

My Summer Internship

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I never knew how a city functioned as a whole until the beginning of this summer. I was very fortunate to receive this summer internship through the MATC program. Throughout this summer I have learned a great deal of what goes on in the transportation engineering field. I currently work for the Department of Public Works for Engineering Services in the sidewalk section.

The Department of Public Works has four different sections; comprehensive engineering information systems, design/construction, development services, and traffic operations. I am under the traffic operations section which deals with signals/signs, parking meters, sidewalks, pavement markings, and over-dimensional permits and obstructions. I have done some work in the design construction field as well. In these past three months of working for the city, I have learned a great deal of different things.

My main job for the city has been in the sidewalk section. Some of the tasks I deal with are inspections of new and old sidewalks. When a contractor is going to pour a new sidewalk, they must first call in for an inspection. Once I am informed of this, I will go to the location and check to see if they formed it to the city's standards. The main things I check for when I am inspecting are that the beginning of the sidewalk is 9.5 inches off the curb and that the cross slope is no greater than two percent. Most people take our sidewalks for granted, but those who are handicapped rely that sidewalks are made to be accessible.

Within Lincoln there are many areas where sidewalks need to be repaired. One of my main projects that I have been working on is to survey sidewalks that need repair. I have been surveying the area of 9th to 27th Streets

from South St to Van Dorn St. When surveying these sidewalks, I look for a few things that require the sidewalk to be repaired. The main concern is a greater than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch rise between sidewalks. It is very important that these get noted to be fixed so people don't trip over them and people in wheelchairs can roll over them smoothly. A few other things that are noted for repair are large cracks, curbs that need to be cut for wheelchair ramps, and that there is not too great a side slope.

A few other things that I have done this summer are sight obstructions and traffic counts. Sight obstructions are called in and I will go to the sight to see what needs to be done to correct for the obstruction. If it is obstructing traffic, the city will send a letter telling the property owner to cut down their bushes or move whatever needs to be moved that is obstructing the view of vehicles. I have also gathered the information of a few intersections through traffic counts. These are not the fun, but are very important when determining if something needs to be done at an intersection to increase the level of service and the safety.

I have been very fortunate this summer in what I have learned with the city. I have learned many new computer programs that I had never been introduced to such as MicroStation, PETRA, and Lotus 1-2-3. I have also let my boss know that I want to go into structural engineering and he was more than happy to let me go out on the new Harris Overpass and see the construction take place. I feel that this has been a great experience for me and look forward to continuing my work with the City into the school year.