

CASCO

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Approved on January 30, 2024
Special Town Meeting

Acknowledgments

Many passionate people have contributed time, energy and ideas into the making of this new Comprehensive Plan. We hope that when you read it, you hear your voices in this plan. More than that, we hope that you will continue to lend your voice, and a helping hand to move ideas into action.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Town of Casco's Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Steering committee is proud of the work done over the past two years to create this guiding vision for a focused future of targeted growth of services, infrastructure, and policies in Casco. We feel connected to the Plan and responsible to see its recommendations moved forward — and we hope the other residents of Casco feel this way as well. As you move through these pages, please know the plan was built with a people-driven, data-informed process; gathering input, feedback and experiences from current residents as well as a review and nod to Casco's treasured past. The recommendations are supported with an entire set of chapters full of extensive local and regional data from archaeology and history, demographics and population, economy and housing, to water and natural resources, and everything in between.

This Plan focuses on preserving the woods, waters and open space and maintaining the rural character of our town while bringing in needed services and desired infrastructure where appropriate. The planning process has identified seven Big Ideas and associated strategies outlined later in this document, that can be used to guide our town into the future. The Big Ideas are: Protect Woods, Waters, and Open Space; Support Diversity and Multi-generational Community Life; Connect the Villages with Safe Streets and Trails; Attract Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs; Maintain Fiscal Stability and Accessible Government; Be Leaders of Resiliency; and, Activities for All. The strategies under each Big Idea are meant to be used during Plan Implementation, as a starting point for community discussions relating to the vision and goals of the plan.

The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is a guided starting point for our future. There will be many, many ways and times for the people of Casco to continue to be involved in forming the future of our town. Casco is a small town powered by volunteers, and volunteers will be needed to improve communication; committees will need volunteers to perform tasks; Public hearings will be held for input on updated zoning. The adoption of this plan is just the beginning!

The Committee is immensely grateful for the time so many community members put in during our numerous public workshops, open houses and meetings to provide feedback and support for this work.

Snapshot of Community Engagement

From April 28th through May 2nd, 2022, the Town hosted, “Casco Planning Days,” an intensive, multi-day public planning and design event to develop a vision for the future of Casco. Over the course of five days and about 50+ hours, people participated in hands-on workshops, focus groups and big community conversations to create this plan.

The Select Board in Casco decided early on that it wanted to have an open, inclusive planning process that made it easy for people to contribute ideas and be part of decision

making. Marketing and outreach was robust, a temporary studio, or physical hub was opened at the community center, and an online hub was created, too. For five days, the consulting team, leadership and the Comprehensive Plan Committee staffed the studio and talked to anyone and everyone who came through the doors.

The best plans are made when communities plan together, and when design happens with the people who are most affected by the outcomes. The spirit of inclusiveness is evident, we think, in the visions and big ideas that this plan lays out. For more information about the engagement process - and what happens next - see section, “A Continuum of Community Engagement and Implementation”.





Photos: GPCOG





A Brief History

By: Alice Bradeen, Casco Resident

Aside from its residents and visitors, what gives a town identity? When one thinks about historic New England and areas that have managed to keep history relevant whilst keeping pace with the times, will they think of the Lakes Region area of Maine? Of Casco? How do we honor the past and the present, old families and new, historic buildings with modern? What has brought people to town, and what has compelled them to stay? The comprehensive planning committee is working diligently to answer these questions so Casco can move into its future in a purposeful way.

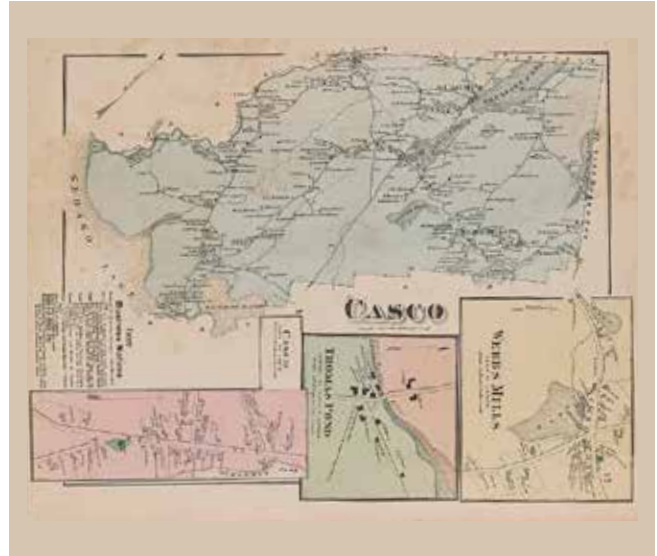
Casco was formed in 1841 after a separation from then "Raymondtown". The people who lived in what is now Casco felt separated from what is now Raymond by areas that were geographically challenging to navigate. There was a sense of disconnect and inefficiency with the way things were, and a committed group of people worked tirelessly to change it. It was important to them to have agency in their

community. Prior to the division, a townhouse was built on the Plains Rd. in Raymond (currently Camp Timanous) with the intent of serving as a central location for all. This ultimately inconvenienced more people and the secession was approved. Casco's first town meeting was held at the Friends Meetinghouse on Quaker Ridge Rd., which was built in 1814 and still stands today.

Casco once consisted of a series of small village areas, each tending to have a church, a school, a general store, a blacksmith shop, mills, etc. in order to sustain the nearby residents. If you take a look at one of the old maps (1857, or 1871) you can see where homes and businesses were clustered. Webbs Mills and South Casco by Thomas Pond were two of the larger villages of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The people of Casco were determined, independent, and persevered through many challenges.

Why is it important to preserve the past as we look to our future? History reminds us that we accomplish more together, that communities are formed by the people who live in them even more than the buildings they live in. That said, when we keep history alive through preservation and mindful updates, we show we value our community and the time and efforts of those who came before us. History provides roots, or a foundation from which the future grows. What we do today will be our legacy to future generations of Casco residents.

We acknowledge that the Town of Casco is located in the traditional territory of the Wabanaki Confederacy.



Above: An historic map of Casco from 1871. Casco once consisted of a series of small village areas, each tending to have a church, a school, a general store, a blacksmith shop, mills etc. Photo: Town of Casco

Below: Campers exercising at Camp Mechano, South Casco, 1924. Photo: Maine Memory Network



A Vision for Tomorrow





Protect the Village & Rural Way of Life

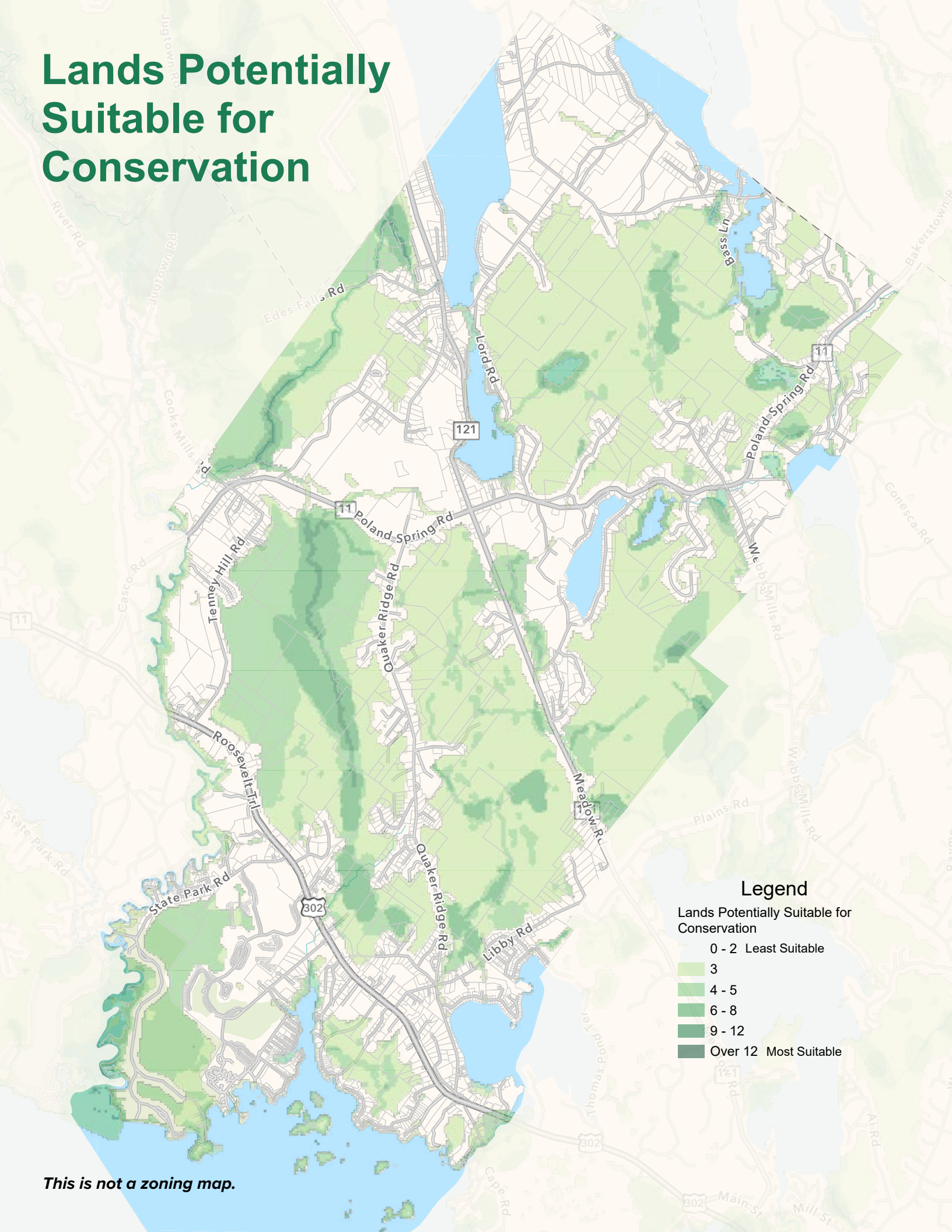
Residents of Casco agree that the ongoing and future protection of their villages, woods and waters is of highest importance. The potential for future development is acknowledged given Casco's place in Cumberland County and the in-migration that is happening to the State of Maine. The ethos of this plan carries forward much of the direction expressed in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan: preserve what makes Casco, Casco. Direct intentionally-designed growth to places where multiple community goals can be achieved.

5

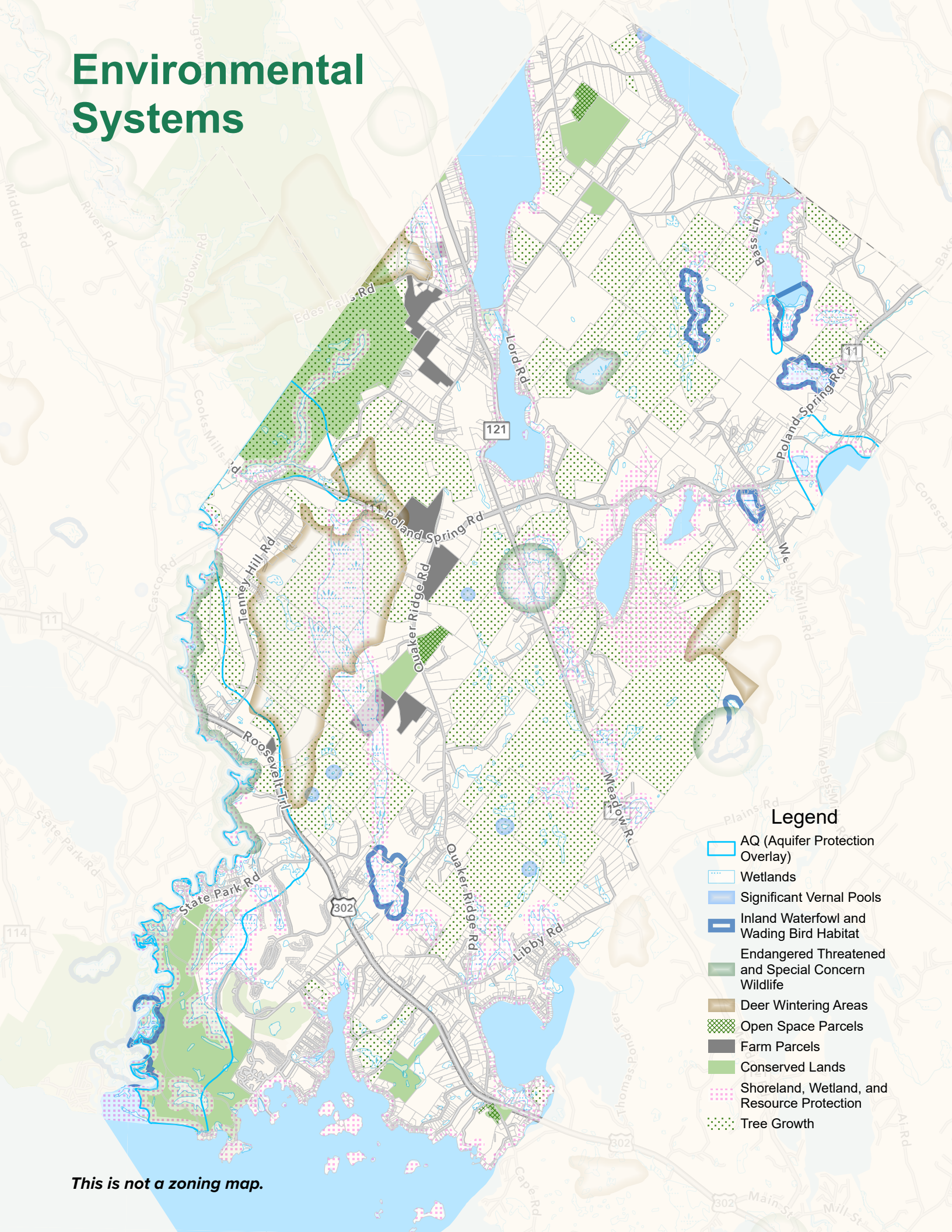
KEY LAND USE INITIATIVES SUPPORTED BY THE COMMUNITY

- 1 The villages of Casco should be protected, but limited, small-scaled development should be allowed to provide local neighborhood amenities:** coffee shops, small stores, multi-generational gathering spaces to meet neighborhoods and engage in social/recreational activities. The emphasis should be on replicating — not exceeding — the size and scale of buildings and the architectural vernacular that is here today. Contemporary, placeless architecture, large retailers and strip development that is found in neighboring towns along Rt. 302 should be strictly prohibited, and zoning standards should ensure the physical patterns of what is here today remains tomorrow.
- 2 Pike's Corner and Cooks Mills, historically considered as villages, have an opportunity to evolve into walkable, mixed-use village neighborhoods with new houses and some limited businesses.** The form of development here should replicate the same pattern of historic settlement found in the other villages, aesthetically controlled through new form-based zoning standards.
- 3 The water quality health of the lakes and ponds is of critical importance to residents.** People recognize that the stability of the town's tourist-based economy is dependent on good water quality, and a combination of continued Shoreland Zoning enforcement, education, monitoring and other programmatic activities is needed. People also recognize that long term permanent protections of forested lands, which comprises much of Casco's land area today, will ensure watershed health.
- 4 The businesses that call Casco home should be supported and valued for their contribution to the local economy.** Additional economic development and the attraction of business that creates demand for skilled labor and higher paying jobs is much desired for the Rt 302 corridor. Allowing more intense, concentrated development in some areas of Rt 302 will incentivize growth to focus on one area rather than sprawl out along the corridor in ways that residents strongly oppose.
- 5 Lands enrolled in tree growth are owned predominantly by two private landowners.** Residents expressed gratitude and appreciation for the (mostly) informal public access they enjoy to these privately held parcels. Residents are concerned that, over time, this relationship could change. With so much of Casco's land being held in Tree Growth, residents feel vulnerable they could lose this one great thing that makes up their identity and way of life.

Lands Potentially Suitable for Conservation



Environmental Systems



This is not a zoning map.

LANDS POTENTIALLY SUITABLE FOR CONSERVATION

The Lands Potentially Suitable for Conservation map is provided by MDIFW Beginning with Habitat Program. This is a natural resources co-occurrence map, “its purpose is to highlight a given area’s relative conservation values to aid in planning.” Data layers represent the concentration of environmental assets including rare and exemplary natural communities, threatened and endangered species, significant wildlife habitats and riparian zones and water resources, and undeveloped habitat blocks.

Residents can access an interactive data viewer at:

www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS

An Environmental Systems map was created and used during the public engagement process to lead the community through a conversation about where to protect historic settlements, farms, woods, waters and habitats. The Environmental Systems map communicates the protective policies that the town has implemented to date and contrasts this with the vast amount of land that is privately held, much of which is enrolled in Tree Growth and not secured in terms of future public access or land protection.

During Casco Planning Days, residents confirmed conservation priorities. People engaged in a hands-on mapping workshop to identify places people thought should be prioritized for protection and places where growth and development felt appropriate. Participants worked with a base map including wetlands, waterbodies, conserved lands, significant/natural habitat, water protection, recreational access, elevation, and current development. Participants also had access to the Lands Potentially Suitable for Conservation map. The visioning and mapping exercise showed that open space and forest preservation for recreational access and aesthetic purposes remain a top priority to Casco residents.

The Environmental Systems map uses the following combination of data layers from both town GIS sources and IFW Beginning with Habitat:

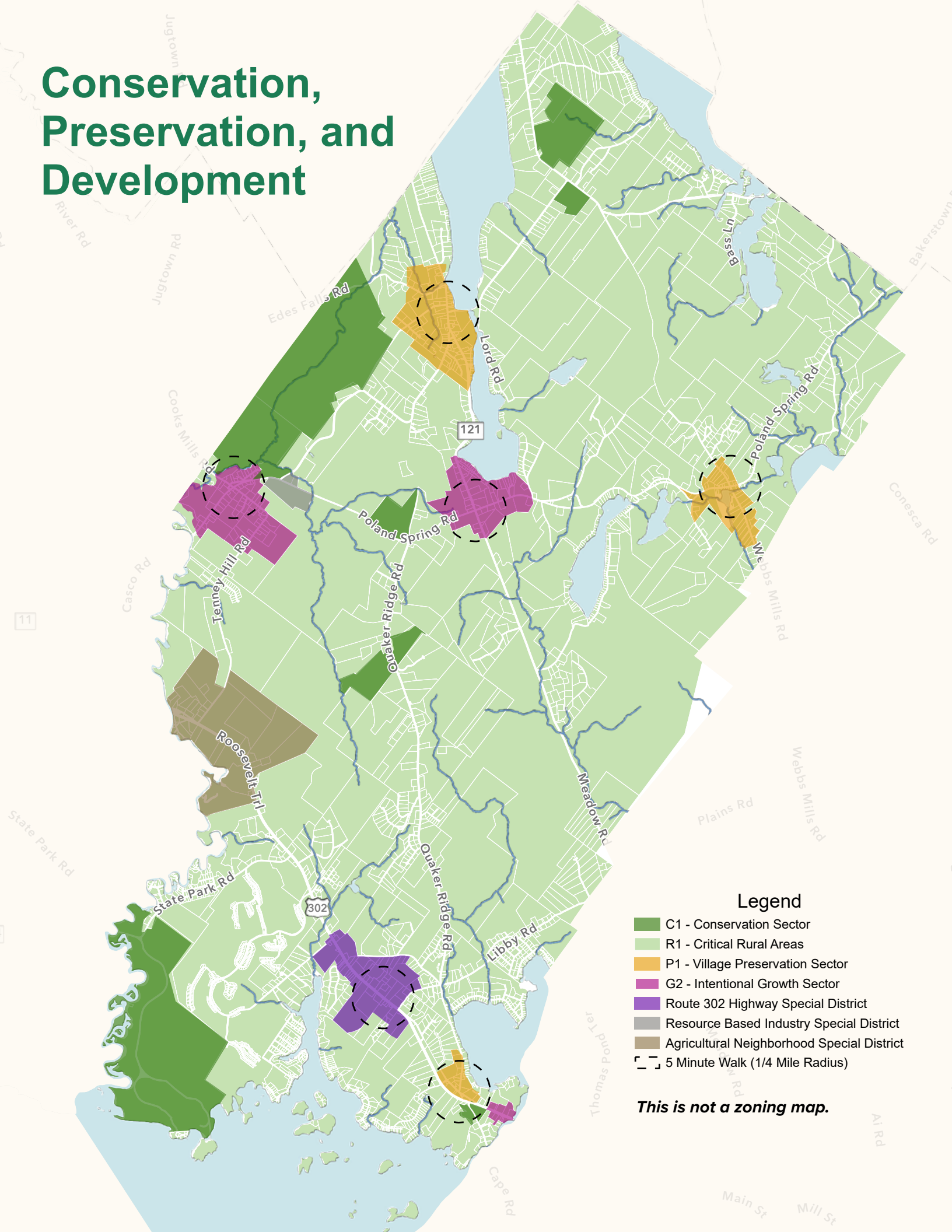
- Aquifer Protection Overlay District, Shoreland Zoning District, Streams and Wetlands Protection District
- Shoreland, Wetland, and Resource Protection Overlay Zones
- Significant Vernal Pools
- Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat
- Endangered Threatened and Special Concern Wildlife
- Deer Wintering Areas
- Conserved Lands, Open Space, Farm and Tree Growth Parcels

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS

A number of environmental protection policies are in place to protect groundwater, water bodies, drinking water supplies and water quality. For a thorough inventory of existing zoning policies, see data chapter, “Water and Natural Resources”. Having prepared the last comprehensive plan under this same review criteria, a number of the recommended minimum policies for protection of land and water, and land use development have been put into place. The town’s land use ordinances have been reviewed for consistency with current state laws.

The Big Idea, “ Be Leaders of Resiliency”, and, “Protect Woods, Waters, and Open Space” identify a number of policy-related action strategies to further protect critical resources. Strategic partnerships for implementation are also identified, such as the local land trusts, lakes associations, and regional planning agency.

Conservation, Preservation, and Development



CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT MAP

The Conservation, Preservation and Development map of Casco has been created through a balanced and considered process of community engagement, identifying community values, studying historic settlement patterns and exploring important environmental data. For a town located so close to Portland, and in a county where people are migrating within the county to seek more affordable housing, Casco understands now is the time to implement zoning policies that will direct development and investment to the areas of town already settled.

This map reflects places in Casco that are conserved, places that should be preserved, and places that have development investment opportunities. Future development and land use activities are being directed into strategic locations and at a scale and level that aligns with the future vision for each place: portions of the Route 302 priority corridor, and five villages. In most cases, these areas already had some degree of human settlement or past investment in municipal buildings, lands and infrastructure. In some cases, such as the Watkins Flats area, current commercial zoning rights combined with regional growth pressures will sway what happens here. So while it may have some critical resources, future growth can be shaped to mitigate impacts.

Next, whereas the previous plan identified a number of sprawling residential transitional areas, this plan intentionally eliminates that designation, instead identifying land as rural or as a place type — a place for protection, enhancement or transformational development. The plan and recommended land use policy amendments directs development away from critical resources and environmental systems.



SECTORS



C1 - Conservation | NO GROWTH

This is a No Growth area. It contains land that has been protected from development in perpetuity, by way of acquisition, easement, covenant or agreement. The legal instrument for each parcel explicitly calls out how the property can be used, but generally a limited amount of development is accommodated. As new lands are secured for conservation or preservation, those lands would be added to this sector and map.



R1 - Critical Rural Areas | LIMITED GROWTH

The R1 area identifies critical rural lands comprising of forests and timber resources, significant farms and farmlands, open space, lakes and ponds, scenic areas and views, high-value wildlife and fisheries habitat, aquifers, flood buffer and floodprone areas, and open lands functionally necessary to support a vibrant rural economy. Lands located here are deserving of the maximum protection from development. While this area currently has a range of regulatory protections in place, new development should continue to be subjected to environmental regulations, and stronger site design standards should be considered to further protect the town's rural assets and minimize negative impacts to land and water, flora and fauna. Further, it is hoped that a combination of voluntary rural, form-based code tools can encourage development to organize in the least-impactful way on the land.



P1 - Village I | PRESERVATION, LIMITED GROWTH

The Villages designated for Preservation recognize that build-out has predominantly occurred and some infill of new buildings, renovation of existing buildings - including civic buildings should be allowed. The presence of civic buildings (including churches), public spaces and other municipal amenities here serve as social gathering centers and recreational outlets. There is a desire to continue to invest municipal dollars into buildings, land and infrastructure despite the fact that limited future growth will occur in these historic settlements. These areas should be rezoned from simply one Village District into two - three districts, reflecting the predominantly residential nature of the buildings, yet recognizing the dimensional pattern of what is here and allowing for some limited commercial uses and a variety of residential building types. The villages designated P1 include: Casco, Webbs Mills, and South Casco Village.



G2 - Village I | ENHANCE, LIMITED GROWTH

The villages designated for enhancement through limited growth provide places for new housing and mix of neighborhood businesses and services to help support the neighborhood and town's tax base. In the Cooks Mills area, the town recently invested money renovating the Crooked River School, and there's an opportunity to build out a new village neighborhood center here in a pattern similar to the historic villages. In Pike's Corner, the town has created a municipal campus with town office, fire station, recently improved park, and acquired lands for water access to Parker Pond. Currently a rural crossroads (but known historically as a village), this area has the potential to transform into a handful of walkable, mixed use blocks of neighborhood with limited commercial activities and a variety of residential building types. The "Water's Edge," along the southeastern-most portion of Route 302 in Casco, a former antique mall, metalsmith, and fabrication site, is also an opportunity for reinvestment. Allowing places for new villages with smaller lots will incentivize development to locate here rather than in areas requiring big lots and longer roads to serve them.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

The following Special Districts identify additional areas of town for designated growth and development. Many of these areas are currently zoned to allow land use activities and development in alignment with the land uses and activities that are happening here today. Assigning special districts allows the town to be more nuanced in its approach to how future development will occur here, recognizing the unique characteristics of the land, existing development, and desired future use for each.



Route 302 Highway Special District I DESIGNATED GROWTH AREA

This special district would allow a portion of Rt 302 to have increased development rights allowing the area to develop into a high quality, attractive, dense commercial mixed use district. The intended pattern of development here would place smaller footprint buildings of higher quality design and construction towards the front of the lots, with larger footprint, simpler buildings such as fabrication buildings, hotels, inns, and multi-unit apartment buildings towards the back of lots. Development would organize around connected, walkable street blocks rather than individual driveways, dead end streets and parking lots serving individual buildings. New frontage created by a street network would serve as frontage for new buildings. Local trips between buildings would occur on this internal connected street network rather than on Rt 302. Properties with buildings today could fill in with new buildings in front of existing ones, improving the aesthetic along Rt 302. Storage and warehouse buildings could be screened by these new buildings. The town could actively attract new employers to this area of town, and permit supportive workforce housing here.



Resource-Based Industry Special District

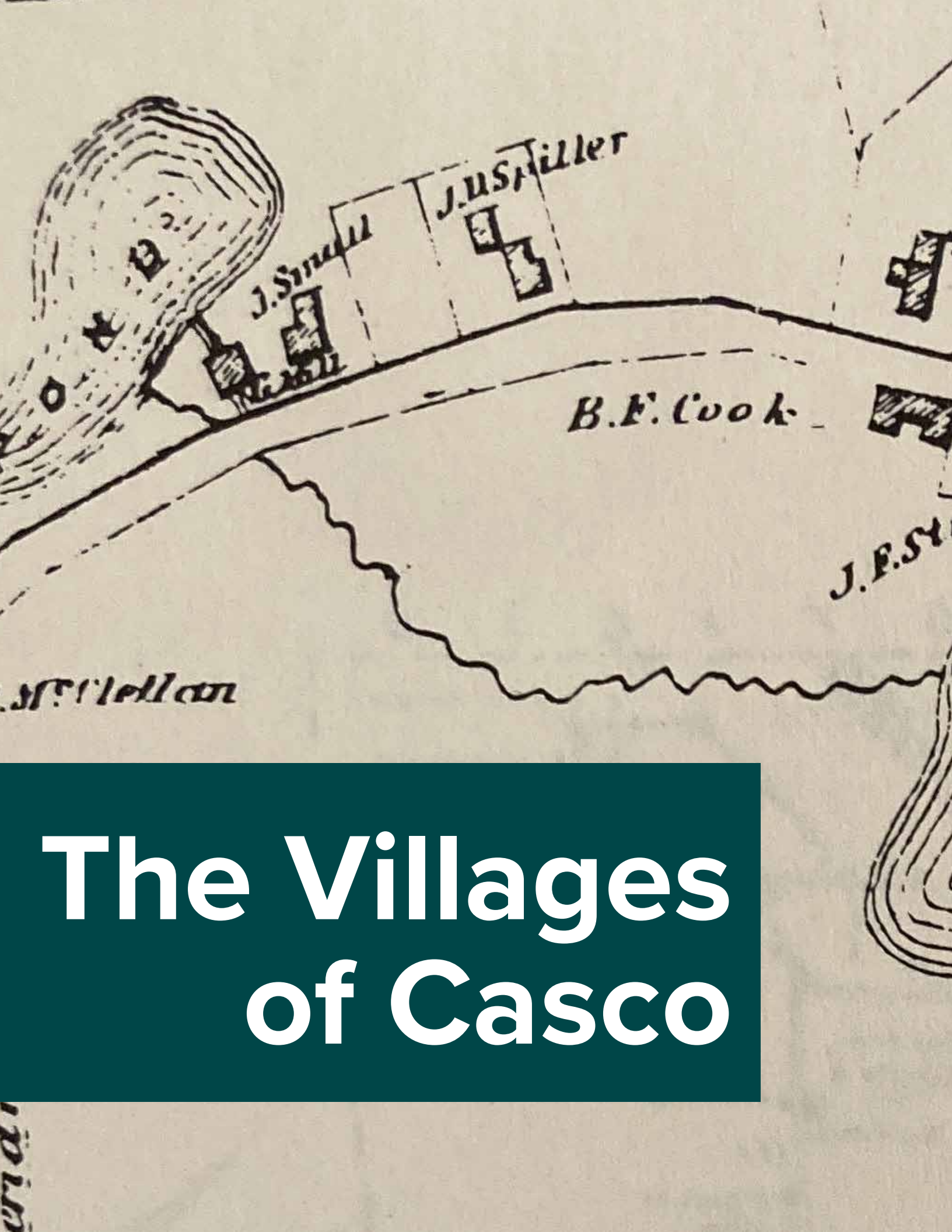
DESIGNATED GROWTH AREA

This special district includes Hancock Lumber’s mill and retail outlet. It reinforces the land use activities that occur here today and make it easy for expanded operations to happen should businesses want to do so. Special performance standards could address any potential concerns like noise, dust, traffic, and stormwater runoff.

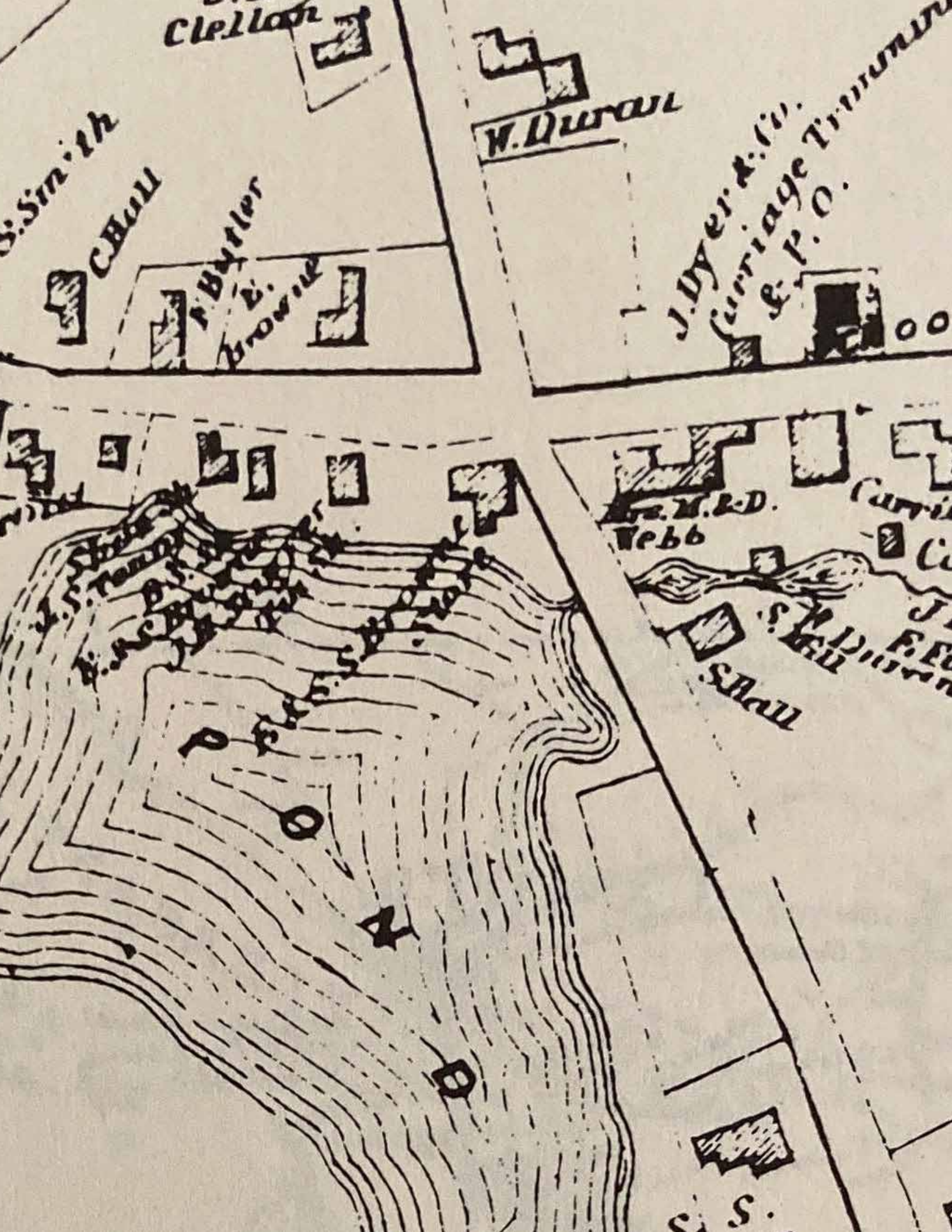


Agricultural Neighborhood Special District

This special district allows development to emerge as a complete neighborhood of village scaled lots, blocks and streets oriented around agriculture and continues to allow commercial activities. The Watkins Flats area at Rt 302 and Tenney Hill could develop as an agricultural neighborhood where the much loved farming, agricultural buildings (farmstand), and scenic views are preserved and integrated into a new neighborhood. The building of workforce and farm worker housing should be encouraged, as should tourist-based agricultural supportive commercial business such as inns, retail stores, farm-to-table restaurants, farmers markets, artisan and makerspaces, food production, and wellness-oriented services and activities. A portion of this property is zoned Aquifer Protection District, and development that occurs here should be designed to minimize and avoid impacts to the aquifer, such as limiting impervious surfaces and using current Maine DEP stormwater best management practices to guide site design.



The Villages of Casco



Clellan

C. Smith

C. Ball

F. Butler

E. Browne

W. Durand

J. Dyer & Co.

Carriage Trimmings
& P.O.

F. M. & D. Webb

S. Hall

S. S.

Carriage

Co.

J. F. E. D. Co.

F. E. D. Co.

Strengthening Casco's Villages

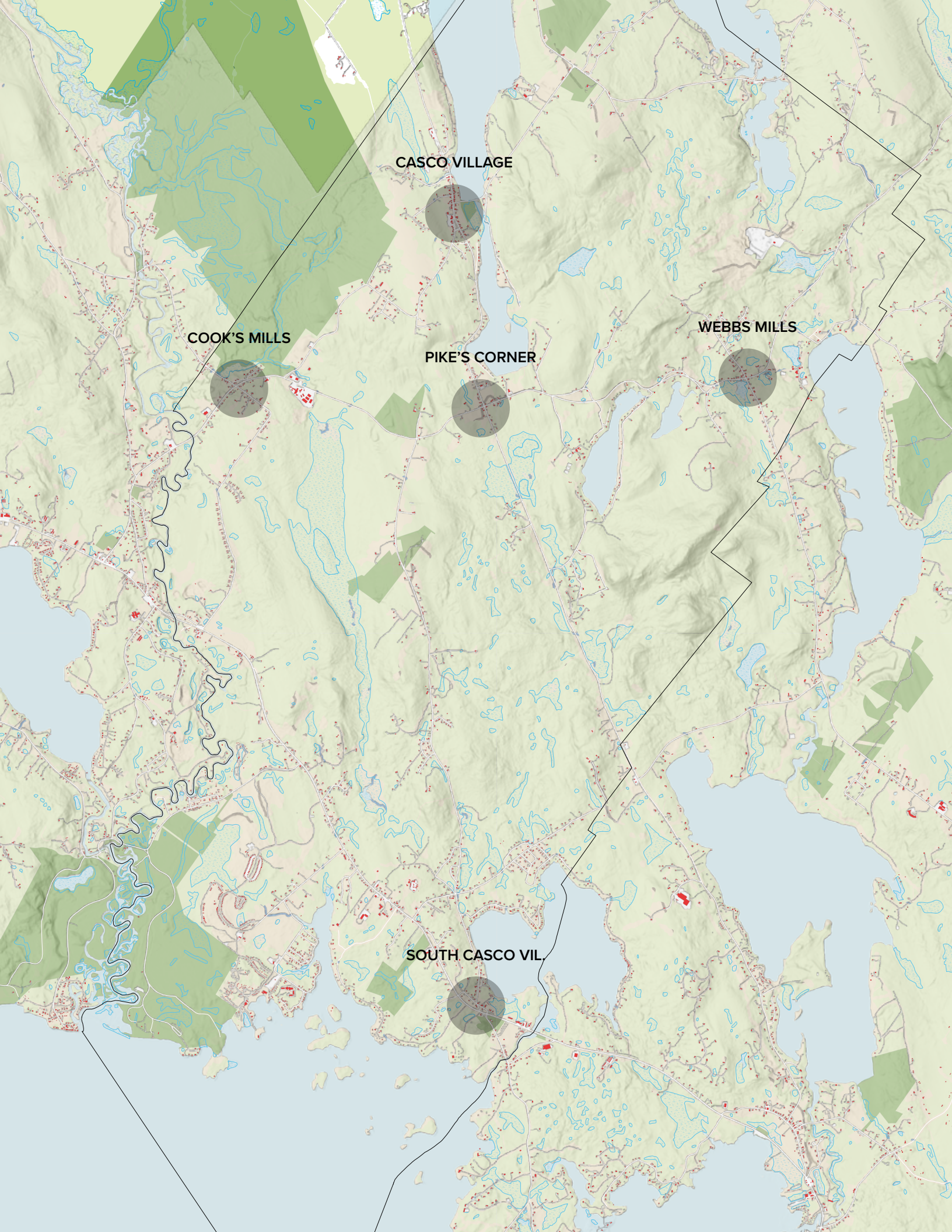
From the planning process the team learned that Casco has intact villages, many of which have very similar patterns as others. While the villages identified have historically provided more resources — commercial activity, social institutions, and recreational space — they have become almost entirely residential.

While trails and protection of open space have been a focus, less attention has been given to protections and enhancements in the villages. Casco Village, Pike's Corner, and Webbs Mills each have formal outdoor public spaces. The historic Grange in Casco Village is no longer active and privately owned. While the villages do not have housing clustered around a central

point, they comprise little other than residential space. In the whole of Casco, there are very few local shops, particularly outside of the industrial/commercial stretch of Rt. 302. Nowhere in Casco is walkable, even within villages. To travel between villages requires personal vehicles as they are completely disconnected.

The future of the villages can be an evolution into, or back to, well-rounded centers. Pike's Corner, also referred to as the Crossroads, is one strong example of the potential for growth in Casco's Villages. There is the potential for a commercial center and municipal campus. In its geographical position near the center of Casco, any effort to connect the villages would be centralized through Pike's Corner, making the area more of a crossroads where people intersect and meet rather than an intersection where cars speed through.





CASCO VILLAGE

COOK'S MILLS

PIKE'S CORNER

WEBB'S MILLS

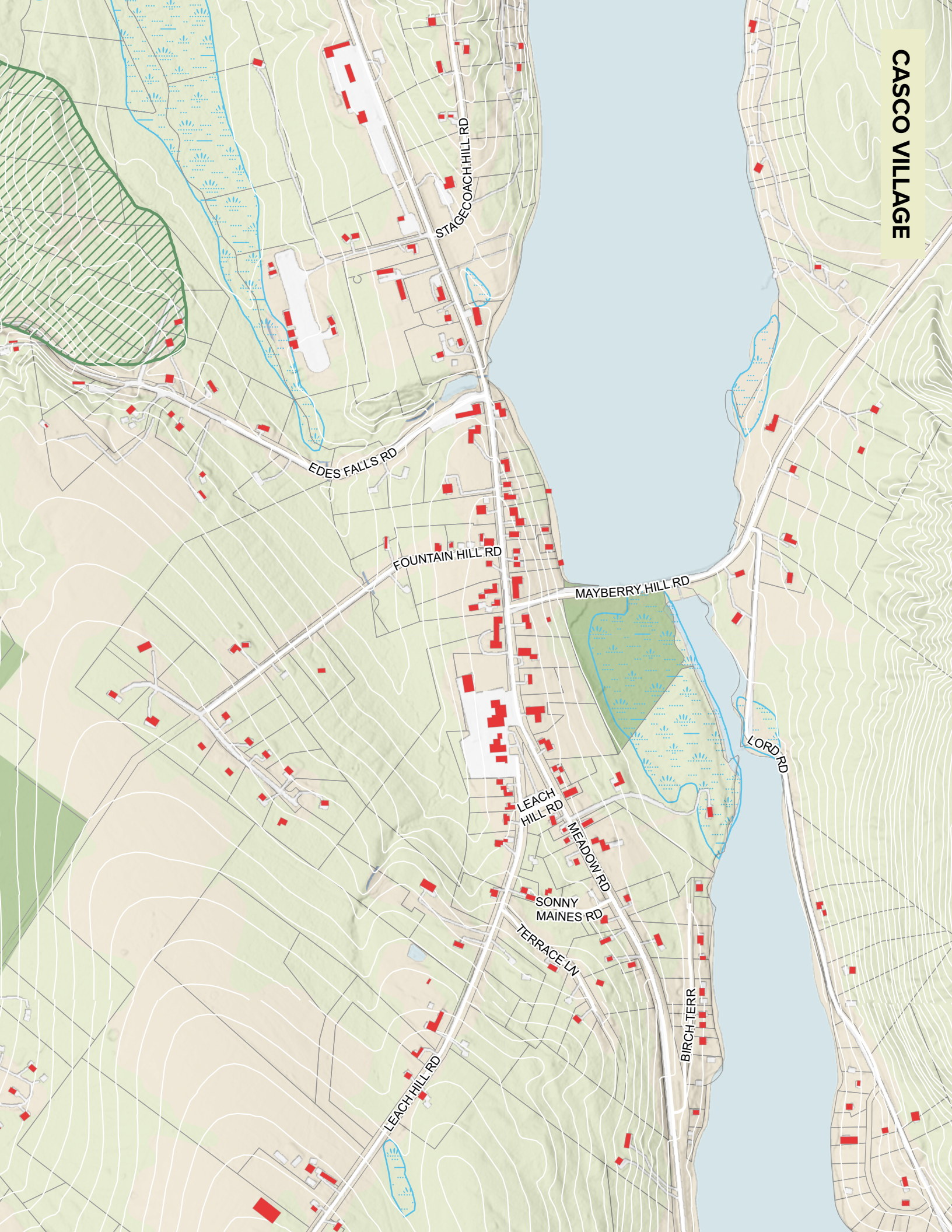
SOUTH CASCO VIL.



Casco Village

Casco Village is the social center of the town, home to the Community Center, Library, Casco Village Church, Village Green, and Casco Days Park where the annual Casco Days fair is hosted. The village contains one of two public beaches and some of the only sidewalks in Casco. The village is characterized by a number of historic buildings despite losses in recent years such as the historic Grange Hall.

CASCO VILLAGE





Casco Village is centered on Route 121 along the western side of Parker Pond and Pleasant Lake. Because of the concentration of social and recreational resources, the village is one of the most frequented areas of Casco. The Community Center, in particular, hosts many visitors daily where a large range of activities take place such as after school sports, senior meals, and town meetings. Residents made the importance of the space clear during the public process and added that the demand for the Community Center

exceeds the space available. There is a desire to relocate activity unrelated to recreation and social activities (i.e., Government and municipal functions) elsewhere.

The short stretch of Route 121 where the heart of the village lies is marked by a speed limit change from 50 mph to 30 mph, however, residents have noted that cars rarely slow down passing through. While there are some sidewalks, pedestrians must walk on the side of the road for sections,



putting them in danger of speeding cars. Parking takes place off-street in the municipal parking lot adjacent to the Community Center and Post Office or in driveways of individual homes.

Casco Village has one of the widest ranges of building types in the town after the Route 302 area, including an assisted living facility, large connected barns to homes, small single family homes, large churches, and civic buildings. Many of these buildings have historic roots and are

part of the village's historic aesthetic. Participants in Casco Planning Days referred to this as one of the reasons the village is special, highlighting the need to create protections to preserve the historical aesthetic, particularly as chain and non-local businesses become interested in expanding to Casco. Additionally, Casco residents noted the lack of small local shops in the village (as well as the town more generally) and their desire to see more shops and restaurants.

Webbs Mills

Webbs Mills is one of the most complete neighborhoods in Casco. Centered around the intersection of Webbs Mills Road and Route 11, Webbs Mills boasts many historic homes and has a restaurant, a sugar shack, a church, and a waterfront park.

Similar to other parts of Casco, Webbs Mills residents are concerned about the speed of cars coming down Route 11. A speed change brings the limit down to 35 mph around the village's central intersection and a homemade sign asks drivers to "please slow down" as they approach. There are a handful of meeting places near the intersection. A park (soon to be expanded) on one corner has a scenic space where people can be found sitting in the gazebo, eating at the picnic table, or fishing in the pond. Another corner hosts Webbs Mills Eats and Craft Brews, which has limited indoor and outdoor dining space. Off of the intersection is Webbs Mills Free Baptist Church.

Houses in Webbs Mills tend to be single family, one to two stories, and removed from the street, although closer to the intersection are generally not as far back as in other parts of town. Webbs Mills has a mixture of historic homes with historic aesthetics and newer homes that tend to be smaller. There are several rundown buildings including one that was recently lost to a fire.



Photos: GPCOG

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Pike's Corner

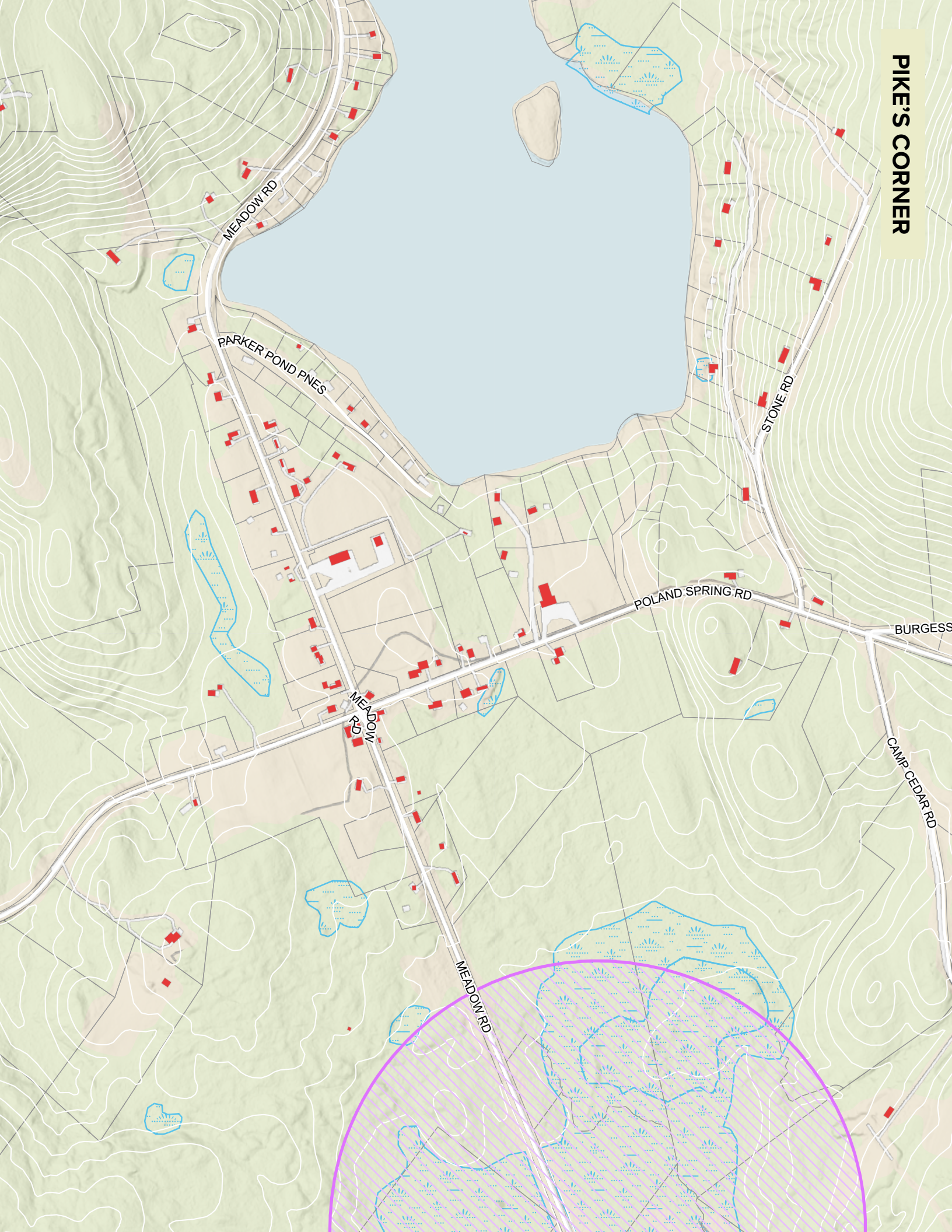
Pike's Corner is the municipal center of Casco, sitting at the intersection of Route 121 and Route 11. Pike's Corner is home to the relatively newly constructed Town Office and Fire Station as well as Kindred Farms, one of the most popular food establishments in Casco.

The town buildings in Pike's Corner are removed from the street and surrounded by a large municipal parking lot. Because they were so newly constructed, the buildings are modern but have a classically municipal style. The Town Office has a fluorescent sign on Route 121 that displays town news and meeting times. The sign is the most clear marker that the municipal center of Casco is there. Kindred Farms is closer to the street with parking behind the store front and is often busy, with cars circulating regularly. The intersection sees quite a bit of daily vehicular traffic. Because of the historic high volume of crashes at the intersection, the intersection is now controlled by

a four way stop. While the area is easy to travel through by car, residents expressed a desire for non-motorized connectivity between Pike's Corner and other villages, particularly Casco Village which is only about 1.5 miles up Route 121.

Residents and town staff recognized the potential for the plot of land recently purchased by the town which surrounds the Town Office and stretches down to the lake. The land has the capacity to transform what now exists as a dislocated collection of municipal buildings into a complete, walkable campus.

PIKE'S CORNER

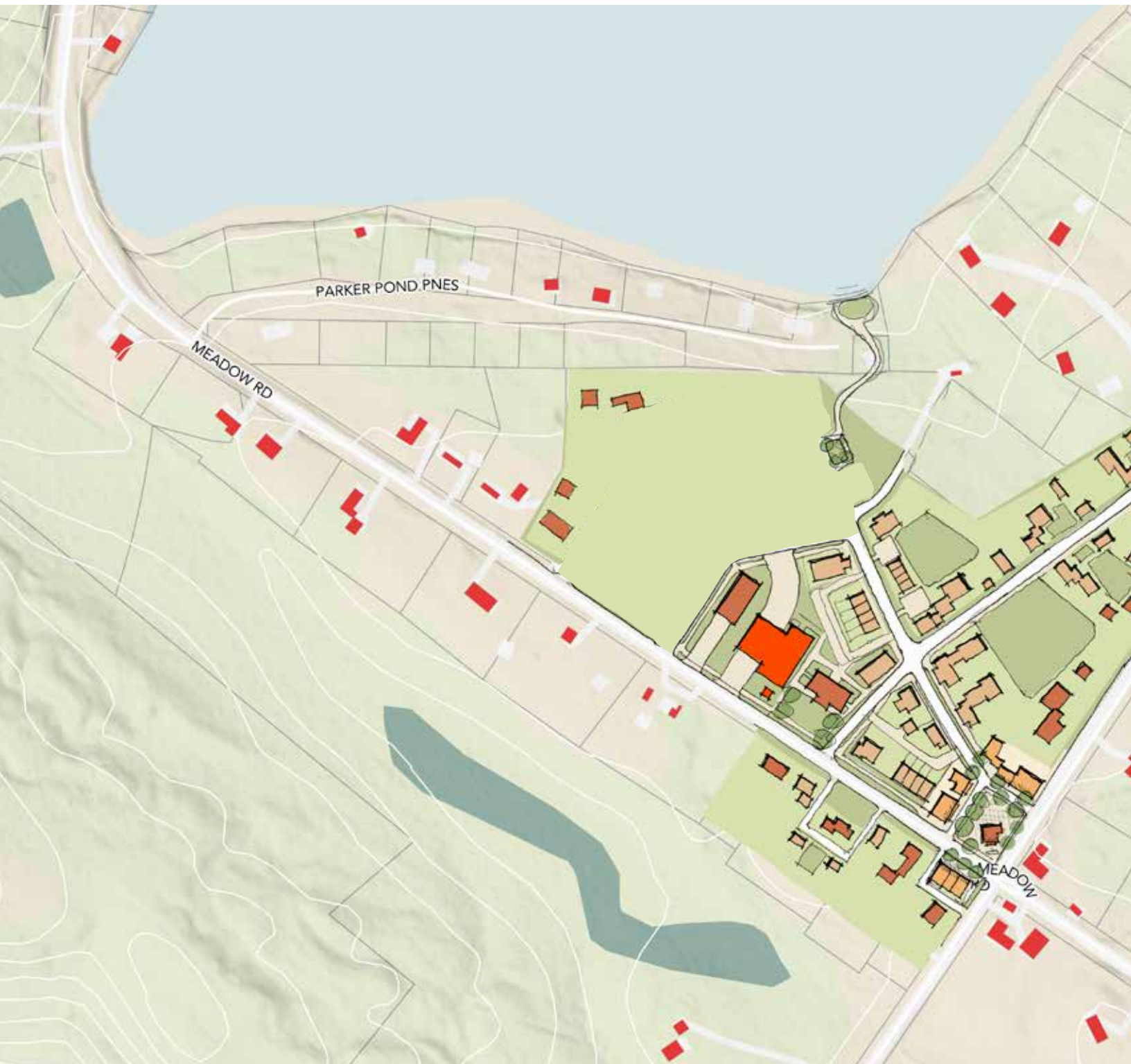




This is a conceptual drawing expressing ideas only.



This is a conceptual drawing expressing ideas only.



This is a conceptual drawing expressing ideas only.



This is a conceptual drawing expressing ideas only.

The design for Pike's Corner as presented here is one of a number that could be considered. During the planning process participants expressed various views for how this area, particularly the 11-acre parcel owned by the Town, should be used. The three most commonly heard desired uses were for open space/public space, housing, and municipal expansion. Further master planning and decision making on the part of the town (in the case of town-owned land) or private landowners will be needed to come to a consensus on the ideas expressed here to determine what this part of town should look like.

This particular rendition of Pike's Corner focuses on the possibility of a multi-generational neighborhood with supportive amenities like the town office, newly improved playground, trails and access to water, and local cafe. As the site is flat, it presents an opportunity to become a place for seniors to live as they downsize and allow them to stay in the community as they age.

These drawings were developed during Casco Planning Days to illustrate how a mix of new housing types and local businesses could be arranged around intimate village-scaled blocks and civic spaces. The block pattern allows for development to happen slowly, over time. With this pattern of connected blocks, each block could accept a modification of the design by swapping in more housing, less housing, more open space or less open space, different housing types, etc.

The ideas encompassed by this Comprehensive Plan are meant to ensure that whatever tools are needed will be in place to bring to life whatever the agreed upon vision turns out to be.

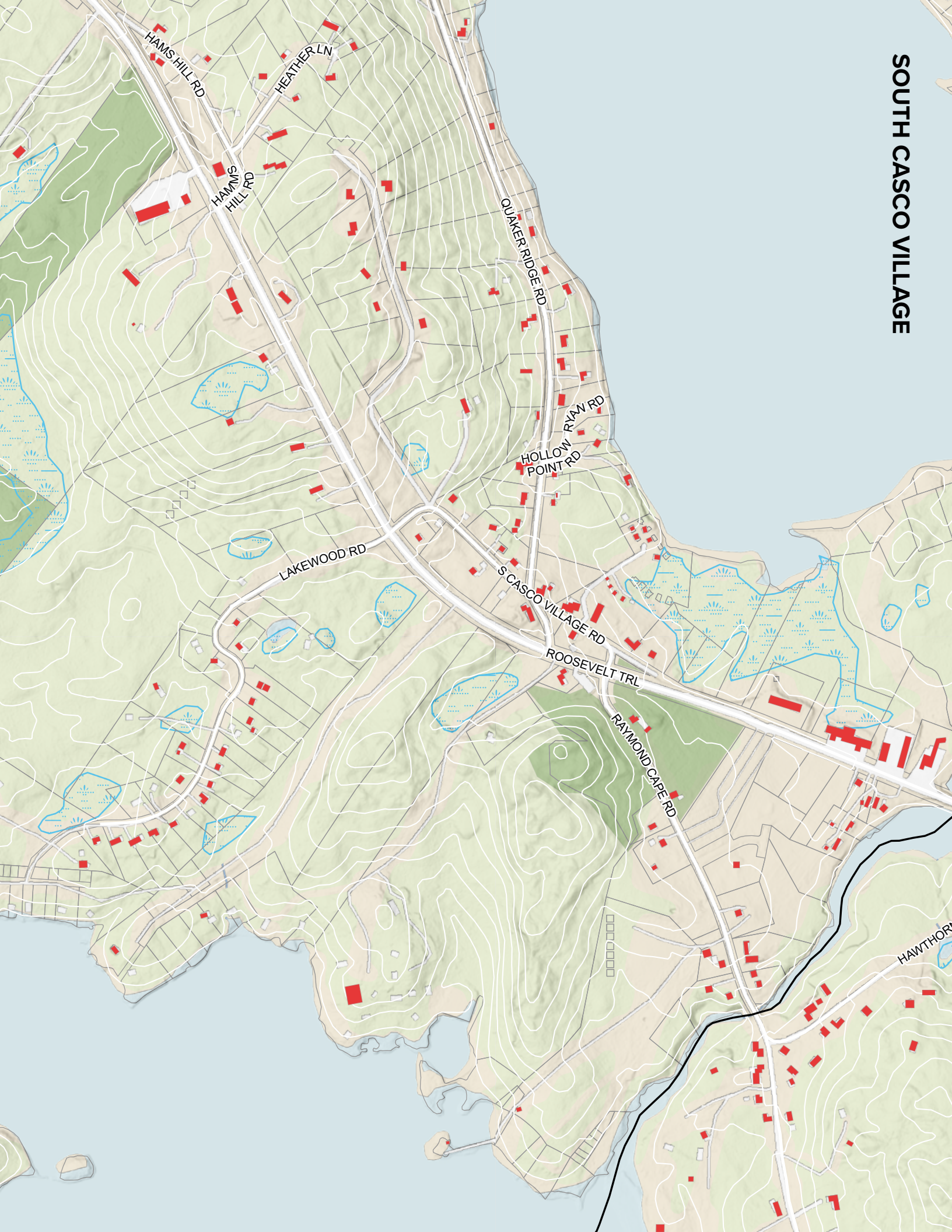
South Casco Village

South Casco, located on Route 302 at the end of Quaker Ridge Road, marks the spot of a formerly vibrant village. Today, South Casco is predominantly a residential area dotted with single family homes.

While South Casco may not appear as a robust village today, there are glimpses of the village it was in the past. South Casco had far more robust activities and industries which developed during the village's beginnings surrounding saw and corn mills. South Casco had a vibrant economy in the second half of the 19th century when the business of the mills was accompanied by the production of wood products and many shops including corn shops, a box shop, a carriage and smith shop, a coat shop, and a general store. There were reports that not only was the village populated by residents, but patrons came all the way from Portland to visit the carriage shop. By the mid 20th century, South Casco had lost many of the old buildings and the village had become less cohesive. Adding new businesses and activities within the villages should be approached thoughtfully in both use and design.



SOUTH CASCO VILLAGE



Cook's Mills

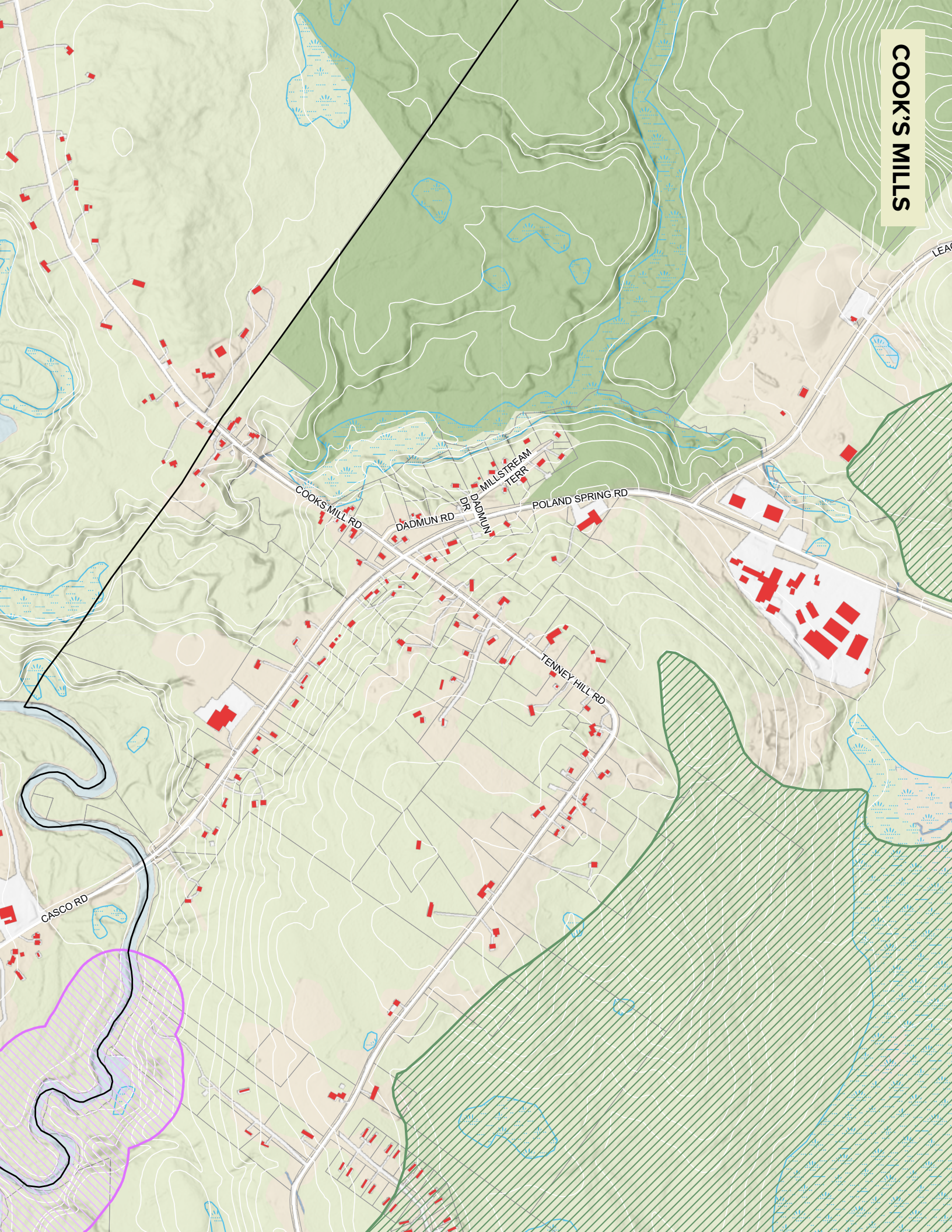
Cook's Mills is centered along Route 11 and is home to the Crooked River Elementary School. A recent reinvestment in the school could be leveraged to bring new investment in housing to the area.

Community members expressed concern about Route 11 as it passes Crooked River Elementary, particularly related to the high speed of cars driving around the bend. Residents expressed desire for the road to be made safer for students who walk to school or have to cross the street to reach the school as well as the general safety of students near the road. Potential treatments to address the speeds suggested by residents at the public planning process included planting native plants along the road.

The village has a residential population accommodated by a stock of low to moderate income housing. Turnout by Cook's Mills residents was low during the public planning process so the planning team was only able to gain limited insight into relevant issues and desires for the area.



COOK'S MILLS





Civic Buildings & Spaces

Civic buildings and spaces are essential elements of a neighborhood and continue to serve an important role in civic life and sociability today.

Casco's municipal buildings are concentrated in Pike's Corner and in Casco Village which are spaced just under one and a half miles apart on Route 121. The Casco Town Office was newly constructed in 2015 in Pike's Corner next to the fire station and municipal storage building, which the public works department currently occupies. All buildings are set significantly back from the street with a large parking lot in between. With existing buildings and a newly purchased plot of land that reaches from the Town Office to Parker Pond, Pike's Corner presents an opportunity to transform into a full municipal complex and expanded village center.

In Casco Village, civic buildings create an existing, cohesive village center. There, the Post Office and Community Center with a gym and meeting rooms sits next to the Casco Library and across from the Casco Village Church. Sidewalks in Casco Village are limited. Next to the Community Center is Casco Days park, where Casco Days is held annually, providing a year-round outdoor community gathering space. Casco has one mid-sized school, Crooked River School, located on Route 11.



Uses & Activities in the Rural Areas



FORESTS & CONSERVED LANDS

Casco has a significant number of large, rural lots comprised mostly of forests, with farms and conserved lands. Casco has 6,559 acres of forestland enrolled in the Tree Growth current use tax program, 331 acres enrolled in the Farmland current use tax program and 65 acres enrolled in the Open Space current use tax program. Casco's rural spaces draw residents and visitors for appreciation and recreation. Much of Casco's rural land is owned by a small number of private landowners. Loon Echo Land Trust own some properties and holds some easements. There's a robust network of maintained hiking, ATV, and snowmobile trails criss-crossing the rural lands, and the lakes draw visitors for water-based recreation.



RURAL FARMS

There are few rural farms in Casco. The most notable is Hancock Family Farm, a local small-scale farming operation which produces primarily for their popular CSA program and farm stand. The farm is located off of Quaker Ridge Road where farm buildings, which have a classic aesthetic, lie on a private road in the middle of the farmland. The Loon Echo Land Trust has easements on several sites that were historically agricultural lands, however none are working farms.

CAMPS & RESORTS

Casco has many camps and resorts, ranging in size and amenity. Small privately owned camps include Camp Laurel South, Netop and Camp Cedar. South of Route 302 land use is dominated by water-dependent resort recreational properties and camp types along Sebago Lake such as Point Sebago, Camp Sunshine, and Migis Lodge. Many of the larger camps are almost entirely self-contained and function as campus-like places with a combination of central gathering spaces indoor and out, kitchen and dining facilities, private and group shared lodging, lanes, pathways, office administration and retail. They tend to be off a main road, most often Route 302, and have networks of private roads. Buildings are oriented around natural features, recreational spaces and the water, and vehicular access is limited in favor of pedestrian walkways. Environmental regulations such as shoreland zoning, wetlands and stream protection districts may be applicable to any new site development.

SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

Casco's suburban neighborhood developments are scattered throughout town and are characterized by single family building types set back significantly from the street on wide, disconnected lots – many of which sit on more than an acre of land. Casco also has a section of rural area zoned for manufactured housing and includes a large area of duplex lots developed in the 1960s-70s. Streets often dead-end and lack sidewalks, necessitating drivers and pedestrians share the street. Most of these developments in Casco have no neighborhood center that can be reached easily walking from homes. Much of the residential development in Casco from the 1960s to today follows a suburban pattern.

INDUSTRIAL/MUNICIPAL

Casco's industrial past continues with the Hancock Lumber Sawmill and warehouses on Route 11. It is the most intensive industry business in Casco,. There is a P&K Quarry located in a Contract Zone between Route 11 and the Heath. The Casco/Naples Bulky Waste and Transfer Station is a medium industrial municipal facility on Leach Hill Road.





Emerging Places



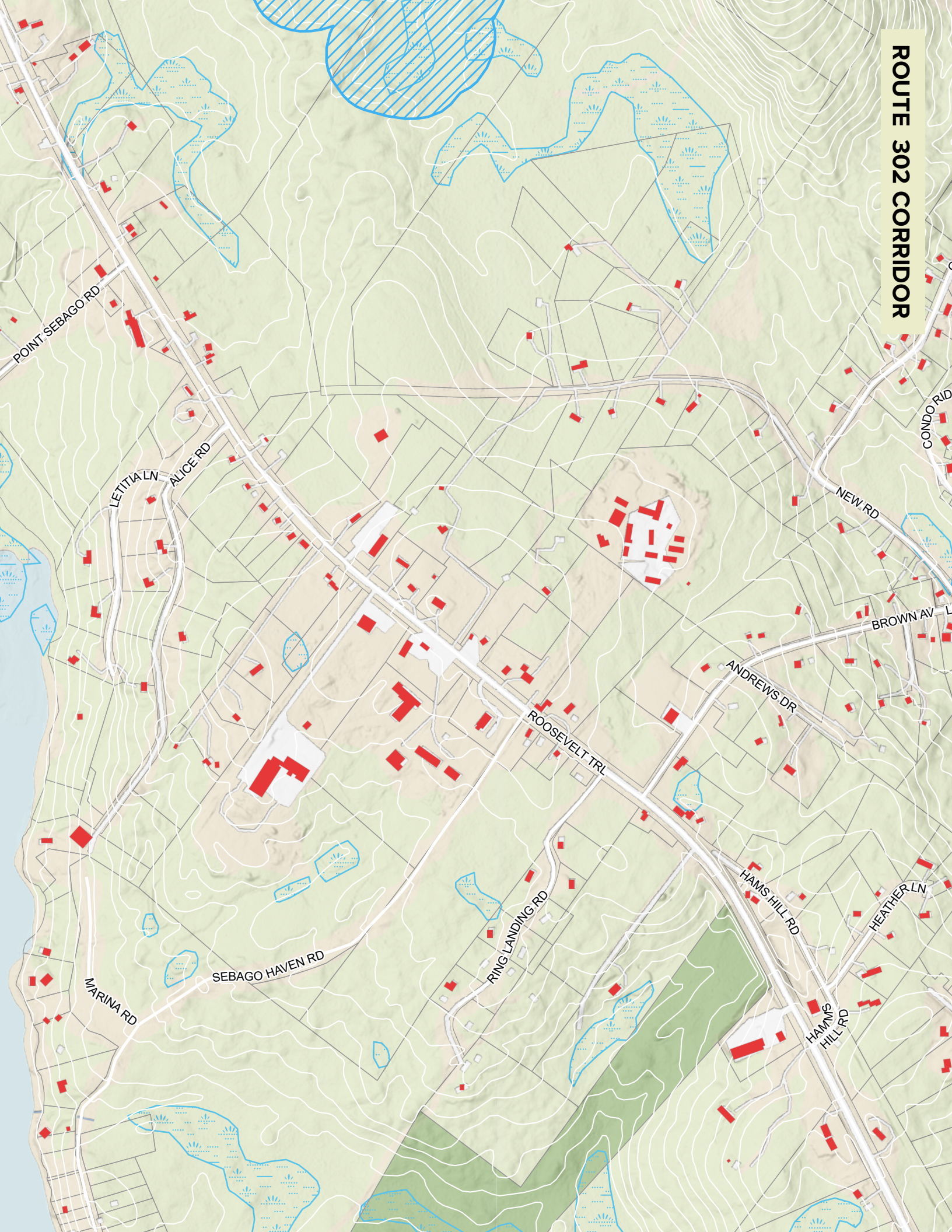


Route 302 Corridor

Route 302 is a high-speed regional throughway that bisects Casco between Raymond and Naples. Either commercially zoned or commercially used, the 302 corridor allows for many kinds of land uses with no regulations to control scale of buildings and design. This has led to a disconnected hodge-podge of places and aesthetics, from quaint historic buildings to massive industrial warehouses and storage buildings.

Although the regional corridor hosts local tenants as well as regional and national chains, Route 302 in Casco has a significant concentration of light industrial business including many commercial and storage facilities. Most commercial buildings are medium sized, particularly industrial repair and auto-oriented commercial establishments. Most buildings are set far back from the road with parking lots in front, and a mixture of landscaping treatments. Parking lots are often accessed by wide, street-sized access lanes or individual driveways and dead-end streets.

ROUTE 302 CORRIDOR







“

How can we make sure we still look like Casco in the future?

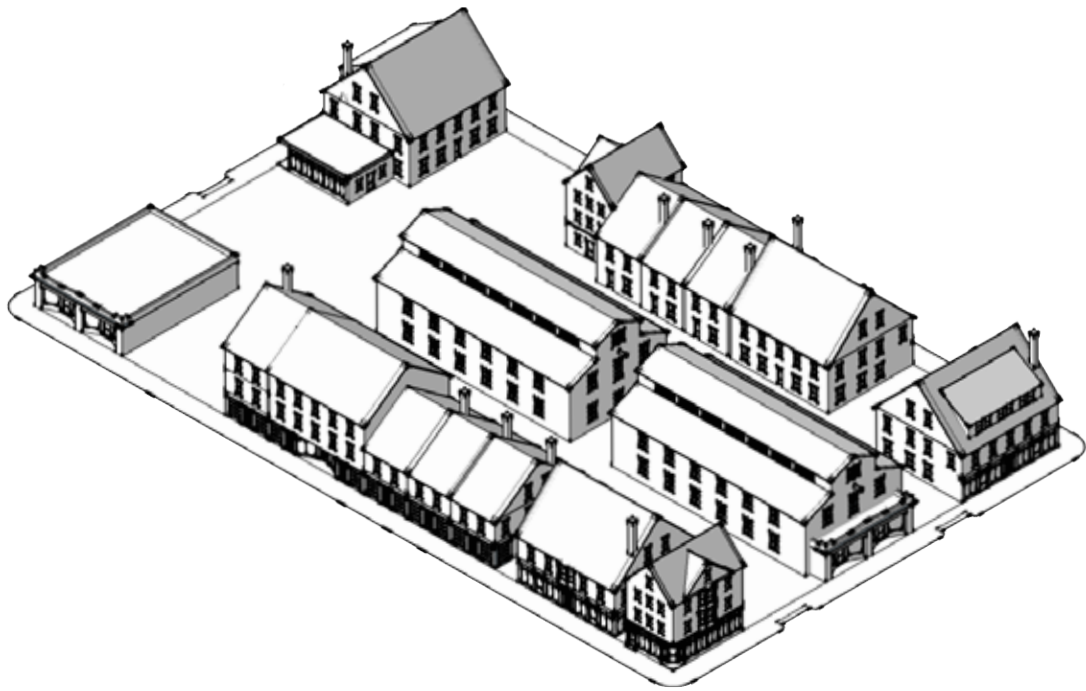
HOW TO REPAIR THE CORRIDOR

Residents expressed a desire to see increased economic development in the Town of Casco to support its tax base while maintaining Casco's rural, aesthetic heritage. Participants in the planning process posed the questions to the design team: how do we attract development for Rt 302 in a way that boosts property values rather than diminishes? How can we have coffee shops and manufacturing and entrepreneurial industries with well paying jobs while minimizing impacts to the land and land consumption? How can we make sure we still look like Casco into the future?

The rendering on the previous page shows a number of new, larger footprint buildings arranged near Rt 302, imagining that for a section of the corridor, speeds could be civilized in order to create a mixed use business district. With amendments to zoning, buildings can fill in the frontages along Rt 302 to screen other less aesthetically valued uses like outdoor and indoor storage. The idea is not to reject those types of uses and more cost-effective, large footprint buildings, but to strategically locate them behind smaller buildings that have been designed to give something back to the street.

What does this vision mean? It means economic development opportunities. It means workforce housing opportunities, bringing people and jobs together. It means one day this area of Rt 302 could be a place people stop, not simply drive through at fast speeds.

Below: An example of how one Maine town used a form-based code to continue to allow large highway oriented buildings and uses, while also reinforcing a higher quality place.



a. DESCRIPTION

The Highway Commercial Special District accommodates the areas of Route 1 developed that has an auto-oriented suburban pattern and where there is a desire to change the pattern of development through infill and redevelopment of underutilized and vacant sites, and allow greater future commercial activity.

b. PURPOSE

1. To accommodate large highway oriented buildings in a predictable manner that reinforces a high-quality character.
2. To enable the continuation of existing highway commercial uses, while allowing new development that enables buildings to be closer together with opportunities for walking.

c. LOT DIMENSIONS

Width	20 ft min, 100 ft max (3)
Depth	n/a

d. PRIMARY BUILDING PLACEMENT

Primary Front Setback	0 ft max
Secondary Front Setback	3 ft max
Side Setback	5 ft max
Rear Setback	5 ft min

New regulations and development that enables buildings to be closer together and consolidated access/ circulation creates opportunities for walking between buildings without having to re-enter Rt 302. The Highway Commercial Special District shows a variety of building types including fabrication buildings, workshops and small hotel/inn building which could also be retirement/senior housing. Smaller mixed use building types fill in the frontage and provide opportunities for expanding Casco’s commercial tax base.



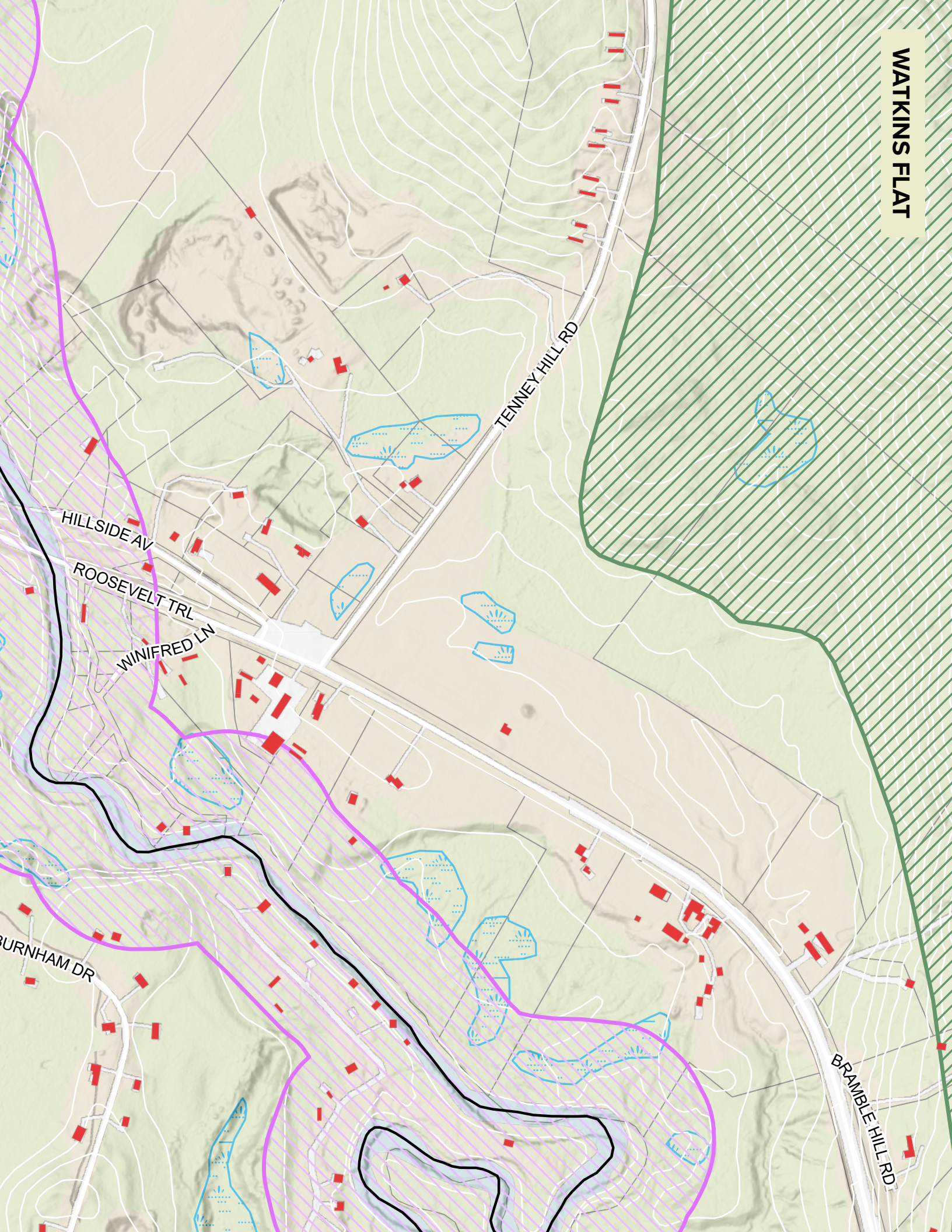
Watkins Flat Agricultural Neighborhood

The Watkins Flats area is both beloved for its wide sweeping views across a field, the cluster of historic buildings at the Raymond Casco Historical Society, and the ice cream and farm stands. And yet this area of the Rt 302 corridor is infamous for traffic accidents and dangerous driving conditions. Furthermore, the land is zoned for commercial activities and well-positioned in the lakes region to see development. Because of these conditions, Casco Planning Days tested out the concept of development arranged around agriculture to balance land protections with the likely scenario of future growth.

The Town could consider adopting an Agricultural Neighborhood ordinance that protects land while providing limited development rights. In this diagram, housing is arranged closer together along the treeline and set back and out of the field, allowing a large block of land to remain preserved as agriculture. The housing types imagined here could support small apartments up to 12 units and 4 - 8 units in a connected farm building typology. Row houses and cottages could also provide opportunity for fee ownership of attainable housing - row houses being attractive to young buyers and cottages to those downsizing from larger homes, seeking lower maintenance living.

Another small cluster of local retail buildings could be located along a portion of Tenney Hill, integrating with and supporting this new agricultural neighborhood. Shops could support the summer tourist economy and the need for more localized neighborhood amenities. Arranging development in this way would allow landowners to yield fiscal returns from their land while minimizing costs to serve development.

WATKINS FLAT





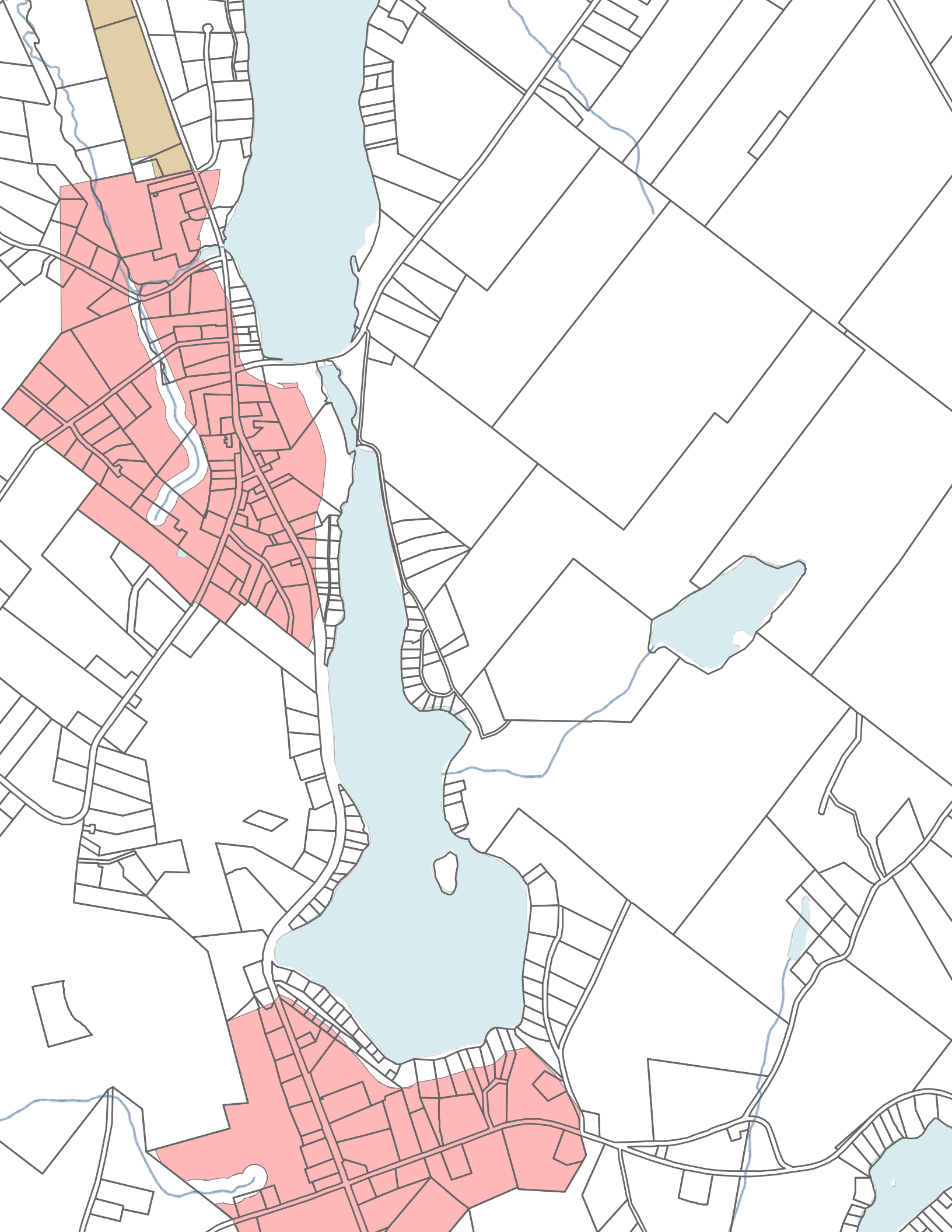
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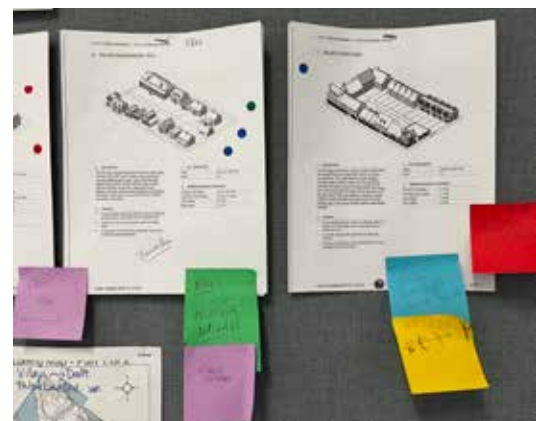
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Zoning Analysis & Recommendations



Photos: GPCOG

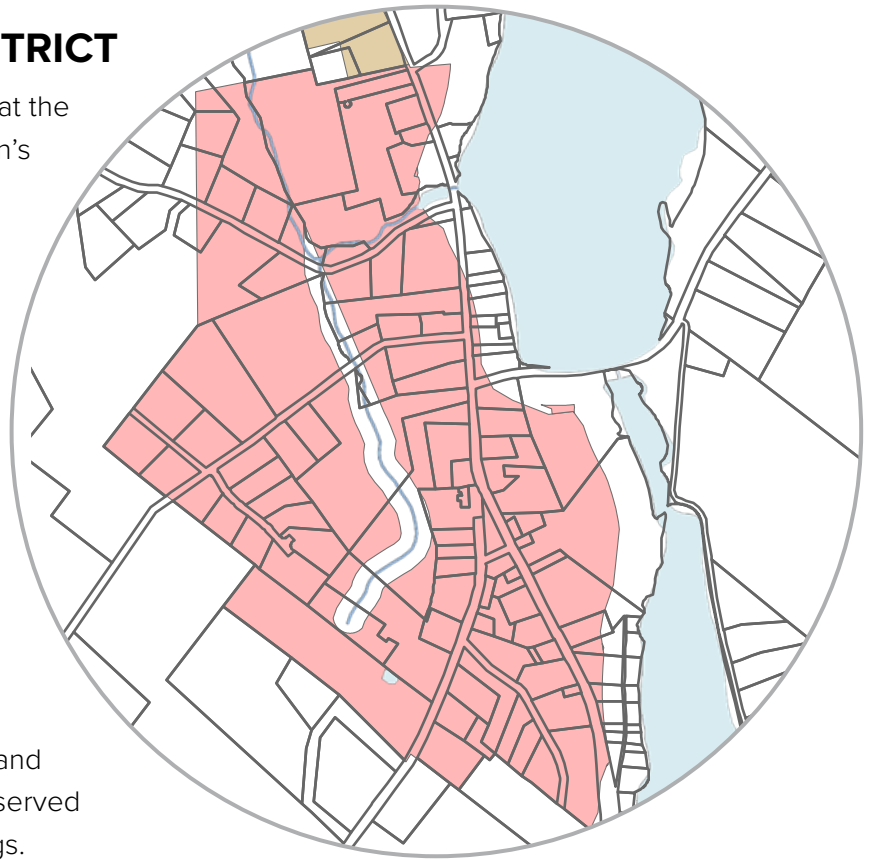
Innovative Zoning Tools

Residents arrived at the Casco Planning Days event ready to talk deeply about zoning amendments, citing that the previous Comprehensive Plan was never implemented: asking, how will this process be different? Because public design charrettes are meant to be responsive to the issues and concerns raised by the community, example zoning code sheets were tacked to the studio wall and discussed with the community by the midpoint check in.

The following analysis identifies areas of inconsistency between the current ordinances and the direction set forth by this new comprehensive plan. This analysis is not exhaustive but addresses the most important changes the town can make to protect rural lands and focus the kinds of development it wants to the areas it should be. It is technical in nature and may be challenging to understand, as is the nature of zoning and land use law.

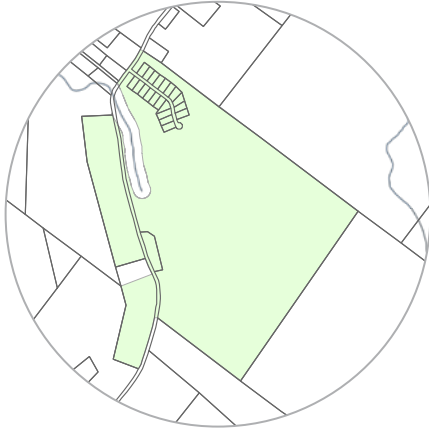
AMEND THE VILLAGE DISTRICT

- The Intent of this district, as written at the time of this plan, aligns with this plan's vision
- The "Village" district should be parsed into two or three zoning districts instead of only one to allow for more refined control over which properties can be used for commercial use and which portions of the village should remain residential. Municipal properties and other civic buildings (churches) should be designated under a civic zone, and standards should be put into place to ensure future renovations and expansions are of a high quality deserved of these special community buildings.
- People agree that small commercial uses should continue to be allowed in the village, but not every lot should benefit from the same set of permitted uses.
- The dimensional standards do not align with the existing historical pattern of what's here today. The district metrics are akin to 1960's suburban large lot development. For example, lot sizes are set at a minimum of 60,000 sf, and lots require a minimum of 150' of road frontage. Lot sizes should be reduced or eliminated to reflect the existing historic pattern of the village, keyed to newly defined Village District zones. Use a range of lot widths and setbacks instead to control the spacing of dwellings.
- The minimum land area per dwelling unit requirement is 60,000 square feet, discouraging the ability for large dwellings to



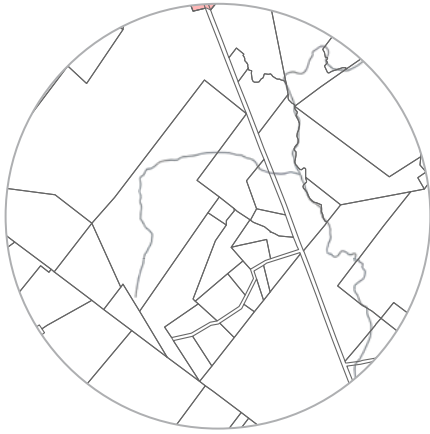
be converted to apartments or small multi-unit housing types to be built in the village. Recommend no minimum land area per dwelling unit for some portions of a newly defined Village District zones. With that, the current density bonus for affordable housing should be removed. (it would no longer be necessary)

- An amendment to building height standards should be considered to make mixed-use buildings a viable option.



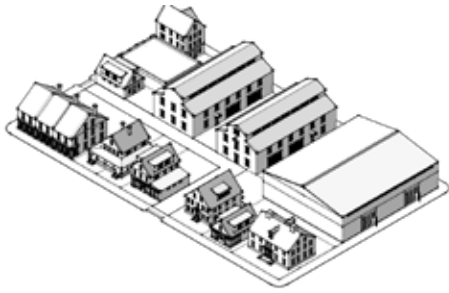
MAINTAIN THE MANUFACTURED HOUSING PARK DISTRICT (MHP)

- Having affordable housing options in Casco is desired. This area services that need, and given its close proximity to the Crooked River School and Rt 302 (access to employment centers in the region), should continue to provide affordable and workforce housing opportunities.
- This zone is assigned to land that has been designed by the State as a Deer Wintering Area. The district allows for all uses that are permitted in the Residential district (the lowest density district in the town). Residential district dimensional standards do not supersede those identified in MHP.
- This district does not mandate manufactured housing be located here. If the landowner wants to redevelop the area, a number of residential building types are permitted. Replacement housing could include a mix of duplexes and multiplex under current zoning, or the site could accommodate residential care, community living or other kinds of housing types as long as each lot meets the minimum size of 20,000 sf, and for multi-family manufactured housing, each lot has 20,000 sf per dwelling unit.



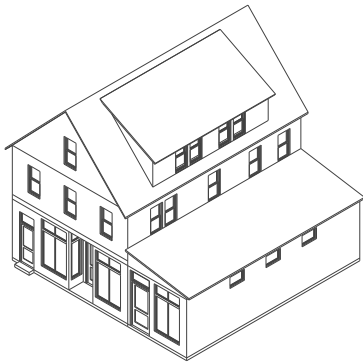
AMEND THE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

- The current 80,000 sf lot size per dwelling unit applies to a significant portion of the land area of the town. At this size, protection of the rural landscape is impossible to accomplish. Through a zoning effort, the town should consider increasing the base land area per dwelling unit in the residential district. This should be done not independent but in conjunction with implementing: 1. the other rural preservation zoning tools recommended in this plan; 2. amendments to the Village District and Rt 302 Highway Corridor Special District. These actions will decrease the development pressure on the rural lands and focus growth in the places where growth is desired.
- The Residential district also permits a wide range of commercial uses, many often being quite large and commercial in character. Examples include Nursing homes, Day Care Centers, Multi-plex dwellings, Churches. The zoning ordinance has no standards to control the architectural design of buildings. The pattern and characteristics of development that could result from land divisions and unchecked design is wide open and the town is vulnerable to loss of its rural sense of place. To protect rural character, the town should consider adopting a range of building types and corresponding standards to control the size, scale and architecture of new development.



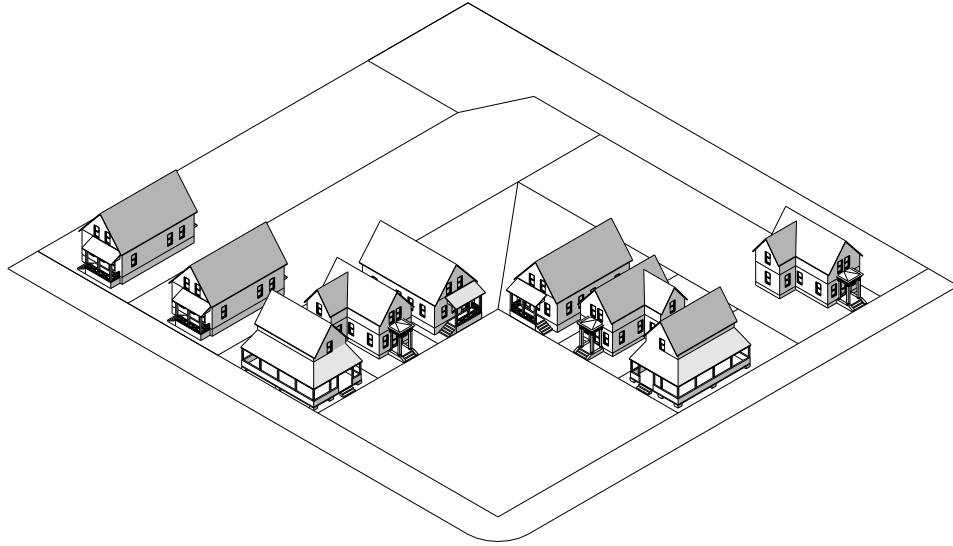
REVIEW CURRENT COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

- Consider amendments to existing standards including architectural, building and site design standards.
- Consider breaking out the existing Commercial District into two or more Commercial Districts with varying standards.



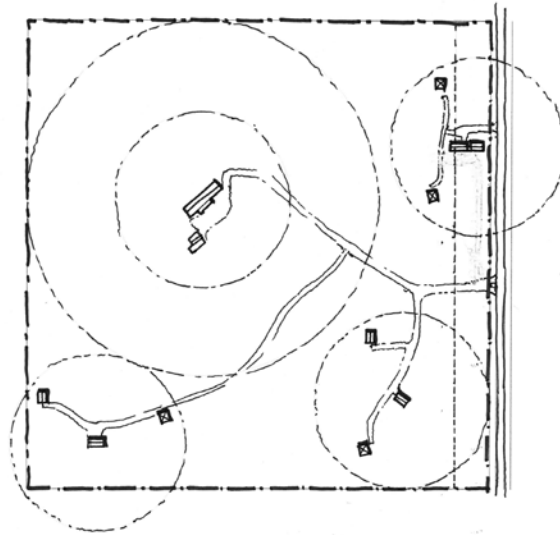
ADOPT BUILDING STANDARDS & PREAPPROVED BUILDING TYPES

- Include building type standards and assign permitted building types to each zoning district and special district. Regulating development with building types will ensure the right kinds of buildings go in the right place at the right scale. With architectural protections in place and an understanding of the limits on building size, new development is more likely to emerge in a pattern and aesthetic that is desired for Casco. Portions of the Village district, for example, could allow smaller scale commercial buildings that will support living here without fearing developers will deliver placeless buildings often found along strip corridors.
- With a system of building types embedded in zoning, the town can pre-approve building types to expedite certain kinds of development in areas where development is wanted.



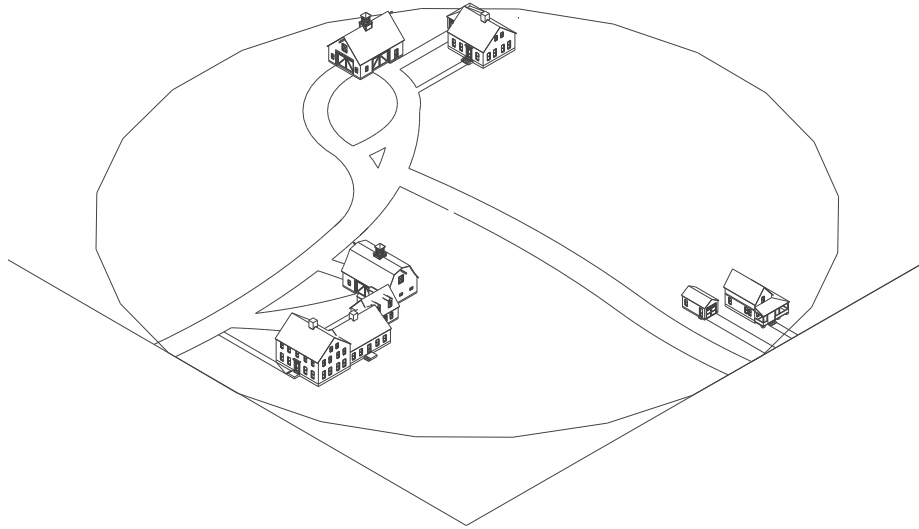
CONSIDER ADOPTING A POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD STANDARD FOR THE VILLAGES

- Allows for the arrangement of a single building type around a central common courtyard space at a greater density than is otherwise allowed without altering the underlying zoning.
- Results in a close arrangement of between 4 to 20 buildings and more social living opportunities that would not otherwise be permitted.
- Parking, if provided, is permitted only in a central parking area accessed by a narrow driveway.
- Pocket neighborhoods consist of three elements; the building lots on which buildings are placed, the courtyard around which the building lots are arranged, and access areas which may or may not include driveways, parking lots, and pedestrian walks. Individual lots may not exceed 3,000 sf, and the courtyard must be at least 20 ft wide on its shortest side, and have an area not smaller than 1000 sf and not larger than 10,890 sf (1/4 acre).
- Septic and water would be shared.
- The total frontage of a pocket neighborhood may not exceed 300 ft in aggregate length along any single thoroughfare.



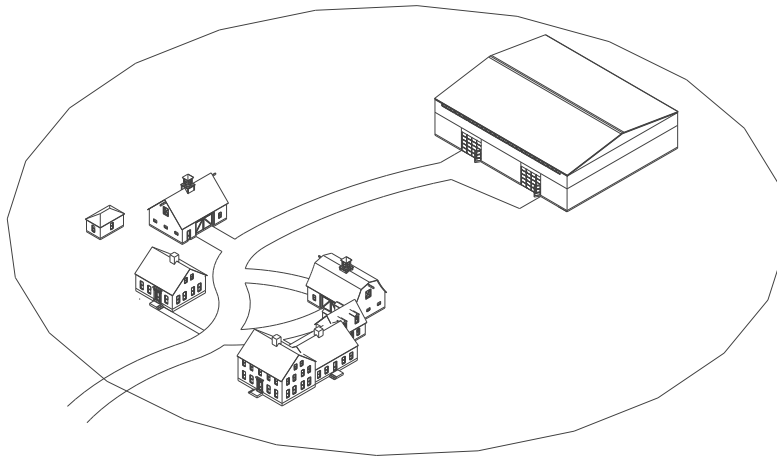
CONSIDER ADOPTING RURAL PLACE TYPES

- Rural place types can encourage development to organize in low impact ways on the rural landscape, while providing opportunities for limited development. Other benefits include: 1. reduced upfront infrastructure costs to service the site and long term costs to maintain infrastructure; and 2. flexibility to position buildings and site improvements in the most optimum locations on a property.
- Residential dwellings, commercial and home-based entrepreneurial activities, resource-based business, and recreational activities could occur compactly on a site without causing land to be divided into small increments. A landowner could create a small family compound and choose to divide just enough land to accommodate the new house and improvements. It also allows rural-based commercial activities without opening all lands up to commercial rights. This zoning tool discourages sprawl and the fragmentation of land in a voluntary way - landowners can choose to declare a compound, or simply continue to follow the requirements of the Residential zoning district.



CONSIDER ADOPTING A SMALL COMPOUND RURAL PLACE TYPE

- Medium-sized lots allow for the more dense arrangement of buildings in the character of traditional rural farms, with buildings grouped together to efficiently meet residential and working needs.
- Allow increased density and uses without altering the underlying zoning.
- Results in development that maintains a rural character while creating real estate value, economic activity, and housing opportunities.
- To establish a small compound, it requires a minimum 5 acre lot with a minimum of 250' of frontage on a street.
- All buildings within a small rural compound must be located entirely within a circle 250 feet in radius. This circle defines the boundary of the small rural compound and must meet all district setbacks.
- Up to four dwelling units can be created without physically subdividing the property. Theoretical lot lines are used to site buildings and verify building setbacks, which are reduced from underlying zoning.



CONSIDER ADOPTING A LARGE COMPOUND RURAL PLACE TYPE

- Large lots allow for the more dense arrangement of buildings in the character of traditional rural farms, with buildings grouped together to efficiently meet residential and working needs.
- Allow increased density and uses without altering the underlying zoning.
- Result in development that maintains a rural character while creating real estate value, economic activity, and housing opportunities.
- Large rural compounds are only allowed on lots 10 acres or greater with a lot width of at least 500 feet along an existing thoroughfare.
- All buildings within a large rural compound must be located entirely within a circle 250 feet in radius. This circle defines the boundary of the large rural compound and must meet all district setbacks.
- Up to seven dwelling units may be created without physically subdividing the property. Theoretical lot lines are used to site buildings and verify building setbacks, which are reduced from underlying zoning.



CONSIDER AMENDING PARKING STANDARDS

- Parking standards across the table are too excessive and take up land that could otherwise be used for more commercial or residential units. This excessive standard becomes amplified and problematic where business is wanted on smaller lots. Walkable village lots are not big, and, as example, should have no mandatory off-street parking. Parking can be managed area-wide, in a municipal lot nearby, on a street or in a shared private lot.
- The residential requirement of 2.0 spaces / dwelling unit is a barrier to creating multi-family housing, consumes land, and can make infill of smaller multi-unit building types on smaller lots impossible to build. This standard should be reduced or eliminated if the site is located in a village.



CONSIDER ADOPTING CIVIC SPACE STANDARD

- Consider adopting a set of civic space standards calibrated to different sizes and types of development. This will ensure valuable and usable public spaces, private spaces, parks and recreational land is provided to meet the needs of residents as Casco grows.

CONSIDER REPEALING PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (PRD)

- Planned residential development ordinances are an antiquated zoning approach that will not accomplish the pattern of village-style development that is wanted for Casco. Instead, zoning should ask for what is wanted.

CONSIDER ADOPTING NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS

- As a modern replacement to Planned residential development, new neighborhood design standards should be in place should a landowner want to subdivide a large parcel of land. Neighborhood standards address creating meaningful civic spaces, and connected streets.

VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PRINCIPLES



A

Treat Streets as Public Spaces

Streets are public spaces and should be designed to create outdoor rooms where random conversations happen between neighbors, where people can get exercise, walk their dogs, and where children can ride their bicycles and play. New streets connecting directly to existing main streets should be designed for slow movement, and include concrete sidewalks separated by a tree-lined esplanade. Other streets could be yield streets where everyone shares the space but people (and critters) take priority over cars.

D

Allow a Range of Lot Sizes and Building Types

Design new neighborhoods to include a similar diversity of lot sizes and buildings, thereby accommodating a diversity of scale of housing and lifestyle. Allow tightly arranged small houses on small lots, ideal for empty nesters or renters and first-time home buyers. Also permit large homes on larger estate lots, and let those homes be shared by many people. Small apartment buildings can look like Maine's unique building type: big house, little house, back house, barn. Diverse lot sizes and range of building types supports multi-generational living.

B

Make Pedestrian-Friendly Streets

New neighborhoods can be designed to facilitate pedestrian connectivity and access. Blocks should be between 300 – 400 ft, not exceeding 1300 linear feet in circumference, and mid-block pathways may be incorporated to enhance connectivity to adjacent amenities or greenspace, or where topography might be challenging. This small block pattern is what rural historic Maine villages have, as opposed to long dead-end streets.

C

Integrate New Civic Spaces

Meaningful civic spaces should be integrated into neighborhoods, providing people with places to gather in community. Depending on the size of the neighborhood being built, a civic space could be a small square, green, or tot lot or a larger park. Spaces should be designed to consider protection from wind and sun, lighting, and include seating, trees, and attractive, native plantings.

Dedicated
Non-engine-powered
trails for x-c ski
trail running, Dog
Walking, BIKE
etc.

Big Ideas

Housing.

SPORTS CAMP

• with

Indoor Pool

Track, Activity rooms



Protect Woods, Waters, & Open Space

Casco is known for its scenic beauty. Residents embrace access to the outdoors and enjoy exploring the lakes, trails, and natural landscapes. These resources also attract more people to the area, both to live and visit. This makes conserving natural areas a key priority for the Town. However, residents expressed frustration over the lack of access, inventory, and preservation. There is an opportunity to better manage and protect the resources that make Casco thrive.

DEVELOP A REFINED TRAIL NETWORK

Casco has an extensive network of trails on state parks, public preserves, and town-owned land as well as a more informal network crossing private property. The trails support hiking, walking, snowmobiling, and ATVs. Local recreation clubs are very active in maintaining existing trails, especially within private property. Trails are also maintained by Loon Echo Land Trust, the State Park, and the Town. As development continues to occur, especially with the sale of large parcels, the community could lose many of the informal trails unless steps are taken to purchase trail easements or to require developers to provide direct and convenient trail connections as part of their development projects. The Town needs to continue partnering with organizations and property owners to develop new trails and preserve the existing network.

Strategies

01 / Build relationships with large parcel landowners and the state park to secure long-term, generational access and preservation to key trail linkages and connections, with the consideration of working towards establishing formal agreements.	02 / Update zoning to clearly articulate when trail corridors should be preserved or added as private development occurs.	03 / Create an open space and trails connectivity map to identify important trail corridors and connections for future private development.	04 / Consult with interested parties to solidify use and easement agreements with private landowners.
05 / Seek private and public funding to expand the number of trails and pedestrian/ bicycle paths.	06 / Prioritize funding for sidewalk and bicycle network expansions.	07 / Continue to work regionally with surrounding communities and organizations to extend regional trails.	08 / Encourage the Open Space Commission to expand its relationships with external partners and private landowners.



ENHANCE GENERATIONAL ACCESS TO TRAILS & WATERWAYS

Many people don’t know which lands are open to the public, where trails are located, or how the outdoor recreational spaces can be used. Residents expressed the desire to have increased access to the outdoors but noted the difficulties in accessibility. The Town will need to be active stewards and partners to help maintain public access to public and private lands. Casco can leverage the very active recreation clubs in the area to create and distribute information about the available trails.

Strategies

01 / Create trails and water access points that are ability-inclusive and accessible by means other than car.	02 / Install low-cost, low-impact signage along trails and water access points to aid in navigation and private property use.	03 / Seek private and public funding to expand the number of access points to natural resources and water access.	04 / Improve public awareness and knowledge of the trails by expanding volunteer opportunities and creating trail, water access, and outdoor recreation maps and informational materials.
05 / Develop relationships with private landowners and provide ongoing stewardship assistance to ensure continued access to trails.	06 / Work with local and regional organizations to offer four-season, nature-based activities and programming for people of all ages and abilities.	07 / Enter into agreements with private landowners to formalize trail and water access points.	

KEEP LARGE AREAS OF CASCO WILD AND UNTOUCHED

Residents want to preserve open spaces, natural resources, and wildlife to enhance the environment and preserve the natural character of Casco. The Open Space Commission is always looking to improve the Town’s open space inventory. High priority areas include the Pine Hill/Owl Pond/Heath area, Rattlesnake Mountain, Quaker Ridge East, and Quaker Ridge West.

Strategies

01 /

Work with the local land trusts to pursue state and federal grant funding to increase land conservation.

02 /

Protect the town’s natural heritage by acquiring and preserving private, open, underutilized land for wildlife and low-impact recreational use.

03 /

Use the Open Space Fund as a strategy to purchase open space and protect important natural resources and land conservation in Casco.

04 /

Plant wild and native meadow seeds along Crooked River School.

05 /

Update the zoning code to require developers building appropriate scale projects within the rural districts to protect high quality open space.

06 /

Create connections between conserved lands for increased wildlife corridors and trails.

“I love the rural, country setting of Casco”

“

Preserving the quality of our lakes and streams is of the utmost importance.

PRESERVE LAKES, PONDS, AND WATERWAYS

The lakes and ponds in Casco are the economic engines for the town. The water quality in the majority of Casco’s lakes and ponds is stellar, but are at risk to threats by development in the region. Residents want to take an active approach to conserving open space in order to protect the watershed. There is an abundant number of water protection organizations in the region that is helping to monitor and protect these vital resources.

Strategies

01 / Continue to work with local organizations to actively monitor the health of the lakes and ponds.	02 / Consider limiting or halting commercial water extraction to protect long-term viability of water resources.	03 / Educate residents on shoreline management best practices, invasive species, and the importance of water quality.	04 / Partner with neighboring communities and regional pond associations to monitor, protect, and improve water quality in the region’s watershed.
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PROTECT FARMS AND WORKING LANDS

Casco's working lands provide natural benefits such as improved water quality and carbon sequestration, along with supporting the local economy. Residents expressed the desire to protect these farming, forestry, and all working lands to ensure longevity and transition to the next generation.

Strategies

01 /

Update the zoning code to protect high quality open space within the rural districts.

02 /

Work regionally to develop marketing materials to showcase outdoor amenities, farms, and local food sources unique to Casco.

03 /

Encourage working farms and forests to participate in the Farmland and Tree Growth Tax Program.

04 /

Work with the Maine Farmland Trust, the Department of Agriculture, and other organizations to attract and support farmers and agricultural-based businesses.

05 /

Develop a solar ordinance that protects farmland, forests, and working lands



PROTECT HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

There is a need for further survey, inventory, and analysis of Casco's prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and historic buildings, structures, and objects. Notably, there have been no professional surveys for historic archaeological sites in Casco. Many known and suspected sites are located within proximity to water. Shoreland zoning and resource protection district permitting addressed those sites, however information is limited.

Strategies

01 /

Complete a survey of historic properties and archaeological sites.

02 /

Identify properties that may be nominated to the National Register for historic places.



Support Diversity & Multi- Generational Community Life

Casco wants to be an attractive, exciting, and entertaining town for anyone to live throughout their entire life. However, residents expressed concerns over retaining young families and being able to age in place. Many people understand the connection between housing options and jobs, and being able to offer housing for a range of lifestyles. Through Casco Planning Days, participants identified the need for more diverse and affordable housing to sustain a multi-generational population.



CREATE MULTI-GENERATIONAL SPACES

Residents overwhelmingly want to have places to gather. They want to see kids playing in the village alongside older generations. Intentional multi-generational spaces strengthen the bond of the community. These spaces should be both indoors and outdoors and provide for a range of abilities.

Strategies

01 /

Improve infrastructure of parks and outdoor community gathering spaces to include utilities such as water and electricity to increase functionality.

02 /

Address transportation issues to get children and seniors to programs by purchasing a town bus or partnering with the school district, transit agencies, or private organizations.

03 /

Create a shared artist workspace in a village district.

04 /

Create a long-term future cemetery for Casco residents.



IMPROVE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Residents want to feel connected regardless of age. Building social connections sustains the population, improves the health of residents, and attracts more people to town.

Strategies

01 /

Improve cell coverage in the villages.

02 /

Boost communication of volunteer needs and opportunities to sustain increased sociability.

03 /

Create a volunteer calendar or online sign-up platform to advertise volunteer opportunities, time commitments, and schedule.

04 /

Start a mentorship program to match people with skills with people who want to learn new skills.

05 /

Organize a “creating community” event - speed dating style opportunity to get to know your neighbors.

06 /

Create a resident welcome package or page on the town website to easily inform people about town committees, how to get involved, and importance of town participation.

“

We're too separate.

EMBRACE DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Casco wants to be a welcoming town for everyone. The Town should continue to encourage people with a range of viewpoints and lived experiences to represent the town. Ensuring diversity is critical to the success of various efforts in the community and maintaining a welcoming environment.

Strategies

01 /

Assess how ordinances and town policies affect the diversity of the town.

02 /

Encourage diversity on committees and boards to ensure that decision-making entities reflect all interests in the community.



ENCOURAGE HOUSING DIVERSITY TO ACCOMMODATE A RANGE OF FAMILY SIZES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Cost of living in Casco has been increasing. People are also often not able to afford to live in the place where they work, which limits potential economic opportunities for the town. Creating affordable housing, and a range of housing styles, can attract new families, keep existing families and allow current residents to age in place.

Strategies

01 /

Update the zoning code to enable greater density and diverse housing choices within the 5-minute walk areas identified on the Connectivity Map.

02 /

Update the zoning code to regulate building types by zoning district to ensure new buildings and projects complement the scale and sense of place in each of the villages, and a range of unit sizes are permitted. Provide a more stringent set of development standards to control building form, scale, components, placement, materials and associated site improvements throughout town.

03 /

Update the zoning code to allow building groups such as pocket neighborhoods in villages, and connected farms, small and large compounds, and hamlets in the rural areas.

04 /

Review all municipal codes and procedures to remove barriers to small-scale development and the construction of affordable building types.

Strategies (Continued)

05 /

Create a multi-generational neighborhood plan for the Crooked River School area.

06 /

Consider zoning tools to support an agricultural neighborhood district with limited commercial activities at Watkins Flats.

07 /

Work with landowners to create a neighborhood master plan for the rehabilitation of the mobile home park.

08 /

Update the zoning code to remove parking minimums within the growth areas, allowing the free market to determine parking needs. Add controls that require new parking to be located behind buildings.

09 /

Expedite permitting for construction of affordable housing units in growth areas envisioned as dense, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

10 /

Create an affordable housing fund. Fund it, for example, with a percentage-based land transfer tax.

11 /

Allow large homes to be shared by multiple people not living in family, but that share cooking facilities, gathering spaces and other supportive amenities.

12 /

Amend ordinance to comply with LD 2003.



Connect the Villages with Safe Streets & Trails

Casco residents want to walk, bike, and move around town safely. During Casco Planning Days the top requests were for slower, safer streets, and more in-town multimodal connections. The lack of connectivity is a key issue affecting the quality of life in town. Designing and retrofitting streets in a way for residents to feel safe moving about town will not only improve the health of residents but also increase the ability to attract and retain businesses and workforce.

SLOW TOWN TRAFFIC TO MAKE STREETS SAFER

Casco residents indicated that there are several roads in town where people feel too comfortable driving at excessive speeds. Many of these roads are statewide mobility corridors meant to move large volumes of traffic, especially during peak tourism season. The design of these roads is at odds with the safety of road users, especially more vulnerable users like cyclists and pedestrians. A slow-flow approach to street design is needed to balance these competing priorities of throughput and usability. Design changes such as narrowing travel lanes, allowing for on-street parking, or adding street trees can add friction that will make drivers feel much more uncomfortable driving at speeds above posted limits.

Strategies

01 /

Work with the state to slow down areas of the town to support additional village investment and opportunities for economic growth.

02 /

Work with the state for greater town control over posted speed limits and initiate discussions for changing the way speed limits are set to improve safety.

03 /

Adopt a Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic fatalities.

04 /

Adopt a Complete Streets policy that considers the safety and accessibility of all roads for all users. Prioritize pedestrian, or multi-modal-first approach for all transportation projects and programs, from scoping to maintenance.

05 /

Adopt a resolution that establishes a reduced speed within Casco's more densely populated areas.

06 /

Add bike signage to improve visibility and safety of bicyclists.

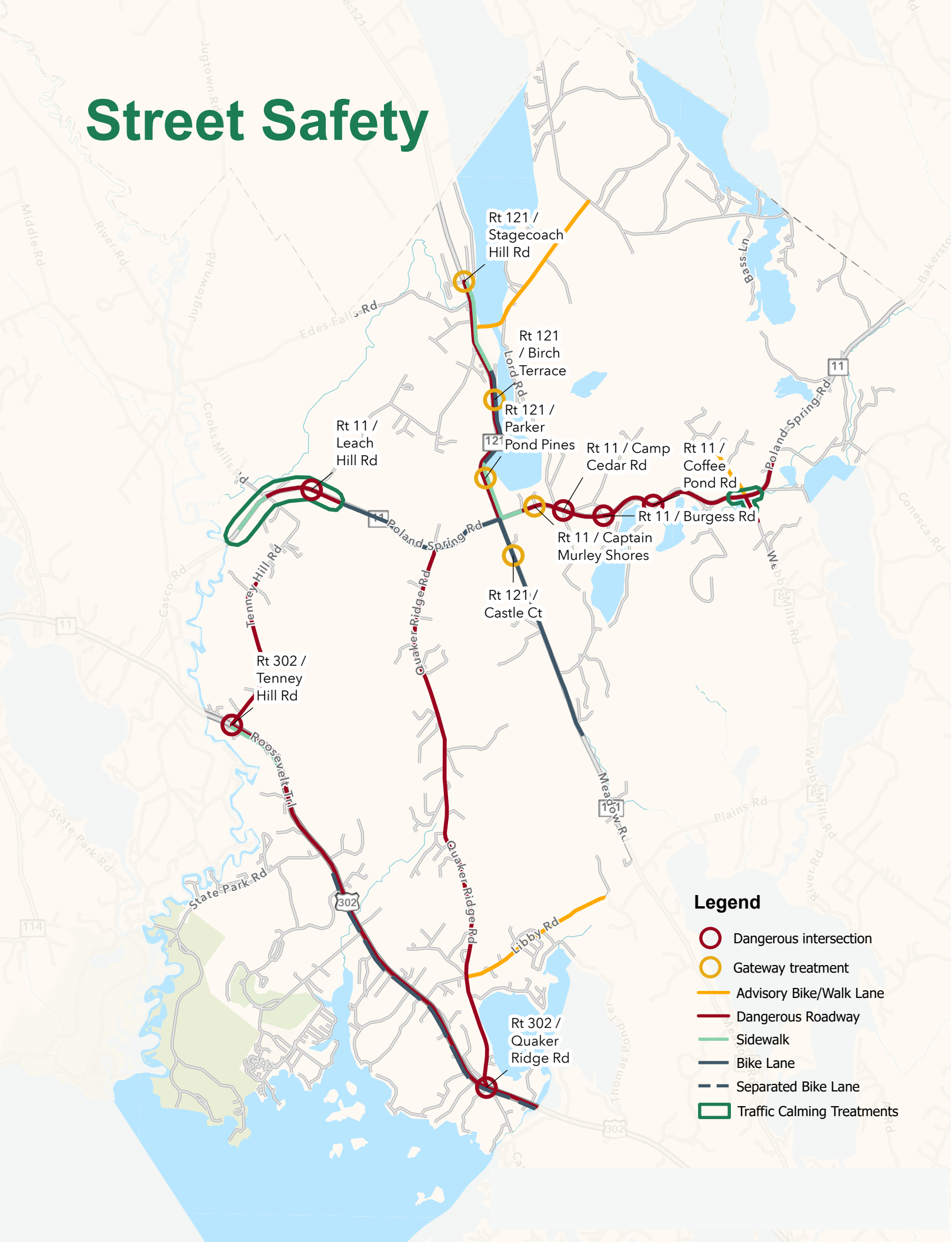
07 /

Continue to direct funding to pilot temporary, test measures such as lane width reductions, advisory bike lanes, and other techniques to slow traffic on local neighborhood streets.

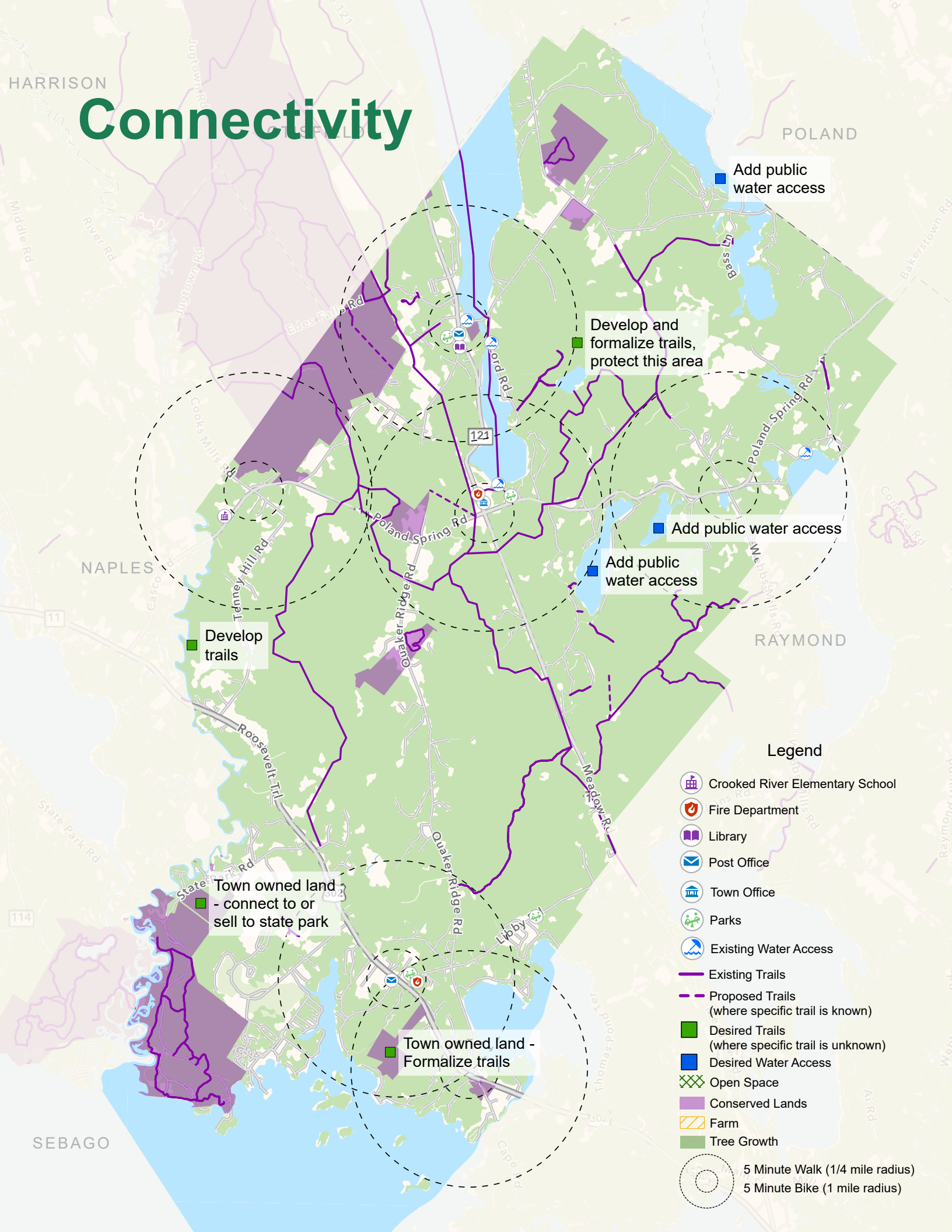
08 /

Ensure upkeep of existing streets before making new streets.

Street Safety



Connectivity



Add public water access

Develop and formalize trails, protect this area

Add public water access

Add public water access

Develop trails

Town owned land - connect to or sell to state park

Town owned land - Formalize trails

Legend

- Crooked River Elementary School
- Fire Department
- Library
- Post Office
- Town Office
- Parks
- Existing Water Access
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails (where specific trail is known)
- Desired Trails (where specific trail is unknown)
- Desired Water Access
- Open Space
- Conserved Lands
- Farm
- Tree Growth

5 Minute Walk (1/4 mile radius)
5 Minute Bike (1 mile radius)

“

I like to walk and I don't want to take my life into my hands.

IMPROVE ROAD GEOMETRY

The road geometry in Casco, that is the design of the roadway such as street widths, turning lanes, and intersections, is inducing speed and thus, fatalities. Improving roadway design will make streets safer and improve multimodal connections.

Strategies

01 /

Work with MaineDOT to evaluate where adjustments can be made to road geometry to reduce speeding and increase safety, including the full lengths of Rt 302 and Rt 11.

02 /

Work with MaineDOT to create purposeful areas along Rt 302 where vehicle speeds can be reduced to support local economic development, climate resiliency and livability goals.

03 /

Create a gateway treatment and re-allocate lane space on Rt 11 near Crooked River School to support increased walking and bicycling to school for neighborhood students.





Attract Local Businesses & Entrepreneurs

Casco should make it easy for restaurants, breweries, cafes, and other businesses to come and thrive. During Casco Planning Days, residents expressed the need for more local small businesses that fit with Casco's character. Casco is well positioned to support a growing economy and has a great opportunity to attract new residents.



Photos: GPCOG

SUPPORT EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

While residents want to attract new small businesses, they also appreciate the businesses already in Casco. However, the town needs to ensure that they are supporting and making it easy for existing businesses to grow and operate.

Strategies

01 /

Review existing ordinances to ensure businesses can operate as needed within the village centers.

02 /

Create an economic development committee or businesses association to enhance communications between the business community and town staff.

03 /

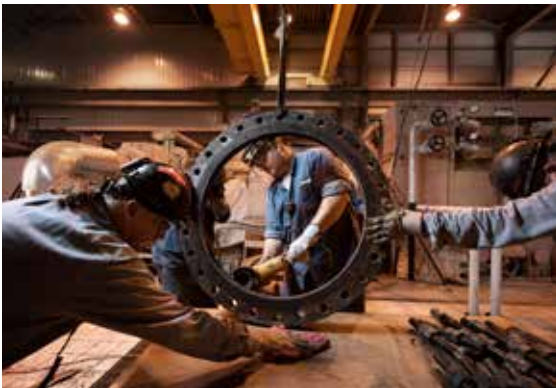
Enhance connections between local businesses such as farm to table restaurants.

04 /

Explore costs and funding mechanisms for bringing utilities into town.

05 /

Prioritize streets that are safe, interesting, and comfortable for walking.



ATTRACT A DYNAMIC WORKFORCE

Families and young workers are attracted to areas with strong social and professional development connections. Casco has residents running businesses out of their homes, many of which are unknown to the broader community. Supporting home-based economies and developing programs to build local skills will boost the capacity of the workforce.

Strategies

01 /

Support the organization of professional groups to hold networking and community building events.

02 /

Work with the library to encourage private sector partnerships to host professional enrichment and skills building workshops.

03 /

Create a town-wide directory of home-based and local businesses.

04 /

Update zoning to allow for higher density development to create more walkable destinations and more diverse housing choices.



“
The best thing is
the small town
look. Please keep
big stores and
businesses out.”

RECRUIT NEW LOCAL AND NON-FRANCHISE BUSINESSES

During the Planning Days, residents repeatedly mentioned the local and small-town charm of Casco. The consistent vision for Casco was to avoid big box stores and support the mom-and-pop businesses. Residents want to see new types of businesses like a pub or bed and breakfast, along with those that provide community services like a health or medical practice. Promoting new local, non-franchise businesses will not only strengthen the local business economy but also foster new connections for growing the existing businesses.

Strategies

01 /

Update zoning to ensure new commercial development has a village look and feel.

02 /

Update zoning to allow restaurants or small-scale lodging, such as a bed and breakfast, in the villages and to specify form.

03 /

Find more places to have commercial zoning and zones that keep the right type of businesses in designated areas.

04 /

Consider buying buildings when available and rent them to new businesses.



Maintain Fiscal Stability & Accessible Government

Casco wants to improve their direct communications, response to local concerns, and ability to act. Some residents feel there is a stark division between elected officials and the community members. Steps should be taken to improve communication between leadership and the community. The Town is also expressing their departments are understaffed and lack funding to deliver desired services.

FIND MORE WAYS TO INCLUDE RESIDENTS IN THE TOWN PROCESS

Communication is time consuming but critical for small towns. Engagement with the community is a successful, inexpensive way to increase the capacity of the town and get buy-in from residents. Casco can operate more efficiently as people participate in and understand the town process. This includes finding people to serve on volunteer boards who represent diverse viewpoints, and setting a culture of open, respectful communication.

Strategies

01 / Continue to use an open, transparent, and participatory process.	02 / Adopt a policy to hold facilitated public workshops when complex problems arise that require broad community commitment.	03 / Include funding in the budget for meetings between Town Hall and the community.
04 / Increase volunteerism and community participation to improve the capacity and capability of committees.	05 / Test alternative committee meeting times and days to make it easier to volunteer.	06 / Develop a strategy or partnership to make child-care available for all public meetings to promote involvement.





We need to transition from ‘you gotta know a guy’ to everyone in town can access this information.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS ON TOWN HAPPENINGS

Casco has a town website and Facebook page to keep residents informed. The Town uses CivicReady to send emergency alerts and notifications to subscribers. However, residents consistently mentioned the lack of communication around town events and inability to get involved. Maintaining and increasing communication methods will be vital in mobilizing volunteer groups, attracting visitors, and bringing the community together.

Strategies

01 /

Consider forming a volunteer communications committee or including funding in the budget for a part-time communications staff member.

02 /

Launch a community newsletter.

03 /

Keep the Town’s website and Facebook pages up to date with current content and promote activities based in the community.

04 /

Continue to work with the community to build shared communication goals to reach a diverse audience.

05 /

Encourage more people to volunteer by coordinating and promoting opportunities, such as road clean-ups or community groups to knit for people in need.

06 /

Annually, hold a community celebration to acknowledge the work of volunteers.

07 /

Create an outreach campaign to promote Casco outside of the town beyond just Casco Days.

“

There are many senior citizens who are on a fixed income. They cannot afford an increase in taxes.

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO RESIDENTS

Protecting the tax base so people can afford to live in Casco is crucial to ensure a multi-generational population. To retain and attract residents to Casco, the Town should find creative ways to support the community. Casco has the opportunity to not only foster trust between the government and citizens, but also attract new residents to support the tax base.

Strategies

01 /

Find ways to support people in keeping their homes well-kept such as matching funds for installing solar, or community house-repair funds.

02 /

Explore ways to bring Town Hall services directly to neighborhoods.

03 /

Add leadership incentives to attract a diverse selection of volunteers for town boards and committees.

04 /

Consider job sharing to attract highly skilled talent to the town.



BUILD MECHANISMS FOR FUNDING

Lack of government positions increases the workload for existing staff. The Town may also miss out on funding opportunities due to overburdened staff capacity. Increasing funded staff positions, finding additional funding opportunities to complete town projects, and setting an open and clear budget will improve town operations.

Strategies

01 /

Include funding in the budget for a part-time staff person to support the Town Manager and Code Enforcement with town planning and economic development.

02 /

Continue to use an open and participatory budgeting process.

03 /

Evaluate if new job structures or changes to workplace culture should occur to attract new talent to government services.

04 /

Fund staff professional development to improve budgeting and town operations for long term capital improvements.





Be Leaders of Resiliency

Casco envisions itself as a community committed to sustainability. Residents want to create a resilient community that prepares for and adapts to climate change. Work should continue to lessen the Town's impacts on the environment by improving energy efficiency and conserving resources. It also means ensuring the people in Casco can afford to live in the town, age in place, and respond to climate disasters. The Town should ensure that decisions going forward are made through climate-informed policies and actions.

DEVELOP INVENTORIES AND BASELINE DATA

To better prepare for the future, Casco residents want to know what is here now. The town feels they do not have enough detailed data and analysis to understand the at-risk critical infrastructure, ecosystems, and people most vulnerable to climate change. Creating a comprehensive body of documents and plans that identifies the climate hazards and impacts the town faces will guide high-priority actions and aid in creating goals for climate adaptation planning.

Strategies

01 /

Conduct a greenhouse gas inventory, vulnerability assessment, and/or climate action plan to understand the infrastructure, ecosystems, and people most vulnerable to climate change.

02 /

Complete an inventory of all invasive species in the town and set up an invasive species management plan.

03 /

Incorporate climate data into new or updated town plans.



ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Understanding of the ways in which climate change will influence our daily experience can help build support for sustainable actions in the community. Informing the community about possible impacts, and existing resources and solutions, is essential to building resilience in a community. Casco residents understand that the information is only part of the solution, the other is how to get that information out. The Town has an opportunity to bolster both their education and communication.

Strategies

01 /

Update communication strategies to distribute informational materials more easily, including keeping the town website up-to-date and possible town newsletter.

02 /

Consider creation of a new resident welcome package that provides an overview on property care, volunteer committees and opportunities, importance of sustainability, and/or ongoing projects.

03 /

Use the Community Center to host environmental programs for kids and adults.

04 /

Partner with the school district, Lakes Environmental Association, and other organizations to bring sustainability focused education to the kids.

05 /

Include funding for sustainable education and outreach in future budgets.

06 /

Facilitate educational workshops to teach residents on composting, recycling, emissions reductions, green infrastructure, and sustainable actions.

07 /

Educate residents and businesses on point-source pollution, and the importance of groundwater and surface water protection.

08 /

Partner with organizations, such as Maine Lakes, communicate on the importance of water quality and environmentally safe practices. This might take the form of participating in the LakeSmart programming from Maine Lakes.

BOOST THE RESILIENCY OF PEOPLE

Many residents said that affordability is a driving factor forcing people to leave or preventing people from moving to town. Prioritizing actions that address social vulnerability will build healthier communities and sustain the population. There is a strong desire to build a sense of community to help one another and make the town a more vibrant place to live. Casco Residents are also interested in joining with organizations to learn new skills, protect their homes, and increase social connections.

Strategies

01 /

Encourage aging in place through development of efficient, resilient, multi-generational housing.

02 /

Develop affordable housing, both for rent and to purchase, to support and promote working-class living in Casco.

03 /

Create an outreach program to connect with underserved and historically underrepresented residents of Casco.

04 /

Establish multi-generational social connections to bring the community together.

05 /

Develop a local bus or shared ride connection to services for seniors and youth.

06 /

Partner with local organizations, such as the Wild Seed Project or WindowDressers, to offer local workshops on energy efficiency and implement sustainability projects.

07 /

Develop an emergency response communication system that relays information to residents but also ensures emergency vehicles have sufficient access to all areas of town.

ENSURE EFFICIENT AND DURABLE TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure upgrades and efficiency improvements would reduce overall emissions and can result in lower long-term costs, saving the town money. Resilient infrastructure also ensures reliable transportation during emergencies, protects residents and private property, and reduces strain on the natural environment. Paved surfaces are often impervious and shed large volumes of runoff. Implementing bioswales, rain gardens, and green infrastructure can conserve these spaces while enhancing the Town's landscape.

Strategies

01 / Improve the energy efficiency of municipal operations by installing renewable energy, electrifying buildings, and switching to electric vehicles.	02 / Create incentives or ordinances to increase green infrastructure and improve energy efficiency in new commercial and residential developments.	03 / Work with regional organizations to build local awareness for the social, environmental, and economic benefits of green infrastructure.	04 / Consider adopting the building stretch code.
05 / Take climate data into consideration when updating plans, policies or ordinances. This could include taking increased precipitation into account when updating culvert sizing.	06 / Update zoning codes to align with flooding projections.	07 / Continue to plan for and fund road infrastructure improvement projects.	

PROTECT THE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS



Protecting open space improves water and air quality while increasing resilience for the surrounding communities. Green space also benefits residents’ health by reducing the impact of heatwaves on elderly and vulnerable populations. Casco residents consistently mention the need to conserve open space and protect the lakes and ponds.

Strategies

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 01 /
Protect water quality by reducing stormwater and runoff from development, roads, agriculture, and fertilized lawns. | 02 /
Explore ways to expand monitoring of Casco’s surface water quality to maintain healthy lakes. | 03 /
Create environmentally safe landscape standards for planting of open space (native vegetation, pollinator habitat, drought resistance) and lawn care maintenance. | |
| 04 /
Understand the extent of invasive species (terrestrial and aquatic) and work to monitor and remediate impacted areas. | 05 /
Assess the impact of PFAS on sites where town sludge was formerly spread. | 06 /
Explore public and private partnerships to increase recycling and composting. | 07 /
Review current zoning regulations to ensure goals and objectives are being met. |



SHIFT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

Casco wants to encourage use away from fossil fuels to renewable, sustainable energy sources. Renewable energy investments will reduce overall emissions and save the town money. However, the Town also needs to balance competing land uses to protect the resources that are part of Casco's life and identity.

Strategies

01 /

Create a solar ordinance to balance sustainability with the preservation of agriculture, forested lands and open space.

02 /

Install renewable energy projects (solar, wind, geothermal, anaerobic digestion, etc.) on municipal buildings and properties.

03 /

Work with private EV installers to consider incentives for businesses to install charging stations for EVs.

04 /

Encourage electric vehicle usage and expand available charging stations in high-use public areas.

05 /

Promote awareness and use of Efficiency Maine.



REDUCE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED

Transportation is the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maine. Most towns are reliant on personal vehicle use. Increasing transit and alternative modes of transportation will reduce vehicle miles and reduce overall emissions. Improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure would encourage active transportation. Active transportation not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions but also improves the health of residents.

Strategies

01 /

Adopt a Complete Streets policy.

02 /

Prioritize funding for expanding the bicycle and pedestrian network.

03 /

Continue discussions with transit providers to connect Casco to regional destinations.

04 /

Work with transit providers to develop an intra-town transit service.

05 /

Work with local organizations to coordinate and provide a range of transportation services for the needs of the aging populations and youth.

06 /

Consider partnering with regional organizations to provide incentives for ride sharing.



Activities for All

During Casco Planning Days, residents consistently expressed the desire to have more ways to come together as a community. There was strong interest in diversifying community events and activities, and better utilizing existing resources. People want Casco to be a community for all, both in programming and spaces to gather.

INCREASE INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

There is an emphasis to diversify the community programs to include non-sport offerings and greater multi-generational activities. During the planning process, the community brainstormed a long list of potential activities they would like to see in Casco. This provides residents the opportunity to establish a group of local people to support existing programming and expand opportunities.

Strategies

01 /

Budget for additional staff position to assist town-wide activity programs.

02 /

Form a volunteer programming group to support the Community Center existing programming and expand future opportunities.

03 /

Support increased funding for the library to provide additional multi-generational activities.

04 /

Enhance event communications with a searchable town-wide calendar of events.

05 /

Offer multi-generational programming at various times and days to accommodate more people.

06 /

Create meet-up mentor match groups that can offer services to one-another (kids and adults).

“Programs I would like to see and experience...”

- Indoor hands-on experiential play for young children
- Multi-generational activities such as canning, cooking, music, science, arts, and gaming
- Organize adult sports leagues such as softball, tennis, kickball, field hockey, or tai chi
- Start a rain or shine outdoor adventure club
- Boost programs and day camps for children such as swim lessons, rock climbing, fishing, kayaking, hiking, and other outdoor activities
- Expand the town's outdoor gear lending library (add kayaks, XC skis, and fishing gear)
- Create a tool lending library for home and yard care
- Offer DIY house maintenance classes
- Organize summer and weekend family camps and outings
- Partner to bring adult education and Maine coop extension programs
- Set up a medical equipment loan closet
- Lego club, electronics group, board game night, and other non-sport activities
- Weekly summer concerts at the gazebo

Quotes from Casco Planning Days



Photos: Casco Parks & Recreation

UTILIZE EXISTING FACILITIES

Casco owns and maintains a range of public facilities. Residents mentioned the need to better utilize these spaces as a way to strengthen neighborhood connections and offer more activities. This could mean increasing programming throughout the year or keeping the facilities better maintained.

Strategies

01 /

Program existing civic spaces, such as fields, the gazebo, or Casco Day Park with activities such as concerts and plays.

02 /

Allow and encourage “Friends of” groups to help manage existing civic spaces.

03 /

Form public/private partnerships to fund the retrofit of neighborhood and civic spaces to add desired amenities such as parks, gathering spaces, or recreational opportunities.

04 /

Ensure adequate funding and staffing to maintain existing town properties.

05 /

Consider how existing town property can become a 4-season use (i.e. creating a skating rink in the park during winter).

06 /

Partner with the school district to provide programming at the schools.

EXPAND FACILITIES

Casco residents generated an extensive list of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that are desired but currently unavailable. Many of these opportunities could be provided through public-private partnerships. The Town should consider strategies to encourage and incentivize private sector investments in the community-based facilities.

Strategies

01 /

Create a separate space for town board and committee meetings so the Community Center can remain multi-generational.

02 /

Buy property as it becomes available to build new indoor and outdoor recreational facilities or community-gathering spaces.

03 /

As part of new development, explore opportunities to partner with developers to create new recreational facilities.

04 /

Use credit enhancement agreements to incentivize private development of recreational facilities.

05 /

Update the Town's zoning code to include provisions for development of meaningful open space such as parks, plazas, gardens, dog parks, or playgrounds.

06 /

Ensure long-term maintenance costs for new programming and facilities are included in the budget or explore grant opportunities.

“Potential new facilities I’d like to see...”

- Regional recreation center, with a pool, indoor track, and activity rooms
- Additional outdoor pickleball courts
- Community woodshop
- Boost places in winter with accessible parks, skate rink, and snow trails for x-country skiing and snowshoeing
- Skatepark, disc golf, and dirt tracks for bmx
- Community gardens and food growing in public spaces
- Install a community garden and wild native plant beds along the front of the Crooked River School
- Indoor space to offer theater, arts and gallery.
- Dog park and pet friendly recreational areas
- Community farmers market

Quotes from Casco Planning Days



PROTECT & EXPAND WATER ACCESS FOR THE PUBLIC

Residents of Casco love the water. The lakes are an essential part of the community identity and residents want to better utilize this great resource.

Strategies

01 /

Create a waterfront pavilion.

02 /

Better utilize the town access to Parker Pond.

03 /

Make improvements at Crescent Lake beach.

04 /

Extend the town beach to the boat ramp on Pleasant Lake.







Casco in the Regional and State Context

Regional Context

In summary, Casco coordinates with regional entities as follows:

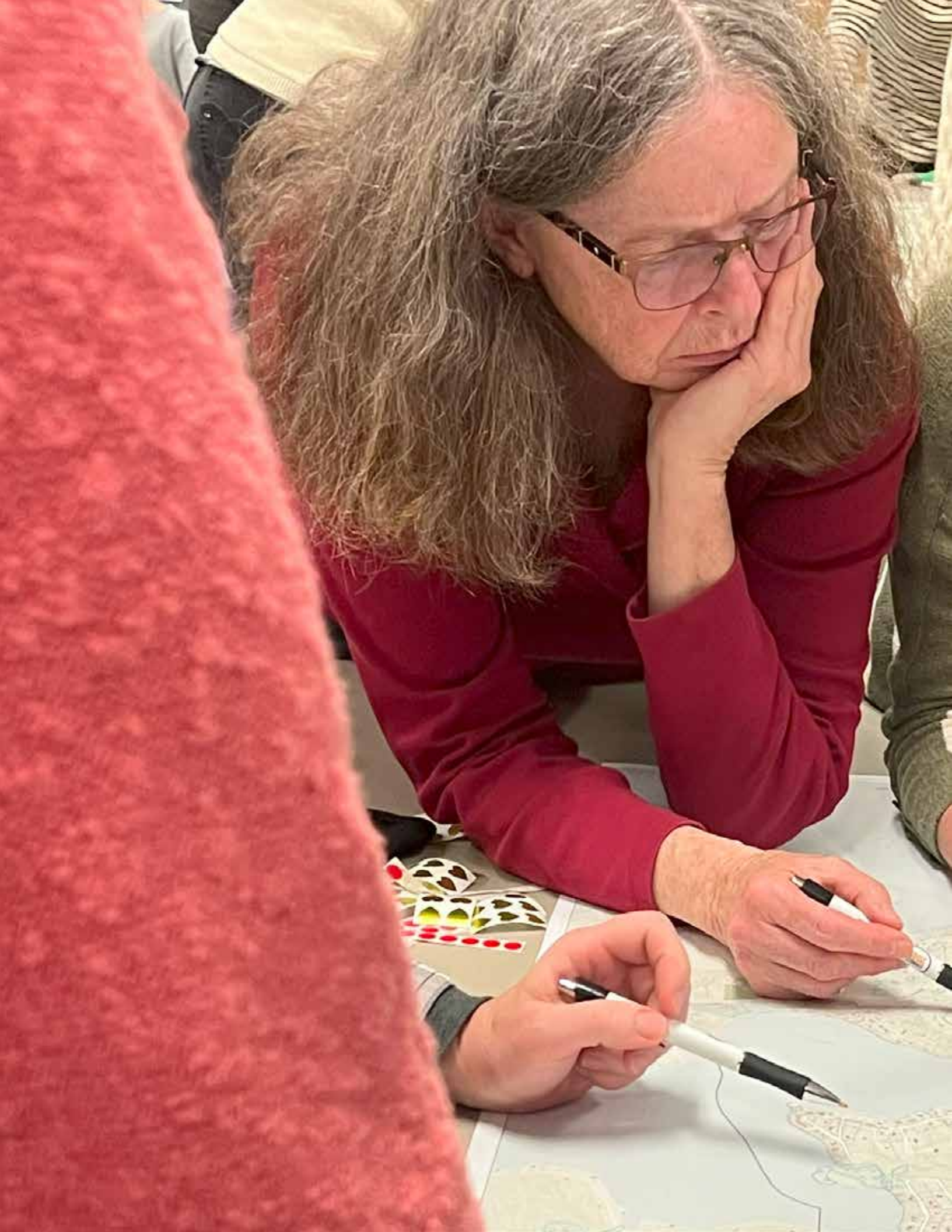
- The Casco Fire Rescue Department (CFRD) participates in a regional system of mutual aid, sharing fire and EMS services with the neighboring towns of Naples, Raymond, and Otisfield. For further details see Public Facilities and Services chapter.
- The School District is shared between the towns of Casco, Naples, and Bridgton with elementary, middle, and high schools spread across the Towns. For further details see Public Facilities and Services chapter.
- Waste Management is handled at a transfer station shared with Naples and located in Casco. For further details see Public Facilities and Services chapter.
- Water resource protection and land conservation efforts are shared with neighboring towns. Many local lakes and ponds are shared between towns and consequently share lake and pond conservation associations. Land Trusts and nonprofits that work in Casco such as the Loon Echo Land Trust and Sebago Clean Waters have regional scopes. For further details see Water and Natural Resources chapter.
- The town is enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership, a state-wide program for community and climate resilience funding. The town will be among a cohort also including Hartford, Lovell, Oxford, and Sumner working with the Center for an Ecology-Based Economy (CEBE) which acts as a service provider in the region.
- The Lakes Region Explorer provides regional bus transportation through Casco between Portland and Bridgton. For further details see Transportation chapter.
- Casco is part of the Lakes Area Collaboration to improve and expand regional broadband access together with the towns of Bridgton, Fryeburg, Harrison, Naples, Naples, Raymond, Sebago, Standish, and Windham. The collaboration is being facilitated by GPCOG. For further details see Public Facilities and Services chapter.

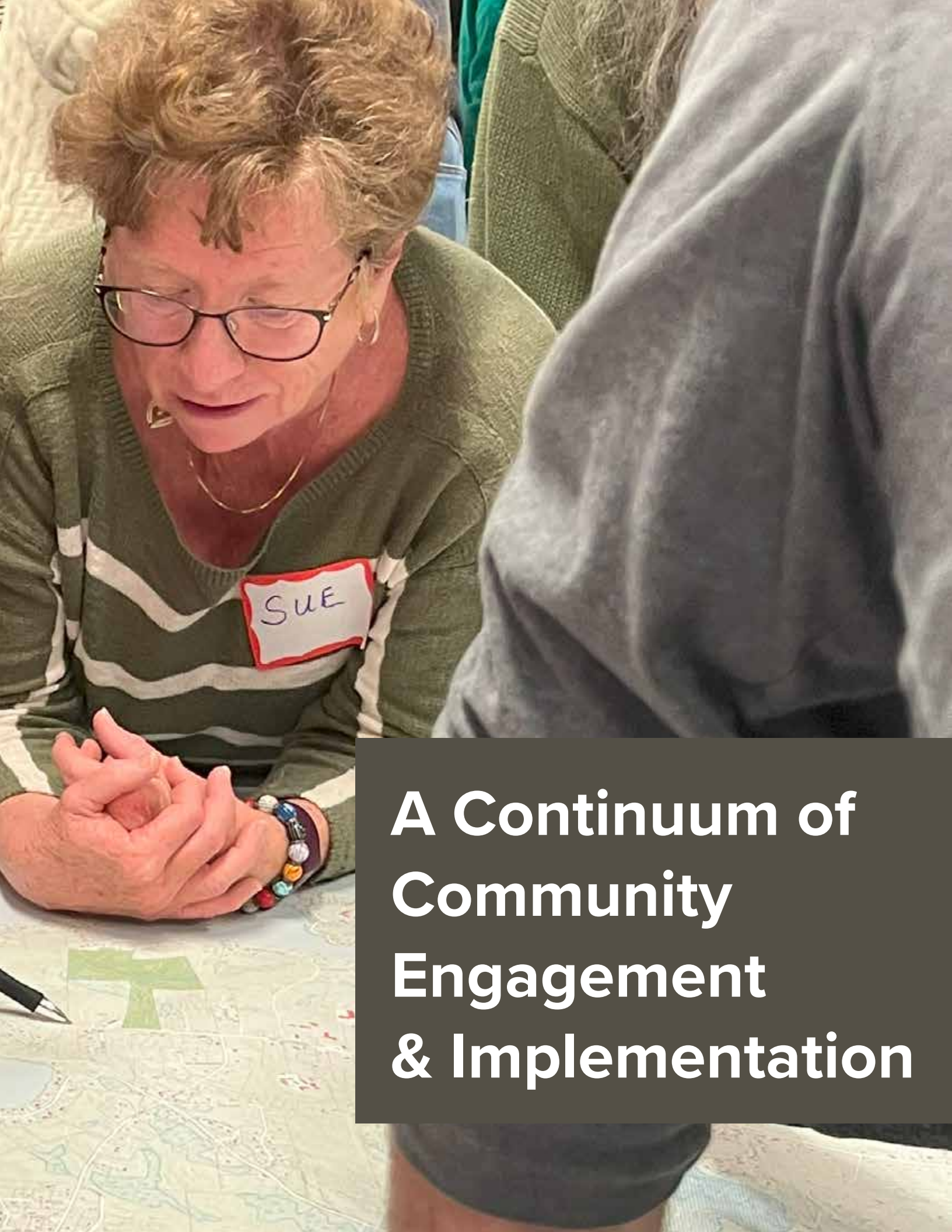
State Context

Casco has prepared this plan using an inquiry-based approach. The goals and action strategies identified in the Zoning Analysis and Recommendations, and Big Ideas sections reflect Casco's priorities as either communicated verbatim or transcribed by the planning team applying current planning best practices.

The list of policies and action strategies mandated by the State by Growth Management Act (GMA) have been reviewed for applicability and appropriateness, and are incorporated into the plan's Implementation Matrix, organized by topic as they appear in GMA. Where the Comprehensive Planning Committee and team have identified goals not to be incorporated, a brief note has been made why — most often because the Town has already implemented the policy or strategy or it's just not appropriate given the size or limited resources of Casco.

For a list of supplemental State policies and strategies, see the Implementation section of the plan.





A Continuum of Community Engagement & Implementation

How We Created the Plan

From April 28th through May 2nd, 2022, the residents of Casco were invited to participate in “Casco Planning Days,” an intensive, multi-day public planning and design event to develop a vision for the future of Casco.

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

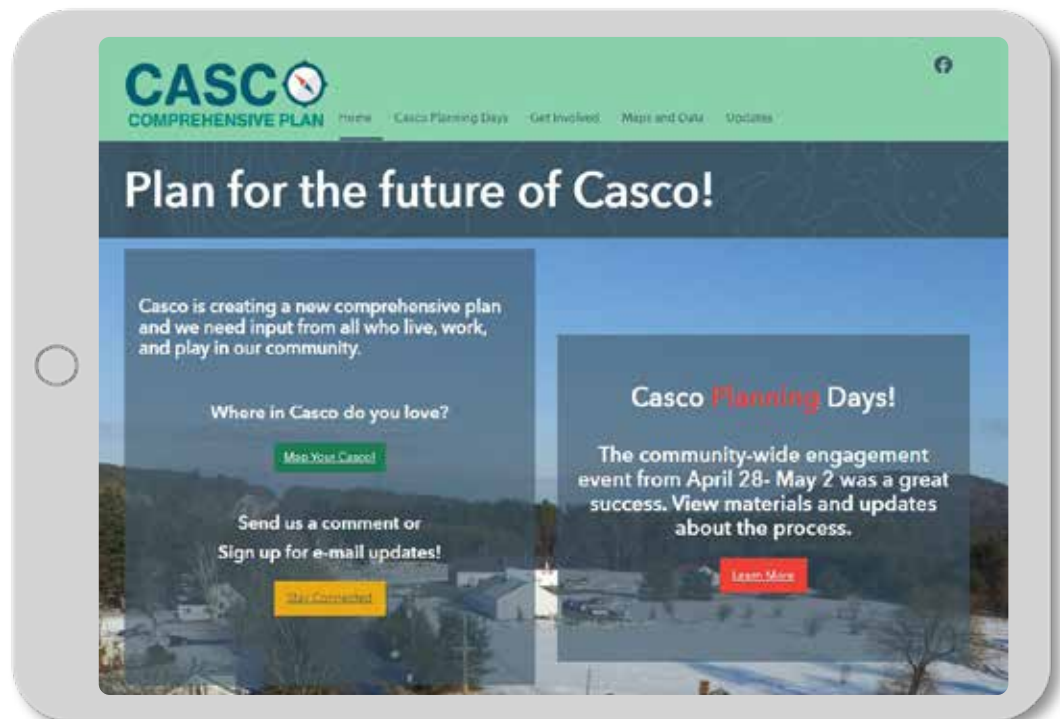
Gearing up for the Comprehensive Plan Update process, the Selectboard made a call to Casco residents for volunteers to serve on the Casco Comprehensive Plan Committee (hereafter referred to as “the committee”) which would represent a variety of neighborhoods and backgrounds. The committee was the driving force behind public outreach efforts for this plan,

working with the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) early in the process to develop an outreach plan. Prior to launching into the process, the committee met for four months to learn about contemporary issues in planning, design, and regulatory frameworks.

SOCIAL & ONLINE MEDIA

The committee used personal social media accounts and the Town of Casco Facebook page to promote Casco Planning Days. Posts created by the committee were posted to the social media pages and in news blasts of multiple local clubs and organizations including Road Associations, the snowmobile and ATV clubs, Casco Public Library, Songo Locks School, Crooked River Elementary School, Parent Teacher Association, and Loon Echo Land Trust. The library and municipal departments such as Fire Rescue and

A special project website kept the community informed about the planning process, including upcoming events and ways to get involved. The website is archived here: <https://casco-gpcog.hub.arcgis.com/>



Parks and Recreation also posted on their Facebook pages.

The informational Hub Site created provides information about the entire Comprehensive Plan Update process with important topics including the schedule and details of Casco Planning Days, maps and data, and ways to get involved.

During Casco Planning Days, the team of GPCOG planners (hereafter referred to as “the team”) utilized a Miro Board where Casco residents unable to participate in-person could interact with the process. The Visual Preference Survey was available to participate in on the Comprehensive Plan Miro Board. Photos were also regularly posted of maps and materials in the studio as they were marked-up and commented on.

PRINT MEDIA

All printed materials were consistently branded with the Casco Comprehensive Plan logo and Casco Planning Days aesthetic to provide a cohesive identity to all things project-related. Postcards were handed out by committee members, town staff and the library, and given out to all school-age kids to take home. Postcards communicated the full schedule and location of Casco Planning Days and direction to the website for more information. Posters expanded from the postcard and lawn signs listing the time and place of the event were placed at popular places.



CASCO
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Casco is creating a new comprehensive plan, and we need YOUR input! Join us for focused discussions, presentations, events, and more. For more info, visit casco-gpcog.hub.arcgis.com or scan the QR code to the right.

Open Studio Every Day!
Bring your ideas | 9:00 am - 9:00 pm**THURSDAY**
Kick-Off & Hands-On Workshop: Getting Ready for Growth
Presentation, 6:00-8:30 pm**FRIDAY**
Recreation & Social Life
Special Topic Meeting, 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Getting Around: Roads & Mobility
Special Topic Meeting, 1:00-2:00 pm
Support Local Economy
Special Topic Meeting, 4:30-5:30 pm
Business Mixer
Networking, Beverages and Snacks, 5:30-6:30 pm**SATURDAY**
Woods, Waters, Trails & Open Spaces
Special Topic Meeting, 10:30-11:30 am
Sustainable Future
Special Topic Meeting, 12:00-1:00 pm
Swing Into Spring With The Library
Family Fun, 2:00-4:00 pm
Community Check-In
How are we doing so far?, 5:00-6:00 pm
Open Rec Center and Dessert Potluck
Sweets, Dodgeball and more, 6:00-7:00 pm**SUNDAY**
Selectboard Leadership Meeting
Meeting, 10:00-11:00 am**MONDAY**
Closing Session
Presentation, 6:00-8:00 pm

THE STUDIO

The pop-up design studio was used throughout Casco Planning Days. The Studio was housed in a meeting room in the Community Center courtesy of the Casco Parks and Recreation department. The team set up a fully-functioning office and design studio for the duration of the event, where the community was welcomed in for scheduled sessions and to drop by during open studio hours, 9am-9pm, to interact with the team and planning process on their own time. Following community workshops, special topic sessions, drop-ins, and other meetings, team members began to develop planning framework and illustrative plans that responded to community input.

Outside of the studio, the team conducted a Synoptic Survey of various buildings across Casco's villages. The survey tracked the existing pattern of development and design in Casco by measuring elements such as building height, setback, and shape. From the Survey the team determined where the design did not fit with the existing zoning of areas in order to suggest updated zoning and building standards that better fit the actual shape of Casco and guide future design.



KICK-OFF & SPECIAL TOPIC SESSIONS

The week-long public planning process kicked off at the pop-up studio in Casco Village with a presentation, hands-on workshop, and community goal-setting. Over 40 people attended Casco Planning Days Kick-Off on the first night of the week. Before the hands-on workshop, the team made an introductory presentation to the community. The presentation provided an overview of the project schedule and intentions, the existing conditions of Casco and its villages, and example strategies to control the pattern of development including building standards and zoning. The presentation also allowed the team to explain their own roles as listeners and interpreters, who would translate the community vision as expressed by the community themselves into the polished Comprehensive Plan for the town.

In the workshop that followed the opening presentation, participants were invited to mark up maps of Casco with places they loved, areas they would like to see improvements, and spaces they wanted protected. This generated conversation about housing, local businesses, access to trails, and safety of the roadways which began to inform the team about community priorities and guiding principles. At the end of the night, participants at each table shared their top big ideas expressed through the mapping activity to the whole group, highlighting for each other and the team the most critical aspirations and concerns people had for Casco.

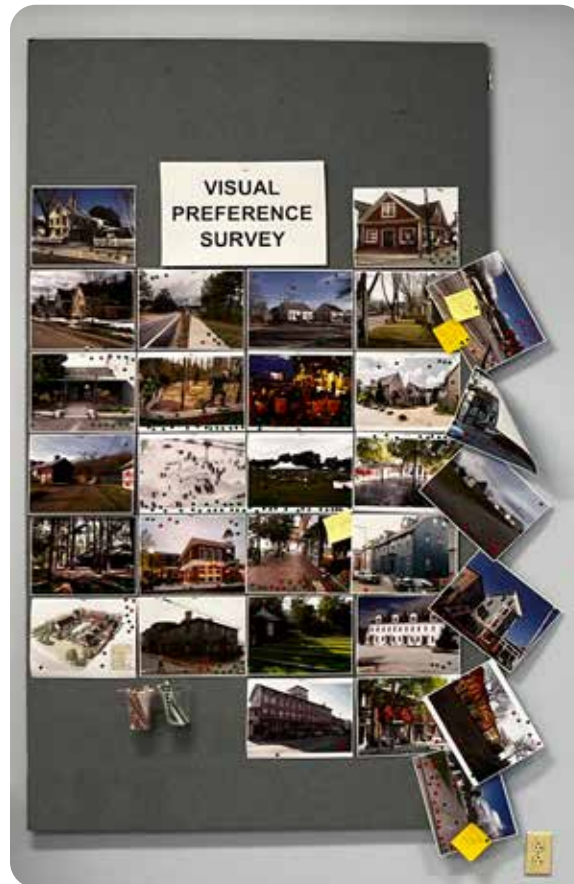


Over the next two days, community members met for special topic sessions in the studio to break down more specific concerns and priorities. Each special topic session attracted from four to 20 participants, providing a more intimate and deeper look at topics including recreation & social life, roads & mobility, local economy, woods, waters, trails, & open space, and creating a sustainable future. A business mixer at the end of the second day also created a space for local business owners and entrepreneurs to connect and share insights into what it is like to operate a business in Casco. The library hosted Swing Into Spring, a family fun event which included a story walk, face painting, and a local author visit on the Village Green.

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

The Visual Preference Survey was available both in-person on a wall in the studio and on the Casco Planning Days Miro Board for online participation. In the studio, the team set up over 50 photos of design, architecture, and landscaping ideas which may inspire the future development in Casco. Participants were asked to place green dots on photos they liked and wanted to see in Casco and red dots on photos they didn't like nor want to see in the town. Participants also placed comments explaining why they liked or did not like photos with sticky notes. On the Miro Board, participants

placed comments and dots virtually. The survey was successful in gathering preference feedback, most photos were covered in dots by the end of the week, which was useful for the team to identify what Casco residents would like to see in their town.



BIG IDEAS WALL

The Big Ideas Wall prompted residents of all ages to identify what they would like to see in the future for Casco. Participants were asked to write or draw their Big Ideas and post it on the wall.

The activity presented a creative forum for residents to express their wants and needs for the town. The team drafted the Big Ideas for the Plan directly based on the Big Ideas Wall, taking note of every comment. The wall stayed up throughout the week and people

interacted with it during drop-ins and before/after sessions and workshops.

INTERACTIVE MAP, SURVEY, & QUESTION CAMPAIGN

Launched before Casco Planning Days began, "Map My Casco" was an interactive crowdsourced mapping activity available on the project website. Participants were able to select a location on the map to make a comment on three topics: Places You Love, Small Fix, and Big Idea. Participants were welcome to make as many reports as they



desired and could leave additional feedback by “liking” and commenting on other people’s ideas.

Also on the project website, the Casco Planning Days Survey provided space for participants to answer questions about Casco today and what they would like to see in the future. Questions ranged from “What do you like best about Casco?” to “Does Casco need more housing?” to “What should happen at Pike’s Corner?” The final question was an open-ended call for any other comments or suggestions. The Question Campaign asked participants “What is your question about the future of Casco?” in order to glean what were resident’s general concerns, hopes, and potential direction of Casco in the coming years.

COMMUNITY PLANNING MID-POINT CHECK-IN

The mid-point check-in workshop rounded out the third day of the week. The team led participants around the room to view preliminary works products posted on the walls, talking through what had been discussed over the previous three days and how resident feedback had already been incorporated into maps and materials. This included a draft summary of the Big Ideas, important road safety

measures, suggestions for defining the villages, and a preliminary sketch of Pike’s Corner. After the presentation, participants were invited to continue to add comments to materials and reflect on them with team members to further refine new ideas. The feedback from the mid-point check-in helped inform the subsequent drawings and maps which would be presented in the final wrap-up session.

CLOSING SESSION

On Monday, the last day of Casco Planning Days, the team worked hard to finish synthesizing ideas and polish maps, renderings, and Big Ideas produced from community feedback throughout sessions and drop-ins. The results were presented to the community in the closing session after the closing presentation which provided possible actions and designs based on the Visual Preference Survey, comments, and community member discussions with the team. Following the presentation, attendees were welcomed once again to mark up materials by way of dots and sticky notes for the final feedback of Planning Days. The evening and process concluded in high spirits as many residents expressed their excitement at the potential they could see in Casco’s future.



PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

After Casco Planning Days, the Committee worked with the Team for nearly 12 months to develop the first draft of the Plan. It was presented in mid-March of 2023 when about 50 people attended an “unveiling/open house” at the Casco Community Center. All of the major parts of the plan, including summaries of where Casco has come from and where we are now (History/ Villages), Emerging Places (Renderings of 302 Corridor, Pikes Corner, Watkins Flats), as well as

the Big Ideas and Strategies were presented. The draft was available for public review on the town’s website (pdf download) and hardcopies were placed at various municipal locations around town; comments were submitted via email or hardcopy. The committee gathered the public comments and reviewed them, making some minor edits. A second Draft Plan was released prior to a moderated Q&A Roundtable discussion (~20 people attended) and a Select Board/Planning Board Public Hearing (30-40 people attended),



both held in mid-May. In June, there was a joint workshop between the Committee and the Selectboard. In addition to these targeted public events, the committee held dozens of open-door meetings at the community center, processing comments and performing page-by-page document review for edits and clarity. Throughout this time, the Selectboard offered their support and encouragement — indicating they believed the Draft Plan represented the needs and desires of the community, based on Casco Planning Days

and public comment. They suggested softened wording in places to ensure the townspeople understand the intention of the plan — advice the committee took very seriously. This period of writing, review, collection and processing of comments, rewrite and subsequent review has taken hundreds of hours and involved dozens of people.

Financing the Plan: A Capital Investment Strategy

The data chapter, “Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan”, identifies how the town has funded and anticipates funding of future capital investment needs.

The data chapter, “Public Facilities and Services” calls out needs to fund the following:

- Maintenance of deteriorating cemeteries.
- A more secure gate for Public Works’ sand and salt shed.
- Creating space for the Public Works Department currently housed in the fire station.
- Expanding fire facilities and purchasing a ladder truck.

Further, the Big Ideas section of this plan identifies a wide array of both facilities improvements and

The town’s leadership and staff are committed to continuing an **open budgetary process and dialogue with the community** to carefully plan for and consider how money is spent in Casco.

programmatic activities that may require staffing support to accomplish. While staffing is not a capital investment, it is something the town will consider as part of its annual budgeting process. Needs identified in the Public Facilities and Services chapter and Big Ideas section include:

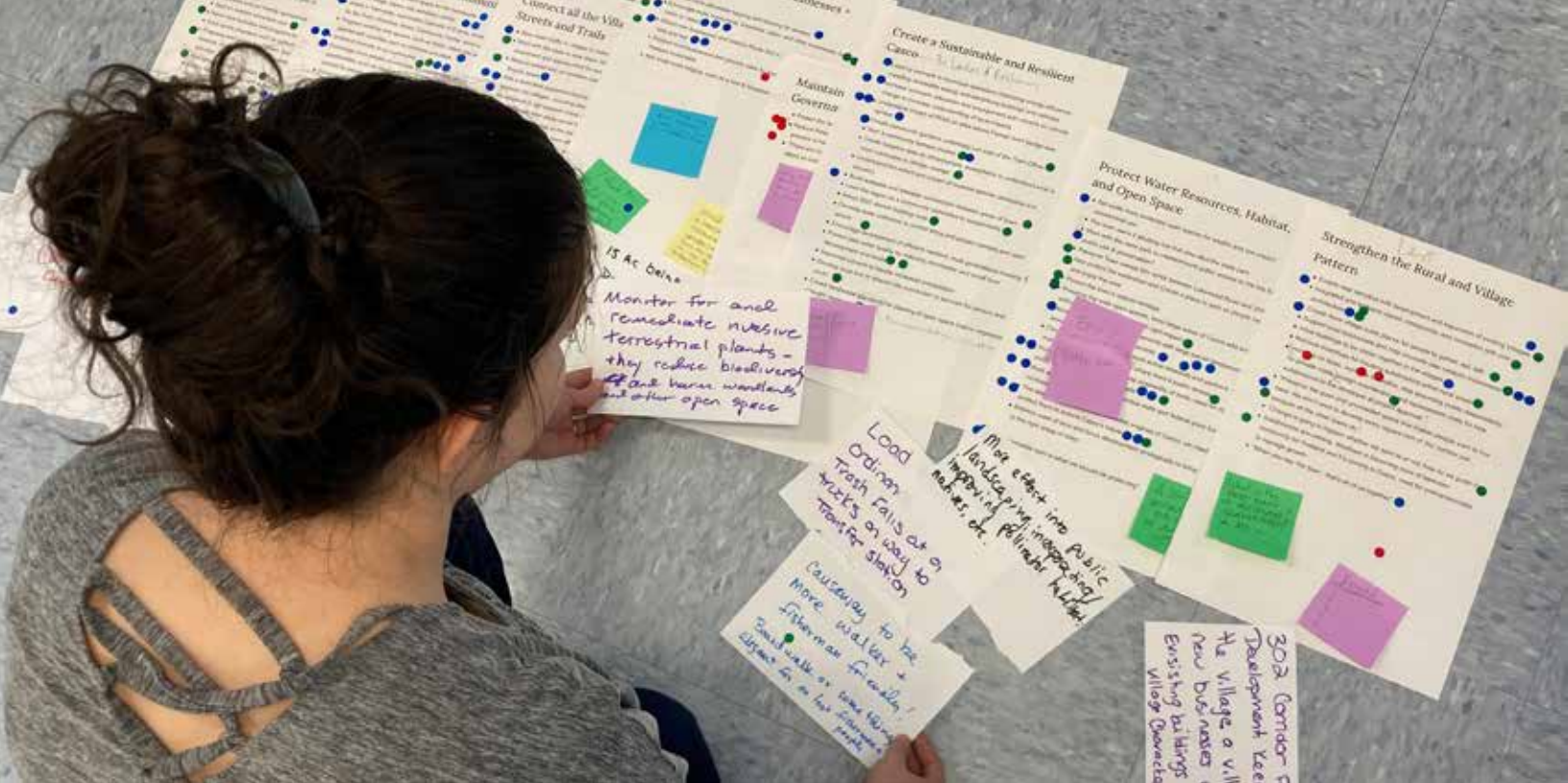
- Expanding public works staff and taking over private contracts for public works services.
- Expanding administrative staff in the Town Office in the busier summer months.
- Expanding emergency response staff.

In the approximate 10 year lifecycle of this plan, the following investments (table on next page) are prioritized along with (very rough) cost estimates. It is understood that, at the time of writing of this plan, we are in a post COVID-19 period of inflation, building supply costs and labor costs are high, as are labor shortages. At the same time, interest rates and fuel are double that of just two years ago. Municipal projects across the state have been suspended due to misaligned estimated costs versus actual costs, and staff shortages. The economic outlook is unclear, recovery period is unknown.

With that said, while we are identifying priorities we are by no means committing that any of the capital investments will come forward at the estimated cost or within the estimated timeframe – or at all. The town’s leadership and staff are committed to continuing an open budgetary process and dialogue with the community to carefully plan for and consider how money is spent in Casco.

ANTICIPATED CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

WHAT	HOW MUCH	PRIORITY	GROWTH RELATED INVESTMENT	FUNDING SOURCE
Municipal + Land Use Policy, Zoning	\$75K (year 1) \$50K (year 2) \$25K (year 3)	High	No	Municipal Budget
Community Development, Development Readiness + Special Studies	\$50K (year 1) \$50K (year 2) \$50K (year 3)	High	No	Grants/ Municipal Budget
Trail Improvements; Expanded Access, Accessibility, Signage	\$250K	Medium	No	Grants/ Municipal Budget
Street Safety + Road Infrastructure Improvements	\$750K - \$1M annually	High	Yes	Municipal Budget
New Municipal Government Meeting Area	\$250K	High	No	Municipal Budget
Expanded Communications + Engagement	\$15K/yr	High	No	Grants/ Municipal Budget
Community Bus	\$123K	Medium	No	Grants/ Municipal Budget
Emergency Communications System Improvements	\$250K	High	No	Grants/ Municipal Budget
Land Acquisition for Open Space + Trails	\$3M	High	No	Grants/ Bond/ Philanthropic
Cemetery Maintenance	\$10K-\$20K annually	High	No	Municipal Budget
Public Works Facility Improvements	\$3M	Medium	No	Bond
Expanded EMS/Fire Facilities	\$6M	Medium	No	Bond
Resiliency Program + Water Quality/Environmental Monitoring	\$50K (year 1) \$50K (year 2) \$20K (annually)	High	No	Grants/ Municipal Budget
Ladder Truck*	\$1.5M*	Medium	No	<i>*This expenditure would be a shared regional cost</i>



Implementing the Plan

In anticipation of plan adoption at Town meeting, the Selectboard should put out a call for volunteers to join an “Implementation Committee.”

The Board should prepare to appoint a team of dedicated leaders who will champion the plan and take on coordination and oversight of implementation efforts. The Selectboard may consider appointing a committee composed of one representative from each of the other town committees and organizations to optimize local coordination and communication of efforts. Members of the committee who shepherded the plan's creation should be first considered.

It is incredibly important that the Implementation Committee understands the robust public process that led to the creation of the Comprehensive Plan, and that their true responsibility is to move

its visions and goals forward, not re-evaluate overall plan contents and divert from the plan's vision. Championing the plan is the Committee's first role, carrying out the plan is the Committee's first responsibility.

Because Casco is a small town powered by volunteers, the Implementation Committee will likely become more than coordinators. The Committee should be prepared to work collaboratively with staff on special initiatives, engage in the budgeting process, and work with the Planning Board to make sure priority zoning amendments called out by this plan are moving forward. Further, the committee's role should include regular, ongoing communications and platforms for discussion with the community about plan progress. The plan was created with many hands and voices, and its implementation will need just as many people pulling in the same direction to implement it.

The Role of the Selectboard, in summary:

- Bring forward the plan for adoption at Town Meeting
- Appoint an Implementation Committee and define committee roles
- Bring forward any subsequent zoning or land use policy-related recommendations
- Coordinate with staff and committee to fund additional plans and studies
- Consider budgeting for capital investments in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process
- Consider budgeting for any staffing and programmatic changes in the annual budget
- Coordination with county and state agencies and/or utility service providers, as needed to maintain and upgrade infrastructure and services.
- Annually review the progress of the committee and co-host a plan celebration and open house!

The Role of the Implementation Committee, in summary:

- Implement the plan
- Set an annual work plan and base that plan on the implementation matrix
- Bring forward requests for fiscal or staffing support to leadership
- Coordinate with staff and stakeholders, so all parties understand what parts of the plan they are responsible for implementing
- Hold quarterly check ins with the Selectboard to discuss progress and identify any issues/ opportunities
- Prepare an annual report of progress
- Co-host an annual plan celebration and open house with the Selectboard.



Demonstration Projects to Test ideas

Implementation efforts for this plan are already underway! Casco's leadership met on the second last day of the public design week to discuss "low hanging fruit": what the town could do right now to begin responding to the wishes of the community. The first initiative was to engage a bicycle and pedestrian facilities expert, Jim Tassé, to help design and install a village gateways treatment and safe walking zone on Route 121 in Casco Village. This installation was designed in partnership with the Maine DOT and begins to tackle one of the biggest priorities of the community — making streets safer for everybody.

5 EARLY ACTION STEPS TO TAKE NOW!

1

Start A Connect Casco Action Group

The Big Idea, “Activities for All” identifies a number of ways to boost togetherness. A few low cost, quick to implement strategies include: “Form a volunteer programming group to support the Community Center existing programming and expand future opportunities.” and, “Enhance event communications with a searchable town-wide calendar of events.” An action-oriented group could kickstart both of these initiatives and more, expanding communications through newsletters, direct email blasts, posters, and via social media channels.

2

Fund Zoning Repair Work

At minimum, the town should adopt protections for the rural area by way of the farm compounds zoning tool, assign portions of Route 302 as a Special District to encourage higher quality, more compact redevelopment, and adopt building types and standards to control size, scale, and aesthetics of development in the Village and Commercial Districts. New zoning will allow some villages to expand while maintaining a rural, small town sense of place.

3

Engage the MaineDOT in a Village Partnership Initiative

The State’s new funding program provides an opportunity to work in partnership with the Maine DOT to plan for street improvements in villages and main streets. Casco may be able to make a strong case for creation of a slower section of Route 302 to

focus economic development and housing opportunities on this priority corridor. This program helps to move communities closer to funding for shovel-ready projects. Current and ongoing efforts by the town to document speed in the villages will help to support the case for slower, safer streets.

4

Pursue a Community Action Grant

This new state funding source through the Community Resilience Partnership could help the Town of Casco address a number of different strategies identified in the big idea, “Be Leaders of Sustainability.” Funding can also be used to amend zoning to create walkable, mixed use village centers that will support new housing.

5

Implement Slow Streets Safety Tests

Continue to work with stakeholders to install low-cost, temporary to more permanent treatments in places identified on the “Streets Safety” map. The purpose of the installations should be to test out ideas in anticipation of making more permanent temporary improvements that can remain year-long. Some areas may see longer term reconstruction. The Town should continue to liaise with Greater Portland Council of Governments staff to make sure any/all possible funding sources (regional, state, and federal) are available to the town to make safety improvements.

Evaluating and Updating the Plan

Building upon the narrative provided above, through ongoing evaluation this plan may be updated from time to time to reflect changes in the community, the region, and the state. The plan is kinetic and should not be treated as a snapshot in time.

Much of the data in the inventory and analysis section is static - it is a snapshot, and it may change. Through annual community check in's, any significant changes in trends, market, circumstance and community values and priorities should be discussed. If leadership finds discrepancies, the community should decide if and when an update to the plan is necessary.

Annually, the Plan Implementation Committee should review progress, and report out its findings at a community open house. This open house can do five main things:

1. Share progress and celebrate the successes.
2. Outline priorities for the coming year, including any initiatives that may require funding or community support at town meeting.
3. Recruit additional volunteer support where it is needed.
4. Keep the community connected to the plan and the process of implementation open and transparent.
5. Facilitate an open-ended discussion about any one or number of issues or topics that the community feels leadership and the Committee needs to focus on.



As required by the State, after 5 years the Plan Implementation Committee should evaluate the following, at minimum:

- A. The degree to which future land use plan strategies have been implemented;
- B. Percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in growth areas;
- C. Location and amount of new development in relation to community's designated growth areas; and,
- D. Amount of critical natural resource, critical rural, and critical waterfront areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.



Implementation Matrix

The plan implementation matrix provides an organizational framework for the implementation of each project, policy or initiative identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The matrix can be used to organize efforts by the Implementation Committee, staff and stakeholders. Each strategy identified in the document is listed in the matrix along with reference to whether the item is zoning related, the anticipated timeframe for completion, the responsible party for implementation, and level of priority,

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
Amend the Village District	X	Short	IC / PB	High
Maintain the Manufactured Housing Park District (MHP)		<i>No action required</i>		
Amend the Residential District	X	Short	IC / PB	High
Adopt Special Districts	X	Short	IC / PB	High
Adopt building standards and preapproved building types	X	Short	IC / PB	Med
Consider adopting a Pocket Neighborhood Standard for the villages	X	Mid	IC / PB	Med
Consider adopting rural place types	X	Short	IC / PB	High
Consider adopting a small compound rural place type	X	Short	IC / PB	High
Consider adopting a large compound rural place type	X	Short	IC / PB	High
Consider amending parking standards	X	Short	IC / PB	High
Consider adopting civic space standard	X	Mid	PB	Med
Consider repealing Planned Residential Development (PRD)	X	Mid	PB	Med
Consider adopting neighborhood design standards	X	Short	IC / PB	High

CEO Code Enforcement Office

DPW Director of Public Works

FC Fire Chief

FM Facilities Manager

IC Implementation Committee

OSC Open Space Commission

PB Planning Board

RD Recreation Director

SB Select Board

TM Town Manager

1. Protect Woods, Waters, & Open Space

DEVELOP A REFINED TRAIL NETWORK

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Build relationships with large parcel landowners and the state park to secure long-term, generational access and preservation to key trail linkages and connections, with the consideration of working towards establishing formal agreements.		Ongoing	SB	High
02 / Update zoning to clearly articulate when trail corridors should be preserved or added as private development occurs.	X	Short	PB	High
03 / Create an open space and trails connectivity map to identify important trail corridors and connections for future private development.		Short	OSC	High
04 / Consult with interested parties to solidify use and easement agreements with private landowners.		Ongoing	OSC	High
05 / Seek private and public funding to expand the number of trails and pedestrian/bicycle paths.		Ongoing	OSC	High
06 / Prioritize funding for sidewalk and bicycle network expansions.		Ongoing	SB	Med
07 / Continue to work regionally with surrounding communities and organizations to extend regional trails.		Ongoing	OSC	High
08 / Encourage the Open Space Commission to expand its relationships with external partners and private landowners.		Ongoing	OSC	High

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ENHANCE GENERATIONAL ACCESS TO TRAILS & WATERWAYS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Create trails and water access points that are ability-inclusive and accessible by means other than car.		Mid	OSC / RD	High
02 / Install low-cost, low-impact signage along trails and water access points to aid in navigation and private property use.		Mid	OSC / RD	Med
03 / Seek private and public funding to expand the number of access points to natural resources and water access.		Ongoing	OSC	High
04 / Improve public awareness and knowledge of the trails by expanding volunteer opportunities and creating trail, water access, and outdoor recreation maps and informational materials.		Mid	SB	Med
05 / Develop relationships with private landowners and provide ongoing stewardship assistance to ensure continued access to trails.		Ongoing	OSC	High
06 / Work with local and regional organizations to offer four-season, nature-based activities and programming for people of all ages and abilities.		Short	RD	Med
07 / Enter into agreements with private landowners to formalize trail and water access points.		Ongoing	OSC	High

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1. Protect Woods, Waters, & Open Space

KEEP LARGE AREAS OF CASCO WILD & UNTOUCHED

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Work with the local land trusts to pursue state and federal grant funding to increase land conservation.		Mid	SB	High
02 / Protect the town's natural heritage by acquiring and preserving private, open, underutilized land for wildlife and low-impact recreational use.		Mid	SB	High
03 / Use the Open Space Fund as a strategy to purchase open space and protect important natural resources and land conservation in Casco.		Short	OSC / SB	High
04 / Plant wild and native meadow seeds along Crooked River School.		Mid	OSC	Med
05 / Update the zoning code to require developers building appropriate scale projects within the rural districts to protect high quality open space.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
06 / Create connections between conserved lands for increased wildlife corridors and trails.		Ongoing	OSC	High

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PRESERVE LAKES, PONDS, AND WATERWAYS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Continue to work with local organizations to actively monitor the health of the lakes and ponds.		Ongoing	SB	High
02 / Consider limiting or halting commercial water extraction to protect long-term viability of water resources.		Mid	SB	High
03 / Educate residents on shoreline management best practices, invasive species, and the importance of water quality.		Short	SB	High
04 / Partner with neighboring communities and regional pond associations to monitor, protect, and improve water quality in the region's watershed.		Short	SB	High

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1. Protect Woods, Waters, & Open Space

PROTECT FARMS AND WORKING LANDS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Update the zoning code to protect high quality open space within the rural districts.	X	Mid	PB	High
02 / Work regionally to develop marketing materials to showcase outdoor amenities, farms, and local food sources unique to Casco.		Mid	SB	Med
03 / Encourage working farms and forests to participate in the Farmland and Tree Growth Tax Program.		Mid	OSC	High
04 / Work with the Maine Farmland Trust, the Department of Agriculture, and other organizations to attract and support farmers and agricultural- based businesses.		Short	OSC	High
05 / Develop a solar ordinance that protects farmland, forests, and working lands	X	Short	PB	High

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PROTECT HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Complete a survey of historic properties and archaeological sites.		Mid	SB	Med
02 / Identify properties that may be nominated to the National Register for historic places.		Mid	SB	Med

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2. Support Diversity & Multigenerational Community Life

CREATE MULTI-GENERATIONAL SPACES

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Improve infrastructure of parks and outdoor community gathering spaces to include utilities such as water and electricity to increase functionality.		Mid	RD	High
02 / Address transportation issues to get children and seniors to programs by purchasing a town bus or partnering with the school district, transit agencies, or private organizations.		Short	RD	High
03 / Create a shared artist workspace in a village district.		Mid	SB	Med
04 / Create a long-term future cemetery for Casco residents.		Mid	SB	High

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IMPROVE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Improve cell coverage in the villages.		Mid	SB	High
02 / Boost communication of volunteer needs and opportunities to sustain increased sociability.		Short	TM	High
03 / Create a volunteer calendar or online sign-up platform to advertise volunteer opportunities, time commitments, and schedule.		Short	TM	High
04 / Start a mentorship program to match people with skills with people who want to learn new skills.		Mid	RD	Med
05 / Organize a “creating community” event - speed dating style opportunity to get to know your neighbors.		Mid	RD	Low
06 / Create a resident welcome package or page on the town website to easily inform people about town committees, how to get involved, and importance of town participation.		Short	TM	High

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2. Support Diversity & Multigenerational Community Life

EMBRACE DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Assess how ordinances and town policies affect the diversity of the town.	X	Short	SB	High
02 / Encourage diversity on committees and boards to ensure that decision-making entities reflect all interests in the community.	X	Short	SB	High

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ENCOURAGE HOUSING DIVERSITY TO ACCOMMODATE A RANGE OF FAMILY SIZES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Update the zoning code to enable greater density and diverse housing choices within the 5-minute walk areas identified on the Connectivity Map.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
02 / Update the zoning code to regulate building types by zoning district to ensure new buildings and projects complement the scale and sense of place in each of the villages, and a range of unit sizes are permitted. Provide a more stringent set of development standards to control building form, scale, components, placement, materials and associated site improvements throughout town.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
03 / Update the zoning code to allow building groups such as pocket neighborhoods in villages, and connected farms, small and large compounds, and hamlets in the rural areas.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
04 / Review all municipal codes and procedures to remove barriers to small-scale development and the construction of affordable building types.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
05 / Create a multi-generational neighborhood plan for the Crooked River School area.		Mid	IC / SB	Med
06 / Consider zoning tools to support an agricultural neighborhood district with limited commercial activities at Watkins Flats.	X	Short	IC / PB	High

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ENCOURAGE HOUSING DIVERSITY TO ACCOMMODATE A RANGE OF FAMILY SIZES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS (CONT.)

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
07 / Work with landowners to create a neighborhood master plan for the rehabilitation of the mobile home park.		Long	SB	High
08 / Update the zoning code to remove parking minimums within the growth areas, allowing the free market to determine parking needs. Add controls that require new parking to be located behind buildings.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
09 / Expedite permitting for construction of affordable housing units in growth areas envisioned as dense, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.		Mid	SB	High
10 / Create an affordable housing fund. Fund it, for example, with a percentage-based land transfer tax.		Long	SB	Med
11 / Allow large homes to be shared by multiple people not living in family, but that share cooking facilities, gathering spaces and other supportive amenities.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
12 / Amend ordinance to comply with LD 2003.	X	Short	IC / PB	High

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SLOW TOWN TRAFFIC TO MAKE STREETS SAFER

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Work with the state to slow down areas of the town to support additional village investment and opportunities for economic growth.		Mid	SB	High
02 / Work with the state for greater town control over posted speed limits and initiate discussions for changing the way speed limits are set to improve safety.		Short	PB	High
03 / Adopt a Vision Zero plan to eliminate traffic fatalities.	X	Short	SB	High
04 / Adopt a Complete Streets policy that considers the safety and accessibility of all roads for all users. Prioritize pedestrian, or multi-modal-first approach for all transportation projects and programs, from scoping to maintenance.	X	Short	SB	High
05 / Adopt a resolution that establishes a reduced speed within Casco's more densely populated areas.	X	Mid	SB	High
06 / Add bike signage to improve visibility and safety of bicyclists.		Short	DPW	High
07 / Continue to direct funding to pilot temporary, test measures such as lane width reductions, advisory bike lanes, and other techniques to slow traffic on local neighborhood streets.		Short	SB	High
08 / Ensure upkeep of existing streets before making new streets.		Ongoing	SB	High

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3. Connect the Villages with Safe Streets & Trails

IMPROVE ROAD GEOMETRY

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Work with MaineDOT to evaluate where adjustments can be made to road geometry to reduce speeding and increase safety, including the full lengths of Rt 302 and Rt 11.		Mid	SB / TM	High
02 / Work with MaineDOT to create purposeful areas along Rt 302 where vehicle speeds can be reduced to support local economic development, climate resiliency and livability goals.		Mid	SB	High
03 / Create a gateway treatment and re-allocate lane space on Rt 11 near Crooked River School to support increased walking and bicycling to school for neighborhood students.		Short	DPW	High

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SUPPORT EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Review existing ordinances to ensure businesses can operate as needed within the village centers.	X	Short	PB / IC	High
02 / Create an economic development committee or businesses association to enhance communications between the business community and town staff.		Mid	SB	Med
03 / Enhance connections between local businesses such as farm to table restaurants.		Mid	SB	Med
04 / Explore costs and funding mechanisms for bringing utilities into town.		Mid	SB / TM	Med
05 / Prioritize streets that are safe, interesting, and comfortable for walking.		Short	SB	High

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4. Attract Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs

ATTRACT A DYNAMIC WORKFORCE

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Support the organization of professional groups to hold networking and community building events.		Mid	RD	Med
02 / Work with the library to encourage private sector partnerships to host professional enrichment and skills building workshops.		Mid	RD	Med
03 / Create a town-wide directory of home-based and local businesses.		Short	SB	High
04 / Update zoning to allow for higher density development to create more walkable destinations and more diverse housing choices.	X	Short	PB	High

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RECRUIT NEW LOCAL AND NON-FRANCHISE BUSINESSES

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Update zoning to ensure new commercial development has a village look and feel.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
02 / Update zoning to allow restaurants or small-scale lodging, such as a bed and breakfast, in the villages and to specify form.	X	Short	IC / PB	High
03 / Find more places to have commercial zoning and zones that keep the right type of businesses in designated areas.	X	Mid	IC / PB	High
04 / Consider buying buildings when available and rent them to new businesses.		Ongoing	SB	Med

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5. Maintain Fiscal Stability & Accessible Government

FIND MORE WAYS TO INCLUDE RESIDENTS IN THE TOWN PROCESS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Continue to use an open, transparent, and participatory process.		Ongoing	SB	High
02 / Adopt a policy to hold facilitated public workshops when complex problems arise that require broad community commitment.		Short	SB	High
03 / Include funding in the budget for meetings between Town Hall and the community.		Mid	SB	Med
04 / Increase volunteerism and community participation to improve the capacity and capability of committees.		Mid	SB	Med
05 / Test alternative committee meeting times and days to make it easier to volunteer.		Short	Various	High
06 / Develop a strategy or partnership to make child-care available for all public meetings to promote involvement.		Short	SB	High

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IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS ON TOWN HAPPENINGS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Consider forming a volunteer communications committee or including funding in the budget for a part-time communications staff member.		Short	TM / SB	High
02 / Launch a community newsletter.		Short	TM	High
03 / Keep the Town's website and Facebook pages up to date with current content and promote activities based in the community.		Ongoing	TM	High
04 / Continue to work with the community to build shared communication goals to reach a diverse audience.		Ongoing	SB	High
05 / Encourage more people to volunteer by coordinating and promoting opportunities, such as road clean-ups or community groups to knit for people in need.		Ongoing	SB	High
06 / Annually, hold a community celebration to acknowledge the work of volunteers.		Ongoing	SB	High
07 / Create an outreach campaign to promote Casco outside of the town beyond just Casco Days.		Mid	SB	High

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5. Maintain Fiscal Stability & Accessible Government

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO RESIDENTS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Find ways to support people in keeping their homes well-kept such as matching funds for installing solar, or community house-repair funds.		Mid	SB	Med
02 / Explore ways to bring Town Hall services directly to neighborhoods.		Mid	SB	Med
03 / Add leadership incentives to attract a diverse selection of volunteers for town boards and committees.		Short	SB	High
04 / Consider job sharing to attract highly skilled talent to the town.		Ongoing	Various	Med

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BUILD MECHANISMS FOR FUNDING

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Include funding in the budget for a part-time staff person to support the Town Manager and Code Enforcement with town planning and economic development.		Short	SB / PB / IC	High
02 / Continue to use an open and participatory budgeting process.		Ongoing	SB	High
03 / Evaluate if new job structures or changes to workplace culture should occur to attract new talent to government services.		Short	SB	Med
04 / Fund staff professional development to improve budgeting and town operations for long term capital improvements.		Short	SB	High

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DEVELOP INVENTORIES AND BASELINE DATA

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Conduct a greenhouse gas inventory, vulnerability assessment, and/or climate action plan to understand the infrastructure, ecosystems, and people most vulnerable to climate change.		Mid	SB	Med
02 / Complete an inventory of all invasive species in the town and set up an invasive species management plan.		Mid	SB	Med
03 / Incorporate climate data into new or updated town plans.		Mid	SB	Med

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ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Update communication strategies to distribute informational materials more easily, including keeping the town website up-to-date and possible town newsletter.		Short	SB / TM	High
02 / Consider creation of a new resident welcome package that provides an overview on property care, volunteer committees and opportunities, importance of sustainability, and/or ongoing projects.		Short	SB / TM	High
03 / Use the Community Center to host environmental programs for kids and adults.		Ongoing	RD	Med
04 / Partner with the school district, Lakes Environmental Association, and other organizations to bring sustainability focused education to the kids.		Mid	OSC / RD	Med
05 / Include funding for sustainable education and outreach in future budgets.		Short	SB	High
06 / Facilitate educational workshops to teach residents on composting, recycling, emissions reductions, green infrastructure, and sustainable actions.		Ongoing	RD	High

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ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (CONT.)

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
07 / Educate residents and businesses on point-source pollution, and the importance of groundwater and surface water protection.		Mid	OSC	Med
08 / Partner with organizations, such as Maine Lakes, communicate on the importance of water quality and environmentally safe practices. This might take the form of participating in the LakeSmart programming from Maine Lakes.		Ongoing	OSC	High

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BOOST THE RESILIENCY OF PEOPLE

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Encourage aging in place through development of efficient, resilient, multi-generational housing.	X	Mid	SB	Med
02 / Develop affordable housing, both for rent and to purchase, to support and promote working-class living in Casco.		Mid	Various	High
03 / Create an outreach program to connect with underserved and historically underrepresented residents of Casco.		Mid	SB	High
04 / Establish multi-generational social connections to bring the community together.		Short	RD	Med
05 / Develop a local bus or shared ride connection to services for seniors and youth.		Short	RD	Med
06 / Partner with local organizations, such as the Wild Seed Project or WindowDressers, to offer local workshops on energy efficiency and implement sustainability projects.		Short	OSC / RD	Med
07 / Develop an emergency response communication system that relays information to residents but also ensures emergency vehicles have sufficient access to all areas of town.		Mid	FC / TM	High

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ENSURE EFFICIENT AND DURABLE TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Improve the energy efficiency of municipal operations by installing renewable energy, electrifying buildings, and switching to electric vehicles.		Long	SB	Med
02 / Create incentives or ordinances to increase green infrastructure and improve energy efficiency in new commercial and residential developments.	X	Mid	PB	Med
03 / Work with regional organizations to build local awareness for the social, environmental, and economic benefits of green infrastructure.		Mid	PB	Med
04 / Consider adopting the building stretch code.	X	Mid	PB	Med
05 / Take climate data into consideration when updating plans, policies or ordinances. This could include taking increased precipitation into account when updating culvert sizing.	X	Ongoing	Various	High
06 / Update zoning codes to align with flooding projections.	X	Mid	PB	High
07 / Continue to plan for and fund road infrastructure improvement projects.		Ongoing	DPW / TM / SB	High

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PROTECT THE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Protect water quality by reducing stormwater and runoff from development, roads, agriculture, and fertilized lawns.		Ongoing	DPW	High
02 / Explore ways to expand monitoring of Casco's surface water quality to maintain healthy lakes.		Short	OSC	High
03 / Create environmentally safe landscape standards for planting of open space (native vegetation, pollinator habitat, drought resistance) and lawn care maintenance.		Short	OSC	High
04 / Understand the extent of invasive species (terrestrial and aquatic) and work to monitor and remediate impacted areas.		Mid	OSC	High
05 / Assess the impact of PFAS on sites where town sludge was formerly spread.		Short	SB	High
06 / Explore public and private partnerships to increase recycling and composting.		Long	SB	Med
07 / Review current zoning regulations to ensure goals and objectives are being met.	X	Mid	PB	Med

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6. Be Leaders of Resiliency

SHIFT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Create a solar ordinance to balance sustainability with the preservation of agriculture, forested lands and open space.	X	Short	PB	High
02 / Install renewable energy projects (solar, wind, geothermal, anaerobic digestion, etc.) on municipal buildings and properties.		Long	SB	High
03 / Work with private EV installers to consider incentives for businesses to install charging stations for EVs.		Mid	SB	High
04 / Encourage electric vehicle usage and expand available charging stations in high-use public areas.		Mid	SB	High
05 / Promote awareness and use of Efficiency Maine.		Short	SB	High

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REDUCE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Adopt a Complete Streets policy.	X	Short	SB	High
02 / Prioritize funding for expanding the bicycle and pedestrian network.		Ongoing	SB	High
03 / Continue discussions with transit providers to connect Casco to regional destinations.		Ongoing	SB	High
04 / Work with transit providers to develop an intra-town transit service.		Long	SB	Med
05 / Work with local organizations to coordinate and provide a range of transportation services for the needs of the aging populations and youth.		Mid	SB / RD	High
06 / Consider partnering with regional organizations to provide incentives for ride sharing.		Mid	SB / RD	High

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INCREASE INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Budget for additional staff position to assist town-wide activity programs.		Mid	RD	High
02 / Form a volunteer programming group to support the Community Center existing programming and expand future opportunities.		Short	RD	Med
03 / Support increased funding for the library to provide additional multi-generational activities.		Short	SB	High
04 / Enhance event communications with a searchable town-wide calendar of events.		Short	SB / TM	High
05 / Offer multi-generational programming at various times and days to accommodate more people.		Short	RD	High
06 / Create meet-up mentor match groups that can offer services to one-another (kids and adults).		Short	RD	High

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UTILIZE EXISTING FACILITIES

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Program existing civic spaces, such as fields, the gazebo, or Casco Day Park with activities such as concerts and plays.		Mid	RD	High
02 / Allow and encourage “Friends of” groups to help manage existing civic spaces.		Mid	SB	Med
03 / Form public/private partnerships to fund the retrofit of neighborhood and civic spaces to add desired amenities such as parks, gathering spaces, or recreational opportunities.		Short	RD	Med
04 / Ensure adequate funding and staffing to maintain existing town properties.		Ongoing	SB	High
05 / Consider how existing town property can become a 4-season use (i.e. creating a skating rink in the park during winter).		Mid	RD	High
06 / Partner with the school district to provide programming at the schools.		Mid	RD	High

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EXPAND FACILITIES

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Create a separate space for town board and committee meetings so the Community Center can remain multi-generational.		Mid	TM / SB	Med
02 / Buy property as it becomes available to build new indoor and outdoor recreational facilities or community-gathering spaces.		Long	SB	Med
03 / As part of new development, explore opportunities to partner with developers to create new recreational facilities.		Long	SB	Med
04 / Use credit enhancement agreements to incentivize private development of recreational facilities.		Mid	RD	Med
05 / Update the Town's zoning code to include provisions for development of meaningful open space such as parks, plazas, gardens, dog parks, or playgrounds.	X	Mid	PB / RD	Short
06 / Ensure long-term maintenance costs for new programming and facilities are included in the budget or explore grant opportunities.		Short	RD	Med

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PROTECT & EXPAND WATER ACCESS FOR THE PUBLIC

STRATEGY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
01 / Create a waterfront pavilion.		Mid	RD	Low
02 / Better utilize the town access to Parker Pond.		Short	SB / OSC / RD	High
03 / Make improvements at Crescent Lake beach.		Mid	SB	Med
04 / Extend the town beach to the boat ramp on Pleasant Lake.		Mid	SB	Med

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Supplemental State Policies & Strategies

WATER RESOURCES	APPLICABILITY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
POLICY: To protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.	Incorporated	X	Mid	PB	High

NATURAL RESOURCES	APPLICABILITY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
STRATEGY: Through local land use ordinances, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent BwH maps and information regarding critical natural resources.	Incorporated	X	Mid	PB	High
STRATEGY: Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.	Incorporated		Short	OSC	Med

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AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES	APPLICABILITY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
STRATEGY: Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.	Incorporated	X	Ongoing	PB	High
STRATEGY: Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.	Incorporated	X	Ongoing	PB	High
STRATEGY: Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.	Incorporated	X	Mid	PB	High
STRATEGY: Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas (if the town designates critical rural areas) to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.	Incorporated	X	Mid	PB	High
STRATEGY: Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.	Incorporated	X	Short	PB	High

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Supplemental State Policies & Strategies

ECONOMY	APPLICABILITY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
STRATEGY: Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.	Incorporated		Ongoing	SB	High
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TRANSPORTATION	APPLICABILITY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
POLICY: To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.	Incorporated		Long	SB	Low
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STRATEGY: Develop or continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.	Incorporated		Mid	SB	High
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STRATEGY: Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.	Incorporated		Mid	SB	High
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STRATEGY: Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.	Incorporated	X	Ongoing	SB	High
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FISCAL CAPACITY & CIP	APPLICABILITY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
POLICY: To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.	Incorporated		Ongoing	SB	High
POLICY: To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.	Incorporated		Ongoing	SB	High
POLICY: To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.	Incorporated		Ongoing	SB	High
STRATEGY: Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.	Incorporated		Ongoing	SB	High
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN	APPLICABILITY	ORDINANCE RELATED	TIMEFRAME	LEAD	LEVEL OF PRIORITY
STRATEGY: Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.	Incorporated		Ongoing	SB	High
STRATEGY: Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.	Incorporated	X	Short	IC / PB	High
STRATEGY: Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.	Incorporated		Short	SB	High
STRATEGY: Track new development in the community by type and location.	Incorporated		Short	IC / PB	Med
STRATEGY: Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan.	Incorporated		Ongoing	SB	High

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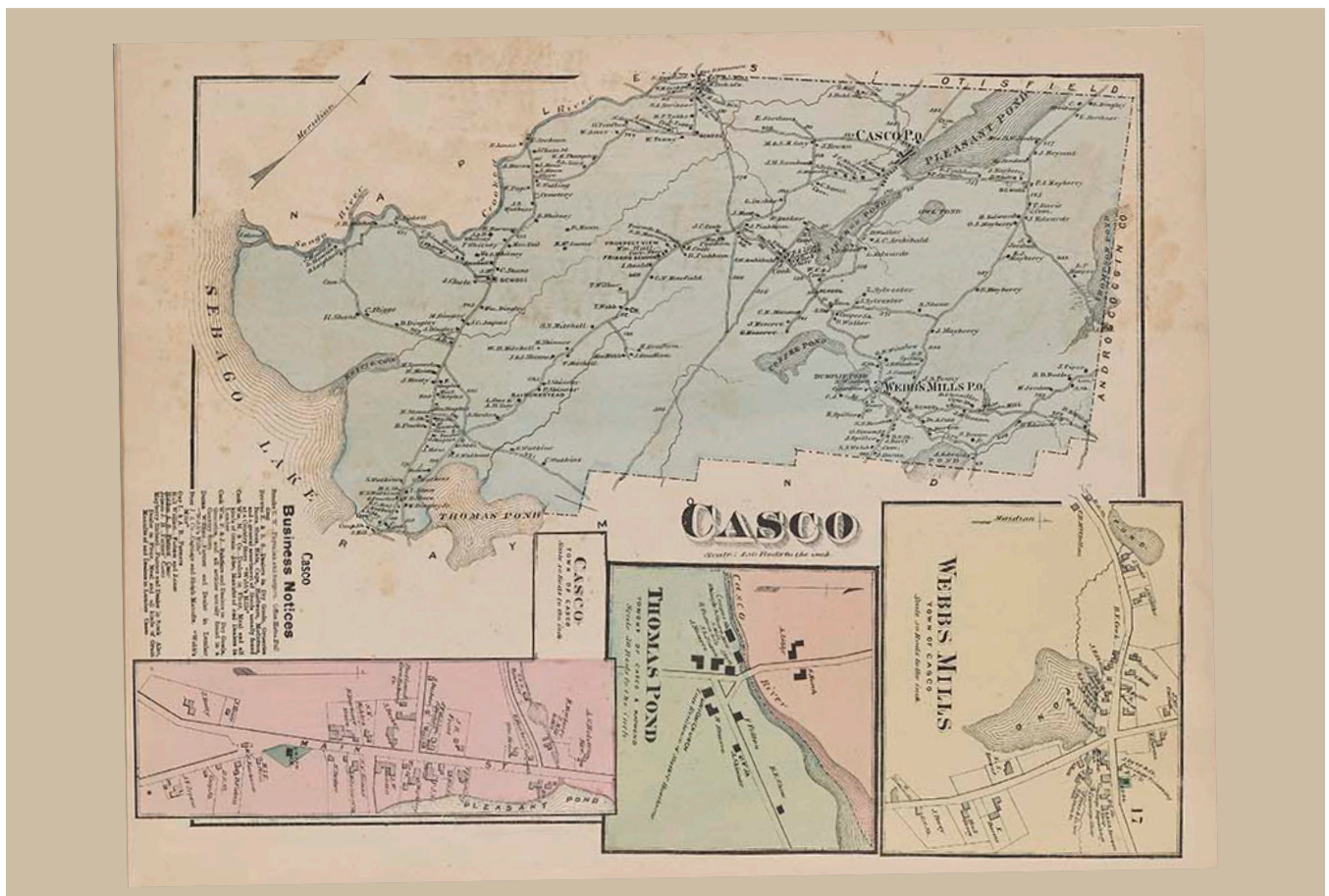
CHAPTER 1

HISTORIC & ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of the historic and archaeological resources within Casco. To learn more about specific properties, residents may access the Cultural & Architectural Resource Management Archive (CARMA) map viewer at: www.maine.gov/mhpc/quick-links/carma

This Chapter is organized into three sections:

1. History of Casco
2. Historic Resources
3. Threats to Historic Resources and Protective Measures



History of Casco

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “An outline of the community’s history, including a brief description of historic settlement patterns and events contributing to the development and character of the community and its surroundings.”]

Casco was formed in 1841 after a separation from then “Raymondtown”. Because there were geographically challenging areas in Raymondtown, there was a sense of disconnect and inefficiency with the way things were, and a committed group of people worked tirelessly to create two separate towns. Casco’s first town meeting was held at the Friends Meetinghouse on Quaker Ridge Rd., which was built in 1814 and still stands today.

Before European contact, the bountiful and widespread forests that grew here after the last glacier retreated were lightly managed by Native Americans and were still intact when early European settlers arrived in the 1700s. These settlers realized the economic potential of these forests and built an industry around them. Early sawmills were located next to waterways in South Casco Village, Cook’s Mills, Webb’s Mills, and Casco Village. These areas, with both water access and industry, proved to be magnets for both residential and commercial development. Farms became plentiful, having sprung up close to these village areas and in other areas where timber harvesting revealed excellent soils for agricultural use. Roads were built to connect these areas together as well as with surrounding towns.

Casco once consisted of a series of small village areas, each tending to have a church, a school, a general store, a blacksmith shop, mills, etc. in order to sustain the nearby residents. If you take a look at one of the old maps (1857, or 1871) you can see where homes and businesses were clustered. Webb's Mills and South Casco by Thomas Pond were two of the larger villages of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Casco has evolved through time just as it has in many surrounding Lake Region communities. Until after the Second World War, economic activity continued to be non-intensive and characterized by farming, timber harvesting, and pockets of small commercial and industrial activity, primarily in the early village settlements. Summer camps for boys and girls were established on some of the lakes. Seasonal homes were built around Casco's primary water bodies. Farming and commercial businesses started to dwindle.

Casco's population in 1960 was less than that in 1860, reflecting the westward expansion and the conversion from an agrarian economy. Cellar holes and stone walls mark many old farms. Casco's current population is more than three times what it was in the 1960's, but the Town has been able to keep much of its rural charm.

There are now five villages in the Town of Casco, nestled among thousands of acres of forest. The villages of today are well-kept and mostly residential in nature. Most villages do not have the same level of commercial activities happening in them as they did in historic times. Today, much of the commercial activity occurs along the Route 302 corridor, and residents travel outside Casco to obtain many goods, services and employment.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Are historic patterns of settlement still evident in the community?"]

Historic patterns of settlement are very much still evident in the community today. See section of the plan, "The Villages of Casco" for descriptions of the settlement patterns that are still evident today, and are desired for protection and enhancement tomorrow in Casco's five villages.

Historic Resources

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “An inventory of the location, condition, and use of any historical or archaeological resource that is of local importance.”]

One of Casco’s biggest historical assets is the Raymond-Casco Historical Society. The Historical Society runs a history museum and holds a collection of historic and archaeological artifacts including many historic farming artifacts and a replica of the Friends School House. The Historical Society is currently hoping to expand programming at the museum and raise awareness of the historical significance of buildings in order to raise the level of historical stewardship in the two towns.

The following section includes the various historical properties and sites identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) as of March, 2021.

There are four properties in Casco listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

1. Friends Meetinghouse, Quaker Ridge (1814) in Casco Village.
2. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Boyhood Home (1818)
3. The Watkins House and Cabins at the junction of Cape Road and U.S. 302 (1810-1920)
4. The Richard Manning House on Raymond Cape Road (1813) in South Casco.

There are two historic archaeological sites documented by the MHPC for Casco:

1. Cook’s Mills (CK)-1 which was significant in the early 19th century
2. Pike’s Corner (PI)-1 which was significant in the 19th century.

There are 10 prehistoric archaeological sites

identified by the MHPC in Casco. They lie on the shores of Thompson Lake, Thomas Pond, and Sebago Lake. Limited professional archaeological surveying has been conducted in the State Park and along the Sebago Lake shoreline east of the State Park.

There are many historic properties throughout Casco. Those identified by MHPC in the Cultural & Architectural Resource Management Archive include:

1. 15 historic properties in Casco Village along Route 121 between Mayberry Hill Road and Edes Falls Road. All that have been assessed are listed as in good condition.
2. 14 historic properties at the intersection of Route 121 and 11. All are in either good or fair condition with the exception of 598 Meadow Road, which is listed as in poor condition.
3. Four historic properties on Route 85 just South of Route 11 on Crescent Lake, three of which are listed as in good or fair condition.
4. Nine historic properties on Route 302 near the Naples border. Of the properties that have been assessed, all are in fair condition.
5. In Sebago Lake State Park, there is a Historic Bridge in good condition.

Threats to Historic Resources and Protective Measures

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A brief description of threats to local historic resources and to those of state and national significance as identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. Have significant historic resources fallen into disrepair, and are there ways the community can provide incentives to preserve their value as an historical resource? Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community’s historic and archaeological resources.”]

The Raymond-Casco Historical Society identifies a major threat to local historic resources in the lack of identification and knowledge of property and sites on private property. Sites that are not preserved under the national register of historic places are not protected by law, and thus are often changed and wiped of their historic qualities. Others have been left to deteriorate or even be demolished altogether. A recent significant loss was the Friends School House which was destroyed by a fire in 2018. The building and its contents were not saved, however, the Raymond-Casco Historical Society has created a replica on display at the museum.

To increase awareness of historical significance of sites in the towns, the Raymond-Casco Historical Society hopes to increase programming through their museum. One of their biggest projects currently underway is relocating the Watkins Historic Blacksmith Shop, which has fallen into disrepair, on Quaker Ridge to the Museum site. The Historical Society plans on moving the structure to Route 302 in Casco, restoring it to a

working blacksmith shop, and are hoping to offer introductory blacksmithing classes. Through the shop, the Historical Society is attempting to get the community interacting with, and see value in, the towns’ histories.

As recommended by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in their inventory data packet, there is a need for further survey, inventory, and analysis of Casco’s prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and historic buildings, structures, and objects. Notably, there have been no professional surveys for historic archaeological sites in Casco. Prior to development within 50 yards of the shore, the shorelines of Thompson Lake, Thomas Pond, and unsurveyed portions of Sebago Lake need to be surveyed for prehistoric archaeological sites. Additionally, in future archaeological surveys, there should be a focus on potentially significant resources associated with Casco’s agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those related to the earliest Euro-American settlement of the area in the 18th and 19th centuries. Finally, a comprehensive survey of above-ground historic resources should be conducted to identify other properties in Casco that may be nominated to the National Register for Historic Places.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “What protective measures currently exist for historic and archeological resources and are they effective? Do local site plan and/or subdivision regulations require applicants proposing development in areas that may contain historic or archaeological resources to conduct a survey for such resources?”]

Protective measures exist in a number of locations within the zoning and subdivision ordinances. The effectiveness of the ordinances are subjective. One might argue no, evidenced by the exterior physical alterations that occurred after the Grange Hall in Casco Village was sold to be converted to a marijuana grow facility.

Casco has not completed a survey of historic properties or archaeological sites, while Maine Historic Preservation Commission has limited information. The ordinances and protections are only as effective as the data is accurate and available.

The following regulations apply to development within the Shoreland Zone:

§ 215-9.33 Archaeological site. Any proposed land use activity involving structural development or soil disturbance on or adjacent to sites listed on, or eligible to be listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by the permitting authority, shall be submitted by the applicant to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for review and comment at least 20 days prior to action being taken by the permitting authority. The permitting authority shall consider comments received from the Commission prior to rendering a decision on the application.

§ 215-9.36 Administration and enforcement. (2) A permit is not required for an archaeological excavation as long as the excavation is conducted by an archaeologist listed on the State Historic

Preservation Commission’s level 1 or level 2 approved list, and unreasonable erosion and sedimentation is prevented by means of adequate and timely temporary and permanent stabilization measures.

The following regulations apply if constructing Wireless Communications Facilities:

§ 215-8.9 Requirements for tower. (11) An analysis of the visual impact of the proposed facility, including tower and supporting structures, which may include photo montage, field mock-up, or other techniques that identify the potential visual impacts, at design capacity, of the proposed facility. Consideration shall be given to views from roads, public areas, private residences, historic resources, including historic districts and structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and archaeological resources. The analysis of the impact on historical and archaeological resources shall meet the requirements of the Maine State Historic Preservation Commission in its review capacity for the FCC. The overall analysis shall assess the cumulative impacts of the proposed facility and other existing communication facilities in the area.

§ 215-8.10 Planning Board review. E. Planning Board review guidelines. The Planning Board may require that the applicant submit documentation, in writing, that the guidelines established below will be met and maintained. The Planning Board will be guided in its consideration of a WCF application by the following parameters: (10) The proposed WCF facility will not unreasonably interfere with the view from any public park, natural scenic vista, historical building, major view corridor or designated scenic resource. (12) Based on information submitted by the applicant, the Planning Board shall ensure that: (c) Other technically feasible sites have been investigated

and the proposed facility has been located in order to minimize the effect of the location on visually sensitive areas such as residential communities, historical areas, and open space areas.

The following is required for properties that are being subdivided:

§ 210-8.1 Criteria for evaluation of subdivision.

A. The subdivision: (9) Will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, rare and irreplaceable natural areas, or any public rights for physical or visual access to the shoreline.

§210-9.5. Retention of open spaces and natural features. F. If the proposed subdivision contains any identified historical or archaeological site or any areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan or by the Maine Critical Areas Program as rare and irreplaceable natural areas, the areas shall be included in the open space and suitably protected by appropriate covenants and management plans.

The following is required for properties located within the Resource Protection District:

§ 215-9.37 Establishment of districts. A. Resource Protection District (RP).(1) Description. The Resource Protection District includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the shoreland zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection and Watershed Districts, except that areas which are currently developed and areas which meet the criteria for the Limited Commercial/Residential District need not be included within the Resource Protection District:

(i) Other significant areas which should be included in this district to fulfill the purposes of this Subsection A, including but not limited to existing public access areas and certain significant archaeological and historic sites deserving of long-term protection as determined by the municipality after consultation with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

The following is required if a property is being developed under a Contract Zone Agreement:

§ 215-3.4 Contract zoning. (b) When negotiating the terms of a contract zoning agreement, the Planning Board may consider, among other factors, the following:[9] Preservation and protection of historic and archaeological sites.

CHAPTER 2

WATER & NATURAL RESOURCES

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of water and natural resources within Casco and the surrounding region.

This Chapter is organized into five sections:

1. Surface Waters and Groundwater
2. Soils
3. High Value Plant and Animal Habitat
4. Threats and Protections of Water and Natural Resources
5. Environmental Protections

Surface Waters and Groundwater

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A description of each great pond, river, surface drinking water supply, and other water bodies of local interest including: A. ecological value; B. threats to water quality or quantity; C. documented water quality and/or invasive species problems”]

Over two square miles of the town’s surface area are lakes and ponds with over 40 miles of rivers and nearly 40 miles of shoreline. Many of Casco’s lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, aquifers, and watersheds have good to outstanding water quality, but are at risk to threats by development in the region. See water resources map in “Protect Woods, Waters, and Open Space” Big Idea section for more information.

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Lakes and Ponds

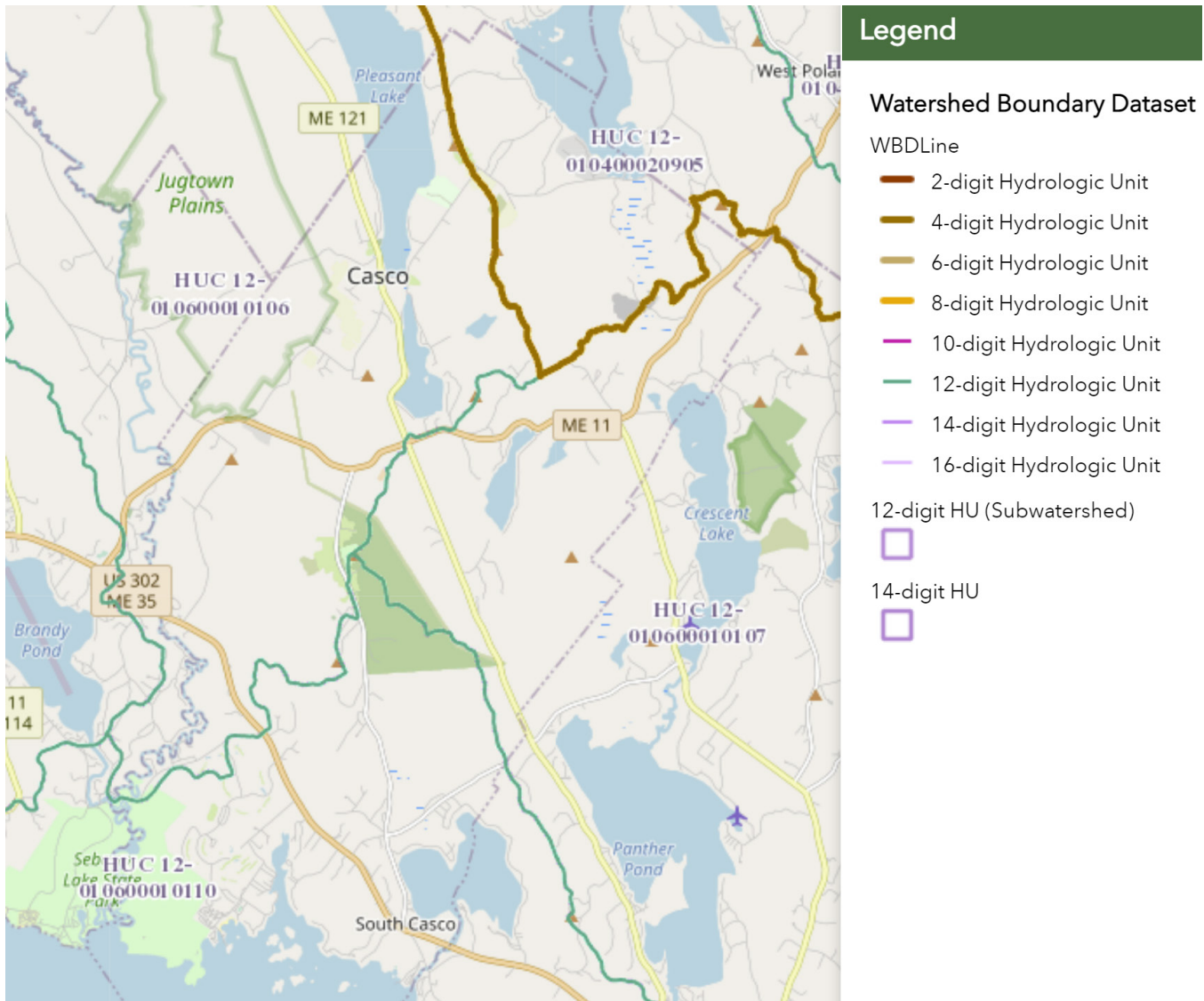
The water quality in the majority of Casco’s lakes and ponds is stellar, particularly Pleasant Lake, Sebago Lake, and Thompson Lake which are locally known as standouts. The following descriptions of Casco’s lakes and ponds include information from the Lake Stewards of Maine’s Lakes of Maine data portal about water bodies’ size, water quality, conservation and stewardship, threats, and phosphorus allocation budget (for those that apply). The watershed-per-acre phosphorus allocation budget of lakes and ponds is the amount of phosphorus from development that each acre of a lake or pond’s watershed could accept without risking a perceivable change in quality of water and is calculated by the DEP.

- **Coffee Pond:** The pond has an area of 106 acres with a maximum depth of 70 feet. The pond hosts coldwater and warmwater

fisheries. There are no known invasive aquatic plant infestations. The lake has been surveyed by volunteers and professionals for invasive aquatic plants. Local stewards of the pond include the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District. Although unimpaired, MDEP has listed Coffee Pond as a nonpoint source priority threatened lake watershed because of its sensitivity to additional phosphorus inputs due to the pond’s hydrology and/or threats in the watershed, including risk from new development. Coffee Pond’s direct watershed area in Casco is 452 acres and it’s per acre phosphorus allocation is .053 lb/acre/yr.

- **Crescent (Rattlesnake) Lake:** The Lake is situated mostly in Raymond with just the northern tip in Casco. It’s area is 703 acres and has 12,867 meters of shoreline and a maximum depth of 54 feet. The lake hosts coldwater and warmwater fisheries and has no known invasive aquatic plant infestations. The lake is patrolled by certified water quality monitors and invasive plant patrollers from its local stewards in the Crescent Lake Watershed Association. Crescent Lake’s direct watershed area in Casco is 904 acres and it’s per acre phosphorus allocation is .033 lb/acre/yr.
- **Dumpling Pond:** The pond has an area of 31 acres, 1,874 meters of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 14 feet. There are no known invasive aquatic plant infestations. It is listed as potentially at risk from new development. Dumpling Pond’s direct watershed area in Casco is 375 acres and it’s per acre phosphorus allocation is .054 lb/acre/yr.
- **Hog Meadow Pond:** The pond is in Casco and has an area of 18 miles and 1,455 meters

WATERBODIES & WATERSHEDS



of shoreline. There are no known invasive aquatic plant infestations. Hog Meadow Pond's direct watershed area in Casco is 135 acres and its per acre phosphorus allocation is .051 lb/acre/yr.

- **Owl Pond:** The pond has an area of 21 acres, 1,271 meters of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 15 feet. The pond hosts warmwater fisheries with no known invasive aquatic plant infestations. Local stewards of the pond include the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District. Owl Pond's direct watershed area in Casco is 286 acres and its per acre phosphorus allocation is .032 lb/acre/yr.
- **Parker Pond:** The pond has an area of 167 acres, 5,700 meters of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 19 feet. The pond hosts warmwater fisheries. In 2000, variable-leaf milfoil, an invasive aquatic plant infestation, was identified in the pond, however, was eradicated in 2014 through efforts by the Pleasant-Lake Parker Pond Association. The association continues to conduct surveys and uses benthic barriers to control occasional VLM plants. Volunteers have conducted invasive aquatic plant screening surveys. Local stewards include the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond Association. Although unimpaired, MDEP has listed Parker Pond as a nonpoint source priority threatened lake watershed due to its sensitivity to additional phosphorus inputs due to the pond's hydrology and/or threats in the watershed, including risk from new development. Parker Pond's direct watershed area in Casco is 667 acres and its per acre phosphorus allocation is .038 lb/acre/yr.
- **Pleasant Lake:** The lake is split between Otisfield on the north end and Casco on the south. It has an area of 1,332 acres, 14,614 meters of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 62 feet. The lake hosts coldwater and warmwater fisheries. In 2000, variable-leaf milfoil was confirmed as an invasive infestation in the lake; however, VLM has not been observed since 2015 and is considered eradicated. There are certified water quality and invasive plant monitors active at the lake and invasive aquatic plant surveys have been conducted by both volunteers and professionals in the past. Local stewardship groups include Oxford County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond Association. Pleasant Lake's direct watershed area in Casco is 768 acres and its per acre phosphorus allocation is .046 lb/acre/yr.
- **Sebago Lake:** The lake is shared by the Towns of Casco, Naples, Raymond, Sebago, Standish, Windham, and Frye Island. It has an area of 29,992 acres, 6,861 meters of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 316 feet. The lake hosts coldwater and warmwater fisheries. Variable-leaf milfoil has been mapped by the Portland Water District in 12 colonies in the lake since first being discovered in 1970; the infestation is managed through Diver Assisted Suction Harvester and barriers. There are certified water quality and invasive plant monitors active at the lake and invasive aquatic plant surveys have been conducted by agency staff and volunteers in the past at nine different survey stations across the lake. Local stewardship groups include the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, Raymond Waterways, Lakes Environmental Association, and the Portland Water District. Sebago Lake's direct watershed area in Casco

is 8707 acres and it's per acre phosphorus allocation is .047 lb/acre/yr.

- **Thomas Pond:** The pond is in Casco on the west side and in Raymond on the east. It has an area of 533 acres, 85 meters of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 64 feet. The lake hosts coldwater and warmwater fisheries. There are no known invasive aquatic plant infestations. There are certified water quality and invasive plant monitors active at the lake and invasive aquatic plant surveys conducted principally by volunteers. Although unimpaired, MDEP has listed Tomas Pond as a nonpoint source priority threatened lake watershed due to its sensitivity to additional phosphorus inputs due to the pond's hydrology and/or threats in the watershed, including risk from new development. Additionally, Thomas Pond feeds into Sebago Lake meaning contamination in the Pond has the potential to affect the quality of drinking water. Local stewardship groups include the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District. Thomas Pond's direct watershed area in Casco is 2159 acres and it's per acre phosphorus allocation is .021 lb/acre/yr.
- **Thompson Lake:** Only the southernmost tip of the lake is in Casco, the rest is split between the Towns of Poland, Otisfield, and Oxford. The lake has an area of 4,419 acres, 47,925 meters of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 121 feet. The lake hosts coldwater and warmwater fisheries. Variable-leaf milfoil was identified in 1975 in the southernmost portion of the lake known as "the Heath." The infestation is managed by diver assisted suction harvesters and barriers. There are certified water quality and invasive plant monitors active at the lake and invasive aquatic plant surveys have been conducted by agency staff and volunteers

at five different survey stations. Local stewardship groups include Oxford County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Thompson Lake Environmental Association. Thompson Lake's direct watershed area in Casco is 2574 acres and it's per acre phosphorus allocation is .031 lb/acre/yr.

- **Panther & Nubble Ponds:** While located in Raymond, Nubble Pond's direct watershed area in Casco is 187 acres and its per acre phosphorus allocation is .035 lb/acre/yr. Also in Raymond, Panther Pond's direct watershed area in Casco is 2139 acres and it's per acre phosphorus allocation is .037 lb/acre/yr.

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Rivers

Class AA is the highest classification of waters. It applies to waters which are outstanding natural resources and which should be preserved because of their ecological, social, scenic or recreational importance. Class A is the second highest classification. It applies to waters suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection; fishing; agriculture; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation; navigation; and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The classifications of Casco's rivers as identified on MDEP's list of nonpoint source priority watersheds are as follows:

- **Mill Brook:** At the confluence with Crooked River, the DEP has labeled 2.28 miles of Mill Brook (also known as Mile Brook) a class B impaired stream due to wastewater outfalls and Benthic Macroinvertebrates.
- **Robinson Brook:** Classified A
- **Edwards Brook:** Classified A
- **Meadow Brook:** Classified A (*Staples Brook,*

Rolfe Brook in Raymond)

- **Lord Brook:** Classified A (*Ring Brook, Sucker Brook*)
- **Lilly/Lily Brook:** Classified AA (*connects Parker Pond and Pleasant Lake*)
- **Decker Brook:** Classified AA
- **Songo River:** Classified A. Variable-leaf milfoil was first identified in the Songo River in 2004 when it was found above and below the lock. Until 2015, the infestation was managed through benthic barriers, hand removal, and a suction harvester. Since 2016, the infestation has been scattered and regrowth is managed by hand removal and barriers. Management efforts are led by the Lakes Environmental Association.
- **Crooked River:** Classified AA
- **Rolfe Brook:** Classified A
- **Dingley Brook:** Classified A

No streams in Casco are listed on MDEP's list as impaired nor threatened.

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Groundwater/Aquifers

Groundwater is water that lies below the water table, saturating the soil and filling in the pores and fractures in the bedrock. Groundwater is recharged by precipitation that seeps into the ground. The bodies of rock and sediment saturated with groundwater are called aquifers. Aquifers can be confined if they have a layer of impenetrable rock or clay covering them, or unconfined if they lie below a permeable layer of soil. The two main dangers to groundwater are depletion and contamination. Depletion occurs when groundwater is used faster than it can be recharged through rainfall. Groundwater can

can occur from agricultural runoff that includes pesticides and herbicides, leaking septic tanks, and improper storage of waste and chemicals in landfills. Although groundwater is naturally filtered as it moves through the ground, this process may not be enough to remove all of the unnatural contaminants. Uncontaminated groundwater is particularly important to communities like Casco that rely on wells to supply household water as wells are direct points of discharge for aquifers.

Significant aquifers in Casco as identified in the Watershed Map compiled by Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Environmental Assessment, 2021 include:

- Along the Crooked River which divides Casco and Naples at 10-50 gallons per minute with a smaller portion at over 50 gallons per minute. This smaller portion has been highlighted as having land use risk on high yield sand and gravel aquifers.
- Small portions of land off of Crescent Lake, Thomas Pond, and Thompson Lake are aquifers of 10-50 gallons per minute.

Casco's aquifers are generally in good condition. In town code, they are protected by an Aquifer Protection Overlay District meant to "protect Casco's underground water supply by restricting uses and activities on land overlying aquifers and aquifer recharge areas." In the protection area, there are additional prohibited uses including but not limited to: uncontained manure storages, storage of hazardous materials, restaurants, and truck facilities. When more restrictive than those of the underlying zone, Aquifer Protection standards are applied. The most notable recent contamination of the groundwater in Casco was in the spill on Tenney Hill discovered in the early 2000s.



Watersheds

Waters designated nonpoint Source (NPS) priority watersheds by Maine DEP include both waters already impaired or potentially threatened by NPS pollution. Many of Casco's watersheds are on the threatened NPS priority list.

- **Sebago Watershed:** Much of Casco lies within the Sebago Watershed. The watershed is 224.67 square miles and has outstanding water quality and is part of the public water system for Portland. The Sebago watershed has been identified by the U.S. Forest Service as at a high risk of losing forestland to development. According to Sebago Clean Waters, a advocacy collaborative of nine organizations and the Portland Water District, 84% of the 234,000 acres of watershed is forested. The forest helps keep the water of the region clean through filtration.
- **Thompson Lake Watershed:** A small portion of Thompson Lake Watershed is in Casco with the rest in neighboring Otisfield, Oxford and Poland. The watershed is 41.71 square miles with outstanding, although sensitive, water quality and is designated threatened by DEP.
- **Pleasant Lake Watershed:** A small portion of Pleasant Lake Watershed lies in Casco along

with Otisfield. It's area is 7.66 square miles and has outstanding, but threatened, water quality as well as supports a fish hatchery.

- **Parker Pond Watershed:** This watershed is wholly contained in Casco with an area of 1.93 square miles. The water quality is sensitive and the watershed is designated threatened.
- **Crescent Lake Watershed:** This watershed lies in Casco and Raymond at 7.42 square miles. The water quality of the watershed is sensitive and is designated threatened.
- **Thomas Pond Watershed:** This watershed is in Casco and Raymond with 5.28 square miles. The water quality is sensitive and the watershed is designated threatened.
- **Coffee Pond Watershed:** This watershed lies completely within Casco and is 0.88 square miles. The water quality of the watershed is sensitive and is designated threatened.

Deforestation of the watersheds, as a result of development (including clearing for installation of large solar farms), was expressed as a concern. Residents identified protection of the watershed as having direct correlation to the health of the lakes.

Soils

The Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA rates soils by type and use. Soils defined as prime farmland soils are those that are well suited to producing food crops. Casco's prime farmlands are mostly located where farming occurred in the past.

The largest concentrations are located in the following areas:

- Along Mayberry Hill from the Otisfield town line and extending down the Heath Road.
- West of Casco Village, primarily along Leach Hill and the Fountain Hill Road.
- Between Pike's corner and Parker Pond.
- Along Route 85 south of Webb's Mills.
- Along Quaker Ridge.
- Along the Riggs Road in South Casco.

Other soils are also considered suited for use as farmland, even though they are not classified as "prime". The main concentration of these additional soil types is found south of Pike's Corner and from there runs west-southwest to the west side of Tenney Hill. Other smaller clusters, for the most part, are adjacent to prime farmland soils. Agricultural soils have been mapped at a large scale and are available for viewing at the Casco Town Hall. (Excerpt from 2003 Comprehensive Plan).

High Value Plant and Animal Habitat

Much land in Casco serves as important natural spaces for plants and animal habitats. The following lists some notable areas of concern by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

- At Owl Pond, the Scarlet Bluet is identified as a species of special concern and the New England Bluet is identified as a species of conservation need.
- On the Poland-Casco border off of Route 11, the Fern-leaved False Foxglove is identified as a species of special concern.
- Around Route 121 West of Coffee Pond and at the Raymond-Casco border North of Panther Pond, the Great Blue Heron is identified as a species of special concern.
- At the Raymond-Casco border East of Coffee Pond, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has reported Summer Grape as a threatened species, Purple Clematis as a species of special concern, and found areas of an Oak-Pine Woodland and Enriched Northern Hardwood Forest.
- Along the Crooked River, the Pygmy Snaketail is identified as a species of special concern.

See the Environmental Systems map for more information on high value plant and animal habitat locations.

Threats and Protections of Water and Natural Resources

**See Environmental Protections in the Regulatory Framework of Comprehensive Plan.*

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are there point sources (direct discharges) of pollution in the community? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?”]

Between 1969 and 1980, Portland-Bangor Waste Oil operated a waste oil collection and storage facility in Casco at Tenney Hill. The oil, some of which was contaminated with lead and solvents, leached into the soil and groundwater at the site, leading to a DEP investigation from 2001 to 2003 which estimated that 58,000,000 gallons of groundwater below the site are contaminated and that the natural degradation will take more than 100 years. The site has added hazard in its position in the Crooked River watershed. The DEP designated the site as a State “uncontrolled hazardous substance site.” Following the decision, Casco was granted \$500,000 from the Waste Motor Oil Disposal Site Remediation Program funds for natural resource damages in the loss of use of groundwater at the site. The DEP determined that it was not feasible to decontaminate the groundwater so drinking water extraction from the area has been limited and the funds granted were to be allocated to local projects to protect groundwater from pollution. The funds continue to be available for low-income Casco residents to replace failing septic systems. However, according to the CEO, few residents have taken advantage.

Other point-source pollution concerns by staff include motorized boats and old septic systems and by Loon Echo Land Trust include short-term rentals on the waterfront.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are there non-point sources of pollution? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?”]

Some of Casco’s waters have the potential to be threatened by non-point source pollution. For individual assessments of water bodies, see descriptions above. Pollution monitoring and enforcement is handled by the local Code Enforcement Officer, Portland Water District (for Sebago Lake), and the DEP. In order to protect the water resources in and surrounding Casco, the public works department uses a minimal amount of salt on the roads. Although the amount of salt used has increased slightly in recent years, Casco still uses less than surrounding towns.

Although community members have noted that Casco rarely takes steps beyond requirements set by other regulating bodies to eliminate non-point sources of pollution, they have expressed a desire for educational programming to increase awareness about water resource protection. During public design week, community members suggested involving Lakes Environmental Association in schools and creating a summer environmental education program for kids who would then work to spread information to adults in Casco.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Do public works crews and contractors use best management practices to protect water resources in their daily operations (e.g. salt/sand pile maintenance, culvert replacement street sweeping, public works garage operations)?”]

Town staff follow the Department of Environmental Protection rules for the quantity of salt used on streets. Staff also engage in online training for best practices. Casco employs a contractor to replace problematic culverts on driveway entrances and those that need to be increased in size.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection? Is there current regional cooperation or planning underway to protect shared critical natural resources? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional groups?”]

There are volunteer groups monitoring water quality and stewardship groups active in the region including Sebago Clean Waters, Loon Echo Land Trust, Lake Stewards of Maine, Maine Lakes, and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection Lakes Program. The abundant number of water protection and other natural resource protection organizations in the Lakes Region shows ample opportunity to partner with local groups. It also indicates a level of volunteership in the community and willingness to take action.

There are many non-profit organizations that work throughout the Lakes Region to protect water and forestry resources. See notes above, and the chapter on Recreation for more information on regional cooperation for conservation of trails and open spaces.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A summary of past and present activities to monitor, assess, and/or improve water quality, mitigate sources of pollution, and control or prevent the spread of invasive species.”]

Volunteer organizations actively monitor most lakes and ponds. Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM) is one of the leading organizations in promoting lake stewardship and is the primary source of lake data in Maine; LSM trains, certifies and provides technical assistance to monitor the lakes for water quality and identify invasive aquatic plant and animal infestations. LSM publishes data for each lake on their website. Some of Casco’s lakes have their own specific stewardship groups such as the Crescent Lake Watershed Association, the

Thompson Lake Environmental Association, and the Pleasant Lake and Parker Pond Association. The Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond Association was established in the 1960s to address receding water levels of the time and later to monitor the purple loosestrife found in the water. Community members noted during the public design week that the lakes associations are important to protecting the lakes but that there should be additional efforts for conservation outside of the lakes themselves such as connection to land conservation and the conservation of watersheds more generally.

Sebago Clean Waters (SCW) is a collaborative of environmental nonprofits, including the Loon Echo Land Trust which was a founding member, and the Portland Water District. SCW works to increase the pace of forest conservation in the Sebago watershed, which makes up a significant part of Casco, in order to preserve the water quality of Sebago Lake. As the forest helps to filter water, the conservation of forestland is SCW’s primary methodology of source water protection in the region. SCW was recently awarded an \$8mil grant from the State’s Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program, \$5mil of which is to be used for conservation easements. In addition to direct conservation, the collaborative commissioned a research study in 2018 on the market-value of the ecosystem services that conserved lands provide in the watershed.

To address erosion around lakes across Maine, Maine Lakes, a non-profit dedicated to protecting Maine’s lakes and ponds, partners with local lake associations to create the LakeSmart education and reward program. LakeSmart is a voluntary program in which lakeside homes are evaluated by trained volunteers and homeowners are

given individualized suggestions on how to improve. Education provided includes practices for landscaping that minimizes erosion along the shoreline and into the lakes. Homeowners whose properties are determined to be lake-friendly receive the LakeSmart Award which includes two signs that can be posted at the waterfront and driveways.

The Lakes Environmental Association (LEA) is a nonprofit that aims to protect the water and watersheds in the Greater Sebago Lakes Region through advocacy, action, and scientific analysis. Previous actions taken by LEA include helping to begin the milfoil program, blocking a nuclear waste dumping facility near Sebago Lake, and increasing enforcement of Maine's environmental protection laws.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A description of the location and nature of significant threats to aquifer drinking water supplies.”]

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are any of the community’s critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?”]

Waterfront development continues to threaten watersheds but residents want to take an active approach to conserving open space in order to protect the watershed. There is concern with the villages located close to lakes and the impact future development may have. However, during design week, residents indicated the importance of preserving natural areas and concentrating development to minimize impact to the lakes and watershed. Unrestricted development around the lakes presents the greatest threat compared to dense development in village centers.

There is debate about how to preserve Casco's open space with the minimum lot size ordinance. With the current minimum lot size, a subdivision

is required to take up more space than is always needed, making density difficult to implement. The requirement for more land threatens the current open space and forested lands to future development.

Environmental Protections

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How are groundwater and surface water supplies and their recharge areas protected?”]

As part of the Town of Casco Code's water protections, groundwater and surface water supplies and recharge areas are considered in most zoning cases. The code defines groundwater inclusive of subsurface water present in aquifers as well as recharge areas. Throughout, the code prohibits activities that store or discharge inadequately treated material such that they may run off or seep into and pollute surface or groundwater to be harmful to human, animal, or aquatic life. Activities are restricted to where they may be geographically in relation to the water table and aquifers. (§ 215-5.34; § 215-9.32; § 215-7.5; § 210-8.1; § 215-4.10; § 62-8; etc.)

Replacement or installation of a new septic system within 200 feet of Sebago Lake requires a permitting process with the Portland Water District. Although Casco residents drinking water comes from private wells, Sebago Lake provides water for Greater Portland.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A summary of existing lake, pond, river, stream, and drinking water protection and preservation measures, including local ordinances.”]

Streams and Wetlands Protection

The following is required for properties located within the Streams and Wetlands Protection District::

§ 215-4.8 Streams and Wetlands Protection District (SW). [Amended 3-9-1991 by Art. 157; 9-28-1991 by Art. 16; 6-12-2013 by Art. 27; 9-24-2014 by Art. 4] A. Intent. To protect the water quality of streams and brooks that flow into Crooked River and Casco's lakes and ponds and of significant wetland areas not protected under shoreland zoning. Buffering these areas will help protect them from the adverse impacts of development or environmental occurrences and maintain the high quality of Casco's larger water bodies. Toward the achievement of these purposes, the following minimum standards are established. B. Applicability. These standards shall apply to all land areas within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of any stream or wetland of special significance as defined, exclusive of ponds and rivers protected under shoreland zoning. C. Permitted uses. (1) The following uses are permitted: (a) Recreational uses not requiring structures. (2) The following uses require Reviewing Authority review: (a) Timber harvesting that complies with shoreland protection performance standards herein. (b) Road and driveway crossings where necessary to provide access to lots. (3) All other uses are prohibited. D. Space standards. (1) None; no structures permitted. (2) Areas within the Streams and Wetlands Protection District composed of buildable land, as defined herein, may be included in determining the net residential area of contiguous land under the same ownership that lies outside the Streams and Wetlands Protection District.

Shoreland Zoning

The following establishes the Shoreland Zoning District:

§ 215-9.1 Purposes. The purposes of this article are to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; to prevent and control water pollution;

to protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; to protect buildings and lands from flooding and accelerated erosion; to protect archaeological and historic resources; to protect freshwater wetlands; to control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; to conserve shore cover, and visual as well as actual points of access to inland waters; to conserve natural beauty and open space; and to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas.

§ 215-9.5 Applicability. A. This article applies to all land areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of any great pond or river; within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland; and within 130 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream. B. This article also applies to any structure built on, over or abutting a dock, wharf or pier, or other structure extending beyond, or located below, the normal high-water line of a water body or within a wetland.

§ 215-9.3 Shoreland Districts and Shoreland Zoning Map. A. Shoreland Districts. The Shoreland Districts, as established by this chapter in Article 4, § 215-4.1, are: (1) Resource Protection (RP). (2) Limited Residential/Recreational (LRR). (3) Limited Commercial/Residential (LCR). (4) Stream Protection (SP). (5) Watershed (WS).

Aquifer Protection

The following apply to the Aquifer Protection Overlay District:

§ 215-4.10 Aquifer Protection Overlay District (AP). A. Intent. To protect Casco's underground water supply by restricting uses and activities on land overlying aquifers and aquifer recharge areas. Toward the achievement of this purpose, the following minimum standards are established.

B. Permitted uses. Same as underlying district (subject to site plan review where indicated) except for prohibited uses listed herein. C. Prohibited uses. (1) Dwelling, multiplex, and PRDs. [Amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (2) Engineered sewerage systems. (3) Industrial and manufacturing uses, including light industrial uses. (4) Outdoor storage. (5) Uncontained salt and sand piles. (6) Uncontained manure storage. (7) Storage of hazardous materials. (8) Junkyards. (9) Restaurants. (10) Hotels. (11) Motor vehicle service stations. [Amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (12) Motor vehicle repair garages. [Amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (13) Truck facilities. (14) Construction services. D. Space standards. When more restrictive than those of the underlying zone, the following space standards shall be applied: (1) Minimum lot size: 120,000 square feet. (2) Minimum road frontage: 300 feet. (3) Maximum impervious surface to lot area: 10%. (4) Maximum building height: 35 feet. E. Other standards. (1) All spreading or disposal of manure shall conform to the Best Management Practices handbook published by Maine Department of Agriculture, 1988, and subsequent revisions. (2) Erosion and sedimentation shall be minimized by adherence to erosion control management practices contained in the Environmental Quality Handbook, 1986, published by the Maine Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and periodically amended. F. Appeal. Owners who contest the placement of their property in the Aquifer Protection District may appeal to Planning Board for map change in accordance with the procedures of § 215-3.3 of this chapter. In all cases, the burden of proof shall be on the owner to demonstrate that his property should not be included within the Aquifer Protection District.

Performance Standards

The following are required performance standards:

§ 215-5.31 Stormwater quality and phosphorous control. [Added 6-10-2015 by Art. 29] A. Applicability. This section shall apply to all development, construction, alteration or building on lots, where any portion of the lot is within 250 feet of a great pond, as measured from the normal high-water line, or 100 feet of a perennial stream, as identified on a United States Geological Survey map. Projects that must meet this standard include but are not limited to: (1) All lots subject to site plan review, including any additions, modifications, or new commercial, retail, industrial, institutional and/or recreational structures and uses that have not received prior approval by the Planning Board that included a phosphorus export analysis or a stormwater plan that meets the applicable requirements of 06-096 CMR Chapter 500, Stormwater Management, as amended. [Amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (a) All such lots subject to Article 7, Site Plan Review, shall conform to the requirements of § 215-7.4, Submission requirements, Subsection A(3), and § 215-7.5, Criteria and standards, Subsection A(5), Surface water drainage, in addition to the provisions of this section. (b) Except for minor developments and minor modifications, for which Planning Board approval is not required and the Reviewing Authority may approve, all projects subject to site plan review shall submit a phosphorus export analysis and calculations based on Phosphorus Control in Lake Watersheds: A Technical Guide to Evaluating New Development (latest edition), issued by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Minor developments and minor modifications subject to Reviewing Authority review only shall use the point system in Subsection B(1). (2) New residential structures

and uses that have not received prior approval by the Planning Board that included a phosphorus export analysis or a stormwater plan that meets the requirements of 06-096 CMR Chapter 500, Stormwater Management, as amended. [Amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (3) Expansions of existing single-family structures and duplexes, new accessory structures associated with single-family structures and duplexes, or extensions of more than 150 linear feet of existing driveways, any of which individually or cumulatively increase the impervious area on the lot by 1,500 square feet or more.

§ 215-5.34 Water quality protection. No activity shall store, discharge or permit the discharge of any treated, untreated, or inadequately treated liquid, gaseous, or solid materials of such nature, quantity, obnoxiousness, toxicity, or temperature, such that they will run off, seep, percolate, or wash into surface water or groundwater so as to contaminate, pollute, or harm such waters or cause nuisances, such as objectionable shore deposits, floating or submerged debris, oil or scum, color, odor, taste, or unsightliness, or be harmful to human, animal, plant, or aquatic life.

Are local shoreland zone standards consistent with state guidelines and with the standards placed on adjacent shorelands in neighboring communities? Are land use ordinances consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources?

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are local shoreland zone standards consistent with state guidelines and with the standards placed on adjacent shorelands in neighboring communities? Are land use ordinances consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources?”]

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “What regulatory and non-regulatory measures has the community taken or can the community take to protect critical natural resources and important natural resources?”]

Casco has adopted the state guidelines for shoreland zoning. Also included in the Code are measures for erosion and sediment control, timber harvesting, and vegetation clearance.

CHAPTER 3

AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of the agricultural and forestry capacity within Casco and the surrounding region. This Chapter is organized into four sections:

1. Agricultural Resources
2. Local Agricultural Protection
3. Forestry Resources
4. Implications

Agricultural Resources

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How important is agriculture and/or forestry and are these activities growing, stable, or declining?”]

Agriculture is not a major part of the economy of Casco. According to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, only 14 residents over the age of 16 were employed in farming, fishing, and forestry in Casco. Since 2010, there have been less than 30 people working in farming, fishing, and forestry in Casco. Previously, agriculture was a large part of the town’s economy and community. Community members have expressed interest in reinvesting in local agriculture.

Forestry is a significant part of Casco’s economy. Hancock Lumber Company has been in business since 1848 and still has a lumber mill, retail store, and its administrative offices in Casco. It has been prominent in Casco since its founding. The town was initially formed around mills, many of which have become today’s villages. Forestry has been a constant in Casco and has been relatively stable throughout town history.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A description of any community farming and forestry activities (e.g. community garden, farmer’s market, or community forest) and a brief description of any that are under threat. Does the community support community forestry or agriculture (i.e. small woodlots, community forests, tree farms, community gardens, farmers’ markets, or community-supported agriculture)? If so, how?”]

Agriculture is not a significant aspect of Casco’s economy; there are not many opportunities for the town to support community agriculture. Casco previously hosted a farmers’ market at the Village Green, however due to low participation and the onset of COVID-19, the market has not been held

in recent years. The biggest community farming operation in Casco is Hancock Family Farm which runs a very popular CSA and farm stand. The farm also runs a hands-on farmer training program to help new farmers learn all aspects of the farming business.

Known farming facilities in Casco include:

- Hancock Family Farm, 36 Quaker Ridge Rd.: Organic Farm with a CSA, Farmstand, and pick-your-own Flowers.
- Sweet William’s Maple Syrup, 66 Spiller Rd.: Maple products.
- Rooted Earth Farm, 28 Webbs Mills Rd.: Small, 5 acres, three person operation. The farm has a focus on sustainable farming and herbs.
- Mid Ridge Farm, 343 Mayberry Hill Rd.: Organically produced urban farm and farmers market.
- Thicket Hill Farm: Family-owned pig farm.
- Momentum community garden, 1059 Meadow Rd.
- E’s Beez: honey producer.

Additionally, the Casco (Wade) State Fish Hatchery is located at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife just North of the Village off of Route 121 and is supplied water by Pleasant Lake. Fish species raised at the Hatchery include brown trout, rainbow trout, landlocked salmon, and brook trout seasonally. Annually, the facility produces 85,000 catchable fish, more than 45,000lbs.



[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Information on the number of parcels and acres of farmland, tree growth, and open space enrolled in the state’s farm, tree growth, and open space law taxation programs, including changes in enrollment over the past 10 years. Are farm and forest land owners taking advantage of the state’s current use tax laws?”]

Farms, open space, and tree growth in Casco:

- 330.7 Acres, 7 parcels farm
- 64.5 Acres, 3 parcels open space
- 6,559.3 Acres, 68 parcels tree growth

In the 2021 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, Casco’s Cumberland County Assessor reported that there were 69 tree growth parcels, seven farmland parcels and three open space parcels, or a total of 79 parcels in current use programs. Of the 3389 land parcels in Casco, 2.33% are enrolled in current use programs as of March 1, 2021. Although land has continued to be enrolled in these programs over the past 10 years, some parcels of land have been withdrawn from these programs as well.

Local Agricultural Protection

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is the community currently taking regulatory and/or non-regulatory steps to protect productive farming and forestry lands? Are there local or regional land trusts actively working to protect farms or forest lands in the community? Are there policies to safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry. To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability?”]

The Casco Open Space Commission’s mission includes protecting working agricultural land and forests. Through community engagement, the Commission has guided landowners toward strategies to protect the space such as through Farm land tax laws to reduce the landowner’s tax liability and using conservation easements. Beyond the Open Space Commission, the Town Code touches on farming mostly in the context of water protection policies, although the Planning Board is currently working on an alternative energy ordinance to help contain solar farm operations in balance with maintaining open space.

The Loon Echo Land Trust reported easements on a few sites that were historically agricultural lands, such as Helen Allen Farm; however, LET does not currently have any working farms under protection. The organization has expressed interest in doing work to acquire/conservate farms in Casco given the opportunity.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are there large tracts of agricultural or industrial forest land that have been or may be sold for development in the foreseeable future? If so, what impact would this have on the community?”]

Until very recently, Hancock Land (Lumber) Company owned a significant portion of forested and open land in Casco. The company has a history of making their private land open to public access for recreation, including Jugtown Forest, a large conservation easement held by the State, a portion of which is in Casco. While Hancock and others’ lands have been a major resource for Casco residents, residents have expressed concern over the potentially unclear future of Hancock Land Company’s former land, as 90% of it has now transferred ownership to a private individual. Given the amount of land in large ownerships, changing ownerships, particularly if fragmented or for development, could be problematic for the forests, open space and outdoor recreational opportunities in Casco.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Does the community have town or public woodlands under management, or that would benefit from forest management?”]

Casco has public woodlands although community members have observed that they have been managed poorly. Sebago Lake State Park is located in the Towns of Casco and Naples. The park, including its woodlands, is operated by the Maine Department of Conservation. Other publicly accessible lands are privately owned.

Forestry Resources

Hancock Lumber Company operates sawmills, lumberyards, and component manufacturing. The company was founded in 1848 and today is the largest producer of Eastern Pine in North America. In addition to the location in Casco, Hancock operates two other sawmills in Maine and one in New Hampshire. They also operate related retail businesses which supply contractors and homeowners with lumber and building materials. Facilities in Casco include the Ryefield Sawmill, on Route 11, which produced over 17 million board feet of Eastern White Pine in 2001. There is also one retail outlet in Casco, and the corporate offices are on Route 11, across from the Ryefield Mill, Hancock Land Company owns and manages timberland.

Also in the lumber industry, The Red Mill Lumber is a sawmill that specializes in hardwood and hemlock timber mats, supplying the lake region with building materials since 1979.

The annual timber harvest for Casco has fluctuated in the last 30 years from under 200 to over 1000 acres harvested total; the average total harvest from 1991 to 2018 is 622 acres. Harvest is most often done through selection harvest and shelterwood harvests.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Does the community have a street tree program?”]

Casco does not have a street tree program.



CHAPTER 4

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a data snapshot about the population and demographics (including income and employment) of Casco. The information in this chapter should be considered against the information in the Housing Chapter, specifically costs of housing, unit types, and condition.

Population and Demographics

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is the rate of population change expected to continue as in the past, or to slow down or speed up? What are the implications of this change? What will be the likely demand for housing and municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics, both as a result of overall change and as a result of change among different age groups?”]

The rate of population change is unpredictable due to many factors including the continued effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and mitigation, the fluctuating regional and national. How and where the town chooses to invest tax dollars to support services that individual population cohorts need to maintain a good quality of life is another important factor in local population shifts. Finally, future community choices about land use and zoning policy could affect the rate of growth. If the trend of outward migration from Greater Portland continues as people seek more affordable housing choices, Casco’s 2 acre minimum lot zoning and affordable land could result in an influx of subdivision developments and thus, new population.

Because of proximity to Portland, increased trends to telecommute, and the attractiveness of Casco as a town that can support a recreation-based lifestyle, we surmise the population will not decline. Examining the makeup of Casco’s new residents can help reveal current trends in population growth and the potential makeup and needs of the future population of the town.

The following data from 2020 (unless otherwise stated) describe the population of residents that are new to Casco:

- 12.9% of the population was new residents.
- The vast majority of people moving to Casco (90%) were moving from another town within Cumberland County. Only 1% were from a different county within Maine, and 9% were moving from out of state.
- 25.8% of people moving to Casco had income below the poverty level. 27.3% of those moving to Casco from within the county were below poverty level while none of those moving from out of state were below the poverty level.
- The incomes of new residents tend to be higher than those already living in town. A higher portion of new residents earned \$75,000 or more in individual income than the portion of total town residents who earn \$75,000+ (15.6% of new residents vs. 11.6% of total Casco residents).
- The vast majority of new Casco residents (84.9%) live in owner-occupied housing. This is the highest proportion of new residents living in owner-occupied housing in the past decade. A larger proportion of those moving from out of state rent (25.7%) than those moving from within the county (14.2%).
- People moving from within the county (median age 25.4) are younger than the town median of 50.1. The median age of those moving from within the county has been decreasing in recent years.
- The median age of those moving from out of state (50.2) is older than those moving from within the county and has been increasing in recent years.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Does your community have a significant seasonal population, is the nature of that population changing? What is the community’s dependence on seasonal visitors?”]

Casco has a significant seasonal population that arrives in the late Spring/Summer and supports Casco’s local economy. For more information on how the community is affected by seasonal visitors, please see the Economy section.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If your community is a service center or has a major employer, are additional efforts required to serve a daytime population that is larger than its resident population?”]

Casco is not a service center. The largest service centers are Lewiston/Auburn to the North-East and Portland to the South-East. The closest service centers are Bridgton to the West, Oxford to the North, and Windham to the South-East.






DEMOGRAPHIC FACTS

Employed in Casco

 **579** employees work in Casco

 **83%** of those who work in Casco **reside in another town**

Top Residence Locations:

 Casco	96
 Naples	45
 Windham	38
 Bridgton	30
 Oxford	28

Reside in Casco

 **1652** workers reside in Casco

 **94%** of workers who reside in Casco **work in another town**

Top Work Locations:

 Portland	259
 Windham	129
 Naples	109
 Casco	96
 South Portland	92

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMY

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of economic development within Casco and the surrounding region.

This Chapter is organized into three sections:

1. Economic Overview
2. Labor Market
3. Priorities

Economic Overview

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are public facilities, including sewer, water, broadband access or three-phase power, needed to support the projected location, type, and amount of economic activity, and what are the issues involved in providing them?”]

Public sewer and water do not exist, and according to town staff are not needed in the foreseeable future, as Casco is still rural and spread out. Water extension along Route 302 would be significantly expensive and would require an intensity of development to support its cost that Casco residents do not support. Residents support discrete locations for intense development, and that type of development can be handled through wells and advanced wastewater technologies. Broadband improvements including wireless communications services are needed, and portions of the Town are covered under the Cumberland Oxford Lakes Area Broadband Initiative. The town’s commercial zones have three-phase power.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How can/does the community use its unique assets such as recreational opportunities, historic architecture, civic events, etc. for economic growth?”]

Casco’s economy is fundamentally derived from natural resources - woods and waters. With a significant portion of the land enrolled in Tree Growth, and Hancock Lumber headquartered in Casco, it has been thought that the long term socio-economic picture of Casco should continue to be based on resources. That, if trees are no longer harvested and lumber is no longer produced, the large contiguous blocks of woods should be secured for recreational use, habitat and water quality protection. During the public design week, residents identified a number of locations for land and trails connectivity, as

well as increased public access to waters. See “Connectivity” map. The residents want this amenity to remain in perpetuity, as it enriches their quality of life, but they also recognize that people can and will seek out Casco for these very same amenities.

However, tourists come and stay in Casco during the summer but because there aren’t businesses in the Town, they leave and go to other towns to access those places. Casco could be capturing some of that economic activity if additional commercial development happened in strategic locations.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is the economy experiencing significant change, and how does this, or might this, affect the local population, employment, and municipal tax base?”]

According to ACS in 2020, Casco’s unemployment rate was 3.9%. In 2020, the top three employment industries were:

1. Construction;
2. Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance
3. Retail trade.

In 2010, the top employment industries were retail trade; educational services, healthcare, and social services; and wholesale trade.

Much of the business done in Casco is by contractors. Although it has not impacted their amount of business, COVID-19 has created problems for contractors obtaining supplies.

From 1:1 interviews with staff, Planning Board and leadership, we also heard that the marijuana and solar industries are rapidly growing in Casco, and there is a lack of guidelines or site location criteria. The concern is the deforestation of large

properties currently enrolled in Tree Growth to accommodate acres upon acres of solar infrastructure. Further, the town has no mechanism in place to capture impact fees from solar farm installations.

The indirect impact will come if land valuations decrease because of impacts by either industry - smell, aesthetic, changes to water quality as result of deforestation. The two industries are locating here because of low land costs, and what is built could further reduce land values long term, discouraging higher quality reinvestment in the Rt 302 corridor particularly.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If there is a traditional downtown or village center(s) in the community? If so, are they deteriorating or thriving?”]

There are five villages in the Town of Casco. The villages are well-kept and mostly residential in nature. Most villages do not have the same level of commercial activities happening in them as they did in historic times. Because it would take so long to travel between villages by horse and carriage, the villages needed to sustain themselves. Each had at least one village store and a handful of industries. Today, much of the commercial activity happens along the Route 302 corridor, and residents travel outside Casco to obtain many goods, services and employment.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is tourism an important part of the local economy? If so, what steps has the community taken to support this industry? What is the community’s dependence on seasonal visitors?”]

Tourism is a significant part of the town’s economy and is concentrated geographically around Sebago Lake. The town has two vacation resorts, Migis Lodge at Sebago Lake, and Point Sebago Resort; a golf course, restaurants, and bed and

breakfasts making up the industry. There are multiple lakeside summer camps that draw children and families to Casco in the summer. Sebago Lake State Park hosts campgrounds, beaches, and trails and Casco receives visitors to its other trails around town.

In talks with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, residents have observed that the large crowd of tourists that is attracted to Casco in the summer has led to many housing units used for short-term rentals through Airbnb and Vrbo, further limiting available housing stock for permanent residents.

The Committee also recognizes that protection of water quality is fundamental to the local economy of the town, and as such has identified a number of strategies earlier in this plan to protect water quality and address resiliency.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If there are local or regional economic development incentives such as TIF districting, do they encourage development in growth areas? A description of any economic development incentive districts, such as tax increment financing districts, in the community.”]

Casco does not have a TIF district or local economic development incentive program to direct growth. A TIF district is not anticipated at this time.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A brief historical perspective on how and why the current economy of the community and region developed.”]

Casco has evolved through time just as it has in many surrounding Lake Region communities. The bountiful and widespread forests that grew here after the last glacier retreated were lightly managed by Native Americans and were still intact when early European settlers arrived in the 1700s. These settlers realized the economic potential of

these forests and built an industry around them. Early sawmills were located next to waterways in South Casco Village, Cook's Mills, Webb's Mills, and Casco Village. These areas, with both water access and industry, proved to be magnets for both residential and commercial development. Farms became plentiful, having sprung up close to these village areas and in other areas where timber harvesting revealed excellent soils for agricultural use. Roads were built to connect these areas together as well as with surrounding towns.

Until after the Second World War, economic activity continued to be non-intensive and characterized by farming, timber harvesting, pockets of small commercial and industrial activity, primarily in the four early village settlements. Summer camps for boys and girls were established on some of the lakes. Seasonal homes were built around Casco's primary water bodies. Farming and commercial businesses started to dwindle. The village areas attracted more housing. Route 302 continued to be the major transportation hub for the town, and as such, over time the majority of economic activity shifted to the corridor.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "A list of local and regional economic development plans developed over the past five years, which include the community."]

Casco does not have a local development plan. Some local initiatives held over the past five years have included:

- Casco has hosted a local business showcase in the past where business owners set up tables at a community event. The purpose of the event was to show community members what businesses existed and make local goods available for purchase. The showcase has not taken place recently. Attempts to produce a newsletter listing local businesses

have not yet been realized.

- Casco also hosted a farmers' market in the Village Green, however low participation and the onset of COVID-19 has meant it is discontinued.

Casco is part of an Economic Development District (EDD), one of 25 communities in Cumberland County. The EDD publishes a "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy" every five years and provides annual updates. The last document was published in 2018 and identified the following three Strategic Goals

1. Sustain our regional strengths and seize our opportunities. Our first goal focuses on the positive aspects of our analysis in section two, building our economic and social prosperity by increasing jobs and investments, sustaining existing employment and clusters, and growing our exports.
2. Overcome our regional deficits. Our second goal focuses on our weaknesses identified in section two with efforts to address our demographics, our need for better educational and workforce outcomes, and our commitment to reduce poverty and increase equity.
3. Plan for and mitigate our external threats. Our third strategy focuses on economic and environmental resiliency, addressing our need to better plan for the disruptions we can foresee, and those we cannot.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Do they coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development?"]

Casco is part of two Chambers of Commerce. The Greater Bridgton Chamber of Commerce promotes local businesses in 13 towns and villages in the Bridgton region through marketing and social media, including Casco. The Sebago

Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce promotes commerce through marketing, advocacy, education, and networking and is the most active in Casco of the two Chambers.

Casco's leadership participates in the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), which is not a regional development corporation but convenes Casco's neighbors and other member municipalities within the region (see above re: Cumberland County Economic Development District, which is also housed at GPCOG). Through this connection, Casco participates in regional economic development efforts.

Labor Market

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Do/should home occupations play a role in the community?"]

Home occupations exist in Casco and, according to the Casco CEO, they will continue to be acceptable as long as they do not impede the flow of traffic or draw traffic in excess to areas.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Where does the community's population work and where do employees in your community reside? A description of the major employers in the community and labor market area and their outlook for the future."]

- See demographic facts under Big Idea, "Support Diversity and Multi-Generational Community Life".
- Of the Casco working population of 1,959, the top industries for residents are education services and healthcare and social assistance at 368 people, construction at 310, and retail trade at 283. (ACS S2405) Point Sebago Resort is by far the largest employer in Casco with 250-499 employees. The next two largest employers are Hancock Lumber Casco Sawmill and Spurwink School which

both have 50-99 employees. (GPCOG Community Profiles) 85.4% of employed Casco residents work in Cumberland County. (ACS S0801) Although there are some workers that commute into Casco (495), the number of Casco residents that commute out of the Town for work is far greater at approximately 1,568 people. Only approximately 110 people live and work in Casco.

- P&K Sand and Gravel Inc., which is based out of Naples, operates Heath Quarry in the Town of Casco on Route 11. The company does residential, commercial, and development excavation, and produces Redi-Mix concrete and rock products out of the Quarry.
- From Center for Workforce Research and Information (<https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/employers2.html>) the Casco Inn has 20-49 employees, Freeport Nursing and Rehab has 50-99 employees, Fryeburg Health Care Center has 100-249, Momentum has 20-49, Point Sebago Boutique has 20-49, and Sebago Lake State Park has 20-49. Most employers in Casco have under 20 employees. Many of the places with smaller employment in Casco are summer camps like Camp Sunshine and Camp Cedar and municipal offices such as Casco Fire and Rescue Department and Casco Town Office.

Priorities

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Does the community have defined priorities for economic development? Are these priorities reflected in regional economic development plans? What type of economic development activity does the community desire? What is the community’s role in the region?”]

Yes. Through the public engagement process used to create this plan, the community identified priorities for economic development. See Big Idea, “Attract Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs”. The content for this Big Idea was crowd-sourced from the community, and calls for supporting local businesses, attracting a dynamic workforce, and recruiting new local and non-franchise businesses to Casco.

Regionally, while the Greater Portland Region’s 2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy mentions the Lakes Region, Casco and neighboring towns are not included with substance.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are there appropriate areas within the community for industrial or commercial development? If so, are performance standards necessary to assure that industrial and commercial development is compatible with the surrounding land uses and landscape?”]

Appropriate areas for commercial development are identified on the “Conservation, Preservation and Development” Map. This map categorizes the various areas by level of preservation, enhancement or transformative growth. The map also identifies a number of Special Districts, one being the Rt 302 Highway Special District where the most broad range of land uses should occur.

Limited, smaller scale commercial activities are intended for the villages to provide neighborhood services and amenities.

For each area identified on the map, building, site and design standards will be necessary to ensure that new development respects the architectural history and village aesthetic of the town. Buildings on Rt 302 and in industrially zoned lands can be larger and simpler, and those standards should be made explicitly clear through a system of building types in zoning.

Other lands currently zoned for industrial uses will continue to be available for that purpose.

CHAPTER 6

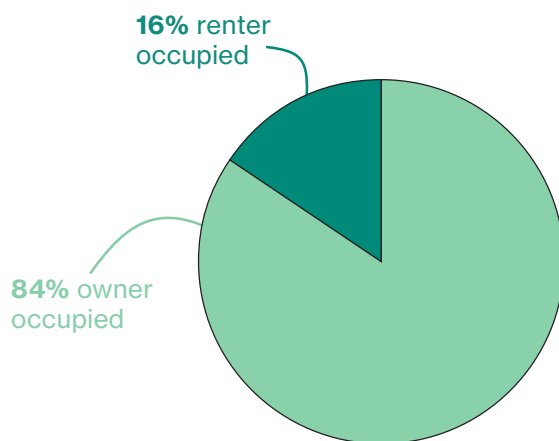
HOUSING

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of housing within Casco. This Chapter is organized into two sections:

1. Housing Stock
2. Housing Affordability

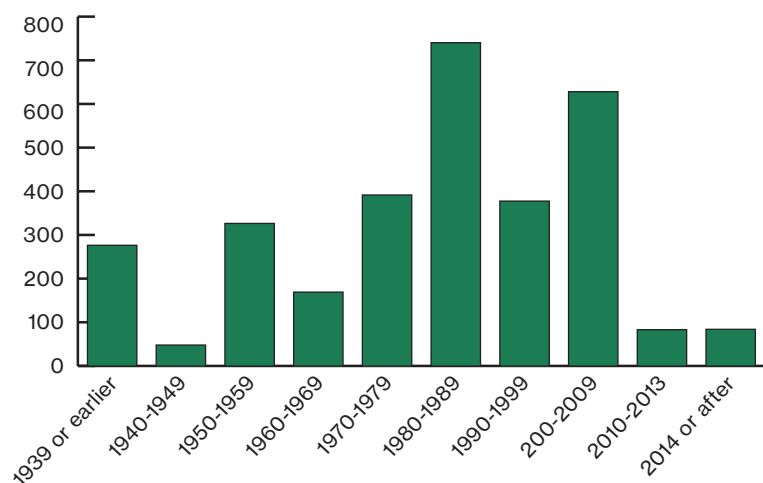
HOUSING FACTS & AFFORDABILITY

3130 total
housing units



1363 units
are for **seasonal, recreational,
or occasional use**, which is
44% of Casco's
housing units

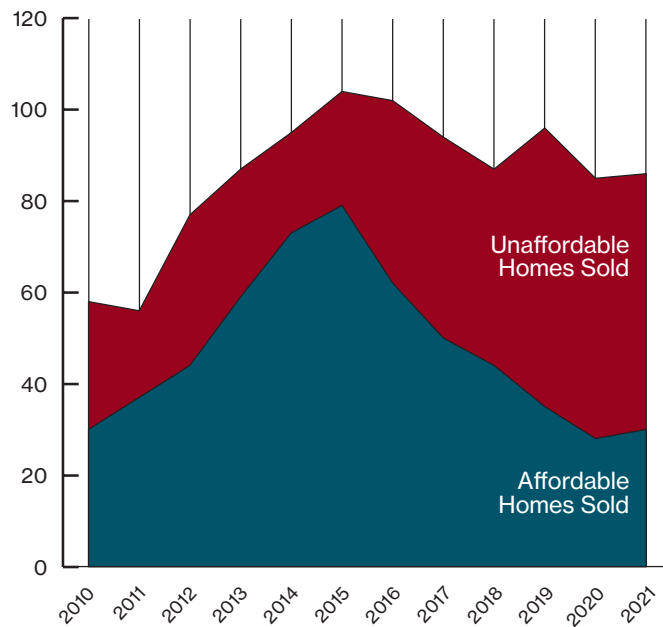
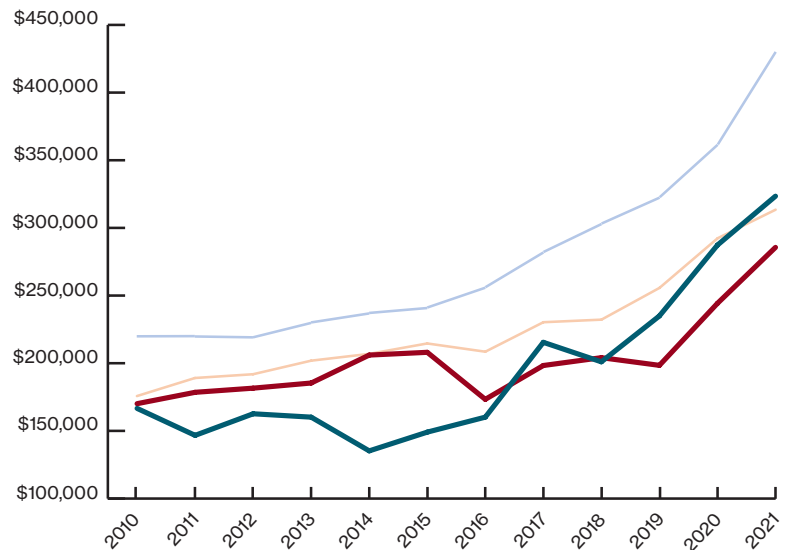
37%
of housing units
were built
after **1990**



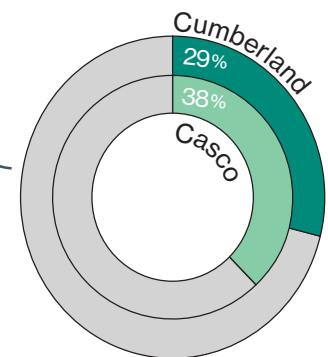
19% of housing units are **mobile homes**

The median home costs
\$323,750
 which is unaffordable for
56.6% of households

■ Casco Median Sale Price
 ■ Casco Price Affordable to Median Income
 ■ Cumberland County Median Sale Price
 ■ Cumberland County Price Affordable to Median Income




Casco renters spend
9% more
 of their income on rent
 than the county median




33 units
 without complete
 kitchen facilities


16 units
 without complete
 plumbing facilities


94 units
 without telephone
 service available

Housing Stock

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How many additional housing units (if any), including rental units, will be necessary to accommodate projected population and demographic changes during the planning period?”]

In 1:1 interviews with town staff and in conversation with the planning board and comprehensive plan committee, we heard that housing is precarious in Casco. There are only a handful of houses on the market in Casco at a time, estimated by staff around five at the most. Much of the rental housing stock consists of short-term rentals particularly through Airbnb and Vrbo. Outside of these, there aren’t many units available to rent for long-term housing. If someone wants to move to Casco, they would likely have to buy a house or rent for more than a mortgage.

There is potential for denser housing in a number of locations in Casco, as described on the Conservation, Preservation and Development Map in Part I of this plan. As residents who desire a more rural environment to live in already reside outside of the village, staff predict that residents would not object to incrementally increasing density within the village.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are seasonal homes being converted to year-round use or vice-versa? What impact does this have on the community?”]

According to town staff, there have been no conversions of seasonal homes to year-round or vice versa in recent years. If there were to be conversions, particularly from seasonal to year-round, there would be necessary steps to take such as converting septic systems and insulation for coverage beyond two seasons.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are there other major housing issues in the community, such as substandard housing?”]

As recorded by the State Economist of Maine, of the 1,913 housing units occupied in 2020, 33 lacked complete kitchen facilities, 16 lacked complete plumbing facilities, and 94 lacked telephone service. Many buildings are in poor condition, an issue the Code Enforcement Office has been attempting to rectify. Although many of these buildings are unsafe, families are often unable to afford to repair the problems.

The lack of housing is the most major housing issue in Casco.

Housing Affordability

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is housing, including rental housing, affordable to those earning the median income in the region? Is housing affordable to those earning 80% of the median income? If not, review local and regional efforts to address the issue. Will additional low and moderate income family, senior, or assisted living housing be necessary to meet projected needs for the community? Will these needs be met locally or regionally?”]

The shortage of housing in general severely limits the affordable housing options in Casco. The Casco Selectboard has discussed the possible use of the Berry Property for affordable/senior housing. The Board reached out to Avesta Housing regarding the potential for the site and found that there are multiple potentially limiting factors to Casco securing funding from Maine Housing such as Casco’s low walkability, modest area rents, unlikely chance the town would provide a TIF, and Casco’s position not as a service center community.

There are multiple assisted living and residential care facilities in Casco and the surrounding towns.

- The ACS 2021 five-year estimate identifies the median household income in Casco as \$64,767. The average rate of homeownership in Casco is higher than in the rest of Maine (89.6% vs. 74.8%). The median gross rent in Casco is \$933.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Information on existing local and regional affordable/workforce housing coalitions or similar efforts.”]

There is no affordable/workforce housing coalition that covers the Town of Casco.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How do existing local regulations encourage or discourage the development of affordable/workforce housing? A summary of local regulations that affect the development of affordable/workforce housing.”]

Minimum lot size standards, parking standards and additional steps to permit multi-family housing stand in the way of adding to housing stock, particularly standing in the way of affordable and workforce housing.

The following regulation applies in the Village District:

§ 215-4.5 Village District (V). A. Intent. To provide a variety of housing types and services within a compact area while reinforcing existing village characteristics. This district is established to combine the convenience of village life with the physical amenities of a rural environment and to encourage development near adequate roads and Town services. Toward the achievement of these purposes, the following minimum standards are established.

E. Density bonus for affordable housing. Single-family subdivisions comprised of 25% or more of affordable housing units as defined shall have minimum lot sizes of 50,000 feet. Multiplex and planned residential developments that include

25% or more affordable housing units as defined shall have a minimum of 50,000 square feet of net residential area per dwelling unit.

The following performance standards apply to planned residential development:

§ 215-5.24 Planned residential development.

“A. Purpose. The purpose of these provisions

is to encourage greater flexibility and more

creative design for the development of single-family dwellings and multiplex dwellings than

generally is possible under strict application of the

space standards of this chapter. It is intended to

encourage a pattern of residential development

which will result in the following attributes:

[Amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (1) Preservation

of Casco’s rural character by retention of open

space. (2) Preservation to the greatest extent

possible of existing landscape features and

the utilization of such features in a harmonious

fashion. (3) Protection of environmentally

sensitive areas.(4) Economical and efficient

building arrangement, traffic circulation and utility

construction. (5) Recreation facilities that may be

better located and used than would otherwise

be provided under more conventional land

development. (6) Planned variety and coordination

in the location of structures and building forms

and relationships. B. General requirements. (1)

Planned residential developments are permitted

in Village and Residential Districts and, in the

Limited Residential/Recreational Shoreland

Subdistrict, shall conform and be subject to net

residential density calculation. (2) All single-family

subdivisions of 20 lots or more shall be reviewed

by the Planning Board as PRDs and be subject

to the net residential calculation for PRDs. (3) All

multiplex developments of 10 dwelling units or

more shall be reviewed by the Planning Board

as PRDs and be subject to the net residential

calculation for PRDs. (4) In the Village District,

subdividers/developers of parcels five acres or larger may choose to have their projects reviewed as PRDs. (5) In all other districts in which they are allowed, subdividers/developers of parcels 10 acres or larger may choose to have their projects reviewed as PRDs. (6) All PRDs shall meet the use standards of the districts in which they are located. (7) All PRDs shall meet the requirements of Chapter 210, Subdivision of Land, and site plan review provisions of this chapter. (8) Allowable densities for PRDs shall be based on net residential density and shall be calculated in the following manner: (a) Determine the net residential area of the parcel (see definitions and § 215-5.19). (b) Divide the net residential area by the minimum land area per dwelling unit size for the particular district to establish the maximum net residential density for the project. (c) Except for projects qualifying for the affordable housing density bonus, in no case shall the density of a PRD or multiplex project exceed the density established by the minimum land area per dwelling unit for the district where the project is located. C. Single-family PRD standards. (1) Except in the Village District, lot sizes may be reduced below the minimum lot size normally required in the zoning district [see Subsection C(2) and (3) below] as long as the residual open space created by such reductions, plus the areas which are subtracted from gross area to calculate net residential area, are designated as open space. (2) Except in the Village District, lot areas for individual lots may be reduced up to 25% below the minimum lot size required in the zoning district. In no case shall lot sizes for PRDs be less than 50,000 square feet. (3) Except in the Village District, frontage for individual lots may be reduced up to 25% below the minimum frontage required in the zoning district. In no case, including instances when lots front a cul-de-sac, shall road frontages be less than 75 feet. (4) Front, side and rear setbacks shall

not be reduced below the minimum standards required in the zoning district. (5) Shore frontage and shore setback requirements shall not be reduced below the minimum shore frontage or shore setback required in the zoning district. (6) A setback of 100 feet on an arterial street is required and shall include a fifty-foot landscaped strip. (7) No building or structure shall be sited in areas treated as 100% deductions from the parcel's net residential acreage. Siting of structures on areas treated as 50% deduction (poorly drained soils) is discouraged but is permitted where the applicant/developer demonstrates that no adverse impacts will result. D. Multiplex PRD standards. (1) Front, side and rear setback for the perimeter of multiplex PRD developments shall be double the minimum front, side and rear setbacks required in the zoning district. (2) Distances between detached multiplex clusters shall be at least 50 feet. (3) A setback of 100 feet on an arterial street is required and shall include a fifty-foot landscaped strip. E. Planned residential development open space standards. (1) The total area of open space within the development shall equal or exceed the sum of the areas by which the building lots in single-family subdivisions are reduced below the minimum net residential area per dwelling unit required in the zoning district. (2) In no case shall a planned residential development reserve less than 15% of the gross area as open space. Street rights-of-way and impervious surface areas shall be excluded from the calculation of minimum dedicated open space. (3) All open space with PRDs shall also comply with § 215-5.23, open space performance standards. F. Location of buildings. (1) Buildings shall be oriented with respect to scenic vistas, solar access, natural landscaped features, topography, and natural drainage areas in accordance with an overall plan for site development. (2) Buildings shall be

compatible in terms of physical size, visual impact, intensity of use, proximity to other structures, and density of development with other permitted uses within the district. G. Utilities. (1) Water supply. (a) All dwellings in the development shall be connected to a common water supply and distribution system or individual on-site water systems. (b) The subdivider/developer must clearly demonstrate that adequate groundwater or treated surface water is available for all and that the water source is safe from both on-site and off-site contamination. (2) Sewer. (a) All structures with required plumbing in the development shall be connected to individual septic systems or a private central collection and treatment system in accordance with the minimum standards set forth in the Maine State Plumbing Code. (b) If a central collection and treatment system is proposed for a single-family PRD, the applicant/developer must show that at least one site on each lot has soils suitable for on-site subsurface waste disposal in accordance with the minimum standards set forth in the Maine State Plumbing Code. (c) If a central collection and treatment system is proposed for a multiplex PRD, the applicant/developer must show that a second site on the parcel has such size, location and soil characteristics as to accommodate a system similar to the one proposed for the primary site.

CHAPTER 7

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of the recreational opportunities and open space in Casco.

This Chapter is organized into four sections:

1. Recreational Facilities
2. Open Space Protection
3. Recreational Water Access
4. Unmet Needs

Recreational Facilities

**For a map of open spaces, recreation and water access, see the Connectivity map.*

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A description of important public and private active recreation programs. ”]

The biggest asset of the Parks and Recreation Department is the Community Center in Casco Village where the majority of the department’s programming takes place. The Community Center houses a gym, two conference rooms, a kitchen, and the department office; outside, there is a playground, tennis courts, and additional basketball courts.

The department hosts recurring activities such as yoga twice a week, open gym time, Lakes Region youth basketball, Girls on the Run, field hockey, pickleball, tennis, playgroup, storytime, and senior meals. The department also hosts annual celebrations including Christmas tree lighting in the Community Center, Halloween in Casco and an Easter egg hunt at the Community Park. The department is dedicated to providing programming for all Casco residents from children to seniors.

Important recreational facilities in Casco include the following:

- Casco Community Center and the adjacent Village Green.
- Casco has two public beaches open to Lake residents: Crescent Lake Beach and Pleasant Beach.
- Casco has three playgrounds including at the Community Center, Casco Community Park and Libby Park.
- There are sports courts and fields at Dingley Field, which is used for Rookie and Minor

League Baseball and 10 and under softball; Libby Park, which has tennis and basketball courts; and the Community center.

- Casco Community Park is a new park that has full-sized fields, lights, a concession stand, and a quarter mile walking trail.
- Although school recreation takes priority of their facilities, Crooked River School is sometimes used to supplement recreational space as well.
- Bushido Karate Dojo and Fitness is a private martial arts studio in Casco that hosts classes for kids, teens, and adults and hosts other classes in Raymond, Bridgton, and Fryeburg.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A description of local and regional trail systems, trail management organizations, and conservation organizations that provide trails for all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, or hiking. Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use-conflicts on these trails?”]

Casco residents have many opportunities for outdoor recreation on the many hiking, snowmobiling, and ATV trails. While there are no designated mountain biking trails, State Park trails and ATV trails are used. While LEIT Preserve and State Park trails are maintained by their respective owners, recreation clubs are also very active in maintaining Casco’s trails for their members. The Crooked River Snowmobile Club is a Maine Snowmobile Association affiliated club in Casco. The club maintains almost 50 miles of groomed trails. Hancock Land Company as well as large and small landowners have made their land available to the club for snowmobile use. The Casco system of trails connects to systems in Raymond, Naples, Otisfield, and Poland. The Lakes Region ATV Club maintains 57 miles of trails

in Bridgton, Casco, Denmark, Harison, Naples, Sebago, and Otisfield.

Trails in Casco include:

- Hacker's Hill Preserve: the Preserve includes 27 acres of fields and woods that welcomes visitors to take in scenery, picnic, bird-watch, hunt, and walk. The Preserve has restrooms, parking, and picnic tables in addition to a .7 mile loop for walking. The Preserve is maintained by the Loon Echo Land Trust.
- Mayberry Hill Preserve: the Preserve includes 160 acres of woodlands, meadows, and streams and a .9 mile trail loop with benches alongside where visitors can walk and cross-country ski. The preserve is maintained by the Loon Echo Land Trust.
- Jugtown Forest: the Jugtown Forest trail is a 2.7 mile loop. The area is primarily used for off-road driving and snowmobiling as well as cross-country skiing and mountain biking. Some trails are maintained by the Crooked River and Muddy River SnoSeekers Snowmobile Clubs.
- Que Five Trail: 3.9 mile trail primarily used for ATVs and snowmobiles but is groomed by the snowmobile club in the winter so can be used for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing as well.
- Sebago Lake State Park: includes the 3.4 mile Outer Loop trail from Cub Point for hiking, the 3.8 mile Blue Loop for hiking, and private trails for guests of Migis Lodge.
- Owl Pond: 1.7 mile trail for hiking and cross-country skiing, and other snowmobile and ATV trails.
- Rattlesnake Mountain via Bri-Mar Trail: popular 2.5 mile trail that is accessible year-round for walking, running, and snowshoeing with

views of Panther Pond and towards Raymond. Residents have reported a shortage of parking near the trailhead, which is located in Raymond.

Residents have reported that most of the area's trails are well maintained, particularly those facilitated by Hancock Lumber in Jugtown Forest and the ATV club. Due to the multipurpose nature of some trails, such as those that host both hikers and ATV riders, there are some reported use-conflicts.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Regional recreational opportunities as appropriate."]

*See connectivity map for regional trail *connections.*

Open Space Protection

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "A map or description of scenic areas and scenic views of local importance, and regional or statewide importance, if available."]

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Does the community have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites, either outright or through conservation easements? Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved?"]

Open space conservation has been a priority in Casco for many years, particularly following the establishment of the Open Space Committee, now Commission, by the 2003 Casco Comprehensive Plan. The Committee initially identified four focus areas for land acquisition and protection, which the current Commission continues to use. The areas identified include:

- Pine Hill/Owl Pond/Heath area with 1,800 acres comprising Owl Pond, the only pond in

the town that is undeveloped on the shores, and trails.

- Rattlesnake Mountain with 1,400 acres comprising the Town's highest point, trails, a heron rookery, and rare plant communities.
- Quaker Ridge East with 1,600 acres comprising wetlands, high quality agricultural soil, and trails.
- Quaker Ridge West with 1,800 acres comprising a deer wintering area, old-growth hemlock, trails, and stream and wetlands.

The Open Space Commission has prepared maps detailing public land, natural features, large parcels, and tree growth, and inventoried town-owned properties, supported the purchase of open space land including Hacker's Hill, participated in the Lake Region Greenprint Partnership, and created stewardship plans. The Commission meets monthly at the Casco Community Center and, as of 2018, have been active in trying to acquire private, open, underutilized land. The Commission has an Open Space Fund which is used for direct acquisitions in the name of the Town of Casco with landowners and to negotiate agreements with landowners for conservation easements or leases on land in Casco. The Commission may also engage services of outside professionals such as foresters, ecologists, and land use planners, to accomplish its goals.

Loon Echo Land Trust (LELT) plays a major role in conservation of open space and more generally as well as protecting public access to the outdoors in the Lakes Region. LELT conserves 8,500 acres of land and manages over 32 miles of trails while collaborating with residents, businesses, and organizations to acquire and protect more land through conservation

easements, land purchases, and land donations. In Casco, LELT has multiple focus areas and has worked to protect Hacker's Hill and Mayberry Hill Preserves, the latter of which was acquired in partnership with Casco and was the land trust's first preserve. Although none have public access guaranteed, LELT maintains easement properties in Casco on private land, securing development rights to the land trust. Current LELT projects include the installation of historically and ecologically informative interpretive signage in Hacker's Hill Preserve and improving safe parking access and trails at Mayberry Hill Preserve.

Loon Echo Land Trust uses a regional approach to land preservation and protection. The land trust serves seven towns in the Sebago Lake Region and regularly works with town governments to acquire and manage sites. They collaborate with other land trusts and partners in Maine to work on a landscape-level rather than hyper-locally. The organization is embarking on a new regional conservation strategy with other land trust partners that will focus on climate resilience and resilient landscapes. This includes examining the level of connectivity and areas where resilient habitats can or should be connected, particularly in areas that are fragmented or have habitat loss where conservation of small connecting pieces or corridors could have an outsized impact on larger resilient landscapes. LELT does additional regional work through Sebago Clean Waters (see Water and Natural Resources Chapter) which operates independent of town lines, focusing instead on stakeholders in the Sebago Lake watershed.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?"]

Jugtown Forest is an example of private lands being made available for public use.

Recreational Water Access

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Does the public have access to each of the community’s significant water bodies? An inventory of any fresh or salt water bodies in the community determined locally to have inadequate public access.”]

There are two public beaches open for exclusive use by Casco residents: Crescent Lake Beach on Edwards Road and Pleasant Lake Beach on Mayberry Hill Road. The director of Park and Recreation has reported sediment build-up issues at Pleasant Beach being difficult to clear. Around Sebago Lake there are a handful of private resorts that have private beaches. Sebago Lake State Park, which costs \$6 entry fee for adult Maine residents, has a beach. Dumpling Pond does not have public access for Casco residents.

There are an adequate number of boat launches located at Coffee Pond, Parker Pond, Pleasant Lake, and Sebago Lake State Park. There is one boat pumpout station in Casco which is located at the Kettle Cove Marina off of Sebago Lake.

Unmet Needs

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Will existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups in your community? Is there a need for certain types of services or facilities or to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to either add capacity or make them more usable? identification of unmet needs.”]

While projected population growth in Casco does not show a significant increase, the Parks and Recreation Department has expressed a need to better accommodate the existing population. Despite the fact that a significant amount of Parks and Recreation’s programming takes place there,

the Community Center lacks adequate space to support activities and storage. In addition to Parks and Recreation activities, the Community Center also hosts municipal meetings, which lack a home in other municipal buildings. These meetings further limit the use of the space for recreation activities. If municipal meetings find a space outside of the Community Center, existing recreational facilities and programs in the community should be able to accommodate growth and changes in population in Casco. Additionally, the capacity of the department’s staff, primarily the director, is stretched thin, making adding programming difficult. An additional staff member will join the department January 1, 2023.

The director of Parks and Recreation has reported residents’ desire for the expansion of recreation opportunities in a few specific areas including accommodating the growth of pickleball, creating a covered outdoor ice rink, and making an accessible and dog-friendly swimming area available to the public. Casco currently lacks an ice skating rink and a public area that allows dogs. All three of these growth areas could be addressed through the use of the Berry Property, soon to be the subject of a feasibility study, to expand recreation. The land has space for a new year-round covered pavilion which could be flooded to create an ice rink in the winter and used for pickleball and tennis in the warmer seasons. The property connects to the waterfront at Parker Pond, where a beach and dog park could be built. The property has great potential as a center of recreation as there may be opportunity to connect to the waterfront through a new trail. The potential expansion of the municipal campus and addition of recreational space at the Berry Property would make existing recreation space more available in the Community Center and provide some of the programs and spaces currently missing from Casco.

Improved opportunities for walking have been voiced as a desire by the community. Casco does not have infrastructure for walking in the Village where the Community Center is located. Except for a tiny section, Route 121, which connects the Village and Town Hall, does not have sidewalks. Cars often reach speeds of over 50MPH, making it dangerous for pedestrians and dog-walkers who continue to use the road despite the risk. Additionally, there are no trails in Casco accessible by modes of transportation other than by car. No trails currently connect to the Village or to area schools, although there is potential for trail connections to the Crooked River School. Outside of the Village, there have been complaints that Casco has ATV, snowmobile, and horseback riding trails but not enough ability-inclusive walking trails.

Recommendations

In conversation with the Loon Echo Land Trust, various funding opportunities were suggested for conserving open space in Casco. They include taking advantage of Land for Maine's Future, which was recently funded for the first time in 10 years. The program is the State of Maine's primary funding source for conserving land for its natural and recreational value. It is an opportunity for towns, especially in partnership with a land trust, to secure funding for major conservation projects. Casco has previously partnered with LEIT to conserve open space, including in order to form Hacker's Hill Preserve. Another available funding program is the Land and Water Conservation Fund which Casco accessed to build the Casco Community Park. Under the Land and Water Conservation Fund are the Forest Legacy Program and the Forest Legacy Program which are part of a budget process currently. LEIT has also expressed interest in preserving or supporting working farmland, which Casco currently lacks for the most part. The land trust is willing to assist the town in accessing the Maine Farmland Trust, a statewide nonprofit land conservation organization, for funding.

CHAPTER 8

TRANSPORTATION

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of the transportation systems within Casco and the surrounding region.

This Chapter is organized into four sections:

1. Local Street Networks and Safety
2. Access to Transportation
3. Alternative Modes of Transportation
4. Regional Context

Local Street Networks and Safety

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “What are the transportation system concerns in the community and region? What, if any, plans exist to address these concerns?”]

**See Big Ideas: Support Diversity & Multi-Generational Community Life and Connect all the Villages with Safe Streets and Trails.*

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Seasonal fluctuation in accident data? Costs to the town for traffic violations.”]

According to Maine DOT data from 2012-2022, more traffic crashes occur in the winter months, between November and March. Coverage by the Cumberland County Sheriff’s department is set as an annual fee. Additional coverage for special events and circumstances may be contracted on an as needed basis. For more information on accident data see the Casco Crash Map or the Maine DOT Map Viewer at: www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “To what extent do sidewalks connect residential areas with schools, neighborhood shopping areas, and other daily destinations? How are walking and bicycling integrated into the community’s transportation network (including access to schools, parks, and other community destinations)?”]

The only sidewalks in Casco are located in Casco Village. Walking is not integrated into the community’s transportation network and is not an option for residents to get to daily destinations. The lack of sidewalks in some areas has resulted in people walking on dangerous roads, particularly in the summer as the population rises. Community members have reported an increase in pedestrians on the street when sidewalks are not available during the COVID-19 pandemic as

crowds in traditional outdoor spaces like the parks grew overwhelming.

Bicycling is rarely used as a mode of transportation in Casco as roads are too fast and have no designated space for cyclists. Residents have expressed interest in bike lanes to make it more of a possibility.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “What is the community’s current and approximate future budget for road maintenance and improvement?”]

The fiscal year 2023/24 road budget is approximately \$750K, and for the life of this plan is anticipated to be between \$750K - \$1M annually.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “List and locate municipal parking areas including capacity, and usage. Are there parking issues in the community? If so what are they?”]

Municipal parking areas include: Pleasant Lake Beach, Crescent Lake Beach, Town Office, Casco Community Park, Casco Community Building, Hacker Hill, Mayberry Hill Trail Parking, and Brown Ave. Ball Field. There is an electric vehicle charging station in Casco Village behind the community center and in South Casco near the baseball field.

Capacity and usage is generally not an issue in Casco. There have been concerns about the lack of parking at the trailhead for Rattlesnake Mountain. There have been instances of large cars parking in ways that block the passage of emergency vehicles down narrow residential

streets, particularly in the summer with the increased temporary population.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If there are parking standards, do they discourage development in village or downtown areas?”]

Casco has parking standards. Standards are restrictive such as 2 spots per dwelling and 1 spot per 200 feet of retail space. New zoning standards should be considered to reduce off-street parking requirements.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Does the community have local access management or traffic permitting measures in place?”]

Casco has design standards for streets and includes traffic considerations for the approval of developments (see § 210-9.10 Design and construction of streets).

There are three types of roadways that are managed in Casco: private, public, and state roads. Casco uses the road commissioner and the State Department for state roads such as Routes 11, 302, 85, and 121 are managed by MDOT. The municipal roads are managed by the Town of Casco.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Do the local road design standards support the community’s desired land use pattern? Do the local road design standards support bicycle and pedestrian transportation?”]

The current road design standards should be reviewed and right-sized to ensure the community’s desired land use pattern will be achieved. In some cases, the metrics are excessive - right of way and pavement width in particular. There are also only three street thoroughfare types and a few more could be considered. Standards are focused on cars, parking, and shoreland zone environmental

protections and rarely take pedestrian and bicycle transportation into account.

The town’s local design standards can be found in § 210-9.10 Design and construction of streets.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Do planned or recently built subdivision roads (residential or commercial) simply dead-end or do they allow for expansion to adjacent land and encourage the creation of a network of local streets? Where dead-ends are unavoidable, are mechanisms in place to encourage shorter dead-ends resulting in compact and efficient subdivision designs?”]

All planned and recently built subdivision roads dead-end and have little to no connection opportunity. A mixture of road standards have been applied.

The following applies to the design of street layout in regards to dead-ends: § 210-9.10 Design and construction of streets. (10) In the case of dead-end streets, the Planning Board may require that additional right-of-way widths be provided if it determines that future extension of the street may occur. Such additional widths shall be consistent with the right-of-way width of the dead-end street.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Location and overall condition of roads, bridges, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities, including any identified deficiencies or concerns.”]

According to town staff, a number of state roads traversing through Casco need repair, ditch work, and annual maintenance. The town does not have equipment to do spring sweeping. Shoulders and ditch work need attention in many locations in Casco. There are no formal bicycle facilities in Casco.

The greatest concern is geometry: road geometry supports and encourages excessive speeding,

creating dangerous hazards for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Identify potential on and off-road connections that would provide bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods, schools, waterfronts and other activity centers.”]

**See Big Idea Connect the Villages for Connectivity Map.*

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Identify major traffic (including pedestrian) generators, such as schools, large businesses, public gathering areas/activities, etc. and related hours of their operations.”]

Traffic has increased recently on major roads in the morning south in the direction of Portland and Westbrook. This has particularly been true as more people move to Casco and have jobs elsewhere.

As one of the few businesses in town, Kindred Farms gets significant traffic, particularly in the summer with the increase in tourists. The Crooked River School sees daily traffic during and around school hours. The Town Office, Casco Public Library, Post Office, and Community Center have steady traffic during regular business hours.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Identify policies and standards for the design, construction and maintenance of public and private roads.”]

- **§ 210-9.10 Design and construction of streets** A detailed table sets quantitative design and construction standards for public or private industrial streets. There are standards for entrances to different types of roads and driveways. There are standards for intersections including keeping them as close to 90 degrees as possible. Projects are to be approved by the planning board and

construction to be overseen by the Casco Road Commissioner.

- **§ 215-5.25 Road construction**

A. Roads shall be located, constructed, and maintained in such a manner that minimal erosion hazard results. Adequate provision shall be made to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. B. Additionally, all roads constructed shall conform to the following standards: (1) Road crossings of watercourses shall be kept to the minimum number necessary; (2) Bottoms of culverts shall be installed at streambed elevation; (3) All cut or fill banks and areas of exposed mineral soil shall be revegetated or otherwise stabilized as soon as possible; and (4) Bridges or culverts of adequate size and design shall be provided for all road crossings of watercourses which are to be used when surface waters are unfrozen.

More in depth regulations for roads in relation to water protections including guides on drainage and distance set back required from high-water lines of great ponds, rivers, and other bodies of water. (for more see shoreland zoning: § 215-9.21 Roads and driveways.)

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Identify existing and proposed marine and rail terminals within your community including potential expansions.”]

Not applicable.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If coastal communities identify public ferry service and private boat transportation support facilities (may be covered under Marine Resources with cross reference) including related water-side (docks/piers/wharves) and land-side (parking) facilities.”]

Public boat landings in Casco include a marina

on Thompson Lake near Heath Road, in Casco Village on Pleasant Lake near Mayberry Hill Road, on Coffee Pond near Coffee Pond Road, and at the mouth of Crooked River where it connects to Sebago Lake. While not located in Casco, the Frye Island Ferry launches from nearby Raymond connecting to Frye Island at the center of Lake Sebago.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If the community hosts a transportation terminal, such as an airport, passenger rail station, or ferry terminal, how does it connect to other transportation modes (e.g. automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, transit)?”]

Not applicable.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If the community hosts or abuts any public airports, what coordination has been undertaken to ensure that required airspace is protected now and in the future? How does the community coordinate with the owner(s) of private airports?”]

Not applicable.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If you are a coastal community are land-side or water-side transportation facilities needed? How will the community address these needs?”]

Not applicable.

Access to Transportation

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Do available transit services meet the current and foreseeable needs of community residents? If transit services are not adequate, how will the community address the needs?”]

The Maine Council on Aging has reported trends showing that if a community does not have dedicated senior housing (assisted living, graduated care), seniors will leave the community. As Casco does not have these facilities nor

transportation options to connect seniors with health and other services, many seniors are unable to age in place. For the most part, the population moving to Casco (purchasing homes when seniors leave) has financial resources and vehicles.

Alternative Modes of Transportation

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Identify bus or van services. Nonprofit ride services.”]

The Lakes Region Explorer is the only bus route serving Casco. As part of Cumberland County, Casco is serviced by the Regional Transportation Program (RTP) which provides van, bus, and ride-share service for disabled, elderly and low-income individuals and those with special needs. RTP services include rides to essential medical services.

The town has identified the desire to have a town-operated ride service to transport seniors and school children to and from activities. Because of COVID, the school district cut bus service from the schools to the community center and library. The loss of this service has been felt by the community. Some residents have suggested that, by having a town-controlled service, future disruption of service won't be an issue.

Regional Context

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are conflicts caused by multiple road uses, such as a major state or U.S. route that passes through the community or its downtown and serves as a local service road as well?”]

Highways SR 121, SR 11, and US 302 run through Casco. According to Casco's Public Works department, there are no notable conflicts caused by multiple road uses at this time, however

road repairs and speed limit differences do occasionally have conflicts.

Speed is a conflict, caused by excessive pavement width and wide-curving road geometry, and in many places wide paved shoulders. US 302 is overbuilt and dangerous. This creates a conflict for drivers, and a conflict between drivers and anyone who attempts to bicycle or walk here. Walking to and across US 302 does occur, as people move from the Tenney Hill area to the south side of US 302 to pick up the Lakes Region Explorer.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How do state and regional transportation plans relate to your community?”]

MaineDOT has plans to improve a large culvert in Casco between 2021-2023. Casco will not be significantly impacted by regional transportation plans.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Identify airports within or adjacent to the community and describe applicable airport zoning and airspace protection ordinances your community has in place.”]

There are no airports in Casco.

CHAPTER 9

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of the public facilities and services within Casco and the surrounding region.

This Chapter is organized into nine sections:

1. General Government
2. Drinking Water Supply
3. Sewer Service
4. Public Works Facility
5. Safety Services
6. Public Education
7. Public Library
8. Telecommunications

General Government

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are municipal services adequate to meeting changes in population and demographics?”]

Generally, municipal services are adequate to meet the needs of the population, with exception to police coverage, fire station space and condition, and public works.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “To what extent are investments in facility improvements directed to growth areas?”]

The town has begun to build a municipal campus near the Crossroads of Rt 11 and Rt 121.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Will other public facilities, such as town offices, libraries, and cemeteries accommodate projected growth?”]

The town office was recently constructed and provides appropriate space for staff. If needed, the site has ample space to support an expansion.

The Public Works department is struggling to keep up with the deteriorating condition of some of the older cemeteries where many old headstones are broken and require more maintenance than the department has the capacity for currently. There is concern over dwindling remaining cemetery space and a need for more caretakers. Most cemeteries in Casco are private, although the Town has taken over some in recent years.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is the town considering impacts to public facilities and services as result of climate change?”]

The town has applied for a Community Action Grant through the Community Resilience Partnership for projects to make the Town more prepared and resilient to climate change.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “General physical condition of facilities and equipment; capacity and anticipated demand during

the planning period; identification of who owns/manages the systems; estimated costs of needed capital improvements to public facilities; Municipal Government Facilities and Services – Describe facilities and staffing for municipal administrative, enforcement, and public works operations. estimated costs of needed capital improvements to public facilities;”]

The Central Fire Station is relatively new and in good condition; however, it is over capacity as it currently houses both the CFRD and the public works department along with both departments’ equipment and trucks.

Administrative staff at the Town Office report a strain on their capacity in the summer season. The Town Office employs one part-time and two full-time administrative staff members.

The public works department currently employs a single staff member who oversees the day-to-day operations including overseeing the contracted companies Casco utilizes for most public works services. The Town has contracts for plowing, sidewalk maintenance, grass, park, and beach maintenance, tree services, road improvements, and waste. Casco plans to grow the department in the coming years to a crew of six and take over the contracts themselves.

The gate to public works’ sand and salt shed is broken and lacks security allowing contractors to take product by the barrel. A new, more secure gate is needed or a relocation of the pile to the bulky waste facility across from the shed.

See individual sections for more detailed accounts of staffing, enforcement, and physical condition of facilities and equipment and identification of ownership and management of services and systems.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Street Tree Program - Describe the community’s street tree program. Does the community have a street tree program?”]

Casco does not have a street tree program.

Drinking Water Supply

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If public water supply expansion is anticipated, identify and protect suitable sources? If the community has a public water system are any public water supply expansions anticipated? If so, have suitable sources been identified and protected?”]

Casco does not have a public water supply and does not anticipate moving toward it.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is the water district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan? If the town does not have a public sewer or water system, is this preventing the community from accommodating current and projected growth?”]

The town does not have a public water supply. Properties are served by private wells. According to staff, the Town is still too rural for public water and sewer; The private systems are not preventing the community from accommodating growth. On one occasion, an affordable housing agency reported that Casco’s lack of public water and sewer contributed to the inaccessibility of funding for senior housing development.

Sewer Service

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If the community has a public sewer system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated in the future? Is the sanitary district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan as required by (38 M.R.S.A. §1163), or will it be?”]

Casco uses private septic systems

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Stormwater Management – Identify combined sewer overflows. For Municipal Separate Stormwater System (MS4) communities, describe plan and status of the major goals of the MS4 requirements. Are existing stormwater management facilities adequately maintained? What improvements are needed? How might future development affect the existing system?”]

Stormwater management systems are designed to meet the criteria of a twenty-five year storm based on rainfall in Portland, Maine. Subdividers may not overload an existing or future stormwater drainage system downstream from the subdivision and must finance improvements to existing systems in order to accommodate possible increased storm flows. Developments are required to take measures to correct and prevent soil erosion as detailed in a sediment and erosion plan. Casco does not have stormwater management facilities currently in place. Casco is not a Municipal Separate Stormwater System.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Septage – Identify any community policies or regulations regarding septage collection and disposal. Identify the number and types of users, and percent of households served. How do residents dispose of septic tank waste? Are there issues or concerns regarding septic tank waste?”]

Septic tank waste is pumped and removed by private companies and disposed of by Maine regulations. There is concern about old/abandoned septic tanks and leaking/failing tanks, especially as a contamination threat to aquifers and the groundwater. Following a waste spill on Tenney Hill, Casco created a one-time \$250,000 budget to assist residents fixing their septic systems. Very few residents have taken advantage of the fund. The Code Enforcement Office checks septic systems as a free service. Other septic system concerns are in cases where more people use systems than what they were designed for

such as when accessory apartment dwellers or campers use the same system as the main house.

The following is required within shoreland zoning:

§ 215-9.24 Septic waste disposal. [1] All subsurface sewage disposal systems shall be installed in conformance with the State of Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules and the following: (Note: The Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules require new systems, excluding fill extensions, to be constructed no less than 100 horizontal feet from the normal high-water line of a perennial water body. The minimum setback distance for a new subsurface disposal system may not be reduced by variance.) A. Clearing or removal of woody vegetation necessary to site a new system and any associated fill extensions shall not extend closer than 75 feet, horizontal distance, to the normal high-water line of a water body or the upland edge of a wetland; and B. A holding tank is not allowed for a first-time residential use in the shoreland zone.

The following are required by Town Performance Standards:

§ 215-5.27 Sanitary provisions. A. All subsurface sewage disposal systems shall be located in areas of suitable soil and comply with the minimum standards set forth in the State Plumbing Code. B. All subsurface sewage disposal systems shall be located in areas of suitable soil at least 1,000 feet in size. C. The minimum setback for subsurface sewage disposal facilities shall be no less than 100 horizontal feet from the normal high-water line of a water body. This requirement shall not be reduced by variance. D. No materials of any kind shall be permanently or temporarily placed or deposited directly into or in the floodplains of any river or stream, lake or ponds, or on the ice thereof where such material may fall or

otherwise find its way into said watercourses, nor shall such material be placed or deposited directly in pits, wells or on ground surface except in conformity with the State Plumbing Code and local ordinances. E. A marina shall provide, for use by its customers, shower and toilet facilities and shall also provide an environmentally safe means of removing accumulated waste matter from boats which have self-contained sanitary waste disposal units. F. No dwelling or structure shall be converted from seasonal to year-round use that is located within 250 feet of the high-water line of any lake, pond, river, stream or body of water more than one acre in size, including abutting wetlands, until the owner shall prove that the subsurface disposal system is located at least 100 feet from the high-water line of that water body and was legally installed after July 1974, or a performance bond equal to the estimated cost of the system shall be posted to insure that the new subsurface disposal system will be installed at least 100 feet from the high-water line, prior to completion or occupancy of the building. Any existing bedrooms or other rooms that could be used as bedrooms that may have been added or will be added must be calculated as bedrooms for septic system design. Any increase in the number of bedrooms or potential bedrooms above the original subsurface disposal system design shall mandate the installation of a new or expanded subsurface disposal system.

The following is required improvements and design standards for subdivision:

§ 210-9.9 Adequate utilities. B. Sewage disposal. (1) In no instance shall a septic disposal system be allowed in soils classified by the Maine Plumbing Code as having “extremely severe limitations.” (2) An application for an individual septic system shall be completed by a Maine professional engineer, Maine certified soil scientist

or licensed site evaluator in full compliance with the requirements of the State of Maine Plumbing Code. (3) Each proposed lot must show at least one test pit indicating suitable soils for subsurface waste disposal. (4) Plans for engineered systems as defined in the Maine State Plumbing Code shall be designed by a professional civil engineer and approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. [Amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (5) In subdivisions involving multiplex dwellings, the Planning Board shall require designation of a second site on the parcel adequate to accommodate the proposed central sewage system for the project. (6) The Planning Board may require that additional sites be reserved for future sewage disposal in instances where the size, character or location of the project raises public safety concerns.

C. Solid waste disposal. The subdivider shall show adequate provision for the collection and disposal of solid waste. D. Demolition debris disposal. For all subdivisions 10 lots or larger, the subdivider shall demonstrate that debris generated by the development and construction of the subdivision shall be collected and disposed of at a licensed facility other than the Casco Recycling and Transfer Facility.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is the solid waste management system meeting current needs? Is the community reducing the reliance on waste disposal and increasing recycling opportunities? Are improvements needed to meet future demand? Solid Waste – Describe the community’s solid waste management system. Identify types and amounts of municipal solid waste and recycled materials for the past five (5) years.”]

Waste is disposed of at the Casco-Naples Transfer Station and Casco-Naples Bulky Waste Station on the junction of Leach Road and Route 11. The Transfer Station is open four days a week from 7:00AM to 5:30PM and serves as a municipal waste service to the towns accepting

household/food waste in its Compacting Hopper and recycling in its Recycling Bins. It is owned and operated by the two towns jointly. To use the facility, residents of Casco and Naples must display a current sticker or permit on their windshield or car window.

The Bulky Waste Station is open four days a week from 7:00AM to 4:45PM. It is owned and operated by Naples and Casco and provides additional service to the Towns of Otisfield and Raymond. To use the facility residents may pay as they go or use coupons obtained from the town office or, for renters, from landlords. The station handles items including metals, stumps, demolition materials, waste oil, tires, etc. A universal waste section accepts items such as televisions, batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, mercury containing thermostats, etc. An attached shopping section displays items with potential use value for sale. Both stations handle materials but pass waste and recycling on to be processed elsewhere.

The recycling program at the transfer station makes recycling an option for Casco residents as it is in the same location as waste disposal. The Town Code of Casco prioritizes recycling in its waste management section, stating the purposes of waste management is to be cost effective and protect the environment which they will carry out “by recycling as many materials as possible and, eventually, by reducing the volume of nonrecyclable materials through composting.”

The Casco/Naples Earth Day Clean Up is an annual event to clean up litter on the Towns’ roads and grounds. The event is run by volunteers.

Public Works

Public Works is the newest formed department, and provides maintenance for a number of municipal properties in addition to plowing and limited road maintenance. It provides maintenance of municipal building grounds and cemeteries including in Casco Village on Old Stagecoach Road, Poland Spring Road, Allan Pond Road, in Cook's Mills on Tenney Hill Road, in Webb's Mills on Webb's Mills Road, and in South Casco on Route 302. They maintain landscaping and snow removal at the municipal building and library in Casco Village on Route 121.

Safety Services

[STATE REQUIREMENT: "Is the community's emergency response system adequate? Are improvements needed? Are local and regional health care facilities and public health and social service programs adequate to meet the needs of the community?"]

Casco Fire Rescue Department (CFRD) has reported inadequate communications systems for emergency response. Like emergency response departments across the country, CFRD is facing a staffing shortage. Although the number of emergency calls has remained the same, there has been a decrease in staff numbers to respond. The type of staff also presents challenges; the majority are per diem day-shift workers rather than full-time or volunteers, which the department ran on previously. Of the roster of 35, there are only four active volunteers. The only administrative support the department has comes from the fire chief himself who is also one of the few full-time members of the team. Understaffing has led to burn out among those who are left to run and support the department.

Even with smaller staff, the current fire station does not provide sufficient room for CFRD. The limited space of the current fire station means they are unable to isolate dirty gear and returns from the living quarters as is recommended to reduce cancer risks. CFRD also needs more room to accommodate growth. Additional office and general space as well as space for more rucks is essential to allow the department to function more effectively. CFRD does not have a ladder truck and must instead rely on the surrounding towns for support or face fires alone with increased risk. A ladder truck would not have a place at the current station. The CFRD currently shares space with the newly formed and soon expanding Public Works department which is housed in the fire station's annex/garage. Already at capacity, CFRD does not have room for the increased number of emergency response and managerial staff and equipment required to meet Casco's emergency service needs. Although the department sees it as their responsibility to handle as many of the emergencies in Casco on their own, they are greatly limited by lack of staff, space, and equipment. These challenges will be considered as part of the new station feasibility study.

CFRD has also reported challenges reaching emergencies due to access problems on roads that are too small for the trucks, plow status of roads, and, in the summer in particular, residents' or visitors' cars blocking roads.

Casco relies on regional health care facilities to serve the population. CFRD have transfer and emergency services, and take patients to care outside of Casco, most often Portland and Bridgeton in addition to other surrounding towns like Lewiston and Norway. CFRD is required to take patients where they request to go. This leaves a wide area for the department to travel

with each service and costs the department staff, trucks, and equipment for the significant time it takes for a crew to transfer patients round trip. If the population increases, and if the makeup of that population trends older, service coverage during transfers may require additional staffing.

In addition to receiving regional assistance for emergencies in Casco, CFRD assists neighboring towns as well— participating in a regional system of mutual aid.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Emergency Response System –Average call response times for fire, police, and emergency/rescue. h. Health Care - Describe major health care facilities (hospitals, clinics) and other providers serving the community. Identify public health and social services supported by the community through municipal subsidy.”]

There are no hospitals in Casco; the closest hospital is Bridgton Hospital. Sebago Primary Eye Care Services is located on 302. First Light Home Care provides at-home health services to residents of Cumberland, Oxford, Androscoggin, and York Counties. There are two assisted living facilities: The Casco Inn Residential Care Facility and Country Village Assisted Living. In nearby Raymond there is a family medicine practice, Raymond RediCare.

There are two fire stations in Casco, Central and Brown Avenue. Central Station is staffed 24/7 by two Firefighters/EMTs and the Fire Chief; during the day there are five people on the floor and at night there are three who are accommodated by sleeping quarters for two staff. The Brown Avenue Station is smaller with four bays and a day room and is staffed from 6:00AM to 6:00PM by two Firefighters/EMTs. The Fire Department has an automatic mutual aid agreement with the Towns of Naples, Raymond, and Otisfield to provide additional support and resources. Average

emergency response times may be measured in the process of the upcoming feasibility study, although may be currently estimated at 15-20 minutes to the site of emergency.

Casco does not have a police force and relies on Maine State Police and the Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office. Family Crisis Services, the Domestic Violence Resource Center for Cumberland County has drop-in hours located in the Standish Town Office. Also available are resources from the Lakes Region Outreach Site.

The Cupboard Collective is a cooperative food transportation program that was piloted in Casco and Naples in 2011. The program is designed to address barriers to transportation required for food access in rural areas by partnering with local governments, food pantries, and state emergency food providers like Good Shepherd Food Bank to deliver food. Emergency food resources have largely been centralized in Portland, far and expensive to get to from the Lake Region.

Public Education

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is school construction or expansion anticipated during the planning period? Are there opportunities to promote new residential development around existing and proposed schools?”]

No school construction is currently planned. Most recently, Crooked River Elementary School was reopened. Community members have expressed desire for school expansion.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Estimated costs of needed capital improvements to public facilities; g. Education – Identify school administrative unit. Include primary/secondary school system enrollment for the most recent year information is available and for the ten (10) years after the anticipated adoption of plan.”]

Casco's school administrative unit is RSU 61 (formerly MSAD 61), which includes the Towns of Casco, Naples, and Bridgton. Included in the system are Lake Region High School (located in Naples), Lake Region Vocational Center (Naples), Lake Region Middle School (Naples), Songo Locks School (Naples), Stevens Brook Elementary School (Bridgton), Crooked River Elementary School (Casco) and Lake Region- Fryeburg Adult Education. There are 587 students from Casco in school under the age of 18.

Public Library

Casco has a public non-profit library which is open four days per week. The Casco Public Library owns, maintains and operates its own building. The library provides a welcoming space for visitors and offers physical and digital resources including books, ebooks, movies, and literacy resources. The "Library of Things" makes other items like snowshoes, games, and puzzles available for check out. The library hosts a weekly storytime with readings, sing alongs, and crafts for kids. Other programs hosted by the library include StoryWalks®, experiential learning through gardening, and mahjong, knitting and book groups. The Library organizes the Casco Winter Fun Day on the Casco Village Green with snow activities, games, crafts, and more. It also participates in Halloween Trunk or Treat and Christmas in the Village. The Library plans to expand its presence in South Casco with a "Little Free Library," a self-serve way of accessing and sharing books.

The Library primarily serves the towns of Casco and Otisfield, who provide financial support to it. People from other communities also use the Library and accounts are free to anyone who requests one, even if not a resident of the town.

Other funding for the Library comes from fundraising activities, individual and business contributions, and grants. The library actively seeks grant funding to support activities. Recently, ARPA funds were used to create kits for children and families of developmentally appropriate interactive games and activities.

The last library expansion occurred in 2002, and no longer meets the physical space needs of the community. While expansions have provided enough space for books and reading areas in the Library, it lacks space for quiet patron work as well as storage. If needed, the Library has space on site for expansion. Fundraising efforts are currently underway to make about \$300K available for identified improvements

Donations to the Library Bookstore provide the opportunity to purchase books at low cost and all proceeds directly support library operations.

Regional Resources

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Has the community partnered with neighboring communities to share services, reduce costs and/or improve services? In what ways?”]

Schools, emergency response, and solid waste services are shared in the region. Social and environmental organizations, such as the Loon Echo Land Trust and Crooked River Snowmobile club also work throughout the region. See individual chapters and sections for details.

Telecommunications

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Estimated costs of needed capital improvements to public facilities: e. Power and Communications – Availability of 3-phase power, Internet (including broadband), and cable within the community. Are improvements needed in the telecommunications and energy infrastructure?”]

Casco is largely cabled by Spectrum, their incumbent cable company, and also has a digital subscriber line (DSL) available through Consolidated Communications, their incumbent telephone company. Casco is part of the Cumberland Oxford Lakes Area Broadband initiative, a regional effort to expand broadband access. Each town will appoint two representatives, at least one whom is a member of an elected government body and at least one representative from each town to form a communication team. Broadband initiatives are most effective as part of regional effort as networks are better able to share resources.

CHAPTER 10

FISCAL CAPACITY & CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Casco Comprehensive Plan

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a current status of the fiscal capacity within Casco and the surrounding region.

This Chapter is organized into three sections:

1. Taxation and Revenue
2. Funding for Future Capital Investments
3. Regional Efforts in Shared Investments

Taxation and Revenue

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Identify community revenues and expenditures by category for the last five (5) years and explain trends. Identify local and state valuations and local mil rates for the last five (5) years.”]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS

	General Gov't	Public Safety	Health & Sanitation	Public Works	Social Services	Parks, Rec, & Cemeteries	County Tax	Education	Unclassified	Capital Outlay	Debt Services	Total
FY 2020	118,834	1,046,744	285,785	576,018	24,647	74,122	466,125	6,545,475	224,677	1,137,530	324,762	11,894,231
FY 2019	960,882	763,942	229,711	941,952	20,889	81,719	450,494	6,369,442	280,991	1,321,127	331,813	11,752,962
FY 2018	944,710	658,874	255,574	694,696	36,353	125,658	442,722	6,625,836	587,704	736,875	335,090	11,444,073
FY 2017	799,835	598,823	231,916	723,135	30,144	121,873	433,703	6,470,752	368,026	1,227,910	15,841	11,021,958
FY 2016	820,890	445,339	237,165	685,747	63,145	108,465	438,764	6,402,869	322,704	821,999	N/A	10,347,087

GOVERNMENT REVENUES FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS

	Property Taxes	Excise Taxes	Intergovernmental revenues	Interest Income	Charges for Services	Miscellaneous	Total
FY 2020	9,443,643	789,673	672,213	57,857	476,109	186,029	11,625,524
FY 2019	9,351,838	799,541	434,343	51,349	294,535	237,757	11,169,363
FY 2018	9,017,012	788,923	404,605	47,898	231,384	435,524	10,925,346
FY 2017	9,152,612	742,309	461,955	71,196	271,033	242,929	10,942,034
FY 2016	8,746,513	727,121	378,603	59,690	281,773	127,521	10,321,221

LOCAL AND STATE VALUATIONS AND MIL RATES FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS

	State Valuation	Tax Mil Rate
FY 2021	757,400,000	15.66
FY 2020	707,700,000	15.40
FY 2019	680,050,000	
FY 2018	648,250,000	
FY 2017	637,100,000	15.10

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Describe means of funding capital items (reserve funds, bonding, etc.) and identify any outside funding sources.”]

A majority of funding is done through capital reserves, local appropriations through budgetary process. There is one active bond with \$2.75 million for general capital improvements, which has 7 years remaining. For land acquisition, Casco uses some private grants and donations. Community Development Block Grants have paid for some parks and recreation programming. The library is a private entity and is funded by fundraising and some town assistance (\$87,000) through budget appropriations.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How does total municipal debt (including shares of county, school and utility) compare with the statutory and Maine Bond Bank recommended limits on such debt?”]

The town is operating within the recommended limits.

Funding and Future Capital Investments

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “How will future capital investments identified in the plan be funded?”]

See above. Same funding sources will be used. The town manager has also suggested that lease/purchasing may be an option for the town to exercise, particularly for vehicles and equipment.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “If the community plans to borrow to pay for capital investments, does the community have sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain the necessary funds?”]

The town has sufficient borrowing capacity with a capital reserve of \$3.7 million (the auditor’s recommended level of capital reserve being \$2.7 million).

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “The comprehensive plan must include a capital investment plan that: Identifies and summarizes anticipated capital investment needs within the planning period in order to implement the comprehensive plan, including estimated costs and timing, and identifies which are municipal growth-related capital investments; Establishes general funding priorities among the community capital investments; and Identifies potential funding sources and funding mechanisms.”]

The town recently adopted an annual capital improvement planning process. The plan is for a 5-year term, and establishes priorities that will be evaluated on an annual basis, informing the budgetary process. Staff anticipate extending this period of planning to a 10-year term. The recommendations contained in this plan affecting capital investments will be considered each year as part of the annual capital improvement planning process. For more information, see section “Financing the Plan.”

Regional Efforts in Shared Investments

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Have efforts been made by the community to participate in or explore sharing capital investments with neighboring communities? If so, what efforts have been made?”]

Notable cost sharing programs include animal control with Naples and Raymond and the Transfer and Bulky Waste Station with Naples. Otisfield also brings bulky waste to Casco’s transfer station (enterprise account).

The town is currently exploring the possibility of regional EMS services. The conversation was initiated at the request of the region’s fire chief’s. This could consist of providing services in regional districts as opposed to county-wide. Fire and rescue service was initially considered but after a study was conducted, the conversation was discontinued.

With the COLAB initiative, the town and other Lakes Region towns, Casco is looking to study the feasibility of expanded broadband.

CHAPTER 11

LAND USE & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Casco Comprehensive Plan

This chapter of the Casco Comprehensive Plan is a portion of the Inventory and Analysis section of the plan. The purpose of this section is to answer some of the questions about existing and future land use. However, a much deeper analysis, discussion, and set of action strategies are identified in Part I of this plan under “A Vision for Tomorrow”.

Analyses

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is most of the recent development occurring: lot by lot; in subdivisions; or in planned developments? Is recent development consistent with the community’s vision?”]

There has been a dramatic increase in building permit requests in recent years; last year saw double the number of the year prior at over 200 permits requested. Popular requests include permits for renovations and accessory apartments, the latter of which has seen an increase in requests for permits. Casco has been more willing to accept in-law apartments because the additions would not require full kitchens and washer/dryer so would be more efficient. Although based on the number of requests the community seems to have interest in accessory apartments, the planning board has been hesitant to change allowances for in-law apartments to the more general accessory apartments because residents of accessory apartments would be less likely to share amenities with the main building and thus would lack the same efficiency of in-law apartments. Even with in-law apartments, there is some concern that after the apartment is sold, it might become a full apartment. There could also be problems as septic systems and amenities designed for the main house may not accommodate additional users.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “What regulatory and non-regulatory measures would help promote development of a character, and in locations that are consistent with the community’s vision?”]

Casco’s regulations are business friendly with few barriers to development. The Casco Code Enforcement Department has a tiered site review process in which permit requests for developments small enough, under 5,000 square feet, are granted through Code Enforcement

staff review rather than all the way through the Planning Board which approves larger projects. The process is very supportive of small developments as it allows projects under the threshold to proceed more efficiently. While regulation allows for it, Casco has not seen the type of development that is desired in businesses such as restaurants and small, local shops. To bolster the benefits of the tiered site review, the threshold at which permit requests must go to the Planning Board could be raised. As it stands, many businesses have stayed just under 5,000 square feet. Additionally, Casco has very slim design standards which could be made to better fit the ideal of the Town, particularly in areas like the Village to preserve the distinct character.

In recent years, there has been commercial development, especially in marijuana cultivation and solar projects. These are not the types of development desired most by the community, but the state has been slow to instruct towns how to regulate them. As an aesthetic solution, most of the solar projects will be screened from the main roads, but some residents fear the projects taking up natural space that is so critical to the town’s identity.

Community desires do not align with the code as residents often attempt to split a lot at an acre to sell for a minimal amount. Casco has a back lot standard but people rarely take advantage of it.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Is the community’s administrative capacity adequate to manage its land use regulation program, including planning board and code enforcement officer?”]

As reported by the town’s code enforcement officer, the community’s administrative capacity is adequate to manage its land use regulation program.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “Are floodplains adequately identified and protected? Does the community participate in the National Flood Insurance Program? If not, should it? If so, is the floodplain management ordinance up to date and consistently enforced? Is the floodplain management ordinance consistent with state and federal standards?”]

The town has reported that flooding is not a problem and is under control through the use of dams. The last major flooding event occurred in the Patriot’s Day Nor’easter, after which the town took extra flooding precautions including increasing culvert size.

Floodplains are adequately identified and protected. The floodplain management ordinance is up to date and consistently enforced.

Conditions & Trends

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “An existing land use map, by land use classification (such as mixed-use, residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, agricultural, commercial forests, marine, park/recreational, conserved, and undeveloped land). A description or map identifying the location of lots and primary structures created within the last ten years. Include residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial development.”]

See “A Vision for Tomorrow” in Part I of the plan. See “Conservation, Preservation, and Development Map” which identifies and describes existing land use activities and development, and where future intended development is desired. Casco’s zoning map is unique in that its districts align with its historic future land use map. This alignment will continue with the adoption of this plan, though recommendations do suggest further refinement of zoning districts to better guide development. A “Vision for Tomorrow” also describes where development has occurred over the past 10+ years - and historically.

[STATE REQUIREMENT: “A summary of current district lot dimensional standards.”]

The following applies to the Village District:

§ 215-4.5 Village District (V). Space standards.

(1) Minimum lot size: 60,000 square feet. (2)

Minimum land area per dwelling unit (for duplex, multiplex and PRDs): 60,000 square feet of net residential area. [Amended 6-12-2013 by Art. 27]

(3) Maximum building coverage: 20%. (4) Minimum road frontage: 150 feet. (5) Minimum setbacks:(a) Front: 40 feet. (b) Side: 15 feet, except as provided in Subsection C(6) below. [Amended 6-15-2002 by Art. 72] Rear: 15 feet. (6) Reduced side setback for accessory structure. The minimum side setback for an accessory storage structure of 100 square feet or less of floor area shall be 10 feet, provided that all of the following conditions are met:

[Added 6-15-2002 by Art. 72; amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (a) The accessory storage structure must meet all other setback requirements.(b) All structures larger than 100 square feet in area on the property abutting the side of the accessory storage structure shall be set back at least 15 feet from the shared property line. (c) The height of the accessory storage structure shall not exceed 12 feet. (d) No more than one accessory storage structure per lot shall be entitled to the ten-foot side setback. Any additional accessory structures must meet the full fifteen-foot setback requirement. (e) The use of the accessory storage structure shall be exclusively for storage. There shall be no human occupancy of the accessory storage structure and no cooking or bathroom facilities shall be permitted in the structure. (f) No variance shall be permitted from this ten-foot setback requirement. (7) Maximum building height: 35 feet.

The following applies to the Residential District:

§ 215-4.6. Residential District (R). Space standards. (1) Minimum lot size: 80,000 square feet. (2) Minimum land area per dwelling unit (for duplex, multiplex and PRDs): 60,000 square feet of net residential area. [Amended 6-12-2013 by Art. 27] (3) Maximum building coverage: 15%. (4) Minimum road frontage: 200 feet. (5) Minimum setbacks: (a) Front: 50 feet. (b) Rear: 25 feet. (c) Side: 25 feet, except as provided in Subsection C(6) below. [Amended 6-15-2002 by Art. 72] (6) Reduced side setback for accessory structure. The minimum side setback for an accessory storage structure of 100 square feet or less of floor area shall be 10 feet, provided that all of the following conditions are met: [Added 6-15-2002 by Art. 72; amended 6-14-2017 by Art. 27] (a) The accessory storage structure must meet all other setback requirements. (b) All structures larger than 100 square feet in area on the property abutting the side of the accessory storage structure shall be set back at least 25 feet from the shared property line. (c) The height of the accessory storage structure shall not exceed 12 feet. (d) No more than one accessory storage structure per lot shall be entitled to the ten-foot side setback. Any additional accessory structures must meet the full twenty-five-foot setback requirement. (e) The use of the accessory storage structure shall be exclusively for storage. There shall be no human occupancy of the accessory storage structure and no cooking or bathroom facilities shall be permitted in the structure. (f) No variance shall be permitted from this ten-foot setback requirement. (7) Maximum building height: 35 feet.

The following applies within the Shoreland District:

§ 215-9.14 Minimum lot standards. Area requirements within the shoreland zone:

	Min. Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Min. Shore Frontage (ft.)
Residential, per dwelling unit	80,000	200
Governmental, institutional, commercial or industrial, per principal structure	80,000	300
Public and private recreational facilities	80,000	200

The following is required as a general restriction:

§ 215-3.1 General restrictions. D. If more than one residential dwelling unit is constructed on a single lot or parcel in any district except for Commercial, all dimensional requirements for that district shall be met for each additional dwelling unit. E. If one residential and one commercial structure, or two or more commercial structures, are sited on a single lot or parcel in the Commercial District, all dimensional requirements for the Commercial District shall be met.

DEFINITIONS

Affordable Housing: “Affordable housing” means a decent, safe and sanitary dwelling, apartment or other living accommodation where the cost of occupancy is no more than 30% of that family’s household income. Affordable income targeting is meant to create affordability for households at or below 80% AMI (Area Median Income) driven by affordable housing finance requirements. Those affordability targets go to 120% AMI in the context of homeownership (defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended).

Attainable Housing: There is no agreed upon definition about what Attainable housing is, except that it is generally considered market rate (non-deed restricted to remain affordable) housing that can be afforded by people making 80% - 120% AMI. This income parameter aligns with the definition of Workforce Housing.

Comprehensive Plan: “Comprehensive plan” means a document or interrelated documents containing the elements established under section 4326, subsections 1 to 4, including the strategies for an implementation program which are consistent with the goals and guidelines established under subchapter II.

Form Based Code (*aka Form Based Zoning*): “Form-based code” means a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code

offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation. (defined by Form Based Codes Institute)

Growth Area: “Growth area” means an area that is designated in a municipality’s or region’s comprehensive plan as suitable and desired for residential, commercial or industrial development, or any combinations of those types of development, and into which most development or investment is directed. Growth Areas include the following Placetypes that are common and recognizable settlement patterns in Maine and that are demonstrated to produce a positive municipal return on investment: Downtown, Village Center, Rural Crossroads, High Impact Corridor, Adjacent Neighborhood, Rural Farmstead, and Working Waterfront.

Growth Areas also include locally identified Special Districts that have a unique pattern of development based on an established and recognized historic pattern, which are supported by locally calibrated land use regulations.

Placetypes are identified locally as areas for either limited growth or intended growth. Both limited and intended growth areas may be considered as high value to the municipality, financially, economically, or socially, and as such are intended for ongoing investment in infrastructure, buildings, housing, businesses, and civic spaces and buildings. Limited growth areas, because of their historic pattern of development or extent of build-out under locally calibrated neighborhood standards, may be the focus of ongoing investment, while not the subject of intensive new transformative development. As a result, limited and intended growth areas have different tools for managing development within the placetype.

As part of a comprehensive planning process, a community may identify locations for establishing new placetypes, excluding High Impact Corridors, where the newly established placetype meets the definition herein, excluding the requirement for the year the placetype was planned and built. New placetypes must have adopted locally calibrated neighborhood standards that enable a development pattern that is consistent with the intent and definition of the placetype.

Place Type: “Placetype” means a definable geographic area that includes buildings and streets, as well as other elements, that are familiar and identifiable within Maine based on a number of characteristics related to the size of the developed area, the arrangement of buildings, the pattern and arrangement of streets, the types of activities that occur within buildings, the type of infrastructure, and the presence of civic spaces and civic buildings. The following placetypes are identified and defined in this chapter: Downtown, Village Center, Rural Crossroads, High Impact Corridor, Adjacent Neighborhood, Rural Farmstead, and Working Waterfront.

Rural Area: “Rural area” means a geographic area that is identified and designated in a municipality’s or region’s comprehensive plan as an area that is deserving of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, erosion mitigation, water retention, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat, scenic lands, public water supplies, scarce or especially vulnerable natural resources, and open lands functionally necessary to support a vibrant rural economy.

Village Center: “Village Center” means an area with a loose grouping of predominantly contiguous mixed-use parcels that contains a mix of multi-story buildings. These areas were planned, built, and/or used for a mix of uses prior to 1940, and typically include buildings of historical or architectural significance. The area primarily consists of buildings that contain commercial, residential, and civic activities. Buildings are typically close together, often attached, and located adjacent to the sidewalk with a zero-foot or shallow front setback. Buildings tend to be located along a loose network of streets. Sidewalks may be present. Village Centers may also be designated in locations for new development where neighborhood standards are in place in local land use regulations.

Workforce Housing: “Workforce housing” means a decent, safe and sanitary dwelling, apartment or other living accommodation where the cost of occupancy is no more than 30% of that family’s household income. Workforce rental units aim to create affordability for households at or below 120% AMI typically driven by affordable housing finance requirements.

Zoning Ordinance: “Zoning ordinance” means a type of land use ordinance that divides a municipality into districts and that prescribes and reasonably applies different regulations in each district.