



WEBSTER, NY

Community, Environment & Education Network

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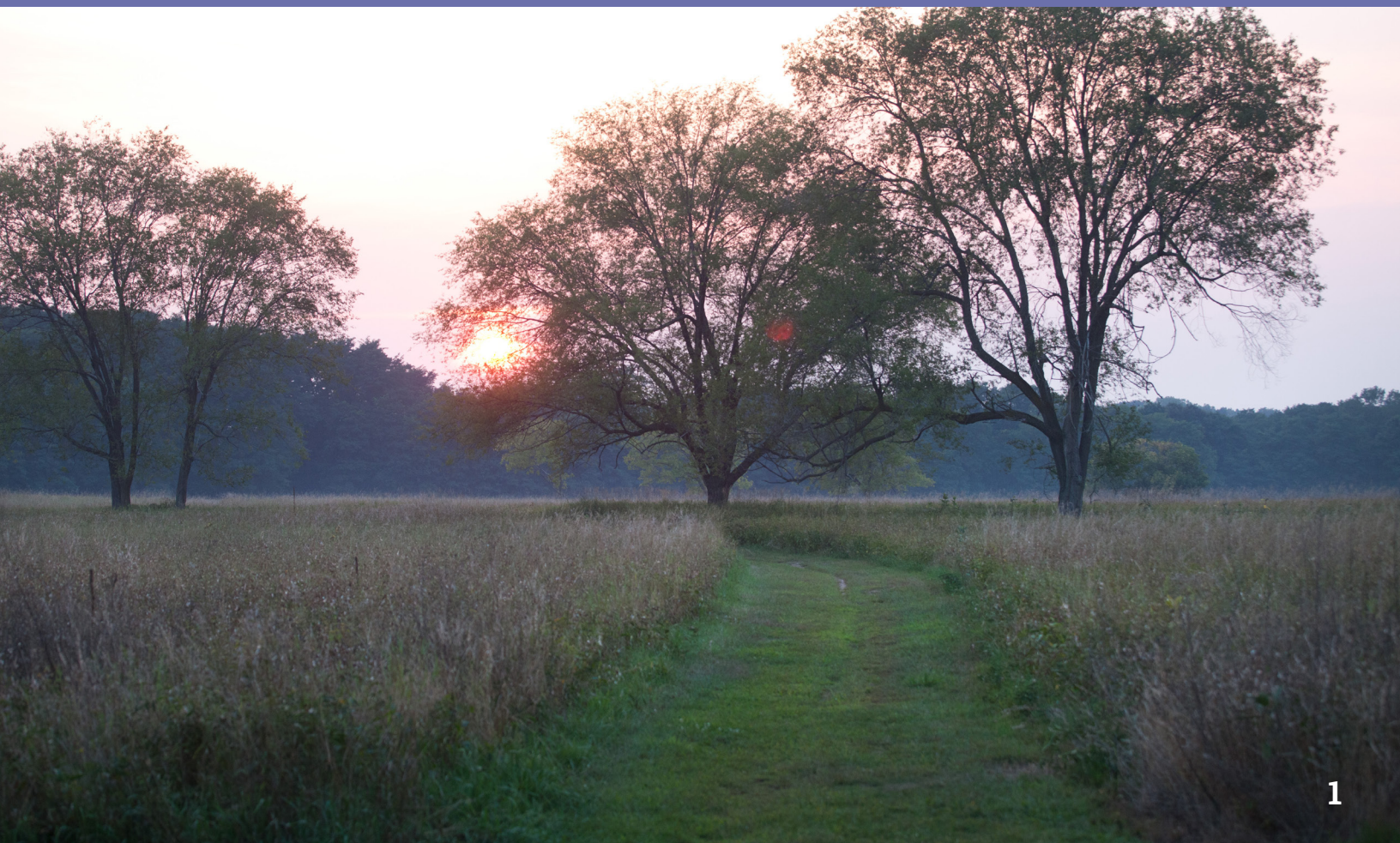


Learn more at WebsterEDA.org

Community, Environment & Education Network

Explore. Learn. Grow.

Webster, NY is seeking to further enhance the quality of life for residents by creating distinctive and memorable destinations within the community for residents, visitors and commerce. Community leaders will accomplish this through existing assets, resources and organizational capacity for the planning and development of a network of outdoor recreational and educational sites located throughout the Town and Village. The project is the outgrowth of Webster's 2015 Community Investment Strategy, created by the Webster Economic Development Alliance on behalf of the Town, Village, School District and local businesses. During the development of its strategy, the Alliance conducted an extensive public outreach campaign which ultimately led to the identification of several projects and initiatives that support the continued growth and improvement of Webster. The Community, Environment & Education Network (CEEd) project has been identified by Alliance leadership as an important piece of a broader community-wide strategy to invest in aspects that make Webster unique among its peers. Related focus areas of the Investment Strategy include Downtown Revitalization, Waterfront Revitalization, Recreation, Athletics and Tourism, and Community Identity. CEEd is a cross-cutting initiative that physically and figuratively links these focus areas across the community.



Why CEEd?

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

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

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

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

Did You Know?

The National Recreation and Park Association recommends 20-30 acres of parks and open space preserves per 1,000 population.

Webster's park and open space system currently exceeds 57 acres of protected land per 1,000 population, nearly double the suggested allocation for the provision of adequate recreation resources.

Community, Environment & Education Network (CEEd)

The Vision

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

The Mission

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

The Approach

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

The Audience

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

The Partners

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

How do we make this happen?

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

PHASE 1: Organizational and Partnership Development

Identify network partners and convene organizational discussions to highlight relationships, responsibilities and leadership. This initial phase will also identify potential funding, labor and resource commitments from Network partners and outside agencies. Finalizing the organizational phase will include drafting, negotiating and executing relevant MOUs, and the potential identification of a lead fiduciary entity and host 501(c)(3) corporation.

PHASE 2: Organize and Convene Leadership Committee

Finalize organizational vision, mission and purpose (VMP) and add partners as needed to achieve VMP. Phase 2 will also assemble Working Teams & Identify Team Leaders for areas such as:

1. Development - manages all construction projects
2. Programmatic - coordinates network programmatic offering
3. Outreach/Extension - coordinates engagement with public
4. Fundraising - manages grant and donation procurement

Phase 2 will assign roles, responsibilities and reporting structures, while also including a substantial public outreach effort to solicit input, ideas and volunteers from the community. The last part of Phase 2 will include the solicitation of funding for the development of the CEEd Network Master Plan.

PHASE 3: Master Plan Development

With network partners and funding in place, CEEd leadership will develop and solicit a Request for Proposals to identify professional consultants to guide the Master Plan development process. The Master Plan will identify a holistic approach to the development of the CEEd network, including municipal and corporate policy changes, curriculum, outreach and extension opportunities, and physical construction projects. Recommendations will be prioritized, and will include the identification of likely funding sources to facilitate implementation.

PHASE 4: Implementation

The implementation of Master Plan recommendations will be undertaken on parallel paths as opportunities and funding become available.

Education & Recreation Network Ideas

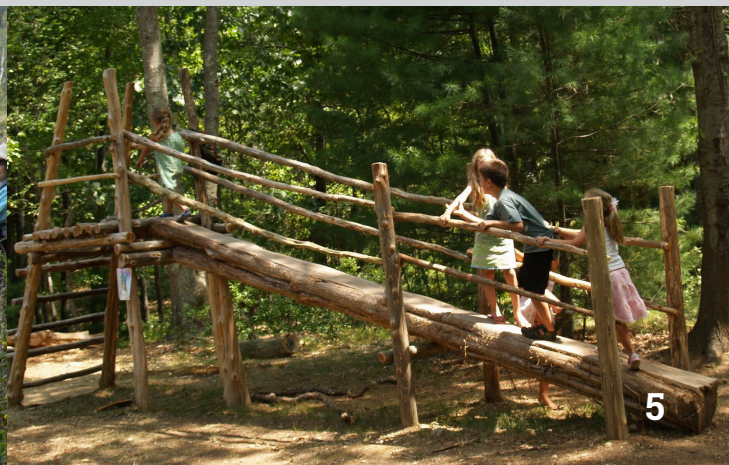
Outdoor education and recreation areas may vary in size, complexity, intended audience and overall goals and learning and/or enrichment objectives. All features will be developed in consideration with the available landscape. Potential partners such as the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Friend's of Webster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

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

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



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



Network Concepts

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

Sandbar Park Waterfront Revitalization - Environmental Education Area

Webster is undertaking the design and development of an Environmental Education Area at the Sandbar Park Irondequoit Bay waterfront, part of a larger \$11 million waterfront revitalization effort. The proposed CEED network site was generously donated by a local developer. This station is envisioned to be a hub for a series of diverse education and interpretive sites located across the upland and riparian zones at the extreme eastern tip of Irondequoit Bay. The proposed station concept includes boardwalks, piers and gathering spaces perched out over the water. The Town is currently planning the formation of a project Advisory Committee to help refine the educational and developmental programming. This site is intended to be suitable to support diverse uses for community exploration, class field trips, and potentially more refined research and experimentation. The public engagement and design process will explore unique and exciting instructional opportunities to engage residents and students in the discovery and study of the natural environment and Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM).

Design Development Plans for the Sandbar Park Environmental Education Area





Conceptual Renderings for the Sandbar Park Environmental Education Area



Community, Environment & Education Network

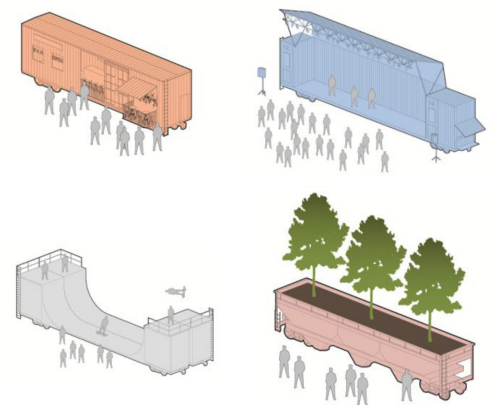
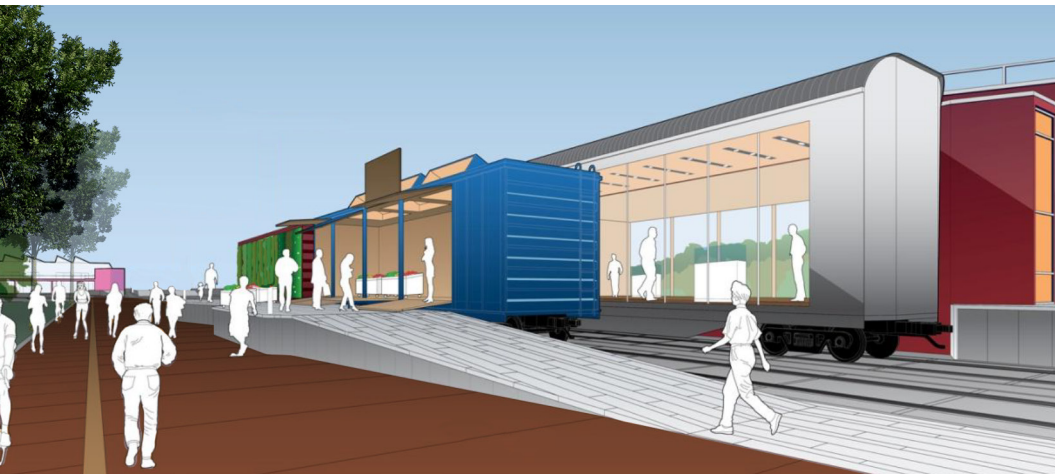
North Village: Hojack Railpark and History Center

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

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

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

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

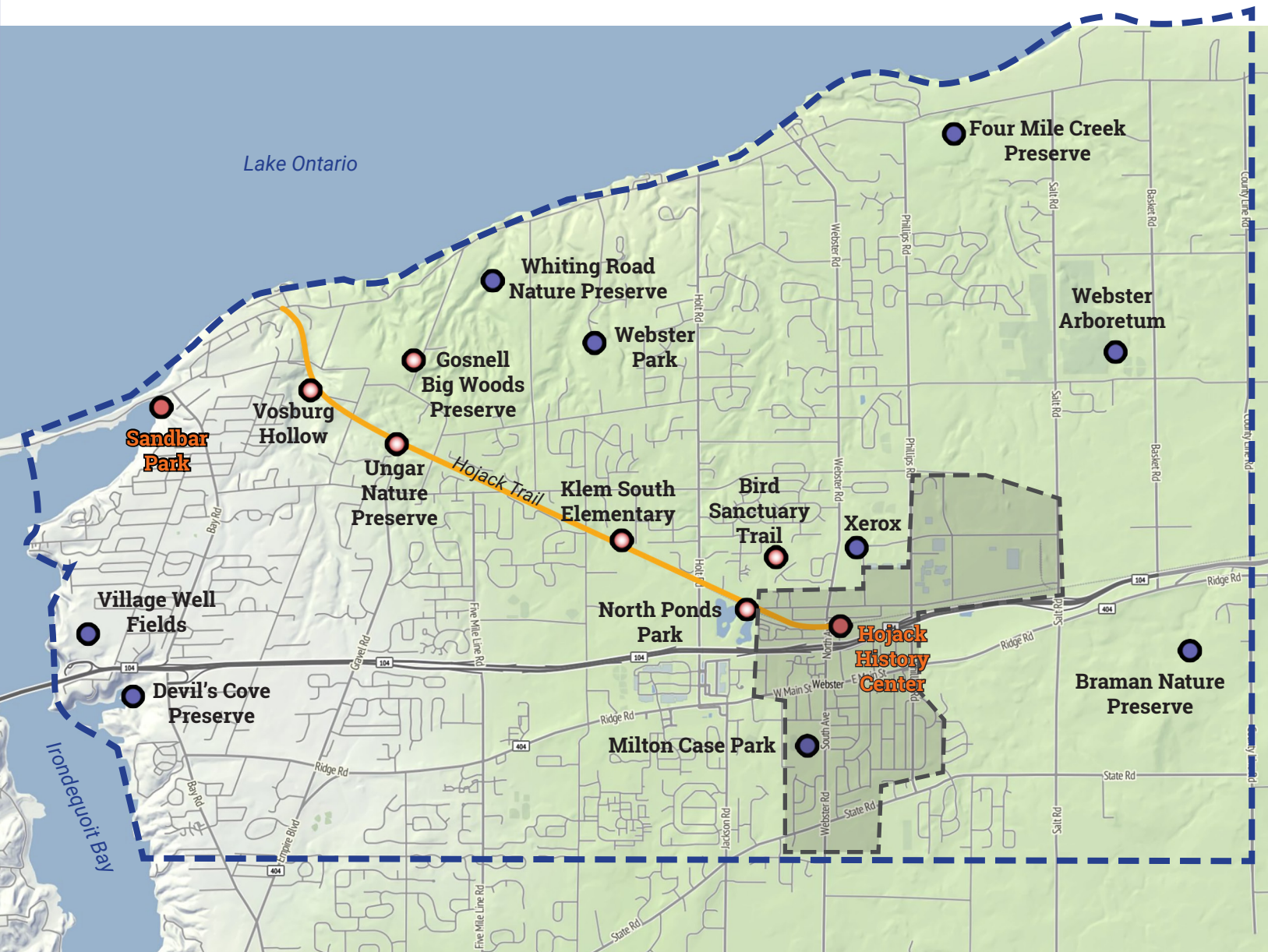


Former Hojack Railroad baggage depot, now disassembled and in storage. This building could be reassembled as part of an interactive historic education station.



Network Map

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



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

Developed by the Webster Economic Development Alliance.

