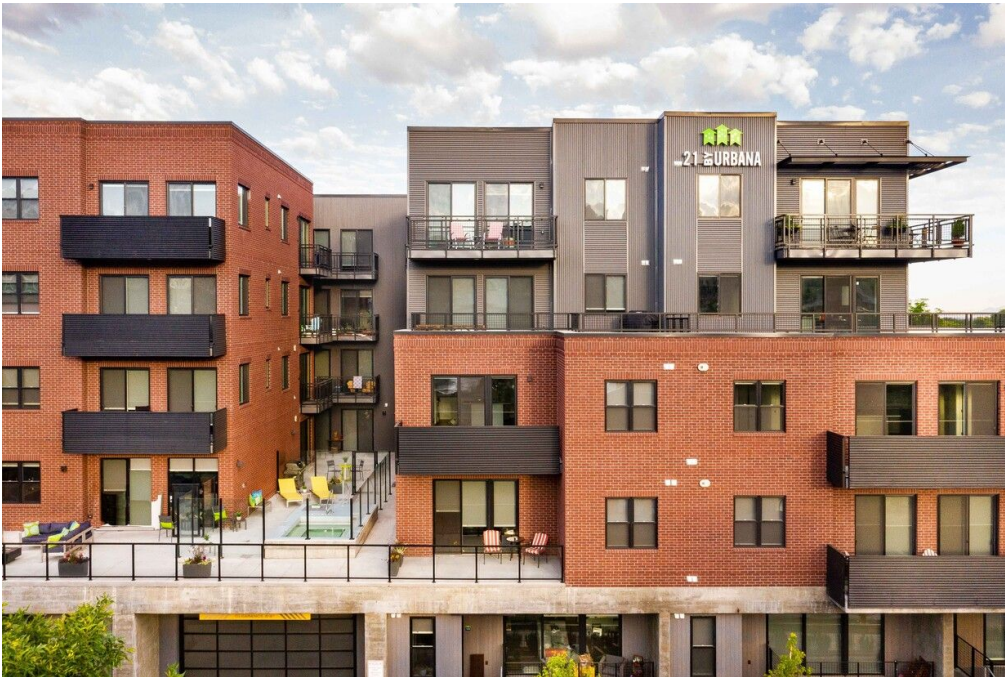


# **The Potential for Small-Scale Condo Construction in Urbanizing Utah**

**March 27, 2025**

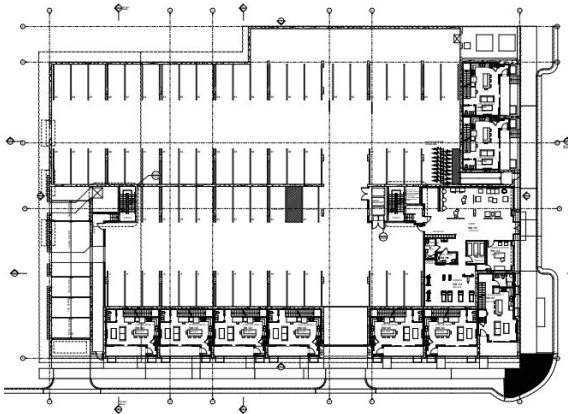
# The DNA of Modern Midrise Living

## *Apartments, Condos Across North America*



# Two Dominant Building Code Drivers

## *Type V-over-I Construction, Two Staircases (Double-Loaded Corridor)*



137 Stalls / 126 Units = 1.09

137 Stalls / 159 Bedrooms = 0.86



**ZONING:** CSHBD2

**LOT SQUARE FOOTAGE** = 37,760 SF (.86 ACRES)

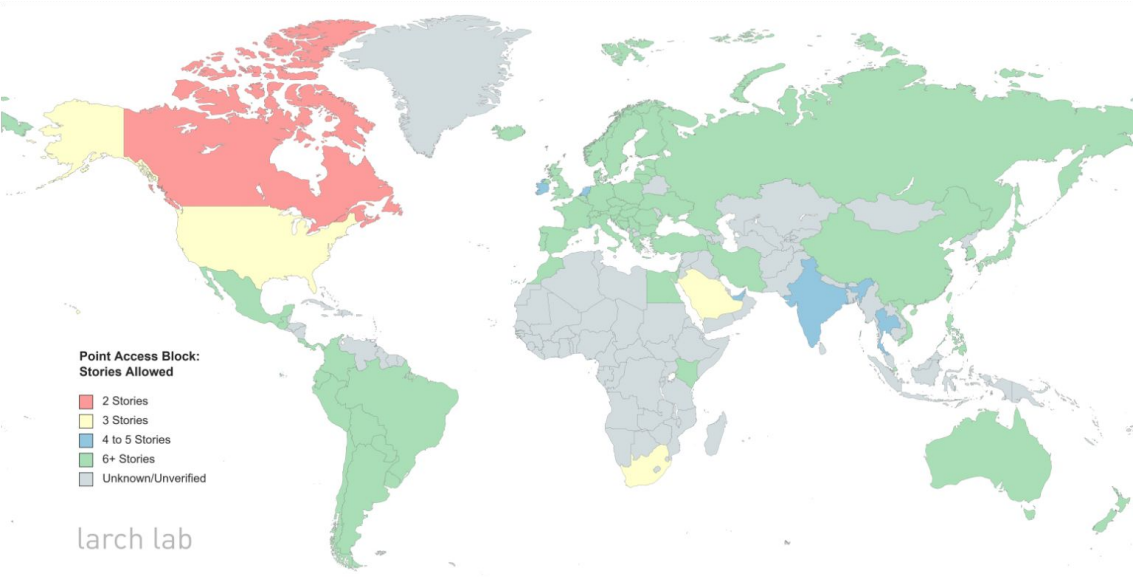
**DWELLING UNIT DENSITY:** 146 UNITS PER ACRE

**CONSTRUCTION TYPE:** (LEVELS 0-1) TYPE IA -CONCRETE AND STEEL  
(LEVELS 2-5) TYPE VA -WOOD



# Global Comparison

## Maximum Height with Single-Staircase



Point Access Block:  
Stories Allowed

- 2 Stories
- 3 Stories
- 4 to 5 Stories
- 6+ Stories
- Unknown/Unverified

larch lab

USA (w few exceptions) -->



Maximum Prescriptive\* Height for Single Exit Stair Buildings  
multi-unit residential occupancies only (apartment buildings)

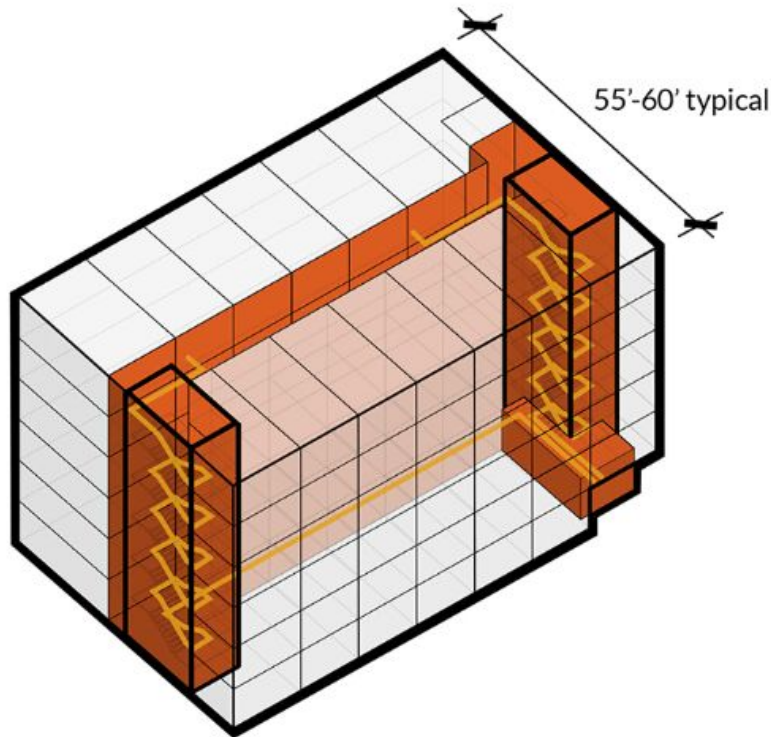
\*some jurisdictions provide statutory law requirements while other jurisdictions publish guidance and allow alternative solutions subject to performance-based design (updated December 2024)

<sup>TM</sup> = finish floor level (uppermost occupied storey)

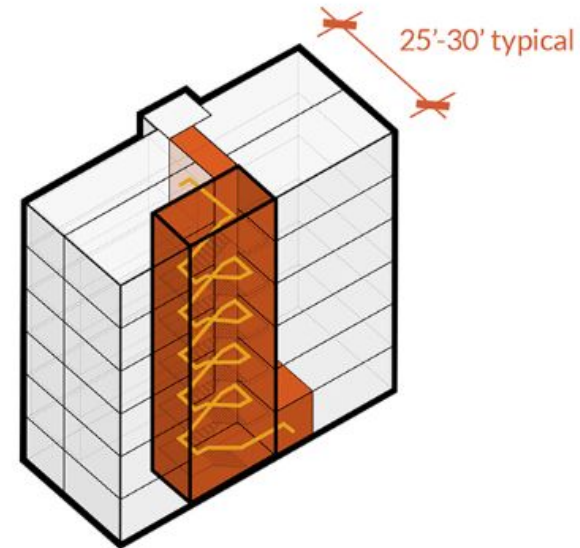
Note: the drawing assumes a floor-to-floor height of 3m

# The Tale of the Tape

## *Double-Loaded Corridor vs Point Access Block*



Requires large site  
Complicated land assembly  
Bulky buildings  
87% average floor plate efficiency  
Larger units relatively infeasible  
Single exposure  
Limited daylight, ventilation  
Unavoidable noise, pollution

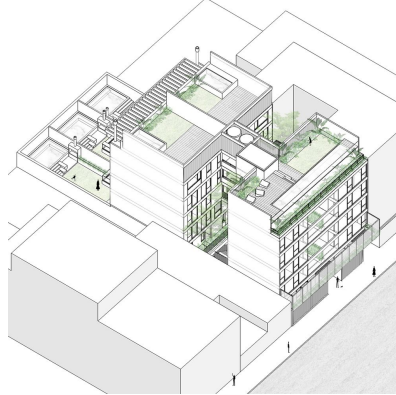


Feasible on small & irregular sites  
Single lot, functional land market  
Slimmer buildings  
93% average floor plate efficiency  
Broader unit mix feasible (including family-scale)  
Multiple exposure (typical)  
Improved daylight, ventilation  
Ability to buffer bedrooms

**SAFE!**

# The Possibilities for Midrise Living

## *Small Sample of Point Access Blocks*



### **Buenos Aires**

#### *Building Program*

5-6 stories

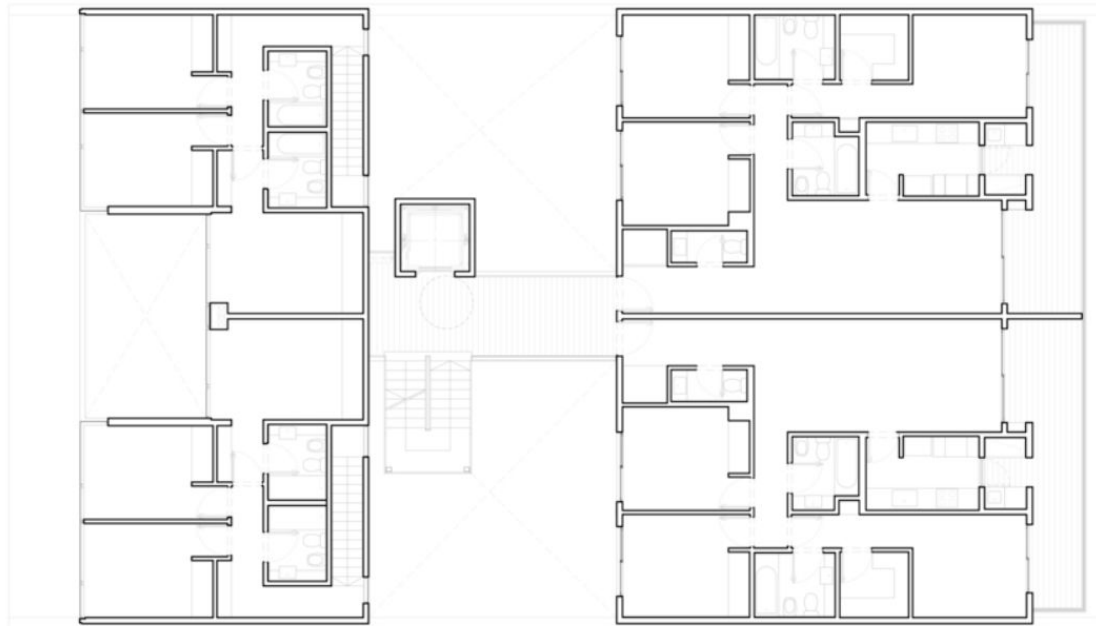
25,000 sq ft

1-3 bedrooms

#### *Site*

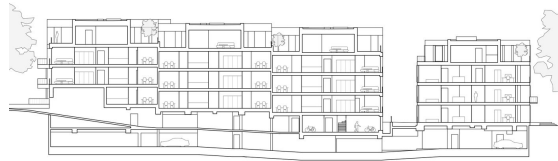
<5,000 sq ft

Subterranean parking



# The Possibilities for Midrise Living

## *Small Sample of Point Access Blocks*



### **Hamburg**

#### *Building Program*

4-5 stories

70,000 sq ft

2-3 bedrooms

#### *Site*

~1/2 acre (22k sq ft)

Subterranean parking





# The Possibilities for Midrise Living

## *Small Sample of Point Access Blocks*



### Rio de Janeiro

#### *Building Program*

7-8 stories

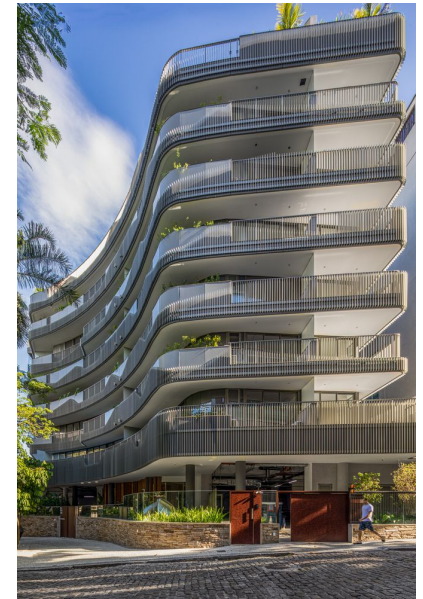
44,000 sq ft

2+ bedrooms

#### *Site*

<10,000 sq ft

Subterranean parking





# More Humble, Closer to Home

## *4-6 Story Seattle Infill*



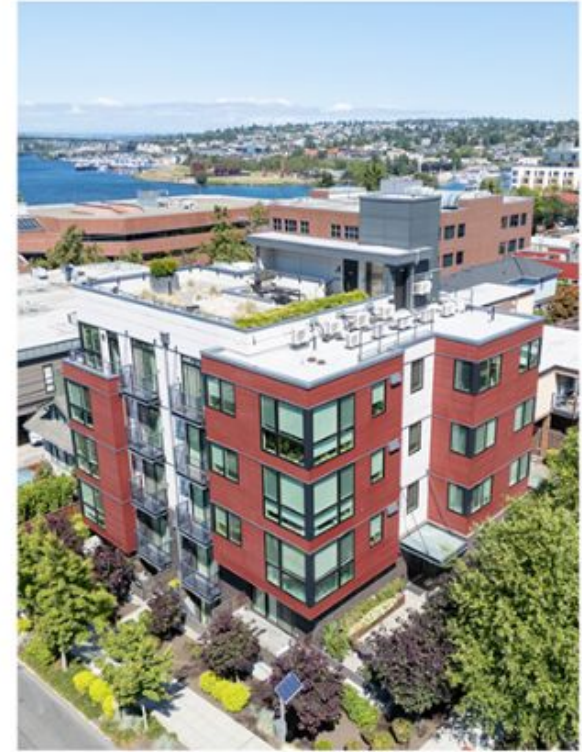
### **101 John St.**

20 street-facing, market-rate apartments atop ground-floor retail, built in 2016 on a 4,600-square-foot lot.



### **ALNA Ballard**

1123 NW 57th St., 21 market-rate apartments, built in 2021 on a 5,000-square-foot lot.

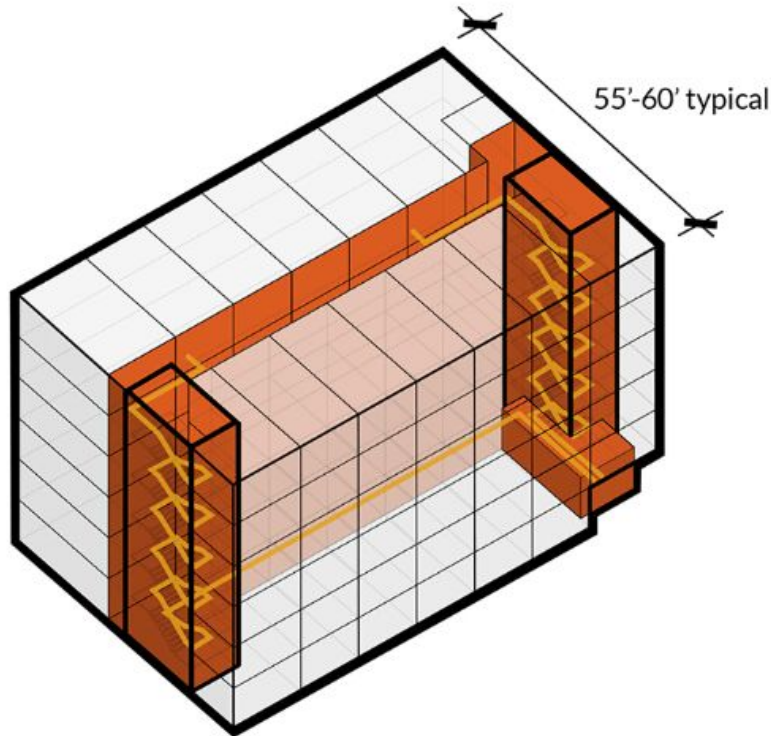


### **Franklin Station**

2303 Franklin Ave. E, 22 market-rate apartments, built in 2018 on a 4,800-square-foot lot.

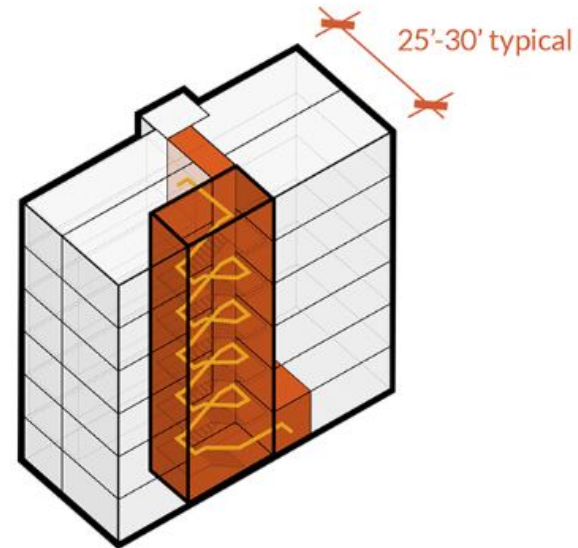
# The Dollars & Sense

## *Advantages of Small-Scale Condo Development*



### Larger buildings

- Higher stakes = more controversy
- Pushed to hostile sites (arterials etc)
- Extremely continuous street walls
- More expensive construction (per square foot)
- Higher risk, less productive
- Monocultural product mix
- Long absorption
- Large potential "class"



### Smaller buildings

- Less bulk = less controversy
- Unlocks small & irregular lots & higher opportunity neighborhood contexts
- Lower architectural stakes (slimmer buildings)
- Relatively efficient/inexpensive to build
- Lower risk, more productive
- Greater marketability (broader unit mix)
- Shorter project closeout turn
- Much smaller potential "class"

# References & Additional Resources

- [Pew Charitable Trusts](#)
- [HUD Policy Brief](#)
- [Larch Lab Policy Brief](#)
- [The Second Egress](#)
- [2025 American Single Stair Design Competition](#)
- [Denver Single Stair Design Competition](#) (Results Page)
- [About Here](#) (YouTube)