



What Does the Plan for a Truck-Only Toll Bridge Mean for Africatown?



- Major truck traffic
- Toxic air pollution
- Health and safety risks
- Limited access to historic sites
- Environmental racism

The Mobile Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Eastern Shore Metropolitan Planning Organization are considering a new version of the 2019 Mobile River Bridge and Bayway Project. This version has three phases that begin with the construction of a truck-only toll bridge. Both the Mobile and Eastern Shore MPOs must first hear from the public before making a decision. Here's our concerns with the proposed truck-only toll bridge.

Major truck traffic on Africatown Blvd.

Commercial truck drivers would avoid paying the \$15 toll each way on the proposed Mobile River Bridge and, instead, drive on the free Africatown-Cochran Bridge. This would cause major truck traffic on Africatown Blvd. The official plan by the Mobile MPO states the following: "A shift in external truck volumes from the Bayway to the Causeway can be expected due to a toll. . . . An obvious conclusion can be made that a truck toll on Interstate 10 with an un-tolled option on US90 will put a strain on the capacity of I-65, the Cochrane-Africatown Bridge, and the US 90 Causeway." (Mobile MPO, Draft Amendment to the 2045 Long Range Transportation, p. 13).

Toxic air pollution from diesel truck exhaust

Exhaust from diesel trucks is extremely toxic and damaging to human health. The fine particles from the exhaust penetrate deep into the lungs, leading to the development of asthma in children and increased risk of premature death from heart and lung diseases. They are also likely to cause harm to the nervous system, such as cognitive effects. Diesel exhaust also contains about 40 toxins that are scientifically known to cause cancer.

Health and safety risks

The plan for the Mobile River Bridge Project would multiply the number of trucks on Africatown Blvd. Residents would be exposed to additional toxic air pollution from trucks that can damage their health. More trucks traveling at speeds of 65 mph or greater would risk the safety of Africatown residents, particularly children, when walking, driving or biking along and across Africatown Blvd.

Limited access to historic sites

Community efforts to promote the history of Africatown and historic sites along Africatown Blvd. would be hindered by increased truck traffic. The Mobile MPO concluded that the truck traffic would "strain" the route that goes through Africatown, meaning that truck traffic jams would occur frequently. The truck traffic would limit access to these historic sites for residents and tourists.

Environmental racism

In Mobile County, Black residents in Africatown are disproportionately exposed to toxic pollution and hazards from industrial facilities. The plan for the Mobile River Bridge Project would worsen environmental racism in Africatown by increasing truck diesel pollution, creating more health and safety risks, and limiting access to historic sites in the community. By ignoring these racial disparities in the plan for the Mobile River Bridge Project, the Mobile MPO fails to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and environmental justice policies that prohibit the use of federal transportation dollars on projects that result in racial discrimination.