

Equity Advisory Group – Equity Lens Session

Meeting Date: March 16, 2022
 Time: 4:30pm – 6:00m
 Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

Facilitator:	EAG Members:
Amber Lenhart	Dee Knope, Takeasa Village
Avista:	KJ January, Spectrum Center Spokane
Tamara Bradley	Jupiter McGee, Community Member and Organizer
Renee Coelho	Guests:
Kim Boynton	Shay Bauman – Public Counsel
Jaime Majure	Joni Bosh – Northwest Energy Coalition
Amanda Ghering	
Annette Brandon	

Agenda

I. Welcome & Introductions	Amber Lenhart
– Overview of Meeting: Rules and Intent	Amber Lenhart
II. EAG Value	Amber Lenhart
III. EAG Structure	Amber Lenhart
IV. CEIP Status Review	Tamara Bradley
V. Customer Benefit Indicator Review	Tamara Bradley
VI. Your Support Team and Next Meeting	Amber Lenhart

Facilitator

Meeting Notes

Today we really want to discuss the structure and value of the group, make sure you're really seeing the value in participating in this group. We, Avista, really value you and your commitment to this group, you've made a huge impact on our Clean Energy Implementation Plan and our Customer Benefit Indicators—we really value and appreciate you, and we hear you.

EAG Value

Generally, how do you feel about your role here in the EAG? Do you understand what your role is? What questions do you have about your role in the Equity Advisory Group?

Member: I do it because it's to help homeowners—low-income homeowners—and that's what we deal with here.

Member: My sense of our role has become clearer over time; initially it wasn't, but it's become clearer. I've taken on a role in sharing my experience here and with the community re: what Avista is doing. Advising/providing information, sharing about our experiences in how things like pollution have impacted us.

Member: No questions. I do feel very heard in these meetings, so I feel like my role in expressing the values and important aspects of my community are heard here—and the monthly topics are interesting.

How? How are you getting that feedback that your voice is being heard?

Member: The reassurance in the meetings, nods, feedback, etc. And I'm able to take up space in these meetings.

Member: I second that.

Do you feel comfortable expressing your thoughts/insights in these meetings?

Member: Yes. I appreciate being able to use the chat function, so I don't feel like I'm interruption, and I am able to think through my responses.

Member: You also provide me with a way to, if I come up with something after or if I take some info and bring it back to my folks, I know I can follow-up after the fact.

What about the monthly topics – are these valuable and interesting for you? These topics aren't always pre-set; Ecology example (we just saw what they were doing with air pollution and thought it would be useful to share; we'd really like you to express your interest in what you'd like to see talked about? This is ongoing, you can bring forward ideas any time. You can bring in any subjects/questions, and if we don't have the answers, we'll get you someone who does. We are also very interested in you bringing your community to us—you all represent different groups and learning about them is valuable.

Member: I would say my biggest interest is in people, and things like employee diversity or how specific groups may be impacted in different ways. would be interested in learning more about indigenous issues around energy and climate, etc.

EAG Structure

Now about structure, we currently have Wed PM and Fri AM meetings each month—do you like having those two available days each month?

Member: I do like it. Since it's split up, I feel like there's less of a sense of group community. Some way to kind of reintegrate that at some point would be nice.

Member: I like the small groups for discussion—I don't feel as open to talk in larger groups. But I would like to see the grand community of who all is included here, so I can find solace in who is being represented, who's coming to the table.

How about the current times, 4:30pm-6pm Wednesdays and 7:30am-9am Fridays? Are those times convenient for you?

Member(s): I'm not going to a 7:30am meeting. So, I need this later meeting.

What about sharing between meetings—a wrap-up of things discussed Wednesday for the Friday meeting, and same back over to the Wednesday group?

Member(s): That would be great.

What about the length of time for these meetings—1 ½ hours?

Member(s): I think it's a good timeframe; we can always end early if we finish, but an hour and a half has worked well so far and seems like a safe time. I think an hour and a half is good typically, gives leeway for conversation and to give space for people to arrive a little late etc.

Are there particular months that we shouldn't have equity lens sessions in 2022?

Member: I know we've got a lot of outdoorsy people around here. I don't have much going on, so I'm all for meeting every month.

Member: I feel like monthly keeps the momentum going, as having a gap may lose some people.

Member: I don't have a life, and even when I do I have a tablet, so I can meet whenever.

Is there a desire to have in-person meetings, or do you prefer virtual meetings?

Member: It depends on everyone else's comfort level. Me, I'd attend in-person, but I'd still wear a mask.

Member: I like virtual as it can reach Avista's larger service area, also travel time.

[CEIP Status Review](#)

CEIP timeline. Filed October 1, 2021, comments due January 28, 2022. We received comments from 8 parties and filed response comments quickly to address some of the common themes, clarifications, or issues we heard from those 8 groups. We are currently in conversations with those interested parties, March-possibly April. As part of our plan, Avista also committed to larger Public Participation Meetings—possibly each quarter—so we may end up with 3 this year. We're thinking through barriers—times, etc.—that people may encounter for these meetings, i.e. how do we get people to participate in a public meeting that Avista is having?

We did hear common themes in our Customer Benefit Indicators. Avista provided 13 CBIs in its CEIP. You (EAG) discussed many more, and after prioritization and a voting matrix, these are the ones that rose to the top. At Avista, we're committed to these 13—we think they're very significant in our plan, and these are the CBIs that we heard from you/our customers—and we are really just looking to improve these, and we're committed to continuously improving these CBIs. Dept. of Ecology, they came in and discussed how outdoor air quality impacts everyday life, focusing on overburdened communities. It's likely that these overburdened communities will overlap with our vulnerable populations or highly impacted communities. They have an aggressive timeline, trying to get some of these air quality monitors in place by the end of the year. So, this may be an opportunity to, again, improve upon our existing CBIs and maybe get some of these monitors placed in ways that benefit our VPs or HICs. This is to provide an update that, as these CBI discussions continue, there may be new CBIs that the other 8 parties are suggesting that we need to discuss within this group—and to tie a bow on the reasons why we had the Dept. of Ecology come speak to this group and how it was relevant to our work here.