



As I took a small break between cases and contract reviews, an [article](#) in the November 2, 2009 issue of ENR Magazine caught my eye. The article discusses the efforts of a Chicago [architect](#) to create a holistic approach to the renovation and "de-carbonization" of the Chicago Loop area. The plan involves large scale energy retrofits and sustainable reuse of Chicago's tall buildings.

Another interesting aspect of this article points out that tall buildings in general have hit the construction skids in the US and Latin America, this is not the case in Europe and the Middle East. However, those buildings that are going up (and up and up) are trying to go "green." Several of the

worlds tallest buildings, or soon to be so, are seeking LEED gold or platinum certification.

These two trends, in my view, are healthy. First of all, much like the goal of [Build2Sustain](#), the Chicago effort is a move toward sustainable reuse and retrofit/renovation. I see this as a great trend and a way to perform the "Three R's" (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), by reusing existing building materials and footprints without the cost and use of newer materials from tear downs and rebuilds.

Second of all, the trend toward "up not out" seems to me to be a great thought. Of course there are certain physical limits to the trend toward taller and taller buildings, but as a whole, the smaller the footprint, the more sustainable the building. Taller means closer together, and closer together means better walking paths and easier access to public transportation among other "green" benefits.

The fact that LEED is going international in this way is a good thing as well. It means that the world, including places like China, is moving in the right direction.

What do you think? Am I on the right track? This post is meant to be a discussion starter, so I really would like to hear from readers of Musings through comments, tweets and other avenues of [contact](#).

Please check out my [Construction Law Musings Blog](#) for more on Virginia construction law and other topics.