



Multifamily Access: Riding the New Tech Investment Wave

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Electronic access control systems – that is, an electronic system that uses electronic keys such as keycards, fobs, or mobile devices to control access via gates or doorways – offer many benefits to multifamily communities. Access control improves the overall safety of the community, preventing theft and property damage, with electronic access control offering greater convenience for residents, efficiency for owners and operators, and enabling new use cases such as self-guided tours, keyless entry for maintenance workers, and advanced guest management functions.

This white paper examines key trends in access control adoption in the multifamily housing market. It leverages custom research data and insights from over 600 key decision makers at multifamily owners and operators as to how their companies approach access control, plans for future deployments, as well as intentions to meet resident demands for enhanced security and convenience.

Study Methodology

This white paper draws on the results of a 600 respondent survey of key decision makers with leading multifamily owners, operators, and management companies across the United States, representing a diverse mix of company sizes, building types, and geographies across the US market.

It investigates the state of access control adoption, companies' plans and timelines for future projects, and the key challenges and benefits associated with these deployments.

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Where We Are Now: The State of Electronic Access Control

The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed the multifamily housing industry, triggering a wave of investments into smart building systems and electronic access control. As a result, 70% of multifamily companies report that electronic access control is in place in at least one property that they own or manage. Of those with electronic access control, roughly half report that their newest property has such a system in place. This points to the high priority modern multifamily properties place on these systems, as well as the need companies will increasingly face to retrofit older properties and compete against new construction.

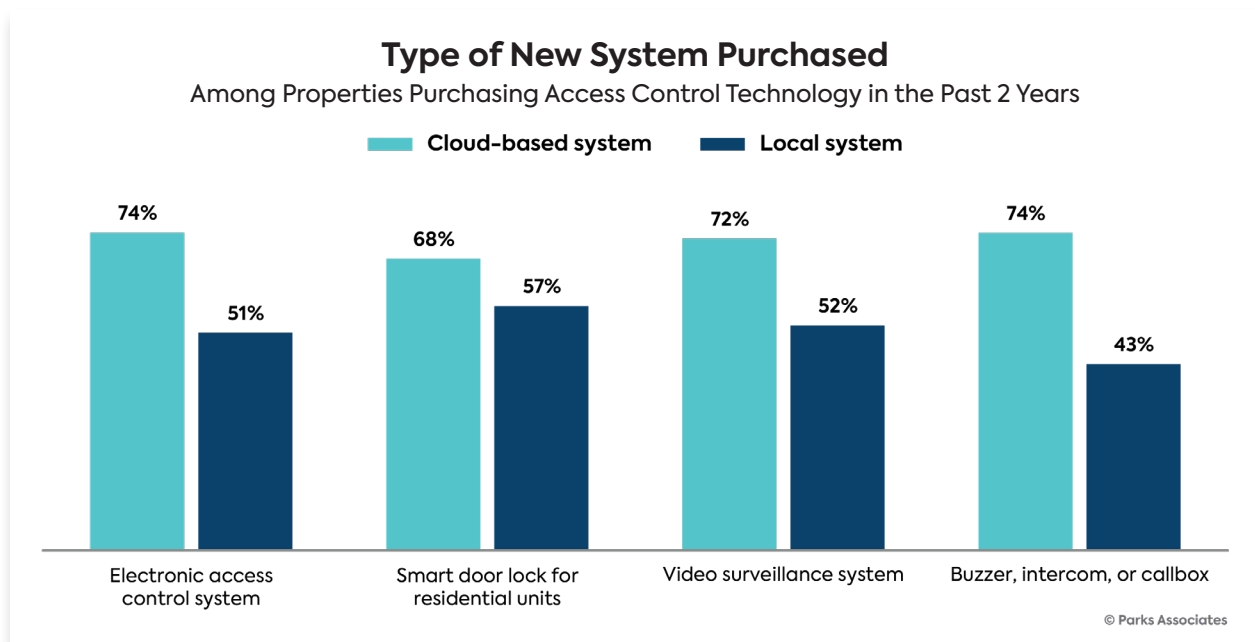
Adoption of both electronic access control systems and smart door locks is high.

- 70% of multifamily companies have an access control system on at least one property; 50% of those with systems report having one in their newest property
- 70% have smart door locks on at least one property
- 92% report having an intercom or callbox in at least one property

The landscape of access control is also changing. Companies that have adopted electronic access control technologies are moving away from local-only systems with on-site servers, and towards cloud-based solutions. This enables new use cases such as self-guided tours, app-based mobile access for residents and staff, and easy entry for delivery drivers and other authorized third parties, among others.

Cloud-based systems have officially overtaken local ones, with higher adoption across main access control system components.

The shift to the cloud also resolves the challenges local systems face – old and outdated servers that require regular maintenance and updates, the need for in-house expertise via dedicated IT or security teams, high maintenance costs with teams spending time and resources going to and from local sites, inefficiencies in managing user data and integrating with third-party systems, and less flexibility in scaling additional sites.



Companies have found success with their access control system rollouts, reporting high satisfaction from residents, efficiency gains for property staff, streamlined operations, reduced rates of crime and safety incidents, lower operating costs, as well as other benefits.

However, while adoption of access control and smart door locks is high, companies also face challenges managing and supporting these solutions. The use of multiple vendors for these systems is common, and each vendor may require a separate web portal or resident app, separate data storage, and different protocols and may not be integrated with other building components. This leads to residents and staff members needing to use multiple apps and interfaces to control devices and onboard/offboard residents. This, of course, results in frustrations on the part of residents and staff, lowering satisfaction and creating additional work and inefficiencies.

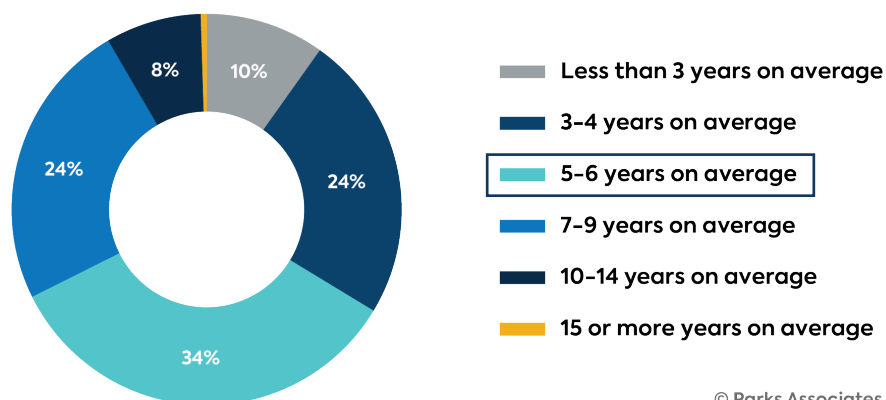
Companies have taken several steps to resolve these challenges, including shifting to modern cloud-based solutions, cutting down on the number of partners by incorporating more components from one system, and/or integrating with other solutions.



Where We're Headed: Increasing Efficiency and Meeting Resident Demands

Demand is building for a new round of access control system upgrades and replacements, with 76% of companies that currently have electronic access control systems reporting that they plan to upgrade, replace, or deploy a new system in the next two years. The industry as a whole is preparing for a major wave of activity, as the systems that were deployed during the 2019-2021 COVID-19 pandemic reach the 5-6 year mark and increasingly become due for replacements and upgrades.

Access Control System Replacement Cycle



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The investments made during the COVID-19 pandemic are paying off. In the next two years, over three-fourths of key decision makers at MDUs report that they plan on upgrading or replacing electronic access control solutions.

The new solutions being installed today are largely cloud-based and integrated with property management systems and other smart building components. They include in-demand features and functionality such as video intercoms, mobile credentials, guest management capabilities, parking management, and enable new capabilities such as self-guided tours.

87% of key decision makers report that they are interested in video intercoms.

Cloud-based technologies require connectivity to function and many companies turn to Wi-Fi to connect them to the cloud. However, companies face challenges and expenses related to wiring & signal penetration & propagation, especially with regards to retrofits. New advancements, including Wi-Fi bridges, HaLow technology, and cellular modules, offer to significantly cut these costs.

Multifamily properties report different priorities depending on where they are in their technology journeys. Companies that have made the move to mobile credentials and app support are especially interested in features such as video calling from intercoms and enhanced guest management capabilities. Companies without mobile credentials look for Wi-Fi capabilities and integration with smart door locks.

When Evaluating Access Control Solutions, What Features or Functions Does Your Company Look For?

Companies With Mobile Access via Resident App

- 1 Video calling
- 2 Guest management/visitor passes
- 3 Cloud based, works everywhere
- 4 Works over cellular
- 5 Parking management capabilities

Companies Without Mobile Access via Resident App

- 1 Works over Wi-Fi
- 2 Integrates with smart door locks on resident units
- 3 Guest management/visitor passes
- 4 Works over cellular
- 5 Mobile credentials keyless entry

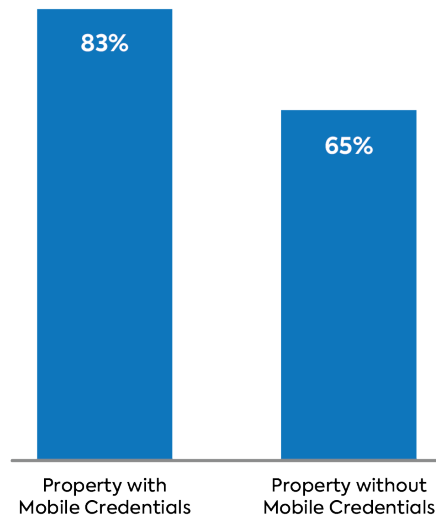
The movement towards these new systems – and the shortening of access control replacement cycles – is being driven by several key factors:

- **Efficiency gains:** Improving operational efficiency is the top driver for properties to deploy, upgrade, or replace access control systems. These efficiency gains help companies to resolve bottlenecks or do more with less staff, leading to considerable cost savings.
- **Resident demand:** Meeting resident demand, increasing resident satisfaction, and keeping up with neighboring properties are key for attracting and retaining residents. In a Q2 2024 study of MDU residents, Parks Associates found that residents on properties with access control systems that support mobile credentials reported a nearly 20pp increase in satisfaction with their property.
- **Enabling new capabilities:** Remote showings and self-guided tours both increase operational efficiencies while allowing prospective residents to visit properties at their own convenience, weeding out less interested prospects and improving close rates for leasing agents.
- **Addressing safety and security concerns:** Parks Associates data finds that 53% of MDU residents in US internet households are far more concerned about the physical security of their home than they were 5 years ago. Access control systems act to mitigate these concerns by preventing unauthorized individuals from entering the property.

- **Package management:** Companies are challenged with ever-increasing package, grocery, & food deliveries. Inadequate access mechanisms or storage oftentimes result in increased work for property staff, frustrations on the part of residents, or potential intrusion into the property by unauthorized individuals. Systems that allow authorized delivery drivers access avoid this pain point.
- **Aging and broken systems:** Systems with performance or reliability issues can force properties to upgrade or replace an access control system at an inconvenient time. It is preferable to schedule a replacement before systems degrade, to prevent any impacts to operations or to residents.
- **Rising costs of legacy infrastructure:** In many markets, the cost to operate older access control systems and intercoms continues to grow, driven especially by dramatic increases in the cost of legacy telephone service.

Satisfaction with Property

% Rating Satisfaction 5-7 on 7pt Scale



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Key Challenge

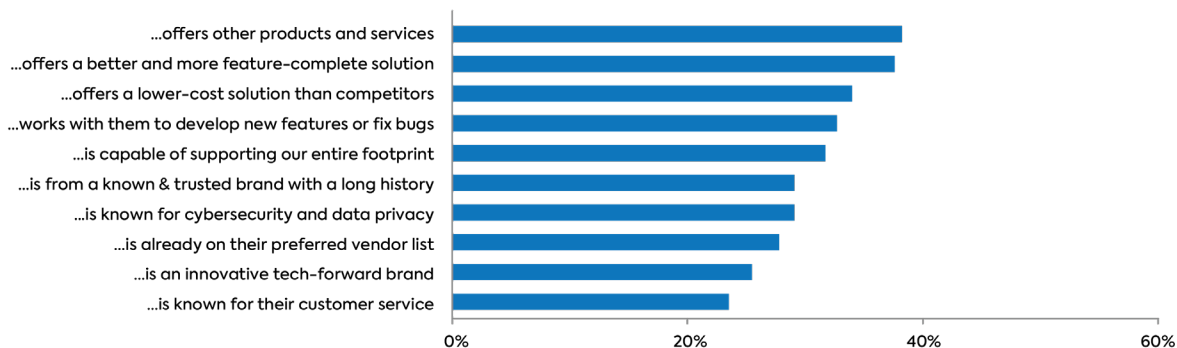
The price of plain old telephone service (POTS) is increasing by 4-10x in many markets, and POTS lines are even being retired and decommissioned altogether, as phone companies move to retire legacy copper wire systems. Shifting to Wi-Fi or cellular modules can save companies hundreds of thousands of dollars across their multifamily portfolio.



How We Get There: Focusing on What Matters Most

Key decision makers, capitalizing on the lessons learned during the last major wave of investment into access control solutions, are honing in on what matters most to them and their companies. This includes integration and simplicity from their partners, as well as feature-complete solutions that can get the job done. Key decision makers that are more familiar with the access control market and access control brands report different priorities than those who are less familiar, and larger companies report different priorities than smaller ones, reflecting the complexity of the market landscape.

Key decision makers at multifamily properties want a partner who:



Those who are more familiar with the access control market and access control brands – commonly larger companies – are keenly interested in feature-complete solutions, working with partners capable of supporting their entire footprints, and partners already on preferred vendor lists. Those who are less familiar – commonly smaller companies – seek partners that offer a complete suite of other products and services, taking away the burdens of integration as well as simplifying the process of vetting and validating new vendors. Smaller companies are more cost sensitive than larger ones, but nonetheless emphasize the convenience and simplicity of “one-hand-to-shake” above price.

Companies at different stages of their access control journeys likewise have different preferences when it comes to features and functions, with companies at an earlier stage of their journey looking for smart door lock integration and mobile credential support and companies that have already moved to mobile credentials looking carefully towards video intercoms and guest management features for their next round of upgrades.

With increasing operating efficiency a major business goal for multifamily properties, keeping these factors in mind is paramount when choosing a solution that can deliver and a partner that can do it right. Pent-up demand is signaling the next wave of investments into multifamily technologies, with access control at the forefront.

About Chamberlain Group



Chamberlain Group (CG) is a global leader in intelligent access and Blackstone portfolio company. Our innovative products, combined with intuitive software solutions, comprise a myQ ecosystem that delivers seamless, secure, access to people's homes, businesses, and communities. CG's recognizable brands, including [LiftMaster®](#) and [Chamberlain®](#), are found in 50+ million homes, and 11 million people rely on our myQ® app daily. Our patented vehicle-to-home connectivity solution, myQ Connected Garage, is available in millions of vehicles from the leading automakers.

About LiftMaster

LiftMaster is the number one brand of professionally installed residential garage door openers, as well as a leading manufacturer of commercial door operators, residential and commercial gate operators, smart video intercoms and related access control products. Driven by the access and security needs of the marketplace, LiftMaster's expansive line of state-of-the-art residential and commercial products are designed to fit any lifestyle or application, providing the latest technology and innovations in safety, security, and convenience. More information at [LiftMaster.com](#).

About Parks Associates



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Parks Associates, a woman-founded and certified business, is an internationally recognized market research and consulting company specializing in emerging consumer technology products and services. Founded in 1986, Parks Associates creates research capital for companies ranging from Fortune 500 to small start-ups through market reports, primary studies, consumer research, custom research, workshops, executive conferences, and annual service subscriptions.

The company's expertise includes new media, digital entertainment and gaming, home networks, internet and television services, digital health, mobile applications and services, consumer apps, advanced advertising, consumer electronics, energy management, and home control systems and security.

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Kristen Hanich heads Parks Associates' consumer electronics and mobility research, with expertise in other verticals including connected cars, mobile networking, healthcare, wellness, and independent living. She leads a mix of custom and syndicated research projects throughout the year, with a focus on major players and emerging trends. Kristen specializes in bridging the gap between data-driven and narrative approaches to understanding the consumer markets via a mix of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

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ATTRIBUTION

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RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

for Emerging Consumer Technologies

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Multifamily



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