mr. Diegel was told that the shuttle was not on the Forest Service’s radar currently  
27 due to other work but the CWC could move that process ahead and make it easier for the Forest  
28 Service once they are ready. Mayor Knopp reported that there had been discussions with the Forest  
29 Service and there was support to start the process in this way.  
30

31 Executive Director of Policy, Lindsey Nielsen reminded those present that the shuttle service in  
32 Millcreek Canyon is one of the very first Stakeholders Council projects. The Millcreek Canyon  
33 Committee was formed as a subcommittee of the Stakeholders Council in 2019. The Millcreek  
34 Canyon Committee wanted to determine the feasibility of a shuttle and look into its  
35 implementation. Those were some of the action items identified in the Mountain Accord. This  
36 was always something the CWC was interested in pursuing. It was exciting to see this  
37 recommendation come through the Millcreek Canyon Committee recently.  
38

39 Mr. Diegel noted that there had been proposals for tolling in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons.  
40 As soon as that happens, a lot of the use will shift to Millcreek Canyon. It was likely that the use  
41 in Millcreek Canyon will increase significantly once tolling or other restrictions are placed in the  
42 other canyons. It made sense to focus on the shuttle now. Mayor Knopp also believed it made  
43 sense to identify funding and move the process forward.

1  
2 **2. The Committee will Discuss Possible Paths to Pursue NEPA Analysis for a Millcreek**  
3 **Canyon Shuttle Program.**  
4

5 Mr. Kovel introduced himself and reported that he serves as a Special Projects Coordinator in the  
6 Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The Salt Lake District Ranger planned to attend the  
7 meeting but had a conflict. Mr. Kovel referenced the Forest Service Briefing Paper that was  
8 distributed to the Transportation Committee. It outlined a process that the Forest Service felt was  
9 necessary for any proposed shuttle service in Millcreek Canyon.

10  
11 The Forest Service supports shuttle service in Millcreek Canyon. Mr. Kovel noted that the shuttle  
12 service was referenced in the Mountain Accord, in which the Forest Service was an active  
13 participant. Since then, the Forest Service continues to acknowledge the need for shuttle service  
14 in Millcreek Canyon. The Forest Service Briefing Paper included background information and  
15 detailed requirements the Forest Service needs to see in a proposal.

16  
17 One of the key concerns pertained to the FLAP grant project that was being carried out in the  
18 canyon. Planning for shuttle service was included in the initial application. Mr. Kovel explained  
19 that the initial application also included road improvements for the entire canyon. The original  
20 cost estimate was \$38 million. That did not include the shuttle service planning but was for road  
21 improvements in the entire canyon. Working with the Federal Highway Administration  
22 (“FHWA”), the project scope was narrowed down to something that was acceptable to FHWA and  
23 stood a chance of being funded. The transportation planning part was removed because doing  
24 transportation through FHWA tended to be extremely expensive. It would have come down to  
25 either not making the roadway improvements or doing a shuttle. However, without the roadway  
26 improvements, the shuttle service would not be possible. Although planning services for the  
27 shuttle were not carried forward in the FLAP grant, the project partners maintained it as a priority.  
28 Work done in the upper portion of the canyon would make it possible to have future shuttle service.

29  
30 Mr. Kovel reported that a public meeting was scheduled in the near future. It would involve  
31 FHWA and the public partners. There would be a presentation related to the environmental process  
32 as well as the conceptual design process. He reiterated that the shuttle service was considered  
33 formally when the FLAP grant project was applied for but was unable to be carried forward fully  
34 through that process. It was still considered a priority to facilitate future shuttle service.

35  
36 Mr. Kovel noted that at the last CWC Board Meeting, Forest Supervisor, Dave Whittekiend,  
37 addressed the CWC Board. Due to the current fiscal and resource limitations within the Forest  
38 Service, there was not enough capacity to take on the shuttle proposal and NEPA work  
39 independently. That did not preclude a third-party, such as the CWC, from creating a proposal for  
40 Forest Service consideration and then procuring a qualified consultant to prepare the necessary  
41 NEPA. That could then be reviewed by the Forest Service and a decision could be made about the  
42 information.  
43

1 As for what a proposal would require, those details were outlined within the Forest Service  
2 Briefing Paper. Mr. Kovel reviewed some of the highlights. For instance, a proposal would need  
3 to cover the anticipated phases of construction in the canyon. He reiterated that the initial FLAP  
4 grant application was for the entire canyon but it was narrowed down to just the upper portion. It  
5 was the intent of the project partners to submit another FLAP grant application for the lower  
6 portion of the canyon to complete the road improvements throughout. The application was to open  
7 in 2025. Based on the timing, if that project was awarded, the construction would take place in  
8 2029 for the lower portion of the canyon. Shuttle service at that time would be unknown because  
9 it was uncertain what that construction would look like. Judging by what was proposed in the  
10 upper portion of the canyon, it was likely that the lower portion of the canyon would be closed to  
11 general public traffic during part or all of the construction time. That may present an opportunity  
12 for shuttle service to come in and address the restricted access.

13  
14 Mr. Kovel reviewed other requirements that a proposal would need to address. The seasonality of  
15 the canyon needs to be considered as well as the types of uses that occurred. It was also necessary  
16 to predict the number of people who will take advantage of the shuttle service and understand how  
17 those demands would be distributed across the forest. The Forest Service managed Millcreek  
18 Canyon similarly to how Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons are managed. Although Millcreek  
19 Canyon is not currently used as a watershed, it has the potential to be designated as a watershed.  
20 As a result, a lot of the same management practices for Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons were  
21 applied to Millcreek Canyon.

22  
23 The infrastructure would need to be examined to make sure there are adequate restrooms and  
24 amenities at shuttle stops to accommodate the predicted influx of riders. Mr. Kovel explained that  
25 it would also be necessary to look at appropriate locations for shuttle stops. It was unlikely that  
26 the stops would be at every trailhead because some trailheads need to be preserved for people who  
27 want more of a secluded recreational experience. Additionally, some trailheads are more amenable  
28 to having a shuttle stop and better able to handle the influx of people. He noted that the road in  
29 Millcreek Canyon, where it crosses National Forest Service lands is under a long-term easement  
30 to Salt Lake County. Salt Lake County maintains the roads. There would need to be close  
31 coordination with them for the use of the road.

32  
33 Mr. Kovel pointed out that there are a few private parcels in the canyon. A proposal would need  
34 to look at how those private lands would be addressed. Mr. Kovel reported the Millcreek fees that  
35 are collected for access are processed by the County. The fees that are not used for the operation  
36 of the fee service were turned over to the Forest Service for maintenance and infrastructure  
37 improvements in the canyon. The Forest Service would ask that a proposal consider how a shuttle  
38 service would impact those fees. It was noted that a successful proposal for the canyon would  
39 involve lands outside of the Forest Service. Mr. Kovel explained that it was important to consider  
40 where people will park and board a shuttle. There is no room in the canyon on Forest Service  
41 lands to do so. It would need to be located outside of the canyon.

42  
43 Mayor Knopp noted that in Big Cottonwood Canyon, limiting parking to manage visitor flow was  
44 not working very well. He believed that needed to be revisited. Mayor Knopp asked about the  
45 revenues that Forest Service receives from Millcreek Canyon tolling. Mr. Kovel was not sure of  
46 the exact number but someone from the County might have a better idea of the figure.

1  
2 Carl Fisher noted that maintaining lots and infrastructure for personal vehicles can sometimes be  
3 more expensive than maintaining and operating infrastructure for a transit system. If there is a loss  
4 to the fee system revenue stream, he wondered if an analysis would be done to determine whether  
5 the costs were offset somewhat. Mr. Kovel believed that was a possibility. The revenues are used  
6 for everything in the canyon, which includes parking infrastructure as well as restroom  
7 maintenance, and trail maintenance. Whether there would be a loss or gain on the revenue, there  
8 would need to be details provided. Currently, the Forest Service does not anticipate using the  
9 shuttle to replace or restrict vehicles in the canyon. It was seen as a way to augment.

10  
11 Mayor Knopp believed that if the CWC could find funding to move the NEPA process forward,  
12 there would be some level of Forest Service partnership and support. Mr. Kovel confirmed this.  
13 However, he pointed out that the Forest Service Briefing Paper included a deadline for the proposal  
14 as July 31, 2023. He understood that did not provide a lot of time. The reason for the deadline  
15 was based on the process of getting a shuttle in place before the anticipated start of the FLAP  
16 construction. That was slated to take place in the spring of 2025. Mr. Kovel explained that if the  
17 proposal was submitted by July 31, 2023, it would give the Forest Service time to analyze the  
18 proposal and determine whether it was feasible. If it was, the Forest Service would determine  
19 what level of NEPA would be required for analysis. It would then be up to the proponent, whether  
20 that is the CWC or another entity, to procure a qualified consultant to prepare the NEPA for Forest  
21 Service consideration. A lot of the NEPA may involve field surveys, which cannot be done in the  
22 winter. That was the reason the timeline for the proposal was only a few months away.

23  
24 The Forest Service would assist the project proponent through each of the different phases.  
25 Mr. Kovel reiterated that the Forest Service would help guide and answer questions throughout  
26 the process. As far as funding, the proponent would need to find the funds for a professional and  
27 comprehensive proposal. If the Forest Service determines that the proposal is feasible, carrying it  
28 through the NEPA phase would also require funding. Mayor Michael Weichers noted that parking  
29 infrastructure for the shuttle had always been an issue. Moving forward with a study to get a  
30 shuttle implemented without having a solution to the parking infrastructure issue did not seem  
31 logical. He was not sure he would support a study before the existing issue is addressed. Mayor  
32 Knopp agreed that the main problem to solve would be parking. However, the best way to solve  
33 that issue was to start taking steps forward. He expressed concerns about the tight deadline.

34  
35 Mr. Perez believed the proposal would acknowledge the need to develop parking. There could be  
36 potential parking included or existing parking lots could be utilized. He saw the shuttle parking  
37 issue as part of the proposal that would be submitted to the Forest Service. Dina Blaes from Salt  
38 Lake County appreciated the work that has been done by the Forest Service. The County was also  
39 interested in pursuing a shuttle and supported the concept. When the FLAP grant proposal was  
40 prepared, the shuttle was an important component. The County recognized the need to scale down  
41 the proposal to receive the grant but still welcomed the idea of a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon. She  
42 reiterated that there was support.

1 Ms. Blaes noted that there had been a lot of discussions about the UDOT Little Cottonwood  
2 Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). She referenced conversations about a tri-  
3 canyon holistic approach. She thought there was some benefit in allowing that process to play out  
4 because there would likely be shuttle proposals in the other canyons as well. Mayor Knopp  
5 understood the comments shared but stressed the importance of starting somewhere. As far as he  
6 knew, UDOT did not have plans in Millcreek Canyon. It was important to start the process.  
7 Mr. Perez explained that the CWC was willing to take on the project manager role.

8  
9 Ms. Nielsen wondered if Ms. Blaes had information about the Millcreek Canyon toll amount and  
10 how a shuttle might impact that. Ms. Blaes did not have that information available but shared  
11 information about timing. If the CWC plans to seek funding from the County, the appropriations  
12 cycle is in October, which would be the first time that the request would be heard by the Council.  
13 Mr. Perez believed there would be a budget amendment shortly. Ms. Blaes clarified that the June  
14 budget cycle is when the Federal grants are trued up because the Federal fiscal year differs from  
15 the County fiscal year. There was a lot of direction that the County should not seek new requests  
16 during the month of June.

17  
18 **3. CWC Staff will Brief the Committee on Draft Scope of Work and Next Steps.**

19  
20 Ms. Nielsen shared the rough timeline that was drafted for the shuttle process. It was created by  
21 CWC Staff as well as Beckee Hotze and Zinnia Wilson with the Forest Service.

22  
23 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

24  
25 There was no public comment.

26  
27 **ADJOURN TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

28  
29 **1. Following a Motion and Affirmative Vote, Chair Knopp will Close the Meeting.**

30  
31 **MOTION:** Mayor Weichers moved to ADJOURN. Mayor Knopp seconded the motion. The  
32 motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

33  
34 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:52 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 Tuesday, May 16, 2023.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

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