

Castro Valley Library: An Innovative Green Building

Modern libraries provide not only books, but also public access to the Internet, community gathering spaces, and educational opportunities for youth and adults alike. The new Castro Valley Library, which opened in October 2009, provides all of this in a green facility that is U.S. Green Building Council LEED® Gold rated.



Photo: David Wakeley

The Library conserves resources through water and energy efficiency.

Natural light provides a pleasant reading environment while saving electricity.



Photo: Sibila Savage 2009

Partnering with the Community

A new library has long been the dream of many community members, who formed the Castro Valley Library Advisory Committee in 1990. The County worked closely with this committee to help the community realize this dream.

An Innovative Green Building

In designing and constructing the Library, the County wanted to provide the healthiest and most comfortable indoor environment possible while reducing the building's impact on the global environment. The high-efficiency building also saves taxpayer dollars by saving water, saving energy and reducing waste.

About the New Library

- Serves 57,000 Castro Valley residents
- Provides a variety of learning and community gathering spaces
- 34,537-square-foot facility provides ample space for growing book and multimedia collection
- State-of-the-art facility includes a labor-saving machine that automatically sorts returned books, significantly increasing efficiency
- Raised floor with access provides flexibility to upgrade technology in the future
- Alameda County secured a \$13.9 million grant from a state library bond to fund the project

CHALLENGES

- Providing space for a growing library collection plus multiple learning and gathering spaces
- Meeting tight schedule while delivering a resource-efficient and cost-effective building
- Meeting County's green building commitment

SOLUTIONS

- Provides reading areas, meeting rooms, cafe, outdoor amphitheater
- Completed on time and on budget: \$22.3 million and 16 months
- Achieved USGBC LEED® Gold rating

BENEFITS

- Enhances community and learning experiences
- Saves taxpayer dollars through energy and water efficiency
- Reduces greenhouse gases and preserves natural resources for future generations

The Library's Green Features

Learning experiences at the Library are enhanced by the innovative features of this green building:

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- A 277-kilowatt solar energy installation provides 100% of the library's electricity needs.

SAVING ENERGY

- Natural light and energy-efficient lighting reduce electricity use and save taxpayer dollars
- Building designed to be 25% more energy-efficient than required by California's strict energy efficiency standards
- Raised floor provides underfloor air circulation, maximizing heating and cooling efficiency

SAVING WATER

- **Outdoors:** Bay-Friendly Landscaping with smart irrigation and drought-tolerant plants saves about 50% over conventional landscaping
- **Indoors:** Water efficient plumbing fixtures save more than 40%

REDUCING WASTE

- More than 75% of construction debris was recycled

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

- Located just two blocks from a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station
- Convenient, covered bike racks
- Preferred parking for fuel-efficient vehicles, carpools, and vanpools

BUYING GREEN

- To provide healthy indoor air for children and adults, the County purchased paints, carpets, and furniture designed to minimize the release of harmful chemicals into the air
- Recycled-content building materials included steel framing, ceiling tiles, and concrete

GREEN CLEANING

- To maintain a healthy indoor environment for library users and employees, janitors use green cleaners and microfiber cloths, which trap dust
- Entryway mats reduce tracked-in dirt and pollutants



Pedestrian bridge over newly restored Castro Valley Creek

A CREEK SEES DAYLIGHT

Castro Valley Creek runs adjacent to the Castro Valley Library. In fact, the library building was designed to reflect the curve of the creek. Not long ago, the creek was partially buried in a concrete culvert. The County is restoring the creek to a sunlit meandering stream lined with trees and plants. The creek improvements will help control flooding and create wildlife habitat.

Residents can stroll along the creek or cross the new pedestrian bridge made from a converted railroad flat car that connects the library to the community. Children can learn about nature and science at a creek-side amphitheater.

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