



# Achieving Turnkey Connectivity: Elevating the Total Multifamily Experience

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# Achieving Turnkey Connectivity: Elevating the Total Multifamily Experience

As resident expectations evolve, multifamily property owners, operators, and developers are under increasing pressure to deliver connected, tech-forward living experiences. This whitepaper explores the impact of move-in ready connectivity and advanced smart technology on property operations and the resident experience. It highlights Parks Associates' research on multifamily residents, owners, operators, identifying top amenity preferences—including for security, convenience, and seamless internet access. With today's renters skewing older, more family-oriented, and often working remotely, robust digital infrastructure is no longer a luxury—it's a requirement.

This whitepaper examines how properties can enable turnkey property readiness and a seamless move-in ready experience for residents. It addresses the growing challenges from vendor fragmentation, and best practices for simplifying smart tech implementation. It further outlines strategies for integrating connectivity into new builds, emphasizing long-term scalability, ISP partnerships, and potential monetization opportunities. Retrofit opportunities are also discussed, showing how legacy buildings can meet modern demands.



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# Connectivity Laying the Foundation: A Guide for Owners and Operators

Across the United States and other markets, internet download speeds are increasing, and smart buildings are enabling operational transformation. Residents, staff, owners and operators, developers, and investors have increased expectations when it comes to technology availability and performance. Modern properties are efficient to run, convenient to live and work in, and offer many cost benefits and an excellent return on investment.

Reliable connectivity — combined with high internet speeds and low latency — is essential to creating the best experience for all stakeholders and ensuring the performance of multifamily assets.

## Why Build for Connectivity? Top Benefits for Owners and Operators.

Connectivity is critical for supporting a modern multifamily experience. It enables residents' connected lifestyles while also laying a foundation for smart technology deployments — both inside and outside of residential units.

Across the US, consumer-reported average download speeds have grown radically in just the past five years alone, with nearly one-quarter of US internet households now using a gigabit or faster service. Residents and prospective residents expect these speeds to be available to them, and digital services providers are designing their services with fast downlink and low latency in mind.

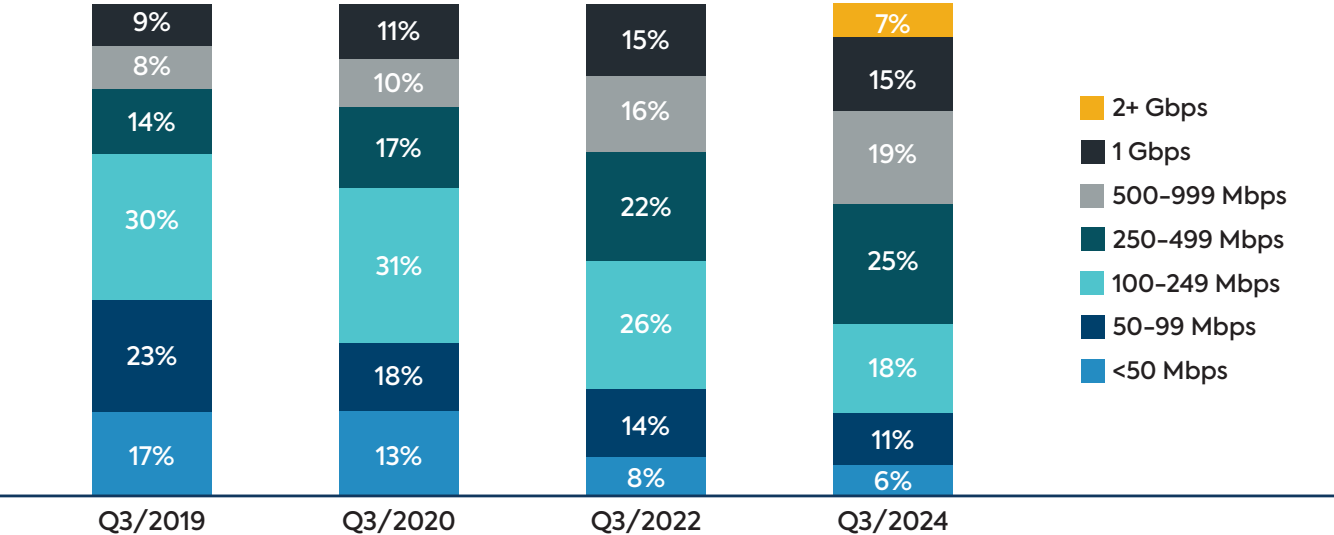


***“Nearly 40% of [Comcast] new connects [are] choosing gig-plus speeds, which is up about 10 [basis] points from the start of the year.”***

— Jason Armstrong, Comcast Chief Financial Officer, on Comcast's Q3 2025 earnings call



Download Speed of Home Internet Services



© Parks Associates

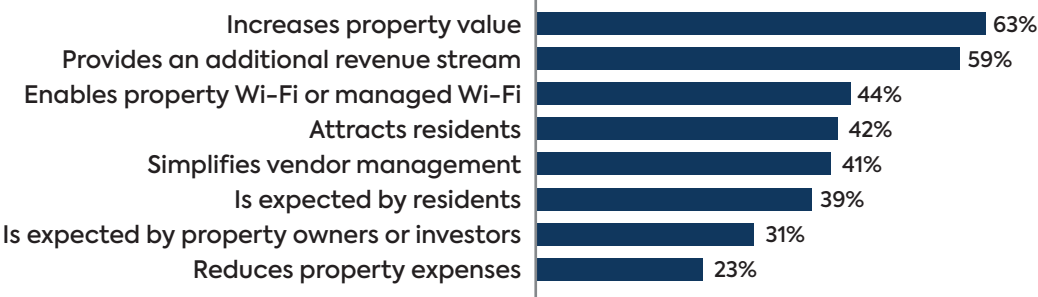
**Bulk internet and managed Wi-Fi are also increasingly making their way into new builds and even existing ones.** In Parks Associates’ 2024 study of multifamily owners and operators, over a third of companies reported that they offered bulk internet in at least one of their properties. Bulk internet is being used as an amenity for residents, offering high-speed always-on access available at move-in, and for prices below what a resident can get at retail.

Bulk internet and Wi-Fi allow properties to include these services as a part of the overall value to the resident. Residents who already have bulk internet (tested in Parks Associates’ surveys as “property-provided internet”) consider it the number one amenity they look for in their next home. Resident interest in bulk is driven both by receiving a lower cost service as well as a convenient onboarding experience.

- Residents who’ve experienced bulk internet are less likely to report that a choice of internet provider is important to them when choosing their next home than those currently on a retail plan.
- Those with bulk internet are interested in potentially bundling in TV and video streaming services, pointing to new opportunities for amenities and optional upsells.

Residents without prior bulk experience may be cautious about moving to properties with a limited choice of internet service providers but can be convinced by its low cost and convenience.

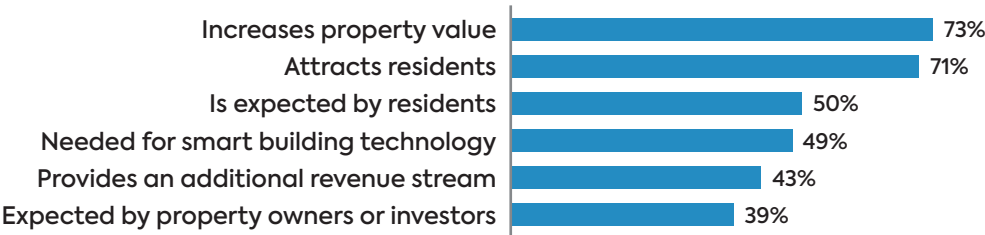
Drivers for Bulk Internet Deployments



© Parks Associates

Managed Wi-Fi is becoming increasingly popular as well, serving as a driver for bulk internet adoption, with owners adopting it for full property coverage. Parks Associates research finds that 60% of multifamily owning-or-operating companies have managed Wi-Fi in at least part of their footprint, with 13% reporting full penetration across their portfolios. Companies planning to offer managed Wi-Fi report that their primary drivers for doing so include increasing property value for developers and prospective sellers, as well as attracting new residents. Managed Wi-Fi services are commonly provided with a bulk contract to ensure there is sufficient capital for both the infrastructure investment and equipment in the property.

Drivers for Managed Wi-Fi Deployments among Multifamily Owners & Operators



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Properties benefit from bulk and managed Wi-Fi deployments both through enhanced connectivity options and a foundation that unlocks the value of smart building and IoT initiatives. Many owners and operators consider these a prerequisite for smart building solutions, enabling easier IoT deployments, smoother daily operations with fewer technical issues, and – for in-unit amenities – enabling devices to continue operating during the resident turnover process.



## Preparing Buildings for Connectivity

Preparing buildings for connectivity – whether in new construction or retrofits – requires careful planning and consideration. Decision makers must consider their goals, the costs involved, and form a plan of action. At present, many multifamily properties are upgrading to faster internet speeds, deploying Wi-Fi to different areas of the property, and evaluating the bulk opportunity.

### *Strategic Partnerships with ISPs and Tech Vendors*

When preparing a building for connectivity, builders – as well as owners and operators – should involve internet service providers (ISPs) and technology vendors during the earliest stages of planning. Early engagement makes it easier to design infrastructure and craft plans that support both current and future demands. It also allows for more detailed evaluation of the financial costs and opportunities involved, including various financing and partnership models.

Partner ISPs may be able to share or cover some or all of the cost of installing or upgrading networks, including trenching, conduit installation, and backbone cabling in exchange for access agreements or revenue sharing. Owners and operators should ensure that their partners can work with them on optimal payment terms, adapting to the unique needs of their unique properties. Additionally, co-marketing and long-term support agreements can help improve the resident onboarding experience and facilitate the high-quality internet service that today's resident demands.

Internet service providers are also additionally taking on the role of tech vendor and ecosystem and integration expert, acting to coordinate smart technology deployments while ensuring devices have optimum connectivity and coverage.

### *Avoiding Fragmentation*

As companies begin layering on additional tech solutions, fragmentation is becoming more and more of an issue. In Parks Associates 2024 study of multifamily owners and operators, respondents reported an average of 21 different proptech vendors alone across their portfolios – creating challenges when it comes to managing and integrating solutions.

Choosing individual solutions vendors can allow companies more control over their tech stacks but requires more coordination and integration effort. This approach works best for smaller companies that only have a handful of specific needs, or larger companies with robust operational technology (OT) departments dedicated to handling the technical lift required. In this scenario the owner or operator will also commonly need to coordinate their different partners and various stakeholders during the installation process and in the case of outages or other technical issues.

In contrast, one-hand-to-shake partnerships provide clear alignment in communications and planning, avoiding the challenge of coordinating multiple outside stakeholders. This approach improves out-of-the-box interoperability and reduces the need for custom integration. Builders, owners, and operators choosing this approach should look for partners that offer both one-hand-to-shake *and* best-of-breed solutions.

## Future-Ready: Planning for the Next 20 Years

To stay competitive and adaptable over the coming decades, connectivity should be approached with flexibility and forward-thinking. Owners, operators, and builders can prepare for changing technologies and resident expectations by focusing on the following priorities:

- Build for flexibility and scalability: design telecom closets, conduit paths, and access points so they can be easily expanded or reconfigured as technology evolves.
- Prepare for multi-gig speeds: we do not know what future demands will be placed on the networks designed today, but the rapid adoption of AI technologies will almost certainly increase bandwidth requirements. Properties must be built with a strong network backbone, using modern architecture to handle these emerging needs.
- Initiate smart building and grid-integrated systems: plan ahead for IoT devices, in-unit smart amenities, and building automations while enabling a robust connection to the electrical grid capable of supporting higher power draws and advanced building systems.
- Choose the right partners: consider providers with longevity and well-established records, who can help you plan for both short-term and long-term objectives.

It is far less expensive to retrofit technologies into existing properties when they are designed with flexibility in mind.

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*It's situational, [what's easier to retrofit.] Newer buildings you might have access to chassis that were left for the future. Actual new construction – 99.9% of the time they'll have microduct chassis, actual duct chassis, things for a fiber backbone. Post-war buildings, from the 1960s to 80s, those are [still easier to retrofit] than pre-war. [In pre-war buildings] you may have to sacrifice footage in the units, [rip up] the corridors.*

– VP of Design and Construction, Real Estate Design and Management Firm

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# Unpacking Retrofit Opportunities

With rents in many markets stagnant year-over-year, new construction at a multi-year lull, and the price of capital remaining historically high, owners and operators are evaluating new opportunities for improving their NOI and ROI. For many, retrofitting connectivity delivers.

## Opportunity One: Move-In Ready Internet

One area of opportunity for properties is deploying move-in ready internet, in partnership with an internet service provider. Move-in ready internet integrates resident internet activation and user onboarding directly into the leasing and move-in workflow, helping ensure that the resident can access their new home internet the moment they walk in the door – or as soon as otherwise possible.

Move-in ready internet can be implemented under bulk or retail internet deployment models and does not require bulk internet service. Additionally, routers or gateways installed within resident units and across the property can enable both fully managed Wi-Fi and managed solutions that solve many of the managed Wi-Fi use cases without requiring a full deployment.

*[Resident onboarding] is pretty automatic... People sign leases electronically. We make sure they understand the lease, the community rules, and walk them through the Wi-Fi. We process them in the system and it triggers something on the partner's side – the resident gets an email with their username and password.*

– VP of Operations, MDU Owner/Operator

## Upgrading Building Connectivity

Properties have an opportunity to upgrade existing connectivity to support faster speeds, lower latency, and more reliable internet service. Internet is a top amenity for residents and prospective residents, who are including the available internet service packages in their mental math when considering a new community.

Before investing in major upgrades, properties should conduct thorough connectivity audits to evaluate the current state of their infrastructure. This includes assessing wiring, conduit, and backhaul capacity to identify potential bottlenecks. Determining existing Wi-Fi coverage areas and identifying dead zones is also critical, especially if smart building initiatives are planned. Filling in these gaps ensures that residents have consistently high throughput and quality of experience (QoE) wherever they live or gather, from individual units to shared spaces.

## Reusing Existing Wiring

Properties oftentimes do not need to perform expensive and time-consuming re-wiring projects, saving money and reducing potential disruptions to residents and staff. Existing coaxial cable, Cat 5, Ethernet, and even powerline can oftentimes be reused to enable smart building applications. For existing properties wired with coaxial cable, DOCSIS upgrades can support gigabit or multi-gigabit speeds without needing to run fiber replacements.

Properties also do not need to run fiber all the way to the residential unit to gain some of the advantages of fiber – fiber to the node, or to the curb, will take the fiber network within 100–1,000 feet of the resident. With Full Duplex DOCSIS, a hybrid fiber/cable network will support symmetrical multigig speeds, unlocking the benefits of fast upload speeds – increasingly important for remote workers and others using AI.

## Smart Tech Considerations

Owners and operators evaluating retrofit opportunities must also factor in the potential benefits — and the requirements — of smart technology deployments, which are increasingly expected by both current and prospective residents. Technologies including smart thermostats, smart door locks, water leak detectors, smart security cameras with video analytics, and modern access control solutions are key enablers of operational transformation and modernization strategies.

Integrating proptech solutions during the retrofitting process can offer multiple potential benefits to operational efficiency, cost management, energy management, and elevations to resident experience, enabling properties to remain competitive in an increasingly connected market.



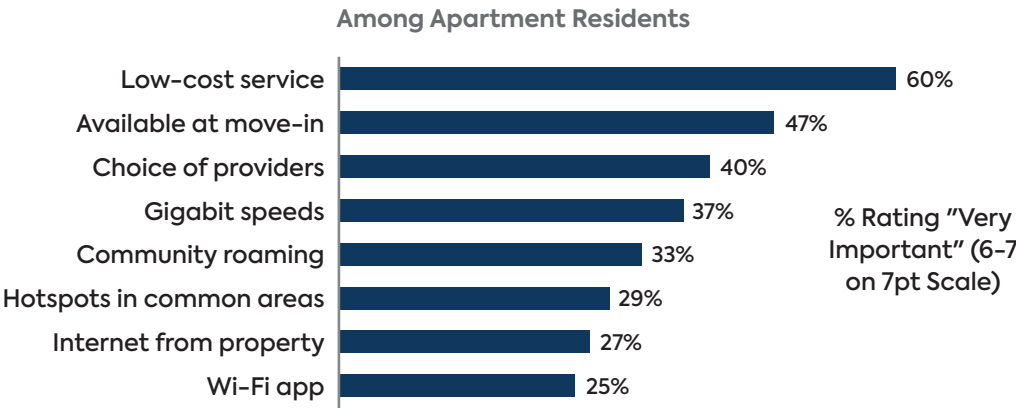


# The New Resident Experience

## Understanding Resident Expectations

Apartment residents have strong expectations when looking for a new home. In Parks Associates 2024 study of multifamily residents, nearly 50% of apartment residents rated internet available at move-in a top consideration when searching for a new home. Notably, those who already have experienced bulk internet are much more interested in it – with 45% considering internet directly available from their property or community “highly important” and some 65% considering internet available at move-in “highly important.”

### Importance of Connectivity Options When Searching for a New Home

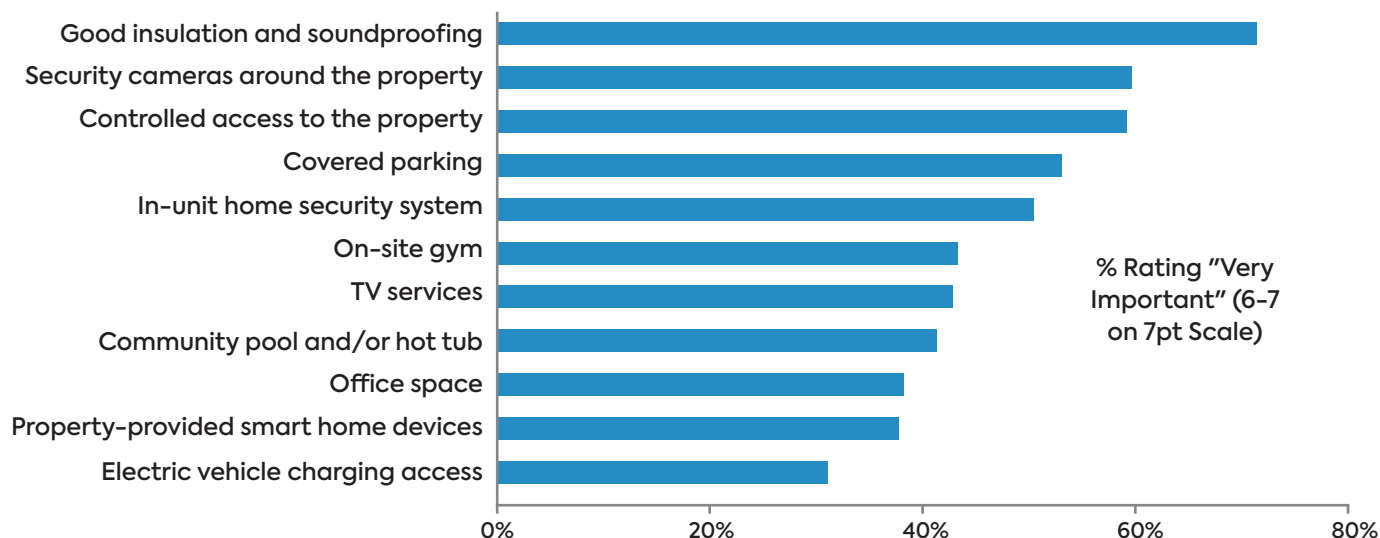


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In Parks Associates 2025 study of multifamily residents, those who are likely to move in the next six months – i.e., prospective residents – were asked to rate the importance of various amenities when choosing their next home. Security cameras and access control were two of the top three most desired amenities in multifamily residents’ next home, behind only good insulation and soundproofing, and above even covered parking. Modern solutions, such as AI-enabled smart cameras and app-controlled access systems, require robust property connectivity to operate and meet the needs and expectations of prospective residents.

## Importance of Tested Amenities

Among Those Likely to Move In Next 6 Months



© Parks Associates

## Understanding the Demographics of Today's Renters

While renters as a whole are younger than homeowners, the overall US population is aging. As of 2025, roughly half of apartment renters are over 45 years of age. Some 60% live in households with other people, commonly including a significant other and/or children or other family members. Roughly half own pets.

In short, renters are older than they once were, and household sizes are larger. One quarter are remote workers, and a similar number have children living with them. They need robust connectivity and amenities that support modern parenting.





### Demand for Day Zero Connectivity

Instant connectivity is now a baseline expectation for today's renters. When it comes to expectations for a future home, Parks Associates 2025 consumer research finds that 41% of apartment renters expect their internet service will be ready-to-go from the moment they move into a property. 36% expect that they will be able to roam seamlessly around their apartment community while still being connected to the same Wi-Fi network.

ISPs can streamline activation of resident internet service through integrations with property management systems or leasing and move-in workflows, making this connectivity available immediately. For property managers and owners, the impact on the property is significant: seamless connectivity ensures a far better move-in experience for the resident, leading to favorable perceptions of the property and a higher likelihood of recommending it to friends and family. Additionally, it reduces the move-in support burden on staff, streamlining operations from the very first day.

### Readying a Solid Foundation

To prepare for long-term success, properties must begin by meeting the demand for high-speed internet and bundled services. Residents and prospective residents are increasingly seeking gigabit-level services as well as bundles that may include managed Wi-Fi, smart community amenities, and in-unit devices.

Research from Parks Associates highlights the value of these amenities: smart, connected properties boast much higher Net Promoter Scores (NPS), with in-unit smart devices offering a 32-point lift to NPS compared to properties without such features. Bulk internet is similarly associated with a 26-point NPS boost to the property, though this depends on the competitiveness of local retail ISPs with regards to pricing and service quality.

With a solid foundation in place, owners and operators can move forward confidently with connected building strategies. These strategies deliver numerous operational benefits while increasing resident satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, data-driven property management models enabled by strong digital infrastructure unlock future opportunities for growth, positioning properties to adapt to evolving technologies and expectations.



# Turnkey Readiness

## The Challenge of Fragmentation

While technology offers many benefits, the number of solutions and the sheer velocity of their arrival has created an overwhelming ecosystem for many owners and operators. In Parks Associates 2024 study of MDU owners and operators, participants reported working with an average of 21.5 smart building partners alone. Electronic access control systems in particular were highly fragmented, with the average owner and operator reporting having between three to five vendors across their portfolios.

Fragmentation creates a variety of challenges for owners and operators, on-site staff, and for residents. Staff and residents are increasingly needing to juggle multiple apps and websites, each requiring a separate account and log-in. Training staff and residents becomes more challenging in such an environment, and on-site staff may not know who to call in the event an outage or incident occurs. In the event a provider exits the market – either by going out of business or being acquired, with the purchaser winding down operations – owners and operators may be left with hardware that relies on unsupported or nonfunctional software.

Fragmentation can lead to high costs, under-utilized technologies, and negative resident experiences due to inconsistency. Parks Associates consumer survey data finds that this is highly impactful on resident perception of the property – while smart technologies overall offer a powerful boost to resident NPS, if a resident is *dissatisfied* with the smart tech, NPS drops to an average of -39. By contrast those who are satisfied with their smart technologies have an average NPS of 21 – a 60-point difference.

In short, doing smart tech right is highly impactful to resident satisfaction – but doing smart tech wrong is worse than not having it at all. Limiting fragmentation and the number of vendors is a highly useful strategy for owners and operators wanting to ensure a quality smart tech experience for residents and staff.

## Understanding Best Practices for Multifamily Building Owners & Operators

To combat fragmentation, owners and operators need to employ best practices when executing on their technology roadmaps.

1

### Be strategic when selecting vendors and consolidate when possible

- Consolidate vendors down to a manageable set, capable of supporting you across your entire footprint
- Focus on partners that emphasize interoperability and integrations and are willing to work with you on delivering a solution that meets your needs
- Consider the benefits of all-in-one solutions providers that combine connectivity with robust smart technology and manage all aspects, from initial planning through deployment, training, and support

2

### Prioritize training and operational readiness

- Create a streamlined onboarding process for on-site staff and property teams
- Plan for resident education and support
- Prioritize partners with superior onboarding and training solutions, with apps and tools that are easy for residents and staff to pick up and use

3

### Plan for the full lifecycle

- Ensure that the chosen solutions can be supported throughout their lifecycles
- Emphasize support SLAs and maintenance – know who is responsible for what, and look for partners offering proactive support who will alert you to issues before residents do
- Have a schedule and a plan for funding installations, updates, and replacements



# Achieving Long Term Success

To achieve long-term success, owners and operators will need to exceed resident expectations for seamless connectivity while reducing complexity. They will also need to lay the groundwork for smart building innovation to improve operational efficiency and deliver future-ready asset performance.

## Key Takeaways

- Resident expectations are rising. Connectivity is a top priority.
- Day-zero readiness improves satisfaction and simplifies move-in.
- Turnkey solutions and vendor consolidation reduce friction.
- Retrofit-friendly technologies open opportunities across existing properties.
- Investing in smart technology foundations today enables an easier transformation tomorrow.

## Recommendations for Owners and Operators

- Work to reduce fragmentation and fatigue for residents and staff to improve community loyalty and referrals.
- Prioritize connectivity as the foundation for technology innovation and smart building strategies.
- Prioritize high-impact connectivity features first.
- Identify technology partners who can bridge connectivity and smart building solutions, simplifying deployments, including single-stop connectivity and solutions providers to simplify and oversee the end-to-end process.



## 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.



## About Xfinity Communities

Xfinity Communities delivers turnkey solutions featuring future-ready connectivity and integrated technology tailored for multifamily properties, senior communities, and student housing. Our scalable infrastructure supports evolving connectivity needs—powering millions of units nationwide. We help owners, property managers, and developers elevate resident experiences and streamline operations with intelligent WiFi, premium entertainment, and smart building automation from Comcast Smart Solutions. Discover how Xfinity Communities is redefining digital living. Visit [Xfinity Communities](#) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#) to learn more.

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### ATTRIBUTION

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# RESEARCH, CONSULTING, & MARKETING SERVICES

for the Connected Home,  
Multifamily and SMB Markets

With over 35 years of experience, Parks Associates is committed to helping our clients with reliable and insightful consumer and industry research.



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Platforms



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Wearables and Mobile Devices



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Standards & Interoperability