

# Corporate Sustainability Report

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**WHITESTONE REIT**

2024



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01

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# ABOUT WHITESTONE REIT



# LETTER FROM OUR CEO

At the core of Whitestone's mission is meeting the needs of the communities surrounding our centers by working with our tenants - many of which are entrepreneurial business owners - to better their communities. We are proud of our work with these owners and businesses and eagerly embrace ESG principles that will further advance the role we play by supporting diversity, reducing the environmental impact of our buildings, and helping all of our stakeholders succeed.

I've served just over three years as Whitestone's CEO and over that time I am proud of the improvements we have made benefiting our investors, tenants, communities, and associates. We have achieved record occupancy levels in our properties, reduced our corporate overhead costs, strengthened our balance sheet resulting in the receipt of an investment grade credit rating, improved employee satisfaction ratings and onboarded an ESG data management solution. On the governance side, we have separated the CEO and Chair roles, terminated the Shareholder Rights Plan (poison pill), provided shareholders the ability to amend our bylaws, refreshed and increased the strength and diversity of our board with five new trustees. In 2024, we added Kristian Gathright and Donald Miller, two new independent trustees, after an exhaustive search by the Nominating and Governance Committee in combination with executive search firm Spencer Stuart.

Our primary focus now is on advancing long-term sustainable change through enacting mechanisms to ensure ESG efforts are a crucial part of our daily operations and decision making. One example of this is through implementing green leases with our tenants. With a weighted average remaining lease term of approximately 4 years, we expect to increase the percent of our portfolio with green leases clauses and work more closely with tenants to implement ESG considerations into daily operations.

We have also begun installing electric vehicle charging stations at select centers, in order to energize and strengthen our centers and support the transition to electric vehicles. We're also working with all of our employees to find ways to reduce our carbon footprint, including improving HVAC systems, installing energy efficient lighting, and increasing the renewable energy percentage in our electric contracts.

Our management approach builds unity between our tenants and bonds with our communities. We understand that managing our ESG responsibilities is critical to creating and sustaining long-term value. Our priorities in these efforts are providing high quality rental spaces to strong, diverse, and successful businesses; investing in our people to ensure we can attract and retain the talent we need to remain successful; and operating to the highest possible standards of ethics and transparency. Whitestone looks forward to sharing the progress we have made in 2024 as well as a look at our plans for the years ahead.



**David K. Holeman**  
Chief Executive Officer

# BUSINESS AND PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Whitestone REIT (“Whitestone”) is a retail shopping center owner focused on properties that provide daily necessities and touch points for community, convenience, and commerce. We acquire, lease, and manage our centers to match tenants with the shared needs of the surrounding neighborhood. Our tenants include grocery stores, restaurants, medical and dental services, and many others essential to the vibrancy and health of the local area. Whitestone values diversity and is proud to maintain a workforce reflective of the wide range of customers and communities we serve.

## Portfolio

Our current portfolio 100% sun-belt located, with properties in Texas and Arizona. As of December 31, 2024, we wholly owned 12 properties in the Houston metropolitan area, 9 properties in the Dallas metropolitan area, 3 properties in the San Antonio metropolitan area, 5 properties in the Austin metropolitan area and 26 properties in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

## 2024 Key Metrics

50

Wholly owned properties

5

Parcels of land held for future development

4.9M

Square feet (wholly owned)

100%

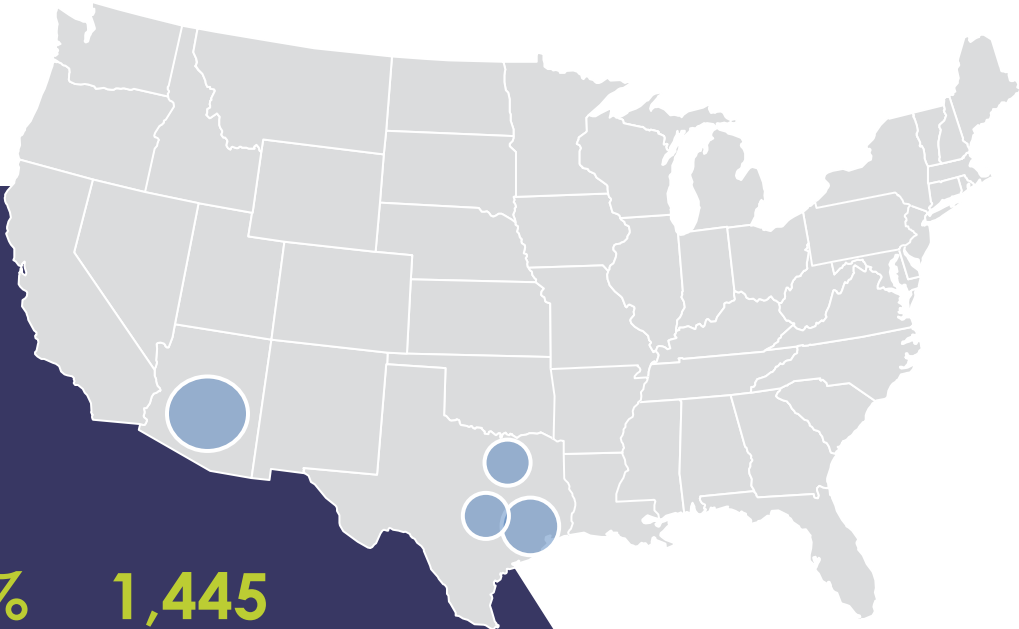
Sunbelt properties

94.1%

Portfolio Occupancy

1,445

Total tenants



Note: All data in this presentation is year-end 2024 data, unless otherwise noted.



## ESG AT WHITESTONE

We understand that managing our environmental, social, and governance responsibilities is critical to creating and sustaining long-term value. Our priorities include: providing high quality rental spaces to strong, diverse, and successful tenants; investing in our people to ensure we can attract and retain the talent we need to remain successful; and operating to the highest possible standards of ethics and transparency.

Since establishing our ESG Steering Committee, we have focused on creating a benchmark for our performance in key environmental, social, and governance criteria. As of 2022, we believe we have an understanding of our performance relative to best practices in the retail real estate sector. Over the coming years, we will prioritize making continuous improvement to do our part in creating an equitable and sustainable net zero carbon economy.

With this goal in mind, we will continue the diagnostic analysis of our current practices and procedures, but also make meaningful strides to begin the implementation of a multi-year plan to address the most pressing ESG issues impacting Whitestone and its communities. We will track our progress in part by reporting in alignment with leading ESG frameworks such as GRESB, TCFD, and SASB. To assist in these endeavors, we have onboarded software to allow us to track resource consumption and GHG emissions in near real-time. With the benchmarks established in 2022, we will focus our future efforts on making progressive improvements and ultimately becoming a recognized leader in ESG best practices.

# 02

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## GOVERNANCE

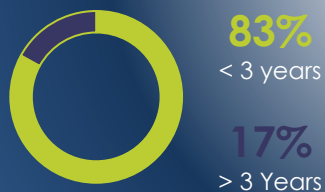




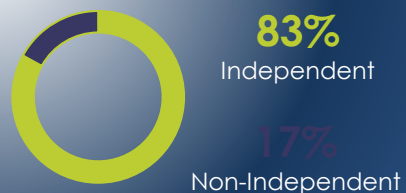
# BOARD COMPOSITION\*

Beginning in 2020, we refreshed our Board of Trustees, creating a balance of experience and new perspectives that positions Whitestone to address a continuously evolving ESG environment. Diversity and inclusion are strategic initiatives at Whitestone, and their application extends to our Board. We remain committed to maintaining a Board with gender and racial diversity that helps facilitate balanced, wide-ranging discussions in the boardroom. In 2022, we added CEO, Dave Holeman, followed by Amy Feng and Julia Buthman in 2023 and Kristian Gathright and Don Miller in 2024.

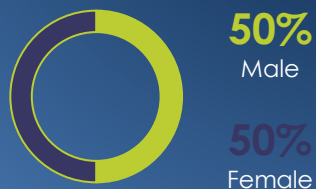
## Tenure



## Independence



## Gender



## Race and Ethnicity



# GOVERNANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Whitestone and its Board maintain high standards for accuracy and transparency in matters of corporate governance and financial reporting. We are proud to include the following corporate best practices in our governance standards:

- ✓ Declassified Board, with annual election of trustees
- ✓ Plurality vote standard in trustee elections with resignation policy
- ✓ Separate Chairman and CEO roles
- ✓ 5 of 6 trustee nominees are independent; Audit, Compensation, and Nominating and Corporate Governance Committees each entirely comprised of independent trustees
- ✓ Independent trustees meet without management present
- ✓ Share Ownership Policy
- ✓ Codes of Conduct for trustees, officers, and employees
- ✓ Shareholder ability to adopt, amend or repeal the bylaws and call special meetings
- ✓ Clawback provision included in Whitestone's Code of Business Conduct and Ethics



# HOW WE DESIGNED THE RIGHT BOARD TO SERVE WHITESTONE SHAREHOLDERS (2024)

<u>Annual Board Evaluation</u>	<u>The Search</u>	<u>Candidate Refining</u>	<u>The Full Board</u>	<u>Announcement and Onboarding</u>
Evaluate The Board's Core Competencies, Perspectives And Strategic Needs	Consider Qualified Candidates	Interview Candidates (Nominating and Governance Committee)	Additional Interviews and Candidate Selection	Bringing New Directors Up to Speed
May	Jun – Jul	Aug – Sept	Oct	Nov
<p>Ensure board is strong in strategic oversight, financial and valuation capability, stakeholder advocacy, diversity of expertise / perspective and real estate experience.</p> <p>The board determined fresh perspectives and additional real estate experience would add value to the Whitestone board, announcing intent to refresh two board members (long-serving members David Taylor and Nandita Berry to depart).</p> <p>Interviews of director recruiting firms by the Nominating and Governance Committee (NGC).</p>	<p>The NGC hired Spencer Stuart to assist in finding candidates with strong real estate experience, c-suite experience, integrity and prior board / oversight experience.</p> <p>In addition, the full board utilized resources including the NYSE and the National Association of Corporate Directors in order to enhance an exhaustive search for candidates.</p> <p>Trustee candidates sourced, needed skill sets refined and calibrated by Spencer Stuart and Company.</p>	<p>Candidates were interviewed multiple times, virtually and in-person, by the NGC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed their ability to apply their experience in an oversight / strategic capacity</li> <li>Ensured their skills filled gaps in Whitestone's skills matrix, and</li> <li>That they possessed the dedication necessary to properly represent shareholders on Whitestone's board.</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates recommended by the NGC were subsequently interviewed by the full board and checked against the needs driven by the company's strategic plan, skills matrix and oversight needs.</p> <p>The full board subsequently approved two new candidates for the board.</p>	<p>Announced and onboarded new board members</p> <p>New board member orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spent time in each functional area</li> <li>Familiarized new trustees with Whitestone's operations and team members</li> <li>Visited WSR properties</li> </ul>

## OUTCOME

**A highly qualified, well-rounded board with strong oversight experience and excellent diversity of thought:**

- Financial, accounting and valuation expertise
- Extensive real estate, retail and relevant industry knowledge
- Significant public company director experience
- Governance and sustainability experience
- Cybersecurity experience

# WHITESTONE'S COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Through owning, operating, developing and redeveloping successful neighborhood community shopping centers, we engage with a wide variety of stakeholders, including shareholders, noteholders, lenders, employees, co-investment partnerships, tenants, and the local communities where our properties are located. We believe that considering the needs and feedback of these stakeholders is crucial to the value-creation process as they are in a position to significantly influence our long-term success.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ENGAGEMENT APPROACH		TOPICS OF DISCUSSION
Shareholders, Noteholders and Lenders	One-on-one meetings with individuals and institutions	Interactions facilitated via industry associations and sell-side analyst conferences	Our goals and strategic objectives, performance and expectations, transparent disclosure, corporate governance and other ESG initiatives
	Direct dialogue through Whitestone-hosted market visits and quarterly conference calls	Information sharing via company filings	
Tenants	Tenant site visits on a regular basis performed by property managers and regional managers	One-on-one contact with tenants and representatives at retailer industry conferences	Tenant performance, tenant satisfaction, property maintenance, property health and safety, property efficiencies and sustainable building practices
	Tenant satisfaction surveys		
Communities	One-on-one dialogue with local and regional planning agencies, municipal boards, permitting authorities and community groups	Direct dialogue through open houses and town halls	Property specific information, community interests and needs
	Monitoring through social media	Employing a diverse group of associates that understands the needs of multicultural communities and tenants.	
Vendors	Compliance with our Vendor Code of Conduct Policy		Vendors are to comply with established Code of Conduct Policy which includes, but not limited to, labor rights, health & safety, unfair business practices and environmental and sustainability concerns
Employees	One-on-one engagements and annual goal setting	Special project and training workshops	Employee satisfaction, benefits and compensation, health and safety, career development and training, diversity and equal opportunity
	Employee review meetings and Q&A sessions with the executive team members	Open door policy that encourages employees to offer opinions or raise concerns informally	
	Formal reporting mechanism to raise issues such as fraud, harassment, etc.	Whistleblower Policy	
	Employee satisfaction surveys	Employee ESG training	

# ESG OVERSIGHT

Our Board's Nominating and Corporate Governance committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Whitestone's performance in and response to key sustainability issues, including social and governance topics. As needed, the committee makes recommendations to the Board on actions to be taken. Whitestone's ESG Steering Committee, which includes our CEO, reports directly to the Board's Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee.

**Board of Directors**

**Nominating and Corporate  
Governance Committee**

**ESG Steering Committee**



## ESG STEERING COMMITTEE

Whitestone's ESG Steering Committee is responsible for front line action on environmental (including climate-related), social, and governance matters. The ESG Steering Committee is a cross-functional team including our CEO as well as members of our asset management, human resources, investor relations, and operational departments. Its mission is to formulate and implement Whitestone's response to key ESG matters as well as monitor and assess upcoming ESG matters that may affect the organization in future years.

# RISK MANAGEMENT AND DATA SECURITY

Our Board has an active role, as a whole and also at the committee level, in overseeing management of our risks. The Compensation Committee is responsible for overseeing the management of risks relating to our executive compensation plans and arrangements. The Audit Committee oversees management of financial and legal compliance risks. The Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee manages risks associated with the independence of the Board and potential conflicts of interest. While each committee is responsible for evaluating certain risks and overseeing the management of such risks, the entire Board is regularly informed through committee reports about such risks.

The Audit Committee considers risks relating to cybersecurity and, for that purpose, receives annual reports from management regarding cybersecurity risks and countermeasures being undertaken or considered by Whitestone, including updates on the internal and external cybersecurity landscape and relevant technical developments.

We engage an external IT consultant that actively monitors network activity to prevent cyber attacks and protect against data loss by backing up our network drives on a regular basis.

Whitestone has not had an information security breach within the last 5 years. The company has also not had a breach occur by a third party. Whitestone trains all employees on information security annually (training conducted by Preactive IT). The company maintains a cyber insurance policy.

## KEY POLICIES

### CODE OF BUSINESS CONDUCT AND ETHICS

Whitestone's Code of Business Conduct and Ethics outlines the policies necessary to ensure we are conducting our business with high standards and integrity. All Whitestone employees and members of the Board of Trustees are expected to adhere to the principles and procedures in the Code that apply to them. 100% of Whitestone employees are trained for compliance with the Code annually.

### HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

Our policy on human rights is consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This policy reflects our human rights stance in our relationships with our employees, suppliers, contractors, and tenants.

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

Whitestone's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles is reflected in our DEI Policy. This commitment covers activities across our business, from talent recruitment to employee engagement to how we engage our tenants and local communities.

### VENDOR CODE OF CONDUCT

As an industry leader and a responsible business, we seek to use our position to promote the highest standards for ethics and business conduct wherever we operate. For us to provide superior services in a responsible manner, we require vendors to comply with our Vendor Code of Conduct. In addition, all employees are required to pass an annual online module for anti-bribery & anti-corruption.

### INSIDER TRADING COMPLIANCE POLICY

Our Insider Trading Compliance Policy outlines clear and appropriate standards to ensure Whitestone employees and Board members do not use material, nonpublic information when purchasing or selling our securities and that unauthorized parties do not have access to material, nonpublic information.

### OSHA POLICY

We are highly focused on providing a safe and productive workplace. Whitestone's commitment to our associates' health and safety is outlined in our OSHA Policy.

### WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

The Company also has made available a 24/7 confidential employee hotline, which employees, suppliers and customers may use to report any observations, concerns or complaints – available in local languages. The company has a strict non-retaliation policy for issued reported via the hotline. The number for the hotline is: 1-855-890-3329.

### Lobbying / Advocacy

Whitestone had zero lobbying / advocacy expenditures over the last 3 years and has no plans for any expenditures in 2025 (political or otherwise).

# 03

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## ENVIRONMENTAL



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

As of December 31, 2024, we wholly owned and managed a real estate portfolio of 50 properties and five land parcels for future development, containing approximately 4.9 million square feet of gross leasable area. Due to our portfolio's size and our desire to add value to the communities in which we serve, we are aware of the environmental impacts our properties could have and recognize the need for thoughtful environmental stewardship.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In 2022, we developed an environmental management system (EMS) framework and process in reference to the ISO 14001 standard, through which we are able to continue driving financial value and minimizing the environmental impact of the built environment. We developed this EMS to manage portfolio- and site-specific risks, enable implementation of environmental initiatives and projects, and track relevant information on a more regular and automated basis. There are four integrated stages: Plan, Do, Check and Act.

**PLAN:** ESG Committee identifies potential opportunities, priorities, and risks as it relates to Whitestone's ESG strategy

**DO:** ESG Committee implements initiatives that reduce the environmental footprint of Whitestone's operations

**CHECK:** ESG Committee identifies what was successful in reaching environmental goals and what failed to reach the desired impact

**ACT:** ESG Committee discloses progress to the Board of Trustees and adjusts the appropriate actions if stated objectives in the "Plan" phase were not met

## ENERGY MANAGEMENT, GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

As an owner of retail real estate, our approach to energy management is focused on two areas: our operations and our communities.

We recognize that our operations are where we have the most control over and are the most responsible for. Through our energy management policy, we have identified that managing energy efficiency first starts with managing energy consumption data. With this data, we are able to identify which properties within our portfolio are able to benefit the most from energy efficiency upgrade projects, such as upgrading parking lot lighting to efficient LED lights.

For the communities in which we serve, we recognize that energy management can equate to best practices for greenhouse gas emissions management, which can impact us all. As part of our energy management policy, we have committed to installing electric vehicle charging stations at some centers and will evaluate expanding this effort where it makes sense.



Whitestone bought 22.6 million kilowatt hours of renewable electricity from TXU between 2020 and 2024.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES**

### **WATER MANAGEMENT**

Because the majority of our properties are located in geographic regions that are prone to drought and water supply issues, water management is a critical component of our operations. In our new water management policy, we have two identified approaches: water consumption within our buildings and water consumption on our sites.

Within our buildings, we recommend to our tenants to use low-flow fixtures where possible and offer them resources to facilitate those decisions through our tenant fit-out guide. For our sites, we monitor and evaluate our water consumption trends and identify strategies to mitigate or eliminate water use such as through irrigation improvement projects and implementing xeriscaping in our landscaping.

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

As an owner of retail real estate, we recognize that bringing people and communities together can result in waste and recycling generation from consumer activities. Because of the potential environmental impact of our properties, we have created a waste management policy to support waste generation mitigation and improved recycling management. Through our waste management policy, we are able to:

- Identify a baseline waste management approach across our portfolio
- Support our tenants in having the right waste management services accessible to their relevant market
- Support our communities by offering specialty recycling



### **CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE**

Our current geographic concentration in the Houston metropolitan area potentially increases the risk of damage to our portfolio due to hurricanes. We have also identified the following as potential physical and transition climate related risks that could impact our portfolio:

- Flooding
- Wildfires
- Droughts
- Loss of power
- Increased CapEx to resolve physical damage to properties
- Potential increased SEC or other regulatory requirements
- Changes in capital markets pricing due to sustainability or resilience performance

We believe that continued geographic diversification in markets where we have substantial knowledge and experience will help offset the climate risk from a single market concentration. We have yet to be materially impacted by climate change or natural disasters, but we continue to evaluate the risks and will adapt as our understanding of these topics evolves. We have extensive insurance in place to protect against natural disasters and incidents.

### **BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT**

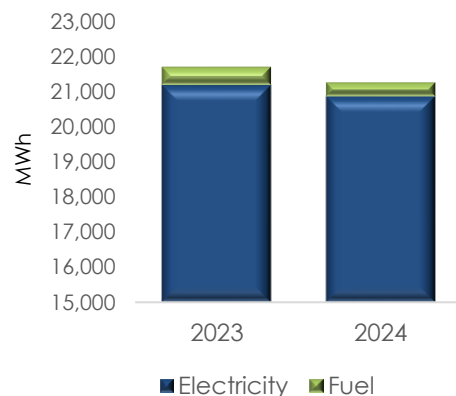
Whitestone recognizes that as a real estate owner, our properties may encounter issues related to wildlife, ecosystems, endangered species, and habitat management. We understand that it is our responsibility to limit our impact on local biodiversity and habitats, and we aim to operate and build responsibly.

Through our biodiversity and habitat policy, we focus on minimizing the impact to the natural environment during development and throughout our operations. Some examples of how we mitigate our impact include limiting or eliminating the use of toxic chemicals in our landscaping and reducing noise and air pollution during construction.



# ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

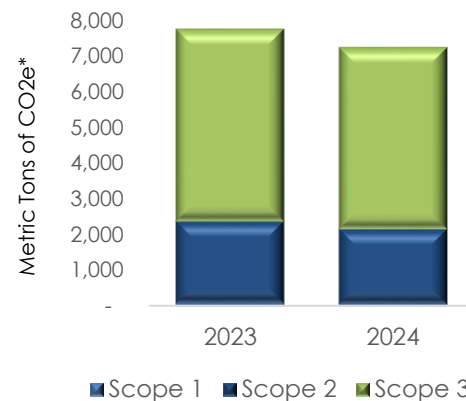
## ENERGY USAGE (Absolute)



In 2024, our properties saw a 2% decrease in energy consumption and a 1% decrease in like-for-like energy consumption.

For 2023 and 2024, 97.6% and 98.2% of total absolute energy consumption was sourced from the electric grid, respectively, and 2.4% and 1.8% was sourced from natural gas, respectively.

## GHG EMISSIONS (Absolute)

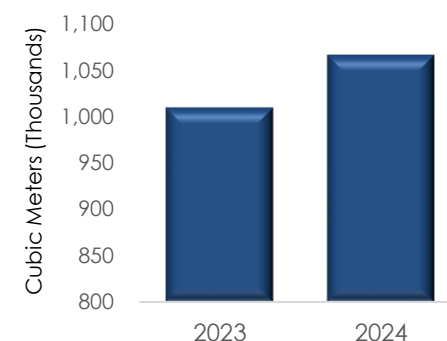


In 2024, our properties saw a 6.5% decrease in absolute GHG emissions. For our like-for-like properties, we saw a 26% decrease in Scope 1 emissions, a 6.3% decrease in Scope 2 emissions, and a 5.1% decrease in Scope 3 emissions.

\*Units in mtCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Scope 1 and 2 include emissions from exterior and common areas at retail properties. Scope 3 includes emissions from tenant usage at all property types.

## WATER USAGE (Absolute)



In 2024, our properties saw a 5.6% increase in absolute water consumption and an 8.1% increase in like-for-like consumption.



## GRESB RESPONSE

In 2024, we consolidated the work that we have done to integrate ESG throughout our company and submitted our 4<sup>th</sup> annual GRESB assessment. Through our submission to GRESB, we identified a baseline for Whitestone's ESG performance, benchmark our performance against our peers, and focus on future improvements. We intend to continue submitting to GRESB annually.

GRESB is an independent organization that collects, validates, scores, and benchmarks ESG data for use by investors, asset managers, and the industry as a whole.

# 04

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## SOCIAL



# OUR ASSOCIATES

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

At Whitestone, we believe that our people are at the heart of our culture, philosophy, and strategy. We are committed to maintaining workplaces, properties, and communities that are inclusive, diverse, and free of discrimination of any kind; we have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, sex, color, national or social origin, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification or expression, or any other status protected by law.

We aim to serve shareholders, tenants, and our community through our commitment outlined in Whitestone's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy, which includes commitments to embracing differences and creating a fair and transparent environment in the workplace. As stated in our Human Rights Policy, the basis for recruitment, hiring, placement, development, training, compensation, and advancement at Whitestone is qualifications, performance, skills, and experience. All Whitestone employees complete annual diversity, inclusiveness, and sensitivity training to ensure that we uphold these commitments as an organization.

## ASSOCIATE ENGAGEMENT

Whitestone's employees are the foundation of our entrepreneurial spirit, inclusive culture, and our success and achievements. Our employees represent Whitestone to our stakeholders, and we want them to feel excited and proud of this duty. All of our employees have the opportunity to share their thoughts in an annual employee satisfaction survey. Many employees feel supported by their managers who are highly focused on improving personal growth and development, enabling the employees to work at their full potential. In addition to continuing this one-on-one support, Whitestone also has an action plan to continuously improve our culture and employee engagement based on survey feedback, which includes additional training, reviewing our existing programs, and having further feedback sessions with our executives, department leaders, and individual teams.

We also host several events throughout the year to foster engagement and team building, including:

- Quarterly Town Hall Meetings
- Associates Recognitions
- Employee birthday and anniversary celebrations
- Building Better Health Seminars and Healthy Team Challenges
- WSR International and Inclusion Day
- Annual WSR family events
- Giving Back Community events (food drive initiatives, beautifying Buffalo Bayou Houston park, and BEAR Back to School Improving lives for at-risk and CPS-Involved Children)
- Associate potluck for Thanksgiving, Super Bowl, and other significant events
- Holiday celebrations and tacky sweater contests



## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Supporting our employees in their professional goals and development is a top priority for Whitestone. All our employees complete training on Whitestone's policies when they are hired, and we conduct individual annual employee reviews that focus on personal and professional goal setting. The annual performance reviews include an evaluation of the employee's performance and are discussed with the broader management team to ensure every employee's needs are met.

Employees also complete specific training in OSHA policy, safety regulations, cyber security, and business functions such as property management, maintenance, leasing, legal, acquisition, human resources, and accounting.

96%

of our employees received professional and compliance training during the year\*.

96%

of employees received ESG-specific training in social and governance topics\*.

97%

of our managers received leadership and professional development training\*.



### EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Through our Employee Development Program, Whitestone offers all associates the chance to expand their skills and knowledge. The program is offered on a monthly and quarterly basis through lunch and learn events. The sessions are led by Whitestone leadership or outside experts. Each event focuses on a specific aspect of real estate, industry, or leadership. Associates are encouraged to enhance their soft skills through online courses, a self-paced program available for their convenience.

### TUITION ASSISTANCE AND FIRST SCHOLAR EDUCATION PROGRAM

We encourage opportunities for associates to learn and grow by pursuing advanced degrees and additional educational opportunities that are aligned with Whitestone's strategy and goals. If an employee chooses to pursue an educational opportunity, Whitestone will reimburse a portion of the tuition fees in accordance with company policy. Our First Scholar Education Program provides tuition assistance for students attending Rice University's MBA program.

### COLLEGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

We have a strong focus on building out our talent pipeline and providing opportunities for students to learn about the real estate industry. We are proud to offer internship opportunities to students from local universities twice a year, during both summer and winter breaks. Accepted students work in our corporate office for at least eight weeks and may have the opportunity to return to Whitestone after graduating.

### APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Partner with **Open Classrooms** for flexible, online technical training. This self-paced program combines coursework with hands-on experience, offering mentorship, structured learning, and industry-recognized certifications to upskill associates for cross-functional roles.

\* In 2024



# TALENT PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## Strengthening talent pipeline to minimize hiring risks and drive long-term organizational success

- **WORKFORCE PLANNING & NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Identify key roles and future skill gaps while aligning the talent pipeline with departmental needs, business growth, cultural development, and succession planning. Utilizing Succession Matrix, PrincipleYou assessment, and CompAnalyst job analysis report to refine role alignment and talent strategies.

- **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Build strong relationships with industry talent acquisition experts, hiring managers, and department leaders. Promote referral programs and promote apprenticeships and internships to provide hands-on experience.

- **INTERNAL UPSKILLING & CAREER PATHWAYS**

Implement structured training programs to develop technical and leadership skills. Provide mentorship, coaching, and special project opportunities to enhance cross-functional growth.

- **PERFORMANCE-BASED ADVANCEMENT**

Establish clear career progression roadmaps based on skills and performance. Identify and promote high-potential associates through structured annual succession planning.

- **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) INITIATIVE**

Integrate DEI into the talent pipeline by adopting diverse hiring practices, inclusive leadership training, and fostering an equitable workplace. Partner with organizations such as the **Rice University DEI Annual Conference**, **ADP Business Partners**, and **TXWC** to support diversity efforts. Measure progress through annual associate surveys and focus group feedback sessions.

- **CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT & RETENTION**

Enhance employee retention by investing in professional growth, leadership development, competitive compensation & benefits programs, career mobility, a positive workplace culture, and active employee engagement programs.



## SAFETY AND WELLNESS

Whitestone is invested in creating an environment where our employees feel safe and have opportunities to improve personal wellness. To ensure the safety of all relevant parties, we host an annual OSHA training and annual risk and safety training with specific topics by region. Our field staff members are required to be educated on the OSHA 29CFR1910, 29CFR1926, and the Whitestone REIT Incident Report process throughout the duration of their employment at Whitestone.

## BUILDING BETTER HEALTH PROGRAM

Established in 2016, the Building Better Health program promotes a healthy and active lifestyle for our employees. Each quarter, we hold on-site seminars that cover topics such as healthy eating and living, financial planning, mental health, and well-being. Our regional offices are also able to attend these seminars remotely, so every Whitestone associate has the opportunity to educate themselves on living a healthier lifestyle. The Building Better Health program also offers supplemental benefits such as telehealth, employee assistance programs, personal health tools, and gym membership fee reimbursement. We also hold bi-annual Step Count competitions to inspire employees to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Through these programs, we provide our associates the opportunity to work with professional counseling and access to various resources that help our associates live healthy balanced lives where they can be more productive at work and have a happy home life.

## BENEFITS

Whitestone employees are provided with equity incentives (base salary, annual cash bonus, and restricted stock units) to align their job functions and interests with those of our shareholders.

In addition to equity, we offer a variety of benefits for all employees:

- ✓ College Savings and 401(k) programs, including an employer 401(k) match up to 3.5%
- ✓ Access to an on-site or virtual financial planner to help assist associates choose the best savings options
- ✓ Health insurance
- ✓ Employer-contributed HSA account supplements
- ✓ Employer – Health Reimbursement Arrangement
- ✓ Employer-paid basic life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance
- ✓ Your Money Line, a financial wellness program for associates
- ✓ Employee discount program through LifeMart and LifeKey
- ✓ Building Better Health program
- ✓ Monthly gym or fitness reimbursement
- ✓ One-on-one coaching with a certified dietician
- ✓ One-on-one coaching with a licensed therapist
- ✓ Employee Assistance Program 24-hour access through LifeCare and Lincoln Financial Group
- ✓ Daily supply of fruit and other healthy snacks
- ✓ Support for employee participation in charitable events

We offer all Employees a Family Assistance Program through LifeCare, LifeMart and Lincoln Financial Group which includes resources for the following personal situations:

- 24/7 access to professional counseling services
- New baby and adoption process
- Parenting and how to care for special needs
- Pet care
- Legal
- Funeral planning
- Travel assistance program
- Identity thief protection
- Associate discount program
- Moving or relocation
- Money management
- Living with or managing a serious illness
- Caring for an aging loved one
- Grief and loss management
- Marriage and divorce counseling





# TENANTS AND COMMUNITIES

## SERVING THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Since 2006, we have focused on acquiring, redeveloping, and operating properties that provide our communities with daily touch points for community, convenience, and commerce. We aim to work with tenants that meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhood, including retail, grocery, restaurants, medical, educational, or financial needs. Our strategy requires intensive management of a large number of small spaces and small tenant relationships. When a property has a vacancy, Whitestone's management works to identify tenants who will provide this additional value to their communities.

## TENANT ENGAGEMENT

Whitestone works with many smaller, non-national tenants. As a landlord, we strive to offer the best service and highest quality properties to our tenants. We ensure our standards are upheld by conducting tenant surveys, meetings, and engaging in a formalized lease renewal process. We want to hear how tenants are using their spaces and their opinions on what future tenants may be complementary to their businesses. Evaluation of our tenants as well as their satisfaction is done through several processes administered by our Strategy Team, our Property Management, and Leasing departments.

## WHITESTONE Q'S

Whitestone Q's is a practice consisting of a refined list of questions based on industry-standard questions to engage with tenants. Whitestone Q's enables our operations team to engage with tenants on a deeper level, build relationships, increase information flow, and analyze trends. Through this practice, we have further insight on tenants' opportunities and needs.

## PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our properties are an integral part of their communities. We pride ourselves in creating spaces within our communities that meet the needs of tenants and residents alike. Whitestone strives to be a responsible corporate citizen and a positive influence in our communities by participating in multiple community-focused activities each year including donation drives for local food banks, volunteer beautification projects at community parks, and BEAR Back to School Improving lives for at-risk and CPS-Involved Children, and neighborhood social events in the common areas of our properties. These projects are integrated with our day-to-day mission of serving our communities.





# HUMAN RIGHTS

Our Human Rights Policy was updated in April 2022 to reflect our dedication to maintaining the highest human rights standards and commitments. Respect for human rights is a fundamental value of Whitestone REIT, and we strive to respect and promote human rights consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in our relationships with our employees, suppliers, contractors, and tenants. Our Human Rights Policy addresses topics such as diversity and inclusion, operation of a safe and healthy workplace, forced labor and human trafficking, child labor, water, work hours, cybersecurity, and antibribery. All employees are trained on this policy, including the human trafficking section for all employees with direct responsibility for procurement. Whitestone has no employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

**83%**

2023 Participation Rate

**90%**

2024 Participation Rated

# SOCIAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

## WORKFORCE COMPOSITION (2024)

### Whitestone REIT Associate Tenure

**24%**

< 2 Years

**25%**

2 – 4 Years

**29%**

5 – 9 Years

**22%**

10+ Years

### Associates

**56%**

Male

**44%**

Female



### Management \*

**61%**

Male

**39%**

Female



\* 40% of named executive officers are female.

# 05

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is Whitestone REIT's fourth report on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) information. In this report, we reference ESG reporting frameworks and standards, including the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) and the Task Force on Climate related Financial Disclosures (TCFD). The metrics included in this report cover Whitestone's operations for the 2024 calendar year unless otherwise stated. This report may include information, data, and statistics from third parties. We believe these sources are reliable but have not independently verified such information. Whitestone engaged Sodali & Co to support the data collection, content development, and report design.

Our disclosure and analysis in this 2024 Corporate Sustainability Report contain forward looking statements that set forth anticipated results based on management's plans and assumptions. Such statements give our current expectations or forecasts of future events; they do not relate strictly to historical or current facts. We have tried, wherever possible, to identify each such statement by using words such as "anticipate," "estimate," "expect," "project," "intend," "plan," "believe," "will," "target,"

"forecast," and similar expressions in connection with any discussion of future operating or financial performance. In particular, these forward-looking statements include those relating to future actions, future acquisitions or dispositions, future capital expenditure plans, future performance or results of current and anticipated expenses, interest rates, foreign exchange rates, or the outcome of contingencies.

We cannot guarantee that any future results discussed in any forward- looking statements will be realized, although we believe that we have been prudent in our plans and assumptions. Achievement of future results is subject to risks, uncertainties, and potentially inaccurate assumptions, including those risk factors discussed in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2024 and in other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Should known or unknown risks or uncertainties materialize, or should underlying assumptions prove inaccurate, actual results could differ materially from those anticipated at the time the forward-looking statements are made. We undertake no obligation to publicly update forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise.

# SUSTAINABILITY ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD\* (SASB) INDEX

Topic	Code	Accounting Metric	2024 Data
Energy Management	IF-RE-130a.1	Energy consumption data coverage as a percentage of total floor area, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Office (Other): 84%; Retail (Strip Mall): 12%
Energy Management	IF-RE-130a.2	(1) Total energy consumed by portfolio area with data coverage, (2) percentage grid electricity, and (3) percentage renewable, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Office (Other): 2,729 MWh (90% comes from the grid and 1% comes from renewable energy products) Retail (Strip Mall): 18,552 MWh (99% comes from the grid and 13% comes from renewable energy products)
Energy Management	IF-RE-130a.3	Like-for-like percentage change in energy consumption for the portfolio area with data coverage, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Office (Other): -5% change, 84% Like-for-Like data coverage of total floor area Retail (Strip Mall): -1% change, 11% Like-for-Like data coverage of total floor area
Energy Management	IF-RE-130a.4	Percentage of eligible portfolio that (1) has an energy rating and (2) is certified to ENERGY STAR	0% of our portfolio has an energy rating or is certified to ENERGY STAR.
Energy Management	IF-RE-130a.5	Description of how building energy management considerations are integrated into property investment analysis and operational strategy	Whitestone REIT collects and categorizes utility usage for all meters controlled by our organization. This initial benchmarking allows us to measure improvement to our performance relative to comparable properties. Additionally, when we acquire a new property and seek to add value through renovation, we aim to improve operational efficiencies, which may include opportunities to improve a property's environmental footprint, such as LED retrofits, HVAC upgrades, and providing parking spaces for low emission and fuel-efficient vehicles.

\* The SASB Standards enable businesses around the world to identify, manage, and communicate financially-material sustainability information to their investors. SASB has developed 77 unique Industry Standards, which identify industry-specific, financially material ESG topics to guide disclosures for companies. Whitestone is referencing the specific Real Estate Standard.

# SUSTAINABILITY ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD\* (SASB) INDEX

Topic	Code	Accounting Metric	2024 Data
Water Management	IF-RE-140a.1	Water withdrawal data coverage as a percentage of (1) total floor area and (2) floor area in regions with High or Extremely High Baseline Water Stress, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Data Coverage as a Percent of Total Floor Area: - Office (Other): 100% - Retail (Strip Mall): 99% Data Coverage as a Percent of Floor Area in Regions with High or Extremely High Baseline Water Stress: - Office (Other): 22% - Retail (Strip Mall): 64%
Water Management	IF-RE-140a.2	(1) Total water withdrawn by portfolio area with data coverage and (2) percentage in regions with High or Extremely High Baseline Water Stress, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Total Water Withdrawn (m3): - Office (Other): 27,451 - Retail (Strip Mall): 1,038,607 Percentage in in Regions with High or Extremely High Baseline Water Stress: - Office (Other): 42% - Retail (Strip Mall): 68%
Water Management	IF-RE-140a.3	Like-for-like percentage change in water withdrawn for portfolio area with data coverage, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Office (Other): +1% change, 100% Like-for-Like data coverage of total floor area Retail (Strip Mall): +8% change, 88% Like-for-Like data coverage of total floor area
Water Management	IF-RE-140a.4	Description of water management risks and discussion of strategies and practices to mitigate those risks	Whitestone collects and categorizes water usage for all meters controlled by our organization. We use this benchmarking to improve our performance relative to comparable properties. Additionally, when we acquire a new property and seek to add value through renovation, we aim to improve operational efficiencies, which may include opportunities to improve a property's environmental footprint, such as installing more efficient water fixtures and xeriscaping.

# SUSTAINABILITY ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD\* (SASB) INDEX

Topic	Code	Accounting Metric	2024 Data
Management of Tenant Sustainability Impacts	IF-RE-410a.1	(1) Percentage of new leases that contain a cost recovery clause for resource efficiency-related capital improvements and (2) associated leased floor area	Whitestone rolled out green leases in April 2024 and 95% of all new leases signed since implementation have been green leases
Management of Tenant Sustainability Impacts	IF-RE-410a.2	Percentage of tenants that are separately metered or submetered for (1) grid electricity consumption and (2) water withdrawals, by property subsector	Whitestone REIT does not currently track the percentage of tenants that are separately metered or submetered for electricity and water, although the vast majority of our tenants are individually metered for these utilities.
Management of Tenant Sustainability Impacts	IF-RE-410a.3	Discussion of approach to measuring, incentivizing, and improving sustainability impacts of tenants	Whitestone REIT onboarded a data management software solution to track electricity, water, gas, and trash usage. This solution allows us to separately track environmental metrics in tenant-controlled spaces and landlord-controlled spaces, which will enable us to benchmark tenant sustainability impacts. Many of our leases are triple net leases, which pass on utility expenses directly to its tenants. Given this structure, tenants are incentivized to reduce electricity and water usage to improve their own profitability. As we further develop our ESG program, we will investigate opportunities to partner with tenants to incentivize and improve their sustainability impacts.
Climate Change Adaptation	IF-RE-450a.1	Area of properties located in 100-year flood zones	As of 12/31/2024: Office (Other): 0 square feet are in a 100-year floodplain, Retail (Strip Mall): 638,240 square feet across six properties are in a 100-year floodplain
Climate Change Adaptation	IF-RE-450a.2	Description of climate change risk exposure analysis, degree of systematic portfolio exposure, and strategies for mitigating risks	In 2023, Whitestone REIT underwent a climate scenario analysis where physical and transition climate risks and potential impacts were assessed across three different scenarios (RCP 8.5/Current Policies, RCP 4.5/Delayed Transition, and RCP 2.6/Net-Zero). Amongst physical risks assessed, extreme heat and surface runoff posed the leading physical risks to our portfolio. The assessment showed that Whitestone is prepared for transition risks assessed under the current policies (business-as-usual) scenario, but is moderately exposed to regulatory, market, and reputational risks in closer to net-zero scenarios. We are currently evaluating strategies to manage these risks and are beginning to implement them across our business. For more details on our climate related risk management strategy, refer to the TCFD Report section of this document.
Activity Metrics	IF-RE-000.A	Number of assets, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Office (Other): 3, Retail (Strip Mall): 53
Activity Metrics	IF-RE-000.B	Leasable floor area, by property subsector	As of 12/31/2024: Office (Other): 162,987 sq ft, Retail (Strip Mall): 5,220,833 sq ft
Activity Metrics	IF-RE-000.C	Percentage of indirectly managed assets, by property subsector	We are hands-on owners who directly manage the operations and leasing of our properties.
Activity Metrics	IF-RE-000.D	Average occupancy rate, by property subsector	The aggregate occupancy rate of our portfolio was 94.1% based on GLA as of December 31, 2024.

# THE TASK FORCE ON CLIMATE-RELATED FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES (TCFD) REPORT

The Financial Stability Board created the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) to improve and increase reporting of climate-related financial information. The work of TCFD provides recommendations for more effective climate-related disclosures that promotes more informed investment, credit, and insurance underwriting decisions.

## GOVERNANCE

Whitestone's Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee has direct oversight over ESG and Whitestone's ESG Steering Committee. Whitestone REIT's ESG strategy, initiatives, and communications are guided by its ESG Steering Committee, which comprises a cross-functional group of senior management. The Committee is responsible for monitoring and assessing ESG matters related to Whitestone, which may include climate-related risks, and must bring all current and emerging ESG matters to the attention of Whitestone's CEO and Board. The committee continuously monitors ESG matters that may impact Whitestone's operations, financial reporting, and reputation.



## STRATEGY

Whitestone's current geographic concentration in the Houston metropolitan area potentially increases the risk of damage to our portfolio due to hurricanes. We have also identified the following as potential physical and transition climate-related risks that could impact our portfolio:

- Flooding
- Wildfires
- Droughts
- Loss of power
- Increased CapEx to resolve physical damage to properties
- Potential increased SEC or other regulatory requirements
- Changes in capital markets pricing due to sustainability or resilience performance

Our ESG Steering Committee is responsible for developing plans to address ESG matters that may affect Whitestone's business. Whitestone conducted a climate-related risk assessment and scenario analysis, and the results of these assessments will help guide our management of climate-related risks and opportunities.



## RISK MANAGEMENT

Whitestone recognizes climate change presents an immediate and long-term challenge. We performed a climate-related risk assessment and will continue to adapt our organization and portfolio in the best interest of our stakeholders.

## METRICS AND TARGETS

Whitestone tracks environmental metrics such as energy, emissions, and water usage. Please refer to the environmental section of this report for more information.

Scope 1, 2, and 3 GHG emissions*	2023	2024
Scope 1	64	48
Scope 2 (Location-based)	2,303	2,105
Scope 3 (Category 13)	5,387	5,097

\*Units in mtCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Scope 1 and 2 include emissions from exterior and common areas at retail properties. Scope 3 includes emissions from tenant usage at all property types.

