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CORPORATE PARTICIPANTS

Angela L. Kleiman *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - Executive VP & CFO*

Michael J. Schall *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

CONFERENCE CALL PARTICIPANTS

Karin Ann Ford *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

PRESENTATION

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you very much for coming this afternoon. We very much appreciate it.

My name is Karin Ford. I'm the Senior REIT analyst at MUFG Securities, and I'm very excited to be here today with the management team of Essex Property Trust. We've got CEO, Michael Schall; CFO, Angela Kleiman. And we'll definitely welcome your questions.

I'll turn it over, first, to Mike, to just give any opening remarks, and then we'll start the Q&A.

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Okay, great. Well, thank you, Karin. And again, thank you for joining us today. I also want to recognize that Barb Pak and Emily Huffman from the company -- you guys raise your hand -- are here with us today as well.

So by way of background, Essex is an S&P 500 company. We own and operate more than 60,000 apartment homes in the western part of the U.S., really the coastal urban markets of California and Washington. There are some very unique things about these markets. Generally, job growth exceeds the U.S. average, and in fact, so far in 2018, using trailing 3-month job growth, we're at about 2.2% versus 1.6% in our forecast, and actually, the U.S. average is about that, really driven a lot by the tech companies that are on the West Coast. So for whatever reason, they took somewhat of a lag in hiring late in '17 and they've really picked it up again here in '18.

There's a number of factors in our West Coast markets that constrained housing supply. Included in this is expensive single-family housing, so the transition from a renter to a homeowner is a very difficult one. We've generally produced less than 1% of the housing stock every year, so you have the confluence of good demand growth, 2.2% job growth, with relatively limited amounts of housing being produced.

Behind that, a recent study found that there was a pretty dramatic shortage of housing in the U.S. created from the period from 2000 to 2015. That's 7.3 million units short for that period in the U.S. California is about half of that, 3.4 million units. So we have a supply-demand imbalance ongoing, but we also have a huge housing shortage in the past. So I think that sets up a pretty ideal situation for an owner of rental property in these markets.

I guess, the track record validates this strategy. We just announced our 24th consecutive dividend increase to $7.44, which positions us nicely to become a dividend aristocrat next year. In total, we paid about $85 in dividends over -- since our IPO in 1994. That's roughly 4x our IPO price. And we have among the highest total returns of all the REITs in existence since 1994. So I think we're like #1 or #2 of all the REITs that were in existence from that point on. So the strategy works, and we're pretty excited about the opportunity ahead.

Switching to 2018 guidance, and we have discussed this on the conference call recently. We generally expect improved economic conditions this year versus last year, multi-family supply to be relatively flat in '18 versus '17, but we're seeing both solid job growth and income growth -- incomes that are generally growing faster than rents which is improving affordability as we go through 2018, actually for the last couple of years.

So we expect market rents in 2018 to grow about 3%, same-store revenue about 2.7%, and core FFO around 4.6%.

We issued an update to our operations -- our operating statement as part of our investor package. It's on Page 28. It showed the results for April and May of 2018, where we had revenue growth of 2.8% against the guidance midpoint of 2.7% and against a 3.3% increase in revenue, same property revenue in Q1 '18.

Most of the deceleration from Q1 was attributable to occupancy. So the occupancy gain embedded in the Q1 numbers was about 60 basis points, and the occupancy gain over the prior year, for April and May, was about 30 basis points.

So we think we're pretty well positioned as a company, and again, it looks like job growth is doing better than we thought, so demand is growing stronger. Supply is about what it was last year, so we think that better times are ahead. That was -- that completes my intro. So back to you, Karin.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Thank you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

So I'll kick it off with a big picture question. Can you just talk about, to a potential investor who's considering an investment in Essex, what you think the value proposition is in the stock today?

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Sure. I'll handle that one. I think that Essex is -- we've got a premier track record and a great portfolio of apartments on the West Coast. Our apartments over long periods of time have done well, and especially on the West Coast. We pay around a 3% dividend, and we've grown that every year for 24 years now. And so with the 3% dividend and core FFO growing between 4% and 5%, that would imply, at the same multiple, somewhere around 7.5% total return. We think that we're -- that puts us in the top tier of certainly the apartment REITs, and we have a very strong balance sheet. And so I think we're very well positioned for opportunities ahead.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Great. And can you just go through each of your regions and talk about how they're performing relative to where you thought they would be at the beginning of the year? And you said you're going to reconsider your 3% market rate growth on the second quarter earnings release. Just give us your -- update us on your thoughts as far as that with respect to each of the regions.

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Sure. So in Q1 '18, if you go to Southern California, it's been pretty steady as a market, 3.3% same property revenue growth. Preliminary April/May was also 3.3%. Going to Northern California, Q1 '18 was 2.7%, same property revenue, and preliminary April/May was 2%. However, there was an 80-basis point swing in occupancy in Northern California, and so therefore, most of that difference is attributable to occupancy. And Seattle was 4.5% for the first quarter and decelerated to 3.3%. Essentially, what's happened is the prior year we had, if you just look at market rents, we had a very strong first half of the year. Market rents peaked early and then declined pretty rapidly at the end of last year, so the normal shape of how revenues grow in the Essex portfolio was different last year. And so this year we have tough comps basically for the first 6 months of the year. And then as we go into the second half of the year, we should start picking up some steam with respect to same property revenue. And I'd say the strongest market that we -- that's in our portfolio was actually Northern California, even though that doesn't show up in these numbers, followed by probably Seattle. Seattle has a significant amount of supply, but it continues to have great job growth, somewhere in the 3%, 3%-plus range.

So Seattle, even though it has more supply, it also has great demand. And so Seattle is probably second. And then finally, Southern California. So again, I think this year, the comparables to last year are influenced by the year-over-year weighted -- that revenue grew last year and then peaked early and then declined pretty precipitously, and so this year will be a little bit different. But we should pick up loss to lease, which is market rents above in-place rents, as we go through the last 6 months of the year.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Great. There've been a lot of talk and discussion surrounding rent control trends in California. Can you update us on the status of initiatives to put a repeal of Costa-Hawkins law on the November ballot? And has rent control surpassed supply is perhaps the biggest risk you see in your markets?

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Yes. So Costa-Hawkins, let me provide a little bit of background on that. There will be a ballot measure referendum on Costa-Hawkins, which was a 1995 law that restricted the rent control that local governments could enact. So what had happened before Costa-Hawkins was enacted was there were some cities with very restrictive rent control ordinances -- San Francisco, Berkeley, Santa Monica, primarily. And they found it from the late '70s when their rent control ordinances were enacted until the mid-'90s, virtually no housing had been produced in those markets. And so Costa-Hawkins was a legislative solution to try to promote more housing production in these areas, in big cities that essentially had no housing production. Because California was suffering as it is today from the pretty severe housing shortage, Costa-Hawkins was meant to be a solution to that. So the law passed in 1995. It did a couple of major things. Number one, it banned rent control on anything built after February 1995. Number two, it mandated vacancy decontrol. So when an apartment vacates, it immediately goes to market. It doesn't allow rent control on that unit. It does not allow the cities that had rent control to strengthen their rent control, and then it also banned rent control on for-sale housing. And so all of those things took place. The industry -- the apartment industry was not all that excited about Costa-Hawkins when it was initially passed, and I think since then, it's been proven to be a very good thing for the industry because, for example, you have tens of thousands of apartments that have been built in San Francisco, none of which would be there had Costa-Hawkins not passed. So fast forward to 2018, so there will be a referendum on the California ballot in November, and it will propose to do a number of things, including repeal of Costa-Hawkins. And the apartment industry has a pretty robust industry coalition that has been set up to oppose that. Actually, most of the Democrat governor candidates, Mr. Villaraigosa, Gavin Newsom, John Chiang, have come out on our side of that, essentially opposing a repeal of Costa-Hawkins because I think that the unintended consequences of Costa-Hawkins are to further restrict the production of housing, and California -- the California, I think, legislature and the governmental entities realized that further restricting the production of housing will further damage the supply-demand balance, and effectively, it'll be -- it's essentially a low-growth or an antigrowth type of proposition. So we have again an industry coalition, and it is very well organized. And so we seek to block the repeal, or oppose the repeal of Costa-Hawkins. I can't assure you what might happen, but I can say that if Costa-Hawkins is repealed, I think we'd go back to a period that was similar to the pre-Costa-Hawkins era. I was here at Essex during that period. And the markets did just fine. You had certain cities that you avoided, and other cities that didn't have dramatic rent control benefited from the fact that San Francisco and Berkeley and Santa Monica produced very little housing. And I don't think that in and of itself is problematic in terms of operating an apartment company. More recently, since 2016, there were 10 proposals to enact rent control consistent with Costa-Hawkins, and 8 of them failed. So just to give you an idea, so if Costa-Hawkins is repealed, that doesn't mean rent control is going to be the way of the land in California. All it means is that cities can then have more flexibility to enact rent control ordinances from that point on.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

I think one of your peers estimated that 10 municipalities that the REITs operate in could consider rent control if Costa-Hawkins is repealed. Do you have a view on that? Do you think it's as many as 10 of your submarkets that could be in play?

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Well, there's a list of cities that are considering rent control. And whether or not Costa-Hawkins is repealed, and because it -- Costa-Hawkins doesn't ban rent control proposals, it mandates that they comply with certain things that I just discussed. So I wouldn't be surprised that some of them do, but again, the precedent of -- okay, since 2016, we've had 10 cities that have had some form of rent control proposal, and 8 of them were essentially not enacted. So I think that that's a pretty good comp. I think that the unintended consequences of rent control are pretty well known now. You have a legislative analyst report that's available on the California website that discusses rent control. It was completed a couple of years ago. You have a recent study by Stanford University that studied San Francisco rent control. And there are some links to those at savecostahawkins.org, and there's a couple of other websites that go along with it. So I think that the kind of the initial reaction, the populist reaction is rent control is a good thing because rents are going up too fast in California. However, it's these unintended consequences that our coalition seeks to make very clear to the population in California that these things are pretty severe and will actually end up hurting the people that are expected to be benefited by rent control.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Any questions in the audience?

Unidentified Participant

I think it was the City of Seattle that's been considering something that we want to call the Jobs Act closing on large employers like Amazon some sort of incremental capacity to fund the imposition, if you will, that they close on the city. What impact do you see that having on your -- broadly on your housing project if something like that were to take place?

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Do you want to take it? Sure.

Angela L. Kleiman - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - Executive VP & CFO*

So in Seattle, they did pass a head tax of $275 per person per year, and that's only in the city of Seattle. What that means for our portfolio -- and by the way, that money is going towards funding for affordable housing. And so ultimately, politics aside and all the rhetoric aside, it actually will benefit Amazon because in order to attract talent, there's a need for affordable housing. And the average home price or median home price in Seattle is now $600,000. And so it's become quite unaffordable, where 3 years ago, it was $450,000. So it's a city that's undergoing a lot of changes. And $275, it's not unreasonable. It's not egregious or business-unfriendly. It's more symbolic than anything else, that the local residents got something out of it. As far as the impact for us. As we have a handful of properties that will be impacted, but once we went through all the numbers, we're talking $6,000 a year. And so it's de minimis.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Can your guys talk a little bit about supply? I think you said you expect supply to be roughly flat this year and then down next year. Can you just broadly talk about what you think the impact of supply is going to be on your portfolio looking ahead? And what percentage of your portfolio today is being impacted by lease-up -- multiple competitive lease-ups offering large concessions?

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Yes, I'll handle that one. Supply, we expect to be generally down a little bit in 2019 versus 2018, and this is covered on Page 8 of our supplemental document. And I know that supply tracking is a little bit challenging for both the investors and for the companies because I think we rolled, in our own internal supply numbers, we rolled about 4,000 units from 2017 to 2018. And I think AXIOMetrics actually rolled a much larger number from 2017 to 2018, which means -- I've heard from investors that "Hey, we thought supply peaked last year, and now it looks like it's this year. And what's going to happen next year?" So there's a little bit of confusion out there with respect to supply. But most of that is because of just construction delays and that type of activities. So I think that what I'd say is generally speaking, supply is peaking, and the rationale to rebuild the pipeline, I think that there's some pretty big headwinds. For example, construction costs going up somewhere around 10% a year for the last several years, while rents are going up at 3%, you can imagine what that does to your cap rate. And so I think that deals are becoming more and more difficult to underwrite. So I think that -- not that there aren't a pretty significant amount of permits being pulled, but I think the tendency is going to be to push them out further. So I think it will have generally reasonably high level -- not high level of supply -- we produce 1% of stock a year, for example, so it's not a huge amount of apartments being built. But as Karin said, where several buildings are delivered in the same submarket at the same time, we will experience supply disruption because each of those buildings is trying to lease up somewhere around 30 units per month. So if you get 4 buildings that are trying to lease up 30 units a month, and especially, if it's in the second half of the year where job growth tends to slow down a little bit towards the end of the year, you can have this mismatch of too much supply in the marketplace. And developers are typically granting in that environment somewhere between 1.5 to 2 months free, which is just 12% to 16% of annual rents for a short period of time, again, while they're being leased up, but that's disruptive to the market. And essentially, it changes the pricing dynamic really throughout the market. So we expect that again in a couple of areas, to a greater extent, but for the most part, again, with supply declining, I think it will happen less as time goes on, in '18 and into '19. So the areas that are most directly affected by the multiple buildings competing on a lease-up basis with one another would be Seattle, downtown LA, Westside -- and really, Westside LA. Other than that, I think we're in pretty good shape. Our portfolio, just to give you an idea of the supply being delivered, about 40% of it is being delivered in the urban core. And only about 10% of our portfolio is in the urban core. Most of our portfolio is on the -- is in a variety of submarkets around the major metro areas.

Unidentified Participant

I want to ask you about your product. I saw the deck, mostly high-rise and mid-rise. You hear a lot of comments about digital apartments, so that's maybe why (inaudible). And so if I may ask, what's your typical development yield (inaudible)

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Okay. So in terms of product first. So our product -- so our basic strategy is "Hey, let's pick the markets, the metro areas that support the greatest supply-demand imbalance, and therefore, have the best rent growth. And we -- track CAGRs of rent growth throughout most of the markets in the U.S. and certainly, San Francisco, for example, is one of the top markets in terms of long-term compounded annual growth rates of rents. And then with respect to -- we think we found those markets, certainly on the West Coast, and so we will own a broader swath of property. In other words, let's say B- to A-quality property in a variety of different configurations from some of the older buildings are garden style, but most of our properties are either wraps or podiums, and then we have a few high-rise buildings as well. So it's a broader mix of product within markets that grow faster than most of the other areas of the United States. So that is the basic strategy of the company. The second part of the question, did you get that?

Angela L. Kleiman - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - Executive VP & CFO*

Development yields.

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Development yields, yes. We'll start with the development yields. Development yields are -- again, we measure them untrended, let's say, so untrended. We target somewhere around a 25% premium to an acquisition cap rate to compensate us for the risk inherent in development. And so if an acquisition cap rate is 4 to 4.25, we're looking for somewhere around 5 to 5.25 with, again, no trending of rents with rents in-place as of the point that we are moving forward. Now again, back to the dilemma, which is with construction costs going up at around 10% and rents going up about 3%, your cap rate is actually compressing, and so I would say the market clearing, the deals that we're seeing actually go-to-market and actually start building -- have been committed long before, and the equities are already invested in the deals long before. And many of them are starting construction on a 4.5 type cap rate, I think that's pretty typical in our market. So cap rates have been compressed and are continuing to compress given that scenario. In terms of redevelopment, we have some properties that are, I'd say 2-story walk-up and they still -- you still cannot justify tearing them down, and mainly because we can't get enough density from the cities in order to justify tearing down a 2-story building in order to build a 5-story building. You can't -- you just can't make those numbers work. I wish we could. I think that could be part of the solution to California's housing shortages, but at this point in time, that's not on the table. The cities are incredibly restrictive. And I asked Angela, it was one of my favorite questions, and she doesn't like to answer it. I said, "How much do you spend on that public art at one of our properties that we just delivered in?" Your answer was?

Angela L. Kleiman - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - Executive VP & CFO*

A very depressing $1.4 million for a piece of artwork.

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Yes, beautiful art -- beautiful artwork. And I asked how much rent does she get for that. So this is the type of thing. At the bottom of the cycle, generally speaking, cities are welcoming you to build in their city and they're waiving fees and below market rate, affordable units and that type of thing. At the top of the cycle, they want more stuff. They want energy efficiency, things which arguably, that can't work, depending upon what it is, public artwork, more affordable units, higher fees, et cetera. So that's -- we're closer. We don't know that we're at the top of the cycle, but we're close to the top than we are at the bottom. So there are some definite headwinds on the development side.

Unidentified Participant

There's been a few of these micro apartments popping in cities like San Francisco. Will these potentially be a kind of threat going forward?

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

We keep track -- we pretty much don't get caught up on which element of supply. We just try to look at all supply. And again, that kind of the numbers that we threw out here. California is short $3.4 million apartment units. There's one study, Up for Growth National Coalition with the National Multi Housing Council. So there's an enormous shortage here. And every year, it's getting worse, not better. San Jose is surprisingly, this year, reported 3%-plus job growth for the first time in a couple of years. So demand is better. The tech companies, there's been a tremendous amount of wealth created on the West Coast. And so this housing shortage is not going to go away anytime probably in the next decade. I mean, that will be the best case if all the -- if more pro-growth policies were enacted. And when you consider, for example, in San Francisco and San Jose, we're producing about 5% to 7% of the office stock right now that's under construction. And so if we're producing 1% of the apartment stock, it's not enough. It's not going to be enough to house the people in those office buildings. And so, we think this is a -- it's the reason why the Costa-Hawkins repeal is out there, but it's the wrong answer. It's not going to accomplish what it's expected to accomplish. And in fact, it probably hurts those that it seeks to help.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Piggybacking on that, I had seen a stat that accessory building units, so garage apartments, guesthouses on single-family houses were up pretty big, 60%-plus. Do you think that's a potential supply competition in this housing shortage?

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

I think that there are common sense solutions to a lot of these issues. And I think that could be part of it. If you can get through all the building code issues and parking and all the other things that come into play as a result of this, the fire safety and a variety of things. But there was a study, for example, that was done on the -- it was on the Costa-Hawkins issue, by UC Berkeley -- the Terner study that recently came out. It was trying to find a common-sense solution to California's housing problems, and looking specifically at Costa-Hawkins and saying, "Hey, that probably isn't the solution. And the solution probably is to do nothing. There is probably somewhere in between." And it proposed a couple of things. But one of them, I thought, resonated with us, which is a -- make it more like an emergency cap, so no rent increases on renewals above 10%. And to have another concept of CPI -- regional CPI, plus 5%, which will take it to somewhere around 7.5% to 8% type cap on renewal rents. I think there are things that can help. And I think all of these things, like the micro units help, I think that turning your garage into a rental unit will help. But I think you put all these together, the housing shortage in California is not going away anytime soon.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

And lastly -- we've only got 20 seconds, but I just wanted to ask about capital allocation. Stocks trading at a 10% discount to NAV, it doesn't happen very often in Essex's world. So how are you thinking about share repurchases, acquisitions and co-investments?

Angela L. Kleiman - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - Executive VP & CFO*

Well, okay. In 3 seconds, I'll answer this question. Big picture, we think about capital allocation in terms of the arbitrage of the spread between the cost of funds and investment that we're making. And the investment that we're making, the goal is to accomplish 3 things: grow FFO per share, which is cash flow; NAV per share; and have the growth of the asset outperform the growth of the portfolio. So with that backdrop, big picture, with our current stock price, if you use consensus NAV as a proxy, we are not going to issue stock. But if there is an investment opportunity that makes sense, we have other source of capital. We have a co-investment program that's very active, which right now, we've been doing 50-50 joint ventures. And in the past, we've done 20-80 or 25-75. So when equity costs becomes more expensive, we might lean into that capital allocation, or we could sell assets when main street pricing is greater than our internal NAV. There is some optionality there. And so it's all about what capital we deploy and what we end up investing, the end destination for the capital.

Karin Ann Ford - *MUFG Securities Americas Inc., Research Division - Senior Real Estate Analyst*

Great. Thanks very much, everybody.

Michael J. Schall - *Essex Property Trust, Inc. - President, CEO & Director*

Thank you.
