

ABOUT HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Functional classification means the federal system of classifying groups of highways according to the character of service they are intended to provide and classifications made by the VDOT Commissioner based on the operational characteristics of a highway.

Travel involves movement through a network of roads. To achieve safe and efficient traffic movement within the network, each highway is assigned a functional classification



based on the highway's intended purpose (function) for serving through traffic vs. providing access to property.

The functional classification system groups highways into three basic categories identified as (1) arterial, with two subclasses of "principal" and "minor", with the primary function to provide through movement of traffic; (2) collector, with the function of

supplying a combination of through movement and access to property; and (4) local (streets), with the primary function of providing access to property.

Principal arterials are major highways of regional and statewide significance intended to serve large amounts of traffic traveling relatively long distances at higher speeds. Direct property access requires careful management to preserve traffic mobility and avoid creating unsafe and congested traffic operations.

Minor arterials interconnect with and augment the principal arterial system. Minor arterials distribute traffic to smaller geographic areas providing service between and within communities. Development connections to the arterial need to be managed so as to not adversely affect their traffic movement function.

Collectors provide both access to land uses and traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. The collector system distributes traffic from the arterials through the area to the motorist's ultimate destination. Conversely, collectors also collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it into the arterial system.

Local streets comprise all facilities that are not collectors or arterials. Local streets function to provide direct access to abutting land and to other streets.

