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Dozens mark opening of new Mokelumne pedestrian/bike bridge over Highway 4

The multispan bridge closes a gap in the trail that was created by the highway's expansion



A cyclist rides across the new Mokelumne Trail Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, in Brentwood, Calif. The overcrossing provides a safe access for cyclists and pedestrians over State Route 4 for commuting and recreational travel and is part of the Mokelumne Trail. (Aric Crabb/Bay Area News Group)



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Dozens of pedestrians and cyclists marked the opening of a new bridge over Highway 4 in Brentwood by making the inaugural journey across the 850-foot-long span on Wednesday morning.

The new, nearly \$14 million multi-span structure, which broke ground almost two years ago, will [close the gap](#) in the Mokelumne Trail that was created when Highway 4 was expanded more than 20 years ago.

“This is a really important day,” said Tim Haile, executive director of Contra Costa Transportation Authority. “It’s been a really long time coming in. This has been a gap in the network for quite some time.”

For nearly two decades, Highway 4 cut right through the Mokelumne Trail in Brentwood, blocking access and forcing pedestrians and cyclists to take a long detour on busy Lone Tree Way to continue on the path into Antioch.



Bicyclists ride near the new Mokelumne Trail Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, in Brentwood, Calif. The overcrossing provides a safe access for cyclists and pedestrians over Highway 4 for commuting and recreational travel and is part of the Mokelumne Trail. (Aric Crabb/Bay Area News Group)

Cyclist Jerry Post, one of a dozen or so members of Delta Pedalers at the ceremony, was happy to see the new trail and eager to ride across it as he waited for authorities to cut the ribbon.

“It’s gonna make it a lot safer to get from Brentwood over to Antioch, because riding a bike underneath the freeway – well, cars don’t care about cyclists,” the 69-year-old Brentwood resident said. “So, you’re kind of dodging cars and fighting the cars all the time if you gotta cross underneath the freeway ...it’s brutal.”

Cyclist Stacey Keller-Moore, 65, agreed.

“A lot of us have to use Lone Tree (Way) and kill ourselves,” Keller-Moore said. “We are so thrilled to have this.”

Contra Costa Transportation Authority Board Chair Newell Arnerich, a Danville councilmember, credited former Brentwood Mayor Bob Taylor with advocating for the bridge. Others did the same.

“We would not be here today if it wasn’t for the advocacy of this man,” he told the large crowd gathered. “And literally, this project fell off the shelf, and when Tim

Timing is everything, Arnerich added.

“It takes a lot of people,” he said. “An incredible number of people make a project like this happen.”

Funding for the overcrossing came from Measure J taxpayer dollars, the State Route 4 Bypass Authority and Bay Area Toll Authority bridge toll funds.

At 16 feet in width, the bridge will also be wide enough for future autonomous shuttles — small electric pod cars now in the development stage — that possibly could traverse the bridge in the future, authorities said.

“We’re planning transportation for the future,” Arnerich said. “We’re not just building projects. We’re making the connectivity, looking at the future, breaking down the barriers.

“So for the bicyclists, this is a bicycle overcrossing, for the pedestrians, this is for pedestrians, and by the way, it’s a future autonomous vehicle for personal micro (transit) devices that will go over this.”

Haile also called the bridge an “icon” and “catalyst” for the city of Brentwood because it will improve access to businesses in the community and the nearby Brentwood Innovation Center, a 300-acre mixed-use business park.

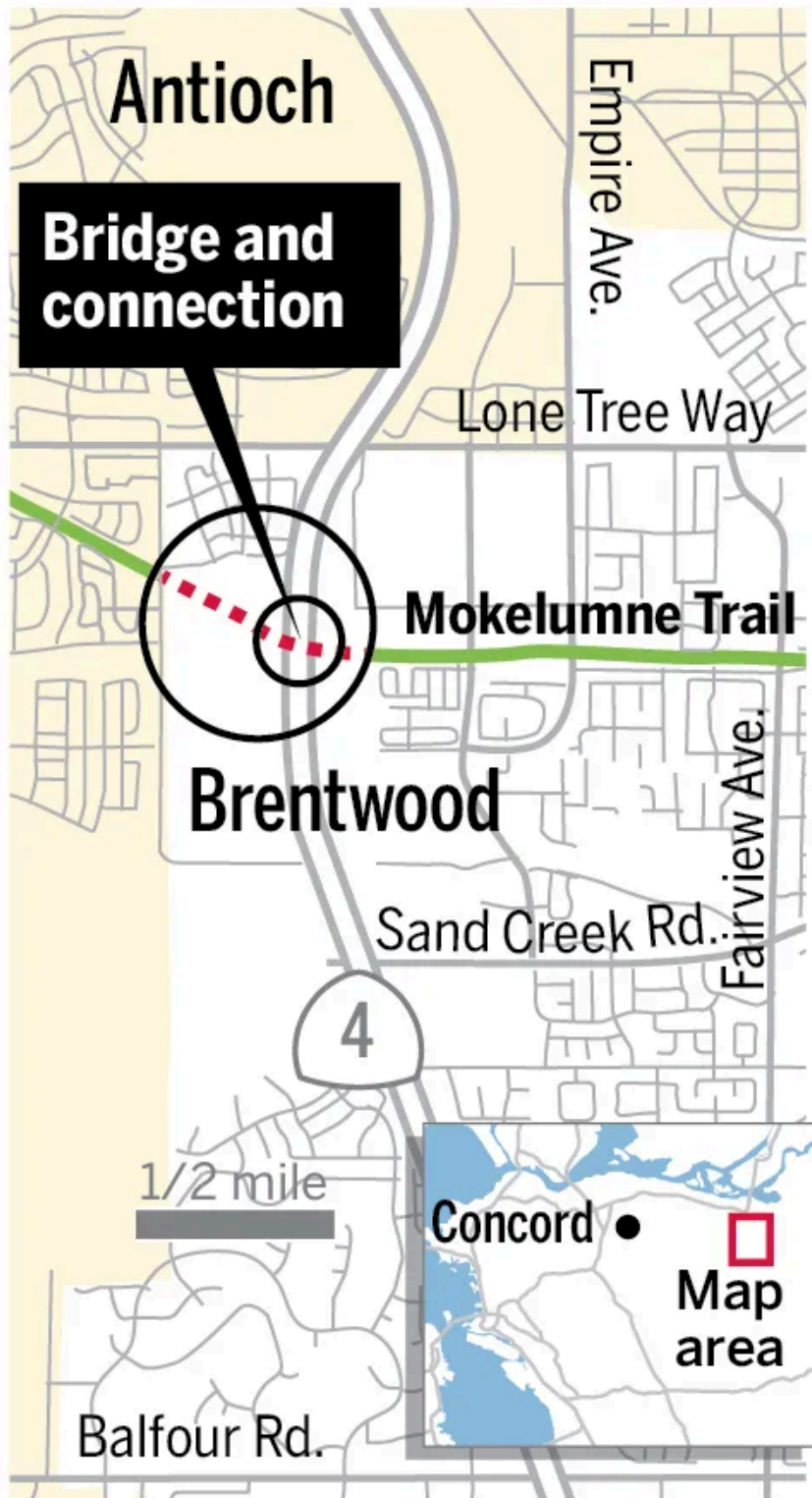
“This is not only to help provide and close the gap in the bicycle network, but it’s also to be a catalyst for a future transit stop as well,” he said.

Brentwood Mayor Joel Bryant told the crowd that “bridges are about connections.”

“The fact is we now have a bridge to connect ourselves to each other, all the way from down South San Francisco all the way to the foothills of the Sierra, you can be on trail systems,” he said.

“We are working together as a community to connect with each other, to connect with our health, connect with our mental peace,” he said.

Contra Costa County Supervisor Diane Burgis likened the trail system to a quilt.



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Burgis also credited resident and longtime cyclist Bruce “Mr. Bicycle” Ohlson for attending every transportation meeting for decades and advocating for safe bicycle lanes.

Over the years, Ohlson said he reminded everyone involved with the Brentwood Highway 4 expansion that the connecting bridge was required in the environmental documents. It wasn’t an easy battle, though, he said, noting at least one leader decades earlier didn’t want “motorists money spent on bicyclists’ amenities,” he said.

For Burgis, the new bridge connecting the Brentwood and Antioch sides of the trail offers much for all.

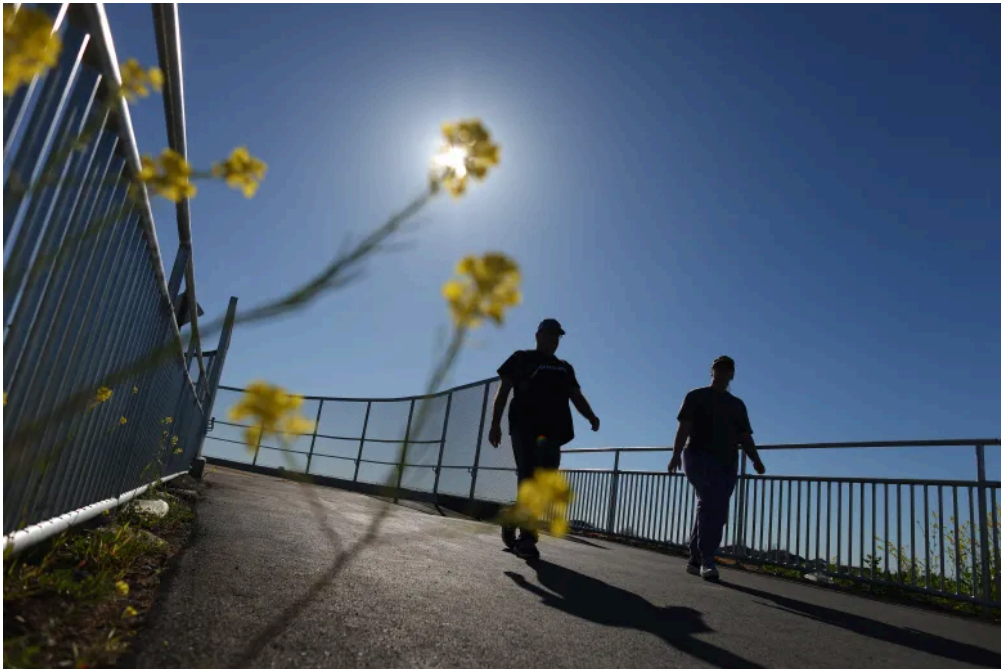
“Our residents will now have a safe bridge to access the Mokelumne Trail, which opens so many possibilities for families and people,” she said. “Now that the trail is officially connected, cyclists, trail walkers and those seeking environmentally friendly ways to travel can get to where they need to go.”



A pedestrian walks across the new Mokelumne Trail Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, in Brentwood, Calif. The overcrossing provides a safe access for cyclists and pedestrians over State Route 4 for commuting and recreational travel and is part of the Mokelumne Trail. (Aric Crabb/Bay Area News Group)



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