

A Framework for Wayshowing:

The Peak to Peak Scenic & Historic Byway

Larimer, Boulder, and Gilpin Counties
Colorado



June 2014

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Executive Summary: Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway

Utilizing a “front-seat back-seat” approach, travelers unfamiliar with the Peak to Peak Byway area took to the road with a list of significant historical, cultural and recreational sites to locate. Neophytes in the front seat searched for signs, used digital devices, studied maps and asked for directions. Meanwhile, transportation and tourism specialists in the back seat recorded the navigational challenges of those “new to the byway” travelers.

Stakeholders on the Peak to Peak Scenic & Historic Byway are determined to keep their byway “green,” through a minimum number of visual intrusions on the natural landscape, and through sound day-to-day ecological practices by both locals and visitors including keeping brochures and other disposables to a minimum. At the same time, improved navigation for visitors can help capitalize on the potential for increasing travel-related revenues for the communities along the byway. Balancing these factors resulted in the following recommendations:

- A. Create a website specific to the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway to provide navigational, historical, and interpretive information about the byway. The website should be designed to both assist visitors while they are planning a trip, and also provide onsite interpretation in areas with internet access. The website needs to be optimized to function on mobile devices in order to be useful to most travelers.
- B. Create a QR code which travelers can use to download the Peak to Peak website or an electronic brochure. Consider developing a mobile phone app for the byway. Finally, consider marking hotspots for wireless access.
- C. Consider providing an annual poster/byway map that carries the QR code and be displayed in windows from Memorial Day to Labor Day. These would minimize paper use, yet keep the byway visible to travelers.
- D. Establish a stronger gateway orientation. Consider locating informational gateway kiosks with site specific navigational and interpretive signage in Black Hawk, Nederland, and Estes Park (the highest concentration areas for visitors). Currently there are no *byway begins* or *byway ends* signs, nor is the route clear for visitors entering the byway from canyon roads.
- E. Conduct a signage inventory to determine where additional byway signs are needed for traveler reassurance on the byway route. Signage should be in place at each of the major intersections (both for northbound and southbound travelers as well as for travelers driving on-to or off-of the byway) so travelers can distinguish the scenic byway from other roads and navigate the turns necessary to stay on the byway.
- F. Address the multi-modal character of the Peak to Peak Byway, as it is popular route for both bicyclists and motorcyclists. More needs to be done to make bicyclists aware of cycling hazards in specific locations, and to make drivers aware of the fact that cyclists share the road for a majority of the byway’s length. Add *Share the Road* signs to alert drivers of bicyclists. Provide up-to-date bicycling information on the Peak to Peak website and clearly specify which sections of the roadway

are not recommended for bicycle travel. Consider working with CDOT to test alternative bicycle signage being used by other states.

- G. Establish a plan for interpretation of the byway that includes both electronic content and interpretive signage of significant sites. The assessment team found that the byway is indeed spectacularly scenic, but noted that they found little information to help them understand the history of the region.
- H. Improve directional signage to Visitor Centers. The assessment team found it very difficult to locate Visitor Centers throughout the corridor. These places are key resources for travelers and need to be easily identifiable to visitors unfamiliar with the area. Improve signage on the Visitor Center buildings themselves and in the places where additional Visitor Information signs are needed, pair them with other clusters of signs.
- I. Build a system of turnouts at byway gateways that provide a coordinated regional system of wayshowing for travelers. Include a comprehensive regional map, navigational directions and interpretive information. Work in conjunction with all four Scenic and Historic Byways in CDOT Traffic Region 4: Pawnee Pioneer Trail (Weld, Morgan and Logan Counties), South Platte River Trail (Sedgwick County), Cache la Poudre-North Park (Jackson and Larimer Counties), and Trail Ridge Road (Grand and Larimer Counties). A model wayshowing system is currently being installed in eleven counties of CDOT Traffic Region 2 in Southeast Colorado.



Cyclists on Peak to Peak Byway near Ward Colorado

Due to the successful management of the Peak to Peak Byway, the route has maintained its scenic character in the face of steadily increasing vehicle traffic. Residents have expressed concern in regards to the growing popularity of their byway most specifically as it relates to noise from motorcycles. Visitor numbers are likely to continue increasing as the population of the Colorado Front Range grows.

Enhancing the existing wayshowing system can help guide visitors in meaningful and memorable ways while minimizing conflicts between user groups (i.e., bicyclists and motorists, residences and visitors). A stronger wayshowing system can contribute to both greater safety and a deeper understanding of the historic and natural assets that make the Peak to Peak Byway special. This document recommends that the byway address three areas: 1) The development and electronic delivery of content for the Internet and for mobile devices, 2) need for visitor centers along the route to be more easily identified and located, and 3) safety issues regarding bicycle traffic.

Introduction

The deployment of an effective system of wayshowing is an essential component of successful regional tourism strategies. Wayfinding and wayshowing are related but distinct concepts. **Wayfinding** is the mental process performed by travelers in identifying and locating their travel destinations. **Wayshowing**, on the other hand, is the communication in the form of maps, signs, and other media intended to aid the traveler in their wayfinding.

The purpose of this document is to provide a preliminary plan for an enhanced wayshowing system along the Peak to Peak Byway. In achieving this purpose, the plan aims to:

- Provide an outline of key concepts of wayshowing and wayfinding
- Assess the inventory of existing directional signage to key sites along the Peak to Peak Pathways and designation signage along the same routes
- Provide recommendations for enhancing directional signage to key sites
- Provide an outline for subsequent action

Keys to Effective Wayshowing

An effective system of wayshowing responds to the needs of travelers at all stages in their journey. At a minimum, effective wayshowing for the traveler must:

- Support how people find their way in unfamiliar travel environments
- Provide a guidance system of reliable and consistent components on the byway
- Respond to the unique characteristics of the byway
- Integrate pre-visit, visit, and post-visit stages of the byway experience
- Contribute to a safe roadway and travel environment
- Become a widely practiced body of knowledge among byway providers

With the assistance of an effective wayshowing system, successful travelers should be able to:

1. Identify origin and destination
2. Determine turn angles
3. Identify segment links and directions of movement
4. Recognize on-route and distant landmarks
5. Mentally embed or visualize the route in a larger reference frame: a cognitive map.

Stages of Wayshowing

Effective wayshowing is essential not only to ensuring good experiences for the visitor, but also in attracting that visitor in the first place. While wayshowing may seem to begin and end with the traveler on the road, it also plays an important role in attracting visitors, assisting in their trip planning, and in enhancing their recollections with others after their trip is complete. Consider the travel experience as five distinct stages:

Choose

The point at which the traveler decides his or her travel destination or destinations. *Wayfinding Needs: What are the travel routes? What is there to see and do and where are these activities located? How much time is required for the trip?*

Prepare

This is the stage in which the prospective traveler plans and prepares for their trip, including making reservations or other advance travel arrangements. *Wayfinding Needs: How will we get there? Where will we stay, eat and stop? How much time should we allot to travel to and on the travel route? Where are the heritage, recreational, and cultural attractions of the area?*

Go/Do

This stage is the event itself as the visitor makes his or her way to or around their destination. *Wayfinding Needs: Where are the entry points to the route? How do we get back on track if we get off the route? Where are the attractions along the route? Where can we get information along the route? Where do we get gas, food, or lodging?*

Recall

This is the stage in which the memories of the trip extend its enjoyment beyond the time spent away from home. With travel completed, visitors typically want pictures, maps, souvenirs or other items to assist their recollection of a memorable trip. *Wayfinding Needs: What will help us recall the good times we had on the trip? Where were the sites we really enjoyed?*

Do Again

It is hoped that with an enjoyable and memorable trip, many visitors will return. *Wayfinding Needs: Where are those good maps from our last trip? We need to show our friends and family what they might like.*

Wayshowing Components

A successful wayshowing system includes multiple components that not only direct the traveler, but also provide interpretive information. Wayshowing does not start and stop on the road, but exists to provide the traveler with information to plan their trip and assist in the recollection of it afterwards through maps, websites and other media that can be accessed away from the physical roadway. Essential elements of a wayshowing system include the following:

- Entrances, exit and gateway signage identify where to enter and exit a route or byway so that travelers know their position relative to accessing and leaving a byway or other route.
- Orientation stops are pull-offs, turn-outs and other places for motorists to stop and help them create, refresh, and expand their mental maps of a byway or other route, its intrinsic qualities, and overarching interpretive theme with exhibits, maps, and other means of communication.
- Repetitive route markers provide sequence of visual cues for motorists to follow along a byway or other route.
- Directional signage to planned destinations alert and guide motorists to featured stops and attractions along or near a byway or other route.
- A portable map is a carry-on map of a byway corridor or travel region and its various attractions and amenities.

History of Wayfinding Development on the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway

The Peak to Peak Scenic Byway was established in 1918 during the gold rush years of the early 20th century. It is approximately 55 miles in length and connects the towns of Estes Park, Allenspark, Nederland, and Black Hawk. Originally built as a curvy slow-speed dirt road between mining towns, the Peak to Peak byway is today engineered and paved to accommodate more vehicles at higher speeds. According to Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) statistics, many segments of the byway are now seeing nearly 5,000 vehicles in Average Annual Daily Trips (AADTs).

In 1989 the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway was designated as a Colorado's first officially recognized Scenic and Historic Byway based on its intrinsic qualities of scenic, historic, recreational, natural, and cultural significance. It traverses a beautiful landscape of high country forests and meadows. It parallels the Continental Divide and provides stunning views of the Colorado Rockies including Indian Peaks, Mount Meeker, and Longs Peak. The area around the byway saw the first important gold strikes in the State and the Peak to Peak passes numerous relics of this mining history including mine shafts, ore dumps, and ghost towns. There are also plentiful recreational attractions along the route that provide opportunities for fishing, hunting, hiking, camping, rock climbing, bicycling, bird watching, and skiing. Dirt roads just off the byway provide opportunities for 4-wheel drive vehicles and snowmobiles. The elevation of the byway is in the montane ecosystem between 8,000 and 9,500 feet which is dominated by coniferous forests of lodgepole pine and Douglas fir, dotted with aspen groves and open meadows. Wildlife is abundant here providing frequent elk and moose sightings. Subalpine ecosystems and alpine tundra ecosystems rise above 9,500 foot elevations and form the backdrop scenery. The primary cultural quality of the Peak to Peak Byway is the exposure visitors get to the mountain culture that exists in the small towns along the route.

The byway uses the State scenic byway logo (the blue Columbine sign) as directional signage to mark the route. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for signage along the state highways that make up the byway (CO 119, CO 72, and CO 7).

In 1998 Boulder County funded a byway Corridor Management Plan entitled, “A Place Apart,” for the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway Interest Group. This plan established a preservation investment strategy that focused on identifying investments necessary to protect the local character of the byway and surrounding communities. The basic philosophy of this report was, “Less is more . . . the less growth that is present or evident, the greater the degree to which we have protected viewsheds and ecosystems.” The plan attempts to preserve the spacious and unsettled characteristics of the byway from over-development.

In 2002, the Corridor Management Plan was followed with a Visual Intrusion Reduction Plan, which addresses ways to improve the scenic quality of the Peak to Peak Byway by identifying adverse visual elements within the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) right-of-way along the byway. Visual intrusions were defined as anything that diminished the natural and scenic beauty of the byway and were most often identified as unnecessary pullouts, wide shoulders, signage, and sparsely vegetated areas. To reduce visual clutter the plan recommended that signs be consolidated as much as possible and unnecessary or redundant signs be removed. To promote design continuity along the byway the plan also recommended adding Scenic Byway signs and installing gateway signage for Black Hawk, Nederland, and Estes Park (all key entry points to the byway).

The Colorado Department of Transportation has provided large brown directional signs for some specific byway attractions including parks, campgrounds and hiking trails.



Consolidated Attraction Signage



Consolidated Business Signage

Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway Wayfinding Assessment

Often the difficulty in providing effective wayshowing lies in understanding where travelers require assistance and in what form. Additionally, maps, signs, brochures and other media from multiple sources can often provide conflicting information. In June 2014 an on-the-road assessment was conducted along the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway to answer some of these questions. Specifically, the exercise sought to:

- Identify gaps in navigational clues for travelers by identifying points of certainty, and points of confusion; and
- Identify points of disconnect between what a traveler sees through the windshield and what they read from maps, brochures, mobile devices, web sites in their laps.

Byway representatives were asked to list the top ten heritage, cultural, and/or recreational sites in their respective counties and provide an assessment of the existing directional signage. Twenty-six sites were chosen for the Wayfinding Assessment. The attractions and sites chosen for inclusion in this exercise appear below.

Peak to Peak Wayfinding Assessment Route (Black Hawk to Estes Park)

Cultural Heritage Sites	Recreation Sites
Apex Valley ghost towns Fritz Peak Astronomy Observatory Nederland Visitor Center Boulder County Mining Museum Caribou Ranch Recording Studio Millsite Inn Bunce School Old Gallery in Allenspark Meeker Park Lodge Saint Malo Historical Landmark (Chapel on the Rocks) Eagle's Plume Native American Museum Enis Mills Cabin Historical Marker (Father of RMNP) Stanley Hotel National Hist. Landmark	Missouri Lake Pickle Gulch Picnic Area Golden Gate Canyon State Park West Magnolia Road Trailhead Eldora Ski Area Caribou Ranch Open Space Gordon Gulch NF Dispersed Camping Area Leaf Peeping Viewing Area Brainard Lake Camp Tahosa Boy Scout High Adventure Camp Camp Dick NF Campground Olive Ridge NF Campground Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP)

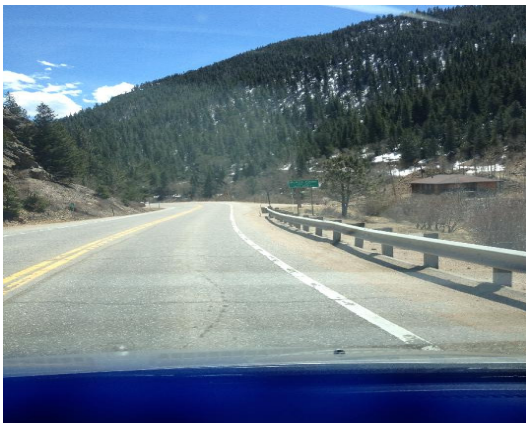
A four member team was assembled to travel the byway using a “front seat, back seat” approach. In the front seat were neophytes, new to the region with limited knowledge of the area. They were given the list of attractions and sites to locate using highway signage, verbal directions and printed materials such as brochures and maps available at Visitor Centers and other public outlets. The “front seaters” were also allowed to use any mobile devices available to them.

Transportation and tourism specialists occupied the backseat. The “back seaters” recorded the experience of the “front seaters” in detail. “Back seaters” recorded the exact locations where the “front seaters” encountered confusion or uncertainty in navigating the region. They also recorded any disparities between written information in maps, brochures and other media and actual conditions as observed through the windshield.

While the neophytes in the front seat navigated their way through unfamiliar territory, the specialists in the back seat were given the following assignment:

- Observe the actions and discussions of the “front seaters”
- Record locations where “front seaters” expressed uncertainties and confusion and note apparent reasons
- Quiz “front seaters” on effectiveness of signs, maps and other driving instructions
- Note which wayshowing devices “front seaters” are using most often and which they are not
- Resist giving any travel or driving advice unless an immediate safety issue warrants
- Conduct post-trip discussion with “front seaters”

After the conclusion of the wayfinding exercise, participants were asked to record observations and make recommendations based on their on-the-road experience. A full list of the comments and observations by the two teams is found in the Appendix.



Existing Black Hawk Signage



Existing Nederland Signage



Existing Estes Park Signage



Existing Bicycle Signage

Recommendations and Action Plan

An analysis of this structured assessment exercise combined with the input of local officials, transportation professionals, and tourism specialists resulted in recommendations that can both improve the ease of navigation for visitors and better capitalize on the potential for increasing travel-related revenues for the communities along the byway.

Recommendations acknowledge that the Byway Committee and byway communities have held a steady course of the sustainability of both ecosystems and viewsheds. Collectively the citizens want a minimum of intrusion on the landscape (including signage) and ways to communicate with travelers that exclude disposable brochures.

The following recommends are made:

Navigation

- A. Establish one Regional map midway on the Byway.
- B. Conduct a signage inventory to determine where additional byway signs are needed for traveler reassurance on the byway route. Signage should be in place at each of the major intersections listed below. There should be signage directing northbound and southbound travelers as well as travelers driving on-to or off-of the byway. Travelers should be able to distinguish the scenic byway from other roads and navigate the turns necessary to stay on the byway.
 - CO 279 & CO 119 in Black Hawk (Gateway)
 - CO 119 & CO 46 / Golden Gate Canyon Road
 - CO 119 & CO 72 / Coal Creek Canyon Road
 - CO 72 & CO 119 / Boulder Canyon Drive (Round –a –bout) in Nederland (Gateway)
 - CO 72 & CO 7 / Saint Vrain Drive
 - CO 7 & US 36 / N. Saint Vrain Ave. in Estes Park
 - US 36 & US 34 / Big Thompson Canyon Road in Estes Park (Gateway)
- C. Address the multi-use nature of the Peak to Peak Byway. This is a popular bicycling route and more needs to be done to make cyclists aware of cycling hazards and drivers aware of the fact that cyclists share the road for a majority of the byway’s length. Add *Share the Road* signs to alert drivers of bicyclists. Provide up to date bicycling information on the Peak to Peak website and clarify where it is recommended to bicycle on the byway and where it is not recommended.
- D. Improve directional signage to Visitor Centers. The observation team found it difficult to locate any Visitor Centers along the route. These places are key information resources for travelers and need to be easily identifiable to visitors unfamiliar to the area. Determine how existing visitor centers can be more visible.

Gateways

- A. Establish stronger gateway orientation. Possibilities range from interpretive installations at entry points, to small signs at the northern and southern most points on the byway. Currently there are no *begin* or *end* signs and it is not always clear when you drive onto the byway from a canyon road somewhere in the middle. Consider locating informational gateway kiosks with site specific navigational and interpretive signage in Black Hawk, Nederland, and Estes Park (the highest concentration areas for visitors).
- B. Build a system of turnouts at byway gateways that provide a coordinated regional system of wayshowing for travelers. Include a comprehensive regional map, navigational directions and interpretive information. Work in conjunction with all four Scenic and Historic Byways in CDOT Traffic Region 4: Pawnee Pioneer Trail (Weld, Morgan and Logan Counties), South Platte River Trail (Sedgwick County), Cache la Poudre-North Park (Jackson and Larimer Counties), and Trail Ridge Road (Grand and Larimer Counties). A model wayshowing system is currently being installed in eleven counties of CDOT Traffic Region 2 in Southeast Colorado.

Electronic Visitor Information

- A. Create a website specific to the Peak to Peak Scenic Byway to provide navigational, historical, and interpretive information about the byway. The website should assist visitors in planning a trip to the byway as well as for onsite interpretation for those areas with internet coverage. The website needs to be optimized to function on mobile devices in order to be useful to most travelers. Meanwhile, travelers should be directed to the state scenic byway site www.coloradobyways.org.
- B. Establish a program for interpretation. Conduct an inventory of significant places along the byway. Define and catalog each site's significance. Apply this information first to the Peak to Peak website and to the Colorado Byway website.

Partnerships

Projects to be developed in partnership with the Colorado Department of Transportation

- Prioritize navigational signs on I-70
- Conduct an inventory of byway signs to determine if any additional signs are needed
- Install "Share the Road" as needed in key segments of the byway where problems may arise; consider a test of more efficient signage for bicycles that have been adopted by other states.
- Add mileage from I-70 and US 6 to key attractions on signs where possible

Projects to be developed in partnership with Counties

- Conduct an inventory of byway signs to determine if any additional signs are needed
- Install "Share the Road" as needed in key segments of the byway where problems may arise
- Cross check nomenclature or specific sites on signage and publications to ensure consistency
- Develop Beverly Heights Park as a major orientation site on the north end of the byway
- Add mileage between key attractions on signs (where possible)

Projects to be undertaken in partnership with byway communities

- Develop community specific wayfinding signage within each town

Projects to be undertaken by the byway organization

- Cross check nomenclature on publications and websites to ensure consistency
- Develop mobile app and e-books

The recommendations included in this document represent only the first steps in the process of developing a more effective system of wayshowing. Recommendations concerning directional signage and interpretive signage can be acted upon in the short term by bringing together relevant stakeholders and CDOT officials. Representatives from the Peak to Peak Byway Committee can play a valuable role in working with relevant stakeholders and CDOT officials. Recommendations concerning orientation and interpretive kiosks, as well as clustered signage will require additional effort to secure funding and achieve consensus on placement.

The next step in this process will involve working with city and county officials and representatives from the byway to determine final site locations and establish site priorities for interpretive kiosks. Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway representatives may also wish to meet with local officials to determine the possibilities for clustered signage highlighting local attractions and amenities.

APPENDIX

Summary of key observations from the front seaters

Navigational signs Overview

- Gateway signage was not noticeable or identifiable
- Major intersections (CO-119 and Blackhawk, CO-119 and CO-72, CO-72 in Nederland at the round-a-bout, and CO-72 and CO-7) were difficult for the observation team to navigate
- Navigate signage appears to be at a minimum
- Few signs that indicate you are on a byway
- Despite an abundance of bicyclists on the byway the only bicycle sign that has been observed reads, "Bicycles not recommended, ride at your own risk"

Site specific navigational observations

- In their online search observation team was unable to find site information or a recommended list of stops/attractions along the byway
- Native American Museum was not found by observation team
- Fritz Peak Observatory was not found by observation team
- Bunce School was not found by observation team

Interpretive signs Overview

- Very few interpretive signs can be found on the Peak to Peak Byway
- Historical / interpretive information is unavailable at most sites
- The observation team expressed a strong desire for more access to historical information about the sites found along the byway
- The observation team was unable to find a good resource online for interpretive information

Site specific interpretive observations

- Nederland residents expressed interest in promoting the sustainability values of their citizens
- Mining relics along the byway are without signage

Inconsistencies in attraction identification: signs, printed materials such as maps and brochures, and mobile devices

- Peak to Peak Scenic Byway is listed as Peak to Peak Scenic Highway on TripAdvisor rendering it invisible to searches for "byway" on the site
- Peak to Peak Scenic Byway is listed as "Peak to Peak Highway" on Google Maps

Byway notes and observations from the Wayfinding front seaters during their tour on the Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway on June 6, 2014.

FRONT SEAT OBSERVATIONS

Volunteer, Frederick Pichon (International Visitor)

- I got lost in Black Hawk and Central City trying to find the road to Nederland. I know the locals don't want signs in the landscape, but there could be a little more help for someone like me who is new to the area. Very few commercial signs
- Feels like driving in the country - pretty landscape, modest houses, nice gardens
- "Most sites were easy to find but if I did not have a list I might not have known to look for them"
- Could not find Native American Museum
- "I wondered if there was more to see off the main road"
- Confusing navigating to and from Allenspark
- We saw some remnants of mines, but the sites needed explanation
- "What brought people to this place?"
- "There is very little historical information."
- I wish they would consider a phone app for visitors that describe what they see. Historical information was not found along roadway

Volunteer, Amy Harter

- "Gorgeous drive!"
- The observatory was not identified by signage, we saw platform on top of mountain
- Could not find byway sites online
- Would like to see a list of suggested stops
- "I would come back for the horses"
- Meeker Lodge was a nice place to stop, right off road, easy to see
- Driving felt safe but I felt uncomfortable when sharing with cyclists
- Had to wait two times behind cyclists until it was safe to pass
- Pulled off to watch elk
- "From Black Hawk to Nederland I had no idea what road I was on"
- "We really wanted an ice-cream stop"

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

- The pulloff marked "Scenic Overlook" did not have a view, it should be renamed "Historic Marker"
- Few signs indicate you are on a byway
- Noticed lots of bicyclists, not so many motorcyclists
- Point of interest / history information signs were desired but lacking
- Visitor Centers needed signage
- Need signage or some other indicator about where to find information (like visitor centers)
- Suggest gateway signage and midpoint regional map
- Could not find Bunce School, marked by point of interest sign
- We only saw blue columbine byway signs before and after CO 72 turns onto CO7... did not see elsewhere on the byway
- What is sugarloaf?

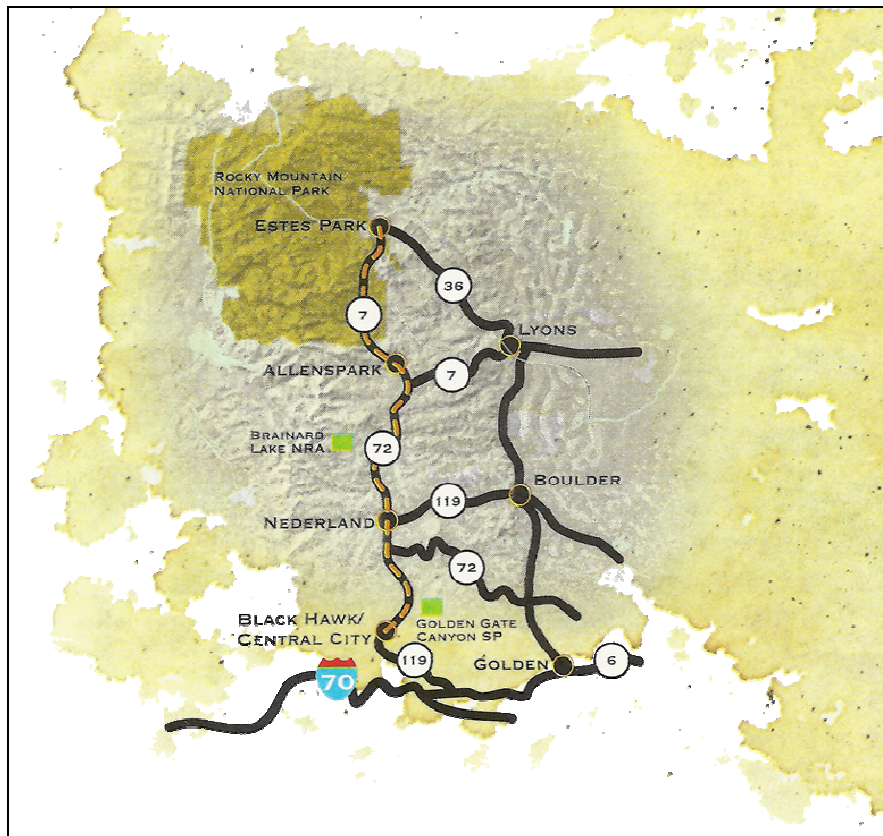
- No road signs from Blackhawk
- Lots of bicyclists

COMMENTS FROM LOCAL BYWAY REPRESENTATIVES

- People walk from “Scenic Overlook” along road to actual overlook up the hills. Safe pedestrian access along roadway would be a great improvement.
- Blue Columbine Scenic Byway signs could be added to the sign post for the purple Adopted Road signs
- Signage for hotspot wireless access would be beneficial especially around Allenspark where a wireless hotspot exists
- It would be great to have a scenic byways app by CDOT

Peak to Peak Scenic and Historic Byway (55-miles)

- Black Hawk, Rollinsville, Nederland, Ward, Peaceful Valley, Allenspark, Meeker Park, Estes Park



<http://www.coloradodot.info/travel/scenic-byways/north-central/peak-to-peak>