

# COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS

## RESOLUTION No. 2022-55

### A RESOLUTION CONCERNING UDOT'S PREFERENCE FOR GONDOLA OPTION B

**WHEREAS**, on 6 December 2022 the city council (the "*Council*") of the city of Cottonwood Heights (the "*City*") met in regular session to consider, among other things, responding to a recent decision by the Utah Department of Transportation ("*UDOT*") concerning transportation issues affecting SR 210 ("*SR 210*"), which is a Utah state road traversing the entire Easterly side of the City, extending 13.62 miles from SR-190 (at or near Fort Union Blvd.) along Wasatch Blvd. ("*Wasatch Blvd.*") to the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon (the "*Canyon*"), and thence Easterly up the Canyon before terminating in the Town of Alta; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wasatch Blvd. / SR 210 corridor (the "*Corridor*") passes through City residential areas housing hundreds of City's residents, all of whom are materially, adversely affected by current Corridor due to traffic noise and fresh air pollution it introduces into the surrounding neighborhoods, the difficulty exiting or entering the many neighborhoods accessed by the Corridor and of traveling between neighborhoods separated by the Corridor, and the dangers to drivers and pedestrians caused by the high speeds of vehicles using the Corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, for the past four years the UDOT has conducted an Environmental Impact Statement process (the "*EIS*") concerning alternatives for transportation improvements for SR 210 and the Canyon; and

**WHEREAS**, because the Corridor to the mouth of the Canyon is located almost entirely within the City, the City will experience the most direct and sustained impact of any transportation improvements decision flowing from the EIS; and

**WHEREAS**, the City's Wasatch Blvd. Master Plan (the "*Master Plan*") details the City's vision for a future, less intrusive, Corridor and suggests various methods of mitigating its impact on the surrounding neighborhoods by prioritizing incentivized and enhanced bus usage, locating parking structures away from the Corridor, and promoting the redesign of the Corridor in ways that limit roadway width, decrease vehicle speeds and emphasize active transportation and recreational uses; and

**WHEREAS**, consequently, throughout the entire EIS process the City has served as a participating agency for the EIS; various City officers and employees were actively engaged in the EIS process; and the City consistently provided to UDOT comments, concerns and local priorities concerning the transportation alternatives through public comments, formal resolutions of the Council, public discussions, and frequent meetings with UDOT; and

**WHEREAS**, those efforts by the City's leaders, staff and residents have been based on a hope and expectation that UDOT will use the EIS process to adopt alternatives for transportation improvements that will appropriately mitigate the adverse impacts of the Corridor on the City and its residents; and

**WHEREAS**, UDOT recently issued a final EIS for the Canyon (the “*Final EIS*”) in which UDOT identified so-called “Gondola Alternative B” (the “*Gondola Alternative*”), with proposed phasing, as UDOT’s preferred alternative for improved transportation on the Corridor and in the Canyon; and

**WHEREAS**, the Gondola Alternative will (a) cost taxpayers at least \$550 Million in initial construction costs, together with ongoing operational expenses; (b) result in direct service only to two private ski resorts; (c) remove only 30% of vehicular traffic from the Corridor; (d) require construction of 22 high-rise gondola towers in the Canyon, adversely affecting its natural beauty and its fragile ecosystem; and (e) have limited flexibility to respond to changing circumstances; and

**WHEREAS**, rather than utilizing regional intermodal hubs at several locations geographically removed from the mouth of the Canyon with incentivized bus transit for canyon users, the Gondola Alternative encourages patrons to drive their private vehicles along the entire Corridor by providing a 2,500 stall parking structure (the “*Structure*”) at the base station, therefore not diminishing whatsoever the vehicle traffic along the Corridor through the City to the base station; and

**WHEREAS**, the Structure’s parking capacity likely will result in various negative conditions, including (a) more vehicular traffic on the Corridor on peak days; (b) thereby providing justification for increasing vehicle capacity on the Corridor, to which the City is adamantly opposed; and (c) investing significant public funds to construct and operate the Structure even though it will sit largely unused on non-peak days; and

**WHEREAS**, as noted by other governmental entities, an alternate approach to the proposed transportation improvements exists that has the potential to adequately address the transportation needs highlighted in the EIS through more practical and less invasive transportation strategies, such as parking management technologies and policies, multi-passenger vehicle incentives, traction device requirements, and regionally-place mobility hubs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council desires to articulate its position on the Gondola Alternative advocated in the Final EIS in the hope that that alternative will be eliminated from consideration in the final record of decision (“*ROD*”) to be adopted by UDOT at the end of the 45-day comment period following issuance of the Final EIS; and

**WHEREAS**, after careful consideration, the Council has determined that it is in the best interests of the health, safety and welfare of City and its residents to so act;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Cottonwood Heights city council that the Council hereby encourages and requests UDOT to eliminate the Gondola Alternative from consideration in the final ROD and for UDOT to instead adopt less invasive transportation improvement strategies such as those detailed above.

This Resolution, assigned no. 2022-55, shall take effect immediately upon passage.

**PASSED AND APPROVED** effective 6 December 2022.



ATTEST:

COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL

By: *Paula Melgar*  
Paula Melgar, Recorder



By: *Michael T. Weichers*  
Michael T. Weichers, Mayor

VOTING:

Michael T. Weichers	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>
Douglas Petersen	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>
J. Scott Bracken	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>
Shawn E. Newell	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>
Ellen Birrell	Yea <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nay <input type="checkbox"/>

DEPOSITED in the office of the City Recorder this 6<sup>th</sup> day of December 2022.

RECORDED this 6 day of December 2022.