

EQUITY RESIDENTIAL
Form 10-K
February 24, 2011

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**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549**

FORM 10-K

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

For the Fiscal Year Ended **DECEMBER 31, 2010**

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)

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)

**Preferred Shares of Beneficial Interest, \$0.01 Par
Value**
(Title of Each Class)

New York Stock Exchange
(Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered)

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

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

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§ 232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (§ 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. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer

Accelerated filer
Smaller reporting
company

Non-accelerated filer (Do not check if a 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 \$11.4 billion based upon the closing price on June 30, 2010 of \$41.64 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 16, 2011 was 293,981,029.

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DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Part III incorporates by reference certain information that will be contained in the Company's Proxy Statement relating to our 2011 Annual Meeting of Shareholders, which the Company intends to file no later than 120 days after the end of its fiscal year ended December 31, 2010, and thus these items have been omitted in accordance with General Instruction G(3) to Form 10-K.

EQUITY RESIDENTIAL

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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 in each of its markets.

EQR is the general partner of, and as of December 31, 2010 owned an approximate 95.5% ownership interest in, ERP Operating Limited Partnership, an Illinois limited partnership (the Operating Partnership). All of EQR's property ownership, development 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, 2010, the Company, directly or indirectly through investments in title holding entities, owned all or a portion of 451 properties located in 17 states and the District of Columbia consisting of 129,604 apartment units. The ownership breakdown includes (table does not include various uncompleted development properties):

	Properties	Apartment Units
Wholly Owned Properties	425	119,634
Partially Owned Properties - Consolidated	24	5,232
Military Housing	2	4,738
	451	129,604

As of December 31, 2010, the Company had approximately 4,000 employees who provided 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. See also Note 19 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for additional discussion regarding the Company's segment disclosures.

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 and Investing Strategies

The Company invests in apartment communities located in strategically targeted markets with the goal of maximizing our risk adjusted total return (operating income plus capital appreciation) on invested capital.

Our operating focus is on balancing occupancy and rental rates to maximize our revenue while exercising tight cost control to generate the highest possible return to our shareholders. Revenue is maximized by driving qualified resident prospects to our properties, converting this traffic cost-effectively into new leases at the highest rent possible, keeping our residents satisfied and renewing their leases at yet higher rents. While we believe that it is our high-quality, well-located assets that bring our customers to us, it is our customer service that keeps them renting with us and recommending us to their friends.

We use technology to engage our customers in the way that they want to be engaged. Many of our residents utilize our web-based resident portal which allows them to review their account and make payments, provide feedback and make service requests on-line.

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We seek to maximize capital appreciation of our properties by investing in markets that are characterized by conditions favorable to multifamily property appreciation. These markets generally feature one or more of the following:

- n High barriers to entry where, because of land scarcity or government regulation, it is difficult or costly to build new apartment properties leading to low supply;
- n High single family home prices making our apartments a more economical housing choice;
- n Strong economic growth leading to household formation and job growth, which in turn leads to high demand for our apartments; and
- n An attractive quality of life leading to high demand and retention and allowing us to more readily increase rents.

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. The Company may also seek to acquire properties by purchasing defaulted or distressed debt that encumbers desirable properties in the hope of obtaining title to property through foreclosure or deed-in-lieu of foreclosure proceedings. The Company has also, in the past, converted some of its properties and sold them as condominiums but is not currently active in this line of business.

The Company primarily sources the funds for its new property acquisitions in its core markets with the sales proceeds from selling assets that are older or located in non-core markets. During the last five years, the Company has sold over 97,000 apartment units for an aggregate sales price of \$7.2 billion and acquired nearly 25,000 apartment units in its core markets for approximately \$5.5 billion. We are currently acquiring and developing assets primarily in the following targeted metropolitan areas: Boston, New York, Washington DC, South Florida, Southern California, San Francisco, Seattle and to a lesser extent Denver. We also have investments (in the aggregate about 18% of our NOI) in other markets including Atlanta, Phoenix, Portland, Oregon, New England excluding Boston, Tampa, Orlando and Jacksonville but do not intend to acquire or develop assets in these markets.

As part of its strategy, the Company purchases completed and fully occupied apartment properties, partially completed or partially unoccupied properties or land on which apartment properties can be constructed. We intend to hold a diversified portfolio of assets across our target markets. Currently, no single metropolitan area accounts for more than 17% of our NOI, though no guarantee can be made that NOI concentration may not increase in the future.

We endeavor to attract and retain the best employees by providing them with the education, resources and opportunities to succeed. We provide many classroom and on-line training courses to assist our employees in interacting with prospects and residents as well as extensively train our customer service specialists in maintaining the equipment and appliances on our property sites. We actively promote from within and many senior corporate and property leaders have risen from entry level or junior positions. We monitor our employees' engagement by surveying them annually and have consistently received high engagement scores.

We have a commitment to sustainability and consider the environmental impacts of our business activities. With its high density, multifamily housing is, by its nature, an environmentally friendly property type. Our recent acquisition

and development activities have been primarily concentrated in pedestrian-friendly urban locations near public transportation. When developing and renovating our properties, we strive to reduce energy and water usage by investing in energy saving technology while positively impacting the experience of our residents and the value of our assets. We continue to implement a combination of irrigation, lighting and HVAC improvements at our properties that will reduce energy and water consumption.

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, 2010.

Major Debt and Equity Activities for the Years Ended December 31, 2010, 2009 and 2008

During 2010:

- n The Operating Partnership issued \$600.0 million of ten-year 4.75% fixed rate public notes in a public offering at an all-in effective interest rate of 5.09%, receiving net proceeds of \$595.4 million before underwriting fees and other expenses.
- n The Company issued 2,506,645 Common Shares pursuant to its Share Incentive Plans and received net proceeds of approximately \$71.6 million.

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- n The Company issued 157,363 Common Shares pursuant to its Employee Share Purchase Plan and received net proceeds of approximately \$5.1 million.
- n The Company issued 6,151,198 Common Shares at an average price of \$47.45 per share for total consideration of \$291.9 million pursuant to its At-The-Market (ATM) share offering program. See Note 3 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.
- n The Company repurchased and retired 58,130 of its Common Shares at an average price of \$32.46 per share for total consideration of \$1.9 million (all related to the vesting of employee restricted shares). See Note 3 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.

During 2009:

- n 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.
- n The Company issued 422,713 Common Shares pursuant to its Share Incentive Plans and received net proceeds of approximately \$9.1 million.
- n The Company issued 324,394 Common Shares pursuant to its Employee Share Purchase Plan and received net proceeds of approximately \$5.3 million.
- n 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 ATM share offering program. See Note 3 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.
- n 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 (all related to the vesting of employee restricted shares). See Note 3 in the Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements for further discussion.
- n The Company repurchased \$75.8 million of its 5.20% fixed rate tax-exempt notes.
- n 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.
- n 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.
- n 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.
- n 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.
- n

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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:

- n 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.
- n 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.
- n 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.
- n The Company issued 995,129 Common Shares pursuant to its Share Incentive Plans and received net proceeds of approximately \$24.6 million.
- n The Company issued 195,961 Common Shares pursuant to its Employee Share Purchase Plan and received net proceeds of approximately \$6.2 million.
- n 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.
- n 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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- n 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.

During the first quarter of 2011 through January 13, 2011, the Company has issued approximately 3.0 million Common Shares at an average price of \$50.84 per share for total consideration of approximately \$154.5 million through the ATM share offering program. The Company has not issued any shares under this program since January 13, 2011.

An unlimited amount of equity and debt securities remains available for issuance by EQR and the Operating Partnership under effective shelf registration statements filed with the SEC. Most recently, EQR and the Operating Partnership filed a universal shelf registration statement for an unlimited amount of equity and debt securities that became automatically effective upon filing with the SEC in October 2010 (under SEC regulations enacted in 2005, the registration statement automatically expires on October 14, 2013 and does not contain a maximum issuance amount). However, as of February 16, 2011, issuances under the ATM share offering program are limited to 10,000,000 additional shares.

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, 2011, 22,785,696 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 \$1.425 billion (net of \$75.0 million which had been committed by a now bankrupt financial institution and is not available for borrowing) 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 0.50%) dependent upon the Operating Partnership's credit rating or based on bids received from the lending group. EQR has guaranteed the Operating Partnership's credit facility up to the maximum amount and for the full term of the facility.

As of December 31, 2010, the amount available on the credit facility was \$1.28 billion (net of \$147.3 million which was restricted/dedicated to support letters of credit and net of the \$75.0 million discussed above) and there was no amount outstanding. During the year ended December 31, 2010, the weighted average interest rate was 0.66%. 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). The Company did not draw and had no balance outstanding on its revolving credit facility at any time during the year ended December 31, 2009.

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 apartment 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.

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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), limited partnership interests in the Operating Partnership (OP Units) and Long Term Incentive Plan Units (LTIP Units). In this section, we refer to the Shares, OP Units and LTIP Units together as our securities and the investors who own Shares and/or OP/LTIP 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. Numerous factors may adversely affect the economic performance and value of our properties and the ability to realize that value. These factors include changes in the global, 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 multifamily properties 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, all of 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 and Our New Dividend Policy May Lead to Quicker Dividend Reductions

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 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. While our new dividend policy makes it less likely we will over distribute, it will also lead to a dividend reduction more quickly than in the past should operating results deteriorate. See Item 7 for additional discussion regarding our new dividend policy.

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

When our residents decide not to renew their leases upon expiration, we may not be able to relet their apartment units. Even if the residents do renew or we can relet the apartment units, the terms of renewal or reletting may be less favorable than current lease terms. If we are unable to promptly renew the leases or relet the apartment 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 s policies, many of which may encourage home ownership, can increase competition and possibly limit 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 and/or develop multifamily properties for rental operations as market conditions dictate. We may also acquire multifamily properties that are unoccupied or in the early stages of lease up. We may be unable to lease up these apartment properties on schedule, resulting in decreases in expected rental revenues and/or lower yields due to lower occupancy and rates as well as higher than expected concessions. 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 (or lack thereof) may

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increase (or depress) 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. 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 Act, 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.

Risks Involved in Real Estate Activity Through Joint Ventures

We have in the past and may in the future develop and acquire properties in joint ventures with other persons or entities when we believe circumstances warrant the use of such structures. Joint venture investments involve risks, including the possibility that our partners might refuse to make capital contributions when due; that we may be responsible to our partner for indemnifiable losses; that our partner might at any time have business or economic goals which are inconsistent with ours; and that our partner may be in a position to take action or withhold consent contrary to our instructions or requests. Frequently, we and our partner may each have the right to trigger a buy-sell arrangement, which could cause us to sell our interest, or acquire our partner's interest, at a time when we otherwise would not have initiated such a transaction. In some instances, joint venture partners may have competing interests in our markets that could create conflicts of interest. 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.

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 reallocate our capital promptly 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 and/or cash investments 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 Market Conditions and Volatility of Share Prices Could Adversely Affect the Market Price of Our Common Shares

The stock markets, including the New York Stock Exchange, on which we list our Common Shares, have experienced significant price and volume fluctuations. As a result, the market price of our Common Shares could be similarly volatile, and investors in our Common Shares may experience a decrease in the value of their shares, including decreases unrelated to our operating performance or prospects. The market price of our Common Shares may decline or fluctuate significantly in response to many factors, including but not limited to the following:

- n general market and economic conditions;
- n actual or anticipated variations in our quarterly operating results or dividends;
- n changes in our funds from operations, normalized funds from operations or earnings estimates;
- n difficulties or inability to access capital or extend or refinance debt;
- n decreasing (or uncertainty in) real estate valuations;
- n a change in analyst ratings;
- n adverse market reaction to any additional debt we incur in the future;
- n governmental regulatory action, including changes or proposed changes to the mandates of Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, and changes in tax laws; and
- n the issuance of additional Common Shares, or the perception that such issuances might occur, including under our ATM program.

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Changes in Laws and Litigation Risk Could Affect Our Business

We are generally not able to pass through to our residents under existing leases any 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.

Any Weaknesses Identified in Our Internal Control Over Financial Reporting Could Have an Adverse Effect on Our Share Price

Section 404 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 requires us to evaluate and report on our internal control over financial reporting. If we identify one or more material weaknesses in our internal control over financial reporting, we could lose investor confidence in the accuracy and completeness of our financial reports, which in turn could have an adverse effect on our share price.

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.

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. While 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, should mold become an issue in the future, our financial condition or results of operations may be adversely affected.

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, changes 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.

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Insurance Policy Deductibles, Exclusions and Counterparties

As of December 31, 2010, 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, 2010 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 has reviewed its claims history over the years and 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, 2010, the Company was 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 has become more susceptible to large losses as it has transformed its portfolio, becoming more concentrated in fewer, more valuable assets over a smaller geographical footprint.

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

Non-Performance by Our Operating Counterparties Could Adversely Affect Our Performance

We have relationships with and, from time to time, we execute transactions with or receive services from many counterparties. As a result, defaults by counterparties could result in services not being provided, or volatility in the financial markets could affect counterparties' ability to complete transactions with us as intended, both of which could result in disruptions to our operations that may adversely affect our business and results of operations.

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, 2010.

In addition to debt, we have \$200.0 million of combined liquidation value of outstanding preferred shares of beneficial interest with a weighted average dividend preference of 6.93% per annum as of December 31, 2010. 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. 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

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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.

Potential Reforms to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Could Adversely Affect Our Performance

There is significant uncertainty surrounding the futures of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Should Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have their mandates changed or reduced, be disbanded or reorganized by the government or otherwise discontinue providing liquidity to our sector, it would significantly reduce our access to debt capital and/or increase borrowing costs and would significantly reduce our sales of assets and/or the values realized upon sale. 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.

Non-Performance by Our Financial 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 will not honor its financial commitment. Our borrowing capacity under the credit facility has in essence been permanently reduced to \$1.425 billion.

The Company also has developed assets 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.

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, 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 or to obtain lower deductible insurance compliant with the lenders' requirements at the lower rating level.

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, exten