



SYNC Partner Agency funded projects (Left to right, top to bottom)

Quincy Water Reuse Facility, Eatonville Water Treatment, King County Georgetown Wet Weather Treatment Station, Richland Horn Rapids Landfill, Seattle Fairview Ave Bridge, Grant County PUD Gloyd to Stratford Broadband, Camas SR500 and Lake Rd Intersection



**WASHINGTON'S INFRASTRUCTURE
SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT TEAM**

September 2022

Report to Legislature

Kathryn A. Gardow PE, Public Works Board Chair

2022 SYNC Legislative Report

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What is SYNC?

What is SYNC?

SYNC is Washington's Infrastructure System Improvement team. It formed to meet the objectives of [RCW 43.155.150](#). The Legislature continues to support SYNC and extended this multi-agency partnership in 2021 ([SB 5403 \(2021\)](#)). SYNC is a collaborative partnership among the Public Works Board (PWB), the departments of Commerce, Ecology, Health, and Transportation, and the Transportation Improvement Board. In 2021, SYNC expanded to include broadband infrastructure, partnering with the Washington State Broadband Office, the Public Works Board Broadband Program and Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to explore broadband coordination opportunities. SYNC partners share strategy to engage communities and transform the delivery of state financial and technical assistance for infrastructure improvements that promote recovery, resiliency and energy efficiency for a more equitable and sustainable Washington.



Report Objectives

This report meets the objectives of [RCW 43.155.150\(6\)](#) which requires the system improvement team to develop a report on member's efforts in the 2021-2023 biennium. These include:

- A list of projects funded by members of the system improvement team.
- A description of the coordination the system improvement has completed with other grant programs and funds leveraged.
- A description of regional planning that has occurred.

SYNC Objectives

Beginning in 2021, SYNC expanded its objectives and updated the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) with partner agencies to incorporate equity, environmental justice and climate change resilience to create a stronger foundation for coordinated infrastructure investment. The following list highlights enhancements to SYNC's objectives (**bold text reflects added language**):

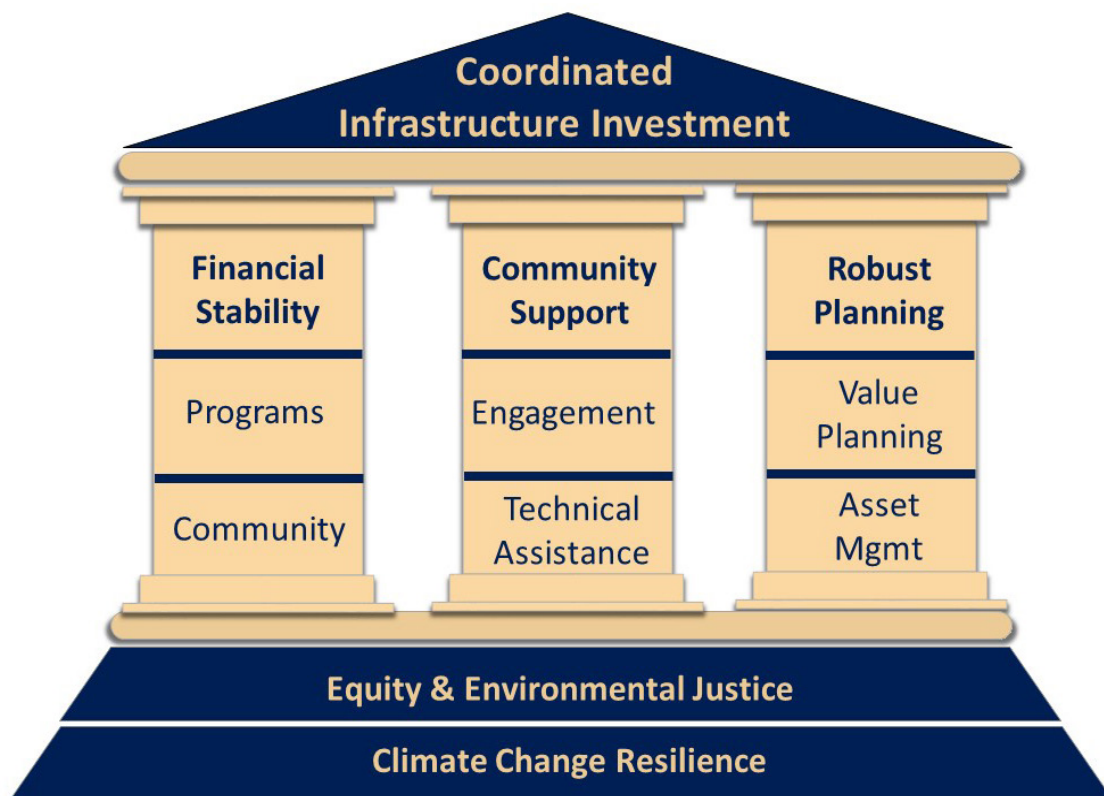
- Promote the development of projects that maximize value, minimize overall costs and disturbance to the community, and ensure long-term durability and resilience.
- Promote investment in public health and safety, environmental protection, resiliency and restoration.**
- Ensure projects are designed to meet the unique needs of each community, including addressing and **when possible rectifying historical environmental impacts**, rather than the needs of particular funding programs.
- Ensure project designs that maximize long-term value **and climate resilience** by fully considering and responding to anticipated long-term environmental, technological, economic, **social, demographic** and population changes.

What is SYNC?

- e. Provide the flexibility to innovate, including utilizing natural systems, addressing multiple regulatory drivers, and forming regional partnerships.
- f. Collaborate across programs and jurisdictions so that different investments are packaged to be complementary, timely, and responsive to community needs.
- g. Build local capacity for communities, to meet their unique financial, planning, and managerial needs, so they can design, finance, and build projects that meet their long-term goals **including addressing historical environmental justice impacts and projected climate impacts**.
- h. Provide optimal use and leveraging of federal and private infrastructure dollars.
- i. Ensure periodic, system-wide review and ongoing achievement of the designated outcomes **including systems-level review and sharing of environmental justice concerns and strategies**.

These foundational concepts support:

- Financial stability of programs and communities.
- Community engagement and technical assistance.
- Proven planning strategies such as value planning, asset management and regionalization.



SYNC Agency Projects

Table 1: Summary of Projects Funded in Fiscal Year 2022

Sync partner agencies funded over \$1.011 billion across 560 different projects between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

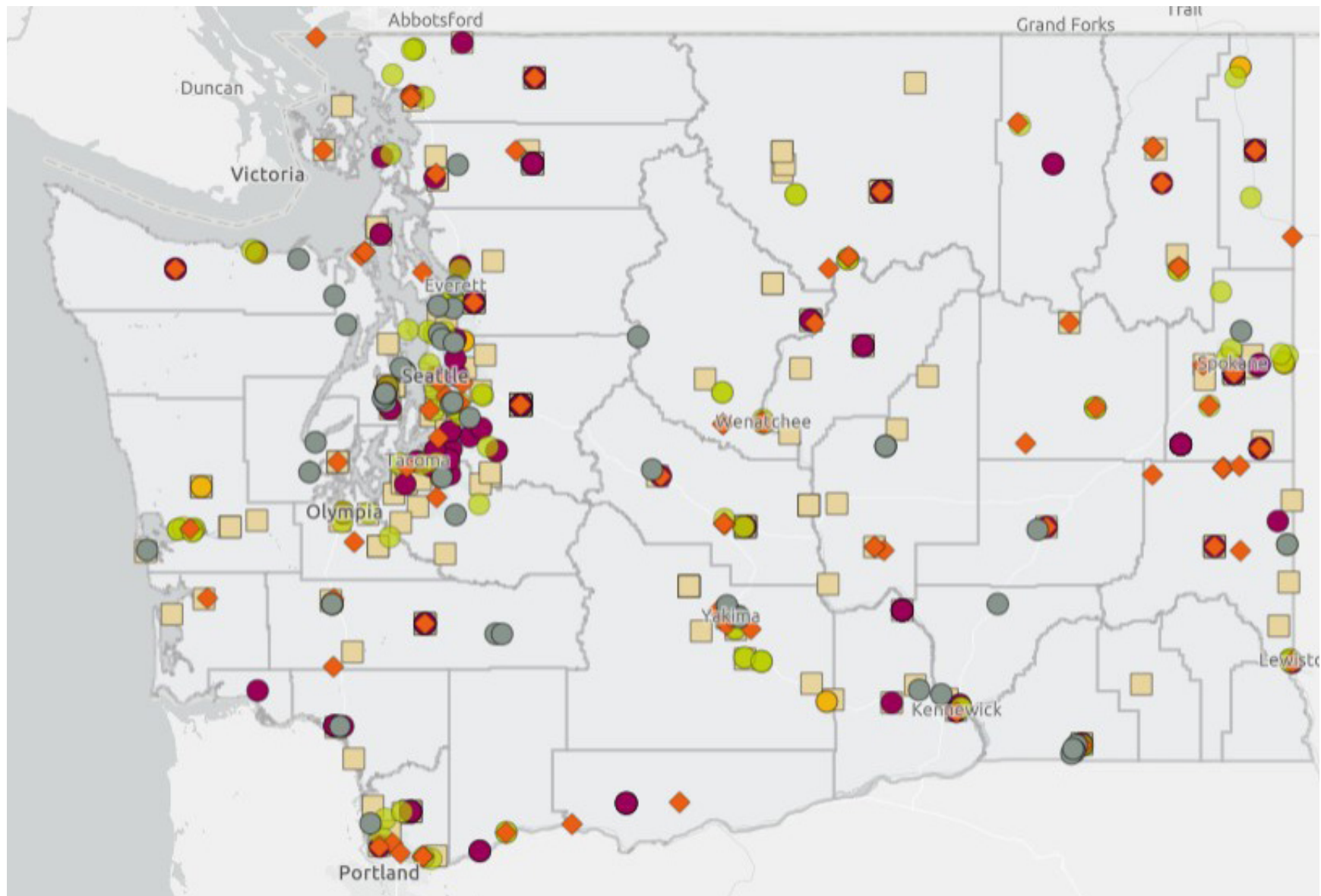
SYNC Agency	Total Cost	Contracts
Public Works Board	\$ 127,742,133	47
Public Works Board Traditional	\$ 125,012,659	43
Public Works Board Broadband	\$ 2,729,474	4
Department of Commerce	\$ 222,120,460	95
State Community Development Block Grants	\$ 12,989,385	39
Infrastructure Assistance Projects	\$ 20,200,310	16
Local Community Projects	\$ 4,257,020	6
Connecting Housing to Infrastructure	\$ 4,891,605	12
Washington State Broadband Office	\$ 179,782,140	22
Department of Ecology	\$ 288,833,271	85
Centennial Grant	\$ 7,850,757	5
Clean Water State Revolving Fund Forgivable Principal Loan	\$ 2,938,063	13
Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan	\$ 245,210,680	30
Stormwater Financial Assistance Program (SFAP)	\$ 32,833,771	37
Department of Health – Drinking Water	\$ 103,794,841	33
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)	\$ 103,794,841	33
Department of Transportation Local Programs	\$ 155,837,800	121
City Safety	\$ 32,900,500	40
County Safety	\$ 37,374,000	48
Bridges	\$ 85,563,300	33
Transportation Improvement Board	\$ 113,132,878	179
Arterial Preservation Program (APP)	\$ 6,094,966	16
City Sidewalk Program (CSP)	\$ 14,670,000	41
Small City Arterial Program (SCAP)	\$ 15,169,895	24
Small City Preservation Program (SCPP)	\$ 4,575,903	36
Urban Sidewalk Program (SP)	\$ 8,014,937	32
Urban Arterial Program (UAP)	\$ 64,607,177	30
Total	\$ 1,011,461,383	560

SYNC partner agencies seek to better understand which communities receive infrastructure funding relative to socioeconomic disparities. Mapping projects enables SYNC partners to visually understand whether selected projects are reaching underserved communities. The map (page 7) and online [SYNC team dashboard](#) shows SYNC partner agency projects funded in the last fiscal year (FY2022) relative to populations living in poverty.¹

¹ Washington Tracking Network, Washington State Department of Health. Web. "Poverty - Households Living Below 185% Poverty Level". Data obtained from US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2021. Published on WTN: 14 Sept 2021

SYNC Partner Projects Funded in FY22

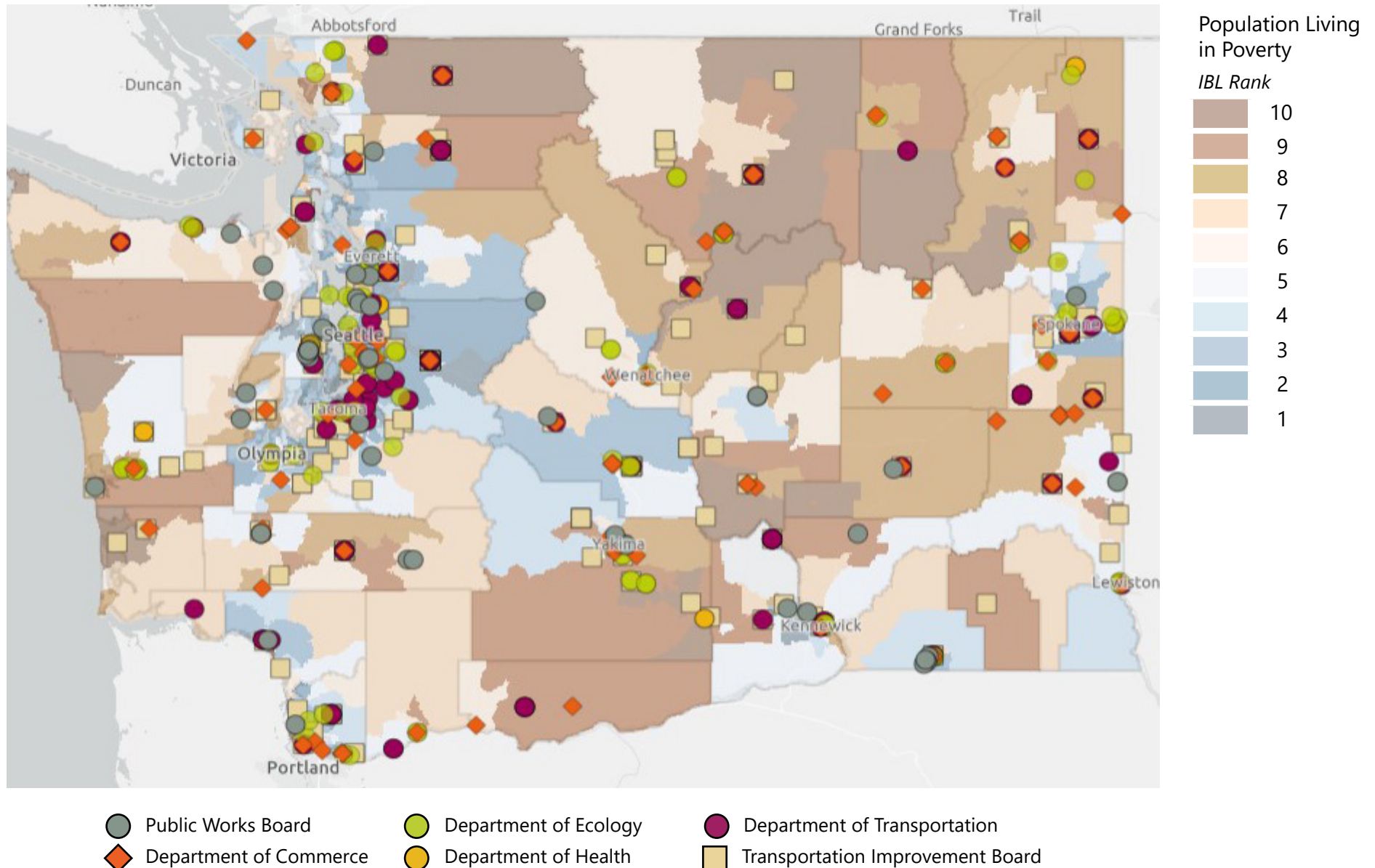
SYNC partner agency investments in fiscal year 2022 include 560 projects totaling over \$1.011 billion in public investment. View interactive [SYNC team project dashboard](#) online.



- Public Works Board
- Department of Ecology
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Health
- Transportation Improvement Board

SYNC Partner Projects Funded in FY22 Against Populations in Poverty

Information By Location (IBL) ranking from the Washington Tracking Network shows populations living in poverty (equal to or below 185% of the Federal poverty level). This data uses poverty status in the past 12 months from the American Community Survey. Interactive [SYNC Team project dashboard](#) displays the number of SYNC projects per population living in poverty Index.



How SYNC Coordinates

Timing of Funding Cycles

Grant and loan application cycle timing is discussed at monthly SYNC meetings to ensure the timing of each cycle is intentional and does not affect other cycles. SYNC agency grant cycles are customer driven and sensitive to our local partners' capacity to apply for multiple grants or loans at any given time. Each agency shares funded project lists to identify any cross-over between programs. Finally, partners share projects that were unfunded but met threshold application criteria. This informs the infrastructure pipeline for ready-to-go projects that remain unfunded due to lack of funds.

Table 2: Funding Cycle Timing for SYNC Partner Agencies													
	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22
Public Works Board Traditional													
Public Works Board Broadband													
Washington State Broadband Office													
State Community Development Block Grant Program													
Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program													
Transportation Improvement Board													
Clean Water State Revolving Fund													
Drinking Water State Revolving Fund													
Washington State Department of Transportation													
Community Economic Revitalization Board													
United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development													

Dig-Once Initiatives

A road repair or a right-of-way opening for utility installation or maintenance creates an opportunity to inspect, repair, replace or install other infrastructure at the same time. Benefits of coordination include cost savings, efficient use of resources, reduced impact on adjacent residents and businesses, and less impact on natural resources. Dig-once is an opportunity for proactive development and management of critical infrastructure systems. SYNC partners are actively creating more opportunities and incentives to a dig-once approach.

Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) requires that applicants provide the age of adjacent/ underlying infrastructure in a project area as part of the funding application process. This approach flags projects with aging infrastructure and initiates informal coordination with other SYNC

How SYNC Coordinates

infrastructure funders that facilitates concurrent infrastructure improvements prior to final paving. To support these opportunities, the [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund](#) reserved a portion of funding for drinking water main replacement projects that coincide with another infrastructure project, such as a transportation improvement project, sewer main replacement, or fish passage project.

The PWB is developing a program model that sets a specific source of funds aside for projects that install a broadband conduit concurrently with other PWB funded infrastructure improvements. The intent of this approach is coordinating traditional and broadband construction more purposefully. A PWB work group is exploring PWB policies and programming, including scoring criteria, to facilitate this approach. Work group recommendations to the full board are expected by the end of calendar year 2022.

The Department of Commerce, in partnership with the Lewis County Economic Development Alliance, is developing a Dig-Once Pilot Program Report. The report on the implementation of a statewide dig-once policy is due Dec. 1, 2022. SYNC partners have indicated a willingness to consider incorporating recommendations into respective agency work.

Broadband Infrastructure Funders at the SYNC Table

Broadband infrastructure is an essential infrastructure system. The [PWB broadband program](#), the [State Broadband Office \(SBO\)](#) and [Community Economic Revitalization Board \(CERB\)](#) represent broadband programs at SYNC. The SBO leads for describing the collaborative efforts and strategic direction for broadband investment in its report, due to the Legislature in December 2022. Ongoing coordination between the broadband infrastructure funders includes bi-weekly meetings, a [shared web-based dashboard](#), and consistent messaging with potential applicants. [Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#) funding for broadband requires a comprehensive five-year

plan that includes outreach and engagement with communities. The SBO, in coordination with PWB and CERB, leads this effort. With broadband representation at SYNC there is an opportunity to collaborate and share lessons learned with SYNC partners.

Emergency Recovery Efforts

As wildfires, storm events and other emergencies impact communities' infrastructure, the SYNC partnership maintains a commitment to coordinate and collaborate recovery efforts. Collaboration involves coordinating around fund sources to satisfy federal eligibility requirements, participation in roundtable workshops and funding of emergency recovery efforts.

Federal funding for [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) COVID-19 state fiscal recovery funds](#) required significant coordination with the departments of Health and Ecology due to federal project eligibility requirements. SYNC partner relationships assisted in making sure COVID-19 funding was able to be put to use in communities in need.

Beyond COVID-19, natural disasters also affect communities in Washington. SYNC partners consistently look for ways to improve interagency collaboration during emergency recovery efforts such as the November 2021 flood and landslide disaster affecting Whatcom, Clallam and Skagit counties and the Lummi, Nooksack and Quileute tribes. During monthly meetings, SYNC partners maintain awareness of recovery efforts occurring at roundtable workgroups organized by Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The PWB's emergency loan and grant program recently supported infrastructure investment to repair and protect critical drinking water infrastructure in response to damage caused by catastrophic wildfire in the towns of Malden and Nespelem. In Nespelem, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded a water system management plan

How SYNC Coordinates

in 2019. The asset management plan was key to the community's eligibility for PWB emergency funds in the wake of the 2021 wildfire disaster. Departments of Health and Ecology also have emergency loan programs. Bridgeport Wastewater Treatment Plant in the city of Bridgeport and Mattawa Wastewater Treatment Plant in the city of Mattawa are two examples of projects funded to repair and replace structures and equipment destroyed by fire. Planning dollars for asset management plans, capital facility plans and other planning activities promote coordination and resilience, and in some cases can lead to regionalization.

Regional Planning

Communities experiencing infrastructure challenges need regionally focused technical assistance. SYNC partner agencies regularly coordinate to collaboratively assist communities experiencing isolation issues. [Consolidation feasibility grants](#) are available through the Department of Health. These funds are important to build the pipeline of coordinated infrastructure investments across the state. SYNC partners are positioned to advance similar planning grants and make connections to funding opportunities.

Targeted Capacity Building for Small Communities

Small communities can receive targeted assistance to build technical, administrative or financial capacity to meet public health and environmental mandates. The departments of Health and Ecology often refer small rural cities and towns, counties, unincorporated communities or utility districts and water associations to the [Small Communities Initiative \(SCI\) program](#) for assistance in developing focused projects, making strategic investments, and identifying and accessing appropriate fund sources for drinking water and wastewater system upgrades. The SCI team regularly participates in SYNC meetings to share information about challenges communities are experiencing, and collects information to share with communities.

Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council Technical Assistance

Assistance to small communities is available through the [Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council \(IACC\) technical assistance portal](#). Communities can receive information about potential funding programs, technical assistance and guidance or participate in a technical team meeting with several funding agencies. From July 2021 to June 2022, 30 communities across the state received assistance from members of the IACC (Table 3).

Table 3: IACC Technical Assistance

Local governments receiving assistance from July 2021 to June 2022 by county

Information on Funding Programs				18
Benton	1	Okanogan		1
Columbia	1	Pierce		2
Garfield	1	San Juan		1
Grays Harbor	1	Skamania		1
Island	2	Snohomish		1
King	1	Spokane		2
Kittitas	1	Whatcom		1
Mason	1			
Technical Assistance and Guidance				5
Kittitas	2	Whatcom		1
Lincoln	1	Whitman		1
Tech Team Meeting				7
Benton	1	Jefferson		1
Clark	1	San Juan		1
Franklin	1	Whitman		1
Island	1			
Total				30

Federal Infrastructure Investment

Coordinated infrastructure investment is more important than ever with unprecedented federal investment in infrastructure expected over the next five years from Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The [Public Works Assistance Account \(PWAA\)](#) provides state match for the federal grants that go to the Drinking Water and Clean Water state revolving funds, which are administered by the departments of Health and Ecology. SYNC partners are working together to identify and address opportunities and challenges to accessing federal funding.

Key Considerations When Accessing Federal Funding

Project Readiness

For most of the IIJA funding, state agencies must develop project priority lists of eligible projects and activities in an Intended Use Plan within the next two years. Communities need to work with infrastructure agencies to ensure projects ready for construction have submitted applications for funding.

Build America Buy America (BABA) Act

BABA expands domestic preference purchasing requirements to include iron and steel products, manufactured goods, and construction materials such as glass, concrete, lumber, and plastics for Federal funding including state revolving funds, transportation and agriculture funding.

Subsidization for Disadvantaged Communities

State revolving fund programs must provide additional subsidization to eligible water systems that meet the disadvantaged/hardship community criteria defined by the state. The departments of Health and Ecology have well-established criteria for prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged/hardship communities, but are evaluating rules and criteria of “disadvantage/hardship community” definitions to address possible improvements. SYNC partners

collaborate monthly to make headway with these challenging decisions and ensure an informed and coordinated approach.

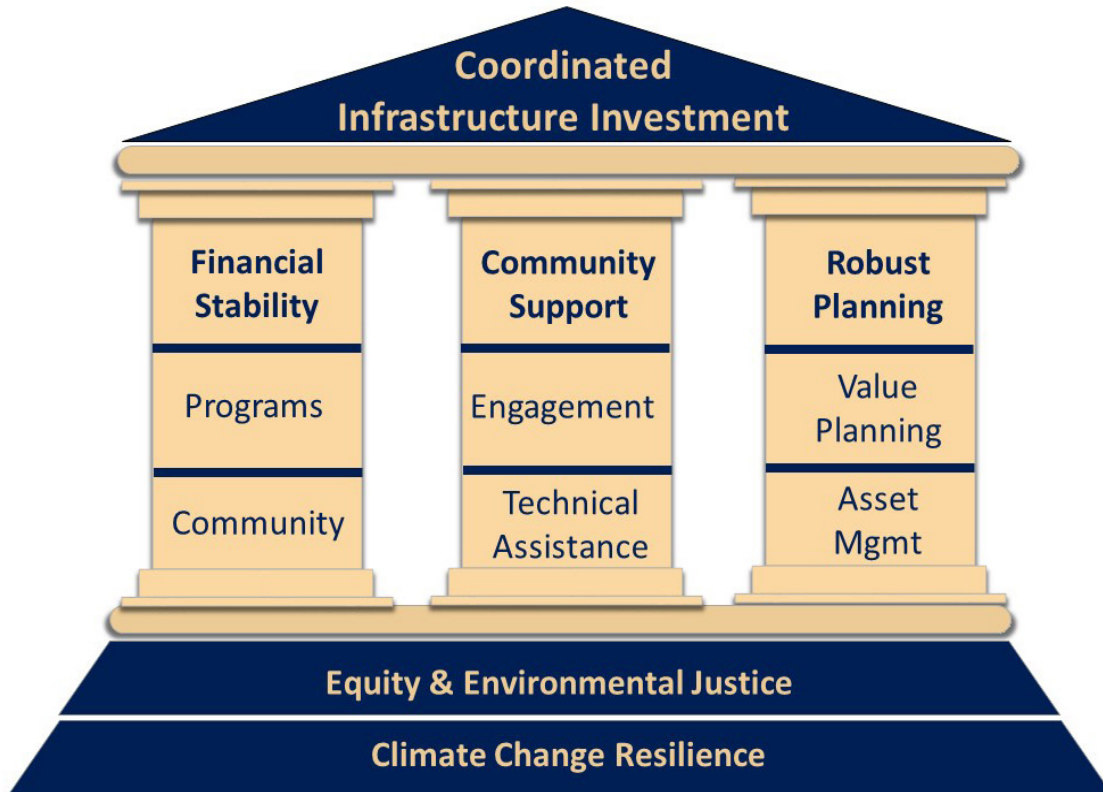
Environmental Justice

In the Justice40 Initiative, the federal government set a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved and/or overburdened by pollution. Most of the critical infrastructure investments under SYNC partner agencies consideration fall within the programs covered by the Justice40 initiative (such as clean transit, remediating and reducing legacy pollution and developing critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure). The [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) provides geospatial mapping to better identify disadvantaged communities that would benefit from the Justice40 Initiative. SYNC partner agencies are sharing knowledge and experience with the Justice40 tools so that all partner agencies can learn from and take action to meet Justice40 and the [Washington State Healthy Environment for All \(HEAL\) Act](#) commitments.

Administrative Capacity

SYNC infrastructure funders are committed to assisting and building in-house and local capacity to utilize federal funding for projects from cradle to grave.

Ongoing Efforts and Next Steps



The SYNC partners are committed to coordinated infrastructure investment by providing financial stability and increasing local capacity through engagement and technical assistance in the areas of planning, operations, and management.

All SYNC partners continue to implement their respective programs to comply with numerous state and/or federal regulations. These activities are responsive to ongoing prioritization of equity, environmental justice and climate resilience across Washington's communities. For example, the role of the SYNC partners in salmon recovery and habitat protection, such as replacement or removal of local government culverts, warrants programmatic and policy focus in the next biennium.

SYNC is actively participating in dig-once policy pilots, exploring affordability and hardship measures, and maintaining responsiveness to climate emergencies. Current mapping analysis aims to utilize equity and climate indexes to understand current patterns of infrastructure investment. Table 4 summarizes the priority action areas of the SYNC partner agencies.

Ongoing Efforts and Next Steps

Table 4: SYNC Moving Forward - 2021-2025 Priority Action Areas

Priority Area	SYNC's Role	Proposed Action
Financial Stability		
Dependable, affordable and flexible financial resources for infrastructure investments. Optimize and leverage federal, state and local infrastructure dollars.	Coordinated financial resources	Communicate, build capacity and plan with applicants and local governments regarding what to expect in infrastructure funding over the next five years. Align timing of funding cycles to ensure the best service to applicants.
Community Support – Engagement & Technical Assistance		
Fair access and distribution of added values and benefits of infrastructure investments.	Capacity development	Continue to emphasize asset management and value planning in communities of need.
Planning, Operations & Maintenance		
Durable and resilient infrastructure responsive to environmental, technological, economic and population changes.	Technical assistance	Promote regionalization or consolidation assistance. Contribute to dig-once policy pilot recommendations.
Equity & Environmental Justice		
Meet Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act commitments for covered agencies, opt-in agencies and other commitment levels.	Understand commitment level and the impact it has on key deliverables	Compare and implement HEAL Act key deliverables and Justice40 requirements.
Hardship policies for infrastructure investment is equitable for urban and rural communities.	Collectively understand and promote uniform hardship policies	Determine shared hardship indicators across SYNC partner agencies.
Communities can afford to operate and maintain infrastructure systems.	Collectively advocate for infrastructure affordability at household and community scales.	Review household (rate assistance) affordability measures.
Climate Change/ Climate Resilience		
Climate change scenario planning, including hazard identification and redundancy, and resilience planning.	Technical assistance	Incorporate sustainability and climate resilience into the value planning process.
Promote flexible funding for climate resilience and climate emergencies.	Coordinated financial resources	Identify barriers and gaps in funding innovative or climate resilient projects. Coordinate funding during emergencies (such as wildfires, storms, drought response).
Create shared platform to collect and present investment data alongside key socio-economic indicators.	Coordinated financial resources, technical assistance and capacity building in distressed areas of the state.	Map investments in relation to equity and climate resilience indexes for accountability and coordinated process improvement.
Coordinated investments to advance recovery goals and metrics.	Coordinated financial resources, technical assistance and capacity building in priority habitats including Puget Sound.	Align investments with salmon recovery plans at the watershed and Puget Sound action agenda levels (placeholder for governor's biennial salmon recovery request).

