

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 392

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
392A	From US 287C at the South End of Fort Collins East along (Carpenter Rd) (Old CO RD 32) Crossing I-25 ending at 7th Street and SH 257-A in Windsor
392B	From SH 257-A East of Windsor East via Lucerne and North To SH 14C at Briggsdale

Highway Location:

Counties: Larimer, Weld
 Length (Miles): 36.066

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

<i>OAHP Site No.</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Assessment Date</i>	<i>Site Name</i>
5LR.13197	Not eligible	2013	SH 392
5WL7004	Not eligible	2013	SH 392

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

Colorado Department of Transportation evaluated SH 392 as officially not eligible in 2012 and the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred in 2013.

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

<i>OAHP Site No.</i>	<i>District Name</i>	<i>Assessment (If Applicable)</i>
None	No historic districts are found on or adjacent to this highway	

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Historical Data:

SH 392A begins at the junction of SH 287 in Ft. Collins in Weld County and travels east, over Interstate(I)-25 to the junction with SH 257 in Windsor. SH 392B extends from the east side of Windsor and travels east via Lucerne and north to SH 14 in Briggsdale. The entire route is 36 miles.

SH 392 entered the state highway system relatively late, in 1949. The route originally went from Windsor and SH 259 east via Lucerne, ending in Barnesville. The western extension to U.S. Highway n(US) 87/185 (current I-25) was added by 1960. The eastern extension from Barnesville to Briggsdale is shown on state highway maps by 1954 as an unpaved road. State maps show the entire route was paved by 1960.

Northeastern Colorado is within the physiographic province of the Great Plains, and more specifically, the area known as the High Plains. The terrain is relatively flat, with gentle hills and shallow waterways, and the climate is semiarid, with low levels of moisture. There are few trees and the region is known for weather extremes. The South Platte River and its tributaries is the primary source of water and the lifeline for communities in northeastern Colorado. The river has guided travelers for millennia, starting with trails used by Native Americans, trappers, and explorers. Beginning in 1858, after the discovery of gold at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River--today's Denver--the South Platte River Trail guided the majority of travelers to the gold camps and support towns. The trail began at the confluence of the North Platte and South Platte in North Platte, Nebraska, as a branch of the Overland or Oregon Trail. The transcontinental railroad also followed the river in 1881 when the Union Pacific Railroad built its branch line to Denver. After 1910, with the establishment of the Colorado Highway Commission, the river dictated the paths of the region's first major highways and bridges for river crossings.

Prior to the homestead era and the arrival of the railroad, the South Platte River valley was prime pastureland and ranchers took full advantage of the ability to run cattle freely for grazing. John Wesley Iliff and others amassed huge herds near the river in the 1860s and 1870s, buying key parcels and leasing state and federal lands in northeastern Colorado. The cattle were trailed to railheads in Cheyenne or Denver before 1881. After 1881, the railroad towns of Brush, Iliff, Sterling, and Julesburg became busy freight shipping points. Farmers formed cooperatives to build major irrigation systems based on priority water rights from the South Platte. At Greeley, the construction of irrigation canals and storage reservoirs significantly increased the acreage for agriculture. Prior to these systems, crop raising was limited to fields in river and creek bottoms but irrigation made it possible for farmers to plant crops in fields on higher benches further from the river. Fifty miles east of Greeley, Fort Morgan became the center of several irrigation systems that radiated to outlying farms and ranches, as did Sterling, another forty miles downstream (Wyckoff 1999: 164).

The region has always had a relatively sparse population. Larger towns such as Greeley, Fort Morgan and Sterling settled on the river, connected to the smaller towns of Ovid, Sedgwick, Crook, Iliff, Atwood, and Merino. Major irrigated crops included corn and feed crops for animals. Sugar beets became a prominent crop after 1910 in Weld, Morgan, and Logan counties. The Great Western Sugar Company built ten processing factories in the South Platte River valley at Loveland, Greeley, Eaton, Fort Collins, Windsor, Longmont, Sterling, Brush, Fort Morgan, and Ovid. The raising and processing of sugar beets also brought large numbers of field workers from other countries to the region, including Germans from Russia, Japanese, and Mexicans. While irrigated farming is possible near the river and in fields that have water rights to the underground Ogallala aquifer, dryland farming supported farms and ranches north of the river near the small communities of Peetz, Stoneham, Briggsdale and Keota. Major dryland crops include winter wheat, sorghum, milo, alfalfa, and field peas (Webb 1931: 373).

SH 392 is an east/west connector for the communities of Windsor and Lucerne to the highways of SH 14 and SH 257 and I-25. Windsor first began as a stage stop for the Overland Trail and later platted in 1882 with the building of the Greeley, Salt Lake and Pacific Railroad (later Union Pacific Railroad). Situated between larger agricultural markets such as Ft. Collins and Greeley, Windsor became an agricultural processing town in the 1903 with the building of the Great Western Sugar beet factory (Thomas 2010: 35). The community of Lucerne was at first a railroad stop for the Denver-Pacific Railroad line to Cheyenne in 1869 and later a stop for unloading bales of alfalfa. By 1892 the town was platted. The Great Western Sugar company had a beet dump in Lucerne from 1902 until 1985 (Lynch 2011).

SH 392 is one of many short rural regional connector roads developed in the mid-20th century to access more prominent routes that connect to urban centers along the front range. Its entry as a state highway on the later years of beet processing and cattle production mark it as a less prominent transportation link to regional markets. Research and review of historic mapping does not indicate that this highway provided direct access to destinations related to important historic themes such as industry, agriculture, or commerce.

**Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHF*

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(Unless otherwise indicated, sources used in the preparation of this section included state highway maps, the Highways of Colorado by Matthew Salek, 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 392 is classified as an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS. Portions of the following significance statement have been taken from 5WL.7004/5LR.13197, a site form prepared by J. Gabriel/Lisa Schoch from CDOT in 2012 that determined the entire highway did not have significance under Criteria A or C.

Criterion A

As an Engineered Route, SH 392 is one of many local routes that connect to other more prominent transportation corridors. Research failed to indicate this highway has a direct association with a historical theme important in Colorado history, or that it represents an early or prominent road construction project of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD), or the connections it provides from any subsequent highway improvements. It was added to the state system in 1949, several decades after the highway department began to improve farm to market routes to facilitate the state's growing agricultural industry. The development of the highway is exemplified by expansion and contraction of the state's highway network: expansions of roadway mileage occurred until the 1990s, followed by a period when parts of the highway were taken off the system, and added back again. The roadway is also not an example of a road built or improved with Depression-era federal work relief programs. As such, the highway does not possess significance under Criterion A.

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

This highway is not considered to be an early or prominent project of the CHD. It is not indicative of a period or method of construction on a local, regional, or statewide scale. It served as a local roadway between Windsor and Lucerne until it was extended to SH 37 in 1954. 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. It travels across relatively flat terrain and there are no innovative engineering techniques evident in its design or construction. 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.

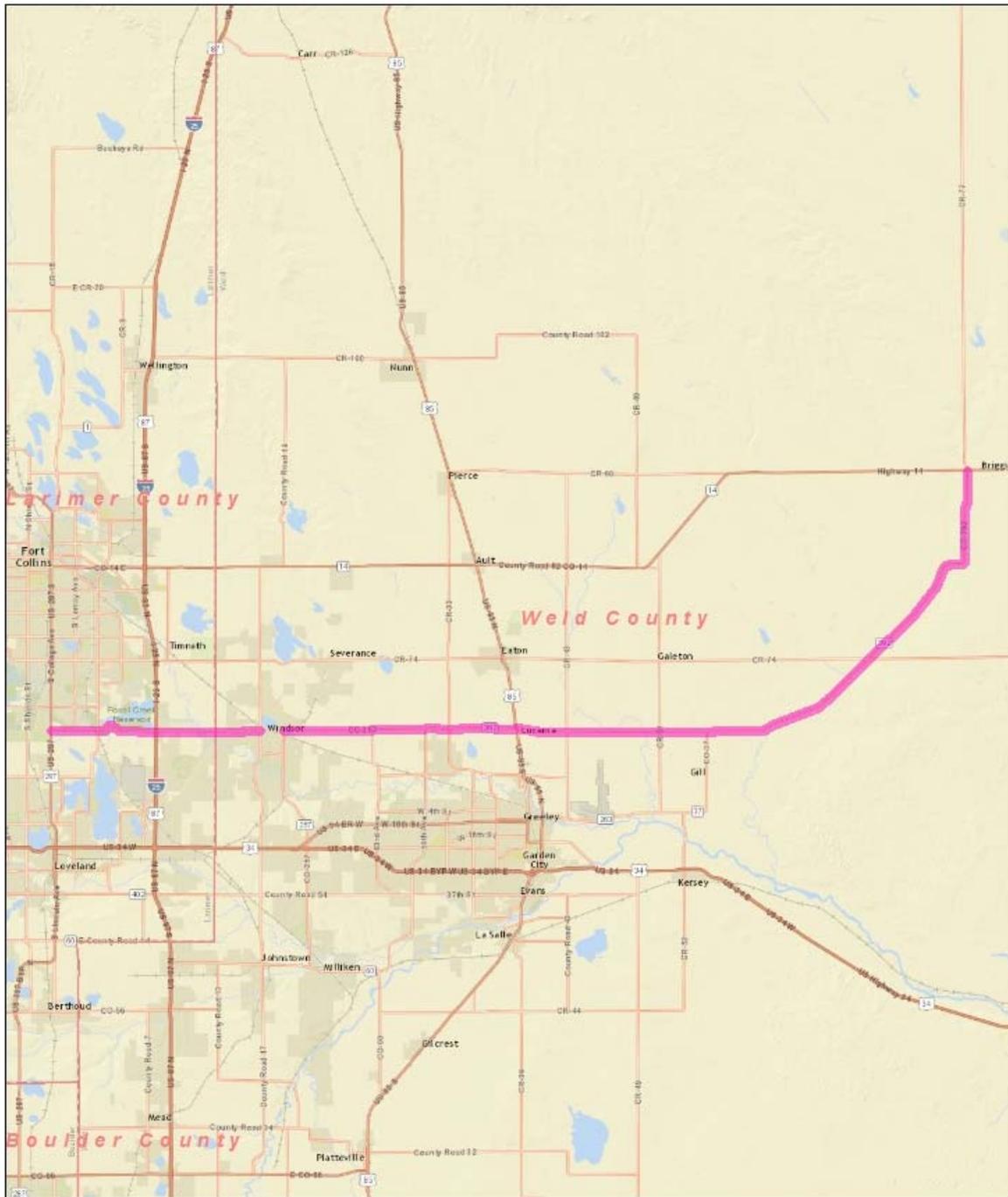
Criterion D

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 392
- County Boundary

SH 392

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

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