



OUR STORY OF **PROGRESS**

THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS MEMORIAL BRIDGE



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Washingtonians:

The journey of remaking the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge between cultures, communities, and people began with one simple, yet monumental order: to set the highest standard in bridge design, while paying homage to an American icon. We could not be prouder of the men and women who embraced this order with eagerness, tenacity, persistence, and resilience. Their dedication to upholding the legacy of Frederick Douglass and the ideals he championed are what has given us all an immense amount pride for the past and present, and of great hope for the future.

A large, transformative project like this does not happen without the support of so many stakeholders and partners. We had our champions in Congress, DC's own Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, then-Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, local and federal government stakeholders, and community partners. Together, our shared vision and goals enabled DDOT to successfully undertake and complete our city's largest public infrastructure project to date. I thank each of them for their hard work and commitment, and I am honored to have played a part in our drive to better connect communities on both sides of the Anacostia River and to building a structure that has now become just as prominent in our monumental landscape as the memorials all along the National Mall.

This Story of Progress Commemorative Book shares the journey of the construction of the New Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge from conception to completion in 20 key moments. Each of these moments celebrates important milestones that encapsulate the remaking of the bridge between cultures, communities, and people. We invite you to take this journey with us as we share our this remarkable story of progress.



Muriel Bowser
MAYOR



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our vision of rebuilding the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge was more than just one of transforming transportation infrastructure that— after 68 years of serving residents, visitors, and commuters in the Washington DC area—was showing its age, both structurally and in its design.

We also wanted to deliver on the commitment in our long-range moveDC plan to make traveling in the District safer, cleaner, faster, and easier. We wanted to build a more connected DC – connecting Ward 8 and Ward 6, connecting residents to jobs and prosperity, and connecting our entire community to the future of multi-modal transportation. Our story of progress draws us that much closer to Mayor Bowser's goal of building safer, stronger, and healthier neighborhoods across the District's eight wards.

Let us remember the symbolic importance of the Frederick Memorial Bridge. It stands as a link, bridging the past and the future. This iconic structure is a true testament to our dedication to progress, our resilience as a city, and our determination to leave a legacy of excellence for generations to come. Today, the FDMB serves as a visual reminder of the unity and connectivity that lies in the heart of every Washingtonian and our nation as a whole. We hope this book illustrates our collective sentiments of optimism, pride, hope, and gratitude for how far we've come and all that lies ahead.



Everett Lott

Everett Lott

DIRECTOR, DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



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**WE HAVE TO DO
WITH THE PAST
ONLY AS WE CAN
MAKE IT USEFUL
TO THE PRESENT
AND TO THE
FUTURE.**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

For nearly seven decades, the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge connected neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River with the U.S. Capitol and downtown corridor. Also known as the South Capitol Street Bridge, the iconic bridge named after abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass carried more than 70,000 commuters daily prior to its reconstruction. As it had exceeded its useful lifespan, a reconstruction project was initiated to replace the aging structure and further support the ongoing revitalization of the Anacostia Waterfront and development.



OUR JOURNEY OF PROGRESS BEGINS

Public unveiling of bridge design

Mayor Muriel Bowser joined South Capitol Bridgebuilders, the lead contractor and AECOM, the lead bridge designer to unveil plans for the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge project on August 10, 2017. Renderings and video simulations revealed a distinct design that included three sets of parallel arches, multi-use paths, pedestrian overlooks, and traffic ovals boasting green space on each side of the bridge.



Groundbreaking

On February 13, 2018, Mayor Muriel Bowser, Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, Senate Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, and Ward 8 Councilmember Trayon White joined other elected officials, dignitaries, and community members to break ground on the New Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. The groundbreaking coincided with the commemoration of the bicentennial of the birth year of the bridge's namesake Frederick Douglass.

After nearly a decade of planning, designing, and securing funding for the \$441 million South Capitol Street Corridor project that began with replacing the then 68-year-old Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, work began on what would become the largest infrastructure project in the District Department of Transportation's (DDOT) history.



GAINING PERSPECTIVE, BUILDING PRIDE

Visit to Frederick Douglass house

In honor of Black History Month and the birthday of the project's namesake, in February 2020 the project team visited the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site. Frederick Douglass' estate, known as "Cedar Hill," is in the Anacostia neighborhood in Ward 8 and where Frederick Douglass lived the last nearly two decades of his life. The main attraction of the site is the historic house, which is furnished with many of Douglass' original belongings and sits on top of a 50-foot hill overlooking the city. Everyone in attendance expressed that they learned at least one new fact about the life of Frederick Douglass, which created a newfound sense of pride in being able to work on the project.



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**BE NOT DISCOURAGED.
THERE IS A FUTURE FOR
YOU... THE RESISTANCE
ENCOUNTERED NOW
PREDICATES HOPE.**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS



AN ICON EMERGES

Installation of V-Piers

In 2019, the construction of the New Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge began to show visible signs of progress with the erection of its signature V-piers. They get their name from the V-shape of the support pier of a bridge that will be visible above the water. Later that year, the first segments of the above-deck iconic arches, arguably the most aesthetically pleasing component of the bridge, were installed.



First two arches installed

The arches, which are made primarily of steel and divided into 56 pieces or segments, were carefully constructed in stages over a period of six months. The process started with building temporary arch supports on both the west and east abutments, which were constructed throughout the Fall of 2019 on both sides of the V-piers. By mid-March 2020, the first pair of arches, designated as the West Arches, were fully erected.

DID YOU KNOW?

The New FDMB arches are made primarily of steel and were divided into 56 segments that weighed between 25 and 75 tons each. The entire bridge is comprised of 700 tons of structural steel. That is the weight of 55 city buses or six times as heavy as a blue whale, the largest mammal to have ever lived.



ALL EYES ON THE ARCHES

Final arch installation

The New FDMB team celebrated the final installation of the arches in August 2020. The arches were carefully constructed in stages over a period of six months. Its slender, modern design was the brainchild of AECOM, the lead designer on the project.

Prior to the final arch installation, several of the hard-working men and women serving on the project team had an opportunity to sign the inside of the final arch segment, making their own unique mark on this historic project.





SETTING A NEW STANDARD

Secretary of Transportation visit

In late May 2021, Mayor Muriel Bowser and District Department of Transportation Director Everett Lott welcomed Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer to the New FDMB project site. The group toured the construction site and discussed the importance of the American Jobs Plan to infrastructure projects such as the New FDMB project.

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DDOT is committed to elevating and advancing transportation equity by evaluating our policies, planning, community engagement, and project delivery, to ensure public investments in transportation justly benefit all residents, visitors and commuters.

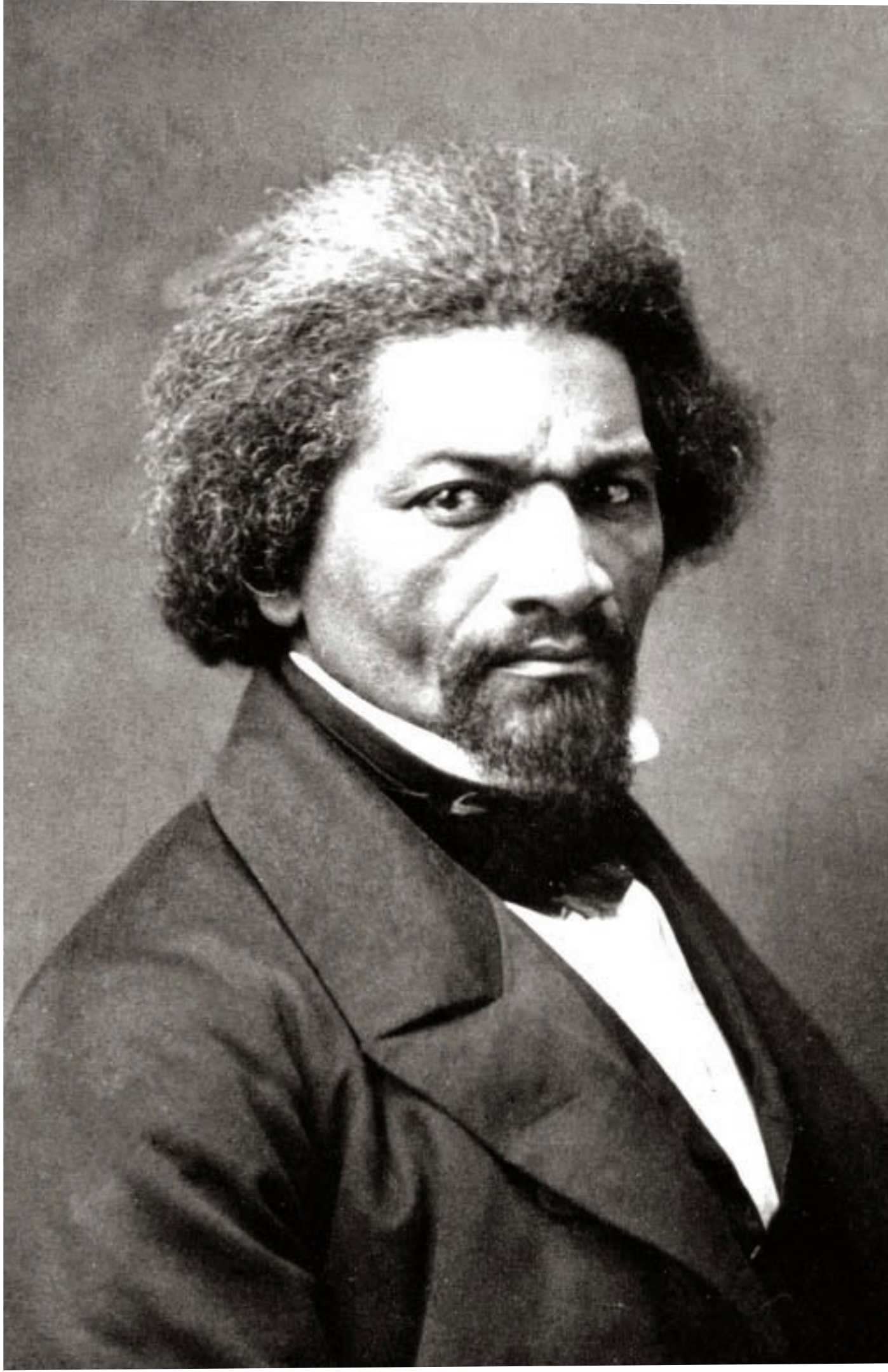


A LIVING LEGACY OF PROGRESS

STRIVE Mentorship Program

In May 2021, the New FDMB project team launched STRIVE, a Mentorship Teaching Program for District high school students with an affinity for S.T.E.M. and those looking to define their career paths. This six-week program, conducted by way of weekly learning sessions, focused on key areas in heavy civil engineering and construction such as ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) and lighting, heavy equipment and operations, concrete and masonry, maintenance of traffic, and communications outreach. One of the most valuable components of the program was that students had an opportunity to engage with engineering and construction professionals inside and outside of the classroom to foster meaningful industry relationships that can be leveraged as they begin their careers.

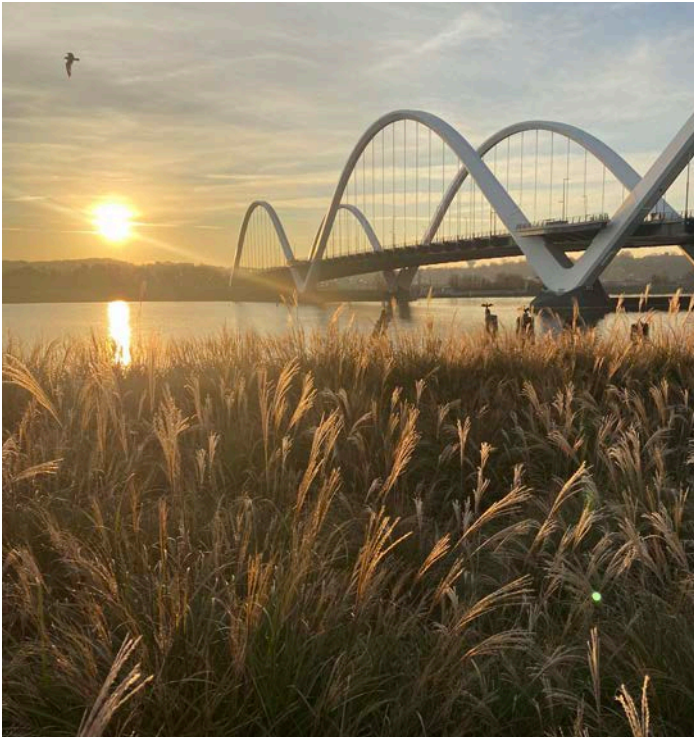




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**YOU ARE NOT
JUDGED BY THE
HEIGHT YOU HAVE
RISEN, BUT FROM
THE DEPTH YOU
HAVE CLIMBED.**

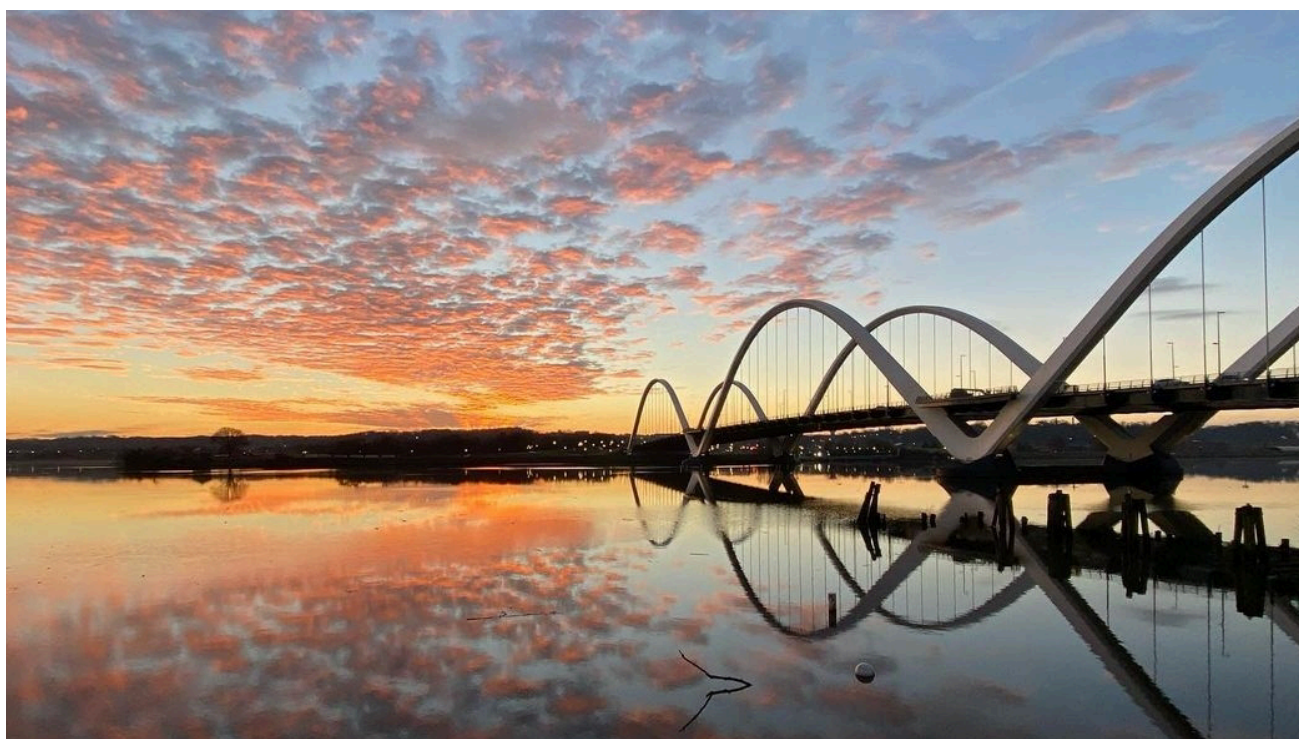
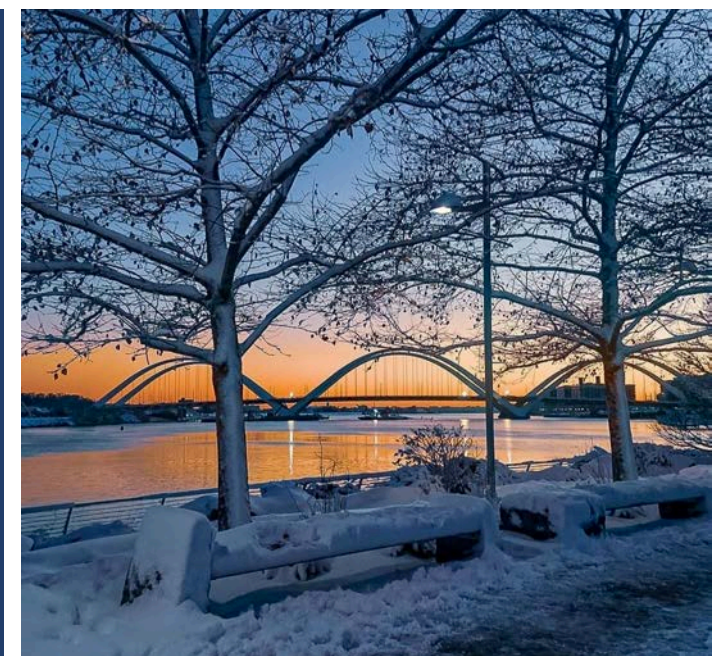
FREDERICK DOUGLASS

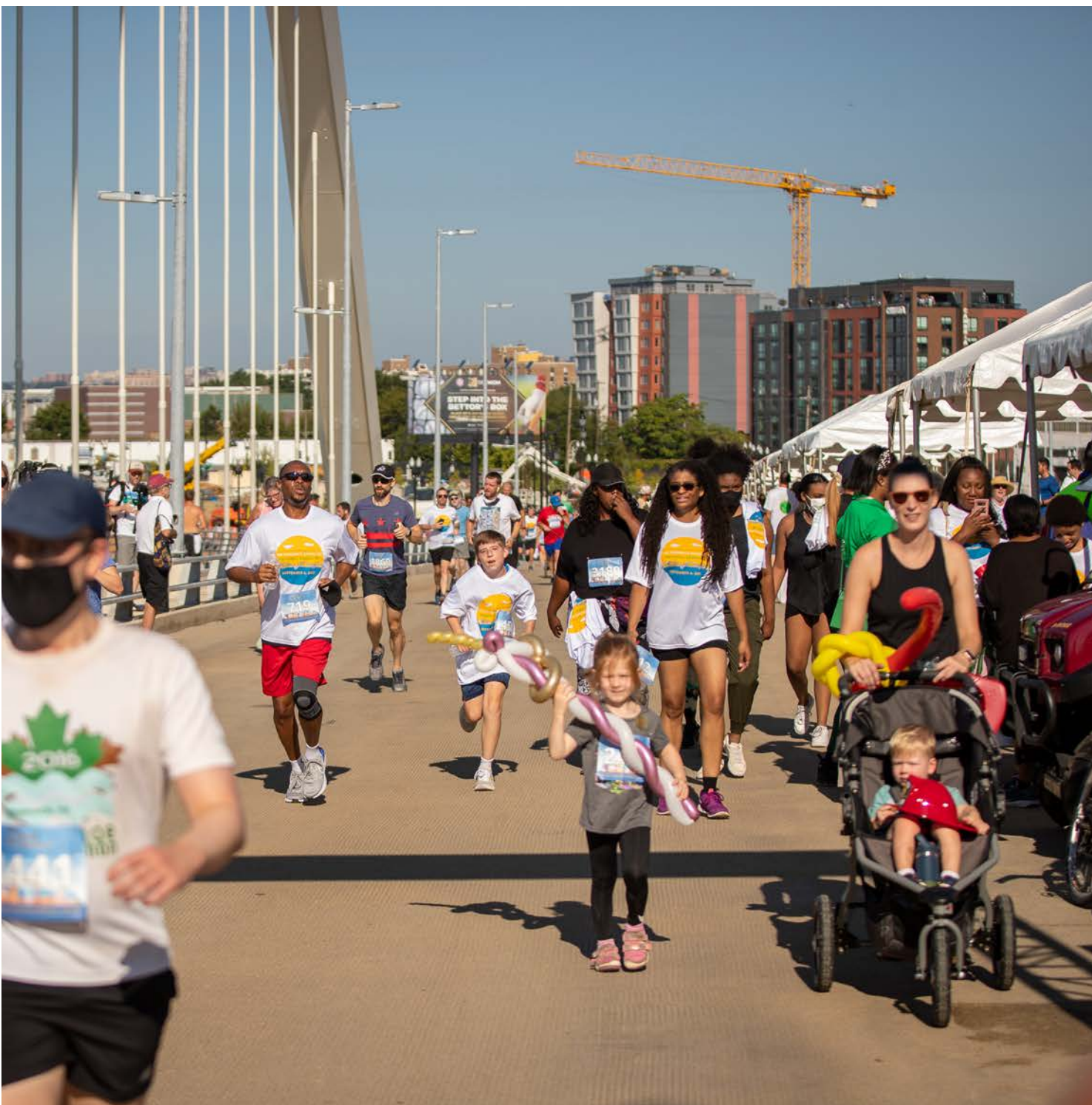


FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT

Community construction perspectives

With the installation of the arches, we gained new vantage points of the bridge across the region. We thank all our neighbors around the DMV for tagging us and sending images of the bridge from their vantage point. Here is a snapshot of our collective #progress, through the lens of our digital community.





RUNNING THE RACE, TOGETHER

Deck opening Community Run

On Labor Day 2021, thousands of people from across the region came out to celebrate the opening of the New Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge (FDMB). This monumental week of festivities began on Labor Day with a 5K Fun Run led by D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and a Community Day, which offered bicyclists and pedestrians an opportunity to preview the bridge before its official opening to traffic later in the week.

Guests of the Community Day enjoyed live music and entertainment from a local band and dance companies as well as nearly a dozen food trucks and 30 local vendors and organizations.



OUR BRIDGE, OUR MOMENT, OUR LEGACY

Ribbon cutting with Frederick Douglass family on the bridge.

On Tuesday, September 7, 2021, a formal Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was hosted by Mayor Bowser and featured an all-star lineup of speakers that included Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, Ward 8 Councilmember Trayon White, Kenneth Morris, Jr., a descendant of Frederick Douglass, and DDOT Director Everett Lott. Other members of the Frederick Douglass family were present as well.



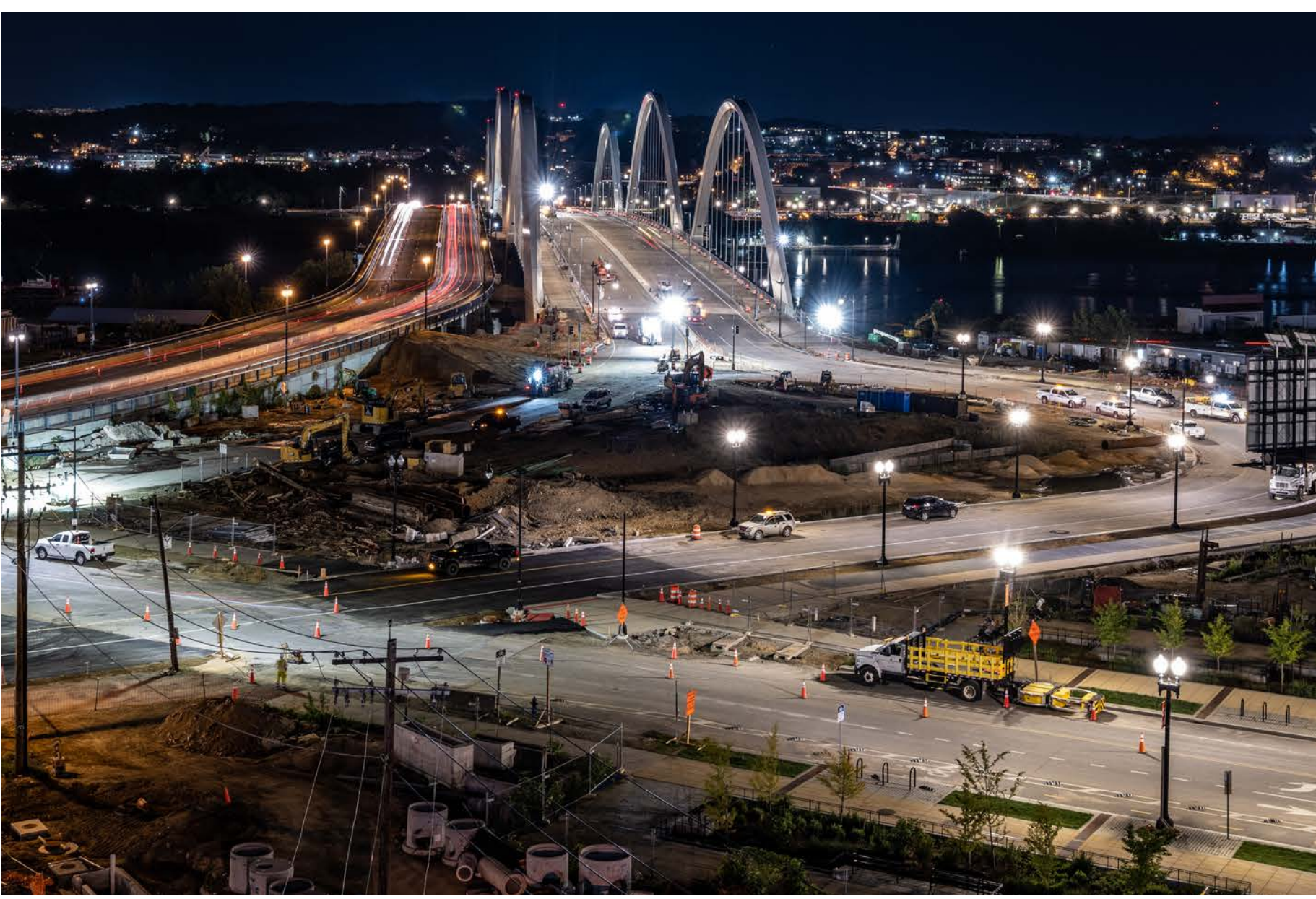
The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony opened with a lively procession from Duke Ellington School of the Arts' marching band and concluded with a water show tribute from the DC Fireboat John H. Glenn Jr., which also made an appearance at the Community Day.



FIRST PASSAGE

Traffic switch with first cars over the bridge

History was made when shortly after midnight on September 11, 2021, the first cars passed over the new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. This passage marked a significant milestone in our journey of progress.



DID YOU KNOW?

The New FDMB is the first bridge in the Nation's Capital with arches that extend above the deck. The three pairs of arches top out at 168 feet above the water.

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**WHERE THERE IS
NO STRUGGLE,
THERE IS NO
PROGRESS.**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS





DID YOU KNOW ?

The New FDMB arches are illuminated by LED light fixtures that were installed on the cable stay hangers that support the bridge deck, as well as on the footings of the piers. This unique aesthetic lighting makes it appear as if there are lights embedded in the arches.

THE ARCHES IN LIGHTS

Lighting of the bridge

Aesthetic lighting was installed on the bridge by Aldridge Electric and KSA and designed by Randy Burkett Lighting Design. The programmable lighting system underwent its own design and system configuration, which allows it to use various color patterns and operate as a standalone system.



CULTURES, COMMUNITIES, AND PEOPLE

MLK Day walk across the bridge

In January 2022, the FDMB was chosen as the destination for the DC Peace Walk on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The King family, including Martin Luther King III, Andrea Waters King, and Yolanda King, and other civil rights leaders joined the Peace Walk to march for voting rights. Walking on the bridge emphasized the message to Congress to pass the voting rights legislation as it did the infrastructure bill.



Other Give Back Opportunities

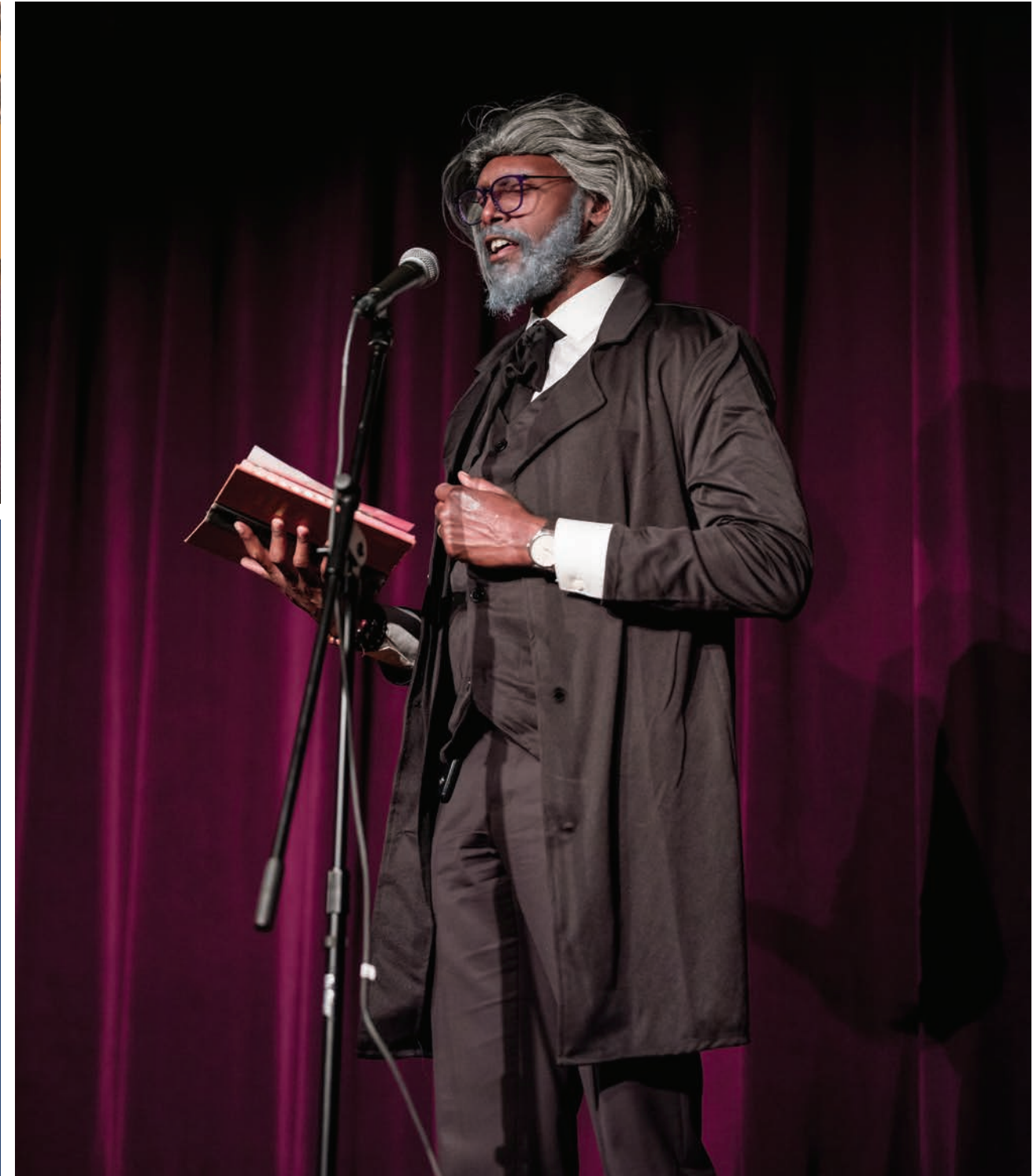
Over the four-year construction process, the New FDMB team was proud to partner with two of the District's finest non-profit organizations, Martha's Table and the Thelma D. Jones Breast Cancer Fund, to give back to our neighbors in need in Wards 6 and Ward 8. Due to the generous support of the team and other generous donors, we were able to provide essential supplies and food to less fortunate communities.



PROGRESS LIVE!

In November 2019 the New FDMB team launched “Progress LIVE!”, a live event series to promote the bridge project to the community and help to build genuine connections with the residents who directly benefit from the bridge in a personal and engaging way. The inaugural event was held at Busboys and Poets Anacostia to celebrate the bridge project’s quarterly Progress Magazine’s Fall feature of its founder, Andy Shallal. It was held in tandem with the restaurant’s signature Open Mic Poetry Night, with community artists offering poetry centered on the theme of “progress,” paying homage to the FDMB’s namesake.

In February 2022 the Progress LIVE! event series continued with an FDMB-themed trivia night at local restaurant Solace Outpost. Guests also enjoyed a front row seat to the FDMB lighting in celebration of Black History Month.





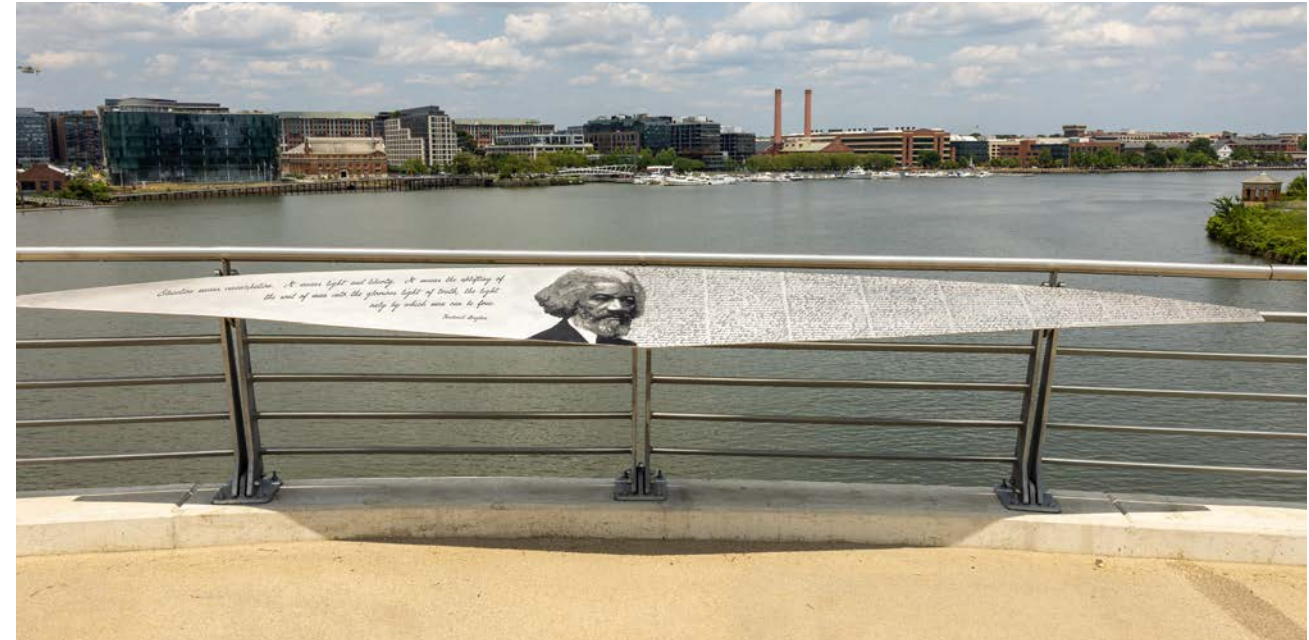
MORE THAN JUST A BRIDGE

The West and East Ovals

Connecting to esplanades on both sides of the Anacostia River via pedestrian and bicycle paths, the Ovals aim to improve connectivity, increase recreational green space, and provide stormwater management by capturing and retaining stormwater runoff. They also create a dignified entryway into the city's core and serve as potential locations for future memorials.

Each Oval has its own distinct look and feel as well as function. The West Oval was envisioned as a formal urban park with a large central plaza intended for events and informal gatherings, and it is designed to accentuate direct views of the U.S. Capitol. By contrast, the East Oval is mostly surrounded by open parkland and provides motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists with wide vistas of the river and the city skyline to the north. Both ovals provide needed parkland, upgraded amenities, and enhanced bike and pedestrian facilities including signalized crossings, and improved access to recreation and gathering spaces for the community.

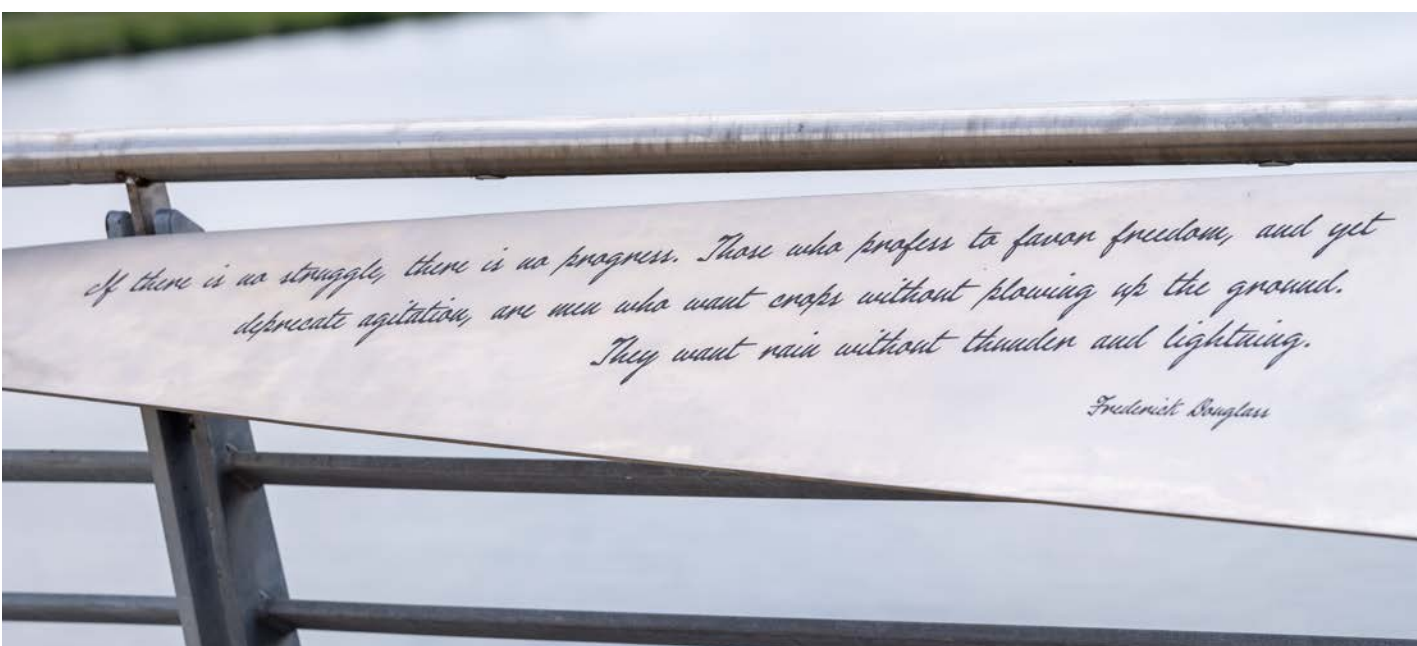




A PATHWAY TOWARD THE FUTURE

Pedestrian and Bike Paths and Overlooks

The FDMB boasts 18-foot-wide sidewalks on each side of the bridge that function as a split-use bike and pedestrian pathway that extends the Anacostia River Walk Trail. The pathway, which allows 8 feet for pedestrians and 10 feet for cyclists, is the first split-use pathway on a bridge in the District where each has its own designated spaces. It also features four pedestrian overlooks, two on each side, that offer sweeping views of both sides of the Anacostia River and stunning plaques commemorating the life of the bridge's namesake Frederick Douglass.





MAKING THE CONNECTION, FROM EAST TO WEST

Howard Road Interchange and other connections

The reconstruction effort of the South Capitol Street Corridor project included construction of the new traffic oval west of the bridge connecting South Capitol Street, Potomac Avenue SE/SW, and Q Street SW; the new traffic oval east of the bridge connecting South Capitol Street, Suitland Parkway, Anacostia Drive access road, and Howard Road SE; realignment of South Capitol Street from Firth Sterling Avenue SE to the east oval; and reconfiguration of Interstate I-295 Interchange with Firth Sterling Avenue SE, Suitland Parkway, and Howard Road SE.



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**MY HOPES WERE NEVER
BRIGHTER THAN NOW.**

FREDERICK DOUGLASS



**USE THE QR CODE TO VIEW ADDITIONAL MILESTONES,
PROJECT VIDEOS, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.**



