

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 71

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
071A	From SH 350-A northeast of Timpas north To SH 10-A west of Hawley
071B	From SH 10-A at Bawley north To U.S. 50-B and SH 266-A in Rocky Ford
071C	From U.S. 50-B west of Rocky Ford north To U.S. 24-A in Limon
071D	From U.S. 24-A in Limon north via Last Chance To U.S. 34-B east of Brush
071E	From U.S. 34-B in Brush north To SH 14-C east of Stoneham
071F	From SH 14-C Stoneham north to To the Nebraska State Line

Highway Location:

Counties: Weld, Morgan, Washington, Lincoln, Crowley, Otero
 Length (Miles): 224.12

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*

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Historical Data:

SH 71 is approximately 224 miles long and extends north from the junction of U.S. Highway (US) 350 southwest of La Junta to the Nebraska state line.

Historically, the trails, highways, and rural roads that made up the transportation network in eastern Colorado facilitated travel through this sparsely-populated region and also made possible the transfer and distribution of the region's agricultural goods and commercial products. Colorado's eastern plains were traversed by several early prominent trails including the Oregon Trail, later renamed the Overland Trail, located between Julesburg and Wyoming via Fort Collins; the Old Cherokee Trail, a branch of the Santa Fe Trail in the southern part of the region; and the three branches of the Smoky Hill Trail that extended east from Kansas to Denver. Settlement occurred along these trails and farms and ranches, established along the South Platte River and its tributaries, lead to the later development of water irrigation systems. 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. As a result, the region experienced a boost in settlement and agricultural development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 34-36, 41-43, 63-65) SH 71 is not associated with these early trails.

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. 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, especially north-south routes to connect to more prominent regional east-west routes. US 40 was the major east-west transportation corridor across the eastern plains. Other corridors included Interstate Highways 70 and 76, SH 34 and 36 as well as less prominent highways that served as local connector roads. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 118)

A 1922 state highway map indicates that the present-day route for SH 71 between US 350 and Brush was in place by that time. Historic state highway maps indicate that SH 71 was designated by 1926 along this route. Between 1939 and 1954 a spur extended north of Brush. By 1954 an 11-mile segment between Limon and Last Chance was turned back creating a gap in the overall route. The gap was closed by 1955. By 1956 a road corridor leading north from Brush to the Nebraska state border was in place but was not designated SH 71 until around 1964. According to Salek, in Limon, SH 71 originally came north to US 24-40-287 at I Avenue, but was realigned west to K Avenue about 1999. Exit 90 of SH 71 and the I-76 interchange in Brush was originally a cloverleaf interchange when built in 1959. In spring 2013 as part of an I-76 reconstruction project, it was changed to a diamond interchange. SH 71 underwent damage from flooding south of Snyder due to heavy rainfall in September 2013 after which it underwent emergency repairs and was reopened in early October 2013.

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 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.)

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

Criterion A

SH 71 nearly extends across the entire state through small towns and sparsely populated areas on the eastern plains of Colorado characterized by ranching and agriculture. Historically, the north-south-oriented SH 71 served to provide a cross-state transportation route with connections to other state roads, county roads, and local and rural destinations. However, 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 or other destinations related to important historic themes. 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 relief project. As such, this highway is not significant 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.

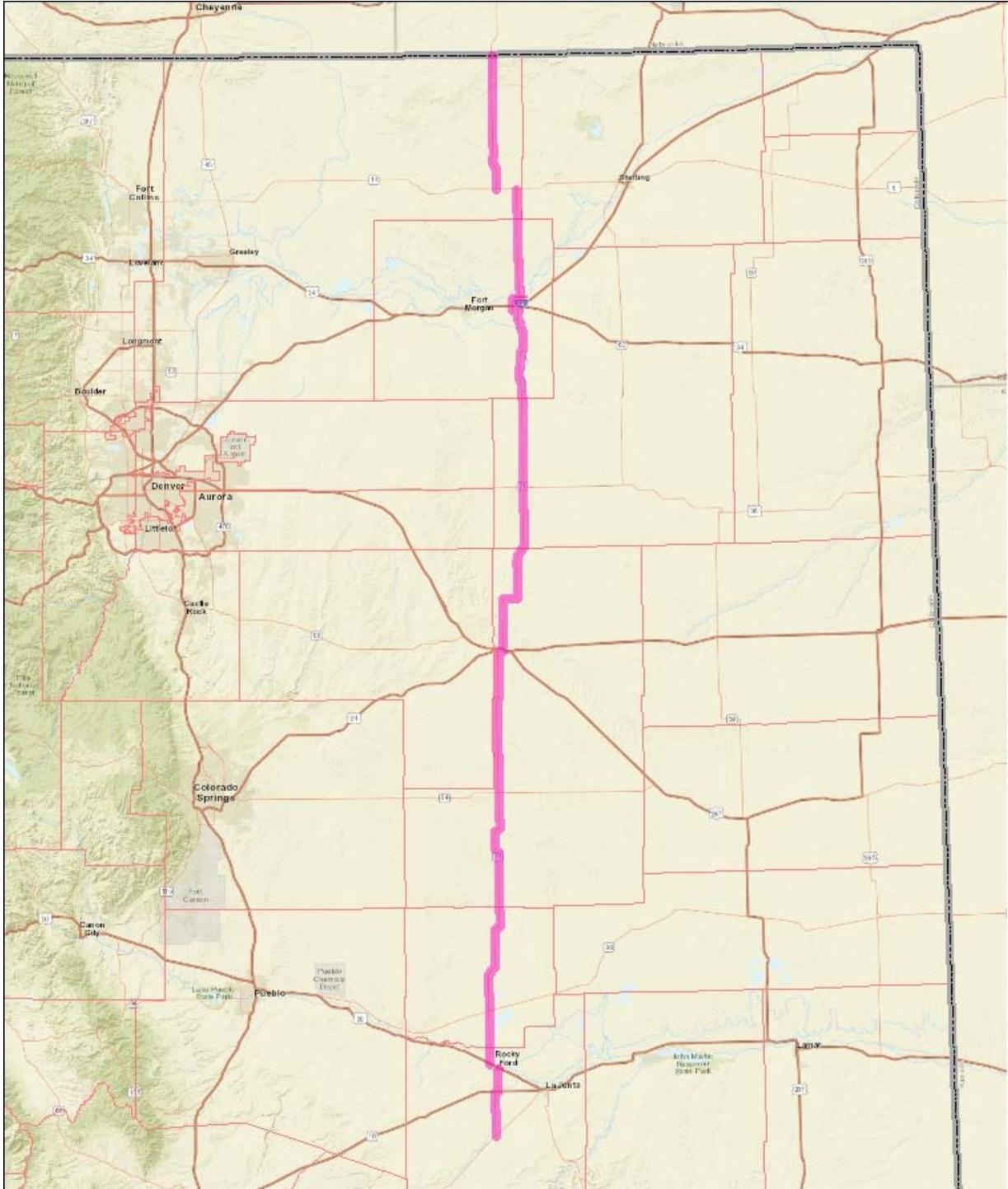
Criterion D

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.

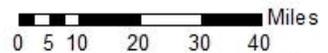
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- SH 71
- State Boundary
- County Boundary

SH 71



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