

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 184

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
184A	From SH 49-B north of Cortez East To SH 145A west of Dolores
184B	From SH 145-A west of Dolores southeast To SH 160-D (Mancos Bus Rt)

Highway Location:

Counties: Montezuma
Length (Miles): 25.678

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>
5MT.11754	Field eligible	9/2/2001	MANCOS AND RICO WAGON ROAD

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

No Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms were identified for previously recorded segments of this highway. The Mancos and Rico Wagon Road (5MT.11754) is in the vicinity of present-day SH 184 and was previously identified as field eligible. However, the Mancos and Rico Wagon Road is abandoned and does not directly correlate to the existing route of SH 184.

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 184 is approximately 26 miles long and consists of two discontinuous segments. The eastern segment extends from the intersection with U.S. Highway (US) 160/Grand Avenue in Mancos north to SH 145 near Dolores. The western segment continues north from a point along SH 145 just west of the eastern segment and extends west to US 491. Southwestern Colorado is a generally mountainous region that owes much of its history to mining. The earliest transportation corridors in southwest Colorado were wagon roads that often followed trails established by Native Americans, explorers, fur trappers, and traders. The Colorado Gold Rush of 1859 brought an influx of people to Colorado's southwestern region in search of fortune and led to the establishment of mining camps through the area to supply activities at the mines and those working in the mines. Located to the north of SH 184 are towns like Silverton, Placerville, and Ouray, which began as mining camps and supply centers for mining districts. The eastern terminus for SH 184 is located just west of Durango. Durango was established in 1880 after the Rio Grande Railroad extended its line through the area. Surrounded by coal and agricultural land, Durango became a major supply center within the area. Toward the western end of SH 184 is the town of Dolores, which is surrounded by grazing pastures and ranch land where livestock-raising persists (Colorado State Planning Commission 1941; 141, 426; Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177). The early history of this highway does not have an association with a known trail or important regional mining activities.

Early roads within the region were built to connect mining camps with mining districts, which are generally located to the north of SH 184. The popularity of the automobile increased dramatically throughout the state between 1910 and 1920. The Good Roads Movement and founding of the Colorado Highway Department in the first decades of the twentieth century led to the establishment of a highway network throughout the region and state (Carter and Mehls 1984: 138-141). Historic state highway maps indicate that a railroad along the general corridor of present-day SH 184 was in place by 1916. By 1939 a vehicular road with a stair-stepped pattern was located along the general corridor of present-day SH 184 and included a short spur south of Mancos that is no longer in use. According to Salek, most of the route was turned back by 1954 for about half its length to a nine-mile segment extending north of Mancos. By 1978 the route was extended northwest to Dolores and along a segment previously designated SH 147 to Lewis at present-day US 491.

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. SH 184 provided connections to other roads and to typical local and regional destinations. Research, literature review, and historic mapping does not indicate that this highway provided direct access to destinations related to important historic themes and functioned as one component of the overall regional transportation.

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

Criterion A

The SH 184 corridor was not established as a vehicular route until 1939 and does not represent an early or prominent project completed by the Colorado Highway Department that possesses significance under Criterion A. No evidence was found that indicates the current route of SH 184 corresponds to the former roadbed for the Mancos-Rico Wagon Road. Research did not indicate the road was built or improved as part of a Depression-era federal work relief program. Although SH 184 passes through ranch land no evidence suggested that it served as an important farm-to-market road or was pivotal in the transfer of agricultural goods or livestock within the region. In addition, research did not indicate that the road has an important association to mining or industry that distinguishes it from other roads in the region. As such, it does not possess significance 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

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 within the mountainous southwest region and it 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.

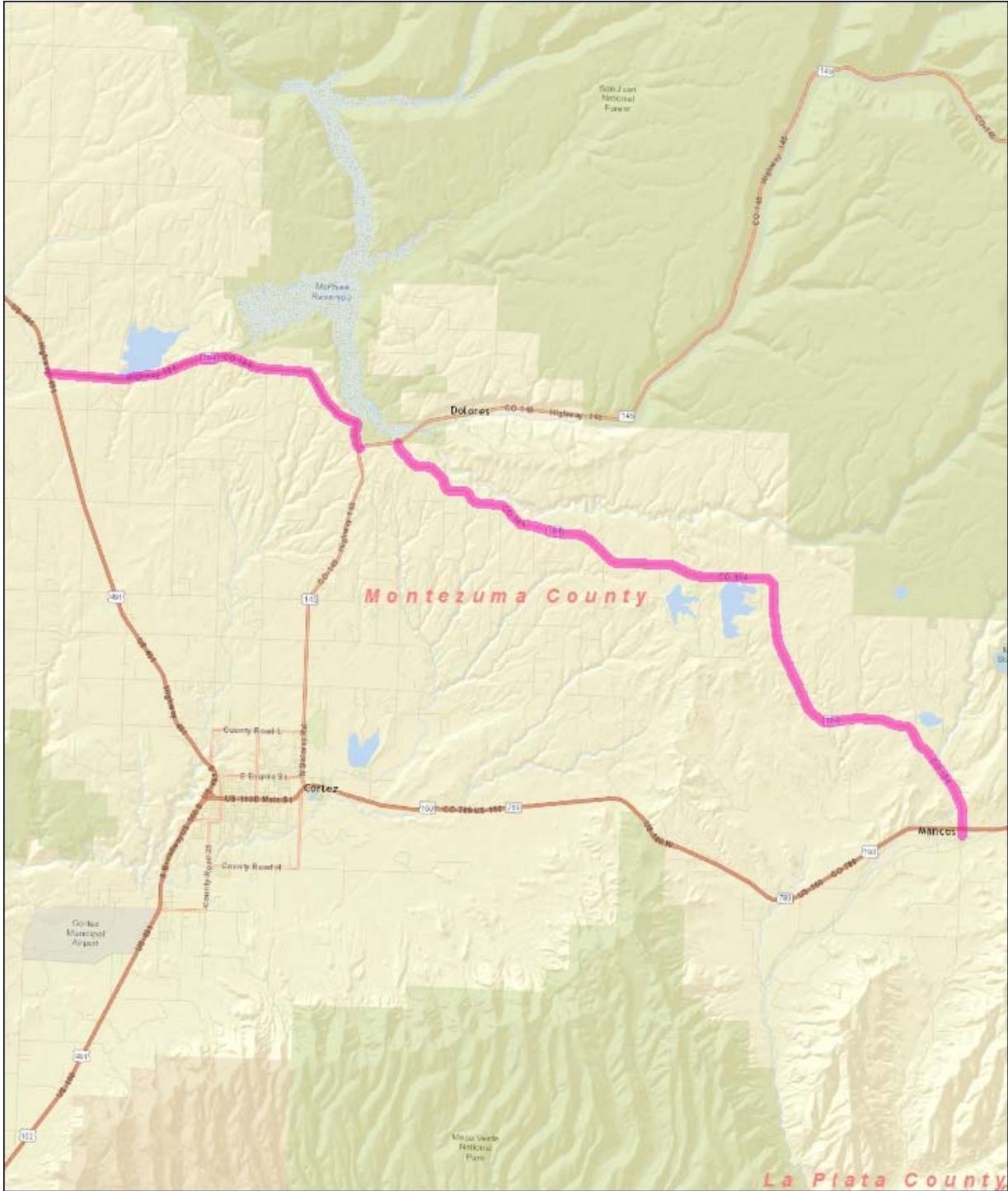
Criterion D

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 184
- County Boundary

SH 184

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