EDITION 6

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THE KEY BRIDGE REBUILD

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BRIDGE REBUILD
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INSIDE THIS EDITION

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SEPTEMBER 9, 2026 // ED. 06

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) is rebuilding the Francis Scott Key Bridge to reconnect the I-695 Baltimore Beltway and restore a vital transportation link. The rebuild project is rooted in the needs of local communities—enhancing daily life, strengthening connections, facilitating the movement of people and goods across the country, and ensuring a modern bridge that will serve Marylanders for generations to come.

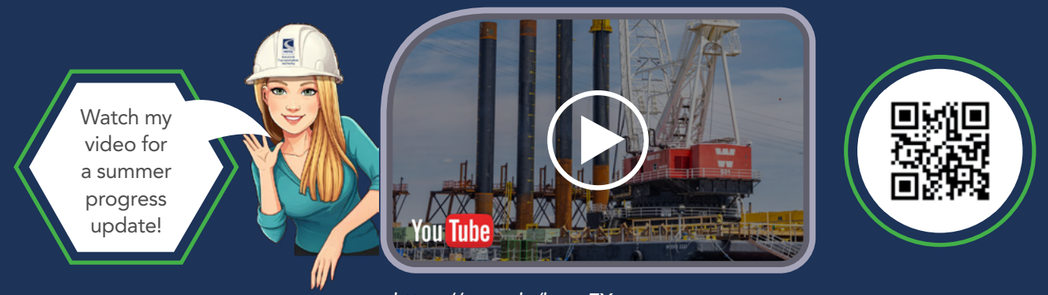
KEYping it Reel

Summer Construction Update

The crews are advancing work on the bridge's two main pylons, which will support the new cable-stayed bridge spans. As of August 2026, over 50 permanent piles have been installed at the south pylon (Pier 24) and over 35 piles at the north pylon (Pier 25). Pile driving operations consists of both foundation and pier protection piles. Pile driving operations are expected to continue through the fall, winter, and into early spring next year.

At the end of July 2026, crews completed welding and installing the 36-inch diameter piles for the main line of the north trestle and south trestle (work platforms). The trestles will extend from land to the north and south pylons. Crews are now focused on constructing the trestle spans. More than half of the spans have already been completed. The full length of the main line is expected to be completed by fall 2026, providing crews, equipment, and materials with critical access for the next phases of bridge construction.

Allison Persing from the MDTA is bringing the Key Bridge Rebuild project to life on the Patapsco River with on-site video updates. Watch her latest video to see and hear from Mike Baker, the environmental construction manager, for a summer construction update.



https://qrco.de/bgxsFX

Permanent production piles in the foreground at the south pylon (Pier 24), with pile driving underway at the north pylon (Pier 25) in the background.

Advancing the Rebuild

The project team continues to make strong progress driving permanent foundation piles at the main span piers near the federal navigation channel. The crews are utilizing a two-pile template at the south pylon (pier 24) and a five-pile template at the north pylon (pier 25). The templates are utilized to improve the precise installation of the piles and increase efficiency by standing multiple piles at once. To date, more than 80 steel piles have been driven, each more than 200 feet long and 8 feet in diameter.

Environmental safeguards remain an important part of pile driving operations. Before full pile driving begins, crews perform a "soft start" procedure, also known as pile tapping. This process starts with a series of low-energy taps and brief pauses before gradually increasing the hammer to full power. The soft start allows nearby marine life to move away before the impact hammer reaches full power.

▲ *The bubble curtain releasing compressed air around the pile being driven.*

▼ *Permanent foundation piles and pier protection piles at the south pylon (Pier 24).*

▲ *Crews installing pile bonnets and cap beams for the trestle (work platform).*

Additionally, crews use a triple-ring bubble curtain system that pumps compressed air through a series of rings surrounding the pile. The resulting curtain of bubbles helps reduce the level of underwater noise that travels through the water, minimizing impacts to the surrounding aquatic environment during pile driving operations.

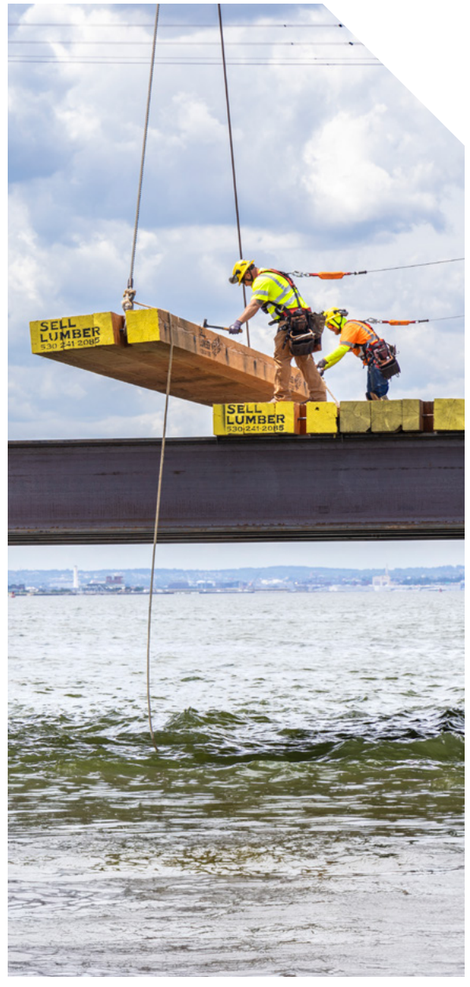
Crews are also making quick progress on the main line of the temporary construction trestle (work platform), extending from land to the north and south pylons. The crews first drive steel piles in the riverbed, then install steel bonnets, cap beams, and stringers across the piles, creating the flat work surface with timber crane mats.

The north trestle has completed driving all 126 piles, each 36 inches in diameter, and construction of more than 40 spans. The south trestle has completed driving all 91 piles, each 36 inches in diameter, and construction of more than 25 spans. ■

North Trestle ▼

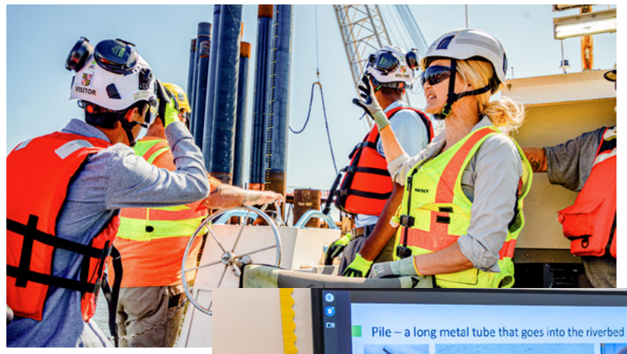
▼ *South Trestle*

Crews installing timber crane mats for the trestle (work platform). ▼



2026 Internship Program

Elen pointing to the pile driving barge where he was stationed for two weeks.



Rena strengthening her public speaking skills while giving a site tour.

The MDTA partnered with the Maryland Higher Education Commission to launch the Key Bridge Rebuild Internship Program in 2025, creating new paid public sector opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students from four major Maryland universities in engineering and environmental disciplines. The internship program provides a unique opportunity to contribute to one of the most significant infrastructure projects in Maryland's history while developing the skills and experience needed to become future industry leaders.

Running annually from June through August, the program welcomed its second cohort in summer 2026, comprising 10 interns, from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Morgan State University; Johns Hopkins University; and University of Maryland College Park.

The interns had hands-on, in-field experiences that allowed students to work alongside transportation and construction professionals while gaining practical knowledge that cannot be replicated in a classroom setting. Interns spent three days each week in the field and two days in the office. In the field, they shadowed MDTA inspectors and project teams, observing critical construction activities and contributing to daily project operations. From reviewing project plans to observing field activities firsthand, they gained a realistic understanding of their future careers.

Katelyn discusses the Key Bridge Rebuild with students at UMBC's George and Betsy Sherman Summer Camp, inspiring the next generation of transportation professionals.

2026 Key Bridge Rebuild Internship Cohort.

A key component of the program is preparing the interns for success beyond graduation. Throughout the summer, MDTA leaders and project experts gave presentations to share insights about their careers, industry trends, and the many pathways available within transportation and construction. Additionally, the interns attended a full-day career readiness workshop focused on job searching, resumes, and interviews.

To broaden their understanding of Maryland's infrastructure network, the interns toured several major transportation and environmental projects across the state, including the Millard E. Tydings Memorial Bridge, the Thomas J. Hatem Memorial Bridge, the I-95 Express Toll Lanes, and Poplar Island.

The internship program demonstrates the importance of experience-based learning. By combining real-world project experience, mentorship, technical training, and professional development, the program equips students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to begin their professional journeys.

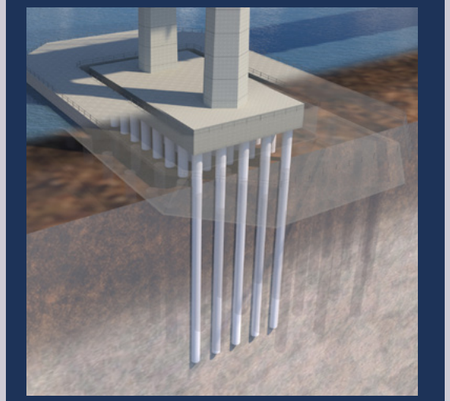
Learn more at KeyBridgeRebuild.com/Internship-Program/

Ayobami standing in an 8-foot-diameter foundation pile.

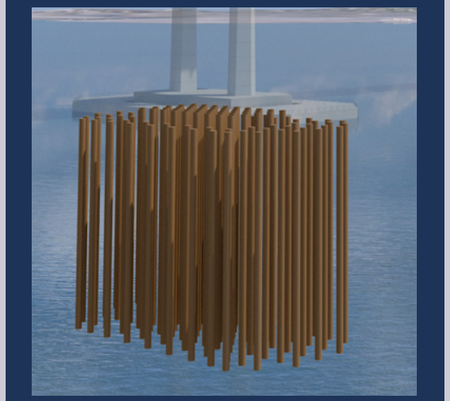
By the Numbers

Permanent Foundation and Pier Protection Piles
Built with American-made steel, the foundations and pier protection systems for the north pylon (pier 25) and the south pylon (pier 24) are taking shape on either side of the bridge's main span. The numbers below showcase the scale of the elements supporting and protecting these critical structures.

In total, 90 foundation piles support the north pylon (pier 25) and south pylon (pier 24).

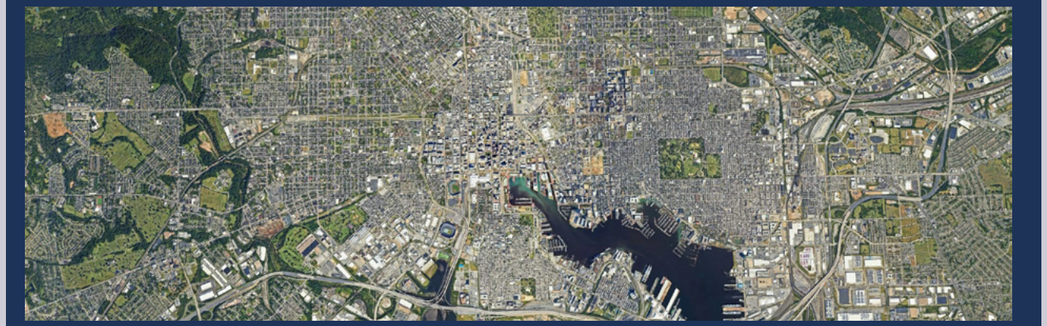


In total, 156 pier protection piles will support the pier protection for the north pylon (pier 25) and south pylon (pier 24).



10 Miles of Piles

If you line up the 246 piles, each over 200 feet long, end to end they would stretch all the way across Baltimore City from Leakin Park to Rosedale.



Faces of the Rebuild

Meet **Joe DeHitta**, a dedicated civil engineer with more than 30 years of experience working on construction and transportation projects. He currently serves as the **Safety Manager** for Athavale, Lystad & Associates as part of the General Engineering Consultant Team for the MDTA's Key Bridge Rebuild Project. After witnessing an incident early in his career, Joe became dedicated to implementing preventive measures that enhance workplace safety.

Q: What is your previous experience?
I have more than 30 years of experience on multimillion-dollar construction projects and six years on transportation projects. I have served as a field engineer, project engineer, quality control manager, and senior project manager. Eight years ago, I moved into construction safety, eventually becoming a corporate safety director, and have dedicated my career to keeping workers safe ever since.

Q: What is your role on the Key Bridge Rebuild project?
I help ensure the safety of everyone involved on the project by overseeing MDTA personnel, collaborating with the design-build contractor to promote safe work practices, and providing safety orientations, as well as OSHA 10/30, First Aid, CPR, and AED training courses.

Q: What do you like most about your job?
I enjoy connecting with the crews in the field and using safety audits as an opportunity to mentor and coach workers, especially those who are new to the industry. This project is especially meaningful to me because I was first involved in the recovery efforts and now on the rebuilding of the Key Bridge.

Q: What would you want someone outside the project to know about the safety measures being implemented on the project?
The MDTA's project safety goal is zero fatalities and zero serious injuries. The Office of Environment, Safety and Risk Management enforces this by ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations, performing hazard inspections, and providing workforce health and safety training.

Thank you, Joe, for your leadership, dedication, and the positive impact you continue to have on Maryland's transportation future!

MDTA inspectors who support project operations in the field.

In the Community

The Key Bridge Rebuild team partnered with Brooklyn Park Elementary, Norwood Elementary, and Baybrook Elementary/ Middle schools to pilot the "Bridge to the Future" Sticker Challenge. Over 200 students from these three schools representing Baltimore City and Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties designed stickers inspired by the new Key Bridge.

> "The students in our community are now part of the legacy, helping to shape not just the bridge but the future it represents. Construction workers will proudly wear it on their hard hats!"
>
> – MDTA Chief Engineer Jim Harkness

As Baltimore celebrated America's 250th anniversary, the Key Bridge Rebuild team participated in Sail 250 Maryland. Community members stopped by to learn about progress updates and ask questions.

▲ *The Key Bridge Rebuild Outreach Team at Baltimore Sail 250.*

Historic ships passed by the Key Bridge Rebuild on their way to the Baltimore Harbor. ▼

Want to know where we will pop up next?

View our Events Calendar or sign up for updates to find out where the Key Bridge Rebuild team will be next and when public meetings will be held. The calendar is continuously updated as more events are added.

Do you want to hear from the MDTA at your next community event or meeting?

Members from the Key Bridge Rebuild team are available to attend upon request—fill out the contact form to learn more information.

Community Spotlight

UMBC George and Betsy Sherman STEM* Camp

sherman.umbc.edu

The Key Bridge Rebuild Team partnered with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County's (UMBC) George and Betsy Sherman Center to inspire the next generation of bridge builders. Through its work, the Sherman Center promotes high-quality STEM and early childhood education and builds meaningful partnerships with schools and communities.

The Key Bridge Rebuild interns joined the Sherman Center's STEM Summer Camp in Cherry Hill to teach rising third and fourth graders about the Key Bridge Rebuild. Through hands-on activities, students explored the many careers involved in bridge construction, dressed in personal protective equipment, simulated driving foundation piles, and learned how bubble curtains help protect marine life during construction.

The experience was especially meaningful because four of the interns are current UMBC students, serving as role models and demonstrating how educational pathways can lead to impactful careers in engineering, construction, and infrastructure development.

Are you a small business, retail store, or restaurant near the Key Bridge Rebuild and want to be featured in a future spotlight? Contact us through KeyBridgeRebuild.com!

Watch Allison Persing's behind the scenes video showcasing the Key Bridge Rebuild interns teaching a STEM lesson.

https://qrco.de/bgy3o6

▲ *Students demonstrating pile driving with the bubble curtain activated.*

*Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

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Stay Connected

The MDTA is committed to keeping local communities and stakeholders informed every step of the way. Go to our website to join the mailing list and subscribe to text alerts for project updates and events.

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