Q&As for Virtual Community Update December 16, 2025

Question	Response
Why the Bridge Is Being Rebuilt (Not Repaired)	
• Why not just fix the parts of the bridge that were damaged and reuse the existing piers?	MDTA evaluated the reuse of the former bridge at the onset of the project. It was not possible to reuse the piers in the new bridge construction because the taller, longer, and wider bridge adds weight that could not be accommodated by the existing piers.
• Has a tunnel cost been evaluated?	Immediately following the collapse of the Key Bridge, the decision was made to seek Federal Emergency Relief Funds, which requires that the impacted facility be reconstructed in-kind. A tunnel was not possible due to the funding program and the in-kind replacement requirement.
• Did the State consider a ferry system to operate during the rebuild process?	Immediately following the collapse of the Key Bridge, the decision was made to seek Federal Emergency Relief Funds, which requires that the impacted facility be reconstructed in kind, thus eliminating the possibility of analyzing other crossing alternatives, such as ferries. Ferry system implementation would require a lengthy process involving a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study, environmental permitting, vessel procurement, and terminal construction. Given the anticipated timeline of the Key Bridge rebuild effort, even with the additional two years added to the schedule, a ferry service would not be able to be in place and operational before the new bridge is open to traffic thereby negating any congestion benefits. In addition, a ferry service would need to be sustainable from a cost perspective. With the presence of alternative crossing routes, and the limited periods of congestion on area roadways, a ferry service could expect competition for travelers thereby limiting its viability to be self-sustaining.

What the New Bridge Will Be (Design & Function)	
• Will the new bridge be able to support the weight of all cargo coming from the Port of Baltimore?	The new bridge is being designed following the latest national bridge design standards and will be able to carry the weight of all traffic crossing the bridge, including commuters and tractor trailers carrying cargo to and from the Port of Baltimore. Maryland's standard legal load is a tractor-trailer that weighs 80,000 pounds. Just like all interstate bridges, the new Key Bridge will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis for any oversize/overweight tractor-trailer combination that exceeds the standard legal load in weight or dimensions and requires a permit for hauling. In very rare cases, such a permit vehicle may not be allowed to cross the new Key Bridge and will need to follow an alternative route prescribed by the State.
• Why aren't you building dolphins?	As a part of the proof-of-concept design, a number of pier protection schemes were evaluated, including rock islands and dolphins. Due to the geology of the Patapsco River in the area of the bridge, it was determined that the rigid pier protection structures that are in the current design was the preferred option to meet the latest AASHTO specifications and best practices.
• Was a bike/ped lane considered for the new bridge?	Federal emergency relief (ER) funding allows the bridge to be rebuilt as a replacement-in-kind structure to current design standards, which limits the ability to add new features such as bike or pedestrian lanes at this time. However, the Maryland Department of Transportation remains committed to advancing a strategic planning framework to advance opportunities for crossing the Patapsco River and addressing east-west mobility needs in the region.
• Can a sidewalk and light rail line be added?	Federal emergency relief (ER) funding allows the bridge to be rebuilt as a replacement-in-kind structure to current design standards, which limits the ability to add new features at this time such as a sidewalk or light rail line. However, the Maryland Department of Transportation remains committed to advancing a strategic planning framework to advance opportunities for crossing the Patapsco River and addressing east-west mobility needs in the region.
• Will the bridge design plans be made publicly available?	The Key Bridge is considered a critical infrastructure element that is a National Security concern. Due to the sensitive nature of this piece of infrastructure, detailed design plans are not available to the public. MDTA will continue to share available documents and bridge renderings to KeyBridgeRebuild.com and social media.

• How deep are the pilings going?	The depth of the pilings varies based on the particular bridge foundation or pier protection element and their location within the project (land vs. shallow water vs. deep water). The deepest piles are expected to be driven over 200 feet below the waterline.
• How big are the tower footings?	The two main piers (pylons) will be more than 600 feet tall over the Patapsco River. Each pylon will rest on 45 steel piles where each steel pile is over 200 feet long and eight feet in diameter. The pylon foundation, made of reinforced concrete, is over 20 feet thick and covers the area of two basketball courts. In addition to the pile foundations, we will have additional cable stay bridge foundations for the tie-down pier and transition pier, located on each side of the main span. These smaller piers will have ten piles each using the same 200-foot-long by 8-foot-diameter steel piles. For more information on the Key Elements of the new bridge, visit https://keybridgerebuild.com/design/
• What sort of corrosion mitigation measures will be included in the new bridge?	The project team is developing a comprehensive Service Life & Corrosion Protection Plan to address all aspects of the long-term performance of the bridge, including corrosion mitigation.
Funding, Responsibility, and Tolls	
• Who is paying for the new bridge and who will finance any costs that Congress doesn't pay for?	The American Relief Act (P.L. 118-158) authorized more than $8 billion for the Emergency Relief (ER) Program authorized under 23 U.S.C. § 125 and provides that the federal share for Emergency Relief funds for responding to the Dali's destruction of the Francis Scott Key Bridge will be 100%. Maryland, through the Maryland Transportation Authority, has made substantial financial and operational commitments to support the Key Bridge reconstruction—including advancing upfront construction costs; hundreds of millions of dollars in insurance proceeds; and pursuit of litigation. To meet these upfront cost requirements, MDTA will utilize financing and will have to pay interest in meeting its debt requirements. In addition to providing costs up front, as a requirement of the reimbursable federal-aid program, MDTA has contributed over $350 million in insurance proceeds toward cleanup and reconstruction. The MDTA is utilizing a progressive design-build contract method that has expedited the early stages of the rebuild process.

	To minimize burdens on federal taxpayers, and consistent with the American Relief Act, the State of Maryland is pursuing litigation against the DALI's owner and manager for all the damages caused by their gross negligence and incompetence – including the cost to reconstruct the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Any funds recovered in the lawsuit will be applied to the costs to construct the new bridge.
• If the federal government doesn't cover the cost, will Maryland residents end up with that burden?	The State of Maryland continues to pursue litigation against the DALI's owner and manager for all of the damages caused by their negligence and incompetence – including the cost to reconstruct the Francis Scott Key Bridge – so that the parties responsible for this tragedy pay for the damages they caused. The American Relief Act, 2025, provides that if any additional funds are required to build the new bridge beyond the compensation paid by the DALI, the federal government will provide that funding.
• Is the shipping company being held responsible for the replacement of the new Key Bridge?	The State is in the process of pursuing litigation against the Dali's owners and management to hold them responsible for their gross negligence and for the damages they caused.
• Is the information regarding who's accountable for the bridge cost being shared with taxpayers openly?	
• Is the Trump Administration capable of clawing back previously approved funding? Can he withhold money needed to replace the bridge?	The American Relief Act (P.L. 118-158) authorized more than $8 billion for the Emergency Relief Program authorized under 23 U.S.C. § 125 and provides that the federal share for Emergency Relief funds for responding to the Dali's destruction of the Francis Scott Key Bridge will be 100%. Any change to the 100% federal cost share would require action by Congress.
• Is there compensation for the watermen who do not have access to the surrounding area for fishing activity?	MDTA does not have that information. We suggest reaching out to the Department of Natural Resources for alternate fishing locations.
• How could the cost be drastically higher than originally quoted?	As a condition to receiving federal emergency relief funding in the immediate aftermath of the bridge collapse, the MDTA was required to provide an initial cost and timeline estimate for the Francis Scott Key Bridge Rebuild Project less than two weeks after the incident, prior to conducting any engineering or design studies. The purpose of the early price modeling was to secure emergency relief funding, so without determinations on ultimate design to incorporate federal standards for channel width, modern construction standards, shipping vessel height clearance, and other elements, the approximation was based on rough order

	of magnitude calculations that considered square footage and cost estimates of major bridge projects over the last 12 years. When the initial cost estimate was developed in April 2024, while the salvage and recovery operation was still underway, the MDTA did not have a preliminary design incorporating bridge type and size, geotechnical or bridge design documentation, nor information on material costs or quantities needed. The higher costs are also driven by design elements to meet modern construction and regulatory standards and the continued volatile market conditions for construction costs. Specifically, pier protection triples the amount of large piling on the job compared to original assumptions. Geology has resulted in this being the only viable option to meet today's AASHTO guidelines. The protective fenders are larger than a football field and the towers needed to accommodate both the 230-foot height and the main span length will be significantly higher than the initial assumptions. The increased length of the main span is now 1,665 feet and has resulted in an increase of the overall span of the bridge and the height of main piers. The increased size accommodates marine traffic and is needed to comply with current AASHTO guidelines for new bridges. Additionally, at the time the preliminary estimates were released, there was no information on certain economic pressures that have impacted costs associated with materials, labor, and equipment. The competing demand for equipment and resources by contractors engaged in other national and regional projects is also a factor in the updated estimates.
• Will the new bridge be tolled and if so, how much will the new toll be?	The new Key Bridge is part of the I-695 facility and will continue to be tolled as part of that facility. The current toll rate for that facility can be viewed on the MDTA website. MDTA is planning a systemwide toll rate revision for all of our facilities to go into effect in fiscal year 2028, which would impact the future toll rate for the facility. Toll rates are set by the process outlined in Transportation Article, § 4-312, Annotated Code of Maryland and MDTA will follow this process in establishing the planned toll rates.

Construction Timeline & Current Activities	
• When will construction start?	The Key Bridge Rebuild is still in Phase One and is currently at the 70% design milestone. Pre-construction activities were needed as part of the design effort. Thanks to the progressive design-build approach, we were able to advance some work before final design completion. Some activities included land and marine geotechnical borings—deep, narrow holes were drilled into the ground at the project site to collect soil samples. These samples provided data to design safe, durable, and efficient structures tailored to site-specific conditions. Wind tunnel testing was also performed, which is necessary to determine how the bridge would respond to extreme weather and windy conditions. Scour testing was also performed to evaluate the riverbed's erosion around the piers—a critical process for bridge safety. Following pre-construction activities, we began demolishing the existing land structures, concrete deck, and steel girders. After starting demolition, the contractor began a test pile program in October 2025, which will confirm and advance the design. This work, along with demolition, will continue into the early part of next year. Trestle (a temporary platform constructed to enable contractor to obtain supplies, equipment, and worker access to the project location on the water) construction is underway at Hawkins Point, which will continue over the next couple of months, followed by the start of a second trestle on the north side (Sollers Point) in February. Following pre-construction, we will move into Phase Two, known as the construction phase, this summer. In Phase Two, we will begin construction on the approach spans, continue the pylon construction, and begin construction on the cabled stay span.
• What will happen to the test pilings when the test is complete?	Twelve piles have been driven as a part of the test pile program (six at each pylon). Four piles (two at each pylon) are test piles, whereas the other eight (four at each pylon) are reaction piles. The four test piles will be removed, while we expect to leave the eight reaction piles in place and incorporate them into the permanent pylon foundations.

• What is driving the current schedule, how is it being tracked and what incentives are there for early completion?	The initial estimates were provided 13 days after the tragic collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge with 0% design on the rebuild. Recent pre-construction activities, updated datapoints, and design – not available in the immediate days following the bridge collapse – have been used to inform the MDTA on an updated estimated cost and schedule for the project.
• Has the Trump administration changed the progress of the bridge rebuild?	From the beginning of this project, MDTA has worked closely with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and that collaboration continues today. The team proactively works with the contractors and FHWA to identify innovative construction techniques and conduct independent cost estimates to keep the project on track.
• What materials are being transported that need a freight semi-truck?	Many materials will be transported to the project site, both overland and overwater. Please visit kiewit.com/pages/opportunities/mdta-key-bridge-rebuild/ for subcontracting opportunities.
• What is the status of Trestle Materials Procurement, particularly Stringer Packs, Ledger Beams and Pile Bonnets?	Please reach out to RebuildKeyBridge@Kiewit.com for questions regarding Kiewit led procurements.
Construction Impacts on Nearby Communities	
• What can the communities adjacent to the bridge expect during the height of construction in terms of noise and potential air pollution?	Some construction activities, such as pile driving and heavy equipment use, will generate some noise that may be heard up to about one mile from the site and vibrations that may be felt within approximately 500 feet. To minimize impacts, baseline noise and vibration monitoring was conducted before major construction began, and continuous monitoring will take place throughout construction using real-time sensors. In accordance with federal regulations, an Air Quality Plan was developed that addresses fugitive dust control, visible emissions from stationary sources, and exhaust emissions associated with construction activities. The Plan includes numerous Best Management Practices to be implemented to limit impacts to air quality during construction.

• Will the building process cause structural issues with houses in the area?	No physical impacts to homes are anticipated. Out of an abundance of caution, preconstruction property inspections were completed within a one-mile radius of key construction areas, including interior inspections when requested. A total of 1,103 properties were inspected. Vibration levels will also be monitored during construction to ensure they remain within safe limits and do not affect nearby structures.
• Are you going to close Park (Ft.) Armstead for any length of time?	Fort Armistead Park is owned and operated by Baltimore City. MDTA does not anticipate requesting the City close the park because of the Key Bridge project. Any closures would be at the discretion of the City. Should any park closures be necessary, public notification would be made.
Traffic, Tunnels, and Interim Conditions	
• Why is the I-895 toll booth removal tied to the completion of the Key Bridge Rebuild?	The Key Bridge collapse has resulted in a redistribution of traffic, with most of the traffic that was using the Key Bridge shifting to either the Fort McHenry Tunnel (I-95) or the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel (I-895). The I-895 toll booth removal is a part of a larger project that includes interchange reconfiguration and bridge replacements. Due to the proximity of the adjacent Frankfurst Avenue and Childs Street ramps, the toll booth removal cannot be safely implemented without the associated interchange reconfiguration and bridge replacements. Reconfiguring the interchange and replacing the bridges would result in significant temporary construction traffic impacts that would worsen the current condition.
• What will be done to alleviate traffic at tunnels, like remove [the] harbor tunnel tolls?	Traffic is being actively monitored across I-95, I-895, and the tunnel corridors, and coordination with regional traffic agencies is ongoing to implement temporary congestion-relief measures during construction. Actions to date include suspending tolls at the I-695 Broening Highway exit to support Port access throughout the rebuild, adjusting the northbound I-895 toll plaza to improve merging and traffic flow, converting I-895 to all-electronic tolling (with toll booth removal planned after construction), and adding new pavement markings near the I-95 Fort McHenry Tunnel to improve traffic operations. MDTA is also exploring transit incentive programs, infrastructure enhancements, and partnerships with employers to encourage alternative commuting options and reduce peak-hour congestion.

• Is there a plan to better handle the merge area onto I-895 off Shell Road until the new bridge is completed?	The number of lanes and geometry of the lanes entering the tunnel is the main constraint that limits what can be done with the northbound I-895 mainline lanes, as well as the exit to Childs Street and the entrance from Shell Road. MDTA has implemented a temporary condition that enhances safety and optimizes traffic flow. MDTA will continue to monitor this condition; however, significant changes are not anticipated prior to the interchange reconfiguration project due to impacts to traffic on I-895.
Maritime Safety & Waterway Navigation	
• What do boaters need to know when they travel through the rebuilding area by boat?	MDTA works closely with the United States Coast Guard to develop Local Notice to Mariners. The USCG publish these notices periodically to waterway users on their website (https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Featured-Content/Mariners/Local-Notice-to-Mariners-LNMs/East-District/). MDTA has published these notices and summary information to our website: https://keybridgerebuild.com/newsroom/waterway-users/. Particular to the area surrounding the bridge, there are two safety zones in place on within 500-feet to either side of the work area (excluding the federal channel), as well as 6-knot no wake zones in place 1000-feet beyond the safety zones. No boater access is permitted within the safety zone. However, the Federal Channel remains open with no speed restrictions. In December 2025, the contractor will begin constructing an access trestle (or temporary bridge) that will support their construction equipment and material deliveries. Once completed, the trestle will provide a physical barrier to boaters within the safety zone.
• Where and when do boaters get this information?	Boaters and waterway users can visit the USCG website (https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Featured-Content/Mariners/Local-Notice-to-Mariners-LNMs/East-District/) and MDTA website (https://keybridgerebuild.com/newsroom/waterway-users/) for updates on waterway use around the rebuild.
Jobs, Workforce, and Local Opportunities	
• How can we find out who the subcontractors are? How can Construction Management firms partake in this project as a subcontractor?	Please reach out to RebuildKeyBridge@Kiewit.com for any questions regarding Kiewit's team composition or upcoming procurements.

• Will residents from Turner Station and nearby communities be hired for the rebuild? How can people apply?	Yes. As the project moves into full construction, there will be job opportunities, including apprenticeships and workforce development positions. Information about current and upcoming opportunities with the project contractor is posted on KeyBridgeRebuild.com. MDTA also works with local governments and workforce development agencies in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Baltimore County to support training and placement programs funded through grants and other resources, in coordination with MDOT.
• Should residents expect an increase of temporary occupation? That is if a resident wanted to offer room and board, is there a [way]?	Please reach out to RebuildKeyBridge@Kiewit.com for any questions regarding Kiewit's lodging plans.
• Will there be opportunities for cleaning the trailers, quality and safety support, and/or IT solutions and services? When will the bidding come out?	Please visit kiewit.com/pages/opportunities/mdta-key-bridge-rebuild/ for subcontracting opportunities.
• Is there still a massive DBE mandate for this project?	On October 3, 2025, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation issued an Interim Final Rule, that became effective upon release, that made significant changes to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. In accordance with the Interim Final Rule, DBE goals on all active contracts funded by federal transportation dollars (which includes the Key Bridge Rebuild) will not be enforced until all currently certified DBEs and Airport Concessionaire DBEs are re-evaluated under the new certification requirements set by the Interim Final Rule. MDTA is committed to complying with USDOT's October 2025 Interim Final Rule on DBE participation. The project's existing 26.5% overall DBE goal – set in consultation with USDOT – remains our benchmark, even as we adjust procedures under the new rule. MDTA is working closely with USDOT and the contracting community to ensure transparency and fairness as the federal program transitions.

Bridge Experience, Legacy, and Public Engagement	
• Will the bridge be lit?	The Key Bridge will have aesthetic lighting, such as cable and pier lighting, to accent the bridge structure at night, as well as roadway lighting, navigational lighting, and other ancillary lighting as required for safety. MDTA plans to engage with the public to provide input on nonstructural elements and options for the bridge.
• Are you still planning a public input process for some of the bridge elements?	MDTA plans to engage with the public to provide input on nonstructural elements and options for the bridge.
• Will there be a memorial?	MDTA is in the early stages of planning for a memorial. MDTA will share information as it becomes available.
• Is it possible to get a small piece of the Key Bridge to display at the Community College of Baltimore County?	Requests for bridge materials are handled on a case-by-case basis. Please submit your request by emailing the project team at info@keybridgerebuild.com.
• Will there be a webcam we can watch construction?	MDTA plans on providing periodic project updates, which may include drone, fixed camera, and other methods of video collection, which will be posted to KeyBridgeRebuild.com. We do not anticipate implementing a live stream of the construction.
• Where is the best viewing spot to see construction progress (website, social updates, Ft Armistead S, path by Amazon building)?	The best way to follow construction progress is through the project website and the @KeyBridgeRebuild Facebook page, where we frequently share updates, photos, and videos. The website also includes a dedicated project gallery featuring the latest photos, videos, and renderings.