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IT'S TOUGH TO BEAT A REHAB WHEN IT COMES TO GREEN, STUDY SAYS

A new study from the Preservation Green Lab, which is the sustainability advocacy branch of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, says that in most cases, there are more environmental benefits in renovating an existing building than constructing a new energy efficient one.

As reported in the *Daily Journal of Commerce*, The study used life-cycle analysis to measure six different types of buildings in four diverse cities: Portland, Phoenix, Chicago, and Atlanta. The study looked at factors including geography, energy performance, electricity grid-mix, building type, and lifespan to evaluate the environmental effects and carbon emissions.

Patrice Frey, director of sustainability at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said that the team wanted to understand how reusing a building would compare to a new energy efficient one. The study found that it takes between 10 and 80 years for a new, energy efficient building to compensate for the environmental impacts of its construction. The study said that carbon emissions saved by renovating buildings are substantial when scaled across an entire city. While many people assume the energy efficiency of new green buildings compensate for the negative impacts of construction, this study indicates that designers need better tools to see how material choices affect carbon emissions throughout a building's life. "The study makes clear that building reuse offers a viable strategy for reducing climate emissions," said Frey.

Increasingly more people are getting interested in the sustainable aspects of existing buildings, and the hopes are that this study will push building owners to consider other options. According to Jason McLennan, CEO of the Cascadia Green Building Council, many green building decisions are based on assumptions. He said that it helps to have scientific evidence that evaluates the life-cycle cost of design and construction decisions. "The notion that you need a blank slate to create a green building is clearly incorrect."

Read the study from the Preservation Green Lab [here](#).