

# ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING

Dietz & Associates, LLC

## Canal Crossing Plaza, South Bound Brook, NJ: Making downtown dreams a reality

More and more, the public has been rejecting the crowded indoor shopping malls and looking to their own downtown areas to fulfill their retail and recreation needs.

"This has been a steady trend for several years now," said Chuck Dietz, president, Dietz & Associates, LLC. "People no longer want to drive 20 minutes to a mall, usually located on a busy highway, and then, once they get there, they have to deal with crowds of people." Instead, Dietz explained,



Canal Crossing Plaza

people prefer to walk or drive a few minutes into their own town, stroll along the streets and have a variety of retail services, restaurants, family recreation activities, and independently owned specialty shops combined with full service anchor style stores. "People who commute all week long, don't want to spend the weekends dealing with traffic and crowds all over again, and I believe this, among other things, has ignited the downtown revival," said Dietz. Dietz & Associates, LLC is changing the look of many

South Jersey towns including Manalapan, Belmar, Flemington, and South Bound Brook.

The South Bound Brook project is a great example of the transformation of New Jersey's former manufacturing sites. And the Manalapan project is an example of how to breathe new life into a former farm tract in a town that has never had a central downtown area.

Canal Crossing Plaza in South Bound Brook, NJ is part of the redevelopment of the former GAF Materials site in conjunction with a complete downtown revitalization program.

"We are designing the retail section of about 22,560 s/f, as well as working downtown with the mayor and the architectural review committee to promote existing retail building façade enhancements. The commercial portion, which sits next to a brand new residential development, will include retail on the ground level and apartments on the second floor. South Bound Brook was largely an industrial area when GAF occupied the site. This entire project literally turns it into a neighborhood with a downtown 'Main Street' feel," said Dietz.

In Manalapan, where the population has been surging as more people move to Monmouth County, Dietz & Associates, LLC is designing the structures for this 135 acre mixed use former farm site. Anchor stores, a bank, supermarket, restaurants and recreation fields will provide the residence of this burgeoning community with a gathering place and a focal point in their community. Prior to this, residents had to travel out to the highway for services.

Dietz expects the Main Street revival to continue for many years. "We don't see this trend abating for a while. New Jersey is a very desirable state, more people continue to move here, and as long as new homes are still being built, the demand for downtown services will continue."

Dietz & Associates, LLC is an award winning, nationally recognized full service architectural design firm based in East Hanover, NJ. ■

D & A

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