

CASCO

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



OCTOBER 2023

DRAFT

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.

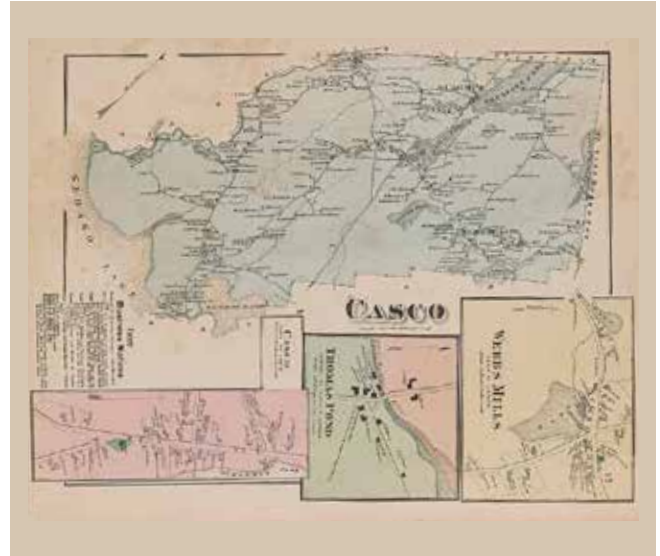
Casco was formed in 1841 after a separation from then "Raymondtown". The people who lived in what is now Casco felt separated from what is now Raymond by areas that were geographically challenging to navigate. There was a sense of disconnect and inefficiency with the way things were, and a committed 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

