

## The Great Blue Heron Way - A regional trail

Elder Ruth Adams of Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) has a vision for a network of trails which would link TFN to other first nation communities and neighbouring communities. These trails would be multi-use (both walking and cycling) and would be fully accessible for people of all ages and abilities. The first phase of this network is a trail connecting TFN to Delta and the Tsawwassen Ferry terminal. Later we envision the GBHW would extend northward to Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations and the neighbouring communities of Richmond, Vancouver and the North Shore as well as extending eastward to Surrey and Semiahmoo First Nation. This trail would reach out to the larger community by improving access to ocean, river, parks and forested amenities. Our hope is to connect many of the paths and trails that already exist in Delta, Richmond and Vancouver to make one continuous trail, with supplementary loops, by 2017 - the sesquicentennial founding of Canadian Confederation.



GBHW Graphic by TFN artist Carl Morgan

The GBHW concept was approved by TFN on Feb. 12, 2014. The GBHW working group is led by Elder Ruth Adams to introduce GBHW to neighbouring communities and First Nations. The trail would connect the Great Blue Heron rookeries of Tsawwassen and Vancouver via the wetlands and salt marsh heron habitats within the Fraser Estuary.

The approximate routing of the trail, from the ferry terminal, is along the causeway, through the Tsawwassen First Nation to Ladner and the George Massey Tunnel. The tunnel is due to be replaced with a bike friendly bridge although a limited service shuttle currently carries cyclists through the tunnel. Much of the path, along the dykes from the ferry to the tunnel, already exists. A direct bike friendly route through Richmond via Shell Road, to the Canada Line Bridge already exists to the Highway 99 overpass. A westerly path, via the Lulu Island sea dyke system, provides an alternative more scenic route. Neither route yet meets the “all ages, all abilities’ standards for connectivity to the Canada Line Bridge at Bridgeport.

Within Vancouver, it is envisioned that the trail will progress from the Canada Line Bridge, either northwards through Marpole to Kerrisdale along the proposed Arbutus Greenway or westerly through Southlands, Pacific Spirit Regional Park, to Spanish Bank, Jericho and Kitsilano parks. The notion of the western trail has been endorsed in principal by Pacific Spirit Regional Park, University Endowment Lands and the Ministry of Transportation planning staff but will likely require further community and political input-particularly where the trail connects to the Spanish Bank Seaside bike route.

To conclude we would like to add that work on promoting Elder Ruth Adam's vision of the GBHW is, currently, a collaborative effort of TFN, HUB Cycling, Arbutus Greenway Improvements Society, Trails BC, Trans Canada Trail and local volunteers. If you require further information please contact members of Elder Ruth Adam's Great Blue Heron Way team listed below.

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