



2025 Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study Update

Public Comments

Overview & Methods

The Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) opened a 30-day public comment period on the scope of the 2025 update to Fehr & Peers' 2012 Transportation Feasibility Study. This updated study focuses on a shuttle option for Millcreek Canyon.

We sent out a press release, newsletter, and several social media posts announcing the public comment period. We took flyers to Millcreek Canyon where they were posted at the fee booth and popular trailheads. Many of our partner organizations notified their own audiences of the public comment period.

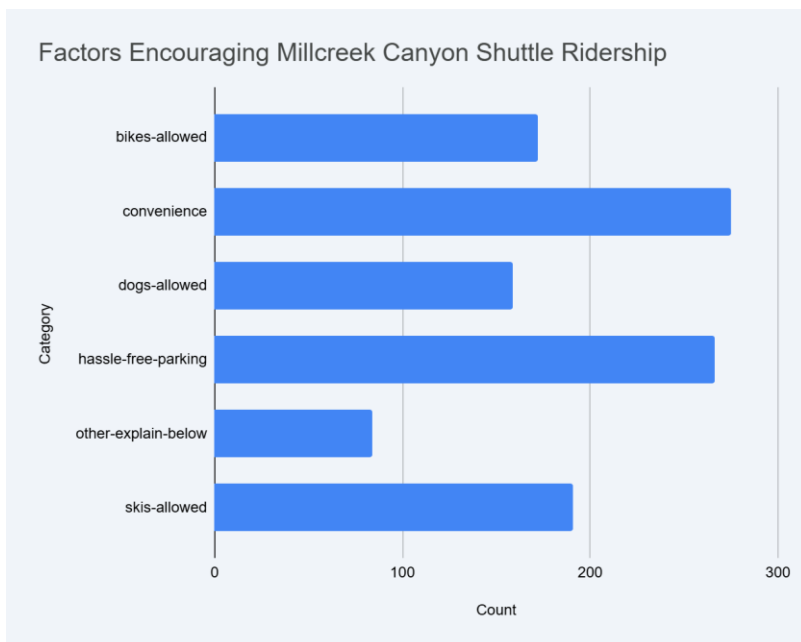
341 people filled out the comment form. Not all answered each question, and some people only made general comments such as being in favor of or opposed to the shuttle. The number of people who answered each question are noted in the summary that accompanies each graph. Two people called on the phone. 13 people left a shuttle-related comment in our general comment box. 19 people sent emails with general comments. This gives us a total of **375 respondents**.

We have combined the emails and general comments with the responses from the comment form and cleaned them up to align with the formatting of the other data, when possible. Some "general" comments included data that could easily be added to the prompts asking about cost, seasonal usage, bike accommodations, and so on. When applicable, we added this data so that it would be reflected in the charts.

The comment form was created with prompts and "Checkbox Lists" to make sure the scope of the study would be addressed and so that the output data would be clear and easy to use. It is more difficult to extrapolate data from general comments. For this reason, some of the general comments are not reflected in the charts. When a comment has been mentioned several times by different people or is particularly compelling, we note that in the summaries accompanying the charts or at the end of the report where we provide additional recommendations.

What Would Encourage People to Ride the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle?

When asked for the factors that would encourage someone to ride a shuttle, 345 people answered. We added relevant responses from general comments and emails to this data, as well, bringing the total number of responses to 351. We used a “Checkbox List” for this question, meaning respondents were allowed to check multiple boxes. Convenience (275 respondents) and hassle-free parking (266 respondents) are the most significant factors encouraging people to use the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle. Allowing skis (191 respondents), bikes (172 respondents), and dogs (159 respondents) are also strong motivators, indicating a desire for the shuttle to accommodate various recreational activities. 84 people selected “other, explain below” and elaborated on their responses or offered additional things that might encourage them to ride the shuttle.



It became apparent through respondents’ detailed answers that we failed to ask how many people will be hauling picnic gear such as coolers, chairs, and bags of charcoal. Judging by the responses, these picnic items are important to many people. They suggested we look into ways to accommodate large, bulky items like coolers inside the shuttles utilizing shelving systems such as those found on airport shuttles made to carry luggage.

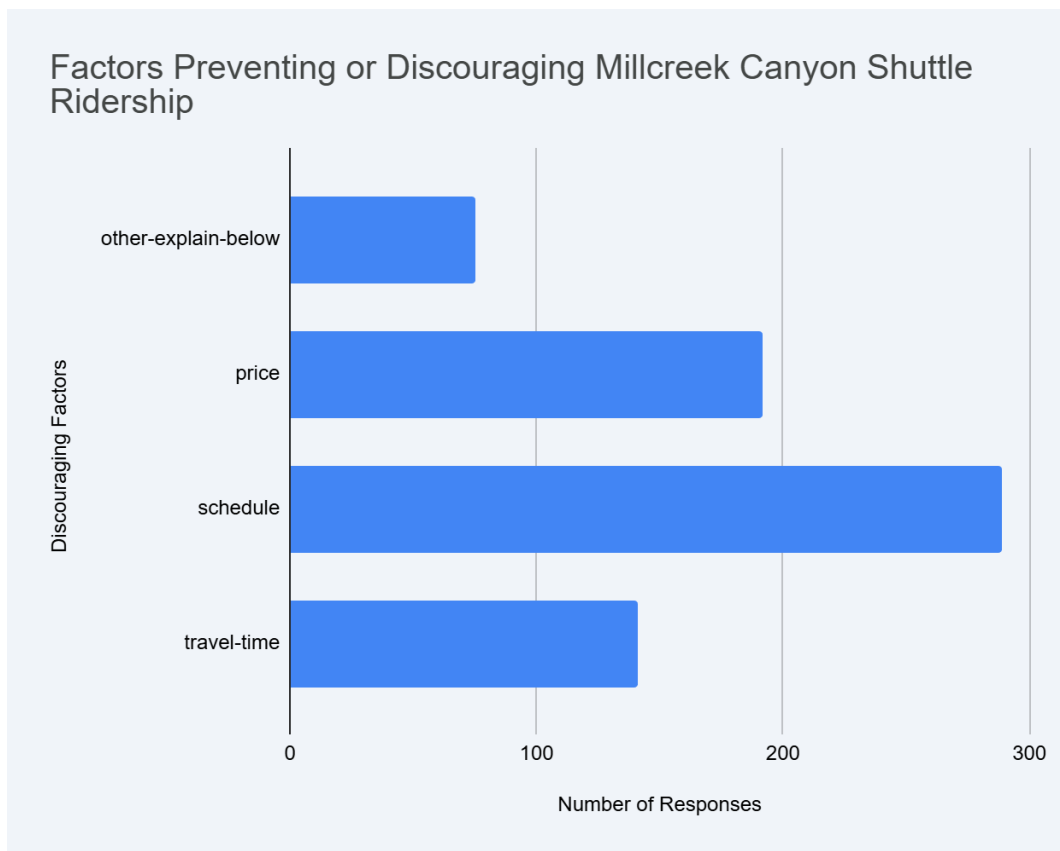
The word “convenience” seemed to have different meanings for different people. Convenience, to some respondents, meant short wait times (no more than 30 minutes) between shuttles. To others,

convenience meant ease-of-use. For example, insufficient bike or ski storage would make the shuttle less convenient. Ill-behaved dogs or insufficient space could also make the shuttle less convenient for some users.

While dogs being allowed was a pro for many users, it was a con for others. Some people expressed concern over riding with dogs. Some people suggested we consider an even-odd schedule for bikes and dogs to match the current rules of the canyon.

What Would Discourage People from Riding the Shuttle?

When asked for the factors that would discourage people from riding the shuttle, 336 people responded. A small number of these responses come from emails. We used a “Checkbox List” for this question, meaning respondents were allowed to check multiple boxes. Schedule limitations (289 mentions), price (192 respondents), and travel time (141 respondents) are the main concerns that would prevent or discourage people from riding the shuttle.



Many of these respondents further explained their primary deterrents in their comments, saying that they wouldn’t want to wait more than 15 or 30 minutes for the shuttle. Most respondents agree that 15 minutes is the ideal wait time, 30 minutes is acceptable, and one hour wait times would make the shuttle too inconvenient for people to develop the habit of riding.

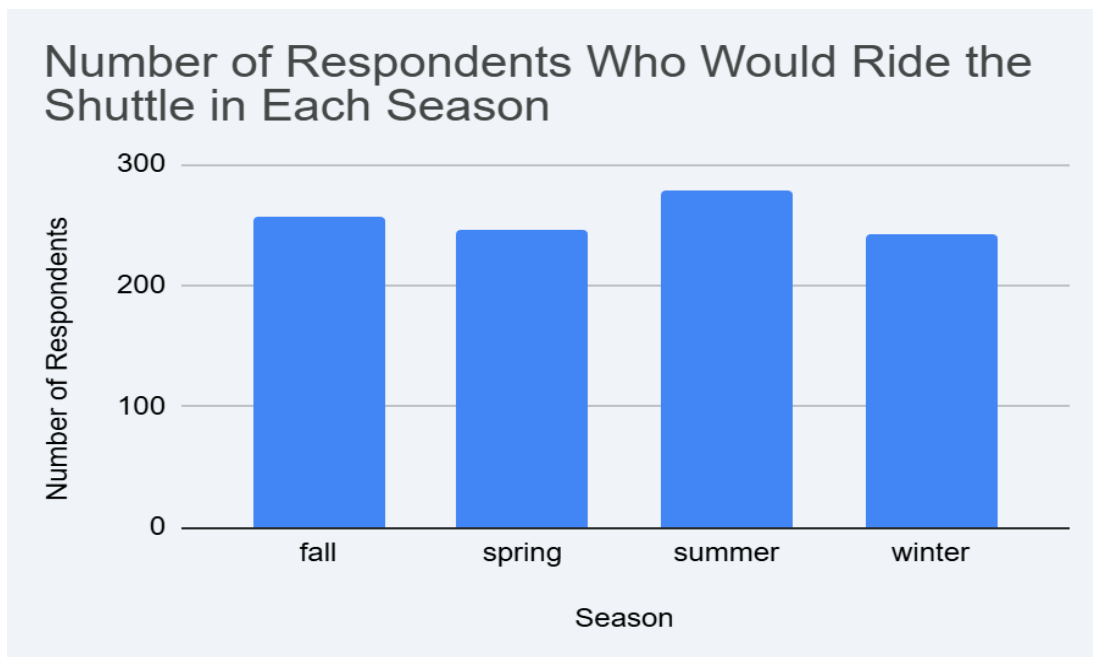
Some respondents suggested reserved seating as one solution for long wait times, while other respondents said most of their trips in Millcreek Canyon happen on a whim, making it difficult to use a shuttle with long wait times.

Seasonal Preference

306 people answered the question regarding seasonal shuttle usage. A small number of these came from emails. When we initially created this seasonal form we incorrectly selected “Radio List” for this question which allowed respondents to only select one response at a time. This prevented the first 28 respondents from selecting multiple seasons. Some respondents noted this flaw in the question, and we fixed it by turning the question into a “Checkbox List” so the remaining respondents could select every season in which they’d ride a shuttle. Respondents indicated high willingness to use the shuttle in summer (278 mentions), fall (257 mentions), spring (245 mentions), and winter (243 mentions), suggesting year-round demand.

It’s worth noting here that summer and fall activities are nearly identical (hiking, biking, picnicking, running, etc.), while a good portion of spring in the Wasatch is still quite wintry. There is still skiable snow in Millcreek from March through May most years.

Some respondents selected only summer and fall or only summer and winter, for example. It may be possible to guess what activities these folks are most interested in by their seasonal selection combo, but we did not explore that data.



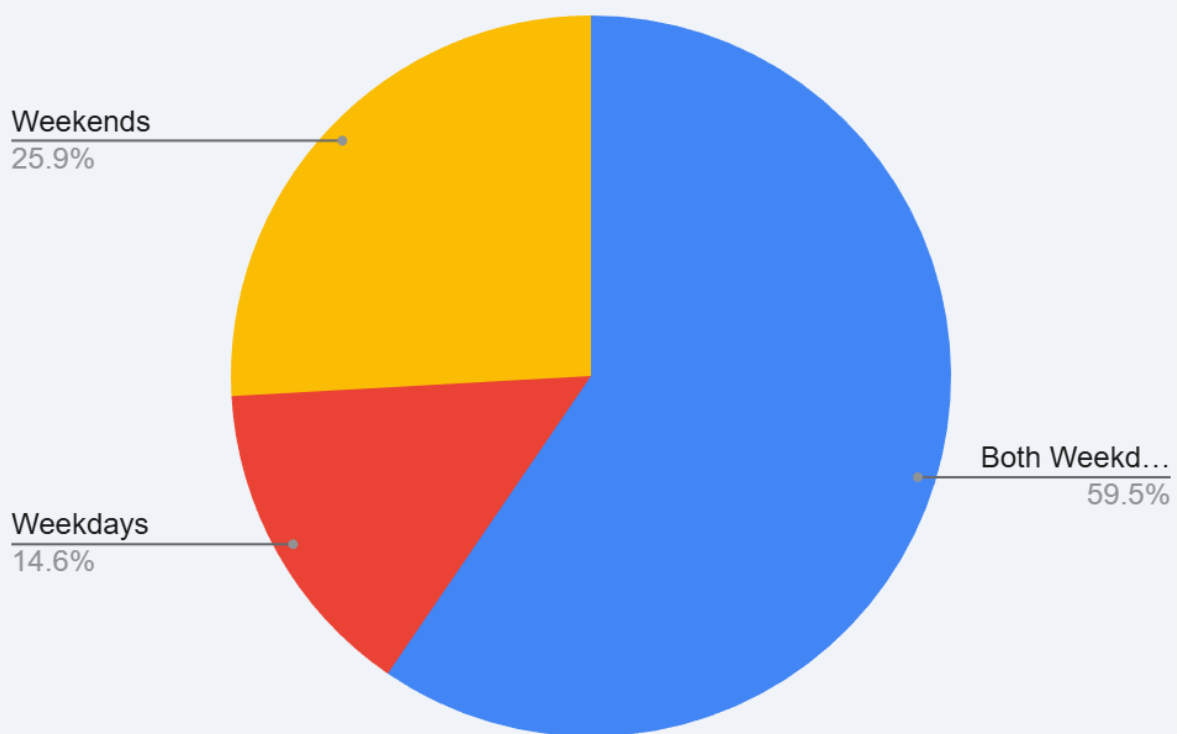
Would People Ride the Shuttle on Weekends, Weekdays, or Both?

309 people responded when asked if they'd use a shuttle on weekdays, weekends, or all week.

There is a strong preference for the shuttle to be available all week long. The majority of respondents (184) indicated they would use the shuttle on both weekdays and weekends. 80 respondents would use the shuttle only on weekends. 45 respondents would use the shuttle only on weekdays.

A small amount of respondents noted they use the canyon too early in the morning or too late at night for a shuttle to be useful for them.

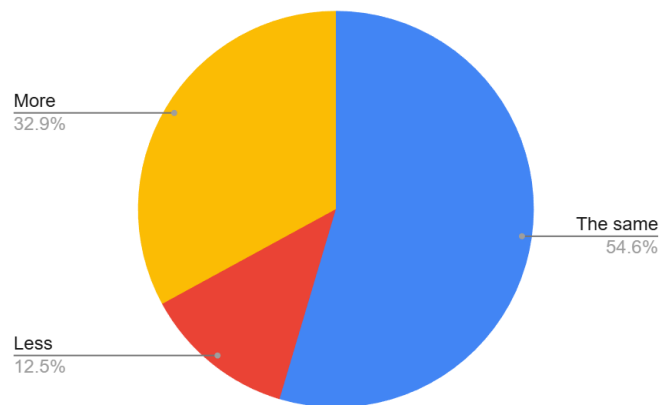
When would you use a Millcreek Canyon Shuttle?



How Much Would People Pay for a Shuttle?

337 people answered the prompt asking how much they'd be willing to pay for a shuttle service in Millcreek Canyon. In the question, we reminded them that a day pass is \$5 and a yearly pass is \$50. We asked if they'd be willing to pay more, less, or the same as these amounts assuming the shuttle fee replaced the booth fee. A significant portion of respondents are willing to pay "the same" (184 respondents) or "more" (111 respondents) for the shuttle service, with only 42 respondents indicating they would pay "less". This suggests a general acceptance of current or potentially higher pricing, so long as the cost makes sense in the context of the future, adjusted booth fee.

How much people would pay:



Respondents provided useful information in response to this question, noting that:

- Seniors need to be accommodated just as they now are with adjusted lower rates.
- To incentivize shuttle use, the fee should cover a group of people rather than just an individual. If \$5 per car covers all occupants of the vehicle (often between 2 and 7 people) then the shuttle fee should account for that in some way.
- Many people don't want to have to purchase two different passes (one for car and one for shuttle) and would instead prefer to have one pass that covers both seasonal car usage and seasonal shuttle usage. In this case, respondents assume they'll be paying more than \$50 a year for this "combo pass."
- Many people recommend making the shuttle cheaper than the car fee to incentivize use.
- Many people want to make sure that the shuttle remains affordable for all types of canyon users.
- A small number of respondents didn't want their tax dollars to be used to fund the shuttle.

Other Comments

- Many people want to be able to transfer easily from the UTA system to the Millcreek Shuttle
- When allowed to elaborate or fill in the “other” field, many people mention shuttle frequency. Most people would be unwilling to use a shuttle if wait times were more than 15 minutes. Some people would be willing to wait as long as 30 minutes, but that seems to be the upper limit. When looking at the “convenience” field in the first chart and the “schedule” field in the second chart, shuttle frequency concerns seem to be the primary factor contributing to the large amount of responses to these questions.
- Respondents frequently suggested integrating the fee into the existing pass. For example: \$25/year for shuttle access, \$60/year for car access, \$75/year for both. There are many examples similar to this. Most people don’t like the idea of having to buy two separate passes because they may split their time in Millcreek between car and shuttle.
- Some people brought up the question of per person vs. per group fee. The car pass is \$5 for a whole family, but if that same family were to pay per person to use the shuttle, they would be disincentivized to use it. Could there be a group pass option?
- One person noted that the Bonanza Flats shuttle includes ski- and dog-hauling options. It might be good to see how they’re doing it.
- Many people suggested a set schedule. The set schedule is particularly important for the last shuttle of the day leaving from Big Water Trailhead and heading back down the canyon. If people could plan their hikes to catch this final shuttle they might be incentivized to plan around it.
- Some people mention the potential for dog shuttles to be separate from other shuttles.
- As mentioned above, many people picnic in the canyon and would need the shuttle to accommodate coolers, wagons, and more.
- To keep traffic flowing on the way into the canyon, a “Do Not Stop” sign could be placed at the booth.
- There is some concern that the shuttle would increase usage in the canyon.
- Some people think it would be a good idea for Millcreek to disallow cars once the shuttle is up and running.

- A couple of people noted the potential to integrate the shuttle with an app for convenience.
- Respondents hope the shuttle would stop at all the major trailheads.
- Many people are excited by the prospect of utilizing the shuttle to create new loop hikes. One might be able to start at Alexander Basin Trailhead and exit at Big Water, for example.

Conclusion

A consistency runs through the public comments on the Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Feasibility Study. Salt Lake Valley residents and others use the canyon in similar ways, so their requirements for a shuttle tend to be similar.

Most people want to make sure the shuttle runs frequently. Respondents would be more than happy to wait 15 minutes for the shuttle, with 30 minutes being the upper limit. Wait times of more than 30 minutes could be unrealistic for users hoping to ride the shuttle with impatient dogs and kids. Many canyon users do not plan their outings to Millcreek Canyon in advance and have a difficult time wrapping their heads around having to fit their hikes or runs around a shuttle's schedule.

Potential shuttle users want parking at the staging lot to be hassle free. They also would be encouraged to ride the shuttle if it was somehow integrated into the UTA system.

Respondents want to make sure bikes, skis, and dogs are allowed on the shuttle. Skis outperformed bikes and dogs in the responses to this prompt, but not dramatically. It's also important to them that it's convenient to haul these items on the shuttle. If there is insufficient space for gear, they might choose not to use the shuttle. They also want to be able to bring their picnic gear such as coolers, wagons, and bags of charcoal on the shuttle.

Most respondents would be willing to pay the same amount as the booth fee for a shuttle pass (\$50 annually). While some people would never drive if a shuttle was offered, it is more common that shuttle users would drive on occasion, and would prefer not to have to buy a separate pass for driving. One resulting suggestion from this conundrum would be to create a tiered fee structure. If the shuttle cost \$25 per year, cars cost \$60 per year, and a combo pass cost \$75 per year, for example, people might be incentivized to use the shuttle.

Respondents want to be able to ride the shuttle in Millcreek Canyon all year long and on every day of the week.