



Creating Opportunities Along the Nation's Trails

425 West Pittsburgh Street | Greensburg, PA 15601 | (724) 216-9160 | www.trailtowns.org | www.progressfund.org

Economic Impact of Regional Trails

1. Great Allegheny Passage (from Pittsburgh to Cumberland, MD) – 150 Miles

- 6 studies/surveys completed between 1998-2015 by Trail Town Program® and partners
- Estimated Trail Usage: 940,000 (2013)
- Estimated Overall Direct Economic Impact: \$50 Million (2012)
- Average Day User Spends: \$18 per day (2014)
- Average Overnight Guest Spends: \$124 per night (2014)

Business Activity and Impact of the Great Allegheny Passage, 2007-2015

- 137 new trail-related businesses opened in the Trail Towns since 2007. There were 72 business closings during the same period, resulting in a net gain of 65 new businesses.
 - 270+ net new jobs were created
- 25 businesses expanded operations and 15 changed hands during this period.
- Estimated Sales Related to Trail Traffic:
 - 2008: 25%, 2012: 30%, 2013: 34%, 2014: 40%

During this period, The Progress Fund provided loans to 33 unique Trail Town related businesses along the GAP. This includes financing to:

- 12% of the new businesses
- 36% of the expansions and
- 20% of those that changed ownership

In total, \$8 million in loans were provided to these businesses which leveraged an additional \$6 million in private investment.

2. Erie to Pittsburgh Trail (from Titusville to Parker) – 62 Miles

- Completed by the Rails to Trails Conservancy (2013)
- Estimated Trail Usage: 159,000
- Overall Economic Impact: \$7.48 Million
- Average Day User Spends: \$21 per day
- Average Overnight Guest Spends: \$80 per night

Business Impact of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, 2014 Sample Survey

- 61% of businesses plan to expand in 2015, with 70% saying it was related to the trail
- Estimated Sales Related to Trail Traffic:
 - 2013: 10%, 2014: 19%

3. Ghost Town Trail, part of the Trans-Allegheny Trails (from Blacklick to Ebensburg) – 36 Miles

- Completed by the Rails to Trails Conservancy (2009)
- Estimated Trail Usage: 76,000
- Overall Economic Impact: \$1.7 Million
- Average Day User Spends: \$13 per day
- Average Overnight Guest Spends: \$78 per night

Trans-Allegheny Trails/Main Line Canal Sample Survey

- 61% of respondents found out about the trail through word of mouth
- 80% of those surveyed said if nearby trails were connected they would consider a long or multiple day trip
- 67.5% of respondents were looking for restaurants/cafés
- On average, each person spent about \$10.22/day mostly on meals, snacks, or beverages

Since expanding beyond the Great Allegheny Passage in 2014, three additional loans were provided to new Trail Town related businesses across the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition region. These loans total \$392,000 and leveraged an additional \$223,000 in private investment. Together, all 35 Trail Town related businesses are still in operation.

General Trail User Survey – Completed July – October 2015

- 55.5% of respondents were between the ages of 46 – 65
- 33.8% of respondents used trails more than once a week
- The most preferred lodging accommodation was camping at 46.8% followed by hotel at 37.3% and Bed and Breakfasts at 36.8%.
- The top services and amenities were Restaurants/Cafés at 81.3% followed by Public Restrooms/Water at 80.2%.
- 32.5% of respondents selected they would be willing to pay 6 – 10% more for a product that was environmentally or sustainably made.
- 76.6% of respondents were more likely to patron a business that has bike racks/bike storage
- For food options 65% were looking for local/regional favorites and 57.5% were looking for locally grown or raised
- 84.2% of respondents typically found out about business or attractions through internet and social media

For complete economic impact reports and related studies visit:

www.trailtowns.org/services/economic-research/

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