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GIFFELS WEBSTER RECEIVES APA AWARD FOR DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

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Detroit — Giffels Webster, a Detroit-headquartered consulting firm specializing in infrastructure and land development solutions for public, private and institutional clients, received national recognition by the American Planning Association (APA) at its annual National Planning Conference for the development of the downtown master plan for the City of Clawson, Mich.

The firm and municipality received the 2017 Vernon Deines Honor Award for an Outstanding Small Town Special Project Plan by the APA's Small Town and Rural Planning (STaR) division. The Clawson Downtown Master Plan, adopted in 2015, provides an update to the city's 2004 Urban Framework Plan and succeeds the 2009 Downtown Master Plan. Giffels Webster worked with the Clawson Planning Commission and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to

develop a plan reflecting the community's desire for downtown revitalization within the context of its history as a small suburban city.

In review of the plan, APA STaR noted, "The Awards Committee was incredibly impressed with this plan, and feel it embodies the best of small town planning. The breadth of community outreach techniques, particularly the awareness walks and built-form studies, as well as the overall support for the plan, provide a model for communities of all sizes."

Giffels Webster utilized its proprietary NextSteps for Downtown planning tool to develop a straightforward and trackable plan to improve building stock, provide land use recommendations, enhance the streetscape, draw visitors and meet daily needs of Clawson residents. The plan features extensive use of photography and graphic renderings to help residents and property owners understand how the downtown will be strengthened through façade, signage and infill developments.

"Our approach to planning combines both short- and long-term strategies to heighten the appeal of a downtown area, while maintaining the charm that makes a community unique," said Rod Arroyo, partner at Giffels Webster. "In Clawson, and other municipalities we've assisted, we incorporate feedback from key stakeholders to create a functional community plan with distinct goals and action strategies for the future."

The development of the master plan was informed by resident and business owner input obtained through public meetings and Main Street Oakland County visioning efforts.

"[The new Downtown Master Plan] purposely embraces the small-scale hometown reality of Clawson, while providing actionable strategies for meaningful revitalization and redevelopment," said Susie Stec, economic development coordinator at the City of Clawson.

Since adopting the downtown master plan, Giffels Webster continues to work with the City of Clawson to revise the municipality's zoning standards to better guide development in the community. The new zoning standards that have been drafted in partnership with the city reflect its commitment to the goals set in the master plan, resulting in a comprehensive approach for future downtown prosperity.

"We are gratified to see our efforts in action," said Arroyo. "The downtown master plan has been well received by community stakeholders, and we are honored to be recognized by the APA for our contributions to the City of Clawson."

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