



Tennessee River Bridge Feasibility Study

PROJECT
STUDY AREA

In Partnership with:



PROJECT INFO

The City of Decatur recognizes the need to provide infrastructure improvements that better connect its traveling public to the north side of the Tennessee River. This improved infrastructure is critical to support the increasing growth in and around the city. The City of Decatur received a \$1 million grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) (attached) and is providing \$1 million in local matching funds for the feasibility study.

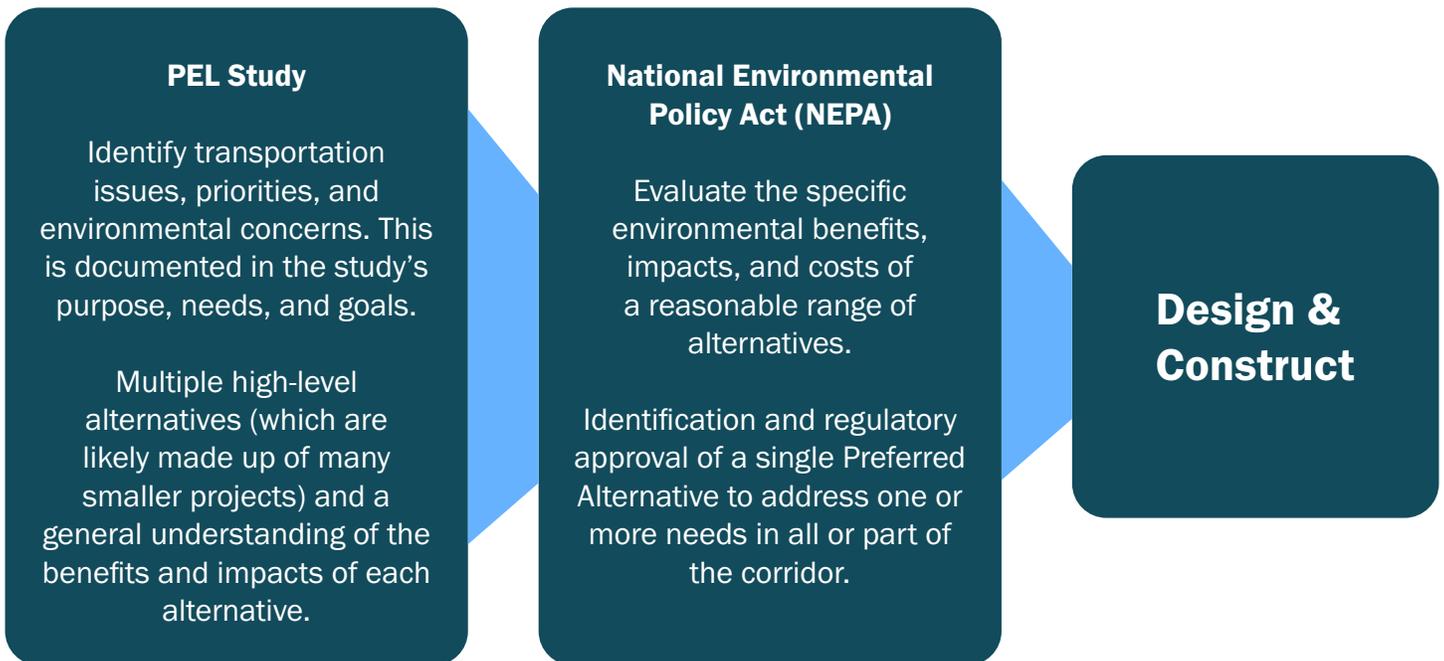
WHAT IS PEL?

Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) is a collaborative process that is initiated early in the transportation planning process by incorporating environmental and community values into transportation decisions. A PEL study includes early engagement with agencies, stakeholders, and the public on the project’s purpose and need, potential alternatives, and assess potential impacts to the community and environment. A goal of using the PEL process is to improve efficiency by minimizing duplication between the planning and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes.

The PEL process for the Tennessee River Bridge Feasibility Study will include the following components:

- Data Collection: The project team will collect data to document traffic and environmental existing conditions that will be instrumental during the NEPA process.
- Purpose and Need Development: The project team will develop the purpose and need statement that can be incorporated into the NEPA process.
- Agency Coordination/Involvement: The project team will coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Alabama Department of Transportation

- (ALDOT) to identify and coordinate with appropriate federal, state, local, and tribal agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise in human and environmental considerations within the project study area (attached).
- Stakeholder Involvement: The project team will conduct small group meetings with stakeholders to solicit input about the project and bolster working relationships.
- Public Involvement: The City of Decatur, in coordination with the project team, will host two Public Involvement Meetings to inform the public about the project and gather feedback from the public on the purpose and need and proposed alternatives.
- Documentation: The project team will provide a feasibility study that will analyze the proposed alternatives and potential impacts to human and environmental considerations. The documentation will also include outreach activities. This documentation should be able to link planning to the environmental review process.
- Lead Agency Review and Involvement: The project team will coordinate with the lead agency, FHWA, to confirm the requirements were met in the PEL process and the documentation can be carried forward into the NEPA process.



STUDY, PURPOSE, NEEDS, AND GOALS

The “Steamboat Bill” Memorial Bridges, located along ALT US 72 / US HWY 31 / SR 20, span one of the widest points along the Tennessee River between Morgan and Limestone Counties in the City of Decatur. The existing ALT US 72 / US HWY 31 / SR 20 southbound bridge was constructed in 1963 and is part of the primary route providing a direct linkage between the Decatur and Huntsville Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Additionally, ALT US 72 / US HWY 31 / SR 20 is a primary linkage from Muscle Shoals to I-65.

Together, the Decatur and Huntsville MSAs represent the fastest growing Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) in the state of Alabama which has resulted in significant increases in traffic volumes along this route. There are currently no direct alternative routes across the Tennessee River which could relieve traffic during peak times. These congested peak hour conditions also degrade access capabilities for emergency responders traveling the route.

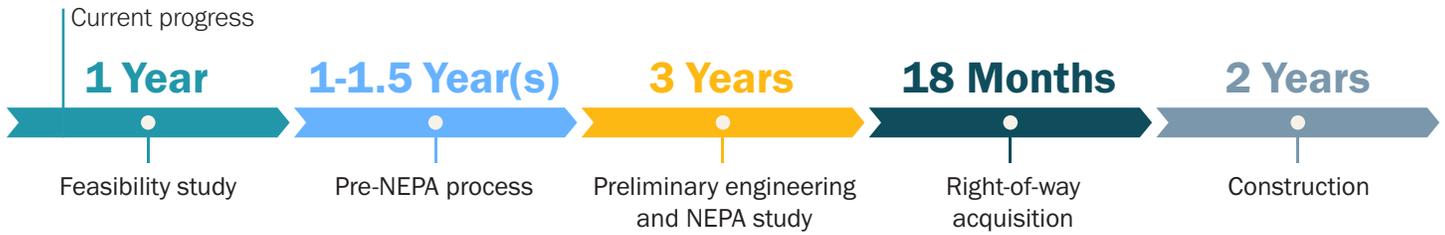
Based on the needs facing this segment of ALT US 72 / US HWY 31 / SR 20, the purpose of the Tennessee River Bridge project is to:

<h3>INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE</h3>  <p>Replace or rehabilitate the aging ALT US 72 / US HWY 31 / SR 20 southbound bridge as the primary crossing over the Tennessee River to provide a reliable conveyance for years to come</p>	<h3>CONGESTION</h3>  <p>Relieve congested conditions along ALT US 72 / US HWY 31 / SR 20 in the areas adjacent to the current ALT US 72 / US HWY 31 / SR 20 bridges over the Tennessee River</p>	<h3>CONNECTIVITY</h3>  <p>Maintain regional connectivity between the Decatur MSA and the Huntsville MSA</p>	<h3>CAPACITY</h3>  <p>Increase capacity for growing number of vehicles crossing over the Tennessee River</p>
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The project goals (provided below) are the resulting benefits anticipated to be achieved through the project improvements. While some of the cited goals are directly related to the purpose of the project, others are anticipated indirect outcomes that will provide benefit for motorists. Alternatives considered by the study will be evaluated on how well they achieve the project goals.



PROJECT TIMELINE



The "Steamboat Bill" Memorial Bridges in Decatur, AL

FEASIBILITY STUDY NEXT STEPS

- Combine/package concepts into alternatives
- Evaluate benefits and impacts of developed alternatives
- Develop recommended alternatives/packages and an implementation plan
- Complete the PEL study

STAY INVOLVED

Comments/Inquiries can be submitted to:
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Project email:
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