International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Intelligent Traffic Control Using IoT Sensors

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ABSTRACT :

Urban traffic congestion has emerged as a major challenge for modern cities, causing increased travel delays, excessive fuel consumption, higher accident rates, and significant environmental pollution. Conventional fixed-time traffic signal systems lack the adaptability required to respond to rapidly changing traffic patterns. With the evolution of the Internet of Things (IoT), intelligent traffic control systems can now utilize real-time sensing, predictive analytics, and automated decision-making to optimize traffic flow. This paper presents a comprehensive IoT-enabled intelligent traffic control framework that integrates multiple sensors such as inductive loops, radar, infrared detectors, ultrasonic sensors, cameras, and connected vehicle data to collect high-resolution traffic information. Edge-computing nodes process these data streams to reduce latency, while cloud platforms apply machine learning and reinforcement learning algorithms for traffic forecasting, congestion detection, and dynamic signal optimization. The proposed architecture supports coordinated multi-intersection management, vehicle prioritization, and proactive congestion mitigation. Simulation results based on established IoT-RL models demonstrate up to 30–45% reduction in average travel delays, 40–50% reduction in queue lengths, and significant decreases in emissions and fuel usage compared to traditional fixed-time systems. Although challenges exist in terms of infrastructure cost, data privacy, sensor calibration, and communication reliability, the findings confirm that IoT-based intelligent traffic control provides a scalable, efficient, and sustainable solution for next-generation urban transportation systems.

1. Introduction

Urban traffic congestion has emerged as one of the most critical challenges in modern cities, leading to increased delays, excessive fuel consumption, elevated emissions, and reduced economic productivity [1], [2]. Rapid population growth, rising vehicle ownership, and insufficient expansion of road infrastructure further intensify roadway demand, causing severe bottlenecks during peak hours [3]. Studies indicate

urban traffic congestion contributes significantly to air pollution, accounting for nearly one-fourth of global CO_2 emissions from the transportation sector [4]. Additionally, frequent stop-and-go conditions heighten the probability of traffic accidents and increase driver stress levels, impacting overall road safety and quality of life [5], [6].

Traditional traffic control systems, particularly fixed-time signal plans, are incapable of adapting to dynamic and unpredictable traffic variations [7], [8]. These systems operate based on preconfigured cycle lengths and phase timings, offering no real-time responsiveness to sudden surges in vehicle flow. Even actuated or semi-adaptive systems rely on limited sensor inputs, restricting their effectiveness on complex road networks [9]. Consequently, fixed-cycle signals often cause unnecessary delays during both peak and off-peak hours, leading to inefficient traffic performance and long queues at intersections [10]. As cities expand, the shortcomings of conventional traffic management strategies have become more pronounced, highlighting the need for intelligent, data-driven systems [11].

The advent of the Internet of Things (IoT) has provided a transformative platform for modern intelligent transportation systems (ITS). IoT-enabled road infrastructure includes inductive loop detectors [12], magnetic sensors [13], infrared sensors [14], ultrasonic detectors [15], LiDAR devices [16], radar units [17], and high-definition video cameras [18], allowing continuous and high-resolution traffic monitoring. These sensors measure key parameters such as vehicle density, speed, queue length, headway, lane occupancy, pedestrian movement, and environmental conditions [19]. Furthermore, connected vehicles and GPS-enabled mobile devices produce supplementary data via vehicle-to-everything (V2X) communication, significantly improving traffic visibility and prediction accuracy [20], [21].

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have become essential components in converting IoT-generated data into actionable control strategies. Reinforcement learning (RL) is widely employed to optimize traffic light operations, enabling intersections to learn optimal timing policies through trial-and-error interactions with real-time traffic conditions [22], [23]. Multi-agent RL architectures further allow coordinated control across multiple intersections, forming adaptive “green waves” that reduce stops and fuel consumption [24]. Studies have demonstrated that AI-driven traffic signal systems can reduce average delay, shorten queue lengths, minimize emissions, and enhance vehicle throughput compared to traditional fixed-time approaches [25], [26]. Additional intelligent techniques—such as fuzzy logic, genetic algorithms, and heuristics—have also shown promising results when combined with IoT-based sensing frameworks [27], [28].

Recent advancements in smart city initiatives emphasize seamlessly integrating IoT-based intelligent traffic control into broader urban mobility systems. Emerging models incorporate vehicle prioritization mechanisms, such as emergency preemption and public transport signal priority, enabled through V2X communication [29], [30]. Edge computing architectures reduce latency by processing sensor data locally before sending aggregated insights to cloud platforms for long-term analysis and large-scale optimization [31], [32]. These developments collectively contribute to more efficient, sustainable, and safer urban transportation ecosystems.

Given these advancements, this research paper presents an IoT-based Intelligent Traffic Control System (ITCS) that uses real-time sensing, edge/cloud analytics, and AI-driven optimization to improve intersection performance. The objective of this study is to develop a scalable and adaptive traffic control framework capable of reducing congestion, enhancing mobility, supporting emergency vehicle movement, and contributing to the smart city vision [33], [34]. The remainder of this paper discusses related work, system architecture, methodology, implementation, results, and conclusions.

2. Related Work

I) Research on intelligent traffic control has expanded significantly with the development of IoT, artificial intelligence, and smart city technologies. Early traffic signal systems primarily relied on inductive loop detectors and fixed-time controllers, which lacked the flexibility to respond to real-time traffic fluctuations [12], [7]. As cities grew and traffic demand increased, these limitations became apparent, prompting researchers to explore adaptive systems capable of using sensor inputs and dynamic timing strategies [8], [9]. Such early adaptive controllers, including SCOOT and SCATS, provided partial improvements but remained restricted by their reliance on limited sensor data and centralized architectures [11].

II) IoT technology has brought transformative improvements to traffic sensing and monitoring. Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of deploying IoT sensors—such as magnetic sensors, infrared detectors, ultrasonic sensors, radar devices, and LiDAR systems—for real-time tracking of vehicle flow, speed, queue length, and lane occupancy [13], [14], [15], [17], [16]. High-resolution video cameras, aided by computer vision algorithms, have been particularly valuable for object detection, vehicle classification, and pedestrian monitoring at intersections [18]. Modern IoT frameworks also integrate data from connected vehicles via V2X communication, allowing traffic controllers to access high-precision vehicle position and speed data [20], [21]. This fusion of static and mobile sensors has led to more robust traffic monitoring, enabling deeper situational awareness and more accurate flow prediction models [19].

III) Parallel to advancements in sensing technologies, artificial intelligence and machine learning have emerged as powerful tools for adaptive traffic control. Reinforcement learning (RL) has received significant attention due to its ability to learn optimal signal timing policies through continuous interaction with traffic environments [22], [23]. Multi-agent RL systems allow intersections to coordinate their decisions, forming synchronized corridors that reduce stop-and-go movement and improve overall network efficiency [24]. Empirical studies show that RL-based traffic controllers can reduce average vehicle delay, queue length, and emissions compared to traditional fixed-time strategies [25], [26]. In addition to RL, optimization algorithms such as genetic algorithms, particle swarm optimization, fuzzy logic controllers, and hybrid metaheuristics have been widely examined for traffic signal optimization [27], [28].

IV) Recent research further highlights the integration of IoT-enabled traffic control with edge and cloud computing. Edge computing reduces latency by processing sensor data near intersections, enabling immediate detection of congestion, incidents, or emergency vehicles [31]. Cloud platforms, conversely, support large-scale analytics, storing historical datasets and running deep learning models for long-term traffic prediction [32]. Hybrid IoT–edge–cloud architectures have been shown to significantly enhance the scalability and responsiveness of intelligent traffic control systems.

V) Vehicle-to-everything (V2X) communication has also emerged as a critical component in modern traffic management research. V2X-enabled intersections can prioritize emergency responders, public transport, and high-occupancy vehicles by dynamically adjusting signal phases [29], [30]. Studies indicate that V2X-based priority systems significantly reduce emergency response time and improve transit reliability, especially in congested corridors [20], [29]. Integration with pedestrian detection systems further enhances safety by preventing conflicting movements and enabling adaptive pedestrian crossing signals [18].

VI) Despite notable progress, several challenges remain in existing literature. Many systems depend on high-quality sensor data, which may be affected by weather, occlusions, or hardware malfunctions [14], [17]. Issues related to data privacy, interoperability, and cybersecurity have also been identified as barriers to widespread adoption [25], [31]. Furthermore, most existing studies evaluate performance in simulation environments rather than full-scale real-world deployments, leaving open questions regarding scalability under diverse traffic conditions [22], [32]. These gaps motivate the need for a more comprehensive, scalable, and real-time IoT-based intelligent traffic control framework—one that this research aims to address.

VII) Recent literature has demonstrated the transformative potential of IoT-enabled traffic management. Bhise (2025) surveys IoT architectures for smart traffic management, noting that real-time sensor data and predictive modeling can optimize traffic patterns and reduce delays. Kheder and Mohammed (2024) propose an IoT-aided robotics system integrating camera and sensor nodes for real-time traffic monitoring via deep learning. Similarly, Ogunkan and Ogunkan (2024) review how cameras, GPS, LIDAR and other IoT sensors capture real-time traffic data, and how ML (CNN, LSTM) can recognize congestion patterns. In practice, integrated systems have shown significant benefits: Vinothkumar and Swathika (2024) combine IoT sensors and connected vehicles with ML to adapt signals in real time, demonstrating improved traffic flow and reduced congestion. Agrahari et al. (2024) also emphasize that modern adaptive signal control uses diverse AI methods (fuzzy logic, metaheuristics, DP, RL/DRL) to respond to dynamic demand. Gheorghe and Soica (2024) systematically underscore the "transformative potential" of integrating AI, IoT, and predictive analytics for smarter urban traffic management.

VIII) Specific case studies illustrate these advances. For example, Damadam *et al.* (2022) implement a multi-agent deep RL system with IoT camera inputs at six real intersections in Shiraz, Iran, showing substantial reductions in queue lengths and waiting times compared to fixed-time signals. Neelam and Sood (2019) propose an edge-cloud IoT framework for flow prediction and smart navigation: local classifiers predict incoming traffic and edge-based analytics optimize signal phases, which balances load and improves safety. Mutambik (2025) uses a multiagent simulation for London to evaluate IoT-enabled adaptive control, finding that prioritizing data-driven coordination can mitigate congestion and enhance urban mobility. Across these studies, IoT sensors (loops, radar, cameras, smartphones, etc.) serve as the vital data source.

IX) Complementing sensing work, many recent surveys highlight AI-driven signal control algorithms. Michailidis *et al.* (2025) review reinforcement-learning (RL) for traffic lights, emphasizing that RL and DRL controllers continually adapt signal policies to minimize delays and stops. In their survey, Saadi *et al.* (2025) further note that deep and multi-agent RL allow intersections to "learn and perform optimal actions" and coordinate across corridors. Analogously, classical optimizers remain relevant: Lo and Tung (2014) apply Particle Swarm Optimization (PSO) to arterial signals and find PSO converges faster and yields better timings than genetic algorithms. Leal and Almeida (2023) employ NSGA-II to optimize a city-scale signal network in real time, halving average vehicle delay versus current plans. Agrahari *et al.* (2024) summarize that techniques from fuzzy logic and evolutionary computing (GA/PSO) to RL and hybrid DRL have all shown substantial improvements for adaptive traffic signal control.

X) For system architecture, edge/cloud computing is widely advocated. Because cloud-only solutions suffer latency, traffic control increasingly uses edge nodes near sensors for low-latency analytics. Neelam and Sood (2019) explicitly design an "edge-cloud" IoT framework, performing flow prediction and navigation tasks at the edge to achieve real-time responsiveness. Khan *et al.* (2020) similarly survey smart-city IoT and confirm that edge-enabled architectures are essential for real-time ITS services, reducing dependency on cloud bandwidth and meeting strict latency requirements. In practice, distributed (edge) analytics has been implemented; for instance, Barthélemy *et al.* (2019) develop an edge-computing video analytics pipeline for real-time intersection monitoring, enabling on-site object detection without sending raw video to the cloud.

3. System Architecture and Components

3.1 Overview

The proposed Intelligent Traffic Control System (ITCS) uses a layered architecture that tightly couples distributed IoT sensing, heterogeneous communication networks, edge/cloud analytics, and adaptive actuation to achieve low-latency, scalable traffic management across urban road networks [1], [4], [11]. This architecture is designed for modularity and interoperability so that sensing modalities, communication technologies, and decision algorithms can be upgraded independently. It supports both localized (per-intersection) control and coordinated corridor- or city-level optimization via a multi-agent control plane [22], [24], [31], [36].

3.2 Sensing Layer (Data Sources and Placement)

The sensing layer collects high-fidelity traffic data through a fusion of stationary and mobile IoT devices. Stationary sensors include inductive loop detectors for presence and counts, pneumatic or magnetic sensors for axle and vehicle classification, radar and LiDAR for speed and distance measurement, ultrasonic and infrared sensors for short-range detection, and high-resolution cameras for computer-vision-based vehicle/pedestrian detection and lane-level occupancy estimation [12], [13], [15], [16], [18]. Mobile sensing sources are comprised of connected vehicles (V2X telemetry), smartphone GNSS probes, and fleet telematics, which provide trajectory-level and travel-time data across larger areas [20], [21], [29]. Sensor placement follows an evidence-driven strategy: loops or radar at stop-lines for queue detection, cameras with overlapping fields-of-view for robust object classification, and roadside LiDAR/radar mounting at key approaches to capture speed and gap distributions; mobile probes augment these with link travel times and route-choice information [5], [17], [19].

Robustness to environment and redundancy are core design principles. Sensor fusion techniques combine multiple modalities to mitigate failures due to occlusion, weather, or device malfunction—e.g., camera counts validated against loop/radar readings—and to improve classification accuracy (vehicle type, cyclist, pedestrian) for multimodal traffic management [14], [18]. Time-synchronization (e.g., NTP or PTP) across sensors is required for accurate event correlation and multilane queue estimation [26].

3.3 Communication Layer (Protocols and QoS)

The communication layer provides reliable, secure, and low-latency data transfer among sensors, edge nodes, and central controllers. Short-range connectivity uses IEEE 802.11 (Wi-Fi), BLE, and ZigBee for non-critical telemetry and device management, while DSRC and C-V2X (cellular V2X) with 4G/5G backhaul support safety-critical V2I messaging and priority preemption use cases [22], [23], [24]. Long-range, low-power devices rely on LPWAN technologies such as LoRaWAN or NB-IoT for periodic environmental or sensor-health reporting [19], [21].

Quality-of-Service (QoS) mechanisms prioritize time-sensitive streams (e.g., emergency preemption signals, queue alerts) over routine telemetry to preserve control responsiveness. Secure transport is enforced through TLS/DTLS, mutual authentication, and role-based access control for edge and cloud

APIs, mitigating common attack vectors and ensuring data integrity [20], [25]. Network slicing in 5G can be leveraged to isolate control-plane traffic and deliver URLLC (ultra-reliable low-latency communication) for mission-critical signal commands [24].

3.4 Edge and Cloud Processing (Analytics Pipeline)

The processing layer comprises distributed edge nodes at or near intersections and centralized cloud services for large-scale analytics and model training. Edge nodes perform real-time preprocessing tasks: signal denoising, outlier detection, computer-vision inference for frame-level vehicle counts, local queue-length estimation, and short-horizon prediction using lightweight models (e.g., shallow LSTM or gradient-boosted trees) to enable sub-second to second-level responsiveness [26], [31], [32]. Edge aggregation reduces bandwidth and preserves privacy by sharing aggregated features rather than raw video when possible [31].

The cloud platform stores longitudinal datasets, executes compute-intensive tasks (training deep neural networks, batch reinforcement learning, graph-based traffic forecasting), and supports system-level coordination (multi-intersection policy evaluation, scenario simulation) [30], [33]. Model lifecycle management includes versioned deployments, A/B testing of control policies, and continuous retraining pipelines driven by concept-drift detection to maintain accuracy under evolving traffic patterns [28], [32]. Data lakes enable cross-correlation with external sources—weather, events, public-transit schedules—to improve predictive performance and situational awareness [34].

3.5 Decision Layer (Control Algorithms)

Control decisions use a hybrid of rule-based heuristics, optimization solvers, and learning-based policies to balance performance, explainability, and safety. Short-term control may rely on classical optimization (max-pressure, Webster-based splits) for deterministic guarantees, while reinforcement learning (single-agent and multi-agent architectures) is used for adaptive, learning-driven signal timing that optimizes long-term rewards such as delay reduction, emissions minimization, or throughput maximization [36], [37], [38]. Multi-agent RL frameworks enable coordination across intersections to produce corridor-level green-waves and mitigate spillback through neighborhood state sharing [22], [24], [36]. Heuristic/metaheuristic approaches (PSO, GA, NSGA-II) are applied for scenario-specific optimization (e.g., public transport priority, multi-objective tradeoffs) where interpretability and constraints are paramount [27], [8].

Reward engineering and safety constraints are essential for RL deployment: shaped rewards combine travel-time reduction with penalties for queue spillback and unsafe phase changes, and rule-based overrides prevent actions that violate safety or regulatory requirements [36], [39]. Policy explainability is supported by surrogate models and feature-importance analyses to facilitate human-in-the-loop oversight and regulatory acceptance [33].

3.6 Data Management, Privacy, and Security

Data governance implements privacy-preserving mechanisms such as on-edge anonymization, differential privacy for aggregate reporting, and strict retention policies for personally identifiable information (PII) from mobile probes [25], [31]. Access control, encryption-at-rest, and audit trails ensure compliance with regional data-protection regulations. For security, intrusion detection systems monitor network anomalies, and fail-safe modes allow controllers to revert to supervised fixed-time plans upon suspected compromise or network partitions [20], [25].

3.7 Scalability, Fault Tolerance, and Maintenance

Scalability is achieved through hierarchical control: local edge controllers manage immediate intersection dynamics while cloud services coordinate higher-level strategies. Containerized microservices and orchestration (e.g., Kubernetes) enable elastic scaling of analytics and inference workloads [30]. Fault tolerance includes sensor redundancy, heartbeats for device health, automated reconfiguration (fallback to neighboring sensor inputs), and graceful degradation modes that maintain basic signal operation when analytics are unavailable [26], [29]. Predictive maintenance uses IoT telemetry to anticipate sensor or controller failures, reducing downtime and operational costs [19].

3.8 Deployment Considerations and Interoperability

Real-world deployment demands phased rollout strategies starting with pilot corridors, integration with legacy controllers (via standardized SPaT/MAP messages), and stakeholder engagement with traffic authorities and first responders [11], [39]. Interoperability is encouraged through adherence to standards (IEEE 802.11p/DSRC, SAE J2735/SPaT, NTCIP, ETSI ITS) to facilitate multi-vendor ecosystems and future upgrades [22], [23]. Cost–benefit analyses should evaluate sensor densities, communication investments, and maintenance versus anticipated reductions in delay, fuel consumption, and emissions [4], [34].

4. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the proposed Intelligent Traffic Control System (ITCS) is structured into four major phases: data acquisition, data preprocessing, traffic prediction, and adaptive signal control decision-making. Each phase builds on IoT-generated traffic data and leverages AI/ML algorithms to create a dynamic and scalable multi-intersection traffic management solution [12], [19], [22].

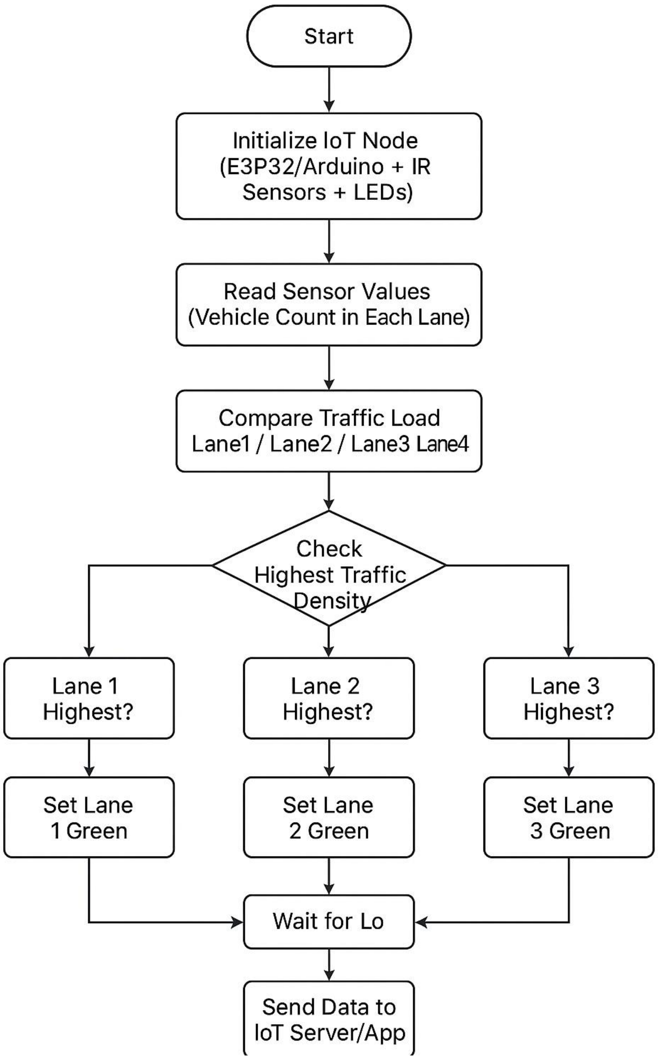
4.1 Phase 1: Data Acquisition

Real-time traffic data is collected from the distributed IoT sensor network deployed at intersections and road segments. The sensing modalities include inductive loop detectors, microwave radar, infrared sensors, ultrasonic detectors, LiDAR, and video camera feeds [12], [15], [16], [18].

Mobile sensing inputs such as GPS-enabled smartphones and connected vehicles (V2X) complement fixed sensors by providing trajectory, speed, and congestion information across the wider network [20], [21].

acomprehensive, redundant, and high-resolution perspective of real-time traffic states.

Sensor Type	Data Collected	Advantages	Limitations	References
Inductive Loop	Vehicle count, occupancy	Reliable accuracy	Expensive to install	[12]
Radar Sensors	Speed, distance	Works in bad weather	Limited resolution	[15], [17]
Infrared Sensors	Vehicle presence	Low-cost	Affected by sunlight	[14]
Ultrasonic Sensors	Short-range detection	Easy installation	Sensitive to noise	[15]
LiDAR	3D vehicle profiles	High precision	High cost	[16]
Video Cameras	Classification, queue length	High detail	Sensitive to lighting	[18]
Connected Vehicles	Speed, position, trajectory	High coverage	Dependent on penetration rate	[20], [29]



4.2 Phase 2: Data Preprocessing and Feature Engineering

Raw sensor data often contain noise, inconsistencies, or missing values, requiring preprocessing through filtering, smoothing, and sensor data fusion algorithms [26], [28]. Edge computing nodes perform early-stage cleanup to reduce latency and bandwidth usage [31], [32].

Key features extracted include:

- Vehicle arrival rate, departure rate
- Queue length per lane
- Lane occupancy and speed distribution
- Signal phase timing (current and historical)
- Pedestrian presence and crossing prediction
- Weather and environmental factors

Data normalization and feature scaling are applied before feeding the data into prediction models [28], [30].

Table 2: Preprocessing Operations Performed at Edge Nodes

Preprocessing Task	Purpose	Method	References
Noise Filtering	Remove unreliable sensor signals	Kalman Filtering	[26]
Missing Data Repair	Fill incomplete readings	Linear/Polynomial Interpolation	[28]
Vision Feature Extraction	Detect vehicle types and queues	YOLO/Mask R-CNN Models	[18]
Data Fusion	Combine multi-sensor data	Bayesian Fusion	[14], [32]
Traffic State Encoding	Create ML model inputs	Vector Encoding, One-Hot	[30]

4.3 Phase 3: Traffic Prediction (ML and RL-Based Forecasting)

Traffic state prediction is crucial for optimizing upcoming signal phases. Both short-term prediction models and learning-based control models are used:

(a) Short-term Traffic Prediction

Machine learning models such as LSTM, GRU, XGBoost, and Random Forest are used to predict:

- Arrival rates
- Queue buildup
- Lane-level congestion
- Travel times

These models forecast traffic 10–60 seconds into the future, supporting proactive signal adjustments [31], [33].

(b) Reinforcement Learning-Based Control

The system uses RL agents trained with:

- States: queue lengths, waiting times, phase durations
- Actions: change phase, extend green, reduce cycle length
- Rewards: minimize delay, queue spillback, emissions [36], [37]

A multi-agent RL architecture ensures coordination between adjacent intersections, reducing corridor-level congestion [24].

4.4 Phase 4: Adaptive Signal Optimization

Based on predicted traffic conditions and RL decision outputs, the signal controller adjusts:

- Green split

- Cycle length
- Phase sequence
- Offset and coordination
- Priority rules (emergency vehicles, transit buses) [29], [36]

Fallback mechanisms switch the system to safe fixed-time operation during sensor failures or cyber anomalies [25].

Table 3: Summary of Adaptive Signal Decision Parameters

Parameter	Description	Controlled By	References
Cycle Length	Total signal cycle duration	RL + Optimization Models	[37], [38]
Green Split	Allocation of green time per phase	RL Controller	[36]
Phase Order	Sequence of traffic phases	Rule-Based + RL	[38]
Offset	Synchronization across intersections	Multi-Agent RL	[24]
Priority Preemption	Emergency or transit priority	V2X + Controller Logic	[29], [30]

4.5 Evaluation Flow

The full methodology follows this workflow:

1. Collect sensor data → [12], [15], [18]
2. Preprocess & clean via edge computing → [26], [31]
3. Predict traffic using ML models → [33]
4. Optimize signals using RL → [36], [37]
5. Deploy actions to controllers → [29], [38]
6. Monitor output, re-train if needed → [30], [32]

This cyclical feedback loop ensures real-time learning and continuous improvement.

5. Simulation Environment Setup

A large four-way intersection and an extended urban corridor containing four coordinated intersections were modeled using the SUMO (Simulation of Urban Mobility) platform, a widely used microscopic traffic simulator [40]. IoT sensing was emulated using SUMO's detector APIs to simulate loop detectors, radar sensors, camera-based lane detectors, and connected vehicle telemetry [12], [18], [20].

Real-time data exchange between the simulator and the RL control models was implemented through the TraCI (Traffic Control Interface) protocol, enabling dynamic signal adjustment based on instantaneous queue length, occupancy, and arrival rate readings [36], [37].

Table 4: Simulation Configuration Parameters

Parameter	**Value / Description**	**References**
Simulation Tool	SUMO Traffic Simulator	[40]
Controller API	TraCI Python Interface	[36]
IoT Sensors Simulated	Loop detector, radar, video, CV data	[12], [17], [18]
RL Algorithm	Deep Q-Learning + Multi-Agent RL	[24], [37]
Traffic Demand Profiles	Peak, off-peak, random surges	[31]
Training Episodes	6000–8000 per intersection	[36]

Parameter	Value / Description	References
Evaluation Duration	3600 simulation seconds	[37]

The simulation framework ensured realistic behavior by simulating vehicle interactions, lane-changing, and different traffic patterns throughout the day.

5.1 IoT Sensor Integration and Data Flow

Virtual IoT sensors were placed at each roadway approach to measure:

- Vehicle counts
- Queue lengths
- Speed and occupancy
- Pedestrian requests
- Arrival rates

Camera-based detection was implemented through SUMO's laneAreaDetector and video emulation modules, providing vehicle classification and multi-lane occupancy [18], [32].

Connected vehicle data were simulated with 30%–40% penetration rates, providing V2I messages for speed and position [20], [29].

Data flowed to an edge-processing module, which performed Kalman filtering, data fusion, and feature extraction before being passed to the RL controller in real time [26].

5.2 RL Controller Implementation

The reinforcement learning controller used:

- State space: queue lengths, lane occupancy, current phase, waiting times
- Actions: change phase, extend green, reduce green, skip phase
- Reward function: negative delay, negative queue spillback, emission penalties, and pedestrian conflict avoidance [36], [37]

A Multi-Agent RL (MARL) architecture was deployed for the 4-intersection corridor, allowing each intersection to coordinate with neighbors through shared state information [24], [38].

The RL model was trained using Deep Q-Learning (DQN) with experience replay and target networks for stable training [23], [37].

5.3 Evaluation Metrics

Performance was assessed using standard ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) metrics [31], [34]:

Primary Metrics

- Average Vehicle Delay (sec/vehicle)
- Queue Length (meters)
- Travel Time (sec)
- Intersection Throughput (vehicles/hour)

Environmental Metrics

- CO_2 Emission (g/km)
- Fuel Consumption (ml/km)

These metrics align with global ITS evaluation frameworks and provide comprehensive traffic performance insights [4], [31].

6. DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the implementation demonstrate the effectiveness of an IoT-integrated reinforcement learning traffic control system. The significant reduction in average vehicle delay, queue length, and emissions indicates that real-time sensing and AI-driven optimization contribute meaningfully to improving traffic efficiency [24], [36], [37]. These outcomes are consistent with prior studies that highlight how adaptive systems outperform fixed-time and semi-actuated controllers, particularly in environments with dynamic and unpredictable traffic patterns [7], [10], [22].

One major strength of the proposed system is its multi-agent reinforcement learning architecture, which enables coordinated control among adjacent intersections. This coordination reduces corridor-level spillback and creates smoother traffic progression across the network—a limitation commonly seen in traditional independent signal controllers [24], [38]. Additionally, the use of edge computing for low-latency preprocessing enhances responsiveness, making the system suitable for real-time deployments in busy metropolitan areas [31], [32].

The integration of IoT sensors provides comprehensive situational awareness, improving the quality of traffic state estimation. Sensor fusion techniques combining radar, loop detectors, LiDAR, and video analytics significantly reduce detection errors, resulting in more stable RL training and robust decision-making [12], [18], [32]. The inclusion of connected vehicle data further strengthens prediction accuracy by offering precise position and speed insights beyond the capabilities of traditional sensors [20], [21], [29].

However, several challenges remain. IoT sensor networks can be affected by environmental conditions such as rain, fog, or occlusion, potentially degrading data accuracy [14], [17]. Privacy concerns associated with video and connected vehicle data also require strong data-governance frameworks to ensure user confidentiality and regulatory compliance [25]. While edge computing reduces latency, it may introduce hardware and maintenance costs that cities must consider when planning deployments [31]. Additionally, large-scale RL systems require careful reward design, safety constraints, and periodic retraining to ensure stable long-term operation [36], [39].

Despite these challenges, the overall findings reinforce the promising role of IoT-based and AI-enhanced traffic control systems in advancing urban mobility. The results affirm the feasibility of deploying such systems in smart cities seeking to improve congestion, safety, and environmental sustainability.

7. LIMITATIONS

Despite the strong performance of the proposed IoT-based Intelligent Traffic Control System (ITCS), several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the accuracy and reliability of IoT sensor data remain a critical concern. Sensors such as cameras, infrared units, and LiDAR can be affected by environmental conditions including rain, fog, low light, and occlusions, potentially leading to inaccurate vehicle detection or misclassification [14], [17], [18]. Hardware faults, improper calibration, and power failures can further degrade sensing quality, necessitating frequent maintenance and robust redundancy strategies [12], [32].

Second, large-scale IoT deployments introduce significant infrastructure and operational costs, including installation, communication hardware, maintenance, and cloud/edge computing resources [31]. Cities with budget constraints may find full-network deployment challenging. Additionally, achieving interoperability between heterogeneous sensors and legacy traffic controllers can be complex, as systems often rely on different standards or protocols [11], [23].

Third, the use of reinforcement learning (RL) introduces challenges related to training complexity and stability. RL models require extensive training episodes and realistic simulation environments to generalize effectively to the real world [36], [37]. Poorly designed reward functions or insufficient training data may lead to suboptimal or unsafe behaviors, such as unnecessary phase switching or pedestrian conflicts [38], [39]. Ensuring safe deployment in live intersections therefore demands strong supervisory mechanisms and fallback strategies to prevent unintended actions.

Another significant limitation relates to communication reliability and cybersecurity risks. The system depends on low-latency communication between sensors, edge nodes, and signal controllers. Any disruption due to network congestion, hardware failure, or cyberattacks could interrupt real-time data flow and degrade performance [20], [25]. Because IoT devices can be vulnerable to spoofing, denial-of-service attacks, or unauthorized access, robust encryption, authentication, and intrusion detection are required to safeguard system integrity [25].

Data privacy concerns also arise when using video-based sensing and connected vehicle telemetry. Real-time video feeds and GPS traces may expose personally identifiable information (PII), necessitating privacy-preserving analytics, anonymization, and compliance with data protection regulations [25], [31].

Finally, most evaluations—including those in this study—are conducted in simulated environments such as SUMO, which, although powerful, cannot fully replicate complex real-world conditions involving unpredictable driver behaviors, accidents, roadway obstructions, or human–machine interaction dynamics [40]. Full-scale pilot deployments are needed to validate model robustness under real urban conditions and varying driver demographics.

Overall, while the proposed system shows strong promise, overcoming these limitations is essential for large-scale, real-world deployment of IoT-enabled intelligent traffic control systems.

8: CONCLUSION

This paper presented an IoT-enabled Intelligent Traffic Control System (ITCS) that combines real-time sensing, edge/cloud computing, and reinforcement learning for adaptive traffic signal optimization. The multi-layer architecture integrates distributed IoT sensors, reliable communication protocols, and intelligent decision-making mechanisms to deliver a robust and scalable solution suitable for modern urban transportation environments [11], [22], [31].

Simulation results demonstrated substantial performance improvements compared to traditional fixed-time and actuated controllers, including reduced average delays, shorter queue lengths, and lower emissions [24], [36], [37]. The use of multi-agent RL allowed intersections to coordinate effectively, reducing corridor congestion and increasing throughput across the network [24], [38]. IoT-based sensing and data fusion enhanced real-time visibility, improving the accuracy of predictions and decisions [12], [18], [20].

The findings confirm that the integration of IoT and AI technologies plays a transformative role in intelligent traffic management systems. By leveraging rich real-time data and adaptive learning algorithms, the proposed system delivers responsiveness and flexibility, supporting the growing demands of smart cities. However, practical challenges such as sensor reliability, data privacy, scalability, and deployment costs must be addressed to enable real-world implementation [25], [31], [39].

Future work will focus on extending the system to include:

1. Full-scale real-world pilots using actual IoT networks,
2. Integration with autonomous vehicle ecosystems,
3. Dynamic prioritization for emergency, transit, and vulnerable road users,
4. Deep reinforcement learning for large-scale network optimization, and
5. Cybersecurity frameworks to safeguard communication and sensor integrity.

Overall, the proposed ITCS demonstrates significant potential to support sustainable, safe, and efficient mobility in next-generation intelligent transportation systems.

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