

EAG (Equity Advisory Group) January 14, 2022, Meeting Notes

Attendees: Annette Brandon, Renee Coelho, Tamara Bradley, Amber Lenhart, Connie Kliewer (NE WA Education), Gretchen Chomas, Alexsandra Swenson (Girl Scouts of America/Student), Jaime Majure, Tami Dillon (Skill skin), Mary Kimball (TEP), Will Von Bracht (Principle in Othello), Larry Mattson (Jacobs), Shay Bauman (Public Counsel), Darrell Soyars (Avista), Brooke Beeler (Dept. of Ecology), Michelle Bennington (Our Place)

Welcome and Introductions

Equity in CETA (Clean Energy Transformation Act) Discussion

Populations that face barriers to the transformation to clean energy.

Providing people with what they need to thrive.

Named Communities Discussion

Defined Highly Impacted Communities and Vulnerable Populations per WAC 480-100-605

48 census tracts are identified as Named Communities within Avista's Washington service territory out of 142 census tracts

Member: Stated she does not see West Central Spokane in the VP map slides and wondered if that could be added. See Peaceful Valley but not West Central.

Amber: asked, what are the situations or barriers that may prevent someone from fully receiving the benefits of the transformation to clean energy?

Amber: asked for thoughts of the group on the definitions and maps of named communities. Are there areas that are missing?

Member: Kendall Yards is in West Central and then you have other streets right around it that are highly impacted by inequities and disparities. Is Kendal Yards part of West Central? If so, can the designation line by Bridge Ave, as those in that area use the railroad tracks as the line between the two areas.

Tamara: asked if there are areas on the map that are highlighted pink that should not be highlighted? Should we revisit areas and dig into those areas to see why they were defined as being in a named community? We want to make sure we are designating all our vulnerable populations and are looking to this group to help us identify those that are missing on the map. Looking forward to seeing 2020 census data to see how the Names Communities maps will be updated.

Amber asked what reflections others have?

Member: stated that the intersectionality between these populations and those listed on the pink sticky notes on slide 14. It is mind blowing when you step back and take that into account.

Annette: the sticky notes really outline those populations that may be highly impacted or vulnerable and do we still have the correct classifications? How can we connect with them to help them know what programs are available for them to be able to participate in.

Member: there are some people that use all resources available and try to meet them where they are at, and it can be hard to know where they are to maintain services. It is a constant shift because it is never one and done and she would love to brainstorm more about this. What are the best ways to target the programs they are not utilizing?

Member: South hill has a lot of new mixed income housing with all the new apartments, especially in the Moran prairie area. Parents with young children especially face more barriers because life is harder when you are a single parent or in general kids can make it harder to participate. Connecting with organizations and using trusted members of the communities you are trying to target is important. That way information is being shared within these communities that they are already trust.

Member: a lot of migrants from Guatemala and little countries from central America and their languages have specific dialects and there is not always someone that can translate for them, so finding a dialect like theirs and having a closed caption option is important.

Member: lower income and families within that category, laundromats may be a good place to add flyers around our options so that people can read them while they are waiting for laundry, few people want to read lengthy emails.

Member: there is a group of older individuals who are trying to stay in their home, and they are on a limited fixed income, and they may have lost their driver's license, so transportation becomes an issue and does that generation have Wi-Fi or internet, do they even want to learn to use the computer?

Amber: wonders if that also includes customers from rural areas

Member: yes, that is true for those that are in rural areas as she is from Tekoa and some communities only have a doctor in town once a week, no taxi services etc.

Member: at Our Place we are talking about having a senior day to get groceries and clothes and utility help etc., because our lines are so long that it is just impossible for seniors to get the help they need. So, we see that the older generation is struggling with some of these areas.

Member: Pilot projects and microgrid or distributed community solar within certain communities to try and test some things out to support these customer groups. Is there a point within 2022 where Avista may be ready to field test some of these suggestions? Tamara said that we cannot commit to that, but yes, we would like to be able to do that.

Annette: shared that we did agree as part of our most recent GRC (General Rate Case) that we would look at pilot programs such as time of use rates so lower rates for use at certain times and higher rates at peak times, so more to come.

Future Conversations:

Work that Avista and the Spokane tribe will be doing in Wellpinit, CEIP (Clean Energy Implementation Plan) Comment review, Energy Efficiency identified projects. We want these meetings to be valuable for

EAG members and we want to share information that is beneficial to the team, so please share your thoughts on what you would like presented at these meetings.

Member: would like to have a discussion on the electric grid and gas vs electricity. Everyone is moving to electricity except the utility companies, and the effect of methane gas when using gas, and the environmental impact that it has would be a good topic. Do we frack to get gas and I would like to talk about that a little bit in the future?

Member: thinks that the wildfire topic would be interesting, and she is excited to learn more about that.