



Road Function Classifications

The U.S. DOT's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) classifies our Nation's urban and rural roadways by *road function*. Each function class is based on the type of service the road provides to the motoring public, and the designation is used for data and planning purposes. Design standards are tied to function class. Each class has a range of allowable lane widths, shoulder widths, curve radii, etc. The following photos and information illustrate the four major road function classifications: Interstates, Other Arterials, Collectors, and Local roads. The amount of mobility and land access offered by these road types differs greatly.

The Interstate System is the highest classification of roadways in the United States. These arterial roads provide the highest level of mobility and the highest speeds over the longest uninterrupted distance. Interstates nationwide usually have posted speeds between 55 and 75 mi/h.



Rural Arterial

Illinois



Urban Arterial

California



Rural Interstate

North Carolina



Urban Interstate

North Carolina

Other Arterials include freeways, multilane highways, and other important roadways that supplement the Interstate System. They connect, as directly as practicable, the Nation's principal urbanized areas, cities, and industrial centers. Land access is limited. Posted speed limits on arterials usually range between 50 and 70 mi/h.

Collectors are major and minor roads that connect local roads and streets with arterials. Collectors provide less mobility than arterials at lower speeds and for shorter distances. They balance mobility with land access. The posted speed limit on collectors is usually between 35 and 55 mi/h.



Rural Collector

New York



Urban Collector

Delaware

Local roads provide limited mobility and are the primary access to residential areas, businesses, farms, and other local areas. Local roads, with posted speed limits usually between 20 and 45 mi/h, are the majority of roads in the U.S.



Rural Local

Pennsylvania



Urban Local

New York

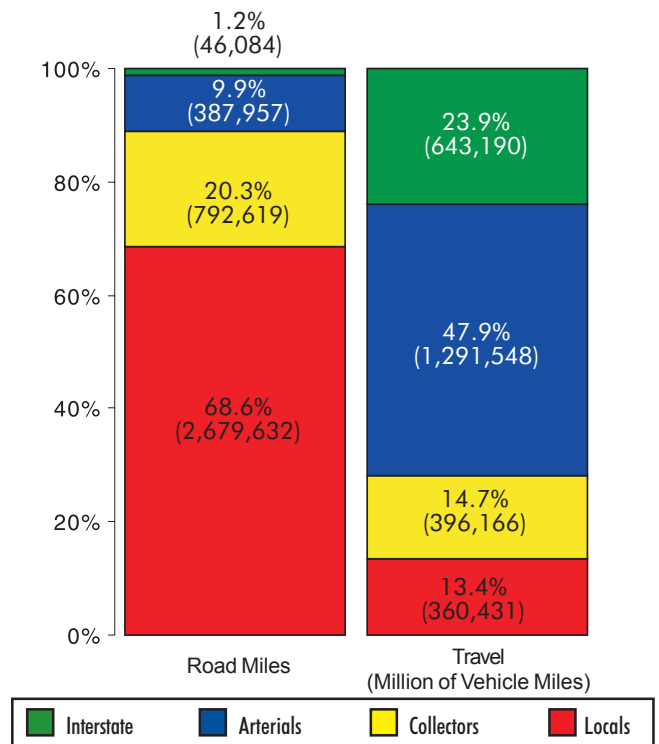


Figure 1. Total Road Mileage and Travel by Road Function (1999)

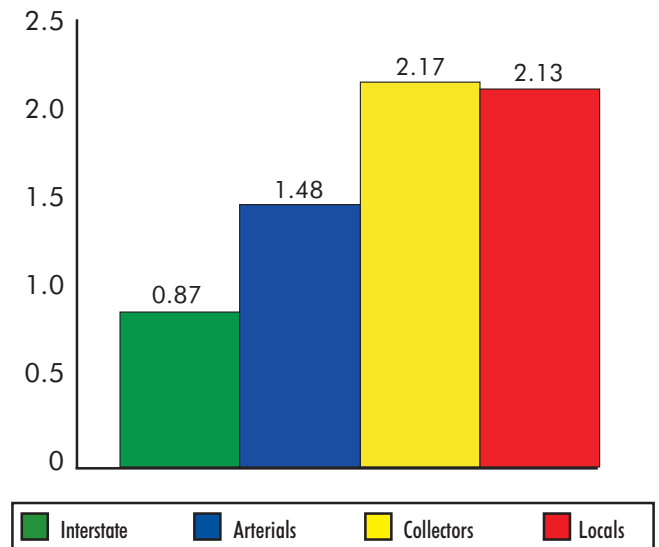


Figure 2. Overall Fatality Rates by Function Class (Fatalities per 100 M VMT, speeding-related and nonspeeding fatalities combined) (1999)

Source: Table VM-2 for VMT, and HM-20 for Public Road Miles, FHWA 1999 Highway Statistics. Fatality data come from NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System.