

Sustainability Profile:

Watermark Kendall West



Property name: Watermark Kendall West

Location: Cambridge, Massachusetts

Building type: High rise apartment

Building size: 344,709 sq. ft.

Constructed: 2006

Acquired: 2003

Property manager: Gables Residential



Property Overview

Overlooking the Charles River and the MIT campus in Cambridge, Watermark Kendall West offers 321 units of modern, full-service apartment space. The building is home to a diverse community of international graduate students and young to middle-aged professionals working in Cambridge and Boston.

Improving Sustainability

Located in the tech-savvy MIT Kendall Square neighborhood, Watermark Kendall West earns its place among its innovative neighbors, operating under the mantra of “no matter how ‘green’ you build a building, if you don’t operate the building in a way that is focused on the environmental impact, you aren’t reducing the building’s impact on the environment as much as possible.” The property identifies best-in-class sustainability strategies to guide its environmental efforts, in addition to implementing a hands-on operations management approach.

The property has systematically improved its energy performance through a combination of capital upgrades and operational management approaches. The property team has implemented a comprehensive energy management program, which includes the trending and continual adjustment of EMS setpoints to reduce energy consumption, while balancing occupant comfort levels. The team also re-engineered the building’s original boiler system to include storage tanks and controls to increase efficiency of heating and cooling operations, replaced the domestic hot water heating system with energy efficient equipment, optimized operations of heat exchangers through preventative maintenance, and implemented daily maintenance walk-throughs to ensure peak equipment performance. The property team also retrofitted incandescent and compact fluorescent fixtures to LED lighting in all resident units, common areas, and the building’s fitness center. Taken together, these lighting improvements have helped the property team avoid over \$34,500 in energy costs and reduce their energy use by 335,380 kWh in 2018.¹

Opportunities to reduce water consumption are continually identified. Since 2014, the property team has replaced original shower heads with 1.5 gallon per minute (GPM) fixtures and retrofitted kitchen and bathroom faucets with 1.5 GPM aerators in all resident units. Additionally, drip irrigation and irrigation controls were added to water the building's vegetated roof and landscaped balcony.

In addition to the efforts outlined above, the property team has implemented a robust tenant education and engagement program. Initiatives in this program include: sustainability information highlighted on its website, signage in model units describing sustainable building attributes, and a Green Living Guide provided to tenants in their leasing packet that discusses green building facts and tenant ways to save energy and water. The Watermark team also provides tenants with free Green Seal cleaning products and a variety of opportunities to recycle light bulbs, batteries, and various other materials.

Key Facts, Awards, and Recognition:

- ENERGY STAR® Certification (2015 - 2018)
- LEED EBOM Gold (2010 with re-certification in 2015)
- Completed ASHRAE Level II audit (2014)
- 25% energy use reduction since 2014

Sustainability Initiatives:

The property team has utilized the following strategies to reduce energy, water, and waste and to improve the environmental impact of Watermark Kendall West:

- Installed ENERGY STAR kitchen appliances and washing/drying machines
- Retrofitted incandescent and compact fluorescent fixtures to LED lighting in all resident units, common areas, and the building's fitness center
- Replaced the domestic hot water heating system with energy efficient equipment
- Utilized low and no-VOC paint
- Installed high-efficiency water fixtures and water-sourced heat pumps with programmable thermostats
- Installed operable windows and shades allowing control over natural lighting and outside air
- Incorporated bamboo flooring and purchased sustainable office furniture
- Purchased sustainable office furniture
- Incorporated a vegetated roof and landscaped terrace, equipped with drip irrigation systems
- Committed to purchase renewable energy certificates and carbon offsets to cover 50% of the building's energy consumption for two years
- Installed cogeneration equipment to produce off the grid electricity
- Installed variable frequency drives to increase overall efficiency of building equipment
- Incorporated low-e glass to reduce heat gain and improve energy efficiency
- Recycled 69% of ongoing consumables through a comprehensive recycling program
- Alternative transportation encouraged through proximity of subway, ZipCars, and 50 bicycle racks
- Added signage in model units for potential residents to learn about the building's sustainable attributes
- Promoted sustainability education through Green Living Guides
- Provided tenants with on-site battery and light bulb recycling programs
- Implemented a green cleaning program for building maintenance, cleaning teams, and tenants



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¹ Avoided costs are calculated by subtracting the 2018 common area electricity and natural gas cost from 2017 common area electricity and natural gas costs. Energy consumption savings are calculated by subtracting 2018 whole building electricity and natural gas consumption from 2017 whole building electricity and natural gas consumption.

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