

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 83

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
083A	From Powers Blvd in Colorado Springs East and North via Franktown and Parker To SH 002A (Colorado Blvd) at Bayaud Ave in Denver

Highway Location:

Counties: Denver, Arapahoe, Douglas, El Paso

Length (Miles): 56.773

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>
5DA.1519	LISTED IN NATIONAL REGISTER	10/15/2002	CHERRY CREEK BRIDGE, CDOT NO. G-18-BL, MILEPOST 46.30

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. National Register of Historic Places (National Register)-listed properties associated with or that cross SH 83 include the following:

5DV.840 – The Highline Canal Historic District crosses SH 83 at the intersection of Parker Road and Mississippi Avenue.

5DA.1519 – Cherry Creek Bridge. Listed on the National Register 10/15/2002. (CDOT # G-18-BL).

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>
5DV.840	Highline Canal Historic District	106 - Officially eligible

*Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHP

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Historical Data:

SH 83 is a 57.899 mile-long route that runs from Powers Blvd in Colorado Springs east and north through Franktown and Parker to SH 2 (Colorado Blvd) at Bayaud Avenue, in Denver.

SH 83 lies in the Colorado Piedmont, a region defined geographically as the rolling hills and stream-laced valleys that lie to the east of the Front Range. This area contains both the most urbanized corridor in the state and also wide swaths of rural farm and ranchlands, with its history firmly rooted in the events that profoundly changed the region from the 1850s well into the twentieth century. Prehistorically the region was the hunting grounds of the Comanche, who were later pushed south by the Cheyenne and Arapahoe. By the 1850s sparse European-American settlement in the form of scattered farms and trading posts dotted this area, with trails such as the Cherokee Trail crossing the plains and connecting with California-bound trails to the north. With the Pikes Peak Gold Rush, however, change was fast and intense. The urban core (Denver, Boulder, Golden) that became the metro Denver area sprang from commerce and transportation, i.e., the connection of the gold fields in the Rocky Mountains with the markets and cities to the east. Colorado Springs was developed first in the 1870s as an early tourist destination, with General William Palmer's vision of a resort city acting as a guide. The city became an elite enclave, known for a time as "Little London" for the proliferation of British tourists, many of whom stayed, and Colorado Springs would go on to become home to a high number of millionaires made from the Cripple Creek Gold Rush in the 1890s. With the advent of World War II and the post-World War II period, the Colorado Springs area became home to military installations like Fort Carson, Peterson Air Force Base, and the U.S. Air Force Academy, installations that have had enormous impact on the history of infrastructural development in and around the city (Wyckoff 1999:101-103; Ubbelohde 1995:118;334-335).

Relative to other routes that connect Denver with Colorado Springs, SH 83 has a high level of historic significance. Many homesteads, farms, and ranches dating to the early years of settlement along the Front Range are known to have been in close proximity to SH 83 as it runs through Douglas and El Paso Counties. Franktown appears on an 1861 map of Colorado, a map which also shows that the area had been surveyed for the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) and was an area of agricultural settlement in those early years. The Colorado Highways MPS notes that the Smoky Hill Trail, a route used by travelers to Denver from the east, roughly followed the segment of the highway from Parker north to Denver (MPS Sec. E, p. 9). The highway is visible on the 1866 map of Colorado as a road roughly following the same alignment as the 1922 designated highway, and by 1916 the route was well established, with the Colorado & Southern Railway following the road south from Denver to Parker, turning east from there to provide access to the farms and ranches in the rural areas of the central plains. These sources demonstrate that SH 83 would certainly have played a role as an early and important farm to market route in this region.

First designated as State Primary Road 1S from Denver to Franktown between 1910 and 1920, SH 83 ran from the intersection of Colorado Blvd and Vasquez in Denver, south through Franktown and a string of other small towns to join with the Great North-South Highway at Sommers (now the approximate location of Interquest Parkway exit, MP 153 on Interstate(I)-25), north of Colorado Springs. In 1922, the Highway Department renumbered the road as State Highway 83. SH 83 was not heavily used until the Highway Department straightened it south of Franktown in the late 1940s as part of an attempt to provide motorists with a better alternative to the increasingly congested U.S. Highway (US) 85/87. This work involved building an open-spandrel concrete bridge (5DA.1519), designed in 1947 and completed in 1948, across Cherry Creek at Franktown. This bridge, which is the longest concrete spandrel bridge in Colorado, is listed on the National Register.

By 1954, the north end of SH 83 was pulled south to the intersection of Colorado Boulevard and Bayaud Avenue, in Denver. The south end of the highway fluctuated to an even greater extent, moving in the mid-1960s from its junction with US 85/87 at Sommers south along Maizeland Drive/Academy Blvd through Colorado Springs to Airport Road. The highway (as Academy Blvd) was periodically extended to the south and west through the 1960s and 1970s until 1981, when it followed the northern boundary of Fort Carson and met SH 155. In 2007, CDOT turned back all of SH 83 as it followed Academy Blvd, and redefined the south end of SH 83 as the junction of SH 21 and Interquest Parkway, at the approximate location of the highway's original southern terminus.

(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 83 is classified as an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS. This highway is significant under Criterion A in the area of Transportation at the local level.

Criterion A

Research and review of historic maps and other materials indicates that SH 83 follows a route known to have been in place since the early days of settlement along the Front Range in the 1860s. Research has shown it to be an important example of an early project of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD). The road provided an important connection for ranchers and farmers to transport agricultural goods to markets and railheads in the commercial centers of Denver and Colorado Springs. It continued to serve this function well into the later part of the twentieth century. As such, SH 83 is significant under Criterion A as an early project of the CHD and as a farm-to-market route in the area of Transportation 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

State Highway 83 is considered to be an early or prominent project of the CHD. However, 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.

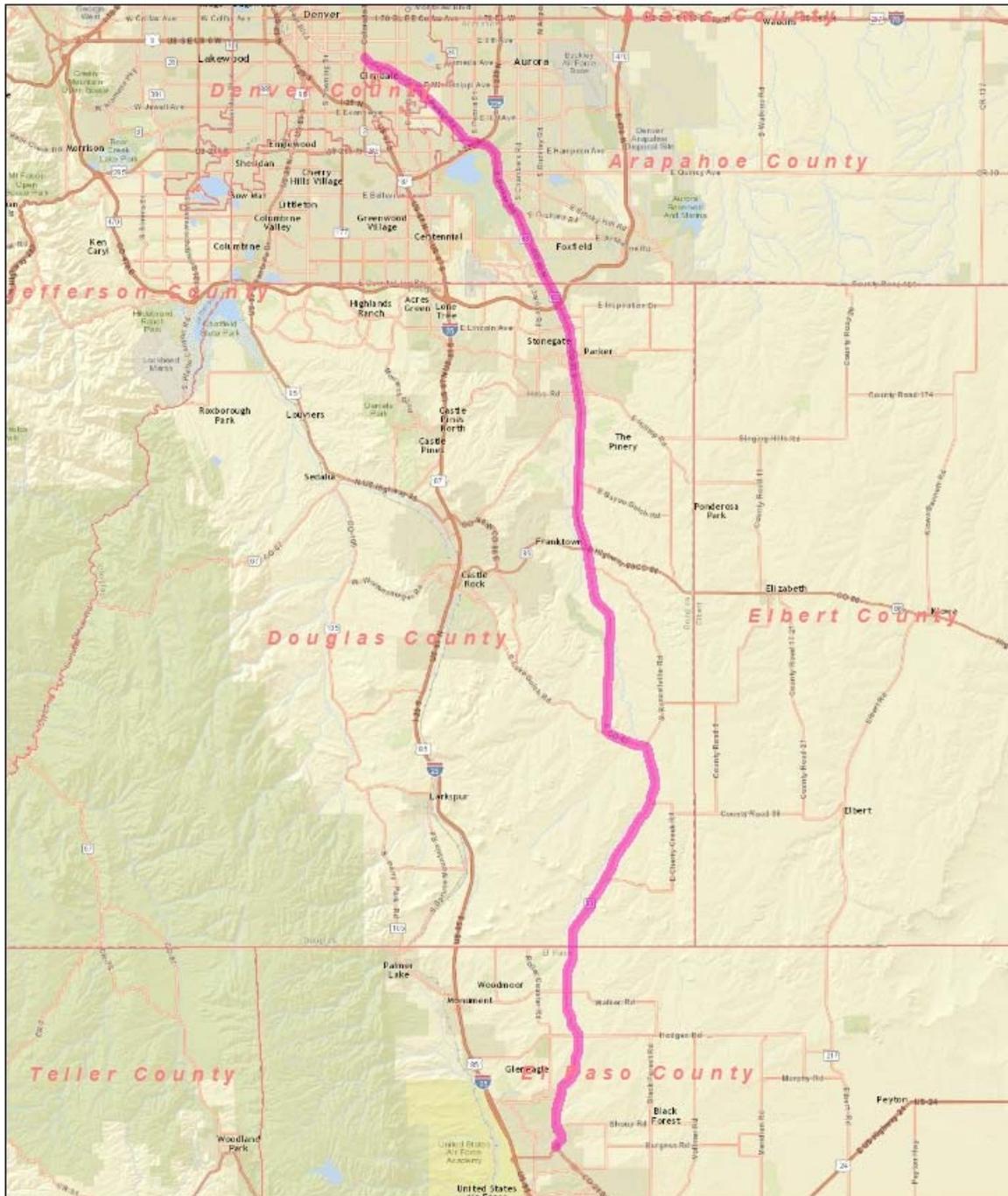
Criterion D

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 83
- County Boundary

SH 83



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

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