

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 121

CDOT Route Nos. and Milepost (MP) Limits:

<i>CDOT Route</i>	<i>Route Description</i>
121A	From SH 121-B and SH 470-A north along Wadsworth Blvd To SH 287-C in Broomfield
121B	From the Martin Marietta Plant Entrance in Kassler North To SH 121-A and SH 470-A south of Denver

Highway Location:

Counties: Broomfield, Denver, Jefferson
 Length (Miles): 30.442

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>
5JF.4508.1	Officially needs data>Field eligible	2008>04/11/2008	WADSWORTH BOULEVARD (SEGMENT)

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

The forms that were available on Compass were those for the Old Town Arvada Historic District (5JF.1278) and the Stocke Walter Historic District (5JF.1943). Prior to 1957, Wadsworth Boulevard/SH 121 ran through what is now the Old Town Arvada district, but after 1957 the bypass skirted downtown Arvada, or what is now the district. No historic districts directly border SH 121 or incorporate what is currently SH 121. Other forms were not available on Compass and cannot be interpreted to have bearing on the significance of SH 121.

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>
5JF.1030	Schnell Farm	Listed on National Register
5JF.1278	Arvada Downtown Olde Town Arvada	Listed on National Register
5JF.1943	Stocke Walter Addition	Listed on National Register
5JF.4512	Lakewood School Historic District	106 - Officially eligible
5JF.4685	Green Acres Historic District	106 - 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) 121

Historical Data:

SH 121 is 30.83 miles long and runs from the Martin Marietta plant at Kassler north to U.S. Highway (US) 287 in Broomfield, just north of the Boulder Turnpike exchange. The highway is also known as South Wadsworth Boulevard, Wadsworth Boulevard, the Wadsworth Bypass, and Wadsworth Parkway, names that encapsulate the route's history of growth and change.

As an original 1920s highway, the route ran from US 287 south to Hampden Avenue. Connecting the farm towns of Broomfield and Arvada, the road can be seen on earlier maps of Colorado as an undesignated highway (Clason, 1916). As the street became increasingly laden with traffic in the 1920s, Wadsworth became one of the primary traffic arteries running through the growing town of Arvada, which was a gateway to mountain recreation for the city dwellers in Denver. In the post-World War II years, as suburban development and automobile traffic in the west metro area increased, it was necessary to bypass downtown Arvada, and the Wadsworth Bypass was constructed in 1958 between 65th Avenue on the north and 52nd Avenue on the north, leaving the original portion of the route to serve downtown Arvada with the quaint moniker "Olde Wadsworth Boulevard." Another departure from the route of the original road was Wadsworth Parkway, which comprises at the north five-mile-long segment of SH 121, Constructed in about 1969, this bypass veers west from the original Wadsworth Boulevard at 92nd Avenue in Westminster, and connects to US 287 at a point about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west of the original Wadsworth.

In the southwest metro area, SH 121 has been expanded and rerouted to meet the needs of industry and residential development as recently as 25 years ago. Postwar suburbanization in the southwest metro area increased the need for better north-south traffic arteries, and in 1965 and 1966 the highway was extended south of Hampden to Ken Caryl Avenue and then to Deer Creek Canyon Road, following Carr Street. In 1970, however, the Wadsworth Parkway expressway bypass was completed, and State Highway 121 was once again continuous with some permutation of Wadsworth (Salek), connecting with SH 75 south of Ken Caryl Road near Chatfield Reservoir.

Following the construction of C-470, the portion of SH 75 that reached Kassler was renumbered as SH 121, extending the highway continuously to the entrance of the Martin Marietta plant at Kassler (Salek). This took place in 1991, and was the most recent evolutionary step in the history of SH 121.

A review of sources did not reveal that this route represents important road engineering achievements, an important road type or subtype identified in the MPS, or that it served to provide an important connections to markets.

(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) 121

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) 121

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

Criterion A

Although in its early years SH 121 served to connect the rural area north of Arvada with the town's commercial center, the bypass constructed in 1958 changed the route of the highway from its historic course and SH 121 no longer runs through or connects with the historic area of the city of Arvada, nor does it directly border the historic districts (5JF.1278 and 5JF.1943). In addition, the northern part of the highway was diverted from Wadsworth in 1969, and no longer follows the route related to its history as a 1920s highway. The portion of the road that does still follow its historic farm-to-market route no longer reaches either of its market connections, and as such cannot be said to be a farm-to-market route. Therefore, although it once did, it no longer has a direct association with a historical theme important in Colorado history, nor does it represent an early or prominent road construction project of the Colorado Highway Department (CHD). It also cannot be said to derive significance from any of the connections it provides subsequent to highway improvements, such as re-routing or bypasses. As such, the highway does not possess significance under Criterion A.

Criterion B

Research did not reveal State Highway 121 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

As a representative example, a state highway that exhibits physical features indicative of an important type or subtype identified in the MPS reflecting its original design or an important variation may possess significance. A state highway may also possess significance for particularly important engineering achievements.

State Highway 121 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.

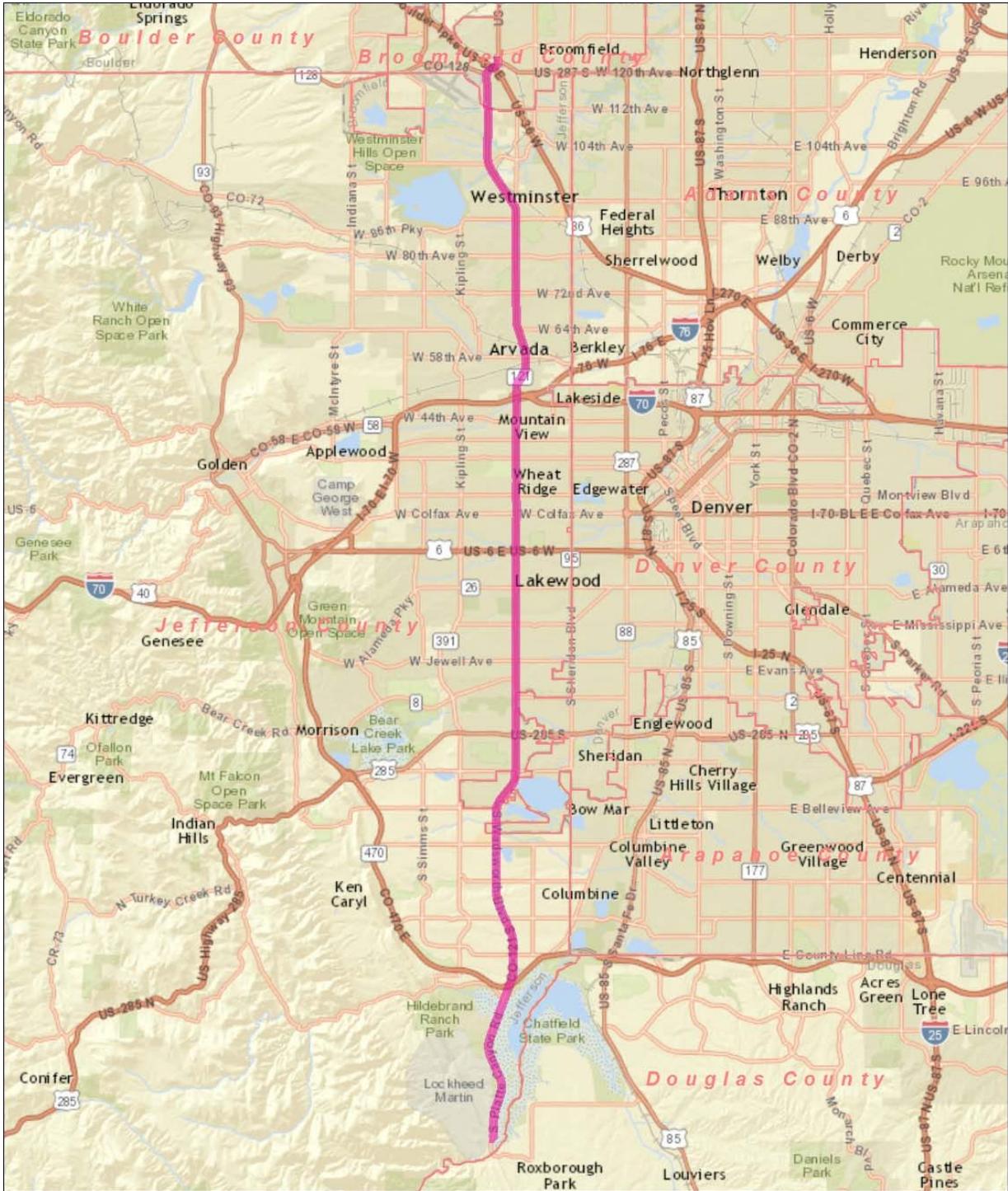
Criterion D

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.

**Information based on data from Compass provided by OAHF*

Colorado Historic Highway Inventory - Historical Summary and Evaluation of Significance

Highway Name: State Highway (SH) 121



Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User



- SH 121
- County Boundary

SH 121



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