

Location:

212 South 1st Street
Connellsville, PA

County:

Fayette

Description:

Real estate purchase loan

Total Project Cost:

\$168,000

**People:**

“Connellsville used to be coal and coke, and now it’s pedal and spoke,” Nate Morgan likes to say. The Youghiogheny River city became wealthy creating raw material for steelmaking, then declined with the metals industry. But its position on the Great Allegheny Passage is bringing back prosperity, and entrepreneurs including Nate and Kevin Leonard are seeding the trail with businesses. When Kevin learned that a large house along the trail was up for sale, the two teamed up with the aim of turning it into cyclist-focused lodging.

Progress:

Nate had previously borrowed from The Progress Fund, which this time loaned \$148,500.

Impact:

The sprawling house, once a convent, sits in one of Connellsville’s most historic sectors, thick with stately trees and close to vibrant St. Rita of Cascia church. It adds upwards of 20 beds to Connellsville’s burgeoning hospitality sector, which is anchored by Nate-owned Comfort Inn and Chateau Connellsville, another converted convent. Kevin’s Trippy Hippy Brewing and Nate’s The River’s Edge Restaurant add revelry and upscale dining. Connellsville is no longer just a quick stop along the trail. “People are going to make Connellsville the destination point,” says Kevin. “We’re getting ahead of that wave.”

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