Smart Traffic Management

Team Members

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1. Proposed Application Area

Default project 1

2. The selected application, algorithm, model, and/or dataset

Problem Statement

Managing real-time traffic flow, relieving congestion, and maintaining road safety are becoming more and more difficult in contemporary urban environments. Conventional traffic monitoring systems are not flexible enough to adjust to changing situations such different types of vehicles, occlusion, and lighting. Our project's goal is to create a deep learning-based intelligent traffic management system that can identify and categorize various vehicle kinds in practical situations, offering dependable and effective assistance with traffic analysis.

Dataset: COCO Traffic-Related Subset

Instead of using a predefined traffic dataset, we curated a subset of the COCO 2017 dataset by extracting only the classes related to traffic and urban mobility. These include:

- `person`, `bicycle`, `car`, `motorcycle`, `bus`, `truck`, `traffic light`, and `stop sign`. This subset includes both training and validation splits and retains the original COCO annotations for bounding boxes and class labels. The dataset offers high-quality annotations, wide environmental variety (weather, camera angles), and significant object diversity, making it suitable for evaluating model robustness in real-world smart city settings.

Selected Algorithms & Models

To explore performance and trade-offs in object detection tasks, we implemented and compared three different models:

1. YOLOv5s

- A single-stage real-time object detector known for its speed and accuracy balance.
- Used as the primary benchmark due to strong mAP scores and inference efficiency.
- Implemented via the official Ultralytics YOLOv5 PyTorch repo.
- Trained for 5 epochs on the COCO traffic subset.

- 2. Faster R-CNN (Region-Based CNN)
- A two-stage detector known for its high accuracy in complex scenarios.
- Implemented using `torchvision.models.detection.fasterrcnn_resnet50_fpn`.
- Slightly slower but provides better localization in cluttered scenes.
- Trained for 5 epochs.

3. SSD300 (Single Shot Detector)

- A lightweight model optimized for speed.
- Implemented via `torchvision.models.detection.ssd300_vgg16`.
- Trained for 30 epochs.
- Despite tuning, SSD produced underwhelming results (e.g., detecting everything as "car") and is included as a negative baseline in our evaluation.

Each model was trained and evaluated using the same COCO traffic subset to ensure a fair comparison. Inference was performed on real video clips, and results were saved with overlaid bounding boxes and class predictions for visual inspection and metric-based evaluation.

3. system architecture

Overview of YOLOv5

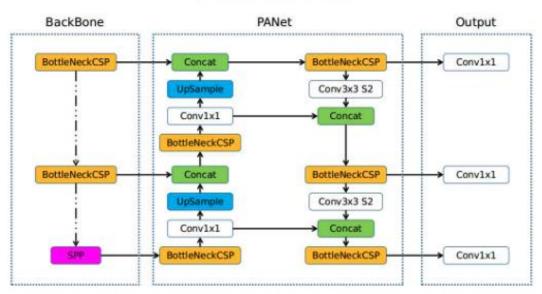


Diagram 1. Simplified YOLOv5 model architecture

YOLOv5 System Architecture Summary

- 1. Backbone CSPDarknet-53
 Uses Cross Stage Partial (CSP) modules (C3 blocks) to improve learning efficiency by splitting and merging feature maps.
 - o Combines convolution and residual connections for rich multi-scale features.

o Produces enhanced feature representations with lower redundancy.

2. Neck – SPPF + PANet

- SPPF (Spatial Pyramid Pooling Fast): Pools features at multiple receptive fields to enrich context with minimal computational cost.
- PANet (Path Aggregation Network): Top-down and bottom-up feature fusion using upsampling and concatenation, improving object localization especially for small and mid-size objects.

3. Detection Head

- o Applies detection at three scales (P3, P4, P5) using Conv + Detect layers.
- o Outputs class scores and bounding box offsets using predefined anchor boxes.
- Anchors are generated via k-means clustering to reflect object size distribution in the dataset.

4. Anchors & Post-processing

- Each anchor allows prediction of bounding box offsets and classes at different scales and aspect ratios.
- Non-Maximum Suppression (NMS) is used to remove redundant predictions by keeping the box with the highest confidence when IoU > threshold (e.g., 0.45).

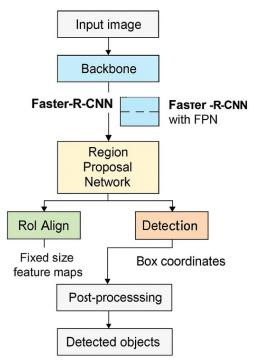


Diagram2. Faster R-CNN Architecture

Faster R-CNN Architecture

- 1. Backbone ResNet-50 with FPN (Feature Pyramid Network)
 - o The base CNN extracts deep visual features from input images at multiple scales.

- o FPN creates a top-down pathway with lateral connections to combine low-level spatial details with high-level semantic information.
- o Outputs multi-scale feature maps for region proposal.

2. Region Proposal Network (RPN)

- A lightweight network applied on each feature map level to generate candidate object regions (RoIs).
- o Predicts objectness scores and bounding boxes relative to anchors.
- o Proposes top-N regions (e.g., 200–1000) for further classification and regression.

3. RoI Align + Detection Head

- o Crops each proposed region using RoI Align, ensuring accurate spatial alignment.
- Each region is passed through fully connected layers for final classification and bounding box regression.
- o Supports class-specific box refinement (per-class regressor heads).

4. Post-processing

- Applies per-class Non-Maximum Suppression (NMS) to remove overlapping detections.
- Outputs the final set of object bounding boxes with class labels and confidence scores.

This two-stage approach enables accurate object detection in cluttered and overlapping scenes, making Faster R-CNN ideal for high-precision tasks at the cost of inference speed.

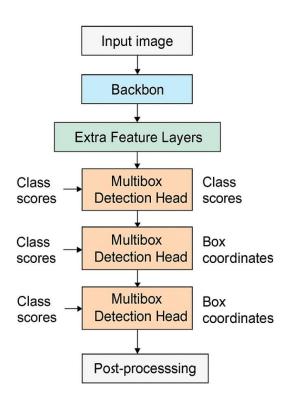


Diagram3. SSD300 System Architecture

SSD300 System Architecture

- 1. Backbone VGG16
 - o Uses the standard VGG16 architecture to extract feature maps from input images.
 - Early layers (conv1 to conv5) are borrowed from VGG16, pretrained on ImageNet.

2. Extra Feature Layers

- Adds a series of convolutional layers beyond the base network (e.g., conv6–conv11).
- These layers progressively decrease in spatial resolution (down to 1x1), enabling detection at multiple scales.
- o Each layer outputs a fixed number of default boxes (anchors).

3. Multibox Detection Heads

- o Each selected feature map predicts:
 - Class scores for each default box
 - Bounding box offsets (x, y, width, height)
- o No region proposal step predictions are made in one pass over the image.

4. Post-processing

- Uses Hard Negative Mining to balance positive/negative examples during training.
- During inference, applies NMS to suppress duplicate detections.
- o Lightweight and fast but less accurate for small or occluded objects.

Although SSD is efficient and suitable for real-time tasks, it struggles in low-data regimes and with complex scenes, which affected its performance in our project.

4. Code Workflow & Techniques

This section outlines the complete inference pipeline implemented across all three models (YOLOv5, Faster R-CNN, SSD) on real-world urban video data. The pipeline includes dataset preparation, frame preprocessing, model loading, inference, post-processing, and result rendering. Each model follows a similar high-level flow while leveraging model-specific APIs and structures.

Key Techniques

- COCO subset extraction with traffic-related classes: person, car, bus, truck, traffic light, etc.
- Custom YAML for YOLOv5 and COCO JSON format for PyTorch models.
- Use of OpenCV for frame extraction, transformation, and visualization.

- Use of DetectMultiBackend (YOLOv5) and native PyTorch detection APIs (fasterrcnn_resnet50_fpn, ssd300_vgg16).
- Confidence thresholding and Non-Maximum Suppression for result filtering.
- Bounding box rendering and annotated video export.

1) Dataset Preparation (prepare_coco_subset.py)

We filtered the COCO 2017 dataset using a custom script that extracts only traffic-relevant categories and saves the results into a dedicated coco_subset/ folder with both image and annotation files.

- Classes: person, bicycle, car, motorcycle, bus, truck, traffic light, stop sign.
- Format: JSON annotation files for Faster R-CNN and SSD; converted YOLO .txt format for YOLOv5.

2) Preprocessing & Image Transformation

Each video frame is processed as follows:

- YOLOv5: Resized to 640×640 with padding (value 114) to maintain aspect ratio and match model stride.
- Faster R-CNN: Converted to RGB and transformed into PyTorch tensors using torchvision.transforms.ToTensor.
- SSD: Resized to 300×300 for model compatibility; normalized as float32 tensors.

All images are processed on-the-fly from video streams using cv2.VideoCapture.

3) Model Loading

- YOLOv5 uses DetectMultiBackend for loading best.pt and inferring on images or videos.
- Faster R-CNN and SSD use torchvision models (fasterrcnn_resnet50_fpn, ssd300_vgg16), modified to fit 8 output classes (7 traffic + 1 background).
- All models are moved to GPU (cuda) when available.

4) Inference & Post-processing

YOLOv5: Runs inference via model(img_tensor) → predictions, followed by Ultralytics' built-in NMS pipeline.

- Faster R-CNN & SSD: Output dictionaries with boxes, scores, labels fields.
- Custom thresholds (e.g., 0.25) are applied to remove low-confidence detections.
- PyTorch's torchvision.ops.nms() is used for post-processing to remove overlapping predictions.

5) Bounding Box Rendering & Video Output

All models use OpenCV to render detection results frame-by-frame:

- Bounding boxes are drawn using cv2.rectangle, and class labels with confidence scores are added using cv2.putText.
- For YOLOv5, Ultralytics' Annotator class is optionally used.
- Final annotated frames are written to output videos using cv2. VideoWriter.

Each model's video output is saved to its own folder:

- runs/detect/smartcity_yolo5_test/ (YOLOv5)
- fasterOutput/annotated_video.mp4 (Faster R-CNN)
- ssdOutput/annotated_video.mp4 (SSD)

6) SSD as Negative Case

Despite extended training (30 epochs), the SSD model misclassified most objects as "car" and showed weak confidence scores. This underperformance highlighted the importance of model choice and robustness under data limitations. We retained SSD as a contrast case for result comparison and discussion.

5. Task distribution among group members

Jinwoo Bae

Identified the fundamental issue for intelligent traffic control and explained the real-world application setting. chosen and examined the UA-DETRAC dataset, paying particular attention to its environmental conditions, labeled classifications, and structure. assessed the dataset's suitability for object detection model training and testing by looking at important features such vehicle types, occlusion levels, truncation, lighting conditions, and object scales. summarized the results of the dataset interpretation and provided assistance for the evaluation discussion in the project report.

Honghao Ma

End-to-End Project Implementation & Engineering
Led the entire pipeline development and experimental workflow for the Smart City
AI Object Detection project. This includes:

- ◆ Dataset Engineering: Designed and implemented a custom subset extraction process from the COCO dataset, selecting only traffic-relevant categories. Converted annotations into both COCO-style JSON and YOLO-format `.txt` files to support multiple model architectures.
- ◆ Model Implementation: Trained and evaluated three different object detection models—YOLOv5, Faster R-CNN, and SSD300—across a unified COCO-based dataset. Adapted and fine-tuned model heads to fit a custom 8-class setting, and performed hyperparameter tuning within computational constraints.
- ◆ Inference & Visualization Pipeline: Developed video inference pipelines for all models, including frame preprocessing, detection, post-processing (NMS), and OpenCV-based visual overlay. Saved output videos with bounding boxes for visual comparison and statistical analysis.
- ◆ Evaluation & Comparison: Collected performance results across models, analyzed class-wise detection behavior, and compared outcomes in terms of speed, accuracy, and robustness. Positioned SSD as a negative baseline for contrastive analysis.
- ◆ Project Infrastructure: Built and maintained the entire GitHub repository, organizing code, notebooks, and configuration files. Authored the complete project report and README, and designed the final presentation content to highlight key takeaways from the experimental comparisons.

Final version: https://github.com/MarlonMa17/258Project

Itzel Xu

Literature & Model Research: Conducted an in-depth review of key object detection papers. Researched model architecture details and compared various YOLO versions and their practical implications in constrained edge deployment scenarios.

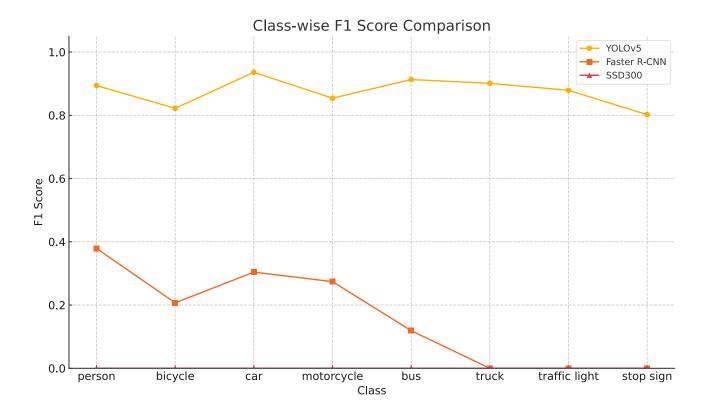
Dataset Evaluation: Validated the UA-DETRAC dataset, ensuring proper label mapping and quality checks for robust traffic detection.

Deployment & Debugging: Resolved configuration issues in both training and inference pipelines (e.g., module imports, device configuration, input tensor shape conversion, normalization, and augmentation) within the Kaggle environment.

Collaborated with team members contributing to clear project documentation and presentation material.

6. Key references;

- [1]L. Wen *et al.*, "UA-DETRAC: A new benchmark and protocol for multi-object detection and tracking," *Computer Vision and Image Understanding*, vol. 193, p. 102907, Apr. 2020, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cviu.2020.102907.
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- [4]Redmon, J., Divvala, S., Girshick, R., & Farhadi, A. (2016). You only look once: Unified, real-time object detection. In Proceedings of the IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (pp. 779–788). https://doi.org/10.1109/CVPR.2016.91
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- [7] Girshick, Ross. "Py-Faster-Rcnn Has Been Deprecated. Please See Detectron, Which Includes an Implementation of Mask R-CNN." *GitHub*, 2 May 2023, github.com/rbgirshick/py-faster-rcnn.
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- [9] Vinodababu, Sagar. "Contents." *GitHub*, 4 May 2023, github.com/sgrvinod/a-PyTorch-Tutorial-to-Object-Detection.
- [10] Hui, Jonathan. "SSD Object Detection: Single Shot MultiBox Detector for Real-Time Processing." *Medium*, 28 Dec. 2018, jonathan-hui.medium.com/ssd-object-detection-single-shot-multibox-detector-for-real-time-processing-9bd8deac0e06.
- 7. Evaluation and comparison results, including graphs (data graph must be in vector format)



Figma1. Class-wise F1 Score Comparison Across Three Models (YOLOv5, Faster R-CNN, SSD300)

The figure above compares the class-wise F1 scores of three different object detection models—YOLOv5, Faster R-CNN, and SSD300—on the COCO traffic subset validation set. F1 score is a balanced measure combining both precision and recall, and is particularly useful for evaluating detection performance in imbalanced or noisy datasets.

YOLOv5 Performance

YOLOv5 clearly outperforms the other two models across all eight traffic-related categories. It achieves F1 scores above 0.80 for every class, with the highest score of 0.936 for the "car" class, reflecting both high precision and recall. This model consistently detects person, bus, truck, and even smaller objects like traffic light and stop sign with strong confidence and minimal false positives. Its PANet-based multi-scale design and k-means-derived anchors contribute to effective generalization across varying object sizes and aspect ratios. YOLOv5's performance indicates excellent suitability for real-time, real-world smart city deployment.

Faster R-CNN Performance

Faster R-CNN shows moderate performance, with "person" (F1 = 0.379) and "car" (F1 = 0.304) being its strongest classes. This is attributed to its Region Proposal Network (RPN), which tends to favor larger or more visible objects. However, the model suffers from significantly lower

precision, as it frequently produces redundant or overlapping predictions. It completely fails to detect rare or smaller classes like truck, traffic light, and stop sign, likely due to limited representation in the dataset and lack of scale-specific tuning. This suggests that while Faster R-CNN is strong in theory, its default configuration struggles in small-scale or imbalanced training scenarios.

SSD300 Performance

The SSD model performs the worst among all three. Despite being trained for 30 epochs, it fails to detect any class with non-zero F1 scores. This aligns with previous qualitative observations, where SSD often misclassified every object as "car" or returned no predictions. SSD's shallow feature hierarchy and rigid anchor configurations make it ill-suited for small datasets or those with varying object densities. It lacks the multi-scale fusion of YOLOv5 or the RPN adaptability of Faster R-CNN. In this experiment, SSD served as a useful negative baseline, highlighting the importance of architecture choice and data representativeness.

Model	Avg.F1	Strengths	Weaknesses	Verdict
YOLOv5	~0.88	Fast, highly accurate, robust	Needs GPU, sensitive to anchors	Best overall
Faster R-CNN	~0.25	High recall for large objects	Overlapping predictions, low precision	Medium performer
SSD300	~0.00	Lightweight	Poor accuracy and generalization	Unsuitable baseline

Table. Class-wise F1 Score Comparison Across Three Models (YOLOv5, Faster R-CNN, SSD300)



Figma2. YOLOv5 Detection Examples Across Diverse Urban and Non-Urban Scenes

This figure demonstrates YOLOv5's robustness and adaptability across a wide range of environmental contexts, including outdoor mountain slopes, airport terminals, and city intersections.

Key observations include:

- Consistent person detection: In all four quadrants, YOLOv5 detects individuals at varying scales and distances, even when partially occluded or positioned in crowds.
- Multi-class recognition: In addition to person, the model identifies car and truck in urban and semi-urban settings with moderate to high confidence scores.
- Complex environments: Despite challenging lighting (e.g., overexposed snow, overcast skies) and perspectives (e.g., panoramic views, dense crowd), the model maintains stable bounding box localization.
- Low-confidence thresholds: The presence of bounding boxes with confidence scores as low as 0.3 suggests that the model may produce some false positives. However, the detections remain spatially relevant and interpretable, reflecting YOLOv5's aggressive recall optimization.

This visual result complements the F1 score analysis: YOLOv5 not only achieves high metrics on paper but also produces stable and visually consistent detections in complex, real-world environments.



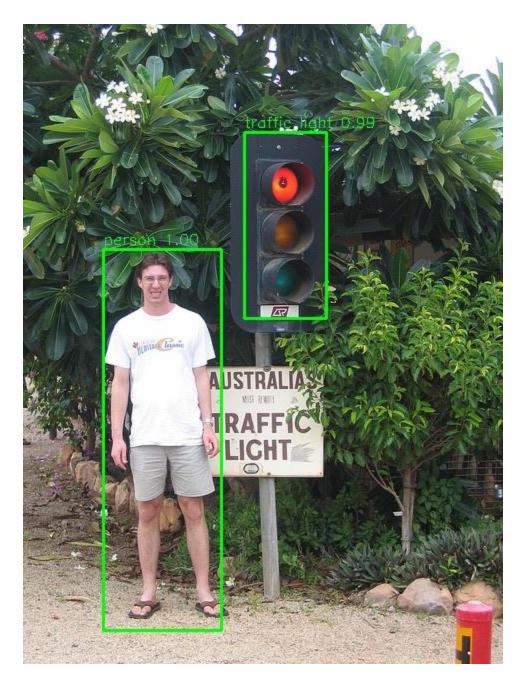
Figma3. YOLOv5 Detection Example on a Busy Urban Intersection

This image illustrates the YOLOv5 model's detection performance on a real-world street scene. The model successfully detects multiple instances of person, car, and traffic light with high confidence scores (ranging from 0.79 to 0.88). Even small and partially occluded objects—such as distant vehicles and side traffic lights—are accurately identified.

Notably, the bounding boxes are tightly fitted to the object contours, and the class predictions are consistent with the scene semantics. For example:

- Two pedestrians crossing the street are correctly labeled as person with high confidence.
- A series of vehicles are detected at multiple distances and orientations.
- All visible traffic lights, even those in the background or partially occluded by poles, are localized and labeled.

This result highlights YOLOv5's superior ability to generalize across scale, distance, and occlusion. It affirms the earlier F1 score results, where YOLOv5 maintained scores above 0.80 for all eight traffic-related classes. Such robustness makes YOLOv5 particularly suitable for deployment in smart city monitoring systems where real-time accuracy is critical.



Figma4. Faster R-CNN Detection Output on Natural Scene with Foreground Objects

This image illustrates the detection output from the Faster R-CNN model on a cluttered natural background scene. The model successfully identifies a person and a traffic light with very high confidence scores (1.00 and 0.99, respectively), demonstrating its strong capability to generate highly confident detections when objects are clear and centered.

Key observations:

- Bounding box precision is high. Both the person and traffic light are enclosed with tight bounding boxes, indicating that the Region Proposal Network (RPN) component of Faster R-CNN has accurately localized foreground regions.
- High confidence detection suggests that the model is well-trained to distinguish between key object features under standard lighting and centered compositions.
- Limitations not visible in this frame include the model's tendency to underperform in more crowded or occluded scenarios, as shown in earlier F1 score evaluations.

While this image highlights a strong case for Faster R-CNN's accurate predictions, it should be viewed in context with its overall lower recall and narrower generalization as seen across the full validation set. It excels when object scale, visibility, and contrast are favorable, but struggles with detection diversity and uncommon classes.



Figma5. Faster R-CNN Detection on Urban Street – Overlapping Predictions and Class Confusion

This detection result shows how Faster R-CNN performs on a dense urban intersection with multiple vehicles, traffic signals, and pedestrians.

While the model successfully detects a wide range of classes—car, traffic light, person, bus, and even stop sign—its predictions expose key limitations:

- Overlapping bounding boxes: The same car is sometimes detected multiple times with different scores (e.g., car 0.98, car 0.93, car 0.99), leading to false positives and lower precision.
- Redundant labels and visual clutter: Many detections are crowded and redundant, reducing interpretability. This aligns with the F1 evaluation showing lower precision despite moderate recall.
- Confidence inconsistencies: Some traffic light predictions are made with high confidence (0.96), while others as low as 0.37—often for the same physical object.
- Partial object misses: Although multiple people are visible, only a few are labeled as person, indicating failures in dense or occluded regions.

This visual example validates the quantitative F1 results: Faster R-CNN excels in recognizing objects, but lacks the post-processing refinement and consistency of YOLOv5, especially in scenes with heavy object overlap.



Figma6. SSD300 False Positives – Misclassification in Irrelevant Scene

This image demonstrates the severe generalization issues faced by the SSD300 model. Despite the scene being entirely unrelated to traffic or transportation—featuring a person standing in front of a political backdrop—the model predicts multiple instances of the class bicycle with confidence scores ranging from 0.26 to 0.28.

Key observations include:

- All predictions are false positives: No actual bicycle appears in the image, yet the model confidently predicts otherwise. This confirms the earlier F1 evaluation results, where SSD yielded a score of 0.0 for all categories.
- Random pattern sensitivity: The predictions are likely influenced by background shapes (e.g., the hammer and sickle logo), which the model confuses with object contours it vaguely learned.
- No object suppression or spatial context awareness: SSD lacks advanced mechanisms such as anchor refinement, spatial pyramid pooling, or feature fusion, making it fragile to visual noise and unfamiliar input contexts.
- Low training effectiveness: Despite 30 epochs of training, the model failed to learn robust class boundaries. This aligns with its tendency to predict "everything as a car" or "everything as something," observed throughout both validation and video inference.

This failure case provides compelling visual evidence of SSD's unsuitability for smart city-level object detection, reinforcing its role as a negative baseline in our comparative analysis.



Figma 7. SSD 300 False Positives - Misclassification in Irrelevant Scene

This figure shows a catastrophic failure case from the SSD300 model on a busy urban intersection frame. Nearly every spatial region is filled with overlapping bounding boxes, each labeled as car with extremely low confidence scores—most between 0.15 and 0.19.

Key insights:

- Detection explosion: The model generates dozens of overlapping boxes for the same region, failing to apply any form of Non-Maximum Suppression (NMS) or internal confidence pruning.
- Single-class bias: Almost all predictions are classified as car, indicating that the model has severely overfit to one dominant class during training and cannot distinguish between other objects.
- Noisy low-confidence scores: The highest score among predictions barely reaches 0.22, well below a usable threshold. This aligns with the earlier F1 analysis, where all classes scored 0.0.
- Practical breakdown: In real-world applications, such a detection result would not only be unusable but would actively corrupt downstream decision-making systems.

Together with the previous misclassification example, this result demonstrates that SSD300 fails both qualitatively and quantitatively, making it unsuitable even as a lightweight detector in smart city scenarios.

♦ Qualitative Comparison Summary

The final qualitative comparison across YOLOv5, Faster R-CNN, and SSD300 highlights critical differences in object detection reliability, interpretability, and real-world applicability.

YOLOv5 delivers clear and consistent bounding boxes, with high-confidence detections across diverse environments. It excels at multi-class detection in crowded urban scenes (Figure X+1, X+2), maintaining visual clarity and accurate spatial localization even with multiple overlapping objects. This aligns with its strong F1 scores (all > 0.80), confirming both model robustness and real-time detection suitability.

Faster R-CNN, while capable of localizing prominent objects like car and person, suffers from overlapping predictions, inconsistent label confidence, and frequent omission of minor classes such as stop sign or traffic light. Figures X+3 and X+4 reveal both its strength in simple scenes and its struggle in dense traffic scenes, where visual clutter and over-prediction reduce interpretability. The visual output reinforces its quantitative profile: good recall but lower precision.

SSD300 stands out for its failure to generalize. Despite extended training, it misclassifies unrelated content (Figure X+5) and overwhelms frames with unusable, low-confidence predictions (Figure X+6). These failures confirm the 0.0 F1 scores across all categories and position SSD as a failed baseline. Its lack of effective feature fusion, anchor optimization, and post-processing renders it unreliable for any safety-critical smart city application.

♦ Conclusion

From both quantitative metrics and visual results, **YOLOv5 emerges as the clear winner**, balancing accuracy, generalization, and clarity. Faster R-CNN offers moderate interpretability in constrained settings but is less efficient. SSD, despite being lightweight, proves unsuitable due to catastrophic failure in both detection precision and visual output quality.

8. Optional: screenshots or photos

