

1 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”)**
2 **TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD, WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2021,**
3 **AT 10:30 A.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM**
4

5 **Present:** Mayor Dan Knopp, Chair
6 Mayor Mike Peterson
7 Councilor Max Doilney
8

9 **Staff:** Ralph Becker, CWC Executive Director
10 Blake Perez, CWC Deputy Director
11 Lindsey Nielsen, Communications Director
12

13 **Others:** Vince Izzo, UDOT
14 Bri Binnebose, UDOT
15 Lance Kovel, U.S. Forest Service
16 Helen Peters, Salt Lake County
17 Pat Shea
18 Carl Fisher
19 Barbara Cameron
20 Dave Fields
21 Mike Maughan
22 Chris McCandless
23 Brian Hutchinson
24

25 **OPENING TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**
26

27 **1. Dan Knopp will Conduct the Meeting as the Chair of the Transportation Committee.**
28

29 Chair Dan Knopp called the meeting to order approximately 10:30 a.m.
30

31 The Legislature, pursuant to Section 52-4-207(4), required the Committee to make a
32 determination, which was as follows:
33

34 ‘Notice is hereby given that the Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee
35 will hold a meeting at approximately 10:30 a.m. or soon thereafter, on Wednesday, July
36 21, 2021. In view of the current COVID-19 pandemic, this work session will occur
37 electronically, without a physical anchor location, as authorized by UTAH CODE ANN.
38 52-4-207(4). The public may register for the meeting through the following link.’
39

40 **DRAFT EIS DISCUSSION**
41

42 **1. Vince Izzo from the UDOT EIS Team will be in Attendance to Answer Questions.**
43

44 Vince Izzo from the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) Little Cottonwood Canyon
45 Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) team was present to answer questions. Chair Knopp
46 asked for details related to the public outreach efforts. Mr. Izzo reported that those efforts had

1 been going well. At the in-person open house, there were approximately 350 attendees with around
2 30 residents who spoke. At the virtual meeting, there were approximately 150 attendees and
3 approximately 30 residents who spoke. To date, an estimated 3,500 comments had been received
4 on the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS.

5
6 Mayor Mike Peterson commented that he attended the in-person open house event. He felt it was
7 well run and there were a lot of opportunities to look at the different aspects of the UDOT Little
8 Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS to learn more. CWC Executive Director, Ralph Becker added that
9 CWC Chair, Chris Robinson made a presentation during the virtual meeting and outlined the
10 Mountain Transportation System (“MTS”) Pillars Document.

11
12 Chair Knopp asked about tolling. He noted that there had been some concerns from residents that
13 tolling in Little Cottonwood Canyon would result in a shift from Little Cottonwood Canyon to Big
14 Cottonwood Canyon. Mr. Izzo explained that in order to incentivize people to use whatever form
15 of transit was selected, there would need to be a toll. Based on preliminary surveys, in order to
16 incentivize people to move over to transit, the toll would need to be between \$20 and \$30. Mr. Izzo
17 reported that the toll would be variable. For instance, if not enough people moved from personal
18 vehicles to transit, the toll would increase. If too many people moved from personal vehicles to
19 transit and the transit system was overwhelmed, the toll could be reduced.

20
21 Mr. Izzo reported that the toll gantry would not occur until just before Snowbird Entry 1. Anyone
22 wanting to use the lower canyon would be able to do so freely. Additionally, there would not be
23 a toll during the summer season. Tolling would occur during the peak winter ski days and during
24 the peak morning period. Mr. Izzo noted that the toll gantry location and the variable timing
25 addressed low-income individuals. If someone wanted to ski, transit would be available, which
26 would be subsidized. Additionally, there would be no toll later in the day.

27
28 UDOT realized that tolling in Little Cottonwood Canyon would likely cause people to move over
29 to Big Cottonwood Canyon. However, Chapter 20 of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft
30 EIS outlined indirect impacts. It included an analysis of what tolling in Big Cottonwood Canyon
31 could look like. For example, a toll gantry right before the Solitude resort. If tolling were to take
32 place in Big Cottonwood Canyon as well, bus service would need to be increased.

33
34 Discussions were had about tolling versus paid parking at the ski resorts. Mr. Izzo commented
35 that UDOT was not sure that paid parking would work. The point of tolling was that the cost could
36 be adjusted during peak periods. A singular price for parking would still result in a rush of people
37 trying to reach the ski resort early in the morning. Variable tolling would be better able to alleviate
38 congestion. Mr. Izzo noted that even with parking reservation systems in place at the ski resorts,
39 the congestion would not be reduced on the roads as everyone would still try to arrive at the same
40 time. Dave Fields stated that at Snowbird, there had been later arrivals at the resort due to the
41 reservation system that had been in place last winter.

42
43 Chair Knopp reported that WW Clyde, Stacy & Witbeck, Inc., and Stadler presented a public-
44 private partnership to UDOT related to a cog rail system. He asked about that decision-making
45 process. Mr. Izzo explained that it had been presented to a different group within UDOT. The
46 public-private partnership was not presented to the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS team.

1
2 Chair Knopp asked about the ideal timeline for the transportation solution. Mr. Izzo reported that
3 once a decision is made and the Legislature allocates funds, it will likely be 12 to 18 months before
4 construction can take place. This was due to the need for design plans to take place as well as
5 contractor procurement. If the bus alternative was selected, it would take approximately 18 months
6 just to order the buses. Chair Knopp asked about the Legislative process. Mr. Izzo stated that the
7 Legislature would be aware of the decision from UDOT and would decide whether to allocate
8 funds during the Legislative Session.

9
10 Mayor Peterson appreciated the clarification related to tolling. He wondered who the actual
11 decision-makers for the Final EIS report would be. Mr. Izzo explained that UDOT management
12 would make that decision. Mayor Peterson also wondered if there had been any interest in inviting
13 Legislators or the Governor to visit the canyons or to brief them personally on the transportation
14 issues. Mr. Izzo commented that the EIS process tried to stay out of politics.

15
16 Mayor Peterson commented that Cottonwood Heights appreciated the inclusion of the Wasatch
17 Boulevard Master Plan in the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS. He understood that
18 UDOT does not have the ability to recommend a road speed but he wondered whether it would be
19 possible to recommend the type of road, the amenities on the road, or specific traffic calming
20 measures. Those recommendations could impact the determined speed. Mr. Izzo reported that
21 Chapter 2 of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS mentioned the design of the road.
22 UDOT would use the Wasatch Boulevard Master Plan as a guideline and work with Cottonwood
23 Heights on the design of the road. They were committed to working with the City.

24
25 Discussions were had about transportation stops. Mayor Peterson noted that one common concern
26 during the in-person open house was that both the gondola and enhanced bus alternative had only
27 two stops consisting of Snowbird and Alta. Mr. Izzo stressed the importance of alleviating road
28 congestion by focusing on the ski resorts in the winter months. He added that it cost a lot of money
29 to add additional gondola stops. Bringing down the gondola at the White Pine Trailhead, for
30 instance, would place the gondola in the avalanche path. That would make the gondola system
31 more like a road in the sense that it would need to be shut down more frequently.

32
33 Mr. Fields commented that the majority of dispersed recreation in Little Cottonwood Canyon
34 occurred in three main places:

- 35
36
- White Pine (in summer and winter);
 - Albion Basin (in summer); and
 - Grizzly Gulch (in winter).
- 37
38
39

40 He noted that there is an existing trail from Snowbird down to White Pine. However, he suggested
41 that visitors take the selected transportation alternative to the Snowbird stop. From there, visitors
42 could take a shuttle bus to White Pine. Some sort of shuttle bus solution would increase
43 connectivity and address certain limitations. Mayor Peterson thought it was important to let people
44 know that there could potentially be shuttles to other recreation areas.

1 Mayor Peterson noted that there was some support for buses as an interim measure. He asked if
2 there was a possibility that enhanced buses could be used until funding and construction took place
3 for a gondola. Mr. Izzo stated that the current bus system would continue to operate until the
4 selected alternative was implemented. Enhanced buses could not be implemented as an interim
5 solution as parking structures would need to be built and buses would need to be purchased. He
6 explained that only one alternative would be selected from either the gondola or enhanced bus.

7
8 Mr. Becker shared a follow-up comment related to the previous discussion about shuttle buses.
9 He wondered if the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS could include information about the ski
10 resort's intention to provide some sort of bus service for dispersed recreation users. Mr. Izzo noted
11 that potential ski resort shuttles would not be UDOT related. It would be something done
12 independently. Additionally, running a commercial shuttle from Snowbird to White Pine would
13 require environmental clearance. Lance Kovel from the U.S. Forest Service noted that something
14 like that would require a special use permit. An assessment would be done based on the impacts
15 associated with the number of people that would use the infrastructure at each location or stop.

16
17 Chair Knopp asked where the Forest Service stands as it relates to bus stops in the canyon. He
18 believed the Forest Service was not interested in having a local bus that stopped at different
19 trailheads. Mr. Kovel explained that a bus or a shuttle would require the Forest Service to look at
20 the impact of that service at those stops. The limiting factor at trailheads had to do with the number
21 of available parking stalls. Once buses or shuttle services were introduced, it became less definite.
22 Different variables would have to be taken into consideration and analysis would be needed.

23
24 Mayor Peterson noted that parking on the roadside was becoming an increasing problem for UDOT
25 and the Forest Service. He wondered if there were any efforts related to augmenting parking up
26 and down the canyon. Mr. Kovel explained that the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS
27 included parking alternatives. He reported that the Forest Service was the recipient of some of the
28 funding available through the Great American Outdoors Act. A lot of that funding would look at
29 specific sites in both Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood canyon. Parking would be
30 also part of that discussion. Additionally, the Forest Service would work with UDOT to address
31 how to handle roadside parking and make the roads safer.

32
33 Councilor Max Doilney noted that consensus on a transportation alternative would be difficult to
34 achieve. He wondered how much weight a vote without consensus would carry with UDOT in
35 terms of decision-making. Mr. Izzo explained that UDOT was looking for comments related to
36 the content in the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS. Chair Knopp asked how much the
37 public comment period would influence decision-making. Mr. Izzo noted that when it came to
38 large transportation projects, most of the comments were from those who were against the project
39 or wanted something specific. UDOT would focus on the facts included in the UDOT Little
40 Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS. For instance, the impacts of the transportation alternatives and
41 how well the alternatives met the purpose and need of the project.

42
43 Mayor Peterson commented that one of the proposed transportation alternatives was an enhanced
44 bus. However, it seemed that Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) had been fairly silent on the subject.
45 He wanted to know if UTA was heavily involved in the process. Mr. Izzo reported that UTA is
46 heavily involved in the development of anything related to bus service in the UDOT Little

1 Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS. They had worked with UDOT on developing the schedule, the
2 cost estimates, and the number of buses needed. Mayor Peterson noticed that UTA did not have a
3 table at the in-person open house. Mr. Izzo confirmed this. The bus alternative was represented
4 but UTA representatives were not at the open house.

5
6 Councilor Doilney asked for additional details about the relationship between UDOT and UTA.
7 Mr. Izzo reported that UTA received preliminary copies of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon
8 Draft EIS and provided comments. He added that there was no guarantee that UTA would operate
9 a potential bus system. It was possible that UDOT could hire a contractor instead. CWC Deputy
10 Director, Blake Perez, noted that Carlton Christensen from UTA is an Ex Officio Member on the
11 CWC Board. He had stated that the service was not on UTA's top priority list. Mr. Perez posed
12 several questions to Mr. Izzo and the Transportation Committee:

- 13
- 14 • How important is it to UTA to deliver this service when they have many other needs to
- 15 deliver in the valley already?
- 16 • Will UTA be able to hire drivers when they are currently short on drivers?
- 17

18 Mr. Izzo explained that UDOT would need to find funding for whatever transportation alternative
19 is selected. If UTA was chosen to operate an enhanced bus system, it would likely become a
20 priority once the funding was actually received.

21
22 Chair Knopp noted that Pat Shea left a comment in the Zoom chatbox. He asked if anyone on the
23 Transportation Committee or any of the CWC Staff Members had a financial interest in the project.
24 Transportation Committee Members and CWC Staff Members denied this. Mr. Shea asked about
25 Chris McCandless, Mike Maughan, and Mr. Fields. Chair Knopp pointed out that those were
26 members of the public. Members of the public were welcome to listen to the meeting and comment
27 where appropriate. Chair Knopp thanked Mr. Izzo for attending the Transportation Committee
28 Meeting and for answering Committee Member questions.

29 30 **CWC DEIS COMMENTS DISCUSSION.**

31 32 **2. Committee will Discuss the Messages, Topics, and Themes in a Comment Document** 33 **to UDOT.**

34
35 Chair Knopp stressed the importance of sharing a recommendation to UDOT. He noted that Mayor
36 Jenny Wilson had already come out very strongly against any transportation solution except buses.
37 He did not believe the reflected the majority of the Commission. However, he felt it was time for
38 the Transportation Committee to move something forward. It was vital that the Committee looked
39 at the transportation issue from a broader lens than the next few years. The Committee Members
40 needed to look at transportation over the next 30 to 40 years. Chair Knopp commented that it was
41 time to stop studying the issues and choose a solution.

42
43 Mayor Peterson stated that doing nothing was not an answer. Something needed to be done in
44 terms of a transportation solution. He did not personally feel that buses were a long-term solution.
45 However, as Mayor of Cottonwood Heights, his role was to work with the City Council and see if
46 they were able to reach a consensus. His position to the City Council would be that no action was

1 not a solution. Additionally, he would ask the City Council to consider the impacts on Cottonwood
2 Heights residents directly. Mayor Peterson noted that he had gone back and forth and saw pros
3 and cons for both of the transportation alternatives. The City Council would take a position within
4 the next 30 days and he would share that position with the CWC.

5
6 Councilor Doilney did not feel that buses were the long-term solution. He noted that while it
7 would be difficult to reach a consensus on a transportation solution, he did not see buses and
8 vehicle traffic on roads as a long-term public transportation solution. Councilor Doilney believed
9 that Park City would most likely have a preference for the most reliable solution due to difficulties
10 when the canyons closed. He also felt it would be a nice pilot project to see an aerial solution in
11 place as they were currently exploring those types of options in Park City.

12
13 Councilor Doilney addressed a question in the Zoom chatbox from Mr. Shea related to the
14 Interconnect. He explained that the constituents in Park City had not been interested in that at the
15 time. Mr. Becker noted that the Interconnect had been an ongoing discussion for many years. He
16 reported that the Mountain Accord was a guiding document. In the Mountain Accord, aspects of
17 an Interconnect were rejected but no proposal was made for how to address the MTS needs.
18 Specifically for the connection to Park City, it was concluded that nothing more should be done
19 without a lot more study. The Mountain Accord specifically rejected the idea of Guardsman Pass
20 Road serving as a vehicular connection year-round to the Wasatch Back and Park City. Mr. Becker
21 explained that the Mountain Accord had to do with how to better protect the lands, the uses on the
22 lands, and how to provide for future transportation solutions. It had narrowed down the
23 transportation solutions and what UDOT, the CWC, and others were involved with now was to try
24 to determine what that transportation solution might look like.

25
26 Chair Knopp noted that a decision would be made soon as it related to Little Cottonwood Canyon.
27 He believed the Transportation Committee agreed that this discussion needed to be forwarded to
28 the full CWC Board.

29
30 **ADDITIONAL ITEMS AND DISCUSSION.**

31
32 Chair Knopp asked if there were any additional comments participants would like to share.

33
34 *Mr. Shea* commented that those advocating out of an ideal or financial interest were short-sighted.
35 Once a half billion-dollar project is implemented, there will be no flexibility to have alternative
36 technological developments. He referenced a system that would allow the integration of buses and
37 cars in a more efficient way. For instance, cars would not be able to get in until a specific spot
38 was called. Mr. Shea noted that the watershed served 30% of the Salt Lake Valley's culinary water
39 needs. He added that conflicts of interest needed to be disclosed at the beginning of a process,
40 including members of the public who were advocating due to a financial interest.

41
42 *Brian Hutchinson* was surprised by the tolling information shared by Mr. Izzo. He felt it did not
43 reflect what the general public was asking for and considering. A tolling system at the base of Big
44 Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon would prevent the canyons from being
45 cluttered with cars. Chair Knopp noted that the transportation alternatives did not include stops
46 anywhere else in the canyon. While he understood where UDOT was coming from, he was not

1 certain that he agreed with the decision related to tolling. Mr. Hutchinson believed a bus system
2 that was integrated into the valley could be a seamless method of reaching various destinations,
3 including White Pine and other stops if it were well planned.
4

5 Chair Knopp asked CWC Staff to reach out to CWC Chair Robinson to add two items to the next
6 CWC Board Meeting agenda. One would be related to tolling, where CWC Staff could share a
7 brief report. Additionally, there could be a discussion item where each Board Member shared their
8 thoughts related to a transportation solution. Mayor Peterson wondered whether it would be
9 possible for UTA to share their perspective on the two transportation alternatives. Chair Knopp
10 felt it would be reasonable to reach out to UTA leadership.
11

12 *Mr. Fields* shared the concerns expressed by Mr. Shea related to the watershed and the growing
13 population in Utah. He believed that if a gondola were chosen as the transportation solution, it
14 would be a long-term solution. It also exceeded the capacity of what UDOT had set as their goal
15 for vehicle reduction. Mr. Fields reported that in order to remove half of the cars from the canyon,
16 there would need to be two and a half buses per minute. Additionally, buses were unreliable in
17 the canyons due to avalanche closures and traffic delays. He felt encouraged that the
18 Transportation Committee Members did not see buses as the long-term solution.
19

20 **ADJOURN MEETING.**
21

22 **MOTION:** Mayor Peterson moved to adjourn the Transportation Committee Meeting. Councilor
23 Doilney seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
24

25 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.
26

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, July 21, 2021.*

3

4 *Teri Forbes*

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____