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**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024, AT 1:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS AT THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

- Present:** Dan Knopp, Chair  
Bill Ciraco  
Monica Zoltanski  
Danny Richardson
- Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director  
Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations

**OPENING**

**1. Chair Dan Knopp will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Transportation Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission.**

Chair Dan Knopp called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Transportation Committee Meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

**BIG COTTONWOOD CANYON ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**1. The Committee will Discuss Submitting a Comment for the Scoping Period of UDOT’s Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment.**

Chair Knopp explained that the Transportation Committee will first discuss the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. At some point, he believes Big Cottonwood Canyon will pass Little Cottonwood Canyon in terms of transportation progress, because of the lawsuits. Mayor Monica Zoltanski does not see one canyon as contingent on the other. Both canyons have their own unique transportation needs. She believes it makes sense to move forward in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Chair Knopp asked whether the Transportation Committee should submit a comment for the scoping period of the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. He pointed out that the plan is similar to what was included in the Big Cottonwood Canyon Mobility Action Plan (“BCC MAP”). Since it follows what is in the BCC MAP, it may not be necessary to comment.

1 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, suggested that the CWC take the opportunity to comment on  
2 the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. The comment can be in support of what  
3 is proposed. It could mention what was outlined in the BCC MAP and express support for that.  
4 Mayor Zoltanski asked if the CWC has approved the elements of the BCC MAP. This was  
5 confirmed. Ms. Nielsen reported that the CWC received an invitation to submit a scoping letter  
6 during this phase of the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment. The due date for  
7 the scoping letter is December 13, 2024. She can have a draft letter ready for review ahead of the  
8 CWC Board Meeting scheduled on December 2, 2024. The CWC Board can discuss the draft  
9 letter at that time. It will be possible to make the necessary revisions and submit them before the  
10 deadline.

## 11 **MILLCREEK CANYON SHUTTLE**

### 12 **1. The Committee will discuss the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle:**

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- 15
- 16 **a. Feasibility Study.**
- 17 **b. Parking, Permitting, Staging, and Construction.**
- 18 **c. NEPA.**
- 19

20 Ms. Nielsen shared information about a potential Millcreek Canyon shuttle. She reported that the  
21 CWC will find out shortly whether the request for funding from the Outdoor Recreation Initiative  
22 through the Division of Outdoor Recreation was successful. She explained that the funding request  
23 is to update the Feasibility Study from Fehr & Peers. The Feasibility Study for the Millcreek  
24 Canyon shuttle was done by Fehr & Peers in 2012 and contracted by Salt Lake County in support  
25 of their Regional Transportation Plan. The Feasibility Study should be updated at this point to  
26 reflect current conditions. In the next few days, there should be clarity about whether the funding  
27 was received. If it is, then it will be possible to contract with a firm to perform the updates.  
28

29 Ms. Nielsen reported that some funding may have been identified at the State level for a pilot year  
30 of the Millcreek Canyon shuttle program. That could result in approximately \$600,000 for the  
31 pilot year if the Legislature this session decides there is a desire to allocate funding for that purpose.  
32 If that is successful, it will reduce the necessary funds for the pilot year by approximately 60%.  
33

34 Parking, staging, and permitting still need to be finalized for a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. The  
35 CWC and Stakeholders Council have identified two potential areas for parking and staging: one  
36 on the east side of I-215 and one on the west side of I-215. Ms. Nielsen believes the west side  
37 option, which is a frontage road that abuts Skyline High School, makes the most sense. In addition  
38 to the finalization of the shuttle parking and staging areas, there is necessary National  
39 Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) work. Since the lands in Millcreek Canyon are mostly  
40 public, implementing a shuttle program in Millcreek Canyon will require an Environmental  
41 Analysis in conjunction with the NEPA process. It is expected that the findings of that analysis  
42 will be a Categorical Exclusion, which means that there would not be a significant impact.  
43

44 Chair Knopp believes the best place for shuttle staging is the new transportation hub at the bottom  
45 of Big Cottonwood Canyon. It is a six or seven-minute drive from there to the mouth of Millcreek  
46 Canyon. Everywhere else requires a bit of a compromise. Ms. Nielsen liked the suggestion. She

1 asked about the timeline for the transportation hub. Chair Knopp explained that it depends on the  
2 process since studies need to be done, but there are negotiations underway to purchase the land.

3  
4 Mayor Zoltanski asked if Mayor Jeff Silvestrini has expressed a preference for the Millcreek  
5 Canyon shuttle staging area. Ms. Nielsen reported that Mayor Silvestrini is supportive of a shuttle  
6 program in Millcreek Canyon. The canyon is unincorporated Salt Lake County and the road is a  
7 County road, but Millcreek City would be a partner in this program. Mayor Silvestrini previously  
8 stated that he would be willing to assist with the Skyline High School collaboration to use the  
9 frontage road as a parking and staging area. However, the gravel pit is a new suggestion. It can  
10 be considered depending on the timeline. Ms. Nielsen reminded those present that the hope is to  
11 get the shuttle program up and running in 2025 because the construction work in the upper portion  
12 of Millcreek Canyon is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2025. This would ensure access is  
13 maintained while construction is happening. Chair Knopp pointed out that a short-term parking  
14 solution could be the frontage road and a long-term solution could be the gravel pit area.

15  
16 Additional discussions were had about possible parking and staging areas. Mayor Zoltanski  
17 suggested reaching out to the hotel shuttle to see what works with scheduling, reservations, and  
18 timing. It might be possible to learn lessons from shuttles that already exist. She is prepared to  
19 move forward with the Feasibility Study, as there seems to be a lot of interest in the shuttle. Ms.  
20 Nielsen reported that there is no Action Item associated with the Feasibility Study, but if the CWC  
21 request for funding through the State does not come through, there can be discussions about steps  
22 that can be taken within the organization. The cost to update the study is approximately \$30,000.  
23 Mayor Zoltanski noted that funding could be sought out from the County and Millcreek.

24  
25 Ms. Nielsen reported that there could be a more robust discussion about the Millcreek Canyon  
26 shuttle during the CWC Board Meeting that is scheduled for December 2, 2024. That agenda can  
27 also include a conversation about the Feasibility Study update. CWC Staff will know whether or  
28 not the funding for that update will come through before that CWC Board Meeting takes place.

## 29 **LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON**

### 30 **1. The Committee will Discuss what Role, if any, the CWC Should Play in** 31 **Transportation/Transit Solutions in Little Cottonwood Canyon.**

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34  
35 Mayor Zoltanski discussed transportation in Little Cottonwood Canyon. She knows the Utah  
36 Department of Transportation's ("UDOT") position is that nothing will advance with the first phase  
37 of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") until there is a  
38 resolution to the challenges. However, she feels it is important to discuss what the State, UDOT,  
39 and Utah Transit Authority ("UTA") can do to lead out on sensible transit solutions. She feels  
40 there is enough agreement on the enhanced buses, so it may be possible to move forward with that.  
41 She believes a statement of support to move forward with enhanced busing would be meaningful.

42  
43 Chair Knopp pointed out that UDOT has made it clear they will not do anything until the lawsuits  
44 are settled. The issue is that busing is mentioned in the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS as  
45 UDOT rather than UTA. He asked ex-officio member Carlton Christensen for feedback on this.  
46 Ex Officio Christensen stated that the other UTA route has been reestablished and it is not

1 anticipated that there will be other bus solutions from UTA for Little Cottonwood Canyon at this  
2 time. The enhanced busing will need to come from UDOT and UDOT is currently dealing with  
3 the lawsuits. Mayor Zoltanski noted that it is still possible to release a statement that expresses  
4 support for buses. Chair Knopp liked that approach and the idea of continued conversation.

5  
6 Mayor Zoltanski believes it is responsible for the CWC to be on the record stating that the  
7 organization is working towards solutions. Chair Knopp agreed and reiterated his support for the  
8 approach outlined. Ms. Nielsen reviewed what will be drafted ahead of the CWC Board Meeting:  
9 Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment Scoping Letter and Draft Environmental  
10 Collaboration and Conflict Resolution Request for Little Cottonwood Canyon. She reported that  
11 both will be ready for review at the next CWC Board Meeting and then the next steps can be taken.

12  
13 Chair Knopp asked about the idea of a train in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Mayor Zoltanski  
14 thought it should be further explored, though she has not taken any public position on that. She  
15 understands that the reason it was not fully vetted was because of the associated costs. However,  
16 the gondola costs have since eclipsed the cost of a train. Chair Knopp reported that when train  
17 representatives looked at the UDOT engineer estimate, there was a high contingency budget listed.  
18 This made it seem like there was no desire to pursue the train. The representatives stated that it is  
19 possible to pursue the train for much less than the UDOT engineer estimate. Mayor Zoltanski  
20 asked about the tunnel that already exists. Chair Knopp noted that there is the Wasatch train tunnel.

21  
22 Commissioner Bill Ciraco stated that any transportation remedy that uses out-of-the-box thinking  
23 should be welcome. The next few years are a window of opportunity. He believes there is a  
24 growing appetite to do something different. Park City will host between 35% and 40% of the  
25 venues for the Olympics, but that does not mean there will not be a burden on the Wasatch Front  
26 at that time. It is important to think about what there is a desire to see in place 10 years from now.

27  
28 During the Olympics that were held in 2002, it was not possible to drive into Park City unless it  
29 was a resident and residents were not allowed to drive their vehicles around town, because buses  
30 needed to be used. Something similar will be done in 2034. There were a lot of positive comments  
31 about the experience in 2002. The implementation strategies put in place benefited residents and  
32 visitors. Commissioner Ciraco discussed the potential for tolling or congestion pricing in the  
33 future. There needs to be a transportation alternative in place when those strategies are used.  
34 Commissioner Ciraco expressed support for the possibility of a Little Cottonwood Canyon train.

35  
36 Mayor Zoltanski suggested that there be a discussion with the CWC Board. It seems that the train  
37 concept was tabled because of the costs, but she does not feel the train idea was fully vetted. Mayor  
38 Zoltanski reported that she needs to leave the Transportation Committee Meeting shortly. Before  
39 leaving, she shared information about the 2034 Olympics. She heard that Little Cottonwood  
40 Canyon is not under consideration because the weather conditions are too unpredictable. Since  
41 there is a lot of snow there, that means it would be difficult to host successful events in the canyon.

42  
43 Chair Knopp asked that the CWC Board examine what was put forward in the Mountain Accord  
44 as it relates to connections between the resorts. It would be worthwhile to look at that again.  
45 Discussions were had about connectivity and year-round options. Ms. Nielsen recapped the  
46 suggestions shared by the Transportation Committee: Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental

1 Assessment Scoping Letter, Draft Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution Request  
2 for Little Cottonwood Canyon, and a robust transportation discussion with the CWC Board.

3  
4 Ms. Nielsen reminded Committee Members that in 2020, the CWC embarked on the Mountain  
5 Transportation System (“MTS”) project where the organization looked at the various  
6 transportation modes that could be feasible for the Cottonwood Canyons. There were discussions  
7 with train experts, aerial experts, and UTA about expanded busing. All of those education sessions  
8 were recorded and can be listened to as needed. She believes the Transportation Committee wants  
9 to reopen the investigation into one of those modes, which was confirmed. Ms. Nielsen explained  
10 that the suggestion could be considered by the CWC Board at the next meeting.

11  
12 Chair Knopp reported that Stadler, Stacy Witbeck, and WW Clyde all came to UDOT and said  
13 there was a desire to propose a public-private partnership. UDOT told them to submit that in the  
14 comments. However, there might be a different attitude from UDOT at this point. Ms. Nielsen  
15 asked whether the Transportation Committee wants to include the exploration of another  
16 transportation mode in the Draft Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution Request.  
17 Chair Knopp does not want to speak for the others, so that will need to be a CWC Board decision.

18  
19 Commissioner Ciraco believes there needs to be a push for the densest form of transportation that  
20 has the least per capita operational need. UTA will not do any additional busing because of the  
21 driver's needs. He shared comments about a BRT project that High Valley Transit is trying to run  
22 from Kimball Junction to Old Town Transit Center in Park City. There are 15-minute headways  
23 planned, which would be five departures per hour. 10-minute headways would mean seven  
24 departures per hour. With 45 people on a bus and seven departures per hour, that is about 300  
25 people per hour. It would cost \$100 million to \$105 million to have an extra carrying capacity of  
26 300 people an hour with another 18 employees needed. Leaning into this kind of system is not  
27 necessarily the most effective choice. There needs to be a discussion about dense transit types.

28  
29 Ms. Nielsen believes it makes sense to bring the Transportation Committee's ideas to the CWC  
30 Board Meeting on December 2, 2024. Based on the feedback received at that time, it may be  
31 possible to schedule presentations in the new year. Commissioner Ciraco pointed out that a  
32 representative from Stadler could share information about what was proposed previously, the  
33 costs, and the current conditions. Additional discussions were had about transit options.

34  
35 Ms. Nielsen acknowledged that the Transportation Committee wants to have a robust conversation  
36 about transportation during the next CWC Board Meeting. She asked that Chair Knopp and  
37 Commissioner Ciraco lead that conversation. Ms. Nielsen shared the MTS Pillars Document with  
38 those present. That document is what the CWC Board approved at the end of the MTS process  
39 that went into 2021. There was no support expressed for one specific alternative, but there was  
40 consensus for a regional transportation system that achieves and supports the following:

- 41  
42
- 43 • Visitor Use Capacity;
  - 44 • Watershed Protection;
  - 45 • Traffic Demand Management, Parking, and Bus (or Other Transit) Strategies;
  - 46 • Integration into the Broader Regional Transportation Network;
  - Year-Round Transit Service;

- Long-Term Protection of Critical Areas Through Federal Legislation.

Ms. Nielsen explained that the last point relates to the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act (“CWNCRRA”). During the Mountain Accord process, it was understood that any protection of the land needs to work in conjunction with transportation and transit solutions in the canyons. All of the different systems need to be considered during these discussions.

Commissioner Ciraco discussed visitor use. He explained that control of visitor use numbers can be achieved by controlling the means of access. If there is a road with personal vehicles, then there is no real control. Chair Knopp reported that the approach of the U.S. Forest Service is to manage visitor use with parking. However, that is not a strategy he feels is particularly effective. Commissioner Ciraco noted that in Zion National Park, a shuttle is used to access the area and it is not possible to drive into the park. Chair Knopp believes a train is the cleanest transit solution.

Ms. Nielsen asked what questions the Transportation Committee wanted to pose to the CWC Board during the December 2, 2024, CWC Board Meeting. Chair Knopp explained that there is a desire to communicate the need to look at transportation options. Additionally, he would like to request that there be a discussion about connectivity between Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Additional discussions were had about the train alternative. Ms. Nielsen wanted to know whether Committee Members wished to specifically discuss the train or to have a broader conversation about transit alternatives. It is possible to revisit the work done during the MTS project and hear from different experts. Chair Knopp thought the latter made sense. Danny Richardson expressed support for the comments made about the train alternative.

It was determined that CWC Staff will write a memo that summarizes the conversation had during the Transportation Committee Meeting. It can be stated that there is a desire to re-examine transit alternatives that could address the transportation issues in the Cottonwood Canyons and Park City.

## **2034 OLYMPICS**

### **1. The Committee will Discuss Transportation Issues Related to the 2034 Olympics.**

The Committee discussed the 2034 Olympic Games. Commissioner Ciraco explained that the jurisdictions that are not currently listed as hosting events still need to view the Olympics as an opportunity. Those areas will have to deal with a lot of the displacement that happens during the events. Chair Knopp reported that during the 2002 Olympic Games, the numbers were down and the regular skiers did not come. Commissioner Ciraco stated that business was down in Park City during the Olympics previously and he has had conversations with business owners about that. Two years before and five years after there seems to be an increase rather than during the games.

## **STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **1. The Ski Bus Priority Access Program Begins on November 29, 2024.**

Ms. Nielsen reported that the Ski Bus Priority Access Program will begin on November 29, 2024. She reminded Committee Members that the program is done in partnership with the Sandy City

1 Police Department and Cottonwood Heights. The program has been successful and beneficial.

2  
3 **2. Minutes Approval Process.**

4  
5 Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, explained that if the Transportation Committee plans  
6 to meet more regularly, it will be possible to approve the Meeting Minutes at the next meeting.  
7 Alternatively, it is possible to send them out when the Meeting Minutes are ready and a  
8 determination can be made via email. There is not currently a set meeting schedule for the  
9 Committee. Commissioner Ciraco suggested a meeting schedule that is a little more regular. Chair  
10 Knopp expressed support for a Transportation Committee Meeting every other month or so.

11  
12 **3. Scheduling Next Meeting.**

13  
14 The next Transportation Committee Meeting will be held in the third or fourth week of January.

15  
16 **4. Central Wasatch Symposium on January 9-10, 2025.**

17  
18 Ms. Nielsen reminded the Committee that the Central Wasatch Symposium will take place on  
19 January 9 and 10, 2025. She asked Committee Members to share information about the event.

20  
21 **OTHER ITEMS**

22  
23 There were no additional discussions.

24  
25 **1. Chair Knopp will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Transportation Committee**  
26 **Meeting.**

27  
28 **MOTION:** Bill Ciraco moved to ADJOURN the Transportation Committee Meeting. There was  
29 no second. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

30  
31 The Central Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting adjourned at 2:00 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 on Wednesday, November 20, 2024.*  
3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

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