

Transforming Cleveland's Historic Scranton Corridor with Gigabit Broadband

The Tappan, a new multifamily development in the Cleveland, Ohio, historic Tremont neighborhood, draws new residents with instant-on gigabit broadband from Snip Internet. **BROADBAND COMMUNITIES** thanks Robin Doerschuk, vice president and general manager of Snip Internet, and Josh Rosen, co-founder of Sustainable Community Associates, for helping develop this profile.

By Sean Buckley / *Broadband Communities*

Imagine waking up in your chic, modern apartment in a hip neighborhood, maybe watching a few funny late-night clips or cat videos on your phone using the 1 Gbps broadband while you lounge in bed, then wandering down to the lobby to the artisan, on-site bakery for a delicious espresso and a freshly baked cardamom bun. Sounds like a dream, right? For residents of The Tappan, it's a reality.

Located in Cleveland's Tremont neighborhood, The Tappan is a \$22 million, new construction, multifamily development with 95 apartments. A key feature is Leavened, a 2,000 square foot artisan bakery on the ground floor that has become a neighborhood destination.

The Tappan was built by Sustainable Community Associates (SCA), a community development firm focused on invigorating main streets and revitalizing urban areas in socially responsible, sustainable ways. The Tappan was one of the first housing projects in the Midwest to use the Opportunity Zone program, leveraging funds from partner PNC Bank to create affordable housing units in a transitional neighborhood.

SCA says The Tappan is part of its commitment to transform Cleveland's historic Scranton Corridor, through which it looks to fill in the "missing teeth of the corridor" and add to the streetscape and neighborhood walkability.

Josh Rosen, co-founder of SCA, says the building has been a draw for low-income residents looking for affordable housing. "The Tappan has 95 apartments, and 65 percent are held for folks making less than 120 percent of the area median income, which is about \$52,000 or less," he says. "It's truly a fixed-income community."

A REVITALIZED COMMUNITY

Tremont is notable for being one of Cleveland's oldest neighborhoods. Traditionally, it was home to several immigrant groups, including Germans, Greeks and East Slavs. Like other large cities, Cleveland lost manufacturing jobs, particularly in the city's steel industry. This had two effects: it culminated in the early 1980s recession and a downturn in Tremont's population. At the 2000 census, the area had fewer than 9,000 residents.



The Tappan has 95 apartments, including many that are designated affordable housing units. A big draw of the building is an on-site artisan bakery, Leavened.

But beginning in the early 2000s and accelerating in the 2010s, Tremont has been undergoing a revitalization. The neighborhood's proximity to downtown and affordable housing led to an influx of new residents, including a mix of young professionals, empty nesters, hipsters and immigrants attracted to the neighborhood's amenities, historical housing and new housing.

Rosen says that the Scranton Corridor has transitioned from a commercial route to a residential, mixed-use building community. For instance, the Wagner Awning Building, built in 1895, served as a sewing factory, manufacturing everything from tents for American soldiers during the Vietnam War to awnings for Cleveland's most significant buildings. In 2014, the company relocated to a more modern facility. SCA purchased the building and turned it into a housing development with 59 units.

SCA's purchase of the Wagner Awning Building included land across the street, where the development company decided to build The Tappan.

"Since we had all this property across the street that was open, it made sense to put buildings on both sides of

the road," Rosen says. "The impetus was to do new construction design that didn't mimic the look of the Wagner Awning Building but paid somewhat of an homage to an industrial past."

Like the Wagner Awning Building housing transformation, SCA wanted to ensure The Tappan paid tribute to the community's commercial roots.

MAINTAINING A LOCAL FEEL

When SCA considered service providers for its Cleveland properties, it wanted one that already had a presence in the community. The developer found that unlike a national telco or cable operator, a local player such as Snip Internet could be more responsive to residents' needs and offer better service support.

"So many of our residents – even before COVID-19 – are freelancers and people who work from home and depend on high-speed internet," Rosen says. "When we heard about Snip Internet, we decided it was a natural match for us given the service it provides and the fact that it's a local business."

Snip Internet now successfully provides internet at SCA's existing properties, including The Tappan and the Wagner Awning Building. SCA currently is partnering with Snip on other new projects in Cleveland, including a mix of new construction and older properties being rehabilitated into multifamily dwellings.

"As long as Snip Internet is willing to work with us, we consider it a

PROPERTY OF THE MONTH HIGHLIGHTS ~ The Tappan ~

- 95 apartments, 65 percent affordable housing
- 2,000 square foot artisan bakery
- 100 Mbps or 1 Gbps broadband
- Instant-on broadband
- Common-area wireless



When residents move into The Tappan or any SCA properties, they can access internet instantly, without waiting for installation.

great partnership,” Rosen says. “We are constructing our fourth and fifth properties in Cleveland, and Snip will be the internet provider on all of them.”

INSTANTLY AVAILABLE INTERNET

In addition to offering disruptive, high-speed service, Snip Internet essentially serves as a guide and a subcontractor, ensuring that developers such as SCA have service ready.

“When residents move into one of our properties, they can get internet access right away,” Rosen says. “It’s a way of easing their stress with moving, and it makes it easier for property owners to manage.”

Robin Doerschuk, vice president and general manager for Snip Internet, agrees and adds that because SCA pre-leases its units far in advance, it has a ready group of subscribers to take its service.

Snip provides all necessary router/modem equipment with local service, support and free setup. “We have all of our customer premises equipment (CPE) in all apartments,” Doerschuk says. “As soon as residents move in, we can activate internet remotely so it’s ready on day one and no one has to come into the unit.”

Snip Internet provides service in Cleveland, Detroit and Milwaukee, and takes pride in its commitment to never throttle or cap a subscriber’s data. The ISP, which focuses on multifamily housing, offers two main symmetrical internet services tiers: Fast (100 Mbps) for \$50 and Faster (1 Gbps) for \$75 a month.

“If you look at our slogans, we make it as simple as possible,” Doerschuk says. “We want to make sure if you’re a gamer or a streamer, or you’re doing Zoom calls, you have symmetrical speeds, there are no hidden costs, and you can use [the internet] immediately.”

SCA and Snip hope residents are impressed with the speed and customer service Snip offers. “So many people who move into these apartments may not have heard of Snip because they are coming from other markets we’re not in yet, but they are always saying we are the easiest setup and the best option they had the opportunity to work with,” Doerschuk says.

VITAL STATISTICS

Property Description: The Tappan is a mixed-use housing development by Sustainable Community Associates (SCA), a community development

firm focused on invigorating main streets and revitalizing urban areas in socially responsible, sustainable ways. The property, built in 2019, has 95 apartments and 2,000 square feet of commercial space, including an artisan bakery. The project was one of the first in the Midwest to use the Opportunity Zone program, leveraging funds from partner PNC Bank to create affordable housing in a transitional neighborhood. The Tappan is part of SCA’s commitment to transform the historic Scranton Corridor.

Demographics: SCA says it’s proud to cater to a diverse demographic. It tries to be as inclusive as possible and make sure its housing communities are welcoming to all. Tenants include empty nesters, couples, medical workers and people relocating to Cleveland from other places. Sixty-five percent of The Tappan units are dedicated affordable housing for low-income people.

Greenfield or retrofit? Greenfield

Number of units: 95 units

Style: Mid-rise

Time to deploy: Approximately 12 months

Date services started being delivered: Snip Internet started providing services in June 2020.

LESSONS LEARNED

What was the biggest challenge?

Convincing customers that Snip Internet, a company they may not have heard of, offers internet with the best speed options and customer service.

What was the most significant success?

Ironically, the most significant success was the same as the biggest challenge. Given the quality of speed and customer service, convincing customers that Snip Internet is the best option has been very successful and has not required a heavy lift.

What feedback does the leasing/sales office get from residents? What has the experience taught them about marketing, installing or supporting these services? All feedback SCA receives is positive. Residents especially appreciate that Snip sets up internet before they even arrive, so it is one less move-in worry for them, and they have internet access on day one.

What should other owners consider before they get started on a similar deployment? Make sure that construction plans and the internet service provider's plans are well coordinated.

SERVICES

Services offered or planned on the network: Snip Internet provides two broadband speeds: 100 Mbps and a symmetrical 1 Gbps service. It also provides wireless service for common areas and the in-house gym.

Provider choice: Snip Internet

Do additional service providers operate separate broadband networks on the same property? No

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Is the point of contact for resident technical support the property manager, the service provider or a third party? The service provider, Snip Internet

BUSINESS

Which parts of the network are owned by the ISP, and which parts are owned by the property owner? The backbone network, residential access network, and customer premises equipment (CPE) are provided and owned by Snip Internet.

Is there a marketing agreement with the property owner? Yes.

If yes, is it exclusive or nonexclusive? Exclusive.

Does the agreement include an incentive such as a door fee or revenue share? Yes

How do the service provider and owner work together to market the services? SCA offers Snip Internet exclusivity, and Snip provides digital material for residents during the leasing process and move-in.

Is there a bulk-service agreement?

If so, what services are included?

Can residents upgrade from the bulk services? There's no bulk service agreement, but Snip Internet is the only internet provider for The Tappan. Residents can choose between Snip Internet's 100 Mbps or 1 Gbps offering.

TECHNOLOGY

Broadband architecture: Fiber from Snip's backbone is brought into the building's main distribution frame/intermediate distribution frame (MDF/IDF). Snip installed CAT 6A cabling from IDFs to each apartment unit.

Where is the fiber terminated? At the MDF/IDF using Cat 6A.

Methods for running cables between buildings: The developer provided risers/conduits.

Vendors/products:

- Calix 844E GigaCenters (subscriber CPE)
- Juniper (EX series Ethernet switches) ❖



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