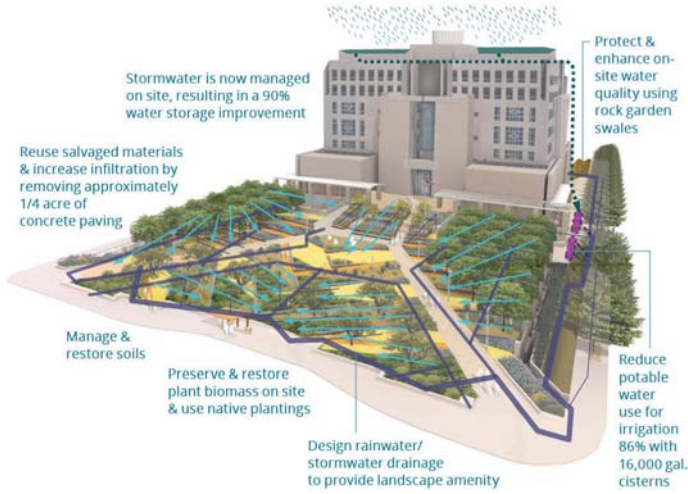


U. S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA)

Pete V. Domenici United States Courthouse— Arid Region Urban Landscape & Water Harvesting Retrofit

Albuquerque, New Mexico



This Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) certified project transformed a location dominated by concrete into a working landscape that not only maximizes efficient water use, but manages stormwater on site to protect the Rio Grande and the region's unique ecology.



top: Rendering by Rios Clementi Hale Studios, diagram overlay by Biohabitats

To enhance overall sustainability of the seven-story Pete V. Domenici Federal Courthouse, located in Albuquerque's central business district, the General Services Administration initiated a substantial renovation to the building's three-acre landscape. As a result of this transformation, the Courthouse became one of the first projects to achieve certification from the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES), landscape performance-based accreditation awarded to projects that enhance local ecology.

The innovative, provocative, new landscape features

low-impact stormwater/green infrastructure and rainwater harvesting for irrigation reuse. Vast expanses of turf grass, impermeable paving, and high water-use plants were replaced with xeric plantings and materials appropriate for the site. The removed paving was repurposed to create new landscape and stormwater management features, including pedestrian friendly seating.

As the civil engineer and rainwater harvesting designer on a team led by Rios Clemente Hale Studios, Biohabitats created a model for arid region urban landscape water conservation, harvesting and reuse. A 16,000-gallon rainwater harvesting system captures rooftop rainwater for reuse in landscape irrigation, reducing potable water use by more than 75%. An efficient drip

irrigation system, fed primarily by harvested rooftop rainwater replaces a less efficient irrigation system. A flow meter along the sidewalk generates public awareness of the rainwater collection system. Before the renovation, the site had limited stormwater attenuation and filtration, so Biohabitats designed green infrastructure/low-impact stormwater techniques such as vegetated swales, rock gardens, and biofiltration beds to filter and slow runoff from parking and plaza areas. This stormwater system has performed well under the stress of a 500-year storm event.

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800.220.0919
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