




# 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 center 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



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





Photo: GPCOG

## 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.











# 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.





### DESIGN 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.





## Support Multi-Generational Community Life



to: GPCOG

### 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.





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# 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.



## Support Multi-Generational Community Life



### DEVELOP HOUSING 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 /

Rezone the Watkins Flats area to create an agricultural neighborhood district.

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 allow accessory residential apartments to be in spaces greater than 720 square feet, so long as the accessory apartment remains subordinate to the principal residence. Allow accessory residential apartments on sites that have more than 30% lot coverage, provided that all state plumbing codes can be met.





## **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 ensures 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 /

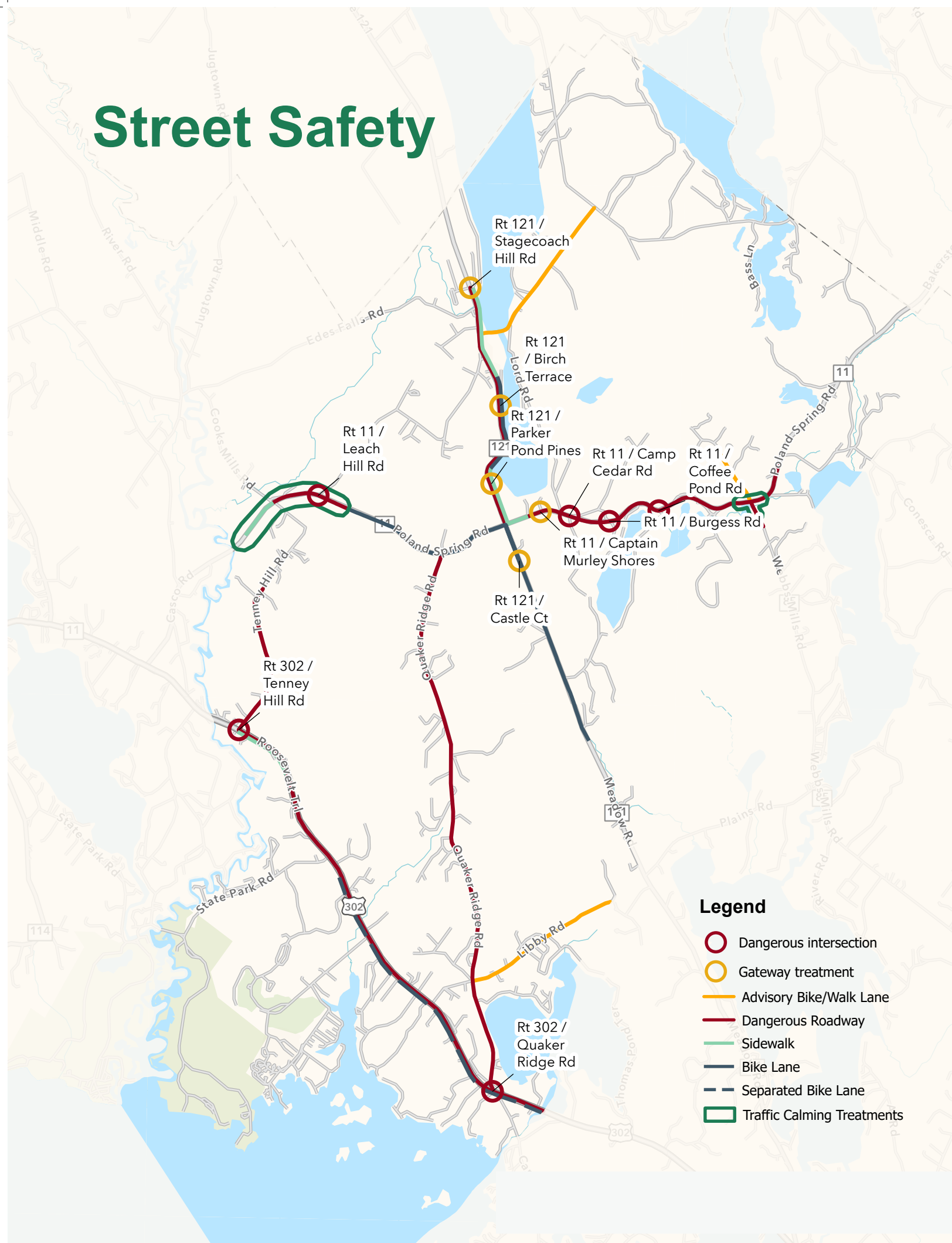
Continue to direct funding to pilot temporary, test measures such as lane width reductions, advisory bike lanes, and other techniques to slow traffic on local neighborhood streets.

08 /

Ensure upkeep of streets before making new streets.



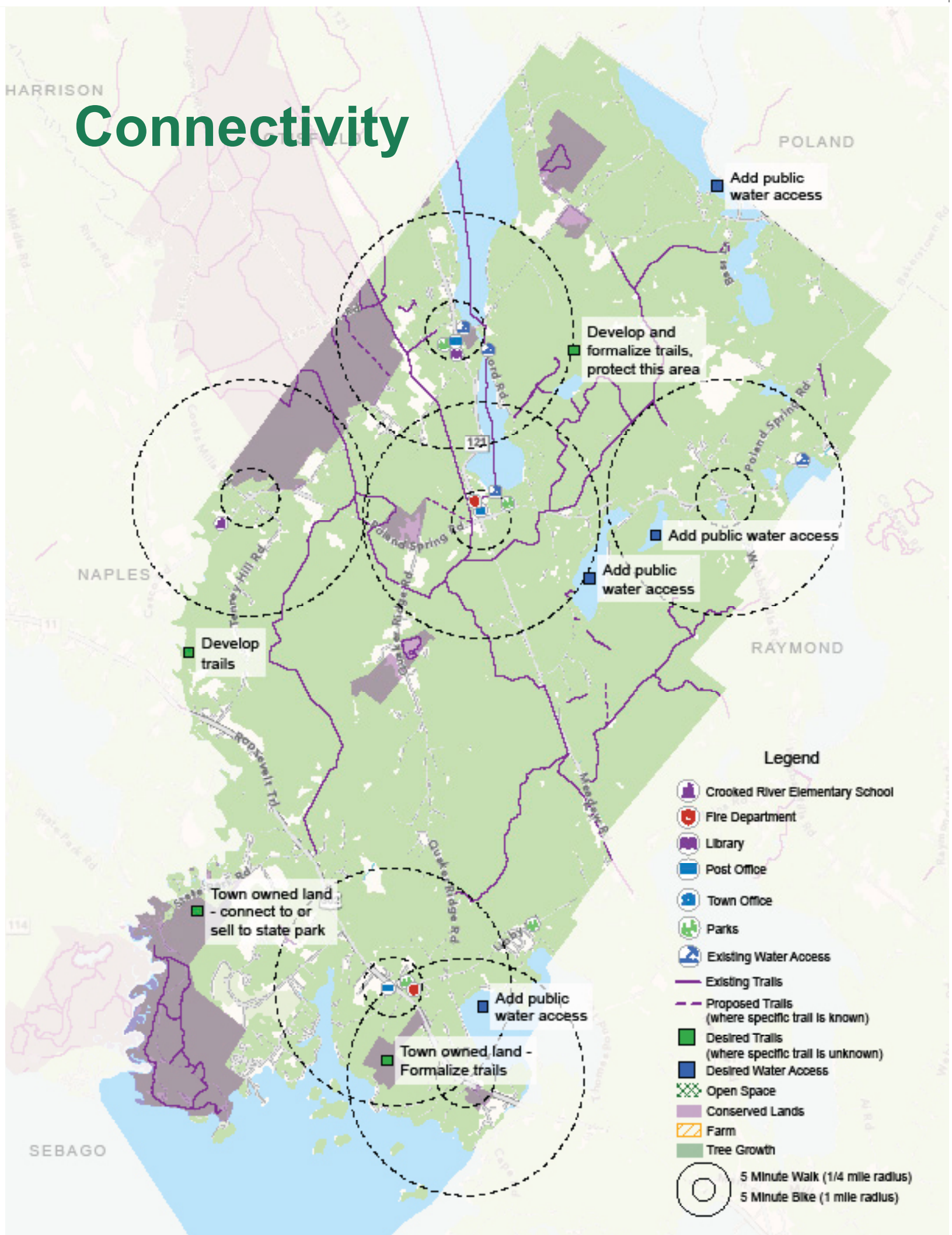
# Street Safety



## Legend

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

# Connectivity





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**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.







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**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.

