

# *CE Coastal Economics, LLC*

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## **Recommendation**

**Advisory Committee**

### **Build the I-10 Mobile Bridge and Bayway**

**February 20, 2021**

#### **Members:**

**Donald Epley, PhD CCIM MAI Regional Economist, University of Missouri**  
**Professor Emeritus, University of South Alabama**  
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## **Memorandum of Understanding Covering Four Recommendations I-10 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway**

We propose to create a safer and faster route across Mobile Bay promoting economic development with new jobs and income. This proposal is based on numerous conversations, opinions, and recommendations offered by local, knowledgeable parties. The analysis includes related construction costs, traffic counts, and revenue projections available at this time.

**A. The goal is to build one project with two parts: the new six-lane I-10 Mobile River Bridge, and the new attached eight-lane Bayway, using federal and state funding to cover related costs.**

**B. Existing transportation routes remain free:**

\*Cochrane-Africatown Bridge, Bankhead Tunnel, Wallace Tunnels, and Causeway

\*Wallace Tunnels- evaluate elimination of the I-10 designation; evaluate redesign of the West Entrance to reduce local traffic congestion

**C. The new I-10 Bridge and Bayway could have a user-fee to partially cover cost, if needed:**

\*The Public supports a \$2 average per vehicle user-fee on Class 1 vehicles (passenger cars, SUVs, pickup trucks, motorcycles, passenger, or service vans.)

\*Class 2 vehicles and higher will pay \$10 average per vehicle.

\*A frequent-traveler discounted user-fee would be considered for all vehicles

**D. The above is supported with the understanding that many details and challenges still to be considered and resolved may arise.**

### **Summary of Recommendations We Support:**

- 1) the original configuration in the Environmental Impact Statement presented by ALDOT remains**
- 2) a choice to the traveler of a new Bridge in addition to the existing free routes**
- 3) the removal of the Wallace Tunnels from I-10 designation to reduce local traffic congestion**
- 4) a reasonable user-fee on the new Bridge only if additional funding is required.**

### **This report relies on the following partial list of sources:**

Alabama Department of Transportation  
ALDOT consultant report on Mobile Transportation, 2018  
Alabama Department of Labor, Market Information Division  
City of Mobile personnel  
Envision 2045, Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Media interviews with local and state officials  
Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Build the Bridge Coalition  
Mobile County personnel  
Professional individuals and interested parties  
Selected bridge research and literature  
U.S. Census Bureau, Origin-Destination Employment Study  
U.S. Department of Transportation Statistics

### **Advisory Committee Members:**

Donald Epley, retired Economist, University of South Alabama  
Joseph Mareno, retired Chief Financial Officer, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce  
Stephen Russell, retired Economic Development, director, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

## **Frequently Asked Questions\***

**Q: Describe a free route from the Eastern Shore to downtown Mobile.**

A: Two ways: 1) Take the Causeway (free) to the Bankhead Tunnel (free), or the Bayway (free) to the Wallace Tunnel (free).

**Q: Describe a free route from the Eastern Shore to the Mobile Regional Airport.**

A: Several ways: Drive the Causeway (free) to the Africatown-Cochran Bridge (free) or Bankhead Tunnel (free), or the Bayway (free) to the Wallace Tunnel (free), and then travel west on Government St to Airport Blvd. or to the Virginia Street entrance to I-10 West, or south on Broad Street to I-10West.

**Q: Does the proposed Brookley airport have a convenient entrance/exit from the new Bridge route?**

A: Yes, traveling from the Bridge to I-10West, the entrances to Brookley off I-10 will remain as configured today at both the south end of Broad Street and at the south end of Michigan Avenue.

**Q: How would I exit the Wallace tunnel on the east side of the Mobile River?**

A: The existing exits will remain the same as configured today.

**Q: How would I exit the Wallace tunnel on the west (downtown) side of the Mobile River?**

A: The Wallace Tunnel will be directly connected to Water Street in downtown Mobile.

**Q: If a Bridge user fee exists, where will it be collected?**

A: A user fee will be collected for both directions at or near the approaches to the new Mobile River Bridge. It is likely that user fees will be collected electronically so as not to stop or slow the flow of traffic over the Bridge.

**Q: What does a user fee of “average \$2” or “\$2 average” mean?**

A: Some vehicles would pay more than \$2 and some less, depending on, for example, such vehicle characteristics as number of axles, etc.

**\*Answers based on information available at the time.**

# **PROPOSAL**

**Consider these four points to be  
“reasonable” recommendations**

**Send to ALDOT to determine their  
“feasibility”**

**Invite ALDOT to return to the Coast  
for its response**