

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

**Highway Name:** State Highway (SH) 370

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

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
370A	From SH 15-A south of Monte Vista east To SH 285-A south of Alamosa

**Highway Location:**

Counties: Rio Grande, Alamosa  
Length (Miles): 14.136

**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 370 is approximately 14 miles long and located southwest of Alamosa in the south-central region of the state. The highway extends west from the U.S. Highway (US) 285 junction to SH 15, just north of the Conejos-Rio Grande County line.

The earliest transportation corridors in South-Central Colorado were wagon roads that often followed trails established by Native Americans. Settlers from New Mexico moved into the San Luis Valley in the 1850s and established early irrigation and water reclamation systems to support the area's agricultural industries. The San Luis Valley developed into a center for agriculture and livestock-raising within the region beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 46-48)

Railroad construction began in southern Colorado during the 1860s. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) was organized in 1870 and construction on tracks south of Denver began that same year. The D&RG reached the San Luis Valley by 1877 and expanded throughout the valley over the next several decades; tracks reached Alamosa in 1878 and a line was constructed from Alamosa to Espanola, New Mexico in 1880. Railroads served as an important means for connecting communities distributing livestock and agricultural products produced in the San Luis Valley to larger markets. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 46-48, 79-81)

The popularity of the automobile increased dramatically 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 in the 1920s and 1930s. US 160 became the major east-west route through the San Luis Valley in the 1930s by providing connections to SH 17, US 285, and many smaller and less prominent north-south routes that comprised the local transportation network. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 138-141)

The eastern half of SH 370 was not in place or designated a state highway until 1939 according to historic state highway maps at which time it extended west from US 285 to the Alamosa-Rio Grande County Line. By 1954 the route was extended further west to its current terminus at SH 15. The entire highway was paved two years later in 1956. Based on an analysis of historic highway maps, it appears to have served as a local connector to provide easy access to Alamosa and Monte Vista for those living and working in the area.

State highways, farm-to-market roads, and small local connector roads like SH 370 typically served to link more remote areas with the major regional transportation corridors, towns, and cities. Research and review of historic mapping indicates that this highway had no important association to historic themes within the state and region nor did it provide direct access to destinations associated with important trends or events. SH 370 served as a minor connector road to access more prominent routes in the region and was one of many roads that formed the local and regional transportation network.

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

#### *Criterion A*

SH 370 was constructed relatively late within the context of highway development and is not an example of an early or prominent project by the Colorado Highway Department (CHD) nor was it built or improved as part of a Depression-era federal work relief project. Present-day SH 370 is a short local connector road and did not serve as an important farm-to-market road providing access between an important agricultural region and its market. 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.

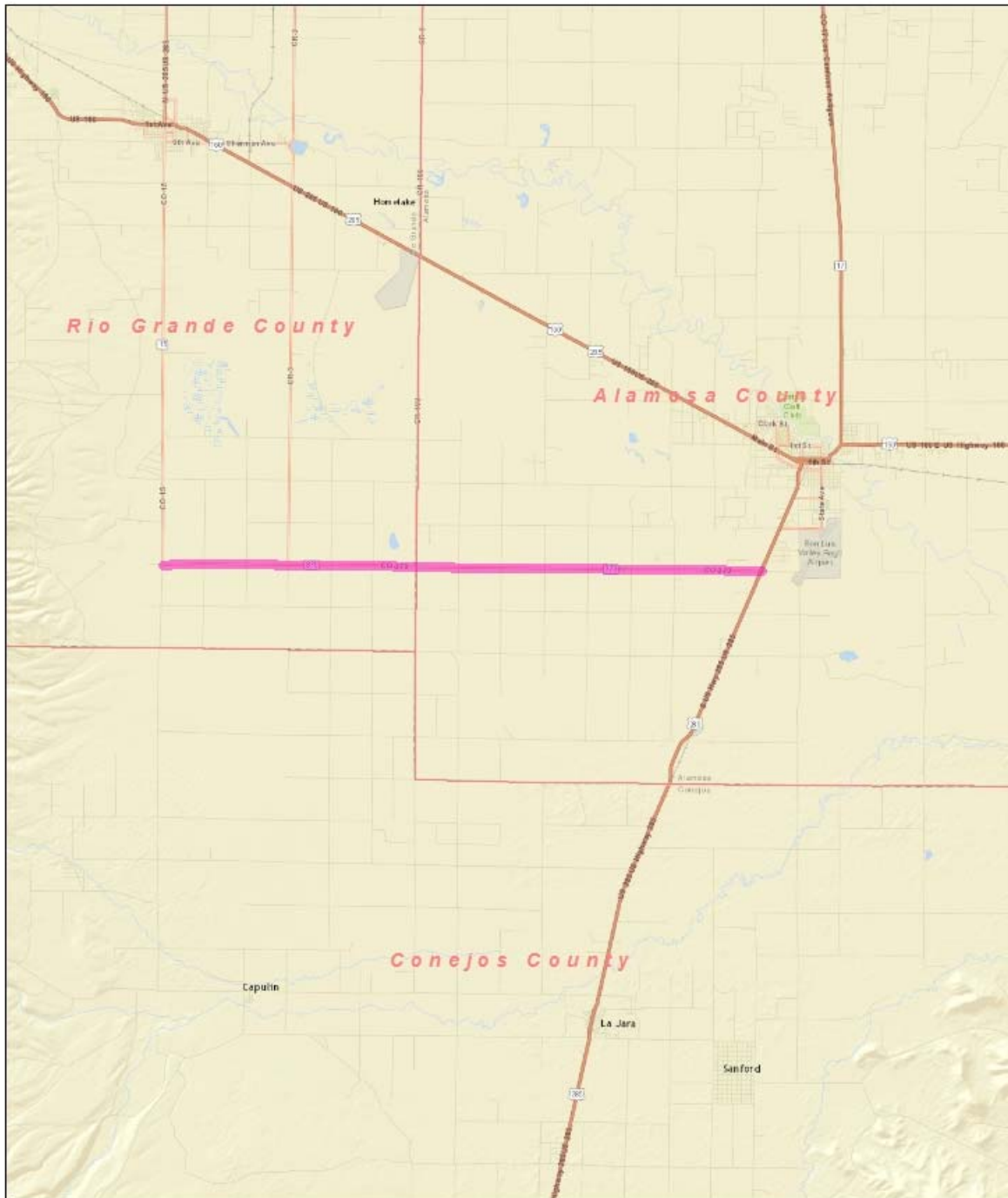
#### *Criterion D*

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.

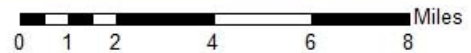
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- SH 370
- County Boundary

**SH 370**

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