



Your Cycling Connection

bikehub.ca



TFN Delta HUB Cycling Local Committee

Mr Walt Judas,  
CEO  
Tourism Association of BC  
200-948 Howe Street  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1N9

**Re:** BC Ferries Highway 17 causeway

Dear Mr Judas,

We at Tsawwassen First Nation(TFN) Delta HUB Cycling Local Committee and Trails Society of BC immensely enjoyed meeting you last month. We had a very good discussion about our concerns about the BC Ferries Highway 17 causeway, plus cycling tourism opportunities in BC. As we discussed, Trails BC presented these concerns about the ferry causeway at BC Ferries' last AGM. The presentation was favourably received. We hope that action can be taken now, and we appreciate your support.

A grade separated bike path along the causeway is our request, and it should safely connect with existing and future trail and cycle networks- that lead to and from the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley (within the Metro Vancouver and TransLink Greenways Network, and on the City of Delta Bike Route Map). This would significantly increase safety and convenience of those who choose to ride to the Ferry Terminal.

In the immediate vicinity of the causeway, the Great Blue Heron Way (GBHW) dike top trail on Tsawwassen First Nation land (on the north side) has no safe connection to the causeway. It is terminated by the causeway. TFN should be consulted regarding ways to correct this issue; and to ensure the public using the causeway are aware they are on Tsawwassen Traditional Territory. We at TFN Delta HUB have worked closely with TFN towards their goal of an eventual trail system connecting First Nation communities between the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. Here is more information on the GBHW - <https://trailsbc.ca/the-great-blue-heron-way-vision-gbhw/>. Photos are enclosed in an Addendum to this report.

I am pleased to present to you several photos I took recently while cycling west, towards the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal. I then turned around and returned on the causeway, heading east. It was a nice (dry) day, and I encountered very little traffic when I took these photos. Normally of course, cyclists contend with significant traffic (and sometimes bad weather) when leaving the ferry.

Riding east (away) from the Tsawwassen Ferry terminal, the causeway cycling lane is the most dangerous cycling I have encountered anywhere. I would estimate that I have cycled well over 100,000 kilometres over the years - throughout BC, USA and Europe. The cycling lane that locals and tourists use when exiting the ferry terminal heading east is too narrow, has too much debris, and is poorly lit at night. Cars, trucks, and vehicles hauling boats speed by cyclists, at times with just a foot or two of distance between them. It is particularly dangerous when cyclists must veer towards traffic as they avoid debris, or to avoid a large puddle when it rains (and when a cyclist avoids a 'hubcap' as you will see in one of the photos below). I saw that same hubcap about eight months ago which indicates how infrequently the cycling lane is cleaned. Due to poor lighting, a nighttime ride is particularly dangerous.

In addition, when riding west on the ferry causeway (towards the terminal), there is no signage letting cyclists know where they should go. Many incorrectly ride to vehicle pay booths, crossing traffic towards the booth that corresponds to their destination. They are then told to go back and take the road that goes towards the pedestrian check-in office. After checking in, cyclists often have trouble finding their ferry, again due to a lack of signage.

Upon leaving the Gulf Island ferries, heading east, cyclists are incorrectly directed by ferry personnel to cross the road (with the pedestrians who are leaving the ferry). From there, cyclists eventually figure out they must return to the road they crossed and cross it again, dodging traffic that is leaving the ferry.

Cyclists then use the narrow and dangerous cycling lane along the south side of the causeway. There is no signage at the only opening to the existing but poor condition, multi-use path (MUP) that starts about 100 metres up the causeway. As a result, every cyclist I have seen continues to ride in the narrow cycling lane rather than taking the existing MUP, which would be safer. There are two other entrance points into the MUP, but they are chained off.

With the hugely popular Lochside Trail and Galloping Goose cycling trails on Vancouver Island, and great cycling opportunities on the Gulf Islands, tourists and locals enjoy fantastic, world class cycling. We have work to do on the Lower Mainland side to match these trail systems. HUB's "Ungap the Map" report / suggestions detail many short gaps that if worked on, could safely connect many more cycling trails. Historically, the Lochside Trail also had numerous gaps but eventually all those gaps were fixed. Please let us know if you would like a copy of this report.

If I had to choose the most important cycling issue to work on (that could be done quite economically), it would be to fix the dangerous cycling conditions on the south side of the BC ferry causeway. There is ample existing land available on most of the south side of the ferry causeway to extend the existing MUP further towards the ferry terminal. In addition, the MUP is in poor repair and needs to be re-paved.

Without expanding the narrow breakwater near the ferry terminal on the south side of the causeway, it may not be possible to lengthen the MUP all the way (west) to the ferry terminal. However, as said, there is enough land to further extend the MUP, closer to the terminal. A short (improved) cycling lane could then connect with an expanded and improved MUP. Most of the existing cycling lane on the south side could then be removed, creating more space for the separated MUP. Few pedestrians use this MUP, but I would still suggest a line be painted (in the MUP) to separate cyclists from pedestrians.

Regarding debris in the cycling lanes (which includes broken seashells, sharp rocks, and glass), I have personally experienced three flats while heading to the ferry (on the west side). On one occasion, my tire pump did not work. I learned that there was no bike pump on the ferry heading to Victoria. I suggest BC Ferries consider attaching some multi-use bike tools and a bike pump (in the bike rack area on all or at least some, of the ferries).

Quebec has had great success with their 'Route Verte' trail system. Years ago, I read about an economic impact study that determined Quebec more than recouped their investment (in this long cycling route), through increased cycling tourism and health benefits. Ontario has implemented their own version of the Route Verte, borrowing a lot of the same ideas. With BC's weather advantage and our world class cycling opportunities in many areas of our province, we at HUB would very much enjoy discussing what we feel are many untapped opportunities in cycling tourism.

BC cycling can rival the best cycling I have experienced in Europe (with a bit more investment in same). If we had better connected cycling routes on our side of the water, combined with the Lockside Trail and Galloping Goose Trail, the growing number of travelers interested in cycling tourism would be more likely

to come to our province. During the pandemic, cycling increased considerably and with the massive growth in E bikes, the market for cycling tourism has, I believe, grown significantly. The photos attached are in a space that could become a world class facility in BC.

My friend and fellow cyclist, Mike Starko, was killed in driver-caused accident a short distance from the BC Ferries causeway. A second member of riding group was killed by a vehicle about 7 years ago. This, and many other accidents and near misses (that I and others have experienced), is why we are so dedicated to cyclist safety.

The ferry traffic on Highway 17 and the causeway, on the busy route heading to BC's capital city Victoria and the heavy goods truck route to Duke Point near Nanaimo, impacts everyday lives at TFN, in Tsawwassen and in Delta. Safety improvements will benefit BC residents, travellers, and BC Tourism.

Thank you very much for considering these proposed enhancements towards safer, greener, and active travel.

**Neil Pope, Co- Chair, TFN Delta HUB Cycling Local Committee**

[neil.pope@cibc.ca](mailto:neil.pope@cibc.ca)

Tsawwassen, BC