

Giffels Webster wins APA award for New Baltimore wayfinding project

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DETROIT—Giffels Webster, a Detroit-based firm providing infrastructure, planning, and land development consulting, has received the American Planning Association Private Planning Division's 2020 Inspiring Planning Project Award for its work on a wayfinding plan with the city of New Baltimore.

The APA's Private Practice Division Awards honor the inspiring work of private practitioners in responding to the needs of communities and improving the overall quality of life.

New Baltimore's wayfinding sign plan establishes a detailed plan for implementation of road signs to promote the established community character and create opportunities for more people to discover the amenities, festivals, and businesses in downtown New Baltimore. The plan was envisioned in the city's master plan update, which Giffels Webster helped prepare and was adopted in 2017.

The project is innovative in its approach and foundation, with dual sponsorship by the municipality and a non-profit, Art on the Bay (AOTB). This plan is an example of how

municipalities facing budget challenges can partner with local groups to effect change that benefits all the stakeholders while providing additional sources of funding. The final sign design includes a logo created by local artist, Nino DiPilla. This project demonstrates how the combination of art, community planning, and the technical sign requirements of a state road agency can lead to a unique solution that reflects small-town character and implements adopted action strategies.

“When we were reviewing options to direct residents and visitors toward some of New Baltimore’s key downtown destinations, we wanted to be sure that we did so in a way that was simple, useful and visually appealing all at the same time,” said Rod Arroyo, partner at Giffels Webster. “It is rare to see the work of a local artist incorporated into official traffic signs, and we hope this project will serve as a benchmark for others.”

Giffels Webster worked with the Wayfinding Plan Committee to identify locations and designs that would meet the Committee’s goals and comply with Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) standards. The wayfinding sign committee consisted of city elected officials, planning commissioners, business owners, art enthusiasts, citizens and more.

In May of 2020, MDOT issued a sign permit, allowing the approved 2020 Wayfinding Sign Plan to be the guiding document for installation of signs along M-29 (Green Street in downtown New Baltimore). Additional signs are also planned along roads under the jurisdiction of the Macomb County Department of Roads.

“The plan represents a high-quality product with a clear path to implementation and could easily be transferrable to other communities,” said New Baltimore Mayor John Dupray.

Giffels Webster employs civil engineers, landscape architects, planners, surveyors, and GIS specialists to help public, private, and institutional clients throughout the United States with their planning, land development, and infrastructure needs. More at www.giffelswebster.com.

More about New Baltimore at cityofnewbaltimore.org, and more about Art on the Bay at www.ArtontheBay.com.

The APA’s Private Practice Division has been dedicated to meeting the needs of private planning consultants for over 25 years. For more information, visit www.Planning.org/divisions/privatepractice.

<https://www.techcentury.com/2020/06/22/giffels-webster-wins-apa-award-for-new-baltimore-wayfinding-project/>