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After nearly five years, Canyon Road Bridge opens for two-lane traffic

By Vera Kochan



An aerial view of the Jan. 20 Canyon Road Bridge Opening Ceremony. Photo courtesy Brandon Hays

Commuters and bicyclists who use the Canyon Road Bridge on a regular basis have undoubtedly realized, as of Jan. 20, that they no longer have to wait patiently at a stop light for their turn to cross the bridge - a habit that lasted for nearly five years.

The original bridge, built in 1936, was damaged during 2017 landslides. Since that time, the town of Moraga has poured its efforts into a replacement bridge (another two-way, modern steel-reinforced, concrete bridge) with enhancements such as street lights, pedestrian walkways, bike lanes, a bench and a multi-use path connecting the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.

The Opening Ceremony and ribbon cutting was attended by at least 100 people who wasted no time standing along the side railings of the bridge to look at the views below.

Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg began the event by noting that "construction of both the temporary bridge and the replacement bridge were big complicated projects for Moraga's small staff. There were many hurdles and challenges, including navigating

environmental constraints, securing grant funding, and construction and supply delays due to COVID. Moraga is the little engine that could, but truth be told, we couldn't have done it alone." She went on to thank the many agencies involved during the construction process with a shout-out to Moraga's residents, Moraga Country Club Homeowners Association, Canyon's residents and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

"I'm so proud to be here and help to deliver this bridge," Moraga Director of Public Works Shawn Knapp said. "It affects Moraga and everyone in the area. We made sure that during construction closures MOFD (Moraga-Orinda Fire District) was stationed on the Canyon side in case of emergencies. I'm also thankful that this is done, because the town has many needs, and we can begin to focus on those. There's a lot more going on in this town."

Mayor Renata Sos stated, "This bridge is a testament to teamwork. A testament to the people of the town of Moraga. A testament to effective local government."

Also in attendance were Vice Mayor Steve Woehleke, Council Member Teresa Onoda, Council Member Sona Makker, Council Member Mike McCluer, Contra Costa County Board Supervisor Candace Andersen, Lafayette Mayor Teresa Geringer and Orinda Mayor Dennis Fay.

Moraga Assistant Engineer Sharon Chan, who is serving as project manager for the bridge said, "I'm super excited that we have a nice, safe, new, emergency evacuation route. It's a big accomplishment that's good for Moraga and Canyon."

According to Knapp, this summer should see all of the additional fine points to the bridge completed with at least a five-year time span to make certain that everything is environmentally sound.

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