

OFFICE PROPERTIES

Quarterly

Sustainability

Fiddler's Green Center: An energy retrofit story

While almost everyone can agree that our commercial office buildings should be energy efficient, there are many property owners and tenants who still struggle with exorbitant energy costs every month. No one likes paying high utility bills, but forward-thinking energy-efficiency projects can sometimes take a back seat to more immediate issues like filling empty tenant space or making sure your budget adds up.

In our experience, all building owners and facility directors want what's best for their properties, but many of them aren't sure how to organize, kick off or finance an energy retrofit project. So, they wonder, how do I even begin?

There are many different ways to answer that question, but we think it's most helpful to look at a real-world example of an energy retrofit project as a case study.

A few years ago, I connected with a colleague at Denver's John Madden Co. at a Colorado Real Estate Journal event covering retro commissioning. As we talked, he explained that his firm was interested in making its buildings at Fiddler's Green Center in Greenwood Village more energy efficient.

What started at that event is now a strong partnership between McKinstry and JMC that's been going for six years and counting! At the outset, we completed a variety of small projects that helped the company monitor its energy con-



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sumption, assess the condition of its facilities and attain a LEED certification.

We were all proud of the work we'd accomplished, but we knew that the elephant in the room was an even bigger project: a comprehensive

energy retrofit of twin office buildings at Fiddler's Green Center. This would save JMC and its tenants a ton of money, but it was a complex project to get off the ground, financially and logistically.

Thankfully, we were able to work with the Colorado Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program. As you might have already read in this quarterly, this program makes it possible for commercial building owners and real estate developers to obtain affordable, long-term financing for energy efficiency, renewable energy and water conservation improvements.

What we were looking to tackle at Fiddler's Green Center met those criteria, so we decided to apply for financing through Colorado C-PACE. C-PACE funds up to 100 percent of any eligible project's costs, and that's helpful for building owners because it eliminates upfront costs. C-PACE payments are made through a special assessment on the property taxes.



The financing for the \$7.1 million Fiddler's Green Center project was approved Jan. 30 and construction began in February. The twin office buildings total 414,000 square feet. It is the largest C-PACE project financed in Colorado.

Knowing all this, we were convinced that working with Colorado C-PACE was a great way to make this energy-efficiency project feasible. In addition, we collaborated with Bellco Credit Union, the project financier, and Integro, the project finance consultant.

Ultimately, the financing for the \$7.1 million Fiddler's Green Center project (including both hard and soft costs) was approved Jan. 30, and we kicked off construction in February. The twin office buildings total 414,000 square feet, and our energy-saving work in the coming months will focus on replacing rooftop units, upgrading controls, revamping lighting, updating water fixtures, installing next-generation

metering of all tenant spaces, pursuing LEED certification, and kicking off a three-year Active Energy Management program.

Notably, this project will be the largest-ever financed through Colorado's C-PACE program, establishing a new benchmark for excellence in C-PACE energy-efficiency projects. It's expected to be completed later this summer.

While an energy retrofit of your building or buildings may seem intimidating or too complex at the outset, programs like Colorado C-PACE have made comprehensive energy efficiency a reality for many Colorado building owners. There's no time like the present to get started.▲