



Council on Vertical Urbanism

Previously the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat



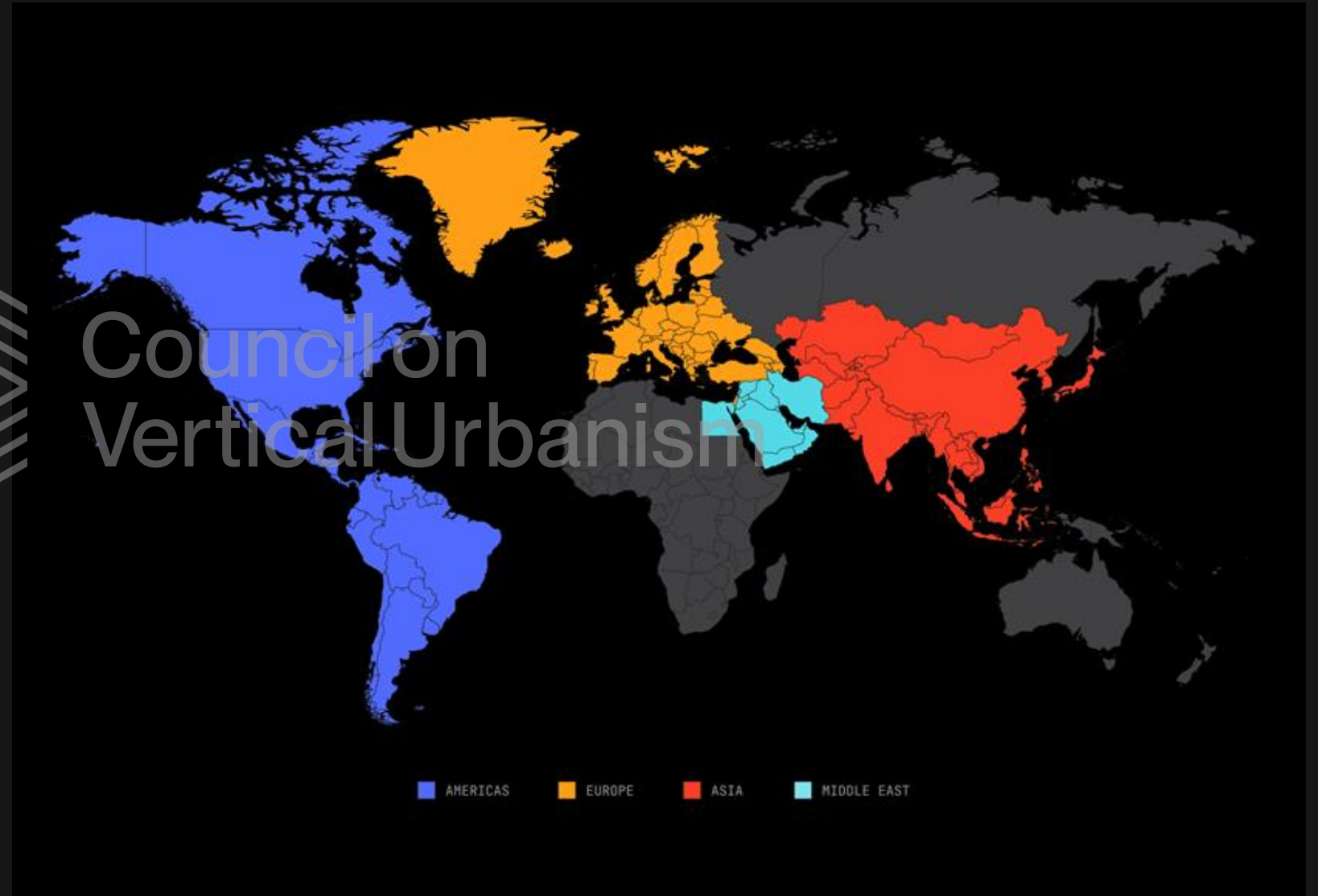
The **Council on Vertical Urbanism (CVU)** is the leading global authority on tall buildings and sustainable, resilient cities. We explore how responsible density, upward growth, and three-dimensional solutions can support more livable and healthier cities, especially in the face of rapid urbanization and the effects of climate change.

Regional hubs

Americas, Europe, Asia & Middle East

CVU has **six offices worldwide**: the Chicago Headquarters, Academic offices in Chicago and Toronto, a Research office in Venice, an office in Riyadh and the Asia Headquarters in Shanghai.

Our members form a truly global network. CVU offices on **three continents** and regional chapters, committees, and representatives in over **50 countries** means that you can get involved wherever you are in the world.

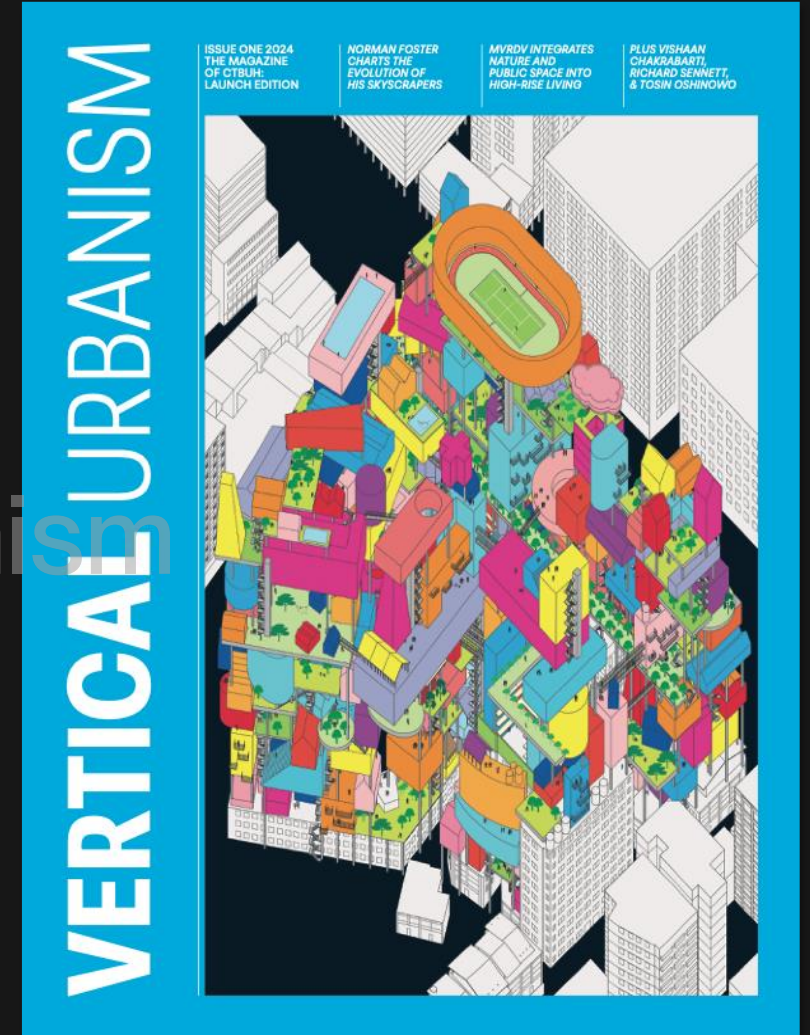


Research-driven publications

Access cutting-edge resources



Our flagship magazine represents a holistic approach to understanding and improving the cities in which we live, exploring how increased density and vertical growth can support more sustainable and healthy cities.



Height criteria & “Tallest” titles

Fortify your industry presence

The Council is perhaps best-known to the public as the arbiter of tall building height and the global authority that bestows titles such as “**The World’s Tallest Building.**”

Council on Verticality

World

archdaily
the world's most visited architecture website

ArchDaily Articles CTBUH Names Norway's Mjøstårnet the Tallest Timber Building in the World

CTBUH Names Norway's Mjøstårnet the Tallest Timber Building in the World



Written by Katherine Allen March 15, 2019

The Council for Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat has announced that Norway's Mjøstårnet tower is, at 85.4 meters, officially the world's tallest timber building. Beyond the unique distinction, the tower is also Norway's tallest mixed-use structure and third tallest building.

This announcement comes in concert with a new amendment of CTBUH's Height Criteria, the guideline widely considered the authority on tall buildings around the world. The new update officially recognizes timber as a structural material, allowing CTBUH to monitor developments in timber construction. Given the recent spate of timber-based projects around the world, this update is expected to be of interest to both established stakeholders and the general public.

"Outsiders may perhaps think that there is great risk involved in using a new assembly method on such a large and prestigious project. However, following many years of development, we were ready to take a new step," says Rune Abrahamsen, director at Moelven Limtre.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Daily News

Who Decides What Building is Tallest? An Expert Explains
U.S. skyscrapers go spire to spire. New York wins bragging rights.

13 Nov 2013 by MIKE SEGAR

Second City is back in second place, at least when it comes to height. New York's [One World Trade Center](#) will officially open next year as America's tallest building, topping Chicago's [Willis Tower](#) by 325 feet (99 meters).

The distinction hinges on a definition. According to the [Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat](#), the needle atop the new trade center is a spire, not an antenna.

The Chicago-based council—an international organization that measures skyscrapers and arbitrates height records—defines a spire as a “vertical element that completes the architectural expression of the building and is intended as permanent.” By contrast, antennas, flagpoles, and signage are considered “functional-technical equipment subject to change.”

Translation: The 408-foot (124-meter) needle is part of One World Trade Center's architectural height of 1,776 feet (541 meters). The Willis (formerly Sears) Tower, America's tallest building for the past 40 years, stands a “mere” 1,451 feet (442 meters) tall.

To better understand the council and its criteria, we sat down with Timothy Johnson, the council's chair and a design partner at the firm [NBBJ](#).

People may be surprised to learn there's an organization that certifies building heights. How long has the council been around?

The council was started in 1969 by Lynn Beedle, a structural-engineering professor at Lehigh University. He and [Willis Tower designer] Fazlur Khan, a structural engineer and professor at [the Illinois Institute of Technology], brought this group together because a lot of tall buildings were being designed and erected in the Chicago area and around the U.S. It was such a new topic then, and they wanted to disseminate [accurate] information to the country and the world at large.

These two gentlemen were both academics and professionals—very connected in the world. So we very quickly became a global organization, and conferences began happening all over the world wherever there were tall buildings.

The council's height committee made this determination about One World Trade Center. Who's on that committee, and how does it work?

It's multidisciplinary. There are architects, engineers, contractors, developers, academics, specialty consultants, suppliers—the same demographic as the rest of our organization. The height committee is the highest level of leadership we have: our board of trustees, our global advisory group, and a few [other experts] we handpicked. At this last meeting, we had 25 people representing 13 different countries and 19 cities.

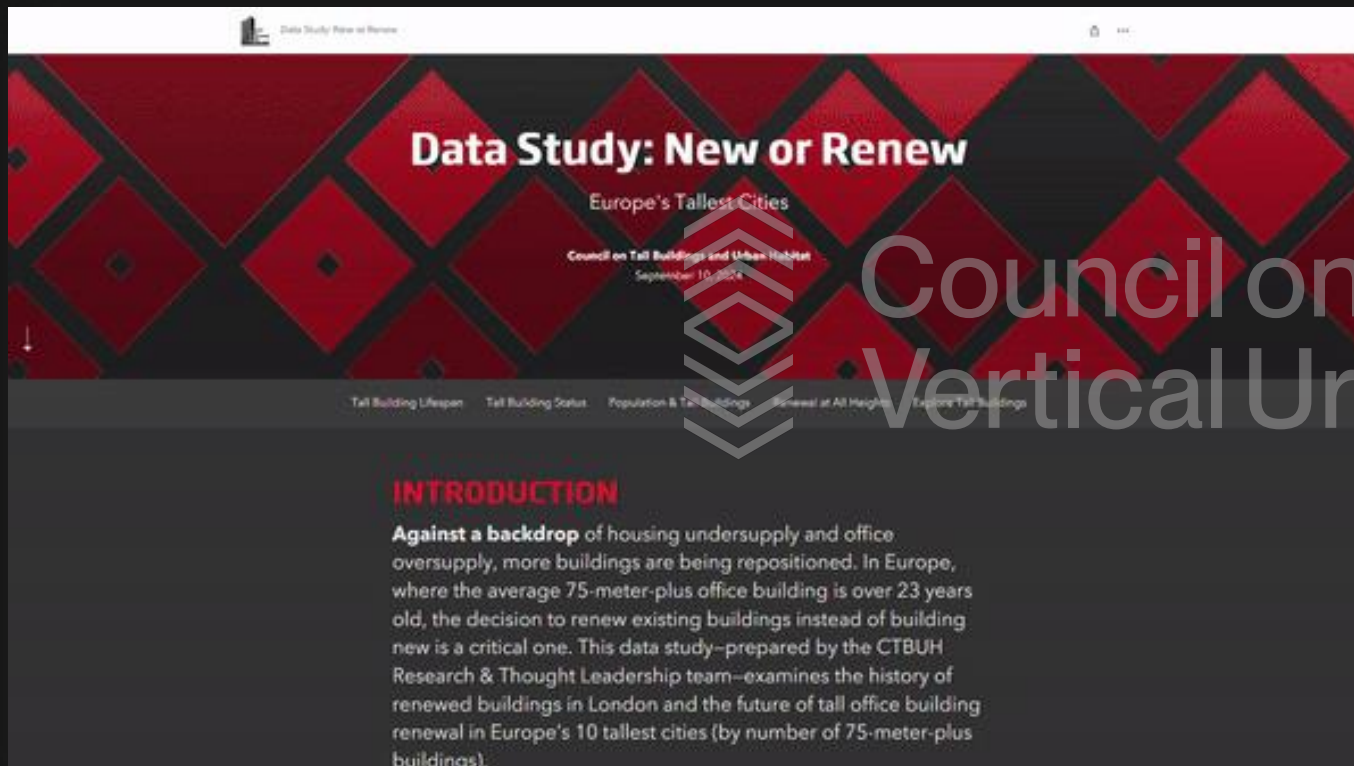
Is there an agreed-upon standard—a working definition of “tall building”?

The simplest way to put it is that you need vertical transportation to get around it. But it's hard to give a technical answer. We've never said, “A building has to be at least 70 stories” or something like that. But we don't just look at building height. Part of our name concerns urban habitat. We want to know: How do tall buildings become part of the cityscape? And how does that become part of solving some of the population-expansion challenges we have today?

The council has three criteria for measuring building height. What are they?



With 16 categories, our renowned annual awards program **recognizes the projects, practices, and individuals that make extraordinary contributions** to the advancement of tall buildings, the urban environment, sustainability, and human well-being around the world.

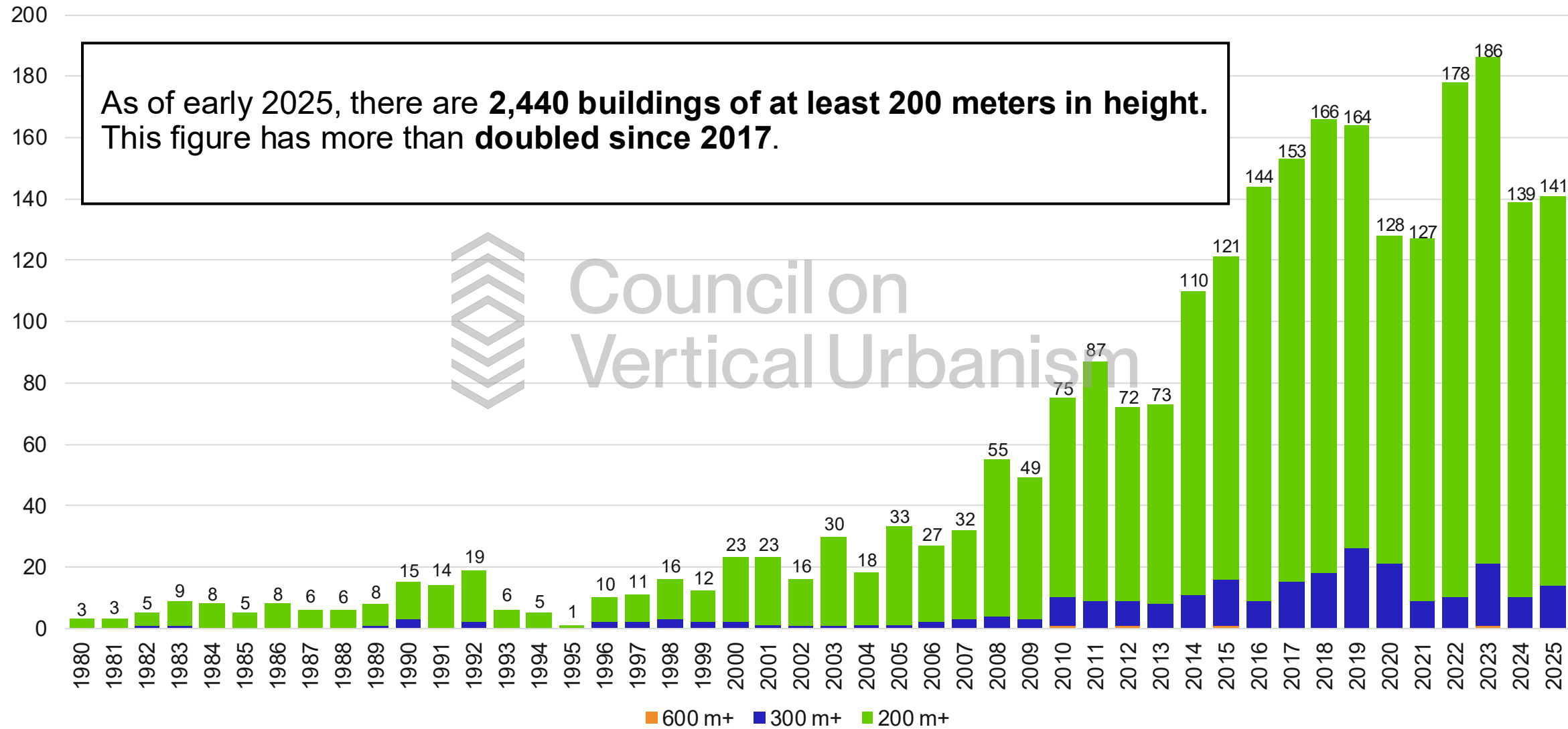


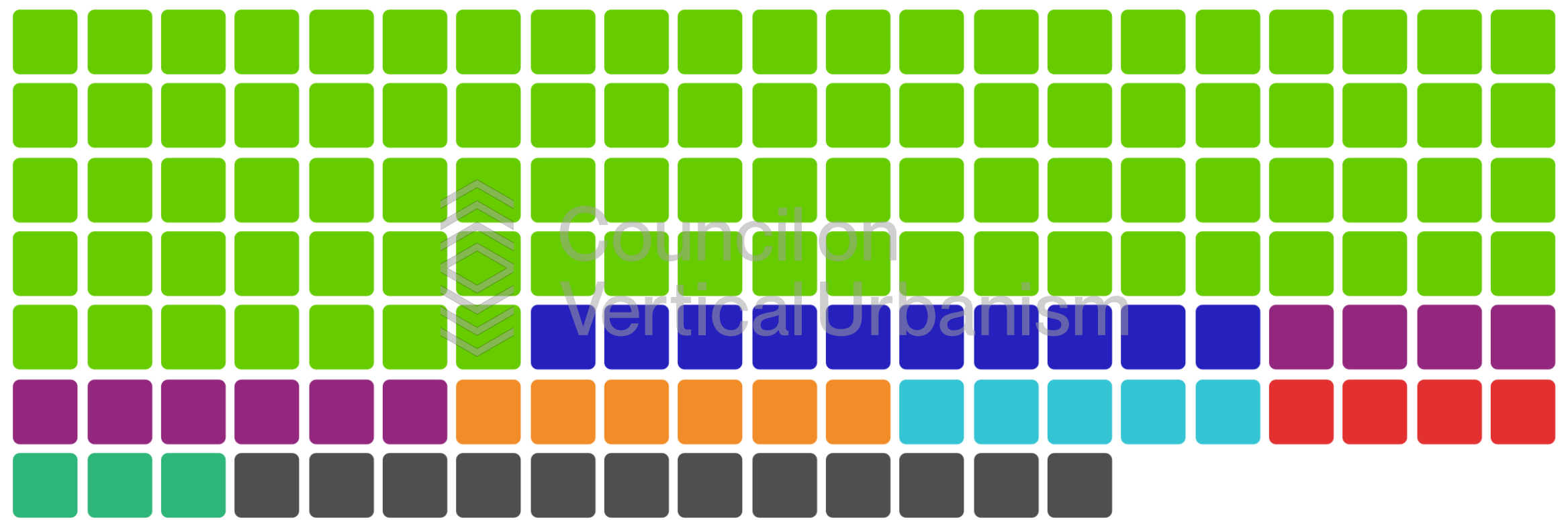
Leveraging our **global database of 40,000+ tall buildings**, we conduct original, data-driven analysis to reveal emerging trends, performance metrics, and typological shifts shaping the future of tall buildings and dense urban environments.

Global Trends & Forecasts

The State of the Tall Building Industry. A Global Perspective and the UK

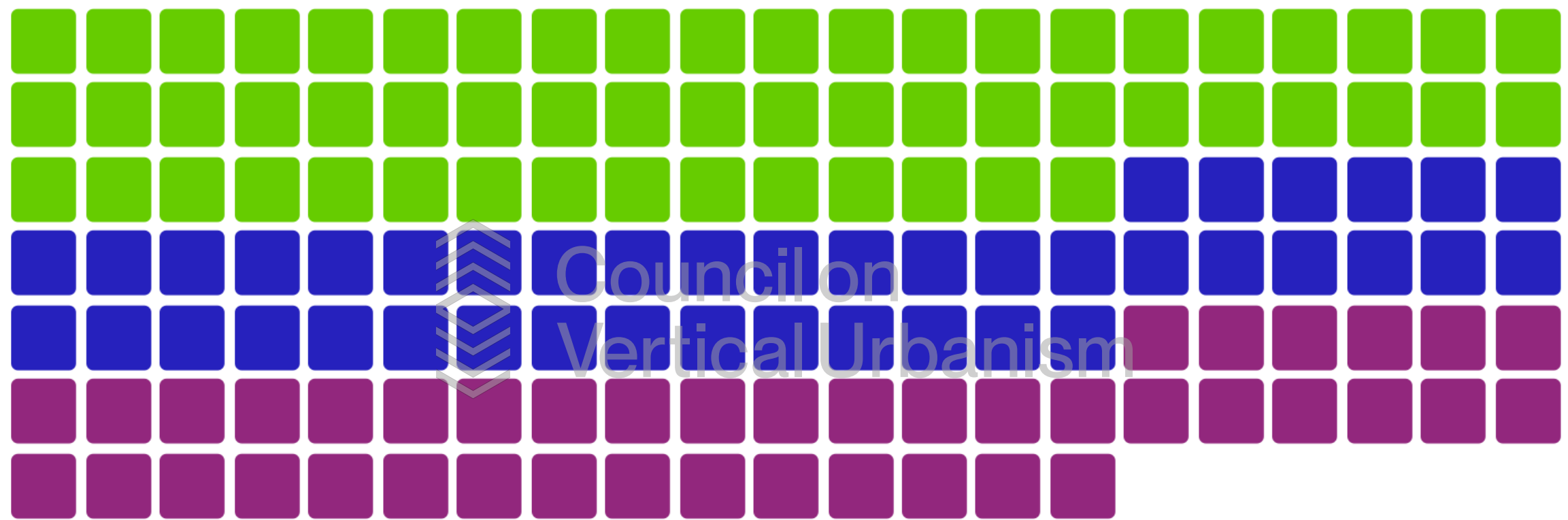






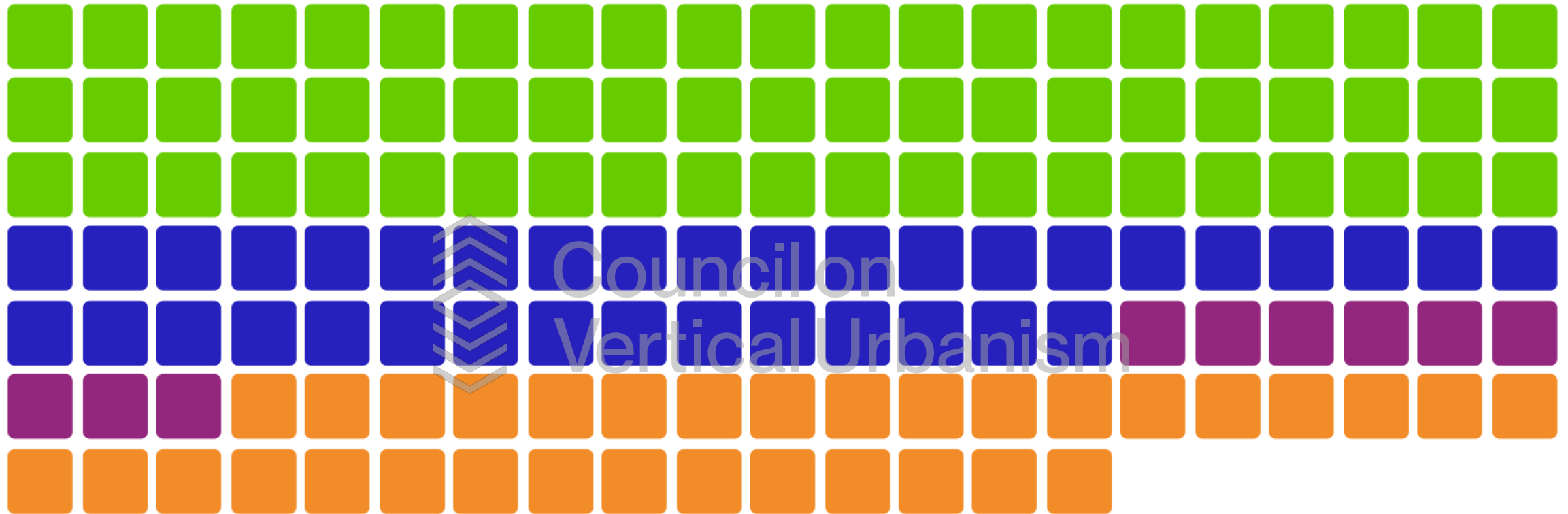
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■ China ■ United States ■ Malaysia
■ India ■ Canada ■ Iraq ■ Japan ■ Other



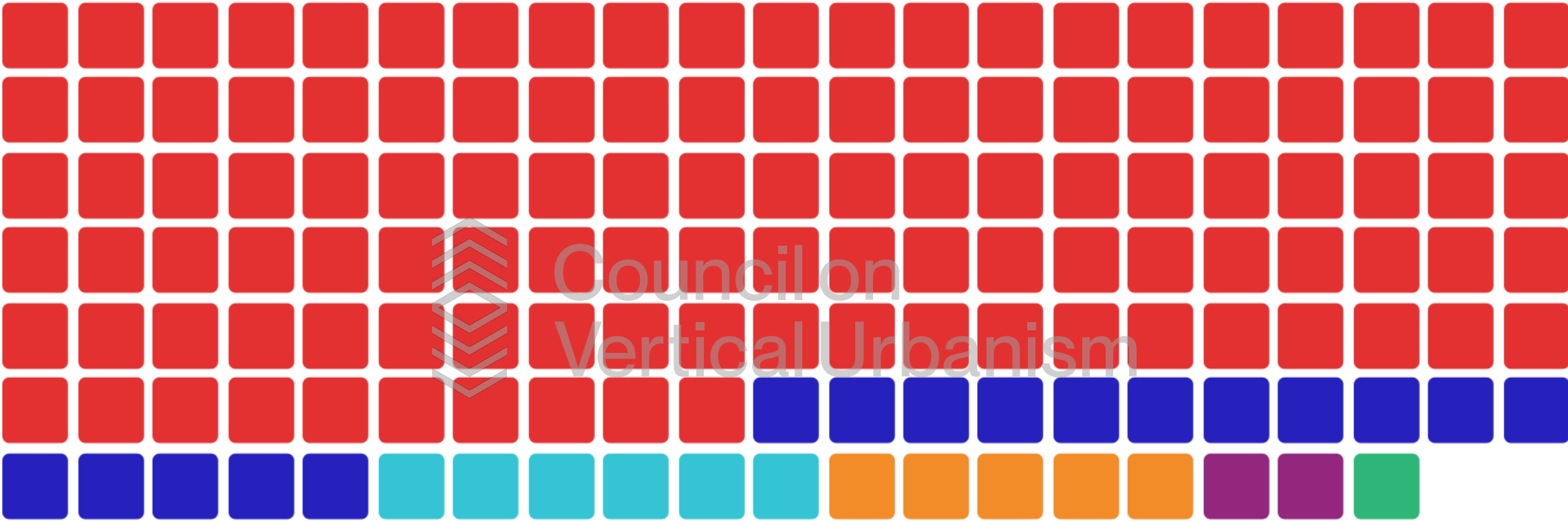
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- All-Office
- Mixed-Use
- All-Residential
- Other



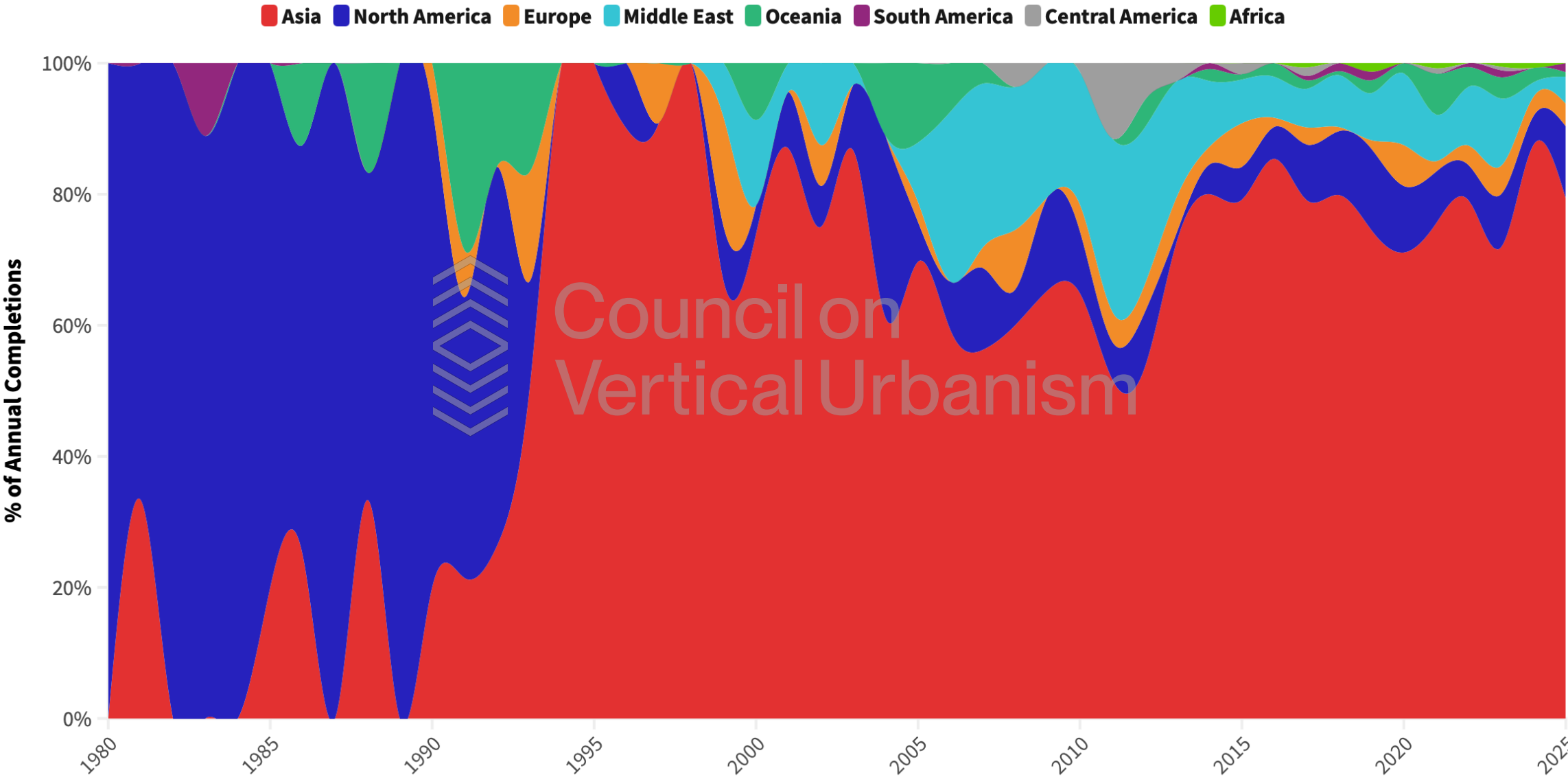
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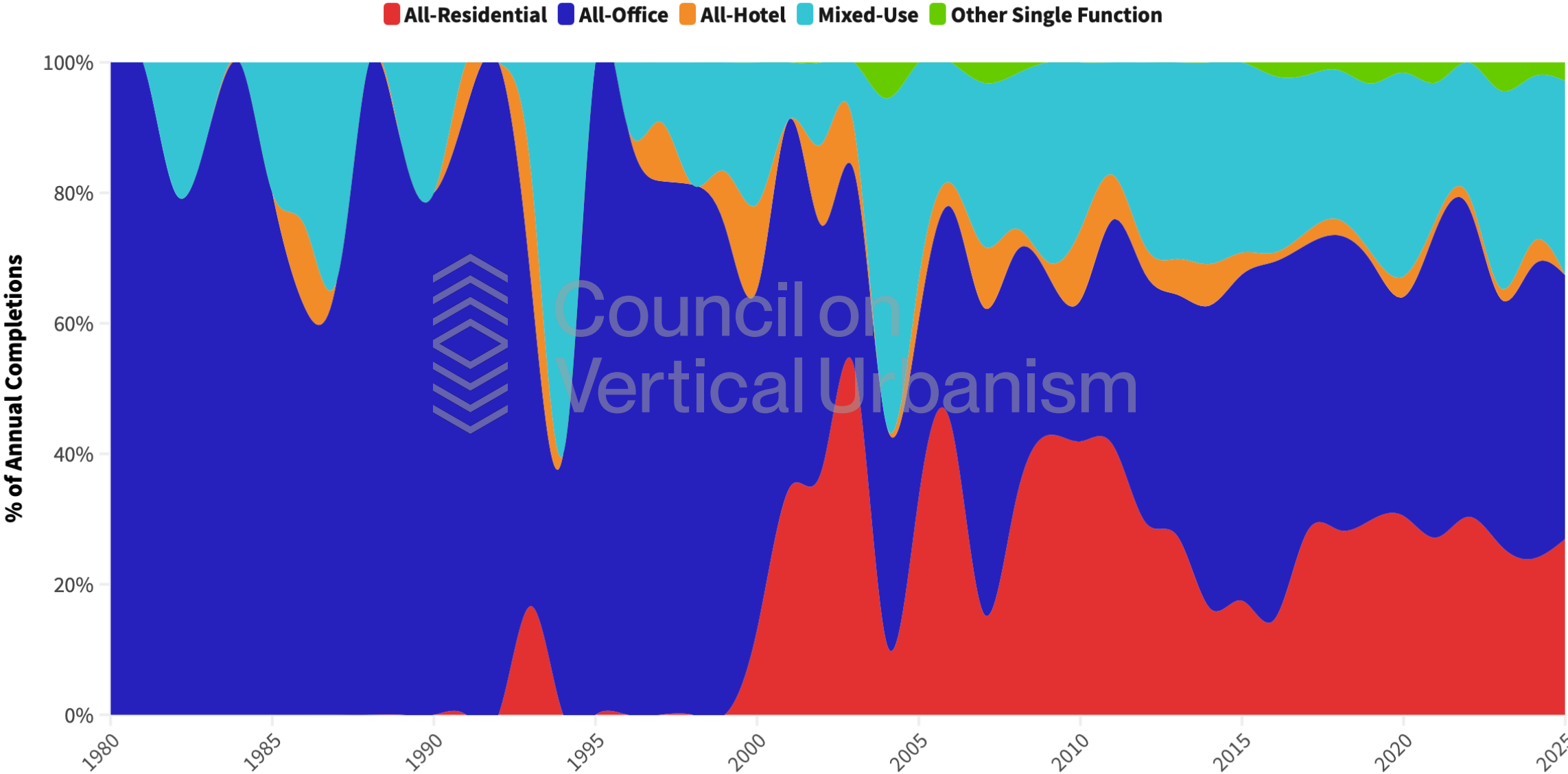
■ All-Concrete
 ■ Composite
 ■ All-Steel
■ Other / Unknown

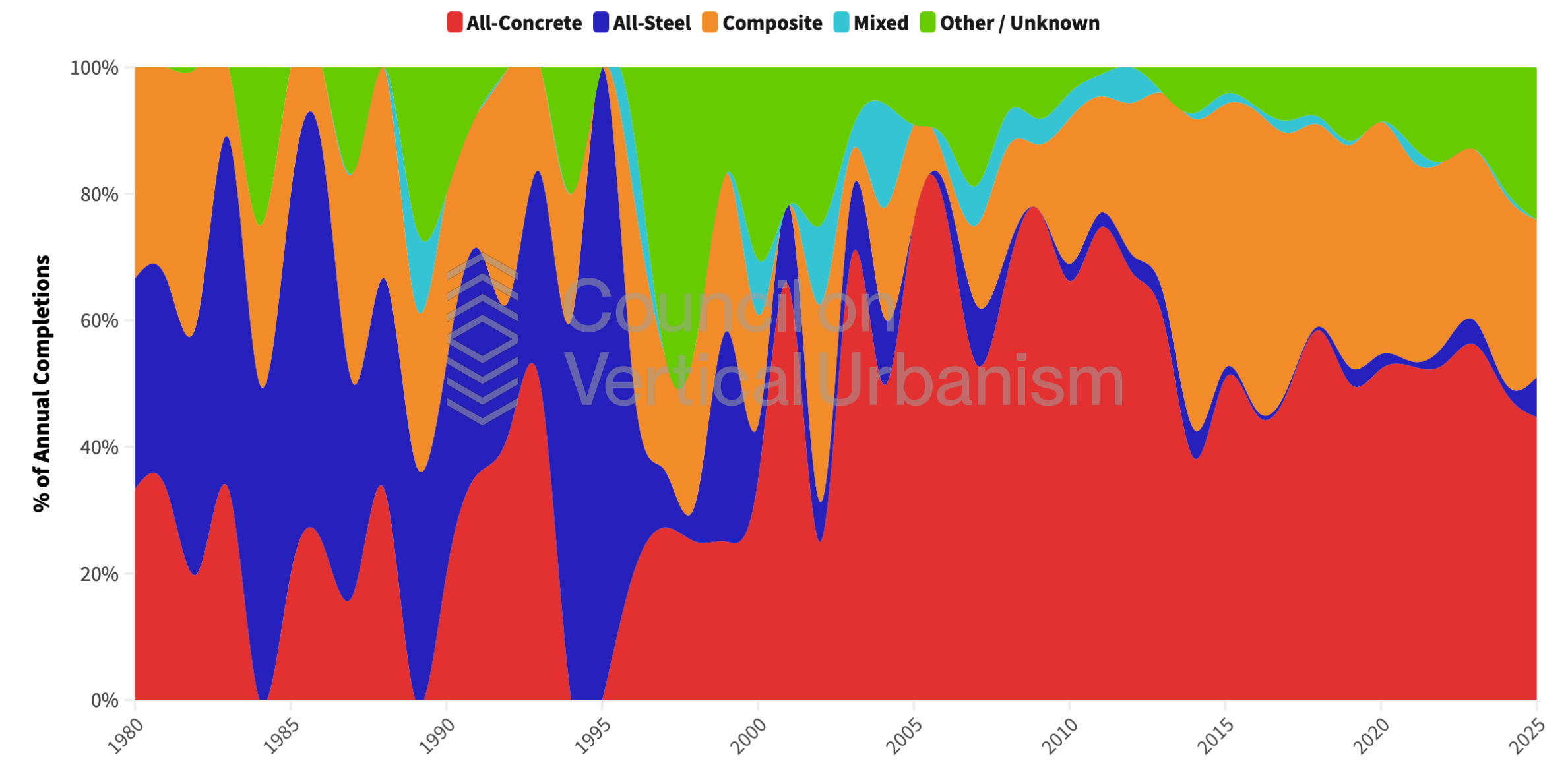


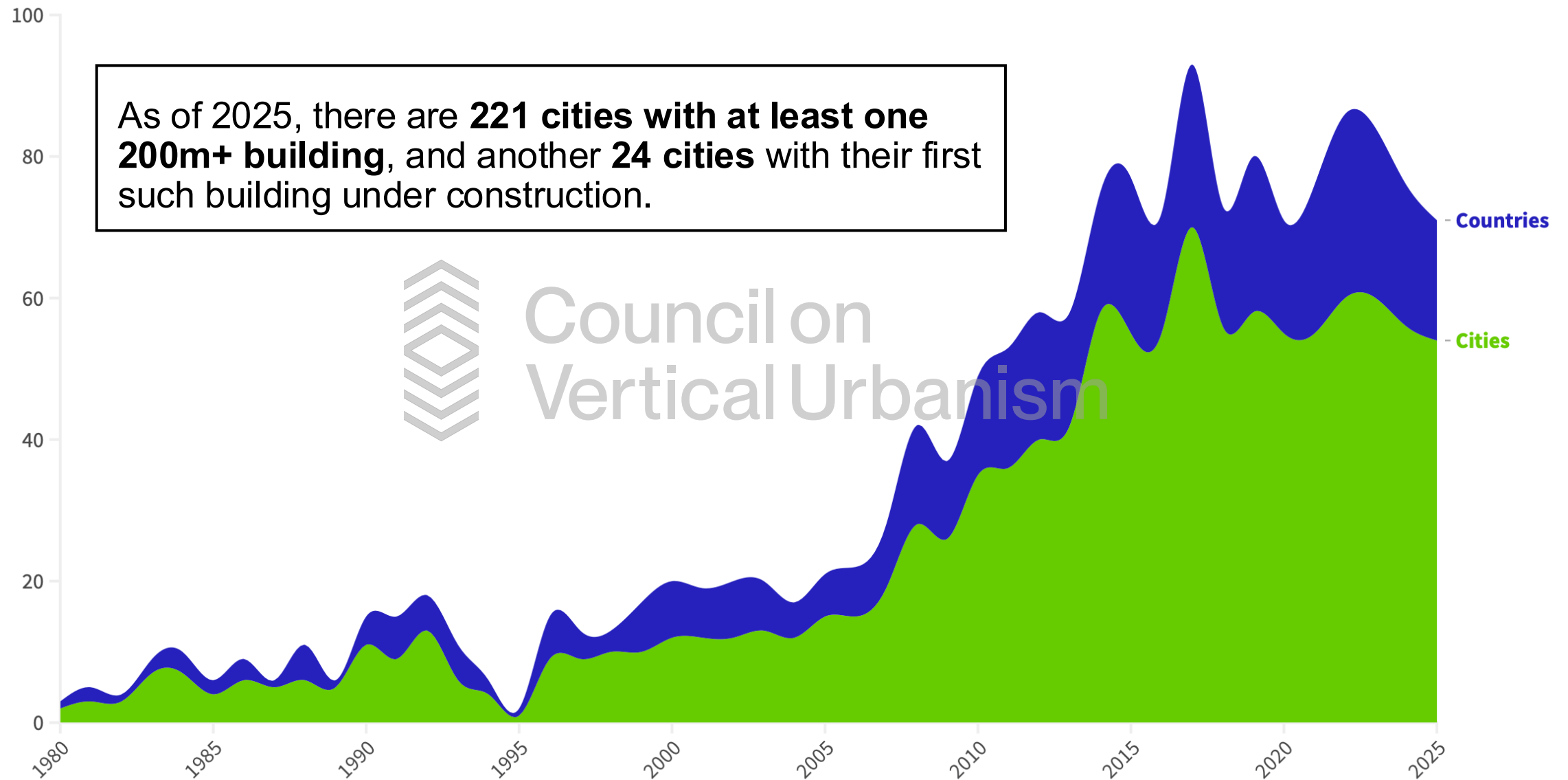
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- Asia
- North America
- Middle East
- Europe
- South America
- Oceania



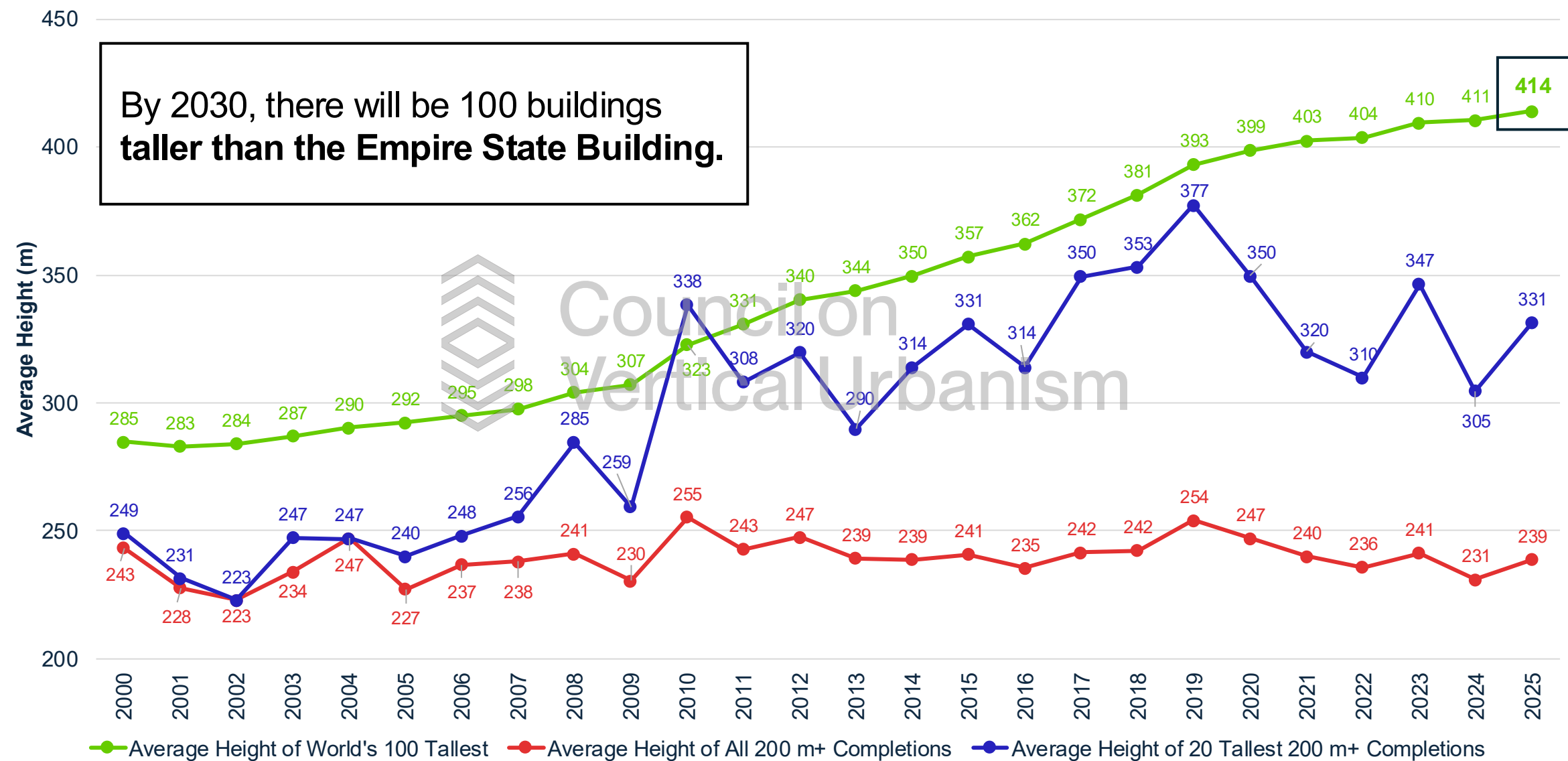


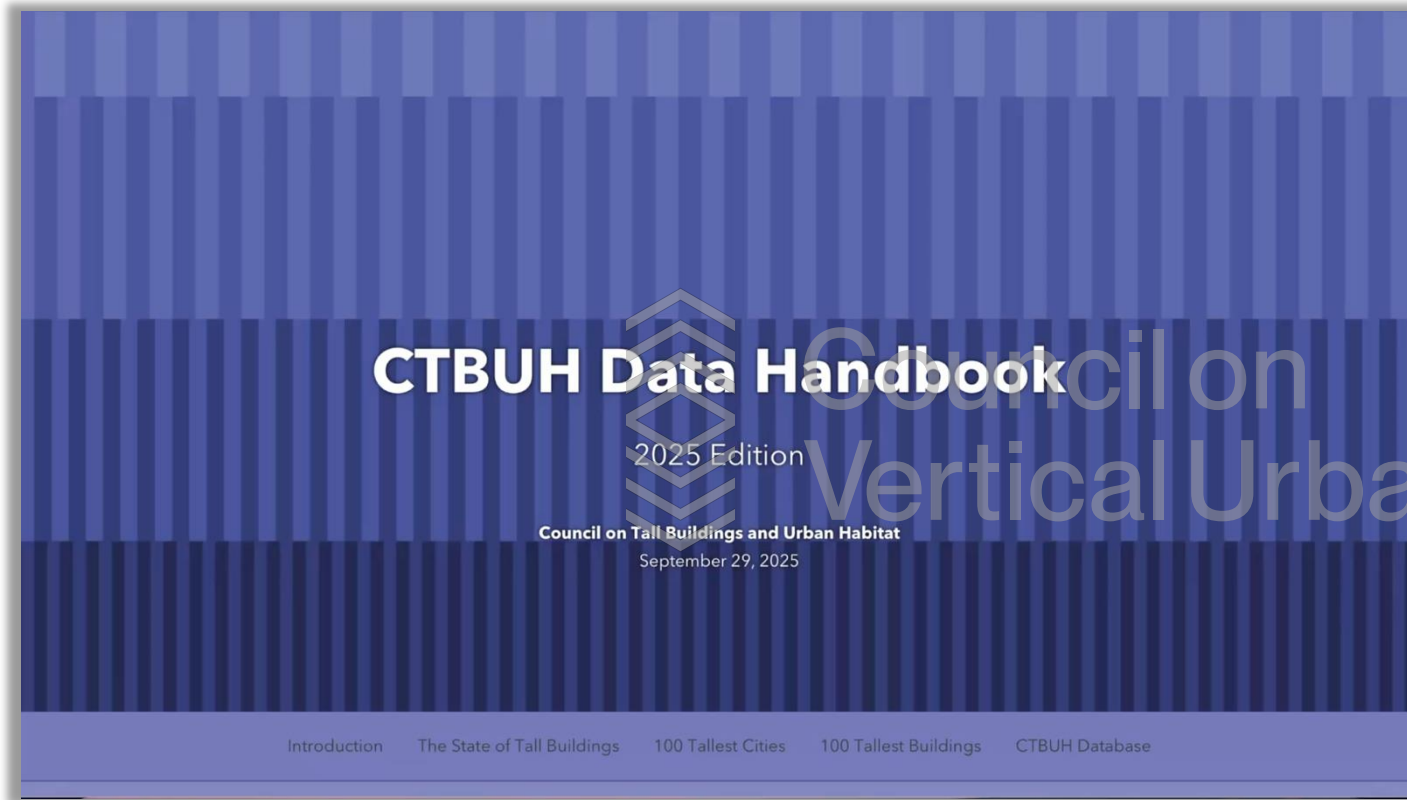




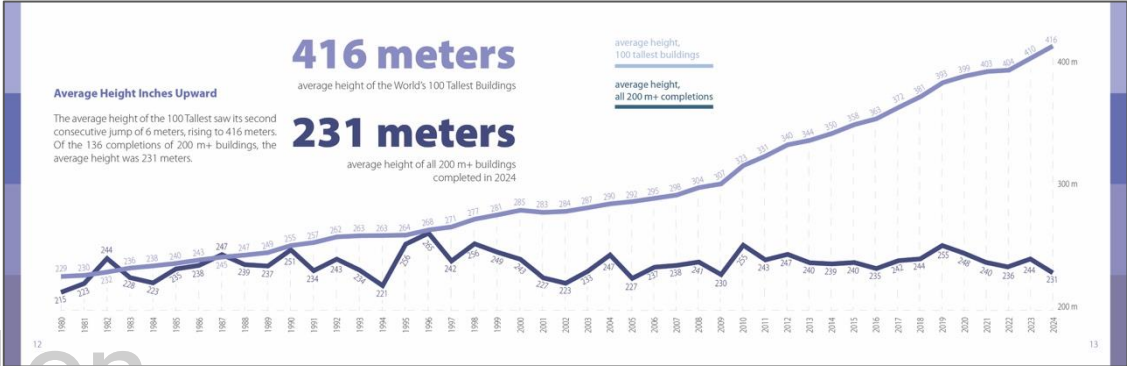
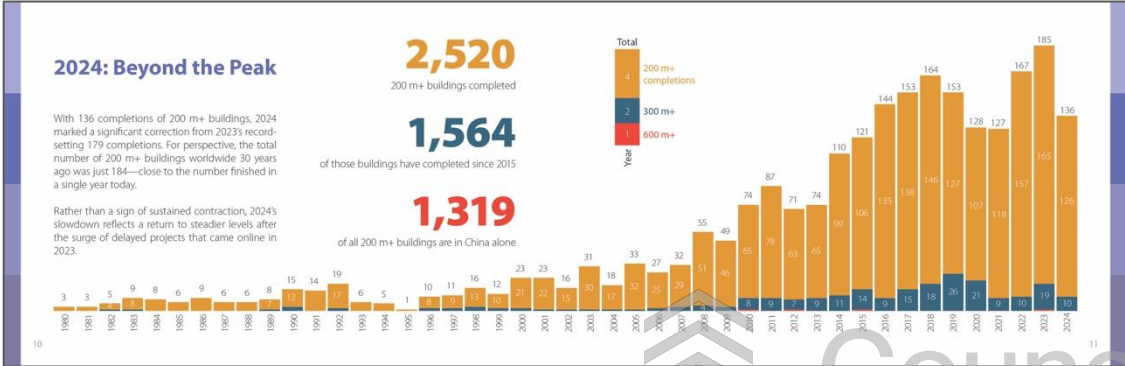
Tall Building Trends

Average Height





Explore the Data Handbook Interactive Website



Explore the Data Handbook Interactive Website

Activity Report

Europe

Council on
Vertical Urbanism

The State of the Tall Building Industry. A Global Perspective and the UK





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2026 Global Activity Series







Council on
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2026 Global Activity Series

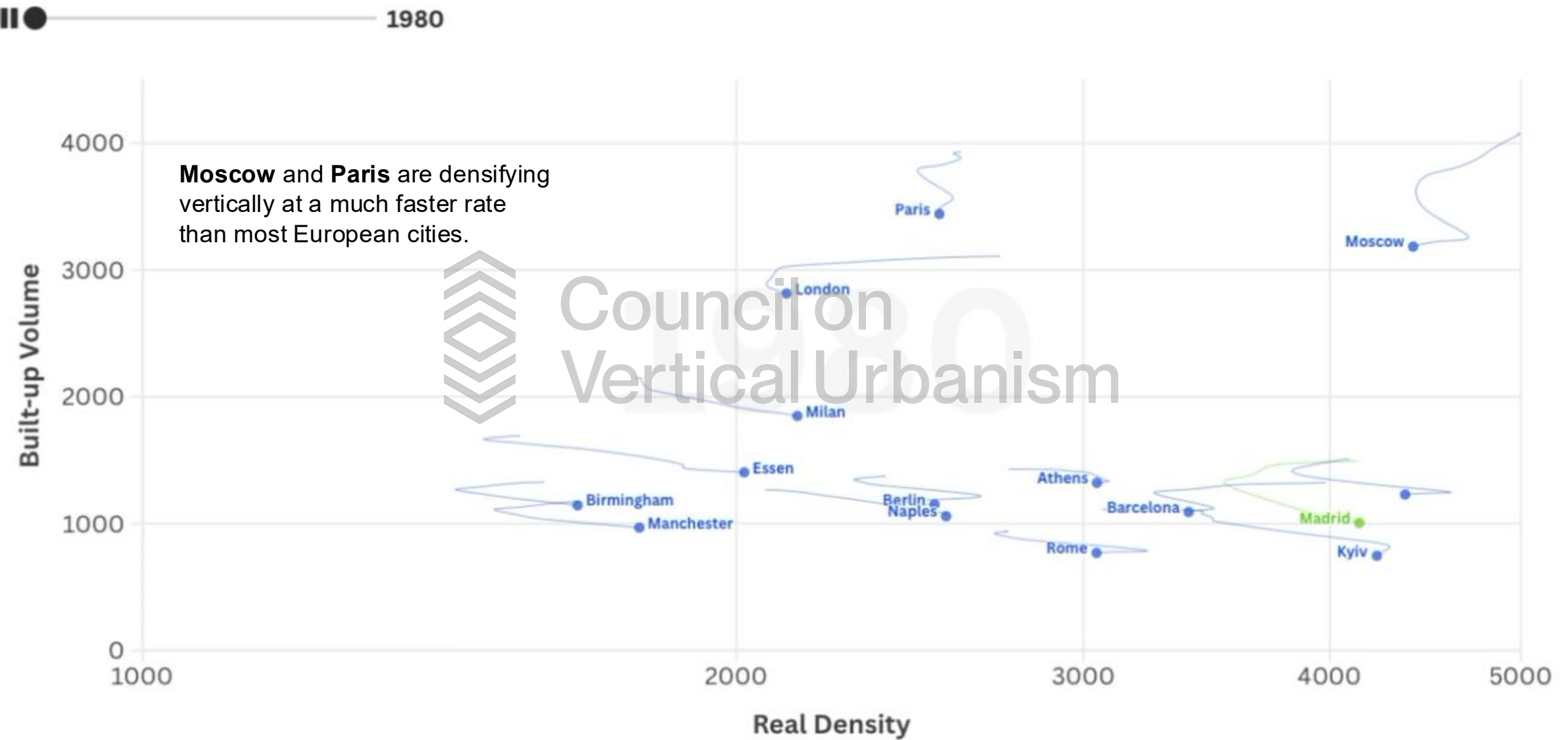
Q1: Tall Buildings and Urban Growth in the Americas

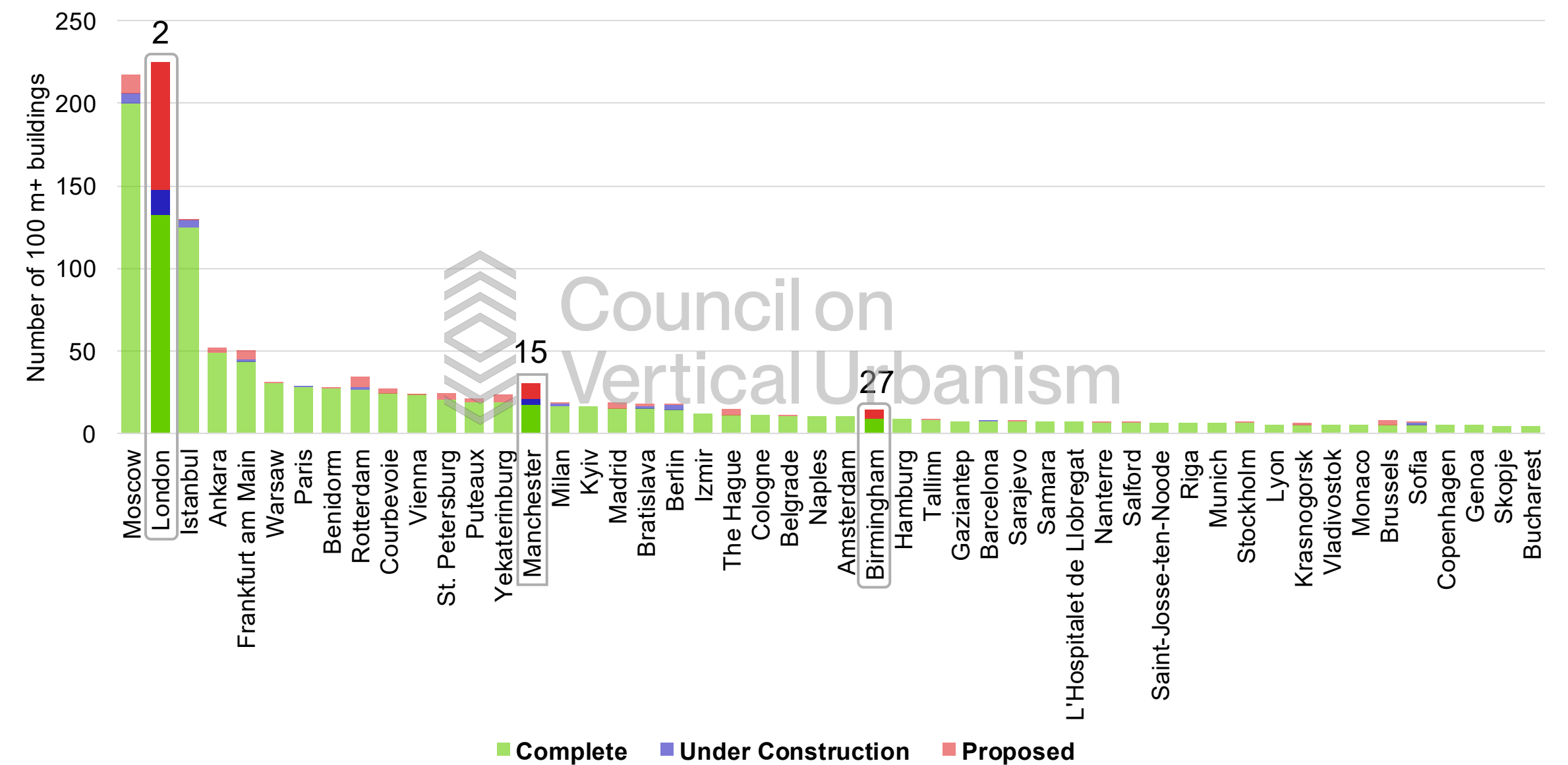
Council on Vertical Urbanism
March 6, 2026



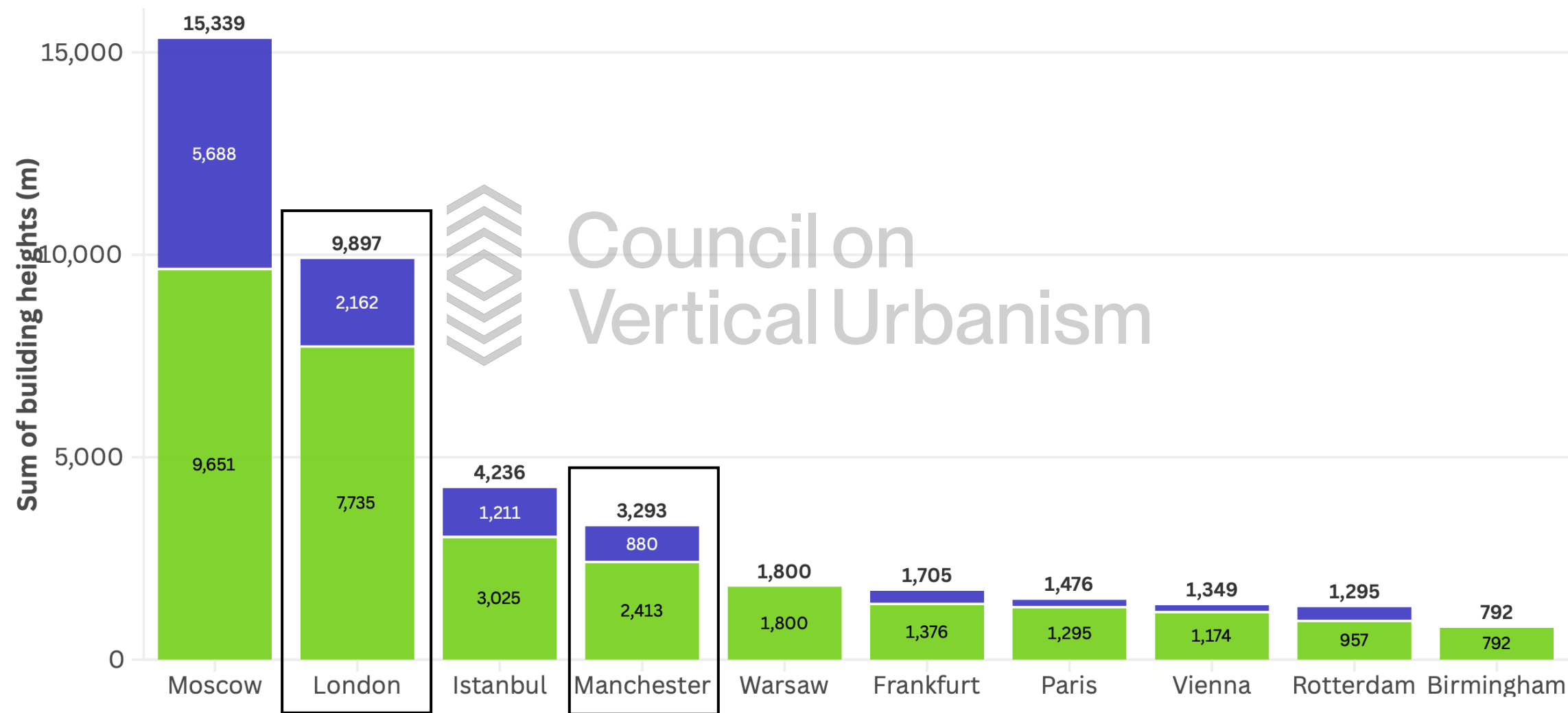
Scan to access the
most recent Global
Activity Report on
the Americas Region

The next report,
focused on Europe,
will be released in
mid-June 2026.

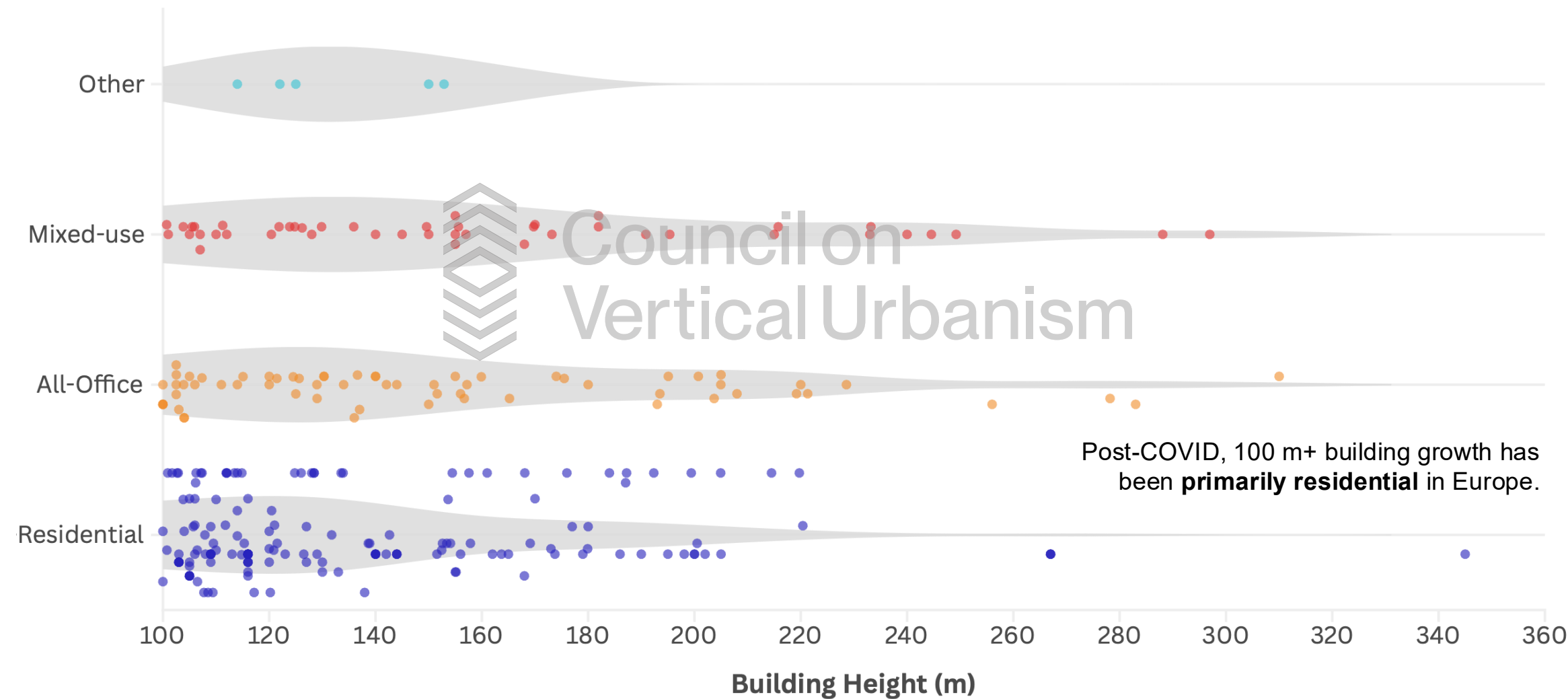




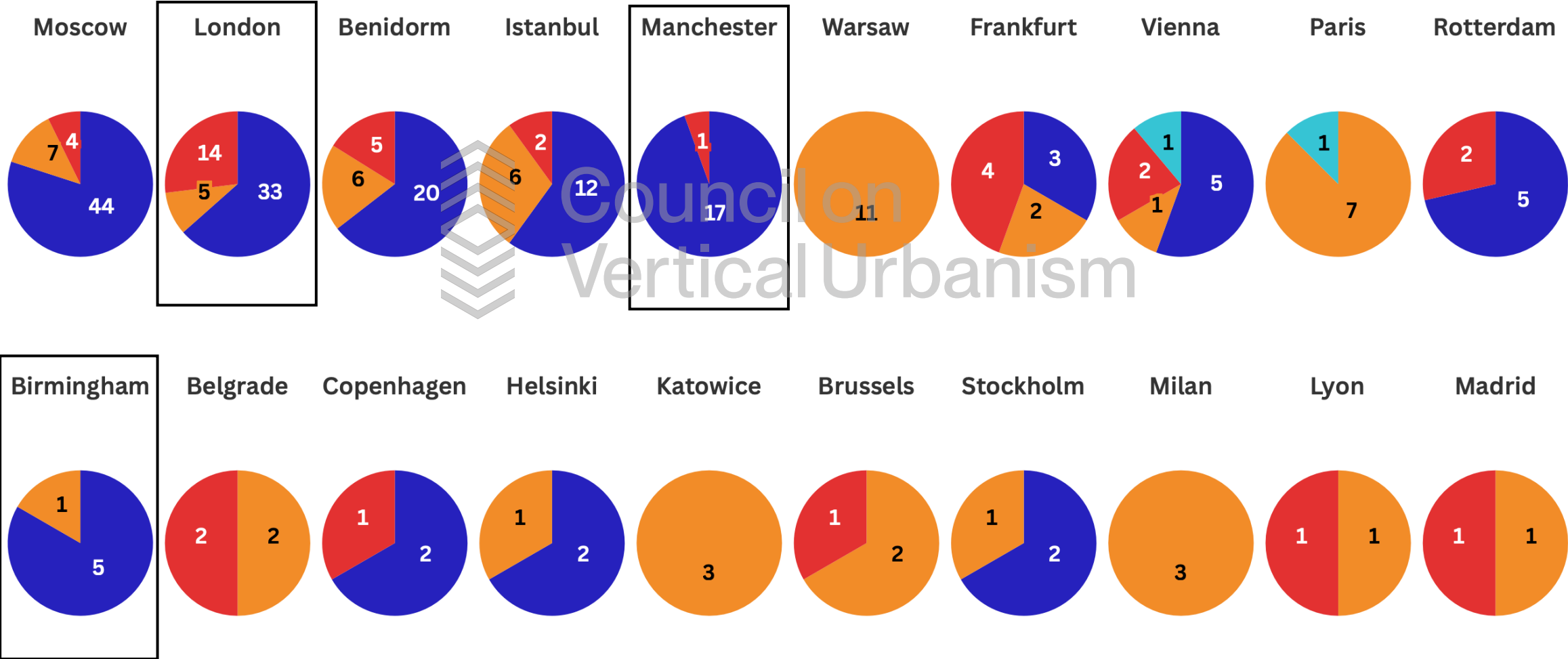
■ Post-COVID Completion ■ Under Construction



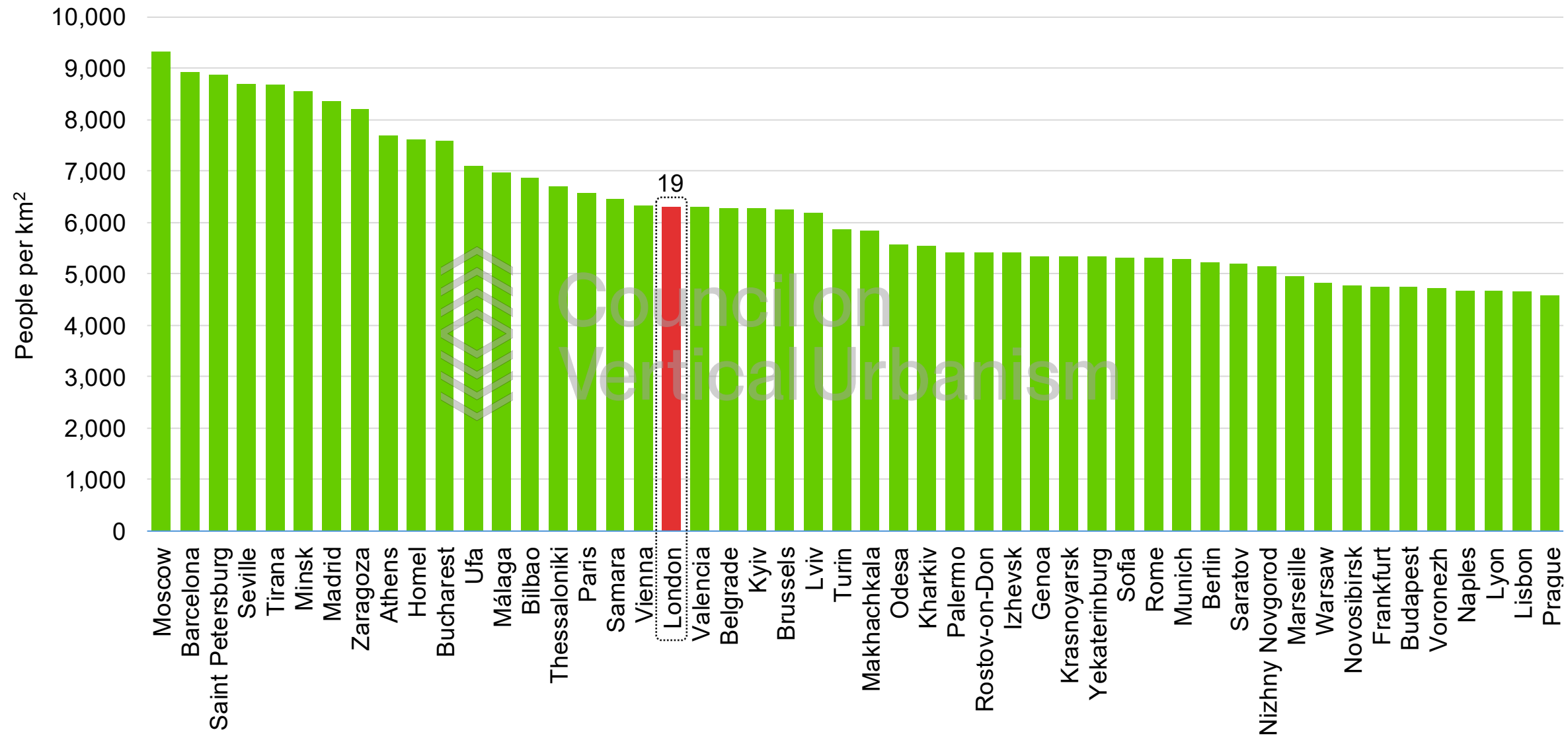
Building Function ● Other ● Mixed-use ● All-Office ● All-Residential

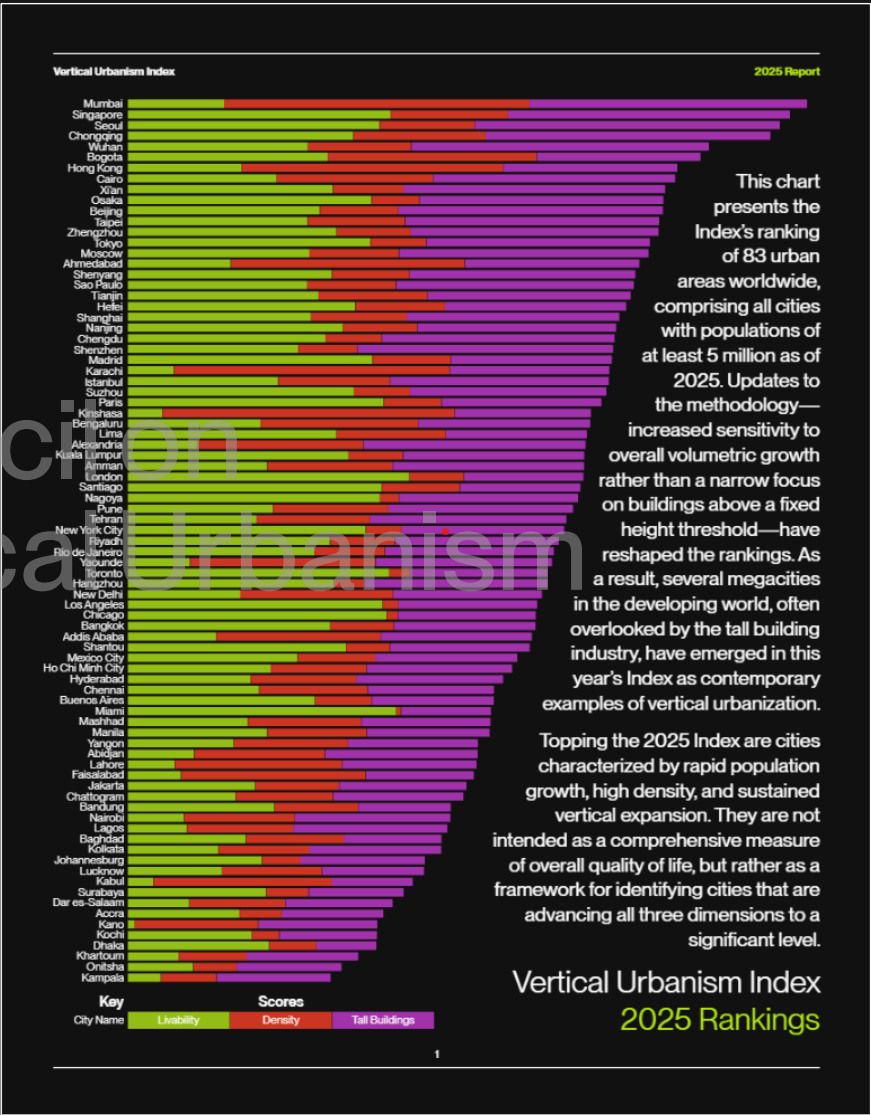
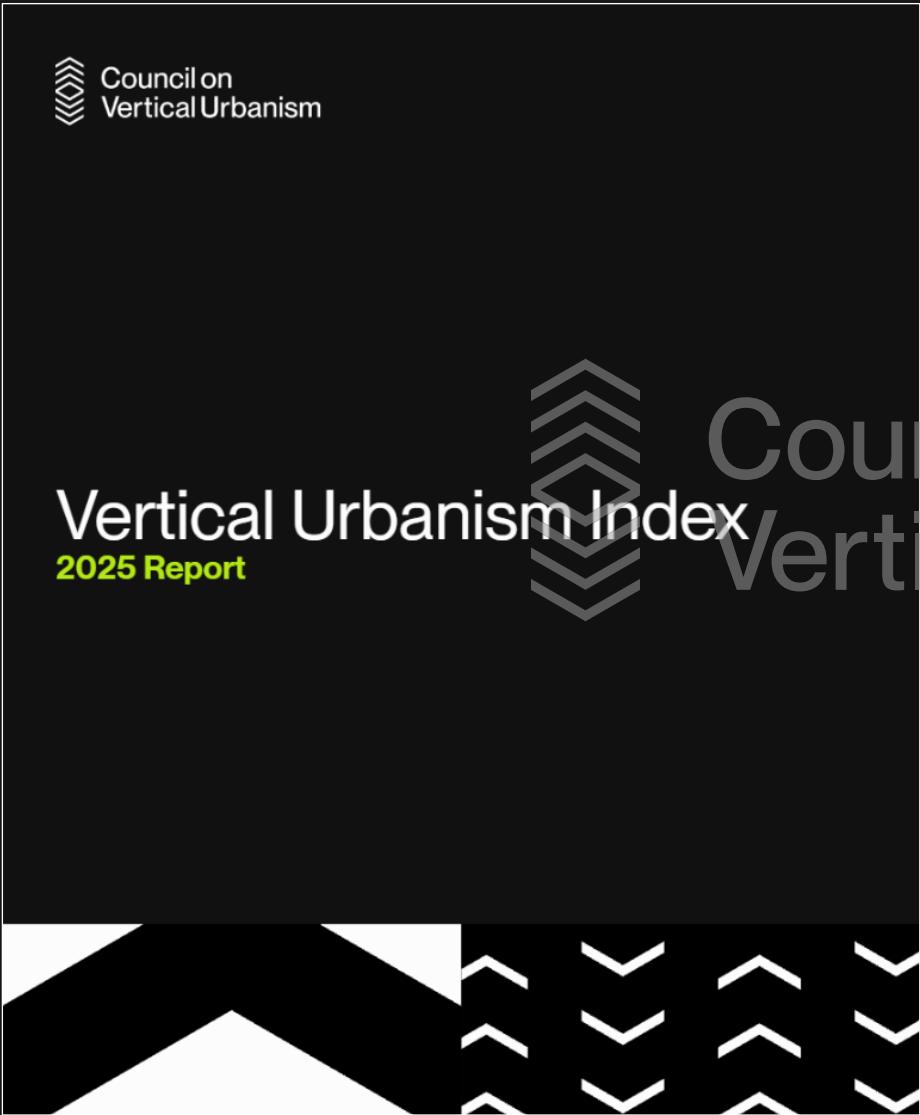


■ All-Residential ■ All-Office ■ Mixed-Use ■ Other

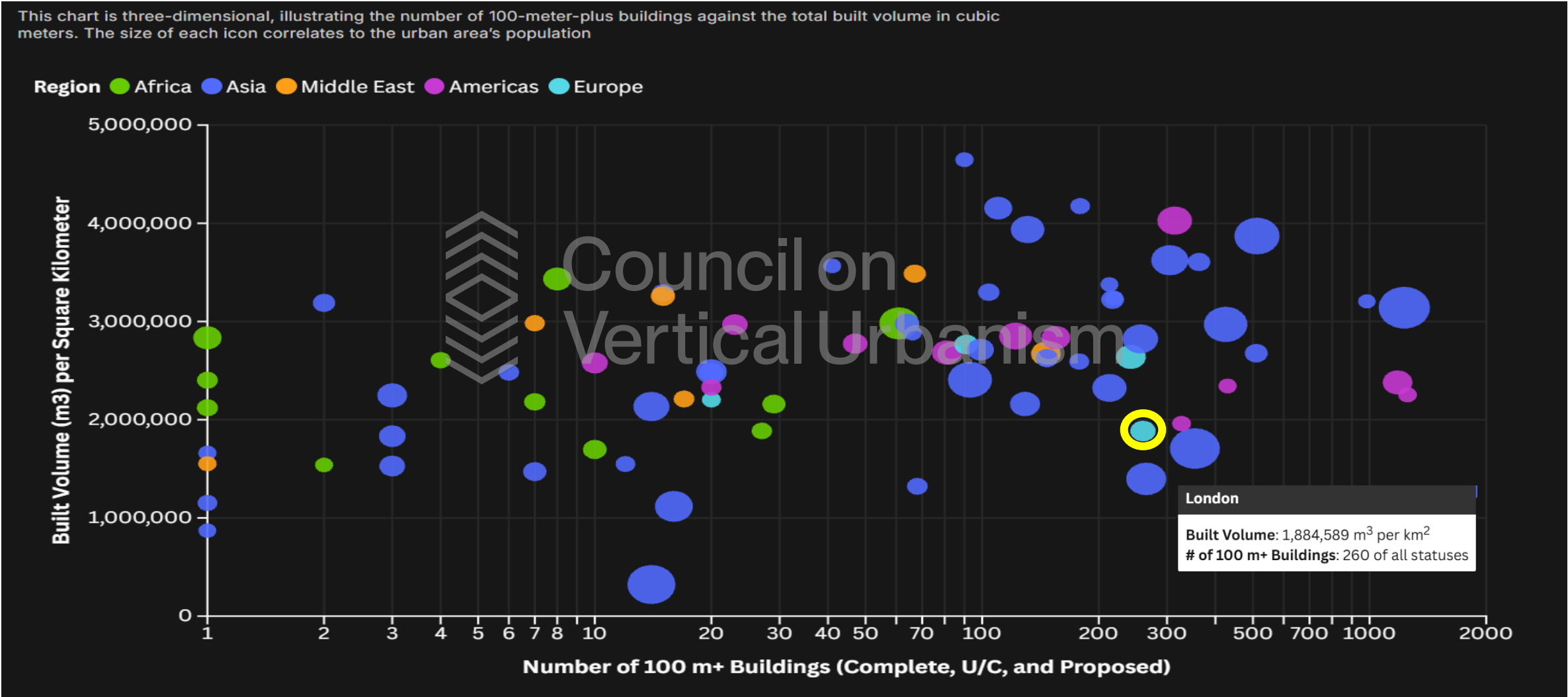


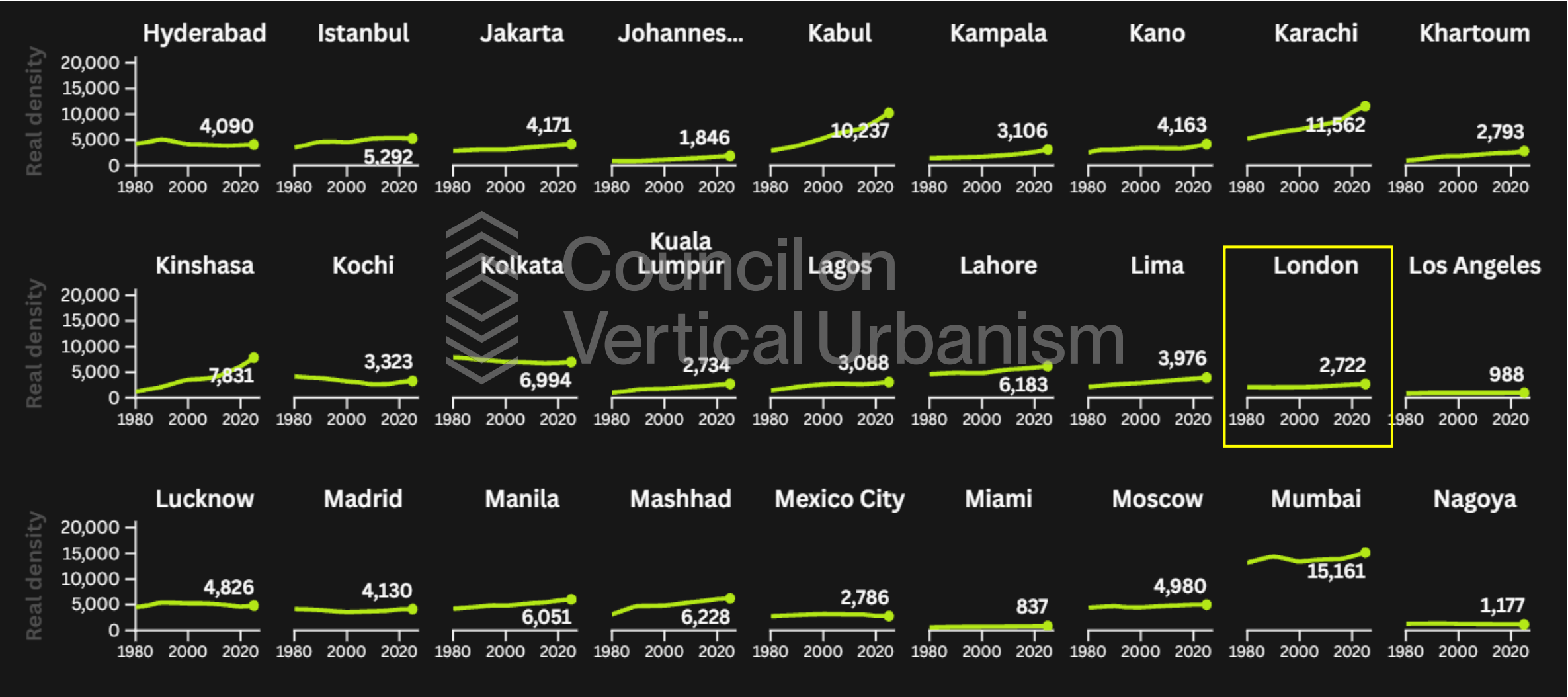


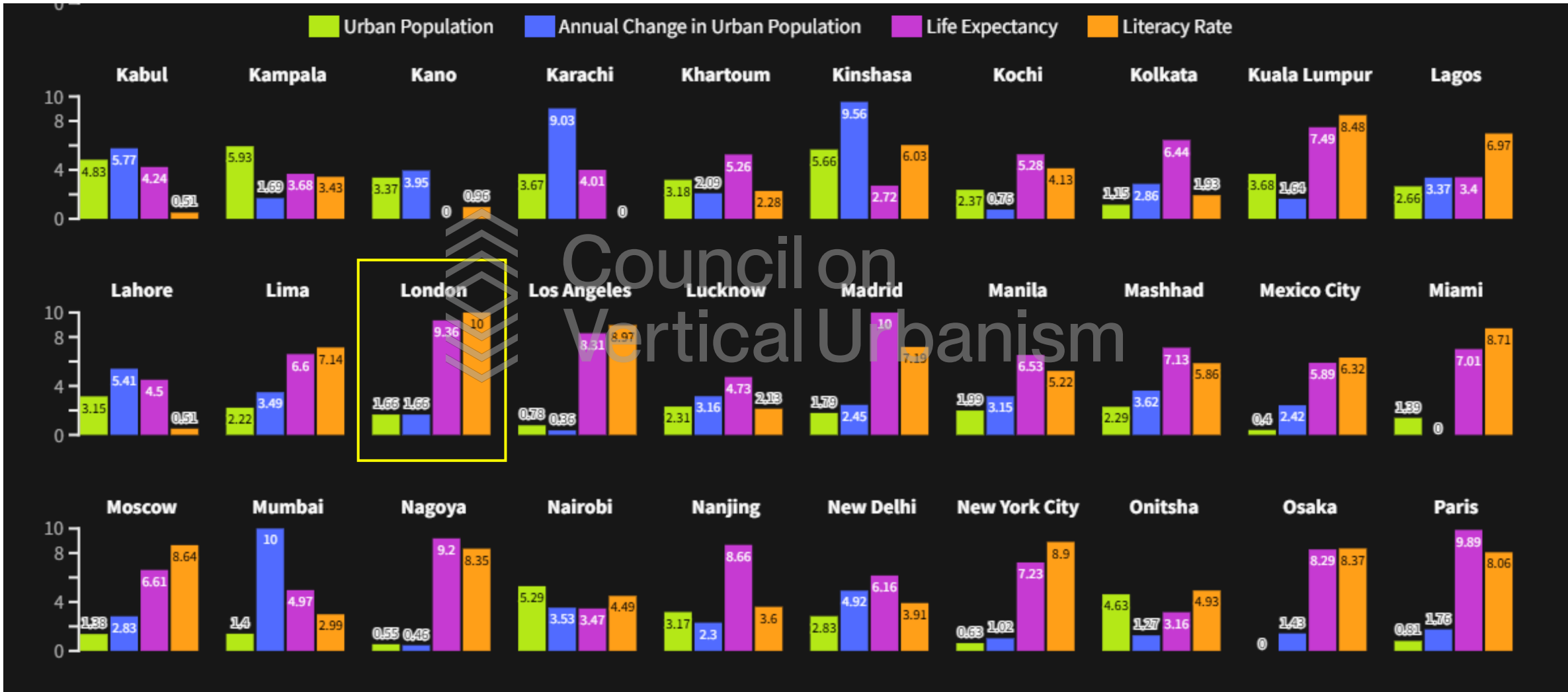


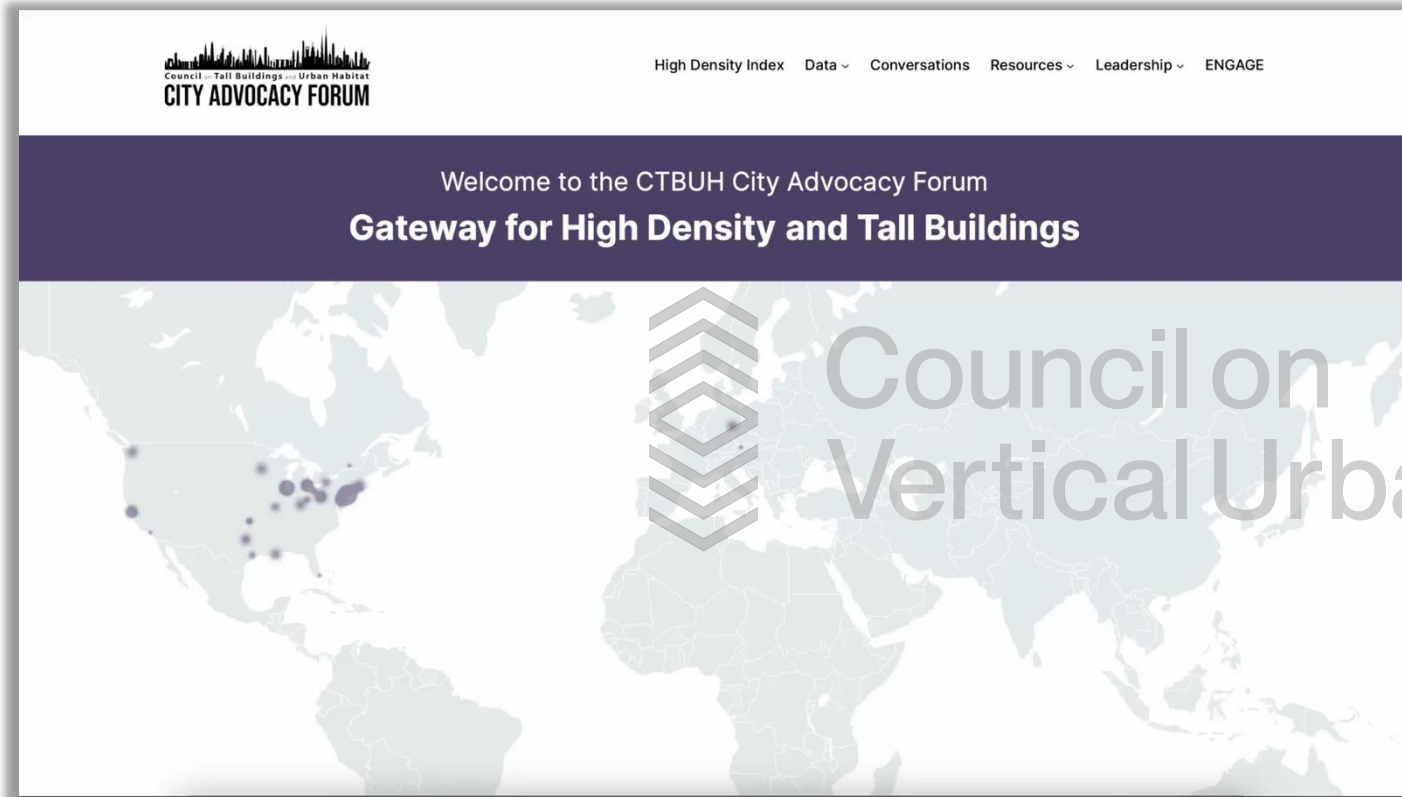


Tall Building Score Density Score Livability Score					
Rank	Urban Area	Country	Scores		Composite
31	Bengaluru	India			15.15
32	Lima	Peru			15.05
33	Alexandria	Egypt			15.01
34	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia			14.98
35	Amman	Jordan			14.96
36	London	UK			14.94
37	Santiago	Chile			14.84
38	Nagoya	Japan			14.76
39	Pune	India			14.60
40	Tehran	Iran			14.38









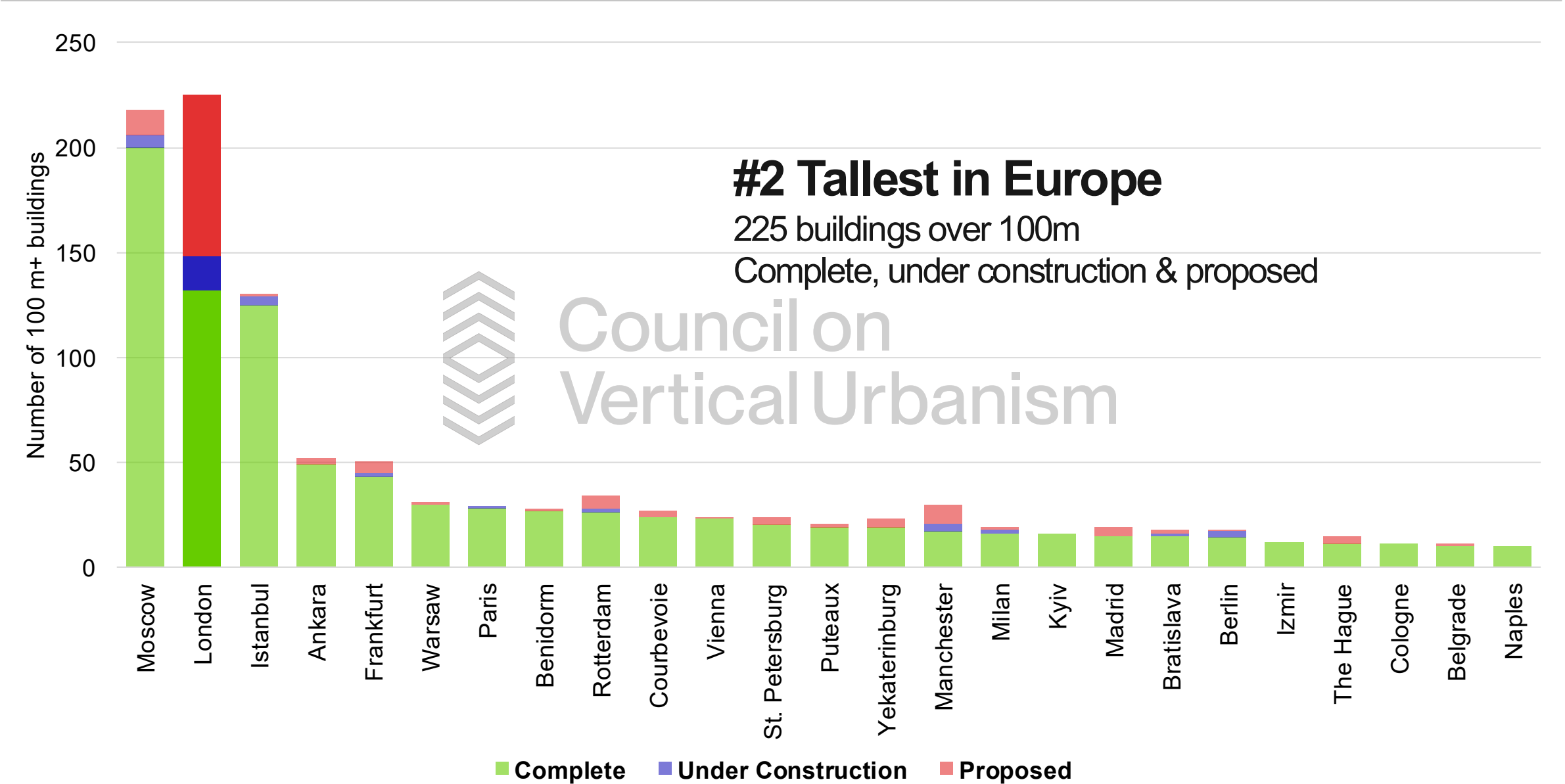
Explore the City Advocacy Forum Website

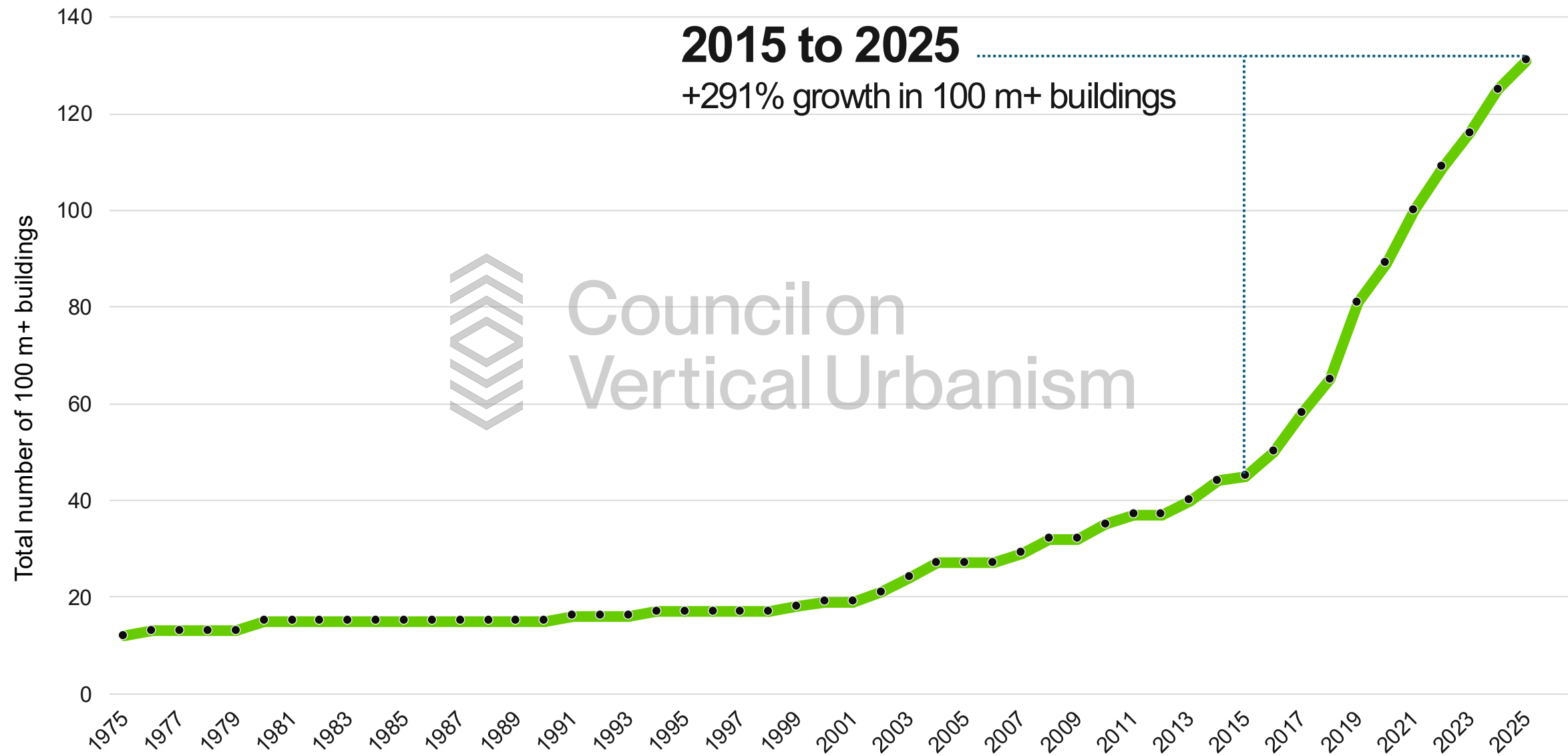
London in Depth

Council on
Vertical Urbanism

A Closer Look at Activity and Projections

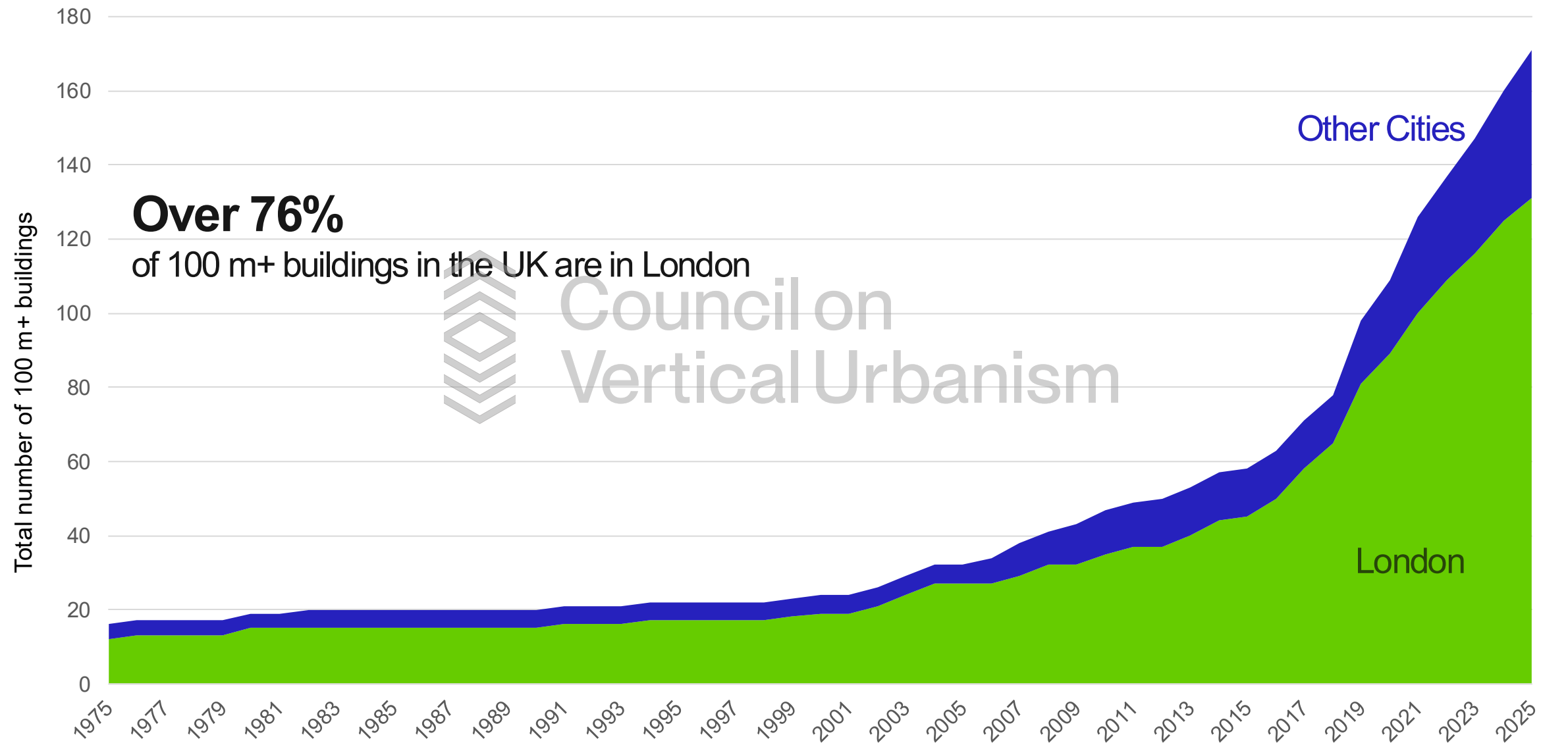


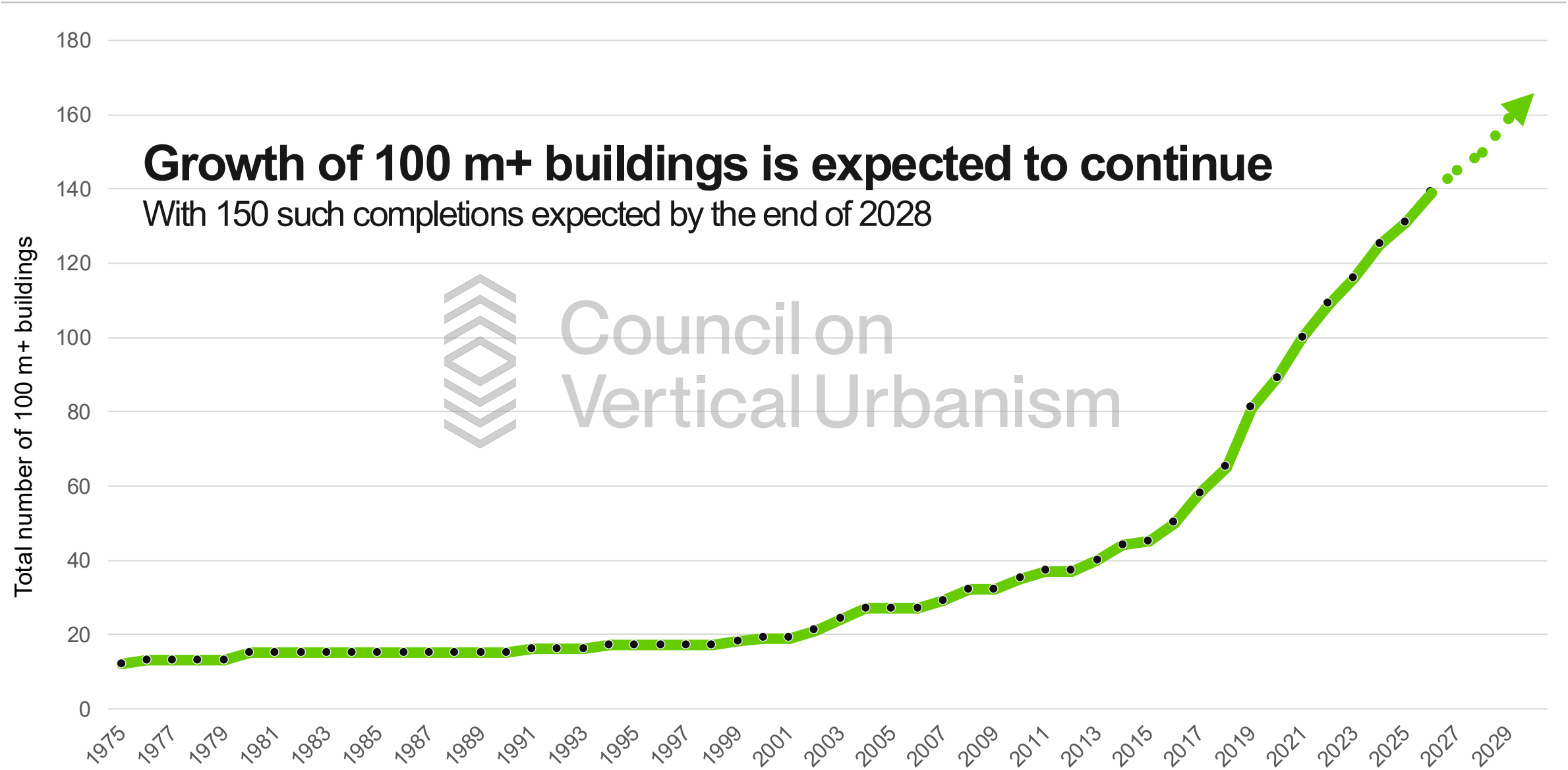


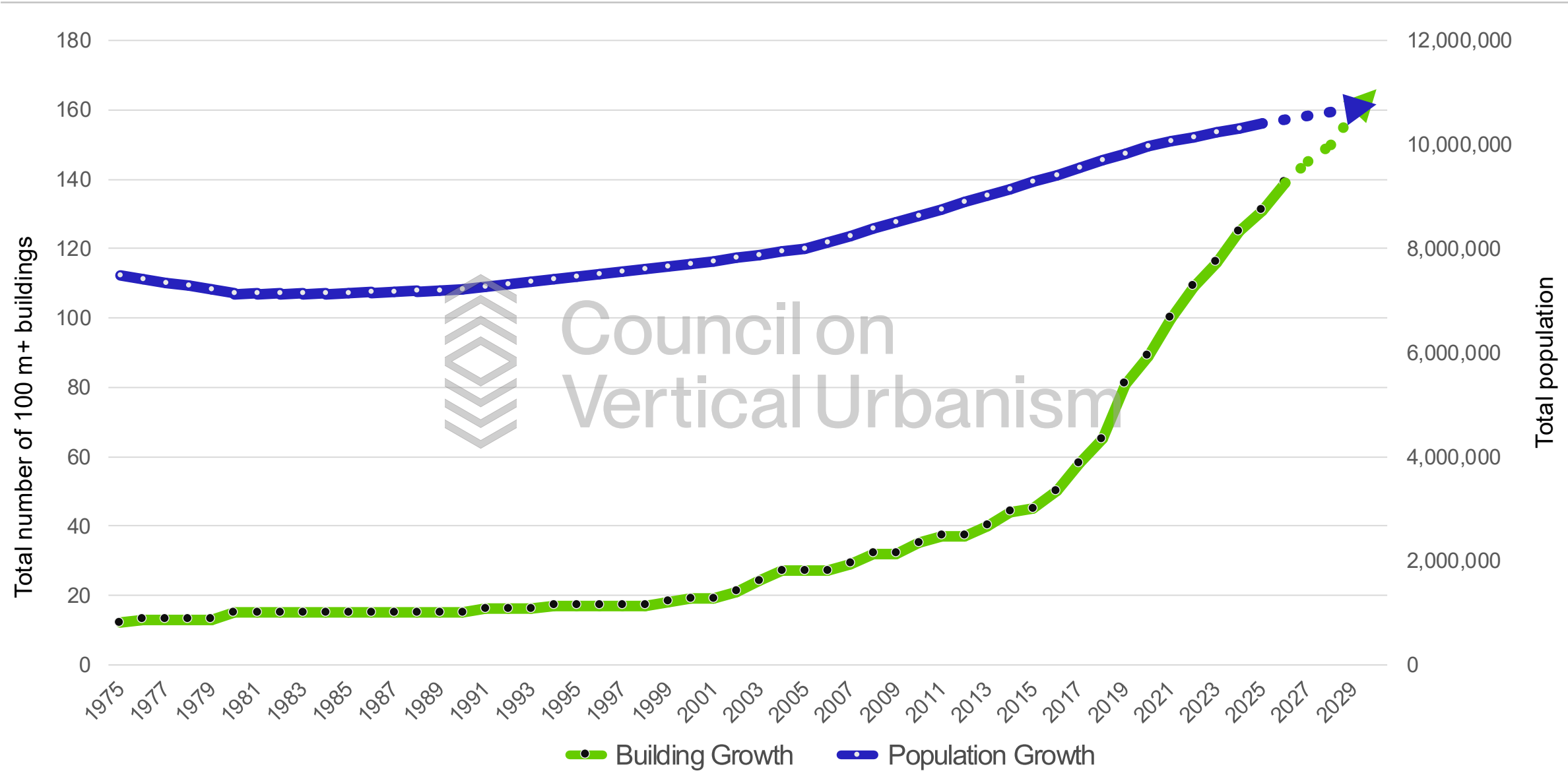


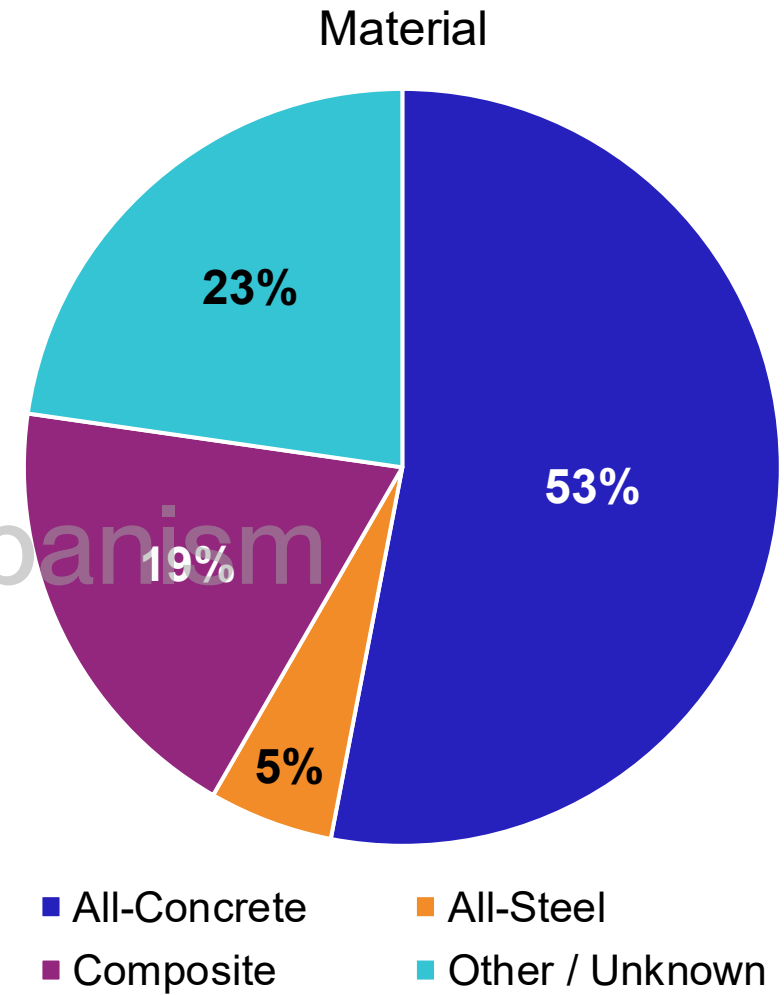
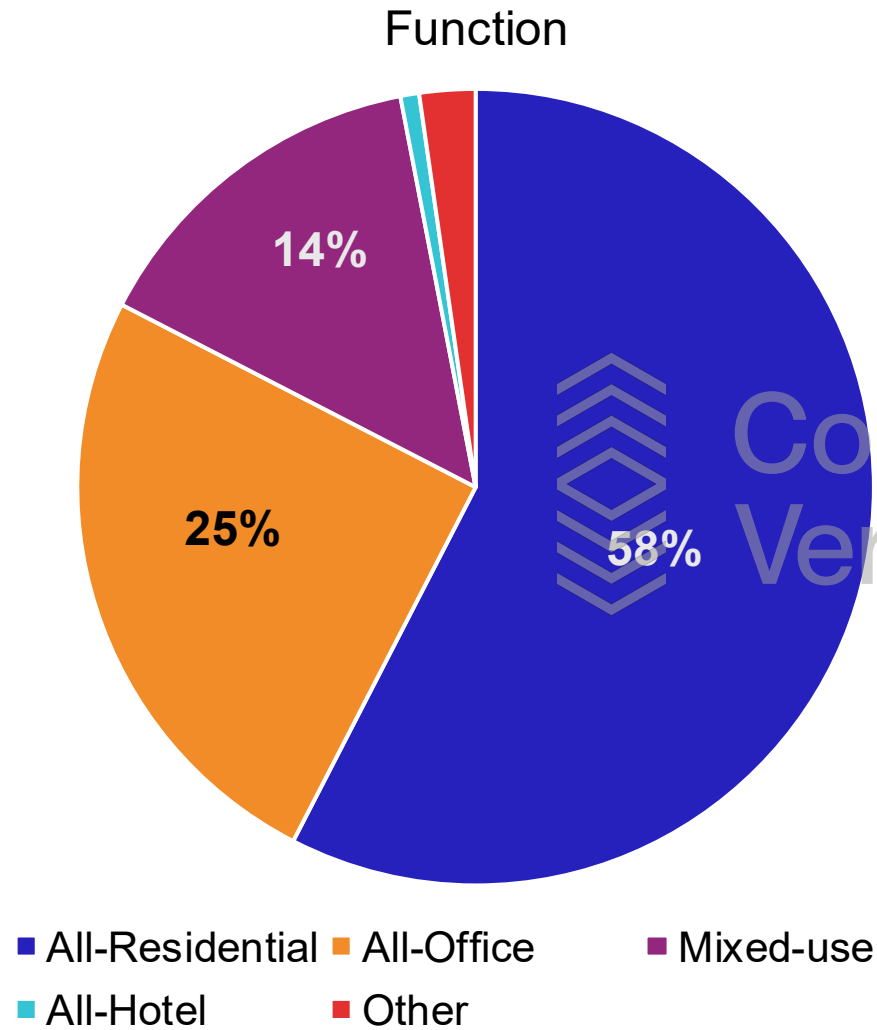
London

vs. Other Cities in the UK









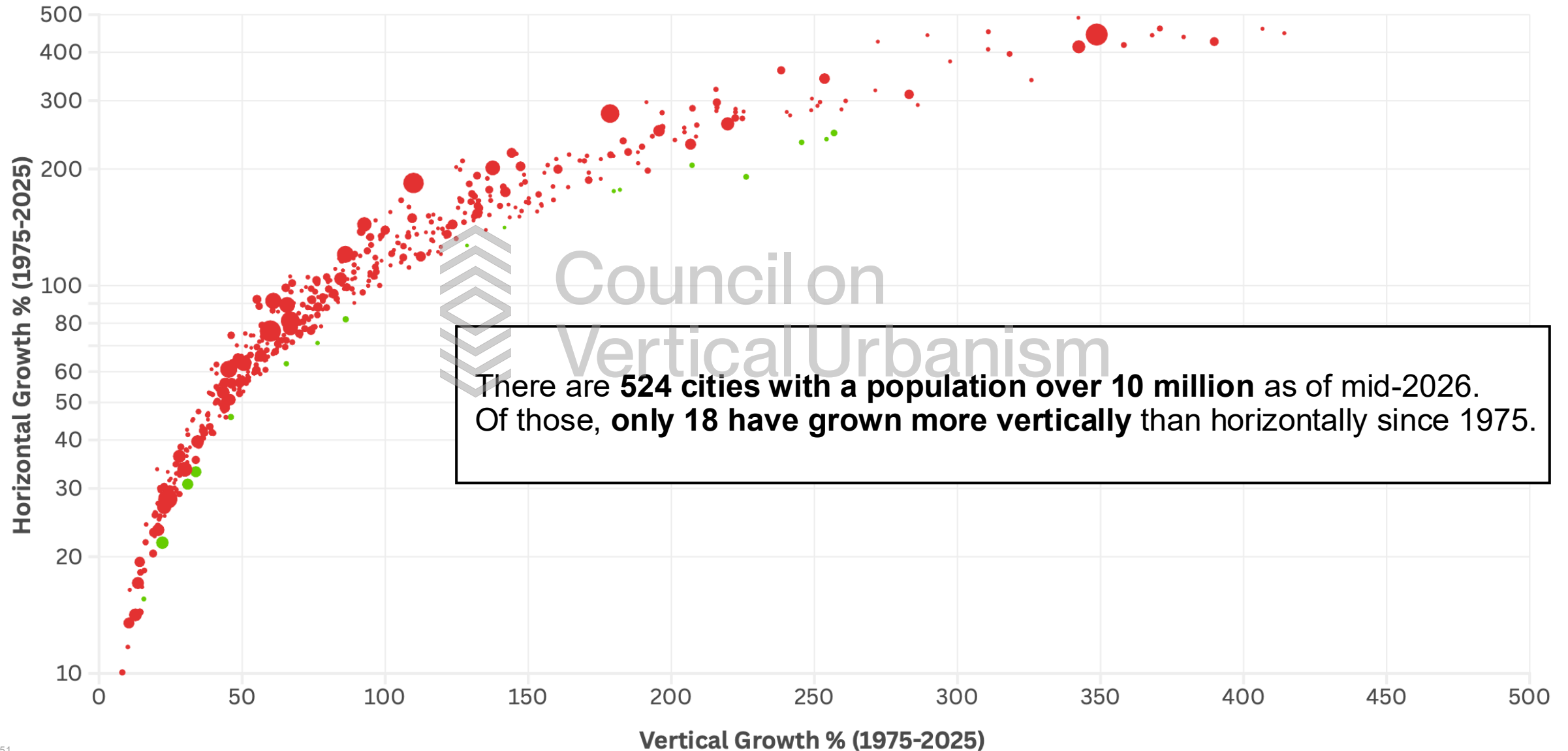
What Comes Next?



Council on
Vertical Urbanism

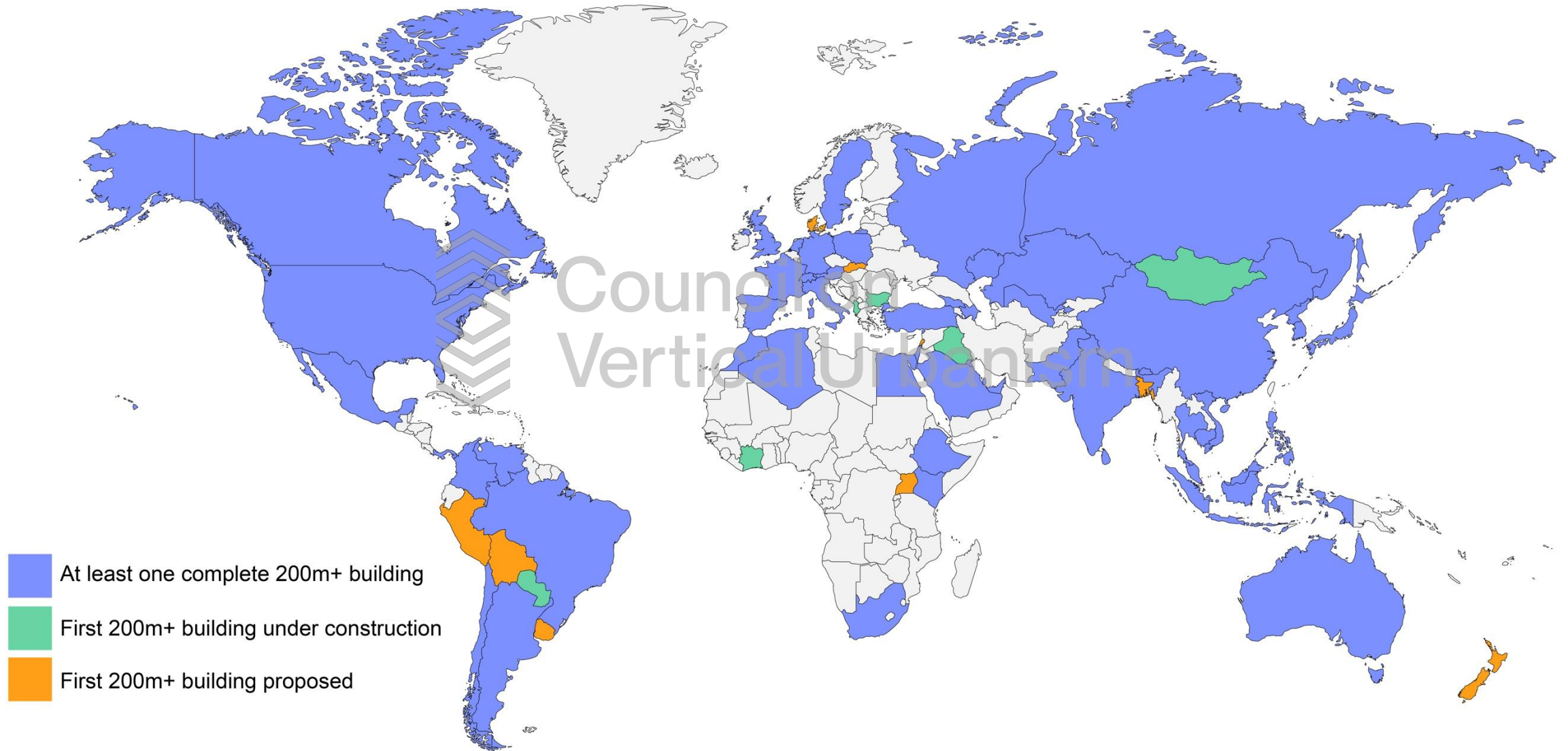
Trends and Global Projections





State of the Industry

Countries by 200m+ Building Status



The era of “building anything, anywhere” is over.

2026 marks a shift to a more selective tall building market focused on utility over iconicity.

140 completions of 200m+ buildings are expected in 2026.

This is roughly on par with 2025's completions but below a record of 185 completions in 2023.

Tall building growth is expanding geographically without uniformity.

Regional divergence, tighter financing, and geopolitical pressure are redrawing the global picture. Tallest completion in 2024 was in Cairo, tallest building in Southern hemisphere is now in Jakarta, Thailand and Vietnam are exploding vertically.

Records are still being broken regularly.

NYC and Hong Kong surpassed 100 complete 200m+ buildings in 2025; Shenzhen surpassed 200.

By 2030, over 240 cities will have at least once complete 200m+ building.

This is an increase from 223 cities today and double the 116 cities with such buildings in 2011.

State of the Industry

2025 End of Year Construction Forecasts

Structural Material

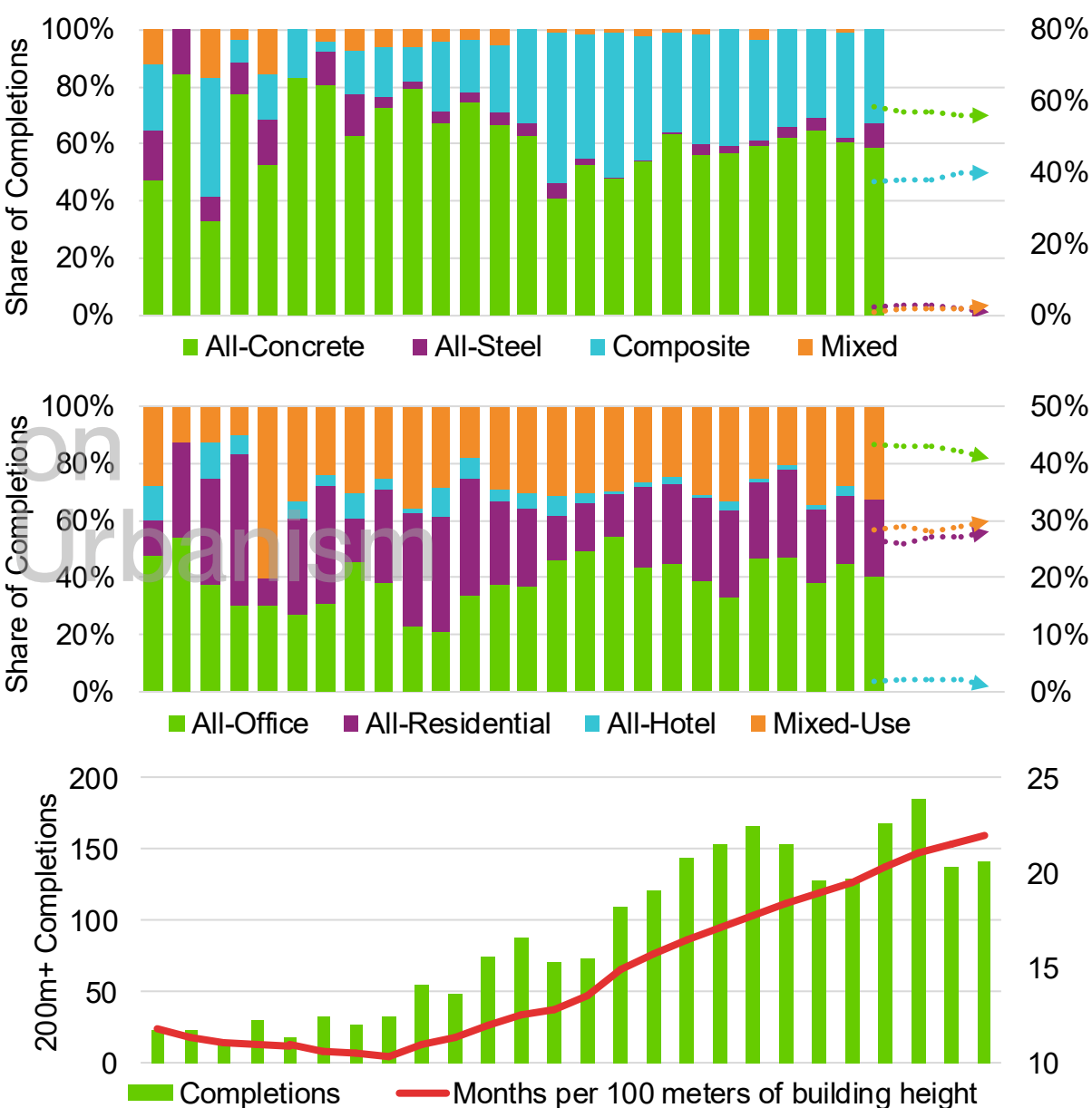
Composite structures were catching up to all-concrete structures, but this share has largely plateaued in the past decade.

Building Function

CVU anticipates that all-office completions will continue a slow decline, while mixed-use and all-residential completions will increase.

Construction Timelines

Construction time has almost doubled since 2000, from 11.8 to 22.0 months per 100 meters of building height. CVU expects this trend to hit 24 months by 2030.





Council on Vertical Urbanism

VerticalUrbanism.org

