Moscone Goes Gold in Time for Greenbuild

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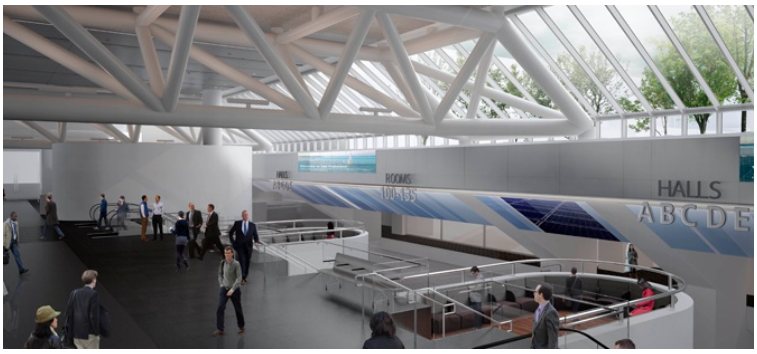

San Francisco's Moscone Convention Center has been a hallmark of San Francisco's tourist infrastructure since the first of its three buildings opened in 1981, but a recent renovation and LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance (LEED EB: O&M) Gold certification show off the Center's new vision and approach to sustainability – just in time to host the estimated 35,000+ attendees of Greenbuild 2012. The original 700,000 square foot building was designed by HOK to help transform a downtrodden, underutilized area adjacent to downtown into the thriving business center it is today; a second and third building later added much-needed capacity to the facility. After 30 years of heavy use, however, the buildings started to show their age. HOK returned to Moscone Center to give it a partial facelift, and to work with Jones Lang LaSalle towards LEED EB: O&M certification.

Covering an area of several city blocks, Moscone Center offers easy access for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders and also provides conventioneers walkable access to surrounding restaurants, shopping, museums, churches and lodging. Despite its size, the Center has a limited visual impact on the urban fabric, offering pedestrian-scale facades, underground parking, and rooftops covered with either photovoltaic panels or public park space. A two block walk from San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Powell St. Station, visitors can reach Moscone from the airport in just a half hour. San Francisco transit use is really easy and highly encouraged for Greenbuild attendees! (Out-of-towner Greenbuild attendees who book their BART trip from SFO to the city in advance get a discount, so don't wait.)

The recent Moscone Center renovations included updated public spaces as well as technology upgrades, improved ventilation and lighting systems, enhanced operational efficiencies, and universal access for all visitors to the facility. Some of the more visible changes include wall-sized images of 35 of San Francisco's neighborhoods, allowing visitors to get to know the "real" city, beyond its famous icons.

Many of the green innovations won't be immediately visible to visitors – the vast arrays of PV on the roofs or the green cleaning program, for example – but convention goers will directly experience some of the remodeled features. The public restrooms were upgraded to provide low flow plumbing fixtures, representing more than 30% savings from the building baseline. The facility management also excels in waste management and sustainable purchasing practices, achieving eight of the ten available Materials and Resources points.

Several of the upgrades demonstrate a shared vision between Moscone Center and Greenbuild, beyond the basic elements of a green building – the Center has Green Conference Attendee and Exhibitor Guidelines for all of its events, and there are educational kiosks and displays around the facility demonstrating its sustainability features. One important renovation – IT and communications upgrades – also supports the "@ Greenbuild" theme of this year's conference. This is a key issue for a facility known for big name tech events like Macworld Expo, VMworld, Oracle, Google I/O, and others. Us San Francisco locals are excited to add Greenbuild to this fabled list of hot events and look forward to seeing you in Moscone Center next week.

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