Energy Innovation Cluster ICAP Cohort 3 Report

Post-Summit Update

Inland Northwest Energy Innovation Cluster (Urbanova – Contract *25-78250-008)*

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Overview and Objectives

This report is a final update of Contract 25-78250-008, awarded under the Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program (ICAP 3) to Urbanova for the purpose of convening and managing an industry-led cluster focused on grid modernization. This update provides a summary of the discussions and outcomes from the two-day Energy Innovation Summit hosted by Urbanova/INTENT and WSU.

This ICAP 3 scope supported hosting a statewide industry summit, extending outreach to 16 new partners, and further informing the equity-focused strategic planning for our cluster partner network.

This final report incorporates summary feedback and action plans developed during the two-day Energy Innovation Summit being held July 8-9, 2025. This is driving Urbanova Board strategic planning and resourcing decisions that will continue to be industry-led and partner informed as we continue to build to the future energy economy.

Contents

Executive Summary and Energy Innovation Summit Outcomes

The July 2025 Energy Innovation Summit served as a turning point in expanding and deepening partnerships across the energy industry. Sixteen new partners engaged with the emerging NW Energy Innovation Cluster (the Cluster), including twelve who participated as speakers, offering a diverse mix of expertise from utilities, finance, education, and technology sectors. While formal MOUs are still in development, these partners have voiced clear intent to collaborate. Of particular significance, Tribal leaders shared guidance on culturally aligned project design and expressed interest in co-hosting a future Tribal Energy Opportunity Summit—an initiative now in early coordination. These developments signal growing momentum, increased trust, and the foundation for a more inclusive and regionally tailored clean energy ecosystem.

The Summit also marked a cultural milestone for the Cluster, with over 50 contributors and an over 90% attendance rate across two days of intensive collaboration. The event's structure advanced three core tracks—Industry & Research, Workforce & STEM, and Innovation & Investment—with over 25 regional projects discussed, validating the value of applied innovation rooted in community. A key highlight was the example from a Tribal participant proposing raised-platform solar arrays designed to preserve native ecosystems and culturally significant wildlife habitats. This underscores the need for energy solutions that reflect ecological and cultural priorities, potentially requiring new financial models and partner alignment to support added costs. The Summit's outcomes, documented in AI-supported summaries and Zoom recordings, now anchor INTENT's next phase of implementation and cross-sector strategy.

Energy Industry and Research

The Industry Track was a strategic component of the summit, designed to build on previous insights and summit discussions to identify and prioritize the top challenges and opportunities facing the future energy ecosystem—particularly at the community and electrical distribution levels. Using a design thinking approach, the session focused on structured ideation, collaborative problem solving, and the development of actionable strategies.

Participants worked in phased teams to define 15 critical energy transition challenges, ranging from lack of equitable benefits distribution and burden, inadequate market structures, to resilience, regulatory hurdles, and workforce needs. A key realization was the urgent demand for scalable, localized solutions to help towards adequate energy capacity (GW/GWh) without defaulting to bulk power system interventions.

The session identified a templated methodology for structuring and managing innovation through multiple project tracks, each focusing on specific themes such as community engagement, technical modeling, communication, and resiliency planning. Over two days, participants translated high-level challenges into concrete action plans aligned with short-term (6-month) and medium-term (18-month) timelines.

Key six-month actions include designing engagement and resiliency templates, developing a cost-benefit framework for resiliency investment, initiating stakeholder engagement, and creating DER simulation models. The 18-month roadmap targets implementation of these templates with

commercial and regulatory partners, community-led policy engagement, AI/ML-powered tools for stability simulation, and platform prototyping.

The result is a pragmatic and collaborative framework that will guide INTENT/Urbanova's innovation efforts over the next 18 months, enabling repeatable, resource-conscious project execution while engaging diverse stakeholders in energy transformation. The track's outcomes establish a foundational roadmap for resilient energy systems, emphasizing equity, adaptability, and action.

Top Priority Next Steps: Detail the roadmap action items for more specificity and determine project resources for each.

Workforce & STEM Development

The Workforce & STEM track of the July 2025 Energy Innovation Summit established a clear and actionable agenda to develop a diverse, hands-on clean energy talent pipeline. Since the Summit, the Energy Workforce & STEM Innovation Team has launched with a cross-sector charter, and the region has begun piloting new classroom-industry engagement models, workforce resource mapping, and early replication of legacy training programs like NEWTech and SCC. These efforts collectively represent a significant step forward in aligning education, training, and industry needs across the Inland Northwest.

Top Priority Next Steps:

1. Launch modular certification and short-term upskilling pilots by Q1 2026.
2. Finalize and begin testing a standardized K–20 engagement framework across multiple districts.
3. Scale internship coordination and simulation-based hands-on learning programs in partnership with employers and technical colleges.

Innovation, Incubation & Investment (I3)

The I3 track accelerated momentum around building a commercialization ecosystem capable of addressing the Inland Northwest's 25,000 MW clean energy gap. The Cluster will review a Coordination Hub pilot offering matchmaking and commercialization support, initiated development of a regional innovation map, and hold its first pitch and capital access events. Engagements with tribal and rural partners have begun, alongside early planning for a data-sharing platform to support grid demand analytics.

A regulatory reform initiative has also been identified aimed at addressing transmission and generation permitting barriers across Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana. Participants emphasized that solving the region's energy gap cannot happen without streamlined multi-jurisdictional permitting aligned to modern grid infrastructure. This track proposed convening utilities, state regulators, Tribes, economic development agencies, and clean energy developers to co-develop a harmonized permitting compact—positioning the Inland Northwest as a national model for rapid, coordinated infrastructure deployment. This recommendation now informs a priority action in INTENT's 2026 roadmap.

Top Priority Next Steps:

1. Expand the Coordination Hub into a formalized, multi-tiered commercialization platform by mid-2026.
2. Pilot the load coordination data platform with utility partners to demonstrate value and scalability.
3. Deepen tribal and rural innovation partnerships through dedicated capacity-building efforts and co-led programming.
4. Advance a multi-state regulatory reform pathway as a commercialization enabler by convening a regulatory working group to address permitting for transmission and generation infrastructure.

Conclusion

Looking ahead, the next 2–3 years present a pivotal window for the Inland Northwest Energy Innovation Cluster to translate planning into impact. With sustained support from partners and targeted investment, the Cluster can drive deployment of scalable, community-informed energy solutions across the Pacific Northwest—solutions that balance affordability, resilience, and decarbonization. Together, we can fast-track commercialization of breakthrough clean technologies, expand inclusive workforce development across rural and tribal communities, and formalize new permitting and regulatory models that serve as a national template for rapid energy infrastructure deployment. By leveraging the region's growing innovation ecosystem—spanning utilities, entrepreneurs, tribal nations, educators, financiers, and public-sector allies—we have the foundation to unlock significant economic growth while solving one of the most pressing challenges of our time: equitable, reliable access to clean energy. With the right partners, resources, and shared ambition, this cluster can become a national model for inclusive energy transformation.

We invite committed public, private, and philanthropic leaders to join us in making the Inland Northwest and Pacific Northwest a proving ground for what's possible when equity, innovation, and implementation align.

Objectives Met and Activities Completed

1. Governance Creation and Cluster Buildout

These are the updates from the June 30 report as we continue to evolve organizational governance and energy cluster branding.

- Included direct partnership and participation with Washington State innovation cluster partners (Clean Tech Alliance Washington, VERTical Innovation Cluster, Fuse SPC).
- Conducted post-summit board meeting to prioritize and move forward branding, strategic planning, ongoing staffing, budgeting and communication needs.
- Selected contract organization (https://studebakerdesignco.com) to assist completion of rebranding strategy over the next 90 days (logo, name, and value proposition messaging).
- Focus on key partner outreach and investment.

2. Energy Industry Gap/Needs Analysis – Summit updates and priorities

The summit focused efforts in three tracks: Industry; Workforce Development; Innovation, Incubation and Investment. The previous progress report highlighted two categories of effort that were consolidated into the Industry Track for the Summit, Market Making & Demonstration and Community Energy Resilience. This report also consolidates them into the industry track.

The results of the event confirm earlier focal points with respect to community first and an emphasis on energy resiliency, burden, and equity for tribal and rural communities. The need for power and capacity was understood to be the region's most urgent need over the next 10 years. The need for new types of clean energy technologies is evident as are controls and distribution archetypes that allow for more optimized operation and resiliency. The creation of new bulk power grid technologies is not in scope for this innovation cluster. The distribution, control, and deployment of them certainly **is** within scope. The applicability of solutions, incubation of ideas that become solutions, and the training of workforce personnel is required to achieve success.

Perhaps the most important result from this Summit is the definition of specific actionable items that address the gaps & needs previously identified as well as the additional challenges discovered. These actionable items are specific to the three tracks and are discussed further. Their identification and definition are a highlight for the Summit as it provides the roadmap with more clarity for immediate action that augments the previous roadmap from the original gaps/needs assessment. This report documents the detailed roadmap that was forthcoming. In the near term, the roadmap will be reconciled with the previous roadmap items to establish a go-forward version.

a. Governance, Policy & Strategy Development

The newly merged board met the day following the summit for a half-day strategy session. This strategy session was designed to help the new energy cluster's transitional board align on a clear path forward following reintegration. Over the course of three hours, board members engaged in a highly participatory process that facilitated grounding-in shared context, surfaced

individual perspectives and helped to build a collective roadmap. The session balanced insights with structure, providing space to reflect on recent summit learnings, contribute personal vision and converge on strategic priorities that will guide the organization's next phase and those who will carry it forward. A follow-up summary report (expected by July 30) will guide outreach efforts. Prospective board members, including tribal, university and community representatives will be invited to attend future meetings and share contributions. The next board planning session is scheduled for August 13, 2025.

b. Energy Industry & Research *(Market Making & Demonstration and Community Energy Resilience consolidated)*

The Industry track of the July 2025 Energy Innovation Summit employed a design thinking process to define challenges and to ultimately create an action plan.

The group conducted an in-depth discussion on energy transformation, emphasizing the urgent need for actionable solutions to address reliability risks heightened by the integration of renewable energy and new technologies. Key concerns included equitable benefit distribution, inadequate market structures, and support mechanisms for demonstration projects. Assigning designated individuals for each action was highlighted to ensure progress and accountability.

In exploring **Community Engagement and Project Strategies**, the team stressed the importance of understanding community needs, effective risk management, and resource optimization.

When discussing the **Resilient Energy Systems Planning Framework**, the focus was on creating robust models for community resilience. The group aimed to engage diverse stakeholders, prioritize regional projects, and develop power system models incorporating distributed energy resources (DERs). Metrics for cost-benefit analysis and real-time interaction models were identified as critical for grid stability.

For **Community Resiliency Framework Development**, the objective was to craft a flexible template enabling communities to implement resilience improvements. The team organized efforts into tracks for community engagement, technical specifications, and implementation planning, targeting a complete roadmap within a week. Sustained stakeholder engagement and utility involvement were recognized as pivotal.

Finally, the track discussed a potential shift towards offering consulting services to support these initiatives, a transition dependent on active member participation.

An action plan was established for the next 6- and 18-month periods which is provided in Section 3. The next steps are to detail each of the action items to understand resource requirements, duration, and interdependencies. The approach would be to manage each, as a project, in a portfolio of projects. The results of that effort will be provided to the board for incorporation into planning efforts of the new organization.

Priority Challenges Identified:

- Lack of equitable distribution of benefits & burden for energy transition
- Need clear leadership & processes to develop demonstration projects
- Lack of adequate markets
- Better processes addressing cultural and economic impacts of transition
- Scalable tech (GW) in 10 years
- Increased volatility due to DERs / Reliability issues due to load/gen balance
- Need computational power and technical resources for simulation studies
- Lack of adequate measures for resiliency
- Lack of adequate incentives
- Governmental uncertainties
- Better architect of utility infrastructure
- Investment for modernization

Actionable Solutions and Opportunities:

- Create templates for:
    - Community: engagement, resilience platform, needs assessment.
    - Stakeholder: Framework to support target funding, engagement.
    - Technical: Business model for energy markets, Cost benefit models, zonal stability electrical models, simulation techniques, distribution archetype.
    - Communication: social media channels, surveys, workshops, legislative.

Summit Deliverables and Next Steps: The track coalesced around the concept of template activity around process, solutions, engagement, and communication. The next step is to detail each of the actionable items to determine resource requirements and member participation for the purpose of creating a project, budget, and resource plan for each.

Post-Summit Update and Forward Strategy: The Summit provided clarity as to the template approach and how it can allow for parallel activity in work units small enough to execute effectively while enhancing repeatability. There was excitement around the simplicity of the concept as well as the flexibility it offers.

Key Advancements and Recommendations:

- The action item projects will be presented to the Board for consideration and prioritization of budget and resources.
- The membership will engage to assign ownership and team members for specific projects
- Current projects, such as REDEEMS that was submitted to DOE and is in pending status, will be maintained.

Forward Recommendations:

- Ownership of action, participation, and funding are critical. If there is a challenge in any of these areas, a course correction will need to be implemented with minimal delay.

- INTENT/Urbanova resources must be established at a level sufficient to coordinate the different projects at the highest level.

c. Workforce & STEM Development

The Workforce and STEM track of the July 2025 Energy Innovation Summit identified pressing needs and catalyzed tangible next steps to develop an inclusive and future-ready energy workforce. Participants, including industry, educators, and community leaders, emphasized the importance of collaborative approaches to STEM career pathways, expanded pre-apprenticeship and technical training, and early K–12 engagement. Key takeaways and recommended actions include:

Priority Challenges Identified:

- A persistent gap in hands-on experience and technical skills for clean energy jobs, despite sufficient availability of "book smart" candidates.
- Shortages in specialized trades such as commissioning engineers and relay technicians.
- Inadequate counselor training and shortage of counselors to guide students toward energy-related career paths.
- Insufficient early exposure to energy careers at the elementary and middle school levels.

Actionable Solutions and Opportunities:

- Formalize an Energy Workforce & STEM Innovation Team with industry and education partners to create a shared charter and implementation roadmap.
- Leverage successful programs like NEWTech's simulated learning model and SCC's historic pre-apprenticeship model (16-week, 40-hour paid training, formerly with 80% placement).
- Increase access to hands-on STEM experiences via summer academies and equipment sharing between districts.
- Promote second-career pathways and upskilling through short-term training and modular certification programs.
- Use tools like EV's topic calendars to time classroom visits by industry representatives.
- Address the need for clean energy content in traditional trades training, and foster partnerships to address lack of internships.

Summit Deliverables and Next Steps: The track culminated in broad support to stand up the proposed Energy Workforce & STEM Innovation Team under the Cluster governance framework. Volunteers from the session agreed to shape its early scope and align efforts across K–20 education, workforce boards, utilities, and energy employers. This effort is expected to define standardized engagement practices across districts, develop a regional inventory of workforce resources, and coordinate pilot projects.

Post-Summit Update and Forward Strategy: Since the Summit, momentum around the Workforce & STEM track has continued to build with clear alignment between identified challenges and emerging project activity. Through the Cluster, efforts are actively transitioning from planning to pilot implementation across multiple education and industry sectors. A strong foundation has been laid for building a resilient and inclusive clean energy workforce pipeline.

Key Advancements and Recommendations:

- The Energy Workforce & STEM Innovation Team was formally launched in Q3 2025, with initial charter development completed and monthly work sessions underway.
- A regional inventory of workforce programs has been initiated, mapping existing assets and skills gaps related to clean energy and trades.
- First wave of school-industry engagements were piloted using EV calendar coordination tools, helping optimize industry classroom visits.
- NEWTech and SCC legacy programs are being evaluated for replication in adjacent school districts, with early adopters identified.
- Planning is underway for district-level pilots involving shared use of simulation equipment and curriculum enhancement.
- Modular certification pilots are expected to launch in Q1 2026, with curricula emphasizing upskilling, digital fluency, and clean energy literacy.

Forward Recommendations:

- Maintain and resource the Energy Workforce & STEM Innovation Team as a cross-sector convener and implementation engine.
- Scale internship pathways and modular training options by partnering with employers and community colleges.
- Develop standardized K–20 engagement protocols that address the variability across districts and streamline industry participation.
- Institutionalize evaluation and feedback mechanisms to refine hands-on program models and ensure relevance to evolving workforce demands.
- Align funding and policy support toward proven high-impact interventions such as pre-apprenticeships and district-wide simulation programs.
- Position the Cluster as the statewide intermediary for regional STEM alignment, clean energy workforce equity, and career pathway innovation.

d. Innovation, Incubation & Investment (i3)

The I3 track was convened by LaunchPad INW, regional incubators, entrepreneurs, and investors to co-develop pathways that strengthen the commercialization pipeline for clean energy technologies. Anchored in solving the region's 25,000 MW energy gap, the track focused on innovation ecosystem gaps, entrepreneurship support, and diverse investment approaches.

Core Themes & Gaps Identified:

- Fragmented support for early-stage energy companies and insufficient regional coordination.
- Limited awareness of existing technical and financial resources.
- Need for stronger tribal and rural engagement.
- Lack of visibility and storytelling for successful regional innovations.

Strategic Recommendations:

- Establish the Cluster as a Regional Coordination Hub for commercialization, offering services such as pitch events, regulatory guidance, partner matchmaking, and grant support.
- Advance a multi-state regulatory reform pathway as a commercialization enabler by convening a regulatory working group to address permitting for transmission and generation infrastructure.
- Develop a data-driven model for demand visibility and energy load coordination, potentially with utility APIs.
- Cultivate tribal and rural partnerships to expand access and innovation pathways.
- Encourage incubation via programs like LaunchPad's Springboard and Fuse SPC's State of Motion.

Outcomes and 18-Month Roadmap: The I3 group proposed a two-pronged model: (1) a fee-for-service coordination hub providing commercialization tools to innovators and investors; and (2) a data platform to support grid resilience through load analytics. Initial priorities include refining service delivery models, building a unified innovation map, and piloting events that connect technologies to capital. These will be guided by the Cluster's broader equity and ecosystem development goals.

Post-Summit Update and Forward Strategy: Following the July 2025 Summit, the I3 track has progressed rapidly from concept to structured planning and early-stage implementation. The Cluster is actively positioning itself as a commercialization hub, coordinating across stakeholders to deliver technical, financial, and strategic support to clean energy innovators. The path forward reflects a balance of near-term pilot activity and long-term platform and ecosystem development.

Key Advancements and Recommendations:

- The Coordination Hub pilot was formally initiated in late 2025, offering matchmaking services, regulatory consulting, and access to grant assistance for early-stage companies.
- An initial regional innovation ecosystem map is in development, supported by a directory of startup resources and partner services.
- First pitch and partner matchmaking events were held in partnership with LaunchPad and Fuse SPC, resulting in several exploratory investments.
- The data-sharing platform concept for load analytics has completed its initial scoping and is now in early-stage utility stakeholder consultations.
- Early tribal and rural partnership engagement efforts have launched, including two listening sessions and planning for innovation-focused workshops in 2026.

Forward Recommendations:

- Expand and institutionalize the Coordination Hub with formal membership tiers, service menus, and performance tracking.

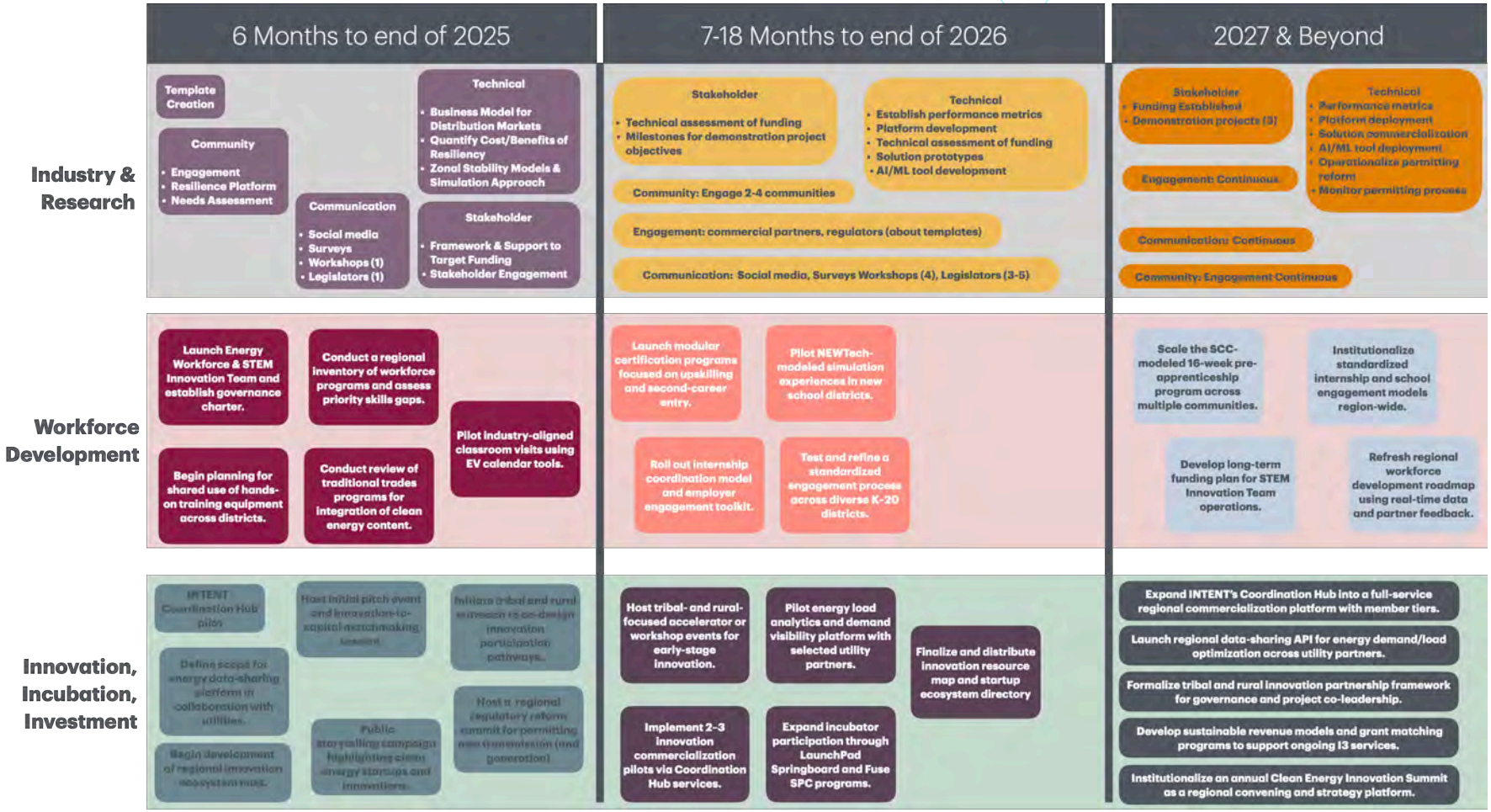
- Pilot and deploy the demand coordination data platform in collaboration with utilities, and secure funding to scale.
- Formalize tribal and rural innovation partnerships with dedicated support structures and localized capacity-building programs.
- Continue building the innovation ecosystem through storytelling, recognition, and expanded accelerator programming.
- Develop long-term sustainability plan for the Cluster's commercialization services, including revenue model and external investment fund linkages.
- Position the Cluster as a trusted intermediary between innovators, utilities, regulators, and capital providers to close the commercialization gap in clean energy technologies.

Together, the Workforce and I3 tracks articulated a roadmap for building the human and entrepreneurial infrastructure necessary to meet the region's decarbonization and reliability goals.

3. Strategic Planning: Updated 18-month Strategic Action Plan for 2025-26

The action plan information below is focused on many shorter term goals to both narrow focus for organizational sustainability, build the value statement based on that focus for our partners and members, and show actionable results to help build momentum. Funding for energy innovation and projects with emerging technologies is seen to be a nationwide challenge for the next few years, and our plan is to help our partners develop projects that have a more realistic ROI without large scale government investments. This has been a core principle for us over the past three years. To do that, our value proposition must help our partners do more with less and leverage the extensive partner network to help achieve that. This collaboration can help partners specialize and minimize new expertise or resources. In order to demonstrate this value, there is a critical 12–24-month period of intense partner and community development work that needs to be accomplished to help develop that common voice and ensure the most important energy interventions rise to the top for investment.

See GANTT chart next page.



Consolidated list of roadmap priorities as outcomes from the July 8-9, 2025 Energy Innovation Summit.

a. Through December 2025 (Next 6 Months)

The three thematic tracks outlined for the remainder of 2025 within the Inland Northwest Energy Innovation Cluster center around **community-informed energy planning, inclusive workforce development, and commercialization of clean energy innovation**. The *Energy Industry and Research* track focuses on developing foundational tools—like resilience frameworks, stakeholder engagement templates, zonal stability simulations, and communication strategies—to support equitable grid modernization. The *Workforce & STEM Development* track emphasizes forming a regional innovation team, assessing and aligning education with industry needs, piloting outreach programs, and preparing shared hands-on learning assets. The *Innovation, Incubation & Investment (I3)* track advances commercialization through the Cluster's Coordination Hub, an innovation pitch event, public storytelling, tribal and rural outreach, and groundwork for a data-sharing platform. Collectively, these tracks reinforce the cluster's goals to drive equitable decarbonization, foster community resilience, and strengthen regional economic competitiveness.

Energy Industry and Research

- Establish a template for each of the following:
  - Community Engagement
  - A Community Resilience Platform
  - Framework & Support to Target Funding
  - Assess Community Needs
  - Stakeholder Engagement
  - Business Model for Distribution Markets
  - Quantify Cost/Benefits of Resiliency
  - Zonal Stability Models & Simulation Approach
  - Communication (social media, surveys, workshops, legislative policy)

Workforce & STEM Development

- Launch Energy Workforce & STEM Innovation Team and establish governance charter.
- Conduct a regional inventory of workforce programs and assess priority skills gaps.
- Pilot industry-aligned classroom visits using EV calendar tools.
- Begin planning for shared use of hands-on training equipment across districts.
- Conduct review of traditional trades programs for integration of clean energy content.

Innovation, Incubation & Investment (I3)

- Stand up the Cluster's Coordination Hub pilot with fee-for-service commercialization support.
- Host initial pitch event and innovation-to-capital matchmaking session.

- Begin development of regional innovation ecosystem map.
- Launch public storytelling campaign highlighting clean energy startups and innovations.
- Initiate tribal and rural outreach to co-design innovation participation pathways.
- Define scope for energy data-sharing platform in collaboration with utilities.
- Host a regional regulatory reform summit for permitting new transmission (and generation)

b. Through December 2026 (Months 7–18)

The 2026 priorities for the Inland Northwest Energy Innovation Cluster continue building momentum by advancing implementation, commercialization, and broader engagement. The *Energy Industry and Research* track emphasizes deeper collaboration with commercial partners and regulators to refine templates, launch AI/ML-enabled tools, and implement a communication strategy through social media, workshops, and legislative outreach. Key technical milestones include platform development, prototype solutions, and metrics-driven assessments of funding and demonstration objectives. The *Workforce & STEM Development* track focuses on scaling inclusive programming through modular certification for upskilling and career transitions, expanding simulation-based learning into more districts, and piloting internship coordination and engagement models tailored to K–20 systems. The *Innovation, Incubation & Investment (I3)* track moves into applied testing with commercialization pilots, rural and Tribal accelerator events, a demand analytics platform pilot with utilities, and broader incubation support via LaunchPad and Fuse SPC. A finalized innovation ecosystem map and resource directory will help anchor and guide this regional economic growth strategy.

Energy Industry and Research

- Engagement with commercial partners
- Engagement with regulators (about templates)
- Convene a regional permitting summit involving WA, ID, OR, and MT to develop a harmonized permitting compact for transmission and generation projects.
- Establish a multi-state working group of utilities, regulators, and Tribal and economic development stakeholders to identify regulatory conflicts and design an expedited pilot permitting process for high-impact energy infrastructure projects.
- Platform development
- Establish performance metrics
- Technical assessment of funding
- Milestones for demonstration project objectives
- Solution prototypes
- AI/ML tool development
- Communication plan implementation (social media, surveys, 4-workshops, 3-5 legislators)

Workforce & STEM Development

- Launch modular certification programs focused on upskilling and second-career entry.
- Pilot NEWTech-modeled simulation experiences in new school districts.
- Roll out internship coordination model and employer engagement toolkit.
- Test and refine a standardized engagement process across diverse K–20 districts.

Innovation, Incubation & Investment (I3)

- Implement 2–3 innovation commercialization pilots via Coordination Hub services.
- Host tribal- and rural-focused accelerator or workshop events for early-stage innovation.
- Pilot energy load analytics and demand visibility platform with selected utility partners.
- Expand incubator participation through LaunchPad Springboard and Fuse SPC programs.
- Finalize and distribute innovation resource map and startup ecosystem directory.

c. From 2027 on (Months 19+)

From 2027 onward, the Inland Northwest Energy Innovation Cluster aims to solidify its role as a regional engine for clean energy transformation through scalable deployment, institutionalization, and sustained impact. The *Energy Industry and Research* track will operationalize its early investments with three funded demonstration projects showcasing commercialized solutions, deployed platforms, and enhanced AI/ML tools, all measured through standardized performance metrics. Stakeholder, community, and communications engagement becomes continuous, embedded practice. The *Workforce & STEM Development* track focuses on institutionalizing successful models, including the SCC-modeled 16-week pre-apprenticeship program and standardized K–20 engagement frameworks, while implementing a regional workforce roadmap powered by real-time data. Long-term sustainability will be reinforced through funding strategies for the STEM Innovation Team. In the *Innovation, Incubation & Investment (I3)* track, the Cluster's Coordination Hub will evolve into a full-service commercialization platform with tiered membership, a regional energy data-sharing API, and formal governance frameworks for Tribal and rural innovation leadership. Sustainable revenue streams and grant matching programs will support continued incubation and investment, anchored by an institutionalized annual Clean Energy Innovation Summit to align strategy and showcase progress.

Energy Industry and Research

- Stakeholder
  - Funding Established
  - Demonstration projects (3)
- Technical
  - Performance metrics standardized

  - Platform deployment at demonstration projects
  - Solution commercialized
  - AI/ML tools deployed and enhanced
- Engagement -> Continuous
- Community Engagement -> Continuous
- Communication -> Continuous
- Operationalize the permitting reform compact by launching at least one multi-state demonstration project as a national case study in permitting efficiency.
- Monitor, document, and publish permitting process improvements and infrastructure timelines as an investment-attracting transparency tool.

Workforce & STEM Development

- Scale the SCC-modeled 16-week pre-apprenticeship program across multiple communities.
- Institutionalize standardized internship and school engagement models regionwide.
- Develop long-term funding plan for STEM Innovation Team operations.
- Refresh regional workforce development roadmap using real-time data and partner feedback.

Innovation, Incubation & Investment (I3)

- Expand INTENT's Coordination Hub into a full-service regional commercialization platform with member tiers.
- Launch regional data-sharing API for energy demand/load optimization across utility partners.
- Formalize tribal and rural innovation partnership framework for governance and project co-leadership.
- Develop sustainable revenue models and grant matching programs to support ongoing I3 services.
- Institutionalize an annual Clean Energy Innovation Summit as a regional convening and strategy platform.

4. Partner Engagement & Membership Development

The July 2025 Energy Innovation Summit catalyzed meaningful engagement with 16 new partners—12 of whom contributed as speakers—and opened new pathways for collaboration, particularly with Tribal Nations. These engagements reinforced the importance of culturally aligned energy solutions and led to initial planning for a future Tribal Energy Opportunity Summit. With over 50 contributors and a 90% attendance rate, the Summit validated the Cluster's three-track approach, advanced shared roadmaps, and deepened commitment across

sectors to equitable, resilient energy innovation. These outcomes now serve as the launchpad for broader implementation, sustained cultural alignment and reflect a strong post-summit momentum in both partner development and strategic direction.

a. Energy Industry Outreach and Partner Development

The July 2025 Energy Innovation Summit helped transform earlier outreach efforts into meaningful collaboration and clear pathways for expansion of the Cluster's industry partnerships. As part of this summit-centered engagement, we deepened relationships with over 30 utility organizations, multiple Tribes, and over a dozen energy-related and investment-oriented organizations across the Pacific Northwest and nationally.

Most notably, the Cluster confirmed active engagement from 16 new partners—12 of whom participated as speakers or panelists during the Summit. These organizations represent a diverse cross-section of local governments, higher education, entrepreneurial ventures, clean energy financiers, and technology providers. While formal MOU agreements with these partners remain in progress, each expressed strong enthusiasm to collaborate with the Cluster and its core stakeholders on near-term implementation efforts.

The Summit also elevated the role of Tribal voices in shaping the next phase of energy innovation. Tribal leaders shared key input on community priorities and expressed interest in co-organizing a dedicated Tribal Energy Opportunity Summit. INTENT is now working to support that vision, with Tribal representatives agreeing to initiate conversations and assist in early planning, contingent on meaningful State leadership participation.

These discussions reaffirmed the critical role Tribal Nations must play—not only in project design and siting, but also in governance, investment decision-making, and cultural alignment of energy solutions. The outreach effort, Summit platform, and follow-up coordination demonstrate growing trust, and an opportunity to formalize sustained partnership.

Confirmed Engaged Partners (12 of whom were Summit contributors):

- City of Spokane
- Community Colleges of Spokane
- Eastern Washington University
- Inland Power
- Carbon Quest
- Johnston Engineering
- Clean Technology Alliance
- Washington Green Bank
- E8 Angels
- VERTical
- Fuse SPC
- Montauk Climate
- Clean Energy Supplier Alliance

- Zero Emissions Northwest
- Apricus Energy Partners
- Emerald Renewable Energy Developers

Expanding a sustainable energy cluster's connections to peer organizations, investors, and developers yields major benefits for the Pacific Northwest and the State of Washington as they navigate unprecedented energy demands, decarbonization imperatives, and technology disruption. A broadened coalition—featuring actors such as the City of Spokane, Eastern Washington University, Carbon Quest, Zero Emissions Northwest, and Montauk Climate—brings diverse technical expertise, regulatory insights, and commercialization pathways into a shared effort. Collaboration with financial engines like Washington Green Bank, E8 Angels, and Apricus Energy Partners unlocks critical capital for piloting advanced grid solutions, clean firm energy technologies, and distributed energy resource (DER) platforms across rural and urban communities alike.

b. Industry-Led Cluster Summit (2 Days – July 8-9) – Summary of outcomes

The July 2025 Energy Innovation Summit successfully delivered on its promise to catalyze alignment, strategy, and action across Washington's clean energy innovation community. As outlined in the Workforce and I3 track updates above, the Summit produced tangible deliverables and prioritized roadmaps for each of the three focus areas. In many ways, the event marked an inflection point for INTENT and its partners, anchoring the transition from cluster formation to implementation and growth.

The event also surfaced critical reflections and future opportunities. A significant call-to-action emerged from Tribal participants to organize a dedicated Tribal Energy Summit—one centered on Tribal energy sovereignty, cultural values, and ecological priorities. There was strong consensus that this effort should be co-developed with Tribal leaders and supported through intentional investment and visible participation from Washington State leadership.

Participants highlighted the importance of addressing the intersection of energy growth, economic development, resilience, workforce equity, and ecological stewardship as part of future cluster programming. Discussions emphasized the need to design and fund packaged solutions that not only deliver reliable energy but do so in ways that align with community and cultural values.

One particularly impactful example shared was the concept of elevated solar platforms adapted for Tribal lands to preserve culturally significant wildlife and plant habitats. This type of context-sensitive design carries higher upfront costs but reflects deep community-rooted values and benefits. Future cluster strategies will need to consider how non-traditional investors and cross-sector funding models can help projects like these "pencil out."

Summit Highlights and Impact Metrics:

- Over 90% participant attendance across both days.
- 53 discrete speakers, panelists, and contributors across 4 structured panels and 3 interactive breakout tracks.
- 20 partner-led presentations ranging from local innovation case studies to policy and investment strategies.
- 12 new partner speaker and contributors that attended from across Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.
- General session on industry and community opportunities and trends, and three tracks:
    - Track 1: Industry and Research (design-thinking on grid modernization challenges).
    - Track 2: Workforce & STEM Development (inclusive career pipelines).
    - Track 3: Innovation, Incubation & Investment (bridging capital and commercialization).

The event was hosted at WSU's Spokane Academic Center and Catalyst Building—blending technical focus with community relevance. The proceedings included case studies from Carbon Quest, equity-driven planning by Avista, and structured engagement sessions that prioritized design thinking and peer exchange.

Summit sessions were recorded and summarized with support from AI-assisted transcription tools, with full Zoom recordings and content links included in the Appendix. These insights directly inform the updated ICAP3 strategic plan and INTENT's programming priorities for 2025–2026 and beyond.

The event served not only as a capstone to two years of cluster formation work—but as a critical step-off point into a broader cultural transformation toward equitable energy innovation, Tribal inclusion, and scalable investment in regionally rooted, community-informed solutions.

Appendix: Supporting Documents

The following attachments are provided in accordance with the requirements of Contract 25-78250-008 under the deliverable "Energy Innovation Cluster ICAP Cohort 3 Report" for the ICAP3 Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program award to Urbanova.

1. **Board retreat and strategy session – July 10, 2025**
2. **Industry and Research Summary Report – July 11, 2025**
3. **Innovation, Incubation, and Investment Summary Report – July 10, 2025**
4. **Energy Workforce and STEM Development Track– July 10, 2025**
5. **Meeting Summaries (AI assisted) – July 9, 2025**
6. **July 8-9 Energy Innovation Summit Recordings**

General Session and Track 1 (Energy Industry) – Day 1

Track 1 (Energy Industry) and General Session Report-Outs – Day 2

Track 2 (Workforce and STEM) – Day 1

Track 2 (Workforce and STEM) – Day 2

Track 3 (Innovation, Incubation, and Investment) – Day 1

Track 3 (Innovation, Incubation, and Investment) – Day 2

Memo

To: Board of Directors
From: Mason Burley, CEO, Urbanova
Date: July 10, 2025
Re: Board retreat and strategy session

Board member retreat and strategy session: Thursday, July 10, 10:00am – 1:45pm

Board members arrive 9:30 – 10:00am *(Refreshments and light snacks provided)*

Call to order and introductions 10:00 - 10:05am

Summit debrief and recap, Mason Burley, CEO 10:05 – 10:20am

a. Reference: Summit takeaways (sent via email July 9)

Strategic planning, Part 1:

b. Introduction, Latisha Hill, BOD (Vice President of Community Affairs and Chief Customer Officer, Avista) 10:20 – 10:30am
c. Context session, Nico Archer, DH 10:30 to 11:20am

Break 11:20 – 11:30am (Refreshments and light snacks provided)

Strategic planning, Part 2:

d. Cloudstorm: Personal vision and alignment, Nico Archer, DH 11:30 - 12:15pm
e. Reference: Board member strategy session worksheet (pre-work)

Break (plate lunch) 12:15 – 12:30pm

Strategic planning, Part 3 (working lunch):

f. Roadmap, Nico Archer, DH 12:30 - 1:30pm

Wrap-up and next steps

g. Mason Burley, CEO, 1:30 – 1:45pm

Final Report Industry Track

Provided by: Curtis Kirkeby (Open Energy Solutions)
Facilitators: Daniel Conte De Leon (University of Idaho), Jonathan Male (WSU), and Rubindra Nanda (WSU)

Executive Summary

The Industry Track was a strategic component of the summit, designed to build on previous insights and summit discussions to identify and prioritize the top challenges and opportunities facing the future energy ecosystem—particularly at the community and electrical distribution levels. Using a design thinking approach, the session focused on structured ideation, collaborative problem solving, and the development of actionable strategies.

Participants worked in phased teams to define 15 critical energy transition challenges, ranging from lack of equitable benefits distribution and burden, inadequate market structures, to resilience, regulatory hurdles, and workforce needs. A key realization was the urgent demand for scalable, localized solutions to help towards adequate energy capacity (GW/GWh) without defaulting to bulk power system interventions.

The session identified a templated methodology for structuring and managing innovation through multiple project tracks, each focusing on specific themes such as community engagement, technical modeling, communication, and resiliency planning. Over two days, participants translated high-level challenges into concrete action plans aligned with short-term (6-month) and medium-term (18-month) timelines.

Key six-month actions include designing engagement and resiliency templates, developing a cost-benefit framework for resiliency investment, initiating stakeholder engagement, and creating DER simulation models. The 18-month roadmap targets implementation of these templates with commercial and regulatory partners, community-led policy engagement, AI/ML-powered tools for stability simulation, and platform prototyping.

The result is a pragmatic and collaborative framework that will guide INTENT/Urbanova's innovation efforts over the next 18 months, enabling repeatable, resource-conscious project execution while engaging diverse stakeholders in energy transformation. The track’s outcomes establish a foundational roadmap for resilient energy systems, emphasizing equity, adaptability, and action.

Industry Track

The industry track leveraged previous findings, summit content, and design thinking processes to establish a roadmap of action to meet the region’s future energy needs.

The session was created to leverage a design thinking process which follows an overall flow of: 1) ***UNDERSTAND***; 2) ***EXPLORE***; and 3) ***MATERIALIZE***. There are 6 distinct phases which define this flow which are provided in the diagram below.

Day 1

The session commenced by considering the region's energy future from a stakeholder perspective. To maximize the content exploration, groups of four to five were formed.

Participants were requested to empathize with energy challenges and opportunities, associating their empathy with a specific, defined challenge. Initially, the teams primarily identified with the challenge definition, which appeared somewhat broad. Subsequently, they refocused on refining the challenge definitions to become more specific. As a result, the teams defined fifteen unique challenges, which are provided in the design thinking section.

With the challenge definitions completed, the first two design thinking phases, namely ***EMPATHIZE*** and ***DEFINE***, were successfully concluded. The subsequent step involved soliciting the groups to ***IDEATE***, generating ideas for each challenge. Each group was tasked with creating three ideas for each challenge. The generated ideas are available in the design thinking section. Day one concluded with this task being completed.

Day 2

On the second day, the session drew upon the concepts generated at the conclusion of the first day to establish actionable items for the organization to implement. This approach can be considered a prototype phase of design thinking, with a unique twist in that it focused solely on taking actions rather than prototype and test iterations that ultimately lead to the development of a product.

To ensure diverse interactions and cover a broader range of ideas, new groups of two to three individuals were formed. These teams demonstrated remarkable success in developing numerous actionable items. The discussions surrounding these actions led to several key realizations:

1. Community was a relevant aspect for all participants in some way.
2. While there were overlaps, a common theme emerged.
3. Effective communication was crucial.
4. Architectural considerations were important.
5. Repeatability was desired.
6. Collaboration was essential.

The ideas and associated action items suggested a templated or specification approach for all the specific focal points of activity.

The actionable items are included in the design thinking section.

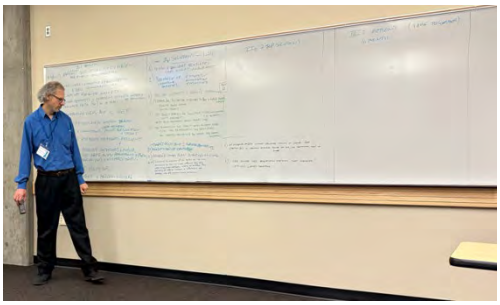
Design Thinking

The industry track was responsible for identifying the most significant challenges and opportunities that emerged during the Summit. A design thinking process was employed to facilitate this process. This process involved the following steps:

1. **Empathy**: Stakeholders were identified, and their perspectives were understood.
2. **Challenge Definition**: The most pressing challenges were defined based on the criteria of being challenges that can be effectively executed.
3. **Ideation**: Potential solutions were generated for the identified challenges.
4. **Actionable Items**: Actionable items were identified for the next six months, spanning from the end of 2025 to the end of 2026.

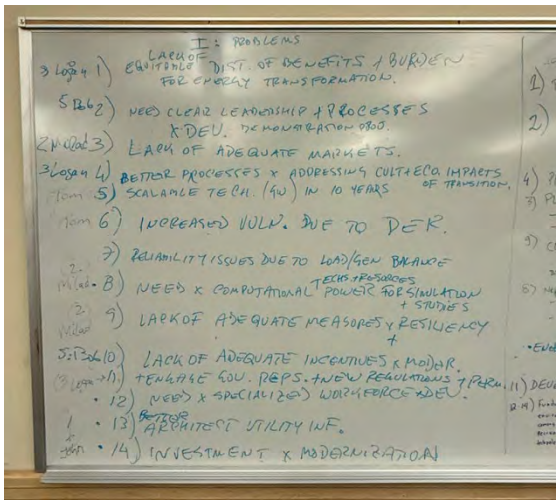
The process started by forming teams of four to five individuals. The teams were tasked with jointly identifying the top three challenges and the underlying empathy that supported these challenges. The resulting 15 top challenges were identified based on prioritizing challenges that can be effectively executed. A few challenges were deemed too broad or focused to be actionable. For instance, the requirement of (GW) of resources in the next ten years was deemed too general and lacked specific details.

Each group was then asked to provide potential ideas for three of the challenges, and these ideas were subsequently discussed within the group. Based on the generated ideas, attendees were reconfigured into groups of two to three to develop actionable items for each of the identified challenges within the six-month and eighteen-month timeframes.



The findings for each of the identified challenges are presented below.

Challenges



1. Lack of equitable distribution of benefits & burden for energy transition
2. Need clear leadership & processes to develop demonstration projects
3. Lack of adequate markets
4. Better processes addressing cultural and economic impacts of transition
5. Scalable tech (GW) in 10 years
6. Increased volatility due to DERs
7. Reliability issues due to load/gen balance
8. Need computational power and technical resources for simulation studies
9. Lack of adequate measures for resiliency
10. Lack of adequate incentives for ……
11. Tentative government reps, new regulations, + Perm
12. Need specialized workforce development
13. Better architect of utility infrastructure
14. Investment for modernization
15. Better communication for action

Ideas (note: ideas were consolidated or naturally merged to form the ones in this list)

1. Design resiliency templates that support measurability
2. Create database of expertise, knowledge, facilities and establish sharing processes (DDE)
3. Platform for residential consumers to partake in active power markets (reactive power, inertia)
4. Provide support for permit process streamlining
5. An incubator -> GTM support structure focusing on scale that capitalizes on regional resources. Promote fast fail, gap identification proof of concept
6. Open-source DER orchestration platform that integrates grid-level forecasting
7. Energy boutiques for benefits
8. New techniques /algorithms for stability analysis of hybrid systems that leverage; 1) AI/ML tools for accelerating time domain studies; 2) new computing architecture for faster time domain simulations

9. Cost benefit analysis for investment in resiliency measures that justify the investment an example of which might be microgrids
10. Develop a communication plan, Public + Commercial + Legislative
11. Fundamental architecture of the market and regulatory environment to permit and animate differential value sets among energy service stakeholders including our workforce. This necessarily will address investment in infrastructure and technology along with investment recovery mechanisms

These ideas were used to establish the action items. See the Action Planning Section.

Design thinking resulted in very intense conversations. The conversations focused on the following topics.

Overall Challenge

The group engaged in a comprehensive discussion on energy transformation and potential solutions within energy systems. They concentrated on critical issues such as heightened vulnerability to reliability due to the adoption of renewable energy sources and novel devices, equitable distribution of benefits and burdens, inadequate market structures, and processes for supporting demonstration projects. The session underscored the imperative for actionable solutions and tangible steps that can be implemented in the immediate term to progress towards long-term objectives. Furthermore, the group explored the significance of designated point individuals for each action item to facilitate progress and ensure adherence to commitments.

Community Engagement and Project Strategies

The group engaged in a comprehensive discussion on various strategies for community engagement and project approval. These strategies encompassed communication plans, resiliency design, and pre-approved frameworks. The group underscored the paramount importance of comprehending community requirements, mitigating potential risks, and optimizing resource allocation. The discussion also drew upon personal experiences in Norway, exploring topics such as electric vehicles, renewable energy, and tourism.

Resilient Energy Systems Planning Framework

The group engaged in a discussion on the development of specifications and models for resilient energy systems within communities. It was identified as a critical need to plan for engaging communities, legislators, and stakeholders to establish a template for resilient design. The objective was to establish frameworks that prioritize regional projects and identify communities for discussions on energy ecosystems. The group also plans to develop regional (zonal) power system models that incorporate distributed energy resources (DERs), initially focusing on smaller areas such as a few substations. They intend to create metrics for cost-benefit analysis of resilience benefits and explore business models for distribution markets. The discussion emphasized the necessity of models that can capture interactions between neighboring DERs in real time, thereby addressing the current challenges associated with grid stability analysis.

Community Resiliency Framework Development

The group engaged in a discussion regarding the development of a specification or template for community resiliency and distribution system enhancements. The primary objective was to establish a customizable framework that would empower communities to implement necessary improvements.

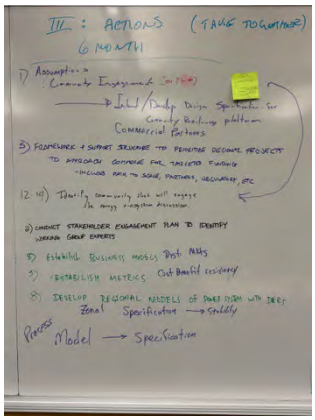
The team resolved to divide the work into distinct tracks, encompassing community engagement, technical specifications, and implementation planning. The ultimate goal was to create a comprehensive roadmap within the next week.

Throughout the discussion, the team underscored the significance of sustained stakeholder engagement and utility involvement. They also explored potential funding avenues, including government funding through the Commerce Department and private sector investment.

The team concluded that the organization could potentially transition into offering consulting services to facilitate these programs. However, this transformation would necessitate the active participation of members.

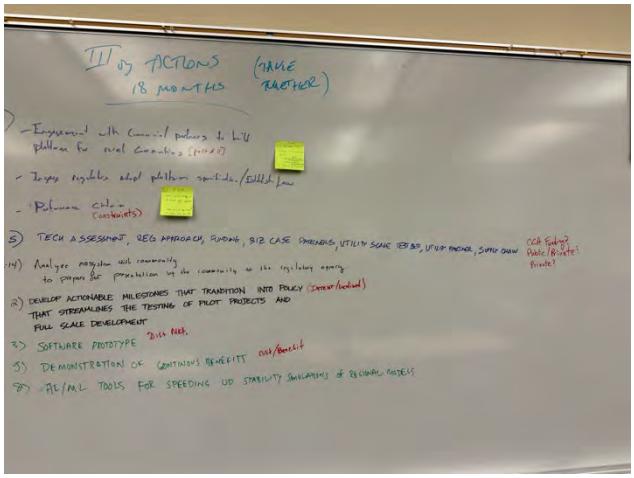
Action Planning

Actions (6 month)



1. Design **template** for community engagement
2. Design **template** for community resilience platform
3. Develop a **template** for a framework & support structure to prioritize regional projects to approach Commerce for targeted funding which includes: 1) path to scale; 2) partners; 3) regulatory; 4) other
4. Identify an initial community that will engage the energy ecosystem discussion
5. Establish a stakeholder engagement plan **template** to identify working group experts
6. Establish a business model **template** for distribution markets
7. Establish a **template** for metrics that quantify cost benefit of resiliency
8. Develop a zonal-regional stability model **template** for analysis/simulation of DERs
9. Establish -> PROCESS; MODELS; SPECIFICATION
10. Create a communication plan **template** for: 1) social media education, engage social media channels; 2) regional communities -> hold 2 workshop events; 3) legislators -> contact 1

Actions 18 Months



1. Engagement with commercial partners to implement platform for rural communities
2. Engage regulators to adopt platform templated approach
3. Establish performance criteria and metrics
4. Technical assessment; regulatory approach; funding (CCA, private, public/private); business case; partners; utility scale test bed; utility partner, supply chain
5. Analyze ecosystem with community to prepare for presentation by the community to the regulatory agency
6. Develop actionable milestones that transition into (localized) policy that streamlines the testing of pilot projects and full-scale development
7. Software prototype for distribution market
8. Demonstration of continuous cost/benefits
9. AI/ML tools for speeding up stability simulations of regional/zonal models
10. Get SEPA pre-approval for specification template (reliant on initial template design/release) and communication plan
11. Implement first steps of communication plan: 1) establish social media accounts for educational info; 2) survey communities -> hold 4 workshops (1/quarter); reach out to 3-5 legislators

Conclusion

The industry track demonstrated success in establishing well-defined, actionable items that can be concurrently worked on and managed as a project portfolio by INTENT/Urbanova. This approach facilitates collaboration among diverse entities or individuals and ensures that the project is effectively managed. The template approach promotes efficient effort and results that are manageable with limited resources yet contribute to a comprehensive and structured approach. The outcomes of this session identified the next 18 months of effort for the INTENT/Urbanova innovation cluster, providing not only a roadmap of action but also a template process for achieving results.

INTENT ENERGY INNOVATION SUMMIT JULY 8-9, 2025 FINAL REPORT I³ TRACK

LAUNCHPAD
INLAND NORTHWEST

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I³ Track Final Report | July 2025

Overview

The INTENT Energy Innovation Summit's I³ Track (Innovation, Incubation, Investment) brought together regional stakeholders to address the commercialization continuum for clean energy technologies. Facilitated by LaunchPad Inland Northwest, the track focused on identifying resources, gaps, and actionable strategies to strengthen the region's energy innovation ecosystem, highlighted a local energy startup success story and two regional entrepreneur support organizations plus a panel of diverse investment options.

Initial customers for commercialization services are expected to include regional energy startups, research spinouts, and mid-stage clean tech ventures seeking regulatory guidance, pilot validation, or investment alignment. Data-driven optimization solutions will primarily serve utilities, microgrid operators, and building portfolio owners aiming to improve load management and integrate distributed resources.

The Critical Challenge

The region's "one thing" could be focused on solving the 25k megawatt shortage predicted over the next decade. Without a solution for this critical need, we cannot support all the other initiatives being pursued within the community such as growth in the biomedical space, AI startups, and other emerging sectors.

This energy shortage represents both a significant challenge and an unprecedented opportunity for the region to establish itself as a leader in energy innovation and solutions. This shortfall aligns with national trends and presents an urgent

opportunity for the Inland Northwest to pilot regulatory, technological, and business model reforms that could serve as a model for national replication.

The Collaborative Imperative

We cannot succeed while standing alone. By pooling resources, knowledge, and connections, our region has a better chance of identifying our Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) and mobilizing the resources necessary to succeed in establishing a name for the region.

The summit demonstrated that success in energy innovation requires coordinated effort across multiple sectors, including academia, industry, government, and community organizations.

Key Findings

The I^3 Track sessions revealed several critical insights:

Innovation Ecosystem Gaps: While the region has notable strengths in research institutions and emerging technologies, there is less regulatory pathway guidance and comprehensive support for energy-based early-stage companies.

Regional Resources: The summit identified numerous existing resources that aren't fully leveraged, including university research capabilities, established companies with pilot partnership potential, strong Tribal Nations, and a growing network of experienced entrepreneurs and advisors.

Investment Landscape: The region has diverse funding mechanisms available for large scale capital projects, from traditional venture capital to non-dilutive funding sources. Better coordination and collaboration in new innovation areas that require less established avenues for the needed funding.

Recommended Strategic Options

Three primary pathways emerged for INTENT's future focus:

Option 1: Regional Coordination Hub - INTENT would serve as the central coordinator for energy technology commercialization resources, providing fee-for-service support including pitch events, market research, partner connections, regulatory guidance, and grant funding assistance.

Option 2: Data-Driven Approach - INTENT would act as a coordinator for distributed energy systems in the region by providing a platform for data standardization and APIs for entrepreneurs, mapping the resources and identifying gaps for our communities, clearing the obstacles for technology commercialization, and promoting a vision to close the energy shortage through a combination of resource management and innovations.

Option 3: Regulatory Reform Catalyst – INTENT could convene a regional coalition of stakeholders from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana to address the urgent permitting challenges for new transmission and generation. By streamlining inter-jurisdictional policies, INTENT could position the region as a national model for rapid deployment of grid infrastructure, creating a first-mover advantage in resilience and reliability reform.

Next Steps

The summit identified specific 18-month action items focusing on:

- Conducting a comprehensive customer analysis on needs and gaps
- Establishing clear service delivery models
- Developing sustainable revenue streams through membership, sponsorship, and fee-for-service offerings
- Building stronger partnerships with tribal entities and rural communities
- Creating systematic approaches to obstacle removal for energy technology commercialization

Immediate next steps also include a region-wide branding and communications campaign aimed at raising awareness of the cluster's services and opportunities, as well as targeted outreach to recruit energy entrepreneurs not yet active in the region through national events and accelerator networks.

Conclusion

The region stands at a pivotal moment where the convergence of energy challenges, technological innovation, and collaborative potential creates an opportunity to establish itself as a national leader in clean energy solutions. Success will require sustained commitment to the collaborative approach identified during the summit and strategic focus on addressing the 25k megawatt challenge while building the ecosystem infrastructure necessary to support long-term innovation and growth.

I³ TRACK: INNOVATION, INCUBATION, INVESTMENT

The I³ Track included content on the commercialization continuum for new technologies including innovation, incubation, and investment. There was a varied approach to delivering this content including:

- Innovation - a brief informational session followed by a small group exercise
- Incubation - a presentation by a local energy startup and presentations from two regional service providers
- Investment - a panel highlighting diverse investment approaches.

Track Goals

1. Highlight the regional resources available to entrepreneurs in the clean energy industry
2. Identify potential gaps in expertise or support across the region
3. Surface specific actions our region might focus on to better support these types of entrepreneurs

LaunchPad was contracted to design and deliver the I³ track. Bill Kalivas, CEO & Co-Founder, and April Needham, Advisor, facilitated the sessions.

Track Facilitators:

Bill Kalivas, **LaunchPad**

April Needham, **LaunchPad**

This edited version includes feedback from Kathleen Hebert, E8 Angels and Mark Gustafson, Avista Development. Additional feedback on the summit activities will continue to be reviewed and incorporated to shape future action plans.

I N N O V A T I O N

The Innovation session included a brief education for participants of what an innovation ecosystem is including key components and core elements for clean energy and also an overview of the commercialization continuum, or steps taken to move a new technology idea into the market. Following this information sharing, participants worked in rapid-fire format to quickly identify as many existing key resources as possible that aren't already listed on INTENT's ecosystem map, define gaps within the ecosystem, and propose potential solutions or actions towards resolving these resource gaps.

Launchpad's Regional Innovation Strategy

Bill Kalivas, co-founder and executive director of Launchpad Inland Northwest Foundation, presented an overview of the organization's mission to foster innovation, connect talent, and grow the regional innovation economy. He explained Launchpad's history, its focus on supporting innovators, strengthening the talent pipeline, and developing ecosystems in tech and life sciences. Bill highlighted Launchpad's success metrics, emphasizing the importance of measuring long-term company survival and growth rather than just job creation. The session discussed steps for growing the network and attracting more talent and capital to the region, with plans to engage attendees in an interactive conversation to identify actionable items.

Clean Energy Innovation Ecosystem Building

The meeting focused on building a robust innovation ecosystem for clean energy technologies in the region, emphasizing cross-sector partnerships. April Needham outlined the importance of an innovation ecosystem, its components, and the commercialization process, while highlighting gaps such as limited funding and fragmented support. Participants were tasked with identifying new regional partners, mapping them, and suggesting actionable items to address gaps in the ecosystem over the next 18 months. The discussion also touched on the status of SBIR funding for energy innovations, with concerns about potential cuts and legislative efforts to protect or expand the program.

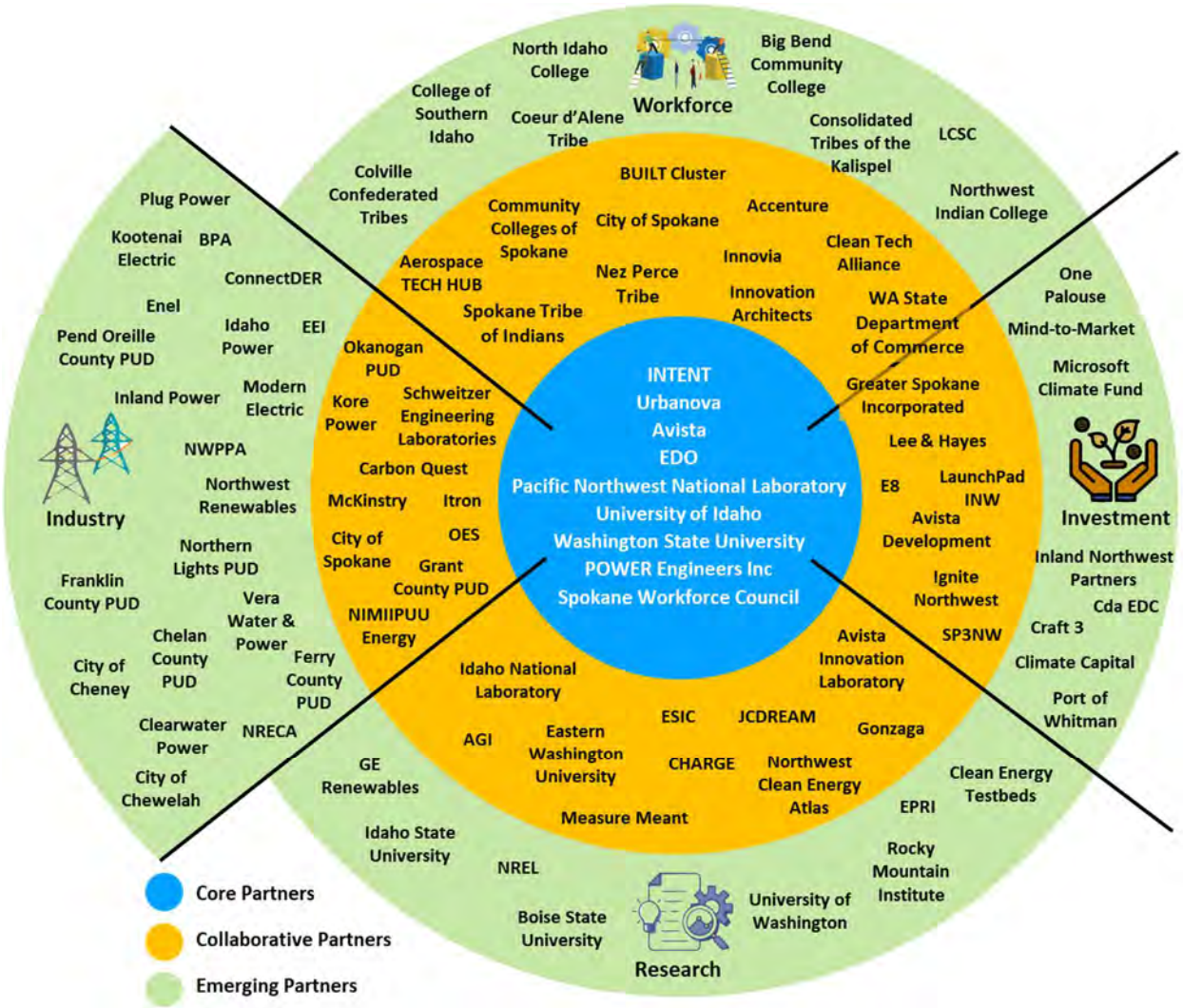
Clean Energy Ecosystem Partnership Strategies

The group discussed identifying partners and gaps in the clean energy ecosystem, focusing on resources like venture capital, data access, and funding models. They identified potential solutions such as creating a new venture capital fund, improving regional permitting processes, and providing access to free compute resources and grant funding. The session concluded with a brief overview of next steps, including upcoming presentations and an investment panel.

Despite strong local engagement, the Summit revealed a gap in active entrepreneurial participation beyond the existing regional startups. INTENT should establish a targeted strategy to attract external founders, including: (1) national startup scouting, (2) curated energy entrepreneur residency programs, and (3) sponsored hackathons or open innovation challenges focused on solving local grid problems. These initiatives will ensure a robust and replenishing pipeline of commercialization-ready technologies.

Commercialization Continuum

Discovery & Validation	Early-Stage Product Development	Business Modeling & Strategy	Funding & Resources	Market Entry & Scale Up
Support Needs • Ideation • IP Assessment • TRL Assessment • Market Validation	**Support Needs** • Build test models • Run tests • Refine technology	**Support Needs** • Business Model • Go-to-Market Strategy • Regulatory Strategy • Business Formation	**Support Needs** • Funding Strategy • Pitch Deck • Strategic Partnerships • Resource Activation	**Support Needs** • Product Launch • Scaling Operations • Customer Acquisition • Exit Strategy
Support Structures • Research Tools • Advisors • Industry Experts • Research Labs • Legal Services	**Support Structures** • Advisors • Maker Spaces & Testbeds • Industry Partners-Pilots	**Support Structures** • Advisors • Mentorship • Marketing & Sales • Legal & Financial • Coworking Spaces • Incubators & Accelerators	**Support Structures** • Legal & Financial • Grants & Competitions • Board of Advisors	**Support Structures** • Corporate Governance • Operational Experts • Exit Planning Advisors



INCUBATION

Entrepreneurial Challenges and Success Strategies – Carbon Quest

Dave Curry, founder of Carbon Quest, a carbon capture company, shared his entrepreneurial journey, highlighting the challenges of starting a business in Spokane due to limited resources, including capital and customers. He described his previous ventures, including a successful energy storage company in New York City, which led to a pilot project with a real estate company and eventual acquisition. Dave explained how he secured initial funding for Carbon Quest from a former business partner and described the process of assembling a team and developing the company's technology. He emphasized the importance of personal relationships and credibility in overcoming bureaucratic challenges and securing investments.

Dave Curry, Founder
Carbon Quest

Startup Ecosystem Partners

The meeting discussed the establishment of an ecosystem for entrepreneurs in Eastern Washington, particularly in Spokane and the Tri-Cities area.

Paul Carlisle, representing WSU Tri-Cities and Fuse SPC, outlined their efforts to build a supportive environment for startups (aka “The Clubhouse”) through programs like Fuse Launch, the Fuse Fund, and State of Motion.

Paul Carlisle, Director
FuseSPC

Steve Neff, who co-founded the Inland Tech Start Fund, shared insights on LaunchPad's Springboard program which uses the Lean Canvas and Lean Startup model to improve startup success rates. This program also uses a go-to-market strategy developed using an AI tool. Steve highlighted the importance of matching entrepreneurs with advisors and mentors and mentioned a database of over 3,000 individuals for supporting entrepreneurs. The discussion also covered a pitch session for evaluating investable companies and a collaboration with various venture capitalists.

Steve Neff, Director
LaunchPad

INVESTMENT

Mark Gustafson with Avista Development moderated a panel of investment professionals from Montauk Ventures, E8 Angels, and Washington State Green Bank, who shared their investment models and strategies, emphasizing how early non-dilutive funding as one of several pathways to crowding-in investment effects. The discussion also touched on potential funding mechanisms, such as leveraging university endowments or creating grant programs to support entrepreneurs in Eastern Washington.

			
Mark Gustafson **Avista Development**	Kathleen Hebert **E8 Angels**	Matt Bisgyer **Montauk Ventures**	Eli Lieberman **WA State Green Bank**

Clean Energy Funding Challenges

The panel discussed the impact of fluctuating federal funding on clean energy projects, noting that while some areas like hydrogen face challenges, others like solar and wind have viable pathways forward. They highlighted the importance of local deployment and innovation driven by market constraints, with opportunities for state-level initiatives to fill gaps left by federal funding. The discussion also covered the need to optimize energy systems considering affordability, reliability, and availability, with a focus on leveraging software and new point sources of generation to enhance grid resilience and efficiency.

The panel agreed that while various capital sources are available, the limiting factor remains the pipeline of high-quality, investable entrepreneurs and demonstration-ready projects.

ACTION PLANNING

The Day #2 session focused on identifying actionable items that INTENT can explore over the next 18 months in anticipation of confirming the core mission, key customers, and revenue model.

Ultimately, the group identified two key avenues for INTENT to explore. If proven viable, one could be launched in the near future and one would need a longer runway. These two options are outlined below.

Option #1 – Regional Coordination Hub

It is recommended that INTENT explore a focus on becoming the organization that coordinates resources related to energy technology commercialization for the region, representing innovator and company needs at the policy level, and providing service delivery to regional innovators. The service delivery model would include a fee for service structure with the following potential services rendered, in addition to others to be determined at a later date:

- Hosting pitch events across the region where ideas can be shared and potentially find appropriate partners and where new technologies in the prototype stage can find pilot partners and early adopters
- Research for customer discovery and validation of market
- Connecting innovators with partners for proof of concept, prototyping, minimum viable product (MVP), and design for manufacturing (DFM)
- Determining the path from pilot to scale
- Identifying new channel partners (at the pilot level and those that can become early adopters)
- Educating and consulting on regulatory pathways
- Providing grant funding support resources for identification of grant opportunities and grant writing assistance
- Launching a matching grant fund for companies receiving state and federal grants

A key responsibility is acting as the source for clearing obstacles of any variety for the successful commercialization of energy technologies within the region. Exploration of these many obstacles will help INTENT further refine service offerings which can also inform the most appropriate organizations to recruit at the sponsor or member levels.

This option could provide a diverse revenue model for the organization to include:

- Membership and/or Sponsorship for organizations wanting to connect to innovators
- Fee for Services for innovator companies
- Grant funding (State, Federal)

Option #2 – Data-Driven Approach

In addition to directly supporting regional energy innovators, INTENT could pursue a data-driven approach by collecting, analyzing, and educating through data initially sourced from peer-to-peer sources and eventually through utility partnerships promoting a unified API for distributed resource management. Managing this data platform approach and applying it towards education of various activities' implications on usage/demand will enable better load management, highlight key innovations needed, and could provide another source of revenue for the organization. Activities could include:

- Identifying data standards for resource management and APIs for entrepreneurs
- Mapping energy resources and identifying gaps for our communities
- Maintaining a database of the existing resource partnerships and points of integration of the system
- Functioning as a hub for energy entrepreneurs
- Clearing the obstacles for technology commercialization and deployment
- Convening partners to work together to close the energy shortage through a combination of resource management and innovations

Another critical component for the success of the organization is prioritizing the development of relationships with tribal entities and representatives from the rural communities across the service territory. These representatives could be farmers, agricultural workers, hispanic populations, youth, etc. There is a wealth of talent within our rural and tribal communities which aren't generally accessed or included in these types of initiatives which can be metro-centric at times.

Option #3 - Regulatory Reform Catalyst

INTENT could convene a regional coalition of stakeholders from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana to address the urgent permitting challenges for new transmission and generation. By streamlining inter-jurisdictional policies, INTENT could position the region as a national model for rapid deployment of grid infrastructure, creating a first-mover advantage in resilience and reliability reform.

This initiative directly benefits energy industry partners by accelerating timelines and reducing uncertainty for capital-intensive infrastructure projects. Utilities, developers, and technology providers will be able to move more efficiently from planning to execution—saving time, lowering soft costs, and improving return on investment. A regional permitting framework could enable shared resources, coordinated siting, and reduced legal and administrative barriers that often delay or derail clean energy and transmission projects.

For market partners and investors, this approach de-risks project pipelines and enhances the investability of clean energy portfolios in the Inland Northwest. A proactive regulatory alignment across state lines signals a stable and forward-looking regional market, attracting private capital, federal co-investment, and high-growth startups. Ultimately, this could unlock the development of high-impact projects like multi-state transmission lines, clean firm energy assets, and next-generation microgrids that serve both rural and urban communities.

Priorities:

- Initiate a tri-state regulatory convening (WA-ID-OR, with MT engagement) focused on fast-tracking transmission and generation permitting reforms.
- Identify and map permitting overlaps, conflicts, and bottlenecks across jurisdictions.
- Propose a harmonized regulatory pathway or “model compact” for regional energy infrastructure projects.
- Develop a policy working group inclusive of utilities, regulators, tribes, and economic development authorities.
- Launch a demonstration permitting pilot with a high-impact clean energy or transmission project as a national proof point.

The following is additional context from the day's discussions.

Introductions and Reflections

The meeting focused on reflecting on the previous day's sessions and discussing the future direction of INTENT. April Needham encouraged participants to share their key takeaways from the previous day's general and track sessions and thoughts on future purpose and plans for INTENT, emphasizing transparency and authenticity. In addition to exploring revenue models and membership, the group planned to generate actionable items for INTENT's leadership to consider over the next 18 months.

To foster connection among participants, Bill Kalivas suggested introducing themselves and their organizations. Participants in this track were from various professional backgrounds, including economic development, engineering, energy, and investment sectors. Ryan was recognized for his contributions to the regional entrepreneur ecosystem, while Andy discussed containerized hydrogen and carbon capture projects. Jeff shared insights into Pyro Phase's work in bio crude and renewable energy, and Hollyanna highlighted her experience in tribal transportation planning and power development. The discussion touched on historical telecommunications infrastructure in Spokane and the importance of tribal rights and treaties.

Energy Innovation and Collaboration Strategies

Mason Burley, CEO of Urbanova, discussed the organization's mission to support and advance regional energy innovation through collaboration, technical expertise, and policy advocacy. He emphasized the need to identify a niche for the new organization (Urbanova once merged with INTENT) in the entrepreneurship space and explore revenue models to fund its operations. Rod Price, founder of Ascend Energy and Infrastructure, highlighted the importance of collaboration among companies, tribes, and communities in addressing shared energy challenges. Participants discussed the potential role of INTENT in facilitating communication and collaboration across various stakeholders, with a focus on engaging universities and tribal communities.

Tribal and Rural Energy Collaboration

The discussion focused on the importance of engaging tribal nations and rural communities in energy projects, highlighting successful examples of youth innovation. There was an acknowledged need for establishing early and meaningful collaboration, rather than approaching the Tribes only when there was a pending agenda. Hollyanna emphasized the necessity of understanding tribal sovereignty, culture, and history, as well as the economic potential of tribal resources, while also addressing trust issues

that arise from past exploitation. Participants agreed that building genuine relationships with tribes and including diverse voices, such as farmers and rural stakeholders, in decision-making processes is crucial for successful projects. The conversation underscored the need for better representation of tribal and rural interests in organizations and highlighted the value of engaging these communities early in project planning.

Restoring Rail and Energy Systems

The group discussed the need for rail service restoration between Chicago and Seattle along the old Hiawatha route, which would require significant investment but could help reduce freight truck traffic. They explored opportunities for light rail development between Tri-Cities and Seattle, drawing inspiration from successful transit systems in other cities. The discussion highlighted the importance of bringing together various stakeholders, including technology providers and innovators, to address energy infrastructure challenges and create economic development opportunities. The conversation also touched on the growing demand for data center power consumption and the need for advanced metering infrastructure to better manage energy distribution and usage.

Inland Northwest Innovation Strategy Meeting

The group discussed the need to position the inland Northwest as a magnet for innovation, particularly in addressing the region's 25,000 Megawatt energy gap over the next decade. They emphasized the importance of framing the problem attractively for innovators and leveraging the region's resources, including talent, land, and quality of life, to support various sectors like energy, life sciences, cybersecurity, AI, and advanced manufacturing. The discussion highlighted the opportunity to transition utilities into information companies by gathering, sharing, and utilizing real-time data, with Itron's meters being a potential tool for this transformation. There was a concern about ensuring that INTENT does not become just another temporary initiative, and the group agreed on the need to define a clear value proposition and data strategy to communicate effectively to stakeholders.

Regional Innovation Ecosystem Development

The group discussed regional innovation challenges, and highlighted efforts to map the local innovation ecosystem through a collaboration with Gonzaga University's New Venture Lab. They noted that while there are multiple software development organizations in the region, there's a lack of coordination and awareness about

existing resources, with Bill Kalivas emphasizing the need to tell the region's success stories and build a stronger innovation ecosystem similar to other tech hubs. The discussion also covered the importance of scaling pilot projects beyond initial funding, with Mason explaining that INTENT was formed to develop regional economic opportunities through grid modernization and energy innovation, having secured an initial $1 million NSF grant with Urbanova as a partner.

Collaboration and Revenue Model Exploration

The group discussed collaboration opportunities and revenue models, focusing on data sharing and identifying new channel partners. They explored the potential for creating a platform to connect companies with pilot technologies to potential customers, similar to a pitch event. The conversation also touched on the importance of understanding stakeholder needs and avoiding past mistakes in similar initiatives. Finally, they noted the need to include Spokane County representatives in future discussions due to their work on the County’s comprehensive plan on renewable energy zoning and siting.

INTENT's Energy Ecosystem Strategy

The group discussed INTENT's role in managing electrons and data across the energy ecosystem, with a focus on helping regional innovators and startups scale their technologies. They explored how INTENT could serve as a convener of cross-sector collaboration, providing data governance, technical tools, and expertise while avoiding becoming a project-focused organization. The discussion highlighted the need to better understand customers and define a clear value proposition, with particular attention to grid modernization and household autonomy in energy management.

Regional Clean Energy Innovation Platform

The group discussed the challenges and opportunities for creating a regional platform for innovators and entrepreneurs focused on grid modernization and clean energy technologies. They explored the potential for INTENT to serve as a catalyst for economic development, emphasizing the importance of data sharing and collaboration. The conversation touched on the possibility of developing an API to facilitate data exchange between utilities and innovators, drawing inspiration from successful examples like the SunSpec Alliance. The group also acknowledged the need to reposition INTENT to align with current regional needs and secure buy-in from key decision-makers.

PHOTOS

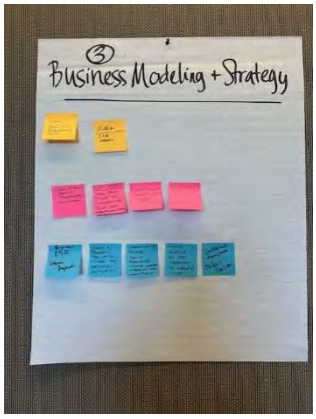
Eric Finch (INTENT) & Curt Kirkeby (INTENT/OES)

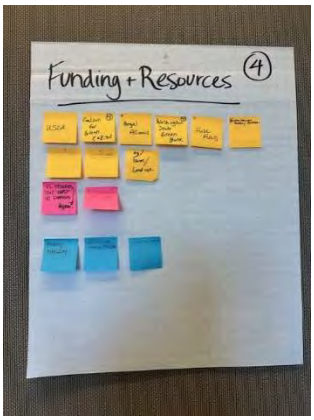
Eric Finch (INTENT) & (Montauk Ventures)

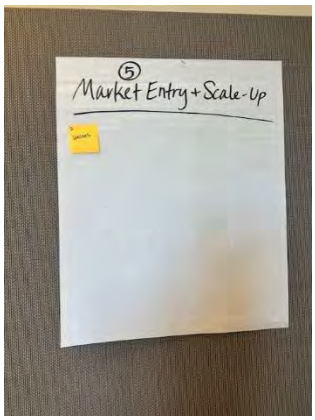
Eric Finch (INTENT) & Stacia Rasmussen (GSI)

Mason Burley (Urbanova)

Innovation Exercise (Commercialization Continuum Stages 1-5)







Energy Workforce and STEM Development Track

July 8-9, 2025, Summit Outcomes

SUMMARY:

Prioritized Positives –

1. Collaboration: industry, K-12, and higher education; would still like to do more
2. Resources in our region: industry, universities, and community colleges
3. NEWTech as a model for simulated learning and outcomes and successes

Prioritized Potential Growth –

1. Changing the stigma around the trades; just as valuable as college
2. Reduction/removal of the partnership communication barrier between schools and industry, and industry and schools
3. Regional and collective program solutions; too big and too costly to do alone

Prioritized Challenges –

1. More training for school / career counselors, and more counselors in general
2. Identification of what are the future clean energy technology jobs
3. Better engagement at younger ages with parent coordination

Actionable Roadmap –
(Stacia's proposal, not output from the track…input by Kevin and Mark appreciated!)

- Establish an Energy Workforce & STEM Innovation Team
- Secure an industry volunteer to lead/chair the team
- Secure a Cluster Board Champion to guide and support the team
- Team participants would initially be comprised of the track participants as volunteers
- The team would create an Innovation Team Charter with a scope, goals, and objectives
- Regularly occurring meetings would be held to develop plan(s), and implement the plan(s) in support of the Charter

ADDITIONAL DATA POINTS:

- Available energy workforce resources – National cewd.org, Pacific Northwest cleanenergyexcellence.org, Lakewood WA example https://www.cloverpark.k12.wa.us/
- A Commissioning Engineer role in the built environment is needed, and it is hard to fill
- Relay Technician role is needed and serves as an installer and in a support capacity
- The supply of 'book smart' energy workforce is sufficient; those with hands on experience is not sufficient
- Best candidates seem to be 2nd career individuals
- Summer STEM academies/camps that incorporate hands on activities are showing success (SCC, Inland Power, EV, etc.)
- Lack of awareness of organizations and their energy jobs is a common theme, and needs to be addressed at all grade levels, but mostly at the middle school level ('Touch-A-Truck" has been successful for Public Works)
- Current trades training is lacking technology instruction
- Sharing of expensive equipment / tools should be explored across educators (i.e. simulators)
- Pre-apprenticeship programs are generating good candidates, but lack the availability of internships to move into
- Short-term training programs / certificates get workers into the jobs in demand fastest
- Up-skilling existing workers to provide new skills into clean energy jobs is a suggested approach
- EV will be providing calendars with the dates that topics are covered to give industry visibility to what timeframes they should visit the classrooms
- There is a great opportunity to reestablish the SCC pre-apprenticeship program contracted to Avista; 16-weeks, paid 40 hours per week job, 80% placement rate, 100 students per year through the program, and ran for 29 years
- Each program that involves school districts, require a different engagement approach for each school district; a standardized process would provide efficiency and speed for new program development

Meeting Summary for Main Meeting and Track 1 | DAY 1 July 8th and DAY 2 July 9th

Energy Transformation Problem Solving

The group discusses a list of problems related to energy transformation and plans to develop solutions. They clarify and refine the problem statements, merging some related items. The participants agree to work in pairs to address two problems each, aiming to generate about 15 solutions. These solutions will then be prioritized and narrowed down to a top seven. For each selected solution, the group plans to define specific actions to be taken in the next 6 and 18 months. Some participants suggest focusing on topic types when assigning problems to groups.

Energy Systems Problem-Solving Workshop

The group discusses and refines a list of problems and potential solutions related to energy systems. They focus on issues such as increased vulnerability to reliability due to renewables and new devices, equitable distribution of benefits and burdens, lack of adequate market structures, and processes for supporting demonstration projects. The participants then begin to assign teams to work on specific problems, with each pair taking on three issues. They emphasize the need for actionable solutions and concrete steps that can be taken in the short term to work towards longer-term goals. The group also discusses the importance of having point persons for each action item to drive progress and ensure follow-through.

Community Engagement and Project Strategies

The group discusses various strategies for community engagement and project approval, including communication plans, resiliency design, and pre-approved frameworks. They emphasize the importance of understanding community needs, addressing risks, and ensuring efficient use of resources. The conversation then shifts to personal experiences in Norway, touching on topics such as electric vehicles, renewable energy, and tourism.

Resilient Energy Systems Planning Framework

The group discusses developing specifications and models for resilient energy systems in communities. They plan to engage communities, legislators, and stakeholders to create a template for resilient design. They aim to establish frameworks to prioritize regional projects and identify communities for energy ecosystem discussions. The group also plans to develop regional power system models that include distributed energy resources (DERs), focusing on smaller areas like a few substations. They intend to create metrics for cost-benefit analysis of resilience benefits and explore business models for distribution markets. The discussion emphasizes the need for models that can capture interactions between neighboring DERs in real-time, addressing current issues with grid stability analysis.

Community Resiliency Framework Development

The group discussed developing a specification/template for community resiliency and distribution system improvements, with a focus on creating a framework that communities can customize. They agreed to break the work into tracks including community engagement, technical specifications, and implementation planning, with the goal of creating a roadmap in the next week.

The team emphasized the need for continued stakeholder engagement and utility involvement, while discussing potential funding approaches including government funding through Commerce and private sector investment. They concluded that the organization could potentially evolve to offer consulting services to help facilitate these programs, though this would require active participation from members.

Energy Sector Workforce Development Priorities

The group conducted a rose, bud, thorn exercise to identify priorities for workforce and staff development in the energy sector. The top positive aspects (roses) were collaboration between industry, K-12, and higher education; abundant regional resources; and the New Tech skill center as a model for simulated learning. Key areas for improvement (buds) included changing the stigma around trades, better school-industry partnerships, and developing regional collective solutions. Major challenges (thorns) were the need for more career counselor training, preparing for future clean energy jobs, and engaging younger students and parents. The discussion highlighted the complexities of apprenticeship programs and the need to make traditional engineering fields more appealing to students.

Energy Ecosystem Innovation Hub

The group discussed the innovation, incubation, and investment track of their project. They identified the need for a central clearinghouse organization that would be the go-to resource for entrepreneurs, partners, and anyone working in the energy ecosystem. This organization could potentially serve as a data exchange platform to facilitate collaboration and information sharing. The group emphasized the importance of developing a unique value proposition for Intent and using it to attract investment and recruitment. They also discussed the challenge of retaining talented graduates in the region and the potential to engage more with graduate students and young innovators. The conversation highlighted the need for regional collaboration and a focus on developing innovative solutions to energy challenges.

Energy Cluster Initiative Next Steps

The meeting concludes with a recap and next steps for the energy cluster initiative. Mason Burley, CEO of Urbanova, thanks participants and outlines future plans, including developing a communication strategy, rebranding, and growing a membership base. He highlights the importance of partnerships and community involvement in this effort. The group discusses hosting future events at partner organizations to showcase their work and engage the community. Mason expresses gratitude to key contributors, particularly Washington State University for their support in organizing the event.

Meeting Summary for Track 2_Day 1 July 8th & Day 2 July 9th

Advancing STEM Workforce Strategies

The group reconvenes after a break to continue their discussion on workforce and STEM topics. The facilitator expresses satisfaction with the high attendance and emphasizes the importance of moving from strategic thinking to tactical action. They plan to conduct a human-centered design exercise to generate concrete ideas for progress. The facilitator also encourages participants to think without constraints during the upcoming exercise.

East Valley Career Education Initiatives

The discussion focuses on educational programs and initiatives in the East Valley School District aimed at exposing students to various career paths and hands-on learning experiences. Doug, the CTE director, describes several programs including large trades nights with over 1,000 participants and 75 vendors offering hands-on activities, and a summer Production Manufacturing Institute run in collaboration with Wagstaff. The district is also planning a STEM camp for next summer, focusing on exposing students to different companies and career pathways. Additionally, East Farms Elementary School has been implementing Project Lead The Way (PLTW) for 20 years, providing project-based learning experiences for K-6 students, with plans to expand this approach to other schools in the district.

Success Factors in Workforce Programs

Jeremy shares experiences from two successful programs Avista ran: a high school program and a pre-apprenticeship program. The high school program exposed students to utility work through paid internships, but faced challenges transitioning students directly into the workforce. The pre-apprenticeship program had high job placement rates but became unsustainable due to costs. Key success factors included mimicking a real work environment, using current industry instructors, and providing hands-on experience. Jeremy suggests that future programs could benefit from broader partnerships to share costs and support.

Student Career Pathways in Utilities

The group discusses various initiatives to attract and prepare students for careers in utilities and public works. Stephanie mentions a pre-apprenticeship program near a high school, while others share about STEM academies, public works camps, and touch-a-truck events. The conversation highlights the importance of exposing students to different career opportunities and developing their aptitude for specific roles. Kevin from the city discusses challenges in recruiting for public works positions and the need for specialized skills. The group also explores ideas like using simulators for training and organizing career-focused summer camps for students. Finally, there's a discussion about the evolving workforce needs in the clean energy sector, emphasizing the need for programs that blend electrical theory with power systems and high voltage components.

Human-Centered Design Exercise: Rose, Bud, Thorn

Kevin introduces a human-centered design exercise called "Rose, Bud, Thorn" to the group. Participants are divided into small teams and asked to categorize ideas into three areas: roses (things going well), buds (potential opportunities), and thorns (challenges or things to stop doing). The teams rotate through each category, brainstorming and writing down ideas. After the exercise, participants use green dots to vote on the most important ideas across all categories. The session concludes with a short break before further discussion.

Career Explore Northwest Website Launch

The group discusses the Career Explore Northwest website, a collaborative effort between GSI, Spokane Workforce Council, and KSPS, which provides career information and videos for students. Kevin encourages its use in K-12 education and by industry experts to promote various career paths. The website includes wage data, educational requirements, and over 150 career videos, though some gaps in coverage are noted. The discussion also touches on the need for earlier career education in schools, possibly starting in 9th grade, and the use of high school and beyond plans to tailor career programs to student interests.

Energy Workforce Development Initiatives

The group discusses various resources and initiatives related to energy workforce development. They mention the Get Into Energy website, which offers curriculum and job resources, and the creation of a new energy and natural resources career cluster. Kevin shares his experience with the Evergreen Biocluster, suggesting that a similar workforce innovation team could be beneficial for this group. The meeting concludes with participants agreeing to join a Monday board for further discussions and to share progress on action items. Some participants also briefly discuss their connections to Iowa and the Midwest.

Meeting Summary for Track 3 Day 1 July 8th & Day 2 July 9th

Launchpad's Regional Innovation Strategy

Bill Calivas, co-founder and executive director of Launchpad Inland Northwest Foundation, presented an overview of the organization's mission to foster innovation, connect talent, and grow the regional innovation economy. He explained Launchpad's history, its focus on supporting innovators, strengthening the talent pipeline, and developing ecosystems in tech and life sciences. Bill highlighted Launchpad's success metrics, emphasizing the importance of measuring long-term company survival and growth rather than just job creation. The session aimed to discuss steps for growing the network and attracting more talent and capital to the region, with plans to engage attendees in an interactive conversation to identify actionable items.

Clean Energy Innovation Ecosystem Building

The meeting focused on building a robust innovation ecosystem for clean energy technologies in the region, emphasizing partnerships with AI, cybersecurity, and other key sectors. April Needham outlined the importance of an innovation ecosystem, its components, and the commercialization process, while highlighting gaps such as limited funding and fragmented support. Participants were tasked with identifying new regional partners, mapping them, and suggesting actionable items to address gaps in the ecosystem over the next 18 months. The discussion also touched on the status of SBIR funding for energy innovations, with concerns about potential cuts and legislative efforts to protect or expand the program.

Clean Energy Ecosystem Partnership Strategies

The group discussed identifying partners and gaps in the clean energy ecosystem, focusing on resources like venture capital, data access, and funding models. They identified potential solutions such as creating a venture capital collective, improving regional permitting processes, and providing access to free compute resources and grant funding. The session concluded with a brief overview of next steps, including upcoming presentations and an investment panel.

Entrepreneurial Challenges and Success Strategies

Dave shared his entrepreneurial journey, highlighting the challenges of starting a business in Spokane due to limited resources, including capital and customers. He described his previous ventures, including a successful energy storage company in New York City, which led to a pilot project with a real estate company and eventual acquisition. Dave explained how he secured initial funding for Carbon Quest from a former business partner and described the process of assembling a team and developing the company's technology. He emphasized the importance of personal relationships and credibility in overcoming bureaucratic challenges and securing investments.

Carbon Quest and Startup Ecosystem

The meeting discussed the development and funding of Carbon Quest, a carbon capture company, and the establishment of an ecosystem for entrepreneurs in Eastern Washington, particularly in the Tri-Cities area. Paul Carlisle, representing WSU Tri-Cities and Fuse, outlined their efforts to build a supportive environment for startups through programs like Fuse Launch, the Fuse Fund, and State of

Motion. Stacy, who co-founded the Inland Tech Start Fund, shared insights on using the Lean Canvas and Lean Startup model to improve startup success rates. The discussion also touched on potential funding mechanisms, such as leveraging university endowments or creating grant programs to support entrepreneurs in Eastern Washington.

AI-Driven Business Strategy Launch

The meeting discussed a go-to-market strategy involving AI and a wraparound program for developing business strategies in one day. SAC highlighted the importance of matching entrepreneurs with advisors and mentors, and mentioned a database of over 3,000 individuals for networking and resource allocation. The discussion also covered a pitch session for evaluating investable companies and a collaboration with various venture capitalists. Additionally, the meeting introduced a panel of venture capitalists and green bank representatives, who shared their investment models and strategies, emphasizing non-dilutive funding and crowd-in investments.

Clean Energy Funding Challenges

The panel discussed the impact of fluctuating federal funding on clean energy projects, noting that while some areas like hydrogen face challenges, others like solar and wind have viable pathways forward. They highlighted the importance of local deployment and innovation driven by market constraints, with opportunities for state-level initiatives to fill gaps left by federal funding. The discussion also covered the need to optimize energy systems considering affordability, reliability, and availability, with a focus on leveraging software and new point sources of generation to enhance grid resilience and efficiency.

Intent's Strategic Reflection and Planning

The meeting focused on reflecting on the previous day's sessions and discussing Intents' future direction. SAC encouraged participants to share their key takeaways and thoughts on Intents' purpose, history, and future plans, emphasizing transparency and authenticity. The group planned to generate actionable items for Intents' leadership to consider over the next 18 months. To foster connection among participants, SAC suggested introducing themselves and their organizations.

Energy and Development Expert Insights

The meeting introduced several participants from various professional backgrounds, including economic development, engineering, and energy sectors. Ryan was recognized for his contributions to the regional entrepreneur ecosystem, while Andy discussed containerized hydrogen and carbon capture projects. Jeff shared insights into Paraphase's work in bio crude and renewable energy, and Hollyanna highlighted her experience in tribal transportation planning and power development. The discussion touched on historical telecommunications infrastructure in Spokane and the importance of tribal rights and treaties.

Energy Innovation and Collaboration Strategies

Mason Burley, CEO of Urbanova, discussed the organization's mission to support and advance regional energy innovation through collaboration, technical expertise, and policy advocacy. He emphasized the need to identify a niche for the new organization, Intent, in the entrepreneurship space and explore revenue models to fund its operations. Rod Price, founder of Ascend Energy and

Infrastructure, highlighted the importance of collaboration among companies, tribes, and communities in addressing shared energy challenges. Participants discussed the potential role of Urbanova/Intent in facilitating communication and collaboration across various stakeholders, with a focus on engaging universities and tribal communities.

Tribal and Rural Energy Collaboration

The discussion focused on the importance of engaging tribal nations and rural communities in energy projects, highlighting successful examples of youth innovation and the need for early and meaningful collaboration. Sally emphasized the necessity of understanding tribal sovereignty, culture, and history, as well as the economic potential of tribal resources, while also addressing trust issues that arise from past exploitation. Participants agreed that building genuine relationships with tribes and including diverse voices, such as farmers and rural stakeholders, in decision-making processes is crucial for successful projects. The conversation underscored the need for better representation of tribal and rural interests in organizations and highlighted the value of engaging these communities early in project planning.

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Regional Innovation Ecosystem Development

The group discussed regional innovation challenges, particularly around data and water issues, and highlighted efforts to map the local innovation ecosystem through a collaboration with Gonzaga University's New Venture Lab. They noted that while there are multiple software development organizations in the region, there's a lack of coordination and awareness about existing resources, with SAC emphasizing the need to tell the region's success stories and build a stronger innovation

ecosystem similar to other tech hubs. The discussion also covered the importance of scaling pilot projects beyond initial funding, with Mason explaining that INTENT was formed to develop regional economic opportunities through grid modernization and energy innovation, having secured an initial $1 million grant with Urban Nova as a partner.

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Regional Clean Energy Innovation Platform

The group discussed the challenges and opportunities for creating a regional platform for innovators and entrepreneurs focused on grid modernization and clean energy technologies. They explored the potential for Urbanova and Intent to merge and serve as a catalyst for economic development, emphasizing the importance of data sharing and collaboration. The conversation touched on the possibility of developing an API to facilitate data exchange between utilities and innovators, drawing inspiration from successful examples like the SunSpec Alliance. The group also acknowledged the need to reposition Urbanova and Intent to align with current regional needs and secure buy-in from key decision-makers.