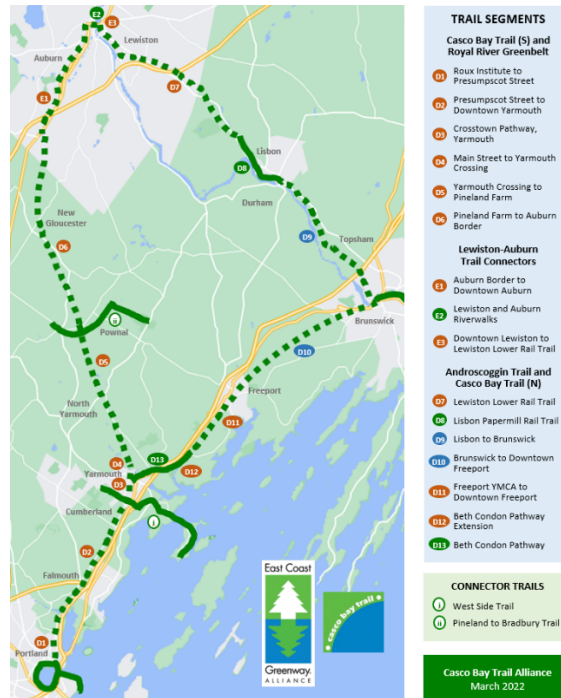




Casco Bay Trail Alliance Letter of Support for RAISE Grant Application
 East Deering: Pathways to Bridge The Gap

We write in support of the Maine Department of Transportation’s RAISE grant application for infrastructure improvements in the East Deering neighborhood. We particularly support the proposed bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connecting the East Deering neighborhood to the Portland peninsula and Back Cove, as well as improved bike and pedestrian access on Sherwood Street. These improvements would be transformative for active transportation in Portland and—by connecting to the proposed Casco Bay Trail Alliance route—the region as a whole.

The mission of the Casco Bay Trail Alliance is to plan and support a 72-mile multi-use trail connecting Portland to Lewiston, Brunswick, and the many cities and towns in between. The planned route is depicted below.

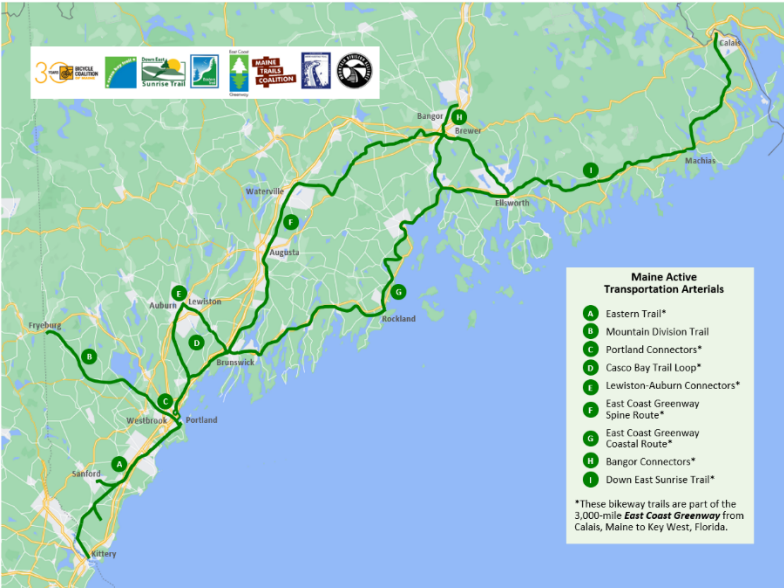


As an organization devoted to active transportation, we strongly support the bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements that are proposed in the RAISE grant application. The neighborhood of East Deering is currently hemmed in by major road thoroughfares—Route I-295 and Washington Avenue—making it difficult to safely walk or bike to other parts of the city. The new Roux Institute will increase the number of people (and cars) traveling through the neighborhood. The bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements in the grant application

would connect East Deering to the rest of Portland—making it safe for people to enjoy all the benefits of walking, biking, and being outdoors, as well as reaping all the environmental benefits of reducing car trips.

Not only would the proposed infrastructure improvements connect East Deering to the rest of Portland, but—by connecting to the proposed Casco Bay Trail route—they would transform active transportation for the entire region. The backbone of the Casco Bay Trail is a 26-mile unused, state-owned rail corridor from Portland to Auburn (the Berlin Subdivision). This corridor terminates in East Deering at the campus of the Roux Institute. Thus, by connecting East Deering to other parts of Portland, the proposed infrastructure would also connect to the entire 72-mile route of the proposed Casco Bay Trail. This could transform a traditionally car-bound region into a place where people can safely leave their cars behind and commute on active transportation corridors.

Finally, the proposed infrastructure improvements would connect the Casco Bay Trail to other current and proposed long-distance trails, as shown in the map below.



For example, the Eastern Trail is a 65+- mile route starting in Kittery and ending in South Portland, Maine. By connecting East Deering to the Portland peninsula, the proposed infrastructure improvements would make it safer for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel from points north of Portland to points south.

Active transportation carries many benefits, including promoting public health and helping to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment. Bike and pedestrian infrastructure also provides a critical resource for people who don't or can't drive—or simply want to drive less. The proposed bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements in the grant application would provide all of these benefits, and would also connect people to bus routes, supporting an integrated public transportation network.

Thank you for your consideration of the grant application and the proposed improvements to active infrastructure in Maine.

Sincerely,

The Casco Bay Trail Alliance

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February 15, 2024