May 6, 2024

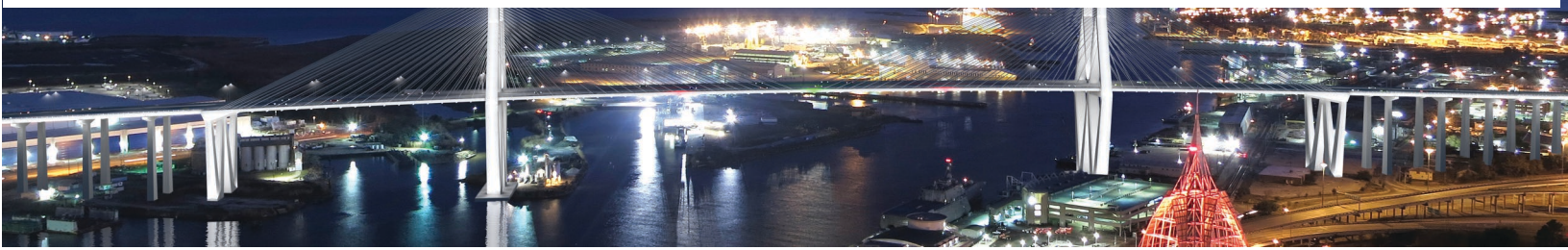
FY 2025-2026 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity (MPDG)

MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE & BAYWAY

I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE AND BAYWAY MULTIMODAL PROJECT

Project Readiness

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



PROJECT READINESS

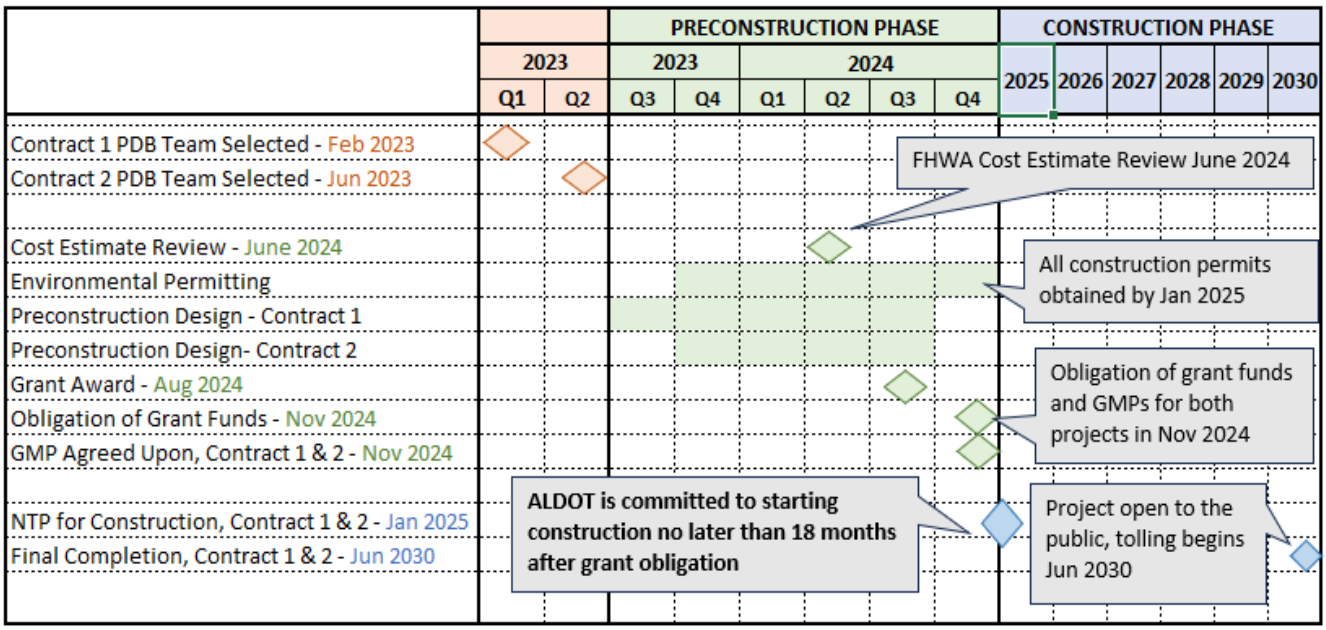
Technical Feasibility

The George Wallace Tunnel (Wallace Tunnel) and Bayway, which currently carry I-10, were designed to accommodate a level of traffic that has been far surpassed. The preliminary design has been advanced to a level that confirms the project's technical feasibility. The project has been studied for over 25 years, starting with the project feasibility study in 1997. In 2014, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was prepared that evaluated the potential impacts of the No Build Alternative and four Build Alternatives. In the following years, additional engineering and environmental studies were conducted, including studies to consider resiliency associated with sea-level rise and climate change, and revisions were made. A Supplemental DEIS was prepared and signed by FHWA on March 26, 2019. The Combined Final EIS/ROD was approved on August 15, 2019. The FEIS/ROD selected an alternative and determined that the project is needed and technically feasible.

Project Schedule

ALDOT has two contracts for each major component of the project running simultaneously. Click here for a map showing the project limits. Construction for both is expected to start in 2025 and end in 2030 (see **Figure 1** below). For a more detailed schedule click here. In addition, the design-build team schedule for the Mobile River Bridge Project can be viewed here and for the Bayway project can be viewed here.

Figure 1: Project Schedule



Required Approvals

The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers served as Cooperating Agencies on the NEPA document. The project team coordinated with these agencies extensively to ensure the FEIS/ROD met their needs to satisfy the requirements of NEPA for the issuance of permits under the "one decision" approach. Below provides a summary of permits required and the status of each.

ALDOT has coordinated with the following agencies to advance the Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project:

- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Aviation Administration

Table 1: List of Permits and Approvals

Permit/Approval	Agencies Involved	Status
Bridge Permit	U.S. Coast Guard, 8th District	**APPROVED:** USCG has-approved vertical and horizontal clearances and permitting approach; permit application will be submitted in 2024.
Section 401/404/Section 10 Joint Application and Notification (Individual Permit)	USACE, Mobile District, and Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)	**IN-DEVELOPMENT:** ALDOT has developed a Draft Mitigation Plan with input from the USACE, NOAA, USFWS, USEPA, ADCNR, and ADEM. Mitigation ratios and mitigation sites for wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, and essential fish habitat have been approved by agencies. Pre-application meetings have been conducted with the USACE and ADEM. Permit application will be submitted in the third quarter of 2024.
Incidental Take Permit, Section 7 Endangered Species Act	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	**COMPLETE:** Section 7 Formal Consultation is complete; obtained Incidental Take Permit for Alabama red-bellied turtle and Gulf sturgeon
FAA Form 7460-1 and Form 7460-2	Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	**SUBMITTED AND IN-REVIEW:** Draft Form 7460-1 and Form 7460-2 was submitted to FAA to identify allowable heights and locations for cranes and structures
Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)	FHWA, ALDOT, State Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 30 Consulting Parties	**APPROVED:** Final Section 106 MOA signed on July 11, 2019 (included in Appendix D of FEIS/ROD)
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit	Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM)	NPDES Permit to be obtained by the contractor prior to construction

Environmental

The Combined FEIS/ROD for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway was signed by FHWA on August 15, 2019.

History of Environmental Review

The environmental process started with a Feasibility Study in 1997. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the proposed project was issued on October 20, 2003. Several public involvement activities have been held, along with extensive coordination with agencies and public interest groups. Engineering and environmental studies have been performed, and FHWA signed the DEIS in July 2014. A range of reasonable alternatives were analyzed to effectively relieve congestion while minimizing impacts on the natural and human environments.

When ALDOT decided to use an alternative delivery method that would include tolling, FHWA required the preparation of a Supplemental DEIS to address the changes in the project and potential impacts associated primarily with the addition of tolling. The Supplemental DEIS was signed on March 26, 2019. The final NEPA determination—a Combined Final EIS/Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD)—with a signed Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement and Draft Mitigation Plan was approved by the FHWA on August 15, 2019. The Notice of Final Federal Agency Action on the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project in Alabama was published in the Federal Register on August 30, 2019.

State and Local Approvals

The project is a High Priority and Congressional Earmark Project. The project is included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Both Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) within the project limits, Mobile (August 9, 2023) and Eastern Shore (ES) (August, 2023), have placed the project on their Transportation Improvement Plans ("TIP") (Mobile TIP, ES TIP) and 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) (Mobile LRTP, ES LRTP). Both MPOs provided approval letters for the tolling framework.

Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation Strategies

During early project development, ALDOT engaged FHWA in a series of workshops through the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2) to find strategic solutions to three national transportation challenges: improving highway safety, reducing congestion, and improving methods for renewing roads and bridges. This included the SHRP2 R10 - Project Management Strategies for Complex Projects and SHRP2 R9 - Managing Risk on Rapid Renewal Project. Following these workshops, ALDOT held a project-specific Risk Workshop in 2018 with FHWA, ALDOT executive and project staff, and specialty advisors to identify and analyze project risks, including environmental impacts and right-of-way, using a risk management approach to identify ways to mitigate those identified. A matrix was developed to track and monitor risks. Mitigation strategies and contingency plans were developed and are regularly reviewed and updated.

The following plan summarizes our project risk management approach that is modeled after the FHWA's "Guide to Risk Assessment and Allocation for Highway Construction Management." We have and continue to identify and assess the potential probability of consequences of all significant risks on the project. This approach allows us to identify and implement appropriate measures to either eliminate risk entirely or reduce and mitigate the potential impacts.

1. **Risk Management Planning**: Engages key stakeholders (including ALDOT, FHWA, City of Mobile, Mobile County, Baldwin County, Port of Mobile, US Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, USACE, FHWA, US Fish and Wildlife Service) to collaborate to manage risk.
2. **Risk Event Identification**: Identifies potential risk events and the affected process area, category, action owner, potential effects if no action taken, and potential cause of failure.
3. **Qualitative Risk Analysis**: Prioritizes risks by analyzing the probability of occurrence and impacts, categorized to determine potential impact.
4. **Quantitative Risk Analysis**: Assigns a risk relating to the potential impact on overall project objectives. This analysis places risk events on a heat map according to the total quantitative risk calculated as (Risk Probability) x (Risk Severity).
5. **Risk Response Strategy**: Determines options and action plans to mitigate events and enhance opportunities. This begins with all red (high-level) risk events and then continues to yellow (medium) and green (low) risk events. Further priority can be established according to the risk level number. Monte Carlo sensitivity analysis is used to assure we prioritize risks correctly.
6. **Risk Monitoring and Control**: An ongoing process overseeing the effectiveness of risk responses, monitoring residual risks at a predetermined frequency, recording action status, identifying, and documenting new risks, and assuring risk management processes are followed. This process is monitored and controlled using the project risk register.

To advance construction as soon as possible, ALDOT has completed the project's right-of-way (ROW) acquisitions. All 42 tracts have been acquired. ALDOT has also completed separate demolition contracts to remove buildings and foundations within the project ROW.

Technical Feasibility

As noted previously, ALDOT has been studying this project for over 25 years, and in that time has involved many engineering consultants, coordinated closely with numerous agencies including FHWA, and engaged a significant number of project stakeholders. The technical challenges associated with the project are well known and understood. ALDOT has a high degree of confidence that reasonable solutions exist for all of the challenges associated with designing and building this project.

ALDOT has selected two design-builders to design and construct the project. Kiewit Massman Traylor (KMT) is the selected design-builder for the main span, high-level approaches, and interchange work in Mobile County, and Mobile Bayway Constructors (MBC), (Flatiron and Lane Construction), is the selected design-builder for the Bayway and interchanges within Baldwin County. See map here showing the limits of each project. The technical input received from collaborating with the design-builders has further enhanced ALDOT's understanding of project challenges and development of feasible solutions.

ALDOT has entered into Early Design Works Agreements (EDWA) with both KMT and MBC upon selection. Doing so has allowed design activities to begin prior to signing the design-build agreement. To date, both teams have submitted over 100 design packages and innovation packages as required by the project's technical provisions. These submittals include document management plans, safety plans, TS&Ls, 30% & 60% civil plans, geotechnical memos, design quality management plans, utility packages and traffic control. A detailed submittals list from KMT can be viewed here and a detailed list from MBC can be viewed here. ALDOT anticipates a minimum of 60% design to be completed on all project elements by the end of 2024, with design completion by mid-2025.

Design submittals and preliminary plans submitted to date are available for USDOT review:
https://mobileriverbridge.com/reference-information-documents-mrb/

In addition to the preliminary design, some of the completed studies prior to procurement include:

- Geotechnical testing and Advance Load Test Program
- Level 1 and 3 Storm Surge Analysis and Report
- No Build and toll-free travel demand models
- Preliminary hazardous material study
- Traffic and Revenue Analysis
- Preliminary ROW plans
- Signage plans
- Bicycle/pedestrian studies
- Project Specific Climate Report (Wind Study)
- Interstate Modification Report (for all eight interchanges)
- West Side Foundation Report
- Draft Mitigation Plan
- Stormwater Technical Memorandum
- Vessel Collision Report
- Draft Technical Provisions

Technical Capacity

ALDOT has extensive experience receiving, managing, and expending federal transportation funds. ALDOT also has previous experience with Design-Bid-Build projects that have been funded and constructed in the area including Additional Lanes on I-10 from CR-39 to US-90, SR-181 Diverging Diamond Interchange over I-10, and I-65 Murder Creek Bridge Replacement. ALDOT is working extensively with its consultants on developing alternative delivery projects in other regions of Alabama as well (West Alabama Highway).

On this project, ALDOT has contracted with several national engineering consulting firms to assist with project management and oversight. The consulting team supporting the project provides ALDOT with access to a large number of engineering professionals with extensive project history and knowledge, ALDOT design and construction experience, and exposure to large complex projects at the national level. These professionals are working as extensions of ALDOT's staff and provide deep capacity that can be adjusted to meet the frequently changing needs for management, oversight, and review support.