

BUILDING MY CAREER

AJINKYA SARAWADE

CITY OF OMAHA



I had a flight to India on May 8, 2018 at 2pm. I was happy and upset at the same time as I remember. I was happy because I was going home to meet my family after almost one year and sad because I didn't get any internship. As an international student, I wanted to work in United States and get global experience. I emailed Amber of MATC to please let me know about my internship on the 7th and was eagerly waiting for the same. I still remember it was Monday, May 7th and I woke up at 8:30 am. As always, I checked my email and the next moment I was yelling to my mom on the phone, "I got the job, mom! I got the job!"

Two weeks later, May 21st was my first day. I went to the downtown office of City of Omaha and met with Gayle, who is a wonderful person and my sponsor. She gave me the address of construction division office, and I drove there. I met with Gabe Astorino who showed me my desk after introducing me to some of the co-workers. Gabe told me that I would be meeting with Michael Kleffner, head of the construction division after some time. I was excited but nervous because you do not meet such top profile people every day, right?

When I met Mike, I realized how friendly and influential person he is. He told me two things: first, feel free to ask questions and, second, what kind of work I want to learn. After that, I went out with one of the field inspectors to see City of Omaha's construction projects.

I am working on the "Spring lake" project which is a CSO (Clean Solutions Omaha) project. We are separating existing combine storm-sewer pipe runs so that we can treat water more efficiently in Omaha. To visit various construction sites and learning how to inspect field activities under the supervision of main field inspector,

Ethan Sundheim has been fun. The tasks I am learning during my internship are construction of manholes, RCP storm pipes, VCP sanitary pipes, concrete roads, asphalt roads, driveways, sidewalks, structures, inlets, and so on. Understanding the process of excavation, backfilling, seeding has been another important aspect of this internship.

Making daily inspection reports and discussing my work with our construction manager Jesse Ayala is fun. I attended weekly progress meetings with construction manager, designer, and general contractor to discuss schedules, payments, issues, changes if any, plans of coming weeks. I learned important skills like estimation, scheduling, plan reviewing, project management and time management. Construction is a broad industry with many aspects to consider. Architecture, design, environmental, landscaping, safety, management all are crucial fields that define construction. While working with the City of Omaha, I gained practical knowledge of the aforementioned fields.

This internship helped me to understand what interests me the most and what steps to take to achieve my future ambitions. It has been such an amazing experience that transformed me from a college student to a professional man.

I would like to greatly thank the Mid-America Transportation Center for giving me this incredible opportunity. Big thanks to City of Omaha specially to Michael Kleffner, Jesse Ayala and Ethan Sundheim who supported me throughout the journey. I feel confident, focused, and ready for my future challenges.