

**TRAIN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION**

**TCA STRATEGIC PLAN  
2021**

Presented to, and for Adoption by,  
The Board of Directors of  
The Train Collectors Association June 2020.

Developed by: The Strategic Planning  
Committee

**Table of Contents**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>2020 COMMITTEE REPORT</b>                                    | <b>Page 1</b>  |
| <b>BACKGROUND and CHARGE</b>                                    | <b>Page 2</b>  |
| <b>MISSION STATEMENT</b>  | <b>Page 2</b>  |
| <b>VISION and VALUES</b>  | <b>Page 3</b>  |
| <b>GOALS</b>  | <b>Page 4</b>  |
| <b>STRATEGIES and ACTIONS</b>                                   |                |
| <b>Goal 1, Membership</b>                                       | <b>Page 5</b>  |
| <b>Goal 2, Finance</b>  | <b>Page 6</b>  |
| <b>Goal 3, Member Benefits</b>                                  | <b>Page 7</b>  |
| <b>Goal 4, Asset Development</b>                                | <b>Page 8</b>  |
| <b>Goal 5, Quality Information</b>                              | <b>Page 10</b> |
| <b>Goal 6, Governance</b>                                       | <b>Page 11</b> |
| <b>Appendix A. Strategic Planning Committee Members 2019/20</b> | <b>Page 12</b> |

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TRAIN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION  
Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) 2020 Report  
May 18, 2020

The 2021 plan will continue to carry out the goals outlined in the 2020 plan; specifically seeking to increase the value of TCA to its members, improve member retention and attraction of new members, and maintain stable TCA finances while maximizing primary assets like our publications, the Museum, and the Library. The Strategic Planning Committee meets twice each year at York. In April 2020 the Committee did not meet, but rather polled by internet email. At the direction of five successive TCA Presidents, the Committee has continued to place particular emphasis upon issues related to membership, core assets, and finances.

In the coming year, Strategic Planning will evaluate the degree to which the Strategic Plan has been accomplished in each area of TCA, and will focus on finding solutions to accelerate and improve both performance and efficiency in delivering value to Members. On behalf of the 2019/20 TCA Strategic Planning Committee, we respectfully submit the attached 2021 Plan for adoption and implementation by the TCA Board of Directors.

John DeSantis, Chairperson, Strategic Planning Committee

**Background and Charge**

**The Charge:**

The Strategic Planning Committee shall develop a plan to move TCA into the future in the context of the 21st Century. See TCA Rules & Regulations, Special Committees, Strategic Planning Committee, Item 1.

**The Commitment:**

The Board of Directors of the Train Collectors Association and its appointed committees hereby dedicate themselves to carrying out the Mission Statement directives and actions contained within this Strategic Plan - based on the Vision Statement, Value Statement, and Goals set forth herein.

In considering any action, three questions shall serve as an additional guide.

1. Is this action of long-term benefit to TCA and its Mission?
2. Will this action make TCA more valued to its current members?
3. Will this action stimulate interest by others in joining TCA?

**Mission Statement**

To develop an appreciation of and to preserve an important segment of history - Tinsplate Toy Trains - through research, education, community outreach, fellowship, establishment of collecting standards and to promote the growth and enjoyment of the hobby of collecting and operating toy, model and scale trains.

### 3 Vision and Values

#### **Vision Statement:**

The Train Collectors Association is the leading train collecting/operating club:

Providing member benefits making it the "must join" organization.

Establishing the relevance and intellectual value of the history of toy, model and scale trains, with the objective of providing an educational benefit.

Known to command the highest quality and ethical values in all its activities.

Known to be the ultimate resource for preserving the past and documenting the present.

Known for building and maintaining the most effective marketplace for the acquisition, sale and distribution of the "trains" themselves as well as information pertaining to them.

Known for valuing collectors and operators of all ages.

#### **Value Statement:**

*Despite all else changing, our values endure.*

Believing this, the Train Collectors Association adopts and shall conduct its affairs in accordance with the following values:

To Members:

TCA will operate to exceed the expectations of its members and will strive to continuously identify member needs, upgrade member benefits and promote fellowship and interaction among members and within the hobby.



In Ethics:

TCA will set and maintain the highest standards for financial dealings, member behavior and accuracy of communication.

To The Hobby:

TCA will continue to establish itself as the prime resource for those interested in collecting and operating toy, model and scale trains.

To Paid Staff:

TCA will respect, support and invest in professional development.

To The Family:

TCA will foster and support the participation of all family members in TCA activities and will act to preserve and nurture the TCA tradition of camaraderie among members.

In Organization:

TCA will set policies and procedures for efficient, ethical and honest operations at all levels of the Association - unencumbered by bureaucracy.

**GOALS:**

1. Create and maintain positive yearly growth in membership
2. Ensure short and long term financial health and security of TCA
3. Define and Communicate Member Benefits
4. Asset Development
5. Quality Information
6. Governance

**List of Most Used Abbreviations:**

- BOD** Board of Directors of Train Collectors Association
- HQN** Headquarters News, newsletter for membership
- NBO** National Business Office, TCA Headquarters, Strasburg, PA
- NTTL** National Toy Train Library, in TCA Headquarters, Strasburg, PA
- NTTM** National Toy Train Museum, in TCA Headquarters, Strasburg, PA **OM** Office Manager
- SPC** Strategic Planning Committee
- TCA** Train Collectors Association
- TCQ** Train Collectors Quarterly, quarterly publication of TCA

**TCA Strategic Plan 2020**

**Goal 1, Membership:** Achieve and maintain positive yearly growth in membership. Continue the efforts established during the previous Strategic Plan to encourage retention and accelerate new growth.

**Action 1: Recruit New Members**

Continue and further develop directions for the BOD, Divisions, and Chapters to follow in recruiting new members from current member referrals, train shows, hobby-related and other suitable public events.

**Action 2: Intensify Retention Efforts**

Continue and expand the last year's developed program for National, Divisions, and Chapters to use in convincing current members to remain in or return to TCA.

Action 3: Division Presidents or designee continue to follow up on names from Drop List. All divisions will receive notices from NBO of members who have dropped. Using format and material provided by NBO, Division will contact individuals with encouragement to renew.

Action 4: Invite public who attend meets to join TCA and Division. Using format and material provided by NBO, Division Presidents or designees will solicit all non-TCA members who attend meets, invite them to join.

Responsibility: All of the above will be a joint effort among the Strategic Planning, Public Relations and Marketing, and the Membership Recruiting, Retention, and Benefits Committees. Division Presidents to complete the above goals by June 2020.

**Goal 2, Finance:** Insure short and long term financial health and security of TCA. Match financial requirements to available funding. Maintain continuous re-evaluation by the Treasurer in concert with the Finance Committee, Officers, and BOD.

Action 1. Insure that the operating budget is fully funded before proposed budget is presented to the BOD; and that any proposed increases or additions are fully funded prior to presentation to the BOD for approval.

Action 2. Develop alternative and additional sources for non-dues operating funds. Expand development of fundraising. Pursue member contributions from estates.

Action 3. Develop funding for long-term capital projects. Insure that a reserve account system is incorporated into the operating budget for each year, for those actions necessary to maintain the integrity of the capital assets of TCA. Continue or adjust program from previous years.

Responsibility: TCA BOD, Finance Committee, and Treasurer. Completion Date: Report status at SPC, October and April York.

**Goal 3, Member Benefits:** Expand and communicate member benefits. Identify and enhance ways for members to enjoy their hobby, and seek opportunities for fellowship that make TCA the "must-join" organization in the hobby.

Action 1: Utilize 2015 member survey results to explore relative values of current and added benefits, and what would be the best strategies for informing present and prospective members of benefit values. Adjust efforts intended to generate division and chapter participation.

Action 2: Work with TCA national publications, NTTM, and NTTL to maximize value to, and awareness by, members.

Action 3: Work with Divisions and Chapters to expand regular local opportunities for interaction and fellowship, with particular emphasis on group gatherings such as train meets, home layout and collection visits, and social events. Encourage colocation of toy train events with related or analogous hobby interest groups.

Action 4: Create a new comprehensive website for TCA that will serve as the one central internet resource related to toy trains. Work with Divisions and Chapters to generate regular localized communication via internet and publications, as well as robust local websites and online forums. Work with NBO to develop easy-to-use templates for websites and newsletters for use by Divisions and Chapters.

Responsibility: Strategic Planning Committee, Public Relations and Marketing Committee

Action 5: Initiate and continue membership recruiting campaign that incentivizes Divisions, Chapters and members to recruit new members.

Responsibility: Membership Recruiting, Retention and Benefits Committee, Internet Committee, and BOD, especially Division Presidents. Report Status at SPC meeting, October and April York.

Action 6: Explore new approaches to the TCA National Convention to increase value to members, encourage more member attendance and participation, improve financial results and accountability, and assure long-term viability. Review Convention Cars program to maximize interest by members and increase revenue to TCA.

Responsibility: National Convention Guidelines Committee, BOD. Completion Date: April 2020. Status report at SPC meetings.

**Goal 4, Asset Development:** Raise the intellectual perception and value of the Train Collectors Association, its NTTM, NTTL, print and electronic publications to all audiences.

Action 1: Continue to complete and maintain one formalized database inventory of all collections - both owned and on loan. Establish values and maintain adequate insurance coverage for all assets owned and under TCA care. Chairman of Education and Museum Committee, Chairman of Library Committee, Secretary, and Office Manager to be trained and have access.

Responsibility: Education and Museum Committee and Library Committee, Board of Directors. Completion Date: Status report at SPC meetings.

Action 2: Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the TCA, as well as a plan for the NTTM and a plan for the NTTL. Initiate and maintain the new marketing efforts for all three entities.

Responsibility: Public Relations and Marketing Committee. Completion Date: October 2020. Status report at SPC meetings.

Action 3: Increase awareness and utilization of TCA NTTM and NTTL among TCA members. Work with TCA publications in print and online to place articles featuring pieces and information from the collections in each edition - focusing on the collections themselves, assistance available to members, and the fulfillment of TCA's educational mission.

Responsibility: Education and Museum Committee, Library Committee, Publication Editors. Completion Date: ongoing. Status report at SPC meetings

Action 4: Encourage toy train manufacturers to support and promote TCA through direct financial support, as well as by participation in TCA events and promotion to their retailers and consumers.

Responsibility: Public Relations and Marketing Committee, TCA President or designee. Status report at SPC meetings;

**Goal 5, Quality Information:** Acquire and efficiently distribute to members and the public the highest quality of information on the history of toy, model and scale trains. Make TCA the prime resource for information on toy, model and scale trains - "Everything Trains".

Action 1. Publications On-Line. Publish and make accessible on-line to both members and the public any TCA publication that is sold out and out of print. Link on TCA homepage to "Publications" Example: "Lionel - Standard of the World 1900-1942." Communicate at the same time that there is more information available to TCA members; invite to join.

Responsibility: Internet Committee, Library Committee. Completion Date: Status report at SPC meetings.

Action 2: TCA Collections Data Base. Create the world's largest toy, model and scale train data base of information by putting the TCA collections data base on-line. all fields and photos would be accessible to TCA members via their membership number and a password.

Responsibility: Internet Committee. Completion Date: Status report at SPC meetings.

Action 3: Continue to upgrade the NTTM and NTTL, with improvements in displays and facilities. Make the NTTM more tourist, kid, and family friendly. Make the NTTL more useful to members who may not be able to travel to Strasburg.

Responsibility: Education & Museum Committee, Library Committee, Maintenance Committee.  
Completion Date: ongoing. Status report at SPC meetings.

**Goal 6, Governance:** Structure TCA governance to expedite decision making, minimize bureaucracy, and maximize accountability, transparency, and efficiency of operation.

Action 1: Provide for the consistent use, monitoring and updating of the Strategic Plan by the TCA Officers, Board of Directors, Board Committees, and Divisions.

Responsibility: Strategic Planning Committee.

Action 2: At the beginning of each term-of-office year, a copy of the most recently BOD adopted Strategic Plan shall be provided to all TCA BOD members, Officers, and Committee Chairpersons.

Responsibility: National Secretary, National Business Office.

**Appendix A**

Strategic Planning Committee Members: 2019/2020

Peter Atonna, (75-7578) President

Rupert Campbell, (94-39537) Past President

Jim Potts, (64-1063) President-elect

John DeSantis, (75-7885) - Strategic Planning Chair

James Burke, Jr., (68-2321) Term 2017-20

Carol McGinnis, (95-41066) Term 2016-19

Jay Zschau, (75-7858) Term 2018-21 Katie

Elgar (94-39348) Term 2019-22

**Invited Guest: Non-Voting**

Rick McKenny, (86-23260) Treasurer

Kevin Quinn, (98-41767) Kids Club

Rick Dunn, (HE87-26844)

Dan Glover, (93-38090) BOD

Russ Keil, (04-56974) BOD

Chris Allen, (95-40580) BOD

Sam Merando, (97-45719) Kids Club

Bob Lubonski, (90-31880) Museum Committee

Leon Duminiak, (02-54067)

Tammy Hersh, Business Office Manager

Lori Nyce, Librarian