## Project Purpose:

The purpose of the *Decatur Bridge Feasibility Study* is to assess the need and/or location for a new Tennessee River crossing, or a southbound U.S. Highway 31 replacement bridge, over the Tennessee River, in the City of Decatur, Alabama. The existing southbound bridge was constructed almost 60 years ago and is nearing the end of its life expectancy. The "Steamboat Bill" Memorial Bridges span one of the widest points along the Tennessee River between Morgan and Limestone Counties in the City of Decatur. Some key specifics on the two bridge spans include:

- The southbound cantilever truss bridge was built in 1963 and rehabilitated in 1997
- The northbound reinforced concrete bridge was built in 1999

Additionally, the Decatur Bridge connects the Decatur MSA to the Huntsville MSA, which is the fastest growing CMSA in the State of Alabama. It combines U.S. Highway 31 (North/South) and Alternate U.S. Highway 72 (East/West) traffic *and is part of Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) know as Corridor V*. The bridge has a higher traffic count than the I-65 Bridge, and it handles I-65 traffic when unfortunate events happen on I-65.

The two closest bridges to the west include:

- Wheeler Dam (86 years old) – 30 river miles & 30.3 driving miles away
- Wilson Dam (98 years old) – 45.5 river miles & 46.2 driving miles away

The two closest bridges to the east include:

- I-65 – 4.5 river miles & 11 driving miles away
- Hobbs Island Bridge – 28.5 river miles & 34.4 driving miles away

The construction of a new river crossing, or a southbound U.S. Highway 31 replacement bridge, over the Tennessee River, in the City of Decatur, is considered critically important to ensure that the necessary transportation infrastructure is in place to support the continued growth of the Automotive and Aviation clusters in Alabama. According to the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), the average annual daily traffic (AADT) count for the bridge was 53,774 in 2020, which represents an increase of approximately 6,000 vehicles since 2017. By 2030, it is estimated that there will be 65,550 vehicles a day or over 10,000 more vehicles using the existing bridge.

## Project Scope and Timeline:

Project Scope of Services for the Decatur Bridge Feasibility Study are:

Task 1.1 Project Preparation

- Kickoff Meetings with the Consultant to define Goals, Expectations and Outcomes
- Communication Plan for the exchange of information between the Consultant, City and MPO.
- Overview of Agreements and Timeframes for Project Completion

Task 1.2 Data Collection and Review

- Origin Destination Data
- Geotechnical Data
- Hazmat Inventory
- Traffic Count Data (Current, Future and Historical)
- Low and Moderate Income Areas
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Identification of Section 4F Areas
- Identification of Economically Distressed Areas
- Field Surveys including River Soundings
- Industry Interviews and Data Collection
- Utility Inventory
- Traffic Studies and Observations including Travel Demand Model Data
- Alternative Route Analyses from past and present studies and reports
- River Usage Data including traffic at regional ports and industries
- Current Conditions Report (roadways, bridges, industries and ports)

Task 1.3 Public Outreach

- Transparent Communications with the General Public and all Stakeholders
- Quarterly Informational Meetings between the Consultant, MPO and City
- Industry and Business Owner Meetings
- Elected Officials and Agency Meetings
- Community and Neighborhood Meetings
- Project Information disbursed through Websites, Social Media Sites, Newspapers and Newsletters
- Public Involvement Meetings (Informational Meeting and Study Presentation Meeting)

Task 1.4 Project Cost Development

- Construction Cost Estimates on each Alternative
- Cost Estimates based on current Industry Trends
- Cost Estimate on Design and Environmental Process

Task 2.1 Corridor Study

- Review and Evaluate Previous Maps and Studies
- Prepare Base Maps including Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Prepare Base Maps that include all 4F Areas
- Prepare Base Maps that include Low and Moderate Income Areas and Economically Distressed Areas
- Prepare Base Maps of Current, Future and Historical Traffic Counts
- Prepare Maps of Alternative locations
- Consult with Federal, State and Local Agencies on their Requirements and Regulations

- Develop General Design Criteria for all Reasonable Alternatives
- Preform a Capacity Analysis for each Alternate (including a Origin Destination Study) that shows volume reduction on the existing Alternate 72 / U.S. Highway 31 Bridge
- Develop a Final Report that includes Alternatives that is feasible to move into the Design and Environmental Process for Construction of the Bridge
- Help to identify potential funding sources for the Design and Environmental Process

3. Project Schedule

- Once the funding for the Feasibly Study is approved the Sponsor will go through the Consultant Selection Process according to all Appalachian Regional Commission Rules and Regulations.
- Timeframe to complete the Decatur Bridge Feasibility Study is twelve (12) month