



Comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement

Little Cottonwood Canyon S.R. 210 | Wasatch Boulevard to Alta in Cottonwood Heights, Sandy, the Town of Alta, and Salt Lake County, Utah

Volume 2: **Longer Comments**

Utah Department of Transportation

UDOT Project No. S-R299(281)

Submitted pursuant to

42 USC 4332(2)(c) and 49 USC 303

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being or have been carried out by UDOT pursuant to 23 USC 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated May 26, 2022, and executed by FHWA and UDOT.

As of the publication of this document, UDOT has not reviewed, in detail, all of the comments received on the Final EIS. Comments are essentially verbatim with personal information and rude or vulgar language redacted or removed. Be aware that some inappropriate language could have been missed. In addition, UDOT did not verify the safety or security of any hyperlinks that were included in the comments; please use caution if clicking on any of these links.

The comments are separated into four volumes:

Volume 1 contains a comment identification (ID) number for all comments received during the Final EIS public review and comment period. Volume 1 also contains the majority of the comments that were submitted through the project website, emailed, texted, or received via voicemail.

Volume 2 contains some of the longer comments that were automatically truncated due to cell character limits in the Volume 1 comment table. These longer comments are presented in their entirety in Volume 2.

Volume 3 contains comments that were received as attachments to an email. These comments contain the comment ID found in Volume 1. Many of these comments are also found in Volumes 1 and 2.

Volume 4 contains the comments that were mailed to UDOT. These comments also contain the comment ID found in Volume 1 along with the text "mailed comment" in the comment column.

Volume 2- Longer Comments

ID	Full Name	Comment
25455	Madeline Vandel	<p>My name is Madeline Vandel, and I am a lifelong resident of Salt Lake City. I have been recreating in Little Cottonwood Canyon for over 20 years. I have several very serious concerns about your department's August 31st decision that Gondola Alternative B is your preferred alternative.</p> <p>First, looking at who you are consulting for your environmental impact statement I see that you are missing a major agency to consult with: the Department of Environmental Quality for the State of Utah. Why on earth have you not yet consulted them? As a state agency you need to work in conjunction with other departments to make a fully informed decision. The experts here are DEQ. You cannot make the correct decision without consulting them and having them give you a statement. I refuse to believe that building a gondola will not have negative impacts on the air and water quality of little cottonwood canyon. You cannot make a decision about the environmental impacts of any of the alternatives without consulting DEQ. They are the experts and their statements should be of the utmost importance to you and your departments decision.</p> <p>Second, I do not believe that this is the right choice for the people who actually live in Salt Lake City and at the base of the Cottonwood Canyons. It seems as if this decision was made to benefit developers and special interests. I am curious to hear why you think that a gondola is best for locals. As someone who has lived in the area for over 20 years and comes from a family who has been here for generations, I can tell you that this is not the right choice. What Salt Lake residents need is certainly not a gondola with giant parking lots and obstructive construction. This seems like it benefits tourists and developers, voices which most certainly should not be valued over those of the residents. I am seriously disappointed in this decision and my voice does not feel heard.</p> <p>Also, as somebody who recreates in Little Cottonwood Canyon year round, I do not understand how a gondola would support not only backcountry skiing access but also climbing and hiking access in the summer. Sure maybe a gondola makes sense in theory when you solely consider access to Snowbird and Alta, but what about all of those who recreate in the backcountry in the winter and climb at various locations throughout the canyon in the summer. How would a gondola support us in accessing these locations that are so important to us?</p> <p>In conclusion, as a resident of the Salt Lake area whose voice should be a priority in this decision, I demand that you firstly consult with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality before taking any further steps. They are the experts who can really tell you what the environmental impact will be of a gondola. This should be your number one priority. I understand that without consulting them it is easier to make whatever decision you want, but this is unacceptable. They must be consulted in order to make a decision that is informed and responsible. Next I urge that you really examine who this decision benefits. Your priority needs to be residents of Salt Lake City and those who live at the base of the Cottonwood Canyons. Stop listening to developers and those who may be trying to pay you off. You represent Utahns, not whoever will pay you. I also urge you to consider those who recreate throughout the canyon year round. Climbers and backcountry skiers deserve access to the canyon. Do the right thing here. You MUST consult DEQ, and please do the right thing by prioritizing locals over big money and developers.</p> <p>Be on the right side of history here. Consult DEQ!</p> <p>Respectfully, Madeline Vandel</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

26336	Judith Warner	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
26763	Josh Smith	<p>Good afternoon,</p> <p>I write to you today as a concerned citizen of salt lake city, and frequent user of Little Cottonwood Canyon. While I agree that there is a traffic problem in Little cottonwood canyon, I am strongly against the proposed solution, Gondola option B.</p>

		<p>I totally agree, something has to be done about congestion in the canyon. Not only is it inconvenient to all users, but cars idling their way up the canyon many days out of the year generates tons of pollution, which we already have too much of in the salt lake area. The gondola solution certainly has the potential to reduce car emissions on the road, but I believe that udot thinking that people will opt for the gondola over driving up the canyon is flawed. I personally use the ski bus, carpool, and do whatever I can during busy times of the year to cut down on traffic, but the majority of users do not. Unless the gondola is made mandatory on high traffic days (which I'm not a proponent of either, see below), I don't see the average person using it. What happens when you forget a glove, or lunch in your car? The gondola will ultimately only be used by tourists, and those who ski very few days out of the year. And what then happens if the gondola is made mandatory to backcountry users, just trying to access public land? This ultimately would be wrong, and toeing the line of illegal as it would restrict access to public land. Overall, I see the gondola being a flashy option, that few would use, and many would pay for.</p> <p>Secondly, lets look who benefits from this solution, and who doesn't. The two key beneficiaries are Snowbird and Alta ski resorts. To have a gondola, that shuttles customers straight to their doorstep and nowhere else, AND the taxpayers of Utah will pay for it for them!? This seems ludicrous when put in terms like this. I may not be so vehemently opposed to this option, if Alta and Snowbird were paying the majority of the bill, but so far it looks like they aren't. This to me screams crony capitalism...which I hope will not win out over morals.</p> <p>Next, let's look to one of our own national parks, Zion. They have implemented an impressive bus system that seems to work very well, even on the busiest of days. If you invested in a large bus fleet and parking, implemented mandatory bus days, and dropped off at many stops so backcountry users could still access public land it seems as if this could be the ticket! Zion national park serves over twice the visitors of little cottonwood per year (4.3m vs 2m) and the road travels through similar terrain. This to me points to that we should use a tried and true system, that also saves the landscape of the canyon from eyesores.</p> <p>Lastly, I'd really like to call to question the morality of the decision making process, and those ultimately making the decision. I'll admit, I haven't read all 14,000 comments from the draft eis period, but from the circles I'm involved in, and even circles I'm loosely related to, the vast majority of salt lake city citizens are against the gondola. I also understand that there have been some backdoor dealings between Snowbird and Alta and udot which raises even more suspicion about what's really driving this decision. Is Udot really looking out for the majority of its citizens? Not tourists, and not uber wealthy resort owners, whose pocketbooks I guess could match locals, but whose numbers don't come close. The way this whole process has been handled raises suspicion that someone is getting something in return for pushing the gondola option through, and if that's true, shame on udot. It is this suspicion that most drives my opposition to the gondola. If the gondola were put to a public vote, or if the ski resorts were paying for the majority of it, maybe I'd feel a little less strongly...but that's not what's happening.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, and please, act for the good of the citizens of Utah, not for personal interests.</p> <p>Josh Smith</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

27419	John Kennington	<p>Thank you for soliciting comments on this most important issue.</p> <p>It is unfortunate that this expensive project is proposed to serve just two businesses only for a maximum of 90 - 120 days per year, at this, the twilight of the ski resort age, with shortening ski seasons and rising ticket prices, to remediate traffic conditions that occur just 15 - 30 days per year. This project seems to be proposed about 50 years too late. I am, therefore, opposed to the proposed Gondola B project for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -One glaring omission for this project is that it should be proposed in light of what would also be envisioned for Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC), as well. For example, in the future will it also be envisioned to serve the needs of the two resorts in BCC by extending the gondola from Alta to Solitude and Brighton by a taxpayer funded additional extension? As such I would be most opposed to any further construction resembling a ski-interconnect. -I do agree that easier, less invasive options should be implemented in LCC before the gondola construction is considered, like tolling and limiting single occupancy vehicles on snow days, building the snow sheds, enhancing trailhead parking lots and enhancing the bus service with more, cheaper rides, flexible schedules and better buses. <p>I would then propose that the schedule of the project be paused for at least two ski seasons to conduct traffic studies to determine if further measures are needed to bring traffic congestion down to acceptable levels. After that, any additional needed improvements should be considered and designed. Such preliminary measures may potentially save the state lots of money. Such evidence of this needed traffic mitigation is already apparent with various resorts' implementation of parking requirements and the recent UTA Free Fare February which reduced the traffic loads in the canyons. There are plenty of other large resource needs, like saving the Great Salt and Utah Lakes, mitigating the homeless problem, and addressing air quality and climate change problems, than to spend significant resources on a declining tourist issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gondola service during adverse weather conditions may be spotty and inconsistent, causing it to be less dependable. For example, service may be halted during avalanche mitigation work and high wind conditions. -The road already exists and will always be needed to service the canyons. It has the potential to service all canyon users for the entire year with only slight improvements, the snow sheds and better mass transit, all at much less expense than the gondola. -A full length canyon gondola will greatly diminish the view shed, is too long and expensive a ride to continually attract tourists, and will likely be much less needed by the time it's completed. <p>For those who want a tourist attraction in LCC, one already exists, with the Snowbird gondola which has great bottom and top facilities, fantastic views and is not too long or expensive a ride. It is also positioned to the side of the canyon, which is less intrusive to the canyon view shed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Installation of a 2500 car capacity parking garage, with its ancillary businesses, will create a traffic congestion problem in that part of Hwy 210 and the area around it, intensifying the exact problem we are trying to avoid. -In modifying Wasatch Blvd through Cottonwood Heights, instead of expensive pedestrian overpasses, please consider installing several raised pedestrian crosswalks which are much cheaper, are self enforcing and they will calm traffic providing much safer conditions for alternative transit and will help achieve a slower speed limit of 35 mph. <p>Thank you very much for your consideration.</p>
27638	Ben Anderson	<p>I am devastated that the state would choose to mar a pristine landscape with a gondola. In years to come, i believe this will be looked at as a devastating mistake as a natural environment falls victim to short sighted policy. For numerous reasons, I beg you to consider other options before progressing with the gondola.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>In many ways, the gondola is an answer to a problem created by the ski resorts. The ski resorts, without concern for consequences, have increased their number of skier visits without increasing parking, lifts, amenities, or lodging services. The expanded gondola service serves the ski resorts to bring more skiers to an already crowded mountain and puts the burden on taxpayers. Ski resorts have been able to expand ticket sales without any recourse. The formula that supports the number of skiers, parking stalls, and amenities is extremely out of calibration. I know it is not the governments job to dictate how a private business is run, but why are taxpayers on the hook to support a business that is not offering the same consideration. I am not sure how I benefit from paying for a gondola that will serve only ski resorts.</p> <p>The gondola does not serve other recreational users in the canyon. Parking will continue to be dangerous. There should be paved pull outs at Lisa Falls, Gate Buttress, and Tanner's Flat, among other locations similar to the new parking lot at the vault. Additionally, police presence on snow days is abysmal. They consistently allow cars without chains, bald tires, 2 wheel drive, etc. up the canyon without a second thought. On the majority of occasions, the police are not even there. Given the number of LCC users, it seems that advertised canyon plans and thorough organization from law enforcement could address some initial needs that have not been met in the last decades as traffic has increased without regulation. There is no question that much of the traffic problems are caused by drivers who are unprepared and unfamiliar with what it means to drive the canyon in winter conditions. Although the gondola is purported to remove traffic, unless UPD does its job, there will continue to be unprepared drivers that cause concern and hazards to others on the road.</p> <p>As a personal editorial, those in power in Utah seem to be very concerned with making Utah the best place to live. My family has been fortunate enough to know "This is the Place" since the 19th century. However, in our quest to be economically progressive, we are damaging many of the reasons why I love to call Utah home. Destroying LCC is another step in the wrong direction as we damage a wonderful place to find solitude and wilderness. Hiking the other day, I ran into a man. We greeted one another and I asked how he was. He replied "suffering", to which I responded, "that's wonderful". And continued "wild spaces should be hard to get to, because then it keeps them away from the insincere".</p> <p>I could go on, but I'm sure you are busy. Please keep our spaces wild. Please do not mar the beautiful skyline that exists in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Not everything that looks good on paper is good in real life. Don't destroy the natural beauty of LCC. The flare and sparkle of this type of progress will fade, eventually to stand as a cautionary tale. LCC will never be the same; once it's gone, it's gone forever. Don't be the one to take it away, protect it. I beg you to reconsider.</p>
27955	Jennifer Cottam	<p>Thank you for soliciting comments on this most important issue.</p> <p>It is unfortunate that this expensive project is proposed to serve just two businesses. I work at Snowbird on Tuesdays and after going up every week for about 10 years, I have only had 1 day where it took me over an hour to drive up. It's seems to me to be a very expensive and invasive plan that basically remediates traffic conditions that occur just 15 - 30 days per year. And let's face it, if there are that many people going up the mountain then it's too crowded. Once it is full, then why keep bringing people up? At any rate, this project seems to be proposed about 50 years too late. I am, therefore, opposed to the proposed Gondola B project for the following reasons:</p> <p>-One glaring omission for this project is that it should be proposed in light of what would also be envisioned for Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC), as well. For</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>example, in the future will it also be envisioned to serve the needs of the two resorts in BCC by extending the gondola from Alta to Solitude and Brighton by a taxpayer funded additional extension? As such I would be most opposed to any further construction resembling a ski-interconnect.</p> <p>-I do agree that easier, less invasive options should be implemented in LCC before the gondola construction is considered, like tolling and limiting single occupancy vehicles on snow days, building the snow sheds, enhancing trailhead parking lots and enhancing the bus service with more, cheaper rides, flexible schedules and better buses.</p> <p>I would then propose that the schedule of the project be paused for at least two ski seasons to conduct traffic studies to determine if further measures are needed to bring traffic congestion down to acceptable levels. After that, any additional needed improvements should be considered and designed. Such preliminary measures may potentially save the state lots of money. Such evidence of this needed traffic mitigation is already apparent with various resorts' implementation of parking requirements and the recent UTA Free Fare February which reduced the traffic loads in the canyons. There are plenty of other large resource needs, like saving the Great Salt and Utah Lakes, mitigating the homeless problem, and addressing air quality and climate change problems, than to spend significant resources on a declining tourist issue.</p> <p>-Gondola service during adverse weather conditions may be spotty and inconsistent, causing it to be less dependable. For example, service may be halted during avalanche mitigation work and high wind conditions.</p> <p>-The road already exists and will always be needed to service the canyons. It has the potential to service all canyon users for the entire year with only slight improvements, the snow sheds and better mass transit, all at much less expense than the gondola.</p> <p>-A full length canyon gondola will greatly diminish the view shed, is too long and expensive a ride to continually attract tourists, and will likely be much less needed by the time it's completed.</p> <p>For those who want a tourist attraction in LCC, one already exists, with the Snowbird gondola which has great bottom and top facilities, fantastic views and is not too long or expensive a ride. It is also positioned to the side of the canyon, which is less intrusive to the canyon view shed.</p> <p>-Installation of a 2500 car capacity parking garage, with its ancillary businesses, will create a traffic congestion problem in that part of Hwy 210 and the area around it, intensifying the exact problem we are trying to avoid.</p> <p>-In modifying Wasatch Blvd through Cottonwood Heights, instead of expensive pedestrian overpasses, please consider installing several raised pedestrian crosswalks which are much cheaper, are self enforcing and they will calm traffic providing much safer conditions for alternative transit and will help achieve a slower speed limit of 35 mph.</p> <p>Thank you very much for your consideration.</p>
28183	J. Trent	<p>Josh, My name is Joshua Trent and I am a resident of Holladay UT and I work with a company very interested in either funding or financing the entire Gondola Project. I called and left a message, but thought an email would work as well.</p> <p>I originally approach members of the Utah City Counsel but they said they were opposed to the project on financial basis, when we told them we would fund the entire project they said they were opposed to it on an environmental level as well.</p> <p>I finally was able to speak with Brittany at Exoro and she said you are the person in charge of the project.</p> <p>Below is a summary of what we do and how we fund projects, but we can tailor a</p>

		<p>specific solution for UDOT on the Gondola project and maybe other UDOT projects as well.</p> <p>Here is a summary about our group and an example of what we do.</p> <p>Alpina is a privately owned investment boutique firm in Canada that provides professional services in the sectors of Finance, Real Estate, Insurance, Corporate Services. Established in 2018 as a holding company, group companies operating since 1978, and headquartered in Vancouver, Alpina has grown into a sophisticated local and international investor with a global revenue generating asset base.</p> <p>The Alpina investment model focuses on (1) government development projects, (2) large-scale projects, (3) infrastructure development and (4) projects funded through grants rather than loans. We fund governments, international institutions, private equity, sovereign wealth funds, corporates, private and family businesses, social and educational institutions, medical institutions and 501(C)(3)</p> <p>Example 1 - outline of the Alpina method: When we spoke I told you about a group I work with that can provide funding or financing for projects. We mainly focus on government projects but can also do public/private partnerships and private projects. I know this program can be an ideal solution for the UDOT Little Cottonwood Gondola Project and other projects as well that UDOT may be involved in.</p> <p>Here is a list of the focus areas:</p> <p>Affordable Housing Colleges and Universities Hospitals and Medical Centers Infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.) Cultural Centers Stadiums Etc.</p> <p>We provide funding in two different formats:</p> <p>Funding - this comes in the form of Grant Funding where the funds do not need to be repaid. Financing - this comes in the form of a non-recourse loan, we funding would be paid based on borrowers ability to repay.</p> <p>How can this benefit Municipalities and Private Projects?</p> <p>Municipalities have to fund projects. Right now it is estimated that a \$2 Trillion investment will be necessary by 2025 to upgrade existing infrastructure across the country. As you know, municipalities raise funds via public and private financing and through the issuance of bonds, which have tax implications on the taxpayers of the municipality.</p> <p>What our group (referred to as "API" from this point on) provides is funding/financing that is highly favorable to the municipality and its taxpayers. A very simple summary of what they can do is as follows:</p> <p>City X wants to build an infrastructure project. They present a budget of the</p>
--	--	--

		<p>project to API. City X structures the offer in the form of a Private Placement - which means API will be the sole investor of the project. API provides a term sheet based on the budget. If the term sheet is accepted by the city's bond counsel then an agreement is put in place, the bond is pushed forward and structured for purchase by API. Bond is placed in custody with a leading financial institution. API begins funding the transaction based on the disbursement schedule/milestones of the project.</p> <p>Here are the unique benefits to the Municipality:</p> <p>Once the project is completed, the bond is returned back to the municipality - it can then be canceled OR in many cases the municipality will choose to use the bond for another project, like a hospital, infrastructure or affordable housing. When the bond is in use, it is custodized with a top financial institution, which protects the municipality. I can explain more on this later if needed. Funding for the project is in the form of a grant, so the city doesn't need to repay it which means the "tax implications" on the taxpayers is zero.</p> <p>We are looking to work with key individuals that want to enhance their communities and do it in a fiscally responsible manner.</p> <p>There are more details I can provide but this should be a good summary until we can discuss it in more detail.</p> <p>Please review and let me know what additional questions you might have.</p> <p>We can also work with existing projects if the bond has been issued but not filled.</p> <p>Sample 2 - Public/Private option:</p> <p>We would also like to propose a different method for funding, a Public-Private Partnership, where we create an agreement to finance and manage the project thereby allowing no voter election for a bond issuance and zero tax liability to the taxpayers.</p> <p>Basically, each project is different and we can tailor the funding/financing for what works best for the project.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>J. Trent Black Box Group</p>
28235	John Murray	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>I've been living in SLC for the past 8 years and throughout this time I have been an avid user of Little Cottonwood Canyon, both in the winter for skiing and the summer for mountain biking and rock climbing. I've experienced the massive lines of traffic going up to the ski resorts on powder days so I can speak personally to the value of reducing this traffic. But I've also witnessed the traffic up LCC on days that aren't powder days, or even just a few hours after the morning of a powder day, and the traffic isn't bad at all. One almost never needs to stop their car during off hours. The traffic chaos is caused almost entirely by patrons of Snowbird/Alta, whereas other users of LCC (hikers, backcountry skiers, ice climbers) generally don't come in such great numbers that they cause traffic</p>

		<p>problems. I buy a pass for the LCC ski resorts every year, and I love the resorts. But in my mind, this is an inappropriate use of taxpayer dollars to subsidize private companies. Really, the people that are benefiting from this are mostly ski resort pass holders and the ski resorts themselves, rather than the general public.</p> <p>As far as cost effectiveness, \$550 million dollars seems like a lot to spend on improving traffic flow for ~36 weekend days per ski season. When thinking about long term efficacy of this solution, I question how many more decades our city will have such demand for skiing in the context of global warming, loss of snowpack, and the disappearance of the Great Salt Lake. It is also concerning that this spending is predominantly favoring recreation for the rich. Seeing that high of a price tag makes me wonder what sorts of improvements to the public transit system in the Salt Lake County area could be done for a similar price, in order to reduce rush hour freeway traffic. This would both improve pollution in the valley and also benefit a larger portion of the general public by reducing gas consumption.</p> <p>The gondola, as proposed, will likely not move enough people when demand is high. The proposed plan has a gondola that can move 35 passengers every two minutes (17.5 people per minute). Snowbird's tram moves about 125 passengers every 10 minutes (12.5 people per minute), but their tram only services ~1/4-1/3 of the Snowbird resort-goers. And the line for the Snowbird tram on powder days can take in excess of 45-60 minutes to get through. The proposed LCC gondola only moves 40% more people than the Snowbird tram, but it is servicing two whole resorts and the line will likely be very long and cumbersome. The estimated 45 minute trip time of the proposed LCC gondola is likely overly optimistic.</p> <p>I think that giving buses priority over cars to get up the canyon by providing a dedicated bus lane and forcing cars to stay in a single lane, will make the buses much more effective and favorable over driving private vehicles up. This restriction would only be applicable during rush hours, whereas cars and buses could use both lanes all other times of the day. Turning LCC road into a three lane road with the middle lane changing direction depending on the time of day (uphill only in the morning, downhill only after 1pm, many cities have roads like this) would be a reasonable way to minimize the expansion of the road to allow for peak traffic during those times. Only buses would be allowed to use the middle lane, so as to avoid confusion of private vehicle drivers and minimize accidents.</p>
28258	Garrett English	<p>There are several items about this project, as currently presented by UDOT, that raise concerns about the function and financial viability of this project. As a year-round user of Little Cottonwood Canyon and homeowner in the Salt Lake valley, this project appears to be ill-conceived, exclusionary, aesthetically & ecologically damaging, and one with potential for massive cost overruns.</p> <p>1) The gondola is proposed to have an uphill capacity of 35 persons per car, with a car departing every 2 minutes. This provides an uphill capacity of approx. 1,050 persons / hour. The tram at Snowbird ski resort has an uphill capacity of 1,000 persons / hour. How does UDOT reasonably expect this capacity to serve both Alta and Snowbird ski resorts in an effective manner and capacity? The backlog of uploading and downloading skiers, workers, etc. will be unsustainable based on this simple calculation.</p> <p>2) (Please note mm is used to as shorthand for millions of dollars, ex. \$600,000,000 is represented as \$600mm). At a proposed cost of \$600mm (as estimated by UDOT in 2021) the project seems irresponsibly fiscally, but as a professional in the architecture, engineering, and construction industry I suspect cost estimate is significantly under actual project cost. The approx.. 17.5%</p>

		<p>construction costs increase due to inflation for 2022, estimated by the US Census Bureau, would add approx. \$105mm to this cost, bringing it to \$705mm. Additionally, using a similarly ambitious transit gondola project, Panorama Mont Blanc, as a R.O.M (rough order of magnitude) cost basis of analysis, I argue that this project would cost far more than just the initial estimate plus inflationary increases. Completed in 2015 the Panorama project cost \$138mm for an approx. 2 mile long gondola. The proposed 12 mile Little Cottonwood gondola, at 6x the length, and using a conservative 25% inflation rate since 2015, would theoretically cost \$1,035mm (nearly twice the UDOT estimate). This project however has other unknown cost factors, at twice the length of any currently existing gondola the engineering and construction costs cannot reasonably be based on comparable projects as there is no comparable. I would argue this project is as ambitious as something like the Boston I-95 'big-dig', which had an initial cost estimate of \$2,700mm but an actual cost of \$25,000mm! I don't suggest this will be the cost of this project, but when construction something with no equal for scale the potential for unknowns to significantly increase cost must be accounted for, which I do not believe the UDOT estimate does.</p> <p>3) What is the access plan for construction of the gondola tower foundations? The scarring on the hillside and impact to the creek basin will be irreparable. I would argue that adding to the impact of the existing road with snowsheds, etc is significantly less impactful since this is already an existing engineering scar that could be expanded, not an entirely new impact.</p> <p>4) This project is exclusive to the benefit of the private ski resorts. Backcountry and other trailhead users are excluded and would still rely on the existing road, while still paying to fund this gondola project. A tax-payer funded solution must benefit all users of the canyon, if private enterprise wish to improve their guest experience than they should foot the bill.</p>
28324	Fred Ash	<p>If I were part of the government entity assigned to make the decision, what would I have to do? First I would need to identify the scope of the problem. Then I would need to find out what people on all sides of the issue have been proposing to solve the problem. And then I would have to make a decision.</p> <p>So the first thing I did was take my wife on a drive up the beautiful Little Cottonwood Canyon, on a cloudy Friday afternoon. We were amazed at how many cars were parked along side the road wherever there was room to park, and in the several small parking areas, cars obviously belonging to hikers and fishermen. At the top of the canyon there was little available parking near the ski resorts. One could only imagine what it would be like on the weekends, especially in the snow season.</p> <p>Then I started research on the traffic problem in the canyon. I learned that year-round, Little Cottonwood Canyon visitors enjoy unparalleled access to some of Utah's greatest outdoor attractions, including hiking, climbing, skiing, snowboarding and more. Little Cottonwood Canyon alone sees "1.2 million vehicle trips into the canyon per year. Up to 7,000 vehicles (cars, trucks and buses) go up and down Little Cottonwood Canyon per day on the busy days in the winter.</p> <p>Another very important thing I learned was that skiing accounts for only about half of the canyon usage. Hikers, fishermen, and tourists account for the rest, and from what my wife and I saw, there is not room for many more parking places along the road. It is good that UDOT favored the Gondola option over the option of expanding the highway, which would have eliminated much, if not most, of the parking for hikers and fishermen.</p> <p>But the gondola plan includes drop-off stations only at Alta and Snowbird. So, while I feel it is the better option of the two options, it is clear that it mostly benefits workers, skiers, and visitors to the resorts. It would definitely improve</p>

		<p>traffic on the highway, with the fewest impacts and disruptions, and the ride could become an attraction in its own right, as one person noted.</p> <p>The Gondola plan is clearly an off-shoot of the problems brought into our state by those who have been doing everything they can to increase our population with financial incentives, promises of access to our beautiful canyons, quality education, etc. It is too bad those newcomers didn't check the facts before signing in.</p> <p>I like to follow the money. It is clear that no hikers or fishermen are about to get rich in this plan. But there is a coalition of individuals, stakeholders from the ski industry, public relations firms, and real estate firms that stand to make a ton of money.</p> <p>There are some questions that should be answered: Who will pay the bill? Whether the funding will come from state, federal or a private entity is unclear at this point, UDOT says. Funding from the State will require approval from the Utah Legislature.</p> <p>Now that UDOT has announced its choice to be the Gondola option, as the two private owned ski resorts at the top of the canyon are the only ones to be served by the gondola, shouldn't those two ski resorts be covering most of the cost?</p> <p>Is it wise to use over half a billion State or Federal dollars for such a project when that money could be better spent for public education and or other public needs?</p> <p>Is it a good idea to use State dollars to cover the cost of a project clearly geared to benefit two specific private owned ski resorts next to the Salt Lake valley, not government run businesses? Would this be an opening for our legislators to use tax dollars to improve access or other needs of other private ski resorts in the state, north or south of the Salt Lake valley?</p>
28408	Andy White	<p>Key studies have shown that skiing has been suffering from declining participation over the past decade. <https://newtoski.com/is-skiing-becoming-more-or-less-popular/> (Alaina Johnson, June 24, 2022)</p> <p>According to the National Ski Areas Association the number of active ski and snowboard participants in the US has been falling since its peak of 10.1 million in 2010-11 to just 8.4 million in 2015-16. The skier visit statistics paint a similar picture - declining by over 7.7 million between 2010 and 2016.</p> <p><https://www.originoutside.com/insights/is-our-obsession-with-conversion-killing-the-ski-industry> The Covid years have changed the trend, or at least provided a bump.</p> <p>I'm a skier. Bought my first pass at Alta in the early 70s and my most recent one last year.</p> <p>I also pay taxes which I would like spent to enhance the health, friendliness and warmth of humanity, only a small part of which is subsidizing recreation for those making 160% of the local demographic (Oregon skiers in 2012, had a median income of \$82,000 while Oregon residents as a whole had a median income of \$49,000</p> <p><https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/12578/Ski%20Oregon%20Econ%20Impact%20Final.pdf;sequence=1></p> <p>According to the national weather service (https://www.extremeweatherwatch.com/cities/alta/most-yearly-snow), the most snow Alta has received since they began keeping records was 875" in 1983. Number 10 on the list of big years was 554" in 2019. Numbers 13,14, 15, and 17 are the only others in the top 20 since then and their totals hover around 500 - 525" contrary to old promotional material that claimed Alta averages 550" per year (https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/article/10-ski-resorts-deepest-snow).</p> <p>Data from a university of British Columbia research project <https://blogs.ubc.ca/michaelpidwirny/season-length-mammoth/> shows temperatures between 1951-1980 were about 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees F) cooler than they were between 1981 and 2010. If those thirty years trends</p>

		<p>continue . . . ? <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/climate-and/climate-skiing> predicts there will be a greater than 75% change in ski season length by 2050 if we follow a moderate versus a high pathway of carbon dioxide emissions. They don't predict it will get longer.</p> <p>In 2016 the Denver Post reported that skier demographics was changing. It's the older people who skied more (9.5 days per year for those over 68.) Boomers of that year also skied more than the national average of five times per year, according to a National Ski Area Association survey released that August. Those ages 45-54 made up 20 percent of skiers, up from 14 percent in the 1997-98 season; the 55-64 age group made up 12 percent, up from nearly 5 percent, and those 65 and older rose to 5.5 percent from 2.5 percent, according to the NSAA study. That's almost 38% of the skiers being 45 or older. They are the ones who can afford it now, but they probably started skiing when they were much younger and have worked their way up into \$125+ per day tickets . Where is the sustaining young blood?</p> <p>Will the resorts' winter business be obsolete before a gondola is even paid for?? Will it's primarily winter revenue source be of significance as the winter recreational seasons shorten?</p> <p>Busses have a flexibility a gondola doesn't. Consider the possibility of sharing the capital costs of busses with the big five (Utah's National Parks) and our state parks. Shuttle services there use busses in the summer while the ski industry utilizes them in the winter.</p> <p>Ski bus ridership is up 48% since UTA increased canyon runs by ending direct service from downtown. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2019/05/23/ski-bus-ridership-is-up/> That change allowed them to run the canyon every 15/30 minutes (peak/off). Routes now start at designated Trax stations and visit high volume park-and-ride lots along the way.</p> <p>For whatever reason, there were about 85 fewer ski resorts (462 total) operating in 2021 than there were in 1991. <https://nsaa.org/webdocs/Media_Public/IndustryStats/ski_areas_per_season_thru_2021.pdf> Could have been bad business practices, consolidation, or "bad luck" with the weather. Time may tell.</p> <p>I resubmit an opinion piece here that I did for the Salt Lake Tribune in the fall of 2020 in response to an earlier gondola article. I believe I also submitted a copy to you, but it is still relevant and think it deserves your continued consideration.</p> <p>Thank you Mr. Rafferty for your perspective on the Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) transportation quandary. As I drove up there to hike last weekend I was struck yet again by the number of cars parked along the highway by those seeking forest access (half a mile's worth at White Pine). I was reminded that your gondola alternative, with stations only at Snowbird and Alta, would do nothing to address the needs of people wishing to visit White Pine, Red Pine, or Maybird Lakes or Lisa Falls or anything else farther down canyon. A 2016 USU study (1) estimates only about a third, 782,190, of LCC's annual visitors are resort patrons meaning many of the other 1,417,253 visitors would reap little benefit from a gondola. Flexible bus run with their own problems, would solve that one.</p> <p>Considering only resort visitors, you suggest a 30 passenger gondola cabin would arrive every 30 seconds and move 3500-4000 people per hour up the canyon, but the UDOT alternatives summary (2) says it would leave every two minutes. 30 people every two minutes only puts 900 people an hour up the canyon.</p> <p>It is estimated to cost \$393 million plus operating and maintenance. A bus chassis is estimated to last a dozen years (3), let's call it ten due on salted roads, and would need three engine rebuilds in that time (4) making it cost somewhere</p>
--	--	---

		<p>near half a million dollars over its lifetime. \$393 million would buy and maintain almost 800 buses.</p> <p>With ski racks on the outside of the bus (where would they go on the gondola?) the bus could transport 30 passengers. If it loads and leaves every two minutes it puts 900 skiers on the mountain per hour.</p> <p>The UDOT summary estimates 46 minute up canyon travel time for either the gondola or a bus. Theoretically that means 92 buses or gondola cabins running a continuous loops. Without personal auto traffic on the road a homogenous system would tend to have smoother flow.</p> <p>If buses were only used one year, 393 M would buy and rebuild enough buses to last 8 years, but since the life expectance I've decided to reduce to 10 years, that money would provide buses for 80 years. You stated the gondola's lifespan is three times that of a bus. Three times 10 or 12 is only in the thirty year realm.</p> <p>Touting the gondola as "the only electric option" that would reduce a number of our air pollutants might be true right now, but electric cars are on the upswing in the US and 80,000 electric buses were delivered globally in 2018. (5)</p> <p>"North of Los Angeles, Antelope Valley Transit Authority is close to becoming the first all-electric metro fleet in the US. And places like New York City and California have set goals to gradually transition to 100 percent zero-emission bus fleets by 2040." (5)</p> <p>And what do you do with your transit system when you don't need to get 1,000 people per hour up the canyon? If it's fixed in place maybe you continue to make your monthly payments and paint it.</p> <p>If it's a bunch of buses, you can run an appropriate summer schedule with stops at popular places along the way and maybe strike a deal with the National Park Service or other large organizations and share the cost letting them serve visitors in Zion or other heavily used venues.</p> <p>One oft voiced drawback to buses is the canyon closing avalanche threat. Though I've only anecdotal information here, looking at a canyon avalanche path map (7) suggests that most of Snowbird and much of Alta is in avalanche terrain and must be cleared/stabilized before the resorts can open. Do the patrols deem the runs safe for the public significantly earlier than UDOT can clear the road? How often?</p> <p>The viability of skiing as an economic venture is slightly raised from time to time but, Ski Utah data (8) says three of the last four years have had more skier days than any in the last ten. (through the 2019 season).</p> <p>Countering that optimism, a table compiled by onthesnow.com (9) shows a rather regular yearly snowfall drop for Alta from 574" in 2009 to 486, 360, 404, 303, 436, 278, and 249 in 2016. The last 4 years have been up but since a 1994-95 high of 745" the trend has been generally down (10).</p> <p>"New analysis by the Climate Impact Lab (8) brings more bad news for American skiers already experiencing disappointing conditions at their favorite resorts. Within the next 20 years, the number of days at or below freezing in some of the most popular ski towns in the US will decline by weeks or even a month. If global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at the same pace that they did in the first decade of this century, ski resorts could see half as many sub- freezing days compared to historical averages by late century. While reducing global emissions will slow the pace of decline, American ski areas will still face significantly shorter seasons in the years ahead."</p> <p>Warmer climate means less snow and decreases the ability to artificially make snow.</p> <p>So what's the answer? First we need to figure out the question. What do we want to do? Alleviate winter driving and parking problems in the canyon? Provide a Disneyland ride? Adjust canyon usage to its reasonable carrying capacity? Subsidize one of my favorite sports?</p>
--	--	--

		<p>I've got lots of questions</p> <p>(1) https://saveourcanyons.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/tri_canyon_visitor_use_estimate.pdf</p> <p>(2) https://littlecottonwoodeis.udot.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/9234_42_LCC_EIS_Alternatives_Project_Factsheet_FIN_WEB_6_29_2020.pdf</p> <p>(3) https://www.codot.gov/programs/commuterchoices/documents/trandir_transit.pdf</p> <p>(4) https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/on-the-road-to-rehab-its-a-hard-life-for-a-metro-bus/2011/08/18/gIQAqNMWXJ_story.html</p> <p>(5) https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/28/electric-buses-are-taking-over-china-and-the-us-is-trying-to-catch-up.html</p> <p>(6) https://www.impactlab.org/news-insights/americas-shrinking-ski-season/</p> <p>(7) http://www.avalanchemapping.org/IMAGES/litcotweb.pdf</p> <p>(8) https://www.impactlab.org/news-insights/americas-shrinking-ski-season/</p> <p>(9) https://universe.byu.edu/2017/01/12/scientists-predict-climate-change-to-impact-utah-ski-industry/</p> <p>(10) https://www.freethepowder.com/blogs/report-blog/16177205-alta-utah-snowfall-history-from-1945-2014</p>
28863	Jared I	<p>I support Phase 1 of the proposal, except for the tolling. I do not support Phase 2.</p> <p>To add more details, I support increasing bus service to LCC and BCC, and increasing parking capabilities at the mouth of the canyons, as well as in the valley. I would also prefer a bus lane added to each canyon.</p> <p>I do not prefer tolling. Tolling heavily impacts frequent users (Utah residents) and low income users. While it will likely encourage additional carpooling or bus ridership, it won't do anything to help with the fact that the canyons and valley have a limited amount of infrastructure to help get users up the mountain.</p> <p>That is why I strongly support the increased bus service and road widening, particularly with expanded and new parking lots available in the valley.</p> <p>The primary factor limiting my current bus ridership is not being able to find parking at the bus stations.</p> <p>The second biggest factor is busses being full by the time they get to the lot I park at (which can be resolved with more busses overall).</p> <p>The third biggest factor is that when the canyon roads become full of cars, bus riders end up waiting in the same traffic as everyone else, but in the discomfort of a public bus. By expanding the road and having a dedicated flex bus lane, that issue is resolved.</p> <p>I do not support the gondola. The logistics to use the gondola are too time consuming, particular when bus transfers to the gondola base are involved. I also do not like that there are no stops for other canyon users on the gondola route, including snowshoers and backcountry skiers. Offering stops at trailheads could allow the gondola to also run outside of the winter. The gondola causes a negative visual impact to the canyon. I also have a concern that the gondola proposal just moves the concentration of traffic jams from the resort parking lots to the roads at the mouth of LCC that feed the gondola base, which might even be worse overall than the current situation. There is also a concern about the cost to ride. While the assumption is that resort passes will grant free access to the gondola, what if that subsidy goes away? No one will want to pay to ride the</p>

		<p>gondola each time. Plus, that means that canyon users without a ski pass are not going to be able to access the gondola in the same way, which feels unfair.</p> <p>A final thought is that there should be some consideration on limiting the daily users of the canyons rather than trying to put as many people as possible up them. Just because a bus system or gondola can move thousands of more people to the resorts doesn't mean that's going to improve any of the recreation itself. A lot of the canyon headaches were reduced when resort parking reservations were implemented. Many other public recreation activities have had to move to lottery systems because the demand is too high. While I personally wouldn't like this, because it would reduce my opportunities to ski, it is worth considering. Maybe the resorts have parking reservations and the public lots have a permitted lottery parking system. After a certain time if day (post-morning rush), the lots because first come first served. Since parking traffic flow would be controlled, there could be a mandate that resorts allow dropoffs as well. Again, I'm hesitant about this idea because I know at some point it would work against me, but I don't necessarily seeing doubling or tripling the lift lines as a better alternative, especially considering the level of public and government funding going towards it.</p> <p>In summary, yes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Enhanced bus service -More parking availability throughout the valley, preferably near the canyon mouths. -New bus flex lanes in each canyon. -Snowshed construction. -Trailhead improvements. <p>No to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tolling -Gondola <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parking reservations/lottery <p>Thanks!</p>
28898	Arash Farhang	<p>I have a lot of thoughts and comments on the current gondola proposal and why it is not the best solution, and quite frankly a bad idea.</p> <p>1) It will ruin the beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) forever. Naturally beautiful places should be kept that way, with minimal additions. There are a lot of alternatives to the gondola, which will leave the canyon in a much more pristine state. All those should be exhausted before a gondola is ever even considered.</p> <p>2) One of the motivators for a gondola, is that LCC is incredibly avalanche prone. It has been argued that a gondola will remove cars from the road and allow for travel up and down the canyon even during periods of high avalanche danger (at least when snow is being cleared, but likely not during artillery work). My proposal is that we take care of a large burden of the avalanche issue simply by have snowshed tunnels at the already identified avalanche runout zones across the highway. This has already been done in places like Rogers Pass British Columbia, Canada, and across countless mountain roads in the Alps. If we are truly serious about avalanches being an issue and somewhat smart about addressing the issue, we would have already implemented these long ago. Let's get smart and actually implement them.</p>

		<p>3) Travel capacity up the canyon. The said gondola would only be equivalent to 6 buses going to each of the two resorts Alta and Snowbird per hour. This is pitiful. If we seriously want to increase capacity, we need more than 6 per hour per resort. Moreover, people need to be incentivized to carpool more. Do like other resorts like solitude is currently doing. Give people free parking if they have a full car and charge them if they don't. Implement things like that and buses. Not a gondola that only has one car every 2 minutes. That's barely even a gondola. That's closer to a tram. Lastly, good solutions to alleviate congestions and bottlenecks should not present more bottlenecks while fixing the original bottlenecks. That is why carpooling in addition to most buses is really the best way. People meet up at one person's house and all carpool together. That way we don't have so many people trying to go to one place to take one mode of transport like a gondola, thereby having causing a bottleneck trying to get to the gondola structure. Same goes for buses. They need to definitely stop at multiple park and rides in the valley and not just at the mouth of bcc or lcc, otherwise we have another bottleneck there. Not to mention not enough parking at all at those locations.</p> <p>4) Use of taxpayer money to benefit the resorts. Something like the gondola should not even be considered, because it is using taxpayer money to fund something that is benefiting 2 privately owned ski resort. They should be required to burden all of the cost of said proposed gondola, because it will only be used in the winter months to their benefit. I get that the ski resorts bring in tax revenue to the state, but so does every citizen of the state. They should therefore not get to benefit from taxpayer dollars for such a project.</p>
28978	Andrew Wilson	<p>Bad deal for taxpayers: I'm going to assume a few approximate numbers: 3500 cars per day enter LCC over the course of a year. Of course, they also exit the canyon, so the same 3500 leave as well. They each carry about 2 people per car. The goal of the gondola or enhanced bus service is to reduce the number of cars by 30%. So, 30% of 3500 = 1050 cars per day reduction entering canyon.</p> <p>The proposed cost of each alternative is around \$550,000,000. The gondola would require an additional \$7,000,000 each year to operate, the bus service around \$12,000,000 per year. Over the next 25 years, the capital and operation expenditure for the gondola becomes \$725,000,000 and the bus service becomes \$850,000,000, or averaged out as expensed over time it comes to \$29,000,000 per year for gondola and \$34,000,000 for bus service.</p> <p>If you divide the yearly capital expense average and maintenance costs, then divide by the number of cars entering the canyon the project intends to reduce, it looks like this:</p> <p>Gondola - \$29,000,000 per year/ 1050 fewer cars per day entering (363,350 cars) = \$79.80 per car that enters the canyon.</p> <p>Bus - Same scenario as above, \$95.57 each car.</p> <p>That's what Utah tax dollars will be subsidizing over the next 25 years. And I can pretty much wager that the 1050 fewer cars per day will be replaced with more people driving up the canyon because the road won't be as busy and there will be available parking. Result is an increase in the number of cars and people in LCC.</p> <p>I would be livid to see my tax dollars being utilized for between and \$80 to \$95 per reduced vehicle that I must pay for. Imagine, the 1050 reduced cars in the</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>below canyon parking lot at \$80 per vehicle to get hem to park there. That's \$84,000 per day in taxpayer dollars to park and ride - and it's your tax dollars that fill that parking lot, and it's your tax dollars that stuff the corporate greed of the ski resorts that will benefit immensely from all the added skier and other recreational traffic.</p> <p>And who do you think is going to come knocking on the Alta and Snowbird business office door when these resorts become this much more popular and profitable?? How about the conglomerates, Alterra or Vail Resorts, they will offer big money for our beloved Alta and Snowbird.</p> <p>Working on solutions to save a much more critical geographic component would be to keep The Great Salt Lake from drying up. And are there numerous other philanthropical projects that would deserve a chunk of such taxpayer funding, even it was available money? Absolutely yes.</p> <p>Please don't continue to try to spend this phantom money for such an unworthy project the is really just a veiled attempt by the corporate resorts to pad their wallets and sell out when the numbers look really, really good.</p>
29005	Allan Schein	<p>Having read the Final EIS for the Little Cottonwood Canyon Gondola B alternate choice, I am amazed that there is absolutely no discussion of the impacts to our neighborhoods. Economic and traffic considerations seem to be a major driver to facilitate the ski areas to have a tentacle down canyon into the valley. But there is no indication this study and UDOT have considered what a massive industrial transportation hub will do to our neighborhoods. We're not zoned for a major industrial complex, did not move to this corner of the valley to have our living environment radically changed, and believe this decision was based on political, economic and preferential decisions that will forever diminish quality of life for residents in this vicinity.</p> <p>With the Gondola come the opportunists. The people that have bought the land on which to situate this out-of-place ski area attraction. No mention of the planned hotel and shopping center adjoining the base station is made. No mention of the size of the parking structure itself, or the base station, or how the influx of vehicles and people will affect the daily lives of residents. All the expansion and planned build-out will destroy the peace and tranquility of these neighborhoods. Make them more dangerous and radically alter the character of our community.</p> <p>The plan for Wasatch itself is ridiculous. UDOT is planning to funnel all traffic now, not through our neighborhoods but right into them. Widened roads, sound barriers, overpasses and more will now alter our neighborhoods with the overflow growth from and for the ski areas. And the attractive nuisance which the Gondola will prove to be. People utilizing it more in summers just for an activity. Mitigating traffic issues does not mean increasing it with the introduction of an amusement park style attraction.</p> <p>Not only that, but the economic rather than residential focus is a mistake from the start. Whatever happened to the concept of "quiet enjoyment" of our homes? UDOT and Snowbird want to run a major highway up to the canyon mouth and seem to have forgotten how Bangerter Hwy has destroyed and made neighborhoods radically different, and more dangerous thanks to the increase in traffic.</p> <p>Wasatch Blvd is a major recreation corridor. Runners, walkers, cyclists, and dog walkers rely on this corridor. The Tour of Utah bicycle race has been held on this route numerous times. Canyon recreation in general exceeds visits to the ski areas but the focus is on economic development. Residents should not have to suffer personal changes to their environment in order to allow the ski area expansion, which due to continuous growth have outgrown their useable boundaries.</p>

		<p>The extensive advertising Gondolaworks bought presented numerous exaggerations, half lies and outright [REDACTED] to the general public. The claim by Mr. Fields that the gondola will only require 2 acres is false, and the EIS shows a number greater than 200 acres required. Depictions of deplorable conditions riding buses were publicized. Yet, Gondolaworks's cable cars are sky buses, boxcars with seats suspended on a cable rather than wheels. Giving it a romantic name evoking some other culture doesn't change what it is.</p> <p>This entire concept is economic based with freeloaders looking to take a profitable ride on taxpayers money. It's not a solution unto itself, but a planned development designed to benefit the ski areas and land owners near base station while parading itself as a realistic traffic solution. It will increase traffic and the corresponding noise in our neighborhoods, diminish our quality of life, include a large industrial parking lot and hotel/mall complex due to the opportunity for profit. This is another unsuitable development disguised as a solution to a problem created by allowing uncontrolled expansion and growth of the ski areas. Let them have the mountains. Keep them out of the valley. If Cottonwood Heights residents wanted to live in Park City they would have moved there. Do not facilitate such growth in this quiet residential community.</p> <p>Allan Schein, Cottonwood Heights</p>
29040	Jasonged Jasonged	<p>Key studies have shown that skiing has been suffering from declining participation over the past decade. <https://newtoski.com/is-skiing-becoming-more-or-less-popular/> (Alaina Johnson, June 24, 2022)</p> <p>According to the National Ski Areas Association the number of active ski and snowboard participants in the US has been falling since its peak of 10.1 million in 2010-11 to just 8.4 million in 2015-16. The skier visit statistics paint a similar picture - declining by over 7.7 million between 2010 and 2016.</p> <p><https://www.originoutside.com/insights/is-our-obsession-with-conversion-killing-the-ski-industry> The Covid years have changed the trend, or at least provided a bump.</p> <p>I'm a skier. Bought my first pass at Alta in the early 70s and my most recent one last year.</p> <p>I also pay taxes which I would like spent to enhance the health, friendliness and warmth of humanity, only a small part of which is subsidizing recreation for those making 160% of the local demographic (Oregon skiers in 2012, had a median income of \$82,000 while Oregon residents as a whole had a median income of \$49,000</p> <p><https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/12578/Ski%20Oregon%20Econ%20Impact%20Final.pdf;sequence=1></p> <p>According to the national weather service (https://www.extremeweatherwatch.com/cities/alta/most-yearly-snow), the most snow Alta has received since they began keeping records was 875" in 1983. Number 10 on the list of big years was 554" in 2019. Numbers 13,14, 15, and 17 are the only others in the top 20 since then and their totals hover around 500 - 525" contrary to old promotional material that claimed Alta averages 550" per year (https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/article/10-ski-resorts-deepest-snow).</p> <p>Data from a university of British Columbia research project <https://blogs.ubc.ca/michaelpidwirny/season-length-mammoth/> shows temperatures between 1951-1980 were about 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees F) cooler than they were between 1981 and 2010. If those thirty years trends continue . . . ? <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/climate-and/climate-skiing> predicts there will be a greater than 75% change in ski season length by 2050 if we follow a moderate versus a high pathway of carbon dioxide emissions. They don't predict it will get longer.</p> <p>In 2016 the Denver Post reported that skier demographics was changing. It's the</p>

	<p>older people who skied more (9.5 days per year for those over 68.) Boomers of that year also skied more than the national average of five times per year, according to a National Ski Area Association survey released that August. Those ages 45-54 made up 20 percent of skiers, up from 14 percent in the 1997-98 season; the 55-64 age group made up 12 percent, up from nearly 5 percent, and those 65 and older rose to 5.5 percent from 2.5 percent, according to the NSAA study. That's almost 38% of the skiers being 45 or older. They are the ones who can afford it now, but they probably started skiing when they were much younger and have worked their way up into \$125+ per day tickets . Where is the sustaining young blood?</p> <p>Will the resorts' winter business be obsolete before a gondola is even paid for?? Will it's primarily winter revenue source be of significance as the winter recreational seasons shorten?</p> <p>Busses have a flexibility a gondola doesn't. Consider the possibility of sharing the capital costs of busses with the big five (Utah's National Parks) and our state parks. Shuttle services there use busses in the summer while the ski industry utilizes them in the winter.</p> <p>Ski bus ridership is up 48% since UTA increased canyon runs by ending direct service from downtown. <https://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2019/05/23/ski-bus-ridership-is-up/> That change allowed them to run the canyon every 15/30 minutes (peak/off). Routes now start at designated Trax stations and visit high volume park-and-ride lots along the way.</p> <p>For whatever reason, there were about 85 fewer ski resorts (462 total) operating in 2021 than there were in 1991. <https://nsaa.org/webdocs/Media_Public/IndustryStats/ski_areas_per_season_thru_2021.pdf> Could have been bad business practices, consolidation, or "bad luck" with the weather. Time may tell.</p> <p>I resubmit an opinion piece here that I did for the Salt Lake Tribune in the fall of 2020 in response to an earlier gondola article. I believe I also submitted a copy to you, but it is still relevant and think it deserves your continued consideration.</p> <p>Thank you Mr. Rafferty for your perspective on the Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) transportation quandary. As I drove up there to hike last weekend I was struck yet again by the number of cars parked along the highway by those seeking forest access (half a mile's worth at White Pine). I was reminded that your gondola alternative, with stations only at Snowbird and Alta, would do nothing to address the needs of people wishing to visit White Pine, Red Pine, or Maybird Lakes or Lisa Falls or anything else farther down canyon. A 2016 USU study (1) estimates only about a third, 782,190, of LCC's annual visitors are resort patrons meaning many of the other 1,417,253 visitors would reap little benefit from a gondola. Flexible bus run with their own problems, would solve that one.</p> <p>Considering only resort visitors, you suggest a 30 passenger gondola cabin would arrive every 30 seconds and move 3500-4000 people per hour up the canyon, but the UDOT alternatives summary (2) says it would leave every two minutes. 30 people every two minutes only puts 900 people an hour up the canyon.</p> <p>It is is estimated to cost \$393 million plus operating and maintenance. A bus chassis is estimated to last a dozen years (3), let's call it ten due on salted roads, and would need three engine rebuilds in that time (4) making it cost somewhere near half a million dollars over its lifetime. \$393 million would buy and maintain almost 800 buses.</p> <p>With ski racks on the outside of the bus (where would they go on the gondola?) the bus could transport 30 passengers. If it loads and leaves every two minutes it puts 900 skiers on the mountain per hour.</p>
--	---

		<p>The UDOT summary estimates 46 minute up canyon travel time for either the gondola or a bus. Theoretically that means 92 buses or gondola cabins running a continuous loops. Without personal auto traffic on the road a homogenous system would tend to have smoother flow.</p> <p>If buses were only used one year, 393 M would buy and rebuild enough buses to last 8 years, but since the life expectance I've decided to reduce to 10 years, that money would provide buses for 80 years. You stated the gondola's lifespan is three times that of a bus. Three times 10 or 12 is only in the thirty year realm.</p> <p>Touting the gondola as "the only electric option" that would reduce a number of our air pollutants might be true right now, but electric cars are on the upswing in the US and 80,000 electric buses were delivered globally in 2018. (5)</p> <p>"North of Los Angeles, Antelope Valley Transit Authority is close to becoming the first all-electric metro fleet in the US. And places like New York City and California have set goals to gradually transition to 100 percent zero-emission bus fleets by 2040." (5)</p> <p>And what do you do with your transit system when you don't need to get 1,000 people per hour up the canyon? If it's fixed in place maybe you continue to make your monthly payments and paint it.</p> <p>If it's a bunch of buses, you can run an appropriate summer schedule with stops at popular places along the way and maybe strike a deal with the National Park Service or other large organizations and share the cost letting them serve visitors in Zion or other heavily used venues.</p> <p>One oft voiced drawback to buses is the canyon closing avalanche threat. Though I've only anecdotal information here, looking at a canyon avalanche path map (7) suggests that most of Snowbird and much of Alta is in avalanche terrain and must be cleared/stabilized before the resorts can open. Do the patrols deem the runs safe for the public significantly earlier than UDOT can clear the road? How often?</p> <p>The viability of skiing as an economic venture is slightly raised from time to time but, Ski Utah data (8) says three of the last four years have had more skier days than any in the last ten. (through the 2019 season).</p> <p>Countering that optimism, a table compiled by onthesnow.com (9) shows a rather regular yearly snowfall drop for Alta from 574" in 2009 to 486, 360, 404, 303, 436, 278, and 249 in 2016. The last 4 years have been up but since a 1994-95 high of 745" the trend has been generally down (10).</p> <p>"New analysis by the Climate Impact Lab (8) brings more bad news for American skiers already experiencing disappointing conditions at their favorite resorts. Within the next 20 years, the number of days at or below freezing in some of the most popular ski towns in the US will decline by weeks or even a month. If global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise at the same pace that they did in the first decade of this century, ski resorts could see half as many sub- freezing days compared to historical averages by late century. While reducing global emissions will slow the pace of decline, American ski areas will still face significantly shorter seasons in the years ahead."</p> <p>Warmer climate means less snow and decreases the ability to artificially make snow.</p> <p>So what's the answer? First we need to figure out the question. What do we want to do? Alleviate winter driving and parking problems in the canyon? Provide a Disneyland ride? Adjust canyon usage to its reasonable carrying capacity? Subsidize one of my favorite sports?</p> <p>I've got lots of questions</p> <p>(1) https://saveourcanyons.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/tri_canyon_visitor_use_estimate.pdf</p> <p>(2) https://littlecottonwoodeis.udot.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/9234_42_LCC_EIS_Alternatives_Project</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Factsheet_FIN_WEB_6_29_2020.pdf</p> <p>(3) https://www.codot.gov/programs/commuterchoices/documents/trandir_transit.pdf</p> <p>(4) https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/on-the-road-to-rehab-its-a-hard-life-for-a-metro-bus/2011/08/18/gIQAqNMWXJ_story.html</p> <p>(5) https://www.cnbc.com/2019/09/28/electric-buses-are-taking-over-china-and-the-us-is-trying-to-catch-up.html</p> <p>(6) https://www.impactlab.org/news-insights/americas-shrinking-ski-season/</p> <p>(7) http://www.avalanchemapping.org/IMAGES/litcotweb.pdf</p> <p>(8) https://www.impactlab.org/news-insights/americas-shrinking-ski-season/</p> <p>(9) https://universe.byu.edu/2017/01/12/scientists-predict-climate-change-to-impact-utah-ski-industry/</p> <p>(10) https://www.freethepowder.com/blogs/report-blog/16177205-alta-utah-snowfall-history-from-1945-2014</p>
29321	Aaron Masover	<p>Hello, I live in Taylorsville and I love to ski in Little Cottonwood Canyon. In general I strongly support public transportation in Little Cottonwood canyon, and in the Salt Lake Valley in general.</p> <p>I previously submitted a comment in support of the gondola alternative. However, since I learned about Stadler's cog rail proposal that they presented in 2021, I currently support that option more for the following reasons (some of which are mentioned in the presentation):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stadler proposed a south side rail alignment that would be cheaper than the north side alignment, and avoid many avalanche slide paths. However, it looks like UDOT has only been considering a north side alignment. Stadler does not seem to be recommending snow sheds for a south side alignment. 2. Stadler puts the total cost of a cog rail at \$488m (subtracting their parking garage estimate, and assuming electrification). This is about 1.5x the cost of the \$335m gondola option. 3. Stadler proposed an additional \$487m rail connection to the Frontrunner along 9400s. This rail connection could directly connect to the cog rail line (using the same train cars and same track). 4. A cog rail would have the ability to make whistle stops for other canyon recreationists (hikers, rock climbers, showshoers, backcountry skiers, etc). On the other hand, the gondola would only go to Alta and Snowbird. 5. The south side alignment cog rail proposal from Stadler would have an estimated capacity per hour of 3000-5000 riders. 6. The O&M costs of a cog rail are about \$1.4m lower (there is an extremely long period for this to break even, but I still thought I would list it). <p>I think that we ought to be supporting more public transportation throughout the scope of the entire Salt Lake Valley. So despite the 1.5x cost of the cog rail, I still currently prefer the option because it more directly supports public transportation goals compared to a gondola. I also do not support any road widening project, or parking garage project. These are band-aids that will only increase traffic and congestion later on.</p> <p>We need a stronger focus on making the majority of a trip to Little Cottonwood canyon possible via public transit, rather than a "drive to take public transit" sort of situation.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>I would like to know the reasons for the differences between Stadler's estimates and UDOT's including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why does Stadler not recommend snow sheds for a south side alignment? Why is UDOT estimating \$250m for snow sheds in their cog rail alternative? Is that because UDOT is only considering a north side alignment? If so, why? 2. Why is Stadler estimating \$488m for the cog rail itself (including electrification) while UDOT is estimating \$688m? 3. Why has the option of a new rail line along 9400s not been talked about more? <p>Thank you and best regards, Aaron Masover</p>
29353	Tim Naylor	<p>We need to look towards a Sustainable Future.</p> <p>The Gondola has its merits; however, it is not in the best interest for the people who live in the State of Utah.</p> <p>A Gondola is not sustainable. The Gondola will only qualify for Utah money and private donations to build and limited resources to sustain. The Gondola has limited passenger load and throttled passenger movement.</p> <p>Expanding SR-210, with road and a future railway (possibly Cog) will allow SR-210 to be eligible for Federal Funding along with Utah State Money. And when we hold the Olympics, this corridor will become eligible for additional Federal Money.</p> <p>Gondola Works states the following: NOTE: Gondola Works Statements in Bold Bullet Points-My Comments are in Hollow Bullet Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It will reduce the congestion in Canyon and Neighborhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o People still have to get to the Gondola; how do they do this (Car or Bus and in the future, Rail)? o The Gondola will only hold 35 people, Gondola Works states that a Gondola can be available every 30 seconds-How long does it take to load a Gondola (over 30 seconds). Does the proposed cost include 72 Gondolas to meet 30 second headway time? o If the Gondola is served by Rail, there is no way the Gondola will be able to handle 90 people per car and there could be up to 4 cars (360 people). Buses hold up to 70 people. o We need a system that is seamless, providing the ultimate sustainable experience for our community and visitors. - Weather & Avalanche Resistant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Building Sheds and Retaining Walls in Avalanche Areas for road and railway will allow for consistent and safe ingress and egress. - 36 minutes from La Caille base station to Alta <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o With a Bus and Rail Service, conveyance will be seamless making the trip quicker, easier, and better.

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carbon neutral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Buses are moving away from Fossil Fuel as are Cars, Light Rail and Cog Rail use Electricity. Let's look towards the future. - Protects Watershed, Wildlife Habitat & Existing Trails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Watershed will still be protected, Wildlife Habitat will not be affected with Sheds and Underpasses, and Existing Trails will still be accessible. - Minimal Concrete, Pavement, & Construction Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o By Gondola Works Estimates, 50 Acres will be impacted which is minimal in terms of the Opportunity for better Public Transportation and SOV/HOV's. - 50 Year Life Cycle vs. 14 Years for Buses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Using bus and eventually rail is a Sustainable Plan that will improve the quality of life for all users in the State of Utah and Visitors. This plan could be sustained for over 100 years. - Completes Regional Transportation Loop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Gondola would only create a pinch point in transporting people, extending the time on the trip, and creating a negative experience. Bus and Rail will be seamless and a better loop. - Allows for Crowd Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Gondola will manage to create Big Crowds while people wait for the next Gondola. Eventually people will turn to Public Transportation. - Year-Round Operation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bus and Rail will be Year-Round and a better experience. - Greater Access for those with Disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o How can this be? People with Disabilities will have better access from any point in Utah and a greater experience with Bus and Rail with less inconvenience. - Expanded Parking at Base Stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o No need for Expanded Parking as Riders can access Bus and Rail at any point along the Route. - Less Expensive Operation & Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o With a Conveyance paid for and sustained with Federal Funding and State Dollars the Expense and Maintenance for Bus and Rail for the people of Utah will be minimal. - Does Not Require Added Snowshed Cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Snowshed Costs will be incorporated in the overall Road/Railway.
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>- Increases Tourism Assets & Economic Opportunities</p> <p>o Everywhere there is Bus and Rail, Tourism and Economic Opportunity Grows.</p> <p>If the Gondola is Built, we will end up building a Rail System anyway. The proposed package also includes Roadway improvement. We need to do it right the first time, with a sustainable future in mind by taking that 500 million+ for the Gondola and putting it in a real, sustainable transportation system. Bringing more people to Utah and the Canyons will bring more money to the State of Utah.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Tim Naylor, CTL</p>
29556	Tim Burkett Owner	<p>Long Time Skier 50 years 1972</p> <p>I oppose the Gondola for 2 very simple reasons.</p> <p>1. It will add huge number of new skiers onto the slopes of Alta + Snowbird. Do we need more paying skiers on weekends? Soon the lift lines will look like Vail or Aspen - or worse - Lake Tahoe - do we really want 40-minute lift lines just because we figured a way to jam more skiers up there? It will ruin the experience for everyone. If you have reached the limit on skiers already, then limit the access.</p> <p>2. Electric Cars are coming - so the tail pipe problem goes away. So that does not make sense either.</p> <p>Also: It will look like a Disneyland ride going up the middle of the canyon. Avalanches will be able to hit the poles. At Snowbird they are on the ridges for a reason. What happens if a tower gets hit by an avalanche? Still going to run it anyway. Did you see what happen in Europe just a couple of years ago? Gondola not working properly started sliding backwards then fell, killing many.</p> <p>We live at bottom of canyon and would not like to see moving gondola every time i look up at mountains.</p> <p>Will increase the amount of time to go skiing by double. For season pass holders WHO PAY THE FREIGHT up there it's not good.</p> <p>Finally, DO NOT BUY OUT LAQUILLE and level it to put in some cement atrocity.</p> <p>My solution is to do what they did at the Olympics using parking lots around the valley that are empty almost all the time. Then lots more buses - electric if you have them to get people up and down. Eliminating a massive traffic jam at the bottom of the gondola when every car that normally would just breeze up the canyon now has to que up and wait just to enter some huge building think of the parking mess downtown on jazz games same thing.</p> <p>I can't see cement and steel being the answer. Limit the skiers if you have too many in the future too bad, all those up there at once is NOT good for any skier.</p> <p>Are there going to be Police or Gondola cops at the bottom of the canyon to check you to prove you are an owner or employee? That should mess up the cars</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>taht are allowed up there.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
29750	Jeremy Steck	<p>It disappoints me that the Gondola Alternative B has been chosen as the preferred alternative for improved transportation in Little Cottonwood Canyon. I am encouraged that the funds for the Gondola have not yet been secured and that in the meantime the Enhanced Bus Service Option will be implemented. This provides time for the transportation solution that I believe will be best for BOTH Little Cottonwood and Big Cottonwood Canyons to be implemented, if done right, this will be successful and eliminate the need for the Gondola Alternative.</p> <p>One of the biggest oversights of this entire EIS is that it is focussed solely on Little Cottonwood Canyon. The data shows that there are more heavy congestion days in Big Cottonwood Canyon than Little Cottonwood for the past several years, even outside of ski season. The Enhanced Bus Service should equally help the traffic congestion in both canyons if implemented effectively and will provide a year round traffic solution.</p> <p>The Enhanced Bus System will be most effective if it is made to be easier than driving your car to the resorts or any of the many trailheads between Wasatch Boulevard and the top of each of the two canyons. As such, it should be free or at least subsidized enough so that taking the bus is cheaper than the gas that it would take to drive up each canyon from the each mouth in a personal vehicle (including the parking fees being implemented by the resorts in the winter). Buses should be given priority over personal vehicles to enter the canyon. This can be done by creating bus only lanes on Wasatch Boulevard to allow buses to pass traffic and make the turns into each canyon. If the buses have priority over personal vehicles for entry to the canyons, they may still be a very attractive option to users if the cost is slightly higher than driving a personal vehicle because you will get there faster. Buses should be equipped with external ski racks to avoid the hassle of bringing equipment on to the bus and holding it for the duration of the ride. Busses should also be equipped with external racks to carry bikes, crash pads for bouldering and sleds so that canyon users other than skiers may also be accommodated. The bus should be able to make stops at any requested location between Wasatch Boulevard and the top of each canyon so that all canyon users can be accommodated year round.</p> <p>In order for the Enhanced Bus System to be effective, the amount of buses needs to match the demand on any given day. This also holds true for parking at the bus stations. In the past years, I have observed the parking availability to be less than adequate for the amount of people trying to ride the bus. Perhaps the parking lot for the Gondola option could begin early to provide more parking options for the enhanced bus system? After studying this for the past few years, we know the approximate number of users that plan to use the canyons each day throughout the year. We also know that the current amount of buses and parking areas do not match those numbers. The quantity of buses and associated parking lots must match the demand for the enhanced bus system to be a success.</p> <p>If the number of buses are adequate, and they are given priority to enter the canyon over personal vehicles, and they are cheaper than driving a personal vehicle, and they accommodate the needs of all canyon users...people will be happy take the bus.</p>
29911	Bill Boyle	<p>Response to gondola proposal.</p> <p>I am not in favor of any of the current proposals and support leaving the canyons</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>alone. I for one have weeded myself out of little cottonwood skiing except on weekdays where no snowfall has occurred for 24 hours.</p> <p>Here are my issues:</p> <p>Destruction of the scenic view shed-I do not want the visual impact of this project during and after.</p> <p>Possibility of years of disruption in vehicle travel.</p> <p>Other (than skiers) recreation will be disrupted and in some cases destroyed. Access to the area and its trailheads will be curtailed and there will be destruction of historical climbing/ bordering. Not to mention that the gondola does nothing to get people to trailheads and climbing areas</p> <p>Capacity of the gondola will not make significantly impact car transportation-It is simply not cost effective (at a 1000 people per hour), or in general, time effective for many skier days and or use outside the ski season. to better access this I would like to see detailed data outlined below.The gondola is only really being considered because of ski season at ski resorts.</p> <p>A thousand people an hours does not begin to cover the demand for early/peak time travel in the canyon</p> <p>Allowing people to weed themselves, out rather than the state setting boundaries, is a much better approach. Consider how much skiing ha changed in 10 years. Many people have switched to multiple area passes, and don't, I for one, go up little cottonwood on snow days; and this will probably continue to be so regardless of the existence of a gondola.</p> <p>Levying a 20-30 dollar add on to access canyon is frankly not worth it and I believe that most people will agree. Put that levy on now and that may resolve much of the traffic problem, I wont pay it. And then again consider the benefits of season passes to other resorts. I find that the ability to make a reasonable decision requires significantly more data than has been presented, and data that covers the entire year or several years of all season use.</p> <p>Some of the data I would like to see: Several years of road traffic that breaks out 1) daily skier populations at snowbird and alta, 2) daily uphill traffic, 3) relationship to weather of daily count to weather, 4) number of days canyon closed 5) weather delays in road openings, 6) amount of time these delays are 7) hour by hour traffic counts are factored, 8) data collection for the entire year that shows.</p> <p>In conclusion, my personal observations are that there is a traffic issue with little cottonwood but this generally is related to weekends and snow days during the ski season. I frankly have not seen the info I need to justify any costly process to make little cottonwood more accesible. From my point of view, little cottonwood is being destroyed by overuse, and bringing more people up there, only adds to the problem. I don't see how the cost of this project justifies the myopic gains that might be achieved; and I for one do not want to pay for something that brings about memories of the great salt lake pumps.The only real benefit I see is some reduction in gas use and pollution, but if this is a substantive goal, the money could be spent elsewhere to get a greater effect.</p>
30033	Greg Davis	<p>Dear UDOT!</p> <p>First if all does it really matter what the locals or the people that use the Canyon</p>

		<p>regularly or the homeowners at the mouth of Lcc have to say because a majority of the people do not want your gondola and yet here we are moving forward with the ridiculous gondola.</p> <p>how can u all b serious about destroying the canyon for 2 ski resorts that that stand to profit substantially at the cost going of everyone else.</p> <p>not only is the gondola not going to help it will actually things worse In my opinion. the Gondola will lead to even more people attempting to drive to the mouth of pristine Lcc where there will now be a parking lot for up to 2500 cars, a base station and 200ft plus size towers strewn along the entire canyon. (No Thanks) For what, 15 really bad traffic days u r willing to spend in excess of \$500 million.</p> <p>The vehicles that are attempting to get to the gondola parking lot which will b located near the mouth of the canyon will still be stuck in the same traffic as everyone else(Backed up to ft union on some occasions and even to 6200 s hwy exit) on days canyon is closed for avi control and crazy pow days. The GONDOLA will also not run while they are performing avalanche control. (2 hours and up) so now even more people will be waiting in there running cars with heat on till canyons open and the gondola to start running. A majority of locals do not want it nor do the communities near the mouth of Lcc.</p> <p>This gondola is nothing but a Sheep in Wolves Clothing for snowbird who dreams of the day they can advertise longest gondola in the world. snowbird doesn't care about the traffic otherwise they would limit the amount of people they allow on the mountain. do any of u actually recreate in these canyons. have u ever been to snowbird on a packed powder holiday weekend. there lines r out of control because they cannot currently handle that many people without ridiculous wait times at every chair and this gondola will only make those matters worse.</p> <p>once again its clear the wealthy r making the decisions for you because no-one in there right mind wud put a gondola in this canyon. we are europe nor do we wanna be. i have been lcc die local for the last 25 yrs. lcc is my home away from home where i recoup and escape the stresses of life. now ill have people zooming buy in this absolute waste of funding which needless to say only benefits those who can afford to ski which is a fairly limited amount of people. you all will still have to have police at the bottom but now it will require even more officers to control traffic flow.</p> <p>NO THANKS UDOT</p> <p>hopefully u all are actually reading all these comments because if you are there is no way in good faith you could move forward with such a blatant waste of state money or forcing tax payers to pay for something they don't wanna with the only benefits going to snow bird and alta.</p> <p>im trying to get my morgage to go down and every year its already increased because of these damm schools take 60 to 70% of property taxes i can't afford any more taxes. soon i won't b able to afford to ski.</p> <p>now you all wanna try and push this 500 million dollar joke on takes payers, no way guys!!! stop smoking crack it will help you all think clearer.</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p><u>Listen to what the people want NO GONDOLA PLEASE!!!</u></p>
30078	Patrick Rich	<p>So tolling pays for tolling and punishes people financially for wanting to use the canyon. This is a terrible disincentive. How about toll single occupancy vehicles instead? If the toll is just to pay for tolling and there will be single occupancy restriction enforcement tools already in place, simply use those tools to toll single-use vehicles. If the resorts are going to financially punish single-use vehicles AND UDOT will punish single-use vehicles it will become financially onerous for residents to use the canyons. This system creates an economic imbalance of access while double charging residents whose taxes support the infrastructure already.</p> <p>It's been said already but this entire project revolves around supporting two private businesses (and to a much smaller extent a small population of the town that supports those businesses). I'm struggling to understand why I should pay to support a road with taxes, then pay to use those roads through tolls, then pay to park at those businesses, and then pay for the use of the businesses. If the businesses want to support the level of traffic that is causing the problem...why aren't the businesses financially responsible? Why is the financial burden on ALL users and doubly so on residents?</p> <p>At the VERY least there needs to be a reduced residency toll to account for maintenance already paid and avoid double taxation that unfairly punishes locals that already have to deal with canyon-related issues.</p> <p>I've also yet to see any supporting evidence that tolling will actually have the desired effect. While there is some study regarding tolling generally it doesn't take into account the type of user and the destination - I.e. will people paying \$150 to park and ski be disincentivized to pay an additional \$20-30 dollars or will they just pay it as the ever-increasing cost of skiing?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tolls support tolling or other non-canyon-related projects and do nothing to improve the canyon. 2. There hasn't been a compelling argument made that tolling will have the desired effect of reducing traffic. 3. Tolling WILL disproportionately affect locals and lower-income populations who are already financially supporting the road. 4. This access is 100% to facilitate private businesses that are not bearing any financial burden and stand to benefit enormously. <p>I know UDOT is trying to solve a road problem, but I don't think they are looking at why and who it will benefit and hurt most.</p>
30248	Anna Marie Neider	<p>Problems with your plan...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- IT WILL IRREVERSIBLY DAMAGE THE BEAUTY OF LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON 2- The towers are HUGE and VERY UGLY. They will be a PERMANENT SCAR on our beautiful canyon. 3- It costs a fortune 4- You dont know how you will pay for it 5- You are ready to go forward even tho you dont have the money 6- Very few will benefit from the gondola. Why dont they pay for it? 7- Your issue with the traffic is grossly exaggerated. I live here. I can see the

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>traffic. The only bad times are a few weekend powder days...</p> <p>8- You haven't even tried far less damaging and/or far less costly options.</p> <p>9-What about incentives to carpool?</p> <p>10- Incentives to receive prime parking for full cars?</p> <p>11- Incentives to avoid peak hours?</p> <p>12- More reliable buses</p> <p>13- Gigantic ugly parking garages... Permanent Eye sores</p> <p>14- Traffic to get to parking and lines to board the Gondola</p> <p>15- Why do you think Utahns will want to ride public transportation? I don't think they will. Why give up control, and change one headache for another far more expensive and more inconvenient headache.</p> <p>ALL SO A VERY FEW WILL BENEFIT AT THE COST OF THE MAJORITY</p> <p>16- YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELVES</p>
30303	Carolyn Keigley	<p>We need to learn from history. If you look at the history of transportation in the beginning of our country's history in changing the landscape with the building of canals. They were expensive and divisive and most importantly their service did not last long. Railroads quickly replaced them. The idea of spending millions of dollars for the sole benefit of the ski industry, two privately owned resorts which the majority of the state tax payers will not use, and to change the viewsheds and the topography of a beautiful canyon forever, I ask this question, "Just how long will Gondolas solve the problem of overcapacity of visitors in the canyon? Just as the canals, gondolas are expensive, divisive and most importantly their service will not solve the problem of too many visitors in the canyons. I will make a bet that the tax payers will still be paying for the Gondolas when we will finally realize that we still have a problem of too many visitors in a small canyon.</p> <p>I cannot understand why we can't do the simple and inexpensive step as the National Parks and other areas in the Forest Service Campgrounds across the nation have taken which is - When the parking lots are full, the park, or road is simply closed to cars. After that point all entering must come in on buses.</p> <p>We do have the Zion model as an example. But of course politics are not going to allow this since the \$ rules or in this case the resorts, land developers have an inside favor with those in office making these decisions.</p> <p>As for tolling, I totally support this but in both canyons, (LCC & BCC) and both at the same time. However there are major differences in these two canyons. Big Cottonwood canyon has problems not only in the winter but also in the summer and the peak of fall colors. Big Cottonwood Canyon needs a toll at the mouth of the canyon all year around on the busy weekends, holidays, and storm days. Please lawmakers, come up into BCC in the summer on the weekends and also on the Weeknights from 5-9 and witness how this canyon is being used. It is a race track for motorcycles and small race cars and car clubs driving over 100MPH. Lawmakers have a responsibility to making Highway 190 a safe road. Making BCC a toll road from the mouth of the canyon to Guardsman Pass would solve this problem and guess what, it would not cost a dime. The tolls collected would pay for the system and even provide enough bathrooms, toilet paper and the cleaning of the toilets. Four years ago Yellowstone National Park spent \$28K on hand sanitizers per summer and 2,710 rolls of toilet paper PER DAY! LCC and BCC combined have more annual visitors than Yellowstone National Park and I can tell you we don't have the same number of bathrooms nor the amount of toilet paper that Yellowstone provides to their visitors. So much for protecting the Wasatch watershed! Both LCC and BCC have been declared by the state as one of the state's gems and yet the state has seriously neglected these two canyons that serve as many visitors as the state's National parks.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Lastly - Parking on the roads during the winter and near the resorts is very dangerous! I live here in BCC and near the highway and I can tell you that there are many busy days when there has been near accidents with those that park on the road with their car doors opened and partially blocking the oncoming traffic while they are getting their ski gear on in the road. Then these ski resort customers walk mostly in the road which is often icy and slick with the traffic in both lanes which includes plows. It is truly scary to see parents with little children on the highway with no place to get away from this mixed traffic. When a death occurs and this will eventually happen, who is responsible? Who will be sued? Resorts, UDOT, State etc.? By plowing the road to enable parking on the road, UDOT is creating a safety issue. By allowing the resorts to put pressure on UDOT and the municipalities and the state to use the public highway as a resort parking lot they are responsible for creating a safety hazard. So in my opinion no roadside parking should be allowed on the side of the highway within walking distance of the ski resorts, and in the case of BCC that means 2-3 miles away from the resorts. This is a safety hazard and should not be allowed! Additionally, I have witnessed many busy winter weekends when the traffic is backed up and ambulances have had problems getting to emergency calls. This has been caused by the fact that with that many cars backed up on the highway plus cars parked on the road there is simply no place for the traffic to move over to allow the ambulance to safely pass the backed up traffic.</p> <p>So my plea is that lawmakers will make the right decisions for safety, for tax stressed families, and for the environment rather than seeing the gondola as a way of bringing in more money in sale taxes or spending more of the peoples' money through taxes, bonds, etc in the decades to come.</p>
30560	Barbara Straley	<p>TOURISM & SKIING are big to UTAH's economy -</p> <p>The Gondola could kill tourism for the Little Cottonwood resorts!!!! What tourist is going to plan a ski vacation to Utah where you, have to carry your Skis boots & poles, & suitcases all over the place? With this Gondola plan they will have to; Rent a car to park at the gondola so you don't have to pay the toll,</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Take Trax to a Bus, Bus to the Gondola base. Then You continue shleping your ski equipment, suitcases, From your bus or your car to the gondola base. Once at Snowbird if you are staying a Iron Blossm (the first condos in Snowbird resort)</p> <p>You have to take your skis, boots, poles, suitcase, through the lobby, down a level to walk across chick-a-dee slope, though the tram building down a floor, Through 2 parking lots and a along a short road, past the tennis courts, than finally into Iron Blossom lobby, up the elevator to your room.</p> <p>Now pictures doing that either arriving at the airport at 7:30 a.m. in the morning or at 10:30 p.m. at night, and having to do that in the dark of night or while cars and skiers are arriving to ski for the day.</p> <p>Wouldn't you rather GO to - Vail or even Vermont?</p> <p>Not to mention the beauty of our one of a kind canyons. being ruined and</p>

		<p>unsightly.</p> <p>Taxpayers have to pay for the gondola, then have to pay to use it???</p> <p>Question about cost of operation. Is this another "Great Salt Lake Pump" in the making (only part time use). WHY would we spend \$550 million dollars on a project that is only used 6 months a year? AND Where are they going to store the gondola cars when it's not in use??? 16 miles(8 miles each way) of gondola cars would need to be removed and STORED if not being used in the summer.</p> <p>Leaving them hanging in the 105 degree weather all summer would do terrible damage to them, and would be ugly, also leaving them open to vandalism. Like the pump, the cost to maintain it would be too much and then the 2500 parking plaza would be maintained by the state but the La Caille landowners would use it for parking at their hotel/shopping center, they put in, making it ANOTHER taxpayer burden.</p> <p>Plus the base location makes traffic a worse mess pushing traffic from the south across the mouth of the canyon to get over to the gondola base.</p> <p>Utah needs a TRUTH in PRESENTATION Policy</p> <p>UDOT Tells legislators More Buses until this is built. then UTA announces they are stopping whole Routes of bus service for this coming ski season,</p> <p>I hope there is some government oversight.</p> <p>Could you make sure there are not any people working on any parts of the project who go ahead of the project buying land, then vote for that site so they can sell their land to UDOT/UTA for a huge profit, like happened with Frontrunner.</p> <p>PLEASE DO NOT PUT IN THIS GONDOLA!!!!</p>
30569	Scot Morgan	<p>I have never seen such a biased and shoddy report. If this was a business proposal it would get you fired. The lack of supporting documentation for UDOT's decision is beyond comprehension. The facts and timelines point to collusion between UDOT and Snowbird. It does not address the needs of parking needed for recreation at the multiple access points throughout the canyon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no computer traffic simulation of the traffic flow impact of the Gondola base camp to canyon residents. - Where is the public opinion comment response summary showing the number of comments for and against a Gondola? - Where is a public opinion survey? Which would show the lack of public support for this boondoggle. - Josh Van Jura and UDOT and Snowbird will be sued. - No real alternative solutions proposed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Is a 20-minute drive up the canyon on warmed conductive concrete roads that don't allow snow accumulation and snowsheds in avalanche areas with no need for snowplows salting the roads a better idea? o No salt better for the environment

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study missing computer simulations of Snowshed additions. - Study missing computer simulations of fixing the three traffic light choke points into Little Cottonwood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o New tunnels/bridges accommodate left turn traffic-flow without stopping traffic. (particularly important for outflow traffic at Wasatch Boulevard onto 210 and down canyon traffic onto 209) - The insanity of lugging skis, boots, poles, backpacks filled with helmets, gloves, goggles, neck warmers and a cooler with lunch and snacks in your arms, standing in line for 30 minutes for the hour Gondola ride up the canyon and then the 10-minute hike to a lodge or lift. What if you just flew in with a ton of luggage? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o That means Gondola riders will take more than 3 hours up/down the canyon to ski plus the drive home time. This is not a viable solution. - County and Forest Service must allow parking expansion at the resorts, and other stopping point up the canyon. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o This is a major issue, since UDOT's plan is to eliminate roadside parking. o Parking is even more crazy during Snowbird's October Fest - Buses slow down traffic to a crawl <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Public Transportation should not be used in the canyon. o Snowbird's President doesn't want them either. - Taxpayers are upset by this proposal's colossal waste of money. - UDOT has no business trying to turn the canyon into Disneyland attraction.
30609	Craig Adam	<p>As this is the final EIS Comment period I am not fully aware if these comments are acceptable for this purpose, but I chose to add them as they are important to me, my family and neighbors.</p> <p>As stated in the UDOT presentation Little Cottonwood Canyon is subjected to an average of 56 hours a year of closures. Depending upon the extent of the avalanche this could account for anywhere from a few hours to days for an individual avalanche occurrence. For this small number of closures and the inconvenience it causes, I cannot accept the tax burden placed on the residents of Utah for this project in good conscience. My final thought would be to either enforce carpooling or make bus transportation more convenient. Skiing is already getting the label of a "White Privilege" sport, excluding many minorities and low income persons due in part to the high cost involved and this project will only add to this label as the cost for a day's skiing may now soar to over \$200/day/person. Has anyone considered that according to some ski resort experts, skiing is on the decline? And then Utah is seeing a decline in the number of snow days due in part to climate change. Will we even need these improvements in 10-years? There's also the thought of what do all these improvements buy residents on good travel days or during post winter driving conditions?</p> <p>The inconvenience for families and older citizens hauling their gear and belongings (skies, poles, boots, extra clothes, lunches, etc) to the hill via multiple</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>vehicle transfers is a task I would not even want to imagine and I consider myself a healthy 65+ years old. I can only imagine if I was someone handicapped or dragging 4 kids along.</p> <p>I am in favor of adding a road toll in the form of HOV tolling in order to promote carpooling, allowing 2 or more riders reduced or free mountain access. Additionally you speak of phased implementation, so consider building the parking structure for the base station first and using it as a park-and-ride bus terminal. This will provide UDOT time to evaluate if the gondolas is even needed while providing an alternative to self-driving the hill. Tolls from single ridership could be used to offset bus fares for those who chose to ride as another enticement. Speaking of tolls, what method will be used to assure that single drivers are being tolled, as currently I see many drivers of the HOV riding singularly in the HOV lane and the yellow toll light flashing.</p> <p>As for the environment I can only laugh when UDOT claims that water quality will not be affected. Currently there is an exclusion of dogs in the canyon in order to maintain water quality but has there ever been a citation or fine issued to someone bringing a dog on the trails or to the resorts? Doubt it. So how serious is the water quality going to be taken during the construction phase? Here in Weber Co I have reported many times that construction projects have violated SWPP protocols and nothing happens. I have even reviewed County site inspection reports where the County inspector basically "pencil whips" their inspection form and when a physical inspection of the project is performed using the same criteria results are radically different.</p> <p>Thanks for taking the time to review this statement and I apologize in advance should I have gone off-topic. I hope some of these thoughts and ideas can find their way into your final project planning.</p> <p>Respectfully;</p> <p>Craig Adam</p>
30612	Margaret Bourke	<p>Dear Secretary Braceras,</p> <p>Thank you for your service to Utahns and visitors alike with your strong environmental positions regarding clean air, clean water and a health environment and ecosystem.</p> <p>Attached is a letter I sent to US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. I am also sending it to you as well as others leading Utah into the future in the hope that that future will be a healthy on for my children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, as well as the flora and fauna that we all cherish and enjoy seeing in so much of Utah's natural landscape.</p> <p>I urge you to change the format of the phasing process such that if the tolling and busing options mentioned provide adequately for transportation needs, that the place will stop there, and not proceed with seeking funding for a gondola.</p> <p>September 19, 2022</p> <p>Secretary Pete Buttigieg US Department of Transportation; engage@dot.gov 1200 New Jersey Ave, SE Washington, DC 20590</p>

		<p>RE: Reject funding Gondola B in Little Cottonwood Canyon</p> <p>Dear Mr. Secretary,</p> <p>Thank you for your service to America, and the people of both urban and rural communities, cities as well as towns. I write to fervently request you and your agenda reject any applications for funding the Utah Department of Transportation's (UDOT) Little Cottonwood Canyon Gondola B, preferred alternative.</p> <p>As you know, much of Utah is federal lands, whether national park, forest, wilderness area, preserve, or land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. I live in Alta, the headwaters of the Little Cottonwood Canyon Creek, the top of the box canyon, a canyon named for that creek. While not South Bend, nor West Lafayette, where I was raised, it has a character, which is due to its continued natural beauty, a feeling of calm, peace and tranquillity where solitude is still possible.</p> <p>UDOT's selection of Gondola B, in the September Final EIS, is NOT what ought to receive public funding.</p> <p>This gondola...:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">would benefit only the affluent, winter ski and snowboard communities;would benefits 2 private ski resorts;would provide no access to trails elsewhere in the twelve (12) mile canyon;would create a noisy, less scenic environment;would require dedicated, long-term infrastructure while climate warming effects demonstrate drought plus higher temperatures shortening the ski/boarding season. <p>There must be so many, many more equitable, beneficial applications for infrastructure and mass transportation dollars. In Utah, where you recently visited Governor Cox and Mayor Wilson, more public transportation in the form of buses and low emission trams to national parks, forests and preserves would be ideal and is needed. With the increase in outdoor recreation and enjoyment, spurred in part from the COVID pandemic, these public areas are in desperate need of providing access, but not from gondolas nor private vehicles. These are "natural" areas and people are coming to enjoy nature, not scenes degraded by areal tramways. I am sure, as a two-term mayor, you are well aware of the inequity caused by developers having an outsider voice in state and local actions. Please join Senators Iwamoto, and Riebe, as well as Representative Bennion, Mayors of Salt Lake County, Sandy, Cottonwood Heights and Alta, as well as other elected officials and many citizens both affiliated and not, with non-profits such as:</p> <p>Friends of Alta Friends of Little Cottonwood Canyon GreenLatinos Latino Outdoors Salt Lake City League of Women Voters of Salt Lake Salt Lake Climbers Alliance Save not Pave Save our Canyons Students for the Wasatch Wasatch Backcountry Alliance Wasatch Mountain Club</p> <p>I am available to speak with you or any member of your staff.</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Sincerely yours,</p> <p>Margaret Bourke -----</p> <p>Cc Governor Spencer Cox [via website comment form] Utah Department of Transportation, Secretary Carlos Braceras Senate President J. Stuart Adams and Majority leader Evan J. Vickers House Majority leader, Mike Schultz and Speaker Brad Wilson Senator Kathleen Riebe Representative Gay Lynn Bennion</p>
30622	Erme Catino	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>discussion about it.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
30623	Dan Ernst	<p>Reading and listening to the available information and understanding there is a lot of emotion that has been conveyed, I want to give my perspective.</p> <p>I see the gondola as the preferred alternative for a variety of reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reliability - whether for weather, road conditions, accidents or sure number of guest wanting to ascend the canyon, there is a higher probability of reliability. 2. Environmental - having the alternative - will provide a means to take cars off the road - less hydrocarbons. Also note each time there is an accident involving cars in the canyon, likely resulting in the release of contaminants; coolant, battery acids and lubricants that can flow into SL County water system. 3. Financial - The bill is steep, but what is the cost to the public. The ski industry and the tourism that has occurred as a result of the canyon has been a positive impact upon state, county and the communities serving this canyon over the years. Adding the gondola, would it preserve and expand the opportunity to grow the revenue \$'s in light of limited parking already in effect within the canyon. Another way to promote the state and community. Will the cost of investment be offset by expanded tourism growth with an updated and progressive view on how to better service the canyon and community via a gondola. 4. Historical - My first visit to Little Cottonwood Canyon was 1960. From my recollection, Alta was a small and quaint community served by a small and limited road. There were a limited number of homes and there was no Snowbird. Advance 60+ years and, well, we know what is up the canyon. The impact has been significant and in my mind is a reminder of the impact of growth and the pressures that comes with these additions. As is evident, there is only one way up and down the canyon and that requires a vehicle and there are limits on the number that can travel at any one time. And when there is event that makes the road impassable, well everything comes to a halt. I'm not a fan of expanding roads, adding additional hydrocarbon driven buses. Weather patterns are changing and in my mind, doing nothing or adding lanes for buses will only contribute and accelerate weather change. <p>Change is difficult and even more so when emotion is added. I look at the addition of the gondola and that of being a pioneer leader (see what we did and are doing) that serves the community. If I recall, there were a lot of vocal naysayers concerning TRAX. I disagree it is only serving two entities. I see it as servicing the entire canyon (all businesses up the canyon), the entire skiing community (businesses and local community) as well as the service community (hotels, restaurants and entertainment).</p> <p>I could keep going, but I will close for now. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.</p>
30661	Braxton Denos	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are</p>

		<p>against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>Thank you!</p>
30807	May Lee	<p>UDOT's decision that identifies Gondola Alternative B as the preferred alternative is flawed.</p> <p>UDOT's Final EIS overview states that "safety, mobility and reliability" are the issues facing SR210 today. In terms of mobility, recent research from University of California at Davis clearly demonstrates that "traffic congestion has traditionally been addressed by adding additional roadway capacity via constructing entirely new roadways, adding additional lanes to existing roadways, or upgrading existing highways to controlled-access freeways. Numerous studies have examined the effectiveness of this approach and consistently show that adding capacity to roadways fails to alleviate congestion for long because it actually increases vehicle miles traveled." (Source: https://ncst.ucdavis.edu/research-product/increasing-highway-capacity-unlikely-relieve-traffic-congestion) Simply stated, expanding the road leads to increases in traffic. My question is: how exactly does UDOT's proposal to expand SR210 improve safety and mobility on SR 210?</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>As a resident of Cottonwood Heights, I am especially alarmed by the expansion of Wasatch Boulevard. UDOT's proposal, set in the middle of a residential area, merely invites increased driving speeds and I would expect an increase in accidents and fatalities. What would be better would be a road design that promotes slower speed limits; a less car-centric design limited to 3 lanes; protected bike lanes for cyclists, not to be shared with other road users (Please explain why any bicyclist would want to ride on a 5 lane pseudo-highway, especially a heavily travelled one?); pedestrian paths on both sides (east and west) of Wasatch; and no pedestrian bridges. Ground level crosswalks would work better to slow down traffic and minimize traffic hazards.</p> <p>The assumptions made by UDOT in analyzing an integrated transportation system are puzzling. Regarding a theorized increased traffic in Little Cottonwood Canyon: since SR 210 is not a through-road and dead ends at Alta, how is it that an increase in population would automatically lead to increased traffic? If the current road and parking available at the ski resorts throttles traffic flow, as it does currently, how does the number of cars increase? You may have extrapolated on past usage figures, but wouldn't SR210 reach a point of diminishing returns, and that rate of growth would slow down? Also, the Little Cottonwood EIS specifically states that UDOT does NOT anticipate that traffic volumes will decrease with their proposed gondola alternative, so what is the point of spending millions on this? Same traffic plus gondola just means more crowds at the resorts. They are plenty crowded now.</p> <p>In your project overview and final EIS summary, it's written: "Ultimately, the partners seek to deliver transportation options that meet the needs of the community while preserving the values of the Wasatch Mountains." This entire EIS exercise merely benefits a handful of individuals and privately owned businesses. It is a waste of taxpayer funds and fiscally irresponsible. Which local community is benefiting and being served from this project? I know that Salt Lake County, Town of Alta, Cottonwood Heights, and Sandy are dead set against Gondola Alternative B. It risks destroying these robust communities by diminishing our property values. How does this alternative preserve Little Cottonwood Canyon? I'm asking UDOT to explain how bringing more people into LCC, or specifically, Snowbird and Alta ski resorts, protects the canyon? It would merely add exponential risk of more traffic and more people to an ever-increasingly vital and drought-impacted watershed.</p>
31050	Katy Andrews	<p>Installing a gondola up Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is the wrong solution for protecting the canyon and resolving the traffic congestion. If the focus was on preservation of LCC rather than reducing traffic, then traffic reduction would happen naturally. This canyon is small and fragile and is already negatively impacted by the number of visitors it sees every day in the winter. Installation of a gondola would not change the number of cars visiting the resorts, but would increase skier visits by 20%, per UDOT's EIS, thus causing further harm to the canyon. The first thing that should be done before any changes are considered is to support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Once this is determined, then the solution should be focused on limiting the visitors, which will reduce traffic.</p> <p>This is just one of several unanswered questions and there is no reason to invest what is likely to be much more than \$550 million in a permanent project that may not be the best solution once all questions are answered. It is much less expensive and much more environmentally friendly to implement enhanced bus service, tolling, parking reservations, and enforcement of traction laws.</p> <p>It seems that building a gondola in LCC is only to serve the businesses of</p>

		<p>Snowbird and Alta, yet is funded by tax-payers. The majority of tax-payers oppose installing a gondola up LCC (80% of Utahns, according to a Deseret News/Hinckley Institute of Politics poll) and the resort executives are the main people supporting this terrible idea. UDOT's EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6] Installation of a gondola completely ignores public and political opinion (the tax payers!). It also completely ignores other tax-payer uses such as trailhead use.</p> <p>Building a gondola is also not a convenient or necessary solution and adds significant travel time to and from Snowbird and Alta. How are people incentivized to not just drive up the canyon and park, which is much faster and convenient? For the gondola strategy to be effective, there will need to be a major change in public habits. UDOT has no plans to limit cars up the canyon or even analyze demand, so it seems that the original traffic issue is not being solved with a gondola. The gondola will not solve traffic issues. It will simply push traffic out of LCC onto Wasatch Blvd, I-215, and surrounding neighborhoods in the Cottonwood Heights community.</p> <p>Instead, UDOT should implement solutions that they already know reduce the traffic problem like tolling (see Millcreek Canyon) and parking reservations (see Solitude, Snowbird, and Alta). These are things that can be planned and executed for this coming ski season and if done well, data can be collected on the effectiveness of these various solutions. The expense and environmental damage caused by installation of a gondola is not commensurate with the traffic problem at hand and seems like a very unnecessary solution. This gondola would not even run during avalanche mitigation or the eight months of the year that are not winter.</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a true treasure of our local environment and attracts skiers, climbers, and hikers from around the world to enjoy its beauty. Constructing more than 20 towers reaching 200 feet tall and stretching eight miles through the heart of LCC would destroy the canyon's natural beauty. Altering the canyon's footprint will also destroy popular climbing and hiking areas including Alpenboch Loop Trail.</p> <p>Do not build a gondola up LCC. Instead, work to understand how many visitors LCC can handle at any given time and then implement a solution that enforces that limit. This will reduce the traffic problem.</p>
31061	Ramsey Tate	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC?

		<p>2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/).</p> <p>3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots.</p> <p>4. If the gondola only runs during the winter, how does that help with traffic in the canyon during the summer? The gondola would sit stagnant during the summer taking away from the natural beauty of the canyon. Traffic options need to be addressed for all seasons, not just winter.</p> <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action against this development. Thank you!</p>
31063	Phyllis Mayhew	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they

		<p>conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/).</p> <p>3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots.</p> <p>4. If the gondola only runs during the winter, how does that help with traffic in the canyon during the summer? The gondola would sit stagnant during the summer taking away from the natural beauty of the canyon. Traffic options need to be addressed for all seasons, not just winter.</p> <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <p>1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year.</p> <p>2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users.</p> <p>3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it.</p> <p>I urge you to take action against this development. Thank you!</p>
31067	Candice Rainey	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <p>1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC?</p> <p>2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The</p>

		<p>Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/.</p> <p>3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots.</p> <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
31084	Kristin Bryce	<p>NO TO THE GONDOLA!!!</p> <p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah.</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting

		<p>vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots.</p> <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
31141	Haley McClellan	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many</p>

		<p>visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. 4. The gondola will not provide access to trailheads, and will not be of added benefit to backcountry users such as mountain bikers, hikers, and backcountry skiers. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
31143	Kate Sonnick	<p>NO GONDOLA! The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
31152	Chris McCandless	<p>UDOT EIS Comment Re: Faulty date relating to SOC USU Study Dear Mr. Van Jura,</p> <p>The definition of dispersed Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) recreationists used and promoted by Save Our Canyons (SOC) and others is vague and incorrect as presented in materials by those in opposition to the UDOT EIS preferred transportation alternative being the gondola.</p> <p>Their attempt to provide information that states 70% of all LCC visitors are dispersed recreationists that do not use the Snowbird or Alta facilities. This comment will point out why SOC and others using this study to influence LCC visitors is misleading and has an undue influence on the gondola's acceptance and as such, the lack of support from their support groups should be discounted. In part, the first of two Utah State University studies (attached) is a five-page report called An Estimation of Visitor Use in LCC, BCC and Millcreek Canyons (the "Visitor Use Study") and uses a visitation formula with 12-month vehicle count compared to only six months of skier visits that defines the number of skiers utilized vehicles. The Visitor Use Study is skewed as it defines that all visitors in LCC who did not purchase a lift ticket are people who do not go to Alta and Snowbird. As detailed below, this prejudices the results by ignoring the non-skier visitors who use the resorts such as those attending Oktoberfest, staying at the hotel, eating dinner, hiking to Albion Basin to see the wildflowers, etc.</p> <p>These identified dispersed LCC visitors, as inferred by the USU study and the gondola opponents state they are not using resorts assets (including the parking) are false as there is simply not enough room along the canyon road to facilitate parking that many vehicles below Snowbird's entry one and above Alta. Because they are using the resorts parking above Entry One through to Alta, the dispersed visitors could then be served by the gondola.</p> <p>The second USU study (attached) is titled the Central Wasatch Visitor Use Study (CWWVUS). The CWWVUS results are prejudiced against the resort users further because they did not interview anyone at Snowbird (see page 3 in the CWWVUS)? Of the ten reported sites where they collected visitor use data in LCC, only one location at Alta was used and that location accounted for only .8% of the studies respondents. It appears the reports desired outcomes were pre-determined and as such the report is then fatally flawed. This is in part due to only five of the 200 USU coordinated interviews being conducted within the ski areas!</p> <p>By stark contrast to the two USU study's conclusions, Alta Ski Area had Streetlight Data (see Note One) conduct a three-year analysis (attached) of the LCC canyon visitors' destination. From 2018-2020, the total average year-round daily vehicle count arriving from the mouth of LCC and then arriving at either</p>

		<p>Snowbird or Alta was 87%! UDOT had similar findings in their draft EIS which is why you recommend that the final two preferred transportation options only stop at Alta and Snowbird. It's not because UDOT wants to subsidize the commercial venues, it's because it's the destination for the vast majority of LCC visitors! Further, on a single day (2/12/2022) we counted 124 vehicles parked below Snowbird Entry One. Everything above that location can be managed by the two preferred UDOT alternatives. With an estimated 4,300 vehicles parked at and around the Alta and Snowbird resorts, the dispersed recreationists were 2.95% of the canyon visitors. Further, the number of vehicles at the White Pine trailhead, including parked cars on Highway 210 was 82. As mentioned by Snowbird management, with slight modifications to the Snowbird transportation and mountain systems, they could manage the White Pine dispersed visitor's transportation needs. Therefore, If the 82 vehicles were deducted from those not able to be assisted in the future by mass transit, then on that day, the dispersed recreationists represented only .9%, not the 70% of the LCC visitors as promoted by USU SOC and others.</p> <p>Additionally, the Gondola opponents are throwing numbers around like "70% of the canyon users are dispersed recreationists" (see Figure 3 Visitor Use Study - page 5). They state that "there are 783,013 non-resort users' vehicles in the canyon annually" (Page 2 -Estimation of Visitor Use in LCC, BCC and Millcreek). If the opponents' claims are correct, and their claim that the UDOT preferred alternative (the gondola) disproportionately favor the resorts, and if you divide the estimated visitors' vehicles by 365 days in the year, the average number of dispersed visitor vehicles in LCC are 2,145 cars per day. One needs to ask the question: With only a few hundred available visitor parking spots along the LCC road and at trailheads (outside of the Snowbird and Alta parking), where are all these dispersed users parking - every day?</p> <p>We believe that, in the future that most canyon visitors can have better access to LCC through the proposed UDOT preferred alternative and that access as planned is presently balanced and proportionally accounted for in the Draft EIS. As a state and community, we need to support solutions that solve all the challenges in the canyon, not the imaginary problems created by rhetoric and public clamor. We applaud UDOT for their work and are confident that you have come to the conclusion based upon science based factual information, without undue influence as UDOT should not be subject to public clamor, misinformation, and exaggerated rhetoric.</p> <p>Sincerely, CW Management Corporation Chris McCandless, President</p> <p>Note One: Streetlight Data harnesses smartphones as sensors to measure vehicle, transit, bike, and foot traffic virtually anywhere. Using their software to get counts, O-D, and other transportation metrics - for any road, area or time period.</p>
31156	Dennis Goreham	<p>Thank you for one more opportunity to address the transportation issues facing Little Cottonwood Canyon and the Salt Lake Valley. The Wasatch Mountain Club has been recreating in LCC for over a century and have a special interest in the canyons of the Wasatch and preserving their beauty and recreation opportunities for future generations.</p> <p>The WMC agrees with UDOT's plan for a phased approach starting with buses and some of the transportation components associated with it. This phased incremental approach makes sense in meeting the transit needs in LCC. We believe these components should be constructed in a way they become part of the long-term solution. In the FEIS, UDOT indicates that "When the gondola system becomes operational, there would no longer be a need for enhanced bus service". We absolutely disagree with this statement. The buses should continue to provide service for the ski resorts and dispersed recreation users year-round.</p>

		<p>Climate change will certainly affect snowpack conditions in LCC and in an appendix, UDOT offers evidence for that. UDOT indicates it does not affect their decision to build a gondola however. They were able to locate studies to back up their finding that "climate change effects should not materially affect" ski resorts and their desire to build the gondola. Studies of snowpack indicators by the EPA conclude that the snowpack has already declined by 23% on average with a loss of 18 snowpack days, with that trend continuing. Now is not the time to spend in excess of half a billion dollars to build something that will likely prove unnecessary in future decades, just to subsidize two ski resorts with dwindling snowpack and skier days.</p> <p>Gondola proponents continue to say that the gondola will be more environmentally friendly than buses. This is just wrong. The Final EIS indicates the gondola actually will pollute higher levels of greenhouse gases than buses. Local water authorities indicate construction of the gondola towers will adversely affect water quality and harm riparian areas in the canyon. Incrementally adding buses to the canyon will minimize the adverse effects of a gondola.</p> <p>The proposed gondola will have tremendous impact on climbing areas. UDOT continues to say the gondola will have minimal impact on climbing areas. They ignore the deleterious impact of gondolas to visual quality and loss of solitude to focus on the climbing experience. UDOT says none of the vertical climbing routes would be impacted. It is nonsense to believe that towers, cables and gondola cars running above or adjacent to climbs, what would have no impact?</p> <p>In the construction and phasing section, UDOT states that the gondola is not included in the WFRC Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) but it is an "alternative to a third lane in LCC". A gondola running in the winter to two destinations is certainly not remotely similar to a third lane. There are no similarities between a third lane and the gondola and it is just wrong to consider it a legitimate "alternative". Until the proposed alternative goes through the WFRC planning process, the Record of Decision should not be issued.</p> <p>The Wasatch Mountain Club believes it is important to maintain the visual quality of the viewshed contained in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Throughout this EIS process the WMC has addressed the need for, and then the deficiencies in UDOT's attempt to do visual quality analysis. In UDOT's words, visitor's views along the highway "would be dominated by gondola infrastructure, and the visitor experience would be degraded". The impact to the landscape would be, by UDOT'S own definition, high. High meaning the "landscape would be severely altered, and project elements would dominate the visual setting" changing the aesthetics and character of LCC forever.</p> <p>"Travelers along the Little Cottonwood Canyon State Scenic Byway (that is, S.R. 210), which extends along the entire length of the canyon, are considered to have a high sensitivity rating and concern for aesthetic and scenic values." The aerial gondola alternative undoubtedly has the greatest visual quality impact and detracts from the value of the Scenic Byway designation. It makes no sense that UDOT's FEIS analysis concludes the gondola alternative would have the most detrimental visual impact, then just ignores that fact by selecting it as the preferred alternative.</p> <p>The WMC supports the phased implementation approach UDOT described in the Final EIS. Using buses in both the near-term and as a long-term solution makes sense. In this document, UDOT continues to leave bus stops out of their trailhead improvement designs however. This is a feature many have advocated for during</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>the entire EIS process. This is either an oversight or just poor planning. Buses could provide transportation to Little Cottonwood Canyon users all year around.</p> <p>Because of the deleterious impacts identified above, the Gondola B alternative should not be selected.</p> <p>Thank you, Dennis Goreham Conservation Director Wasatch Mountain Club --</p>
31157	Jodi Coleman	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users.

		<p>3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it.</p> <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
31158	Chris McCandless	<p>The following points are often quoted as facts as they relate to the bus versus the gondola debate. Often, the gondola opponents' versions are misleading or blatantly false. This letter's intent is to clarify inaccurate statements.</p> <p>OMISSIONS The opponents to the Gondola are spreading false and misleading information in many areas. Listed below are a few:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opponents criticize the gondola because: "[it] only stops at Snowbird and Alta." While this is true, their statements and printed materials conveniently omit the fact that the bus only stops at the resort locations as well. To validate this stop location priority, a three-year cell phone GPS tracking study places 85% of the people's destination who enter Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) at Snowbird and Alta. It should also be noted that the highest used dispersed recreation locations can be accessed through these same stops. - Costs. They overstate the cost of the gondola. While the EIS estimated \$550 million for the project, the gondola represents only \$391 million of that amount; the remainder would fund non-gondola related canyon improvements. - Inflation. They also inflate the estimated costs by stating the \$391 million dollar gondola might cost \$1 billion, a wildly speculative number, presumably due to future inflationary impacts. If so, opponents omit that the bus and road improvement costs will be impacted by the same inflationary impacts as the gondola. - Flexibility and Pivoting. The opponents' claim that the gondola can only load 30% of the vehicles' traffic passengers or 1,050 PPH is false. The gondola, using the submitted LaCaille Base Station design can load up to 3400 PPH. The gondola can also respond within minutes to peak period demand variations by adding or subtracting cabins onto the cable; the enhanced bus system is simply not able to do that. - Ridership. In several polls conducted by various groups, including one recently published by a local municipality, up to 85% of the respondents state they do not like nor do they plan to ride the bus. While residents may think busses are a good option, we can infer by the written comments (in the polls) that they feel the bus is for other people to ride. If very few plan to ride the bus, why are we spending millions on a system that the majority does not want to ride and will try to avoid? <p>TAX-PAYER FUNDING Opponents argue that taxpayers should not be funding a "half-a-billion-dollar system" that serves "rich resort areas" with a gondola. What they leave out is that the bus system would do the same thing. Either way, taxpayers would pay for the construction, like what they do with all other UDOT roadway and UTA train and bus public transportation improvements.</p> <p>NEGATIVE IMPACTS Opponents cite that the gondola will negatively impact the view corridor of the canyon. However, for the bus system to work, according to the Draft EIS, UDOT and UTA testimony, it would require LCC roadway to be widened to four lanes of travel. This four-lane road would create a significantly greater lineal and horizontal impact in the canyon, far greater than the estimated twenty-two towers for the gondola. The road widening would drastically alter views, decimate the hillside in most roadway areas, create untold hazards and impacts to traffic during construction, and increase the flow of pollutants to watershed because of the increased road surface and annual avalanche debris flow.</p> <p>ACCESS Opponents have privately stated that they like traffic congestion because it keeps people out of Little Cottonwood Canyon. The gondola frightens them because it allows all citizens to have safe, clean, and convenient access to</p>

		<p>"their" canyon. What happens to the congestion when the Wasatch Front population doubles in 20 years? The gondola is a long-term future solution, one that does not kick the can down the road by providing a short-term solution disguised as a long-term solution to the problem.</p> <p>Even today, access is a critical issue when the canyon is closed due to avalanche and extreme weather conditions. It is not uncommon to have several thousand recreationists, tourists, and employees stuck at the resorts overnight when the road becomes impassable.</p> <p>SAFETY For decades, UDOT has been conducting on-going road maintenance and dealing with hazardous conditions during the winter months, including avalanche control, removal of debris, and rescuing the public from various incidents including occasions where a death occurs in the canyon. The future population growth will cause a broader and exponential increase in UDOT's ability to keep citizens and visitors to LCC safe. Presently, the only LCC traffic solution that includes a secondary emergency egress from the Canyon is the gondola. More busses are also subject to an increased number of slide-offs increasing the congestion, especially in adverse conditions due to compromised road conditions and canyon closures.</p> <p>TIMING. UDOT has been researching and struggling for nearly three decades to determine how to best resolve the issues that negatively impact the public's safety and vehicular travel reliability in LCC. UDOT has also been working for nearly five years to provide the public with an opportunity to make suggestions. These suggestions for LCC have resulted in over 120 conceptual solutions, including detailed analysis of the train, two bus options, two gondola options and even status quo. All these options have been thoroughly vetted over years of debate including the analysis of every public comment, nearly 17,000 of them. The result of this arduous process is that UDOT selected Gondola as the preferred alternative. The opposition would have us slow down the process or choose a bus or train option that has been deemed less favorable. Several public officials have also asked that UDOT and resort owners try other less expensive solutions such as tolling, paid parking, car-pooling, etc. These measures have already been considered and in many cases implemented. They have minimal effect on the traffic and offer no long-term solution to the many issues. And they do not take into consideration the impact of future growth. UDOT has been studying the problems extensively for decades. At some point, we must act, and that time has come.</p> <p>As it relates to vetting the bus options, UTA has testified that the bus option without a four-lane highway will not work. The UDOT bus alternative with its 1050 people per hour (PPH) capacity would require at least forty-eight busses in the canyon every hour.</p> <p>Recently, UTA announced that it will be cutting bus service in the canyons this winter because they cannot hire the needed drivers for a system that operates about eight busses per hour in LCC. So, how are they going to hire 60+ drivers for the LCC enhanced bus system to operate the 66 new buses, if they cannot hire the drivers needed now? The fact that the new drivers are seasonal employment opportunities compounds the problem even more. The gondola system, however, has considerably fewer employees (estimated to be 17).</p> <p>LCC ROAD LCC roadway is known to be one of North America's most dangerous highways of its type, which includes sixty-four known avalanche pathways that cross the highway. Adding more rubber-tired vehicles to a known dangerous highway is simply making the problem worse. Alternately, the gondola could eliminate this public risk caused by avalanches and make it possible for UDOT to meet and even exceed their 30% vehicle reduction, an EIS stated objective.</p> <p>RELIABILITY The gondola option increases the reliability of guaranteeing that canyon closures (due to adverse weather conditions including avalanches) would</p>
--	--	---

		<p>have little or no known impact on citizens' travel time into and out of LCC. The 3S gondola operates in almost any kind of weather.</p> <p>TRAFFIC The detailed traffic impact studies completed by Hales Engineering state that the Gondola - Alternative B (LaCaille Base Station) minimizes congestion at the mouth of the canyon. The gondola can also load at least three times the number of passengers (as compared to the bus) during peak AM/PM travel periods. The opponents claim otherwise but have no science-based studies or proof to their claims - just rhetoric.</p> <p>ENVIRONMENTAL The opponents claim that the gondola is not the environmental choice. However, the new widened LCC road destroys fifty acres of the canyon as the new road is carved directly into the mountain side. The increase in impervious asphalt surfaces and other materials will have a continued negative impact on the atmosphere and our water shed. By comparison, the twenty-two towers will have a total footprint of approximately 2-3 acres, and unlike what is being stated by the opponents, very few road improvements to the towers will be required because they generally follow the existing road. Furthermore, the gondola is electric, creates its own in-cabin power, and is silent.</p> <p>PRIVATE LAND CONTRIBUTION If the gondola is selected, Snowbird has agreed to place property they own along the north side of LCC into a public conservation easement; no development of these hundreds of acres would be possible in the future protecting this property as open space that is also a large watershed area. If the bus alternative was selected, Snowbird's (or perhaps its future successor) stated contribution will be withdrawn.</p> <p>OPPONENTS RENDERINGS The gondola opponents have renderings that are wholly inaccurate, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their rendering of the gondola shows four towers from the mouth of the canyon to the base station; there will be only two. - The footings and footprints on their rendering and others show "hotel-sized" tower structures with massive footprints mentioned and estimated to be 20-30,000 square feet. The actual footprint of gondola towers is about 40'x40' or 1600 square feet total. - Their rendering includes an eight-story parking structure above the grade of Hwy 210. The actual base station design proposal is to have the parking structure built, in part, beneath the UDOT ROW and all of it below the existing Hwy 210 grade to protect the traveler's view of the mountains and the canyon entrance, to every extent possible. <p>TAX PAYER FUNDING In their EIS, UDOT projected the operational costs for both systems and they estimated the gondola annual costs to be \$10 million less than the enhanced bus system per year. The gondola also presents several unique revenue generating sources-such as locker rental, naming rights, increased participation by resort owners, etc. Using these public and private partnerships input on gondola funding options, the proponents of the gondola show a revenue stream which suggests the potential that no State, County nor municipal taxes would be needed to cover the annual gondola operational expenses. The bus has no such advantages. In fact, the gondola could have up to a \$4 million dollar per year surplus, which could be used as a Little Cottonwood Canyon fund to enhance and preserve roads, trails, and trailhead maintenance or other worthwhile canyon needs.</p> <p>While opponents claim the cost to ride the gondola could be as high as \$50, proponents preliminary estimate states that the ticket to ride the gondola could be as low as \$9. By comparison the same analysis estimates that the actual cost to ride the bus would be greater than \$25. The bus fare for the riders would most likely continue to be \$5, but make no mistake, all TAXPAYERS through the traditional means of subsidizing UTA through the 1% state wide sales tax will pay the additional \$20 per rider. The annual bus deficit is projected to exceed \$7 million per year, leaving no potential for an on-going canyon improvement and</p>
--	--	---

		<p>maintenance fund. The bus is more expensive, less environmentally friendly and creates an on-going deficit leaving no maintenance fund for LCC without taxing citizens even more.</p> <p>Thank you for taking this information into consideration when deliberating on the fate of our canyon. The projections, estimates and clarification are assembled using information from numerous gondola supporters.</p>
31159	Jeremy Coleman	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>

31324	Wendy Carrigan	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean" the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium" parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
31328	Connor Nash	<p>Building a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon is a shortsighted, irresponsible, and unwelcome "solution" to the traffic problem on SR 210. Negative impacts to viewshed, watershed, wildlife, overall canyon experience, etc. far outweigh any potential benefits promised by the gondola proposal.</p> <p>To start, the gondola stands to solely benefit Alta and Snowbird, two successful</p>

		<p>private entities that should not be receiving, and do not need, any public subsidies or handouts. 500 million dollars could be much more effectively spent on improved bus service (which has now been cut and will be essentially useless this coming ski season) and implementing a tolling system for holidays and weekends.</p> <p>The solution is in fact, simple, and does not involve building the world's largest gondola in one of the city's most important watersheds. Predictably busy days in the canyon (and trust me, as someone who spends well over 150 days per year there, they are quite predictable) will require a hefty toll to drive up the canyon. This toll can be reduced through carpooling. The more people in the vehicle, the smaller the toll. Toll fees go toward maintaining the improved bus service and improving canyon facilities; trailheads, parking lots, public restrooms. The bus is free, for EVERYONE, and has stops for ALL canyon users. Money incentivizes human behavior, and people all of a sudden start to take the (new and improved) bus service on busy days. This is simple economics, but by the lack of logic coming out of UDOT I can tell that no one on the team has any knowledge of the subject.</p> <p>A massive gondola would indeed mitigate the need for avalanche-induced road closures and traffic jams attributable to vehicle slide-offs, but do we really need to mitigate these issues? Alta and Snowbird are situated in one of the most active avalanche areas in the country. That's part of their beauty and appeal. The snow is deep and the terrain is steep. In fact, Alta has made promotional videos about this very concept. The phenomenon of "Interlodge" is unique to LCC and is something to be accepted as a part of recreating in such an amazing place, not something to be overengineered around. Slide-offs can be reduced through meaningful enforcement of the traction law. This "law", as it is currently enforced, seems more like a suggestion than a serious and fineable offense. I have never seen a car pulled over during a snowstorm for disobeying the traction law, and I have seen many, many vehicles driving in the canyon during snowstorms that are far from compliant.</p> <p>The main issue with the gondola is that it does not even solve the problem that it claims to address, it simply moves it. The gondola would take weekend powder day traffic jams from in the canyon to the base of the canyon, affecting homeowners, commuters, BCC traffic, and beyond. The roads at the base of LCC are no better suited to handle immense volumes of vehicles than the one going up it. Not to mention the fact that after all of the construction, inconvenience, and financial irresponsibility of building the gondola is finished, you have the audacity to charge money for people to take it like it's some sort of amusement park ride. You claim to want people to stop driving their cars, and instead have proposed that they pay an extra \$30+ to ride up in a box with a view. Make the action you want to stop cost more, and make the action you want to happen cost nothing.</p> <p>I am not going to spend an entire paragraph (or several) going over the environmental, recreational, and aesthetic impacts of the gondola that also make it a terrible choice for the future of LCC. UDOT already knows them and clearly does not care. But I would like to remind you that this is a PERMANENT decision, made brashly before attempting any non-intrusive improvements to transportation in Little Cottonwood. You cannot do a trial run of the world's longest gondola and then suddenly decide that it was not a good idea. Building this monstrosity is a serious commitment, and a seriously misguided one at that.</p> <p>Your gondola proposal is unnecessary, unwanted, and unintelligent. It is greedy,</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>misguided, and shortsighted. Please, I, along with the entire outdoor community of Salt Lake City, am begging you, reconsider your options and try a less impactful solution before you choose the nuclear option. Do not alter and deface this beautiful canyon forever to open the ski resorts for a few more days per winter.</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a special place and a precious resource for the residents, and tourists, of Salt Lake City. Do not ruin it for everyone.</p>
31383	Jason Erickson	<p>Dear UDOT, Thank you for compiling the detailed EIS report that clearly lists out the main options and an overall review of how the analysis and impact study was conducted. The main concern with the final EIS proposal is the very narrow focused scope of the project being the evaluation of options being considered to improving the mobility and reliability of transportation on S.R. 210 overall for winter ski traffic. The problem regarding mobility and reliability is now becoming a matter year-round and impacts S.R. 190. Seeking scope expansion to cover recreation users for the 2.1m users as listed in section 1.1.2.1 for S.R. 210 and the additional users for S.R. 190 My first suggestion is to expand the Scope of purpose statement to include improving the mobility and reliability of transportation in S.R. 210 during year round peak periods. When considering the current scope of the Final EIS statement - My recommendation is enhanced bus service without road expansion in S.R. 210 is the best solution moving forward as it is a scalable solution that minimizes permanent environmental impact in S.R. 210. Per page 2-142 of the Final EIS the cost of phase implementation is \$110 Million with a \$7 million operating budget. This solution can be implemented with out permanently changing the landscape. This solution has a 54 minute proposed transit concept which is one minute shorter than the Gondola B alternative as recommend by UDOT. Per page 2-89 Final EIS statement The gondola would not operate if artillery is being used for avalanche mitigation since the artillery shells would pass over the gondola towers and cable (up to six times per year with snow sheds in place). As soon as the avalanche mitigation using artillery is completed, the gondola would begin to operate even if S.R. 210 is closed to remove snow from the avalanche mitigation. Some of the gondola towers and parts of the alignment would be within an area where there might be artillery shell fragments. The gondola cabins would not be on the cable within the fragmentation zone when artillery is being used (gondola cabins can be stored at the nearest station). After avalanche mitigation using artillery is completed, the cables would be inspected by cameras and magnetic imaging devices, and the towers would be inspected by video, to ensure that no damage has occurred. To reduce the need for avalanche</p>

		<p>mitigation using artillery, snow sheds have been included with Gondola Alternative A (see Section 2.6.4.4, Avalanche Mitigation Alternatives). (This applies for Gondola B) Snow sheds could reduce the need for avalanche mitigation using artillery by 80% This demonstrates that the Gondola B alternative does not solve the problem of moving people during avalanche mitigation and if the cables were determined that they needed repair this could potentially shut down the gondola for the season. It is fiscally irresponsible for UDOT to recommend moving forward with a \$550 Million dollar construction project that will still require the \$110 Million cost of the enhanced bussing to bridge the time gap. That brings the total of the Gondola system to a baseline of \$650 Million not adjusting for price changes between 2020 and 2025 or later when the construction would begin. The enhanced bus system can be rolled out in smaller phases and tested/proven method while it is initiated. Per UDOT statements they acknowledge that the current SKI bus system frequently reaches</p> <p>Unrestricted max capacity and there is an issue with lack of parking based on current infrastructure. During Free Fare February 2022. Page 7 of the UTA_ Free Fare February 2022 final release statement shows an increase of 14% for weekly riders. People will take the bus when you make it convenient and affordable. The costs analysis provided in the FEIS statement has many ambiguous statements that demonstrate that the cost for the Gondola is a rough estimate and that if any design and construction changes are required that UDOT might need to re-evaluate the Environmental analysis - 2.6.4.1.6 This would include several large construction projects that have highly variable costs and have seen a 30% minimum increase since the EIS baseline cost set in 2020. Once permanent modifications to Little Cottonwood Canyon begin, they can never be undone. The stunning canyon that has shaped the lives of generations will no longer be the same. The large diesel tanks at both angle stations present potential for large scale environmental impact into our watershed if there were any damage to the containment system and a Oil/water separator system is not installed. Multi year civil construction through out the canyon will require intense SWPP mitigation programs. UDOT has proven in Millcreek that your projects have contaminated our watershed to the point that it was not safe for human interaction. The acreages the is impacted by the Gondola is primarily in Little Cottonwood Canyon by the Angle stations, switching stations, and 22 Pole foundations.</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>We seek sensible solutions that look at a holistic view of the canyons and not a fiscally irresponsible band-aid that is funded by the tax payers. The canyons need to be preserved for generations to come and as a community we will work together to alter our habits for a sustainable future.</p> <p>Thank you for your time,</p> <p>Jason Erickson</p>
31397	Mike Revie	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>Thank you for compiling the detailed EIS report that clearly lists out the main options and an overall review of how the analysis and impact study was conducted.</p> <p>The main concern with the final EIS proposal is the very narrow focused scope of the project being the evaluation of options being considered to improving the mobility and reliability of transportation on S.R. 210 overall for winter ski traffic.</p> <p>The problem regarding mobility and reliability is now becoming a matter year-round and impacts S.R. 190. Seeking scope expansion to cover recreation users for the 2.1m users as listed in section 1.1.2.1 for S.R. 210 and the additional users for S.R. 190</p> <p>My first suggestion is to expand the Scope of purpose statement to include improving the mobility and reliability of transportation in S.R. 210 during year round peak periods.</p> <p>When considering the current scope of the Final EIS statement - My recommendation is enhanced bus service without road expansion in S.R. 210 is the best solution moving forward as it is a scalable solution that minimizes permanent environmental impact in S.R. 210. Per page 2-142 of the Final EIS the cost of phase implementation is \$110 Million with a \$7 million operating budget. This solution can be implemented with out permanently changing the landscape. This solution has a 54 minute proposed transit concept which is one minute shorter than the Gondola B alternative as recommend by UDOT.</p> <p>Per page 2-89 Final EIS statement</p> <p>The gondola would not operate if artillery is being used for avalanche mitigation since the artillery shells would pass over the gondola towers and cable (up to six times per year with snow sheds in place). As soon as the avalanche mitigation using artillery is completed, the gondola would begin to operate even if S.R. 210 is closed to remove snow from the avalanche mitigation. Some of the gondola towers and parts of the alignment would be within an area where there might be artillery shell fragments. The gondola cabins would not be on the cable within the fragmentation zone when artillery is being used (gondola cabins can be stored at the nearest station). After avalanche mitigation using artillery is completed, the cables would be inspected by cameras and magnetic imaging devices, and the towers would be inspected by video, to ensure that no damage has occurred. To reduce</p>

	<p>the need for avalanche mitigation using artillery, snow sheds have been included with Gondola Alternative A (see Section 2.6.4.4, Avalanche Mitigation Alternatives). (This applies for Gondola B) Snow sheds could reduce the need for avalanche mitigation using artillery by 80% This demonstrates that the Gondola B alternative does not solve the problem of moving people during avalanche mitigation and if the cables were determined that they needed repair this could potentially shut down the gondola for the season. It is fiscally irresponsible for UDOT to recommend moving forward with a \$550 Million dollar construction project that will still require the \$110 Million cost of the enhanced bussing to bridge the time gap. That brings the total of the Gondola system to a baseline of \$650 Million not adjusting for price changes between 2020 and 2025 or later when the construction would begin. The enhanced bus system can be rolled out in smaller phases and tested/proven method while it is initiated. Per UDOT statements they acknowledge that the current SKI bus system frequently reaches</p> <p>Unrestricted max capacity and there is an issue with lack of parking based on current infrastructure. During Free Fare February 2022. Page 7 of the UTA_ Free Fare February 2022 final release statement shows an increase of 14% for weekly riders. People will take the bus when you make it convenient and affordable. The costs analysis provided in the FEIS statement has many ambiguous statements that demonstrate that the cost for the Gondola is a rough estimate and that if any design and construction changes are required that UDOT might need to re-evaluate the Environmental analysis - 2.6.4.1.6 This would include several large construction projects that have highly variable costs and have seen a 30% minimum increase since the EIS baseline cost set in 2020. Once permanent modifications to Little Cottonwood Canyon begin, they can never be undone. The stunning canyon that has shaped the lives of generations will no longer be the same. The large diesel tanks at both angle stations present potential for large scale environmental impact into our watershed if there were any damage to the containment system and a Oil/water separator system is not installed. Multi year civil construction through out the canyon will require intense SWPP mitigation programs. UDOT has proven in Millcreek that your projects have contaminated our watershed to the point that it was not safe for human interaction. The acreages the is impacted by the Gondola is primarily in Little Cottonwood Canyon by the Angle</p>
--	--

		<p>stations, switching stations, and 22 Pole foundations.</p> <p>We seek sensible solutions that look at a holistic view of the canyons and not a fiscally irresponsible band-aid that is funded by the tax payers. The canyons need to be preserved for generations to come and as a community we will work together to alter our habits for a sustainable future.</p> <p>Thank you for your time,</p> <p>Mike Revie</p>
31402	Sam Liz Dunham	<p>THE SEASON IS NEAR AND CHANGE IS IN THE AIR! Crystal Mountain has tackled a new transportation plan with thought, strategy and consideration, rather than sticking their heads in the snowbank and pretending traffic wasn't an issue. They listened to a lot of impassioned guest feedback, carefully evaluated their options and forecasted for another big winter of visitation after seeing how the population, and community and the outdoors are all booming right now. They looked to other ski resorts that have tackled similar transportation challenges and what solutions best preserved the character of their hills.</p> <p>CRYSTAL MOUNTAINS SOLUTIONS started in 2019.</p> <p>THE BIG SHIFT</p> <p>So, for this winter, we're changing how it's all going to work in our parking lots.</p> <p>First, the big news is that we've shifted our lots to paid parking for non-passholders on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Parking will be included with the purchase of a season's pass, but they will be required to register their plates before arrival so we can gauge capacity. Carpooling will be radically encouraged and free for four or more with designated spaces and priority shuttles. Paid parking revenue will directly fund free bus transportation from Enumclaw on peak weekends, as we embrace more efficient and more environmentally conscious ways of accessing our mountain.</p> <p>THE DETAILS All Passholders</p> <p>Parking is included with the purchase of a season's pass. Passholders must enter their license plate numbers online in our system prior to arrival and will be verified in our lots through the license plate recognition software. On-site parking is included with the purchase of an Ikon Pass as well as Crystal Local Pass, Hall Pass and Anytime passholders. Wild Card holders will park free on Fridays. A Lot is still reserved for A-plus parking pass holders.</p> <p>Four-Plus Carpools</p> <p>Parking will be free for 4+ person carpools that are verified on arrival. Aside from being part of the solution and earning good powder karma, carpoolers will gain access to designated spaces and priority shuttle service-both of which will save valuable time getting up on the hill. We encourage household members or vaccinated groups of four or more to carpool as much as possible this winter.</p> <p>Weekend Day Visitors</p> <p>Paid parking will be required for daily visitors at the area on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, whether with or without pre-purchased day tickets. Backcountry</p>

		<p>skiers and snowboarders, snowshoers and all other snow play visitors will also need to pay for parking after arrival via the app, by scanning a QR code or at one of our on-site, solar powered kiosks. Write down your plate number before hitting the kiosk.</p> <p>Weekday Parking and Other Key Details</p> <p>Parking will remain free for all visitors from Monday to Thursday. We actively encourage guests to take advantage of flexible schedules to ski or ride on weekdays when the mountain is quiet and empty. A Lot is still reserved for A-Plus parking passholders. All paid parking revenue will be utilized to fund free shuttle bus service from Enumclaw on peak weekends. Stay tuned for more info on schedules.</p> <p>THE MOTIVATION</p> <p>Maintaining the character and experience of our mountain is extremely important to us, but so is allowing our community to grow so others can feel the same charge. With sustainability as a core value at Crystal, we believe this transportation plan is a positive step to address character, access and sustainability by improving traffic flow, reducing total car trips and lessening environmental impacts.</p> <p>In an effort toward transparency and tracking, we're making our goals for this plan public. And, we're counting on our Crystal community to help get us there and, of course, remind us if we get off track.</p> <p>We seek to improve guest experiences of arrival and parking as well as providing reliable, cost-free shuttle service as a viable alternative We aim to reduce the number of cars on the road and in parking lots by 10% We're working to reduce carbon emissions (as a result of vehicle pollution) by 10% We're encouraging carpooling with members of your house or other vaccinated guests We're aiming to expedite the arrival process from parking lot to base area, so you can be skiing or riding in less time We're committed to providing more efficient, expedited shuttle service between our lots and base area with more shuttles and faster routes, increasing capacity by 20% from last season</p>
31510	Kyle Toohey	<p>To whom it may concern:</p> <p>As a resident of the surrounding LCC community and someone who recreates and works frequently in the canyon, I am disappointed to hear about the choice of preferred alternative regarding the choice to install a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon. It seems that there are other options being overlooked in previous proposals that should be used before committing to a potential gondola build.</p> <p>The use of tolling with a tiered payment system considering yearly passes for locals and progressive fee based on car occupancy could greatly impact the amount of cars entering the canyon and actually encourage carpooling. Without some sort of incentive given to people travelling to resorts it seems hard to get people to change habits in a timely manner.</p>

		<p>The use of more effective and stringent vehicle restrictions with preemptive monitoring entering the canyon prior to storms that may arrive in the afternoon. It's great to have enforcement while a storm is actively going in the morning but we need people there in advance of other anticipated weather systems to prevent people accessing the canyon ahead of forecasted storms. It does no good if they drive up on a dry, snowless road to only then need to get down in an inadequately equipped vehicle after a storm has begun.</p> <p>There needs to actually be a wholehearted attempt to increase bus service and build better regional transportation hubs for accessing public transportation into the canyons. The proposed alternative and amendments already made to bus service do little to address the proximal nature of parking areas to bus lines going up canyon. Currently, the setups for transport lead to bottlenecks near the mouth of the canyons because transportation users are all still driving close to the mouth to access these options. The gondola option presents this same issue because people will still need to drive to the mouth park for this solution. It does little to take cars off the road and ultimately adds more people into LCC, which may already be at its natural daily carrying capacity for recreation. There simply may not be much more accessible space for people to recreate on the most popular days to ski and ride. There is very limited number of days per winter season when the gondola would operate without the road being open and actively being the only option to bring people up to the resorts.</p> <p>The gondola also fails to address access for potential recreationists outside the resorts and will not appropriately serve all people but favor for profit businesses being the resorts. It will be a taxpayer handout to two businesses that seem to be doing just fine and posting record years in terms of visitation year in year out. They will contribute little financially to the project but benefit the most.</p> <p>Another idea to take into account is that as the climate continues to change there will potentially be fewer days where the gondola alternative is necessary. It seems like a short term "solution" that doesn't factor in other variables like a diminishing snowpack and changing environment. The natural environment of the canyon will also be dramatically altered under the current preferred alternative and other forms of non-winter recreation will be drastically impacted in terms of climbing and mountain biking. In addition, as far it seems the gondola won't operate in the summer and will not be accessible to other forms of recreation that is a major oversight.</p> <p>There seems to be major public opposition from many Utahans of all walks of life. State entities have a duty to act in the best interests and wants of the people who pay for the projects proposed not to have their desires and ideas shoved to the side for the sake of a few with special interests. Respectfully, please reconsider and listen to the voices of the citizens of Utah who loudly oppose the construction of this project and destruction of this beautiful natural landscape. The proposal selected adds to the problem at hand instead of addressing it, there needs to be a better balance of public interests and private profits not the other way around.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
31521	Bryan Anderson	<p>As a frequent user of this canyon, I don't think the gondola is necessary and would be an eye sore and would increase the time to get to the resorts. It would also contribute to an already overcrowded experience. The items needed are the following:</p>

		<p>1. Snowbird should continue to use the FREE parking reservation system they used to limit the number of skiers and cars. Alta should adopt the same system which they have never done to this extent. Combined, this will also help with the end user experience by eliminating overcrowding. We don't need to increase skiers' cost and travel times to limit the number of cars. It can be done for free!!!! No parking spot, to car!</p> <p>2. Build nice looking snow sheds at only the very worst 2 or 3 avalanche paths to maintain traffic flow, safety and minimize destructive construction.</p> <p>3. Increase existing bus service, but do not widen the road or add lanes in the canyon. Once up the canyon a little ways the traffic flows well even on the worst of days.</p> <p>4. Add just one (1) southbound express bus lane on Wasatch Blvd from BCC to the mouth of LCC. This alone will incentivize people to use the bus because this is the area with the worst traffic problem. Please don't wreck Wasatch Blvd with more than one lane added!!!</p> <p>5. Increase the busing and canyon transportation services for tourists from their hotel who don't know how to drive in the canyon.</p> <p>6. NO TOLLING!!! Tolling will cause increased traffic congestion at the tolling site, which we are trying to reduce, and is totally not necessary to reduce the number of cars in the canyon as the parking reservation system will solve it.</p> <p>As you can see, this involves not just a UDOT solution as item 2 solves much of the problem with zero costs.</p>
31919	Andrew Lines	<p>The decision by UDOT to adopt the Gondola B option is a mistake.</p> <p>Enhanced Bussing Busses are a tried and true method of transportation, and I see no reason to abandon them in favor of a system that would cost \$500 million when enhanced bussing would cost \$140 million less. UDOT should try expanding parking, expanding the bus fleet, and if needed examining the possibilities of expanding Wasatch Boulevard BEFORE attempting a large, years long project like a Gondola.</p> <p>The current plan wishes to implement an Enhanced Bussing plan alongside the Gondola, which is a terrible idea. UDOT will be too focused on the Gondola to make the Enhanced Bussing option run well, and it will inevitably turn out to be wasteful and inefficient. UDOT will then cite this inefficiency (caused by UDOT's lack of focus) as a reason for the Gondola.</p> <p>Ski Resorts I understand that tourism is a large part of Utah's economy, especially during ski season. But using public funds to build a ferry directly to corporations does not sound like a good idea. It would be like public transportation going exclusively from the bus stop to McDonalds or Taco Bell and back. Tax revenue from the Ski Resorts will help mitigate the cost in the long run, but this could take decades, not including the year on year maintenance cost of the Gondola.</p> <p>The Gondola only helps Ski Resorts, as if you are going down the Canyon for any other reason, the road will remain small and most likely congested during the winter months. The Gondola will permanently ferry tourists to and from the Ski Resorts, which sounds like something the Ski Resorts would implement, not something a State Agency would advocate and provide funding for.</p> <p>Expansion In my opinion, expansion seems like the easiest option here. Expand the roadway, expand parking, expand bussing options. If Wasatch Boulevard and North Cottonwood Road are expanded, ALL traffic moving through there,</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>including residents, hikers, campers, and climbers would benefit, not just the Ski Resorts and Skiers.</p> <p>Expansion of parking and expansion of bussing options would also help fix congestion, as there would be less vehicles on the road in addition to a larger road. This would be much simpler than attempting to build a large Gondola System, and much of the construction could be done during the Summer, when traffic would be comparably light.</p> <p>Overall, the Gondola seems like a poorly designed decision chosen to benefit Ski Resorts, and a very inefficient project that will continue to take taxpayer money away from other projects which would benefit citizens much more, such as road repairs and maintenance to cope with a quick moving, ever growing city.</p>
31935	Giles Florence	<p>NO Gondola</p> <p>"Preferred Alternative B with proposed phasing" is a sham. Evidence doesn't support UDOT's half-billion-dollar gondola as either the preferred or feasible solution to the vital transportation needs on SR 210. I am baffled to think that the conclusion drawn from all the years of input from stakeholders (residents as well as resort owners) and analysis by experts could lead UDOT's decision-makers to such a ludicrous, self-serving, financially prodigal, ecologically inept, and utterly elitist recommendation.</p> <p>The price tag alone demands answers to basic questions that have been asked all along by responsible people even before Mountain Accord or CWC began their costly and excessive analysis seeking the best means of transporting people and goods up and down Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>What else could be done with that much money to solve the problem?</p> <p>Who benefits most from such an extravagant investment, citizens or the resorts?</p> <p>Why shouldn't the resorts fund it, since they are the exclusive destinations?</p> <p>Why not require resort employees to carpool or bus to work?</p> <p>Why not have Snowbird follow Alta's example and instigate paid parking?</p> <p>If "phasing" is a genuine proposal, why not begin with more bus service? (Not LESS)</p> <p>The proposed alternative lacks a valid cost-benefit analysis as well as any genuine consideration of the gondola's impact on wildlife or aesthetics. Towers would go right above my house and destroy our views, as well as views of bikers, hikers, and sightseers.</p> <p>You are completely ignoring the input from a great majority of the citizens of the valley who have voted against the gondola. The vast majority of taxpayers in the state don't even ski at the two resorts being served, yet they are to pay for it?</p> <p>And you are clearly concerned with serving only the wealthy:</p> <p>Niederhauser and his developer buddies who stand to make millions on their properties at the base of the proposed guideway;</p> <p>Rich skiers, who are the ones who will be using the gondola;</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Wealthy resort owners.</p> <p>I urge you to reconsider your preferred alternative and be sensible. Provide incentives for more creative ride-sharing, more frequent bus service, winter tolls, better passing lanes, and other methods that work elsewhere. The gondola is simply too costly without commensurate benefits, especially to only run during the winter ski season. Crazy.</p> <p>Giles Florence</p>
31945	Margaret Bourke	<p>October 10, 2022</p> <p>Josh Van Jura, EIS Project Manager Executive Director Carlos Braceras C/O HDR via Email: LittleCottonwoodEIS@utah.gov Utah Department of Transportation 2825 E. Cottonwood Parkway, Suite 200 Cottonwood Heights, UT 84121</p> <p>RE: Comment on Final EIS for Little Cottonwood Canyon of August 31, 2022</p> <p>Dear Messieurs Van Jura and Braceras,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) prepared by Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) in August 2022. Thank you for allowing the public to comment now that UDOT has reached a primary preferred alternative. I hope that following these comments, any changes to the FEIS will also be subject to public review and comment prior to a Record of Decision being made, although that step is not currently in the timeline on the UDOT website for this area.</p> <p>Information for the team to consider is included in this, my comment, before a final decision is reached. I share my thoughts on the selected preferred alternative, environmental impacts and other transportation performance considerations contained in the FEIS. My comments, like all others, will be a matter of public record, subject to public release. However, please remove my street, phone number and email addresses from the formal public release, whether on the project website, or otherwise, absent written permission from me, ahead of any such release.</p> <p>My comments relate to inconsistencies, analysis, diversity, inclusion and equity which do not appear to be adequately considered in either the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) nor the FEIS.</p> <p>The FEIS includes several new Key Observation Points (KOP) which were not present in the DEIS. These new depictions are for residential areas at the mouth of the canyon. Apparently this recognizes residential areas deserve special attention for impacts from the proposals. Despite Alta being a town with a residential community, as well as the situs of a ski resort, UDOT still fails to provide any KOP's in Alta depicting the towers or cables over those residences, nor the change to the iconic image of the sun setting down canyon, through the corridor in which LCC traverses. The gondola towers and gondola terminus will most definitely change the environment, both aesthetically and functionally. Selecting the Catherine's Pass Trailhead as the KOP in Alta demonstrates an insensitivity to view and view shed. That area is a parking lot for summer hiking, used as such only during July through October; 1/4 of the year, only 3 months!</p>

		<p>Further, sometimes the area is closed because of snowfall restricting access to the area for vehicles, and pedestrians alike; usually beginning in October or whenever snow closes the roadway, and continues until July when the snow leaves the roadway. And the gondola is not visible from that location, hence it adds nothing to revealing the visual impact of this installation.</p> <p>During the winter season operations of Alta Ski Resort (Alta Ski Lifts, Company, "ASL"), the Catherine's Pass Trailhead parking area contains equipment some of which is not present in the summer. This includes avalanche triggering devices, and buildings/sheds used for racing operations. These items are visually prominent, at that location. But they are on the same "ridge," but slightly down slope to the West of the KOP image used in the DEIS and the FEIS. Selecting an area where folks typically do not congregate, or, if there, are not looking for a view in the direction of the image demonstrates a lack of appreciation of an observation point. One does not go to a "scenic overlook" and fail to observe the "overlook" in favor of a view of the parking lot. If anything, people would be in that location looking south towards Sugarloaf Peak or SSE towards Devil's Castle; where there is majestic view. However, this is not used for the DEIS nor FEIS as a KOP.</p> <p>Further, the LCC Gondola B terminus/station in Alta, as well as 3 lift towers are not depicted in either the DEIS nor the FEIS. These selected locations are in fact which impact view and view sheds in an enormous way. Nearly all structures built in the community have oriented windows facing West and/or at the resort terrain, where the towers and station would obstruct an otherwise natural scene. These locations would therefore create the MOST visual impact to people in the town of Alta, whether residents or visitors, as well as people in the backcountry. The visual images will be there year-round, and forever, yet no images or even concept drawings are included in the FEIS. Is this omission due to the likely enormous size and negative visual impacts from a wide range of locations? These infrastructures likely may dominate the view looking west, the very image on the front of the FEIS. That image was likely taken near the ridge in Grizzly Gulch, high above the Alta town yet the representations of the gondola in that view are not included.</p> <p>From such a location, all 3 Alta gondola towers would be huge, out-of-scale, unsightly infrastructure, significantly affecting the otherwise dominant "nature" view of majestic mountains, rocks, trees; Mother Nature's beauty and glory, more precious than any gem.</p> <p>The gondola terminus in Alta, as well as many towers based on their suggested locations, and the number of people the system is projected to move on an hourly basis. These towers would have to be illuminated under FAA regulations, making them prominent nighttime "features." gondola cabins, operating 30 per hour with a projected 1050 people per hour arriving up canyon. The terminus infrastructure must be sized to accommodate their exit and entrance, as well as comfort amenities like restrooms, drinking fountains and places to sit and queue to wait. Is there also a plan to add space for hundreds of people to hunker down, as a safety feature to house people in the event of an "Interlodge" event occurring while visitors are in the canyon?</p> <p>Alta continues efforts to become a dark sky community, and such safety tower illumination, is not the direction the community wants to go. There are many, many locations that really are KOPs, and are viewed many more months of the year. Suggesting the visual change would be "high," is an understatement of the most egregious nature and does not convey the enormous scar this would create.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Like S. R.-210 and its avalanche rating is an order magnitude higher than ALL other assessed roadways in North America, rating the "visual change" as "high", does not even begin to capture the true magnitude of the visual impacts from this infrastructure.</p> <p>At the same time, the primary preferred alternative includes not only the gondola, but also a new bus stop, remote from the largest parking lot in Alta to a new position on the highway itself. There are no depictions of the acre of land to be acquired from the United States Forest Service (USFS) for this stop. Nor are there depictions of the relationship of that enlarged and relocated bus stop with existing roadway traffic, current parking, access to the community center and post office within Alta. This, despite these facilities involving relatively large quantities of pedestrians at many hours of the day and evening.</p> <p>The FEIS concludes there will be no adverse impacts to cultural resources in Alta, despite disturbing 0.63 acres of an archeological site within Alta, and, adding to that disturbance, now the FEIS, declares about 1 acre of additional land in Alta is impacted for the relocated bus stop. Mitigation from the 0.63 acre disturbance is said to be adequate as "data recovery and construction mitigation" practices will be employed. However, the historic Thomas Moore Toilets, are immediately adjacent to this area. Would "data recovery" adequately preserve this resource? (FEIS, Vol 1, Chapter 2, Alternatives, Table 2.6-10 @ 2-141.)</p> <p>How will the new bus stop situate interrelate with the planned, yet not depicted Alta gondola terminus? Will the bus stop be only at this new re-located area, or, will it continue to the Albion parking lot, as is the current practice, winter and summer. Why establish the gondola as year-round, whereas the bus is planned to be winter only? Visitation in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is year round, Snowbird operates a summertime Oktoberfest from August through mid-October with miles long roadside parking on both sides of the roadway, as well as filling its parking lots. On a recent weekend, the roadside parking was from Hellgate cliffs in Alta, down canyon, merging with the roadside parking at the White Pine Trailhead. Why, when every state, national park and recreation area has seen increased visitation, with record numbers year-over-year, would a plan for future transportation fail to take visitation into account for all seasons? Why establish a preference for the gondola and cog rail as year round, but the enhanced bus be winter only? Current operations of Utah Transit Authority (UTA) buses operate in the summer with a single bus up canyon in the mornings and a single bus going down in the evenings to transport workers to the resorts. Would this service also be eliminated?</p> <p>The new bus stop impacts an archeological site with a proposal to simply remove and preserve the artifacts. y. Congestion from buses turning around, people parking, avalanche dangers on the downhill side of the roadway as well as snow plowing to push snow off the roadway and onto the downhill slope will all be negatively affected and yet are not discussed.</p> <p>There is no ski run nor indoor facility to accept the thousand plus skiers per hour the buses would bring. Where will they go, how will they haul their gear? How far will they have to walk to purchase a ski pass? Where will they sit to don their gear and put on their boots? Are lockers or other building planned for the re-located bus stop? What is the overall impact of this new, temporary bus stop: how will it affect Alta's community, residents, lodge guests as well as daytime visitors? How will this location affect the summertime pond and wetland areas below the "mine dump" and the frequent wildlife at that location? What about the deer, moose and other wildlife not infrequently seen walking and grazing along the Little</p>
--	--	---

		<p>Cottonwood Creek and willows which line its banks around the Alta town park; how would the Gondola and associated infrastructure affect them?</p> <p>What climate change considerations rate in the FEIS? How long is a lengthy winter ski/board season planned to be? When the season is primarily dependent on weather patterns, not only snowfall, but even more so, cold temperatures to allow for snowmaking when it does not fall from the sky, how many days/weeks/months is the planned "winter" gondola and enhanced bus" scheduled to operate? Overtime, the season has changed from being reliably starting in early to mid-November and extending through mid-April; 5+ months. Now weather patterns bring colder temperatures erratically, sometimes in October, but sometimes no snow or even warm temperatures mid-winter, and the season ending in April, with limited terrain in full operation. The gondola alternative analyzed a 5 month season, 150 days.</p> <p>Similarly, the length of the winter ski/board season is assumed, but nowhere stated. What is the length assumed to be? How will the costs change when temperatures warm and less precipitation in the form of snow falls? What reservoirs will need to be built to store water to make snow for the winter seasons, should there be less snowfall than optimal to operate the two, private, for-profit resorts singularly set to benefit from the Gondola B proposal? We are seeing worldwide, less and less snowfall and receding or melting glaciers, including the massive Thwaites glacier in Antarctica.</p> <p>Despite these effects, the drying of the Great Salt Lake to an all time low-level historically, and the increased salinity of the remaining lake making it difficult for brine shrimp to survive and migratory birds being threatened by losses to brine shrimp and other microorganisms, a primary source of food during their annual migrations, there is little emphasis on these current changes bringing harmful dust off the dry lakebed, higher and higher into the mountains. In September of this year, an article in Science spoke to the "lowest level ever recorded" with greater salinity, "imperil[ing] millions of birds."</p> <p>UDOT concluded it would be "unacceptable" for extended travel times of 80 minutes, for 50 days of a 150 day ski season. This is the "condition" which needed to be remedied; that by spending 1/2 billion in 2020 dollars. Again, should the "problem" or mandate be given to an agency other than UDOT where the focus were not mobility, one wonders if the preferred alternative would be vastly different with scalability and the ability to pivot when conditions change. Operating the congeal for only 100 days in winter, what is the effect; will it still be \$7M, or more akin to the \$3M for summer operations? .</p> <p>The historically low levels of the Great Salt Lake. Year over year, the level falls, making new historic lows. Lower lake levels are allowing wind driven dust (whether toxic or not), to deposit on the Wasatch mountains, including the ski resorts. That dust coats the snow in a brown covering. Not only is it unsightly, but it causes the surface temperatures of the snow to be warmer, and leads to earlier snow melt.</p> <p>More and more trees are dying from weather driven changes, both in precipitation, length of freezing seasons, and new insect populations, not previously present in the high alpine settings. Large rain storms are more frequent, washing out large boulders, creating new water channels high up in the canyon. Events that have been rare, but experienced over the past 2 summers.</p> <p>Change to the environment is inevitable and currently occurring, some by "nature"</p>
--	--	--

	<p>and others caused by man, over which we have some control. Despite some elements being controllable, the FEIS shows a plan, over some unspecified period of years, to build structures both temporary and permanent, un-scalable for demand or weather. We must be more aware rather than un-seeing of the environment.</p> <p>While the "phased" approach sounds intriguing and some argue is a workable and even long term solution in itself. That "solution" is an incompatible "solution" because in effect the "primary preferred alternative" combines both the gondola B alternative, AND the enhanced bus with expanded roadway. Would not the environmental impacts be combined, when using employing BOTH "alternatives"?</p> <p>The phased approach includes widening Wasatch Boulevard as well as constructing snow sheds in LCC. In addition, mobility vehicle parking hubs are still listed in the primary preferred alternative, at both the gravel pit and 9400 South/Highland. These proposed structures will be smaller than envisioned in the DEIS because the parking garage at the gondola B base will be enlarged to accommodate the private vehicles. With the gondola operating, carrying 1050 people per hour, that base station garage will be full in less than two and a half hours.</p> <p>UDOT is not the best organization for this project. UDOT focuses on roadways, but even more so, the focus is mobility on those roads. Moving people expeditiously is a stated and primary goal, hence that goal is placed first in the comparison tables in the FEIS. Resiliency, retaining an adaptable environment, maintaining the outdoor experience for the people flocking to the Cottonwood Canyons to experience, is NOT in UDOT's mandate, nor emphasis. Population growth, as well as planning high density at gateway communities, all contribute to increased negative impacts on nature from noise and pollution. This is evident in the analysis of of the National Park Service and other agencies; documented over time.</p> <p>The DEIS discussed establishing 2 new parking lots, 9400 South/Highland and at the Gravel pit, plus La Caille base station, with roughly 1500 vehicle spaces. Now, the FEIS indicates smaller remote mobility hubs are needed, temporarily and a larger, permanent La Caille / base station parking structure. Capacity numbers of the gondola have not changed. Much of the "Accessory" components are the same, snow sheds, prohibited roadside winter resort parking, and widening of Wasatch boulevard. However, different from the DEIS, buses will not have priority.</p> <p>The "capacity" of the gondola is 1500/hour, at a minimum. Operating limits are 5,500 people per hour, with the Doppelmayr 3S system , the system specified by GondolaWorks, the promoters of the La Caille preferred gondola alternative. The parking planned for this alternative is wholly inadequate, leading either to lengthy delays, people circling lots waiting for a spot to open, or abandoning the mode, and driving up LCC. The FEIS indicates the gondola will carry 35 people per car, 30 cars per hour, or 1050/hour. With this number, the planned parking spaces will be full, even at the newly enlarged La Caille base, within the first 2.5 hours of operation.</p> <p>There is no acknowledgement in the FEIS that uncontrolled numbers of visitors can threaten the very thing visitors have come to enjoy. The environment, the ecology, the beauty, the tranquility, these are all potentially detrimentally affected when the number of visitors is not managed appropriately to the resource and available amenities. Where is the visitor capacity analysis in the DEIS? What is</p>
--	--

	<p>the number of visitors LCC can accommodate without harming the watershed? What is the number of people capable of being accommodated with the existing infrastructure in the ski areas? What is the number the backcountry can accommodate? Are there adequate sanitation facilities for all visitors, resort and backcountry? Is there sufficient water available for residents of LCC and Salt Lake City, even in extended droughts? What happens in the event of an "interlodge" conditions where all people present MUST be and remain inside whatever structure they occupy when the event is declared? Where will these people be and how will their safety be assured?</p> <p>Visitor management appears to assume that visitation is a winter issue as the preferred primary alternative is ONLY planned as winter transportation. Evidence and local studies clearly demonstrate, year over year, that visitation has increased and shows no signs of lessening, particularly in the presence of population growth. In the Trends and issues that define outdoor recreation in Utah, the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation as well as the Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism at Utah State University, authored a 2021 Report to the Governor on Utah's Land, Water and Air. That report concludes, "The demand for outdoor recreation on Utah's public lands and waters has grown consistently over the past decade." And, "Over 2.5 million Utahns participate in outdoor recreation each year, with visitation to Utah's public lands consistently reaching record highs each year. * * * The development of a comprehensive, statewide inventory of outdoor recreation assets would enable more strategic investments by disbursement programs designed to invest state funds into the development of outdoor recreation infrastructure"</p> <p>Most significantly, even this report only discusses Utahans, not visitors from other states or countries. Where is the data about non-Utahans? There has been an effort for a long time to attract visitors to Utah from outside the state. Isn't that why there be a website: visitutah, from the Utah Office of Tourism? That department's mission is to "promote[] tourism into the state through advertising and media contacts.."</p> <p>pastedGraphic.png</p> <p>pastedGraphic_1.png</p> <p>Similar increases in outdoor recreation are being seen and felt elsewhere as well as consequential impacts, some adverse or catastrophic. The posthumous 2020 memoir, Requiem for America's Best Idea, by Michael J. Yochim, a 22 year national park ranger, wrote, our regenerative pleasures drawn from parks and national recreation areas, may soon fall victim to our destructive impulses, related to climate change, including rising temperatures, larger forest fires, mega-droughts, as well as global warming effects on vegetation patterns. Even before this book, in 2014, a study was published with authors from the National Park Service (NPS), United States Forest Service (USFS), United States Geologic Survey (USGS), and academics at Montana State University and University of Montana.</p> <p>This study evaluated impacts to the National park from land use and climate change from 1900 and projecting through 2100. This study concludes there is a need to assess vulnerability across networks of protected areas, [so] those most at risk can have developed effective adaptation strategies. (Id., Abstract.)</p> <p>"[] We first defined park protected-area centered ecosystems (PACEs) based on ecological principles. We then drew on existing land use, invasive species,</p>
--	--

		<p>climate, and biome data sets and models to quantify exposure of PACEs from 1900 through 2100. Most PACEs experienced substantial change over the 20th century (.740% average increase in housing density since 1940, 13% of vascular plants are presently nonnative, temperature increase of 1°C/100 yr since 1895 in 80% of PACEs), and projections suggest that many of these trends will continue at similar or increasingly greater rates (255% increase in housing density by 2100, temperature increase of 2.5°C-4.5°C/100 yr, 30% of PACE areas may lose their current biomes by 2030). In the coming century, housing densities are projected to increase in PACEs at about 82% of the rate of since 1940. The rate of climate warming in the coming century is projected to be 2.5-5.8 times higher than that measured in the past century." (Abstract)</p> <p>Further, by 2100, more than half of the West's present vegetation will have become incompatible with its environment and will vanish entirely. This conclusion is not new. A 2014 report co-authored by academics at Montana State University, University of Montana, USDA, Forest Service, National Park Service and USGS referenced the 2008 idea of creating protected areas (PAs), citing the 2006 study calling PAs as cornerstones to protection and maintenance of biological diversity as a global strategy to safeguard nature. Further the 2014 article recognized</p> <p>"The rationale for the PA approach is that restricting human activities within protected areas will allow natural processes and native species to persist (Gaston et al. 2008).</p> <p>There is abundant scientific evidence of human contributions or induced changes to protected areas ecosystems, from nearby land use changes, introduction of invasive and exotic species, and climate changes. Further, evidence suggests that these effects may be cumulative or synergistic. This is documented from effects due to increased human density over time, population growth, as well as human impacts due to impacts on bio-diversity due to poaching, pets and recreation. All of this suggests that UDOT, and USFS have failed in the environmental analysis under NEPA in the FEIS.</p> <p>Environmentalism is practiced at the resorts, involving leasing lands from the USFS. However, despite efforts to broadcast native seeds in construction disturbed areas, such as when terrain is modified, snow making lines installed or serviced, this remediation effort is small in comparison to the current problems. While perhaps inadequate, Alta Ski Lifts, Company, environmental efforts were recognized by the US ski industry. However, despite building LEED certified structures, restoring wetlands destroyed by lift construction, and planting 40,000 tree saplings and seedlings, these efforts are not nearly enough to sequester the carbon released by removal of hundreds of trees over the last 84 years of operation. The removal may have been due to age, disease, or, for expansion of lift served terrain, and better skier experience from larger, faster ski lifts and re-routing or widening ski runs and access roads.</p> <p>September 21, 2022, ASL General Manager, Mike Maughan, spoke to a gathering at the University of Utah, organized by the "Students For The Wasatch." (Instagram@StudentsForThe Wasatch) Maughan's slide presentation provided statistics about bus ridership and resorts users. He also addressed travel problems and solutions. Weather is the foremost problem because it can make roads slick. Problems develop on top of that from inadequate traction devices on vehicles and snow on the roadway and no UDOT plows nearby to clear that snow.</p>
--	--	---

	<p>At the top of his solutions list was establishing winter-long traction laws, installing remote avalanche devices, improving the traffic merge between Alta and Snowbird and a plow station at the top of the canyon. These solutions are NOT part of the DEIS nor the FEIS, yet are far less costly and likely to be possible to implement for winter 2022-2023. Statistics he cited also demonstrate electric buses would not be as slow as gasoline powered buses, however ridership over the past 4-5 years as been only 5% of resort users and estimated to only be 8% of users. Vehicles in parking lots are 50% rentals with inadequate winter traction devices. Further, he said resort skier's demand an experience different from other resorts with nearly 4 to 5 times more lifts. Finally, Maughan thought the interim solutions might demonstrate the next step of going to a gondola is not necessary.</p> <p>UDOT determined that the reservation parking system implemented by the resorts, including Alta Ski Lifts, Company for winter 2021-22 and winter 2022-23 is not/will not be effective. Alta's GM disagrees and cites to evidence to the contrary.UDOT cites to "evidence" of afternoon downhill traffic congestion whereas much of the FEIS is focused on uphill capacity and congestion during peak travel times 7 - 10 AM; NOT 4 - 7 PM.</p> <p>In addition, the FEIS discusses the possibility of " tolling or other forms of congestion management." The FEIS declares the type of tolling system has yet to be decided. Nor the cost for the tolling, but. The FEIS does declare that pricing would be variable to ensure reduction of vehicles by 30% and incentivize transit ridership. The FEIS declares that if tolling were implemented in LCC, likely a toll would have to be implemented as well in Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC). However, a separate environmental analysis would need to be conducted for BCC, AND any tolling "would need to be authorized by the Federal Highway Administration in addition to follow[ing] Utah [] requirements." (FEIS, Vol 1, Chapter 2 Alternatives, @ pp. 50-51, see also Vol 4, ¶20.4.6, @ 20-20 for similar statements.)</p> <p>In discussing tolling around the resorts, starting "just west of Snowbird Entry 1", and the combined Gondola B plus Enhanced Bus Service primary preferred alternative, reiterates statements in the Executive Summary:</p> <p>"Residents of Little Cottonwood Canyon, drivers of service vehicles, and potentially resort employees would likely be exempt from paying the toll or observing the vehicle occupancy restriction." (FEIS, Vol 1, Executive Summary @S-20 and, Chapter 2, Alternatives, Travel Demand Management, ¶2.4.1@ p50: "Potentially residents of Little Cottonwood Canyon, drivers of service vehicles, and resort employees would be exempt from paying the toll.") (Emphasis added.)</p> <p>Implementing the phased approach includes improved bus service, constructing mobility hubs at the gravel pit and 9400 South, as well as new bus stops at Snowbird and Alta resorts. Vol 1, Chapter 2I, Appendix @p. 2.) UDOT envisions, "tolling would be implemented with the start of the phased bus service...." In addition, Wasatch Boulevard would be widened, snow sheds built, improved trailheads built, restricting upper canyon parking, all occurring as "construction funding becomes available." (Id.)</p> <p>"[E]xclud[ing] single occupancy vehicles from entering the canyon during busy ski days (typically Friday through Sunday and holidays)" from 7 AM to 10 AM, is another mechanism mentioned to manage traffic congestion. If banning single occupancy vehicles did not achieve improved mobility, "during certain periods, both single and two-occupant vehicles, might need to be restricted from Little</p>
--	--

		<p>Cottonwood Canyon." Once again the FEIS suggests exemptions might be part of said implementation:</p> <p>"Residents of Little Cottonwood Canyon, drivers of service vehicles, and resort employees may potentially be exempt from the vehicle occupancy requirement." (Vol 1, ¶2.4.2 Vehicle Occupancy @ 2-51.) (Emphasis added.)</p> <p>In discussing the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative in Chapter 7, subpart 4.2, the FEIS also discusses tolling or a "ban on single occupant Vehicles. At section 7.4.2.2.1, the FEIS states:</p> <p>"The enhanced bus service to the ski resorts would be the only option to not paying the toll. The toll would not apply to residents, resort and other business employees, employees with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, or freight traffic." (Id.) (Emphasis added.)</p> <p>Later in that same section, the FEIS concludes:</p> <p>"The only freight traffic that uses S.R. 210 in Little Cottonwood Canyon serves the ski resorts and other commercial businesses. Freight traffic would likely be exempt from paying the toll, so the toll would not restrict freight traffic to these locations." (Emphasis added.)</p> <p>UDOT's project manager, Josh Van Jura spoke to the Board of Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) October 3, 2022 about the FEIS. During that meeting, Mr. Van Jura discussed tolling and vehicle occupancy restrictions. He said the technology for implementing vehicle occupancy restrictions did not yet exist, but he believed it was "close." He saw the problem for vehicle occupancy restrictions was that per the federal Code of Federal Regulations, the only deviation was for motorcycles and bicycles. Pointedly, Mr. Van Jura singled out Alta's mayor. Mr. Van Jura said:</p> <p>"[] Mayor Bourke, this is a part that interests you. You and your residents would not be able to drive up the canyon by yourselves. [] Even if you live up there. [] Wanted to make sure you were aware of that. That is a requirement as part of the Code of Federal Regulations...." (CWC October 3, 2022 Board meeting, recording beginning at @ 0:36:20.)</p> <p>This statement is in direct conflict with not one, not two, not three, but at least 4 places in the FEIS reaching nearly the opposite conclusion, as quoted above. Another conflict occurs related to the climbing boulders in LCC. Sentences that immediately follow one another come to different conclusions. The Gondola B alternative "might directly remove two climbing boulders in Little Cottonwood Canyon if they cannot be avoided during final design or relocated to a new location in [LCC.] Gondola Alternative B would not reduce access to climbing or other recreation resources in [LCC.]" Which is it? (Vol 1, Chapter 2, ¶2.6.9.1.1 @ 2-137.)</p> <p>How much of these restrictions apply only, because as part of the phased approach, UDOT intends to widen Wasatch Boulevard, requiring only high occupancy vehicles to travel? What happens for the residents on the East side of Wasatch Boulevard with no other access save for Wasatch Boulevard? Must they work together to have a shuttle to travel from home to work or hockey games or ski racing so that they meet the occupancy restrictions, even if traveling to a resort not in either BCC or LCC?</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>For 50 days a year, UDOT is intending to spend more than \$550M to construct, and then nearly \$11M annually to operate and maintain, really? The mission to reduce transit time below 80 minutes for those 50 days a year is NOT the right goal, not the right solution, not the right cost.</p> <p>There remain many, many unknowns and considerations which were not factored into the decisions in the FEIS of the preferred primary alternative announced August 31, 2022. Firstly, costs in the FEIS fall short of being true estima</p>
32185	Jaren Davis	<p>I am in favor of the gondola, as I believe the majority of Utahns are. I posted below to social media as talking points.</p> <p>Let's talk about transportation in Little Cottonwood Canyon</p> <p>Whether you are a resident or guest, you quickly realize our use of the beautiful Wasatch Canyons has outgrown our ability for recreation enthusiasts to commute to desired destinations efficiently.</p> <p>It is often problematic for our transportation infrastructure organizations to plan for unknowns or obtain funding before needs arise. That is the case in Little Cottonwood Canyon. We have exceeded our ability to address the popularity of our outdoor recreation with current roadways and transportation systems.</p> <p>The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) was tasked with finding a solution to address the need. After sifting through many ideas, UDOT's engineers, planners, and other associated professional personnel found two possible solutions identified as preferred alternatives-one- enhanced busing with road widening, or two- a gondola.</p> <p>After further study, UDOT determined that the gondola was the best option. As expected, groups had formed, standing ready to oppose anything UDOT would propose. Their target has been primarily the gondola, yet they were against anything that would benefit the continued recreational uses of the canyon. It is important to note that the loudest voices are those who live near the mouth of the Cottonwood Canyons. I live there, too, and I know many people who don't want more people in "the neighborhood." With this emotion, the details of either proposal get exaggerated to the point that they seemingly don't make sense to those of us who seek a meaningful solution.</p> <p>As we talk, remember that our public lands aren't reserved for neighbors, no matter how loud their voices become.</p> <p>Let's look at these options without the neighborhood fluff or emotion. To start, we need to realize the demand isn't merely ski industry related; for those of us who have grown up accessing multiple uses in the canyons, we know it is everything from a relaxing drive to more intense services like hiking, biking, fishing, camping, birdwatching, and cooking a nice outdoor meal with family and friends.</p> <p>Do you wonder why UDOT picked the gondola as its first choice? I found that the interest was to preserve the canyon as the need for increased transportation is addressed and to provide a safe, reliable means of transportation for all users.</p> <p>UDOT found that the bus system would need to add sixty-six buses to the existing fleet and required placing two new dedicated bus-only lanes, one in each direction. As you think of the existing road, ask yourself if you would want one like Provo Canyon going up Little Cottonwood. That roadway is similar to what is needed to provide an adequate system carrying the passengers required. The Provo Canyon road changed the look of the canyon forever. The needed expansion for buses on the Little Cottonwood Canyon road would cover over fifty additional acres, where the gondola needs two-three acres to place towers. It would require destroying many popular roadway areas. No one who loves our canyons would want these improvements if there were an alternative. Would you agree? So far, I feel UDOT has it right.</p> <p>To stop the growth, the neighborhood groups quickly went to work telling horror</p>

		<p>stories, believing we wouldn't do any research, I guess? You have read funny things like no one will ride the gondola because the cabins will stink (I think these people feel the bus won't). Or, as reported in the Tribune, we won't need to do anything because global warming will decrease snowpack to the point that the resorts will close. That is dramatic, yet it shows how the opposition is willing to fabricate truth with intentions to create anger and fear. You may have heard more serious imagery, such as the towers will be "hotel-sized" structures and suggestions that we won't see anything but a gondola in the canyon.</p> <p>The facts about the gondola towers are that the footings are 40' X 40'. These are not only a mere fraction of intentionally misleading information but are barely visible due to the lattice-type construction used. Think of the structure of any gondola you have ever ridden. And, like me, think, I don't even remember seeing the footings. There are to be twenty-two poles in a nine-mile span; less than half of the stories of some opponents state there will be where 44 is being sold to the unknowing.</p> <p>Next on the anti-growth list is the parking structure and how it will be massive, underused, and carry lines of waiting vehicles. The structure is limited to a height below the existing road and has some floors below grade. It will be built to enable traffic at a higher capacity than expected. The traffic study shows that we will hardly have any line getting into the base station. That is excellent news for those who haven't seen those days in the canyon for years. Don't let the fact pass you that bus riders have to park. But the opponents are okay with that because they hope to push these lots into "other" people's neighborhoods.</p> <p>Any other argument needs to be seen for what it is, anti-growth. No one will ride. If true, it is the same for either solution. Yet most, if not all, want to ride a gondola where buses have no attraction, comparatively speaking. Surveys have shown that most residents won't ride the bus but will go on the gondola.</p> <p>You probably think, like me, UDOT thought this through because it makes sense when you strip out the misinformation. UDOT's study wasn't a knee-jerk reaction favoring special interest groups as anti-gondola propaganda wants you to believe. The distinguished professionals named above took five years to analyze 120 options and reviewed over 25,000 public comments.</p> <p>We need to consider more issues with the bus. They are petroleum driven, adding to an existing concern for pollution. You say, do electric. I did, but today's electric buses only last five hours and would cost significantly more to buy and operate. Not that it isn't a good idea, it just isn't practical. We'd add charging stations and hope they don't get stuck in severe weather without a charge. We don't need to talk about the need for drivers, as we learned recently that UTA is cutting half of the canyon ski bus routes due to a staff shortage. A gondola runs in expected winter weather when buses are stopped in the same traffic we experience today and requires far less staff.</p> <p>Let's talk costs as they, too, play a role. The opponent's gondola stories are that it will cost one billion dollars. The gondola's price is \$391 million, whereas the bus option exceeds that number, including the needed road improvements (if electric buses are used, they are almost twice as expensive). Another tactic is that these are today's costs and will likely be much higher. However, any potential increase in costs is affected equally by both options. For either solution, bus or gondola, the price will be paid for by the State similarly to all UDOT projects.</p> <p>More critical than initial costs could be the ongoing costs. UTA currently subsidizes bus ridership on average by 85% with public sales tax dollars. The estimated bus and road widening option will cost fourteen million dollars annually. By comparison, the gondolas operating annual expenses will be four million dollars and, with recent financial yearly projections, can provide the public with a surplus of nearly four million dollars due to its efficiency. The hope is that the gondola's surpluses will be sent to a dedicated fund to improve and maintain Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>We didn't even need to talk about how sexy the gondola would be in promoting our annual \$2.3 billion outdoor recreation industry, which brings in significant tax dollars... UDOT got it right.</p> <p>To finish, add to the gondola plan that Snowbird will place a conservation easement preventing further development on its hundreds of acres of privately owned land on the canyon's north side if the gondola is picked. Oh, that reminds me, the opposition says the gondola only benefits the resorts, as that is where the stops are. They must not have ridden the bus because that is where they also stop.</p> <p>The transportation issue in Little Cottonwood must be addressed! It is public land and needs a public solution. Please share your thoughts on why we wouldn't side with UDOT. I obtained my data from general searches and want to hear if I have missed something. We can debate facts; let's not get into the emotional battles these groups wish us to have.</p> <p>Thank you for looking at this critically with me.</p>
32226	Michael Jablonski	<p>First and foremost, thank you for your work in all aspects of this project. There's no question that Utah is changing before our eyes and a sustainable long-term solution to traffic in LCC must be decided upon soon. Also- big shout out to UTA, USDA Forest Service, and Snowbird and Alta in all working together to make something sustainable happen for the long term.</p> <p>I have spent many hours researching this topic - I am NOT in favor of the gondola as the solution. I do believe it would take away from the natural beauty of the canyon. Maybe the impact to the beauty of the canyon wouldn't be as much as I'm imagining, but I wanted to voice this concern. It would be difficult to tell until built. Snowbird stated in their letter of support for the gondola that "Park n Ride lots have historically paid for the UTA ski bus fares of employees and season passholders". I hope I'm reading this correctly as I give credit to what Snowbird and UTA figured out that my bus fare has been included in previous season passes; they go on to say "we envision a similar funding model if a gondola were to go into place"-- but what about the price to park at La Caille? I very well could have missed this, but I have not seen any parking quotes to park at that structure at La Caille. In the UDOT report, it mentions gondola riders would park at a mobility hub, then take the 13-minute bus ride to the gondola. With that being said, I'd be more apt to just stay on a bus up the canyon (if there are more electric buses/ less impact on the environment). To add, a majority would have to do this anyways with only 2,500 spots at La Caille- not sure how many people want to drive to a bus stop to be shuttled to the gondola. This means that realistically, people are still going to take busses or drive up canyon when they can, so why build the gondola? "The bigger you build it, the more they will come" and I feel as if the gondola would attract that many more people here for reasons outside of its intention: moving skiers and riders up LCC (more on this at the end). And on the huge storm days when people can't drive or take a bus- come on- can you imagine the nightmare that will be the line of people trying to get gondola parking then the line for the gondola?? With all this being said, alternative "A": enhanced bus service gets my vote (if there are additional environmentally friendly buses) between these two "final" options.</p> <p>A few ideas around this: not as much of an eyesore that a gondola would bring to the canyon. Priority to buses on Wasatch Blvd and tolling during peak hours to shy people away from driving up in their cars. This next point might not be realistic- but on huge storm nights (when UDOT puts out the statement that they are blasting until 8am) could a statement also be put out that it will be buses only/ no personal vehicles until noon the following day? (outside of emergency vehicles, workers, canyon homeowners, ect.) and include a statement saying people in personal vehicles can't line up until noon? I'm thinking something</p>

		<p>similar to Zion NP- how it's buses only at peak visitor times. Having enough buses where people don't need to know schedules- having multiple buses at stops so that as soon as one is full, it takes off for LCC and the next one starts loading. We all know that in addition to the wet, avalanche prone snow that caused such large slides, one of the biggest reasons for such crazy traffic the last few years is that we hear the canyon is closed until 8am, but people start to line up at 5am, which backs things up through 9am (or later, 10:45 on huge snow days) by the time things start moving. I am all about getting up super early on pow days, but the reward would be close parking to the bus then enjoying a ride up from UTA on a nice early bus. I might regret that idea, but it could seriously help with the traffic. Side note- UDOT and UTA has done an amazing job over the years, you women and men rock!</p> <p>My last point- Snowbird and Alta have such an incredible product in their skiing- mostly due to the geological magic that is LCC. I'm sure they are sick of hearing this, but they seriously need to consider removing themselves from the multi-resort pass. (Hence why I put "final" options in quotes earlier in my letter) To my understanding, Ikon financials are private. As an Ikon holder three years ago, my girlfriend and I went back to an Alta/Bird last winter (and we still would have even if it didn't include an Ikon base pass), and plan on skiing LCC as much as we can for as long as we live in the SLC area. The skiing is that much better in LCC. I can only imagine they make a boat-load by being a part of the Ikon; and maybe I'm way off, but it's such a legendary place that I imagine strong revenue could still be generated by selling day tickets for those whom really wanted to ski in LCC. We can't believe how many people we met on the chairlifts this past winter that were from out of state, traveling around the West and shredding LCC "because they had free days on their Ikon pass". We can't sustain those type of visitor numbers and the gondola will only attract more and more. The Ikon blackout days were amazing- I believe a sustainable amount of visitors were at the resort those days. Again, maybe I'm way off, but their seems to be so much loyalty from LCC resort skiers- in many forums, I have read numerous comments that passholders would be willing to pay more to make up some of the difference in revenue if they weren't apart of the multi-resort pass. I'd hate to see that type of loyalty go away. I'd also hate to see the proposed gondola turn LCC into any more of a Disneyworld than it already has started to (when the gondola becomes just as much as an amusement ride as it is a solution to traffic ex. People riding it up just to go grab lunch up canyon and take Instagram pictures): Utah can still benefit from the tourism dollars from those type of visitors, they really enjoy Park City. Thank you for hearing me out. This will be my 10th full year here (I can only imagine what the people who have lived here for 30+ years say about us; but hey, I was here before Ikon and I was coming here anyways before I knew Epic had arrived that same year- when they took over operations for The Canyons, previous to the combination with PCMR).</p> <p>**Final and possibly the most important point: I mentor for an underprivileged teenager in West Valley City. His (single) mother does not have the financial means to get him on skis. (I am so grateful that I was able to learn such an expensive sport growing up- thank you, mom and dad) It makes me sick to my stomach to think that people's tax dollars would be used towards this gondola, to no benefit of theirs, nor of so many others within a similar social-economic class. Please use common sense, and look into your heart, to realize how bad of an idea the gondola is; and say: "NO" to the gondola.</p> <p>I love skiing LCC, I love Utah, and look forward to a sustainable solution. Thank you again for all of your work. Let it Snow.</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		Sincerely, Michael Jablonski
32273	Jennifer Bridgeman	<p>I am gravely concerned that the impacts of a gondola in LCC are being treated on a black and white scale, and that our priorities are not where they should be. I decided to submit this comment not to discuss facts or figures, but to approach it as myself and how I view the lasting impacts of this decision.</p> <p>I am extremely opposed to a gondola, especially when we haven't even tried other options first that are less destructive and less expensive. We should be working to preserve the pristine environments we live so close to. Why is our focus right now on a gondola, which would cost millions of taxpayer dollars, when we have more time-pressing problems? (For example, being able to live in SLC due to drought and the Great Salt drying up). I would have hoped to see that crazy amount of money go towards more pressing matters that affect our ability to live in this beautiful place! I would rather our state focuses on more innovative, less destructive options that safeguard the ecosystems we depend on for our health, mental and physical. The whole reason many folks live here is to engage and connect with the Wasatch Front- we should be striving to preserve it as we continue to grow, not destroy it when we haven't even tried other options first.</p> <p>I personally choose to connect with Little Cottonwood Canyon in many forms, but most largely through climbing. LCC is actually the most special place on earth to me because of how I have chosen to engage with the landscape there. Climbing is not just recreation for me- it has become my lifestyle, and the highest form in which I connect with environments, nature, and myself. Climbing affords many beautiful, powerful, and meaningful ways of connecting with a specific landscape and place. LCC is arguably one of the most pristine places to do that in the country, and so close to a city! Saying not all of the climbing will be destroyed, and that access would still be available or rerouted, does not detract from the bare fact that a gondola would be forever changing an environment through such a monumental disturbance and change. We cannot go back from altering ecosystems or destroying environments. I climb not for summitting peaks or formations, but to learn and experience the journey. The rock teaches you, and you form lasting connections with the landscape. You form a relationship with a place, and Little Cottonwood is such a special place for many people whether they climb, ski, hike, etc. This is their lifestyle, it goes beyond simply having fun. (Just research the history of climbing in LCC, it's amazing). The best and most beautiful way many climbers experience this connection and relationship is out in nature and away from disturbances- what better way to live and grow and engage in such an activity than to experience it away from construction, the city, and the urban jungles in which we live. We go to, and arguably depend on, these nature spaces for many personal, cultural, spiritual, recreational, and life purposes.</p> <p>I do not believe the true impacts to climbing, and the ecosystem of LCC, were truly explored in this proposal or even given much weight. It feels like this been treated as separate entities or separate parts. LCC is a prime example of how beautiful and pristine the Wasatch Front is, and we shouldn't lose that. Isn't that one reason why people chose to ski in LCC? Ecosystems work as a whole entity. They are similar to a body with all its parts. Regardless of what impacts are considered "minimal," you are not adding a mere eyesore to the canyon- you are disturbing and destroying many parts of that working ecosystem on all fronts. Everything is interconnected. The climbing would never be the same because that environment has been changed forever. We cannot go back if we do this. As our population continues to grow and more people turn to the outdoors, we need to learn how we can coexist with our environments economically, physically, and mentally. We should try other options that are not so disruptive that cause</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>irreversible changes to our ecosystems. Even if climbing was causing all the traffic congestions, I would still be opposed to a gondola.</p> <p>If the community is largely against it, and it's our most expensive and destructive and disturbing option, why are we going with it? Why can't we be creative with the traffic problem and try other methods first to see if a gondola is even truly necessary? ESPECIALLY given how expensive and irreversible it is, and that there are other matters at hand we face that should be given higher priority.</p> <p>As someone who has spent years finding peace, community, solitude, strength, and heart in the natural spaces of LCC, and in light of the vast majority of people who utilize the canyon, please reconsider not building a gondola and try another option first. Please think and evaluate and explore how such a structure would have so many detrimental effects to all aspects of LCC's ecosystem, both during and after construction, and therefore would also be detrimental to the many ways in which people connect with the canyon. I apologize for the length of this message, but I hope you read it. I hope, at least, my passion will lend itself to you some longing or understanding of my position and feelings. LCC is a large part of my life and always will be. And it's very much the same for many other people, regardless of how they have chosen to connect with those natural spaces.</p>
32378	Brad Barlage	<p>I am against the Gondola because:</p> <p>Irreversible & Rushed Decision</p> <p>There is simply no reason to invest \$550 million in a permanent project with so many unanswered questions.</p> <p>If common sense could prevail, we would implement cost-effective and environmentally-friendly options such as enhanced busses, tolling, reservations and enforcement of traction laws.</p> <p>As Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson said, these are "common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound."</p> <p>Tax-Payer-Funded, Serving Private Resorts</p> <p>Why are Utah taxpayers footing the \$550 million bill for a problem two private businesses created and for a solution that will only benefit those two businesses?</p> <p>As we know, resort executives stand to gain the most from a gondola and have been behind the majority of pro-gondola messaging.</p> <p>They view the gondola as a tax-payer-funded marketing ploy to increase visitation to their businesses.</p> <p>UDOT's EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>Ignoring Local Public & Political Opinion</p> <p>80% of Utahns oppose the gondola, according to a Deseret News/Hinckley Institute of Politics poll.</p> <p>Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Sandy Mayor Monica Zoltanski and many other elected officials agree.</p>

	<p>"Rather than rip up the canyon with a half-a-billion-dollar price tag, let's invest in common-sense solutions. Parking hubs in the valley, electric busing with regular routes, carpooling and tolling, reservations, common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound," Wilson said at the Truth About the Proposed Gondola event in June.</p> <p>With no trailhead or backcountry access, the gondola is far from a solution that benefits all of LCC's users throughout the year.</p> <p>Not a Convenient Solution</p> <p>If the gondola is built, your ski day will consist of parking off-site (or paying a premium for one of the limited parking spots near the base), taking a bus to the base station then riding the gondola 31 minutes to Snowbird or 37 minutes to Alta.</p> <p>And then doing it all in reverse order at the end of the day.</p> <p>How can it be assured the gondola will be used and actually reduce cars in the canyon?</p> <p>For the gondola strategy to be effective, there will need to be a major change in public habits.</p> <p>With no plan by UDOT to limit cars (it is our understanding they plan to implement bussing until the gondola is built but not continue the program afterward) or any analysis of demand, the original issue of traffic is not being solved. It will simply funnel more visitors to the resorts.</p> <p>Increased Visitation Stress on LCC</p> <p>If those invested in the gondola are so interested in preserving Little Cottonwood Canyon, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support.</p> <p>As our friends at Students for the Wasatch pointed out, if the gondola is implemented, the number of cars visiting resorts will remain the same while skier visits will increase by 20%, per UDOT's EIS.</p> <p>The EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>What Will it Really Cost?</p> <p>The proposed budget to build the gondola comes in at approximately \$550 million. But many estimate that number would ultimately come in closer to \$1 billion.</p> <p>We know projects of this size tend to go way over budget. Our new airport (which could use a gondola from Terminal B) was budgeted for \$1.8 billion and ended up costing more than \$4 billion.</p> <p>If the gondola is built, it would cost \$10.6 million annually just to operate. Plus, UDOT estimates an additional \$12.5 million in capital costs, expected by 2037, followed by \$16.5 million by 2051, according to the Deseret News.</p>
--	---

		<p>How much would a gondola trip cost - likely much more than most customers would be willing to pay.</p> <p>Is a Gondola Even Necessary?</p> <p>How many days per winter are you in a complete standstill in Little Cottonwood Canyon? No doubt the red snake is real. But real enough for an expensive, permanent gondola?</p> <p>Plus, the gondola will not run when howitzers are active during avalanche mitigation in the lower canyon from Lisa Falls to Monte Cristo.</p> <p>And we can't even think of an argument for the gondola to be operating for the other eight months of the year.</p> <p>Preserving the Beauty of LCC</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a true treasure of our local environment and attracts skiers, climbers and hikers from around the world to enjoy its beauty.</p> <p>Constructing more than 20 towers reaching 200 feet tall and stretching eight miles through the heart of LCC would destroy the canyon's natural beauty.</p> <p>Altering the canyon's footprint will also destroy popular climbing and hiking areas including Alpenboch Loop Trail.</p> <p>Push Traffic onto Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>The gondola will not solve traffic issues.</p> <p>It will simply push traffic out of Little Cottonwood Canyon onto Wasatch Blvd, I-215 and surrounding neighborhoods in the Cottonwood Heights community.</p>
32435	James Perkins	<p>I am strongly opposed to the proposed Gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon. I've been a Utah resident for 33 years, and I find this proposal a very harmful and destructive one for a canyon that needs more protection and preservation than ever. Furthermore, the idea that this planned Gondola would be paid for by Utah taxpayers, but only fatten the pockets of Snowbird, Alta, La Callie, The Tree Farm, Chris McCandless, and Wayne Niederhauser, is not something I'd ever support as a Utahn.</p> <p>Here is why I oppose Gondola B (or any Gondola plan such as this):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There would be obvious harm and destruction to the canyon wilderness by the construction and maintenance of this project: forty 15-foot diameter poles, new road construction, huge truck traffic, all cutting through the Little Cottonwood Canyon wilderness. 2) Permanent and irreversible harm to wildlife that will be forever impacted by the encroachment of this Gondola into this beautiful canyon watershed. 3) Hawkwatch International studies show that birds will be injured and killed during night migrations through the canyon. With birds globally suffering massive population declines due to human encroachment, loss of habitat, and human development like this project, added to the DYING of the Great Salt Lake which has not been adequately addressed, this Gondola development will hasten the deaths of more bird and other wildlife populations. All of the many people we know in Utah don't want this project to be built! 4) The harm to Little Cottonwood canyon itself: the trees, the creeks, further pollution of the air and water quality, increased erosion from development of this Gondola, and negative impacts to the solitude of the canyon.

		<p>5) The cost of a Gondola ride has still not been released by UDOT. But somewhere in their estimated range is truly very unrealistic an expense for the average Utah family to pay to go ski at these resorts, added to ski lifts, meals, lodging. Average families simply cannot afford this and surely ridership will suffer, making this project akin to the 1980"s huge taxpayer expense and waste of the pumps constructed in the desert to pump water... a very failed project in all respects.</p> <p>6) Furthermore, it is noted that this intrusive and expensive (to taxpayers) Gondola would only service two sites in the season of winter. Thus, this proposal has far less merit of benefit given the gross harmful impacts to the canyon and its life species, the time, and the cost to taxpayers.</p> <p>7) Besides being a high and unnecessary waste of an expense to Utah taxpayers, the funds will be taken from transportation funds meant for the state of Utah. Why not restrict private vehicle use during ski season and use EV shuttles? Far less intrusive and would greatly cut down on emissions during winter months when the inversion is at its worst. UDOT and these developers could still reap monetary benefit AND go green, promoting green, clean energy in the canyon with EV shuttles, reducing fossil fuel emissions in SLC and the mountains, reducing harm to wildlife and the watershed, and serving as a model for other Western state ski resorts. I suggest these developers go back to the drawing table and do more research, looking at other Western states and European models of success.</p> <p>I strongly oppose any and all such proposed Gondola developments in Little (or Big) Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>Sincerely, James Perkins</p>
32455	Rebecca Jacoby	<p>Most notably, the privately-held Ski resorts of Alta and Snowbird to not merit the significant expenditures of UDOT to build a Gondola System. The Ski Resorts of Alta and Snowbird should sell their daily ticket amounts with their own designated capacity parking lots to support those ticket sales. That would then constitute the amount of vehicles allowed to access Little Cottonwood Canyon for those designated Resorts. Passes only would be required to access the Parking and Skiing use of Alta and Snowbird.</p> <p>As a current estimate for building a Gondola System, the amount of \$600 million to One billion cannot be verified without actual design having been executed and submitted. It is not fair or does not seem legal that Utah State Transportation Budget and Utah State Taxpayer money is to be used to support the Little Cottonwood Ski Trade Entities. If those Ski Resorts have expanded and are selling tickets for the over-crowding of the Little Cottonwood road, then it is essential that they cut back to meet more realistic use and further expansion of a limited road use.</p> <p>The Budget estimate to build a Gondola System for Little Cottonwood represents a Discrimination of all other users than skiers for the canyon and public forest usage.</p> <p>The public expenditure from UDOT to build a Gondola is literally being proposed for Privately-held companies that hold ownership of Alta and Snowbird Resorts. Alta Resort is owned by multiple individuals-the Laughlin family 51%, the Quinney family 25%, the Bass family 11%. Ownership of Utah's Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort changed privately owned hands of co-founder Deck Bass to Wyoming Business man, Ian Cummings, who is also co-founder of Park City-Based Powder Corp. Why does UDOT have any requirement to use Public money to support Privately-owned Resorts?</p> <p>If the Gondola is proposed to have two stops, Snowbird and Alta, it leaves many other important and traditional stopping points will not be available to users? What about the needs for stops or parking access for White Pine, Red Pine, privately-owned residences and condos, hiking trailheads, restaurants that are all beyond</p>

		<p>designed stops for Gondola passengers.</p> <p>The Gondola as proposed is a Huge Mega Structure with Huge, Unsightly Towers that will significantly interrupt the environmental and aesthetic enjoyment/conditions that now exist in Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>The Gondola Structure path will encroach on the Edges of The Wilderness Designations of Little Cottonwood Canyon. It does not seem that this has been fully investigated in plans to date.</p> <p>The Parking Structure for a 2,500 'car parking building, represents One Million square feet---an enormous, very Urban Mass. Imagine its size and walls blocking views, imposing on neighborhoods, and roadway excursions.</p> <p>There is a powerful logic to increasing buses and light transit commuter vans, both vehicles types being electric----this is more convincing than Gondola trams moving every three minutes with only 35 persons. Buses carry 40-60 people at a time and could move every 3-5 minutes. How about an army of 1-passenger, electric vans moving every 2 minutes, that could pick up travelers across the valley at designated parking lots.</p> <p>Please consider NO GONDOLA-OTHER BUS AND MULTIPLE-PASSENGER VEHICLES REPRESENT SOLUTIONS WHICH ARE BETTER FOR QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT AND APPARENT PROTECTIONAL USE OF LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON.</p> <p>THE PRIVATELY-HELD OWNERSHIP OF ALTA AND SNOWBIRD DOES NOT DESERVE THE UNFAIR EXPENDITURE OF UDOT BUILDING THEIR BUSINESSES. MANY PRIVATE CITIZENS DO NOT USE THESE SKI RESORTS. THESE PRIVATE COMPANIES MUST BUILD THEIR OWN ACCESS TO THEIR RESORTS AND STOP SELLING TICKETS THAT GO BEYOND THE CURRENT NEEDS OF THE ROADWAY OF LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON.</p>
32460	Concerend Utahn	<p>There is a major problem with the Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Draft Alternatives. As a public, we have been fed a false choice between expanded bus service and a gondola to alleviate congestion in Little Cottonwood Canyon. The environmental, congestion, and traffic estimates for both proposals has been well vetted ' but it is still a false dichotomy.</p> <p>To illustrate, I would like to draw an analogy between skiing and a sporting arena. It is not a perfect analogy, but it does illustrate the problems present in this plan quite well.</p> <p>Let's pretend for a moment that at the end of highway 210 (Little Cottonwood Canyon) ' which is a dead-end roadway ' instead of a ski resort (Alta/Snowbird) there was a football stadium.</p> <p>That stadium would have some sort of capacity limit governed primarily by the number of seats/bleachers/boxes available. It may even be limited by egress regulations determined by the state or local governments.</p> <p>Ski resorts likewise have a capacity limit ' but it is not dictated by the number of seats/bleachers/boxes ' rather it is dictated by the number of skiers or snowboarders the mountain can both safely and comfortably accommodate on its runs, in its lines, and on its chairlifts.</p> <p>Over time, the teams that play in that stadium have gotten more and more popular. The stadium went from rarely selling out, to selling out during major sporting events and some concerts, to consistently selling out every single weekend with a line out the door of disgruntled fans wishing they could find a way inside.</p>

		<p>If you were the owner of that stadium, you'd have a couple of options in front of you.</p> <p>- Ignore Your Constraints</p> <p>You could allow more people into the stadium than there are seats. Fans could sit on each other's laps. Some might sit backwards. Some might sit on stairs. Some could stand in the parking lots. Others could hang out in the locker room or the promenade. To do this, you may have to build a larger parking lot, increase bus service to the stadium, or even ask the city to build you a light-rail connection. This would certainly increase revenue in the short term, but ultimately would lead to a poor fan experience and compromise attendee safety.</p> <p>- Increase Pricing to Match Demand</p> <p>You could begin to increase pricing. As demand outstrips supply and pricing becomes more inelastic ' the stadium owner could increase revenue by charging more per ticket sold until an equilibrium is met where the stadium is consistently sold out without any excess demand for seats. This would cause some people to not be able to attend events at the arena due to excessive pricing, but would increase revenue for the stadium owner without deteriorating the fan experience or compromising the safety of attendees.</p> <p>- Expand the Stadium</p> <p>You could invest in a stadium expansion. If you could accurately forecast an increase in demand in the future, an expansion to expand the breadth and height of the arena to include more seats would allow you to capture more revenue by selling additional tickets. Of course, this would require a capital outlay, time, and permitting ' but ultimately would allow you to increase your revenue without deteriorating the fan experience and without excluding some fans that don't have the ability to pay for attendance.</p> <p>- Build More Stadiums</p> <p>If the city around you becomes large enough, it may be appropriate to think about building additional stadiums to spread demand for different event types. There is no reason that every concert needs to be played in a 40,000 seat venue. Nor do Hockey and Basketball need to be played in the same arena. Football might deserve a dedicated venue of its own. This is not about segregating sports, but rather building facilities that are designed specifically for different types of events. By building additional stadiums, multiple events could be held on the same day/night and attendees could be spread across multiple venues. Of course, to do this the city or state may need to participate in finding a suitable location for those stadiums.</p> <p>By this point, the analogy is painfully obvious. UDOT has presented the public with two options ' both of which ignore the very basic constraints of skiing in Utah. Little Cottonwood Canyon resorts, as currently designed, have significant capacity constraints. Combined, the resorts can barely handle 10,000 skiers per day safely or enjoyably. Currently, the biggest constraint that keeps these resorts anywhere close to that 10,000 skier capacity number is the available parking at the resorts. UDOT, Snowbird, and Alta would rather increase the number of skiers allowed on the mountain, in the lines, and on the chairlifts by expanding parking (at the base of the canyon) and providing alternative transportation options to the resort (buses and gondolas) than rationally solve the problem in front of them: capacity.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>The capacity problem has been compounded in recent years by a combination of several factors including population growth, inflation-adjusted decreasing season pass prices, the availability of multi-resort season passes, an increased supply of Airbnb style accommodations in the Salt Lake Valley, and a steady increase in winter sports participation.</p> <p>Building a gondola, a train, widening the road, increasing bus service, or any other option that allows for more people to visit Alta and Snowbird is not the solution we need. Those options may be justifiable when comparing CO2 emissions or general safety compared to the highway, but they do not solve the problem of capacity and they only serve to allow Alta and Snowbird to increase their revenue at the expense of skier safety, the skiing experience, and worst of all, the taxpayer's dollar.</p> <p>No new resort accessible skiable terrain has opened in Little Cottonwood Canyon since 1999 (Mineral Basin) or in Big Cottonwood Canyon since 1992 (Great Western Express). During that time period, Alta would restrict daily skiers to 3,500 per day and sold a season pass for \$875 (\$1,380 today). In fact, the skiing experience was so sacred that Alta limited its season pass sales and had a waiting list just to buy one. Today an Alta season pass runs \$1,200 (15% less than in 1999) and an Ikon pass (which includes unlimited skiing at Solitude, 7 days at Brighton, 7 days at Deer Valley, and 7 days to share at Alta/Snowbird) is \$899 (35% less expensive than a season pass in 1999). All this while the population of Utah grew by nearly 60%.</p> <p>Utah's skiing has a real capacity issue. There is not a single solution that can solve it on it's own, but increasing the number of skiers in Little Cottonwood Canyon is not the solution. A real EIS alternative study would have included an analysis of opening new terrain (stadium expansion), new resorts (more stadiums), and price increases to control demand. It would have suggested ingress capacity limits in the canyon. It would have looked at alternate routes into our skiable terrain (a base area for Snowbird in Mary Ellen's Gulch, a base area for Brighton in Midway, a train from summit county to Big Cottonwood Canyon). The UDOT EIS did none of these because it was only concentrating on finding a way to use taxpayer dollars to increase revenues for two private ski resorts. It is myopically focused on little cottonwood canyon as the only corridor to skiing.</p> <p>If you live in and pay taxes in Utah, you should do everything you can to block both of these alternatives and tell UDOT and the State of Utah to work together to find some real solutions.</p>
32499	Mitchell McDermott	<p>My name is Mitch McDermott, I am a software engineer, resident of Sandy and outdoor enthusiast.</p> <p>A phrase often said now-a-days about places that are overcrowded and not longer what they once were, are being 'loved to death.' Personally I don't believe such a thing exists. If you love something, you'll care for it, protect it and preserve it for future generations. However, there is such a thing as being 'developed to death', and Little Cottonwood Canyon is at risk of that with both of the proposed solutions. I not only believe these two solutions are not a fix to the problem, but I know there is a better, less invasive option that exists.</p> <p>The two proposed solutions are ignoring a few big issues. First, neither solution will work without a public transportation overhaul. There needs to be adequate mobility hubs across the Salt Lake valley to transport passengers. Having everyone park between a couple of lots will result in the same gridlock that we</p>

		<p>currently experience, especially if one of those lots is a parking garage. Second, another huge issue being ignored is the canyon capacity. I'm not sure why it's not being discussed, but transporting more people up the canyon than we currently have will result in a worse experience for everyone. Longer lift lines, more angry tourists, a greater number of people to transport down canyon once ski resorts close. No matter the transportation solution, it is not feasibly possible to transport 3000-4000 people down the canyon all at 3 or 4pm. Many people who frequent the canyon know this is already a growing problem, and increasing uphill capacity will only exacerbate it. Lastly, why is Big Cottonwood Canyon being ignored? This issue is just as prevalent in its neighboring canyon and we're talking about preparing for 2030/2050, so why is that not being addressed? The same system I'm proposing could be scaled to fit BCC needs almost flawlessly. Why not kill two birds with one stone?</p> <p>For months I have been voicing my opinion, and in favor of, a Zion-like shuttle system. This means busses would be the only option for getting up and down canyon during peak hours, with no private vehicles on the road. I believe this is the only path to achieve what this project set out to do. In 2000, Zion National Park established a shuttle system to eliminate traffic and parking problems, protect vegetation, and restore tranquility to Zion Canyon. The shuttle system runs during peak periods of the year to transport visitors in Zion Canyon, without giving visitors the option to drive through the canyon. In 2017 alone, the park estimated the shuttles transported more than 6.3 million passengers. It's now been over 20 years and the shuttle system is still in place, and if you've visited in that time, you can appreciate the lack of cars in the canyon. I came across a guy named Brian Kissmer who had the same idea, and he had already crunched the numbers to compare it to proposed solutions. Below is a direct quote pulled from his work discussing costs more in detail:</p> <p>The Proterra Catalyst E2, an all-electric transit bus, has been shown to outcompete both diesel and EV competitors for various metrics including maximum hill grade, climb speed, and maintenance cost. The bus can maintain a speed of 40 mph on a 10% uphill grade, utilizes regenerative downhill braking, and maintains excellent energy efficiency. This specific model set the world record for the longest electric bus drive on a single charge at 1,101.2 miles and has a recharge rate of approximately six hours.⁴ While the \$750,000 cost of a single bus is higher than that of a diesel bus (~\$500,000)⁵, maintenance costs of the Proterra are on average 30% cheaper than the maintenance costs of a diesel bus. The average lifetime maintenance cost of an electric bus is \$.60/ a mile, versus \$.85/mile for an average diesel bus.⁶</p> <p>The cost of 30 Proterra Catalyst E2 buses totals to about \$22.5M. The additional charging ports will cost up to \$50,000⁷ each with a total cost of \$1.5M. Total operation and maintenance costs for 30 buses over a lifespan of 250,000 miles (12 years) is approximately \$4.5M.</p> <p>If the gravel lot does not provide enough parking for the drivers that would normally drive themselves during peak hours, high estimates for the construction of a parking garage give a cost of about \$28,000⁸ per space, or \$14.2M for a garage with 500 parking spaces. Building a parking garage will reduce the amount of square footage required to house the cars for passengers and will remove the necessity for development within the canyon. Between the bus fleet and parking garage this liberal estimate adds up to about \$42.7M, or 7.21% of the \$592M price tag of the proposed gondola system. If the bus fleet is completely replaced after 12 years the cost will total \$71.2M, or 11% of the gondola project.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Furthermore, this project could be expanded if my estimates are too low to accommodate the amount of commuters without ever coming close to the price of the gondola project.</p> <p>The EIS suggests that gondolas will carry 35 people and leave every two minutes from the station, transporting a total of 1050 riders per hour. The buses that are currently used have a capacity of about 50 people. To match the capacity of the gondola, the canyon would need to run about 21 buses per hour (~3 buses per minute). The construction of the gondola will cost approximately half a billion of taxpayer dollars. The average cost for a public transit bus is anywhere between \$500,000 and \$800,000 USD depending on the fuel used. Even if the state were to add 30 additional buses to its current fleet, the total cost with a liberal estimate would be about \$24,000,000, or ~5% the price of the gondola system. *Doesn't include maintenance or replacement costs but those are mentioned above*</p> <p>I love Little Cottonwood Canyon and would hate to see it forever tarnished by following through with one of the two solutions proposed. The two proposed solutions are not iterable, scalable, or, worst of all, temporary. The solution I proposed is much less damaging, and doesn't effect the watershed or viewshed. On top of that, is it much simpler to implement, and much cheaper. It can also be scaled further in the future to meet capacity, and could be a model for a solution in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Beyond winter, my proposed solution provides an option for summer use as the canyons continue to get more popular.</p> <p>I hope I have brought light to another possible solution to the problem at hand, and that your team will strongly consider weighing all possible options and impacts. However, if it comes down to the road being widened vs a gondola, I would take the road being widened 100 times out of 100. Thanks for your time.</p> <p>Stay Stoked, Mitch McDermott</p> <p>Works Cited (via Brian) https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1118&context=trec_seminar https://escholarship.org/content/qt5pj337gw/qt5pj337gw_noSplash_f8a62967aab7706cad0210204e946ce7.pdf?t=moa5jb https://slideplayer.com/slide/6068778/ https://insideeys.com/news/337499/watch-proterra-electric-bus-conquer-utahs-steepest-roads/ https://www.publicpower.org/periodical/article/electric-buses-mass-transit-seen-cost-effective https://afdc.energy.gov/files/u/publication/financial_analysis_be_transit_buses.pdf https://afdc.energy.gov/files/u/publication/evse_cost_report_2015.pdf https://wginc.com/parking-outlook/ ****There's a useful graphic in this one****</p>
32679	Peter Wilk	<p>I am a year round user of Little Cottonwood as a climber, trail runner, backcountry skier and sightseer from my motorcycle. These activities also extend into the other canyons outside Salt Lake City. The health and beauty of these canyons are very important to me. In the ten years I have lived in Salt Lake I've experienced-and been part of-the increased use within the canyons. As a mechanical engineer I spend more time thinking than most users about solutions and the various tradeoffs that might be needed in those solutions to the traffic within the canyons. The UDOT proposed solution for improving traffic within Little Cottonwood Canyon has some positive, but many negative attributes I would like to highlight.</p>

		<p>The incentives and punishments for low occupancy vehicle traffic, particularly in the winter, that UDOT is proposing make sense to me. I like the possibility of a toll and parking limitations at the ski resorts. These types of changes are extremely useful since it can change human behavior, need little physical infrastructure, and can be frequently tweaked to update to changing needs and efficacy information.</p> <p>Another attribute of the proposed plan I like is the inclusion of snow sheds. I have frequently come across these structures in other areas of the US and Europe that I've traveled. I think they are a relatively low visual and environmental impact to improve downtime due to reduced impact to avalanches over the road. One item of great importance in developing the designs of these structures is that a heavy priority is also placed on their aesthetic design not just their function. Please consider architects and designers with a history of making structures that blend with the environment to not overly impact the beautiful canyon that we have. These structures aren't a generic overpass over I-80 and should be designed by individuals with talents that will allow these safety features to look like natural parts of the landscape.</p> <p>Another easy way to improve traffic into the canyon that requires no infrastructure is more enforcement of snow tires/chains in the canyon. It is frequent that I see a vehicle spun out in the ditch or unable to start moving uphill after coming to a stop and it is purely due to inadequate tires. This includes numerous trucks I've seen with overly worn tires despite technically being of the proper rating.</p> <p>On the other side of the coin is the numerous missteps UDOT has made in this entire process. The biggest of which is the myopic scope of the problem that UDOT is considering. The Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon are not independent entities, they are barely 4 miles apart. Planning a +\$500 million dollar solution to one canyon's traffic problem is not prudent. On the worst traffic days there are simultaneous and related problems in both canyons. Anyone who's traveled up the canyons during these times can see that they are not independent entities and must be treated as a whole.</p> <p>Similarly to the inadequate topographic scope is the time period and users that UDOT is focusing on. The focus is on fixing a problem that is less than 50 days a year and only for users attending two private businesses. A transportation plan for the canyons should be more inclusive to all seasons and users. A gondola is too rigid and slow of a tool to use for improving traffic problems within LCC. Again, a +\$500 million dollar fix to a 50 day a year problem sounds fiscally irresponsible.</p> <p>On a more granular and personal level as a climber, I'm very concerned about the impacts of especially the gondola or other roadway changes. These changes will impact historic and world renowned climbing areas for the worse. Tower construction, maintenance will disturb the atmosphere of the canyon and its climbing. Towers obstructing views will ruin the reasons people choose to come to the canyon in the first place.</p> <p>It is unfortunate that while UDOT has identified some good improvements to LCC traffic that it falls short of being very effective or forward looking at the problem. Given the changes in transportation we are experiencing in our daily lives with electrification and autonomous vehicles, it is a shame UDOT isn't looking to spend +\$500 million on a solution that is innovative and a model for others around the world. I very much hope that UDOT reconsiders its current plan.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>-Peter Wilk Millcreek, UT</p>
32680	Jane Hudson	<p>I am wholeheartedly against the Gondola proposal.</p> <p>I live in Millcreek, and recreate in the Wasatch Mountains almost every day (year round). I love the Wasatch and feel that we all need to work hard to preserve its beauty.,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>The current traffic problem only happens less than <15 days a year. Throughout the EIS, the transportation problems are projected to get worse with population growth. Sections 1.3, 1.4.1.2, and 1.4.2.2 (just to name a few) discuss this growth and the related problems. ,Ä®,Ä®The gondola is not only an eye sore, but will cause major impacts to the canyon (i.e. destroying world class bouldering areas and various ecosystems). We need to put real effort into trying to expand the bus system or try another option like tolling. The gondola parking lot will be almost a mile from the gondola station, it's expensive to ride, it's slower than driving and is less convenient (especially for groups and families). People will not use it.</p> <p>It only serves a portion of canyon users, only those going to resorts and the resorts themselves. There is no disincentive to drive so people will continue to do so.,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>I find it extraordinarily irresponsible to ignore the obvious need to examine the level of visitation that this fragile resource can handle without damage. The EIS simply waves off this point in S.12 by saying "The Forest Service acknowledges that, in the future, management might be needed to limit resource impacts from user visitation in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Specific visitor capacities are not being considered by the USDA Forest Service at this time.</p> <p>",Ä®,Ä®If we weigh the growth impacts in this equation so heavily that we are willing to spend \$600M to \$1B of taxpayer money for a "future" problem (right now it's <15 days a year) ... how can we not ask the Forest Service to "consider visitor capacities?" It is negligent and irresponsible not to do so. We cannot simply blame the Forest Service and wave this away as a "noted" but "ignored" concern!,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>I am adamantly opposed to this proposed alternative and demand that all other options that be tried and exhausted FIRST before building a \$600M gondola that will destroy the canyon.</p> <p>,Ä®,Ä®It's too expensive. It's too invasive. It will likely encourage rather than discourage car traffic. And ... it won't solve the powder-day traffic problem, there will just be lines of cars waiting to enter the rapidly-filled gondola parking lot. There will be no difference to the users of 9400 S and Wasatch Blvd (and surrounding neighborhoods) on those days.</p> <p>This also does not help the traffic congestion is any other canyon, namely Big Cottonwood Canyon. I implore you to give bussing a real shot and make an effort to improve the bus system. That is a scalable and more sustainable option that has not been given a real shot. ,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>The gondola is not the right answer.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		There are many other common-sense approaches that could and should be implemented.
33035	Ken Paulson	<p>I believe that the decision by UDOT to favor the Gondola alternative for access to Little Cottonwood Canyon is inappropriate and short sighted as to the benefit it provides to the people of Utah who not only enjoy the canyon for its skiing activities but also for its scenery, flowers, wildlife, and general environmental aesthetics. Go up to Albion Basin and look down the canyon. Beautiful - oops, there is a Gondola right in the middle of this view. Awful.</p> <p>The Gondola makes limited access to the entire canyon and only favors the ski resorts in increasing their revenue. The financing for this project unfairly falls on the people of Utah to support these private businesses. If the Gondola project is so sorely needed to reduce traffic in the canyon during ski season, then the businesses that benefit from this project should pay for the project.</p> <p>That aside, I don't fully understand how this project is going to positively reduce congestion and make it more convenient to access the canyons during the winter.</p> <p>People are going to need access to the staging points of the Gondola. Anyone that has skied is aware of the lift lines that develop during the day. I believe that at the embarking and disembarking points of the Gondola, huge crowds of skiers will develop both in the morning going up to the resorts and even greater crowds will develop when the lifts close and everyone wants to leave at the same time. With a bus alternative, many busses can line up to take skiers down the canyon much more quickly than herding the crowds through a single loading point to access the Gondola. People are going to be tired and irritated at the that time and it isn't going to be a pleasant experience for anyone.</p> <p>OK then, everybody gets on the Gondola. Where does it take them. To another single staging point where everyone gets off to go to their -- Car? Where is their car? In the great parking lot either at the unloading point or at another offsite parking lot (wherever that has been set up.) Have we reduced the number of cars and the pollution (air, neighborhood congestion, refuse accumulation, etc.) the cars create. No, we have just relocated all of that to somewhere else. OK, we must now develop shuttle service from the lower staging area to offsite parking to get the skiers from point A to their cars. Do we really believe that we will not see the same amount of cars. How are people going to get to the points where they can access their cars. Either develop a shuttle service to offsite parking or a make a huge parking lot at the embarking point itself? Maybe people will drop off and pick up at the embarking point and won't need to park. Cool, do we now have a long line of idling cars waiting for pickups/dropoffs? Has anyone at UDOT ever gone to a school to pick-up their children - ugh. This will be many many times worse.</p> <p>A well organized bus transport system could eliminate the need for shuttles by setting up routes to pick up and drop off skiers at specific loading sites. I am not a particular proponent of a huge bus transport system but to me this offers a better alternative to relieving canyon congestion than the Gondola alternative. What's more, in the summer when that may be less pressure on the specific ski areas, bus transport can be reduced where as the Gondola would not be fully utilized resulting in a partially idle investment still requiring maintenance and operating personnel for those that want to use it.</p> <p>A Gondola system is going to ruin a gem that we can never reclaim - all for a limited gain for a select few to the detriment of the many and their generations to come. There must be better options to consider to preserve the canyons that we</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>purport to love and cherish. While I know that a lot of dedicated people have spent time reviewing alternate plans for this canyon (and for other canyons to come,) there isn't a necessity to make an irrevocable commitment that could have lasting negative impacts without exhausting all possible alternatives even those that might be made just to preserve what otherwise might be lost forever.</p> <p>Please think more than twice over the decisions about to be made and the long term impact.</p> <p>Regards,</p> <p>Ken Paulson</p>
33674	Craig Heimark	<p>My son wrote me on September 30 with a link to an article. The article had the headline "UTA Cuts Public Bus Service to All Utah Ski Resorts Due to Staffing Shortages". In his email was the one line question:</p> <p>"Can't do this... but can build a gondola? What the heck is wrong with Utah?"</p> <p>It prompted some thinking on my part. I have worried for some time, that US politicians have become disconnected from the general citizenry and no longer pursue actions in the common good, instead aiming their initiatives at a very narrow political base. It seems the UTA's persistent and single-minded pursuit of building a gondola for Little Cottonwood Canyon is but the latest example of this trend. I have attended in person hearings on the Gondola. I have also tried as best I can to stay abreast of news reports and skim some of the comments that have been submitted during the public process. While my observations are only anecdotal it seems well more than 50% of the residents are opposed to building the gondola. My estimate from the public hearing I attend was north of 65%. I also know that most of the mayors of the cities and towns most affected are opposed to building the gondola.</p> <p>I do know the benefits of the gondola largely accrue to a very narrow set of business interests but are financed by the public. That is not my definition of political action "for the common good". Rather, it feels like corruption of the democratic process where politician's highjack public servants and public funds for the benefit of a few connected individuals and businesses. It is no wonder that recent surveys all document a marked erosion in the trust between the general populace and the government in the US.</p> <p>I did note that Michael Maughan, the General Manager of Alta Ski Lifts, and one of the obvious beneficiaries of the expenditure of public funds, wrote a very balanced note that identified many far, far cheaper solutions to control and reduce traffic congestion in LCC. Despite his overt conflict of interest, in my opinion, Mike has a more balanced view of the pros and cons of building a Gondola than the UTA or the public officials who are ostensibly elected to serve the public interest.</p> <p>If I were a conspiracy theorist, I would think that the failure to hire enough bus drivers to staff the LCC bus service this coming season was designed to put pressure on the public to support the gondola project. I am not (a conspiracy theorist), so I will instead attribute this unfortunate choice to institutional incompetence.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the incompetence is massive. It seems patently silly that we can spend what will likely be more like \$750m - \$1B on a gondola (after adjusting for</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>inflation and the fact that almost all public work projects come in over initial budget) and cannot afford to staff a busing service up Little Cottonwood Canyon. I am pretty sure if they raised the hourly pay to be the very best in the entire nation we would get a hoard of applicants</p> <p>Here is some simple math. According to Google the average trucker annual compensation is \$46,459 in Utah and \$53,594 Nationwide (Utah is about 15% lower than the National Average). The same Google search reveals that the top 3% of Nationwide truck driver earn \$76,529 per year. If we had 4 drivers that would be sufficient for 15 minute service, but let's double that number to 8 drivers for each hour of service. And instead of 8 hours of coverage let us provide 10 hours of coverage every day of the year, even though the ski season bus service from December 11 to the end of April is only 140 days. By my math this is a total of \$765,290 per year. Now I am pretty sure if the Utah Department of Transportation provided an annual salary that is in the top 3% of the National average driver salary and we guaranteed the drivers they could not be laid off for the next 30 years, we would be flooded with driver applicants.</p> <p>What would this cost compared to a Gondola? The current estimate (which I am pretty sure is WAY low because of inflation) is \$550m dollars. The current 30 year Muni bond rate is 3.95%, so the annual cost of servicing the debt needed to fund the Gondola is \$19.75m. In other words hiring and paying drivers to service LCC canyon on a year round basis at an average service interval of 7.5 minutes (way more than is needed) is more than 25 times cheaper than the Gondola (\$19.75m divided by \$765,290)</p> <p>As my son, Jake, said - What the H E double L is wrong with Utah?</p>
33878	Del Draper	<p>Del Draper -- -- -- October 14, 2022</p> <p>Utah Department of Transportation, Et. Al. Re: Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS Comments on Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS Identity of Commenter I am 71 years old and have had a family cabin at Alta since 1961. Over the decades I have driven up and down the canyon literally thousands of times and I am very familiar with traffic patterns in the Canyon. I am an avid skier and ski all Utah resorts. I both use the bus and drive my own car when I go skiing. General Comments on the Gondola option What a bad choice. What an expensive boondoggle. This is a monumental error similar to the pumps to drain the Great Salt Lake. Just like those pumps, there are many factors that suggest the Gondola will not work and is not sustainable. These include: 1) If you have to take a bus to get to the bas of the Gondola, it would be much faster to stay on a bus that was going up the canyon. Other than taking the Gondola one time as a novelty most skiers will not use it. 2) It is unclear how much it will cost to take the Gondola. If it is cheaper to drive up and park at the resorts, or to take the bus to the resort, then people will not use the Gondola. 3) The Gondola is not flexible. One huge investment that can not be redeployed in the way the busses could. The Gondola is also terrible inequitable 1) It is ridiculous to spend \$500 million of public money to benefit two privately</p>

		<p>owned resorts a few days of the year. If the Gondola is really a viable solution, the resorts should pay for it.</p> <p>2) Only something like 8% of those living along the Wasatch front ski. Why should they be pay to benefit the few who can afford to ski?</p> <p>UDOT should instead move incrementally. What is the impact on Canyon traffic if tolling is introduced? Try it and see before building a Gondola. What is the impact if Wasatch Blvd. is upgraded so that busses can pass cars stuck in a traffic jam? Try it and see before building a Gondola. What is the impact of a Buses First program that restricts cars until after 10:00 AM on weekends and on powder days? Try it and see, and only after that knowledge is gained spend the money on the Gondola.</p> <p>UDOT has defined the scope of the EIS too narrowly. The question is not just how to provide better mobility and reliability. The question must also include examining the impact of the increased mobility on the fragile Canyon environment.</p> <p>Comments on the Busing Alternative:</p> <p>UDOT needs to continue to review incremental steps to solve the problem in the Canyon and needs to continue to consider the busses as an alternative.</p> <p>1) The existing road in Little Cottonwood Canyon is adequate about 99% of the time. The traffic problem is limited to a few winter days - probably about 20 or 30 days a year.</p> <p>Some of these are weather related and some are too many cars all trying to get up the canyon at the same time. The rest of the year traffic flows just fine.</p> <p>2) Even on the very worst days when there is fresh powder at the resorts and it may take over an hour to get from the mouth of Big Cottonwood to the mouth of Little Cottonwood, once you are in the Canyon the traffic flows. It usually picks up speed about one mile up the canyon and approaches the 40-mph speed limit as it passes White Pine.</p> <p>3) There is no need to add a dedicated bus lane in the canyon since the traffic flows in the canyon on the existing road on all days except when there is a weather event.</p> <p>4) The same cannot be said of Wasatch Blvd. It is of critical importance to improve Wasatch Blvd and North Little Cottonwood Canyon Road so that busses can get by, around and ahead of any car traffic jams.</p> <p>5) The proposed improvements on Wasatch Blvd do not do this. "Signal Priority" for busses in not adequate. If not a dedicated lane, then some system is needed with traffic controls that closes one lane to all cars and dedicates it to busses on these critical days.</p> <p>6) Without adequate improvements on Wasatch Blvd the estimated travel times from the Gravel Pit Hub to the resorts in the EIS are meaningless. Busses will be caught in traffic.</p> <p>7) Conversely, travel time in the Canyon for busses without a dedicated lane only adds a few minutes to travel time over the alternative of having a dedicated bus lane.</p> <p>8) People will ride the bus if it is efficient and reliable and cost effective compared to the other choices. The bus is only efficient and reliable if it can pass the traffic jams on Wasatch.</p> <p>9) Tolling in the canyon and charging for parking can make the bus cost effective</p>
--	--	---

		<p>compared to driving.</p> <p>10) A personal anecdote: I ride the bus frequently to Solitude. I love how it delivers me right to the lifts, and I don't have to pay to park, nor do I have to walk a mile from the road if the parking lot is full. These same advantages that make the bus appealing can be made to apply to Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>Comparing the Enhanced Bus Service ("EBS") to the Gondola Alternative: 1) Enhanced Bus Service is far less expensive. Since a dedicated bus lane is not needed in the Canyon, the cost of Enhanced Bus Service is not just \$51 million less than the Gondola, it is \$206 million less. (Substitute the \$355 capital cost for EBS without a dedicated lane in the Canyon for the \$510 capital cost for EBS with the dedicated lane, and add the savings to the \$51 million saving of EBS compared to the Gondola).</p> <p>2) Comparing EBS with a dedicated lane to the gondola is not only a false equivalency with respect to cost, but also a false equivalency with respect to environmental impact. The impact of the Gondola does not look so bad compared to the impact of EBS when the road needs to be widened. When it is acknowledged that EBS can work without a dedicated lane, the true additional adverse impacts of the Gondola are easier to recognize.</p> <p>3) Busses are scalable and flexible. As the dynamics of the ski business change, or if it dries up, changes can be made in bus schedules, or they can be put to other uses. Not so the Gondola. Rather than focusing on a solution that only addresses the present, UDOT should pursue flexible solutions that can adapt to changes in future demands and uses. By nature of its design the tram alternative will bring less flexibility in its use than an enhanced bus service. As the alignment will be more rigid, it will not provide easy opportunities to scale up or down and will have very exclusive infrastructure that can't be easily relocated to other areas with shifting demand. An improved bus system will allow for greater flexibility along the corridor, with express service, easy changes in service frequency and easy adaptation to other corridors when needed.</p> <p>4) If it is necessary to take the bus to access the Gondola, why not save time and stay on the bus and ride it up the canyon.</p> <p>5) While the Gondola adds a small amount of reliability on a few winter days, this additional reliability is simply is not worth the cost.</p> <p>Respectfully Submitted,</p> <p>Del Draper</p>
33892	Evan Tobin	<p>I am extremely disappointed in the Final EIS as released on August 31, 2022. I made several submissions during the public comment period but some questions were ignored or not answered completely. One comment was completely ignored because it was submitted during the extended comment, it looked like most comments during the extension were ignored. The extension was publicity only, totally useless.</p> <p>While comments from entities such as Save our Canyons, the Town of Alta, Cottonwood Heights and others were specifically named, comments from individuals like myself were answered in broad generalities or not at all. Some of my comments were addressed and clumped in with the comments of others. Topics like modern solutions being proposed by companies like "The Boring Company", such as tunneling were dismissed outright. Other comments I made regarding running busses later in the day to reduce the traffic at the busiest times</p>

		<p>were never even addressed. They commented that busses might run till 7pm for the gondola, but never addressed that I suggested busses should run till 10 or 11 at night so people shouldn't be pressured to rush down the canyon. Apres Ski is something that people like and want, but the current bus schedule stops at 6pm, it's part of the problem! I'm not just talking about drinking in bars, there are after ski programs run by both Alta Community Enrichment(the Alta Arts Council) and Snowbird, like films, lectures, workshops, classes and more that people can't attend if they use the busses with the current schedules. People could stay up canyon and have dinner before heading down if busses ran later. Park City's free busses don't stop at 6pm, they have a real transportation system!</p> <p>I have read the huge volume of pages of response to comments in the EIS and I am appalled by how dismissive UDOT was of important issues and responded only with "outside the scope" or "not under the control of UDOT"; yet UDOT made broad statements over issues which they clearly do not have control over and have now further shown how biased and self serving this EIS document is.</p> <p>UDOT clearly states they don't even know who would run or manage the gondola after they build this monstrosity for almost a billion dollars! They claim they will have contractual control, yet they also make claims the busses will run every 5 minutes between the mobility hubs and the gondola. This is not under their control as made painfully clear by the fact that they said the "phased implementation" would include more frequent busses and UTA has just announced cancellation of major LCC bus routes and cutting the frequency of the remaining routes in half, not increasing them as UDOT claimed. This entire EIS is a sham. People were finally utilizing busses with the moderately enhanced schedules last year and it really helped traffic along with the parking reservation systems at the resorts. Now with UTA cutting service, we will take 2 steps backward.</p> <p>UDOT pointed out in the comments that a distributed shuttle system proposed by commenters was a valid alternative but wouldn't work because it required too many drivers. Again, they were overstepping their bounds here (when it served them), but the fact they validated the alternative, it should clearly be evaluated using modern technology. Fully autonomous electronic busses, which are already in use elsewhere, were not even considered as an alternative. This project is supposed to address future concerns, yet it refuses to evaluate the newest technologies. UTA's current acknowledgement that they don't have enough bus drivers should be motivation to engage new technologies. Autonomous Electric busses are here and are the way of the future: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/europe-first-autonomous-electric-buses-spain/ https://singularityhub.com/2022/04/29/the-uks-first-autonomous-passenger-bus-started-road-tests-this-week/ https://www.sustainable-bus.com/its/autonomous-bus-public-transport-driverless/</p> <p>Modern solutions are the way to go and AEV's should eventually travel in underground tunnels totally free of the current problems of avalanche paths, air quality/inversion issues fueled by gas powered vehicles, bad drivers and the unknowns of traffic in Little Cottonwood Canyon. There is no reason that UTA shouldn't start investing in a fleet of autonomous electric busses and/or vans for the entire valley. UTA's recent announcement about cutting service to the Ski Bus routes states that they do not have enough drivers. It really is fairly obvious that autonomous transit needs to be started.</p> <p>Both UDOT and UTA are oblivious of the fact that traffic in Little Cottonwood</p>
--	--	---

		<p>Canyon is not limited to winter storm days. Just this weekend traffic coming down from Snowbird took over 2 hours just to come down the canyon from Snowbird on a beautiful fall day, with no snow or bad weather, just lots of vehicles. Why does UDOT not know about this? It obviously casts doubts on their traffic studies! The fact that UTA doesn't run bus service during the Summer or during Snowbird's Octoberfest shows how out of touch both UDOT and UTA are. Using an AEV fleet is not even an option addressed in the EIS! This whole project needs a do over! Start again. Actually read and utilize the 14,000 comments that the public took the time to write, they include some great ideas(which UDOT dismisses as "outside of scope".</p> <p>The phased approach is definitely the way to go, but the gondola should not be the ultimate goal. A modern 21st century public transportation system should be the ultimate goal. Tunnels built by The Boring Company are currently open and operating in Las Vegas. They're still waiting on approvals to allow them to operate AEV's (autonomous electronic vehicles), but even with restrictions, further development has already been contracted to expand the current 3 station system to 29 miles and 51 stations https://www.boringcompany.com/vegas-loop . The entire cost is being paid for by The Boring Company with payback to The Boring Company to only occur after completion through operating revenue. Similar contracts have also been signed in Ft. Lauderdale, FL https://jacketmediaco.com/boring-company-gets-approval-to-begin-operations-in-florida/ and proposals in Texas are nearing contract https://www.masstransitmag.com/alt-mobility/news/21281862/tx-elon-musks-boring-co-may-pour-millions-more-into-san-antonio-airport-tunnel-project . This technology is cutting edge and needs to be considered to solve our problem. Cost projections for tunnels are at only 10 million dollars per mile. Yes, the Vegas loop cost twice that, but they were on the bleeding edge. Let Elon Musk build us the transportation we need out of his pocket, not ours!</p> <p>This sounds like a perfect plan for Utah. Let's save ourselves, the taxpayers, the ~\$ billion (or more likely 1 Billion dollars) that UDOT is proposing! It should be a phased implementation, bare minimum the initial tunnel should start at the 9400 S 2000 East UTA Park & Ride (which will hopefully soon have a large parking structure built for the initial expanded bus service) & a minimum of 12 stops at UTA Park and Ride (2000E), UTA Park & Ride/LDS Church(3142 E), Bell Canyon Trailhead(3450 E), Little Cottonwood Parking Lot(4385 E), Grit Mill Trailhead/Wasatch Resort, Gate Buttruss, Tanner Flats, White Pine Trailhead, Snowbird Creekside, Snowbird Center, Alta Goldminers, Alta Albion Grill. A Gondola that just serves Alta & Snowbird, not all these stops, is just a bad idea.</p> <p>Eventually it should extend from Rio Tinto Stadium or even Daybreak. It is only 15 miles from Rio Tinto stadium to Alta (only 150 million dollars to dig that tunnel). The valley clearly needs East/West public transportation. Obvious choices for the next stations would be Rio Tinto Stadium, Sandy Historic Trax Station(165 E), Quarry Bend(1000 E), Alta View Hospital(1300 E) & the Waterford School(1700 E), all of these locations already have parking. When the tunnel continues to Daybreak, it would obviously have a station at Daybreak Trax line. This is forward thinking with endless future potential.</p> <p>The Tunnel could extend from Alta, through the mountain to Brighton and Park City. That would solve Big Cottonwood's traffic problem as well as hook up to the free Park City bus system! Once this system is successful, it will only be logical to keep building tunnels under I-15, North To Salt Lake City, the Temple, to the Airport under I-80 as well as South to Las Vegas to meet up with the Vegas Loop.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Bring Utah into the 21st Century!</p> <p>Elon Musk thinks big, I would think he will eventually get contracts to go under all the US Interstate System. Once you have a fully underground tunnel system populated with AEV's, the speeds will achieve what Elon originally envisioned and a trip from Salt Lake Airport all the way to Alta could take only 10-15 minutes max, in full white out storm conditions, but totally underground. So much safer than the flying cars in the Jetsons.</p> <p>The Gondola is slow 20th Century technology, we need 21st Century technology, let's not go backwards, let's boldly go forward into the future.</p> <p>Evan Tobin, current resident of Sandy, former resident of Alta, originally from NYC</p>
33898	Sara Mantlik	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>Thank you for compiling the detailed EIS report that clearly lists out the main options and an overall review of how the analysis and impact study was conducted.</p> <p>The main concern with the final EIS proposal is the very narrow focused scope of the project being the evaluation of options being considered to improving the mobility and reliability of transportation on S.R. 210 overall for winter ski traffic. The problem regarding mobility and reliability is now becoming a matter year-round and impacts S.R. 190. Seeking scope expansion to cover recreation users for the 2.1m users as listed in section 1.1.2.1 for S.R. 210 and the additional users for S.R. 190</p> <p>My first suggestion is to expand the Scope of purpose statement to include improving the mobility and reliability of transportation in S.R. 210 during year round peak periods.</p> <p>As an avid snowboarder, hiker and mountain biker, I want to see a long-term solution that also addresses areas I use in the canyon such as the red pine trailhead and all throughout big cottonwood canyon (S.R. 190).</p> <p>When considering the current scope of the Final EIS statement - My recommendation is enhanced bus service without road expansion in S.R. 210 is the best solution moving forward as it is a scalable solution that minimizes permanent environmental impact in S.R. 210. Per page 2-142 of the Final EIS the cost of phase implementation is \$110 Million with a \$7 million operating budget. This solution can be implemented without permanently changing the landscape. This solution has a 54 minute proposed transit concept which is one minute shorter than the Gondola B alternative as recommended by UDOT.</p> <p>Per page 2-89 Final EIS statement</p> <p>The gondola would not operate if artillery is being used for avalanche mitigation since the artillery shells would pass over the gondola towers and cable (up to six times per year with snow sheds in place). As soon as the avalanche mitigation using artillery is completed, the gondola would begin to operate even if S.R. 210 is closed to remove snow from the avalanche mitigation. Some of the gondola towers and parts of the alignment would be within an area where there might be artillery shell fragments. The gondola cabins would not be on the cable within the fragmentation zone when artillery is being used (gondola cabins can be stored at the nearest station). After avalanche mitigation using artillery is completed, the cables would be inspected by cameras and magnetic imaging devices, and the towers would be inspected by video, to ensure that no damage has occurred. To reduce the need for avalanche mitigation using artillery, snow sheds have been included with Gondola Alternative A (see Section 2.6.4.4, Avalanche Mitigation Alternatives). (This applies for Gondola B) Snow sheds could reduce the need for avalanche mitigation using artillery by 80%</p>

		<p>This demonstrates that the Gondola B alternative does not solve the problem of moving people during avalanche mitigation and if the cables were determined that they needed repair this could potentially shut down the gondola for the season. It is fiscally irresponsible for UDOT to recommend moving forward with a \$550 Million dollar construction project that will still require the \$110 Million cost of the enhanced bussing to bridge the time gap. That brings the total of the Gondola system to a baseline of \$650 Million not adjusting for price changes between 2020 and 2025 or later when the construction would begin.</p> <p>The enhanced bus system can be rolled out in smaller phases and tested/proven method while it is initiated. Per UDOT statements they acknowledge that the current SKI bus system frequently reaches max capacity and there is an issue with lack of parking based on current infrastructure. During Free Fare February 2022. Page 7 of the UTA_ Free Fare February 2022 final release statement shows an increase of 14% for weekly riders. People will take the bus when you make it convenient and affordable.</p> <p>The costs analysis provided in the FEIS statement has many ambiguous statements that demonstrate that the cost for the Gondola is a rough estimate and that if any design and construction changes are required that UDOT might need to re-evaluate the Environmental analysis - 2.6.4.1.6</p> <p>This would include several large construction projects that have highly variable costs and have seen a 30% minimum increase since the EIS baseline cost set in 2020.</p> <p>We seek sensible solutions that look at a holistic view of the canyons and not a fiscally irresponsible band-aid that is funded by the tax payers. The canyons need to be preserved for generations to come and as a community we will work together to alter our habits for a sustainable future.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, Sara Mantlik</p>
33971	David R. Penelope L. Smith	<p>Regarding UDOT's Final EIS for Little Cottonwood Canyon and the selection of the Gondola B as the preferred alternative, we have the following comments.</p> <p>First, UDOT is to be commended for:</p> <p>"Recognizing that safety, mobility and reliability are issues on S.R. 210 today, and that it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B, UDOT is proposing a phased implementation plan starting with components of the Enhanced Bus Service."</p> <p>While this realization and the phased implementation are clearly steps in the right direction, UDOT has still not taken any action with respect to what should have been the starting point for any planning effort for an improved transportation system for Little Cottonwood Canyon (and as UDOT now admits, a transportation system for Big Cottonwood) as changes to Little Cottonwood will inevitably impact Big Cottonwood Canyon. UDOT needs to start with a comprehensive visitor capacity and management plan. Any responsible plan needs to define what the environmentally sustainable carrying capacity of the canyon(s) is and how any proposed actions will impact this capacity. This should be the baseline starting point for the planning process. That we are now over four years into the EIS and UDOT still has no meaningful idea of what the carrying capacity is makes any of their proposals suspect!</p> <p>UDOT phase-in plan states:</p> <p>"The proposed phasing would include increased and improved bus service as described in the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative (with no canyon roadway widening), tolling or restrictions on single occupancy vehicles, and the construction of mobility hubs. UDOT would also proceed with widening and other improvements to Wasatch Boulevard, constructing snow sheds, and implementing trailhead and roadside parking improvements, as funding allows."</p> <p>UDOT fails to include two additional things which can be done immediately and at minimal cost. These are active enforcement of the traction law to insure that</p>

		<p>private vehicles have adequate snow tires and the reduced private vehicle traffic that is already occurring due to Alta's requirement for weekend parking reservations and Snowbird's charging for parking.</p> <p>UDOT's recent adoption of this phased approach is not only realistic, but also gives UDOT the option of modifying the \$550 million gondola (it is worth keeping in mind that the new prison which had an initial budget of \$1.8 million had an actual cost of over \$4 million), if they find that the above identified incremental changes result in significant traffic reductions. Perhaps UDOT's traffic reduction goals could be accomplished without the monumental expense and major view-shed impacts of some 20 towers each 200 ft. tall!</p> <p>It is worth noting that UDOT has no meaningful data regarding the fare for the gondola. In Chapter 32.2.4 of the final EIS, they state that "the cost of transit [gondola] will be determined after an alternative is selected and more detailed information is available, and adjustments might be made based on experience and otherwise as appropriate." How UDOT can make realistic forecasts on the potential ridership of the gondola without any idea of how much it would cost to ride is baffling at the very least.</p> <p>UDOT does provide a clue to their pricing philosophy however: "the cost of transit fare [gondola] would be substantially below the cost of the toll to encourage the shift from personal vehicles to transit."</p> <p>Apparently this statement was not revised after UDOT decided to adopt the phased-in approach. We now are informed that "tolling" will be part of phase one, yet UDOT will only be able to set the toll once they know the fare for the gondola? This is at best a circular argument and indicates that the gondola fare will only be attractive if they set it "substantially below the toll for private vehicles".</p> <p>So rather than set the vehicle toll based on the cost of maintaining the road and parking lots, UDOT will set the toll to make the gondola fare attractive. So much for the claim that the gondola will be a scenic attraction in its own right! When one realizes that riding the gondola will take 55 min. as compared to 38 min. in a private vehicle (44.7% longer), it will clearly have to be less expensive than the toll for driving to get skiers to use it.</p> <p>The gondola (as proposed by UDOT):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will only run during the ski season 2. Will only stop at Snowbird and Alta (and only have one stop at each ski area) 3. Will benefit only two private businesses and their customers 4. Will cost at least \$550 million 5. Will adversely impact the view-shed for all canyon users 6. Is opposed by 80% of Utahans (according to a Deseret News poll)
33976	Jane Hudson	<p>I am wholeheartedly against the Gondola proposal.</p> <p>I live in Millcreek, and recreate in the Wasatch Mountains almost every day (year round). I love the Wasatch and feel that we all need to work hard to preserve its beauty.,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>The current traffic problem only happens less than <15 days a year. Throughout the EIS, the transportation problems are projected to get worse with population growth. Sections 1.3, 1.4.1.2, and 1.4.2.2 (just to name a few) discuss this growth and the related problems. ,Ä®,Ä®The gondola is not only an eye sore, but will cause major impacts to the canyon (i.e. destroying world class bouldering areas and various ecosystems). We need to put real effort into trying to expand the bus system or try another option like tolling. The gondola parking lot will be almost a mile from the gondola station, it won't be free to ride, it's slower than driving and is less convenient (especially for groups and families). People will not use it.</p> <p>It only serves a portion of canyon users, only those going to resorts and the</p>

		<p>resorts themselves. There is no disincentive to drive so people will continue to do so.,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>I find it extraordinarily irresponsible to ignore the obvious need to examine the level of visitation that this fragile resource can handle without damage. The EIS simply waves off this point in S.12 by saying "The Forest Service acknowledges that, in the future, management might be needed to limit resource impacts from user visitation in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Specific visitor capacities are not being considered by the USDA Forest Service at this time.</p> <p>",Ä®,Ä®If we weigh the growth impacts in this equation so heavily that we are willing to spend \$600M to \$1B of taxpayer money for a "future" problem (right now it's <15 days a year) ... how can we not ask the Forest Service to "consider visitor capacities?" It is negligent and irresponsible not to do so. We cannot simply blame the Forest Service and wave this away as a "noted" but "ignored" concern!,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>I am adamantly opposed to this proposed alternative and demand that all other options that be tried and exhausted FIRST before building a \$600M gondola that will destroy the canyon.,Ä®,Ä®It's too expensive. It's too invasive. It will likely encourage rather than discourage car traffic. And ... it won't solve the powder-day traffic problem, there will just be lines of cars waiting to enter the rapidly-filled gondola parking lot. There will be no difference to the users of 9400 S and Wasatch Blvd (and surrounding neighborhoods) on those days.</p> <p>This also does not help the traffic congestion is any other canyon, namely Big Cottonwood Canyon. I implore you to give bussing a real shot and make an effort to improve the bus system. That is a scalable and more sustainable option that has not been given a real shot. ,Ä®,Ä®</p> <p>The gondola is not the right answer.</p> <p>There are many common-sense approaches that could and should be implemented.</p>
33980	Samuel Nichols	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As a member of the Cottonwood Heights community, a homeowner, and tax-paying citizen I stand firmly against the proposition of a gondola to service Little Cottonwood canyon.</p> <p>As someone who has enjoyed this special space all my life through skiing, climbing, hiking, and mountain biking the proposition of a gondola has an overwhelmingly negative impact on these activities and more. As a climber who finds this canyon to be a reprieve and would classify the walls as world-class climbing, a gondola would destroy the escape and serenity this space offers to climbers. This is not only a visual pain being proposed but a risk to climbers, you cannot have distractions while you are engaged in this albeit risky, but beautiful activity. Onlookers from gondola cars could shout and distract climbers risking their lives. The proposed towers would be far too close to the climber's trails and walls for them to be deemed safe to climb. Additionally, the noise pollution this project would create will be detrimental to all recreation, residents, and wildlife within the canyon. The privacy and seclusion of homeowners within the canyon and recreation should be considered. A gondola destroys all privacy.</p> <p>Increasing the footprint of humans in this canyon from the ground and above in the form of gondola towers and stations will destroy an incredibly unique</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>ecosystem that has taken thousands of years to develop. In the last decade traffic through this canyon has increased greatly. While this is a sign of people showing love for the great outdoors and this unique landscape, a gondola will exacerbate the traffic of people into this canyon.</p> <p>The community of Cottonwood Heights will be bearing a significant financial load if the gondola is approved, all in the name of shuttling people to the ski resorts that are increasing their prices year after year. The gondola may reduce vehicular traffic on roadways but the ski resorts stand to profit from this at an alarming level with no apparent skin in the game financially. This is not okay, if the resorts cannot manage the current crowds of visitors to their resorts in a meaningful manner, what makes us think they can handle more?</p> <p>There are thousands of Cottonwood Heights citizens standing against a gondola, including our community leaders as stated in the city paper for October 2022. These leaders are elected by the people for the people. Listen to our leaders' stances as they represent the citizens of our community! If we destroy this landscape we will be unable to recover it. This is a place that should be shared with generations beyond those alive today. A gondola and greed stand to destroy this. We cannot allow this!</p> <p>While a solution to the ever-increasing traffic of Little Cottonwood canyon is not easy, we must find innovative ways to solve this problem. I am a first supporter of roadway reinforcement and expansion. Covered roadways through sections of the canyon will reduce snow removal requirements - increasing safety and opening the canyon easier. Additionally, a carpool lane for those who travel wisely can reduce cars in the canyon and speed up travel. Yes, this would require expanding the existing roadway, but this cost, environmental impact, and impact on activities travelers enjoy in the canyon are far less than a gondola without sacrificing the communities trust in government. Another small solution would be to certify vehicles before peak traffic season as compliant with the winter travel requirements - 4x4, winter tires, etc. - and install an RFID gate for those travelers. This would limit the need for local law enforcement to check cars daily, regulate the flow of traffic and keep people safer on this roadway.</p> <p>I can only hope that this comment is taken into consideration and that we do not allow money and greed to corrupt our government at a local level. This has been going on in Washington for far too long and we cannot let it spread into our community. A gondola IS NOT the solution, we must find better alternatives that support the citizens of the community, the unique ecological spaces of the canyon, and those who choose to recreate within it. Little Cottonwood canyon is truly a special place and a gondola would destroy this.</p> <p>Once again, I and the community of Cottonwood Heights stand resolutely against a gondola being built in Little Cottonwood canyon. Please head our voices, elected officials comments, and community needs.</p> <p>Sincerely, Samuel Nichols</p>
34055	David Andrenyak	<p>October 15, 2022</p> <p>Utah Department of Transportation Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft Transportation Alternatives Environmental Impact Statement, September 2022</p> <p>This letter is in response for comments on the Final Environmental Impact</p>

		<p>Statement (DEIS) for Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) Road and Wasatch Boulevard. I am David Andrenyak and I am a resident of Salt Lake City, Utah for over 30 years. I have been an active hiker, nordic skier, snowshoer, and volunteer in the Central Wasatch Mountains. I respect the beauty of the Central Wasatch and hope that its natural character can be maintained. I recognize the importance of LCC and Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC) as sources for drinking water used in the Salt Lake Valley. The water quality of LCC and BCC needs to be preserved. I also note increased number of recreation visitors to the Central Wasatch and the need to reduce traffic congestion at corridors such as the Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) Road.</p> <p>I oppose the construction and operation of a gondola system as proposed in the Gondola alternative B for the Final Environmental Impact State (September, 2022). A gondola would ruin the beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon and spoil the experience for LLC visitors. There are many visitors to LCC that seek a natural and primitive outdoor experience. These visitors would be appalled by sights of tall towers, extensive cables, and gondola cars. The gondola system will impact experiences at LCC rock climbing areas and the Tanners Flat campground.</p> <p>Yes, I understand that the main concern of the LCC EIS is to improve mobility and reliability to the LCC ski resorts during peak hours in the winter snow season (LCC DEIS 2.6.2). However, focusing on winter travel improvements to Alta and Snowbird does not address the overall vehicle traffic problems in LCC. Having a mass transit system that only serves one stop at Snowbird and one stop at Alta would not reduce vehicle congestion in LCC. Mass transit solutions should include stops at the White Pine-Red Pine trailhead, Lisa Falls trailhead, Little Cottonwood Trail, and Grizzly Gulch trailheads. Yes, I am smart enough to realize that it would be too expensive and not practical to have gondola stops at trailheads that I listed. That is another reason for not supporting a gondola system in LCC. Also, the proposed gondola system will have only one stop at Snowbird and one stop at Alta. Some resort visitors may not choose to use the gondola because the gondola stop is not near to where they prefer to ski or visit. For example, visitors that want to ski from the Sunnyside lift at Alta would choose not to use the Gondola because the proposed Gondola stop is near the Alta Lodge area and not near the Sunnyside lift. Another example is Snowbird Oktoberfest visitors choose not to use the Gondola because the proposed gondola stop is at By Pass road and not near Snowbird plaza. The Final EIS points out that gondola travel will be safer and more reliable with respect to avalanche and winter weather hazards. Please keep in mind that gondola travel may not be safe during high wind conditions and winter electrical storms (Last season, ski lifts at Solitude had to close at least two times because of "thunder snow").</p> <p>The Final EIS preferred alternative has proposed a phased implementation plan starting with components of the Enhanced Bus Service. I do support some of this plan. I support increased bus service in LCC without roadway expansion. The increased bus service should be all year round. I support tolling for private vehicle in LCC. I support plans that restrict private vehicle usage in LCC. Throughout the Mountain Accord process and this LCC EIS process, I have consistently argued that the transportation plans for the Central Wasatch should include increased bus service and restriction of private motor vehicle use. I continue support those two actions. I disagree with the EIS conclusion that visitors will not use the bus in the summer. If private vehicle use in LCC and the other Central Wasatch transportation corridors is restricted, visitors will have to take the bus.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the high cost of the gondola system. The well</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>over 300 million dollar cost to construct the gondola system is very high for something that will ruin the beauty of LCC and probably not solve the traffic congestion in LCC. That money would be better spent to improve mass transit throughout the Salt Lake valley as well as bus/shuttle service in Millcreek and Big Cottonwood Canyons.</p> <p>Thank you for taking on this challenge. Thank you for considering my comments.</p> <p>Respectfully</p> <p>David M. Andrenyak Salt Lake City, Utah</p>
34060	Dolly Garlo	<p>I am writing, yet again, to oppose the construction of a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon, for the following reasons:</p> <p>1. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and process were flawed.</p> <p>a. The Little Cottonwood Canyon gondola project is a boondoggle for private interests. No taxpayer money should be spent on this. It is designed to connect a private commercial venture (LaCaille development) to other private commercial venues (Snowbird and Alta Ski Resorts, primarily, but including the involvement of Dopplemeyer the gondola company, construction interests, marketing consultants and others...), using public tax dollars to pay for private interest ventures. That alone is highly problematic when a majority of affected taxpayers oppose the project. Polls indicate that 80% of Utahns prefer a solution other than building a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon. (Deseret News, December 9, 2021).</p> <p>b. Additionally, as for the EIS, the boundaries of the study were too narrowly drawn. They did not consider neighboring Big Cottonwood Canyon, the Park City area ski resorts, and many key transportation routes affecting them all. Skier traffic problems are caused by and should be considered for all the resorts: Alta and Snowbird in Little Cottonwood Canyon, AND Brighton and Solitude in Big Cottonwood Canyon, Park City, Deer Valley, and The Canyons in the Park City area. To truly serve the public interest, finding the best solution should be inclusive and holistic, not limited to one canyon and the private interests wishing to build a project there.</p> <p>c. There needs to be a comprehensive transportation strategy that includes the other canyons, not only Little Cottonwood Canyon. Big Cottonwood Canyon at peak times often surpasses the congestion in Little Cottonwood Canyon. A successful traffic mitigation strategy in one canyon will just push traffic into the neighboring canyon, and will not alleviate impacts on the protected watershed. Additionally, the decision on whether or not to connect Little and Big Cottonwood canyons to the Wasatch Back needs to be made before the interests in any single canyon push their own transportation plan. A piecemeal approach would not only be ineffective for the short-term, it would make long-term comprehensive solutions more difficult to accomplish. THAT should be more of a priority in a skier transportation plan for all resorts, not the private interests of a few in a historically important and environmentally fragile, single canyon.</p> <p>d. Speaking of historical significance, the Forest Service's enabling statute requires it to protect, preserve, and enhance the history of Little Cottonwood Canyon, but the draft EIS fails to acknowledge this history as even being relevant. Honoring that history in LCC would not include the construction of a gondola. A single gondola project in one canyon fails to address the overall environmental impact of the industries involved in interconnected areas of the fragile Wasatch</p>

		<p>Front and Back.</p> <p>e. All stakeholders have not been included in the process. It has been largely driven by private interests, UDOT and the Utah Legislature. Citizens in West Valley and South Jordan who will be asked to foot the bill for it are largely unaware of this project and its fiscal magnitude.</p> <p>f. UDOT has failed to do the modeling necessary to verify that the gondola system will actually improve the skier congestion problem. Today most people travel straight from their garage to the resorts in the comfort of their private cars. The gondola is a very complex system consisting of a series of converging and dependent process steps with many potentially confounding variables. More thoughtful and inclusive study is necessary to address potential bottlenecks, delays, and long lines that compound through the system, and which can make the skier experience longer and more miserable than imagined. This was not effectively considered in UDOT's focus in addressing the traffic issue, and should look at the challenges of increased use of all the Wasatch canyons and ski resorts comprehensively.</p> <p>g. UDOT has not applied the sophisticated modeling tools readily available for such complex systems. The draft EIS just regurgitates "data" and "conclusions" about the gondola's efficiency from financially interested parties promising that a gondola car will always be available when in truth there will be reliability issues, unexpected or unplanned mechanical breakdowns of the gondola. If one bus breaks down, it does not cause a failure of the entire system. If anything breaks on any one of the gondola towers or drive motors, the entire gondola stops until repairs are made. These costs must also be identified and measured.</p> <p>2. The gondola project is fiscally irresponsible with \$600M of initial capital being used for the benefit primarily of private ski resorts and a private real estate developer.</p> <p>a. The federal and state - that is, PUBLIC - funds that would be spent building the gondola could be used to fund myriad other public projects that would benefit all Utahns taxpayers, including other already deferred transportation infrastructure needs, sewer and water projects, and seismic infrastructure upgrades (schools). Thus, this is an irresponsible use of taxpayer money.</p> <p>b. Utahns would have to foot the bill through ongoing subsidies for perpetual operating losses. The gondola cannot cover its operating expenses based on ridership focused on weekend use during the ski season. The gondola would have to run at all times, even if ridership is low which creates a carbon as well as fiscal deficit. The inflexibility of a gondola solution is a major detraction. Once it is built, the impacts are permanent. Other solutions provide more flexibility and less risk.</p> <p>c. Maintenance costs for ongoing use have not been adequately considered and will likely require taxpayers to foot the bill.</p> <p>3. The gondola would not solve the traffic problem on peak days. On the 15-20 days a year when Snowbird and Alta have ski rush hour traffic, approximately 8,000 people move up the canyon from 7:30-9:30 am. At maximum capacity, the gondola could move 1,000/hour, which means from 7:30-9:30 they could move only 2,000 people. It is highly inconvenient for those who would use it, having to part at the gondola base - or elsewhere when those 1,500 - 1,800 parking places</p>
--	--	---

		<p>are filled adding another bus ride to the gondola, before an additional 30 minute trip to the ski resort. People will have to sit in traffic to park and wait for busses to even use the gondola especially at peak times, so there is no real flow of traffic and passengers.</p> <p>4. Use of public transportation - that is, bus service - has not been maximized.</p> <p>a. Currently, on peak days skier vehicles drive up the canyon with an average of 1.9 passengers/car. More people would use buses, if it were more convenient to do so, such as if the ski resorts provided more/better locker storage for the use of skiers who otherwise prefer to secure their gear and after ski boots, etc. in their private vehicles. This is especially true for families.</p> <p>b. Additionally, on non-peak days, people will not use the gondola because cars and buses are easier and more flexible. The gondola cars will run mostly empty for most of the year which would be a failure financially, environmentally, and operationally.</p> <p>5. Environmental degradation. Altering one of Utah's most scenic canyons has a high cost. Twenty-two towers each 25 stories high would take the majesty out of "Little" Cottonwood Canyon. Such a structure in a pristinely beautiful natural canyon is unsightly. In addition to visual impact, the drinking water that comes from Little Cottonwood Canyon will be impacted by gondola construction, and carbon emissions would be higher than other more flexible options since the gondola would have to run continuously. Visual and noise impact will negatively affect both human experience and canyon wildlife. The EIS has not sufficiently addressed the environmental impact of the gondola project.</p>
34083	Seth Simonds	<p>Either proposed solution requires a tolling system to disincent driving and incent the alternative. A toll system is an order of magnitude less expensive, can be implemented quickly, uses existing infrastructure, generates revenue and has to happen regardless. The tolling system should be implemented and it's impacts studied before committing to and outlaying half a billion dollar?</p> <p>Anecdotaly, Alta's paid parking and reservation system effectively solved the parking crisis in upper LCC last year save for the acute issues associated with big storm days (there might just be limits imposed by nature that we as humans have to adapt to-crazy, I know). Across several user groups, we piled 5 to a car to go backcountry skiing or resort skiing because one of us had a parking pass-a certificate with 20 dollars of face value. The minimum age and income in these vehicles were 35 and 75k, piling into a car, over 5 dollars per capita. My Alta friends said the resort was pleasant and they could park again. Snowbird, looked like a zoo; the trailheads looked like zoos, we were able to ski the Emmas and Flagstaff, in 2ft, on weekend, with maybe 50 other people on the entire south side of the canyon on a weekend; Alta got to spin their lifts. Last winter I made the fewest trips to LCC in 15 years because of \$20 and planning; the same as I have driven up Millcreek maybe 5 times in 15 years over five dollars, a tough shed, porta potty and 200k in labor cost: Tolling is not some crazy project and the days it was needed traffic would be stopped up at the mouth anyways. You could have a tough shed, it could be portable. Last season was the most I have carpooled to LCC since college.</p> <p>An argument against the toll booth is that it disproportionately affects the poor. Unfortunately, the poor are already disproportionately impacted...by being poor. Access to LCC is not on their list of concerns so this argument is a classic one of trickling up economic value by funding a wealthy user group, with a poorer tax base. The toll might bind on a marginal user groups, like college kids, but this is not a marginalized community. We are subsidizing wealthy people and users by transferring cost to poorer communities and not bearing the burden of our</p>

		<p>recreation ourselves. Moreover, only a few wealthy user groups benefit: resort skiers at Alta and Snowbird and the resorts. This is why you have seen 15k comments: you are benefiting wealthy people at the expense or cost of other wealthy people: rock climbers, bikers, hikers, back country skiers Wealthy people have time enough to care.</p> <p>The companies have a business model where it behooves them to put as much meat through there sausage factories as possible-the gondola will help their assembly line. They have an obligation to maximize profit, that's fine; but, I think they should pay for the Gondola and we should judge their enthusiasm for the project based on that condition: King Solomon style. My guess is that half a billion dollars of privately funded infrastructure would dampen enthusiasm.</p> <p>Do what's simple, do what's cheap, do what's flexible, take advantage of human behavior. The twilight series was effectively solved over a 5\$ entrance fee, it's not rocket science: people treat things what they worth and if something is free, it gets treated as cheap. We have all the infrastructure we need to solve this problem now and, in the future, when humans are no longer responsible for driving their own cars. That will happen sooner than some big project. Stop gap, until then by taking advantage of market mechanisms. I can guarantee 30% reduction in traffic at \$50 a vehicle. If the goal of all this is to pump more sausage through the factories, then let's call it what it is and assign fair burden to fair benefit. Those towers would be so ugly and sad. A wider road would be sad and ugly. At a certain point nature has limits, when do we content ourselves within those limits?</p>
34096	Richard Mingo	<p>The National Environmental Policy Act was passed in 1969 with near unanimous support in both houses of Congress, across party lines, and was quickly enacted by President Nixon (oh, those were the days!). And Why Not! The Act simply requires Federal Agencies to prepare an Environmental Report that discloses the environmental impacts of projects they are proposing so decision makers can make informed decisions based on of the consequences of their actions. It also requires that the public be informed and provided an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process. Informed decisions, public disclosure and opportunity for the public to participate in the decision-making process - brilliant! Unfortunately, in my opinion, UDOT's FEIS isn't quite what Congress had in mind. The document doesn't adequately disclose the impacts of the project and does not provide the necessary information for decision makers to make informed decisions.</p> <p>- The estimated cost of the project will have increased at rates not seen in over 40 years from the costs presented in the FEIS to what they are more likely to be at the time of construction. The costs estimate for all alternatives should be updated, and not by just an across the board indexing. Decision makers and the public need to consider the opportunity cost of this investment within the context of the entire suite of funding decisions that need to be made by the State Legislature. Any decisions by the State Legislature to spend tax dollars on this project should be done with full knowledge and discourse of what other projects and programs they would be forgoing. Therefore, true cost of the alternatives should be updated to current/projected costs and not just indexed across the board. More accurate cost estimates, will lead to better decisions regarding the allocation of our limited tax dollars and knowledge of the opportunity cost of associated with this project. Informed decisions is of course, the ultimate goal of NEPA.</p> <p>- The Environmental Justice discussion in the FEIS does not adequately disclose the fact that the costs of the project fall disproportionately on low and middle income households. Few low- and middle-income families rarely afford can afford a day of skiing at Snowbird or Alta but they will be paying the lion's share of the project through their tax dollars. The same can be said for those Utah residents who live further distance from LCC and don't often choose to ski at LCC resorts.</p>

		<p>The cost also falls disproportionality and those who simply don't ski or might be physically challenged because of disabilities, age or health. The benefits of this project are enjoyed by a very small minority and typically by those who have more disposable income than most.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Purpose and Need for the project describes a peaking problem that becomes untenable for only a limited number of days per year. The FEIS didn't formulate other alternatives to address the peaking problem or even the degree to which the peak needs to be addressed. For instance, reservation system, lottery, auctions could all help mitigate congestion on peak days. Simply forecasting and publicizing forecasted traffic delays the day prior, might incentive some people to choose other ski destinations. - The Federal Highway Administration's conclusion, and U.S Forest Services apparent concurrence, that the impacts of the Gondola alternative are de minimis on 4f resources are not supported nor convincing. The entire canyon is essentially a 4f resource with picnic areas, campgrounds, rock climbing areas, back country skiing, hiking, biking, fishing, photography, birding, wilderness and solitude to name a few. To argue that the impacts of 22, 200 ft towers and associated infrastructure are de minimis to these other resources and recreational opportunities, or that the impacts could ever be mitigated to be de minimis is inaccurate at best. It certainly does shine a light on UDOT's understanding and appreciation, or lack thereof, of the value of entire suite of recreational opportunities and natural resources afforded by LCC and the bias for downhill skiing. - The impacts to water quality need a more rigorous analysis. The FEIS acknowledges that the LaCaille gondola base and parking structures are on and adjacent to an EPA Superfund Site which has a "a high probability of contamination," of lead and arsenic. Cleaning up a Superfund Site is no simple endeavor, the cost of which needs to be included in the cost estimate and not swept aside as inconsequential. <p>The FEIS leaves the reader wondering why UDOT and the State of Utah would even consider such a costly project, at the expense of so many other needed programs, that serves such a small and narrow segment of public and for only a few days of the year. I suspect the reason is that there is no better investment than one where the financial risks and environmental costs are borne by the tax paying public and the financial rewards are enjoyed by just a few. I have no doubt that if we followed the dollars, those few would have close ties to Utah's political power brokers.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Richard Mingo Millcreek, UT</p> <p>Cc: Mayor Jeff Silvestrini Millcreek, UT</p> <p>Mayor Jenny Wilson Salt Lake County</p> <p>David Whittekiend Forest Supervisor Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest</p> <p>Senator Jani Iwamoto</p>
--	--	---

		<p>Representative Doug Owens</p>
34128	Shandi Kano	<p>Hi, UDOT and the appointers of UDOT,</p> <p>My name is Shandi Kano, a constituent of yours. I live at ----- Sandy, UT, one mile from the mouth of LCC, and I am writing in to ask you to reject the proposed Gondola B as the preferred option to mitigate traffic in LCC.</p> <p>Little Cottonwood is important to me because there was a time when being up that canyon saved my life. I had experienced a nervous breakdown at the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013. I was out east living and working for ESPN and this moment in time forced me into some serious health consequences. Coming back here where I went to school, I found myself more and more drawn into Little. Spending time in that canyon helped my brain heal from trauma, helped my body heal from severe physiological damage and gave hope back to my spirit.</p> <p>Never in my wildest dreams would I ever think I'd be privileged enough to live where I live, to be this close to a place I've loved since the early 2000's. As a runner, a backcountry snowboarder, a lover and appreciator of nature and all it does for us as a society, this is important to me. As a person who endures the winter traffic from my doorstep, I have thought through the process of using the Gondola instead. I thought through what things would be like if actually there was a gondola on those busier days. The truth is, the traffic that stands still just beyond my fence will still be there, however, it will be worse than it already is. Instead of the vehicles trying to get up the canyon, they are vying for one of the limited parking spots at the gondola base (which is right in the middle of a quiet residential neighborhood, which does not feel right). When those spots fill up, the decision is to get back in line to wait to get up canyon, or drive somewhere else to find parking, and then wait for a bus, which will then put you back in traffic to wait for a drop off at the gondola, and then the ride itself, which only serves two, for-profit destinations.</p> <p>According to the following facts from your EIS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed \$600M is coming from the taxpayers of this state. This is not a trivial amount of money that benefits private developers and two ski resorts and resort skiers only, while not benefiting the majority of those who live in this state, yet will pay for this. 2. According to the EIS, the water quality of LCC will be diminished (DEIS 19.2.2.5) The Sandy municipal water district as well as the SLC Dept of public utilities, are both concerned about this as they stated that the your analysis and preparation for the protection of our water is extremely insufficient. Our watershed will be the most vulnerable during construction, which is several years long according to your EIS. Last year, UDOT contracted a company to do work on 215. Concrete ended up in the Millcreek stream. Therefore, UDOT does not have the trust of the public when it comes to the protection of our water sources. Salt Lake Public utilities believes that our water will be impacted and I am disappointed in the response you made to them. 3. Wildlife and ecosystem analysis from the EIS feels very insufficient and vague. We know that impacts to any one species of wildlife or fauna has a cascading effect on more wildlife and more fauna. Elementary science class teaches us that the decline of an animal like, say, a scavenger like a vulture, can create a surge in diseases, like Rabies, amongst smaller mammals. Which of course, impacts the larger mammals who eat the smaller guys. Which of course, we can start to see increases in wildlife and human interactions as the wildlife comes to urban areas looking for food. The cascading effect is very real, the decline of one species will always lead to a decline elsewhere. I am disappointed in your analysis here as it

		<p>is insufficient and vague.</p> <p>4. Table 13.4-7 of the EIS shows that 6,620 acres of forest/woodland will be impacted by the construction of the gondola. It also shows that 2,412 acres of shrubland will be impacted. It also shows that 6,688 acres of bedrock will be impacted by the construction. Again, the decline of each of these resources has a cascading effect the ecosystem overall and our livelihoods. This will impact our water quality, our air quality and the quality of life for the ecosystem and wildlife overall. Less shrubs and greenery means less clean air, and less food for the wildlife. These interactions are far reaching and far exceed the 28 acres that UDOT has claimed to be converted.</p> <p>5. I also have concerns about the impact of the noise on the wildlife. Research shows that where more human noise is added to an ecosystem, the wildlife population declines and or becomes unhealthy and unstable. Again, the cascading effects here.</p> <p>6. The construction of the gondola is worrisome for many reasons. We know that it will take longer than proposed and we know that it will cost more than proposed. Furthermore, this proposed gondola would be the longest in the world. The first of its kind, the build, the maintenance and the finances will far exceed what has been proposed. Again, this is taxpayer funded for something that has not been done before and cannot be trusted or relied upon. In the FEIS, you have a statement that says "If a gondola alternative is selected, UDOT would contract final design and construction of the gondola to a company that specializes in gondola systems. If the gondola system changes, based on the gondola system contractor's final design, UDOT might need to reevaluate the environmental analysis done in the EIS." Effectively, this tells the public that we don't truly know how long this will take, how much it will cost, and what the consequences will be. It seems as though the reason for the vague analysis in many areas of this EIS are due to the fact that the plans are loose and therefore unreliable. Based on your supplier or hitting a rock you cannot get through, we go back to square one and everything changes. Again, the cascading effects here are like wildfire. There is nothing listed on what happens if there is trauma to the lines of the gondola. What if any structure is damaged at all. This is an unacceptable analysis for the public.</p> <p>The goal was to "substantially improve roadway safety and reliability and mobility from Ft. Union to the town of Alta for all users." Based on the facts from your EIS, this is not what will happen with the gondola. White Pine users for example, both cannot take the gondola to White Pine and based on the proposal, cannot park at White Pine because of the removal of on-road parking.</p> <p>I am concerned why the Gondola was chosen as preferred.</p> <p>Alternative options that benefit the canyon, ALL of its users and the resources we rely on. These options also think about the future of this place and those to come who are yet to enjoy it and should be considered as they have proven to be effective as well as far more affordable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expanded bus service with electric busses 2. Incentives to carpool or incentives to take public transit 3. Removing cars from the canyon at all, leaving only an electric train that stops at ALL major access points in the canyon for all users. 4. Reducing traffic on the road by 30% (which is only stated as a goal, not a proven thing in your EIS) but we have seen that paid parking or parking reservations at Alta has reduced users in the canyon. In other words, there are some common sense solutions that are already working. <p>Former public representatives, Senator Wayne Niederhauser and Chris</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>McCandles sold the property where the gondola base is slated to be located but maintained the property that's around it. Our community fears what this means. Particularly, ideas like Yellowstone Clubs, or more places for elite tourists and yet more construction, more destruction to our neighborhoods and ecosystems, our community, and our livelihoods.</p> <p>I fear a proposal of a public-private partnership. I fear that there's a conspiracy by former Senator Wayne Niederhauser and Chris McCandles and Kevin Gates of LaCaille. By law, Pre-determination is prohibited. Which feels like something important to note as it is public knowledge that the majority of the 14,000 comments were against the gondola and that much more affordable, common sense solutions have not been considered.</p> <p>I urge you UDOT, to deny the gondola proposal as it is factually not the solution you have stated we need, nor the solution that the people of this community, this area, this city and this state prefer or want.</p> <p>Finally, in your EIS, the phased approach that included expanded bus services now cannot be implemented due to the bus routes that you have cut up the canyon for the winter. It all seems insidious and pre-determined and does not represent what the public prefers. As you constituent, again, I urge you, please deny this proposed solution as you have clearly shown in the EIS it is not an adequate solution and does not have reliable plans.</p> <p>Shandi Kano --</p>
34154	Patrick Guinn	<p>As a lifetime local and frequent user of Little Cottonwood Canyon I strongly feel that not only should we not be using over half a billion dollars in tax money to build a gondola that would only benefit two private ski resorts, we also should not be destroying the natural beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>On the contrary, we should be doing all that we can to preserve the canyon and make the existing infrastructure as efficient as possible. I understand that additional development will be necessary in one way or another, but as stewards of this canyon I think it is irresponsible to build something as intrusive as a gondola that will require construction well outside of the existing footprint of the road and cause the destruction of existing recreation areas, most notably the world class rock climbing in LCC that people travel from all around the world to participate in.</p> <p>We need to invest in flexible means of increasing volume in the canyon. There are only 5-10 days in the winter where traffic is borderline unbearable (and this is coming from someone who skis LCC 50+ days a season, almost exclusively on the weekends when the traffic is at its peak), otherwise the flow of traffic in the canyon is reasonable for the majority of the season. The gondola only has the capability to help alleviate that traffic on a handful of days a year, pretty much entirely in the winter, yet would be a permanent eyesore year round. Since it only has two stops at Alta and Snowbird it would not help other users of the canyon get to trailheads or climbing areas lower in the canyon, which are used both in the summer as well as the winter for ice climbing and backcountry skiing, and would be more of a novelty outside of the winter months. It hasn't convincingly shown that it will have a significant impact on traffic in the winter months with the volume of people it can move and in most cases it would take significantly longer to ride the gondola than it would to drive. It would take some cars off the road in the winter, but it won't change the existing bottleneck at the base of the canyon, if anything it will just shift it more towards the north fork of the canyon road</p>

		<p>(Wasatch boulevard). The biggest issue with traffic is getting to the mouth of LCC. Once you are past the merge and in the canyon traffic flows smoothly. The gondola won't do anything to help solve the traffic issues caused by the existing travel routes to the mouth of the canyon.</p> <p>Expanded bus service including electric busses that have less of an environmental impact are going to be key for enhancing volume on the existing roads, incentivizing carpooling to keep single passenger vehicles to a minimum, and a toll during the peak use days in the winter season are all flexible solutions that will go a long way toward alleviating the worst traffic issues and days where the pain is most acutely felt. Additionally, there needs to be a better effort to keep vehicles without proper tires off the road on the winter, many of the traffic issues result from crashes and slide offs, which are often caused because cars that are unfit for driving in the snow are allowed on the road on storm days. There also needs to be a stiffer penalty for cars unfit for the road causing traffic issues; if you slide off because your tires aren't fit for the road or you don't have 4 wheel drive/all wheel drive you should face a stiff fine/traffic citation. There needs to be someone checking tires at the mouth of the canyon any day that there is snow on the road. The beautiful part about these solutions is that they minimize permanent damage to a gorgeous and historic canyon here in the Wasatch.</p> <p>Lastly, I don't think there has been enough thought about the fact that our winters have gotten shorter and shorter as an effect of climate change, so it doesn't make sense to build a permanent structure like a gondola that will have diminishing returns in the future as our winters are continually shortened by climate change. The decline of the great salt lake will also play a large role as we will see less and less lake effect snow which will compound the effects of climate change. This gondola is a short-sighted option that will be an irresponsible use of tax payer money as it won't move the needle enough to justify it's enormous cost, both monetarily and environmentally.</p>
34171	Colin Gregersen	<p>I do not support UDOT's decision of Gondola Option B as the preferred alternative for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EIS scope is too narrow, excluding transportation solutions for Big Cottonwood Canyon, and therefore doesn't capture the entirety of environmental impacts and costs of transportation solutions in the Central Wasatch. A transportation solution for BCC is needed. The EIS must consider both canyons to be complete. When ignoring transportation issues in BCC, the EIS sets up a piecemeal approach. A piecemeal approach is not consistent with NEPA as I understand it. If Big Cottonwood were included in the EIS, then the taxpayer would see the true costs and environmental impacts of transportation solutions in the Cottonwood Canyons. An example of serious importance is how a gondola up LCC would impact a traffic solution for BCC. A likely and cost-effective solution would be a gondola from upper LCC to upper BCC, over the ridgeline. The public must be made aware that a decision for transportation solutions in LCC will have significant impacts on the future of BCC transportation. 2. Infrastructure impacts these transportation solutions will have on the canyon need to be considered. The bottom line is this: Will increasing the number of people drive further development in the canyon which would irreversibly and negatively impact the reason it is so popular in the first place? This is a fundamental question. Transportation solutions focused on delivering more people to upper LCC cannot be provided without a thorough understanding of the impacts more people will have on the future of the canyon. Basic questions that have not been addressed are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are there enough buildings, power, water, and waste management to handle the increase in users these transportation solutions would create? b. Are there enough bathrooms?

		<p>c. Will the ski resorts need to expand their resort boundaries to meet the new volumes of users to preserve user experience that was degraded by delivering more people to them?</p> <p>d. Is there enough food and shelter in upper LCC to protect its visitors in predictable weather-related situations that would shut down the gondola?</p> <p>e. Can the town of Alta or Unified Police protect and serve the increases of people who are now enabled to travel there?</p> <p>3. Overcrowding and it's environmental and experiential impacts in upper Little Cottonwood Canyon has not been adequately addressed. I was unable to identify an analysis of the impacts that would result from dramatically increasing the number of people in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Just like the roadway, there is limited space for people in upper Little Cottonwood Canyon. Common sense would dictate there is a limit to the number of people the canyon can support without impacting the environment and the user experience.</p> <p>4. There is no data to support the EIS conclusion that vehicular traffic will be reduced with any of the alternatives; hence the options evaluated in this EIS are incomplete. I do not agree with the conclusion that people will choose to take the gondola over their car. The gondola transportation option is far less convenient than driving in my opinion. As a pragmatic and enthusiastic skier, I can assure you I will not take the gondola if the road is available to me and UDOT's vehicular traffic numbers are to be believed! I don't think I'm alone in this decision making. Common sense indicates that more dramatic action must be taken to reduce vehicular traffic.</p> <p>5. I do not support using \$550M of taxpayer money for a gondola. Less expensive alternatives exist that have been identified in the EIS.</p> <p>6. I do not support a government subsidy for two private businesses. As a taxpayer, I do not want my taxes to be spent on an expensive gondola and its annual operating expenses to subsidize the two private businesses it serves (Alta and Snowbird). If Alta and Snowbird believe the gondola is needed, then they should pay for it. If the Utah tourism industry believes the gondola is needed then they should pay for it.</p> <p>7. Commute times and noise levels are insufficient metrics to inform the public. The maximum number of people capable of being delivered to Alta and Snowbird should be provided clearly and unambiguously for each transportation solution. The skier visitation numbers to be delivered to Alta and Snowbird should be provided so the public can make an informed decision. Gondola capacity appears underestimated and difficult to understand.</p> <p>Thank you, Colin Gregersen Salt Lake City, UT</p>
34266	Brian Vansteen-kiste	<p>submitted Sunday 10-16-22</p> <p>I'm writing to submit my comment AGAINST the construction of a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>I first visited northern Utah, with an emphasis on snowboarding at Snowbird, less than a week after the 2002 Olympics.</p> <p>I returned in 2003 before moving to Midvale in 2004. I have been here ever since. I moved here for the mountains and for snowboarding and have based my life around both.</p> <p>I bought my 18th consecutive season pass to Snowbird last April, functionally giving Snowbird my money and float 6 months ahead of my seeing value from it. I have done this for 18 years.</p> <p>I own my own home and a commercial building, both in Salt Lake County, and I pay substantial property taxes on both.</p>

		<p>I also own and run my own business, further contributing to the local economy.</p> <p>Prior to self employment, I worked for a concessionaire year round at Snowbird from 2004-2014.</p> <p>When I was employed (physically) at Snowbird I travelled up (and down) canyon 4-5 days a week.</p> <p>While working up canyon I enjoyed 100 day snowboard seasons; I currently strive for 60 (snowboard) day seasons.</p> <p>I have 20 years experience driving up the canyon at all times of the year.</p> <p>I share all this to characterize myself, my experience with the canyon, and to hopefully give weight to my comments AGAINST the gondola.</p> <p>Many a local group have protested this gondola project. Take a drive down/up lower 210 and around 9400 s back to Wasatch and you'll see the RESIDENTS most affected unfurling numerous banners and putting up signs AGAINST the terrible gondola idea.</p> <p>Add to their ranks politicians, businesses, user groups, environmental organizations and others and you get a picture of an overwhelming sentiment AGAINST this project.</p> <p>SLC Mayor Erin Mendenhall, County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Sandy Mayor Monica Zoltanski, Midvale Mayor Marcus Stevenson, the Salt Lake County Council, Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, Friends of Alta, The University of Utah's Students for the Wasatch group, Friends of Little Cottonwood Canyon, the Salt Lake Climber's Alliance, Save our Canyons and others have all publicly expressed their OPPOSITION to this terrible idea.</p> <p>I don't see how publicly funded UDOT can ignore us when you have our elected leaders voicing citizen dissent alongside businesses and those sworn to protect our priceless and irreplaceable environmental resources.</p> <p>We do not want your gondola idea.</p> <p>We do not want to buy this gondola for Powdr Corp and Alta Ski Lift Corp.</p> <p>From the most visceral knee jerk place of my opposition, I don't want to see beautiful LCC defiled by the construction of a gondola. Even if it was a solution to traffic, which it is not, I would not want to see a gondola despoil the canyon that drew me across country, away from my friends and family, to build a new life around.</p> <p>Beyond my personal beliefs, logic supports any/all arguments AGAINST this gondola.</p> <p>The problem is car based congestion around the mouth and in the canyon. Building a gondola people have to drive to and park at will only concentrate and further mire the problem around the mouth and on Wasatch.</p> <p>Residents of that area will suffer even more if the gondola project proceeds. In addition to more traffic, the proposed parking structure additions for the Gondola are insufficient and don't address the needs of larger vehicles (think sprinter vans).</p> <p>Udots own studies show the gondola is not a traffic solution and will actually increase traffic and capacity at resorts (which ignoring solutions for all other canyon users). The resorts infrastructures are already over taxed and their functional carrying capacity, and that of the canyon, is not being adequately taken into consideration.</p> <p>Publicly funding a project of this scale to benefit two private entities is a gross</p>
--	--	---

		<p>malfeasance. Doing so at the detriment to the environment and usage is a crime. This gondola will not serve the people, it will only benefit 2 private corporations. The needs of other canyon users are being glazed over while the quality of their experience is being eroded.</p> <p>I do not climb or use the trailheads often, but I empathize with climbers who will lose their recreation access (during and after construction) and for the impact the gondola will have for all canyon users. Camping at Tanner's Flat will forever be changed, for the worse (ruined) by having a gondola hanging, seasonally shuttered, overhead. Multiply this by 1,000x for ALL users, hikers, bikers, campers, climbers, lead peepers, etc., all so 2 private corporations can have their novelty.</p> <p>I characterize the gondola as a novelty because that's what it is. Like a child's quarter machine toy bought existing the grocery store, but on a mammoth scale, the gondola is a novelty desired in the moment, and cast aside once bought. Once it's \$30+ to ride and functionally inaccessible, its usage will stop.</p> <p>The current traffic "crisis," seems overstated. I remember it being much worse years ago when Big Cottonwood Canyon was still sleepy. I perceived a much larger traffic problem up BCC and think LCC is much better than it was just 5+ years back. I think a large contributing factor to this "balancing," of use is/was the former LCC traffic nightmare and people migrating one canyon over out of frustration. Now, both canyons have their road issues, but my experience is that LCC is better now than it was in the past. BCC has different logistical problems, so I think LCC is being targeted for a gondola because it's easier. I also think Powdr and ASL have pushed for it and the SKETCHY developer relationship between local developers has helped. CW Management, Quail Run Development, McCandless and Niederhauser have their own interests in mind, NOT the public's. Snowbird's lack of transparency and shell corp land deals all stink. Snowbird, Alta Ski Lifts, and Udot all had the opportunity to buy the land Jim William's developed across from the tree farm for \$4 million and passed on it, even as local politicians pushed for the acquisition years back. Now the inverse is happening. The timing is because of profit, not because this is a solution.</p> <p>I have seen, from the inside out and from close proximity, the disregard for the environment private business up, and down, canyon can exhibit. The (relative) recent management changes at Alta Ski Lifts and ownership changes at Snowbird are not helping this stewardship problem. Profit is being prioritized over health, customers, and ethos. If Dick Bass' "mind, body, spirit," was once a defining ethos, today's short sighted direction is better characterized as "greed, profit, growth.," Down canyon developers are exacerbating this problem with their greed.</p> <p>To that end, these parasitic corporations are looking for tax payers to fund their next novelty to drive growth. They hope to do this by ATTEMPTING TO trick Utah's citizens to pay for their monstrosity of a gondola. Their misleading advertising tactics are a thin veil to the profit motivations their expenditures are made towards.</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>The tourists this bad idea (gondola) targets will visit the expensive gondola once, check it off their list, and stop using it.</p> <p>Residents and locals will be left with an environmentally damaging, expensive, unfunctional, EXPENSIVE eyesore.</p> <p>I do not trust that the construction of this project can be completed without an environment catastrophe occurring.</p> <p>Look at Snowbird's tram accident for a recent instance of how accidents can happen.</p> <p>The gondola project's scale is many times that of simply hanging a car on an existing hanger.</p> <p>I could go on and on, but I think I've made my point.</p> <p>UDOT needs to listen to the people who fund it and stop this madness.</p> <p>My solution is to leave things the way they are, do/build nothing, and make buses more user friendly.</p> <p>I am not against tolling if technology is used.</p> <p>Another thing UDOT and the 2 businesses could try is actually enforcing the road restrictions and posting Unified, or some other agency, at the bottom to keep vehicles without proper tires/chains out of the canyon on restriction days.</p> <p>This is rarely done.</p> <p>So yeah, NO GONDOLA.</p> <p>Thanks for making it this far if anyone actually reads comments.</p> <p>Brian Vansteenkiste</p>
34314	Quinn Graves	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Quinn Graves and I am a lifelong resident of the Wasatch. I grew up on the Wasatch Back and was introduced to the beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon when I was going to school at the University of Utah. I am a lover of both resort and backcountry skiing, hiking, mountain biking, and trail running. I wholeheartedly believe that building a gondola up Little Cottonwood Canyon will ruin the canyon for present and future generations.</p> <p>First off, we need solutions to the transportation issue NOW, not by 2050. We need a transportation solution that is both scalable and will increase accessibility in LCC. A gondola is neither of these things. The gondola is specifically for already affluent people going to ski at Snowbird and/or Alta. It does not serve many user groups who enjoy LCC such as hikers, climbers, backcountry skiers, bikers, etc. The gondola will continue to exacerbate the already huge issue of lack of access to outdoor spaces by only serving one specific user group. Plus, if roadside parking is not allowed before Snowbird entrance 1, climbers and backcountry skiers will have continued restricted access to popular climbing at the base of the canyon and the White Pine Canyon trailhead.</p> <p>Another important fact to pay attention to is climate change. A review published in the journal Nature in 2021 found that, across the Western United States, snow water equivalent will probably decline by about 25% by 2050 (Siirilia-Woodburn et al. 2021). The skiing industry and the snowpack we all rely on for water in the Western United States will be severely impacted by this decline. How does it possibly make sense to implement a gondola that could be totally obsolete by the turn of the century?</p> <p>Other crucial things to asses in the environmental impact statement are protecting</p>

		<p>the viewshed and watershed in LCC. When I was in college, one of my courses had us volunteer with the Alta Environmental Center. We were told there are many restrictions that buildings and signage must comply with to protect Alta's viewshed. How does a gondola comply with these viewshed rules? A gondola will ruin LCC's stunningly unique viewshed. Who wants to look out at a gondola with towers running up the entirety of the canyon? I know I don't. I also know I don't want the water running out of the mountains into LCC creek to get contaminated by gondola construction. LCC creek provides much of the Salt Lake Valley's water. Since humans are not allowed in streams or lakes in LCC, how could it possibly be okay to have a massive construction project occurring so close to a crucial water source? This seems like an environmental disaster waiting to happen. Gondola construction is destined to pollute this crucial watershed.</p> <p>It is wild to me that UDOT is proposing a transportation "solution," that they don't even have funding to build. \$550 million is an insane amount of money to waste on a "solution," that will only take people to and from ski areas and nowhere else in the canyon. It is very obvious that the gondola "solution," is designed to line the pockets of the higher-ups at Alta, Snowbird, and La Caille because it's essentially a showy amusement park ride implemented to boost tourism from the wealthy. This "solution," doesn't do much to reduce traffic in LCC because cars will still be allowed on the roadway and all of the users who do not ski at ski areas will still have to drive up the canyon.</p> <p>Finally, building a gondola is not a reliable solution to the transportation issues that plague the Cottonwood Canyons. I work at a ski area in Utah and lifts/gondolas are unreliable. The number of times that I've witnessed lifts and gondolas delayed due to weather, wind, and mechanical issues is numerous. I have no faith that the LCC gondola will be immune to these issues.</p> <p>I think the solution to the transportation issues in LCC should use a mix of buses and make SR 210 a toll road. The toll should be based on how many people are in a vehicle; less for more people in one car and more for single-occupant vehicles. This solution is both scalable and immediate. Please, think of user groups other than those who ski at resorts. Think of an actual solution that isn't designed to make already wealthy corporations richer. No gondola in LCC!</p>
34355	Michael Wessler	<p>This canyon has been a cornerstone of my personal and professional life for the past 13 years, and I would hate to see such brash decisions permanently damage such a widely beloved refuge. A gondola is absolutely NOT the appropriate solution for LCC at this time, and likely never will be. In short, a few major issues with the plan are:</p> <p>(1) taxpayer funding of what essentially only benefits private industry, with plans as advertised being incomplete or lacking in transparency,</p> <p>(2) a lack of an honest attempt at roadway improvements or public transportation, including moves that would effectively limit access to public lands for lower-income families,</p> <p>(3) failure to address both summer congestion issues in LCC along with congestion issues in BCC, which are becoming more significant each year, and</p> <p>(4) innumerable other impacts to quality of the experience for those who live in, near, or recreate frequently in the canyons in all seasons.</p> <p>Moving forward with the gondola when existing and relatively affordable options have not been given an honest attempt is wholly irresponsible. For the record,</p>

		<p>proclaiming that public transportation is insufficient to reduce the traffic problems based on data from 2020-present is laughable. Carpool and bus usage statistics from a multi-year pandemic are invalid and do not represent a system functioning at full capacity. This needs to be given an honest shot in a true post-pandemic situation before considering expensive and permanent alternatives like road widening or a gondola.</p> <p>Even more laughable is UTA cutting bus service in the Cottonwoods in the middle of this 'assessment' period, essentially sabotaging (whether intentional or not) the efforts to increase ridership and reduce single-occupancy-vehicles in the canyons. How is a tolled roadway supposed to work when there is insufficient bus service to balance out the addition of the toll? This will limit access for lower-income families while simultaneously failing to solve the issue at hand.</p> <p>I would support an honest, multi-year assessment period where bus service is substantially increased, park-and-ride infrastructure is expanded to match the increased bus service (today's lots are often full by 7AM), and tolling is used (appropriately) to encourage ridership. Snow sheds in frequent avalanche paths will help mitigate some of the roadway issues the buses would face. Increased plow frequency would mitigate road condition issues even during higher snowfall rate events. Furthermore, the cost of this expanded bus service and snow shedding would come at a fraction of that which the gondola would total out (even at it's unbelievable estimates of 550M when reality is likely well in excess of 1.1B). How does UDOT/the state intend to fund such an elaborate project when UTA can't even fund the most basic of bus routes? Bonus, increased bus service and tolling as proposed here would be an easy to implement solution for BCC as well, rather than this farce of a 'transportation solution' which solves just about nothing for LCC and completely ignores BCC.</p> <p>Furthermore, just one summer afternoon spent in either LCC or BCC is enough to make one realize this is not just a winter problem, and includes the trailheads as well as the resorts. An honest attempt at expanded and incentivized carpooling/bus service needs to come first, period.</p> <p>All of the above commentary doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of the impacts the gondola would have on the viewshed, quiet, and overall experience of canyon residents and recreational users.</p>
34386	Steven Glaser	<p>Comment 6293</p> <p>Original Comment: 2.2.2.1, 4th Paragraph. The phrase 'Level 2 resources' is used here, but they are not defined.</p> <p>UDOT Response: The commenter mentioned a specific section and paragraph, but UDOT could not find this reference. However, Table 2.2-2, Level 2 Screening Criteria (Impacts), of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) lists the resources considered in the screening process.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: Here is the original Draft EIS text in its entirety. The phrase 'Level 2 resources' is in the next-to-last sentence of the last paragraph.</p> <p>2.2.2.1 Improve Mobility on Wasatch Boulevard Improving mobility on S.R. 210 in 2050 involves meeting two different needs: improving mobility for commuter traffic during the weekday on Wasatch Boulevard and improving mobility for the winter ski traffic on S.R. 210 along the entire corridor from Fort Union Boulevard to the town of Alta. The screening criteria for weekday commuter traffic on Wasatch Boulevard are different than for winter ski traffic since the roadway travel demand varies by each type of traffic.</p> <p>Because the criteria are different, the alternatives screening process for Wasatch Boulevard in particular was conducted separately from and prior to the alternatives screening process for S.R. 210 overall (see Section 2.2.2.2, Improve</p>

		<p>Mobility on S.R. 210 from Fort Union Boulevard to Alta). The mobility benefits provided by the Wasatch Boulevard alternatives that passed Level 1 and Level 2 screening were considered part of the baseline conditions when evaluating how to improve mobility on S.R. 210 overall (see Section 2.2.2.2). For more details about the Wasatch Boulevard screening results, see Appendix 2A, Draft Alternatives Development and Screening Report June 8, 2020.</p> <p>Table 2.2-3 shows the alternatives considered for Wasatch Boulevard and the screening results. As shown in the table, only the Imbalanced-lane Alternative and the Five-lane Alternative passed the screening process. Both alternatives met UDOT's level of service goal of LOS D or better. With the Imbalanced-lane Alternative, the level of service on Wasatch Boulevard would be LOS C in 2050, and with the Five-lane Alternative, the level of service would be LOS B or C. With all of the other alternatives, segments of Wasatch Boulevard would operate at a level of service of LOS F.</p> <p>The footprints and impact lines for the Imbalanced-lane Alternative and the Five-lane Alternative are similar, are mostly within UDOT's existing right of way, and would not have substantially different impacts to any of the Level 2 resources considered. Because the two alternatives would have similar levels of impacts and costs, the Level 2 screening analysis did not give UDOT a reason to eliminate either alternative.</p> <p>Original Comment: 2.2.4, Gondola Alternative B, Travel Reliability. It was stated in a local newspaper that gondola will be stopped whenever avalanche control work is performed to ensure no damage to the system before restarting. What if there is damage? What is the contingency for getting people off? What will happen to traffic on what is undoubtedly a superb powder day? What is the maximum length of time for getting the gondola system up and running again? Days? Weeks? The rest of the ski season? What are the implications for travel reliability of the gondola system? This does not appear to have been addressed in the EIS.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: UDOT's response 32.2.6.5K addresses portions of the comment, but not all. It does not address whether the gondola would need to be stopped and inspected whenever avalanche control work is performed. If true, this would have a major impact on the reliability of the gondola alternative given the frequency with which avalanche control work is performed. The Record of Decision (ROD) should explicitly discuss whether this is a valid concern, and if so, incorporate it into it's alternative selection.</p> <p>The comment also asked for the maximum length of time to get the gondola system working again in the event of damage, and the implications for the travel reliability of the gondola system. The response merely says that repair times would depend on the nature of the damage. While true, this evades the point of the comment. If there is a potential for damage to occur that could result in the gondola being out of commission for a week, a month, or more, that is something that should certainly be considered in weighing the alternatives. If on the other hand, it is difficult to envision a situation where the gondola would not be running for more than a day or two, not so much. Again, the robustness of the gondola system needs to be accounted for in making the final alternative selection in the ROD.</p> <p>Original Comment: Appendix 2G (Preferred Alternative Selection Memorandum), Section 2.2.4, Preferred Alternatives Selection. This section is too vague to justify the selection of the two alternatives. Just listing an alternative's attributes and how the negative impacts could be mitigated is not sufficient. This could be done to justify the selection of any of the alternatives.</p> <p>For example, when it comes to cost, it is stated that the Enhanced Bus with Shoulder Lane Alternative has the second lowest capital cost, and the Gondola Alternative B has the second highest cost. Merely mentioning the rankings is not sufficient characterization, as these statements would be the same if the cost</p>
--	--	--

		<p>differentials were \$1 million, \$1 billion, or \$1 trillion. The EIS should describe in detail why it is worth spending an additional \$150 million for the Enhanced Bus with Shoulder Lane (versus the Enhanced Bus Alternative), and an additional \$240 million for the Gondola Alternative B.</p> <p>This comment is just one example. Other factors should also be included in this analysis. For the Enhanced Bus with Shoulder Lane Alternative, in addition to cost, this section should also discuss why this alternative's selection is warranted given the additional effects on wildlife and the natural environment (including the specific amount of additional wildlife habitat impacted, the specific amount of additional pavement, and the impact on streams, riparian areas, and floodplains) and recreation (including impacts to more recreation areas, climbing resources, and trailheads, and the additional visual impact), compared to the Enhanced Bus Alternative.</p> <p>For the Gondola Alternative B, there should be a similar discussion, guided by the summary characteristics of the alternative provided by Table 6. In addition to cost, there would be a discussion of why this alternative is warranted in the face of the negative visual impacts it would have, not to mention many of the other factors listed for the Enhanced Bus with Shoulder Lane Alternative, such as the acres of wildlife habitat impacted, floodplain impacts, recreation areas and trail effected, etc.</p> <p>The reasons for comparing the impacts to those of the Enhanced Bus Alternative are that 1) the Enhanced Bus Alternative satisfies the Project Purpose and Need, and 2) it is the least costly alternative and, 3) based on Table 6, this alternative has the smallest environmental impact for every listed characteristic (where environmental impacts are used in the sense of the table title).</p> <p>UDOT Response: From 32.2.9W: The final selected alternative will consider the environmental analysis identified in the EIS along with the transportation performance of the alternative. UDOT will provide detailed reasons why it selected the alternative in the Record of Decision.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: UDOT's essentially defers its response to the ROD. However, the Final EIS does not provide the detail necessary for the ROD to properly follow through on this promise. As just one example, the comments below point out how visual impacts have been incompletely characterized. Without a full characterization, it is impossible to properly weigh the pros and cons of the alternatives in the ROD.</p> <p>The alternative selected in the ROD should explicitly show how the various factors were weighed. One possibility to do so quantitatively is to use Decision Analysis. Where a factor is inadequately characterized at this time, the ROD should either be delayed pending additional data collection/analysis, or the ROD should show how the same outcome would be arrived at regardless of what additional data collection and analysis might show.</p> <p>Original Comment: 4.4.4.2. - Regional, Paragraph Two. This paragraph states: ". . . some recreation users might see the gondola as a negative visual impact, reducing the quality of their recreation experience.,"</p> <p>For me personally, it is highly likely that I will view the gondola as a negative visual impact, and that this will reduce the quality of my recreational experience. I say this based on how I have reacted to other developments in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon (e.g., Snowbird's development of Mineral Basin, and the condominium development at Solitude). I now generally avoid certain hikes/snowshoes that I used to enjoy as a result.</p> <p>I have spoken with my wife, and she also believes that it is highly likely that the gondola will have a negative visual impact, and reduce the quality of her recreational experience. I have spoken to several friends who have the same</p>
--	--	--

		<p>opinion. In total, I have spoken with enough people who share this opinion to qualify as 'some.'</p> <p>Therefore, this sentence should be edited to state: "It is highly likely that some recreational users will see the gondola as a negative visual impact, reducing the quality of their recreational experience.," Furthermore, since a small sampling readily turned up so many people with this perspective, an inquiry should be conducted to determine if in fact the sentence should actually read "It is highly likely that large numbers of recreational users will see the gondola as a negative visual impact, reducing the quality of their recreational experience.," (italicized phrases for the purposes of the comment only).</p> <p>UDOT Response: The EIS was modified as follows: However, recreation users might see the gondola as a negative visual impact, reducing the quality of their recreation experience during any time of the year.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: The text still uses the word 'might'. The original comment dealt with the likelihood of the visual impacts, indicating that they were 'highly likely,' and provided a rationale. The Final EIS should be modified to address the likelihood, rather than leaving this as a possibility of unknown significance for the ROD to interpret.</p> <p>Original Comment: Table 17.3-1, Key Observation Points. Almost all of the key observation points (KOPs) are quite close to the road. While (for example), the gondola will appear smaller from greater distances, that does not mean that only locations nearest the gondola need to be evaluated. One could potentially see the gondola for hours while returning to a trailhead for example. The longer time, with the view of the gondola looming ever larger, is a factor that would need to be considered.</p> <p>The Key Observation Points should be comprehensive enough to allow some sense for how long a person would notice the gondola while hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, or backcountry skiing. This includes the Red Pine Trail, the White Pine Trail, and the trail to Cardiff Pass/Flagstaff Peak/Mt. Superior and Monte Cristo from the town of Alta. There should also be KOPs on the ridgeline between Little and Big Cottonwood Canyon, and on the ridgeline between Little Cottonwood and American Fork Canyon. These are all popular with backcountry users (including myself), and should be included in the evaluation of visual impacts.</p> <p>UDOT Response: The response 32.17A includes the statement "however, this does not change the analysis that the gondola infrastructure would be visually dominant and out of character with the surrounding environment.,"</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: The Final EIS did not add the requested KOPs, nor does the response (32.17A) explain why this was not done.</p> <p>The original comment was requesting that the visual impacts be fully characterized so that they could be properly compared to the benefits of the gondola. Just as it is important to know that a particular alternative is faster than another by 15 minutes as opposed to 1 minute, it is important to know whether the visual impacts on backcountry users will be limited to the very beginning and end of the excursion, or whether they will be periodically or continuously present during portions of the hike or route.</p> <p>Similarly, the reason for analyzing ridgeline impacts is to determine whether visual impacts will be limited to backcountry recreation initiated within Little Cottonwood Canyon, or whether it also affects the many additional people traveling to the ridgeline from adjacent canyons. Without a full characterization of visual impacts, the ROD cannot properly compare the advantages and disadvantages of the different alternatives.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Comment 6437</p> <p>Original Comment: 5. Within Little Cottonwood Canyon, the project goal is to reduce traffic during peak hours by 30 percent. The EIS analysis concludes that Gondola Alternative B meets this goal. However, the gondola is not a scalable form of transportation. An uncertainty analysis should be conducted to determine the likelihood that the gondola will succeed in meeting the project goals. This is because the traffic demand model has substantial uncertainties, as it requires projecting the amount of road use out to 2050; i.e., by decades.</p> <p>Appendix I (Draft Vehicle Mobility Analysis) to Appendix 2A (Draft Alternatives Development and Screening Report), Section 2.1, used a study that concluded that total traffic has been increasing in Little Cottonwood Canyon at a rate of 1.2 percent per year. (This study was published in 2018 although the EIS does not provide the years included in the data set.) It was then assumed that the 30th busiest hour would increase by exactly this same rate (for a total increase of 46 percent) through 2050.</p> <p>Modest changes in the assumed growth rate will result in quite different traffic levels by 2050. It would not be surprising if the 30th highest hour was substantially different.</p> <p>To give some perspective, note that Ski Utah (https://www.skiutah.com/news/authors/pr/utah-sets-record-for-skier-days-in) stated that skier days in 2018-2019 for all of Utah were 12 percent higher than in 2017-18, and 24 percent higher than for 2016-17. These data are for all of Utah and are not specific to Snowbird and Alta, much less Little Cottonwood Canyon as a whole. However, it is still notable that there was a 24 percent increase in two years, whereas the model is predicting only a 46 percent increase in 32 years. It should be further noted that the traffic growth rate in Little Cottonwood Canyon as a whole is not necessarily the same as the growth rate of the 30th hour. For instance, it is possible that skier visitation is going up at greater than the average growth rate at peak times (holidays and powder days), balanced out by declines in November and April as climate change makes these months less reliable/desirable for skiing.</p> <p>As a second example, the EIS states in its Draft Vehicle Mobility Analysis that "According to an analysis conducted for UDOT (Fehr & Peers 2018b), traffic on S.R. 210 has been increasing at a rate of 1.2% per year.," (Appendix I (Draft Vehicle Mobility Analysis) to Appendix 2A (Draft Alternatives Development and Screening Report). Assuming this is an accurate summary of the Fehr and Peers report, the 1.2 percent growth rate is an average for the year as a whole and is not specific to the ski season (much less the busiest months of the ski season). It may well be that ski traffic has been increasing (or could increase) at a greater rate than the 1.2 percent, and traffic the rest of the year has been increasing by a smaller amount.</p> <p>It would be inanity to spend half a billion dollars on a project and then have it fail. This is especially so if an uncertainty analysis would have shown that even though the most likely result would be for the gondola to be up to the task, there was also a reasonable probability that it would fail to meet the project objectives, and leave us with a consistently clogged road. Given that the capacity of the gondola cannot be increased, an uncertainty analysis needs to be conducted to determine the robustness of this solution with regards to meeting the project goals.</p> <p>UDOT Responses: 32.2.6.5A: However, the number of cabins can be scaled to reduce or add capacity depending on future demands within the limits of the evaluation conducted in the EIS.</p> <p>32.2.6.5N: Designing a system to carry more users is possible but not warranted to meet the project purpose. The gondola system is based on the number of parking spaces that supports the system, which is 2,500 vehicles. Once the parking is full, the gondola system has reached its capacity. So capacity cannot</p>
--	--	---

		<p>be increased beyond the design of parking unless more parking is added.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment. These responses are incomplete. The comment requested an uncertainty analysis to determine the likelihood that the gondola alternatives would succeed in meeting the goal of reducing traffic in peak hours by 30% given such factors as the uncertainty in the traffic growth rate that will occur, and that the growth rate for the average day can be different than the growth rate of the highest traffic days. The comment response did not address if the ability to add cabins, combined with the number of parking spaces serving the gondola, means that the uncertainty in the traffic growth rate is minor or irrelevant, or if there is a significant potential for the gondola to fail to meet the project goals if traffic growth rates have been underestimated.</p> <p>To be more specific, an annual 1.2% rate of traffic growth over 30 years results in a 43% cumulative increase in volume. However, if the annual rate of increase is 2%, there is an 81% increase. What is the maximum reasonable amount that the assumed annual 1.2% rate of traffic growth could be an underestimate (and what is the basis for that value)? What would the cumulative level of traffic increase be under those circumstances? Given the parking limitations and limitations on adding cabins to the gondola, would the goal of a 30% reduction in traffic be achieved? If not, how close would it come? This evaluation should be accounted for when selecting the final alternative in the ROD.</p> <p>The response to this comment raises an additional issue. If cabins are added to the gondola to increase capacity, how does that affect gondola travel times to the resorts? A sensitivity analysis in the traffic growth rate should guide the number of additional cabins assumed in this analysis (unless, of course, the gondola works in way where the travel time is independent of the number of cabins)</p> <p>Comment 7943</p> <p>Original Comment: 10.4.8.1, 4th Paragraph. This paragraph obscures the fact that the uncertainties with evaluating the potential for health effects for mobile source air toxic emissions (MSATs) are not substantially greater than those for criteria pollutants. The text states "The methodologies for forecasting health impacts include emissions modeling, dispersion modeling, exposure modeling, and then a final determination of health impacts, with each step in the process building on the model predictions obtained in the previous step.," However, this statement is also largely true when evaluating criteria pollutants, and is therefore not a reason to not quantify MSAT health risks.</p> <p>This EIS explicitly performs emissions and dispersion modeling, which is the same whether the focus is a criteria pollutant or an MSAT. The health impacts are based on a comparison to National Ambient Air Quality Standards, which is analogous to comparing MSAT concentrations to reference concentrations (RfCs) that have been developed for the non-carcinogenic MSATs (such as diesel exhaust particulates). It is true that since the standards for criteria pollutants are based on exposure periods of no more than one day, they do not have the uncertainties that MSATs have with exposure modeling. However, the exposure modeling uncertainties, which are associated with the amount of time a person is at a receptor location (e.g., at their home), are far lower than those for the emissions modeling, the dispersion modeling, and the toxicity assessment. If there was perfect information for the exposure modeling, the overall uncertainty with the assessment would be largely unchanged.</p> <p>UDOT Response: The response 32.10E states the following: As stated in Chapter 10, Air Quality, of the EIS, there are no standards for hazardous air pollutants, so it would not be possible to compare any results. In addition, as stated in the analysis, the S.R. 210 Project is considered a Tier 2 project. The types of projects included in the Tier 2 category are those that serve to improve operations of highway, transit, or freight without adding substantial new capacity or without creating a facility that is likely to meaningfully increase mobile source air toxics (MSAT) emissions. Tier 2 projects require only a qualitative (not</p>
--	--	--

		<p>quantitative) analysis because of the low potential for MSAT effects.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: While a quantitative analysis may not be required, this does not change the fact that the text of the 4th paragraph of 10.4.8.1 is highly misleading. The uncertainties with comparing diesel exhaust concentrations to a reference concentration are similar in magnitude to those associated with comparing particulate matter concentrations to the NAAQS standard, and the EIS should not imply otherwise.</p> <p>Original Comment: 10.4.8.1, 4th and 5th Paragraphs, 70-year lifetime. With regards to the uncertainties, the EIS especially discusses the difficulties with making reliable estimates of 70-year lifetime MSAT concentrations for the purposes of estimating the cancer risk associated with these chemicals. This statement is not consistent with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidance. The EPA's Human Health Evaluation Manual, Supplemental Guidance: Update of Standard Default Exposure Factors (OSWER Directive 9200.1-120, February 6, 2014), has a default residential exposure duration of 26 years. In other words, evaluating the carcinogenic impact would only require evaluating emissions through approximately 2050, the date used for evaluating the air quality impact of criteria pollutants.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: No changes were made by UDOT to the text of the EIS, and the identified comment response (32.10E) does not address the comment. The original comment is stating the EIS text is wrong: an evaluation of MSATs does not require an exposure evaluation of 70 years. The text should be corrected to remove the offending statements, and the ROD should be performed without relying on this EIS text.</p> <p>Original Comment: 10.4.8.1, 6th Paragraph, Risks from Diesel Exhaust. This paragraph is misleading. While the EPA has not established a toxicity value for quantifying cancer risks associated with diesel exhaust, it has established a reference concentration of 0.005 mg/m³ (see the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) database (epa.gov/iris)). Furthermore, Section 10.2.3 of the EIS cites EPA's 2011 National Air Toxics Assessment as identifying nine MSATs that should be included in a NEPA analysis based on their being either a cancer risk driver or a noncancer hazard contributor. Diesel exhaust is cited in the National Air Toxics Assessment as a driver of non-cancer hazards, and it should be considered in that context.</p> <p>This paragraph also states that "there is no national consensus on air dose-response values assumed to protect the public health and welfare for MSAT compounds." It is unclear what is meant by national consensus. It is true that toxicity values for MSATs have not gone through a formal rule-making process. However, EPA has established toxicity values for the MSATs, and has published them on the IRIS database. This database is based on a compendium of available toxicological data, containing both United States and international studies, and peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed research. The toxicity values on the IRIS database have been used in evaluating risks from chemicals in soil, groundwater, and air in a variety of settings. They are completely appropriate for use in the context of an EIS.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: As with the previous comment, no changes were made by UDOT to the text of the EIS, and the identified comment responses (32.10A, 32.10E, and 32.10F) do not address the comment. The EIS text describes in great detail why the Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) is a credible database, and about how it concludes that the available data does not justify quantifying the dose-response relationship between diesel engine exhaust and cancer risks.</p> <p>This same IRIS database also concludes that the existing toxicological and epidemiological data is sufficient to warrant the establishment of a reference concentration (RfC) for diesel engine exhaust for use in evaluating the potential for non-cancer effects. Non-cancer health effects are just as important as cancer</p>
--	--	--

		<p>effects. Since the EIS thoroughly addresses why evaluation of the cancer endpoint is not appropriate for diesel engine exhaust, it should give equal discussion to non-cancer endpoints. The ROD must be performed accounting for potential non-cancer as well as cancer impacts.</p> <p>Original Comment: 10.4.8.1, 7h and 8th Paragraphs. For non-carcinogenic effects, a hazard quotient in excess of 1 is the standard by which risks are considered to be potentially significant. (Comment abridged).</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: As with the previous comments, no changes were made by UDOT to the text of the EIS, and the identified comment responses (32.10A, 32.10E, and 32.10F) do not address the comment. The text goes into great detail about the challenges associated with establishing the acceptable cancer risk level that could be used for this project. The original comment pointed out that there is uniform agreement on the standard by which non-cancer risks are evaluated. Noncancer endpoints should be given the same level of discussion as cancer endpoints.</p> <p>Original Comment: 10.4.8.1, Last Paragraph. While uncertainties can by no means be eliminated from a risk assessment of MSATs, they are not of a different order of magnitude than those associated with criteria pollutants. The conclusion of this paragraph should be reconsidered in light of the fact that criteria pollutant risks have been modeled, quantified, and presumably been found useful to the development of the EIS. The effect of not evaluating MSAT risks is to zero them out - that is, their risks are not being considered in the decision regardless of how substantial they are. A more appropriate picture of their impact would be obtained if their risks were estimated, with uncertainties similar to those associated with the evaluation of criteria pollutants.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: UDOT's responses (32.10A, 32.10E, and 32.10F) sidestep the point of this comment. This paragraph of the EIS describes why quantifying risks from MSATs would not be useful to decision makers. The comment is contradicting that conclusion.</p> <p>With regards to this full series of comments on the air quality analysis, the text of Section 10.4.8.1 describes how problematic it would be to quantify cancer risks for MSATs. I do not disagree. But UDOT must not limit its concerns to carcinogenic effects. If it is going to discuss carcinogenic effects in this detail, it should provide the same level of discussion to non-carcinogenic effects. Furthermore, the discussion of carcinogenic effects has many statements that are inaccurate or misleading. The discussion should be revised to accurately portray what can and cannot be accomplished by a risk analysis, and the ROD should be performed with equal concern for non-carcinogenic and carcinogenic effects.</p>
34399	Kelsey Adkins	<p>Hello,</p> <p>I'm Kelsey Adkins, a registered voter who lives in Cottonwood Heights. I am strongly against the proposed plan to build a gondola. I have a deep, and close relationship to Little Cottonwood Canyon; I go into the canyon to recreate on average 3-4 times a week. I'm involved in backcountry skiing, resort skiing, hiking year round, and rock climbing in the spring, summer, and fall.</p> <p>If the gondola is built it will have a grave impact on not only my experience, but the experience of everyone else who goes into the canyon, the wildlife in the canyon and neighboring canyons (since they travel between canyons), and have far-reaching effects on anyone in the valley who drinks the water from the LCC watershed, as well as tax payers' who don't even go into the canyon.</p> <p>I'm very concerned that impact study on the wildlife was woefully inadequate.</p>

		<p>There are several animal and plant species which live in the areas where the gondola towers will be built whose habitat will be greatly affected, including some species that are sensitive or endangered, including the boreal toad. The noise impact you conducted was inadequate, and studies have shown that the noise from the gears alone is enough to change the habits of birds, affect bats' ability to use echolocation to hunt and feed, and reduce the numbers of insects and amphibians as well. The effects on the entire ecosystem are far-reaching, since insects, amphibians, birds, and bats, are all part of a larger food web that will ultimately have effects on larger mammals including deer, coyote, and mountain lion just to name a few. Studies have shown that when these larger mammals are stressed due to a change in their food sources or scarcity of food resources, there is increase incidence of human-wildlife contact and issues.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the effects of the gondola on the watershed, both during construction as well as afterward. More than one municipality has commented about this, so it's apparent that the impact on the watershed was glossed over and not thoroughly considered.</p> <p>As a passionate climber I want it to be known that the climbing experience is SO MUCH MORE than simply me interacting with the rock immediately in front of me. I climb to that I can be present in the moment with my surroundings in nature. That includes the sounds, the sights and views from the base of the climb, the middle, or the top of the climb. It includes the hike to and from the base of a climb. I climb to be connected with the natural world, not simply to get from point A to B. Gondola towers and a gondola passing through the areas where I frequently climb in lower LCC will gravely detract from this experience for me, other climbers, and future generations of climbers. As climbers, we are often the best advocates for land conservancy and stewardship. It is concerning that by diminishing the climbing experience for us climbers, you risk driving us away, which poses a risk to the long term conservation of LCC keeping it wild and safe for the animals and plants that currently call it home.</p> <p>I believe that a better solution would be to focus on increased bus service. This would include more buses running on a frequent schedule. Mobility hubs located throughout the valley, not just at the base of the canyon. Incentives from the resorts for people taking the bus. And penalties or tolls for people riding in single occupancy vehicles up the canyon.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time and effort to get to the bottom of this and accurately represent our community.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kelsey Adkins -- --</p>
34469	Jessica Kunzer-Pearson	<p>I have been a Utah resident since my family moved to Salt Lake City in 1998 and all of that time has been deeply connected to the ski industry and Little Cottonwood Canyon. I have always been a passionate and regular skier, biker, and hiker. I served as the Ski Utah Director of Communications from 2007-2012. My mother was employed by Snowbird for 16 years.</p> <p>That said, I am very familiar with the transportation issues that have always existed in Little Cottonwood Canyon due to its natural avalanche hazard as well as those that have developed due to an increase in canyon use by locals and visitors.</p>

	<p>I have been following the need for improved transportation for more than 20 years but there are several logistical and moral reasons which make me adamantly OPPOSED to the gondola as that solution. Logistically, the gondola is not a comprehensive solution and will result in a poor user experience for a single user group. Morally, the gondola is an egregious misuse of Utah taxpayer dollars and will permanently mar the natural beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon. The following paragraphs examine these points.</p> <p>Although the gondola is a solution designed only for Little Cottonwood Canyon, traffic is not unique to the Canyon. Other options such as buses, tolls, parking reservation systems and incentives can be applied to other high-traffic canyons such as Big Cottonwood and Millcreek. Furthermore, their use can be adjusted to demand projections throughout the year. Anyone who has tried to see summer flowers or autumn leaves in the canyons understands the need for year-round support. Furthermore, overflow cars parked outside of the White Pine trailhead in Little Cottonwood, the S-turns in Big Cottonwood, and many places in Millcreek present a huge safety issue with hikers walking on the highway alongside vehicle traffic. The gondola will do nothing to help these issues.</p> <p>Second, the user experience for most destination and local visitors will be very poor-unless you have a reservation at the new hotels which will be built and highly-priced at the LaCaille development. Riding the gondola will require users to drive and park in one central location (that is currently highly residential), purchase gondola access, get in a line for the gondola, and ride the gondola all while managing their gear and families. Can you imagine this process with small children in tow? I cannot. Upon arrival, where can people put their belongings? Will they need to pay for expensive gear storage? Must you wear your ski boots the whole time you are riding the gondola? What if you wanted to bring extra mittens, socks, snacks, or goggle-lenses? And at the end of the day, how long of a line will people have to wait in before they begin the journey back down?</p> <p>It would have to be virtually impossible to get up the canyon via car for anyone to think the gondola was a better solution than driving. And on the days when it is impossible, that is likely caused by avalanche concerns. When avalanche danger is high, limited terrain is open for skiers and snowboarders at the resort. So why is there such a rush to get skiers up to the resort on high avalanche days at all?</p> <p>Third, the gondola is a blatant misuse of Utah taxpayer dollars to support private profit. Did Utah taxpayers help to pay for Park City Resort's cabriolet or the funicular at Deer Valley's St Regis? No, they did not. The gondola is designed to get skiers from a new resort base located at LaCaille up to Alta and Snowbird. That is its purpose. Not transportation. Let's not insult the intelligence of taxpayers, many of who never venture into Little Cottonwood Canyon, by telling them this is a public transportation solution.</p> <p>Finally, Utah's economy has been booming largely because of the natural beauty existing so close to our city centers. Little Cottonwood's steep granite canyon sides are iconic. Throughout the Canyon, visitors are treated to a wilderness sanctuary that makes you feel miles away from the bustle of city life. This dichotomy is precious and a distinguishing feature of our location.</p> <p>This summer, I enjoyed camping at Tanner's Flat less than 4 miles up Highway 210. As my family listened to the roar of the creek, we admired the stunning peaks towering above us. With my eyes pointed to the sky I thought about what this would feel like with a gondola hanging over my head. And that is the</p>
--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		question, must we prioritize the profit of two resorts over the magnificence of our mountains? To me, the answer is clearly NO.
34478	Zachary Niemeyer	<p>I am not in favor of your preferred alternative. The gondola does not address the needs adequately. The stated purpose of the EIS is to analyze an integrated transportation system that increases the reliability, mobility, and safety for all users on S.R. 210 from Fort Union Blvd. to the Town of Alta. The EIS identified that a gondola from La Caille would be the best alternative. This is contrary to the stated goals.</p> <p>First, the reliability of a gondola would not be better than a bus alternative. When the canyon is shut down due to heavy snow, the gondola would not be able to run as the need to use explosives would prohibit the gondola from being run. In addition to this, the gondola may need maintenance and would not be available during this time. If something were to break during the winter, it may be significantly more difficult to repair than a bus.</p> <p>Secondly, the mobility of people would not be improved with the gondola. The average time to the resorts would be lower on the gondola than the bus. The only improvement would be the average time it takes for people to drive. This is the most egregious data. The gondola would take on average 55 minutes from base to resort. The bus without roadway improvements would take 54 minutes. This means that taxpayers would be paying \$200 million dollars more for a slower alternative. This estimate may also be on the low end as inflation has drastically increased all costs since the EIS started. These are the issues I have with the conclusions from the EIS.</p> <p>The gondola itself has additional issues that were not addressed. This is a taxpayer funded project and it only stops at two private resorts. This means that two private entities will benefit from significant expenditures from the public. This is absolutely not acceptable. Additionally, the local political entities have all stated their displeasure with this alternative. Cottonwood Heights, Sandy, Salt Lake City, and Salt Lake County have all stated that this alternative is not their preferred alternative. The gondola is also not an easy solution to implement. It will cause significant changes to the environment as the towers and access roads are built. It will have significant visual impacts on the canyon. It will be a permanent solution that may not work well. It is like putting all of your eggs in one basket and assuming that our projections for 30 years in the future will be correct.</p> <p>In addition to these problems, I have issues with the manner in which the EIS was conducted. Little Cottonwood Canyon can only support so many people at the resorts, as overcrowding is currently happening. Resorts are implementing limits on the number of tickets because of this. The assumption that more people will visit the resorts may not be true. The EIS also ignores possible climate changes that may limit the amount of snow at the resorts. This could also reduce the number of days that a gondola would help traffic. The issues that the EIS hopes to alleviate are only minor issues on a small number of days throughout the year. This means that a large, permanent, expensive project is only going to affect people positively on a small number of days, while negatively affecting the environment and ambiance of the canyon all other days. The gondola would also push traffic problems into neighborhoods around La Caille.</p> <p>Overall, a bussing solution would be much easier to implement, and could be experimented with. The traffic using the bus would only need to reach the bus station at the gravel pit, which is close to the highway. The bus would not affect the environment if hydrogen powered buses or electric buses were used. This solution could be phased to increase service on busy days and decrease service on less popular days. Overall, a bus solution has significant advantages over a gondola.</p>

34481	Jim Fairchild	<p>Hello and thank you for your time.</p> <p>I hope you will read this and read everyone else's opinion and ideas that call on common sense, not a hidden agenda, to create an effective solution to deal with the continued population in the Canyon.</p> <p>There is overwhelming opposition to the Gondola by Canyon locals. How can you push this through with so much opposition? How can this not be put to a vote? Without being rude, it seems like it's time for "no more Mr. Niceguy,". What UDOT is backing lacks vision, an understanding of the Canyon, and smacks of developer greed and backdoor deals.</p> <p>Whats in for UDOT?- whose pocket are you in? - it's not hard to see that common sense low impact solutions with the Canyons best interest in mind are not at the top of your agenda.</p> <p>How can UDOT think that the educated public isn't aware of the names Neiderhauser and McCandless and what kind of slant that their association with this project adds to the Gondola proposition?</p> <p>Is there any need to even discuss this?...I guess so! I really feel that UDOT should be ashamed of themselves and the forces that are driving your organization and this project;</p> <p>Snowbird, Alta, and the obvious spin off development by your hidden partners that will take place at the Mouth are the sole beneficiaries of this project in Little Cottonwood.</p> <p>The general public foots the bill and the Canyon suffers irreparable harm to increase ski resort and private interest profits. Please stop embarrassing your organization and the State by trying to say different.</p> <p>Serious traffic problems in the Canyon is only a problem 15 to 20 days a year-you want to forever alter our Canyon for 15 to 20 days a year?</p> <p>I live above the firestation and have for 35 years.. I ski most every day,...we are living the life here, we know the details.</p> <p>I would like to use an analogy at this point.</p> <p>We have a friend who lives a couple of blocks off the beach in Laguna CA. During the summer season (LCC equivalent of the winter season), tourists mob their areas and make stupid moves all day long, every day.</p> <p>Parking is tough, crowds are high, and their neighborhood takes a hit. But guess what, nobody is moving, and the town isn't making any dramatic moves to find a "solution,"</p> <p>WHY?,</p> <p>Because they understand that this summer crunch is 3 month deal, and then they get their life and typical routine back for the next 9 months.</p> <p>If a resident at or near the Mouth of the Canyon can't handle the 20 days a year that traffic is an actual issue, then simply move for the winter or for good.</p> <p>A few random common sense thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What skier wants to delay their experience by riding the Gondola instead of driving or bussing straight up? - Whose going to pay \$30 to ride a Gondola up the Canyon after the novelty wears off? - Who wants to figure out how to drag all their gear to the Gondola line, get it up there, store it or carry it around, and then repeat the process on the way down. - Don't perpetuate a developer and resort cash grab to serve their selfish interests and/or the occasional complaining resident who cant take a little adversity to live at gateway of the best skiing in NA. <p>That being said, Im sure you're aware that literally every neighborhood at the Mouth and down Wasatch opposes the Gondola as a group and advertises that</p>
-------	---------------	---

		<p>fact loud and clear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A parking garage at La Caille-do you think this is environmentally friendly? - Please come clean about the hidden agenda, the backroom deal. <p>I guess that will become apparent when we see who the developer will be for the village that will no doubt pop up at the Gondola base.</p> <p>And yes!, if you widen wasatch blvd you can then justify that the new village can handle the traffic flow-all part to the master plan...right?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stop claiming that you care about our Canyon..tell the truth..set a new trend. - Guess what Guys, its not going to be snowing much as the years go on, so really, its all moot. <p>Are you kidding me?!:</p> <p>Longest 3-cable gondola system in the world (8 miles).</p> <p>Will require 20+ towers; 10 of which will be over 200' tall.</p> <p>(Each tower will need a road built to access the tower for construction and ongoing maintenance), so lots of additional permanent roads.</p> <p>A topic for discussion: Big Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>The traffic situation there is worse. Is this Canyon not up for discussion?</p> <p>How can any plan not include this Canyon.</p> <p>Why are we so focused on Snowbird, Alta, and the land around LaCaille?...I wonder :(</p> <p>Newsflash: Traffic, parking and people traffic issues in the Canyon are not native to Snowbird and Alta.</p> <p>Theres a whole Canyon with multiple trailheads... the Gondola will have no positive impact on these areas.</p> <p>This issues you claim you want to alleviate exists from the top to the bottom of the Canyon, every season of the year.</p> <p>The Gondola makes two stops..what?? You call this a solution?</p> <p>Heres a solution package to consider that costs us less, makes more sense for the broader picture of Canyon issues, an minimizes impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate a real bus service with start/parking zones at the gravel pit and 94th and Highland. - Run the busses on a continuous schedule, year round. - Develop the trail heads on the way up and down, parking, bathrooms, bus stops. - Put in toll for the drivers..if you drive you're going to pay for it (season passes available for locals)..cash generated goes back to Canyon upkeep. - Establish a vehicle # cap that is determined by traffic flow and road conditions. - Once the cap is hit, drivers are done..they turn around and go get the bus. <p>You have claimed you want to initiate at least some of these steps as a phased in stepping stone as you move towards gondola.</p> <p>How about making these steps the final solution and tweaking as necessary as the years go by?</p> <p>Give it 5 years and if it doesnt work...THEN entertain another solution.</p> <p>The final dagger-UTA is jumping ship on providing even their current subpar commitment to a good bus schedule due to lack of ability to find drivers!!</p> <p>An underhanded way to somehow justify the need for your Gondola?...these new updates are not flying over peoples heads.</p> <p>How about putting a fraction of the 500 million \$ Gondola tab to paying a fair wage for a unique and sometimes stressful job.</p> <p>You'll drop 500 mill of our \$ on the a project that only serves the Good Old Boys</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>and two for profit ski areas, but cant pay someone \$20 per hour to drive a bus.</p> <p>Yes, discerning citizens in this area are angry with UDOT and everything this project stands for.</p> <p>If this project goes through, the transparency of this plan will be revealed to the fullest extent, as we will all live a destructive, expensive, and inadequate solution, forever scaring the one of Utahs crown jewels for the sake of developer and ski resort profit, paid for by the common citizen.</p> <p>In closing-how about putting the funds into saving the Great Salt Lake, so there's a reason to even go up Little Cottonwood 30 years from now?</p> <p>Common sense, no grifter solutions to our ALL our Canyons growing pains and a focus on what really matters in this Valley...lets rethink this proposition for the greater good.</p> <p>Please do what's right, eliminate the Gondola as a viable option for Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>Thanks.</p>
34531	Danielle Poirier	<p>As a resident of Utah for the past 18 years (both the Wasatch back and front), I want to express my concerns with moving forward with the gondola proposal. I am an avid resort skiers, backcountry skier, hiker, and climber. I have followed and researched the UDOT LCC EIS in depth and feel strongly that the gondola is not a proven solution- rather a development opportunity that will benefit few at the expense of many. I, along with the majority of locals, would like to see common-sense solutions implemented (and truly given enough resources to succeed) before we cause irreversible degradation to a gem (both economic and environmental) of Utah. It would be reckless to move forward with a gondola for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The EIS was insufficient in scope. It didn't take Big Cottonwood Canyon, impacts from 9400 South, Parleys or the Wasatch Back into account--the surrounding canyons and roads need to be looked at in their entirety. 2) Watershed impacts were not sufficiently studied or considered 3) Alternatives were not presented or explored sufficiently. 4) Current traffic patterns were not systematically or rigorously analyzed. 5) Cost estimates of the gondola were not rigorously analyzed. <p>I agree with UDOT that a preferred solution will represent a summary of key concerns expressed within the public comments that were received and processed: EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS to dispersed recreation, OVERCROWDING, VISUAL IMPACTS, WATER QUALITY IMPACTS, AND YEAR-ROUND ACCESS for a majority of visitors. The proposed solution does not address these aspects. Below is a list of issues that we see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot is a red herring argument. WBA does not think that vehicle traffic will be abated enough (if at all) by the gondola to justify this conclusion. Backcountry users - like resort patrons - want to be able to use public transit in lieu of their own vehicles to access the canyon, but that is not possible under the current proposal. UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors," but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best.</p>

		<p>Economic benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts.," WBA does not feel that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America (SIA) participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Data from the National Ski Area Association (NSAA) likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, Nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT was \$550M. This was pre-inflationary times, so even in the last year that figure will have risen to \$600M, if not significantly higher. Even if the cost has only increased by \$50M, that means that every single person in Utah is "paying," \$200 each to have what is effectively the most expensive chairlift in history installed for the benefit of two businesses (and auxiliary businesses). Any benefit associated with the proposed gondola will likely never be realized by the many Utahns who don't ski and/or live in other areas of the state, despite them paying for it.</p> <p>Gondola fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs of constituents riding the gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p> <p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-paid chairlift.</p> <p>Other solutions - UDOT says "it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B," but it also may NOT take years, so clearly the gondola is the priority. And if UDOT is trying to simultaneously raise at least \$600M for the gondola AND fund the alternative solutions, the money is in danger of not being available for ANY solution. And by making it clear that the gondola is the preferred solution, UDOT is effectively being incentivized to make the alternate solutions NOT work. Therefore, we adamantly suggest that UDOT acknowledge up front that the large tab for the gondola is unrealistic and focus its efforts on simpler, more easily attained transit solutions using existing infrastructure: aka tolling for all canyon users to disincentivize SOV's, enhanced bus lanes, enhanced bus service (already being cut for the 22-23 season), alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes, etc. This would require UDOT working more closely with UTA, which appears to not be the case.</p> <p>Phasing/Safety/Construction - The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more</p>
--	--	--

		<p>specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the Gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Risk/Flexibility - UDOT's consideration of a gondola as a transportation solution is highly innovative - and risky. While they may be confident in all of the analysis that went into evaluating its chance of success in meeting the Purpose and Need, there is little discussion in the DEIS for how a gondola system would be modified physically or operationally if that becomes necessary, or who would be in charge of making those determinations, and on what basis, and for what cost, and what the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of those changes would be. This creates an inadequate basis for a decision to select the gondola alternative.</p> <p>Controversial - By anyone's assessment, this project has been "polarizing," in this community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The DEIS uses a softer characterization of "strong interest,". It is irresponsible to suggest it is anything other than controversial; for example, the mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have done the same.</p> <p>Tolling - Alta Ski Lifts parking fees this past winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the effects that tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. This week UDOT again introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p> <p>Big Cottonwood Canyon - UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA. A BCC/LCC connection is unacceptable to many other stakeholders who want to preserve the unique qualities of each canyon and avoid the prospect of lifts criss-crossing the ridgetops.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever," and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>Avalanche Mitigation - the use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. Once anti-personnel shells are launched over a gondola the gondola has to be cleared again for use. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening; in fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Effects on climbing - As a climber, I am deeply concerned about the effect on the world class climbing that the construction will have. Climbing has a long history in the canyon, is a very popular activity, and it's representative group Salt Lake City Climbers Alliance has a long history of engaging with the state and the LDS church to protect and enhance the LCC climbing areas, yet the EIS effectively ignored the impact on climbing in its Preferred Solution.</p> <p>Viewshed - while we acknowledge that the top of LCC harbors a small town and two ski resorts and related businesses, the heart of LCC is wild terrain that includes clearly visible tracts of designated wilderness. The effect of 200-foot tall towers and 35-person gondola cars will be an eyesore that a majority of constituents, to whom such infrastructure will be visible whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, or skiing, will find offensive. Gondola infrastructure will be visible to anyone skiing, hiking, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Sincerely, Danielle Poirier</p>
34539	Gay Lynn Bennion	<p>I represent both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon in the Utah House of Representatives. As I have conducted a listening tour through our district this summer and met with thousands of my neighbors at their doors, I can confidently state that I represent our district in the following comments.</p> <p>With my constituents, I am opposed to Gondola B. I have heard that the EIS was never intended to be a popularity poll, but the views of the people who live in and around the canyons should be given high consideration.</p> <p>The FEIS doesn't address goals of the Central Wasatch Commission Pillars statement, it doesn't spend tax dollars in ways that benefit all Utahns, and it doesn't protect the iconic beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>As a district, we support the Pillars Statement issued by the Central Wasatch Commission in 2021. "The opinion considers visitor use capacity, watershed protection, traffic demand management and parking strategies, a year-round transit service, and integration into the broader regional transportation network, as well as the overall and long-term goal of protection of critical areas in the Central Wasatch Mountains through federal legislation, the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act (CWNCRA)."</p> <p>The FEIS fails to adequately address traffic demand management and parking strategies, year-round transit service and integration into the broader regional transportation network, as well as the overall and long-term goal of protection of critical areas in the Central Wasatch Mountains.</p> <p>The FEIS fails to take account of improvements to traffic flow with parking reservation system at Alta Ski Resort. The 2,500 parking structure at the base station would exacerbate traffic flow along S.R. 210 rather than reduce the traffic, which could be achieved through transit hubs, which are now under study by Central Wasatch Commission.</p> <p>It fails to provide a depiction of the impacts to the viewshed in Alta itself. The supporting structures would require illumination at night, according to FAA, forever changing another unique characteristic of the pristine nature of the canyon. It would disturb 0.63 acres of an archaeological site and has no clarification for the site of a new bus stop. There is no plan to provide facilities needed to absorb the thousands of people disembarking from the gondola, ignoring obvious further development to accommodate this change in flow of users. It is not scalable or flexible, which is a high priority given the lower accumulations of snow the area is experiencing, and would permanently scar and</p>

		<p>negatively impact the beautiful area it is intended to service.</p> <p>The people of Utah will not adequately benefit from the more than \$500 million (in 2020 dollars) which will specifically benefit two ski resorts and the tiny percentage of Utahns who ski there. The problem it addresses involves 20-40 high usage snow days in the winter, but the visual impact would be felt by all users of the canyons year-round.</p> <p>The FEIS also doesn't adequately address the superfund site which will be impacted and will potentially require costly mitigation where the parking structure would be sited.</p> <p>I join Margaret Bourke of Alta in her request for immediate steps to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enact for LCC winter-long vehicle traction mandates for all-wheel or four-wheel drive vehicles with appropriate winter tires. 2. Position snow plows up canyon to remove snow rapidly when it falls; 3. Provide flexible, scalable transit year-round into LCC. <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a unique, alpine wilderness. Any EIS should make protection of its current attributes the highest priority.</p> <p>Gay Lynn Bennion Utah House of Representatives, District 46</p>
34555	Daren Cottle	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the final EIS recommendations for improving traffic conditions in LCC.</p> <p>Visiting and recreating in LCC is one of the great pleasures of my life. At times in the winter, traffic can be a mess, but UDOT's preferred alternative to improve canyon traffic on these specific days will do irreparable to the canyon and only serve a few private businesses. I appreciate UDOT's sincere efforts to fulfill their charge from the Utah State Legislature to improve winter traffic in LCC. However, the desired alternative is an expensive boondoggle that bypasses trying common sense alternatives that are far less expense or damaging to the canyon. In addition, these businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Some of my concerns with the Gondola include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall that will forever scar LCC,"s one of a kind scenery. - The "clean," the gondola will be will power by COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). - The gondolas base station with 2,500 "premium," parking spots will just create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. Once those are filled, traffic problems will be pushed fuller into the valley to bus stops. - The cost to ride the gondola and potential long waits in line at peak times will likely mean auto traffic in the canyon will not be significantly reduced. - Because the gondola only stops at Snowbird and Alta, non-resort canyon users will likely continue to drive in the canyon in the winter. - It's difficult to see significant usage of the gondola in the summer, so I assume it will be an idle eye sore most of the summer months. - Finally, the estimated \$600 million cost of the gondola is by UDOT's own admission, an overly optimistic price tag. Similar to the Utah State Prison

		<p>relocation, the half a billion price tag will be double, if not more if it's actually built. Spending that kind of money on a project to objectively benefit a handful of private businesses in a specific industry seems folly at best.</p> <p>Rather, than jump into this expensive eye sore, let's first try less expensive solutions that already exist. These options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parking reservations. These work! Look at how these reduced weekend traffic at Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. This is a NO COST option that really moves the needle. - An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. - Tolling at peak times to further reduce traffic. This simple process has been effective in other Utah canyons and states. <p>I urge you to hit the pause button and reconsider the options available to reduce traffic in LCC during peak travel times. Please don't move forward with a "solution," that is expensive and scares LCC for generations to come.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
34556	JoAnn Cottle	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the final EIS recommendations for improving traffic conditions in LCC.</p> <p>Visiting and recreating in LCC is one of the great pleasures of my life. At times in the winter, traffic can be a mess, but UDOT's preferred alternative to improve canyon traffic on these specific days will do irreparable to the canyon and only serve a few private businesses. I appreciate UDOT's sincere efforts to fulfill their charge from the Utah State Legislature to improve winter traffic in LCC. However, the desired alternative is an expensive boondoggle that bypasses trying common sense alternatives that are far less expense or damaging to the canyon. In addition, these businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Some of my concerns with the Gondola include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall that will forever scar LCC,"s one of a kind scenery. - The "clean," the gondola will be will power by COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). - The gondolas base station with 2,500 "premium," parking spots will just create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. Once those are filled, traffic problems will be pushed fuller into the valley to bus stops. - The cost to ride the gondola and potential long waits in line at peak times will likely mean auto traffic in the canyon will not be significantly reduced. - Because the gondola only stops at Snowbird and Alta, non-resort canyon users will likely continue to drive in the canyon in the winter. - It's difficult to see significant usage of the gondola in the summer, so I assume it will be an idle eye sore most of the summer months. - Finally, the estimated \$600 million cost of the gondola is by UDOT's own admission, an overly optimistic price tag. Similar to the Utah State Prison relocation, the half a billion price tag will be double, if not more if it's actually built. Spending that kind of money on a project to objectively benefit a handful of

		<p>private businesses in a specific industry seems folly at best. Rather, than jump into this expensive eye sore, let's first try less expensive solutions that already exist. These options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parking reservations. These work! Look at how these reduced weekend traffic at Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. This is a NO COST option that really moves the needle. - An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. - Tolling at peak times to further reduce traffic. This simple process has been effective in other Utah canyons and states. <p>I urge you to hit the pause button and reconsider the options available to reduce traffic in LCC during peak travel times. Please don't move forward with a "solution," that is expensive and scares LCC for generations to come. Thank you!</p>
34574	Kurt Hegmann	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>There are many elements to examine. Durability over decades, functionality/ease of use and environmental impact are probably the most important concerns as no solution is cheap. As well, it should be noted that each aspect of dysfunction, individually and in aggregate, puts pressures on people to use cars.</p> <p>Examining these in no particular order: Durability with Bus is by far the lowest, Tram moderate, and Train is highest where rail lines last a long time tho eventually need replacement.</p> <p>Pollution is highest with buses (both from car tires + lesser component of exhaust driving to the canyon mouths/lots and the buses themselves), moderate with tram (primarily car tires driving to the parking lots but less from the in-canyon perspective) and lowest with trains (less driving to reach a nearer/dispersed parking lot). Other pollutants track similarly.</p> <p>Parking lots buildout is high with the buses and trams but least with the trains.</p> <p>Traffic jams are high with either the gravel pit parking structure for buses and/or probably are even higher with the LaCaille lot for the tram, but dispersed if not negligible for train where the many parking lots are distributed closer to people and buses become more viable to go to the trains.</p> <p>Carrying capacity (including carrying the most people at the 0800-0900 starting times) is lowest for buses, moderate for tram but best for train.</p> <p>The ability to get people in/out of the transit mode is an under recognized, but major issue as it is by far slowest with buses (i.e., annoyingly slow one at a time, and pace set by the slowest person to get up/down stairs who can be wearing ski boots) while it is moderate for trams and fastest for trains (large doors open, and divulge large numbers who quickly go around the slow ones).</p> <p>Ability to access hiking areas is moderate with buses, impossible with the trams and highest with 30-60s whistle stop train stops which can be varied by time of the year/seasonal demand (ala Zermatt, CH, to which IMO decision makers should take a paid trip to allow for a better understanding).</p> <p>The ability to eliminate/reduce rental cars is poor to negligible with buses or the tram option, but is high with a train where direct connection with the airport is possible.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>There is no leveragability (\$) with the bus or tram, but the train then becomes more leverage able as by obviating the need for a car rental, there are considerable cost savings for the vacationing public (e.g., can charge higher prices on tickets because someone no longer needs the expense of a rental car)</p> <p>Another important aspect is the ability to function when most needed (i.e., snow), which is poor with the buses, but good with either the tram or train option.</p> <p>Functioning when windy is poor with the tram, but good with either bus or train options.</p> <p>Neighborhood traffic jams are Moderate to high depending on the option, e.g., gravel lot, there will be high volume traffic jams on Wasatch and the La Caille neighborhood will be complete bedlam for the tram option, while trains allow for dispersion throughout the valley's parking lot areas and airport.</p> <p>The overall environmental impact is highest with buses, moderate with trams and lowest with the train option.</p> <p>In sum, the key facets of long-term durability, ease of use, minimizing dysfunction, demonstrated successful implementation internationally, environmental impact all align with the train being the superior option, not buses or trams.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
34579	Ben Ricketts	<p>The gondola B alternative is the wrong choice for Little Cottonwood Canyon, Utah and the environment. The initial proposed phasing is worth the expense and worth trying.</p> <p>There are so many unanswered questions - so many much less expensive solutions that have not been tried. Why on earth is it a good idea to spend so much money on the gondola without trying those other solutions? Putting in a gondola requires significant infrastructure that can't be easily removed if this solution does not work.</p> <p>The initial phasing is a great way to tackle the problem in a more cost-effective and environmentally friendly way.</p> <p>Enhanced busing without the road widening seems like a no-brainer. Provide more options for public transportation. More buses = more opportunity for riding public transportation = fewer long lines and packed buses. Let's make it EASIER to take the bus. And if we are using buses, why not make them electric which is even more environmentally friendly? Several of our local leaders tested out electric buses and found they worked great up and down the canyon.</p> <p>If we are using enhanced busing, make it easier for riders with 'express' buses to Alta, 'express' buses to Snowbird and 'local' buses to stop at popular trailheads.</p> <p>Tolling will affect people's decisions to drive up the canyon and the funds can be used for road maintenance, avalanche control, sustaining the tolling system, etc. Tolling works in Millcreek Canyon - why not Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon too?</p> <p>Parking reservations at BOTH Snowbird and Alta are a great idea. If you don't have a parking reservation, you won't drive up the canyon! This is a proved</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>solution!</p> <p>Enforcement of the traction law is also a no-brainer. Only allow vehicles up the canyon with the proper tires and AWD. This should be enforced leading up to a storm as well to reduce the numbers of cars slipping and sliding and getting into accidents.</p> <p>The addition of permanent infrastructure (20+ towers) makes me sick to my stomach. How can we even comprehend such a choice that would impact the land, the watershed and the views? We need to preserve the landscape AND the beauty and wonder of LCC. Building the gondola towers will permanently destroy the views. That infrastructure cannot be easily removed.</p> <p>Ultimately, the gondola only benefits a small portion of the population - a relative few who already have the means to ski. Taxpayers' money should be used to improve the lives of the state's most vulnerable (bolster things like low-income housing, food insecurity) or fight climate change or improve our public education system. The gondola is not a good use of taxpayers' funds.</p>
34582	Harriet Wallis	<p>1)A gondola does not solve the problem. It will create a hug bottleneck as people jam up to park at the loading station and then jam up again as they wait to ride up the canyon.</p> <p>2) Bad health idea. A Gondola system will force people to be together and breathe on each other -- such as in a pandemic.</p> <p>3)Construction costs and overrun costs always go up. It's wrong to force Utah taxpayers to pay for something that a small percentage of them will use. I ski, but why should any non-skier, resident of St. George, etc, be asked to pay for something they won't use? This is not a one-time cost, either.</p> <p>4) Annual operating costs have not been figured into taxpayer cost.</p> <p>5)There are less invasive, lower-cost alternatives to a gondola. A toll system (for both canyons) plus parking reservations should be required at both Alta and Snowbird.</p> <p>Toll system: Count of all valid parking spaces in the canyon. Install an electronic car-counting system (similar to airport parking garages) at the base. Once the system counts that enough cars have gone through the gates, the gates would lower and not raise again until a certain number of vehicles had passed through on the downward side.</p> <p>Residents and employees would have key cards that would raise the gates for them. This system would work for Big Cottonwood too.</p> <p>6)A gondola only benefits 2 commercial businesses -- Alta and Snowbird -- that are on National Forest Service land. A gondola will prevent access to public land by making it too costly to use.</p> <p>7)Public and political opinion is against the gondola, but UDOT refuses to listen.</p> <p>8) STOP the GONDOLA!</p>
34583	Jane Hudson	<p>I am wholeheartedly against the Gondola proposal.</p> <p>I live in Millcreek, and recreate in the Wasatch Mountains almost every day (year round). I love the Wasatch and feel that we all need to work hard to preserve its</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>beauty.,Ä®</p> <p>Ä®The current traffic problem only happens less than <15 days a year. Throughout the EIS, the transportation problems are projected to get worse with population growth. Sections 1.3, 1.4.1.2, and 1.4.2.2 (just to name a few) discuss this growth and the related problems. Ä®</p> <p>Ä®The gondola is not only an eye sore, but will cause major impacts to the canyon (i.e. destroying world class bouldering areas and various ecosystems). We need to put real effort into trying to expand the bus system or try another option like tolling. The gondola parking lot will be almost a mile from the gondola station, it's expensive to ride, it's slower than driving and is less convenient (especially for groups and families). People will not use it.</p> <p>It only serves a portion of canyon users, only those going to resorts and the resorts themselves. There is no disincentive to drive so people will continue to do so.,Ä®</p> <p>Ä®I find it extraordinarily irresponsible to ignore the obvious need to examine the level of visitation that this fragile resource can handle without damage. The EIS simply waves off this point in S.12 by saying "The Forest Service acknowledges that, in the future, management might be needed to limit resource impacts from user visitation in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Specific visitor capacities are not being considered by the USDA Forest Service at this time.",Ä®</p> <p>Ä®If we weigh the growth impacts in this equation so heavily that we are willing to spend \$600M to \$1B of taxpayer money for a "future" problem (right now it's <15 days a year) ... how can we not ask the Forest Service to "consider visitor capacities?" It is negligent and irresponsible not to do so. We cannot simply blame the Forest Service and wave this away as a "noted" but "ignored" concern!,Ä®</p> <p>Ä®I am adamantly opposed to this proposed alternative and demand that all other options that be tried and exhausted FIRST before building a \$600M gondola that will destroy the canyon.,Ä®</p> <p>Ä®It's too expensive. It's too invasive. It will likely encourage rather than discourage car traffic. And ... it won't solve the powder-day traffic problem, there will just be lines of cars waiting to enter the rapidly-filled gondola parking lot. There will be no difference to the users of 9400 S and Wasatch Blvd (and surrounding neighborhoods) on those days.</p> <p>This also does not help the traffic congestion is any other canyon, namely Big Cottonwood Canyon. I implore you to give bussing a real shot and make an effort to improve the bus system. That is a scalable and more sustainable option that has not been given a real shot. Ä®</p> <p>Ä®The gondola is not the right answer. There are many common-sense approaches that could and should be implemented.</p>
34646	Chris Adams	<p>The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance (WBA) is a local SLC nonprofit representing the interests of thousands of backcountry - and resort - users both locally and nationally as they pertain to the preservation of the famous non-resort terrain in the Tri-Canyon area. We have paid very close attention to the LCC EIS transportation process, and this is our formal comment.</p>

		<p>WBA agrees with UDOT that a preferred solution will represent a summary of key concerns expressed within the public comments that were received and processed: EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS to dispersed recreation, OVERCROWDING, VISUAL IMPACTS, WATER QUALITY IMPACTS, AND YEAR-ROUND ACCESS for a majority of visitors. The proposed solution does not address these aspects - below is a list of issues that we see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors," but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best. It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot is a red herring. WBA does not think that vehicle traffic will be abated enough (if at all) by the gondola to justify this conclusion. Backcountry users - like resort patrons - want to be able to use public transit in lieu of their own vehicles to access the canyon, but that is not possible under the current proposal.</p> <p>Economic Benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts.," WBA does not feel that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that end is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Furthermore, data from the National Ski Area Association likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT for the gondola was \$550M. This was pre-inflationary times, so even in the last year that figure will have risen to \$600M, if not significantly higher (which WBA suspects to be the case). Even if the cost has only increased by \$50M, that means that every single person in Utah is "paying," \$200 each to have what is effectively the most expensive chairlift in history installed for the benefit of two businesses (and auxiliary businesses). Any benefit associated with the proposed gondola will likely never be realized by the many Utahns who don't ski and/or live in other areas of the state, despite them paying for it.</p> <p>Gondola Fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs for people to ride the gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p> <p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and</p>
--	--	---

		<p>October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas.</p> <p>Other Solutions - UDOT says "it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B," but it also may NOT take years, so clearly the gondola is the priority. And if UDOT is trying to simultaneously raise at least \$600M for the gondola AND fund the alternative solutions, the money is in danger of not being available for ANY solution. And by making it clear that the gondola is the preferred solution, UDOT is effectively being incentivized to make the alternate solutions NOT work. Therefore, we strongly suggest that UDOT acknowledge up front that the large tab for the gondola is unrealistic and focus its efforts on simpler, more easily attained transit solutions using existing infrastructure: tolling for all canyon users to disincentivize SOV's, enhanced bus lanes, enhanced bus service (already being cut for the 22-23 season), alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes, etc. This would require UDOT working more closely with UTA, which appears to not be the case.</p> <p>Phasing/Safety/Construction - The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Risk/Flexibility - UDOT's consideration of a gondola as a transportation solution is highly innovative - and risky. While they may be confident in all of the analysis that went into evaluating its chance of success in meeting the Purpose and Need, there is little discussion in the DEIS for how a gondola system would be modified physically or operationally if that becomes necessary, or who would be in charge of making those determinations, and on what basis, and for what cost, and what the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of those changes would be. This creates an inadequate basis for a decision to select the gondola alternative.</p> <p>Controversial - By anyone's assessment, this project has been "polarizing," in the community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The DEIS uses a softer characterization of "strong interest." It is irresponsible to suggest it is anything other than controversial; for example, the mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative, instead saying that common sense solutions that use existing infrastructure and more buses should be pursued. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have said the same thing.</p> <p>Parking Reservations/Tolling - Alta Ski Lifts parking fees this past winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the impact that paid parking and tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. This week UDOT again introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Big Cottonwood Canyon - UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar traffic problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA. A BCC/LCC connection is unacceptable to WBA and many other stakeholders who want to preserve the unique qualities of each canyon and avoid the prospect of lifts criss-crossing the ridgetops.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever," and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing/riding tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>Avalanche Mitigation - The use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening and once anti-personnel shells are launched over the gondola, it must be cleared before it can start up again. In fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p> <p>Effects on climbing - While WBA primarily represents the interests of wintertime non-motorized use, many WBA members are also climbers. We are deeply concerned about the effect the construction and operation of the gondola will have on the world class climbing in LCC. Climbing has a long history in the canyon, is a very popular activity, and it's representative group Salt Lake City Climbers Alliance has a long history of engaging with the state and the LDS church to protect and enhance the LCC climbing areas, yet the EIS effectively ignored the impact on climbing in its Preferred Solution.</p> <p>Viewshed - While we acknowledge that the top of LCC harbors a small town and two ski resorts and related businesses, the heart of LCC is wild terrain that includes clearly visible tracts of designated wilderness. The effect of 200-foot tall towers and 35-person gondola cars will be an eyesore that a majority of constituents, to whom such infrastructure will be visible whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, or skiing, will find offensive. Gondola infrastructure will be visible to anyone skiing, hiking, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive up the canyon. There are clearly better, more logical common sense solutions that can be put in place that do not create such an eyesore in this unique environment.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts on this process and for your consideration of this comment.</p> <p>Sincerely, The Board of Directors of Wasatch Backcountry Alliance</p>
34670	Quinn Weber	My family and I are vehemently opposed to the Little Cottonwood Canyon gondola project.

		<p>Please protect the canyon and the Wasatch range from this abhorrent project idea.</p> <p>There are better solutions to the Little Cottonwood Canyon traffic congestion situation.</p> <p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean," the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium," parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it.
--	--	--

		I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!
34676	Matt McLaren	<p>I am strongly opposed to UDOT's preferred Gondola alternative B as a solution for decreasing congestion in LCC. There are better low cost solutions which have either not been tested or fully implemented.</p> <p>Some of these lower cost solutions include but are not limited to a toll on all non-resident personal vehicles entering LCC - not just above entry 1. Duplicate Solitude's usage of a sliding scale with an inverse relationship between the price of the toll and the amount of people in the toll paying vehicle. This would also encourage car-pooling. Payment of a toll would grant that vehicle the right to park in any legal parking spot in LCC and is not tied to the purchase of a ski pass. All funds generated from tolls would be used to mitigate the cost to tax payers for avalanche path snowsheds, enhanced bus service, traction enforcement and improved trailhead parking and facilities.</p> <p>In addition, implement a toll seasons pass option, with the opportunity to purchase a LCC parking seasons pass predicated on having a UDOT Cottonwood Canyon sticker and qualifying 4x4 or AWD vehicle. Grant these qualifying vehicles the ability to bypass the toll station/traction enforcement line. While on the subject of snow tires, how about enforcing snow tire/traction laws with the same vim and vigor alcohol laws are enforced in Utah? It is a low cost high benefit solution which keeps non winter worthy cars off the highway.</p> <p>As a former resident of the Top of the World Drive neighborhood in Cottonwood Heights, dealing with powder day traffic is a known entity and an accepted cost of living there. The direction of travel for the vast amount of trips being made by neighborhood residents is the opposite direction of ski traffic. This is an inconvenience you learn to plan around. Cottonwood Heights residents and government have opposed both the widening of Wasatch Boulevard and the gondola. They accept the tradeoff between occasional traffic backing up into the neighborhoods compared to the permanent negative impact of widening Wasatch Boulevard and building a gondola.</p> <p>The gondola is not a cost effective solution, particularly when better congestion mitigation solutions outlined above have not been fully implemented. It's obvious the cost estimate of the La Caille gondola solution (\$391 million) would end up costing at least 2-3x that amount given current inflationary pressure and significantly higher borrowing costs. The visual impact to LCC is unacceptable and degrees of magnitude worse than the visual impact snowsheds and a 3rd lane for busses would represent. A gondola cannot run during interlodge restrictions or during avalanche mitigation efforts. If a gondola is truly needed as a secondary emergency egress, why not run one over the ridge to BCC, or Summit or Wasatch counties? As currently constituted, the LCC gondola offload points are fixed and limited to just Snowbird and Alta. Buses have a ton more flexibility. For example the BCC bus stops at the Spruces Campground. Finally, the idea of gondola sponsorships earning \$4m million annually is laughable.</p> <p>While I appreciate having a forum to state my opinion regarding UDOT's preferred solution, this whole process has the wiff of insider dealings. Powerful developers/ex-legislators/ski resort management using public funds to subsidize a solution which benefits them while they carry none of the cost is the very definition of corporate welfare. I'm tired of Snowbird holding the threat of developing the north side of LCC below Mt. Superior, or Alta threatening Grizzly Gulch access, as leverage to pursue their self-interest unimpeded. Cynically decreasing ski bus frequency this winter is the icing on the cake. Salt Lake</p>

		County, Salt Lake City, Cottonwood Heights and the Town of Alta have formally opposed this plan but in the end this will shake out like the prison move, it's a fait accompli.
34704	Brian Bass	<p>I am disappointed in UDOT's recommendation for a gondola service through Little Cottonwood Canyon. I do not believe this is a good solution for many reasons.</p> <p>First and foremost, Alta and Snowbird are not the main attractions of Little Cottonwood Canyon. The canyon itself is the main attraction. According to An Estimation of Visitor Use in Little Cottonwood, Big Cottonwood, and Millcreek Canyons prepared by the Utah State University Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism in 2016, only 22.8% of vehicles using the canyon throughout the year were visiting the ski resorts. Hiking, sightseeing, camping, rock climbing, mountain biking, and backcountry skiing account for a far larger share of canyon usership through the course of the year, and yet none of these recreationists will experience benefit from a gondola. In fact, they will see a diminished experience as some current trails and recreation areas will be destroyed by the gondola towers, and the viewshed of other recreation areas will be negatively impacted.</p> <p>Next, I do not believe the gondola will work well to reduce traffic issues. Most people currently prefer to use their own cars over public transportation to the ski resorts, and by far the most common reason I see for this online is that "they 'need' their cars at the resort, so they can have their ice chest, change of clothes, etc... right there at the resort. If they were to take the bus, they wouldn't be able to carry all this stuff to the resort.," The gondola does not solve this problem, and therefore I only see people using it in large numbers once the canyon is already backed up. Therefore, the gondola might not actually reduce any congestion, it will only force more people into the resorts, creating longer lift lines, causing more on-mountain accidents and injuries, and diminishing the customer skiing experience.</p> <p>Traffic congestion is also not an issue 90% of the year. There is no congestion in the summers or winter weekdays. Even weekends when it hasn't snowed in a while see very little traffic congestion. It is debatable how urgent some kind of traffic congestion solution is and rushing into an irreversible half-billion dollar project seems rushed.</p> <p>But if a traffic congestion solution is to be implemented, there are many reasons not to choose the gondola right away. The first is cost, as the gondola alternative is far more expensive than other options that could be explored first. The gondola alternative was estimated at \$550 Million dollars in 2020, which would be equivalent to about \$600 Million now. Looking at our big project history, the Salt Lake Airport construction was initially estimated to cost \$1.8 Billion and now estimates are upward of \$4.1 Billion. The longest gondola in the world right now stands at just under 9 km. At 8 miles long, this would make the LCC gondola over 33% longer than the world's longest gondola. A construction project of this unprecedented magnitude would bring many unknowns, almost certainly causing the gondola budget to creep upward over time.</p> <p>Right here in Utah we have a perfect example of what is known to reduce traffic congestion, as we have seen Zion National Park implement mandatory bussing over the last 20+ years. Zion recently received a grant for \$33 Million that will replace their entire bus fleet with electric buses. The enhanced bus service considered in the EIS here is \$200M cheaper, plus it could be scaled as needed, which could further reduce costs. The gondola alternative has no flexibility or scalability. Looking at the EIS data, over the last 20 years the road has been closed an average of 56 hours a year for avalanche control. This is not very much</p>

		<p>per year, but the trend is what I am more concerned with. 4 of the last 6 years have had less than 30 hours of closure. Our world is trending in a direction where there is less and less snow each year. To lock ourselves into a full gondola solution at this point in history, without trying a scalable option first, is unwise.</p> <p>Finally, this is not a project that has Utahns in mind. From what I've seen, the majority of elected officials in Salt Lake are not in favor of the gondola alternative. The resident public that lives near the canyon are certainly not in favor of the gondola alternative. The people that benefit from this project are the owners of Snowbird and Alta, some of the wealthiest people in America who hardly need a government handout. If Alta and Snowbird were truly worried about traffic congestion, they could stop accepting the Epic or Ikon pass and traffic would improve overnight. The highest priority should be to preserve the land for use by all Utahns and guests. Intentionally increasing the capacity of Little Cottonwood Canyon beyond its limit is unacceptable. Increasing ski resort capacity beyond what the road can handle will negatively impact the watershed and recreational user experience. Increased capacity will also inevitably lead to increased ski resort expansion pressures, which will only further reduce public access to what once was public land available to all.</p> <p>I agree with some forms of the suggested alternative such as implementing tolling and vehicle occupancy restrictions. My suggestion would be to have the resorts reserve out their parking spaces ahead of time. Anyone without a reserved parking space would then be required to take the bus to the resort. This would do far more to reduce congestion than a gondola. Recreationists that do take their cars into the canyon should then be charged a toll, which could be used to offset the costs of the buses and other more impactful capital improvements like parking lot construction for trails that don't have them, or improvements to existing lots like trash can installation. This combination of buses and tolling would do far more to reduce congestion than a gondola would, and at a lower cost. It could also be implemented immediately, rather than after a long, expensive, and irreversible construction project, all while preserving the natural beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p>
34747	Eric Kraan	<p>It is my intent for this comment to become part of the record that will be reviewed by a variety of authorities and provide a record of rational concerns about the environmental impact of UDOT's preferred option.</p> <p>The Gondola B option will severely impact the local community, dividing a neighborhood with an unnecessary roadway expansion, and adding massive parking facilities in a location already littered with an overabundance of parking lots.</p> <p>Dissecting communities with high-speed, multi-lane highways goes against what Utah's Governor Cox has publicly stated previously. Similarly, it is also against the policy goals of the Biden administration, as stated by secretary Pete Buttigieg as part of the new National Roadway Safety Strategy.</p> <p>It is for these reasons, that the Gondola B option, may solve the questions posed by the Utah state legislature, but fail to be good at Urban Planning, foster good community building, and increase roadway safety concerns when compared to the US DOT's Safe System Approach.</p> <p>The proposed Gondola will add a massive 2500 parking structure at the south end of Cottonwood Heights. Parking this many cars will require a facility just as large as the one at the Salt Lake International Airport; but, because it will need to fit inside a smaller area, it will probably need to be constructed as a 10-stories</p>

		<p>high building.</p> <p>On top of this, the State Legislature already appropriated \$13 million dollars in 2017 to secure land at the Gravel Pit near Big Cottonwood Canyon to build another massive parking garage, 2.2 miles away, on the north end of the city. Please note that an underground parking facility was recently constructed at the northernmost end of SR 210, as part of a new multi-use facility also owned by the McCandless and Niederhauser corporation. The parking facility was intended to be a PAID facility, but because of the overabundance of free parking in the area has required management to offer the parking for free. Such foolish over-supply of parking will simply overrun the city and transform "The City Between the Canyons" into "The Parking Lot Between the Canyons".</p> <p>Before the unveiling of the Gondola B solution in 2020 (a full 2 years after the start of the EIS), the full premise for a traffic solution was to capture morning recreational traffic exiting the I-215 headed south at the "Gravel pit" before the flow of cars collides with commuter traffic headed north from Draper and Sandy, and the reverse scenario in the evening. There is even a proposal for a Rapid Bus system at Highland Dr and 9400 south that would move commuter traffic more efficiently and reduce future commuter traffic pressure on Wasatch blvd. The benefits of this plan would have been:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Securing safe egress and ingress to neighborhoods along Wasatch Blvd between these two canyons. 2) Allowing for urban planning to develop a quaint urban center to serve as a welcome mat to the canyons. <p>The Gondola B option scraps both of these goals because it creates this massive parking garage at the "La Caile" location, increasing rather than reducing the amount of traffic along the corridor. By effectively canceling the efforts to reduce the impact of 3 different user groups (recreation, commuters, and locals), UDOT is proposing a commUNITY destructive project.</p> <p>According to traffic counts shared by UDOT and the City of Cottonwood Heights, almost half (46% to be precise) of all current traffic along the 2.2-mile segment of Wasatch blvd between Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons is local traffic; meaning, that most trips in this corridor begins or ends within one of the 16 points of egress along the 2.2 miles of Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>Further, there are only 3 signalized intersections throughout this entire segment, meaning that of the 16 access points locals can opt to leave or enter their neighborhood, only 7 will be signalized. The safety repercussions for half the users of Wasatch blvd, who have no other option but to turn in or out of Wasatch while facing traffic at more than 50mph on a multi-lane highway should be enough to raise SAFETY red flags to local, state, regional, and federal leaders. It is especially troubling to see our state transportation department remain ABSOLUTELY indifferent, even when the state's Zero Fatalities continue to utterly fail to meet its stated safety goals, fatalities keep raising at an alarming rate, and urbanization efforts continue to be planned and implemented with absolute disregard for safety and commUNITY.</p> <p>UDOT has concrete reasons for continuing to prioritize high-speed car traffic ahead of common-sense urban planning and safety. They are following directions</p>
--	--	--

		<p>from the Governor's office and the State's Legislature, who have remained tone-deaf to the fact that roadway fatalities in the state are increasing as our state is growing and remains divided by high-speed roadways.</p> <p>It is particularly egregious for UDOT leadership, a cabinet position within the office of Governor Cox, to pursue this effort because the governor's first State of the State speech indicated his desire to meet the challenges of growth by uniting communities, especially those that have been separated by urban highways like I-15; meanwhile, at the same time, his DOT is slashing cities and dreams with the same ol' highways.</p> <p>Source: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CIPB8rsGSSMsRHJN9bDn8Kx2Gsy0kl8L/view</p> <p>The issues of commUNITY building, good urban planning, and safety are at the core of the vast opposition to the Gondola. A person needs not be a professional musician to appreciate good music or detest the bad. Similarly, people do not need to be professionally trained urban planners or traffic engineers to appreciate how a good project or a bad project will alter their sense of commUNITY. The fact that UDOT leadership has repeatedly stated throughout the process that the outcome of the EIS is not up to public opinion is troubling. CommUNITY voices do matter because that is how they communicate their need for a sense of place, and Utah's state leadership is well-advised to listen carefully.</p> <p>Besides, Transportation and Urban Planning professionals know perfectly well that high-speed highways and massive parking lots erode a community's sense of safety and unity. Designing for slow speeds within the complex urban environment is such a necessary prerequisite that Salt Lake City's Transportation Director, Jon Larsen, has extensively written about it in the past. Example here: https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/2/2/forgiving-design-vs-the-forgiveness-of-slow-speeds</p> <p>It is IMPERATIVE, for proper urban planning to be at the forefront of our state's efforts to meet the demands of growth puts on our urban landscape and our canyons. It is also well past time to re-calibrate UDOT's priorities and for the UTAH State Legislature to reverse its mandate on UDOT and grant the department the flexibility of contextual design and demand that safety be prioritized above high-speed traffic.</p> <p>We must also put to rest this foolish idea that the Gondola will replicate some sort of European-like Utopia. The truth is that a Gondola cannot accomplish such a lofty goal. It takes good city planning, where the towns and villas that surround a ski area are carefully manicured into quaint, human-scale, walkable places that enrich the human experience rather than being overrun by massive parking-lot garages littered throughout like cow patties.</p> <p>The tragedy of this moment resides in the fact that state leadership continues to fail to recognize the fact that the proposed Gondola will do next to nothing to mitigate traffic up the canyon, (for that a toll will need to be implemented) and its supporting infrastructure will set back systematic safety goals as well as destroy what little opportunity there is for community members to create a well-founded community capable of improving both; the quality of life of the people that call this place home, and the quality of the ski experience every visitor wants.</p>
--	--	--

34749	Ray Diehl	<p>It is my opinion that the proposed Little Cottonwood Canyon gondola would lead to other development activities and would hasten the destruction of natural beauty in the canyon and negatively impact summer canyon experiences for Wasatch Front residents. I also have concerns about the level of public funding required for the proposed gondola - which will benefit a relatively small percentage of Utahns. For example, many years ago there was discussion of an inter-connect system that would connect the Alta and Brighton areas with a gondola. This idea was scrapped with many of the arguments against it based on the negative impacts a gondola would have on currently undeveloped areas of Little and Big Cottonwood Canyons. It is logical to assume that if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon then the inter-connect proposal would likely arise again along with its related destruction of more wild and undeveloped areas.</p> <p>I have ridden multiple gondolas in both the United States and Canada. Generally the gondolas are surrounded by maintenance roads and/or areas that have been cleared of trees for skiing. The maintenance roads allow access for maintaining gondola towers and also provide access routes for rescuing gondola riders in case of a breakdown. While the initial gondola proposal may not include maintenance roads, I think there is a high likelihood that they may be added in the future and further erode the canyon's scenic and habitat values.</p> <p>And while the current proposal is geared primarily for winter transport, it is not hard to imagine that if built it may eventually be used for summer transport as well. Both Big and Little Cottonwood canyons see heavy summer usage currently. One proposal someone has floated is to have a shuttle run between the Snowbird gondola station and the White Pine/Red trailhead should the gondola be operated during the summer months.</p> <p>On the surface this is a great idea. But thinking back to a public hearing I attended when Snowbird development was first proposed, there was a great deal of discussion about whether White Pine Canyon would be included in the resort's boundaries. Luckily it was not - and it has been preserved as a popular summer hiking area without tree clearing, lift towers or other development. But I could easily see a time when someone may suggest that it would be easier to service that area if it was a part of the resort. Since Snowbird has already expanded over the ridge from its original developed area into Mineral Basin, and expansion up canyon is blocked by Alta, it is not unreasonable to suspect that down canyon expansion might be proposed in the future. If this were to occur, then the scenic beauty and undeveloped nature of White Pine Canyon would be at risk once again.</p> <p>I am also concerned about funding for the proposed canyon gondola project. Not only is it a very expensive proposition, but its direct benefits are limited to a relatively small segment of Utah's population - particularly if it is limited to winter-only use.</p> <p>The Cottonwood Canyons are a gem for the people of the Wasatch Front. Very few large metropolitan areas have relatively undeveloped canyon and mountain areas within such easy reach of their residents for both winter and summer recreation. The canyons are under constant threat of over-development which may destroy much of the natural beauty found within them. The proposed Little Cottonwood Canyon is a threat to both the canyon's beauty and the recreational value for current and future generations of Wasatch Front residents.</p>
34770	April M Love	<p>I suspect that our public comments have been solicited just so that UDOT can say that they did ask for comments, but go ahead with their plans regardless of how the public input goes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The gondola project will limit transport to those without disabilities, since the issue of accessibility has not been addressed. The assumption is that able-bodied skiers will be the only people using the gondola. 2. The cost of the ticket to travel up the canyon by the gondola is not mentioned.

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>I'm guessing that the one-way ticket will be somewhere around \$45-\$50.</p> <p>3. The beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon will be permanently defaced.</p> <p>4. Destruction of the watershed, on which the Salt Lake Valley relies.</p> <p>5. Traffic delays and crowds foreseeable at the gondola base will cause many prospective users to drive instead.</p> <p>6. Better and much cheaper alternatives exist that UDOT has not considered. One would be to implement alternate day access depending on whether a vehicle's license plate number is even or odd. Another would be mandatory carpooling enabled by an app (similar to Uber's) to match drivers and riders who would meet at a designated place near the bottom of the canyon. It's understandable, although not in the public's interest, that the ski resorts would object to such arrangements for fear they would reduce the number of skier days.</p> <p>7. Despite alternatives to the "gondola solution,," these more feasible, more reasonably priced alternatives are being ignored. My thought is "follow the money,," The scent of graft and lining the pockets of those involved in the "planning," ramming the gondola option down the throats of Utah taxpayers.</p> <p>8. Whether it's the cost of construction, potential threat to the watershed, special interests backing the project, equity issues, carrying capacity of the canyon or some combination of all five, canyon users ranging from their early teens to late 70s voiced their opposition to the gondola and support for the resolution.</p>
34774	Trent Duncan	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>Thank you for accepting public comments on the Little Cottonwood Canyon Final EIS and Draft Record of Decision. As a resident of Salt Lake County and a frequent user of Little Cottonwood Canyon during all seasons of the year, I would like to express my opposition to the preferred alternative, which includes construction of a gondola from a base station near the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon to it its terminus at Alta, Utah. I also oppose any alternative that would widen the road in canyon. Prior to implementing either of these alternatives, UDOT should work with local communities, Alta and Snowbird ski resorts, the U.S. Forest Service, and non-governmental organizations representing a variety of users to implement prudent and cost effective measures that specifically address traffic and safety issues. As part of any solution, UDOT should move forward with construction of snow sheds, improved shoulders with bike lanes, restrictions on road side parking, and trailhead improvements. Regarding the preferred alternative, I urge you to consider the following:</p> <p>1) Local Input should be a primary factor taken into consideration in the decision-making process. While Alta and Snowbird are destination resorts, year-around traffic congestion in Little Cottonwood Canyon is primarily the result of local use. Residents of Salt Lake County are the primary users of Little Cottonwood Canyon and are disproportionately impacted by UDOT's decision. The majority of residents in the County have also expressed clear and unequivocal opposition to the construction of the gondola. Cottonwood Heights, Sandy City, Salt Lake City, and Salt Lake County have passed resolutions opposing the project. Not a single community in Salt Lake County has voiced support the gondola. It would be inconsistent with Utah values for UDOT to approve the gondola when it directly contradicts the will of local residents who are the primary users of the canyon are disproportionately impacted by current traffic problems.</p> <p>2) The gondola does not benefit all canyon users. Any transportation solution adopted should benefit all recreation users and provide year-round benefit. A gondola that transports people directly to Snowbird and Alta harms rather than benefits climbers, back country skiers, cyclists, hikers and other users. While other aspects of UDOT's preferred alternative (e.g., improved parking at trailheads and snowsheds) would have broad public benefit, the gondola only addressed the needs of a limited number of resort skiers. Of particular concern, construction of a gondola does not provide access to a single trailhead in the canyon or address</p>

		<p>traffic associated summer and winter recreation use of areas such as Lisa Falls and White Pine trailhead, which provides access to the White Pine, Red Pine, Maybird, and Hogum drainages.</p> <p>3) The cost of the gondola outweighs benefits and should be not be covered by tax payers. The estimated cost for construction of the gondola is approximately \$550 million. Given the current labor market, supply chain issues, and inflation, these costs are likely an underestimate. Prior to making any decision UDOT should update its cost estimates to account for changed conditions. Utah tax payers should not shoulder the cost of a gondola, especially when traffic issues are primarily limited to morning and evening hours on powder days, weekends and holidays days during peak ski season. The costs are of the gondola area unreasonable given that the primary concern is traffic jams that occur approximately 120 hours per year (2 hours in the morning and two hours in the evening 30 days per year). This money should be used to address more pressing transportation or public service needs.</p> <p>UDOT should also recognize that the primary beneficiaries of the gondola are two for profit corporations operating on public lands and a demographic that primarily includes white upper-class skiers. As prices for equipment, parking, lift tickets, and amenities continue to increase, the ski industry is pricing out middle-class families. While the State of Utah, and specifically Salt Lake County, are becoming increasingly diverse, the ski industry is becoming more exclusive. Statistically, less than 4 percent of the U.S. population skis. Diverse and low-income communities should not subsidize a project that provides no direct public benefit. The cost should also not be shouldered by residents of Salt County residents that oppose the project.</p> <p>4) There is no evidence that skiers will use the gondola. UTA officials collect demographic data, including ethnicities and income levels of riders. This information is relevant when estimating ridership of the proposed gondola. According to 2020 census data, Salt Lake County is 87.1% white; 18.8% Hispanic or Latino; 4.6% Asian; 2.2% Black; 1.8% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and 1.4% Native American or Native Alaskan.</p> <p>In 2022, according to UTA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minorities make up 25.9% of all riders and 31% are low-income riders. - Minorities make up 27.4% of fixed bus route riders, 30.3% of TRAX riders and 16.9% of commuter rail riders. - Low-income riders make up 48.1% of fixed bus route riders, 35.6% of TRAX riders and 26.3% of commuter rail riders. <p>The data above clearly shows that the primary users of mass transit systems are low-income and minority populations. As previously discussed, there is a significant diversity gap in the snowsports industry, where it is estimated that Hispanics make up only 6 percent of skiers and cost barriers prohibit low-income individuals and families from skiing (especially at Alta and Snowbird). Based on demographics data and mass transit statistics, it unreasonable to expect that white upper-class individuals and families would use the gondola. Some of the pragmatic reasons that most resort patrons would continue to drive rather than use the gondola include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commute times associated with the gondola would exceed transportation times associated with vehicle travel, and commute times matter. UDOT has underestimated the door-to-door time and inconvenience it would take to reach resorts via the gondola when adding in driving times to transportation hubs, transfers (with ski equipment in hand), wait times, and connections (which could
--	--	---

		<p>include mandatory transfer to buses prior to reaching the gondola base station from dispersed transportation hubs). Even with vehicle traffic, most resort patrons will opt for a shorter uninterrupted commute in the intimacy and privacy of their own car. Weekday skiers not affected by traffic or parking issues will also choose to drive rather than ride the gondola. Monday through Friday skiers are more likely to ski flexible and reduced hours that align with school or work schedules and are also focused on minimizing commute times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skiers value the convenience of keeping extra equipment and clothing in their vehicles. Nearly every skier will add or shed layers during the day as temperatures fluctuate. Oftentimes skiers will change skis or equipment (such as goggle lens or sunglasses) depending on conditions. Skiers using the gondola will forego these conveniences or be forced to pay exorbitant costs of resort locker facilities, which are currently limited. Oftentimes season locker rentals exceed the cost of season passes. - Tailgating is as synonymous with the skiing experience. Those using the gondola would forego this tradition and be forced to take lunch breaks in already overcrowded lodges and pay for expensive ski resort food. <p>Even with efforts to incentivize use of the gondola, it should be recognized that skiers that can afford the price of lofty lift tickets can likely absorb the costs of tolling. In fact, many users are already accustomed to paid parking, which is becoming an industry norm. Additionally, the costs of paying a toll or parking fee would likely be less than the costs of the gondola, locker rentals, and purchase of resort food. Demographical information, costs, and inconveniences indicate that UDOT will have difficult achieving its goal of reducing canyon traffic by 30 percent through alternative transportation such as the gondola as long as vehicles are allowed in the canyon.</p> <p>5) Before approving the gondola UDOT should adopt common sense and cost effective transportation solutions. Local and county governments, non-profit organizations, and interested citizens have identified a long-list of conservative, measured, cost-effective, and reasonable transportation solutions that should be implemented before approving the gondola. These solutions include, tolling, paid parking, ride share programs, increased busing, enforcement of chain and vehicle restrictions, limiting the number of vehicles in the canyon to available parking, minimizing road side parking, and construction of snowsheds. To date, few if any of these solutions have been implemented with any consistency. Before degrading the world class scenery of Little Cottonwood Canyon, UDOT should work ski resorts, local governments, and interested organizations to implement measures that could have an immediate impact on traffic and canyon safety.</p> <p>6) Traffic does not deter weekend skiers. Despite that fact that Utah and Colorado are known to have the world's worst ski traffic, they remain popular ski destinations because of terrain, conditions, and location. In fact, there is no indication that increases in traffic has or will result in a decline in ski resort use or impact the multi-billion-dollar ski industry. Traffic jams caused by weather and poorly designed roads are in fact an expectation for most skiers. Because skiing is entirely an optional extra-curricular activity, individuals can choose whether they are willing to accept the inconvenience of traffic, which is part of the skiing experience. Just as people expect to encounter crowds in America's most visited National Parks during peak summer season, they expect longer than average travel times during snow events and on weekends during peak ski season. Reducing traffic to resorts caused from increased tickets sales should not be a primary consideration in UDOT's decision.</p> <p>7) The gondola will degrade the world class scenery of Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p>
--	--	--

	<p>Because of its steep, rugged, and unforgiving topography, portions of Little Cottonwood Canyon remain largely undeveloped. In the lower- to mid-canyon, the Lone Peak and Twin Peak Wilderness Areas provide protection for scenic, geologic, biological, and recreational resources. Construction of a gondola would significantly alter the viewshed of the canyon. The greatest impacts would be to those recreating in or near the Wilderness Areas, including those using the White Pine trailhead.</p> <p>8) UDOT must consider the impacts of its decision on neighboring highway 190 in Big Cottonwood Canyon and the cumulative impacts of multiple fee proposals. UDOT's response to comments on the DEIS asserts that the cumulative impact analysis considers impacts to neighboring Big Cottonwood Canyon; however, the EIS fails to take a "hard look," at these impacts. UDOT should conduct additional studies to determine how tolling and the gondola would change visitor use patterns.</p> <p>Of specific concern, hidden within the EIS, there is limited information regarding UDOT's plans to introduce tolling as a mechanism for incentivizing use of the gondola and managing impacts to neighboring Big Cottonwood Canyon (i.e. UDOT has stated that if a toll is instituted in Little Cottonwood Canyon it would also have to be instituted in Big Cottonwood Canyon). Just recently, UDOT has begun to publicly discuss tolling proposal (featured in multiple news articles), but has admitted that "the exact details of potential are yet to be determined." UDOT's tolling proposal is a cumulative action that is inseparably connected from other canyon transportation solutions and is critical for determining whether the preferred alternative would meet UDOT's purpose and need. Additional details must be incorporated into the range of alternatives regarding UDOT's tolling proposal in order to adequately understand whether construction of the gondola would actually have an impact on traffic.</p> <p>Additionally, since publication of UDOT's final EIS, the U.S. Forest Service has announced its intent to begin charging fees at multiple trailheads and facilities across the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, including in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Options could include individual site fees or an annual pass that provides users with access to recreation sites and facilities across the forest. This too is a cumulative impact that must be considered in UDOT's EIS. UDOT must consider how Forest Service fees, ski resort parking fees, and UDOT tolling would work together (i.e., would visitors be expected to purchase a Forest Service annual pass, pay UDOT's daily toll, and reserve paid resort parking). Prior to implementing any decision, the EIS must consider how these fees would change visitor patterns, disperse use to adjacent canyons, and impact diverse and low-income communities.</p> <p>9) The EIS should disclose Alta and Snowbird's interests in the project and whether the decision has any connection to Utah's Olympic proposal. Prior to the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics the State of Utah agreed that no events would be held in Little Cottonwood Canyon due to public safety, traffic congestion, and parking limitations. The State successfully hosted the games without using facilities at either Alta or Snowbird, two of the State's flagship resorts. As the state prepares to host the games again in either 2030 or 2034, it should again exclude Snowbird and Alta as host venues. This commitment would provide the public with assurance that there is no hidden agenda and that the construction of the gondola is no way connected with Utah's desire to host another Olympic games.</p> <p>The EIS must also recognize the ski resorts' roles and interests in the project. Since publication of the Final EIS, the public has learned that Snowbird purchased that</p>
--	---

		<p>land that would be used for the gondola base station under the name of "LLC Base Property,." This would potentially require the state to rent or purchase the land on which the gondolas base station would sits from the primary beneficiary. The public must know the details and costs of any transactions or agreements between UDOT and Snowbird for use of the base and terminal facilities. The public has also learned that Gondola Works, the primary group behind public advocacy for the gondola, is backed and was started by Snowbird. Without disclosure of this information concern the public rightly remains skeptical regarding closed door agreements and whether industry has inappropriately had influence on the preferred alternative.</p> <p>10) UDOT has not adequately considered the impacts of widening Wasatch Blvd on cyclists. Wasatch Boulevard is not a highway and should not be used as one. It is road that provides access to residential neighborhoods in Cottonwood Heights, Sandy, and Draper and is used year-round by hundreds of cyclists per day. Cyclists and drivers have accepted Wasatch Boulevard as a multi-modal transportation corridor that provides sweeping and views of the surrounding mountains and Salt Lake Valley, access to canyons, and connections to trail systems (e.g., Parleys and Corner Canyon). Expansion of Wasatch Blvd would result in increased traffic and speeds and create unsafe conditions for cyclists. The addition of bike lanes to an upgraded road will not mitigate these issues and would substantially alter the character of this area. Urban cyclists prefer low volume residential roads with reduced speeds. UDOT should consider an entirely separate paralleling cycling boulevard if expansion of Wasatch Boulevard is part of its decision.</p> <p>11) UDOTs final decision should address parking issues in upper Little Cottonwood Canyon. Since UDOT initiated its EIS process tensions between Alta Ski Lifts Company and backcountry users in Little Cottonwood Canyon has increased. Alta owns and maintains nearly all parking in the upper Little Cottonwood Canyon and has instituted paid parking policies to preserve its parking for ski resort patrons. This decision has disproportionately impacted public use of National Forest system lands outside of resort boundaries. Currently there is no wintertime public parking in Little Cottonwood Canyon for non-ski resort patrons. Construction of the gondola would not address this issue because backcountry users frequently access the canyon during early morning or evening hours (5:30-8:30 AM) but have nowhere to park under Alta's current policy. In its efforts to identify transportation solutions that benefit all canyon users, UDOT should work with the Forest Service, Alta, and backcountry users to find fair and amicable solutions to existing parking problems.</p> <p>12) UDOT has inappropriate dismissed reasonable alternatives from analysis. Within the EIS UDOT dismisses several alternatives from analysis that are reasonable and should be analyzed in detail. Specifically, UDOT dismissed limiting the total number of skiers or having a reservation system as a solution to limiting traffic congestion. UDOT states that it does not have the authority to ban certain ski passes, charge more for lift tickets or parking, add more or reduce parking at the ski resorts, or limit the number of visitors at private businesses. Additionally, UDOT asserts that because S.R. 210 is a public road, UDOT does not have the ability to close the road to public travel except as a result of accidents, emergencies, or extreme weather conditions, or authority to change a private business's operating hours.</p> <p>UDOTs rationale for dismissing these alternatives is not consistent with CEQ NEPA guidance. According to CEQ's 40 most asked questions 2a and 2b, and agency must consider all reasonable alternatives, even if those alternatives are</p>
--	--	---

		<p>outside of an agency's authority or jurisdiction. In addition to being inconsistent with CEQ regulations and existing case law, UDOT's rationale for dismissing these alternatives is a logical fallacy. The most obvious way to reduce canyon traffic, even during morning and evening hours, is limiting the number of vehicles in the canyon at a given time. Reducing the number of skiers through capping ticket sales or limiting the number of vehicles in the canyon to available parking is a reasonable, clear, and obvious solution to traffic and safety problems. Any assertion that these measure would not reduce traffic, even during peak hours, fails the test of reason, especially when similar measures have been successfully employed at other popular recreation destinations, including national parks and ski resorts throughout the country. Further, this assertion does not comport with the fact that in recent years UDOT has temporarily closed both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons when parking lots are at capacity.</p> <p>"In determining the scope of alternatives to be considered, the emphasis is on what is 'reasonable' rather than on whether the proponent or applicant likes or is itself capable of carrying out a particular alternative. Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant.,"</p> <p>Before approving construction of a gondola opposed by locals and at the expense of tax payers, UDOT must consider an alternative that would limit the number of vehicles in the canyon and limit ski resort tickets sales. While this alternative may be undesirable from the applicant's standpoint (either UDOT or the ski resorts) it is possible to create an alternative that 1) preserves and improves skier experiences; 2) allow for equitable access and sustainable use of the canyon; 3) provides reasonable economic opportunity for private business operating in the canyon; and 4) mitigates traffic congestion and safety concerns. Finally, as previously mentioned, skiing is entirely a discretionary extracurricular activity. Individuals that disinterested in dealing with morning and evening traffic can select to ski on alternative days, during alternative hours, or at alternative areas with no actual repercussion.</p> <p>Thank you again for your efforts to include the public in the decision-making process. While NEPA does not require that that UDOT accepts the will of the people, I urge you to consider listen to local voices and those that most frequently use the canyon who have almost unanimously voiced opposition to the construction of a gondola as a reasonable transportation solution.</p>
34781	Dana Ochs	<p>I am opposed to the gondola solution in Little Cottonwood Canyon. I speak for the majority of Utahns when I say this. 80% of Utahs are against the gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Gondola Works claim that preservation is important and is part of the reason for this gondola, but Little Cottonwood Canyon is home to historical and world class rock climbs and boulders. The installation of this gondola would be the permanent erasure of these recreation areas that people all over the world travel to visit. I encourage you to consider the destruction you would be causing to what beautiful natural landscapes we are responsible for protecting.</p> <p>Gondola Works boasts about how "clean" the gondola would be, but omits the mention of where the electricity to power it is coming from: coal-fired power from Rocky Mountain Power. The Great Salt Lake is already shrinking and these coal burning plants guzzle water in addition to polluting CO2 into the atmosphere</p>

		<p>(https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/).</p> <p>Consider, also, the traffic that would be caused during the construction of the towers required for such a gondola. If it would be constructed similar to how I've personally seen construction in the Cottonwoods and Millcreek canyons, it might be under construction for years. You may argue that it is a small price to pay for lasting traffic relief but the gondola is not a lasting solution. It is a bandaid fix. The gondola would not eliminate the traffic, but push it somewhere else. Traffic would be pushed onto Wasatch Boulevard and 215 as people make their way to park and rides or parking garages (of which more would need to be constructed as well).</p> <p>With all of that being said, in the best case scenario, where every person who wants to ski in LCC access the resorts via the gondola, what makes you think people would use it? If people don't use the busses now, there is no incentive for them to use the gondola instead. The traffic problems may not be shifted, but remain entirely the same.</p> <p>Instead, consider incentives to encourage people to carpool and reduce traffic:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Parking reservations have worked, historically. For example, look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2) An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric busses that run directly to the ski areas. This should also include smaller vehicles to provide access to other trailheads for backcountry skiers, snowshoers, or people wanting to recreate in areas of LCC that do not directly benefit the ski resorts. This would also require paying bus drivers a wage that encourages them to come to work. If it is out of budget to pay bus drivers aptly, I seriously wonder where the money for this gondola is coming from. 3) Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS, but there has been little to no discussion about it. There has been discussion about it in terms of making it a solution for summertime canyon access. Think critically about why tolling is an acceptable solution to combat overcrowding during the summer, but not during the winter? <p>Please save our canyons and use your voice to do what is right.</p>
34818	Mark Levin	<p>On the Gondola - General</p> <p>I am the Owner of a residence at Alta, and the gondola system will likely be very visible on the hill above my home and property, nevertheless, I strongly support the gondola alternative, but with some comments and suggested modifications to the current preferred alternative. Some other thoughts regarding the gondola are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggest that the gondola be free, such as the one linking Telluride and Mountain Village in Colorado. That will go a long way toward getting people to leave their cars down below. - The gondola will avoid essentially all avalanche risk for its riders. Any vehicle driving in the canyon is at risk, even with mitigation measures. Often, the highest risk is late on a heavy snowfall day, when there is a lot of new snow loading and mitigation can't be initiated until the skiers are down the canyon, yet thousands are stuck in slow or nearly stopped traffic under loaded avalanche chutes. - The gondola should be operated well into the evening hours, especially on weekends. - Evacuation personnel for the gondola will become an important consideration

		<p>Tolling and Vehicle Limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am against tolling, as it further stratifies the skiing experience to the wealthier classes, and the survival of the sport we love requires diversifying the skier group and encouraging more young people from all backgrounds to become skiers. - As we learned during Covid, de facto vehicle limits as a result of having a system of ski area morning parking reservations required on peak demand days are likely going to be much more directly effective than tolls, and more fair to all guests who prefer to drive up to ski, and the administrative cost is carried by the ski areas, not the taxpayers. - Any tolling, or other highway access limitation system, will need to include special consideration for residents, owners and others that have to regularly travel up SH-210 to live or work; manage or maintain rental properties; repair, maintenance and delivery service personnel; Alta and Snowbird area business employees, and others who are part of the functional needs of the community. A possible solution for those who regularly have to go up the canyon for these purposes might be an annually requalified permit system, using RFID chipped photo IDs that are not tied to a particular vehicle, as well as business-associated RFID chips. Another system would have to be worked out for occasional occupational traffic, such as repairmen and contractors, etc.. <p>Financial Viability of Alternatives</p> <p>Any investment of public funds by the taxpayers needs to have an economic study and net present value analysis against each of the other alternatives. This should include associated revenues and costs that are external to the project itself, but which are enabled by the project. Avoided costs are a savings to be credited as well. There needs to be offsetting tax, cost sharing, or other revenue streams to payback any public money expended so that any alternative implemented is either cash positive or neutral to the taxpayers.</p> <p>Adding Amenities and Facilities</p> <p>One of the fundamental problems with both of the LCC resorts is lack of sufficient bed base, and the lack of a walkable 'village' environment for overnight guests. This adds to the traffic problems up the canyon, both for day skiers and tourists. Some related suggestions follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging development of more, and better, evening activities at the resorts may help keep some of the local day skiers, or guests not staying in the canyon, out of the 4 PM-6PM 'red snake' by providing an alternative to getting right in line to go down at the end of the day. - Since there is not much developable land left in LCC, the concept for the transit base area at La Caille should be expanded much further to include opportunities for development and concessions for hotels, restaurants, shops, entertainment, etc. and have a direct tie to the light rail, so visitors can ride a train from the airport to their hotel by the gondola, eat, attend entertainment and shop, then get to the ski areas without needing a car. That probably would be a money maker to help offset the cost and might get a lot of cars off the roads. - Alta needs to develop many more hotel beds to reduce the number of tourist drivers on the snowy roads. Most of the existing facilities are aged and well beyond their prime as well. The recent Snow Pine project was a very attractive, high quality re-development, but should have been much larger. - Restrictive land use policies that limit the size or locations of development at Alta and Snowbird should be re-examined to make the most out of the land that is physically able to be developed or re-developed in future years.
--	--	---

		<p>- Both resorts need to add significantly more parking before any on-highway parking is eliminated. Alta should build a multi level parking structure and more parking needs to be built at Snowbird as well.</p> <p>- Whether up the canyon, down below, or both, additional amenities and commercial potential will help carry the cost of the necessary transportation improvements that are needed in the long term.</p> <p>SH-210 Improvements and Highway Management</p> <p>- The highway needs to be widened to include a reversible center lane, in conjunction with the gondola.</p> <p>- The design criteria for redevelopment of SH-210 should ensure that all the curves with their apex on the canyon side of the road are superelevated to help keep vehicles from sliding off into the canyon. There also need to be berms, jersey barriers, cables, or guardrails at all points where there is a significant risk of vehicle drop-off into the canyon - where space for anchorage is limited, tiebacks buried under the roadway and helical piers or other engineered systems can help anchor the barriers without reliance on subjacent lateral support on the canyon side.</p> <p>- Probably including some turnouts with restrooms would be a very good idea. Sometimes the 'red snake' traffic going down the canyon can last several hours, forcing some hard choices on drivers and their passengers.</p> <p>- The snowsheds are a great idea, and probably more are needed. The better lit they are inside, the less they will impact traffic speeds.</p> <p>- MUCH tougher enforcement of vehicle suitability going up the canyons in the winter needs to happen. That means 4x4s or AWD with real winter-rated tires, not just 'all season' tires. We have all had many days following some 2-WD car up the canyon barely able to keep moving - or not moving - with wheels spinning on ice or in slushy spring snow. Not allowing unsuitable vehicles in winter will help reduce overall traffic as well as incident related delays due to those vehicles.</p> <p>Bus Transportation</p> <p>- The current buses are not well suited to mountain travel and as a result, have incidents that can tie up the canyon for hours sometimes. If buses are to be relied on as a major element of the solution, then special buses that are more capable in the winter mountain conditions should be part of the plan. Think 4x4, locking diffs, retarder, more power, studded winter tires, autochain systems, etc.</p> <p>- Bus ridership by frequent day skiers (nearly all of whom are local season pass holders) can be encouraged by having lots of large seasonal rental lockers available at very reasonable cost, in pleasant changing rooms of ample capacity, very near the bus unloading points. Nobody wants to lug all their stuff up to the ski area in a bus each time they go up.</p> <p>- How realistic is an alternative plan heavily tied to bus transportation when they can't even get enough people to operate buses this year?</p> <p>General - Long Range planning</p> <p>The LCC gondola is just one component of the realistic planning that is needed to accommodate the growth in the state, as it relates to winter recreation in the Wasatch mountains. Whether we like it or not, that growth can't be ignored, without ruining the quality of the winter recreation experiences that the resorts have to offer. This means that the ski areas need to expand their terrain and lifts as well.</p> <p>An Interconnect, or One Wasatch, or whatever its ultimately called, is a good idea and can be an important component of reducing LCC and BCC traffic, by linking</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>the areas to a larger bed base on the east slope of the mountains. The logical main mountain hub is in the Brighton Loop area, which could serve as a connection point for gondolas in BCC, connecting to LCC and another to Park City.</p>
34830	Taylor Meadows	<p>To all concerned,</p> <p>I thank you for reading my comments and giving the people that love and use Little Cottonwood Canyon a platform to share their voice.</p> <p>I also thank you for efforts to begin experimenting with low-cost, low-impact solutions to congestion and overcrowding in LCC. During the first round of public comments, I strongly voiced that other solutions NEED to be fully tested before committing to massive projects like the gondola. I stand by my previous statement and urge UDOT to favor non-invasive, low-cost solutions to surge congestion on select days of the year in LCC.</p> <p>I am, however, very disheartened to know that my voice was disregarded in the last round of public commenting. Once again I raise my voice in strong opposition to the proposed gondola for Little Cottonwood Canyon. I will expound on several points why the gondola is NOT the right solution for Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>First, as I alluded to above, the gondola is in direct opposition to the voice of the people. LCC belongs to the people of this state and county that contribute tax dollars for its maintenance, protection, and care. The voice of the people matters when it comes to the management of this canyon as well. Per a Hinckley institute poll, 80% of Utahns OPPOSE the gondola. No gondola IS the voice of the people. Additionally, political opinion is being disregarded. Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Sandy Mayor Monica Zoltanski, and the majority of the Salt Lake County Council, among others, have carried the voice of their constituents in opposing and condemning the gondola. The voice of the people must not be ignored.</p> <p>Second, the gondola is a tax-payer's responsibility, while the benefit goes to private ski resorts. Little is known to the public what financial burden is placed on the benefactors of this proposal. All indicators thus far suggest very little while, we, the Utah taxpayers, will foot the bill whether we ski on powder days at Snowbird and Alta or not.</p> <p>Third, the gondola comes with an unfathomably large sticker price when it is only intended to help alleviate congestion for a select number of days. The stress and frustration of powder-day and weekend traffic in the canyon is a real problem, but 30-50 days out of 365 doesn't warrant an estimated \$550 million dollar, multi-year project. If we are only fighting congestion problems 10-15% of the year, why do we need to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to try to address it? Many estimates suggest that the price tag could be substantially more than estimated as well. The potential benefits of the gondola to Utah taxpayers do not outweigh its impressive costs.</p> <p>Fourth, the gondola is a tourist attraction with no practical value for locals that will pay for it. The gondola as proposed does not create more convenience for resort users. Perhaps a dad no longer has to sit in traffic both ways to ski at Snowbird with his kids and wife, but he will have to wait in traffic to get parked, then wrangle his kids to the bus, then wait for the gondola, then finally wait on the gondola cab to the resort. Then he has to do it all over again on the way home. And what about all the ski boots and other pieces of equipment? I strongly believe that dad will try the gondola once with his kids, then never do it again because of the logistical nightmare it becomes. Sure, the shiny new gondola brings a new</p>

		<p>"Disneyworld meets Planet Earth" to our own Wasatch for the droves of tourist skiers that visit. But they make up only a portion of our resort traffic, and they don't have to pay for the gondola to be built.</p> <p>Fifth, the gondola grossly ignores other uses of the canyon beyond those who can afford to ski at a resort. Backcountry skiers, hikers, snowshoers, sightseers, and other user groups are completely ignored by the gondola proposal. Even though these users are responsible to pay for the gondola, they reap no practical value from its presence. It solely benefits for-profit ski resorts that are already overcrowded beyond skier satisfaction.</p> <p>Sixth, the gondola may suggest traffic alleviation in the canyon, but the road will remain open. As long as that is the case and individuals can arrive to the resort in roughly the same amount of time, there is no compelling incentive to ride the gondola and deal with the inconveniences of doing so. Instead skiers can keep their belongings with them and worry about putting on their ski boots once arriving at the resort. I strongly believe that the gondola will quickly become a seldom, if-at-all, used option for the majority of resorts users.</p> <p>Seventh, the proposed solution pushes more traffic into the neighborhoods of Sandy and Cottonwood Heights instead of reducing strain on these areas. Not to mention that congestion farther out into these neighborhoods will also impact the already apparent congestion approaching Big Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>Eighth, the gondola will destroy and compromise world-class climbing areas. Though effort has been made to mask the damage that will be done to the local climbing areas, the gondola's construction will forever alter climbing access in LCC. During construction of the gondola, access will be restricted, alongside the irreversible changes to world-class boulders in particular.</p> <p>Ninth, and perhaps most important, the gondola further destroys a magnificent piece of the natural world that has already been greatly impacted by humans. We've already done irreversible damage to LCC. Let's not fall into that trap again by tearing it up even more without considering the damage we're doing and the additional stress we put on the area by shoving more people into the canyon.</p> <p>I appreciate the opportunity to make my voice heard. I stand united with the majority of Utah in strongly and vocally opposing the gondola, pleading you to consider the voice of the people who you represent as public-sector servants.</p> <p>Thank you, Taylor Meadows</p>
34836	Joshua Figgins	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Joshua Figgins. I am a resident of Sandy. I am opposed to the gondola idea. I am a Utah voter and a frequent user of Little Cottonwood Canyon. I understand that the canyon has major traffic issues that need to be addressed, but I do not believe that a gondola is an appropriate solution. The gondola is incredibly expensive. That is a lot of money that is really only going to help those with lots of money who can afford to go skiing. If we can find a way to raise half a million dollars on an infrastructure project like this I feel that it can be used somewhere with a much bigger impact that benefits all of the Salt Lake area, and not just those that can afford to go skiing at the resorts.</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is absolutely beautiful and is used for so much more recreation than just skiing. The gondola is going to displace many climbing routes. That is awful because this canyon is home to so much world class climbing. The canyon has some of the most stunning views in all of Utah. It provides a feeling of</p>

		<p>solitude and peace that a Gondola now interrupts. The Gondola isn't even useful for all canyon users. It seems to only benefit Snowbird and Alta during the ski season. It does not help all the other canyon users during winter.</p> <p>The times that traffic is really bad is only during snow storms. I do not feel that spending over half a million dollars for a solution that is only needed for maybe 20 days of the year is a good idea. Again if we are going to be spending money to fix traffic issues in the Salt Lake area I think that money should go to somewhere that will benefit all residents for a lot more than just 20 days of the year.</p> <p>Another issue I have with the Gondola is that it doesn't seem to reduce the amount of cars that will be driving up the canyon. In the last document stating UDOTs plan, it still expected the same amount of cars to be going up the canyon after the gondola is built. Therefore the gondola doesn't seem to erase the traffic issue on snow days, but just allows more people to make it up the canyon.</p> <p>I support the idea of an improved busing system. I don't support a massive road expansion. I think that is overly expensive and causes a lot of environmental damage as well. I do think that there could be a lot more incentives to get people to ride the bus. The buses can be designed a lot better for skiers. They can allow for easier gear handling and comfort. I think that the bus stations can be more inviting and provide a comfortable place where people are happy to wait for a bus.</p> <p>My idea would be to create a hybrid bus passing lanes up the canyon. There are probably places on the canyon road where it would make sense to build an extra lane for buses. This could be in areas that aren't destructive to current recreation, are cheaper to build a road, and requires less infrastructure to mitigate avalanches. You could just build one extra lane that buses can use going up in the morning and at some point during the day they can switch so that the buses use the same lane to go down in the afternoon when traffic starts getting bad going down. I think this would work great because it would motivate people to take the bus because the bus would have opportunities to pass slow traffic going up the canyon. It wouldn't be a bus only lane the whole way up, but at strategic locations to minimize canyon damage and allow for buses to pass slow traffic occasionally.</p> <p>I also think that Alta and Snowbird can do more to encourage people to take buses. I appreciate that season passes offer free bus fare. I think that Alta and Snowbird could offer improved locker and storage for skiers. They could offer incentives on certain days for skiers to take the bus. They can continue parking reservations on days that are expected to be crowded. They can make it very clear that if you don't have a parking reservation that you will need to take a bus to get up to the resorts.</p> <p>I think that traction laws should be enforced in the canyon. This won't prevent people from going up the canyon because a bus will still be an option.</p> <p>I feel that Little Cottonwood Canyon is so much more than the ski resorts. I think the ski resorts are a blessing to have so close, but it is not worth selling our canyon for an entire year just so that some people can ride it for the winter. I don't think that it will fix the traffic problem much better than common sense solutions would. I think it is a massive benefit to only the ski resorts and causes way more permanent damage to an absolutely beautiful canyon and state than any good that it could bring. Little Cottonwood is so much more than just the ski resorts and it deserves more common sense solutions that will help to preserve its beauty and natural wonders.</p>
34869	Darwin Moore	<p>October 16, 2022</p> <p>Dear UDOT Final EIS Committee:</p> <p>I am writing to express my extreme disapproval of the UDOT Preferred Gondola Alternative B plan. I am a Utah Citizen, lifelong Utah resident living in the Wasatch Front (Sandy). I also have strong ties to Rural Utah. My entire family and I are also avid skiers who spend most of our ski days at the Little Cottonwood</p>

		<p>ski resorts - Alta and Snowbird.</p> <p>It is my hope this letter will help provide the information you need see how the Gondola plan will not resolve the Canyon transportation concerns, will be a major tax burden, very few Utahns will benefit and it will permanently scar the majestic beauty of this unique fragile Canyon.</p> <p>Classic Taxation without Representation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estimated initial Gondola costs/taxes - \$560M, based on costs from four years ago. - Considering high inflation, recent estimates place the initial cost at \$1 Billion. - Annual maintenance costs are estimated to be \$10.4M. - 2021 Deseret News Poll showed 80% of Salt Lake Residents oppose the Gondola. - This Gondola proposal is projected to benefit only 2-3% of the Utah population. However, the entire Utah State population will be taxed to pay for it. - Why tax those who don't want or need it? <p>How Serious Is The Traffic Problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UDOT estimates 10-15 winter days per year with congestion and long ski resort commute times. Residents at the Canyon mouth monitored traffic for the 2021/2022 ski season at 6-10 days. - Most major events (concerts, football games, Jazz games, Stadium of Fire, etc..) traffic is expected and travel time accordingly adjusted. The same should be true for ski resort commutes. - It is unreasonable to spend millions/billions of dollars to address an issue that occurs only 15 days a year. <p>The Gondola Does Not Provide A Reasonable Solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UDOT stated the Gondolas could transport between 960 and 1,050 people per hour. - Alta and Snowbird estimate 14,000 to 15,000 skiers and employees commute to their resorts on winter days. - Most skiers commute to the resorts between 7:30 and 9:30am, 2 hours. - Only 2,000 of up to 15,000 would be transported during these 2 morning hours. - It would take 5 hours (7:00am to Noon) to transport 5,000 skiers. Then it would take 5 hours to Gondola them back to the parking garage. This is unreasonable with few willing to do it. o This leaves up to 10,000 skiers who will need to commute through other options. - The parking garage at the Gondola base is projected to have 2,500 parking stalls. Offsight parking and shuttles would need to be built and used to transport people to the Gondola base. - The expected charge per person to ride the Gondola is between \$25 and \$40. - Once on the Gondola, travel time to the resorts is 30 and 36 minutes. Time to park and travel to the Gondola base may take an additional 45 to 60 minutes (or more) with increased ski traffic. - Of those polled in the Sandy area, 97% said they would not pay or go through the hassle to ride the Gondola. - With only 10-15 winter days of potential need, the Gondolas would have limited to no use 350 days of the year. - The Gondola will only stop at two locations, Snowbird and Alta ski resorts. Access to multiple trailheads and climbing areas will need to be accessed via vehicles. - The Gondola DOES NOT provide a solution that warrants a \$1 Billion initial and \$10.4 M annual tax burden.
--	--	--

	<p>Little Cottonwood Canyon - A Unique/Fragile Natural Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2001 Olympic EPA Canyon Environmental Impact Study findings showed the Canyon was too fragile to support Olympic spectators.<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Little Cottonwood Canyon was closed to Olympic Events.o The Canyon is just as fragile today; it would experience major environment disruption with Gondola construction.- 22+ Towers 200+ feet in height all the way up the Canyon.- Little Cottonwood Canyon is a main watershed that supports the Salt Lake Valley. Dogs are not allowed in the Canyon. Why allow Gondola construction with the varied risks of water contamination?- Permanently scar the beauty and majesty of this Canyon and mouth of the Canyon at the Gondola base.<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Encumbered with towers, cables, cable cars that would be seen from everywhere from within the Canyon.- Utah citizens are not interested in having the "bragging rights," of the longest Gondola (8 miles) in the world. The people of Utah do not want a carnival ride tourist attraction in our Canyon.<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Increased visitors resulting from Gondola ride marketing will further damage this natural resource. <p>Who Stands to Benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Private corporations - Alta and Snowbird<ul style="list-style-type: none">o UDOT is solving their parking and transportation concerns. Paid with Tax Payer dollars.- Real Estate Investors / Developers - at the base and top of the Gondola.- Former State Legislators/Land Owners at Gondola base<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Strongly lobbying their Gondola proposal/agenda to former legislative colleagues.- Why would taxpayers be asked to subsidize expenses and increase customer volume so private corporations and investors can reap the benefits? <p>Explore other options - Gondola is not the answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Encourage more carpooling through implementing a variable toll program in the upper Canyon for vehicles with fewer than four passengers. This would cut traffic in half with minimal cost.- Tolling in combination with paid and reserved parking solutions at the ski resorts will provide a less expensive solution to the winter traffic issues.- The cost would be borne by those who visit the Canyon, rather than by all Utahns. <p>In summary, the Gondola proposal would be an ineffective solution to the minimal concerns of winter weekend traffic. This pristine Canyon would be permanently tarnished. Private entities would benefit at the expense of all Utah taxpayers, most of which would never use the Gondola. Tax dollars should be repurposed to sustaining the Great Salt Lake water levels, Rural Road improvements, addressing appropriate Urban and Rural population growth with limited water and natural resources, managing visitor numbers at National & State Parks, and other worthwhile causes beneficial to all Utahns.</p> <p>Please take these concerns into serious consideration. The vast majority of Utahns do not want the Gondola. Please work to represent the voice of the Utah majority by removing the Gondola proposal from consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
--	---

		<p>Darwin Moore Concerned Utah Citizen</p>
34912	Gessel Gabriella	<p>Irreversible & Rushed Decision</p> <p>There is simply no reason to invest \$550 million in a permanent project with so many unanswered questions.</p> <p>If common sense could prevail, we would implement cost-effective and environmentally-friendly options such as enhanced busses, tolling, reservations and enforcement of traction laws.</p> <p>We have seen parking reservations work throughout the Wasatch in the last few years. Tolling has proven to be an effective solution in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>As Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson said, these are "common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound.,"</p> <p>Tax-Payer-Funded, Serving Private Resorts</p> <p>Why are Utah taxpayers footing the \$550 million bill for a problem two private businesses created and for a solution that will only benefit those two businesses?</p> <p>As we know, resort executives stand to gain the most from a gondola and have been behind the majority of pro-gondola messaging.</p> <p>They view the gondola as a tax-payer-funded marketing ploy to increase visitation to their businesses.</p> <p>UDOT's EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts.," [Ch. 6]</p> <p>Ignoring Local Public & Political Opinion</p> <p>80% of Utahns oppose the gondola, according to a Deseret News/Hinckley Institute of Politics poll.</p> <p>Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Sandy Mayor Monica Zoltanski and many other elected officials agree.</p> <p>"Rather than rip up the canyon with a half-a-billion-dollar price tag, let's invest in common-sense solutions. Parking hubs in the valley, electric busing with regular routes, carpooling and tolling, reservations, common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound,," Wilson said at the Truth About the Proposed Gondola event in June.</p> <p>With no trailhead or backcountry access, the gondola is far from a solution that benefits all of LCC's users throughout the year.</p> <p>Not a Convenient Solution</p> <p>If the gondola is built, your ski day will consist of parking off-site (or paying a premium for one of the limited parking spots near the base), taking a bus to the base station then riding the gondola 31 minutes to Snowbird or 37 minutes to Alta.</p> <p>And then doing it all in reverse order at the end of the day.</p>

		<p>How can it be assured the gondola will be used and actually reduce cars in the canyon?</p> <p>For the gondola strategy to be effective, there will need to be a major change in public habits.</p> <p>With no plan by UDOT to limit cars (it is our understanding they plan to implement bussing until the gondola is built but not continue the program afterward) or any analysis of demand, the original issue of traffic is not being solved. It will simply funnel more visitors to the resorts.</p> <p>Increased Visitation Stress on LCC</p> <p>If those invested in the gondola are so interested in preserving Little Cottonwood Canyon, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support.</p> <p>As our friends at Students for the Wasatch pointed out, if the gondola is implemented, the number of cars visiting resorts will remain the same while skier visits will increase by 20%, per UDOT's EIS.</p> <p>The EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts.," [Ch. 6]</p> <p>What Will it Really Cost?</p> <p>The proposed budget to build the gondola comes in at approximately \$550 million. But many estimate that number would ultimately come in closer to \$1 billion.</p> <p>We know projects of this size tend to go way over budget. Our new airport (which could use a gondola from Terminal B) was budgeted for \$1.8 billion and ended up costing more than \$4 billion.</p> <p>If the gondola is built, it would cost \$10.6 million annually just to operate. Plus, UDOT estimates an additional \$12.5 million in capital costs, expected by 2037, followed by \$16.5 million by 2051, according to the Deseret News.</p> <p>Is a Gondola Even Necessary?</p> <p>How many days per winter are you in a complete standstill in Little Cottonwood Canyon? No doubt the red snake is real. But real enough for an expensive, permanent gondola?</p> <p>Plus, the gondola will not run when howitzers are active during avalanche mitigation in the lower canyon from Lisa Falls to Monte Cristo.</p> <p>And we can't even think of an argument for the gondola to be operating for the other eight months of the year.</p> <p>Preserving the Beauty of LCC</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a true treasure of our local environment and attracts skiers, climbers and hikers from around the world to enjoy its beauty.</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Constructing more than 20 towers reaching 200 feet tall and stretching eight miles through the heart of LCC would destroy the canyon's natural beauty.</p> <p>Altering the canyon's footprint will also destroy popular climbing and hiking areas including Alpenboch Loop Trail.</p> <p>Push Traffic onto Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>The gondola will not solve traffic issues.</p> <p>It will simply push traffic out of Little Cottonwood Canyon onto Wasatch Blvd, I-215 and surrounding neighborhoods in the Cottonwood Heights community</p>
34918	David Iltis	<p>To UDOT</p> <p>As a former resident of Alta, and long time visitor to Little Cottonwood Canyon, I am appalled at the idea of a gondola marring the landscape, the view shed, and wildlife habitat.</p> <p>Please remove the gondola from consideration ever. The canyon is so much more than a playground for skiers and so much more than the ski areas.</p> <p>Please do proceed with expanding the park and ride lots, especially those near the mouth of LCC, as they are woefully inadequate and have not enough effect on how many people can ride the bus.</p> <p>Please do proceed with more frequent bus service that will help to draw people out of their cars. Please combine this with a toll on those days when the bus services the canyon, and make the bus cheaper than the toll.</p> <p>The gondola is nothing more than a giveaway of taxpayer money to 2 ski areas, both of which have become so expensive that the average Utahn can barely afford to ride the lifts. They certainly don't need any more of our money. They already enjoy the use of public lands for private profit. It's not a good idea to give them public money to get private customers to and from the resort.</p> <p>A better option would be if instead of packing more people up to the resorts is if they limited the number of skiers each day. This would solve many of the issues. Canyon traffic is not a daily issue, but rather is really bad only a few weekends a year.</p> <p>Adding more capacity to the canyon by adding a gondola will not reduce traffic. The principle of induced demand is such that with more capacity in the system, more people will find their way to the resorts, both via gondola and via the roadway. To repeat so it's clear, the gondola will not solve any traffic issues, it will only end up increasing the number of users in the canyon. Then what? We will have the same traffic issues, a destroyed view shed, and \$550 million given to the ski resorts.</p> <p>Additionally, Wasatch Blvd should not become a superhighway to the resorts. The people of Cottonwood Heights and Sandy deserve better. They have spoken loudly, but as per usual, UDOT does not listen to the needs of the local communities that it serves.</p> <p>Please UDOT, do better. You seem to be relying on old ways of thinking, and as a result, you put out awful solutions. Stick to the basics - increased park and ride capacity, increased bus service, parking fees at the resorts, and limiting the</p>

		<p>number of skiers on high traffic days.</p> <p>Sincerely, Dave Iltis Salt Lake City, UT</p>
34923	Caleb Norman	<p>For all of the items that have been proposed to be introduced around the same time as the gondola implementation, they begin to beg the question, "why would an LCC gondola need to be implemented in the first place, especially when the added measures would work so well on their own?" This is especially important to consider when we examine the current situation and find that it has not been optimized for lowering traffic at any truly significant level.</p> <p>The gondola would only impact a [1] of the current traffic rate up LCC , with no effect on BCC traffic, which has arguably been worse. These effects drop even more during the summer periods when vehicle speeds are higher on clear roads and the gondola usage will plummet.</p> <p>A solution is needed that can be adaptable at the peak and low volume portions of the season, and something that can work well year-round for both canyons. Most/all of these suggestions have been brought up to some degree, but a recommendation to implement all of them together needs to be prioritized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build strategically placed avalanche tunnels on both canyon roads. -Drastically increase the rate of buses per hour for both canyons, and increase parking infrastructure options for each canyon to work with the bussing and possible carpooling options. -Incentivize those who insist on still driving to carpool via free canyon passes and parking. -The availability of the free canyon passes and parking could be further restricted to vehicles with snow tires on storm days, if need be. -Toll and charge parking to those who are not carpooling and bussing. -These changes could be adjusted during the summer as needed. -Ignore <p>The sum of nearly all of the proposals that UDOT have brought up to supplement or help introduce the Gondola via 'phasing' would function far better than either the current situation, or the Gondola itself. In fact, proposing a Gondola to solve the problems in either canyon is irrelevant to the actual issue of traffic overflow. Yes it might be profitable for the Gondola Works coalition, but at what cost to the paying SLC residents who may not even ski, and only one of the two crowded canyons? Additionally, as a lifelong skier and avid user of LCC's resources, it seems clear that the proposal of a gondola installation simply serves as a trojan horse to eventually interconnect multiple ski resorts, a'la European ski resorts. If the groundwork allowed to be laid for this likely long-term outcome, we will greatly risk overrunning the very special mountains we are blessed with, losing their beauty in the process.</p> <p>[1] "Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement," , September 2022 and the Gondolaworks.com website.</p> <p>Calculations: Gondola capacity: 35 persons/gondola car * 1 gondola car/2 min * 60 min/hr = 1050 persons/hr Road capacity: ~7000 vehicles/day * 2.17 persons/vehicle * 1 day/4 hrs@peak usage = 3800 persons/hr Where the 4 hrs @peak usage is defined as the approximate 7-11am window that the canyons see the most ascending traffic during a given ski season. Numbers may vary for seasonal travel.</p>

		<p>Background: I am the son of a ski instructor entering her 33rd-year as an Alta ski instructor, and have been skiing and hiking in the canyon since I was 3 years old. I will be graduating from the University of Utah in the spring of 2023 with a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering.</p>
34958	Beth Enos	<p>We need safety improvements to Wasatch Blvd. In the State Route 210 stretch Ft. Union south 2.6 miles there are eleven intersecting neighborhoods. I live in one of these and have seen three cars fly off Wasatch into neighbors yards- these home have small children who play in the yards! Of all other State Routes in Utah, the majority of state routes have a posted speed of 35mph or a maximum of 40mph. Strava cycling reports that this stretch is highly utilized by cyclists. With post-Covid levels of distracted, impaired and speeding motorists and the acceptance, as is stated in the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Safe Systems Approach", roadways through residential areas must take into account human error. NACTO studies show that T-bone motorist to motorist collisions, which is likely when motorists are entering and exiting from side roads at speeds of over 35mph are usually fatal. It has become very dangerous for me (and my 16 yr old son new driver) to try and exit our neighborhood onto Wasatch due to the high-speed drivers) The SR 210 stretch is no place for a posted speed of 50mph. UDOT needs to analyze and report on why SR 210 is treated differently from the majority of other State Routes.</p> <p>¬Σ Since the installation of the "High-T intersection" where SR 210/Wasatch Blvd splits just north of the La Caille Restaurant, bullet bikers, HOGs and unmuffled cars can see the green light as they drive southbound from Golden Hills Avenue. There begins, for many, an unbridled gunning for speed. the noise from these high-speed drivers and motor cycles in neighborhoods is unacceptable. This also occurs as motorists leave the Ft. Union intersection. In 2022, CHPD have clocked speeds as high as 72mph. These cars exit Wasatch into neighborhoods going over 55 MPH. With the average speed measuring 48mph, we know that many drivers are well in excess of 50mph in this area where people live and try to sleep, and cyclists, pedestrians, children and motorists from adjoining neighborhoods attempting to cross or turn left or right through this fast moving traffic are endangered. UDOT needs to run updated traffic analysis of the dangerous areas including Ft. Union/SR 210, 1/4 mile stretch south of Ft. Union/SR 210, the 3500 East and south for 1/2 mile (including Kings Hill Drive), the 1 mile area in and around Golden Hills Avenue/High T intersection.</p> <p>¬Σ The problems of SR 210 Ft. Union to 1/4 mile south of High T Intersection need immediate improvement not expansion.</p> <p>¬Σ We believe your 2050 data may be flawed and does not support the widening of Wasatch Blvd and the building of the gondola. We need to treat this as the residential area that it is and slow down the traffic. I have seen two bicycles hit by cars in just two years! We need to preserve this road for everyone and reduce the accidents by reducing the speed limit.</p>
35035	Noah Wetzel	<p>I strongly believe that a Gondola won't solve much, besides move the congestion to Wasatch Blvd and the Gondola Terminal area, instead of having the congestion within the canyon. Sure that alleviates liability of road side incidents with avalanches, but from an canyon aesthetic viewpoint, and most importantly tax payers dollars... there are better ways to move forward.</p> <p>Years ago, Alta season passes were once on a lottery system, and tickets (to my knowledge) were capped. With that said, I believe that some areas can handle only so much, and the LCC is certainly one of those areas. The reality is, LCC is a small canyon, and the increased use must either move towards limiting use, or</p>

		<p>heading in the completely opposite direction. The Gondola would be the completely opposite direction, which, if installed, would only put more and move people up in the canyon. Now, Alta and Snowbird are in a position where they must build new lifts to accommodate the increase in users. Sure, it sounds exciting, but y'all must think long and hard to ensure the right decision will be made. There's no going back on this one, you are in charge of the aesthetic within the canyon, of deciding the outcome which we all will see, within one of the most iconic canyons in the west. It's up to you to decide the fate of it's future, a move that cannot be retracted or modified. If you look at any highly trafficked area, it all leads to either more growth, or permitting...because areas that are extremely beautiful can only handle so much.</p> <p>I strongly believe snow sheds along the roadway, and an increase in public transportation would solve these issues. I've skied at Alta and Snowbird since 2007, and for a couple years I took the bus entirely. For those of you who point to the numbers of bus users, you must understand why those numbers aren't as high as they could be, why those numbers aren't even at capacity. The answer points to our current state of the red snake. Anyone that knows Little Cottonwood, isn't going to voluntarily take the bus on a big snow day, because they know they'll be standing the entire way up and down the canyon...for hours! No one in their right mind would subject themselves to that torture. However, if you focused some of that absurd amount of tax payers dollars (or even better yet, make the resorts pay for some of it since they are profiting from it and the work of their employees which they barely compensate)...to improve the infrastructure at the base areas (such as rental and season rental locker rooms, bathrooms, actual transit centers, perhaps parking garages, and finally improve parking areas in the canyon and add snow-sheds and most importantly an increased number of buses... I'm pretty confident the issues would be solved. I know personally, that even if their were lockers at the mountain where I could store my gear for the season it would change the current total of bus users (thus allowing skiers/snowboarders to hop on the bus with ease, without the need to corral their gear to ensure it doesn't fall on someone.</p> <p>Long story short, you can't rely on the numbers you currently know, because the current infrastructure works against the efficiencies of the current transportation system. If you focus on snowsheds, improved infrastructure at the base area, trailhead improvements, and increased buses... you would see all the difference you need.</p> <p>Don't take this decision lightly. Whatever your choice, just make sure you're not moving the issue to another part of the canyon or base area...actually ensure that your decision solves the issue at hand. Like Denzel Washington said in the movie Training Day, "██████ Chess, it ain't Checkers!"</p> <p>Move wisely, and God Speed.</p>
35040	Tate Denna	<p>I would like to "cast my vote," on the proposed Little Cottonwood Canyon gondola solution.</p> <p>I am in strong opposition to the proposal of using a gondola to solve the traffic issues up the canyon for a variety of reasons of which I will specify a few in particular.</p> <p>First, why in the world would state taxpayers pay such an enormous bill that almost exclusively benefits two private companies.</p> <p>It's awful rational when considering the MANY other needs the state faces that</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>could that money to better use. For example, that same money could go towards drought measures that would far better protect Little Cottonwood Canyon long term than a Gondola could ever dream of.</p> <p>Second, the proposal and decision making process reeks of manipulation and secret glad-handing.</p> <p>It has been highly publicized that the comment period collected the highest response in UDOT history.</p> <p>Based on news article comment threads. I'm going to confidently guess those were largely in opposition to the gondola. Yet, even after 14,000 comments, UDOT still recommended it as the best course of action.</p> <p>Then I heard Snowbird quietly purchased the land that would host the parking structure at the mouth of the canyon and it was clear to me that the public would be fleeced by this entire scheme.</p> <p>Third, The Gondola only serves one user group. Leaving out all other canyon recreaters, including myself. Again, only supporting the customer base of two private companies, yet every single one of use will be held footing the bill.</p> <p>Fourth, I don't care about making a record of the longest gondola in the US. It would come at the cost of the most awful visual scar in the canyon that we can comprehend.</p> <p>Instead, there are a litany of simple, far less expensive solutions that when combined could offer some measurable improvement without the monolithic mistake of this gondola.</p>
35061	Chris Adams	<p>Hello there. I want to thank you for all of the time and effort that you have put into the EIS process. Unfortunately, despite all of that that time and effort, I do not think you have come up with a common sense solution that is going to address the traffic issues that are at the base of the EIS. I also do not think that the preferred solution will lead to equitable public access to dispersed recreation, and will result in overcrowding of LCC, with permanent visual and water quality impacts with a solution that does not provide year-round use or access for visitors.</p> <p>The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts.," I do not think that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that end is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Furthermore, data from the National Ski Area Association likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors," but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best. It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in</p>

		<p>either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot. If the goal is to reduce vehicle use in the canyon, it makes sense to have the gondola stop at the busiest trailhead to allow people to use it, rather than force them to continue driving their cars.</p> <p>As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas. Plus you will have to drive to the gondola and potentially take a bus to the La Caille station, which seems onerous and burdensome to anyone who has tried to get their kids ready to ski with one transition, let alone two or three. I think that alone will be enough for many people to remain in the comfort of their own private vehicles rather than ride a gondola with 30 strangers.</p> <p>The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Alta Ski Lifts parking fees last winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the impact that paid parking and tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. Last week UDOT again introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p> <p>UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar traffic problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA.</p> <p>UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever," and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing/riding tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>The use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening and once anti-personnel shells are launched over the gondola, it must be cleared before it can</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>start up again. In fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts on this process and for your consideration of this comment. I sincerely hope you opt for common sense solutions that employ existing infrastructure rather than spend hundreds of millions of dollars building a gondola that serves little other purpose other than enriching two private entities.</p> <p>Thanks, Chris Adams</p>
35070	Tom Diegel	<p>My name is Tom Diegel, and I have lived in Salt Lake City and recreated in Little Cottonwood Canyon for 23 years and visited prior to that consistently since the mid-80's. I have spent a lot of time in Europe's mountains - including this past summer - and have seen and ridden on a wide array of gondolas and cog railways. I appreciate that UDOT recognizes that bus-oriented and tolling solutions are good short term options, but it's clear that the goal is gondola, as soon as funds are available. I was initially mildly in favor of the LCC gondola, but have since become strongly against it, for a variety of reasons:</p> <p>Seasonality - I do not have to tell UDOT that LCC receives a LOT of traffic outside the ski season. During its Oktoberfest Snowbird consistently parks more cars per day than it ever does on winter powder weekends. Just as SkiLink was weakly portrayed as a "transportation solution," the LCC gondola - by limiting its use to winter - is clearly also not a transportation solution but a taxpayer-financed chairlift. To say that the gondola is intended to address the acute nature of winter mornings and afternoons is to ignore that the SL Valley and the Cottonwoods need transportation solutions year round.</p> <p>Dispersed use - I also do not have to tell UDOT that the White Pine lot in particular and the other roadside parking areas get a lot of use with an increasing trend. UDOT claims that by "taking cars off the road," the traffic on the highway will be alleviated, but this does nothing to address the parking there, and also ignores the fact that dispersed users would also like to have enhanced transportation solutions, and the new White Pine lot design does not come close to addressing the parking demands there. Not addressing dispersed users (trailheads in addition to the resorts) does not address the EIS goals of "improving air quality," (continuing to encourage SOV's), "improving safety," (less parking=more roadside parking), and "increasing the quality of life for residents and canyon users by reducing traffic congestion as private vehicles shift to transit," (no options).</p> <p>Inconsistent funding goals - as noted above, I appreciate that UDOT recognizes the needs and desires of the community to improve dispersed use parking lots, bus, tolling, etc. but it seems that there's only one pot of money, and based on the EIS UDOT is clearly targeting the gondola, which is financially challenging, and therefore is disincentivized to provide complete funding and effort to the alternatives.</p> <p>Partnerships - While UDOT and UTA are both state agencies, historically there is little coordination between them, and this season is a perfect example of that because UTA is cutting service, even as the enhanced service initiated two seasons ago was widely seen as successful. There is not an obvious funding mechanism to "do it all," and history does not suggest that dramatically-increased level of partnership between UDOT and UTA will occur.</p> <p>Reliability - Avalanche mitigation is a huge deal in LCC, and UDOT has no plans to curtail use of the howitzer/anti-personnel bombs that are integral to that. From what I can see in the EIS, the only acknowledgement of avalanche mitigation is</p>

		<p>snowsheds, however, there is nothing in the EIS that addresses gondola operation in conjunction with over-line howitzer use.</p> <p>Expense - I understand that public works are expensive, and things like freeways, bridges, and other major infrastructure are necessary to address the needs of a mobile community. However, at a proposed price tag of \$550M this is pushing this state of 3M people to an average cost of almost \$200 for every single citizen, regardless of where they live or if they ever travel up LCC. For a family of 4 that's \$800 of taxpayer dollars, and this is only for the major proposed alternative that is unproven and committing, not for the additional improvements (enhanced bus, improved trailheads, etc) that may come prior to gondola construction.</p> <p>Committing the state's taxpayers to an expense that will likely be pushing \$1B by completion for a seasonal chairlift targeting only resort patrons is an egregious misappropriation of funds.</p> <p>Ski resort trends - While Ski Utah has done a good job of luring more ski resort patrons here from other states over the last few years, resort skiing nationally has been flat for 40 years (always in the 50-60M user days/year). Snowbird's ticket prices this year are \$167-\$200, Alta's are \$120-\$150. Lift ticket prices have historically gone up faster than inflation. By the time the gondola goes in the lift tickets will be well over \$200. Additionally, global warming will harm the ski industry worldwide. The EIS does not take into account macro trends that have the potential to limit the numbers of skiers using the expensive, committing infrastructure.</p> <p>Overall Wasatch transportation - UDOT has focused all of its energies on LCC and effectively ignored both BCC and/or the ability to move people from other parts of the valleys to the mouths of the canyons, despite increasing traffic problems. Adding a huge parking lot at the mouth of LCC simply shifts the problem, and BCC traffic will continue to worsen while UDOT does nothing for it. The EIS does not consider a broader transportation system that takes into account the equally-affected adjacent areas.</p> <p>Overcrowding - the addition of the gondola will simply increase the number of people in the canyon. One of the reasons that Ski Utah has been effective at luring skiers from Colorado is that Utah has a far-lower skier density than Colorado. Implementation of the gondola will only add to the numbers of visitors to LCC (people will still be driving their vehicles without any traffic restrictions) the density of skiers will increase the need for associated development. What is the capacity of LCC? The EIS mentions a lack of a visitor use study as a complaint in the DEIS comments, but the final EIS does not address canyon capacity. Is it hundred thousand people? 7000 people, 50,000 people? The proposed gondola capacity could push this over the limit.</p> <p>I appreciate the complexity of the problems associated with canyon transportation solutions, but by keeping the gondola option as the alpha solution is a risky, expensive, crowded, inefficient (relative to personal vehicles filled with people with powder fever) and threatens to detract from implementation of the lesser, simpler solutions that are currently proposed only as stopgap solutions.</p>
35095	Matt Sullivan	<p>October 17, 2022</p> <p>I'm fully against for the gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>Of up most importance, the cost is far too expensive and for taxpayers to take on that burden. This is a very unwise direction take considering how careful and prudent the State of Utah is with their budget and cost state-wide. We're so budget conscious where education and other needs are not fully met, and now the State wants to spend over 500,000,000.00 dollars on a gondola? There is no common and economic sense in this.</p> <p>It only serves the ski resorts and those who have enough money to pay for that</p>

		<p>costly sport while the Utah taxpayers pick up the tab and cost to pander to the upper class and those who have recreational money to part with. It also only serves out-of-state tourists who MAY use the gondola, but in reality, they'll use rental vehicles to drive up the canyon and haul up all their ski wear and gear for their week's stay at Snowbird. The cost for ordinary Utah citizens who live on a tight budget can't afford the gondola costs of a ticket and is far too far out of range for the unbelievable cost to build a gondola.</p> <p>The gondola ruins the spectacular beauty of the Little Cottonwood Canyon landscape with this mechanical cube hanging in the air obstructing the view we have always enjoyed in all four seasons. It scars the scenic view.</p> <p>Parking lot. If you're interested in less environmental impacts, creating a massive parking lot runs the opposite and causes greater storm water runoff runs counter. Storm water runoff is a problem that would not go away and impacts wildlife. More surface water management will be a constant problem.</p> <p>Solutions</p> <p>Bring about electric bus services, and make it more available during the ski season.</p> <p>Make the fees discounted or free, and allow buses to have priority to cars and include a bus lane in parts of the road where feasible and safe.</p> <p>For summer, offer the same, and even make services free. Yes, this would be paid by taxpayers, but they at least would get the benefit of a free bus service; and it wouldn't be a service just for skiers. It would be for all Utah citizens.</p> <p>For those wanting to drive up the canyon, have a toll booth with a fee. That will incentivize some to take the free bus up the canyon.</p> <p>Offer discount to carpooling and vans with 7 passengers or greater.</p> <p>Even at all these suggestions of better bus services and free or discounted fees and toll booths, those are far minimal than the ridiculous cost of a gondola that'll really only serve a select class of people and many from out-of-state. It's not our job to provide some fancy transportation system that really will serve so few and still result in low impact of reducing road traffic. We all know that.</p> <p>Having a gondola WON'T solve the traffic problem, not slow it down. It makes no economic sense at the tune of >500 million dollars shouldered by taxpayers, hurts the common hard-working Utahn and families with more taxes and would forever scar the phenomenal scenic view of Little Cottonwood has always had since the post-glaciation Holocene period 11,000 years ago.</p> <p>There are much better common-sense solutions UDOT must seriously evaluate and not jump to a economically senseless gondola option.</p> <p>Sincerely, Matt Sullivan</p>
35098	Luke Sherman	<p>I am an economist and data scientist with an additional degree in public policy. I am writing to oppose the methods and conclusions UDOT's FEIS for Little Cottonwood Canyon. I would like to emphasize the following six issues that are insufficiently addressed by the FEIS as of October 2022:</p> <p>Issues:</p> <p>1. UDOT is missing an opportunity to evaluate the benefits of enhanced bus service. UDOT has already determined that they should increase bus service in the interim period before gondola funding and construction is able to take place. Prior to moving forward with the gondola project, UDOT should plan for a retrospective analysis of enhanced bus service to asses whether and how it has met constituent needs. A retrospective analysis is greatly superior to a prospective analysis and the opportunity to glean new insights from this interim</p>

		<p>experiment should not be overlooked.</p> <p>2. UDOT is ignoring the impacts of the lengthy construction process. During the construction of the gondola there will be years of substantial delays in accessing the canyons, combined with visual disturbances. The enhanced bus service without road widening will not have the same delays due to lengthy construction.</p> <p>3. Climate change will substantially impact tourism in the Wasatch and blunt the benefits of the gondola. Snow accumulation in the Wasatch and the number of skiable days are expected to decrease dramatically with a changing climate (Musselman et al., 2021). This will have large impacts on the number of peak winter travel days and has the potential to greatly affect the net benefits of reducing congestion during these periods. Because there is uncertainty around this impact, it may be superior to select projects that involve less capital investment.</p> <p>4. The FEIS does not address congestion at the Alta and Snowbird ski lifts, which will partially offset demand. In the long term, the gondola options will dramatically increase access to the Alta and Snowbird resorts. However, this increase in demand for skiing at Alta and Snowbird will also result in longer wait times and congestion at the resorts themselves, especially on peak winter travel days. Longer wait times at Alta and Snowbird will necessarily result in other adjacent resorts (Brighton, Solitude, Park City, Deer Valley, etc) becoming more desirable. The FEIS suggests that the gondola alternatives, in particular, will increase tourism. If congestion at the resorts is not addressed, however, peak winter skiers will seek out alternatives to avoid longer wait times at the resorts. This may substantially limit ridership on the gondola during the peak periods when it stands to hold the most benefits. Increased tourism may instead result in spillover congestion in BCC and at other resorts. Senate Bill 277 calls on UDOT to address congestion, but the FEIS does not explicitly address how the spillover congestion effects of additional tourism nor they address congestion at the Alta and Snowbird resorts themselves.</p> <p>5. Projected uncertainty around the projected cost of the gondola alternatives is far too narrow. According the EIS, Gondola B will cost between \$533 and \$550 million. This is consistent with a +/- 5% beyond the average estimated cost of \$541.5 million. UDOT fails to acknowledge the large and long -tailed cost overruns that are associated with large capital projects (Flyvbjerg et al., 2014). Because cost-overruns are almost only positive and, it is insufficient to use a +/- 5% uncertainty estimate for the gondola alternatives. This provides far too narrow of an estimated cost range. UDOT has limited experience with gondola construction and the scale of this project is unprecedented: there is no existing gondola that is nearly as long. For these reasons it is hard to overstate the number of unforeseen circumstances that will impact the final project cost. The FEIS is fundamentally invalidated by projecting such narrow uncertainty on a major capital project for which there is no existing corollary.</p> <p>6. The FEIS does not attempt to assess net costs and benefits in standardized framework. By electing not to conduct a formal cost-benefit analysis (CBA) in their FEIS, UDOT makes no attempt to quantify net befits from the proposed alternatives. An ex-ante cost-benefit analysis would help UDOT to project whether alleviated congestion during peak periods is justified by the considerable capital and operating costs of the proposed alternatives (Boardmen et al., 2018). Instead of formalizing net benefits in a manner that considers gondola ridership costs, the costs of delayed travel in the construction period, the strong preference that most travelers have to avoid public transit, and the declining number of peak periods</p>
--	--	--

		<p>due to climate change, UDOT frames the assessment of alternatives in an incomplete manner.</p> <p>References Boardman, A. E., Greenberg, D. H., Vining, A. R., & Weimer, D. L. (2018). Cost-Benefit Analysis: Concepts and Practice. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108235594</p> <p>Flyvbjerg, B., Garbuio, M., & Lovallo, D. (2014). Better forecasting for large capital projects. <i>McKinsey on Finance</i>, (52), 7-13.</p> <p>Musselman, K.N., Addor, N., Vano, J.A. et al. Winter melt trends portend widespread declines in snow water resources. <i>Nat. Clim. Chang.</i> 11, 418-424 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-021-01014-9</p>
35146	Michael Gilbert	<p>As a backcountry enthusiast, I agree with UDOT that a preferred solution will represent a summary of key concerns expressed within the public comments that were received and processed: EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS to dispersed recreation, OVERCROWDING, VISUAL IMPACTS, WATER QUALITY IMPACTS, AND YEAR-ROUND ACCESS for a majority of visitors. The proposed solution does not address these aspects - below is a list of issues that I see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors," but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best. It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot is a red herring. WBA does not think that vehicle traffic will be abated enough (if at all) by the gondola to justify this conclusion. Backcountry users - like resort patrons - want to be able to use public transit in lieu of their own vehicles to access the canyon, but that is not possible under the current proposal.</p> <p>Economic Benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts.," I do not feel that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that end is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Furthermore, data from the National Ski Area Association likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT for the gondola was \$550M. This was pre-inflationary times, so even in the last year that figure will have risen to \$600M, if not significantly higher. Even if the cost has only increased by \$50M, that means that every single person in Utah is "paying," \$200 each to have what is effectively the most expensive chairlift in history installed for the benefit of two</p>

		<p>businesses (and auxiliary businesses). Any benefit associated with the proposed gondola will likely never be realized by the many Utahns who don't ski and/or live in other areas of the state, despite them paying for it.</p> <p>Gondola Fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs for people to ride the gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p> <p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas.</p> <p>Other Solutions - UDOT says "it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B," but it also may NOT take years, so clearly the gondola is the priority. And if UDOT is trying to simultaneously raise at least \$600M for the gondola AND fund the alternative solutions, the money is in danger of not being available for ANY solution. And by making it clear that the gondola is the preferred solution, UDOT is effectively being incentivized to make the alternate solutions NOT work. Therefore, I strongly suggest that UDOT acknowledge up front that the large tab for the gondola is unrealistic and focus its efforts on simpler, more easily attained transit solutions using existing infrastructure: tolling for all canyon users to disincentivize SOV's, enhanced bus lanes, enhanced bus service (already being cut for the 22-23 season), alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes, etc. This would require UDOT working more closely with UTA, which appears to not be the case.</p> <p>Phasing/Safety/Construction - The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Risk/Flexibility - UDOT's consideration of a gondola as a transportation solution is highly innovative - and risky. While they may be confident in all of the analysis that went into evaluating its chance of success in meeting the Purpose and Need, there is little discussion in the DEIS for how a gondola system would be modified physically or operationally if that becomes necessary, or who would be in charge of making those determinations, and on what basis, and for what cost, and what the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of those changes would be. This creates an inadequate basis for a decision to select the gondola alternative.</p> <p>Controversial - By anyone's assessment, this project has been "polarizing," in the community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The DEIS uses a softer characterization of "strong interest.," It is irresponsible to suggest it is anything other than controversial; for example, the</p>
--	--	--

		<p>mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative, instead saying that common sense solutions that use existing infrastructure and more buses should be pursued. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have said the same thing.</p> <p>Parking Reservations/Tolling - Alta Ski Lifts parking fees this past winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the impact that paid parking and tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. This week UDOT again introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p> <p>Big Cottonwood Canyon - UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar traffic problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA. A BCC/LCC connection is unacceptable to WBA and many other stakeholders who want to preserve the unique qualities of each canyon and avoid the prospect of lifts criss-crossing the ridgetops.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever," and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing/riding tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>Avalanche Mitigation - The use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening and once anti-personnel shells are launched over the gondola, it must be cleared before it can start up again. In fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p> <p>Effects on climbing -I am also deeply concerned about the effect the construction and operation of the gondola will have on the world class climbing in LCC. Climbing has a long history in the canyon, is a very popular activity, and it's representative group Salt Lake City Climbers Alliance has a long history of engaging with the state and the LDS church to protect and enhance the LCC climbing areas, yet the EIS effectively ignored the impact on climbing in its Preferred Solution.</p> <p>Viewshed - While I acknowledge that the top of LCC harbors a small town and two ski resorts and related businesses, the heart of LCC is wild terrain that includes clearly visible tracts of designated wilderness. The effect of 200-foot tall towers and 35-person gondola cars will be an eyesore that a majority of constituents, to whom such infrastructure will be visible whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, or skiing, will find offensive. Gondola infrastructure will be visible to anyone skiing, hiking, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive up the canyon. There are clearly better, more logical common sense solutions that can be put in place that do not create such an eyesore in this unique environment.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts on this process and for your consideration of this comment.</p> <p>-Michael</p>
35148	Caleb Norman	<p>Note: this is a re-submission to edit on October 17, 2022 to a prior comment.</p> <p>For all of the items that have been proposed to be introduced around the same time as the gondola implementation, they begin to beg the question, "why would a gondola up LCC need to be implemented in the first place, especially when the added measures would work so well on their own?" This is especially important to consider when we examine the current situation and find that it has not been optimized for lowering traffic at any truly significant level.</p> <p>The gondola would only impact the current traffic rate up LCC by around 28% [1,2], with no effect on BCC traffic, which has arguably been worse. While this figure may sound nice, improvements to the traffic would likely need to be several multiples of its current state in order to satisfy the long term demand the canyons will grow into. These effects drop even more during the summer periods when vehicle speeds are higher on clear roads and the typical gondola usage plummet. A solution is needed that can be adaptable at the peak and low volume portions of the season, and something that can work well year-round for both canyons. Most/all of these suggestions have been brought up to some degree, but a recommendation to implement all of them together needs to be prioritized.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build strategically placed avalanche tunnels on both canyon roads. -Drastically increase the rate of buses per hour for both canyons, and increase the parking infrastructure options for each to work with the bussing and possible carpooling options. -Incentivize those who insist on still driving to carpool via free canyon passes and parking. -The availability of the free canyon passes and parking could be further restricted to vehicles with snow tires on storm days, if need be. -Toll and charge parking to those who are not carpooling and bussing. -These changes could be adjusted during the summer as needed. <p>The sum of even a handful of the proposals UDOT have presented to supplement or help introduce the Gondola via 'phasing' would function far better than either the current situation, or the Gondola itself. In fact, proposing a Gondola to solve the problems in either canyon is irrelevant to the actual issue of traffic overflow. Yes it might be profitable for the Gondola Works coalition, but at what cost to the paying SLC residents who may not even ski, and only one of the two crowded canyons? Additionally, as a lifelong skier and avid user of LCC's resources, it seems clear that the proposal of a gondola installation simply serves as a trojan horse to eventually interconnect all the Cottonwood and Park City ski resorts, a'la many European ski areas. If the groundwork is allowed to be laid for this possible long-term outcome, we will greatly risk overrunning the incredible mountains we have been blessed with, losing their beauty in the process.</p> <p>References: [1] "Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement," , September 2022 [2] Gondolaworks.com website, est. figures for busy days in LCC. Note: 7000 vehicles/hr is still a relatively conservative estimate due to the summer traffic</p>

		<p>frequently beating this figure.</p> <p>Calculations: Gondola capacity: 35 persons/gondola car * 1 gondola car/2 min * 60 min/hr = 1050 persons/hr Road capacity: 7000 vehicles/day * 2.17 persons/vehicle * 1 day/4 hrs@peak usage = 3800 persons/hr Percent difference in capacity of canyon users affected = $1050 * 100\% = 28\%$ improvement in capacity</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3800</p> <p>Where the 4 hrs @peak usage is defined as the approximate 7-11am window that the canyons see the most ascending traffic during a given ski season. Numbers may vary for seasonal travel.</p> <p>Background: I am the son of a an Alta employee entering her 33rd-year on the ski instructor team, and have been skiing and hiking in the canyon since I was 3 years old. I will be graduating from the University of Utah in the spring of 2023 with a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering.</p>
35164	Colby Ashcroft	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>Thank you for accepting public comments on the Little Cottonwood Canyon Final EIS and Draft Record of Decision. As a resident of Salt Lake County and a frequent user of Little Cottonwood Canyon during all seasons of the year, I would like to express my opposition to the preferred alternative, which includes construction of a gondola from a base station near the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon to it its terminus at Alta, Utah. I also oppose any alternative that would widen the road in canyon. Prior to implementing either of these alternatives, UDOT should work with local communities, Alta and Snowbird ski resorts, the U.S. Forest Service, and non-governmental organizations representing a variety of users to implement prudent and cost effective measures that specifically address traffic and safety issues. As part of any solution, UDOT should move forward with construction of snow sheds, improved shoulders with bike lanes, restrictions on road side parking, and trailhead improvements. Regarding the preferred alternative, I urge you to consider the following:</p> <p>1) Local Input should be a primary factor taken into consideration in the decision-making process. While Alta and Snowbird are destination resorts, year-around traffic congestion in Little Cottonwood Canyon is primarily the result of local use. Residents of Salt Lake County are the primary users of Little Cottonwood Canyon and are disproportionately impacted by UDOT's decision. The majority of residents in the County have also expressed clear and unequivocal opposition to the construction of the gondola. Cottonwood Heights, Sandy City, Salt Lake City, and Salt Lake County have passed resolutions opposing the project. Not a single community in Salt Lake County has voiced support the gondola. It would be inconsistent with Utah values for UDOT to approve the gondola when it directly contradicts the will of local residents who are the primary users of the canyon are disproportionately impacted by current traffic problems.</p> <p>2) The gondola does not benefit all canyon users. Any transportation solution adopted should benefit all recreation users and provide year-round benefit. A gondola that transports people directly to Snowbird and Alta harms rather than benefits climbers, back country skiers, cyclists, hikers and other users. While other aspects of UDOTs preferred alternative (e.g., improved parking at trailheads and snowsheds) would have broad public benefit, the gondola only addressed the needs of a limited number of resort skiers. Of particular concern, construction of a gondola does not provide access to a single trailhead in the canyon or address traffic associated summer and winter recreation use of areas</p>

		<p>such as Lisa Falls and White Pine trailhead, which provides access to the White Pine, Red Pine, Maybird, and Hogum drainages.</p> <p>3) The cost of the gondola outweighs benefits and should not be covered by tax payers. The estimated cost for construction of the gondola is approximately \$550 million. Given the current labor market, supply chain issues, and inflation, these costs are likely an underestimate. Prior to making any decision UDOT should update its cost estimates to account for changed conditions.</p> <p>Utah tax payers should not shoulder the cost of a gondola, especially when traffic issues are primarily limited to morning and evening hours on powder days, weekends and holidays during peak ski season. The costs of the gondola area are unreasonable given that the primary concern is traffic jams that occur approximately 120 hours per year (2 hours in the morning and two hours in the evening 30 days per year). This money should be used to address more pressing transportation or public service needs.</p> <p>UDOT should also recognize that the primary beneficiaries of the gondola are two for-profit corporations operating on public lands and a demographic that primarily includes white upper-class skiers. As prices for equipment, parking, lift tickets, and amenities continue to increase, the ski industry is pricing out middle-class families. While the State of Utah, and specifically Salt Lake County, are becoming increasingly diverse, the ski industry is becoming more exclusive. Statistically, less than 4 percent of the U.S. population skis. Diverse and low-income communities should not subsidize a project that provides no direct public benefit. The cost should also not be shouldered by residents of Salt Lake County residents that oppose the project.</p> <p>4) There is no evidence that skiers will use the gondola. UTA officials collect demographic data, including ethnicities and income levels of riders. This information is relevant when estimating ridership of the proposed gondola. According to 2020 census data, Salt Lake County is 87.1% white; 18.8% Hispanic or Latino; 4.6% Asian; 2.2% Black; 1.8% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and 1.4% Native American or Native Alaskan.</p> <p>In 2022, according to UTA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minorities make up 25.9% of all riders and 31% are low-income riders. • Minorities make up 27.4% of fixed bus route riders, 30.3% of TRAX riders and 16.9% of commuter rail riders. • Low-income riders make up 48.1% of fixed bus route riders, 35.6% of TRAX riders and 26.3% of commuter rail riders. <p>The data above clearly shows that the primary users of mass transit systems are low-income and minority populations. As previously discussed, there is a significant diversity gap in the snowsports industry, where it is estimated that Hispanics make up only 6 percent of skiers and cost barriers prohibit low-income individuals and families from skiing (especially at Alta and Snowbird). Based on demographics data and mass transit statistics, it is unreasonable to expect that white upper-class individuals and families would use the gondola. Some of the pragmatic reasons that most resort patrons would continue to drive rather than use the gondola include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commute times associated with the gondola would exceed transportation times associated with vehicle travel, and commute times matter. UDOT has underestimated the door-to-door time and inconvenience it would take to reach resorts via the gondola when adding in driving times to transportation hubs, transfers (with ski equipment in hand), wait times, and connections (which could include mandatory transfer to buses prior to
--	--	--

		<p>reaching the gondola base station from dispersed transportation hubs). Even with vehicle traffic, most resort patrons will opt for a shorter uninterrupted commute in the intimacy and privacy of their own car. Weekday skiers not affected by traffic or parking issues will also choose to drive rather than ride the gondola. Monday through Friday skiers are more likely to ski flexible and reduced hours that align with school or work schedules and are also focused on minimizing commute times.</p> <p>ÔÇú Skiers value the convenience of keeping extra equipment and clothing in their vehicles. Nearly every skier will add or shed layers during the day as temperatures fluctuate. Oftentimes skiers will change skis or equipment (such as goggle lens or sunglasses) depending on conditions. Skiers using the gondola will forego these conveniences or be forced to pay exorbitant costs of resort locker facilities, which are currently limited. Oftentimes season locker rentals exceed the cost of season passes.</p> <p>ÔÇú Tailgating is as synonymous with the skiing experience. Those using the gondola would forgo this tradition and be forced to take lunch breaks in already overcrowded lodges and pay for expensive ski resort food. Even with efforts to incentivize use of the gondola, it should be recognized that skiers that can afford the price of lofty lift tickets can likely absorb the costs of tolling. In fact, many users are already accustomed to paid parking, which is becoming an industry norm. Additionally, the costs of paying a toll or parking fee would likely be less than the costs of the gondola, locker rentals, and purchase of resort food. Demographical information, costs, and inconveniences indicate that UDOT will have difficulty achieving its goal of reducing canyon traffic by 30 percent through alternative transportation such as the gondola as long as vehicles are allowed in the canyon.</p> <p>5) Before approving the gondola UDOT should adopt common sense and cost effective transportation solutions. Local and county governments, non-profit organizations, and interested citizens have identified a long-list of conservative, measured, cost-effective, and reasonable transportation solutions that should be implemented before approving the gondola. These solutions include, tolling, paid parking, ride share programs, increased busing, enforcement of chain and vehicle restrictions, limiting the number of vehicles in the canyon to available parking, minimizing road side parking, and construction of snowsheds. To date, few if any of these solutions have been implemented with any consistency. Before degrading the world class scenery of Little Cottonwood Canyon, UDOT should work ski resorts, local governments, and interested organizations to implement measures that could have an immediate impact on traffic and canyon safety.</p> <p>6) Traffic does not deter weekend skiers. Despite that fact that Utah and Colorado are known to have the world's worst ski traffic, they remain popular ski destinations because of terrain, conditions, and location. In fact, there is no indication that increases in traffic has or will result in a decline in ski resort use or impact the multi-billion-dollar ski industry. Traffic jams caused by weather and poorly designed roads are in fact an expectation for most skiers. Because skiing is entirely an optional extra-curricular activity, individuals can choose whether they are willing to accept the inconvenience of traffic, which is part of the skiing experience. Just as people expect to encounter crowds in America's most visited National Parks during peak summer season, they expect longer than average travel times during snow events and on weekends during peak ski season. Reducing traffic to resorts caused from increased tickets sales should not be a primary consideration in UDOT's decision.</p> <p>7) The gondola will degrade the world class scenery of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Because of its steep, rugged, and unforgiving topography, portions of Little</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Cottonwood Canyon remain largely undeveloped. In the lower- to mid-canyon, the Lone Peak and Twin Peak Wilderness Areas provide protection for scenic, geologic, biological, and recreational resources. Construction of a gondola would significantly alter the viewshed of the canyon. The greatest impacts would be to those recreating in or near the Wilderness Areas, including those using the White Pine trailhead.</p> <p>8) UDOT must consider the impacts of its decision on neighboring highway 190 in Big Cottonwood Canyon and the cumulative impacts of multiple fee proposals. UDOT's response to comments on the DEIS asserts that the cumulative impact analysis considers impacts to neighboring Big Cottonwood Canyon; however, the EIS fails to take a "hard look," at these impacts. UDOT should conduct additional studies to determine how tolling and the gondola would change visitor use patterns. Of specific concern, hidden within the EIS, there is limited information regarding UDOT's plans to introduce tolling as a mechanism for incentivizing use of the gondola and managing impacts to neighboring Big Cottonwood Canyon (i.e. UDOT has stated that if a toll is instituted in Little Cottonwood Canyon it would also have to be instituted in Big Cottonwood Canyon). Just recently, UDOT has begun to publicly discuss tolling proposal (featured in multiple new articles), but has admitted that "the exact details of potential are yet to be determined." UDOT's tolling proposal is a cumulative action that is inseparably connected from other canyon transportation solutions and is critical for determining whether the preferred alternative would meet UDOT's purpose and need. Additional details must be incorporated into the range of alternatives regarding UDOT's tolling proposal in order to adequately understand whether construction of the gondola would actually have an impact on traffic. Additionally, since publication of UDOT's final EIS, the U.S. Forest Service has announced its intent to begin charging fees at multiple trailheads and facilities across the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, including in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Options could include individual site fees or an annual pass that provides users with access to recreation sites and facilities across the forest. This too is a cumulative impact that must be considered in UDOT's EIS. UDOT must consider how Forest Service fees, ski resort parking fees, and UDOT tolling would work together (i.e., would visitors be expected to purchase a Forest Service annual pass, pay UDOT's daily toll, and reserve paid resort parking). Prior to implementing any decision, the EIS must consider how these fees would change visitor patterns, disperse use to adjacent canyons, and impact diverse and low-income communities.</p> <p>9) The EIS should disclose Alta and Snowbird's interests in the project and whether the decision has any connection to Utah's Olympic proposal. Prior to the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics the State of Utah agreed that no events would be held in Little Cottonwood Canyon due to public safety, traffic congestion, and parking limitations. The State successfully hosted the games without using facilities at either Alta or Snowbird, two of State's flagship resorts. As the state prepares to host the games again in either 2030 or 2034, it should again exclude Snowbird and Alta as host venues. This commitment would provide the public with assurance that there is no hidden agenda and that the construction of the gondola is no way connected with Utah's desire to host another Olympic games.</p> <p>The EIS must also recognize the ski resorts' roles and interests in the project. Since publication of the Final EIS, the public has learned that Snowbird purchased that land that would be used for the gondola base station under the name of "LLC Base Property." This would potentially require the state to rent or purchase the land on which the gondola's base station would sit from the primary beneficiary. The public must know the details and costs of any</p>
--	--	---

		<p>transactions or agreements between UDOT and Snowbird for use of the base and terminal facilities. The public has also learned that Gondola Works, the primary group behind public advocacy for the gondola, is backed and was started by Snowbird. Without disclosure of this information concern the public rightly remains skeptical regarding closed door agreements and whether industry has inappropriately had influence on the preferred alternative.</p> <p>10) UDOT has not adequately considered the impacts of widening Wasatch Blvd on cyclists. Wasatch Boulevard is not a highway and should not be used as one. It is road that provides access to residential neighborhoods in Cottonwood Heights, Sandy, and Draper and is used year-round by hundreds of cyclists per day. Cyclists and drivers have accepted Wasatch Boulevard as a multi-modal transportation corridor that provides sweeping and views of the surrounding mountains and Salt Lake Valley, access to canyons, and connections to trail systems (e.g., Parleys and Corner Canyon). Expansion of Wasatch Blvd would result in increased traffic and speeds and create unsafe conditions for cyclists. The addition of bike lanes to an upgraded road will not mitigate these issues and would substantially alter the character of this area. Urban cyclists prefer low volume residential roads with reduced speeds. UDOT should consider an entirely separate paralleling cycling boulevard if expansion of Wasatch Boulevard is part of its decision.</p> <p>11) UDOTs final decision should address parking issues in upper Little Cottonwood Canyon. Since UDOT initiated its EIS process tensions between Alta Ski Lifts Company and backcountry users in Little Cottonwood Canyon has increased. Alta owns and maintains nearly all parking in the upper Little Cottonwood Canyon and has instituted paid parking policies to preserve its parking for ski resort patrons. This decision has disproportionately impacted public use of National Forest system lands outside of resort boundaries. Currently there is no wintertime public parking in Little Cottonwood Canyon for non-ski resort patrons. Construction of the gondola would not address this issue because backcountry users frequently access the canyon during early morning or evening hours (5:30-8:30 AM) but have nowhere to park under Alta's current policy. In its efforts to identify transportation solutions that benefit all canyon users, UDOT should work with the Forest Service, Alta, and backcountry users to find fair and amicable solutions to existing parking problems.</p> <p>12) UDOT has inappropriately dismissed reasonable alternatives from analysis. Within the EIS UDOT dismisses several alternatives from analysis that are reasonable and should be analyzed in detail. Specifically, UDOT dismissed limiting the total number of skiers or having a reservation system as a solution to limiting traffic congestion. UDOT states that it does not have the authority to ban certain ski passes, charge more for lift tickets or parking, add more or reduce parking at the ski resorts, or limit the number of visitors at private businesses. Additionally, UDOT asserts that because S.R. 210 is a public road, UDOT does not have the ability to close the road to public travel except as a result of accidents, emergencies, or extreme weather conditions, or authority to change a private business's operating hours. UDOTs rationale for dismissing these alternatives is not consistent with CEQ NEPA guidance. According to CEQ's 40 most asked questions 2a and 2b, and agency must consider all reasonable alternatives, even if those alternatives are outside of an agency's authority or jurisdiction. In addition to being inconsistent with CEQ regulations and existing case law, UDOTs rationale for dismissing these alternatives is a logical fallacy. The most obvious way to reduce canyon traffic, even during morning and evening hours, is limiting the number of vehicles in the canyon at a given time. Reducing the number of skiers through capping ticket sales or limiting the number of vehicles in the canyon to available parking is a reasonable, clear, and obvious solution to traffic and safety problems. Any assertion that these measure would</p>
--	--	--

		<p>not reduce traffic, even during peak hours, fails the test of reason, especially when similar measures have been successfully employed at other popular recreation destinations, including national parks and ski resorts throughout the country. Further, this assertion does not comport with the fact that in recent years UDOT has temporarily closed both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons when parking lots are at capacity. "In determining the scope of alternatives to be considered, the emphasis is on what is 'reasonable' rather than on whether the proponent or applicant likes or is itself capable of carrying out a particular alternative. Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant."</p> <p>Before approving construction of a gondola opposed by locals and at the expense of tax payers, UDOT must consider an alternative that would limit the number of vehicles in the canyon and limit ski resort tickets sales. While this alternative may be undesirable from the applicant's standpoint (either UDOT or the ski resorts) it is possible to create an alternative that 1)preserves and improves skier experiences; 2) allow for equitable access and sustainable use of the canyon; 3) provides reasonable economic opportunity for private business operating in the canyon; and 4) mitigates traffic congestion and safety concerns.</p> <p>Finally, as previously mentioned, skiing is entirely a discretionary extracurricular activity. Individuals that disinterested in dealing with morning and evening traffic can select to ski on alternative days, during alternative hours, or at alternative areas with no actual repercussion.</p> <p>Thank you again for your efforts to include the public in the decision-making process. While NEPA does not require that that UDOT accepts the will of the people, I urge you to consider listen to local voices and those that most frequently use the canyon who have almost unanimously voiced opposition to the construction of a gondola as a reasonable transportation solution.</p>
35206	Susan Clement	<p>I agree with the thoughts and stance of WBA. I'm an avid backcountry user in LCC/BCC and other surrounding areas of the wasatch and Utah. I do not think a gondola is the answe and believer there are better wash that will protect our environment and watershed while making the canyons more accessible to all users at all times of year</p> <p>OCTOBER 17, 2022</p> <p>WASATCH BACKCOUNTRY ALLIANCE'S LCC EIS COMMENT</p> <p>The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance (WBA) is a local SLC nonprofit representing the interests of thousands of backcountry - and resort - users both locally and nationally as they pertain to the preservation of the famous non-resort terrain in the Tri-Canyon area. We have paid very close attention to the LCC EIS transportation process, and this is our formal comment.</p> <p>WBA agrees with UDOT that a preferred solution will represent a summary of key concerns expressed within the public comments that were received and processed: EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS to dispersed recreation, OVERCROWDING, VISUAL IMPACTS, WATER QUALITY IMPACTS, AND YEAR-ROUND ACCESS for a majority of visitors. The proposed solution does not address these aspects - below is a list of issues that we see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors," but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best. It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety</p>

		<p>hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot is a red herring. WBA does not think that vehicle traffic will be abated enough (if at all) by the gondola to justify this conclusion. Backcountry users - like resort patrons - want to be able to use public transit in lieu of their own vehicles to access the canyon, but that is not possible under the current proposal.</p> <p>Economic Benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts.," WBA does not feel that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that end is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Furthermore, data from the National Ski Area Association likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT for the gondola was \$550M. This was pre-inflationary times, so even in the last year that figure will have risen to \$600M, if not significantly higher (which WBA suspects to be the case). Even if the cost has only increased by \$50M, that means that every single person in Utah is "paying," \$200 each to have what is effectively the most expensive chairlift in history installed for the benefit of two businesses (and auxiliary businesses). Any benefit associated with the proposed gondola will likely never be realized by the many Utahns who don't ski and/or live in other areas of the state, despite them paying for it.</p> <p>Gondola Fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs for people to ride the gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p> <p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas.</p> <p>Other Solutions - UDOT says "it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B," but it also may NOT take years, so clearly the gondola is the priority. And if UDOT is trying to simultaneously raise at least \$600M for the gondola AND fund the alternative solutions, the money is in danger of not being available for ANY solution. And by making it clear that the gondola is the preferred solution, UDOT is effectively being incentivized to make the alternate solutions NOT work. Therefore, we strongly suggest that UDOT acknowledge up front that the large tab for the gondola is unrealistic and focus its efforts on simpler, more easily attained transit</p>
--	--	--

		<p>solutions using existing infrastructure: tolling for all canyon users to disincentivize SOV's, enhanced bus lanes, enhanced bus service (already being cut for the 22-23 season), alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes, etc. This would require UDOT working more closely with UTA, which appears to not be the case.</p> <p>Phasing/Safety/Construction - The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Risk/Flexibility - UDOT's consideration of a gondola as a transportation solution is highly innovative - and risky. While they may be confident in all of the analysis that went into evaluating its chance of success in meeting the Purpose and Need, there is little discussion in the DEIS for how a gondola system would be modified physically or operationally if that becomes necessary, or who would be in charge of making those determinations, and on what basis, and for what cost, and what the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of those changes would be. This creates an inadequate basis for a decision to select the gondola alternative.</p> <p>Controversial - By anyone's assessment, this project has been "polarizing," in the community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The DEIS uses a softer characterization of "strong interest.," It is irresponsible to suggest it is anything other than controversial; for example, the mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative, instead saying that common sense solutions that use existing infrastructure and more buses should be pursued. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have said the same thing.</p> <p>Parking Reservations/Tolling - Alta Ski Lifts parking fees this past winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the impact that paid parking and tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. This week UDOT again introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p> <p>Big Cottonwood Canyon - UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar traffic problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA. A BCC/LCC connection is unacceptable to WBA and many other stakeholders who want to preserve the unique qualities of each canyon and avoid the prospect of lifts criss-crossing the ridgetops.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the</p>
--	--	--

		<p>canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever," and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing/riding tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>Avalanche Mitigation - The use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening and once anti-personnel shells are launched over the gondola, it must be cleared before it can start up again. In fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p> <p>Effects on climbing - While WBA primarily represents the interests of wintertime non-motorized use, many WBA members are also climbers. We are deeply concerned about the effect the construction and operation of the gondola will have on the world class climbing in LCC. Climbing has a long history in the canyon, is a very popular activity, and it's representative group Salt Lake City Climbers Alliance has a long history of engaging with the state and the LDS church to protect and enhance the LCC climbing areas, yet the EIS effectively ignored the impact on climbing in its Preferred Solution.</p> <p>Viewshed - While we acknowledge that the top of LCC harbors a small town and two ski resorts and related businesses, the heart of LCC is wild terrain that includes clearly visible tracts of designated wilderness. The effect of 200-foot tall towers and 35-person gondola cars will be an eyesore that a majority of constituents, to whom such infrastructure will be visible whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, or skiing, will find offensive. Gondola infrastructure will be visible to anyone skiing, hiking, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive up the canyon. There are clearly better, more logical common sense solutions that can be put in place that do not create such an eyesore in this unique environment.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts on this process and for your consideration of this comment.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>The Board of Directors of Wasatch Backcountry Alliance</p> <p>(Photo courtesy of Howie Garber Photography)</p> <p>POST NAVIGATION Previous UDOT Identifies Preferred Alternative for LCC EIS</p> <p>STAY INFORMED Subscribe to our newsletter and help protect the Central Wasatch.</p> <p>SUBSCRIBE ABOUT About Sponsors The Uptrack Trail Counting Resources Contact Us</p>
--	--	--

		<p>LATEST Blog News Events TAKE ACTION Get Involved Shuttle Donate</p> <p>©2022 Site by Brad Hogan</p>
35220	Jason Erickson	<p>My name is Jason erickson and am a resident of cottonwood heights, constituent of Utah.</p> <p>Thank you for listening to our comments and suggesting to move forward with the enhanced bus service.</p> <p>1. In alignment with the Salt Lake County Council that The Gondola Alternative B proposal be eliminated from consideration in its entirety or at minimum be put on hold until the following have been demonstrated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The enhanced bus service as recommended by UDOT is in effect and a study on usage occurs Education is put out by UDOT/UTA demonstrating to the public that these resources are available and how we can work together as a community to resolve the congestion issue in S.R. 210 SLCA is added as an engaged stakeholder of S.R. 210 A clear construction timeline & updated cost breakdown is presented that will show the impact of the Gondola B proposal in regards to lane closure, durations, and updated costs Updated analysis of S.R. 210 recreational users on an annual basis that includes post pandemic population boom & increase in outdoor recreation <p>2. UDOT releases a timeline and plan for the Enhanced Bus Service without road widening as this has been proposed by UDOT per FEIS statement</p> <p>3. The Trail Head parking issue be decoupled from the FEIS statement and given priority to move forward with independent funding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The FEIS statement has shown several recommendations for this and it is a clear and apparent needs. UDOTe to work with UTA & key stakeholders to focus on increasing Trail Head parking at the identified areas and not wait until the resolution and funding of this project. <p>4. UDOT to release a direct cost and timeline comparison between the Enhanced Bus service without road widening & the Gondola Alternative B without any supplemental costs and factors including avalanche mitigation/trail head parking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Impact statement on how current users will be impacted by Enhanced bus service with no construction modifications with in S.R. 210 and the Gondola Alternative B. <p>The SLCA makes the following recommendations and requests of UDOT</p> <p>1. In alignment with the Salt Lake County Council that The Gondola Alternative B proposal be eliminated from consideration in its entirety or at minimum be put on hold until the following have been demonstrated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The enhanced bus service as recommended by UDOT is in effect and a study on usage occurs Education is put out by UDOT/UTA demonstrating to the public that these resources are available and how we can work together as a community to resolve the congestion issue in S.R. 210

		<p>c. SLCA is added as an engaged stakeholder of S.R. 210</p> <p>d. A clear construction timeline & updated cost breakdown is presented that will show the impact of the Gondola B proposal in regards to lane closure, durations, and updated costs</p> <p>e. Updated analysis of S.R. 210 recreational users on an annual basis that includes post pandemic population boom & increase in outdoor recreation</p> <p>2. UDOT releases a timeline and plan for the Enhanced Bus Service without road widening as this has been proposed by UDOT per FEIS statement</p> <p>3. The Trail Head parking issue be decoupled from the FEIS statement and given priority to move forward with independent funding.</p> <p>a. The FEIS statement has shown several recommendations for this and it is a clear and apparent needs.</p> <p>b. UDOT to work with UTA & key stakeholders to focus on increasing Trail Head parking at the identified areas and not wait until the resolution and funding of this project.</p> <p>4. UDOT to release a direct cost and timeline comparison between the Enhanced Bus service without road widening & the Gondola Alternative B without any supplemental costs and factors including avalanche mitigation/trail head parking.</p> <p>a. Impact statement on how current users will be impacted by Enhanced bus service with no construction modifications with in S.R. 210 and the Gondola Alternative B.</p> <p>Little cottonwood will forever has changed my heart and soul with the purity it has provided. I want generations to have this to experience this</p>
35258	Ian Jones	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <p>1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC?</p> <p>2. GW consistently points out how "clean," the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/).</p> <p>3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium," parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots.</p> <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
35259	Claire Parsons	<p>My name is Claire Parsons and I moved to northern Utah three years ago. I've been heavily involved in conservation efforts across the greater and central Wasatch since 2019. I am a botanist and recreationalist. I spend many hours a week working in the mountains as well as enjoying the public land access the Wasatch mountains have to offer. I have the opportunity to work with various stakeholders across the Salt Lake City Valley that are determined to protect the watershed, migration corridors, endemic plant species, and creating equitable access opportunities for the population.</p> <p>I am grateful that UDOT has taken the time to research alternatives to solve the transportation issues in Little Cottonwood Canyon (SR 210) and that an EIS process was administered. Thank you for taking the time to begin analyzing this issue. As someone who does not ski at private resorts, I cannot wrap my mind around why UDOT would be supporting a project that solely funds Alta and Snowbird patrons? The gondola is only stopping at Alta and Snowbird. If the gondola is backing their visitors, why is this a citizen funded project?</p> <p>Additionally, how was the scope of this project approved to be so narrow? A project that wants to alleviate single vehicle traffic in the canyon but a project that is being built only for resort visitors? What about the other 9 months out of the year when Little Cottonwood is slammed? Or in the winter when backcountry trailheads are at capacity?</p> <p>Here is a consolidated list of questions and concerns about the preferred gondola alternative.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The gondola is STATIC. Once built, it is what it is. A gondola system cannot evolve with a growing population. Common sense solutions can. Busing, affordable tolling during peak visitation periods, establishing transportation hubs, and so on. These solutions can also scale back if visitation was to ever lessen. With a population that is destined to continue growing, how will a gondola system that only serves TWO locations - Alta and Snowbird - cater to the transportation needs of the valley? 2. The proposed gondola is estimated to improve mobility by 30%. That is it. How can one reason spending over \$550 million to hardly solve the issue? Not to mention the \$550 million was projected in 2018. What is the new estimated cost of the gondola project as of October 2022? 3. Parking for the gondola does not exist yet which means more parking lots will

		<p>need to be developed at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon to serve patrons. Where do you see these parking lots going? How many acres will the parking lots or garages take up in addition to the footprint of the gondola?</p> <p>The gondola runs only in the winter... we experience transportation issues year-round. Will UDOT facilitate another evaluation project that expands the need and scope of the project beyond servicing only Alta and Snowbird patrons?</p> <p>4. The gondola is fully funded by taxpayers meaning that the majority of the state that does not ski at the private ski resorts in Little Cottonwood Canyon will be required to contribute to this project. Why is this being seen as the lead funding opportunity for a project that is serving a miniscule percentage of the Utah population? As an individual that does not ski at these resorts, there are countless issues that could use my dollar more than building something for private ski resorts. Education across the state, conservation initiatives, funding the housing crisis, etc.</p> <p>5. From an environmental standpoint, there is absolutely no guarantee that UDOT can fully say this has no impact on the Utah Watershed. With a history of contaminating waterways and killing aquatic populations due to spilloff from UDOT construction, how can UDOT make a claim like this? Little Cottonwood Canyon houses the valley's drinking water.</p> <p>6. Why did the UTA budget get cut weeks after UDOT presented the gondola as a preferred alternative with a phased approach? The phased approach is centered around public transportation opportunities and now those resources have been cut by 50% and two months before peak winter recreation season.</p> <p>7. What is UDOT doing about prioritizing the phased approach?</p> <p>I want it to be clear that I recognize the intricacies of this project and the severity of this decision. This is a decision that will permanently affect and change the integrity of Little Cottonwood Canyon and should not be held lightly nor rushed. There are many different common-sense solutions that can serve the public and alleviate traffic pressures that require far less development that can be implemented before building something as massive, expensive, and irreversible as the gondola system.</p> <p>A few suggested strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased busing access. 2. Increasing public transportation accessibility across the canyon. 3. Incentives for carpooling. 4. Traction laws. 5. Tolling during peak periods. 6. Bus-only canyon during peak periods. 7. Requiring Snowbird and Alta to provide adequate fleet vehicles for their visitors. 8. Host an EIS study where the resorts are not involved in the scope but the entirety of the canyon is involved in the scope. 9. Year-round transportation opportunities. 10. Funding transportation hubs. <p>I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to UDOT for offering an additional public comment period. I urge you to think about long-term transportation solutions. We need to create proactive, long-term transportation solutions and regulations that are a proper match to the increased pressures the central Wasatch will continue to face. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
35260	Sarah Cummings	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best</p>

		<p>LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean," the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium," parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
35306	ANNA MOORE	<p>In reviewing the EIS, I find that the goals of environmental protection, equity, travel reliability, and user experience are NOT met by Gondola B.</p> <p>Environmental: It is painfully ironic that UDOT finds it acceptable to ask for \$550 million for skier traffic- when the entire Salt Lake Valley is teetering on environmental collapse if the Great Salt Lake disappears. *How can a skier gondola warrant \$550 million, when last year, the state only allocated \$40 million for a Great Salt Lake watershed enhancement? *If (when) the Great Salt Lake dries up, there will be no lake effect snow, no skier</p>

		<p>tourism and the gargantuan gondola will be an eyesore and testament to the city's shortsighted ignorance.</p> <p>*It's also important to remember- the traffic issues facing LCC are only for 50 days each winter... Proving this investment is outrageous.</p> <p>Also, the claim that the 100-213 feet towers will not affect the watershed seems ingenuine.</p> <p>*How deep will the base supports for the gondola towers go?</p> <p>*What are the methods to keep concrete and construction waste from spilling into the watershed?</p> <p>Equity:</p> <p>The EIS should be more explicit about the user cost of the gondola. Current models projects that Snowbird would charge \$25 for patrons to PARK their vehicles at the gondola base station and another \$25 per person to RIDE to the gondola up the canyon. That's \$50 on top of a \$130 day pass. I'm curious who would actually utilize the gondola service if this is the case.</p> <p>*But the real question should be, who will be benefiting (profiting) from the gondola?</p> <p>How convenient that Snowbird owns the land for the base station and now UDOT's plan includes an additional 1000 parking spots at that station.</p> <p>Not to mention- Snowbird started the organization "Gondola Works," that has fed pro-gondola propaganda for the past years.</p> <p>Honestly, the proposed gondola appears to be less of a way to mitigate pollution and traffic, and more of a corporate monopoly on access to LCC.</p> <p>*Why does Gondola Works refuses to share their finances with the public?</p> <p>*Why -after 14,000+ public comments- (a majority in opposition of the gondola)- is UDOT still clinging to this option?</p> <p>Travel Reliability</p> <p>As for travel reliability, how will wind affect the Gondola?</p> <p>You noted in one of your road improvement alternatives that the snow sheds located at the base of slide paths would reduce road closure time from 80 hrs to 11 hrs.</p> <p>*How many hours would you expect the Gondola to be closed for high winds or mechanical issues?</p> <p>I do appreciate the phased approach of adding more busing and tolls- but worry that UDOT won't make this early phase robust enough- creating the illusion that buses don't work and a gondola is still warranted. Zion National Park has fully adopted bus shuttles and is able to transport 1,200 riders per day in peak season. Copying this model would reach the goal of 30% reduction in private vehicles and save the state millions of dollars.</p> <p>User Experience</p> <p>Boosting the La Calle parking structure from 1500 to 2500 inherently creates the problem you're trying to eliminate- traffic and congestion.</p> <p>Allowing an additional 1000 skiers to drive to the base station-then stand in line at the gondola only creates a different choke.</p> <p>The gondola ignores the real issue... The mountains have their capacity too.</p>
35317	Robert Douglass	<p>The EIS asserts that the preferred Alternative, Gondola Option B, is more reliable than road-based alternatives. There is no data, analysis, or even qualitative argument supporting this incorrect assumption. The EIS implies that the gondola provides a reliable alternative means of transport during events that may shut the road. Those events can be characterized by extreme weather (e.g., tornado), fire,</p>

		<p>earthquake, road-accident, landslides or rock falls, and avalanche closures (actual or high-risk). Last year the Sandia Tram froze and stopped trapping its passengers for the night until a darling rope-rescue could be effected. The year before that a cable-supported cabin's brakes failed, and it rolled back down the mountain at high speed eventually detaching, falling, and killing all but one of its passengers. Accidents do happen and they cause lifts to be closed for days to months while repairs and inspections and improvements are installed. It is not clear that a gondola provides a meaningful, significant, safe, and reliable alternative to transit by road for any of these conditions. The reliability of the road versus the world's largest, most complex gondola can be compared for each of these events:</p> <p>a. Weather extreme enough to close the road (e.g., a tornado or extreme fire danger) would also close the gondola.</p> <p>b. A forest fire in the Canyon would close both the road and the gondola.</p> <p>c. Earthquakes and landslides or rockfalls offer equal danger to both the road and the gondola. For example, major rockfalls of truck-sized boulders have occurred and rolled directly over the location of the first transfer station and some of the towers. It is likely that it would take far longer to repair earthquake damage to the complex mechanisms of the gondola than to repair any road damage from landslides, rockfalls, or earthquakes. The gondola offers no additional safety or reliability in these cases.</p> <p>d. Traffic accidents can and have closed the LCC road briefly in the past. However, these are quickly cleared and any disruption in transport on the road would need to be compared quantitatively with all the events such as maintenance, repair, lighting, etc, that close the cable lifts in the Canyon. No clear reliability advantage for the gondola appears to exist with respect to rare traffic accident closures.</p> <p>e. Avalanches and avalanche risks routinely close the road for 10.8 days a year on average per the EIS. However, all alternatives, except the no-action one, include snowsheds. The snowsheds will reduce the closure times to a negligible few hours a year. Because the snowsheds cover the largest, most common avalanche chutes, the road will be closed only during the very largest snowstorms. During such times, the gondola will be closed because interlodge restrictions will be in effect and the gondola cannot be safely loaded or unloaded at the ski resorts, according to the EIS. Additionally, many of the hours of road closure occur prior to 7 AM during which time the gondola is not operational. For these reasons, there will be very few hours or perhaps no hours in which the gondola is operational and the road closed because of avalanche debris or risk. The net result is that the EIS proposes spending \$755M (\$550M by 2020 EIS accounting +\$110M for temporary buses) on a solution that will provide more reliable transportation than the road only 1 to 4 hours a year, if at all. An extraordinary cost for such a small benefit for very few Utahns. Stationing a permanent flight-for-life helicopter and crew at the ski resorts during any road closure would be far more cost-effective and reliable than the EIS preferred option.</p> <p>Failure of the EIS to provide an analysis or even qualitative discussion of how the gondola B Option could be significantly more reliable than the road is negligent. The road provides an alternative route and one that can be more quickly and cheaply repaired after major incidents like fire, earthquake, and landslides. The road provides access to emergency equipment, such as firefighting equipment that the gondola cannot. The road will have no or negligible additional closure hours over the gondola. The road appears to be more reliable than the gondola. The EIS asserts with no support that the gondola is more reliable and uses that assertion as its principal justification for the EIS's preferred alternative. The EIS is negligent in failing to support that assertion with facts and analysis.</p>
--	--	--

35339	Nanci Bockelie	<p>I write to register my opposition to the Gondola alternative. It is too costly, involves too much destruction within Little Cottonwood Canyon (the Canyon), and does not serve enough Canyon users. With only limited parking at the gondola base and limited stops at the ski areas, the Gondola alternative will not remove enough cars from the Canyon to resolve safety issues. It will also require too many transfers and wait time for it to be a workable alternative for most people. The Enhanced Bus Lane alternative is better, and if these are the only two solutions, I would choose the Enhanced Bus Lane alternative.</p> <p>However, neither of the proposed solutions truly address and resolve the issues in the Canyon. The Enhanced Bus Lane option requires too much new road construction and provides too little parking for in-Canyon users without giving them any alternative way to reach their destinations.</p> <p>A better solution exists that will address all the traffic issues in the Canyon, save the taxpayers multiple millions of dollars and avoid the environmental issues inherent in both the proposed road widening for the Enhanced Bus Lane and the Gondola proposal. That solution? Combine enhanced bus service (more enhanced than proposed) with tolling and permitting systems to greatly restrict the number of private cars in the Canyon - a "Better Bus Alternative."</p> <p>To solve a problem, one must first define the problem. The EIS purports to define the transportation problem broadly to improve "reliability, mobility and safety for all users on S.R. 210,," (emphasis added); however, both the Enhanced Bus Lane and Gondola alternatives provide transportation only for people going to the ski areas. Neither of these solutions addresses the users of in-Canyon recreational areas such as White Pine, the Great White Icicle, Lisa Falls and Tanner's Flats. Nor does the current planning address parking congestion in the summer. In fact, the proposed solutions anticipate reduced in-Canyon parking, without adding any public transportation options for in-Canyon users.</p> <p>In addition, neither the Gondola nor the Enhanced Bus Lanes includes any proposal to reduce the total number of cars in the Canyon. While traffic congestion on a handful of winter weekends grabs headlines and causes headaches far beyond the Canyon mouth, it is only a symptom of the main problem: too many cars in the Canyon all year long. By failing to address the burgeoning road use, both the proposed solutions guarantee that the costs and problems associated with the road will still exist even after we have spent millions of dollars of taxpayer money.</p> <p>Both proposed alternatives will also create new environmental impacts of the construction and maintenance needed to bring any of the proposals to fruition. In short, the slender benefits of the proposed alternatives, particularly the Gondola, do not justify the massive amounts of public spending, or environmental upheaval in a pristine and fragile environment that they will require.</p> <p>By adding a tolling system and permit plan, a Better Bus Alternative will ensure that people will get to the ski areas faster and more safely than the other alternatives. A Better Bus Alternative will also address these other ancillary problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of sufficient parking at high volume recreation areas outside the ski areas in both summer and winter, resulting in many cars parking along Route 210; - The limited ability of plows to clear the road fast enough due to the traffic congestion during bad snowstorms; - Congestion along feeder roads below the Canyon mouth as cars line up to enter the Canyon after winter closures for avalanche control. <p>A Better Bus Alternative would use a fleet of buses to provide year-round, with frequent service with three dedicated Canyon routes: one route will go only to Alta, one will go only to Snowbird, and one will be an in-Canyon route, servicing the many recreational spots in the Canyon. Each route will run every 5-10 minutes during peak hours and every 20-30 minutes during non-peak times.</p>
-------	----------------	--

		<p>Winter and summer routes need to run late enough that people who choose to stay for evening activities will be assured that they can get down the mountain. In addition to the buses, a Better Bus Alternative would include an appropriately priced tolling system for less congested days. UDOT can easily and inexpensively install open road tolling at the Canyon mouth. Open road tolling will not impede the flow of traffic. Modern systems allow for pricing and activation changes as needed. Tolls should be high enough to encourage bus use - perhaps three to four times the cost of the bus to encourage carpooling - and can vary as weather and traffic change.</p> <p>During and in advance of inclement weather, and on holidays or other times of peak congestion, cars will not be allowed in the Canyon at all, without a permit. The permit system will allow buses and vehicles with permits to access the Canyon at all times (other than during closures for avalanche control, events, emergency closures, etc.) without paying any toll. Permits should be limited to homeowners and guests, essential workers, emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles, with an additional limited number of permits given to each resort to dole out in any way they want. UDOT must not allow the permit system to be compromised by opening it to anyone willing to pay, as happened with the HOV lanes on I-15.</p> <p>Unlike the suggested alternatives for the Canyon, the Better Bus Alternative combination of more buses and limited vehicle access will actually and substantially reduce traffic on route 210. It will allow and encourage all Canyon users to use the publicly funded transportation system they are paying for. Because the Canyon will not be clogged with cars, the bus trip up and down the Canyon will be faster than any of the other proposed alternatives, a plus with skiers anxious to get first powder tracks. Fewer cars also means that plows will be able to access the road quickly during storms. UDOT will not need to build extra bus lanes or additional parking areas in the Canyon, because few cars will be using the roadway. Nor will UDOT need to build the divisive and generally unwanted additional lanes on Wasatch Blvd., as cars will no longer need to line up on valley roads on powder days as they wait to access the Canyon.</p> <p>Unlike a Gondola, which requires huge initial outlays of money and significant environmental disruption for a system that cannot easily be changed, the Better Bus Alternative makes use of existing infrastructure. The system can be scaled up rapidly and with minimum disruption and delay. It could be put in place as early as next year, unlike the proposed alternatives. Any new construction for parking structures will be limited to the valley, where construction is cheaper, easier and involves far less environmental risk. The Better Bus Alternative also allows maximum flexibility; existing buses can be replaced with all-electric buses, different size buses, buses with better traction alternatives, etc. as needs change or better technology comes along. The Better Bus Alternative can also easily be implemented in Big Cottonwood Canyon, which suffers somewhat less congestion due to avalanche danger than Little Cottonwood Canyon, but more congestion is summer due to more in-Canyon hiking, camping and picnicking opportunities.</p> <p>With the Better Bus Alternative, instead of paying for more paving and destruction of the fragile Canyon ecosystem, UDOT can fund improvements at the major in-Canyon recreation areas in the Canyon, such as restroom facilities and bus shelters. Many of these could be built on portions of existing parking areas that will no longer be needed.</p> <p>All the alternatives require additional parking at the Canyon mouth or elsewhere in the valley. The Better Bus Alternative is no exception. Although parking garages will garner opposition from area homeowners, they are a necessary part of any plan that reduces Canyon traffic. Also, the disruption from new valley parking garages pales in comparison to the disruptions required for the Gondola or the Enhanced Bus Lane alternative. Design constraints on the parking structures (e.g., a step-back at each level and a decorative finish on the side</p>
--	--	---

		<p>facing any residential area) would lessen such opposition. Suggested locations for enhanced parking include the Gravel Pit on Wasatch Blvd. and the 94th South Highland Drive PnR (both already needed even for existing proposals), Trax stations on all three lines (i.e., Historic Sandy, Fashion Place West) and at University of Utah parking areas for use on weekends.</p> <p>Parking facilities should include restrooms and retail space for recreation related uses such as lockers, a coffee and breakfast bar, equipment rentals, car wash valet service, pizza. Rentals from these services would offset part of the cost of the additional parking facilities. Because each ski area will reduce its needed parking lot acreage significantly, they will have space to build additional base facilities to serve the needs of bus riders: additional day and season lockers, restrooms, changing rooms, food service, and similar amenities. The environmental and monetary savings from not having to maintain the existing parking lots, and the income from services provided, will allow the ski areas to recoup the costs of any new construction.</p> <p>Bus prices should remain as low as reasonable to encourage bus riding, through the income from tolls and permit fees and subsidies as necessary. The ski areas should continue to underwrite the bus system by providing free passes with a season pass. In addition, anyone should be able to buy weekly, monthly or annual passes at a discount over single ride costs, to incentivize frequent Canyon users to use the buses.</p> <p>I urge UDOT to adopt the Better Bus Alternative. It will cost less than either the Gondola or Enhanced Bus Lane alternatives. It also solves more of the Canyon transportation problems than those alternatives. Adopting the Better Bus Alternative will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce congestion on feeder roads in the valley - Reduce congestion in the Canyon - Resolve the safety issues cause by blocked roads - Provide public access for in-Canyon users as well as ski area users - Eliminate the need for in-Canyon road-widening and additional parking - Free up space at the ski areas for new amenities to serve bus riders - Eliminate environmental damage in the Canyon completely - Eliminate years of construction <p>Thank you. Nanci Snow Bockelie</p>
35341	Evan Tobin	<p>I am extremely disappointed in the Final EIS as released on August 31, 2022. I made several submissions during the public comment period but some questions were ignored or not answered completely. One comment was completely ignored because it was submitted during the extended comment, it looked like most comments during the extension were ignored. The extension was publicity only, totally useless.</p> <p>While comments from entities such as Save our Canyons, the Town of Alta, Cottonwood Heights and others were specifically named, comments from individuals like myself were answered in broad generalities or not at all. Some of my comments were addressed and clumped in with the comments of others. Topics like modern solutions being proposed by companies like "The Boring Company," such as tunneling were dismissed outright. Other comments I made regarding running busses later in the day to reduce the traffic at the busiest times were never even addressed. They commented that busses might run till 7pm for the gondola, but never addressed that I suggested busses should run till 10 or 11 at night so people shouldn't be pressured to rush down the canyon. Apres Ski is something that people like and want, but the current bus schedule stops at 6pm, it's part of the problem! I'm not just talking about drinking in bars, there are after ski programs run by both Alta Community Enrichment(the Alta Arts Council) and</p>

		<p>Snowbird, like films, lectures, workshops, classes and more that people can't attend if they use the busses with the current schedules. People could stay up canyon and have dinner before heading down if busses ran later. Park City's free busses don't stop at 6pm, they have a real transportation system!</p> <p>I have read the huge volume of pages of response to comments in the EIS and I am appalled by how dismissive UDOT was of important issues and responded only with "outside the scope," or "not under the control of UDOT,;" yet UDOT made broad statements over issues which they clearly do not have control over and have now further shown how biased and self serving this EIS document is.</p> <p>UDOT clearly states they don't even know who would run or manage the gondola after they build this monstrosity for almost a billion dollars! They claim they will have contractual control, yet they also make claims the busses will run every 5 minutes between the mobility hubs and the gondola. This is not under their control as made painfully clear by the fact that they said the "phased implementation," would include more frequent busses and UTA has just announced cancellation of major LCC bus routes and cutting the frequency of the remaining routes in half, not increasing them as UDOT claimed. This entire EIS is a sham. People were finally utilizing busses with the moderately enhanced schedules last year and it really helped traffic along with the parking reservation systems at the resorts. Now with UTA cutting service, we will take 2 steps backward.</p> <p>UDOT pointed out in the comments that a distributed shuttle system proposed by commenters was a valid alternative but wouldn't work because it required too many drivers. Again, they were overstepping their bounds here (when it served them), but the fact they validated the alternative, it should clearly be evaluated using modern technology. Fully autonomous electronic busses, which are already in use elsewhere, were not even considered as an alternative. This project is supposed to address future concerns, yet it refuses to evaluate the newest technologies. UTA's current acknowledgement that they don't have enough bus drivers should be motivation to engage new technologies. Autonomous Electric busses are here and are the way of the future: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/europe-first-autonomous-electric-buses-spain/ https://singularityhub.com/2022/04/29/the-uks-first-autonomous-passenger-bus-started-road-tests-this-week/ https://www.sustainable-bus.com/its/autonomous-bus-public-transport-driverless/</p> <p>Modern solutions are the way to go and AEV's should eventually travel in underground tunnels totally free of the current problems of avalanche paths, air quality/inversion issues fueled by gas powered vehicles, bad drivers and the unknowns of traffic in Little Cottonwood Canyon. There is no reason that UTA shouldn't start investing in a fleet of autonomous electric busses and/or vans for the entire valley. UTA's recent announcement about cutting service to the Ski Bus routes states that they do not have enough drivers. It really is fairly obvious that autonomous transit needs to be started.</p> <p>Both UDOT and UTA are oblivious of the fact that traffic in Little Cottonwood</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Canyon is not limited to winter storm days. Just this weekend traffic coming down from Snowbird took over 2 hours just to come down the canyon from Snowbird on a beautiful fall day, with no snow or bad weather, just lots of vehicles. Why does UDOT not know about this? It obviously casts doubts on their traffic studies! The fact that UTA doesn't run bus service during the Summer or during Snowbird's Octoberfest shows how out of touch both UDOT and UTA are. Using an AEV fleet is not even an option addressed in the EIS! This whole project needs a do over! Start again. Actually read and utilize the 14,000 comments that the public took the time to write, they include some great ideas(which UDOT dismisses as "outside of scope".</p> <p>The phased approach is definitely the way to go, but the gondola should not be the ultimate goal. A modern 21st century public transportation system should be the ultimate goal. Tunnels built by The Boring Company are currently open and operating in Las Vegas. They're still waiting on approvals to allow them to operate AEV's (autonomous electronic vehicles), but even with restrictions, further development has already been contracted to expand the current 3 station system to 29 miles and 51 stations https://www.boringcompany.com/vegas-loop . The entire cost is being paid for by The Boring Company with payback to The Boring Company to only occur after completion through operating revenue. Similar contracts have also been signed in Ft. Lauderdale, FL https://jacketmediaco.com/boring-company-gets-approval-to-begin-operations-in-florida/</p> <p>and proposals in Texas are nearing contract https://www.masstransitmag.com/alt-mobility/news/21281862/tx-elon-musks-boring-co-may-pour-millions-more-into-san-antonio-airport-tunnel-project . This technology is cutting edge and needs to be considered to solve our problem. Cost projections for tunnels are at only 10 million dollars per mile. Yes, the Vegas loop cost twice that, but they were on the bleeding edge. Let Elon Musk build us the transportation we need out of his pocket, not ours!</p> <p>This sounds like a perfect plan for Utah. Let's save ourselves, the taxpayers, the ~\$ billion (or more likely 1 Billion dollars) that UDOT is proposing! It should be a phased implementation, bare minimum the initial tunnel should start at the 9400 S 2000 East UTA Park & Ride (which will hopefully soon have a large parking structure built for the initial expanded bus service) & a minimum of 12 stops at UTA Park and Ride (2000E), UTA Park & Ride/LDS Church(3142 E), Bell Canyon Trailhead(3450 E), Little Cottonwood Parking Lot(4385 E), Grit Mill Trailhead/Wasatch Resort, Gate Buttruss, Tanner Flats, White Pine Trailhead, Snowbird Creekside, Snowbird Center, Alta Goldminers, Alta Albion Grill. A Gondola that just serves Alta & Snowbird, not all these stops, is just a bad idea.</p> <p>Eventually it should extend from Rio Tinto Stadium or even Daybreak. It is only 15 miles from Rio Tinto stadium to Alta (only 150 million dollars to dig that tunnel). The valley clearly needs East/West public transportation. Obvious choices for the next stations would be Rio Tinto Stadium, Sandy Historic Trax Station(165 E), Quarry Bend(1000 E), Alta View Hospital(1300 E) & the Waterford School(1700 E), all of these locations already have parking. When the tunnel continues to Daybreak, it would obviously have a station at Daybreak Trax line. This is forward thinking with endless future potential.</p> <p>The Tunnel could extend from Alta, through the mountain to Brighton and Park</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>City. That would solve Big Cottonwood's traffic problem as well as hook up to the free Park City bus system! Once this system is successful, it will only be logical to keep building tunnels under I-15, North To Salt Lake City, the Temple, to the Airport under I-80 as well as South to Las Vegas to meet up with the Vegas Loop. Bring Utah into the 21st Century!</p> <p>Elon Musk thinks big, I would think he will eventually get contracts to go under all the US Interstate System. Once you have a fully underground tunnel system populated with AEV's, the speeds will achieve what Elon originally envisioned and a trip from Salt Lake Airport all the way to Alta could take only 10-15 minutes max, in full white out storm conditions, but totally underground. So much safer than the flying cars in the Jetsons.</p> <p>The Gondola is slow 20th Century technology, we need 21st Century technology, let's not go backwards, let's boldly go forward into the future.</p> <p>Evan Tobin, current resident of Sandy, former resident of Alta, originally from NYC</p>
35361	Kaesi Johansen	<p>I am a resident living at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon, but even if I didn't live here I would be concerned with the overall cost of a project that benefits only two resorts and the developers at the expense of taxpayers.</p> <p>The addition of the Ikon Pass several years ago compounded traffic problems. Traffic seemed much improved over the past couple of winters with the implementation of reserved parking at Snowbird the first year and then Alta the second year. What steps are the resorts taking to solve this problem? I feel that Snowbird and Alta should be part of the solution to the traffic issues rather than looking to taxpayers to pad their pockets without having to put any skin in the game. The resorts should be footing the bill for the gondola. Traffic for University of Utah and BYU football games is ridiculous too -- is our next move going to be adding gondolas to those locations as well? I feel that our money would be better spent improving mass transit along the entire Wasatch Front to benefit the greatest number, rather than "improving?" a projected 50 days a year for skiers trying to reach an already over-crowded resort. I have often heard comments that resort users only get to ski down half the mountain before they have to stand in line for the next chair lift up. What's next? Turning over more land to the resorts for their expansion to accommodate the increased number of users? The future of Little Cottonwood Canyon is at stake with this decision.</p> <p>I lived in Cottonwood Heights for twenty years and moved to the mouth of Little Cottonwood around 5 years ago. The year round winds at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon are much more severe and noticeable than we had in Cottonwood Heights. Last winter my neighbor's weather station clocked winds gusting to 80-90 miles per hour on several occasions. We lost shingles and mature trees along with sustaining other wind damage. I recognize that the Snowbird Tram is on a peak but it is often closed for wind. How realistic is it that the gondola will be reliable and safe with the wind we receive in the canyon and surrounding areas. What wind speeds are safe for the gondola and how often do wind speeds in the canyon and LaCaille areas exceed that level? Will the gondola also need to shut down following winds for safety inspection? How many of those 50 projected days will be taken away because of wind and safety inspection? Has a study been published regarding wind issues?</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>I'm also concerned with bringing the additional traffic to the base of the gondola at LaCaille. I feel that the congestion that we are trying to alleviate will not be solved with the number of cars coming and going. The gondola option is only solving the traffic problem for the few miles up Little Cottonwood Canyon. The rest of SR210, Wasatch Blvd, 9400 South and surrounding areas will find no relief from the traffic congestion. Dispersing traffic throughout the valley and using bus service/mass transit will alleviate this issue. Of course this option would not be as appealing for the developers at LaCaille and it appears that they are the ones driving this gondola option.</p> <p>Regarding the 2500 parking spaces, what visual impact will be involved with that structure? Will it tower above North Little Cottonwood Road or will it be mostly underground? A towering parking structure will destroy canyon views as much if not more than the gondola towers. It appears that it will have easy access from the north and south to enter, but what are you recommending for exit? I often have difficulty exiting my own subdivision or making a left hand turn on to North Little Cottonwood Road from the stop sign near the park and ride by the electric sign at the base of the canyon because of traffic coming down the canyon. Will there be a light at the parking structure to control those 2500 cars trying to exit the parking structure at the end of the day?</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of these issues.</p> <p>Kaesi Johansen</p>
35482	Mark Barrett	<p>Greetings, I have some comments and questions about the interpretation of the EISI have a few questions about the EIS that I hope you can explain.</p> <p>Increase in impervious surface</p> <p>Enhanced Bus Service in Peak-period Shoulder Lane Alternative: 35.2-38.8 acres Gondola Alternative B: increase of 22.6-26.2 acres</p> <p>Wildlife habitat impacted</p> <p>Enhanced Bus Service in Peak-period Shoulder Lane Alternative: 44-48 acres Gondola Alternative B: increase of 24-28 acres</p> <p>In regards to above numbers, are they not talking about acreage beside an existing road vs land in the middle of the canyon? I don't think that you can compare the two as being the same in regard to the ecosystem. It seems it would be less impact to destroy 44 acres of land adjacent to the road than it would to destroy 24 acres of the middle of the canyon.</p> <p>Visual change (primary alternative/supporting element) - Visual change includes landscape character change at key observation points. The visual change is for the primary alternative and supporting elements such as snow sheds.</p> <p>Enhanced Bus Service in Peak-period Shoulder Lane Alternative: Negligible/high Gondola Alternative B: High/high</p> <p>This hits home with my main objection to the gondola. It will permanently affect the natural beauty of this stunning canyon. As I said earlier, because of its small size, the Wasatch is not the Alps.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>In regard to snow sheds, assuming they are necessary, could architects not design them to blend in better with the slope. Do they really need to look like a steel box? I am not a civil engineer, but just asking.</p> <p>\</p> <p>Do the right thing</p> <p>Thank you, Mark Barrett</p>
35537	Allison Stephens	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>My name is Allison Stephens and I live near the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon. As a resident, I have major concerns regarding the passing of the EIS Gondola Solution.</p> <p>Firstly, I'm concerned about the worsened traffic congestion and lack of access to the canyon during the construction of the project. This could go on indefinitely, as construction inevitably takes longer than what is projected. Further delays could result from supply or funding shortages. Another potential impact to whether the project ultimately gets finished is if it were to span a change in elected officials. Public objection and voting persuasion could heavily influence future public funding for incomplete construction. This would likely leave irreversible damage due to abandoned construction and vandalism. If more money was forked out for deconstruction, there are hazards with that too.</p> <p>Secondly, as a registered voter, it is very upsetting to me that so much public money, money that should benefit the greater population, would be dumped into something that is purely recreational and mostly benefitting a small, elite community. It's even more upsetting to me that proposal discussions and decisions on which 'solutions' to focus on were held without the public's knowledge or say. Utah has bigger issues to solve (i.e. food disparities, water shortages, air quality, the housing crisis, education and healthcare needs). The funds that have been designated to address transportation issues were meant to analyze the entire state- rather than use the entirety for one road. These other issues have seen nowhere near the amount of money at its disposal as this project would get.</p> <p>Thirdly, as a Registered Nurse, and parent of a Wildlife Biologist, I'm concerned with the implications on human health in general and our wildlife population in the canyon, that would be associated with risks of potential construction spills into rivers and added sediment and waste into the watershed. The noise, pollution, destruction, and physical footprint from a gondola will disturb and deter existing wildlife-creating susceptibilities for new problems in the canyon and surrounding areas (i.e. more predatory animals into residential areas).</p> <p>Fourthly, even if the Gondola project were to be completed, there will be periods of it being unusable due to general maintenance of materials, icing, avalanches, monitoring, vandals and further construction needs for erosion and flooding changes that would compromise the safety of the structure. When it is fully operable, I don't see it solving the traffic issues we are seeing now. A gondola also has less options for stops, thereby forcing riders to less destination points along the way and at a higher fee. This is not ideal.</p> <p>A gondola on such a large scale and dependent on so many factors for it to even be operable is a precarious and foolish decision. Given all of the concerns I've listed, I strongly urge you to remove the gondola from consideration.</p> <p>Shuttle and electric buses are a comfortable, yet cheaper alternative in rider fair, cost for the buses and operation. They would shorten commute time in comparison with the Gondola. It gives more options for parking (without relying on structures near the mouth of the canyon) and more options for stops along the way. It also allows for more flexibility with maintenance (i.e. if one bus is out, the whole system isn't shut down), and for usage in other areas during off seasons.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Buses can be utilized much sooner and would reduce traffic immediately vs. worsen it while waiting on construction. Buses have already proven to be an effective means in our National Parks and pose less risk to our environment as well as human and wildlife health.</p> <p>Thank you UDOT, for taking the time to read my comments and for your consideration on this important matter and its far-reaching effects. I look forward to hearing from you.</p> <p>Sincerely, Allison Stephens</p>
35541	Aaron Anderstrom	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how "clean," the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 "premium," parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users.

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it.</p> <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
35550	Jane Hudson	<p>Hello UDOT, I am wholeheartedly against the Gondola proposal.</p> <p>I live in Millcreek, and recreate in the Wasatch Mountains almost every day (year round). I love the Wasatch and feel that we all need to work hard to preserve its beauty.</p> <p>The gondola is not only an eye sore, but will cause major impacts to the canyon (i.e. destroying world class bouldering areas and various ecosystems). We need to put real effort into trying to expand the bus system or try another option like tolling. The gondola parking lot will be almost a mile from the gondola station, it's expensive to ride, it's slower than driving and is less convenient (especially for groups and families). People will not use it.</p> <p>It only serves a portion of canyon users, only those going to resorts and the resorts themselves. There is no disincentive to drive so people will continue to do so.</p> <p>The current traffic problem only happens less than <15 days a year. Throughout the EIS, the transportation problems are projected to get worse with population growth. Sections 1.3, 1.4.1.2, and 1.4.2.2 (just to name a few) discuss this growth and the related problems.</p> <p>I find it extraordinarily irresponsible to ignore the obvious need to examine the level of visitation that this fragile resource can handle without damage. The EIS simply waves off this point in S.12 by saying "The Forest Service acknowledges that, in the future, management might be needed to limit resource impacts from user visitation in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Specific visitor capacities are not being considered by the USDA Forest Service at this time."</p> <p>If we weigh the growth impacts in this equation so heavily that we are willing to spend \$600M to \$1B of taxpayer money for a "future" problem...how can we not ask the Forest Service to "consider visitor capacities?" It is negligent and irresponsible not to do so. We cannot simply blame the Forest Service and wave this away as a "noted" but "ignored" concern!</p> <p>I am adamantly opposed to this proposed alternative and demand that all other options that be tried and exhausted FIRST before building a \$600M gondola that will destroy the canyon and the ecosystem it supports.</p> <p>It's too expensive. It's too invasive. It will likely encourage rather than discourage car traffic. And ... it won't solve the powder-day traffic problem, there will just be lines of cars waiting to enter the rapidly-filled gondola parking lot. There will be no difference to the users of 9400 S and Wasatch Blvd (and surrounding neighborhoods) on those days.</p> <p>This also does not help the traffic congestion is any other canyon, namely Big Cottonwood Canyon. I implore you to give bussing a real shot and make an effort to improve the bus system for both LCC & BCC. That is a scalable and more sustainable option that has not been given a real shot.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>The gondola is not the right answer. There are many common-sense approaches that could and should be implemented.</p> <p>Please truly consider my comment and those of other locals.</p> <p>Thank you, Jane Hudson</p>
35585	Emily Lindner	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>I urge UDOT to reconsider the gondola B option as the preferred alternative for LCC. The preparation of the EIS document is thorough and extensive and I appreciate the time you are taking to evaluate different options to determine what best serves the needs of the Utah community and environment in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Here is a little about me and why I am invested in this conversation - I am a 27 year old Utah taxpayer; I play and enjoy the Wasatch canyons for climbing, skiing, hiking, and biking; I work with underserved, low-income, minority groups in SLC to have better access and education to resources in their community; and I studied environmental sciences. I recognize you are sifting through thousands of public comments, and my hope is that you hear our concerns about the gondola project moving forward.</p> <p>This project costs a LOT of money and affects Utah taxpayers. The gondola is infrastructure that permanently changes LCC landscape and ecosystem services. The gondola is designed to serve only ski resort users and tourists, and ignores other local recreational users. The gondola will also create a larger socio-economic gap in the Salt Lake Valley. These are issues we cannot ignore. These are issues that will not be solved by the construction of a gondola. These are issues that will continue to bring frustration to those who's voices are left unheard to those with money and power.</p> <p>Climate change and clean air in Utah will not be solved with the construction of a gondola in a canyon that can see the brown cloud from above. What is UDOT doing to reduce the amount of private cars emitting greenhouse gases in the valley? How are taxpayers being invited to be part of that change that doesn't negatively impact their wallet or access to goods and services? What other solutions exist to incentivize the community to change the way we think and act when it comes to transportation?</p> <p>It makes me deeply sad to think about LCC changing. I moved to Utah about 3 years ago from Montana and I remember when I drove up Little Cottonwood Canyon for the first time to go on a hike. I was in awe! I couldn't stop thinking about how beautiful, unique, big, and pristine the canyon was. I continued to stare and wonder about what these mountains offered. The mountains have always been a place of refuge for me. A place where you can hear the animals moving through the brush, the water rushing over rock, snow painting the peaks and melting into wildflowers. I know each person may have their reasons for being in the mountains, but for me it's to get away from the noise of the city and people. A gondola would change that. I gondola would be a constant reminder that civilization cannot be escaped in Utah. A gondola would always be in the view, it would take away natural beauty EVERY day of the year.</p> <p>I urge you, UDOT, to reconsider your plan. You have power in decision. You have power in what the outcome is. You have power to positively impact this community. You have power to make a difference. There's alternatives that have not been implemented that could work before permanent change occurs in the beloved Little Cottonwood Canyon. Do your community a favor, and listen to the</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>concerns of those who will be negatively impacted by your current EIS proposal to implement construction of a gondola. Thank you for reading our comments.</p> <p>Sincerely, Emily</p>
35617	Heather Matheson	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>I'm an active user of Little Cottonwood Canyon and have been since I was 5 years old learning to ski at Alta. Today I still love skiing at the resorts but also have ventured into the backcountry skiing and hiking & trail running in the summertime. LCC is a special place and truly a beautiful escape for me and everyone who enjoys spending time there. I fully support solving our traffic and congestion challenges however the announced Gondola B does not do this.</p> <p>We all need to change our habits getting up the canyon. I try to carpool as much as I can. But spending lots of tax payer money on an expensive gondola is not the solution and not going to the solution I and everyone need. It will not be convenient unless a much larger parking structure is build right next to the loading station. I know going with my family having to take a car, bus and gondola is just not an option. The parking reservations have actually made it really easy and more flexible solutions like that should be attempted before an expensive gondola.</p> <p>Alternatively if a more robust electric bus system like Park City we're put in place that would provide more flexibility for families and those going up to trailheads in the canyon (I don't always go to the resorts).</p> <p>I really charish the natural beauty of the canyon as do so many Utahns. The Gondola would permanently destroy this when there are other more flexible common sense solutions, particularly when we're only talking about busy weekend days in the winter. I and others enjoy the canyon year round and don't want the Gondola ruining that experience (I ski at Alta too!) It also won't reduce the traffic enough to make it worth destroying the natural beauty. Preserving what natural beauty we have is an economic driver to attract skiers from all over to our state. The Gondola doesn't provide any trailhead access and nothing has been proposed with the Gondola Plan</p> <p>I also still worry about our watershed. Climate change is clearly creating new drought challenges and any disruptive efforts near our water should be a cause for concern and further research which hasn't been provided with the latest EIS.</p> <p>I also worry about traffic along Wasatch Blvd to get to the Gondola base. A thorough study of how this would back but had not been shown especially if it's a snowy day and avalanche danger.</p> <p>Clearly it's going to take time to even get funding for a gondola when right now a robust busing system could be implemented and have the flexibility to adapt to being efficient when demand is higher. Using electric buses like Park City could also help reduce emissions in the canyon especially on bad inversion air days.</p> <p>As 7th generation Utahn and local user of LCC Im concerned Gondola Plan B hasn't listened to all types of users throughout the year. I'm definitely a resort goer but also a trail user and this plan favors the resorts for only a few weekends a year. Until it's proven other solutions don't work we should avoid building a gondola.</p>

		<p>I hope you will listen to the voices of the local community and appreciate the opportunity to comment. I want to help make changes too and open to changing my habits if the options are both environmentally sustainable and think about all users for our long term future of the canyon.</p>
35710	Jo Anne Clay	<p>Utah DOT identified the Gondola Alternative B with phased in implementation as the best way to improve transportation in the canyon. I do not agree and am disappointed with this choice for the following reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Gondola will operate in the winter during the ski season and will have two stops, Alta and Snowbird ski hills. It will not address traffic needs during the other 8 month of the year. Clearly, the Gondola option only supports the two ski resorts. 2. Using tax dollars that support two ski resorts and the land owners at the base of the canyon is a miss use of our tax dollars that benefit three private entities. Our tax dollars should be used to support the needs of the general public who use the canyon for a variety of recreational activities. 3. No where in the proposal address the disadvantages of the Gondola that will make it unattractive for the public. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The ride is estimated to be 45 minutes one way. People are reluctant to use the existing bus service because they need to carry their equipment and the time to catch the bus each way. The gondola will require inconvenience to carry ski equipment and the time to get to the ski resorts is lengthy. I wonder how easily handicap people will be able to access the gondola. b. The cost of riding the gondola is not disclosed. Cost can be a detriment to individuals and families who pay a high price for seasons tickets or day passes. Many local people will be resistant to use the gondola to ski at the resorts. I will end up not skiing because of the cost and inconvenience. c. The gondola will impact the beauty and esthetics of the canyon and will impact the safety of the water during construction. It will be an eyesore to those who enjoy the canyon during the whole year. d. Traffic will continue to back up on Wasatch as people enter and leave the proposed parking lot for the gondola. 4. UDOT considered the plan's ability to substantially improve transportation-related safety, reliability, and mobility for all users on S.R. 210. The problem with the Gondola Proposal is that it benefits only 2 user groups, ski resorts and people skiing at the resorts. Please note that the public that goes skiing multiple times during the season who do not stay at the resort will be resistant to using the gondola regularly. Traffic and safety are addressed only during the ski season. <p>I support alternative ways to improve traffic and safety along S. R. 210 and some of these alternatives have been utilized to improve traffic flow.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ski resorts require reservations to park on site. I live along Wasatch between the two canyons and have noticed a dramatic reduction of traffic along Wasatch when this policy was implemented. 2. Maintain 1 lane of traffic each direction with a center left turn lane for side streets. In addition to these three defined lanes, a separated bike lane needs to be built for bikers and hikers who use the street for transportation and recreation. The 3' lane next to the road is not safe. 3. I have noticed that many of the parking lots for people who use the bus during the ski season are full. Communication needs to be developed to let skiers identify where they can park. To reduce inconvenience of local skiers using the bus, more lockers need to be available at the resorts. 4. More buses need to travel up and down the canyon during peek hours. The current proposal by UTA to reduce bus transportation is detrimental to solving transportation needs during the ski season. <p>Further note, I attended approximately 10 meetings throughout the development of the plan to improve traffic and safety for S.R. 210. The gondola proposal was not discussed at any of the meetings that I attended. It appeared after a massive</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>solicitation by Snowbird of people purchase seasons passes or stay at the resort. I am disappointed that the plan gained support of UDOT after the public meetings were completed. I am also disappointed that the two resorts, their patrons, and landowners of property to be used for the gondola have such a large voice in determining UDOT's improvement plan.</p>
35783	Stephanie Tobey	<p>To Whom it May Concern:</p> <p>I am writing to voice my concern over your plan to build a gondola to provide service to the ski resorts in Little Cottonwood Canyon. I believe that it will create more traffic issues than it will solve.</p> <p>I have lived in Cottonwood Heights for 47 years. In fact, my home is roughly one mile west of Big Cottonwood Canyon (roughly 3200 E and 7200 S), and I must use Fort Union Blvd. every day in order to drive to work downtown. In fact, Fort Union is the only way for me to get anywhere north of my home.</p> <p>In the winter, it is not uncommon to have traffic backed up for miles with skiers and snowboarders anxious to make the first tracks on freshly fallen snow. Traffic will back up all the way down Wasatch Blvd. to the freeway, with more cars stopped on I-215 clear back to 4500 S. Drivers also back up traffic on Ft. Union to 3000 E. and then down the hill to 6200 S. As there is not a stop light along Ft. Union between 3000 E. and Wasatch Blvd., it can take up to 20 minutes for me to get out of my neighborhood and on my way to work. What is worse, cars have discovered that they can try and cut through my neighborhood to access the newly built Canyon Centre Pkwy and then turn south on Wasatch Blvd. They speed through the neighborhood to beat others that might have the same idea, without much regard for the residents and their children that might be playing in the neighborhood.</p> <p>For those that do wish to use the park-and-ride lots, they find that they fill up quickly, and then decide that the best thing to do is park along Ft. Union, which then puts them at risk of getting parking tickets or causing more traffic issues.</p> <p>In addition to the traffic headaches, having that many cars on the road means that many of them idle while waiting to go up the canyons. This idling increases emissions, which worsens air quality for all that live in Salt Lake County.</p> <p>I believe the gondola will only entice skiers to continue to drive to the mouth of the canyons. While it may cut down on traffic up Little Cottonwood Canyon, it will only exacerbate the current situation of too many cars that are on the road. It does nothing to address the bigger issue of lack of park-and-ride lots, sketchy public transit, and too many cars competing for limited parking spaces at the resorts. The gondola will benefit two resorts that have not done much to help alleviate the situation. Therefore, if they want this so badly, then they should pay for it. It does not provide a public benefit, as only those that can afford the hefty cost of skiing and snowboarding will use it.</p> <p>I think that a better solution to address the overall problem is to bring UTA, community leaders, residents, and representative from the resorts together to come up with a solution that will benefit all. This should include unpopular solutions such as capping the number of skiers and snowboarders allowed at the resorts on a given day, increasing bus service, building more park-and-ride lots in the valley, extending Trax lines to the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon and the park-and-ride lot there, and possibly adding more traffic lights along Ft. Union. I strongly urge you to reconsider this plan and start anew. You have an opportunity</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		to create a plan that will make sense and have a lasting impact on the community for generations. Please slow down, think, and do the right thing. Thank you.
35813	Jared Hargrave	<p>As a long-time skier of Little Cottonwood Canyon, both at resorts and in the backcountry, I am totally against a gondola in LCC. Here's why:</p> <p>My first concern is that the gondola would serve only one type of canyon user: resort skiers and snowboarders. There are many other recreationists that use the canyon such as backcountry skiers, snowshoers, fly fishers, rock climbers, mountain bikers, hikers and more. But the gondola will only have stops at Snowbird and Alta. Therefore, the gondola is not a canyon transportation solution at all. It is only a way to get more skiers to the resorts, which only benefits the resorts. The gondola is nothing more than an expensive gift to the ski resorts, funded by tax payers.</p> <p>Second, the Little Cottonwood Canyon gondola would be an eyesore. The Draft EIS shows gondola towers would reach up to 230 feet in the air. To put that in perspective, the 13-story Cliff Lodge at Snowbird is 157 feet tall. Just imagine a row of 20 towers, taller than the Cliff Lodge, lined up through the bottom of the canyon. This would destroy the viewshed and urbanize one of the Wasatch Mountain's most treasured canyons.</p> <p>My third issue with the gondola is that the towers would threaten world-class rock climbing and bouldering routes in Little Cottonwood Canyon. The gondola tower's placements could possibly destroy the boulders near the mouth of the canyon, as well as trail access to the crags. I've spent many days on those routes and would be devastated to lose them.</p> <p>Fourth, a gondola only serves Little Cottonwood Canyon. But neighboring Big Cottonwood Canyon has traffic issues that are nearly as bad. UDOT is not taking traffic going to Solitude and Brighton into consideration here. I feel like any transportation plan UDOT puts forth should encompass the entire Tri-Canyon area to alleviate all resort traffic. Enhanced bus service is something that can be employed in both LCC and BCC.</p> <p>Finally, gondolas are an easy target for sabotage. Just look at what happened to the Sea to Sky Gondola in British Columbia. Vandals cut the cable not once, but twice in six months. Both instances destroyed the cabins as they crashed to the ground, costing between \$5 million and \$10 million in damages. Who's to say the same can't happen here? A cut cable would end UDOT's transportation solution, a real quick, and for as long as it would take to repair (again at taxpayer's expense).</p> <p>I prefer the enhanced bus service option. However, I do not support widening the road. Adding another lane would cause as much, if not more environmental damage to the canyon and would also likely take out the aforementioned bouldering spots. A better option is to explore ways to decrease single-rider cars in the canyon. Making S.R. 210 a toll road is one way to do this. There could be a graduated level of rates - single passenger vehicles would pay a much higher cost than vehicles with 4 people or more. Busses, of course, would be less expensive, if not free for resort season pass holders.</p> <p>While I don't like widening the road for environmental reasons, I do prefer it over the gondola because it won't destroy the viewshed as much, and it would serve all canyon users, not just resort skiers and snowboarders.</p> <p>In general, I agree with much of what the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance and the</p>

		<p>Salt Lake Climber's Alliance has proposed for Little Cottonwood Canyon solutions. Such ideas include:</p> <p>Tolling to incentivize use of public transportation and manage canyon capacity. Reduced or free bus ticket prices on busy weekends Increased funding to support more buses. Increased funding to create/operate express bus routes from locations all across the Wasatch Front. Managed and reversible-lane alternatives during peak traffic periods. Furthermore, I think the canyon's traction laws should be in effect every day during ski season - not just when it snows. All too often cars without 4WD or snow tires somehow get up the canyon, and authorities do a terrible job of checking and enforcing tire laws. So many traffic jams happen because of passenger cars sliding off the road. Those vehicles should not be allowed up the canyons, no matter the weather conditions... period.</p> <p>All of these options are strategies that UDOT can try before committing to a hundreds-of-millions-of-dollars gondola or road expansion.</p> <p>I'm a skier, both at resorts and in the backcountry, and I know how frustrating it is to try and get to the upper canyons on a powder day. There is no doubt that something must be done to alleviate traffic congestion on powder days and weekends. But both the gondola goes too far at this point in time. I question why UDOT insists on taking the nuclear option where there will be no going back from, when there are less expensive and less intrusive ways to decrease the amount of vehicles going to ski resorts. Let us try those options first, before going nuclear in our beloved Cottonwood Canyons.</p>
35889	Tate Denna	<p>I'd like to express my disappointment of and opposition to the recent recommendation for the LCC gondola project.</p> <p>My list of reasons is long and far reaching. Perhaps aggravated by the purported extensive research and evaluation process yet still coming to what must be the worst and most expensive option that could be proposed.</p> <p>Two things in particular of high on that list.</p> <p>One, that fact that this is marketed as a solution to the LCC traffic problems is at best false. Traffic problems are real in the canyon, but they are not limited to the handful of powder days each year. Traffic is an issue all year. October is one of the busiest months of the year with Oktoberfest and the fall colors. Hordes of people make the trek up the canyons.</p> <p>The gondola as proposed would only be operational during the winter months. Leaving the busy warmer seasons right back to square one with the original issue at hand.</p> <p>If it was decided that the window could be extended to warmer seasons, the monumental shortcoming would remain, the gondola is only intended to serve the two primary private businesses located at the top of the canyon.</p> <p>Bypassing the 8 miles of recreation spots in between. Still making it a gigantic, expensive, useless eyesore.</p> <p>My second reason is this. LCC is not unique in its traffic issues. Just as severe is BCC next door.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>No mention has been made of those issues? Is it because the two private businesses located at the top of that canyon are not forcing the issue through a corrupt process?</p> <p>Are we going to have to build another horrifically expensive chair lift to those two resorts in the near future as well?</p> <p>Or will the awful decision be made to bridge over the mountain ridge and extend the LCC line into BCC?</p> <p>Bottom line, the gondola is not a solution. It does not solve the traffic problem. Nothing has been said of the rider cost. Who's to say people will want to pay the cost? Or instead opt to just drive themselves up the canyon?</p> <p>It's been stated that avalanche work will shut down the gondola anyway. Those are generally the days with the worst "red snake" anyway. So again, the gondola will be useless in solving the problem it was created for.</p> <p>This is nothing more than a flashy toy for two ski resorts to slap on their brochures to coax skiers up the the hill to spend their money. All at the expense of every tax payer in the state.</p> <p>MUCH can be done with much less to alleviate the traffic problem. Enforcing the traction laws. prioritizing uphill/downhill traffic, tolling, increased/reliable bus services can combine to dramatically mitigate the issue.</p> <p>Not to mention, the budgetary difference would be astounding.</p>
35908	Jake Eiting	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>My name is Jake Eiting and I am a SLC resident. I am writing to you in opposition of the proposed transportation alternative, the gondola.</p> <p>I believe the proposed gondola B option laid out in the FEIS is the wrong decision.</p> <p>Firstly, the cost of building a gondola in LCC is an irresponsible use of tax payer money. It is easy to see how a project of this scope, with inflation, delays, material and labor shortages could easily top the scales at 1 billion dollars. UDOT should absolutely not use that amount of money to cater to a select few utahns, tourists, and to line the pockets of Alta and Snowbird. Absolutely not.</p> <p>Secondly, a reduction of 30% personal vehicles could be achieved in a much, much cheaper and simpler way. One such example, increase the number of travelers per vehicle on S.R. 210. Carpooling could easily cut the number of vehicles entering the canyon by half and open up space for more buses which carry dozens of people. The gondola option does not solve the vehicle issue. It allows 2500 cars to park at the base but then what? The parking fills up and folks drive up the canyon anyway. The gondola option does not eliminate vehicles from entering the study area and is a very poor option.</p> <p>Thirdly, the public has spoken! I have spent many nights reading through the comments and the responses to the draft EIS provided by UDOT in volume 6 of the FEIS. It is obvious to me that the public is against the gondola option. I also attended the Salt Lake County Council meeting on Oct. 4th, 2022 in which the Council voted in favor of supporting common sense solutions and not supporting the gondola option. The public presence at that meeting was huge and not a</p>

		<p>single member of the public who spoke in front of the council was pro-gondola. Everyone was against the gondola. Including the Salt Lake City mayor.</p> <p>Lastly, and most importantly, we need to address the environmental legacy of this upcoming decision. Beyond the obvious destruction of one of Utah's greatest view sheds, the gondola represents many dangers to the hydrology and ecology of LCC. One only needs to look back in history to see the folly in large scale projects taking place in such important natural spaces. Glen canyon dam is a recent example. It was a project of immense destruction to one of the world's great canyons and now it's on the precipice of being obsolete as we continue to encounter drought conditions. I worry, sometimes awake at night, that the gondola would be a similar folly. Us humans are great at justifying these types of acts even though the negative impacts to the environment, our fragile and dwindling watershed, the plants and animals that we rely on, are staring us right in the face.</p> <p>I urge you to please not build a gondola. A low impact carpooling system with increased bus support is a far more environmentally and fiscally responsible option. Please listen to the public, represent your constituents, think about the citizens of Utah first, all of the citizens of Utah, not just the skiers, and certainly not the resorts, and please, please consider your legacy. What is progress? Do you want to take a forward step? Or do you want to turn 180 degrees and take a forward step? Which one is progress? Please, look into your hearts and ask yourselves what you want your legacy to be. What will you decide to do with one of the West's most beautiful and greatest canyons?</p> <p>Thank you for your time, dedication, and hard work,</p> <p>Sincerely, Jake Eiting</p>
35924	Alanja Oliver	<p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) is at it again. Gondola Works has released yet another slick video, along with a series of broadcast ads, billboards and sponsored content, to try to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how „Áúclean,Äù the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>„Àpremium,À parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots.</p> <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. <p>I urge you to take action and use your voice to speak out against this development. Thank you!</p>
35980	Brielle Watne	<p>Much to say here regarding the decision to go ahead with the gondola project for Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) - I am very much against it - though there are a couple of key points I would like to highlight.</p> <p>#1: There are many ways to address the problem prior to building a gondola, including the important step of creating a bus depot (where the parking for the gondola is planned to be) and testing out various bus options before any additional steps are taken. The depot could range from one extreme, shutting down public access to the canyon for several months/weeks/days per year - save residents/workers (e.g. Zion NP), to simply enhancing the bus boarding/unboarding process via the depot. Buses also have the additional benefit of being able to service far more places in the canyon (e.g., trailheads - not everyone wants to go to Snowbird or Alta) and if the buses are electric - which has been proven to work in the canyon - then the environmental impact is lower.</p> <p>#2: While you cannot place a price on this, the aesthetic loss of value within the canyon itself is worth noting. Currently the sightlines, the contours of the granite walls near the mouth of the canyon and the unobstructed views up the various gulches and forks (Tanner's Gulch, White Pine Fork, Red Pine Fork, etc.) are highly valued by those of us who utilize the canyon year-round. The varied gondola towers, cables, and cars would permanently scar the canyon and the natural feeling currently cherished throughout the canyon would be lost.</p> <p>#3: One underlying assumption behind building a gondola is the thought that far fewer cars will drive up the canyon in the winter (part of the environmental impact study). That is a questionable assumption at best. Yes, some will decide to take the gondola up rather than driving - particularly during storms...this of course assuming the gondola itself isn't shut down due to high winds during said storms. Given the projected travel time for the gondola it will be faster to travel via personal vehicle, which will be especially true if some cars are removed via the gondola. Meaning the same number of cars will use the canyon, and more people in total would be up the canyon with gondola usage - which highlights yet another</p>

		<p>ignored issue: what is the tipping point for usage in LCC? The failure to address this critical issue is point #4.</p> <p>#5: The fact that the public is footing the bill for a solution that will only run 6(ish) months out of the year, and one that will only benefit two entities, is concerning to say the least. Make it a shared expense between UDOT, Snowbird, and Alta and the public could stomach the costs more. Nothing has been stated to indicate this has been discussed.</p> <p>#6: The increased traffic wherever the gondola is built (currently slated for the land purchased by LCC Base Property LLC, which of course is owned by Cummings family - who also own Snowbird) will be severe even on good days. Between the entry areas for Snowbird and Alta there are currently five places where cars can gain access to those resorts. Even if there are two entry points for the gondola base station the strain felt on high snow days will be immense. Getting into, and then out of, the base station will simply be a traffic nightmare - at the base of the canyon! - and the rational option for most drivers will be to drive up the canyon.</p> <p>#7: In terms of avalanche mitigation/avoidance - one of the main arguments stated for building a gondola - there could be tunnels built in certain places/high slide areas to (a) ease the problems caused by slides and (b) allow for wildlife to move more freely across the canyon throughout the year. This further avoids the footprint of the gondola towers which would be massive.</p> <p>#8: If the public is footing the bill for a gondola system it seems to further bolster the argument that everyone should have access to the areas the gondola is feeding - namely snowboarders accessing Alta. I won't weigh in on my opinion here, just a logical ramification that needs to be considered and addressed.</p> <p>#9: Something that thus far has been overlooked is the fact that the projected snowpack in the canyon will decrease over time (if weather patterns/warming continues). Meaning the financial projections for Snowbird and Alta will further become strained as time goes on, which will then nullify the gondola and make it go the way of the failed Moab lift system - albeit with a much higher cost and environmental scar.</p>
36104	Robert Douglass	<p>Alpenbock Loop and Grit Mill: The UDOT final EIS incorrectly assesses as nonexistent or de minimus the considerable impacts of the gondola options on the Alpenbock Loop and Grit Mill - an area designated by UDOT as a 'public recreation area' under Section 4(f) in UDOT LCC EIS. The EIS's rationale appears to be that because the gondola does not physically touch the ground in the Alpenbock Loop and Grit Mill area, it has no impact or at most a de minimus impact. That finding is flatly in error. The gondola options have sizable impacts on this public recreation area. Failure to assess and address mitigation of these considerable impacts means that the EIS is not compliant with Section 4(f) regulations. The gondola, option B, runs immediately over portions of the Alpenbock Loop and Grit Mill public recreation area, according to UDOT's interactive map. The Alpenbock Loop and Grit Mill qualify as a Section 4(f) 'public recreation area' as confirmed by UDOT's EIS and the U.S. Forest Service. It is a popular climbing area and secondarily a hiking trail and camping area, used by hundreds of climbers year-round. This area accesses the vertical silver-white granite walls on the north side of Little Cottonwood Canyon. This is a world-class and world-renown climbing area, popular with both locals and out-of-state visitors. The EIS fails to identify the significant impacts of the gondola alignment on the Alpenbock Loop and Grit Mill - a serious omission. The visual impact of the gondola, option B, is significant. This climbing area is treasured for its</p>

		<p>spectacular, unspoiled views of one of the most beautiful canyons in America. The only canyon in the Wasatch to be fully glaciated and carved into a stunning U-shaped glacial valley. The gondola options will send over one thousand people per hour riding in bus-sized cabins on the gondola directly over this prime public recreation area. Gondola cabins will descend from over 230 feet high to ground level at a gondola transfer station in the middle of the parking lot and trailhead, then rise from the trailhead to climb over another giant tower as the gondola transects this entire public recreation area. Because of the altitude of the gondola, people on the gondola will be level with and look directly at climbers on the vertical rock faces. Climbers will no longer look south to the spectacular sheer granite walls of Little Cottonwood's Bells Canyon Peaks, but instead, their view will be drawn to the massive steel ropes and transiting cabins holding up to 35 people and to the steel tripods of the nearby supporting towers, over 230 feet tall. The gondola alignment and the huge towers supporting the gondola cables will be prominent and visible throughout the length of the climbing area, marring the views up, down and across the Canyon. As a final visual blow, FAA regulations require that flashing lights be installed on the top of these huge towers, drawing the eyes of everyone in the public recreation area. This is a significant visual impact, altering forever the climbing experience in this public recreation area. In addition to the visual abomination of the gondola, UDOT estimates that additional noise levels of 50db will be imposed on climbers - this noise is on top of the road noise that is already present. The noise impact is not de minimus because it is the same as the road, it is additive to the road noise and significant. It doubles the volume of an already high-noise pollution environment. The decibel level will likely be higher near the trailhead due to the proximity of the angle station and nearby towers due to the noise the cabins make as they transit the tower cable supports, the noise of the motors in the angle station, and the noise of the diesel generators when they are operating. UDOT's Final EIS fails to provide any supporting data or analysis of noise levels for normal operation and omits consideration of the higher noise levels when the transfer station backup generator is in operation. As offensive as the marred view and noise will be, the invasion and destruction of privacy and solitude of people climbing in the public recreation area will be a worse impact. The experience of calm, quiet and solitude one gets working their way up the granite faces will be gone. Climbers will be watched by more people than if they were walking in a large metropolitan area. They will be photographed and video-recorded without their consent. The experience of a climb on natural rock faces in a spectacular outdoor setting will be shattered visually, aurally, and in terms of any feeling of being in nature - this is certainly not a nonexistent impact nor is it remotely de minimis. The EIS fails to properly identify correctly and properly assess the impacts of the gondola on this qualifying public recreation area. The Final EIS does not comply with Section 4(f) .</p>
36172	John Bovard	<p>Hello there, I am a resident of Salt Lake City. I am a strong supporter of the addition of public transit options in Little Cottonwood Canyon as well as the Salt Lake Valley as a whole.</p> <p>I have previously been a supporter of the gondola option, but have since learned more details about the cog rail proposal made by Stadler in 2021. Since learning more about Stadler's proposal, I have a very difficult time supporting the gondola for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stadler proposed a south side alignment which would be cheaper than the north side alignment and avoid avalanche paths. Yet it appears that UDOT has only considered a north side alignment. The south side may not require snow sheds. 2. Stadler estimates the total cost of the cog rail to be \$488 million (excluding

		<p>parking garage estimate and assuming electrification). This is approximately 1.5 times the cost of the gondola option.</p> <p>3. Stadler proposed a \$487 million rail connection to the Frontrunner along 9400 S which could connect directly to the cog rail line with the same cars and track.</p> <p>4. A cog rail has the ability to make stops for canyon destinations other than Alta and Snowbird, making the canyon more accessible for more than just resort skiers. This would benefit hikers, snowshoers, rock climbers, backcountry skiers, etc.</p> <p>5. The cog rail proposal has an estimated capacity of 3-5000 riders.</p> <p>6. The operations and maintenance costs of the cog rail are approximately \$1.4 million lower than the gondola option. Though this would take a very long time to break even, it is still relevant.</p> <p>7. The scenic impact of a cog rail would be significantly less than that of a gondola.</p> <p>With these points in mind, I believe the cog rail option far better serves the goals of public transportation. The cog rail would help increase accessibility to LCC for many types of recreation while reducing private vehicle traffic. Furthermore, I am strongly opposed to any road-widening or parking garage projects. Research has shown that these do not help to reduce congestion but only encourage more drivers. Any infrastructure to support more cars would only serve as a temporary bandaid instead of as a solution to the problem.</p> <p>There needs to be a stronger focus on helping recreators make the journey into the canyons entirely by public transit than than more hybrid trips where they drive to public transit, i.e. park 'n rides.</p> <p>Furthermore, I would like to know more details as to why there are differences between UDOT's estimates and Stadler's estimates, such as:</p> <p>1. Why does UDOT recommend snow sheds at a cost of \$250 million while Stadler does not? Is this because UDOT is only considering a north side alignment? If yes, why?</p> <p>2. Why is Stadler's estimate only \$488 million for the cog rail including electrification while UDOT estimates \$688 million?</p> <p>3. Why are other rail lines such as one along 9400 S not been discussed more?</p> <p>Finally, it has recently come to my attention that UDOT is considering a \$25-30 toll for drivers going to Snowbird or further into the canyon. I am vehemently opposed to this option--even if it is limited to specific times on specific days. This would make it financially impossible for myself and anyone else for whom money is not free-flowing to ski in LCC. I carefully budget throughout the year to be able afford to go to Snowbird and Alta. I am also extremely busy with limited free time, so in order to make the most of those days when I am able to go to the resorts, I try to spend all day there. Skiing is already an expensive hobby, though it has slowly been becoming more accessible. It is also the main way in which I am able to engage with nature in the winter. Imposing a toll on resort-goers would only serve to make the sport more exclusive and an option that is only for the rich. It would make nature less accessible to those with financial limitations, which has a</p>
--	--	---

		dramatic impact on mental and physical health. The accessibility to skiing is a large part of why I love the Salt Lake Valley and have chosen to build a life here.
36189	Mallory Sandoval Lambert	<p>I am against UDOT's recommendation of installing a gondola up Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) as a way to mitigate the traffic up the canyon. The biggest issue with the gondola is that it would only serve one type of user: resort skiers and snowboarders. This is due to the fact that the gondola has one stop at Snowbird and one stop at Alta. There are a plethora of other outdoor recreationists up the canyon: backcountry skiers and snowboarders, snow shoers, rock climbers, mountain bikers, and sledders. With that many outdoor recreationists who are unable to use the gondola, there will still be traffic up the canyon. Thus, the gondola is 1) a publicity stunt designed to draw in EVEN MORE resort users from around the world and 2) not designed to truly address the traffic issue up the canyon. Further, the traffic is mainly an issue in winter and much less so in the summer. So, the gondola is a one-season "solution" that will compromise the glorious viewshed that exists today. Finally, as a wildlife ecologist that studies wildlife movement in response to human-induced land-use change, I have major concerns about how wildlife will respond to not only the footprint the gondola will create, but also the sight and sound of it. Previous studies show that wildlife (including mountain goats, black grouse, mountain hares, and others) alter their behavior in response to ski resort infrastructure (https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1568670/FULLTEXT01.pdf, https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jwmg.21243, https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jwmg.1028, https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2008.01547.x, https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2664.12174). Resorts and resort infrastructure, such as a gondola, reduce habitat connectivity and cause wildlife to avoid areas near infrastructure. This reduction in connectivity and avoidance behavior by wildlife interferes with wildlife's ability to 1) seek out mates and 2) capitalize on available forage, both of which can have profound effects on entire wildlife populations. I cannot argue against UDOT's recommendation without offering a better solution, luckily, Utah already has a great example of an inclusive, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly traffic mitigation method: Zion National Park. Years ago, Zion was facing a similar nightmare with traffic backing up the entire canyon as visitors waited in their cars to see the glory of the canyon for themselves. To mitigate traffic, Zion planners incorporated a shuttle system and increased available parking. Now, Zion has 4.5 million visitors each year (LCC has 5.5 million, for reference), there are no more traffic jams, and visitors are able to access all parts of the canyon that was previously available by personal vehicle. An improved bus or shuttle system combined with increased parking and tolls for single-occupancy vehicles is the best solution to address LCC's winter traffic issue. This solution is more inclusive, less destructive of the viewshed, less costly, and will use infrastructure that is already in place. I do not support UDOT's decision to recommend the gondola. It is a short-sided solution that will serve few of LCC's outdoor recreators and will ruin the incredible views up and down the entire length of the canyon.</p>
36197	Denise Marlowe	<p>There is simply no reason to invest \$550 million in a permanent project with so many unanswered questions.</p> <p>If common sense could prevail, we would implement cost-effective and environmentally-friendly options such as enhanced busses, tolling, reservations and enforcement of traction laws.</p> <p>The group of businesses and individuals who stand to gain the most financially if a gondola is built in Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) are trying to convince Utahns a gondola is the best LCC transportation solution.</p>

		<p>We dont need to pay millions to fix a problem two private businesses created. As we know, resort executives stand to gain the most from a gondola and have been behind the majority of pro-gondola messaging.</p> <p>Unfortunately, their claims about sustainability, clean energy use and LCC preservation are misleading and confusing. Don't forget, 80 percent of Utahns are against a gondola in LCC (https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/12/9/22822405/poll-little-cottonwood-canyon-bus-system-favored-over-gondola-udot-alta-snowbird-ski-resort-utah).</p> <p>Tellingly, there is much that the video, and overall campaign, does NOT say:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If preservation is so important, how does building more permanent infrastructure that includes 20+ towers, 10 of which are at least 200 feet tall, help preserve the beauty and wonder of LCC? 2. GW consistently points out how „Áúclean,Áù the gondola will be, but they conveniently do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP. (Read more about water usage related to coal power from The Salt Lake Tribune here: https://www.sltrib.com/news/environment/2022/05/01/utahs-drought-persists/). 3. GW also conveniently omits the fact that you will have to drive your polluting vehicle to a bus terminal, unless you are elite enough to have one of the 2,500 „Áúpremium,Áù parking spots at the base station, which will create new traffic issues on Wasatch Blvd as people vie for the coveted spots. 4. Also, the gondola will not run when howitzers are active during avalanche mitigation in the lower canyon from Lisa Falls to Monte Cristo. And I can't even think of an argument for the gondola to be operating for the other eight months of the year. <p>If Gondola Works is so interested in preserving LCC, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support. Then the best solutions can be implemented, regardless of whether it is their solution or not.</p> <p>I agree with GW that we do not need to add a third lane to LCC, which would add more concrete, impact LCC creek and the world-class climbing areas. Rather, let's use solutions that already exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking reservations work! Look at how they worked for Snowbird in 2021 and Alta Ski Lifts this year. 2. An enhanced system of regional natural gas and/or electric buses that run directly to the ski areas. This should include smaller vans that stop at trailheads for dispersed users. 3. Tolling is supposed to be part of the EIS but there has been little to no discussion about it. It has worked well in Millcreek canyon! <p>Thank you, D Marlowe</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

36254	Eric Van den Akker	<p>First of all, bless the person who has to read all these comments! Having been to some public meetings before, I know you're getting some crazy ones, but also some really really good ones - some probably better than mine. Anyway, I'd suggest this meshing of current proposed alternatives (hoping that it's at least among the really really good ones!)</p> <p>* Keep the big parking lot/structure at the base station - gotta keep this simple for it to be successful. (after all, parking at the resorts is one of the problems being solved here, which frankly is a resort problem, not a UDOT problem, but I digress...we can kill 2 birds with one stone). This way, the only transfer is from their own vehicle to the ride up the canyon.</p> <p>* For said ride up the canyon, instead of regular buses, operate electric shuttles (such as USU Aggie Bus or those they use on Denver's 16th street, but for heaven's sake, they don't have to look the same as a city bus). Then you'd have the wireless charging pads (like the USU bus uses) at the 3 stops (base parking structure, Snowbird, and Alta) combined with regenerative braking, and charging becomes a very small or nonexistent problem (running a few extra shuttles could give extra time to charge if needed).</p> <p>* I'd still recommend the snowsheds with this plan.</p> <p>* Having the express shuttle lane would also help "sell" the service to those stuck in slower traffic, but does add a LOT to the capital cost, so I'd say probably delay implementing that part, but am generally favorable to it.</p> <p>I think that would solve most of the downsides to the enhanced bus system alternative, without the big downsides of the gondola alternative.</p> <p>As much fun as it is to ride a gondola (the one in Telluride was free last week, which also encourages ridership), it's totally inflexible. We're talking about something that's a problem - in your words - approximately 50 days a year; just a fraction of the year, and really only affects a very small part of the community & community members. It seems clear to me that better bus service is the better option overall, but buses aren't sexy.</p> <p>So...</p> <p>Make the buses sexy! Make them very frequent, electric (electric has its problems, but it's also very sexy) (and there are ways to work around the downsides), SIMPLE & EASY to both get to & use, and frankly, look different. Once they look different and operate like shuttles, you can call them shuttles and that frankly helps improve their public image too (I'm just telling it how it is). Then when the shuttles aren't needed (you know, for the other 315 days of the year), they can either be parked or used elsewhere in your system. The gondola would be stuck. Immovable. Inflexible. And omnipresent for the vast majority of the year that it'd still not be in use.</p> <p>For the enormous costs of this project, I think the flexibility needs to carry higher weight. And let's be honest - this isn't just a solution for Little Cottonwood Canyon, it's also basically going to be a test run for Big Cottonwood Canyon's similar issues.</p> <p>Thank you for putting the information out there and easy to find online, and for the opportunity to submit comments.</p> <p>-Eric in Taylorsville-</p>
36293	Amber L Broadaway	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>I am submitting comments on behalf of Solitude Mountain Resort, a member of the Alterra Mountain Company community and located in the Town of Brighton, Big Cottonwood Canyon. I would first like to applaud and thank your team for the</p>

		<p>tremendous amount of work and effort you have put forth in attempting to solve for some very complex environmental and capacity issues in the Cottonwoods. While new to Utah, having arrived just over a year ago from Vermont, it has been the primary topic of my short tenure thus far as President & COO of Solitude. But over these past few months, I have watched and participated in what seems to be a very thoughtful and inclusive process of engaging and soliciting feedback from all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>My areas of concern are primarily relative to Big Cottonwood and S.R. 190, given the location of Solitude in that area. First and foremost, the notion of tolling as detailed in your Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) applies to both Canyons and raises some problems for Solitude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unfair economic impact on Big Cottonwood resort guests, especially prior to there being an enhanced public transport system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Big Cottonwood resorts already have parking fee structures in place, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has announced that it will be adding user fees at nearby locations as well o Adding tolling fees on top of these existing fees is excessive and creates a poor guest experience o The location of the toll as proposed, at the Big Cottonwood resort entrances, discriminates against resort guests versus other canyon users. - The creation of new traffic congestion issues that would undermine one of the project's fundamental goals of reducing traffic congestion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Toll-related vehicle stoppages near the resorts will likely increase congestion at existing pressure points near the resorts. o The toll location is not effective in relation to vehicle turnaround areas and thus will create traffic back-ups further up the canyon. o If the intent is to maintain the Utah Traction Law, let us put this verification and toll in the same location - at the bottom of the canyon <p>Your tolling fact sheet states, "with improved transit options, tolls during the ski season." I would appreciate clarification on whether tolling will or will not be implemented prior to improved transit in Big Cottonwood. Some of the recent commentary by UDOT suggests tolling may be implemented before an enhanced bus system and/or the gondola are complete, including as soon as next ski season. Is this true?</p> <p>If that is true, I respectfully request that UDOT delay tolling until all stakeholders in the Cottonwoods (businesses, residents, the U.S. Forest Service) have had an opportunity to collaborate on additional parking solutions and carpooling incentives. I believe the four Cottonwood resorts can do more collectively to help reduce traffic congestion issues, especially within our respective canyons and with the support of UDOT. Solitude was the first resort to implement paid parking in the Cottonwoods and would be happy to share how we have driven our carpooling numbers up year over year.</p> <p>I would also implore UDOT to consider and treat Big Cottonwood v. Little Cottonwood differently, especially in terms of tolling. These roads, user access (winter & summer), along with available bed base, and resort operating hours are very different. We would be better served by looking at each canyon's current trends to determine what makes sense versus a one-size fits-all approach to tolling in both locations. Many forget that Big Cottonwood Canyon typically offers 86 hours/week of resort winter operations, while Little Cottonwood typically only offers 49 hours/week.</p> <p>UTA has cut ski bus service by 50% this season, which should give us all pause</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>with regard to their capability of providing an enhanced bus service of any kind. While we are all still feeling the effects of the pandemic, the great resignation, wage pressures, etc. -certain industries have figured out how to navigate it this, while UTA has not. Better attracting and retaining UTA drivers needs to be a higher priority right now if we are going to make any attempt at bringing ski bus service back to normal next season, let alone enhance it in the coming years.</p> <p>With respect to the Mobility Hub at the Gravel Pit, will this also be available and serviced for Big Cottonwood Canyon? None of your Fact Sheets allude to this; I worry about taking this prime parking location for S.R. 190 and dedicating it solely for Little Cottonwood Canyon use. Does UDOT envision shared usage, or a second mobility hub for Big Cottonwood near our mouth?</p> <p>While not directly indicated in the EIS documents, I am aware that roadside parking in both canyons is a hot topic for UDOT, USFS and the towns. Right now, Solitude has the smallest amount of dedicated resort parking of any of the four resorts. On paper, we pencil at about 1250 but in practicality we hover closer to 1000 on resort stalls. The current spillover into roadside parking has proven critical to our business. We also struggle with the fact that the bulk of our base area lands are USFS owned, who has put a moratorium on new parking in the canyons. This is challenging for us. If we can partner with the stakeholders and find ways to solve for the loss of roadside parking, we would be amenable to that - provided this loss is made up either at the resorts, elsewhere in the canyon, or at the valley floor supported by adequate public transportation options. As an aside, Solitude has offered to both the Town of Brighton and USFS to take on paid roadside parking if desired - to date, neither entity has taken us up on this offer.</p> <p>To be sure, Solitude is in favor of supporting a transformative parking-traffic solution in the Cottonwoods that achieves UDOT's desired environmental and user experience goals. We have already committed \$15,000 for Big Cottonwood Canyon's Mobility Action Plan Study. Our hope is that, with whichever UDOT option is selected for Little Cottonwood Canyon, businesses & towns are given a chance to solve for carpooling incentives before tolling is implemented; that when/if tolling is implemented, it is phased in after enhanced transit solutions are enacted; that when/if tolling is implemented it is placed at the mouth of the canyons; that enhanced valley parking options are made equitable to both canyons; that roadside parking is not eliminated until after an alternative is achieved, and that a concerted effort is enacted now to help support UTA in growing its pool of qualified drivers (enhanced wages, benefits, schedules, etc.).</p> <p>Thank you for your time in considering these perspectives and for all the effort put into this important initiative. I hope I can be of additional assistance to UDOT going forward.</p> <p>Sincerely, Amber L. Broadaway President & COO, Solitude Mountain Resort</p>
36328	Scott Keller	<p>Hello - First, I'd like to say thank you for reading this feedback.</p> <p>I'm an avid skier, rock climber, and hiker that has lived in Cottonwood Heights for more than 30 years. I have skied ~3,000+ days in the Central Wasatch and been extremely active in local mountaineering activities ranging from resort and backcountry skiing to climbing area maintenance, mentoring, and trailhead cleanups. I live here by choice and the incredible environment of these canyons is</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>why. My home is 1 block off Wasatch Boulevard and my road access is heavily affected when traffic is backed up. I'm right in the thick of it.</p> <p>Despite that reality, I feel very strongly that the Gondola option (in any form) should be removed from consideration for Little Cottonwood Canyon. Why? My reasons follow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is the most expensive option in terms of taxpayer impact. the final cost would be something like 40x the annual state education budget. The exact number may be debatable but it's not debatable that it's an irresponsible spend of public money. 2. It serves the fewest interests (aka, ONLY Snowbird, Alta, and a few landowners at the base). Your EIS also calls this out. The public calls it a "boondoggle". The optics are terrible for DOT, the resorts, and any public figures promoting it. It's hard to defend in the public eye. 3. It does not serve the needs of hikers, most backcountry skiers, or climbers in any way by stopping mid-canyon 4. The vast majority of the public surveyed is against it 5. The EIS failed to do any real impact study on the animal populations in and around the canyon 6. The impact on the watershed is drastic and inevitable, as per the SLCO water authority position, as well as common sense 7. The physical destruction to the precious climbing resources near the mouth of the canyon is untenable. The long list of magnificent climbing boulders that will be moved, removed, or destroyed can never be replaced. The permanent damage to these rare assets would be egregious. 8. The blight created by numerous, looming lift towers will forever impact the canyon's aesthetics from countless vantage points. This is incredibly irresponsible because it will destroy the intrinsic value of the canyon: natural beauty. 9. It will further compress people into the upper canyon, only to further impact the ski areas with human traffic and the activities that spawn from them. The already long lift lines will just get longer. 10. It doesn't remove significant traffic from Wasatch Boulevard because the traffic will simply be split at La Caille turnoff. The two lanes you plan to build will be just as backed up as the single lane has been anyway. It fails to achieve the primary (stated) goal. <p>Although I know I am not alone on this thinking, I can only speak for myself here.</p> <p>My preference would be to generally close the canyon to most traffic and force people onto electric buses. Call it the "Enhanced Zion Model", which has been a huge success. It's also a very cost-effective solution, too. I would gladly give up my canyon driving privileges if it ends the gondola agenda.</p> <p>If you want a really simple, less drastic solution, simply require 2 or more people in each vehicle entering the canyon on busy days. A booth near the mouth to enforce this is all you'll have to build and staff. That would likely achieve a 30% reduction in total car count without a massive funding program.</p> <p>Thank you for listening.</p>
36374	Marco Valero	<p>I am a strong advocate for environmental conservation, access and protection, and I agree with preferred alternative opponents that a canyon gondola would significantly impact the scenery of the canyon and represent an expensive solution to a problem that could probably be more easily mitigated with stronger winter traction enforcement, tolling/carpool incentives, and expanded park & ride facilities to get more people out of cars with better, more frequent bus service.</p>

	<p>UDOT already recognizes this because they are already proposing a phased approach to LCC regardless of which alternative is selected.</p> <p>However, after reading the Final EIS, I must support the gondola as the best long-term solution to LCC congestion for the following reasons:</p> <p>1 - While the gondola significantly impacts the viewshed of LCC, it has the least actual impact on the watershed and wildlife of LCC because it has the smallest physical footprint on the landscape. Both the cog railway and enhanced bus concept would require more pavement, more avalanche sheds and more construction in the canyon than the Gondola. That has a far greater impact on the canyon than towers holding the gondola up, despite the viewshed impacts.</p> <p>2 - It is clear that the vast, vast majority of traffic congestion in LCC is directed towards Alta & Snowbird; the vehicle counts for those touring, camping, hiking and other activities in the canyon pale in comparison to the fact that thousands of skiers go to Alta & Snowbird on weekends in the winter. This issue becomes even worse during inclement weather and avalanche mitigation events because congestion spills over into the neighborhoods surrounding the base of the canyon. The gondola would directly connect the vast majority of LCC users to their destination without having to drive up the canyon, and it is a far more resilient mode of transportation when compared to a cog railway or enhanced bus alternative as it bypasses the delays and dangers associated with driving through a steep, narrow mountain road.</p> <p>3 - The Final EIS has already gone into detail about how other alternatives, such as a Zion National Park shuttle network, have neither the capacity or reliability needed to effectively serve Little Cottonwood Canyons needs. The gondola already has far less projected O&M costs despite a similar construction price tag to the enhanced bus network, and far less than the cog railway.</p> <p>As someone who has worked in the transportation planning industry, as well as recently completing a Masters Degree in Transportation Engineering, I appreciate the detail to which UDOT has analyzed Little Cottonwood Canyon. Many of the comments I've seen criticizing the LCC Gondola are, despite good intentions, misinformed on the realities of providing reliable mobility in challenging terrain and conditions, and do not provide any real alternatives outside of previously considered options that were ruled out and responded to in the massive comments section of the Final EIS.</p> <p>In closing, I hope that UDOT and the public understand that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to Little Cottonwood Canyon, it is a beautiful place with that requires our respect and foresight to use and preserve going forward. If the gondola is selected, UDOT must (and I cannot stress this enough), MUST ensure that is an affordable, easily accessible, and reliable form of mobility to get everyone up and down Little Cottonwood Canyon. This will require affordable fares (equal to, if not cheaper than existing transit options), a strong regional bus & rail feeder network to La Caille, and sufficient capacity for the future to make this work.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Marco Valero M.S.C.E. Transportation Engineering Viterbi School of Engineering '21</p>
--	---

36386	William Gilmer	<p>17 October 2022</p> <p>Based on information provided in the Final EIS UDOT should not construct the proposed Gondola Alternative B and proceed with the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative. For the following reasons the Gondola Alternative B should not be considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The economics as stated in Section 6 do not adequately justify the mandate as directed by SB 277. Of the \$12.3B generated by the recreation industry, \$1.322B are attributed to the ski industry of which, based on pg 6-13 numbers Alta and Snowbird contribute \$1.76.3M. This breaks down to the ski industry contributing approximately 13.3% of total recreation dollars with the Little Cottonwood Canyon ski areas contributing less than 2% of that amount. Construction of a gondola that will only benefit 2 ski areas for a brief period of the year cannot justify a +600 Million dollar project. 2. The taxpayers of Utah should not be subsidizing private industry. If, after many years of stepwise enhancement of public transport do not adequately mitigate transportation issues, consideration for the two ski areas constructing and paying the total cost of a gondola system could be contemplated. 3. Reliability and maintenance issues are not adequately understood for a gondola of this length. Currently, many storm days and inclement weather shutdown the Snowbird tram on a regular basis. 4. Who will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the gondola? This is not in UDOT's purview and the report does not address the cost of rides nor who will receive the revenue from Gondola fares. The taxpayers of Utah should not build a system that will generate revenue for private businesses. 5. The La Caille development will only benefit private business (Snowbird?) and should not be subsidized by the Utah taxpayers. 6. The Gondola Alternative B does not, nor will it, address any issues of traffic congestion in Big Cottonwood Canyon which also contains two ski areas. <p>On the basis of the FEIS UDOT should immediately implement the proposed Enhanced Bus Service Alternative. Aspects of this implementation should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquisition and construction of mobility hubs at the Gravel Pit and 9400 South locations. The full 1500 and 1000 space units should be built as this will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lock up the required space from future development encroachment, b. Allow future growth and implementation of a variety of public transportation options, c. Potentially mitigate SR 210 issues without the need for a gondola, and d. Mitigate traffic issues in both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons and benefit 4, not two, ski areas. 2. Complete the Five-lane Alternative and upgrades to Wasatch Boulevard extending to North Little Cottonwood Road as necessary. Consider lane reversal options as needed to relieve congestion in the morning and afternoon peak traffic times. 3. Implement only one snowshed installation at the highest incidence avalanche zone. 4. Construct all proposed trailhead improvements and ensure that backcountry ski users have areas to park at the most popular areas. 5. Limit single vehicle use on peak use and storm days. While checking for snow tires have officers turn away all single passenger vehicles on highly congested days. Implement all possible strategies to change personal vehicle use, including tolling, to a culture of public transport usage. Ensure reliable, accessible public transport and do so in concert with local hotels and ski area input. 6. Ensure that the ski areas help subsidize UTA in proportion to their economic benefit. If personal vehicle usage limitations require enhanced bus service to increase skier days then the ski areas should participate in the cost of enhanced services.
-------	----------------	--

		<p>The state of Utah needs to address the serious congestion along Wasatch Boulevard and SR210 as the results of increased traffic to the Alta and Snowbird ski areas. However the proposed Gondola Alternative B is not the required solution. This alternative serves only a very small, elite population for a very short time of the overall seasonal use of Little Cottonwood Canyon, benefits two private businesses with taxpayer largesse, and provides no benefit for other wintertime users including backcountry skiers, snowshoers, and winter climbers. A gondola this long does not exist and will have very many design, logistical, maintenance, and reliability issues that have not been adequately addressed in this FEIS. Nor have the cost of fares, who will maintain and operate the system, and who will receive the revenue generated by the system.</p> <p>Utah taxpayers should not pay for the Gondola Alternative B and UDOT has many other projects that will benefit a much larger portion of the recreational industry.</p>
36390	Eli Davis	<p>- Irreversible & Rushed Decision</p> <p>There is simply no reason to invest \$550 million in a permanent project with so many unanswered questions.</p> <p>If common sense could prevail, we would implement cost-effective and environmentally-friendly options such as enhanced busses, tolling, reservations and enforcement of traction laws.</p> <p>We have seen parking reservations work throughout the Wasatch in the last few years. Tolling has proven to be an effective solution in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>As Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson said, these are "common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound."</p> <p>- Tax-Payer-Funded, Serving Private Resorts</p> <p>Why are Utah taxpayers footing the \$550 million bill for a problem two private businesses created and for a solution that will only benefit those two businesses?</p> <p>As we know, resort executives stand to gain the most from a gondola and have been behind the majority of pro-gondola messaging.</p> <p>They view the gondola as a tax-payer-funded marketing ploy to increase visitation to their businesses.</p> <p>UDOT's EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>- Ignoring Local Public & Political Opinion</p> <p>80% of Utahns oppose the gondola, according to a Deseret News/Hinckley Institute of Politics poll.</p> <p>Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Sandy Mayor Monica Zoltanski and many other elected officials agree.</p> <p>"Rather than rip up the canyon with a half-a-billion-dollar price tag, let's invest in common-sense solutions. Parking hubs in the valley, electric busing with regular routes, carpooling and tolling, reservations, common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound," Wilson said at the Truth About the Proposed Gondola event in</p>

		<p>June.</p> <p>With no trailhead or backcountry access, the gondola is far from a solution that benefits all of LCC's users throughout the year.</p> <p>- Not a Convenient Solution</p> <p>If the gondola is built, your ski day will consist of parking off-site (or paying a premium for one of the limited parking spots near the base), taking a bus to the base station then riding the gondola 31 minutes to Snowbird or 37 minutes to Alta.</p> <p>And then doing it all in reverse order at the end of the day.</p> <p>How can it be assured the gondola will be used and actually reduce cars in the canyon?</p> <p>For the gondola strategy to be effective, there will need to be a major change in public habits.</p> <p>With no plan by UDOT to limit cars (it is our understanding they plan to implement bussing until the gondola is built but not continue the program afterward) or any analysis of demand, the original issue of traffic is not being solved. It will simply funnel more visitors to the resorts.</p> <p>- Increased Visitation Stress on LCC</p> <p>If those invested in the gondola are so interested in preserving Little Cottonwood Canyon, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support.</p> <p>As our friends at Students for the Wasatch pointed out, if the gondola is implemented, the number of cars visiting resorts will remain the same while skier visits will increase by 20%, per UDOT's EIS.</p> <p>The EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>- What Will it Really Cost?</p> <p>The proposed budget to build the gondola comes in at approximately \$550 million. But many estimate that number would ultimately come in closer to \$1 billion.</p> <p>We know projects of this size tend to go way over budget. Our new airport (which could use a gondola from Terminal B) was budgeted for \$1.8 billion and ended up costing more than \$4 billion.</p> <p>If the gondola is built, it would cost \$10.6 million annually just to operate. Plus, UDOT estimates an additional \$12.5 million in capital costs, expected by 2037, followed by \$16.5 million by 2051, according to the Deseret News.</p> <p>- Is a Gondola Even Necessary?</p> <p>How many days per winter are you in a complete standstill in Little Cottonwood Canyon? No doubt the red snake is real. But real enough for an expensive,</p>
--	--	---

		<p>permanent gondola?</p> <p>Plus, the gondola will not run when howitzers are active during avalanche mitigation in the lower canyon from Lisa Falls to Monte Cristo.</p> <p>And we can't even think of an argument for the gondola to be operating for the other eight months of the year.</p> <p>- Preserving the Beauty of LCC</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a true treasure of our local environment and attracts skiers, climbers and hikers from around the world to enjoy its beauty.</p> <p>Constructing more than 20 towers reaching 200 feet tall and stretching eight miles through the heart of LCC would destroy the canyon's natural beauty.</p> <p>Altering the canyon's footprint will also destroy popular climbing and hiking areas including Alpenboch Loop Trail.</p> <p>- Push Traffic onto Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>The gondola will not solve traffic issues.</p> <p>It will simply push traffic out of Little Cottonwood Canyon onto Wasatch Blvd, I-215 and surrounding neighborhoods in the Cottonwood Heights community.</p>
36459	John Badila	<p>As a Salt Lake City resident, a skier, rock climber and a photographer I have followed the LCC EIS transportation process very closely. I have spent a great deal of time in Little Cottonwood Canyon over the past 14 years as a recreationist and a resort employee. I'm familiar with the challenges facing transportation in this canyon, having used the ski buses extensively, as well as carpooling and (more often than I'd like) driving a car with a single occupant.</p> <p>I strongly oppose UDOT's preferred alternative, the Gondola Alternative B. There are several major drawbacks to this proposed project, and even leaving the obvious problems out of consideration, it seems unlikely that this alternative will even succeed in alleviating traffic problems significantly.</p> <p>Dispersed Use- The gondola as proposed leaves dispersed use of LCC out of consideration entirely. The White Pine trailhead is very popular year-round with hikers and backcountry skiers, to the point that the lot is full and parking on the shoulder for a mile uphill and down is common, but the gondola will not stop here, leaving this problem unabated.</p> <p>Impact on Rock Climbing and Viewshed- The proposed gondola will have irreversible and highly detrimental impacts on rock climbing in the lower part of Little Cottonwood Canyon, and these impacts have been minimized or ignored in the EIS. These impacts include the destruction or removal of popular boulders for climbing to build the access roads and gondola support towers. Further, there will be major visual and noise impacts to the majority of areas where rock climbing is popular in LCC. The gondola will pass directly over or nearly alongside many climbing routes and bouldering areas. The proposed 200-foot tall towers and 35-person gondola cars will be visible to all visitors to Little Cottonwood Canyon, whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, skiing, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive up the canyon.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Seasonality- As proposed, the gondola will only operate from December through April. This will benefit the ski resorts, Alta and Snowbird while doing nothing to alleviate traffic from June to October, which is already at similar levels to winter use.</p> <p>Failure to Alleviate Traffic Congestion- It is still unknown what fees will be charged to gondola riders, but given the high estimated cost of the project (\$550 million in the initial proposal) it is likely to be expensive, which will incentivise most canyon users to continue taking private vehicles up the canyon. Further, the gondola cannot operate while avalanche control work is being done, so it may not run at all on some of the most congested mornings on storm days.</p> <p>Private Profit at Public Expense- The proposed Gondola Alternative B stands to provide an economic benefit primarily to two private businesses, Alta and Snowbird ski resorts. This seems like an unreasonable use of more than 500 million dollars of taxpayer money, especially when most Utahns don't visit these resorts, and many live in parts of the state far from this area.</p> <p>We Don't Want It- A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola.</p> <p>Capacity- To my knowledge, UDOT has not done a capacity study as part of the EIS for this project. So there is no data on what the impact on the canyon will be of moving more people up the canyon per day than is currently possible. Assuming the gondola can succeed in getting more people up Little Cottonwood Canyon each day than is currently possible, that will have inevitable detrimental effects on crowding and environmental impacts, which are already significant issues.</p> <p>Not Needed- The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." This should not be UDOT's goal in spending public money on what is billed as a transportation solution. The latest data suggest that interest in resort skiing is declining, while participation in backcountry skiing is growing rapidly. Transportation solutions should be aimed at alleviating real problems and benefitting all canyon users, not enriching private businesses.</p> <p>Other Options- UDOT's EIS fails to adequately consider several alternative solutions that could be more workable and less expensive. Some of these include: a toll for all canyon users, enhanced bus service (which is actually being cut this season), snow sheds for sections of the road most prone to avalanches, and alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes.</p> <p>Gondola Alternative B is not a good solution for Little Cottonwood Canyon's transportation challenges. And it will do nothing at all to alleviate similar traffic problems in neighboring Big Cottonwood Canyon. It is neither needed nor wanted by the local community, the people of Utah, or the majority of canyon users. As such, I strongly oppose Gondola Alternative B.</p> <p>Sincerely, John Badila</p>
36546	Christina Arvidson	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>I respectfully request that you step back from the decision you put forth and continue efforts in researching the solution for Little Cottonwood Canyon to find a more inclusive answer with less impact than building multiple permanent</p>

		<p>structures across our beautiful canyon.</p> <p>This decision doesn't solve for the entire problem. One comment I heard in response to issues with only having two stops was that the bus system also currently only stops at the resorts. That's the point - we are trying to change that. Having only two stops is part of the traffic problem that needs consideration and it is shortsighted to not address it. We cannot solve the traffic issue without adding a resolution for the trailheads that so many enthusiasts use.</p> <p>The current plan reduces the number of parking spaces at these lots. Meanwhile, the number of backcountry users increases yearly. This trend will continue as resorts become increasingly unaffordable for many.</p> <p>In addition, roadside parking will be eliminated in these areas- which I don't disagree with, because vehicles are often poorly parked and block the road. Unfortunately, I do not see any proposed resolutions for the displaced vehicles so that the growing backcountry community can experience the beauty that brought them to live in this incredible state. I strongly urge that you consider bus routes which include stops at these trailheads with hubs or stations where we can store shoes, etc while out in the wilderness.</p> <p>I want to also address a few other items that concern me about this project.</p> <p>The videos were highly unclear about the distance from parking lots to the gondola loading station. One said that the issue was resolved but the parking seems to be approximately .75mi from the loading dock. This will add a huge barrier for those who will struggle to get there, including for those with small children or with less mobility. Having buses shuttle people is a bit of a slap in the face since those buses could just continue right up the canyon. Where will others park when the premium lot is full?</p> <p>The conflict of interest in this project is completely unavoidable. Having members from Snowbird and Alta directly involved in the decision of what happens in our beloved canyon - and having that outcome be something that directly benefits themselves - should not be allowed. Anyone involved in either mountain should step aside from this decision because whether or not they are willing to admit this, their affiliation with the resorts is preventing them from making an objective decision. You can call this shrewd business, but you're ruining our landscape for a buck. Look to Yvon Chanaud as an example of how to be a steward to your community.</p> <p>As an outdoor enthusiast who has enjoyed these mountains for years, I have personal experience with the ski bus. I used to ride the bus almost everyday to Snowbird. Then the route changed and left me stuck up the canyon for nearly a full day. I abandoned the bus because I frequently only had time for a half day of skiing so I could manage personal responsibilities. We are so close to incredible electric technology. It has already been well published that this project will take years to begin because of the massive funding requirements. I urge you to consider the technological advancements that will continue to take place in that time. You are measuring tomorrow's solution with today's capabilities. Companies here in Utah are developing technology that includes recharging stations built into the road so vehicles charge as they drive. We are so close to realizing these improvements. Please research this angle before downplaying the potential of bus improvements.</p> <p>Meanwhile, what is the truth about how the gondola will be fueled? It is being</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>touted as a clean option, but you do not mention the electricity source that will power it - COAL-fired power from RMP.</p> <p>Recently, more changes to the bus schedule were announced because of driver shortages. I implore you to review the compensation package for that job and make it more appropriate for the risk drivers take in getting buses up and down the canyon safely multiple times a day. It is 2022 in Utah, where cost of living is exponentially greater than it was a mere 5 years ago.</p> <p>Please, listen to UTAH. Listen to the constituents. Do not take further steps toward the gondola without revisiting our other options with fresh perspectives and an eye on what we will be capable of in the near future.</p> <p>Respectfully, Christina Arvidson</p>
36570	Tracy Griffall	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>WE (the taxpayers, our elected leaders, and UDOT) are admittedly faced with a challenging issue to try to design safe, reasonable, and functional methods to reduce traffic and congestion to, and within, Little Cottonwood Canyon. That said, I am absolutely, unequivocally opposed to both UDOT's Gondola B plan as well as the widening of Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>As a born-and-raised Salt Lake resident of 60 years, I have watched the Salt Lake and surrounding areas go through many growth spurts and consequent growing pains. These growing pains required widening of many roadways; installation of new interstates and highways; development of/ disappearance of farmlands and open spaces; etc. The one thing that has always been a constant priority through it all has been the preservation of our beautiful canyons and watershed areas. I am heartbroken that UDOT continues to pursue the gondola which they state "has the highest visual impacts" but can't claim it has the lowest impact to watershed and other areas.</p> <p>As a healthcare professional, we are taught that you should always consider the WHOLE patient before starting treatment and then start with the least invasive option. Little Cottonwood Canyon, Wasatch Blvd, the residential areas near the canyon(s), citizens of Salt Lake who utilize the canyon, and tourism, ALL need to be considered when designing a solution. Many alternate recommendations have been made and seem to fall on UDOT's deaf ears.</p> <p>There are SO MANY less invasive options that could and should be implemented, in a staged manner, before EVER considering the gondola. Some options could include in part or in whole:</p> <p>BUSES AND PARK-N-RIDE SITES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A fleet of electric buses with designated routes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > to ski areas during the winter > in the summer and fall, have stops at major trailheads, rock-climb sites, and resorts > in the fall, have designated sight-seeing buses for fall color observation. - Increase park-and-ride sites. Existing park-and-ride sites are inadequate as I can attest from personal experience. Additional sites away from the canyon-mouths could be strategically placed. <p>WASATCH BLVD:</p> <p>Traffic bottlenecks at Ft. Union Blvd. and Wasatch Blvd. during peak ski season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We must reduce the desirability of driving your own vehicle, often by one person, up the canyon to park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Place toll booths at the mouth of the canyon. > Add a bypass lane for buses and HOV (high occupancy vehicles) so only single-passenger vehicles are tolled. <p>RESORTS TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: Resorts should carry some burden of</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>solution since they benefit most.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resorts have a finite number of parking spaces. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Especially in ski season, require resorts to manage their own parking by utilizing an online reservation system for daily/weekly/monthly parking permits. > Resort parking lots should have their own parking staff. Implement the following individually or combined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gated entry to validate vehicle has proper parking permit. Electronic access such as gated housing communities use or an attendant at the gate(s) such as national parks. > Valet parking to expedite traffic flow during peak hours of day > Of course, have a bus-bypass lane at entry to parking lot to bypass the above measures. <p>I strongly urge UDOT and those on the planning committee to cease pursual of the current plan that includes gondola installation, widening of Wasatch and mega-parking lot at LaCaille. I encourage you to pursue some of the less-invasive, less-costly alternatives that have been presented over the course of months but unilaterally and collectively dismissed. The existing plan is detrimental to our pristine canyon; negatively impacts surrounding neighborhoods on a daily basis; is cost prohibitive to local users; is a ridiculous burden on taxpayers; and may backfire and negatively impact tourism in LCC since the gondola detracts from the small, local resort feel many tourists seek.</p> <p>I am begging you to eliminate Gondola B and widening Wasatch Blvd from the Final plan. Please start with smaller, less-invasive measures, implemented in stages over time.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration,</p> <p>Tracy Griffall</p>
36629	Shauna Bona	<p>Date: October 16, 2022 To: UDOT LCC EIS Consultant Team From: League of Women Voters of Salt Lake City Re: Comments on Final LCC EIS</p> <p>Dear UDOT Personnel and Consultant Team,</p> <p>The League of Women Voters of Salt Lake City (LWVSL) is disappointed in the final EIS that identified the gondola as the solution to transportation issues in Little Cottonwood Canyon. This solution threatens to overwhelm the canyon with too many visitors to the detriment of this important watershed for the Salt Lake Valley and the ecological balance in the canyon. In addition, the spectacular visual vistas in the canyon will be permanently altered by the presence of large support towers.</p> <p>We are pleased to see a proposal with a phased approach and urge the Department to undertake less impactful alternatives; incentives to promote mass transit use, more frequent and efficient bus service (preferably electric), tolls to encourage car-pooling, restrictions on single-occupancy vehicles, and a parking reservation system at the ski resorts. We encourage a systematic analysis of the effects of such measures before going forward with building a gondola that may not be necessary.</p> <p>Specifically, we have the following comments: We believe that the proposed snow sheds are unnecessary when balancing the minor inconvenience of waiting for snow to be cleared a few days a year, with the unavoidable environmental damage that will result from their construction and</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>maintenance.</p> <p>We support more and strategically placed bus access points that reduce congestion at the canyons and incentives to mass transit use valley-wide. We support bus service that is fairly allocated to serve a variety of recreational areas and uses and not just the ski resorts; thus we support year-round bus service.</p> <p>We support options and actions that increase opportunities for all recreational interests including those of underserved populations.</p> <p>We support all efforts to more fully understand all canyon users and their expectations when visiting the canyons, and the current visitor use and management studies being undertaken. They will provide valuable information that is at present, missing.</p> <p>We believe the time has come to invest in solutions that prioritize the preservation and maintenance of a healthy canyon environment that is sustainable.</p> <p>Our primary concern with the canyons is their environmental integrity, most especially the watershed we all rely on. As the climate changes with less snowpack and warmer temperatures anticipated, our reliance on that incredibly valuable resource - the Wasatch Mountains and the seven creeks that flow through its canyons - become even more vital to our survival and quality of life. The final EIS presented will have environmental consequences that cannot be mitigated. We support a phased approach with incremental changes to achieve the positive results desired with the least damage, allowing time to adequately and thoroughly assess the consequences of those actions before undertaking a permanent alteration to the canyon by building a gondola.</p> <p>As you know, the League is a non-partisan organization which relies on study, discussion, and consensus before our carefully considered positions are announced. Our comments here are based on our positions on protecting our environment and our invaluable watersheds.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Shauna Bona, President, League of Women Voters of Salt Lake</p>
36657	Daisy DeMarco	<p>Much to say here regarding the decision to go ahead with the gondola project for Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) - I am very much against it - though there are a couple of key points I would like to highlight.</p> <p>#1: There are many ways to address the problem prior to building a gondola, including the important step of creating a bus depot (where the parking for the gondola is planned to be) and testing out various bus options before any additional steps are taken. The depot could range from one extreme, shutting down public access to the canyon for several months/weeks/days per year - save residents/workers (e.g. Zion NP), to simply enhancing the bus boarding/unboarding process via the depot. Buses also have the additional benefit of being able to service far more places in the canyon (e.g., trailheads - not everyone wants to go to Snowbird or Alta) and if the buses are electric - which has been proven to work in the canyon - then the environmental impact is lower.</p> <p>#2: While you cannot place a price on this, the aesthetic loss of value within the canyon itself is worth noting. Currently the sightlines, the contours of the granite walls near the mouth of the canyon and the unobstructed views up the various gulches and forks (Tanner's Gulch, White Pine Fork, Red Pine Fork, etc.) are highly valued by those of us who utilize the canyon year-round. The varied gondola towers, cables, and cars would permanently scar the canyon and the natural feeling currently cherished throughout the canyon would be lost.</p>

		<p>#3: One underlying assumption behind building a gondola is the thought that far fewer cars will drive up the canyon in the winter (part of the environmental impact study). That is a questionable assumption at best. Yes, some will decide to take the gondola up rather than driving - particularly during storms...this of course assuming the gondola itself isn't shut down due to high winds during said storms. Given the projected travel time for the gondola it will be faster to travel via personal vehicle, which will be especially true if some cars are removed via the gondola. Meaning the same number of cars will use the canyon, and more people in total would be up the canyon with gondola usage - which highlights yet another ignored issue: what is the tipping point for usage in LCC? The failure to address this critical issue is point #4.</p> <p>#5: The fact that the public is footing the bill for a solution that will only run 6(ish) months out of the year, and one that will only benefit two entities, is concerning to say the least. Make it a shared expense between UDOT, Snowbird, and Alta and the public could stomach the costs more. Nothing has been stated to indicate this has been discussed.</p> <p>#6: The increased traffic wherever the gondola is built (currently slated for the land purchased by LCC Base Property LLC, which of course is owned by Cummings family - who also own Snowbird) will be severe even on good days. Between the entry areas for Snowbird and Alta there are currently five places where cars can gain access to those resorts. Even if there are two entry points for the gondola base station the strain felt on high snow days will be immense. Getting into, and then out of, the base station will simply be a traffic nightmare - at the base of the canyon! - and the rational option for most drivers will be to drive up the canyon.</p> <p>#7: In terms of avalanche mitigation/avoidance - one of the main arguments stated for building a gondola - there could be tunnels built in certain places/high slide areas to (a) ease the problems caused by slides and (b) allow for wildlife to move more freely across the canyon throughout the year. This further avoids the footprint of the gondola towers which would be massive.</p> <p>#8: If the public is footing the bill for a gondola system it seems to further bolster the argument that everyone should have access to the areas the gondola is feeding - namely snowboarders accessing Alta. I won't weigh in on my opinion here, just a logical ramification that needs to be considered and addressed.</p> <p>#9: Something that thus far has been overlooked is the fact that the projected snowpack in the canyon will decrease over time (if weather patterns/warming continues). Meaning the financial projections for Snowbird and Alta will further become strained as time goes on, which will then nullify the gondola and make it go the way of the failed Moab lift system - albeit with a much higher cost and environmental scar.</p>
36668	Steve Pruitt	<p>1. I see nothing in the EIS that addresses the resident birds of prey - red tail hawks and eagles that regularly are visible in flight and perching in trees below the 209/210 junction. How are you addressing the elimination of them with the gondola?</p> <p>2. The loading of the additional bus cost only onto the La Caille alternative has the appearance of putting UDOT's fingers on the scale to produce a preferred outcome. Why would the small incremental distance between the two gondola alternatives mean one has to have a line item bus expense while the other does not if the ridership from the terminal and access thereto is the same?</p>

		<p>3. Of the 50 days per year this project is supposed to impact, where are the figures on the portion of these days that accompany these 50 days when winds approach hurricane force and the operation of this folly?</p> <p>4. You have stated that there will be a projected 45% increase in southbound Wasatch traffic at peak periods but you have not provided anything to support this claim. As the east bench is virtually built-out limiting future traffic increases, where are the new trips being generated from that support this claim.</p> <p>5. Your plan makes all access to the parking solely from 210 and in doing so you have provided no study or support on the impact on Wasatch between 9400 South and the 210 signalized intersection; the impact on this signalized intersection itself; the impact on Wasatch Blvd. south of 9400 South; and 209 altogether particularly given that the alternative at the 209/210 intersection would level the traffic flow between 209 and 210 for such access.</p> <p>6. I see nothing in your gondola budget for legal defense of your selection which will most certainly occur and last for years and what is your defense to the destruction of the view corridor from all of the impacted property owners as such view corridors have been historically and legally defended when compromised.</p> <p>7. As the ordinary tax payer will have no benefit whatsoever from your preferred alternative but are being asked to pay for much like the student loan forgiveness plan currently at play and as sunshine is the best disinfectant, you should have to provide an assessment or explanation of the following:</p> <p>A. The projected economic value to the two ski areas that are the terminal beneficiaries of the gondola but will be shouldering none of the cost.</p> <p>B. Identification of the base beneficiaries including the names of all land owners, speculators and contract buyers such as Niederhauser, McCandless and La Caille together with any disclosures that may exist or be found through FOIA or otherwise between any of these beneficiaries and all other beneficiaries and/or their lobbyist with the State legislature and the Governor.</p> <p>C. What methods other than tax payer funding are being considered to pay for the project and what documentation do you have from potential vendors that support your cost analysis and in this era of continuing inflation, how stale are your budgets and what are the financial contingencies to the budget.</p> <p>9. For all ancillary commercial benefactors at the base, other than the carpetbaggers everyone knows, what provisions have you established to insure that all concession operations that benefit in any way from a gondola at La Caille will be subject to public bid.</p> <p>10. What if any agreements have been proposed with La Caille that would benefit La Caille such as ancillary development benefitting from your selection, identification of their business as the name of the base development and/or access from La Caille across Little Cottonwood Creek to otherwise benefit them.</p> <p>11. I see nothing in your preferred alternative that protects the privacy of any of the land owners who will become the fish bowls for each gondola cabin. If traffic mitigation is the real goal, then not having windows on the south side of each cabin will mitigate this intrusion into our privacy and as the cabins are assuredly</p>
--	--	--

		not constructed, as those impacted want to see no southern visibility as part of the "preferred" design element to maintain our privacy.
36689	Kelli McEwan	<p>I work in little cottonwood canyon and haven't been able to keep all or your options/revisions and information straight. It's also been ---- depressing to try to read the information that would vastly upset the day to day flow of my life. I want to be objective but also reiterate what I feel like is the experiential side of the public that hasn't really been addressed as well as going back to the original problem were solving for.</p> <p>The problem is traffic as I understand it. but the reason there is traffic is because this area is pristine, and beautiful and nearby a thriving city. I really don't think brining anymore city than we have to up canyon is in our best interest. I'm not a save our canyons person, be I am someone that wants to know when is enough.</p> <p>I also believe in working harder not smarter. We have so many easy minimal physical changes that can be implemented today or in a shorter period of time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * incentives weekday use, ski resorts brining back weekday passes, working with companies to incentives sending their employees to the mountains during non peak skiing. * the last two years have been pretty surprisingly less traffic in the canyon. <p>Something you'd expect would the opposite with covid making carpooling less desirable. What was different the last two years was the two resorts taking turns on parking reservations. It's a simple low cost solution, that works off existing infrastructure, and requires a handful of entry level workforce to achieve (which would be automated with gates etc).</p> <p>Those two things alone would alleviate immediate stress, and buy SIGNIFICANT time of city grown, and raising for funds for appropriate infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Everyone really wants the buses to be the solution, we really really want it. There's problems with getting workers to the union and getting enough drivers now and that's super unfortunate, I wonder what can be down to make the job less demanding more part time, with still significant benefits. It's type we start thinking a-typical and questioning the business status quo and do better for the working class. * We also need more parking at park and ride areas, with proper protection of our vehicles from break ins and catalytic converter theft. It doesn't alleviate any stress if we are too paranoid to take the bus. <p>In regards to the existing proposals it seems like we have completely forgotten what we are solving for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Traffic just at the base of the canyon at any of the proposed locations just moves the traffic there. to an area of public people did nothing to receive this massive project in their backyard. * Traffic in the canyon can take a a considerable amount of time on accident and bad road nights, but to have a gondola that takes more time in travel time let alone loading and unloading than driving the canyon (even moderate red snake levels) is so completely assinine it missing the goal of what you were setting out to solve entirely. * That brings me to the point on how classist this would really wind up being as well. You want lockers down at the base station, with no work through on more lockers at the resorts, you're relegating people using public transit to have everything on their person. No car for storage, no lockers for storage... that's all in a hope to drive sales of food, rentals and retail up at the resorts but let's already realize a huge demographic currently cannot afford that. * the people that can afford that are already paying for preferred parking, and won't be side by side the working class at all, and we all know it.

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>If we are solving the problem for the rich, then there is a beautiful new exclusive resort named Wasatch peaks ranch they can go ski. If we want to keep being inclusive, we need to get more creative with offerings, cost, pay/compensations. If we had a system in place for parking that was fair from a planing, first come first serve, money, opportunity perspective I think we are over a decade or more out on needing to solve for bigger infrastructure projects.</p> <p>But if we insist on infrastructure I think snow sheds are great, I think buses are great (in the summer too, that stops at trail heads), I'd just suggest a sticker/barcode pass for car windows for an express lane for those with appropriate tires, and or parking reservation or employee) and then a side lane for those to pay a visitors toll, have their tires checked, and or check if they are carpooling, or can buy parking etc...</p> <p>I can confirm that the skiing product goes down already on fully parked out ski days. Gondolas would only add more skiers... that would give the resorts an argument to expand, which maybe we should but I don't think we need to more than we need to have opportunities for people to ski on a ghost town Tuesday, etc.</p> <p>Also let it be known I rather more resorts, than larger resorts, as we all hate large corporate ski hills like Vail, and once they are too big they are public nuisances that cannot be stopped.</p> <p>I think it's interesting you're solving for the ski resorts problem and seemingly getting surprised that the public in which you work for is getting upset and you're solutions. Put it back on the businesses, and work with the legislator to have sustainable expansion and better business practices. It sucks that we have suck a cool area where everyone wants to come ski all the time, and have been aiming to cater to a more affluent demographic... however, it should to some degree be accessible for everyone in the valley and what has been proposed misses the mark for right now. It's a tall order of what you've been given and I wouldn't want to be in your position. I do however hope smaller solutions are treated as real solutions before massive ones that are hard to take back.</p> <p>Thank You. Kelli</p>
36731	Stuart Derman	<p>As a resident of Salt Lake County and frequent user of Little Cottonwood Canyon, I'm extremely invested in the outcome of this potential project, and hope to utilize this public comment to clearly and concisely express my perspective on the Gondola project in Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>I've been deeply involved in this debate as a member of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council, Executive Director of Wasatch Mountain Arts and engaged member of our beloved Wasatch community.</p> <p>The gondola is without question a mistake that will permanently alter one of our state's most incredible natural treasures. But the many reasons that this option is a mistake, goes far beyond the visual alteration of the canyon views.</p> <p>1) Practicality - It is clear that consideration around where canyon users are coming from has not been accurately accounted for. We need a solution that gets canyon users from their local area to the areas they wish to enjoy. This involves looking at bus routes from Salt Lake City and other towns/cities where canyon</p>

		<p>users originate their trips rather than just the base. The proposed Gondola will not make sense on the majority of winter days for users resulting in a high likelihood people will just drive up the canyon anyway. I'm one of them. Why would someone commit to a guarantee of slower transportation vs the risk of making it up and down the canyon faster.</p> <p>2) Ecological Impact - Little Cottonwood is a key watershed. We can't even have dogs in the canyon. How can we possibly accommodate the construction from 22+ towers being constructed and all the roads that will need to be built. This seems like a nightmare for our water supply.</p> <p>3) Traffic Estimates - The numbers presented around current vehicle volume and projected volume simply don't add up. They look hyper inflated to justify the project.</p> <p>4) Long Term Traffic Volume - While foreseeable future winters will hopefully remain strong, the longer term outlook is not as positive. It seems like this long term growth justification for the project is based on unrealistic snowfalls and powder days.</p> <p>5) Only 2 Stops - The Gondola only would stop at Alta & Snowbird. What about that many other places in the canyon that people use? Backcountry skiing and winter human powered recreation is growing at rapid rates and this project doesn't account for these users.</p> <p>6) Not Year Round Solution - Based on all the messaging, the gondola is meant to solve winter traffic. But what about the summer? Increasing bus service would solve this problem. The resorts are not the only place people are going to recreate and in the summer I would argue trails off resorts are more popular.</p> <p>Such complex issues like the gondola that would change the face of our community should have broad consensus from the public, local government and some level of agreement by community stakeholders. The gondola clearly has none of that. It has divided our community and choosing to move forward would only further erode public trust. I hope you choose to make the right decision and not proceed with the construction of the gondola in favor of more measured, responsible and flexible solutions that can adapt with the needs of our community.</p>
36743	Richard Jirik	<p>Dear Sirs:</p> <p>While I agree with many of UDOT's recommendations as set a forth in the LCC FEIS for addressing the transportation issues facing Little Cottonwood Canyon, I disagree with UDOT's selection of Gondola Alternative B as the preferred alternative. I cannot see the logic in committing to the eventual construction of the gondola and La Caille base station/parking structure unless the Enhance Bus Service alternative (which UDOT is essentially recommending in the interim for the Gondola B Alternative until funding for the gondola and base station are procured) is first implemented, fully tested, and refined as needed, in order to assess if the Enhanced Bus Service alternative is a viable solution to the traffic congestion and safety issues plaguing Wasatch Boulevard and SR 210 during the ski season. The performance and impacts of the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative would be assessed after a minimum five year period had elapsed. Only then should a decision be made on whether to proceed with the execution of the Gondola B Alternative or the Enhanced Bus Service in Peak-Period Shoulder Lane (PPSL) Alternative.</p> <p>I believe that UDOT should recommend the Enhanced Bus Service as the</p>

		<p>preferred alternative for the ROD, for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) This alternative has the least environmental impact to LCC and Little Cottonwood Creek, and would have minimal visual impact to the scenic views; 2) It has the lowest estimated cost of all of the primary alternatives evaluated as per the FEIS; 3) The alternative is scalable with respect to the number of buses to be operated. 4) Implementation of this alternative would not preclude the possible selection of another of the primary alternatives UDOT has identified, if the Enhanced Bus Service alternative is determined to be 1) unworkable, 2) ineffective in reaching performance goals (i.e., reducing traffic congestion, travel times, safety metrics, etc.) as set by UDOT, and/or 3) cost prohibitive during its full scale operation. <p>I would agree with UDOT that from an efficiency and safety perspective, the Gondola Alternative B makes the most sense for transporting skiers to Snowbird and Alta. But at what cost ? Moreover, there are other factors that need to be considered when evaluating the merits of Gondola Alternative B, among them funding sources, the need to prioritize and address other local and state issues in the face of finite state revenues, and the long term impacts of climate change on Utah's ski industry. Unfortunately, these appear to not to have been considered by UDOT in selecting its preferred alternative.</p> <p>Estimated Cost and Funding Source(s)</p> <p>Foremost is the price tag of the Gondola Alternative B, estimated to be between \$533 and \$550M in 2020 dollars. Granted, these are preliminary estimates, but the cost range is still significantly higher than that for the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative. Although the FEIS does not address any potential funding sources for the gondola, it is reasonable to assume that at least most of the cost will be borne by Utah taxpayers, assuming authorization of funds by the state legislature. Given the myriad of problems that our state faces, and the competing demands for our limited tax revenues, one can argue that other needs (e.g., addressing water conservation, air quality, the housing shortage, education, etc.) warrant higher priority than funding a gondola that would largely benefit a relatively small and affluent segment of the population.</p> <p>Potential Impacts of Climate Change on Local Ski Resorts</p> <p>With respect to our continuing mega-drought, unquestionably exacerbated by global climate change, it is likely that future snow packs in the Central Wasatch Mountains will gradually diminish over the next several decades, especially if the Great Salt Lake continues to recede. As the lake shrinks, a reduction in lake effect snowfall at the higher elevations can be expected as time progresses. Significantly smaller seasonal snow packs, in conjunction with a gradual decrease in the length of the winter ski season in the future, will likely negatively impact the number of days the resorts can operate, and conversely, result in a gradual decline in the total number of ski person-days days each season. A gradual but significant decline in the number skiers and demand for this type of recreation due to shorter ski seasons could make the gondola and supporting infrastructure an expensive and shortsighted boondoggle, and negate the primary rationales for constructing the gondola. In summary, do we as a society really want to spend millions to construct a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon that, as climate change progresses, could very well lead to the demise of the ski industry</p>
--	--	---

		<p>nationwide, including Utah, and ultimately relegate the gondola to a "white elephant" status ? In my view, the scenario I have outlined here is a very real one if we do not take more robust actions to address climate change, and it represents a cogent argument for scrapping Gondola B as recommended alternative.</p> <p>Sediment Loading into Little Cottonwood Creek</p> <p>The FEIS summary table for the Gondola B Alternative states that water quality standards for Little Cottonwood Creek will not be exceeded as a result of implementation of this alternative. However, while exceedance of COC MCLs may not be an problem during or after construction, it seems to me excessive sediment loading, as well as pollutants associated with construction of the gondola towers and the access road(s), is likely to impact Little Cottonwood Creek during stormwater runoff, despite any BMPs implemented (Chapter 19, Section 19.2.2.5), of which none are mentioned. Consequently, I fear that UDOT is downplaying the potential for significant adverse impacts to the water quality of the creek, and the possible shutdown, albeit likely temporarily, of the Little Cottonwood water treatment plant. While the footprint for each individual gondola tower will be relatively small, the same cannot be said for the access road needed to reach many if not most of the tower site. In summary, the potential for shutdown of the treatment plant at the mouth of LLC due to excessive sediment loading or construction-related pollution is another reason I am opposed to the Gondola B Alternative at this time.</p> <p>Other Thoughts on the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative:</p> <p>I am generally in favor of the various components of the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative, although I would like to see eventual adoption of summer bus service, and the incorporation of bus stops at various trailheads, if this alternative is selected in the ROD. Otherwise, a large segment of the recreational community that uses LLC in the summer months or snowshoes/backcountry skis in the winter will have to use POVs to access the canyon, adding to the traffic congestion and pollution.</p> <p>One element of the Enhanced Bus Service Alternative, as well as the Gondola B and Enhanced Bus Service In Peak-Period Shoulder Lane alternatives, that I believe absolutely critical to addressing the traffic issue, is the tolling/management of vehicle occupancy. Without this component any enhanced busing service is likely to fall short of expectations.</p> <p>In concluding, I want to reiterate my support for the Enhanced Bus Service alternative, despite the shortcomings I perceive for this alternatives as noted above. This alternative provides sufficient flexibility and scalability, has the least environmental impact, and has the lowest estimated cost of the alternatives evaluated by UDOT. If the Enhanced Bus Service alternative fails to meet expectations over a minimum five-year operational period as per a series of performance metrics, then UDOT, with public input, should be prepared to select either the Enhanced Bus Service in Peak-Period Shoulder Lane (PPSL) or the Gondola B alternative.</p> <p>Sincerely, Richard Jirik</p>
36797	Kody Fox	<p>Friends of Alta Official Comment Regarding the Selection of Gondola Alternative B</p> <p>In September, UDOT announced that it had selected the Gondola Alternative B</p>

		<p>with proposed phasing as the preferred alternative in its final EIS. Friends of Alta disagrees strongly with this decision. Below, we would like to highlight the main reasons why.</p> <p>Gondola Alternative B would be funded by taxpayers</p> <p>UDOT is planning on funding Gondola Alternative B in a project estimated to cost Utah taxpayers over half a billion dollars. We believe this is unethical. If a gondola were to be built, it should be paid for by the private multi-million-dollar corporations that stand to benefit from it. Remember, only 2-3% of Utah residents ski Snowbird and Alta on weekends, but every Utah citizen will pay approximately \$175 just to build the gondola, not to mention it's steep operating costs. For a family of four, that is \$700 for a method of transportation they will likely never use.</p> <p>Gondola Alternative B places our vital watershed at risk</p> <p>The gondola poses significant risk to our watershed through its construction and the added pressure on Little Cottonwood Canyon of significantly increased visitation. It risks contaminating the watershed which is responsible for providing swaths of vital culinary water for the Salt Lake Valley.</p> <p>Gondola Alternative B would be permanent</p> <p>Once it's built, it's there forever. The viewscape of Little Cottonwood Canyon would be irreversibly scarred by the more than 20 towers scaling as high as 262 feet into the sky moving 40 large gondolas.</p> <p>Gondola Alternative B was never meant to be a solution to canyon congestion</p> <p>The EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." If the gondola is implemented, the number of cars visiting resorts will remain the same while skier visits will increase by 20%, per UDOT's EIS. The EIS specifically states that UDOT does not anticipate traffic volumes will decrease with their proposed gondola alternative. As stated in EIS 8.4.3.2, "daily traffic volumes would be similar to the existing conditions in 2020."</p> <p>Gondola Alternative B would only service those going to the ski resorts</p> <p>A gondola would only stop at Snowbird and Alta. It would serve only those who pay to access a private ski area, but leave behind the growing population of hikers, mountain bikers, backcountry skiers, photographers, and other canyon visitors. And depending on cost-feasibility and adoption, it may not run in the summer at all.</p> <p>Common sense solutions are the right ones</p> <p>Common sense solutions are a fraction of the cost, scalable, environmentally friendly, and effective. These include tolling, reservations, and improved and more frequent bus service to minimize potential harm to the watershed while maintaining the infrastructure to service the whole canyon. This option is flexible and can be changed to meet changing needs for transportation in LCC.</p> <p>The steps taken in the phased approach must matter</p> <p>UDOT has recommended a phased approach to combat canyon congestion prior to building a gondola but has not agreed to stop building a gondola if traffic reduction goals are met. It's reasonable that if UDOT's goal is to reduce traffic and a phased approach can achieve that goal at a fraction of the cost of Gondola Alternative B, no gondola should be built. If the goals are met and the gondola moves forward, it calls into question the legitimacy of this entire process.</p> <p>The public must be kept in the know</p> <p>As the phased approach is implemented, it is vital that the public is made aware when a phase is beginning and allows for adequate time to study the effectiveness of the approach prior to implementing the next phase. If the stated goals of traffic reduction are met, UDOT must stop any plans to fund Gondola Alternative B with taxpayer dollars.</p>
36845	Pauline Kneller	<p>Dear UDOT and UDOT Cottonwood Teams,</p> <p>I'm writing today to submit my argument against the gondola transportation</p>

		<p>solution option in Little Cottonwood Canyon. I hope that this writing, along with all the other comments against the gondola that you are receiving will lead you to change your decision to oppose the gondola and support the UTA bus solution instead.</p> <p>One of the most glaring issues with the gondola option is that it only attempts to solve the traffic in Little Cottonwood Canyon, completely ignoring Big Cottonwood Canyon. Anyone who tries to drive on Wasatch Boulevard during ski traffic rush hour can attest to the fact that Big Cottonwood draws in a massive amount of traffic as well. The goal of this whole transportation solution is primarily to reduce traffic in and around the Cottonwood Canyons, and the gondola wholly fails to even address the traffic in and around Big Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>The gondola also does not make logistical sense. The construction of it alone will take years. This construction not only will make the traffic worse in an around the canyon during the entire process, but it will also be incredibly destructive to the environment. Our watershed is decreasing due to climate change, and the construction of the gondola will only contaminate it and place further unnecessary strain on it and our environment. On the contrary, increasing bus service now would eliminate the need for significant construction to the canyon, provides an immediate solution to the traffic problem, will not make the traffic worse, and will not place further strain on our fragile watershed.</p> <p>In addition to the construction nightmare the gondola will cause, the gondola does not solve the traffic problem. The traffic blockages that happen in the canyon right now will only be translated into the surrounding roadways and neighborhoods with the construction of the gondola. Parking lots for the gondola near the base of Little Cottonwood would be overflowing and congested, just like at the base of the resorts currently. With well-planned bus routes and park and rides, ski traffic could actually be reduced rather than just relocated.</p> <p>The cost of the gondola, both for the construction of it and then the use of it, is another main reason it should be avoided. Taxpayers, whether or not they use the canyon, will be forced to fund the gondola project. Taxpayers should not at all be responsible for funding a business venture that only benefits a few businesspeople and the ski resort management teams. In addition, the gondola will also cost money to ride, adding yet another monetary obstacle for skiers and outdoor recreationists.</p> <p>Alternatively, increasing the number of buses servicing the canyons as well as improving and adding bus lines will improve accessibility to the canyons without placing undue financial strain on canyon-goers and taxpayers. Buses are more financially feasible than a potentially expensive gondola ticket or season pass. Buses also will be able to serve the whole canyon, including trailheads, climbing spots, backcountry skiing locations, and other tourist destinations. The gondola as proposed will only provide service to the resorts, maybe proving that this is not as much as a transportation solution rather than another profit-scheme to serve the resorts.</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a very special place to me, to many locals, and to tourists alike. It harbors communities that will be severely negatively impacted by a gondola. The climbing community would lose some ultra-classic climbing routes. Hiking trails will never be the same. The viewshed of the canyon will be permanently devastated. Backcountry skiers will lose access to some of the best backcountry skiing in the Central Wasatch with the placement of the gondola stations. The resort goers who look up at the uninhibited view of the vast walls that shelter the canyon will lose that magic view. The people who live at the base</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>of the canyons and moved there for its beauty and for access to canyons will be forced to accept the construction and existence of the behemoth that would be the gondola and gondola stations.</p> <p>I ask you to seriously reconsider the option to increase bus service to the canyons. Improved bus service will only serve to improve access to the canyon, address the heavy traffic that plagues the canyons and surrounding base area, and serve the whole city. This will happen without a massive construction project, damage to our watershed and viewshed, will address the traffic in both canyons, and will not negatively impact taxpayers and people trying to travel up the canyon.</p> <p>The decision to support the gondola is completely against most public and local needs and desires. For something so integral to the community as Little Cottonwood Canyon is, it is unspeakably unmoral and unjust to actively reject the input that the community has rallied together to provide. I implore you to listen to the people this gondola would negatively impact, and to rescind your support of the gondola. The Department of Transportation is here to provide transportation solutions, and the gondola is the exact opposite of what we need.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and support.</p> <p>Pauline Kneller</p>
36871	Hailey Griffin	<p>Hello, and thank you for your time. I'm sure you're eyes are tired and cheeks sore from the smile you have to constantly place on your face while talking to the public.</p> <p>My name is Hailey. I moved to Alta, Utah in January of 2009, lived there for 7 years, 8 ski seasons, before buying my home in Cottonwood Heights. I continue to work a full time, year round job up there. This commentary is strictly my own.</p> <p>I remember traffic on SR210 from my first season and am at awe at how big of a deal it has become in recent years. I worry we have grown impatient as a society and this is a problem we are building up bigger than it is. Yes, action is needed for safety, but is a Gondola the right course?</p> <p>I strongly feel the money being raised for the Gondola project would be much better served being spent on improving transit in the Salt Lake Valley. From my home, I have to drive a considerable distance to take public transport to Salt Lake City, the Airport, the west side of the Valley. I can walk to the ski bus, but more often than not it's full and I end up hitchhiking. There is a major lack of convenience, therefore lack of incentive, to take public transit as it stands.</p> <p>Can we help UTA hire more drivers? Without improving public transportation to the Gondola base, will we even see a benefit in traffic reduction? Or will it simply be placing the traffic into the surrounding neighborhoods? Widening Wasatch, to access a Gondola that may only run 5 months a year, with a limited parking base area, and not improving Valley transit. Ugh. How will this work in the fastest growing state? Will we not just be reevaluating again in 10-15 years?</p> <p>Some thoughts and ideas (disclaimer: I know little, but have experience a lot).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I love the idea of avalanche sheds. 2. I also believe reflective paint would go a long way in seeing "the edge of the road" to those not so regular canyon drivers. 3. Can we straighten the road in some of those "scary" areas? Especially below Snowbird 1 where we see so many slide offs. 4. How about a UDOT shed in each canyon? Can pop out when those

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>"unexpected" storms roll through, as they always suddenly seem to appear at 2:30/3pm. No more relying on the Snowbird plow that way... Also, creates local jobs. (Hopefully people want them again soon, the jobs I mean)</p> <p>5. Work with the resorts for carpool incentives... heaven forbid they own any of the traffic issues.</p> <p>6. Limit parking on the highways.</p> <p>7. Increase bus service in the valley and have DIRECT routes to the resorts. Less time on the bus, more incentive to ride it.</p> <p>8. Improve and expand Trax to travel along the Wasatch bench and add some East/West lines in Sandy and/or Cottonwood Heights. Maybe even Holladay to the 6200s park and ride.</p> <p>I know that the LCC Red Snake is a loud talking point of "surprised" canyon drivers. People like to complain and social media is giving them a platform to do it loudly. The reality is that LCC grid lock is about an average 10 days per year and heavy traffic is usually on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday mornings from Christmas to end of March. I worry that the Gondola is a poor reaction to a problem that only truly plagues a small group of users. Instead, that money should be used to benefit the many. Improving our public transit system and expanding throughout the valley would better serve the whole.</p> <p>Thank you. I really do appreciate your time in reading this.</p>
36886	Claudia Wiese	<p>There are multiple other solutions that are not as expensive, invasive and more immediate than the gondola. These phased approaches extend way beyond what is proposed in the FEIS but should include a suite of solutions that can adapt to the ever changing needs of LCC as well as BCC. As is common in many ski towns/resorts, the amount of people at the resort changes dramatically depending on the time of year, with high concentrations of people in the winter, and much fewer people in the summer. The gondola can only run at one speed and will not be able to adapt to the dynamic nature of the industry. Bussing on the other hand can not only change schedules based on seasons, but also based on expected changes from year to year or even day to day. This type of solution will save energy and money overall as it will not be as wasteful.</p> <p>Here is how buses could be a real solution, more immediately, with less construction and cheaper overhead costs:</p> <p>1. Bus improvements: UTA buses are seeing continual usage increases in the last five years.</p> <p>-Increasing not only the number of buses but the surrounding infrastructure would continue to support this increased demand for the bus. Examples of what this would look like are:</p> <p>having buses run directly from popular hotels downtown so out of town tourists don't have to drive at all (especially in rental cars) (Banff has this structure and it works incredibly well).</p> <p>It would also mean having "pop up" parking on weekends at various locations around the mouth of the canyon and in the city. These "pop up" parking would be lots that are only used M-F and are wide open on weekends. This would remove the congestion at the mouth of the canyon due to limited parking, whether or not you are taking the bus.</p> <p>There could also be priority busing in the sense that buses can use the shoulder to pass traffic, etc. (Another incentive to take the bus). Buses should run from the Westside and other communities that often lack access to outdoor spaces and that are not considered in the gondola proposal. Ideally a lot of these buses are of the express type, so they only make one or two stops before entering the canyon. Furthermore, electric buses are easier to attach to renewable energy systems than the gondola, which while it will be electric, UT large scale electric grid is mostly coal, so it's not as green.</p>

		<p>There should also be bussing options that stop at various trailheads for users other than skiers.</p> <p>These bussing options can also work year round, which the gondola is currently not proposed to do.</p> <p>There could also be "mobility hubs" that are covered shelters for canyon users to use to put on/take off equipment at the resorts while they wait for the bus, perhaps they could even be warmed to make the bus better.</p> <p>2. Tolling based on residency and ideally income.</p> <p>WA has a great system with their state parks, where you can buy an annual pass to all state parks. This same system could be established for the canyons and if you present some tax information, you could potentially forgo the cost. If you are an out-of-state visitor, you will either have to pay more or still buy one but for less uses (since you are coming for limited amount of time)</p> <p>3. Incentivize carpooling: Legalizing hitchhiking in the canyon is an idea I've heard of recently. You could even create designated stopping points for this to occur.</p> <p>Other incentives for carpooling could be implemented such as preferred parking at BOTH resorts for carpooling.</p>
36908	Hailey Griffin	<p>Hello, and thank you for your time. I'm sure you're eyes are tired and cheeks sore from the smile you have to constantly place on your face while talking to the public.</p> <p>My name is Hailey. I moved to Alta, Utah in January of 2009, lived there for 7 years, 8 ski seasons, before buying my home in Cottonwood Heights. I continue to work a full time, year round job up there. This commentary is strictly my own.</p> <p>I remember traffic on SR210 from my first season and am at awe at how big of a deal it has become in recent years. I worry we have grown impatient as a society and this is a problem we are building up bigger than it is. Yes, action is needed for safety, but is a Gondola the right course?</p> <p>I strongly feel the money being raised for the Gondola project would be much better served being spent on improving transit in the Salt Lake Valley. From my home, I have to drive a considerable distance to take public transport to Salt Lake City, the Airport, the west side of the Valley. I can walk to the ski bus, but more often than not it's full and I end up hitchhiking. There is a major lack of convenience, therefore lack of incentive, to take public transit as it stands.</p> <p>Can we help UTA hire more drivers? Without improving public transportation to the Gondola base, will we even see a benefit in traffic reduction? Or will it simply be placing the traffic into the surrounding neighborhoods? Widening Wasatch, to access a Gondola that may only run 5 months a year, with a limited parking base area, and not improving Valley transit. Ugh. How will this work in the fastest growing state? Will we not just be reevaluating again in 10-15 years?</p> <p>Some thoughts and ideas (disclaimer: I know little, but have experience a lot).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I love the idea of avalanche sheds. 2. I also believe reflective paint would go a long way in seeing "the edge of the road" to those not so regular canyon drivers. 3. Can we straighten the road in some of those "scary" areas? Especially below Snowbird 1 where we see so many slide offs. 4. How about a UDOT shed in each canyon? Can pop out when those "unexpected" storms roll through, as they always suddenly seem to appear at 2:30/3pm. No more relying on the Snowbird plow that way... Also, creates local jobs. (Hopefully people want them again soon, the jobs I mean) 5. Work with the resorts for carpool incentives... heaven forbid they own any of the traffic issues.

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>6. Limit parking on the highways.</p> <p>7. Increase bus service in the valley and have DIRECT routes to the resorts. Less time on the bus, more incentive to ride it.</p> <p>8. Improve and expand Trax to travel along the Wasatch bench and add some East/West lines in Sandy and/or Cottonwood Heights. Maybe even Holladay to the 6200s park and ride.</p> <p>I know that the LCC Red Snake is a loud talking point of "surprised" canyon drivers. People like to complain and social media is giving them a platform to do it loudly. The reality is that LCC grid lock is about an average 10 days per year and heavy traffic is usually on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday mornings from Christmas to end of March. I worry that the Gondola is a poor reaction to a problem that only truly plagues a small group of users. Instead, that money should be used to benefit the many. Improving our public transit system and expanding throughout the valley would better serve the whole.</p> <p>Thank you. I really do appreciate your time in reading this.</p>
36963	Steve Preston	<p>One of the great things about the great state of Utah is the great outdoors in our beloved state. This is something that is universally agreed upon. The cottonwood canyons are a major piece to the puzzle in the great environment we live in. Few places in the world have such great access to such breathtaking areas such as these. And with the proposed solution of a gondola in a little cottonwood canyon, we are on the brink of ruining that beautiful landscape. This is only one of several major problems and drawbacks to this gondola. A list of the horrible drawbacks to this plan are the following</p> <p>The way it will destroy the beauty of little cottonwood canyon.</p> <p>The cost of over 550 million dollars.</p> <p>The inability to actually serve its purpose and solve the traffic issue that has plagued the canyons for years.</p> <p>The cost to ride the gondola.</p> <p>The detrimental hit it takes on making skiing in Utah affordable.</p> <p>The fact that a gondola only benefits ski areas profits, as well as the rich.</p> <p>The fact that it is largely paid for by Utah taxpayers, most of which won't even use it.</p> <p>The fact that the ski industry may be ending due to climate change.</p> <p>The fact that a large portion of the people you have making this decision don't even apply or have knowledge on the situation</p> <p>The fact that shoving more people up the canyon kills the skiing environment and experience.</p> <p>The fact that other solutions exist that are way simpler such as parking reservations, canyon tolling, passenger restrictions, continued bus service etc...</p> <p>Firstly, Massive gondola towers all the way up this entire beautiful canyon will destroy the natural beauty of it. Imagine coming up the canyon and having your experience of getting away from all the tall infrastructure in the city ruined by massive gondola towers in the way of your view. Building these towers will require tearing up the land, and building possible service roads to access the gondola towers just to name a few. The community that uses this canyon will not tolerate it being destroyed so that the resorts, gondola works, and rich can pocket an incredibly large check from the people of Utah.</p> <p>Secondly, This is an incredible amount of money to spend on a solution even if this solution was incredibly effective (spoiler, it's not). As popular of a passtime the recreation in the canyon is in Utah, A large portion of Utahns don't use it, let alone ski which is the primary purpose of this gondola. Utah's will be paying for this with their own money even if they don't use it. So many larger issues exist in</p>

		<p>this state right now and this is not where the money should be going (Skiing is my life and I love it more than anything). Homelessness, Infrastructure, crime, hunger, just to name a few. Don't cheat Utah out of what it really needs by benefiting the minority that is the rich and letting them have a cash grab with a gondola.</p> <p>Thirdly, This solution doesn't come close to solving Utah's traffic issue in the canyon on busy winter days. According to gondola works this gondola is going to be able to transport just over 1,000 people per hour. On the busiest winter weekends up to 20,000 people go up the canyon on the busiest days! We know this number due to UDOT itself counting over 14,000 cars going up the canyon on a day in 2017. This is why this solution is quite frankly disgusting, and not really about solving the issue at all. We all know that the primary travel times when traffic gets really bad are in the morning and afternoon before and after resorts close. At times cars are stuck for over 3-4 hours traveling to and from the resorts. In my experience the primary times of travel in the morning are 6-9 am. During this time the gondola could only support 3,000 people! That is a mere 15 percent! That is not close to remotely denting the problem. We can't do the math by dividing the number of skiers by hours in the day. You have to do so by primary travel hours because that is where the problem lies, and that is where this solution comes terribly short. This doesn't even mention the fact that the gondola plans to have a parking station with 2,500 available parking spaces, which also is not enough for the gondola based on the amount of cars we see. In what world is it logical to spend 550 million dollars on something that will destroy a beautiful landscape and not remotely fix the problem. If basic logic is used, this solution would never have made it past the whiteboard. But this very next point is the reason we are still talking about it.</p> <p>Fourthly, This resort benefits the resorts, gondola works, And those that will own and operate the gondola. Not the people of Utah, not those who use it, not those who love this canyon. It's not hard to realize why Snowbird and Alta have been so excited about this solution. It's not due to their proclaimed belief that it saves the environment, it's because it is giving their business an incredibly large boost. Gondola Works is going to get a fat pay day when it comes to this gondola, and once operating, those in the control seat will have full control on pricing and operation of this thing. Which is the next point</p> <p>Fifthly, The pricing of this gondola kills skiing's affordability. The cost of the activity of skiing has skyrocketed in recent years. A relatively inexpensive pastime has skyrocketed into an elitist sport for the rich that is not inclusive. Utah has made efforts to make skiing more inclusive and beneficial for those with all ranges of income. This solution absolutely wipes out all the progress that has been made. Alta township has calculated that this gondola would cost 111 hundred dollars per day for an individual to use! This is an extreme! The average cost for a gondola of this caliber around the world is 27\$/mile. Even if this estimation was incredibly inaccurate it is ridiculous to expect most skiers to be able to pay even 15-35 dollars a day for this system. Many of us travel up the canyon daily, and even if we don't ride the system everyday it is simply not plausible to expect people to pay that much and be able to afford this system. In addition, you have to pay for parking for the gondola, pay to ride the gondola, and by the way you have to wait for it too. The reason this is still a possible solution is because those that support this gondola don't care if skiing is inclusive, or if Utah is inclusive, they care about profit. That is not what our state stands for.</p> <p>Sixthly, We have to face the reality that unless change is made, skiing could be over in 30-40 years. Climate change is real and killing the sport of skiing fast.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>That is the primary purpose that this gondola would operate for. Spending 550 million dollars on a solution that will be irrelevant at the end of that time is not the solution. Instead spend the money on other more important issues, or on solving the issue of climate change itself. Why are we entertaining this idea when it is vastly overcomplicating a solution that can be solved with small solutions, and may be irrelevant in 30-40 years.</p> <p>Seventhly , How many members of UDOT and the government of utah actually ski? Using the canyon? Maybe, but skiing? A very small number. This is why these comment periods are so crucially important. I call on any individual that had any power in making this decision to really evaluate why they supported the gondola. Was it because it was in the interest of utah? Was it because it was in the interest of the canyon? Was it because it was in the interest of those that use the canyon? Or was it in the best interest of yourself? Now I know this question will be different for many people but there are those that need to ask themselves these questions, and make some serious reevaluations. I am invested in this topic and solution because I care about Utah and its best interests. Anyone who eliminates themselves from the equation and looks at this problem with the interest of Utah in mind, would never consider this solution. EVER.</p> <p>Eighthly, Utah has been known for skiing since the term "ski resort" made any sense. People have flocked here, and built their lives around the excitement of skiing/boarding the greatest snow on earth. This excitement and experience has slowly been ruined however by overuse. If someone wants to ski, they should ski. But each day resorts only have so much capacity, and lift lines on the weekends are already miserable. Anyone that skis could tell you that. This is yet another reason why this solution fails. At some point we have to cap the amount of people we let go up the canyon. Building a massive gondola to cram people into the resorts just ruins the soul of skiing. We can't keep finding ways to get more people up there. The slopes are only so big. This is why a gondola ain't it. Find a solution that keeps the soul of skiing in mind.</p> <p>Ninthly, I have referenced many points around skiing and the gondola, but that is not all that applies. People use canyons year round and many use them for purposes other than skiing. Many have never even touched a ski pole. How does this solution think of them?</p> <p>Tenthly, There are plenty of solutions that solve the issue without any of the above drawbacks. The gondola is extremely expensive, simple parking reservations are not. One of the few advantages of covid in the ski industry was the implementation of parking reservations at some resorts. Snowbird did it during the 2020-2021 season and Alta last season. Both times it ensured that skiers heading to those resorts knew they had a parking spot. It ensured that those that didn't have one wouldn't be going up that day thus decreasing the amount of cars in the canyon. Imagine what we could do if both resorts implemented these initiatives at the same time. Massive impacts could be had especially if resorts didn't charge for a reservation. This along with continued bus service, and prohibiting cars with less than 4 passengers would solve the solution. 20,000 people are going up in approximately 15,000 cars on the busiest days. This means that three in four cars only have 1 passenger. Prohibiting these one two and three passenger cars will eliminate the amount of cars by up to 65 percent. It may not be a comfortable ride, but it makes skiing possible, and is actually better for the environment. Combine these 3 solutions and you have fixed the issue. It can be done, and it doesn't need to be so complicated.</p> <p>Conclusion - Big problems don't always need big solutions. A variety of smaller</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>ones can do the job. Anyone that logically thinks through the problem can realize that a gondola is not in the best interest of Utah, or its great people. In the end we all want to preserve Utah, but this is simply not the way to do it and I call on all those involved to accept that and do the job of representing Utah right. We don't want a gondola, and we have spoken.</p>
36967	Hailey Griffin	<p>Hello, and thank you for your time. I'm sure you're eyes are tired and cheeks sore from the smile you have to constantly place on your face while talking to the public.</p> <p>My name is Hailey. I moved to Alta, Utah in January of 2009, lived there for 7 years, 8 ski seasons, before buying my home in Cottonwood Heights. I continue to work a full time, year round job up there. This commentary is strictly my own.</p> <p>I remember traffic on SR210 from my first season and am at awe at how big of a deal it has become in recent years. I worry we have grown impatient as a society and this is a problem we are building up bigger than it is. Yes, action is needed for safety, but is a Gondola the right course?</p> <p>I strongly feel the money being raised for the Gondola project would be much better served being spent on improving transit in the Salt Lake Valley. From my home, I have to drive a considerable distance to take public transport to Salt Lake City, the Airport, the west side of the Valley. I can walk to the ski bus, but more often than not it's full and I end up hitchhiking. There is a major lack of convenience, therefore lack of incentive, to take public transit as it stands.</p> <p>Can we help UTA hire more drivers? Without improving public transportation to the Gondola base, will we even see a benefit in traffic reduction? Or will it simply be placing the traffic into the surrounding neighborhoods? Widening Wasatch, to access a Gondola that may only run 5 months a year, with a limited parking base area, and not improving Valley transit. Ugh. How will this work in the fastest growing state? Will we not just be reevaluating again in 10-15 years?</p> <p>Some thoughts and ideas (disclaimer: I know little, but have experience a lot).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I love the idea of avalanche sheds. 2. I also believe reflective paint would go a long way in seeing "the edge of the road" to those not so regular canyon drivers. 3. Can we straighten the road in some of those "scary" areas? Especially below Snowbird 1 where we see so many slide offs. 4. How about a UDOT shed in each canyon? Can pop out when those "unexpected" storms roll through, as they always suddenly seem to appear at 2:30/3pm. No more relying on the Snowbird plow that way... Also, creates local jobs. (Hopefully people want them again soon, the jobs I mean) 5. Work with the resorts for carpool incentives... heaven forbid they own any of the traffic issues. 6. Limit parking on the highways. 7. Increase bus service in the valley and have DIRECT routes to the resorts. Less time on the bus, more incentive to ride it. 8. Improve and expand Trax to travel along the Wasatch bench and add some East/West lines in Sandy and/or Cottonwood Heights. Maybe even Holladay to the 6200s park and ride. <p>I know that the LCC Red Snake is a loud talking point of "surprised" canyon drivers. People like to complain and social media is giving them a platform to do it loudly. The reality is that LCC grid lock is about an average 10 days per year and heavy traffic is usually on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sunday mornings from Christmas to end of March. I worry that the Gondola is a poor reaction to a</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>problem that only truly plagues a small group of users. Instead, that money should be used to benefit the many. Improving our public transit system and expanding throughout the valley would better serve the whole.</p> <p>Thank you. I really do appreciate your time in reading this.</p>
36973	Steve Preston	<p>One of the great things about the great state of Utah is the great outdoors in our beloved state. This is something that is universally agreed upon. The cottonwood canyons are a major piece to the puzzle in the great environment we live in. Few places in the world have such great access to such breathtaking areas such as these. And with the proposed solution of a gondola in a little cottonwood canyon, we are on the brink of ruining that beautiful landscape. This is only one of several major problems and drawbacks to this gondola. A list of the horrible drawbacks to this plan are the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The way it will destroy the beauty of little cottonwood canyon. The cost of over 550 million dollars. The inability to actually serve its purpose and solve the traffic issue that has plagued the canyons for years. The cost to ride the gondola. The detrimental hit it takes on making skiing in Utah affordable. The fact that a gondola only benefits ski areas profits, as well as the rich. The fact that it is largely paid for by Utah taxpayers, most of which won't even use it. The fact that the ski industry may be ending due to climate change. The fact that a large portion of the people you have making this decision don't even apply or have knowledge on the situation The fact that shoving more people up the canyon kills the skiing environment and experience. The fact that other solutions exist that are way simpler such as parking reservations, canyon tolling, passenger restrictions, continued bus service etc... <p>Firstly, Massive gondola towers all the way up this entire beautiful canyon will destroy the natural beauty of it. Imagine coming up the canyon and having your experience of getting away from all the tall infrastructure in the city ruined by massive gondola towers in the way of your view. Building these towers will require tearing up the land, and building possible service roads to access the gondola towers just to name a few. The community that uses this canyon will not tolerate it being destroyed so that the resorts, gondola works, and rich can pocket an incredibly large check from the people of Utah.</p> <p>Secondly, This is an incredible amount of money to spend on a solution even if this solution was incredibly effective (spoiler, it's not). As popular of a passtime the recreation in the canyon is in Utah, A large portion of Utahns don't use it, let alone ski which is the primary purpose of this gondola. Utah's will be paying for this with their own money even if they don't use it. So many larger issues exist in this state right now and this is not where the money should be going (Skiing is my life and I love it more than anything). Homelessness, Infrastructure, crime, hunger, just to name a few. Don't cheat Utah out of what it really needs by benefiting the minority that is the rich and letting them have a cash grab with a gondola.</p> <p>Thirdly, This solution doesn't come close to solving Utah's traffic issue in the canyon on busy winter days. According to gondola works this gondola is going to be able to transport just over 1,000 people per hour. On the busiest winter weekends up to 20,000 people go up the canyon on the busiest days! We know this number due to UDOT itself counting over 14,000 cars going up the canyon on a day in 2017. This is why this solution is quite frankly disgusting, and not really</p>

	<p>about solving the issue at all. We all know that the primary travel times when traffic gets really bad are in the morning and afternoon before and after resorts close. At times cars are stuck for over 3-4 hours traveling to and from the resorts. In my experience the primary times of travel in the morning are 6-9 am. During this time the gondola could only support 3,000 people! That is a mere 15 percent! That is not close to remotely denting the problem. We can't do the math by dividing the number of skiers by hours in the day. You have to do so by primary travel hours because that is where the problem lies, and that is where this solution comes terribly short. This doesn't even mention the fact that the gondola plans to have a parking station with 2,500 available parking spaces, which also is not enough for the gondola based on the amount of cars we see. In what world is it logical to spend 550 million dollars on something that will destroy a beautiful landscape and not remotely fix the problem. If basic logic is used, this solution would never have made it past the whiteboard. But this very next point is the reason we are still talking about it.</p> <p>Fourthly, This resort benefits the resorts, gondola works, And those that will own and operate the gondola. Not the people of Utah, not those who use it, not those who love this canyon. It's not hard to realize why Snowbird and Alta have been so excited about this solution. It's not due to their proclaimed belief that it saves the environment, it's because it is giving their business an incredibly large boost. Gondola Works is going to get a fat pay day when it comes to this gondola, and once operating, those in the control seat will have full control on pricing and operation of this thing. Which is the next point</p> <p>Fifthly, The pricing of this gondola kills skiing's affordability. The cost of the activity of skiing has skyrocketed in recent years. A relatively inexpensive pastime has skyrocketed into an elitist sport for the rich that is not inclusive. Utah has made efforts to make skiing more inclusive and beneficial for those with all ranges of income. This solution absolutely wipes out all the progress that has been made. Alta township has calculated that this gondola would cost 111 hundred dollars per day for an individual to use! This is an extreme! The average cost for a gondola of this caliber around the world is 27\$/mile. Even if this estimation was incredibly inaccurate it is ridiculous to expect most skiers to be able to pay even 15-35 dollars a day for this system. Many of us travel up the canyon daily, and even if we don't ride the system everyday it is simply not plausible to expect people to pay that much and be able to afford this system. In addition, you have to pay for parking for the gondola, pay to ride the gondola, and by the way you have to wait for it too. The reason this is still a possible solution is because those that support this gondola don't care if skiing is inclusive, or if Utah is inclusive, they care about profit. That is not what our state stands for.</p> <p>Sixthly, We have to face the reality that unless change is made, skiing could be over in 30-40 years. Climate change is real and killing the sport of skiing fast. That is the primary purpose that this gondola would operate for. Spending 550 million dollars on a solution that will be irrelevant at the end of that time is not the solution. Instead spend the money on other more important issues, or on solving the issue of climate change itself. Why are we entertaining this idea when it is vastly overcomplicating a solution that can be solved with small solutions, and may be irrelevant in 30-40 years.</p> <p>Seventhly , How many members of UDOT and the government of utah actually ski? Using the canyon? Maybe, but skiing? A very small number. This is why these comment periods are so crucially important. I call on any individual that had any power in making this decision to really evaluate why they supported the gondola. Was it because it was in the interest of utah? Was it because it was in</p>
--	---

		<p>the interest of the canyon? Was it because it was in the interest of those that use the canyon? Or was it in the best interest of yourself? Now I know this question will be different for many people but there are those that need to ask themselves these questions, and make some serious reevaluations. I am invested in this topic and solution because I care about Utah and its best interests. Anyone who eliminates themselves from the equation and looks at this problem with the interest of Utah in mind, would never consider this solution. EVER.</p> <p>Eighthly, Utah has been known for skiing since the term "ski resort" made any sense. People have flocked here, and built their lives around the excitement of skiing/boarding the greatest snow on earth. This excitement and experience has slowly been ruined however by overuse. If someone wants to ski, they should ski. But each day resorts only have so much capacity, and lift lines on the weekends are already miserable. Anyone that skis could tell you that. This is yet another reason why this solution fails. At some point we have to cap the amount of people we let go up the canyon. Building a massive gondola to cram people into the resorts just ruins the soul of skiing. We can't keep finding ways to get more people up there. The slopes are only so big. This is why a gondola ain't it. Find a solution that keeps the soul of skiing in mind.</p> <p>Ninthly, I have referenced many points around skiing and the gondola, but that is not all that applies. People use canyons year round and many use them for purposes other than skiing. Many have never even touched a ski pole. How does this solution think of them?</p> <p>Tenthly, There are plenty of solutions that solve the issue without any of the above drawbacks. The gondola is extremely expensive, simple parking reservations are not. One of the few advantages of covid in the ski industry was the implementation of parking reservations at some resorts. Snowbird did it during the 2020-2021 season and Alta last season. Both times it ensured that skiers heading to those resorts knew they had a parking spot. It ensured that those that didn't have one wouldn't be going up that day thus decreasing the amount of cars in the canyon. Imagine what we could do if both resorts implemented these initiatives at the same time. Massive impacts could be had especially if resorts didn't charge for a reservation. This along with continued bus service, and prohibiting cars with less than 4 passengers would solve the solution. 20,000 people are going up in approximately 15,000 cars on the busiest days. This means that three in four cars only have 1 passenger. Prohibiting these one two and three passenger cars will eliminate the amount of cars by up to 65 percent. It may not be a comfortable ride, but it makes skiing possible, and is actually better for the environment. Combine these 3 solutions and you have fixed the issue. It can be done, and it doesn't need to be so complicated.</p> <p>Conclusion - Big problems don't always need big solutions. A variety of smaller ones can do the job. Anyone that logically thinks through the problem can realize that a gondola is not in the best interest of Utah, or its great people. In the end we all want to preserve Utah, but this is simply not the way to do it and I call on all those involved to accept that and do the job of representing Utah right. We don't want a gondola, and we have spoken.</p>
36978	Thomas Stenger	<p>I was extremely disappointed to fail to find among the comments reproduced in the Final EIS the comment I submitted last year. How can that be? I am resubmitting it here, below. I would be grateful to receive a response to my comment. My only additional comment is that UDOT should consider a strategy in which the "bus only" alternative I describe below is implemented only on certain days (e.g., days with or after significant snow accumulation). Please, do not proceed with the gondola proposal.</p>

		<p>[The below was submitted 9/10/21, as confirmed by an automatic email reply from UDOT.]</p> <p>Dear Utah Department of Transportation,</p> <p>\$500 million is an incredible sum, and it should buy incredible results. Unfortunately, I'm extremely concerned that the two preferred alternatives would be ineffective--even before considering their environmental impacts.</p> <p>It's simple: Without a materially significant toll on vehicular access to LCC, very few people will choose to ride a gondola (which might frequently lengthen their trip to Snowbird/Alta), and only a modest number more will choose to bus. If one of the two preferred alternatives were chosen, a substantial toll must be imposed as well. Otherwise we'll simply have sent even more winter sports enthusiasts to the resorts, without reducing congestion.</p> <p>In the short term, with population increasing and people heading outdoors more, the best choice would be to adopt a "bus only" model, akin to the one used in Zion National Park. Private vehicular access would be forbidden. No construction/destruction would be necessary. It would be cheapest, fairest, and least environmentally-disruptive option. Honestly, \$500 million of taxpayer money to fund a project that disproportionately benefits the well-to-do? The well-to-do (and resorts) ought to bear the cost themselves (whether enduring the current traffic or paying a toll). I write this as a very fortunate, well-to-do snowboarder.</p> <p>A softer, less permanent touch is all the more advisable given technological advances. Autonomous vehicle technology--at least of the "minimal" sort necessary to travel the LCC--will be here within the next 5 years, latest. Widespread adoption will follow. Perhaps using that technology could be mandated. Cars might then move synchronously up and down the LCC. Drivers could remain in their cars, but the consequences of human driving (slow "domino" starts, slower driving) would be eliminated. Why spend \$500 million tearing up LCC when it might not even be necessary in the near future?</p> <p>If \$500 million simply must be spent, how far would that amount get us toward "snow sheds" spanning the entire length of the LCC? That is, consider what would be, in effect, a miles-long tunnel to the resorts. Ideally the "roofs" of the sheds would be covered with earth (and be allowed to "return to nature"). Far from further blighting the LCC with a gondola or wider roadway, we would have gone quite a ways to reclaiming what it once was!</p> <p>Please, please, do not undertake either of the two preferred alternatives. Please institute a bus only model like Zion has, then wait for the technology to arrive that will eliminate the need for the project altogether.</p> <p>Sincerely, Thomas Stenger</p>
36982	Thomas Stenger	<p>I was extremely disappointed to fail to find among the comments reproduced in the Final EIS the comment I submitted last year. How can that be? I am resubmitting it here, below. I would be grateful to receive a response to my comment. My only additional comment is that UDOT should consider a strategy in which the "bus only" alternative I describe below is implemented only on certain days (e.g., days with or after significant snow accumulation). Please, do not proceed with the gondola proposal.</p>

		<p>[The below was submitted 9/10/21, as confirmed by an automatic email reply from UDOT.]</p> <p>Dear Utah Department of Transportation,</p> <p>\$500 million is an incredible sum, and it should buy incredible results. Unfortunately, I'm extremely concerned that the two preferred alternatives would be ineffective--even before considering their environmental impacts.</p> <p>It's simple: Without a materially significant toll on vehicular access to LCC, very few people will choose to ride a gondola (which might frequently lengthen their trip to Snowbird/Alta), and only a modest number more will choose to bus. If one of the two preferred alternatives were chosen, a substantial toll must be imposed as well. Otherwise we'll simply have sent even more winter sports enthusiasts to the resorts, without reducing congestion.</p> <p>In the short term, with population increasing and people heading outdoors more, the best choice would be to adopt a "bus only" model, akin to the one used in Zion National Park. Private vehicular access would be forbidden. No construction/destruction would be necessary. It would be cheapest, fairest, and least environmentally-disruptive option. Honestly, \$500 million of taxpayer money to fund a project that disproportionately benefits the well-to-do? The well-to-do (and resorts) ought to bear the cost themselves (whether enduring the current traffic or paying a toll). I write this as a very fortunate, well-to-do snowboarder.</p> <p>A softer, less permanent touch is all the more advisable given technological advances. Autonomous vehicle technology--at least of the "minimal" sort necessary to travel the LCC--will be here within the next 5 years, latest. Widespread adoption will follow. Perhaps using that technology could be mandated. Cars might then move synchronously up and down the LCC. Drivers could remain in their cars, but the consequences of human driving (slow "domino" starts, slower driving) would be eliminated. Why spend \$500 million tearing up LCC when it might not even be necessary in the near future?</p> <p>If \$500 million simply must be spent, how far would that amount get us toward "snow sheds" spanning the entire length of the LCC? That is, consider what would be, in effect, a miles-long tunnel to the resorts. Ideally the "roofs" of the sheds would be covered with earth (and be allowed to "return to nature"). Far from further blighting the LCC with a gondola or wider roadway, we would have gone quite a ways to reclaiming what it once was!</p> <p>Please, please, do not undertake either of the two preferred alternatives. Please institute a bus only model like Zion has, then wait for the technology to arrive that will eliminate the need for the project altogether.</p> <p>Sincerely, Thomas Stenger</p>
37021	Bo Torrey	<p>First, I would like to thank everyone from UDOT for their work to prepare the EIS proposals and creating a space for members of the public to have their voices heard. I would especially like to thank Josh Van Jura for managing this project. I urge UDOT, Josh and all others involved to not take any criticism of the proposals personally or become defensive. It is human nature to do so when one's work is publicly criticized however, this is not aimed to be a personal jab but rather a passionate critique of the proposals themselves and a desire to find a solution that best serves the canyon, the city, and the people who live here. On that note, I</p>

		<p>think it's unacceptable how UDOT has postured itself and the entire draft and final proposal of the EIS so that public perception is thus that we have to pick between the two proposed "solutions" instead of acknowledging that other solutions exist and can be considered.</p> <p>I do not support either of the proposed solutions and it's clear from attending public hearings that the overwhelming majority of community members also reject the proposals. I am advocating that we adequately fund programs and resources that leverage the existing infrastructure the Cottonwood Canyons have in place today. It is at best irresponsible, at worst irreversibly destructive to move forward with either of the proposals. The gondola does not solve the traffic and congestion problem and only truly serves as a cheeky tourist attraction with no practical improvement to canyon visitors other than those wishing to visit the ski areas. What about those looking to backcountry ski? Or visit another trailhead within the canyons? The gondola would continue to be at the mercy of the unpredictable weather of the canyon. It's not uncommon for lightning to occur during heavy snowstorms as cold fronts approach, strong winds to shut down gondolas, or icing to prevent gondolas from operating. How reliable and efficient would the gondola be able to operate during those snow events that correspond to the days when traffic and congestion are at their worst? What are the safety procedures for reopening the gondola following an avalanche mitigation mission?</p> <p>Widening the road should not be an option either given the numerous historical mine sites located along the road that contain hazardous materials and metals within them. Opening those sites up increases the number of hazardous materials flowing into a primary water source for a growing city, and a shrinking water supply. For decades the solution to traffic problems has continued to be to add another lane. If history has taught us anything it's that that does not solve congestion it only furthers the capacity for congestion to worsen. These proposals are completely unacceptable and prioritize tourism, and financial growth for ski areas, and continue to push locals out of the canyons.</p> <p>There are other options to address the canyon transportation issues that are far less invasive to the viewshed, the landscape, and the water as well as significantly cheaper and more holistic. If the proposed solutions are based on 2050 projections then why is there no added focus on a more holistic city-wide transportation plan? Why would UDOT not partner with UTA and conduct canyon user surveys to gather data on where people are traveling from within the Salt Lake valley to understand transportation habits and identify the most practical locations for transportation hubs? Hubs located at or near the mouths of the canyons do little to curb congestion and just move the problem elsewhere. We need solutions now. Adding more buses to the existing roadway can be more quickly implemented while providing more long-term flexibility. Buses can be successful without widening the road. Expanded bus service that picks people up from numerous locations across the valley, with express buses to the resorts, and shuttles for dispersed trailhead users, combined with tolling/paid parking for private vehicles and effective enforcement of the traction policies, is a formula to address the problem at lower costs, and without permanently damaging the canyon. Utah has never invested enough resources to make the canyon ski bus system truly effective. We need to try this approach now, and with proper funding.</p> <p>It is also imperative that a capacity study of the Central Wasatch Canyons be conducted to make an informed decision based on real data. It's a vital step in planning for any long-term solution considering the fragile ecosystems and limited space of the Cottonwood Canyons. Furthermore, any efforts that intentionally or unintentionally increase capacity beyond the current capacity limit (as defined by</p>
--	--	--

		<p>current parking spots) are unacceptable. I am concerned that without a plan in place now to manage canyon capacity, the canyons will become even more crowded, which will negatively impact the beauty of the canyon, the watershed, and the recreational user experience. The increased capacity will also inevitably lead to increased ski resort expansion pressures. I am against any future ski resort expansion outside of their current footprints.</p> <p>Several steps should be implemented first before considering more invasive and expensive solutions. Tolling personal vehicles, 4-wheel drive rental car restrictions, and increased busing without road widening can start this season. Buses offer the most practical solution considering the relatively few days the canyon experiences multi-hour travel times. Bussing is scalable, meaning that on days when traffic is expected to be worse more buses can be added, and buses could pick passengers up at a higher frequency (every 2-3 minutes). On the flip side, on days when traffic is anticipated to be less the number of buses could be reduced. It's a practical common-sense solution to the problem. Added infrastructure for bus loading and unloading and strategic stop locations along the roadway will be needed for this system to truly function efficiently.</p> <p>With the surge in popularity of e-bikes and continued use of the canyons by recreational cyclists, I feel it's worthwhile to consider bicycles and bicycle infrastructure as a practical component of the transportation solution during the summer months. A protected bike lane may not be feasible given the constraints of the roadway but existing pathways could be repurposed and improved to create a separate and safe transportation corridor for cyclists.</p> <p>The +600 million dollar price tag is laughable considering who and what that amount of money is being used to serve. I do not want my tax dollars being spent to provide corporate subsidies for the ski areas and lead to the destruction of our public lands. The proposals here serve a particular population of people whose problem is the several-hour travel time from their home to the ski area on just a handful of days a season. Wouldn't these funds be better served to help populations who are houseless or food insecure? I think yes.</p>
37039	Joseph Campanelli	<p>I certainly do not envy UDOTs position. There is no solution to make everyone happy. But I do believe that any action that gets more people in the canyon is not a solution. If teleportation becomes an option, are we going to have infinite people at the resort? NO. And I know, Im just making a point. WE NEED TO COME UP WITH A CAPACITY LIMIT at some point, like yesterday. I think the Gondola does not solve any real problems. It doesn't eliminate the road and so there will be more people. It will create more problems but also more revenue for the resorts. I think the less development we do as humans the better. We are over consuming (not living with the planet). If the gondola were a winner of a solution, head and shoulders above everything else; sure maybe we destroy and build it. But the gondola doesn't solve the summer, trailheads, or non resort time skiers(hours). It's not even a great environmental solution. The gondola is just another problem creator. Do we restrict access? I don't know. I know I don't want to be restricted. But I think tolling, restricting (capacity limit!), and charging for parking is a good place to start. But we need to make sure other people are included in hours/restrictions. Not just the resorts. Remember the resorts are kind of the problem. Let us see how this goes, but we are NOT building a gondola. So lets get that money to hiring bus drivers!</p> <p>I have included the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance's comments below. I agree with their point of view and how they address each issue in detail. I wish I could articulate as well as they have but I cannot.</p>

		<p>The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance (WBA) is a local SLC nonprofit representing the interests of thousands of backcountry - and resort - users both locally and nationally as they pertain to the preservation of the famous non-resort terrain in the Tri-Canyon area. We have paid very close attention to the LCC EIS transportation process, and this is our formal comment.</p> <p>WBA agrees with UDOT that a preferred solution will represent a summary of key concerns expressed within the public comments that were received and processed: EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS to dispersed recreation, OVERCROWDING, VISUAL IMPACTS, WATER QUALITY IMPACTS, AND YEAR-ROUND ACCESS for a majority of visitors. The proposed solution does not address these aspects - below is a list of issues that we see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors" but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best. It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot is a red herring. WBA does not think that vehicle traffic will be abated enough (if at all) by the gondola to justify this conclusion. Backcountry users - like resort patrons - want to be able to use public transit in lieu of their own vehicles to access the canyon, but that is not possible under the current proposal.</p> <p>Economic Benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." WBA does not feel that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that end is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Furthermore, data from the National Ski Area Association likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT for the gondola was \$550M. This was pre-inflationary times, so even in the last year that figure will have risen to \$600M, if not significantly higher (which WBA suspects to be the case). Even if the cost has only increased by \$50M, that means that every single person in Utah is "paying" \$200 each to have what is effectively the most expensive chairlift in history installed for the benefit of two businesses (and auxiliary businesses). Any benefit associated with the proposed gondola will likely never be realized by the many Utahns who don't ski and/or live in other areas of the state, despite them paying for it.</p> <p>Gondola Fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs for people to ride the</p>
--	--	--

		<p>gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p> <p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas.</p> <p>Other Solutions - UDOT says "it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B" but it also may NOT take years, so clearly the gondola is the priority. And if UDOT is trying to simultaneously raise at least \$600M for the gondola AND fund the alternative solutions, the money is in danger of not being available for ANY solution. And by making it clear that the gondola is the preferred solution, UDOT is effectively being incentivized to make the alternate solutions NOT work. Therefore, we strongly suggest that UDOT acknowledge up front that the large tab for the gondola is unrealistic and focus its efforts on simpler, more easily attained transit solutions using existing infrastructure: tolling for all canyon users to disincentivize SOV's, enhanced bus lanes, enhanced bus service (already being cut for the 22-23 season), alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes, etc. This would require UDOT working more closely with UTA, which appears to not be the case.</p> <p>Phasing/Safety/Construction - The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Risk/Flexibility - UDOT's consideration of a gondola as a transportation solution is highly innovative - and risky. While they may be confident in all of the analysis that went into evaluating its chance of success in meeting the Purpose and Need, there is little discussion in the DEIS for how a gondola system would be modified physically or operationally if that becomes necessary, or who would be in charge of making those determinations, and on what basis, and for what cost, and what the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of those changes would be. This creates an inadequate basis for a decision to select the gondola alternative.</p> <p>Controversial - By anyone's assessment, this project has been "polarizing" in the community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The DEIS uses a softer characterization of "strong interest." It is irresponsible to suggest it is anything other than controversial; for example, the mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative, instead saying that common sense solutions that use existing infrastructure and more buses should be pursued. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have said the same thing.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>Parking Reservations/Tolling - Alta Ski Lifts parking fees this past winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the impact that paid parking and tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. This week UDOT again introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p> <p>Big Cottonwood Canyon - UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar traffic problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA. A BCC/LCC connection is unacceptable to WBA and many other stakeholders who want to preserve the unique qualities of each canyon and avoid the prospect of lifts criss-crossing the ridgetops.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever" and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing/riding tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>Avalanche Mitigation - The use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening and once anti-personnel shells are launched over the gondola, it must be cleared before it can start up again. In fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p> <p>Effects on climbing - While WBA primarily represents the interests of wintertime non-motorized use, many WBA members are also climbers. We are deeply concerned about the effect the construction and operation of the gondola will have on the world class climbing in LCC. Climbing has a long history in the canyon, is a very popular activity, and it's representative group Salt Lake City Climbers Alliance has a long history of engaging with the state and the LDS church to protect and enhance the LCC climbing areas, yet the EIS effectively ignored the impact on climbing in its Preferred Solution.</p> <p>Viewshed - While we acknowledge that the top of LCC harbors a small town and two ski resorts and related businesses, the heart of LCC is wild terrain that includes clearly visible tracts of designated wilderness. The effect of 200-foot tall towers and 35-person gondola cars will be an eyesore that a majority of constituents, to whom such infrastructure will be visible whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, or skiing, will find offensive. Gondola infrastructure will be visible to anyone skiing, hiking, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive up the canyon. There are clearly better, more logical common sense solutions that can be put in place that do not create such an eyesore in this unique environment.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts on this process and for your consideration of this</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		comment. Sincerely, The Board of Directors of Wasatch Backcountry Alliance
37045	Lance Fairbanks	<p>October 17, 2022 To Whom It May Concern, State Agencies: UDOT, UTA, Re: Gondola Project in Little Cottonwood Canyon Preservation of our Canyons environmental and aesthetic quality should be a top priority. Spending millions of dollars on a Gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon, a Grandiose Elitist Infrastructure Project for the profit of some at the expense of others is not a responsible solution. Putting profit before Stewardship is irresponsible. There are other less expensive solutions; say NO to the Gondola. Consider the Great Salt Lake and the Lucin Cutoff of 1904 turned earthen causeway in the 1950's. This division creating the North Arm and South Arm has had an embarrassing impact on the "Pink Side" of the Lake, resulting in an economic loss and altered ecosystem. With an even more complicated issue of Water Management, drought and diversions, the problems have compounded. Read it in the News. How can Utah claim to be a good Steward of Little Cottonwood Canyon if we struggle to manage the Lake? More new infrastructure is not the solution; say No to the Gondola.</p> <p>The People have spoken in opposition to this Project again and again. As Friends of Little Cottonwood Canyon have said No and residents in the area have said No, large towering structures and suspended cables operating over private and public lands is "unsightly and invasive." The whole Project contradicts the concept of the Foothills and Canyon Overlay Zone, FCOZ. The installation of the Gondola would be a striking violation of that governing covenant. Preservation of the Canyon Aesthetics for both public and private enjoyment commands respect, say NO to the Gondola.</p> <p>People have expressed their thoughts for or against the project and other solutions. A poll taken on social media found that only 3% were in favor of the Gondola, 44% in favor of Highway/Bus Improvements, 20% in favor of a Reservation System, 12% in favor of Shuttle System (provided by the Resorts), 16% Limiting Passes, 1% other [504 audience with 54 votes]. My support for an alternative to the Gondola is in favor of Highway/Bus improvements, Parking/Reservation System with both Public Transportation and Carpooling as the emphasis to reduce traffic, say NO to the Gondola.</p> <p>As it is, the Ski Resorts are already at capacity, getting more people there by Gondola certainly won't improve the experience. The ability to regulate parking and passes per day is already a viable option given internet technology. Reservations may be made online ahead of time. A Parking/Reservations System can be implemented relatively easily. There is No need to spend Millions of Dollars before attempting other measures, say NO to the Gondola.</p> <p>The Gondola is an Elitist Project solving a temporary traffic problem on Snow Days, fewer than 24 out of 365. The profit motives of the "players" is all too transparent. Five to Six Hundred Million Dollars is a lot of money that some people, builders, developers and certain private land owners are going to gain wealth at the expense of others. Billing Taxpayers would not be a popular option and charging Riders a fee upwards of \$60 seems too expensive. If the Resorts want unlimited access for profit, let them put up the Money. But if such a high stakes project is not feasible on its own merit, say NO to the Gondola.</p> <p>Implementing a Toll Booth to collect upwards of \$30 to Vehicle Drivers for "access" to public lands is a terrible social contract. If revenues from such fees go towards the Gondola, what is the Driver receiving in exchange? If there were improvements, such as Snow Sheds or a dedicated HOV lane to Highway 210, infrastructure already in place, then the Toll might be justified. However, we all know that Toll Booths create their own traffic problems regardless of the weather,</p>

		<p>welcome to American Fork Canyon and the National Parks. Toll Booths will compound the traffic issue, say NO to the Gondola.</p> <p>At the juncture of the Financial Phase of the Project, everything about the flow of Money smells of organized manipulation in a process to favor one party or class, the Profiteers, such that the voice of the Citizens who object is disregarded. As many believe, the Project has already been decided and nothing that has been said or can be said in opposition has any merit. As the Salt Lake County Council has voted No, it is my plea that the State of Utah will be a good Steward for the Preservation of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Do the right thing, say NO to the Gondola.</p> <p>Sincerely concerned, Lance Fairbanks, MBA</p>
37094	Claire Dvorak	<p>Irreversible & Rushed Decision</p> <p>There is simply no reason to invest \$550 million in a permanent project with so many unanswered questions.</p> <p>If common sense could prevail, we would implement cost-effective and environmentally-friendly options such as enhanced busses, tolling, reservations and enforcement of traction laws.</p> <p>We have seen parking reservations work throughout the Wasatch in the last few years. Tolling has proven to be an effective solution in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>As Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson said, these are "common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound."</p> <p>Tax-Payer-Funded, Serving Private Resorts</p> <p>Why are Utah taxpayers footing the \$550 million bill for a problem two private businesses created and for a solution that will only benefit those two businesses?</p> <p>As we know, resort executives stand to gain the most from a gondola and have been behind the majority of pro-gondola messaging.</p> <p>They view the gondola as a tax-payer-funded marketing ploy to increase visitation to their businesses.</p> <p>UDOT's EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>Ignoring Local Public & Political Opinion</p> <p>80% of Utahns oppose the gondola, according to a Deseret News/Hinckley Institute of Politics poll.</p> <p>Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Sandy Mayor Monica Zoltanski and many other elected officials agree.</p> <p>"Rather than rip up the canyon with a half-a-billion-dollar price tag, let's invest in common-sense solutions. Parking hubs in the valley, electric busing with regular routes, carpooling and tolling, reservations, common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound," Wilson said at the Truth About the Proposed Gondola event in June.</p> <p>With no trailhead or backcountry access, the gondola is far from a solution that</p>

		<p>benefits all of LCC's users throughout the year.</p> <p>Not a Convenient Solution</p> <p>If the gondola is built, your ski day will consist of parking off-site (or paying a premium for one of the limited parking spots near the base), taking a bus to the base station then riding the gondola 31 minutes to Snowbird or 37 minutes to Alta.</p> <p>And then doing it all in reverse order at the end of the day.</p> <p>How can it be assured the gondola will be used and actually reduce cars in the canyon?</p> <p>For the gondola strategy to be effective, there will need to be a major change in public habits.</p> <p>With no plan by UDOT to limit cars (it is our understanding they plan to implement bussing until the gondola is built but not continue the program afterward) or any analysis of demand, the original issue of traffic is not being solved. It will simply funnel more visitors to the resorts.</p> <p>Increased Visitation Stress on LCC</p> <p>If those invested in the gondola are so interested in preserving Little Cottonwood Canyon, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support.</p> <p>As our friends at Students for the Wasatch pointed out, if the gondola is implemented, the number of cars visiting resorts will remain the same while skier visits will increase by 20%, per UDOT's EIS.</p> <p>The EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>What Will it Really Cost?</p> <p>The proposed budget to build the gondola comes in at approximately \$550 million. But many estimate that number would ultimately come in closer to \$1 billion.</p> <p>We know projects of this size tend to go way over budget. Our new airport (which could use a gondola from Terminal B) was budgeted for \$1.8 billion and ended up costing more than \$4 billion.</p> <p>If the gondola is built, it would cost \$10.6 million annually just to operate. Plus, UDOT estimates an additional \$12.5 million in capital costs, expected by 2037, followed by \$16.5 million by 2051, according to the Deseret News.</p> <p>Is a Gondola Even Necessary?</p> <p>How many days per winter are you in a complete standstill in Little Cottonwood Canyon? No doubt the red snake is real. But real enough for an expensive, permanent gondola?</p> <p>Plus, the gondola will not run when howitzers are active during avalanche</p>
--	--	---

		<p>mitigation in the lower canyon from Lisa Falls to Monte Cristo.</p> <p>And we can't even think of an argument for the gondola to be operating for the other eight months of the year.</p> <p>Preserving the Beauty of LCC</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a true treasure of our local environment and attracts skiers, climbers and hikers from around the world to enjoy its beauty.</p> <p>Constructing more than 20 towers reaching 200 feet tall and stretching eight miles through the heart of LCC would destroy the canyon's natural beauty.</p> <p>Altering the canyon's footprint will also destroy popular climbing and hiking areas including Alpenboch Loop Trail.</p> <p>Push Traffic onto Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>The gondola will not solve traffic issues.</p> <p>It will simply push traffic out of Little Cottonwood Canyon onto Wasatch Blvd, I-215 and surrounding neighborhoods in the Cottonwood Heights community.</p>
37113	Kimberly Kraan	<p>From: Kimberly Kraan. Cottonwood Heights, UT TO: UDOT RE: Public comment for record, re: Final EIS Gondola B, Oct 17, 2022: Opening, and preface for opposing a gondola in LLC as part of UDOTs' FINAL EIS : UDOT seems to miss the mark time and again on this issue. In presenting its latest FINAL EIS Gondola B Plan, they appear to have slipped over the ethical edge, narrowing the EIS focus in supporting privatized development interest of contrasting a gondola, which is to be funded by public tax dollars; the UDOT gondola-centric solution serves only private interest profiteering over greater public needs as formerly outlined in the originally drafted EIS purpose, 2018. No doubt in mind that the state senators, who crafted the legislative bill setting the \$66 million of EIS study money in motion, were careful in providing wiggle-room language within the bill to allow for any scope modifications. UDOT proclaims in its purpose of the revised Final EIS, that it is charged with: "substantially improving transportation-related safety, reliability, and mobility for all users on S.R. 210 from Fort Union Boulevard through the Town of Alta". Let's read that again: "For all users on S.R. 210". With that statement alone a gondola fails to meet the EIS criterion. In fact, a gondola would severely degrade and worsen conditions for all users on SR210, by inducing traffic into the area through both planned road widening and construction of a massive 2,500 tall parking garage/ gondola base station, thereby increasing risks for incidents, and increased emissions pollution along SR210 while simultaneously decreasing public safety. A gondola fails to meet any safety, reliability, or mobility issues on SR210/LCC: Per Uot's Chpt 32.2.4: "To meet the project purpose, UDOT does not need to eliminate all personal vehicles From Little Cottonwood Canyon. Personal vehicles would still be allowed into the canyon at all times (except during temporary closures for avalanches or accidents) to access recreational activities, the ski resorts, and personal residences." Continuing on, paraphrasing 'under US title 23 UDOT cannot close a state roadway...' SR210 will experience the same traffic flow, traffic incidents, etc, and traffic will not be limited within LLC, nor or will UDOT close the roadway, it cannot under</p>

		<p>Federal prevailing laws. So, nothing about safety, reliability, or mobility is improved for those using SR210 under UDOT's Final EIS Gondola B plan. The only purpose left standing is that a gondola serves is to increase canyon capacity be delivering more patrons to the ski resorts located within the canyon, snowbird and alta, that purpose is indirectly stated in UDOT's EIS purpose 'as the preferred alternative to improve transportation in the canyon'. To claim a gondola meets the criteria of: "substantially improving transportation-related safety, reliability, and mobility for all users on S.R. 210", is to offer-up self-serving skewed statistical data. This claim does nothing more than support the gondola narrative presented by UDOT, it serves only to increasing canyon capacity, but fails to decrease number of incidents within LLC. While it presents an alternative system/module of transportation, so too do busses, trains, and zeppelins. The gondola comes at a hefty price tag, a price public has already questioned as being too much money for a limited scope and service public transportation project. Public has demanded for increased, flex bus type service as an LCC supplemental transportation system, and UDOT has ignored those comments.</p> <p>Public comments ignored, again. As a community member who has followed this issue since it's conception, I am put off by the fact that UDOT fails to publically disclose, online, the 14,000 prior public comments presented to UDOT on the EIS, for reasons UDOT claims is related to too large of PDF files, yet UDOT can break up it's own 11,000 pages of EIS into segments. UDOT received \$66 million to study this issue, and cannot figure out how to get those public comments online and accessible to everyone? Instead, it offers for public to transport themselves to their offices for a paper copy. UDOT manipulatively, and deceptively, imo, uses that record number of prior public comments, 14,000, and strings it right into their support statement for the Final EIS Gondola B plan, as if to infer that prior public opinion supports their preferred gondola solution. It does not, and this is just one of many examples of UDOT word-smithing to serve its own narrative. "UDOT has released the Final EIS and 14,000+ public comments received during the Draft EIS comment periods, and identified Gondola B, with proposed phasing, as the preferred alternative to improve transportation in the canyon." Let's note that a comma placement after the first use of EIS herein is of utmost importance.</p> <p>UDOT's EIS scope altered. The EIS was deliberately changed/altered to a much narrower focus than that of the initial scope, which had set out to seek solutions that served the greater common good. The current, revised Final EIS, fails to meet the collective needs of the greater common good for the residents of Utah, and serves only to benefit a few investor business/developers and ski resorts owners, and UDOT.</p> <p>Cronyism, Skepticism, Lack of Accountability, Actions speak louder than words. UDOT received \$66 million of study money. For public record, this action was set it monition by former state senator, Wayne Neiderhauser, during his term as state senator. It is also a known fact that Neiderhauser likes to dabble as a real-estate developer. Shortly after the legislative bill, he co-sponsored, had passed through state legislation, he stepped away from state office and took on a private sector role as developer of the large-scale, planned commercial center that would become a gondola base hub to ultimately connect his planned development to the 2 ski resorts in LLC(snowbird and alta). Snowbird has embraced and actively supported the gondola, its history suggest it desires both expansion and increased patronage to its resort. Alta resort, on the other hand, is on record as opposed to constructing a gondola within LCC. Neiderhauser's company recently sold the land necessary for the gondola station base to an LLC owned by Snowbird corporation. Snowbird would not have speculatively purchased the base</p>
--	--	---

		<p>property if the gondola were an uncertainty. It is assumed Snowbird had some prior knowledge of UDOT's EIS revised solution outcome. Recent activity of udot suggests snowbird has had much influence on its revisions to the Final EIS scoping statement, and that suggest cronyism. UDOT has since been under formal Audit. UDOT had removed former EIS rep after he agreed to local community that he would see to it UDOT reduced the speed limit along SR21- from 50mph to 35 mph speed limit along SR210, through Cottonwood Heights. The EIS new rep, along with higher-ups in command at UDOT, claim this speed limit reduction simply will not happen, the narrative changed abruptly with changes in command at UDOT, despite Cottonwood Heights city and residents repeatedly voiced concerns of community safety along the SR210 state road. Ignoring local residents request to not increase traffic nor widen SR210, and work to increase local area safety, UDOT in response has acted with a belligerent attitude, and is dead-set on blasting a 5 to 7 lane highway, of Bangeter proportions (2.5 miles), through the Cottonwood Heights east side community, severing residential areas from the city and decreasing community safety in its path of destruction, all in order to direct more vehicles along SR210 to the Gondola base, and its surrounding private commercial developments and planned massive parking garage, and ultimately the ski resorts within LLC. There is a winner and a loser in this scenario, and it's clear whom UDOT has picked as the winner. UDOT has made no concessions for safety with Cottonwood Heights residents in the scope of its Final EIS plans, rather the plans by design will desecrate a community, and will do so at expense of profiteering gains by private enterprise interest, using public funds. There is no functional need to widen SR210 to 5 to 7 lane capacity, other than UDOT needs to validate its application for securing maximum Federal funding. And, money is what is driving this entire EIS, money and greed. UDOT was a former partner of CWC (central wasatch commission) then quietly backed out of that partnership, as if to maintain some public appearance of neutrality on the matter. The CWC also stated the "goal was to reduce congestion in LCC"... by placing more people on gondola. The failure in their logic, as continued to be spilled to public in support of a gondola, is that UDOT is not changing nor altering traffic within LLC as part of the project scope. Neiderhauser's business partner, former council person McCandless sat on the CWC as a council person, steering this from the inside. While his role is ethically questionable, McCandless finally removed himself from public office to pursue the gondola dream with partner Neiderhuaser. There is no neutrality in supporting a solution that does not solve an issue. There is no neutrality when a developer (former state senator) sets public money in motion to a state agency only to have it serve his own profit margins on the other end.</p> <p>As public comments pile up, whenever solicited for public comment on the EIS, UDOT blatantly ignores the spoken/written will of the greater community of the residents of Utah by which it is tasked to serve. Public comment period to UDOT is nothing more than a check box, a formality, and UDOT informs public it does not have to react to or act upon those comments received. UDOT's lack of accountability and that sends public message; people become more disillusioned and disengaged with public process. Former mayor of Cottonwood Heights once said of UDOT that "Udot is Udot" inferring as though nothing can be done to alter the course of the agencies actions. This sediment, of UDOT, is expressed more than I can to know. This seems par for the course as public responds to UDOT's latest Final EIS Gondola B Plan, again, UDOT is not listening, because it does not have to. But, none the less, here are my 11, 000 pages opposing UDOT's gondola solution, and I hope UDOT is inundated with replies, with well over the prior 14,000 threshold of adamantly opposed comments to the gondola.</p> <p>A gondola won't stop traffic flow in LCC, but laws can change to address that. Per a prior udot post, re: USA title 23 federal code, udot cannot limit the number</p>
--	--	---

		<p>of cars, nor close off state roads, with exception to obvious reasons of severe weather avalanche work, incident, road work. UDOT's director, Braceras, sat on ASHTO in recent years, and could have allocated some of the "study money" (\$66 mill) given to udot by the state, to work at the Federal transportation level in respect to proposing legislative bills/changes under US title 23, devising changes/amendments to existing law language unique to dead-ended canyons impacted by high-volume traffic in high-tourism areas throughout UT, and find legal avenues by which to limit cars in these places, and ultimately have means whereby to limit traffic within LCC. Instead UDOT chose the easy money route making public claim as if injecting \$550 million into a (frivolous) gondola (scam) will solve any LCC canyon traffic issues.</p> <p>No clear indication of location of gondola as presented by UDOT. Where will the gondola ultimately cross the SR210? UDOT fails to provide enough details to give public sense of where the gondola will be placed. It is questionable as to whether its latest EIS drawings depict accurately, or not, the gondola's intended route. In their defense they'll work this out 'after getting funding'. It was earlier assumed UDOT would transverse the newly acquired open space land (land purchased under pressure by Cottonwood Heights from developers that placed it on a uber-short timeline offering in the midst of UDOT's EIS), in Cottonwood Heights. But, per Utah Open Lands statement below it is evident that UOL's will oppose a gondola transversing this protected open space land.</p> <p>FROM UTAH OPEN LANDS:</p> <p>"COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS BONNEVILLE SHORELINE TRAIL: PROTECTED AND DEFENDED!</p> <p>Utah Open Lands has never experienced the need to defend an open space a mere 48 hours after its preservation, but no matter when a threat arises, Utah Open Lands always stands ready to steward and defend the precious open spaces under our trust. The recent UDOT transportation alternative that was released on November 20th for Little Cottonwood Canyon, proposing a diesel cog train on our newly acquired preservation, is the poster child of poor planning on the part of the agency and is something that Utah Open Lands takes seriously.</p> <p>In alerting UDOT to our concerns, along with concerns voiced by the City of Cottonwood Heights, UDOT has made statements that, in proposing new alternatives, they will work to avoid the open space. Utah Open Lands needs you to stand with us in telling UDOT that avoidance of this protected landscape is the only option. When we think about our iconic landscapes here in Utah, the entrance to Little Cottonwood Canyon rises to the top. These scenic viewsheds cannot be marred by development, including poor transportation planning.</p> <p>What was UDOT thinking? We can only speculate, but what we know is that this alternative is bad for open space, open space which is critical to Utah's economy. Please make comments in anticipation of UDOT releasing its draft EIS and send comments to your elected officials, City, County, and State, that a gondola or tram on the 26-acre Cottonwood Heights Bonneville Shoreline Trail Preserve is unacceptable."</p> <p>In accordance with the above statement from Utah Open Lands it would be infeasible to transverse SR210 across this newly acquired and protected open space.</p> <p>The current Final EIS plans show the Wildwood neighborhood will be subject to privacy invasion as the line stays to the west of SR210 before transversing across SR210, then eastward into LLC. UDOT has had years to fine-tune plans, and it fails to do so. This inaction leaves public with more skepticism and less</p>
--	--	--

		<p>confidence in UDOT's ability to provide residents in the area privacy from view and noise-shed of a gondola overhead within close proximity to these private properties. While details are not part of the EIS scope work, UDOT's illustrative renderings suggest otherwise, and leave much to be desired. Its carefully selected renderings are intended to eye-wash public into thinking the gondola is a less invasive or less intrusive solution than it truly will be once constructed. With today's digital technology udot can and should be charged with delivering realistic images to public, particularly when trying to sway public opinion and support for such a large scale public money funded project.</p> <p>To add insult to injury, graphically udot depicts its 2,500 stall parking garage as a 2-story, low rise building, when in fact to house that many vehicles it would take 10 stories, on the same given footprint it has allocated in its renderings for its 2-story depiction. UDOT, You know who else was good will illusion? Disney. Again, public eye-washing, which serves to instill less confidence and trust in udot as a state agency, and serves more to elevate public skepticism.</p> <p>Snowsheds, finally. Snowsheds are one component within the Final EIS plan that offer both mobility functionality and safety mitigation. Snowsheds will mitigate for safety, and improve mobility in LCC by decreasing hours of canyon road closure form 56 to 11, that is an 80 % increase in safety & mobility measures alone.</p> <p>Where UDOT falls short in safety road mitigation, however, and as I have pointed out profusely over the years of commenting, is: 1. with the state traction law, specific to mandate for snow tire types accepted, and 2. policing the state road canyon entry, and 3. In acting negligently by allowing ill-equipped vehicles into the LLC canyon on scheduled weather event days. Per a conversation with UPD, they indicated that UDOT is solely responsible for SR210 opening/closing of the canyon road, or lifting the traction laws, based upon weather conditions. Udot replied to this question to me in past by claiming it could not keep the road closed or limit canyon ingress/egress traffic if weather improved, even if only temporary, even when knowing that degrading weather is scheduled for that same day, and that, imo is negligent. During those moments of improved condition, UDOT lifts the traction laws and inevitably vehicles get into LLC canyon ill-equipped for condition when egressing/unloading later in the same day, thereby, drivers are unsuspectingly forced into unsafe situations, BY UDOT, by the STATE ROAD AUTHORITY CHARGED WITH THEIR SAFETY! Udot takes ZERO accountably or responsibly for the multitude of yearly winter season incidents that result (due to its own negligence) as direct result of UDOT allowing cars into the canyon ill-equipped by lifting traction laws during momentary windows of improved weather. Rather than make up statistics, or provide none, UDOT ought to use a portion of their study money and implement real incident data analysis throughout the course of a winter season, collecting data specific to: vehicle types, and more specific to tire type and tread on vehicle at time of incident, driver impairment, vehicle speed, and document how those incidents were relative to road opening/closures(traction law lifts) UDOT controls throughout any given day during a winter season. I doubt anyone at UDOT tasked with opening/closure of roads holds a degree in meteorology, which also exasperates the problem, nor has UDOT taken it upon itself as the agency tasked with public safety on state roads to collect such data.</p> <p>Bye, Bye UTA Busses. UDOT speaks of its partners, specifically UTA in its early EIS draft phases, yet UTA has left the building. However, let it be known that UDOT, not UTA, is the state agency that received \$66 million to study a narrowly scoped issue, with a pre-determined outcome. UDOT seems unwilling or reluctant to share any of that study money with the state agency UTA. UTA is the state transportation agency(mobility, trains & busses), in case anyone reading would like a quick definition of agency roles. Yet, with the EIS, we see UDOT</p>
--	--	--

		<p>crossing-over to head up a transportation mobility project, the gondola, in which UTA has no seemingly active role. In public appearance perspective, UTA has been far from engaged in this process. This process started in 2018, and now, as of 2022, UTA has since announced it will "cut", not increase, bus service in the Cottonwood Canyons winter season 2022/2023. UDOT currently includes offering increased UTA bus services into LLC in its phased planning, it does so knowing that UTA has already scaled back those very services specific to support this EIS component, ergo: UDOT's statement to increase bus services appears to public as false claim. By design, or happenchance, either way it is evident that there are underlying public agency issues between UTA and UDOT, which serves to the discredit of both state agencies. While flex bus options seem valid, and can operate on-demand to meet LCC transportation needs, UTA has placed themselves out of contention, at least for the short term 2022/2023 winter ski season. Send some of your \$66 million to UTA and let's see if bus service won't be reinstated.</p> <p>Change the State Traction Laws, and you will reduce the # of LLC incidents per year. As UDOT states, in meeting its purpose it does not need to eliminate all cars from LCC/SR210. A gondola only serves a data dilution device, in respect to decreasing total numbers of incidents in the canyon, PER CAPITA. By simply increasing total numbers of visitors within LCC canyon proportionally the number of incidents accordingly are reduced, again this is per capita. But, in FACT the total number # of incidents will not decreased on SR210 by adding a gondola, because we've not reduced total number of cars within LLC, nor have we imposed more stringent Traction laws. Since vehicles are still free to travel up/down LLC, and as long as UDOT continues to open/close the LCC canyons (lifting the state traction laws as it sees fit), relative to schedules weather, etc., we will see same more/less of # numbers of vehicle-related incidents in LCC. Public suggests to UDOT time and again to increase the amount of UPD canyon patrol, to assure drivers are entering LCC are properly equipped with snow/traction tires that meet the state traction law - this has been a point of contention among those that access the canyon prepared for conditions, only to get delayed due to incident by those that enter the canyon ill-prepared. SR210 is a state road and UDOT has authority to step up and take responsibility for vehicle safety for those that drive it.</p> <p>The state Traction Law mandate is missing the mark for required tire type in severe winter driving, as can be experienced in LCC. The law makes no exceptions to LLC/BCC, or other areas in Utah's mountainous regions around the state that experience more severe winter weather driving conditions. Rather, it's a blanket law that covers minimal requirements for winter driving. These laws can be improved, and as such can improve (reduce) driver-related incidents in the LCC canyon. The law can change to demand that all vehicles entering into LCC/BCC (and, other applicable places in Utah's mountain regions) during winter season must be equipped with Mountain/Snow rated Tires (the snowflake symbol), or chains, and not just allow an all-season M+S (mud and snow) to suffice for these severe type conditions. Studies show M+S are worthless for extreme winter driving, and while better than nothing, they are no match to the abrupt severe weather challenges that can, and do, frequently occur in LLC any given winter day. UDOT has failed repeatedly to address this issue. There is much push back on changing state policy from Rental car companies, regarding equipping fleets with snow tires, or chains, and from those tourist who get caught off-guard arriving unable to enter the canyon. Be prepared is number #1 rule of driving. The state can offer rental car agencies incentives to change-out fleet tires, and offer radial chains on their fleet, on a number of vehicles. Tourists can purchase or rent chains for short-term visitations. Perhaps the Lacalli developer</p>
--	--	---

		<p>folks can offer these services to tourists.</p> <p>Absolutely No to Widening of SR210/Wasatch Blvd & NO to a Massive Parking garage. This is a simple unwarranted aspect of Udot's EIS that serves only to induce traffic congestion in the area, thereby increasing auto emissions and pollution, noise, traffic incidents, etc. UDOT has offered no studies ahead of these plans. Plans that call for 5-7 lanes along the 2.5 miles of SR210 through Cottonwood Heights; These plans will directly conflict with Gov Cox's vision of not using highways to divide communities, the plans will also severe neighborhoods from htnme city, and reduced public safety in the local area. As a state appointed agency UDOT is operating contrary with the governors requests that projects of this magnitude should seek to connect communities rather than severe or divide communities. Increasing lanes on SR210 will exasperate an already deadly and busy traffic area. There are 11 residential streets connecting onto SR210 in it's 2.5 miles length(between Bengal & LaCalli area), and UDOT's plans call for reducing local area safety of these residential areas exponentially by increasing lanes without providing safe ingress/egress into the very neighborhoods that connect along this 2.5 mile segment. In past, and early EIS Draft phases, the Gravel pit, Northeast of SR190 & SR210, was designated/considered as a regional Parking hub for vehicles that enter into the area to access both LCC & BCC canyons from alternative transportation hub using mass transit (namely UTA bus service). A wrinkle in the blueprints finds Gravel pit land owner/developers balking at the idea of giving up a portion of their developable land to UDOT for said purpose. Plans floated by the land owners failed to include any such parking structure/hub as part of their planned developments, despite udot securing \$13 million for land to developer a public transit hub, aka: massive parking garage, on the north end of this commercial land. (Sr210 & Wasatch Blvd). BTW, Udot, public demands to know where exactly did that \$13 million go? Massive parking garages are the most unproductive use of any public dollars, and constructing one in Cottonwood Heights will ultimately burden the city of Cottonwood Heights taxpayers with maintenance & upkeep costs. As evidenced, by the parking large garage at SR190 & SR210, constructed with public tax dollars as part of the Park Center project (by same Neiderhauser & McCandless developers as LaCalli planned development). Developers claimed there would be fee-generated parking that would be productive to the city of Cottonwood Heights(developed thru a city RDA corp, who is ultimately burdened with its upkeep); yet, the developers of Park Center have since offered free parking for public use because the area is already over-burdened with parking. Simply put, another massive parking garage in the area will not be productive and simply not warranted. While udot infers there is need for a massive parking structure, because of the planned gondola and base station, there is not. Snowbird should be charged with paying for a parking garage and they can sort those details out with the private developers and not place burden for parking onto local communities who do not benefit from it. Snowbird can also construct parking garages on their property to accommodate the increase patronage they desire. None of this should be done with public funding. There is no study presented by udot to support claims that constructing a massive parking garage at the planned Lacalli commercial development will be a productive investment for those left with the burden of upkeep and maintenance, ultimately, Cottonwood Heights tax payers.</p> <p>The SR210 is unsafe today, and has been so for decades. It's length is used heavily by cyclists and pedestrians alike (despite no sidewalks along its length); as a bike route it fails to meet the safe system approach by National DOT(more recent policy adoption in UT), nor NACTO standards (as adopted in UT, by UDOT head Braceras, 2014). UDOT has since failed to make any concessions to adjust speeds along SR210, an urban arterial, to 30 or 35mph, or to make the bike lanes</p>
--	--	--

		<p>safe per prescriptives of the NACTO policies it has adopted. Speeds along this corridor have been clocked at 72mph, and UDOT has done nothing to date to increase safety along its length for cars, cyclist or pedestrians. And, fast-forward and UDOT now proposes thru it's Final EIS to widen the 2 lane Blvd of SR210 to shove ven more cars at faster speeds into an already congested area, to get patrons for the ski resorts to a gondola base planned by private interest. The gondola has been a clear case of private interest steering pubic dollars since it's conception, please do not insult public otherwise. UDOT is acting selfishly, and on behalf of those invested private interest, its behavior is unethical in submitting a gondola to public as an end-all means addressing traffic mitigation, and safety fix for LCC.</p> <p>Environmental impacts, too many to list. Lack of data is disingenuous on UDOT's part as a state agency assuming a lead role in this study project. The "E" in EIS stands for ENVIRONEMNTAL, yet UDOT has presented no independent data of environmental impacts, or mitigation plans during construction phases for: pollution, soils contamination(from superfund site) disturbances, earthquake, natural habitats and environment vegetation(flora/fauna displacements), water & air contamination from disturbing soils during any proposed construction phase, detailed traffic incidents(within LCC and along SR210 from LCC mouth to Bengal Blv). It has failed to present severe weather and wind-study analysis, evacuation plans, or safety-related plans due to emergency shut down operations of a gondola, or other negative impacts a gondola will instill upon LCC. Data presented by udot has been nothing more than self-serving (as it is conducted and presented by UDOT) to fit UDOT's narrowly focused narrative. These critical data analysis need to be done independently of , outside of the one agency taking leadership role and purporting this EIS gondola as a final solution to public. In one traffic study udot used 2014 data from former Mountain Accord org., which is not only out-dated, but does not include the larger study area. \$66 million can generate a lot of papers and "words" to convince public this is the best solution to propose to address any traffic safety and mitigation issues in LCC. However, the entire study falls short, no data.</p> <p>A gondola will negatively impact, LCC for ever. As others better versed and more intricately informed have discuss this key point, I am inclined to agree with their work and findings that a gondola constructed within LCC will permanently destroy the beauty of the canyons, and irreversibly impact it's natural resources.</p> <p>A gondola threatens water quality during construction phases. Water from LCC is designated as potable, drinking water by many of the communities at the canyon base.</p> <p>The gondola base is planned to be constructed upon a formerly designated EPA super-fund site. While the site was cleaned up, designated to residential use, and its status as a super-fund site removed, this clean up was done to meet criteria for former residential zoning use. The currently intended use as a large scale commercial use project us undetermined. A massive parking structure construction phase will permeate deeply into the ground, and disturb contaminated soils, and open up EPA concerns. Concerns that UDOT has yet to address in respect to its planned massive parking garage. The massive parking garage and gondola base site has not has not been evaluated for current intended commercial uses as proposed by UDOT and developers.</p> <p>My comments echo the sediments of Save NOT Pave, Save Our Canyons, Wasatch Backcountry Alliance, and Utah Open Lands. These folks, and orgs, have done extensive research, and have submitted good, logical reasons to avoid constructing a gondola in LCC, along with other reasonable submissions, and UDOT has failed to take their concerns seriously. Please add my name onto that pile.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>And, then came the Olympics, and Bragging rights. The obvious underlying reason udot won't let this gondola project go is that they are being pressured by developers and ski resorts alike to construct a gondola that will place snowbird in contention as a 2034 winter Olympic venue, claiming(as per gondola works web page: "A gondola would allow Little Cottonwood Canyon ingress and egress in all weather conditions, even if the highway was temporarily closed to vehicles." No one will be moving in/out of any buildings, let alone getting onto a gondola to evacuate the canyon during Interlodge. Interlodge is something that realistically can happen at snowbird due to unforeseen avalanche conditions. Last Year was 5 days, and prior years there were 2 to 3 days of Interlodge 'lock down' per season. So, please stop trying to sell public that a gondola will operate 100% of the time, it won't. Interlodge is something that realistically can happen at snowbird/alta resorts due to unforeseen avalanche conditions. That alo</p>
37114	Eric Gustafson	<p>I agree with all points from this well researched comment from WBA. Please consider this decision carefully as it is a big mistake to put a Gondola up this beautiful Canyon. Thank you Eric Gustafson. Utah Mountain Adventures WBA agrees with UDOT that a preferred solution will represent a summary of key concerns expressed within the public comments that were received and processed: EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS to dispersed recreation, OVERCROWDING, VISUAL IMPACTS, WATER QUALITY IMPACTS, AND YEAR-ROUND ACCESS for a majority of visitors. The proposed solution does not address these aspects - below is a list of issues that we see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors" but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best. It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot is a red herring. WBA does not think that vehicle traffic will be abated enough (if at all) by the gondola to justify this conclusion. Backcountry users - like resort patrons - want to be able to use public transit in lieu of their own vehicles to access the canyon, but that is not possible under the current proposal.</p> <p>Economic Benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." WBA does not feel that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that end is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Furthermore, data from the National Ski Area Association likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT for the gondola was \$550M. This was pre-inflationary times, so even in the last year that figure will have risen to \$600M, if not significantly higher (which WBA suspects to be the case). Even if</p>

	<p>the cost has only increased by \$50M, that means that every single person in Utah is "paying" \$200 each to have what is effectively the most expensive chairlift in history installed for the benefit of two businesses (and auxiliary businesses). Any benefit associated with the proposed gondola will likely never be realized by the many Utahns who don't ski and/or live in other areas of the state, despite them paying for it.</p> <p>Gondola Fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs for people to ride the gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p> <p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas.</p> <p>Other Solutions - UDOT says "it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B" but it also may NOT take years, so clearly the gondola is the priority. And if UDOT is trying to simultaneously raise at least \$600M for the gondola AND fund the alternative solutions, the money is in danger of not being available for ANY solution. And by making it clear that the gondola is the preferred solution, UDOT is effectively being incentivized to make the alternate solutions NOT work. Therefore, we strongly suggest that UDOT acknowledge up front that the large tab for the gondola is unrealistic and focus its efforts on simpler, more easily attained transit solutions using existing infrastructure: tolling for all canyon users to disincentivize SOV's, enhanced bus lanes, enhanced bus service (already being cut for the 22-23 season), alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes, etc. This would require UDOT working more closely with UTA, which appears to not be the case.</p> <p>Phasing/Safety/Construction - The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Risk/Flexibility - UDOT's consideration of a gondola as a transportation solution is highly innovative - and risky. While they may be confident in all of the analysis that went into evaluating its chance of success in meeting the Purpose and Need, there is little discussion in the DEIS for how a gondola system would be modified physically or operationally if that becomes necessary, or who would be in charge of making those determinations, and on what basis, and for what cost, and what the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of those changes would be. This creates an inadequate basis for a decision to select the gondola alternative.</p> <p>Controversial - By anyone's assessment, this project has been "polarizing" in the</p>
--	--

		<p>community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The DEIS uses a softer characterization of "strong interest." It is irresponsible to suggest it is anything other than controversial; for example, the mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative, instead saying that common sense solutions that use existing infrastructure and more buses should be pursued. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have said the same thing.</p> <p>Parking Reservations/Tolling - Alta Ski Lifts parking fees this past winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the impact that paid parking and tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. This week UDOT again introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p> <p>Big Cottonwood Canyon - UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar traffic problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA. A BCC/LCC connection is unacceptable to WBA and many other stakeholders who want to preserve the unique qualities of each canyon and avoid the prospect of lifts criss-crossing the ridgetops.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever" and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing/riding tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>Avalanche Mitigation - The use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening and once anti-personnel shells are launched over the gondola, it must be cleared before it can start up again. In fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p> <p>Effects on climbing - While WBA primarily represents the interests of wintertime non-motorized use, many WBA members are also climbers. We are deeply concerned about the effect the construction and operation of the gondola will have on the world class climbing in LCC. Climbing has a long history in the canyon, is a very popular activity, and it's representative group Salt Lake City Climbers Alliance has a long history of engaging with the state and the LDS church to protect and enhance the LCC climbing areas, yet the EIS effectively ignored the impact on climbing in its Preferred Solution.</p> <p>Viewshed - While we acknowledge that the top of LCC harbors a small town and two ski resorts and related businesses, the heart of LCC is wild terrain that includes clearly visible tracts of designated wilderness. The effect of 200-foot tall</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>towers and 35-person gondola cars will be an eyesore that a majority of constituents, to whom such infrastructure will be visible whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, or skiing, will find offensive. Gondola infrastructure will be visible to anyone skiing, hiking, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive up the canyon. There are clearly better, more logical common sense solutions that can be put in place that do not create such an eyesore in this unique environment.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts on this process and for your consideration of this comment.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>The Board of Directors of Wasatch Backcountry Alliance</p>
37139	Carolyn Johnson	<p>I live in close proximity to Little Cottonwood Canyon and a resident of East Sandy, near ----- . I use both Little Cottonwood Canyon as a runner, hiker, and skier. On a day-to-day basis, what happens in Little Cottonwood Canyon affects me and my neighbors much more than politicians and tourists. I highly recommend the enhanced bus service.</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Gondola Estimated Capital Cost - \$550 Million</p> <p>Enhanced Bus Service Capital Cost - \$324 Million</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Gondola - 2 stops</p> <p>Enhanced Bus - Numerous stops including hiking and skiing and can drop off runners and bikers</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Gondola - runs during the ski season</p> <p>Enhanced Bus - runs year round</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Gondola - most likely will be down during high winds and snow storms - much like the Snowbird Tram</p> <p>Buses -Buses run in windy and snowy conditions.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Gondola - permanently scars and mars the canyon beauty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - infrastructure also displaces the habitat for animals - only used during the winter ski season <p>Buses - Electric, - use current roads,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - higher frequency of electric buses, - more people can be carried to more specific sites. - Runs throughout the year on a clear and enhanced schedule - Enhanced bus system enables people to pick up their ride from their hotels, and neighborhoods so that our neighborhoods close to the canyons won't need to have high rise parking in our neighborhoods bringing more car/truck traffic congestion and worsening air pollution as well as leaving the high rise parking garages out of neighborhoods built to have views of the mountains. <p>_____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use tolls to go up the canyon - Use ski parking reservations - Use rideshare programs - Use multi-passenger vehicle incentives

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>- Expand inspection hours and enforcement of traction devices for cars and trucks.</p> <p>Not only are electric buses a smart investment but they are an agile investment. One that can be easily adjusted according to usage, weather, and seasons. The gondola cannot move or make any type of quick or agile response to weather or population needs.</p> <p>Last but certainly not least is that this Gondola is an unwise use of public monies playing to corporations and people of means, former elected officials who had knowledge of this project before it was widely known and who will benefit greatly from taxpayer dollars.</p> <p>The gondola is not commonsense use of taxpayer money. It is not the best alternative for the canyons.</p> <p>We should prioritize these options: electric buses, rideshare, parking management, tolls, expanded enforcement of vehicles, things that make sense and that will help out ALL of us, not enrich the few.</p>
37181	Adam Lenkowski	<p>I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to any and all gondola alternatives. The people of Utah who live and recreate here have made it very clear, we do not want this ridiculous "solution" pushed on us that will RUIN all that makes little cottonwood great. Also, what about Big Cottonwood, that arguably has a WORSE TRAFFIC PROBLEM than little cottonwood ever since the introduction of the IKON pass? Are we going to build another 15 mile long gondola for that canyon? Obviously not. The negatives far outweigh any "benefit" from this and the reasons are blatantly obvious, but I'll list them out again.</p> <p>-Gondola WILL NOT solve the traffic problem. Carrying capacity would take all day to transport the 5-7k people that go up the canyon on a busy powder day. Also, traffic will build up even further down backing up into the neighborhoods than it already does with the base station location. The canyon itself has a subjective carrying capacity, and trying to push more and more people up is not the solution.</p> <p>-Due to the aesthetic degradation and major visual impact this option should have been thrown out from the start. YOU WILL SEE 250+ ft tall towers with FAA lighting at the mouth of the canyon from everywhere in the salt lake valley. From inside the Canyon, the visual impact will detract from the inherent beauty that makes the canyon great, so much so that it will not feel like forest, wilderness lands. It will have the feel of an AMUSEMENT PARK.</p> <p>-I'm not a climber, but I've listened to the climbing communities concerns of impact to many famous bouldering routes. Not to mention, you will be staring at a giant Gondola on all the historic climbing routes on the famous granite slabs on the lower canyon.</p> <p>We, the people of Utah have spoken. We do not want this monstrosity that only benefits wealthy developers, and giant ski resort companies. UTA bus service was CUT soon after the gondola alternative was announced as the "preferred alternative". What a joke. This is absolutely disgusting behavior, as we are used to seeing from our leaders in this State. This solution sounds similar to "Lets build a multi billion dollar pipeline from the ocean to the great salt lake" mentality. Reads like a sad joke, but it's true. Its time to make informed COMMON SENSE decisions. Such as, we need to change our behavior and habits:</p> <p>-More buses that are FREE or at least very cheap. More stops, more parking</p>

		<p>garages. -Tolling on the busiest days. -Limiting the amount of people in the canyon. -GREATLY INSCENTIVISING CARPOOLING</p> <p>NONE OF THESE options have ever even been attempted. We are going to jump straight to lets bulldoze the canyon. Anyone that supports this should be ashamed of themselves. Shame on UDOT, the developers, and ski resort execs.</p> <p>Last but not least, a giant Gondola that only stops at the 2 ski resorts will not in any way benefit the large number of other user groups including: Hikers, climbers, snow shoers, backcountry ski/snowboarders, families going on a picnic, etc etc etc. This is designed to shove as many people into Alta and Snowbird as humanly possible, and line the pockets of the people involved in this INSANE project. I will never, ever support this. In an industry that is quickly becoming an elitist sport, this is a step in the WRONG DIRECTION.</p> <p>Sincerely, Adam Lenkowski</p>
37192	Scot Wilcox	<p>After reviewing the EIS documents in its current form, the obvious lack of credible research and the lack of a legal audit trail, along with the lack of proper vetting of ALL issues pertaining to this project is appalling. The only issue made clearly transparent, is the sad attempt to compile "data" that is so blagtently weighted to the benefit of a small group of a has-been politician (owns massive real estate earmarked for the project, his greedy cronies who who stand to make a windfall profits on the backs of taxpayers in Utah. The aforementioned individuals and entities have worked diligently to keep this entire project 'below the radar and withholding critical and substantive disclosures and information from state taxpayers. A small group of 'power-brokers' as they like to perceive themselves, have built a secretive coalition to quietly develop and implement the idea of a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon, without providing the legally required notice to the public and the taxpayers who will be affected by this project.</p> <p>The assertion made in the document, that ALL possible options, alternatives and solutions have been investigated, researched and numerically quantified is an outright lie. Evidence of weighted analysis of these options and their short and long-term cost/benefit data, is woefully lacking and would be discredited in a court of law in 15 minutes. If the findings contained in this EIS are indeed the final statement that UDOT is prepared to make and to stand by, then it fails the taxpayers of Utah in every way. The document on its face is an embarrassment to UDOT and the lackey's involved in its creation. It also speaks volumes about the current lack of leadership at UDOT. Critical questions not properly addressed or transparency provided:</p> <p>1- Where is the financial commitment that a citizen and taxpayer can understand, outlining the financial commitment(s) of Alta and Snowbird ski resorts respectively? What contract, agreement, written or verbal, intent or maybe even a smoke signal have the resorts been obligated to or offered for the potential project?</p> <p>2- Where is the supporting date outlining the feasibility of having controlled numbers of skiers at each resort rather than allowing an open-door unlimited access policy which has been used for years? Where's the output representing the controlled numbers approach used by Deer Valley for years and quite successfully?</p> <p>3- Who ran the 'analysis' for the numbers and financial representations made in the EIS document? UDOT? The ski resort accounting offices?</p> <p>I've been in financial services for 28 years. I'm fully aware, as are UDOT and</p>

		<p>Neiderhauser et al, that you can spin and roll numbers that benefit the entity or individuals paying for and benefiting from said 'analysis' and subsequent output.</p> <p>4- How does UDOT benefit? To represent themselves as independent from the 'group' of greedy enthusiasts, may have worked 25 years ago, but not now. A full forensic audit from an legally authorized, independent certified tax and accounting entity or entities, i.e. KPMG, Ernst and Young, Deloitte, for the taxpayers of Utah must be brought before the Utah Courts by way of petition and mandated by the court to protect the taxpayers, most of whom, don't have the background to understand the 'findings' in the EIS.</p> <p>5- What other state entities are involved in this 'club' of politically active enthusiasts/landholders/greedy secretive minions? The same forensic requirements need to be placed, by court mandate, to all state entities, individuals employed by state, cities, etc and a complete forensic audit of all individuals and entities owned and involved with the proposed project. Taxpayers of Utah have the right to know how much each individual, entity and state agency is making or benefiting from the proposed enormous sum of money.</p> <p>6- Why hasn't this been brought before the taxpayers in a clear, concise, articulate manner? I've lived in the Big Cottonwood are for 5 years and I have not received ONE mailer, email, note on my door, flier hanger on the door knob, note from a carrier pigeon etc, providing me information regarding 'meetings' where citizens were able to attend and receive information and provide input? Why is that?? Even individuals running for public office manage to get signs posted on people's lawns with their names on them and at least one door hanger with their face on it! It's really suspicious to me that an issue of this magnitude, with the potential impact to a priceless natural resource and the staggering dollars involved, wasn't on every billboard, given air time on commercials, on newscasts or grocery store flyers that could be picked up???</p> <p>I formally request an immediate cease and desist order be placed on this project until such time that the aforementioned questions and numerous others, along with the appropriate forensic audits be conducted and full and complete disclosures are provided to the taxpayers of Utah.</p> <p>I am fully prepared to petition the Utah State Court for a cease and desist order, causing the legal and protracted process of vetting, verifying and disclosing for and behalf of the state of Utah. In short, it's my personal and professional opinion that UDOT and other state agencies involved with and endorsing this document are on the edge of committing fraud. The private investors, real estate owners and entities have clearly dealt in bad faith with the citizens of Utah and have violated numerous financial laws and state statutes.</p> <p>Scot B. Wilcox</p> <p>After reviewing the EIS documents in its current form, the obvious lack of credible research and the lack of a legal audit trail, along with the lack of proper vetting of ALL issues pertaining to this project is appalling. The only issue made clearly transparent, is the sad attempt to compile "data" that is so blagtently weighted to the benefit of a small group of a has-been politician (owns massive real estate earmarked for the project, his greedy cronies who who stand to make a windfall profits on the backs of taxpayers in Utah. The aforementioned individuals and entities have worked diligently to keep this entire project 'below the radar and withholding critical and substantive disclosures and information from state taxpayers. A small group of 'power-brokers' as they like to perceive themselves, have built a secretive coalition to quietly develop and implement the idea of a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon, without providing the legally required notice to the public and the taxpayers who will be affected by this project.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>The assertion made in the document, that ALL possible options, alternatives and solutions have been investigated, researched and numerically quantified is an outright lie. Evidence of weighted analysis of these options and their short and long-term cost/benefit data, is woefully lacking and would be discredited in a court of law in 15 minutes. If the findings contained in this EIS are indeed the final statement that UDOT is prepared to make and to stand by, then it fails the taxpayers of Utah in every way. The document on its face is an embarrassment to UDOT and the lackey's involved in its creation. It also speaks volumes about the current lack of leadership at UDOT. Critical questions not properly addressed or transparency provided:</p> <p>1- Where is the financial commitment that a citizen and taxpayer can understand, outlining the financial commitment(s) of Alta and Snowbird ski resorts respectively? What contract, agreement, written or verbal, intent or maybe even a smoke signal have the resorts been obligated to or offered for the potential project?</p> <p>2- Where is the supporting data outlining the feasibility of having controlled numbers of skiers at each resort rather than allowing an open-door unlimited access policy which has been used for years? Where's the output representing the controlled numbers approach used by Deer Valley for years and quite successfully?</p> <p>3- Who ran the 'analysis' for the numbers and financial representations made in the EIS document? UDOT? The ski resort accounting offices?</p> <p>I've been in financial services for 28 years. I'm fully aware, as are UDOT and Neiderhauser et al, that you can spin and roll numbers that benefit the entity or individuals paying for and benefiting from said 'analysis' and subsequent output.</p> <p>4- How does UDOT benefit? To represent themselves as independent from the 'group' of greedy enthusiasts, may have worked 25 years ago, but not now. A full forensic audit from an legally authorized, independent certified tax and accounting entity or entities, i.e. KPMG, Ernst and Young, Deloitte, for the taxpayers of Utah must be brought before the Utah Courts by way of petition and mandated by the court to protect the taxpayers, most of whom, don't have the background to understand the 'findings' in the EIS.</p> <p>5- What other state entities are involved in this 'club' of politically active enthusiasts/landholders/greedy secretive minions? The same forensic requirements need to be placed, by court mandate, to all state entities, individuals employed by state, cities, etc and a complete forensic audit of all individuals and entities owned and involved with the proposed project. Taxpayers of Utah have the right to know how much each individual, entity and state agency is making or benefiting from the proposed enormous sum of money.</p> <p>6- Why hasn't this been brought before the taxpayers in a clear, concise, articulate manner? I've lived in the Big Cottonwood area for 5 years and I have not received ONE mailer, email, note on my door, flier hanger on the door knob, note from a carrier pigeon etc, providing me information regarding 'meetings' where citizens were able to attend and receive information and provide input? Why is that?? Even individuals running for public office manage to get signs posted on people's lawns with their names on them and at least one door hanger with their face on it! It's really suspicious to me that an issue of this magnitude, with the potential impact to a priceless natural resource and the staggering dollars involved, wasn't on every billboard, given air time on commercials, on newscasts or grocery store flyers that could be picked up???</p> <p>I formally request an immediate cease and desist order be placed on this project until such time that the aforementioned questions and numerous others, along with the appropriate forensic audits be conducted and full and complete disclosures are provided to the taxpayers of Utah.</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>I am fully prepared to petition the Utah State Court for a cease and desist order, causing the legal and protracted process of vetting, verifying and disclosing for and behalf of the state of Utah. In short, it's my personal and professional opinion that UDOT and other state agencies involved with and endorsing this document are on the edge of committing fraud. The private investors, real estate owners and entities have clearly dealt in bad faith with the citizens of Utah and have violated numerous financial laws and state statutes.</p> <p>Scot B. Wilcox</p>
37233	Steve Erickson	<p>October 17, 2022</p> <p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>Utah Audubon Council submits the following comments on the Little Cottonwood Canyon Final Environmental Impact Statement.</p> <p>Utah Audubon Council is the public policy arm of the five Audubon societies in Utah, whose leaders serve as the Council Board of Directors. The mission of the Audubon Council of Utah is to conserve and enhance Utah's natural environment with special emphasis on birds and their habitat, for the benefit of humanity and the biological diversity of the Earth. The five Audubon societies that comprise the Council are: Bridgerland Audubon Society, Great Salt Lake Audubon, Red Cliffs Audubon Society, Utah Lake Audubon, and Wasatch Audubon Society. Many of our Audubon members have skied, hiked, biked, birded, photographed, and camped in Little Cottonwood Canyon, as well as recreated at its two ski resorts. We urge UDOT to drop its support for the gondola in the FEIS and proceed with the "phased implementation plan starting with components of the Enhanced Bus Service" and associated infrastructure improvements, tolling and single occupancy vehicles, additional valley parking, and limited roadside improvements. We previously commented on the DEIS that UDOT should have withdrawn the DEIS prior to issuing the FEIS due to its fundamental flaws, and instead proceed with a Supplemental EIS. We reiterate this as UDOT considers its Record of Decision.</p> <p>We emphasize that the gondola will have negative impacts that are irreversible and extremely detrimental to the canyon environment. These include impacts to migrating birds, visual pollution, lack of access to trail heads in both winter and summer and complete lack of functionality for any access during the ski off-season, when most Utahns enjoy LCC. The failure of the EIS to address the more comprehensive issues of transit and transportation in the area should have been a deal killer for the gondola, as it simply fails to solve the transportation problems in LCC or the Cottonwood Canyons.</p> <p>Of course, the gondola will also be paid for by taxpayer who will never ride it to access the beneficiaries - the ski resort owners and those well-off enough to afford to ski LCC, including a large percentage of out-of-state skiers. The positive economic impact of tax revenues generated is out-weighed by the regressive and unfair negative impacts upon the 90+ percent of Utahns who don't ski, much less ski at Alta or Snowbird. With these access problems and the tax inequities for such a large percentage of the local populations, the gondola should be considered an environmental and economic injustice.</p> <p>Lastly, assuming that UDOT will proceed with the phased implementation plan, we urge that due consideration and time be given to assessing the impact of the current bus driver shortage on the overall evaluation of the plan. This driver shortage is likely a short term impact, but its impact upon transit up and down the canyon this winter at least will be very significant, and it should not be ignored or downplayed as UDOT proceeds with its on-going analysis of LCC transportation.</p>

		Respectfully, Steve Erickson, Policy Advocate Utah Audubon Council
37258	Emily Sullivan	<p>Please see my comments Irreversible & Rushed Decision</p> <p>There is simply no reason to invest \$550 million in a permanent project with so many unanswered questions.</p> <p>If common sense could prevail, we would implement cost-effective and environmentally-friendly options such as enhanced busses, tolling, reservations and enforcement of traction laws.</p> <p>We have seen parking reservations work throughout the Wasatch in the last few years. Tolling has proven to be an effective solution in Millcreek Canyon.</p> <p>As Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson said, these are "common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound."</p> <p>Tax-Payer-Funded, Serving Private Resorts</p> <p>Why are Utah taxpayers footing the \$550 million bill for a problem two private businesses created and for a solution that will only benefit those two businesses?</p> <p>As we know, resort executives stand to gain the most from a gondola and have been behind the majority of pro-gondola messaging.</p> <p>They view the gondola as a tax-payer-funded marketing ploy to increase visitation to their businesses.</p> <p>UDOT's EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>Ignoring Local Public & Political Opinion</p> <p>80% of Utahns oppose the gondola, according to a Deseret News/Hinckley Institute of Politics poll.</p> <p>Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson, Sandy Mayor Monica Zoltanski and many other elected officials agree.</p> <p>"Rather than rip up the canyon with a half-a-billion-dollar price tag, let's invest in common-sense solutions. Parking hubs in the valley, electric busing with regular routes, carpooling and tolling, reservations, common-sense solutions that are fiscally sound," Wilson said at the Truth About the Proposed Gondola event in June.</p> <p>With no trailhead or backcountry access, the gondola is far from a solution that benefits all of LCC's users throughout the year.</p> <p>Not a Convenient Solution</p> <p>If the gondola is built, your ski day will consist of parking off-site (or paying a premium for one of the limited parking spots near the base), taking a bus to the base station then riding the gondola 31 minutes to Snowbird or 37 minutes to Alta.</p>

		<p>And then doing it all in reverse order at the end of the day.</p> <p>How can it be assured the gondola will be used and actually reduce cars in the canyon?</p> <p>For the gondola strategy to be effective, there will need to be a major change in public habits.</p> <p>With no plan by UDOT to limit cars (it is our understanding they plan to implement bussing until the gondola is built but not continue the program afterward) or any analysis of demand, the original issue of traffic is not being solved. It will simply funnel more visitors to the resorts.</p> <p>Increased Visitation Stress on LCC</p> <p>If those invested in the gondola are so interested in preserving Little Cottonwood Canyon, the first thing they should do is support a capacity/visitor management study to better understand how many visitors LCC can support.</p> <p>As our friends at Students for the Wasatch pointed out, if the gondola is implemented, the number of cars visiting resorts will remain the same while skier visits will increase by 20%, per UDOT's EIS.</p> <p>The EIS states, "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." [Ch. 6]</p> <p>What Will it Really Cost?</p> <p>The proposed budget to build the gondola comes in at approximately \$550 million. But many estimate that number would ultimately come in closer to \$1 billion.</p> <p>We know projects of this size tend to go way over budget. Our new airport (which could use a gondola from Terminal B) was budgeted for \$1.8 billion and ended up costing more than \$4 billion.</p> <p>If the gondola is built, it would cost \$10.6 million annually just to operate. Plus, UDOT estimates an additional \$12.5 million in capital costs, expected by 2037, followed by \$16.5 million by 2051, according to the Deseret News.</p> <p>Is a Gondola Even Necessary?</p> <p>How many days per winter are you in a complete standstill in Little Cottonwood Canyon? No doubt the red snake is real. But real enough for an expensive, permanent gondola?</p> <p>Plus, the gondola will not run when howitzers are active during avalanche mitigation in the lower canyon from Lisa Falls to Monte Cristo.</p> <p>And we can't even think of an argument for the gondola to be operating for the other eight months of the year.</p> <p>Preserving the Beauty of LCC</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a true treasure of our local environment and attracts</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>skiers, climbers and hikers from around the world to enjoy its beauty.</p> <p>Constructing more than 20 towers reaching 200 feet tall and stretching eight miles through the heart of LCC would destroy the canyon's natural beauty.</p> <p>Altering the canyon's footprint will also destroy popular climbing and hiking areas including Alpenboch Loop Trail.</p> <p>Push Traffic onto Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>The gondola will not solve traffic issues.</p> <p>It will simply push traffic out of Little Cottonwood Canyon onto Wasatch Blvd, I-215 and surrounding neighborhoods in the Cottonwood Heights community.</p>
37262	Bret Backman	<p>Does spending a billion dollars (since we all know that the \$550 million price tag is a pipe dream) of taxpayer money on a problem that 1) affects a very small portion of the SLC population, and 2) affects those people for a maximum of 10-15 days a year really make sense?</p> <p>No one will ride a slow, expensive gondola except on the days when traffic is bad. They just won't.</p> <p>On the other hand, requiring reserved parking - paid or not - has been shown to be VERY effective at reducing traffic in the canyon for the past 3 years (two years for Snowbird, and last year at Alta).</p> <p>Do I love paying for parking? No.</p> <p>Is is better than any other option? Absolutely. And it's already been shown to work. Well.</p> <p>Also, I believe one of the major flaws in the whole gondola (or road widening) argument is this: That on a powder day, it is important for EVERYONE who wants to go up LCC to be able to do so.</p> <p>That is simply madness. Have you every experienced lift lines on a powder day? If so, you would not think that we need to get MORE people onto the ski resorts. It's not only the traffic that ruins the experience on a powder day. Lift lines do, too. We don't need more people in the canyon on those days.</p> <p>Instead, we should acknowledge that space in LCC on a great ski day is - wait for it - FINITE. There is only so much to go around.</p> <p>So, first ones who get a parking reservation win. Sorry, that's how limited resources work.</p> <p>So, I beg you to PLEASE abandon both of the ridiculous options you've chosen between (gondola and road widening) and go with common sense solutions that are scalable, and have already been shown to work.</p> <p>Reserved parking - whether paid or not. Incentives for carpooling (paid reserved parking is probably the easiest to administer, more than directly charging for low occupancy vehicles) More buses on routes that start AWAY FROM the mouth of the canyon.</p> <p>Speaking of that last point (away from the mouth of the canyon), you of course</p>

		<p>realize that the proposed bottom terminal of the gondola is already WELL into the traffic pattern on a powder day, right? =)</p> <p>Be sensible. Charge for parking and call it a victory.</p> <p>Use the billion somewhere else, where it will benefit more Utahns on more than a dozen days a year.</p>
37267	Steven Strong	<p>PLEASE DON'T RUIN THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF LITTLE COTTONWOOD CANYON WITH GONDOLA TOWERS! PLEASE DON'T WASTE half a billion to one billion dollars of public funds (including my money) to built the gondola system, which would primarily benefit only two private ski resorts! I support increased and improved bus service, tolling or restrictions on single occupancy vehicles, and the construction of mobility hubs, as described in the phased implementation.</p> <p>I am strongly opposed to Gondola B. The views of the people who live in and around the canyons should be given high consideration.</p> <p>The FEIS doesn't address goals of the Central Wasatch Commission Pillars statement, it doesn't spend tax dollars in ways that benefit all Utahns, and it doesn't protect the iconic beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>I support the Pillars Statement issued by the Central Wasatch Commission in 2021. "The opinion considers visitor use capacity, watershed protection, traffic demand management and parking strategies, a year-round transit service, and integration into the broader regional transportation network, as well as the overall and long-term goal of protection of critical areas in the Central Wasatch Mountains through federal legislation, the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act (CWNCRA)."</p> <p>The FEIS fails to adequately address traffic demand management and parking strategies, year-round transit service and integration into the broader regional transportation network, as well as the overall and long-term goal of protection of critical areas in the Central Wasatch Mountains.</p> <p>The FEIS fails to take account of improvements to traffic flow with parking reservation system at Alta Ski Resort. The 2,500 parking structure at the base station would exacerbate traffic flow along S.R. 210 rather than reduce the traffic, which could be achieved through transit hubs, which are now under study by Central Wasatch Commission.</p> <p>It fails to provide a depiction of the impacts to the viewshed in Alta itself. THE SUPPORTING STRUCTURES WOULD REQUIRE ILLIMINATION AT NIGHT, ACCORDING TO THE FAA, FOREVER CHANGING ANOTHER UNIQUE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PRISTINE NATURE OF THE CANYON. It would disturb 0.63 acres of an archaeological site and has no clarification for the site of a new bus stop. There is no plan to provide facilities needed to absorb the thousands of people disembarking from the gondola, ignoring obvious further development to accommodate this change in flow of users. IT IS NOT SCALABLE OR FLEXIBLE, which is a high priority given the lower accumulations of snow the area is experiencing, and would permanently scar and negatively impact the beautiful area it is intended to service.</p> <p>The people of Utah will not adequately benefit from the more than \$600-800 million which will specifically benefit two ski resorts and the tiny percentage of Utahns who ski there (including me). The problem it addresses involves at most around 20-30 high usage snow days in the winter, but the visual impact would be felt by all users of the canyons year-round and forever into the foreseeable future. The FEIS also doesn't adequately address the superfund site which will be impacted and will potentially require costly mitigation where the parking structure would be sited.</p> <p>I join by elected representative, Gay Lynn Bennion, in her request for immediate steps to: enact for LCC winter-long vehicle traction mandates for all-wheel or four-</p>

		<p>wheel drive vehicles with appropriate winter tires; position snow plows up canyon to remove snow rapidly when it falls; and provide flexible, scalable transit year-round into LCC.</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is a unique, alpine wilderness. Any EIS should make protection of its current attributes the highest priority.</p>
37326	Viktor Simovski	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Viktor. I'm a 31 year old naturalized citizen from North Macedonia. I am your constituent, an active registered voter in the great state of Utah, and level-headedly & whole-heartedly against the gondola as a solution to LCC's congestion woes. I moved to Utah in 2019 and currently live in SLC's Guadalupe Neighborhood.</p> <p>This project is important to me because my inspiration to move to Utah was skiing big mountains. Skiing introduced me to nature, and nature showed me tranquility and guidance in a hectic world the same way religion does onto others. Not all feel this way but I know there are many who do, and I hope those reading can find a way to understand that and hear it in my words.</p> <p>Those are the personal words. Now the technical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (1) Typically with any motorized vehicles (cars, trains, airplanes, buses), a Design Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (DFMEA) is provided by the manufacturer to show each system is robust enough to withstand failures within it. For example, a DFMEA from a motorized vehicle manufacturer would show the probability, severity, and recommended actions if an engine fails from decreased fuel line pressure. Has UDOT compiled any FMEA documentation of their own to consider traffic failures and do they plan to share that with the public? Where, or why not? 2. The Final EIS does not consider the flexibility of each EIS solution in the future based on traffic failures that could happen down the road. This is important because the gondola is a permanent structure more so than just tolling or adding ski-specific busses - why wasn't this considered? 3. Based on simple data on monthly snowfall in Alta from the Utah Avalanche Center [https://utahavalanchecenter.org/alta-monthly-snowfall], Alta shows a decreasing trendline in overall snowfall as well as total snowfall in the months of December, January, and March (simovski.v+EIS@gmail.com for the excel sheet I'd be happy to share). Considering that UDOT states the project purpose is based on peak-period winter traffic and safety regarding avalanches (Executive Summary, Chapter S.2), what cost-benefit analysis has been done that incorporates snowfall data since UDOT stated that lower snowfall months do not require transportation solutions at this time? 4. The NOAA published a paper in 2018 [https://www.climate.gov/news-features/climate-and/climate-skiing] which states: <p>Utah will probably face a similar problem [where the warmer mountain climate causes climbing snowlines]. McInerney [a hydrologist with the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Salt Lake City] says, "When you look at our snowpack, the amount of precipitation overall hasn't changed that much. There are still dry years and wet years. But the fraction of precipitation that used to be totally snow is changing to rain." NOAA data indicate that the CONUS snow-to-rain ratio of precipitation has moved mostly toward rainfall and away from snowfall between 1949 and 2016. Discussing his ski neighborhood, McInerney says, "We anticipate</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>that situation to evolve to 2100 where we'll just have rainfall. The upper elevations of the Uinta Mountains may have snow, but the Wasatch Range will be snow free."</p> <p>(1) It wasn't mentioned in Chapter 1.3 of the Final EIS if the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) considered the effects of decreased snowpack on the Regional Transit Plan (RTP) 2050 population numbers that UDOT used to compile it's LCC EIS congestion data - has UDOT or WFRC considered this in their modeling?</p> <p>(2) Has UDOT at any point incorporated climate data (specifically snowfall trends) to study the effect of a climbing snowlines on traffic congestion?</p> <p>5. What long-term year-round analysis does UDOT use to justify the project purpose being narrowed to serving only ski resorts?</p> <p>I urge you to deny the gondola alternative and build on the side of the canyon that is already developed, and in ways that are less impactful to the nature in the canyon. I appreciate and respect the work you guys have done on this project. The government in Utah is truly a shining example in how a government should be communicating to the public and UDOT is a big part of that. Thank you thank you thank you, and I appreciate you.</p> <p>cheers.</p>
37340	Ashley Patterson	<p>As a Salt Lake City resident and regular visitor to Little Cottonwood Canyon, I have closely followed the LCC EIS transportation process, and am puzzled by the advancement of the gondola as a preferred alternative.</p> <p>The key concerns I see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative are:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - The White Pine parking lot is crowded with vehicles year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year but particularly in summer when the gondola does not intend to operate. This creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The gondola does not plan to stop at White Pine thus the traffic at that trailhead will continue to get worse not better. This is the premier hiking destination in Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>Economic Benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." This has been rightfully controversial given that this gondola is simply serving two private entities and using massive amounts of taxpayer dollars to do so. Service to free or low cost winter recreational opportunities (snowshoeing, nordic skiing, backcountry skiing, sledding, or winter hiking) when the gondola is running are minimal meaning this proposed alternative is serving only relatively affluent resort skiers and snowboarders.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT for the gondola was \$550M and given typical cost overruns for large infrastructure projects, this is likely looking closer to \$1 billion taxpayer dollars for a solution with no parking in a residential neighborhood that serves two ski resorts in the winter.</p> <p>Gondola Fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs for people to ride the</p>

		<p>gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p> <p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas.</p> <p>Controversial - This project has been controversial in the community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative, instead saying that common sense solutions that use existing infrastructure and more buses should be pursued. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have said the same thing.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. Not a great result after spending \$1 billion.</p> <p>Sincerely, Ashley Patterson</p>
37358	Jen Colby	<p>I am writing to comment on the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS for transportation. In the past, I worked for the Content Analysis team and reviewed and analyzed NEPA comment as my work. I understand the process and the technical reviews versus general public comment.</p> <p>I worked for a ski lodge and also ran a small business in Little Cottonwood Canyon for most of a decade and lived in the canyon, too. I am quite aware of the issues, constraints, and values inherent in this astounding natural area so close to a major population center and international airport.</p> <p>Regarding the EIS, the preferred alternative of a gondola is so flawed it seems as though it can only have been selected due to political and corporate pressure and an incomplete, biased, arbitrary and capricious analysis. As such it fail to meet NEPA standards. Even if such an expensive boondoggle were constructed, without robust and greatly increased transit and a strong demand management element, the gondola will fail to meet its intended goals and purpose. The congestion will be effectively as bad while those who decide to use the gondola will also face wait times - just not in the line of cars at the top of LCC. However, the traffic congestion will simply be displaced to valley streets and roads. The modeling for traffic must be completely flawed and needs to be evaluated by an unbiased, external expert team. Moreover, the amount of base parking that will be needed will have unacceptable environmental impacts, much less the tower and structural components directly.</p> <p>The only rational, conservative, and cost effective alternative puts the responsibility where it belongs on the commercial ski resorts and entities that drive demand, and reduces environmental impact (I would have hated to code that sentence lol).</p> <p>A demand management alternative must include -market rate parking fees for every private vehicle entering LCC;</p>

		<p>-tolling during high season; -limiting season and daily resort pass sales; -variable and time dependent ski lift ticket pricing to match demand; -other relevant evidence-based options for demand management.</p> <p>The impacts of climate change are not adequately analyzed, given the high end estimates are unfortunately already coming true at a much accelerated and frankly terrifying pace. The ski season will likely shorten substantially with 2-3 decades, lessening any need further. There is essentially no summer need for all of this - at most congestion is 120-150 days in the year, driven entirely by the commercial ski business. It is also congestion experienced and caused by those responsible for it, so it is atrocious to ask general taxpayers to foot the bill for a gondola for the highest income residents and visitors - about the only people who can afford to resort ski anymore.</p> <p>As an avid skier, I object to the public subsidies - including permit fees and all the other support from the public sector and woefully underfunded USFS - to this highly environmentally impactful industry. Only mining has more environmental impact.</p> <p>I endorse and incorporate by reference the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance's comments.</p> <p>The gondola boondoggle cannot meet the demand, has enormous visual impacts, and cannot pass any serious cost-benefit economic impact - except to line the pockets of the contractors who would build it. This alternative must be reversed and rejected. Given the massive backlog of maintenance real needs in a comprehensive, complete, regional, low carbon transportation network and future, the apparent willingness of UDOT to ask for jaw-dropping sums of funding for this project is unacceptable and unprofessional. We desperately need a new vision for a livable future that includes sustainable management of the Cottonwood canyons.</p> <p>Please eliminate the gondola boondoggle from consideration and focus on real, cost-effective transportation solutions for LCC.</p>
37366	Hannah Baxter	<p>The proposed gondola is an unrealistic and harmful option for several reasons. First, the gondola would only stop at Snowbird and Alta, but over 3/4th of canyon users don't go to those destinations when they go up the canyons (source: An Estimation of Visitor Use in Little Cottonwood, Big Cottonwood, and Millcreek Canyons, written by Chase C. Lamborn and Steven W. Burr). This means that the gondola would not be improving access and will not be cutting down on the majority of traffic. In order to offset the \$600 million spent to build the gondola, the gondola will likely cost money to use, with no estimate cost released, whereas public transportation is free, and even the ski buses are only \$5 (Deseret News "What Now? Will New Buses or a Gondola be the Answer to a Congested Canyon?"). UDOT has itself admitted that the gondola will not reduce traffic, but instead get more people to the ski resorts. According to EIS 8.4.3.2, with the increase in resort visitation from UDOT's proposals, "daily traffic volumes would be similar to the existing conditions in 2020", but "the [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts" (UDOT's EIS Ch. 6.). This shows that even UDOT is aware the gondola is not actually meant to improve traffic and accessibility, and that it is instead simply a way for those who already have more than enough money to increase their wealth at the cost of the citizens of Sandy and the health of the canyon. In other words, UDOT says the gondola will increase resort visitation and profit while using public funds and not reducing traffic. Using public funds to increase the wealth of ski resorts, which are private companies, is governmental corruption. Those in the government who support this plan will be known as corrupt politicians who harmed instead of helped the people they were supposed to be serving.</p> <p>Beyond affecting canyon users, proposed construction of the gondola is harmful</p>

		<p>to the health of the citizens of Salt Lake Valley. On average, 90% of SLC's water supply comes from the Wasatch. UDOT construction projects have polluted streams before (KSL - concrete spill in Mill Creek).</p> <p>In total, the pros list for the gondola is short, and the cons list is very long. The pros are that it will increase resort profit (by using public funds, yippee for corruption!), increase profit for private developers (who obviously need all that extra money), will be a tourist attraction, and will get more people to the ski resorts (who, just like the private developers, are in dire need for more money). The cons are many. It will irreparably damage the canyon's beauty, will require \$600 million in tax dollars to build, will not address traffic, will not improve accessibility, only services the resorts, will require years of construction in our very sensitive and crucial watershed, will require dispersed users to pay for access to their public lands, and will not address Big Cottonwood Canyon traffic.</p> <p>Let us remember that this whole issue originally was meant to address canyon traffic and accessibility. What would be the best solutions for those? Adding bus stops around the valley that could take anyone straight to the canyons. Buses that stop at ski resorts AND hiking trailheads and climbing approaches. Buses are the best solution. They are already cheap, could be incentivized to increase ridership, and can be implemented far quicker than a gondola, and do not affect the beauty of our canyon. Those who have proposed the gondola are corrupt and greedy, putting personal monetary gain over the needs of the community and the health of the canyon. The intertwining of UDOT with the private gondola interests shows that UDOT has lost sight of their purpose and is no longer interested in helping the citizens of Utah. Instead, they are concerned only with helping those with private interests. If the Utah Legislature ultimately decides to support the gondola, it will be a sad day in the history of our state. It will show a government that is corrupt and that does not care about the health or opinions of its citizens.</p>
37371	Jackson Arvidson	<p>Hi UDOT,</p> <p>As a frequent user of LCC during all months of the year I have several comments regarding your findings.</p> <p>First & foremost LCC is an amazing natural playground with many different types of outdoor recreation opportunities and it is awesome that so many people want to take part in them. Like many amazing places LCC cannot handle all the people that want to recreate all the time.</p> <p>The absolute worst traffic days are in part caused by more people attempting to recreate in the canyon than the canyon can handle. Does it make sense to spend millions on infrastructure to maximize the number of people in the canyon when it is overcrowded and the quality of experience is being eroded in concert with canyon conditions. There has to be a limit- time should be spent identifying an actual limit rather than figuring out how to move all the people up the canyon in the shortest amount of time.</p> <p>Jumping into the gondola path before exhausting all other, much less impactful approaches seems quite foolhardy. The gondola tower construction and visual appearance will permanently alter the canyon for the worse. All other less impactful strategies must be implemented prior to moving forward on this gondola project.</p> <p>Many of the severe traffic events are caused by car accidents mid</p>

		<p>canyon. Spending the money to enforce traction laws would go a long way in preventing those mid canyon accidents that exponentially increase canyon transit time.</p> <p>There already is a bus system, which has mobility hubs miles from the mouth of the canyon. Focusing on improving the bus experience and penalizing single car drivers aka tolling & parking fees would go a long way in incentivizing canyon users to ride the bus.</p> <p>I would like to point out that Alta's reservation system & paid parking strategy has certainly improved the traffic situation. I think if snowbird adopted a similar strategy that would go a long way to helping the situation with minimal impact.</p> <p>The goal is to reduce the number of vehicles travelling in the canyon, which in turn will alleviate the congestion at the canyon mouth, which negatively impacts residents in those neighborhoods. I still see a conflict if gondola access is provided by parking your car in a garage at the mouth of the canyon.</p> <p>The large drawbacks to the bus service I have witnessed are overcrowding and unreliable service. People want to take the bus, raising the pay wage for the drivers seems like a no brainer compared to the cost of the gondola.</p> <p>Moving onto the avalanche hazard of SR-210. I see avoiding that hazard as the best argument for the gondola. The final EIS shows avalanche closure through the 2017-18, I would be interested to see those numbers through last winter. We have certainly noticed more low elevation rain events and I wonder how long before the lower elevation slide paths are no longer a concern due to lack of snow to create a bed surface for avalanches to run all the way to the road. Impacts of climate change must seriously be considered prior to full heartedly recommending this gondola.</p> <p>While I know this comment area is to specifically address the SR-210 FEIS, I would like to mention that SR-190 has a host of its own problems that need to be addressed, most very similar to those addressed regarding SR-210 in this FEIS. Due to the length and shape of that canyon I'm going to wager that a gondola would not be at the top of the list for that canyon. Buses can be rerouted to address higher demand areas.</p> <p>Thank you for reading through my comments. Good luck!</p> <p>Sincerely, Jackson Arvidson</p>
37382	robert jacobs	<p>Selecting Gondola B as the preferred alternative ignores many considerations :</p> <p>It is too inflexible. It cannot be modified to allow for new developments - economical, climatic, transport innovations, etc. Once built the gondola will be there whether needed or not, whether wanted or not. Think West Desert Pumps! It is still unclear what will convince anyone who has driven to the mouth of LCC, to now park, get out of their car with ski equipment, walk to the loading platform, stand in a line to get on a gondola, pay for the ride, take longer to get up the canyon, and if they are going to Alta either wait a little longer on the gondola or</p>

		<p>get off and onto another gondola for the remainder of the trip.</p> <p>Whatever mechanism is used to get anyone out of their vehicle(a toll I guess), it will be just as effective in inducing people to ride a bus.</p> <p>Buses significantly reduce vehicle traffic on Wasatch Blvd. by eliminating the 2500 vehicles which will be parked in the Gondola Parking Structure. Parking for ski bus transfer should be at the Gravel Pit and 9400 South as originally proposed. This would allow for easy access by users of public transportation(PT) as well as vehicles.</p> <p>Buses can be utilized by other users of the canyon - hikers, climbers, cross country skiers, .. whomever by providing other stops along the canyon. Imagine being able to take a bus up to trailheads instead of fighting for parking spaces in limited lots. In fact trail head parking could be eliminated and hikers required to take the bus to reach trailheads - think Zion NP shuttle.</p> <p>Electric busses would be ideal for the canyon. using regenerative techniques to recover a good portion of energy used to travel up the canyon on the way down. My electric car recovers 50-60%.</p> <p>The Gondola B alternative was introduced so late in the process, it really avoided the extensive examination which was promised for this process. Many questions have still not been answered which would allow citizens or UDOT to adequately analyze the Gondola B alternative - access to the 2500 car parking structure, will parking be free, cost to ride the Gondola, cost of toll to drive, mountain capacity, how will tolling be implemented, how will skiers who use PT get to the Gondola - there is already adequate PT to gravel Pit and 9400 South hubs.</p> <p>Allow ski resorts to help solve their problem - resorts should implement a parking reservation system, if you don't have a reservation don't drive to the resort. This could be the way the toll is implemented for skiers and would solve the problem of dealing with people who live in Alta, etc., only skiers would pay the toll(parking fee). We could eliminate the entire cost of the tolling part of the proposal.</p> <p>If climate change does adversely affect ski conditions, we may not have a problem for the Gondola to solve - but we will still have the Gondola and the HUGE debt and maintenance costs to deal with. Busses? not so much, just scale back the bus service. A Snowbird VP said don't be misled by the fact that there wasn't much of a traffic problem the last couple of years because they were an anomaly due to the mild winters. Is he sure they were an anomaly or are they the new norm with climate change? Does UDOT know?</p> <p>I strongly advocate for a phased approach to test less costly and intrusive alternatives before committing to the Kraken called Gondola B. Every governmental entity representing the East Bench agrees with me. Thanks.</p>
37422	Tim Rogers	<p>I don't know how much it matters, and I'm sure a lot of these comments start with "I've skied Alta for 35 years" or something like that, but I feel like it might help whoever is reading this to know that I've worked for UDOT as an Avalanche Forecaster in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons since 2018. Prior to that I lived and worked in Alta for over a decade. I've seen the growth and change in both LCC and SLC. I feel like my viewpoint is unique and deeply informed, but also, it's just one of many who moved to Utah and fallen in love with the Wasatch Front.</p> <p>I'll cut to the chase. I'm a fan of the preferred alternative. I still don't think a gondola is the best solution or the first thing LCC needs to alleviate the traffic pressure, but as it's stated in the draft, I'm in support of the phased approach and believe if the other measures don't make enough of an impact, the gondola could be an appealing addition to mobility in the canyon.</p> <p>The first and biggest concerns I have are that the working capacity study for LCC is over 20 years old. This is absolutely ridiculous, to have a thorough understanding of how many people are using the canyon and what they're doing /</p>

	<p>where they're going is absolutely required before deciding on and investing in costly solutions. The fact that UDOT would not complete a new capacity study or require the USFS to complete one as part of the EIS is confusing and troubling. Without a current capacity study how do we expect to get a thorough understanding of who is using the canyon, where they're going, and how many people the Cottonwoods can safely or reasonably accommodate on a daily basis?</p> <p>I'm in support of starting with less invasive maneuvers like enhanced bus service, avalanche sheds, and mobility hubs (not to mention, tolling) and believe that they would have a drastic impact on the congestion problems in LCC. But if those measures aren't enough, I'm open to considering a transportation alternative like a gondola to have another option for canyon travel. As every Avalanche Supervisor in LCC has said for the last 30+ years, avalanche sheds in the mid-canyon could reduce mid-day closures by close to 80%. And while the traffic problem is no longer just caused by these closures for avalanche control, this change alone could alleviate many of the long waits in down-canyon travel.</p> <p>I think it's important for solutions or alternatives to be usable year-round, even if it's only on a reduced schedule. Congestion is no longer just a winter issue. I also think any alternatives should be accommodating to access USFS trailheads as I have witnessed these user groups grow drastically over the last decade and a half.</p> <p>I can appreciate the tough position UDOT finds itself in proposing or confirming the gondola or any construction as a traffic alternative. I think it's unfortunate that this problem was created by the ski areas, compounded by the popularity of backcountry skiing and the lack of action from the forest service, but then blamed on UDOT. I wish the USFS would allocate more money to management of the Cottonwoods, I wish the ski areas would limit their business in a way so they might still make a profit and offer an appealing product, but my wishes don't get too far, and until the ski areas or USFS steps up to the plate in actionable ways this will remain a transportation issue for UDOT to solve. After seeing the problem only get worse for years I'm glad someone is at least putting options on the table.</p> <p>I don't think it looks good for UDOT to be offering solutions that seem catered to serve the ski areas. Yes, much of the winter congestion is due to their popularity, but I don't think that means transportation alternatives or traffic solutions should be accommodating solely to them. If the business is so popular that people can't make it through the door then they can figure out a reservation system or another type of product to offer. There are a lot of different people using the canyon and I think usage outside of the ski areas will only become more popular, for that reason I think UDOT should anticipate alternatives to better serve those groups in the future.</p> <p>I think that's about it. Something needs to be done, many days exiting the canyons is unnecessarily tedious and downright hazardous, purely because of the volume of traffic. Thanks for listening and good luck in a decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [] Proponent of the phased approach - [] Need a new capacity study. - [] Alternatives or enhanced bus should operate on a reduced capacity year-round and be scalable to incorporate trailheads - [] USFS should complete a new capacity survey and create snow-park type permit system. - [] Ski areas should relinquish some parking to USFS or be cooperative with
--	---

		land/funding for mobility hubs unless they don't want them to be convenient for ski area users.
37452	Anna DeMonte	<p>UDOT,</p> <p>First off, I'd like to make sure to separate the two main issues that I believe are most at-play when it comes to the EIS proposal.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving the mobility and reliability of transportation in S.R 210 2. Preserving the beauty of Little Cottonwood Canyon <p>The reason for clear separation of the two is to acknowledge that, while I am passionate about preserving the beauty of our mountains, I understand that it can be difficult to look at an issue objectively when there is passion involved. With that, I'll first start by focusing on the first point above; improving the mobility and reliability of transportation in S.R 210.</p> <p>I am an avid visitor of Little Cottonwood Canyon, but the gondola recommendation by UDOT would certainly not improve mobility and reliability for those like me. Why? In both the summer and the winter, I spend the majority of my days visiting trailheads all along the canyon's length, not at the resorts. Two destinations I rarely visit are Alta and Snowbird, which happen to be the two locations in which the gondola recommendation would operate. For backcountry users in both summer and winter, there needs to be a long-term solution that also addresses areas I use in the canyon such as White Pine trailhead, Grizzly Gulch, and Gate Buttruss.</p> <p>When considering the current scope of the Final EIS statement - My recommendation is enhanced bus service without road expansion in S.R. 210. This is the best solution moving forward as it is a scalable solution that minimizes permanent environmental impact in S.R. 210. Per page 2-142 of the Final EIS, "the cost of phase implementation is \$110 Million with a \$7 million operating budget." This solution can be implemented without permanently changing the landscape. This solution has a 54 minute proposed transit concept which is one minute shorter than the Gondola B alternative as recommended by UDOT.</p> <p>Additionally, it would be fiscally irresponsible for UDOT to recommend moving forward with a \$550 Million dollar construction project that will still require the \$110 Million cost of the enhanced bussing to bridge the time gap. That brings the total of the gondola system to a baseline of \$650 Million, not adjusting for price changes between 2020 and 2025 or later when the construction would begin.</p> <p>The enhanced bus system can be rolled out in smaller phases and tested/proven method while it is initiated. Per UDOT statements, they acknowledge that the current SKI bus system frequently reaches max capacity and there is an issue with lack of parking based on current infrastructure. During Free Fare February 2022. Page 7 of the UTA_ Free Fare February 2022 final release statement shows an increase of 14% for weekly riders. People will take the bus when you make it convenient and affordable.</p> <p>The cost analysis provided in the FEIS statement has many ambiguous statements that demonstrate that the cost for the Gondola is a rough estimate and that if any design and construction changes are required, UDOT might need to re-evaluate the Environmental analysis - 2.6.4.1.6. This would include several large construction projects that have highly variable costs and have seen a 30% minimum increase since the EIS baseline cost set in 2020.</p> <p>Now, to touch on the second issue I highlighted above-- preserving the beauty of</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>I keep this issue second because I realize that it is not UDOT's intention to harm or sacrifice the beauty of the canyon. A transportation issue was identified and it is reasonable that some of the proposed solutions may have a visual effect on the canyon.</p> <p>That being said, given my already-outlined points above (lack of service in all areas of LCC, the financial impact, etc), adding a gondola with two large diesel tanks at both angle stations would without a doubt be a tragedy. Once permanent modifications to Little Cottonwood Canyon begin, they can never be undone. The stunning canyon that has shaped the lives of generations will no longer be the same.</p> <p>This option presents potential for large scale environmental impacts into our watershed if there were any damage to the containment system and an oil/water separator system is not installed.</p> <p>Multi-year civil construction throughout the canyon will require intense SWPP mitigation programs. UDOT has proven in Millcreek that your projects have contaminated the watershed to the point that it was not safe for human interaction. The acreages that would be impacted by the Gondola are primarily in Little Cottonwood Canyon by the Angle stations, switching stations, and 22 Pole foundations.</p> <p>Why permanently damage the beauty of such a dearly-loved canyon when other viable options exist that ALSO serve not-just resort visitors?</p> <p>We seek sensible solutions that look at a holistic view of the canyons and not a fiscally irresponsible band-aid that is funded by the taxpayers. The canyons need to be preserved for generations to come and as a community we will work together to alter our habits for a sustainable future.</p> <p>Best, Anna</p>
37454	John Pikus	<p>I have already commented multiple times with potential solutions and ideas to fix the maybe 20 day a year problem of wintertime traffic in LCC. I also understand that UDOT was charged with the task of improving the reliability and mobility of SR 210 in Little Cottonwood Canyon. However, this is way too narrow of a scope to view Little Cottonwood as a place. It is so much more than just a highway and two ski resorts. It is a place where myself and many others have had incredible experiences of solitude in nature even just a few minutes off the road in this beautiful glacier-carved canyon. It is a place where I have marveled so many times at the quality natural experience that can be had just minutes from the bustling city. It is a special place to me and so many others that call Salt Lake City their home, and we would love to see that experience preserved for our children and grandchildren.</p> <p>I applaud UDOT for taking some steps of a phased approach to the canyon's traffic problem. Snowsheds are a great idea that I believe will help significantly. Have someone check tires at the mouth of the canyon and perhaps institute a mandatory sticker policy so that this can be done quickly? I drive a small car with snow tires (I did get a sticker from Burt Brothers too) and was never once checked. I am honestly confused as to why this is so difficult to do. It would solve so many of the wintertime road problems in LCC. Accept that driving the buses in the winter is not a desirable job and that UTA is going to have to pay drivers a lot</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>of money in order to hire enough to satisfy demands (yes, I understand that UDOT is not directly involved in this, however the money being used to fund the hypothetical gondola could instead be used to pay bus drivers lots of money.)</p> <p>I also appreciate that UDOT is looking forward to issues that will arise with population growth in the Salt Lake Valley. We all need to acknowledge that times are changing and we cannot keep living the way we used to. However, I want to see future people enjoying the canyon in the same way I have been fortunate enough to. Ski uncrowded resort slopes at Snowbird and Alta without waiting in huge liftlines. Skiing off the summit of Red Baldy early in the morning and marvelling at the view of the canyon. Topping out world class boulder problems in a beautiful and undisturbed deep forest setting. The only solution will be to place a capacity limit on the canyon (and most importantly the resorts.) What good is cramming so many people up there going to do? Other than make big bucks for the resorts and their executives? The experience is just going to be worse for everyone. I'd happily sacrifice being able to ski at the resorts whenever I want so that everyone can have a better experience (and no, resort expansion is not the answer... they already take up the most coveted ski terrain in the canyon and what is left must be preserved for backcountry skiers.)</p> <p>Another thing to think about is with the effects of climate change already evident, how much longer is skiing going to be viable in Little Cottonwood? I could see a future where it does not snow enough for the resorts to provide the same great ski experience that they have in the past. And we will be left with the monstrosity of an aging and rusting gondola that no longer serves a purpose... very sad. Listen to the people and elected politicians of Salt Lake County who share these concerns. We see Little Cottonwood with a more holistic view and understand how a Gondola would forever alter this special place. I urge UDOT to do the same, and expand their horizons beyond simply thinking about mobility and reliability.</p> <p>Best, John Pikus</p>
37481	Wendy Zeigler	<p>Dear UDOT staff, I have been a user of LCC most of my 60 years. As a Utah resident and a property owner in BCC I have the following comments:</p> <p>First, thank you for your tiered approach, the phase in is important to get people using public transportation. I believe if public transport is less expensive, faster, and more reliable more people will use it. The fact that you believe we only need to reduce traffic by 30% means that buses are even more practicable. If we ran a bus every 3 min, one to Alta, the next to Snowbird and the next stopping at Trail heads, you could reduce traffic by at least 30%. A Van might work to TH's at first. Part of the problem with this EIS and what you are tasked to solve, is that this is not just a winter problem, but a 4 season problem and it is a problem at all trailheads. You have an opportunity to solve this year round problem with the buses. We need summer buses!</p> <p>Second, your larger parking lots are very short sighted. They will put a dent in the parking issues we have today, but not in the future parking issues at all trailheads, only helping the ski areas. With population increasing every year, plus the increased use among existing population, this problem of cars on the road will just continue. A bus stop at White pine could help significantly, but I could not find a bus turn out/stop in the EIS for this location. We could also have stops at the most popular climbing areas.</p> <p>The gondola will ruin the view shed of one of the most beautiful canyons in the world! Imagine a gondola going up the middle of the Grand Canyon with that</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>many cars on it. It would be a travesty, LCC is the same value of view to most users of LCC. That is why 80% of residents oppose this option.</p> <p>The gondola will not be able to run on Inter-lodge days for obvious reasons. It will only shift the traffic jam onto Wasatch Blvd.</p> <p>To that point, you are faced with the same problem, everyone wants to arrive for first tracks on a powder day. There is no way all of those cars will be able to enter the single parking garage in a timely manner to not back up onto Wasatch BLVD. You are just shifting the problem down canyon. After people drive around in the parking garage, they will give up and drive up. The next time, they won't even bother trying.</p> <p>I am very sad to see widening of Wasatch Blvd. You will bring more and more traffic to this road by doing this. As it is now, many Draper cars use I-15, I am concerned this will change for commuting. Here again, a more efficient bus service would be the answer.</p> <p>The tolling idea, only at the top of the canyon, on busy days, is interesting and has some merits. However, I fully support a toll like in Millcreek with an annual pass option, then put this money right back into the Canyon, for roads, trail work, added restrooms at TH's etc. You could have a different fee schedule for those going to the top on a busy ski day.</p> <p>TH Parking: Having experienced the Cardiff Fork Pedestrian signal, I think you need to find a better way for Pedestrian crossing at Lisa Falls, maybe a culvert like at Corner Canyon funded by Tolling at the bottom of the canyon. Unfortunately, all of those parking lots will be overflowing the moment they are built. Cars are not the answer, bringing more cars is not the answer. White Pine expanded parking is not even close to the use now on weekends all year round. Public transit to trailheads is the answer. Most people cannot afford the outrageous prices of ski resorts, big parking garages, or gondolas, therefore, trailhead use will continue to skyrocket. Buses are the best answer and year round is vital.</p> <p>I am further concerned that you are not addressing the backcountry ski parking at Alta. Maybe this is another issue, but I see you reducing spaces around the Alta lodge and Our Lady of the Snows. Will you expand bus service times to accommodate Dawn Patrol? ,Ã®</p> <p>Finally, as a resident of BCC, I feel you are shifting pressure into BCC. I would like to see parking garages and increased bus service that benefit both canyons.</p> <p>Parking reservations work, increased bus service at a subsidized rate, to lower costs will work, WE do not need to subsidize Alta and Snowbird with more tax payer money than they already receive.</p> <p>I am hopeful that, with this phased approach, if a better solution to the problem comes along, you will consider that also.</p> <p>Wendy Zeigler</p>
37503	Jason Wolf	<p>Dear UDOT LCC EIS Project Team,</p> <p>Thank you for taking the public voice into consideration during this very important decision. A decision that will not only have an impact on our current transportation needs but also have a lasting effect on future generations. During the EIS process, it is important to not only consider the needs of skiers that visit Alta and Snowbird but also all visitors to the canyon. Little Cottonwood Canyon has</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>become an iconic natural space that is only elevated in intrinsic value due to its close proximity to a major metropolitan area. Nowhere else in the world can you find Wilderness within minutes of a community of over 1 million residents. It is a place where people from around the globe can admire the natural aesthetic of a glacial carved canyon.</p> <p>I ask that UDOT reconsider the scope of the LCC EIS. I believe that the scope is far too narrow and does not adequately take into consideration the majority of residents of Utah. The very definition of the project's purpose and need will create further barriers to entry for families that already cannot afford the luxury of skiing. We live in a place that brings tourists in from all over the world, but many of the people in our community do not have the financial means to enjoy much of the Wasatch. Currently, much of our public lands are not free to access. I ask UDOT to reconsider the purpose to include providing equitable access for residents who currently cannot access public lands due to financial obstacles that only grow as winter recreation becomes increasingly cost-prohibitive.</p> <p>Public lands belong to everyone, all people have a human right to access nature and the great outdoor experience without obstacles/barriers. In Chapter 5, Environmental Justice, section 5.3 'Affected Environment' and the environmental justice impact analysis area is too narrow of a geographical scope to adequately determine equitable access to the outdoors. UDOT states in the LCC EIS that they "did not identify low-income or minority areas, service providers, or housing near the proposed alternative improvements". This demonstrates that low-income households have to travel further distances to access LCC than more affluent residents who live close by. The EIS also fails to take into account the cost(s) to access the mobility hubs. I believe there is an Environmental Justice concern to equitable access for low-income families if charged per person. The EIS states that one solution for low-income populations is to "wait to recreate after peak hours," this statement suggests unequal access.</p> <p>Thank you for adding the phased approach to the final EIS. I am supportive of increasing Electric Buses that not only reduce traffic on SR210 but also tie into mobility hubs which are part of the many communities throughout the valley. I ask that UDOT add additional bus stops at other locations in LCC outside of the ski resorts. These stops would include White Pine, Tanners Flat, and Grist Mill. I also ask that UDOT add performance metrics to allow a 5-year study to determine if an enhanced bus service could meet the needs of reducing 30% of traffic from SR210. In addition to the enhanced bus service, I ask UDOT to work with the ski resorts to determine parking capacity at each resort and create a smartphone app that will allow visitors a quick and easy way to see traffic, reserve a parking space and provide information on public transit options. Overall I am in support of Salt Lake County's Common-Sense Solutions because it does not create any irreversible destruction to Little Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>Thank you for the consideration</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Jason Wolf</p>
37539	John Connolly	<p>I am re-sharing the WBA's comment in support of their position against the gondola. Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>---</p> <p>The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance (WBA) is a local SLC nonprofit representing the interests of thousands of backcountry - and resort - users both locally and</p>

		<p>nationally as they pertain to the preservation of the famous non-resort terrain in the Tri-Canyon area. We have paid very close attention to the LCC EIS transportation process, and this is our formal comment.</p> <p>WBA agrees with UDOT that a preferred solution will represent a summary of key concerns expressed within the public comments that were received and processed: EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS to dispersed recreation, OVERCROWDING, VISUAL IMPACTS, WATER QUALITY IMPACTS, AND YEAR-ROUND ACCESS for a majority of visitors. The proposed solution does not address these aspects - below is a list of issues that we see with UDOT choosing Gondola Alternative B as its preferred alternative:</p> <p>Dispersed Use - UDOT claims to have "Consideration of all canyon users, not just resort visitors" but by only having resort terminals and not operating year-round it's clear that this is disingenuous at best. It is well known that the White Pine trailhead is wildly popular year-round, with cars parking up and down the highway for up to a mile in either direction at all times of the year. This not only forces people to be far from their intended destination, it also creates a significant safety hazard along the state highway. The argument that UDOT uses for not stopping at White Pine is that there will be less traffic on the highway due to the gondola, thereby enabling White Pine users to drive to the lot is a red herring. WBA does not think that vehicle traffic will be abated enough (if at all) by the gondola to justify this conclusion. Backcountry users - like resort patrons - want to be able to use public transit in lieu of their own vehicles to access the canyon, but that is not possible under the current proposal.</p> <p>Economic Benefit - The EIS states: "The [gondola] would provide an economic benefit to the ski resorts by allowing more users to access the resorts." WBA does not feel that enriching two private entities is UDOT's mission or responsibility and that applying taxpayer dollars to that end is a reckless use of public funds. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the latest Snowsports Industries of America participation numbers (2021-22) show a nearly 6% decrease in resort skiers and a 96% increase in backcountry skiers. Furthermore, data from the National Ski Area Association likewise indicates that participation in resort skiing has remained essentially flat for the last 30 years. More broadly accessible, dispersed activities such as backcountry skiing, snowboard touring, nordic skiing and snowshoeing on the other hand are among the fastest growing segments of the snowsports industry. And yet these increasingly popular activities, which should be made accessible to a majority of visitors to LCC, are fundamentally ignored by this proposal.</p> <p>Expense - The initial cost proposed by UDOT for the gondola was \$550M. This was pre-inflationary times, so even in the last year that figure will have risen to \$600M, if not significantly higher (which WBA suspects to be the case). Even if the cost has only increased by \$50M, that means that every single person in Utah is "paying" \$200 each to have what is effectively the most expensive chairlift in history installed for the benefit of two businesses (and auxiliary businesses). Any benefit associated with the proposed gondola will likely never be realized by the many Utahns who don't ski and/or live in other areas of the state, despite them paying for it.</p> <p>Gondola Fees - Along with the rising costs of construction and UDOT's admission that funds may not be available, the prospect of high costs for people to ride the gondola exists. There has been little discussion from UDOT or the ski resorts regarding fees for riding the gondola. It seems logical that high or even exorbitant fees to ride the gondola will drive ridership down.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>Seasonality - As currently proposed, the gondola will only run from December through April. This is despite the fact that traffic in LCC between June and October is effectively at the same level as the winter, with Snowbird actually parking more cars for their Oktoberfest celebration than they do on winter powder days. Relegating the gondola to winter use only confirms that this is NOT a public transit option and is instead a wholly-taxpayer-funded chairlift to benefit two private ski areas.</p> <p>Other Solutions - UDOT says "it may take years to secure federal, state and/or private funding for full implementation of Gondola B" but it also may NOT take years, so clearly the gondola is the priority. And if UDOT is trying to simultaneously raise at least \$600M for the gondola AND fund the alternative solutions, the money is in danger of not being available for ANY solution. And by making it clear that the gondola is the preferred solution, UDOT is effectively being incentivized to make the alternate solutions NOT work. Therefore, we strongly suggest that UDOT acknowledge up front that the large tab for the gondola is unrealistic and focus its efforts on simpler, more easily attained transit solutions using existing infrastructure: tolling for all canyon users to disincentivize SOV's, enhanced bus lanes, enhanced bus service (already being cut for the 22-23 season), alternating uphill/downhill flex lanes, etc. This would require UDOT working more closely with UTA, which appears to not be the case.</p> <p>Phasing/Safety/Construction - The physical and operational elements of a gondola alternative render it useless unless the entire system is constructed. Recognizing UDOT typically does not develop a funding plan until the EIS is finalized - and that this project is so controversial - the EIS should be more specific on the intentions of UDOT in phasing specific elements of the selected alternative. As per Executive Summary, page S-25, Section S.11, there are no safety or operational benefits to construct part of the gondola. This section on phasing deserves additional clarity in order to adequately and transparently inform the decision. Delays on full funding of any length of time would render this entire NEPA process unreliable, and would require restarting the process anew.</p> <p>Risk/Flexibility - UDOT's consideration of a gondola as a transportation solution is highly innovative - and risky. While they may be confident in all of the analysis that went into evaluating its chance of success in meeting the Purpose and Need, there is little discussion in the DEIS for how a gondola system would be modified physically or operationally if that becomes necessary, or who would be in charge of making those determinations, and on what basis, and for what cost, and what the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of those changes would be. This creates an inadequate basis for a decision to select the gondola alternative.</p> <p>Controversial - By anyone's assessment, this project has been "polarizing" in the community. A recent survey showed that 80% of respondents did not favor the gondola. The DEIS uses a softer characterization of "strong interest." It is irresponsible to suggest it is anything other than controversial; for example, the mayors and councils of two of the biggest stakeholders - SLC and SLCO - have taken strong positions against the preferred alternative, instead saying that common sense solutions that use existing infrastructure and more buses should be pursued. All of the largest and most engaged environmental and dispersed recreational groups have said the same thing.</p> <p>Parking Reservations/Tolling - Alta Ski Lifts parking fees this past winter and the effects on LCC traffic were a clear example of the impact that paid parking and tolling in the canyons could have on traffic reduction. This week UDOT again</p>
--	--	---

		<p>introduced the concept of tolling, but the complexity of the suggested program is confusing at best. Please consider simpler and more universal tolling at lower rates to generate better results.</p> <p>Big Cottonwood Canyon - UDOT has inexplicably chosen to ignore BCC's traffic situation despite a changing business environment that has made BCC just as popular as LCC and with similar traffic problems. Social trends indicate that user growth in the Tri-Canyon area will continue to demand solutions that are integrated across the entire area, and the pressures to connect the canyons and extend the gondola could result in a segmented expansion of those transportation systems - which is inconsistent with NEPA. A BCC/LCC connection is unacceptable to WBA and many other stakeholders who want to preserve the unique qualities of each canyon and avoid the prospect of lifts criss-crossing the ridgetops.</p> <p>Verification - UDOT has not provided examples or proof that adding a gondola will actually reduce traffic in LCC. With continued full vehicle access on the state highway it is just as likely that visitors will continue to drive their vehicles up the canyon for maximum efficiency as some will take the gondola. There is a lack of acknowledgement by UDOT that "powder fever" and the overarching enthusiasm for skiing/riding tends to have the psychological effect of users demanding maximum transit efficiency, which the gondola does not represent.</p> <p>Avalanche Mitigation - The use of howitzers to control avalanches is projected to continue into the future. The gondola will not run while avalanche control work is happening and once anti-personnel shells are launched over the gondola, it must be cleared before it can start up again. In fact, there may be even more downtime than simply opening the road when - as is most common - the avalanches do not reach the road. UDOT does not state how long it will take to unload cars, inspect cables and towers, and reload cars during routine avalanche control which is something we must know before accepting the findings of the EIS.</p> <p>Effects on climbing - While WBA primarily represents the interests of wintertime non-motorized use, many WBA members are also climbers. We are deeply concerned about the effect the construction and operation of the gondola will have on the world class climbing in LCC. Climbing has a long history in the canyon, is a very popular activity, and it's representative group Salt Lake City Climbers Alliance has a long history of engaging with the state and the LDS church to protect and enhance the LCC climbing areas, yet the EIS effectively ignored the impact on climbing in its Preferred Solution.</p> <p>Viewshed - While we acknowledge that the top of LCC harbors a small town and two ski resorts and related businesses, the heart of LCC is wild terrain that includes clearly visible tracts of designated wilderness. The effect of 200-foot tall towers and 35-person gondola cars will be an eyesore that a majority of constituents, to whom such infrastructure will be visible whether they are driving, hiking, climbing, or skiing, will find offensive. Gondola infrastructure will be visible to anyone skiing, hiking, or otherwise recreating in the south or north facing terrain of LCC, as well as simply doing a leisurely drive up the canyon. There are clearly better, more logical common sense solutions that can be put in place that do not create such an eyesore in this unique environment.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts on this process and for your consideration of this comment.</p>
37589	Andrew Ferrer	<p>First, and again, thank you for thorough consideration of the public's response to the initial and updated EIS review process and proposals.</p>

		<p>These draft comment reviews (of ~13,000 comments) take great care to pinpoint public commenter's failures to come to the same conclusion of the UDOT board's recognition of Gondola Alternative B as the "preferred alternative." The preferred alternative, Gondola Alternative B, still does not effectively take into consideration a more meaningful approach to the management of transportation issues to be addressed - which should include a more thorough analysis of transportation needs in other Wasatch canyons and the Salt Lake community at large.</p> <p>The Gondola options would immediately and irreparably begin to damage the natural environment in LCC without being able to guarantee proper mitigation of the traffic issues. The projections used to design these solutions are effective at estimating, for instance, possible reductions car volume to maintain car and bus progress up the canyon. In no instance are the promised reductions from Gondola Alternative B a viable guarantee that its operation will be forever smooth and more efficient than smaller, incremental changes that leave smaller impacts on the environment and taxpayer burden.</p> <p>The Gondola Alternative B includes an abridged version of enhanced bus service. The final review indicates the final state of these new constructions (hubs, bus stops, and buses) are yet to be determined. This indicates that, if followed, the gondola would begin operations and the smaller footprint bus facilities are then abandoned? There should be a clear life-cycle and ideally a reuse solution to any resources constructed during major transportation changes to the public realm.</p> <p>The primary objective here is to more efficiently move people up to the resorts and minimize congestion. UDOT repeatedly and accurately claims that it maintains no authority to specifically limit attendance at resorts, use of the road (outside of emergencies), or public lands. This is technically true but lacks the kind of vision that would lead to more holistic construction of a real solution to transportation problems. By focusing on the narrow scope of Little Cottonwood Canyon and its narrow feeder roads, the resources being marshalled here for a huge public infrastructure spending project will only potentially benefit a small percentage of the winter sport recreating population and more likely only benefit two private ski resorts.</p> <p>There is discussion of activating the Gondola service for year-round operation; would it receive any use or just hang limp for 9 months? Would the presence of the Gondola, towers, and cables be a preferred feature in some of LCC's busiest days to photograph fall colors? The Gondola plan also considers that advising people to rideshare would only be met with implementation of fees to passenger car use in the canyon in a tiered structure dependent on traffic conditions. Why is there an assumption that people will prefer the use of the Gondola over the use of an existing bus service? This process is researching technical solutions but at no point does it (nor can it) guarantee that the spaces (cabled gondolas and buses) provided will be filled with the desired occupants.</p> <p>The final EIS document contains this: "Closures of Little Cottonwood Canyon for avalanche mitigation (which occur about 10.8 days per year) typically last 1.5 to 2 hours," (1.4.3.1.1 Mobility - https://littlecottonwoodeis.udot.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/LCC_FEIS_01_Purpose_Need.pdf). This amounts to about 22 hours in the year of avalanche delay - how much could this be mitigated by smaller step improvements snow-sheds over the road and the enhanced bus service proposals?</p> <p>Are the constituents structuring the transportation plans only the other</p>
--	--	---

		<p>government bodies that are listed as 'cooperators' and 'participants' or does it include the funding sources yet to be convinced if this project's viability? What is the dollar amount each Utah citizen will be paying into this project and will they ever request this amount back? Is the congestion issue in LCC an 80-20 scenario, where a smaller percentage of the users are creating the majority of the problem? At the conclusion of this process, who is UDOT convincing of the use-case of the Gondola, the enhanced bus service, some combination of both, or the no-action plan?</p> <p>The case being built technically to suggest a dramatic engineering solution (Gondola Alternative B) may appear to check the desirable traits of a transportation solution. I remain unconvinced that the best solution is an otherwise unproven structure built with an undeclared source of funding for \$500,000,000.00 in initial investment to improve accessibility to two ski resorts. The solutions to the transportation congestion should be small and incremental. The solutions should be rapidly assessed once implemented to guarantee they are meeting the expectations. The Gondola is a huge investment, and it currently guarantees only to leave behind a phased out bus plan in its wake.</p>
37770	Alexis Davis	<p>I feel as though the gondola is NOT the answer for little cottonwood canyon. There are several people like the owner snowbird John Cumming, the GM of snowbird Dave Fields, Chris McCandless and Wayne Niederhauser who are all going to benefit from this. It is all about the money. These people all grew up in Utah and do not care about how invasive this gondola will be to the community, watershed, and wildlife. As we know the land was bought from a secret LLC that snowbird created so people wouldn't be concerned as to why they bought it. Chris McCandless and Wayne Niederhauser were both involved in selling the land and are both part of CW Management Corp. They were also involved in selling land at the bottom of big cottonwood where there was a bar called The Canyon Inn. Cottonwood heights cops were paid to harass the bar owner and staff to get it closed down and this is all public information. The Canyon Inn was one of the top 25 destination skier bars to go to that has been there Eight Settlers Restaurant and Distillery. If you really cared about you cities and your communities you wouldn't be closing down historical places. This is why I believe they do not care about little cottonwood canyon. Snowbird has also gone into business with IKON passes so that skiers will have the option to ski Snowbird, Alta, Brighton and other resorts in Utah. With this pass Snowbird is losing money since these people will no longer be buying day passes they are purchasing the IKON pass and having to share that money as opposed to paying \$120 for a day pass. Snowbird is looking to make more money which is understandable. My question is why wouldn't you do it in the most efficient way possible and try different options that will work before ruining such a beautiful canyon. Little cotton wood canyon is not Europe. Utah is not Europe. There are so many more options and solutions that even locals are not worried about doing because they are concerned for the canyon and community. Park city is having the same issue. So many people have moved to Utah in the last 4-5 years that it is no longer "small lake city". Just because thousands are moving to our state does not mean that we need to change things just to cater to them. Park city is now making people carpool and having you set reservations for parking spots so they can reduce traffic. Also enforcing a toll that you will have to pay, which locals don't mind! We do not want to ruin our canyons. Especially when the Gondola will only have 2 stops. Thats insanity. We are going to build a \$550 million dollar gondola that will only really be used and help a few days out of the year. Only for a few days in the winter? For less traffic? Is that worth it? No! There are only 2 stops and you will not even need to use it during the summer because the traffic is never bad unless it's Oktoberfest. So you will not even be able to use it to get dropped off at an earlier location to get to a hike that you like. This \$550 million could be used towards</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>thousands of better things. Give it to the community, schools, help people and children in need. There are so many better ways to use this money than to bring skiers up a mountain so they don't have to wait in traffic. The thing that doesn't quite make sense to me is that people are still going to be driving up the canyon. There is still going to be a wait to park. Skiers and snowboarders are not going to stop driving up the canyon just because there is a gondola. I have listened to many interviews and podcasts with Dave Fields and Chris McCandless and they are trying to instill fear into the community by talking about how many avalanches there are up the long snake like canyon. Has it ever stopped anyone from driving up before? No. They want to make us nervous so we will agree with them and have them build a gondola so you can get up and down with no issues. What about the wildlife and how it is going to impact the lives of all of those animals that call this place their home? What bout the community and using taxpayers dollars for this project? What about our watershed and how it is going to be impacted when Utah already has enough issues with droughts and not enough water? So now we are going to put our watershed at risk when it is what we rely on for drinking water? It just does not make sense to me. They're promoting it as a heated gondola with charging ports and seats and all these fancy things. If I am not mistaken most cars driving up the canyon have heat and have charging ports. If you need to charge your items you bring with you on the gondola just be a responsible person and charge everything the night before or bring a battery pack. The main reason why I think UDOT should not move forward with the gondola is because it is for the wrong reasons. Listen to your city council members and leaders who really care about your city and want what's best for it and everyone living in it. Let's find a solution together to help the congestion in the canyon and to keep everyone safe including our wildlife, watershed and people of the community. Thank you.</p>
37776	Alexis Davis	<p>I feel as though the gondola is NOT the answer for little cottonwood canyon. There are several people like the owner snowbird John Cumming, the GM of snowbird Dave Fields, Chris McCandless and Wayne Niederhauser who are all going to benefit from this. It is all about the money. These people all grew up in Utah and do not care about how invasive this gondola will be to the community, watershed, and wildlife. As we know the land was bought from a secret LLC that snowbird created so people wouldn't be concerned as to why they bought it. Chris McCandless and Wayne Niederhauser were both involved in selling the land and are both part of CW Management Corp. They were also involved in selling land at the bottom of big cottonwood where there was a bar called The Canyon Inn. Cottonwood heights cops were paid to harass the bar owner and staff to get it closed down and this is all public information. The Canyon Inn was one of the top 25 destination skier bars to go to that has been there Eight Settlers Restaurant and Distillery. If you really cared about you cities and your communities you wouldn't be closing down historical places. This is why I believe they do not care about little cottonwood canyon. Snowbird has also gone into business with IKON passes so that skiers will have the option to ski Snowbird, Alta, Brighton and other resorts in Utah. With this pass Snowbird is losing money since these people will no longer be buying day passes they are purchasing the IKON pass and having to share that money as opposed to paying \$120 for a day pass. Snowbird is looking to make more money which is understandable. My question is why wouldn't you do it in the most efficient way possible and try different options that will work before ruining such a beautiful canyon. Little cotton wood canyon is not Europe. Utah is not Europe. There are so many more options and solutions that even locals are not worried about doing because they are concerned for the canyon and community. Park city is having the same issue. So many people have moved to Utah in the last 4-5 years that it is no longer "small lake city". Just because thousands are moving to our state does not mean that we need to change things just to cater to them. Park city is now making people carpool and</p>

		<p>having you set reservations for parking spots so they can reduce traffic. Also enforcing a toll that you will have to pay, which locals don't mind! We do not want to ruin our canyons. Especially when the Gondola will only have 2 stops. Thats insanity. We are going to build a \$550 million dollar gondola that will only really be used and help a few days out of the year. Only for a few days in the winter? For less traffic? Is that worth it? No! There are only 2 stops and you will not even need to use it during the summer because the traffic is never bad unless it's Oktoberfest. So you will not even be able to use it to get dropped off at an earlier location to get to a hike that you like. This \$550 million could be used towards thousands of better things. Give it to the community, schools, help people and children in need. There are so many better ways to use this money than to bring skiers up a mountain so they don't have to wait in traffic. The thing that doesn't quite make sense to me is that people are still going to be driving up the canyon. There is still going to be a wait to park. Skiers and snowboarders are not going to stop driving up the canyon just because there is a gondola. I have listened to many interviews and podcasts with Dave Fields and Chris McCandless and they are trying to instill fear into the community by talking about how many avalanches there are up the long snake like canyon. Has it ever stopped anyone from driving up before? No. They want to make us nervous so we will agree with them and have them build a gondola so you can get up and down with no issues. What about the wildlife and how it is going to impact the lives of all of those animals that call this place their home? What bout the community and using taxpayers dollars for this project? What about our watershed and how it is going to be impacted when Utah already has enough issues with droughts and not enough water? So now we are going to put our watershed at risk when it is what we rely on for drinking water? It just does not make sense to me. They're promoting it as a heated gondola with charging ports and seats and all these fancy things. If I am not mistaken most cars driving up the canyon have heat and have charging ports. If you need to charge your items you bring with you on the gondola just be a responsible person and charge everything the night before or bring a battery pack. The main reason why I think UDOT should not move forward with the gondola is because it is for the wrong reasons. Listen to your city council members and leaders who really care about your city and want what's best for it and everyone living in it. Let's find a solution together to help the congestion in the canyon and to keep everyone safe including our wildlife, watershed and people of the community. Thank you.</p>
37935	Kenneth Meleta	<p>The proposed gondola is the wrong choice. If the purpose of the EIS has narrowed to "get more paying customers to Snowbird and Alta at any cost" than the project purpose is helplessly, fundamentally flawed. However, I believe the proposal falls short regardless.</p> <p>The proposal does nothing to solve the congestion that occurs before reaching the gondola base and the mouth of the canyon. Riding the gondola actually involves additional unappealing steps for users to take in order to continue their journey up canyon. If someone has already waited in immense traffic by the time they reach the gondola base, are they likely to turn off the main road, search for a parking spot, walk from the parking spot to wait on line for the gondola, then ride up from there? I believe this process will not encourage anyone to opt for the gondola over driving themselves, and that's before people find out that the gondola ride won't even be free. It is not a mobility alternative. It is a gimmick. An ungodly expensive gimmick.</p> <p>Even if funded with tax payer money, it is obvious we will still be charged to even use the unwanted monstrosity. The utter lack of transparency about this crucial detail is incredibly alarming. If this information was widely known, you would even lose the support of the tiny minority of naive onlookers who support this</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>misguided blunder. It is misguided to go through with this solution that is so outrageously expensive to build, expensive to ride, expensive to operate in winter, expensive to operate in the summer, and it is downright criminal to consider asking the taxpayer to foot the bill for such a tourist trap and Ski Utah marketing tagline.</p> <p>It is also shortsighted to seek solutions for Little Cottonwood that can't also be repurposed in Big Cottonwood in the future. When additional barriers are created for traveling into LCC, users will flock to BCC. Compounding the problem in one canyon will not be an indicator of success for this project, as much as I know it would be touted as one when this inevitably happens. Not only will the gondola fail to fix the core issues in LCC, it will not provide a viable blueprint to apply to BCC.</p> <p>The detrimental effects the gondola would have on literally all other user groups other than paying winter season resort guests should be so obvious that I'm angry I even feel the need to touch on it. All canyon visitors including but not limited to backcountry skiers, snowboarders, snowshoers, hikers, fisherman, mountain bikers, road cyclists, photographers, rock climbers, boulderers, trail runners, road runners, and anyone simply looking to escape the city to experience the mental and physical benefits associated with existing in nature, will be negatively impacted by the irreversible decision you are making by recommending the gondola. It will be an eyesore and its construction threatens natural and recreational assets that predate and will outlast the viable Utah ski season in the future.</p> <p>Other less-destructive options exist, and must be considered and implemented first, but even doing nothing is better than the gondola. Your legacy will not be remembered well for rushing this decision to appease those who stand to profit the most from the gondola. The gondola will be an everlasting stain to be lived down by those involved. A failure. An embarrassment.</p> <p>Thank you for pretending to read and consider these comments.</p> <p>Ken Meleta</p>
38008	Lori Okino	<p>The gondola B alternative will not solve the canyon transportation issues. Perhaps from the standpoint of reliability, the gondola would seem like the best choice. Given public outcry against it, perhaps UDOT needs to reassess the weight of public choice in their decision making. Afterall, it IS the public who will bear the burden of the cost.</p> <p>The gondola reminds me of another costly, poor decision back in the early 80's. Governor Norm Bangerter spent \$60 million on three pumps at the Great Salt Lake. This quick fix was only used for two years! What a legacy to leave! Now he is the butt of many jokes.</p> <p>When my husband and I built our home 17 years ago, Little Cottonwood Canyon Road was backed-up mainly on days when avalanche control had it closed. Today, the road is backed-up every morning after a storm, every weekend, and every day avalanche control has it closed. If I leave the house, I can't get back home until 11 am! This is a bigger problem now that covid has allowed me to work from home.</p> <p>However, traffic isn't a problem just in the winter. In the summer, the streets get used by noisy, cars racing around the "golden triangle" at all hours of the day and night. I can always tell when the wild flowers at Alta are blooming. Vehicles stream up and down the road during the day. When Snowbird hosts October fest, the number of cars and motorcycles going up and down the canyon are constant throughout the day. Let's add to the noise and pollution when everyone decides to</p>

		<p>go for a drive to see the fall foliage.</p> <p>The problem is the number of vehicles. It is not limited to the time of day, season, or air quality. It is a problem to some degree on most days.</p> <p>I love to travel abroad. This has given me the opportunity to use public transportation in other countries. The one that sets the bar high is Japan. While I'm not proposing to put trains up the canyon, there were four things that made it stand out. First, there were three levels of transportation service: full service, limited express, and express. The difference between them were the number of stops and the frequency of the trains. Second, the trains were always on time. If I was 1 minute late to the platform, the train was gone. Third, the cost to ride was dependent on the distance to the stop and service level. The farther the ride, the fewer the stops, the higher the cost. Finally, the train platforms were clean, well lit, and safe.</p> <p>Here is my five-prong approach to the Little Cottonwood Canyon transportation issues.</p> <p>1) Since the issue is the number of vehicles, limit usage to locals, group transportation, buses, vehicles with camping reservations, delivery and service vehicles, and emergency and public works vehicles. This will guarantee ridership. Locals will not pay to take the gondola when driving up the canyon is cheaper and more convenient.</p> <p>2) Expand Wasatch Blvd to include a dedicated lane for buses.</p> <p>3) Set up three levels of bus service. An example is below.</p> <p>a. Full-service</p> <p>i. Summer -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stops at every trailhead 2. Stops at every rock-climbing location 3. Stops at every resort <p>ii. Winter -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stops at every snow shoe location 2. Stops at every ice climbing location 3. Stops at every resort <p>b. Limited Express</p> <p>i. Summer #1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stops at one resort 2. Stops at popular trailheads <p>ii. Summer #2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stops at one resort 2. Stops at popular rock-climbing locations <p>iii. Winter #1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stops at one resort 2. Stops at popular snowshoe locations <p>iv. Winter #2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stops at one resort 2. Stops at popular ice climbing locations <p>c. Express</p> <p>i. Summer #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stops at one resort <p>ii. Summer #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stops at second resort <p>iii. Winter #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stops at one resort <p>iv. Winter #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stops at second resort <p>4) Perform time study to ensure accurate bus arrival times. Then train drivers on the importance of a timely and safe trip.</p> <p>5) Build well-lit bus stops with design emphasis on loading gear efficiently while</p>
--	--	---

		<p>safely preventing people from loading late.</p> <p>While my plan is not backed by an expensive consultant, it is based on 17 years of daily knowledge on the issues. I implore you to reconsider other alternatives that are less destructive to our canyon!</p>
38012	David Handwerger	<p>The preferred alternative of a gondola from the base of LCC to Snowbird/Alta is a ridiculously expensive and environmentally harmful solution to a problem that only exists a few times a ski season, and only serves two private commercial entities. I have driven up LCC to ski Alta/Snowbird >100 times a season for each of the last 6 seasons (and had an AltaBird pass the past 14). The number of times per season that I get stuck in an unmoving "red snake" coming down the canyon or a stop-and-go going up it can be counted on one hand - maybe 2 in a good snow year. When they do occur, they each last only a couple of hours. Overall, we're talking 24-36 hours of severe traffic congestion PER SEASON (including and estimate of the number of times I alter my travel plans to avoid potential congestion, yet still go skiing in LCC).</p> <p>With the parking reservation system implemented at Alta, and the somewhat looser system at Snowbird (because road parking is still allowed), congestion has eased, with much of it attributable to people parking along the side of LCC at Snowbird to avoid parking fees or reservation exclusions. I suggest that it is these people that cause much of the uphill congestion, as most have to flip U-turns to get down the canyon, thus holding up traffic while they do so. By the time one gets past Snowbird, traffic is almost always flowing. Maybe not at 40 mph, but certainly fast enough for an efficient ride down.</p> <p>If Alta and Snowbird feel that a gondola is the best way to alleviate traffic congestion, even though parking reservations have gone a long way to already achieving this, then let them pay for it - all of it: planning, studies, construction, maintenance and operation. The gondola would serve no one other than them. If the estimated \$500 million price tag (almost certainly much more than that) is too much for them, they can drop out of the IKON pass, or any other multi-resort passes that come their way, to lessen the number of people heading up the canyon in the first place. If the number of skiers these passes provide cannot support a (probably) >\$1 billion boondoggle, then they have a choice to make. Furthermore, there are numerous, far less expensive things that UDOT, Alta and Snowbird can do that would make the gondola totally unnecessary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct busses to Alta and Snowbird, rather than one bus that serves both, would make the trip to Alta for more palatable. As of now, it takes longer to take the bus from the nearest bus stop to LCC to Alta/Wildcat (45') than it does from my house at 9th and 9th in SLC (35'-40'), not to mention the time it would take to drive to that bus stop (either Wasatch & 6200 S - if I can even find parking there) or 9400 S. and Highland. If busses to Alta didn't make 3 stops at Snowbird, that trip would be 20 minutes shorter (each way), which would largely compensate for the time it takes to drive to the park and ride. 2. If traffic is backed up, the bus will be stuck as well. I then have a choice of either spending the extra time in the comfort of my own vehicle, sitting down, listening to my car stereo and drinking my coffee - or being in a crowded, noisy, smelly bus, laden down with gear, and quite possibly forced to stand the whole way. That choice is a no-brainer - I'll drive (as will many others). If LCC road were widened by a single reversible lane, uphill in the morning and downhill in the afternoon, and reserved ONLY for busses, then the value proposition for bussing goes WAY up, because the bus will be able to beat the traffic. This would surely be cheaper than a) a gondola, or b) a 4 lane road. Reversible lanes are not unheard of - they have them in many other places I've been, marked with overhanging indicators of which direction is open and which direction is closed. 3. Prohibit U-turns on LCC road for those parked along it - and enforce it. If people are parked pointing uphill, they should be required to continue uphill, take one of the ramps into Snowbird proper, drive through that lot and come out the

		<p>next ramp down. If above the tram plaza, they should be required to take the bypass road to Alta (or have Snowbird find a way to turn them around sooner - but not on LCC road) and merge in to traffic by the Peruvian Lodge. If this requires putting up cement barriers in the middle of the road, or temporary traffic cones, so be it.</p> <p>4. UDOT could VIGOROUSLY enforce the traction law. This would eliminate pretty much every rental car from the canyon on snow days. They are already violating the traction law by not having chains, but on snow days one ill-equipped rental car on the road going 2 MPH can cause a tremendous traffic jam - and hold up the snow plows. On any day the canyon is restricted, or might become restricted, there should be people a) stopping ill-equipped vehicles from going up the canyon, b) ticketing ill-equipped vehicles already up the canyon in the lots or parked along the road. All vehicles are already required at least to have chains, so require people to leave their chains on the driver seat for someone to see, or better yet, have them mounted to avoid a ticket. Lodge guests are not exempt from the chain requirement, so they can also leave their chains on the driver's seat to avoid a citation, c) if the restriction comes into effect after people have already headed up, don't let anyone out of a lot in an ill-equipped vehicle until 7 pm, so that those who have 4WD and/or snow tires/chains can get down in a more timely manner. Most of the traffic problems on snow days can be traced back to people in cars that shouldn't be up the canyon - period! Stop them, completely, from driving up in the first place - they can take the bus - or from causing traffic issues on the way down because they can't be bothered to follow the law.</p> <p>All of these ideas I just proposed would likely be significantly less expensive than the preferred alternative of a gondola, would be more effective at alleviating congestion on the days it is most likely to be an undue burden, be far less environmentally damaging, would cover all people accessing the canyon - not just those heading to Alta or Snowbird ski bases, and would not shift the traffic problem to the canyon mouth instead of eliminating it as is the stated desire. After all, even if a gondola were built, people would still have to get there, and that would just move the traffic nightmare downhill into the neighborhoods. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
38029	Emma Furman	<p>As a Utah resident, active community member, and someone who frequently recreates in Little Cottonwood Canyon and the surrounding areas of the Wasatch, I truly appreciate the time, dedication, thoughtfulness, and care that the UDOT team has put into researching the different transportation options to help support recreation in Little Cottonwood Canyon. It's a very special and unique ecosystem that all Utahns and those who visit here should be able to experience and enjoy. Personally, some of my first times climbing were in the canyon, and I'll never forget the literally breathtaking feeling of looking out over the vast expanses of granite across the canyon, and down into the Salt Lake Valley below. It galvanizes and humbles you all at the same time, and I support the alternatives that protect this uniquely special place, and allow those from all backgrounds to better access them.</p> <p>I wholeheartedly support the enhanced bus (with no additional roadway capacity) alternative as the best solution outlined in UDOT's Little Cottonwood EIS. Not only does it meet the UDOT's goals of improving mobility in the canyon during peak hours and reducing vehicle use, but it is by far the most cost effective and cheapest option for taxpayers, with the ability to help folks from all economic and social backgrounds access Utah's public lands.</p> <p>There is also a huge, unmet demand for bus service. As someone who frequently takes the bus up the Cottonwoods in the winter, I've firsthand witnessed long lines with not everyone at the bus stop able to get on, sometimes groups of 20 or more</p>

		<p>left behind. The recently announced cuts to bus service do little to help answer the demand for this affordable service, and the answer to labor shortages seems simpler and much less expensive than a multi-million dollar gondola; simply pay the bus drivers more for the amazing service they provide in frequently hazardous winter driving conditions.</p> <p>I vehemently oppose the gondola option for a multitude of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It's the most expensive option for taxpayers by far (\$592 million versus \$355 for the enhanced bus service without a corresponding substantial increase in canyon mobility or increase in people it will be able to move during peak hours. -Per the EIS, it's not scalable and UDOT would not be able "to determine the operational success until after a major capital investment is made into the system." As Utah's population increases at a rapid rate, we need transportation methods that we can scale for future generations of outdoor recreators. The enhanced bus service is easily scalable. -The gondola alternative has a high environmental footprint, forever altering the landscape and destroying well loved climbing areas, including 35 boulders and 142 problems. It impacts 17 acres of irreplaceable canyon land, as opposed to only 13 with the enhanced bus service. <p>The gondola is also not immune to avalanche mitigation, and per the EIS, structures and gondola cars would need to be inspected after avalanche mitigation blasting, and the gondola would not operate while artillery is in use. So the gondola would be subject to the same avalanche mitigation pauses that roadway travel and buses are.</p> <p>Another large concern for the gondola plan, as well as tolling in the canyon, is the environmental justice impact. It's also concerning that no fare amounts for the gondola have been released to the public. Tolling disproportionately limits access to the upper canyon from lower income folks, including those who want to partake in lower cost outdoor recreation, such as bouldering, sledding, snowshoeing, and backcountry skiing. At the same time, activities in the lower canyon would be more limited due to the infrastructure and construction of the gondola. We need to protect these resources and not make it more difficult for marginalized residents of the Wasatch to access them.</p> <p>Limiting single occupancy vehicles, especially in peak hours, is a great alternative, as it does not exclude anyone, and instead encourages folks to carpool and use public transportation.</p> <p>I am never more energized, inspired, creative, productive, and happy than when I am out in Utah's wild spaces like Little Cottonwood Canyon, and truly believe this makes me not only a better human being, but allows me to conduct my personal and professional life from a better perspective. Utah can only be a great state for all of our citizens if we allow everyone this same experience. We not only bring the vigors of our adventures into our personal lives, but they allow us to be creative and productive at our 9-5 jobs (and all schedules). As I understand economics are also a concern, please keep that in mind. Thank you for taking the time to hear the voices of concerned and caring citizens who love our wild spaces.</p>
38036	Karen Heath	<p>After reading all the interim plans prior to maybe getting a preferred gondola in 2050, I hardly know where to start.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interim use of buses is totally useless unless a toll is initiated way before the lower Snowbird entrance or the lower Solitude entrance. It needs to be initiated at a much earlier point-like the mouth of the canyons. Additionally, it needs to be

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>charged on ALL cars going up the canyon not just solo drivers. Of course, this option would require ramping up purchase of buses.</p> <p>1a. However, where would said buses be stored when it is not ski season, and this is a huge investment, so how are funds actually raised for a Gondola? Extra buses do seem to defeat the potential need for the Gondola, and maintenance of them could kill the Gondola project-that is if you can force people to take the buses (which they mainly do not take now)</p> <p>2. The proposed wall system along Wasatch is totally ridiculous. The indicated areas on Wasatch are either where homes are actually above the walls, or where there are currently no homes. I live on Wasatch and there is no wall where I live, but I currently hear all the traffic noise now. (Not that it bothers me, and I don't want my East view blocked by a wall anyway). I suppose if you are just looking at doing retaining walls for dirt that would be affected by widening Wasatch, then, So be it, but the map is not clear on that.</p> <p>3. Wasatch road desperately needs to be the first thing taken care of. Despite what many commenters will say, the traffic is terrible between 4:30-5:30, virtually every workday, when Oktoberfest is happening at Snowbird on the weekends both in the morning and in the later afternoon, weekends during ski season AND any day of the week if there happens to be a snowfall the night or day before (cause it's sick of work day so they can get fresh powder skiing). Where we live on Wasatch does not have a light or a traffic circle, and getting out on to Wasatch is just waiting for an accident.</p> <p>4. Many of the commenters will say that speeds need to be lowered. That is ridiculous and obtuse thinking. Wasatch IS and will continue to be a commuter route. Speeds rarely reach 50 during rush hour due to the lights at 7200, Bengal Blvd, 3500 East connector to Wasatch and the High T light combined with the volume of traffic. It certainly never reaches 50 MPH speed on a good snow day or during Oktoberfest or during the rush hours. The road originally was designed for faster speeds, and lowering them hinders those trying to leave earlier or later to avoid the rush of other times.</p> <p>4. Having been to Zermatt Switzerland several times in the last eight years, I do not see the gondola towers spoiling any scenery. I do believe that the six-seater cars are more efficient than the larger tram cars currently used at Snowbird and some other places in Switzerland. While requiring more cars, the car doors do open and close automatically, requiring less personnel to load and help unload, so the whole system runs more efficiently. The bigger team cars are much more of an eyesore than the smaller gondola cars.</p> <p>5. Finally, I can't emphasize enough the need for dedicated lanes for joggers, walkers and bicyclists. Wasatch is dangerous for all of them, and yet I have no other choice than to walk part of Wasatch to get to a place in a less-trafficked neighborhood to walk or bike.</p> <p>Thank you for your work on this project and all the time you must spend to read all the comments. Sincerely, Karen W. Heath</p>
38052	Scott Kafesjian	<p>I believe the cost of the proposed solutions is way out of line with the benefit that might be realized. Estimates of ridership on the proposed gondola may be way off. It seems to me</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>that there would be high interest initially but the cost/benefit for most people would deter them from riding it. It would be like an amusement park ride, or a tourist attraction and would provide access only to 2 stops - Alta and Snowbird. It may not operate at all during the summer (?).</p> <p>Cost estimates for construction are most likely well below current cost to build, and way below future cost to build a gondola. Detailed design discoveries and unforeseen design requirements will undoubtedly result in major overruns above the cost estimates. Such are very common for projects like this that are out of the ordinary and represent major increases in complexity, permitting, seismic issues, etc.</p> <p>It seems that the gondola offers little or no time savings vs. driving or taking a bus. The only possible benefit of the gondola is that it "might" offer an alternate transportation mode if the canyon road is impassable. The number of times this happens in a winter is relatively small. In this event, it is highly likely that ski resorts would be also closed for avalanche mitigation, thus there would be little reason to get to one of the 2 resorts where the proposed gondola would stop. In fact, during bad weather and high wind events (the very things that tends to result in road closure) the proposed gondola may not be able to operate. These points do not even represent the major reason that the gondola is a poor choice. That is the extremely negative visual impact of the towers and the environmental disruption that construction and operation would bring. The towers will be visible from essentially everywhere in the canyon, and much of the S.L. Valley nearby, thereby changing the very nature of the canyon that is one of the most beautiful features of the Wasatch.</p> <p>Further, UDOTs own projections of ridership levels seem to be extremely optimistic. What motivation will there be to pay an as yet unknown price, park and carry everything you will need for a day of skiing from your car to the base station, wait in line (yes, there will probably be a line to board), take the long ride to the upper station, carry all your gear from the station to the resort, and reverse it all at the end of the day?? Seems like an epic adventure that is not likely to be undertaken by many resort-goers.</p> <p>I agree there are traffic problems in the canyon. However, these problems are not of the same impact as traffic congestion on major roads in the state that are used by many more people than the LCC road and have much broader consequences. The traffic in the canyon may occasionally result in decreased revenue for Alta and Snowbird. However, that is the nature of the winter sport they offer. Sometimes it snows a lot in LCC! During those times, skiing may not be possible! Efficient, powerful, electric buses with purposeful design (for carrying skiers, hikers, etc.) are a much more workable solution than a gondola, and result in much less environmental and visual impact and will be much more likely to be used. Coupled with a toll and restrictions on personal vehicles on the busiest days, this is the most attractive approach for traffic mitigation. Buses can also stop at locations other than the designated end stations of a gondola as conditions dictate or travel trends change. The buses must be design for the purpose at hand - comfortably transporting skiers and their equipment up and down a steep mountain road- not for moving commuters on suburban and urban roads.</p> <p>LCC is a relatively small, environmentally sensitive area that is not a place that can accommodate unlimited numbers of visitors. The goal should not be to put more people in the canyon, it should be to maintain the beauty and resources that the canyon offers. Reducing road traffic is a great way to do that, but installing a massively expensive, permanent eyesore like a gondola is not the way to do it. The canyon will be ruined by a gondola, simply put.</p>
38065	Jason Dymock	To whom it may concern,

		<p>Little Cottonwood Canyon holds a special place in my heart. I have been backcountry skiing, climbing, hiking, and visiting the ski resorts up the cottonwood canyons for the majority of my life. Some of my best days of skiing have been at Snowbird and the views from hiking up Mt. Superior in the summer always take my breath away. In recent years the crowds and traffic have definitely increased in the canyon and with that, my enjoyment of this beautiful area has decreased. Something needs to be done. At first, I thought the proposed gondola seemed like a good idea, but as I learned more it has become obvious that it is not a good solution and should not be implemented. Many less expensive and more effective options exist that should be evaluated instead of the gondola. While there may not be one perfect solution, the proposed gondola is one of the worst options out there.</p> <p>The main problem is high traffic on weekends and powder days, along with backups caused by closures for avalanche mitigation. We should take into consideration all affected parties, including both inbounds and backcountry skiers/snowboarders, hikers, climbers, mountain bikers, taxpayers, the resorts, neighborhoods near the mouth of the canyon, and future generations.</p> <p>The gondola would be an eye sore for the many people who use the lower sections of the canyon and would ruin many climbing areas. It would only be of use in the winter, on weekends and a handful of powder days. It has a negative effect on climbers, hikers, and taxpayers and does not stop at any backcountry trailheads. Charging to ride the gondola will increase the cost of skiing and therefore limit skiing in the canyon to the wealthy (though with the price of lift tickets it is already limited to the wealthy).</p> <p>As a Utah resident, the price tag alone is reason enough to avoid the gondola. Nearly half a billion dollars put onto taxpayers for something that only benefits two private companies seems ridiculous. If the problem is caused by the two resorts, then they should have to pay for the solution.</p> <p>Some better options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cap the number of skiers allowed per day at the resorts, similar to what they do at Powder Mountain. Fewer skiers = less traffic. - Build a tunnel system, It avoids avalanche paths, does not require snow removal, is less expensive than a gondola, is out of sight and not an eye sore, and you could connect all the ski resorts in the central Wasatch together. A tunnel from near park city to BCC and a tunnel from BCC to LCC would provide quick and easy access to all resorts and would route traffic through Parleys canyon which is much safer than driving LCC. The total tunnel length would be between 6-10 miles depending on placement. The longest road tunnel in the world is about 25 miles long and is in Norway. It was built in 2000 for 1050 million NOK. Accounting for inflation and exchange rates, in today's money that would be roughly \$170 million. Now I am no math professor, but \$170 million for 25 miles of road tunnels seems like a much more cost-effective option than a \$500 million gondola. This will also allow skiers to take their cars up to the resorts. Letting them take lunches, extra layers, different pairs of skis for changing conditions, etc. something that the gondola would not allow. A parking garage would come in handy if this option were selected and the lines at lifts would stay insanely long... but everything would be connected and it would be a huge plus for the tourism side of things as one could access 6 world-class ski resorts within 30 minutes of driving. <p>Learn more about the tunnel in Norway here - https://www.visitnorway.com/listings/l%C3%A6rdalstunnelen-worlds-longest-road-tunnel/12205/#:~:text=At%2024.5%20kilometres%2C%20the%20L%C3%A6rdal</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>connection%20between%20Oslo%20and%20Bergen. Maybe we could hire some Norwegians to come and help us out? My biggest hesitation with this option is that we would have to see how it affects watershed pollution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase bus services and require carpooling to enter the canyon. Make people change their behavior instead of modifying the environment. People will choose the most convenient and economical option for travel so make it inconvenient to drive up. - Require reservations to drive up and park in the canyon. Limit the number of reservations to the point that the traffic problem is resolved. This does not totally solve the backup at the bottom of the canyon when people are waiting for avalanche crews to do their thing but would reduce canyon traffic. <p>In closing, such a beautiful place should be preserved, not turned into Disneyland. I know that the tourism industry benefits our state greatly but surely we can find a solution that both preserves nature and benefits us economically. Underground tunnels or modifying people's behavior would be more effective and economical options than the proposed gondola. Plans for the gondola should be abandoned as they do not have the best interest of the state of Utah and its people in mind.</p> <p>Feel free to reach out to me with any questions.</p> <p>Best, Jason Dymock</p>
38100	Tom Burdett	<p>Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS The mission of the U.S. Forest Service is: "To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." And the Forest Service motto is: "Caring for the Land and Serving People," capturing the spirit of its mission is accomplished through five main activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection and management of natural resources on lands we manage. - Research on all aspects of forestry, rangeland management, and forest resource utilization. - Community assistance and cooperation with State and local governments, forest industries, and private landowners to help protect and manage non-Federal forest and associated range and watershed lands to improve conditions in rural areas. - Achievement and support of an effective workforce that reflects the diversity of the American people. - International assistance to formulate policy and coordinate U.S. support for the protection and sound management of the world's forest resources. <p>This principal vision statement should guide the environmental impact statement (EIS) for transportation planning for Little Cottonwood Canyon. This EIS recommendation is not in concert with this vision. The final EIS recommending Gondola B alternative is flawed on several levels. It is flawed with addressing the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting forests and grasslands - Assistance with protecting watersheds - Improving conditions in rural areas - Community assistance and cooperation with emergency management - Impacts to wildlife migration <p>1. Protecting forests and grasslands: The impact of high wire conveyance systems requires the forest to be cleared of tall trees below it. It also requires the removal of trees and maintain fire clearance for a certain radius around support</p>

		<p>structures and service roads.</p> <p>2. Assistance with protecting watersheds: The removal of the trees and grass lands will promote erosion in the canyon, interrupt natural drainage and cause sediment to be deposited into the streams.</p> <p>3. Improving conditions in rural areas: The selected alternative should improve community structure by enhancing access for year-round residents of the canyon, not simply cater to destination tourists. In high wind conditions, an aerial gondola is shut down and useless. And, that maybe the time when enhanced transportation is needed most.</p> <p>4. Community assistance and cooperation with emergency management: One of the reasons that the 2002 Olympics could not hold events in Little Cottonwood Canyon is because it lacks two routes of travel for evacuation. Emergency service should be weighted higher with the selection of alternatives. For example, in the "Big Burn" rail transportation was used to evacuate elderly people, women and children at the last minute before a major forest fire engulfed Wallace Idaho.</p> <p>5. Impacts to wildlife migration: Visual impact of a gondola in motion within a narrow V-shaped canyon will impact wildlife habitat and migration of birds (owls, hawks, etc.) and possibly terrestrial mammals in Little Cottonwood.</p> <p>The planning effort for Little Cottonwood Canyon is one that requires meeting a greater set of objectives as identified by community planning, and Forest Service motto and mission statements. UDOT is very good at building modern highways and expressways to move vehicles. That is the mission of UDOT and its culture. It does it well and is creative within its mission. UDOT is not experienced with moving people using different modes of travel. With this EIS, alternatives were eliminated that could better meet the community and US Forest Service missions. An EIS should be used to enhance the environment and community objectives, not just a series of boxes to check off.</p> <p>A comprehensive analysis of alternatives in sensitive environments necessitates a broader approach. There are many examples of EISs in the Pacific Northwest that meet and enhance local objectives. Please consider and review other efforts like this. Little Cottonwood requires one of those analyses. It should be started over with a new set of scoped alternatives. Management should be directed to the US Forest Service, Salt Lake County, UTA or joint management of some combination thereof.</p>
38114	Sydney Stephens	<p>In regards to the detriment caused by a gondola, as a wildlife biologist I am concerned with the EIS's ecosystem section and believe it inadequately assesses the risk to wildlife- which has subsequent impacts on the wellbeing and relationships of humans to their environment. For example, as you saw from the Metropolitan Water District and Public Utility Comments, the affect on water quality is not likely negligible. Small changes in pH and sediment deposit have drastic and deadly affects on wildlife, aquatic and terrestrial. Cleansing this water for public (human) use will have added costs: how has UDOT anticipated/budgeted for these costs?</p> <p>Habitat fragmentation by presence of anthropogenic structures (i.e. large towers), noise disturbance from construction and high-decibel machinery (i.e. gears on a gondola which will easily disturb airborne creatures - UDOT's analysis of the peak-to-peak gondola's dB heard from the ground is inadequate in assessing wildlife hearing ranges and proximity to source) are shown in many studies to affect health, reproduction, and survival of many species. These effects can be seen miles from the source and have spill over throughout many canyons. Furthermore, this causes dispersal into bordering urban areas where we see an increase in human-wildlife conflict following disturbance events and habitat fragmentation. Increase in domestic pet predation, garbage/food scavenging,</p>

		<p>denning/destruction of property, and even attacks on human will ensue. This is strongly correlated with habitat/resource disturbance in multitudes of peer-reviewed studies. When rises in human-conflict increase as a result of habitat alteration, in the U.S. we most often punish the wildlife (removal/euthanasia from management agencies to keep people comfortable) instead of changing human behaviors/attacking the root of the problem. Subsequently, wildlife populations further decrease. What, if any, plans does UDOT have to rectify changes in wildlife population, particularly those that are sensitive species, locally endangered, threatened, or migratory, throughout the entire Wasatch as a result? What collaborations with NGO expertise and state wildlife agencies are in place for proper management? What monitoring and surveys are in place to ensure awareness in wildlife presence/populations are up-to-date and responses are appropriate and flexible? If adequate management under a gondola is deemed impossible, what actions is UDOT willing to take to change construction plans- and is it even able to do so after a Record of Decision is made?</p> <p>The operations of construction machinery, and manufacturing costs of these structures have significant carbon emissions. The removal of vegetation, and disturbance of soil, releases additional carbon into the atmosphere. Each plant sequesters CO2 from the atmosphere and converts it to oxygen- removing the natural systems that aid in fixing our air quality is a poor choice. Furthermore, the gondola is not carbon-neutral; aside from the steep carbon costs of construction, its operations also add to the environment. Since it does not currently plan to remove cars from the canyon, but to be an added transportation system, this is also added emissions. As a city with some of the worst air quality in the country- this not an insignificant factor. What, if any, climate mitigation/carbon offset strategies has UDOT considered?</p> <p>As stated above, the aim of having people be added to the canyon (aka the resorts) via gondola, in lieu of reducing vehicles their footprint- shows clear prioritization of ski industry profits over environmental stewardship, public desires, fiscal responsibility, and income equality. Should the gondola truly remove vehicles (which is unlikely once people realize the amount of effort and time it takes to ride the gondola instead of driving a personal vehicle), its services only the ski resorts. From 2012-2021 (9 years), ski visitation in Utah grew by 1.5 million while population grew only 0.12 million. In 2022 alone, ski visitation grew 0.5 million (1/3 of the growth seen over the previous decade) while the population grew by only 0.01 million. The representation that accommodating ski resort access is for the people of the Salt Lake valley and its population growth is a blatant misrepresentation- completely inaccurate to the data. The ski resorts aim to grow their visitation, and thus their profits, and are now restricted by transportation rather than global interest. Using this opportunity to desecrate the canyon for corporate gain is greedy and corrupt; the allowance/cooperation of it by government organizations such as UDOT would be negligent to say the least.</p> <p>Much of the SLC area does not use the resorts: income disparity is a prominent reason for this. 60% of canyon users do not use the resorts. Therefor, the majority of canyon users would be either physically (forced gondola) or financially (income restrictions to steep tolling alternatives meant to dis-incentivize non-gondola use) cut off from the lower 90% of the canyon and various recreational activities therefor: rock climbing, hiking, ice climbing, mountain biking, picnicking, backpacking/camping, etc. The median household (not individual) income in 2021 was \$67k. A single-person season pass to Snowbird for an adult is \$1,550 - this means that at least 2% of a household's entire year profit (before tax, so much more of net income) would have to go to a single member of that household's ski pass for the gondola to have any significance to them. This is for a pass alone,</p>
--	--	---

		<p>and does not include money for equipment and gondola/transportation tickets or fees - raising this cost even higher. Recall that the median is only the middle marker for income, meaning that over half of Utahns would consider their % of their household to be much greater for a single ski pass. This is simply not viable for low-income individuals, families, etc. Consequently, the gondola and the restriction of the canyon subsequently creates socioeconomic discrimination. Public lands (for which the majority of LCC is, or is leased under) are "are owned collectively by U.S. citizens." What, if any, are UDOT's plans to subsidize and make affordable the access to the canyon so as to avoid socioeconomic discrimination? Considering the 'gate keeping' of a gondola: what, if any, are UDOT's plans to make the canyon accessible for non-resort users after the essential privatization of public lands?</p> <p>Furthermore, the #1 reason for canyon value/usage in LCC (as found by the extensive survey of LCC conducted at USU) was "to observe scenic beauty." This beauty is irreparably marred by such an intensive and destructive project as a gondola. Recreationists come to see the canyon. It has a rich history in the development of rock climbing world-renown and respected- and is in the works of a historic designation for such. Most climbers climb, especially in the multipitch-rich granite sea of Little Cottonwood, to get to the top and be able to look out at the world around them. Most hikers and backcountry snowsport users do so for the same reasons. To say otherwise is a clear indication of lack of involvement in these sports or appreciation of nature- and is not in line with the public wishes for public land. Little Cottonwood Road is a scenic highway that cannot currently allow even large telephone poles; this designation would obviously be stripped if skyscraper size industrial towers are constructed. There will never again be the Little Cottonwood that exists today, the canyon that gained the love and attention that got us here in the first place.</p> <p>UDOT has failed to prioritize lower-impact solutions. You have stated that a 30% traffic reduction would solve the congestion issues in the canyon. Your EIS states that 36% of vehicles are single-occupancy. Simply banning single-occupancy during peak-use days would more than solve this problem. Considering traction laws, appropriate tolling (that is not used as an exploitive tool to force people to ride a gondola that only services the elite ski industry), or parking reservation systems at the resort are all viable options. Not implementing these solutions (not as a phased approach that serves as a coercion for a gondola) is not negligent to your duties, and corrupt in many people's eyes.</p> <p>Should UDOT pass a record of decision for a gondola, regardless of private or public (tax) funding, lawsuits will surely ensue from various parties. The individuals working at UDOT (though not the organization itself as a government entity) and Gondola Works (i.e. Snowbird) that seek to so blatantly ignore the data, responsibility, and public outcry, would find themselves vulnerable to defending litigation. This will have substantial time and financial costs. How, if at all, has this factor been budgeted for/anticipated in construction timelines and expenditure?</p> <p>Many projects like this that are not as popular as expected end up abandoned, instead of deconstructed due to the costs. The Moab gondola is one of multiple examples just within Utah. How, if at all, has UDOT budgeted/planned to remove structures if the operations of the gondola are failed after construction?</p> <p>I, along with 80% of Utahns, urge you to remove the gondola from consideration. This is based on sound economic, social, and environmental data and reasoning. It is also based on a personal connection to the canyon for which many of us</p>
--	--	--

		<p>have. I urge you not to prioritize the agenda of elite developers over the responsibility of stewardship to the land, and to its overwhelming majority of people.</p>
38145	Morgan Cardon	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I appreciate the time and energy that was put into looking at viable solutions for a real problem. It is apparent that the traffic congestion up LCC does cause some real issues that are worth addressing appropriately. I can see some of the assets associated with using Gondola B as transportation and a potential solution. However, I do question if this is truly the best option when considering costs, future climate alterations, and user experience for all canyon visitors.</p> <p>The cost of Gondola B is projected to be in the hundreds of millions, and is funded using tax-payer dollars. Tax-dollars are to be used for the benefit of society as a whole, yet the Gondola would serve primarily skiers visiting local resorts. It is my opinion that using tax-payer dollars for a venture that benefits such a small portion of the group is not in alignment with the purpose of tax-dollars.</p> <p>Another question to consider is the future of our local Utah climate. After visiting the Salt Lake today, it is apparent that it is in extreme danger. It is drying up. And with it drying up, there will be implications on air quality, local temperature, and snowpack. It is short-sighted to consider building a multi-million-dollar gondola to benefit skiers for only a handful of days during the year, while we let our Great Salt Lake die and cause an increase in health complications and a loss of snow, both of which will adversely affect the economy through increased healthcare costs and loss of ski-tourism. I believe the funding should be used to help mitigate this very immediate need. If there is no snow, then there will be no congestion up LCC making the Gondola obsolete.</p> <p>My third greatest concern is the user experience for canyon-goers. The Gondola provides service to the ski resorts, which benefits only visitors of those resorts. Even though I could see it benefiting other users in the form of clearer roads for driving to trailheads, the fact still remains that this would relieve an issue that is only present for about 50 days a year. Also, I do imagine that the same reasons why people do not take the bus would be the same reason why people won't want to take the Gondola: it simply isn't as convenient as driving. When you are taking an entire family skiing, you need snacks and diapers and changes of clothes and the ability to get warm fast. For these reasons, any family is going to opt to drive over taking a bus OR a Gondola. Considering the Gondola will cost to ride, you also eliminate college students who are trying to come up as cheaply as possible. That leaves tourist visitors, who will probably have rental cars and luggage and want to drive as well, as well as rich people who won't want to take any form of public transportation. I urge you to strongly consider just how much Gondola B will be utilized, and if the demographics targeted will actually be interested in using it.</p> <p>In short, although Gondola B is an option, I do not believe it is the best option. This is a serious investment of tax-dollars, that may become obsolete if we fail to preserve our current climate, and that I'm skeptical will even have the traction needed to make it worth it. I urge UDOT to look into other options like expanding the bus system, making the bus system more user friendly, or even consider funding privatized bus routing as a better option. Currently, bus routes are hard to interpret and service is being reduced. Surely there is much more to be done before we even consider such an expensive and drastic solution such as Gondola B.</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Thank you for your time. Morgan</p>
38148	Evan Jackson	<p>The people have spoken, "no gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon".</p> <p>The Hinckley Institute of Politics conducted a poll in November 2021. 80% of respondents favor other alternatives over the gondola. This alone should be enough reason for UDOT to forgo the gondola. But just in case UDOTs needs additional reason to forgo the gondola (because obviously they don't care about public opinion), here are a few others.</p> <p>Cost of a failure. UDOT claims the gondola is more reliable than other alternatives, but this is a myopic point of view. I have yet to see a fair comparison regarding the cost of failure vs other alternatives. Consider enhanced bussing. If a bus breaks down, the rest of the system continues to work and function as planned and thus the system can operate at diminished capacity. If the gondola breaks down, the entire system fails, there are no back up gondolas but there are back up busses. Now, consider a gondola failure with active riders. How does UDOT plan to manage a long-term shutdown while there are riders onboard? How long will it take to rescue riders from each car? How will UDOT manage the added complications of elderly, diabetic, pregnant, or physically disabled riders? This would be a large-scale rescue effort. This isn't a chair lift where riders can be lowered/rappel down onto a groomed ski run. In the case of the gondola, the only below is rough untraveled terrain. The gondola cannot be considered a viable option until a robust comprehensive rescue plan is in place. Failure to do otherwise is grossly irresponsible and borderline negligent. I encourage UDOT to consider not just reliability when comparing alternatives but also the cost of failure. I few small failures are inconvenient; one major failure would be catastrophic.</p> <p>Cost. As an engineer, I speak from experience regarding what the industry calls "serial number 1". With any brand-new complex system, there is more uncertainty, and more unknowns than existing solutions. Thus, general guidance is to avoid "serial number 1" (i.e. brand new alternatives) whenever possible. I have yet to see any comprehensive discussion regarding the additional financial and schedule risk surrounding the gondola vs other alternatives. There is more than one construction company and more than one bus supplier. The gondola would be single sourced and thus there is even greater supply chain risk compared to other alternatives. Furthermore, the gondola is new territory for UDOT. This isn't a project within their scope, in fact it's outside everyone's. There are no other alternatives globally for comparison. To think the gondola a "serial number 1" project will be built within the \$500-600 million budget isn't optimistic, it is naive. Mike Douglass, a former engineer and founding member of the anti-gondola group Friends of Little Cottonwood Canyon, conducted his own analysis that puts the cost between \$977 million and \$1.06 billion by 2053.</p> <p>Financing. How does UDOT expect to finance the project? I and many I know have vowed to solicit our state and federal government representatives to vote against any bill that will fund the gondola. 80% of the public favor other alternatives; it won't be hard to find and organize others like me to put pressure on our government to deny funding for this heinous project.</p> <p>I strongly encourage UDOT to listen to the people rather than the corporations and development companies (e.g. CW management, Snowbird, and Alta). The gondola will be a blight on the canyon and destroy the beauty that so many come to see. Please reconsider other alternatives.</p>
38152	Carston Oliver	<p>While I am somewhat encouraged by, and support UDOT's identification of a phased approach to reducing traffic in the canyon that includes tolling and better utilization of busses; as a whole I am extremely disappointed. I do not support</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>the Gondola B option, and I do not support widening the road at this time.</p> <p>The Gondola B option not only fails to meet the purpose and need of the project, but is grossly overpriced, will likely be underutilized, will permanently damage the environment, watershed, and recreation within the canyon, and is far more likely to make traffic in and around the canyon worse, rather than improve it.</p> <p>The EIS to begin with is too narrow in scope. By looking at Little Cottonwood traffic in isolation, you are failing to acknowledge and appropriately address the way that LCC traffic directly affects not only traffic on Wasatch Boulevard feeding into the canyon, but the entire neighborhood, nearby freeway, and traffic into and in Big Cottonwood Canyon, Millcreek, and Parleys Canyon.</p> <p>70% of total annual visitation to the Central Wasatch (tri-canyon area) is dispersed, 30% is to ski areas, and of that total only 8% goes to Alta, and 9% to Snowbird.</p> <p>There are 21 visitor sites in Little Cottonwood Canyon, and the gondola will only go to 2. While this will help visitors going to ski areas and may help traffic on a handful of particularly bad days in the winter season will not do any good to aid in high traffic times outside of the winter season when most canyon recreation is dispersed. It will also damage other visitor sites and recreation areas, harm riparian corridors, likely dump construction debris into the watershed, and permanently damage the views throughout the canyon. This is an utter failure to aid in mobility and safety for all canyon users.</p> <p>The LaCaille Gondola base parking exists beyond where traffic already builds up, and has insufficient parking spaces to meet the needs of gondola users; this will likely make traffic worse, and disincentivize utilization of the gondola. The additional parking at the gravel pit is still insufficient, especially when accounting for the likelihood that many of those additional parking spaces will be used by visitors of Big Cottonwood Canyon.</p> <p>The Gondola comes at a high price, and as a permanent fixture that allows little flexibility to deal with changing canyon usage and traffic patterns.</p> <p>I would much rather see some common sense solutions that make better use of and improve upon existing infrastructure: combining tolls that scale prices based on vehicle occupancy and increase on high-traffic days with canyon express busses and shuttles that originate from transit hubs throughout the valley and offer relatively direct service to the canyons makes far more sense. This would incentivize carpooling and transit usage, and would help distribute the traffic load throughout the valley rather than concentrating the buildup near the mouths of Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons.</p> <p>This system would be flexible, allowing the number of busses and shuttles per day to be scaled based upon season and visitor patterns, and it would allow for service to trailheads for dispersed users. On the handful of particularly busy days/weekends per year, canyon traffic could be restricted to only busses, shuttles, and canyon residents.</p> <p>Additionally, CNG and Electric busses could and should be utilized to offer cleaner power for transit, especially to replace older busses as they go out of service.</p> <p>I would much rather park at a transit hub nearer to my house and get in an express bus or shuttle up one of the canyons than fight traffic just to get a spot at a transit hub near the mouth of the canyon, then get on a gondola that ruined the views in the canyon, goes slower than the road, and doesn't even go where I want to go... I just don't see the incentive to use it, and it's not with the price tag and permanently destructive cost.</p>
38154	Noah Kuhns	<p>To Whom it may concern,</p> <p>For much of my life Little Cottonwood Canyon has been a place that I hold close to my heart. I spend as much time as I can traveling through those mountains. Hiking, running, and climbing during the summer, and backcountry skiing in the</p>

		<p>winter. All those who have spent time in the Cottonwoods are all too familiar with the issues at hand. Congested roads, overcrowded resorts accompanied by minimal parking, and limited public transit options available. I strongly feel that placing a gondola through the canyon would not solve these issues, and will drastically increase our environmental impact on one of the most important resources that we have.</p> <p>From my understanding the studies have shown that putting a gondola through the canyon would not actually reduce the amount of vehicle traffic on highway 210. What it does do is create a fast track to already overcrowded ski resorts that stand to have substantial increases in profit directly related to it's installation. The fact that this financial burden will fall into the taxpayers hands is unacceptable. This project fails to address the need for increased parking at the mouth of the canyon and surrounding area, as well as the need for a viable bus transit system. If these options were paired with a toll system that could be applied on heavy traffic days(weekends, holidays, etc.) then I believe that we'd see real positive changes to the dynamic of the canyon. I believe that UDOT and the state of Utah have an obligation to the people that live here to do whatever they can to protect our natural resources and promote long term solutions that keep conservation and accessibility in mind.</p> <p>A gondola is problematic for several reasons. The environmental impact of the construction that would be required, and the impact that that construction would have on recreation in the canyon are concerning. It would entail the loss of access to historic climbing and skiing routes that stretch the entirety of Little Cottonwood Canyon. Spending taxpayer dollars on a project that limits recreational access to backcountry trail heads and climbing areas is not an equitable transit solution. The solutions needs to have more in mind than just shipping people to and from a ski resort. The Cottonwoods are so much more than Snowbird, Alta, Brighton and Solitude. The more human impact that is impressed upon these canyons, the more we risk losing a delicate resource that is the watershed that we all rely on to survive. A gondola is wildly impactful, both from a financial stand point as well as an environmental.</p> <p>I think that the state should consider creating a substantial transit center to facilitate travel in and out of both Cottonwood canyons. This would address the greater problem that affects the entire area including both highways as well as the residential areas that surround the mouths of both canyons. A transit center could provide bus travel, carpooling opportunities, and even allow smaller shuttle services to operate alongside it. Shuttle or bus services could intermittently have a route that would run and make several stops up each canyon to support backcountry recreation and provide better access for the general public. This system partnered with a substantial increase in parking infrastructure could solve traffic congestion in the area, and be an equitable approach to access in both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. These systems benefit the resorts, but also benefit those that desire access outside of the resorts. If we can accomplish these goals and forego the installation of a permanent fixture such as the gondola I feel that it is necessary that we try.</p> <p>I would be deeply saddened to see this project approved. I hope that you'll consider the the voices of all of those that have reached out to express their concerns.</p> <p>We deserve better than this.</p>
38166	Catherine Nuar	<p>As a resident of Salt Lake County and a frequent visitor to Little Cottonwood Canyon, I appreciate this organization's efforts to find a transportation system that improves the reliability, mobility, and safety for those who use S.R. 210. I do not believe that the gondola proposed as the preferred alternative adequately addresses the challenges as they exist.</p> <p>Some key areas of concern are as follows....</p>

		<p>Equitable Outdoor Access - Any solution to canyon crowding should consider all canyon users. The proposed gondola, however, would not operate during the winter and would only service the resorts. This does not address the needs of the many, many individuals who recreate further south in the canyons. Without restricting all private vehicles from driving past White Pine, a gondola would increase the number of visitors accessing the ski resorts while doing little to mitigate traffic concerns. As well, the proposed gondola would disrupt bouldering areas, climbing routes, and trails that are used and loved by residents and visitors alike.</p> <p>Economic Benefit to Private Entities - A gondola would benefit the resorts by increasing the number of guests who could access those areas. Currently limited by parking and bus capacity, a gondola would be a significant boon to the resorts as more visitors who be able to access them. Applying public funds to the gondola would be a reckless use of taxpayer funds.</p> <p>Seasonal Shortfalls - The proposed gondola is not planned to be run in summer. Summer traffic meets or exceeds winter usage between wildflower season, leaf peepers, and Snowbird's Octoberfest in addition to the many residents and visitors who recreate in the canyon.</p> <p>Weather/Avalanche Mitigation Shortfalls - The proposed gondola would not be able to operate during certain periods of inclement weather. Additionally, it would not run while avalanche control work is happening. It is unclear how long after avalanche mitigation is completed before the proposed gondola would be able to run again. A study must be conducted to determine this before accepting the gondola proposal. Additionally, road closures could be mitigated by building snow sheds, which is a much lower cost solution.</p> <p>Resort Capacity - Building a gondola that would significantly increase the number of guests able to access the resorts in Little Cottonwood without addressing the real capacity limits of said resorts is shortsighted at best. Overcrowded resorts create a safety issue as congested resorts have lead to significant injuries and deaths due to collisions.</p> <p>Bus Access - This winter alone the ski bus routes have been significantly reduced because of an inability to find adequate drivers. Before committing to funding a massive project such as the gondola, a good faith effort needs to be made to increase bus access rather than reduce it. Paying bus drivers a livable wage commensurate with the increasing costs of living in Salt Lake City would be a first step.</p> <p>Traction Laws - The majority of traffic issues in Little Cottonwood during the winter are a result of car crashes and slide offs. Enforcing the traction laws is a low cost way to mitigate much of the traffic issues.</p> <p>Resort Parking Reservations - Requiring parking reservations would ensure that folks wanting to ski would know whether or not they had a parking spot and mitigate the issue of folks all rushing up the canyon at the same time.</p> <p>Lack of Adequate Analysis on Operating Constraints, Usage, and Limitations - The proposed gondola solution does not adequately address operating constraints due to weather, avalanche mitigation, and unplanned maintenance. Additionally, there is no clear proposal on cost to users, long term maintenance, or realistic usage. With continued vehicle access allowing folks to drive to the</p>
--	--	---

		resorts, there is no real incentive for individuals to use the gondola that would - on most days - increase their commute time by a factor of 3. In my own case, I skied 170 days last winter. Less than ten of days had traffic so bad that it took be longer than the proposed gondola would take.
38191	Ana Sullivan	<p>The Gondola B option is not going to solve the traffic problem in LCC. The solution needs to be much more nuanced than the exorbitantly expensive, short-sighted, nature marring approach that UDOT, Snowbird and Alta have proposed.</p> <p>Why? Because it's not going to solve the problem, it will just put more traffic to the base of the canyon, impacting both Sandy and Cottonwood Heights cities, causing another separate issue for the residents who live there, who have spoken out against the gondola in overwhelming numbers.</p> <p>Another glaring reason the gondola is not the best solution, is that it will forever destroy the natural beauty of the glacier cut canyon that recreationists of ALL kinds, come to enjoy. This decision cannot be taken back once it is implemented.</p> <p>The gondola only benefits the ski resorts, and does not consider other user issues in the canyon. Several parking areas along the road, both in the summer and the winter seasons are overcrowded. A gondola will not help with this, as there are simply no more parking areas that can accommodate the users in the canyon. Furthermore, the gondola is proposed to only run during the winter. Really? Just restating that sentence seems asinine.</p> <p>The overall price of the project is estimated at 550 billion, with many reports suggesting it could cost twice as much or more. That is simply not a good bet if you're looking at cost/benefit scenarios by any measure. Unless your only variables are the ski resorts and the developers. To add insult to injury, the construction will take a decade, with traffic issues constant. Just look at Big Cottonwood's example currently with the Fire Mitigation Project. Traffic delays are a major issue. This gondola proposal just keeps getting more ridiculous as I write.</p> <p>And even more absurd was the alternative to the gondola in the first comment period, with Expanded Bus Service which included widening the road and adding 200 foot retaining walls. How is that really an alternative worth pursuing? It appears to be the solution only to make the gondola appear to be the better option. Both are flawed and terrible options.</p> <p>Which brings me to my final comment, as I'm running out of time:</p> <p>The addition of more buses and routes to and from the ski areas seems like a much better alternative to implement, and I am glad to see that UDOT has proposed this solution as a "phased approach". Interestingly enough however, UTA announced that it is removing selected ski bus service routes to the canyon this 2022/23 season. Coincidence?</p> <p>How about using the Traction Law at all times and enforcing it? Several times over the past three years especially, UDOT has refrained from turning on the 4x4 or chains signs on at the bottom of the canyon during or before a predicted storm. Therefore, allowing 2wd vehicles to pass up and get stuck going up or down, causing several delays and accidents on many days that I witnessed personally in the canyon. Also, rarely were police stationed at the entrance to enforce laws on dangerous and or busy storm days.</p> <p>How can you say that there is problem with traffic in LCC when known solutions aren't being implemented in the first place?</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>An example of buses working to move tourists in and out of a crowded and popular tourist destination is none other than our very own Utah's Zion National Park. Buses move millions of tourists there each year and has conveniently solved the traffic problem there without destroying the very place they are trying to profit from.</p> <p>Simply put, the gondola is a tourist attraction to benefit the few, at the cost of many. It just doesn't add up to good sense.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and time in reading my comment. I was born and raised in Utah, at the base of these canyons. Preserving them for generations to come should be all of our goals, not just what we can profit, extract and benefit monetarily by them.</p>
38194	Adam Dunford	<p>As a Utah resident, my family has enjoyed the use of Little Cottonwood Canyon for many generations. We have hiked, picnicked, enjoyed scenic drives, and skied there frequently, as did my father when he was young, as did my grandparent's families, and so on. We have enjoyed our time in this canyon as a beautiful natural resource, and that is the frame in which I view this project.</p> <p>Little Cottonwood Canyon is the jewel of the Wasatch Front that we are proud to call our home. The preservation of this wild and striking landscape ought to be the business of the Utah State government, not commodification and so-called development. The construction of miles and miles of gondola will forever change the face of this incredible place. No matter how thoughtfully the pylons are planned so not to disturb climbing zones or how much car traffic is reduced, this project will create a new unnatural sight for every step along the canyon floor, spoiling any semblance of wildness that we long to find there.</p> <p>Many have complained about the cost of the project. It is very high for a state the size of Utah. It is my understanding the cost compares to Los Angeles' recently rebuilt 6th Street Bridge, a project which saw many delays and budgets rises. How will UDOT protect LCC from years of delays? Do you want to turn Little Cottonwood Canyon into a zone comparable to the East LA Interchange?</p> <p>Many have complained that the project benefits only the corporate owners of the ski resorts, and appeals to outside tourism, while overlooking the wants of people who use the whole canyon, who live and pay taxes in this state.</p> <p>Many have complained that the gondola will not solve the traffic problems. It does not run at high enough capacity to facilitate the crowds on high traffic mornings, and it will not be able to run while explosives are in the air during avalanche mitigation, rendering the whole idea pointless.</p> <p>I understand that the State of Utah wants to improve access to resources, and UDOT is in the business of making sure that happens. I understand that UDOT wants to be able to leave a legacy, and improve the image of Utah as a mountain destination. I contend that if the State of Utah truly wants to leave a legacy and if you want to show you care for our stewardship of our land, the conservation of our natural landscape should be your number one priority. I understand that along with the Gondola project there are plans to preserve and protect the slopes of Mt. Superior. What about Maybird Gulch, Red Pine and White Pine? The gondola will strip each of them of more natural charm every minute that a car of 32 people soars by. The whole canyon deserves the respect of conservation that you offer as a pittance to one lone mountain.</p>

		<p>I implore you to take new considerations of alternatives. The Utah public are against this intrusive gondola plan, because it ignores the uses of the canyon which we have loved for so long; a quiet, remarkably beautiful place with trails all along where you can enjoy an afternoon away from home all year around. You are in the position to make decisions for the public. Please consider our concerns before you change the face of our land.</p>
38195	Geoffrey Heath	<p>I live on the corner of -----. My wife and I will be affected as much as anyone by whatever final decisions ultimately are made. I disagree with the local voices who are screaming against the gondola proposal, and am in the minority who support the gondola (based at the La Caille site) as the best concept, for reasons summarized below. I think several points must be kept in mind. They include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It seems that most (not all, but most) of the opponents of the gondola in the local area here really want to turn Wasatch Blvd. back into a quiet road with traffic more like it was 30 or 40 years ago. They don't like the commuter traffic or the volume of recreational traffic. While that is understandable, they seem to think we could turn the clock back by lowering the speed limit to 35 along the whole road and making current commuters from Sandy and Draper so frustrated that they will use Highland Drive or some other route to avoid having to go slower on Wasatch Blvd. That perspective strikes me as utterly unrealistic and unreasonable. Because of how the southeastern part of the valley has developed over the last few decades, Wasatch Boulevard will always be a commuter artery. It will remain a commuter artery even if Highland Drive is eventually extended southward. 2. Additional bus service up Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) during peak ski days will not solve the traffic problem, or probably even significantly affect it favorably. The estimates of how much additional buses would reduce traffic are misleading because they are based on either transparently false or unrealistic assumptions. (1) The estimates assume that there would be no affect on bus traffic from snow and ice on the road up the canyon. That is so laughable as to require no further comment. Even if a bus can handle snow and ice better than most cars, the buses will still suffer the consequences on the traffic of the cars that can't handle it as well. (2) Taking the bus will not reduce the time needed to access the ski areas, because the buses will be stuck in the same traffic jams as the cars. So those who take the bus will have to drive to one of the bus hubs from their home(s), wait for the bus, then climb on into a crowd with several dozen of their best friends who they've never met, and then go through the same traffic nightmare as they do when driving in their cars, and then be subject to the bus schedules in coming back down. In their cars, they have complete control over who they are with, when they go and when they return, are not jammed together with strangers, and the situation is physically a lot more comfortable. The only real incentive for folks who do not now take the bus to switch over to the bus is if a big enough fee were imposed to drive up the canyon so as to make enduring the discomfort of the bus financially worth the trade-off. (What that dollar amount would be I don't know, but it probably would have to be relatively stiff.) But the EIS doesn't actually propose to do that. If I read it correctly, it proposes a fee only for single-occupancy vehicles. I suspect most people who drive now are driving with at least one other person. Consequently, the proposed fee for only single-occupancy vehicles would have little effect. (3) Fortunately, the EIS does not recommend adopting the proposal for additional bus-only lanes up the canyon itself. Construction of additional lanes on the canon road itself would have some of the worst environmental effects and would mar the canyon more than any of the other proposals and still cost an enormous amount of money. LCC simply is not wide enough at several points to accommodate significant widening of the road. (4) The engine exhaust and noise from a large number of additional buses

		<p>would be more environmentally unfavorable to the canyon and more annoying to patrons and visitors than gondola options.</p> <p>3. I am personally pleased that a Swiss firm was retained to evaluate and work on gondola options. My wife and I have extensive experience with the gondola/tram systems in and above Zermatt, Switzerland, which is a major reason we favor the gondola concept. However, I would urge UDOT to reconsider the design concept and consider smaller and more cars. The model would be the 6-people-per-car system that operates from the southern end of the town of Zermatt and goes up to Furi, then to Schwarzsee and up to Trockener Steg. The system operates (or at least seems to us to operate) at faster speeds than the larger tram cars on other lines (for example, Trockener Steg up to Klein Matterhorn), and carries more people per hour. The smaller 6-person cars depart every ten seconds or so, with automatically opening and closing doors. From Furi to Trockener Steg, passengers can debark at at Schwarzsee as the car temporarily slows and the door opens, or stay on the car and continue up to the final station. The cars are light, and the towers are smaller and lower in height than the larger towers needed for the larger and heavier big tram cars on other lines. No human operators are needed except to run the motors at the bottom and top stations. While a smaller-car system would require more towers than the big tram option proposed in the EIS, the overall environmental and visual impact likely would be less than for the big towers needed for the proposed system. I would urge UDOT to reevaluate the gondola design concept.</p> <p>4. For any gondola system, one of the most important questions is: What's the power source? Is the plan to have Rocky Mountain Power build a big increase in generating capacity to meet what would be required to power the gondola system, or to build an independent generating system? Either alternative involves lots of questions that require analysis.</p> <p>5. The proposals in the EIS for Wasatch Boulevard between Big Cottonwood Rd/Ft Union Blvd and the "T" junction where Wasatch Blvd splits from North Little Cottonwood Rd don't seem to make a lot of sense and appear to be an attempt to placate some o the opposition to the overall proposal. (1) Many of the proposed noise walls would be located along segments of the road where housing does not abut Wasatch Blvd and is located higher on the hill or mountainside above the road and well above the height of the proposed noise walls. What good would the walls do in that situation? (2) There is not enough room on this portion of Wasatch Blvd to make five lanes plus a bike lane plus a special use lane without taking a lot of property adjoining the road by eminent domain---at huge cost and major prejudice and disadvantage to abutting landowners. The road can be made two lanes on both sides for the entire stretch between BCC Rd/Ft Union and the T junction, with shoulders wide enough to serve as bike lanes (as the majority of it is now) without taking very much adjoining property by eminent domain. That would have a somewhat favorable effect on traffic flow. Trying to turn Wasatch into a pedestrian-favorable road at the same time is a pipe dream and would cost far more than it is worth (not to mention the volume of litigation that would ensue).</p> <p>6. A proposal to widen North Little Cottonwood Road between the T junction and the actual mouth of the canyon makes no sense. It would simply change the point where the road narrows to one land and the traffic jam begins, with no discernible benefit to the canyon or traffic.</p> <p>7. None of the proposals is the EIS will make any actual difference for many years to come, because any alternative ultimately selected involves hundreds of</p>
--	--	---

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>millions of dollars that have to come from sources that no one can now identify. Obviously, the State Legislature is not going to vote to raise about 500 million dollars to fund whatever the final selected alternative is. Nor should it. Clearly, the resort owners need to pony up a major portion of the costs, since they will be primary beneficiaries. The EIS essentially acknowledges that not very much is going to happen in the next many years. At the same time, much of the proposed effort to implement "elements" of the non-gondola alternative in the meantime will cost huge amounts of money that will further delay or subtract from obtaining the funds needed for the gondola alternative. My suggestion would be that if a gondola proposal is selected, scale back the "elements" of other alternatives not selected and focus on action to do limited improvements to improve traffic flow on Wasatch Blvd to the extent practical and undertake the difficult efforts and negotiations to raise money for the main project sooner.</p> <p>8. The smaller-car gondola alternative also has the advantage that it would be easy to build an optional stop near Tanners Flat (similar to the Schwarzsee arrangement above Zermatt in Switzerland), which would open the option to run a gondola in the summer and not just in the winter. That would help greatly in reducing peak summer season vehicle traffic. The parking problems in the canyon during the summer are now acute, and a stop within a relatively short distance of a large portion of the starting points for hiking and other activities could mitigate that problem greatly.</p>
38203	Brian Roberts	<p>I am a resident of Salt Lake City, Utah. I have lived in Utah most of my life.</p> <p>I strongly oppose building a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon. It would make the canyon ugly and look like an amusement park. It would ruin the beauty of Utah that people come from all over the world to see.</p> <p>There are only about ten winter days per year the road has problems. Due to global warming, some scientists predict there won't be snow in North America by 2050. That is only 28 years from now.</p> <p>Therefore, an ugly gondola and these other projects you propose are not needed. They are a waste of taxpayer money.</p> <p>I believe you are out of touch since you are even considering such a foolish thing!</p> <p>The Utah Department of Transportation has a history of making BAD decisions. You raised the speed limit from 65 mph to 70 and 80 plus even though the Utah Highway Patrol strongly advised against this, begged you NOT to do this. You did it anyway. Since then Utah highway deaths have skyrocketed. It is a joke to hear you talk about zero fatality goals when you are doing this and highway deaths have skyrocketed because of it. It is also not good for the environment and not good for saving fuel.</p> <p>Now you want to squander \$500 million to \$600 million building an unnecessary 8 plus mile long gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon that is not needed. It will make the canyon ugly.</p> <p>Just because something CAN be done does not mean it SHOULD be done. As engineers, you appear to only care about numbers. You are ignoring what matters most - keeping our Utah beautiful.</p> <p>Years ago I traveled by raft through the Grand Canyon. While in the Grand</p>

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>Canyon I saw old scars where the Federal Government drilled and tested different locations in the canyon to build a dam and fill the Grand Canyon with water. Luckily, people came to their senses and this didn't happen. I hope you come to your senses and don't build the gondola or widen the road. Don't do anything that will make the canyon ugly.</p> <p>Those in favor of the gondola are speaking out of both sides of their mouth. They say it is necessary because the road is icy and dangerous during the winter. If that was their main reason for a gondola, they would want to end road travel in the canyon. They don't want this. They want BOTH. Why? The ski resorts want as many customers per day as possible. Since the road can only move a given number of vehicles per day, they want it to continue (no matter how dangerous) and the gondola to run at the same time. You are being hoodwinked if you think the gondola is about improving safety!</p> <p>The gondola is also being promoted as being "clean." It will be powered by DIRTY COAL.</p> <p>What I also don't like about the gondola is it would NOT be safe. The ride will be 37 minutes long. Each car only has room for about 20 people to sit yet will be packed with up to 35 people. That means 15 people will be standing holding their skis. Ski resorts make a lot of money selling alcohol. Skiers will drink. Many will come back down the canyon drunk. Drinking and fighting go hand in hand. Fights inevitably will break out in the gondola cars. Many Utahns carry guns.</p> <p>The gondola will become a target for mass shootings. I highly doubt you plan to make every gondola passenger go through a metal detector and security prior to boarding the gondola. If you do that it will cost a lot of money for employees and equipment. It will slow down the boarding. If you don't do it, the gondola could be easily destroyed with only \$40 dollars (100 rounds of 9 mm x 40 cents each equals \$40). If there is a mass shooting on the gondola, people will no longer want to ride it. It will probably be taken down, just like some schools are torn down after mass shootings.</p> <p>If you ignore the majority of people who are opposed to the gondola and build it anyway, I expect many of them, including myself, will stop skiing in Little Cottonwood Canyon. I expect some of them will create websites and encourage out of state tourists to avoid skiing in this canyon. If this happens, it could put Snowbird and Alta out of business.</p> <p>I would much rather the \$500 million to \$600 million be spent saving the Great Salt Lake. It is what most Utah residents care about since it directly affects our health and our way of life. Due to the lake being the lowest level in recorded history, our summers are now unbearably hot and dry. We are running out of water.</p> <p>The Catholic Church in Utah recently came out against building the gondola. It said the money could be much better spent, that it is enough money to pay for everyone in Utah to use mass transit for free.</p> <p>Come to your senses. Listen to the majority of the people and do what they want. Do NOT build the gondola that will make the canyon ugly!</p>
38209	Rodger Renstrom	<p>UDOT's selection of a gondola as the preferred alternative to transportation management in Little Cottonwood Canyon puts the numerous impacts of that option and the EIS process on the back burner in favor of unrestricted canyon</p>

		<p>development and degradation. The UDOT process has selected an alternative that fails in multiple ways to, as its mission dictates, "deliver transportation options that meet the needs of the community while preserving the values of the Wasatch Mountains." Emphasis mine.</p> <p>UDOT has made little effort to focus on what should be the initial step in determining transportation concerns for LCC: what is the carrying capacity of the canyon and the two privately operated ski corporations that will benefit from unlimited access to LCC? UDOT gives lip service to carrying capacity by stating "UDOT received numerous comments that a visitor capacity analysis should be conducted to determine how many recreation users can be supported by the natural resources in Little Cottonwood Canyon before the environment and the recreation experience are degraded." However UDOT's response seems to simply be that "the Forest Service keeps track of that, we don't really care. We just want to move as many people as possible to benefit developers and private corporations with connections."</p> <p>It would seem elementary that a billion dollar construction project designed to encourage unlimited access that forever alters one of America's great Urban canyons and the designated wildernesses it harbors demands a serious assessment of what the carrying capacity of that canyon is and what transportation options best meet those needs with minimal impact.</p> <p>UDOT admits that "the Forest Service acknowledges that, in the future, management might be needed to limit resource impacts from user visitation in Little Cottonwood Canyon." However, the gondola alternative selected by UDOT is designed to produce unlimited conveyance to the two private corporations operating in the canyon (and ONLY those two entities). In other words, UDOT is proposing a transportation solution that may need to be restricted in the future to control canyon access.</p> <p>The project fails to "deliver transportation options that meet the "needs of the community" in part because the majority of the community does use the ski resorts in the winter nor travel on Wasatch Blvd., and it is unlikely that those members of the community who do ski and snowboard will opt to use the gondola, leaving it primarily as a transportation option for tourists, not the community.</p> <p>UDOT seeks to address the following concerns, however its analysis is woefully simplistic in its conception and ultimately presents a solution inconsistent with canyon needs.</p> <p>1) Decreased mobility in winter during the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) peak travel periods related to visits to ski areas, with the greatest traffic volumes on weekends and holidays and during and after snowstorms.</p> <p>In an average snow year the canyon road is severely congested perhaps 20 times during the season. UDOT proposes spending over \$500m to solve a problem that exists for less than 10 percent of the calendar year. With the anticipated effects of climate change, it is likely that the powder days that drive serious road congestion will decrease further. During the 2021-22 ski season, there were only approximately three days where the road was seriously congested. The gondola would have been empty for most of the winter recreation season.</p> <p>2) Decreased mobility on Wasatch Boulevard resulting from weekday commuter traffic.</p>
--	--	--

		<p>The congestion on Wasatch Boulevard on weekdays is no worse than that on I-15 during rush hour or UT 224 to Park City. The idea that Wasatch Blvd. must be widened to accommodate increased traffic flow when similar, and more crucial, conditions exist elsewhere in the area smacks of a solution trying to find a problem.</p> <p>3) Safety concerns associated with avalanche hazard and traffic delays caused by the current avalanche-mitigation program in Little Cottonwood Canyon. Periodic road closures for avalanche mitigation can cause 2-to-4-hour travel delays or longer, which can cause traffic to back up in the neighborhoods at the entrance of the canyon.</p> <p>The ski resorts that would be the primary beneficiaries of unlimited traffic to their businesses have operated for over 50 years with worse avalanche conditions than what we generally experience today. Ski resort operators knew the business they were getting into long ago and have managed snow conditions and the canyon road exceptionally well. More people are likely to die driving to work in the Salt Lake valley than by an avalanche in LCC. The inconvenience of avalanche control work - even if it occasionally results in road delays or even resort closure for a day or two - does not justify the impacts to LCC caused by a massive gondola structure, its accompanying construction impacts, or the unlimited visitors to the canyon that it is intended to create.</p> <p>4) Limited parking at trailheads and ski areas that leads to roadside parking.</p> <p>Then don't allow people to park on the roads, duh. Reserved parking, car pooling, better public transportation, controlling visitor numbers - a number of options are available and should be implemented before an ill-conceived project such as the gondola is allowed to proceed, in any fashion, exploratory or otherwise.</p> <p>UDOT's prime concern is simply moving people. It doesn't really care, or give meaningful attention to, the unnecessary impacts that accompany its myopic people-moving focus.</p> <p>The UDOT report and selection of the gondola as a preferred option is an egregious dereliction of its duty to balance transportation issues with the actual level of Canyon needs and the environmental impacts that such an intrusive project will forever impart on " the values of the Wasatch Mountains." And all to benefit developers with political contacts and two private corporations primarily interested in maximizing profits at the expense of everything else LCC has to offer all of the people of Utah and the nation.</p> <p>If the gondola project is allowed to proceed in the face of unprecedented public opposition and the opposition of Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City and Sandy City, it will be a perfect example of how government ignores the interests of people and the environment in favor of back-door political deals and corporate profit. This alternative should not be allowed to proceed.</p>
38220	Chad Smith	<p>Well here I am submitting my comment in the last few minutes before this final public comment period closes. I wasn't going to write, because I have grown to feel that UDOT doesn't really want my input. But a friend convinced me that I should write as a protest, if nothing else. And this took me almost an hour to write, so I hope you actually read it and try to care.</p> <p>I would like you to know that, as I have attended multiple open houses, town halls and online input sessions over the last four years, I have gone from being excited</p>

		<p>and inspired by the opportunities and impressed by the planned process to feeling disempowered, frustrated and disgusted at the process and (apparent) result. The process appears to be broken and inept at best and corrupt at worst. I really don't get why this planning for something so important has been done so very badly. It is clear that we need a holistic solution for a variety of issues, for the entirety of the canyon, and year round (not to mention for additional locations like Big Cottonwood, too). And yet, we've been fed partial solutions for a limited problem happening during a relatively small number of hours and days per year. And when so many of us have repeatedly pointed out the inadequate scope of the now-preferred "solution" and the better solutions available, we have been told again and again something to the effect of "Sorry, but as good as those solutions may be, they are outside the scope of this EIS, which is strictly intended only to address a relatively small number of high-traffic snow days in Little Cottonwood Canyon. (A small, specific problem that appears to have been custom made for the Gondola Works coalition.) Ugh!</p> <p>So many are like me: we care passionately about this, we have tried to be educated and involved, because it is so important. And we are aware that we have flooded the system with feedback that is overwhelmingly negative about the gondola. And yet it is your preferred alternative and now the selected alternative? And your UDOT representative now has a slide presentation with a slide about UDOT's take aways from public input, with the first bullet point claiming that the gondola is popular? It's not, and for good reason!</p> <p>I could write so much about this, but I saw the presentation given by the UDOT representative to the Salt Lake County Council just the other day. I heard the many, excellent points made and concerns raised by the council members there. I know that you're already aware. Please just consider my message here as a strong echo of those many points. The process has been done wrongly. The gondola is not the right solution, and it is also the least popular solution. Beyond that, I will venture a guess that it is the alternative with the biggest likelihood for going over budget and making UDOT and the Gondola Works coalition even worse than they already do.</p> <p>Please do not make this mistake. I and thousands of others will take no joy in seeing the failure of an overpriced eyesore that ends up being underutilized and (even if it were utilized to capacity) will absolutely not solve the issues we currently face in LCC. Not to mention the issues we will be facing decades from now. Again, I will take no joy in saying "I told you so," but you will end up implementing the other solutions anyway. We need tolling, we need snow sheds, we need expanded and subsidized bussing. These are the solution, and yet we will be underfunding them because we're so anxious to build the world's longest f-ing gondola in LCC where it absolutely doesn't belong.</p> <p>And as UDOT solicits this input, which you don't appear to actually want, you try to make it clear that none of the alternatives will provide solutions for trailhead access? Why not? I saw plans for bus-preferred parking lots in LCC at one of the open houses years ago. It seems like you just want the gondola to look more appealing by making the other alternatives more limited than they could easily be. (Let alone pitching the flexibility of a bus solution that could easily pave the way for something more future proof, like autonomous electric shuttles in a few years.) And on top of all that, you're saying something to the effect of "Please keep in mind as you give your very final feedback, that we still have no idea what we will charge for tolls, busses, gondolas, etc. But speak now or forever hold your peace. Oh, and also we'll make sure we charge the same amount for the bus as we do for cars, just to ensure that we don't actually encourage anyone to ride the bus</p>
--	--	--

		<p>rather than their personal vehicles." Grrr...</p> <p>I have lost so much faith in UDOT over this whole fiasco. If we end up with a gondola after all this, it will just confirm that UDOT is as bad as our legislature. You guys don't appear to actually want any input. You just want to say you've given us an opportunity to weigh in.</p>
38375	Ashley Kern	<p>Hello, UDOT Staff! I am a resident of Murray, UT. I submitted my comment via the website, but didn't get confirmation that it went through, so I thought I'd email it as well. Please see below:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Gondola Alternative B is a solution that the Salt Lake County community does not desire. There are several reasons for this including several heavy environmental impacts to our public lands and poor usage of public funds. There are also a much better, immediate solutions available to alleviate the traffic issues.</p> <p>The impacts from the construction process alone will be frustrating. In order to move heavy equipment to the job site, trees would have to be removed and animal habitats would be run over. The ground surface would be regraded which destroys the microbiome and ecology of the soil for a time. The project will also permanently destroy some recreational climbing spots and cause non-access to others for the duration of construction. Little Cottonwood Canyon is a world-class climbing area, where Olympians and climbing legends have trained. For all users of the canyon including hikers, climbers, wildlife lovers, and more it would be shame to ruin the beauty of the canyon with the cables and support structures required for the gondola. Construction would take several years and cost the community over half of a billion dollars, excluding cost and schedule overruns that are likely to happen. This is an unfair and unequitable use of taxpayer dollars; residents who cannot afford to ski or snowboard will also be contributing towards the cost of building the expensive gondola.</p> <p>The Gondola "solution" also ignores the factor that climate change should play in the decision-making process. A study published in Nature Reviews Earth and Environment in November 2021 by Erica R. Siirila-Woodburn et al estimates that snow-water equivalents are expected to decrease in the western United States by 25% by 2050. The study also estimates that snow-water equivalents will reduce 50% by 2100. It is inappropriate (both in cost and environmental impact) to build additional infrastructure for an industry that will experience this level of decline in Utah in the coming decades.</p> <p>I agree with UDOT that reducing single-car traffic in LCC is key to achieving better traffic flow. However, the best way to do this would be to implement a checkpoint at the mouth of the canyon during the winter months only. This checkpoint would ensure that vehicles are prepared to enter the canyon (by having AWD/4WD and appropriate tires). It would also only allow cars which are utilizing carpooling and/or require a large toll. Another idea would be to only allow tourists' cars which have a hotel/accommodation reservation in the canyon and only allow residents' vehicles whom carpool with 3 or 4+ people per car. Cutting down on unprepared vehicles in the canyon would reduce the number of traffic slowdowns. Forcing a "carpool or large toll" situation would heavily incentivize locals to take the ski busses. In conjunction with the traffic checkpoint rules, I'd encourage UDOT to increase the number of busses running in both LCC and Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC). Both of these canyons have traffic issues and the gondola doesn't address the traffic issues in BCC at all. Implementing winter checkpoints and increasing bus options in both canyons would fix issues in both of the canyons. These better solutions could be implemented as soon as this winter! The gondola would take much longer. UDOT staff, thank you for</p>

		<p>coordinating with the public and taking the time to gather these comments. Please consider the alternative outlined above and consider not going forward with Gondola Alternative B.</p> <p>—</p> <p>Thanks, Ashley Kern</p>
38381	Sydney Rae Stephens	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>My name is Sydney Stephens, I was raised in Cottonwood Heights in Sandy, as were all of my ancestors dating back to the initial European-descended establishment of the Salt Lake valley by pioneers in the 1800s. My family is deeply connected to Utah and the Wasatch mountains as such. Little Cottonwood is where I learned to ski and rock climb, its where I went on some of my first dates with my husband, where I first began observing wildlife as a child which would lead to my career as a biologist, and where I shared many more personal and profound moments. I have hiked virtually every trail, climbed virtually every established climb, been involved in wildlife surveys throughout the canyon, and used both Alta and Snowbird on multiple occasions. I can say confidently that I have had a well-rounded experience of the canyon both physically through different seasons, sports and location, mentally through different socioeconomic statuses, and intellectually through a wider objective and historical view as a biologist.</p> <p>In regards to the detriment caused by a gondola, as a wildlife biologist I am concerned with the EIS's ecosystem section and believe it inadequately assesses the risk to wildlife- which has subsequent impacts on the wellbeing and relationships of humans to their environment. For example, as you saw from the Metropolitan Water District and Public Utility Comments, the affect on water quality is not likely negligible. Small changes in pH and sediment deposit have drastic and deadly affects on wildlife, aquatic and terrestrial. Cleansing this water for public (human) use will have added costs: how has UDOT anticipated/budgeted for these costs?</p> <p>Habitat fragmentation by presence of anthropogenic structures (i.e. large towers), noise disturbance from construction and high-decibel machinery (i.e. gears on a gondola which will easily disturb airborne creatures - UDOT's analysis of the peak-to-peak gondola's dB heard from the ground is inadequate in assessing wildlife hearing ranges and proximity to source) are shown in many studies to affect health, reproduction, and survival of many species. These effects can be seen miles from the source and have spill over throughout many canyons. Furthermore, this causes dispersal into bordering urban areas where we see an increase in human-wildlife conflict following disturbance events and habitat fragmentation. Increase in domestic pet predation, garbage/food scavenging, denning/destruction of property, and even attacks on human will ensue. This is strongly correlated with habitat/resource disturbance in multitudes of peer-reviewed studies. When rises in human-conflict increase as a result of habitat alteration, in the U.S. we most often punish the wildlife (removal/euthanasia from management agencies to keep people comfortable) instead of changing human behaviors/attacking the root of the problem. Subsequently, wildlife populations further decrease. What, if any, plans does UDOT have to rectify changes in wildlife population, particularly those that are sensitive species, locally endangered, threatened, or migratory, throughout the entire Wasatch as a result? What collaborations with NGO expertise and state wildlife agencies are in place for proper management? What monitoring and surveys are in place to ensure</p>

		<p>awareness in wildlife presence/populations are up-to-date and responses are appropriate and flexible? If adequate management under a gondola is deemed impossible, what actions is UDOT willing to take to change construction plans- and is it even able to do so after a Record of Decision is made?</p> <p>The operations of construction machinery, and manufacturing costs of these structures have significant carbon emissions. The removal of vegetation, and disturbance of soil, releases additional carbon into the atmosphere. Each plant sequesters CO2 from the atmosphere and converts it to oxygen- removing the natural systems that aid in fixing our air quality is a poor choice. Furthermore, the gondola is not carbon-neutral; aside from the steep carbon costs of construction, its operations also add to the environment. Since it does not currently plan to remove cars from the canyon, but to be an added transportation system, this is also added emissions. As a city with some of the worst air quality in the country- this not an insignificant factor. What, if any, climate mitigation/carbon offset strategies has UDOT considered?</p> <p>As stated above, the aim of having people be added to the canyon (aka the resorts) via gondola, in lieu of reducing vehicles their footprint- shows clear prioritization of ski industry profits over environmental stewardship, public desires, fiscal responsibility, and income equality. Should the gondola truly remove vehicles (which many believe are unlikely once people realize the amount of effort and time it takes to ride the gondola instead of driving a personal vehicle), it services only the ski resorts. From 2012-2021 (9 years), ski visitation in Utah grew by 1.5 million while the population grew only 0.12 million. In 2022 alone, ski visitation grew 0.5 million (1/3 of the growth seen over the previous decade) while the population grew by only 0.01 million. The representation that accommodating ski resort access is for the people of the Salt Lake valley and its population growth is a blatant misrepresentation of need. Ski resorts aim to grow their visitation, and thus their profits, and are now restricted by transportation rather than global interest. Using this opportunity to desecrate the canyon for corporate gain is greedy and corrupt; the allowance/cooperation of it by government organizations such as UDOT would be, at minimum, negligent. What are UDOT's methods for projecting SLC population growth over the next 50 years and what that means for canyon use? How has UDOT reconciled ski resort usage with declining snow pack over that time period and what data have they incorporated into that model when assessing need?</p> <p>60% of canyon users do not use the resorts. Lack of desire to ski/snowboard is one reason that should not be forgotten. Income disparity is another prominent reason. Therefor, the majority of canyon users would be either physically (forced gondola) or financially (income restrictions to steep tolling alternatives meant to dis-incentivize non-gondola use) cut off from the lower 90% of the canyon and various recreational activities therefor: rock climbing, hiking, ice climbing, mountain biking, picnicking, backpacking/camping, etc. The median household (not individual) income in 2021 was \$67k. A single-person season pass to Snowbird for an adult is \$1,550 - this means that at least 2% of a household's entire year profit (before tax, with actual net income giving an even higher %) would have to go to a single member of that household's ski pass for the gondola to have any significance to them. This is assuming they have invested years of money in equipment and lessons already, and budgeted for gondola tickets or fees. Recall that the median is only the middle marker for income, meaning that over half of Utah's would consider their % of their household to be much greater for a single ski pass. This is simply not viable for low-income individuals, families, etc. Consequently, the gondola and the restriction of the canyon subsequently creates socioeconomic discrimination. Public lands (for which the majority of LCC</p>
--	--	---

		<p>is, or is leased under) are "are owned collectively by U.S. citizens." What, if any, are UDOT's plans to subsidize and make affordable the access to the canyon so as to avoid socioeconomic discrimination? Considering the 'gate keeping' of a gondola & associated tolling at LCC's entrance: what, if any, are UDOT's plans to make the canyon accessible for non-resort users after the essential privatization of public lands?</p> <p>Furthermore, the #1 reason for canyon value/usage in LCC (as found by the extensive survey of LCC conducted at USU) was "to observe scenic beauty." This beauty is irreparably marred by such an intensive and destructive project as a gondola. Recreationists come to see the canyon. It has a rich history in the development of rock climbing world-renown and respected- and is in the works of a historic designation for such. Most climbers climb, especially in the multipitch-rich granite sea of Little Cottonwood, to get to the top and be able to look out at the world around them. Most hikers, canyon-drivers, picnics, and other outdoor sport participants do so for the same reasons. Little Cottonwood Road is a scenic highway that cannot currently allow even large telephone poles; this designation would obviously be stripped if skyscraper size industrial towers are constructed. There will never again be the Little Cottonwood that exists today, the canyon that gained the love and attention that got us here in the first place.</p> <p>UDOT has failed to prioritize lower-impact solutions. You have stated that a 30% traffic reduction would solve the congestion issues in the canyon. Your EIS states that 36% of vehicles are single-occupancy. Simply banning single-occupancy during peak-use days would more than solve this problem. Considering traction laws, appropriate tolling (that is not used as an exploitive tool to force people to ride a gondola that only services the elite ski industry), or parking reservation systems at the resort are all viable options. Not implementing these simple, non-destructive solutions (NOT as a phased approach that serves as a coercion for a gondola) is negligent.</p> <p>Should UDOT pass a record of decision for a gondola, regardless of private or public (tax) funding, lawsuits will likely ensue from various parties directed at both individual people and organizations involved in seeing the gondola through. Regardless of outcome, litigation is time and cost-intensive to defend. This will have substantial fiscal and temporal costs. How, if at all, has this factor been budgeted for/anticipated in construction timelines and expenditure?</p> <p>Many projects like this that are not as popular as expected end up abandoned, instead of deconstructed due to the costs. The Moab gondola is one of multiple examples just within Utah. How, if at all, has UDOT budgeted/planned to remove structures if the operations of the gondola fail after construction? If failed, does UDOT plan to abandon the gondola materials, with their aforementioned detriments despite lack of use, in the wilderness in lieu of paying for its decommissioning?</p> <p>Finally, given that the original senate bill (S.B. 277) charged UDOT with solving transportation issues across the state, with no one issue listed or prioritized, what other issues will UDOT address under this assigned duty? How can we expect budgeting to be distributed across statewide projects versus Little Cottonwood alone?</p> <p>I, along with 80% of Utahns, urge you to remove the gondola from consideration. This is based on sound economic, social, and environmental data and reasoning. It is also based on a personal connection to the canyon for which many of us have. I urge you not to prioritize the agenda of elite developers over the</p>
--	--	--

Comments on Little Cottonwood Final EIS

		<p>responsibility of stewardship to the land and its local people.</p> <p>Best, Sydney R. Stephens Director of Conservation Ecology IORAA</p>
38626	Amber Broadway	<p>Dear UDOT,</p> <p>I am submitting comments on behalf of Solitude Mountain Resort, a member of the Alterra Mountain Company community and located in the Town of Brighton, Big Cottonwood Canyon. I would first like to applaud and thank your team for the tremendous amount of work and effort you have put forth in attempting to solve for some very complex environmental and capacity issues in the Cottonwoods. While new to Utah, having arrived just over a year ago from Vermont, it has been the primary topic of my short tenure thus far as President & COO of Solitude. But over these past few months, I have watched and participated in what seems to be a very thoughtful and inclusive process of engaging and soliciting feedback from all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>My areas of concern are primarily relative to Big Cottonwood and S.R. 190, given the location of Solitude in that area. First and foremost, the notion of tolling as detailed in your Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) applies to both Canyons and raises some problems for Solitude:</p> <p>Unfair economic impact on Big Cottonwood resort guests, especially prior to there being an enhanced public transport system</p> <p>The Big Cottonwood resorts already have parking fee structures in place, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has announced that it will be adding user fees at nearby locations as well</p> <p>Adding tolling fees on top of these existing fees is excessive and creates a poor guest experience</p> <p>The location of the toll as proposed, at the Big Cottonwood resort entrances, discriminates against resort guests versus other canyon users</p> <p>The creation of new traffic congestion issues that would undermine one of the project's fundamental goals of reducing traffic congestion</p> <p>Toll-related vehicle stoppages near the resorts will likely increase congestion at existing pressure points near the resorts</p> <p>The toll location is not effective in relation to vehicle turnaround areas and thus will create traffic back-ups further up the canyon</p> <p>If the intent is to maintain the Utah Traction Law, let us put this verification and toll in the same location - at the bottom of the canyon</p> <p>Your tolling fact sheet states "with improved transit options, tolls during the ski season,". I would appreciate clarification on whether tolling will or will not be implemented prior to improved transit in Big Cottonwood. Some of the recent commentary by UDOT suggests tolling may be implemented before an enhanced bus system and/or the gondola are complete, including as soon as next ski season. Is this true?</p> <p>If that is true, I respectfully request that UDOT delay tolling until all stakeholders in the Cottonwoods (businesses, residents, the U.S. Forest Service) have had an opportunity to collaborate on additional parking solutions and carpooling incentives. I believe the four Cottonwood resorts can do more collectively to help reduce traffic congestion issues, especially within our respective canyons and with the support of UDOT. Solitude was the first resort to implement paid parking in the Cottonwoods and would be happy to share how we have driven our carpooling numbers up year over year.</p>

	<p>I would also implore UDOT to consider and treat Big Cottonwood v. Little Cottonwood differently, especially in terms of tolling. These roads, user access (winter & summer), along with available bed base, and resort operating hours are very different. We would be better served by looking at each canyon's current trends to determine what makes sense versus a one-size fits-all approach to tolling in both locations. Many forget that Big Cottonwood Canyon typically offers 86 hours/week of resort winter operations, while Little Cottonwood typically only offers 49 hours/week.</p> <p>UTA has cut ski bus service by 50% this season, which should give us all pause about their capability of providing an enhanced bus service of any kind. While we are all still feeling the effects of the pandemic, the great resignation, wage pressures, etc. -certain industries have figured out how to navigate it this, while UTA has not. Better attracting and retaining UTA drivers needs to be a higher priority right now if we are going to make any attempt at bringing ski bus service back to normal next season, let alone enhance it in the coming years.</p> <p>With respect to the Mobility Hub at the Gravel Pit, will this also be available and serviced for Big Cottonwood Canyon? None of your Fact Sheets allude to this; I worry about taking this prime parking location for S.R. 190 and dedicating it solely for Little Cottonwood Canyon use. Does UDOT envision shared usage, or a second mobility hub for Big Cottonwood near our mouth?</p> <p>While not directly indicated in the EIS documents, I am aware that roadside parking in both canyons is a hot topic for UDOT, USFS and the towns. Right now, Solitude has the smallest amount of dedicated resort parking of any of the four resorts. On paper, we pencil at about 1250 but in practicality we hover closer to 1000 on resort stalls. The current spillover into roadside parking has proven critical to our business. We also struggle with the fact that the bulk of our base area lands are USFS owned, who has put a moratorium on new parking in the canyons. This is challenging for us. If we can partner with the stakeholders and find ways to solve for the loss of roadside parking, we would be amenable to that - provided this loss is made up either at the resorts, elsewhere in the canyon, or at the valley floor supported by adequate public transportation options. As an aside, Solitude has offered to both the Town of Brighton and USFS to take on paid roadside parking if desired - to date, neither entity has taken us up on this offer.</p> <p>To be sure, Solitude is in favor of supporting a transformative parking-traffic solution in the Cottonwoods that achieves UDOT's desired environmental and user experience goals. We have already committed \$15,000 for Big Cottonwood Canyon's Mobility Action Plan Study. Our hope is that, with whichever UDOT option is selected for Little Cottonwood Canyon, businesses & towns are given a chance to solve for carpooling incentives before tolling is implemented; that when/if tolling is implemented, it is phased in after enhanced transit solutions are enacted; that when/if tolling is implemented it is placed at the mouth of the canyons; that enhanced valley parking options are made equitable to both canyons; that roadside parking is not eliminated until after an alternative is achieved, and that a concerted effort is enacted now to help support UTA in growing its pool of qualified drivers (enhanced wages, benefits, schedules, etc.).</p> <p>Thank you for your time in considering these perspectives and for all the effort put into this important initiative. I hope I can be of additional assistance to UDOT going forward.</p>
--	--