

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 56

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
056B	From U.S. 287-C Berthoud By-Pass East To Frontage Road East of I 25-A at (CR 44) in Johnstown

Highway Location:

Counties: Larimer, Weld
Length (Miles): 6.695

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*

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 56

Historical Data:

SH 56 is approximately 7 miles in length and extends west from U.S. Highway (US) 287 through the town of Berthoud to Interstate (I)-25 on the east. The road is located within the Little Thompson Valley, an agricultural region that is also home to larger urban centers located along Colorado's Front Range.

Northern Colorado was historically the terminus for several prominent trails. The first wagon road through the Little Thompson Valley was established in 1850 and the Oregon Trail, later renamed the Overland Trail, extended between Julesburg and Wyoming via Fort Collins. Settlement and agriculture occurred along these trails. Farms and ranches, established along the Little Thompson River and the South Platte River and their tributaries, led to the later development of water irrigation systems. The Little Thompson Valley developed into a successful agricultural region in the 1890s with activities related to wheat, alfalfa, and flour milling as well as livestock-raising. In the early 1900s the Great Western Sugar Company established a presence in Northern Colorado with numerous factories and railroads to collect sugar beets from fields throughout the region, including Berthoud, and distribute the product to sugar factories in Loveland, Longmont, and Fort Collins. (Berthoud Historical Society 2014)

A number of railroads constructed through the region beginning in the 1860s eventually led to a decline in travel along these trails and opened up new markets within the state and beyond. The Colorado Central Railroad established itself in the region in 1877. As a result, the region experienced further settlement, population growth, and agricultural development between approximately 1870 and 1890. The popularity of the automobile increased dramatically between 1900 and 1920 as a result of the Good Roads Movement and the establishment of the Colorado Highway Commission that expanded the state's highway network. By 1914 the Lincoln Highway extended through Northern Colorado generally following the path of the Overland Trail. The development of the first state highways included major routes providing connection between population centers and agricultural areas. In addition, 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 major transportation corridors accessing the Front Range included SH 34, SH 36, and I-25, and I-76. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 34-36, 41-43, 63-65, 118)

SH 56 originally began at US 287 (then US 87) and headed northwest to US 34. Historic state highway maps indicate that SH 56 was designated a state highway by 1926. By 1939 the route was extended further to the east near present-day I-25. Several changes to the route occurred in the 1950s; the extent of the highway at both ends was first reduced, then extended east to SH 185, and the entire route was eventually paved. By 1955 the route was extended east to present-day I-25 and paved. Recent changes to the route include the US 287 Berthoud Bypass completed in August 2006, which according to Mathew Salek, resulted in modifications to the alignment of the highway in and around Berthoud.

State highways, farm-to-market roads, and small local connector roads served to link more remote areas with major regional transportation corridors, towns, and cities; however, research and review of historic mapping does not indicate that this 7 mile highway provided direct access to destinations related to important historic themes such as industry, agriculture, or commerce.

(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.)

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

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 56

- 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)

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

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 56

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

Criterion A

Research did not indicate that this highway is an example of an early or prominent project by the Colorado Highway Department or was built or improved as part of a federal work relief project. Historically, SH 56 served to provide connections to other state roads, county roads, and local and rural regional destinations and towns. The 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 and does not provide direct access to destinations related to other historically important themes. 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 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.

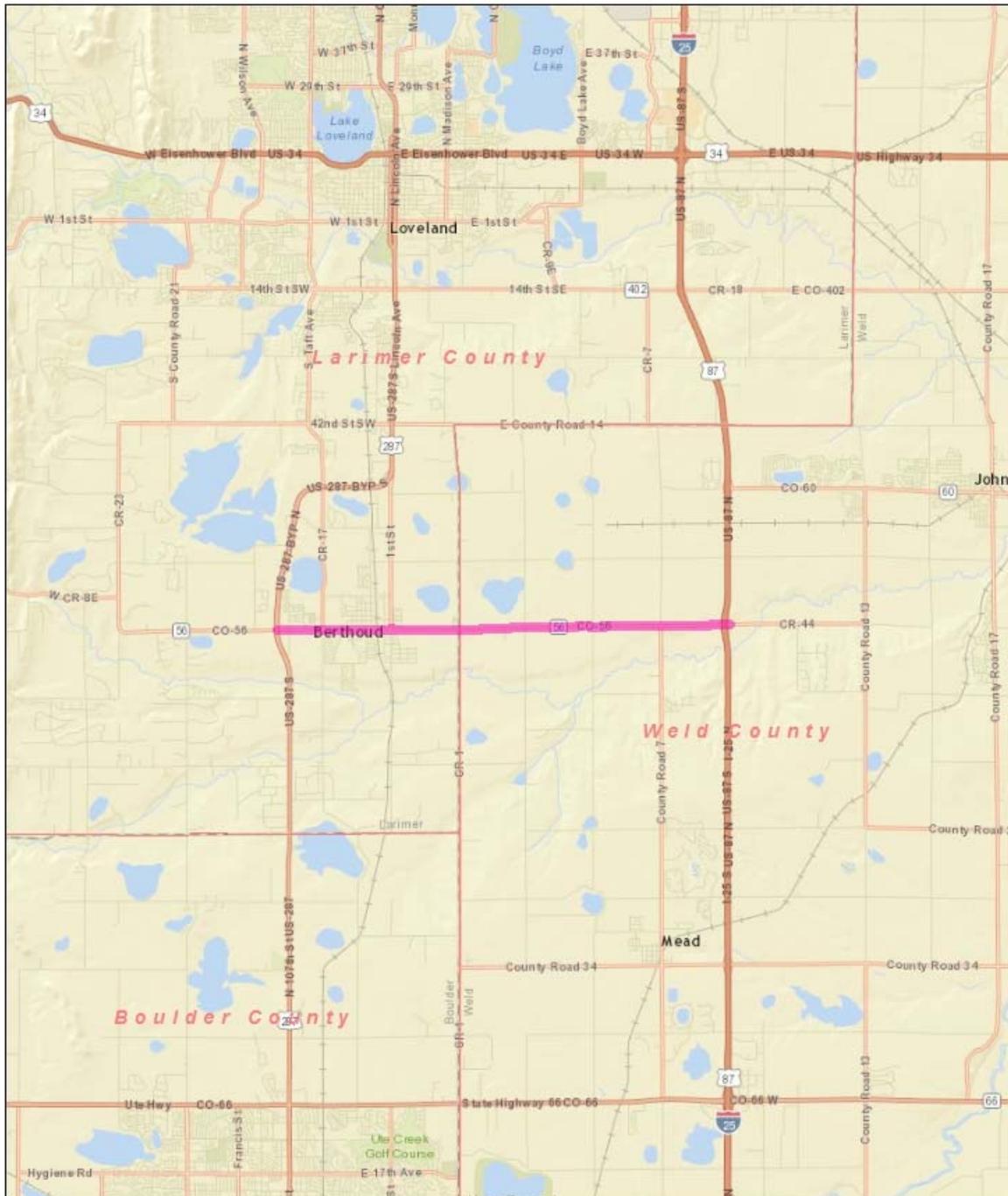
Criterion D

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.

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

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

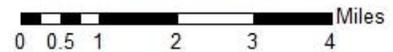
Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 56



Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, Intermap, P.C., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, 2013



- SH 56
- County Boundary



SH 56



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

*Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHF