



What is SWISS?

We are a regional partnership of elected councilmembers, commissioners, and executives from Snohomish County, Whatcom County, Island County, Skagit County, and San Juan County. Our mission is to identify and collaboratively advance shared regional priorities that will improve the quality of life in our region's communities.

OUR PRIORITIES

Regional Awareness And Collaboration



To achieve enduring and meaningful outcomes for our counties, it is critical for SWISS counties to share information and knowledge, engage with regional partners, and collaboratively pursue opportunities that address our shared priorities.

Behavioral Healthcare

The Problem

SWISS county residents do not have consistent and easily accessible quality behavioral healthcare services that achieve lasting outcomes, particularly for crisis stabilization, substance use disorder support, long-term care, and youth-focused care. We aim to address the challenges that are creating this issue:

- Insufficient funding to build, operate, and maintain care facilities.
- Limited qualified treatment professionals due to funding and complications with insurance and Medicaid.
- Inability to quickly identify an individual's behavioral health needs in a crisis situation.
- Lack of long-term, ongoing care, housing, or supervised living for patients who are transitioning out of care or with ongoing needs.

The Goal

SWISS communities have access to an accountable regional behavioral health care system that creates a humane and meaningful continuum of care from a patient's initial moment of need to a long-term, safe solution. This can be accomplished through:

- Stable, equitable funding.
- Systems that support timely access and sharing of a patient's behavioral healthcare history.
- Bed capacity that enables timely care without occupying much-needed space in other facilities, such as jails.
- Ongoing engagement and support between SWISS counties and partnering behavioral health organizations.



Broadband

The Problem

Large portions of our region, especially rural and small communities, lack reasonable access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband services. This essential utility would provide an equitable pathway to quality education, physical and behavioral health care, employment opportunities, economic growth, agricultural productivity, social connections, and other vital services which protect, inform, and empower residents in these communities. We aim to address the challenges that are creating this issue:

- Inequitable investments made in rural and small communities.
- Middle-mile and final-mile investments left to communities.
- Fragmented approach to deployment.
- Broadband availability assessment maps inaccurately portray the needs of small and rural communities.
- Policies preventing infrastructure development.

The Goal

SWISS Counties have equitable, affordable access to quality, reliable, high-speed broadband internet, especially in underserved and unserved areas. This can be accomplished through:

- Small and rural community investment incentives.
- Coordinated broadband planning efforts.
- Local authority that meets the needs of the region.



Multimodal transportation

The Problem

SWISS counties lack multimodal transportation options that are reliable, affordable, resilient, and environmentally sound. The lack of options impacts people's ability to work and commute, seek healthcare, engage in tourism and recreation, access healthy foods, engage in the regional economy, transport goods and supplies, and do so in an environmentally sustainable manner. We aim to address the challenges that are creating this issue:

- Ferry maintenance costs, vulnerability, and policies limiting variety.
- Inconsistent and unreliable funding.
- Lack of alternative fuel options.
- Susceptible to floods, earthquakes, and other disasters or transportation interruptions.

The Goal

Residents in our region have access to suitable, dependable, and timely transportation and mobility options which enable them to access work, recreation, healthcare, and other critical services. This can be accomplished through:

- Advocating for new, reliable funding with a unified voice.
- A more diverse and durable ferry fleet.
- Robust public transportation and interconnection system.

