



**Request for Proposals  
East Broad Top Railroad - Master Plan  
May 24, 2021**

Introduction

The EBT Foundation, Inc., acquired the East Broad Top Railroad — a National Historic Landmark — in 2020 with the intention of reopening it as a steam railroad operating with original East Broad Top equipment. This is a historic preservation project on a large scale: The 33-mile railroad dates to 1872, and the circa-1910 shop complex in Rockhill Furnace is among the best-preserved industrial-history sites in the U.S. thanks to the stewardship of the Kovalchick family from 1956 to 2020 and the support of the Friends of the East Broad Top. The foundation will create a master plan for the railroad's future, and also begin marketing the railroad professionally in collaboration with other attractions in the area — Raystown Lake, the Horseshoe Curve, the Railroaders Memorial Museum, and more.

Project Overview

The EBT Foundation acquired the railroad and moved quickly to stabilize historic buildings and repair track and cars that were used in a four-mile tourist operation from 1960 to 2011. The foundation is eager to bring in experienced preservation architects and planners to help us strategize for the years ahead. We need to consider how best to use the facilities we have, how to interpret our history most effectively for visitors, what new facilities we may need, and how the railroad and the Rockhill Trolley Museum can most successfully work together to not only interpret but market Rockhill Furnace and Orbisonia as a destination for tourism. We also need to look at communities the railroad could be fortunate enough to return to, such as Shirleysburg, Three Springs, and Saltillo, and consider how we could help them benefit by the EBT's return.

Project Scope

This master plan will update and build on the National Park Service's extensive 1990 "Study of Alternatives." Engagement with the Master Plan Steering Committee is vital to fully understand the vision for the railroad and surrounding communities/region. Among the current challenges that a master plan will help the railroad with:

- What kind of facilities should replace the current, worn-out structures at Colgate Grove? Will simple shelters suffice, or would more elaborate buildings offer a wider range of event possibilities that would pay back their construction costs within a reasonable amount of time.
- What recreational offerings can the 23-acre Colgate Grove parcel accommodate?
- How can the railroad best interpret the machine shops for visitors who have no familiarity with American industrial history? The EBT's are among the best-preserved early-20th-century shops anywhere, but tours have been inconsistent in recent years and unlike railways there are few peer organizations to serve as points of reference.

- How can the EBT and its neighbor, the Rockhill Trolley Museum, partner to offer visitors a compelling experience that includes a steam-train excursion, a trolley ride, and a visit to the machine shops? The trolley museum's current facilities encroach on the railroad's historic viewshed, but the museum's offerings make it a perfect companion operation to the railroad.
- Can a walking tour of the Rockhill Furnace ruins be developed, including the extensive ruins of the beehive coke ovens?
- What might be good uses for the Rockhill Elementary School, which is expected to become vacant after the school district builds a new central elementary school beside the high school?
- If the railroad reopens additional sections of track so that it again passes through lineside communities, how can we help those communities take advantage of whatever possibilities the expansion may offer them. Do they need help with planning, with economic development, with historic preservation? If the EBT were to reopen all the way to Robertsdale, how could the railroad cooperate with the Friends of the East Broad Top (which owns the station and the Old Post Office) and with the Coal Miners Museum to make Robertsdale an educational and historic attraction? Similarly, if the railroad were to reopen the Midvalley Branch to the former location of Joller, how could that site be developed to create an appealing destination?

In addition to helping answer these questions, the master-planning process will engage community members in ways that could make them good resources for future planning discussions. And the finished document will be invaluable as the EBT Foundation seeks donations and grants to carry out its mission to preserve, Interpret and market the East Broad Top Railroad corridor.

#### Timeline

RFP Issued	May 28, 2021
Proposals Due	June 15, 2021
Consultant Selected	June 30, 2021
Kick Off Meeting	July 1, 2021
Draft Work Products Due	March 1, 2022
Final Work Products Due	May 15, 2022

#### Deliverables

- Master Plan report identifying and prioritizing site development and analysis of adjacent land use policy development to protect historic viewshed.
- Summary of potential local, regional, and statewide economic impact.
- Good quality photographs, maps and other visual representations.

#### Qualifications

The following criteria will be used to select consultant:

- Knowledge and familiarity with the East Broad Top Railroad and adjacent communities
- Knowledge of successful heritage-tourism practices and nonprofit organizational needs
- Methodology for research
- Ability to effectively structure a timeline for project development and associated funding opportunities
- Demonstrated ability to work with similar organizations
- Clear, concise, and specific description of project components
- Fee and schedule

Please address any questions in writing to Brad Esposito at [info@eastbroadtop.com](mailto:info@eastbroadtop.com) . Proposals are due on Tuesday, June 15 by 4:00 PM and should be submitted electronically.