



Gladstone Land Corporation (LAND)

Updated June 1st, 2021 by Josh Arnold

Key Metrics

Current Price:	\$23	5 Year CAGR Estimate:	-3.2%	Market Cap:	\$684 M
Fair Value Price:	\$13	5 Year Growth Estimate:	5.0%	Ex-Dividend Date:	06/17/21
% Fair Value:	177%	5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:	-10.8%	Dividend Payment Date:	06/30/21
Dividend Yield:	2.3%	5 Year Price Target	\$17	Years Of Dividend Growth:	7
Dividend Risk Score:	F	Retirement Suitability Score:	F	Last Dividend Increase:	0.1%

Overview & Current Events

Gladstone Land Corporation is a real estate investment trust, or REIT, that specializes in the owning and operating of farmland in the U.S. The trust owns 141 farms, comprising about 104,000 acres of farmable land. Gladstone's business is made up of three different options available to farmers, all of which are done on a triple-net basis. The trust offers long-term sale leaseback transactions, traditional leases of farmland, and outright purchases of farm properties. Gladstone's portfolio has an appraised value of \$1.2 billion, and the stock trades with a market capitalization of \$684 million. The trust went public in early 2013 after having been founded in 1997.

Gladstone reported first quarter earnings on May 12th, 2021, with results coming in better than expectations on both the top and bottom lines. Gladstone reported core funds-from-operations per share of 18 cents, which was up two cents from Q4, and bested estimates by four cents. Net asset value ended the quarter at \$12.69 per share, up 3.8% from the December quarter, which was primarily driven by a decrease in the fair value of fixed long-term borrowings, which was the result of higher market interest rates. In addition, the trust issued common shares at above estimate NAV, which generated a further gain.

Operating income was \$16 million, up 6% from Q4. The trust said the quarter contained the results of \$156 million in acquisitions that were made in the fourth quarter, and that the interest rates used to secure those acquisitions were very low, improving margins.

The trust acquired three new farms during the quarter, consisting of 233 acres, for \$5.6 million. In addition, it executed four new lease agreements at lower rates than before, meaning it expects a negative impact to annual net operating income of \$92k, or 4.3% over prior comparable leases. We've slightly reduced our estimate of FFO for this year to 65 cents per share following Q1 results.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2026
AFFO	---	\$0.57	\$0.16	\$0.25	\$0.40	\$0.54	\$0.56	\$0.51	\$0.57	\$0.66	\$0.65	\$0.83
DPS	---	---	\$1.16	\$0.36	\$0.47	\$0.50	\$0.52	\$0.53	\$0.53	\$0.54	\$0.54	\$0.63
Shares¹	---	2.8	6.2	6.9	8.6	10.8	13.4	16.3	17.9	20.9	26.2	32.0

Gladstone's growth has been irregular since it went public in 2013, although that growth has settled down a bit recently. From 2016 to 2018, Gladstone produced just over \$0.50 in AFFO-per-share annually, which is below where we see long-term earnings potential after recent acquisitions. With margins once again moving in the right direction, we think Gladstone can grow at 5% annually over the long-term. Acquisitions and rent escalations are likely to be the only sources of AFFO growth in the coming years, as has been the case for some time. We note that guidance on this front in Q1 was modest, so we'll be keeping an eye on margins for the balance of the year.

Growth in the trust's portfolio will drive higher rental revenues, but Gladstone continues to suffer from very high funding costs. It issues preferred stock with coupons in the mid-to-high single-digits, and issues common stock that has not only an implied cost of a higher share count, but also a dividend yield of 2%+. With capitalization rates in the mid-

¹ Share count in millions

Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.



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single digits, it is very difficult for Gladstone to issue such expensive capital and then profitably invest it in new properties. Given this, Gladstone has to tightly control operating expenses to move the needle on a per-share basis, which it has struggled to accomplish. We see this as continuing for the foreseeable future unless it finds a cheaper way to fund acquisitions. We note recent financing activity has been completed at more favorable rates, given that the share price has moved much higher, which should help boost the trust's margins further in the years to come. We also note this can turn quickly with market rates and the trust's share price.

The dividend was raised fractionally most recently as Gladstone appears to have hit the maximum dividend it can pay until AFFO-per-share increases. The most recent increase was just 0.1%.

Valuation Analysis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Now	2026
Avg. P/AFFO	---	---	100.7	49.3	25.8	18.9	22.0	24.8	21.2	21.6	35.4	20.0
Avg. Yld.	---	---	7.2%	2.9%	4.6%	4.9%	4.2%	4.2%	4.4%	3.8%	2.3%	3.8%

Gladstone's price-to-AFFO has been very high in recent years and sits at 35.4 today. We see fair value, given its low projected growth and maxed out dividend, at 20 times AFFO. That implies a strong annual headwind to total returns should the stock revert to this valuation, as Gladstone has rallied strongly in recent weeks.

The yield is 2.3% today and we see it rising over time as the valuation moderates from today's extreme level.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

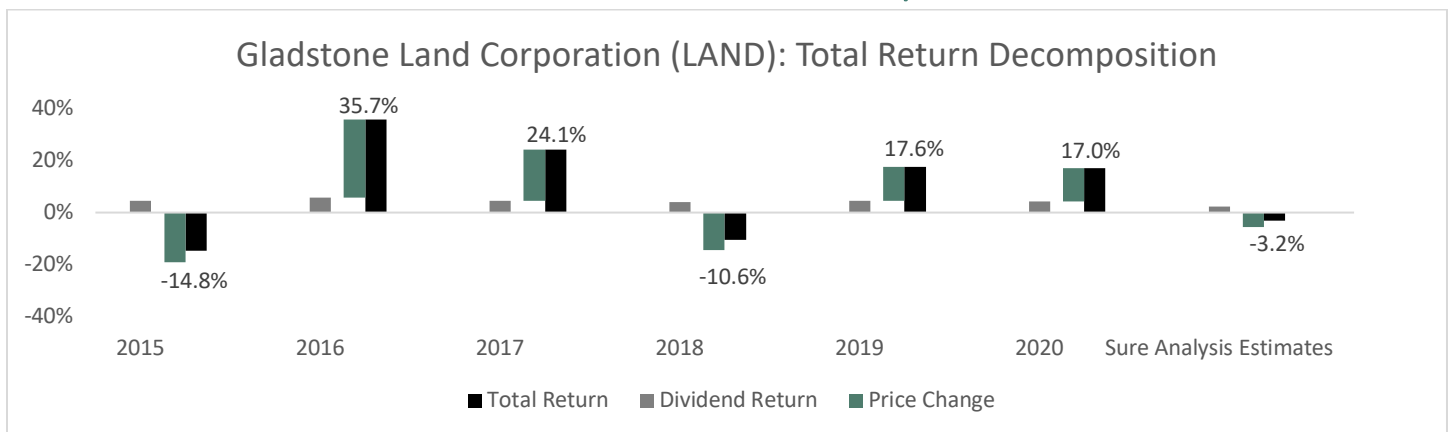
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2026
Payout	---	---	---	144%	118%	93%	93%	104%	93%	82%	83%	76%

Gladstone offers farmers a diverse portfolio of high-quality properties, but it doesn't necessarily have a competitive advantage. Recessions may hurt the trust's earnings as farmers that operate on low margins may struggle if a downturn occurs. Weather is another risk factor for Gladstone and its farmers, as crop destruction can occur for a variety of reasons. The dividend is also likely somewhat stretched at this point as it is 83% of AFFO-per-share.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

While we like the steady nature of Gladstone's rental income, the stock is far too expensive, and growth too low. We see total annual returns of -3.2%, consisting of the dividend yield and modest growth, more than offset by a headwind from the valuation. Given the high price compared to our estimate of fair value, we are reiterating Gladstone at a sell rating.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Revenue	---	3	4	7	12	17	25	37	41	57
Gross Profit	---	3	4	7	11	17	24	35	38	55
Gross Margin	---	96.5%	97.0%	94.0%	93.3%	95.5%	94.7%	94.4%	93.9%	96.8%
SG&A Exp.	---	1	2	3	3	4	5	5	6	11
D&A Exp.	---	0	1	2	3	5	7	9	13	17
Operating Profit	---	2	2	2	5	8	11	12	19	28
Operating Margin	---	60.6%	37.4%	29.5%	39.6%	44.2%	45.3%	33.0%	47.4%	48.5%
Net Profit	---	1	-1	0	1	0	0	3	2	5
Net Margin	---	17.7%	-30.3%	-1.7%	4.8%	2.6%	-0.1%	7.2%	4.3%	8.6%
Free Cash Flow	---	-6	-39	-68	-73	-86	1	-12	9	8
Income Tax	---	0	2	0	---	---	---	---	---	---

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Assets	---	41	94	152	229	334	462	565	817	1,067
Cash & Equivalents	---	1	16	3	3	2	3	15	14	9
Inventories	---	---	---	---	---	---	2	0	---	---
Goodwill & Int. Ass.	---	0	0	1	2	2	5	6	5	4
Total Liabilities	---	33	45	92	151	246	344	384	538	683
Accounts Payable	---	1	1	2	3	3	7	9	10	9
Long-Term Debt	---	31	43	86	142	207	301	336	482	624
Shareholder's Equity	---	8	49	60	78	77	110	176	277	384
D/E Ratio	---	3.79	0.89	1.44	1.82	2.70	2.74	1.91	1.74	1.63

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Return on Assets	---	1.6%	-1.8%	-0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Return on Equity	---	7.7%	-4.3%	-0.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	1.8%	0.8%	1.5%
ROIC	---	1.7%	-1.9%	-0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.6%
Shares Out.	---	2.8	6.2	6.9	8.6	10.8	13.4	16.3	17.9	20.9
Revenue/Share	---	1.23	0.65	1.05	1.38	1.73	2.08	2.37	2.08	2.56
FCF/Share	---	-2.31	-6.30	-9.88	-8.44	-8.59	0.11	-0.79	0.46	0.38

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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