

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 115

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
115A	From SH 50-A at 9 th St in Canon City southeast via Florence and northeast via Penrose To the North Side On Ramps onto I-25A in Colorado Springs

Highway Location:

Counties: Fremont, El Paso

Length (Miles): 46.946

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

<i>OAHHP Site No.</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Assessment Date</i>	<i>Site Name</i>
5FN.1073.1	Officially needs data>Field needs data	06/22/1992>10/18/1991	OLD HIGHWAY 115
5FN.1073.2	Officially needs data>Field needs data	06/22/1992>10/18/1991	OLD HIGHWAY 115
5FN.1073.4	Field not eligible	8/26/2000	OLD STATE HIGHWAY 115 - SEGMENT

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

Three Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway, including 5FN1073.1, 5FN.1073.2, and 5FN.1073.4 were identified in Compass. 5FN.1073.1 and 5FN.1073.2 correspond to Old State Highway 115 and as of their last evaluation in 1992 required more data. Another segment of Old State Highway 115 (5FN.1073.4) was previously determined not eligible in 2000; this segment is located north of Penrose and does not correspond to the current alignment of SH 115.

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

<i>OAHHP Site No.</i>	<i>District Name</i>	<i>Assessment (If Applicable)</i>
5FN.523		106 - Officially eligible

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

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Historical Data:

SH 115 is approximately 47 miles long and extends southwest from Interstate(I)-25 in Colorado Springs to Penrose before turning west and continuing to US 50 in Cañon City. The earliest transportation corridors in South-Central Colorado were wagon roads that often followed trails established by Native Americans. The area west of Pueblo and south of Colorado Springs was settled in the mid-nineteenth century. Small farms, ranches, and towns were established in the area and served as supply centers for those traveling along stagecoach routes through the area from Colorado Springs and Pueblo and to provide access to area mining activities. Residents and those engaged in mining activities further into the mountains also frequented the small towns. Cañon City was organized in 1860 at which time a series of mining activities were underway in the area including coal, iron, gypsum, marble, and granite. The settlement that eventually developed into Penrose was established in the 1860s as a stop along a stagecoach route with a restaurant and hotel. Colorado Springs was laid out in 1871 and by the 1870s roads and trains connected Colorado Springs with Cañon City and Pueblo. Coal fields were also located near Cañon City and together with the discovery of oil in the early 1880s, industrial development spurred further growth and settlement in the area. The town of Florence, also along the route of the highway, incorporated in 1887 and by 1890, had 50 oil wells, 60 new homes, and numerous businesses (Johns 2014; History of Canon City Florence Community History).

The popularity of the automobile increased dramatically throughout the state between 1910 and 1920. The Good Roads Movement and establishment of the Colorado Highway Commission in the first decades of the twentieth century led to the establishment of a highway network throughout the region and state. Smaller communities increasingly saw the benefits of highway access, which led to further highway construction along less traveled routes and alignments in the 1920s and 1930s. The route that eventually developed into US 50 was historically the major east-west transportation corridor through south-central Colorado. SH 115 was a prominent north-south route that together with smaller state highways and local connector roads formed the regional transportation network (Carter and Mehls 1984: 138-141).

Historic state highway maps indicate a road along the general corridor of present-day SH 115 was in place by 1916. SH 115 was designated by 1926 and extended south from US 85-87 in Colorado Springs through Penrose to what was then US 50 (currently SH 120), located just east of Florence. Several federal relief projects were completed within the corridor, including U.S. Public Works Project N.R.S. 365-B in 1935, which was located just south of the El Paso and Pueblo County line for just over 1 mile and U.S. Public Works Project No. N.R.M. 165-B that extended for less than a mile through the town of Florence prior to the designation of the route as SH 115 (this segment was US 50 until the 1950 realignment of that route). SH 115 was paved between Penrose and Colorado Springs by 1949. US 50 was realigned by 1950 to a new segment north of Florence; the old alignment became SH 120 and SH 115 was extended along its old route west to Cañon City. According to Salek, the expressway in south Colorado Springs was in place by the late 1950s, and the interchange at US 50 was in place by 1977. Prior to 2007, Nevada Avenue south of I-25 was marked as US 85/SH115, but in October 2007 the route that had been US 85 along Nevada Avenue, between I-25 Exit 140 and Lake Avenue, was renumbered as an extension of SH 115.

(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 115 is classified as an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS.

Criterion A

The road corridor that eventually became SH 115 was constructed by 1916, just a few years after the establishment of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD). No evidence suggests this road served as an important farm-to-market road or was pivotal in the transfer of agricultural goods or livestock or has important associations to mining or industry that distinguish it from other roads in the region or served as a prominent project of the CHD. Small segments of the route have associations with Depression-era federal relief projects, including U.S. Public Works Project N.R.S. 365-B located just south of the El Paso and Pueblo County line for just over 1 mile and U.S. Public Works Project No. N.R.M. 165-B that extended for less than a mile through the town of Florence prior to the designation of the route as SH 115. These segments of the overall route possess significance under Criterion A in the areas of Politics/Government at the state level. In addition, that portion of the route within Florence that was previously designated as part of US 50 also possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Transportation for its association with that cross-state route (see the Colorado Historic Highway Inventory form for US 50 for additional information).

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

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 within the mountainous southwest region and it 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.

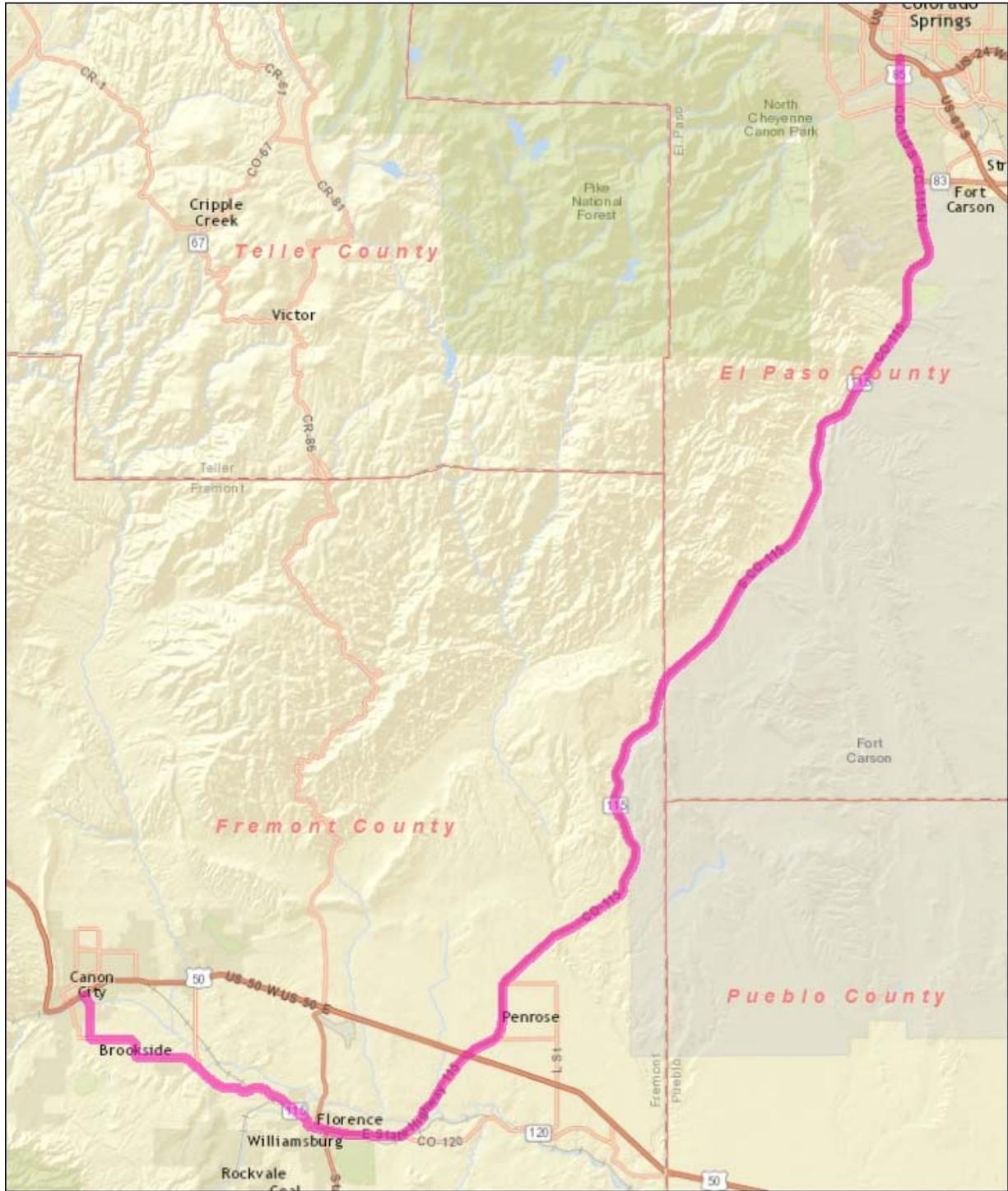
Criterion D

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.

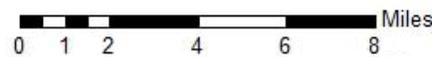
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- SH 115
- County Boundary

SH 115

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