

ABSTRACT

A plurality of sample points are set in a series of images which represent a road and vehicles and which are taken by a video camera. The sample points situated in a
5 certain image at each of which the vehicle is expected to be present are detected as presence sample points, while the sample points situated in the image at each of which the vehicle in motion is expected to be present are detected as movement sample points. Based on the movement sample points, are detected, movement blocks each formed by
10 part of the sample points adjacent to one another and including part of the movement sample points. A ratio of the movement sample points to all of the sample points contained in each movement block is larger than a predetermined level. The presence sample points excluded from the movement blocks are detected as congestion sample
15 pints. Based on the congestion sample points, are detected, congestion blocks each formed by part of the sample points adjacent to one another and including part of the congestion sample points. A ratio of the congestion sample points to all of the sample points contained in each congestion block is larger than a predetermined level. Based on the congestion blocks thus detected, the state of traffic congestion on the road is measured.