

To: Executive Committee – Mountain Accord
From: Ann Ober, Staff Lead on the Big Cottonwood to Park City Study
Re: Delay of Big Cottonwood to Park City Study
CC: Wilford Sommerkorn, Ned Hacker, Jonathan Weidenhamer Robin Hutcheson, Barbara Cameron, Jon Larsen, Nathan Rafferty, Laura Briefer, Cathy Kahlow and Jeff Jones.
Date: September 23, 2015

Background

The Accord, signed on July 13, 2015, outlines next steps for the Mountain Accord. Included in section 3 is the following recommendation:

3.11. BIG COTTONWOOD TO PARK CITY

3.11.1. The signers of this Accord agree to further study the economic, transportation, community, and environmental detriments, benefits and impacts (both positive and negative) of a wide range of non auto-based options to connect Park City with Big Cottonwood Canyon. The study will include an analysis of carrying capacity for the broader Park City Community.

3.11.2. Summit County, Park City, Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City, U.S. Forest Service, the environmental community WFRC, and the Ski Resorts will develop a scope for further study and suggest next steps.

3.11.3. The study described above will be conducted through a local process (not a NEPA process) under the direction and control of the parties listed in Section 3.11.2 above.

The signers of this Accord agree that the intent of this effort is to gather information and facts, and no party will have any obligation to act on the information gathered.

3.11.4. The signers of this Accord agree to actively support maintaining Guardsman Pass Road in its current management in winter (closed).

Proposal

Over the past two months, the previously mentioned participants have been meeting to develop a scope for this item. Recently, staff convened to determine if the time is ripe for this work. The team has specific concerns. First, this study will be highly dependent on the transportation model developed in Phase I and currently housed at Wasatch Front Regional Council. This model is integral to three of the projects within Phase II and a component of several other studies. Staff believes that a firm should be hired to manage that model for the Mountain Accord and that the Big Cottonwood to Park City project cannot proceed without that team in place.

Second, a similar issue arises for the economic and fiscal analysis required to make this project valuable. The current program manager for Mountain Accord, Laynee Jones, has recommended that Mountain Accord hire an economic analyst, if not team, to evaluate the economic and fiscal impacts associated with the Phase II projects. The Big Cottonwood to Park City staff team believes that the hired consultant/manager should determine the correct team and economic model to utilize prior to this team trying to assess the economic impact of four to five transportation modes.

Third, a significant portion of this work is qualitative. There are qualitative components of other projects that are moving forward and it makes some sense to collaborate with those projects prior to releasing this RFP.

The team does feel that this information is necessary in the future and would recommend re-establishing this committee once the transportation and economic models are up and running. For this reason, we would recommend that the Executive Committee approve this project for Phase III funding in January 2017 or for funding later in Phase II.

Funding Needs

- **To be determined once the broader, more regional teams for the transportation and economic models have been secured.**

Key Considerations and Benefits

- **This allows for current funding, which is more limited than had been expected, to be used on projects that are ready for immediate action.**
- **Funding in Phase III would allow us to limit the total cost of the project by not reinventing the wheel of other contracts.**