

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 2

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

CDOT Route	Route Description
002A	From U.S. 285D (Hampden Ave) and (Colorado Blvd) in Denver North To A Direct Connection onto U.S. 06H North of 52nd St in Commerce City
002B	From a Direct Connection Fly Over at Jct U.S.6H at (Vasquez Blvd) in Commerce City To MilePost 13 - Begin SH 002C at (Quebec St) End SH 002B
002C	From SH 002B at Quebec St in Commerce City northeast To the I-76 Interchange between Commerce City and Brighton

Highway Location:

Counties: Adams, Arapahoe, Denver

Length (Miles): 19.175

OAHP Site Numbers (for previously recorded segments, if applicable)*:

OAHP Site No.	Assessment	Assessment Date	Site Name
5JF.5116.1	Supports eligibility of entire linear resource>Field eligible	03/26/2013>12/06/2012	OLD STATE HIGHWAY 2 - SEGMENT
5JF.5116.2	Supports eligibility of entire linear resource>Field eligible	03/26/2013>12/06/2012	OLD STATE HIGHWAY 2 - SEGMENT

Discussion of Site Forms (for previously recorded segments, if applicable):

Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway listed above and available in Compass were reviewed. Only 5JF.5116.1 was available for review and included a discussion of Old SH 2 in the area of US 40 in Mount Vernon Canyon before it was abandoned and realigned in 1937.

Historic Districts located within 250 feet of highway (OAHP Site Number and Name)*:

OAHP Site No.	District Name	Assessment (If Applicable)
5DV.1085	Jackson Street Group	Staff - Officially Eligible
5DV.310	George W. Clayton Trust and College	Listed on National Register
5DV.50	City Park Historic District	Listed on National Register
5DV.5186	Seventh Avenue Historic District	Local Landmark
5DV.5311	City Park Golf Course	Listed on National Register
5DV.840	High Line Canal	106 - Officially eligible
5DV.9035	Park Hill Historic District	Listed on National Register

*Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHP

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Historical Data:

SH 2 begins in the Denver metro area at Hampden Ave (US 285) traveling north along Colorado Blvd, connecting with US 6 at Vasquez Blvd, and then travels northeast through Commerce City to connect with I-76 near Brighton for an overall length of 19.175 miles.

On early state travel maps in 1916 and 1922, SH 2 was first marked as "State Highway 21". According to Matthew Salek, SH 2 traveled the northern length of the state, along the alignment of US 40 from Utah to Metro Denver, east to Colfax then north on Broadway to Brighton Blvd. It traveled northeast on the current Vasquez Blvd (US 6-85) then northeast along US 85 to Greeley. From Greeley, SH 2 went to Wiggins along US 34 then US 6 to Ft. Morgan to Sterling, then US 38 to Nebraska. By 1923, state travel maps show State Highway 21 marked as SH 2. By 1926 the Federal Bureau of Public Roads had renumbered SH 2 as US 40 (Form 5JF.5116.1)

SH 2 was rerouted a number of times. The segment along US 40 in Mount Vernon Canyon and Floyd Hill was abandoned by 1937 when the new alignment of US 40 from Morrison to US 6 was completed. (Site Form 5JF.5116.1). By 1940, SH 2 was co-signed with US 6 and US 40 along Colfax to Colorado Blvd, then traveled north through Commerce City, along Vasquez Blvd then northeast through Hudson to Wiggins, no longer traveling through Greeley (Salek). In 1962, Denver city maps show SH 2 in the metro area traveling east along Colfax and then connecting north with Colorado Blvd, then providing a junction with I-80s before heading northeast to US 6. (Simmons, Simmons and Bunyak, 2011: K-260) By 1968, SH 2 is currently marked only in the metro area, along its current alignment from Hampden (US 285) north along Colorado Blvd (then SH 153) to Vasquez Blvd (US 6/85) then traveling northeast before ending at the junction with I-76. (Salek)

SH 2 travels along Colorado Blvd in Denver. Colorado Blvd. serves as a connector for the suburban residential areas in south Denver to the central urban corridors. Colorado Blvd, which is a part of the southern half of SH 2, has been marked on Denver maps since the late 1880s (Willits Farm Map, 1889, Rollendets Map, 1898). It served as the boundary between Denver County and Arapahoe County until the city of Denver annexed portions of Arapahoe County south of Alameda from 1945-1960. Colorado Blvd also borders the town of Glendale between Alameda and Arizona Avenues. The mid-century growth of suburban neighborhoods, shopping retail centers, and automobile related business is reflected on Colorado Blvd. It is a six-lane thoroughfare that travels through a congested area with fast-food outlets, automobile dealerships and retail strip malls. Colorado Blvd served the suburban development in the areas south of Evans Avenue and provided the important link to the new shopping centers and the new Valley Highway System. By 1955, the Colorado Blvd exit to the Valley Highway (I-25) was complete (Simmons, Simmons and Bunyak, 2011: E-164). Although Colorado Blvd borders seven historic districts (Park Hill, City Park and City Park Golf Course, Clayton College, Seventh Avenue, Jackson Street, and the Highline Canal), it was not instrumental in the development of these historic districts. Instead, Colorado Blvd. is a product of the post-war suburban development of eastern Denver. The rapid rise of suburban neighborhoods south and east of Denver after World War II relied heavily on the north-south connector of Colorado Blvd to access the urban center (Noel, 1990: 255-276).

The northeastern portion of SH 2 serves as a connector through Commerce City, traveling on the northwestern edge of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge to I-76. Commerce City was first established as an agricultural community with hog farms and truck gardens. The addition of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in 1942 and post war population growth also stimulated industry in this area. Oil refineries, industrial parks, and even a Greyhound dog racing track populated the area. Easy access to the transportation corridors such as SH 2, and US 85, US 6 and railroads only increased the industrial success (Noel 1990: 352; 361-362).

Research reveals that SH 2 facilitated the physical development of the suburban Denver metro area during the post-World War II period.

Unless otherwise indicated, sources used in the preparation of this section included state highway maps, the Highways of Colorado, Highways to the Sky: A Context and History of Colorado's Highway System, Colorado State Roads and Highways, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission, plans in the Online Transportation Information System (OTIS) and site forms for previously surveyed resources in Compass when available.

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- ☐ **Not Significant - No historical significance identified**
- ☒ **Significant - Historical significance identified (see details below)**

Property Type and Areas of Significance:

A detailed explanation why this highway possesses historical significance is provided in the Significance Statement below.

Cultural: ☐

Criterion A specific requirements

- ☐ Early and/or prominent project of the Colorado Highway Department (Transportation)
- ☐ Association with a significant event (If applicable, the Area of Significance is indicated in the statement of significance below)
- ☐ Association with federal work relief programs (Politics/Government)

Criterion C specific requirements

- ☐ Representative example (Transportation)

Engineering: ☒

Subtypes

- ☐ Farm-to-Market Road
- ☐ Limited Access, Multiple-Lane, Divided Highway/Freeway
- ☐ Highway Bypass

Criterion A specific requirements

- ☐ Early and/or prominent project of the Colorado Highway Department (Transportation)
- ☒ Association with a significant event (If applicable, the Area of Significance is indicated in the statement of significance below)
- ☐ Association with federal work relief programs (Politics/Government)

Criterion C specific requirements

- ☐ Representative example (Transportation)
- ☐ Engineering achievement (Engineering)

Aesthetic: ☐

Criterion A specific requirements

- ☐ Early and/or prominent project of the Colorado Highway Department (Transportation)
- ☐ Association with a significant event (If applicable, the Area of Significance is indicated in the statement of significance below)
- ☐ Association with federal work relief programs (Politics/Government)

Criterion C specific requirements

- ☐ Representative example (Transportation)
- ☐ Engineering achievement (Engineering)
- ☐ Landscape architecture (Landscape Architecture)

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Historic periods of highway construction:

- ☐ Pre-territorial (pre-1861)
- ☐ Territorial and pre-automobile state roads (1861-1890)
- ☒ Automobile age (1890-1930)
- ☒ Depression and World War II (1930-1945)
- ☒ Postwar Interstate Era (1945-1973)
- ☐ Completion and Augmentation of Interstate System (1973-2000)

Level of Significance:

- ☒ Local
- ☐ State
- ☐ National

Significance Statement:

SH 2 is classified as an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS.

Criterion A

As an Engineered Route, SH 2 possesses significance under Criterion A. In the Denver metro area, Colorado Blvd. is a product of the post-war suburban development of eastern Denver. The development of the southern Denver suburban corridor relied on SH 2 for its physical growth. As such, SH 2 possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Transportation and Community Planning and Development for its role in post-World War II suburban growth in Denver at the local level.

Criterion B

Research did not reveal this highway to be directly associated with the events or work of a person important in history, nor does research indicate the highway represents the efforts of a specific individual to secure construction of this highway for the economic development of a community or area of the state. Therefore, this highway does not possess significance under Criterion B.

Criterion C

As a representative example, a state highway that exhibits physical features indicative of an important type or subtype identified in the MPS reflecting its original design or important variation may possess significance. A state highway may also possess significance for particularly important engineering achievements.

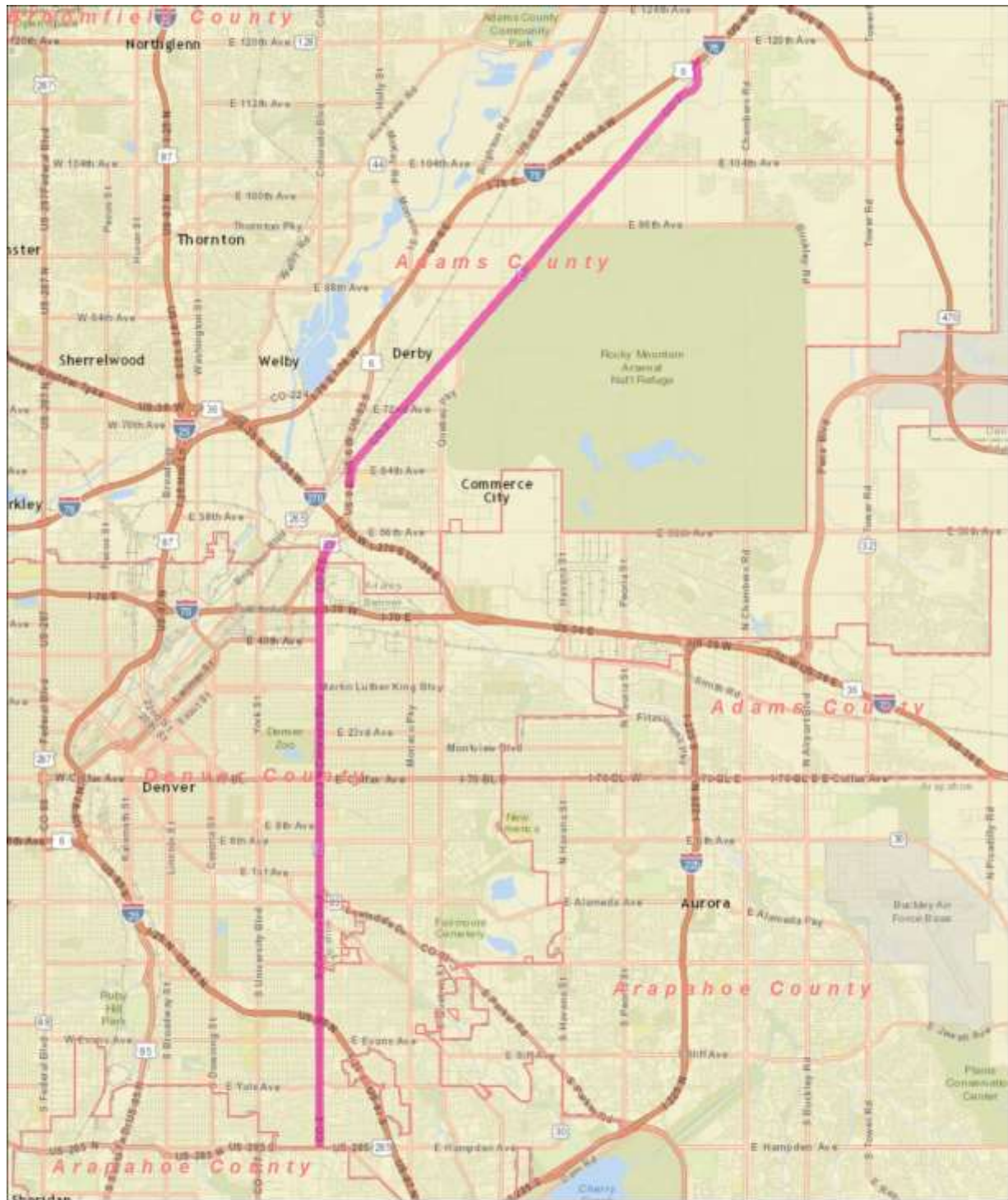
This highway is not considered to be an early or prominent project of the Colorado Highway Department. Research and literature review yielded no evidence to indicate the use of innovative or important engineering design or construction techniques that serve to distinguish this highway from other roads and does not appear to exhibit important engineering innovations or important later modifications. The highway's design and construction appear to fall within the established standard practices of state highway design and construction of the time and the highway does not possess significance under Criterion C.

Criterion D

For a property to possess significance for information potential, the information yielded by the property must answer specific important research questions that cannot be otherwise answered. The technology of highway construction is well understood and documented. As such, this highway is unlikely to yield important information that cannot be discerned from archived plans and other records. Therefore, this highway does not possess significance under Criterion D.

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SH 2
County Boundary

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

SH 2



Map indicates the extent of the highway based on CDOT GIS data; portions co-signed with other highways may not be indicated.

*Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHF