

# Via6

## Seattle, Washington

### PROJECT DATA

USE  
MULTIFAMILY HOUSING  
654 STUDIO, ONE-, AND TWO-BEDROOM UNITS

YEAR OPENED  
2013

SITE SIZE  
0.89 AC (0.36 HA)

RENTAL RATES  
\$1,400 TO \$4,380

PROJECT COST  
\$193 MILLION

DEVELOPER  
PINE STREET GROUP LLC

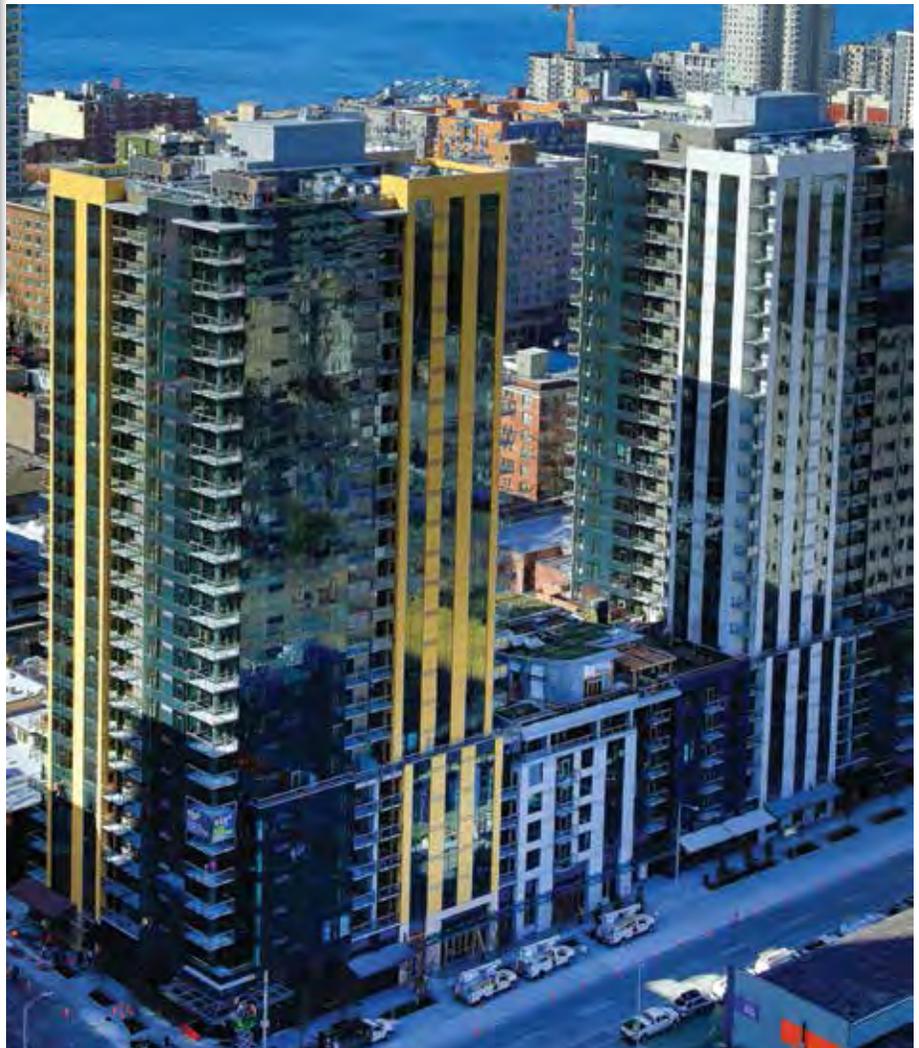
ARCHITECT/INTERIOR DESIGNER  
GGLO

EQUITY PARTNERS  
CANADA PENSION PLAN INVESTMENT BOARD AND THE MULTI-EMPLOYER PROPERTY TRUST, CLIENTS OF BENTALL KENNEDY, SEATTLE.

**BEFORE THE PINE STREET GROUP CONCEIVED OF VIA6**, its adjacent blocks had no housing, very little street life, and few amenities. The design for Via6 was started with the objective of building a community rather than building an apartment building, says Matt Griffin, principal and managing partner of Pine Street Group. Taking that approach changed the way his company thought about designing and marketing the project. Via6 is not only the first apartment building Pine Street Group has developed, but also the largest residential project in downtown Seattle built in one phase.

The design for Via6 was started with the objective of building a community rather than building an apartment building.

*Tim Rice  
Architectural  
Photography*



Griffin was inspired to create a place where people wanted to stay, as well as where they could live without needing to own a car. Via6 is located two blocks from the Westlake Transit Hub, which connects people to all reaches of the city.

Via6 is a 24-story, two-tower mixed-use project spanning the length of one downtown block. It has 654 studio and one- and two-bedroom apartments located above 15,000 square feet (1,400 sq m) of community-oriented service businesses.

## Main Wellness Features

Location aside, by focusing on building a community rather than an apartment building, Pine Street Group created a project that includes features that strongly promote both physical activity and social interaction—features that can be adapted in other projects. Establishing this sense of community is a big part of what sets Via6 apart from similar apartment complexes.

With a perfect Walk Score of 100, the site is ideal for promoting walkability and bikability—and removing the need for car ownership. Griffin believes that a car-free lifestyle is a way to reduce the stress (as well as the cost) that comes with car ownership. Though the units are smaller than most in the Seattle area—averaging 715 square feet (66 sq m)—Griffin noted “the location is so good that over time we believe people will pay a premium to be here.”

### SPACES FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Creating spaces and opportunities for planned and spontaneous social interaction was a major factor in the design and remains a focus of operations of Via6. The original motivation for creating this sense of community was to retain tenants, Griffin says, but he now believes that if people know their neighbors, they will be healthier as well. Community-supporting wellness features include:

- \* **Ground-floor public uses.** A restaurant, grocery store, coffee shop, barber shop, and bike shop are used by both residents and the general public, providing both convenience to residents and chances to meet others in the neighborhood.
- \* **An 18-foot (5.5 m) steel-clad chronograph located in the lobby.** Residents and guests can click through topics displayed on the chronograph to see what is trending online and get the latest headlines. The chronograph also displays



The seventh-floor pavilion includes indoor and outdoor spaces that encourage resident interaction.  
*Ben Benschneider*

An 18-foot (5.5 m) chronograph in the lobby displays information about Via6 and the neighborhood.  
*Ben Benschneider*

A mezzanine level contains social amenities and games for residents and is visible from the lobby below.  
*Ben Benschneider*



information about Via6, and neighborhood amenities and services—all of which provide people with information that will help them strike up conversations with one another.

\* **A mezzanine level where activity is visible from the lobby.** Amenities located there include

pool tables and shuffleboard tables, and easy chairs with tables. Abundant power outlets and free wifi encourage residents to come down from their units to work or relax during evenings and weekends, allowing people to meet

Bicycle amenities feature prominently within the ground and mezzanine levels of Via6.  
*Pine Street Group*





without having to go down to the street-level bars and restaurants.

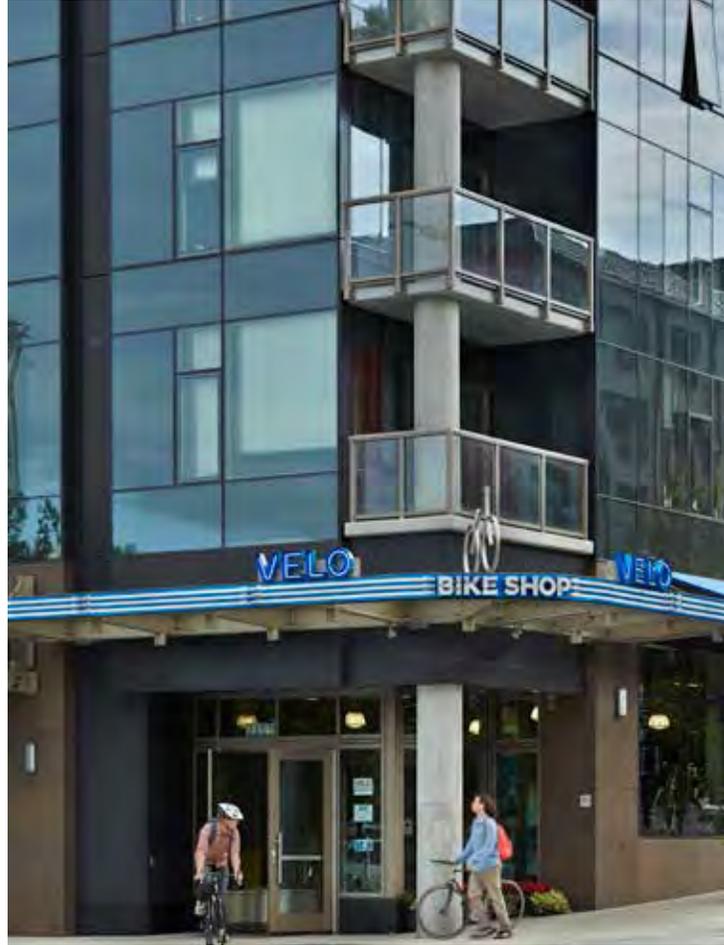
- \* **A ground-floor theater area.** The theater can be reserved for private events but is open to all residents when local sports teams are playing. Residents who are sports fans can watch their favorite teams in a social setting with other fans rather than watching in their own apartment.
- \* **The pavilion.** An area on the seventh floor between the two towers, referred to as the pavilion, has indoor and outdoor space that can be used nearly year-round due to Seattle's temperate climate. Instead of individual grills, the area has three large barbecues with multiple controls, as well as communal tables, encouraging residents to cook and eat alongside their neighbors. Griffin says he has been amazed by the number of people who first met in this space.
- \* **In-house event coordinators.** During the first year, a husband-and-wife musician/artist team has lived at Via6 rent-free in exchange for planning social events for residents to meet their neighbors.

## SUPPORT AND AMENITIES FOR BIKING

Via6 has embraced the notion of bikability not only for residents, but also for the broader downtown community. Griffin convinced the popular Velo Bike Shop—located in another neighborhood for 24 years—to relocate to Via6 to help with this vision.

Pine Street Group also built space for ViaBike, a bike club for downtown bicycle commuters that is managed by Velo. For a monthly fee of \$15, the club provides secure storage for 150 bikes, private access to the club off an alley, and locker rooms with showers and towel service. Members' bikes parked in designated stalls can be serviced by Velo while their owners are at work.

Bike storage for residents is separate and is reached by a ramp off the alley. Residents also have access to a bike wash, air pump, and stands



with bike tools. The bike shop offers classes for residents on changing flat tires and performing other minor maintenance. The shop also reserves a few bikes for lending to residents at no cost for running errands. These features, which have made Via6 known as a hub for bicyclists, have played a big role in marketing the building to prospective residents and retail tenants, and in creating a health-focused identity for the project, says Griffin.

## Performance

Via6 has performed better than expected in terms of income, Griffin says, though the Pine Street Group measures early success more by lease-up rate than lease premiums. The firm expected it would take 18 months for the project to be 90 percent leased, but it took less than a year, despite the small unit size and an increased apartment supply in Seattle. Rents range from \$1,175 to \$4,285 per month, and Griffin notes that Via6 is pushing rent rates higher in Seattle. Rents at Via6 currently average about \$3 per square foot.

**Left: ViaBike, a bike club for downtown bicycle commuters, provides secure bike storage for club members. Bike storage for Via6 residents is separate.**

*Ben Benschneider*

**Right: The Velo Bike Shop, which relocated to Via6, serves as a bicycling hub for the whole neighborhood.**

*Ben Benschneider*