

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

**Highway Name:** State Highway (SH) 86

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

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
086A	From the End of SH 86B at (Ridge Rd) via Franktown, Elizabeth, and Kiowa To I 70-A Northwest of Limon
086B	From I-25 End U.S. 85B (Santa Fe) East and South To to (RIDGE RD) Start SH 86 A

### Highway Location:

Counties: Douglas, Elbert  
Length (Miles): 61.641

### 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 86 is approximately 62 miles long and is located in central Colorado east of Castle Rock. The highway extends east from Interstate(I)-25, through the towns of Elizabeth, and Kiowa, to I-70. The general setting of the area in which SH 86 extends includes rolling hills as well as agricultural land used for ranching. Many portions of the road corridor also have modern residential development.

Trade between Native Americans and settlers in the mid-to-late 1800s led to the establishment of trade and travel routes that extended across Colorado's eastern plains. The trails, highways, and rural roads that eventually made up the transportation network in this region facilitated travel through this sparsely-populated area of Colorado. The Santa Fe Trail was the earliest major east-west route through this region and remained as such until important highway corridors were developed in the 1920s such as former SH 100 (current U.S. Highway (US) 160) and US 350, which provided major east-west routes. Other highways, including present-day US 287, US 350 and US 385, the major north-south arteries in this region, provided access to previously remote areas. The Smoky Hill Trail was established in response to the Colorado Gold Rush in 1859 and provided the shortest route to Colorado's gold fields. The trail extended from Atchison, Kansas, on the Missouri River to Denver. Used initially by gold miners, wagon trains, and immigrants seeking fortunes, the trail also became a main route for stage and freight lines. Settlers also followed the trail to establish farms and ranches along its route through Colorado. Three different branches made up the Smoky Trail, including the North, Middle, and South. That portion of SH 86 between I-70 and Elizabeth generally follows the route of the South Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail.

The southern plains boasted the largest cattle industry in the state during the late nineteenth century. Due to the arid climate, in the late nineteenth and twentieth century irrigation canals were constructed in the region to facilitate agriculture that included wheat, hay, oats, corn, sugar beets, watermelon, cantaloupe, and other crops. The entry of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad into Colorado during the late nineteenth century resulted in the settlement and growth of towns. During the early twentieth century, farm-to-market roads were constructed to link these rural areas with regional market centers like Colorado Springs and Pueblo. 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. (McTighe 1984: 35-11; Noel et al 1994: 25, 29; Wyckoff 1999: 157-170).

Historic state highway maps indicate a portion of the road that became SH 86 was in place by 1916 and extended from Castle Rock to Kiowa. The road was extended east to Riverbend at US 40 by the mid-1920s. The entirety of the highway was paved by 1972. The western terminus has been relocated several times in the past three decades but currently connects to the Founders Parkway bypass on the northeast side of Castle Rock. Major travel routes within the region include I-70, I-76, US 40, and US 40/US 287 that extend from neighboring borders with Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma to Denver. SH 86 is located along a portion of the Smoky Hill Trail and developed as a rural connector road providing remote areas with access to other major transportation corridors like US 40. (Autabee and Dobson-Brown 2003: E-9; Smoky Hill Trail Association 2011)

(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 86 is classified as a Cultural Route under the classification system in the MPS.

#### *Criterion A*

As a Cultural Route, this highway possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Transportation for its association with the Smoky Hill Trail. The route and alignment of this highway evolved from the South Branch of the Smoky Hill Trail, an important early transportation corridor established during the Colorado gold rush that developed into an important travel and trade route between Kansas and Denver. A portion of the route was constructed in the early years of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD) but the route as a whole was gradually extended and improved over time and does not represent an early, singular project constructed by the CHD. Although it historically linked Castle Rock with areas to the east, research neither indicates that SH 86 served as a farm-to-market road providing direct and important access between an important agricultural region and its market, nor that the highway or component segments constructed as part of a Depression-era federal work relief project. SH 86 possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Transportation for its association with an early transportation corridor important at the state 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*

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.

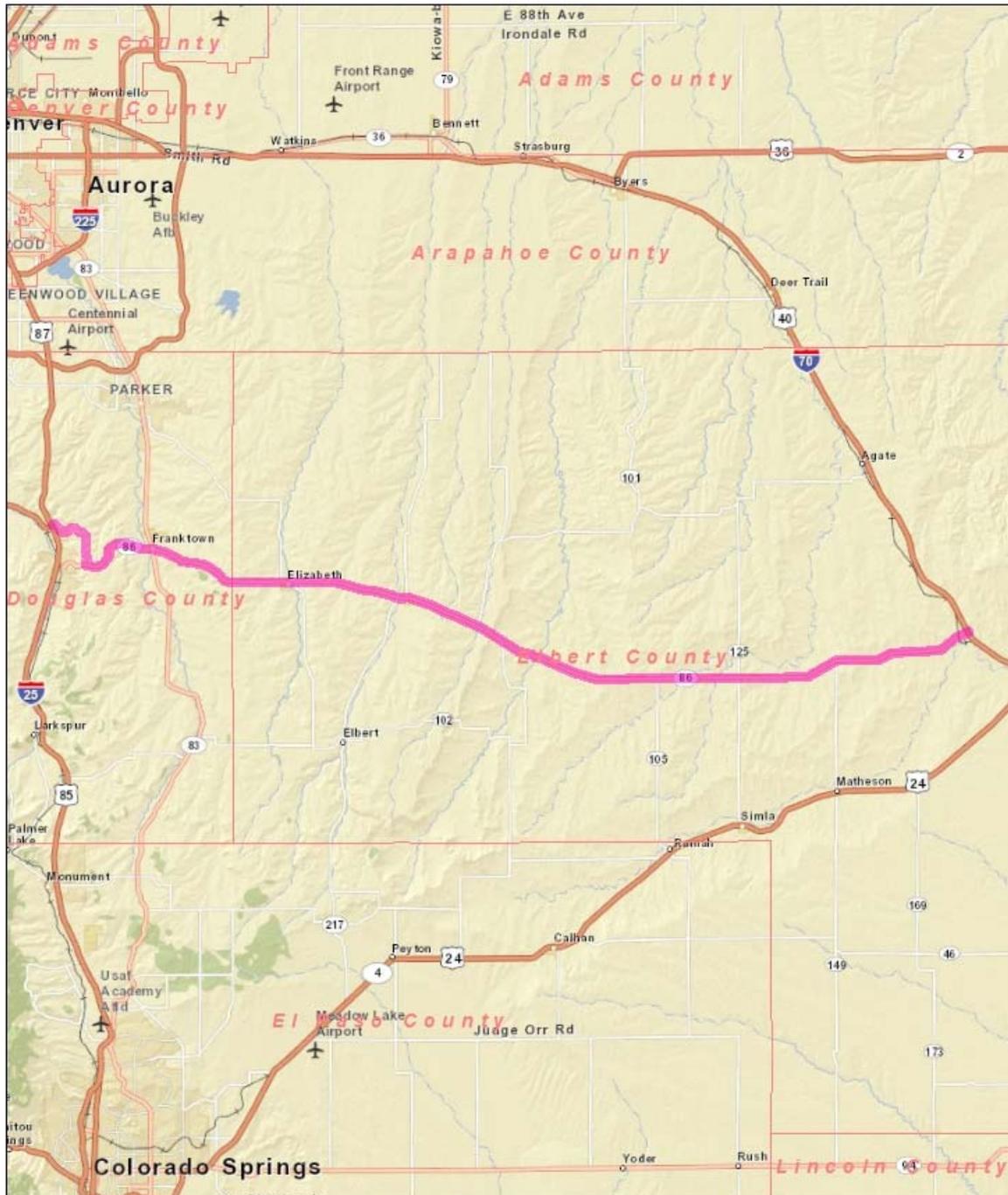
#### *Criterion D*

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.

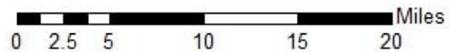
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- SH 86
- County Boundary

### SH 86

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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