

# Green News & Views

Real Assets – ESG initiatives

May 2021



## Fitwel's

7 health impact categories

"We are pleased to recognize UBS Asset Management Real Estate & Private Markets for achieving the Fitwel Viral Response Approval for 455 Market Street, one of San Francisco's premier office and retail destinations..."

Joanna Frank  
President and CEO, Center for  
Active Design

## Health & wellbeing at our core with Fitwel

- Impacts community health
- Reduces morbidity and absenteeism
- Supports social equity for vulnerable populations
- Instills feelings of wellbeing
- Provides healthy food options
- Promotes occupant safety
- Increases physical activity

The importance of integrating the Social component of ESG into real estate management is increasing, with many investors now taking a far more holistic approach to ESG investments. How a building can utilize structural, design and operational strategies to support the physical, social and mental health of its occupants reinforces the demand for healthier buildings. In addition, it has become evident that healthy buildings are key to resuming operations following a crisis like the pandemic.

In its continued efforts to provide a safe living and working environment for its tenants, UBS Asset Management (UBS-AM), Real Estate & Private Markets (REPM) has obtained entity- and property-level certifications through Fitwel and its Viral Response Module. Among other properties, REPM recently received Fitwel Viral Response certification for 455 Market Street, a Class A San Francisco office asset managed by the business. 455 Market Street was first awarded the Fitwel Certification in March 2019, and later obtained the Fitwel Viral Response Certification in May 2021.

## What is Fitwel?

Fitwel is the world's leading certification system for optimizing building design and operations to support human health & wellbeing. It was originally created by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and US General Services Administration, with the Center for Active Design selected as the operator. Fitwel is implementing a vision for a healthier future where all buildings and communities are enhanced to strengthen health & wellbeing.

## Fitwel Certification

Fitwel addresses health as an interconnected system, with no single dominant category or area of focus, and as such all strategies are voluntary, with no individual prerequisites. The 7 standards are as follows:

### **Impact community health**

Strategies that impact surrounding community health broaden the impact of the project past the health of onsite occupants, reaching those who live, work, play, or learn in the neighboring areas.

### **Reduce morbidity and absenteeism**

Strategies that reduce morbidity and absenteeism promote decreased rates of chronic disease and mental health conditions, reductions in disease transmission, and fewer missed days of work.

### **Support social equity for vulnerable populations**

Strategies that support social equity for vulnerable populations ensure that a range of populations, including children, elderly, disabled, or socio-economically disadvantaged persons have increased access to health-promoting opportunities whether through universal accessibility, pricing incentives, targeted amenities, or pedestrian-focused environments.

### **Instill feelings of wellbeing**

Strategies that instill feelings of wellbeing promote inclusion, relaxation, and perceptions of safety, through rejuvenating and clean spaces, an enhanced connection to nature, and opportunities for social engagement.

### **Provide healthy food options**

Strategies that enhance access to healthy foods provide occupants with expanded availability to fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious food options by diversifying the outlets and sources of healthier food options, promoting healthier choices, and reducing cost of healthier options through pricing incentives.

### **Promote occupant safety**

Strategies that promote occupant safety decrease risk of crime and injury, protect bicyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic, and increase stair safety.

### **Increase physical activity**

Strategies that increase physical activity incorporate opportunities for movement into everyday life whether through encouraging active transportation, promoting stair use, or expanding access to indoor and outdoor fitness areas and equipment.

## How assets are scored

The Fitwel standard provides a blueprint for making positive changes that are scientifically proven to enhance wellbeing and occupier health. A Fitwel certification denotes that a building incorporates an exemplary number of evidence-based design and policy strategies that support the physical, mental and social health of its occupants. Through an evidence-based 12 section system, Fitwel certifies the wellness credentials of buildings and their surroundings based on criteria such as the following partial list of criteria that were met by 455 Market Street:

- Accessible, direct access pedestrian route to public transit
- Secured and covered bicycle parking
- Provide showers with lockers for building occupants
- Tobacco-free policy
- Adopt and implement an Indoor Air Quality Policy
- Adopt and implement a Green Purchasing Policy
- Provide natural daylight in a majority of the workplace
- Ensure that there is one certified first responder (CFR) per 100 regular occupants present during work hours
- Walk Score of 90 or above

## Viral Response Module

The Viral Response Module provides annual, third-party certification of policies and practices to mitigate the spread of contagious diseases within buildings. The Viral Response module was developed in direct response to industry demand surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Viral Response module was initiated during COVID-19, its strategies can minimize the spread of other infectious respiratory diseases, including influenza and legionnaires' disease. It is one of the leading frameworks that real estate owners and operators can use as part of their efforts in ensuring their properties are ready for a safer and healthier return to work.

The Fitwel Viral Response Module certification is a two-step approach. Step 1 is the certification of the entity-wide policies and practices that must be followed by all individual properties. UBS received the entity level certification in December 2020. Step 2 is the asset-level certification that is awarded once an individual property demonstrates that it has met the requirements specified in the entity-level policies and practices. The Fitwel Viral Response module strategies are weighted according to their strength of evidence and level of health impact, using a 100% scale. A module score of 70-89% will be recognized as Fitwel Viral Response Certified. Assets are scored against the following criteria:

### **Enhance indoor environments**

Focuses on mechanical systems, enhanced cleaning protocols and policies that impact viral transmission within the indoor environment.

### **Encourage behavioral change**

Focuses on behavioral interventions implemented within the built environment that can mitigate viral transmission.

### **Build occupant trust**

Focuses on policies and procedures to maximize trust in the built environment.

## About 455 Market Street

455 Market Street is a Class A 22-story office building located one block from the new Salesforce transit center and Salesforce Tower. In addition to its prime location in relation to public transit with a Walk Score of 100 and Transit Score of 100, 455 Market Street has been a leader in sustainability since its first Energy Star certification in 2002.

Additional awards and certifications over the years include:

- 2005 Commercial Recycler of the Year
- 2007 Earth Award (first year of the competition)
- 2008 Earth Award (only allowed to win awards twice)
- 2009 LEED Silver certification
- 2014 LEED Gold certification
- 2019 Fitwel certification
- 2019 LEED Platinum certification
- 2019 TOBY (Outstanding Building of the Year) Award
- 2020 LEED ARC Platinum certification
- 2021 Fitwel Viral Response Module certification

COVID-19 has elevated the importance of occupant health in building operations and the environment we create for our tenants and residents. The Fitwel certification is a continuation of REPM's commitment to advancing tenants' wellbeing through health-promoting design and market-leading operational strategies.

Health & wellbeing has become an increasingly important focus across the entire real estate industry. Although the energy and environmental components of buildings have received significant attention for over a decade, the social components are quickly becoming just as important. Through prioritizing health & wellbeing, we are not only further modernizing and enhancing the appeal of our buildings, we are also creating greater levels of trust among our occupants – particularly as people prepare to return to the office.



455 Market Street – San Francisco, California, USA

“...As a demonstrated leader in the healthy building movement, UBS-AM REPM continues to promote sustainable practices throughout its portfolio, optimizing its properties to put the health & wellbeing of its occupants first.”

Joanna Frank  
President and CEO, Center for Active Design



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