

MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION ("CWC") STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2020 AT 3:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM WITH NO ANCHOR LOCATION.

6 7 **Present:** 

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Chair Dr. Kelly Bricker, Vice-Chair Jan Striefel, Chris Cawley, George Vargyas, Ed Marshall, Steve Van Maren, Mike Marker, Barbara Cameron, Julianna Christie, Bobby Sampson, Dennis Goreham, Don Despain, Kyle Maynard, Nate Rafferty, Ned Hacker, Carl Fisher, Donn Knopp, Carlton Christenson, Annalee Munsee, Brian Hutchinson, Del Draper, John Knoblock, Randy Doyle, Paul Diegel, Megan Nelson, Mike Maughan, Nate Furman, Patrick Shea, Steve Issowitz, Tamara Prue, Chris Robinson, Sarah Bennett, Dave Fields, Alex Schmidt, Helen Peters, Harris Sondak, Marci Houseman

**CWC Staff:** 

Executive Director Ralph Becker, Deputy Director Blake Perez, Communications Director Lindsey Nielsen, Office Administrator Kaye Mickelson

#### 1. **OPENING**

a. Dr. Kelly Bricker will Conduct the Meeting as Chair of the Stakeholders Council ("SHC").

Stakeholders Council Chair, Dr. Kelly Bricker called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 p.m.

b. Chair Kelly Bricker will Read the Determination Letter Referencing Electronic Meetings as Per the Legislative Requirements.

Chair Bricker read the following statement:

Pursuant to Utah Code §52-4-207-4, the Mountain Accord Stakeholders Council of the Central Wasatch Commission ("CWC") hereby determined that conducting Council Meetings at any time during the next 30 days at an anchor location presents substantial risks to the health and safety of those who may be present at the anchor location. The World Health Organization, the President of the United States, the Governor of the State of Utah, the Salt Lake County Mayor, and the Salt Lake County Health Department have all recognized that a global pandemic exists related to a new strain of Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Due to the state of emergency caused by this global pandemic, we find that conducting a meeting at an anchor location under the current state of public

health emergency constitutes a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present at the location. According to the information of State Epidemiology experts, Utah is currently in an accelerated phase which has the potential to overwhelm the State's health care system.

c. The Stakeholders Council Will Consider Approving the Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, July 15, 2020.

**MOTION:** Barbara Cameron moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, July 15, 2020. Paul Diegel seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Council.

d. As Recommended by the CWC Executive Council, Jan Striefel will Complete the Current Term of Vice-Chair ending 6/30/2021 with the Resignation of Greg Summerhays – Vice-Chair, Dr. Kelly Bricker, Automatically becomes Chair for the Balance of the Remaining Term Ending 6/30/2021 Per Rules and Procedures.

Executive Director, Ralph Becker, reported that when a Chair steps down, the Vice-Chair automatically assumes the Chair position. This means that Dr. Kelly Bricker has now assumed the Chair position of the Stakeholders Council for the remaining term. The move was considered and approved by the CWC's Executive Committee. Staff did not want to leave the Vice-Chair position vacant, so the Executive Committee recommended that Jan Striefel fill the position. Mr. Becker reported that certain criteria must be met in terms of the selection of the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. Whoever serves in those positions cannot be an advocate for a particular organization or have a specific business interest in the CWC. Members who fit that criteria were reviewed and Vice-Chair Striefel was selected to serve in that role for the interim period. The CWC Board would consider the matter at the November 2, 2020 meeting.

Barbara Cameron wondered if the Stakeholders Council could nominate potential candidates. Mr. Becker stated that if there was someone the members of the Stakeholders Council want to serve as Vice-Chair, they could contact staff or the CWC Board Members. He noted that the Commission wanted to move forward quickly on an interim basis to ensure that someone is available in the event the Chair is unable to serve. Ms. Cameron suggested Marci Houseman but Mr. Becker explained that a Commission Member cannot serve on the Stakeholders Council.

Dave Fields asked for more information on Vice-Chair Striefel's background. Mr. Becker reported that Vice-Chair Striefel initially was put forward by the League of Women Voters as a suggestion for a Stakeholders Council position. She previously ran a landscape, architectural, and environmental planning firm, called Landmark Design. Vice-Chair Striefel worked on a variety of matters, including some related to transportation. She sold her business, retired, became involved with the League of Women Voters, and eventually became a member of the Stakeholders Council. Vice-Chair Streifel added that Landmark Design was involved in recreation planning and environmental planning projects.

Chair Bricker publicly thanked Greg Summerhays for his leadership in the Chair role. She also thanked Vice-Chair Striefel for assuming the Vice-Chair position.

### 2. <u>VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT UPDATE</u>

a. Staff Will Provide Funding Update.

CWC Deputy Director, Blake Perez, reported that at the next Budget/Finance Committee Meeting they will consider recommendations for the use of reserves to work on the Environmental Dashboard and Phase 1 of the Visitor Use Management Study. They will weigh in on what membership contributions have been made and determine whether the CWC was able to fund the projects.

Mike Marker noted that there had been a lot of interest in the Visitor Use Management Study. He did not feel there was a guarantee that the study would be funded. Mr. Becker reported that the Stakeholders Council initially recommended the Visitor Use Management Study, which had gone on to the CWC Board. A determination was made to pursue Phase 1 of the study subject to the following conditions:

• Sandy City approving their budget amendment to include funding for the CWC; and

• Solicit funding from other sources.

Mr. Becker noted that Sandy City may be moving forward with the budget amendment. He hoped they would reach a final decision before the end of the month. There had also been commitments to provide private funding. Mr. Becker felt that the next steps would be for the Budget/Finance Committee to make a recommendation about whether to move forward and use CWC reserves to initiate the study. There may still be conditions related to Sandy City and private funding. Mr. Becker considered the Visitor Use Management Study to be an important project.

### 3. TRAILS COMMITTEE

a. John Knoblock will Provide an Update on Trails Committee Work Done to Date.

Trails Committee Chair, John Knoblock, reported that one of the main reasons for the Trails Committee was to push forward the Trails Master Plan. He noted that there was interest among various parties and governmental entities and it was important to coordinate with them. Mr. Knoblock reported that the Trails Committee was coordinating with Patrick Nelson from Salt Lake City Watershed. Mr. Nelson did not want to move forward with the Trails Master Plan until Salt Lake City Watershed has completed its Watershed Management Plan. Mr. Knoblock reported that the Trails Committee was also working with the U.S. Forest Service. He noted that they had an employee working on a trails inventory of user-created trails.

The Trails Committee was also working with Martin Jensen and Walt Gilmore from Salt Lake City
Parks & Recreation. Mr. Jensen wanted Parks & Recreation to be the lead agency that pulls the
Trails Master Plan together. Mr. Jensen had been working with Helen Peters, from the Salt Lake
County Regional Planning Department, to secure funding through the Transportation Choice Fund.

He was attempting to pull funding together and would coordinate with the Trails Committee, Salt Lake City Watershed, and the U.S. Forest Service.

Patrick Shea wondered when the Trails Committee was created and who was serving on the Committee. Mr. Knoblock reported that the Trails Committee was created in January 2020 and included Ms. Cameron and Sarah Bennett. The Committee had not met formally at this stage but was working behind the scenes to coordinate with various agency partners. Mr. Shea believed Kyle Maynard from Friends of Alta should be included on the Committee.

 Ms. Bennett noted that the Trails Committee planned for a small project with the Salt Lake Ranger District, using money from the CWC that was slated for small projects. \$20,000 was identified for a bridge project on the Desolation Trail. The timing was pushed back, which allowed the Committee to write a grant and double the money. This would broaden the scope and allow for additional trail fixes in the Big Cottonwood drainage.

### 4. MILLCREEK CANYON COMMITTEE UPDATE

a. Ed Marshall, Chair of the Millcreek Canyon Committee will Provide an Update on the Work of the Committee to Date. Minutes of the Committee are Posted on the Utah Public Notice Website.

Millcreek Canyon Committee Chair, Ed Marshall, reported that many of the issues facing Millcreek Canyon differ from those facing the Cottonwood Canyons. He noted that there is a County Road rather than a State Highway. Mr. Marshall stated that the County Road is not fully developed. A few years ago, a four-foot-wide righthand shoulder was constructed on the uphill side but it only extends for the first three miles. In the upper canyon, the upper half of the County Road has no shoulder and the top portion becomes very narrow.

From November 1 to July 1 of each year, the road is closed halfway up the canyon at the winter gate. The County Road becomes a trail and is used by many diverse groups for various recreational purposes. Mr. Marshall noted that approximately 90% of the users are pedestrians and many of them have dogs. When there is snow on the ground, there are often cross-country skiers. When there is little or no snow on the ground, there are mountain bikers and road cyclists. These diverse user groups set the scene for potential conflicts above the winter gate. These conflicts could lead to public safety issues. Mr. Marshall noted that determining how to manage these issues had been frustrating for the U.S. Forest Service and the Parks and Recreation Department. There had been discussions about banning bikes and dogs on alternating days.

The Millcreek Canyon Committee discussed the issues for the following reasons:

• User conflicts and public safety are important issues and should be addressed;

• Resolving these issues was a recommendation of the Mountain Accord for Millcreek Canyon. The CWC is advancing the proposals of the Mountain Accord; and

• None of the user groups want the U.S. Forest Service or the County to close the road to them on alternating days.

Mr. Marshall reported that there are six members of the Millcreek Canyon Committee besides himself. They were identified as:

- Del Draper;
- Paul Diegel;
- Tom Diegel;
- John Knoblock;
- Brian Hutchinson:
- Polly Hart and Hillary Jacobs from Millcreek F.I.D.O.S. are unofficial members as well as Mike Mikhalev from the Salt Lake County Bicycle Advisory Committee and Salt Lake resident, Kathleen Bratcher.

Mr. Marshall noted that the Committee has been working on proposals to mitigate potential user group conflicts for five months. They were looking for approval from the Stakeholders Council so that the proposals could be forwarded to the CWC Board for approval.

 Mr. Diegel noted that this was not a complete list of the issues in Millcreek Canyon. The Committee focused largely on road-related issues, safety, and overall user experience. He reported that the Committee came up with possible recommendations that focused on the following three scenarios:

1. The road is open to cars;

2. The road is snow-covered and closed above the winter gate; and

3. The road is partially bare and cyclists can ride up the road.

Mr. Diegel stated that one of the rules the Committee imposed was to recommend solutions that could be implemented fairly quickly and that do not involve changing rules or laws.

Committee recommendations for when the road is open to cars were as follows:

• Encourage pedestrians to use the south side of the road in the lower canyon below Maple Grove. This would be for travel in both directions. The shoulder on the south side is much wider than on the north side and there is a better line of sight;

• Remind users that traffic rules for cyclists must be enforced. It is important to make sure cyclists understand they are part of the road system and are subject to the same rules;

• Post "Share the Road" and "Give Three Feet" signs to encourage pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to share the road and allow for space;

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- Crosswalk or series of crosswalks at the Millcreek Inn area and the complex with picnic areas on both sides of the road. There is a lot of congestion in these areas and crosswalks would make it clear that motorists and cyclists need to slow down to accommodate others;
- Install a flashing crosswalk light at Log Haven. There is a crosswalk area that is frequented by restaurant patrons. A flashing crosswalk light would signal user groups to slow down;
- Reduce the speed limit above the winter gate, where the road gets narrower and sightlines are reduced. The speed could be as low as 15 mph in the upper regions of the canyon; and
- Put flashing speed signs up, either permanently or periodically with variable measuring signs. These would show user groups how fast they are going.
- The following Committee recommendations were shared for when the gate is closed above the winter gate:
  - Existing rules that apply to user groups need to be clarified and enforced. This can be done through clearer wording on signs and written materials as well as consistent enforcement;
  - Establish recommendations and rules of etiquette for the canyon;
  - Pedestrian traffic both up and down the canyon should stay in the south lane of the road. Cyclists and skiers should be in the south lane going up, in the middle of the road to pass, and in the north lane during descent. Restrict descending cyclists to a third of the road, since there are generally more people visiting the canyon on foot; and
  - Encourage cyclists to recognize that this is a shared mixed-use trail. Cyclists need to give an audible warning (a shout or a bicycle bell) when approaching pedestrians and be prepared to slow down as necessary. A public awareness campaign could spread the word using social media, clear signs, and enforcement officers.
- Mr. Diegel reported that there were minor updates made to the letter sent to the Stakeholders Council. He noted that the main focus of the Committee recommendations was to increase safety and improve the overall user experience.
- Mr. Hutchinson commented that it was important to be mindful of the unintended consequences of some of the decisions. He raised concerns that one of the advocacy groups at the last meeting seemed to have an unbending position. Mr. Hutchinson considered the environment in the canyons to be ill-suited for off-leash dogs. In addition, he did not believe dogs should be permitted every day. He suggested that the Stakeholders Council consider the issue further so that improvements can be made to necessary policies.
- Mr. Marshall commented that there are few places in the east Salt Lake area where people can walk their dogs and have them off-leash. Millcreek Canyon allows dogs because it is a designated watershed but not a protected watershed. The water from Millcreek Canyon is not used for culinary purposes and there is no filtration plant. Dog walkers are one of the largest user groups

in the canyons and there tend to be far more dog walkers than cyclists or downhill skiers. Mr. Marshall recognized that space is needed for skiers and downhill cyclists due to the speed differences. A split was proposed so that one-third of the road would be dedicated to a specific user group and two-thirds to the remaining user groups. The road is 22 feet wide with two 11-foot lanes. Mr. Diegel added that some of the issues Mr. Hutchinson was worried about would diminish if the existing rules are followed.

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Mr. Draper noted that the Committee had not tried to change any of the existing rules. They took the situations that existed and tried to add safety among various user groups. Whether dogs should be permitted or allowed to be off-leash was beyond the scope of the Committee.

Mr. Shea wondered if the Committee had considered having the water analyzed for pathogenic and non-pathogenic material. Even though Millcreek Canyon is not used for potable water, the analysis could show what is actually happening within the canyon. Mr. Diegel felt it was a good idea but not part of the current project recommendations. Mr. Shea believed it was a primary health concern and should be prioritized.

Mr. Knoblock noted that the Committee wanted to move something forward that is achievable right away. He worried that attempting to alter dog regulations would slow the Committee down. Mr. Diegel agreed and stated that the Committee does not have the authority to say whether dogs are allowed in the canyons. They could give opinions or make a recommendation if the U.S. Forest Service or Salt Lake County ask, but it would be presumptuous to take on the issue.

Mr. Hutchinson felt that an increasing number of dogs are being accommodated simply because there are not many places for them to go. He wondered if the Committee was being consistent with the principles of the Mountain Accord by accommodating domestic animals in a natural setting rather than seeking to restore and preserve the natural setting. He asked if the Committee was being consistent with the Mountain Accord and if the canyons should move away from allowing dogs. Mr. Marshall responded that the Committee was being consistent with the Mountain Accord, which reasonably promotes canyon recreation. He noted that dog owners have been using the canyon for decades. Mr. Marshall stated that there is no wildlife near the road during the day due to cyclists and various other user groups. As a result, the dogs will have no impact on wildlife during that time.

 Carl Fisher wondered if there was a way to implement some of the recommendations on a temporary or trial basis. This would allow the Committee to evaluate the impacts of the proposed changes. Mr. Marker stated that he would be more comfortable if a formal timeframe was determined to review and assess whether the changes are working. Mr. Diegel explained that the intent was to pass the recommendations along to the U.S. Forest Service and Salt Lake County and work with them to determine how to best enact the proposed changes. Reviews and timeframes would be resolved at the detail level.

Mr. Marshall noted that the Committee would present suggestions to the U.S. Forest Service and Salt Lake County. Everything was in writing to ensure that the majority of the Committee was in agreement about the recommendations. If the recommendations have the approval of the Stakeholders Council as well as the CWC Board, they would carry more weight. This would

increase the likelihood that some of the proposals will be accepted and implemented by the U.S. Forest Service and Salt Lake County.

The Council discussed adding a recommendation to the proposal stating that the results would be monitored. Mr. Hutchinson suggested a monthly review process while Mr. Marshall suggested a quarterly review process. It was noted that the U.S. Forest Service and Salt Lake County would handle the implementation of the recommendations as well as monitoring.

**MOTION:** Del Draper moved to approve the recommendations presented by the Millcreek Canyon Committee to the CWC Board, as amended, with a condition to request periodic monitoring if any of the proposed changes are implemented. Mike Marker seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Council.

# 5. <u>CWC MOUNTAIN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ("MTS") DRAFT ALTERNATIVES</u>

a. Introductory Remarks by Julianna Christie: MTS Summit Facilitator.

 Julianna Christie, Facilitator for the Mountain Transportation System ("MTS") Virtual Summit, reported that she had spoken with 26 Stakeholders, including members of conservation groups, recreation groups, the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, ski resorts, Ski Utah, Forest Service, private property owners, watershed managers, and Chair Bricker. Ms. Christie reviewed some of the findings from the Stakeholder discussions as follows:

• There was unanimous acknowledgement that congestion is increasing in the canyons. This is a year-round concern;

• Many of the Stakeholders want to see the transportation solutions presented alongside visitor use management issues and environmental concerns;

• There was a desire for a Visitor Use Management Study that will update current information, fill in any gaps, and incorporate climate change predictions. Many believe this should be started before transportation decisions are made;

• Appreciation was expressed for the CWC and the fact that the MTS approach is regional;

• The transportation solutions many of the Stakeholders want to see should aim to:

o Reduce the number of cars in the canyons;

o Be as inclusive as possible and serve year-round and dispersed users; and

 Consider who will be paying for the transportation solution versus who will benefit from the transportation solution.

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45 46 • There was largely universal support for expanded bus service and a mass transit system that connects to that expanded bus service. Electric buses were mentioned;

• Many of the Stakeholders 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 of the Stakeholders did not have a preference for which transportation mode was selected, some 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 shared by Stakeholders related to the different modes of transportation as follows:

- The 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; and
- The 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.
  - b. Stakeholders Council will Break into Groups to Provide Feedback on Each Alternative.

Mr. Perez explained that the Stakeholders Council would break out into smaller discussion groups to discuss the MTS alternatives. There would be three groups in total with a leader and a scribe:

- Group #1: Laura Hanson (Lead) and Kaye Mickelson (Scribe);
- Group #2: Chris Cawley (Lead) and Caroline Rodriguez (Scribe);
- Group #3: Ned Hacker (Lead) and Kyle Maynard (Scribe).

Mr. Becker reported that the CWC Board requested more direct input from the Stakeholders Council. The groups would allow for interaction and discussion about the MTS alternatives. He noted that several Commissioners were listening in on the Stakeholders Council Meeting. They were interested in hearing some of the discussions ahead of the summit.

Mr. Perez assigned the Stakeholders Council Members to their groups for a discussion period.

Stakeholder Council will Discuss Preliminary Questions and Concerns c. **Regarding MTS Summit.** 

Ms. Mickelson reported that the Group #1 discussions were about the gondola and expanding the bus service. There were concerns about being able to protect the watershed, development increases, and capacities. Stakeholders noted that they had already seen an increase in volume and transportation would cause volumes to increase even more. There was discussion related to the impact on water quality, the user experience, whether busses can handle all of the transportation needs, and whether gondolas are a safer alternative. They noted that the gondola does not include snowsheds but it would remove a lot of vehicles from the road.

Mr. Crawley reported that the Group #2 discussions covered each of the primary alternatives. There was support for any solution that would accommodate growth and reduce vehicular congestion in Little Cottonwood Canyon. It was noted that there were challenges related to physically locating a rail line in the upper canyon, given the layout of development and the existing infrastructure. Comments were made for and against a bus-based system. Some believe bus-based solutions would utilize existing infrastructure and serve dispersed users, while others felt it would not be reliable due to weather and geographic circumstances. Clarification was needed on the relationship between MTS and the Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS"). There was also discussion regarding snowsheds and whether they would be favorable.

 Mr. Maynard reported that the Group #3 discussions were centered around the alternatives in the MTS and EIS. There were concerns about choosing an alternative without fully understanding all of the associated projects and impacts. All of the alternatives had negative impacts to consider and a number of different projects were tied to each alternative. Stakeholders noted that there were different needs for Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Some of the Stakeholders felt there was a lack of interest in preserving open spaces in the area. There was also a back and forth conversation about integrating traffic solutions into the valley.

Ms. Christie discussed the preliminary approach for the Mountain Transportation System Virtual Summit, which would take place on November 13, 2020, and November 14, 2020. Day One would include the following:

• Review the objectives and the agenda;

• CWC presentation about the MTS process and the draft alternatives. Review what has been discovered from the expert panel, public comment period, and the Build Your Transit online tool;

• Presentation by Laura Briefer from Salt Lake City Public Utilities to discuss what is being done to protect the watershed;

• Work as a group to establish a problem statement. Criteria will be identified in order to determine how to judge each solution;

• Discuss each of the draft alternative elements. There will be clarifying questions to start as well as a reaction round. For any areas where a consensus is not reached, plans will be discussed in order to move forward; and

• Review the agreements and outstanding next steps.

Ms. Christie shared the preliminary approach for Day Two of the summit as follows:

• Review the agenda and the results from day one;

• CWC presentation to discuss the question: "Can buses alone solve the transportation issues?";

• A detailed discussion of each alternative; and

• Recap all learnings and discuss next steps.

### 6. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Mr. Becker reported that the next CWC Board Meeting was scheduled for November 2, 2020. In addition to discussing the Millcreek Canyon Committee recommendations, there would be discussions related to the Budget/Finance Committee. The Committee was considering whether to move forward with the completion of the Environmental Dashboard. There was also discussion about initiating funding through reserves in order to move forward with the Visitor Use Management Study.

The Legislative/Land Tenure Committee and the Executive Committee recommended moving forward with the next draft of the Congressional Legislation for public review. If the CWC Board approved the draft, it would be put out for public review shortly after the Board Meeting. Mr. Becker reported that the most significant change to the draft had to do with land exchanges. The ski resorts did not want to continue pursuing the land exchange proposals at this time. They were removed from the draft bill in order to move forward with the other elements of the bill.

Chair Bricker thanked Vice-Chair Striefel, the group leaders and scribes, and the Stakeholders for their participation in the meeting.

### 7. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

**MOTION:** Annalee Munsee moved to adjourn. Del Draper seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Council.

The Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central
 Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Meeting held Wednesday, October 21, 2020.

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## Teri Forbes

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