

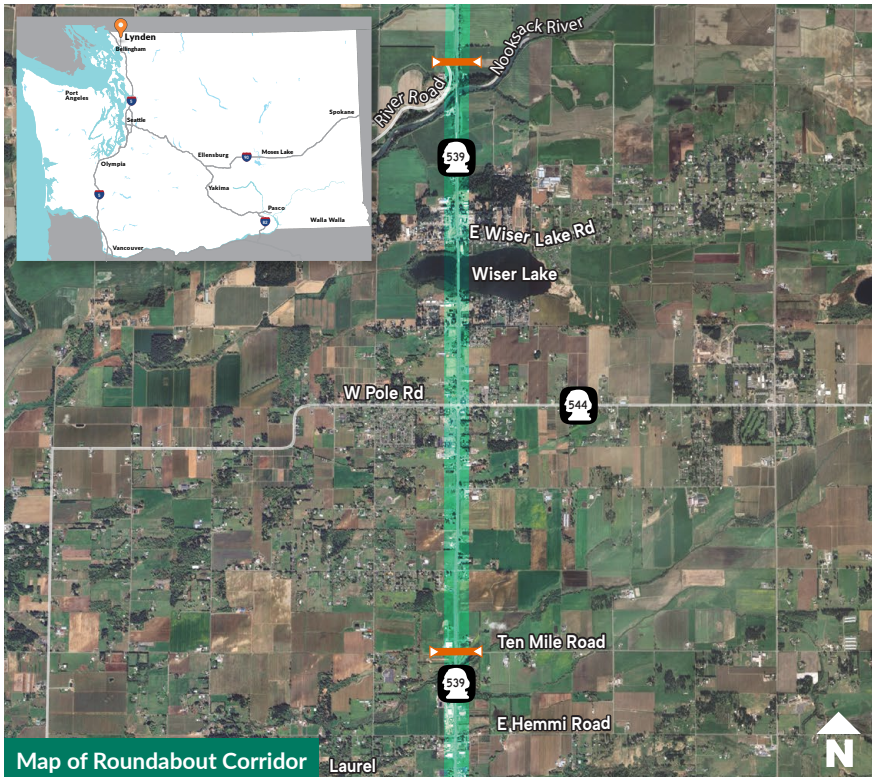
# State Route 539 Roundabouts

From Lynden to Laurel, WA



## Corridor Background

SR 539, also called the Guide Meridian or just the Guide by locals, runs from Bellingham to the Lynden border crossing to Canada. This state route serves as a major freight and agricultural corridor and hosts heavy seasonal/recreational traffic. Prior to reconstruction completed in 2009, the Guide had a history of fatal and serious injury crashes. The two-lane, high-speed, unseparated highway had many head on crashes. Once the decision was made to convert to a four-lane highway with a median cable barrier, WSDOT developed a system of four roundabouts to provide access to adjacent land uses. The rebuilt corridor is similar to portions of US 101; it provides the rural area with more capacity for heavy seasonal traffic.



## Corridor Information

Extents

Ten Mile Road to River Road  
(4 miles)

Context

Mostly rural with some suburban homes and small pockets of businesses.

Traffic Volume

17,000 vehicles per day

Speed Limit


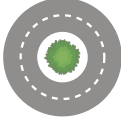





50 mph

Number of Lanes

4 lanes, cable separated median







## Comparison: Before and After

	Before	After
River Road		 Roundabout
W Wiser Lake Road		
SR 544/E Pole Road		
Ten Mile Road		
Number of Lanes		

Before and after crash rates per year were provided for two of the SR 539 roundabouts in a research article. Injuries decreased, even if overall crashes increased. More minor crashes will likely decrease over time as drivers become more familiar with the roundabouts.

### Percent severe injury crashes versus all crashes

Intersection	Construction Year	Before	After
SR 539 & W Wiser Lake Rd	2009	 44%	 0%
SR 539 & SR 544/E Pole Rd	2009	 42%	 19%

*Disclaimer:* Under 23 U.S. Code § 148 and 23 U.S. Code § 407, safety data, reports, surveys, schedules, lists compiled or collected for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, or planning the safety enhancement of potential crash sites, hazardous roadway conditions, or railway-highway crossings are not subject to discovery or admitted into evidence in a Federal or State court proceeding or considered for other purposes in any action for damages arising from any occurrence at a location mentioned or addressed in such reports, surveys, schedules, lists, or data. **Data source:** Public Opinion, Traffic Performance, the Environment, and Safety After Construction of Double-Lane Roundabouts, Transportation Research Record, No. 2402.

## Additional Information

- ▶ Travel time on the corridor has decreased. Truck drivers traveling between the US and Canada timed their trips before and after corridor improvements. Some have reported that a trip between Bellingham and Lynden previously took 30 minutes, but now takes 10 to 15 minutes.
- ▶ Corridor residents whose travel patterns were impacted by the cable median generally remain supportive as well, and feel the capacity and safety improvements make it worth the time to replace left turn movements with right turn and U-turn movements.
- ▶ “They seem safer to me than four-way stop intersections...” said Amy Becke of Bellingham. “There is a learning curve for some. But heck, if New Jersey can do it so can we.” — **Bellingham Herald**
- ▶ “There is a lot of push back when a roundabout is going in,” she said. “Nobody wants to sit in traffic for a construction zone. Then they know the road dynamic is going to change. But then you’re not having those long wait times at the light anymore, which is the whole point.” — **Bellingham Herald**

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