



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE – APPLICATION TEMPLATE

BASIC INFORMATION

Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Region: Finger Lakes

Municipality Name: Village of Webster

Downtown Name: Village of Webster

County: Monroe

Downtown Description - Provide an overview of the downtown and summarize the rationale behind nominating this downtown for a Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award):

The Village of Webster historically functioned as the economic heart of the community. However, over the past 20-30 years private investment focus has shifted into the Town of Webster. In 2015, the Webster Economic Development Alliance completed a Community Investment Strategy (CIS) to guide public and private investment throughout the Town and Village of Webster. Public outreach efforts conducted during strategy development indicated that community residents desire a strong, enjoyable and vibrant Village atmosphere. Residents noted that the generally poor aesthetics and conditions of Main Street properties is a turn-off and causes them to shop/dine/visit elsewhere. The CIS highlighted several recommendations for public and private investments in the Village of Webster, which would be the implementation focus of our community's Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

DOWNTOWN IDENTIFICATION

This section should be filled out with reference to the criteria set forth in the DRI Guidelines.

- 1) Boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhood.** Detail the boundaries of the targeted neighborhood, keeping in mind that there is no minimum or maximum size, but that the neighborhood should be compact and well-defined. Core neighborhoods beyond a traditional downtown or central business district are eligible, if they can meet other criteria making them ripe for investment.

The boundaries of Webster's target neighborhood are coterminous with the boundaries of the Webster Village Business Improvement District. In general, the target area comprises West Main Street and significant portions of East Main Street (SR 404), North Avenue and portions of South Avenue (SR 250), centered on the 4-corners intersection of these corridors.

- 2) Size.** Outline why the downtown, or its catchment area, is of a size sufficient to support a vibrant, year-round downtown, with consideration of whether there is a sizeable existing, or increasing, population within easy reach for whom this would be the primary downtown.

Webster's Downtown Revitalization target area is at the core of the Village of Webster, a growing community of several distinct single-family, multi-family and mixed-use neighborhoods with an all-time high population of 5,400. The downtown target area is within walking distance of greater than



50% of this population, and is also within walking distance of the majority of the 4,900 Xerox Corporation employees at the Xerox Webster Campus. The downtown currently functions as a central destination for personal and professional services, including banking, insurance, legal, daycare and specialty retail. In addition, downtown is the hub of the broader Webster community's arts, culture and entertainment activities, and is the location of festivals, concerts, parades, outdoor movies and theatre, with over 35,000 visitors annually. A collection of restaurants, eateries, bars and pubs also make downtown a destination for nightlife in Webster. With 60 market-rate units currently under construction, recent investments in the Village have added over 300 units in the past 10 years following a demographic/cultural shift and return to urban living.

3) Past Investments & Future Investment Potential. Describe how this downtown will be able to capitalize on prior, and catalyze future, private and public investment in the neighborhood and its surrounding areas.

The downtown target area has received significant public investment recently in the form of new paving for Routes 404 and 250, with NYS spending over \$3 million in 2015. The Village of Webster is in the process of undertaking \$1.05 million in streetscape improvements along North Avenue, with construction anticipated in 2017/2018; this includes over \$800,000 in federal transportation funding. These improvements leverage over \$12 million in private investment planned and underway on the construction of 90 new residential units and new restaurants along North Avenue.

The Village of Webster and its partners have undertaken several studies and planning initiatives since 2009 to create policies and a framework for public and private investment in the target area. The culmination of this is the recently completed Community Investment Strategy, which includes an entire section on Village Downtown Revitalization describing goals, strategies and priority projects for implementation.

There are several vacant, underutilized and/or disinvested properties located in the target area ready for investment. Throughout downtown, numerous properties suffer from disinvestment as the age of the structures - many over 100 years old - and extent of required improvements have precluded investment. In addition, approximately 50 acres of vacant industrial/commercial land exist at the northern end of the target area as part of the Xerox Webster Campus. These lands hold significant development potential due to their location and available infrastructure to support new construction, and are envisioned to become a high-quality technology park and major employment center in Eastern Monroe County.

Formed in 2002, the Webster Village Business Improvement District (BID) coordinates arts, cultural and entertainment events throughout the year to attract people into the Village target area. As a result of these efforts, the Village of Webster is the center of cultural and seasonal events in the community and annually attracts 35,000 visitors to festivals, concerts, and parades. The annual organizational budget appropriated for these activities is approximately \$35,000.



- 4) Job Growth.** Describe how recent or impending job growth within, or in close proximity to, the downtown will attract professionals to an active life in the downtown, support redevelopment, and make growth sustainable in the long-term.

The downtown target area includes a small portion of the Xerox Wilson Center for Technology Campus. The Xerox Wilson Center includes over 5 million square feet of office, laboratory, manufacturing and warehouse space. With 4,900 employees, Xerox Corporation is the largest employer in Webster and fourth largest in the Rochester metro. A significant economic development and employment generation initiative currently underway is the transformation of the Xerox West Campus into a high-tech business park. The West Campus is a 400,000 square foot complex on 88 acres closely associated with the downtown target area currently supporting approximately 400 jobs.

The Webster Economic Development Alliance has taken preliminary coordination steps with Xerox Corporation management to conduct visioning for the future of the West Campus complex, and this project is envisioned to be a major employment generator for both Webster and the Finger Lakes Region. The West Campus is located within walking distance of downtown pending improved trail and sidewalk connections. This proximity would allow future employees to live downtown and walk to work, and also for employees to visit downtown as part of their morning commute or during lunchtime. The combination of urban living in mixed use neighborhoods and a reduced commute to work is highly sought after by the millennial generation and is a significant, and rare, quality of life attribute available in Webster's downtown.



- 5) Attractiveness of the Downtown.** Identify the properties or characteristics the downtown possesses that contribute or could contribute, if enhanced, to the attractiveness and livability of the downtown. Consider, for example, the presence of developable mixed-use spaces, housing at different levels of affordability and type, healthy and affordable food markets, walkability and bikeability, and public parks and gathering spaces.

The central core of the downtown target area has the greatest density of mixed-use space within the broader Webster community. Multi-story mixed-use buildings line East and West Main Street with most including upper story residences at varying levels of affordability. Numerous additional buildings are available for conversion to mixed use, with a significant conversion underway that will add 20 market-rate units within a former cold-storage warehouse on North Avenue.

Completed in 2015, Webster's Town/Village Community Investment Strategy promotes the continued expansion of residential density within downtown, including the construction of multi-story mixed-use structures where possible and appropriate. The target area is serviced by transit and is also bisected by two primary off-road trails that partially connect the Village core with neighborhoods in the Town of Webster and the Xerox Campus. These trails are further connected to the neighborhoods within the Village via bike-lanes and sidewalks. The target area includes a central community park that is the host to outdoor concerts, movies and festivals throughout the year.

Finally, the target area includes the Harmony House. Constructed in 1899, this historic 3-story, 12,000 square foot building currently functions, albeit poorly, as a performance hall for concerts, weddings and other arts events. The revitalization and renovation of this structure to support expanded utilization has been identified as a priority investment project for the Village.

- 6) Policies to Enhance Quality of Life.** Articulate the policies in place that increase the livability and quality of life of the downtown. Examples include the use of local land banks, modern zoning codes, complete streets plans, or transit-oriented development. If policies achieving this goal are not currently in place, describe the ability of the municipality to create and implement such policies.

The Village of Webster and the Webster Economic Development Alliance (WEDA/Alliance) have conducted extensive planning and land use initiatives since 2009 to prepare the community for appropriate growth and investment. Development and investment downtown is guided by the Village's Comprehensive Plan and Village Core Revitalization Plan (2011) which have established broad policies to promote walkability, community character and mixed use development in the downtown target area. In addition, design guidelines (2011) were established for each zoning district in the target area, many of which have been codified in recent updates to the Village's zoning ordinance.

In 2013, the Village finalized a Circulation, Accessibility and Parking Study utilizing federal transportation funds. The findings from this study have led to several capital projects in the Village to improve walkability and bikeability, and were the backbone of the Village's 2014 award of over



\$800,000 in federal transportation monies for bike/ped improvements along North Avenue currently underway.

The 2015 Community Investment Strategy is the culminating planning/policy document, coalescing the findings from the 2009-2014 efforts into a concise set of goals, objectives, tactics and priority investment projects. The continued progress from planning to implementation is a testament to the commitment of Village leadership and the valuable guidance provided by the Alliance. As a result, the Village of Webster is ready to move forward with its Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

- 7) **Poverty Reduction.** The FLREDC has identified reduction of poverty as a primary goal of its regional economic development strategy. Please identify if and how the proposed revitalization efforts would provide an opportunity to support this strategy.

The majority of the downtown is located within the 2014 Low/Moderate Income Upper Quartile Ranking provided by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, July 2014. In addition to public infrastructure improvement projects, the proposed Village of Webster Downtown Revitalization Initiative will also seek to support the revitalization of vacant, aging and disinvested properties. Low and moderate-income households currently occupy many of these properties. When implemented, the program will improve access to quality, affordable housing alternatives. In addition, the proposed Downtown Revitalization Initiative is an investment in community infrastructure that promotes the development of strong mixed-use urban neighborhoods that bolsters local small businesses. These businesses also provide the bulk of the community's low-wage, low-skill jobs and support a path to prosperity and an exit from poverty.

- 8) **Local Support.** Set forth the local and community support that exists for the revitalization of this downtown and the commitment among local leaders and stakeholders to building and implementing a strategic investment plan. Identify an initial local lead for the program that will work with outside experts to convene a local DRI Planning Committee to oversee the plan.

In 2009, the Webster Economic Development Alliance (WEDA/Alliance) was created in recognition of several on-going and emergent economic development challenges facing the community. A non-profit local development corporation, the Alliance Board includes leadership from the Town & Village of Webster, the Webster Central School District, the Chamber of Commerce and the Village Business Improvement District. The Alliance employs an experienced executive staff to facilitate high priority economic development initiatives. The creation and annual funding of WEDA by its partner organizations is recognition by community leaders that economic development activities to promote Webster, retain existing businesses, and recruit new investment cannot be successful in a piecemeal approach.

In 2015, WEDA completed the Community Investment Strategy (CIS), which highlighted Village Downtown Revitalization as the top priority in Webster. Public outreach efforts conducted in support of the CIS overwhelmingly indicated the revitalization of the Village as the priority investment preference among Town and Village residents, business owners and the community's youth. This is a strong indication of broad local and community support and commitment to the revitalization of downtown.



The Webster Economic Development Alliance is the logical local lead for Webster's Downtown Revitalization Initiative and will oversee all planning/implementation projects.

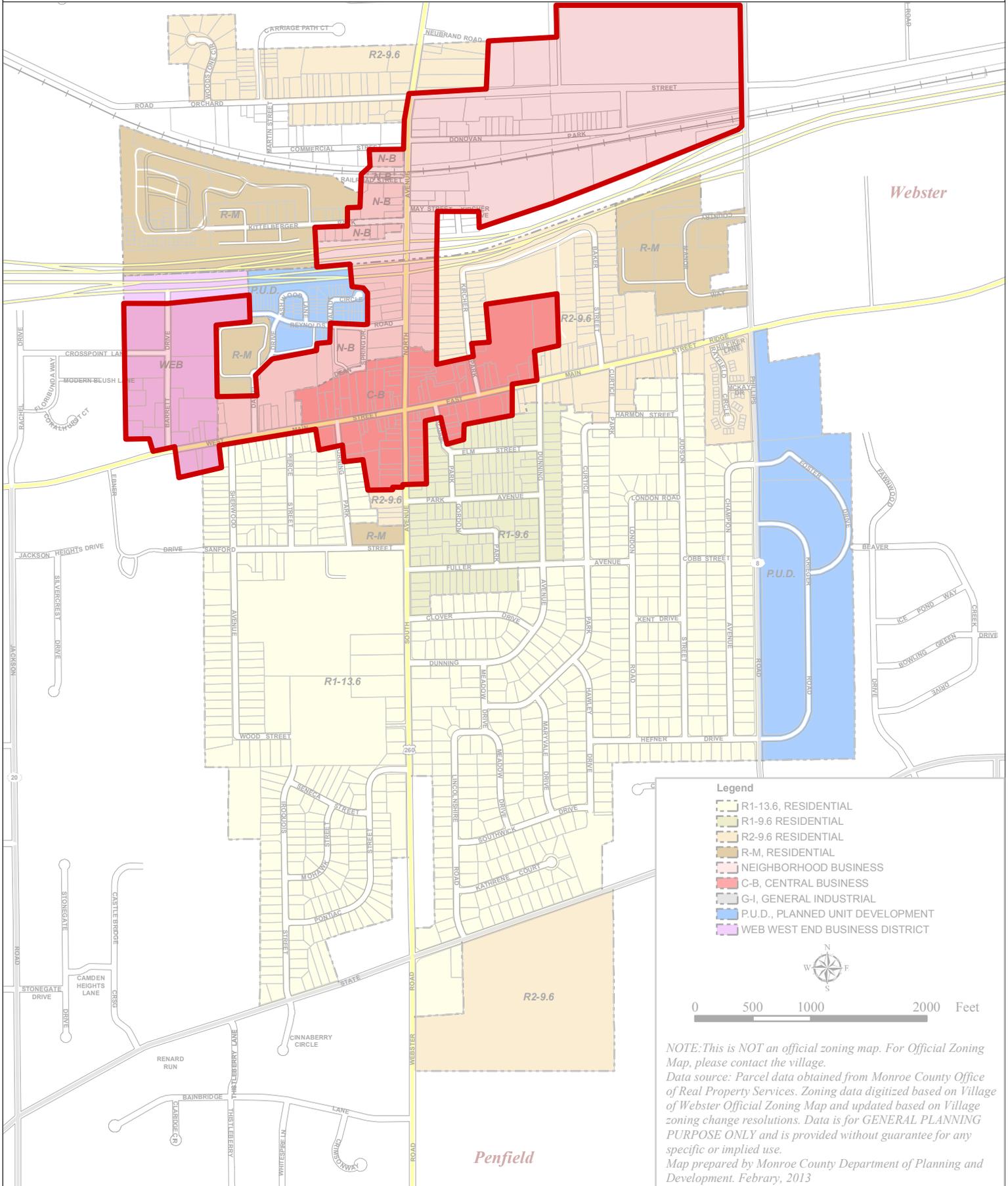
9) Other. Provide any other information that informed the nomination of this downtown for a DRI award.

Like so many communities throughout the US today, redevelopment in the Village of Webster is taking root along a wholly different set of assumptions about land, form and economic vibrancy. 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!

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 can only be accomplished through coordination, partnership and dedication from the entire community – leadership, local business, and citizens – working together in the spirit of cooperation to make Webster a premiere community in the Finger Lakes Region.

Yet, the Village and the Webster Economic Development Alliance are prepared, energized, and steadfast in their desire to bolster growth and guide future investment in downtown. Webster's Downtown Revitalization Program has been 7-years in the making, and we are ready to launch the next phase of our community's prosperous future with the support of the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council.

VILLAGE OF WEBSTER, NEW YORK



Downtown Revitalization Initiative Program Boundary





Strengthening Our Quality of Life

Community Investment Strategy
Webster, New York

November 2015



Learn more at WebsterTogether.com



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9 Mile Point Club, Inc
Webster Business Improvement District
Henderson Ford
Dr. Peter Pellitteri, DMD

Webster Economic Development Alliance Board of Directors

Carmen Gumina, President – School Superintendent
Ron Nesbitt, Vice-President – Town Supervisor
John Cahill, Secretary – Village Mayor
Virginia Nancy – Toddlers Workshop Daycare, Inc
Robyn Whittaker – Village Business Improvement District
Patrick Murray, Treasurer – Genesee Regional Bank
William Horeth – Kittelbergers Florist & Gifts
Mike O'Connor – Resident
Darrell Byerts – Village of Webster
Tim Mason – Mason Marketing
Greg Chambery – Maplewood Nursing Home
Ann Kowal – Special Care Systems

Plan Development Team

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Webster Economic Development Alliance | Highland Planning, LLC |
| Town of Webster | CZB, LLC |
| Village of Webster | Prosper Marketing + Design |
| Webster Central School District | Sukhenko Design |
| Webster Chamber of Commerce | Palmer Photography |
| Village Business Improvement District | ZaZa Digital Media |

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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!**

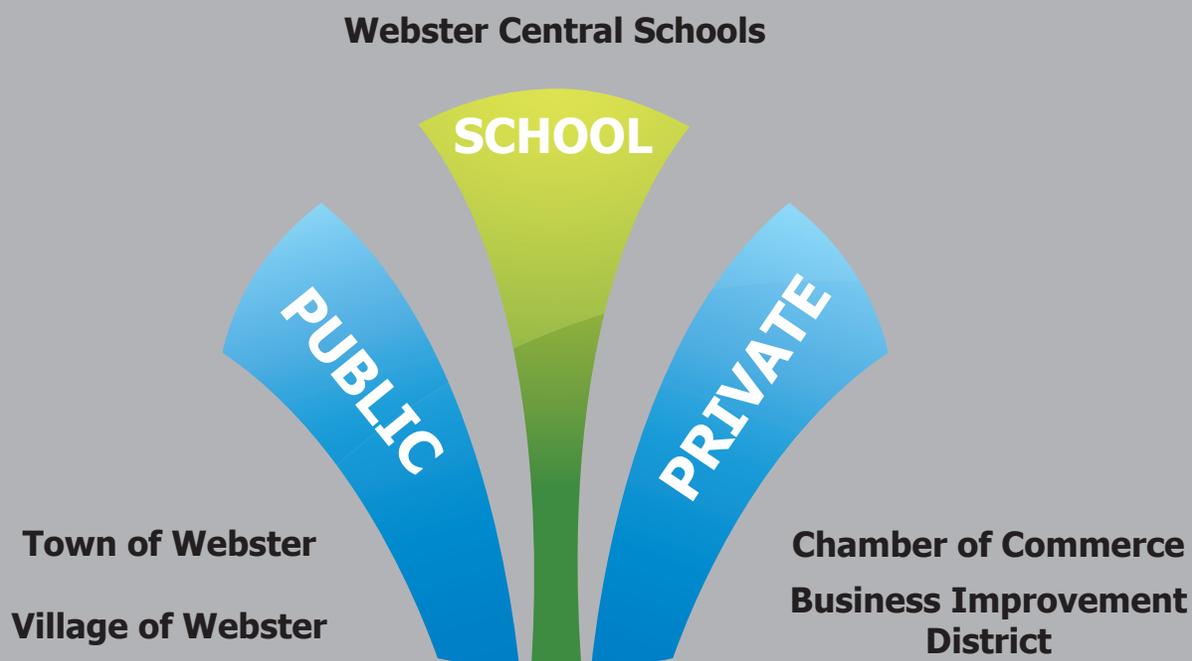


Webster Economic Development Alliance

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

The 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.



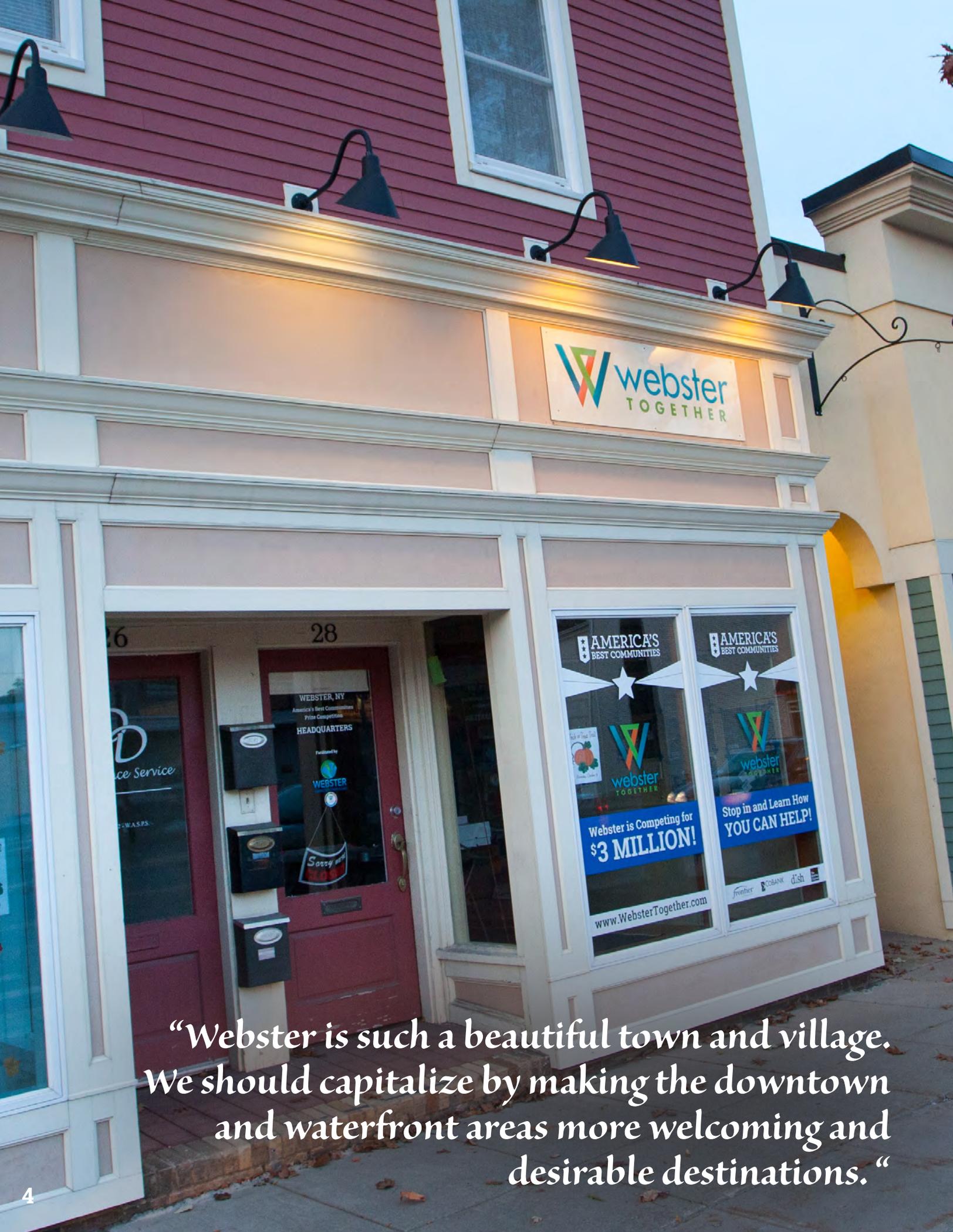
The Alliance is a private, non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York and is recognized as a 501-c-3 organization by the US Internal Revenue Service. As a Local Development Corporation, the Alliance's primary goals are to plan, organize and implement local community and 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

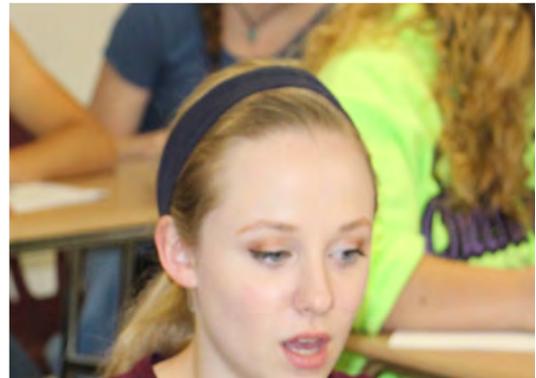


Dear Mr. and Mrs. Mack

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

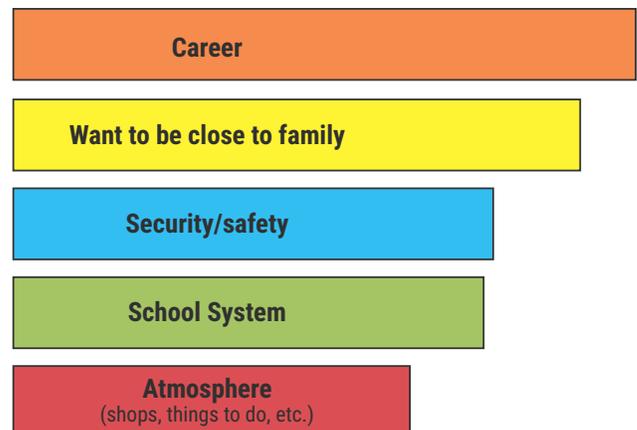
Webster's youth desire a central location for arts, culture and entertainment. They also called for more locations to hangout and gather in a safe environment. The Village of Webster is the logical location for the community's hub of entertainment. The student's interest in a community events calendar 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.





Dr. Shari L. Gustin
OPTOMETRIST
Michael W. Gustin
LICENSED OPTICIAN

81
WEBSTER EYECARE
ASSOCIATES

- Dr. Shari L. Gustin, Optometrist
- Dr. Amanda M. Sanford, Optometrist
- Dr. Raymond M. Lester, Optometrist
- Michael W. Gustin, Licensed Optician
- Bradley W. Cadwell, Licensed Optician

Webster Eyecare
SHIELD
CLEAR VISION
SINCE 1978

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.”

Community Engagement 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, Athletics & Tourism

6 Priority Investment Areas

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.

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.

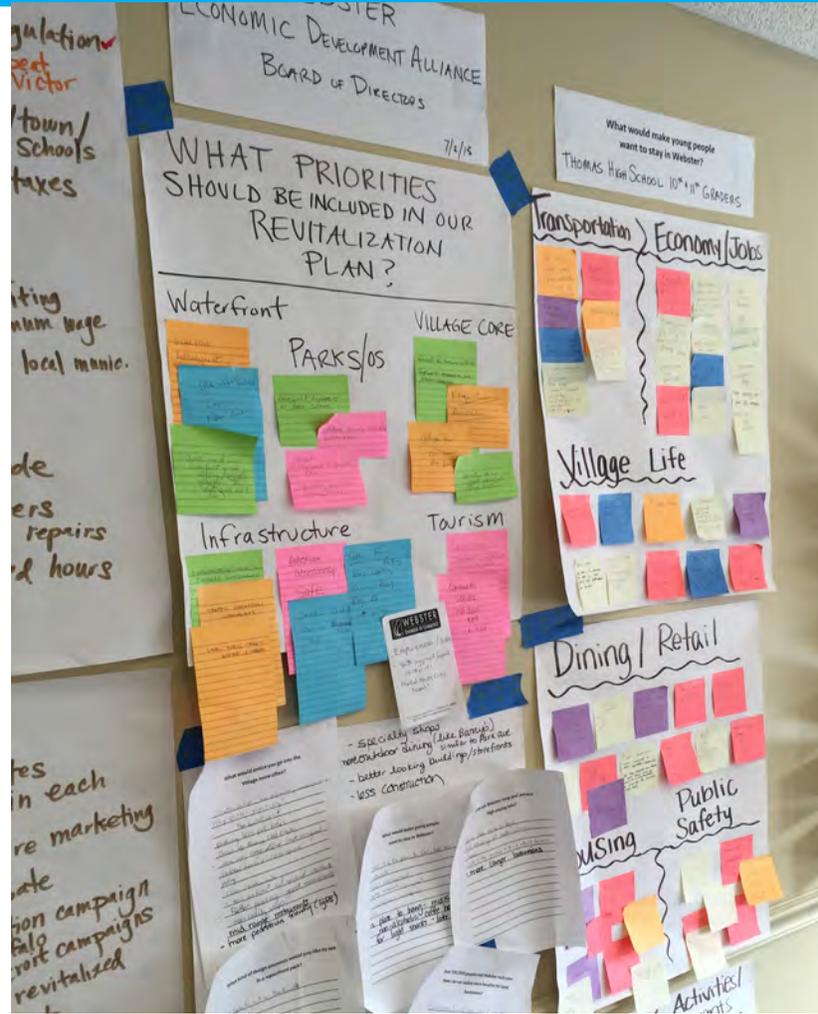
All of this can only be accomplished through **coordination, partnership and dedication** from the entire community's - leadership, local business, and citizens - working together in the spirit of cooperation to **make Webster one of America's Best Communities**.

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

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. Community Wellness Center
10. Community, Environment & Education Network



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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 center.

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

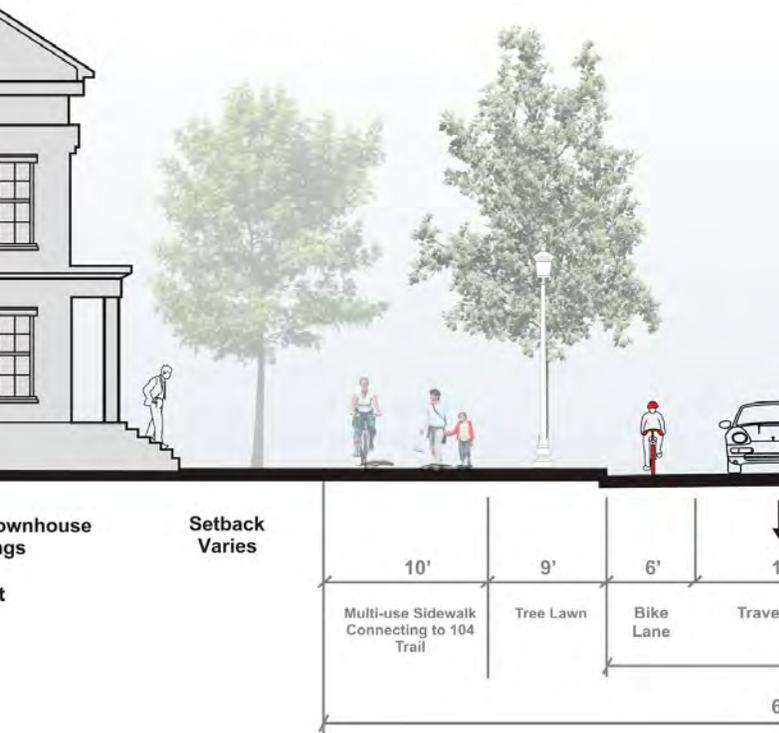
Targeted Streetscape Improvements

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.

