

CHIMERA INVESTMENT CORP
Form 10-K
February 25, 2016

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549
FORM 10-K

(MARK ONE)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15 (d) OF THE SECURITIES
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED: DECEMBER 31, 2015

OR

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15 (d) OF THE
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD FROM TO

COMMISSION FILE NUMBER: 1-33796

CHIMERA INVESTMENT CORPORATION
(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

MARYLAND
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation of
organization)

26-0630461
(I.R.S. Employer Identification Number)

520 Madison Avenue, 32nd Floor
New York, New York
(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

10022
(Zip Code)

(212) 626-2300
(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of Each Class Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered

Common Stock, par value \$.01 per share New York Stock Exchange
Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

None

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the
Securities Act.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the Registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days:

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§ 232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files).

Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

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

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No

At June 30, 2015, the aggregate market value of the voting stock held by non-affiliates of the Registrant was \$2,683,573,258 based on the closing sale price on the New York Stock Exchange on that date.

The number of shares of the Registrant's Common Stock outstanding on January 29, 2016 was 187,711,868.

CHIMERA INVESTMENT CORPORATION
 2015 FORM 10-K ANNUAL REPORT
 TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<u>PART I</u>	
<u>ITEM 1. BUSINESS</u>	3
<u>ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS</u>	10
<u>ITEM 1B. UNRESOLVED STAFF COMMENTS</u>	43
<u>ITEM 2. PROPERTIES</u>	43
<u>ITEM 3. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS</u>	43
<u>ITEM 4. MINE SAFETY DISCLOSURES</u>	43
<u>PART II</u>	
<u>ITEM 5. MARKET FOR REGISTRANT’S COMMON EQUITY, RELATED STOCKHOLDER MATTERS AND ISSUER PURCHASES OF EQUITY SECURITIES</u>	44
<u>ITEM 6. SELECTED FINANCIAL DATA</u>	46
<u>ITEM 7. MANAGEMENT’S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL CONDITION AND RESULTS OF OPERATIONS</u>	47
<u>ITEM 7A. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DISCLOSURES ABOUT MARKET RISK</u>	78
<u>ITEM 8. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY DATA</u>	82
<u>ITEM 9. CHANGES IN AND DISAGREEMENTS WITH ACCOUNTANTS ON ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE</u>	82
<u>ITEM 9A. CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES</u>	83
<u>ITEM 9B. OTHER INFORMATION</u>	84
<u>PART III</u>	
<u>ITEM 10.</u>	85

DIRECTORS, EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

<u>ITEM 11.</u>	<u>EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION</u>	85
<u>ITEM 12.</u>	<u>SECURITY OWNERSHIP OF CERTAIN BENEFICIAL OWNERS AND MANAGEMENT AND RELATED STOCKHOLDER MATTERS</u>	85
<u>ITEM 13.</u>	<u>CERTAIN RELATIONSHIPS AND RELATED TRANSACTIONS AND DIRECTOR INDEPENDENCE</u>	85
<u>ITEM 14.</u>	<u>PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT FEES AND SERVICES</u>	85
<u>PART IV</u>		
<u>ITEM 15.</u>	<u>EXHIBITS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT SCHEDULES</u>	86
<u>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</u>		F-1
<u>SIGNATURES</u>		S-1
EXHIBITS		

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

We make forward-looking statements in this report that are subject to risks and uncertainties. These forward-looking statements include information about possible or assumed future results of our business, financial condition, liquidity, results of operations, plans and objectives. When we use the words “believe,” “expect,” “anticipate,” “estimate,” “plan,” “continue,” “intend,” “should,” “may,” “would,” “will” or similar expressions, we intend to identify forward-looking statements. Statements regarding the following subjects, among others, are forward-looking by their nature:

- our business and investment strategy;
- availability of investment opportunities in real estate-related and other securities;
 - our expected investments;
 - changes in the value of our investments;
- interest rate mismatches between our investments and our borrowings used to finance such purchases;
 - changes in interest rates and mortgage prepayment rates;
 - effects of interest rate caps on our adjustable-rate investments;
 - rates of default, delinquencies or decreased recovery rates on our investments;
- prepayments of the mortgage and other loans underlying our mortgage-backed securities, or RMBS, or other asset-backed securities, or ABS;
 - general volatility of the securities markets in which we invest;
- our ability to maintain existing financing arrangements and our ability to obtain future financing arrangements;
 - the degree to which our hedging strategies may or may not protect us from interest rate volatility;
- impact of and changes in governmental regulations, tax law and rates, accounting guidance, and similar matters;
 - the impact of and changes to various government programs;
- market trends in our industry, interest rates, the debt securities markets or the general economy;
 - our understanding of our competition;
- our transition from an externally-managed real estate investment trust, or REIT, to an internally-managed REIT (see below under “The Internalization”);
 - availability of qualified personnel;
 - our expectations regarding materiality or significance;
 - the effectiveness of our disclosure controls and procedures;

- material weaknesses in our internal controls over financial reporting;
- inadequacy of or weakness in our internal controls over financial reporting of which we are not currently aware or which have not been detected;
 - additional information that may arise from the preparation of our financial statements;
 - estimates relating to our ability to make distributions to our stockholders in the future;
- our ability to maintain our classification as a real estate investment trust, or REIT, for federal income tax purposes; and
- our ability to maintain our exemption from registration under the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended, or 1940 Act.

The forward-looking statements are based on our beliefs, assumptions and expectations of our future performance, taking into account all information currently available to us. You should not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. These beliefs, assumptions and expectations can change as a result of many possible events or factors, not all of which are known to us. Some of these factors are described under the caption “Risk Factors” in this 2015 Form 10-K. If a change occurs, our business, financial condition, liquidity and results of operations may vary materially from those expressed in our forward-looking statements. Any forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date on which it is made. New risks and uncertainties arise from time to time, and it is impossible for us to predict those events or how they may affect us. Except as required by law, we are not obligated to, and do not intend to, update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

In this Annual Report on Form 10-K, references to “we,” “us,” “our” or “the Company” refer to Chimera Investment Corporation and its subsidiaries unless specifically stated otherwise or the context otherwise indicates. The following defines certain of the commonly used terms in this Annual Report on Form 10-K: Agency refers to federally chartered corporation, such as Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, or an agency of the U.S. Government, such as Ginnie Mae; MBS refers to mortgage-backed securities secured by pools of residential or commercial mortgage loans; RMBS refers to mortgage-backed securities secured by pools of residential mortgage loans; CMBS refers to mortgage-backed securities secured by pools of commercial mortgage loans; Agency MBS refers to MBS that are issued or guaranteed by an Agency; Agency RMBS and Agency CMBS refer to MBS that are secured by pools of residential and commercial mortgage loans, respectively, and are issued or guaranteed by an Agency; Non-Agency RMBS refers to residential MBS that are not guaranteed by any agency of the U.S. Government or any Agency.

PART I

Item 1. Business

The Company

We are a publicly traded real estate investment trust, or REIT, that is primarily engaged in the business of investing, on a leveraged basis, in a diversified portfolio of mortgage assets, including Agency RMBS, Non-Agency RMBS, Agency CMBS, residential mortgage loans, and real estate related securities. We were incorporated in Maryland on June 01, 2007 and commenced operations on November 21, 2007. We invest, either directly or indirectly through our subsidiaries, in RMBS, residential mortgage loans, Agency CMBS, commercial mortgage loans, real estate-related securities and various other asset classes. We have elected and believe that we are organized and have operated in a manner that enables us to be taxed as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the Code. If we qualify for taxation as a REIT, we generally will not be subject to U.S. federal income tax on our taxable income that is distributed to our stockholders. To ensure we qualify as a REIT, no person may own more than 9.8% of the outstanding shares of any class of our common stock, unless our Board of Directors waives this limitation.

Our Investment Strategy

Our objective is to provide attractive risk-adjusted returns to our investors over the long-term, primarily through dividends and secondarily through capital appreciation. We intend to achieve this objective by investing in a diversified investment portfolio of RMBS, Agency CMBS, residential mortgage loans, commercial mortgage loans, real estate-related securities and various other asset classes, subject to maintaining our REIT status and exemption from registration under the 1940 Act. The MBS, and real estate-related securities we purchase may include investment-grade and non-investment grade classes, including the BB-rated, B-rated and non-rated classes.

We make investment decisions based on various factors, including expected cash yield, relative value, risk-adjusted returns, current and projected credit fundamentals, current and projected macroeconomic considerations, current and projected supply and demand, credit and market risk concentration limits, liquidity, cost of financing and financing availability, as well as maintaining our REIT qualification and our exemption from registration under the 1940 Act.

The Internalization

In August 2015, we entered into agreements to internalize the Company’s management (the “Internalization”). Prior to the Internalization, we were managed by Fixed Income Discount Advisory Company, (“FIDAC”), an investment advisor registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”) and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Annaly Capital Management Inc. (“Annaly”). Pursuant to a transition services agreement that we entered into with FIDAC on August 5, 2015, we terminated the management agreement with FIDAC, and we hired a number of employees formerly

employed by FIDAC or its affiliates. In addition, FIDAC agreed to continue to provide us a number of services previously provided under the Management Agreement at the same level, quality and time frame until December 31, 2015, at which time we had the option to extend the term of the Transition Services Agreement (the “TSA”) for up to three one-month extension periods. While our transition to internal management was completed by December 31, 2015, we extended the TSA for certain IT and internal audit services through the end of February 2016 primarily in connection with the completion of our 2015 financial audit. Those services are now completed, and FIDAC no longer provides any management services to us.

As described in the Transition Services Agreement, we extended offers of employment to certain employees of FIDAC and its affiliates, including certain of FIDAC's executive officers. We had also been party to an administrative services agreement (the "Administrative Services Agreement") with RCap Securities, Inc. ("RCap"), a sister company of FIDAC, pursuant to which RCap provided trade clearing and brokerage services to us from time to time. Under the terms of the Transition Services Agreement and in furtherance of the completion of the Internalization, the Management Agreement and the Administrative Services Agreement were both terminated without the payment of any termination fee.

On August 5, 2015, we also entered into a share repurchase agreement (the "Share Repurchase Agreement") with Annaly. Pursuant to the terms of the Share Repurchase Agreement, we agreed to purchase the entire 4.4% stake owned by Annaly in the Company, and we are no longer an affiliate of Annaly. The repurchase of these shares owned by Annaly was settled on August 17, 2015.

For more information regarding the Internalization, including information related to arrangements with our management team and the appointment of certain new members of management, please refer to our Current Report on Form 8-K filed on August 5, 2015.

Business Overview

Currently, we focus our investment activities primarily on acquiring Non-Agency and Agency MBS, and on purchasing residential mortgage loans. At December 31, 2015, based on the amortized cost balance of our interest earning assets, approximately 46% of our investment portfolio was Agency MBS, 20% of our investment portfolio was Non-Agency RMBS, and 34% of our investment portfolio was securitized residential mortgage loans. At December 31, 2014, based on the amortized cost balance of our interest earning assets, approximately 52% of our investment portfolio was Agency MBS, 16% of our investment portfolio was Non-Agency RMBS, and 32% of our investment portfolio was securitized residential mortgage loans. As discussed in "Management's Discussion and Analysis," the change in the composition of our assets during 2015 relates primarily to the decrease in our Agency MBS assets to reduce interest rate exposure in our Agency portfolio.

We have engaged in transactions with residential mortgage lending operations of leading commercial banks and other originators in which we identified and re-underwrote residential mortgage loans owned by such entities, and purchased and securitized such residential mortgage loans. In the past we have also acquired formerly AAA-rated Non-Agency RMBS and immediately re-securitized those securities. We sold the resulting AAA-rated super senior RMBS and retained the rated or unrated mezzanine and subordinate RMBS.

Our investment decisions depend on prevailing market conditions and our business opportunities at such time and we expect that these will change over time. As a result, we cannot predict the percentage of our assets that will be invested in each asset class or whether we will invest in other classes of investments. We may change our investment strategy and policies without a vote of our stockholders.

Our investment strategy is intended to take advantage of opportunities in the current interest rate and credit environment. We expect to adjust our strategy to changing market conditions by shifting our asset allocations across these various asset classes as interest rate and credit cycles change over time. We believe that our strategy will enable us to pay dividends and achieve capital appreciation throughout changing market cycles. We expect to take a long-term view of assets and liabilities, and our reported earnings and estimates of the fair value of our investments at the end of a financial reporting period will not significantly impact our objective of providing attractive risk-adjusted returns to our stockholders over the long-term.

We use leverage to seek to increase our potential returns and to finance the acquisition of our assets. Our income is generated primarily by the difference, or net spread, between the income we earn on our assets and the cost of our borrowings. We finance our investments using a variety of financing sources including, when available, repurchase agreements, warehouse facilities and securitizations. We manage our debt and interest rate risk by utilizing interest rate hedges, such as interest rate swaps, caps, options and futures to reduce the effect of interest rate fluctuations related to our financing sources.

We have elected to be taxed as a REIT and operate our business to be exempt from registration under the 1940 Act, and therefore we are required to invest a substantial majority of our assets in loans secured by mortgages on real estate and real estate-related assets. Subject to maintaining our REIT qualification and our 1940 Act exemption, we do not have any limitations on the amounts we may invest in any of our targeted asset classes.

Investment Portfolio

The following briefly discusses the principal types of investments that we have made and may in the future make:

Residential Mortgage-Backed Securities

We invest in mortgage pass-through certificates issued or guaranteed by Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac which are securities representing interests in “pools” of mortgage loans secured by residential real property where payments of both interest and principal, plus pre-paid principal, on the securities are made monthly to holders of the security, in effect passing through monthly payments made by the individual borrowers on the mortgage loans that underlie the securities, net of fees paid to the issuer/guarantor and servicers of the securities. We may also invest in collateralized mortgage obligations, or CMOs, issued by the Agencies. CMOs consist of multiple classes of securities, with each class bearing different stated maturity dates. Monthly payments of principal, including prepayments, are first returned to investors holding the shortest maturity class; investors holding the longer maturity classes receive principal only after the first class has been retired.

Agency RMBS are collateralized by either fixed-rate mortgage loans, or FRMs, adjustable-rate mortgage loans, or ARMs, or hybrid ARMs. Hybrid ARMs are mortgage loans that have interest rates that are fixed for an initial period (typically three, five, seven or ten years) and thereafter reset at regular intervals subject to interest rate caps. Our allocation between securities collateralized by FRMs, ARMs or hybrid ARMs will depend on various factors including, but not limited to, relative value, expected future prepayment trends, supply and demand, costs of financing, costs of hedging, expected future interest rate volatility and the overall shape of the U.S. Treasury and interest rate swap yield curves. We take these factors into account when we make these types of investments.

We invest in investment grade and non-investment grade RMBS. We evaluate certain credit characteristics of these types of securities, including, but not limited to, loan balance distribution, geographic concentration, property type, occupancy, periodic and lifetime caps, weighted-average loan-to-value and weighted-average Fair Isaac Corporation (“FICO”) score. Qualifying securities are then analyzed using base line expectations of expected prepayments and loss severities, the current state of the fixed-income market and broader economy in general. Losses and prepayments are stressed simultaneously based on a credit risk-based model. Securities in this portfolio are monitored for variance from expected prepayments, severities, losses and cash flow. The due diligence process is particularly important and costly with respect to newly formed originators or issuers because there may be little or no information publicly available about these entities and investments.

We may invest in net interest margin securities, or NIMs, which are notes that are payable from and secured by excess cash flow that is generated by RMBS or home equity line of credit-backed securities, or HELOCs, after paying the debt service, expenses and fees on such securities. The excess cash flow represents all or a portion of a residual that is generally retained by the originator of the RMBS or HELOCs. The residual is illiquid, and thus the originator will monetize the position by securitizing the residual and issuing a NIM, usually in the form of a note that is backed by the excess cash flow generated in the underlying securitization. We may also invest in interest-only (“IO”) Agency and Non-Agency RMBS. These IO RMBS represent right to receive a specified proportion of the contractual interest flows of the collateral.

We have invested in and intend to continue to invest in RMBS which are typically pass-through certificates created by the securitization of a pool of mortgage loans that are collateralized by residential real estate properties.

The securitization process is typically governed by one or more of the rating agencies, including Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Service, Standard & Poor's, and DBRS Limited which determine the respective bond class sizes, generally based on a sequential payment structure. Bonds that are rated from AAA to BBB by the rating agencies are considered "investment grade." Bond classes that are subordinate to the BBB class or are unrated are considered "below-investment grade" or "non-investment grade." The respective bond class sizes are determined based on the review of the underlying collateral by the rating agencies. The payments received from the underlying loans are used to make the payments on the RMBS. Based on the sequential payment priority, the risk of nonpayment for the investment grade RMBS is lower than the risk of nonpayment for the non-investment grade bonds. Accordingly, the investment grade class is typically sold at a lower yield compared to the non-investment grade or unrated classes which are sold at higher yields.

Residential Mortgage Loans

We have invested in and may in the future invest in residential mortgage loans (mortgage loans secured by residential real property) primarily through direct purchases from selected mortgage originators. We may enter into additional mortgage loan purchase agreements with a number of primary mortgage loan originators, including mortgage bankers, commercial banks, savings and loan associations, home builders, credit unions and mortgage conduits. We may also purchase mortgage loans on the secondary market. We expect these loans to be secured primarily by residential properties in the United States.

The residential mortgage loans in which we have previously invested were primarily underwritten to our specifications. The originators performed the credit review of the borrowers, the appraisal of the properties securing the loan, and maintained other quality control procedures. We generally considered the purchase of loans when the originators have verified the borrowers' income and assets, verified their credit history and obtained appraisals of the properties. We or a third party performed an independent underwriting review of the processing, underwriting and loan closing methodologies that the originators used in qualifying a borrower for a loan. Depending on the size of the loans, we may not have reviewed all of the loans in a pool, but rather selected loans for underwriting review based upon specific risk-based criteria such as property location, loan size, effective loan-to-value ratio, borrower's credit score and other criteria we believe to be important indicators of credit risk. Additionally, before the purchase of loans, we obtained representations and warranties from each originator stating that each loan was underwritten to our requirements or, in the event underwriting exceptions have been made, we were informed so that we may evaluate whether to accept or reject the loans. An originator who breaches these representations and warranties in making a loan that we purchase may be obligated to repurchase the loan from us. As added security, we used the services of a third-party document custodian to insure the quality and accuracy of all individual mortgage loan closing documents and to hold the documents in safekeeping. As a result, all of the original loan collateral documents that are signed by the borrower, other than the original credit verification documents, were examined, verified and held by the third-party document custodian.

We may originate mortgage loans or provide other types of financing to the owners of real estate. We currently do not intend to establish a loan servicing platform, but expect to retain highly-rated servicers to service any mortgage loan portfolio we acquire. We have previously purchased certain residential mortgage loans on a servicing-retained basis. In the future, however, we may decide to originate mortgage loans or other types of financing, and we may elect to service mortgage loans and other types of assets.

We conduct a due diligence review of each servicer before executing a servicing agreement. Servicing procedures would typically follow Fannie Mae guidelines but will be specified in each servicing agreement.

We have in the past and may in the future acquire residential mortgage loans for our portfolio with the intention of either securitizing them and retaining them in our portfolio as securitized mortgage loans, or holding them in our

residential mortgage loan portfolio. To facilitate the securitization or financing of our loans, we may create subordinate certificates, which provide a specified amount of credit enhancement. We may issue securities through securities underwriters and either retain these securities or finance them in the repurchase agreement market. There is no limit on the amount we may retain of these below-investment-grade subordinate certificates. Until we securitize our residential mortgage loans, we expect to finance our residential mortgage loan portfolio through the use of warehouse facilities and repurchase agreements.

We withdrew our licenses in various jurisdictions to avoid not being in good standing under such licenses. The failure to maintain licenses or our good standing in various jurisdictions may temporarily require us to cease certain business strategies or modify the way in which we execute such strategies. For example, without the state licenses necessary to purchase residential mortgage loans, it was necessary for us to structure securitization transactions in a different manner than we may otherwise have chosen to do. This may, among other things, cause us to be unable to execute aspects of our business which may have otherwise been profitable, or we may incur additional costs related to such business operations that we otherwise would not have. We have reapplied for licenses in many jurisdictions and have been approved in most but not all jurisdictions. These conditions may have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

Agency CMBS

The Agency CMBS we acquire are Ginnie Mae Construction Loan Certificates (“CLCs”) and the resulting project loan certificates (“PLCs”) when the construction project is complete. Each CLC is backed by a single multifamily property [or health care facilities]. The investor in the CLC is committed to fund the full amount of the project; however, actual funding generally occurs monthly as construction progresses on the property and only after each construction advance is insured by the FHA and issued by Ginnie Mae. The principal balance of the CLC increases as payments by the investor fund each construction advance. Each Ginnie Mae approved mortgage originator must provide the agency with supporting documentation regarding advances and disbursements before each construction advance is issued by Ginnie Mae. We also review this documentation prior to funding each Ginnie Mae guaranteed advance. Upon completion of the construction project the CLC is replaced with a PLC. Ginnie Mae guaranteed the timely payment of principal and interest on each CLC and PLC. This obligation is backed by the full faith and credit of the United States.

As the holder of a CLC, we generally receive monthly payments of interest equal to a pro rata share of the interest payments on the underlying mortgage loan, less applicable servicing and guaranty fees. GNMA CLCs pay interest only during construction, and so there are no payments of principal. As a holder of a PLC, we generally receive monthly payments of principal and interest equal to the aggregate amount of the scheduled monthly principal and interest payments on the mortgage loans underlying that PLC, less applicable servicing and guaranty fees. In addition, such payments will include any prepayments and other unscheduled recoveries of principal of, and any prepayment penalties on, an underlying mortgage loan to the extent received by the Ginnie Mae Issuer during the month preceding the month of the payment. The mortgage loans underlying the PLCs generally contain a lock-out and prepayment penalty period of 10 years during which the related borrower must pay a prepayment penalty equal to a specified percentage of the principal amount of the mortgage loan in connection with voluntary and certain involuntary prepayments. Ginnie Mae does not guaranty the payment of prepayment penalties.

Commercial Mortgage Loans

We may invest in commercial mortgage loans consisting of first or second lien loans secured by multifamily properties, which are residential rental properties consisting of five or more dwelling units, or by mixed residential or other commercial properties, retail properties, office properties or industrial properties. These loans may or may not conform to the Agency guidelines.

Other Asset-Backed Securities

We may invest in securities issued in various collateralized debt obligation, (“CDO”), offerings to gain exposure to bank loans, corporate bonds, asset-backed securities, or ABS, mortgages, RMBS, CMBS, and other instruments.

We may invest in CMBS, which are secured by, or evidence ownership interests in, a single commercial mortgage loan or a pool of mortgage loans secured by commercial properties. These securities may be senior, subordinated, investment grade or non-investment grade. We intend to invest in CMBS that will yield current interest income and where we consider the return of principal to be likely. We intend to acquire CMBS from private originators of, or investors in, mortgage loans, including savings and loan associations, mortgage bankers, commercial banks, finance companies, investment banks and other entities.

Investment Guidelines

We have adopted a set of investment guidelines that set out the asset classes, risk tolerance levels, diversification requirements and other criteria used to evaluate the merits of specific investments as well as the overall portfolio composition. Our investment committee (“Investment Committee”) periodically reviews our compliance with the investment guidelines. Our board also reviews our investment portfolio and related compliance with our investment policies and procedures and investment guidelines at each regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

Our Board of Directors and our Investment Committee have adopted the following guidelines for our investments and borrowings:

- No investment shall be made that would cause us to fail to qualify as a REIT for federal income tax purposes;
- No investment shall be made that would cause us to be regulated as an investment company under the 1940 Act;
- With the exception of real estate and housing, no single industry shall represent greater than 20% of the securities or aggregate risk exposure in our portfolio; and
- Investments in non-rated or deeply subordinated ABS or other securities that are non-qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% REIT asset test will be limited to an amount not to exceed 50% of our stockholders’ equity.

These investment guidelines may be changed by a majority of our Board of Directors without the approval of our stockholders.

Our Financing Strategy

We use leverage to increase potential returns to our stockholders. We are not required to maintain any specific debt-to-equity ratio as we believe the appropriate leverage for the particular assets we are financing depends on the credit quality and risk of those assets. At December 31, 2015 and 2014, our ratio of debt-to-equity was 4.0:1 and 3.8:1, respectively. For purposes of calculating this ratio, our equity is equal to the Total stockholders’ equity on our Consolidated Statements of Financial Condition, and our debt consists of repurchase agreements and securitized debt.

Subject to our maintaining our qualification as a REIT, we may use a number of sources to finance our investments, including the following:

- **Repurchase Agreements.** We have financed certain of our assets through the use of repurchase agreements. We anticipate that repurchase agreements will be one of the sources we will use to achieve our desired amount of leverage for our residential real estate assets. We maintain formal relationships with many counterparties to obtain financing on favorable terms.
- **Warehouse Facilities.** We have utilized and may in the future utilize credit facilities for capital needed to fund our assets. We intend to maintain formal relationships with multiple counterparties to maintain warehouse lines on favorable terms.
- **Securitization.** We have acquired and may in the future acquire residential mortgage loans for our portfolio with the intention of securitizing them and retaining a portion of the securitized mortgage loans in our portfolio. To facilitate the securitization or financing of our loans, we generally create subordinate certificates, providing a specified amount of credit enhancement, which we intend to retain in our portfolio.

- **Re-REMICs.** We have acquired and may in the future acquire Non-Agency RMBS for our portfolio with the intention of re-securitizing them and retaining a portion of the re-securitized Non-Agency RMBS in our portfolio, typically the subordinate certificates. To facilitate the re-securitization, we transfer Non-Agency RMBS to a special purpose entity that has been formed as a securitization vehicle that will issue multiple classes of securities secured by and payable from cash flows on the underlying Non-Agency RMBS.

Our Interest Rate Hedging and Risk Management Strategy

From time to time, we use derivative financial instruments to hedge all or a portion of the interest rate risk associated with our borrowings. Under the federal income tax laws applicable to REITs, we generally enter into certain transactions to hedge indebtedness that we incur, or plan to incur, to acquire or carry real estate assets.

We may engage in a variety of interest rate management techniques that seek to mitigate changes in interest rates or other potential influences on the values of our assets. The federal income tax rules applicable to REITs may require us to implement certain of these techniques through a taxable REIT subsidiary, or TRS, that is fully subject to corporate income taxation. Our interest rate management techniques may include:

- puts and calls on securities or indices of securities;
- Eurodollar futures contracts and options on such contracts;
- interest rate caps, swaps and swaptions;
- U.S. Treasury futures, contracts, securities and options on U.S. Treasury securities; and
- other similar transactions.

We may attempt to reduce interest rate risks and to minimize exposure to interest rate fluctuations through the use of match funded financing structures, when appropriate, whereby we seek (i) to match the maturities of our debt obligations with the maturities of our assets and (ii) to match the interest rates on our investments with similar debt (i.e., floating rate assets are financed with floating rate debt and fixed-rate assets are financed with fixed-rate debt), directly or through the use of interest rate swaps, caps or other financial instruments, or through a combination of these strategies. This will allow us to minimize the risk that we have to refinance our liabilities before the maturities of our assets and to reduce the impact of changing interest rates on our earnings.

Compliance with REIT and Investment Company Requirements

We monitor our investment securities and the income from these securities and, to the extent we enter into hedging transactions, we monitor income from our hedging transactions as well, so as to ensure at all times that we maintain our qualification as a REIT and our exempt status under the 1940 Act.

Employees

As at December 31, 2015, we had 32 employees, all of whom were full-time. We believe that our relationship with our employees is good. None of our employees are unionized or represented under a collective bargaining agreement.

Competition

Our net income depends, in large part, on our ability to acquire assets at favorable spreads over our borrowing costs. In acquiring real estate-related assets, we will compete with other mortgage REITs, specialty finance companies, savings and loan associations, banks, mortgage bankers, insurance companies, mutual funds, institutional investors, investment banking firms, financial institutions, hedge funds, governmental bodies (including the U.S. Federal Reserve) and other entities. In addition, there are numerous mortgage REITs with similar asset acquisition objectives, and others that may be organized in the future. These other REITs will increase competition for the available supply of mortgage assets suitable for purchase. Many of our competitors are significantly larger than we are, have access to

greater capital and other resources and may have other advantages over us. In addition, some of our competitors may have higher risk tolerances or different risk assessments, which could allow them to consider a wider variety of investments and establish more favorable relationships than we can. Current market conditions may attract more competitors, which may increase the competition for sources of financing. An increase in the competition for sources of funding could adversely affect the availability and cost of financing, and thereby adversely affect the market price of our common stock.

Distributions

To maintain our qualification as a REIT, we must distribute substantially all of our REIT taxable income to our stockholders each year, and we intend to distribute all such taxable income to satisfy such requirement. We have declared and paid regular quarterly dividends in the past and intend to do so in the future. The Board of Directors declared and paid a common stock cash dividend of \$0.48 per common share for each quarter of 2015. The Board of Directors have also declared the first quarter 2016 dividend of \$0.48 per share and expects to maintain a \$0.48 per share dividend for the remaining three quarters of 2016.

Available Information

Our investor relations website is www.chimerareit.com. We make available on the website under "Investor Relations/SEC filings," free of charge, our annual report on Form 10-K, our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q, our current reports on Form 8-K and any other reports (including any amendments to such reports) as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file or furnish such materials to the SEC. Information on our website, however, is not part of this Annual Report on Form 10-K. All reports filed with the SEC may also be read and copied at the SEC's public reference room at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Further information regarding the operation of the public reference room may be obtained by calling 1-800-SEC-0330. In addition, all of our filed reports can be obtained at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

You should carefully consider the following factors, together with all the other information included in this 2015 Form 10-K, in evaluating our company and our business. If any of the following risks actually occur, our business, financial condition and results of operations could be materially and adversely affected, and the value of our stock could decline. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial also may impair our business operations. As such, you should not consider this list to be a complete statement of all potential risks or uncertainties.

Risks Associated With Our Investments and Our Operations

The mortgage loans we invest in and the mortgage loans underlying the mortgage-backed and asset-backed securities we invest in are subject to delinquency, foreclosure and loss, which could result in losses to us.

Residential mortgage loans are typically secured by single-family residential property and are subject to risks of delinquency and foreclosure and risks of loss. The ability of a borrower to repay a loan secured by a residential property is dependent upon the income or assets of the borrower. A number of factors, including a general economic downturn, acts of God, terrorism, social unrest and civil disturbances, may impair borrowers' abilities to repay their loans. In addition, we invest in Non-Agency RMBS, which are backed by residential real property but, in contrast to Agency RMBS, their principal and interest is not guaranteed by federally chartered entities such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and, in the case of Ginnie Mae, the U.S. government. The U.S. Department of Treasury and FHFA have also entered into preferred stock purchase agreements between the U.S. Department of Treasury and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac pursuant to which the U.S. Department of Treasury will ensure that each of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac maintains a positive net worth. Asset-backed securities are bonds or notes backed by loans or other financial assets.

Commercial mortgage loans are secured by multifamily or commercial property and are subject to risks of delinquency and foreclosure, and risks of loss that are greater than similar risks associated with loans made on the security of single-family residential property. The ability of a borrower to repay a loan secured by an income-producing property typically is dependent primarily upon the successful operation of such property rather than upon the existence of independent income or assets of the borrower. If the net operating income of the property is reduced, the borrower's ability to repay the loan may be impaired. Net operating income of an income producing property can be affected by, among other things, tenant mix, success of tenant businesses, property management decisions, property location and condition, competition from comparable types of properties, changes in laws that increase operating expense or limit rents that may be charged, any need to address environmental contamination at the property, the occurrence of any uninsured casualty at the property, changes in national, regional or local economic conditions or specific industry segments, declines in regional or local real estate values, declines in regional or local rental or occupancy rates, increases in interest rates, real estate tax rates and other operating expenses, changes in governmental rules, regulations and fiscal policies, including environmental legislation, acts of God, terrorism, social unrest and civil disturbances.

In the event of any default under a mortgage loan held directly by us, we will bear a risk of loss of principal to the extent of any deficiency between the value of the collateral and the principal and accrued interest of the mortgage loan, which could have a material adverse effect on our cash flow from operations. In the event of the bankruptcy of a mortgage loan borrower, the mortgage loan to such borrower will be deemed to be secured only to the extent of the value of the underlying collateral at the time of bankruptcy (as determined by the bankruptcy court), and the lien securing the mortgage loan will be subject to the avoidance powers of the bankruptcy trustee or debtor-in-possession to the extent the lien is unenforceable under state law. Foreclosure of a mortgage loan can be an expensive and lengthy process which could have a substantial negative effect on our anticipated return on the foreclosed mortgage loan. RMBS evidence interests in or is secured by pools of residential mortgage loans and CMBS evidence interests in or is secured by a single commercial mortgage loan or a pool of commercial mortgage loans. Accordingly, the RMBS and CMBS we invest in are subject to all of the risks of the respective underlying mortgage loans, and we refer to RMBS and CMBS collectively MBS.

We have significant credit risk, especially on Non-Agency RMBS, in certain geographic areas and may be disproportionately affected by economic or housing downturns, natural disasters, terrorist events, adverse climate changes or other adverse events specific to those markets.

We are not required to observe specific diversification criteria. A significant number of the mortgages collateralizing our RMBS may be concentrated in certain geographic areas. For example, with respect to our Non-Agency RMBS portfolio, we have significantly higher exposure in California, Florida, New York, and New Jersey which constitute, collectively, 48.9% of such portfolio at December 31, 2015. Certain markets within these states (particularly California and Florida) experienced significant decreases in residential home value during the housing crisis and continue to experience challenging economic and real estate conditions. Any event that adversely affects the economy or real estate market in these states could have a disproportionately adverse effect on our Non-Agency RMBS portfolio. In general, any material decline in the economy or significant difficulties in the real estate markets would be likely to cause a decline in the value of residential properties securing the mortgages in the relevant geographic area. This, in turn, would increase the risk of delinquency, default and foreclosure on real estate collateralizing our Non-Agency RMBS in this area. This may then materially adversely affect our credit loss experience on our Non-Agency RMBS in such area if unexpectedly high rates of default (e.g., in excess of the default rates forecasted) and/or higher than expected loss severities on the mortgages collateralizing such securities were to occur.

The occurrence of a natural disaster (such as an earthquake, tornado, hurricane or a flood) or a significant adverse climate change may cause a sudden decrease in the value of real estate and would likely reduce the value of the properties securing the mortgages collateralizing our Non-Agency RMBS. Since certain natural disasters may not

typically be covered by the standard hazard insurance policies maintained by borrowers, the borrowers may have to pay for repairs due to the disasters. Borrowers may not repair their property or may stop paying their mortgages under those circumstances. This would likely cause defaults and credit loss severities to increase on the pool of mortgages securing our Non-Agency RMBS which, unlike Agency RMBS, are not guaranteed as to principal and/or interest by the U.S. Government, any federal agency or federally chartered corporation.

We leverage our investments, which may adversely affect our return on our investments and may reduce cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

We leverage our investments through borrowings, generally through the use of repurchase agreements, warehouse facilities, credit facilities and securitizations. We are not required to maintain any specific debt-to-equity ratio. The amount of leverage we use varies depending on our ability to obtain credit facilities, the lenders' and rating agencies' estimates of the stability of the investments' cash flow, and our assessment of the appropriate amount of leverage for the particular assets we are funding. Under some credit facilities, we expect to be required to maintain minimum average cash balances in connection with borrowings. Our return on our investments and cash available for distribution to our stockholders may be reduced to the extent that changes in market conditions prevent us from leveraging our investments, require us to decrease our rate of leverage, increase the amount of collateral we post, or increase the cost of our financing relative to the income that can be derived from the assets acquired. Our debt service payments will reduce cash flow available for distributions to stockholders, which could adversely affect the price of our common stock. We may not be able to meet our debt service obligations, and, to the extent that we cannot, we risk the loss of some or all of our assets to foreclosure or sale to satisfy the obligations. We leverage certain of our assets through repurchase agreements. A decrease in the value of these assets may lead to margin calls which we will have to satisfy. We may not have the funds available to satisfy any such margin calls and we may be forced to sell assets at significantly depressed prices due to market conditions or otherwise. The satisfaction of such margin calls may reduce cash flow available for distribution to our stockholders. Any reduction in distributions to our stockholders or sales of assets at inopportune times or prices may cause the value of our common stock to decline, in some cases, precipitously.

Changes in prepayment rates could negatively affect the value of our investment portfolio, which could result in reduced earnings or losses and negatively affect the cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

There are seldom any restrictions on borrowers' abilities to prepay their residential mortgage loans. Homeowners tend to prepay mortgage loans faster when interest rates decline. Consequently, owners of the loans have to reinvest the money received from the prepayments at the lower prevailing interest rates. Conversely, homeowners tend not to prepay mortgage loans when interest rates increase. Consequently, owners of the loans are unable to reinvest money that would have otherwise been received from prepayments at the higher prevailing interest rates. This volatility in prepayment rates may affect our ability to maintain targeted amounts of leverage and return on our portfolio of residential mortgage loans, RMBS, and CDOs backed by real estate-related assets and may result in reduced earnings or losses for us and negatively affect the cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

To the extent our investments are purchased at a premium, faster than expected prepayments result in a faster than expected amortization of the premium paid, which would adversely affect our earnings. Conversely, if these investments were purchased at a discount, faster than expected prepayments accelerate our recognition of income.

Increases in interest rates could negatively affect the value of our investments, which could result in reduced earnings or losses and negatively affect the cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

We have invested in and will continue to invest in real estate-related assets by acquiring RMBS, residential mortgage loans, CMBS and CDOs backed by real estate-related assets. Under a normal yield curve, an investment in these assets will decline in value if long-term interest rates increase. Declines in market value may ultimately reduce earnings or result in losses to us, which may negatively affect cash available for distribution to our stockholders. A significant risk associated with these investments is the risk that both long-term and short-term interest rates will increase significantly. If long-term rates were to increase significantly, the market value of these investments would decline, and the duration and weighted average life of the investments would increase. We could realize a loss if these assets were sold. At the same time, an increase in short-term interest rates would increase the amount of interest owed

on the repurchase agreements or other adjustable rate financings we may enter into to finance the purchase of these assets. Market values of our investments may decline without any general increase in interest rates for a number of reasons, such as increases in defaults, increases in voluntary prepayments for those investments that are subject to prepayment risk and widening of credit spreads.

In a period of rising interest rates, our interest expense could increase while the interest we earn on our fixed-rate assets would not change, which would adversely affect our profitability.

Our operating results will depend in large part on the differences between the income from our assets, net of credit losses and financing costs. We anticipate that, in most cases, the income from such assets will respond more slowly to interest rate fluctuations than the cost of our borrowings. Consequently, changes in interest rates, particularly short-term interest rates, may significantly influence our net income. Increases in these rates will tend to decrease our net income and market value of our assets. Interest rate fluctuations resulting in our interest expense exceeding our interest income would result in operating losses for us and may limit or eliminate our ability to make distributions to our stockholders. Although we use hedging strategies to protect against increases in interest expense, there is no guarantee the hedge strategy will be effective or will prevent decreases in net income in a period of rising interest rates.

We have experienced declines in the market value of our assets resulting in us recording impairments, which have had an adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition.

A decline in the market value of our MBS or other assets may require us to recognize an other-than-temporary impairment (or “OTTI”) against such assets under GAAP. When the fair value of our MBS is less than its amortized cost, the security is considered impaired. We assess our impaired securities on at least a quarterly basis and designate such impairments as either temporary or other-than-temporary. The determination as to whether an OTTI exists and, if so, the amount we consider other-than-temporarily impaired is subjective, as such determinations are based on both factual and subjective information available at the time of assessment. As a result, the timing and amount of OTTI constitute material estimates that are susceptible to significant change. In the future, we may experience declines in the fair value of our MBS and other assets that could result in additional OTTI that will be recognized in earnings.

The lack of liquidity in our investments may adversely affect our business.

We invest in securities or other instruments that are not liquid. It may be difficult or impossible to obtain third party pricing on the investments we purchase. Illiquid investments typically experience greater price volatility as an active market does not exist. In addition, validating third party pricing for illiquid investments may be more subjective than more liquid investments. The illiquidity of our investments may make it difficult for us to sell such investments if the need or desire arises. In addition, if we are required to liquidate all or a portion of our portfolio quickly, we may realize significantly less than the value at which we have previously recorded our investments. As a result, our ability to vary our portfolio in response to changes in economic and other conditions may be relatively limited, which could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

We depend on third-party service providers, including mortgage servicers, for a variety of services related to our Non-Agency RMBS and whole mortgage loans we may acquire. We are, therefore, subject to the risks associated with third-party service providers.

We depend on a variety of services provided by third-party service providers related to our Non-Agency RMBS and whole mortgage loans we may acquire. We rely on the mortgage servicers who service the mortgage loans backing our Non-Agency RMBS to, among other things, collect principal and interest payments on the underlying mortgages and perform loss mitigation services. Our mortgage servicers and other service providers to our Non-Agency RMBS, such as trustees, bond insurance providers and custodians, may not perform in a manner that promotes our interests. In addition, continued foreclosure avoidance requirements including, among other things, loan modifications may reduce the value of mortgage loans backing our Non-Agency RMBS or whole mortgage loans that we acquire. Mortgage servicers may be incentivized by the Federal government to pursue such loan modifications, as well as forbearance plans and other actions intended to prevent foreclosure, even if such loan modifications and other actions are not in the best interests of the beneficial owners of the mortgage loans. In addition to the financial incentives for mortgage loan servicers to modify loans and take other actions that are intended to prevent foreclosures, legislation has recently been adopted that creates a safe harbor from liability to creditors for servicers that undertake loan modifications and other actions that are intended to prevent foreclosures. Finally, any regulatory effort to delay the initiation or completion of foreclosure proceedings on specified types of residential mortgage loans (some for a limited period of time), may limit the ability of mortgage servicers to take actions that may be essential to preserve the value of the mortgage loans underlying the mortgage servicing rights. Any such limitations are likely to cause delayed or reduced collections from mortgagors and generally increase servicing costs. As a result, the mortgage loan servicers on which we rely may not perform in our best interests or up to our expectations. If our third-party service providers do not perform as expected, our business, financial condition and results of operations and ability to make distributions to our shareholders may be materially adversely affected.

Mortgage loan modification programs, future legislative action and changes in the requirements necessary to qualify for refinancing a mortgage may adversely affect the value of, and the returns on, the assets in which we invest.

The U.S. Government, through the Federal Housing Administration, or FHA, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, or FDIC, has implemented programs designed to provide homeowners with assistance in avoiding residential mortgage loan foreclosures including the Hope for Homeowners Act of 2008, which allows certain distressed borrowers to refinance their mortgages into FHA-insured loans and the Home Affordable Modification Program, or HAMP, which provides a detailed, uniform model for one-time modification of eligible residential mortgage loans. The programs may also involve, among other things, the modification of mortgage loans to reduce the principal amount of the loans or the rate of interest payable on the loans, or to extend the payment terms of the loans. These loan modification programs, including future legislative or regulatory actions and amendments to the bankruptcy laws, that result in the modification of outstanding mortgage loans, as well as changes in the requirements necessary to qualify for refinancing a mortgage may affect the value of, and the returns on, our Non-Agency RMBS and Agency RMBS. Depending on whether or not we purchased an instrument at a premium or discount, the yield we receive may be positively or negatively impacted by any modification.

The U.S. Government's efforts to encourage refinancing of certain loans may affect prepayment rates for mortgage loans in mortgage-backed securities.

In addition to the increased pressure upon residential mortgage loan investors and servicers to engage in loss mitigation activities, the U.S. Government has also expressed a need for refinancing of certain loans, and this encouragement may affect prepayment rates for mortgage loans in mortgage-backed securities. To the extent these and other economic stabilization or stimulus efforts are successful in increasing prepayment speeds for residential mortgage loans, such as those in mortgage-backed securities, that could potentially have a negative impact on our income and operating results, particularly in connection with loans or mortgage-backed securities purchased at a premium or our interest-only securities.

We might not be able to purchase residential mortgage loans, mortgage-backed securities and other investments that meet our investment criteria at favorable spreads over our borrowing costs.

To the extent we purchase assets using leverage, our net income depends on our ability to acquire residential mortgage loans, mortgage-backed securities and other investments at favorable spreads over our borrowing costs. Our investments are selected by our investment team, and our stockholders will not have input into such investment decisions.

We may not realize income or gains from our investments.

We invest to generate both current income and capital appreciation. The investments we invest in may, however, not appreciate in value and, in fact, may decline in value, and the debt securities we invest in may default on interest or principal payments. Accordingly, we may not be able to realize income or gains from our investments. Any gains that we do realize may not be sufficient to offset any other losses we experience. Any income that we realize may not be sufficient to offset our expenses.

Our investments in subordinated RMBS are generally in the "first loss" position and our investments in the mezzanine RMBS are generally in the "second loss" position and therefore subject to losses.

In general, losses on a mortgage loan included in a securitization will be borne first by the equity holder of the issuing trust, and then by the "first loss" subordinated security holder and then by the "second loss" mezzanine holder. In the event of default and the exhaustion of any classes of securities junior to those in which we invest and there is any

further loss, we will not be able to recover all of our investment in the securities we purchase. In addition, if the underlying mortgage portfolio has been overvalued by the originator, or if the values subsequently decline and, as a result, less collateral is available to satisfy interest and principal payments due on the related RMBS, the securities in which we invest may effectively become the “first loss” position behind the more senior securities, which may result in significant losses to us. The prices of lower credit quality securities are generally less sensitive to interest rate changes than more highly rated investments, but more sensitive to adverse economic downturns or individual issuer developments. A projection of an economic downturn, for example, could cause a decline in the price of lower credit quality securities because the ability of obligors of mortgages underlying RMBS to make principal and interest payments may be impaired. In such event, existing credit support in the securitization structure may be insufficient to protect us against loss of our principal on these securities.

Interest rate caps on our adjustable-rate MBS may adversely affect our profitability.

Adjustable-rate MBS are typically subject to periodic and lifetime interest rate caps. Periodic interest rate caps limit the amount an interest rate can increase during any given period. Lifetime interest rate caps limit the amount an interest rate can increase over the life of the security. Our borrowings typically will not be subject to similar restrictions. Accordingly, in a period of rapidly increasing interest rates, the interest rates paid on our borrowings could increase without limitation while caps could limit the interest rates on our adjustable-rate MBS. This problem is magnified for hybrid adjustable-rate and adjustable-rate MBS that are not fully indexed. Further, some hybrid adjustable-rate and adjustable-rate MBS may be subject to periodic payment caps that result in a portion of the interest being deferred and added to the principal outstanding. As a result, we may receive less cash income on hybrid adjustable-rate and adjustable-rate MBS than we need to pay interest on our related borrowings. These factors could reduce our net interest income or cause us to suffer a loss.

A flat or inverted yield curve may adversely affect adjustable-rate MBS prepayment rates and supply.

Our net interest income varies primarily as a result of changes in interest rates as well as changes in interest rates across the yield curve. When the differential between short-term and long-term benchmark interest rates narrows, the yield curve is said to be “flattening.” We believe that when the yield curve is relatively flat, borrowers have an incentive to refinance into hybrids with longer initial fixed-rate periods and fixed rate mortgages, causing our MBS to experience faster prepayments. In addition, a flatter yield curve generally leads to fixed-rate mortgage rates that are closer to the interest rates available on ARMs, potentially decreasing the supply of adjustable-rate RMBS. At times, short-term interest rates may increase and exceed long-term interest rates, causing an inverted yield curve. When the yield curve is inverted, fixed-rate mortgage rates may approach or be lower than mortgage rates on ARMs, further increasing adjustable-rate MBS prepayments and further negatively impacting adjustable-rate MBS supply. Increases in prepayments on our MBS portfolio cause our premium amortization to accelerate, lowering the yield on such assets. If this happens, we could experience a decrease in net income or incur a net loss during these periods, which may negatively impact our distributions to stockholders.

A significant portion of our portfolio investments will be recorded at fair value as determined in accordance with our pricing policy and, as a result, there will be uncertainty as to the value of these investments.

A significant portion of our portfolio of investments is in the form of securities that are not publicly traded. The fair value of securities and other investments that are not publicly traded may not be readily determinable. It may be difficult or impossible to obtain third party pricing on the investments we purchase. We value these investments quarterly at fair value, as determined in accordance with our valuation policy. Because such valuations are inherently uncertain, may fluctuate over short periods of time and may be based on estimates, our determinations of fair value may differ materially from the values that would have been used if a ready market for these securities existed. The value of our common stock could be adversely affected if our determinations regarding the fair value of these investments were materially higher than the values that we ultimately realize upon their disposal.

A prolonged economic slowdown, a recession or declining real estate values could impair our investments and negatively affect our operating results.

Many of our investments are susceptible to economic slowdowns or recessions, which could lead to financial losses in our investments and a decrease in revenues, net income and assets. Unfavorable economic conditions also could increase our funding costs, limit our access to the capital markets or result in a decision by lenders not to extend credit to us. These events could prevent us from increasing investments and have an adverse effect on our operating results.

We may be required to repurchase mortgage loans or indemnify investors if we breach representations and warranties, which could negatively affect our earnings.

If we sell loans, we would be required to make customary representations and warranties about such loans to the loan purchaser. Our residential mortgage loan sale agreements will require us to repurchase or substitute loans in the event we breach a representation or warranty given to the loan purchaser. In addition, we may be required to repurchase loans as a result of borrower fraud or in the event of early payment default on a mortgage loan. Likewise, we are required to repurchase or substitute loans if we breach a representation or warranty in connection with our securitizations. The remedies available to a purchaser of mortgage loans are generally broader than those available to us against the originating broker or correspondent. Further, if a purchaser enforces its remedies against us, we may not be able to enforce the remedies we have against the sellers. The repurchased loans typically can only be financed at a steep discount to their repurchase price, if at all. They are also typically sold at a significant discount to the unpaid principal balance. Significant repurchase activity could negatively affect our cash flow, results of operations, financial condition and business prospects.

We may incur losses in connection with executing or participating in future securitizations which could materially and adversely impact our business and financial condition.

There are a number of factors that may cause us to incur a loss executing or participating in future securitizations. For example, the price we pay for the mortgage loans that we securitize is impacted by the level of competition in the marketplace for acquiring residential mortgage loans. In addition, the cost to us of the short-term debt that we use to finance our holdings of mortgage loans prior to securitization is affected by a number of factors including the availability of this type of financing to us, the interest rate on this type of financing, the duration of the financing we incur, and the percentage of our mortgage loans for which third parties are willing to provide short-term financing.

We may also suffer losses if the value of the mortgage loans we acquire declines prior to securitization. Declines in the value of a residential mortgage loan can be due to, among other things, changes in interest rates and changes in the credit quality of the loan. In addition, transaction costs incurred in executing transactions impact any liability that we may incur, or may be required to reserve for; in connection with executing a transaction can cause a loss to us. To the extent that we incur a loss executing or participating in future securitizations for the reasons described above or for other reasons, it could materially and adversely impact our business and financial condition.

Our due diligence of potential investments may not reveal all of the liabilities associated with such investments and may not reveal other weaknesses in such investments, which could lead to investment losses.

Before making an investment, we assess the strengths and weaknesses of the originator or issuer of the asset as well as other factors and characteristics that are material to the performance of the investment. In making the assessment and otherwise conducting customary due diligence, we rely on resources available to us and, in some cases, an investigation by third parties. This process is particularly important with respect to newly formed originators or issuers with unrated and other subordinated tranches of MBS and ABS because there may be little or no information publicly available about these entities and investments. There can be no assurance that our due diligence process will uncover all relevant facts or that any investment will be successful.

Our real estate investments are subject to risks particular to real property.

We own assets secured by real estate and may own real estate directly in the future, either through direct investments or upon a default of mortgage loans. Real estate investments are subject to various risks, including:

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- acts of God, including earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters, that may result in uninsured losses;
- acts of war or terrorism, including the consequences of terrorist attacks, such as those that occurred on September 11, 2001;
 - adverse changes in national and local economic and market conditions;
 - changes in governmental laws and regulations, fiscal policies and zoning ordinances and the related costs of compliance with laws and regulations, fiscal policies and ordinances;
 - costs of remediation and liabilities associated with environmental conditions such as indoor mold; and
 - the potential for uninsured or under-insured property losses.

If any of these or similar events occurs, it may reduce our return from an affected property or investment and reduce or eliminate our ability to make distributions to stockholders.

We may be exposed to environmental liabilities with respect to properties to which we take title.

In the course of our business, we may take title to real estate, and, if we do take title, we could be subject to environmental liabilities with respect to these properties. In such a circumstance, we may be held liable to a governmental entity or to third parties for property damage, personal injury, investigation, and clean-up costs incurred by these parties in connection with environmental contamination, or may be required to investigate or clean up hazardous or toxic substances, or chemical releases at a property. The costs associated with investigation or remediation activities could be substantial. If we ever become subject to significant environmental liabilities, our business, financial condition, liquidity, and results of operations could be materially and adversely affected.

We have and may in the future invest in RMBS collateralized by subprime mortgage loans, which are subject to increased risks.

We may in the future invest in RMBS backed by collateral pools of subprime residential mortgage loans. “Subprime” mortgage loans refer to mortgage loans that have been originated using underwriting standards that are less restrictive than the underwriting requirements used as standards for other first and junior lien mortgage loan purchase programs, such as the programs of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. These lower standards include mortgage loans made to borrowers having imperfect or impaired credit histories (including outstanding judgments or prior bankruptcies), mortgage loans where the amount of the loan at origination is 80% or more of the value of the mortgage property, mortgage loans made to borrowers with low credit scores, mortgage loans made to borrowers who have other debt that represents a large portion of their income and mortgage loans made to borrowers whose income is not required to be disclosed or verified. Due to economic conditions, including increased interest rates and lower home prices, as well as aggressive lending practices, subprime mortgage loans have in recent periods experienced increased rates of delinquency, foreclosure, bankruptcy and loss, and they are likely to continue to experience delinquency, foreclosure, bankruptcy and loss rates that are higher, and that may be substantially higher, than those experienced by mortgage loans underwritten in a more traditional manner. Thus, because of the higher delinquency rates and losses associated with subprime mortgage loans, the performance of RMBS collateralized by subprime mortgage loans in which we may invest could be correspondingly adversely affected, which could adversely impact our results of operations, financial condition and business.

We may invest in securities in the developing Agency risk transfer sector that are subject to mortgage credit risk.

We may invest in securities in the developing Agency risk transfer sector (“CRT Sector”). The CRT Sector is comprised of the risk sharing transactions issued by Fannie Mae (“CAS”) and Freddie Mac (“STACR”), and similarly structured transactions arranged by third party market participants. The securities issued in the CRT Sector are designed to synthetically transfer mortgage credit risk from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to private investors. Currently, CAS and STACR transactions are structured as unsecured and unguaranteed bonds issued by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, respectively, whose principal payments are determined by the delinquency and prepayment experience of a reference pool of mortgages originated and guaranteed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, respectively, in a particular quarter. Transactions arranged by third party market participants in the CRT Sector are similarly structured to reference a specific pool of loans that have been securitized by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac and synthetically transfer mortgage credit risk related to those loans to the purchaser of the securities. The holder of the securities in the CRT Sector has the risk that the borrowers may default on their obligations to make full and timely payments of principal and interest. Investments in securities in the CRT Sector could cause us to incur losses of income from, and/or losses in market value relating to, these assets if there are defaults of principal and/or interest on the pool of mortgages referenced in the transaction.

We utilize analytical models and data in connection with the valuation of our investments, and any incorrect, misleading or incomplete information used in connection therewith would subject us to potential risks.

Given the complexity of our investments and strategies, we must rely heavily on analytical models and information and data supplied by third-parties (“Models and Data”). Models and Data will be used to value investments or potential investments and also in connection with hedging our investments. When Models and Data prove to be incorrect, misleading or incomplete, any decisions made in reliance thereon expose us to potential risks. For example, by relying on Models and Data, especially valuation models, we may be induced to buy certain investments at prices that are too high, to sell certain other investments at prices that are too low or to miss favorable opportunities altogether. Similarly, any hedging based on faulty Models and Data may prove to be unsuccessful. Furthermore, any valuations of our investments that are based on valuation models may prove to be incorrect.

Some of the risks of relying on analytical models and third-party data are particular to analyzing tranches from securitizations, such as RMBS. These risks include, but are not limited to, the following: (i) collateral cash flows and/or liability structures may be incorrectly modeled in all or only certain scenarios, or may be modeled based on simplifying assumptions that lead to errors; (ii) information about collateral may be incorrect, incomplete, or misleading; (iii) collateral or bond historical performance (such as historical prepayments, defaults, cash flows, etc.) may be incorrectly reported, or subject to interpretation (e.g., different issuers may report delinquency statistics based on different definitions of what constitutes a delinquent loan); or (iv) collateral or bond information may be outdated, in which case the models may contain incorrect assumptions as to what has occurred since the date information was last updated.

Some of the analytical models we use, such as mortgage prepayment models or mortgage default models, are predictive in nature. The use of predictive models has inherent risks. For example, such models may incorrectly forecast future behavior, leading to potential losses on a cash flow and/or a mark-to-market basis. In addition, the predictive models we use may differ substantially from those models used by other market participants, with the result that valuations based on these predictive models may be substantially higher or lower for certain investments than actual market prices. Furthermore, since predictive models are usually constructed based on historical data supplied by third-parties, the success of relying on such models may depend heavily on the accuracy and reliability of the supplied historical data and the ability of these historical models to accurately reflect future periods.

All valuation models rely on correct market data inputs. If incorrect market data is entered into even a well-designed valuation model, the resulting valuations will be incorrect. However, even if market data is appropriately captured in the model, the resulting “model prices” will often differ substantially from market prices, especially for securities with complex characteristics, such as derivative securities.

Our use of models in connection with the valuation of our assets subjects us to potential risks in the event that such models are incorrect, misleading or based on incomplete information.

As part of our risk management process, we may use models to evaluate, depending on the asset class, house price appreciation and depreciation by county, region, prepayment speeds and foreclosure frequency, cost and timing. Certain assumptions used as inputs to the models may be based on historical trends. These trends may not be indicative of future results. Furthermore, the assumptions underlying the models may prove to be inaccurate, causing the model output also to be incorrect. In the event models and data prove to be incorrect, misleading or incomplete, any decisions made in reliance thereon expose us to potential risks. For example, by relying on incorrect models and data, we may be induced to buy certain assets at prices that are too high, to sell certain other assets at prices that are too low or to miss favorable opportunities altogether.

Valuations of some of our assets are subject to inherent uncertainty, may be based on estimates, may fluctuate over short periods of time and may differ from the values that would have been used if a ready market for these assets existed.

While the determination of the fair value of our investment assets takes into consideration valuations provided by third-party dealers and pricing services, the final determination of exit price fair values for our investment assets is based on our judgment, and such valuations may differ from those provided by third-party dealers and pricing services. Valuations of certain assets may be difficult to obtain or may not be reliable. In general, dealers and pricing services heavily disclaim their valuations as such valuations are not intended to be binding bid prices. Additionally, dealers may claim to furnish valuations only as an accommodation and without special compensation, and so they may disclaim any and all liability arising out of any inaccuracy or incompleteness in valuations. Depending on the complexity and illiquidity of an asset, valuations of the same asset can vary substantially from one dealer or pricing service to another.

Our results of operations, financial condition and business could be materially adversely affected if our fair value determinations of these assets were materially higher than the values that would exist if a ready market existed for these assets.

We are dependent on our executive officers and other key personnel for our success, particularly now that we are an internally managed company, the loss of any of whom may materially adversely affect our business.

Our success is dependent upon the efforts, experience, diligence, skill and network of business contacts of our executive officers and key personnel, particularly since internalizing our company in 2015. The departure of any of our executive officers and/or key personnel could have a material adverse effect on our operations and performance.

We may change our investment strategy, asset allocation, or financing plans without stockholder consent, which may result in riskier investments.

We may change our investment strategy, asset allocation, or financing plans at any time without the consent of our stockholders, which could result in our making investments that are different from, and possibly riskier than, the investments described in this 2015 Form 10-K. A change in our investment strategy or financing plans may increase our exposure to interest rate and default risk and real estate market fluctuations. Furthermore, a change in our asset allocation could result in our making investments in asset categories different from those described in this 2015 Form 10-K. These changes could adversely affect the market price of our common stock and our ability to make distributions to our stockholders.

We may engage in new business initiatives and invest in different types of assets than we are not accustomed to and these activities could expose us to new, different or increased risks.

We continually evaluate new business opportunities and investment strategies that may allow us to diversify our business. We have and may in the future invest in a variety of mortgage-related and other financial assets that may or may not be closely related to our existing business. Additionally, we may enter other operating businesses that may or may not be closely related to our current business. These new assets or business operations may have new, different or increased risks than what we are currently exposed to in our business and we may not be able to manage these risks successfully. Additionally, when investing in new assets or businesses we will be exposed to the risk that those assets, or income generated by those assets or businesses, will affect our ability to meet the requirements to maintain our REIT status or our status as exempt from registration under the 1940 Act. If we are not able to successfully manage the risks associated with new assets types or businesses, it could have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

We operate in a highly competitive market for investment opportunities and more established competitors may be able to compete more effectively for investment opportunities than we can.

A number of entities compete with us to make the types of investments that we plan to make. We compete with other REITs, public and private funds, commercial and investment banks and commercial finance companies. Many of our competitors are substantially larger and have considerably greater financial, technical and marketing resources than we do. Several other REITs have raised, or are expected to raise, significant amounts of capital, and may have investment objectives that overlap with ours, which may create competition for investment opportunities. Some competitors may have a lower cost of funds and access to funding sources that are not available to us. In addition, some of our competitors may have higher risk tolerances or different risk assessments, which could allow them to consider a wider variety of investments and establish more favorable relationships than us. We cannot assure you that the competitive pressures we face will not have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Also, as a result of this competition, we may not be able to take advantage of attractive

investment opportunities from time to time, and we can offer no assurance that we will be able to identify and make investments that are consistent with our investment objectives.

We are highly dependent on information systems and third parties, and systems failures could significantly disrupt our business, which may, in turn, negatively affect the market price of our common stock and our ability to pay dividends to our stockholders.

Our business is highly dependent on communications and information systems. Any failure or interruption of our systems or cyber-attacks or security breaches of our networks or systems could cause delays or other problems in our securities trading activities, including mortgage-backed securities trading activities, which could have a material adverse effect on our operating results and negatively affect the market price of our common stock and our ability to pay dividends to our stockholders. In addition, we also face the risk of operational failure, termination or capacity constraints of any of the third parties with which we do business or that facilitate our business activities, including clearing agents or other financial intermediaries we use to facilitate our securities transactions.

Computer malware, viruses, and computer hacking and phishing attacks have become more prevalent in our industry and may occur on our systems in the future. We rely heavily on our financial, accounting and other data processing systems. It is difficult to determine what, if any, negative impact may directly result from any specific interruption or cyber-attacks or security breaches of our networks or systems or any failure to maintain performance, reliability and security of our technical infrastructure. However, any such computer malware, viruses, and computer hacking and phishing attacks may negatively affect our operations.

Risks Associated With Adverse Developments in the Mortgage Finance and Credit Markets

Market conditions for mortgages and mortgage-related assets as well as the broader financial markets may materially adversely affect the value of the assets in which we invest.

Our results of operations are materially affected by conditions in the markets for mortgages and mortgage-related assets, including MBS, as well as the broader financial markets and the economy generally. Beginning in 2007, significant adverse changes in financial market conditions resulted in a deleveraging of the entire global financial system and the forced sale of large quantities of mortgage-related and other financial assets, which resulted in significant volatility in the market for mortgages and mortgage-related assets and significant losses by certain commercial banks, investment banks and insurance companies with exposure to the residential mortgage market. The 2007-2008 financial crisis and its aftermath impacted investor perception of the risk associated with residential MBS, real estate-related securities and various other asset classes in which we invest, which has continued, in varying degrees through the present. More recently, concerns over economic growth rates, continuing relatively high levels of unemployment and uncertainty regarding future U.S. monetary policy have contributed to increased interest rate volatility. As a result of these circumstances, values for residential MBS, real estate-related securities and various other asset classes in which we may invest have experienced volatility. Any decline in the value of our investments, or perceived market uncertainty about their value, would likely make it difficult for us to obtain financing on favorable terms or at all, or maintain our compliance with terms of any financing arrangements already in place. Although markets have stabilized more recently, renewed volatility and/or deterioration in the broader residential mortgage and MBS markets could materially adversely affect the performance and market value of our investments.

Any downgrade or perceived potential of a downgrade, of U.S. sovereign credit ratings by the various credit rating agencies may have a materially adverse effect on our business.

During the summer of 2011, Standard & Poor's Ratings Services (or S&P), one of the major credit rating agencies, downgraded the U.S. sovereign credit rating in response to the protracted debate over the "U.S. debt ceiling limit" and S&P's perception of the U.S. Government's ability to address its long-term budget deficit. At the same time, S&P also lowered the credit ratings of the government sponsored enterprises, or GSEs, in response to the downgrade in the U.S. sovereign credit rating, as the value of the Agency MBS issued by the GSEs and their ability to meet their obligations

under such Agency MBS are largely determined by the support provided to them by the U.S. Government and market perceptions of the strength of such support and the likelihood of its continuity.

We could be adversely affected in a number of ways in the event of a default by the U.S. Government, a further downgrade by S&P or a downgrade of the U.S. sovereign credit rating by another credit rating agency. Such adverse effects could include higher financing costs and/or a reduction in the amount of financing provided based on the market value of collateral posted under our repurchase agreements and other financing arrangements. In addition, although the rating agencies have more recently determined that the GSEs' outlook is generally stable, to the extent that the credit rating of any or all of the GSEs were to be downgraded in the future, the value of our Agency MBS could be adversely affected. These outcomes could in turn materially adversely affect our operations and financial condition in a number of ways, including a reduction in the net interest spread between our assets and associated repurchase agreement borrowings or a decrease in our ability to obtain repurchase agreement financing on acceptable terms, or at all.

The conservatorship of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, their reliance upon the U.S. Government for solvency, and related efforts that may significantly affect Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and their relationship with the U.S. Government, may adversely affect our business, operations and financial condition.

Due to increased market concerns about Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac's ability to withstand future credit losses associated with securities held in their investment portfolios and on which they provide guarantees, without the direct support of the U.S. Government, Congress passed the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, or the HERA. Among other things, the HERA established the Federal Housing Finance Agency, or FHFA, which has broad regulatory powers over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. On September 6, 2008, the FHFA placed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac into conservatorship and, together with the Treasury, established a program designed to boost investor confidence in Fannie Mae's and Freddie Mac's debt and mortgage-backed securities. As the conservator of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the FHFA controls and directs their operations and may (1) take over the assets of and operate Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac with all the powers of their shareholders, directors and officers of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and conduct all business of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac; (2) collect all obligations and money due to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac; (3) perform all functions of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac which are consistent with the conservator's appointment; (4) preserve and conserve the assets and property of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac; and (5) contract for assistance in fulfilling any function, activity, action or duty of the conservator.

The problems faced by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac resulting in their placement into federal conservatorship and receipt of significant U.S. Government support have sparked debate among some federal policy makers regarding the continued role of the U.S. Government in providing liquidity for mortgage loans and mortgage-backed securities. With Fannie Mae's and Freddie Mac's future under debate, the nature of their guarantee obligations could be considerably limited relative to historical measurements. Any changes to the nature of their guarantee obligations could redefine what constitutes a mortgage-backed security and could have broad adverse implications for the market and our business, operations and financial condition. If Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac are eliminated, or their structures change radically (i.e., limitation or removal of the guarantee obligation), we may be unable to acquire Agency RMBS.

Although the Treasury previously committed capital to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac through 2012, and in the report issued on February 11, 2011 by the U.S. Department of Treasury titled "Reforming America's Housing Finance Market" committed to providing sufficient capital to enable Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to meet their current and future guarantee obligations, there can be no assurance that these actions will be adequate for their needs. If these actions are inadequate, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac could continue to suffer losses and could fail to honor their guarantees and other obligations. Furthermore, the current credit support provided by the Treasury to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and any additional credit support it may provide in the future, could have the effect of lowering the interest rates we expect to receive from RMBS, and tightening the spread between the interest we earn on our RMBS and the cost of financing those assets.

Future policies that change the relationship between Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and the U.S. Government, including those that result in their winding down, nationalization, privatization, or elimination, may create market uncertainty and have the effect of reducing the actual or perceived credit quality of securities issued or guaranteed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. As a result, such policies could increase the risk of loss on investments in mortgage-backed securities guaranteed by Fannie Mae and/or Freddie Mac. It also is possible that such policies could adversely impact the market for such securities and other securities types and spreads at which they trade. All of the foregoing could materially and adversely affect our business, operations and financial condition.

Adverse developments involving major financial institutions and our lenders, including European counterparties, could result in a rapid reduction in our ability to borrow and materially adversely affect our business, profitability and liquidity.

A significant portion of our Agency MBS is financed with repurchase agreements. We secure our borrowings under these agreements by pledging our Agency MBS as collateral to the lender. The collateral we pledge exceeds the amount of the borrowings under each agreement. If the counterparty to the repurchase agreement defaults on its obligations and we are not able to recover our pledged assets, we are at risk of losing the over-collateralized amount. The amount of this exposure is the difference between the amount loaned to us plus interest due to the counterparty and the fair value of the collateral pledged by us to the lender including accrued interest receivable on such collateral.

We also use interest rate swaps to manage our interest rate risks. Under these swap agreements, we pledge Agency MBS or cash as collateral as part of a margin arrangement for interest rate swaps that are in an unrealized loss position. If a counterparty were to default on its obligation, we would be exposed to a loss to a swap counterparty to the extent that the amount of our Agency MBS pledged exceeded the unrealized loss on the associated swaps and we were not able to recover the excess collateral.

Over the past several years, several large financial institutions, including those domiciled in Europe, have experienced financial difficulty and have been either rescued by government assistance or by other large banks or institutions. Some of these financial institutions have provided us financing under repurchase agreements or we have entered into interest rate swaps with such institutions. Any future adverse developments involving major financial institutions or our lenders could affect our ability to borrow and materially adversely affect our business, profitability and liquidity.

In addition, we have entered into repurchase agreements and/or interest rate swaps with six financial institution counterparties that are either domiciled in Europe or a U.S.-based subsidiary of a European domiciled financial institution. It is possible that European credit crisis may impact the operations of the U.S. subsidiaries of a European domiciled financial institution. Our financings and operations could be adversely affected by such events.

Risks Related to Financing

Failure to procure adequate capital and funding on favorable terms, or at all, would adversely affect our results and may, in turn, negatively affect the market price of shares of our common stock and our ability to distribute dividends to our stockholders.

We depend upon the availability of adequate funding and capital for our operations. We intend to finance our assets over the long-term through a variety of means, including repurchase agreements, credit facilities and securitizations. Our access to capital depends upon a number of factors, over which we have little or no control, including:

- general market conditions;
- the market's perception of our growth potential;
- our current and potential future earnings and cash distributions;
- the market price of the shares of our capital stock; and
- the market's view of the quality of our assets.

We have used and may in the future use a number of sources to finance our investments, including repurchase agreements, warehouse facilities and securitizations. Current market conditions have affected the cost and availability of financing from each of these sources — and their individual providers — to different degrees; some are available but at a high cost, and some are largely unaffected. For example, in the repurchase agreement market, borrowers have been affected differently depending on the type of security they are financing. Non-Agency RMBS have been harder or

more expensive to finance, depending on the type of assets collateralizing the RMBS.

The impairment of financial institutions could negatively affect us. If one or more major market participants fail or otherwise experience a major liquidity crisis, it could adversely affect the marketability of all fixed income securities and this could negatively impact the value of the securities we acquire, thus reducing our net book value.

Furthermore, if any of our lenders or any of our potential lenders are unwilling or unable to provide us with financing, we could be forced to sell our securities or residential mortgage loans at an inopportune time when prices are depressed.

Our business, results of operations and financial condition may be materially adversely affected by disruptions in the financial markets. We cannot assure you, under such extreme conditions, that these markets will remain an efficient source of long-term financing for our assets. If our strategy is not viable, we will have to find alternative forms of financing for our assets, which may not be available. Further, as a REIT, we are required to distribute annually at least 90% of our REIT taxable income (subject to certain adjustments) to our stockholders and are, therefore, not able to retain significant amounts of our earnings for new investments. We cannot assure you that any, or sufficient, funding or capital will be available to us in the future on terms that are acceptable to us. If we cannot obtain sufficient funding on acceptable terms, there may be a negative impact on the market price of our common stock and our ability to make distributions to our stockholders. Moreover, our ability to grow will be dependent on our ability to procure additional funding. To the extent we are not able to raise additional funds through the issuance of additional equity or borrowings, our growth will be constrained.

Certain financing facilities may contain covenants that restrict our operations and may inhibit our ability to grow our business and increase revenues.

Certain financing facilities we may enter into contain restrictions, covenants, and representations and warranties that, among other things, may require us to satisfy specified financial, asset quality, loan eligibility and loan performance tests. If we fail to meet or satisfy any of these covenants or representations and warranties, we would be in default under these agreements and our lenders could elect to declare all amounts outstanding under the agreements to be immediately due and payable, enforce their respective interests against collateral pledged under such agreements and restrict our ability to make additional borrowings. Certain financing agreements may contain cross-default provisions, so that if a default occurs under any one agreement, the lenders under our other agreements could also declare a default. The covenants and restrictions we expect in our financing facilities may restrict our ability to, among other things:

- incur or guarantee additional debt;
- make certain investments or acquisitions;
- make distributions on or repurchase or redeem capital stock;
- engage in mergers or consolidations;
- finance mortgage loans with certain attributes;
- reduce liquidity below certain levels;
- grant liens;
- incur operating losses for more than a specified period;
- enter into transactions with affiliates; and
- hold mortgage loans for longer than established time periods.

These restrictions may interfere with our ability to obtain financing, or to engage in other business activities, which may have a significant negative impact on our business, financial condition, liquidity and results of operations. A default and resulting repayment acceleration could significantly reduce our liquidity, which could require us to sell our assets to repay amounts due and outstanding. This could also significantly harm our business, financial condition, results of operations, and our ability to make distributions, which could cause the value of our common stock to

decline. A default will also significantly limit our financing alternatives such that we will be unable to pursue our leverage strategy, which could curtail our investment returns.

The repurchase agreements, warehouse facilities and credit facilities that we use to finance our investments may require us to provide additional collateral and may restrict us from leveraging our assets as fully as desired.

We use repurchase agreements, warehouse facilities and credit facilities to finance our investments. We currently have uncommitted repurchase agreements with 25 counterparties for financing our MBS. Our repurchase agreements are uncommitted and the counterparty may refuse to advance funds under the agreements to us. If the market value of the loans or securities pledged or sold by us to a funding source decline in value, we may be required by the lending institution to provide additional collateral or pay down a portion of the funds advanced, but we may not have the funds available to do so. Posting additional collateral will reduce our liquidity and limit our ability to leverage our assets, which could adversely affect our business. In the event we do not have sufficient liquidity to meet such requirements, lending institutions can accelerate repayment of our indebtedness, increase our borrowing rates, liquidate our collateral or terminate our ability to borrow. Such a situation would likely result in a rapid deterioration of our financial condition and possibly necessitate a filing for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Further, financial institutions may require us to maintain a certain amount of cash that is not invested or to set aside non-levered assets sufficient to maintain a specified liquidity position which would allow us to satisfy our collateral obligations. As a result, we may not be able to leverage our assets as fully as we would choose which could reduce our return on equity. If we are unable to meet these collateral obligations, then, as described above, our financial condition could deteriorate rapidly.

If the counterparty to our repurchase transactions defaults on its obligation to resell the underlying security back to us at the end of the transaction term, or if the value of the underlying security has declined as of the end of that term or if we default on our obligations under the repurchase agreement, we will lose money on our repurchase transactions.

When we engage in a repurchase transaction, we generally sell securities to the transaction counterparty and receive cash from the counterparty. The counterparty is obligated to resell the securities back to us at the end of the term of the transaction, which is typically 30-90 days. Because the cash we receive from the counterparty when we initially sell the securities to the counterparty is less than the value of those securities (this difference is referred to as the haircut), if the counterparty defaults on its obligation to resell the securities back to us we would incur a loss on the transaction equal to the amount of the haircut (assuming there was no change in the value of the securities). We would also lose money on a repurchase transaction if the value of the underlying securities has declined as of the end of the transaction term, as we would have to repurchase the securities for their initial value but would receive securities worth less than that amount. Any losses we incur on our repurchase transactions could adversely affect our earnings, and thus our cash available for distribution to our stockholders. If we default on one of our obligations under a repurchase transaction, the counterparty can terminate the transaction and cease entering into any other repurchase transactions with us. In that case, we would likely need to establish a replacement repurchase facility with another repurchase dealer in order to continue to leverage our portfolio and carry out our investment strategy. There is no assurance we would be able to establish a suitable replacement facility.

Our rights under our repurchase agreements are subject to the effects of the bankruptcy laws in the event of the bankruptcy or insolvency of us or our lenders under the repurchase agreements.

In the event of our insolvency or bankruptcy, certain repurchase agreements may qualify for special treatment under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, the effect of which, among other things, would be to allow the lender under the applicable repurchase agreement to avoid the automatic stay provisions of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and to foreclose on the collateral agreement without delay. In the event of the insolvency or bankruptcy of a lender during the term of a repurchase agreement, the lender may be permitted, under applicable insolvency laws, to repudiate the contract, and our claim against the lender for damages may be treated simply as an unsecured creditor. In addition, if the lender is a broker or dealer subject to the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970, or an insured depository institution subject to the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, our ability to exercise our rights to recover our securities under a repurchase

agreement or to be compensated for any damages resulting from the lender's insolvency may be further limited by those statutes. These claims would be subject to significant delay and, if and when received, may be substantially less than the damages we actually incur.

An increase in our borrowing costs relative to the interest we receive on our assets may adversely affect our profitability, and thus our cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

As our repurchase agreements and other short-term borrowings mature, we will be required either to enter into new borrowings or to sell certain of our investments. An increase in short-term interest rates at the time that we seek to enter into new borrowings would reduce the spread between our returns on our assets and the cost of our borrowings. This would adversely affect our returns on our assets that are subject to prepayment risk, including our RMBS, which might reduce earnings and, in turn, cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

If we issue senior securities we will be exposed to additional risks.

If we decide to issue senior securities in the future, it is likely that they will be governed by an indenture or other instrument containing covenants restricting our operating flexibility. Additionally, any convertible or exchangeable securities that we issue in the future may have rights, preferences and privileges more favorable than those of our common stock and may result in dilution to owners of our common stock. We and, indirectly, our stockholders, will bear the cost of issuing and servicing such securities.

Our securitizations will expose us to additional risks.

We securitize and may continue to securitize certain of our portfolio investments to generate cash for funding new investments. We expect to structure these transactions either as financing transactions or as sales for GAAP. In each such transaction, we convey a pool of assets to a special purpose vehicle, the issuing entity, and the issuing entity issues one or more classes of non-recourse notes pursuant to the terms of an indenture. The notes are secured by the pool of assets. The securitization of our portfolio investments might magnify our exposure to losses on those portfolio investments because any interest we retain in the issuing entity would be subordinate to the notes issued to investors and we would, therefore, absorb all of the losses sustained with respect to a securitized pool of assets before the owners of the notes experience any losses. Moreover, we cannot be assured that we will be able to access the securitization market, or be able to do so at favorable rates. The inability to securitize our portfolio could hurt our performance and our ability to grow our business.

We depend on warehouse and repurchase facilities and credit facilities to execute our business plan, and our inability to access funding could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition and business.

Our ability to fund our investments depends to a large extent upon our ability to secure warehouse, repurchase and credit financing on acceptable terms. We can provide no assurance that we will be successful in establishing sufficient warehouse, repurchase, and credit facilities. In addition, because warehouse, repurchase, and credit facilities are short-term commitments of capital, the lenders may respond to market conditions, which may favor an alternative investment strategy for them, making it more difficult for us to secure continued financing. During certain periods of the credit cycle, such as recently, lenders may curtail their willingness to provide financing. If we are not able to renew our then existing warehouse, repurchase, and credit facilities or arrange for new financing on terms acceptable to us, or if we default on our covenants or are otherwise unable to access funds under any of these facilities, we will have to curtail our asset acquisition activities.

It is possible that the lenders that provide us with financing could experience changes in their ability to advance funds to us, independent of our performance or the performance of our investments, including our mortgage loans. In addition, if the regulatory capital requirements imposed on our lenders change, they may be required to significantly increase the cost of the warehouse facilities that they provide to us. Our lenders also may revise their eligibility requirements for the types of residential mortgage loans they are willing to finance or the terms of such financings, based on, among other factors, the regulatory environment and their management of perceived risk, particularly with

respect to assignee liability. Financing of equity-based lending, for example, may become more difficult in the future. Moreover, the amount of financing we will receive under our warehouse and repurchase facilities will be directly related to the lenders' valuation of the assets that secure the outstanding borrowings. Typically warehouse, repurchase, and credit facilities grant the respective lender the absolute right to reevaluate the market value of the assets that secure outstanding borrowings at any time. If a lender determines in its sole discretion that the value of the assets has decreased, it has the right to initiate a margin call. A margin call would require us to transfer additional assets to such lender without any advance of funds from the lender for such transfer or to repay a portion of the outstanding borrowings. Any such margin call could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, business, liquidity and ability to make distributions to our stockholders, and could cause the value of our common stock to decline. We may be forced to sell assets at significantly depressed prices to meet such margin calls and to maintain adequate liquidity, which could cause us to incur losses. Moreover, to the extent we are forced to sell assets at such time, given market conditions, we may be forced to sell assets at the same time as others facing similar pressures to sell similar assets, which could greatly exacerbate a difficult market environment and which could result in our incurring significantly greater losses on our sale of such assets. In an extreme case of market duress, a market may not even be present for certain of our assets at any price.

Hedging against interest rate exposure may not be successful in mitigating the risks associated with interest rates and may adversely affect our earnings, which could reduce our cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

Subject to maintaining our qualification as a REIT, we pursue various hedging strategies to seek to reduce our exposure to losses from adverse changes in interest rates. Our hedging activity varies in scope based on the level and volatility of interest rates, the type of assets held, financing used and other changing market conditions. There are no perfect hedging strategies, and interest rate hedging may fail to protect us from loss. Alternatively, we may fail to properly assess a risk to our investment portfolio or may fail to recognize a risk entirely, leaving us exposed to losses without the benefit of any offsetting hedging activities. The derivative financial instruments we select may not have the effect of reducing our interest rate risk. The nature and timing of hedging transactions may influence the effectiveness of these strategies. Poorly designed strategies or improperly executed transactions could actually increase our risk and losses. In addition, hedging activities could result in losses if the event against which we hedge does not occur. For example, interest rate hedging could fail to protect us or adversely affect us because, among other things:

- interest rate hedging can be expensive, particularly during periods of rising and volatile interest rates;
- available interest rate hedges may not correlate directly with the interest rate risk for which protection is sought;
 - the duration of the hedge may not match the duration of the related liability;
- the amount of income that a REIT may earn from hedging transactions to offset interest rate losses may be limited by federal tax provisions governing REITs;
- the credit quality of the party owing money on the hedge may be downgraded to such an extent that it impairs our ability to sell or assign our side of the hedging transaction;
 - the party owing money in the hedging transaction may default on its obligation to pay; and
- the value of derivatives used for hedging may be adjusted from time to time in accordance with accounting rules to reflect changes in fair value. Downward adjustments, or “mark-to-market losses,” would reduce our stockholders’ equity.

Our hedging transactions, which are intended to limit losses, may actually limit gains and increase our exposure to losses. As a result, our hedging activity may adversely affect our earnings, which could reduce our cash available for distribution to our stockholders. In addition, some hedging instruments involve risk since they are not currently traded on regulated exchanges, guaranteed by an exchange or its clearing house, or regulated by any U.S. or foreign governmental authorities. Consequently, there are no requirements with respect to record keeping, financial responsibility or segregation of customer funds and positions. Furthermore, the enforceability of agreements underlying derivative transactions may depend on compliance with applicable statutory and commodity and other regulatory requirements and, depending on the identity of the counterparty, applicable international requirements. The business failure of a hedging counterparty with whom we enter into a hedging transaction will most likely result in its default. Default by a party with whom we enter into a hedging transaction may result in the loss of unrealized profits and force us to cover our commitments, if any, at the then current market price. Although generally we will seek to reserve the right to terminate our hedging positions, it may not always be possible to dispose of or close out a hedging position without the consent of the hedging counterparty, and we may not be able to enter into an offsetting contract in order to cover our risk. We cannot assure you that a liquid secondary market will exist for hedging instruments purchased or sold, and we may be required to maintain a position until exercise or expiration, which could result in losses.

We may enter into derivative contracts that could expose us to contingent liabilities in the future.

Subject to maintaining our qualification as a REIT, part of our investment strategy involves entering into derivative contracts that could require us to fund cash payments in certain circumstances. These potential payments will be contingent liabilities, the value of which are unknown, and therefore may not appear on our Consolidated Statements of Financial Condition. Our ability to fund these contingent liabilities will depend on the liquidity of our assets and access to capital at the time, and the need to fund these contingent liabilities could adversely impact our financial condition.

Risks Related To Accounting Matters and our 1940 Act Exemption

Our reported GAAP financial results differ from the taxable income results that impact our dividend distribution requirements and, therefore, our GAAP results may not be an accurate indicator of future taxable income and dividend distributions.

Generally, the cumulative net income we report over the life of an asset will be the same for GAAP and tax purposes, although the timing of this income recognition over the life of the asset could be materially different. Differences exist in the accounting for GAAP net income and REIT taxable income which can lead to significant variances in the amount and timing of when income and losses are recognized under these two measures. Due to these differences, our reported GAAP financial results could materially differ from our determination of taxable income results, which impacts our dividend distribution requirements, and, therefore, our GAAP results may not be an accurate indicator of future taxable income and dividend distributions.

We may generate taxable income in excess of our GAAP income on Non-Agency RMBS purchased at a discount to par value, which may result in significant timing variances in the recognition of income and losses.

We have acquired and intend to continue to acquire Non-Agency RMBS at prices that reflect significant market discounts on their unpaid principal balances. For financial statement reporting purposes, we generally establish a portion of this market discount as a Non-Accretable Difference. This credit reserve is generally not accreted into income for financial statement reporting purposes. For tax purposes, however, we are not permitted to anticipate, or establish a reserve for, credit losses prior to their occurrence. As a result, the entire market discount is accreted into income in determining taxable income during periods in which no actual losses are incurred. Losses are only recognized for tax purposes when incurred (thus lowering taxable income in periods in which losses are incurred). These differences in accounting for tax and GAAP can lead to significant timing variances in the recognition of income and losses. Taxable income on Non-Agency RMBS purchased at a discount to their par value may be higher than GAAP earnings in early periods (before losses are actually incurred). Because we distribute dividends to our stockholders based on our taxable income, our dividend distributions could exceed our GAAP income in periods during which our taxable income exceeds our GAAP income on Non-Agency RMBS purchased at discount to par value and can be significantly less than GAAP income in periods where losses are realized for tax but were realized for GAAP in prior periods.

We have elected not to qualify for hedge accounting treatment for GAAP reporting.

We record derivative and hedge transactions in accordance with GAAP. Our interest rate swaps have not been designated as hedging instruments for accounting purposes. Consequently, changes in the fair value of swaps are reported as a component of net income in the Consolidated Statements of Operations and Comprehensive Income.

Changes or declines in the fair values of our assets, liabilities, and hedging instruments can have adverse effects on us, including earnings volatility or reduced earnings, which may reduce cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

A substantial portion of our assets are classified for accounting purposes as “available-for-sale” and carried at fair value. Changes in the fair values of those assets will be directly charged or credited to OCI. In addition, a decline in values will reduce the book value of our assets. A decline in the fair value of our assets may adversely affect us, particularly in instances where we have borrowed money based on the fair value of those assets. If the fair value of those assets declines, the lender may require us to post additional collateral to support the loan. If we were unable to post the additional collateral, we would have to sell the assets at a time when we might not otherwise choose to do so. A reduction in credit available may reduce our ability to invest and to earn interest income which would reduce cash available for distribution to stockholders.

In addition, the fair values for our assets, liabilities, and hedging instruments can be volatile. The fair values can change rapidly and significantly from a variety of factors, including changes in interest rates, credit performance, perceived risk, supply, demand, and actual and projected cash flows and prepayments. Decreases in fair value may not necessarily be the result of deterioration in future cash flows. Moreover, fair values for illiquid assets can be difficult to estimate, which may lead to volatility and uncertainty of earnings as a result of OTTI, or book value as a result of increases in unrealized losses.

For GAAP purposes, we estimate the fair value of most, but not all, of the assets and liabilities on our Consolidated Statements of Financial Condition. In addition, valuation adjustments on certain consolidated assets and our hedging instruments are reflected in our Consolidated Statements of Operations and Comprehensive Income. If we sell an asset below its cost basis, our reported earnings will be reduced by realized losses.

A decrease in the fair value of the securities we own may result in a reduction in our book value due to the accounting standards we are required to apply. Reporting a low book value could have adverse effects such as the inability to meet or agree upon covenants with counterparties, to enter into hedge instruments, or a reduction in the market price of our common stock.

The fair value of certain of the assets on our Consolidated Statements of Financial Condition as calculated according to GAAP may not reflect amounts we would receive if we disposed of those assets.

GAAP requires that we consolidate certain of our RMBS re-securitization transactions on our Consolidated Statements of Financial Condition and report these assets at fair value. Under GAAP, fair value for these assets is measured by determining the fair value of the underlying RMBS assets we contributed to the re-securitization trust as opposed to evaluating the fair value of the re-securitized securities we acquired as a result of the RMBS re-securitization transaction.

The fair value of the underlying RMBS assets subject to the RMBS re-securitization transactions may differ from the value of the re-securitized securities we received as a result of the RMBS re-securitization transaction. Discrepancies arise as a result of market dynamics, the limitations of the measurement techniques required by GAAP, the consolidation accounting principles under GAAP and the subordinate nature, complexity, illiquidity and restrictive features of the re-securitized securities we own. These differences between the fair values of the underlying RMBS consolidated on our Consolidated Statements of Financial Condition under GAAP presentation and the economic value of our investments in the re-securitized securities can be significant.

A discrepancy where the fair value of the underlying RMBS assets contained in a re-securitization trust is different from the amount we would receive if we sold the re-securitized securities we own may result in an overstatement or

understatement of our book value due to the accounting standards we are required to apply. Reporting a higher book value than the value of our net investments in assets could have adverse effects on us. The adverse effects could include the inability to agree upon covenants with counterparties, the inability to satisfy collateral demands of counterparties based on their review of our financial statements, or an overestimation in the market price of our common stock.

Loss of our 1940 Act exemption would adversely affect us and negatively affect the market price of shares of our common stock and our ability to distribute dividends.

We conduct our operations so that neither we nor any of our subsidiaries are required to register as an investment company under the 1940 Act. Because we are a holding company that will conduct its businesses primarily through wholly-owned subsidiaries, the securities issued by these subsidiaries that are excepted from the definition of “investment company” under Section 3(c)(1) or Section 3(c)(7) of the 1940 Act, together with any other investment securities we may own, may not have a combined value in excess of 40% of the value of our adjusted total assets on an unconsolidated basis. This requirement limits the types of businesses in which we may engage through our subsidiaries. In addition, the assets we and our subsidiaries may acquire are limited by the provisions of the 1940 Act, the rules and regulations promulgated under the 1940 Act and SEC staff interpretative guidance, which may adversely affect our performance.

If the value of securities issued by our subsidiaries that are excepted from the definition of “investment company” by Section 3(c)(1) or 3(c)(7) of the 1940 Act, together with any other investment securities we own, exceeds 40% of our adjusted total assets on an unconsolidated basis, or if one or more of such subsidiaries fail to maintain an exception or exemption from the 1940 Act, we could, among other things, be required either (a) to substantially change the manner in which we conduct our operations to avoid being required to register as an investment company or (b) to register as an investment company under the 1940 Act, either of which could have an adverse effect on us and the market price of our securities. If we were required to register as an investment company under the 1940 Act, we would become subject to substantial regulation with respect to our capital structure (including our ability to use leverage), management, operations, transactions with affiliated persons (as defined in the 1940 Act), portfolio composition, including restrictions with respect to diversification and industry concentration, and other matters.

Certain of our subsidiaries rely on the exemption from registration provided by Section 3(c)(5)(C) of the 1940 Act. Section 3(c)(5)(C) as interpreted by the staff of the SEC, requires us to invest at least 55% of our assets in “mortgages and other liens on and interest in real estate” (or Qualifying Real Estate Assets) and at least 80% of our assets in Qualifying Real Estate Assets plus real estate related assets. The assets that we acquire, therefore, are limited by the provisions of the 1940 Act and the rules and regulations promulgated under the 1940 Act. On August 31, 2011, the SEC issued a concept release titled “Companies Engaged in the Business of Acquiring Mortgages and Mortgage-Related Instruments” (SEC Release No. IC-29778). Under the concept release, the SEC is reviewing interpretive issues related to the Section 3(c)(5)(C) exemption. The potential outcomes of the SEC’s actions are unclear as is the SEC’s timetable for its review and actions. If the SEC determines that any of our securities are not Qualifying Real Estate Assets or real estate related assets or otherwise believes we do not satisfy the exemption under Section 3(c)(5)(C), we could be required to restructure our activities or sell certain of our assets. The net effect of these factors will be to lower our net interest income. If we fail to qualify for exemption from registration as an investment company, our ability to use leverage would be substantially reduced, and we would not be able to conduct our business as described. Our business will be materially and adversely affected if we fail to qualify for this exemption.

Certain of our subsidiaries may rely on the exemption provided by Section 3(c)(6) which excludes from the definition of “investment company” any company primarily engaged, directly or through majority-owned subsidiaries, in a business, among others, described in Section 3(c)(5)(C) of the 1940 Act (from which not less than 25% of such company’s gross income during its last fiscal year was derived) together with an additional business or additional businesses other than investing, reinvesting, owning, holding or trading in securities. The SEC staff has issued little interpretive guidance with respect to Section 3(c)(6) and any guidance published by the staff could require us to adjust our strategy accordingly.

We expect certain of our subsidiaries we may form in the future to rely on Section 3(c)(7) for their 1940 Act exemption and, therefore our interest in each of these subsidiaries would constitute an “investment security” for purposes of determining whether we pass the 40% test.

We may in the future, however, organize one or more subsidiaries that seek to rely on the 1940 Act exemption provided to certain structured financing vehicles by Rule 3a-7. If we organize subsidiaries that rely on Rule 3a-7 for an exemption from the 1940 Act, these subsidiaries will also need to comply with the restrictions described in “Business—Operating and Regulatory Structure—1940 Act Exemption.” In general, Rule 3a-7 exempts from the 1940 Act issuers that limit their activities as follows:

- the issuer issues securities the payment of which depends primarily on the cash flow from “eligible assets” that by their terms convert into cash within a finite time period;
- the securities sold are fixed income securities rated investment grade by at least one rating agency (fixed income securities which are unrated or rated below investment grade may be sold to institutional accredited investors and any securities may be sold to “qualified institutional buyers” and to persons involved in the organization or operation of the issuer);
- the issuer acquires and disposes of eligible assets (1) only in accordance with the agreements pursuant to which the securities are issued, (2) so that the acquisition or disposition does not result in a downgrading of the issuer’s fixed income securities and (3) the eligible assets are not acquired or disposed of for the primary purpose of recognizing gains or decreasing losses resulting from market value changes; and
- unless the issuer is issuing only commercial paper, the issuer appoints an independent trustee, takes reasonable steps to transfer to the trustee an ownership or perfected security interest in the eligible assets, and meets rating agency requirements for commingling of cash flows.

Any subsidiary also would need to be structured to comply with any guidance that may be issued by the Division of Investment Management of the SEC on how the subsidiary must be organized to comply with the restrictions contained in Rule 3a-7. Compliance with Rule 3a-7 may require that the indenture governing the subsidiary include additional limitations on the types of assets the subsidiary may sell or acquire out of the proceeds of assets that mature, are refinanced or otherwise sold, on the period of time during which such transactions may occur, and on the amount of transactions that may occur. In light of the requirements of Rule 3a-7, our ability to manage assets held in a special purpose subsidiary that complies with Rule 3a-7 will be limited and we may not be able to purchase or sell assets owned by that subsidiary when we would otherwise desire to do so, which could lead to losses. We currently limit the aggregate value of our interests in our subsidiaries that may in the future seek to rely on Rule 3a-7 to 20% or less of our total assets on an unconsolidated basis, as we continue to discuss with the SEC staff the use of subsidiaries that rely on Rule 3a-7 to finance our operations.

The determination of whether an entity is a majority-owned subsidiary of our company is made by us. The 1940 Act defines a majority-owned subsidiary of a person as a company of which 50% or more of the outstanding voting securities are owned by such person, or by another company which is a majority-owned subsidiary of such person. The 1940 Act further defines voting securities as any security presently entitling the owner or holder thereof to vote for the election of directors of a company. We treat companies in which we own at least a majority of the outstanding voting securities as majority-owned subsidiaries for purposes of the 40% test. We have not requested the SEC to approve our treatment of any company as a majority-owned subsidiary and the SEC has not done so. If the SEC were to disagree with our treatment of one or more companies as majority-owned subsidiaries, we would need to adjust our strategy and our assets in order to continue to pass the 40% test. Any such adjustment in our strategy could have a material adverse effect on us.

There can be no assurance that the laws and regulations governing the 1940 Act status of REITs, including the Division of Investment Management of the SEC providing more specific or different guidance regarding these exemptions, will not change in a manner that adversely affects our operations. If we or our subsidiaries fail to

maintain an exception or exemption from the 1940 Act, we could, among other things, be required either to (a) change the manner in which we conduct our operations to avoid being required to register as an investment company, (b) effect sales of our assets in a manner that, or at a time when, we would not otherwise choose to do so, or (c) register as an investment company, any of which could negatively affect the value of our common stock, the sustainability of our business model, and our ability to make distributions which could have an adverse effect on our business and the market price for our shares of common stock.

Rapid changes in the values of our MBS, residential mortgage loans, and other real estate-related investments may make it more difficult for us to maintain our qualification as a REIT or our exemption from the 1940 Act.

If the market value or income potential of our MBS, residential mortgage loans, and other real estate-related investments declines as a result of increased interest rates, prepayment rates or other factors, we may need to increase our real estate investments and income or liquidate our non-qualifying assets to maintain our REIT qualification or our exemption from the 1940 Act. If the decline in real estate asset values or income occurs quickly, this may be especially difficult to accomplish. This difficulty may be exacerbated by the illiquid nature of any non-real estate assets we may own. We may have to make investment decisions that we otherwise would not make absent the REIT and 1940 Act considerations.

Regulatory and Legal Risks

Violations of federal, state and local laws, including violations of predatory lending and other laws, by the originator, the servicer, or us may result in rescission of the loans or penalties that may adversely impact our operations, financial condition and business prospects.

Violations of certain provisions of federal, state and local laws by the originator, the servicer or us, as well as actions by governmental agencies, authorities and attorneys general, may limit our or the servicer's ability to collect all or part of the principal of, or interest on, the residential mortgage loans we purchase and hold, and loans that serve as security for the RMBS we purchase and hold. Violations could also subject the entity that made or modified the loans to damages and administrative enforcement (including disgorgement of prior interest and fees paid). In particular, a loan seller's failure to comply with certain requirements of federal and state laws could subject the seller (and other assignees of the mortgage loans) to monetary penalties and result in the obligors' rescinding the mortgage loans against the seller and any subsequent holders of the mortgage loans, even if the assignee was not responsible for and was unaware of those violations. These adverse consequences vary depending on the applicable law and may vary depending on the type or severity of the violation, but they typically include:

- the ability of the homeowner to rescind, or cancel, the loan;
- the inability of the holder of the loan to collect all of the principal and interest otherwise due on the loan;
- the right of the homeowner to collect a refund of amounts previously paid (which may include amounts financed by the loan), or to set off those amounts against his or her future loan obligations; and
- the liability of the servicer and the owner of the loan for actual damages, statutory damages and punitive damages, civil or criminal penalties, costs and attorneys' fees.

The terms of the documents under which we intend to purchase loans, and the terms of the documents used to create the RMBS we intend to purchase, may entitle the holders of the loans and the special purpose vehicles that hold loans in RMBS to contractual indemnification against these liabilities. For example, the sellers of loans placed in a securitization typically represent that each mortgage loan was made in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations at the time it was made. If there is a material breach of that representation, the seller may be contractually obligated to cure the breach or repurchase or replace the affected mortgage loan. If the seller is unable or otherwise fails to satisfy these obligations, the yield on the loans and RMBS might be materially and adversely affected. Due to the deterioration in the housing and commercial property markets, many of the sellers that issued these indemnifications are no longer in business or are unable to financially respond to their indemnification obligations. Consequently, holders of interests in the loans and RMBS may ultimately have to absorb the losses arising from the sellers' violations. While we attempt to take these factors into account in the prices we pay for loans and RMBS, we can offer no assurances concerning the validity of the assumptions we use in our pricing decisions.

Furthermore, the volume of new and modified laws and regulations at both the federal and state levels has increased in recent years. For example, the Dodd-Frank Act established the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau which, among other things, restricts and supervises unfair, deceptive or abusive acts or practices in mortgage lending. In addition, The federal Home Ownership and Equity Protection Act of 1994, commonly known as HOEPA, prohibits inclusion of certain provisions in residential mortgage loans that have mortgage rates or origination costs in excess of prescribed levels and requires that borrowers be given certain disclosures before origination. Accordingly, there is an increased risk that we or the originator or servicer of loans we purchase or that are held in RMBS we purchase may be involved in litigation over violations or alleged violations of recently enacted and proposed laws. It is possible that these laws might result in additional significant costs and liabilities, which could further adversely affect the results of our operations. In addition, failure of residential mortgage loan originators or servicers to comply with these laws, to the extent any of their residential mortgage loans become part of our mortgage-related assets, could subject us, as an assignee or purchaser of the related residential mortgage loans or RMBS, to monetary penalties and could result in the borrowers rescinding the affected residential mortgage loans. Any litigation or penalty would increase our expenses and reduce funds available for distribution to our stockholders.

Some local municipalities also have enacted laws that impose potentially significant penalties on loan servicing activities related to abandoned properties or real estate owned properties.

Any of these preceding examples could result in delays and/or reductions in receipts of amounts due on the loans we intend to purchase or on the loans held in RMBS we intend to purchase, negatively affecting our income and operating results.

There is the potential for limitations on our ability to finance purchases of loans and RMBS, and for losses on the loans and RMBS we purchase, as a result of violations of law by the originating lenders.

In June 2003, a California jury found a warehouse lender and securitization underwriter liable in part for fraud on consumers committed by a lender to whom it provided financing and underwriting services. The jury found that the investment bank was aware of the fraud and substantially assisted the lender in perpetrating the fraud by providing financing and underwriting services that allowed the lender to continue to operate, and held it liable for 10% of the plaintiff's damages. This instance of liability is the first case we know of in which an investment bank was held partly responsible for violations committed by a mortgage lender customer. Shortly after the announcement of the jury verdict in the California case, the Florida Attorney General filed suit against the same financial institution, seeking an injunction to prevent it from financing mortgage loans within Florida, as well as damages and civil penalties, based on theories of unfair and deceptive trade practices and fraud. The suit claimed that this financial institution aided and abetted the same lender involved in the California case in its commission of fraudulent representations in Florida.

In December of 2008, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court upheld a lower court's order entered against a lender that enjoined the lender from foreclosing, without court approval, on certain mortgage loans secured by the borrower's principal dwelling that the court considered "presumptively unfair."

In May of 2009, another securitizer of residential mortgage loans entered into a settlement agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts stemming from its investigation of subprime lending and securitization markets. The securitizer agreed to provide loan restructuring (including significant principal write-downs) valued at approximately \$50 million to Massachusetts subprime borrowers and to make a \$10 million payment to the Commonwealth.

The Dodd Frank Act includes new authority, mentioned above, to take any actions against covered persons or service providers found to have committed or to have been engaging in an unfair, deceptive, or abusive acts or practices in connection with mortgage loans and other transactions, and that authority extends to any person that knowingly or

recklessly provides substantial assistance to those persons or providers.

If other courts or regulators take similar actions, investment banks and investors in residential and commercial mortgage loans and RMBS like us might face increased litigation as they are named as defendants in lawsuits and regulatory actions against the mortgage companies or securitizers with which they do business or they might be prohibited from foreclosing on loans they purchased. Some investment banks may charge more for warehouse lending and reduce the prices they pay for loans to build in the costs of this potential litigation or exit the business entirely, thereby increasing our cost of borrowing. Any such actions by courts and regulators, and any such increases in our costs of borrowing, could, in turn, have a material adverse effect on our results of operations, financial condition, and business prospects.

Our securitization activities expose us to an increased risk of litigation, which may materially and adversely affect our business and financial condition.

Through certain of our wholly-owned subsidiaries, we have and continue to engage in securitization transactions relating to residential mortgage loans.

We utilize disclosure documentation, including term sheets and offering memorandums, which include disclosures regarding the securitization transactions and the assets being securitized. If our disclosure documentation is alleged or found to contain inaccuracies or omissions, we may be liable under federal securities laws, state securities laws or other applicable laws for damages to third parties that invest in these securitization transactions, including in circumstances in which we relied on a third party in preparing accurate disclosures, or we may incur other expenses and costs in connection with disputing these allegations or settling claims.

We may also sell or contribute residential mortgage loans to third parties who, in turn, securitize those loans. In these circumstances, we may also prepare disclosure documentation, including documentation that is included in term sheets and offering memorandums relating to those securitization transactions. We could be liable under federal securities laws, state securities laws, or other applicable laws for damages to third parties that invest in these securitization transactions, including liability for disclosures prepared by third parties or with respect to loans that we did not sell or contribute to the securitization.

We are required to obtain various state licenses in order to purchase mortgage loans in the secondary market and there is no assurance we will be able to obtain or maintain those licenses.

While we are not required to obtain licenses to purchase mortgage-backed securities, we are required to obtain various state licenses to purchase mortgage loans in the secondary market. There is no assurance that we will obtain all of the licenses that we desire or that we will not experience significant delays in seeking these licenses. Furthermore, we will be subject to various information reporting requirements to maintain these licenses, and there is no assurance that we will satisfy those requirements. Our failure to obtain or maintain licenses will restrict our investment options and could harm our business.

Federal and state agencies have taken enforcement actions and enacted regulations and government programs that require government sponsored enterprises (such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac), insured depository institutions, and state regulated loan servicers to engage in loss mitigation activities relating to residential mortgage loans.

Federal and state agencies have taken enforcement actions and enacted regulations that require GSEs (such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac), insured depository institutions, and state regulated loan servicers to engage in loss mitigation activities relating to residential mortgage loans. Other agencies have published policies that strongly recommend these entities to engage in loss mitigation activities. These loss mitigation activities may include, for example, loan modifications that significantly reduce interest and payments, deferrals of payments, and reductions of principal balances. Such modifications may adversely affect our business and financial condition.

Litigation alleging inability to foreclose may limit our ability to recover on some of the loans we purchase or that are held in RMBS.

In October 2007, a judge in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio dismissed 14 cases in which plaintiffs sought to foreclose mortgages held in securitization trusts by ruling that those plaintiffs lacked standing to sue. In each case, the judge found that the plaintiff was not the owner of the note and mortgage on the date the foreclosure complaint was filed in court. Similar actions have been initiated in other states. These actions arise as a result of the common practice in the mortgage industry of mortgage loan sellers providing the loan purchasers

unrecorded assignments of the mortgage in blank (i.e., the assignments do not name the assignee). Some courts have held that before a note holder may initiate a foreclosure, the note holder must show proof to the court that the mortgage itself has been properly assigned to the purchaser each time the mortgage loan has been sold. It is sometimes difficult to obtain and then record originals of each successive assignment. It is still unclear whether higher courts will uphold the requirements imposed by these lower courts.

While many purchasers have strengthened their assignment and recordation processes since that time, investors in mortgage loans remain at risk of being unable to foreclose on defaulted loans, or at a minimum will be subject to delays until all assignments in the chain of the loan's title are properly recorded. Thus, we may not be able to recover on some of the loans we purchase or that are held in the RMBS we purchase, or we may suffer delays in foreclosure, all of which could result in a lower return on our loans and RMBS.

In addition, some legislatures are also instituting stringent proof of ownership requirements that a servicer must satisfy before commencing a foreclosure action. By way of example, in January 2011 the New York State Assembly amended state law to require that any foreclosure complaint contain an affirmative allegation that the plaintiff is the owner and holder of the note and mortgage at issue or has been delegated the authority to institute the foreclosure action by the owner and holder of the subject mortgage and note. Again, laws of this type may limit our ability to recover on some of the loans we purchase or that are held in the RMBS we purchase, and may result in delays in the foreclosure process, all of which could result in a lower return on our loans and RMBS.

Legislative action to provide mortgage relief and foreclosure moratoriums may negatively impact our business.

As delinquencies and defaults in residential mortgages have recently increased, there has been an increasing amount of legislative action that might restrict our ability to foreclose and resell the property of a customer in default. For example, some recently enacted state laws may require the lender to deliver a notice of intent to foreclose, provide borrowers additional time to cure or reinstate their loans, impose mandatory settlement conference and mediation requirements, require lenders to offer loan modifications, and prohibit initiation of foreclosure until the borrower has been provided time to consult with foreclosure counselors.

Alternatively, new federal legislation and some legislatures provide a subsidy to a customer to permit the customer to continue to make payments during a period of hardship. In the case of a subsidy, it is possible that we might be required to forego a portion of the amount otherwise due on the loan for a temporary period.

Finally, federal laws and the laws of some states require foreclosing lenders to give special notices to tenants in properties on which the lenders are foreclosing on, or to permit the tenants to remain in the property for a period of time following the foreclosure.

These laws delay the initiation or completion of foreclosure proceedings on specified types of residential mortgage loans, or otherwise limit the ability of residential loan servicers to take actions that may be essential to preserve the value of the mortgage loans on behalf of the holders of RMBS. Any such limitations are likely to cause delayed or reduced collections from mortgagors and generally increased servicing costs. Any restriction on our ability to foreclose on a loan, any requirement that we forego a portion of the amount otherwise due on a loan or any requirement that we modify any original loan terms is likely to negatively impact our business, financial condition, liquidity and results of operations.

United States military operations may increase risk of Servicemembers Civil Relief Act shortfalls.

Under the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, a borrower who enters active military service after the origination of his or her mortgage loan generally may not be required to pay interest above an annual rate of 6%, and the note holder is restricted from exercising certain enforcement remedies, during the period of the borrower's active duty status. Several states also have enacted or are considering similar laws with varying applicability and effect. As a result of military operations in the Middle East, the United States has placed a substantial number of armed forces reservists and members of the National Guard on active duty status. It is possible that the number of reservists and members of the National Guard placed on active duty status may remain at high levels for an extended time. To the extent that a member of the military, or a member of the armed forces reserves or National Guard who is called to active duty, is a mortgagor on a loan we purchase or an underlying loan in a RMBS we may purchase, the interest rate limitation of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, and any comparable state law, will apply. An increase in the number of borrowers taking advantage of those laws may increase servicing expenses for a loan we purchase or an underlying loan in a RMBS we may purchase, and may also reduce cash flow and the interest payments collected from those borrowers. In the event of default, the laws may result in delaying or preventing the loan servicer from exercising otherwise available remedies for default. If these events occur, they may result in interest shortfalls on the

loans we purchase or on the underlying loans in a RMBS we may purchase that could result in a lower return on our loans or additional losses.

The Dodd-Frank Act contains many regulatory changes and calls for future rulemaking that may affect our business.

The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, or the Dodd-Frank Act, contains many regulatory changes and calls for future rulemaking that may affect our business, including, but not limited to resolutions involving derivatives, risk-retention in securitizations, the origination of residential mortgage loans and short-term financings. The Dodd-Frank Act's requirements may impact the housing and mortgage markets, which could have an adverse effect on our business.

The increasing number of proposed federal, state and local laws may increase our risk of liability with respect to certain mortgage loans, may include judicial modification provisions and could increase our cost of doing business.

The United States Congress and various state and local legislatures are considering legislation, which, among other provisions, would permit limited assignee liability for certain violations in the mortgage loan and servicing origination process, and would allow judicial modification of loan principal in the event of personal bankruptcy. We cannot predict whether or in what form Congress or the various state and local legislatures may enact legislation affecting our business. For example, the California Homeowner Bill of Rights, which became effective on January 1, 2013, imposes new obligations and potential liabilities on investors, master servicers, servicers and subservicers, including anti-blight and tenant protection provisions. We are evaluating the impact of these initiatives on our portfolio and results of operations. As a result of these and other initiatives, we are unable to predict whether federal, state or local authorities will require changes in our practices in the future or in our portfolio. These changes, if required, could adversely affect our profitability, particularly if we make such changes in response to new or amended laws, regulations or ordinances in any state where we acquire a significant portion of our mortgage loans, or if such changes result in us being held responsible for any violations in the mortgage loan origination process, or if the principal amount of loans we own or are in RMBS pools we own are modified in the personal bankruptcy process.

Risks Related To Our Common Stock

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 those set forth under "Risk Factors" and "Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements" and in the information incorporated and deemed to be incorporated by reference herein, as well as:

- 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;
 - changes in our 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.

Common stock eligible for future sale may have adverse consequences for investors and adverse effects on our share price.

We cannot predict the effect, if any, of future sales of common stock, or the availability of shares for future sales, on the market price of the common stock. Sales of substantial amounts of common stock, or the perception that such sales could occur, may adversely affect prevailing market prices for the common stock. In addition, we are not required to offer any such shares to existing shareholders on a pre-emptive basis. Therefore, it may not be possible for existing shareholders to participate in such future share issues, which may dilute the existing shareholders' interests in us.

There is a risk that our stockholders may not receive distributions or that distributions may not grow over time.

We intend to make distributions on a quarterly basis out of assets legally available to our stockholders in amounts such that all or substantially all of our REIT taxable income in each year is distributed. Our ability to pay distributions may be adversely affected by a number of factors, including the risk factors described herein. All distributions will be made at the discretion of our Board of Directors and will depend on our earnings, our financial condition, maintenance of our REIT status and other factors as our Board of Directors may deem relevant from time to time.

Among the factors that could adversely affect our results of operations and impair our ability to pay distributions to our stockholders are:

- our ability to make profitable investments;
- margin calls or other expenses that reduce our cash flow;
- defaults in our asset portfolio or decreases in the value of our portfolio;
- the fact that anticipated operating expense levels may not prove accurate, as actual results may vary from estimates; and
- increased cost of financing.

A change in any one of these factors could affect our ability to make distributions. We cannot assure you that we will achieve investment results that will allow us to make a specified level of cash distributions or year-to-year increases in cash distributions.

Investing in our shares may involve a high degree of risk and broad market fluctuations could negatively impact the market price of our common stock.

The investments we make in accordance with our investment objectives may result in a high amount of risk when compared to alternative investment options and volatility or loss of principal. Our investments may be highly speculative and aggressive, are subject to credit risk, interest rate, and market value risks, among others, and therefore an investment in our shares may not be suitable for someone with lower risk tolerance.

Furthermore, the stock market has experienced extreme price and volume fluctuations that have affected the market price of many companies in industries similar or related to ours and that have been unrelated to these companies' operating performances. These broad market fluctuations could reduce the market price of our common stock.

Our charter and bylaws contain provisions that may inhibit potential acquisition bids that stockholders may consider favorable, and the market price of our common stock may be lower as a result.

Our charter and bylaws contain provisions that have an anti-takeover effect and inhibit a change in our Board of Directors. These provisions include the following:

- There are ownership limits and restrictions on transferability and ownership in our charter. To qualify as a REIT for each taxable year after 2007, not more than 50% of the value of our outstanding stock may be owned, directly or constructively, by five or fewer individuals during the second half of any calendar year. In addition, our shares must be beneficially owned by 100 or more persons during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months or during a proportionate part of a shorter taxable year for each taxable year after 2007. To assist us in satisfying these tests, our charter generally prohibits any person from beneficially or constructively owning more than 9.8% in value or number of shares, whichever is more restrictive, of any class or series of our outstanding capital stock. These restrictions may discourage a tender offer or other transactions or a change in the composition of our Board of Directors or control that might involve a premium price for our shares or otherwise be in the best interests of our stockholders and any shares issued or transferred in violation of such restrictions being automatically transferred to a trust for a charitable beneficiary, thereby resulting in a forfeiture of the additional shares.
- Our charter permits our Board of Directors to issue stock with terms that may discourage a third party from acquiring us. Our charter permits our Board of Directors to amend the charter without stockholder approval to increase the total number of authorized shares of stock or the number of shares of any class or series and to issue common or preferred stock, having preferences, conversion or other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends or other distributions, qualifications, or terms or conditions of redemption as determined by our board. Thus, our board could authorize the issuance of stock with terms and conditions that could have the effect of discouraging a takeover or other transaction in which holders of some or a majority of our shares might receive a premium for their shares over the then-prevailing market price of our shares.
- Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act. Maryland law provides that “control shares” of a corporation acquired in a “control share acquisition” will have no voting rights except to the extent approved by a vote of two-thirds of the votes eligible to be cast on the matter under the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act. “Control shares” means voting shares of stock that, if aggregated with all other shares of stock owned by the acquirer or in respect of which the acquirer is able to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power (except solely by a revocable proxy), would entitle the acquirer 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 of all voting power. A “control share acquisition” means the acquisition of control shares, subject to certain exceptions.

If voting rights or control shares acquired in a control share acquisition are not approved at a stockholders’ meeting, or if the acquiring person does not deliver an acquiring person statement as required by the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act, then, subject to certain conditions and limitations, the issuer may redeem any or all of the control shares for fair value. If voting rights of such control shares are approved at a stockholders’ meeting and the acquirer becomes entitled to vote a majority of the shares of stock entitled to vote, all other stockholders may exercise appraisal rights. Our bylaws contain a provision exempting acquisitions of our shares from the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act. However, our Board of Directors may amend our bylaws in the future to repeal or modify this exemption, in which case any control shares of our company acquired in a control share acquisition will be subject to the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act.

- 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 beneficially owns 10% or more of the voting power of the corporation's shares; or
- an affiliate or associate of the corporation who, at any time within the two-year period before the date in question, was the beneficial owner of 10% 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 the Board of Directors approved in advance the transaction by which such person otherwise would have become an interested stockholder. However, in approving a transaction, the Board of Directors may provide that its approval is subject to compliance, at or after the time of approval, with any terms and conditions determined by the board. After the five-year prohibition, any business combination between the Maryland corporation and an interested stockholder generally must be recommended by the Board of Directors 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 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 statute permits various exemptions from its provisions, including business combinations that are exempted by the Board of Directors before the time that the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder. Our Board of Directors has adopted a resolution which provides that any business combination between us and any other person is exempted from the provisions of the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act, provided that the business combination is first approved by the Board of Directors. This resolution, however, may be altered or repealed in whole or in part at any time. If this resolution is repealed, or the Board of Directors does not otherwise approve a business combination, this statute may discourage others from trying to acquire control of us and increase the difficulty of consummating any offer.

- **Staggered board.** Our Board of Directors is divided into three classes of directors. Directors of each class are chosen for three-year terms upon the expiration of their current terms, and each year one class of directors is elected by the stockholders. The staggered terms of our directors may reduce the possibility of a tender offer or an attempt at a change in control, even though a tender offer or change in control might be in the best interests of our stockholders.
- Our charter and bylaws contain other possible anti-takeover provisions. Our charter and bylaws contains other provisions that may have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of us or the removal of existing directors and, as a result, could prevent our stockholders from being paid a premium for their common stock over the then-prevailing market price.

Our rights and the rights of our stockholders to take action against our directors and officers are limited, which could limit stockholders' recourse in the event of actions not in their best interests.

Our charter limits the liability of our directors and officers to us and our stockholders for money damages, except for liability resulting from:

- actual receipt of an improper benefit or profit in money, property or services; or
- a final judgment based upon a finding of active and deliberate dishonesty by the director or officer that was material to the cause of action adjudicated for which Maryland law prohibits such exemption from liability.

In addition, our charter authorizes us to obligate our company to indemnify our present and former directors and officers for actions taken by them in those capacities to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law. Our bylaws require us to indemnify each present or former director or officer, to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law, in the defense of any proceeding to which he or she is made, or threatened to be made, a party because of his or her service to us. In addition, we may be obligated to fund the defense costs incurred by our directors and officers.

Tax Risks

Your investment has various federal income tax risks.

This summary of certain tax risks is limited to the federal tax risks addressed below. Additional risks or issues may exist that are not addressed in this Form 10-K and that could affect the federal tax treatment of us or our stockholders. This is not intended to be used and cannot be used by any stockholder to avoid penalties that may be imposed on stockholders under the Internal Revenue Code, or the Code. We strongly urge you to seek advice based on your particular circumstances from an independent tax advisor concerning the effects of federal, state and local income tax law on an investment in common stock and on your individual tax situation.

Complying with REIT requirements may cause us to forego otherwise attractive opportunities.

To qualify as a REIT for federal income tax purposes, we must continually satisfy various tests regarding the sources of our income, the nature and diversification of our assets, the amounts we distribute to our stockholders and the ownership of our stock. To meet these tests, we may be required to forego investments we might otherwise make. We may be required to make distributions to stockholders at disadvantageous times or when we do not have funds readily available for distribution. Thus, compliance with the REIT requirements may hinder our investment performance.

We may enter into re-securitization transactions, the tax treatment of which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations.

We have engaged in and intend to engage in future re-securitization transactions in which we transfer Non-Agency RMBS to a special purpose entity that has formed or will form a securitization vehicle that will issue multiple classes of securities secured by and payable from cash flows on the underlying Non-Agency RMBS. In the past, we have structured transactions as REMICs. We have structured the REMIC securitization transactions as a sale by a TRS of mortgage loans to an issuer, another TRS (the "Depositor"), followed by a sale of the resulting REMIC securities through a placement agent retained by the Depositor to investors. In each such securitization, we have purchased all of the REMIC securities that were not purchased from the placement agent by unrelated third parties. Although such transactions are treated as sales for tax purposes, they have been undertaken by a TRS such that the prohibited transactions tax rules have not been implicated.

Complying with REIT requirements may force us to liquidate otherwise attractive investments.

To qualify as a REIT, we generally must ensure that at the end of each calendar quarter at least 75% of the value of our total assets consists of cash, cash items, government securities and qualified REIT real estate assets, including certain mortgage loans and mortgage-backed securities. The remainder of our investment in securities (other than government securities and qualifying real estate assets) generally cannot include more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of any one issuer or more than 10% of the total value of the outstanding securities of any one issuer. In addition, in general, no more than 5% of the value of our assets (other than government securities, qualifying real estate assets, and stock in one or more TRSs) can consist of the securities of any one issuer, and no more than 25% (20% after December 31, 2017) of the value of our total securities can be represented by securities of one or more TRSs. If we fail to comply with these requirements at the end of any quarter, we must correct the failure within 30

days after the end of such calendar quarter or qualify for certain statutory relief provisions to avoid losing our REIT status and suffering adverse tax consequences. As a result, we may be required to liquidate from our portfolio otherwise attractive investments. These actions could have the effect of reducing our income and amounts available for distribution to our stockholders.

Potential characterization of distributions or gain on sale may be treated as unrelated business taxable income to tax-exempt investors.

If (1) all or a portion of our assets are subject to the rules relating to taxable mortgage pools, (2) we are a “pension-held REIT,” or (3) a tax-exempt stockholder has incurred debt to purchase or hold our common stock, then a portion of the distributions to and, in the case of a stockholder described in clause (3), gains realized on the sale of common stock by such tax-exempt stockholder may be subject to federal income tax as unrelated business taxable income under the Internal Revenue Code.

Classification of a securitization or financing arrangement we enter into as a taxable mortgage pool could subject us or certain of our stockholders to increased taxation.

We intend to structure our securitization and financing arrangements so as to not create a taxable mortgage pool. However, if we have borrowings with two or more maturities and, (1) those borrowings are secured by mortgages or mortgage-backed securities and (2) the payments made on the borrowings are related to the payments received on the underlying assets, then the borrowings and the pool of mortgages or mortgage-backed securities to which such borrowings relate may be classified as a taxable mortgage pool under the Internal Revenue Code. If any part of our investments were to be treated as a taxable mortgage pool, then our REIT status would not be impaired, but a portion of the taxable income we recognize may, under regulations to be issued by the Treasury Department, be characterized as “excess inclusion” income and allocated among our stockholders to the extent of and generally in proportion to the distributions we make to each stockholder. Any excess inclusion income would:

- not be allowed to be offset by a stockholder’s net operating losses;
- be subject to a tax as unrelated business income if a stockholder were a tax-exempt stockholder;
- be subject to the application of federal income tax withholding at the maximum rate (without reduction for any otherwise applicable income tax treaty) with respect to amounts allocable to foreign stockholders; and
- be taxable (at the highest corporate tax rate) to us, rather than to our stockholders, to the extent the excess inclusion income relates to stock held by disqualified organizations (generally, tax-exempt organizations not subject to tax on unrelated business income, including governmental organizations).

Failure to qualify as a REIT would subject us to federal income tax, which would reduce the cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

We qualify as a REIT for federal income tax purposes commencing with our taxable year ended December 31, 2007. However, the federal income tax laws governing REITs are extremely complex, and interpretations of the federal income tax laws governing qualification as a REIT are limited. Qualifying as a REIT requires us to meet various tests regarding the nature of our assets and our income, the ownership of our outstanding stock, and the amount of our distributions on an ongoing basis. While we intend to operate so that we will qualify as a REIT, given the highly complex nature of the rules governing REITs, the ongoing importance of factual determinations, including the tax treatment of certain investments we may make, and the possibility of future changes in our circumstances, no assurance can be given that we will so qualify for any particular year. If we fail to qualify as a REIT in any calendar year and we do not qualify for certain statutory relief provisions, we would be required to pay federal income tax on our taxable income. We might need to borrow money or sell assets to pay that tax. Our payment of income tax would decrease the amount of our income available for distribution to our stockholders. Furthermore, if we fail to maintain our qualification as a REIT and we do not qualify for certain statutory relief provisions, we no longer would be required to distribute substantially all of our REIT taxable income to our stockholders. Unless our failure to qualify as a REIT were excused under federal tax laws, we would be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which qualification was lost.

Failure to make required distributions would subject us to tax, which would reduce the cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

To qualify as a REIT, we must distribute to our stockholders each calendar year at least 90% of our REIT taxable income (excluding certain items of non-cash income in excess of a specified threshold), determined without regard to the deduction for dividends paid and excluding net capital gain. To the extent that we satisfy the 90% distribution requirement, but distribute less than 100% of our taxable income, we will be subject to federal corporate income tax on our undistributed income. In addition, we will incur a 4% nondeductible excise tax on the amount, if any, by which our distributions in any calendar year are less than the sum of:

- 85% of our REIT ordinary income for that year;
- 95% of our REIT capital gain net income for that year; and
- any undistributed taxable income from prior years.

We intend to distribute our REIT taxable income to our stockholders in a manner intended to satisfy the 90% distribution requirement and to avoid both corporate income tax and the 4% nondeductible excise tax. REIT taxable income only includes after-tax TRS net income to the extent such TRS distributes a dividend to the REIT. Therefore, our REIT dividend distributions may or may not include after-tax net income from our TRS.

Our taxable income may substantially exceed our net income as determined by GAAP. As an example, realized capital losses may be included in our GAAP net income, but may not be deductible in computing our taxable income. In addition, we may invest in assets that generate taxable income in excess of economic income or in advance of the corresponding cash flow from the assets. To the extent that we generate such non-cash taxable income in a taxable year, we may incur corporate income tax and the 4% nondeductible excise tax on that income if we do not distribute such income to stockholders in that year. In that event, we may be required to use cash reserves, incur debt, or liquidate non-cash assets at rates or at times that we regard as unfavorable to satisfy the distribution requirement and to avoid corporate income tax and the 4% nondeductible excise tax in that year. Moreover, our ability to distribute cash may be limited by available financing facilities. Therefore, our dividend payment level may fluctuate significantly, and, under some circumstances, we may not pay dividends at all.

Ownership limitations may restrict change of control or business combination opportunities in which our stockholders might receive a premium for their shares.

In order for us to qualify as a REIT for each taxable year after 2007, no more than 50% in value of our outstanding capital stock may be owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals during the last half of any calendar year. "Individuals" for this purpose include natural persons, private foundations, some employee benefit plans and trusts, and some charitable trusts. To preserve our REIT qualification, our charter generally prohibits any person from directly or indirectly owning more than 9.8% in value or in number of shares, whichever is more restrictive, of any class or series of the outstanding shares of our capital stock. This ownership limitation could have the effect of discouraging a takeover or other transaction in which holders of our common stock might receive a premium for their shares over the then prevailing market price or which holders might believe to be otherwise in their best interests.

Our ownership of and relationship with any TRS which we may form or acquire will be limited, and a failure to comply with the limits would jeopardize our REIT status and may result in the application of a 100% excise tax.

A REIT may own up to 100% of the stock of one or more TRSs. A TRS may earn income that would not be qualifying income if earned directly by the parent REIT. Both the subsidiary and the REIT must jointly elect to treat the subsidiary as a TRS. Overall, no more than 25% of the value of a REIT's assets may consist of stock or securities of one or more TRSs. A TRS will pay federal, state and local income tax at regular corporate rates on any taxable

income that it earns. In addition, the TRS rules impose a 100% excise tax on certain transactions between a TRS and its parent REIT that are not conducted on an arm's-length basis. Our TRS after-tax net income would be available for distribution to us but would not be required to be distributed to us. We anticipate that the aggregate value of the TRS stock and securities owned by us will be less than 25% of the value of our total assets (including the TRS stock and securities). Furthermore, we will monitor the value of our investments in our TRSs to ensure compliance with the rule that no more than 25% (20% after December 31, 2017) of the value of our assets may consist of TRS stock and securities (which is applied at the end of each calendar quarter). In addition, we will scrutinize all of our transactions with taxable REIT subsidiaries to ensure that they are entered into on arm's-length terms to avoid incurring the 100% excise tax described above. There can be no assurance, however, that we will be able to comply with the 25% (20% after December 31, 2017) limitation discussed above or to avoid application of the 100% excise tax discussed above.

The tax on prohibited transactions will limit our ability to engage in transactions, including certain methods of securitizing mortgage loans that would be treated as sales for federal income tax purposes.

A REIT's net income from prohibited transactions is subject to a 100% tax. In general, prohibited transactions are sales or other dispositions of property, other than foreclosure property, but including mortgage loans, held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business. We might be subject to this tax if we sold or securitized our assets in a manner that was treated as a sale for federal income tax purposes. Therefore, to avoid the prohibited transactions tax, we may choose not to engage in certain sales of assets at the REIT level and may securitize assets only in transactions that are treated as financing transactions and not as sales for tax purposes even though such transactions may not be the optimal execution on a pre-tax basis. We could avoid any prohibited transactions tax concerns by engaging in securitization transactions through a TRS, subject to certain limitations described above. To the extent that we engage in such activities through domestic TRSs, the income associated with such activities will be subject to federal (and applicable state and local) corporate income tax.

Characterization of the repurchase agreements we enter into to finance our investments as sales for tax purposes rather than as secured lending transactions would adversely affect our ability to qualify as a REIT.

We have entered into and will enter into repurchase agreements with a variety of counterparties to achieve our desired amount of leverage for the assets in which we invest. When we enter into a repurchase agreement, we generally sell assets to our counterparty to the agreement and receive cash from the counterparty. The counterparty is obligated to resell the assets back to us at the end of the term of the transaction, which is typically 30 to 90 days. We believe that for federal income tax purposes we will be treated as the owner of the assets that are the subject of repurchase agreements and that the repurchase agreements will be treated as secured lending transactions notwithstanding that such agreement may transfer record ownership of the assets to the counterparty during the term of the agreement. It is possible, however, that the IRS could successfully assert that we did not own these assets during the term of the repurchase agreements, in which case we could fail to qualify as a REIT.

Complying with REIT requirements may limit our ability to hedge effectively.

The REIT provisions of the Internal Revenue Code substantially limit our ability to hedge mortgage-backed securities and related borrowings. Under these provisions, our annual gross income from non-qualifying hedges, together with any other income not generated from qualifying real estate assets, cannot exceed 25% of our annual gross income. In addition, our aggregate gross income from non-qualifying hedges, fees, and certain other non-qualifying sources cannot exceed 5% of our annual gross income. As a result, we might have to limit our use of advantageous hedging techniques or implement those hedges through a TRS, which we may form in the future. This could increase the cost of our hedging activities or expose us to greater risks associated with changes in interest rates than we would otherwise want to bear.

We may be subject to adverse legislative or regulatory tax changes that could reduce the market price of our common stock.

At any time, the federal income tax laws or regulations governing REITs or the administrative interpretations of those laws or regulations may be amended. We cannot predict when or if any new federal income tax law, regulation or administrative interpretation, or any amendment to any existing federal income tax law, regulation or administrative interpretation, will be adopted, promulgated or become effective and any such law, regulation or interpretation may take effect retroactively. We and our stockholders could be adversely affected by any such change in, or any new, federal income tax law, regulation or administrative interpretation.

Dividends payable by REITs generally do not qualify for the reduced tax rates available for some dividends.

Qualified dividend income payable to U.S. stockholders that are individuals, trusts and estates is subject to the reduced maximum tax rate applicable to capital gains. Dividends payable by REITs, however, generally are not eligible for the reduced rates. The more favorable rates applicable to regular corporate qualified dividends could cause investors who are individuals, trusts and estates to perceive investments in REITs to be relatively less attractive than investments in the stocks of non-REIT corporations that pay dividends, which could adversely affect the value of the shares of REITs, including our common stock. Tax rates could be changed in future legislation.

Item 1B. Unresolved Staff Comments

None.

Item 2. Properties

As of December 31, 2015, we do not own any property. Our executive and administrative office is located at 520 Madison Avenue, 32nd Floor, New York, New York 10022, telephone (212) 626-2300. We believe that this space is suitable and adequate for our current needs.

Item 3. Legal Proceedings

After the issuance of the interim financial statements for the third quarter of 2011, the Audit Committee of our Board of Directors initiated an internal investigation, with the assistance of outside counsel and financial advisors engaged by outside counsel, regarding the facts and circumstances relating to our accounting for Non-Agency RMBS and the restatement of our financial statements. This investigation addressed facts and circumstances raised by derivative demand letters served by several of our shareholders. The Audit Committee concluded its investigation in the fourth quarter of 2014 and reached agreements with FIDAC and the shareholders that resolve the issues raised in the derivative demand letters. The Audit Committee also pursued additional remedies against other parties regarding the facts and circumstances relating to our accounting for Non-Agency RMBS and the restatement of our financial statements, which were resolved in the first quarter of 2016 and we expect to recover \$95 million which will be characterized as taxable income in 2016. The Company intends to declare a special dividend soon after receipt of this amount.

Item 4. Mine Safety Disclosures

Not applicable.

Part II

Item 5. Market for Registrant's Common Equity, Related Stockholder Matters and Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities

Our common stock began trading publicly on the NYSE under the trading symbol "CIM" on November 16, 2007. As of December 31, 2015, we had 187,711,868 shares of common stock issued and outstanding which were held by 251 holders of record. The following tables set forth, for the periods indicated, the high, low, and closing sales prices per share of our common stock as reported on the NYSE composite tape and the cash dividends declared per share of our common stock.

	Stock Price		
	High	Low	Close
Quarter Ended December 31, 2015	\$ 14.63	\$ 12.86	\$ 13.64
Quarter Ended September 30, 2015	\$ 14.54	\$ 13.21	\$ 13.37
Quarter Ended June 30, 2015	\$ 15.94	\$ 13.71	\$ 13.71
Quarter Ended March 31, 2015	\$ 16.45	\$ 15.35	\$ 15.70
Quarter Ended December 31, 2014	\$ 16.95	\$ 15.25	\$ 15.90
Quarter Ended September 30, 2014	\$ 16.65	\$ 15.20	\$ 15.20
Quarter Ended June 30, 2014	\$ 16.65	\$ 15.15	\$ 15.95
Quarter Ended March 31, 2014	\$ 15.95	\$ 14.95	\$ 15.30
			Common Dividends Declared Per Share
Quarter Ended December 31, 2015			\$ 0.48
Quarter Ended September 30, 2015			\$ 0.48
Quarter Ended June 30, 2015			\$ 0.48
Quarter Ended March 31, 2015			\$ 0.48
Quarter Ended December 31, 2014			\$ 0.45
Quarter Ended September 30, 2014			\$ 0.45
Quarter Ended June 30, 2014			\$ 0.45
Quarter Ended March 31, 2014			\$ 0.45

We pay quarterly dividends and distribute to our stockholders all or substantially all of our taxable income in each year (subject to certain adjustments). This enables us to qualify for the tax benefits accorded to a REIT under the Code. We have not established a minimum dividend payment level and our ability to pay dividends may be adversely affected for the reasons described under the caption "Risk Factors." All distributions will be made at the discretion of our Board of Directors and will depend on our taxable income, our financial condition, maintenance of our REIT status and such other factors as our Board of Directors may deem relevant from time to time.

The Board of Directors declared dividends of \$1.92 per share during 2015. The Board of Directors declared dividends of \$1.80 per share during 2014.

Share Performance Graph

The following graph and table set forth certain information comparing the yearly percentage change in cumulative total return on our common stock to the cumulative total return of the Standard & Poor's Composite-500 Stock Index or S&P 500 Index, and the Bloomberg REIT Mortgage Index, or BBG REIT Index, an industry index of mortgage REITs. The comparison is for the period from December 31, 2010 to December 31, 2015 and assumes the reinvestment of dividends. The graph and table assume that \$100 was invested in our common stock and each of the two other indices on December 31, 2010. Upon written request we will provide stockholders with a list of the REITs included in the BBG REIT Index.

	12/31/2010	12/31/2011	12/31/2012	12/31/2013	12/31/2014	12/31/2015
Chimera	100	71	86	114	139	137
S&P 500						
Index	100	102	118	157	178	181
BBG						
REIT						
Index	100	98	117	114	136	123

The information in the share performance graph and table has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but neither its accuracy nor its completeness can be guaranteed. The historical information set forth above is not necessarily indicative of future performance. Accordingly, we do not make or endorse any predictions as to future share performance.

The share performance graph and table shall not be deemed, under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, to be (i) "soliciting material" or "filed" or (ii) incorporated by reference by any general statement into any filing made by us with the SEC, except to the extent that we specifically incorporate such share performance graph and table by reference.

Equity Compensation Plan Information

We have adopted a long term stock incentive plan, or Incentive Plan, to provide incentives to our independent directors and employees to stimulate their efforts towards our continued success, long-term growth and profitability and to attract, reward and retain personnel and other service providers. The Incentive Plan authorizes the Compensation Committee of the Board of Directors to grant awards, including incentive stock options as defined under Section 422 of the Code, (“ISOs”), non-qualified stock options, (“NQSOs”), restricted shares and other types of incentive awards. The Incentive Plan authorizes the granting of options or other awards for an aggregate of 8,000,000 shares of common stock. For a description of our Incentive Plan, see Note 12 to the Consolidated Financial Statements.

The following table provides information as of December 31, 2015 concerning shares of our common stock authorized for issuance under our existing Incentive Plan.

Plan Category	Number of Securities to be Issued Upon Exercise of Outstanding Options, Warrants, and Rights	Weighted Average Exercise Price of Outstanding Options, Warrants, and Rights	Number of Securities Remaining Available for Future Issuance Under Equity Compensation Plans
Equity Compensation Plans Approved by Stockholders	-	-	7,432,548
Equity Compensation Plans Not Approved by Stockholders (1)	-	-	-
Total	-	-	7,432,548

(1) We do not have any equity plans that have not been approved by our stockholders.

Item 6. Selected Financial Data

The following selected financial data are as of and for the years ended December 31, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011. The selected financial data should be read in conjunction with the more detailed information contained in the Consolidated Financial Statements and Notes thereto contained in Part IV, Financial Statements, and “Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations” in Part II, Item 7, included elsewhere in this 2015 Form 10-K.

Consolidated Statements of Financial Condition Highlights
(dollars in thousands, except share and per share data)

	December 31, 2015	December 31, 2014	December 31, 2013	December 31, 2012	December 31, 2011
Non-Agency Mortgage-Backed Securities	\$3,675,841	\$3,404,149	\$3,774,463	\$3,961,208	\$4,088,945
Agency Mortgage-Backed securities	\$6,514,824	\$8,441,522	\$1,997,578	\$1,806,697	\$3,144,531
Securitized loans held for investment, net of allowance for loan losses	\$-	\$626,112	\$783,484	\$1,300,131	\$256,632

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Securitized loans held for investment, at fair value	\$4,768,416	\$4,699,215	\$-	\$-	\$-
Total assets	\$15,344,646	\$19,155,005	\$6,936,081	\$7,742,489	\$7,747,135
Repurchase agreements	\$7,439,339	\$8,455,381	\$1,658,561	\$1,528,025	\$2,672,989
Securitized debt, collateralized by Non-Agency RMBS	\$529,415	\$704,915	\$933,732	\$1,336,261	\$1,630,276
Securitized debt, loans held for investment	\$-	\$521,997	\$669,981	\$1,169,710	\$212,778
Securitized debt at fair value, loans held for investment	\$3,720,496	\$3,868,366	\$-	\$-	\$-
Total liabilities	\$12,398,458	\$15,547,315	\$3,604,571	\$4,200,010	\$4,699,516
Shareholders' equity	\$2,946,188	\$3,607,690	\$3,331,510	\$3,542,479	\$3,047,619
Book value per share (1)	\$15.70	\$17.55	\$16.20	\$17.25	\$14.85
Number of shares outstanding	187,711,868	205,546,144	205,525,247	205,519,492	205,493,418

(1) See discussion of Estimated Economic Book Value in Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations.

Consolidated Statements of Operations and Comprehensive Income Highlights
(dollars in thousands, except share and per share data)

	For the Year Ended				
	December 31, 2015	December 31, 2014	December 31, 2013	December 31, 2012	December 31, 2011
Interest income	\$872,737	\$687,795	\$511,783	\$589,440	\$705,024
Income expense	\$259,365	\$147,785	\$101,999	\$126,558	\$134,858
Net interest income	\$613,372	\$540,010	\$409,784	\$462,882	\$570,166
Net income	\$250,349	\$589,205	\$362,686	\$327,767	\$137,329
Income per share-basic	\$1.25	\$2.87	\$1.77	\$1.60	\$0.67
Core earnings per basic common share (1)	\$2.37	\$1.95	\$1.70	\$1.85	\$2.38
Average shares-basic	199,563,196	205,450,095	205,418,876	205,366,207	205,273,039
Dividends declared per share (2)	\$1.92	\$1.80	\$2.80	\$1.90	\$2.55

(1) See discussion of Core Earnings per basic common share in Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations.

(2) For applicable period as reported in our earnings announcements.

Item 7. Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations

The following discussion of our financial condition and results of operations should be read in conjunction with the consolidated financial statements and notes to those statements included in Item 15 of this 2015 Form 10-K. The discussion may contain certain forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Forward-looking statements are those that are not historical in nature. As a result of many factors, such as those set forth under "Risk Factors" in this 2015 Form 10-K, our actual results may differ materially from those anticipated in such forward-looking statements.

Executive Summary

We are a REIT primarily engaged in the business of investing, on a leveraged basis, in a diversified portfolio of mortgage assets, including Agency RMBS, Non-Agency RMBS, Agency CMBS, residential mortgage loans, and real estate related securities. 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.

We focus our investment activities primarily on acquiring Non-Agency and Agency residential and commercial mortgage-backed securities, ("MBS"), and on purchasing residential mortgage loans. At December 31, 2015, based on the amortized cost balance of our interest earning assets, approximately 46% of our investment portfolio was Agency MBS, 20% of our investment portfolio was Non-Agency RMBS, and 34% of our investment portfolio was securitized residential mortgage loans. At December 31, 2014, based on the amortized cost balance of our interest earning assets, approximately 52% of our investment portfolio was Agency MBS, 16% of our investment portfolio was Non-Agency RMBS, and 32% of our investment portfolio was securitized residential mortgage loans.

We make investment decisions based on various factors, including expected cash yield, relative value, risk-adjusted returns, current and projected credit fundamentals, current and projected macroeconomic considerations, current and projected supply and demand, credit and market risk concentration limits, liquidity, cost of financing and financing

availability, as well as maintaining our REIT qualification and our exemption from registration under the 1940 Act.

We have engaged in transactions with residential mortgage lending operations of leading commercial banks and other originators in which we identified and re-underwrote residential mortgage loans owned by such entities, and purchased and securitized such residential mortgage loans. In the past we have also acquired formerly AAA-rated Non-Agency RMBS and immediately re-securitized those securities. We sold the resulting AAA-rated super senior RMBS and retained the rated or unrated mezzanine and subordinate RMBS.

Our investment strategy is intended to take advantage of opportunities in the current interest rate and credit environment. We expect to adjust our strategy to changing market conditions by shifting our asset allocations across these various asset classes as interest rate and credit cycles change over time. We believe that our strategy will enable us to pay dividends and achieve capital appreciation throughout changing market cycles. We expect to take a long-term view of assets and liabilities, and our reported earnings and estimates of the fair value of our investments at the end of a financial reporting period will not significantly impact our objective of providing attractive risk-adjusted returns to our stockholders over the long-term.

We use leverage to seek to increase our potential returns and to finance the acquisition of our assets. Our income is generated primarily by the difference, or net spread, between the income we earn on our assets and the cost of our borrowings. We expect to finance our investments using a variety of financing sources including, when available, repurchase agreements, warehouse facilities and securitizations. We may manage our debt and interest rate risk by utilizing interest rate hedges, such as interest rate swaps, caps, options and futures to reduce the effect of interest rate fluctuations related to our financing sources.

We have elected and believe we are organized and have operated in a manner that qualifies us to be taxed as a REIT under the Code. A REIT generally will not be subject to federal income tax on taxable income that is distributed to stockholders. Furthermore, substantially all of our assets consist of qualified REIT real estate assets (of the type described in Code Section 856(c)(5)). We calculate that at least 75% of our assets were qualified REIT assets, as defined in the Code, as of December 31, 2015 and December 31, 2014. We also calculate that our revenues qualified for the 75% REIT income test and for the 95% REIT income test for years ended December 31, 2015, 2014 and 2013. We also met all REIT requirements regarding the ownership of our common stock and the distribution of our REIT taxable income. Therefore, as of December 31, 2015, 2014 and 2013, we believe that we qualified as a REIT under the Code.

We operate our business to be exempt from registration under the 1940 Act, and therefore we are required to invest a substantial majority of our assets in loans secured by mortgages on real estate and real estate-related assets. Subject to maintaining our REIT qualification and our 1940 Act exemption, we do not have any limitations on the amounts we may invest in any of our targeted asset classes.

Looking forward, we cannot predict the percentage of our assets that will be invested in each asset class or whether we will invest in other classes of investments. We may change our investment strategy and policies without a vote of our stockholders.

Business Environment

The interest rate environment over the last three years has been extremely volatile. During that period, we have experienced many fluctuations in the 10-year Treasury yield that have exceeded 50 basis points (0.50%) in a short timeframe. More broadly, the global fixed income, equity and commodity markets experienced market turbulence and increased volatility during 2015 as investors braced and waited for the Federal Reserve Bank to increase rates.

During this volatile market period, we have continued to acquire investments that we believe provide a risk-adjusted return and income that support the dividend that we distribute to our investors.

Investment Portfolio

For our credit portfolio, we acquired, in the third quarter of 2014, the subordinate notes and call rights with respect to seven residential mortgage loan securitizations sponsored by Springleaf Financial. As planned, we exercised the calls rights to acquire the remaining residential mortgage loans, and then securitized those mortgage loans, for one of the

Springleaf transactions in 2014 and for three of the Springleaf transactions that were eligible to be called in 2015. By exercising our call rights and securitizing the remaining mortgage loans, we were able to increase structural leverage while reducing interest costs on our investment in the mortgage loans. In addition, we executed one other securitization of seasoned subprime collateral in the second quarter of 2015.

To reduce the rate sensitivity of our Agency portfolio, we decreased our exposure to Agency MBS by more than \$2.5 billion during 2015. We also sold Agency MBS with a 4% coupon for Agency MBS with a 3.5% coupon to mitigate prepayment risk as rates declined at certain points during 2015. At December 31, 2014, our portfolio of 4% Agency MBS was 75% of our total Agency MBS compared to 29% by December 31, 2015, while our portfolio of 3.5% Agency MBS increased from 18% at December 31, 2014 to 35% at December 31, 2015. We also significantly increased our Agency CMBS portfolio in 2015. We began the year with less than \$250 million of Agency CMBS and increased this portfolio over \$700 million to \$952 million as of December 31, 2015. Our Agency CMBS portfolio is less interest rate sensitive than our Agency MBS portfolio because our Agency CMBS have lock out periods and prepayment penalties that protect the portfolio against prepayment risk, as well as attractive risk adjusted yields.

Business Operations

As discussed in “Item 1 Business” section, in August 2015, we became internally managed. Specifically, we now have employees and no longer rely on a third-party manager to operate our business. In connection with the Internalization, we have relocated to new office space in New York, and hired the additional staff necessary to complete the internalization. Further, before year end, we built, tested, and completed the construction of a new data center, back up facility and have an independent software suite. We expect operating expenses to be lower on an internalized basis compared to the prior externally managed model and have eliminated certain inherent conflicts particular to externally managed companies.

Stock Buy Back

In August 2015, we announced a \$250 million stock buyback plan. Immediately following the announcement, we entered into a share repurchase agreement with Annaly to acquire the 9 million shares owned by Annaly. We used the remaining amount available after the purchase of shares owned by Annaly to purchase shares in the open market during the third and fourth quarter of 2015. The stock buyback reduced shares outstanding by 18 million shares or 9% of shares outstanding prior to the buyback. On February 18, 2016, the Board of Directors increased the existing share buyback program by \$100 million to \$350 million.

Net Income Summary

The table below presents our net income on a GAAP basis for the years ended December 31, 2015, 2014 and 2013.

Net Income
(dollars in thousands)
(unaudited)

	For the Year Ended		
	December 31, 2015	December 31, 2014	December 31, 2013
Net Interest Income:			
Interest income (1)	\$872,737	\$	