

**Equity Advisory Group –  
Equity Lens Session**

Meeting Date: March 17, 2023  
 Time: 7:30am – 9:00am  
 Location: Zoom Meeting

**Attendees:**

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Facilitator:</b> | <b>EAG Members:</b> |
| Amber Lenhart       | Connie Kilewer      |
| <b>Avista:</b>      | Clair Trapp         |
| Tamara Bradley      | Tami Dillon         |
| Ana Matthews        | Margee C            |
| Meghan Pinch        | Brook Beeler        |
| Amanda Ghering      | Carmen Groom        |
| Kelly Dengel        |                     |
|                     |                     |
|                     |                     |
|                     | <b>Guests:</b>      |
|                     |                     |
|                     |                     |
|                     |                     |

**Agenda**

- I. Welcome & Introductions
  - Overview of Meeting: Rules and Intent
- II. Member Spotlight
- III. Named Communities Investment Fund
- IV. Spokane Tribe – Energy Partnership
- V. Public Participation
- VI. Your Support Team and Next Meeting

**Facilitator**

Amber Lenhart  
 Amber Lenhart  
 Amber Lenhart  
 Ana Matthews  
 Meghan Pinch  
 Tamara Bradley  
 Amber Lenhart

**Meeting Notes**

**Welcome & Introductions**

Introductions and Meeting Rules and Intent and review of today’s agenda.

**Member Spotlight**

Introduced Alex Swenson to the team.

**Named Communities Investment Fund – Project Prioritization**

The EAG has been instrumental in developing ideas on initiatives we can take to support our communities while using funds from Avista’s named community investment fund.

Here is the list combined between each EAG session last month, the items highlighted in blue will be discussed during this meeting. We will discuss projects Avista already has

that tie into these initiatives and new projects that we think match the goals of the EAG. Please let us know if we have hit the mark or if these needs to be improved upon.

| Rank | Initiatives  |
|------|--|
| 1*   | Focus efforts on improving energy efficiency (and EE awareness/education) for schools, community centers, and other places where Named Communities spend time          |
| 1*   | Focus efforts on improving energy efficiency for Spokane Tribe partners  |
| 2    | Improve energy efficiency in multi-family and mobile home communities  |
| 3    | Increase tree canopy and shade in Named Communities (consider tradeoffs with solar)  |
| 3    | Increase access to energy efficient products and appliances for Named Communities  |
| 4    | Increase awareness of and engagement in energy efficiency programs while also meeting whole-house needs through community-based partnerships and referrals to services |
| 5*   | Set aside funds to match for energy efficiency grant applications for community organizations and tribal partners (could have higher feasibility)                      |
| 6    | Focus efforts on improving energy efficiency for community members without stable housing (consider including with other initiatives)                                  |

We are currently looking at each of these items and how we can make strides towards progress in each one.

**Member:** Member share: I learned at a meeting earlier this week that when Spokane Transit retires their vanpool vans and paratransit vehicles, they award them through a grant process. I think the vans are 10 years old and then the paratransit vehicles have over 100,000 miles. I know transport is an issue for named communities, and some of the EAG partner may be interested in getting a free, older, transport vehicle. Grant application available in May. Contact Delana Coombs at STA.

Reflecting on the number one item on this list, through the state department of commerce there is a potential partnership that we could leverage state funds and bring in a project like back up solar, EE improvements, back up battery, EV charging, etc., We are exploring the potential right now. We are looking at a facility now but cannot share who that is yet as nothing has been finalized or agreed. We will create a model that we could replicate with other facilities throughout Eastern Washington. We need to apply for the grant next week, so we are still working on that. Does this model look like a good approach that supports the initiatives you are looking at supporting?

**Member:** Sounds fantastic!

**Member:** I agree with the other member, this sounds terrific.

**Company:** I did have a recommendation from the Wednesday group on how we include and educate the younger community. There would be a lot of opportunity to do outreach.

**Member:** I had a question. Where is the location?

**Company:** I cannot disclose that yet, but we are looking at two different locations. One is in a rural community that had devastation, the other is in the city and in a NCIF.

**Members:** I love that this is a two for one. Both a warming center and cooling center.

**Members:** I like the idea of fixing the roof – it is a big deal.

**Company:** Thank you for the feedback.

## Spokane Tribe – Energy Partnership

Grid modernization

**Awarded project:** Financial support to design and engineer a clean and resilient energy storage project in partnership with the Spokane Tribe. The project will support increased energy resilience and energy sovereignty. Funding does not include construction of project.

**Project Funding:** \$480,000 in total (Avista to provide \$240,000 in-kind match to \$240,000 in funding from Department of Commerce).

The tribe has a large initiative called children of the sun solar project, there was a big fire on the reservation, and it wiped out the distribution lines that bring power to Wellpinit and the surround area. There was no water, no fuel and it made the problem much worse. This issue would not have been quite as bad if there was back up power source. This project is to support the tribe in improving those resource needs.

Traditional Grid Model

### **Clean Energy Fund IV – Natural Hazard Resiliency & Energy Sovereignty**

*Traditional Grid*



#### **Trends challenging the Grid:**

- Aging Infrastructure
- Increased variable generation and load mix
- Increasing risk from wildfires, big storm events and other natural disasters
- Vulnerability to outages in Wellpinit and surrounding areas due to lack of redundancy
- CETA



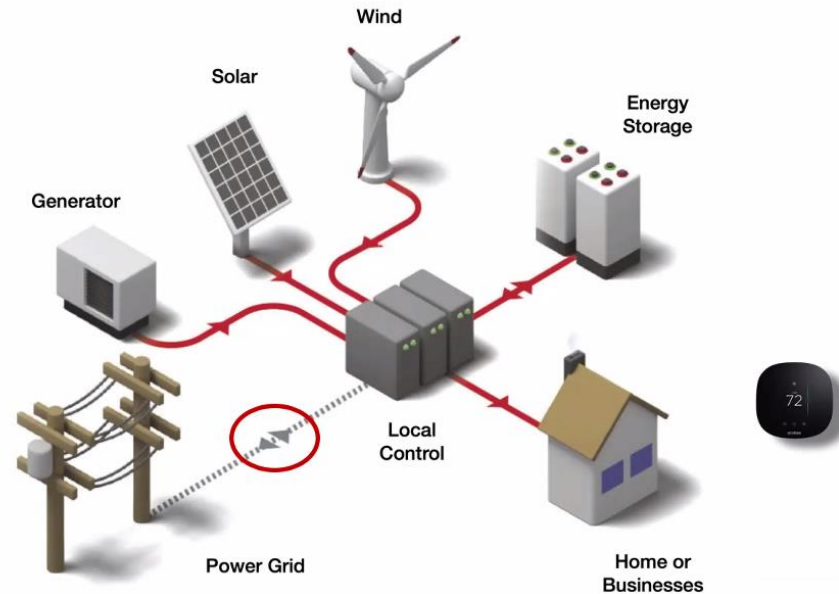
Microgrid model

## What is a Microgrid?

A small power system with the ability to operate connected to the larger grid, or by itself in stand-alone mode.

### 5 key components:

- energy sources (generators, storage)
- Energy sinks (loads)
- a way to connect/ disconnect to the larger power system (PCC)
- means for controlling the microgrid
- appropriate safety assurance systems



**Member:** So, for Wellpinit would they just have one microgrid?

**Company:** That is a good question. We don't know all the answers yet. This is one of two microgrid projects that are occurring in that area. More to come as we dig deeper.

**Member:** What if there is a problem with the microgrid when it is being utilized?

**Company:** The control system of the microgrid can help operate the macro-grid prior to a major outage. In some ways, it acts like a digital substation. It is likely we will be working with some generators.

**Member:** Thank you for providing specific information around the batteries. It is helpful learning.

**Member:** Super cool!

Wellpinit is small but has tons of critical infrastructure that needs to maintain power in the event of an emergency. A lot of their critical structures are located on the same feeder so the micro grid would help support those buildings. However, there are 3 circuits that support that feeder, and it is a challenge to decide which buildings we can support, so we are working through the complexities now. We are looking at redoing those circuits all together and moving all the critical buildings to operate off one circuit that is prioritized in the event of an emergency.

## Spokane Tribe Grid Resiliency Hypothetical Design Concepts- For further development and analysis

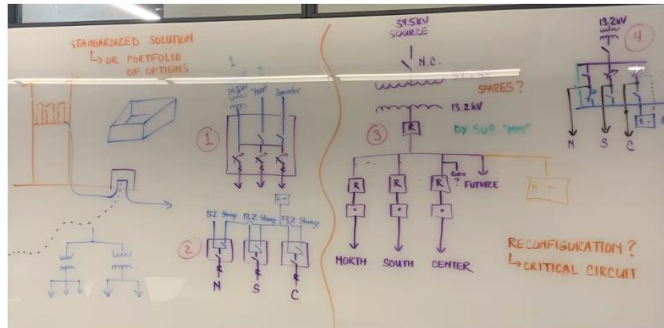


“Switchable” platform that could enable power to be switched between three or more stepdown circuits during an emergency

Could replace elevated building transformers currently located behind post office

Could potentially create a “critical loads” circuit- to ensure that power is available / prioritized to buildings that are critical to Tribal operations during emergencies

Location TBD, but would be somewhere in or near Wellpinit core area



We also needed to see the existing conditions of the buildings and loads before starting, which also brought up potential energy efficiency measures to reduce the load of the larger buildings which will help support the microgrid initiative. We couldn't potentially bring in 13 Energy Efficiency measures and potentially reduce the energy bill by up to 40%. They will be applying for the clean energy fund grant through the department of commerce to support these energy efficiency upgrades.

**Member:** Thanks so much for sharing – just sounds like there is so much positive work happening. Really enjoyed the update

### Public Participation

Through the CETA legislation, we are required to include our customers in our clean energy transition. As you know we hired a third-party consultant, P3, to develop a communication strategy for to help us in engaging out customers effectively. Below is a list of our outreach goals.



# CEIP Public Participation Strategy

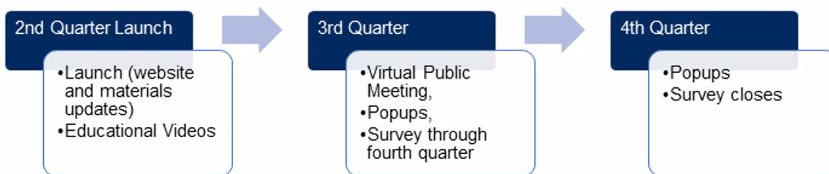
## Outreach Goals

- Establish early and continuous public participation opportunities that provide timely information to all interested parties.
- Provide multiple methods for public input to gain an understanding of the values and needs of residents.
- Provide reasonable public access to information to enhance the public's knowledge and ability to participate.
- Promote an open, inclusive, and transparent public involvement process by providing clear and consistent information that is easy to understand and disseminated in multiple formats based on audience needs.
- Implement measures for seeking input from and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved Named Communities, such as low-income, minority, disabled, and non-English speaking individuals.

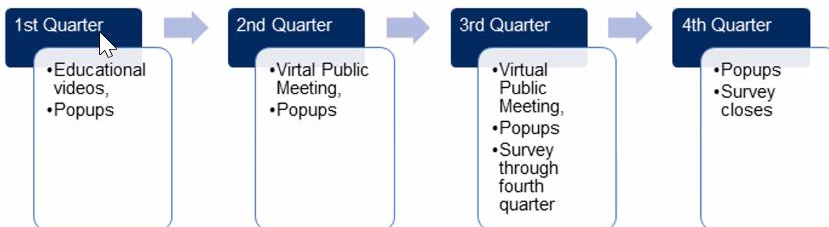


We would like to review their input with you to see what resonates with you. The following actions plan were suggested by P3, to help develop an effective communication and outreach plan.

### 2023 Timeline



### 2024 Timeline



Here are the communication methods P3 suggested

### Virtual Public Meetings

- Provide education on CEIP Implementation
- 1 – 1.25 hr. duration
- Live language interpretation
- Advertise
  - email, customer service line message, social media, bill inserts, newsletters, digital & printed flyers
- Recorded & posted to website
- *Alternative*
  - Prerecorded, language subtitles, view at customer's leisure
  - 15 – 20 minutes

### Popup Events

- Existing community events
- Community partner organization sponsored events
- At least one event per quarter
- Printed and translated materials
- Surveys, program applications, and lightbulbs

What would your preference be for learning about our CEIP?

**Member:** I would prefer video, although 15-20 minutes is a bit to long

**Member:** The in-person or virtual meetings allow participation and engagement; how would customer engage via a video?

**Member:** The benefit of being able to watch the video when it works best for my schedule is a positive.

**Company:** One area we might explore is during the video, we would point customers to our website where they could comment. We will be adding a public comment area to our website.

**Member:** How do we encourage in-person participation?

**Company:** A couple of items we will utilize to encourage participation is bring program materials and applications – also providing though items various languages. We were also encouraged to bring food, lightbulbs, and weather efficiency incentives.

**Member:** People will come for food and incentives

**Member:** Incentives – Yes!

**Member:** Providing childcare, transportation support, etc. can also help.

We plan on surveying our customers annually to ensure they feel heard and how we can continue to engage them.

**Member:** I think it I good to have paper surveys, we have found that paper surveys have greatly increased our response rate.

**Company:** Thank you for that comment and we agree. Paper surveys can be mailed and brought to various events.

Below is a list of items suggested by P3 that we continue to investigate.



What else should we be focusing on when discussing CEIP with our customers?

**Member:** What social media platform does Avista utilize?

**Company:** We have Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The challenge we run into is how to we utilize social media for our WA customers only because our platforms serve WA, Idaho, and Oregon customers. How do we avoid a stream of comments that may not pertain or go into a bunny trail on a topic specifically for our WA customers?

**Member:** It can be hard to target audience geographically, demographically, etc.

**Member:** Paid social media ads can be geofenced, but you do have to pay for them

We are having a public participation meeting April 11<sup>th</sup>, virtually, at noon and at 5pm. Email invitations will be going out to all electric Washington customers including a special invite for all advisory group members.

### Wrap Up

Thank you all for your wonderful ideas, please feel free to send us any additional ideas. In May we will discuss wildfire impacts and initiatives and in April we will continue discussing our project initiatives Ana shared with us today.

Reminder of upcoming meetings on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>