

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 45

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
045A	From East Side Ramps at I 25-A south Pueblo at (Greenhorn Dr) west and north To North Side Ramps at U.S. 50-A northwest of Pueblo

Highway Location:

Counties: Pueblo
Length (Miles): 8.94

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>
None	No previously recorded segments are found on or adjacent to this highway		

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

No Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms (forms) for previously recorded segments of this highway were identified in Compass.

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	

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

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Historical Data:

SH 45 is approximately nine miles long and is located along the west and southwestern edge of Pueblo extending between U.S. Highway (US) 50 on the north and Interstate(I)-25 on the south. The highway travels along the edge of suburban development and a rural area on the west side of Pueblo.

Historically, a number of trails and roads made up the transportation network in the area through which the highway passes that facilitated travel and the distribution of the region's agricultural and industrial supplies and products. Settlement in this part of the state occurred in the early 1800s in part as a result of regional trade along the Santa Fe and Cherokee Trails, whose routes generally followed the Arkansas River Valley and subsequently formed portions of the route of present-day US 50. Located at the confluence of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek, Pueblo was established in 1870 and became a regional center of trade and industry due to its proximity to mining, agricultural areas, and New Mexico. William Jackson Palmer, an influential developer and railroad expansionist, platted another town, South Pueblo, on the opposite side of the Arkansas River, as a stop on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in the early 1870s. Palmer extended rail connections from the Pueblo area to the coalfields around Walsenburg and Trinidad by 1876, to the San Luis Valley by 1878, and to Leadville in the central mountain region by 1881. Combined with the entry of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad in Pueblo in the mid-1870s, rail connections solidified Pueblo as an important regional trade center in southern Colorado leading to increased settlement and industrial growth of the area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Wyckoff 1999: 144-145; Pueblo.org 2014).

Palmer also established the Colorado Coal & Iron Company (CC&I) in 1879. The company's first plant, the South Pueblo Ironworks, was located southeast of South Pueblo on a large tract of company-owned land. CC&I produced rails for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and by the early 1880s was producing coal, pig iron, iron ore, rolled rails, and steel ingots. CC&I had several mining camps through the region and platted Bessemer, a company town for those working at the South Pueblo Ironworks in 1886. By 1890 CC&I had numerous smelters and factory complexes along the southern periphery of the city. CC&I was reorganized as Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) in 1892 and purchased by John D. Rockefeller in 1903. Mining activities in this region were focused primarily in the foothills and mountains south and southwest of Pueblo with the smelters and industrial complexes located along the southernmost periphery of the city. CF&I experienced several booms during the early twentieth century and as the national defense program expanded in the mid-twentieth century, iron and steel production and profits rose dramatically (Deherrera et al 2012: 3-6; Harvard Business School, Colorado Fuel and Iron Corp 2012).

Agriculture was also an important theme in the area through which this route passes. The region boasted the largest cattle industry in the state during the late nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth and twentieth century irrigation canals were constructed to facilitate the production of wheat, hay, oats, corn, sugar beets, watermelon, cantaloupe, and other field crops. The entry of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad into Colorado during the late nineteenth century resulted in the settlement and growth of additional towns along the rail line such as La Junta, Las Animas, Lamar, Granada, and Holly. These towns prospered due the connections the railroad provided and access to convey commercial and agricultural goods to larger markets. During the early to mid-twentieth century, numerous farm-to-market roads were constructed and improved as part of the larger transportation network to transport goods and people in and around Pueblo (Noel et al 1994: 25, 29; Wyckoff 1999: 167-170; Colorado State Planning Commission 1941: 306).

Construction on SH 45 began in the 1960s and the first section completed extended from I-25 northwest to SH 96 in 1966. A segment north of 11th Street was completed by 1973 and the entire extent of the current highway was in place by 1975. Undated right-of-way plans indicate that construction of the highway was completed under several Federal Aid Projects, a common funding program for state highways. State highways, farm-to-market roads, and small local connector roads like SH 45 worked to comprise the overall transportation network, which served to link major regional transportation corridors and facilitate travel in and around cities like Pueblo. Research does not indicate that this highway provided direct access to destinations related to important historic themes. Rather, SH 45 served local traffic and was one of several area local connector roads that helped form the overall regional transportation network and is not individually distinguishable from other roads providing similar connections and it is not associated with important historical themes or destinations. Although the alignment of the highway travels along the outer edge of Pueblo this highway is not considered an early example of a highway bypass; the first highway bypass in Colorado opened in 1949 along US 85 (present-day I-25) near the towns of Greenhorn and Crow south of Pueblo. SH 45 post-dates this early example by over a decade and is it not considered an early or significant example of a highway bypass.

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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 45 is classified an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS.

Criterion A

This highway was constructed between the 1960s and mid-1970s and is not an example of an early or prominent project by the Colorado Highway Department (CHD) or an early example of a bypass nor was it built or improved as part of a federal relief project. Present-day SH 45 is an area connector route and has served to bypass downtown Pueblo and to provide one of several connections between two major regional transportation corridors, US 50 and I-25. Although located at the edge of the city and near rural areas, this highway did not function as a main transportation route for providing direct connectivity as a farm-to-market road between an important agricultural region and its market. This southern terminus is located near the core area of industrial development in Pueblo; the CC&I plans and factories were located along the southern periphery of the city and predate the establishment of this highway. No evidence suggest that this highway played an important role in the transportation of industrial goods produced or used in the part of the city that set it apart from any other local roads or highways. As such, it 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. 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.

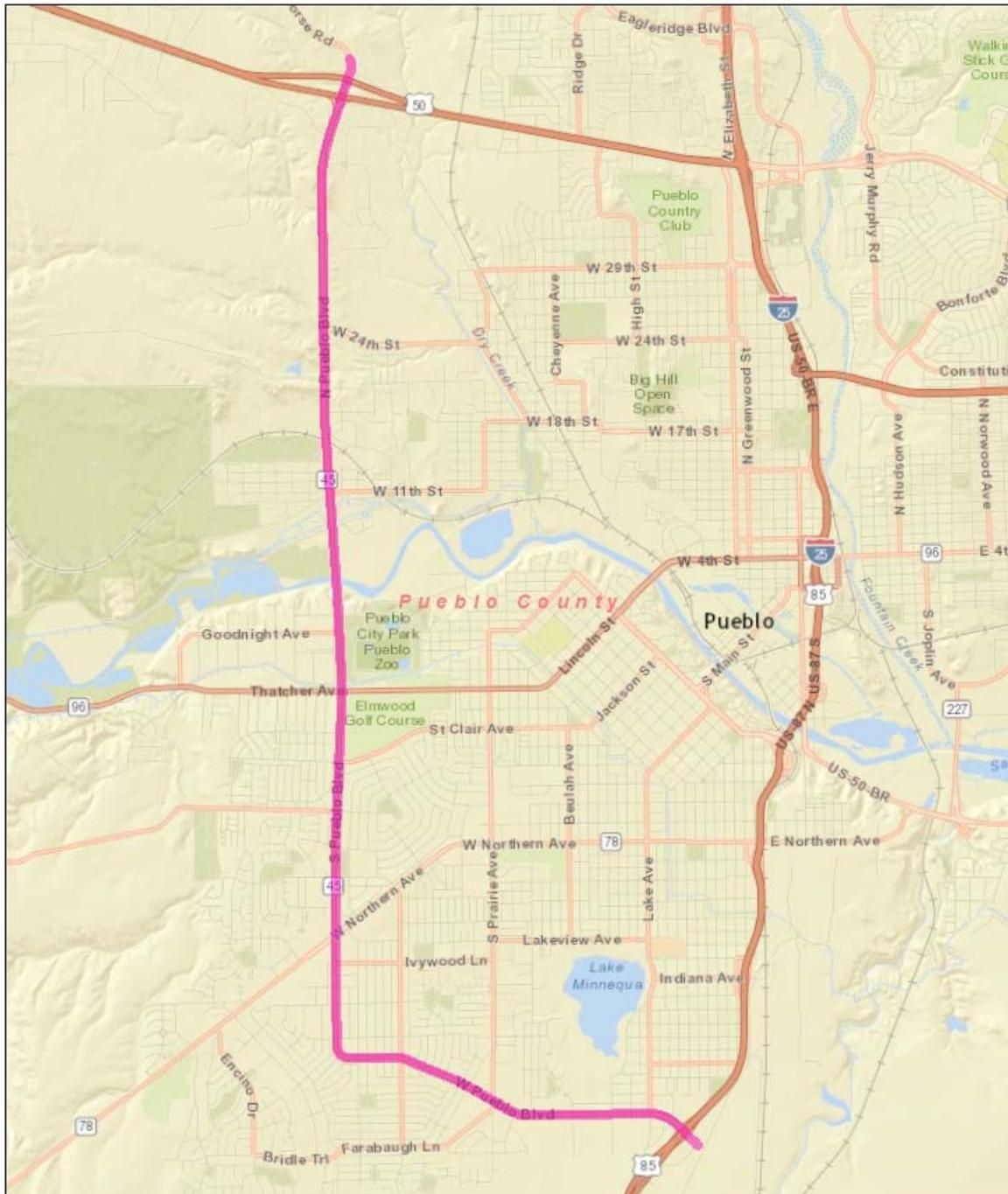
Criterion D

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.

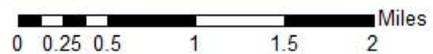
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- SH 45
- County Boundary

SH 45



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