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**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”)
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD, WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022,
AT 11:30 A.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM**

- Present:** Mayor Dan Knopp, Chair
Mayor Mike Weichers, Co-Chair
Mayor Monica Zoltanski
Carlton Christensen
- Staff:** Ralph Becker, Executive Director
Blake Perez, Deputy Director
Lindsey Nielsen, Communications Director
Kaye Mickelson, Office Administrator
- Others:** Barbara Cameron
Hoopa
Carl Fisher
Mike Marker
Patrick Shea
Will McCarvill
Jason Robertson
Russ Fox
Evelyn Everton
Jory Johner
Amber Broadaway
Jenna Malone
Randy Doyle
Mike Doyle

OPEN TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

1. Chair Dan Knopp will Call Meeting to Order and Welcome.

Chair Dan Knopp called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Chair Knopp will Lead Discussion on Assigning Co-Chair.

Chair Knopp reported that a Transportation Committee Meeting had not been held in some time. He was Chair of the Committee previously and would continue to serve in that capacity. Mayor

1 Weichers now serves as Co-Chair of the Transportation Committee. The reason Chair Knopp
2 wanted to reconvene the Transportation Committee was to do work related to Big Cottonwood
3 Canyon. He explained that a lot had been done for Little Cottonwood Canyon and it was time to
4 shift the focus. It was important to come up with transportation solutions, because there were as
5 many, if not more, vehicles in Big Cottonwood Canyon on a regular basis.
6

7 The Town of Brighton worked with the U.S. Forest Service and ski areas to ensure that there was
8 no parking on the north side of the road from Brighton Ski Area, past Solitude, to Willow Heights.
9 Chair Knopp explained that in the winter when vehicles are parked on both sides of the road, it is
10 difficult for emergency vehicles to get through. Keeping the north side clear would make it
11 possible for vehicles to move aside and let emergency vehicles through. If someone parks on the
12 road, Brighton can issue civil citation forms. He hoped that would correct the behavior.
13

14 **PURPOSE, TIMELINE, AND ACTION**

15 16 **1. Committee will Discuss and Define the Direction, Focus, and Outcomes of the** 17 **Transportation Committee.** 18

19 Chair Knopp reported that the Transportation Committee discussions would primarily focus on
20 Big Cottonwood Canyon at the current time, but there would still be discussions about Little
21 Cottonwood Canyon. There would also be information shared about the Federal Lands Access
22 Program (“FLAP”) grant in Millcreek Canyon. According to the Forest Service, micro-transit
23 would not be authorized in Millcreek Canyon until the roads were fixed.
24

25 The Committee would continue to build on the “Pillars for Transportation Solutions in the Central
26 Wasatch Mountains” document and the “Mountain Transportation System (“MTS”) Plan.”
27 Partners would include the U.S. Forest Service, the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”),
28 and the towns at the bottom of the canyon. Chair Knopp explained that he intended to focus on
29 reasonable transportation plans that were environmentally sound and would protect the watershed.
30

31 Carl Fisher ad found the Little Cottonwood Canyon process frustrating. He believed the Wasatch
32 needed to have a comprehensive vision, where transportation was viewed as a tool to help realize
33 that vision. He was concerned that transportation was being used as a means to an end. Chair
34 Knopp stated that his aim for this process was for it to be the opposite of the Little Cottonwood
35 Canyon process. He wanted to make sure there was a lot of input, and small, simple solutions are
36 implemented to create notable change. Chair Knopp reported that he participated in many
37 conversations with the Forest Service. Their visitor management was done by parking. Parking
38 was completely out of control and he wanted to address that. If parking on the road was no longer
39 permitted, it would not be possible to fit excess vehicles in the canyon.
40

41 Chair Knopp made note of a transportation model in Oregon, where there were designated pull-
42 out parking spots. A yearly fee was paid to park there and that was the only parking available.
43 The issue in Big Cottonwood Canyon was the unconstrained parking. There are 75 parking spots
44 at Cardiff, but he counted 600 vehicles in the area. That was unsustainable. If it was possible to
45 limit where parking was permitted, the number of vehicles in the canyon could also be limited.

1 The issue now was that the buses were stuck in the same traffic as the vehicles. As a result, the
2 headways on the buses were inconsistent and visitors were less likely to use transit.

3
4 There was a discussion regarding what the resorts are doing to manage parking. Chair Knopp
5 reported that Brighton has limited reserved parking and Solitude has paid parking. However, he
6 noted that the parking strategy at Solitude resulted in vehicles being parked on the road. It is
7 necessary to replace the vehicles on the road with riders on buses. Chair Knopp asked Carlton
8 Christensen if he knew where the satellite parking spots were for Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”).
9 Mr. Christensen reported that there are spots at the mouth of the canyon and also on 2000 East,
10 Highland Drive, and 9000 South. As for which percentage went to Big Cottonwood Canyon versus
11 Little Cottonwood Canyon, there was ridership data that could be shared with the Committee.

12
13 It was suggested that the Transportation Committee take an inventory of the parking needs, look
14 at what the resorts are doing, determine what the Forest Service can contribute, and consider what
15 a no-road parking ordinance would look like. Chair Knopp clarified that the intention was not to
16 remove all road parking because there was a lot of backcountry use to consider. The intent was to
17 make sure there are managed parking areas. Amber Broadway shared information about the
18 Solitude resort. She reported that there was an organized approach to parking and transportation
19 for both guests and employees. A paid parking model was in effect daily. It was incentivized by
20 the number of visitors in the car. For instance, a single-occupancy vehicle paid \$25 per day
21 whereas a vehicle with four or more in the car would pay \$5 per day. She had seen a 100% increase
22 in the three or four-person occupancy vehicles year-over-year.

23
24 Ms. Broadway noted that some guests opted to park on the road, but she did not believe that the
25 majority of Solitude guests chose to do that. Solitude has a comprehensive program that paid for
26 pass holders to use the bus system. There was a record usage this year. Solitude was looking to
27 rent parking spaces in the valley for more employee shuttling and a rideshare app would be
28 launched next year to incentivize carpooling for both employees and guests. Ms. Broadway did
29 not feel that that the reservation parking model was needed for Solitude currently, but it was
30 something that could be utilized on red flag parking days, which were high visitation days. Chair
31 Knopp explained that Solitude started opening at 8:00 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m., which impacted
32 the flow of traffic considerably. The capacity of the canyon was only 1,200 vehicles per hour.

33
34 Chair Knopp felt it was important to remove canyon visitors from their vehicles and increase bus
35 ridership. The Committee could continue to build on the “Pillars for Transportation Solutions in
36 the Central Wasatch Mountains” document and use the Visitor Use Study information. He
37 believed that visitor use strategies need to be identified and implemented to complement any
38 existing management plans. Watershed protection was also a top priority. Chair Knopp wanted
39 to see two transit hubs in the canyon, with one at Brighton and one at Solitude. There could be
40 lockers and restrooms there, with the transit hubs located outside of the ski areas. That type of
41 design means that buses would not need to go directly into the ski areas to drop off visitors. He
42 did not believe a bus lane up the canyon would happen, but if there were two bus lanes between
43 Solitude and Brighton, that would smooth out bus traffic substantially.

44
45 Chair Knopp stressed the importance of year-round transit. The Forest Service was not currently
46 supportive of year-round transit because they did not feel that they could manage that use. It was

1 important to have restrooms in the right places so the Forest Service could allow visitors to be
2 dropped off at trailheads. Brighton was taking over maintenance of the restrooms in areas such as
3 Cardiff and Silver Lake. The town was fully committed to positive change.
4

5 **2. Committee will Review the Timeline for the Calendar Year and Milestones.**
6

7 The timeline for the Transportation Committee's work was discussed. Chair Knopp suggested that
8 over the next few months, the Transportation Committee put all the different options on the table.
9 A consultant would be hired to conduct a traffic study, determine various options, and look for
10 funding sources for improvements. The Town of Brighton, Cottonwood Heights, and some of the
11 ski areas were committed to donating money for the consultant work. Chair Knopp felt it was
12 important to work with UDOT and the Wasatch Front Regional Council. After the traffic analysis
13 and potential cost estimates are complete, the funding sources could be identified as well as
14 possible funding partners. From there, a request for proposal (“RFP”) would be developed.
15

16 Mr. Christensen asked that any transit studies include UTA in the process. Chair Knopp was not
17 certain that more buses were needed, but there needed to be a streamlined process. Mr. Christensen
18 felt that looking at efficiencies would be beneficial. Jenna Malone applauded the efforts of
19 Solitude and Alta to disincentivize single-occupancy vehicles, but stated that it was important to
20 do more. For instance, tolling would be a good year-round solution. Big Cottonwood Canyon
21 saw a lot more summer traffic and there were overflowing parking lots to consider.
22

23 Barbara Cameron thanked Chair Knopp for re-starting the Transportation Committee. She
24 expressed concerns related to summer traffic. There was often a focus on the winter traffic, but
25 Donut Falls and the Silver Lake Boardwalk were the most popular places to visit in the Wasatch
26 during the summer months. When transportation needs were being considered, it was important
27 to think about where visitors would be after they left a bus or a personal vehicle. There needed to
28 be restroom facilities to serve them. She understood that UTA had no plans for summer buses in
29 Big Cottonwood Canyon but summer buses on weekends would be beneficial to many different
30 users. Chair Knoblock noted that Pat Shea left a comment in the Zoom chat box related to funding.
31 He explained that Brighton had already committed to \$100,000 for the consultant work, which
32 would look into potential funding sources. That was a substantial start.
33

34 Mike Marker appreciated that Chair Knopp was proactive about initiating transportation efforts.
35 Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon had more visitors last year than Zion and
36 the same number of visitors as Yellowstone, with a fraction of the land mass. That was an issue.
37 Something that had come out of the Mountain Accord process was the concept of systems thinking.
38 He thought it was beneficial that Chair Knopp wanted to look at transportation as a system. It was
39 important to consider the larger system that transportation was part of. Mr. Marker believed that
40 one of the errors with the Little Cottonwood Canyon approach was letting the transportation
41 system drive the outcome. The desired outcomes and long-term plans for the ski areas should be
42 factored into the discussions. He was encouraged by the fact that Chair Knopp wanted to see
43 small, simple solutions implemented in Big Cottonwood Canyon.
44

45 Chair Knopp noted that the ski areas did a good job of managing a large number of visitors.
46 However, there are visitors all over the canyon and it was important to manage other types of

1 visitors as well. It was also necessary that restrooms were available to ensure that people did not
2 use the forest as a restroom. That was something that he wanted to continue to focus on.

3
4 Jory Johner introduced himself and explained that he was a Long-Range Planning Manager from
5 Wasatch Front Regional Council. In the current Long-Range Transportation Plan, an express bus
6 was planned to go up Big Cottonwood Canyon. That would not be in the 2023 update to the
7 Regional Transportation Plan, because express buses were not being included. However, it would
8 be included in the UTA Long-Range Transit Plan. On the roadside, congestion pricing would be
9 added to the 2023 plan. Mr. Johner explained that the Regional Transportation Plan included road,
10 transit, active transportation, and improvement projects. There was also flexibility to include
11 operational safety and economic development connectivity needs. The plan was updated every
12 four years and it would be adopted in 2023. He overviewed some of the Wasatch Front Regional
13 Council funding sources and suggested that the Committee look into those further.

14
15 Mr. Christensen referenced an earlier comment made by Ms. Cameron related to bus service in the
16 summer months. He explained that it was too late for UTA to run any normal service there in the
17 summer because there was a certain process that needed to be followed. However, occasionally
18 there was a sponsored service for communities. For example, if there was a historically busy
19 weekend, buses could be run in certain areas. Communities would pay for the incremental costs
20 associated with that. That was a possibility that could be considered, but there were considerations
21 for the stops. If the bus stops already existed, they would be grandfathered in, but if there was a
22 new stop, the stop needed to meet the ADA requirements and standards. The UTA Long-Range
23 Transit Plan would inform their recommendations moving forward as well as the five-year plan.

24
25 Mayor Zoltanski believed the focus of the previous transportation discussions had been related to
26 the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). She wondered
27 what the sequence of events was for UDOT planning and how that would impact Big Cottonwood
28 Canyon. She also wanted to know if Chair Knopp was focused on grassroots solutions to address
29 the needs of the canyon or if there was some structure with other entities. It was important to
30 consider what mistakes from the Little Cottonwood Canyon process the Committee did not want
31 to repeat with the Big Cottonwood Canyon study process. Additionally, she wanted to understand
32 where Salt Lake County is in the process and if they would partner on a traffic study. Chair Knopp
33 reported that he asked the County to participate in the current Transportation Committee Meeting,
34 but they did not have the bandwidth to do so. He assumed they would be a partner as this process
35 moved forward. Representatives from UDOT and the Forest Service had committed to attending
36 future Transportation Committee meetings.

37
38 Chair Knopp explained that based on his conversations with UDOT, their focus was on Little
39 Cottonwood Canyon first, and the efforts would then be replicated with Big Cottonwood Canyon
40 afterward. However, he felt that simple solutions would be best and would make the most
41 significant impact within Big Cottonwood Canyon. It was important that transportation work was
42 not stalled in Big Cottonwood Canyon while the focus was on Little Cottonwood Canyon. He felt
43 that transportation solutions in both canyons needed to work together.

44
45 CWC Deputy Director, Blake Perez addressed the comments from Mayor Zoltanski and explained
46 that this was the beginning of the process but there were a lot of historical documents from the

1 CWC and partners which could guide the transportation conversations. The process with UDOT
2 would be explored further, particularly at the project level. For instance, matching immediate
3 service needs with immediate funding sources and matching long-term projects with long-term
4 funding sources. This process would further outline the short-term and long-term projects. Co-
5 Chair Weichers explained that Mr. Perez had forwarded him an email from the GM of Alta, which
6 included data points that had been collected about the reservation system. He asked that Mr. Perez
7 share that information with the full Transportation Committee. Mr. Perez agreed to do so.

8
9 Mr. Fisher explained that after reading the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS, it seemed that
10 transportation solutions for other canyons were starting from a deficit because the parking spaces
11 at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon would likely be utilized to meet the mobility goals for
12 Little Cottonwood Canyon. That essentially took away the parking for Big Cottonwood Canyon.
13 As a result, different park and ride locations would likely be needed to service the canyon,
14 depending on the outcome of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. Chair Knopp believed it
15 was important to make the buses work better. If there were consistent headways, that would help.

16
17 Mr. Shea believed that “paralysis by analysis” applied to the Central Wasatch. Some of the
18 universities may be able to provide an informational overview related to urban planning and
19 transportation planning. He felt there were beneficial resources to consider and use. He offered
20 to introduce Transportation Committee Members to people at the different universities, as they
21 could be of assistance at little or no cost. Chair Knopp thanked Mr. Shea for his offer. He
22 explained that he intended to move transportation work forward. Though he had been on various
23 Committees and Commissions over the years, it was difficult for progress to be made. He wanted
24 to make sure that something was done that would benefit Big Cottonwood Canyon.

25
26 **3. Committee will Discuss Immediate Action Items to Pursue.**

27
28 Chair Knopp explained that the next few months would be dedicated to putting all of the options
29 on the table, listening to everyone, and coming up with a plan that worked for most. The goal was
30 to hire a consultant to focus on a Big Cottonwood Canyon traffic analysis, transit reliability,
31 potential cost estimates, and funding sources. That information would likely be ready by early fall
32 2022. Mr. Perez noted that the future Transportation Committee meeting schedule may vary and
33 it would likely be based on Forest Service and UDOT availability.

34
35 **MILLCREEK FLAP**

36
37 **1. Committee will Receive Update About the Millcreek FLAP.**

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39 **2. Committee will Hear from the Millcreek Committee of the Stakeholders Council.**

40
41 Additional information about the Millcreek FLAP grant project was not shared.

42
43 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

44
45 There were no public comments.

1 **CLOSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

2

- 3 1. **Chair Dan Knopp will Close the Public Meeting as Chair of the Transportation**
4 **Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission.**

5

6 **MOTION:** Co-Chair Weichers moved to ADJOURN the Transportation Committee Meeting.
7 Mayor Zoltanski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8

9 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 12:41 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 Wednesday, May 18, 2022.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____