

Urban/Rural Definitions

Background:

The determination of some Controlling Criteria and other Elements of Design are based on the Urban or Rural nature of a roadway. Categorization of a project as either Urban or Rural therefore needs to be established before appropriate design standards can be selected. The Urban or Rural nature of a roadway cannot be established simply by looking at traffic volumes or speeds or by selecting from a table. When an Engineering Instruction requires the determination of the Urban or Rural nature of a roadway, the following Guidance should be applied.

Guidance:

This guidance provides a tool by which the Urban or Rural nature of a roadway can be defined. For each project, a roadway evaluation is necessary, and an Urban/Rural categorization made that can be supported by the project team. A roadway may not always fit neatly into one of these categories, and use of engineering judgment will be required.

Urban Roadways and Streets

Roadways that are Urban in nature will generally be characterized by low to moderate posted speeds, frequent entrances, and moderate to heavy residential or commercial development. Curbed sections with closed drainage will generally be prevalent, although open drainage sections may be interspersed. Intersections, sidewalks, and on-street parking are often characteristic of Urban roadways.

Low-Speed Urban Streets

Urban roadways with relatively low posted speeds and variable rates of speed resulting from more frequent conflicts are categorized as Low-Speed Urban Streets. These streets will generally be characterized by frequent entrances and heavy residential or commercial development. They generally include curb and sidewalk sections, often with building fronts adjacent to or near the back of sidewalk. Frequent intersections, cross walks, and on-street parking are usually present.

Rural Roadways

Roadways that are not considered Urban in nature will be considered Rural. Rural roadways will generally be characterized by moderate to high posted speeds, infrequent entrances and low residential or commercial development. Open drainage is generally prevalent.