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Giffels Webster Receives National Recognition for Downtown Master Plan

American Planning Association awards dynamic approach to City of Clawson plan

DETROIT, May 7, 2017 – [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, Michigan.

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.

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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."

About Giffels Webster

Giffels Webster is a collection of people — civil engineers, landscape architects, planners, GIS specialists 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 and land development needs.

Since its inception in 1952, 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, traffic engineering and GIS data creation and management. For more information, visit giffelswebster.com.

About the City of Clawson

The City of Clawson is located in Oakland County, Michigan, and is adjacent to the cities of Troy and Royal Oak. The city has a population of approximately 12,000 people in an area covering 2.2 square miles. Clawson is a member of Main Street Oakland County, a coordinating program of the National Main Street Center and part of Oakland County's Department of Planning & Economic Development Services. For more about the City of Clawson, visit cityofclawson.com and downtownclawson.com.

About the American Planning Association

The American Planning Association is an independent, not-for-profit educational organization that provides leadership in the development of vital communities. APA and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning — physical, economic and social — so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., and Chicago. The Small Town and Rural Planning (STaR) division of APA is a collaborative group of rural and small town planners, citizen planners and allied professionals dedicated to the physical, social and economic diversity of North America's non-metropolitan areas. For more information, visit planning.org.

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