

2023

STRATEGIC PLAN



Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad aspires to become America's premier scenic excursion railroad in terms of safety, overall passenger experience, quality of facilities and equipment and commitment by staff and volunteers to total customer satisfaction. Working in collaboration with key Strategic Partners we will make significant contributions to economic development in Northeast Ohio, to the overall quality of life of the region's residents, and to the promotion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.





MISSION

To provide educational, recreational and heritage railroad experiences and to offer alternative transportation to and within the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Ohio & Erie Canalway.

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad's Board of Trustees recently adopted a strategic plan designed to provide a road map for successful navigation of CVSR's future. We are committed to three strategic goals that build on our strengths, yet challenge us to reach new levels of service quality and operational efficiency. We invite you to explore the plan and discover just where we're going.

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VISION AND VALUES

SAFETY

- We believe that safety is of the utmost importance in the discharge of our duties.
- We operate in compliance with all local, state and federal regulations and standards.
- We maintain and operate our equipment in a safe manner.

CUSTOMER-FOCUSED

- We believe our customers' expectations are a high priority.
- We go beyond the expected to respond to customers' needs.
- We believe our success should be measured by customer.

EXCELLENCE

- We have an unwavering commitment to quality, seeking every opportunity to improve across the entire operation.
- We always pursue the highest level of professionalism and productivity.
- We strive to be leaders in all that we do.

COLLABORATION

- Our mission is enhanced through strong strategic relationships with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and its Conservancy, the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage area, and neighboring communities and stakeholder organizations.
- We work with other organizations and people in a spirit of trust and collegiality.
- We encourage and support teamwork in all efforts.

STEWARDSHIP

- We maintain the highest standards of financial accountability and make decisions in keeping with the trust the public has accorded us.
- We are vigilant stewards of natural and cultural resources.
- We contribute our time and talent to the communities where we live and work.

ACCESS AND EDUCATION

- We strive to provide an educational, memorable, fun-filled experience for every train passenger.
- We perceive CVSR to be an important component of the region's education and entertainment opportunities.
- We find it exciting to expose many thousands of riders to the history of train travel and especially its role in the heritage of the National Park.
- We will work with our partners to create educational opportunities appropriate to all our region's residents and visitors.

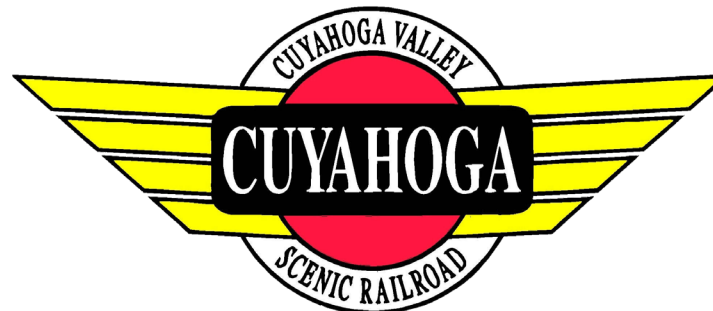
D.E.I.A.

(DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & ACCESSIBILITY)

- We are committed to respecting and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion and improving accessibility in our operations for the benefit of our staff, our guests, visitors to the region, and our region's diverse community.
- We are committed to working in support of our Strategic Partners to expand access to the National Park and our ridership to Northeast Ohio's underrepresented communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

- We are committed to enhancing alternative transportation within the Park and reducing our environmental impact where possible.





GOALS

GOAL 1

We will provide unique, high-quality rail experiences that support the diverse needs and interests of our guests, the National Park, and our region.

GOAL 2

We will develop and maintain effective partnerships that bring passengers, volunteers, and financial resources to CVSR and that enhance the efforts of our Strategic Partners to expand education and access in the Park, and to develop the Park as a national and regional resource.

GOAL 3

We will strive for operational excellence, financial stability, and sustainability:

- The safety and health of our employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and the public will be the first consideration in our operations;
- We will expand ridership, increase fundraising, control expenses, and preserve our rolling stock; We will increase the value of our brand by communicating and promoting CVSR's mission and programs through effective marketing and targeted communications;
- We will develop and sustain effective leadership and a high-performing workforce;
- We will strive to reduce our environmental footprint while operating efficiently within the constraints of our locomotive fleet.



OBJECTIVES

SENIOR LEADERSHIP AND BOARD

Main Statement: The CVSR will support expanding access to the railroad and park by engaging strategically with the park and additional communities and partners

Objectives:

1. Strategies are implemented that provide the region's communities greater access to the railroad and the park.
2. Partners are engaged that represent the diverse needs and interests of the region.
3. The board recruits and retains a board that represent the diverse population and region served by the railroad and park.

VOLUNTEERS

Main Statement: Volunteers are incorporated into a unified organizational structure that will allow for the development and sustainment of Volunteers

Objectives:

1. All year-round volunteer recruitment campaigns are conducted for individual and corporate volunteers.
2. A Volunteer on boarding and training process is developed for all Volunteer roles.
3. Implement tools that help with volunteer recruitment, training, communication, scheduling, recognition, and reporting.

OPERATIONS

Main Statement: Operations has the staff structure and work plans that accommodate the development and sustainment of a culture of safety, preventive maintenance, special projects, and train operations.

Objectives:

1. Safety awareness and training are incorporated into Staff and Volunteer onboarding, daily routines, and role specific requirements.
2. Train operations Staff are aligned to ensure operational continuity, ongoing training, and Head End Crew (HEC) support.
3. Shop Staff and plans are aligned to allow for the completion of preventive maintenance (PM) schedules, special projects, and the tracking of activities.
4. Implement the organization's locomotive strategy that focus the acquisition and preservation of locomotives to common brand or type (ALCO).





DEVELOPMENT

Main Statement: Create a Culture of Relationships, which is beyond transactional giving, where people are connected to the organization's goals, and they are engaged for the long term.

Objectives:

1. An evaluation of our current relationships is performed and donor growth strategy is implemented.
2. The needs of the organization are identified, communicated out and connected to people with the ability to help.
3. A long-term stewardship program is developed and implemented to keep people engaged and grow the relationship with them.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Main Statement: Human Resources practices are implemented that promote employee recruitment, retention, and engagement; communicate the organization's culture to Staff; and are adaptable to the needs of the organization.

Objectives:

1. An employee engagement strategy is implemented to increase employee cohesion and retention.
2. Employee compensation and benefits are reviewed regularly to ensure the organization retains and attracts the right talent.
3. Human Resource policies and procedures are documented and reviewed regularly to ensure compliance and are reflective of the organization's culture.
4. Evaluate the needs, costs and benefits of a Human Resources staff person and implement the outcome of the evaluation.



FINANCE

Main Statement: Financial operating practices are implemented to enhance revenue and expense tracking, operating procedures are reviewed regularly, new systems of contract management and financial status reporting are created.

Objectives:

1. General Ledger accounts are created to reflect direct revenue and expense for new events and expense tracking for locomotives and cars.
2. Standard Operating Procedures are reviewed regularly and new ones are created for emerging needs.
3. A contract management system is created to track and make readily available contract terms, obligations, expirations, and other important items.
4. Financial reports are reviewed and created to ensure their accuracy, timeliness, availability, and adaptability.
5. Evaluate the need, costs and benefits of a Finance Intern and implement the outcome of the evaluation.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TICKETING

Main Statement: Customer Service and Ticketing Standard Operating Procedures are created and implemented to provide customers with a uniform experience, ease of ticketing, service during operational periods and service inquiries are tracked to measure service outcomes.

Objectives:

1. Standard Operating Procedures are created and implemented for its basic functions, Private Car Rentals, schedule changes and other important needs.
2. A full implementation of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is completed with identified service measurements and reporting.
3. A ticketing system is selected that will allow for the customers ease of use and is adaptable to the needs of the organization.
4. Evaluate the need, costs, and benefits of providing customer service during all operational periods and implement the outcome of the evaluation.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Main Statement: Marketing and Communications can create and implement long and short marketing and communications plans for internal and external audiences that build the value of the organization's brand.

Objectives:

1. A year-long internal communications plan is created and implemented that will account for the communication needs of all areas of the organization.
2. A year-long external marketing and communications plan is created and implemented that will execute brand standards through comprehensive messaging across all areas of the organization.
3. The crisis communication plan is updated and implemented with Staff training as needed.
4. In conjunction with Customer Service and Events methods, and systems are created and implemented to enhance the CVSR brand experience as well as understand the needs of our customers, partners, and measure how those needs are met.
5. Standard Operation Procedures are reviewed and created to provide for a consistent communication methodology.

EVENTS/PROGRAMS

Main Statement: Events/Programs is able to create and implement events, programs and systems that meet the needs and expectations of the organization's customers and partners in a way that accounts for financial performance, organizational benefit, and a full cycle of event management.

Objectives:

1. Evaluate current and needed educational programming, along with its costs and benefits, and implement an education plan based on the evaluation.
2. Evaluate customer and partner feedback to create, revise and implement programming that meets their identified needs and the organization's goals.
3. Evaluate the need, costs, and benefits of providing additional merchandising avenues and needed merchandise sales systems and implement the outcome of the evaluation.
4. Create and implement Standard Operating Procedures that account for planning, implementing, and closing out events and programs.