

EQUITY RESIDENTIAL
Form 10-K
February 25, 2010
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UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

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

For the Fiscal Year Ended DECEMBER 31, 2009

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: 1-12252

EQUITY RESIDENTIAL

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Its Charter)

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Maryland (State or Other Jurisdiction of Incorporation or Organization)	13-3675988 (I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)
Two North Riverside Plaza, Chicago, Illinois (Address of Principal Executive Offices)	60606 (Zip Code)
(312) 474-1300 (Registrant's Telephone Number, Including Area Code)	

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

Common Shares of Beneficial Interest, \$0.01 Par Value (Title of Each Class)	New York Stock Exchange (Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered)
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Preferred Shares of Beneficial Interest, \$0.01 Par Value (Title of Each Class)	New York Stock Exchange (Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered)
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Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Indicate by check mark if 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

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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 (§229.405 of this chapter) 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 large accelerated filer, accelerated filer and smaller reporting company in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer (Do not check if a smaller reporting company) 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

The aggregate market value of Common Shares held by non-affiliates of the Registrant was approximately \$5.9 billion based upon the closing price on June 30, 2009 of \$22.23 using beneficial ownership of shares rules adopted pursuant to Section 13 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to exclude voting shares owned by Trustees and Executive Officers, some of who may not be held to be affiliates upon judicial determination.

The number of Common Shares of Beneficial Interest, \$0.01 par value, outstanding on February 19, 2010 was 281,884,878.

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DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Part III incorporates by reference certain information to be contained in the Company's definitive proxy statement, which the Company anticipates will be filed no later than April 15, 2010, and thus these items have been omitted in accordance with General Instruction G(3) to Form 10-K.

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General

Equity Residential (EQR), a Maryland real estate investment trust (REIT) formed in March 1993, is an S&P 500 company focused on the acquisition, development and management of high quality apartment properties in top United States growth markets. EQR has elected to be taxed as a REIT.

The Company is one of the largest publicly traded real estate companies and is the largest publicly traded owner of multifamily properties in the United States (based on the aggregate market value of its outstanding Common Shares, the number of apartment units wholly owned and total revenues earned). The Company's corporate headquarters are located in Chicago, Illinois and the Company also operates property management offices throughout the United States.

EQR is the general partner of, and as of December 31, 2009 owned an approximate 95.2% ownership interest in, ERP Operating Limited Partnership, an Illinois limited partnership (the Operating Partnership). The Company is structured as an umbrella partnership REIT (UPREIT) under which all property ownership and related business operations are conducted through the Operating Partnership and its subsidiaries. References to the Company include EQR, the Operating Partnership and those entities owned or controlled by the Operating Partnership and/or EQR.

As of December 31, 2009, the Company, directly or indirectly through investments in title holding entities, owned all or a portion of 495 properties in 23 states and the District of Columbia consisting of 137,007 units. The ownership breakdown includes (table does not include various uncompleted development properties):

	Properties	Units
Wholly Owned Properties	432	118,796
Partially Owned Properties:		
Consolidated	27	5,530
Unconsolidated	34	8,086
Military Housing	2	4,595
	495	137,007

As of December 31, 2009, the Company has approximately 4,100 employees who provide real estate operations, leasing, legal, financial, accounting, acquisition, disposition, development and other support functions.

Certain capitalized terms used herein are defined in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements.

Available Information

You may access our Annual Report on Form 10-K, our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, our Current Reports on Form 8-K and any amendments to any of those reports we file with the SEC free of charge at our website, www.equityresidential.com. These reports are made available at our website as soon as reasonably practicable after we file them with the SEC.

Business Objectives and Operating Strategies

The Company seeks to maximize current income, capital appreciation of each property and the total return for its shareholders. The Company's strategy for accomplishing these objectives includes:

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Leveraging our size and scale in four critical ways:

Investing in apartment communities located in strategically targeted markets to maximize our total return on an enterprise level;

Meeting the needs of our residents by offering a wide array of product choices and a commitment to service;

Engaging, retaining and attracting the best employees by providing them with the education, resources and opportunities to succeed; and

Sharing resources and best practices in both property management and across the enterprise.

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Owning a highly diversified portfolio in our target markets. Target markets are defined by a combination of the following criteria:

High barrier-to-entry markets where because of land scarcity or government regulation it is difficult or costly to build new apartment complexes leading to low supply;

Strong economic growth leading to high demand for apartments; and

Markets with an attractive quality of life leading to high demand and retention.

Giving residents reasons to stay with the Company by providing a range of product choices available in our diversified portfolio and by enhancing their experience with us through meticulous customer service by our employees and by providing various value-added services.

Being open and responsive to changes in the market in order to take advantage of investment opportunities that align with our long-term vision.

Acquisition, Development and Disposition Strategies

The Company anticipates that future property acquisitions, developments and dispositions will occur within the United States. Acquisitions and developments may be financed from various sources of capital, which may include retained cash flow, issuance of additional equity and debt securities, sales of properties, joint venture agreements and collateralized and uncollateralized borrowings. In addition, the Company may acquire properties in transactions that include the issuance of limited partnership interests in the Operating Partnership (OP Units) as consideration for the acquired properties. Such transactions may, in certain circumstances, enable the sellers to defer, in whole or in part, the recognition of taxable income or gain that might otherwise result from the sales. EQR may also acquire land parcels to hold and/or sell based on market opportunities.

When evaluating potential acquisitions, developments and dispositions, the Company generally considers the following factors:

strategically targeted markets;

income levels and employment growth trends in the relevant market;

employment and household growth and net migration in the relevant market s population;

barriers to entry that would limit competition (zoning laws, building permit availability, supply of undeveloped or developable real estate, local building costs and construction costs, among other factors);

the location, construction quality, age, condition and design of the property;

the current and projected cash flow of the property and the ability to increase cash flow;

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the potential for capital appreciation of the property;

the terms of resident leases, including the potential for rent increases;

the potential for economic growth and the tax and regulatory environment of the community in which the property is located;

the occupancy and demand by residents for properties of a similar type in the vicinity (the overall market and submarket);

the prospects for liquidity through sale, financing or refinancing of the property;

the benefits of integration into existing operations;

purchase prices and yields of available existing stabilized properties, if any;

competition from existing multifamily properties, comparably priced single family homes or rentals, residential properties under development and the potential for the construction of new multifamily properties in the area; and

opportunistic selling based on demand and price of high quality assets, including condominium conversions.

The Company generally reinvests the proceeds received from property dispositions primarily to achieve its acquisition, development and rehab strategies and at times to fund its debt and equity repurchase activities. In addition, when feasible, the Company may structure these transactions as tax-deferred exchanges.

See also Note 20 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for additional discussion regarding the Company's segment disclosures.

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Debt and Equity Activity

Please refer to Item 7, *Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations*, for the Company's Capital Structure chart as of December 31, 2009.

Major Debt and Equity Activities for the Years Ended December 31, 2009, 2008 and 2007

During 2009:

The Operating Partnership obtained \$500.0 million of mortgage loan proceeds through the issuance of an 11 year (stated maturity date of July 1, 2020) cross-collateralized loan with an all-in fixed interest rate for 10 years at approximately 5.6% secured by 13 properties.

The Company issued 422,713 Common Shares pursuant to its Share Incentive Plans and received net proceeds of approximately \$9.1 million.

The Company issued 324,394 Common Shares pursuant to its Employee Share Purchase Plan and received net proceeds of approximately \$5.3 million.

The Company issued 3,497,300 Common Shares at an average price of \$35.38 per share for total consideration of \$123.7 million pursuant to its At-The-Market (ATM) share offering program. See Note 3 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

The Company repurchased and retired 47,450 of its Common Shares at an average price of \$23.69 per share for total consideration of \$1.1 million. See Note 3 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

The Company repurchased \$75.8 million of its 5.20% fixed rate tax-exempt notes.

The Company repurchased at par \$105.2 million of its 4.75% fixed rate public notes due June 15, 2009. In addition, the Company repaid the remaining \$122.2 million of its 4.75% fixed rate public notes at maturity. See Note 9 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

The Company repurchased \$185.2 million at par and \$21.7 million at a price of 106% of par of its 6.95% fixed rate public notes due March 2, 2011. See Note 9 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

The Company repurchased \$146.1 million of its 6.625% fixed rate public notes due March 15, 2012 at a price of 108% of par. See Note 9 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

The Company repurchased \$127.9 million of its 5.50% fixed rate public notes due October 1, 2012 at a price of 107% of par. See Note 9 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

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The Company repurchased \$17.5 million of its 3.85% convertible fixed rate public notes due August 15, 2026 (putable in 2011) at a price of 88.4% of par. In addition, the Company repurchased \$48.5 million of these notes at par. See Note 9 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

During 2008:

The Operating Partnership obtained \$500.0 million of mortgage loan proceeds through the issuance of an 11.5 year (stated maturity date of October 1, 2019) cross-collateralized loan with a fixed stated interest rate for 10.5 years at 5.19% secured by 13 properties.

The Operating Partnership obtained \$550.0 million of mortgage loan proceeds through the issuance of an 11.5 year (stated maturity date of March 1, 2020) cross-collateralized loan with a fixed stated interest rate for 10.5 years at approximately 6% secured by 15 properties.

The Operating Partnership obtained \$543.0 million of mortgage loan proceeds through the issuance of an 8 year (stated maturity date of January 1, 2017) cross-collateralized loan with a fixed stated interest rate for 7 years at approximately 6% secured by 18 properties.

The Company issued 995,129 Common Shares pursuant to its Share Incentive Plans and received net proceeds of approximately \$24.6 million.

The Company issued 195,961 Common Shares pursuant to its Employee Share Purchase Plan and received net proceeds of approximately \$6.2 million.

The Company repurchased and retired 220,085 of its Common Shares at an average price of \$35.93 per share for total consideration of \$7.9 million. See Note 3 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

The Company repurchased \$72.6 million of its 4.75% fixed rate public notes due June 15, 2009 at a price of 99.0% of par. See Note 9 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

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The Company repurchased \$101.4 million of its 3.85% convertible fixed rate public notes due August 15, 2026 (putable in 2011) at a price of 82.3% of par. See Note 9 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

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During 2007:

The Operating Partnership issued \$350.0 million of five-year 5.50% fixed rate notes (the October 2012 Notes) in a public debt offering in May/June 2007. The October 2012 Notes were issued at a discount, which is being amortized over the life of the notes on a straight-line basis. The October 2012 Notes are due October 1, 2012 with interest payable semiannually in arrears on January 15 and July 15, commencing January 15, 2008. The Operating Partnership received net proceeds of approximately \$346.1 million in connection with this issuance.

The Operating Partnership issued \$650.0 million of ten-year 5.75% fixed rate notes (the June 2017 Notes) in a public debt offering in May/June 2007. The June 2017 Notes were issued at a discount, which is being amortized over the life of the notes on a straight-line basis. The June 2017 Notes are due June 15, 2017 with interest payable semiannually in arrears on January 15 and July 15, commencing January 15, 2008. The Operating Partnership received net proceeds of approximately \$640.6 million in connection with this issuance.

The Operating Partnership obtained a three-year (subject to two one-year extension options) \$500.0 million senior unsecured credit facility (term loan) which generally incurs a variable interest rate of LIBOR plus a spread dependent upon the current credit rating on the Operating Partnership's long-term unsecured debt. The Operating Partnership paid \$1.1 million in upfront costs, which will be deferred and amortized over the three-year term. EQR has guaranteed the Operating Partnership's term loan facility up to the maximum amount and for the full term of the facility.

The Company issued 1,040,765 Common Shares pursuant to its Share Incentive Plans and received net proceeds of approximately \$28.8 million.

The Company issued 189,071 Common Shares pursuant to its Employee Share Purchase Plan and received net proceeds of approximately \$7.2 million.

The Company repurchased and retired 27,484,346 of its Common Shares at an average price of \$44.62 per share for total consideration of \$1.2 billion.

During the first quarter of 2010 through February 19, 2010, the Company has issued approximately 1.1 million Common Shares at an average price of \$33.87 per share for total consideration of approximately \$35.8 million through the ATM share offering program.

As of the date of this filing, an unlimited amount of debt securities remains available for issuance by the Operating Partnership under a registration statement that became automatically effective upon filing with the SEC in December 2008 (under SEC regulations enacted in 2005, the registration statement automatically expires on December 21, 2011 and does not contain a maximum issuance amount). As of the date of this filing, an unlimited amount of equity securities remains available for issuance by the Company under a registration statement the SEC declared effective in December 2008 (under SEC regulations enacted in 2005, the registration statement automatically expires on December 15, 2011 and does not contain a maximum issuance amount).

In May 2002, the Company's shareholders approved the Company's 2002 Share Incentive Plan. In January 2003, the Company filed a Form S-8 registration statement to register 23,125,828 Common Shares under this plan. As of January 1, 2010, 22,091,629 shares are the maximum shares issuable under this plan. See Note 14 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

Credit Facilities

The Operating Partnership has a \$1.5 billion unsecured revolving credit facility maturing on February 28, 2012, with the ability to increase available borrowings by an additional \$500.0 million by adding additional banks to the facility or obtaining the agreement of existing banks to increase their commitments. Advances under the credit facility bear interest at variable rates based upon LIBOR at various interest periods plus a spread (currently 0.5%) dependent upon the Operating Partnership's credit rating or based on bids received from the lending group. EQR has

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guaranteed the Operating Partnership's credit facility up to the maximum amount and for the full term of the facility.

During the year ended December 31, 2008, one of the providers of the Operating Partnership's unsecured revolving credit facility declared bankruptcy. Under the existing terms of the credit facility, the provider's share is up to \$75.0 million of potential borrowings. As a result, the Operating Partnership's borrowing capacity under the unsecured revolving credit facility has, in essence, been permanently reduced to \$1.425 billion of potential borrowings. The obligation to fund by all of the other providers has not changed.

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As of December 31, 2009, the amount available on the credit facility was \$1.37 billion (net of \$56.7 million which was restricted/dedicated to support letters of credit and net of the \$75.0 million discussed above). As of December 31, 2008, the amount available on the credit facility was \$1.29 billion (net of \$130.0 million which was restricted/dedicated to support letters of credit and net of the \$75.0 million discussed above). The Company did not draw on its revolving credit facility and had no balance outstanding at any time during the year ended December 31, 2009. During the year ended December 31, 2008, the weighted average interest rate was 4.31%.

Competition

All of the Company's properties are located in developed areas that include other multifamily properties. The number of competitive multifamily properties in a particular area could have a material effect on the Company's ability to lease units at the properties or at any newly acquired properties and on the rents charged. The Company may be competing with other entities that have greater resources than the Company and whose managers have more experience than the Company's managers. In addition, other forms of rental properties and single family housing provide housing alternatives to potential residents of multifamily properties. See Item 1A. *Risk Factors* for additional information with respect to competition.

Environmental Considerations

See Item 1A. *Risk Factors* for information concerning the potential effects of environmental regulations on our operations.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

General

The following Risk Factors may contain defined terms that are different from those used in the other sections of this report. Unless otherwise indicated, when used in this section, the terms "we" and "us" refer to Equity Residential and its subsidiaries, including ERP Operating Limited Partnership. This Item 1A. includes forward-looking statements. You should refer to our discussion of the qualifications and limitations on forward-looking statements included in Item 7.

The occurrence of the events discussed in the following risk factors could adversely affect, possibly in a material manner, our business, financial condition or results of operations, which could adversely affect the value of our common shares of beneficial interest or preferred shares of beneficial interest (which we refer to collectively as "Shares") and limited partnership interests in the Operating Partnership ("OP Units"). In this section, we refer to the Shares and the OP Units together as our "securities" and the investors who own Shares and/or OP Units as our "security holders".

Our Performance and Securities Value are Subject to Risks Associated with the Real Estate Industry

General

Real property investments are subject to varying degrees of risk and are relatively illiquid. Several factors may adversely affect the economic performance and value of our properties. These factors include changes in the national, regional and local economic climates, local conditions such as an oversupply of multifamily properties or a reduction in demand for our multifamily properties, the attractiveness of our properties to residents, competition from other available multifamily property owners and single family homes and changes in market rental rates. Our performance also depends on our ability to collect rent from residents and to pay for adequate maintenance, insurance and other operating costs, including real estate taxes, which could increase over time. Sources of labor and materials required for maintenance, repair, capital expenditure or development may be more expensive than anticipated. Also, the expenses of owning and operating a property are not necessarily reduced when circumstances such as market factors and competition cause a reduction in income from the property.

We May Not Have Sufficient Cash Flows From Operations After Capital Expenditures to Cover Our Distributions

We generally consider our cash flows provided by operating activities after capital expenditures to be adequate to meet operating requirements and payment of distributions to our security holders. However, there may be times when we experience shortfalls in our coverage of distributions, which may cause us to consider reducing our distributions and/or using the proceeds from property dispositions or additional financing transactions to make up the

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difference. Should these shortfalls occur for lengthy periods of time or be material in nature, our financial condition may be adversely affected and we may not be able to maintain our current distribution levels.

We May Be Unable to Renew Leases or Relet Units as Leases Expire

When our residents decide not to renew their leases upon expiration, we may not be able to relet their units. Even if the residents do renew or we can relet the units, the terms of renewal or reletting may be less favorable than current lease terms. Because virtually all of our leases are for apartments, they are generally for terms of no more than one year. If we are unable to promptly renew the leases or relet the units, or if the rental rates upon renewal or reletting are significantly lower than expected rates, then our results of operations and financial condition will be adversely affected. Occupancy levels and market rents may be adversely affected by national and local economic and market conditions including, without limitation, new construction and excess inventory of multifamily and single family housing, slow or negative employment growth, availability of low interest mortgages for single family home buyers and the potential for geopolitical instability, all of which are beyond the Company's control. In addition, various state and local municipalities are considering and may continue to consider rent control legislation which could limit our ability to raise rents. Finally, the federal government is considering and may continue to consider policies which may encourage home ownership, thus increasing competition and possibly limiting our ability to raise rents. Consequently, our cash flow and ability to service debt and make distributions to security holders could be reduced.

New Acquisitions and/or Development Projects May Fail to Perform as Expected and Competition for Acquisitions May Result in Increased Prices for Properties

We intend to actively acquire multifamily properties for rental operations as market conditions dictate. The Company also develops projects and currently has several properties under development. We may begin new development activities if conditions warrant. We may underestimate the costs necessary to bring an acquired property up to standards established for its intended market position or to complete a development property. Additionally, we expect that other major real estate investors with significant capital will compete with us for attractive investment opportunities or may also develop properties in markets where we focus our development efforts. This competition may increase prices for multifamily properties. We may not be in a position or have the opportunity in the future to make suitable property acquisitions on favorable terms. To the extent that we do develop more properties if conditions warrant, we expect to do so ourselves in addition to co-investing with our development partners. The total number of development units, costs of development and estimated completion dates are subject to uncertainties arising from changing economic conditions (such as the cost of labor and construction materials), competition and local government regulation.

In connection with such government regulation, we may incur liability if our properties are not constructed and operated in compliance with the accessibility provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Acts, the Fair Housing Act or other federal, state or local requirements. Noncompliance could result in fines, subject us to lawsuits and require us to remediate or repair the noncompliance.

Because Real Estate Investments Are Illiquid, We May Not Be Able to Sell Properties When Appropriate

Real estate investments generally cannot be sold quickly. We may not be able to reconfigure our portfolio promptly in response to economic or other conditions. This inability to respond promptly to changes in the performance of our investments could adversely affect our financial condition and ability to make distributions to our security holders.

The Value of Investment Securities Could Result In Losses to the Company

From time to time, the Company holds investment securities that have a higher risk profile than the government obligations and bond funds, money market funds or bank deposits in which we generally invest. On occasion we may purchase securities of companies in our own industry as a means to invest funds. There may be times when we experience declines in the value of these investment securities, which may result in losses to the Company and our financial condition or results of operations could be adversely affected. Sometimes the cash we deposit at a bank exceeds the FDIC insurance limit resulting in risk to the Company of loss of funds if these banks fail.

Changes in Laws and Litigation Risk Could Affect Our Business

We are generally not able to pass through to our residents under existing leases real estate or other federal, state or local taxes. Consequently, any such tax increases may adversely affect our financial condition and limit our ability to make distributions to our security holders.

We may become involved in legal proceedings, including but not limited to, proceedings related to consumer, employment, development, condominium conversion, tort and commercial legal issues that if decided adversely to or settled by us, could result in liability material to our financial condition or results of operations.

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Environmental Problems Are Possible and Can Be Costly

Federal, state and local laws and regulations relating to the protection of the environment may require a current or previous owner or operator of real estate to investigate and clean up hazardous or toxic substances or petroleum product releases at such property. The owner or operator may have to pay a governmental entity or third parties for property damage and for investigation and clean-up costs incurred by such parties in connection with the contamination. These laws typically impose clean-up responsibility and liability without regard to whether the owner or operator knew of or caused the presence of the contaminants. Even if more than one person may have been responsible for the contamination, each person covered by the environmental laws may be held responsible for all of the clean-up costs incurred. In addition, third parties may sue the owner or operator of a site for damages and costs resulting from environmental contamination emanating from that site.

Substantially all of our properties have been the subject of environmental assessments completed by qualified independent environmental consulting companies. While these environmental assessments have not revealed, nor are we aware of, any environmental liability that our management believes would have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations, financial condition or liquidity, there can be no assurance that we will not incur such liabilities in the future.

Over the past several years, there have been an increasing number of lawsuits against owners and managers of multifamily properties alleging personal injury and property damage caused by the presence of mold in residential real estate. As some of these lawsuits have resulted in substantial monetary judgments or settlements, insurance carriers have reacted by excluding mold-related claims from standard policies and pricing mold endorsements at prohibitively high rates. We have adopted programs designed to minimize the existence of mold in any of our properties as well as guidelines for promptly addressing and resolving reports of mold to minimize any impact mold might have on our residents or the property.

We cannot be assured that existing environmental assessments of our properties reveal all environmental liabilities, that any prior owner of any of our properties did not create a material environmental condition not known to us, or that a material environmental condition does not otherwise exist as to any of our properties.

Climate Change

To the extent that climate change does occur, we may experience extreme weather and changes in precipitation and temperature, all of which may result in physical damage or a decrease in demand for properties located in these areas or affected by these conditions. Should the impact of climate change be material in nature, including destruction of our properties, or occur for lengthy periods of time, our financial condition or results of operations may be adversely affected.

In addition, developments in federal and state legislation and regulation on climate change could result in increased capital expenditures to improve the energy efficiency of our existing properties and could also require us to spend more on our new development properties without a corresponding increase in revenue.

Insurance Policy Deductibles and Exclusions

In order to manage insurance costs, management has gradually increased deductible and self-insured retention amounts. As of December 31, 2009, the Company's property insurance policy provides for a per occurrence deductible of \$250,000 and self-insured retention of \$5.0 million per occurrence, subject to a maximum annual aggregate self-insured retention of \$7.5 million, with approximately 80% of any excess losses being covered by insurance. Any earthquake and named windstorm losses are subject to a deductible of 5% of the values of the buildings involved in the losses and are not subject to the aggregate self-insured retention. The Company's general liability and worker's compensation policies at December 31, 2009 provide for a \$2.0 million and \$1.0 million per occurrence deductible, respectively. These higher deductible and self-insured retention amounts do expose the Company to greater potential uninsured losses, but management believes the savings in insurance premium expense justify this potential increased exposure over the long-term. However, the potential impact of climate change and increased severe weather could cause a significant increase in insurance premiums and deductibles, particularly for our coastal properties, or a decrease in the availability of coverage, either of which could expose the Company to even greater uninsured losses which may adversely affect our financial condition or results of operations.

As a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, property insurance carriers created exclusions for losses from terrorism from our all risk property insurance policies. As of December 31, 2009, the Company was

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insured for \$500.0 million in terrorism insurance coverage, with a \$100,000 deductible. This coverage excludes losses from nuclear, biological and chemical attacks. In the event of a terrorist attack impacting one or more of our properties, we could lose the revenues from the property, our capital investment in the property and possibly face liability claims from residents or others suffering injuries or losses. The Company believes, however, that the number of properties in and geographic diversity of its portfolio and its terrorism insurance coverage help to mitigate its exposure to the risks associated with potential terrorist attacks.

Debt Financing and Preferred Shares Could Adversely Affect Our Performance

General

Please refer to Item 7, *Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations*, for the Company's total debt and unsecured debt summaries as of December 31, 2009.

In addition to debt, we have \$208.8 million of combined liquidation value of outstanding preferred shares of beneficial interest with a weighted average dividend preference of 6.94% per annum as of December 31, 2009. Our use of debt and preferred equity financing creates certain risks, including the following:

Disruptions in the Financial Markets Could Adversely Affect Our Ability to Obtain Debt Financing and Impact our Acquisitions and Dispositions

Dislocations and liquidity disruptions in capital and credit markets could impact liquidity in the debt markets, resulting in financing terms that are less attractive to us and/or the unavailability of certain types of debt financing. Should the capital and credit markets experience volatility and the availability of funds again become limited, or be available only on unattractive terms, we will incur increased costs associated with issuing debt instruments. In addition, it is possible that our ability to access the capital and credit markets may be limited or precluded by these or other factors at a time when we would like, or need, to do so, which would adversely impact our ability to refinance maturing debt and/or react to changing economic and business conditions. Disruptions in the floating rate tax-exempt bond market (where interest rates reset weekly) and in the credit market's perception of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which guarantee and provide liquidity for these bonds, have been experienced in the past and may be experienced in the future and could result in an increase in interest rates on these debt obligations. These bonds could also be put to our consolidated subsidiaries if Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac fail to satisfy their guaranty obligations. While this obligation is in almost all cases non-recourse to us, this could cause the Company to have to repay these obligations on short notice or risk foreclosure actions on the collateralized assets. Furthermore, while we believe Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac will continue to provide liquidity to our sector, should they discontinue doing so, have their mandates changed or reduced or be disbanded or reorganized by the government, it would significantly reduce our access to debt capital and/or increase borrowing costs and would significantly reduce our sales of assets. Uncertainty in the credit markets could negatively impact our ability to make acquisitions and make it more difficult or not possible for us to sell properties or may adversely affect the price we receive for properties that we do sell, as prospective buyers may experience increased costs of debt financing or difficulties in obtaining debt financing. Potential continued disruptions in the financial markets could also have other unknown adverse effects on us or the economy generally and may cause the price of our Common Shares to fluctuate significantly and/or to decline.

Non-Performance by Our Counterparties Could Adversely Affect Our Performance

Although we have not experienced any material counterparty non-performance, disruptions in financial and credit markets could, among other things, impede the ability of our counterparties to perform on their contractual obligations. There are multiple financial institutions that are individually committed to lend us varying amounts as part of our revolving credit facility. Should any of these institutions fail to fund their committed amounts when contractually required, our financial condition could be adversely affected. Should several of these institutions fail to fund, we could experience significant financial distress. One of the financial institutions, with a commitment of \$75.0 million, declared bankruptcy in 2008 and it is unlikely that they will honor their financial commitment. Our borrowing capacity under the credit facility has in essence been permanently reduced to \$1.425 billion.

The Company also has several assets under development with joint venture partners which were financed by financial institutions that have experienced varying degrees of distress in the past and could experience similar distress as economic conditions change. If one or more of these lenders fail to fund when contractually required, the Company or its joint venture partner may be unable to complete construction of its development properties. Further, the Company's joint venture partners may experience financial distress and to the extent they do not meet their obligations to us or our joint ventures with them, we may be adversely affected. In addition, the Company relies on third party insurance providers for its property, general liability and worker's compensation insurance. While there has yet to be any non-performance by these major

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insurance providers, should any of them experience liquidity issues or other financial distress, it could negatively impact the Company.

A Significant Downgrade in Our Credit Ratings Could Adversely Affect Our Performance

A significant downgrade in our credit ratings, while not affecting our ability to draw proceeds under the revolving credit facility, would cause our borrowing costs to increase under the facility and impact our ability to borrow secured and unsecured debt by increasing borrowing costs, or otherwise limit our access to capital. In addition, a downgrade below investment grade would require us to post cash collateral and/or letters of credit in favor of some of our secured lenders to cover our self-insured property and liability insurance deductibles.

Scheduled Debt Payments Could Adversely Affect Our Financial Condition

In the future, our cash flow could be insufficient to meet required payments of principal and interest or to pay distributions on our securities at expected levels.

We may not be able to refinance existing debt, including joint venture indebtedness (which in virtually all cases requires substantial principal payments at maturity) and, if we can, the terms of such refinancing might not be as favorable as the terms of existing indebtedness. If principal payments due at maturity cannot be refinanced, extended or paid with proceeds of other capital transactions, such as new equity capital, our cash flow will not be sufficient in all years to repay all maturing debt. As a result, certain of our other debt may cross default, we may be forced to postpone capital expenditures necessary for the maintenance of our properties, we may have to dispose of one or more properties on terms that would otherwise be unacceptable to us or we may be forced to allow the mortgage holder to foreclose on a property.

If a property we own is mortgaged to secure debt and we are unable to meet the mortgage payments, the holder of the mortgage could foreclose on the property, resulting in loss of income and asset value. Foreclosure on mortgaged properties or an inability to refinance existing indebtedness would likely have a negative impact on our financial condition and results of operations.

Please refer to Item 7, *Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations*, for the Company's debt maturity schedule as of December 31, 2009.

Financial Covenants Could Adversely Affect the Company's Financial Condition

The mortgages on our properties may contain customary negative covenants that, among other things, limit our ability, without the prior consent of the lender, to further mortgage the property and to reduce or change insurance coverage. In addition, our unsecured credit facilities contain certain restrictions, requirements and other limitations on our ability to incur debt. The indentures under which a substantial portion of our unsecured debt was issued also contain certain financial and operating covenants including, among other things, maintenance of certain financial ratios, as well as limitations on our ability to incur secured and unsecured debt (including acquisition financing), and to sell all or substantially all of our assets. Our credit facilities and indentures are cross-defaulted and also contain cross default provisions with other material debt. The Company believes it was in compliance with its unsecured public debt covenants for both the years ended December 31, 2009 and 2008.

Some of the properties were financed with tax-exempt bonds that contain certain restrictive covenants or deed restrictions. We have retained an independent outside consultant to monitor compliance with the restrictive covenants and deed restrictions that affect these properties. If these bond compliance requirements restrict our ability to increase our rental rates to low or moderate-income residents, or eligible/qualified residents, then our income from these properties may be limited. Generally, we believe that the interest rate benefit attendant to properties with tax-exempt bonds more than outweighs any loss of income due to restrictive covenants or deed restrictions.

Our Degree of Leverage Could Limit Our Ability to Obtain Additional Financing

Our consolidated debt-to-total market capitalization ratio was 48.1% as of December 31, 2009. Our degree of leverage could have important consequences to security holders. For example, the degree of leverage could affect our ability to obtain additional financing in the future for working capital, capital expenditures, acquisitions, development or other general corporate purposes, making us more vulnerable to a downturn in business or the economy in general.

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Rising Interest Rates Could Adversely Affect Cash Flow

Advances under our credit facilities bear interest at variable rates based upon LIBOR at various interest periods, plus a spread dependent upon the Operating Partnership's credit rating, or based upon bids received from the lending group. Certain public issuances of our senior unsecured debt instruments may also, from time to time, bear interest at floating rates. We may also borrow additional money with variable interest rates in the future. Increases in interest rates would increase our interest expense under these debt instruments and would increase the costs of refinancing existing debt and of issuing new debt. Accordingly, higher interest rates could adversely affect cash flow and our ability to service our debt and make distributions to security holders.

Derivatives and Hedging Activity Could Adversely Affect Cash Flow

In the normal course of business, we use derivatives to hedge our exposure to interest rate volatility on debt instruments, including hedging for future debt issuances. There can be no assurance that these hedging arrangements will have the desired beneficial impact. These arrangements, which can include a number of counterparties, may expose us to additional risks, including failure of any of our counterparties to perform under these contracts, and may involve extensive costs, such as transaction fees or breakage costs, if we terminate them. No strategy can completely insulate us from the risks associated with interest rate fluctuations.

We Depend on Our Key Personnel

We depend on the efforts of the Chairman of our Board of Trustees, Samuel Zell, and our executive officers, particularly David J. Neithercut, our President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). If they resign or otherwise cease to be employed by us, our operations could be temporarily adversely affected. Mr. Zell has entered into retirement benefit and noncompetition agreements with the Company.

Control and Influence by Significant Shareholders Could Be Exercised in a Manner Adverse to Other Shareholders

The consent of certain affiliates of Mr. Zell is required for certain amendments to the Sixth Amended and Restated Agreement of Limited Partnership of the Operating Partnership (the Partnership Agreement). As a result of their security ownership and rights concerning amendments to the Partnership Agreement, the security holders referred to herein may have influence over the Company. Although to the Company's knowledge these security holders have not agreed to act together on any matter, they would be in a position to exercise even more influence over the Company's affairs if they were to act together in the future. This influence could conceivably be exercised in a manner that is inconsistent with the interests of other security holders. For additional information regarding the security ownership of our trustees, including Mr. Zell, and our executive officers, see the Company's definitive proxy statement.

Shareholders' Ability to Effect Changes in Control of the Company is Limited

Provisions of Our Declaration of Trust and Bylaws Could Inhibit Changes in Control

Certain provisions of our Declaration of Trust and Bylaws may delay or prevent a change in control of the Company or other transactions that could provide the security holders with a premium over the then-prevailing market price of their securities or which might otherwise be in the best interest of our security holders. This includes the 5% Ownership Limit described below. While our existing preferred shares do not have these provisions, any future series of preferred shares may have certain voting provisions that could delay or prevent a change in control or other transactions that might otherwise be in the interest of our security holders. In 2008, we adopted amendments to our Bylaws to expand the information required to be provided by any security holder, or persons acting in concert with such security holder, who proposes business or a nominee at an annual meeting of shareholders, including disclosure of information related to hedging activities and investment strategies with respect to our securities. These amendments could delay or prevent a change in control or other transactions that might otherwise be in the interest of our security holders.

We Have a Share Ownership Limit for REIT Tax Purposes

To remain qualified as a REIT for federal income tax purposes, not more than 50% in value of our outstanding Shares may be owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals at any time during the last half of any year. To facilitate maintenance of our REIT qualification, our Declaration of Trust, subject to certain exceptions, prohibits ownership by any single shareholder of more than 5% of the lesser of the number or value of the outstanding

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class of common or preferred shares. We refer to this restriction as the Ownership Limit. Absent any exemption or waiver granted by our Board of Trustees, securities acquired or held in violation of the Ownership Limit will be transferred to a trust for the exclusive benefit of a designated charitable beneficiary, and the security holder's rights to distributions and to vote would terminate. A transfer of Shares may be void if it causes a person to violate the Ownership Limit. The Ownership Limit could delay or prevent a change in control and, therefore, could adversely affect our security holders' ability to realize a premium over the then-prevailing market price for their Shares. To reduce the ability of the Board to use the Ownership Limit as an anti-takeover device, in 2004 the Company amended the Ownership Limit to require, rather than permit, the Board to grant a waiver of the Ownership Limit if the individual seeking a waiver demonstrates that such ownership would not jeopardize the Company's status as a REIT.

Our Preferred Shares May Affect Changes in Control

Our Declaration of Trust authorizes the Board of Trustees to issue up to 100 million preferred shares, and to establish the preferences and rights (including the right to vote and the right to convert into common shares) of any preferred shares issued. The Board of Trustees may use its powers to issue preferred shares and to set the terms of such securities to delay or prevent a change in control of the Company, even if a change in control were in the interest of security holders.

Inapplicability of Maryland Law Limiting Certain Changes in Control

Certain provisions of Maryland law applicable to real estate investment trusts prohibit business combinations (including certain issuances of equity securities) with any person who beneficially owns ten percent or more of the voting power of outstanding securities, or with an affiliate who, at any time within the two-year period prior to the date in question, was the beneficial owner of ten percent or more of the voting power of the Company's outstanding voting securities (an Interested Shareholder), or with an affiliate of an Interested Shareholder. These prohibitions l