

2024 Year In Review



HABITABLE

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

Habitable has a vision:

All people and the planet thrive when the materials economy is in balance with Earth's natural systems.

Since 2000, Habitable has developed actionable solutions that leverage market influence for scaled impact. Our ambition is to reimagine the materials economy in service of human and planetary health. Whether through original research or collaboratively designed tools, Habitable has been at the forefront of industry innovations that promote new models of chemical transparency and data integrity rooted in independent, public access to information.

Our Mission

To improve human and environmental health by creating bold, science-based solutions that inspire materials innovations to eliminate pollution, mitigate climate change, and create a more equitable future.

Our Theory of Change

1. Build Capacity for Informed Decisions
2. Enable/Accelerate Market Demand and Adoption
3. Increase Transparency and Disclosure
4. Reduce Chemicals of Concern Use
5. Decrease Exposures to All

Programs

Habitable researchers have decades of experience connecting the health impacts of toxic chemicals used in the materials economy. Our deep industry knowledge is activated through two key initiatives:

Chemical Guidance

Pharos is a web-based chemical database that empowers manufacturers, scientists, and academia to identify chemicals of concern and select healthier alternatives. With over 200,000 chemicals in its database, Pharos has become the industry-leading comprehensive and trusted resource to understand human and environmental health hazards of chemicals used across multiple industries. Pharos' data is accessed and published worldwide by governments, expert agencies, private corporations, and others.

Product Guidance

Informed™ is based on over two decades of Habitable's independent, comprehensive research into the chemical hazards of building materials. Informed™ allows built environment professionals to quickly and easily evaluate the material health of common building products and select safer alternatives while saving time, money, and errors.

Fiscal Sponsorship:

HABITABLE INNOVATION HUB

Habitable is proud to fiscally sponsor emerging organizations that are advancing planetary health through green chemistry, safer product strategies, and other environmental health and justice initiatives. Fiscally sponsored programs operate self-sufficiently within Habitable and benefit from our administrative support, financial management, and executive coaching. Current fiscal sponsees include:

ChemFORWARD

Creating broad access to chemical hazard data, illuminating safer alternatives, and ending toxic chemical exposure.

SUM'D

A coalition of 20+ organizations dedicated to identifying healthier food packaging options.

Little Things Matter

Raising awareness of children's environmental health by translating scientific research into actionable campaigns and resources.

2024 Highlights

Rebranding

In April 2024, Healthy Building Network rebranded to Habitable. This rebranding video explains that we made this change to reposition the organization for another 20 years of success. The rebranding allows us to better tell our story, broaden our audiences, and attract new funding opportunities.

Affordable Housing Report

Advancing Health and Equity Through Better Building Products is a groundbreaking report that reveals material health impacts and wide-spread plastic building products used in Minnesota affordable housing projects. The report has received national attention.

Informed™ Pilots

We advanced the adoption of Informed™, Habitable's healthier product guidance, through several demonstrations projects and pilots:

PROJECTS

We conducted and supported healthy materials assessments for building projects in affordable housing, childcare, K-12 schools, office buildings, and healthcare.

PRACTICE

We worked with several large architectural firms to integrate Informed™ into their firm-wide practices, including Cooper Carry, Cannon Design, MSR Architects, and Mithun. These collaborations reveal growing industry interest in Informed™.

GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS

We launched two pilots with leading standards organizations:

1. International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) / WELL

Building Standard: WELL has incorporated Informed™ into a recently-launched residential pilot program, providing certification incentives to prefer product types ranked yellow and green by Informed™. The pilot includes over 35,000 residential units, representing more than 35 million square feet of housing worldwide. In 2025, we will receive feedback and data from the current cohort to quantify and measure the pilot's impact. Pending the pilot's success, WELL is considering integrating Informed™ into the full standard, including other building typologies, like healthcare, office, schools, and more.

2. U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC):

The Minnesota chapter of the USGBC LEED building standard is launching a pilot to test Informed™ as an Innovation Credit that incentivizes practitioners to select safer products. Approximately five projects will be selected to participate in the pilot cohort in fall 2024.

2024 Highlights

WORKFLOW TOOLS

Autodesk is a multinational corporation that provides software products and services for the architecture, engineering, construction, and manufacturing industries. They have engaged Habitable to create a proof-of-concept demonstration to show how Informed™ data can be integrated into their industry-standard architectural software, Revit. The data integration will show the color ranking of Informed™ product types as architects create their project plans. The proof of concept is currently being tested with 12 architectural firms. Achieving a successful integration with Autodesk would accelerate the use of Informed™ across the broader built environment sector, significantly advancing the use of safer products.

MINNESOTA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

As part of ongoing funding from McKnight Foundation, Habitable launched a state-wide built environment community of practice to shape a plan to eliminate the use of building products ranked red by Informed™. This cross-sector group of real estate professionals will co-design a “Roadmap Out of Red” to advance climate, health, and equity goals. Images below spotlight attendee participation in a June 2024 workshop.



Academic Curriculum

Habitable partnered with Beyond Benign and ChemFORWARD to develop new “safer cosmetics” curriculum modules on the Beyond Benign green chemistry education platform. Pharos continues to be the underlying chemical hazard library that sits as the “Intel Inside” within this effort to educate on chemical hazards--ensuring consistent, trusted chemical data is threaded throughout the ecosystem. Press Release: Green Chemistry Curriculum Modules and Link to Green Chem Modules.

Spotlight

Our Disposable Plastic Buildings

PLASTIC USE IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

In 2024, Habitable received funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies' Beyond Petrochemicals campaign to develop strategies for reducing petrochemical use in building products—the second highest consuming sector for plastics globally, at 17% of total plastic production. Drawing on our 24 years' experience studying chemical hazards

in building materials, we have identified the most harmful plastics and building products where alternatives are readily available. This research comes at a critical time, as the UN Global Plastic Treaty negotiations in Busan, South Korea in November 2024 offer an opportunity to address plastic building materials—a major but often overlooked source of petrochemical demand. Our findings will help guide decision-makers in philanthropy, policy, research and industry toward practical solutions for reducing plastic use in the built environment.

2025 & Beyond

In 2025, Habitable will celebrate the organization's 25th anniversary. To mark this monumental milestone, we are currently drafting our new strategic plan entitled **Deep Clean: A Path to Planetary Health**.

Over the next 15 years, we will continue to activate science to accelerate systems-level change. Through research and market-driven solutions development, we are reimagining a materials economy that advances human and environmental health by reducing pollution, mitigating climate

change, and prioritizing equity and environmental justice, leaving no person or place behind.

DEEP CLEAN The Path to Planetary Health

