

FOR: Giffels-Webster

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FOR RELEASE

Healthy Communities on the Rise with Complete Streets Legislation Says [Giffels-Webster](#)

Transformative concept of rethinking our public spaces can lead to more active lifestyles, lower carbon footprints and livelier downtowns

Detroit, Mich., Dec. 15, 2010 – With Michigan passing [Complete Streets legislation](#), Giffels-Webster, a civil engineering and surveying firm specializing in infrastructure needs for public, private and institutional clients, says more municipalities will adopt ordinances intended to make streets safer and more accessible to a variety of users. That’s good news for Michigan communities.

“Michigan now has legislation that defines Complete Streets and provides guidelines under which communities can begin to plan their futures. For city governments and community groups, who often didn’t see eye to eye on changes, there can be agreement and support of tactics in order to secure funding, boost safety and get projects implemented,” said Scott Clein, PE, LEED AP and associate at Giffels-Webster.

According to Clein, properly implemented Complete Streets improvements can:

- Improve overall roadway safety for all users
- Create vibrant downtowns
- Promote healthier lifestyles

Complete Streets are designed to recognize the needs of all users, regardless of age or ability. For instance, a Complete Street could incorporate on-street bike lanes to properly designate spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. When supported by a detailed traffic study the philosophy might eliminate vehicular lanes to provide wider sidewalks, outdoor dining or sales areas. Pedestrians can also cross roadways more easily when the width of intersections is reduced, along with changes in traffic signal timing. Other “traffic calming” practices keep vehicle speeds at lower levels to enhance pedestrian and cyclist street use.

“Complete Streets work to bring *people* back into the transportation planning equation,” said Clein. “The idea is to look at our roadway corridors holistically and determine what

configuration is best for *all* users. By getting people out of their cars and safely on sidewalks and bikes, we can breathe new life into a city or community.”

Clein and his Giffels-Webster team, experts in Complete Streets planning, already see several Michigan communities focusing on long-term plans and visions of what they physically want to be. In Detroit, the firm has proposed some 400 miles of bike lanes and paths on behalf of the City during preparation of the *City of Detroit Non-motorized Transportation Master Plan*. Since adoption of this plan, the design of several large projects have been completed and should break ground in 2011. In Eastpointe, Mich., Clein worked with the downtown development authority to create an urban plan for the area around Nine Mile Road and Gratiot Avenue. The plan addresses the width, speed and use of Gratiot Avenue to assist in the creation of a walkable downtown that may feature residential, commercial and retail uses.

Clein points to Ferndale, Mich., as a prime example of the positive impact a Complete Streets plan can have on a community. The Ferndale DDA, in conjunction with the City and Giffels-Webster, revitalized its downtown along Nine Mile Road by implementing policies long before the term Complete Streets was in use in the late 1990's. The result is a more inviting, greener, pedestrian-friendly central district that has sustained itself through the years.

Further north along Woodward Avenue, Clein cites Birmingham, Mich. as another example.

“Over the last 20 years the City of Birmingham has put forth a significant effort to implement its *Birmingham 2016 Plan*. This document focuses on protecting the principal shopping district by promoting a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. Birmingham is a Michigan leader in pursuing a walkable urban core,” said Clein.

Michigan is just one of 14 states with codified Complete Streets initiatives, which Clein views as an important piece of the State's revitalization efforts. Today, several Michigan cities have Complete Streets plans, including: Berkley and Novi, which passed resolutions in Oct.; Saline, which adopted a measure in Sept.; and Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Manistique, Sault Ste. Marie, Jackson and Midland.

About Giffels-Webster Engineers

Giffels-Webster is a collection of people—civil engineers, landscape architects, planners and surveyors—who choose every day to make communities better. The Michigan-based firm serves public, private, and institutional clients throughout the United States with their infrastructure needs.

Since its inception in 1950, Giffels-Webster has evolved to offer a broad scope of services centered on helping clients achieve their project or programming goals, including civil engineering, municipal consulting, planning, land development consulting, landscape architecture, and environmental consulting. www.giffelswebster.com.

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