

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

**Highway Name:** State Highway (SH) 62

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

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
062A	From SH 145-A at Placerville northeast via Dallas Divide to To U.S. 550-B at Ridgway

**Highway Location:**

Counties: San Miguel, Ouray

Length (Miles): 23.313

**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 62 is approximately 23 miles long and extends northeast from SH 145 at Placerville to the junction with U.S. Highway (US) 550 east of Ridgeway. Southwestern Colorado is a 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. Towns like Silverton, Placerville, and Ouray began as mining camps and supply centers for mining districts. Ouray was established in 1875 and boomed throughout the 1880s after silver deposits were discovered in nearby hills. Other towns like Mineral Point and Capital City served specific mines instead of larger mining areas. Gold, silver, lead, and zinc were mined at various periods throughout the region (Colorado State Planning Commission 1941; 141; Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177).

The area west of Ridgeway is characterized by rolling hills and expanses of grassland between surrounding mountains on the way to Placerville. Founded as a mining camp, Placerville later became an important shipping point for livestock and by the 1940s was an important loading point in this region (Ubbelohde, Benson, and Smith 2006; 175-177; Wyckoff 1999; 53, Colorado State Planning Commission 1941; 423-425). Early roads in the region were often built to serve and connect mining camps with nearby mining districts and 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. Other roads were financed by wealthy individuals such as Otto Mears, an important figure in the history of road-building in southwestern Colorado. Mears constructed early toll roads between Saguache and Lake City, over Poncha Pass, and between Ouray and Silverton. His influence on road-building in southwestern Colorado is best represented by the construction of the Million Dollar Highway, current US 550, which reflects early and bold efforts to establish roads in the region employing innovative engineering to meet the challenges of the terrain and altitude. Examples of other roads that reflect notable early road-building efforts to traverse mountainous areas of the state, such as early crossings of the continental divide, include SH 9, 17, 84, 160, and 389 among others. (Ubbelohde et al 2006; 175-177; Wyckoff 1999; 53-54). Research and literature review did not indicate that the highway was associated with an important early trail or mining in an important way.

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 a road along the general corridor of present-day SH 62 with the same termini was in place by 1916. The road was designated SH 62 by 1926. Historic highway maps indicate that the highway did not undergo any major realignments since its initial designation. The majority of the route was paved by 1949 and completely paved by 1954.

Road building in mountainous areas addressed challenging terrain and high altitude passes; however, no information 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. Research, literature review, and historic mapping does not indicate that this highway provided direct access to destinations related to important historic themes. SH 62 historically comprised one component of the overall transportation network by linking other highways and providing access to local destinations.

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

#### *Criterion A*

The road corridor that eventually became SH 62 was constructed by 1916, just a few years after the establishment of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD), but research neither indicates this highway was a prominent project completed by the CHD nor that the highway connected destinations related to important historic themes. No evidence suggests that the route was built or improved as part of a Depression-era federal relief program. Although SH 62 terminates at Placerville, which developed into a livestock shipping point toward the mid-twentieth-century, no evidence suggests that this road 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 other industries that distinguishes it from other roads in the region. This road 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 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.

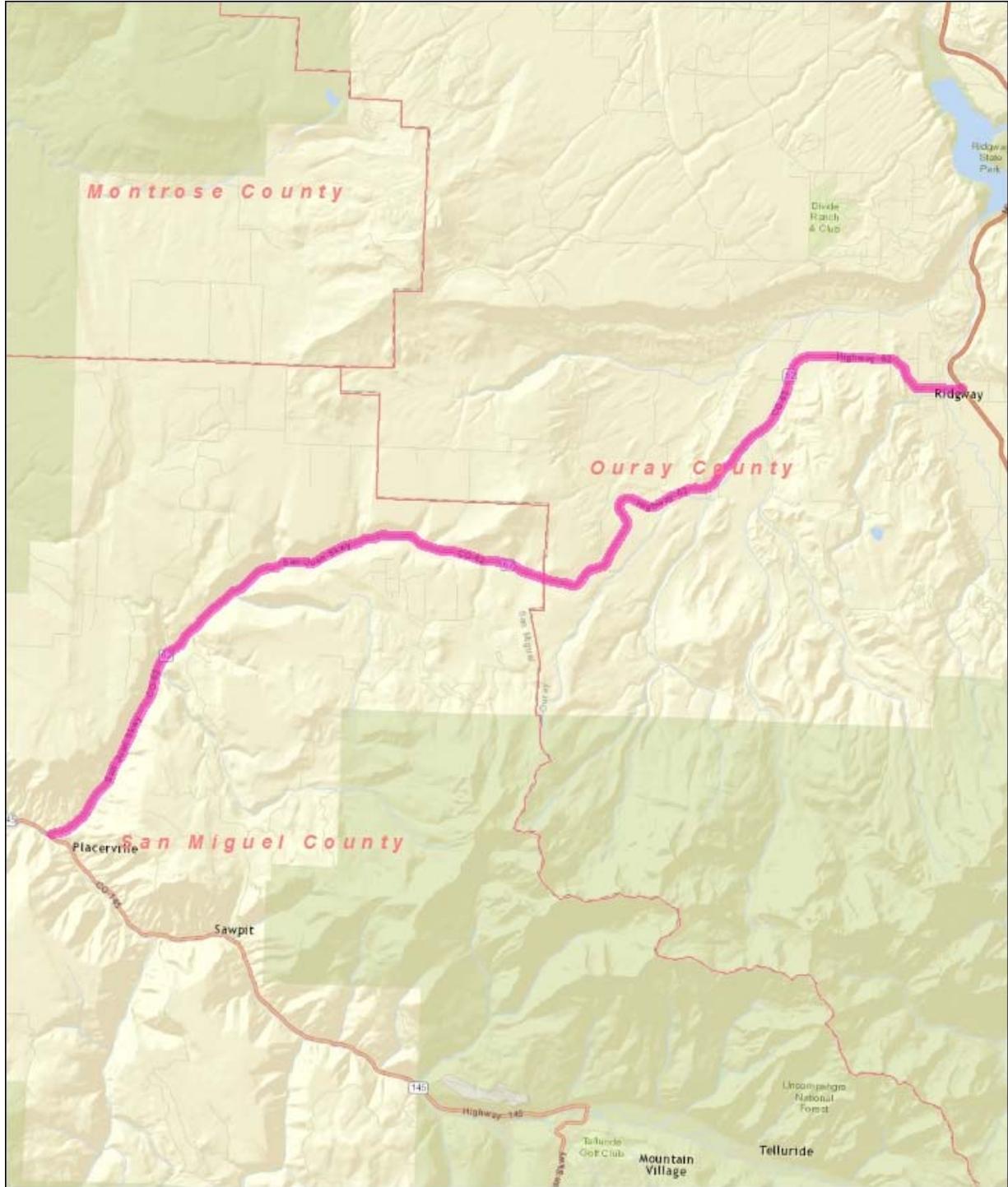
#### *Criterion D*

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.

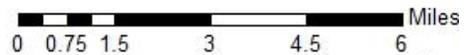
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- SH 62
- County Boundary

SH 62



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