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Published September 6th, 2015

Moraga Sinkhole repairs on track, Canyon bridge delayed

By Sophie Braccini



Canyon bridge remains closed Photo Andy Scheck

Moraga public works department announced that the reconstruction and repair work of the Rheem Boulevard sinkhole is progressing according to plan, with an end date scheduled before the rainy season that typically begins Oct. 15.

The work to reopen the circulation on Canyon Road toward the Oakland hills, however, has been delayed. The next step before the installation of a one-lane temporary metal bridge is the demolition of the existing compromised bridge. Before the bridge is demolished, the utilities that pass under that bridge had to be rerouted.

Shawn Knapp, Moraga senior civil engineer, explains that Sprint needed to dig under the creek to reroute its cable system. The work was delayed by one month when boring encountered layers of granite. A different approach and a longer process were required.

According to the engineer, the demolition of the bridge will start mid-September, as long as the company that was given that contract, W.C. Maloney Inc., is able to pull all the required permits in time. Knapp explains that the company will then have 21 days to complete the demolition and the hauling of the debris, working seven days a week, with shorter hours on weekends.

The town has started to seek companies that sell, rent and install metal truss bridges. Knapp says that 10 have been contacted, with the objective being to find one that will rent a bridge to the town.

As the demolition starts, the town will start the preparation work for the installation of the metal bridge: construction of abutments, preparation of the road with new striping, and installation of traffic lights.

Knapp confirmed that the town is aiming to reopen the road in mid-November and added that the town is in touch with the Canyon community, especially the school board, to inform the members of the exact advancement of the work.

Staff is working with the California Department of Transportation on the emergency release program and setting up the reimbursement process. Knapp adds that Moraga is just one of the agencies seeking reimbursement in California and the total amount of repairs from last year's problems amount to about \$1.5 billion in the state - an amount that will pale in comparison with what Texas will certainly require.

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