

The Charles B. Benenson Visitors Center & Gallery is an environmentally progressive, 4200 square foot LEED Certified Silver structure showcasing state of the art "green" systems.

Sustainable Sites:

- Omi has chosen to protect and restore at least 50% of the existing habitat with native and adapted vegetation. In addition, we have provided over 90% open space to the development footprint to promote biodiversity.
- An Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan was implemented during construction to reduce the amount of soil erosion, waterway sedimentation and prevention of air pollution with dust and particulate matter.
- The Storm Water Management Plan increases on-site infiltration with the construction of a retention pond and a green planted roof. These strategies maintain the natural storm water flows and reduce the amount of pollutants from storm water runoff.
- The green planted roof also reduces the cooling load in the summer, lessening energy consumption and creating a natural habitat for birds.
- Reducing pollution and impact of automobile use by providing preferred parking for low-emitting, fuel-efficient vehicles, and carpools.
- Omi is providing secure bicycle storage and changing facilities for those employees who ride to work.

Water Efficiency:

- The installation of waterless urinals and dual flush toilets that help reduce the water use by approximately 40%.
- Eliminate the use of potable water for landscape irrigation.
- The water reduction techniques used in the building assist in recharging local aquifers.



Energy and Atmosphere:

- Installation of a 9.84 kw photovoltaic (PV) system supplies a non-polluting renewable energy source. In addition to the on-site solar system, Omi purchases at least 35% of remaining electrical power from renewable energy sources.
- A "Daylight Harvesting" system with sensors will monitor the level of ambient daylight to maintain a constant illumination level with a minimum of electricity.
- Series of stone bands, which serve as a heat sink in front of the glazing walls to reduce direct solar gain and absorb the sun's heat, preventing direct heat gain in the space.
- Motion detectors that turn lights on only in rooms that are occupied.
- An independent engineer commissioned the building systems to verify they were installed and perform as designed.
- Zero use of CFC based refrigerants in HVAC systems, which assists in reducing ozone depletion.
- A whole building energy simulation models the energy use of the building and documents overall energy savings.

Materials and Resources:

- Ongoing storage and collection of recycled paper, cardboard, glass, plastics and metals.
- The custom panels of natural horse hair on the face of the reception desk is considered a rapidly renewable material, a product that take fewer than 10 years to grow and harvest.
- More than 40% of the materials used in construction traveled less than 500 miles to the project site, thereby reducing the environmental impacts resulting from transportation.
- More than 20% of the buildings materials are recycled products including:
 - The "mushroom wood" facing behind the reception and café areas is made of recycled hemlock boards that were originally used as a growing medium for mushroom production.
 - The stone veneer system covering the exterior is composed of discarded stone chips from the manufacturing of larger stone slabs at a quarry.
 - The custom pre-cast concrete countertops contain recycled material.
 - Recycled cotton from old blue jeans is used as thermal insulation. The insulation is considered both recycled and the cotton from the blue jeans is a rapidly renewable material.



Indoor Environmental Quality:

- An Indoor Air Quality Management Plan was developed and implemented during construction to protect absorptive materials from moisture damage and protect permanently installed HVAC from contamination. After construction was complete, a through flush-out of the HVAC system evacuated airborne contaminants. Prohibit smoking in the building or within 25 feet of the building.
- To control the level of CO₂ in the building, economizers were installed to allow fresh outdoor air into the HVAC system.
- Numerous operable windows strategically placed for maximum natural fresh air and cross ventilation to improve air quality for improved occupant comfort.
- Entryway system designed to capture dirt and minimize pollutants entering the building.
- Lighting and HVAC control systems that allow the regular occupants to adjust their environment.
- Vast expanses of glass walls and skylights provide daylight and views enabling building occupants to maintain a visual connection to the surrounding environment and reducing artificial lighting requirements.
- Use of only low emitting VOC (volatile organic compound) adhesives, sealants, paints, coatings, carpet systems.