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Moraga awards construction contract for new Canyon Bridge

By Vera Kochan



Evening commute on Temporary Canyon Bridge into Moraga Photo Vera Kochan

For nearly three years drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians have become accustomed to the workings of the temporary bridge and the very minor inconvenience of having to wait their turn to cross it. Good things come to those who wait. The Moraga Town Council voted unanimously to award a construction contract for a new Canyon Bridge during its Feb. 26 meeting.

April 2017 saw the old bridge's closure due to landslide damage. The current temporary bridge was installed by November of that year. Additional delays to construction occurred during the East Bay Municipal Utility District's 2019 landslide and subsequent litigation events.

Moraga's Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp additionally requested the town council to authorize funding to "increase the Design Professional Services Agreement for civil engineering services with NV5, Inc. (Walnut Creek) in an amount of \$202,793."

This increase is an amendment to the original contract and involves such things as environmental monitoring, design changes during bid process, preparation of documents required by environmental permits and risk management analysis. The town's cost would amount to \$25,795 from Fund 210-Measure J after reimbursements contingent on California Department of Transportation approval.

Because the town has no inspectors on its payroll, Knapp also requested the town council to "increase the construction management services, including construction engineering, inspection and material(s) testing for the construction of the Canyon Road Bridge Replacement Project with Harris and Associates, Inc. (Concord) in an amount of \$22,100 contingent on Caltrans approval." Both resolutions were unanimously approved.

As far as choosing a bridge construction company, staff's most recent engineer's estimate of costs had increased to \$7,332,740 with an overall construction budget of \$8,177,673 (including 15% contingency). The increase was a result of inflation and having to relocate the new bridge farther away from existing landslides.

The town extended the bidding period two months to allow for more competitive bidding and any project questions/answers from bidders. Eight contractors submitted bids, half of which hovered close to each other's estimates. Bridgeway Civil Constructors, Inc. (Bridgeway) came in with a bid of \$7,111,020 (lower than the engineer's estimate).

While Bridgeway is a four-year-old company, its staff has many years of experience in the bridge construction industry with projects involving local portions of the 680 freeway. The company's president and key staff members worked for Meyers and Sons - the contractor for the temporary Canyon Bridge.

After assessing what funds are available through Caltrans and the federal Highway Bridge Program, staff will present a cost breakdown of Moraga's share to the town council on a future agenda.

Knapp also discussed a bridge construction timeline during the town council meeting. A pre-construction meeting will take place in mid-March. Later in the month a survey of Temporary Construction Easements and Right of Way is expected along with environmentally sensitive species relocation. April will see the construction of Phase 1 (one lane of the bridge). The removal of the temporary bridge will take place in November followed by a work suspension during the winter months. Construction of Phase 2 (the remaining lane of the bridge) is expected to begin April 2021 and continue to its completion in November.

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