

# Stanislaus County touts completion of Crows Landing Road Bridge

Sabra Stafford, June 26, 2024

A project 23 years in the making was celebrated Monday morning when Stanislaus County held an official ribbon cutting for the Crows Landing Road Bridge.

The Crows Landing Road Bridge crosses the San Joaquin River and connects the Westside communities to Stanislaus County. A traffic survey found that the bridge serves roughly 8,000 vehicles daily with almost 20 percent being truck traffic.

An inspection of the bridge determined it was structurally deficient and functionally obsolete. Time and weather had brought the condition of the bridge to a point that it required a full replacement in order to provide a safer crossing over the river.

Doing such a project would prove to be costly and time-consuming.

“This is a large infrastructure project and I talk about these all the time that people think we can just change out a bridge,” said Stanislaus County Supervisor Vito Chiesa, whose District 2 meets up with Supervisor Channce Condit’s District 5 at the bridge. “We’ve got such issues on our whole bridge system and when you see something like this that is one of the most important crossings over the San Joaquin River finally be completed, this is something to be so proud of.”

The project’s estimated construction cost is approximately \$22,720,477 with most of the funding coming from the federally funded Highway Bridge Program. Other project funding is also coming from the Senate Bill 1, Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account.

The bridge is described as a five-span, post-tensioned box girder that is 723 feet in length and uses 112-foot long cast in steel shell concrete piles that are 72-inches in diameter.

The new bridge has two 12-foot wide lanes, one going in each direction, a 12-foot wide center median and four feet shoulders on each side. There is a dedicated right turn lane southbound on Crows Landing Road to westbound Carpenter Road.

The project also added a center median lane north of the intersection for improved merging from eastbound Carpenter Road to northbound Crows Landing Road.

The county dove into the initial work of the replacement back in 2001, said Stanislaus County Public Works Director David Leamon. The construction began in earnest in August 2021.

“It’s been a journey, this bridge and it’s been interesting,” Leaman said. “We started this project in 2001. So, it took us 23 years from start to finish. I don’t think people appreciate how long it takes to get something like this done. Look at the list of permits. We still had to get a Coast Guard permit even though there are no more ships anymore, but it’s still navigable according to the federal government.”

The work had to take several pauses over the years when the rains pushed the river up and over the banks.

“When we had Catfish Camp evacuated we had one of our shop trucks out here helping to fill tires and getting people moved down the road,” Leaman recalled.

This is the third incarnation of the Crows Landing Road Bridge. The first was a swing bridge that cost \$35,196 and opened in May of 1887. The swing bridge was one lane and would swing out to allow for steam ships navigating the San Joaquin River to pass by. It utilized 40-foot long wood piles.

The second bridge was completed in 1949 and came about after a report found the one lane bridge was patchy and that there was danger of a heavy vehicle falling through one of the holes. That bridge used 40-foot long concrete piles and came in at a cost of \$172,023.