

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

**Highway Name:** State Highway (SH) 14

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

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
014A	From U.S. 40-A at Jackson/Grand County Line (Muddy Pass) northeast To SH 125-A southwest of Walden
014B	From SH 125-A in Walden southeast via Cameron Pass and east via Poudre Canyon To U.S. 287-C at Teds Place
014C	From U.S. 287-C in Fort Collins East via Ault and Raymer To SH 6-5 in Sterling

**Highway Location:**

Counties: Jackson, Larimer, Logan, Weld  
 Length (Miles): 223.027

**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>
5JA.1447.1	Officially not eligible>Field not eligible	12/09/2002>11/06/2002	STATE HIGHWAY 14 SEGMENT
5JA.1447.2	Officially not eligible>Field not eligible	08/30/2004>07/29/2004	OLD COLORADO HIGHWAY 14 AND ASSOCIATED BRIDGE
5JA.1447.3	No assessment given on form	1998	CAMERON PASS, HIGHWAY 14
5JA.1447.4	Officially not eligible>Field not eligible	12/18/2006>10/03/2006	STATE HIGHWAY 14 (SH14) SEGMENT, HIGHWAY 43
5WL.6964.1	Does not support eligibility of entire linear resource>Field eligible	09/17/2012>04/06/2012	OLD STATE HIGHWAY 14

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

Five Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms for previously recorded segments of this highway, including 5JA.1447.1, 5JA.1447.3, 5JA.1447.4, 5WL.6964.1, and 5JA.1447.2 were identified in Compass. One site form for SH 14 (5JA.1447.1) notes that the highway as a complete entity meets National Register of Historic Places (National Register) Criterion A for its contribution to broad patterns of history, but this specific segment was determined not to support the overall eligibility of the route and determined not eligible in 2002. Another segment (5JA.1447.4) was determined not eligible in 2006 and little information was available for 5JA.1447.3. The fourth segment of old SH 14 (5WL.6964.1) was officially determined to not support the overall significance of the linear resource in 2012. Site form 5JA.1447.2 references an abandoned segment of SH 14 that was determined field not eligible in 2004; this segment does not coincide with the current alignment of SH 14.

**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>
5LR.1388		Listed - National Register
5LR.476		Listed - National Register
5LR.484		Listed - National Register
5WL.2883		Listed - State Register

\*Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHP

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### Historical Data:

SH 14 is approximately 223 miles long and extends between U.S. Highway (US) 6 in Sterling west to Fort Collins and then up the Cache La Poudre Canyon over Cameron Pass to Walden to its western terminus at US 40 east of Steamboat Springs.

In the northeast portion of the state, SH 14 crosses the plains counties of Logan and Weld before entering the north-central mountains of Larimer and Jackson Counties. The eastern portion of the SH 14 corridor is within the High Plains of Northeastern Colorado. The South Platte River is the primary water source for communities in the region and many of the earliest transportation corridors, trails used by Native Americans, trappers, and explorers, followed the South Platte River. The South Platte River Valley was prime pastureland prior to the homestead era and the arrival of the railroad. The discovery of gold in the 1850s attracted travelers and fortune seekers alike to Colorado. The Overland and Oregon Trails extended through the region and the transcontinental railroad followed the South Platte River when in 1881 the Union Pacific Railroad built its branch line to Denver. After 1881, railroad towns like Sterling became important freight shipping points. Farmers formed cooperatives to build major irrigation systems based on priority water rights from the South Platte River. At Greeley, the construction of irrigation canals and storage reservoirs significantly increased the acreage for agriculture (Wyckoff 1999: 164-165). Historically, the population of Northeastern Colorado has been sparse with larger communities like Greeley and Sterling connecting smaller towns. Major irrigated crops included corn, various feed crops, as well as sugar beets after 1910 in Weld County. The Great Western Sugar Company built factories at several locations along or near present-day SH 34, including locations in Greeley, Eaton, Fort Collins, Windsor, and Sterling (Webb 1931: 373).

In the north-central portion, Native American Tribes frequented the area prior to the mid-nineteenth century, including the Ute and Arapahoe, who hunted and lived in North Park during the summers and established trails for traveling through the area. The earliest non-native people in this area were primarily fur trappers and explorers. Ranching developed into a prominent activity within the intermountain areas of North Park and included activities like the raising of cattle and sheep as well as hay production. The mining of coal, copper, silver, gold, and fluorspar helped spur increased development throughout much of the nineteenth century. (North Park Pioneer Museum) Early roads in the northern mountain region were often built to serve and connect communities for the movement of people and the transfer of commercial and agricultural goods. The sometimes narrow and rocky canyons combined with the altitude of this mountainous region made road building expensive, dangerous, and difficult. To help finance road construction, toll roads were common in the late nineteenth century prior to the establishment of the Colorado Highway Department. Local residents would often pool resources to build roads.

The beginnings of what became SH 14, started when a toll road was completed over Cameron Pass by 1880. By the 1890s the town of Walden, near the present-day western terminus of SH 14, served as a central supply and trade center for the vast area known as North Park and was connected to a railroad by 1911. In the early 1900s residents and businessmen believed a road up the Cache La Poudre Canyon from Fort Collins to North Park would open the area for recreation and commercial activities; a competing road up the Big Thompson Canyon, between Loveland and Estes Park (present-day US 34), was under construction at this time. By 1912 work was underway on a road up the Cache La Poudre Canyon under the direction of Larimer County officials and led to the formation of the Poudre Valley Good Roads Association to promote construction of the road up the Cache La Poudre Canyon. Competition between the Big Thompson Canyon and Cache La Poudre Canyon projects continued; the convict labor camp housing workers to build the roads was moved back and forth between 1912 and 1914. Historian Stanley Case asserts in his book, *The Poudre: A Photo History*, that the Colorado state highway commission assured that both roads could be completed with the Big Thompson Canyon project taking precedence. Historic state highway maps indicate that the road segments along the general corridor for present-day SH 14, including those on the plains and in North Park, were in place by 1916. In Fort Collins, the route originally followed present-day Lincoln Avenue. Work on the road up the Cache La Poudre Canyon continued throughout the early 1920s and the entire route of SH 14 was designated by 1926; at that time the road extended east of Sterling through Paoli to the Nebraska state line. By the late 1930s the road between Fort Collins and the Nebraska state line was paved. By the late 1940s only portions of the road through the Cache La Poudre Canyon were hard-surfaced. According to Salek, the alignment east of Fort Collins was moved from Lincoln Avenue to its current location in 1950. A middle section of SH 14 was turned back in 1954 creating a gap between Walden and a point located south of Red Feather Lakes. The section east of Sterling was turned back in 1968. By 1979 an all-weather road was completed over Cameron Pass and gaps in the route created during the 1950s had been filled. The highway had one additional realignment in 1989 when a bypass of LaPorte, located northwest of Fort Collins, was completed in 1989 (Case 1995; 335-359, 451-453).

Road building in mountainous areas addressed challenging terrain and high altitude passes; however, no information

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was found to indicate the design, engineering, or construction of this highway differed from other roads in the region. This road was one of many that functioned to supply and support towns and area industries by providing links to regional transportation corridors, towns, and cities.

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

#### *Criterion A*

SH 14 was an early long distance route, extending west from the Nebraska state line through small eastern plains towns, major commercial centers, and more remote areas up the Cache La Poudre Canyon and in North Park, including Walden. On the eastern plains, the road provided direct connectivity between small towns and sparsely populated areas characterized by ranching and agriculture and major commercial and market centers like Sterling and Fort Collins as a farm-to-market road. The road up the Cache La Poudre Canyon was constructed with a specific transportation goal in mind: to connect Fort Collins and North Park for commercial purposes and to promote recreation and tourism. In addition, the route was constructed by 1916, within the first years of the formation of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD), and represents an early and prominent project by the CHD. For these reasons, SH 14 possesses significance under Criterion A in the area of Transportation at the state level in the area of Entertainment/Recreation for its association with tourism and at the local level. Research did not indicate that this highway was built or improved as part of a federal relief project.

#### *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*

Although portions of SH 14 pass through Cache La Poudre Canyon, and required rock blasting to make way for a permanent road; however, research and literature review yielded no evidence to indicate that the rock blasting was innovative or represented important engineering techniques that serve to distinguish this highway from other roads within mountainous areas of the state. The highway's design and construction appear to have utilized techniques common to other roads in mountainous areas. Overall this highway appears to reflect the standard types of design and construction practices and it does not appear to possess significance under Criterion C.

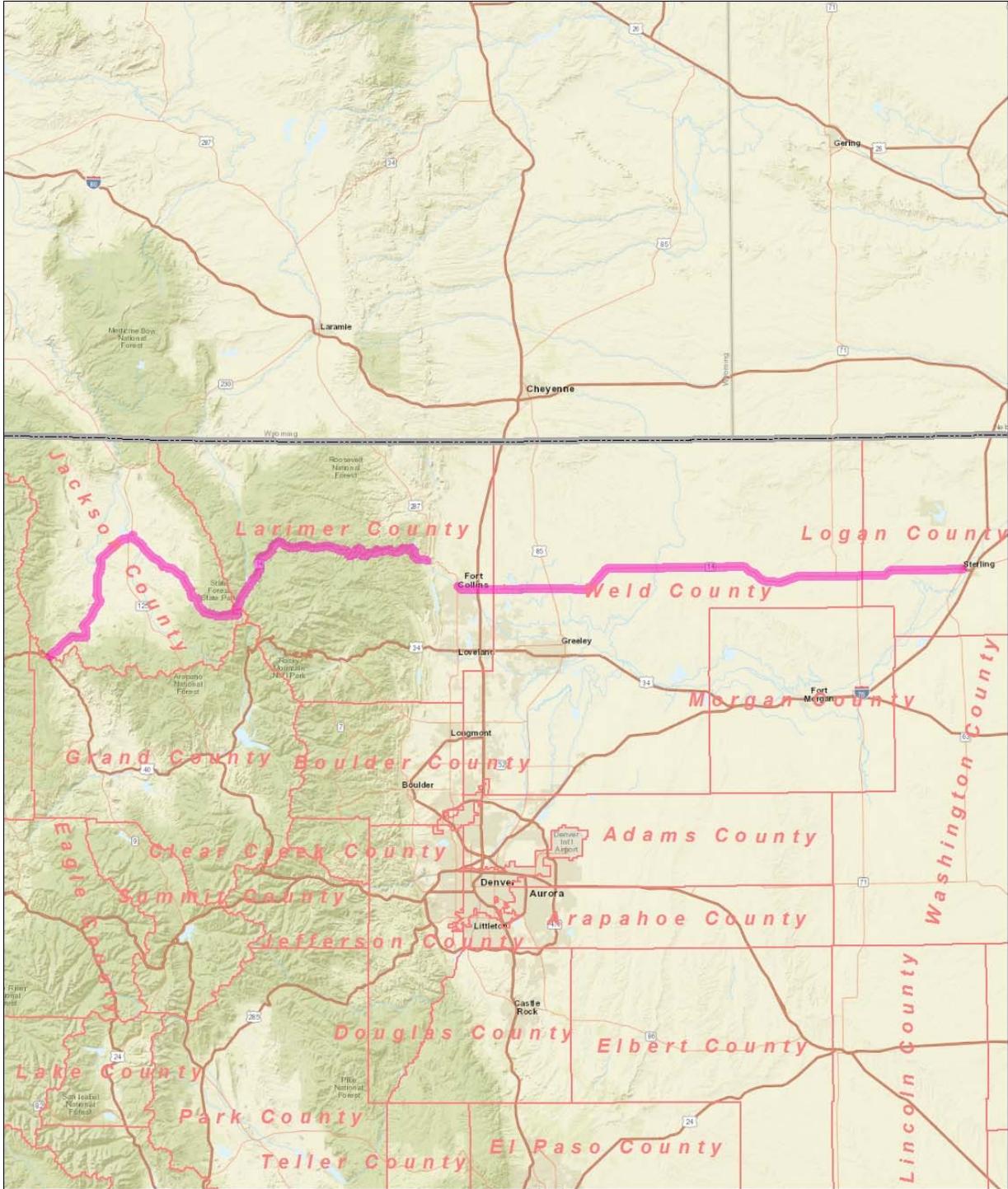
#### *Criterion D*

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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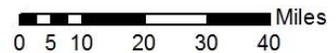
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- SH 14
- State Boundary
- County Boundary



**SH 14**



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