

# Village of Webster Village Core Revitalization Plan



Prepared by:

**Webster Community  
Coalition for Economic  
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(WCCED)**

10/1/2010

VILLAGE CORE REVITALIZATION STUDY  
VILLAGE OF WEBSTER

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	4-5
<b>SECTION I – INTRODUCTION</b> .....	6-10
<b>SECTION II – HISTORY OF WEBSTER’S VILLAGE CORE, CURRENT LAND USES AND VILLAGE CORE BOUNDARIES</b> .....	11-14
<b>SECTION III – PLAN VISION AND GOALS</b> .....	15-17
<b>SECTION IV – PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES</b> .....	18-27
<b>SECTION V –REFERENCES</b> .....	28

**APPENDICES:**

- APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF SWOT ANALYSIS**
- APPENDIX B – PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**
- APPENDIX C – TABULATION OF SURVEY RESULTS**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### VILLAGE OF WEBSTER VILLAGE CORE REVITALIZATION PLAN

#### **Preface**

The purpose of the Village Core Revitalization Plan for the Village of Webster is to:

- Provide a guide for Village government, for property owners and for businesses in their decision-making in order to capitalize on village core assets and to strengthen commerce in the business district.
- Intended to strengthen the business core of the community and preserve its unique characteristics.
- Improves the competitiveness of the Village in securing federal and state assistance for Village priority projects.

#### **Section I: Introduction**

A review is made of both the need for and the purposes of preparing the Village Core Revitalization Plan, its relationship to the Village's Comprehensive Plan, and background on the purposes of comprehensive planning. The Revitalization Plan is intended to serve as both a stand-alone document that can be used as the basis for grant assistance applications as well as an integral part of the Village's Comprehensive Plan which is being prepared on a parallel course.

The section provides discussion of a SWOT analysis undertaken as part of the planning work and reviews public participation efforts and a survey of building property owners in the Village Core. There is also a listing of the various elements included in the Plan.

#### **Section II: History of Webster's Village Core, Current Land Uses and Boundaries of the Village Core Study Area**

The origins of Webster's Village core or center are reviewed from the early 1800's. Originally an agricultural center and distribution point for the larger Town, the Village core developed into the primary hub of commercial and industrial developments well as the focus of the community's social life. Later, suburban residential growth along with the location of a major Xerox

Corporation facility and the construction of Rt. 104 transformed the community. Since 2000, commercial expansion in the surrounding Town has diminished the role of the Village as the primary center for commercial activity in the area but the Village core is still attractive and vibrant and there is potential for new retail, residential, and office uses.

The section provides brief review of current land uses in the Village Core. There is also a description of the boundaries of the area defined as the Village Core for purposes of the Plan.

### **Section III: Plan Vision, Goals and Objectives**

A vision statement for the future of the Village Core is set forth as are goals that support the vision statement. These are organized around the following community planning concerns:

- Making Webster's Core a Good Place to Do Business
- Regional Connections
- Village Core to be Aesthetically Pleasing
- Stress Village Core Identity and Role as a Gateway
- The Village Core as a Place for People
- Wayfinding and Convenient Parking
- Accessibility and Safety

### **Section IV: Implementation Strategies**

This section of the Plan presents a number of planning recommendations that will, if implemented, further the goals established for the Village Core Revitalization Plan. These recommendations or strategies are organized around the major topics established in the goals section of the plan. The timing for implementation of each strategy and identification of responsible parties are addressed in this section. The section concludes with a discussion of the Main Street Four Point Approach and its potential usefulness for Webster's Village Core Revitalization

## **I.: INTRODUCTION**

### **A. VILLAGE CORE REVITLIZATION PLAN**

This Village Core Revitalization Plan for the Village of Webster is intended to guide Village Government, local development organizations, property owners and businesses in their decision-making in order to capitalize on downtown assets and to strengthen commerce in the business district. The plan is also intended to strengthen the core of the community and preserve its unique characteristics.

### **B. COORDINATION WITH VILLAGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Village Core Revitalization Plan has been prepared in concert with the preparation of an update Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Webster. The Revitalization Plan is to be incorporated as part of the Comprehensive Plan and is intended to advance comprehensive planning goals for the community.

Comprehensive Plans, often referred to as master plans, are intended to establish guidelines for the future growth and development of a community. They represent the adopted official statement of a local legislative in regard to both future development and conservation of existing resources. Master Plans set goals, examine existing conditions, and provide long term visions for the physical, social, and economic characteristics of the community in the years ahead. Equally important, master plans outline the policies, guidelines and recommendations that will bring these visions to reality. The Village of Webster is preparing its updated Comprehensive Plan under New York State General enabling legislation including Municipal Law Article 5-J, Sections 7-722 and 7-741 of Village Law. The purposes of the Plan are to:

- Identify community goals and recommended actions to achieve those goals
- Provide an outline for orderly growth, providing continued guidance for decision-making
- Forge a document which focuses on immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development

While New York State does not require the preparation and adoption of master plans by local governments by local governments, it does greatly encourage such planning and provides a process for this in the statutes including the means to adopt a formal master plan. Equally important, New York State's statutes require that local zoning laws, and all other land use regulations, be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive (or well considered) plan. Accordingly, master or comprehensive plans should provide the backbone for local zoning

ordinances and will provide a legal defense for community regulations. Adopted plans also can provide the basis for other actions affecting the development of the community.

Comprehensive Plans bring a number of other benefits to communities as the Plan:

- Represents the adopted official statement of a local legislative body in regard to both future development and conservation of existing resources
- Examines existing conditions, sets goals, and provides long-term visions of the community's future and strategies for reaching these goals
- Improves chances for grants and loans
- Provides a more welcoming environment for economic growth.

### C. PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process began in October of 2009 when the Webster Community Coalition for Economic Development (WCCED) authorized staff to begin preparation of the Revitalization Plan. WCCED is a public-private non-profit Local Development Corporation formed under the laws of the State of New York and is recognized as a 501 C-3 organization by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. WCCED was created by representatives of the Town and Village of Webster, the Webster Central School District, the Village of Webster Business Improvement District, and the Webster Chamber of Commerce. These entities contribute financially to the organization to support staff and programs. Additional contributions come from private businesses and individuals in the community.

WCCED's primary goals are to plan, organize and implement local community and economic development activities for the Webster area. One of its priority activities involves the provision of assistance for the preparation of community and economic development plans and strategies. When WCCED was being organized, Village representatives had expressed great interest in seeing a Village core revitalization plan. The Village has not had such a plan and its absence was seen as an impediment to securing outside aid such as grant assistance from New York State's Main Street Program.

In addition to the above, there were a number of reasons identified by WCCED for developing a Village Core Revitalization plan. These included:

- The Downtown area is a symbol of community health, local quality of life, pride and community history. These are all factors in the community's efforts to sustain itself and improve economic vitality. They also have town-wide implications as it

is much easier to attract investment to any area of the community when you can proudly exhibit a vibrant center.

- A vibrant downtown retains and creates jobs which translate into a stronger tax base. Long term revitalization strategies facilitate the establishment of viable businesses that use public services and provide tax revenues for the community.
  
- The downtown area is a good incubator for new small businesses which form the building blocks of a healthy economy.
- A vital downtown area uses land, infrastructure, and tax dollars efficiently by concentrating activities and creating a “critical mass” of complimentary uses.
- A healthy downtown helps protect property values in surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- The traditional downtown area is an ideal location for independent businesses.
- A revitalized downtown increases the community’s options for goods and services including basic staples, professional services, restaurants or other functions such as housing and entertainment.
- Downtown provides an important civic forum where citizens can congregate and interact. Parades, festivals, street parties, and other celebrations along with farmers’ markets reinforce the sense of community.

A SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Weaknesses) of the area was also undertaken by the Steering Committee to identify the positive and negative forces within and without the area and to develop a full awareness of the local situation. This awareness was intended to help with planning and decision-making. Additionally, the SWOT analysis was intended to help the Steering Committee to focus on goals, objectives and strategies which would:

- ❖ Build on strengths
- ❖ Minimize weaknesses
- ❖ Seize opportunities
- ❖ Counteract threats.

A summary of the SWOT Analysis based on community input is provided as Appendix A.

#### D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

From the beginning of the process, the opportunity for public involvement was of great importance. Two public informational meetings were held at the start of the planning exercise and another session was held to review the preliminary recommendations of the study. Additionally, the Plan Steering Committee, with the assistance of the Village of Webster Business Improvement District (BID), developed and distributed a community survey which was mailed to owners of properties in the Village core area,

Some 200 properties were identified as being within the Village core and, after eliminating multiple properties owned by the same individual or firm, government, or utilities, the mailing list was reduced to 150 property owners. Some 17 surveys were returned as undeliverable and 47 respondents returned completed surveys which represented an outstanding response rate of 35%. A copy of the survey is included as Appendix B.

A copy of the survey response compilation is included with Appendix C. The survey disclosed that a number of Commercial property owners in the Village viewed location and business opportunity as the principal reasons why they invested in the area. These owners overwhelmingly (78% to 22%) felt that access to their facilities and parking was adequate. Property owners also appeared to be very positive about the future of the Village's business district as over 64% indicated that they are considering making property improvements within the next two years.

Respondents to the WCCED survey identified the property tax load, building upkeep, utility costs and building appearance as the principal challenges of owning property in the Village. A full 86% also viewed revitalization of the business district as important to them.

In addressing the types of incentives or assistance that would be most helpful, façade improvement grants, energy efficiency grants and loans, and business assistance loans were selected in that order by survey respondents. These property owners also identified the types of services that were most needed from the Village and/or the Business Improvement District. These include tax incentives for investment, help with façade improvements, and more business activity.

## E. PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Village Core Revitalization Plan is organized around the following elements:

1. Introduction
2. History of Webster's Village Core, Current Land Uses and Study Boundaries

3. Community Vision and Planning Goals for the Village Core
4. Recommended Strategies and Implementation Recommendations

Additionally, appendices are included which provide background on community strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the public. Additionally, information is provided on a survey of property owners used in the planning process.

## **II. HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN WEBSTER, CURRENT LAND USE, AND VILLAGE CORE BOUNDARIES**

### **A. HISTORY OF WEBSTER'S VILLAGE CORE**

Many communities throughout the United States have a downtown or core area that has historically served as the core or center of civic and commercial activity. In the Village of Webster, the origins of the area referred to as downtown, or perhaps more appropriately, the town center, date back to 1812 when the first two buildings were constructed near the present four corners. One of these buildings was a store and the other a tavern. From this modest beginning, the community and its center began to grow becoming the commercial, social, and educational center of the town.<sup>1</sup>

The history of Village center reflects the changing economy of the community. The Village core was originally an agricultural center and distribution point for the town. The junction of Ridge Road and Webster Nine-Mile Point Road, which connected shipping points on the Erie Canal and the New York Central Railroad with a small port on Lake Ontario, was referred to as “the Village” because of a concentration of population and businesses. The railroad at the north end of the Village attracted dried or evaporated apple businesses and small wood-working industries. The Village continued to be the shipping center for the area’s dried apple industry until well after the First World War. The Village also had the world’s largest basket factory and was the center for the canning industry in Monroe County.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the 1900’s, several events significantly influenced the development of the Village and its downtown core. The first bank since the Civil War era was established in the core area and the Rochester-Sodus Bay Trolley connected Webster to Rochester leading to a major expansion of the Village residential area. In 1905, the Village was incorporated followed by municipal infrastructure improvements and services including fire protection, water service and sewage disposal.<sup>3</sup>

As the primary commercial hub of the area, the downtown area of Webster also became the focus of the community’s social life. The presence of the post office, library, banks, and government offices all served to bring people into the area. Further, downtown buildings also had several function providing retail space on the ground floor and offices or residential

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<sup>1</sup> Webster ... Through The Years, Esther Dunn

<sup>2</sup> Village of Webster Comprehensive Plan, 1998

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Reed, Materials prepared for development study, 1965

apartments on the upper floors. These tenants provided sufficient rental income for property owners to both make a profit and properly maintain their buildings.<sup>4</sup>

After World War Two, there were striking changes that transformed Webster's character. First, the agricultural nature of the area has been seen major encroachment by suburban growth moving outward from Rochester. The Town of Webster became one of the major suburban residential areas in Monroe County with its population more than doubling between 1950 and 1960. Substantial residential development has continued to the present. As a consequence, the agricultural industry that made the Village center a market point, administrative, social, and institutional center has largely disappeared.

Secondly, decisions made in the 1950's and 60's by the former Haloid Company, now Xerox Corporation, to invest in major office, research and manufacturing facilities to be located in the Village and the Town of Webster brought about extensive changes in population growth trends in the area. The construction of Route 104 also contributed greatly to the area's growth as access to the metropolitan area was vastly improved.

The most recent stage of growth in the Town of Webster (1980 to present) has been characterized by rapid expansion of residential development, the growth in commercial development undeveloped properties transferring to park land. Undeveloped land experienced a large reduction in total acreage from 6,944 in 2000 to 3,366 in 2006, a decline of 3,578 acres (51.5%). Undeveloped land presently accounts for 17.7 percent of the Town's total land area, down from 39.5percent in 2000.<sup>5</sup>

The population of the Webster area, outside the Village, grew substantially between 1980 and 2000 (latest census data available) claiming from 28,925 in 1980 to 37,926, an increase of 9,001 or 31.12%. In the same period, the Village of Webster went from 5,499 to 5,216, a loss of 283 residents or 5.15%.<sup>6</sup>

Along with population growth in the Town, there has been significant commercial expansion in the Town, particularly since 2000. This expansion includes the Webster Town Center and the Webster Woods Plaza along with a number of retail and service establishments located along the Route 404/Ridge Road Corridor. Other shopping and commercial centers in Webster include Webster Square, Webster Plaza, Wegmans Plaza and Lowes. These developments have certainly diminished the role of the Village core as the center for commercial activity in the Town but the downtown area is still attractive and vibrant. There is potential for new retail, residential, and

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<sup>4</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, "What Happened to America's Main Streets?"

<sup>5</sup> Town of Webster Comprehensive Plan Update, 2008

<sup>6</sup> Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and 2000 Census

office uses as evidenced by recent developments including the construction of an upscale steak house restaurant and a new multi-use office building as well as conversion of the former Key Bank into commercial and residential uses.

## **B. CURRENT LAND USE IN VILLAGE CORE**

Webster's Village Core is made up of a mixture of uses, including residential units in the form of single-family and multi-family dwellings and apartments, a variety of commercial units such as retail, restaurants, pubs, service businesses and banks, professional offices, as well as vacant storefronts and land. There are community services located within the Village Core including a Village Park, Village Hall, and the Northeast Joint Fire District Fire Station.

The main clusters of commercial uses occur along Main Street, divided by Rt. 250 (North Avenue) and on North Avenue up to Commercial Street and Donovan Park. There are relatively few vacant buildings in the study area and very few industrial uses.

Public parking is currently available in the following locations:

- Directly on East and West Main Street
- Behind the Village Hall and Fire Station
- Behind Village DPW buildings adjacent to Corning park
- Areas around Veteran's Memorial Park behind the north side of West Main Street
- Areas behind commercial buildings on the north side of East Main Street
- Area behind the north side of West Main Street opposite Pierce Street.

The majority of properties within the study area are owned by residents of Webster, Rochester and other areas in Monroe and Wayne Counties. A very small number of properties are held by owners in other parts of New York State or outside the state.

## **C. VILLAGE CORE BOUNDARIES**

The study area was defined by the Study Steering Committee as including all of the parcels that are currently zoned as Central Business including those with frontage on Main Street from just west of Corning Park to beyond Kircher Park. Other areas considered as part of the Village Core include the Barrett Road area which is classified as the West End Business District, an area adjacent to Daniel Drive which is classified in the zoning ordinance as neighborhood business, properties adjacent to North Avenue, south of Rt. 104, that are currently classified as neighborhood business, properties on the west side of North Avenue between Rt. 104 and

Donovan park that are currently industrial, and properties on the east side of North Avenue that are zoned industrial and include properties abutting May Street, Donovan park, and Orchard Street. The following map illustrates the Project Study Area.

### III. VISION AND GOALS FOR WEBSTER'S VILLAGE CORE REVITALIZATION

#### A. Vision Statement

A Vision Statement for the future of Webster's Core area was decided upon by the Study's Steering Committee. Visioning is a process by which a community envisions the future it wants, and then plans on how to achieve it. The process brings people together to develop a shared image of "where" they want their community to be in the future. Once a community has envisioned where it wants to be, it can begin to consciously work toward that goal.

The following statement reflects the Village Core Revitalization Committee's vision of what the Village Core should be in the future:

*Webster's Village Core will host mixed uses featuring shopping including niche retail, commercial and professional offices, dining, recreation, leisure-time activities, and living arrangements. The "small town" feel of the downtown will be emphasized by it being a walkable and bicycle friendly area. The historic nature will be enhanced through architectural features of new and old buildings. The core area will draw local residents as well as visitors to the area for local events, shopping and dining experiences. The Village Core, including the West End (route 404), the north part of the Village (Rt.104) and Main Street, will continue to function as gateways to the community and serve as the focal point of community activity.*

#### B. GOALS FOR WEBSTER'S VILLAGE CORE REVITALIZATION

The Joint Comprehensive Master Plan will be used as a basis for decisions that affect the physical, economic, and social character of the Village of Clyde and the Towns of Galen and Savannah. Accordingly, it must reflect the special needs, values and desires of residents in those

communities. Goals and objectives provide this specialized guidance, transforming collective community values into implementation strategies. These implementation strategies (Section IV) may be action items, coordination items, and/or require further study.

- **Goals:** General aims of the community that describes desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are both broad and long-range and represent an end to be sought although they may never actually be attained.

The following are the goals established for the revitalization of Webster's Village Core:

**A. Making Webster's Core a Good Place to Do Business**

Revitalization efforts need to enhance the mix of uses in the Village Core particularly on the ground floors of businesses that open up to the street. The Village Core should promote a synergy between the community and businesses to allow for increased diversity and activity.

**B. Regional Connections**

The core area should connect to nearby amenities and resources, such as hiking and biking trails, Town Centre, and Village Neighborhoods. Impediments to this connectivity, such as existing railroad tracks, should be removed.

**C. Village Core to be Aesthetically Pleasing**

The Village Core should be aesthetically pleasing with more cohesiveness in design and the identity of the area which it conveys to residents and visitors alike. Architectural and building standards should be employed to improve the future physical attractiveness of the core area.

**D. Stress Village Core Identity and Role as a Gateway**

The Village Core should be a highly identifiable unique part of the community and various improvements such as signs and streetscapes should maintain and enhance that identity. There should be BID signs marking the Village Core and incentives for improving landscaping and building appearance along with decorative improvements and features that would be unique to the downtown area.

**E. The Village Core as a Place for People**

The Village Core should be a place for people to live and do business, dine out, walk around, meet others, see art and local history, hear music and concerts, and enjoy holidays, festivals and local events. The streets, parking and open space should be designed to be flexible, attractive and to ensure a safe pedestrian environment. The Center Square should continue to function as the premier public place in the core area.

**F. Wayfinding and Convenient Parking**

The Village Core will continue to be an important civic, commercial, and residential district for the Village of Webster. Signage and markers must clearly direct residents and visitors to convenient parking close to downtown businesses and events. There should be a cohesive and comprehensive approach to wayfinding using design guidelines and stressing a unique sense of place for the core area.

**G. Accessibility and Safety**

The Village Core should be a place for people of all ages and abilities and access by car, bike, or feet should be safe and convenient.

## IV. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### INTRODUCTION

Implementation strategies offer the means to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Plan. These strategies vary in scope depending upon the intended result. For example, an implementation strategy can be specific, such as “pursue funding opportunities for renovation of the second floor of the Town Hall” or more general such as “continue efforts to actively promote and attract desired types of industry in the Village”.

The implementation program also sets forth time frames for implantation of the strategies and identifies the responsibility for achieving them.

### Types of Strategies

Implementation strategies are categorized into four different types including:

**Action:** Can be acted upon to produce a result

**Village and/or Town Board Action:** Reflects a policy which must be adopted by the legislative board(s) of one or more of the communities participating in this Plan

**Special Study Needs:** Additional study to determine best course of action

**Coordination:** Requires ongoing coordination with other parties outside a community or group of communities

### Related Goals

Strategies are organized by each of the goals identified in Section III.

### Priority for Implementation

Indicates when the strategy should be implemented on the basis of the following terms:

- Short-term (under 12 months)
- Medium-term (12 to 36 months)
- Long-term (over 36 months – ongoing)

### Responsible Government, Agencies and other Entities

Lists the governmental department as well as other agencies or groups that will lead implementation of the strategy.

**A. Goal A: MAKING WEBSTER’S CORE A GOOD PLACE TO DO BUSINESS**

**Revitalization efforts need to enhance the mix of uses in the Village Core particularly on the ground floors of businesses that open up to the street. The Village Core should promote a synergy between the community and businesses to allow for increased diversity and activity**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Type of Strategy and Responsibility</b>
Identify and fully utilize business assistance and incentive programs that are currently available to both retain and attract businesses to the Village Core	Short-Term	Action/ Coordination ----- BID / Village Board / Chamber / WCCED
Develop a vision of the types of businesses that are desirable in the Village Core and shape a marketing program around this vision	Short-Term	Special Study / Action ----- BID / Village Board / Chamber / WCCED
Work with Federal and State agencies and the banking community to establish a revolving loan fund program to assist business expansion efforts	Short-Term	Coordination / Action ----- BID / Village Board / WCCED
Expand efforts to engage SCORE, SUNY’s Small Business Development Center, and other business counseling programs to work individually with businesses and assist them in start-up and expansion plans	Short-Term	Coordination / Action ----- BID / Village Board / WCCED
Develop and maintain an information database of various grant and loan programs that can assist Village Core businesses or prospects	Short-Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board / WCCED
Develop marketing brochures/material for business attraction. Include demographic and market data, the current mix of traffic and pedestrian counts, information on special events, business assistance programs and incentives, and contact information	Medium Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board
Designate one person as principle contact for revitalization efforts in the Village core. This could increase the likelihood of securing outside		

aid and would develop relationships with the business community. This individual would also utilize networks of existing businesses, locally and regionally, to target prospects who may be interested in a Webster location	Short-Term	Action ----- Village Board
Coordinate and fully involve existing business and economic development organizations in revitalization and marketing programs to ensure that their individual efforts are fully aligned and that scarce resources are used most effectively. The Village Board, the Village Planning Board, the Village Preservation Committee, the Village of Webster Business Implement District, the Webster Community Coalition for Economic Development, the Webster Chamber of Commerce and others must be involved in revitalization	Medium-Term	Action ----- Village Board / Village Planning Board / Village Historic Preservation Commission / BID / WCCED / Chamber / others

**Goal B: REGIONAL CONNECTIONS**

The core area should connect to nearby amenities and resources, such as hiking and biking trails, Town Centre, and Village Neighborhoods. Impediments to this connectivity, such as existing railroad tracks, should be removed.

Strategy	Timing	Type of Strategy and Responsibility
Require housing and commercial developers to incorporate sidewalks or trails into their site design, linking to existing facilities	On-going	Special Study / Action ----- Village Board
Adopt access management regulations that dictate the use of inter-parcel connection requirements, shared driveways, etc	On-going	Action ----- Village Board
Address the need to overcome the barriers to safe and convenient connectivity which have been created by the Route 104 interchange	On-going	Special Study / Action ----- Village Board

**Goal C: VILLAGE CORE TO BE AESTHETICALLY PLEASING**

The Village Core should be aesthetically pleasing with more cohesiveness in design and the identity of the area which it conveys to residents and visitors alike. Architectural and building standards should be employed to improve the future physical attractiveness of the core area.

Strategy	Timing	Type of Strategy and Responsibility
Work with property owners in the Village Core to access grants and loans for improvements (façade, signage, landscaping)	Short Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board /WCCED
Continue to provide appropriate building code information to property owners	On-going	Action ----- Village Board
Investigate means for priding tax incentives for property owners interested in rehabilitating building in the core area	Short-Term	Special Study / Action ----- WCCED / Village Board
Create and adopt design and architectural standards or guidelines to complement use and bulk requirements for commercial developments	Short-Term	Special Study / Action ----- WCCED / Village Board
Convene a forum(s) and/or undertake other ways of communicating with business district property owners in order to educate them as to the advantage of maintaining and improving their properties.	Short-Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board
A property standards checklist and design standards should be developed to provide clear and concise guidelines to property owners in the business district	Short-Term	Special Study / Action ----- Village Board

**Goal D: STRESS VILLAGE CORE IDENTITY AND ROLE AS A GATEWAY**

The Village Core should be a highly identifiable unique part of the community and various improvements such as signs and streetscapes should maintain and enhance that identity. There should be BID signs marking the Village Core and incentives for improving landscaping and building appearance along with decorative improvements and features that would be unique to the core area.

Strategy	Timing	Type of Strategy And Responsibility
Prepare a “gateway” plan for the Village of Webster that will define limits or boundaries for the Village Core, stress the unique characteristics of Webster’s neighborhoods and quality of life, and provide visitors with a definitive image of Webster.	Medium-Term	Special Study / Action ----- BID / Village Board
Municipal theme or themes for the Village Core and districts should be developed that will describe Webster to visitors. i.e. family and community, history (people, events, industry, activities, commerce), etc.	Medium-Term	Action ----- BID /Village Board / WCCED / Chamber
Select and install various components of a gateway plan such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signs</li> <li>▪ Art</li> <li>▪ Landscaping</li> <li>▪ Surface materials</li> <li>▪ Banners</li> <li>▪ Lighting</li> <li>▪ Streetscapes</li> <li>▪ Information</li> <li>▪ Wayfinding</li> </ul>	Long-term and On-going	Special Study / Village Action ----- BID / Village Board
Recognize the importance of “branding” and the need to “sell” the Village with cohesive approaches that involve the Chamber of Commerce, the BID, SCORE, and marketing professional as appropriate.	Medium-Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board

Strategy	Timing	Type of Strategy And Responsibility
Various State programs such as the “Brownfields” program could potentially be a source of funding for a targeted marketing strategy	Medium-term	Action ----- BID / Village Board

**Goal E: THE VILLAGE CORE AS A PLACE FOR PEOPLE**

The Village Core should be a place for people to live and do business, dine out, walk around, meet others, see art and local history, hear music and concerts, and enjoy holidays, festivals and local events. The streets, parking and open space should be designed to be flexible, attractive and to ensure a safe pedestrian environment. The Center Square should continue to function as the premier public place in the core area

Strategy	Timing	Type of Strategy and Responsibility
Continue Village and BID support and organization of festivals, movies, concerts and other events that draw residents and visitors to the Village Core	On- going	Action / Coordination ----- Village Board / BID
Encourage organizations sponsoring events and development activities in Webster to cooperatively promote the Village Core and coordinate marketing efforts. i.e. BID, Farmers Market, Chamber, Churches, Historical Society, School District, Town Parks and Recreation Commission, and others	Short term and On-going	Action / Coordination ----- BID / Village Board
Housing in the Village core area is important and developers should be encouraged to build market rate and upscale housing	Medium-Term	Action ----- Village Board
North Avenue needs to be promoted as an area with viable development potential	Medium Term	Special Study / Action ----- BID / Village Board
Improvements and coordination of various websites promoting Webster should be undertaken with consideration given to sharing	Short - Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board / Chamber /

of resources and development of one central website that is superior in quality and usability		WCCED
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**Goal F: WAYFINDING AND CONVENIENT PARKING**

The Village Core will continue to be an important civic, commercial, and residential district for the Village of Webster. Signage and markers must clearly direct residents and visitors to convenient parking close to downtown businesses and events. There should be a cohesive and comprehensive approach to wayfinding using design guidelines and stressing a unique sense of place for the core area.

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Type of Strategy And Responsibility</b>
The Village and the BID should consider the design and installation of distinctive wayfinding signs that are unique to Webster yet centered around a common theme to help make people feel welcome in the Village Core and to make it easier to maneuver it, whether by foot, bicycle or car.	Medium Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board
Public parking in the Village Core needs to be effectively managed with improved signage and efforts to dispel the perceptions that there are too few parking spaces	Medium term	Action ----- BID / Village Board
Maps and kiosks should be considered ad village quadrants should be labeled	Medium Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board

**Goal G: ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY**

The Village Core should be a place for people of all ages and abilities and access by car, bike, or feet should be safe and convenient.

Strategy	Timing	Responsibility
Provide ample accommodations for non-motorized forms of transportation	Short Term	Action ----- BID / Village Board
Educate community about benefits of non-motorized travel and available facilities.	On-going	Action ----- Village Board
Continue to look for opportunities to improve parking in the Village Core to support the business customer base	On-going	Action ----- BID / Village Board
Investigate means for improving pedestrian safety such as installing additional crosswalks. Capacity studies should be undertaken as part of this process	Medium-Term	Special Study / Coordination/ Action ----- Village Board / NYSDOT / Genesee Transportation Council

**MAIN STREET FOUR-POINT APPROACH**

As part of its work in identifying goals for revitalization of the Village of Webster’s core area and strategies for reaching these goals, the Study Steering Committee examined the Main Street Four-Point Approach. Main Street is a national program born out of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Since 1980, the National Main Street Center has been working with communities across the nation to revitalize historic commercial areas. Based on historic preservation, the Main Street approach was developed to save historic commercial architecture, but has become a powerful economic development tool as well. The Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of the downtown, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and marketing downtown as a fun place to visit is as critical to Main Street's future as recruiting new businesses, and rehabilitating buildings. Building on downtown's inherent assets -- rich architecture, personal service, and traditional values and most of all, a sense of place -- the Main Street approach supports entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern. It has

earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to local resources and conditions. And because it is a locally driven program, all initiatives stem from local issues and concerns.

## **FOUR POINT APPROACH**

The Main Street Four-Point Approach to commercial district revitalization:

### **The Four Points:**

The National Trust's Main Street Center offers a comprehensive commercial district revitalization strategy that has been widely successful in towns and cities nationwide. Described below are the four points of the Main Street approach which work to revitalize our commercial district.

#### **Design**

takes advantage of the visual inherent in Downtown by directing attention to all its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, landscaping, merchandising, displays and promotional materials. Its aim is to stress the importance of quality design in all of these areas, to educate people about quality design and to expedite improvements in the Downtown.

#### **Economic Re-development**

strengthens Downtown's existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. This is accomplished by retaining and expanding existing businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, by converting unused or underutilized space into productive property and by sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of Downtown business people.

#### **Organization**

Establishes consensus by building partnerships among various groups that have a stake in Downtown. This allows the Main Street revitalization program to provide effective, ongoing management and advocacy of the Downtown. Diverse groups from the public and private sectors (city and county governments, local bankers, merchants, the chamber of commerce, property owners, community leaders, etc.) must work together to create and maintain a successful program.

**Promotion**

takes many forms, but the aim is to create a positive image in order to rekindle community pride in Downtown. Promotion seeks to improve retail sales events and festivals and to create a positive public image of the Downtown in order to attract investors, developers and new business.

**Recommendations for Webster**

The Study Steering Committee recommends that the Village of Webster and its Business Improvement District (BID) follow the Main Street Approach as it provides a tried and proven model for prompting revitalization and economic development in the Village Core. Advancement of the goals and strategies set forth in the plan will help achieve the goals of the Main Street Approach relative to design, economic re-development, organization and promotion.

Organization is viewed by the Study Committee as the most important element in this approach and the Committee feels that a strong working relationship needs to be maintained between Village Government, the Business Improvement District, property owners and businesses. These parties are all crucial to the revitalization effort although it is recognized that Village government should be the driving force in bringing people together, determining needed projects and priorities, and marshalling the resources needed to revitalize the commercial district.

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## **APPENDIX A – SWOT EXERCISES (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)**

### **DOWNTOWN WEBSTER REVITALIZATION STUDY**

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS**

October 21 and 24, 2009

#### **CITIZEN INPUT FROM VISIONING AND SWOT EXERCISES**

SWOT analyses help communities to develop realistic assessments of how strengths and opportunities (internal factors) can counter weaknesses and threats (external factors) to their futures. They are simple yet comprehensive ways of identifying the positive and negative forces within and without communities and are critical to developing a full awareness of the local situation. In turn, this awareness can help with planning and decision-making. Finally, SWOT analyses help communities to:

- Build on strengths
- Minimize weaknesses
- Seize opportunities
- Counteract threats

A SWOT identification exercise was undertaken by WCCED during two public informational meetings in the fall of 2009. Below are the various SWOT factors identified through community input.

#### **STRENGTHS OF DOWNTOWN WEBSTER**

Location  
Family-oriented  
Connectivity/Access  
Good demographics/Household Income

Diverse Businesses Jobs  
Ample parking  
New development  
Form intact  
Charm & history  
Dual frontage  
E-Baum development  
Rich Historic background  
Cooperation between various agencies  
Political cooperation  
Surrounding neighborhoods  
Quality of Village life'  
BID / businesses working together  
Lack vacancies  
Vet park/events

## **WEAKNESSES OF DOWNTOWN WEBSTER**

Parking – location  
Type of Businesses  
Too specialized  
Lack of convenience goods  
Aesthetics/building conditions  
Signs detract  
Enforcement of codes  
Too busy – garish in appearance

## **WEAKNESSES (continued)**

Ridge Road/Rt. 250  
○ Lack of vitality – 4 corners  
Parking – location  
Perception of too little parking  
Main Street parking  
1 or 2 bad looking businesses  
Code process

Absentee landlords  
Not obtaining grants  
Some lack of pride in property  
Lack of financial resources

## **OPPORTUNITIES IN DOWNTOWN WEBSTER**

E-Baum Steakhouse  
State aid  
In-fill development  
Growth – stimulus / Interest in Village  
Tax credits  
Upper-story residential development / upper-scale  
Momentum  
Improved marketing  
Grants  
Nearby waterfront  
Work with churches  
Walkability  
Image – good strengths  
Expand sidewalks  
Location  
Proximity to new development  
Trail development  
Rails to trails  
Momentum and personnel

## **THREATS TO DOWNTOWN WEBSTER**

- ❖ Cost of doing business
- ❖ Lack of resources

## **THREATS (continued)**

- ❖ Real estate taxes
- ❖ Competition and pressures of other development in Town
- ❖ Water quality
- ❖ Increased traffic
- ❖ Truck traffic
- ❖ Poor signage
- ❖ Absentee landlords
- ❖ Lack of design guidelines
- ❖ Lack of uniformity / reverse
- ❖ Code enforcement
- ❖ Changing attitudes/ Take chances
- ❖ Apathy
- ❖ Visual pollution
- ❖ Lack of design guides
- ❖ Economy
- ❖ New York State government
- ❖ Government – not sympathetic to local needs
- ❖ State not business friendly
- ❖ Outside / unfunded mandates
- ❖ Future of Xerox

## APPENDIX B: - PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY

## Building Owner Survey

### Webster Downtown Revitalization Plan

Dear Property Owner:

The Webster Community Coalition for Economic Development (WCCED), in cooperation with the Village of Webster Comprehensive Planning Committee and the Webster Business Improvement District (BID), is developing a downtown revitalization plan for the Village of Webster. As a property owner located within downtown, your insight is important to the planning process. All answers will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous with data reporting occurring only in the aggregate. If you have questions regarding this survey, please contact WCCED's Economic Development Coordinator, Glenn Cooke, at (585) 269-4939 or by e-mail at [gcooke1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:gcooke1@rochester.rr.com). You can also visit with Glenn at his office in the Webster Village Hall. Please complete surveys by Friday, \_\_\_\_\_, 2010. Completed surveys can be dropped off at the Village Hall or faxed to Glenn at (585) 265-1004. Thank you for helping us make downtown Webster a better place to do business!

1. How many years have you owned this property? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is this your only commercial property? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
3. Do you operate a business on this property or rent or lease to another business?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Please describe the primary use of your property (i.e. food preparation service/service, office, tavern, retail, residential, etc.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What initially attracted you to buy property in downtown Webster?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Is the access to your facility and parking sufficient?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How many commercial spaces do you have in this building? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many commercial renters have you had in the last 10 years? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many residential units do you have in this building? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many residential renters have you had in the last 10 years? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Are you considering improvements to your property within the next 2 years? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

12. Are you experiencing any of the following challenges with your property?

- Building appearance \_\_\_\_\_
- Building upkeep and maintenance \_\_\_\_\_
- Filling vacancies \_\_\_\_\_
- Finding quality renters \_\_\_\_\_
- Crime such as vandalism or burglary \_\_\_\_\_
- Utility costs \_\_\_\_\_
- Property tax load \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. How important is the revitalization of Webster's downtown area to the success of your business?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Not important
- \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat unimportant
- \_\_\_\_\_ Somewhat important
- \_\_\_\_\_ Important

16. Have you used any incentives or government assistance programs for your business? (i.e. COMIDA, SBA Loans, SBA Loan Guarantee Program, etc)

17. What types of assistance would be useful to you?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Façade improvement grants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Energy efficiency grants or loans
- \_\_\_\_\_ Business assistance loans
- \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

18. What types of services would you like to see Village government and/or the Business Improvement District offer?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Help with façade improvements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Design standards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Increased business activity
- \_\_\_\_\_ More events
- \_\_\_\_\_ Expanded parking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tax incentives for property investments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

19. Is it a challenge for you to meet handicapped accessibility requirements? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Thank you for your help!**

APPENDIX C – RESULTS OF PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY

**BUSINESS DISTRICT PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY - VILLAGE OF WEBSTER**

April, 2010

**200 Properties / 150 Surveys Mailed / 15 Undeliverables Returned / 50 Respondents to Survey / 37% Response Rate for Surveys Delivered**

**Q1 -How many years have you owned this property?**

Years	Average
15.6	

**Q2 - Is this your only commercial property?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	yes	42	87.5%
2	no	6	12.5%
total		48	100.0%

**Q3- Do you operate a business on property or lease to another business?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Operate a business	24	49.0%
2	Lease to another	7	14.3%
3	Neither	9	18.4%
4	Do both	9	18.4%
Total		49	100.0%

**Q4- Please describe primary use of property?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Residential	19	29.2%
2	Food preparation	4	6.2%
3	Office	16	6.2%
4	Tavern	3	4.6%
5	Retail	8	12.3%
6	Other	15	23.1%
Total		65	100.0%

**Q5 - What initially attracted you to buy property in downtown Webster?**

**Q5 A**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Hometown	8	18.2%

**Q5B**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Family- owned	3	6.8%

**Q5C**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent

1	Good opportunity	14	31.8%
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<b>Q5D</b>		<b>Location</b>	
Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Location	15	34.1%

<b>Q5E</b>		<b>Price</b>	
Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Price	1	2.3%

<b>Q5F</b>		<b>Other</b>	
Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Other	3	6.8%

Total of Q5 responses 44 100.0%

**Q6 - Is access to your facility and parking adequate?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	37	78.7%
2	No	10	21.3%
Total		47	100.0%

**Q7- How many commercial spaces do you have in this building?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	1	19	45.2%
2	2	11	26.2%
3	3	3	7.1%
4	4	1	2.4%
5	5	0	0.0%
6	6 or more	2	4.8%
0	0	6	14.3%
Total		42	100.0%

**Q8- How many commercial renters have you had in the past 10 years?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	1	17	53.1%
2	2	5	15.6%
3	3	4	12.5%
4	4	3	9.4%
5	5	2	6.3%
6	6 or more	1	3.1%
0	0	14	
Total		32	100.0%

**Q9 -How many residential units do you have in this building?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	1	12	26.1%

2	2	4	8.7%
3	3	3	6.5%
4	4	2	4.3%
5	5	1	2.2%
6	6 or more	0	0.0%
0	0	24	52.2%
Total	46		100.0%

**Q10- How many residential renters have you had in the last 10 years?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	1	1	2.3%
2	2	1	2.3%
3	3	7	16.3%
4	4	2	4.7%
5	5	2	4.7%
6	6 or more	1	2.3%
0	0	29	67.4%
Total	43		100.0%

**Q11- Are you considering improvements to your property within the next 2 years?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	yes	31	66.0%
2	no	16	34.0%
total	47		100.0%

**Q12 Are you experiencing any of the following challenges with your property?**

Code		<b>Building appearance</b>	
1		Response	
<b>12A</b>	Building appearance	13	12.6%
Code		<b>Building Upkeep &amp; Maint.</b>	
1		Response	
<b>12B</b>	Building Upkeep & Maint.	15	14.6%
Code		<b>Filling vacancies</b>	
1		Response	
<b>12C</b>	Filling vacancies	8	7.8%
Code		<b>Finding quality renters</b>	
1		Response	
<b>12D</b>	Finding quality renters	7	6.8%
Code		<b>Crime - i.e. vandalism, burg</b>	
1		Response	
<b>12E</b>	Crime - i.e. vandalism, burg	8	7.8%
Code		<b>Utility Costs</b>	
1		Response	
<b>12F</b>	Utility Costs	17	16.5%

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Property tax load	28	27.2%
12G	Property tax load	28	27.2%
Code	<b>Other</b>		
1	Other	7	6.8%
Other		7	6.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>103</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Q13 D How important is the revitalization of Webster's downtown area to the success of your business?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Not important	5	11.1%
2	Somewhat unimportant	1	2.2%
3	Somewhat Important	17	37.8%
4	Important	22	48.9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Q14 Have you used any incentives or government assistance programs for your business?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	COMIDA	1	2.2%
2	SBA Loans	2	4.3%
3	SBA Loan Guarantee program	0	0.0%
4	Other	0	0.0%
5	No	43	93.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Q15 What types of assistance would be useful to you?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Façade improvement grants	20	40.8%
2	Energy efficiency grants/loans	19	38.8%
3	Business assistance loans	7	14.3%
4	other	3	6.1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Q16 What types of services would you like to see Village government and/or the Business Improvement District Offer?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Help with façade improvements	23	21.7%
2	Design standards	12	11.3%
3	Increased business activity	15	14.2%
4	More events	5	4.7%
5	Expanded parking	17	16.0%
6	Tax incentives for prop.inves.	29	27.4%
7	Other	5	4.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Q17 Is it a challenge for you to meet handicapped accessibility requirements?**

Code	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	16	34.0%
2	No	31	66.0%
Total		47	100.0%