

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 66

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
066B	From U.S. 36B east of Lyons east To U.S. 85C in Platteville

Highway Location:

Counties: Boulder, Weld
Length (Miles): 22.813

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:

The current alignment of SH 66 runs from the western junction of U.S. Highway (US) 36 just east of Lyons in Boulder County, traveling to the east and ending at the junction of US 85 in Platteville, Weld County. The overall length of the current highway is 22.813 miles.

The present route of SH 66 was present on early travel and topographical maps from 1904 and 1908 (USGS, 1904; Clason's 1908). The route traveled from just north of Longmont west to Hygiene where it turned northwest and paralleled the Missouri and Burlington Railroad into the town of Lyons. On 1916 travel maps, the route continued west from Lyons into the town of Estes Park. In 1939, the segment east from Longmont to Platteville was added. In 1946, the route was realigned northwest of Longmont to travel into Lyons. By 1954, the only section not paved was the eastern section to Platteville. By 1960, the entire route was paved. In 1960 the route was extended further into Estes Park to allow access to the newly opened Beaver Meadows entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park. In 1967, the segment from Lyons to Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park was cosigned with U.S. Highway (US) 36. By 1977, SH 66/US 36 was extended again in the town of Estes Park to Deer Ridge Junction, leaving a small 1.4 segment still signed only as SH 66. This final segment was finally renumbered US 36 in 2007 leaving no SH 66 in Estes Park (Salek). The current alignment of SH 66 dates from 1977.

The historic themes for Boulder County include coal and mineral mining, agriculture, and ranching. Gold was first discovered in 1859 west of Boulder. Shortly after the arrival of prospectors, settlers established farms and ranches, organized and built irrigation systems, founded farming communities, and organized communal agricultural societies. These ranches and agricultural communities helped supply the mining communities of the gold and coal industry and later, continued to provide important agricultural industries and economies for the region (Wolfenbarger 2008: E-1). In addition to mining and agriculture, tourism is also a historic theme. With the decline of mining and the rise of the late 19th century tourist travel, many former mining towns relied on tourist travelers for their livelihood. By the 1920s the growth of automobile tourism was an important contributor to the economy of these communities. The improvement of roads for the purpose of tourism was successful in attracting new visitors to the region and provided a new industry for the towns that otherwise would have disappeared (Abele 1998: E-7).

The eastern portion of SH 66 traversed agricultural areas. Farms and ranches developed in the area around and east of Longmont, an agricultural community founded in the 1870s. Early maps show a wagon road from Platteville to Hygiene along the same alignment as SH 66. However, this segment of SH 66 did not enter the state highway system until 1939 and did not pass through important agricultural towns or communities. The route traveled north of Longmont and not through the town. Other rural market roads served Longmont directly such as US 287 and SH 119. The town of Platteville served as a railroad stop for the Union Pacific Railroad, serving as a transportation shipping point for agricultural products, yet was accessed by other larger routes in the area such as US 85. Review of local maps show that this route is similar to the other routes that served Longmont and Platteville, such as US 287 and US 85, and it is not distinguished as a rural farm to market route.

State highways, farm-to-market roads and small local connector roads served to link more remote areas with the major regional transportation corridors, towns, and cities; however research and review of historic local area maps does not indicate that this highway provided direct access to destinations related to important historic themes such as industry, agriculture, or commerce. Review of local maps show that this route is similar to the other routes that served Longmont and Platteville, such as US 287 and US 85, and it is not distinguished as a rural farm to market route.

SH 66 served as an early tourism route to Estes Park. No railroad service served the Estes Park area, therefore visitors relied heavily on wagon and later automobile roads to provide direct access to the area via the route of SH 66. Automobiles could navigate the steep canyon drives and allowed more visitors to reach the area. Early travel maps show the wagon road leading to Lyons (Clason's 1908, USGS 1904). This route was probably Alexander MacGregor's toll road along the North St. Vrain River and Little Thompson River from Lyons to Estes Park through Pinewood Springs. Built in 1875, the toll road brought some of the first tourists to the area in stagecoaches and wagons. The creation of Rocky Mountain National Park in 1915 was an enormous draw for visitors to the Estes Park area and Colorado in general. The Colorado State Highway map of 1916 shows this route leading into Estes Park (Litvak 2013, 12-13: and Pickering 1999:111).

Research indicates that the route of SH 66 provided direct access to the Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park, which are important recreational destinations in Colorado.

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

Criterion A

Research and literature review indicates that SH 66 was an important route that helped develop tourism in the Estes Park area. Its route coincides with an early wagon route into the Lyons area from Estes Park to Lyons in the 1870s and after 1900, from Lyons to Longmont. The wagon route had been in use as a transportation route since the 1870s and continued to be improved upon during the 1910s and 1920s. The route provided an important transportation link providing direct access for tourists visiting Rocky Mountain National Park and the Estes Park area resorts. This highway possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Transportation and Entertainment/Recreation at the local level.

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 66 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.

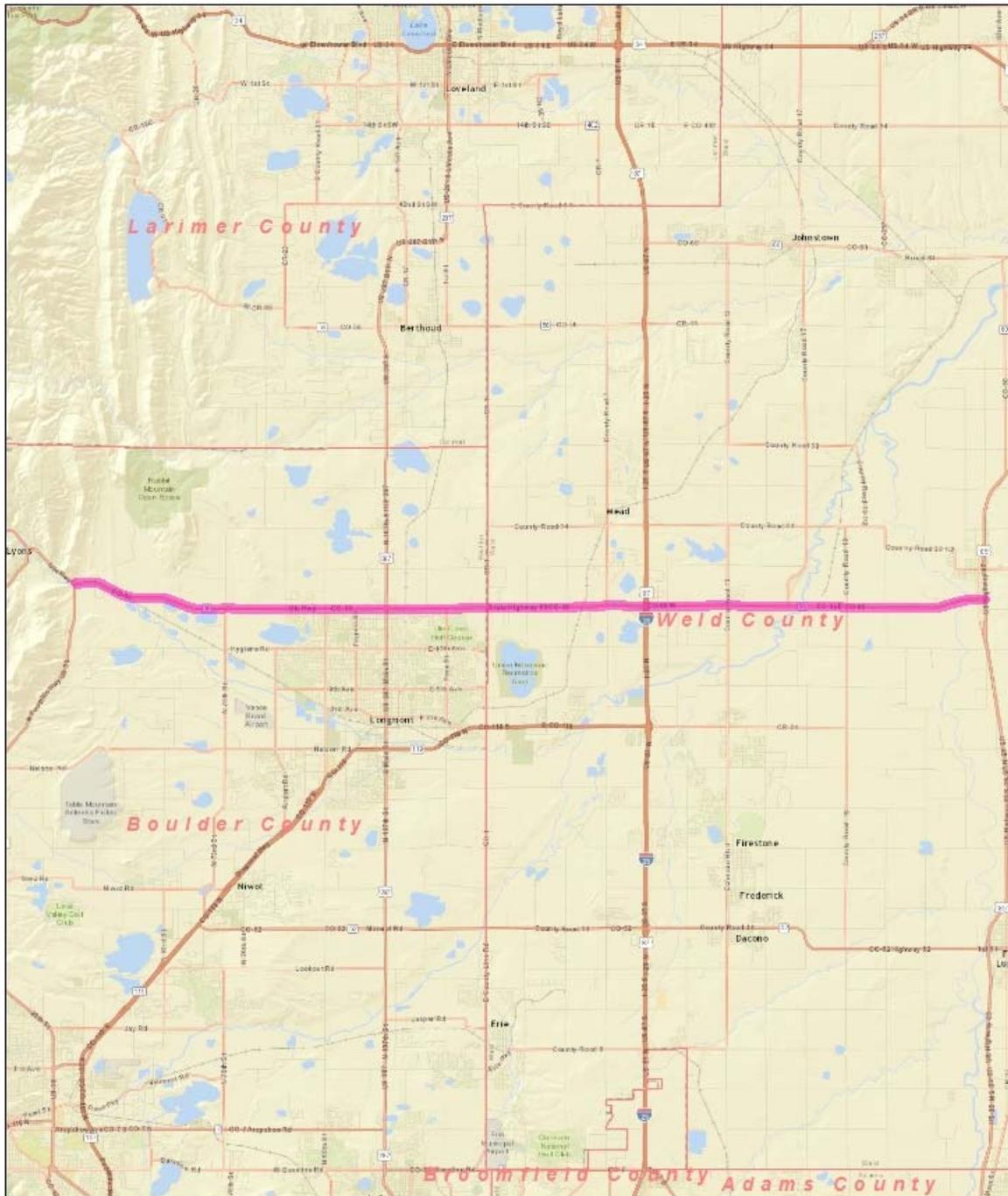
Criterion D

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.

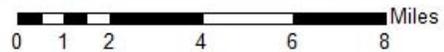
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Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, Intermap, P.C., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, 2013



- SH 66
- County Boundary

SH 66



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