

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 96

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
096A	From SH 69-A in Westcliffe east via Silver Cliff and Wetmore To SH 50-B East of Pueblo
096B	From SH 50-B east of Pueblo east via Boone and Olney Springs To SH 71-C at Ordway
096C	From SH 71-C at Ordway east via Sugar City and Haswell To SH 287-B in Eads
096D	From SH 287-B east of Eads east via Sheridan Lake To the Kansas State Line

Highway Location:

Counties: Kiowa, Crowley, Pueblo, Custer
 Length (Miles): 193.22

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>
5CR.39	Officially not eligible>Field not eligible>Field not eligible>	01/25/1991>11/13/2003>12/11/1990>04/01/1974	HARDSCRABBLE ROAD, NORTH HARDSCRABBLE CANYON ROAD
5CR.40		11/1/1977	OAK CREEK STAGE ROAD
5PE.6006.1	Officially needs data>Field not eligible	03/30/2011>11/02/2006	OLD HIGHWAY 96
5PE.6006.2	Does not support eligibility of entire linear resource>Field not eligible	03/30/2011>11/02/2006	OLD HIGHWAY 96
5PE.6006.3	Does not support eligibility of entire linear resource>Field not eligible	03/30/2011>2007	OLD HIGHWAY 96

Discussion of Site Forms (for previously recorded segments, if applicable):

Five Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway, including 5PE6006 (6006.1, 6006.2, 6006.3), 5CR.39, 5CR.40, 5PE.587, and 5PE.5518, were identified in Compass. An old alignment of SH 96 (5PE6006), which was rerouted in 1971 due to construction of the Pueblo Reservoir, was previously recorded and recommended as a non-contributing segment of the highway. North Hardscrabble Canyon Road (5CR.39) is coincides with the route of SH 96 from the intersection with FS Road 387 to McKenzie Junction going through North Hardscrabble Canyon. This segment of the route was previously recommended as not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Oak Creek Stage Road (5CR.40) appears to have an association to SH 96 but no locational information or National Register eligibility determination were available in Compass or on the site form. SH 96 also passes near but not through three historic districts, including the Pueblo City Park Zoo (5PE.587), the Goat Hill Historic District (5PE.5518), and the Missouri Pacific Railroad Tower Line (5CW30, 5KW52, and 5PE2036).

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>
5CW30	Missouri Pacific Railroad (Towner to N.Avon Dale Jct.)	Officially eligible
5KW52	Missouri Pacific Railroad (Towner to N. Avon Dale Jct.)	Officially eligible
5PE.5518	Goat Hill Historic District	106 - Officially eligible
5PE.587	Pueblo City Park Zoo	Listed on National Register
5PE2036	Missouri Pacific Railroad (Towner to N. Avon Dale Jct.)	Officially eligible

*Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHP

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 96

Historical Data:

SH 96 is approximately 193 miles long and stretches west from the Kansas state line to Westcliffe. The highway extends across the eastern plains and then parallels the Arkansas River before entering the city of Pueblo. From Pueblo the route enters the San Isabel National Forest and winds through a mountainous region before ending at Westcliffe, its western terminus.

Historically, the trails, highways, and rural roads that made up the transportation network in this area facilitated travel through this area and also made possible the transfer and distribution of the region's agricultural products. Settlement in Pueblo occurred in the early 1800s as a result of regional trade along the Santa Fe and Cherokee Trails, whose routes generally followed the Arkansas River Valley and subsequently formed portions of the route of present-day US 50. Pueblo is the only major city through which SH 96 extends. Pueblo was established as a town in 1870 and became a regional center of trade and industry due to its proximity to mining, agricultural areas, and New Mexico. This region of Colorado 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 additional towns like La Junta, Las Animas, and Lamar, which prospered by providing a direct link for conveying commercial and agricultural goods between towns and larger markets. During the early to mid-twentieth century, farm-to-market roads were constructed to link remote areas with regional market centers and major transportation corridors. Located north of other major east-west routes in this region, including US 50 and other shorter routes along the Arkansas River, SH 96 provided a direct connection to Kansas and markets further to the east and also served as an important component of the regional transportation network (Noel, Mahoney, and Stevens, 1994: 25, 29; Wyckoff, 1999: 167-170; Colorado State Planning Commission, 1941: 306).

The westernmost portion of the route that became SH 96 was first used by the Utes and later by fur trappers in the 1820s-1840s. Gold was discovered in the area in 1872 and the trail developed into a wagon road. At one point a daily stagecoach traveled between Pueblo and Rosita. The community of Westcliffe, located northwest of Rosita and the western terminus for SH 96, was established in 1880s after the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad was extended to the area (Custer County Tourism Board, 2014).

By 1916 state highway maps include a route that generally follows the route of present-day SH 96. On the eastern plain, the route was stair-stepped in places and extends the entire length between the Kansas border and Westcliffe. Its alignment during this time and location within a sparsely populated area indicate that it served as a farm-to-market road. The route was designated SH 96 by 1926 and retained generally retained its alignment. The highway was paved between the 1940s and 1960s. By 1957 US 50 was cosigned with a portion of the route extending east from Pueblo to North Avondale. In the early 1970s, planned construction of Pueblo Reservoir forced a reroute of SH 96. Previously SH 96 was along the Arkansas River west of Pueblo, but in 1971 a new alignment was constructed to take SH 96 to the south of the reservoir. State highways, farm-to-market roads, and small local connector roads served to link major regional transportation corridors and facilitate the transfer of goods as well as travel within the region. Its location and early stair-stepped alignment that provided one of few direct connections with Pueblo indicate that SH 96 served as an important farm-to-market road within the region. The highway also served as an early and regionally prominent east-west cross-state route between Kansas and south-central Colorado.

(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) 96

- 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) 96

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 96 is classified a Cultural Route and an Engineered Route under the classification system in the MPS.

Criterion A

Literature review and research indicates that a western portion of the corridor that eventually developed into SH 96 served as a trail used by Native Americans and fur trappers before developing into a wagon road. As such, as a Cultural Route it possesses significance under Transportation at the local level. Subsequently, the road was developed as a route for vehicular traffic by 1916 within the first decade of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD) and served as an early example of state highway construction at the state level. In addition, the portion that extends from the Kansas border to Pueblo served as an important farm-to-market road by providing direct connectivity between the remote agricultural region of south-central Colorado and Pueblo, an important regional market at the local level. The highway also served as an important cross-state route providing through travel between Kansas and south-central Colorado. For these reasons, this highway possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Transportation at both the state and local levels.

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

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.

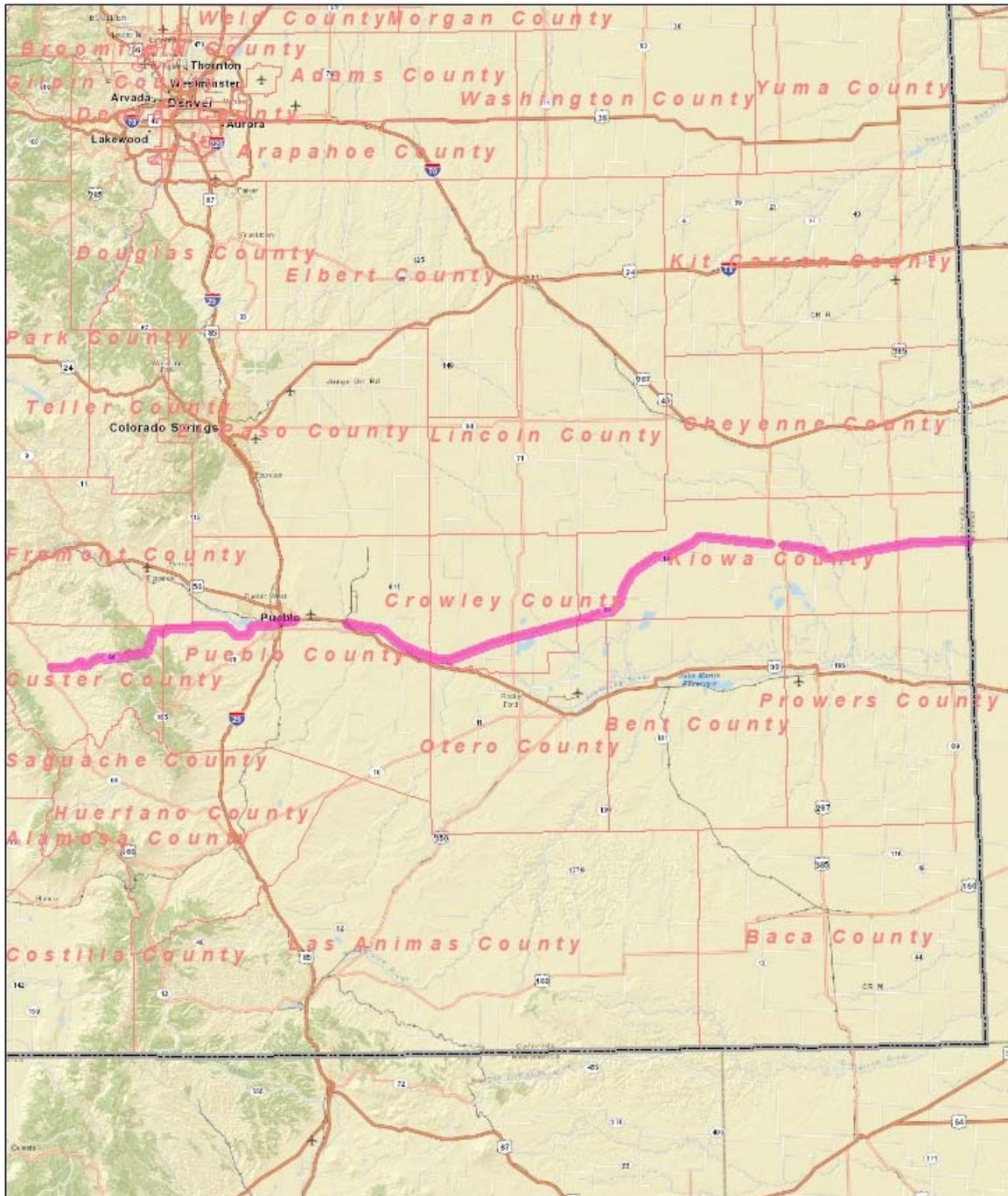
Criterion D

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

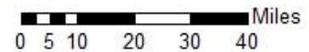
Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 96



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



- SH 96
- State Boundary
- County Boundary



SH 96



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