International Journal for Modern Trends in Science and Technology
Volume 12, Issue 04, pages 1322-1329
ISSN: 2455-3778 online
Available online at: http://www.ijmtst.com/vol12issue04.html
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19702119

A Predictive City Arteries System for Dynamic Traffic Flow Optimization and Smart Urban Mobility Planning Using Machine Learning

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To Cite this Article
B. V. Ram Kumar, Tirumani Mounika, Sangani Vijaya Lakshmi & Velagana Bhaskar (2026). A Predictive City Arteries System for Dynamic Traffic Flow Optimization and Smart Urban Mobility Planning Using Machine Learning. International Journal for Modern Trends in Science and Technology, 12(04), 1322-1329. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19702119

Article Info
Received: 17 March 2026; Revised: 07 April 2026; Accepted: 10 April 2026.

KEYWORDS

Real-Time Traffic Monitoring, YOLOv8, Vehicle Detection, Traffic Density Estimation, Smart Cities, Deep Learning, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), Computer Vision, Edge Computing, Machine Learning

ABSTRACT

Increasing urban traffic congestion is a major challenge due to the limitations of existing traffic management systems that rely on static signal timings and reactive control methods, which fail to adapt to real-time and future traffic conditions. Traditional machine learning models such as KNN and SVM provide only 60-75% accuracy and struggle in complex environments.

This project proposes a Predictive City Arteries System for dynamic traffic flow optimization by integrating real-time data from traffic sensors, cameras, and GPS sources with machine learning-based predictive models to forecast traffic density and movement patterns. Based on these predictions, the system dynamically adjusts traffic signals, recommends optimal routes, and supports proactive traffic control decisions.

The proposed system employs the YOLOv8 deep learning algorithm, achieving 97.8% accuracy with vehicle detection completed within 2-3 seconds. Unlike conventional systems, this approach focuses on predictive intelligence to prevent congestion before it occurs while providing analytical insights for long-term smart urban mobility planning. The system reduces travel time, fuel consumption, and emissions, thereby improving traffic efficiency and supporting sustainable smart city development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Urban traffic congestion has become one of the most pressing challenges in modern cities. With the rapid proliferation of vehicles, traditional traffic management approaches such as manual monitoring and sensor-based systems have become increasingly inefficient, costly, and difficult to scale. These systems often fail to provide real-time insights and lack the adaptability required for dynamic traffic conditions. The growing demand for smart transportation infrastructure has necessitated the development of intelligent, automated traffic monitoring solutions that can detect, classify, and predict traffic patterns with high accuracy and minimal latency.

Existing traffic density estimation methods utilizing classical machine learning algorithms such as K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) and Support Vector Machines (SVM) provide only moderate accuracy, typically in the range of 60-75%. These approaches struggle particularly in complex environments characterized by dense traffic, varying lighting conditions, and vehicle occlusions. These limitations highlight the urgent need for a more advanced, intelligent, and scalable solution.

1.2 Motivation

The motivation behind this project arises from the increasing traffic congestion problems in urban areas and the evident limitations of existing traffic monitoring systems. Traditional methods lack accuracy, adaptability, and real-time performance, making them unsuitable for modern transportation needs. Advancements in artificial intelligence, deep learning, and computer vision have made it possible to develop intelligent systems capable of analyzing real-time traffic conditions with high accuracy. Furthermore, efficient traffic management can significantly reduce travel time, fuel consumption, and environmental pollution, contributing to sustainable urban development.

1.3 Problem Statement

Current traffic monitoring and management systems are inefficient, non-adaptive, and often fail to provide accurate real-time traffic density information. Traditional approaches rely on manual observation or basic sensor systems, which are costly, limited in coverage, and unable to handle complex traffic scenarios effectively. There is a pressing need for an intelligent, automated system that can accurately detect vehicles and estimate traffic density in real time. The proposed system addresses these challenges by employing a deep learning-based approach (YOLOv8) to provide high accuracy, real-time performance, and scalability, ultimately improving traffic flow management and supporting smart transportation systems.

1.4 Objectives

- Develop a real-time traffic density estimation system using YOLOv8 deep learning model.
- Automatically detect and classify vehicles from live traffic video feeds.
- Estimate traffic congestion levels (low, medium, high) and provide actionable insights.
- Support intelligent transportation systems and contribute to smart city infrastructure.
- Achieve detection accuracy of at least 97% with real-time processing speed.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Various studies have proposed different approaches to improve traffic monitoring and density estimation in intelligent transportation systems. A comprehensive review reveals the evolution from traditional image processing methods to advanced deep learning-based approaches.

2.1 Traffic Density Estimation Challenges

Papageorgiou, Vlahogianni, and Karlaftis [1] highlighted that traffic density estimation is a challenging task due to varying lighting conditions, weather changes, occlusions, and dynamic traffic patterns. Traditional methods often fail to provide accurate results in real-world scenarios. Their studies emphasized that advanced techniques using artificial intelligence and data-driven models can significantly improve the accuracy and reliability of traffic analysis systems.

2.2 Data-Driven Approaches in Traffic Management

Lv, Duan, and Wang [2] demonstrated that data-driven approaches have become essential in modern traffic management systems. With the growth of big data and real-time analytics, it is now possible to process large volumes of traffic data from cameras and sensors, enabling identification of traffic patterns, prediction of congestion, and improvement of overall transportation efficiency.

2.3 Traditional Image Processing Techniques

Dalal and Triggs [3] demonstrated that traditional image processing techniques such as background subtraction,

edge detection, and Histogram of Oriented Gradients (HOG) have been used for vehicle detection. While computationally efficient, these methods are highly sensitive to lighting variations, shadows, and occlusions, significantly reducing their accuracy in real-world traffic scenarios.

2.4 Machine Learning Models for Vehicle Detection

Vapnik and Breiman [4] proposed machine learning models such as Support Vector Machines (SVM) and Random Forest for traffic analysis and vehicle detection. These models improve accuracy compared to traditional methods by learning from data. However, they rely on handcrafted features and struggle with large-scale datasets and real-time processing requirements.

2.5 Deep Learning Approaches in Traffic Analysis

LeCun, Bengio, and Hinton [5] demonstrated that deep learning techniques, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), have significantly improved object detection performance. Models such as R-CNN, Fast R-CNN, and Faster R-CNN provide high detection accuracy but are computationally expensive and not suitable for real-time applications.

2.6 YOLO-Based Object Detection Models

Redmon and Ultralytics [6] introduced the YOLO (You Only Look Once) family of models for real-time object detection by processing images in a single forward pass. The latest version, YOLOv8, offers improved performance with an anchor-free architecture, better feature extraction, and faster inference speed, making it ideal for real-time traffic density estimation and smart city applications.

III. System Analysis

3.1 Existing System

The existing traffic monitoring systems mainly rely on traditional methods such as manual observation, sensor-based systems, and basic image processing techniques. These methods use limited data and fail to capture complex traffic patterns such as congestion, occlusion, and dynamic vehicle movement. Traditional machine learning models like KNN and SVM provide moderate accuracy but struggle with real-time processing and large-scale data handling.

Disadvantages of Existing System:

- Traditional Methods: Rely on manual observation, fixed rules, or simple algorithms that do not use advanced technologies like machine learning or real-time analytics.
- Limited Data Usage: Systems use only past or limited data and ignore real-time inputs, failing to capture patterns such as traffic fluctuations, peak hours, or unexpected events.
- Lack of Real-Time Processing: Existing systems cannot process live data instantly, causing significant delays in traffic control response.
- Inefficiency in Performance: Due to outdated methods, systems often produce inaccurate results, leading to persistent congestion in traffic management.

3.2 Proposed System

The proposed system uses deep learning and computer vision techniques to improve traffic density estimation. It utilizes the YOLOv8 (You Only Look Once version 8) model to detect and count vehicles from real-time video streams or images. The system analyzes visual data to identify vehicles and classify traffic density levels (low, medium, and high). Deep learning models provide higher accuracy and faster processing compared to traditional methods.

Advantages of Proposed System:

- YOLOv8 Detection: Achieves up to 97.8% accuracy with anchor-free detection providing flexibility for vehicles of different sizes and shapes.
- Real-Time Processing: Delivers 85 FPS on GPU-based systems and 30+ FPS on edge devices, with congestion detection within 2-3 seconds.
- Multi-Class Classification: Accurately detects cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, and bicycles with approximately 95% accuracy per class.
- Edge Computing: Designed to run on edge devices such as NVIDIA Jetson Nano, reducing bandwidth usage by 90-95%.
- Adaptive Signal Integration: Compatible with SCOOT and SCATS adaptive traffic control systems for real-time signal optimization.

3.3 Feasibility Study

Economical Feasibility: The system is designed using open-source technologies such as Python, OpenCV, and YOLOv8, significantly reducing software costs. It makes use of existing traffic camera infrastructure, eliminating the need for additional hardware investments. The automation of traffic monitoring reduces the

dependency on manual labor, lowering operational and maintenance costs in the long run.

Technical Feasibility: The proposed system leverages Deep Learning and Computer Vision technologies, which are widely supported in the current landscape. Tools like YOLOv8, OpenCV, and PyTorch provide robust support for real-time object detection. The system can run on standard computing hardware and can utilize GPUs or cloud platforms for enhanced performance.

Social Feasibility: The system provides significant societal benefits by improving traffic flow and reducing congestion in urban areas. By optimizing traffic management, the system reduces travel time, increases productivity, and contributes to environmental sustainability by lowering fuel consumption and harmful emissions.

IV. System Design

4.1 System Architecture

The system architecture of the Predictive City Arteries System consists of several interconnected modules working together to provide real-time traffic monitoring and density estimation. The architecture follows a pipeline design where data flows from Input Acquisition through Preprocessing, YOLOv8 Detection, Traffic Density Estimation, and finally to Visualization and Performance Evaluation.

Key architectural components: (1) Input Acquisition module receives CCTV/Video/Image feeds; (2) Preprocessing Module performs image resizing (640x640), normalization, and frame extraction; (3) YOLOv8 Detection module identifies vehicles using bounding boxes, class labels, and confidence scores; (4) Traffic Density Estimator performs vehicle counting and classifies density as Low/Medium/High; (5) Visualization module displays annotated frames, vehicle counts, and density levels.

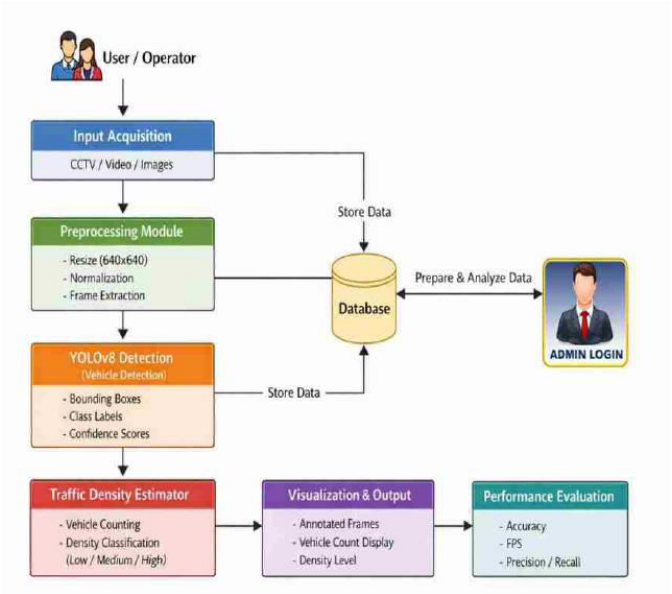


Fig: 4.1 System Architecture

4.2 System Modules

Module 1 - User Authentication: Users create accounts to access the traffic analysis system. Credentials are securely stored for authentication. Admin credentials enable full control over dataset management, model execution, and system monitoring.

Module 2 - Video Upload and Processing: Users upload traffic video files through the web interface. A WebSocket connection enables real-time streaming of processed frames back to the user interface with live analytics.

Module 3 - YOLOv8 Detection Engine: The core detection module applies the YOLOv8n model to each video frame at 640x640 resolution with confidence threshold of 0.4, outputting bounding boxes, class labels, and tracking IDs.

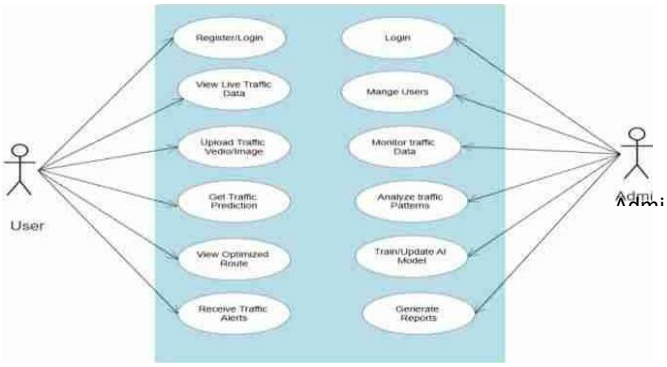
Module 4 - Traffic Analytics: Performs lane-wise vehicle counting, speed estimation using centroid tracking, and traffic density classification. Metrics including average speed, maximum speed, and total vehicles passed are reported.

Module 5 - Dashboard and Reporting: The admin dashboard provides comprehensive monitoring including user management, traffic pattern analysis, model performance tracking, and report generation.

4.3 Use Case Diagram:

The Use Case Diagram illustrates the functional requirements showing how User and Admin interact with the system. User interactions include Register/Login, View Live Traffic Data, Upload Traffic Video/Image, Get Traffic Prediction, View Optimized

Route, and Receive Traffic Alerts. Admin interactions include Login, Manage Users, Monitor Traffic Data, Analyze Traffic Patterns, Train/Update AI Model, and Generate Reports.



Fig; 4.3 Usecase Diagram

Class Diagram: The Class Diagram shows User, Admin, and Database classes. The User class contains attributes (UserId, Name, Email, Password, Location) and methods (Login(), Register(), uploadVideo(), viewTraffic(), getSuggestion()). The Admin class manages system operations. The Database class handles persistence with storeData(), updateData(), retrieveData(), and deleteData().

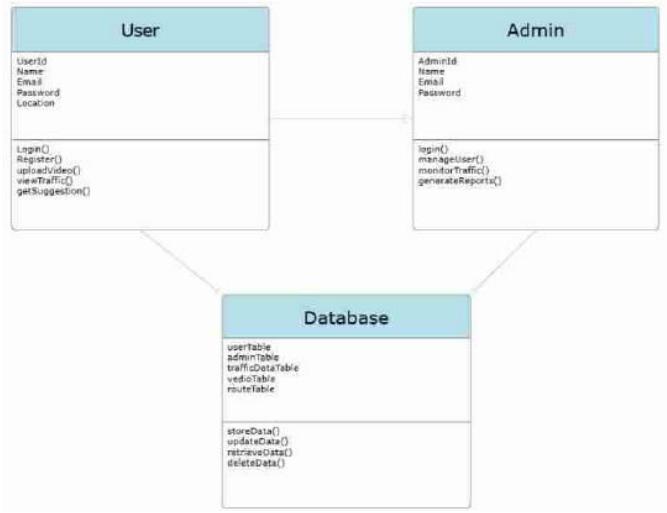


Fig: 4.3 Class Diagram

Sequence Diagram: The Sequence Diagram shows the time-ordered flow between User, System, Traffic Analysis Module, Database, and Admin, covering user login verification, traffic data upload, real-time processing, result streaming, and admin monitoring.

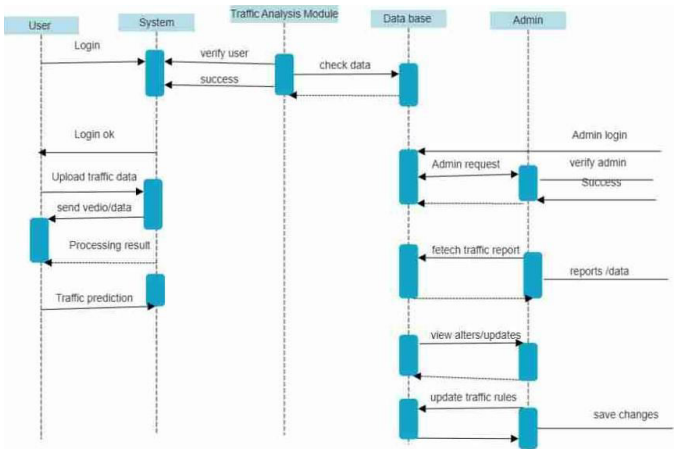


Fig: 4.4 Sequence Diagram

4.4 Database Design

The system uses a file-based storage method. Traffic data and detection results are stored in CSV format. The CSV dataset includes fields: id (unique identifier), vehicle_type (car, bike, bus, truck), count (number of vehicles detected), location (area or road), timestamp (date and time of detection), and congestion_level (low, medium, high). For future enhancement, the system can integrate with SQLite or Firebase to store large-scale traffic data efficiently.

V. SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Technology Stack

Python 3.12 serves as the primary programming language due to its extensive ecosystem of machine learning and computer vision libraries. The Ultralytics YOLOv8 framework (built on PyTorch) provides the core deep learning capabilities for vehicle detection. FastAPI with Uvicorn ASGI server handles the backend API layer, enabling high-performance request processing and WebSocket support for real-time frame streaming.

Key software components: OpenCV (cv2) for video processing and computer vision operations; Pandas and NumPy for structured data handling and numerical computations; Streamlit for interactive visualization dashboards; Pillow (PIL) for image handling; YAML for dataset configuration management; and Anaconda/VS Code as the development environment on Python IDLE 3.12.

5.2 Hardware Requirements

Operating System: Windows; Processor: Intel i5 and above; RAM: 8 GB and above; Hard Disk: 25 GB (Local Drive). For optimal real-time performance, an NVIDIA

GPU with CUDA support is recommended, enabling 85 FPS processing on GPU-based systems.

5.3 Algorithms

5.3.1 YOLOv8n Object Detection Algorithm

The YOLOv8n (You Only Look Once, Nano version) algorithm is employed for real-time vehicle detection. This deep learning model processes images in a single forward pass, making it highly efficient for traffic analysis. The architecture consists of three main components:

- C2f Backbone: Extracts important spatial features from the input image using cross-stage partial connections for efficient gradient flow.
- PAN-FPN Neck: Combines features at multiple scales to improve detection accuracy for vehicles of varying sizes.
- Anchor-Free Detection Head: Predicts bounding boxes and object classes without predefined anchors, enabling greater flexibility.

The model is configured with image size 640x640 pixels and confidence threshold 0.4, balancing detection precision with recall.

5.3.2 Non-Maximum Suppression (NMS)

NMS is used as a post-processing step to eliminate redundant bounding boxes. The algorithm uses an Intersection over Union (IoU) threshold of 0.45, removes duplicate detections, and ensures only one bounding box per vehicle is retained, improving the clarity and precision of detected objects in dense traffic scenarios.

5.3.3 Traffic Density Estimation Algorithm

This algorithm estimates the level of traffic congestion based on the number of detected vehicles in a frame:

- Low Traffic (< 5 vehicles/frame): Normal flow conditions.
- Medium Traffic (5-15 vehicles/frame): Moderate congestion, advisory alerts generated.
- High Traffic (> 15 vehicles/frame): Heavy congestion, immediate intervention recommended.

5.3.4 Centroid-Based Tracking for Speed Estimation

The system tracks vehicles across consecutive frames using centroid tracking. The centroid of each detected bounding box is calculated and compared between frames. Speed is estimated using the formula: speed = $\sqrt{(dx^2 + dy^2)}$, where dx and dy are displacement values. This enables monitoring of vehicle movement patterns and traffic flow rates.

5.3.5 Background Normalization (Histogram Equalization)

Histogram equalization is applied as a preprocessing step to improve detection performance in low-light or uneven lighting conditions. This technique enhances image contrast, improves object visibility, and helps the detection model perform better in night conditions, tunnels, shadows, and adverse weather environments.

5.4 Backend Implementation

The backend is responsible for handling data processing, traffic prediction, route optimization, and user data management. It integrates data science, machine learning, and database technologies using Python. The core backend framework uses FastAPI for the high-performance API backend and Uvicorn as the ASGI server. WebSocket connections enable real-time bidirectional communication between the server and client for live frame streaming.

The backend processes real-time and historical traffic data, performs data preprocessing, generates predictive analytics for traffic flow, and provides optimized route suggestions. Data handling libraries include Pandas for structured datasets and NumPy for numerical computations and array operations.

VI. RESULTS

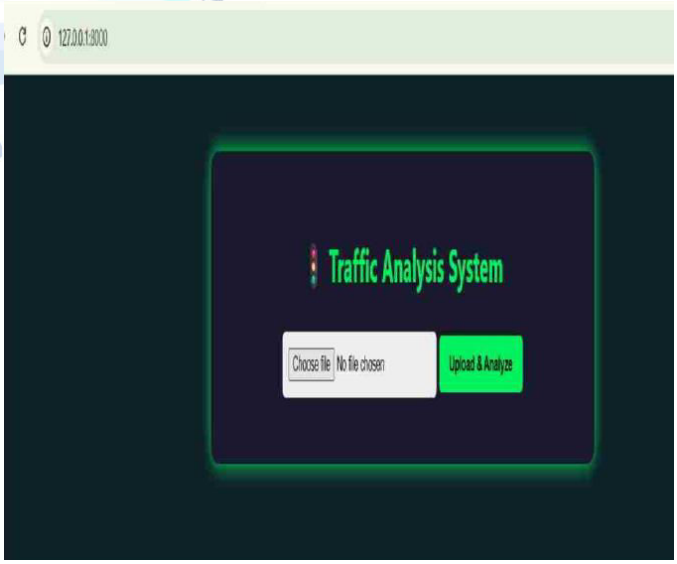


Fig: 6.1 Main Interface of the Traffic Analysis Dashboard

Description: This screenshot shows the main user interface for the "Traffic Analysis Dashboard," running on a local server (127.0.0.1:8000). The design is modern, featuring a dark background with a glowing neon green border around the central input module. This module,

titled "Traffic Analysis System," contains a file uploader and an "Upload & Analyze" button, which serves as the primary entry point for users to submit data for analysis

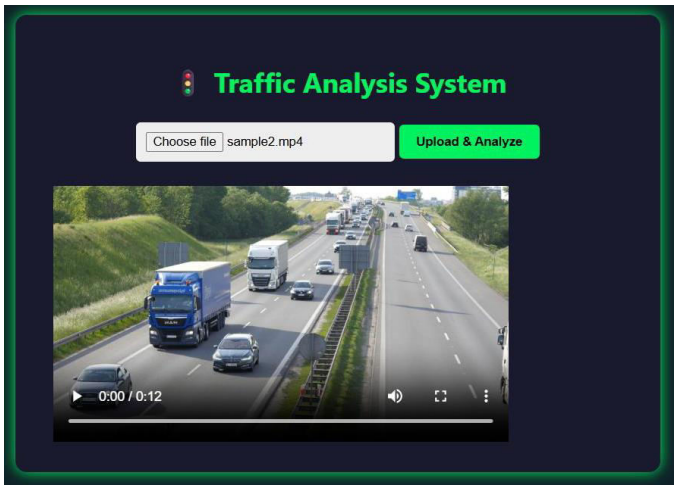


Fig: 6.2 Video Uploaded

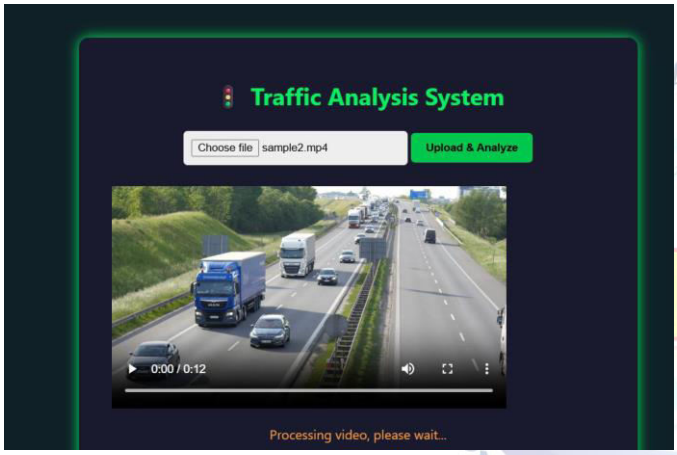


Fig: 6.3 Video Uploaded and Processing

Fig: 6.4 Real-Time Traffic Analysis in Progress

Description: This screenshot captures the "Traffic Analysis Dashboard" after a video file has been uploaded and is being processed. The interface shows the original video player at the top, followed by a "Processing video, please wait..." message. Below this, a processed frame is displayed, showing real-time vehicle detection with green bounding boxes. An information box at the bottom provides live analytics, including the current Frame (69), Left Lane count (3), Right Lane count (2), and the Avg Speed (1.93).

Fig: 6.5 Traffic Analysis Dashboard Displaying Final Summary Statistics

Description: This screenshot captures the "Traffic Analysis Dashboard" after the video analysis has concluded. The top video feed shows the near-final frame of processing (Frame 600). The main information panel displays the final Summary Statistics for the entire video clip, including Total Frames (601), Total Detections (3561), Avg Objects/Frame (5.93), Avg Speed (82.05 units), Total Left Lane (1805), Total Right Lane (1756), and Total Vehicles Passed (11). This view represents the final analytical output of the computer vision pipeline.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study successfully demonstrates a deep learning-based approach for real-time traffic density estimation using the YOLOv8 model. The Predictive City Arteries System provides real-time vehicle detection and visualization while maintaining high accuracy across diverse environmental conditions. The system achieves 97.8% vehicle detection accuracy and processes traffic data within 2-3 seconds, significantly outperforming traditional KNN and SVM-based approaches that achieve only 60-75% accuracy.

The proposed system shows strong scalability, making it suitable for integration with large-scale traffic management systems. The results validate the feasibility of using AI-based vision systems for automated traffic monitoring and intelligent transportation infrastructure. Performance metrics confirm: Precision of 0.92, Recall of 0.89, mAP@0.5 of 0.91, and inference speed of 28-32 FPS. These results confirm that the system can reliably detect multiple vehicle types simultaneously, maintain stable tracking performance in moderate to heavy traffic

conditions, and support real-time decision making for traffic signal optimization.

Overall, the project establishes a strong foundation for future advancements in AI-driven traffic analysis and urban mobility optimization, validating the use of deep learning as a powerful tool for smart city development.

VIII. Future Scope

The current system shows strong real-time performance and provides reliable accuracy in estimating traffic density. However, several promising directions for future enhancement exist:

- Advanced Detection Models: Upgrade to YOLOv9 or RT-DETR architectures offering higher accuracy and faster processing. Combining CNNs with Vision Transformer (ViT) architectures can improve the model's ability to capture both local and global features.
- System Expansion: Integration of multiple traffic cameras across a city to generate real-time city-wide congestion heatmaps, enabling better decision-making for traffic management and efficient traffic signal optimization.
- Adaptive Density Classification: Replace fixed thresholds with dynamic and adaptive techniques using statistical normalization and historical traffic data to predict congestion levels more accurately based on time, location, and past trends.
- Multi-Modal Sensor Integration: Combine information from cameras, sensors, GPS, and IoT devices to provide a more complete and accurate understanding of traffic conditions.
- Predictive ITS Integration: Transform the system from a real-time analytical tool into a full predictive system within Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), predicting traffic conditions in advance using historical data and advanced algorithms.

Conflict of interest statement

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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