

Partner Content

Shaw Contract Builds Sustainable Futures Across Industries

From affordable housing to healthcare and workplaces, Shaw Contract is shaping circular solutions that support both people and the planet.

By: Hayley Arsenault



In a North Portland, Oregon, neighborhood, inclusion is advanced through flooring designed to support resident health and well-being; in Detroit, Michigan, recycled carpet tile brings healthcare and climate action together; and in Omaha, Nebraska, adaptable flooring supports cost efficiency for a flexible workplace. Across these three cities, **Shaw Contract's** circularity initiatives—spanning material innovation, low-carbon design, and reclamation programs—help connect community needs with environmental responsibility, one floor at a time. This vision extends beyond design, shaping materials that heal communities, prioritize health of occupants, reduce waste, and remain accessible to all. Shaw Contract's approach centers on circularity—ensuring materials are designed for reuse rather than disposal. Through initiatives like the re[TURN]® Reclamation Program and innovations like EcoWorx®, the company transforms flooring from a short-term product into a long-term resource.

Circularity in Practice

Since 2006, Shaw Industries' re[TURN] Program has reclaimed and recycled nearly 1 billion pounds of post-consumer flooring. Central to this effort is EcoWorx®, a material engineered for recyclability without compromising performance. As circular design becomes essential for climate resilience, architects and developers are turning to these solutions to meet both environmental and functional demands. This ethos drives projects across sectors—from affordable housing to healthcare campuses—where Shaw Contract's materials support sustainability while enhancing human well-being.

Community Restoration

Affordability and sustainability often seem at odds in housing design, but projects like Albina One show they can go hand in hand. The 94-unit affordable housing complex in Portland, Oregon, designed by LEVER Architecture, demonstrates how material innovation expands access to safe, sustainable housing. The project sits at the heart of the Albina Vision Trust's plan to restore a predominantly Black neighborhood that thrived in the 1960s before urban renewal efforts displaced residents. The Albina Vision Trust was formed in 2017 to rebuild the community and ensure its future.



Albina One. Photography by LEVER Architecture. Image courtesy of Shaw Contract.

LEVER Architecture specified 60,000 square feet of Shaw Contract's PVC-free, fully recyclable EcoWorx® Resilient Pivot plank flooring for its low embodied carbon, durability, and alignment with the Trust's equity goals. Pivot, with its wood-inspired design, is installed across all 94 units, spanning the living, dining, kitchen, and bathroom areas. "It's really special to have a strong sustainability story through a product that has the most square footage of any material in the space," says Kelsey McWilliams, Associate at LEVER Architecture. Thoughtful material choices shape multifamily housing, ensuring durable, comfortable, and healthy living spaces.

Chandra Robinson, Principal at LEVER Architecture, emphasizes the broader impact: "We really think about equity and sustainability as being paired. It's not just about having healthy products in our home or workplace; it's also ensuring that these products don't mean that someone else's backyard or home has been polluted or degraded during the material extraction and manufacturing process." The flooring's recyclability ensures materials today support communities tomorrow—a principle critical to repairing neighborhoods like Albina.

Healthcare & Climate Resilience

Just as housing projects prioritize equity, healthcare systems face urgent climate imperatives. Henry Ford Health's \$2.5 billion revitalization of Detroit's New Center neighborhood tackles this challenge by recycling 42,000 pounds of Cradle to Cradle Certified® Silver EcoWorx® carpet tile during the demolition of its Health Alliance Plan headquarters. Utilizing Shaw Contract's re[TURN] Program, the team avoided 15,000 pounds of CO2 emissions—equivalent to the annual carbon sequestration of eight acres of forest.



Henry Ford Health. Image courtesy of Shaw Contract.

"It was imperative we take an integrated approach to design throughout this demo and new build," says Kelly Wagner, Sustainability Manager at Henry Ford Health. "We relied on the expertise of our partners to provide tangible ways for us to reduce our landfill waste and carbon impact. Having an integrated strategy ensured we maximized every opportunity to repurpose materials and reduce emissions." This initiative highlights healthcare's evolving role, where infrastructure now prioritizes materials that safeguard human and environmental health alike.

Workplace Transformation

From hospitals to corporate towers, circular design adapts to diverse priorities. When First National Bank of Omaha (FNBO) renovated its 23 floors within its 40-story headquarters, the goal was twofold: create a flexible workplace and demonstrate fiscal responsibility. Shaw Contract's phased procurement strategy locked in pricing for 53,000 square yards of carpet tile and 68,500 square feet of luxury vinyl tile, shielding the bank from material cost hikes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

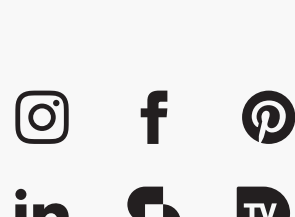


First National Bank of Omaha. Photography by AJ Brown. Image courtesy of Shaw Contract.

The outcome was a modern workspace shaped by FNBO's Modern Flexible Workplace strategy, featuring mother's suites, tech-free rejuvenation rooms, and a new amenity floor reflecting the bank's culture. Shaw Contract reclaimed and recycled 500,000 pounds of carpet through re[TURN], avoiding 4.2 million pounds of carbon emissions—the equivalent of planting 2,320 acres of trees. Brenda Dooley, FNBO's Senior Vice President, notes: "Choice, flexibility, and adaptability are imperative to attracting today's workforce." The project's success lies in its balance—employee well-being and sustainability achieved without compromising budgets.

Future Focus

Shaw Contract's 2025 strategy expands circularity's reach. The re[TURN] Program now accommodates projects as small as 100 square yards (for EcoWorx carpet tile), making sustainability feasible for organizations of all sizes. From Portland to Detroit to Omaha, projects that partner with Shaw Contract share a common thread: products designed to serve communities long after installation. In an industry often fixated on innovation, this approach redefines progress as a commitment to renew—one floor, one project, one community at a time.



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