



Long Term Impacts of the Key Bridge Collapse on Baltimore-area Residents Daily Lives

WEBSITE: <https://21cc.jhu.edu/baltimore-area-survey/>

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1. Introduction

On March 26, 2024, Baltimore’s Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed as the result of a container ship striking one of its main supports. The collapse tragically killed six workers and shuttered the Port of Baltimore for months, which disrupted international trade and resulted in a loss of income for thousands of port workers and workers in related businesses. As local, state, and federal government agencies responded, the daily lives of many Baltimore area residents were impacted as the bridge that was used by 35,000 daily commuters no longer existed, causing long term traffic issues.

Maryland’s Governor Moore signed the bipartisan Protecting Opportunities and Regional Trade (PORT) Act into law in early April 2024 and Baltimore City Mayor Scott outlined the Key Bridge Response 2024 Action Plan to support workers and businesses affected by the bridge collapse. As the local response to temper the immediate disruption was put into action, transportation officials began to publish estimates of the cost and timeline to rebuild the Key Bridge, with an estimated reopening in fall 2028 at a cost of \$1.7 to \$1.9 billion. In August 2024, the Maryland Transportation Authority awarded construction firm Kiewit to design the bridge rebuild and in December 2024, the United States Congress approved full federal funding for the rebuild.

In early April 2024, in the immediate aftermath of the collapse, the [Goucher College Poll](#) surveyed 705 Baltimore City registered voters, asking about a variety of issues including the impact of the Key Bridge on their daily lives, expectations on the rebuild timeline, and their opinion of how Mayor Scott, Governor Moore, and President Biden responded to the collapse. Respondents expressed broad approval of the politicians’ response, with Governor Moore receiving the highest approval rating of 74% responding “excellent” or “good”. About one-fifth of respondents said the collapse impacted them and their family’s daily lives “a great deal” while 37% said it had no impact. One-third of respondents said they expected the bridge rebuild to take 1 to 3 years, while a plurality of 39% thought it would take 4 to 5 years, and 19% said it would take 6 to 10 years.

In this research brief, we examine longer-term impacts of the collapse on. We use data from the [2024 Baltimore Area Survey](#), which was in the field in fall 2024, approximately six to seven months after the collapse, to estimate these measures. In our [initial report](#) on the findings from the 2024 survey, we found that just under half of Baltimore area residents reported that their lives were affected by the Key Bridge collapse, with about one in ten reporting that it affected them “a great deal”. In this brief, we examine the responses to the full set of questions about the Key Bridge collapse to understand the impact of the bridge collapse on various aspects of residents’ daily lives, provide information on confidence in government response to the collapse, and confidence in the rebuild timeline.

2. Data

This research brief uses data from the 2024 Baltimore Area Survey (BAS). The BAS 2024 comprises data from 1,492 respondents, 934 from Baltimore City and 558 from Baltimore County. The data and the findings we report here are weighted to be representative of the adult population of Baltimore City and Baltimore County. The overall margin of error for the sample is ± 3.8 percentage points.

The below questions were asked of all respondents, to which they could respond "Not at all", "A little", "Some", or "A great deal":

- To what extent has the loss of the Key Bridge directly impacted you and your family’s daily lives?
- How much has the collapse of the Key Bridge affected your ability to get to work or school?
- How much has the collapse of the Key Bridge affected your ability to see friends or family?
- How much has the collapse of the Key Bridge affected your ability to run errands like going to the store?
- How much has the collapse of the Key Bridge affected your ability to get to doctor’s appointments or other medical care?

The next two sets of questions were split across respondents, with half receiving the first set and half receiving the second set.

The first set of questions focused on perceptions of the timeline for rebuild; for the first three, respondents could answer “None”, “A little”, “Some”, “Quite a bit”, or “A great deal”. A total of 731 respondents were asked these questions for which the margin of error is ± 5.4 percentage points:

- How much confidence do you have that **local governments in the area** will do what is necessary to get the Key Bridge rebuilt quickly?
- How much confidence do you have that the **government of the State of Maryland** will do what is necessary to get the Key Bridge rebuilt quickly?
- How much confidence do you have that the **federal government** will do what is necessary to get the Key Bridge rebuilt quickly?

- How long do you think it will take to rebuild the bridge? Respondents could answer "Less than four years", "Four years", "Five years", "Six or more years", or "Not sure the bridge will be rebuilt".

The second set of questions focused on perceptions of government response to the collapse and included a question on the timeline for rebuild that included the State of Maryland's estimate; for the first three questions, respondents could answer "Very poor", "Poor", "Fair", "Moderate", "Good", or "Very good". A total of 761 respondents were asked these questions for which the margin of error is ± 5.2 percentage points:

- How would you rate the job done by **local governments in the area** to help people affected by the Key Bridge collapse? Would you say that the job they have done is...
- How would you rate the job done by the **government of the State of Maryland** to help people affected by the Key Bridge collapse? Would you say that the job they have done is...
- How would you rate the job done by the **federal government** to help people affected by the Key Bridge collapse? Would you say that the job they have done is...
- In May 2024, the State of Maryland announced that it would take just over 4 years to rebuild the Key Bridge. How long do you think it will take to rebuild the bridge? Respondents could answer "Less than four years", "Four years", "Five years", "Six or more years", or "Not sure the bridge will be rebuilt".

3. Impact on Daily Lives

About half of Baltimore area residents reported that the Key Bridge Collapse impacted their daily lives six to seven months after the collapse

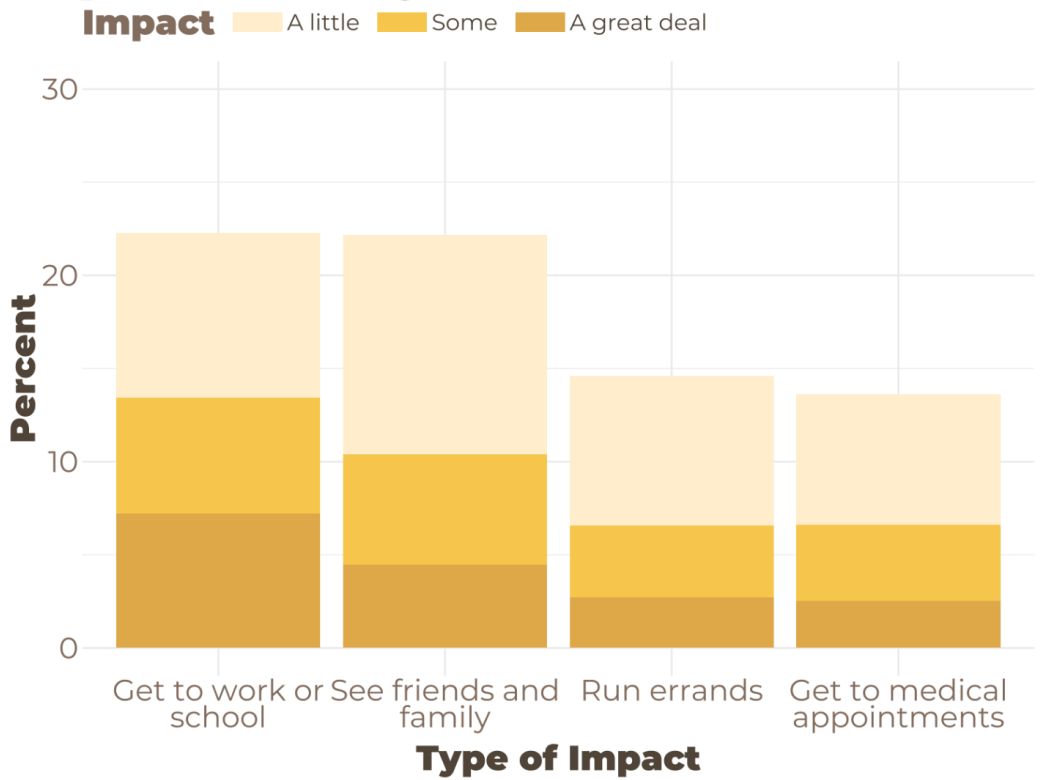
About half of Baltimore area residents reported that the Key Bridge Collapse impacts their daily lives six to seven months after the collapse. This is down from the 63% that reported an impact in responses to the April 2024 Goucher Poll (it is worth noting the Goucher sample was restricted to registered voters only in Baltimore City). We did not find clear disparities in overall level of impact of the Key Bridge Collapse by income, educational attainment, employment status, race, and jurisdiction (Baltimore City or Baltimore County).

The collapse affects people's lives in different ways. Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of residents reporting at least some impact of the Key Bridge Collapse on their daily lives across four areas. About a quarter reported at least a little impact on their ability to get to work or school, as well as seeing family and friends. While the total percentage of Baltimore area residents impacted in these two domains is similar, a greater portion of responses indicated their ability to get to work or school was impacted "a great deal." Meanwhile, even fewer residents (around 15%) see an impact on their ability to run errands or to get access to medical care. Overall, 36% of residents reported being impacted at least "a little" across at least one of these daily activities.

Figure 3.1: Share of Baltimore-area residents whose daily activities are impacted by type of impact

We did not find clear disparities in overall level of impact of the Key Bridge Collapse by income, educational attainment, employment status, race, and jurisdiction (Baltimore City or Baltimore County).

Impact on Daily Activities



Impact by Distance

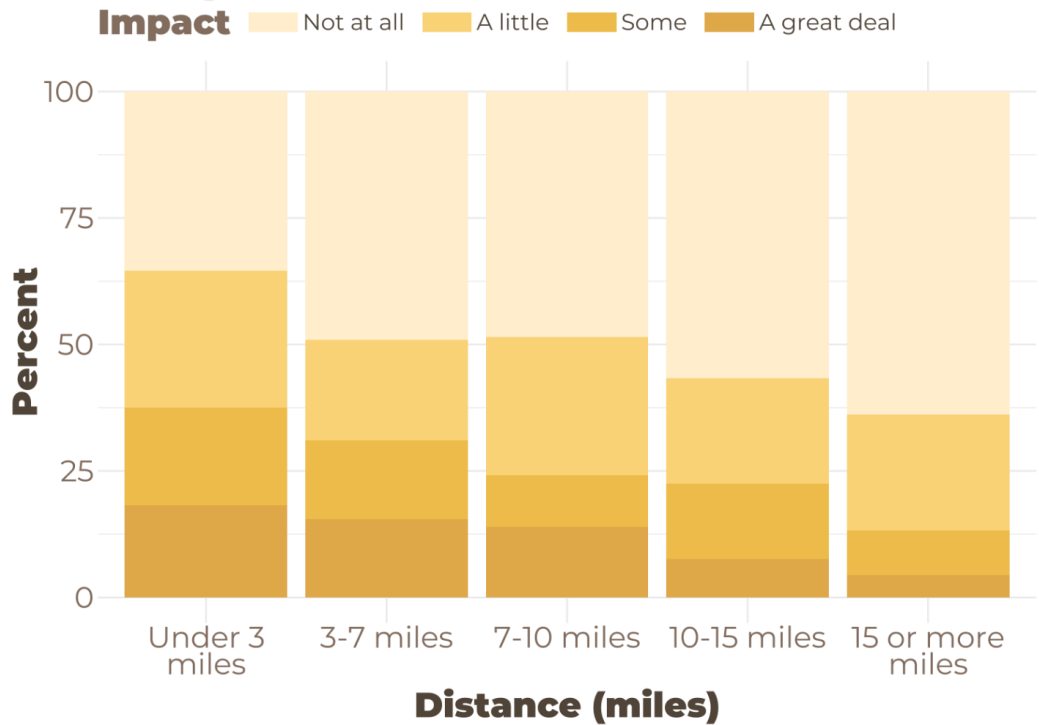
Proximity to the collapsed Key Bridge is associated with a greater degree of impact from the collapse.¹ More than 6 in 10 residents who live within three miles of the collapsed bridge reported that the collapse affects their lives. Furthermore, a third of those residents reported the collapse affects their daily lives “a great deal”. Meanwhile, among residents who live 15 or more miles from the bridge, fewer than 40% reported the collapse affects their daily activities.

1. We split respondents into four groups (quartiles) based on the distance they lived from the Key Bridge. We then split the closest group, under seven miles, into two groups, under three miles and three to seven miles.

Figure 3.2: Share of Baltimore-area residents whose daily activities are impacted by distance of home to the Key Bridge

More than 6 in 10 residents who live within three miles of the collapsed bridge reported that the collapse affects their lives

Impact on Daily Lives by Distance to Bridge



4. Assessment of Government Response

About three in ten Baltimore area residents thought that each level of government had done a “good” or “very good” job responding to the collapse

Among the half of the sample that we asked about how different levels of government (i.e. local, state, and federal) had helped those affected by the Key Bridge collapse, there were few differences between their evaluations of local, state, and federal government responses. About three in ten Baltimore area residents think that each level of government had done a “good” or “very good” job responding to the collapse. Most Baltimore area residents, however, think that all three levels had done either a “fair” or “moderate” job helping those affected.

Residents who reported their daily lives are impacted “a great deal” by the collapse had a more negative view of the government’s response, with more than 3 in 10 assessing each government level as having a “poor” or “very poor response”, making them two times more likely to report this level of response as the Baltimore area population overall.

Confidence in Government's Ability to Rebuild

Among the half of the sample that we asked about their confidence in the different government levels’ ability to do what is necessary to rebuild the bridge quickly, we see a similar trend of little variation in confidence by government level. Across all three levels of government, about 7 in 10 residents have at least “some” degree of confidence in the government’s ability to rebuild the bridge. Nearly 4 in 10 residents

reported having “quite a bit” or a “a great deal” of confidence – with slightly more holding this opinion of the state and local government.

Assessment of Rebuild Timeline

There is some indication that residents do not fully trust the government’s reported timeline to rebuild the Key Bridge. We asked respondents when they expected the bridge rebuild would be completed. To ask the question, we randomly assigned half of the survey respondents to receive a question that mentioned the government’s anticipated timeline (just over four years, as of May 2024), while the other half received a question that made no mention of the government’s anticipated timeline.

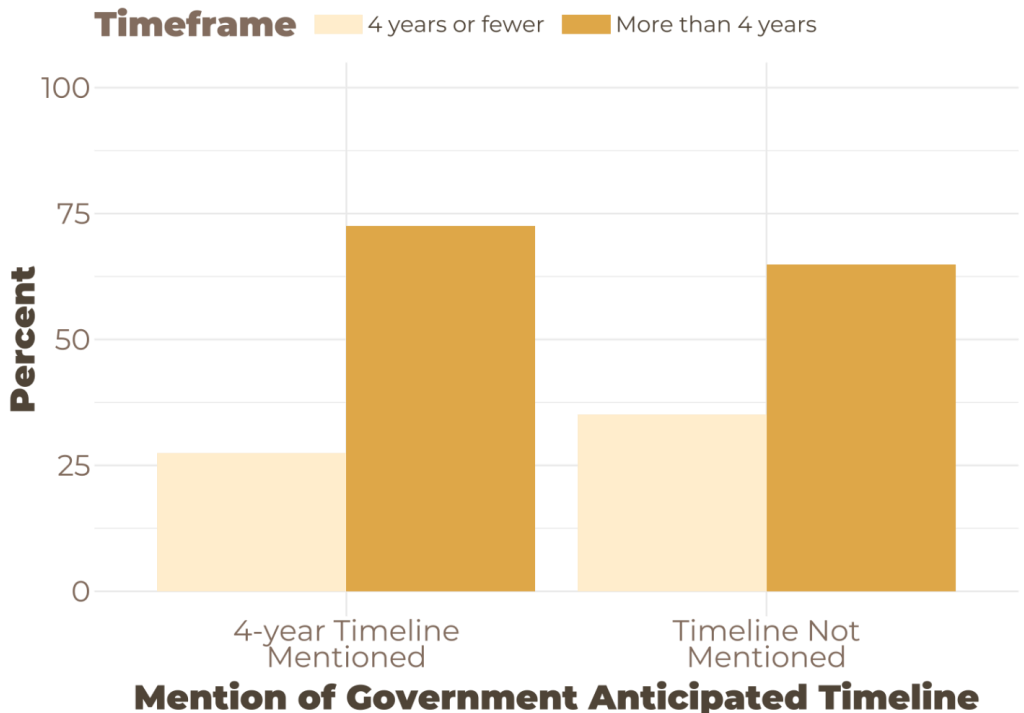
Respondents who were shown the question with the government’s anticipated timeline were more likely to think that the rebuild would take longer (more than 4 years, including about 5% of residents who think it may never be rebuilt): about 73% of respondents shown the government’s anticipated timeline think it will take longer than 4 years to rebuild compared to about 65% of respondents not shown the anticipated timeline. In other words, residents appear to generally not trust the government’s expressed timeline for rebuilding the bridge.

Across all three levels of government, about 7 in 10 residents have at least “some” degree of confidence in the government’s ability to rebuild the bridge

Figure 4.1: Percent of respondents' anticipated bridge rebuild timeline by whether the State's anticipated timeline was mentioned or not

73% of respondents shown the government’s anticipated timeline thought it would take longer than 4 years to rebuild compared to about 65% of respondents not shown the anticipated timeline

Residents' Anticipated Rebuild Timeline



4. Conclusion

About half a year after the Key Bridge Collapse, we find that about half of Baltimore area residents felt some level of daily impact from the collapse. Across Baltimore area residents, nearly one in four report the collapse impacts their ability to get to work or school, as well as their ability to see friends. Meanwhile, slightly more than 1 in 10 report the impact on their ability to run errands or get to doctor's appointments or other medical care. Overall, those who live closest to the collapsed bridge reported the greatest degree of the impact, with nearly 2 in 10 residents living within three miles of the bridge having reported that the collapse impacts them a "a great deal".

Generally, residents felt at least indifferent towards the government's response and most held some degree of confidence in the government's rebuild efforts. However, residents might generally be skeptical of the government's target timeline of rebuilding the bridge by 2028. The overwhelming majority of residents expect the rebuild to take more than 4 years, with even more residents agreeing with the longer timeline *if* they were shown the government's target timeline.



What is Baltimore Area Survey?

The Baltimore Area Survey (BAS) is a new, annual, representative survey of Baltimore City and County residents being run by Johns Hopkins 21st Century Cities Initiative (21CC). The BAS will help scholars, community members, and policymakers learn more about the Baltimore area's strengths and challenges from residents. 21CC affiliated researchers will partner with Baltimore community leaders and policy makers to identify pertinent topics to study and then field a survey with questions on those topics to a representative address-based sample of Baltimore City and Baltimore County residents every year. Having the survey in the field on an annual basis means that policy makers and community leaders are never more than a year away from asking important questions and having timely data. The survey will also allow for measuring change over time and looking at perceptions and opinions before and after significant events.

Find out more:

Website: 21cc.jhu.edu/baltimore-area-survey

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