



INFORMATION RELEASE

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LOCATION OF NEW PARAGOULD BYPASS INTERCHANGE ANNOUNCED

LITTLE ROCK (3-5) – The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) has identified the preferred alternative for the future Highway 412 Bypass (Paragould Bypass) Interchange at State Highway 358, according to Department officials.

Following an extensive review of potential impacts and comments received from public meetings held on February 18, 2014 and on October 30, 2014, the Single-Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) on the eastern alternative has been identified as the best alternative for a connection at State Highway 358 (map of the western portion of the bypass is attached).

“This was a tough decision,” said AHTD Director Scott Bennett. “After considering the social, economic, environmental, and cost impacts, we believe this is the best overall plan for this important project in northeast Arkansas.”

Three alternatives were analyzed for this interchange – a West Diamond Interchange, an East Diamond Interchange, and an East SPUI. Both eastern alternatives are shorter and have a lower total cost than the western alternative; and the diamond interchange alternatives would require more right of way and had a higher number of relocatees than the East SPUI.

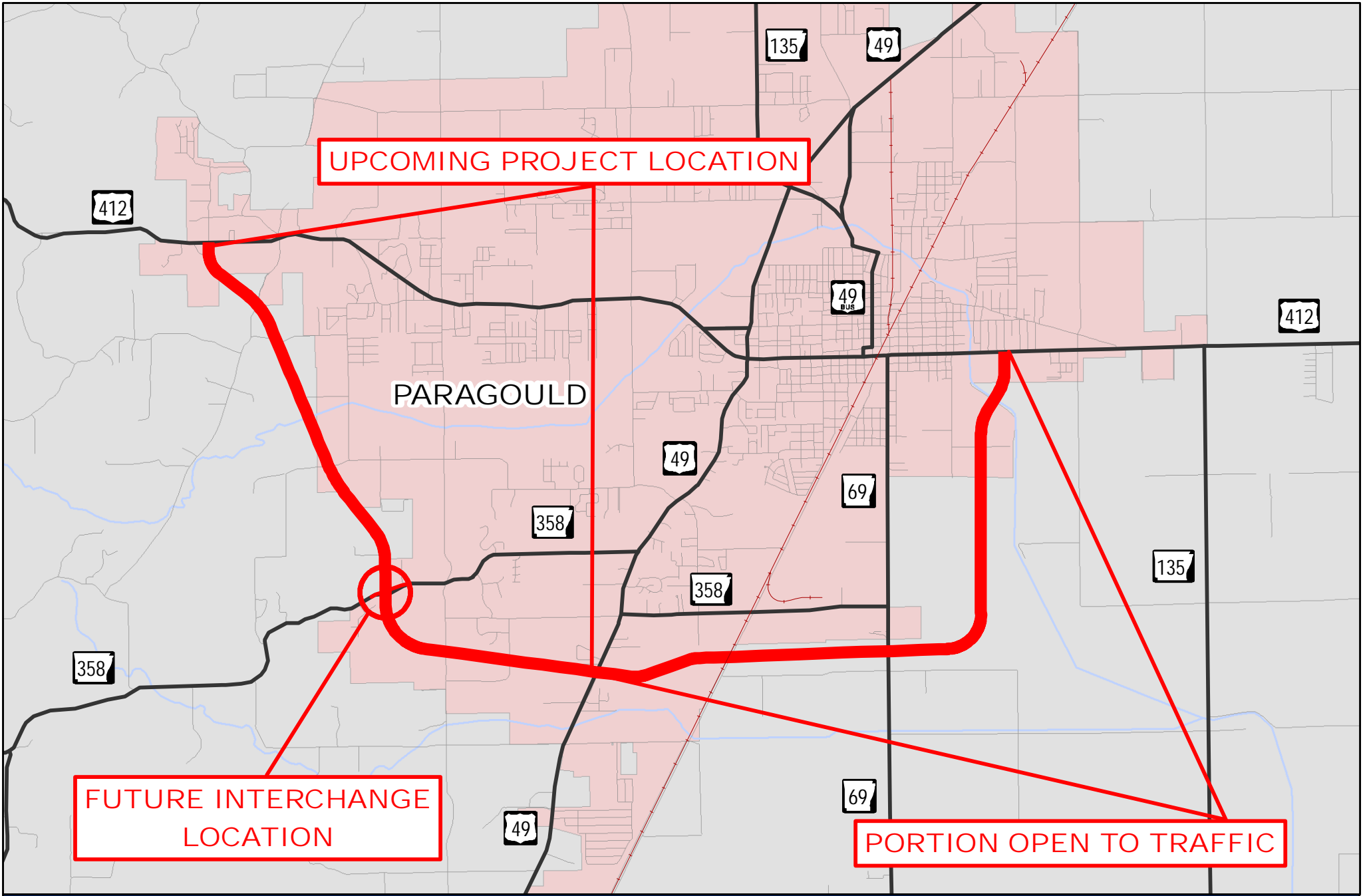
Right of way acquisition is expected to begin this summer, and construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2016. Even though right of way is being acquired to accommodate the interchange, actual construction of the SPUI will not be part of the upcoming project. Only the initial two lanes of the ultimate four-lane bypass are being constructed at this time. The interchange will be constructed when the additional two lanes are added in the future. The AHTD will maintain all the unused right of way in the meantime.

“I know some people are concerned about the possibility of commercial development near the interchange and new highway,” Bennett noted. “And it’s true that new highways often attract and play a key role in economic development. But it’s up to local governments to determine what types of development, if any, to allow in the area through local zoning and land use planning.”

Planning for the Paragould Bypass has been in process since 1992. The project is designed to enhance safety and improve traffic operations in the vicinity of Paragould and is part of an overall effort to upgrade U.S. Highway 412 as a major east-west corridor in Arkansas.

Drivers should exercise caution when approaching and traveling through all highway work zones. Additional travel information can be found at IDriveArkansas.com or ArkansasHighways.com. You can also follow us on [Twitter @AHTD](https://twitter.com/AHTD).





Paragould Bypass

Greene County

