



2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN



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Board Chair And CEO Message

Greetings Members and Stakeholders:

In 2019, the Standardbred Canada (SC) Board of Directors updated the Association's five-year strategic plan and identified strategic areas that the Association should move towards. The five long-term strategic objectives identified were:

- Communications
- Data Management
- Financial Sustainability
- Membership/Customer Service Value
- Stakeholder Relations

In 2021, the Board reviewed the above five strategic long-term objectives to confirm and validate that each remain relevant, vital and on point to where the Standardbred Canada Board wants the Association to drive towards given the sudden interruption of business caused by COVID-19 which wreaked havoc throughout the world.

A sub committee was formed called the "Strategic Planning and Process Committee" comprised of the following SC Directors:

- Blair Corbeil, Chair, Active, Western Region
- Paul Ryneveld, Racetrack, Western Region
- Ian Fleming, Racetrack, Ontario Region
- Ann Straatman, Breeder, Ontario Region
- Ryan Clements, Active, Ontario Region
- Bill McLinchey, Racetrack, Ontario Region
- Guillaume Cayer-Richard, Breeder, Quebec Region
- Bruce Wood, Breeder, Atlantic Region



BILL MCLINCHEY
Chair of the Board



DAN GALL
President & CEO

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Throughout 2021, the committee reviewed the Association's mandate, mission and vision statements, corporate values, and long-term objectives.

The committee also performed an external assessment to review market conditions, technological trends, consumer behavior, regulatory changes, and competitive factors that the Association should consider when preparing and planning its work during the next five years. The pandemic has caused a reset in the way people think, work and live and Standardbred Canada and the racing industry was not, and will not, be exempt from the reset of the "new" normal that is coming to be realized.

The committee also conducted an internal review of the Association's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and both the internal and external reviews confirmed to the Board that the five long-term strategic objectives identified in 2019 remain relevant to the Association, even more so today. Corresponding metrics were identified for each objective that the Association will drive towards attaining over the next few years.

We would like to thank the Strategic Planning and Process Committee, the Board of Directors, and the SC management team for their contributions to this newly revised strategic plan so that management may continue to remain focused and execute to the Board's expectations going forward.



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BACKGROUND

For over 100 years, the Canadian racehorse industry has identified and registered their race stock in accordance with the Animal Pedigree Act (formerly the Livestock Pedigree Act). This identification process is key to the reliable tracking of animals, genetic origin, and breeding of the Canadian racehorse breed and has progressed from lip tattoos and freeze branding to the use of microchipping.

Standardbred Canada was formed in 1998 due to the amalgamation of the breed's two national organizations: The Canadian Trotting Association and The Canadian Standardbred Horse Society (CSHS). CSHS - the breed registry was incorporated in 1910 under the Livestock Pedigree Act (Animal Pedigree Act).

Standardbred Canada supports the standardbred breed and the persons who breed, own and race standardbred horses through

its federal Government of Canada mandate:

- a) The registration and identification of standardbred horses and keeping of pedigrees;
- b) The maintenance, preservation, and dissemination of records regarding the breeding and racing of standardbred horses;
- c) Providing a platform for communication that creates interest, awareness, and support for the standardbred industry.

Standardbred Canada is well established within horse racing and equine industries in North America and around the world.

The national organization has a main office located in Mississauga, Ontario with several departments including: Communications (Website and TROT Magazine), Information Technology, Racing Services, Member Services, Member

& Stakeholder Relations and Finance and Administration, and is accountable to the membership, Board of Directors and multiple stakeholders (e.g. standardbred horse associations, provincial regulators, racetracks, etc.).

Standardbred Canada has over 6,000 current members representing all facets of the horse racing industry including breeders, owners, trainers, drivers, grooms, and racetracks and equally represented by a 15 person Board of Directors from across Canada.

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MANDATE, MISSION AND VISION

MANDATE:

Standardbred Canada supports the standardbred breed and the persons who breed, own and race standardbred horses through;

- a) The registration and identification of standardbred horses and keeping of pedigrees;
- b) The maintenance, preservation and dissemination of records regarding the breeding and racing of standardbred horses;
- c) Providing a platform for communication that creates interest, awareness and support for the standardbred industry.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Standardbred Canada is the national leader that records and communicates information about standardbred breeding and racing.

VISION STATEMENT:

“Standardbred Canada is an essential support for the standardbred horse industry in Canada.”



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STANDBRED CANADA: OUR VALUES

“... It’s about the HORSE of course...”

Honesty & Integrity – Two simple words that make the world of difference in a person, team or an association’s character. Standing behind the words we say, the work we do and being known for doing the right thing, will always create a bond between our members, partners and ourselves.

Own It – Whether it’s the job you do, decisions that you make, or actions that you take. At the end of the day, you own it. Be accountable. Be responsible. Lead the way.

Respect – Respect comes from within. Give respect, get respect. It’s that simple.

Service to Others – We serve our members, horses and industry to the highest standards. We don’t build services to make money, we make money to build services for our members.

Excellence – Excellence is about striving to be the best that we can be, in the work that we do, and the services that we offer. Never settle for anything less.



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MARKET

There has been a significant change in the market conditions primarily as a result of the pandemic that was declared in February 2020.

Market changes could be perceived both negatively and positively depending upon the industry's overall perception and how one views the changes. The Association needs to ensure the significant trends are noted and reflected in the five-year planning process.

One of the biggest trends noted was the necessity to rely on technology and online shopping. As the smart phone is becoming more of a mandatory personal device for the consumer to use in appointments, doing research, making purchases, communications, taking photos and to participate in social media. The familiarity around personal devices has

grown exponentially from two years ago which increases overall demand for online applications and usage going forward.

Online auctions has also seen a surge on a multitude of enterprises breaking into the marketplace which has opened up opportunities to rethink the traditional bricks and mortar sale of horses and lends itself to a more user friendly and convenient method when purchasing a horse.

Fractional ownership membership has seen an uptake in participants with over 30% of fractional owner members converting to full time SC members after the two year fractional ownership membership has expired.

The wagering on the sport was relatively strong, all things considered, again attributed to lack of sporting events during the pandemic, the growth of

HPI and additional national coverage of the sport on The Sports Network. Recent announcements regarding Single Event Sports Wagering should be considered positive and optimistic for the horse racing industry overall.

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REGULATORY

In the past few years, SC has made a concerted effort to work with all regulators to assist in creating discussion and action to improve the sport. An example of this is the Rules of Racing that each province has implemented to promote a consistent rule book across the country.

SC believes there is a significant role the Association can play to assist our regulatory bodies across the country, which includes facilitating positive discussions regarding horse health and welfare, and working with jurisdictions to promote safety, traceability and identification, fairness, integrity, and consistency.

MEMBERSHIP

With an aging demographic and slow growth with the younger demographic, emphasis needs to be made on attracting younger new members/owners to the industry and Association. This includes assistance in promoting career opportunities and advancement for aspiring individuals wishing to be a part of the horse racing community.

Due to this segment being social media savvy and technologically inclined, the Association needs to focus on convenience and ease of communicating to this demographic while providing business transactions and essential horse racing information online.

COMPETITION

With a shrinking industry the competition becomes increasingly crowded with all businesses vying for a lesser slice of the pie in advertising revenue, sponsorship opportunities, joint partnerships, and market share.

This is believed to be a constant trend that will require SC to ensure and maintain competitively priced fees and services while exploring all opportunities to create efficiencies and work with stakeholders in creating value add services for membership.

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The Board of Directors conducted an internal review of the Association's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and provided the following:

STRENGTHS

Communication from the Association has been a definite strength with increased readership on the website and the publication of the monthly TROT magazine. In addition, more creative ways to communicate to the members via surveys, emails, webinars, social media, and other forms of digital communications have further strengthened overall member engagement.

Housing and storing the millions of lines of data pertaining to the breed and performance was also noted as a strength, as is the strength of the Association's financials and the Standardbred Canada team in all departments including Member Services, Member & Stakeholder Relations, Racing Services, Communications, Finance, and Information Technology.

WEAKNESSES

The Board believes that SC can improve on developing a more effective and impactful relationship with government and its stakeholders.

The expansion and advancement of internet technology has also been noted as an area that Standardbred Canada needs to grow in as the Association is lagging in developing programs and services conducive to the expectation of the members (e.g., online entries, transactions, membership, transfers, etc.).

Another weakness is the declining membership that the Association has experienced due to decreasing participants in the horse racing industry. A more creative focus on growing membership and ownership should be an immediate priority.

The Association is also challenged by an ever increasing need to execute on the organization's succession plan for all departments to

ensure that the current brain trust that the Association has is not depleted due to an exodus of key individuals in the near future.

Data analytics has also been identified as a weakness of the Association due to the volume of data lines and deciphering how the data collected can be used for making business decisions easier for members and the industry.

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OPPORTUNITIES

SC can grow the member base by creating a category for racing fans to keep them invested in the sport and the Association. This includes developing programs and events to attract new members, focusing on the younger demographic, and further promotion of TrackIT and the website.

There is an understanding that additional features may be considered for SC, including playing a bigger role in stake administration, online auctions, digitization, and online services.

THREATS

Technology is moving faster than the needs of membership and the Association. The Association could experience a decline in revenue due to the lack of growth in membership. Other competitors and organizations are better

positioned to invest in technology and deliver more quickly to market. Horse and welfare issues continue to surface in the horse racing community and garner the attention of the public and government.



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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: COMMUNICATIONS



STRATEGIC GOAL

Design and provide effective communication platforms focused on creating interest, awareness, and support for the standardbred industry. Communication tools are to be developed to promote and support the horse, membership, racing participants and racing fans, both old and new.



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The industry relies on current and up to date information in a variety of formats and platforms.

Whether through the website, the monthly magazine or social media, Standardbred Canada needs to remain a leader of news and information relating to our industry, sport, and membership.

The website needs to be a one stop shop for members that features online business transactions, industry news, race events and results, and represents the pulse of the industry on a day-to-day and year-to-year basis.

TROT magazine needs to evolve to address ongoing printing and production costs of publishing a monthly four colour glossy magazine and remain in step with today's youth to understand how they want to receive and obtain relevant news about harness racing.

In the past few years, SC has developed a social media business plan that provides a blueprint for a social media strategy that supports a variety of various social media apps and platforms currently established and become flexible to adapt to an ever-changing media landscape.

The Association is anxious to launch a refresh of the existing website that will drive audience with features and services that are important to the younger demographic and make it more user friendly for membership overall.



FUTURE VISION

Standardbred Canada remains the national information hub for racing results, industry and standardbred news by adopting and adapting to media trends with an easy-to-use website that navigates and interfaces with smartphones and incorporates technology to make it easier for SC members to get the information they want in a variety of multimedia formats.

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: DATA MANAGEMENT



STRATEGIC GOAL

Through data governance, Standardbred Canada will develop and implement a data management strategy that will focus on capitalizing on existing and new technologies to better serve the needs of our members, industry & Association with online services and new initiatives.



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Standardbred Canada has an extensive and comprehensive database that houses millions of lines of equine identification, traceability data, ownership, racing and breeding information. The organization has an Information Technology team, and houses its own servers on site, with backup off site to ensure security and privacy. The current database exchanges information daily with the United States Trotting Association (USTA) which is the United States based registry for standardbred horses.

In 2011, Standardbred Canada began a multi-year, multi-million dollar project called Gaitway to modernize the database and computer system. The launch of Gaitway in 2020 was the culmination

of many years of work designed to create a state-of-the-art system to house identification, traceability, ownership, racing and breeding information for hundreds of thousands of standardbred horses, individuals and farms in the industry.

Over the past two years, the move from freeze branding to microchipping has been done methodically and carefully. The Standardbred Canada Gaitway system has been modified completely over that time to allow for the changes. By January 1, 2022, all standardbred racehorses in Canada will be required to have a microchip to participate in racing activities.

In conjunction with a software program, a microchip inserted into every Canadian horse can provide the ability to track the health and movement of equines, creating a robust database effectively and efficiently that removes inconsistencies and improves the accuracy of information regarding the Canadian equine herd throughout their life expectancy.

Standardbred Canada has spent many years, and significant funds to develop, build and modernize the way in which racehorses in Canada are registered and identified and will be looking to integrate the information into a traceability and identification program to assist in promoting the health and welfare of the standardbred breed.

With the voluminous amounts of data that SC has stored, the Association has

been working with stakeholders during the past two years to create a data governance policy that will assist the Association with a data management strategy that will benefit the industry and the membership.



FUTURE VISION

With the collection and storage of standardbred horse information and racing data, SC will develop products and services for stakeholders that will include business data information to assist in current and future business decisions involving the health and welfare of the horse, racing statistics, and promotion opportunities that will improve the end-product for the racing participant and fan.

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STRATEGIC GOAL

To be fiscally responsible for membership, employees and the Board, by ensuring that we have a sustainable business model operating under a responsible governance structure that will yield realistic expectations and projections to ensure the viability of Standardbred Canada for the industry.



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Over the past several years, the industry has been retracting with SC membership aging and declining while new membership flattens.

The pandemic in 2020 and 2021 has raised an acute awareness of the negative trending that the industry has been experiencing and underlines the importance of providing a financial sustainable Association for the membership and the sport.

In the past few years, efforts to this end have included an austerity program focusing on operational processes to become even more efficient and effective. SC has restructured the Association to ensure that the areas of development and innovation are constantly being reviewed which has led to an enhanced TrackIT model, a Field Services restructure, the creation of new membership channels, investing and capitalizing on current assets, the development and future deployment of an online auction service, investment in human resources for future leadership and succession planning opportunities and building new products to assist in the promotion of the sport.

While the financial viability of the Association remains extremely healthy, the Association is vulnerable in its overall vitality due to a successful horse racing program in Canada. The Association needs to do its part and work smarter, not harder, to create a much-needed boost for the industry.



FUTURE VISION

To maintain a healthy financial statement so that the Association can invest in the industry to provide the services membership requires and expects.

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STRATEGIC GOAL

Create a value experience culture for staff and within the Association's programs and services that enhances customer membership satisfaction.



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

With technology moving at breakneck speed, SC has had to do some incredible catch up due to the commitment that was made to the overhaul of the infrastructure of the Gaitway system. Completing the Gaitway project in 2020 has opened the door to begin introducing many other services for membership including the Member Value Program (MVP) which offers discounts to SC members. Online services to include items such as online entries, new membership enrollment, expansion of eShop services, microchip readers/scanners and its related app.

Our members are becoming more adept with shopping and doing business online and SC is preparing to move all services to the internet platform which includes single sign on for members to do all transactions

with one login/one password. SC is also creating direct deposit for owners, trainers and drivers, and have expanded eShop services so that eventually all transactions can and will be done online.

The objective is to provide a more effective method for members to do business with SC and to appeal to and meet the needs of a younger demographic who think, act and expect differently than the way SC has provided services in the past.

This also includes different methods for SC to market to new members by creating different experiences and classifications of membership for both growth and future opportunity.



FUTURE VISION

Imagine, if you will, visiting the SC website via your desktop, laptop, iPad or smartphone and logging in, entering your password and all the services and your account information are at your fingertips so that you may choose a la carte what you want, when you want it and from wherever you are.

For some industries this is the norm. For the horse racing industry, it appears to

be, for now, a long shot – however SC has been slowly and carefully moving in this direction to encourage and appeal to a new and younger member while not disenfranchising the loyal and dedicated horse person. Change is never easy, but it is a constant, especially in this high-tech world that we live in.

Standardbred Canada is committed to becoming a technologically advanced breed registry incorporating the latest technical advancements while not leaving any member behind.

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STRATEGIC GOAL

To represent Standardbred Canada membership at industry meetings and events and champion improvements for participating members by facilitating and articulating their concerns, issues, goals and needs of the membership to the industry and various stakeholders.



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

During the past several years, Standardbred Canada has been focusing on re-establishing our relationships with all stakeholders including regulators, provincial, national, and international horse associations and bodies, racetracks, educational institutions, government and business partners and other racing breed registries.

This has resulted in improved relations and has allowed SC the opportunity to facilitate discussions on important issues for the industry including rules

of racing, national video conferences and webinars, resource assistance for associations and the development of a Government Relations Committee and plan.



FUTURE VISION

For Standardbred Canada to meet its vision of being an essential support to the standardbred horse industry, it is imperative that any goodwill that has been established over the past several years carries forward into a meaningful and open dialogue with government to communicate the importance of the industry in each province and across the country to government leaders. This includes developing an economic report card for government officials to reference in assisting any decision that could impact positively or negatively on the industry.

Maintaining a positive working relationship with all related stakeholders and facilitating meaningful discussion regarding the issues of the day and working together as one team in all standardbred disciplines will assist in creating one voice and one message for our membership, horse, sport, and industry.

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Thank you for taking the time to review the 2022-2026 Standardbred Canada Strategic Plan.

Like any plan, the Association needs to remain flexible and ready to adjust according to whatever circumstances the industry is faced with. The pandemic is a classic example of how important it is to shift priorities on the fly when the unknown becomes known and may drive a considerable wedge between normal business procedures and abnormal conditions.

This five-year plan will only work through detailed annual plans of what tactics Standardbred Canada will take on each year to attain the results and expectations of the Board and the membership.

At Standardbred Canada we are only as strong as our weakest link. We are excited to work with the Board, the employees, the members, and stakeholders to achieve the positive and desired results that have been outlined above.

Here's to good health, safe racing, and happy horses.

At the end of the day...

"It's about the HORSE of course"

Dan Gall
President and CEO

Bill McLinchey
Chair of the Board





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