

**Equity Advisory Group –
Equity Lens Session**

Meeting Date: September 21, 2022

Time: 4:30pm – 6:00pm

Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

Facilitator:	EAG Members:
Amber Lenhart	Brook Beeler - Ecology
Avista:	Dave - Salem Arms
Tamara Bradley	DeAnne Knope
Renee Coelho	Jupiter
Ryan Finesilver	KJ - Spectrum
Darrell Soyars	
Levi Westra	
	Guests:
	Shay Bauman – Public Council
	Simone Robinson – P3
	Chanel Nestor – P3
	Molly Brewer – Commission Staff

Agenda

I.	Welcome & Introductions	Amber Lenhart
	– Overview of Meeting: Rules and Intent	Amber Lenhart
II.	Introduction of Public Participation Partners (P3)	Tamara Bradley
III.	Public Participation Group Discussion	P3
IV.	Named Communities Investment Fund – Energy Efficiency	Ryan Finesilver & Levi Westra
V.	CEIP Condition #19	Tamara Bradley
VI.	Your Support Team and Next Meeting	Tamara Bradley/Amber Lenhart

Facilitator

Meeting Notes

Welcome & Introductions

Introductions and Meeting Rules and Intent

Public Participation Partners (P3)

Avista: P3 is here to discuss Avista’s public participation strategy and learn from you. We keep revisiting this topic because it is a large part of the CETA legislation, and we have committed to improving our public participation throughout the CEIP implementation period and so we have brought in experts to help with this initiative. They have a strong equity lens focus on public participation, they are a woman owned organization. We wanted to ensure that the EAG has their own chance to meet with P3 outside of the larger advisory group meetings Avista conducted with P3 the week of September 12th.

Public Participation Group Discussion

P3: What are some of the things that customers need to effectively communicate and engage with Avista moving forward. We will be conducting smaller community meetings in person and electronically and we would like to learn from you on how we can better engage with the community to gain valuable and meaningful participation during these meetings.

Q1: Based on your experience as advisory group members, how would you like to receive or provide information from Avista?

Member: I like email, especially since I can share that information out with others. Text works just as good as email for me too.

Member: Text or email

Member: I like to provide and receive information via email

Q2: Have you ever attended any Avista fairs or community meetings?

Member: Avista's wildfire and the community engagement survey.

Facilitator: I know I see Avista at the community events (like Unity and Pride)

Q3: For those that have attended, was there anything that you thought that Avista did really well around how that event was conducted or the surveys they provided, how did they do with advertising about these meetings or surveys?

Member: providing or handing out energy saving stuff

Q4: Likewise, is there anything that they did not do as well, and they can improve on?

Facilitator: We've heard from people about imagery and "seeing yourself" in messaging (e.g., renters)

Q5: I know you all get mailers and stuff like that; how do you feel about the communications you are getting from Avista as a customer? Is it clear, is the information useful and clear to understand? What do you like or how can they improve?

Member: It is clear and concise and provides the ability for follow up if you need more information and tells you where you can find it. They do not spam you which I appreciate. I think of the smart meter communications.

Member: Coming into the community is always helpful because the elderly and disabled have a hard time attend especially

Facilitator: It can be overwhelming to get a big packet of information in the mail with your bill, a lot of it goes in the garbage.

Q6: What are some of the barriers to the community that you represent that we can make sure to accommodate to help improve the engagement that takes place in the future?

Member: You communicate clearly but emphasizing straight to the point and precise and understandable language that would help with the language barrier too and just emphasizing the education aspect of why the changes are happening and how the change could help or hurt you depending on your living conditions.

Member: Very helpful for folks with different disabilities like intellectual or developmental disabilities too

Member: That billing information doesn't show some of the news articles. Some of the communities are missing out by not sharing that information with them,

P3: So, a better approach would be to mail it to each individual apartment?

Member: No, I think the only way to resolve it is running copies of the flyer that is in the mail and putting it into their statements. Would be nice to have flyers up on a bulletin board for all members of the community to see. I do not have multiple languages in my apartment building but I know others do so it would be nice to have it available in multiple languages.

Facilitator: Broadband, we have heard about issues for those that are rural and have to drive into town for service

Q7: We will be hosting community meetings in specific communities to ensure we remove barriers for broadband and technology issues. We know the area is large and so we need to be very intentional about where we hold these meetings, are there areas or spaces within communities that would be open to us coming to share this information?

Member: We have a rec room/clubhouse at Takesa Village.

Facilitator: Central library, West and East Central Community centers, food banks, Rural Resources...

Member: Libraries and community centers, I live right by Argonne library

Member: We do not have a building ourselves and we partner with other community organizations, but you could check with churches.

Member: In rural communities, schools, and I second churches.

Facilitator: Especially for certain communities like Marshallese and Slavic communities

Avista: Carl Maxi Center - I may have spelled that incorrect.

Member: pig out in the park and the interstate fair

Q8: How does your community receive its information and what is the best way to contact them?

Member: Social media, Instagram, and Facebook, but with this information we should share with community partners to really be able to connect with more people since most people do not follow their power company on social media.

Avista: What is your number one social media tool?

Member: Instagram, tic tock, Facebook, and twitter.

Member: As I understand it, there are definitely age demographics but also type of information shared also drives the platform.

Member: Instagram is easy to share too, to your story or to Facebook

Member: If Avista share things on Instagram, I know Spectrum will share it.

Member: Hanging flyers up at laundry mats and other places

Member: Utilizing places like farmers markets too? Millwood has regular farmers markets, liberty lake does too

Facilitator: From the health district, people love to have conversations with food (e.g., Roundtable Pizza)

Member: When I used laundry mats, I always looked for information on the boards, you would be surprised on how many use that. Not that they would talk, but they would at least take the information

Q9: What else would you like to share with us as we plan the public engagement strategy around this?

Member: I would think the Spokane agency would be a great place to start to connect with tenants, they see a lot of people, it may have changed due to covid, I am not sure if they are back on schedule again. The Spokane housing authority is what I am referencing.

Named Communities Investment Fund – Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency (EE) program within our CEIP is called named communities projects, this is designed to give the control to the EAG to help decide which projects to pursue. Let's start with a baseline around EE and what it is, it is basically having the same function of electricity while using less energy. We use other terms like conservation and demand side management. The biggest benefit is saving energy and reducing the energy burden, we do not want you to waste energy with inefficient equipment. As a system wide resource, energy efficiency helps keeps rates lower.

We partner with community action agencies, local installers, regional programs, and customers.

The named community investment fund is funded by the energy efficiency group, about \$2 million annually and approximately \$500,000 will be specifically for EAG led programs.

Energy efficiency focuses on residential water heaters, space heaters, insulation, doors, windows, thermostats, new construction, and home energy audits. As well as lighting, food services and shell, HVAC, grocery, other customer projects, and audits for businesses. A lot of savings can occur with having a smart programable thermostat.

Maybe the EAG wants to look at a community organization which is why I am mentioning business incentives.

Are there any questions so far?

Facilitator: Is there a cost associated with that business audit?

Avista: Yes, there can be a cost, but the residential audits are free unless they do a blower door test which does have a small cost to the customer. Home Energy Audits identify the low hanging opportunities for energy savings: leaky window seals, door seals, lighting as well as identifying larger opportunities like high efficiency furnace or converting from electric resistance to heat-pumps. Blower door test identifies size and location of air-leaks in a building.

This may be a project that the EAG wants to pursue and have these funds cover those types of audits, totally up to the EAG to decide.

Overview of programs available on myAvista.com under the “find rebates” section.

The named community approach will be EAG driven projects such as residential energy efficiency, multifamily shared incentives (tenant and landlord), bring efficiency to businesses who serve named communities, and mobile home health and safety. Purpose: to achieve meaningful EE improvements on projects identified by the EAG as a high priority. \$500,000 annually with flexibility for project completion. The fund can only be used towards energy efficiency measures and can go towards and health and safety measure such as roofing or wiring or correcting things that will prevent energy efficiency.

We do not want the EAG to feel overwhelmed or like this entire project is on their shoulders, we have about 30 employees that are here to support these initiatives.

The EAG will own the process for identifying, nominating, and prioritizing projects, determine the correct selection and prioritization methodology.

Avista: What would you say is the timeline while we choose a selection process over the next couple of months?

This is a rolling timeline, this \$500,000 will be available annually. There is no better time than now, but we do not need to select anything now or create a process now, but if you know of something now, it would be good to talk about that sooner rather than later.

Please throw your thoughts in the chat, talk to your communities, and send us an email or call Tamara, Amber, or Renee.

[CEIP Condition #19](#)

With the approval of our CEIP, we were required to comply with 38 conditions on top of the actions required from our CEIP. In the upcoming months we are going to start going through those conditions in more detail. Sometimes we will be asking your thoughts on how we did in certain areas, and some will require EAG approval. Condition #19 does not require EAG approval, but we still want to inform you and make sure that you are on board with this. This condition required Avista to track translation services and we need to come up with that metric by Oct. 1. We discussed internally and came up with 2 metrics. We are going to track the number of translation services available for certain customer outreach channels. Could be website, could be printed materials, phone calls etc., We are working on narrowing those channels and we will also count the distinct languages utilized for each outreach channel identified such as energy efficiency materials, energy assistance materials etc.,

That is a lot of information, we will update you next month on the channels selected. Are we making steps in the right direction?

[Wrap Up](#)

Avista: We have a lot of conditions, provided a tentative schedule of agenda items for the remainder of 2022 and into 2023. There is a lot coming so thank you for your time and your input we really appreciate it. We may send emails, we may send surveys, we may have joint meetings with other advisory groups. There may be times where we are going to need to reach out to you outside of our regularly scheduled session so we

would like to know how you would prefer that communication? Sounds like most people are good with email being the number one form of communication. We are excited to have the new fund for the EAG to consider.

Facilitator: We really appreciate you and your connections to the communities, we encourage you to think about this awesome opportunity of the named community's investment fund between now and the October meetings and how we can use this fund to support the community,

Reminder of upcoming meetings on October 19th and 21st