



Chief Development Officer

Sorrell is proud to partner with Houston Parks Board in its search for a new Chief Development Officer. Houston Parks Board (HPB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to create, improve, protect and advocate for parkland in the Greater Houston region. Since its inception in 1976, the organization has raised and leveraged millions of dollars and touched at least 75% of the City's parkland either through acquisitions and/or capital improvements. HPB benefits from its relationship with the Houston Parks Board Foundation (the "Foundation"). The Foundation was formed to support HPB by holding and managing its endowment funds, raising additional funds, and providing financial assistance in the form of grants to HPB as needed by HPB to support park programs.

Houston Parks Board has 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 expands and enhances Houston's parks system, creating a continuous system within the city limits of 150 miles of parks and trails along Houston's bayous. Currently, HPB is engaged in numerous other park development projects in neighborhoods across the city, with a particular focus on park equity. Led by President & CEO Beth White, the organization has grown in recent years to a staff of 38 individuals. In the current fiscal year, HPB plans to add additional FTEs, with a significant investment in the Development Department. The organization offers a collaborative, high-performing, and goal-oriented culture.

The Development Department plays a vital role in the life of HPB by raising funds that are essential to the organization's operation and to its park development projects. The Development program is diversified, with funds raised from foundations, corporations, individuals, and governmental entities. Public/private partnerships are key to all of its fundraising efforts. The Development team works closely with other departments within HPB, in particular the Communications, Capital Projects, and Finance teams. Working collaboratively on each development project allows for ongoing communication with donors on the progress of existing projects—particularly the larger projects that are complex.

Some of HPB's greatest assets are its board members, who represent some of Houston's most generous and active philanthropists and thought leaders. The opportunity to work closely with such a high-caliber board is one of the compelling aspects of this role. HPB will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2026; the Chief Development Officer will have an opportunity to truly shape the future of the organization by supporting the President & CEO and the Board in laying out a vision for the next 50 years.

For more information on Houston Parks Board and its high-impact work in the community, please visit www.houstonparksboard.org.

Position Overview

Reporting to the President & CEO and also working closely with the Board of Directors and other management staff, the Chief Development Officer (CDO) will advance a sustainable and innovative philanthropic development program to achieve HPB's short and long-term goals. While serving as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, he/she/they will provide strategic leadership in philanthropy to advance HPB's mission through annual giving, government and foundation grants, individual and major gifts, and events. He/She/They will assist the President & CEO in developing and leveraging an actively engaged, philanthropic, volunteer Board of Directors.

The CDO 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. This position offers a unique opportunity to serve a key role in HPB's growth and to create and lead the Fund Development team. The ideal candidate will have a successful track record in fundraising and relationship building, will be knowledgeable about and well networked in Houston's philanthropic community as well as nationally, will have a deep understanding of public/private partnerships, and experience creating and growing a Development team. Relevant experience working with green spaces 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 fundraising results, steward donor relationships, play a major role in development strategy, and to fully leverage HPB's Board toward fundraising efforts. Critical to his/her/their success will be quickly gaining an understanding of HPB's work on the ground. The CDO 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 CDO's responsibilities follow:

Strategy, Vision, and Leadership

The CDO is a key leadership team member and is an active participant in strategic decision-making for HPB. The CDO works with local, regional, and national funders; develops and maintains strong donor relations; works closely with the Board of Directors; formulates and implements HPB's fundraising efforts in support of the organization's long-term strategic business plan; and is expected to provide leadership in identifying, soliciting, and retaining high-level donors. The CDO is an integral part of the budget process and is responsible for the line items directly related to the fundraising function.

Specifics include:

- Developing and implementing short-term and long-term fund development strategies consistent with HPB's Strategic Plan.
- Developing, implementing and managing all fundraising campaigns to grow and sustain the organization's capital, operating, and program needs.
- Manage Development team's performance, mentoring team members professionally and fostering HPB' values and culture as a team leader.
- Serving as a key member of the leadership team, collaborating with the other senior leaders to develop and implement HPB's strategic initiatives.

- Cultivating a dynamic relationship with HPB's Board of Directors.
- Playing a key role in establishing and managing public/private and multi-sector collaborations.

Fund Development and Endowment Strategy

- Directing all ongoing activities to diversify and increase charitable contributions from individuals/major donors, corporations, foundations, and government entities. This requires a deep understanding of donors' desires and values and the use of research, analysis, trends, technology, and communication resources to identify and create lasting relationships and improve HPB's ability to steward donors effectively.
- Developing a strategic program to initiate and maintain contact with key individuals responsible for charitable giving in corporate, government, and foundation settings and secure commitments for contributions.
- Having primary responsibility for development and execution of all funding proposals, in line with a strategic program as stated above. This includes managing grant requests to government entities, as applicable.
- Overseeing the strategy, planning and execution of HPB's annual luncheon and any other fundraising events that may be added in the future.
- Strengthening relationships with donors, professionals, and community foundations to enhance HPB's solicitations of planned giving and possible endowment funds. Developing new personal and business contacts and leveraging the resulting and existing relationships to maximize the organization's exposure to potential donors and/or donor sources.
- Monitoring all donor information; developing and presenting statistical analysis to the President & CEO, senior leadership, and the Board of Directors.
- Collaborating closely with HPB's Communications Team, which is responsible for website development and management, production of printed collateral, social media, videos, and other activities related to growing HPB's brand.
- Helping the organization determine how best to support its equity focus.
- Exploring opportunities to further enhance HPB through its Foundation.
- Performing additional duties as deemed necessary by the President & CEO.

Essential Skills and Experience

The ideal candidate will be an exceptional leader with strong relationship, managerial and organizational experience, and skills including, but not limited to, the following qualifications:

- Strong affinity for HPB's mission; parks or greenspace background/familiarity a plus.
- Bachelor's degree in a related field; Master's degree a plus; Certified Fund-Raising Executive (CFRE) preferred.
- Ten or more years of professional development experience with fundraising, including annual campaigns, major gifts, grant writing, government grants, marketing, communications, and public relations; successful track record of raising funds and managing relationships; has

worked closely with nonprofit boards and development committees; experience in administering planned giving a plus.

- Both nonprofit and management experience required; corporate business development and/or foundation experience viewed as highly relevant and advantageous.
- Understands philanthropic landscape of Greater Houston and adept at cultivating and stewarding relationships with top philanthropic and community leaders.
- Thinks of the proper role of HPB in the entire landscape of parks and green spaces regionally.
- Focuses on unrestricted operating funds and how to maximize the relationship with HPB Foundation over the next few years.
- Strong leadership skills and experience in effectively building, managing, and developing a team; someone who can put the staff and volunteer infrastructure in place and nurture it through support, inspiration, and mentorship.
- Significant strategic planning experience; needs to participate in the ongoing strategic planning process and be integral to addressing how priority projects are selected and funded.
- Strong understanding of the intersection of development with marketing/communications; someone who can articulate HPB's goals and mission when going out to the community with compelling and consistent messaging.
- Outstanding interpersonal, organizational, and analytical skills coupled with strong written and verbal communication skills; ability to articulate a vision at a Board level.
- Experience working in complex organizations.
- Someone at the C-suite level who owns the subject of and knows how to manage up – to optimize and leverage the President & CEO with the Board; outwardly facing and supports the President & CEO in positioning the Board to be outwardly facing.
- Understands how to raise both public and private dollars.
- Adept at donor stewardship and understands its importance.
- Technological proficiency, including significant experience/level of comfort with Microsoft Office Suite and Raisers' Edge.

Desired Personal Attributes

- Natural leader with the ability to motivate and inspire team members.
- Strong decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to quickly earn trust and respect among peers and potential partners.
- Effective multi-tasker and disciplined self-starter who establishes and follows priorities.
- Efficient in time management and able to meet deadlines under pressure.
- Takes initiative and makes independent judgments when appropriate; at the same time is collaborative and a strong team player.
- Mature, confident, low ego with service orientation.

- Visionary: a big-picture thinker who also pays attention to details.
- Flexible and nimble; can navigate seasons of ambiguity and/or change.
- Able to multi-task and problem–solve with grace.
- Intuitive with high emotional intelligence.
- Highly relational, high touch, politically savvy.
- Authentic and trustworthy.
- Extremely discrete; protects confidential information about staff, board members, and donors.

Compensation

Compensation is competitive and commensurate with experience.

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

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