



Oakland Public Library: Elmhurst Branch

Leading the Way as the City's First All-Electric Municipal Building



The Elmhurst Branch of the Oakland Public Library became the City’s first fully electric municipal building in 2023, fostering a safer, energy-efficient, and comfortable space for all!

The City of Oakland’s Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP) aims to provide clean, resilient, and equitable energy for the entire city. As of 2019, 26.8% of Oakland’s local emissions were attributed to buildings & energy use. In response, the city has been working to electrify its building stock and shift towards 100% clean energy, while prioritizing equity for frontline communities.

Goodbye Gas: Electrifying the Elmhurst Library

From January to May 2023, the Elmhurst Branch of the Oakland Public Library underwent a renovation, becoming the City’s first fully electric municipal building and eliminating natural gas usage on-site. The project replaced gas equipment with an efficient heat pump system that provides heating and cooling and point-of-use electric water heaters. Further efficiency improvements include repaired windows with low heat gain, window film to reduce heat, smart thermostats, and exhaust fans for improved air quality.

PROPERTY PROFILE

Location	1427 88th Ave
Sq Ft	3,220
Year Established	1911
Year Upgraded	2023



Impact:

Visitors and staff have noticed the difference. The library is now cooler and quieter on warm days, and the building is more comfortable year-round. In the past, it had to close during heat waves. The new cooling system allows it to provide respite for the community on hot days. By eliminating gas appliances, the renovation also improved indoor air quality, creating a healthier environment for staff and patrons—especially children and seniors, who are more vulnerable to air pollution.

"The best part is that we don't have to close during heatwaves, and we can continue to provide service to the community!"
- Nichole Brown, Branch Manager



Lessons Learned:

Initial data shows that utility costs remained relatively consistent, despite rising electricity rates. As gas prices continue to rise, all-electric buildings will likely prove to be more cost-efficient, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the same time.

Looking Forward:

This project advances multiple ECAP Actions including:

- B-2: Plan for All Existing Buildings to be Efficient and All-Electric by 2040
- B-5: Require All Major Retrofits of City Facilities to be All-Electric
- C-1: Evaluate and Reduce Climate Impacts of City Expenditures and Operation.

The electrification of the Elmhurst Library is an important first step as the City continues its transition away from gas, improving air quality, and phasing out greenhouse gas emissions.

To learn more about the City's electrification work, visit:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/buildings-and-energy> .

UPGRADE AT A GLANCE

Gas Avoided	881 therms/year
Greenhouse Gas Reduction	4,686 kg CO2e/year
Measures Included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of use electric water heaters • Electric heat pump system for heating/cooling • Low solar heat gain window repair and window film • Smart thermostats • Exhaust Fans
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less closures due to extreme heat • Reduced health risks associated with gas exposure • Cooler, quieter, more comfortable