



# Strengthening Our Quality of Life

Community Revitalization Plan  
Webster, New York  
November 2015



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Webster Central School District	Sukhenko Design
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# Community Overview

**Webster, New York** is just 13 miles northeast of the City of Rochester along a 100-mile stretch of unspoiled Lake Ontario shoreline. Webster has a rare combination of industry, commerce, recreational assets, and rich community life all amid rolling hills, significant open space, and agricultural lands. It is exactly this balance of assets that accounts for the diversity of stakeholders who, while having a shared interest in Webster's future, nonetheless compete for scarce local resources, whether its open space, private investment or tax dollars. The need for stability and common cause amid these interests resulted in a number of meaningful partnerships and collaborative efforts among municipal,

school, community and business stakeholders. Organizations such as the Webster Community Partnership, the Webster Youth Sports Council and the Webster Economic Development Alliance together leverage available energy and dollars to increase the effectiveness of service delivery and enhance overall resident quality of life. The ability and willingness of diverse groups of stakeholders to meet, compromise and come together on behalf of Webster is part of what makes our community unique among its peers. This shared commitment to one another sets us apart, and, we believe, is a core part of why Webster should be recognized as one of **America's Best Communities!**

## Why Webster?

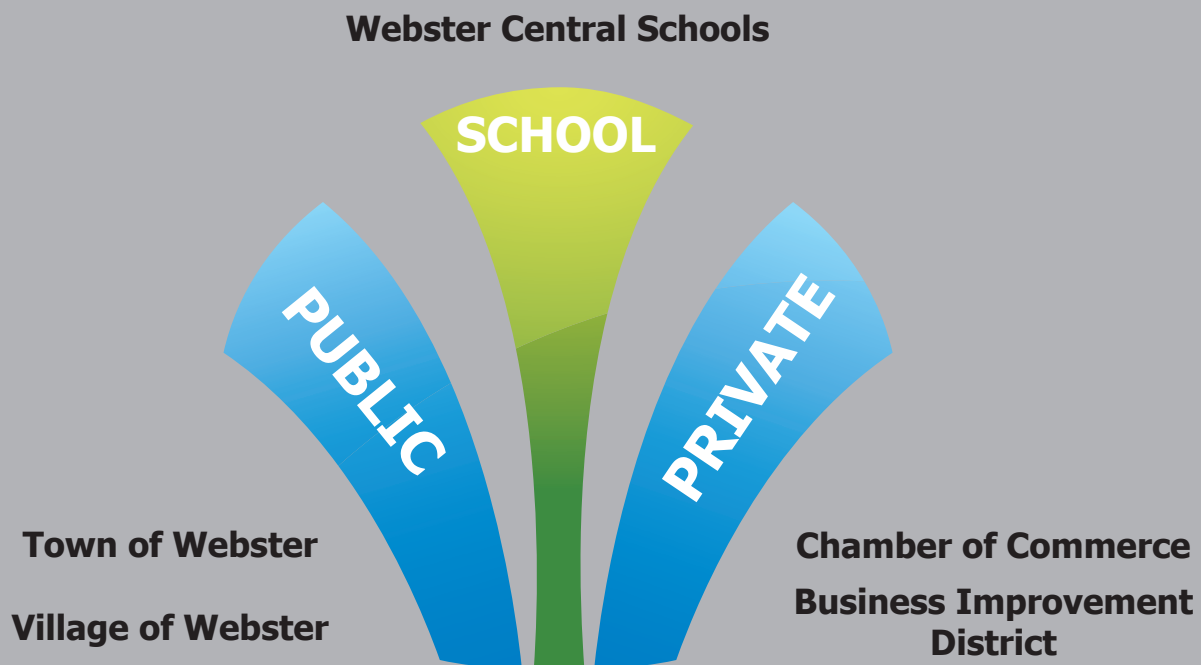
Comfortable, neighborhood living; a vibrant village; a terrific town; a high-performing school district; plus access to an amazing array of amenities have helped to make Webster one of the fastest growing, most sought after communities in Monroe County. You are encouraged to visit us, explore our community and discover why Webster is truly **Where Life is Worth Living!**



## Webster Economic Development Alliance

**Connecting. Facilitating. Communicating. Coordinating.** The Webster Economic Development Alliance is the single entity in Webster, NY that links municipalities, schools and businesses together.

The Webster Economic Development Alliance is a unique public-private partnership comprised of the Town of Webster, Village of Webster, Webster Central School District, Village of Webster Business Improvement District, and the Webster Chamber of Commerce. The Alliance is dedicated to smart, slow and steady growth and support of Webster businesses and the community at large through a focus on Retention, Recruitment, Relationships, Resources.



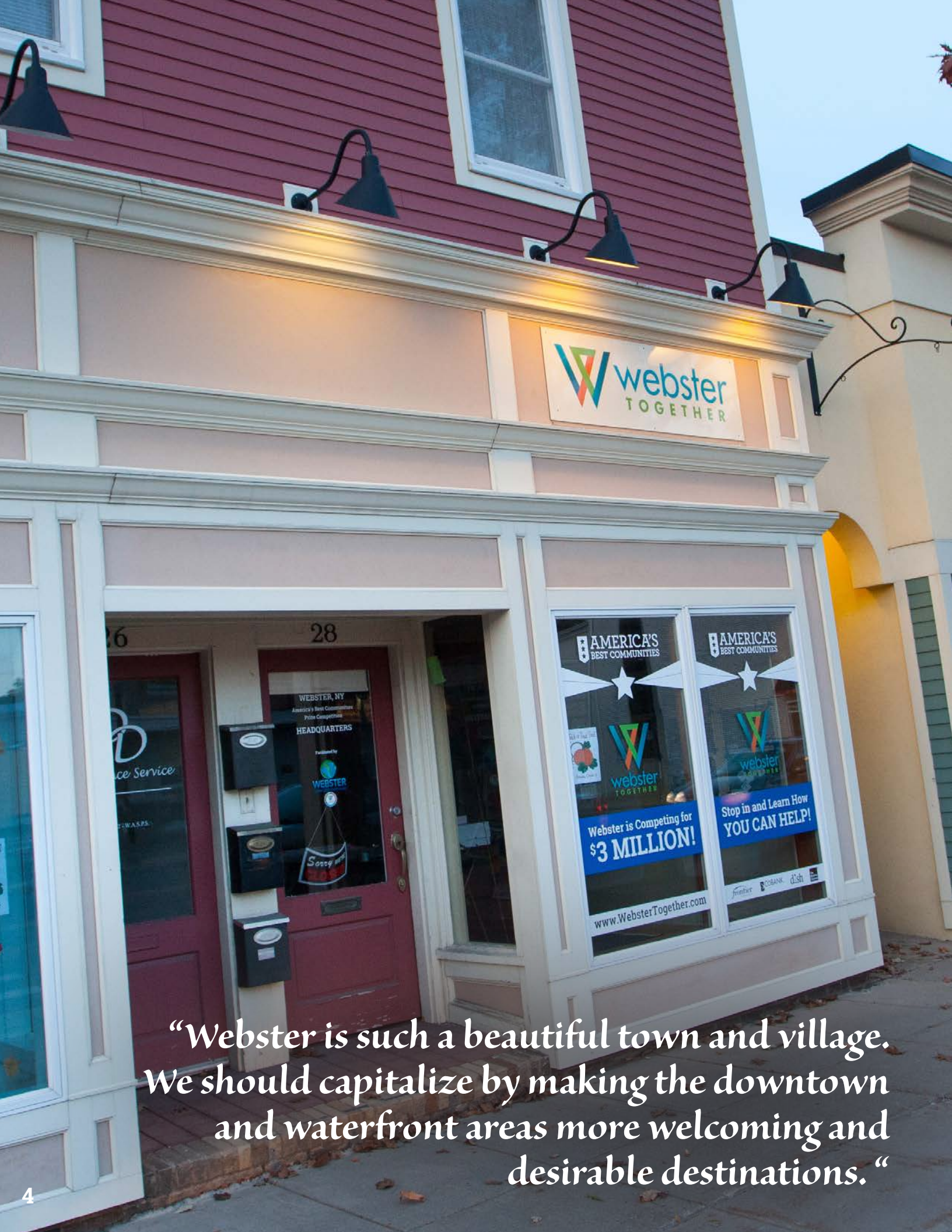
The Webster Economic Development Alliance (Alliance) is a private, non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York and is recognized as a 501-c-3 organization by the US Internal Revenue Service. As a Local Development Corporation, the Alliance's primary goals are to plan, organize and implement local community and economic development activities in Webster, NY and coordinate with partner economic development agencies in the Rochester, NY and Finger Lakes Region.

# Where is Webster?



## Community Quick Facts

- **Population: 43,892**  
(2014 estimate Town & Village)
- **Housing Units: 17,761**
- **Area: 37.7 square miles**
- **Shoreline: 22 miles**
- **Trails: 23 miles**
- **3,200 acres of parks and open space**
- **Webster Central School District: 8,700 students**
- **Largest employer: Xerox Corporation ~ 4,900 employees**



*“Webster is such a beautiful town and village. We should capitalize by making the downtown and waterfront areas more welcoming and desirable destinations.”*



# Community Engagement

## Overview

During the spring and summer of 2015, the Webster Economic Development Alliance (the Alliance) began the Webster Together campaign. Initially funded by Frontier Communications and Xerox Corporation through the America's Best Communities prize competition, the Webster Together campaign is a grassroots community-building effort promoting extensive outreach, engagement and awareness within Webster's broad base of stakeholders. The campaign is an outgrowth of the Alliance and its unifying role within the community to coordinate activities on behalf of local government, the school district, and private business. Webster Together sponsors events, social media campaigns, surveys and awareness programs. To date, the campaign has collected and analyzed community preferences, and synthesized them into a cohesive set of recommendations that will direct future investment in Webster.

**The following summary** documents the extent of public engagement during the planning process, yet also seeks to analyze the findings and answer fundamental questions regarding how and why the engagement process informed and shaped the priorities as established in this plan.

- **What did we learn from the community that was new or noteworthy?**
- **Based on our successes and/or failures, how will we continue to engage these groups as the Webster Together campaign evolves?**
- **What are the key findings from the engagement process and how have we translated them to investment priorities?**

The answers to these questions will help measure the quality of our outreach efforts, while also zeroing in on what is required to make Webster Together a sustainable, long-term vehicle for community engagement.

## Community Engagement Quick Facts

- **3000 flyers distributed**
- **765 Likes on Facebook**
- **645 completed surveys**

Top 3 reasons residents choose to live in Webster:

- Good Schools
- Safe Neighborhoods
- Housing I can Afford

- **667 TV commercials**  
94% of households reached 10 times

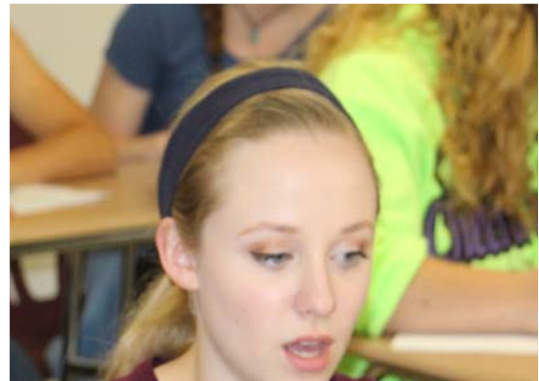


Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mack

webster has really changed! We now have fun parks all over town! The parks now have natural playgrounds! They have boardwalks as well so it will still feel like Florida! Come and visit webster!

Love, Carolyn

Mr. and Mrs. Mack  
123 Sunny St.  
Miami, FL 12345



# Youth Engagement

## Overview

The Webster Together team partnered with teachers and administrators to engage students in a discussion about their vision for the future of Webster. Outreach included hands-on exercises, small group discussions, and, of course, art work. The focus of all of this work was visioning the community that students want to see, and that would make them want to stay in Webster. High-schools students were also given the opportunity to devise and facilitate their own youth engagement activity during school hours through the development and deployment of an online survey.

## Engagement Techniques

### Design your waterfront park!

Webster Thomas High school history students were engaged in a process to design a new waterfront park. The lesson included a reading, small group discussion about what makes public spaces successful, an overview of the fields of landscape architecture, civil engineering and urban planning, and, finally, the park design exercise. Students redesigned Sand Bar Park on Lake Road using a map and 24 squares of paper featuring design elements with space allocations and prices. They chose design elements, but had to stay within a space and monetary budget. Similar to the high school classes, a class of 5th grade students brainstormed the elements that make a great park, and had the opportunity to design their own park with maps and pictures of items they would like to include in the space.

### What would make young people want to stay in Webster?

Students in two Webster Thomas high school history classes participated in a card-storming activity. They were asked to identify quality of life attributes that are important to retain young people. The results of this exercise created a tapestry of ideas and comments that the students self-organized as a class into broader

categories. Parks and recreational opportunities, employment opportunities and entertainment options were identified as key factors to retaining youth in the area.

### Post Cards from the Future!

A 5th grade class created 'postcards from the future'. In this exercise, the students were asked to pretend the year was 2030, and create a postcard inviting out-of-town friends and family to visit Webster by describing their vision for the future of the community.

### Youth Engagement Project

In the fall of 2015, high school students were engaged to formulate their own youth engagement project, where they could obtain feedback from their peers on important topics such as quality of life, education and employment. A team of five students chose to develop an online survey and set up engagement stations during lunch periods where students could take the survey on laptops. The survey was deployed over the course of one week with 181 students' grades 9-12 taking an average of 5-6 minutes to provide their feedback. The team of facilitators reviewed and analyzed the findings towards the development of a brief summary.

## What did we learn?

- Youth desire more events, concerts, and activities that are safe and accessible. There appear to be communications gaps, where the youth are generally unaware of what's taking place within the community or the community is not programming the types of activities that they would like to see. Surveyed students noted that they would like to see a mobile App that includes a community calendar of events for Webster.
- Youth want to stay in Webster, but noted that the availability of a job is the most significant factor influencing their return after college. Students surveyed were very interested in the medical/ biomedical fields and entrepreneurship.
- Youth are sensitive to the impacts of the cost of housing in their decision-making process on where to live. The quality of the education system and the availability/accessibility of entertainment venues also scored high, along with proximity to family.

## Key Findings That Translate

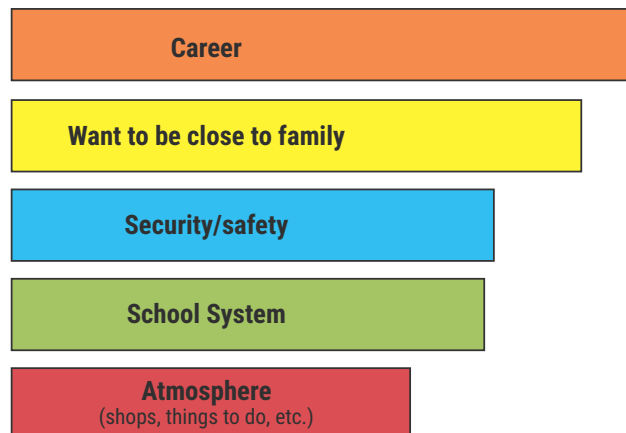
Webster's youth desire a central location for arts, culture and entertainment. They also called for more locations to hangout and gather in a safe environment. The Village of Webster is the logical location for the community's hub of entertainment. The student's interest in a community events calendar echoes the need for a broad, cross-generational communications platform such that Webster's youth feel included in the community. Young adults also expressed their desire to be more involved in the community and provide meaningful contributions. Providing viable employment options is a top priority to attract young adults. This could translate into the development of formalized apprenticeship programs coordinated between the school district and chamber of commerce.

## How to Continue Engagement?

The online survey was very successful, yet lacks the ability for dialogue and nuanced feedback. A mobile application and social media presence may expand engagement with this tech-savvy generation. However, the classroom setting is where the Webster Together team gathered the most meaningful feedback.

There are two methods worth exploring for continued engagement. First, the Webster Together team should maintain a consistent presence within the school district and conduct regular listening sessions and forums seeking the input, feedback and involvement of the community's young adults. This could potentially take the form of bi-annual events in both the fall and spring of each year. The second method involves providing students the tools, training and organizational framework such that they can conduct their own outreach while providing youth representation at the community level. This could include the position of Youth Liaison to key community organizations or government boards. This effort should provide empowerment and responsibilities such that the 2,000 young adults ages 15 to 18 can have a voice in the community's affairs and expand their personal investment in the future of Webster.

### What would make teens stay in Webster after graduation?



# Community Priorities

## Overview

The Webster Together team conducted an extensive public awareness and engagement campaign throughout the spring and summer of 2015. The WT team had a presence at festivals, parades, the local farmers' market, and the public library. Residents were engaged during the Village's Concert and Movies in the Park series, high school football games, Village wine walks, and at our WT headquarters facility on Main Street. These efforts provided numerous opportunities for one-on-one engagement. A robust social media and web campaign generated a dialogue with the community and created a call to action to residents. In conjunction with local businesses, a television awareness campaign highlighted how residents and members of the broader community could get involved and contribute to the community's revitalization plan development process. Informational flyers were even inserted into the game programs at local high school football games. Ultimately, the Webster Together team engaged over 2,000 residents in person and thousands online.

## Engagement Techniques

### Surveys

A Resident Priorities Survey was administered to the public to identify assets and opportunities that characterize the Webster community, with over 500 responses collected using the online Survey Monkey tool. In addition, over 150 paper surveys were completed during one-on-one engagement opportunities during outreach efforts. The Webster Together team also utilized the online polling software PollEveryWhere to engage the public during large public gatherings at high school football games and via social media.

### Web and Social Media

The Webster Together website and Facebook page are the face of the public engagement process, and are utilized weekly to interact with residents through the two-way sharing of information and ideas. During the primary online survey period in August 2015, the WT team was able to achieve a conversion rate of 8 percent and post reaches exceeding 3,000 for our online Resident Priorities Survey. This resulted in the completion of hundreds of surveys and the reception of meaningful feedback from residents.



## Community Awareness Campaign

The Webster Together team partnered with the Sinclair Broadcasting Group on the development of a unique public awareness television campaign to promote the Webster Together campaign and highlight a call to action for viewers interested in getting involved. Funded 100 percent through private businesses, the Town, and School District, a series of 12 commercials were developed highlighting the Webster Together initiative, 22 local businesses, and the Webster community as a whole. During the 10 week television campaign, 667 total spots aired on three networks, reaching 94% of households throughout the market 10 times, for a total of 367,000 impressions. The WT team received significant positive feedback regarding the commercials, which translated into a significant spike in engagement via the Webster Together Facebook page.

## ABC Headquarters

The Webster Together team established a physical presence in the community by activating a vacant storefront in the heart of Downtown Webster. The ABC HQ facility on Main Street is a regular Open House for residents to learn about the competition and share their thoughts and ideas. The walls are plastered with sticky-notes, drawings and lists of comments gathered throughout the competition. It's a visual display of the community's desire for change and hopes for the future of Webster. The HQ is also open during community events such as wine walks, parades and the Halloween Trick or Treat Trail to continue the engagement process.

## What Did We Learn?

Residents value Webster's high quality school district, safe neighborhoods and quality of life services as their priority reasons for calling Webster home. They also desire a revitalized village center that provides a high quality visitor experience and a diversity of unique shopping and dining destinations.

Survey respondents consistently stated they are eager for Webster to take advantage of its unique waterfront resources by providing expanded access and enjoyment of Lake Ontario and Irondequoit Bay.

Improved walkability, the protection of open space and the expansion of trails and other quality of life amenities are the top priorities for future spending and investment.

Based on comments and feedback obtained during the engagement process, the broader public has a general misunderstanding of how private development decisions and approvals are made and the roles of public and private entities.

Residents did not favor the continued expansion of suburban development along Ridge Road, and desired smaller-scale and more locally authentic commercial activity.

## Why do residents live in Webster?

close to family  
safe neighborhoods  
I grew up here!  
Close to Work Recreation & Athletics  
good schools  
Housing I Can Afford

## Key Findings That Translate

Webster residents desire a cohesive and enjoyable village center. Priority issues identified during outreach include a lack of overall visual appeal and architectural character of the streetscape and development as compared to neighboring communities. To this point, Village Downtown Revitalization ranked as the top economic development priority for all residents, including those in the Town of Webster. Residents understand that the success of the Village of Webster is a barometer of the entire community.

The community's desire to maintain a high quality educational system, protect open space and provide expanded quality of life infrastructure supports broader investments outside of the village center. Residents called for an open space system that was more than a collection of vacant land lacking useful purpose.

Residents also called for the reactivation of underutilized sites throughout the community. As well, the attraction and creation of good paying jobs for young professionals was noted as critical to maintaining long-term sustainability in the community. The Rochester region was also recently recognized as the site of the American Institute for Manufacturing Integrated Photonics (AIM Photonics), a \$600 million industry-driven economic development initiative. Together, these factors support the need to engage and partner with Xerox Corporation on how to proactively leverage Webster's industrial assets.

## How to Continue Engagement

The Webster Together campaign successfully engaged thousands of residents and stakeholders within the Webster community. Facilitated by the Webster Economic Development Alliance (Alliance) the Webster Together campaign is envisioned to continue as the public persona of the organization. The Webster Together initiative will build upon the positive momentum achieved in 2015 and translate these successes into continued public engagement and awareness as the Alliance begins to implement Webster's revitalization plan. The Webster Together initiative will be housed as a standing committee of the Alliance with the responsibility of coordinating community engagement and volunteer efforts. The Alliance board of directors will investigate the representation and management of this committee as a key organizational priority for 2016.





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OPTOMETRIST  
Michael W. Gustin  
LICENSED OPTICIAN

81  
WEBSTER EYECARE  
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- Dr. Raymond M. Lester, Optometrist
- Michael W. Gustin, Licensed Optician
- Bradley W. Cadwell, Licensed Optician

Webster Eyecare Associates  
SHIELD  
EYE CARE SYSTEM



# Business Outreach

## Overview

In July 2015, the Webster Together team organized a breakfast workshop for 32 small business owners and members of the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District. The meeting was facilitated as a one-hour, structured conversational process to enable open and intimate discussion, and link ideas within a larger group to access the collective intelligence in the room. Participants moved between a series of tables where they continued the discussion in response to the following set of questions:

1. **What is Webster's competitive advantage in relation to its peers?**
2. **What do you think government should be doing to improve Webster's competitive advantage?**
3. **What do you think small business should be doing to improve Webster's competitive advantage?**
4. **How should Webster best invest the \$3 million prize from America's Best Communities contest to support our small businesses?**

The group discussed the first question as a large group, brainstorming a list of things that provide a competitive advantage for Webster, such as access to parks and the lake, a strong transportation network, and quality schools.

Following the structured conversation, participants were invited to select one of three tables to participate in a World Café exercise with the last three questions. Attendees discussed one question for ten minutes, and then were asked to select another table to continue the discussion initiated from the previous group. At the end of the exercise, participants were asked to review the total responses and indicate which they felt were priorities.

## What Did We Learn?

Small business can improve Webster's competitive advantage through continued support of the Chamber of Commerce, Business Improvement District and the Alliance. Yet, it was recognized that further involvement in Alliance initiatives by business is necessary to achieve broader community goals. Small business owners also indicated that an increase in mentorship of newer businesses would help improve the success rate of young companies while enhancing the business environment for entrepreneurs. It was also noted that a greater presence within the community through the facilitation and sponsorship of events would be beneficial to the business community.

Small business owners indicated that local government can help them by engaging in active community promotions, branding and identity development. Business owners desired for the Town, Village and Chamber to create a coordinated marketing strategy and establish a strong, fresh brand identity for Webster.

Business leaders identified the formation of a visitor's bureau, the capitalization of a revolving loan fund, and the continued exploration of the Naturally Chilled Water District high priority investments for the future of the community.

## Key Findings That Translate

- Community identity, marketing and communications are important to the small business community, and they desire to take on a more active role in these aspects of community development.
- Business owners indicated a need for effective communication and coordination with community organizations to improve their ability to service residents and visitors to Webster.
- Small business owners are seeking mentorship opportunities and ways in which mature, seasoned businesses can help entrepreneurs and startup businesses.

## How to Continue Engagement

The monthly Chamber of Commerce breakfasts and Business Improvement District meetings were the most successful means of engagement with small business owners, and are great opportunities to involve the business community in revitalization efforts. To continue the momentum from the Webster Together campaign, the Alliance will create a permanent committee charged with community engagement and volunteer coordination, which will include members of the business community.





**“Business owners need to make involvement in the broader community a priority.”**

## Conclusions

The revitalization strategy developed by residents, students, business owners, and key stakeholders identified the following priority investment areas:

1. Village Downtown Revitalization
2. Waterfront Revitalization
3. Small Business Development & Entrepreneurship
4. Industrial Development
5. Community Identity, Marketing & Communications
6. Recreation, Tourism & Athletics

Youth and residents want a cohesive center and a vibrant downtown. Business owners want to play an active role in community development. Everyone wants better marketing and communication. Projects and initiatives related to these key areas were identified during the late summer and prioritized during the October 7th summit. These findings, developed through the public engagement process, have translated to the investment priorities summarized in this revitalization plan.

Moving forward, the Alliance is committed to a long-term dialogue with the Webster community. Outreach will require continual effort, but the framework has been established through the multifaceted membership of the Alliance and the development and advancement of the Webster Together campaign through the development of this plan. Future engagement will continue to build upon this framework, as well as continually evaluate and solicit feedback.



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# Revitalization Strategy

## Vision for Revitalization

Webster's revitalization strategy will enhance and expand opportunities to explore the community's rich natural resources, leverage its high caliber recreational and industrial assets, and enjoy the benefits of small-town living in a large metropolitan area. Residents will appreciate the renewed energy of downtown and the joys of outdoor adventure. Visitors will discover that Webster is brimming with fun and memorable experiences. Investors will realize that our community's high quality of life is good for their employees and their bottom line.

Already a top regional destination for sports and recreation tourism, Webster will further capitalize on its natural resources and its championship-level athletic venues to attract even more visitors. Webster's downtown and waterfronts will provide an **authentic sense of place that is distinct within the region**. Yet, this is not a tourism strategy; it is a **quality of life strategy**. Webster will enhance its focus on the characteristics that differentiate it from the crowd: a walkable village core; a majestic waterfront; and abundant open space. The same aspects that make Webster a great place to visit will also make it a great place to live, and, by extension, raise a family or start a business.

All of this can only be accomplished through **coordination, partnership and dedication** from the entire community's - leadership, local business, and citizens - working together in the spirit of cooperation to **make Webster one of America's Best Communities**.

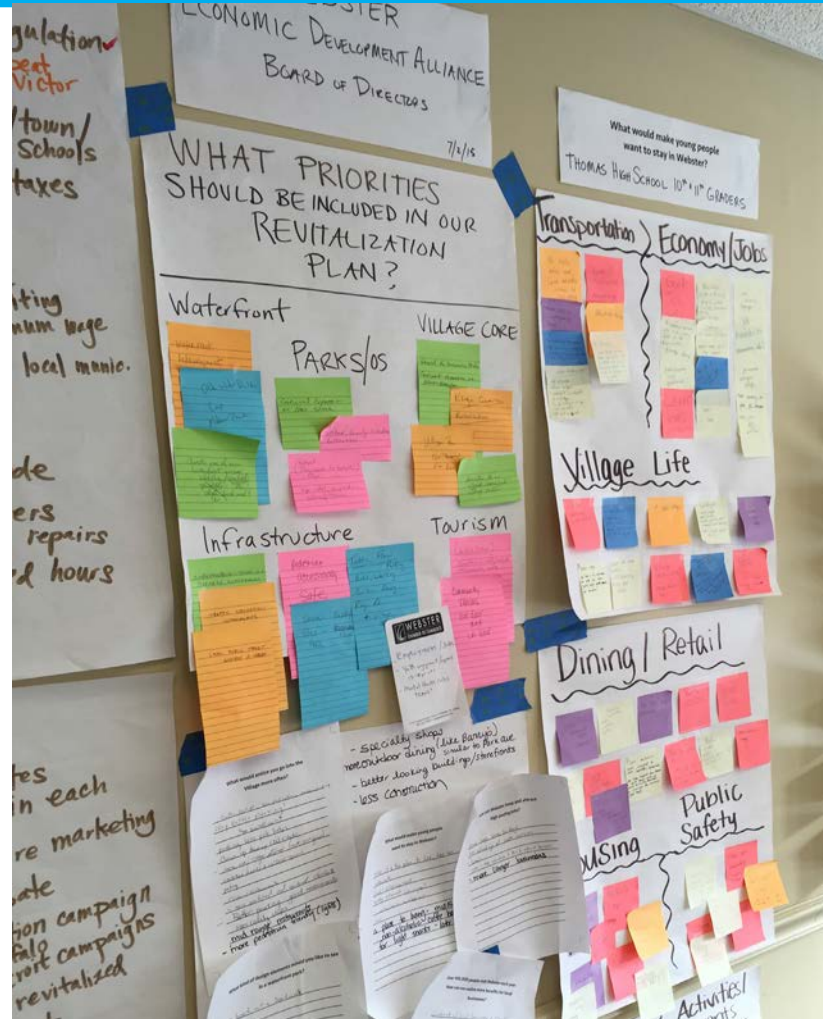
## Community Investment Priorities

The community spoke, and we listened. The following areas represent the investment priorities of residents, business owners, youth and local leadership. The Revitalization Strategy will analyze and recommend projects, programs and initiatives within each broad category for implementation over the course of the next 5 to 10 years.

1. Village Downtown Revitalization
2. Waterfront Revitalization
3. Small Business & Entrepreneurship
4. Industrial Development
5. Community Identity & Marketing
6. Recreation, Athletics & Tourism

## Strategy Framework

A viable Community Investment Strategy builds upon a framework that ties broad ideas and specific activities together, identifying the community's short and long term needs. The implementation of effective policies to guide community investment and decision-making in Webster over the next decade will require a multi-level approach. The Strategy is very much like a building, in that all components from the largest to the smallest must fit together in a logical way for the structure to stand and function well for years to come. Therefore, the Community Investment Strategy document is the blueprint from which the community's future direction, development and success are built. The Strategy has several key elements, which are described below.



## Framework Elements

### Vision for Revitalization

A general statement about the future condition or state of the community; it is the end toward which all actions are aimed.

### Priority Investment Area

A defined component of the vision and an area identified as a priority during the public engagement process.

### Goal Statements

A singular statement on how to achieve a defined component of the Vision

### Strategy

Strategies are narrow in scope and tend to target a specific area or topic.

### Objective

An objective is a statement of measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the strategy that is reasonably attainable. Consider broad actions or aspirations, such as increase, develop, or preserve.

### Tactic

A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing an objective; usually takes the form of a plan, activity, project or program.

## Community Investment Summit

On Wednesday, October 7, 2015, the Webster Together team held a day-long summit on the prioritization of investment activities in the community. The 40-plus Summit participants included staff of the Town, Village and School District administrations, prominent investors and business owners, leadership from Xerox Corporation, community organizations, high school students, educators and key decision-makers in local government. In advance of the days events, a draft Community Investment Strategy and a set of 'homework' sheets were circulated to participants in preparation for a productive dialogue.

The Summit began with a meeting of the Webster Economic Development Alliance Board of Directors to set overall priorities and direction for the meeting and provide guidance to six separate workgroups gathering later in the day. Organized by priority

investment area and composed of four to eight stakeholders, these workgroups met to discuss, debate, identify and prioritize the two most pressing and readily achievable projects in their investment priority area. During an end of day regroup, the Alliance board of directors was presented these priority projects for discussion and further debate to determine the project with the greatest potential to continue the momentum generated by the Webster Together campaign and energize the broadest cross-section of the Webster community. The following section identifies the goals, strategies, objectives and tactics for each Investment Priority Area, summarizes the findings from the Community Investment Summit, and identifies individual priority projects.

## Priority Projects

Six workgroups composed of community, businesses and government leaders completed structured, facilitated discussion to identify specific projects that can help kick-start the revitalization process. The following list of ten projects will be detailed further in the Revitalization Strategy.

1. Targeted Village Streetscape Improvements
2. Village Catalyst Development Project
3. Sandbar Park Waterfront Improvements
4. Business Inventory Database
5. Small Business Mentoring Program
6. Industrial Vision & Master Plan
7. Industrial Marketing Strategy
8. Community Marketing Strategy
9. Center for Human Performance
10. Community, Environment & Education Network



404



SOUTH NORTH

250 250



WEBSTER Celebrates HOME TOWN HEROES in honor of West Webster Fire Department PENNY SAVER East Main St. www.westwebsterpennysaver.com

WEBSTER HOME TOWN HEROES in honor of Webster Police Dept. WILBERT



Charm's Pastry Delights Cake Designers





# Village Downtown

## Overview

The Village of Webster historically functioned as the economic heart of the community. However, over the past 40 years private investments and public policies have channeled demand into the Town of Webster, away from the Village, and into ever more suburban forms. Of course this was happening across America. And, like so many communities throughout the US today, redevelopment along a wholly different set of assumptions about land and form and economic vibrancy is taking root. A nationwide re-emergent appetite for urban living and authentic Village-form is providing Webster the chance to reverse the tragic and cascading cycle of low rental rates and diminished commercial value. The good news is that the renewed broadened public interest in mixed-use neighborhoods has taken hold in Webster and the early returns look fantastic!

Approximately 130 new market rate apartments are either under construction or approved, helping drive the Village's population to an all-time high just shy of 5,400 residents. The Village was also recently awarded over \$800,000 in federal transportation funding for streetscape improvements in 2016/17, which is in addition to \$3.2 million in roadway and sidewalk improvements conducted by New York State in 2015.

Still, the Village faces continuing challenges in the attraction of quality investments that will strengthen its identity and signal to the region it is an emerging cultural and entertainment hub. The work ahead is formidable. Nearby Rochester is becoming more vibrant by the day. Neighboring Towns and Villages with highly prized amenities like Canal-side real estate and dense urban cores are also very appealing to many. As one of the largest villages in the region, Webster must establish a definitive identity that also resonates outside of the community. This will require a true partnership among the Village and private investors, as well as coordination with the Town of Webster to help strengthen the edges of downtown.

## Key Findings From Public Outreach

Webster Together public outreach efforts have indicated that Town residents desire a strong, enjoyable and vibrant village atmosphere. They enjoy the walkability of the Village, and the myriad events and activities taking place throughout the year. Many residents also favor the contrast of the mixed-use Village form compared to the suburban development pattern of the Town. Webster's teens and young adults also desired more gathering spots in the Village, such as coffee shops, cafes and bakeries, and craved more music events targeting their generation. However, all residents also noted that the generally poor aesthetics and condition

of many properties and the streetscape is a turn-off and causes them to shop/dine/visit elsewhere. These findings echo the broader recognition by the development community that the Village must focus on improving the execution of public and private investments.

**Priority Area Goal Statement**  
**Strengthen the status of the Village of Webster as the community's mixed-use cultural and entertainment**

## Revitalization Goals & Strategies

The following table represents a set of potential strategies, objectives and tactics that upon proper execution could help achieve the goal of making the Village of Webster a cultural and entertainment destination.

### Strategy A Improve convenience, functionality and walkability for residents and visitors

#### Objective 1 Increase perception of available parking.

Tactic 1 Provide enhanced wayfinding signage for parking lots

Tactic 2 Develop a parking map for distribution by businesses to customers

#### Objective 2 Improve pedestrian/bicycle connections to the business district.

Tactic 1 Provide an improved path from the Village Hall parking lot to Main Street and South Avenue.

Tactic 2 Develop signage at 104/Hojack trailheads that promote visitation to Village Business District

#### Objective 3 Provide functional, clean and appealing amenities.

Tactic 1 Install bike racks, bike lockers, benches and wayfinding/informational kiosks

Tactic 2 Explore the location of a convenient walk-up Automated Teller Machine.

#### Objective 4 Increase pedestrian-friendliness of Main Street and North Avenue

Tactic 1 Provide uniform, pedestrian-scale lighting for all sidewalk areas

Tactic 2 Ensure functionality and safety of crossing aids



## **Strategy B** Provide a uniform and appealing streetscape experience

### **Objective 1** Expand public realm beautification efforts

Tactic 1 Enhance and expand landscaped areas, including the replacement of weak, dying or missing street trees.

Tactic 2 Identify locations for public art

### **Objective 2** Provide educational resources for property/business owners

Tactic 1 Provide workshops and training sessions on storefront design

Tactic 2 Provide educational materials on Main Street best practices

### **Objective 3** Encourage context-sensitive building improvements

Tactic 1 Create revolving loan fund for business and property owners.

Tactic 2 Create design guidelines to assist property owners and maintain character consistency for building exterior improvements.

## **Strategy C** Provide venues and events that attract visitors from throughout the community.

### **Objective 1** Develop multi-purpose facilities for flexible, year-round usage.

Tactic 1 Explore opportunities for investments to the Fireman's Field.

Tactic 2 Explore the creation of a multi-venue arts, cultural and event center, potentially at the Harmony House or Old Church Mall.

Tactic 3 Identify a location for a permanent public market with beneficial infrastructure and parking.

### **Objective 2** Organize, promote and implement unique, high-quality events

Tactic 1 Parking Art Festival - A festival of unique public art installations within parking spaces on Main Street.

Tactic 2 Sidewalk Saturdays - A series of unique, fun and short Saturday morning events on the sidewalk.

## Strategy D Make the Village a vibrant place to live and work.

### Objective 1 Expand living opportunities in proximity to the Downtown Core.

Tactic 1 Encourage the development of market-rate residential units along Main Street and North/South Avenues.

Tactic 2 Streamline the process for upper-story unit permits and approvals.

### Objective 2 Offer events or activities for employees during the work-week.

Tactic 1 Lunch-time or Happy-Hour concert series

Tactic 2 Lunch-time farmers' market

Tactic 3 Food Truck Rodeos

## Results from the Community Investment Summit

The Village Downtown Revitalization workgroup consisted of Village staff, private investors, commercial real estate agents and business owners. The group discussion was facilitated by a trained public engagement professional with the explicit goal of identifying two priority projects that could be quickly implemented to obtain maximum benefits to Webster. Significant debate surrounded the primary ailment of the Village as a marketplace. Is the poor execution of the physical environment the primary cause of a lack of activity? Or, is it the lack of private investment activity and destination elements that is failing to draw visitors?

The group identified that public improvements in the streetscape and overall visitor experience are a logical first step towards enhancing the marketplace appeal for private investors. The largest obstacle for this project is funding, yet improvements such as new light poles, sidewalks, landscaping and trees

can be done in a coordinated, phased approach over the course of several years absent a large infusion of public funds.

However, this approach requires a high level of commitment, dedication and patience by the Village administration to enact a focused investment strategy. The workgroup targeted Main Street, particularly West Main Street, as the starting point. Significant private reinvestment has already occurred in this area, yet the lack of public improvements has diminished the visual/perceived impact.

The following projects were identified by this workgroup:

1. Targeted Village Streetscape Improvements
2. Village Catalyst Development Project

## Priority Project

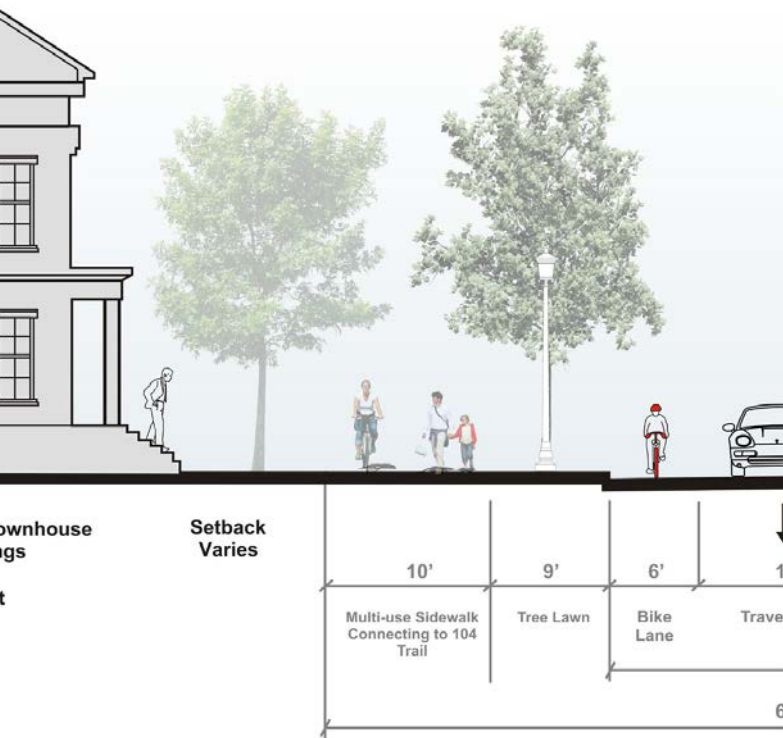
### Targeted Streetscape Improvements

**Description:** The Community Investment Strategy recommends targeted streetscape improvements along Main Street, beginning on West Main. The work should include the replacement of lighting poles and fixtures with pedestrian-scale poles. Sidewalks should be replaced along both sides of the street, and new street trees should be installed in the tree lawn to improve the uniformity and appearance of the corridor. Wayfinding signage and a new village western gateway should be installed at the intersection of West Main Street and Barrett Drive. Finally, the Village must enact a new set of design standards for signage to promote a cohesive appearance and visitor experience.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** The visual perception of a community's streetscape may be its strongest indicator of economic investment, stability and growth. Targeted and modest streetscape improvements can have a dramatic impact on the quality of visitor experience, which translates to increased foot traffic, sales and dollars invested in the community. An important factor in the success of this project will be the involvement of the private sector and collaboration between the Village, the Alliance, and private businesses. In addition, this project is an opportunity for the Town to assist in Village revitalization through land use controls along a short segment of Ridge Road from Jackson Road to Barrett Drive. In conjunction with a coordinated marketing strategy, these improvements will promote the identity of the Village as a place to visit and explore.

**Cost:** The project corridor is less than one-half mile. A similar project being conducted on North Avenue in the Village of Webster has a cost of approximately \$1.75 million per mile. Therefore, the 0.4 mile project on West Main Street from Barrett Drive to 4-corners will likely have an estimated total cost of \$700,000, including construction and soft costs.

**Partners:** The project will require coordination and shared resources between the Village, New York State, and private property owners. Street lighting improvements will also require the cooperation of Rochester Gas & Electric corporation.



## Priority Project

### Catalyst Development Project

**Description:** The Community Investment Strategy recommends the identification of a signature redevelopment project to anchor revitalization efforts in the downtown core and act as a catalyst for spin-off investment activity. One potential public works project is the development of a high quality public space north of Route 104, an immediate need identified in the Village's Comprehensive Plan.

The North Village neighborhood and North Avenue corridor will be receiving over \$2.5 million in state and federal streetscape improvements from 2015-2017 to bolster private investment. Yet, the area lacks a signature gathering space to help solidify its identity and transition to a mixed use neighborhood. Site selection for this project is the primary obstacle.

Two additional potential projects would involve the private redevelopment of highly recognized historic structures that bookend the 4-corners district on East and West Main Streets.

The Grange/Harmony House property on East Main Street is a 12,000 square foot, 3-story building constructed in 1899 that currently functions as a performance hall for concerts, weddings and other events. The Old Church Mall on West Main Street, originally constructed in 1868 with several additions through 1961, functions as a 16,000 square foot mixed-use building with offices, retail and a lower level restaurant.

Although grand in stature and rich in history, these properties suffer from continued disinvestment due to their size, age and their general economic and functional obsolescence. The revitalization of these catalyst sites will largely depend upon the willingness of the current ownership to participate, and/or the identification of a capable private investor to take on the project.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** The redevelopment of these signature community structures into viable and engaging destinations will improve the perception of Main Street and increase visitation and foot traffic in the Village. A successfully revitalized Harmony House and/or Old Church Mall will also signal to the broader development community that the Village of Webster is a safe and profitable investment.

**Cost:** The investment requirements to revitalize these structures is currently unknown and dependent upon several factors, most notably the intended final use. With potential renovations costs likely to exceed \$75 per square foot, the total project could range between \$2-4 million inclusive of acquisition and site development costs. Based on current market rates, this level of investment is unsustainable absent subsidies or public involvement.young adults.



# Waterfront

## Overview

Webster's waterfronts are highly regarded public assets that differentiate the community from its peers in the Greater Rochester region. Throughout the Webster Together public engagement process, the public has maintained strong support for revitalization and investment along the Lake Ontario and Irondequoit Bay waterfronts to promote this unique, yet underutilized community resource as a source of local and regional pride. Webster's waterfronts can also function as an environmental education and social sciences destination to maximize the benefits of this public resource to residents and students from throughout the region.

The Finger Lakes Region has an amazing wealth of water resources, and its waterfronts are recognized as economic development engines offering a multitude of tourism and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. However, opportunities for public access to the State's waterfronts, especially Lake Ontario, are limited by terrain and ownership. With over 22 miles of shoreline, Webster has just one mile of public access along the Lake Ontario/Irondequoit Bay waterfront. The Webster Sandbar is one of the few locally-controlled parks in the region that provide access to both Lake Ontario and a protected harbor. Infrastructure investments at this park will increase regional utilization of the community's waterfronts while encouraging spin-off private investment.

## The Sandbar

The Sandbar is a narrow strip of land extending approximately one mile across Irondequoit Bay from the Webster mainland and separating the Irondequoit Bay from Lake Ontario. It is a unique maritime environment, with a marina, residential uses on small lots, and several restaurants. Since 2003, the Town has acquired approximately 14 acres of property along the Sandbar for the establishment of a waterfront public park that spans the isthmus

and includes frontage on both Irondequoit Bay and Lake Ontario. Through 2014, the Town has made modest and limited improvements to the park land to support expanded utilization by the public. The proposed revitalization strategy seeks to undertake significant investments in public access improvements to make Webster's waterfront at Sandbar Park a viable and family-friendly destination to meet the needs of the Town's expanding population.



*“We have a beautiful lake and park, it should be made more attractive!”*

## Key Findings From Public Outreach

Throughout the public outreach process, Webster residents indicated a strong desire for an accessible, enjoyable and unique waterfront destination that takes advantage of our community's cherished natural resources.

Nearly all residents favored the installation and investment of enhanced infrastructure such as restrooms, playgrounds, picnic shelters, boardwalks and parking. Many residents also called for expanded services and commercial activities along the waterfront including snack bars, boat rentals, restaurant and/or accommodations uses.

The walkability of neighboring canal communities was often cited as an example of how they want to experience Webster's waterfront. Young adults and teens also desired a beach and a safe, well-lit area to go at night such that they did not need to leave the community. Educational and interpretive opportunities related to the waterfront environment, including future linkage with the Town's trail network, were also supported via feedback obtained

during surveys and community outreach.

The current general lack of infrastructure and amenities was the primary reason most residents fail to utilize the public land. Some deemed the existing modest restaurants in the area important community assets, yet others desired enhanced dining options along the water.

All residents also noted that the generally poor aesthetics and lack of family-friendly amenities led them to other communities in search of a waterfront recreational experience.

## Priority Area Goal Statement

**Enhance Webster's waterfronts as a destination for residents' and visitors' recreational enjoyment.**





## Revitalization Goals & Strategies

The following table represents a set of potential strategies, objectives and tactics that upon proper execution could help achieve the goal of making Webster's waterfront a unique recreational destination within the Greater Rochester region.

### **Strategy A** Provide family-friendly comfort, convenience and safety amenities, services and facilities

**Objective 1** Undertake a long-term redevelopment plan for the sandbar area.

Tactic 1 Construct restrooms, playground, shelter, walkways and parking at Sandbar Park.

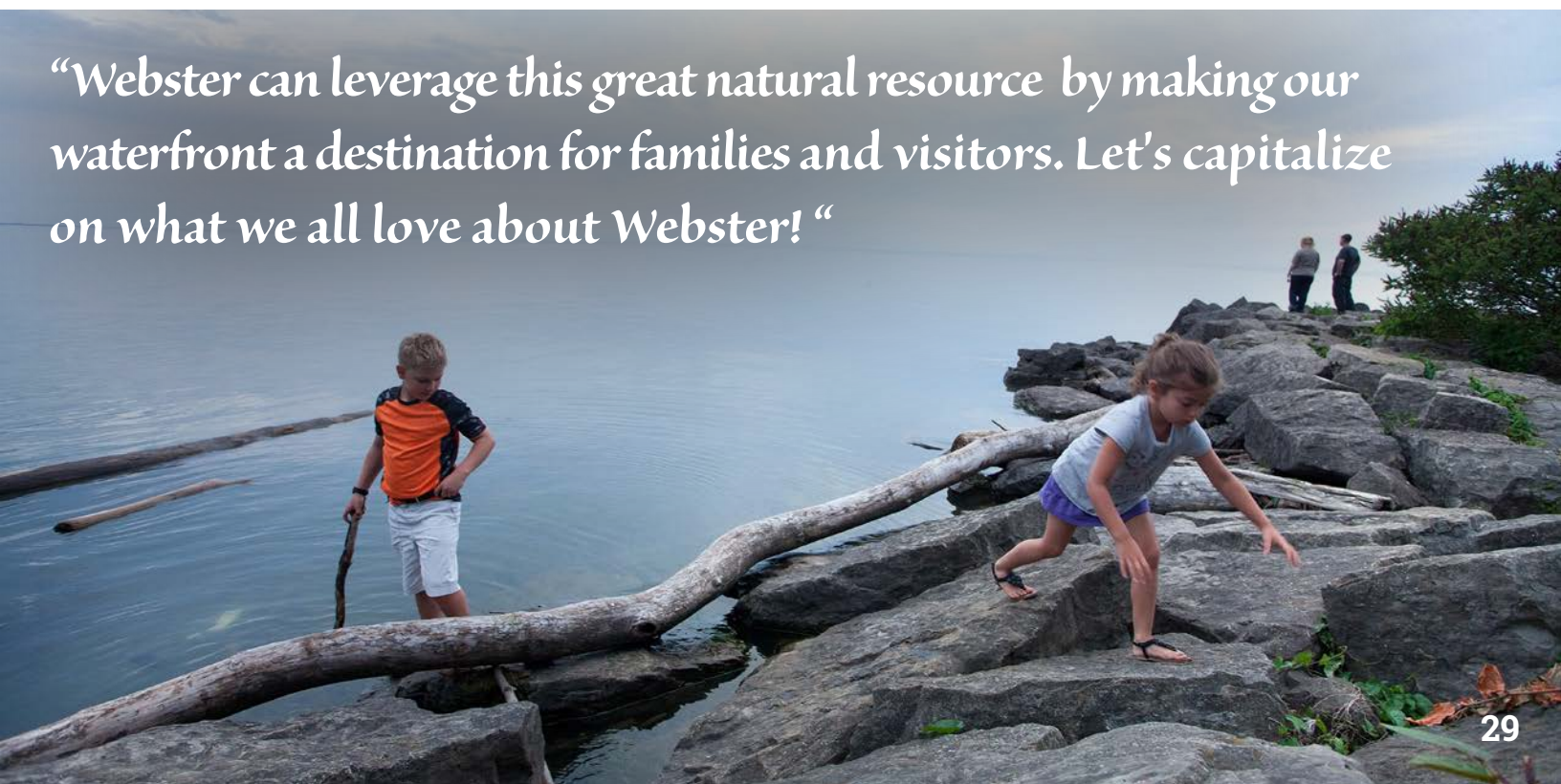
Tactic 2 Identify opportunities for supportive water-enhanced businesses or mixed-use development.

**Objective 2** Coordinate additional amenities and services with Monroe County at Webster Park.

Tactic 1 Install seating, safety, lighting, playground and boardwalk improvements north of Lake Road.

Tactic 2 Coordinate improvements to the White House Lodge to support improved uses, such as corporate meetings.

*“Webster can leverage this great natural resource by making our waterfront a destination for families and visitors. Let's capitalize on what we all love about Webster!”*



## Strategy B Improve the waterfront experience

**Objective 1 Provide infrastructure and amenities that make the waterfront a unique and enjoyable destination.**

Tactic 1 Construct a boardwalk, fishing pier and lighting at Sandbar Park.

Tactic 2 Provide opportunities for specialty food services, such as ice cream, snack bar

**Objective 2 Where possible, maintain views to Lake Ontario and Irondequoit Bay.**

Tactic 1 Clear select, limited areas of trees along the north end of Webster Park.

Tactic 2 Remove/eradicate invasive species along the Irondequoit Bay northern shoreline.

**Objective 3 Provide cultural, educational and historic installations.**

Tactic 1 In coordination with the WCSD, develop an outdoor classroom.

Tactic 2 Develop historic interpretive installations.

Tactic 3 Include opportunities for public art in capital investments.

## Strategy C Expand opportunities to access the Lake and Bay

**Objective 1 Identify appropriate locations for use of watercraft.**

Tactic 1 Construct or install a kayak/canoe launch.

Tactic 2 Provide public docks for transient boats.

**Objective 2 Organize, promote and implement unique, high-quality events**

Tactic 1 Identify lands for potential purchase by the Town of Webster.

Tactic 2 Develop a strategy to maintain a portion of the Village Well Field property as public open space.

## Results From the Community Investment Summit

The Waterfront Revitalization workgroup consisted of the Town Commissioner of Public Works, a civil engineer, a landscape architect, a Monroe County Planner and a waterfront property owner. The group discussion was facilitated by a trained public engagement professional with the explicit goal of identifying two priority projects that could be quickly implemented to obtain maximum benefits to Webster.

Prior to the assembly of the workgroup, a series of key questions and concerns regarding waterfront revitalization and investment were identified by the Alliance board of directors at the beginning of the Summit:

- Can a viable connection be made between the waterfront and the town's trail network?
- Can we include an educational component, such as an outdoor classroom, to promote the continued partnership between the town and school district?
- Will accessibility, real estate and environmental constraints make investment too costly, and thus infeasible?
- What are the sources of funding for construction, on-going maintenance?
- Who is the champion for this initiative?

These questions and concerns were brought to the workgroup to help frame and inform the discussion on prioritizing potential investment projects. The workgroup discussed the merits and obstacles of the implementation of several projects along the waterfront. Based upon the analysis of environmental permitting as well as funding constraints, the workgroup recommended a phased approach for public sector investments.

The first and highest priority phase are land-side improvements that provide family-friendly comfort and convenience amenities such as restrooms, a playground, parking and a car-top portage for kayaks and canoes. An outdoor classroom was also identified as a priority component of phase one improvements. The provision of trail system connectivity was explored and ultimately determined to be a long-term initiative due to the complexities associated with ownership, easements and rights-of-way acquisition.

The following projects were identified by this workgroup:

### 1. Sandbar Waterfront Park Improvements

Phase 1: Waterfront Comfort & Convenience

Phase 2: Waterfront Access & Enjoyment





TOWN OF WEBSTER  
SANDBAR REVITALIZATION CONCEPT

## Priority Project

### Waterfront Comfort & Convenience Improvements

**Description:** The Community Investment Strategy recommends that initial waterfront infrastructure investments focus on landside comfort and convenience amenities such as restrooms, playgrounds, picnic shelters, parking and a car-top boat launch. The development of an outdoor classroom is also proposed as a partnership of the Town and School District. These landside improvements will require minimal environmental permitting and low-cost design and engineering. In addition, local highway and parks department forces will be capable of constructing significant portions of the program, further reducing costs and expediting the implementation and enjoyment by residents.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** The Webster community is clamoring for expanded amenities and access to the Town's waterfronts. The implementation of this project can be accomplished quickly and would provide an immediate attraction for residents and visitors to Sandbar Park. The expanded access to recreational amenities promotes community health and wellness, and the visually significant investment in the community may attract new residents, visitors and spending from outside Webster.

**Cost:** It is estimated that total project costs would range from \$200,000 to \$300,000, depending upon the complexity and size of the picnic and restroom facilities. Much of this funding is currently available via the Town's Parkland Trust Fund, though portions may be bonded, and others may be procured through private donations.

**Partners:** The Town of Webster will be the likely project lead for Phase 1 Sandbar Park improvements. A partnership between the Town and School District on the outdoor classroom could become a model for future efforts elsewhere in the community, and showcases Webster's unique atmosphere of cooperation amongst varied stakeholders.

## Priority Project

### Waterfront Access & Enjoyment

**Description:** In addition to landside comfort and convenience improvements, a series of waterside infrastructure projects are recommended to further expand the offerings of Webster's Lake Ontario and Irondequoit Bay shoreline. These improvements include a boardwalk, lighting, on-street parking and a fishing pier. The extensive coordination, permitting and approvals required for these projects creates an extended timeline. The Town will learn in December 2015 if they are successful in their application for grant funding through New York State to begin the design, engineering and permitting aspects of these improvements.

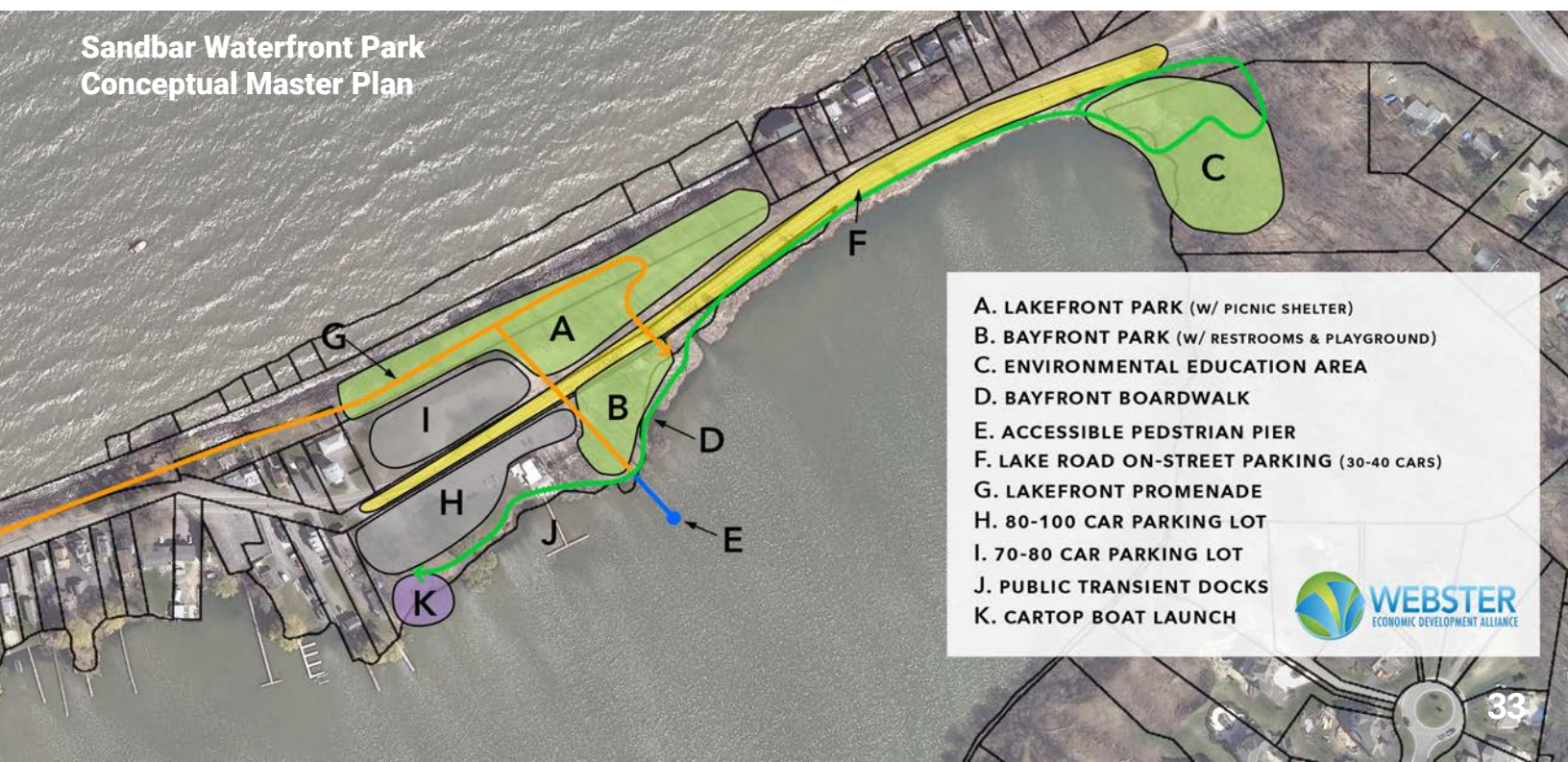
**Key Benefits to Webster:** Similar to the landside improvements, the waterside infrastructure will increase the visitation to the waterfront; yet will drastically increase the draw from the larger region. The redevelopment of waterfront into a signature community destination will improve

the perception of Webster as a community and could likely lead to an increased desirability by new residents.

**Cost:** Initial estimates for waterside infrastructure indicate a required investment cost of \$1.1 to \$2.3 million, which includes the partial realignment of Lake Road to facilitate the construction of a waterside boardwalk. Final costs for these improvements will be available upon the completion of pending design and engineering activities.

**Partners:** The Town of Webster will continue to lead the charge for waterfront revitalization, yet more regional and statewide partners and involved agencies will also play important roles. State and federal environmental protection agencies, the Army Corps of Engineers and potentially the Coast Guard will all be involved in the approval process for structure in the water. County and State level transportation departments may also have notable involvement. Private partners such as foundations and community benevolent organizations will also play a role in the execution and funding of project elements.

### Sandbar Waterfront Park Conceptual Master Plan



- A. LAKEFRONT PARK (w/ PICNIC SHELTER)
- B. BAYFRONT PARK (w/ RESTROOMS & PLAYGROUND)
- C. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AREA
- D. BAYFRONT BOARDWALK
- E. ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN PIER
- F. LAKE ROAD ON-STREET PARKING (30-40 CARS)
- G. LAKEFRONT PROMENADE
- H. 80-100 CAR PARKING LOT
- I. 70-80 CAR PARKING LOT
- J. PUBLIC TRANSIENT DOCKS
- K. CARTOP BOAT LAUNCH





# Small Business & Entrepreneurship

## Overview

Webster is fortunate to have two large and active business support organizations that represent small business in the broader community. With a combined membership of over 640 businesses, the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District provide business-to-business networking opportunities, small business development programming, joint marketing assistance and many other benefits to its members. As well, the Business Improvement District organizes several community events throughout the year that draw approximately 30,000 visitors into the Village for concerts, festivals, movies and parades.

Webster boasts a breadth of established and successful small business owners – greater than 1/3 of Chamber members have been in business for longer than 10 years. The Chamber of Commerce regularly celebrates the longevity of its members, with many small business owners crediting their membership in the Chamber and the mentorship of other business owners as key to their success. However, no formal mentorship and/or startup business support programs are currently offered in the community. The need for mentorship of new businesses by existing businesses is supported by the following data collected by the U.S. Small Business Administration:

**70% of small businesses are owned and operated by a single person; and**

**70% of small businesses survive 2 years, only 50% survive 5-years.**

Running a successful business requires several skills-sets, yet most entrepreneurs lack the knowledge, capacity and resources to survive longer than 5 years. Most startup business owners are simply not aware of the complexities and requirements of operating a business. This is where mentorship can play an important role, providing tools, guidance and reassurance to place (and keep) new business owners on the path for success.

## Key Findings From Public Outreach

The public was extremely supportive of the role small businesses play in the community, and desired an even greater diversity of business within the community. The largest area where residents craved diversity was in restaurants and niche retail.

Small businesses lauded the leadership, support and services provided by the Chamber of Commerce. The presence of the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement

District were highlighted as significant elements of Webster's competitive advantage.

The small business roundtable discussion identified a small business education center or 'boot camp' program as a priority area for future business services investment. Also, the mentorship of newer businesses was highlighted as an opportunity for existing businesses to support the overall success of the community.

One-third of students and young adults surveyed indicated that they would consider starting their own business in Webster after graduation.



## Priority Area Goal Statement

**Establish Webster as a destination for small businesses and entrepreneurs.**

## Revitalization Goals & Strategies

The following table represents a set of potential strategies, objectives and tactics that can enhance

### Strategy A Enhance small business development support services

**Objective 1 Develop structured educational and training programs aimed at small business**

Tactic 1 Develop a small business mentorship program to help new entrepreneurs understand the basics of operating a business.

Tactic 2 Assist/support the participation of local small business in formal Coaching or Economic Gardening program offered by others.

**Objective 2 Provide small businesses with a larger pool of qualified employees**

Tactic 1 Explore the development of a coordinated apprenticeship program with the WCSD and private business that encourages and incentivizes graduates to remain in Webster.

Tactic 2 Create a centralized source for job listings targeted at student employees.

Tactic 3 Create a training program for student employees that links classroom exercises with on-the-job experience.





## **Strategy B** Create programs/initiatives to support entrepreneurship

### **Objective 1** Make Webster a Startup Friendly Community

Tactic 1 In conjunction with the WCSD, develop a small business incubator focused on Science, Engineering, Technology & Math

Tactic 2 Host social and networking events that educate, inspire and connect entrepreneurs.

Tactic 3 Hold an entrepreneurial start up competition where winning businesses receive a multifaceted incentive package.

### **Objective 2** Expand coordination between the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District.

Tactic 1 Encourage the joint sponsorship and facilitation of community events.

## **Strategy C** Encourage and expand the diversity of small businesses in Webster

### **Objective 1** Attract and support local neighborhood-scale businesses

Tactic 1 Identify market gaps and strategically recruit businesses outside of Webster to expand or relocate in the community



## Results From the Community Investment Summit

The Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship workgroup consisted of the CEO/ President of the Chamber of Commerce, a high school senior / Young Entrepreneurs Academy graduate, a high school Business teacher, and several successful local business owners. The group discussion was facilitated by a trained public engagement professional with the explicit goal of identifying priority projects that could be quickly implemented to obtain maximum benefits to Webster. Prior to the assembly of the workgroup, a series of key questions and concerns regarding small business development were identified by the Alliance board of directors at the beginning of the Summit:

- How can we provide financial support for new entrepreneurs seeking an affordable location to open their business?
- How can we help entrepreneurs stay in business and succeed?
- How can the School District help drive entrepreneurship and the mindset of young people?
- Can we create a turn-key business startup kit?

The workgroup engaged in significant discussion on how to best support entrepreneurs and small business owners. The group identified several potential strategies involving the Chamber of Commerce and/or existing successful businesses. The need to identify and inventory all businesses within the community was also discussed. With access to approximately 20 percent of total businesses through its membership database, the Chamber of Commerce is unable to reach a large percentage of small businesses that could likely benefit from support and mentorship programs.

## Priority Project

### Business Inventory Database

**Description:** In conjunction with the Business Improvement District, the Chamber of Commerce is seeking to conduct a survey and inventory of all businesses within the greater Webster area. This will help identify potential businesses to assist through a small business mentorship program.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** The inventory will assist Chamber and BID leaders in tracking new, old and closed businesses and improve the ability of their organizations to serve the broader business community. The project will also assist the Chamber in providing targeted programs and services. The Webster Economic Development Alliance can utilize the information to track business sector expansion and contractions, identify local workforce needs, and focus business development efforts tailored to the needs of Webster.

**Cost:** The development, deployment and analysis of the survey instrument and database is anticipated to cost \$20,000.

**Partners:** The project will be lead by the Chamber of Commerce, with support from the Business Improvement District, Webster School District, the Webster Economic Development Alliance.

## Priority Project

### Business Mentoring Program

**Description:** The Business Mentoring Program will provide tools, skills and information through a combination of group and one-on-one training sessions. The program will assemble a kit of resources and best practices developed by the SBA, SCORE, Small Business Development Centers and Women's Business Development Centers to help entrepreneurs avoid common pitfalls. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce is exploring the formation of a 'SWAT' team of local business experts across several fields such as accounting, legal, finance, sales, etc. to help guide small businesses during the startup process to provide guidance and mentorship for success.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** The Business Mentoring Program will help reduce the number of businesses that fail, increase the degree of success for local businesses, and increase the long-term tax base in the community.

**Cost:** The cost to assemble the information resources is minimal. The per-participant cost of the formal training program is anticipated to be \$1,000 - \$2,000. It is expected that partial sponsorships through other local businesses would help offset some of these costs for materials, web resources and instructor time. Yet, participants will be required to fund at least 50 percent of the cost.

**Partners:** The project will be lead by the Chamber of Commerce with support from the Business Improvement District.



**PAYCHEX**

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# Industrial Development

## Overview

Webster has nearly all the key ingredients to become a major employment center within the Greater Rochester region. Yet, for the better part of 50-years it has lacked two significant elements critical to the success of modern industrial zones: a vision, and a strategy to communicate the vision. The historic non-existence of a central or unifying vision for the future of Webster's industrial zone is the function of several realities:

- **Much of the physical plant, was designed and constructed during the 1960's and 1970's as a single campus for a single user (Xerox) and thus does not readily lend itself to a highly marketable or adaptive reuse;**
- **As current majority property owner, Xerox Corporation has no definitive business need to develop a publicized vision for its holdings; and**
- **The community has informally adopted the stance that private enterprise and the marketplace are best suited to determine the future of the Webster's industrial areas.**

Until now, the marketplace had little compelling reason to explore Webster's industrial potential. To successfully compete with other regional sites, Webster's public and private partners have begun working together to establish a unified vision on what the future of industry could look like and how it fits into the broader context of the community. As it matures, this vision will be supplemented by a set of guiding principles to help direct and encourage land use decisions, adaptive reuse strategies, and capital investments that create unique environments and a sense of place within the broader region.

## A Compelling Industrial Vision

Webster must aspire to create a business and employment district that is attractive, engaging and productive. It needs to maintain flexibility to meet the changing demands of private enterprise. Yet, it must also demand high quality execution that allows for future adaptation and to prevent the mediocrity of poorly conceived projects that degrade long-term viability.

Webster's industrial past was the development and manufacture of photocopiers, yet it's industrial future will be drastically different through the creative and sustainable use of its natural resources. The same community assets that make Webster a great place to live also make it a great place to conduct business. Chief among them is Lake Ontario and its abundant, clean and reliable water supply.

Webster's industrial renaissance will harness the deep, cold water of this Great Lake and utilizing the cooling capacity to support cleantech, food, and photonics industries. The exploration of novel technologies and the untapped energy its resources of its surroundings will make Webster a distinctive and innovative destination for investment, forging a new chapter of the community's prosperous future.

## North East Area for Technology

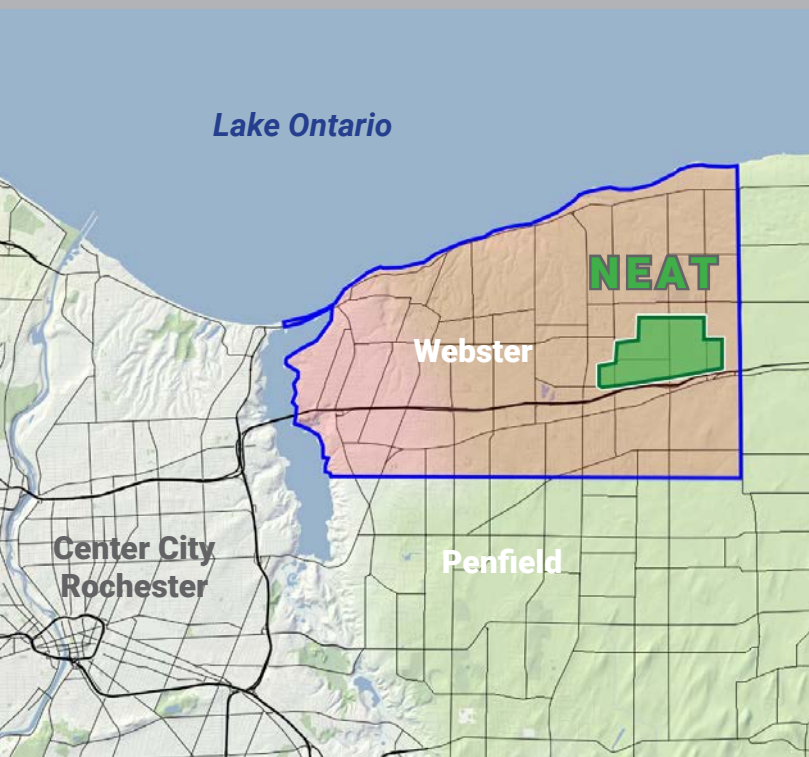
Webster's North East Area for Technology (NEAT) encompasses over 1,400 acres of industrial land and is home to several successful national and international corporations, including the largest single manufacturing facility of Xerox Corporation. The area has high quality highway and rail access, redundant power and 15 million GPD excess capacity of potable water.

The accessible, deep and naturally chilled waters of Lake Ontario provide the potential for 10,000 to 15,000 tons of cooling capacity, sufficient to support up to 3 million square feet of building. NEAT also includes over 500,000 square feet of available office and laboratory space, in addition to 1 million square feet of available manufacturing and warehouse space. Over 250 acres of land are available for new development.

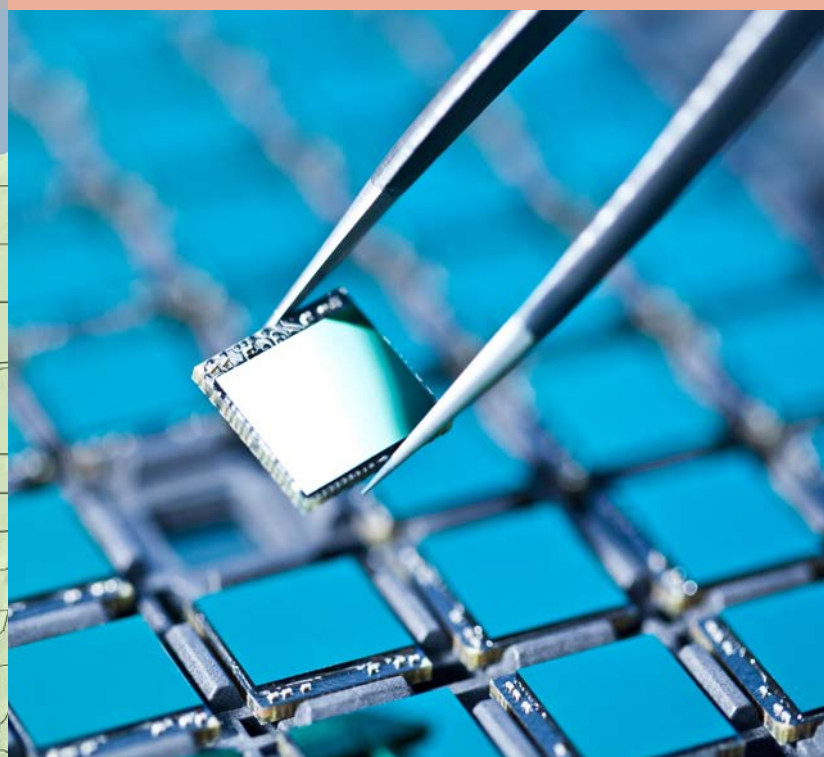
## American Institute for Manufacturing Integrated Photonics

Rochester, NY is the national headquarters for a \$610 million research and manufacturing hub dedicated to the emerging field of photonics, which could mean thousands of jobs for the region. The **AIM Photonics** center will be funded in part by \$110 million from the U.S. defense department, with an additional \$500 million in state and private investment.

Photonics is the science of using and controlling photons, which is the smallest unit of light. Photonics allow for faster transfer of data than traditional electronic circuits, and is used in a wide range of applications including: telecommunications, laser based radar, Datacom, sensing, and many others. It currently powers the Internet as we know it today.



Webster's North East Area for Technology



Photonics will change the way semiconductors are designed and manufactured.

## Key Findings From Public Outreach

Webster's youth and small business community placed the greatest emphasis on job creation and economic development during the public engagement process. When asked about what would make them stay in Webster after graduation, the top ranking answers among students were 'career' followed by 'family.' The desire to reactivate underutilized sites and attract young professionals also support the need to focus on industrial development and, in particular, the creation of unique centers of employment that appeal to the millennial generation.

The business community is very excited about the potential for the Chilled Water District to generate a significant economic boost in Webster. Psychologically, the waning presence of Xerox Corporation in the community and the future of the campus continue to weigh on municipal and business leaders as well as the greater public. A concerted effort by the Town, Village and Xerox to develop a joint vision will provide residents and area business owners much needed encouragement and hope for a bright future on industry in Webster.

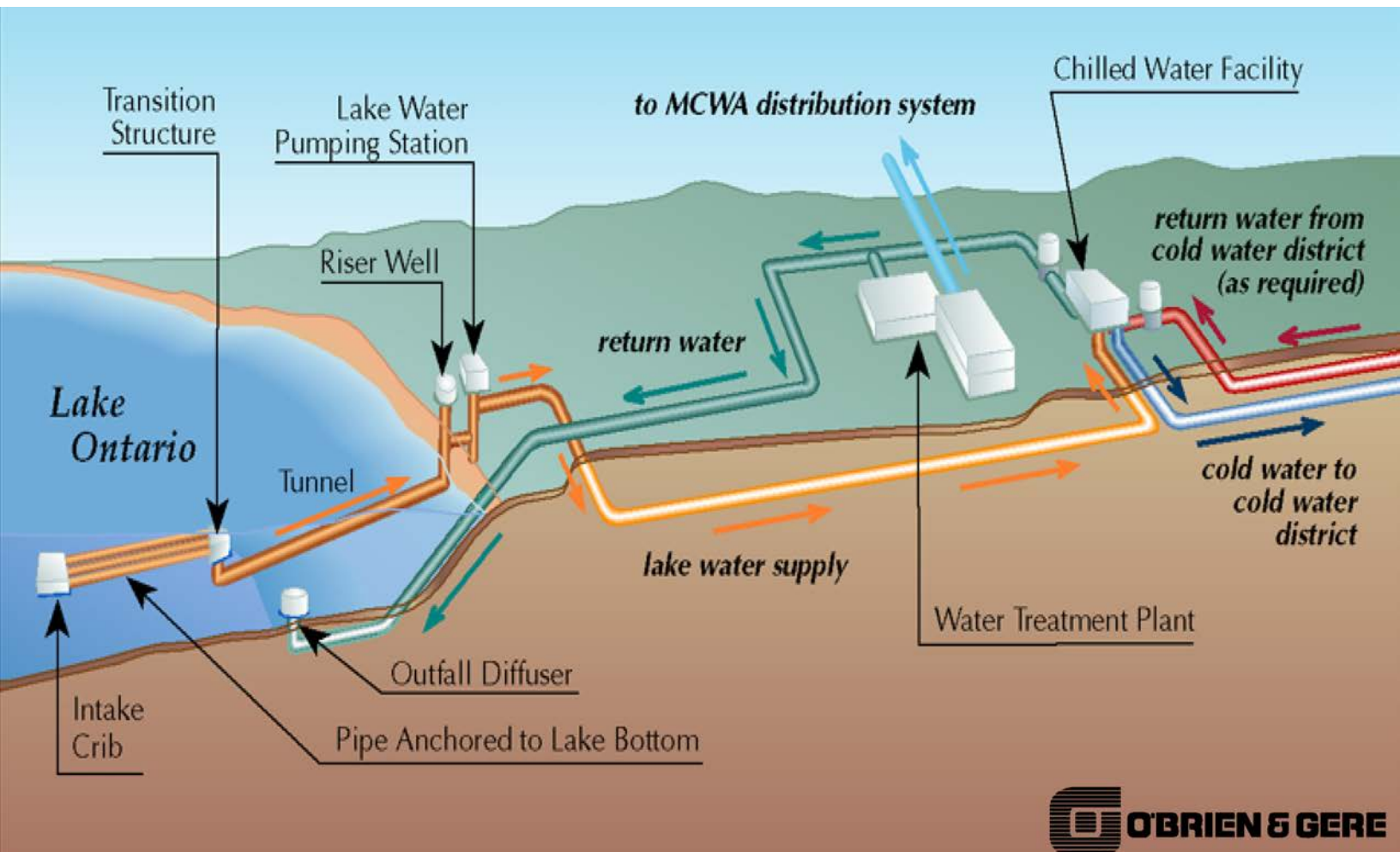


Diagram of the Chilled Water District Concept

## Priority Area Goal Statement

Attract significant investment and employment generation at the regional, national and international levels.

## Revitalization Goals & Strategies

The following table represents a set of potential strategies, objectives and tactics that upon proper execution could help achieve the goal of making Webster's industrial zone a viable employment destination within the Greater Rochester region.

### Strategy A Utilize natural resources and existing infrastructure

**Objective 1 Identify an implementation strategy for a naturally chilled water infrastructure system.**

Tactic 1 Identify development costs and potential ownership structure for a chilled water district.

Tactic 2 Explore use of chilled water by existing industrial users and the attraction of new food processing/manufacturing users.

Tactic 3 Explore the location of indoor ice skating complex.

**Objective 2 Objective 2 Utilize the excess capacity of potable water supplies.**

Tactic 1 Identify and attract high-demand water industries to industrial-zoned lands.

Tactic 2 Explore use of Village well-fields as industrial/alternative energy infrastructure.

**Objective 3 Objective 3 Promote the availability of transportation services within the industrial corridor**

Tactic 1 Identify and compare capacity of transportation assets to mainline communities

Tactic 2 Market rail accessibility to appropriately sized end-users.

Tactic 3 Market proximity to Port of Oswego to appropriate end-users.



## **Strategy B** Recognize importance of Xerox campus as a significant industrial asset

**Objective 1** Coordinate and communicate with Xerox Corporation on the future of the Webster campus to support continued employment and investment growth.

Tactic 1 Hold communications meetings at least bi-annually with key Xerox staff to maintain consistent communication.

Tactic 2 Identify roles and responsibilities for the Webster Economic Development Alliance in assisting the repositioning of the Xerox West Campus. Tactic 3 Explore the location of indoor ice skating complex.

Tactic 3 Develop a master plan and marketing strategy for the conceptual reuse/repositioning of the Xerox West Campus.

## **Strategy C** Leverage location along the Lake Ontario agricultural corridor

**Objective 1** Market Webster as a destination for food and beverage manufacturing.

Tactic 1 Seek-out opportunities to promote the benefits of investing in Webster within food and beverage manufacturing trade circles.

Tactic 2 Identify large regional industry players and implement a direct marketing campaign to educate their key personnel on Webster as a destination for investment.

**Objective 2** Encourage agricultural production in the eastern portions of the community

Tactic 1 Encourage targeted, intensive agricultural uses where appropriate.

Tactic 2 Encourage the growth of agricultural products to support industrial, manufacturing and processing activities.

## Results From the Community Investment Summit

The Industrial Development workgroup consisted of a Town Councilperson, Xerox Corporation Manager of Global Real Estate Strategy, commercial/industrial real estate agent, and the owner of the Ontario-Midland Railroad. The group discussion was facilitated by a trained public engagement professional with the explicit goal of identifying two priority projects that could be quickly implemented to obtain maximum benefits to Webster.

Prior to the assembly of the workgroup, a series of key questions and concerns regarding industrial development and investment were identified by the Alliance board of directors at the beginning of the Summit:

- **Can we partner with local colleges and universities for research and development applications?**
- **How do we prevent the over-proliferation of industrial development?**
- **What is the feasibility of the Naturally Chilled Water District and how do we market the system?**
- **What are the possible synergies with the AIM Photonics research center?**
- **How do we successfully coordinate with Xerox?**

These questions and concerns were brought to the workgroup to help frame and inform the discussion on prioritizing potential projects and initiatives. The workgroup quickly identified the lack of a clearinghouse of available land and building resources as an important obstacle to address.

Yet, much of the discussion focused on the need for a coordinated public/private vision and marketing strategy for industrial development in Webster. Webster can formidably compete with other industrial sites in the region; yet no one is talking about Webster. It was felt that the focus of such an initiative should highlight Webster's natural resources, the potential for chilled water, and the skilled workforce. Also, Webster must continue to communicate with its local, regional and statewide economic development partners, as well as with industry. Recognition by the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council as a priority site was noted as a priority goal for the future of industry in Webster.

The workgroup identified the following projects as initial steps to help achieve investment and employment growth:

- 1. Industrial Development Vision & Master Plan**
- 2. Industrial Marketing Strategy**

## Priority Project

### Industrial Development Vision & Master Plan

**Description:** The Webster Economic Development Alliance will coordinate with Xerox Corporation and other industrial property owners on the development of a shared vision for the future of industry in Webster. Assisted by professional design and planning consultants, the Alliance will convene a working group of local stakeholders and key regional economic development partners to identify the strengths and opportunities and how Webster's assets, resources and capacity can be leveraged and utilized to the benefit of Webster and the region. A primary focus of this initiative will be the development of a master plan and reuse strategy for the Xerox West Campus facility. The Xerox West Campus encompasses over 88 acres of industrial land and is a portion of the largest single manufacturing facility of Xerox Corporation. Complete with highway access, a centralized power plant with redundant power, and access to 15 million GPD of potable water, the West Campus includes over 500,000 square feet of available office and laboratory space and 58 acres of available vacant land. Currently less than 50 percent occupied, the West Campus has the potential to be a catalyst for investment and employment on a regional scale.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** Key benefits of this project include the formation of a coordinated vision that can be shared and communicated as part of a broader marketing strategy. The Vision and Master Plan will provide the content and context for the development of an Industrial Marketing Strategy. The successful implementation of the vision will create significant jobs that may lead to an increase in population. These benefits will translate into expanded economic activity and increased tax revenues.

**Cost:** It is anticipated that consultant fees for vision and master plan development will be approximately \$100,000 to \$150,000. The funding for this initiative will likely be assembled from local, state and private sources.

**Partners:** The project will be lead by the Alliance, yet the workgroup will also include representatives of the Greater Rochester Enterprise, Town of Webster, Village of Webster, the Chamber of Commerce and Xerox Corporation. Additional local private industry stakeholders will also be assembled, including property owners, business owners, real estate professionals and others as identified by the workgroup.



## Priority Project

### Industrial Marketing Strategy

**Description:** Upon completion of the vision and master plan development process, the Alliance will hire private consultants to create and implement a coordinated industrial marketing strategy. A primary goal of the strategy will be the establishment of a recognized identity for Webster's industrial potential locally, regionally and statewide. A strategy to communicate the availability and benefits of Webster's unique and abundant water resources will be a key differentiator in the broader industrial marketplace. Further, the strategy will include a focus on the attraction of nationwide industries requiring access to abundant, dependable and affordable water resources.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** In addition to the potential job creation benefits, a coordinated and well-executed communications campaign will also bolster the identity of the Webster community as a destination for continued growth and investment.

**Cost:** It is anticipated that upfront consultant fees for strategy development will be approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000, with an additional \$50,000 to \$75,000 for communications and collateral development.

**Partners:** This effort will be lead by the Alliance, and similar to the vision and master plan development phase will also include a workgroup composed of local stakeholders.

# Webster, NY

## Your Next Food & Beverage Manufacturing Destination

**Webster has the location and infrastructure to support your next relocation or business expansion. With abundant land, existing buildings and plentiful natural resources, Webster is poised to be the Finger Lakes Region's next destination for food and beverage manufacturing. Come explore our community and discover for yourself why Webster is Where Life is Worth Investing!**

### Location

- HEART OF THE LAKE ONTARIO FRUIT BELT
- 12 MINUTES TO DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER
- 20 MINUTES TO NYS THRUWAY
- 30 MILES TO CSX INTERCONNECT
- 100 MILES TO CANADIAN BORDER
- 80 MILLION CUSTOMERS W/IN A DAYS DRIVE



Learn more at [www.wccd.net](http://www.wccd.net)

Sample of current marketing brochure

# Community Identity & Marketing

## Overview

**Webster: Where Life is Worth Living.** This slogan is likely the most recognized element of Webster's identity. Although cherished by many, these five words do not form a complete identity of our community. Webster has many wonderful attributes that make it a great place to live, raise and family and invest. Yet, there is a lack of uniformity in how Webster portrays itself, and how community members – leaders, residents and business owners – communicate this identity. More to the point, how do we want Webster to be viewed from outside the community? When someone thinks about 'Webster,' what are the first words or thoughts that pop into their head? When residents describe where they live to someone outside our region, what words or phrases do they use? These answers highlights the current version of Webster's 'identity.'

Webster's community 'identity' is more than a slogan or a logo... it is the essence of what makes Webster unique; and as a community we need to communicate our identity clearly, consistently and proudly. The communication of the community's identity, however, is more than the spoken word. The quality of the built environment and the visitor experience in Webster must also communicate the same message; this forms the basis of local pride and sense of place within the community.

Our understanding of the community's values and priorities is the foundation for the creation of an authentic identity and brand for Webster. Family. Education. Open space. Sports. Waterfront. Downtown. Small-town atmosphere. Great location. This is the terminology that Webster residents are already utilizing to describe their community. Therefore, the creation of a genuine identity that can be consistently communicated must evoke these same images and emotions.

The next step in this process is the development of a coordinated marketing strategy that can be implemented and communicated flawlessly by government, residents and the business community. This strategy should touch upon what Webster is today, as well as the direction the community is heading and what it is striving to be in the future. Only then will we be able to communicate why **Webster is Where Life is Worth Living.**



## Key Findings from Public Outreach

The Webster Together campaign and the public engagement process have begun to scratch the surface on the community's identity. Residents have told us why they live here; business owners have told us why they invested here and the benefits of doing so. Residents have also told us their priorities, what they truly enjoy about Webster, and the physical aspects of their community they would like to see change or improved.

As indicated here, the identity and communications needs of the community are diverse, supporting the need to avoid a piecemeal approach that separates residents, government and business.

- Residents consistently identified the education system and quality of life resources as the primary reasons they chose to live in Webster. In addition, they identified these same focus areas as their priority for continued investment.
- Webster's open space system was consistently recognized as an area of pride. Considerable numbers of residents voiced concern about a reduction of open space and fears of overdevelopment.
- Additional comments referred to the character and qualities of other communities as an example of what they would like to see from their own community. These comparisons were almost exclusively utilized for discussion on Webster's waterfront and village downtown areas – geographic areas that were also highlighted as needing the most investment.

- Students and youth consistently cited fun, energetic and diverse places as a priority in their decision-making on where to live post-graduation.
- Business owners highlighted the need for government and the business community to increase investments in community marketing and promotions. The business community also indicated the need for a communications/tourism strategy to improve their ability to service and benefit from the large influx of visitors annually to sporting events.
- The community's leadership values the strong sense of pride residents have about Webster, including the schools, their neighborhoods and why they chose to live here.

## Priority Area Goal Statement

**Develop a marketing and communications strategy that promotes a positive and coordinated community identity.**

## Revitalization Goals & Strategies

The following table represents a set of potential strategies, objectives and tactics that of develop and communicate a unified, consistent identity for Webster.

**Strategy A** Develop a unified and coordinated marketing strategy that promotes Webster as a destination for visitation and investment.

**Objective 1** Create and promote a singular brand for Webster

Tactic 1 Expand and refresh the 'Where Life is Worth Living' motto

Tactic 2 Establish and promote the preferred brand identity for Webster

**Objective 2** Coordinate community marketing efforts

Tactic 1 Convene a working group of involved stakeholders to outline the development of a community-wide marketing strategy.

Tactic 2 Develop marketing pieces for shared use by community stakeholders.

**Strategy B** Foster improved communication and awareness of events, activities and initiatives taking place within Webster.

**Objective 1** Create a community-wide communications platform as the single destination for information.

Tactic 1 Create a coordinated strategy for Town, Village, School Chamber and BID information sharing.

Tactic 2 Expand and coordinate the community's social media presence.

**Objective 2** Provide consistent, efficient and reliable communication between the local business community and event organizers.

Tactic 1 Improve awareness among the business community of events and activities taking place.

Tactic 2 Ensure the consistent use of communications pieces among accommodations providers and event organizers.

Tactic 3 Via the formation of a designated Tourism Promotions Agent or similar entity, develop communications materials that promote the services of local businesses to visitors.

## Results From the Community Investment Summit

The Community Identity, Marketing & Communications workgroup consisted of a Town Councilperson, the CEO/President of the Chamber of Commerce, Xerox Foundation Manager of Communications, and Webster Schools Public Relations Coordinator. The group discussion was facilitated by a trained public engagement professional with the explicit goal of identifying priority projects that could be quickly implemented to obtain maximum benefits to Webster.

Prior to the assembly of the workgroup, a series of key questions and concerns regarding community identity and marketing were identified by the Alliance board of directors at the beginning of the Summit:

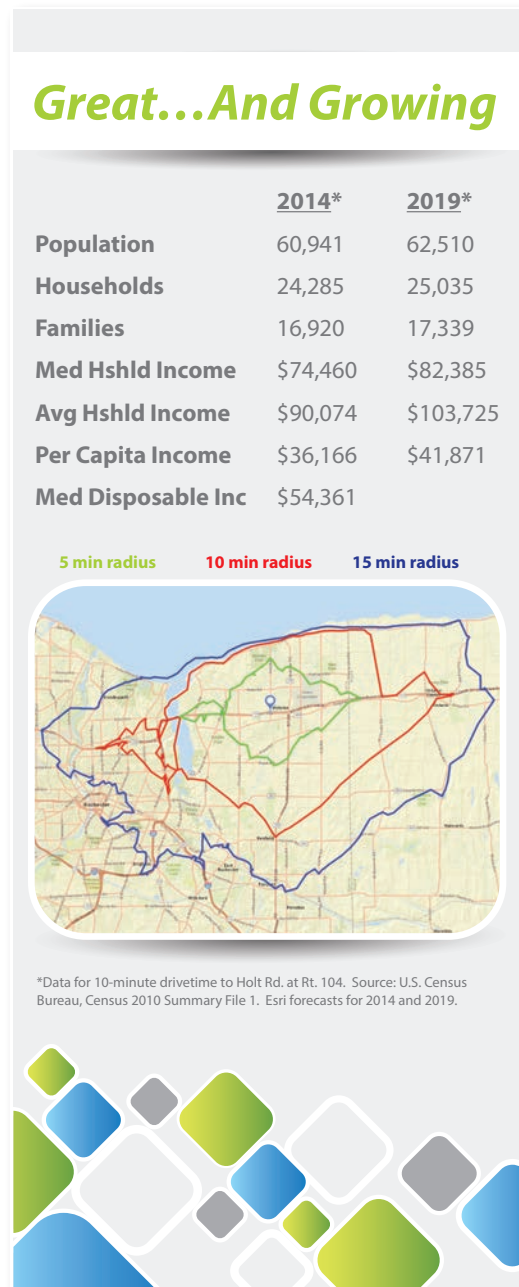
- How can we develop anything without knowing who we really are?
- Who are the key groups to be involved?
- How do we address the immediate need to communicate with tourists and visitors?
- How do we fund this initiative?

The workgroup recognized the need for a coordinated communications strategy that included local government, the school district and the business community. A significant component of the discussion was the development of a formalized Tourism Promotion Agent (TPA) to help facilitate and drive the development of a marketing and communications strategy. The TPA would be a public/private partnership consisting of representatives from

the Town and Village of Webster, Webster School District, the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement District, the Webster Economic Development Alliance and members of the business community such as hotels and restaurants. The creation of a designated TPA was identified as a top priority to organize the marketing strategy development process.

The following projects were identified by this workgroup:

### 1. Community Marketing Strategy





## Priority Projects

### Community Marketing Strategy

**Description:** In partnership with the Webster Chamber of Commerce, the Webster Economic Development Alliance will co-facilitate the development of a community marketing strategy with assistance by professional consultants. A working group of local stakeholders and partners will be assembled to support the refinement of a unified and coordinated brand identity for Webster. This group will ultimately become formalized as a Tourism Promotion Agent (TPA) to help fund long-term and on-going communications efforts within the community and region. For example, the Webster Together team coordinated with Sinclair Broadcasting Group on the development of a public awareness television campaign for Webster and its local businesses. The TPA would be the entity to coordinate and fund similar media campaigns in the future to promote Webster and its businesses to the broader region utilizing the unified brand identity.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** This project will include long-term tangible and intangible benefits to the community. Tangible results from the implementation of the strategy will likely include new signage, wayfinding and gateway elements that are coordinated throughout the community. Other tangible benefits may include the development of an online centralized communications portal to act as a unified, single source of community information. Intangible benefits include an improved sense of community pride, and also an improved recognition of Webster within the broader region.

**Cost:** It is anticipated that consultant fees for strategy development will be approximately \$50,000, with an additional \$50,000 to \$75,000 in communications materials, collateral and media purchases. The funding for this initiative will likely be assembled from state and private sources.

**Partners:** The project will be lead by the Chamber of Commerce with support from the Alliance, yet the workgroup will also include representatives of the Town and Village of Webster, Webster School District, the Business Improvement District, and members of the business community such as hotels and restaurants.

# DISCOVER WEBSTER, NEW YORK

*Where Life is Worth Living, Working, Playing, Investing*





# Recreation, Athletics & Tourism

## Overview

Residents in Webster have access to a wide variety of recreational opportunities, including instructional and organized activities or the self-guided enjoyment of an abundant open space system. Perhaps the most unique aspect of Webster's recreational system, however, is the history of partnership and cooperation among community stakeholders. For example, the Town and School district partnered on the development of the Webster Aquatic Center. The championship-caliber 50-meter indoor pool supports school, public and private programming that attracts thousands of athletes and over 20,000 visitors annually. Further, the Town, School District and private sports leagues have formed the Webster Youth Sports Council, which seeks to be a model for safety, education, wellness, sportsmanship and the efficient utilization of community facilities.

This data clearly indicate that Webster has sufficient capacity and resources to support a vibrant recreation economy. However, similar to the industrial sector of the community, it lacks a unified vision and strategy to leverage these assets as a force for economic prowess. Parks, open space and sports have never been considered an economic engine of the community. In addition, the community has not even scratched the surface to reveal the full recreational and educational potential of Webster's open space resources. Yet, all the pieces of the puzzle suggest that recreation tourism and athletics are the key differentiator to attract visitors and support the continued lure of new residents.

Over the past 20 years, the Webster community has invested millions into its parks, open space system, trails and athletics facilities to support and serve traditional youth recreation and sports. However, the cohort ages 5 to 18 is expected to decrease greater than five percent from 2010 to 2019, indicating a decline in young families and the loss of significant purchasing potential in the local economy. Further, the continued maturing of the population will require Webster to broaden the target audience of recreation spending to include established families, empty nesters and active seniors. By 2019, greater than 50 percent of households in Webster will have a householder age 55 or older. Webster will need to balance support for traditional youth sports with quality of life spending on programming, amenities and venues that create authentic experiences for both maturing families and seniors.





## Key Findings From Public Outreach

The community has indicated broad support for programming and spending tax dollars on education, quality of life amenities, parks and open space. The following are findings from the Webster Together public outreach process as they relate to recreation and youth athletics:

- Residents have significant pride in the Webster Central School District and its sports programs, overwhelmingly indicating 'good schools' as a top reason they chose and continue to live in Webster.
- Quality of life services and education were also the highest-ranking areas among residents for increased spending of tax dollars, ahead of public safety and economic development. However, residents also desired to see Webster's waterfront receive significant investment to make it a destination feature in the community.
- Residents also indicated that they value the community's open space system and would like to see the continued protection and preservation of Webster's natural environments.
- Webster's young adults also indicated that recreation, parks and quality of life amenities were important factors when determining where to live after graduation. Youth desire unique and authentic experiences, and
- The business community indicated that taking advantage of the economic potential of travel sports tourism is a high priority.

## Priority Area Goal Statement

Support the growth and enhancement of Webster as a premiere regional destination for wellness, recreation and athletics.

## Revitalization Goals & Strategies

The following table represents a set of potential strategies, objectives and tactics that of develop and communicate a unified, consistent identity for Webster.

### **Strategy A** Provide high quality facilities, venues and programs.

**Objective 1** Maximize the use and economic potential of existing unique sites, facilities and resources.

Tactic 1 Inventory and market existing underutilized industrial assets for adaptive reuse as recreational and/or athletic facilities.

Tactic 2 Form a public/private Environmental Education Center that leverages the community's unique open space assets.

Tactic 3 Improve the White House Lodge in Webster Park to expand its recreational and economic potential.

Tactic 4 Develop unique venues or attractions that celebrate Webster's natural resources and attract visitors from outside the community.

**Objective 2** Encourage the centralized development of new facilities.

Tactic 1 Identify potential sites and explore the development of a year-round multipurpose indoor field house for public use.

**Objective 3** Develop unique programs to support health, wellness and athletic excellence.

Tactic 1 Explore the advancement of the Webster Youth Sports Council's Medical Advisory Panel.

Tactic 2 Translate and extend the school district's efforts with PBIS and CARE into community-wide recreation and wellness programs.

## **Strategy B** Foster partnerships with regional organizations/institutions

**Objective 1** Establish partnerships with educational institutions, hospitals, and research, rehabilitation and training providers.

Tactic 1 Market Webster as a viable location for a regional health, wellness, training and rehabilitation center.

Tactic 2 Identify potential sites to support the development of private professional and semi-pro team training facilities.

**Objective 2** Coordinate community marketing with regional/national organizations

Tactic 1 Coordinate with the Monroe County Sports Authority on the marketing of Webster's facilities at the regional/national level.

## **Strategy C** Leverage Webster's extensive open space resources

**Objective 1** Expand educational and facilitated learning opportunities

Tactic 1 Develop a program of facilitated and self-guided on-site educational tours in a variety of habitats

Tactic 2 Create an educational program to align with the schools broad K-12 curriculum for the sciences.

**Objective 2** Enhance the connectivity of the trails and sidewalk network

Tactic 1 Develop a network of trails and sidewalks that connect neighborhoods throughout the community with service areas.

## Results From the Community Investment Summit

The Recreation, Athletics and Tourism workgroup consisted of: Town Commission of Parks and Recreation, School District Superintendent, School District Athletic Directors, Chairperson of Town Parks Advisory Board, and resident advocates for youth sports. The group discussion was facilitated by a trained public engagement professional with the explicit goal of identifying priority projects that could be quickly implemented to obtain maximum benefits to Webster.

Prior to the assembly of the workgroup, a series of key questions and concerns regarding recreation and athletics as an economic development driver were identified by the Alliance board of directors at the beginning of the Summit:

- How do we leverage all the facilities and resources currently available?
- Can we afford to build new facilities and venues?  
How do we pay for it?
- Do we need more sports fields?
- What partnerships can we form to improve service delivery and share costs?

The Community Investment Summit identified the development of outdoor classrooms and the formation of a natural resource enhancement strategy as a priority project. In addition, the advancement of an emerging partnership with the University of Rochester was identified as an opportunity to develop a regional wellness and sports medicine facility. These concepts highlight a potential economic transformation in Webster towards science, medicine and health to support all facets of human performance, wellness and achievement.

The following projects were identified by this workgroup:

- 1. Community Wellness Center**  
(Center for Human Performance)
- 2. Environmental Education Network**  
(Community, Environment, & Education Network)



## Priority Projects

### Center for Human Performance (CHAMP)

**Description:** The Webster Economic Development Alliance and the Webster Central School District will explore the development of a community wellness center in partnership with the Town of Webster, the University of Rochester and other private entities. The concept builds upon Webster's existing recreation, athletic and education strengths to address three goal areas: health and wellness; community enrichment; and personal success. It will combine traditional athletic training, rehabilitation and nutrition with personal performance and enrichment. The vision creates a broad-based Center for Human Performance model to combine health sciences and sports medicine with mental skills professionals, life coaches, and counselors to create tailored programs in four achievement areas: academics; leadership; sports; the arts. The first step towards full development of the concept will be to create a pilot program targeting one achievement area. The bold concept aims to support the human desire for success: if you want to become a better leader, artist, scientist or athlete we will help you achieve it in Webster.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** A local partnership with the University of Rochester would expand service delivery and enhance current programming for the community's students and seniors. The development and delivery of tailored personal enrichment plans for all ages will attract visitors from throughout the region who seek to reach their maximum potential for success and achievement. This will enhance the identity and perception of Webster as a community of choice in the Greater Rochester region.

**Cost:** The extent of costs for this long-term project are yet unknown, but will require a significant investment of public and private monies.

**Partners:** The project will be led by the Webster Central School district in a potential partnership with the University of Rochester. Additional partners include the Town of Webster for community health and wellness programming. A potential partnership with a local professional sports team is also being explored to address the physical and psychological needs of high-performing athletes.

A doctor performing bio-metric testing with an athlete to help improve strength and avoid injury.





## Webster Community, Environment & Education Network (CEEN)

**Description:** Webster, NY is planning the development of a network of outdoor recreation and educational sites located throughout the community to leverage our abundant and unique natural resources and our high quality educational system. The CEEN will include a myriad of stations, sites and/or low-impact structures connected where possible via the Town's extensive 23-mile network of trails. These flexible sites will provide basic infrastructure and installations that allow for creative programming, adaptation and utilization by CEEN partners. In addition, curriculum-, discipline-, and user-specific installations or sites can provide opportunities for refined enrichment, research and exploration. The first phase of the project will include the construction of 1-2 outdoor classrooms within the community.

**Key Benefits to Webster:** This project has the potential to engage a broad cross section of community stakeholders, leverage its physical and cultural assets, and expand upon those aspects of Webster most cherished by residents: its education system and open space. Key benefits

include enhanced environmental stewardship and stakeholder engagement, increased community pride and the improved perception of Webster as a destination for unique and engaging recreational experiences.

**Cost:** The long-term cost of system development is unknown. The initial phased of development for the network is anticipated to cost \$150,000 to \$250,000 to create a master plan and design/construct two sites.

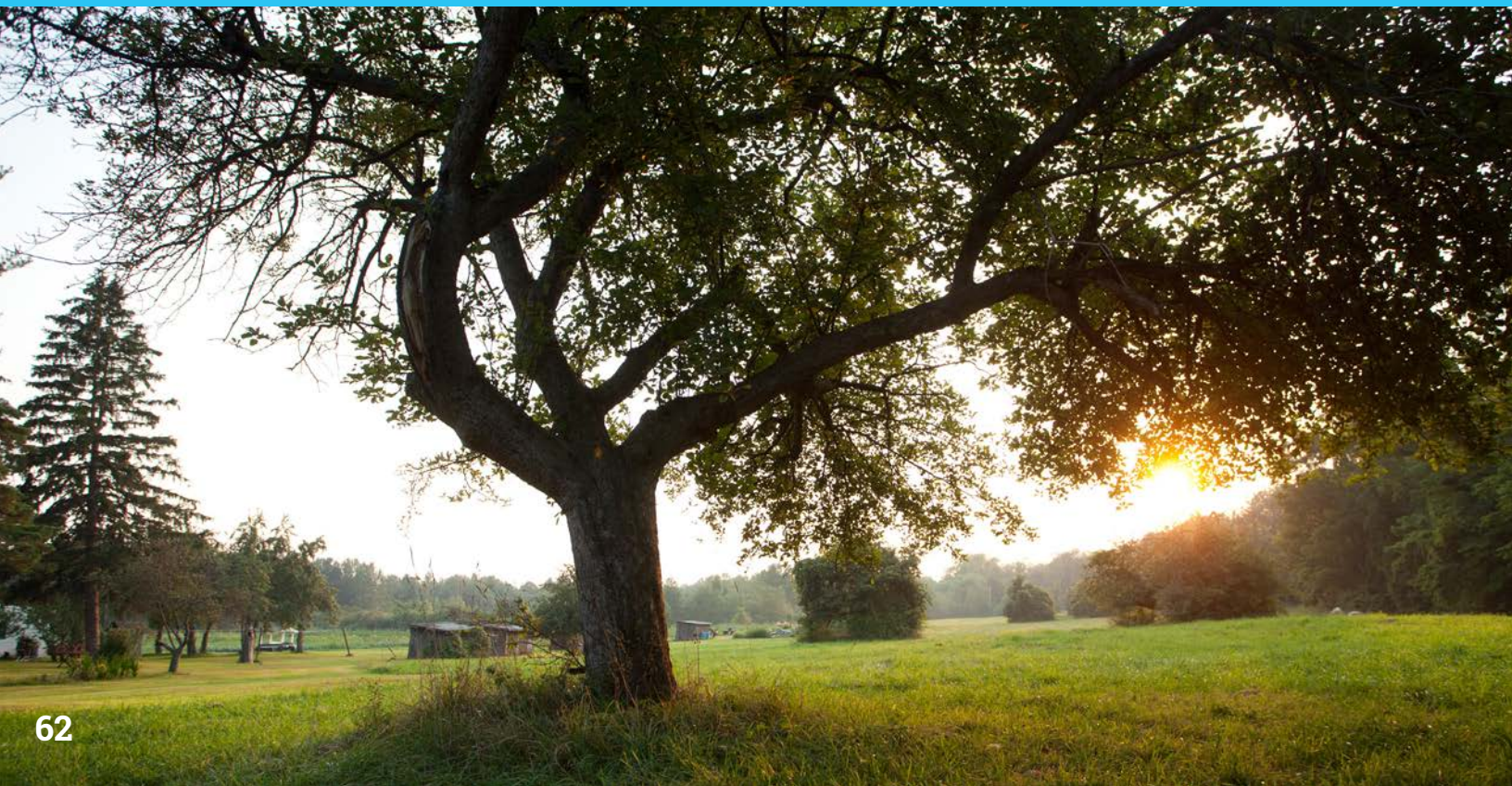
**Partners:** The Webster Economic Development Alliance has accepted the responsibility to identify, assemble and organize a team of community champions and stakeholders, which currently includes the Town of Webster, Village of Webster and Webster School district leadership. Additional potential contributors identified include the Genesee Land Trust, Rochester Institute of Technology,



# Conclusion

After months of work, Webster has developed a revitalization strategy that will enhance and expand opportunities to explore the community's rich natural resources, leverage its high caliber recreational and industrial assets, and enjoy the benefits of small-town living in a large metropolitan area. Residents will appreciate the renewed energy of downtown and the joys of outdoor adventure. Visitors will discover that Webster is brimming with fun and memorable experiences. Investors will realize that our community's high quality of life is good for their employees and their bottom line.

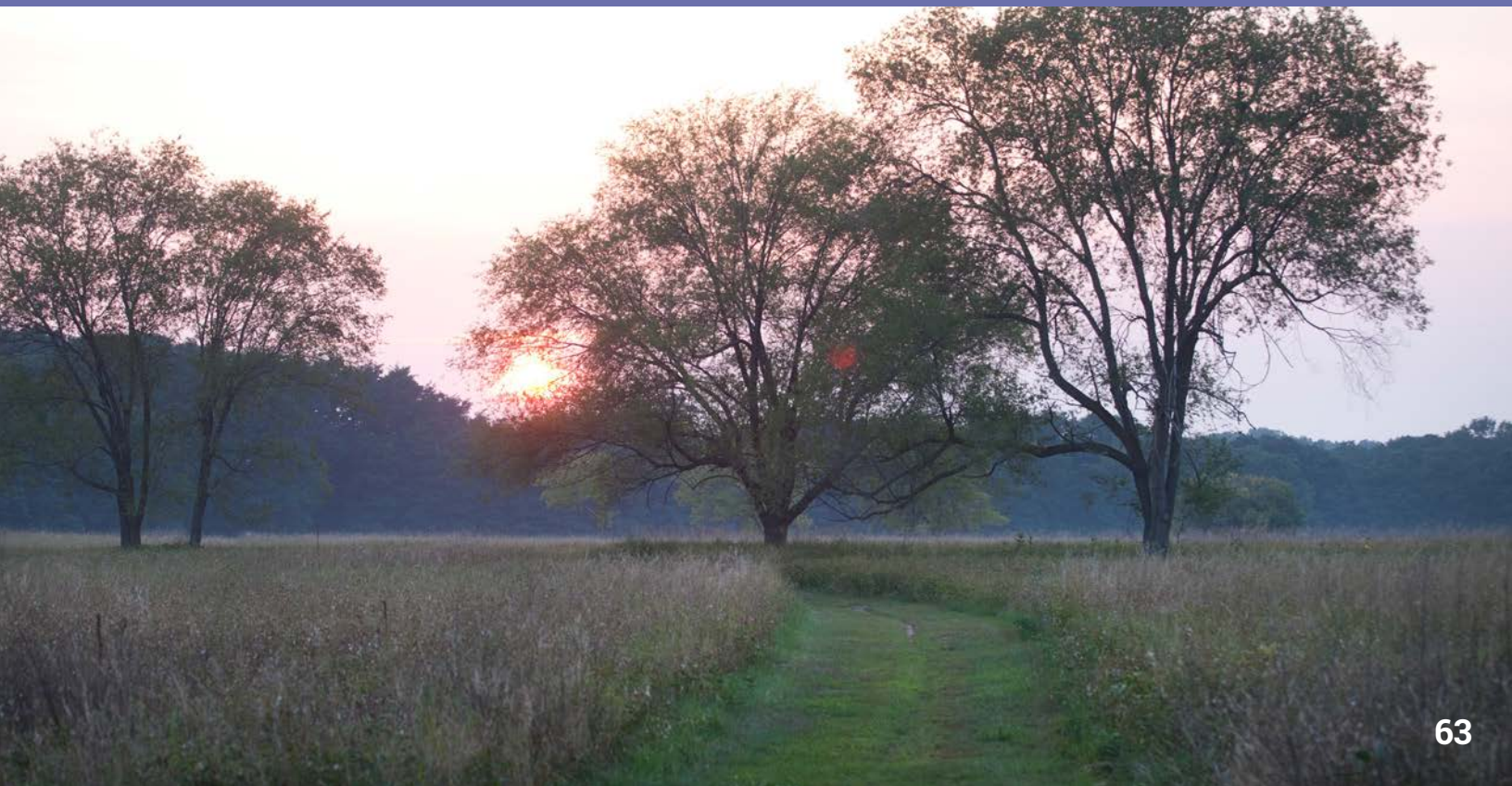
This revitalization plan touches all of Webster and includes a broad range of projects: from our downtown, to our industrial sites; from our small businesses to our town marketing image; from our Waterfront to our parks and natural resources. After extensive community outreach as discussed throughout this document, we have identified 10 priority projects that we intend to work on and have selected the one project to start with that will galvanize the community, enhance our quality of life, showcase our great education system and showcase our natural resources for visitors: A Community Environment & Education Network – an interconnected outdoor recreation and education system for our residents and visitors alike.



# Let's Get Started!

## **Community, Environment & Education Network (CEEN)**

Webster's revitalization strategy begins by leveraging its existing assets, resources and organizational capacity to further enhance the quality of life for residents by creating distinctive and memorable destinations within the community for residents, visitors and commerce. Webster, NY is actively planning the development of a network of outdoor recreational and educational sites located throughout the community to leverage our abundant and unique natural resources. The project is the outgrowth of Webster's recognition as one of America's Best Communities and the award of \$50,000 by Frontier Communications and Xerox Corporation to create a community revitalization strategy. During the development of its strategy, the Webster Economic Development Alliance conducted extensive public outreach via the Webster Together campaign, which ultimately led to the identification of several projects and initiatives that support the continued growth and improvement of Webster. The Community, Environment & Education Network project has been selected by Alliance leadership for submission of a \$100,000 funding request in the next round of the \$10 million America's Best Communities prize competition as the first piece of a broader community-wide revitalization strategy.



## Why CEEN?

Webster, NY has an abundant system of parks, open space and preserved lands, with over 3,300 protected acres covering diverse habitats and ecosystems. Residents benefit from access to the Town's extensive 23-mile network of trails traversing the former HoJack Railroad bed and throughout the community's open space system. With 8,400 students, the Webster Central School District covers 275 acres on 11 sites and is the second largest employer in the community. Together, these elements provide the necessary resources and organizational capacity to effectively implement, operate and maintain an extension of the classroom within the community. In addition, the Village of Webster, Town of Webster and School District have a strong history of partnership and cooperation to coordinate the shared use of community resources. The combination of these unique and differentiating strengths of the Webster community provide true potential for the realization of the Community, Environment & Education Network.

There is broad public support for expanded community investment in education and the environment to the benefit of all age groups. During the Webster Together 2015 public outreach effort, surveyed residents identified Webster's high quality school district, safe neighborhoods and abundant open space as key reasons they selected and continue to live in the community.

Residents also highlighted investments and spending on quality of life infrastructure such as trails, sidewalks, and parks as a top priority. Residents also desired to see more open space preserved and maintained as an important community resource. The challenge is to identify programs and initiatives that use the extensive water, land and trail resources to the benefit of the entire community.

In October 2015, a Community Investment Summit was held with over 40 community stakeholders to identify and prioritize potential projects for inclusion in Webster's community revitalization strategy. This process identified the development of outdoor classrooms and the formation of a natural resource enhancement strategy as two separate priority projects. The marriage of these concepts into a coordinated, cohesive and connected network of outdoor classrooms within Webster's vast open space system is a bold and exciting opportunity to build upon the community momentum established during the Webster Together campaign. While other parts of the broader revitalization strategy benefit various subsets of the community, this effort has the potential to engage a broad cross section of community stakeholders, leverage its physical and cultural assets, and expand upon those aspects of Webster most cherished by residents: its education system, recreation opportunities, and open space resources.

## Did You Know?

The National Recreation Association recommends 15-25 acres of parks and open space preserves per 1,000 population.

**Webster's park and open space system currently exceeds 75 acres per 1,000 population, triple the suggested allocation for the provision of adequate access to recreation resources.**

## **Community, Environment & Education Network (CEEN)**

### **EXPLORE. LEARN. GROW**

#### **The Vision**

The Community, Environment & Education Network (CEEN) is a regionally recognized network of shared, flexible and connected recreation and learning environments that support education, experimentation, exploration and fun for all age levels. The CEEN offers unique and evolving immersive educational opportunities across a broad range of curriculum. The Network also provides facilities and environments for challenging recreational pursuits and improved personal development. The CEEN is a model resource with the Greater Rochester region for environmental education, stewardship and leadership development.

#### **The Mission**

The Webster Community, Environment & Education Network (CEEN) expands educational, recreational and personal development opportunities through exploration and immersion into Webster's history, culture and natural environment.

#### **The Approach**

The CEEN will include a myriad of stations, sites and/or low-impact structures connected where possible via the Town's extensive 23-mile network of trails. These flexible sites will provide basic infrastructure and installations that allow for creative programming, adaptation and utilization by CEEN partners. In addition, curriculum-, discipline-, and user-specific installations or sites can provide opportunities for adventure education, refined enrichment and team-building experiences.

#### **The Audience**

The Community, Environment & Education Network is intended to service the full spectrum of potential users: students, seniors, orienteers, adventure enthusiasts, and personal enrichment seekers. The full realization of the CEEN will accommodate and support basic early childhood education curriculum, at-home vegetable gardeners and corporate leadership teams to make the network a destination and economic draw within the community.

#### **The Partners**

The Webster Economic Development Alliance has accepted the responsibility to identify, assemble and organize a team of community champions and stakeholders, which currently includes the Town of Webster, Village of Webster and Webster School district leadership. Additional potential contributors identified include the Genesee Land Trust, Rochester Institute of Technology, Friends of Webster Trails, Webster Historical Society, the Cornell Cooperative Extension, and local Rotary/Kiwanis/Lions organizations.

## How do we make this happen?

The realization of the Community, Environment & Education Network will require the development of an organizational framework that identifies the relationships, roles and responsibilities of network partners. The following is a summary outline of how CEEN will progress over the next 18 months:

### 1) Organizational and Partnership Development – Completed by February 1, 2016

- a) Identify network partners and convene organizational discussions
- b) Identify relationships, responsibilities and leadership
- c) Secure funding, labor and resource commitments
- d) Draft, negotiate and execute MOU
- e) Identify lead fiduciary entity and host 501(c)(3) corporation

### 2) Organize and Convene Leadership Committee – Completed by April 1, 2016

- a) Finalize organizational vision, mission and purpose (VMP)
- b) Add partners as needed to achieve VMP
- c) Assemble Working Teams & Identify Team Leaders
  - 1. Development - manages all construction projects
  - 2. Programmatic - coordinates network programmatic offering
  - 3. Outreach/Extension - coordinates engagement with public
  - 4. Fundraising - manages grant and donation procurement
- d) Assign Team roles, responsibilities and reporting structure
- e) Conduct public information meeting and Call for Volunteers
- f) Solicitation for In-Kind Services & Materials Donations

### 3) Master Plan Development – Beginning May, 1 2016

- a) RFP development, solicitation and consultant selection
- b) Conduct Public Design Workshop
- c) Identify Site Selection Criteria and Scoring Metrics
- d) Develop network concept master plan
- e) Public Design Review
- d) Finalize site selection and procurement
- e) Finalize initial network programming
- f) Commence design to 90% plans, specifications & estimates

### 4) Coordinated Construction Process – Beginning by November 1, 2016

- a) Completed site and utility development
- b) Completed building shell and mechanicals
- c) Completed building interiors
- d) Finalize programmatic improvements

## Education & Recreation Network Ideas

Outdoor education and recreation areas may vary in size, complexity, intended audience and overall goals and learning and/or enrichment objectives. All features will be developed in consideration with the available landscape. Partners such as the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Friend's of Webster Trails and Webster Central School District will lead the programming effort to ensure maximum impact and benefit to the users, with minimal impact upon the environment. The final program offerings will be dependent upon suitable and available sites. The following is a short list of potential Education Station ideas relevant to the natural and cultural environment of Webster, NY:

- Aerial adventure park
- Arboretum
- Architecture, engineering & structures
- Art in the landscape
- Birding and ornithology
- Brownfield remediation
- Canoeing and kayaking
- Composting restroom
- Climbing, ropes and zip-line courses
- Creek or stream ecology
- Erosion control demonstration area
- Fisheries
- GIS, Geo-caching
- Greenhouses
- Groundwater monitoring wells
- Horticultural demonstration area
- Human Settlement Patterns
- Invasive species
- Wetlands
- Land Use & Development
- Mature Growth Forest
- Mountain biking
- Natural playground
- Net Zero Energy Building
- Observation Tower
- Orchard/vineyard

- Outdoor survival skills
- Problem-Solving Initiative Games
- Pond ecology
- Soil profiles and microbiology
- Sustainable building design & construction
- Trees and woodlands
- Water resources
- Weather station
- Wildlife observation
- Wilderness medicine



Enrichment programming can support diverse age groups to get everyone out into the community's natural spaces.



## Network Concepts

The Community, Environment & Education Network will begin as a collaborative effort of the Town and Village of Webster, Webster Central School District and community benefit organizations to identify and plan for the Phase 1 construction of up to two Community Education Stations within Webster. Discussions with project partners support the general placement of one installation in the Town of Webster, and the other in the Village of Webster. The following rough concepts will be refined during an extensive public outreach effort lead by the Webster Together team and the Webster Economic Development Alliance.

### Gosnell Big Woods Preserve: Tom & Georgia's Cabin

Webster is planning the design and development of an Education Station at the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve, tentatively named after the late Thomas and Georgia Gosnell, the generous community benefactors and conservationists who donated and transferred the land to the Town of Webster in 2006. This station is envisioned to be a central hub for a series of diverse education and interpretive sites located across 200 acres of preserved land in three adjacent habitats: hollow/stream corridor, old field, and mature forest.

Tom & Georgia's Cabin will be a sustainable 'green' building suitable to support diverse uses for community gatherings, event rentals, classrooms, research and experimentation. The public engagement and design process will explore unique and exciting instructional opportunities to engage residents and students in the discovery and study of the natural environment and Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM).

For example, can we power the building through solar and wind energy generation? Can we harvest rainwater for gray water usage? Preliminary ideas also include a weather observatory and building energy management system that would allow the monitoring of site and building conditions remotely by anyone via the Internet. These ideas highlight the potential for Tom & Georgia's Cabin to be a unique and interactive educational site to inspire students, educators and local conservationists.

Example of Potential Education Station: Columbus Academy, Gahanna, Ohio





# Community, Environment & Education Network

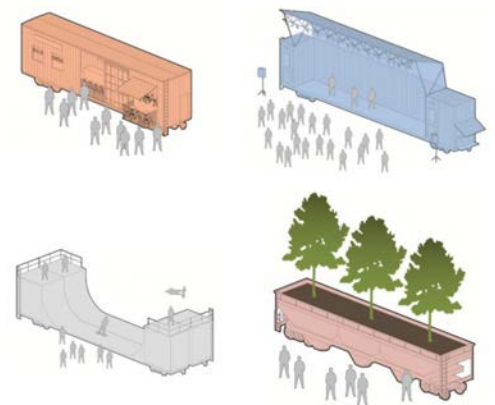
## North Village: Hojack Railpark and History Center

Webster is exploring the development of a Community Education Station in the Village that incorporates interactive history and cultural exhibits with Science, Engineering and Math (STEM) principles associated with our nation's historic railways. To be located adjacent to the former Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg Railroad corridor (locally known as the Hojack), the Hojack Railpark and History Center is envisioned to include the reassembly and reconstruction of a locally cherished historic railroad baggage building that was recently disassembled and placed in storage.

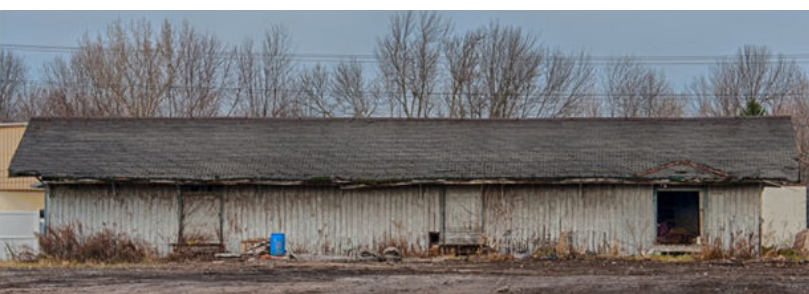
The structure would function as a classroom and interactive, hands-on museum encouraging visitors, especially children, to touch, operate and experience the history and culture that helped shape Webster. Paying homage to Webster's location in the Lake Ontario plain 'fruitbelt,' preliminary ideas include exhibits on the manufacture of baskets and the processing and storage of apples.

The full realization of the history center includes the development of adjacent and connected outdoor exhibits of refurbished and rehabilitated railcars that have been adaptively repurposed as event spaces, play environments and art installations. This long-term vision will make the Hojack Railpark and History Center a regional destination in the community for children, educators and rail enthusiasts.

Artistic rendering of railpark concept; Courtesy Bergmann Associates, DPC - Build a Better Burb Design Competition, 2010. The concept for this new recreational space includes the development of a flexible system of educational, recreational, interpretive and performance spaces located on converted rolling stock. Repurposed former rail cars take on new roles as play equipment, performance spaces, interpretive exhibits, retail and dining space and artist galleries.



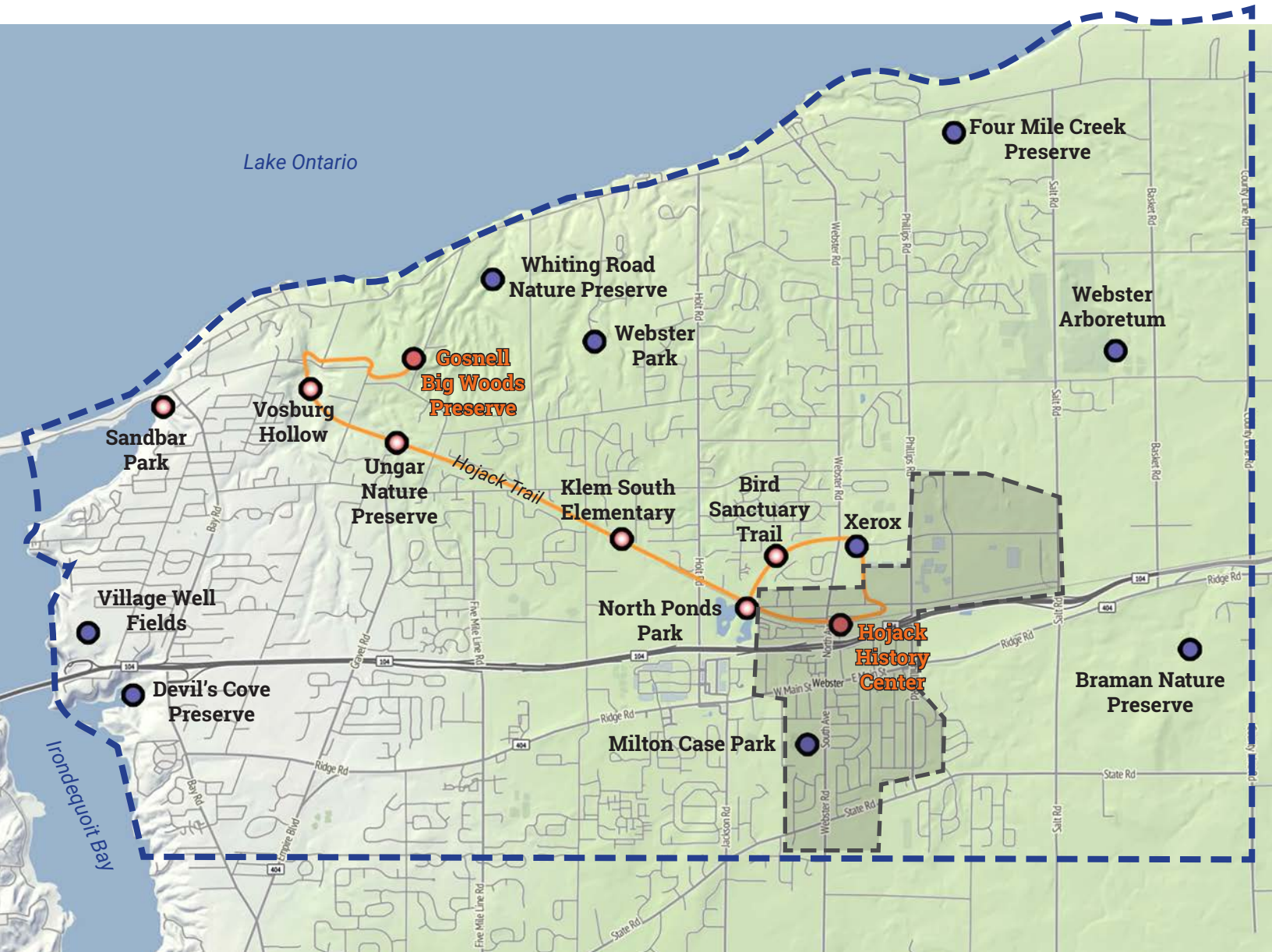
Former Hojack Railroad baggage depot, now disassembled and in storage. This building could be reassembled as part of an interactive historic education station.



# Community, Environment & Education Network

## Network Map

The organization and concept of the Community, Environment & Education Network will take greater form as the collaborative process among network partners continues. Several potential sites been preliminarily identified, though no components of the network have been finalized. The Hojack Rail Trail is envisioned to become the spine of the network. This corridor traverses a large portion of the Town and through the Village, linking thousands of residents together and with the community's downtown core and untouched mature forests. As the planning, design and engagement process builds, the breadth and diversity of sites will be a significant factor in determining the final configuration.



- Phase 1 Education Station Sites
- Phase 2 Network Sites
- Potential Future Sites



*“Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.” ~ Henry Ford*

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