

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

**Highway Name:** State Highway (SH) 63

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

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
063A	From U.S. 36D at Anton north via Akron To U.S. 6J in Atwood at (Front Ave)

**Highway Location:**

Counties: Washington, Logan  
Length (Miles): 56.481

**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 63 is approximately 57 miles in length and extends through an agricultural region on Colorado's eastern plains from U.S. Highway (US) 6 in Atwood, south through Akron, to US 36 in the small community of Anton. The route once extended much further and was substantially shortened -almost half of its length- in the mid-1950s.

Historically, the trails, highways, and rural roads that made up the transportation network in eastern Colorado facilitated travel through this sparsely-populated region and also made possible the transfer and distribution of the region's agricultural products. Colorado's eastern plains were traversed by several early prominent trails including the Oregon Trail, later renamed the Overland Trail, located between Julesburg and Wyoming via Fort Collins; the Old Cherokee Trail, a branch of the Santa Fe Trail in the southern part of the region; and the three branches of the Smoky Hill Trail that extended east from Kansas to Denver. Settlement occurred along these trails and farms and ranches, established along the South Platte River and its tributaries, lead to the later development of water irrigation systems. A number of railroads constructed through the region beginning in the 1860s eventually led to a decline in travel along these trails and opened up new markets within the state and beyond. As a result, the region experienced further settlement, population growth, and agricultural development between approximately 1870 and 1890. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 34-36, 41-43, 63-65) SH 63 is not associated with these early trails.

The popularity of the automobile increased dramatically between 1900 and 1920 as a result of the Good Roads Movement and the establishment of the Colorado Highway Commission that expanded the state's highway network. The development of the first state highways included major routes providing connection between population centers and agricultural areas. In addition, smaller communities increasingly saw the benefits of highway access, which led to further highway construction along less traveled routes and alignments in the 1920s and 1930s, especially north-south routes to connect to more prominent regional east-west routes. US 40 was the major east-west transportation corridor across the eastern plains. Other corridors included Interstate Highways 70 and 76, SH 34 and 36 as well as less prominent highways that served as local connector roads between common destinations and routine services. (Carter and Mehls 1984: 118)

Historic state highway maps indicate a portion of SH 63 south of Akron was in place by 1916 and by 1919 a roadway extended further north to Atwood. The route was paved by 1924. SH 63 was designated a state highway by 1926 and its route extended further south to Haswell in Kiowa County, which is not part of the present alignment. When the route was shortened to its current length in the mid-1950s, it no longer provided a connection between Haswell and Atwood. SH 63 is one of several rural regional connector roads providing access to other more prominent routes that extended across the eastern plains. State highways, farm-to-market roads, and small local connector roads served to link more remote areas with the major regional transportation corridors, towns, and cities. SH 63 served as one of several north-south connector roads within Colorado's eastern plains. Research and review of historic mapping does not indicate that this highway provided an important and direct link to destinations related to historic themes such as industry, agriculture, or commerce within the greater context of eastern Colorado.

Historically, SH 63 was one of several north-south highways on the eastern plains that connected to more prominent east-west routes; it was the east-west routes that provided the direct link to major commercial centers located to the west. Some of the other north-south highways in the region included State Highways 61, 59, and 385. State highways, farm-to-market roads, and small local connector roads like SH 63 typically served to link more remote areas with major regional transportation corridors, towns, and cities, but research and review of historic mapping indicates this highway had no important association to historic themes within the state and region nor did it provide direct access to destinations associated with important trends or events.

(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*

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

#### *Criterion A*

Research did not indicate that this highway is an example of an early or prominent project by the Colorado Highway Department (CHD) or was built or improved as part of a federal work relief project. Present-day SH 63 extends through a sparsely populated area on the eastern plains of Colorado that is characterized by ranching and agriculture. Historically, SH 63 served to provide connections to other state roads, county roads, and local and rural regional destinations. The highway did not function as a main transportation route for providing direct connectivity as a farm-to-market road between an important agricultural region and its market. 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*

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.

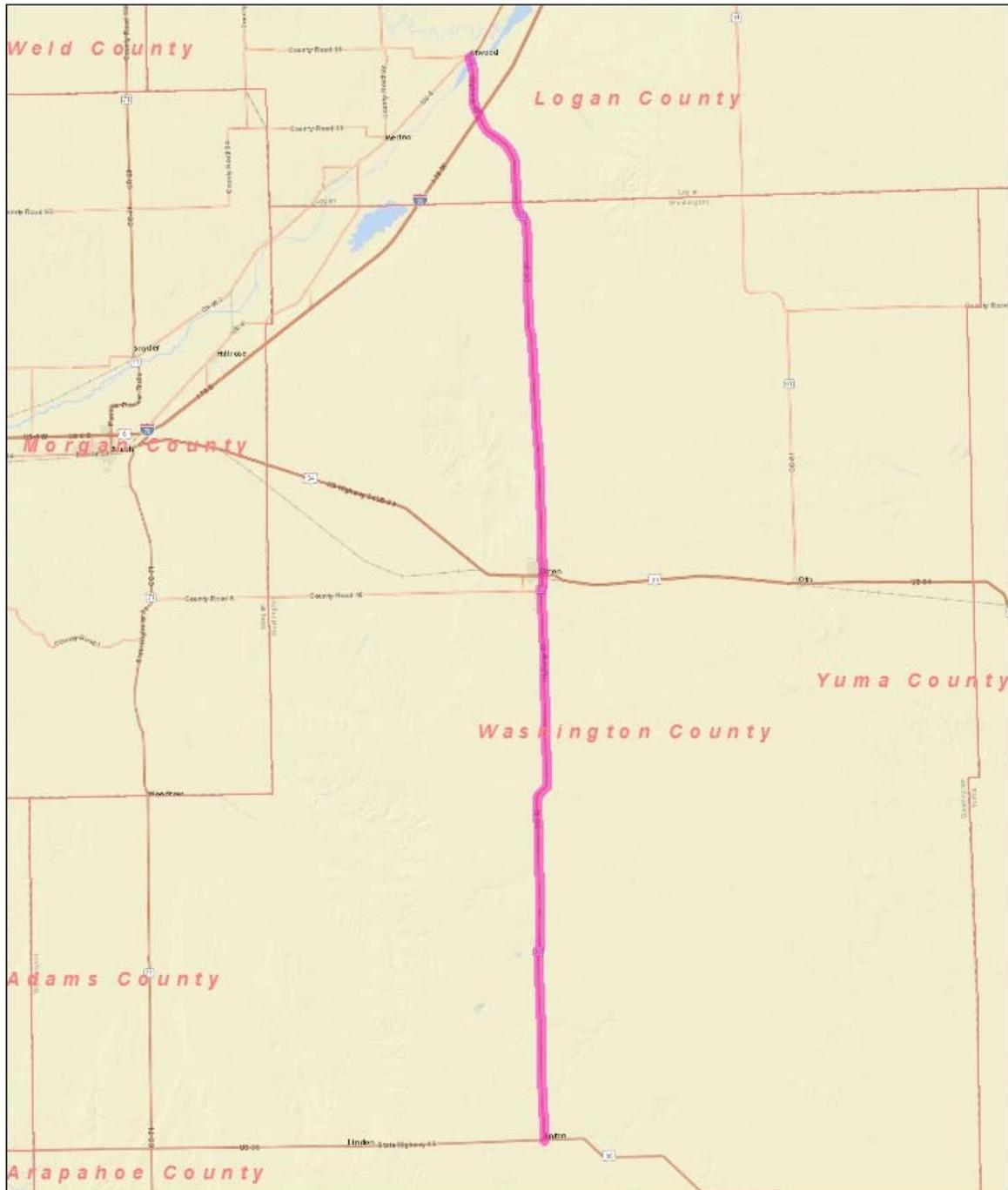
#### *Criterion D*

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.

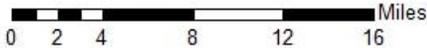
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- SH 63
- County Boundary

SH 63

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