

STEHKIN COMMUNITY PLAN - ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting Summary



Meeting No. 4 - Wednesday, Mar. 11, 2026 - Zoom

Attendees:

Aaron	Robinson	Dutch	Story	Wendy	Garfoot
Barbara	Gross	Joe	Kitchell	Teka	Sellers (ENCW)
Carolyn	McConnell	John	Wilsey	Shirley	Shultz (AQEA)
Chelsea	Courtney	Krissa	Jester	Josh	Jensen (AQEA)
Charles	Raymond	Phil	Fenner	CCPUD:	Chris Blayne
Clancy	Courtney	Smith	Powell	Edrie Risdon	John Stoll
Cynthia	Nawalinski	Trapper	Robins		

1. PUD Presentation: Stehkin Hydro Modernization

Chelan PUD provided an overview of planned upgrades to the Stehkin hydro system, focused on improving reliability, reducing diesel dependence, and modernizing aging infrastructure.

Key components of the modernization effort include:

- **Phase 1: Controls and Switchgear Modernization (2025–2027)**
Replacement of aging equipment, including switchgear and a generator, along with installation of modern control systems and remote monitoring. These upgrades are intended to improve safety, streamline operations, and enhance outage response.
- **Phase 2: Battery Energy Storage System (2025–2028)**
Installation of a battery system (approximately 1000 kWh) to store excess hydro energy and supply power during peak demand or low river flow. This is expected to reduce diesel generator use, lower emissions, and improve overall system stability.
- **Phase 3: Headworks Modernization (Design beginning 2026)**
Evaluation and design of improvements to the hydro intake to maintain reliable water flow, particularly during low-flow conditions.

Key takeaways:

- The upgrades will improve reliability, safety, and operational flexibility, and help reduce reliance on diesel power.
- However, they will not significantly expand overall system capacity or support unlimited growth.
- The system will continue to operate with constraints, meaning future demand will need to be managed.

Looking ahead:

- Energy conservation and efficiency will play an increasingly important role.
- Chelan PUD is exploring efficiency programs and potential behavior-based energy reduction strategies.

- Additional tools—such as rate structures, policies for high energy users, and distributed energy options—may be considered.
- Ongoing coordination between the PUD, Chelan County, and the Stehekin community will be important for long-term success.

2. Teka’s Notes: System Capacity, Conservation & Coordination

Discussion with the PUD included system capacity, conservation, and the roles of different entities in managing Stehekin’s power system, building on the PUD presentation.

- **Shared responsibility and coordination:**
Participants emphasized the need for coordination among the PUD, Chelan County, the National Park Service, and the community. There was general recognition that no single entity can address system constraints alone, and that long-term solutions will require ongoing collaboration.
- **System limits and future planning:**
The group acknowledged that the PUD does not plan for or support unlimited capacity, noting existing constraints such as water rights. There was interest in better understanding current system limits, including how close the system is to peak capacity and how demand has changed over the past 5–10 years.
- **Role of conservation and efficiency:**
Discussion highlighted conservation as an important part of the solution, along with questions about how much impact behavior changes can realistically have. It was noted that new construction is already subject to Washington State energy code requirements, meaning efficiency standards are built into future development.
- **Patterns of energy use:**
Participants discussed differences in energy use across user groups, with a recognition that full-time residents are already conserving and that peak demand can often be driven by part-time or weekend use. This raised interest in better understanding usage patterns and identifying opportunities to reduce peak load. Potential solution could be for the County and PUD to work with part-time residents and homeowners to modernize and participate in energy conservation measures to reduce their load on the system.
- **Technology and data for decision-making:**
Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI, or smart meters) will provide improved data on system usage, helping the PUD and community better understand demand patterns and explore tools such as demand response programs.
- **Infrastructure and operations context:**
Additional discussion points included the planned location of battery storage (near the powerhouse and outside the floodplain), the PUD’s long-term right-of-way

agreement with the National Park Service, and upcoming staffing changes (with Chris Blayne stepping into a decision-making role following John Stoll's retirement).

3. Email Discussion Follow-Up: PUD Power Use & Community Priorities

Following the March 11 meeting, Advisory Group members continued the conversation via email, focusing on questions related to PUD power use, community priorities, and how to frame the issue moving forward.

Key themes from the discussion included:

- **Uncertainty around power usage data:**
Participants noted that estimates of National Park Service (NPS) power use varied widely (roughly 25–50%), and emphasized the need to rely on consistent, verifiable data rather than anecdotal figures. There was also recognition that usage is difficult to isolate, as many facilities serve both NPS functions and community needs.
- **Questions about customer priority and responsibility:**
A key point of discussion was whether and how power should be prioritized between local residents (particularly Chelan County taxpayers) and entities like the NPS. Some participants emphasized that the PUD's primary obligation is to county residents, while others noted the need to better understand how the PUD defines and serves its customers.
- **Clarifying definitions of "community":**
The exchange surfaced differing perspectives on who is considered part of the "community" in this context (e.g., property owners, residents, renters, seasonal users, and institutional partners), and how that definition may influence decision-making.
- **Need for shared information and clear framing:**
Participants expressed interest in establishing a common set of data and clearly defined questions to support informed discussion. There was also support for developing clear community goals and priorities to help guide future conversations and potential solutions.

Overall, the email discussion reinforced the complexity of the issue and the need for clear data, shared understanding, and defined community values to support future decision-making.

4. Timeline and Next Steps

- April 1, 2026 – Draft plan shared with the Advisory Group for review and feedback
- April 17, 2026 – Deadline for Advisory Group feedback
- Late April / Early May (2 weeks) – Project team incorporates feedback and refines the plan into a final draft
- Early May 2026 – Final draft shared with the Advisory Group

- Early May 2026 – Final draft shared with the broader community via the project website
- Mid-May 2026 – Community meeting to present the final plan and outline additional opportunities for comment
- Late May / Early June 2026 – Plan submitted to the Chelan County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners
- Early July 2026 – Plan submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce for 60-day review
- July / August 2026 – SEPA environmental review and 30-day public comment period
- September–December 2026 – Comprehensive Plan adoption process, including public meetings with the Planning Commission