

Asset Management Background

The National Functional Classification (NFC)

One of Michigan's primary federal data reporting requirements to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is to determine what roads are eligible to receive federal funds. This is determined by assigning a highway functional classification to every public road in Michigan. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) calls the federal highway functional classification system the National Functional Classification (NFC). The addition of "National" to functional classification is intended to distinguish it from the State of Michigan's classification system used for distributing Act 51 funds.

The NFC consists of the following classification names, in order from the highest mobility function (which emphasize mobility) down to the lowest (which emphasize property access):

- Interstate
- Other Freeway
- Other Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local

All the preceding NFCs, except for rural minor collector and local roads, qualify for federal aid through the Surface Transportation Program.

Many factors other than just mobility and property access affect the function of a route. These include speed limit, traffic volume, geography, design, average trip distance, statewide percentages, and routes with relative significance to other area roads.

At the highest end of mobility classification is the interstate system, which provides maximum speed, volume, and capacity, with no property access on the route. At the other end of classification is a neighborhood road, where traffic is made up of mostly the residents who live on that road. These local NFC routes provide maximum property access with lower traffic volumes and low speeds, and have little through-traffic (mobility). A road's NFC value is determined in a cooperative process between the state and local road agencies, public transit agencies, and sovereign tribal governments. The NFC is maintained in the Michigan Geographic Framework (MGF), a spatial data layer used in Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The NFC values in MGF are integrated with MDOT's databases and project planning business processes.