



The City of Santa Monica has received a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Rating for the new Main Library. The United States Green Building Council's LEED Green Building Rating System has been adopted by the City as the basis of design for all of its new construction.

The 104,000 square foot Main Library, which opened in January 2006, is the City's second major facility designed and built with the intent of significantly reducing the building's negative impact on the environment. The first was the Public Safety Facility.

As a green building, the new Main Library offers many benefits, including environmental protection, economic advantages, and health and safety benefits, while providing an inviting, friendly, and comfortable place for library users of all ages.

Transportation

The Main Library is located centrally and in the densest part of town which allows a higher number of residents to walk or ride their bikes to the Library. This decreases traffic and environmental impact. The Big Blue Bus lines "1" and "10 Freeway Express" stop directly in front of the building and there are plans for electric car charging stations to be installed in the parking structure.

Exterior Features

The Library's underground parking is sustainable because it eliminates large, paved surfaces exposed to sunlight. In addition, the building's roof is treated to reflect sunlight and, combined, these design elements help reduce the "heat island effect," which contributes to higher summer temperatures and smog.

Solar electric panels on the roof generate renewable energy for the building; the amount of energy generated by these panels is equivalent to the amount of energy used in 3 average homes. As part of a storm water management plan, a 200,000 gallon cistern (the equivalent of 4,000 average bathtubs) was constructed under the building to hold and filter rainwater runoff from the roof, keeping it from overburdening the storm water system. The storm water stored in the cistern will be used to irrigate the landscaped garden areas. The plants and trees surrounding the library were chosen because they lend themselves to water conservation and a reduced need for pest control and maintenance.

Interior Details

All paint on the walls and the steel structure, as well as all adhesives and sealants, are low in VOCs, or volatile organic compounds. VOCs are responsible for what we commonly know as the "new car smell" and are associated with negative health effects. The paints and adhesives used in this building contain little or none of the dangerous chemicals usually found in these materials.

More than 50% of the building materials contain significant recycled content, including the carpet, terrazzo flooring, restroom tile, acoustical ceiling and wall panels, drywall, concrete, and the structural steel. Ever wonder where the materials we put into our recycling bins end up? Some become part of the materials put into this building.

Many of the new Main Library's architectural features, including multiple entrances, the paseo, garden courtyards, windows, and especially the second-level "belvedere" feature, enhance the connection between indoor and outdoor environments. This provides Library users with great views and 75% access to daylight in Library public spaces.

The extensive curtain wall system provides a line of sight to windows from 90% of the public spaces in the building; this means that almost every seat in the Library has a view outside. The chandeliers throughout the building are light sensitive and adjust as needed.

All of the Library's restroom faucets and toilets are "low-flow," which helps to conserve water. In addition, the City of Santa Monica was the first city in the state to approve the use of urinals that use no water.