
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: SANDY CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: COUNCILMEMBER MARCI HOUSEMAN

SUBJECT: LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

DATE: 3/2/21

CC: MIKE APPLGARTH

To my Council Colleagues,

My role on the Central Wasatch Commission is to be the voice of Sandy City. As such, I have met extensively with various leaders within our city to ensure that my voice is united with theirs. I have also heard from countless residents and stakeholders throughout this process. All of these conversations have informed our current stance as a city. The purpose of this memo is to provide an update as to the voice I will share on behalf of our city during upcoming deliberations of the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC).

Sandy's foundational history, our present vitality, and the future growth and prosperity of our community are inextricably tied to Little Cottonwood Canyon. Sandy is the gateway to Snowbird and Alta. Sandy is "The Heart of the Wasatch" that our residents, businesses and visitors identify with. It is imperative to preserve and enhance the economic engine and pristine watershed that provides unparalleled snow for skiing/boarding to our residents, businesses and visitors, and protects our most precious resource as the source waters to Sandy. Our pioneer founders knew this. No water, no Sandy. We know this today. An unhealthy watershed is an unhealthy Sandy.

The Central Wasatch Commission gives Sandy a larger voice and partners to preserve this precious and precarious resource. Growth will continue. Traffic will increase. Scarcity and pressure on our water resources is increasing. The decisions that affect our generations to come are being made today, and Sandy has a right and obligation to be at the table for our residents and businesses, now and in the future.

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Our seat at the CWC table gives Sandy full fledged participation in influencing and guiding those decisions that are so important to keeping our high quality, reliable and affordable water supply; conceiving and implementing solutions that improve transportation, public safety, recreation, public health, environmental benefits and economic growth. Sandy takes pride in being a smart growth City. The CWC helps us leverage our partnerships and help design the future for our City.

Over the last couple of months, I have held multiple meetings with Tom Ward, Abi Holt, Ryan Kump, Britney Ward and Lynn Pace. In addition, we have an upcoming meeting with UDOT to specifically discuss the Little Cottonwood EIS. Mike Gladbach will join that meeting as well. I appreciate the time and energy these city leaders have given towards synthesizing all that has been presented throughout the Mountain Transportation System initiative. Not only have they reviewed an extensive number of resources but they have provided our city's feedback throughout the process.

We have used these many meetings to not only discuss everything we have learned from presenters, stakeholders and members of our community but to also learn from one another. I have gained a great deal from these collaborative conversations. These conversations have helped us identify five priorities that I will share as the voice of Sandy City. We believe these priorities should carry the greatest weight within the matrix the members of the Commission are using to evaluate each proposed transportation solution. The matrix the CWC will be using has been vetted during multiple public meetings and reflects the feedback of both the public and our CWC Stakeholders. It is quite thorough and aligns to the tenets of the Mountain Accord.

Throughout upcoming deliberations with my fellow CWC Commissioners, I will emphasize the following five priorities:

1. **Water quality:** Sandy City feels that getting people into the canyon is secondary to getting safe water out of the canyon. Therefore, protecting the watershed is a top priority.
2. **Cars off the road:** Getting cars off the road is a priority for many reasons. Vehicles are a source of pollution as is the salt that is used to keep the roads safe during the winter. A reduction in vehicles is an investment in protecting our watershed. Additionally,

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getting cars off the road addresses the congestion problem that the residents who live closest to the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon face on a regular basis. Addressing the congestion in the canyon is essential.

3. Selection of a hub: Regardless of the mode of transportation selected for Little Cottonwood Canyon, transportation hubs will be necessary. In particular, it makes no difference how visitors get to the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon, a transfer from one mode of transit to another will be necessary. Sandy City is paying very careful attention to decisions being considered regarding transit hubs. These hubs have the potential to be part of the solution but they could also add to the challenges we face in our city with congestion. Sandy City will be actively advocating for hubs that become part of the solution. For example, we will continue to emphasize the need to focus on 9400 South. We need to invest in a study to determine where the hub should be. Sandy City will be heavily involved in the location of the hub.

4. Ease congestion: Regardless of the mode of transportation selected, the solution must include dispersing transit across our city. As Utah grows and as more visitors seek to enjoy our canyons, we must address the congestion and gridlock across our city and specifically in the Granite community. Sandy City will be keeping an eye on the conversations around addressing transit options across the city—not just at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon.

5. Elevate the canyons experience: The more seamless the experience is for our visitors, the greater improvement there is for long term residents. As we consider the potential solutions, we must consider all types of visitors and how we can elevate the canyons experience for all visitors—including those with mobility issues or other conditions that prevent the typical access to recreation such as hiking or skiing. Little Cottonwood Canyon is visited more than any other national park—we must prioritize the canyon experience as we make decisions.

The CWC serves as an advisory group to the state who will be the decision makers on this issue. Whatever solution we endorse as a city will be in addition to what currently exists. The transportation solutions are cumulative and will push people to where we want them to go without eliminating any of them. We want to restrict travel by road to limited hours so that we are pushing people to the other transit modes. All solutions must include incentives to get people out of their cars. We must reduce growth in

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vehicular traffic. Additionally, the gondola/rail options allow us to build infrastructure around amenities that keep waste out of the watershed. As we collaborate around solutions in Little Cottonwood Canyon, we must invite preferred behaviors that protect the watershed.