

Dedicated
Non-engine-powered
trails for x-c ski
trail running, Dog
Walking, BIKE
etc.

Big Ideas

Housing.

SPORTS CAMP

• with

Indoor Pool

Track, Activity rooms



Protect Woods, Waters, & Open Space

Casco is known for its scenic beauty. Residents embrace access to the outdoors and enjoy exploring the lakes, trails, and natural landscapes. These resources also attract more people to the area, both to live and visit. This makes conserving natural areas a key priority for the Town. However, residents expressed frustration over the lack of access, inventory, and preservation. There is an opportunity to better manage and protect the resources that make Casco thrive.

DEVELOP A REFINED TRAIL NETWORK

Casco has an extensive network of trails on state parks, public preserves, and town-owned land as well as a more informal network crossing private property. The trails support hiking, walking, snowmobiling, and ATVs. Local recreation clubs are very active in maintaining existing trails, especially within private property. Trails are also maintained by Loon Echo Land Trust, the State Park, and the Town. As development continues to occur, especially with the sale of large parcels, the community could lose many of the informal trails unless steps are taken to purchase trail easements or to require developers to provide direct and convenient trail connections as part of their development projects. The Town needs to continue partnering with organizations and property owners to develop new trails and preserve the existing network.

Strategies

<div>01 /</div> <div>Build relationships with large parcel landowners and the state park to secure long-term, generational access and preservation to key trail linkages and connections, with the consideration of working towards establishing formal agreements.</div>	<div>02 /</div> <div>Update zoning to clearly articulate when trail corridors should be preserved or added as private development occurs.</div>	<div>03 /</div> <div>Create an open space and trails connectivity map to identify important trail corridors and connections for future private development.</div>	<div>04 /</div> <div>Consult with interested parties to solidify use and easement agreements with private landowners.</div>
<div>05 /</div> <div>Seek private and public funding to expand the number of trails and pedestrian/ bicycle paths.</div>	<div>06 /</div> <div>Prioritize funding for sidewalk and bicycle network expansions.</div>	<div>07 /</div> <div>Continue to work regionally with surrounding communities and organizations to extend regional trails.</div>	<div>08 /</div> <div>Encourage the Open Space Commission to expand its relationships with external partners and private landowners.</div>



ENHANCE GENERATIONAL ACCESS TO TRAILS & WATERWAYS

Many people don’t know which lands are open to the public, where trails are located, or how the outdoor recreational spaces can be used. Residents expressed the desire to have increased access to the outdoors but noted the difficulties in accessibility. The Town will need to be active stewards and partners to help maintain public access to public and private lands. Casco can leverage the very active recreation clubs in the area to create and distribute information about the available trails.

Strategies

<div>01 /</div> <div>Create trails and water access points that are ability-inclusive and accessible by means other than car.</div>	<div>02 /</div> <div>Install low-cost, low-impact signage along trails and water access points to aid in navigation and private property use.</div>	<div>03 /</div> <div>Seek private and public funding to expand the number of access points to natural resources and water access.</div>	<div>04 /</div> <div>Improve public awareness and knowledge of the trails by expanding volunteer opportunities and creating trail, water access, and outdoor recreation maps and informational materials.</div>
<div>05 /</div> <div>Develop relationships with private landowners and provide ongoing stewardship assistance to ensure continued access to trails.</div>	<div>06 /</div> <div>Work with local and regional organizations to offer four-season, nature-based activities and programming for people of all ages and abilities.</div>	<div>07 /</div> <div>Enter into agreements with private landowners to formalize trail and water access points.</div>	

KEEP LARGE AREAS OF CASCO WILD AND UNTOUCHED

Residents want to preserve open spaces, natural resources, and wildlife to enhance the environment and preserve the natural character of Casco. The Open Space Commission is always looking to improve the Town’s open space inventory. High priority areas include the Pine Hill/Owl Pond/Heath area, Rattlesnake Mountain, Quaker Ridge East, and Quaker Ridge West.

Strategies

01 /

Work with the local land trusts to pursue state and federal grant funding to increase land conservation.

02 /

Protect the town’s natural heritage by acquiring and preserving private, open, underutilized land for wildlife and low-impact recreational use.

03 /

Use the Open Space Fund as a strategy to purchase open space and protect important natural resources and land conservation in Casco.

04 /

Plant wild and native meadow seeds along Crooked River School.

05 /

Update the zoning code to require developers building appropriate scale projects within the rural districts to protect high quality open space.

06 /

Create connections between conserved lands for increased wildlife corridors and trails.

“I love the rural, country setting of Casco”

“

Preserving the quality of our lakes and streams is of the utmost importance.

PRESERVE LAKES, PONDS, AND WATERWAYS

The lakes and ponds in Casco are the economic engines for the town. The water quality in the majority of Casco’s lakes and ponds is stellar, but are at risk to threats by development in the region. Residents want to take an active approach to conserving open space in order to protect the watershed. There is an abundant number of water protection organizations in the region that is helping to monitor and protect these vital resources.

Strategies

01 / Continue to work with local organizations to actively monitor the health of the lakes and ponds.	02 / Consider limiting or halting commercial water extraction to protect long-term viability of water resources.	03 / Educate residents on shoreline management best practices, invasive species, and the importance of water quality.	04 / Partner with neighboring communities and regional pond associations to monitor, protect, and improve water quality in the region’s watershed.
---	--	---	--



PROTECT FARMS AND WORKING LANDS

Casco's working lands provide natural benefits such as improved water quality and carbon sequestration, along with supporting the local economy. Residents expressed the desire to protect these farming, forestry, and all working lands to ensure longevity and transition to the next generation.

Strategies

01 /

Update the zoning code to protect high quality open space within the rural districts.

02 /

Work regionally to develop marketing materials to showcase outdoor amenities, farms, and local food sources unique to Casco.

03 /

Encourage working farms and forests to participate in the Farmland and Tree Growth Tax Program.

04 /

Work with the Maine Farmland Trust, the Department of Agriculture, and other organizations to attract and support farmers and agricultural-based businesses.

05 /

Develop a solar ordinance that protects farmland, forests, and working lands



PROTECT HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

There is a need for further survey, inventory, and analysis of Casco's prehistoric and historic archaeological sites and historic buildings, structures, and objects. Notably, there have been no professional surveys for historic archaeological sites in Casco. Many known and suspected sites are located within proximity to water. Shoreland zoning and resource protection district permitting addressed those sites, however information is limited.

Strategies

01 /

Complete a survey of historic properties and archaeological sites.

02 /

Identify properties that may be nominated to the National Register for historic places.



Support Diversity & Multi- Generational Community Life

Casco wants to be an attractive, exciting, and entertaining town for anyone to live throughout their entire life. However, residents expressed concerns over retaining young families and being able to age in place. Many people understand the connection between housing options and jobs, and being able to offer housing for a range of lifestyles. Through Casco Planning Days, participants identified the need for more diverse and affordable housing to sustain a multi-generational population.



CREATE MULTI-GENERATIONAL SPACES

Residents overwhelmingly want to have places to gather. They want to see kids playing in the village alongside older generations. Intentional multi-generational spaces strengthen the bond of the community. These spaces should be both indoors and outdoors and provide for a range of abilities.

Strategies

01 /

Improve infrastructure of parks and outdoor community gathering spaces to include utilities such as water and electricity to increase functionality.

02 /

Address transportation issues to get children and seniors to programs by purchasing a town bus or partnering with the school district, transit agencies, or private organizations.

03 /

Create a shared artist workspace in a village district.

04 /

Create a long-term future cemetery for Casco residents.



IMPROVE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Residents want to feel connected regardless of age. Building social connections sustains the population, improves the health of residents, and attracts more people to town.

Strategies

01 /

Improve cell coverage in the villages.

02 /

Boost communication of volunteer needs and opportunities to sustain increased sociability.

03 /

Create a volunteer calendar or online sign-up platform to advertise volunteer opportunities, time commitments, and schedule.

04 /

Start a mentorship program to match people with skills with people who want to learn new skills.

05 /

Organize a “creating community” event - speed dating style opportunity to get to know your neighbors.

06 /

Create a resident welcome package or page on the town website to easily inform people about town committees, how to get involved, and importance of town participation.

“

We're too separate.

EMBRACE DIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Casco wants to be a welcoming town for everyone. The Town should continue to encourage people with a range of viewpoints and lived experiences to represent the town. Ensuring diversity is critical to the success of various efforts in the community and maintaining a welcoming environment.

Strategies

01 /

Assess how ordinances and town policies affect the diversity of the town.

02 /

Encourage diversity on committees and boards to ensure that decision-making entities reflect all interests in the community.



ENCOURAGE HOUSING DIVERSITY TO ACCOMMODATE A RANGE OF FAMILY SIZES AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Cost of living in Casco has been increasing. People are also often not able to afford to live in the place where they work, which limits potential economic opportunities for the town. Creating affordable housing, and a range of housing styles, can attract new families, keep existing families and allow current residents to age in place.

Strategies

01 /

Update the zoning code to enable greater density and diverse housing choices within the 5-minute walk areas identified on the Connectivity Map.

02 /

Update the zoning code to regulate building types by zoning district to ensure new buildings and projects complement the scale and sense of place in each of the villages, and a range of unit sizes are permitted. Provide a more stringent set of development standards to control building form, scale, components, placement, materials and associated site improvements throughout town.

03 /

Update the zoning code to allow building groups such as pocket neighborhoods in villages, and connected farms, small and large compounds, and hamlets in the rural areas.

04 /

Review all municipal codes and procedures to remove barriers to small-scale development and the construction of affordable building types.

Strategies (Continued)**05 /**

Create a multi-generational neighborhood plan for the Crooked River School area.

06 /

Consider zoning tools to support an agricultural neighborhood district with limited commercial activities at Watkins Flats.

07 /

Work with landowners to create a neighborhood master plan for the rehabilitation of the mobile home park.

08 /

Update the zoning code to remove parking minimums within the growth areas, allowing the free market to determine parking needs. Add controls that require new parking to be located behind buildings.

09 /

Expedite permitting for construction of affordable housing units in growth areas envisioned as dense, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.

10 /

Create an affordable housing fund. Fund it, for example, with a percentage-based land transfer tax.

11 /

Allow large homes to be shared by multiple people not living in family, but that share cooking facilities, gathering spaces and other supportive amenities.

12 /

Amend ordinance to comply with LD 2003.



Connect the Villages with Safe Streets & Trails

Casco residents want to walk, bike, and move around town safely. During Casco Planning Days the top requests were for slower, safer streets, and more in-town multimodal connections. The lack of connectivity is a key issue affecting the quality of life in town. Designing and retrofitting streets in a way for residents to feel safe moving about town will not only improve the health of residents but also increase the ability to attract and retain businesses and workforce.

SLOW TOWN TRAFFIC TO MAKE STREETS SAFER

Casco residents indicated that there are several roads in town where people feel too comfortable driving at excessive speeds. Many of these roads are statewide mobility corridors meant to move large volumes of traffic, especially during peak tourism season. The design of these roads is at odds with the safety of road users, especially more vulnerable users like cyclists and pedestrians. A slow-flow approach to street design is needed to balance these competing priorities of throughput and usability. Design changes such as narrowing travel lanes, allowing for on-street parking, or adding street trees can add friction that will make drivers feel much more uncomfortable driving at speeds above posted limits.

Strategies

01 /

Work with the state to slow down areas of the town to support additional village investment and opportunities for economic growth.

02 /

Work with the state for greater town control over posted speed limits and initiate discussions for changing the way speed limits are set to improve safety.

03 /

Adopt a Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic fatalities.

04 /

Adopt a Complete Streets policy that considers the safety and accessibility of all roads for all users. Prioritize pedestrian, or multi-modal-first approach for all transportation projects and programs, from scoping to maintenance.

05 /

Adopt a resolution that establishes a reduced speed within Casco's more densely populated areas.

06 /

Add bike signage to improve visibility and safety of bicyclists.

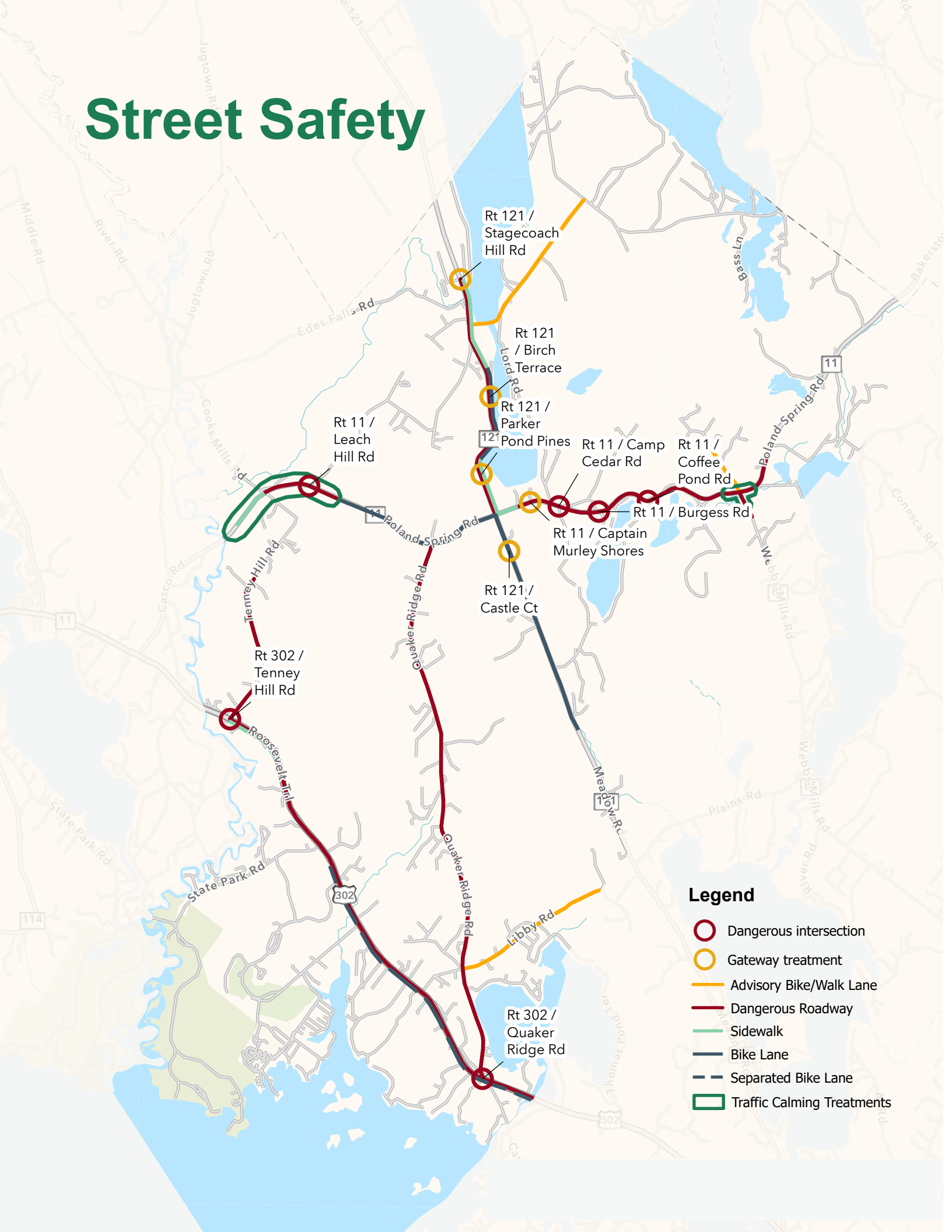
07 /

Continue to direct funding to pilot temporary, test measures such as lane width reductions, advisory bike lanes, and other techniques to slow traffic on local neighborhood streets.

08 /

Ensure upkeep of existing streets before making new streets.

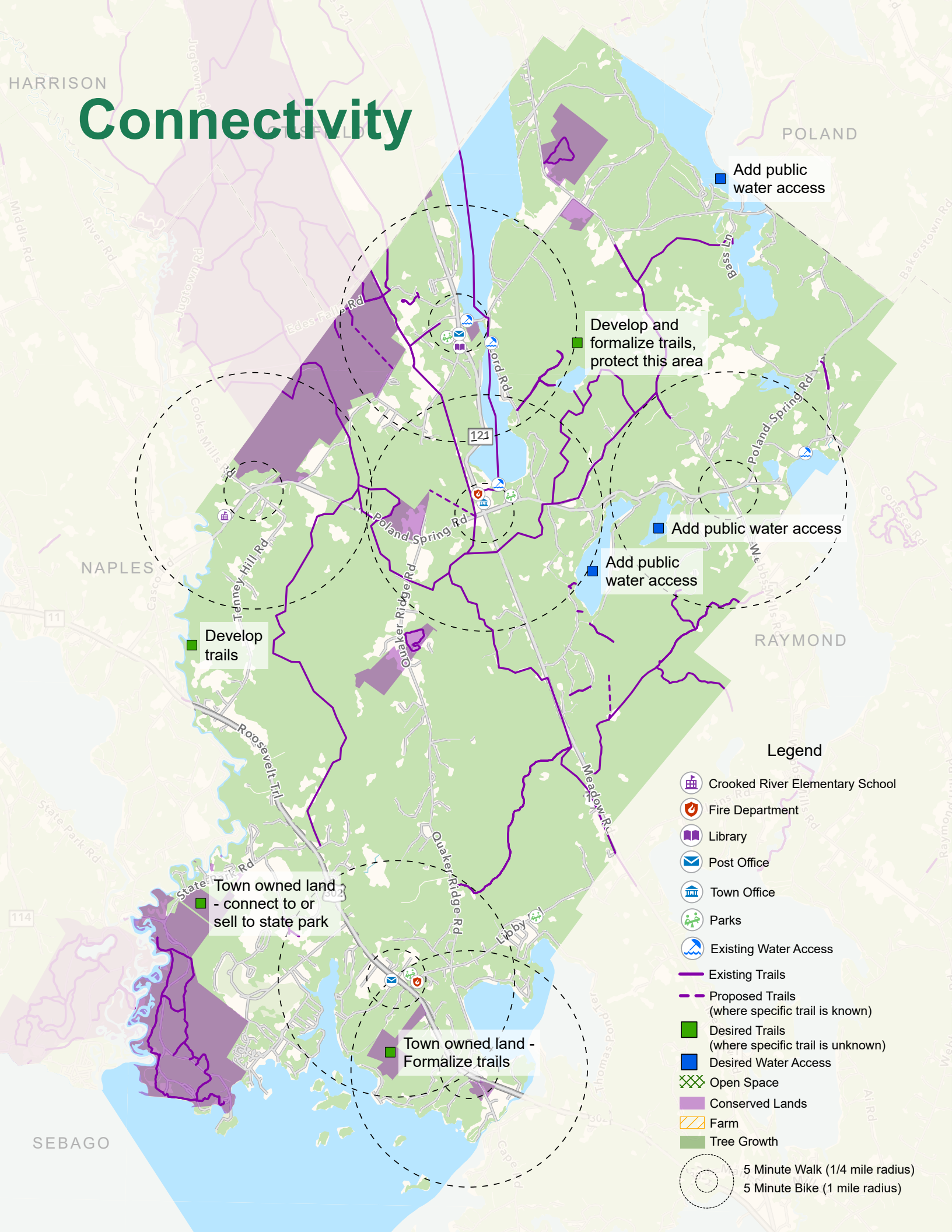
Street Safety



Legend

- Dangerous intersection
- Gateway treatment
- Advisory Bike/Walk Lane
- Dangerous Roadway
- Sidewalk
- Bike Lane
- Separated Bike Lane
- Traffic Calming Treatments

Connectivity



“

I like to walk and I don't want to take my life into my hands.

IMPROVE ROAD GEOMETRY

The road geometry in Casco, that is the design of the roadway such as street widths, turning lanes, and intersections, is inducing speed and thus, fatalities. Improving roadway design will make streets safer and improve multimodal connections.

Strategies

01 /

Work with MaineDOT to evaluate where adjustments can be made to road geometry to reduce speeding and increase safety, including the full lengths of Rt 302 and Rt 11.

02 /

Work with MaineDOT to create purposeful areas along Rt 302 where vehicle speeds can be reduced to support local economic development, climate resiliency and livability goals.

03 /

Create a gateway treatment and re-allocate lane space on Rt 11 near Crooked River School to support increased walking and bicycling to school for neighborhood students.





Attract Local Businesses & Entrepreneurs

Casco should make it easy for restaurants, breweries, cafes, and other businesses to come and thrive. During Casco Planning Days, residents expressed the need for more local small businesses that fit with Casco's character. Casco is well positioned to support a growing economy and has a great opportunity to attract new residents.



Photos: GPCOG

SUPPORT EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

While residents want to attract new small businesses, they also appreciate the businesses already in Casco. However, the town needs to ensure that they are supporting and making it easy for existing businesses to grow and operate.

Strategies

01 /

Review existing ordinances to ensure businesses can operate as needed within the village centers.

02 /

Create an economic development committee or businesses association to enhance communications between the business community and town staff.

03 /

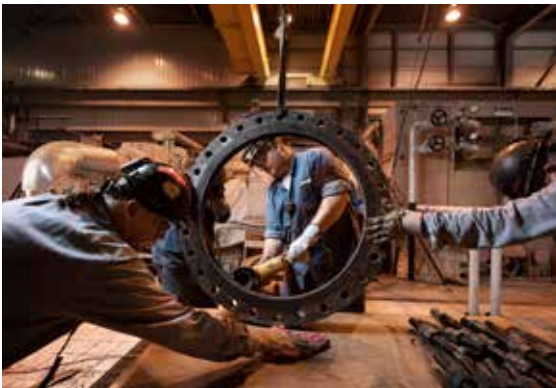
Enhance connections between local businesses such as farm to table restaurants.

04 /

Explore costs and funding mechanisms for bringing utilities into town.

05 /

Prioritize streets that are safe, interesting, and comfortable for walking.



ATTRACT A DYNAMIC WORKFORCE

Families and young workers are attracted to areas with strong social and professional development connections. Casco has residents running businesses out of their homes, many of which are unknown to the broader community. Supporting home-based economies and developing programs to build local skills will boost the capacity of the workforce.

Strategies

01 /

Support the organization of professional groups to hold networking and community building events.

02 /

Work with the library to encourage private sector partnerships to host professional enrichment and skills building workshops.

03 /

Create a town-wide directory of home-based and local businesses.

04 /

Update zoning to allow for higher density development to create more walkable destinations and more diverse housing choices.



“
The best thing is
the small town
look. Please keep
big stores and
businesses out.”

RECRUIT NEW LOCAL AND NON-FRANCHISE BUSINESSES

During the Planning Days, residents repeatedly mentioned the local and small-town charm of Casco. The consistent vision for Casco was to avoid big box stores and support the mom-and-pop businesses. Residents want to see new types of businesses like a pub or bed and breakfast, along with those that provide community services like a health or medical practice. Promoting new local, non-franchise businesses will not only strengthen the local business economy but also foster new connections for growing the existing businesses.

Strategies

01 /

Update zoning to ensure new commercial development has a village look and feel.

02 /

Update zoning to allow restaurants or small-scale lodging, such as a bed and breakfast, in the villages and to specify form.

03 /

Find more places to have commercial zoning and zones that keep the right type of businesses in designated areas.

04 /

Consider buying buildings when available and rent them to new businesses.



Maintain Fiscal Stability & Accessible Government

Casco wants to improve their direct communications, response to local concerns, and ability to act. Some residents feel there is a stark division between elected officials and the community members. Steps should be taken to improve communication between leadership and the community. The Town is also expressing their departments are understaffed and lack funding to deliver desired services.

FIND MORE WAYS TO INCLUDE RESIDENTS IN THE TOWN PROCESS

Communication is time consuming but critical for small towns. Engagement with the community is a successful, inexpensive way to increase the capacity of the town and get buy-in from residents. Casco can operate more efficiently as people participate in and understand the town process. This includes finding people to serve on volunteer boards who represent diverse viewpoints, and setting a culture of open, respectful communication.

Strategies

01 / Continue to use an open, transparent, and participatory process.	02 / Adopt a policy to hold facilitated public workshops when complex problems arise that require broad community commitment.	03 / Include funding in the budget for meetings between Town Hall and the community.
04 / Increase volunteerism and community participation to improve the capacity and capability of committees.	05 / Test alternative committee meeting times and days to make it easier to volunteer.	06 / Develop a strategy or partnership to make child-care available for all public meetings to promote involvement.





We need to transition from ‘you gotta know a guy’ to everyone in town can access this information.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS ON TOWN HAPPENINGS

Casco has a town website and Facebook page to keep residents informed. The Town uses CivicReady to send emergency alerts and notifications to subscribers. However, residents consistently mentioned the lack of communication around town events and inability to get involved. Maintaining and increasing communication methods will be vital in mobilizing volunteer groups, attracting visitors, and bringing the community together.

Strategies

01 /

Consider forming a volunteer communications committee or including funding in the budget for a part-time communications staff member.

02 /

Launch a community newsletter.

03 /

Keep the Town’s website and Facebook pages up to date with current content and promote activities based in the community.

04 /

Continue to work with the community to build shared communication goals to reach a diverse audience.

05 /

Encourage more people to volunteer by coordinating and promoting opportunities, such as road clean-ups or community groups to knit for people in need.

06 /

Annually, hold a community celebration to acknowledge the work of volunteers.

07 /

Create an outreach campaign to promote Casco outside of the town beyond just Casco Days.

“

There are many senior citizens who are on a fixed income. They cannot afford an increase in taxes.

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO RESIDENTS

Protecting the tax base so people can afford to live in Casco is crucial to ensure a multi-generational population. To retain and attract residents to Casco, the Town should find creative ways to support the community. Casco has the opportunity to not only foster trust between the government and citizens, but also attract new residents to support the tax base.

Strategies

01 /

Find ways to support people in keeping their homes well-kept such as matching funds for installing solar, or community house-repair funds.

02 /

Explore ways to bring Town Hall services directly to neighborhoods.

03 /

Add leadership incentives to attract a diverse selection of volunteers for town boards and committees.

04 /

Consider job sharing to attract highly skilled talent to the town.



BUILD MECHANISMS FOR FUNDING

Lack of government positions increases the workload for existing staff. The Town may also miss out on funding opportunities due to overburdened staff capacity. Increasing funded staff positions, finding additional funding opportunities to complete town projects, and setting an open and clear budget will improve town operations.

Strategies

01 /

Include funding in the budget for a part-time staff person to support the Town Manager and Code Enforcement with town planning and economic development.

02 /

Continue to use an open and participatory budgeting process.

03 /

Evaluate if new job structures or changes to workplace culture should occur to attract new talent to government services.

04 /

Fund staff professional development to improve budgeting and town operations for long term capital improvements.





Be Leaders of Resiliency

Casco envisions itself as a community committed to sustainability. Residents want to create a resilient community that prepares for and adapts to climate change. Work should continue to lessen the Town's impacts on the environment by improving energy efficiency and conserving resources. It also means ensuring the people in Casco can afford to live in the town, age in place, and respond to climate disasters. The Town should ensure that decisions going forward are made through climate-informed policies and actions.

DEVELOP INVENTORIES AND BASELINE DATA

To better prepare for the future, Casco residents want to know what is here now. The town feels they do not have enough detailed data and analysis to understand the at-risk critical infrastructure, ecosystems, and people most vulnerable to climate change. Creating a comprehensive body of documents and plans that identifies the climate hazards and impacts the town faces will guide high-priority actions and aid in creating goals for climate adaptation planning.

Strategies

01 /

Conduct a greenhouse gas inventory, vulnerability assessment, and/or climate action plan to understand the infrastructure, ecosystems, and people most vulnerable to climate change.

02 /

Complete an inventory of all invasive species in the town and set up an invasive species management plan.

03 /

Incorporate climate data into new or updated town plans.



ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Understanding of the ways in which climate change will influence our daily experience can help build support for sustainable actions in the community. Informing the community about possible impacts, and existing resources and solutions, is essential to building resilience in a community. Casco residents understand that the information is only part of the solution, the other is how to get that information out. The Town has an opportunity to bolster both their education and communication.

Strategies

01 /

Update communication strategies to distribute informational materials more easily, including keeping the town website up-to-date and possible town newsletter.

02 /

Consider creation of a new resident welcome package that provides an overview on property care, volunteer committees and opportunities, importance of sustainability, and/or ongoing projects.

03 /

Use the Community Center to host environmental programs for kids and adults.

04 /

Partner with the school district, Lakes Environmental Association, and other organizations to bring sustainability focused education to the kids.

05 /

Include funding for sustainable education and outreach in future budgets.

06 /

Facilitate educational workshops to teach residents on composting, recycling, emissions reductions, green infrastructure, and sustainable actions.

07 /

Educate residents and businesses on point-source pollution, and the importance of groundwater and surface water protection.

08 /

Partner with organizations, such as Maine Lakes, communicate on the importance of water quality and environmentally safe practices. This might take the form of participating in the LakeSmart programming from Maine Lakes.

BOOST THE RESILIENCY OF PEOPLE

Many residents said that affordability is a driving factor forcing people to leave or preventing people from moving to town. Prioritizing actions that address social vulnerability will build healthier communities and sustain the population. There is a strong desire to build a sense of community to help one another and make the town a more vibrant place to live. Casco Residents are also interested in joining with organizations to learn new skills, protect their homes, and increase social connections.

Strategies

01 /

Encourage aging in place through development of efficient, resilient, multi-generational housing.

02 /

Develop affordable housing, both for rent and to purchase, to support and promote working-class living in Casco.

03 /

Create an outreach program to connect with underserved and historically underrepresented residents of Casco.

04 /

Establish multi-generational social connections to bring the community together.

05 /

Develop a local bus or shared ride connection to services for seniors and youth.

06 /

Partner with local organizations, such as the Wild Seed Project or WindowDressers, to offer local workshops on energy efficiency and implement sustainability projects.

07 /

Develop an emergency response communication system that relays information to residents but also ensures emergency vehicles have sufficient access to all areas of town.

ENSURE EFFICIENT AND DURABLE TOWN INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure upgrades and efficiency improvements would reduce overall emissions and can result in lower long-term costs, saving the town money. Resilient infrastructure also ensures reliable transportation during emergencies, protects residents and private property, and reduces strain on the natural environment. Paved surfaces are often impervious and shed large volumes of runoff. Implementing bioswales, rain gardens, and green infrastructure can conserve these spaces while enhancing the Town's landscape.

Strategies

01 / Improve the energy efficiency of municipal operations by installing renewable energy, electrifying buildings, and switching to electric vehicles.	02 / Create incentives or ordinances to increase green infrastructure and improve energy efficiency in new commercial and residential developments.	03 / Work with regional organizations to build local awareness for the social, environmental, and economic benefits of green infrastructure.	04 / Consider adopting the building stretch code.
05 / Take climate data into consideration when updating plans, policies or ordinances. This could include taking increased precipitation into account when updating culvert sizing.	06 / Update zoning codes to align with flooding projections.	07 / Continue to plan for and fund road infrastructure improvement projects.	

PROTECT THE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS



Protecting open space improves water and air quality while increasing resilience for the surrounding communities. Green space also benefits residents’ health by reducing the impact of heatwaves on elderly and vulnerable populations. Casco residents consistently mention the need to conserve open space and protect the lakes and ponds.

Strategies

<div>01 /</div> <div>Protect water quality by reducing stormwater and runoff from development, roads, agriculture, and fertilized lawns.</div>	<div>02 /</div> <div>Explore ways to expand monitoring of Casco’s surface water quality to maintain healthy lakes.</div>	<div>03 /</div> <div>Create environmentally safe landscape standards for planting of open space (native vegetation, pollinator habitat, drought resistance) and lawn care maintenance.</div>	
<div>04 /</div> <div>Understand the extent of invasive species (terrestrial and aquatic) and work to monitor and remediate impacted areas.</div>	<div>05 /</div> <div>Assess the impact of PFAS on sites where town sludge was formerly spread.</div>	<div>06 /</div> <div>Explore public and private partnerships to increase recycling and composting.</div>	<div>07 /</div> <div>Review current zoning regulations to ensure goals and objectives are being met.</div>



SHIFT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

Casco wants to encourage use away from fossil fuels to renewable, sustainable energy sources. Renewable energy investments will reduce overall emissions and save the town money. However, the Town also needs to balance competing land uses to protect the resources that are part of Casco's life and identity.

Strategies

01 /

Create a solar ordinance to balance sustainability with the preservation of agriculture, forested lands and open space.

02 /

Install renewable energy projects (solar, wind, geothermal, anaerobic digestion, etc.) on municipal buildings and properties.

03 /

Work with private EV installers to consider incentives for businesses to install charging stations for EVs.

04 /

Encourage electric vehicle usage and expand available charging stations in high-use public areas.

05 /

Promote awareness and use of Efficiency Maine.



REDUCE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED

Transportation is the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maine. Most towns are reliant on personal vehicle use. Increasing transit and alternative modes of transportation will reduce vehicle miles and reduce overall emissions. Improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure would encourage active transportation. Active transportation not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions but also improves the health of residents.

Strategies

01 /

Adopt a Complete Streets policy.

02 /

Prioritize funding for expanding the bicycle and pedestrian network.

03 /

Continue discussions with transit providers to connect Casco to regional destinations.

04 /

Work with transit providers to develop an intra-town transit service.

05 /

Work with local organizations to coordinate and provide a range of transportation services for the needs of the aging populations and youth.

06 /

Consider partnering with regional organizations to provide incentives for ride sharing.



Activities for All

During Casco Planning Days, residents consistently expressed the desire to have more ways to come together as a community. There was strong interest in diversifying community events and activities, and better utilizing existing resources. People want Casco to be a community for all, both in programming and spaces to gather.

INCREASE INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING

There is an emphasis to diversify the community programs to include non-sport offerings and greater multi-generational activities. During the planning process, the community brainstormed a long list of potential activities they would like to see in Casco. This provides residents the opportunity to establish a group of local people to support existing programming and expand opportunities.

Strategies

01 /

Budget for additional staff position to assist town-wide activity programs.

02 /

Form a volunteer programming group to support the Community Center existing programming and expand future opportunities.

03 /

Support increased funding for the library to provide additional multi-generational activities.

04 /

Enhance event communications with a searchable town-wide calendar of events.

05 /

Offer multi-generational programming at various times and days to accommodate more people.

06 /

Create meet-up mentor match groups that can offer services to one-another (kids and adults).

“Programs I would like to see and experience...”

- Indoor hands-on experiential play for young children
- Multi-generational activities such as canning, cooking, music, science, arts, and gaming
- Organize adult sports leagues such as softball, tennis, kickball, field hockey, or tai chi
- Start a rain or shine outdoor adventure club
- Boost programs and day camps for children such as swim lessons, rock climbing, fishing, kayaking, hiking, and other outdoor activities
- Expand the town's outdoor gear lending library (add kayaks, XC skis, and fishing gear)
- Create a tool lending library for home and yard care
- Offer DIY house maintenance classes
- Organize summer and weekend family camps and outings
- Partner to bring adult education and Maine coop extension programs
- Set up a medical equipment loan closet
- Lego club, electronics group, board game night, and other non-sport activities
- Weekly summer concerts at the gazebo

Quotes from Casco Planning Days



Photos: Casco Parks & Recreation

UTILIZE EXISTING FACILITIES

Casco owns and maintains a range of public facilities. Residents mentioned the need to better utilize these spaces as a way to strengthen neighborhood connections and offer more activities. This could mean increasing programming throughout the year or keeping the facilities better maintained.

Strategies

01 /

Program existing civic spaces, such as fields, the gazebo, or Casco Day Park with activities such as concerts and plays.

02 /

Allow and encourage “Friends of” groups to help manage existing civic spaces.

03 /

Form public/private partnerships to fund the retrofit of neighborhood and civic spaces to add desired amenities such as parks, gathering spaces, or recreational opportunities.

04 /

Ensure adequate funding and staffing to maintain existing town properties.

05 /

Consider how existing town property can become a 4-season use (i.e. creating a skating rink in the park during winter).

06 /

Partner with the school district to provide programming at the schools.

EXPAND FACILITIES

Casco residents generated an extensive list of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that are desired but currently unavailable. Many of these opportunities could be provided through public-private partnerships. The Town should consider strategies to encourage and incentivize private sector investments in the community-based facilities.

Strategies

01 /

Create a separate space for town board and committee meetings so the Community Center can remain multi-generational.

02 /

Buy property as it becomes available to build new indoor and outdoor recreational facilities or community-gathering spaces.

03 /

As part of new development, explore opportunities to partner with developers to create new recreational facilities.

04 /

Use credit enhancement agreements to incentivize private development of recreational facilities.

05 /

Update the Town's zoning code to include provisions for development of meaningful open space such as parks, plazas, gardens, dog parks, or playgrounds.

06 /

Ensure long-term maintenance costs for new programming and facilities are included in the budget or explore grant opportunities.

“Potential new facilities I’d like to see...”

- Regional recreation center, with a pool, indoor track, and activity rooms
- Additional outdoor pickleball courts
- Community woodshop
- Boost places in winter with accessible parks, skate rink, and snow trails for x-country skiing and snowshoeing
- Skatepark, disc golf, and dirt tracks for bmx
- Community gardens and food growing in public spaces
- Install a community garden and wild native plant beds along the front of the Crooked River School
- Indoor space to offer theater, arts and gallery.
- Dog park and pet friendly recreational areas
- Community farmers market

Quotes from Casco Planning Days



PROTECT & EXPAND WATER ACCESS FOR THE PUBLIC

Residents of Casco love the water. The lakes are an essential part of the community identity and residents want to better utilize this great resource.

Strategies

01 /

Create a waterfront pavilion.

02 /

Better utilize the town access to Parker Pond.

03 /

Make improvements at Crescent Lake beach.

04 /

Extend the town beach to the boat ramp on Pleasant Lake.



