

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.