
Section 1: S-3ASR (S-3ASR)

Use these links to rapidly review the document

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 16, 2020

No. 333-

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM S-3 REGISTRATION STATEMENT UNDER THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933

LADDER CAPITAL CORP

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

80-0925494
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

**345 Park Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10154
(212) 715-3170**

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of registrant's principal executive offices)

**Kelly Porcella
Chief Administrative Officer & General Counsel
Ladder Capital Corp
345 Park Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10154
(212) 715-3170**

(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number, including area code, of agent for service)

Copies to:

**Joshua N. Korff, Esq.
Luke R. Jennings, Esq.
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
601 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10022
(212) 446-4800**

**Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public:
From time to time after this Registration Statement becomes effective.**

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box:

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box:

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company, or an emerging growth company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company" and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer

Accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer

Smaller Reporting Company

Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 7(a)(2)(B) of Securities Act.

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered | Amount to be Registered | Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Share | Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price | Amount of Registration Fee |
|---|--------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Class A Common Stock, \$0.001 par value per share | (1) | (1) | (1) | (1) |

(1) An indeterminate number of shares of Class A common stock is being registered as may be offered from time to time at indeterminate prices. In accordance with Rules 456(b) and 457(r) under the Securities Act, the registrant is deferring payment of all of the registration fee.

Prospectus

Ladder Capital Corp



Class A Common Stock

Ladder Capital Corp ("Ladder," the "Company," "we" or "us") and the selling stockholders of Ladder as may be named in one or more prospectus supplements (the "Selling Stockholders") may offer and sell shares of our Class A common stock from time to time in amounts, at prices and on terms that will be determined at the time of the offering. We will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of our Class A common stock offered by the Selling Stockholders.

Ladder may offer and sell, and the Selling Stockholders may offer and sell, shares of our Class A common stock, to or through one or more underwriters, dealers and agents, or directly to purchasers, on a continuous or delayed basis. This prospectus describes some of the general terms that may apply to these shares of Class A common stock. The specific terms of any shares to be offered will be described in one or more supplements to this prospectus. You should read this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement carefully before you invest. Our registration of the securities covered by this prospectus does not mean that we or the Selling Stockholders will offer or sell any shares of our Class A common stock.

Our Class A common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE") under the symbol "LADR."

We have two authorized classes of common stock: Class A and Class B. Holders of our Class A common stock and holders of our Class B common stock are each entitled to one vote per share of the applicable class of common stock. All such holders vote together as a single class. However, holders of our Class B common stock do not have any right to receive dividends or distributions upon our liquidation or winding up. Each share of Class B common stock is, from time to time, exchangeable, when paired together with one LP Unit (as defined herein), for one share of Class A common stock, subject to equitable adjustment for stock splits, stock dividends and reclassifications.

Investing in our shares involves a number of risks. See "Risk Factors" in our most recent annual report on Form 10-K, which is incorporated by reference herein, as well as in any other recently filed quarterly or current reports and, if any, the relevant prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") nor any state securities commission nor any other regulatory body has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is March 16, 2020.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE | ii |
| SUMMARY | 1 |
| USE OF PROCEEDS | 2 |
| DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK | 3 |
| U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS | 6 |
| PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION | 32 |
| LEGAL MATTERS | 35 |
| EXPERTS | 35 |
| WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION | 35 |

Neither we nor the Selling Stockholders have authorized any dealer, salesperson or other person to give any information or to make any representation other than those contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus and the accompanying supplement to this prospectus or any associated "free writing prospectus." In this prospectus, any reference to an applicable prospectus supplement may refer to a "free writing prospectus," unless the context otherwise requires. You must not rely upon any information or representation not contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus or the accompanying prospectus supplement. This prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement do not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities other than the registered securities to which they relate, nor do this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy securities in any jurisdiction to any person to whom it is unlawful to make such offer or solicitation in such jurisdiction. You should not assume that the information contained in this prospectus and the accompanying prospectus supplement is accurate on any date subsequent to the date set forth on the front of the document.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to "incorporate by reference" information into this prospectus, which means that we can disclose important information about us by referring you to another document filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is considered to be a part of this prospectus. This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents and reports listed below (other than portions of these documents that are either (1) described in paragraph (e) of Item 201 of Regulation S-K or paragraphs (d)(1)-(3) and (e)(5) of Item 407 of Regulation S-K promulgated by the SEC or (2) deemed to have been furnished and not filed in accordance with SEC rules, including Current Reports on Form 8-K furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 (including any financial statements or exhibits relating thereto furnished pursuant to Item 9.01)), unless otherwise indicated therein:

- [Ladder Capital Corp's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2019 \(our "Annual Report on Form 10-K"\) filed with the SEC on February 28, 2020;](#)
- [Item 7 of Ladder Capital Corp's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2018 filed with the SEC on February 28, 2019; and](#)
- [Ladder Capital Corp's Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on January 30, 2020.](#)

We also incorporate by reference the information contained in all other documents we file with the SEC pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act (other than portions of these documents that are either (1) described in paragraph (e) of Item 201 of Regulation S-K or paragraphs (d)(1)-(3) and (e)(5) of Item 407 of Regulation S-K promulgated by the SEC or (2) deemed to have been furnished and not filed in accordance with SEC rules, including Current Reports on Form 8-K furnished under Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 (including any financial statements or exhibits relating thereto furnished pursuant to Item 9.01, unless otherwise indicated therein)) after the date of this prospectus and prior to the completion of the offering of all securities covered by the respective prospectus supplement. The information contained in any such document will be considered part of this prospectus from the date the document is filed with the SEC.

If you make a request for such information in writing or by telephone, we will provide you, without charge, a copy of any or all of the information incorporated by reference into this prospectus. Any such request should be directed to:

Ladder Capital Corp
345 Park Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10154
Attention: Investor Relations
Telephone: (212) 715-3170

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus, in any accompanying prospectus supplement or in any free writing prospectus filed by us with the SEC. We have not authorized anyone to provide you with different or additional information. We are not offering to sell or soliciting any offer to buy any securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus or in any document incorporated by reference is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front cover of the applicable document.

SUMMARY

This summary highlights selected information from this document and does not contain all of the information that is important to you. To understand the terms of our Class A common stock, you should carefully read this document with any accompanying prospectus supplement. Together, these documents will give the specific terms of the securities we are offering. You should also read the documents we have incorporated by reference into this prospectus for information on us and our financial statements.

About this Prospectus

This prospectus is part of a registration statement on Form S-3 that we filed with the SEC as a "well-known seasoned issuer" as defined in Rule 405 under the Securities Act of 1933, using a "shelf" registration process. Under this shelf process, we may, from time to time, and the Selling Stockholders may, from time to time, offer and sell shares of our Class A common stock in one or more offerings.

This prospectus provides you with a general description of the shares of our Class A common stock that we and the Selling Stockholders may offer. Each time we or the Selling Stockholders sell shares of our Class A common stock, we will, to the extent required by law, provide a prospectus supplement that contains specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may add information to this prospectus or update or change information in this prospectus. If there is any inconsistency between the information in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement, you should rely on the information in the prospectus supplement. You should carefully read this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with the additional information described under the headings "Where You Can Find More Information" and "Incorporation of Certain Information by Reference." You should assume that the information in this prospectus is accurate only as of the date of this prospectus.

Our Company

We are an internally managed real estate investment trust ("REIT") for U.S. federal income tax purposes that is a leader in commercial real estate finance. We originate and invest in a diverse portfolio of commercial real estate and real estate-related assets, focusing on senior secured assets. Our investment activities include: (i) direct origination of commercial real estate first mortgage loans; (ii) investments in investment grade securities secured by first mortgage loans on commercial real estate; and (iii) investments in net leased and other commercial real estate equity. We believe that our in-house origination platform, ability to flexibly allocate capital among complementary product lines, credit-centric underwriting approach, access to diversified financing sources, and experienced management team position us well to deliver attractive returns on equity to our shareholders through economic and credit cycles.

Corporate Information

Ladder Capital Corp was incorporated on May 21, 2013 in Delaware. Our principal executive offices are located at 345 Park Avenue, 8th Floor, New York, New York 10154, and our telephone number is (212) 715-3170. We maintain a website at www.laddercapital.com. **The information contained on our website is not intended to form a part of, or be incorporated by reference into, this prospectus.**

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise indicated in any applicable prospectus supplement, we intend to use the net proceeds from the sale of any Class A common stock offered by us under this prospectus and any related prospectus supplement for our operations and for general corporate purposes. These purposes may include financing of acquisitions and capital expenditures, additions to working capital and repayment or redemption of existing indebtedness. Additional information on the use of net proceeds from the sale of Class A common stock that we may offer from time to time by this prospectus may be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to a particular offering.

We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of shares of our Class A common stock by any Selling Stockholder. All of the shares of Class A common stock offered by the Selling Stockholders pursuant to this prospectus and any related prospectus supplement will be sold by the Selling Stockholders for their own account. We may, however, bear a portion of the expenses of the offering of Class A common stock by the Selling Stockholders, except that the Selling Stockholders will pay any applicable underwriting fees, discounts or commissions and certain transfer taxes.

DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK

The following is a summary description of our Class A common stock and does not purport to be complete. For a complete description of our Class A common stock, please refer to our Second Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, as amended (our "Certificate of Incorporation"), and Amended and Restated Bylaws (our "Bylaws"). This summary description is qualified in its entirety by reference to these documents, each of which is included as an exhibit to the registration statement, of which this prospectus is a part, and the text of the relevant provisions of the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware (the "DGCL").

Authorized Capitalization

Our authorized capital stock consists of 600,000,000 shares of Class A common stock, par value \$0.001 per share, 100,000,000 shares of Class B common stock, par value \$0.001 per share, and 100,000,000 shares of preferred stock, par value \$0.001 per share. The number of authorized shares of any class may be increased or decreased by an amendment to our Certificate of Incorporation approved by our board of directors and by a majority of voting shares voted on the issue at a meeting at which a quorum exists.

Class A Common Stock

Voting Rights

Holders of shares of Class A common stock are entitled to one vote per share on all matters on which stockholders generally are entitled to vote. Holders of our Class B common stock vote together with holders of our Class A common stock on all such matters. Our stockholders do not have cumulative voting rights in the election of directors.

Dividend Rights

Subject to the rights of the holders of any preferred stock that may be outstanding and any contractual or statutory restrictions, holders of our Class A common stock are entitled to receive equally and ratably, share for share, dividends as may be declared by our board of directors out of funds legally available to pay dividends. Dividends upon our Class A common stock may be declared by the board of directors at any regular or special meeting, and may be paid in cash, in property, or in shares of capital stock.

Liquidation Rights

Upon liquidation, dissolution, distribution of assets or other winding up, the holders of Class A common stock are entitled to receive ratably the assets available for distribution to the stockholders after payment of liabilities and the liquidation preference of any of our outstanding shares of preferred stock.

Other Matters

The shares of Class A common stock have no preemptive or conversion rights and are not subject to further calls or assessment by us. There are no redemption or sinking fund provisions applicable to the Class A common stock. All outstanding shares of our Class A common stock are fully paid and non-assessable.

Anti-Takeover Effects of Certain Provisions of Delaware Law and our Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws

Certain provisions of our Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws, which are summarized in the following paragraphs, may have an anti-takeover effect and may delay, defer or prevent a tender offer or takeover attempt that a stockholder might consider in its best interest, including those attempts that might result in a premium over the market price for the shares held by stockholders.

Undesignated Preferred Stock

The ability to authorize undesignated preferred stock makes it possible for our board of directors to issue preferred stock with super voting, special approval, dividend or other rights or preferences on a discriminatory basis that could impede the success of any attempt to acquire us or otherwise effect a change in control of us.

Calling of Special Meetings of Stockholders

Our Bylaws provide that special meetings of our stockholders may be called at any time only by the chief executive officer or the board of directors.

Stockholder Action by Written Consent

Our Certificate of Incorporation precludes stockholder action by written consent.

Advance Notice Requirements for Stockholder Proposals and Director Nominations

Our Bylaws establish advance notice procedures with respect to stockholder proposals and the nomination of candidates for election as directors. In order for any matter to be "properly brought" before a meeting, a stockholder will have to comply with advance notice requirements and provide us with certain information. Our Bylaws allow the presiding chairman at a meeting of the stockholders to adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of meetings, which may have the effect of precluding the conduct of certain business at a meeting if the rules and regulations are not followed.

Removal of Directors; Vacancies

Our Certificate of Incorporation provides that directors may be removed only with cause and upon the affirmative vote of holders of at least a majority of the voting power of all the then outstanding shares of stock entitled to vote generally in the election of directors, voting together as a single class. In addition, our Bylaws provide that any newly-created directorship on the board of directors that results from an increase in the number of directors and any vacancy occurring on the board of directors shall be filled only by a majority of the directors then in office, although less than a quorum, or by a sole remaining director.

Delaware Anti-Takeover Statute

We are subject to Section 203 of the DGCL. Subject to specified exceptions, Section 203 prohibits a publicly-held Delaware corporation from engaging in a "business combination" with an "interested stockholder" for a period of three years after the date of the transaction in which the person became an interested stockholder. "Business combinations" include mergers, asset sales and other transactions resulting in a financial benefit to the "interested stockholder." Subject to various exceptions, an "interested stockholder" is a person who together with his or her affiliates and associates, owns, or within three years did own, 15% or more of the corporation's outstanding voting stock. These restrictions generally prohibit or delay the accomplishment of mergers or other takeover or change in control attempts.

[Table of Contents](#)

Limitations on Liability and Indemnification of Officers and Directors

Subject to the limitations included in the DGCL, our Certificate of Incorporation includes a provision that eliminates the personal liability of directors for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director.

Our Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws provide that we must indemnify our directors and officers to the fullest extent authorized by the DGCL. We are also expressly authorized to, and do, carry directors' and officers' insurance providing coverage for our directors, officers and certain employees for some liabilities.

The limitation of liability and indemnification provisions in our Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws may discourage stockholders from bringing a lawsuit against directors for breach of their fiduciary duty. These provisions may also have the effect of reducing the likelihood of derivative litigation against directors and officers, even though such an action, if successful, might otherwise benefit us and our stockholders.

REIT-related Restrictions on the Ownership of and Ability to Transfer our Class A Common Stock

Among other things, our Certificate of Incorporation provides that, subject to the exceptions and the constructive ownership rules described therein, no person may own, or be deemed to own, in excess of (i) 9.8% in value of the outstanding shares of all classes or series of our capital stock or (ii) 9.8% in value or number (whichever is more restrictive) of the outstanding shares of any class of our common stock, or such other percentage determined by the board of directors in accordance with our Certificate of Incorporation.

In addition, our Certificate of Incorporation prohibits (i) any person from transferring shares of our capital stock if such transfer would result in shares of our capital stock being beneficially owned by fewer than 100 persons, and (ii) any person from beneficially or constructively owning shares of our capital stock if such ownership would result in us failing to qualify as a REIT.

These ownership limitations and transfer restrictions could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a takeover or other transaction in which stockholders might receive a premium for their shares of our capital stock over the then prevailing market price or which stockholders might believe to be otherwise in their best interest.

Choice of Forum

Our Certificate of Incorporation provides that, unless we consent in writing to the selection of an alternative forum, the Court of Chancery of the State of Delaware will be the exclusive forum for (a) any derivative action or proceeding brought on our behalf; (b) any action asserting a breach of fiduciary duty; (c) any action asserting a claim against us arising pursuant to the DGCL, our Certificate of Incorporation or our Bylaws; or (d) any action asserting a claim against us that is governed by the internal affairs doctrine.

Transfer Agent and Registrar

The transfer agent and registrar for our Class A common stock is American Stock Transfer & Trust Company, LLC.

New York Stock Exchange Listing

Our Class A common stock is listed on the NYSE under the symbol "LADR."

U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following is a summary of the material U.S. federal income tax consequences of an investment in the Class A common stock of Ladder. For purposes of this section under the heading "U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations," references to "Ladder," "we," "our" and "us" generally mean only Ladder and not its subsidiaries or other lower tier entities, except as otherwise indicated. This summary is based upon the Code, the regulations promulgated by the U.S. Department of the Treasury (the "Treasury"), rulings and other administrative pronouncements issued by the Internal Revenue Service (the "IRS"), and judicial decisions, all as currently in effect, and all of which are subject to differing interpretations or to change, possibly with retroactive effect. No assurance can be given that the IRS would not assert, or that a court would not sustain, a position contrary to any of the tax consequences described below. We have not sought and do not intend to seek an advance ruling from the IRS regarding our ability to qualify as a REIT. The summary is also based upon the assumption that we and our subsidiaries and affiliated entities will operate in accordance with our and their applicable organizational documents. This summary is for general information only and is not tax advice. It does not discuss any state, local, or non-U.S. tax consequences relevant to us or an investment in our Class A common stock, and it does not purport to discuss all aspects of U.S. federal income taxation that may be important to a particular investor in light of its investment or tax circumstances or to investors subject to special tax rules, such as:

- financial institutions;
- insurance companies;
- broker-dealers;
- regulated investment companies;
- partnerships and entities or arrangements treated as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes;
- persons who hold our stock on behalf of other persons as nominees or are otherwise not beneficial owners of our common stock;
- persons who receive our stock through the exercise of employee stock options or otherwise as compensation;
- persons holding our stock as part of a "straddle," "hedge," "conversion transaction," "synthetic security" or other integrated investment; and
- persons that are required to accelerate the recognition of any item of gross income as a result of such income being recognized on an applicable financial statement;
- and, except to the extent discussed below:
- tax-exempt organizations; and
- foreign investors.

This summary assumes that investors will hold our Class A common stock as a capital asset, which generally means as property held for investment.

The U.S. federal income tax treatment of holders of our stock depends in some instances on determinations of fact and interpretations of complex provisions of U.S. federal income tax law for which no clear precedent or authority may be available. In addition, the tax consequences to any particular stockholder of holding and disposing of our Class A common stock will depend on the stockholder's particular tax circumstances. You are urged to consult your tax advisor regarding the U.S. federal, state, local, and foreign income and other tax consequences to you in light of your

particular investment or tax circumstances of acquiring, holding, exchanging, or otherwise disposing of our Class A common stock.

Taxation of Ladder Capital Corp

We elected to be subject to tax as a REIT commencing with our taxable year ended December 31, 2015. We believe that, commencing with such taxable year, we have been organized and have operated in such a manner as to qualify for taxation as a REIT under the applicable provisions of the Code. We intend to continue to operate in such a manner to continue to qualify for taxation as a REIT.

The law firm of Kirkland & Ellis LLP has acted as our tax counsel in connection with our election to be taxed as a REIT. In connection with this offering, we expect to receive an opinion of Kirkland & Ellis LLP to the effect that, commencing with our taxable year ended December 31, 2015, we have been organized in conformity with the requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT under the Code, and that our actual method of operation has enabled us and our proposed method of operation will enable us to meet the requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT. It must be emphasized that the opinion of Kirkland & Ellis LLP will be based on various assumptions relating to our organization and operation, and will be conditioned upon fact-based representations and covenants made by our management regarding our organization, assets, and income, and the present and future conduct of our business operations. While we intend to operate so that we will qualify as a REIT, given the highly complex nature of the rules governing REITs, the ongoing importance of factual determinations, and the possibility of future changes in our circumstances, no assurance can be given by Kirkland & Ellis LLP or by us that we will qualify as a REIT for any particular year. The opinion will be expressed as of the date issued. Kirkland & Ellis LLP has no obligation to advise us or our stockholders of any subsequent change in the matters stated, represented or assumed, or of any subsequent change in the applicable law. You should be aware that opinions of counsel are not binding on the IRS, and no assurance can be given that the IRS will not challenge the conclusions set forth in such opinions. In addition, Kirkland & Ellis LLP's opinion does not foreclose the possibility that we may have to utilize one or more REIT savings provisions discussed below, which could require the payment of an excise or penalty tax (which could be significant in amount) in order to maintain our REIT qualification.

Our qualification and taxation as a REIT depends on our ability to meet on a continuing basis, through actual operating results, distribution levels, and diversity of stock and asset ownership, various qualification requirements imposed upon REITs by the Code, the compliance with which will not be reviewed by Kirkland & Ellis LLP. Our ability to qualify as a REIT also requires that we satisfy certain asset tests, some of which depend upon the fair market values of assets that we own directly or indirectly. Such values may not be susceptible to a precise determination. Accordingly, no assurance can be given that the actual results of our operations for any taxable year will satisfy such requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT.

Taxation of REITs in general

As indicated above, our qualification and taxation as a REIT depends upon our ability to meet, on a continuing basis, various qualification requirements imposed upon REITs by the Code. The material qualification requirements are summarized below under "—Requirements for qualification—General." While we intend to operate so that we qualify as a REIT, no assurance can be given that the IRS will not challenge our qualification, or that we will be able to operate in accordance with the REIT requirements in the future. See "—Failure to qualify."

Provided that we qualify as a REIT, we will be entitled to a deduction for dividends that we pay and therefore will not be subject to U.S. federal corporate income tax on our taxable income that is currently distributed to our stockholders. This treatment substantially eliminates the "double taxation"

[Table of Contents](#)

at the corporate and stockholder levels that generally results from investment in a corporation. In general, the income that we generate is taxed only at the stockholder level upon a distribution of dividends to our stockholders.

Currently, most U.S. stockholders that are individuals, trusts or estates are taxed on corporate dividends that represent "qualified dividend income" at a maximum regular U.S. federal income tax rate of 20%. With limited exceptions, however, dividends from us or from other entities that are taxed as REITs are generally not eligible for this rate and will continue to be taxed at rates applicable to ordinary income, which are currently as high as 37%. However, for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, U.S. stockholders that are individuals, trusts or estates may generally deduct 20% of certain qualified business income, including "qualified REIT dividends" (generally, dividends received by a REIT stockholder that are not designated as capital gain dividends or qualified dividend income), subject to certain limitations, resulting in an effective maximum U.S. federal income tax rate of 29.6% on such income. See "[Taxation of stockholders—Taxation of taxable U.S. Holders—Distributions.](#)"

Any net operating losses, foreign tax credits and other tax attributes generally do not pass through to our stockholders, subject to special rules for certain items such as the capital gains that we recognize. See "[Taxation of stockholders—Taxation of taxable U.S. Holders—Distributions.](#)" Provided we qualify as a REIT, we will nonetheless be subject to U.S. federal tax in the following circumstances:

- We will be taxed at regular U.S. federal corporate tax rates on any undistributed net taxable income, including undistributed net capital gain.
- For taxable years prior to January 1, 2018, we may be subject to the "alternative minimum tax" on our items of tax preference, if any.
- If we have net income from prohibited transactions, which are, in general, sales or other dispositions of inventory or property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business, other than foreclosure property, such income will be subject to a 100% tax. See "[Prohibited transactions,](#)" and "[Foreclosure property](#)" below.
- If we elect to treat property that we acquire in connection with a foreclosure of a mortgage loan or certain leasehold terminations as "foreclosure property," we may thereby avoid the 100% tax on gain from a resale of that property (if the sale would otherwise constitute a prohibited transaction), but the income from the sale or operation of the property may be subject to U.S. federal corporate income tax at the highest applicable rate (currently 21%).
- If we fail to satisfy the 75% gross income test or the 95% gross income test, as discussed below, but nonetheless maintain our qualification as a REIT because we satisfy other requirements, we will be subject to a 100% tax on an amount based on the magnitude of the failure, as adjusted to reflect the profit margin associated with our gross income.
- If we derive "excess inclusion income" from an interest in certain mortgage loan securitization structures (i.e., a taxable mortgage pool ("TMP") or a residual interest in a real estate mortgage investment conduit ("REMIC")), we could be subject to corporate level U.S. federal income tax at the highest applicable rate to the extent that such income is allocable to specified types of tax exempt stockholders known as "disqualified organizations" that are not subject to unrelated business income tax. See "[Taxable Mortgage Pools and Excess Inclusion Income](#)" below.
- If we violate the asset tests (other than certain *de minimis* violations) or other requirements applicable to REITs, as described below, and yet maintain our qualification as a REIT because there is reasonable cause for the failure and other applicable requirements are met, we may be subject to a penalty tax. In that case, the amount of the penalty tax will be at least \$50,000 per failure, and, in the case of certain asset test failures, will be determined as the amount of net income generated by the assets in question multiplied by the highest corporate tax rate (currently 21%) if that amount exceeds \$50,000 per failure.

[Table of Contents](#)

- If we fail to distribute during each calendar year at least the sum of: (i) 85% of our REIT ordinary income for such year; (ii) 95% of our REIT capital gain net income for such year; and (iii) any undistributed net taxable income from prior periods, we will be subject to a nondeductible 4% excise tax on the excess of the required distribution over the sum of: (a) the amounts that we actually distributed and (b) the amounts we retained and upon which we paid income tax at the corporate level.
- We may be required to pay monetary penalties to the IRS in certain circumstances, including if we fail to meet record-keeping requirements intended to monitor our compliance with rules relating to the composition of a REIT's stockholders, as described below in "*—Requirements for qualification—General.*"
- A 100% tax may be imposed on transactions between us and a TRS that do not reflect arm's-length terms.
- If we sell any of our existing appreciated assets or if we acquire appreciated assets from a corporation that is not a REIT (i.e., a corporation taxable under subchapter C of the Code) in a transaction in which the adjusted tax basis of the assets in our hands is determined by reference to the adjusted tax basis of the assets in the hands of the subchapter C corporation, we may be subject to tax on such appreciation at the highest U.S. federal corporate income tax rate then applicable if we subsequently recognize gain on a disposition of any such assets during the five-year period following their acquisition from the subchapter C corporation.
- The earnings of our TRSs will be subject to U.S. federal corporate income tax to the extent that such subsidiaries are subchapter C corporations.

In addition, we and our subsidiaries may be subject to a variety of other taxes, including payroll taxes and state, local, and foreign income, property and other taxes on our assets and operations. We could also be subject to tax in situations and on transactions not presently contemplated.

Requirements for qualification—General

The Code defines a REIT as a corporation, trust or association:

1. that is managed by one or more trustees or directors;
2. the beneficial ownership of which is evidenced by transferable shares, or by transferable certificates of beneficial interest;
3. that would be taxable as a domestic corporation but for its election to be subject to tax as a REIT;
4. that is neither a financial institution nor an insurance company subject to specific provisions of the Code;
5. the beneficial ownership of which is held by 100 or more persons;
6. in which, during the last half of each taxable year, not more than 50% in value of the outstanding stock is owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer "individuals" (as defined in the Code to include specified tax-exempt entities); and
7. that meets other tests described below, including with respect to the nature of its income and assets.

The Code provides that conditions (1) through (4) must be met during the entire taxable year, and that condition (5) must be met during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months, or during a proportionate part of a shorter taxable year. Conditions (5) and (6) need not be met during a corporation's initial tax year as a REIT (which, in our case, was 2015). Our Certificate of Incorporation

[Table of Contents](#)

provides restrictions regarding the ownership and transfers of our stock, which are intended to assist us in satisfying the stock ownership requirements described in conditions (5) and (6) above.

To monitor compliance with the stock ownership requirements, we generally are required to maintain records regarding the actual ownership of our stock. To do so, we must demand written statements each year from the record holders of significant percentages of our stock pursuant to which the record holders must disclose the actual owners of the stock (i.e., the persons required to include our dividends in their gross income). We must maintain a list of those persons failing or refusing to comply with this demand as part of our records. We could be subject to monetary penalties if we fail to comply with these record-keeping requirements. If you fail or refuse to comply with the demands, you will be required by Treasury regulations to submit a statement with your tax return disclosing your actual ownership of our stock and other information.

In addition, a corporation generally may not elect to become a REIT unless its taxable year is the calendar year. We adopted December 31 as our year-end, and thereby satisfy this requirement.

Effect of subsidiary entities

Ownership of partnership interests. We are a partner in entities that are treated as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes (e.g., directly in our Series REIT operating partnership and indirectly through a TRS in our Series TRS operating partnership). Treasury regulations provide that we are deemed to own our proportionate share of our Series REIT operating partnership's assets, and to earn our proportionate share of such partnership's income, for purposes of the asset and gross income tests applicable to REITs. Our proportionate share of our Series REIT operating partnership's assets and income is based on our capital interest in the partnership (except that for purposes of the 10% value test, described below, our proportionate share of the partnership's assets is based on our proportionate interest in the equity and certain debt securities issued by the partnership). In addition, the assets and gross income of the partnership are deemed to retain the same character in our hands. Thus, our proportionate share of the assets and items of income of any of our subsidiary partnerships generally will be treated as our assets and items of income for purposes of applying the REIT requirements.

We generally have control of our operating partnerships and the subsidiary partnerships and limited liability companies and intend to operate them in a manner consistent with the requirements for our qualification as a REIT. If we become a limited partner or non-managing member in any partnership or limited liability company and such entity takes or expects to take actions that could jeopardize our status as a REIT or require us to pay tax, we may be forced to dispose of our interest in such entity. In addition, it is possible that a partnership or limited liability company could take an action which could cause us to fail a gross income or asset test, and that we would not become aware of such action in time to dispose of our interest in the partnership or limited liability company or take other corrective action on a timely basis. In that case, we could fail to qualify as a REIT unless we were entitled to relief, as described below.

Disregarded subsidiaries. If we own a corporate subsidiary that is a "qualified REIT subsidiary," that subsidiary is generally disregarded for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and all of the subsidiary's assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit are treated as our assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit, including for purposes of the gross income and asset tests applicable to REITs. A qualified REIT subsidiary is any corporation, other than a TRS (as described below), that is directly or indirectly wholly-owned by a REIT. Other entities that are wholly-owned by us, including single member limited liability companies that have not elected to be taxed as corporations for U.S. federal income tax purposes, are also generally disregarded as separate entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes, including for purposes of the REIT income and asset tests. Disregarded subsidiaries, along with any partnerships in which we hold an equity interest, are sometimes referred to herein as "pass-through subsidiaries."

[Table of Contents](#)

In the event that a disregarded subsidiary of ours ceases to be wholly-owned—for example, if any equity interest in the subsidiary is acquired by a person other than us or another disregarded subsidiary of ours—the subsidiary's separate existence would no longer be disregarded for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Instead, the subsidiary would have multiple owners and would be treated as either a partnership or a taxable corporation. Such an event could, depending on the circumstances, adversely affect our ability to satisfy the various asset and gross income requirements applicable to REITs, including the requirement that REITs generally may not own, directly or indirectly, more than 10% of the securities of another corporation. See "—Asset tests" and "—Income tests."

Taxable subsidiaries. In general, we may jointly elect with a subsidiary corporation, whether or not wholly-owned (including a corporation owned by our operating partnership), to treat such subsidiary corporation as a TRS. We generally may not own more than 10% of the securities of a taxable corporation, as measured by voting power or value, unless we and such corporation elect to treat such corporation as a TRS. The separate existence of a TRS or other taxable corporation is not ignored for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Accordingly, a TRS or other taxable subsidiary corporation generally is subject to U.S. federal corporate income tax on its earnings, which may reduce the cash flow that we and our subsidiaries generate in the aggregate, and may reduce our ability to make distributions to our stockholders.

We are not treated as holding the assets of a TRS or other taxable subsidiary corporation or as receiving any income that the subsidiary earns. Rather, the stock issued by a taxable subsidiary to us is an asset in our hands, and we treat the dividends paid to us from such taxable subsidiary, if any, as income. This treatment can affect our income and asset test calculations, as described below. Because we do not include the assets and income of TRSs or other taxable subsidiary corporations on a look-through basis in determining our compliance with the REIT requirements, we may use such entities to undertake indirectly activities that the REIT rules might otherwise preclude us from doing directly or through pass-through subsidiaries. For example, we may use TRSs or other taxable subsidiary corporations to perform services or conduct activities that give rise to certain categories of income such as management fees or to conduct activities that, if conducted by us directly, would be treated in our hands as prohibited transactions.

The TRS rules limit the deductibility of interest paid or accrued by a TRS to its parent REIT to assure that the TRS is subject to an appropriate level of corporate taxation. Further, the rules impose a 100% excise tax on transactions between a TRS and its parent REIT or the REIT's tenants (if any) that are not conducted on an arm's-length basis. We intend that all of our transactions with our TRSs, if any, will be conducted on an arm's-length basis. We may make loans to certain of our TRSs. Deductions for interest paid on any such loan by a TRS may be limited to the sum of (i) the interest income of the TRS for the taxable year, and (ii) 30% of the adjusted taxable income for the taxable year.

Income tests

To qualify as a REIT, we must satisfy two gross income requirements on an annual basis. First, at least 75% of our gross income for each taxable year, excluding gross income from sales of inventory or dealer property in "prohibited transactions," discharge of indebtedness and certain hedging transactions, generally must be derived from investments relating to real property or mortgages on real property, including interest income derived from mortgage loans secured by real property (including certain types of mortgage-backed securities), "rents from real property," dividends received from other REITs, and gains from the sale of real property, mortgages on real property, and shares in other REITs, as well as specified income from temporary investments. Second, at least 95% of our gross income in each taxable year, excluding gross income from prohibited transactions, discharge of indebtedness and certain hedging transactions, must be derived from some combination of income that qualifies under the 75% gross income test described above, as well as other dividends, interest, and

[Table of Contents](#)

gain from the sale or disposition of stock or securities, which need not have any relation to real property. Income and gain from certain hedging transactions will be excluded from both the numerator and the denominator for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests.

Interest income. Interest income constitutes qualifying mortgage interest for purposes of the 75% gross income test (as described above) to the extent that the obligation upon which such interest is paid is secured by a mortgage on real property. If we receive interest income with respect to a mortgage loan that is secured by both real property and other property, and the highest principal amount of the loan outstanding during a taxable year exceeds the fair market value of the real property on the date that we acquired or originated the mortgage loan, the interest income will generally be apportioned between the real property and the other collateral, and our income from the arrangement will qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test only to the extent that the interest is allocable to the real property. See "—Interest and REMIC apportionment." Even if a loan is not secured by real property, or is undersecured (such that all or a portion of the interest thereon does not qualify for the 75% gross income test), the income that it generates may nonetheless qualify for purposes of the 95% gross income test.

We may invest in U.S. Agency and non-U.S. Agency mortgage-backed securities that are either mortgage pass-through certificates or CMOs. We expect that such mortgage-backed securities will be treated either as interests in a grantor trust or as interests in a REMIC for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In the case of mortgage-backed securities treated as interests in grantor trusts, we would be treated as owning an undivided beneficial ownership interest in the mortgage loans held by the grantor trust. The interest on such mortgage loans would be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test to the extent that the obligation is secured by real property, as discussed above. In the case of mortgage-backed securities treated as interests in a REMIC, income derived from REMIC interests will generally be treated as qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income tests. If less than 95% of the assets of the REMIC are real estate assets, however, then only a proportionate part of our interest in the REMIC and income derived from the interest will qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test. In addition, some REMIC securitizations include imbedded interest swap or cap contracts or other derivative instruments that potentially could produce non-qualifying income for the holder of the related REMIC securities. We expect that substantially all of our income from mortgage-backed securities will be qualifying income for purposes of the REIT gross income tests.

Interest income constitutes qualifying mortgage interest for purposes of the 75% gross income test to the extent that the obligation upon which such interest is paid is secured by a mortgage on real property. If we receive interest income with respect to a mortgage loan that is secured by both real property and other property, and the highest principal amount of the loan outstanding during a taxable year exceeds the fair market value of the real property on the date that we acquired or originated the mortgage loan, the interest income generally will be apportioned between the real property and the other collateral, and our income from the arrangement will qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test only to the extent that the interest is allocable to the real property. In certain cases, personal property collateral securing a loan that we hold may be treated as real property for purposes of the foregoing rules. In addition, in certain cases (unless a safe harbor applies pursuant to IRS guidance), the modification of a debt instrument could result in the conversion of the interest paid on the instrument from qualifying income to wholly or partially non-qualifying income, which may require that we dispose of the debt instrument or contribute it to a TRS in order to satisfy the income tests described above. Moreover, the IRS has taken the position that, for purposes of the REIT income tests, the principal amount of a loan is equal to its face amount, even in situations where the loan was acquired at a significant discount. Under this position, a portion of the income generated by the instrument would not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test in cases where the underlying real property has declined in value. Even if a loan is not secured by real property, or is undersecured, the income that it generates may nonetheless qualify for purposes of the 95% gross income test.

[Table of Contents](#)

To the extent that the terms of a loan provide for contingent interest that is based on the cash proceeds realized upon the sale of the property securing the loan, income attributable to the participation feature will be treated as gain from sale of the underlying property, which generally will be qualifying income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests provided that the property is not held as inventory or dealer property. To the extent that we derive interest income from a mortgage loan, or income from the rental of real property, where all or a portion of the amount of interest or rental income payable is contingent, such income generally will qualify for purposes of the gross income tests only if it is based upon the gross receipts or sales, and not the net income or profits, of the borrower or lessee. This limitation does not apply, however, where the borrower or lessee leases substantially all of its interest in the property to tenants or subtenants, to the extent that the rental income derived by the borrower or lessee, as the case may be, would qualify as rents from real property had we earned the income directly.

We may invest in mezzanine loans, which are loans secured by equity interests in an entity that directly or indirectly owns real property, rather than by a direct mortgage of the real property. The IRS has issued Revenue Procedure 2003-65 (the "Revenue Procedure"), which provides a safe harbor applicable to mezzanine loans. Under the Revenue Procedure, if a mezzanine loan meets each of the requirements contained in the Revenue Procedure, (1) the mezzanine loan will be treated by the IRS as a real estate asset for purposes of the asset tests described below, and (2) interest derived from the mezzanine loan will be treated as qualifying mortgage interest for purposes of the 75% gross income test. Although the Revenue Procedure provides a safe harbor on which taxpayers may rely, it does not prescribe rules of substantive tax law and certain typical mezzanine loan aspects may not be described in the Revenue Procedure. We generally intend to structure any investments in mezzanine loans in a manner that reasonably complies with the various requirements applicable to our qualification as a REIT. To the extent that any of our mezzanine loans do not meet all of the requirements for reliance on the safe harbor set forth in the Revenue Procedure, however, there can be no assurance that the IRS will not challenge the tax treatment of these loans.

Rents from real property. Rents received by us, if any, will qualify as "rents from real property" in satisfying the gross income requirements described above only if several conditions are met. If rent is partly attributable to personal property leased in connection with a lease of real property, the portion of the rent that is attributable to the personal property will not qualify as "rents from real property" unless it constitutes 15% or less of the total rent received under the lease. In addition, the amount of rent must not be based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. Amounts received as rent, however, generally will not be excluded from rents from real property solely by reason of being based on fixed percentages of gross receipts or sales. Moreover, for rents received by us, if any, to qualify as "rents from real property," we generally must not operate or manage the property or furnish or render services to the tenants of such property, other than through an "independent contractor" from which we derive no revenue. We are permitted, however, to perform services that are "usually or customarily rendered" in connection with the rental of space for occupancy only and which are not otherwise considered rendered to the occupant of the property. In addition, we may directly or indirectly provide non customary services to tenants of our properties without disqualifying all of the rent from the property if the payments for such services does not exceed 1% of the total gross income from the property. For purposes of this test, we are deemed to have received income from such non customary services in an amount at least 150% of the direct cost of providing the services. Moreover, we are generally permitted to provide services to tenants or others through a TRS without disqualifying the rental income received from tenants for purposes of the income tests. Also, rental income will qualify as rents from real property only to the extent that we do not directly or constructively hold a 10% or greater interest, as measured by vote or value, in the lessee's equity.

Dividend income. We may directly or indirectly receive distributions from TRSs or other corporations that are not REITs or qualified REIT subsidiaries. These distributions generally are

[Table of Contents](#)

treated as dividend income to the extent of the earnings and profits of the distributing corporation. Such distributions will generally constitute qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test, but not for purposes of the 75% gross income test. Any dividends that we receive from a REIT, however, will be qualifying income for purposes of both the 95% and 75% gross income tests.

Fee income. Fees will generally be qualifying income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests if they are received in consideration for entering into an agreement to make a loan secured by real property and the fees are not determined by income and profits. Other fees generally will not be qualifying income for purposes of either gross income test. Any fees earned by a TRS, however, will not be included for purposes of the gross income tests.

Hedging transactions. Any income or gain that we or our pass-through subsidiaries derive from instruments that hedge certain specified risks will be excluded from gross income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests, provided that specified requirements are met, including the requirement that the instrument is entered into during the ordinary course of our business and that the instrument be properly identified as a hedge along with the risk that it hedges within prescribed time periods. Income and gain from all other hedging transactions will not be qualifying income for either the 95% or 75% gross income test. See "—Derivatives and Hedging Transactions."

Failure to satisfy the gross income tests. If we fail to satisfy one or both of the 75% or 95% gross income tests for any taxable year, we may still qualify as a REIT for such year if we are entitled to relief under applicable provisions of the Code. These relief provisions will generally be available if: (i) our failure to meet these tests was due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect; and (ii) following our identification of the failure to meet the 75% or 95% gross income test for any taxable year, we file a schedule with the IRS setting forth each item of our gross income for purposes of the 75% or 95% gross income test for such taxable year in accordance with Treasury regulations yet to be issued. It is not possible to state whether we would be entitled to the benefit of these relief provisions in all circumstances. If these relief provisions are inapplicable to a particular set of circumstances, we will not qualify as a REIT. Even where these relief provisions apply, the Code imposes a tax based upon the amount by which we fail to satisfy the particular gross income test.

Timing differences between receipt of cash and recognition of income. Due to the nature of the assets in which we will invest, we may be required to recognize taxable income from those assets in advance of our receipt of cash flow on or proceeds from disposition of such assets, and may be required to report taxable income in early periods that exceeds the economic income ultimately realized on such assets.

We may acquire mortgage-backed securities in the secondary market for less than their face amount. In addition, pursuant to our ownership of certain mortgage-backed securities, we may be treated as holding certain debt instruments acquired in the secondary market for less than their face amount. The discount at which such securities or debt instruments are acquired may reflect doubts about their ultimate collectability rather than current market interest rates. The amount of such discount may nevertheless generally be treated as "market discount" for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Accrued market discount is generally recognized as income when, and to the extent that, any payment of principal on the mortgage-backed security or debt instrument is made. If we collect less on the mortgage-backed security or debt instrument than our purchase price plus the market discount we had previously reported as income, we may not be able to benefit from any offsetting loss deductions.

Moreover, some of the mortgage-backed securities that we acquire may have been issued with original issue discount. In general, we will be required to accrue original issue discount based on the constant yield to maturity of the securities, and to treat it as taxable income in accordance with applicable U.S. federal income tax rules even though smaller or no cash payments are received on such securities. As in the case of the market discount discussed in the preceding paragraph, the constant

[Table of Contents](#)

yield in question will be determined and we will be taxed based on the assumption that all future payments due on the mortgage-backed securities in question will be made, with consequences similar to those described in the previous paragraph if all payments on the securities are not made.

In addition, pursuant to our ownership of certain mortgage-backed securities, we may be treated as holding distressed debt investments that are subsequently modified by agreement with the borrower. If the amendments to the outstanding debt are "significant modifications" under the applicable Treasury regulations, the modified debt may be considered to have been reissued to us in a debt-for-debt exchange with the borrower. In that event, we may be required to recognize taxable gain to the extent the principal amount of the modified debt exceeds our adjusted tax basis in the unmodified debt, even if the value of the debt or the payment expectations have not changed. Following such a taxable modification, we would hold the modified loan with a cost basis equal to its principal amount for U.S. federal tax purposes. To the extent that such modifications are made with respect to a debt instrument held by a TRS that is treated as a dealer or trader and that makes an election to use mark-to-market accounting, such TRS would be required at the end of each taxable year, including the taxable year in which any such modification were made, to mark the modified debt instrument to its fair market value as if the debt instrument were sold. In that case, the TRS could recognize a loss at the end of the taxable year in which the modifications were made to the extent that the fair market value of such debt instrument at such time was less than the instrument's tax basis.

In addition, in the event mortgage-backed securities, or any debt instruments we are treated as holding pursuant to our investments in mortgage-backed securities, are delinquent as to mandatory principal and interest payments, we may nonetheless be required to continue to recognize the unpaid interest as taxable income as it accrues, despite doubt as to its ultimate collectability. Similarly, we may be required to accrue interest income with respect to subordinate mortgage-backed securities at the stated rate regardless of whether corresponding cash payments are received.

Finally, we may be required under the terms of indebtedness that we incur to use cash received from interest payments to make principal payments on that indebtedness, with the effect of recognizing income but not having a corresponding amount of cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

Due to each of these potential timing differences between income recognition or expense deduction and cash receipts or disbursements, there is a significant risk that we may have substantial taxable income in excess of cash available for distribution. In that event, we may need to borrow funds or take other action to satisfy the REIT distribution requirements for the taxable year in which this "phantom income" is recognized. See "—Taxation of Ladder Capital Corp—Annual distribution requirements."

Asset tests

At the close of each calendar quarter, we must also satisfy five tests relating to the nature of our assets. First, at least 75% of the value of our total assets must be represented by some combination of "real estate assets," cash, cash items, U.S. government securities, and, under some circumstances, stock or debt instruments purchased with new capital. For this purpose, real estate assets include some kinds of mortgage-backed securities and mortgage loans, as well as interests in real property (and certain ancillary personal property), stock of other corporations that qualify as REITs, and debt instruments (whether or not secured by real property) that are issued by a "publicly offered REIT" (i.e., a REIT that is required to file annual and periodic reports with the SEC under the Exchange Act). Assets that do not qualify for purposes of the 75% asset test are subject to the additional asset tests described below.

Second, the value of any one issuer's securities that we own may not exceed 5% of the value of our total assets.

[Table of Contents](#)

Third, we may not own more than 10% of any one issuer's outstanding securities, as measured by either voting power or value. The 5% and 10% asset tests do not apply to real estate assets, securities of TRSs and qualified REIT subsidiaries and the value prong of the 10% asset test does not apply to "straight debt" having specified characteristics and to certain other securities described below. Solely for purposes of the 10% asset test, the determination of our interest in the assets of a partnership or limited liability company in which we own an interest will be based on our proportionate interest in any securities issued by the partnership or limited liability company, excluding for this purpose certain securities described in the Code.

Fourth, the aggregate value of all securities of TRSs that we hold may not exceed 25% (or, for our 2018 and subsequent taxable years, 20%) of the value of our total assets.

Fifth, no more than 25% of the total value of our assets may be represented by "nonqualified publicly offered REIT debt instruments" (i.e., real estate assets that would cease to be real estate assets if debt instruments issued by publicly offered REITs were not included in the definition of real estate assets).

Notwithstanding the general rule, as noted above, that for purposes of the REIT income and asset tests we are treated as owning our proportionate share of the underlying assets of a subsidiary partnership, if we hold indebtedness issued by a partnership, the indebtedness will be subject to, and may cause a violation of, the asset tests unless the indebtedness is a qualifying mortgage asset or other conditions are met. Similarly, although stock of a non-publicly offered REIT is a qualifying asset for purposes of the REIT asset tests, any non-mortgage debt that is issued by a non-publicly offered REIT may not so qualify (such debt, however, will not be treated as "securities" for purposes of the 10% asset value test, as explained below).

Certain securities will not cause a violation of the 10% asset value test described above. Such securities include instruments that constitute "straight debt," which term generally excludes, among other things, securities having contingency features. A security does not qualify as "straight debt" where a REIT (or a controlled TRS of the REIT) owns other securities of the same issuer which do not qualify as straight debt, unless the value of those other securities constitute, in the aggregate, 1% or less of the total value of that issuer's outstanding securities. In addition to straight debt, the Code provides that certain other securities will not violate the 10% asset value test. Such securities include: (i) any loan made to an individual or an estate; (ii) certain rental agreements pursuant to which one or more payments are to be made in subsequent years (other than agreements between a REIT and certain persons related to the REIT under attribution rules); (iii) any obligation to pay rents from real property; (iv) securities issued by governmental entities that are not dependent in whole or in part on the profits of (or payments made by) a non-governmental entity; (v) any security (including debt securities) issued by another REIT; and (vi) any debt instrument issued by a partnership if the partnership's income is of a nature that it would satisfy the 75% gross income test described above under "—Income tests." In applying the 10% asset value test, a debt security issued by a partnership is not taken into account to the extent, if any, of the REIT's proportionate interest in the equity and certain debt securities issued by that partnership.

We invest in Agency and non-Agency mortgage-backed securities that are either mortgage pass-through certificates or CMOs. We expect that these securities will be treated either as interests in grantor trusts or as interests in REMICs for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In the case of mortgage-backed securities treated as interests in grantor trusts, we would be treated as owning an undivided beneficial ownership interest in the mortgage loans held by the grantor trust. Such mortgage loans will generally qualify as real estate assets to the extent that they are secured by real property. We expect that substantially all of our mortgage-backed securities treated as interests in grantor trusts will qualify as real estate assets.

[Table of Contents](#)

In the case of mortgage-backed securities treated as interests in a REMIC, such interests will generally qualify as real estate assets. If less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC are real estate assets, however, then only a proportionate part of our interest in the REMIC and income derived from the interest will qualify for purposes of the REIT asset tests.

If we hold a "residual interest" in a REMIC from which we derive "excess inclusion income," we will be required to either distribute the excess inclusion income or pay tax on it (or a combination of the two), even though we may not receive the income in cash. To the extent that distributed excess inclusion income is allocable to a particular stockholder, the income: (i) would not be allowed to be offset by any net operating losses otherwise available to the stockholder; (ii) would be subject to tax as unrelated business taxable income in the hands of most types of stockholders that are otherwise generally exempt from U.S. federal income tax; and (iii) would result in the application of U.S. federal income tax withholding at the maximum rate (30%), without reduction pursuant to any otherwise applicable income tax treaty or other exemption, to the extent allocable to most types of foreign stockholders. Moreover, any excess inclusion income that we receive that is allocable to specified categories of tax-exempt investors which are not subject to unrelated business income tax ("UBIT"), such as government entities or charitable remainder trusts, may be subject to corporate-level income tax in our hands, whether or not it is distributed.

In addition, certain of our mezzanine loans may qualify for the safe harbor in the Revenue Procedure pursuant to which certain loans secured by a first priority security interest in ownership interests in a partnership or limited liability company will be treated as qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% real estate asset test and the 10% vote or value test. See "—Income Tests." We may make some mezzanine loans that do not qualify for that safe harbor and that do not qualify as "straight debt" securities or for one of the other exclusions from the definition of "securities" for purposes of the 10% asset value test. We intend to make such investments in such a manner as not to fail the asset tests described above, and we believe that our existing investments satisfy such requirements. We believe that our holdings of securities and other assets will comply with the foregoing REIT asset requirements, and we intend to monitor compliance on an ongoing basis.

We enter into sale and repurchase agreements under which we nominally sell certain of our mortgage-backed securities to a counterparty and simultaneously enter into an agreement to repurchase the sold assets in exchange for a purchase price that reflects a financing charge. Economically, these agreements are financings, which are secured by the securities "sold" pursuant thereto. We believe that we will be treated for REIT asset and income test purposes as the owner of the securities that are the subject of any such agreement notwithstanding that such agreements may transfer record ownership of the assets to the counterparty during the term of the agreement. It is possible, however, that the IRS could assert that we did not own the mortgage-backed securities during the term of the sale and repurchase agreement, in which case we could fail to qualify as a REIT.

No independent appraisals have been obtained to support our conclusions as to the value of our total assets or the value of any particular security or securities. Moreover, values of some assets, including instruments issued in securitization transactions, may not be susceptible to a precise determination, and values are subject to change in the future. Furthermore, the proper classification of an instrument as debt or equity for U.S. federal income tax purposes may be uncertain in some circumstances, which could affect the application of the REIT asset requirements. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that the IRS will not contend that our interests in our subsidiaries or in the securities of other issuers will not cause a violation of the REIT asset tests.

However, certain relief provisions are available to allow REITs to satisfy the asset requirements or to maintain REIT qualification notwithstanding certain violations of the asset and other requirements. One such provision allows a REIT which fails one or more of the asset requirements to nevertheless maintain its REIT qualification if: (i) the REIT provides the IRS with a description of each asset

[Table of Contents](#)

causing the failure; (ii) the failure is due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect; (iii) the REIT pays a tax equal to the greater of (a) \$50,000 per failure, and (b) the product of the net income generated by the assets that caused the failure multiplied by the highest applicable corporate tax rate (currently 21%); and (iv) the REIT either disposes of the assets causing the failure within six months after the last day of the quarter in which it identifies the failure, or otherwise satisfies the relevant asset tests within that time frame.

In the case of *de minimis* violations of the 10% and 5% asset tests, a REIT may maintain its qualification despite a violation of such requirements if: (i) the value of the assets causing the violation does not exceed the lesser of 1% of the REIT's total assets and \$10,000,000; and (ii) the REIT either disposes of the assets causing the failure within six months after the last day of the quarter in which it identifies the failure, or the relevant tests are otherwise satisfied within that time frame.

If we should fail to satisfy the asset tests at the end of a calendar quarter, such a failure would not cause us to lose our REIT qualification if we: (i) satisfied the asset tests at the close of the preceding calendar quarter; and (ii) the discrepancy between the value of our assets and the asset requirements was not wholly or partly caused by an acquisition of non-qualifying assets, but instead arose from changes in the market value of our assets. If the condition described in (ii) were not satisfied, we still could avoid disqualification by eliminating any discrepancy within 30 days after the close of the calendar quarter in which it arose or by making use of relief provisions described below.

Annual distribution requirements

In order to qualify as a REIT, we are required to distribute dividends, other than capital gain dividends, to our stockholders in an amount at least equal to:

- (a) the sum of:
 - (i) 90% of our net taxable income, computed without regard to our net capital gain and the deduction for dividends paid, and
 - (ii) 90% of our net income, if any, (after tax) from foreclosure property (as described below), minus
- (b) the sum of specified items of non-cash income.

We generally must make these distributions in the taxable year to which they relate, or in the following taxable year if declared before we timely file our tax return for the year and if paid with or before the first regular dividend payment after such declaration.

To the extent that we distribute at least 90%, but less than 100%, of our REIT taxable income, as adjusted, we will be subject to tax at ordinary corporate tax rates on the retained portion. We may elect to retain, rather than distribute, our net long-term capital gains and pay tax on such gains. In this case, we could elect for our stockholders to include their proportionate shares of such undistributed long-term capital gains in income, and to receive a corresponding credit for their share of the tax that we paid. Our stockholders would then increase their adjusted basis of their stock by the difference between: (a) the amounts of capital gain dividends that we designated and that they include in their taxable income, and (b) the tax that we paid on their behalf with respect to that income.

To the extent that in the future we may have available net operating losses carried forward from prior tax years, such losses may reduce the amount of distributions that we must make in order to comply with the REIT distribution requirements. Such losses, however, will generally not affect the character, in the hands of our stockholders, of any distributions that are actually made as ordinary dividends or capital gains. See "—Taxation of stockholders—Taxation of taxable U.S. Holders—Distributions."

[Table of Contents](#)

If we fail to distribute during each calendar year at least the sum of: (i) 85% of our REIT ordinary income for such year; (ii) 95% of our REIT capital gain net income for such year; and (iii) any undistributed net taxable income from prior periods, we will be subject to a non-deductible 4% excise tax on the excess of such required distribution over the sum of: (a) the amounts actually distributed, plus (b) the amounts of income we retained and on which we have paid U.S. federal corporate income tax.

As discussed above under "—Income tests—Timing differences between receipt of cash and recognition of income," it is possible that, from time to time, we may not have sufficient cash to meet the distribution requirements due to timing differences between our actual receipt of cash and our inclusion of items in income for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In the event that such timing differences occur, in order to meet the distribution requirements, it might be necessary for us to arrange for short-term, or possibly long-term, borrowings, or to pay dividends in the form of taxable in-kind distributions of property. Alternatively, we may declare a taxable dividend payable in cash or stock at the election of each stockholder, where the aggregate amount of cash to be distributed in such dividend may be subject to limitation. In such case, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, taxable stockholders receiving such dividends will be required to include the full amount of the dividend as ordinary income to the extent of our current and accumulated earnings and profits.

We may be able to rectify a failure to meet the distribution requirements for a year by paying "deficiency dividends" to stockholders in a later year, which may be included in our deduction for dividends paid for the earlier year. In this case, we may be able to avoid losing REIT qualification or being taxed on amounts distributed as deficiency dividends, subject to the 4% excise tax described above. We will be required to pay interest based on the amount of any deduction taken for deficiency dividends.

Prohibited transactions

Net income that we derive from a prohibited transaction is subject to a 100% tax. The term "prohibited transaction" generally includes a sale or other disposition of property (other than foreclosure property, as discussed below) that is held as inventory or primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business by us or by a borrower that has issued a shared appreciation mortgage or similar debt instrument to us. We intend to conduct our operations so that no asset that we own (or are treated as owning) will be treated as, or as having been, held as inventory or for sale to customers, and that a sale of any such asset will not be treated as having been in the ordinary course of our business. Whether property is held as inventory or "primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business" depends on the particular facts and circumstances. No assurance can be given that any property that we sell will not be treated as inventory or property held for sale to customers, or that we can comply with certain safe-harbor provisions of the Code that would prevent such treatment. The 100% tax does not apply to gains from the sale of property that is held through a TRS or other taxable corporation, although such income will be subject to tax in the hands of the corporation at regular U.S. federal corporate tax rates. We intend to structure our activities to avoid prohibited transaction characterization.

Foreclosure property

Foreclosure property is real property and any personal property incident to such real property: (i) that we acquire as the result of having bid in the property at foreclosure, or having otherwise reduced the property to ownership or possession by agreement or process of law, after a default (or upon imminent default) on a lease of the property or a mortgage loan held by us and secured by the property; (ii) for which we acquired the related loan or lease at a time when default was not imminent or anticipated; and (iii) with respect to which we made a proper election to treat the property as foreclosure property. We generally will be subject to tax at the regular U.S. federal corporate tax rate

[Table of Contents](#)

(currently 21%) on any net income from foreclosure property, including any gain from the disposition of the foreclosure property, other than income that would otherwise be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test. Any gain from the sale of property for which a foreclosure property election has been made will not be subject to the 100% tax on gains from prohibited transactions described above, even if the property would otherwise constitute inventory or dealer property. Because we will invest primarily in mortgage-backed securities, we do not anticipate receiving any income from foreclosure property that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test.

Derivatives and hedging transactions

We may enter into hedging transactions with respect to interest rate exposure on one or more of our assets or liabilities. Any such hedging transactions could take a variety of forms, including the use of derivative instruments such as interest rate swap contracts, interest rate cap or floor contracts, futures or forward contracts, and options. Except to the extent provided by Treasury regulations, any income from a hedging transaction (including gain from the sale, disposition, or termination of a position in such a transaction) will not constitute gross income for purposes of the 75% or 95% gross income test if we properly identify the transaction as specified in applicable Treasury regulations and we enter into such transaction (i) in the normal course of our business primarily to manage risk of interest rate changes or currency fluctuations with respect to borrowings made or to be made, or ordinary obligations incurred or to be incurred, to acquire or carry real estate assets; (ii) primarily to manage risk of currency fluctuations with respect to any item of income or gain that would be qualifying income under the 75% or 95% income tests; or (iii) in connection with the extinguishment of indebtedness with respect to which we have entered into a qualified hedging position described in clause (i) or the disposition of property with respect to which we have entered into a qualified hedging position described in clause (ii), primarily to manage the risks of such hedging positions. To the extent that we enter into other types of hedging transactions, the income from those transactions is likely to be treated as non-qualifying income for purposes of both of the 75% and 95% gross income tests. We intend to structure any hedging transactions in a manner that will not jeopardize our qualification as a REIT. We may conduct some or all of our hedging activities (including hedging activities relating to currency risk) through a TRS or other corporate entity, the income from which may be subject to U.S. federal income tax, rather than by participating in the arrangements directly or through pass-through subsidiaries. No assurance can be given, however, that our hedging activities will not give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of either or both of the REIT gross income tests, or that our hedging activities will not adversely affect our ability to satisfy the REIT qualification requirements.

Taxable mortgage pools and excess inclusion income

An entity, or a portion of an entity, may be classified as a TMP, under the Code if:

- substantially all of its assets consist of debt obligations or interests in debt obligations;
- more than 50% of those debt obligations are real estate mortgages or interests in real estate mortgages as of specified testing dates;
- the entity has issued debt obligations (liabilities) that have two or more maturities; and
- the payments required to be made by the entity on its debt obligations (liabilities) "bear a relationship" to the payments to be received by the entity on the debt obligations that it holds as assets.

Under Treasury regulations, if less than 80% of the assets of an entity (or a portion of an entity) consist of debt obligations, these debt obligations are considered not to comprise "substantially all" of its assets, and therefore the entity would not be treated as a TMP. Our financing and securitization arrangements may give rise to TMPs, with the consequences as described below.

[Table of Contents](#)

Where an entity, or a portion of an entity, is classified as a TMP, it is generally treated as a taxable corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In the case of a REIT, or a portion of a REIT, or a disregarded subsidiary of a REIT, that is a TMP, however, special rules apply. The TMP is not treated as a corporation that is subject to U.S. federal corporate income tax, and the TMP classification does not adversely affect the qualification of the REIT. Rather, the consequences of the TMP classification would, in general, except as described below, be limited to the stockholders of the REIT.

A portion of the REIT's income from the TMP arrangement could be treated as "excess inclusion income." The REIT's excess inclusion income, including any excess inclusion income from a residual interest in a REMIC, must be allocated among its stockholders in proportion to dividends paid. The REIT is required to notify stockholders of the amount of "excess inclusion income" allocated to them. A stockholder's share of excess inclusion income:

- cannot be offset by any net operating losses otherwise available to the stockholder;
- is subject to tax as UBTI in the hands of most types of stockholders that are otherwise generally exempt from U.S. federal income tax; and
- results in the application of U.S. federal income tax withholding at the maximum rate (30%), without reduction for any otherwise applicable income tax treaty or other exemption, to the extent allocable to most types of foreign stockholders.

See "—Taxation of stockholders." To the extent that excess inclusion income is allocated to a tax-exempt stockholder of a REIT that is not subject to unrelated business income tax (such as a government entity or charitable remainder trust), the REIT may be subject to tax on this income at the highest applicable corporate tax rate (currently 21%). In that case, the REIT could reduce distributions to such stockholders by the amount of such tax paid by the REIT attributable to such stockholder's ownership. Treasury regulations provide that such a reduction in distributions does not give rise to a preferential dividend that could adversely affect the REIT's compliance with its distribution requirements. See "—Taxation of Ladder Capital Corp—Annual distribution requirements."

The manner in which excess inclusion income is calculated, or would be allocated to stockholders, including allocations among shares of different classes of stock, is not clear under current law. As required by IRS guidance, we intend to make such determinations using a reasonable method. Tax-exempt investors, foreign investors and taxpayers with net operating losses should carefully consider the tax consequences described above, and are urged to consult their tax advisors.

If a subsidiary partnership of ours that we do not wholly-own, directly or through one or more disregarded entities, were a TMP, the foregoing rules would not apply. Rather, the partnership that is a TMP would be treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes and potentially would be subject to U.S. federal corporate income tax or withholding tax. In addition, this characterization would alter our income and asset test calculations, and could adversely affect our compliance with those requirements. We intend to monitor the structure of any TMPs in which we have an interest to ensure that they will not adversely affect our qualification as a REIT.

Asset-backed securities

Investments in asset-backed securities, or "ABS", generally are not qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test applicable to REITs and generally do not generate qualifying income for purposes of the 75% income test applicable to REITs. As a result, we may be limited in our ability to invest in such assets.

[Table of Contents](#)

Failure to qualify

If we fail to satisfy one or more requirements for REIT qualification other than the income or asset tests, we could avoid disqualification if our failure is due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect and we pay a penalty of \$50,000 for each such failure. Relief provisions are available for failures of the income tests and asset tests, as described above in "—Income tests" and "—Asset tests."

If we fail to qualify for taxation as a REIT in any taxable year, and the relief provisions described above do not apply, we would be subject to tax on our taxable income at regular U.S. federal corporate tax rates. We cannot deduct distributions to stockholders in any year in which we are not a REIT, nor would we be required to make distributions in such a year. In this situation, to the extent of current and accumulated earnings and profits, distributions to most domestic stockholders that are U.S. individuals, trusts or estates will generally be taxable at the preferential income tax rates (i.e., the 20% maximum U.S. federal income tax rate) for qualified dividends. In addition, subject to the limitations of the Code, corporate distributees may be eligible for the dividends received deduction. Unless we are entitled to relief under specific statutory provisions, we would also be disqualified from re-electing to be taxed as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which we lost qualification. It is not possible to state whether, in all circumstances, we would be entitled to this statutory relief.

Tax Aspects of Our Operating Partnerships and any Subsidiary Partnerships

All of our investments are held through two series of LCFH, Series REIT of LCFH and Series TRS of LCFH. Series REIT holds an interest in Series TRS through a TRS. In addition, our operating partnerships may hold certain of their investments indirectly through subsidiary partnerships and limited liability companies which we expect will be treated as partnerships or disregarded entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In general, entities that are treated as partnerships or disregarded entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes are "pass-through" entities which are not required to pay U.S. federal income tax. Rather, partners or members of such entities are allocated their shares of the items of income, gain, loss, deduction and credit of the partnership or limited liability company, and are potentially required to pay tax on this income, without regard to whether they receive a distribution from the partnership or limited liability company. We will include in our income our share of these partnership and limited liability company items for purposes of the various gross income tests, the computation of our REIT taxable income, and the REIT distribution requirements. Moreover, for purposes of the asset tests, we will include our pro rata share of assets held by our operating partnerships, including their share of their subsidiary partnerships and limited liability companies, based on our capital interest in each such entity. See "—Taxation of Ladder Capital Corp."

Entity Classification

Our interests in our operating partnerships and the subsidiary partnerships and limited liability companies involve special tax considerations, including the possibility that the IRS might challenge the status of these entities as partnerships (or disregarded entities), as opposed to associations taxable as corporations for U.S. federal income tax purposes. If our operating partnerships or a subsidiary partnership or limited liability company were treated as an association, they would be taxable as a corporation and would be required to pay an entity-level tax on their income. In addition, the IRS could challenge the treatment of our series partnerships as separate entities. In this situation, the character of our assets and items of gross income would change and could prevent us from satisfying the REIT asset tests and possibly the REIT income tests. See "—Taxation of Ladder Capital Corp—Asset tests" and "—Income tests." This, in turn, could prevent us from qualifying as a REIT. See "—Failure to qualify" for a discussion of the effect of our failure to meet these tests. In addition, a change in the tax status or tax treatment of our operating partnerships, a subsidiary partnership or limited liability company might be treated as a taxable event. If so, we might incur a distribution requirement or tax liability without any related cash distributions. We believe that our operating

[Table of Contents](#)

partnerships and each of our other partnerships and limited liability companies (for which we do not make an election to be treated as corporations for federal income tax purposes) will be classified as partnerships or disregarded entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

Allocations of Income, Gain, Loss and Deduction

A partnership agreement (or, in the case of a limited liability company treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes, the limited liability company agreement) will generally determine the allocation of partnership income and loss among partners. Generally, Section 704(b) of the Code and the Treasury regulations thereunder require that partnership allocations respect the economic arrangement of the partners. If an allocation of partnership income or loss does not comply with the requirements of Section 704(b) of the Code and the Treasury regulations thereunder, the item subject to the allocation will be reallocated in accordance with the partners' interests in the partnership. This reallocation will be determined by taking into account all of the facts and circumstances relating to the economic arrangement of the partners with respect to such item. Our operating partnerships' allocations of taxable income and loss are intended to comply with the requirements of Section 704(b) of the Code and the Treasury regulations thereunder.

New Partnership Audit Rules

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 changed the rules applicable to U.S. federal income tax audits of partnerships (such as our operating partnership). Under such rules (which are generally effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017), among other changes and subject to certain exceptions, any audit adjustment to any item or amount with respect to the partnership which is relevant in determining the tax liability of any partner (and any partner's distributive share thereof) is determined, and taxes, interest, or penalties attributable thereto are assessed and collected, at the partnership level. These rules could result in our operating partnership or other partnerships in which we directly or indirectly invest being required to pay additional taxes, interest and penalties as a result of an audit adjustment, and we, as a direct or indirect partner of these partnerships, could be required to bear the economic burden of those taxes, interest, and penalties even though we, as a REIT, may not otherwise have been required to pay additional corporate-level taxes as a result of the related audit adjustment. The changes created by these rules are sweeping and in many respects dependent on the promulgation of future regulations or other guidance by the U.S. Treasury. Investors are urged to consult their tax advisors with respect to these changes and their potential impact on their investment in our common stock.

Taxation of stockholders

Taxation of taxable U.S. Holders

As used herein, the term "U.S. Holder" means a holder of our Class A common stock who for U.S. federal income tax purposes is:

- an individual who is a citizen or resident of the United States;
- a corporation (or entity treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes) created or organized in the United States or under the laws of the United States, or of any state thereof, or the District of Columbia;
- an estate, the income of which is includable in gross income for U.S. federal income tax purposes regardless of its source; or
- a trust if (i) a U.S. court is able to exercise primary supervision over the administration of such trust and one or more U.S. fiduciaries have the authority to control all substantial decisions of

[Table of Contents](#)

the trust, or (ii) the trust has a valid election in effect under applicable Treasury regulations to be treated as a U.S. person.

If a partnership, including for this purpose any entity or arrangement that is treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes, holds our Class A common stock, the tax treatment of a partner in the partnership will generally depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. An investor that is a partnership and the partners in such partnership should consult their tax advisors about the U.S. federal income tax consequences of the acquisition, ownership and disposition of our Class A common stock.

Distributions. So long as we qualify as a REIT, the distributions that we make to our U.S. Holders out of current or accumulated earnings and profits that we do not designate as capital gain dividends will generally be taken into account by such stockholders as ordinary income and will not be eligible for the dividends received deduction for corporations. With limited exceptions, our dividends are not eligible for taxation at the preferential income tax rates (i.e., the 20% U.S. federal income tax rate for "qualified dividend income") for qualified dividends received by most domestic U.S. Holders that are individuals, trusts and estates from taxable C corporations. However, for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, non-corporate taxpayers may generally deduct 20% of certain qualified business income, including "qualified REIT dividends" (generally, dividends received by a REIT stockholder that are not designated as capital gain dividends or qualified dividend income), subject to certain limitations, resulting in an effective maximum U.S. federal income tax rate of 29.6% on such income. Additionally, such U.S. Holders are taxed at the preferential U.S. federal income tax rates applicable to qualified dividend income on ordinary dividends designated by and received from REITs to the extent that the dividends are attributable to:

- income retained by the REIT in the prior taxable year on which the REIT was subject to corporate level income tax (less the amount of tax);
- dividends received by the REIT from TRSs or other taxable C corporations; or
- income in the prior taxable year from the sales of "built-in gain" property acquired by the REIT from C corporations in carryover basis transactions (less the amount of corporate tax on such income).

In general, in order to be eligible for the preferential rate of U.S. federal income tax on qualified dividend income, a U.S. Holder must satisfy a holding period requirement and other applicable requirements.

Distributions that we designate as capital gain dividends generally will be taxed to our U.S. Holders as long-term capital gains, to the extent that such distributions do not exceed our actual net capital gain for the taxable year, without regard to the period for which the U.S. Holder that receives such distribution has held its stock. We may elect to retain and pay taxes on some or all of our net long-term capital gains, in which case provisions of the Code will treat our U.S. Holders as having received, solely for tax purposes, our undistributed capital gains, and the U.S. Holders will receive a corresponding credit for taxes that we paid on such undistributed capital gains. See "—Taxation of Ladder Capital Corp—Annual distribution requirements." Corporate U.S. Holders may be required to treat up to 20% of some capital gain dividends as ordinary income. Long-term capital gains are generally taxable at maximum regular U.S. federal income tax rates of 20% in the case of stockholders that are individuals, trusts or estates, and at a flat rate of 21% in the case of stockholders that are corporations. Capital gains attributable to the sale of depreciable real property held for more than 12 months are subject to a 25% maximum regular U.S. federal income tax rate for taxpayers who are taxed as individuals, to the extent of previously claimed depreciation deductions.

Distributions in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits will generally represent a return of capital and will not be taxable to a U.S. Holder to the extent that the amount of such

[Table of Contents](#)

distributions does not exceed the adjusted basis of the U.S. Holder's shares in respect of which the distributions were made. Rather, the distribution will reduce the adjusted basis of the U.S. Holder's shares. To the extent that such distributions exceed the adjusted basis of a U.S. Holder's shares, such holder generally must include such distributions in income as long-term capital gain, or short-term capital gain if the shares have been held for one year or less. In addition, any dividend that we declare in October, November or December of any year and that is payable to a stockholder of record on a specified date in any such month will be treated as both paid by us and received by the stockholder on December 31 of such year, provided that we actually pay the dividend before the end of January of the following calendar year.

To the extent that we have available net operating losses and capital losses carried forward from prior tax years, such losses may reduce the amount of distributions that we must make in order to comply with the REIT distribution requirements. Any net operating losses generated in years beginning after December 31, 2017 will only be able to offset 80% of our net taxable income (determined without regard to the dividends paid deduction). See "—Taxation of Ladder Capital Corp—Annual distribution requirements." Such losses, however, are not passed through to stockholders and do not offset income of stockholders from other sources, nor would such losses affect the character of any distributions that we make, which are generally subject to tax in the hands of stockholders to the extent that we have current or accumulated earnings and profits. Any net operating losses generated in years beginning on or before December 31, 2017 are permitted to be carried back two years and forward 20 years. Net operating losses generated in years beginning after December 31, 2017 can no longer be carried back but can be carried forward indefinitely.

Dispositions of Ladder stock. If a U.S. Holder sells or disposes of shares of our stock, it will generally recognize gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes in an amount equal to the difference between the amount of cash and the fair market value of any property received on the sale or other disposition and the stockholder's adjusted tax basis in the shares of Ladder stock. In general, capital gains recognized by individuals, trusts or estates upon the sale or disposition of our stock will be subject to a maximum regular U.S. federal income tax rate of 20% if the stock is held for more than one year, and will be taxed at ordinary income rates (of up to 37%) if the stock is held for one year or less. Gains recognized by U.S. Holders that are corporations are subject to U.S. federal income tax at a flat rate of 21%, whether or not such gains are classified as long-term capital gains. Capital losses recognized by a U.S. Holder upon the disposition of our stock that was held for more than one year at the time of disposition will be considered long-term capital losses, and capital losses are generally available only to offset capital gain income of the U.S. Holder but not ordinary income (except in the case of individuals, who may offset up to \$3,000 of ordinary income each year). In addition, any loss upon a sale or exchange of shares of our stock by a U.S. Holder who has held the shares for six months or less, after applying holding period rules, will be treated as a long-term capital loss to the extent of distributions that we make that are required to be treated by the stockholder as long-term capital gain.

If an investor recognizes a loss upon a subsequent disposition of our stock or other securities in an amount that exceeds a prescribed threshold, it is possible that the provisions of Treasury regulations involving "reportable transactions" could apply, with a resulting requirement to separately disclose the loss-generating transaction to the IRS. These regulations, though directed towards "tax shelters," are broadly written and apply to transactions that would not typically be considered tax shelters. The Code imposes significant penalties for failure to comply with these requirements. You should consult your tax advisor concerning any possible disclosure obligation with respect to the receipt or disposition of our stock or securities or transactions that we might undertake directly or indirectly. Moreover, you should be aware that we and other participants in the transactions in which we are involved (including their advisors) might be subject to disclosure or other requirements pursuant to these regulations.

[Table of Contents](#)

Passive activity losses and investment interest limitations. Distributions that we make and gain arising from the sale or exchange by a U.S. Holder will not be treated as passive activity income. As a result, U.S. Holders will not be able to apply any "passive losses" against income or gain relating to our stock. To the extent that distributions we make do not constitute a return of capital, they will be treated as investment income for purposes of computing the investment interest limitation.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding Tax. We will report to a U.S. Holder and the IRS the amount of distributions we pay during each calendar year and the amount of tax we withhold, if any. Under the backup withholding rules, a U.S. Holder of our common stock may be subject to backup withholding (currently at a maximum rate of 24%) with respect to distributions unless such U.S. Holder:

- is a corporation or comes within certain other exempt categories and, when required, demonstrates this fact; or
- provides an accurate taxpayer identification number, certifies as to no loss of exemption from backup withholding, and otherwise complies with the applicable requirements of the backup withholding rules.

Any amount paid as backup withholding will be creditable against a U.S. Holder's income tax liability, which may entitle a U.S. Holder to a refund, provided that proper information is timely provided to the IRS.

Taxation of foreign stockholders

The rules governing U.S. federal income taxation of the ownership and disposition of our Class A common stock by persons that are, for purposes of such taxation, nonresident alien individuals, foreign corporations, foreign partnerships or foreign estates or trusts (collectively, "Non-U.S. Holders") are complex, and no attempt is made herein to provide more than a brief summary of such rules. Accordingly, the discussion does not address all aspects of U.S. federal income tax law and does not address state, local or foreign tax consequences that may be relevant to a Non-U.S. Holder in light of its particular circumstances. In addition, this discussion is based on current law, which is subject to change, and assumes that Ladder will qualify for taxation as a REIT. Non-U.S. Holders should consult their tax advisors to determine the impact of U.S. federal, state, local and foreign tax laws with regard to the ownership and disposition of our Class A common stock (including reporting requirements) in light of their individual circumstances.

Ordinary dividends. The portion of dividends received by Non-U.S. Holders that is: (i) payable out of our earnings and profits; (ii) which is not attributable to our capital gains; and (iii) which is not effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business of the Non-U.S. Holder, will be subject to U.S. withholding tax at the rate of 30%, unless reduced or eliminated by treaty.

In general, Non-U.S. Holders will not be considered to be engaged in a U.S. trade or business solely as a result of their ownership of our stock. In cases where the dividend income from a Non-U.S. Holder's investment in our stock is, or is treated as, effectively connected with the Non-U.S. Holder's conduct of a U.S. trade or business, the Non-U.S. Holder generally will be subject to U.S. federal income tax at graduated rates, in the same manner as domestic stockholders are taxed with respect to such dividends. Such income must generally be reported on a U.S. federal income tax return filed by or on behalf of the Non-U.S. Holder. The income may also be subject to the 30% branch profits tax in the case of a Non-U.S. Holder that is a corporation.

Non-dividend distributions. Unless our stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest (a "USRPI") (as described below), distributions that we make which are not dividends out of our earnings and profits will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax. If we cannot determine at the time a distribution

[Table of Contents](#)

is made whether or not the distribution will exceed current and accumulated earnings and profits, the distribution will be subject to withholding at the rate applicable to dividends. The Non-U.S. Holder may seek a refund from the IRS of any amounts withheld if it is subsequently determined that the distribution was, in fact, in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits. If our stock constitutes a USRPI, as described below, distributions that we make in excess of the sum of: (a) the stockholder's proportionate share of our earnings and profits, plus (b) the stockholder's basis in its stock, will be taxed under the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act of 1980 ("FIRPTA"), at the rate of tax, including any applicable capital gains rates, that would apply to a domestic stockholder of the same type (e.g., an individual or a corporation, as the case may be), and the collection of the tax will be enforced by a withholding at a rate of 15% of the amount by which the distribution exceeds the stockholder's share of our earnings and profits.

Capital gain dividends. Under FIRPTA, a distribution that we make to a Non-U.S. Holder, to the extent attributable to gains from dispositions of USRPIs that we held directly or through pass-through subsidiaries, or USRPI capital gains, will, except as described below, be considered effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business of the Non-U.S. Holder and will be subject to U.S. federal income tax at the rates applicable to U.S. individuals or corporations, without regard to whether we designate the distribution as a capital gain dividend. See above under "—Taxation of foreign stockholders—Ordinary dividends," for a discussion of the consequences of income that is effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business. In addition, we will be required to withhold tax equal to 21% of the maximum amount that could have been designated as USRPI capital gains dividends. Distributions subject to FIRPTA may also be subject to a 30% branch profits tax in the hands of a Non-U.S. Holder that is a corporation. A distribution is not attributable to USRPI capital gain if we held an interest in the underlying asset solely as a creditor. Capital gain dividends received by a Non-U.S. Holder that are attributable to dispositions of our assets other than USRPIs are not subject to U.S. federal income or withholding tax, unless: (i) the gain is effectively connected with the Non-U.S. Holder's U.S. trade or business, in which case the Non-U.S. Holder would be subject to the same treatment as U.S. holders with respect to such gain; or (ii) the Non-U.S. Holder is a nonresident alien individual who was present in the United States for 183 days or more during the taxable year and has a "tax home" in the United States, in which case the Non-U.S. Holder will incur a 30% tax on his capital gains. We do not expect that a significant portion of our assets will be USRPIs.

A capital gain dividend that would otherwise have been treated as a USRPI capital gain will not be so treated or be subject to FIRPTA, and generally will not be treated as income that is effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business, and instead will generally be treated in the same manner as an ordinary dividend (see "—Taxation of foreign stockholders—Ordinary dividends"), if: (i) the capital gain dividend is received with respect to a class of stock that is regularly traded on an established securities market located in the United States; and (ii) the recipient Non-U.S. Holder does not own more than 10% of that class of stock at any time during the year ending on the date on which the capital gain dividend is received. We anticipate that our Class A common stock will be "regularly traded" on an established securities exchange.

Dispositions of Ladder stock. Unless our stock constitutes a USRPI, a sale of our stock by a Non-U.S. Holder generally will not be subject to U.S. taxation under FIRPTA. Our stock will be treated as a USRPI if 50% or more of our assets throughout a prescribed testing period consist of interests in real property located within the United States, excluding, for this purpose, interests in real property solely in a capacity as a creditor. It is not currently anticipated that our stock will constitute a USRPI. However, we cannot assure you that our stock will not become a USRPI.

Even if the foregoing 50% test is met, our stock will not constitute a USRPI if we are a "domestically controlled qualified investment entity." A domestically controlled qualified investment entity includes a REIT, less than 50% of the value of which is held directly or indirectly by Non-U.S. Holders at all times during a specified testing period (after applying certain presumptions regarding the

[Table of Contents](#)

ownership of our stock, as described in the Code). We believe that we will be and will remain a domestically controlled qualified investment entity, and that a sale of our stock should not be subject to taxation under FIRPTA. However, no assurance can be given that we will be or will remain a domestically controlled qualified investment entity.

In the event that we are not a domestically controlled qualified investment entity, but our stock is "regularly traded," as defined by applicable Treasury regulations, on an established securities market, a Non-U.S. Holder's sale of our Class A common stock nonetheless also would not be subject to tax under FIRPTA as a sale of a USRPI, provided that the selling Non-U.S. Holder held 10% or less of our outstanding Class A common stock any time during the one-year period ending on the date of the sale. We expect that our Class A common stock will be regularly traded on an established securities market.

In addition, if a Non-U.S. Holder disposes of such common stock during the 30 day period preceding the ex-dividend date of any dividend payment, and such Non-U.S. Holder acquires or enters into a contract or option to acquire our common stock within 61 days of the first day of such 30 day period described above, and any portion of such dividend payment would, but for the disposition, be treated as USRPI capital gain to such Non-U.S. Holder under FIRPTA, then such Non-U.S. Holder will be treated as having USRPI capital gain in an amount that, but for the disposition, would have been treated as USRPI capital gain.

If gain on the sale of our stock were subject to taxation under FIRPTA, the Non-U.S. Holder would be required to file a U.S. federal income tax return and would be subject to the same treatment as a domestic stockholder with respect to such gain, subject to applicable alternative minimum tax and a special alternative minimum tax in the case of non-resident alien individuals, and the purchaser of the stock could be required to withhold 15% of the purchase price and remit such amount to the IRS.

Gain from the sale of our stock that would not otherwise be subject to FIRPTA will nonetheless be taxable in the United States to a Non-U.S. Holder in two cases: (i) if the Non-U.S. Holder's investment in our stock is effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business conducted by such Non-U.S. Holder, the Non-U.S. Holder will be subject to the same treatment as a domestic stockholder with respect to such gain; or (ii) if the Non-U.S. Holder is a nonresident alien individual who was present in the United States for 183 days or more during the taxable year and has a "tax home" in the United States, the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual's capital gain.

Special FIRPTA Rules. Recently enacted amendments to FIRPTA create special rules that modify the application of the foregoing FIRPTA rules for particular types of foreign investors, including "qualified foreign pension funds" and their wholly owned foreign subsidiaries and certain widely held, publicly traded "qualified collective investment vehicles." Non-U.S. stockholders are urged to consult their own tax advisors regarding the applicability of these or any other special FIRPTA rules to their particular investment in our common stock.

Information Reporting and Backup Withholding Tax

Dividends paid to a Non-U.S. Holder may be subject to U.S. information reporting and backup withholding. A Non-U.S. Holder will be exempt from backup withholding if the Non-U.S. Holder provides a properly executed IRS Form W-8BEN or W-8BEN-E, as applicable, or otherwise meets documentary evidence requirements for establishing its status as a Non-U.S. Holder or otherwise establishes an exemption.

The gross proceeds from the disposition of our common stock may be subject to U.S. information reporting and backup withholding. If a Non-U.S. Holder sells our common stock outside the United States through a non-U.S. office of a non-U.S. broker and the sales proceeds are paid to the Non-U.S.

[Table of Contents](#)

Holder outside the United States, then the U.S. backup withholding and information reporting requirements generally will not apply to that payment. However, U.S. information reporting, but not U.S. backup withholding, will apply to a payment of sales proceeds, even if that payment is made outside the United States, if a Non-U.S. Holder sells our common stock through a non-U.S. office of a broker that is a United States person or has certain enumerated connections with the United States, unless the broker has documentary evidence in its files that the Non-U.S. Holder is not a United States person and certain other conditions are met or the Non-U.S. Holder otherwise establishes an exemption.

If a Non-U.S. Holder receives payments of the proceeds of a sale of our common stock to or through a U.S. office of a broker, the payment is subject to both U.S. backup withholding and information reporting unless the Non-U.S. Holder provides a properly executed IRS Form W-8BEN or W-8BEN-E, as applicable, certifying that the Non-U.S. Holder is not a "United States person" or the Non-U.S. Holder otherwise establishes an exemption.

A Non-U.S. Holder generally may obtain a refund of any amounts withheld under the backup withholding rules that exceed the Non-U.S. Holder's U.S. federal income tax liability by timely filing a refund claim with the IRS.

Estate tax. If our stock is owned or treated as owned by an individual who is not a citizen or resident (as specially defined for U.S. federal estate tax purposes) of the United States at the time of such individual's death, the stock will be includable in the individual's gross estate for U.S. federal estate tax purposes, unless an applicable estate tax treaty provides otherwise, and may therefore be subject to U.S. federal estate tax.

Foreign stockholders are urged to consult their tax advisors regarding the U.S. federal, state, local and foreign income and other tax consequences of owning Ladder stock.

Taxation of tax-exempt stockholders

Tax-exempt entities, including qualified employee pension and profit sharing trusts and individual retirement accounts, generally are exempt from U.S. federal income taxation. However, they may be subject to taxation on their UBTI. While some investments in real estate may generate UBTI, the IRS has ruled that dividend distributions from a REIT to a tax-exempt entity do not constitute UBTI. Based on that ruling, and provided that: (i) a tax-exempt stockholder has not held our stock as "debt financed property" within the meaning of the Code (i.e., where the acquisition or holding of the property is financed through a borrowing by the tax-exempt stockholder); and (ii) our stock is not otherwise used in an unrelated trade or business, distributions that we make and income from the sale of our stock generally should not give rise to UBTI to a tax-exempt stockholder.

Tax-exempt stockholders that are social clubs, voluntary employee benefit associations, supplemental unemployment benefit trusts, and qualified group legal services plans exempt from U.S. federal income taxation under sections 501(c)(7), (c)(9), (c)(17) and (c)(20) of the Code are subject to different UBTI rules, which generally require such stockholders to characterize distributions that we make as UBTI.

In certain circumstances, a pension trust that owns more than 10% of our stock could be required to treat a percentage of the dividends as UBTI if we are a "pension-held REIT." We will not be a pension-held REIT unless: (i) we are required to "look through" one or more of our pension trust stockholders in order to satisfy the REIT "closely-held" test; and (ii) either (a) one pension trust owns more than 25% of the value of our stock, or (b) one or more pension trusts, each individually holding more than 10% of the value of our stock, collectively owns more than 50% of the value of our stock. Certain restrictions on ownership and transfer of our stock generally should prevent a tax-exempt entity

[Table of Contents](#)

from owning more than 10% of the value of our stock and generally should prevent us from becoming a pension-held REIT.

Tax-exempt stockholders are urged to consult their tax advisors regarding the U.S. federal, state, local and foreign income and other tax consequences of owning Ladder stock.

Other tax considerations

Legislative or other actions affecting REITs

The present U.S. federal income tax treatment of REITs may be modified, possibly with retroactive effect, by legislative, judicial or administrative action at any time. The REIT rules are constantly under review by persons involved in the legislative process and by the IRS and the U.S. Treasury Department which may result in statutory changes as well as revisions to regulations and interpretations. We cannot predict how changes in the tax laws might affect our investors or us. New legislation, Treasury regulations, administrative interpretations or court decisions could significantly and negatively affect our ability to qualify as a REIT or the U.S. federal income tax consequences to our investors and us of such qualification.

In addition, the recently enacted Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, or TCJA, makes substantial changes to the Code. Among those changes are a significant permanent reduction in the generally applicable corporate tax rate, changes in the taxation of individuals and other non-corporate taxpayers that generally but not universally reduce their taxes on a temporary basis subject to "sunset" provisions, the elimination or modification of various currently allowed deductions (including additional limitations on the deductibility of business interest and substantial limitation on the deduction for state and local taxes imposed on individuals), and preferential taxation of income (including REIT dividends) derived by non-corporate taxpayers from "pass-through" entities. The TCJA also imposes certain additional limitations on the deduction of net operating losses, which may in the future cause us to make distributions that will be taxable to our stockholders to the extent of our current or accumulated earnings and profits in order to comply with the annual REIT distribution requirements. The effect of these, and the many other, changes made in the TCJA is highly uncertain, both in terms of their direct effect on the taxation of an investment in our common stock and their indirect effect on the value of our assets. Furthermore, many of the provisions of the TCJA will require guidance through the issuance of U.S. Treasury regulations in order to assess their effect. There may be a substantial delay before such regulations are promulgated, increasing the uncertainty as to the ultimate effect of the statutory amendments on us. It is also likely that there will be technical corrections legislation proposed with respect to the TCJA, the timing and effect of which cannot be predicted and may be adverse to us or our stockholders.

Medicare 3.8% tax on investment income

Certain U.S. holders who are individuals, estates or trusts and whose income exceeds certain thresholds are required to pay a 3.8% Medicare tax on their "net investment income," which includes dividends received from us and capital gains from the sale or other disposition of our Class A common stock. The temporary 20% deduction currently allowed with respect to ordinary REIT dividends received by non-corporate taxpayers is apparently not allowed as a deduction allocable to such dividends for purposes of determining the amount of net investment income subject to the 3.8% Medicare tax. U.S. stockholders should consult their tax advisors regarding this tax on net investment income.

Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act

Withholding at a rate of 30% generally will be required on dividends, and, subject to the regulatory relief described below, gross proceeds from the sale of, our Class A common stock held by

[Table of Contents](#)

or through certain foreign financial institutions (including investment funds), unless such institution enters into an agreement with the Treasury to report, on an annual basis, information with respect to shares in, and the accounts maintained by, the institution held by certain U.S. persons and by certain non-U.S. entities that are wholly or partially owned by U.S. persons and to withhold on certain payments. Accordingly, the entity through which our Class A common stock is held will affect the determination of whether such withholding is required. Similarly, dividends, and, subject to the regulatory relief described below, gross proceeds from the sale of, our Class A common stock held by an investor that is a non-financial non-U.S. entity which does not qualify under certain exemptions will be subject to withholding at a rate of 30%, unless such entity either (i) certifies that such entity does not have any "substantial United States owners" or (ii) provides certain information regarding the entity's "substantial United States owners," which the applicable withholding agent will in turn provide to the Secretary of the Treasury. An intergovernmental agreement between the United States and an applicable foreign country may modify these requirements. Under proposed U.S. Treasury regulations that may be relied upon pending finalization, the withholding tax on gross proceeds would be eliminated and, consequently, FATCA withholding on gross proceeds from the sale or other disposition of our Class A common stock is not expected to apply. We will not pay any additional amounts to stockholders in respect of any amounts withheld. Non-U.S. Holders are encouraged to consult their tax advisors regarding the possible implications of these withholding taxes on their investment in our Class A common stock.

State, local and foreign taxes

We and our subsidiaries and stockholders may be subject to state, local or foreign taxation in various jurisdictions including those in which we or they transact business, own property or reside. Our state, local or foreign tax treatment and that of our stockholders may not conform to the U.S. federal income tax treatment discussed above. Any foreign taxes that we incur do not pass through to stockholders as a credit against their U.S. federal income tax liability. Prospective investors should consult their tax advisors regarding the application and effect of state, local and foreign income and other tax laws on an investment in our stock.

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

General

We and/or one or more Selling Stockholders may offer and sell our Class A common stock in one or more transactions from time to time through one or more of the following methods:

- on the New York Stock Exchange or any other national securities exchange or U.S. inter-dealer system of a registered national securities association on which our common stock may be listed or quoted at the time of sale;
- ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which the broker-dealer solicits purchasers;
- one or more underwritten offerings;
- block trades in which the broker-dealer will attempt to sell the shares as agent, but may position and sell a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction;
- purchases by a broker-dealer as principal and resale by the broker-dealer for its account;
- an exchange distribution in accordance with the rules of the applicable exchange;
- privately negotiated transactions;
- through agents;
- in "at the market" offerings, within the meaning of Rule 415(a)(4) of the Securities Act, to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise;
- broker-dealers may agree with the Company or the Selling Stockholders to sell a specified number of such shares at a stipulated price per share; and
- a combination of any such methods of sale.

A prospectus supplement relating to a particular offering of our Class A common stock may include the following information:

- the terms of the offering;
- the names of any underwriters or agents;
- the purchase price of our Class A common stock;
- any net proceeds to us from the sale of our Class A common stock;
- any delayed delivery arrangements;
- any underwriting discounts and other items constituting underwriters' compensation;
- any public offering price;
- any discounts or concessions allowed or paid to dealers; and
- any option under which underwriters may purchase additional shares of our Class A common stock from us or any Selling Stockholder.

The distribution of our Class A common stock may be effected from time to time in one or more transactions at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices in block trades, or in underwritten offerings or in other types of trades.

Underwriting Compensation

We and/or one or more the Selling Stockholders may offer our Class A common stock to the public through underwriting syndicates represented by a managing underwriter or managing underwriters or through an underwriter or underwriters without an underwriting syndicate. If underwriters are used for the sale of our Class A common stock, our Class A common stock will be acquired by the underwriters for their own account. The underwriters may resell our Class A common stock in one or more transactions, including in negotiated transactions at a fixed public offering price or at varying prices determined at the time of sale. In connection with any such underwritten sale of our Class A common stock, underwriters may receive compensation from us, any Selling Stockholders or from purchasers for whom they may act as agents, in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions. Underwriters may sell our Class A common stock to or through dealers, and the dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters and/or commissions from the purchasers for whom they may act as agents.

If we use an underwriter or underwriters in the sale of particular Class A common stock, we will execute an underwriting agreement with those underwriters at the time of sale of that Class A common stock. The names of the underwriters will be set forth in the prospectus supplement used by the underwriters to sell that Class A common stock. Unless otherwise indicated in the prospectus supplement relating to a particular offering of Class A common stock, the obligations of the underwriters to purchase the Class A common stock will be subject to customary conditions precedent and the underwriters will be obligated to purchase all of the Class A common stock offered if any of our Class A common stock is purchased.

Underwriters, dealers and agents that participate in the distribution of our Class A common stock may be deemed to be underwriters under the Securities Act. Any discounts or commissions that they receive from us and any profit that they receive on the resale of our Class A common stock may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. If any entity is deemed an underwriter or any amounts deemed underwriting discounts and commissions, the prospectus supplement will identify the underwriter or agent and describe the compensation received from us.

Indemnification

We may enter agreements under which underwriters and agents that participate in the distribution of our Class A common stock may be entitled to indemnification by us against various liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, and to contribution with respect to payments which the underwriters, dealers or agents may be required to make.

Related Transactions

Various of the underwriters who participate in the distribution of our Class A common stock, and their affiliates, may perform various commercial banking and investment banking services for us from time to time in the ordinary course of business.

Delayed Delivery Contracts

We may authorize underwriters or other persons acting as our agents to solicit offers by institutions to purchase our Class A common stock from us pursuant to contracts providing for payment and delivery on a future date. These institutions may include commercial and savings banks, insurance companies, pension funds, investment companies, educational and charitable institutions and others, but in all cases we must approve these institutions. The obligations of any purchaser under any of these contracts will be subject to the condition that the purchase of our Class A common stock shall not at the time of delivery be prohibited under the laws of the jurisdiction to which such purchaser is

subject. The underwriters and other agents will not have any responsibility in respect of the validity or performance of these contracts.

Price Stabilization and Short Positions

If underwriters or dealers are used in the sale, until the distribution of our Class A common stock is completed, rules of the SEC may limit the ability of any underwriters to bid for and purchase our Class A common stock. As an exception to these rules, representatives of any underwriters are permitted to engage in transactions that stabilize the price of our Class A common stock. These transactions may consist of bids or purchases for the purpose of pegging, fixing or maintaining the price of our Class A common stock. If the underwriters create a short position in our Class A common stock in connection with the offering (that is, if they sell more Class A common stock than are set forth on the cover page of the prospectus supplement) the representatives of the underwriters may reduce that short position by purchasing Class A common stock in the open market.

We make no representation or prediction as to the direction or magnitude of any effect that the transactions described above may have on the price of our Class A common stock. In addition, we make no representation that the representatives of any underwriters will engage in these transactions or that these transactions, once commenced, will not be discontinued without notice.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the shares of Class A common stock offered hereby and certain legal and tax matters as described under "U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations" will be passed upon for us by Kirkland & Ellis LLP, New York, New York. If any legal matters relating to offerings made in connection with this prospectus are passed upon by counsel for the underwriters, dealers or agents, that counsel will be named in the prospectus supplement relating to such offering.

EXPERTS

The financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting (which is included in Management's Annual Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting) incorporated in this prospectus by reference to the [Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2019](#) have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

Ladder Capital Corp files annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC. The SEC maintains an Internet site that contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC. The address of that site is www.sec.gov.

Our website address is located at www.laddercapital.com. Through links on the "Investor Relations" portion of our website, we make available free of charge our Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K and any amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. Such material is made available through our website as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file the information with, or furnish it to, the SEC. **The information contained on our website is not intended to form a part of, or be incorporated by reference into, this prospectus.**

The registration statement containing this prospectus, including exhibits to the registration statement, provides additional information about us and the Class A common stock offered under this prospectus. The registration statement can be read at the SEC website.

PART II
INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS

Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution

The following table sets forth the various expenses expected to be incurred by the Registrant in connection with the sale and distribution of the securities being registered hereby, other than underwriting discounts and commissions.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| SEC registration fee | \$ | (1) |
| Accounting fees and expenses | | (1) |
| Legal fees and expenses | | (1) |
| Printing and engraving expenses | | (1) |
| Registrar and transfer agent's fees | | (1) |
| Miscellaneous fees and expenses | | (1) |
| Total | \$ | (1) |

- (1) Estimated expenses are not presently known. The foregoing sets forth the general categories of expenses (other than underwriting discounts and commissions) that we anticipate we will incur in connection with the offering of securities under this registration statement on Form S-3.

Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers

The Registrant is incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware. Section 102(b)(7) of the DGCL allows a corporation to provide in its certificate of incorporation that a director of the corporation will not be personally liable to the corporation or its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except where the director breached the duty of loyalty, failed to act in good faith, engaged in intentional misconduct or knowingly violated a law, authorized the payment of a dividend or approved a stock repurchase in violation of Delaware corporate law or obtained an improper personal benefit. The Registrant's Certificate of Incorporation provides for this limitation of liability.

Section 145 of the DGCL ("Section 145") provides that a Delaware corporation may indemnify any person who was, is or is threatened to be made party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of such corporation), by reason of the fact that such person is or was an officer, director, employee or agent of such corporation or is or was serving at the request of such corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation or enterprise. The indemnity may include expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, provided such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the corporation's best interests and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was illegal. A Delaware corporation may indemnify any persons who are, were or are threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of the corporation by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation or enterprise. The indemnity may include expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit, provided such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the corporation's best interests, provided that no indemnification is permitted without judicial approval if the officer, director, employee or agent is adjudged to be liable to the corporation. Where an officer or director is successful on the merits or otherwise in the defense of any action referred to above, the corporation

[Table of Contents](#)

must indemnify him or her against the expenses that such officer or director has actually and reasonably incurred.

Section 145 further authorizes a corporation to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or is or was serving at the request of the corporation as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation or enterprise, against any liability asserted against him or her and incurred by him or her in any such capacity, or arising out of his or her status as such, whether or not the corporation would otherwise have the power to indemnify him or her under Section 145.

The Registrant's Bylaws provide that the Registrant must indemnify its directors and officers to the fullest extent authorized by the DGCL and must also pay expenses incurred in defending any such proceeding in advance of its final disposition; provided, that if and to the extent required by the DGCL, the advancement of expenses shall only be made upon delivery of an undertaking, by or on behalf of an indemnified person, to repay all amounts so advanced if it should be determined ultimately that such person is not entitled to be indemnified.

The indemnification rights set forth above shall not be exclusive of any other right which an indemnified person may have or hereafter acquire under any statute, provision of the Registrant's Certificate of Incorporation or Bylaws, agreement, vote of stockholders or disinterested directors or otherwise.

The Registrant maintains standard policies of insurance that provide coverage (1) to its directors and officers against loss arising from claims made by reason of breach of duty or other wrongful act and (2) to the Registrant with respect to indemnification payments that it may make to such directors and officers as required by its organizational documents or indemnification agreements between the Registrant and its directors and officers.

Item 16. Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules

- (a) Exhibits.

The exhibit index attached hereto is incorporated herein by reference.

Item 17. Undertakings

- (a) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

- (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement:

- (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act;

- (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the Registration Statement.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the SEC pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20% change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective Registration Statement; and

(iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the Registration Statement or any material change to such information in the Registration Statement;

provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i), (a)(1)(ii) and (a)(1)(iii) of this section do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in reports filed with or furnished to the SEC by the Registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement, or is contained in a form of prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) that is part of the registration statement.

- (2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof.
- (3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.
- (4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act to any purchaser:

(A) Each prospectus filed by the registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(3) shall be deemed to be part of the registration statement as of the date the filed prospectus was deemed part of and included in the registration statement; and

(B) Each prospectus required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424(b)(2), (b)(5) or (b)(7) as part of a registration statement in reliance on Rule 430B relating to an offering made pursuant to Rule 415(a)(1)(i), (vii) or (x) for the purpose of providing the information required by Section 10(a) of the Securities Act shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the earlier of the date such form of prospectus is first used after effectiveness or the date of the first contract of sale of securities in the offering described in the prospectus. As provided in Rule 430B, for liability purposes of the issuer and any person that is at that date an underwriter, such date shall be deemed to be a new effective date of the registration statement relating to the securities in the registration statement to which that prospectus relates, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial *bona fide* offering thereof; Provided, however, that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such effective date, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such effective date.

- (5) That, for the purpose of determining liability of the registrant under the Securities Act to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, the undersigned registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned registrant pursuant to this registration statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, the undersigned registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:

(i) any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of the undersigned registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;

[Table of Contents](#)

(ii) any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned Registrant;

(iii) the portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of the undersigned registrant; and

(iv) any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned registrant to the purchaser.

- (b) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act that is incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.
- (c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers, and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that, in the opinion of the SEC, such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer, or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

EXHIBIT INDEX

| Exhibit Number | Description |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1.1* | Form of Underwriting Agreement |
| 3.1 | Second Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of Ladder Capital Corp (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to the Company's Form 8-K filed on March 2, 2015) |
| 3.2 | Amendment to Second Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of Ladder Capital Corp (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to the Company's Form 8-K filed on June 8, 2015) |
| 3.3 | Amended and Restated Bylaws of Ladder Capital Corp (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.3 to the Company's registration statement on Form S-1 filed on December 24, 2013) |
| 4.1 | Form of certificate of Class A common stock (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.2 of the registrant's registration statement on Form S-1 (Amendment No. 2, filed January 15, 2014)) |
| 4.2 | Second Amended and Restated Registration Rights Agreement (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 99.2 of the registrant's Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on March 3, 2017) |
| 5.1** | Opinion of Kirkland & Ellis LLP (including consent of such firm) |
| 8.1** | Tax Opinion of Kirkland & Ellis LLP (including consent of such firm) |
| 23.1** | Consent of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP |
| 23.2** | Consent of Kirkland & Ellis LLP (included in Exhibit 5.1) |
| 24.1 | Power of Attorney (included on the signature page to this registration statement) |

* To be filed, if necessary, after effectiveness of this registration statement by an amendment to the registration statement or incorporated by reference from documents filed or to be filed with the SEC under the Exchange Act.

** Filed herewith

[Table of Contents](#)

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|---|--------------|
| <hr/> <u>/s/ DOUGLAS DURST</u> Douglas Durst | Director |
| <hr/> <u>/s/ MICHAEL MAZZEI</u> Michael Mazzei | Director |
| <hr/> <u>/s/ PAMELA MCCORMACK</u> Pamela McCormack | Director |
| <hr/> <u>/s/ JEFFREY STEINER</u> Jeffrey Steiner | Director |
| <hr/> <u>/s/ DAVID WEINER</u> David Weiner | Director |

[\(Back To Top\)](#)

Section 2: EX-5.1 (EX-5.1)

Exhibit 5.1

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP AND AFFILIATED PARTNERSHIPS

601 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10022
United States

+1 212 446 4800
www.kirkland.com

March 16, 2020

Facsimile:
+1 212 446 4900

Ladder Capital Corp
345 Park Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10154

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are acting as special counsel to Ladder Capital Corp, a Delaware corporation (the "*Company*"), in connection with the preparation of the Registration Statement on Form S-3ASR (as amended or supplemented, the "*Registration Statement*") to be filed by the Company with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "*Commission*") under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "*Securities Act*"), on or about the date hereof. The Registration Statement relates to the offer and sale from time to time, pursuant to Rule 415 of the General Rules and Regulations promulgated under the Securities Act, of an indefinite number of shares (the "*Shares*") of the Company's Class A common stock, par value \$0.001 per share, to be sold by the Company or certain stockholders of the Company.

In connection with the registration of the Shares, we have examined originals, or copies certified or otherwise identified to our satisfaction, of such documents, corporate records and other instruments as we have deemed necessary for the purposes of this opinion, including (i) the organizational documents of the Company, (ii) minutes and records of the corporate proceedings of the Company and (iii) the Registration Statement and the exhibits thereto.

For purposes of this opinion, we have assumed the authenticity of all documents submitted to us as originals, the conformity to the originals of all documents submitted to us as copies and the authenticity of the originals of all documents submitted to us as copies. We have also assumed the legal capacity of all natural persons, the genuineness of the signatures of persons signing all documents in connection with which this opinion is rendered, the authority of such persons signing on behalf of the parties thereto, other than the Company, and the due authorization, execution and delivery of all documents by the parties thereto, other than the Company. We have not independently established or verified any facts relevant to the opinions expressed herein, but have relied upon statements and representations of officers and other representatives of the Company.

We have also assumed that:

(i) the Registration Statement will be effective and will comply with all applicable laws at the time the Shares are offered as contemplated by the Registration Statement;

(ii) a prospectus supplement (the "*Prospectus Supplement*") will have been prepared and filed with the Commission describing the Shares offered thereby and will comply with all applicable laws;

(iii) all Shares will be sold in compliance with applicable federal and state securities laws and in the manner stated in the Registration Statement and the appropriate Prospectus Supplement;

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

March 16, 2020

Page 2

(iv) a definitive purchase, underwriting, or similar agreement, if applicable, with respect to any Shares offered will have been duly authorized and validly executed and delivered by the Company and the other parties thereto; and

(v) the Shares will be issued and sold in the form and containing the terms set forth in the Registration Statement and the appropriate Prospectus Supplement.

Based upon and subject to the qualifications, assumptions and limitations set forth herein, we are of the opinion that when the Shares have been duly authorized by appropriate corporate action and issued upon receipt of payment therefor, such Shares will be validly issued, fully paid and non-assessable.

Our opinion expressed above is subject to the qualifications that we express no opinion as to the applicability of, compliance with, or effect of any laws except the General Corporation Law of the State of Delaware, including the applicable provisions of the Delaware constitution and reported judicial decisions interpreting such laws.

We hereby consent to the filing of this opinion with the Commission as Exhibit 5.1 to the Registration Statement. We also consent to the reference to our firm under the heading "Legal Matters" in the Registration Statement. In giving this consent, we do not thereby admit that we are in the category of persons whose consent is required under Section 7 of the Securities Act or the rules and regulations of the Commission.

We do not find it necessary for the purposes of this opinion, and accordingly we do not purport to cover herein, the application of the securities or "Blue Sky" laws of the various states to the sale of the Shares.

This opinion is limited to the specific issues addressed herein, and no opinion may be inferred or implied beyond that expressly stated herein. This opinion speaks only as of the date hereof and we assume no obligation to revise or supplement this opinion after the date hereof.

This opinion is furnished to you in connection with the filing of the Registration Statement, and is not to be used, circulated, quoted or otherwise relied upon for any other purpose.

Sincerely,

/s/ KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

[\(Back To Top\)](#)

Section 3: EX-8.1 (EX-8.1)

Exhibit 8.1

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP AND AFFILIATED PARTNERSHIPS

601 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10022

(212) 446-4800

www.kirkland.com

March 16, 2020

Facsimile:
(212) 446-4900

Ladder Capital Corp
345 Park Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10154

Re: *Certain United States Federal Income Tax Matters*

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are acting as special tax counsel to Ladder Capital Corp, a Delaware corporation ("*Ladder*"), in connection with the preparation of the Registration Statement on Form S-3ASR (as amended or supplemented, the "*Registration Statement*") to be filed by Ladder with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "*Commission*") under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "*Securities Act*"), on or about the date hereof. The Registration Statement relates to the offer and sale from time to time, pursuant to Rule 415 of the General Rules and Regulations promulgated under the Securities Act, of an indefinite number of shares of Class A common stock, par value \$0.001 per share, of Ladder ("*Class A Common Stock*") to be sold by Ladder or certain stockholders of Ladder.

In connection with this opinion, we have examined originals or copies, certified or otherwise identified to our satisfaction, of the Registration Statement and such other documentation and information provided to us as we have deemed necessary or appropriate as a basis for the opinion set forth herein.

In addition, Ladder has provided us with, and we are relying upon, a certificate containing certain factual representations and covenants of an officer of Ladder (the "*Officer's Certificate*") relating to, among other things, the actual and proposed operations of Ladder and the entities in which it holds, or has held, a direct or indirect interest (collectively, the "*Company*"). These representations and covenants relate, in some cases, to transactions and investments for which we did not act as the Company's counsel. For purposes of our opinion, we have not independently verified the statements, representations and covenants set forth in the Officer's Certificate, the Registration Statement, or in any other document. We have, consequently, assumed and relied on Ladder's representation that the statements, representations and covenants presented in the Officer's Certificate, the Registration Statement, and other documents, or otherwise furnished to us, accurately and completely describe all material facts relevant to our opinion. We have assumed that such statements, representations and covenants are true without regard to any qualification as to knowledge, belief, intent, or materiality. Our opinion is conditioned on the continuing accuracy and completeness of such facts, statements, representations and covenants. We are not aware of any facts inconsistent with such statements, representations and covenants. Any material change or inaccuracy in the facts referred to, set forth, or assumed herein or in the Officer's Certificate may affect our conclusions set forth herein.

In our review of certain documents in connection with our opinion as expressed below, we have assumed the legal capacity of all natural persons, the genuineness of all signatures, the authenticity of all documents submitted to us as originals, the conformity to original documents of all documents submitted to us as certified, conformed, photostatic, or electronic copies, and the authenticity of the

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

March 16, 2020

Page 2

originals of such copies. Where documents have been provided to us in draft form, we have assumed that the final executed versions of such documents will not differ materially from such drafts.

Our opinion is also based on the correctness of the following assumptions: (i) Ladder and each of the entities comprising the Company has been and will continue to be operated in accordance with the laws of the jurisdiction in which it was formed and in the manner described in the relevant organizational documents, (ii) there will be no changes in the applicable laws of the State of Delaware or of any other jurisdiction under the laws of which any of the entities comprising the Company have been formed, and (iii) each of the written agreements to which the Company is a party has been and will be implemented, construed and enforced in accordance with its terms.

In rendering our opinion, we have considered and relied upon applicable provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "*Code*"), the United States Treasury regulations promulgated thereunder (the "*Regulations*"), pertinent judicial authorities, rulings of the Internal Revenue Service (the "*IRS*"), and such other authorities as we have considered relevant, all as they exist as of the date hereof. It should be noted that the Code, Regulations, judicial decisions, and administrative interpretations are subject to change at any time and, in some circumstances, with retroactive effect. A material change that is made after the date hereof in any of the foregoing bases for our opinion could affect our conclusions set forth herein. In this regard, an opinion of counsel with respect to an issue represents counsel's best judgment as to the outcome on the merits with respect to such issue, is not binding on the IRS or the courts, and is not a guarantee that the IRS will not assert a contrary position with respect to such issue or that a court will not sustain such a position if asserted by the IRS.

Based on and subject to the foregoing, we are of the opinion that:

1. Commencing with Ladder's taxable year that ended on December 31, 2015, Ladder was organized in conformity with the requirements for qualification as a real estate investment trust (a "*REIT*") under the Code, and its actual method of operation through the date of this letter has enabled, and its proposed method of operation will continue to enable, Ladder to meet the requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT under the Code.
2. Although the discussion set forth in the Registration Statement under the heading "U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations" does not purport to discuss all possible United States federal income tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of the Class A Common Stock, such discussion, though general in nature, constitutes, in all material respects, a fair and accurate summary under current law of the material United States federal income tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of the Class A Common Stock subject to the qualifications set forth therein and herein.

As noted in the Registration Statement, Ladder's qualification and taxation as a REIT depend upon its ability to meet, through actual operating results, certain requirements relating to the sources of its income, the nature of its assets, distribution levels and diversity of stock ownership, and various other qualification tests imposed under the Code, the results of which are not reviewed by us. Accordingly, no assurance can be given that the actual results of Ladder's operation for any particular taxable year will satisfy the requirements for taxation as a REIT under the Code.

This opinion is being furnished to you in connection with the filing of the Registration Statement. This opinion may not be relied upon by anyone else without our prior written consent. Except as set forth above, we express no other opinion. This opinion is expressed as of the date hereof, and we are under no obligation to supplement or revise our opinion to reflect any legal developments or factual matters arising subsequent to the date hereof, or the impact of any information, document, certificate, record, statement, representation, covenant, or assumption relied upon herein that becomes incorrect or untrue.

Very truly yours,

/s/ KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

[\(Back To Top\)](#)

Section 4: EX-23.1 (EX-23.1)

[QuickLinks](#) -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

Exhibit 23.1

CONSENT OF INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM

We hereby consent to the incorporation by reference in this Registration Statement on Form S-3 of Ladder Capital Corp of our report dated February 27, 2020 relating to the financial statements, financial statement schedules and the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting, which appears in Ladder Capital Corp's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2019. We also consent to the reference to us under the heading "Experts" in such Registration Statement.

/s/ PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
New York, NY
March 16, 2020

QuickLinks

[CONSENT OF INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM](#)

[\(Back To Top\)](#)