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## Section 1: 424B5 (424B5)

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Filed Pursuant to Rule 424(b)(5)  
Registration No. 333-233337

*CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE*

Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered	Maximum Aggregate Offering Price	Amount of Registration Fee <sup>(1)</sup>
Common Stock, , \$0.01 par value per share	\$400,000,000	\$48,480

- (1) Calculated in accordance with Rule 457(o) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, and Rule 457(r) under the Securities Act. This "Calculation of Registration Fee" table shall be deemed to update the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the registrant's Registration Statement on Form S-3 (File No. 333-233337) in accordance with Rules 456(b) and 457(r) under the Securities Act.

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**PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT**  
**(To Prospectus Dated August 16, 2019)**

**\$400,000,000**



**Common Stock**

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We have entered into a distribution agreement, dated August 16, 2019, with J.P. Morgan Securities LLC, Barclays Capital Inc., BofA Securities, Inc., Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC, Nomura Securities International, Inc. and RBC Capital Markets, LLC, each referred to herein as a sales agent and, collectively, the sales agents, relating to shares of our common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, or our common stock, offered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, pursuant to an “at the market” offering program. In accordance with the terms of the distribution agreement, we may offer and sell shares of our common stock having an aggregate gross sales price of up to \$400,000,000 from time to time through the sales agents and any additional agents appointed under distribution agreements in the future.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, or the NYSE, under the symbol “MFA.” The last reported sale price of our common stock on the NYSE on August 15, 2019 was \$7.20 per share.

Sales of our common stock, if any, under this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus may be made in negotiated transactions or transactions that are deemed to be “at the market” offerings, as defined in Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Act, including sales made directly on the NYSE or sales made to or through a market maker other than on an exchange. The sales agents will be entitled to compensation of up to 2% of the gross sales price per share for any shares of common stock sold under the distribution agreement. Under the terms of the distribution agreement, we may also sell our common stock to a sales agent as principal for its own account at a price agreed upon at the time of sale. If we sell common stock to a sales agent as principal, we will enter into a separate terms agreement with that sales agent, and we will describe this agreement in a separate prospectus supplement or pricing supplement.

Our common stock is subject to certain restrictions on ownership designed to preserve our qualification as a real estate investment trust for federal income tax purposes. See “Description of Common Stock and Preferred Stock—Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer” in the accompanying prospectus.

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**Investing in our common stock involves certain risks. Before buying any shares, you should read the discussion of material risks of investing in our common stock under the caption “[Risk Factors](#)” beginning on page S-4 of this prospectus supplement and beginning on page 5 of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, which is incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.**

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC, nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

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**J.P. Morgan**  
**Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC**

**Barclays**  
**Nomura**

**BofA Merrill Lynch**  
**RBC Capital Markets**

The date of this prospectus supplement is August 16, 2019

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You should rely only on the information contained in or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or any applicable free writing prospectus. We have not, and the sales agents have not, authorized anyone to provide you with different information. We and the sales agents take no responsibility for, and can provide no assurance of the reliability of, any other information others may give you.

We are not, and the sales agents are not, making an offer of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus in any jurisdiction where the offer is not permitted. You should assume that the information appearing in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus, any applicable free writing prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein or therein is accurate only as of their respective dates or on the date or dates which are specified in these documents. Our business, financial condition, liquidity, results of operations and prospects may have changed since those dates.

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**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS SUPPLEMENT**

This document consists of two parts. The first part is this prospectus supplement, which describes the specific terms of this offering and certain other matters relating to us and also adds to or updates information contained in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein. The second part is the accompanying prospectus, which gives more general information, some of which may not apply to this offering. This prospectus supplement may add to, update or change information in the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.

Any statement herein or in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated herein or in the accompanying prospectus by reference shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in any subsequently filed document, which also is incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein and therein, modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus. This prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus and the documents incorporated into each by reference include important information about us, the common stock being offered and other information you should know before investing in these securities. All references to “we,” “our,” “us” or “the company” in this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus mean MFA Financial, Inc.

You should rely only on the information contained in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or in any free writing prospectuses we have prepared. We have not authorized anyone, and the sales agents are not authorized, to provide you with information that is different from that contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement, the accompanying prospectus or in any free writing prospectuses we have prepared. If anyone provides you with different or inconsistent information, you should not rely on it. We are not, and the sales agents are not, offering to sell these securities in any jurisdiction where the offer or sale is not permitted. You should not assume that the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus, as the case may be, or in the case of the documents incorporated by reference, the date of such documents, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus or any sale of our common stock. Our business, financial condition, liquidity, results of operations, and prospects may have changed since those dates.

## FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the information incorporated by reference herein and therein, contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (or the Exchange Act). When used, statements which are not historical in nature, including those containing words such as “will,” “believe,” “expect,” “anticipate,” “estimate,” “plan,” “continue,” “intend,” “should,” “could,” “would,” “may” and variations of these terms and similar expressions, or the negatives of these terms or similar expressions, are intended to identify forward-looking statements and, as such, may involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and assumptions.

These forward-looking statements are subject to various risks and uncertainties, including, but not limited to, those relating to:

- changes in interest rates and the market (i.e., fair) value of our residential mortgage backed securities (or MBS), residential whole loans, CRT securities and other assets;
- changes in the prepayment rates on residential mortgage assets, an increase of which could result in a reduction of the yield on certain investments in our portfolio and could require us to reinvest the proceeds received by us as a result of such prepayments in investments with lower coupons, while a decrease in which could result in an increase in the interest rate duration of certain investments in our portfolio making their valuation more sensitive to changes in interest rates and could result in lower forecasted cash flows or, in certain circumstances, other-than-temporary impairment on certain Legacy Non-Agency MBS, which include MBS issued prior to 2008, purchased at a discount;
- credit risks underlying our assets, including changes in the default rates and management’s assumptions regarding default rates on the mortgage loans securing our MBS that are not guaranteed by any U.S. Government agency or any federally chartered corporation (or Non-Agency MBS) and relating to our residential whole loan portfolio;
- our ability to borrow to finance our assets and the terms, including the cost, maturity and other terms, of any such borrowings;
- implementation of or changes in government regulations or programs affecting our business;
- our estimates regarding taxable income, the actual amount of which is dependent on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, changes in the amount of interest income and financing costs, the method elected by us to accrete the market discount on Non-Agency MBS and residential whole loans and the extent of prepayments, realized losses and changes in the composition of our residential MBS that are issued or guaranteed as to principal and/or interest by a federally chartered corporation (or Agency MBS) such as Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, or an agency of the U.S. Government, such as Ginnie Mae, Non-Agency MBS and residential whole loan portfolios that may occur during the applicable tax period, including gain or loss on any MBS disposals and whole loan modifications, foreclosures and liquidations;
- the timing and amount of distributions to stockholders, which are declared and paid at the discretion of our board of directors and will depend on, among other things, our taxable income, our financial results and overall financial condition and liquidity, maintenance of our real estate investment trust (“REIT”) qualification and such other factors as our board of directors deems relevant;
- our ability to maintain our qualification as a REIT for federal income tax purposes;
- our ability to maintain our exemption from registration under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (or the Investment Company Act), including statements regarding the concept release issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission (or the SEC) relating to interpretive issues under the Investment Company Act with respect to the status under the Investment Company Act of certain companies that are engaged in the business of acquiring mortgages and mortgage-related interests;

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- our ability to continue growing our residential whole loan portfolio, which is dependent on, among other things, the supply of loans offered for sale in the market;
- expected returns on our investments in nonperforming residential whole loans (or NPLs), which are affected by, among other things, the length of time required to foreclose upon, sell, liquidate or otherwise reach a resolution of the property underlying the NPL, home price values, amounts advanced to carry the asset (e.g., taxes, insurance, maintenance expenses, etc. on the underlying property) and the amount ultimately realized upon resolution of the asset;
- targeted or expected returns on our investments in recently-originated loans, the performance of which is, similar to our other mortgage loan investments, subject to, among other things, prepayment risk, credit risk and financing cost associated with such investments; and
- risks associated with our investments in MSR-related assets, including servicing, regulatory and economic risks, and risks associated with investing in real estate assets, including changes in business conditions and the general economy.

These and other risks, uncertainties and factors, including those identified in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, and those discussed in any of our subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q or Current Reports on Form 8-K, could cause our actual results to differ materially from those projected in any forward-looking statements we make. All forward-looking statements are based on beliefs, assumptions and expectations of our future performance, taking into account all information currently available. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date they are made. New risks and uncertainties arise over time and it is not possible to predict those factors or how they may affect us. Except as required by law, we are not obligated to, and are not undertaking to, update or revise any forward-looking statements.

## SUMMARY

*The following summary is qualified in its entirety by the more detailed information included elsewhere or incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus. Because this is a summary, it may not contain all of the information that is important to you. You should read the entire prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus, including the section entitled “Risk Factors” and the documents incorporated by reference herein and therein before making an investment decision.*

## OUR COMPANY

We are an internally-managed REIT primarily engaged in the real estate finance business. We engage in our business through subsidiaries that invest, on a leveraged basis, in residential mortgage assets, including residential whole loans, residential mortgage securities and MSR-related assets. Our principal business objective is to deliver shareholder value through the generation of distributable income and through asset performance linked to residential mortgage credit fundamentals. We selectively invest in residential mortgage assets with a focus on credit analysis, projected prepayment rates, interest rate sensitivity and expected return.

At June 30, 2019, we had total assets of approximately \$13.2 billion, of which \$5.9 billion, or approximately 45%, represents residential whole loans acquired through interests in certain trusts established to acquire the loans. Our purchased performing loans, which as of June 30, 2019 comprised approximately 62% of our residential whole loans, include: (i) loans to finance (or refinance) one-to-four family residential properties that are not considered to meet the definition of a “Qualified Mortgage” in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, (ii) short-term business purpose loans collateralized by residential properties made to non-occupant borrowers who intend to rehabilitate and sell the property for a profit, (iii) loans to finance (or refinance) non-owner occupied one-to-four family residential properties that are rented to one or more tenants, and (iv) previously originated loans secured by residential real estate that is generally owner occupied. In addition, at June 30, 2019, we had approximately \$5.4 billion in investments in residential mortgage securities, which represented approximately 41% of our total assets. At such date, our portfolio includes \$2.3 billion of Agency MBS, \$2.7 billion of Non-Agency MBS and \$407.3 million of CRT securities. Non-Agency MBS is comprised of \$1.7 billion of Legacy Non-Agency MBS and \$1.0 billion of RPL/NPL MBS. These RPL/NPL MBS are backed by securitized re-performing and non-performing loans and are generally structured with a contractual coupon step-up feature where the coupon increases from 300-400 basis points at 36-48 months from issuance or sooner. At June 30, 2019, our investments in MSR-related assets were \$1.2 billion, or 9% of our total assets. Our MSR-related assets include term notes whose cash flows are considered to be largely dependent on MSR collateral and loan participations to provide financing to mortgage originators who own MSRs. Our remaining investment-related assets, which represented approximately 4% of our total assets at June 30, 2019, were primarily comprised of real estate owned (or REO) and MBS and loan-related receivables.

### Compliance with REIT Requirements and the Investment Company Act

We have elected to be treated as a REIT for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In order to maintain our qualification as a REIT, we must comply with a number of requirements under U.S. federal income tax law that are discussed under the heading “Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations” in the accompanying prospectus. Our charter contains restrictions on the ownership and transfer of our capital stock that are intended to assist us in complying with the requirements for qualification as a REIT. Among other things, our charter provides that, subject to certain exceptions, no person or entity may actually or beneficially own, or be deemed to own by virtue of the applicable constructive ownership provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the Code), more than 9.8% (in value or in number of shares, whichever is more restrictive) of the outstanding shares of our capital stock. See “Description of Common Stock and Preferred Stock—Restrictions on

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Ownership and Transfer” in the accompanying prospectus. In addition, we intend to conduct our business at all times so as to maintain our exempt status under, and not to become regulated as an investment company for purposes of, the Investment Company Act.

**General Information**

We were incorporated in Maryland on July 24, 1997, and began operations on April 10, 1998. Our principal executive offices are located at 350 Park Avenue, 20th Floor, New York, New York 10022. Our telephone number is (212) 207-6400. Our common stock, our 7.50% Series B Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock and our 8.00% Senior Notes due 2042 are listed on the NYSE under the symbols “MFA”, “MFA PrB” and “MFO”, respectively. We maintain a website at [www.mfainancial.com](http://www.mfainancial.com). Information contained on our website is not, and should not be interpreted to be, part of this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

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**THE OFFERING**

Issuer	MFA Financial, Inc., a Maryland corporation.
Securities Offered	Shares of our common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, with an aggregate gross sales price of up to \$400,000,000.
NYSE Symbol	“MFA”
Use of Proceeds	We intend to add the net proceeds from sales of the securities offered hereby to our general corporate funds, which we may use for general working capital purposes, including to invest in additional residential mortgage-related assets, including but not limited to, residential whole loans, MBS, CRT securities and investments related to mortgage servicing rights, and for working capital, which may include, among other things, the repayment of amounts outstanding under our repurchase agreements.
Ownership Limit	Our charter contains restrictions on the ownership and transfer of our capital stock that are intended to assist us in complying with the requirements for qualification as a REIT. Among other things, our charter provides that, subject to certain exceptions, no person or entity may actually or beneficially own, or be deemed to own by virtue of the applicable constructive ownership provisions of the Code, more than 9.8% (in value or in number of shares, whichever is more restrictive) of the outstanding shares of our capital stock. Our board of directors may, in its sole discretion, exempt a person from the 9.8% ownership limit under certain circumstances. See “Description of Common Stock and Preferred Stock—Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer” in the accompanying prospectus.
Risk Factors	Investing in our common stock involves risks that are described under the caption “Risk Factors” in this prospectus supplement and in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, and as updated by our subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and Current Reports on Form 8-K, which are incorporated by reference into this prospectus supplement.

## RISK FACTORS

*An investment in our common stock involves risks. Before acquiring any shares of our common stock offered pursuant to this prospectus supplement, you should carefully consider the risks set forth under the caption “Risk Factors” in this prospectus supplement, in the accompanying prospectus and in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and subsequent filings with the SEC, which is incorporated by reference herein. The risks and uncertainties described below and in other documents we have filed with the SEC are not the only risks and uncertainties we face. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial also may impair our business operations. If certain of the risks described in the risk factors incorporated by reference herein actually occur, our business, results of operations and financial condition could suffer. In that event, the trading prices of our common stock could decline, and you may lose all or part of your investment.*

### Risks Relating to Our Common Stock and this Offering

*The market price and trading volume of our shares of common stock may be volatile.*

The market price of shares of our common stock may be highly volatile and could be subject to wide fluctuations. In addition, the trading volume in our shares of common stock may fluctuate and cause significant price variations to occur. We cannot assure you that the market price of our shares of common stock will not fluctuate or decline significantly in the future. Some of the factors that could negatively affect our share price or result in fluctuations in the price or trading volume of our shares of common stock include:

- actual or anticipated variations in our quarterly operating results or business prospects;
- changes in our earnings estimates or publication of research reports about us or the real estate industry;
- an inability to meet or exceed securities analysts’ estimates or expectations;
- increases in market interest rates;
- hedging or arbitrage trading activity in our shares of common stock;
- capital commitments;
- changes in market valuations of similar companies;
- changes in valuations of our assets;
- adverse market reaction to any increased indebtedness we incur in the future;
- additions or departures of management personnel;
- actions by institutional shareholders, including large block sales at a discount;
- speculation in the press or investment community;
- yields on our common stock as compared to yields on other financial instruments;
- changes in our dividend or distribution policy;
- regulatory changes affecting our industry generally or our business;
- general market and economic conditions; and
- future sales of our shares of common stock or securities convertible into, or exchangeable or exercisable for, our shares of common stock.

In addition, the stock market in general has experienced extreme price and volume fluctuations that may be unrelated or disproportionate to the operating performance of companies like us. These broad market and

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industry factors may materially reduce the market price of our common stock, regardless of our operating performance.

***We will have broad discretion as to the use of, and as to the timing of when we deploy, the net proceeds we receive from this offering.***

We will retain broad discretion to use the net proceeds from this offering for general working capital purposes, which may include the acquisition of additional residential mortgage-related assets and the repayment of indebtedness. See “Use of Proceeds.” We may temporarily invest the net proceeds before use in interest-bearing, short-term, marketable investment grade securities or (interest or non-interest bearing) checking (or escrow) accounts or money market accounts that are consistent with our intention to maintain our qualification as a REIT, and no assurances can be given as to how quickly we will be able to deploy the net proceeds from this offering in our target assets. Our management may spend a portion or all of the net proceeds we receive from this offering in ways that our stockholders may not desire or that may not yield a favorable return.

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

We intend to add the net proceeds from sales of the securities offered hereby to our general corporate funds, which we may use for general working capital purposes, including to invest in additional residential mortgage-related assets, including but not limited to, residential whole loans, MBS, CRT securities and investments related to mortgage servicing rights, and for working capital, which may include, among other things, the repayment of amounts outstanding under our repurchase agreements.

## PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We have entered into a distribution agreement with the sales agents under which we may issue and sell shares of our common stock having an aggregate gross sales price of up to \$400,000,000 from time to time through the sales agents acting as sales agents or directly to the sales agents acting as principals for the offer and sale of shares of our common stock. Sales of the shares, if any, may be made in negotiated transactions or will be made by means of ordinary brokers' transactions on the NYSE at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to such prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices or through a market maker other than on an exchange, directly on or through any other existing trading market or by any other method permitted by law, including but not limited to in privately negotiated transactions and in block trades. No sales agent will engage in any prohibited stabilizing transaction in connection with the offering. In no event will the aggregate number of shares of our common stock sold through the sales agents under the distribution agreement have an aggregate gross sales price in excess of \$400,000,000.

Each sales agent will offer the shares of common stock subject to the terms and conditions of the distribution agreement on a daily basis or as otherwise agreed upon by us and such sales agent. We will designate the maximum amount of shares of common stock to be sold through each sales agent on a daily basis or otherwise determine such maximum amount together with the sales agents. Subject to the terms and conditions of the distribution agreement, the sales agents will use their commercially reasonable efforts to sell on our behalf all of the designated shares of common stock. We may instruct the sales agents not to sell shares of common stock if the sales cannot be effected at or above the price designated by us in any such instruction. We or the sales agents may suspend the offering of shares of common stock being made through the sales agents under the distribution agreement upon proper notice to the other parties. None of the sales agents are required to sell any specific number or dollar amount of shares of our common stock, but each has agreed to use its commercially reasonable efforts, as our sales agent, consistent with its normal trading and sales practices and applicable law and regulation and on the terms and subject to the conditions of the distribution agreement, to sell the shares offered as instructed by us. The offering of the shares by the sales agents is subject to receipt and acceptance and is subject to the sales agents' right to reject any order in whole or in part.

We will pay each sales agent commissions for its services in acting as sales agent. Each sales agent will be entitled to compensation equal to up to 2% of the gross sales price of all shares sold through it under the distribution agreement. The remaining sales proceeds, after deducting any expenses payable by us and any transaction fees imposed by any governmental, regulatory or self-regulatory organization in connection with the sales, will equal our net proceeds for the sale of such shares. We estimate that the total expenses associated with the commencement of the offering payable by us, excluding compensation payable to the sales agents under the distribution agreement, will be approximately \$200,000.

An applicable sales agent will confirm in writing to us the number of shares sold on any day that is a trading day for the NYSE other than a day on which trading on the NYSE is scheduled to close prior to its regular weekday closing time, an exchange business day, and the related gross sales price and net sales price no later than the opening of trading on the immediately following exchange business day.

Settlement for sales of common stock will occur, unless the parties agree otherwise, on the second business day following the date on which any sales were made in return for payment of the net proceeds to us. There is no arrangement for funds to be received in an escrow, trust or similar arrangement. Under the terms of the distribution agreement, we also may sell shares to an individual sales agent as principal for its own account at a price agreed upon at the time of sale. If we sell shares to a sales agent as principal, we will enter into a separate terms agreement with such sales agent, and we will describe this agreement in a separate prospectus or prospectus supplement.

We will deliver to the NYSE copies of this prospectus supplement pursuant to the rules of the NYSE. We will report at least quarterly the aggregate number of shares of common stock sold through the sales agents under

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the distribution agreement, the net proceeds to us and the compensation paid by us to the sales agents in connection with the sales of common stock.

Unless otherwise terminated pursuant to the terms of the distribution agreement or mutual agreement of the parties to the distribution agreement, the distribution agreement shall automatically terminate on the third anniversary of the date of the distribution agreement.

In connection with the sale of the common stock on our behalf, each sales agent may be deemed to be an “underwriter” within the meaning of the Securities Act, and the compensation paid to a sales agent may be deemed to be underwriting commissions or discounts. We have agreed in the distribution agreement to provide indemnification and contribution to each applicable sales agent against certain civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

The sales agents and their respective affiliates are full service financial institutions engaged in various activities, which may include sales and trading, commercial and investment banking, advisory, investment management, investment research, principal investment, hedging, market making, brokerage and other financial and non-financial activities and services. Certain of the sales agents and their respective affiliates have provided, and may in the future provide, a variety of these services to the issuer and to persons and entities with relationships with the issuer, for which they received or will receive customary fees and expenses.

In the ordinary course of their various business activities, the sales agents and their respective affiliates, officers, directors and employees may purchase, sell or hold a broad array of investments and actively trade securities, derivatives, loans, commodities, currencies, credit default swaps and other financial instruments for their own account and for the accounts of their customers, and such investment and trading activities may involve or relate to assets, securities and/or instruments of the issuer (directly, as collateral securing other obligations or otherwise) and/or persons and entities with relationships with the issuer. The sales agents and their respective affiliates may also communicate independent investment recommendations, market color or trading ideas and/or publish or express independent research views in respect of such assets, securities or instruments and may at any time hold, or recommend to clients that they should acquire, long and/or short positions in such assets, securities and instruments.

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**LEGAL MATTERS**

Certain legal matters in connection with this offering will be passed upon for us by Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP. Certain legal matters in connection with this offering will be passed upon for the sales agents by Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, New York, New York. Venable LLP will issue an opinion to us regarding certain matters of Maryland law, including the validity of the securities offered hereby. Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP may rely as to certain matters of Maryland law upon the opinion of Venable LLP.

**EXPERTS**

The financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting (which is included in Management's 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, 2018 have been so incorporated in reliance on the reports of KPMG LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

**WHERE YOU CAN OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION**

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other information with the SEC under the Exchange Act. The SEC filings are available to the public from commercial document retrieval services. These filings are also available at the website maintained by the SEC at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov). You can also inspect copies of our public filings at the offices of the NYSE. For further information about obtaining copies of our public filings from the NYSE, please call (212) 656-5060. We maintain a website at [www.mfafinancial.com](http://www.mfafinancial.com). Information contained on our website is not incorporated by reference in, and should not be interpreted to be, part of this prospectus. We make available, free of charge, on our website our SEC filings.

We have filed with the SEC a "shelf" registration statement on Form S-3 under the Securities Act relating to the securities that may be offered by this prospectus supplement. This prospectus supplement is a part of that registration statement but does not contain all of the information in the registration statement. We have omitted parts of the registration statement in accordance with the rules and regulations of the SEC. For more detail about us and any securities that may be offered by this prospectus supplement, you may examine the registration statement on Form S-3 and the exhibits filed with it at the locations listed in the previous paragraph.

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**INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE**

We incorporate information into this prospectus supplement by reference, which means that we disclose important information to you by referring you to other documents filed separately with the SEC. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus supplement, except to the extent superseded by information contained herein or by information contained in documents filed with or furnished to the SEC after the date of this prospectus supplement. This prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus incorporate by reference the documents set forth below that have been previously filed with the SEC:

- our Annual Report on [Form 10-K](#) for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, filed with the SEC on February 21, 2019;
- our Quarterly Report on [Form 10-Q](#) for the quarterly period ended March 31, 2019, filed with the SEC on May 7, 2019;
- our Quarterly Report on [Form 10-Q](#) for the quarterly period ended June 30, 2019, filed with the SEC on August 7, 2019;
- our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on [May 23, 2019](#) and [June 3, 2019](#);
- the portions of our [Definitive Proxy Statement](#) on Schedule 14A, filed with the SEC on April 9, 2019 and incorporated by reference in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2018; and
- the description of our [common stock](#) included in our Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the SEC on March 26, 1998, including all amendments and reports filed for the purpose of updating such description.

We also incorporate by reference into this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus additional documents that we may file with the SEC under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act from the date of this prospectus supplement until we have sold all of the securities to which this prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus relate or the offering is otherwise terminated; provided, however, that we are not incorporating any information furnished under either Item 2.02 or Item 7.01 of any Current Report on Form 8-K. These documents may include Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and Current Reports on Form 8-K, as well as proxy statements. You may obtain copies of any of these filings through the SEC or through the SEC's website as described above.

We maintain a website at [www.mfainancial.com](http://www.mfainancial.com). Information on our website is not, and should not be interpreted to be, a part of this prospectus supplement or the accompanying prospectus.



# MFA FINANCIAL, INC.

**Common Stock**  
**Preferred Stock**  
**Depositary Shares**  
**Warrants**  
**Debt Securities**  
**Rights**  
**Units**

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We may offer, issue and sell from time to time, together or separately:

- shares of our common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, or our common stock;
- shares of our preferred stock, including our convertible preferred stock (which we may issue in one or more series), par value \$0.01 per share, or our preferred stock;
- depositary shares representing shares of our preferred stock;
- warrants entitling the holders to purchase our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or units;
- debt securities;
- rights issuable to our stockholders to purchase shares of our common stock or preferred stock, to purchase warrants exercisable for shares of our common stock, shares of our preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or units, to purchase our debt securities, to purchase depositary shares or to purchase units consisting of two or more of the foregoing; or
- units consisting of two or more of the foregoing.

We will determine when we sell securities, the amounts of securities we will sell and the prices and other terms on which we will sell them. We may sell securities to or through underwriters, through agents or directly to purchasers.

We will describe in a prospectus supplement, which we will deliver with this prospectus, the terms of particular securities which we offer in the future. We may describe the terms of those securities in a term sheet which will precede the prospectus supplement.

In each prospectus supplement, we will include the following information:

- the names of the underwriters or agents, if any, through which we will sell the securities;
- the proposed amount of securities, if any, which the underwriters will purchase;
- the compensation, if any, of those underwriters or agents;
- the public offering price of the securities;
- information about securities exchanges, electronic communications networks or automated quotation systems on which the securities will be listed or traded; and
- any other material information about the offering and sale of the securities.

The New York Stock Exchange lists our common stock under the symbol "MFA", our 7.50% Series B Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock under the symbol "MFA/PB" and our 8.00% Senior Notes due 2042 under the symbol "MFO."

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**Investing in our securities involves certain risks. Before buying any of our securities, you should read the risks referenced under the caption "[Risk Factors](#)" on page 6 of this prospectus**

**NEITHER THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION NOR ANY STATE SECURITIES COMMISSION HAS APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED OF THESE SECURITIES OR DETERMINED THAT THIS PROSPECTUS IS TRUTHFUL OR COMPLETE. ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.**

August 16, 2019

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**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS**

This prospectus is part of a “shelf” registration statement. Under this shelf registration statement, we may sell any combination of our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares representing shares of our preferred stock, warrants entitling the holders to purchase our common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or units, debt securities, rights issuable to our stockholders to purchase shares of our common stock or preferred stock, to purchase warrants exercisable for shares of our common stock, shares of our preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or units, to purchase our debt securities, to purchase depositary shares or to purchase units consisting of two or more of the foregoing, or units consisting of two or more of the foregoing, in one or more offerings. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. Before you buy any of our securities, it is important for you to consider the information contained in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with additional information described under the heading “Incorporation of Certain Documents By Reference.”

## FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus contains or incorporates by reference certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (or the Securities Act), and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (or the Exchange Act). When used, statements which are not historical in nature, including those containing words such as “will,” “believe,” “expect,” “anticipate,” “estimate,” “plan,” “continue,” “intend,” “should,” “could,” “would,” “may” and variations of these terms and similar expressions, or the negatives of these terms or similar expressions, are intended to identify forward-looking statements and, as such, may involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and assumptions.

These forward-looking statements are subject to various risks and uncertainties, including, but not limited to, those relating to:

- changes in interest rates and the market (i.e., fair) value of our residential mortgage backed securities (or MBS), residential whole loans, CRT securities and other assets;
- changes in the prepayment rates on residential mortgage assets, an increase of which could result in a reduction of the yield on certain investments in our portfolio and could require us to reinvest the proceeds received by us as a result of such prepayments in investments with lower coupons, while a decrease in which could result in an increase in the interest rate duration of certain investments in our portfolio making their valuation more sensitive to changes in interest rates and could result in lower forecasted cash flows or, in certain circumstances, other-than-temporary impairment on certain Legacy Non-Agency MBS, which include MBS issued prior to 2008, purchased at a discount;
- credit risks underlying our assets, including changes in the default rates and management’s assumptions regarding default rates on the mortgage loans securing our MBS that are not guaranteed by any U.S. Government agency or any federally chartered corporation (or Non-Agency MBS) and relating to our residential whole loan portfolio;
- our ability to borrow to finance our assets and the terms, including the cost, maturity and other terms of any such borrowings;
- implementation of or changes in government regulations or programs affecting our business;
- our estimates regarding taxable income, the actual amount of which is dependent on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, changes in the amount of interest income and financing costs, the method elected by us to accrete the market discount on Non-Agency MBS and residential whole loans and the extent of prepayments, realized losses and changes in the composition of our residential MBS that are issued or guaranteed as to principal and/or interest by a federally chartered corporation (or Agency MBS) such as Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, or an agency of the U.S. Government, such as Ginnie Mae, Non-Agency MBS and residential whole loan portfolios that may occur during the applicable tax period, including gain or loss on any MBS disposals and whole loan modifications, foreclosures and liquidations;
- the timing and amount of distributions to stockholders, which are declared and paid at the discretion of our board of directors and will depend on, among other things, our taxable income, our financial results and overall financial condition and liquidity, maintenance of our real estate investment trust (or REIT) qualification and such other factors as our board of directors deems relevant;
- our ability to maintain our qualification as a REIT for federal income tax purposes;
- our ability to maintain our exemption from registration under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (or the Investment Company Act), including statements regarding the concept release issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission (or the SEC) relating to interpretive issues under the Investment Company Act with respect to the status under the Investment Company Act of certain companies that are engaged in the business of acquiring mortgages and mortgage-related interests;

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- our ability to continue growing our residential whole loan portfolio, which is dependent on, among other things, the supply of loans offered for sale in the market;
- expected returns on our investments in nonperforming residential whole loans (or NPLs), which are affected by, among other things, the length of time required to foreclose upon, sell, liquidate or otherwise reach a resolution of the property underlying the NPL, home price values, amounts advanced to carry the asset (e.g., taxes, insurance, maintenance expenses, etc. on the underlying property) and the amount ultimately realized upon resolution of the asset;
- targeted or expected returns on our investments in recently-originated loans, the performance of which is, similar to our other mortgage loan investments, subject to, among other things, prepayment risk, credit risk and financing cost associated with such investments; and
- risks associated with our investments in mortgage servicing rights (or MSR) related assets, including servicing, regulatory and economic risks, and risks associated with investing in real estate assets, including changes in business conditions and the general economy.

These and other risks, uncertainties and factors, including those identified in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, and those discussed in any of our subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q or Current Reports on Form 8-K, could cause our actual results to differ materially from those projected in any forward-looking statements we make. All forward-looking statements are based on beliefs, assumptions and expectations of our future performance, taking into account all information currently available. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date they are made. New risks and uncertainties arise over time and it is not possible to predict those factors or how they may affect us. Except as required by law, we are not obligated to, and are not undertaking to, update or revise any forward-looking statements.

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*The following information is qualified in its entirety by the more detailed information and financial statements and notes thereto appearing elsewhere in, or incorporated by reference into, this prospectus. We encourage you to read this prospectus, as well as the information which is incorporated by reference herein, in its entirety. You should carefully consider the material risks of investing in our securities referenced under the caption “Risk Factors” of this prospectus before making a decision to invest in our securities. All references to “we,” “us” or “our company” in this prospectus mean MFA Financial, Inc. The following defines certain of the terms used in this prospectus: MBS refers to mortgage-backed securities secured by pools of residential mortgage loans; Agency MBS refers to MBS that are guaranteed by a corporation under federal conservatorship, such as Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, or issued by an agency of the U.S. Government, such as Ginnie Mae; Non-Agency MBS are MBS that are not guaranteed or issued by any agency of the U.S. Government or any corporation under federal conservatorship; Legacy Non-Agency MBS refers to Non-Agency MBS issued prior to 2008; and CRT securities refer to credit risk transfer securities which are general obligations of government-sponsored entities (e.g., Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac).*

## MFA FINANCIAL, INC.

### **Our Business**

We are an internally-managed REIT primarily engaged in the real estate finance business. We engage in our business through subsidiaries that invest, on a leveraged basis, in residential mortgage assets, including residential whole loans, residential mortgage securities and MSR-related assets. Our principal business objective is to deliver shareholder value through the generation of distributable income and through asset performance linked to residential mortgage credit fundamentals. We selectively invest in residential mortgage assets with a focus on credit analysis, projected prepayment rates, interest rate sensitivity and expected return.

At June 30, 2019, we had total assets of approximately \$13.2 billion, of which \$5.9 billion, or approximately 45%, represents residential whole loans acquired through interests in certain trusts established to acquire the loans. Our purchased performing loans, which as of June 30, 2019 comprised approximately 62% of our residential whole loans, include : (i) loans to finance (or refinance) one-to-four family residential properties that are not considered to meet the definition of a “Qualified Mortgage” in accordance with guidelines adopted by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, (ii) short-term business purpose loans collateralized by residential properties made to non-occupant borrowers who intend to rehabilitate and sell the property for a profit, (iii) loans to finance (or refinance) non-owner occupied one-to-four family residential properties that are rented to one or more tenants, and (iv) previously originated loans secured by residential real estate that is generally owner occupied. In addition, at June 30, 2019, we had approximately \$5.4 billion in investments in residential mortgage securities, which represented approximately 41% of our total assets. At such date, our portfolio includes \$2.3 billion of Agency MBS, \$2.7 billion of Non-Agency MBS and \$407.3 million of CRT securities. Non-Agency MBS is comprised of \$1.7 billion of Legacy Non-Agency MBS and \$1.0 billion of RPL/NPL MBS. These RPL/NPL MBS are backed by securitized re-performing and non-performing loans and are generally structured with a contractual coupon step-up feature where the coupon increases from 300-400 basis points at 36-48 months from issuance or sooner. At June 30, 2019, our investments in MSR-related assets were \$1.2 billion, or 9% of our total assets. Our MSR-related assets include term notes whose cash flows are considered to be largely dependent on MSR collateral and loan participations to provide financing to mortgage originators who own MSRs. Our remaining investment-related assets, which represented approximately 4% of our total assets at June 30, 2019, were primarily comprised of real estate owned (or REO) and MBS and loan-related receivables.

### **Compliance with REIT Requirements and the Investment Company Act**

We have elected to be treated as a REIT for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In order to maintain our qualification as a REIT, we must comply with a number of requirements under U.S. federal income tax law that

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are discussed under the heading “Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations” in this prospectus. Our charter contains restrictions on the ownership and transfer of our capital stock that are intended to assist us in complying with the requirements for qualification as a REIT. Among other things, our charter provides that, subject to certain exceptions, no person or entity may actually or beneficially own, or be deemed to own by virtue of the applicable constructive ownership provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (or the Code), more than 9.8% (in value or in number of shares, whichever is more restrictive) of the outstanding shares of our capital stock. See “Description of Common Stock and Preferred Stock—Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer.” In addition, we intend to conduct our business at all times so as to maintain our exempt status under, and not to become regulated as an investment company for purposes of, the Investment Company Act.

## **General Information**

We were incorporated in Maryland on July 24, 1997, and began operations on April 10, 1998. Our principal executive offices are located at 350 Park Avenue, 20th Floor, New York, New York 10022. Our telephone number is (212) 207-6400. Our common stock, our 7.50% Series B Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock and our 8.00% Senior Notes due 2042 are listed on the New York Stock Exchange (or NYSE) under the symbols “MFA”, “MFA/PB” and “MFO”, respectively. We maintain a website at [www.mfainancial.com](http://www.mfainancial.com). Information contained on our website is not, and should not be interpreted to be, part of this prospectus.

**RISK FACTORS**

Investment in our securities involves risk. Before choosing to invest in our securities, you should carefully consider the risks of an investment in our company set forth under the caption “Item 1A. Risk Factors” (or similar captions) in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and under the caption “Item 1A. Risk Factors” (or similar captions) in any of our subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q or Current Reports on Form 8-K, which risks are incorporated herein by reference. In the future, you should also carefully consider the disclosures relating to the risks of an investment in our company contained in the reports or documents we subsequently file under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act, which reports and documents will be deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus upon their filing to the extent set forth under “Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference” below.

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

Except as may be set forth in a particular prospectus supplement, we will add the net proceeds from sales of securities to our general corporate funds, which we may use for general working capital purposes, including to invest in additional residential mortgage-related assets, including but not limited to, residential whole loans, MBS, CRT securities and investments related to mortgage servicing rights, and for working capital, which may include, among other things, the repayment of amounts outstanding under our repurchase agreements.

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**DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK AND PREFERRED STOCK**

The following description of the terms of our stock is only a summary. This summary is not complete and is qualified by the provisions of our charter and bylaws, and the Maryland General Corporation Law, or MGCL. See “Incorporation Of Certain Documents By Reference.”

**General**

Our charter provides that we may issue up to one billion shares of capital stock, all with a par value of \$0.01 per share. As of June 30, 2019, 886,950,000 of these authorized shares were classified as common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, 1,160,000 shares were classified as 8.50% Series A Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock, par value \$0.01 per share (or the Series A Preferred Stock), 8,050,000 shares were classified as 7.50% Series B Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock, par value \$0.01 per share (or the Series B Preferred Stock), 3,840,000 are classified as Preferred Stock, par value \$0.01 per share, without further designation and 100,000,000 shares were classified as excess stock, par value \$0.01 per share. As of August 2, 2019, we had 450,555,570 shares of common stock, no shares of Series A Preferred Stock, 8,000,000 shares of Series B Preferred Stock and no shares of excess stock outstanding.

Pursuant to our charter, the board of directors of our company (or our board) is authorized to classify and reclassify any unissued shares of our capital stock, to provide for the issuance of shares in other classes or series (including preferred stock in one or more series), to establish the number of shares in each class or series and to fix the preferences, conversion and other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends and other distributions, qualifications and terms and conditions of redemption of each class or series. Under Maryland law, stockholders are generally not liable for our debts or obligations.

**Common Stock**

All shares of our common stock offered hereby will be duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable. Holders of our common stock will be entitled to receive distributions on their shares of common stock if, as and when our board authorizes and we declare distributions out of legally available funds. However, rights to distributions may be subordinated to the rights of holders of our preferred stock, when preferred stock is issued and outstanding, or subject to the provisions of our charter regarding the restrictions on ownership and transfer of shares of stock. See “—Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer” below. In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, each outstanding share of our common stock will entitle its holder to a proportionate share of the assets that remain after we pay our liabilities and any preferential distributions owed to preferred stockholders.

Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share on all matters submitted to a vote of the common stockholders. There is no cumulative voting in the election of directors, which means that the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of common stock can elect all of the directors then standing for election, and the holders of the remaining shares will not be able to elect any directors.

Holders of shares of our common stock have no preference, conversion, sinking fund, redemption or exchange rights or any preemptive rights to subscribe for any of our securities and generally have no appraisal rights. Subject to the provisions of our charter regarding the restrictions on ownership and transfer of shares of stock, all shares of our common stock have equal dividend, distribution, liquidation and other rights.

Under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation cannot amend its charter, consolidate, convert, merge, sell all or substantially all of its assets, engage in a statutory share exchange or dissolve unless the action is advised by its board of directors and approved by the affirmative vote of stockholders entitled to cast at least two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter unless a lesser percentage (but not less than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter) is set forth in the corporation’s charter. Our charter provides that these matters

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(other than certain amendments to the provisions of our charter related to our board, consideration of various factors when considering a change of control transaction, indemnification, exculpation, advance notice of stockholder proposals and the charter amendment section, which must be approved by the affirmative vote of not less than 80% of the aggregate vote entitled to be cast) may be approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the total number of shares of all classes outstanding and entitled to vote thereon.

Our charter grants our board the power to authorize the issuance of additional authorized but unissued shares of common stock and preferred stock. Our board may also classify or reclassify unissued shares of common stock or preferred stock and authorize their issuance.

We believe that these powers of our board provide increased flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions and in meeting other needs which might arise. Although our board does not intend to do so at the present time, it could authorize the issuance of a class or series that could delay, defer or prevent a change of control or other transaction that might involve a premium price for the common stock or otherwise be in the best interest of our stockholders.

### **Preferred Stock**

We may issue preferred stock, including convertible preferred stock, in one or more classes or series with any rights and preferences which may be authorized by our board. The preferred stock, when issued, will be duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable. Because our board has the power to establish the preferences, powers and rights of each series of preferred stock, our board may afford the holders of any series of preferred stock preferences, powers and rights, voting or otherwise, senior to the rights of the holders of our common stock.

On June 30, 2019, there were 8,000,000 shares of our Series B Preferred Stock outstanding.

The rights, preferences, privileges and restrictions of each series of preferred stock will be fixed by the articles supplementary relating to such series. We will distribute a prospectus supplement with regard to each series of preferred stock. The prospectus supplement, relating to each such series, will specify the terms of the preferred stock, as follows:

- the title and stated par value of the preferred stock;
- the number of shares offered, the liquidation preference per share and the offering price per share of the preferred stock;
- the dividend rate(s), period(s) and payment date(s) or method(s) of calculation applicable to the preferred stock;
- the date from which dividends on the preferred stock will accumulate, if applicable;
- the voting rights, if applicable, of the preferred stock;
- the provision for a sinking fund, if any, for the preferred stock;
- the provision for or any restriction on redemption or repurchase, if applicable, of the preferred stock;
- any listing of the preferred stock on any securities exchange;
- the terms and provisions, if any, upon which the preferred stock will be convertible into common stock, including the conversion price (or manner of calculation) and conversion period;
- a discussion of certain material U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to the preferred stock;
- the relative ranking and preferences of the preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon the liquidation, dissolution or winding-up of our affairs;

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- any limitation on issuance of any series of preferred stock ranking senior to or on a parity with the series of preferred stock as to dividend rights and rights upon the liquidation, dissolution or winding-up of our affairs;
- any limitations on direct or beneficial ownership and restrictions on transfer of the preferred stock, in each case as may be appropriate to, among other purposes, preserve our qualification as a REIT; and
- any other specific terms, preference rights, limitations or restrictions of the preferred stock.

### **Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer**

In order for us to qualify as a REIT, our stock must be beneficially owned by 100 or more persons for at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months or during a proportionate part of a shorter taxable year. Also, not more than 50% of the value of the outstanding shares of our stock may be owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals (as defined in the Code), to include certain exempt entities) during the last half of a taxable year.

Our charter provides that, subject to certain exceptions, no stockholder or “group” (as defined in Section 13(d)(3) of the Exchange Act) may own, or be deemed to own by virtue of the attribution provisions of the Code, more than 9.8% of the number or value of the outstanding shares of our capital stock, whichever is more restrictive (or the Ownership Limit). Our board may waive the Ownership Limit if it is presented with evidence satisfactory to it that the waiver will not jeopardize our qualification as a REIT. As a condition to any such waiver, our board may require opinions of counsel satisfactory to it and must receive an undertaking from the applicant with respect to preserving our REIT qualification. The Ownership Limit will not apply if our board determines that it is no longer in our best interests to continue to qualify as a REIT.

If shares of common stock and/or preferred stock (i) in excess of the Ownership Limit, (ii) which would cause us to be beneficially owned by fewer than 100 persons or (iii) that cause us to become “closely held” under Section 856(h) of the Code, are issued or transferred to any person, the issuance or transfer shall be void as to the number of shares in violation of such restrictions and the intended transferee will acquire no rights to such shares of common stock and/or preferred stock. Shares issued or transferred that would cause any stockholder (or a Prohibited Owner) to own more than the Ownership Limit or cause us to become “closely held” under Section 856(h) of the Code will automatically be converted into an equal number of shares of excess stock. All excess stock will be automatically transferred, without action by the Prohibited Owner, to a trust for the exclusive benefit of one or more charitable beneficiaries that we select, and the Prohibited Owner will not acquire any rights in the shares of excess stock. Such automatic transfer shall be deemed to be effective as of the close of business on the day prior to the date of the transfer causing a violation. The trustee of the trust shall be appointed by us and must be independent of us and the Prohibited Owner. The Prohibited Owner shall have no right to receive dividends or other distributions with respect to, or be entitled to vote, any shares of excess stock held in the trust. Any dividend or other distribution paid prior to the discovery by us that excess stock has been transferred to the trust must be paid by the recipient of the dividend or distribution to the trustee upon demand for the benefit of the charitable beneficiary, and any dividend or other distribution authorized but unpaid shall be paid when due to the trust. The trust shall have all dividend and voting rights with respect to the shares of excess stock held in the trust, which rights shall be exercised for the exclusive benefit of the charitable beneficiary. Any dividend or distribution so paid to the trust shall be held in trust for the charitable beneficiary.

Within 20 days of receipt of our notice that excess stock has been transferred to the trust, the trustee will sell the excess stock held in the trust to a person, designated by the trustee, whose ownership of the shares will not violate the ownership limitations set forth in our charter. Upon such sale, any interest of the charitable beneficiary in the excess stock sold shall terminate and the trustee shall distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the Prohibited Owner and to the charitable beneficiary as follows. The Prohibited Owner shall receive the lesser of (a) the price paid by the Prohibited Owner for the excess stock or, if the Prohibited Owner did not give value for the excess stock in connection with the event causing the excess stock to be held in the trust (e.g., a gift,

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devise or other such transaction), the Market Price (as defined in our charter) of the excess stock on the day of the event causing the excess stock to be held in the trust, and (b) the price per share received by the trustee from the sale or other disposition of the excess stock held in the trust. Any net sale proceeds in excess of the amount payable to the Prohibited Owner will be paid immediately to the charitable beneficiary. If, prior to our discovery that excess stock has been transferred to the trust, the excess stock is sold by a Prohibited Owner, then the excess stock will be deemed to have been sold on behalf of the trust and, to the extent that the Prohibited Owner received an amount for the excess stock that exceeds the amount that such Prohibited Owner was entitled to receive pursuant to the aforementioned requirement, the excess shall be paid to the trustee upon demand.

The Ownership Limit provision will not be automatically removed even if the REIT provisions of the Code are changed so as to no longer contain any ownership concentration limitation or if the ownership concentration is increased. Any change in the Ownership Limit would require an amendment to our charter. Such an amendment will require the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of common stock and any other class of capital stock with such voting rights. In addition to preserving our qualification as a REIT, the Ownership Limit may have the effect of precluding an acquisition of control of our company without the approval of our board.

To the extent our shares of stock are certificated, all certificates representing shares of our common stock or preferred stock will refer to the restrictions described above.

Any person who acquires or attempts or intends to acquire shares of our stock in violation of any of the foregoing restrictions on transferability and ownership will be required to give written notice immediately to us and provide us with such other information as we may request in order to determine the effect of such transfer on our qualification as a REIT.

All persons who own, directly or by virtue of the attribution provisions of the Code, 5% or more of our outstanding shares of stock (or such other percentage at the time prescribed by the Code or the regulations promulgated thereunder) must file a written statement with us containing the information specified in our charter within 30 days after January 1 of each year. In addition, each stockholder must upon demand disclose to us such information as we deem necessary in order to determine our qualification as a REIT and to ensure compliance with the Ownership Limit.

### **Transfer Agent and Registrar**

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock and preferred stock is Computershare Inc., 480 Washington Boulevard, Jersey City, NJ 07310-1900. Its telephone number is 866-249-2610 and its website is [www.computershare.com](http://www.computershare.com). The information on such website is not, and should not be interpreted to be, part of this prospectus.

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### DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

We may issue depositary receipts representing interests in shares of a particular series of preferred stock, which are called depositary shares. We will deposit the shares of preferred stock of a series which is the subject of depositary shares with a depositary, which will hold that preferred stock for the benefit of the holders of the depositary shares, in accordance with a deposit agreement between the depositary and us. The deposit agreement and form of depositary receipt will be filed as exhibits to the Registration Statement of which this prospectus forms a part. The holders of depositary shares will be entitled to all of the rights and preferences of the shares of preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate, including dividend, voting, conversion, redemption and liquidation rights, to the extent of their interests in that preferred stock.

While the deposit agreement relating to a particular series of preferred stock may have provisions applicable solely to that series of preferred stock, all deposit agreements relating to preferred stock we issue will include the following provisions:

*Dividends and Other Distributions.* Each time we pay a cash dividend or make any other type of cash distribution with regard to preferred stock held by a depositary, the depositary will distribute the dividend or other distribution to the holders of depositary shares in proportion to the depositary shares held by each of them. If there is a distribution of property other than cash, the depositary either will distribute the property to the holders of depositary shares in proportion to the depositary shares held by each of them, or the depositary will, if we approve, sell the property and distribute the net proceeds to the holders of the depositary shares in proportion to the depositary shares held by them.

*Withdrawal of Preferred Stock.* A holder of depositary shares will be entitled to receive, upon surrender of depositary receipts representing depositary shares, the number of whole or fractional shares of the applicable series of preferred stock, and any money or other property, to which the depositary shares relate.

*Redemption of Depositary Shares.* Whenever we redeem shares of preferred stock held by a depositary, the depositary will be required to redeem, on the same redemption date, depositary shares constituting, in total, the number of shares of preferred stock held by the depositary which we redeem, subject to the depositary's receiving the redemption price of those shares of preferred stock. If fewer than all the depositary shares relating to a series are to be redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by lot or by another method we determine to be equitable.

*Voting.* Any time we send a notice of meeting or other materials relating to a meeting to the holders of a series of preferred stock to which depositary shares relate, we will provide the depositary with sufficient copies of those materials so they can be sent to all holders of record of the applicable depositary shares, and the depositary will send those materials to the holders of record of the depositary shares on the record date for the meeting. The depositary will solicit voting instructions from holders of depositary shares and will vote or not vote the preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate in accordance with those instructions.

*Liquidation Preference.* Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holder of each depositary share will be entitled to what the holder of the depositary share would have received if the holder had owned the number of shares (or fraction of a share) of preferred stock which is represented by the depositary share.

*Conversion.* If shares of a series of preferred stock are convertible into common stock or other of our securities or property, holders of depositary shares relating to that series of preferred stock will, if they surrender depositary receipts representing depositary shares and appropriate instructions to convert them, receive the shares of common stock or other securities or property into which the number of shares (or fractions of shares) of preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate could at the time be converted.

*Amendment and Termination of a Deposit Agreement.* We and the depositary may amend a deposit agreement, except that an amendment which materially and adversely affects the rights of holders of depositary

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shares, or would be materially and adversely inconsistent with the rights granted to the holders of the preferred stock to which they relate, must be approved by holders of at least two-thirds of the outstanding depositary shares. No amendment will impair the right of a holder of depositary shares to surrender the depositary receipts evidencing those depositary shares and receive the preferred stock to which they relate, except as required to comply with law. We may terminate a deposit agreement with the consent of holders of a majority of the depositary shares to which it relates. Upon termination of a deposit agreement, the depositary will make the whole or fractional shares of preferred stock to which the depositary shares issued under the deposit agreement relate available to the holders of those depositary shares. A deposit agreement will automatically terminate if:

- all outstanding depositary shares to which it relates have been redeemed or converted; or
- the depositary has made a final distribution to the holders of the depositary shares issued under the deposit agreement upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up.

*Miscellaneous.* There will be provisions: (1) requiring the depositary to forward to holders of record of depositary shares any reports or communications from us which the depositary receives with respect to the shares of preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate; (2) regarding compensation of the depositary; (3) regarding resignation of the depositary; (4) limiting our liability and the liability of the depositary under the deposit agreement (usually to failure to act in good faith, gross negligence or willful misconduct); and (5) indemnifying the depositary against certain possible liabilities.

## DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

Each issue of warrants will be the subject of a warrant agreement which will contain the terms of the warrants. The warrant agreement and form of warrant will be filed as exhibits to the Registration Statement of which this prospectus forms a part. We will distribute a prospectus supplement with regard to each issue of warrants. Each prospectus supplement will describe, as to the warrants to which it relates:

- the securities which may be purchased by exercising the warrants (which may be common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares, debt securities or units);
- the exercise price of the warrants (which may be wholly or partly payable in cash or wholly or partly payable with other types of consideration);
- the period during which the warrants may be exercised;
- any provision adjusting the securities which may be purchased on exercise of the warrants and the exercise price of the warrants in order to prevent dilution or otherwise;
- the place or places where warrants can be presented for exercise or for registration of transfer or exchange; and
- any other material terms of the warrants.

## DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

The following description of our debt securities describes general terms and provisions of a series of debt securities to which any prospectus supplement may relate. When we offer to sell a series of debt securities, we will describe the specific terms of the series in the applicable prospectus supplement. If any particular terms of the debt securities of that series or the indenture described in a prospectus supplement differ from any of the terms described in this prospectus, then the terms described in the applicable prospectus supplement will supersede the terms described in this prospectus.

We may issue our debt securities either separately, or together with, or upon the conversion or exercise of or in exchange for, other securities described in this prospectus. The debt securities will be unsubordinated and, unless otherwise expressly stated in the applicable prospectus supplement, unsecured obligations and may be issued in one or more series. If so indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may issue debt securities that are secured by specified collateral. Unless otherwise expressly stated or the context otherwise requires, as used in this section, the term “secured debt securities” means any debt securities that, as described in the prospectus supplement relating thereto, are secured by collateral; the term “unsecured debt securities” means any debt securities that are not secured debt securities; and the term “debt securities” includes both unsecured debt securities and secured debt securities.

The debt securities will be issued under an indenture to be entered into by us and a trustee. The trustee shall be Wilmington Trust, National Association or such other trustee as may be named in the applicable prospectus supplement. Unless otherwise expressly stated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may issue both secured and unsecured debt securities under the same indenture. Unless otherwise expressly stated or the context otherwise requires, references in this section to the “indenture” and the “trustee” refer to the applicable indenture pursuant to which any particular series of debt securities is issued and to the trustee under that indenture. The terms of any series of debt securities will be those specified in or pursuant to the applicable indenture and in the certificates evidencing that series of debt securities and those made part of the indenture by the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, or the Trust Indenture Act of 1939.

The following summary of selected provisions of the indenture and the debt securities is not complete, and the summary of selected terms of a particular series of debt securities included in the applicable prospectus supplement also will not be complete. You should review the form of applicable indenture, the form of any applicable supplemental indenture and the form of certificate evidencing the applicable debt securities, which forms have been or will be filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part or as exhibits to documents which have been or will be incorporated by reference in this prospectus. To obtain a copy of the form of indenture, the form of any such supplemental indenture or the form of certificate for any debt securities, see “Information We File” in this prospectus. The following summary and the summary in the applicable prospectus supplement are qualified in their entirety by reference to all of the provisions of the applicable indenture, any supplemental indenture and the certificates evidencing the applicable debt securities, which provisions, including defined terms, are incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

Capitalized terms used in this section and not defined have the meanings assigned to those terms in the indenture.

### General

The debt securities may be issued from time to time in one or more series. We can issue an unlimited amount of debt securities under the indenture. The indenture provides that debt securities of any series may be issued up to the aggregate principal amount which may be authorized from time to time by us. Please read the applicable prospectus supplement relating to the series of debt securities being offered for specific terms including, where applicable:

- the title of the series of debt securities;

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- any limit on the aggregate principal amount of debt securities of the series;
- whether any debt securities of the series will be issued in temporary or permanent global form (global debt securities) and, if so, the name of the depository for the global debt securities;
- the extent to which, or the manner in which, any interest payable on a temporary global debt security will be paid, if other than in the manner provided in the indenture;
- the date or dates on which we will pay the principal of and premium, if any, on debt securities of the series, or the method or methods, if any, used to determine those dates;
- the rate or rates, which may be fixed or variable, at which debt securities of the series will bear interest, if any, or the method or methods, if any, used to determine those rates;
- the date or dates, if any, from which interest on the debt securities of the series will begin to accrue, or the method or methods, if any, used to determine those dates;
- the dates on which the interest, if any, on the debt securities of the series will be payable and the record dates for the payment of interest;
- the basis used to calculate interest, if any, on the debt securities of the series if other than a 360-day year of twelve 30-day months;
- the place or places where amounts due on the debt securities of the series will be payable and where the debt securities of the series may be surrendered for registration of transfer and exchange, if other than the corporate trust office of the applicable trustee;
- the terms and conditions, if any, upon which we may, at our option, redeem debt securities of the series;
- the terms and conditions, if any, upon which we will repurchase or repay debt securities of the series at the option of the holders of debt securities of the series;
- the authorized denominations in which the debt securities of the series will be issued, if other than minimum denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiples of \$1,000;
- the terms, if any, upon which debt securities of the series may be convertible into or exchangeable for other securities or property;
- the portion of the principal amount of the debt securities of the series which will be payable upon acceleration if other than the full principal amount;
- if other than U.S. dollars, the foreign currency in which payment of the principal of, any premium or interest on or any Additional Amounts (as defined below) with respect to any of such Securities shall be payable;
- if other than U.S. dollars, the currency in which the purchase price for the debt securities of the series will be payable, the currency in which payments on the debt securities of the series will be payable, and the ability, if any, of us or the holders of debt securities of the series to have payments made in any other currency or currencies;
- if the amount of payments on the debt securities of the series may be determined with reference to an index, formula or other method or methods and the method used to determine those amounts;
- any addition to, or modification or deletion of, any covenant or Event of Default with respect to debt securities of the series;
- any addition to, or modification or deletion of, any term related to satisfaction or discharge, defeasance or covenant defeasance with respect to debt securities of the series;
- if any of such debt securities are to be issuable upon the exercise of warrants, and the time, manner and place for such debt securities to be authenticated and delivered;

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- if any of such debt securities are issuable in global form and are to be issuable in definitive form (whether upon original issue or upon exchange of a temporary debt security) only upon receipt of certain certificates or other documents or satisfaction of other conditions, then the form and terms of such certificates, documents or conditions;
- if and under what circumstances we will pay additional amounts (“Additional Amounts”) on the debt securities of the series to any Holder who is a United States Alien in respect of specified taxes, assessments or other governmental charges and, if so, whether we will have the option to redeem the debt securities of the series rather than pay the Additional Amounts;
- if there is more than one trustee, the identity of the trustee and, if not the trustee, the identity of each registrar, paying agent or authenticating agent with respect to the debt securities;
- the Person to whom any interest on a debt security of the series shall be payable, if other than the Person in whose name that debt security is registered on the applicable record date;
- if the debt securities of the series will be secured by any collateral and, if so, a general description of the collateral and of some of the terms of any related security, pledge or other agreements;
- whether such debt securities of the series will be guaranteed, if so, the names of the guarantors of the debt securities of the series and a description of the guarantees; and
- any other terms of the debt securities of the series (whether or not such other terms are consistent or inconsistent with any other terms of the indenture).

As used in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement relating to the offering of debt securities of any series, references to the principal of and premium, if any, and interest, if any, on the debt securities of the series include the payment of Additional Amounts, if any, required by the debt securities of the series to be paid in that context.

Debt securities may be issued as original issue discount securities to be sold at a substantial discount below their principal amount. In the event of an acceleration of the maturity of any original issue discount security, the amount payable to the holder upon acceleration will be determined in the manner described in the applicable prospectus supplement. Certain U.S. federal income tax considerations applicable to original issue discount securities will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement, if applicable.

If the purchase price of any debt securities is payable in a foreign currency or if the principal of, or premium, if any, or interest, if any, on any debt securities is payable in a foreign currency, the specific terms of those debt securities and the applicable foreign currency will be specified in the prospectus supplement relating to those debt securities.

The terms of the debt securities of any series may differ from the terms of the debt securities of any other series, and the terms of particular debt securities within any series may differ from each other. Unless otherwise expressly provided in the prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities, we may, without the consent of the holders of the debt securities of any series, reopen an existing series of debt securities and issue additional debt securities of that series.

Unless otherwise described in a prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities and except to the limited extent set forth below under “—Merger, Consolidation and Transfer of Assets,” the indenture does not contain any provisions that would limit our ability or the ability of any of our subsidiaries to incur indebtedness or other liabilities or that would afford holders of debt securities protection in the event of a business combination, takeover, recapitalization or highly leveraged or similar transaction involving us. Accordingly, we and our subsidiaries may in the future enter into transactions that could increase the amount of our consolidated indebtedness and other liabilities or otherwise adversely affect our capital structure or credit rating without the consent of the holders of the debt securities of any series.

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### **Registration, Transfer and Payment**

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, each series of debt securities will be issued in registered form only, without coupons.

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, debt securities will be issued in minimum denominations of \$1,000 or any integral multiples of \$1,000.

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, the debt securities will be payable and may be surrendered for registration of transfer or exchange and, if applicable, for conversion into or exchange for other securities or property, at an office or agency maintained by us in the United States of America. However, we, at our option, may make payments of interest on any debt security by check mailed to the address of the Person entitled to receive that payment or by wire transfer to an account maintained by the payee with a bank located in the United States of America. Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, no service charge shall be made for any registration of transfer or exchange, redemption or repayment of debt securities, or for any conversion or exchange of debt securities for other securities or property, but we may require payment of a sum sufficient to cover any tax or other governmental charge that may be imposed in connection with that transaction.

Unless otherwise indicated in the applicable prospectus supplement, we will not be required to:

- issue, register the transfer of or exchange debt securities of any series during a period beginning at the opening of business 15 days before any selection of debt securities of that series of like tenor and terms to be redeemed and ending at the close of business on the day of that selection;
- register the transfer of or exchange any debt security, or portion of any debt security, selected for redemption, except the unredeemed portion of any debt security being redeemed in part; or
- issue, register the transfer of or exchange a debt security which has been surrendered for repayment at the option of the holder, except the portion, if any, of the debt security not to be repaid.

### **Book-entry Debt Securities**

The debt securities of a series may be issued in whole or in part in the form of one or more global debt securities. Global debt securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of, a depository which, unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement relating to the series, will be The Depository Trust Company (or DTC). Global debt securities may be issued in either temporary or permanent form. Unless and until it is exchanged in whole or in part for individual certificates evidencing debt securities, a global debt security may not be transferred except as a whole by the depository to its nominee or by the nominee to the depository, or by the depository or its nominee to a successor depository or to a nominee of the successor depository.

We anticipate that global debt securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of, DTC and that global debt securities will be registered in the name of DTC's nominee, Cede & Co. All interests in global debt securities deposited with, or on behalf of, DTC will be subject to the operations and procedures of DTC and, in the case of any interests in global debt securities held through Euroclear Bank S.A./N.V. ("Euroclear") or Clearstream Banking, société anonyme ("Clearstream, Luxembourg"), the operations and procedures of Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg, as the case may be. We also anticipate that the following provisions will apply to the depository arrangements with respect to global debt securities. Additional or differing terms of the depository arrangements may be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

DTC has advised us that it is:

- a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law;
- a "banking organization" within the meaning of the New York Banking Law;

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- a member of the Federal Reserve System;
- a “clearing corporation” within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code; and
- a “clearing agency” registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Exchange Act.

DTC holds securities that its participants deposit with DTC. DTC also facilitates the settlement among its participants of securities transactions, including transfers and pledges, in deposited securities through electronic computerized book-entry changes in participants’ accounts, which eliminates the need for physical movement of securities certificates. Direct participants include securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations and other organizations. Access to the DTC system is also available to others, sometimes referred to in this prospectus as indirect participants, that clear transactions through or maintain a custodial relationship with a direct participant either directly or indirectly. Indirect participants include securities brokers and dealers, banks and trust companies. The rules applicable to DTC and its participants are on file with the SEC.

Purchases of debt securities within the DTC system must be made by or through direct participants, which will receive a credit for the debt securities on DTC’s records. The ownership interest of the actual purchaser or beneficial owner of a debt security is, in turn, recorded on the direct and indirect participants’ records. Beneficial owners will not receive written confirmation from DTC of their purchases, but beneficial owners are expected to receive written confirmations providing details of the transactions, as well as periodic statements of their holdings, from the direct or indirect participants through which they purchased the debt securities. Transfers of ownership interests in debt securities are to be accomplished by entries made on the books of participants acting on behalf of beneficial owners. Beneficial owners will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in the debt securities, except under the limited circumstances described below.

To facilitate subsequent transfers, all debt securities deposited by participants with DTC will be registered in the name of DTC’s nominee, Cede & Co. The deposit of debt securities with DTC and their registration in the name of Cede & Co. will not change the beneficial ownership of the debt securities. DTC has no knowledge of the actual beneficial owners of the debt securities. DTC’s records reflect only the identity of the direct participants to whose accounts the debt securities are credited. Those participants may or may not be the beneficial owners. The participants are responsible for keeping account of their holdings on behalf of their customers.

Conveyance of notices and other communications by DTC to direct participants, by direct participants to indirect participants and by direct and indirect participants to beneficial owners will be governed by arrangements among them, subject to any legal requirements in effect from time to time.

Redemption notices shall be delivered electronically to DTC or its nominee. If less than all of the debt securities of a series are being redeemed, DTC will reduce the amount of the interest of each direct participant in the debt securities under its procedures.

In any case where a vote may be required with respect to the debt securities of any series, neither DTC nor Cede & Co. will give consents for or vote the global debt securities. Under its usual procedures, DTC will mail an omnibus proxy to us after the record date. The omnibus proxy assigns the consenting or voting rights of Cede & Co. to those direct participants to whose accounts the debt securities are credited on the record date identified in a listing attached to the omnibus proxy.

Principal and premium, if any, and interest, if any, on the global debt securities will be paid to Cede & Co., as nominee of DTC. DTC’s practice is to credit direct participants’ accounts on the relevant payment date unless DTC has reason to believe that it will not receive payments on the payment date. Payments by direct and indirect participants to beneficial owners will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices, as is the case with securities held for the account of customers registered in “street name.” Those payments will be the responsibility of DTC’s direct and indirect participants and not of DTC, us, any trustee or any underwriters or

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agents involved in the offering or sale of any debt securities. Payment of principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, to DTC is our responsibility, disbursement of payments to direct participants is the responsibility of DTC, and disbursement of payments to the beneficial owners is the responsibility of direct and indirect participants.

Except under the limited circumstances described below, beneficial owners of interests in a global debt security will not be entitled to have debt securities registered in their names and will not receive physical delivery of debt securities. Accordingly, each beneficial owner must rely on the procedures of DTC to exercise any rights under the debt securities and the indenture.

The laws of some jurisdictions may require that some purchasers of securities take physical delivery of securities in definitive form. These laws may impair the ability to transfer or pledge beneficial interests in global debt securities.

DTC is under no obligation to provide its services as depository for the debt securities of any series and may discontinue providing its services at any time. Neither we nor any trustee nor any underwriters or agents involved in the offering or sale of any debt securities will have any responsibility for the performance by DTC or its participants or indirect participants under the rules and procedures governing DTC. As noted above, beneficial owners of interests in global debt securities generally will not receive certificates representing their ownership interests in the debt securities. However, if DTC notifies us that it is unwilling or unable to continue as a depository for the global debt securities of any series or if DTC ceases to be a clearing agency registered under the Exchange Act (if so required by applicable law or regulation) and a successor depository for the debt securities of such series is not appointed within 90 days of the notification to us or of our becoming aware of DTC's ceasing to be so registered, as the case may be, we determine, in our sole discretion, not to have the debt securities of any series represented by one or more global debt securities, or an Event of Default under the indenture has occurred and is continuing with respect to the debt securities of any series, we will prepare and deliver certificates for the debt securities of that series in exchange for beneficial interests in the global debt securities of that series. Any beneficial interest in a global debt security that is exchangeable under the circumstances described in the preceding sentence will be exchangeable for debt securities in definitive certificated form registered in the names and in the authorized denominations that the depository shall direct. It is expected that these directions will be based upon directions received by the depository from its participants with respect to ownership of beneficial interests in the global debt securities.

Clearstream, Luxembourg and Euroclear hold interests on behalf of their participating organizations through customers' securities accounts in Clearstream, Luxembourg's and Euroclear's names on the books of their respective depositories, which hold those interests in customers' securities accounts in the depositories' names on the books of DTC.

Clearstream, Luxembourg holds securities for its participating organizations ("Clearstream Participants") and facilitates the clearance and settlement of securities transactions between Clearstream Participants through electronic book-entry changes in accounts of Clearstream Participants, thereby eliminating the need for physical movement of certificates. Clearstream, Luxembourg provides to Clearstream Participants, among other things, services for safekeeping, administration, clearance and settlement of internationally traded securities and securities lending and borrowing.

Clearstream, Luxembourg is registered as a bank in Luxembourg, and as such is subject to regulation by the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier and the Banque Centrale du Luxembourg, which supervise and oversee the activities of Luxembourg banks. Clearstream Participants are financial institutions including underwriters, securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies and clearing corporations, and may include any underwriters or agents involved in the offering or sale of any debt securities or their respective affiliates. Indirect access to Clearstream, Luxembourg is available to other institutions that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a Clearstream Participant. Clearstream, Luxembourg has established an electronic bridge with Euroclear as the operator of the Euroclear System (the "Euroclear Operator") in Brussels to facilitate settlement of trades between Clearstream, Luxembourg and the Euroclear Operator.

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Distributions with respect to global debt securities held beneficially through Clearstream, Luxembourg will be credited to cash accounts of Clearstream Participants in accordance with its rules and procedures, to the extent received by the U.S. Depository for Clearstream, Luxembourg.

Euroclear holds securities and book-entry interests in securities for participating organizations (“Euroclear Participants”) and facilitates the clearance and settlement of securities transactions between Euroclear Participants, and between Euroclear Participants and participants of certain other securities intermediaries through electronic book-entry changes in accounts of such participants or other securities intermediaries. Euroclear provides Euroclear Participants, among other things, with safekeeping, administration, clearance and settlement, securities lending and borrowing, and related services. Euroclear Participants are investment banks, securities brokers and dealers, banks, central banks, supranationals, custodians, investment managers, corporations, trust companies and certain other organizations, and may include any underwriters or agents involved in the offering or sale of any debt securities or their respective affiliates. Non-participants in Euroclear may hold and transfer beneficial interests in a global debt security through accounts with a participant in the Euroclear System or another securities intermediary that holds a book-entry interest in a global debt security through one or more securities intermediaries standing between such other securities intermediary and Euroclear.

Securities clearance accounts and cash accounts with the Euroclear Operator are governed by the Terms and Conditions Governing Use of Euroclear and the related Operating Procedures of the Euroclear System, and applicable Belgian law (collectively, the “Terms and Conditions”). The Terms and Conditions govern transfers of securities and cash within Euroclear, withdrawals of securities and cash from Euroclear and receipts of payments with respect to securities in Euroclear. All securities in Euroclear are held on a fungible basis without attribution of specific certificates to specific securities clearance accounts. The Euroclear Operator acts under the Terms and Conditions only on behalf of Euroclear Participants, and has no record of or relationship with Persons holding through Euroclear Participants.

Distributions on interests in global debt securities held beneficially through Euroclear will be credited to the cash accounts of Euroclear Participants in accordance with the Terms and Conditions, to the extent received by the U.S. Depository for Euroclear.

Transfers between Euroclear Participants and Clearstream Participants will be effected in the ordinary way in accordance with their respective rules and operating procedures.

Cross-market transfers between direct participants in DTC, on the one hand, and Euroclear Participants or Clearstream Participants, on the other hand, will be effected through DTC in accordance with DTC’s rules on behalf of Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg, as the case may be, by its U.S. Depository; however, such cross-market transactions will require delivery of instructions to Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg, as the case may be, by the counterparty in such system in accordance with the applicable rules and procedures and within the established deadlines (European time) of such system. Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg, as the case may be, will, if the transaction meets its settlement requirements, deliver instructions to its U.S. Depository to take action to effect final settlement on its behalf by delivering or receiving interests in global debt securities in DTC, and making or receiving payment in accordance with normal procedures for same-day fund settlement applicable to DTC. Euroclear Participants and Clearstream Participants may not deliver instructions directly to their respective U.S. depositories.

Due to time zone differences, the securities accounts of a Euroclear Participant or Clearstream Participant purchasing an interest in a global debt security from a direct participant in DTC will be credited, and any such crediting will be reported to the relevant Euroclear Participant or Clearstream Participant, during the securities settlement processing day (which must be a business day for Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg) immediately following the settlement date of DTC. Cash received in Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg as a result of sales of interests in a global debt security by or through a Euroclear Participant or Clearstream Participant to a direct participant in DTC will be received with value on the settlement date of DTC but will be

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available in the relevant Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg cash account only as of the business day for Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg following DTC's settlement date.

Euroclear and Clearstream, Luxembourg are under no obligation to perform or to continue to perform the foregoing procedures and such procedures may be discontinued at any time without notice. Neither we nor any trustee nor any underwriters or agents involved in the offering or sale of any debt securities will have any responsibility for the performance by Euroclear or Clearstream, Luxembourg or their respective participants of their respective obligations under the rules and procedures governing their operations.

The information in this section concerning DTC, Euroclear and Clearstream, Luxembourg and their book-entry systems has been obtained from sources that we believe to be reliable, but we take no responsibility for the accuracy of that information.

### **Redemption and Repurchase**

The debt securities of any series may be redeemable at our option or may be subject to mandatory redemption by us as required by a sinking fund or otherwise. In addition, the debt securities of any series may be subject to repurchase or repayment by us at the option of the holders. The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms, the times and the prices regarding any optional or mandatory redemption by us or any repurchase or repayment at the option of the holders of any series of debt securities.

### **Conversion and Exchange**

The terms, if any, on which debt securities of any series are convertible into or exchangeable for our common shares or any other securities or property will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Such terms may include provisions for conversion or exchange, either mandatory, at the option of the holders or at our option. Unless otherwise expressly stated in the applicable prospectus supplement or the context otherwise requires, references in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement to the conversion or exchange of debt securities of any series for other securities or property shall be deemed not to refer to or include any exchange of any debt securities of a series for other debt securities of the same series.

### **Secured Debt Securities**

The debt securities of any series may be secured by collateral. The applicable prospectus supplement will describe any such collateral and the terms of such secured debt securities.

### **Merger, Consolidation and Transfer of Assets**

The indenture provides that we will not, in any transaction or series of related transactions, consolidate with, or sell, lease or convey all or substantially all of our property and assets to, or merge with or into, any Person unless:

- either (1) we shall be the continuing Person (in the case of a merger) or (2) the successor Person (if other than us) formed by or resulting from the consolidation or merger or which shall have received the transfer of assets shall be an entity organized and existing under the laws of the United States of America, any state thereof or the District of Columbia and shall expressly assume the due and punctual payment of the principal of, premium, if any, and interest, if any, on all the debt securities outstanding under the indenture and the due and punctual performance and observance of all covenants and conditions in such outstanding debt securities and the indenture to be performed or satisfied by us (including, without limitation, the obligation to convert or exchange any debt securities that are convertible into or exchangeable for other securities or property in accordance with the provisions of such debt securities and the indenture) by a supplemental indenture;

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- immediately after giving effect to the transaction described above, no Event of Default under the indenture, and no event which, after notice or lapse of time or both would become an Event of Default under the indenture, shall have occurred and be continuing; and
- the trustee shall have received the officers' certificate and opinion of counsel called for by the indenture.

In the case of any such consolidation, sale, lease, conveyance or merger in which we are not the continuing entity and upon execution and delivery by the successor Person of the supplemental indenture described above, such successor Person shall succeed to, and be substituted for, us and may exercise every right and power of ours under the indenture with the same effect as if such successor Person had been named as us therein, and we shall be automatically released and discharged from all obligations and covenants under the indenture and the debt securities issued under that indenture.

### **Events of Default**

Unless otherwise specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, an "Event of Default" with respect to the debt securities of any series is defined in the indenture as being:

1. default in payment of any interest, if any, on, or any Additional Amounts, if any, payable in respect of any interest, if any, on, any of the debt securities of that series when due, and continuance of such default for a period of 30 days;
2. default in payment of any principal of or premium, if any, on, or any Additional Amounts, if any, payable in respect of any principal of or premium, if any, on, any of the debt securities of that series when due (whether at maturity, upon redemption, upon repayment or repurchase at the option of the holder or otherwise and whether payable in cash or in our common shares or other securities or property);
3. default in the deposit of any sinking fund payment or payment under any analogous provision when due with respect to any of the debt securities of that series;
4. default in the delivery when due of any securities, cash or other property (including, without limitation, any of our common shares) when required to be delivered upon conversion of any convertible debt security of that series or upon the exchange of any debt security of that series which is exchangeable for our common shares or other securities or property (other than an exchange of debt securities of that series for other debt securities of the same series);
5. default in the performance, or breach, of any other covenant or warranty applicable to us in the indenture or in any debt security of that series, other than a covenant or warranty included in the indenture solely for the benefit of a series of debt securities other than that series, and continuance of that default or breach (without that default or breach having been cured or waived in accordance with the indenture) for a period of 60 days after notice to us by the trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of that series then outstanding;
6. default after the expiration of any applicable grace period in the payment of principal when due, or resulting in acceleration of, other indebtedness (other than Non-recourse Debt of us or any Significant Subsidiary of ours or indebtedness of any Structured Finance Subsidiary of ours) for borrowed money where the aggregate principal amount with respect to which the default or acceleration has occurred exceeds \$100 million and such indebtedness has not been discharged, or such default in payment or acceleration has not been cured or rescinded, prior to written notice of acceleration of the debt securities of that series;
7. failure by us or any of our Subsidiaries to pay final judgments entered by a court or courts of competent jurisdiction aggregating in excess of \$100 million, which judgments are not paid, discharged or stayed for a period of 30 calendar days after such judgments become final and non-appealable;

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8. specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization with respect to us or any Significant Subsidiary of ours; or
9. any other Event of Default established for the debt securities of that series.

No Event of Default with respect to any particular series of debt securities necessarily constitutes an Event of Default with respect to any other series of debt securities. The indenture provides that, within 90 days after the occurrence of any default actually known to a responsible officer of the trustee with respect to the debt securities of any series, the trustee will mail or deliver electronically to all holders of the debt securities of that series notice of that default if known to the trustee, unless that default has been cured or waived. However, the indenture provides that the trustee may withhold notice of a default with respect to the debt securities of that series, except a default in payment of principal, premium, if any, interest, if any, Additional Amounts, if any, or sinking fund payments, if any, if the trustee in good faith determines it in the interest of the holders to do so. As used in this paragraph, the term “default” means any event which is, or after notice or lapse of time or both would become, an Event of Default with respect to the debt securities of any series.

The indenture provides that if an Event of Default (other than an Event of Default specified in clause (8) of the second preceding paragraph with respect to us) occurs and is continuing with respect to any series of debt securities, either the trustee or the holders of at least 25% in principal amount of the debt securities of that series then outstanding may declare the principal of, or if debt securities of that series are original issue discount securities, such lesser amount as may be specified in the terms of that series of debt securities, and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all the debt securities of that series to be due and payable immediately. The indenture also provides that if an Event of Default specified in clause (8) of the second preceding paragraph with respect to us occurs with respect to any series of debt securities, then the principal of, or if debt securities of that series are original issue discount securities, such lesser amount as may be specified in the terms of that series of debt securities, and accrued and unpaid interest, if any, on all the debt securities of that series will automatically become and be immediately due and payable without any declaration or other action on the part of the trustee or any holder of the debt securities of that series. However, upon specified conditions, the holders of a majority in principal amount of the debt securities of a series then outstanding may rescind and annul an acceleration of the debt securities of that series and its consequences. For purposes of clarity, references to an Event of Default specified in clause (8) of the second preceding paragraph with respect to us shall not include any Event of Default specified in clause (8) of the second preceding paragraph with respect to any Significant Subsidiary of ours.

The trustee is under no obligation to exercise any of its rights or powers under the indenture at the request or direction of any of the holders of debt securities of any series unless those holders have offered the trustee indemnity reasonably satisfactory to the trustee against the costs, fees and expenses and liabilities which might be incurred in compliance with such request or direction. Subject to the foregoing, holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series issued under the indenture have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting any proceeding for any remedy available to the trustee under the indenture with respect to that series. The indenture requires the annual filing by us with the trustee of a certificate which states whether or not we are in default under the terms of the indenture.

No holder of any debt securities of any series shall have any right to institute any proceeding, judicial or otherwise, with respect to the indenture, or for the appointment of a receiver or trustee, or for any other remedy under the indenture, unless:

- such holder has previously given written notice to the trustee of a continuing Event of Default with respect to the debt securities of such series;
- the holders of not less than 25% in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of such series shall have made written request to the trustee to institute proceedings in respect of such Event of Default in its own name as trustee under the indenture;

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- such holder or holders have offered to the trustee indemnity satisfactory to the trustee against the costs, fees and expenses and liabilities which might be incurred in compliance with such request;
- the trustee for 60 days after its receipt of such notice, request and offer of indemnity has failed to institute any such proceeding; and
- no direction inconsistent with such written request has been given to the trustee during such 60 day period by the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of such series.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the indenture, the holder of a debt security will have the right, which is absolute and unconditional, to receive payment of the principal of and premium, if any, and interest, if any, on that debt security on the respective due dates for those payments and, in the case of any debt security which is convertible into or exchangeable for other securities or property, to convert or exchange, as the case may be, that debt security in accordance with its terms, and to institute suit for the enforcement of those payments and any right to effect such conversion or exchange, and this right shall not be impaired without the consent of the holder.

## **Modification, Waivers and Meetings**

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, the indenture permits us and the trustee, with the consent of the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of each series issued under the indenture and affected by a modification or amendment, to enter into an indenture or supplemental indentures for the purpose of modifying or amending any of the provisions of the indenture or of the debt securities of the applicable series or the rights of the holders of the debt securities of that series under the indenture. However, no such modification or amendment shall, among other things:

- change the stated maturity of the principal of, or premium, if any, or any installment of interest, if any, on or any Additional Amounts, if any, with respect to any debt securities issued under the indenture;
- reduce the principal of or any premium on any debt securities or reduce the rate of interest on any debt securities or reduce the price payable upon the redemption of any debt security, whether such redemption is mandatory or at our option, or upon the repurchase of any debt security at the option of the holder, or reduce any Additional Amounts with respect to any debt securities, or change our obligation to pay Additional Amounts;
- reduce the amount of principal of any original issue discount securities that would be due and payable upon an acceleration of the maturity thereof;
- adversely affect any right of repayment or repurchase of any debt securities at the option of any holder;
- change any place where or the currency in which debt securities are payable;
- impair the holder's right to institute suit to enforce the payment of any debt securities on or after their stated maturity or, in the case of any debt security which is convertible into or exchangeable for other securities or property, to institute suit to enforce the right to convert or exchange that debt security in accordance with its terms;
- make any change that adversely affects the right, if any, to convert or exchange any debt securities for other securities or property;
- reduce the percentage of debt securities of any series issued under the indenture whose holders must consent to any modification or amendment or any waiver of compliance with specific provisions of such indenture or specified defaults under the indenture and their consequences; or
- reduce the requirements for a quorum or voting at a meeting of holders of the applicable debt securities,

without in each case obtaining the consent of the holder of each outstanding debt security issued under such indenture affected by the modification or amendment.

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Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, the indenture also contains provisions permitting us and the trustee, without the consent of the holders of any debt securities issued under the indenture, to modify or amend the indenture, among other things:

- to evidence the succession of another Person to us and the assumption by that successor of our covenants contained in the indenture and in the debt securities issued under the indenture;
- to add to our covenants for the benefit of the holders of all or any series of debt securities issued under the indenture or to surrender any right or power conferred upon us in the indenture with respect to all or any series of debt securities issued under the indenture;
- to establish the form or terms of debt securities of any series including, without limitation, conversion and exchange provisions applicable to debt securities which are convertible into or exchangeable for other securities or property and to establish any provisions with respect to any security or other collateral for such debt securities and to make any deletions from or additions or changes to the indenture in connection with any of the matters referred to in this bullet point so long as those deletions, additions and changes are not applicable to any other series of debt securities then outstanding;
- to evidence and provide for the acceptance of the appointment of a successor trustee in respect of the debt securities of one or more series;
- to cure any ambiguity or correct or supplement any provision in such indenture which may be defective or inconsistent with other provisions in the indenture, or to make any other provisions with respect to matters or questions arising under the indenture which shall not adversely affect the interests of the holders of the debt securities of any series then outstanding in any material respect;
- to add any additional Events of Default with respect to all or any series of debt securities;
- to supplement any of the provisions of the indenture to permit or facilitate defeasance, covenant defeasance and/or satisfaction and discharge of any series of debt securities, provided that such action shall not adversely affect the interest of any holder of a debt security of such series or any other debt security in any material respect;
- to add guarantees or guarantors in respect of all or any debt securities, to establish the forms and terms of the guarantees and to evidence the release and discharge of any guarantor from its obligations under its guarantee of any or all debt securities and its obligations under the indenture in respect of any or all debt securities in accordance with the terms of the indenture;
- to secure or, if applicable, to provide additional security for all or any debt securities issued under the indenture and to provide for any and all matters relating thereto, and to provide for the release of any collateral as security for all or any debt securities in accordance with the terms of the indenture;
- to make any change to the indenture or any debt securities to conform the terms thereof to the terms reflected in any prospectus (including this prospectus), prospectus supplement, offering memorandum or similar offering document used in connection with the initial offering or sale of any debt securities;
- in the case of any series of debt securities which are convertible into or exchangeable for our common shares or other securities or property, to provide for the conversion or exchange rights of those debt securities in the event of any reclassification or change of our common shares or any of our other securities into which such debt securities are convertible or for which such debt securities are exchangeable or any similar transaction if expressly required by the terms of that series of debt securities; or
- to amend or supplement any provision contained in the indenture or in any debt securities, provided that such amendment or supplement does not apply to any outstanding debt securities issued prior to the date of such supplemental indenture and entitled to the benefits of such provisions.

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Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, the holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may waive our compliance with the provisions described above under “—Merger, Consolidation and Transfer of Assets” and certain other provisions of the indenture and, if specified in the prospectus supplement relating to such series of debt securities, any additional covenants applicable to the debt securities of such series. The holders of a majority in aggregate principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of any series may, on behalf of all holders of debt securities of that series, waive any past default under the indenture with respect to debt securities of that series and its consequences, except a default in the payment of the principal of, or premium, if any, or interest, if any, on debt securities of that series or, in the case of any debt securities which are convertible into or exchangeable for other securities or property, a default in any such conversion or exchange, or a default in respect of a covenant or provision which cannot be modified or amended without the consent of the holder of each outstanding debt security of the affected series.

### **Discharge, Defeasance and Covenant Defeasance**

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, upon our direction, the indenture shall cease to be of further effect with respect to any series of debt securities issued under the indenture specified by us, subject to the survival of specified provisions of the indenture (including the obligation to pay Additional Amounts to the extent described below and the obligation, if applicable, to exchange or convert debt securities of that series into other securities or property in accordance with their terms) when:

- either
  - (A) all outstanding debt securities of that series have been delivered to the trustee for cancellation, subject to exceptions, or
  - (B) all debt securities of that series have become due and payable or will become due and payable at their stated maturity within one year or are to be called for redemption within one year and we have deposited with the trustee, in trust, funds in U.S. dollars or in the foreign currency in which the debt securities of that series are payable in an amount sufficient to pay the entire indebtedness on the debt securities of that series in respect of principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any (and, to the extent that (x) the debt securities of that series provide for the payment of Additional Amounts upon the occurrence of specified events of taxation, assessment or governmental charge with respect to payments on the debt securities and (y) the amount of any Additional Amounts which are or will be payable is at the time of deposit reasonably determinable by us, in the exercise of our sole and absolute discretion, those Additional Amounts) to the date of such deposit, if the debt securities of that series have become due and payable, or to the maturity or redemption date of the debt securities of that series, as the case may be;
- we have paid all other sums payable under the indenture with respect to the debt securities of that series; and
- the trustee has received an officers’ certificate and an opinion of counsel called for by the indenture.

If the debt securities of any series provide for the payment of Additional Amounts, we will remain obligated, following the deposit described above, to pay (on the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in the applicable indenture) Additional Amounts with respect to those debt securities to the extent (and only to the extent) that they exceed the amount deposited in respect of those Additional Amounts as described above.

Unless otherwise provided in the applicable prospectus supplement, we may elect with respect to any series of debt securities either:

- to defease and be discharged from all of our obligations with respect to that series of debt securities (“defeasance”), except for:
  - (1) the obligation to pay Additional Amounts, if any, upon the occurrence of specified events of taxation, assessment or governmental charge with respect to payments on that series of debt

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securities to the extent (and only to the extent) that those Additional Amounts exceed the amount deposited in respect of those Additional Amounts as provided below,

- (2) the obligation, if applicable, to exchange or convert debt securities of that series into other securities or property in accordance with their terms, and
  - (3) certain other limited obligations.
- to be released from our obligations with respect to the debt securities of such series under such covenants as may be specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, and any omission to comply with those obligations shall not constitute a default or an Event of Default with respect to that series of debt securities (“covenant defeasance”), in either case upon the irrevocable deposit with the trustee, or other qualifying trustee, in trust for that purpose, of an amount in U.S. dollars or in the foreign currency in which those debt securities are payable at stated maturity or, if applicable, upon redemption, and/or Government Obligations which through the payment of principal and interest in accordance with their terms will provide money, in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and any premium and any interest on (and, to the extent that (x) the debt
  - securities of that series provide for the payment of Additional Amounts and (y) the amount of the Additional Amounts which are or will be payable is at the time of deposit reasonably determinable by us, in the exercise of our sole and absolute discretion, the Additional Amounts with respect to) that series of debt securities, and any mandatory sinking fund or analogous payments on that series of debt securities, on the due dates for those payments.

If we effect defeasance with respect to the debt securities of any series and those debt securities provide for the payment of Additional Amounts, we will remain obligated, following the effectiveness of such defeasance, to pay (on the terms and subject to the conditions set forth in the indenture) Additional Amounts with respect to those debt securities to the extent (and only to the extent) that they exceed the amount deposited in respect of those Additional Amount as described above.

The defeasance or covenant defeasance described above shall only be effective if, among other things:

- it shall not result in a breach or violation of, or constitute a default under, the indenture;
- in the case of defeasance, we shall have delivered to the trustee an opinion of independent counsel reasonably acceptable to the trustee confirming that (A) we have received from or there has been published by the IRS a ruling or (B) since the date of the indenture there has been a change in applicable U.S. federal income tax law, in either case to the effect that, and based on this ruling or change the opinion of counsel shall confirm that, the holders of the debt securities of the applicable series will not recognize income, gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a result of the defeasance and will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the same amounts, in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the defeasance had not occurred;
- in the case of covenant defeasance, we shall have delivered to the trustee an opinion of independent counsel reasonably acceptable to the trustee to the effect that the holders of the debt securities of the applicable series will not recognize income, gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes as a result of the covenant defeasance and will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on the same amounts, in the same manner and at the same times as would have been the case if the covenant defeasance had not occurred;
- if the cash and Government Obligations deposited are sufficient to pay the outstanding debt securities of that series provided those debt securities are redeemed on a particular redemption date, we shall have given the trustee irrevocable instructions to redeem those debt securities on that date; and
- no Event of Default or event which with notice or lapse of time or both would become an Event of Default with respect to debt securities of that series shall have occurred and be continuing on the date

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of the deposit into trust; and, solely in the case of defeasance, no Event of Default arising from specified events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization with respect to us or event which with notice or lapse of time or both would become such an Event of Default with respect to us shall have occurred and be continuing during the period through and including the 91st day after the date of the deposit into trust.

The applicable prospectus supplement may further describe the provisions, if any, permitting or restricting satisfaction and discharge, defeasance or covenant defeasance with respect to the debt securities of a particular series.

## **Definitions**

As used in the indenture, the following terms have the meanings specified below:

The term “Corporation” includes corporations, partnerships, associations, limited liability companies and other companies and business trusts. The term “corporation” means a corporation and does not include partnerships, associations, limited liability companies or other companies or business trusts.

“Equity Interests” means, with respect to any Person, all of the shares of capital stock of (or other ownership or profit interests in) such Person, all of the warrants, options or other rights for the purchase or acquisition from such Person of shares of capital stock of (or other ownership or profit interests in) such Person, all of the securities convertible into or exchangeable for shares of capital stock of (or other ownership or profit interests in) such Person or warrants, rights or options for the purchase or acquisition from such Person of such shares (or such other interests), and all of the other ownership or profit interests in such Person (including partnership, member or trust interests therein), whether voting or nonvoting, and whether or not such shares, warrants, options, rights or other interests are outstanding on any date of determination.

“Governmental Authority” means the government of the United States or any other nation, or of any political subdivision thereof, whether state or local, and any agency, authority, instrumentality, regulatory body, court, central bank or other entity exercising executive, legislative, judicial, taxing, regulatory or administrative powers or functions of or pertaining to government.

“Non-recourse Debt” means an obligation for indebtedness that can only be satisfied out of the collateral securing the obligation and not out of the debtor’s other assets.

“Person” means any natural person, corporation, limited liability company, trust, joint venture, association, company, partnership, Governmental Authority or other entity.

“Significant Subsidiary” means, as of any date of determination, a Subsidiary of ours that would constitute a “significant subsidiary” as such term is defined under Rule 1-02(w) of Regulation S-X of the SEC as in effect on the date of the indenture.

“Structured Finance Subsidiary” means a Subsidiary the primary function of which is to act as an issuer, depositor or special purpose entity in connection with issuances of obligations collateralized by loans, bonds, mortgages or other debt obligations issued by third parties.

“Subsidiary” of any Person means (a) any corporation, association or other business entity (other than a partnership, joint venture, limited liability company or similar entity) of which more than 50% of the aggregate ordinary voting power represented by the issued and outstanding Equity Interests or (b) any partnership, joint venture, limited liability company or similar entity of which more than 50% of the capital accounts, distribution rights, total equity and voting interests or general or limited partnership interests, as applicable, is, in the case of clauses (a) and (b), at the time owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by (1) such Person, (2) such Person and one or more Subsidiaries of such Person or (3) one or more Subsidiaries of such Person.

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### **Governing Law**

The indenture and the debt securities will be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of New York.

### **Regarding the Trustee**

The Trust Indenture Act of 1939 limits the rights of a trustee, if the trustee becomes a creditor of us, to obtain payment of claims or to realize on property received by it in respect of those claims, as security or otherwise. Any trustee is permitted to engage in other transactions with us and our subsidiaries from time to time. However, if a trustee acquires any conflicting interest it must eliminate the conflict upon the occurrence of an Event of Default under the applicable indenture or resign as trustee.

Wilmington Trust, National Association may act as trustee under one or more of the indentures.

**DESCRIPTION OF OTHER SECURITIES**

We will set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement a description of any rights or units that may be offered pursuant to this prospectus.

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### CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF MARYLAND LAW AND OF OUR CHARTER AND BYLAWS

The following description of the terms of our stock and of certain provisions of Maryland law is only a summary. This summary is not complete and is qualified by the provisions of our charter and bylaws, and the MGCL. See “Incorporation Of Certain Documents By Reference.”

#### **Classification of Our Board**

Our bylaws provide that the number of directors may be established by our board but may not be fewer than the minimum number permitted by the MGCL nor more than fifteen. Any vacancy may be filled, at any regular meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose, only by a majority of the remaining directors. Any director elected to fill a vacancy by our board serves for the remainder of the full term of the class of directors in which the vacancy occurred and until his or her successor is elected and qualifies.

Pursuant to our charter, our board is divided into three classes of directors. Directors of each class serve for three-year terms and each year one class of directors will be elected by the stockholders. The number of directors in each class and the expiration of the current term of each class term is as follows:

Class I	3 Directors	Expires 2020
Class II	2 Directors	Expires 2021
Class III	3 Directors	Expires 2022

We believe that the classification of our board helps to assure the continuity and stability of our business strategies and policies as determined by our board. Common stockholders have no right to cumulative voting in the election of directors, which means that the holders of a majority of the outstanding shares of common stock can elect all of the directors then standing for election, and the holders of the remaining shares will not be able to elect any directors.

The classified board provision of our charter could have the effect of making the replacement of incumbent directors more time-consuming and difficult. At least two annual meetings of stockholders, instead of one, will generally be required to effect a change in a majority of our board. Thus, the classified board provision could increase the likelihood that incumbent directors will retain their positions. The staggered terms of directors may delay, defer or prevent a tender offer or an attempt to change control of our company, even though the tender offer or change in control might be in the best interest of our stockholders.

#### **Removal of Directors**

Our charter provides that a director may be removed only for cause and only by the affirmative vote of at least 80% of the votes entitled to be cast in the election of directors. This provision, when coupled with the exclusive power of our board to fill vacant directorships, precludes stockholders from removing incumbent directors except for cause and by a substantial affirmative vote and filling the vacancies created by the removal with their own nominees.

#### **Business Combinations**

Under Maryland law, “business combinations” between a Maryland corporation and an interested stockholder or an affiliate of an interested stockholder are prohibited for five years after the most recent date on which the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder. These business combinations include a merger, consolidation, share exchange, or, in circumstances specified in the statute, an asset transfer or issuance or reclassification of equity securities. An interested stockholder is defined as:

- any person who, directly or indirectly, beneficially owns ten percent or more of the voting power of the corporation’s outstanding voting stock; or

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- an affiliate or associate of the corporation who, directly or indirectly, at any time within the two-year period immediately prior to the date in question, was the beneficial owner of ten percent or more of the voting power of the then outstanding voting stock of the corporation.

A person is not an interested stockholder under the statute if our board approved in advance the transaction by which he or she otherwise would have become an interested stockholder. However, in approving a transaction, our board may provide that its approval is subject to compliance, at or after the time of approval, with any terms and conditions determined by our board.

After the five-year prohibition, any business combination between the Maryland corporation and an interested stockholder generally must be recommended by our board of the corporation and approved by the affirmative vote of at least:

- 80% of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of outstanding shares of voting stock of the corporation; and
- two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of outstanding shares of voting stock of the corporation other than shares held by the interested stockholder with whom or with whose affiliate the business combination is to be effected or held by an affiliate or associate of the interested stockholder.

These super-majority vote requirements do not apply if the corporation's common stockholders receive a minimum price, as defined under Maryland law, for their shares in the form of cash or other consideration in the same form as previously paid by the interested stockholder for its shares.

The business combination statute may discourage others from trying to acquire control of us and increase the difficulty of consummating any offer.

### **Control Share Acquisitions**

Maryland law provides that holders of control shares of a Maryland corporation acquired in a control share acquisition have no voting rights except to the extent approved by a vote of two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter. Shares owned by the acquiror, by officers or by directors who are employees of the corporation are excluded from shares entitled to vote on the matter. Control shares are voting shares of stock which, if aggregated with all other shares of stock owned by the acquiror or in respect of which the acquiror is able to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power (except solely by virtue of a revocable proxy), would entitle the acquiror to exercise voting power in electing directors within one of the following ranges of voting power:

- one-tenth or more but less than one-third;
- one-third or more but less than a majority; or
- a majority or more.

Control shares do not include shares the acquiring person is then entitled to vote as a result of having previously obtained stockholder approval or shares acquired directly from the corporation. A control share acquisition means the acquisition of issued and outstanding control shares, subject to certain exceptions.

A person who has made or proposes to make a control share acquisition may compel our board of the corporation to call a special meeting of stockholders to be held within 50 days of demand to consider the voting rights of the shares. The right to compel the calling of a special meeting is subject to the satisfaction of certain conditions, including an undertaking to pay the expenses of the meeting. If no request for a meeting is made, the corporation may itself present the question at any stockholders meeting.

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If voting rights are not approved at the meeting or if the acquiring person does not deliver an acquiring person statement as required by the statute, then the corporation may redeem for fair value any or all of the control shares, except those for which voting rights have previously been approved. The right of the corporation to redeem control shares is subject to certain conditions and limitations. Fair value is determined, without regard to the absence of voting rights for the control shares, as of the date of the last control share acquisition by the acquiror or of any meeting of stockholders at which the voting rights of the shares are considered and not approved. If voting rights for control shares are approved at a stockholders meeting and the acquiror becomes entitled to vote a majority of the shares entitled to vote, all other stockholders may exercise appraisal rights. The fair value of the shares as determined for purposes of appraisal rights may not be less than the highest price per share paid by the acquiror in the control share acquisition.

The control share acquisition statute does not apply (a) to shares acquired in a merger, consolidation or share exchange if the corporation is a party to the transaction, or (b) to acquisitions approved or exempted by the charter or bylaws of the corporation. Our bylaws contain a provision exempting from the control share acquisition statute any and all acquisitions by any person of shares of our stock. There can be no assurance that this provision will not be amended or eliminated at any time in the future.

### **Subtitle 8**

Subtitle 8 of Title 3 of the MGCL permits a Maryland corporation with a class of equity securities registered under the Exchange Act and at least three independent directors to elect to be subject, by provision in its charter or bylaws or a resolution of its board of directors and notwithstanding any contrary provision in the charter or bylaws, to any or all of five provisions:

- a classified board;
- a two-thirds vote requirement for removing a director;
- a requirement that the number of directors be fixed only by vote of the directors;
- a requirement that a vacancy on the board be filled only by the remaining directors in office and for the remainder of the full term of the class of directors in which the vacancy occurred; and
- a majority requirement for the calling of a special meeting of stockholders.

Without our having elected to be subject to Subtitle 8, our charter and bylaws already (1) provide for a classified board, (2) require the affirmative vote of the holders of at least 80% of the votes entitled to be cast in the election of directors for the removal of any director from our board, which removal will be allowed only for cause, and (3) vest in our board the exclusive power to fix the number of directorships. In addition, we have elected to be subject to the Subtitle 8 provision that requires a vacancy on our board to be filled only by the remaining directors in office and for the remainder of the full term of the class of directors in which the vacancy occurred.

### **Meetings of Stockholders**

Pursuant to our bylaws, a meeting of our stockholders for the election of directors and the transaction of any business will be held annually. In addition, our Chairman of our Board, Chief Executive Officer, President or our board may call a special meeting of our stockholders. Subject to the provisions of our bylaws, a special meeting of our stockholders to act on any matter that may properly be considered at a meeting of our stockholders will also be called by our Secretary upon the written request of the stockholders entitled to cast not less than 25% of all the votes entitled to be cast at the meeting.

### **Limitation and Indemnification of Directors' and Officers' Liability**

Maryland law permits a Maryland corporation to include in its charter a provision limiting the liability of its directors and officers to the corporation and its stockholders for money damages except for liability resulting

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from (a) actual receipt of an improper benefit or profit in money, property or services or (b) active and deliberate dishonesty established by a final judgment and which is material to the cause of action. Our charter contains such a provision which eliminates directors' and officers' liability to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law.

Our charter obligates us to indemnify, to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law, any director or officer or any individual who, while a director or officer of our company and at the request of our company, serves or has served another entity, from and against any claim or liability to which that individual may become subject or which that individual may incur by reason of his or her status as a director or officer of our company and to pay or reimburse his or her reasonable expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding. The charter also permits our company to indemnify and advance expenses to any employee or agent of our company if authorized by our board.

Maryland law requires a corporation (unless its charter provides otherwise, which our charter does not) to indemnify a director or officer who has been successful in the defense of any proceeding to which he or she is made or threatened to be made a party by reason of his or her service in that capacity. Maryland law permits a corporation to indemnify its present and former directors and officers, among others, against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements and reasonable expenses actually incurred by them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made or threatened to be made a party by reason of their service in those or other capacities unless it is established that (a) the act or omission of the director or officer was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and (i) was committed in bad faith or (ii) was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty, (b) the director or officer actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services or (c) in the case of any criminal proceeding, the director or officer had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful. However, under Maryland law, a Maryland corporation may not indemnify for an adverse judgment in a suit by or in the right of the corporation or for a judgment of liability on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received, unless in either case a court orders indemnification and then only for expenses. In addition, Maryland law permits a corporation to advance reasonable expenses to a director or officer only upon the corporation's receipt of (a) a written affirmation by the director or officer of his or her good faith belief that he or she has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification by the corporation and (b) a written undertaking by him or her or on his or her behalf to repay the amount paid or reimbursed by the corporation if it is ultimately determined that the standard of conduct was not met.

### **Amendment to Our Charter**

Our charter may be amended only by the affirmative vote of the holders of not less than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter; provided, however, that certain amendments related to our board (including a declassification of the board or removal of directors), consideration of various factors when considering a change of control transaction, indemnification, exculpation, advance notice of stockholder proposals and the charter amendment section require the affirmative vote of not less than 80% of all the votes entitled to be cast on such matters.

### **Dissolution of Our Company**

Our dissolution must be declared advisable by a majority of our entire board and approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of not less than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

### **Advance Notice of Director Nominations and New Business**

Our charter provides that, with respect to annual meetings, timely notice of stockholder business proposals and stockholder nominees for directors must be received in accordance with the bylaws. The bylaws provide that with respect to an annual meeting of stockholders, nominations of individuals for election to our board and the proposal of other business to be considered by stockholders may be made only pursuant to our notice of the meeting, by or at the direction of our board or by a stockholder who was a stockholder of record both at the time

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the stockholder provided the notice required by the bylaws and at the time of the annual meeting, who is entitled to vote at the meeting in the election of each individual so nominated or any such other business and who has complied with the advance notice requirements of and provided the information and other materials required by the bylaws. With respect to special meetings of stockholders, proposals of business to be considered by stockholders may be made only pursuant to our notice of the meeting, by our board or by a stockholder who was a stockholder of record both at the time the stockholder provided the notice required by the bylaws and at the time of the special meeting, who is entitled to vote at the meeting in the election of each individual so nominated and who has complied with the advance notice provisions of the bylaws.

### **Exclusive Forum**

Our bylaws provide that, unless we consent in writing to the selection of an alternative forum, the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, Maryland, or, if that court does not have jurisdiction, the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, Baltimore Division, will be the sole and exclusive forum for (a) any derivative action or proceeding brought on our behalf, (b) any action asserting a claim of breach of any duty owed by any of our directors, officers or other employees to us or to our stockholders, (c) any action asserting a claim against us or any of our directors, officers or other employees arising pursuant to any provision of the MGCL or our charter or bylaws or (d) any action asserting a claim against us or any of our directors, officers or other employees that is governed by the internal affairs doctrine.

### **Anti-takeover Effect of Certain Provisions of Maryland Law and of Our Charter and Bylaws**

The business combination provisions and the control share acquisition provisions of Maryland law, the provisions of our charter on classification of our board and removal of directors and the advance notice provisions of our bylaws could delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change in control of our company that might involve a premium price for holders of common stock or otherwise be in their best interest.

## MATERIAL U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSIDERATIONS

The following summary describes material U.S. federal income tax considerations relating to the ownership of our capital stock as of the date hereof by U.S. holders and non-U.S. holders, each as defined below. Except where noted, this summary deals only with shares of our capital stock held as capital assets for U.S. federal income tax purposes and does not deal with special situations, such as those of dealers in securities or currencies, financial institutions, regulated investment companies, tax-exempt entities (except as described in “—Taxation of Tax-Exempt Holders of Our Capital Stock” below), insurance companies, persons holding our capital stock as a part of a hedging, integrated, conversion or constructive sale transaction or a straddle, traders in securities that elect to use a mark-to-market method of accounting for their securities holdings, persons liable for alternative minimum tax, investors in pass-through entities or U.S. holders of our capital stock whose “functional currency” is not the U.S. dollar. Furthermore, the discussion below is based upon the provisions of the Code and regulations, rulings and judicial decisions thereunder as of the date hereof, and such authorities may be repealed, revoked or modified, possibly with retroactive effect, so as to result in U.S. federal income tax consequences different from those discussed below.

**You should consult your tax advisors concerning the U.S. federal income tax consequences in light of your particular situation as well as consequences arising under the laws of any other taxing jurisdiction.**

### Our Taxation as a REIT

We elected to be taxed as a REIT under the U.S. federal income tax laws beginning with our taxable year ended December 31, 1998. We believe that we have operated in a manner qualifying us as a REIT since our election and intend to continue to so operate. In the opinion of Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP, we qualified to be taxed as a REIT under the U.S. federal income tax laws for our taxable years ended December 31, 2015 through December 31, 2018, and our organization and current and proposed method of operation will enable us to continue to qualify as a REIT for our taxable year ending December 31, 2019 and in the future. You should be aware that Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP’s opinion is based on existing U.S. federal income tax law governing qualification as a REIT, which is subject to change, possibly on a retroactive basis, is not binding on the IRS or any court, and speaks as of the date issued. In addition, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP’s opinion is based on customary assumptions and is conditioned upon certain representations made by us as to factual matters, including representations regarding the nature of our assets and the future conduct of our business, all of which are described in the opinion. Moreover, our continued qualification and taxation as a REIT depends on our ability to meet, on a continuing basis, through actual operating results, certain qualification tests in the U.S. federal income tax laws. Those qualification tests involve the percentage of our income that we earn from specified sources, the percentages of our assets that fall within specified categories, the diversity of our share ownership and the percentage of our earnings that we distribute. While Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP has reviewed those matters in connection with the foregoing opinion, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP will not review our compliance with those tests on a continuing basis. Accordingly, no assurance can be given that the actual results of our operations for any particular taxable year will satisfy such requirements. Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP’s opinion does not foreclose the possibility that we may have to use one or more of the REIT savings provisions described below, which would require us to pay an excise or penalty tax (which could be material) in order to maintain our REIT qualification. For a discussion of the tax consequences of our failure to qualify as a REIT, see “—Failure to Qualify,” below.

The sections of the Code and the corresponding regulations that govern the U.S. federal income tax treatment of a REIT and its stockholders are highly technical and complex. The following discussion is qualified in its entirety by the applicable Code provisions, rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, and administrative interpretations thereof. In any year in which we qualify for taxation as a REIT, we generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on that portion of our net taxable income that we distribute currently to our stockholders, although taxable income generated by domestic taxable REIT subsidiaries, if any, will be subject to regular corporate income tax. Our stockholders generally will be taxed on dividends that they receive

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at ordinary income rates unless such dividends are designated by us as capital gain dividends. Distributions we make are not eligible for the dividends received deduction for corporations. We expect that ordinary dividends paid by us generally will not be eligible for the reduced rates that generally apply to distributions by non-REIT C corporations to certain U.S. individuals, trusts and estates, but may be eligible for the up to 20% pass-through deduction for such stockholders.

We are generally not subject to U.S. corporate income tax on income that we distribute currently to stockholders, but we will be subject to U.S. federal tax as follows:

- We will pay U.S. federal corporate income tax on our taxable income, including net capital gain, that we do not distribute to stockholders during, or within a specified time after, the calendar year in which the income is earned.
- For taxable years prior to 2018, under some circumstances, we may be subject to the “alternative minimum tax” due to our undistributed items of tax preference and alternative minimum tax adjustments.
- If we have net income from “prohibited transactions,” which are, in general, sales or other dispositions of 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.
- If we elect to treat property that we acquire in connection with a foreclosure of a mortgage loan or from certain leasehold terminations as “foreclosure property,” we may thereby avoid (a) the 100% tax on gain from a resale of that property (if the sale would otherwise constitute a prohibited transaction) and (b) the inclusion of any income from such property not qualifying for purposes of the REIT gross income tests discussed below, but the income from the sale or operation of the property may be subject to U.S. corporate income tax at the highest applicable rate.
- If due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect we fail to satisfy either the 75% gross income test or the 95% gross income test discussed below, but nonetheless maintain our qualification as a REIT because other requirements are met, we will be subject to a 100% tax on the greater of the amount by which we fail the 75% gross income test or the 95% gross income test, multiplied in either case by a fraction intended to reflect our profitability.
- If we fail to satisfy the asset tests (other than a de minimis failure of the 5% asset test or the 10% vote or value test, as described below under “—Asset Tests”) as long as the failure was due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, we dispose of the assets or otherwise comply with such asset tests within six months after the last day of the quarter in which we identify such failure and we file a schedule with the IRS describing the assets that caused such failure, we will pay a tax equal to the greater of \$50,000 or the highest federal income tax rate then applicable to U.S. corporations on the net income from the nonqualifying assets during the period in which we failed to satisfy such asset tests.
- If we fail to satisfy one or more requirements for REIT qualification, other than the gross income tests and the asset tests, and the failure was due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, we will be required to pay a penalty of \$50,000 for each such failure.
- We may be required to pay monetary penalties to the IRS in certain circumstances, including if we fail to meet recordkeeping requirements intended to monitor our compliance with rules relating to the composition of a REIT’s stockholders, as described below in “—Requirements for Qualification as a REIT.”
- If we fail to distribute during each calendar year at least the sum of:
  - 85% of our ordinary income for such calendar year;
  - 95% of our capital gain net income for such calendar year; and
  - any undistributed taxable income from prior taxable years,

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we will pay a 4% nondeductible excise tax on the excess of the required distribution over the amount we actually distributed, plus any retained amounts on which income tax has been paid at the corporate level.

- We may elect to retain rather than distribute all or a portion of our net capital gains and pay income tax on the gains. In that case, a U.S. holder would include its proportionate share of our undistributed net long-term capital gains (to the extent we make a timely designation of such gain to the holder) in income and receive a credit for its proportionate share of the tax paid by us.
- We will be subject to a 100% excise tax on transactions between us and a taxable REIT subsidiary that are not conducted on an arm's length basis.
- With respect to an interest in a taxable mortgage pool or a residual interest in a real estate mortgage investment conduit, or REMIC, the ownership of which is attributed to us or to a REIT in which we own an interest, although the law on the matter is unclear as to the ownership of an interest in a taxable mortgage pool, we may be taxable at the highest corporate rate on the amount of any excess inclusion income for the taxable year allocable to the percentage of our stock that is held in record name by "disqualified organizations." To the extent that we own a REMIC residual interest or a taxable mortgage pool through a taxable REIT subsidiary, we will not be subject to this tax. A "disqualified organization" includes:
  - the U.S.;
  - any state or political subdivision of the U.S.;
  - any foreign government;
  - any international organization;
  - any agency or instrumentality of any of the foregoing;
  - any other tax-exempt organization, other than a farmer's cooperative described in section 521 of the Code, that is exempt both from income taxation and from taxation under the unrelated business taxable income provisions of the Code; and
  - any rural electrical or telephone cooperative.

We do not currently intend to hold REMIC residual interests or engage in financing or other activities that would result in the allocation of excess inclusion to our shareholders. See "—Taxable Mortgage Pools and Excess Inclusion Income."

If we acquire any appreciated assets from a non-REIT C corporation in a carry-over basis transaction, we could be liable for tax with respect to "built-in gain" in those assets if we recognize gain on the sale or disposition of any such assets during the 5-year period after we acquire the assets. Built-in gain is the amount by which an asset's fair market value exceeds its adjusted tax basis at the time we acquire the asset.

In addition, notwithstanding our status as a REIT, we may also have to pay certain state, local, payroll, and foreign income taxes, because not all states and localities treat REITs in the same manner that they are treated for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Moreover, as further described below, any domestic taxable REIT subsidiary in which we own an interest will be subject to U.S. federal (and applicable state and local) corporate income tax on its taxable income.

*Requirements for Qualification as a REIT.* 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 sections 856 through 859 of the Code;

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- (4) that is neither a financial institution nor an insurance company subject to certain provisions of the Code;
- (5) the beneficial ownership of which is held by 100 or more persons;
- (6) of which not more than 50% in value of the outstanding shares are owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals (as defined in the Code to include certain entities) after applying certain attribution rules;
- (7) that makes an election to be a REIT for the current taxable year or has made such an election for a previous taxable year, which has not been terminated or revoked; and
- (8) that meets other tests, described below, regarding the nature of its income and assets.

Conditions (1) through (4), inclusive, must be met during the entire taxable year. Condition (5) must be met during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months, or during a proportionate part of a taxable year of less than 12 months. Condition (6) must be met during the last half of each taxable year. Neither conditions (5) nor (6) apply to the first taxable year for which an election to become a REIT is made. For purposes of determining the stock ownership requirement described in condition (6) above, an “individual” generally includes a supplemental unemployment compensation benefits plan, a private foundation, or a portion of a trust permanently set aside or used exclusively for charitable purposes. An “individual,” however, generally does not include a trust that is a qualified employee pension or profit sharing trust under the U.S. federal income tax laws, and beneficiaries of such a trust will be treated as holding our shares in proportion to their actuarial interests in the trust for purposes of the requirement described in condition (6) above. We believe that we have maintained and will maintain sufficient diversity of ownership to allow us to continue to satisfy conditions (5) and (6) above. In addition, our charter contains restrictions regarding the ownership and transfer of our stock that are intended to assist us in continuing to satisfy the share ownership requirements described in conditions (5) and (6) above. These restrictions, however, may not ensure that we will be able to satisfy these share ownership requirements. If we fail to satisfy these share ownership requirements, we will fail to qualify as a REIT.

If we comply with regulatory rules pursuant to which we are required to send annual letters to holders of our stock requesting information regarding the actual ownership of our stock (as discussed below), and we do not know, or exercising reasonable diligence would not have known, whether we failed to meet condition (6) above, we will be treated as having met the requirement.

To monitor compliance with the share ownership requirements described in conditions (5) and (6) above, 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 shares (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 U.S. Treasury regulations to submit a statement with your tax return disclosing your actual ownership of our stock and other information. In addition, we must satisfy all relevant filing and other administrative requirements established by the IRS to elect and maintain REIT status, use a calendar year for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and comply with the record keeping requirements of the Code and regulations promulgated thereunder.

*Disregarded Entities and Partnerships.* An unincorporated domestic entity, such as a partnership or limited liability company, that has a single owner for U.S. federal income tax purposes generally is not treated as an entity separate from its parent for U.S. federal income tax purposes. An unincorporated domestic entity with two or more owners for U.S. federal income tax purposes generally is treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In the case of a REIT that is a partner in an entity that is treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes, U.S. Treasury regulations provide that the REIT is deemed to own its proportionate share of the partnership’s assets and to earn its proportionate share of the partnership’s gross income based on its pro

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rata share of capital interests in the partnership for purposes of the asset and gross income tests applicable to REITs, as described below. However, solely for purposes of the 10% value test, described below (see “—Asset Tests”), the determination of a REIT’s interest in partnership assets will be based on the REIT’s proportionate interest in any securities issued by the partnership, excluding for these purposes, certain excluded securities as described in the Code. In addition, the assets and gross income of the partnership generally are deemed to retain the same character in the hands of the REIT. Thus, our proportionate share of the assets and items of income of partnerships in which we own an equity interest is treated as assets and items of income of our company for purposes of applying the REIT requirements described below. Consequently, to the extent that we directly or indirectly hold a preferred or other equity interest in a partnership or limited liability company, the partnership’s or limited liability company’s assets and operations may affect our ability to qualify as a REIT, even though we may have no control or only limited influence over the partnership. In such case, we may be forced to dispose of our interests in such entity.

*Qualified REIT Subsidiaries.* If a REIT owns a corporate subsidiary that is a “qualified REIT subsidiary,” the separate existence of that subsidiary is disregarded for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Generally, a qualified REIT subsidiary is a corporation, other than a taxable REIT subsidiary, all of the stock of which is owned directly or indirectly by the REIT. All assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of the qualified REIT subsidiary will be treated as assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of the REIT itself. A qualified REIT subsidiary is not subject to U.S. federal corporate income taxation, although it may be subject to state and local taxation in some states.

In the event that a qualified REIT subsidiary or disregarded subsidiary ceases to be wholly owned by us (for example, if any equity interest in the subsidiary is acquired by a person other than us or another disregarded subsidiary of us), the subsidiary’s separate existence would no longer be disregarded for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Instead, it 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 tests applicable to REITs, including the requirement that REITs generally may not own, directly or indirectly, more than 10% of the value or voting power of the outstanding securities of another corporation. See “—Asset Tests” and “—Income Tests.”

*Taxable REIT Subsidiaries.* A taxable REIT subsidiary is an entity that is taxable as a corporation in which we directly or indirectly own stock and that elects with us to be treated as a taxable REIT subsidiary. In addition, if a taxable REIT subsidiary owns, directly or indirectly, securities representing 35% or more of the vote or value of a subsidiary corporation, that subsidiary will also be treated as a taxable REIT subsidiary. However, an entity will not qualify as a taxable REIT subsidiary if it directly or indirectly operates or manages a lodging or health care facility or, generally, provides to another person, under a franchise, license or otherwise, rights to any brand name under which any lodging facility or health care facility is operated. We generally may not own more than 10%, as measured by voting power or value, of the securities of a corporation that is not a qualified REIT subsidiary unless we and such corporation elect to treat such corporation as a taxable REIT subsidiary. Overall, no more than 20% of the value of a REIT’s assets (25% for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2018) may consist of stock or securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries.

Income earned by a taxable REIT subsidiary is not attributable to the REIT. As a result, income that might not be qualifying income for purposes of the income tests applicable to REITs could be earned by a taxable REIT subsidiary without affecting our status as a REIT. Our domestic taxable REIT subsidiaries will be fully subject to corporate income tax on their taxable income.

Several provisions of the Code regarding the arrangements between a REIT and its taxable REIT subsidiaries ensure that a taxable REIT subsidiary will be subject to an appropriate level of U.S. federal income taxation. For example, a taxable REIT subsidiary is limited in its ability to deduct interest payments made to affiliated REITs. In addition, we would be obligated to pay a 100% penalty tax on some payments that we receive from, or on certain expenses deducted by, a taxable REIT subsidiary if the IRS were to assert

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successfully that the economic arrangements between us and a taxable REIT subsidiary are not comparable to similar arrangements among unrelated parties. Any income earned by a taxable REIT subsidiary that is attributable to services provided to us, or on our behalf to any of our tenants, that is less than the amounts that would have been charged based upon arm's length negotiations, will also be subject to a 100% penalty tax. We intend to scrutinize all of our transactions with any of our subsidiaries that are treated as a taxable REIT subsidiary in an effort to ensure that we do not become subject to this penalty tax; however, we cannot assure you that we will be successful in avoiding this penalty tax.

*Taxable Mortgage Pools and Excess Inclusion Income.* An entity, or a portion of an entity, that does not elect to be treated as a REMIC may be classified as a taxable mortgage pool, or 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 "bear a relationship" to the payments to be received by the entity on the debt obligations that it holds as assets.

Under the U.S. Treasury regulations, if less than 80% of the assets of an entity (or a portion of an entity) consists 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 taxable mortgage pool.

A TMP generally is treated as a taxable corporation and it cannot file a consolidated U.S. federal income tax return with any other corporation. If, however, a REIT owns 100% of the equity interests in a TMP, then the TMP is a qualified REIT subsidiary and, as such, ignored as an entity separate from the REIT, but a portion of the REIT's income will be treated as excess inclusion income and a portion of the dividends the REIT pays to U.S. shareholders will be treated as excess inclusion income.

Section 860E(c) of the Code defines the term "excess inclusion" with respect to a residual interest in a REMIC. The IRS has yet to issue guidance on the computation of excess inclusion income on equity interests in a TMP held by a REIT. Generally, however, excess inclusion income with respect to our investment in any TMP and any taxable year will equal the excess of (i) the amount of income we accrue on our investment in the TMP over (ii) the amount of income we would have accrued if our investment were a debt instrument having an issue price equal to the fair market value of our investment on the day we acquired it and a yield to maturity equal to 120% of the long-term applicable federal rate in effect on the date we acquired our interest. The term "applicable federal rate" refers to rates that are based on weighted average yields for U.S. Treasury securities and are published monthly by the IRS for use in various tax calculations. If we undertake securitization transactions that are TMPs, the amount of excess inclusion income we recognize in any taxable year could represent a significant portion of our total taxable income for that year.

Although we intend to structure our securitization and financing transactions so that we will not recognize any excess inclusion income, we cannot assure you that we will always be successful in this regard. If, notwithstanding our intent, we recognized excess inclusion income, then under guidance issued by the IRS we would be required to allocate the excess inclusion income proportionately among the dividends we pay to our stockholders and we must notify our stockholders of the portion of our dividends that represents excess inclusion income. The portion of any dividend you receive that is treated as excess inclusion income is subject to special rules. First, your taxable income can never be less than the sum of your excess inclusion income for the year; excess inclusion income cannot be offset with net operating losses or other allowable deductions. Second, if you are a tax-exempt organization and your excess inclusion income is subject to the unrelated business income tax, then the excess inclusion portion of any dividend you receive will be treated as unrelated business taxable income. Third, dividends paid to Non-U.S. holders who hold stock for investment and not in connection with a

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trade or business conducted in the U.S. will be subject to U.S. federal withholding tax without regard to any reduction in rate otherwise allowed by any applicable income tax treaty.

If we recognize excess inclusion income, and one or more disqualified organizations are record holders of shares of capital stock, we will be taxable at the highest federal corporate income tax rate on the portion of any excess inclusion income equal to the percentage of our stock that is held by disqualified organizations. In such circumstances, we may reduce the amount of our distributions to a disqualified organization whose stock ownership gave rise to the tax. To the extent that our capital stock owned by disqualified organizations is held by a broker/dealer or other nominee, the broker/dealer or other nominee would be liable for a tax at the highest corporate tax rate on the portion of our excess inclusion income allocable to our capital stock held by the broker/dealer or other nominee on behalf of the disqualified organizations.

We do not currently intend to hold REMIC residual interests or engage in financing or other activities that would result in the allocation of excess inclusion to our shareholders.

Tax-exempt investors, non-U.S. investors and taxpayers with net operating losses should carefully consider the tax consequences described above and are urged to consult their tax advisors in connection with their decision to invest in our capital stock.

### **Income Tests**

To qualify as a REIT, we must satisfy two gross income requirements, each of which is applied on an annual basis. First, at least 75% of our gross income for each taxable year generally must be derived directly or indirectly from:

- rents from real property;
- interest on debt secured by mortgages on real property or on interests in real property;
- dividends or other distributions on, and gain from the sale of, stock in other REITs;
- gain from the sale of real property or mortgage loans;
- abatements and refunds of taxes on real property;
- income and gain derived from foreclosure property (as described below);
- amounts (other than amounts the determination of which depends in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person) received or accrued as consideration for entering into agreements (i) to make loans secured by mortgages on real property or on interests in real property or (ii) to purchase or lease real property (including interests in real property and interests in mortgages on real property);
- income derived from a REMIC in proportion to the real estate assets held by the REMIC, unless at least 95% of the REMIC's assets are real estate assets, in which case all of the income derived from the REMIC; and
- interest or dividend income from investments in stock or debt instruments attributable to the temporary investment of new capital during the one-year period following our receipt of new capital that we raise through equity offerings or public offerings of debt obligations with at least a five-year term.

Second, at least 95% of our gross income for each taxable year must be derived from sources that qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test, and from (i) dividends, (ii) interest and (iii) gain from the sale or disposition of stock or securities.

Gross income from the following sources is excluded from both the numerator and the denominator in both gross income tests:

- gain from a sale of property that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business;

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- income and gain from hedging transactions to the extent described below under “Hedging Transactions”;
- certain foreign currency gains; and
- cancellation of indebtedness income.

We will monitor the amount of our non-qualifying income and we will seek to manage our portfolio to comply at all times with the gross income tests, but we cannot assure you that we will be successful in this effort. The following paragraphs discuss some of the specific applications of the gross income tests to us.

*Interest.* The term “interest,” as defined for purposes of both gross income tests, generally excludes any amount that is based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person, however, it generally includes the following: (i) an amount that is received or accrued based on a fixed percentage or percentages of receipts or sales, and (ii) an amount that is based on the income or profits of a debtor, as long as the debtor derives substantially all of its income from the real property securing the debt by leasing substantially all of its interest in the property, and only to the extent that the amounts received by the debtor would be qualifying “rents from real property” if received directly by a REIT. We do not expect that any of our loans will be based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person.

Interest on debt secured by mortgages on real property or on interests in real property, including, for this purpose, prepayment penalties, loan assumption fees and late payment charges that are not compensation for services, generally is qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test. If a loan is secured by real property and other property and the highest principal amount of a loan outstanding during a taxable year exceeds the fair market value of the real property (including, for loans secured by real property and personal property where the fair market value of the personal property is less than 15% of the total fair market value of all such property, such personal property) securing the loan as of the date (i) we agreed to originate or acquire the loan or (ii) as discussed below, in the event of a “significant modification,” the date we modified the loan, a portion of the interest income from such loan will not be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test but will be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test. However, in the case of a loan that is secured by both real property and personal property, if the fair market value of such personal property does not exceed 15% of the total fair market value of all property securing the loan, then the personal property securing the loan will be treated as real property for purposes of determining whether the interest on such loan is qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test.

We expect that the MBS in which we invest generally will be treated either as interests in a grantor trust or as interests in a REMIC for U.S. federal income tax purposes and that all interest income from such MBS will be qualifying income for the 95% gross income test. In the case of MBS 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 MBS treated as interests in a REMIC, income derived from REMIC interests generally will be treated as qualifying income for purposes of the 75% and 95% 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.

To the extent that we hold mortgage-related assets that do not represent REMIC interests or grantor trusts representing ownership of mortgage loans, such assets may not qualify as real estate assets, and, consequently, the income generated from them might not qualify for purposes of either or both of the REIT income tests, depending on the circumstances and the specific structure of the investment. Our ability to invest in those assets may be limited.

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We may modify the terms of our mortgage loans. Under the Code, if the terms of a loan are modified in a manner constituting a “significant modification,” such modification triggers a deemed exchange of the original loan for the modified loan. IRS Revenue Procedure 2014-51 provides a safe harbor pursuant to which we will not be required to redetermine the fair market value of the real property securing a loan for purposes of the gross income and asset tests in connection with a loan modification that is (i) occasioned by a borrower default or (ii) made at a time when we reasonably believe that the modification to the loan will substantially reduce a significant risk of default on the original loan. To the extent we significantly modify loans in a manner that does not qualify for that safe harbor, we will be required to redetermine the value of the real property securing the loan at the time it was significantly modified, which could result in a portion of the interest income on the loan being treated as nonqualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test. In determining the value of the real property securing such a loan, we generally will not obtain third-party appraisals but rather will rely on internal valuations.

The interest, original issue discount, and market discount income that we will receive from our mortgage-related assets generally will be qualifying income for purposes of both gross income tests. Some of our investments will not be secured by mortgages on real property or interests in real property. Our interest income from those investments will be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test, but not the 75% gross income test.

We have entered, and intend to enter, into financing arrangements that are structured as sale and repurchase agreements pursuant to which we would nominally sell certain of our assets to a counterparty and simultaneously enter into an agreement to repurchase these assets at a later date in exchange for a purchase price. Economically, these agreements are financings that are secured by the assets sold pursuant thereto. We believe that we would be treated for REIT asset and income test purposes as the owner of the assets that are the subject of any such sale and repurchase 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 assets during the term of the sale and repurchase agreement, in which case we could fail to qualify as a REIT.

*Hedging Transactions.* We may enter into hedging transactions with respect to one or more of our assets or liabilities. Hedging transactions could take a variety of forms, including interest rate swap agreements, interest rate cap agreements, options, futures contracts, forward rate agreements or similar financial instruments. Except to the extent provided by U.S. Treasury regulations, any income from a hedging transaction we enter into (i) in the normal course of our business primarily to manage risk of interest rate or price 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, which is clearly identified as specified in U.S. Treasury regulations before the close of the day on which it was acquired, originated or entered into, including gain from the sale or disposition of such a transaction, (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% gross income tests that is clearly identified as such before the close of the day on which it was acquired, originated or entered into and satisfies other identification requirements, or (iii) in connection with the effective termination of certain hedging transactions described above, will not constitute gross income for purposes of the 75% or 95% gross income tests. 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 does not jeopardize our qualification as a REIT.

We may conduct some or all of our hedging activities through a taxable REIT subsidiary or other corporate entity, the income of which may be subject to U.S. federal income tax, rather than by participating in the arrangements directly or through pass-through subsidiaries.

*Fee Income.* Fee income generally will be qualifying income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests if it is received in consideration for entering into an agreement to make a loan secured by real

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property and the fees are not determined by income and profits. Other fees generally are not qualifying income for purposes of either gross income test. Any fees earned by a taxable REIT subsidiary will not be included for purposes of the gross income tests.

*Rents from Real Property.* To the extent that we own or acquire real property or an interest therein, rents we receive will qualify as “rents from real property” in satisfying the gross income requirements for a REIT described above only if several conditions are met. These conditions relate to the identity of the tenant, the computation of the rent payable, and the nature of the property leased. First, the amount of rent must not be based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. However, an amount received or accrued generally will not be excluded from rents from real property solely by reason of being based on a fixed percentage or percentages of receipts or sales. Second, rents we receive from a “related party tenant” will not qualify as rents from real property in satisfying the gross income tests unless the tenant is a taxable REIT subsidiary, at least 90% of the property is leased to unrelated tenants, the rent paid by the taxable REIT subsidiary is substantially comparable to the rent paid by the unrelated tenants for comparable space and the rent is not attributable to an increase in rent due to a modification of a lease with a “controlled taxable REIT subsidiary” (i.e., a taxable REIT subsidiary in which we own directly or indirectly more than 50% of the voting power or value of the stock). A tenant is a related party tenant if the REIT, or an actual or constructive owner of 10% or more of the REIT, actually or constructively owns 10% or more of the tenant. Third, if rent attributable to personal property leased in connection with a lease of real property is greater than 15% of the total rent received under the lease, then the portion of rent attributable to the personal property will not qualify as rents from real property. Finally, for rents to qualify as “rents from real property” for purposes of the gross income tests, we are only allowed to provide services that are both usually or “customarily rendered” in connection with the rental of real property and not otherwise considered “rendered to the occupant.” We may, however, render services to our tenants through an “independent contractor” who is adequately compensated and from whom we do not derive revenue. We may also own a taxable REIT subsidiary that provides non-customary services to tenants without tainting our rental income from the related properties.

Even if a REIT furnishes or renders services that are non-customary with respect to a property, if the greater of (i) the amounts received or accrued, directly or indirectly, or deemed received by the REIT with respect to such services, or (ii) 150% of our direct cost in furnishing or rendering the services during a taxable year is not more than 1% of all amounts received or accrued, directly or indirectly by the REIT with respect to the property during the same taxable year, then only the amounts with respect to such non-customary services are not treated as rent for purposes of the REIT gross income tests.

*Prohibited Transactions Tax.* A REIT will incur a 100% tax on the net income derived from any sale or other disposition of property, other than foreclosure property, that the REIT holds primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business. Whether a REIT holds an asset primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business depends, however, on the facts and circumstances in effect from time to time, including those related to a particular asset. Nevertheless, we generally intend to conduct our operations so that no asset that we own will be treated as, or as having been, held 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. We cannot assure you that we will comply with certain safe harbor provisions or that we will avoid owning property that may be characterized as property that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business. The 100% tax will not apply to gains from the sale of property that is held through a taxable REIT subsidiary or other taxable corporation, although such income will be subject to tax in the hands of the corporation at regular corporate income tax rates.

*Foreclosure Property.* Foreclosure property is any real property, including interests in real property, and any personal property incident to such real property:

- that is acquired by a REIT as the result of the REIT having bid in such property at foreclosure, or having otherwise reduced such property to ownership or possession by agreement or process of law,

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after there was a default or default was imminent on a lease of such property or on indebtedness that such property secured;

- for which the related loan was acquired by the REIT at a time when the default was not imminent or anticipated; and
- for which the REIT makes a proper election to treat the property as foreclosure property.

However, a REIT will not be considered to have foreclosed on a property where the REIT takes control of the property as a mortgagee-in-possession and cannot receive any profit or sustain any loss except as a creditor of the mortgagor.

Property generally ceases to be foreclosure property at the end of the third taxable year following the taxable year in which the REIT acquired the property, or longer if an extension is granted by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury. This grace period terminates and foreclosure property ceases to be foreclosure property on the first day:

- on which a lease is entered into for the property that, by its terms, will give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test, or any amount is received or accrued, directly or indirectly, pursuant to a lease entered into on or after such day that will give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test;
- on which any construction takes place on the property (other than completion of a building, or any other improvement, where more than 10% of the construction was completed before default became imminent); or
- which is more than 90 days after the day on which the REIT acquired the property and the property is used in a trade or business that is conducted by the REIT, other than through an independent contractor from whom the REIT itself does not derive or receive any income or a taxable REIT subsidiary.

We will be subject to tax at the maximum corporate rate on any income from foreclosure property, other than income that otherwise would be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test, less expenses directly connected with the production of that income. However, income from foreclosure property, including gain from the sale of foreclosure property held for sale in the ordinary course of a trade or business, will qualify for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests.

We may have the option to foreclose on mortgage loans when a borrower is in default. The foregoing rules could affect a decision by us to foreclose on a particular mortgage loan and could affect whether we choose to foreclose with regard to a particular mortgage loan.

*Foreign Currency Gain.* Certain foreign currency gains will be excluded from gross income for purposes of one or both of the gross income tests. “Real estate foreign exchange gain” will be excluded from gross income for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests. Real estate foreign exchange gain generally includes foreign currency gain attributable to any item of income or gain that is qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test, foreign currency gain attributable to the acquisition or ownership of (or becoming or being the obligor under) obligations secured by mortgages on real property or an interest in real property and certain foreign currency gain attributable to certain “qualified business units” of a REIT that satisfies the 75% gross income test and 75% asset test on a stand-alone basis. “Passive foreign exchange gain” will be excluded from gross income for purposes of the 95% gross income test. Passive foreign exchange gain generally includes real estate foreign exchange gain as described above, and also includes foreign currency gain attributable to any item of income or gain that is qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test and foreign currency gain attributable to the acquisition or ownership of (or becoming or being the obligor under) obligations. These exclusions for real estate foreign exchange gain and passive foreign exchange gain do not apply to any foreign currency gain derived from dealing, or engaging in substantial and regular trading, in securities. Such gain is treated as nonqualifying income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests.

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*Dividends.* Our dividend income from stock in any corporation (other than any REIT) and from any taxable REIT subsidiary will be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test, but not the 75% gross income test. If we own stock in other REITs, the dividends that we receive from those REITs and our gain on the sale of the stock in those REITs will be qualifying income for purposes of both gross income tests. However, if a REIT in which we own stock fails to qualify as a REIT in any year, our income from such REIT would be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test, but not the 75% gross income test.

*Phantom income.* Due to the nature of the assets in which we will invest, we may be required to recognize taxable income from certain assets in advance of our receipt of cash flow from or proceeds from disposition of such assets, and may be required to report taxable income that exceeds the economic income ultimately realized on such assets.

We may acquire debt instruments or MBS in the secondary market for less than their face amount. The amount of such discount generally will be treated as “market discount” for U.S. federal income tax purposes. Accrued market discount is reported as income when, and to the extent that, any payment of principal of the debt instrument is made, unless we elect to include accrued market discount in income as it accrues. Principal payments on certain loans are made monthly, and consequently accrued market discount may have to be included in income each month as if the debt instrument were assured of ultimately being collected in full. If we collect less on the 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.

Some of the loans and debt 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 debt securities, and to treat it as taxable income in accordance with applicable U.S. federal income tax rules even though such yield may exceed cash payments, if any, received on such debt instrument.

We generally will be required to take certain amounts in income no later than the time such amounts are reflected on certain financial statements. The application of this rule may require the accrual of income with respect to our debt instruments or MBS, such as original issue discount, earlier than would be the case under the general tax rules, although the precise application of this rule is unclear at this time. To the extent that this rule requires the accrual of income earlier than under the general tax rules, it could increase our phantom income, which may make it more likely that we could be required to borrow funds or take other action to satisfy the REIT distribution requirements for the taxable year in which this phantom income is recognized. We currently do not expect that this rule will have a material impact on the timing of accrual of our income or on the amount of our distribution requirement. We will consider the potential effects of phantom income on our taxable stockholders in managing our investments.

We may agree to modify the terms of distressed or other loans we hold. These modifications may be considered “significant modifications” for U.S. federal income tax purposes that give rise to a deemed debt-for-debt exchange upon which we may recognize taxable income or gain without a corresponding receipt of cash.

In addition, in the event that any debt instruments or debt securities acquired by us are delinquent as to mandatory principal and interest payments, or in the event payments with respect to a particular debt instrument are not made when due, we may nonetheless be required to continue to recognize the unpaid interest as taxable income. Similarly, we may be required to accrue interest income with respect to subordinated MBS 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.

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As a result of 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 “—Annual Distribution Requirements Applicable to REITs.”

*Failure to Satisfy Gross Income Tests.* If we fail to satisfy one or both of the 75% and 95% gross income tests for any taxable year, we may nevertheless qualify as a REIT for that year if we are entitled to relief under the Code. That relief provision will be available if our failure to meet the tests is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect, and we attach a schedule of the sources of our income to our U.S. federal income tax return. It is not possible, however, to state whether in all circumstances we would be entitled to the benefit of these relief provisions. For example, if we fail to satisfy the gross income tests because nonqualifying income that we intentionally recognize exceeds the limits on nonqualifying income, the IRS could conclude that the failure to satisfy the tests was not due to reasonable cause. If these relief provisions are inapplicable to a particular set of circumstances, we will fail to qualify as a REIT. Even if these relief provisions apply, a penalty tax would be imposed based on the amount of nonqualifying income. See “—Our Taxation as a REIT” and “—Failure to Qualify.”

## **Asset Tests**

At the close of each quarter of our taxable year, we must satisfy the following tests relating to the nature of our assets.

- At least 75% of the value of our total assets must be represented by the following (or, the 75% asset class):
  - interests in real property, including leaseholds and options to acquire real property and leaseholds, and, for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015, personal property to the extent such personal property is leased in connection with real property and rents attributable to such personal property are treated as “rents from real property” as a result of such rents not exceeding 15% of the total rent attributable to personal property and real property under such lease;
  - interests in mortgages on real property;
  - stock in other REITs and debt instruments issued by “publicly offered” REITs (i.e., a REIT that is required to file annual and periodic reports with the SEC under the Exchange Act);
  - cash and cash items;
  - U.S. government securities;
  - investments in stock or debt instruments attributable to the temporary investment of new capital during the one-year period following our receipt of new capital that we raise through equity offerings or public offerings of debt obligations with at least a five-year term; and
  - regular or residual interests in a REMIC. However, if less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC consist of assets that are qualifying real estate-related assets under the U.S. federal income tax laws, determined as if we held such assets directly, we will be treated as holding directly our proportionate share of the assets of such REMIC.
- Not more than 25% of our total assets may be represented by securities, other than those in the 75% asset class.
- Except for securities in taxable REIT subsidiaries and the securities in the 75% asset class, the value of any one issuer’s securities owned by us may not exceed 5% of the value of our total assets (or, the 5% asset test).

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- Except for securities in taxable REIT subsidiaries and the securities in the 75% asset class, we may not own more than 10% of any one issuer's outstanding voting securities (or, the 10% vote test).
- Except for securities of taxable REIT subsidiaries and the securities in the 75% asset class, we may not own more than 10% of the total value of the outstanding securities of any one issuer, other than securities that qualify for the "straight debt" exception discussed below (or, 10% value test).
- Not more than 20% (25% for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2018) of the value of our total assets may be represented by the securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries.
- Not more than 25% of the value of our total assets may be represented by debt instruments of "publicly offered" REITs that are not secured by real property or interests in real property.

Securities, for the purposes of the asset tests, may include debt we hold from other issuers. However, debt we hold in an issuer that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% asset test will not be taken into account for purposes of the 10% value test if the debt securities meet the straight debt safe harbor. Debt will meet the "straight debt" safe harbor if the debt is a written unconditional promise to pay on demand or on a specified date a sum certain in money, the debt is not convertible, directly or indirectly, into stock, and the interest rate and the interest payment dates of the debt are not contingent on the profits, the borrower's discretion or similar factors. In the case of an issuer that is a corporation or a partnership, securities that otherwise would be considered straight debt will not be so considered if we, and any of our "controlled taxable REIT subsidiaries" as defined in the Code, hold any securities of the corporate or partnership issuer that (a) are not straight debt or other excluded securities (prior to the application of this rule), and (b) have an aggregate value greater than 1% of the issuer's outstanding securities (including, for the purposes of a partnership issuer, our interest as a partner in the partnership).

In addition, the following instruments will not be considered securities for purposes of the 10% value test: (i) a REIT's interest as a partner in a partnership; (ii) any debt instrument issued by a partnership (other than straight debt or any other excluded security) if at least 75% of the partnership's gross income is derived from sources that would qualify for the 75% REIT gross income test; (iii) any debt instrument issued by a partnership (other than straight debt or any other excluded security) to the extent of the REIT's interest as a partner in the partnership; (iv) any loan to an individual or an estate; (v) any "section 467 rental agreement," other than an agreement with a related party tenant; (vi) any obligation to pay "rents from real property"; (vii) certain 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; and (viii) any security (including debt securities) issued by another REIT. For purposes of the 10% value test, our proportionate share of the assets of a partnership is our proportionate interest in any securities issued by the partnership, without regard to the securities described clause (i) and (ii) in the preceding sentence.

For purposes of the 75% asset test, mortgage loans generally will qualify as real estate assets to the extent that they are secured by real property. Where a mortgage covers both real property and other property, an apportionment may be required in the same manner as described under "—Income Tests—Interest." IRS Revenue Procedure 2014-51 provides a safe harbor under which the IRS has stated that it will not challenge a REIT's treatment of a loan as being, in part, a qualifying real estate asset in an amount equal to the lesser of (i) the fair market value of the loan on the relevant quarterly REIT asset testing date or (ii) the greater of (a) the fair market value of the real property securing the loan on the relevant quarterly REIT asset testing date or (b) the fair market value of the real property securing the loan on the date the REIT committed to originate or acquire the loan. We believe that all of the mortgage loans that we acquire at a discount under the circumstances contemplated by Revenue Procedure 2014-51 are secured only by real property, and no other property value is taken into account in our underwriting and pricing. Accordingly, we believe that apportionment does not apply to our portfolio.

We expect that our investments in MBS generally will be treated as interests in a grantor trust or as interests in a REMIC for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In the case of MBS treated as interests in grantor trusts, we

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would be treated as owning an undivided beneficial ownership interest in the mortgage loans held by the grantor trust. In the case of MBS treated as an interest in a REMIC, such interests generally will qualify as real estate assets, and income derived from REMIC interests generally will be treated as qualifying income for purposes of the REIT income tests described above. 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 qualifies for purposes of the REIT asset and income tests.

We believe that most of the assets that we hold and those we expect to hold will be qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test. However, our investment in other asset-backed securities, bank loans and other instruments that are not secured by mortgages on real property will not be qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test.

We will monitor the status of our assets for purposes of the various asset tests and will seek to manage our portfolio to comply at all times with such tests. There can be no assurances, however, that we will be successful in this effort. In this regard, to determine our compliance with these requirements, we will need to estimate the value of the real estate securing our mortgage loans at various times. In addition, we will be required to value our investment in our other assets to ensure compliance with the asset tests. Although we will seek to be prudent in making these estimates, no independent appraisals will be obtained to support our conclusions as to the value of our assets and securities, or in many cases, the real estate collateral for the mortgage loans that we hold. Moreover, values of some assets may not be susceptible to a precise determination. As a result, there can be no assurances that the IRS may not disagree with these determinations and assert that a different value is applicable, in which case we may not satisfy the 75% and the other asset tests.

We will not lose our REIT status for a de minimis failure to meet the 5% or 10% asset requirements if the failure is due to ownership of assets the total value of which does not exceed the lesser of 1% of the total value of our assets or \$10 million. If we fail to satisfy any of the asset requirements for a particular tax quarter, we may still qualify as a REIT if we (1) identify the failure on a separate schedule, (2) the failure is due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, (3) the assets causing the failure are disposed of (or the requirements are otherwise met) within six months of the last day of the quarter in which the failure was identified and (4) we pay a tax computed as the greater of either \$50,000 or the net income generated by the assets causing the failure multiplied by the highest corporate income tax rate.

After initially meeting the asset tests after the close of any quarter, we will not lose our status as a REIT if we fail to satisfy the asset tests at the end of a later quarter solely by reason of changes in the relative values of our assets. However, an acquisition of property by a REIT requires the REIT to revalue all of its assets. If the failure to satisfy the asset tests results from an increase in the value of our assets after the acquisition of securities or other property during a quarter, the failure can be cured by eliminating the discrepancy within 30 days after the close of that quarter. We intend to maintain adequate records of the value of our assets to ensure compliance with the asset tests and to take any available action within 30 days after the close of any quarter as may be required to cure any noncompliance with the asset tests. We cannot ensure that these steps always will be successful. If we fail to cure the noncompliance with the asset tests within this 30-day period, we could fail to qualify as a REIT.

### **Annual Distribution Requirements Applicable to REITs**

To qualify as a REIT, we generally must distribute dividends (other than capital gain dividends) to our stockholders in an amount at least equal to:

- the sum of (i) 90% of our REIT taxable income, computed without regard to the dividends paid deduction and our net capital gain and (ii) 90% of our net income after tax, if any, from foreclosure property; minus

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- the excess of the sum of specified items of non-cash income (including original issue discount on our mortgage loans) over 5% of our REIT taxable income, computed without regard to the dividends paid deduction and our net capital gain.

Distributions generally must be made during the taxable year to which they relate. Distributions may be made in the following year in two circumstances. First, if we declare a dividend in October, November or December of any year with a record date in one of these months and pay the dividend on or before January 31 of the following year, we will be treated as having paid the dividend on December 31 of the year in which the dividend was declared. Second, distributions may be made in the following year if the dividends are declared before we timely file our tax return for the year and if made before the first regular dividend payment made after such declaration. These distributions are taxable to our stockholders in the year in which paid, even though the distributions relate to our prior taxable year for purposes of the 90% distribution requirement. To the extent that we do not distribute all of our net capital gain or we distribute at least 90%, but less than 100% of our REIT taxable income, as adjusted, we will be subject to tax on the undistributed amount at regular corporate tax rates.

If we cease to be a “publicly offered REIT,” then in order for distributions to be counted as satisfying the annual distribution requirements for REITs, and to provide us with a REIT-level tax deduction, the distributions must not be “preferential dividends.” A dividend is not a preferential dividend if the distribution is (i) pro-rata among all outstanding shares of stock within a particular class, and (ii) in accordance with the preferences among different classes of stock as set forth in our organizational documents.

As described above, if we fail to distribute during a calendar year (or, in the case of distributions with declaration and record dates falling in the last three months of the calendar year, by the end of January following such calendar year) at least the sum of (i) 85% of our ordinary income for such year, (ii) 95% of our capital gain net income for such year and (iii) any undistributed taxable income from prior years, we will be subject to a 4% excise tax on the excess of such required distribution over the sum of (x) the amounts actually distributed (taking into account excess distributions from prior years) and (y) the amounts of income retained on which we have paid corporate income tax.

We may elect to retain rather than distribute all or a portion of our net capital gains and pay income tax on the gains. In that case, our stockholders would include their proportionate share of the undistributed net long-term capital gains in income and receive a credit for their proportionate share of the tax paid by us. For purposes of the 4% excise tax described above, any retained amounts for which we elect this treatment would be treated as having been distributed.

We intend to make timely distributions sufficient to satisfy the distribution requirements. However, 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. For instance, we may be required to accrue interest and discount income on mortgage loans, MBS, and other types of debt securities or interests in debt securities before we receive any payments of interest or principal on such assets. See “—Income Tests—Phantom Income.” Moreover, in certain instances we may be required to accrue taxable income that we may not actually recognize as economic income. For example, if we own a residual equity position in a mortgage loan securitization, we may recognize taxable income that we will never actually receive due to losses sustained on the underlying mortgage loans. Although those losses would be deductible for tax purposes, they would likely occur in a year subsequent to the year in which we recognized the taxable income.

Although several types of non-cash income are excluded in determining the annual distribution requirement, we will incur corporate income tax and the 4% nondeductible excise tax with respect to those non-cash income items if we do not distribute those items on a current basis. As a result of the foregoing, we may not have sufficient cash to distribute all of our taxable income and thereby avoid corporate income tax and the excise tax imposed on certain undistributed income. In such a situation, we may need to borrow funds or issue additional common stock or preferred stock.

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We may satisfy the 90% distribution test with taxable distributions of our stock or debt securities. The IRS has issued a revenue procedure authorizing publicly offered REITs to treat certain distributions that are paid partly in cash and partly in stock as dividends that would satisfy the REIT annual distribution requirement and qualify for the dividends paid deduction for U.S. federal income tax purposes. We have no current intention to make a taxable dividend payable in cash and stock.

Under some circumstances, we may be able to rectify a failure to meet the distribution requirement 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. Thus, we may be able to avoid being taxed on amounts distributed as deficiency dividends. However, we will be required to pay interest based upon the amount of any deduction taken for deficiency dividends.

### **Failure to Qualify**

If we fail to satisfy one or more requirements of REIT qualification, other than the income tests or asset requirements, then we may still retain REIT qualification if the failure is due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, and we pay a penalty of \$50,000 for each failure.

If we fail to qualify for taxation as a REIT in any taxable year and the relief provisions do not apply, we will be subject to tax, including, for taxable years prior to 2018, any applicable alternative minimum tax, on our taxable income at regular corporate rates. This would significantly reduce both our cash available for distribution to our stockholders and our earnings. If we fail to qualify as a REIT, we will not be required to make any distributions to stockholders and any distributions that are made will not be deductible by us. Moreover, all distributions to stockholders would be taxable as dividends to the extent of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, whether or not attributable to capital gains of ours. Subject to certain limitations of the Code, corporate distributees may be eligible for the dividends received deduction with respect to those distributions, and individual, trust and estate distributees may be eligible for reduced income tax rates on such dividends. Unless we are entitled to relief under specific statutory provisions, we also will be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which qualification was lost.

### **Taxation of U.S. Holders of Our Capital Stock**

*U.S. Holder.* As used in the remainder of this discussion, the term “U.S. holder” means a beneficial owner of our capital stock that is for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

- a citizen or resident of the U.S.;
- a corporation (or an entity treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes) created or organized in or under the laws of the U.S., any of its States or the District of Columbia;
- an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or
- a trust if it (a) is subject to the primary supervision of a court within the U.S. and one or more U.S. persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (b) has a valid election in effect under applicable U.S. Treasury regulations to be treated as a U.S. person.

If a partnership (or an entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) holds our capital stock, the tax treatment of a partner generally will depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. If you are a partner of a partnership holding our capital stock, you should consult your advisors. A “non-U.S. holder” is a beneficial owner of our capital stock that is neither a U.S. holder nor a partnership (or an entity treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes).

*Distributions Generally.* As long as we qualify as a REIT, distributions made to taxable U.S. holders of our capital stock out of current or accumulated earnings and profits that are not designated as capital gain dividends

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will be taken into account by them as ordinary income taxable at ordinary income tax rates and will not qualify for the reduced capital gains rates that currently generally apply to distributions by non-REIT C corporations to certain non-corporate U.S. holders. In determining the extent to which a distribution constitutes a dividend for tax purposes, our earnings and profits will be allocated first to distributions with respect to our preferred stock and then to our common stock. Corporate stockholders will not be eligible for the dividends received deduction with respect to these distributions.

For taxable years beginning before January 1, 2026, individuals, trusts and estates may deduct up to 20% of certain pass-through income, including ordinary REIT dividends that are not “capital gain dividends” or “qualified dividend income,” subject to certain limitations (the “pass-through deduction”). For taxable years beginning before January 1, 2026, the maximum tax rate for U.S. holders taxed at individual rates is 37%. For taxpayers qualifying for the full pass-through deduction, the effective maximum tax rate on ordinary REIT dividends for taxable years beginning before January 1, 2026 would be 29.6%. To qualify for this deduction with respect to a dividend on shares of our common stock, a shareholder must hold such shares for more than 45 days during the 91-day period beginning on the date which is 45 days before the date on which such shares become ex-dividend with respect to such dividend (taking into account certain special holding period rules that may, among other consequences, reduce a shareholder’s holding period during any period in which the shareholder has diminished its risk of loss with respect to the shares). Shareholders are urged to consult their tax advisors as to their ability to claim this deduction.

Distributions in excess of both current and accumulated earnings and profits will not be taxable to a U.S. holder to the extent that the distributions do not exceed the adjusted basis of the holder’s stock. Rather, such distributions will reduce the adjusted basis of the stock. To the extent that distributions exceed the adjusted basis of a U.S. holder’s stock, the distributions will be taxable as capital gains. A U.S. holder’s initial tax basis in a share of our capital stock is, in general, equal to the amount paid per share.

Distributions generally will be taxable, if at all, in the year of the distribution. However, if we declare a dividend in October, November or December of any year with a record date in one of these months and pay the dividend on or before January 31 of the following year, we will be treated as having paid the dividend, and the stockholder will be treated as having received the dividend, on December 31 of the year in which the dividend was declared.

*Capital Gain Dividends.* We may elect to designate distributions of our net capital gain as “capital gain dividends.” Capital gain dividends are taxed to U.S. holders of our stock as gain from the sale or exchange of a capital asset held for more than one year. This tax treatment applies regardless of the period during which the U.S. holders have held their stock. If we designate any portion of a dividend as a capital gain dividend, the amount that will be taxable to the stockholder as capital gain will be indicated to U.S. holders on IRS Form 1099-DIV. Corporate U.S. holders, however, may be required to treat up to 20% of capital gain dividends as ordinary income. Capital gain dividends are not eligible for the dividends-received deduction for corporations.

Instead of paying capital gain dividends, we may elect to require U.S. holders to include our undistributed net capital gains in their income. If we make such an election, U.S. holders (i) will include in their income as long-term capital gains their proportionate share of such undistributed capital gains and (ii) will be deemed to have paid their proportionate share of the tax paid by us on such undistributed capital gains and thereby receive a credit or refund for such amount. A U.S. holder of our capital stock will increase the basis in its shares of our capital stock by the difference between the amount of capital gain included in its income and the amount of tax it is deemed to have paid. Our earnings and profits will be adjusted appropriately.

We must classify portions of our designated capital gain dividend into the following categories:

- a 20% gain distribution, which would be taxable to non-corporate U.S. holders of our stock at a rate of up to 20%; or

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- an unrecaptured section 1250 gain distribution, which would be taxable to non-corporate U.S. holders of our stock at a maximum rate of 25%.

The IRS currently requires that distributions made to different classes of stock be composed proportionately of dividends of a particular type.

*Passive Activity Loss and Investment Interest Limitation.* Distributions and gain from the disposition of our capital stock will not be treated as passive activity income, and therefore U.S. holders will not be able to apply any “passive activity losses” against such income. Dividends paid by us, to the extent they do not constitute a return of capital, generally will be treated as investment income for purposes of the investment income limitation on the deduction of the investment interest.

*Other Tax Considerations.* U.S. holders of our capital stock may not include in their individual income tax returns any of our net operating losses or capital losses. Our operating or capital losses would be carried over by us for potential offset against future income, subject to applicable limitations.

*Sales of Our Capital Stock.* Upon any taxable sale or other disposition of our capital stock, a U.S. holder of our capital stock will recognize gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes on the disposition of our capital stock in an amount equal to the difference between:

- the amount of cash and the fair market value of any property received on such disposition; and
- the U.S. holder’s adjusted basis in such REIT stock for tax purposes.

Gain or loss will be capital gain or loss. The applicable tax rate will depend on the holder’s holding period in the asset (generally, if an asset has been held for more than one year it will produce long-term capital gain) and the holder’s tax bracket.

*Medicare Tax.* Certain U.S. holders, including individuals and estates and trusts, are subject to an additional 3.8% Medicare tax on all or a portion of their “net investment income,” which includes net gain from a sale or exchange of our capital stock and income from dividends paid on our capital stock. U.S. holders are urged to consult their tax advisors regarding the Medicare tax.

*Redemption of Preferred Stock.* A redemption of preferred stock will be treated under section 302 of the Code as a distribution that is taxable as dividend income (to the extent of our current or accumulated earnings and profits), unless the redemption satisfies certain tests set forth in section 302(b) of the Code enabling the redemption to be treated as a sale of the preferred stock (in which case the redemption will be treated in the same manner as a sale described above in “—Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Capital Stock”). The redemption will satisfy such tests if it (i) is “substantially disproportionate” with respect to the U.S. holder’s interest in our stock, (ii) results in a “complete termination” of the U.S. holder’s interest in all classes of our stock or (iii) is “not essentially equivalent to a dividend” with respect to the U.S. holder, all within the meaning of section 302(b) of the Code. In determining whether any of these tests have been met, stock considered to be owned by the U.S. holder by reason of certain constructive ownership rules set forth in the Code, as well as stock actually owned, generally must be taken into account. Because the determination as to whether any of the three alternative tests of section 302(b) of the Code described above will be satisfied with respect to any particular U.S. holder of preferred stock depends upon the facts and circumstances at the time that the determination must be made, prospective investors are urged to consult their tax advisors to determine such tax treatment.

If a redemption of preferred stock does not meet any of the three tests described above, the redemption proceeds will be taxable as a dividend, as described above in “—Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Capital Stock.” In that case, a U.S. holder’s adjusted tax basis in the redeemed preferred stock will be transferred to such U.S. holder’s remaining stockholdings in our company. If the U.S. holder does not retain any of our stock, such basis could be transferred to a related person that holds our stock or it may be lost.

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*Conversion of Preferred Stock.* Except as provided below, (i) a U.S. holder generally will not recognize gain or loss upon the conversion of preferred stock into our common stock, and (ii) a U.S. holder's basis and holding period in our common stock received upon conversion generally will be the same as those of the converted preferred stock (but the basis will be reduced by the portion of adjusted tax basis allocated to any fractional share exchanged for cash). Any of our shares of common stock received in a conversion that are attributable to accumulated and unpaid dividends on the converted preferred stock will be treated as a distribution that is potentially taxable as a dividend. Cash received upon conversion in lieu of a fractional share generally will be treated as a payment in a taxable exchange for such fractional share, and gain or loss will be recognized on the receipt of cash in an amount equal to the difference between the amount of cash received and the adjusted tax basis allocable to the fractional share deemed exchanged. This gain or loss will be long-term capital gain or loss if the U.S. holder has held the preferred stock for more than one year at the time of conversion. U.S. holders are urged to consult with their tax advisors regarding the U.S. federal income tax consequences of any transaction by which such holder exchanges shares of our common stock received on a conversion of preferred stock for cash or other property.

### **Taxation of Non-U.S. Holders of Our Capital Stock**

The rules governing U.S. federal income taxation of non-U.S. holders are complex. This section is only a summary of such rules. We urge non-U.S. holders to consult their tax advisors to determine the impact of federal, state and local income tax laws on ownership of our capital stock, including any reporting requirements.

*Distributions.* Distributions by us to a non-U.S. holder of our capital stock that are neither attributable to gain from sales or exchanges by us of "U.S. real property interests" nor designated by us as capital gains dividends will be treated as dividends of ordinary income to the extent that they are made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits. These distributions ordinarily will be subject to U.S. federal income tax on a gross basis at a rate of 30%, or a lower rate as permitted under an applicable income tax treaty, unless the dividends are treated as effectively connected with the conduct by the non-U.S. holder of a U.S. trade or business. Under some treaties, however, lower rates generally applicable to dividends do not apply to dividends from REITs. Further, reduced treaty rates are not available to the extent the income allocated to the non-U.S. holder is excess inclusion income. Although we do not expect to recognize any excess inclusion income, if we did recognize excess inclusion income that exceeds our undistributed REIT taxable income in a particular year, it would be allocated to our stockholders. See "—Our Taxation as a REIT—Taxable Mortgage Pools." Dividends that are effectively connected with a trade or business will be subject to tax on a net basis, that is, after allowance for deductions, at graduated rates, in the same manner as U.S. holders are taxed with respect to these dividends, and are generally not subject to withholding. Applicable certification and disclosure requirements must be satisfied to be exempt from withholding under the effectively connected income exception. Any dividends received by a corporate non-U.S. holder that is engaged in a U.S. trade or business also may be subject to an additional branch profits tax at a 30% rate, or lower applicable treaty rate. We expect to withhold U.S. income tax at the rate of 30% on any dividend distributions, not designated as (or deemed to be) capital gain dividends, made to a non-U.S. holder unless:

- a lower treaty rate applies and the non-U.S. holder files an IRS Form W-8BEN or IRS Form W-8BEN-E, as applicable, with us evidencing eligibility for that reduced rate is filed with us; or
- the non-U.S. holder files an IRS Form W-8ECI with us claiming that the distribution is income effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder's trade or business.

Distributions in excess of our current or accumulated earnings and profits that do not exceed the adjusted basis of the non-U.S. holder in our capital stock will reduce the non-U.S. holder's adjusted basis in our capital stock and will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax. Distributions in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits that do exceed the adjusted basis of the non-U.S. holder in our capital stock will be treated as gain from the sale of its stock, the tax treatment of which is described below. See "—Taxation of Non-U.S. Holders of Our Capital Stock—Sales of Our Capital Stock." Because we generally cannot determine

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at the time we make a distribution whether or not the distribution will exceed our current and accumulated earnings and profits, we normally will withhold tax on the entire amount of any distribution at the same rate as we would withhold on a dividend.

We would be required to withhold at least 15% of any distribution to a non-U.S. holder in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits if our capital stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest with respect to such non-U.S. holder, as described below under “—Sales of Our Capital Stock.” This withholding would apply even if a lower treaty rate applies or the non-U.S. holder is not liable for tax on the receipt of that distribution. However, a non-U.S. holder may seek a refund of these amounts from the IRS if the non-U.S. holder’s U.S. tax liability with respect to the distribution is less than the amount withheld.

Distributions to a non-U.S. holder that are designated by us at the time of the distribution as capital gain dividends, other than those arising from the disposition of a U.S. real property interest, generally should not be subject to U.S. federal income taxation unless:

- the investment in our capital stock is effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder’s trade or business, in which case the non-U.S. holder will be subject to the same treatment as U.S. holders with respect to any gain, except that a holder that is a foreign corporation also may be subject to the 30% branch profits tax, as discussed above; or
- the non-U.S. holder is a nonresident alien individual who is present in the U.S. for 183 days or more during the taxable year and has a “tax home” in the U.S., in which case the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual’s capital gains.

Under the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act of 1980, which is referred to as “FIRPTA,” distributions to certain non-U.S. holders that are attributable to gain from sales or exchanges by us of U.S. real property interests, whether or not designated as a capital gain dividend, will cause such non-U.S. holders to be treated as recognizing gain that is income effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business. Such non-U.S. holders will be taxed on this gain at the same rates applicable to U.S. holders, subject to a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals. Also, this gain may be subject to a 30% (or lower applicable treaty rate) branch profits tax in the hands of a non-U.S. holder that is a corporation. Unless the non-U.S. holder is a “qualified shareholder” or a “qualified foreign pension fund” (each as defined below), we will be required to withhold and remit to the IRS 21% of any distributions to non-U.S. holders that are designated as capital gain dividends, or, if greater, 21% of a distribution that could have been designated as a capital gain dividend, whether or not attributable to sales of U.S. real property interests. Distributions can be designated as capital gains to the extent of our net capital gain for the taxable year of the distribution. The amount withheld, which for individual non-U.S. holders may exceed the actual tax liability, is creditable against the non-U.S. holder’s U.S. federal income tax liability.

However, the 21% withholding tax will not apply to any capital gain dividend with respect to any class of our stock which is regularly traded on an established securities market located in the U.S. if the non-U.S. stockholder did not own more than 10% of such class of stock at any time during the one-year period ending on the date of such dividend. Instead, any capital gain dividend to such holder will be treated as a distribution of ordinary income subject to the rules discussed above under “—Distributions.” Also, the branch profits tax will not apply to such a distribution.

*Sales of Our Capital Stock.* Gain recognized by a non-U.S. holder upon the sale or exchange of our capital stock generally would not be subject to U.S. taxation unless:

- the investment in our capital stock is effectively connected with the non-U.S. holder’s U.S. trade or business, in which case the non-U.S. holder will be subject to the same treatment as domestic holders with respect to any gain;

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- the non-U.S. holder is a nonresident alien individual who is present in the U.S. for 183 days or more during the taxable year and has a tax home in the U.S., in which case the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual's net capital gains for the taxable year; or
- the non-U.S. holder is not a "qualified shareholder" or a "qualified foreign pension fund" and our capital stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest within the meaning of FIRPTA, as described below.

Our capital stock will not constitute a U.S. real property interest if we either are not a U.S. real property holding corporation or we are a domestically-controlled REIT. Whether we are a U.S. real property holding corporation will depend upon whether the fair market value of U.S. real property interests owned by us equals or exceeds 50% of the fair market value of these interests, any interests in real estate outside of the U.S., and our other trade and business assets. The term "U.S. real property interests" generally does not include mortgage loans or MBS. Even if we are a U.S. real property holding corporation, the disposition of our capital stock will not be subject to FIRPTA if we are a domestically-controlled REIT. Generally, a REIT is domestically controlled if, at all times during a specified testing period, less than 50% of the value of its shares is held directly or indirectly by non-U.S. persons.

Because our common stock will be publicly traded, no assurance can be given that we are or will be a domestically-controlled REIT. Even if we were a U.S. real property holding corporation and were not a domestically-controlled REIT, a sale of capital stock by a non-U.S. holder would nevertheless not be subject to taxation under FIRPTA as a sale of a U.S. real property interest if:

- the applicable class of our stock were "regularly traded" on an established securities market within the meaning of applicable U.S. Treasury regulations; and
- the non-U.S. holder did not actually, or constructively under specified attribution rules under the Code, own more than 10% of the applicable class of our stock at any time during the shorter of the five-year period preceding the disposition or the holder's holding period.

We believe that our common stock and our 7.50% Series B Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock is currently treated as being regularly traded on an established securities market. If gain on the sale or exchange of our capital stock were subject to taxation under FIRPTA, the non-U.S. holder would be subject to regular U.S. income tax with respect to any gain in the same manner as a taxable U.S. holder, subject to any applicable alternative minimum tax and special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals. In such case, under FIRPTA, the purchaser of capital stock may be required to withhold 15% of the purchase price and remit this amount to the IRS.

*Qualified Shareholders.* Subject to the exception discussed below, any distribution to a "qualified shareholder" who holds REIT stock directly or indirectly (through one or more partnerships) will not be subject to U.S. federal income taxation under FIRPTA and thus will not be subject to special withholding rules under FIRPTA. While a "qualified shareholder" will not be subject to FIRPTA withholding on REIT distributions, the portion of REIT distributions attributable to certain investors in a "qualified shareholder" (i.e., non-U.S. persons who hold interests in the "qualified shareholder" (other than interests solely as a creditor), and directly or indirectly hold more than 10% of the applicable class of our stock (whether or not by reason of the investor's ownership in the "qualified shareholder")) may be subject to FIRPTA withholding. REIT distributions received by a "qualified shareholder" that are exempt from FIRPTA withholding may still be subject to regular U.S. withholding tax.

In addition, a sale of our stock by a "qualified shareholder" who holds such stock directly or indirectly (through one or more partnerships) generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income taxation under FIRPTA. As with distributions, the portion of amounts realized attributable to certain investors in a "qualified shareholder" (i.e., non-U.S. persons who hold interests in the "qualified shareholder" (other than interests solely as a creditor),

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and directly or indirectly hold more than 10% of the applicable class of our stock (whether or not by reason of the investor's ownership in the "qualified shareholder")) may be subject to U.S. federal income taxation and FIRPTA withholding on a sale of our stock.

A "qualified shareholder" is a foreign person that (i) either is eligible for the benefits of a comprehensive income tax treaty which includes an exchange of information program and whose principal class of interests is listed and regularly traded on one or more recognized stock exchanges (as defined in such comprehensive income tax treaty), or is a foreign partnership that is created or organized under foreign law as a limited partnership in a jurisdiction that has an agreement for the exchange of information with respect to taxes with the U.S. and has a class of limited partnership units representing greater than 50% of the value of all the partnership units that is regularly traded on the NYSE or Nasdaq markets, (ii) is a "qualified collective investment vehicle" (defined below), and (iii) maintains records on the identity of each person who, at any time during the foreign person's taxable year, is the direct owner of 5% or more of the class of interests or units (as applicable) described in (i), above.

A qualified collective investment vehicle is a foreign person that (i) would be eligible for a reduced rate of withholding under the comprehensive income tax treaty described above, even if such entity holds more than 10% of the stock of such REIT, (ii) is publicly traded, is treated as a partnership under the Code, is a withholding foreign partnership, and would be treated as a "United States real property holding corporation" if it were a domestic corporation, or (iii) is designated as such by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and is either (a) fiscally transparent within the meaning of section 894 of the Code, or (b) required to include dividends in its gross income, but is entitled to a deduction for distributions to its investors.

*Qualified Foreign Pension Funds.* Any distribution to a "qualified foreign pension fund" (or an entity all of the interests of which are held by a "qualified foreign pension fund") who holds REIT stock directly or indirectly (through one or more partnerships) will not be subject to U.S. federal income taxation under FIRPTA and thus will not be subject to special withholding rules under FIRPTA. REIT distributions received by a "qualified foreign pension fund" that are exempt from FIRPTA withholding may still be subject to regular U.S. withholding tax. In addition, a sale of our stock by a "qualified foreign pension fund" that holds such stock directly or indirectly (through one or more partnerships) will not be subject to U.S. federal income taxation under FIRPTA.

A qualified foreign pension fund is any trust, corporation, or other organization or arrangement (i) which is created or organized under the law of a country other than the U.S., (ii) which is established by such country or an employer to provide retirement or pension benefits to participants or beneficiaries that are current or former employees (or persons designated by such employees) of one or more employers in consideration for services rendered, (iii) which does not have a single participant or beneficiary with a right to more than 5% of its assets or income, (iv) which is subject to government regulation and with respect to which annual information reporting about its beneficiaries is provided or otherwise available to the relevant tax authorities in the country in which it is established or operates, and (v) with respect to which, under the laws of the country in which it is established or operates, (a) contributions to such organization or arrangement that would otherwise be subject to tax under such laws are deductible or excluded from the gross income of such entity or taxed at a reduced rate, or (b) taxation of any investment income of such organization or arrangement is deferred or such income is taxed at a reduced rate.

*Conversion of Preferred Stock.* The conversion of our preferred stock into our common stock may be a taxable exchange for a non-U.S. holder if our preferred stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest. Even if our preferred stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest, provided our common stock also constitutes a U.S. real property interest, a non-U.S. holder generally will not recognize gain or loss upon a conversion of preferred stock into our common stock so long as certain FIRPTA-related reporting requirements are satisfied. If our preferred stock constitutes a U.S. real property interest and such requirements are not satisfied, however, a conversion will be treated as a taxable exchange of preferred stock for our common stock. Such a deemed taxable exchange will be subject to tax under FIRPTA at the rate of tax, including any applicable capital gains rates, that would apply to

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a U.S. holder of the same type (e.g., a corporate or a non-corporate stockholder, as the case may be) on the excess, if any, of the fair market value of such non-U.S. holder's common stock received over such non-U.S. holder's adjusted basis in its preferred stock. Collection of such tax will be enforced by a refundable withholding tax at a rate of 15% of the value of the common stock.

Non-U.S. holders are urged to consult with their tax advisors regarding the U.S. federal income tax consequences of any transaction by which such non-U.S. holder exchanges shares of our common stock received on a conversion of preferred stock for cash or other property.

*Redemption of Preferred Stock.* For a discussion of the treatment of a redemption of preferred stock, see "Taxation of U.S. Holders of our Capital Stock—Redemption of Preferred Stock."

### **Taxation of Tax-Exempt Holders of Our Capital Stock**

Provided that a tax-exempt holder has not held its capital stock as "debt-financed property" within the meaning of the Code, the dividend and interest income from us generally will not be unrelated business taxable income, referred to as UBTI, to a tax-exempt holder. Similarly, income from the sale of our capital stock will not constitute UBTI unless the tax-exempt holder has held its capital stock as debt-financed property within the meaning of the Code. Although we do not expect to recognize any excess inclusion income, to the extent that we, or a part of us, or a disregarded subsidiary of ours, is a taxable mortgage pool, a portion of the dividends paid to a tax-exempt stockholders that is allocable to excess inclusion income may be subject to tax as UBTI. See "—Our Taxation as a REIT—Taxable Mortgage Pools."

Notwithstanding the above, however, social clubs, voluntary employee benefit associations, supplemental unemployment benefit trusts and qualified group legal services plans that are exempt from taxation under special provisions of the U.S. federal income tax laws are subject to different UBTI rules, which generally will require them to characterize distributions that they receive from us as UBTI. Moreover, a portion of the dividends paid by a "pension-held REIT" are treated as UBTI as to any trust which is described in section 401(a) of the Code, is tax-exempt under section 501(a) of the Code, and holds more than 10%, by value, of the interests in the REIT. Tax-exempt pension funds that are described in section 401(a) of the Code are referred to below as "pension trusts."

A REIT is a "pension-held REIT" if it meets the following two tests:

- it would not have qualified as a REIT but for section 856(h)(3) of the Code, which provides that stock owned by pension trusts will be treated, for purposes of determining whether the REIT is closely held, as owned by the beneficiaries of the trust rather than by the trust itself; and
- either (i) at least one pension trust holds more than 25% of the value of the interests in the REIT, or (ii) a group of pension trusts each individually holding more than 10% of the value of the REIT's stock, collectively owns more than 50% of the value of the REIT's stock.

The percentage of any REIT dividend from a "pension-held REIT" that is treated as UBTI is equal to the ratio of the UBTI earned by the REIT, treating the REIT as if it were a pension trust and therefore subject to tax on UBTI, to the total gross income of the REIT. An exception applies where the percentage is less than 5% for any year, in which case none of the dividends would be treated as UBTI. The provisions requiring pension trusts to treat a portion of REIT distributions as UBTI will not apply if the REIT is not a "pension-held REIT" (for example, if the REIT is able to satisfy the "not closely held requirement" without relying on the "look through" exception with respect to pension trusts). Our 9.8% ownership limit may make it less likely that a pension trust would hold more than 25% of the value of our capital stock or that a group of pension trusts each holding more than 10% of the value of our capital stock would hold more than 50% of the value of our capital stock. No assurance can be given, however, that we will not be a "pension-held REIT" because of ownership waivers or otherwise.

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### **Backup Withholding Tax and Information Reporting**

*U.S. Holders of Our Capital Stock.* In general, information-reporting requirements will apply to payments of dividends and interest on and payments of the proceeds of the sale of our capital stock held by U.S. holders, unless an exception applies. The payor is required to withhold tax on such payments if (i) the payee fails to furnish a taxpayer identification number, or TIN, to the payor or to establish an exemption from backup withholding, or (ii) the IRS notifies the payor that the TIN furnished by the payee is incorrect. In addition, a payor of the dividends or interest on our capital stock is required to withhold tax if (i) there has been a notified payee under-reporting with respect to interest, dividends or original issue discount described in section 3406(c) of the Code, or (ii) there has been a failure of the payee to certify under the penalty of perjury that the payee is not subject to backup withholding under the Code. A U.S. holder that does not provide us with a correct TIN may also be subject to penalties imposed by the IRS. In addition, we may be required to withhold a portion of capital gain distributions to any U.S. holders who fail to certify their U.S. status to us. Some U.S. holders of our capital stock, including corporations, may be exempt from backup withholding. Any amounts withheld under the backup withholding rules from a payment to a stockholder will be allowed as a credit against the stockholder's U.S. federal income tax and may entitle the stockholder to a refund, provided that the required information is furnished to the IRS. The payor will be required to furnish annually to the IRS and to holders of our capital stock information relating to the amount of dividends paid on our capital stock, and that information reporting may also apply to payments of proceeds from the sale of our capital stock. Some holders, including corporations, financial institutions and certain tax-exempt organizations, are generally not subject to information reporting.

*Non-U.S. Holders of Our Capital Stock.* Generally, information reporting will apply to payments of interest and dividends on our capital stock, and backup withholding described above for a U.S. holder will apply, unless the payee certifies that it is not a U.S. person or otherwise establishes an exemption.

The payment of the proceeds from the disposition of our capital stock to or through the U.S. office of a U.S. or foreign broker will be subject to information reporting and backup withholding as described above for U.S. holders unless the non-U.S. holder satisfies the requirements necessary to be an exempt non-U.S. holder or otherwise qualifies for an exemption. The proceeds of a disposition by a non-U.S. holder of our capital stock to or through a foreign office of a broker generally will not be subject to information reporting or backup withholding. However, if the broker is a U.S. person, a controlled foreign corporation for U.S. tax purposes, a foreign person 50% or more of whose gross income from all sources for specified periods is from activities that are effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business, a foreign partnership if partners who hold more than 50% of the interest in the partnership are U.S. persons, or a foreign partnership that is engaged in the conduct of a trade or business in the U.S., then information reporting generally will apply as though the payment was made through a U.S. office of a U.S. or foreign broker.

Applicable U.S. Treasury regulations provide presumptions regarding the status of a holder of our capital stock when payments to such holder cannot be reliably associated with appropriate documentation provided to the payer. Because the application of these U.S. Treasury regulations varies depending on the stockholder's particular circumstances, you are advised to consult your tax advisor regarding the information reporting requirements applicable to you.

*Additional Withholding Requirement.* Under sections 1471 through 1474 of the Code (such sections commonly referred to as "Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act," or "FATCA"), a 30% U.S. federal withholding tax will apply to dividends that we pay to certain foreign entities if such entities do not satisfy disclosure requirements related to U.S. accounts or ownership. Foreign entities must provide documentation evidencing compliance with or an exemption from FATCA, typically provided on IRS Form W-8BEN-E, to avoid this withholding tax. We will not pay any additional amounts to stockholders in respect of any amounts withheld. If a payment is both subject to withholding under FATCA and subject to withholding tax discussed above, the withholding under FATCA may be credited against, and therefore reduce, such other withholding tax. Non-U.S. holders and U.S. holders holding through foreign accounts or intermediaries should consult their tax advisors to determine the applicability of FATCA in light of their individual circumstances.

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### **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 the long-term effect of any future law changes on REITs and their stockholders. Prospective investors are urged to consult with their tax advisors regarding the effect of potential changes to the federal tax laws on an investment in our capital stock.

### **State, Local and Foreign Taxes**

We and our stockholders may be subject to state, local or foreign taxation in various state, local or foreign jurisdictions, including those in which we or they transact business 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. Consequently, prospective stockholders should consult their tax advisors regarding the effect of state, local and foreign tax laws on an investment in our capital stock.

## PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We may sell the securities offered by this prospectus to one or more underwriters for public offering and sale by them or we may sell the securities to investors directly or through agents. Any underwriter or agent involved in the offer and sale of the securities will be named in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Underwriters may offer and sell the securities at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed, at market prices prevailing at the time of sale, at prices related to these prevailing market prices or at negotiated prices. We also may, from time to time, authorize underwriters acting as agents to offer and sell the securities to purchasers upon the terms and conditions set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. In connection with the sale of securities, underwriters may be deemed to have received compensation from us in the form of underwriting discounts or commissions and may also receive commissions from purchasers of securities for whom they may act as agent. Underwriters may sell securities 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 agent.

Securities may also be sold in one or more of the following transactions: (a) block transactions (which may involve crosses) in which a broker-dealer may sell all or a portion of the securities as agent but may position and resell all or a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction; (b) purchases by a broker-dealer as principal and resale by the broker-dealer for its own account pursuant to a prospectus supplement; (c) a special offering, an exchange distribution or a secondary distribution in accordance with applicable NYSE or other stock exchange rules; (d) ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which a broker-dealer solicits purchasers; (e) sales “at the market” to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise, for shares; and (f) sales in other ways not involving market makers or established trading markets, including direct sales to purchasers. Broker-dealers may also receive compensation from purchasers of these securities which is not expected to exceed that customary in the types of transactions involved.

Any underwriting compensation paid by us to underwriters or agents in connection with the offering of securities, and any discounts, concessions or commissions allowed by underwriters to participating dealers, will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Underwriters, dealers and agents participating in the distribution of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters, and any discounts and commissions received by them and any profit realized by them on resale of the securities may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions, under the Securities Act. Underwriters, dealers and agents may be entitled, under agreements entered into with us, to indemnification against and contribution toward civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act.

Any securities issued hereunder (other than capital stock) will be new issues of securities with no established trading market. Any underwriters or agents to or through whom such securities are sold by us for public offering and sale may make a market in such securities, but such underwriters or agents will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. We cannot assure you as to the liquidity of the trading market for any such securities.

In connection with the offering of the securities described in this prospectus and an accompanying prospectus supplement, certain underwriters and selling group members and their respective affiliates, may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the security being offered. These transactions may include stabilization transactions effected in accordance with Rule 104 of Regulation M promulgated by the SEC pursuant to which these persons may bid for or purchase securities for the purpose of stabilizing their market price.

The underwriters in an offering of these securities may also create a “short position” for their account by selling more equity securities in connection with the offering than they are committed to purchase from us. In that case, the underwriters could cover all or a portion of the short position by either purchasing the securities in

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the open market following completion of the offering or by exercising any over-allotment option granted to them by us. In addition, the managing underwriter may impose “penalty bids” under contractual arrangements with other underwriters, which means that they can reclaim from an underwriter (or any selling group member participating in the offering) for the account of the other underwriters, the selling concession for the securities that is distributed in the offering but subsequently purchased for the account of the underwriters in the open market. Any of the transactions described in this paragraph or comparable transactions that are described in any accompanying prospectus supplement may result in the maintenance of the price of our securities at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. None of the transactions described in this paragraph or in an accompanying prospectus supplement are required to be taken by any underwriters and, if they are undertaken, may be discontinued at any time.

Any underwriters and their affiliates may be customers of, engage in transactions with and perform services for us and our subsidiaries in the ordinary course of business.

**LEGAL MATTERS**

The validity of the securities offered hereby is being passed upon for us by Venable LLP. If the validity of any securities is also passed upon by counsel for the underwriters of an offering of those securities, that counsel will be named in the prospectus supplement relating to that offering. In addition, the description of federal income tax consequences contained in the section of this prospectus entitled “Material U.S. Federal Income Tax Considerations” is based on the opinion of Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP.

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**EXPERTS**

The financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting (which is included in Management's 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, 2018 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of KPMG LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

## INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

The SEC allows us to incorporate by reference the information we file with them, which means that we can disclose important information to you by referring you to these documents. The information incorporated by reference is an important part of this prospectus, and information that we file later with the SEC will automatically update and supersede the information already incorporated by reference. We are incorporating by reference the documents listed below, which we have already filed with the SEC under the File Number 1-13991:

- (i) our Annual Report on [Form 10-K](#) for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2018, filed with the SEC on February 21, 2019;
- (ii) our Quarterly Report on [Form 10-Q](#) for the quarterly period ended March 31, 2019, filed with the SEC on May 7, 2019;
- (iii) our Quarterly Report on [Form 10-Q](#) for the quarterly period ended June 30, 2019, filed with the SEC on August 7, 2019;
- (iv) our Current Reports on Form 8-K filed with the SEC on [May 23, 2019](#) and [June 3, 2019](#);
- (v) portions of our [Definitive Proxy Statement](#) on Schedule 14A, filed with the SEC on April 9, 2019 and incorporated by reference in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2018;
- (vi) the description of our common stock included in our Registration Statement on [Form 8-A](#) filed with the SEC on March 26, 1998, including all amendments and reports filed for the purpose of updating such description;
- (vii) the description of the shares of our 7.50% Series B Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock contained on [Form 8-A](#) filed on April 15, 2013; and
- (viii) the description of our 8.00% Senior Notes due 2042, included in our Registration Statement on [Form 8-A](#) filed with the SEC on April 11, 2012.

In addition, we incorporate by reference into this prospectus any reports or documents that we file with the SEC (other than any portion of such filings that are furnished under applicable SEC rules rather than filed) under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act prior to the termination of the applicable offering under this prospectus. If anything in a report or document we file after the date of this prospectus changes anything in (or incorporated by reference in) it, this prospectus will be deemed to be changed by that subsequently filed report or document beginning on the date the report or document is filed.

Upon request, we will provide, without charge, to each person, including any beneficial owner, to whom a copy of this prospectus is delivered a copy of the documents incorporated by reference into this prospectus. You may request a copy of these filings, and any exhibits we have specifically incorporated by reference as an exhibit in this prospectus, by writing or telephoning us at: MFA Financial, Inc., 350 Park Avenue, 20th Floor, New York, New York 10022, Attention: Investor Relations Department; telephone: 212-207-6488.

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**INFORMATION WE FILE**

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other materials with the SEC. The SEC maintains a website that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information regarding issuers (including us) that file electronically with the SEC. The address of that website is <http://www.sec.gov>.

Reports, proxy statements and other information we file also can be inspected at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

We maintain a website at [www.mfainancial.com](http://www.mfainancial.com). Information contained on our website is not, and should not be interpreted to be, part of this prospectus.

**\$400,000,000**



**Common Stock**

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**Prospectus Supplement**

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**J.P. Morgan**  
**Barclays**  
**BofA Merrill Lynch**  
**Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC**  
**Nomura**  
**RBC Capital Markets**

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August 16, 2019