



Checklist: Elevator Planning Considerations for New Buildings

A practical takeaway based on global elevator design insights and trends.

Use this checklist early in planning to help ensure your vertical transportation strategy supports building performance, flexibility, and long-term value.

1. Start Elevator Planning Early

- Engage an elevator consultant during concept or early schematic design
- Align elevator strategy with building program, density, and long-term vision
- Pressure-test assumptions before core layouts and shafts are locked in

2. Design for Future Flexibility

- Anticipate potential changes in use (office ↔ residential ↔ mixed-use)
- Allow for future speed, capacity, or zoning changes where possible

3. Account for Real Usage Patterns

- Understand how people will move through the building, not just peak counts
- Consider differences in demand between offices, residences, hotels, and public spaces
- Model dispersed vs. concentrated traffic patterns

4. Treat Carbon and Sustainability as Design Drivers

- Consider both embodied carbon (materials, equipment, construction) and operational carbon
- Evaluate how shaft sizes, equipment choices, and flexibility affect long-term carbon impact
- Design elevator systems that support longevity, reuse, and modernization

5. Optimize Core Space Strategically

- Balance elevator quantity and performance with rentable/usable area
- Adjust strategies based on market context (dense urban vs. space-available regions)
- Explore smart layouts and control strategies before increasing core size

6. Plan for Compressed Timelines and Risk

- Identify markets or project conditions with accelerated construction schedules
- Make key decisions early to avoid costly late-stage changes
- Use simulations and scenario testing to reduce long-term risk

7. Design for People, Not Just Performance Metrics

- Consider user psychology, perceived wait times, and crowd behavior
- Address comfort, clarity, and predictability – especially in mixed-use buildings

8. Factor in Cultural and Regional Differences

- Identify markets or project conditions with accelerated construction schedules
- Make key decisions early to avoid costly late-stage changes
- Use simulations and scenario testing to reduce long-term risk

9. Look Beyond Minimum Code Compliance

- Recognize that codes often lag behind technology and best practices
- Design with global best practices in mind, not just local minimums
- Anticipate future safety, accessibility, and evacuation requirements

10. Leverage Digital Controls and Technology

- Evaluate destination dispatch and advanced control systems early
- Use technology to improve performance where physical changes aren't feasible
- Plan for monitoring, data, and long-term operational insight

Ready to pressure-test your vertical transportation strategy early? Talk with a VDA expert before core decisions are set.

Schedule a Call

This is not a comprehensive checklist for all vertical transportation design decisions and is meant to be informational only.