



Director of Communications and Engagement

Sorrell is proud to partner with Houston Parks Board in its search for a new Director of Communications and Engagement. Houston Parks Board's (HPB) mission is to expand, improve, and protect parks and greenspace in the Houston region. Since 1976, the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization has utilized public-private partnerships and its extensive philanthropic, government, and community relationships to create an interconnected network of parks, trails, and greenspace for a more resilient and equitable Houston region.

Houston Parks Board reached a major milestone with substantial completion of the boldest and most exciting capital project in its history: Bayou Greenways. This ambitious \$225M project significantly expanded and enhanced Houston's parks system, creating a continuous trail network within the city limits of over 150 miles of linear parks and trails along Houston's bayous. In addition to leading the transformational Bayou Greenways initiative, Houston Parks Board cares for more than 2,800 acres of greenspace and supports park projects large and small.

HPB went through years of an intensive planning effort to determine what comes next and is setting the stage for a major campaign. Our strategic plan calls for HPB to be a leading voice for parks and greenspace in our region, elevating our thought leadership to expand our impact. To do that we will raise awareness of the work of HPB, evaluating the organization's identity to better convey who we are and elevating the organization's profile.

More information on Houston Parks Board and its initiatives is available at: www.houstonparksboard.org.

Position Overview

Reporting to HPB's Chief Advancement Officer, the Director of Communications & Engagement ("DCE") plays a pivotal role in shaping the organization's future, enhancing the HPB brand, and leading a skilled team to engage communities across the Houston region. This strategic leader will oversee brand promotion efforts, manage and coach the community engagement team, and collaborate closely with all HPB departments to advance the organization's mission.

Direct reports to the DCE include three staff members: Senior Community Engagement Manager, Community Engagement Manager, and Community Engagement Coordinator. Additionally, the DCE will manage the engagement with the external PR agency and various contractors.

The DCE will be a highly relational professional with a passion for HPB's mission and drive to engage and steward relationships spanning Greater Houston and beyond. The ideal candidate will have a successful track record in external communications and relationship building, will be knowledgeable about and well networked in the Greater Houston community, will have a deep understanding of public/private partnerships, and experience creating and growing a communications team. Relevant experience working with greenspace or park projects is highly beneficial, as is having some understanding on how public entities fund capital projects.

Priorities for this position are to grow and manage a team, increase HPB's visibility, support the organization's advancement efforts, and foster and grow partnerships. Critical to his/her/their success will be quickly gaining an understanding of HPB's work on the ground. The DCE needs to be an active learner who becomes familiar with the public and private stakeholders and knowledgeable about the many moving parts of HPB's projects.

Highlights of the DCE's responsibilities follow:

- Maintaining HPB's brand integrity across the organization.
- Managing HPB's reputation, understanding the full context of the organization and developing communications strategies, which maintain and strengthen the organization's ability to collaborate and deliver results effectively.
- Integrating Communications and Community Engagement work throughout the organization.
- Building buy-in of Communications and Community Engagement strategies and create efficient ways for colleagues to provide input into both.
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive communications strategy to promote HPB's mission, projects, and initiatives to diverse audiences and communities.
- Monitoring and analyzing the effectiveness of communication efforts, making proactive recommendations for improvement.
- Collaborating with program staff to create compelling stories and content that demonstrate the impact of HPB's work.
- Developing consistent messaging and talking points for presentations made by Board members, the President & CEO, and C-level executives.
- Leading the planning and development of the Communications & Engagement annual budget, focusing on ensuring that the communications and engagement programs demonstrate a clear return on investment.
- Elevating and spotlighting the brand.
- Overseeing the creation and production of collateral materials, both print and digital.
- Maintaining the HPB website, continuously improving it and ensuring strong UX design.
- Planning and implementing the monthly e-newsletter sent to >17,000 recipients, utilizing A/B testing for insights.
- Overseeing the social media content strategy, making recommendations for improvements and engagement optimization.
- Collaborating with the Development team to create cohesive materials for events and fundraising campaigns.
- Direct and hold accountable HPB's public relations firm, handling strategic communications planning and media relations.
- Managing media inquiries and recommending media opportunities to promote HPB's mission.
- Managing contracted graphic designers and photographers to support organization needs.
- Managing HPB's Senior Community Engagement Manager, who serves as the lead community liaison for HPB, overseeing tailored engagement plans for projects based on each unique community, with the goal of encouraging participation and long-term interest from the public.

- In coordination with Community Engagement team, developing a volunteer program that streamlines processes across the organization and maximizes ROI for HPB in organizing volunteer events.
- Being a spokesperson for the organization.

Essential Skills and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in communications, public relations, marketing, journalism or a related field.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in communications or public relations, with nonprofit sector experience preferred, and ideally experience working with Board and Executive-level teams.
- Collaborative attitude and relationship-building skills.
- Desire to understand and navigate complex multi-sectoral issues and public/private partnership structures while succinctly conveying HPB's impact in a simple compelling way. Prior experience with public/private partnerships is a plus.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Experience with issue and crisis management.
- Strong project management and organizational skills.
- Experience managing social media platforms and digital marketing campaigns.
- Working knowledge of community engagement best practices.
- Discernment in prioritizing activities for HPB's benefit.
- Experience managing teams and vendors.
- Flexibility to work independently and manage a team.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office suite. Experience with Canva, InDesign, Photoshop, or WordPress would be a plus.
- Experience leading a rebranding exercise (a plus).
- Strong familiarity with Houston and its parks, trails, and bayous (a plus).
- Spanish language skills (a plus).

Compensation

Compensation is competitive and commensurate on experience. HPB provides a competitive benefits package including medical, dental, vision and life insurance, a 403b retirement plan and generous paid time off. This role is based in HPB's office.

Application and Referral Process

Applicant review is currently underway and will continue until the candidate has been selected. To nominate or be considered for this position, please contact Laura Sorrell at laura@sorrellco.com / 713.854.5351 or Priscilla Plumb at priscilla@sorrellco.com / 281.224.0881. All inquiries will be held in confidence.

About Sorrell

Sorrell is a highly relational provider of executive recruiting. Our mission is to serve as partners with our clients to accelerate their efforts to attract, hire and retain talent that impacts the future of the organization. For more information, call 713.840.1870.