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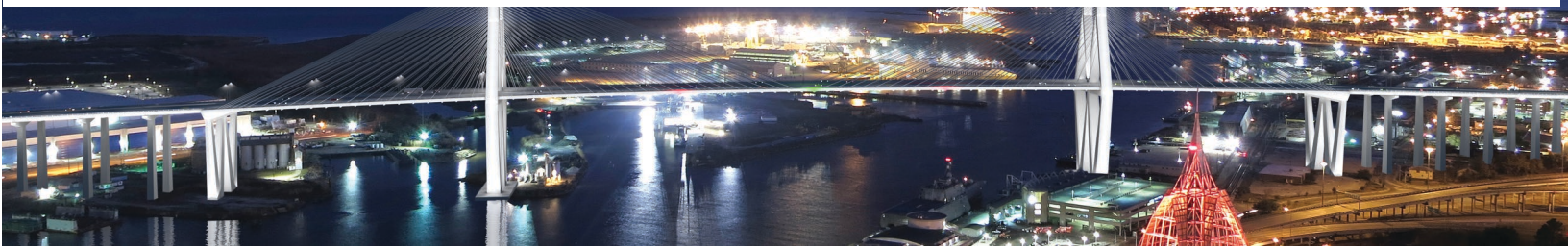
FY 2025-2026 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG)



I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE AND BAYWAY MULTIMODAL PROJECT

Project Description

For more information, please visit: <https://mobileriverbridge.com/fy25-26-mega-grant/>



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

The **I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway** project will improve **safety, efficiency, reliability, resiliency, and mobility** for residents and businesses in the project area as well as for those who rely on the goods transported along Interstate 10 (I-10), a critical corridor for the country. The project is designed to:

- **Increase capacity and traffic flow** to alleviate congestion and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Reduce roadway crashes.**
- **Provide a direct interstate route** for the transport of hazardous material away from the central business district and disadvantaged communities.
- **Improve resiliency** and reduce susceptibility to sea level rise and storm surges.
- **Minimize adverse impacts** on the maritime industries.
- **Reconnect communities** by minimizing the diversion of traffic to local street networks, including disadvantaged communities and Areas of Persistent Poverty that have been impacted by past transportation projects.



The I-10 Mobile River Bridge

The I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project includes four interconnected components:

- **Mobile River Bridge:** The bridge will add an alternate route across the Mobile River in addition to the I-10 George Wallace Tunnel (Wallace Tunnel), currently I-10's only route. The project will construct a new six-lane, state-of-the-art cable-stayed bridge with a minimum of 215 feet of Air Draft Clearance (ADC) across the Mobile River channel.
- **Bayway:** The Bayway component of the project will replace the existing four-lane I-10 Bayway bridges with six lanes, built above the 100-year storm maximum wave height.
- **Interchanges:** Seven interchanges along I-10 will be rebuilt, modified, or rehabilitated as part of the project – Broad Street, Virginia Street, Texas Street, Canal/Water Streets, East Tunnel Portal (US 90/98), Midbay (US 90/98), and the Eastern Shore (US 90/98 in Daphne) – to improve the geometrics and local connections to US 90 and US 98, downtown Mobile including the Convention Center and Civic Center, the Port of Mobile, and the new Mobile International Airport.
- **Other Enhancements:** A new intelligent transportation system (ITS), all electronic tolling facilities, and other enhancements will be included to improve traffic safety and reliability.

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After completion, the new Mobile River Bridge and Bayway will be tolled until all project loans have been repaid. The Wallace Tunnel, Bankhead Tunnel, and Africatown Bridge will remain toll-free Mobile River crossings and the Causeway (US 90/98) will continue to be a toll-free route to cross the bay.

Current Design Status

The project is separated into two procurements that are being delivered using a Progressive Design-Build (PDB) alternative delivery model. The first is the main span, high level approaches and associated interchanges and the second is the Bayway reconstruction and the associated interchanges. These two procurements will reduce project costs and risks by having two smaller projects instead of one large one, thereby allowing for increased competition and enabling additional smaller local design/construction participation.

To date, ALDOT has advanced a significant amount of preliminary design with the two design-build teams. As shown in more detail of the budget narrative of this application, ALDOT has spent \$179 million on previously incurred costs. These costs have been spent on acquiring all ROW for the project, preliminary engineering, final design, archaeological mitigation, geotechnical exploration, load test programs, and survey work.

ALDOT has selected two design-builders for this project and has entered into an early works design agreement with both. The main span project is at approximately 60% design and the Bayway project is at approximately 30% design. Click [here](#) to see a project map showing the limits of both projects.

Transportation Challenges

The I-10 corridor is an essential link in the U.S. Interstate Highway network, serving eight states and 17 major metropolitan regions. It is also the southernmost cross-country corridor from Santa Monica, CA, to Jacksonville, FL, and an important local and regional evacuation route.

Traveling eastward, I-10 currently crosses underneath the Mobile River via the Wallace Tunnel to Blakeley Island and then uses the Bayway to cross the northern portion of Mobile Bay to the Cities of Spanish Fort/Daphne on the Bay's eastern shore. The I-10 corridor was notably impacted by numerous hurricanes: Ivan, Dennis, Katrina, Irma, Nate and others, resulting in a considerable increase in travel time and significant decrease in average speeds as the number of evacuees traveling on I-10 increased. [A hurricane evacuation study for Alabama](#) has been prepared and the summary report can be viewed [here](#).

Need for Increased Capacity at Mobile River and Mobile Bay Crossings

Congestion on I-10 between Mobile and Baldwin counties is on par with the worst in the U.S. The I-10 route through Mobile, particularly at the George Wallace Tunnel, is widely considered one of the worst bottlenecks in the country.¹ The route is limited by the inadequate capacity of

¹Alabama Mobile Regional Resiliency Analysis.

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the George Wallace Tunnel. **It was built to carry approximately 35,000 vehicles per day but is currently carrying 65,000 cars on weekdays and over 75,000 vehicles during major holidays and events. The George Wallace Tunnel is projected to carry 95,000 vehicles per day by 2040**, approximately 2.5 times the traffic it was designed to accommodate.¹ While traffic volumes decreased slightly during the COVID pandemic, increases are again taking place and pre-pandemic volumes are anticipated to be experienced in the near future.

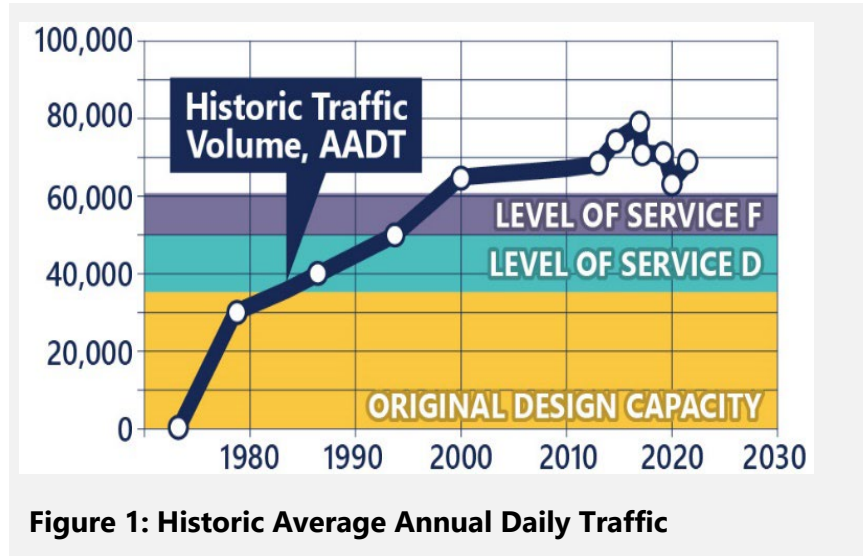


Figure 1: Historic Average Annual Daily Traffic

Weekday peak periods are particularly problematic, with speeds dropping as low as 11.6 mph even when incident-free. Resulting backups can extend up to 10 miles in each direction of the Wallace Tunnel and further if there is an incident on the Bayway. This strains the adjacent local roadway network, negatively impacting residents, businesses, and Areas of Persistent Poverty.

The I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project will expand interstate capacity by adding an alternate route across the Mobile River in addition to the George Wallace Tunnel and building a new Bayway with additional lanes.

ALDOT’s analyses indicate that if the Bayway is not replaced as part of this project, maintenance activities will drastically increase, and major rehabilitation will be needed in the next 15-20 years. ALDOT recognizes that any major investment in the Bayway at this point must bring the structure up to current codes and storm surge resiliency requirements, provide additional capacity to support future growth, improve safety, and address equity and support disadvantaged communities.

Project History

In 1997, a Feasibility Study examined constructing a bridge over the Mobile River near Mobile’s Central Business District (CBD) to alleviate congestion in the George Wallace Tunnel. The study found increasing the capacity only across the Mobile River would simply relocate congestion to the I-10 Bayway, so the decision was made to increase Bayway capacity as well. An Environmental Assessment (EA) signed by FHWA in 2003 considered three Build Alternatives.

¹ This estimate is from the project’s *Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record Of Decision*, August 2019

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FHWA subsequently elevated the level of documentation to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In the years since, several alternatives have been considered.

In 2014, a Draft EIS evaluated the impacts of the No Build Alternative and four Build Alternatives. Additional engineering and environmental studies were conducted, revisions to the Build Alternatives were made, and a Supplemental Draft EIS was prepared and signed by FHWA on March 26, 2019. FHWA signed a Combined Final EIS/Record of Decision on August 15, 2019.

In 2018 and 2019, federal funds were sought to help fund the project structured as Public-Private Partnership (P3), to a design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the facility, which included the collection and management of tolls. Community resistance to the P3 model and perceived private ownership of the facility, combined with resistance to anticipated maximum tolls, led ALDOT to reconsider its approach. ALDOT worked with local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) on an approach that broadened public support while paying special attention to avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts on nearby low-income and minority communities. The new approach included new considerations for the historic Africatown area, which was recently named a World Heritage Site. ALDOT and local MPOs have agreed to a comprehensive project. The new project has been adjusted based on community feedback and included in the area’s Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and Long-Range Transportation Plans (L RTPs). To view the TIP for each MPO click here: [Mobile TIP](#) and [Eastern Shore TIP](#) and to view the L RTP for each MPO click here: [Mobile L RTP amendment](#) and the [Eastern Shore L RTP amendment](#).

In 2022, ALDOT selected two design-builders for the project. To expedite the design and start of construction, an Early Design Works Agreement (EDWA) was entered into with both design-build teams. The EDWA allowed for the teams to start design prior to the Design Build Agreement (DBA) being signed in order to make critical project decisions and discuss cost saving ideas. The early design work started in 2023 is currently ongoing.

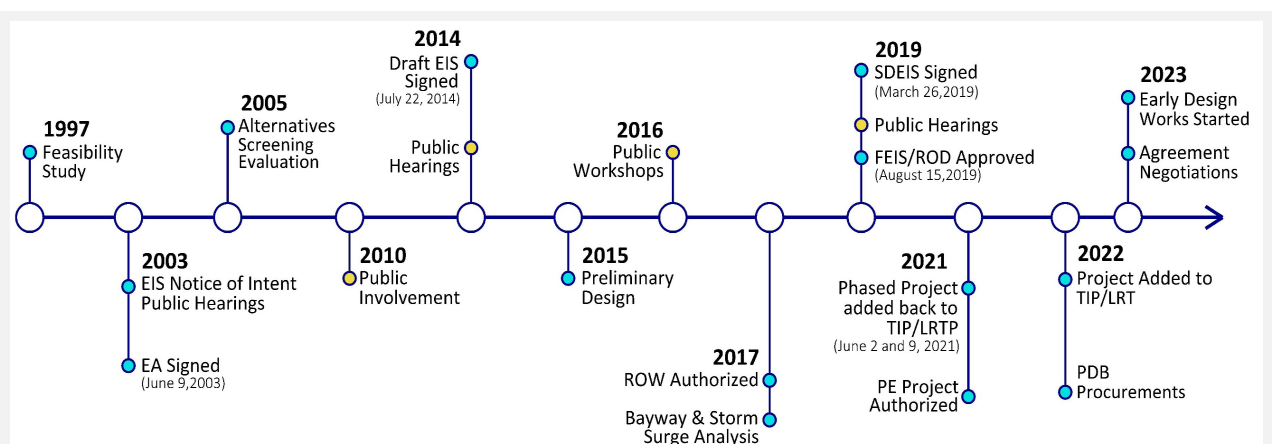


Figure 2: Project History Timeline

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Project Location

The full project extends approximately 10 miles through Mobile and Baldwin counties, Alabama, and falls within two U.S. Census-defined urbanized areas: Mobile and Daphne-Fairhope, Alabama. The western terminus of the project is on the southern edge of the City of Mobile's downtown in Mobile County (Northing: 241264.3, Easting: 1793574.2). The project's eastern terminus lies within the City of Daphne, south of the City of Spanish Fort in Baldwin County (Northing: 239424.8, Easting: 1843725.8).



Figure 3: I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project Map

Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities

The I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project crosses or is adjacent to more than a dozen census tracts that meet the U.S. Department of Transportation's definition of an Area of Persistent Poverty or a Historically Disadvantaged Community, if not both. These areas include much of downtown Mobile, stretching northward to historic Africatown and the Africatown Bridge (which currently receives the traffic diverting from delays on I-10 and the Wallace Tunnel and traffic carrying hazardous materials) and southward to Texas Street and Baltimore Street neighborhoods, which are historically low-income neighborhoods now undergoing revitalization and long-overdue repairs to dilapidated streets. A map showing the census tracts in with the project limits can be viewed [here](#). The I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project is also part of two Opportunity Zones Number: 01097000200 (Census Tract 2) and Number: 01097001200 (Census Tract 12).

As outlined in the FEIS/ROD, the project will make improvements to disadvantaged communities. These communities in the past have been impacted and divided by transportation projects and ALDOT is committed to reconnecting them by constructing shared use paths, sidewalks, crosswalks, and other improvements developed during community engagement. The equity, connectivity and quality of life outcomes are discussed more in the outcome criteria narrative in section 5.