



# HOUSTON GREEN

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GRB  
HOUSTON

KEEPING

# THE BROWN = GREEN

At the **George R. Brown Convention Center**, we are committed to being green, and have long recognized the importance of sustainability efforts. We began seeking opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint in 1998 and haven't stopped since!

We first earned LEED Silver certification status in 2011, and achieved LEED Silver recertification in 2017. In 2022 we achieved **LEED Gold certification**. We divert more than **35%** of our waste from landfills, and are dedicated to high sustainability standards.

From food banks to local schools, we regularly partner with local organizations to recycle, reduce and reuse waste from events, ensuring that our commitment to sustainability benefits not only our environment, but also our community.



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## Our Green Mission Statement

We are dedicated to environmental improvements that encourage social responsibility and economical improvements in our venues, community, and industry. We focus on employee well-being, supporting our community, embracing accountability and celebrating our sustainability successes that cultivate and advance our efforts for a better environment for all.

## Our Awards & Certifications

**We Are USGBC LEED Gold Certified** Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center earned LEED Silver certification in 2011 and achieved LEED Silver recertification in 2017. Since then, the GRB has achieved **LEED Gold certification** for 2022, this is the second-highest level of certification! The certification requires GRB operations to save energy, minimize water usage, reduce CO2 emissions, recycle waste materials and maintain high standards for indoor environmental quality and operate the building as efficiently as possible.

**We Are GBAC STAR Accredited** GBAC STAR is the hospitality industry's only outbreak prevention, response and recovery accreditation certifying the facility has established and maintains thoroughness with cleaning and disinfection.

**We Took The Houston Clean Pledge** We pledge to maintain the highest standards of public safety and health across our city, both for our community and all of our visiting guests.





## Our Sustainability Initiatives & Practices

**The GRBees & Garden at Rusk Balcony** - The GRB teamed up with its food & beverage partner, Levy to implement another green initiative – the #GRBees. Since 2018, guests have been able to view the facility's garden and bee colonies from a second-floor balcony. The colonies were installed as part of the GRB's commitment to sustainability and a way to introduce local products – in the forms of dressings, sauces, and dessert items – to clients, guests, and visitors.

**Farmshelf Hydro Gardens** - We have three Farmshelf microgreen grow boxes that contain items, such as vegetables, herbs, and edible flowers. This produce is then used to prepare meals for client tastings and special events providing a true farm-to-table experience.

**Think Green! Blog** - Internal blog used to promote awareness, educate & communicate with employees, and encourage a more sustainable life.



## Sustainability Partners & Programs

**Second Servings** The GRB has a longstanding history of donating all leftover food from banquets, conferences, or events to Second Servings in an effort to help the community while in the process reducing food waste.

Second Servings is Houston's only prepared and perishable food rescue organization. Since 2015, they've been redirecting unserved and unsold food from retailers, sports venues, distributors, hotels, etc., to the people who really need it at shelters, soup kitchens, low-income housing and many other charities.

### **City of Houston Building Materials Reuse Warehouse**

The GRB is proud to have the Building Materials Reuse Warehouse, a component of the City of Houston Solid Waste Management Department, as a sustainability donation partner.

The Reuse Warehouse benefits the community by providing space for excess building materials that would otherwise be dumped in local landfills. They accept material from individuals, supply companies, and builders, and make it freely available for reuse by any non-profit organization.

**Magpies & Peacock** The GRB is pleased to have Magpies & Peacocks as a textile and materials recycle partner. Magpies & Peacocks is the nation's only 501(c)3 non-profit design house dedicated to the collection and sustainable reuse of post-consumer clothing, scrap textiles and accessories diverted from landfill. They have collected over 145 tons of post-consumer textiles and accessories since 2011. 25% of the donated items are used to supply materials to local schools, colleges and extracurricular programs, the balance is repaired, reworked or up-cycled into new collections for sale.

**Houston Food Bank Teachers Aid Program** When possible, the GRB donates items to the Houston Food bank Teachers Aid Program which provides donated school supplies and office items to teachers who work at low income schools. With this program, teachers are able to "shop" for what they need for free.

**Houston Habitat for Humanity ReStores** Sustainability is community and the GRB happily partners with the home improvement stores and donation centers of Houston Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit organization. ReStores sell new and gently used furniture, home accessories, building materials, appliances, flooring, cabinetry, equipment and more at a fraction of the retail price. Profits generated from the ReStores support Houston Habitat's mission to build and improve the places Houstonians call home.

## Our Commitment to Our Community, Our Culture, and Our People

**Raising Environmental Awareness** In order to keep our community and our team members informed about the importance of sustainable practices, the GRB celebrates the following awareness days:

- **Earth Day** - To celebrate Earth Day, the GRB participates in various projects.
- **Stop Food Waste Day** - A global day of awareness to eliminate wasted food around the world. We provide employees education tips on how to decrease food waste.
- **Bike to Work Day / METRORail** - A bicycle's environmental sustainability is about more than just lower energy requirements. For each person who switches from a private, polluting mode of transport to a bicycle – a zero emission form of transport when in use – a city experiences reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality. We encourage employees to Bike Your Park or Neighborhood, if not to work. In an effort to continue reducing emissions, employees are also encouraged to use our METRORail for transportation when possible. For work related activities, employees are often provided with pre-paid Metrocards for our METRORail system.
- **Lights Out Texas** is a campaign of education, awareness, and action that focuses on turning out lights at night during the spring and fall migrations to help protect the billions of migratory birds that fly over Texas annually.

### Celebrating Diversity & Inclusion In Our Community

Diversity is an integral part of who we are and how we conduct business in our larger Houston community. It contributes to our ability to foster innovation and engagement to enrich the cultural fabric throughout the Houston region. Our workforce is a microcosm of Houston's rich ethnic diversity.

Our employees actively participate in **cultural heritage** celebrations throughout the year, community service projects, Wellness Days events, Pride Month activities, training sessions and seminars. We also schedule Lunch & Learn's like **How to Balance Work and Life in Challenging Times** and offer access to webinars like **Allyship: Becoming an Effective Ally** which focuses on anti-discrimination compliance, diversity representation and inclusion behavior.

**Team Member Health & Wellness** Our people make us who we are which is why we are committed to promoting the health and wellness of our team members. We provide employees with: access to workout rooms, tips on wellness & mindfulness, and bike & walking trails.

## Our Sustainability Initiatives & Practices

**Lights Out Houston** - In an effort to protect our local wildlife, we team up with the Texas Conservation Alliance to join in their "Lights Out for Wildlife" initiative by dimming all non-essential lighting during the peak of spring migration for birds.

**Recycling** - Our employees, partners and tenants participate in recycling efforts inside and outside GRB – bins are clearly marked for paper, trash, organic and plastic/aluminum.

The GRB also participates in **electronic recycling** & reuse of computers, monitors, cell phones, printers and supplies.

**Compostable Food & Products** - Our catering partner, Levy, utilizes compostable food & beverage containers that turn back into soil in approximately 45 to 90 days, dramatically reducing the waste stream. Levy also reduces food waste by using excess food for employee meals and composting food scraps.

**Filtered Water Stations** - We are committed to eliminating single use plastics from our events, mainly plastic water bottles. The GRB has a total of 39 filtered water refill stations for guests to use.

**Green Meetings** - We meet with clients prior to events to discuss sustainability efforts and post event donations.

AVENIDA HOUSTON

AVENIDA HOUSTON CELEBRATES PRIDE MONTH

AVENIDA HOUSTON

CELEBRATES

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**Digital signage** – Our ribbon signs outside & monitors inside the GRB are used to communicate our activities to the public.



# SUSTAINABILITY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## FOOD & BEVERAGE

### **Does the venue have a food donation plan?**

- The GRB works with Second Servings to donate leftover food which is distributed by them to local charities and shelters throughout the city. (Please see page 3 for more information.)

### **What food reduction efforts are in place?**

- Food Donation Partnership with Second Servings.
- Excess food is used for employee meals.
- Food scraps are composted and are also used to feed animals.
- Food digester machine is used to break down food and help divert food waste from landfills.
- Grease and oil used in the preparation of food is also recycled.

### **Do you source from FairTrade certified providers?**

- Yes, our hospitality partner Levy, sources from FairTrade certified providers.

### **Do you use F&B items that have certifications? (USDA organic, Non GMO Project, Certified Humane)**

- Yes; Certified humane cage-free eggs, milk & yogurt that is free of artificial growth hormones, chicken & turkey produced without the routine use of human antibiotics.

### **Do you source food that is grown locally?**

- Levy sources local produce in support of the American Family Farms.

### **Do you use sustainable seafood resources such as Seafood Watch, Ocean Wise, Marine Stewardship Council to make seafood selections?**

- Yes, Levy is committed to sustainable purchasing practices and sources seafood from sustainable sources.

### **Do you use any compostable products?**

The GRB utilizes compostable food and beverage containers that turn back into soil in approximately 45 to 90 days, dramatically reducing the waste stream.

These items include:

- Eco Products™: Corn cups, lids, and straws that look and feel like regular plastics, but are made from renewable resources (100 percent US-grown corn).
- Eco Product™: Hot cups and lids like “comfort cups,” which are lined with heat-stable, vegetable base coating that allows for commercial composting.
- Eco Products™: Cutlery includes medium weight, heat stable, commercially compostable forks, knives and spoons made from corn and vegetable base plastics.
- Eco Products™: Food containers made from renewable resources, including corn.
- Eco Products™: Sugar Cane plates and bowls that are made from sugar cane, a 100 percent renewable resource.

## ENERGY MANAGEMENT

### **Does the convention center set energy goals and are they shared with the public? Are they tracked?**

- Goals are set internally – not shared – and yes, we track daily.

### **Do you ensure low-occupancy power by reducing power use during rehearsals and off-show times?**

- Yes

### **Is LED lighting provided in all rooms?**

- LED lighting is provided in most rooms but not all.

### **Is energy-efficient equipment (monitors, projectors, etc.) used to reduce power consumption?**

- Yes

# SUSTAINABILITY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

### **Are there established objectives and numeric targets for increasing waste diversion on a per event basis?**

- Our goal is to maintain a minimum of 35% diversion overall.

### **Do you measure landfill diversion?**

- Yes, we use our Sustainability Dashboard to track our diverted materials from landfills – co-mingled recyclables, cardboard, plastic, wood, steel, etc.

### **Do you have well labeled waste stations for attendees to clearly know what and how to recycle, landfill or compost?**

- Yes

### **Is composting offered?**

- Yes

### **Is there an event materials donation program in place? Do you reuse event materials or donate them?**

- Yes, we have various material donation partnerships in place to donate post show materials to local charities, schools, etc. (Please see page 3 for more information.)

## AIR QUALITY

### **Do you designate 100% of convention meeting rooms as non-smoking and 100% of interior public spaces as non-smoking?**

- Yes

### **Is there a policy in place that prohibits smoking?**

- Facility Policies: Smoking and Tobacco - In accordance with City of Houston Ordinance No. 2006-1054, smoking is prohibited at the Facility, with the exception of certain enclosed meeting areas designated by the General Manager, when used for private, invitation-only functions. Smoking is allowed on the balconies and outside sidewalk along Avenida Houston.

### **Do you provide bicycle racks for employees and guests?**

- Yes, we have bicycle racks in both the Avenida North and South Garages.

### **Do you have information regarding alternative transportation such as bus, train, bike share, etc.?**

- Yes, information can be accessed from the GRB website ([www.GRBHouston.com](http://www.GRBHouston.com) / Click on attendees getting around Houston) or Information Desks on Levels 1 and 2.
- We have multiple Houston BCycle stations at GRB & Discovery Green. [www.houstonbicycle.com](http://www.houstonbicycle.com)

### **Does the convention center use high-efficiency filters for HVAC and other air filtering equipment?**

- Yes, we do use filtering equipment. In fact, in early September 2020, the George R. Brown Convention Center was the first convention center in the country to deploy the **Integrated Viral Protection (IVP) System** - the world's first biodefense filtration technology proven to eliminate SARS-CoV-2 (99.999%), anthrax spores (99.8%) and other airborne contaminants through a heated filter without impacting the temperature of the ambient air.
- **Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)** is very important for us. IAQ refers to the air quality within and around buildings and structures, especially as it relates to the health and comfort of building occupants. At the GRB, we have a continuous supply of fresh air at all times which is pulled in by our outside air handlers.

### **Is a no-idling policy for vehicles in place? No-idling refers to turning off vehicle engines when not in use. Exceptions may be due to weather conditions or food safety requirements.**

- Yes, we have a no-idling policy in both the Avenida North and South Transit Centers.



# SUSTAINABILITY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## CARBON EMISSIONS

### Is there at least one electric vehicle charging station in the venue's parking facility?

- Avenida South Garage: Six (6) electric charging stations
- Avenida North Garage: Six (6) electric charging stations
- Theater District Garage: Six (6) electric charging stations
- ADA-accessible parking spaces are also available in all parking garages and most surface lots.

### Are there any post-event sustainability reports provided to clients after an event?

- We can provide tracking of composting and isolated waste & recycling pulls post-event.

### Do you have any third-party audited sustainability certifications or recognitions?

- The GRB is currently USGBC LEED GOLD certified and is applying for recertification 2025. The GRB was also previously certified as USGBC LEED SILVER in 2011 and 2017.

## GREEN CLEANING & PRECAUTIONS

### Do you have any special requirements or equipment for cleaning and sanitizing?

- Green Cleaning Policy – The GRB uses green cleaning products and non-chemical products for pest control and weed management. Our in-house service providers and vendors also adhere to Sustainability criteria for cleaning products and materials.
- The GRB uses electrostatic spraying. Electrostatic sprayers can clean up to 54,000 square feet of surface area per hour, reducing labor and chemical resources. The GRB now has 20 EMist 360 electrostatic disinfectant sprayers, which will be used at the end of each day to sanitize all common areas throughout the GRB as well as meeting rooms used during events. An additional eight sprayers will be available for use in HFC-owned venues in the theater district.

### Are there any thermal scanners on site?

- We have installed thermal scanners at all 15 entrances of the GRB Convention Center.

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

### We are committed to environmental stewardship, and ask that our clients, exhibitors, vendors and partners:

- Place recyclables in appropriate recycling containers located in exhibit and public areas.
- Designate merchandise for donation to local non-profits (e.g., leftover bags, office supplies, pens, note pads, etc. and any other recoverable materials).
- Flatten all corrugated cardboard during move-in and move-out for proper recycling.
- Post-show, please inform your GRB Convention Services manager if you have any unused food product that can be recovered and/or donated.
- Encourage the use of **METRORail** for transportation. The Purple and Green Lines serve the convention center from two stations located within walking distance of the facility's North side. To learn more about public transportation options around the GRB, visit [ridemetro.org](http://ridemetro.org).

## QUESTIONS? CONTACT US

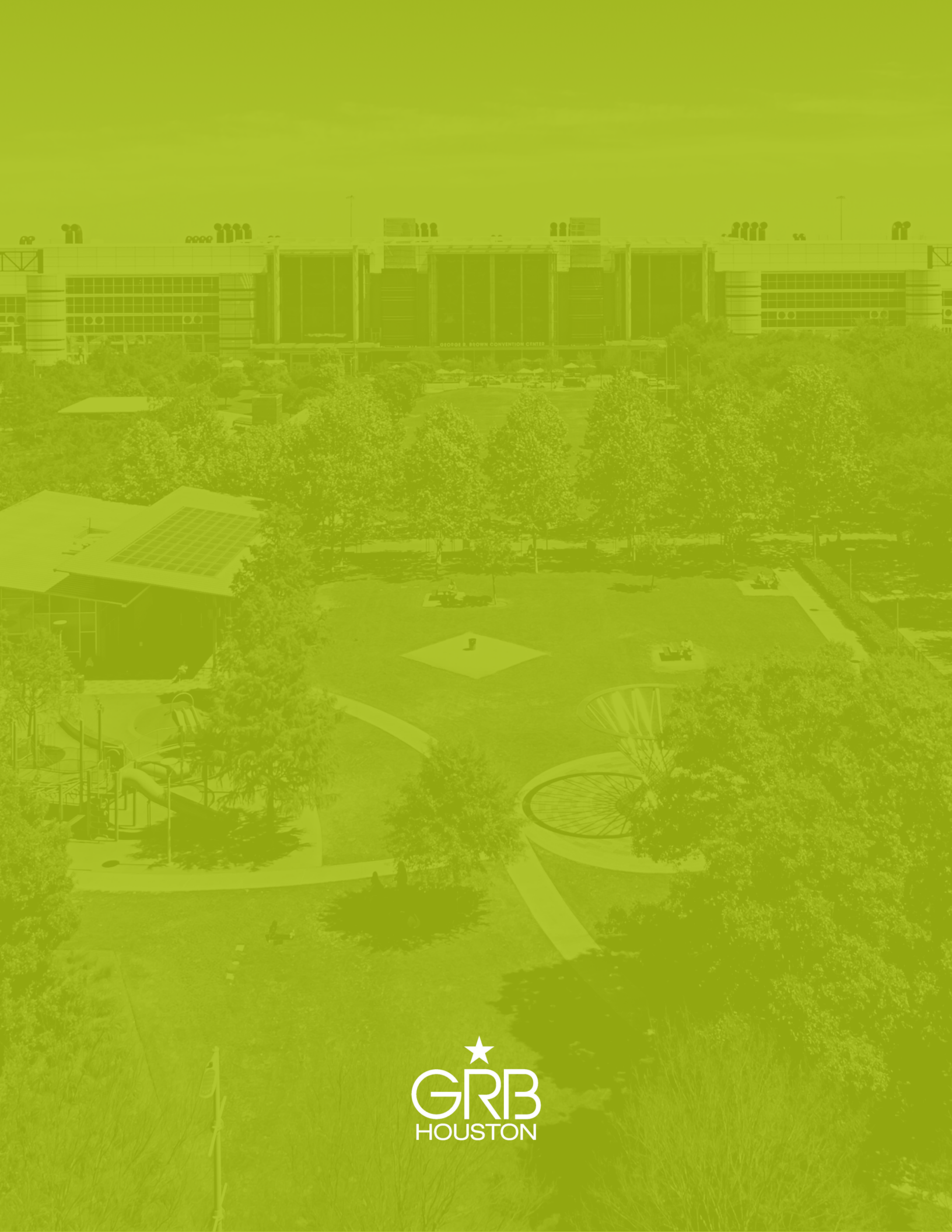
### Want to learn more about our Green Initiatives?

- For more information regarding all of our Green Initiatives visit [GRBHouston.com](http://GRBHouston.com).

### Have a question about our Sustainability Practices?

- Contact [Analisa Terrell | Manager Sustainability & Administration](mailto:Analisa.Terrell@houstonfirst.com) at [Analisa.Terrell@houstonfirst.com](mailto:Analisa.Terrell@houstonfirst.com) or **713.853.8076**





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