

## Project Profile

### Location:

108 West Main Street  
West Newton, PA  
thetrailside.com

### County:

Westmoreland

### Description:

Business Development

### Total Project Cost:

\$483,000



**The Trailside**



### People:

When John Markle was a kid, his Dad owned a repair garage near the riverside. The garage was sold, and John went into education, but he kept an eye on that building. When the Great Allegheny Passage Trail to Washington, D.C., came through, he and his friend Rod Darby, a technologist, had an idea. If that building, and the town, could shift gears to focus on the trail's 700,000 and growing users, they'd be on the path to opportunity.

### Progress:

They explored bank financing, but then learned of The Progress Fund. They told the Progress Fund staff of their plan, and learned about its focus on nurturing tourism in small towns like West Newton, which lie along the newly completed Great Allegheny Passage. "It was a perfect fit," said Rod.

### Impact:

Thanks to \$282,000 in loans from The Progress Fund and \$158,000 from the state's First Industries Fund, The Trailside is being transformed. The garage space is a bicycle shop. A convenience store and restaurant has been re-oriented to serve hikers, bikers, and locals. Next up is an outdoor deck, new facade, and family style pub designed to embrace the history and tradition of the region. In The Progress Fund, Rod and John found not just a lender, but a traveling companion. "We're looking to them," John said, "for the long-term commitment."

The Progress Fund is an equal opportunity provider and employer.