

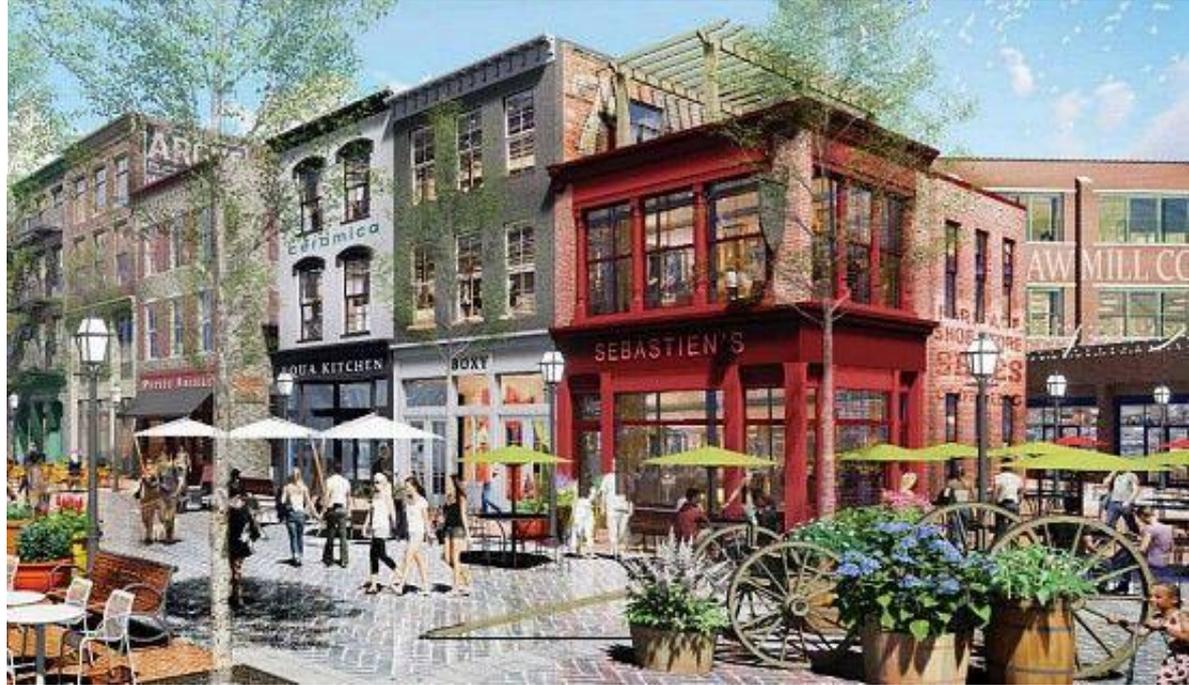


# LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

**Housing**

**Mobility**

**Climate**



# Advisors

## HOUSING + HOMELESSNESS

Prof. Mike Manville - UCLA

Shane Phillips - UCLA

Ed Mendoza - City Planner

Jill Bauman - ImagineLA  
(Homeless Family Services)

Gerhard Mayer - Architect & Urbanist

John Claflin - Architect & Urbanist

25+ Architects & Urbanists

## MOBILITY

Martin Tomasz - Systems Engineer, Bird

Dutch Bike Experts

LADOT

## EQUITY & DEI

Dr. Tunette Powell

Pastor Peter Watts

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

HODG (Hang Out Do Good)

HODG



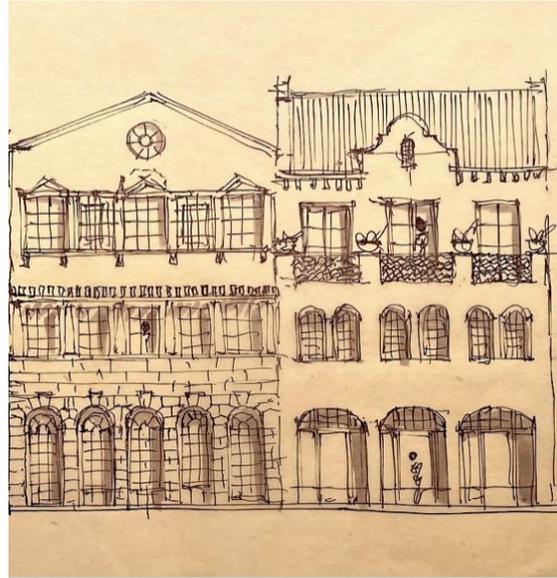
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
SUSTAINABILITY  
ALLIANCE®



- Unassembled
  - Mixed-use
  - Parking-free

- Beautiful architecture
- Increased unit livability

- Accessible infrastructure
- Near transit

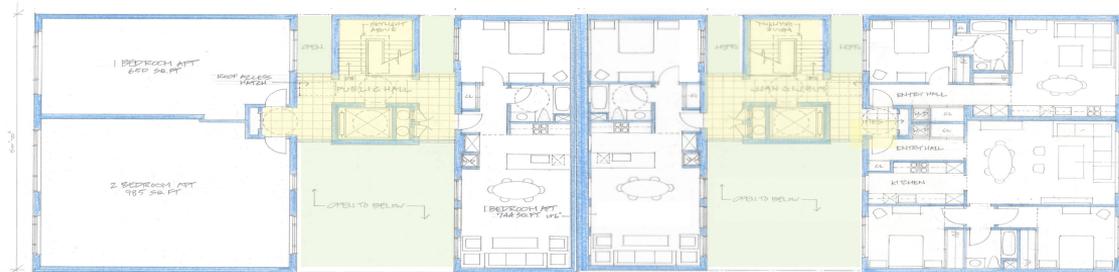
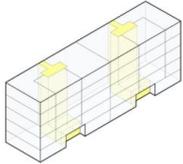
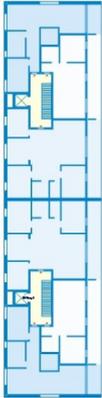


# Courtyard Buildings

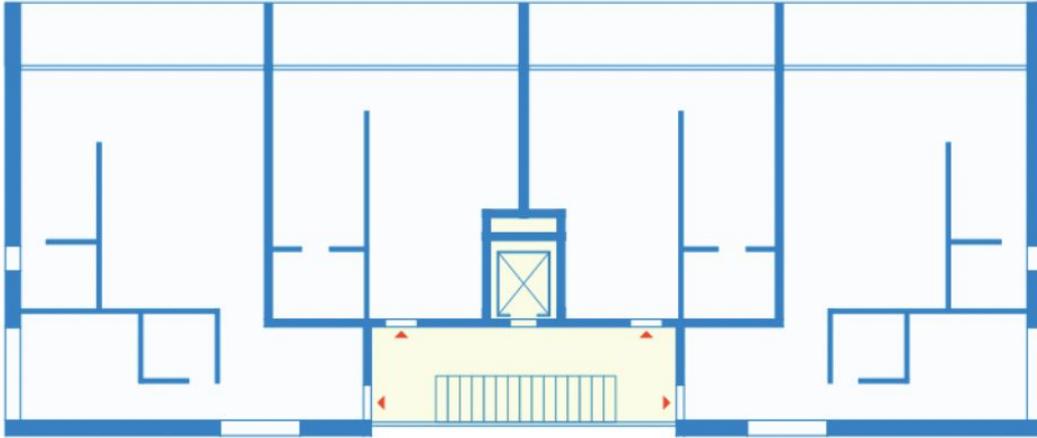
## Courtyard Buildings

6-unit point access block.  
6.5% non-leasable space

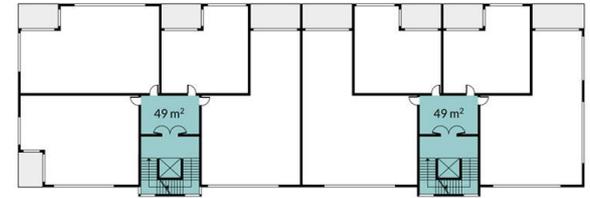
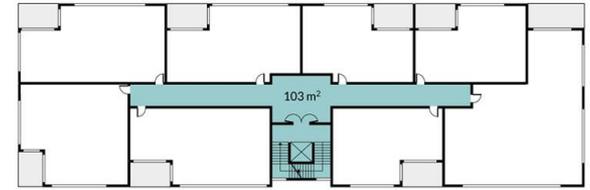
- Multiple core layout creates dual aspect apartments with better daylight access and cross ventilation.
- Diverse unit layouts that encourage greater acoustic privacy.
- Encourages interaction and recognition between residents to contribute to a sense of community and improve perceptions of safety.



# Vertical Shared Access Floor Plans



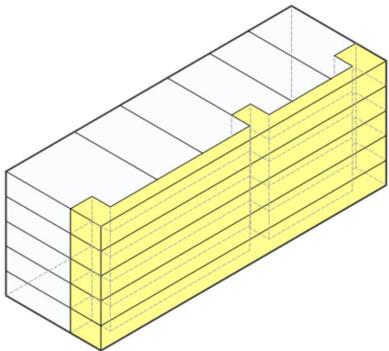
*Diagrammatic Point Access Block floor plan, 93% efficient floor plate*



0 5 10m

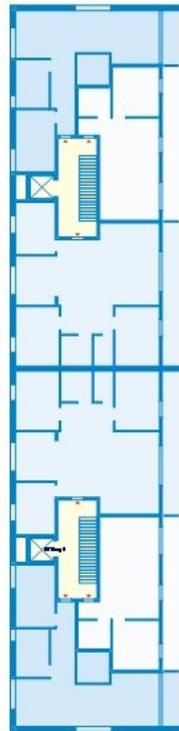
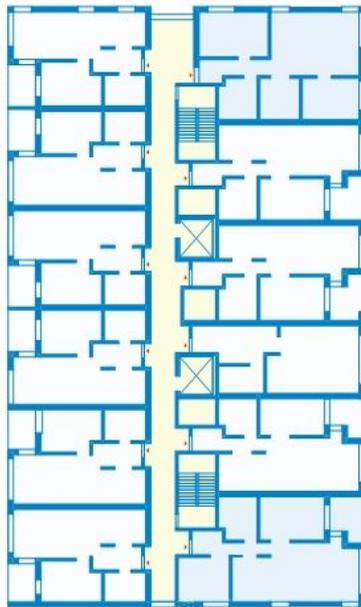
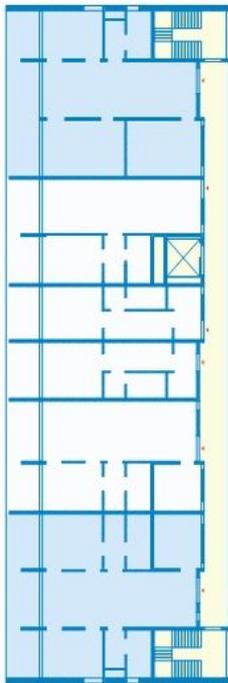
**6-unit single-loaded corridor**  
**16.5% non-leasable space**

- External corridor access looks **unattractive**
- Corridors **feel uncomfortable or unsafe** on tall buildings
- **Least efficient** use of livable floor space



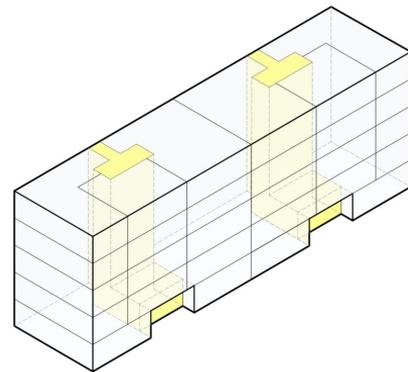
**12-unit double-loaded corridor**  
**13% non-leasable space**

- Units facing the street are **noisier, lack acoustic privacy**, have **too much or too little sunlight**, require **more land** to justify building
- **Least amount of unit diversity**, unorthodox layouts (eg. kitchen at entrance)



**6-unit single-core block**  
**6.5% non-leasable space**

- **Better sunlight access and cross-ventilation**
- **Diverse unit layouts** that provide **greater acoustic privacy**
- **Encourages socialization and community-building**
- **Improves perceptions of safety**



# Second Stairwell / Egress Requirements

## Egress requirements

- California Building Code § 1006.2.1
- Typically second staircase
- The requirement of a **second staircase eats up potential floor space**

### 1006.2.1 Egress Based on Occupant Load and Common Path of Egress Travel Distance

ILLUSTRATION

Two *exits* or *exit access doorways* from any space shall be provided where the design *occupant load* or the *common path of egress* travel distance exceeds the values *listed* in Table 1006.2.1. The cumulative *occupant load* from adjacent rooms, areas or spaces shall be determined in accordance with Section 1004.2.

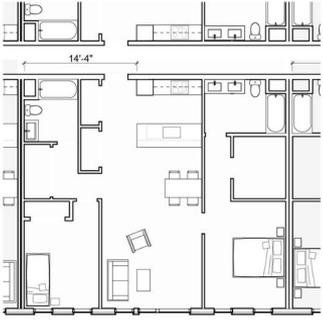


# What Gets Built Without VSA?

- Large **half- or full-block size buildings**, typically on commercial corridors
- **Inefficient** double- or single-loaded corridor layout
- **Poor sunlight** access, **no cross-ventilation**
- Mostly **studios or 1-bedrooms**
- Very **little green space**



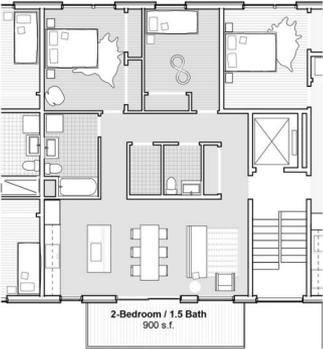
# Two-bedroom apartments



**2-Bedroom/2 Bath**  
970 s.f.  
60 s.f. (1/2 hall)



**2-Bedroom/1 Bath**  
810 s.f.



**2-Bedroom / 1.5 Bath**  
900 s.f.

# Three-bedroom apartments



**3-Bedroom/2 Bath**  
1,250 s.f.  
80 s.f. (1/2 hall)



**3-Bedroom/1.5 Bath**  
1000 s.f.



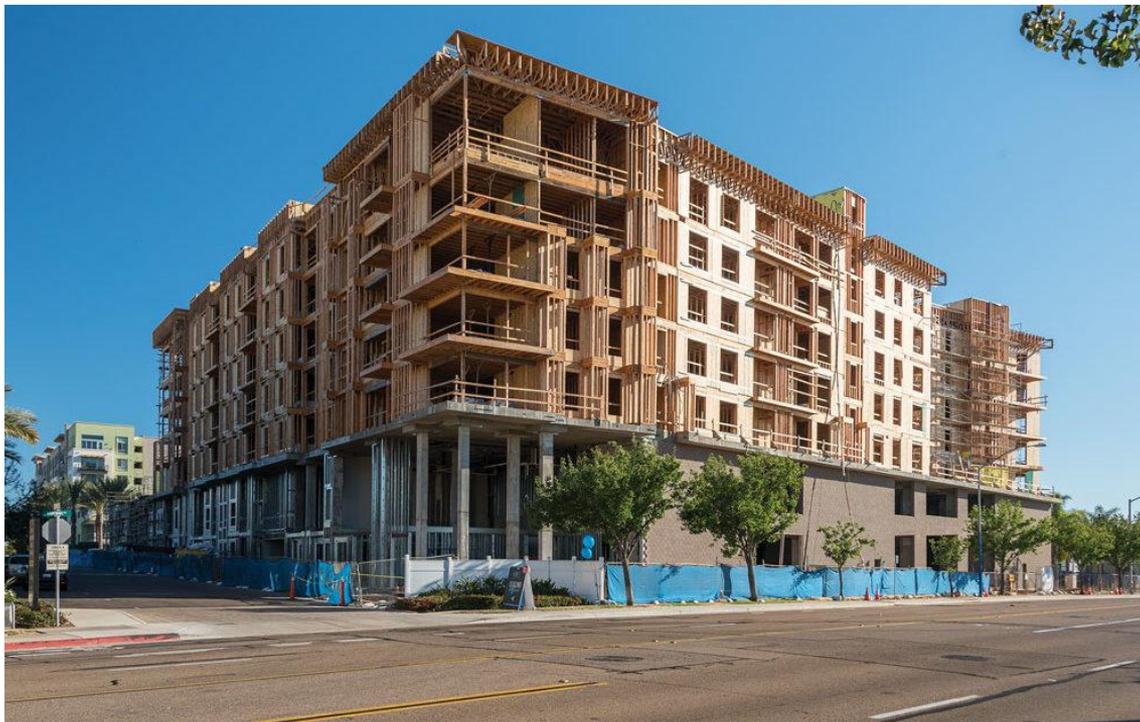
**3-Bedroom / 2 Bath**  
1,040 s.f.

# What We Have Today

- **Wealthy developers can afford** the costs and time needed for **lot assembly**

## Who doesn't build?

- **Small developers** trying to move from ADUs and fourplexes to **mid-sized multifamily**
- **Homeowners** and **small property owners**
- **Community land trusts** and **cooperatives**



# Current Single-Lot Development is Inefficient

- Staircase/egress **requirements eliminate** large portions of **street facing space**
- Units are forced to have **awkward floor plans**
- Units are made to face the sides of a building, which **limits access to sunlight and airflow**
- **Gallery access** (single-loaded) is the **least efficient layout**
- **VSA utilizes 95% of floor space vs. 85% with gallery access**



# 50 x 150 ft. Standard LA “Deep Lot”

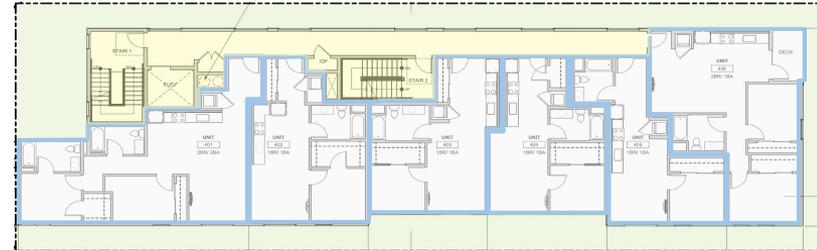
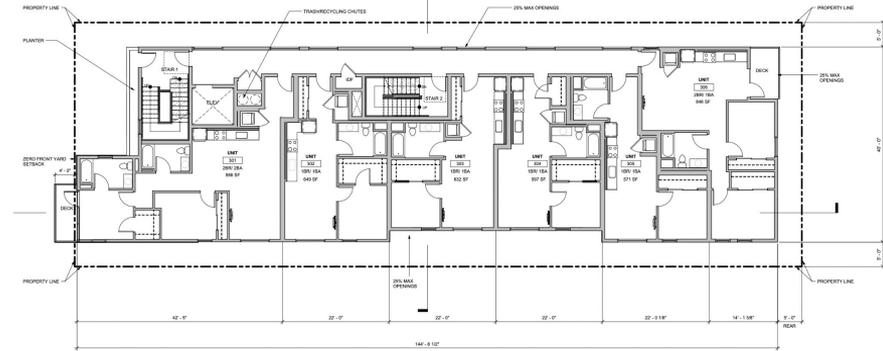
Example #1: 203 N Oxford  
Double-loaded corridor layout



- 30 units
- 7 stories
- Rentable space: 3,218 sq. ft. per floor
- Parcel size: 7,162 sq. ft.
- Building efficiency: 86%

# 50 x 150 ft. Standard LA “Deep Lot”

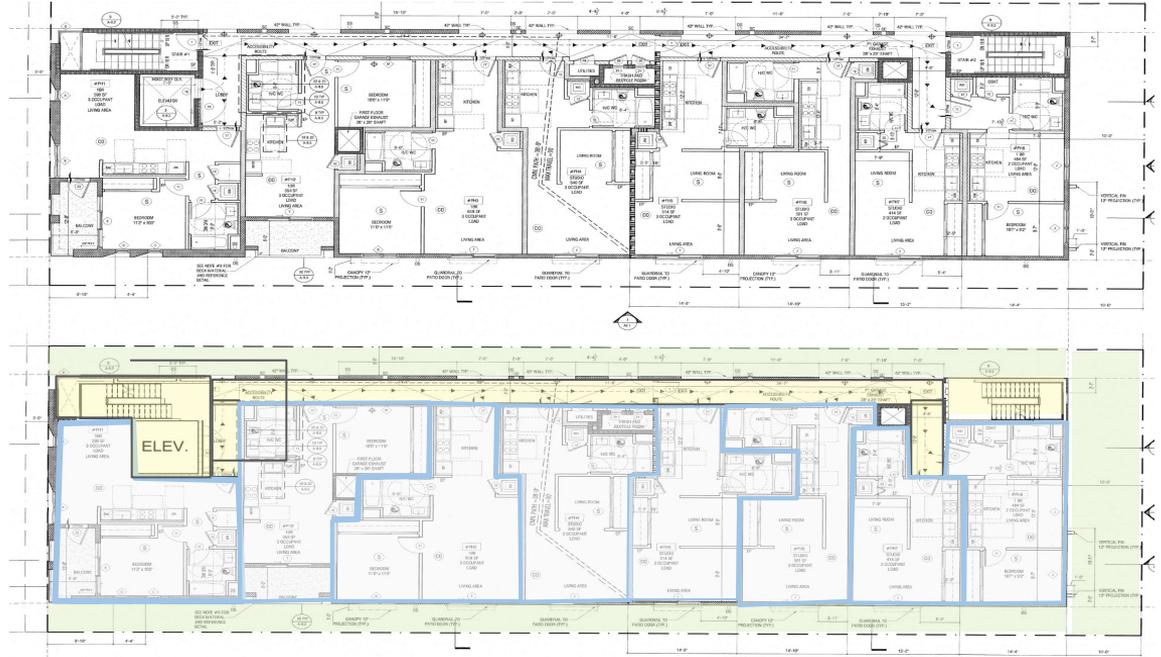
Example #2: 544 S Mariposa  
Single-loaded corridor layout



- 30 units
- 7 stories
- Rentable space: 4,285 sq. ft. per floor
- Parcel size: 7,499 sq. ft.
- Building efficiency: 79%

# 50 x 150 ft. Standard LA “Deep Lot”

Example #3: 3766 Motor  
Single-loaded corridor layout



- 36 units
- 6 stories
- Rentable space: 4,264 sq. ft. per floor
- Parcel size: 7,499 sq. ft.
- Building Efficiency: 78%

# Issues with Single-Parcel Construction

- Few units face the street
- No commercial or mixed-use space
- Inefficient single-loaded layout
- Most units are studios/1-bed
- Bedrooms lack windows
- Lack of sunlight
- Poor cross-ventilation
- Lack of green space
- Inefficient use of side yard space
- Developers unwilling to build except on corner lots
- Tenant pushback to losing views, light, airflow



How do we make single-lot  
construction viable?

Is it even **possible**?

# 50 x 150 ft. Standard LA “Deep Lot” with VSA



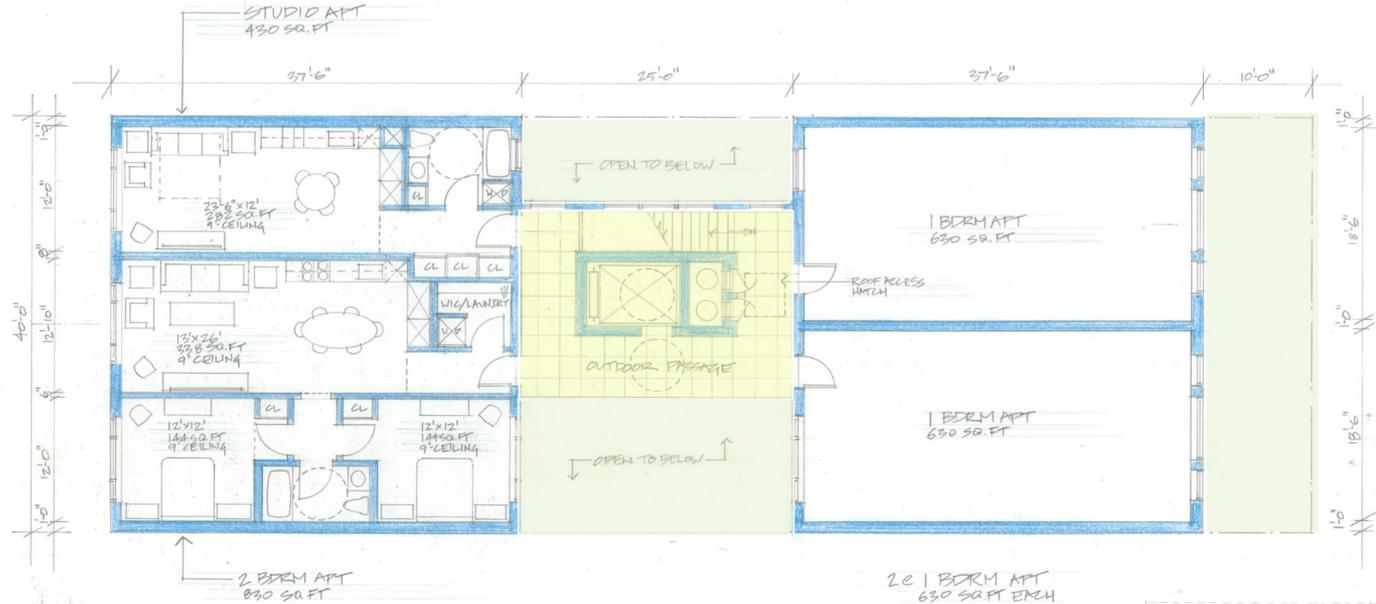
- 36-40 units (and commercial space)
- 6 stories
- Rentable space: 4,758 sq. ft. per floor
- Parcel size: 7,500 sq. ft.
- Building efficiency: 86%
- Large open green space



# 40 x 110 ft. Standard LA Commercial Lot

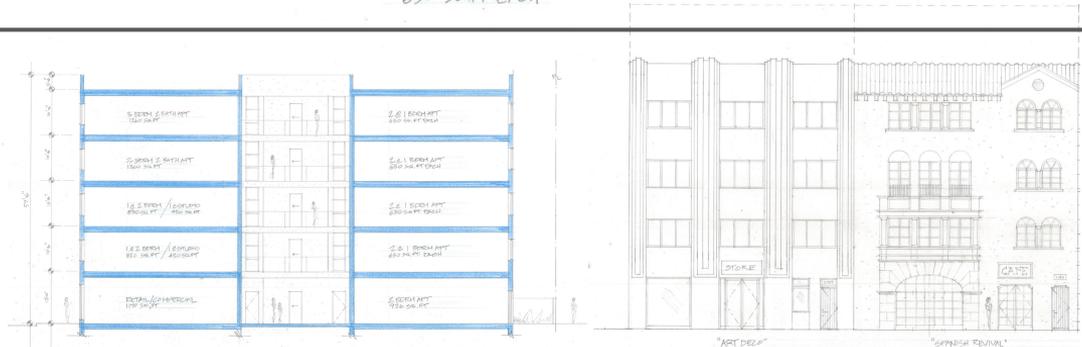


# 40 x 110 ft. Standard LA Commercial Lot



## Vertical Shared Access Site Concept

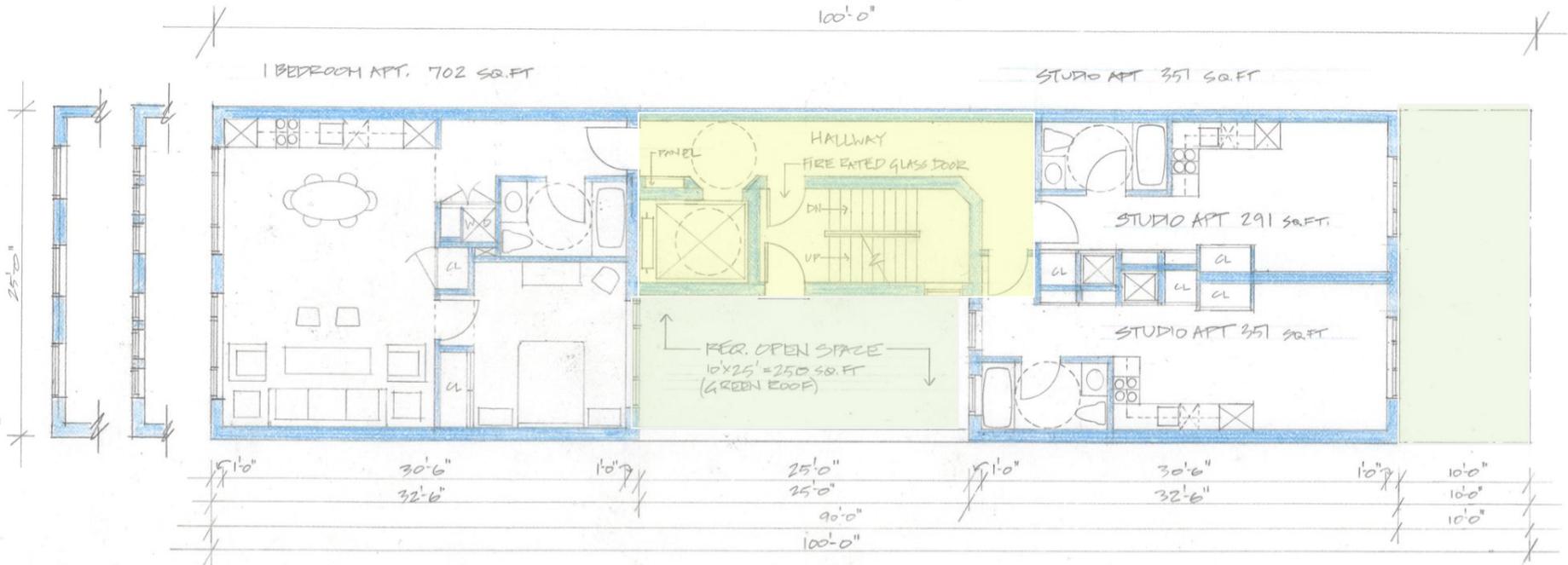
- 16 units (and commercial space)
- 5 stories
- Rentable space: 3,050 ft. per floor
- Parcel size: 4,100 sq. ft.
- Building efficiency: 86%



25 x 100 ft. small lot in Culver City



# 25 x 100 ft. Small Commercial Lot in LA with VSA



- **12-16 units (and commercial space)**
- **5 stories**
- Rentable space: **1,476 sq. ft. per floor**
- Parcel size: **2,500 sq. ft.**
- Building efficiency: **70%** (85% w/o courtyard)

# Status Quo

- 4 units (no commercial space)
- 5 stories
- Rentable space: 900 sq. ft. per floor
- Parcel size: 2,500 sq. ft.
- Building efficiency: 63%

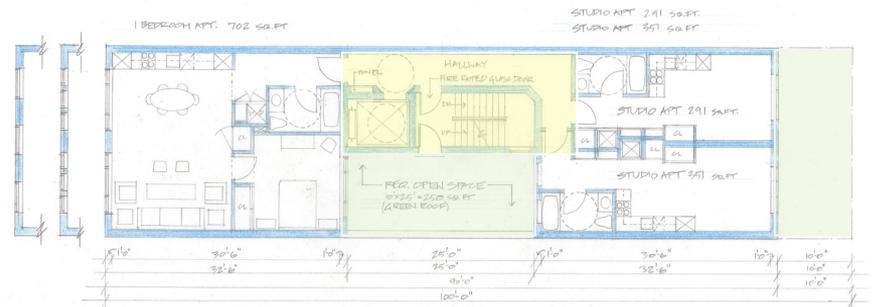
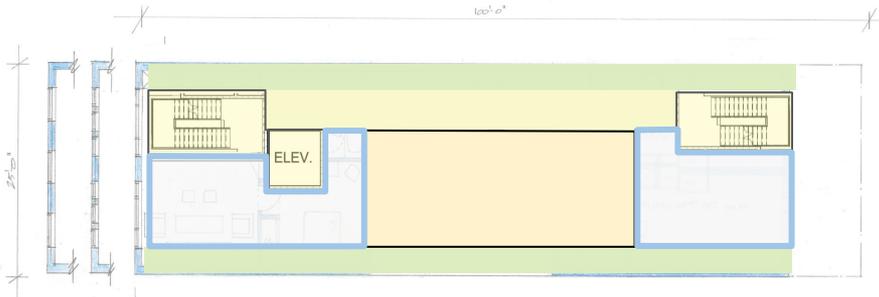
3-4x

+60%

+20%

# LCI Vertical Shared Access

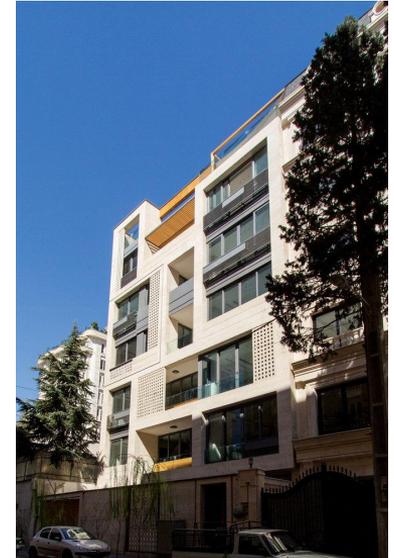
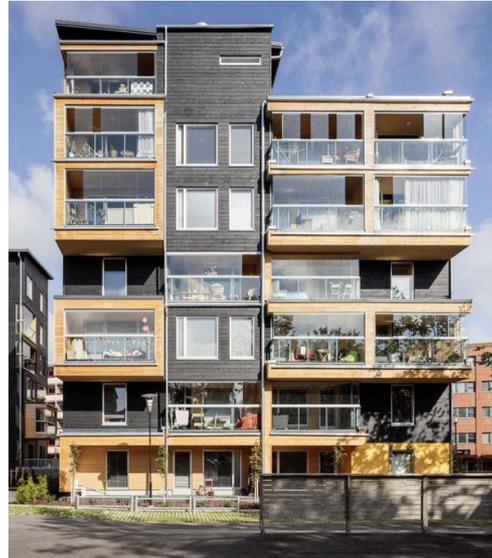
- 12-16 units (and commercial space)
- 5 stories
- Rentable space: 1,476 sq. ft. per floor
- Parcel size: 2,500 sq. ft.
- Building efficiency: 70-75%





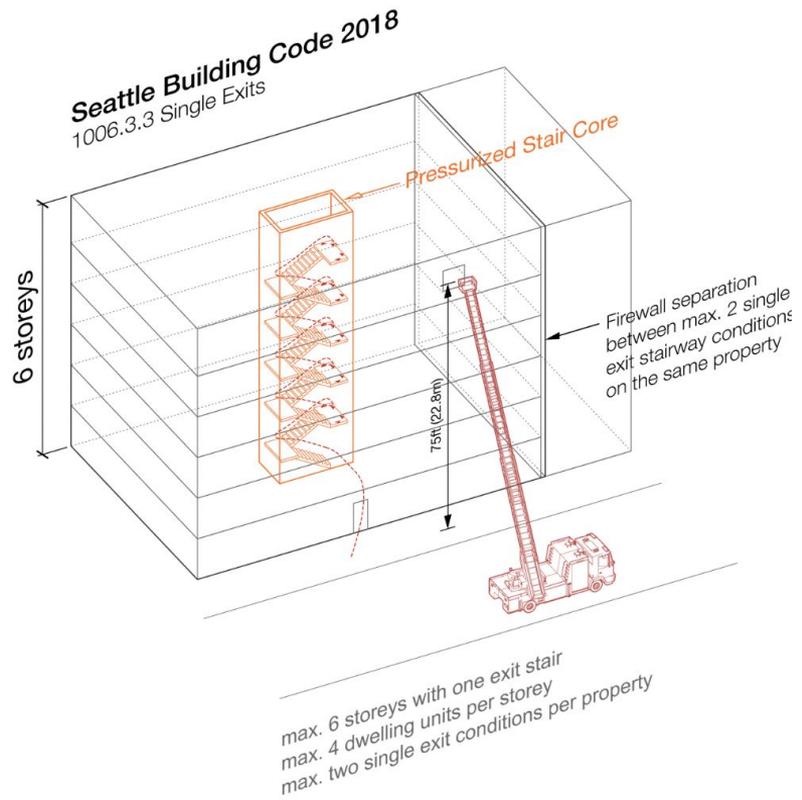
# Fire Safety Strategies

- **Fire safety strategies have evolved** since the second stair requirement
- **Second stairwell requirement goes back to 1867** and the 1901 New York building code
- Modern strategies focus on **containing fires where they occur**
- In Europe, Latin America, and East Asia, the **second point of egress is a fire escape, ladder, window, etc.**



# VSA Buildings in Europe and Seattle/NYC are Safe

- **European countries** (which generally allow VSA) **have a better record on fire safety** than the US
- Seattle has **higher fire safety standards for single stair** than double stair structures
  - **Max. 5 stories for residential** and 6 stories for mixed-use structures
  - Max. 4 units per story
  - Construction has at least **60-minute fire rating**
  - Equipped with **automatic sprinkler system**
  - **Stairway and elevator must be pressurized/vented**
  - Units must open to corridor
  - Travel distance must not exceed 124 feet



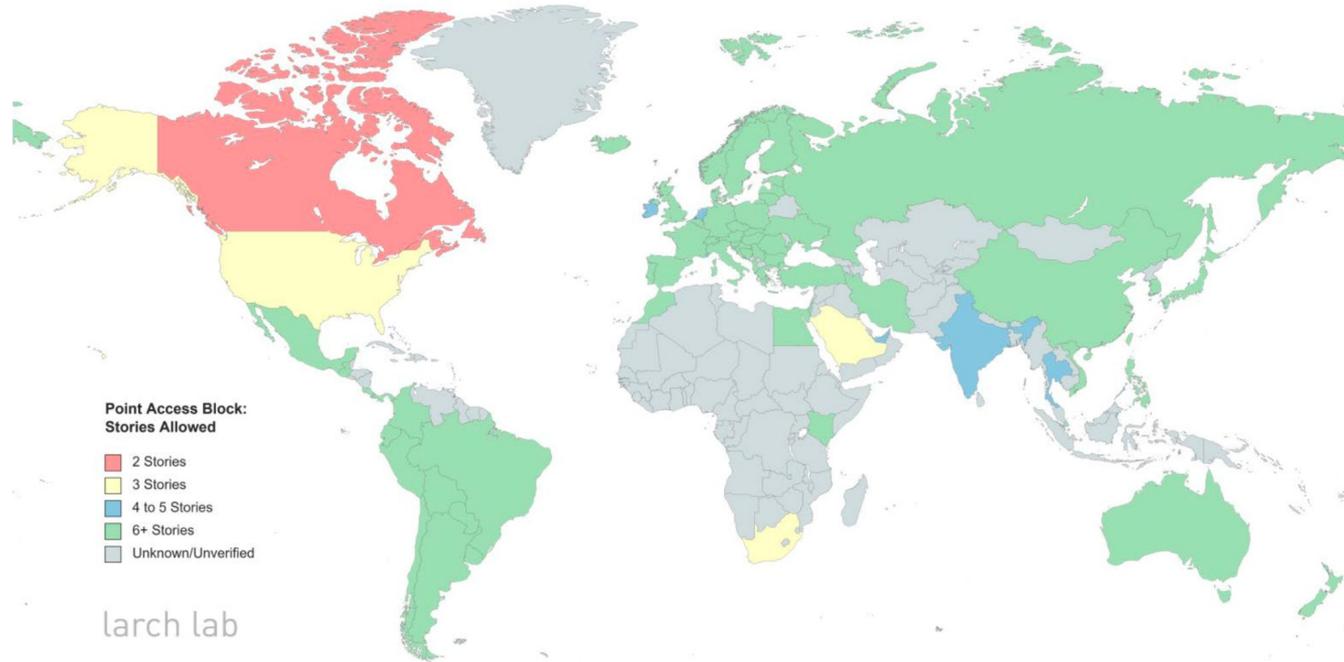
# National Fire Protection Association

- **4 stories** or less
- **4 units** per story
- **Automatic sprinkler system** throughout the building
- Minimum **one-hour fire resistance** rating for **exit corridors**
- Minimum **half-hour fire resistance** for **separating walls**



# The US is an Outlier in not Allowing VSA

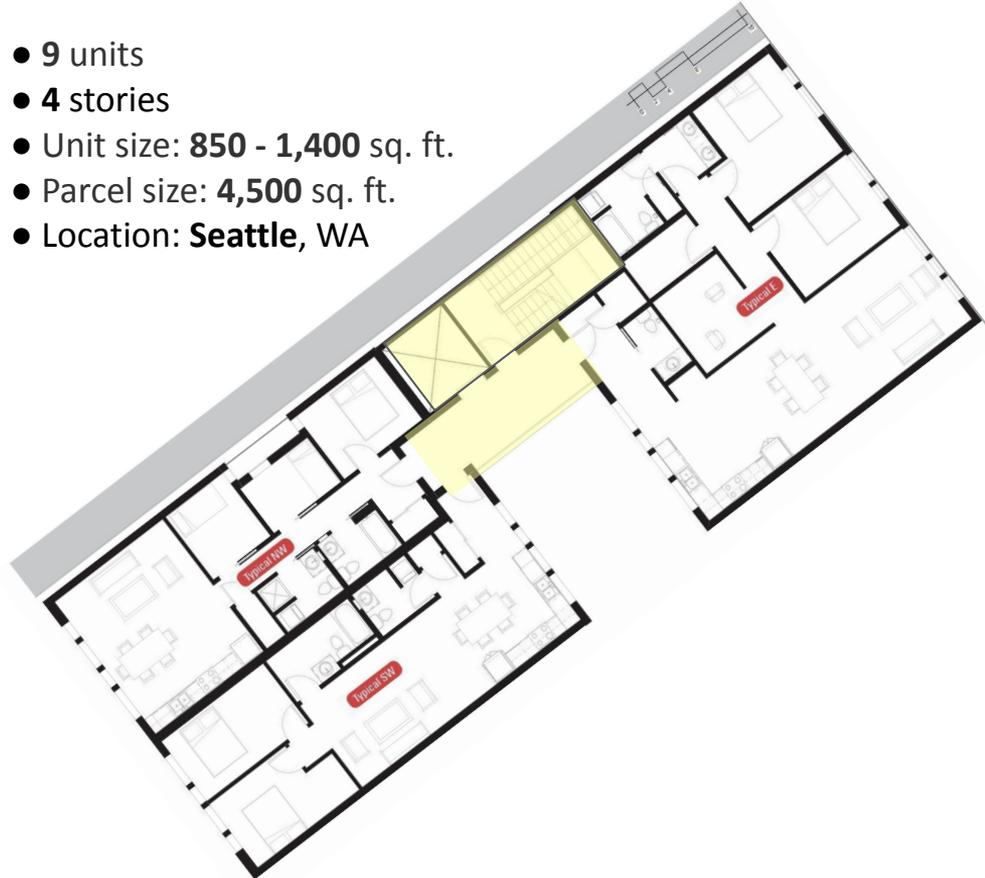
- Developed and developing countries around the world allow VSA
- The US and Canada are outliers in not allowing VSA for small lots
- VSA apartments around the world:
  - Netherlands, Japan and India (up to 5 stories)
  - Seattle and New York City (up to 6 stories)
  - Belgium, Poland, Norway, Australia, and New Zealand (up to 8 stories)
  - Israel, Spain, and Austria (up to 10 stories)



# Capitol Hill Urban Cohousing



- 9 units
- 4 stories
- Unit size: 850 - 1,400 sq. ft.
- Parcel size: 4,500 sq. ft.
- Location: **Seattle, WA**



*Left:*

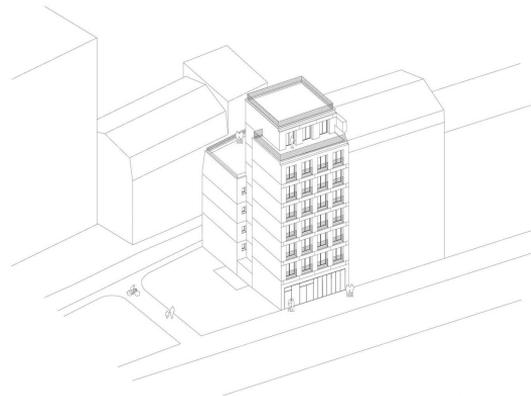
### Capitol Core Building

- 17 units
- 7 stories
- Parcel size: **2,700** sq. ft.
- Location: **Seattle**, Washington

*Right/Bottom:*

### 52 blvd. de Picpus Social Housing

- 15 units + commercial space
- 8 stories
- Parcel size: **1,800** sq. ft.
- Location: **Paris**, France





*Left:*

**3795 Commercial Street Building**

- 10 units
- 4 stories
- Parcel size: **3,400** sq. ft.
- Location: **Vancouver, Canada**



*Right/Center:*

**Rue du Terrage Building**

- 6 units
- 6 stories
- Parcel size: **1,076** sq. ft.
- Location: **Paris, France**



# Developers Get Around Two-Stair Requirement

Existing development in LA  
on commercial corridors

- **Lack of ADA accessibility**
- **Underutilization** of land
- **No covenanted affordable units**



Western Ave

Los Angeles "By-Right" Infill  
4 Units (0 Affordable)  
16 Bed  
16 Bath  
Parking Spaces: 4  
Building sq ft: 6,500  
Lot Size: 5,500



Washington Blvd

LCI Infill  
12 Units (100% Moderate Affordable)  
12 Bed  
12 Bath  
Parking Spaces: 0  
Building sq ft: 8,500  
Lot Size: 2,500

## ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 835

**Introduced by Assembly Member Lee  
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Ward)  
(Coauthor: Senator Wiener)**

February 14, 2023

“AB 835 will help **expand the production of more affordable, family-sized apartments** and flats by making it legal to build these types of homes on smaller and unusually-sized properties in our cities. By directing the State Fire Marshal to research and develop standards for “single stairway,” multi-family buildings, AB 835 will make it possible to build a **wider variety of homes at a lower cost.**”  
– *Author: Lee (D, AD 24)*

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An act to add Section 13108.5.2 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to fire protection.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 835, as introduced, Lee. State Fire Marshal: building standards: single-exit, single stairway multiunit residential buildings.

Existing law, the California Building Standards Law, establishes the California Building Standards Commission within the Department of General Services. Existing law requires the commission to approve and adopt building standards and to codify those standards in the California Building Standards Code, which is required to be published once every 3 years. Existing law requires the State Fire Marshal to research and develop, and authorizes the State Fire Marshal to propose to the California Building Standards Commission, mandatory building standards for fire resistance based on occupancy risk categories in very high, high, and moderate California fire severity zones, as provided.

This bill would require the State Fire Marshal to, before the next triennial edition of the California Building Standards Code adopted after January 1, 2024, research, develop, and propose to the commission for its consideration standards for single-exit, single stairway multiunit residential buildings above 3 stories, as provided. The bill would require the building standards proposed by the State Fire Marshal to, at a





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For further questions or comments, contact LCI Policy Director Ed Mendoza:

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You can follow LCI on Twitter at [@lci\\_la](https://twitter.com/lci_la)

Thank you!



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