

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.