Context Classifications

Context classification is a method of classifying the roadway based on the characteristics of the surrounding environment. The FDOT takes a Complete Streets approach to planning, designing, and operating roadways on the state highway system outside of its limited access facilities. To understand the design and operations that would create a complete street for the given roadway, FDOT refers to the context classification of the roadway and the various criteria based on that classification. The resulting roadway is one that provides for the various mobility needs of the users expected on that facility.

The Context Classification Guide provides information on why complete streets are important, guidance on how context classification is determined, and describes the relationship between context classification, the FDOT Design Manual (FDM), and other FDOT guidance.

FDOT's context classification system categorizes Florida roadways based on the general characteristics of land usage, developmental patterns, and roadway connectivity along the facility. Context Classification provides cues as to the types of uses and user groups that are expected on the roadway. Based on the common built environments existing in Florida, the FDOT context classification identifies eight classifications.

Context Classification Criteria

The context classification system is broken down into the following 8 classifications with the following descriptions:

C1 – Natural: Lands preserved in a natural or wilderness condition. Not intended for future development.

C2 - Rural: Sparsely settled lands. Could be developed in the future.

C2T – Rural Town: Town area immediately surrounded by rural and natural areas

C3R – Suburban Residential: Residential area uses within large blocks and sparse roadway system.

C3C – Suburban Commercial: Nonresidential use with large building footprints and large parking lots within large blocks or sparse roadway network

C4 – Urban General: Mix of the uses set within a small block with a well-connected roadway. Connects to residential neighborhoods.

C5 - Urban Center: Mix of uses set within small blocks that have a well-connected roadway network. Concentrated around a few blocks. Identified as a civic or economic center.

C6 – Urban Core: Area with the highest densities of building heights. And classified as a large, urbanized area. Buildings have a mixed use; they are built up to the roadway and are in a well-connected roadway network.

This classification helps determine the design criteria that a project will refer to in order to best meet the various mobility needs along the roadway. Roadways through more densely populated areas will attract higher non-motorized traffic and thus should work to incorporate the appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Projects

Understanding the needs of all users in the early phases of a project can help assure that the project scope of services defines all necessary improvements and

that the budget is adequate for design, right of way, and construction. The context classification should be determined at the beginning of each project phase and is included in the Typical Section package.