

Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project

Eastern Shore MPO 2045 LRTP Amendment

FAQ – Comment Responses

Below are questions and answers to the most asked questions/comments made regarding the I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway project during the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Amendment public comment period.

Q. Why can't we make this toll-free for residents of Mobile and Baldwin Counties?

Legally, ALDOT cannot charge different rates based on where someone lives – in other words, people in Daphne and in Dallas must have the same price options. However, ALDOT can create different toll options that – while still open to everyone – are most appealing to frequent users and commuters between Mobile and Baldwin Counties. That's how we can have the lower ALGO Pass rates with a \$40 unlimited use option, which is less than \$1 per trip for typical commuters, and the \$2.50 per-use option.

Q. Aren't you just going to create a new bottleneck on I-10 when it shifts back to 4 lanes?

Increasing capacity and ensuring smooth traffic flow are top priorities for the Eastern Shore MPO. The next widening project is on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and plans are underway to add extra lanes on I-10 to the Alabama 181 intersection east of Daphne. The Eastern Shore MPO is looking into expanding interstate widening further east to the Beach Express or even further beyond to the Florida state line.

Q. Why doesn't the federal government pay for all of this? It's an Interstate Highway. What about the gas tax?

The Federal government doesn't own or maintain the interstate highway system, the states do. The state gas tax will be used to maintain the new infrastructure.

Both the state and federal governments will contribute significant funding to this project. The State of Alabama will commit at least \$250 million to this project. Additionally, \$125 million in existing federal INFRA Grant funds will be completely expended on this project, and the State is seeking additional federal funding through the Mega Grant and Bridge Investment Grant programs created by the new federal infrastructure act.

Both MPOs as well as the State of Alabama are committed to seeking additional federal funds to help with project costs. Additional federal or state money that may become available for this project will go toward paying down project debt in order to reduce the duration of any toll.

Q. What's the guarantee that the toll will go away when it's paid off?

The Eastern Shore and Mobile MPOs have a written guarantee from ALDOT that the toll will go away when the debt is paid off. Additionally, since there is no private concessionaire and tolling cannot be used for purposes other than paying down project debt, there is no profit incentive to continue tolling.

Q. Why now?

A. In short, it's now or never. Without the MPO approval to place this project into the TIP, the federal government will take back the \$125 million that it granted to this project. Additionally, ALDOT and the Mobile and Eastern Shore MPOs are seeking additional grants that can help pay for this project. Without that approval from both MPOs, this project would effectively have been unable to receive federal funding.

We need to move forward now to secure these funds and address our traffic problem.