



2024 MnDOT Planning Internship Program

Scott Shaffer | Planner Intermediate

Office of Transportation System Management

December 1, 2023

Introductions

- [David Elvin](#), Long-Range Planning Director, Metro District
- [Rylan Juran](#), Aviation Planning Director, Office of Aeronautics
- [Jessica Oh](#), Strategic Partnerships Director, Office of Sustainability and Public Health
- [Emily Smoak](#), Active Transportation Supervisor, Office of Transit and Active Transportation
- [Hally Turner](#), Policy Planning Director, Office of Transportation System Management

Question 1: What does your office do? What does a typical day look like?

• David, Metro District:

- Putting policies into practice at the district level.
- Conducting corridor studies, small area studies, and research on various policies.
- Increasing focus on multimodal transportation, active transportation, and integrating land use considerations.
- Long-range planning involving community engagement, understanding needs, translating into alternatives, and project development.

• Rylan, Aeronautics:

- Mission to ensure Minnesotans benefit from aviation.
- Work includes policy development, meeting with municipalities, maximizing investment in airports, and collecting aviation taxes.
- Involvement in the State Aviation System Plan and use of GIS skills for data management.

• Jessica, Sustainability and Public Health:

- Focus on sustainability and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Small, tight-knit team working on federal funding programs for electric vehicle charging, resiliency, and carbon reduction.
- Two primary areas: managing funds and institutionalizing changes

to promote sustainability and health.

- Emphasis on reducing vehicle miles traveled, public health, complete streets, and collaboration.

• Emily, Active Transportation:

- Active Transportation team with five focus areas: programs and education, engineering and design guidance, modal planning, research and innovation, and data and mapping.
- Involvement in active transportation and Safe Routes to School programs, bicycle and pedestrian education curriculum, engineering and design assistance, statewide system plans, and data-related research.

• Hally, Transportation System Management:

- Core functions: planning, programming, data and mapping.
- Focus on looking far into the future, setting expectations, and providing tools and guidance for implementation.
- Collaborative work with various entities like metropolitan planning organizations, regional development organizations, cities, counties, and nonprofits.
- Involvement in research, analysis, writing tasks, and potential opportunities for document and image design.

Question 2: What's an important project that an intern could work on in your office? What skills could an intern learn?

• David, Metro District:

• The Elbow Study (Downtown Minneapolis):

- Focus on the area near the Lowry Hill Tunnel and I-94 involving community organizations and agencies.
- Intern tasks: assist with meetings, document preparation, logistical support.

• Hwy 7 Corridor Study (Hopkins to Saint Bonifacius):

- Long-term vision for 18-mile corridor study, addressing safety problems, alternative solutions.
- Intern tasks: meetings, technical analysis, data work on transportation counts, pedestrian crossings, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

• Rylan, Aeronautics:

• State Aviation System Plan:

- Six years in the making, revolutionizing office practices.
- Tasks include implementing the plan, public engagement, and exposure to aviation.
- Opportunities for fieldwork, events, and understanding aviation.

• Jessica, Sustainability and Public Health:

• National Electric Vehicle Charging Program:

- \$5.5 billion federal program.
- Interns work on projects related to electrification of transportation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Tasks include data analysis, community engagement, policy interpretation, and research.

• Emily, Active Transportation:

• Active Transportation and Safe Routes to School Programs:

- Design and install bicycle and pedestrian demonstration projects.
- In-person, statewide travel, community engagement, and hands-on projects.

• Statewide Bicycle System Plan:

- Creating a new plan from scratch, impactful strategies, and community engagement.
- Interns can influence the initial scope of work.

• Research and Pilot Projects:

- Projects on bicycle and pedestrian mobile device data, tribal pedestrian safety, and evaluation of demonstration projects.
- Interns can gain technical skills, engage in GIS work, and support research.

• Hally, Transportation System Management:

• Corridor Planning Unit:

- New unit focused on corridor planning.
- Setting priorities and guidance for corridor selection.
- Opportunities to work at a systems level, community engagement, and influence projects for the next 5-10 years.
- Other areas include transportation equity, environmental justice, asset management, and performance analysis.
- Skills include writing for public consumption, analysis, and influencing without authority.

Question 3: What skills and qualities are you looking for in applicants?

•David, Metro District:

- Skills: curiosity and communication, familiarity with navigating the remote work environment.
- Qualities: ability to adapt to the changing work landscape, knowledge of technology for remote communication, understanding of the evolving work dynamics.

•Rylan, Aeronautics:

- Skills: communication skills. GIS skills are a plus.
- Qualities: enthusiasm for bettering aviation, but no specific aviation knowledge required. Emphasis on on-the-job training, exposure to various aspects of the aviation industry.

•Jessica, Sustainability and Public Health:

- Skills: prior experience in policy projects or related areas, GIS skills, advanced technical or data analysis

skills.

- Qualities: can-do attitude, proactive approach, and the ability to make connections.

•Emily, Active Transportation:

- Skills: asking questions, sharing ideas, relationship-building.
- Qualities: curiosity about the reasons behind actions, enthusiasm for making a positive impact on Minnesota, understanding the connections between transportation decisions and public health, equity, and climate outcomes.

•Hally, Transportation System Management:

- Skills: curiosity and communication.
- Qualities: willingness to lean into nebulous, challenging spaces, curiosity, and effective communication through various forms (teams, notes, presentations).

Question 4: Why should someone be interested in working in your office?

•David, Metro District:

- Opportunity to work with people deeply passionate about new policies and making positive changes related to climate.
- Leaders in multimodal planning with some of the best thinkers in the metro area.
- Emphasis on equity, active transportation, and addressing climate challenges.

•Rylan, Aeronautics:

- Opportunity to learn something new and gain exposure to various aspects of the aviation industry.
- Interns may be hired for long-term positions, providing potential career growth.
- Aviation industry is actively addressing sustainability challenges, including sustainable fuels and electrification.

•Jessica, Sustainability and Public Health:

- Emphasis on caring deeply about investing in interns' interests and providing a valuable experience.

- Collaborative and focused on working with different levels of government.
- Opportunity to gain a vantage point of working with various government units and agencies.

•Emily, Active Transportation:

- Minnesota leads nationally in active transportation work, providing an exciting and respected environment.
- Opportunity to build from scratch and contribute to forward-thinking, cutting-edge work.
- A small, collaborative team with room for growth in a field that is both fun and impactful.

•Hally, Transportation System Management:

- The office plays a significant role in high-level planning for various transportation modes.
- Offers an opportunity for interns to have a substantial impact on decision-making.
- Aligns opportunities with interns' skills and interests, with the chance to support one of four teams.

- To apply: Search for [Job ID 71641](#) on the [Minnesota state careers website](#). The job openings will close on Jan. 12, 2024.
- The MnDOT Planning Internship Program runs from May through August. This internship is available for up to a 12-week, full-time appointment with flexible start date and schedule. The positions pay between \$22.51 and \$32.71 per hour.
- More information is available on the [Planning Internship Program page](#).

Thank you again!

Scott Shaffer, Planning Internship Program Coordinator

scott.shaffer@state.mn.us

651-366-4917