

## Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 170

### CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
170A	From Eldorado Springs East To North of SH 36B at the Superior Louisville City Limit

### Highway Location:

Counties: Boulder  
Length (Miles): 7.019

### 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 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 170 begins at the town of Eldorado Springs and travels east through Marshall to U.S. Highway (US) 36 where it parallels US 36 until the Superior/Louisville exit. The total distance is 7.019 miles.

The current alignment of SH 170 from Marshall west to Eldorado Springs existed on early topographical maps as a wagon road, but was unnamed and unnumbered (USGS). Originally designated SH 398, it was brought into the state system in 1950, and paved by 1954 (Salek). By 1977, SH 398 was decommissioned and the route from Marshall was extended to Eldorado Springs and re-numbered SH 170 (Salek; USGS).

SH 170 was designated a State Highway in the 1920s. By 1930, the alignment of SH 170 followed the current route of SH 7 from US 85 east to US 6 (Salek). By 1939, the alignment changed, and SH 170 started from the current US 287 and traveled west via Superior to Marshall and northwest to Boulder. The segment from Marshall to Boulder was paved by 1947. By 1954 the segment from Marshall to Boulder was renumbered as SH 93. In 1951 the segment of SH 170 from the junction of SH 93 was realigned. It went west from US 287 south of Lafayette, through Superior to Marshall (Project S0014 (1)). By 1965, the section of SH 170 east of the US 36 turnpike was no longer designated a state highway. The segments near Superior and Marshall have been widened and there was some realignment with the interchange with US 36 (project C07-0170-03).

The historic themes for Boulder County include coal and mineral mining and agriculture. Boulder was founded as a supply town for the gold mining communities up Boulder Canyon. Gold was first discovered west of Boulder in 1859. Coal mining began in the 1860s and lasted until the mid 1930s. Gold and coal mining industries relied extensively on railroads to transport materials to and from the mines. However, wagon and later, automobile roads, also provided transportation of the workers and materials to the mining fields and to the towns where the workers lived. Shortly after the arrival of prospectors, settlers established farms and ranches, organized and built irrigation systems, and founded communities and communal agricultural societies. These agricultural communities helped supply the mining communities of the gold and coal industry and provided a thriving economy for the region (Wolfenbarger 2008: E-1).

SH 170 traverses the coal mining area of Marshall and Superior. However, SH 170 did not extend to Marshall and Superior until 1939. Its use as a transportation corridor to these mines did not come until after the development of coal mining. The Colorado & Southern Railroad served Marshall until 1932. By 1946, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, which owned most of the mines, had declared bankruptcy and coal mining was no longer viable in the town of Marshall (Sampson 2008: 2). Therefore, SH 170 does not have an important association with the development of coal mining in the area. However, SH 170 was an important corridor for local residents for their agricultural products, although segments east of US 36 have since been removed from the highway designation. The segment between Marshall and Superior, still extant, would have been associated with this agricultural history.

Tourism is also a prominent historic theme for Boulder County. With the decline of mining in the mountain communities west of Boulder, and rise of the late 19th century tourist travel, many former mining towns relied on tourists for their livelihood. While the improvement of roads for the purpose of tourism was successful in attracting new visitors to the region and provided a new industry for towns that otherwise would have disappeared (Abele, 1998: E-7), this was not the case for Eldorado Springs and SH 170. Eldorado Springs developed in 1904 when the Moffat Lakes Resort Company formed the Eldorado Springs Resort, opening in 1906 with a swimming pool fed by the artesian springs (Noel and Corson 1999: 77). By 1908, the Interurban Railway connected Denver and other larger cities to the area. The height of popularity for the resort was in the 1910s and 1920s with over 40,000 people visiting the swimming pools, cabins, hiking trails, ballroom, and stables. However, the interurban railway was discontinued in 1926. A 1938 flood and a fire the next year destroyed many of the facilities and the resort had difficulties staying open (Noel and Corson 1999: 79). The high point of the resort was in the 1920s and the railroad helped establish and maintain its importance. SH 398 (later SH 170) which was designated as a State Highway in 1950, did not provide an important transportation link to the resort during its early development or the height of its popularity. Thus it does not have an important association under the themes of Industry or Entertainment/Recreation.

The road is not associated with the historic themes of recreation and mining in this region, but it does have a significant association under Transportation as a farm to market road identified in the MPS as an important link for local farmers and ranchers. The route of SH 170 until the mid 1950s provided one of the only highway links between the communities of Superior, Marshall, and Boulder. Although the railroad was more important in the development of coal and tourism in this region, SH 170 provided the only automobile access for farmers and ranchers after the railroad stopped operating. A review of sources did not reveal that the current route of SH 170 represents important road engineering achievements.

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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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## Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

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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 170 is classified as an Engineered route under the classification system in the MPS.

#### *Criterion A*

As an Engineered Route, SH 170 possesses significance under Criterion A for Transportation at the local level as a farm to market road for its role in agricultural development. This highway is a farm to market subtype used by farmers and ranchers in Superior, Marshall, and other communities to transport goods and products to and from larger markets. Although the highway accessed coal mining communities, it does not appear to have a direct and important association with coal mining. In addition, the access to the tourist resort at Eldorado Springs via the highway occurred after the decline of a railroad that was more important in the development of tourism for this resort. Therefore SH 170 is not significant in the area of Industry related to mining or in the area of Entertainment/Recreation related to tourism.

#### *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.

SH 170 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.

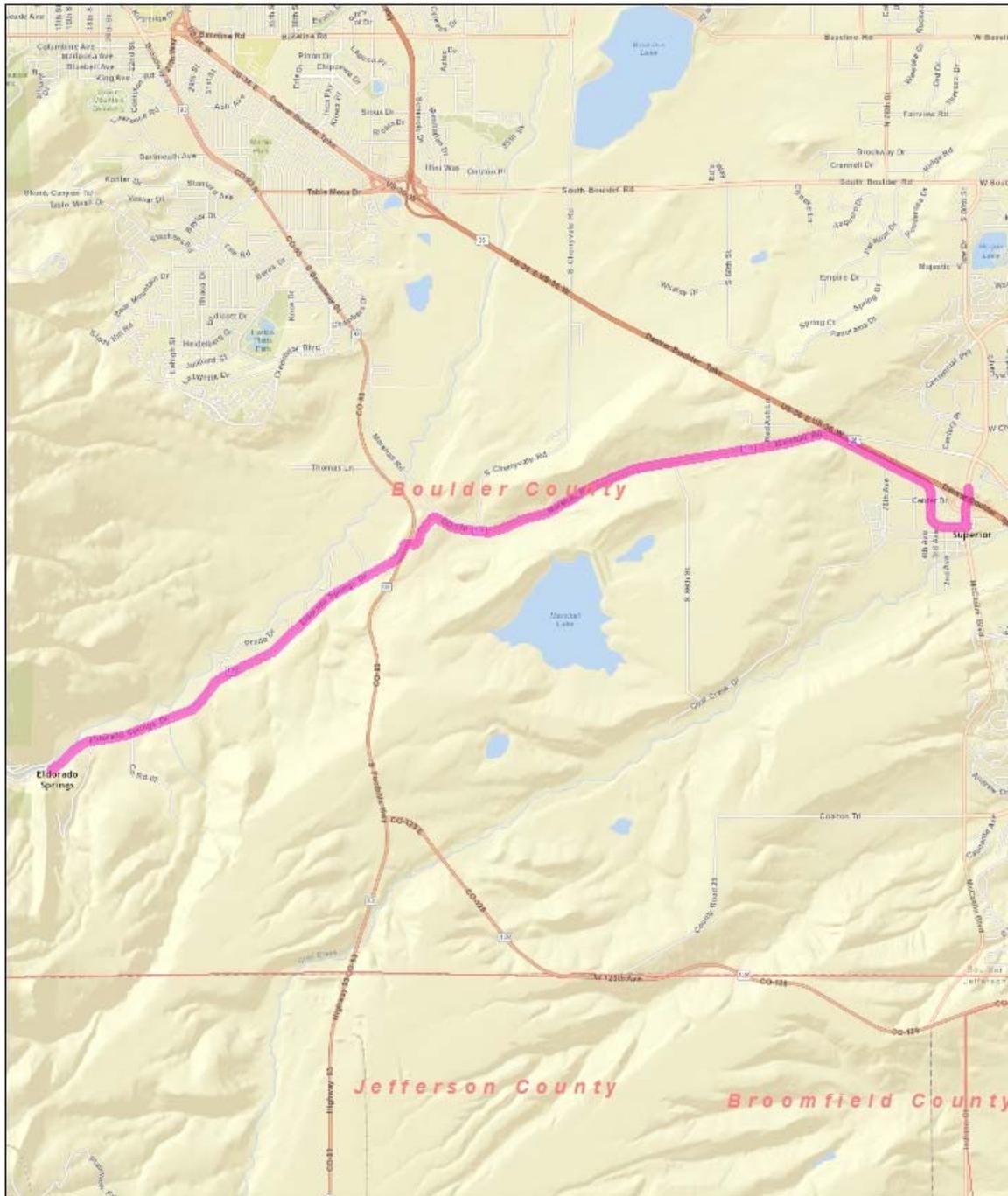
#### *Criterion D*

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.

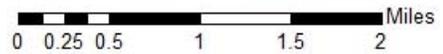
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- SH 170
- County Boundary

**SH 170**



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