



Urban Land Interests

Madison's Iconic US Bank Plaza Earns LEED-Gold Certification

Urban Land Interests' Upgrades Reduce Energy Consumption by 38% and Water Consumption by 85%

Madison, WI — March 1, 2012 — Madison's modernist icon — the US Bank Plaza — earned LEED-Gold certification. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2000, LEED certification is an internationally recognized mark of excellence. The LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Management (EBOM) award certifies that a building's operations — cleaning, maintenance, recycling, exterior maintenance, and systems upgrades — have minimal impact on the environment.

Urban Land Interests' (ULI) renovation of the US Bank Plaza was accomplished by remaining true to the vision of the building's original designer, Bruce Graham of Skidmore Owings & Merrill. Graham, who also designed Chicago's John Hancock Center and Sears Tower, set out to create an energy-efficient design using an economical clear all-glass curtainwall that utilized natural light, rather than electric lighting. Unfortunately, mechanical systems and controls from 1974 were not able to efficiently handle the thermal complexities of an all glass building. The clear glass atria turned the building into an uncomfortable hothouse.

In addition to energy inefficiencies, the 330,000 square foot US Bank Plaza suffered from outdated floor plans. By the 1990s, the first floor atrium and spacious walk-in banking hall were underutilized due to the advent of online banking and ATM machines. Tenant occupancy declined. Recognizing the problems it faced with the building, US Bank put it on the market in 2008.

Subsequent to the purchase and renovation, the LEED-Gold US Bank Plaza has:

- Cut energy usage by 35% to 40% for an estimated annual savings of \$350,000.
- Dropped water usage 85% from 32 million to 3.9 million gallons per year.
- Moved from a low 40s Energy Star rating to a 91 Energy Star certified status.
- Been reinstated as a Class A building that provides more leasable tenant space, greater security, a healthier work environment and improved tenant comfort. Vacancy is currently under 10%.
- Increased outdoor landscaped terrace space.
- Attracted businesses seeking LEED certified spaces.
- Increased foot and sidewalk traffic with the addition of new retailers, including restaurants Graze and L'Etoile.
- Been awarded *InBusiness Magazine's* 2010 Commercial Design Award for Best Office or Retail Renovation.

Other environmental retrofitting included:

- Replacing existing chiller equipment with high-efficiency units and relocating them from the valuable ninth floor to underused storage space on the first floor.
- Replacing noisy, poorly maintained, inefficient constant volume/electric reheat air distribution systems with overhead digital-control variable air volume systems.
- Eliminating hourly automatic flushing of all toilets and urinals, installing low consumption plumbing fixtures and equipment, and terminating domestic water use for heat pumps.
- Replacing 150 watt recessed downlight common area lighting with efficient fixtures. All tenant construction included replacement of existing fixtures to more efficient alternatives.
- Upgrading lighting controls in common areas and tenant spaces.
- Eliminating two elevators that only ran from the garage to the main floor and eliminating a third elevator that was underutilized. Remaining four elevators were modernized and adapted to run from the garage to all nine floors.
- Implementing green cleaning procedures.
- Replacing perimeter HVAC units with quieter and more efficient units.



“What’s unique about the LEED certification for existing buildings is that it takes sustainability to the next level,” notes Darga. The LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Management certification ensures that buildings are implementing sustainable practices and reducing environmental impacts. The operations and maintenance of a building over its lifetime has the greatest impact on its carbon footprint. You can build a highly rated building under the LEED New Construction category, but that doesn’t mean it’s running in a green manner. The US Bank building operations have been set up to ensure it always runs green.”

A successful renovation project and any LEED project of this type require cooperation and involvement from the tenants of the building. A LEED EBOM certification process is most successful when all of the tenants are engaged. “We were lucky to have such positive feedback and interaction with our tenants through this process”, said Darga. He added, “Ultimately, it is the tenants of the US Bank Plaza who benefit from this certification because of a healthier and more productive work environment.”