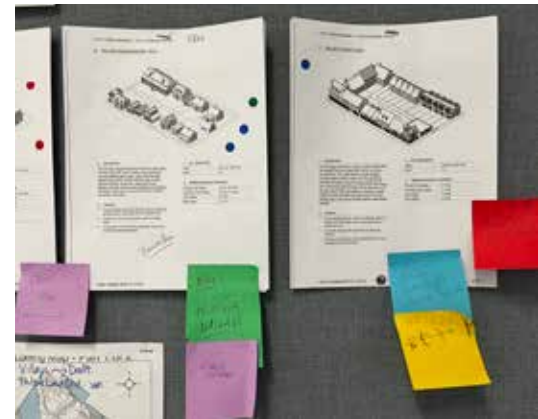




Zoning Analysis & Recommendations



Photos: GPCOG

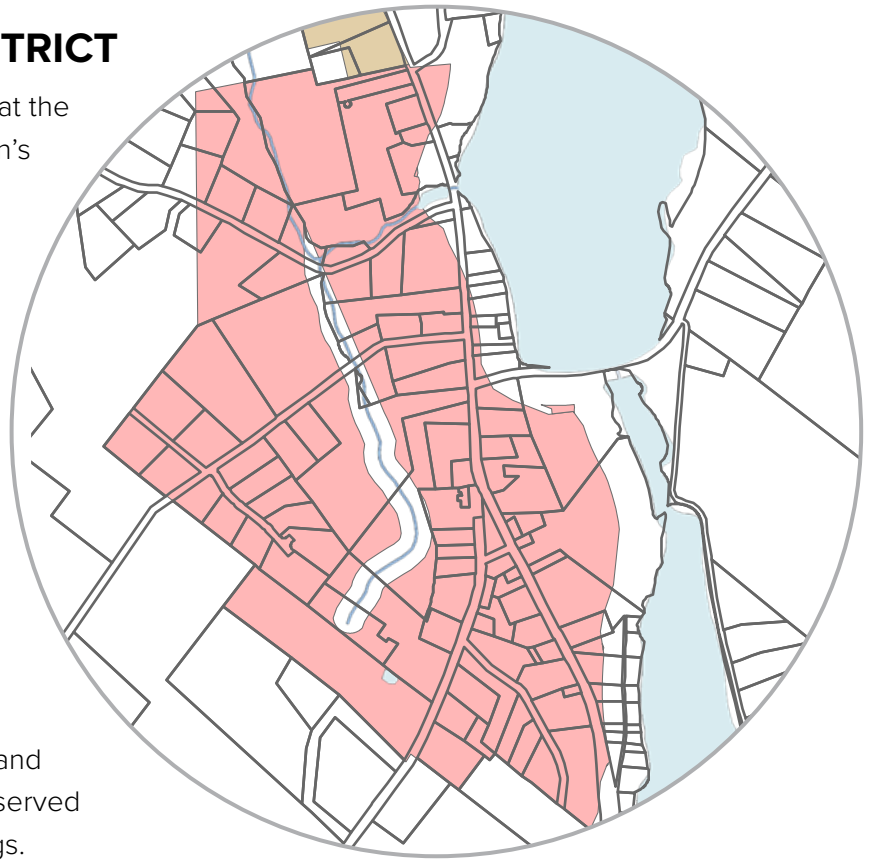
Innovative Zoning Tools

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.

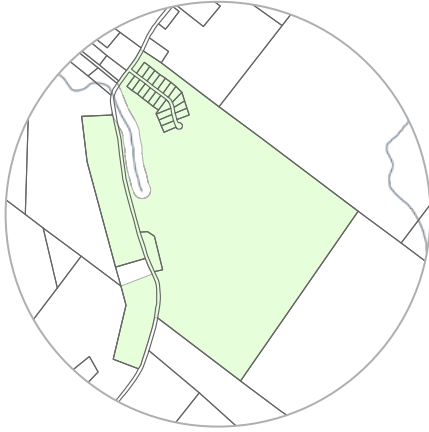
AMEND THE VILLAGE DISTRICT

- 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



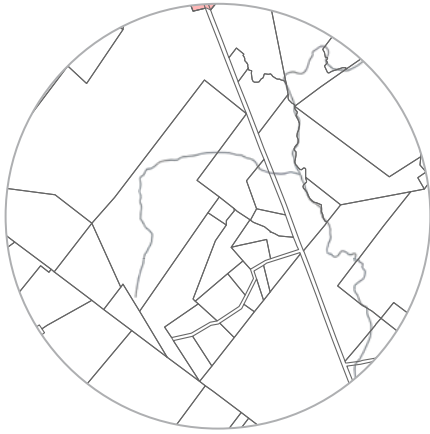
be converted to apartments or small multi-unit housing types to be built in the village. Recommend no minimum land area per dwelling unit for some portions of a newly defined Village District zones. With that, the current density bonus for affordable housing should be removed. (it would no longer be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

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



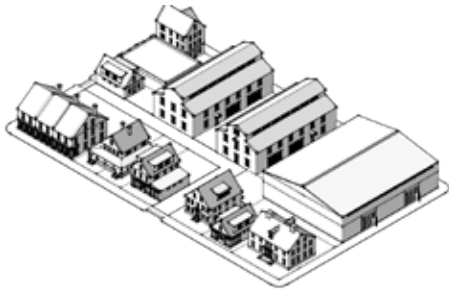
MAINTAIN THE MANUFACTURED HOUSING PARK DISTRICT (MHP)

- 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.



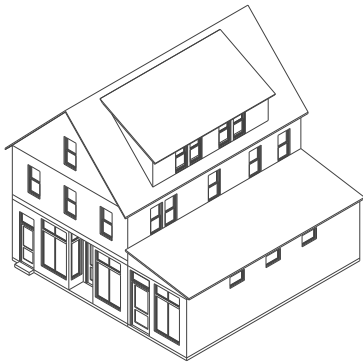
AMEND THE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

- 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.



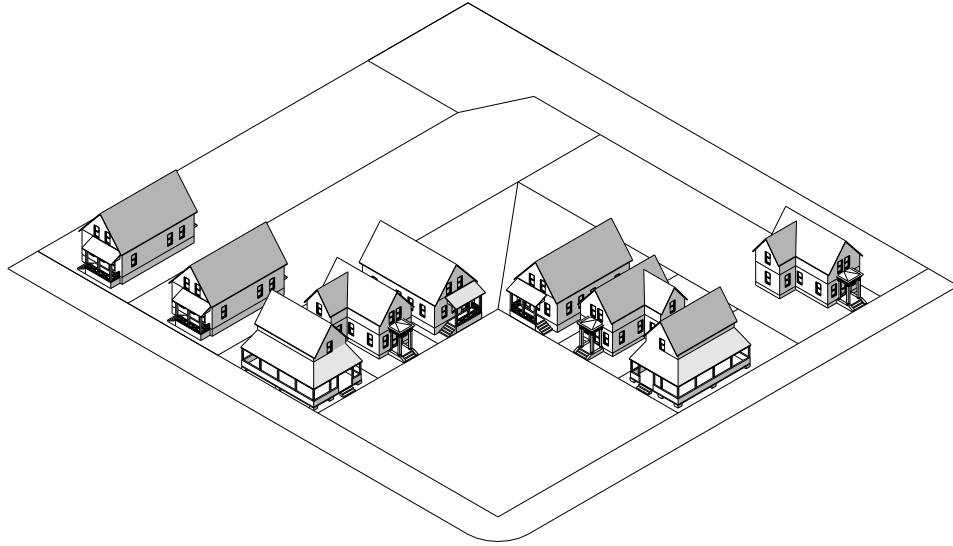
REVIEW CURRENT COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

- 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.



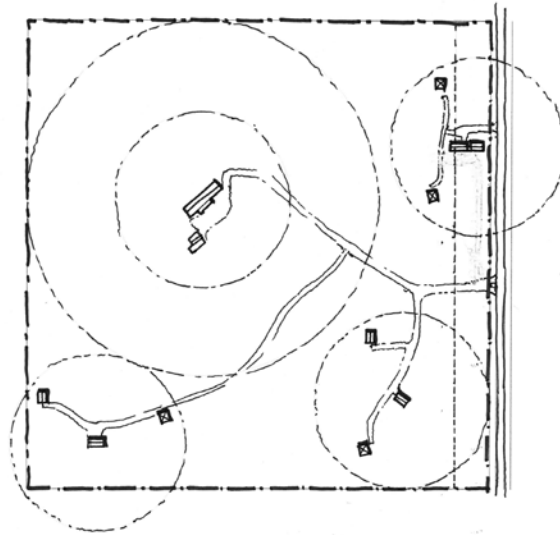
ADOPT BUILDING STANDARDS & PREAPPROVED BUILDING TYPES

- 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.



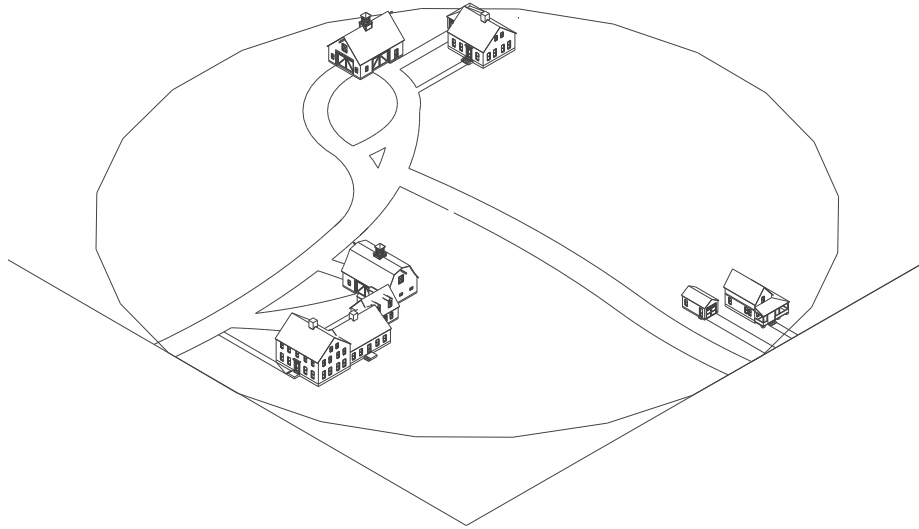
CONSIDER ADOPTING A POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD STANDARD FOR THE VILLAGES

- 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.



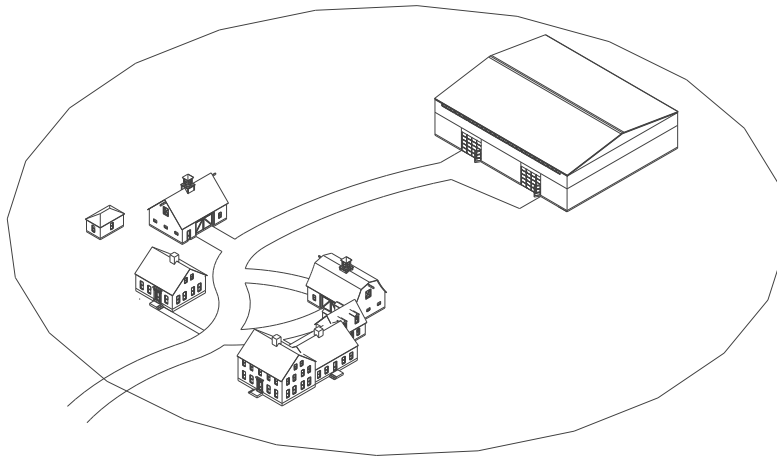
CONSIDER ADOPTING RURAL PLACE TYPES

- 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.