

Ben is a Master of Planning student at Dalhousie University. He spent the summer with The Village on Main undertaking projects across a variety of topics.

His first project of the summer was to acquire funding to revitalize the pedestrian overpass (pedway) on the western border of VOM's district. He assessed the current state of the pedway, and designed interventions to improve the safety, walkability, and design features of the pedway by consulting contractors, artists, and the public. Titled the [Connecting Communities](#), Ben worked with another planning student, Mary, to prepare grant applications to the Canadian Healthy Communities Initiative and the Canada Community which are both pending as of August 2021.

Another ongoing project that Ben contributed to over the summer was establishing [VOM's catchment area](#). Ben and a team of other students identified key data that would inform us on who was coming into the district, where they were coming from, what they were doing and what they might want to do. Building off past projects like Dartmouth Connects from psychographic researchers Third Sector, Ben was part of the team that designed and executed an intercept survey. He even spent a productive afternoon as CID, VOM's service dog mascot. Ben combined the data with select StatsCan data to create an interactive GIS map of VOM's catchment.

Ben became familiar public transit issues in the district during his summer with VOM. With Main Street being designated as a regional growth centre, public transit options have to keep up with development. Ben and Mary reviewed a decade's worth of transit plans, consultations, responses, and research to summarize and make VOM's values known to council. Their research produced two reports: [Transit in The Village on Main](#) and [Transit in Dartmouth](#).

In addition to these major projects, Ben helped with [creating a map of the recent developments](#) in the district, and created a project plan for future students to establish key zoning recommendations for the Suburban Plan. At VOM Ben learned a great deal about the planning profession, the Main Street Dartmouth Community, and the nuts and bolts of development. He is grateful for his time at the Village on Main for developing his design, project management, surveying and writing skills.