

## uniquely GREEN

From electric car charging stations to a hotel's composting program to a great weekly farmers market, downtown is often on the cutting edge of environmental efforts. Check out our rundown of some of the more interesting initiatives you'll find in Houston's center:



### HERE COMES THE SUN

The city of Houston is looking to the sky for energy. Both the City Hall Annex and the George R. Brown Convention Center are harnessing the power of the sun with their rooftop solar panels. The more than 600 panels on top of the convention center are helping the city learn how to best harness the energy of the sun while the array at City Hall generates about 12,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, roughly enough power for an average-size home. The ultimate goal? To expand the use of solar energy throughout the city. [greenhoustontx.gov](http://greenhoustontx.gov)



## Take a taste

One of the easiest things you can do when trying to reduce your carbon footprint is to eat locally sourced foods and recycle. Both are super simple to do when you stop by [Discovery Green](http://Discovery Green) any weekend. Each Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. you can drop off paper, glass, plastic and cans. And every Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. stop by the [Urban Harvest Farmers Market](http://Urban Harvest Farmers Market), where you'll find fresh local fruits and veggies, prepared foods and crafts, chef demonstrations, gardening and growing tips and much more.

[discoverygreen.com](http://discoverygreen.com)

### CHECK IN

The city's largest hotel, the [Hilton Americas-Houston](http://Americas-Houston), has made incredible strides when it comes to the environment. It was the first hotel in the state to achieve the coveted Green Seal Certification. That's no small achievement. Recycling, composting, waste water management and more are all part of the certification process and those that get the recognition have taken significant steps to go green. For example, since the inception of their food composting project, more than 383 tons have been shipped for composting. More than 56 tons of cardboard and more

than 240 tons of paper, glass, mixed plastic and metal cans have been recycled. They took their commitment a step further last summer with their conversion to bio-diesel as an alternative, environmentally friendly fuel. Bio-diesel, a non-toxic and biodegradable energy source, is a clean-burning alternative to petroleum diesel. Even better, it's made from renewable resources such as plant oils, animal fats and recycled grease and kitchen oil and it significantly reduces harmful hydrocarbon emissions and greenhouse gases. [americashouston.hilton.com](http://americashouston.hilton.com)

## Plug and go»

With **hybrid vehicles** becoming more common, consumers may be ready for the next phase – electric cars. The city of Houston and Reliant Energy are looking to jump start that transition with a new program – the Power of the Plug-In. The program, launched late last year, will convert 10 city-owned Toyota Prius hybrids into plug-in electric hybrid vehicles and install 15 charging stations to power them, including one at City Hall. The converted vehicles can drive up to 100 miles per gallon, helping to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The program is also designed to raise consumer awareness about electric cars (seven of the stations will be open to the public) and to promote the city as an electric vehicle center. [greenhoustontx.gov](http://greenhoustontx.gov)

