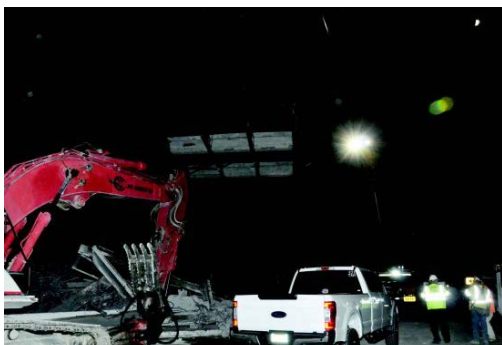


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Canyon Bridge dismantling and rebuilding begins

By *Sophie Braccini*



The dismantling of the Canyon Bridge continued after darkness fell on Sept. 26. Photo Andy Scheck

The old Canyon Bridge is gone. It had been closed to traffic for over five months, though it had been rumored that bicyclists and walkers had occasionally been trespassing. The declaration of instability and closing of the bridge following the landslide of the adjacent hill was the second major infrastructure incident within a year of each other that plagued the town of Moraga and stressed its financial status. The Moraga public works department explains that the demolition was a necessary step before the installation of a temporary one-lane bridge that will reopen access by the end of November to the Oakland hills and the community of Canyon.

The work started as scheduled the week of Sept. 18, with the main part of the bridge gone a week later. Public works director Edric Kwan says that the bridge will be completely cleared by Oct. 8. He further explains that the town is now signing the contract to have the preparation work for the installation of the temporary bridge to start right after the demolition is completed.

Brian Coyle, Canyon school board vice president, tried to have the demolition stopped. A significant difference of perception persists between the Canyon school board and the Town of Moraga. Coyle states that only inspectors with a federally approved bridge inspection certificate can assess the safety of a bridge and Moraga had not called such professionals. When the town, following its plan, decided to remove the bridge, Coyle filed a request to restrain the town from demolishing the bridge. A judge denied the request.

Coyle made a further request that Moraga cease denying what he calls the 2016 CalTrans assessment, and that it permits Canyon school district representatives an opportunity to make a presentation at a Moraga Town Council meeting. That request was heard by a judge on Sept. 29 and denied.

Kwan explains that the installation of a replacement bridge was a complex project to plan. The contractor that will prepare the abutments and piers to retain the hillside and allow for a safe installation of the temporary bridge could not start the work before the bridge is demolished. Kwan says that the site is too narrow for two contractors to have their diverse equipment on site at the same time. He says that the bid documents for this work have been published and a contract would be signed in time for the work to start on the heels of the demolition.

The third company involved in the project is the one that will rent an appropriate bridge to the town. Kwan says he is in the process of selecting one. He continues to forecast the installation of the temporary bridge at the end of November.

The termination of Sinky the Sinkhole

Sinky the Sinkhole, as one resident nicknamed the year and a half crater at the intersection of Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road, is now nearing its end. Kwan reports that the repair is proceeding as planned. The new 96-inch reinforced concrete culvert for the creek was installed and encased in a slurry backfill. The utilities that were installed in the hole were secured in place last winter, a new traffic signal system needs to be placed on site, and the pavement rebuilt. Normal traffic is projected to be re-established by the end of October.



The bridge is gone Photo Andy Scheck

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