



**Presentation “Why is this thing significant?”
Heritage Rail Alliance Conference, September 2019, Squamish BC**

Significance Framework for Rail Transport Vehicles

Core Values

- Technology and Construction Values
- Aesthetic Values
- Historical Association Values
- Historical Impact Values
- Contemporary Social Values
- Information or Research Values

Comparative Values

- Rarity & Representativeness
- Provenance
- Integrity

Things to think about in your institution’s approach to significance:

- **Systematic vs. Unsystematic?**
 - *Systematic =*
 - *clear purpose;*
 - *clear and consistent written criteria, rigor, factual bases;*
 - *consistent and repeatable practices;*
 - *significance permeates all collections practices*
- **Deductive vs. Inductive?**
 - *Deductive - starts with the big ideas of the story and identifies what matters;*
 - *Inductive - focuses on lots of individual characteristics*

Why “do” Significance?

- Better sustainability and public value
- Better collections
- Better presentations (i.e. exhibits, programming, interpretation)
- Better institutional profile and participation
- Better revenues and stakeholder support
- Better control of collections cost and resource use

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Selected Reading

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