

# Webster, New York

Live. Invest. Work. Play. Grow.

**A Vision for the Future**

Authored by:

**The Webster Chamber of Commerce Case for Business Committee**

*The Chamber appreciates the support provided by Matt Chatfield, Executive Director,*

*Webster Community Coalition for Economic Development.*



## A Recap on Growth and Prosperity: 1998-2015

In 1998, the Webster Chamber of Commerce established the *Case for Business Committee* (C4B) in an effort to support its focus on and continual improvement of the economic health of the Webster community as well as enhance market conditions for its members.

As the 1990's were drawing to a close, the availability of land in Webster encouraged rapid growth, both in commercial development and population. This dramatic increase in population also led to a community commitment to expanding athletic and recreational assets including an ice arena, 50-meter swimming pool, indoor field house and an all-weather track. These efforts and market conditions led the C4B to issue its inaugural report, *Webster: Destination for Recreation in 1999*.

These facilities bring hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to Webster for tournaments, meets, and other recreational pursuits. In 2003, Sports Illustrated named Webster its **Sportstown USA for New York State**.

Webster's growth continued into the 2000's and additional facilities, including two multi-purpose lighted synthetic turf fields, a major league turf lighted baseball field, and additional softball fields. In 2011, the Town of Webster dedicated its 43,000 square foot community center including a fully equipped fitness facility, 12,300 square foot gym, two racquet ball courts, arts and crafts room, and aerobic facility. Plans are currently underway to build the *Field of Dreams*, handicapped accessible ball fields.

Webster's natural setting and resources, excellent school system, well-maintained infrastructure and balance of residential/commercial/ and industrial property led to a "quality of life" focus in its second report, *Webster: Community of Choice* issued in 2007. This report focused on three key topics: Improvements to Ridge Road (Rte 404), continued revitalization of the Village of Webster, and the establishment of a technology zone along the Salt and Basket Roads corridor. The committee also identified a need for a professional to assist with the community's continued expansion and with municipal leadership led to the creation of a unique partnership with and among the Town and Village of Webster, the Chamber of Commerce, the Village Business Improvement District (BID) known as the *Webster Community Coalition for Economic Development (WCCED)* in 2009. WCCED's first task was to hire an executive director to plan, organize, and implement local community and economic development activities.

In 2015, Webster was recognized as one of America's 50 Best Communities by Frontier Communications and advanced into the quarterfinals of America's Best Communities prize contest. The ABC competition is a nationwide, multi-year process during which Webster (Town and Village) is competing against 49 other communities for a \$3 million grand prize and status as America's Best Community! Throughout 2015, the Webster Chamber of Commerce assisted the Webster Economic Development Alliance in the development of a resident-driven Community Revitalization Plan indicating where/how to invest \$3 million in our community. The Chamber is now excited to share its current, 2014-15 Vision Report which affirms and enhances prior target areas. Inside you will find Webster's many assets highlighted and C4B recommendations

to bolster and promote Webster as a destination for living, investing, working and playing. Enjoy the reading, share our excitement and why we believe Webster remains the Community of Choice!

Ann Carmody  
Past Chair, Board of Directors and  
Chair, Case for Business Committee  
Webster Chamber of Commerce

# Webster Chamber of Commerce

The Webster Chamber of Commerce is a core business organization in Webster that supports the economic well-being of its members and the community.

## OUR MISSION

The Webster Chamber of Commerce is a membership driven organization that provides networking, support, and education to its members and is dedicated to fostering collaboration and promoting Webster and its economic vitality.

## OUR VISION

Webster Chamber of Commerce is the pulse of Webster business, acting as a catalyst, and bringing Community, Government, and Business together, creating a strong *Community of Choice*.

## CORE VALUES

Core Values guide decisions and actions by the Chamber Board of Directors and committee members. They serve as “guard rails” for behaviors:

- Collaborative
- Diverse
- Trust
- Professional
- Visionary Ethical
- Relationship Builders

## OUR ACTIVITIES

- **Serve** as the voice of the businesses community and support their activities where needed.
- **Advertise** existing businesses, attract new investment and aid existing business expansions.
- **Promote** Chamber members, activities, events, and topics of economic concern.
- **Communicate** with municipalities, economic development organizations and business associations.
- **Provide** networking opportunities and educational programming relevant to local businesses.
- **Offer** health and dental insurance to Chamber business members.
- **Expand** online business promotion opportunities for members.

# 1: Introduction

The 2014-15 C4B Vision Report further supports the Chamber's strategic objectives by highlighting why Webster is a Community of Choice, not only within the greater Webster Community but also the Greater Rochester Region. This latest version of the Chamber's economic development vision encourages internal and external investment in the Webster community by residents, businesses and visitors.

The C4B Committee also identified a series of recommendations which bolster and promote Webster as a destination for living, investing, working and playing within the region including:

## **1. Improved Transportation Access**

Convenient, safe and enjoyable travel into and within the community is a critical economic issue.

## **2. Village Core Revitalization**

A strong, vibrant business core is a symbol of the community's economic health and overall quality of life.

## **3. Deep Lake Water Cooling**

Deep lake water cooling technology has the potential to distinguish Webster as an elite destination for industrial investment.

## **4. Support for WCCED**

WCCED plays a key role in the coordination of public and private economic development activities.

## Community of Choice

The Town of Webster continues to be a destination community in the Finger Lakes Region. The Chamber of Commerce Case for Business Committee has identified the following key community assets in support of this vision:

1. A well-defined and active village center
2. A broad range of residential housing alternatives
3. A high-quality education system
4. A diverse offering of natural resources, parks and open spaces
5. A broad variety of athletic and recreational programming
6. Convenient access to shopping and professional services
7. Accessible transportation and industrial infrastructure and
8. Extensive opportunities for investment and growth

## 2: Discover Webster

Where life is worth **Living.**

Where life is worth **Investing.**

Where life is worth **Working.**

Where life is worth **Playing.**

Live. Invest. Work. Play. Webster, New York is the Community of Choice for every aspect of your life, career, business and time away from home. Webster's comfortable, family-friendly living, desirable neighborhoods and convenient access to shopping, services and employment opportunities have made it one of the fastest growing communities in Monroe County. Visit us! Explore our community and **discover** why Webster is truly *Where Life is Worth Living.*



## Where Life is Worth **Living.**

### **Discover the home you're looking for in Webster**

Webster offers a diversity of housing alternatives, ranging from distinctive 20<sup>th</sup> century traditional neighborhoods and contemporary townhouse apartment communities, to grand waterfront estates on Lake Ontario.

### **Discover Child-Friendly Webster**

When it comes to child care, Webster offers many options, from center-based agencies to private, in-home care and independent nursery schools. The Webster Central School District partners with local agencies to provide Universal Pre-K for four year olds.

### **Discover fun in the heart of Webster.**

The Village of Webster is the center of cultural and seasonal events in the community and attracts over 35,000 visitors annually to festivals, concerts, and parades. Webster boasts significant recreational programming for all ages through its new Community Center and a partnership with the Webster Central School District. In addition to its vast recreational assets, Webster has a state-of-the-art library and numerous walking trails as well as one of Monroe County's largest parks.

### **Discover the answer to your craving in Webster.**

Webster is a shopping, dining and event destination within the northeastern quadrant of Greater Rochester. Our eclectic variety of stores, boutiques and restaurants attracts \$900 million in spending annually.

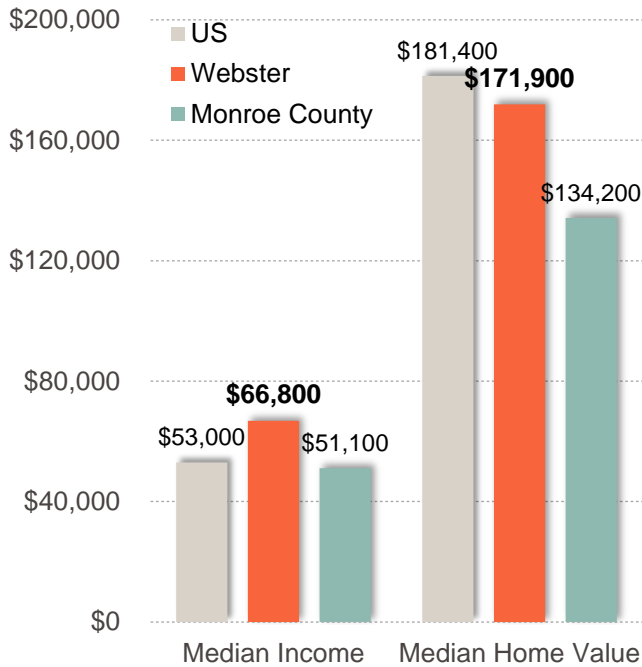


## Webster Central School District

Webster's educational system continues to be one of the community's greatest assets. WCSD is the second largest suburban school district in Monroe County, the 20<sup>th</sup> largest in New York State and home to nearly 9,000 students. In addition to per pupil costs among the lowest in Monroe County, the Webster Central School District offers and is:

- A leader in Advance Placement (AP) opportunities within Monroe County.
- A top 100 Music program in the United States.
- State and Nationally recognized Art, Robotics and Science Olympiad Programs.
- SAT and ACT scores above the state and national mean.
- WCSD graduates consistently receive millions of dollars in scholarships annually.

**Income and Home Value, 2013**



**Housing.** Webster's housing market offers significant value for existing and potential residents, with median home values five percent lower than the national median. Affordability is further increased, with median household incomes 26 percent above national and Monroe County levels. Lower housing costs coupled with higher incomes equate to higher discretionary incomes and an overall improved quality of life. A diversity of neighborhoods provides a broad range of housing types and living arrangements.

Whether you are just starting out, beginning a family, are new empty-nesters or entering your "golden age", Webster offers quality and affordable housing.





**Commercial.** Webster's population growth has ushered in significant commercial investment, resulting in the creation and/or expansion of nearly 2 million square feet of retail, restaurant and office development since 2000. Nationally recognized brands have chosen to invest in Webster, improving the convenience and availability of quality shopping for residents.

**Multi-family.** Further, significant development and investment activity has been recently completed or is in planning/construction phases in both the Town and Village, including several large market rate multifamily and senior housing projects. These residential projects will continue the expansion of the community's population, while also supporting a vibrant and balanced mixed-generation community.

**Village.** The Village of Webster has experienced resurgence as newer generations of singles, young families and baby-boomers are choosing to live in close-knit, walkable communities. Village neighborhoods offer active, pedestrian-friendly streets and a front-porch friendly atmosphere. Residents are in close proximity to a dense, vibrant Main Street corridor offering boutiques, convenience and specialty retail, restaurants, personal services and diverse living alternatives.





## Where Life is Worth **Investing.**

### **Discover your next hire in Webster**

Webster is home to a highly-skilled as well as educated manufacturing labor force that is the second largest in Monroe County and services a dynamic collection of precision manufacturing, automation, imaging and photonics businesses.

### **Discover room to grow in Webster**

Webster has significant land and buildings available for your company's newest location or expansion project and is committed to exploring cutting-edge alternative energy technologies to incentivize industrial and manufacturing investment.

### **Discover your next customer in Webster**

Webster's marketplace includes over 82,000 people within 10 minutes that generate over \$1 billion in demand for retail trade and dining in 2013. The trade area median household income is 36 percent higher than the Monroe County median.

## Did you know?

**Webster has an employment base of over 15,600 employees, most of which are located within 2 miles of the community's core.**

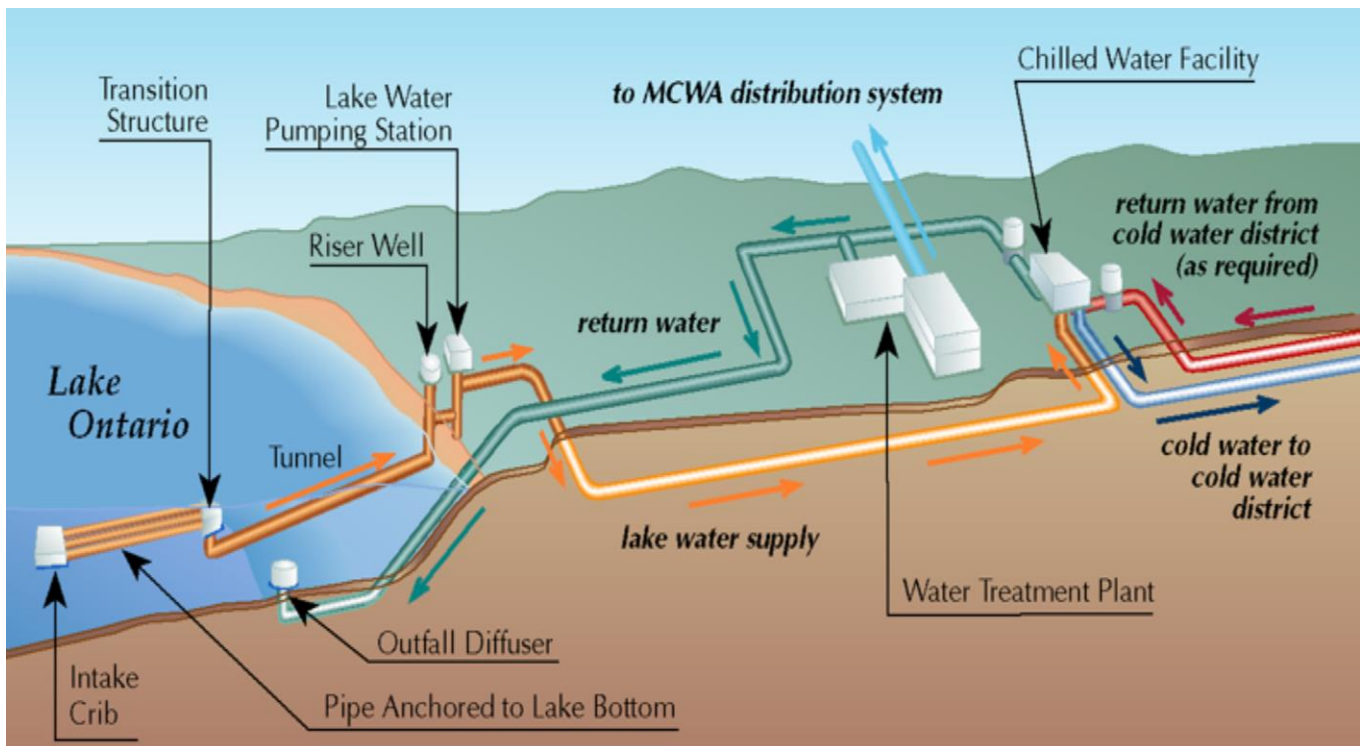
**Weekly lunch spending of just \$7 per employee would equate to over \$5.4 million annually.**

## Discover Your Innovative Side

The Brookings Institute recognized Rochester, NY as an innovation-intensive metro area with the 5th highest per capita patent applications in the nation, and the Daily Beast also noted Rochester as one of the top ten smartest cities based on education attainment and intellectual environment. The Greater Rochester, NY Region is also home to 18 colleges and universities, including the University of Rochester and Rochester Institute of Technology. These institutions provide the job market a consistent pipeline of more than 90,000 students and 18,000 graduates per year. In addition, notable institutions such as Cornell University, Syracuse University, Alfred University and the University at Buffalo are all less than two hours from Webster.

The Webster Economic Development Alliance (Alliance), the Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA) and the Chamber of Commerce are exploring opportunities to utilize the naturally chilled waters of Lake Ontario to offset process and space cooling energy demand for buildings and manufacturers within the community. Similar technologies are successfully being utilized in Toronto, Canada and at Cornell University. The newly constructed Monroe County Water Authority facilities on Lake and Basket Roads could potentially be leveraged towards the development of a chilled water district to service industrial areas along the Basket and Salt Road corridors.

In 2014, with the financial support of the Chamber and MCWA, the Alliance submitted a successful application for NYS funding to conduct a \$116,000 feasibility study regarding the economic viability and cost to construct such a system. It is anticipated the study will be completed by the end of 2016.



## Webster Economic Development Alliance

The Webster Economic Development Alliance (Alliance) is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) Local Development Corporation created to plan, organize and implement local community and economic development activities. Funded by the Town of Webster, Village of Webster, Village Business Improvement District, Webster Central School District and the Webster Chamber of Commerce, the Alliance provides a unified voice on behalf of the Webster community. The Alliance is staffed by an Economic Development Specialist which reports to a 14-member Board of Directors comprised of the chief official of each member organization and experts in the fields of finance, health care, insurance, banking, marketing and other industries.

## Where Life is Worth **Working.**

### Discover great connections in Webster

Webster's convenient access to the Route 104 Expressway will get you to Center City Rochester in 20 minutes, to the NYS Thruway in less than 25 minutes and is within a daytrip of 80 million people in the Northeastern US and Canada.



### Discover opportunity in Webster

Webster is home to one of the largest industrial complexes in New York State and supports a growing base of precision manufacturing, optics and imaging companies as well as the growing field of sustainable, energy efficient technology. Significant opportunities also exist in the personal and professional services industries to support the surging and diverse population.



### Discover great places to work in Webster

Webster is home to several regional, national and international corporations, providing the opportunity to work for some of the nation's major employers while enjoying an affordable and attainable high quality of life.



### A Day's Drive to 80 Million People

Center City Rochester: 12  
NYS Thruway: 21 miles  
Albany, NY  
Buffalo NY  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Philadelphia, PA  
Detroit, MI  
Boston, MA  
New York, NY  
Washington, DC  
Toronto, Canada  
Ottawa, Canada



## Where Life is Worth **Playing.**

### Discover the kid in you in Webster.

Webster's continued commitment to meeting the recreational needs of its multi-generational community has continued since 2003 and its designation as "NY Sportstown" and transformation of the former Xerox Recreation Center on Chiyoda Drive in 2011. In 2014 the Town of Webster dedicated its First Responder splash park and playground, also located on Chiyoda Dr. Assets will grow upon completion of the *Fields of Dreams*.

### Discover space to run and relax in Webster

Webster boasts over 2,100 acres of dedicated parkland and preserved open space and over 23 miles of hiking/biking trails supported by the Friends of Webster Trails.

### Discover a new outlook on life in Webster

With access to Irondequoit Bay and Lake Ontario, Webster is a waterfront community that offers dramatic vistas and framed views from over 550 acres of waterfront parks.

## Did you know?

**The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends 12-25 acres of parks & open space for each 1,000 residents.**

**Webster provides over 75 acres of park and open space for each 1,000 residents.**







## Facilities

50-meter swimming pool // 4,000  
seat Ice Arena // 21,000 SF indoor field  
house // 45,000 SF indoor soccer  
complex // 43,000 SF recreation center //  
25-acre arboretum // 400-meter all  
weather track // 3 multipurpose outdoor  
turf fields // Professional-scale baseball  
venue

## Recreation and Athletics

With over 10,000 roster spots, the Webster community offers a broad diversity of athletic and recreational opportunities for ages 18 and younger. Aggregate spending on recreation and athletics budgets exceeds \$3 million across Town, School District and private organizations, which includes over 500 teams and greater than 15 different organizations. Based upon a modest assumption of \$250 in additional spending per roster spot on clothing, footwear, equipment and travel it is plausible that recreation and athletics generate an additional \$2.5 million in economic activity.



# 3: Action Plan

Strong economic growth, stable housing prices, excellent schools and exceptional athletics and recreation make Webster Monroe County's Community of Choice. The economic outlook for 2014-2015 promises continued growth, with over \$25 million of investment in new opportunities for shopping, dining, personal service and health care providers. This activity expands opportunities to retain the community's expanding income and wealth. The continued management of land use policies will assist community leaders in coordinating this growth.

The Chamber of Commerce recognizes the continued shift in Webster's economy towards precision manufacturing and the growth of the service economy. The transitioning Webster economy is further supported by the second largest manufacturing labor force in Monroe County, as well as the region's strength in the innovation economy.

Webster boasts a high quality educational system, skilled and productive work force, outstanding entrepreneurs and competent governmental systems. These assets will play an important role in the community's ability to realize continued growth as a center destination for investment. Further, the community continues to explore significant opportunities offered from its proximity to Lake Ontario and the corresponding economic potential of deep-lake-water-cooling for commercial and industrial buildings.

The Chamber of Commerce has identified several recommended areas of focus to ensure the continued prosperity and growth of Webster over the course of the next 5 to 10 years.

## 1. Improved Transportation Access

Convenient, safe and enjoyable travel into and within the community is a critical economic issue.

## 2. Village Core Revitalization

A strong, vibrant business core is a symbol of the community's economic health and overall quality of life.

## 3. Deep Lake Water Cooling

Deep lake water cooling technology has the potential to distinguish Webster as an elite destination for industrial investment.

## 4. Support for the Alliance

The Alliance plays a key role in the coordination of public and private economic development activities.

## Improve Access to and from Webster

### Route 404 (Ridge Road) Corridor

The Town and Village of Webster have worked diligently with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to advocate for needed improvements to alleviate congestion on the Route 404 (Ridge Road) corridor. As a result of these efforts, several corridor improvements have been conducted in 2014 and will continue in 2015. Because Ridge Road continues to be a main artery in and out of Webster, the C4B encourages continued study and efforts to maintain safe, convenient and enjoyable travel into and within the community.

*The Town and Village should continue to work closely with NYSDOT to monitor the performance of the Ridge Road Corridor and identify locations requiring improvement. In addition, active advocacy for the transportation needs of Webster should also include private stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce.*

### Public Transportation

Employees of local businesses must have access to timely, convenient and reliable public transportation. Employers such as nursing homes and senior assisted housing developments report that many of their workers experience difficulty in getting to and from work in Webster. As a result, the Alliance has facilitated open forums and discussions with the business community and the Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA) to identify opportunities to enhance service to local employers and their workers.

*The Chamber of Commerce recommends that the Alliance continue to engage the RGRTA with input and participation from the Chamber in frequent dialog and contact with business interests whose employees depend on public transit.*



## Circulation, Accessibility & Parking Study (CAP)

Funded through a grant from the Genesee Transportation Council, this study sought to balance the needs of motorists and others traveling on the roadways within the Village, while also preserving and enhancing community character, economic vitality and walkability.

The CAP study provides a series of recommended strategies and associated improvements including major changes in traffic control configurations at the Route 104/ North Avenue Interchange and changes to East and West Main Streets.

Significant changes are also proposed in the Village's zoning ordinance as well as adoption of a Complete Streets Policy. One major change to zoning in the Village would be the creation of a Traditional Neighborhood Overlay District that would encourage mixed uses and design criteria that promote walkability. The Complete Streets Policy would stress the Village's commitment to safety, access, convenience and comfort of all street users including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists.

## North Avenue Connector

The Village of Webster, NY has received over \$811,000 in Federal Highway Administration funding towards the revitalization of the North Avenue corridor from Main Street north to Orchard Street. The \$1+ million North Avenue Connector project will include improved sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The project will also invest in lighting, signage and gateway features to enhance corridor aesthetics and create a positive first impression for visitors to the community. Improvements are anticipated to be completed by Spring 2018. The project is a direct implementation of recommendations made within the Chamber-supported CAP Study.

*The Chamber of Commerce recommends the continued implementation of recommendations of the CAP study and the adoption of necessary policy changes. Additionally, the community must continue to advocate, directly and through its State representatives, for the allocation of NYSDOT resources to make roadway and intersection improvements advanced by the CAP study.*

## Promote Continued Revitalization of the Village of Webster Core Business Area

The Village of Webster core business area is experiencing a sustained period of revitalization fueled by investments from property and business owners. New stores, housing, and refurbished facades indicate that the Village core is an attractive area to conduct business, live and work.

A well-balanced community offers a variety of housing, retail, dining and services options. Furthermore, a strong and vibrant Village core is an essential component of growth and prosperity throughout Webster, and is a symbol of community health, local quality of life and pride. A revitalized business area increases the community's options for goods and services including basic staples, professional services, restaurants or other functions such as housing and entertainment.

A vibrant core area retains and generates jobs through the growth of existing businesses and the establishment of new ventures that use public services and provide tax revenues for the community.

Finally, the Village core also provides an important civic forum where citizens can congregate and interact. Parades, festivals, street parties, and other celebrations reinforce the sense of community.



*The Chamber of Commerce recommends the continuation of efforts to sustain the revitalization process, and supports the creation of new initiatives by the Village government, the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Alliance. Efforts to secure State funding for façade and street improvements should continue and other funding programs should be explored to ensure that all available resources are utilized in support of revitalization.*



## Investigate Opportunities Inherent in Deep Lake Water Cooling

The location of the recently completed Eastside Water Supply project has provided Webster with a unique opportunity to leverage its waterfront location and significant industrial complex by taking advantage of the alternative energy potential inherent in Lake Ontario.

The Webster Economic Development Alliance (Alliance), in cooperation with the Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA) and the Chamber, have been awarded \$87,000 in New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) funding to conduct a feasibility study to explore the viability of utilizing the cold water found in the depths of in Lake Ontario for use in building and industrial process cooling.

The formation of a distributed energy district powered by the naturally chilled water from the lake could become a significant economic attractor for new growth, while supporting existing business and property owners.

Proven exemplary projects at Cornell University and the City of Toronto supply high quality precedents in support of a project in Webster. Further, the Syracuse area recently completed a major study of the Lake Ontario Cold Water cooling. The proximity of this project to Webster would be considered direct competition for an Eastside Cold Water Project.

*The Chamber of Commerce, through the Alliance, should continue to support the development of a naturally chilled water district. The Chamber and the Alliance should also continue to explore the identification of potential cold water users to serve as a catalyst for bringing such a project to fruition.*

## Continue Support of Webster Community Coalition for Economic Development

The Webster Community Coalition for Economic Development (WCCED) is a unique organization of public and private stakeholders acting as a single voice to promote economic development in Webster. WCCED has been effective in facilitating the retention and creation of jobs and investment in the local community.

WCCED has assisted several local, regional and international companies achieve their business objectives through investment and job creation in Webster. The organization has also been effective in supporting community development objectives for the Town and Village of Webster by conducting and facilitating critical community visioning and planning projects.

These efforts have lead to funding awards for significant economic, transportation and quality of life initiatives that will continue to make Webster a destination and community of choice in the region.

WCCED has also been a vital player in the attraction of new business to Webster through daily coordination with front-line regional marketing organizations including Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE) and Empire State Development (ESD). WCCED provides local landowners, building owners, realtors and others with information on inquiries received from potential investors and works closely with regional partners to strengthen Webster's competitiveness within the New York.

*The Chamber of Commerce recommends the continued support of WCCED as a public-private partnership between the Town, Village, Webster Central School District and local businesses. Further, the Chamber encourages WCCED to continue its coordination and partnership efforts with Webster's local, regional, state and federal representatives to achieve its goals and support WCCED's future as a model economic development organization in New York State.*



## Conclusion

The continued cooperation and partnership among the community's various public and private entities is vital to the economic success of Webster.

The Chamber of Commerce has historically taken the lead in recognizing that economic vitality depends on the collaboration and cooperation of all members of the Webster community. It will continue to serve its business membership and work with WCCED to maintain its high quality of life and affordability. In other words, maintain Webster as a Community of Choice and ...

Where life is worth Living  
Where life is worth Investing  
Where life is worth Working  
Where life is worth Playing