

# Working to Improve Your Commute: Learn about MDOT's Efforts to Keep the Baltimore Region Moving!

## *Frequently Asked Questions from the December 11th Webinar*

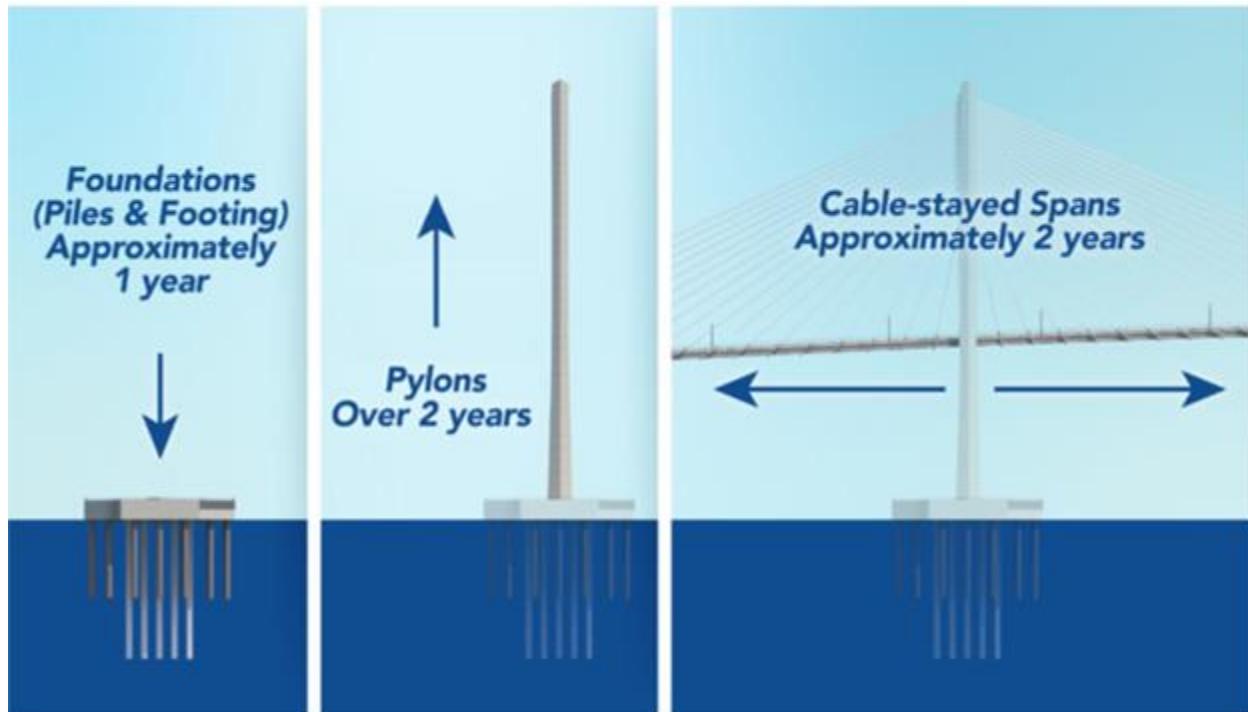
### **When will the old toll booths at Harbor Tunnel be removed?**

- The Baltimore Harbor Tunnel Toll Plaza and surrounding Exit 8 (Frankfurst Avenue/Shell Road) and Exit 9 (Childs Street) Interchanges will be modified as part of the Maryland Transportation Authority's I-895 at Frankfurst Avenue Interchange Improvements Project.
- This project has three phases. Phase 1 was completed in early 2025, which consisted of installation and activation of new tolling gantries, relocating the tolling point from the barrier toll plaza to the new gantry locations. Phase 2, anticipated to begin construction in 2027, involves the reconstruction of Frankfurst Avenue, the reconfiguration of the Frankfurst Avenue and Shell Road intersection and the consolidation of the southbound I-895 off ramps to Frankfurst avenue (Exit 8A & 8B). Phase 3 is the final phase of the project in which the toll plaza will be removed, the I-895 bridges over Frankfurst Avenue and Childs Street will be reconstructed, and the interchange will be reconstructed to its final configuration. Phase 3 is anticipated to begin after the new Francis Scott Key bridge is opened to Traffic, currently projected in year 2030.
- The Baltimore Harbor Tunnel is the primary bottleneck that limits the capacity on I-895 and not the toll booths. Further, the toll booth/plaza removal will cause higher speeds during uncongested travel periods that the current interchange geometry cannot accommodate. Therefore, the MDTA will remove the plaza in concert with the interchange reconstruction.
- The mainline bridge and interchange ramp reconstruction elements in Phase 3 of the project will require long-term, but temporary, lane closures along I-895 to complete demolition and construction activities. Such long-term lane closures will significantly reduce capacity and create congestion on I-895. Given the current travel demand seen on both I-895 and I-95 corridors and the increased impact to traffic that would result from the extended lane closures, the MDTA has scheduled Phase 3 to occur once the new Key Bridge is opened for traffic. Additional information for the I-895 at Frankfurst Avenue Interchange

Improvements Project can be found by visiting this link: <https://mdta.maryland.gov/I895TollPlaza>.

### What are the 3 stages of the Key Bridge rebuild?

- Please find below a graphic depicting the construction duration for the main elements of the rebuild.



### Are the tunnels cleaned on a regular basis?

- All six bores of the two tunnels are cleaned on a rotating basis. Recent cold weather and other overnight maintenance projects in the tunnels have delayed several scheduled cleanings. They will be addressed as needed when we have a few days of temperatures above freezing and no conflicts with other maintenance and construction projects. Several days of temperatures above freezing are required.

### Are tolls still being collected in the Baltimore Harbor area, and are there any discount options available?

- During the call, MDTA Executive Director Bruce Gartner referenced the suspension of tolls from Eastbound I-695 (in Dundalk) to Broening Highway. Since the tollbooths were removed on I-95 several years ago, toll collection has continued in the same location via overhead structures (gantries). If commuters are concerned

about toll rates, the MDTA does offer discount plans that provide reduced rates for people using the tunnels at least 24 times within 45 days. Greater savings (as low as \$1.40 per trip) are achieved for a maximum of 50 trips within 45 days.

**The old incenTrip app gave bonuses for shifting commutes outside the peak travel hours. Will the CommuterCash app include these kinds of incentives?**

- MWCOG Commuter Connections has not yet built this feature back into CommuterCash, but it is something they plan to evaluate as a potential future enhancement.

**Which route should I take during the Key Bridge rebuild project?**

- We encourage commuters to consult the different navigational options to determine the best route(s) for their commute.

**Can you speak to how the roads in Dundalk will be repaired from all the truck-use post-key bridge collapse? Also, can you speak more to how trucks can be diverted off the smaller roads?**

- MDOT SHA continues to monitor pavement conditions on detour routes and work with the trucking industry as part of the overall response to the Key Bridge rebuild.

**How will you all continue to promote specifically the Commuter Buses across the region?**

- MDOT recently expanded the Commuter Choice Maryland Ride Together Rewards Program to include a new Baltimore Transit Incentive Program. During designated promotional periods (first week of each month), NEW first-time transit users in the Baltimore region can take advantage of exciting new incentives to try transit and save money. First-time transit users can download the CharmPass mobile app, do a quick program sign up, and receive free transit passes to experience the benefits of riding transit (including for Commuter Bus).
- The MTA has historically worked with the Counties and major employers throughout the State regarding Commuter Bus service that fits with Marylanders needs. Service changes were made both in response to this coordination and right sizing service to meet existing demand. Beginning in 2025, to compliment the coordination with the Counties and major employers, the MTA began running analyses similar to what the MTA does for our Local Bus for planning future service. These analyses show how the Commuter Bus service can be adjusted to make improvements for MTA users. These efforts will culminate in an Annual Service Plan that will make

adjustments across the Commuter Bus network, which will be finalized in Summer 2026.

**Are there plans to improve GPS navigation and technology in the tunnels?**

- The tunnels are outfitted with FM radio rebroadcast systems and the MDTA recently explored adding a GPS system (e.g. WAZE beacon) to a recent RFP for upgrades to the radio rebroadcast system. Due to certain limitations with specific users related to data-sharing and other constraints, the MDTA chose not to make the technology a requirement. Ultimately, none of the bidders proposed to add GPS rebroadcast systems. The MDTA will continue monitoring industry solutions for effective improvements in the future.

**Could we have notification signs inside the tunnel to remind drivers of the speed limit?**

- MDTA will investigate the existing speed limit signing and evaluate opportunities for enhancement. Speed limit signs are generally posted along both the I-95 and I-895 corridors at regular intervals and in the vicinity of the Baltimore Harbor (I-895) and Fort McHenry (I-95) tunnel entrances. The tunnels themselves are physically constrained with limited height and width, which restricts the amount of space available to place highway signing inside of the tunnels.

**Please fix Keith Ave!**

- The MDTA has contacted the Baltimore City Department of Transportation as Baltimore City owns and maintains Keith Avenue – we will follow up with a response as soon as possible.

**I've noticed that the red line was not mentioned explicitly during the commuter presentation. Is the project still expected to be operational by early 2031?**

- At the state level, the Red Line project is currently funded through the design phase. MTA anticipates a combination of local, state, and federal funds will be used to fund construction of the Red Line. MTA is identifying and evaluating a broad range of options to finance and deliver the project. Keep up to date with the Red Line's progress at <https://redlinemaryland.com/>

**Who can I contact regarding issues with the Transit app?**

- Basic Transit App instructions can be found here: <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/transit>

- Contact information for MTA can be found here: <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/contact-mta>
- Transit App email: [transportation@aacounty.org](mailto:transportation@aacounty.org)

### **What can citizens do to help get the Key Bridge finished before 2030?**

- The MDTA is working day and night to deliver the Key Bridge Rebuild. The MDTA appreciates the support and understanding from the surrounding communities and acknowledges the impact the loss of the Key Bridge has had on the Baltimore region – from longer commute times to financial strain on businesses in our State. The MDTA looks forward to continuing to partner with communities and is always seeking opportunities to share information about the project, including the time and resources that it will take to deliver the new bridge.

### **Are there plans for any new MARC lines?**

- MTA is not currently planning for any new MARC lines at this time. To see what is planned for the MARC system please refer to the MARC Growth and Transformation Plan here: <https://www.mta.maryland.gov/marc-growth-plan>. This plan synthesizes MTA plans, policies, and reports with performance data, local and national trends, and public and stakeholder input. MTA comprehensively analyzed this information to create targeted recommendations for growth and investment that coordinate with the needs of the transit system overall.