



## **Michael LeFande, SBLM Architects PC**

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What was your greatest professional accomplishment in 2012? : In 2012, I opened a branch office for SBLM Architects in Huntington Station, NY. I have always sought ways to expand our client base while offering new and innovative design solutions and services to our long-time repeat clients. SBLM has 5 design studios- including retail/commercial, educational, healthcare/wellness, mixed use/residential and civic. I am joined by Associate Principal Ed Bredow, whose credentials help us to serve the growing demands of the healthcare and higher educational industries that are prevalent here on Long Island.

What was your most notable project, deal or transaction in 2012? : In 2012, our client MD Hutch III, LLC broke ground on a new 331,000 sf shopping center in Throggs Neck, with 875 parking spaces on the site of a former US postal facility. This is one of the most significant new retail developments in the Bronx. The design of the center takes advantage of the 30 ft slope of the site with two levels of retail including Target, TJ Maxx, Petco and Applebees. We are providing construction documents, renderings, leasing plans, tenant exhibits, signage design, and full design services for numerous tenants.

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2013? : While financing remains a challenge, we see signs of life. Several of our development clients have re-approached us about projects that have sat dormant for 3 to 5 years. We have also teamed on a number of public land improvement RPFs. The excess retail space on the market has finally begun to dwindle, and rents are stabilizing. We've seen a 'survival of the fittest' of national retail chains. Some of our long-time clients, such as Petco, Office Depot and Whole Foods have healthy expansion plans that are actually on the rise at this time.

What are your resolutions for 2013? : As my children are entering their college years, I am re-dedicating myself to personal health and enjoyment of family activities. As a firm, we are actively seeking opportunities to become more meaningfully involved in the communities where our four offices reside - New York City, Long Island, Miami, FL and Dallas, TX. SBLM is committed to

sustainability including the AIA 2030 Commitment and will be creating a director-of-sustainability position within the firm to solidify our efforts in the sustainable design arena.

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