Douglas Emmett (DEI)

Updated August 23rd, 2024 by Aristofanis Papadatos

Key Metrics

Current Price:	$15	**5 Year CAGR Estimate:**	12.2%	**Market Cap:**	$3.0 B
Fair Value Price:	$23	**5 Year Growth Estimate:**	0.0%	**Ex-Dividend Date:**	9/26/2024[1]
% Fair Value:	66%	**5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:**	8.8%	**Dividend Payment Date:**	10/5/2024
Dividend Yield:	5.1%	**5 Year Price Target**	$23	**Years Of Dividend Growth:**	0
Dividend Risk Score:	D	**Retirement Suitability Score:**	C	**Rating:**	Buy

Overview & Current Events

Douglas Emmett (DEI) is a real estate investment trust (REIT) that was founded in 1971. It is the largest office landlord in Los Angeles and Honolulu, with a 37% average market share of office space in its submarkets. The REIT generates 81% of its revenue from its office portfolio and 19% of its revenue from its multifamily portfolio. It has approximately 2,700 office leases in its portfolio, annual revenue of $1 billion and a market capitalization of $3.0 billion.

The merits of being the largest office landlord in Los Angeles are obvious, as Los Angeles County is the third-largest city in the world, with GDP of $1 trillion, behind only Tokyo and New York. The dominant position of Douglas Emmett creates operational synergies. In addition, the REIT benefits from high barriers to entry, which reduce competition. Moreover, the proximity to premier housing attracts affluent tenants, who offer reliable cash flows to the company.

In early August, Douglas Emmett reported (8/8/24) financial results for the second quarter of fiscal 2024. Revenue dipped -3% due to lower occupancy of office space and adjusted funds from operations (FFO) per share decreased -4.5% over the prior year's quarter due to lower revenue and increased interest expense. Management reiterated its negative guidance, expecting FFO per share of $1.65-$1.69 in 2024, as high interest rates will continue weighing on interest expense. The trust also cut its dividend by 32% in late 2022 due to this headwind. Fortunately, 87% of debt is at fixed rates but we note that interest expense has almost exceeded operating income in each of the last five quarters.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2029
FFO	$1.83	$1.92	$2.13	$2.20	$2.35	$2.45	$2.12	$1.86	$2.03	$1.86	***$1.67***	***$1.67***
DPS	$0.81	$0.85	$0.89	$0.94	$1.01	$1.06	$1.12	$1.12	$1.03	$0.76	***$0.76***	***$0.76***
Shares[2]	148.1	150.6	153.2	161.2	169.9	173.4	175.4	175.5	175.8	166.8	***170.0***	***200.0***

The markets of Douglas Emmett are characterized by high rent growth and relatively low volatility. Rents in the West Los Angeles submarkets of the REIT have grown 150% over the last 25 years, at a 3.7% average annual rate, the highest growth rate among all the U.S. gateway markets. Douglas Emmett certainly benefits from this trend, as its leases include 3%-5% annual rent hikes. The company has posted flat FFO per share over the last decade, primarily due to the impact of 23-year high interest rates on its interest expense and hence on its bottom line. On the bright side, the REIT has ample development opportunities within its existing portfolio. Given the low comparison base formed this year due to the continued effect of the work-from-home trend but also the negative effect of high interest rates on interest expense, we expect Douglas Emmett to post essentially flat FFO per share over the next five years.

Valuation Analysis

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Now	2029
P/FFO	14.9	15.3	15.8	17.7	*16.0*	16.7	14.8	17.6	12.1	7.1	***9.0***	***13.7***
Avg. Yld.	3.0%	2.9%	2.6%	2.4%	*2.7%*	2.6%	3.6%	3.4%	4.2%	5.8%	***5.1%***	***3.3%***

[1] Estimated date.

[2] 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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Douglas Emmett has traded at a remarkably narrow range of price-to-FFO ratios over the last decade, with a 5-year average price-to-FFO ratio of 13.7. The stock is currently trading at a nearly 10-year low price-to-FFO ratio of 9.0 due to fears that high interest rates will greatly increase interest expense and thus they will reduce FFO per share. If Douglas Emmett trades at its average valuation level in five years, it will enjoy an 8.8% annualized gain in its returns.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2029
Payout	44%	44%	42%	43%	43%	43%	53%	60%	51%	41%	***46%***	***46%***

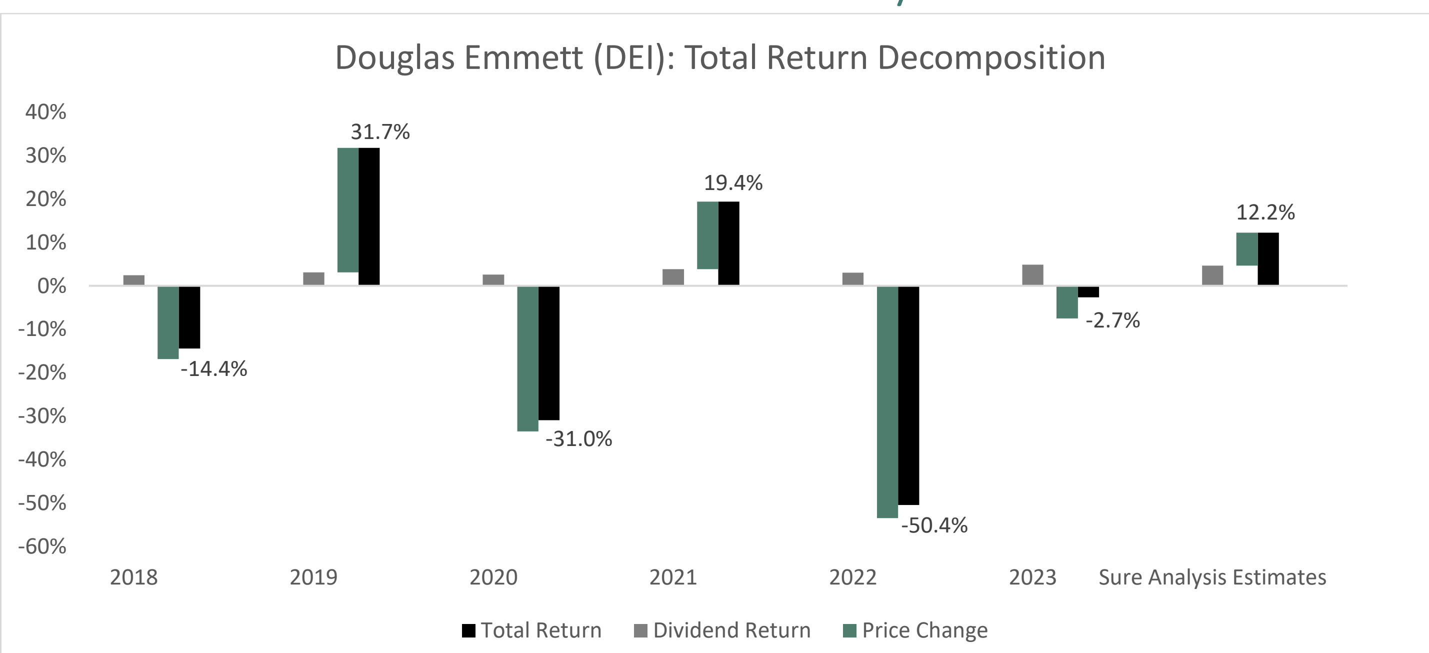
The markets of Douglas Emmett have the highest barriers to entry among the U.S. gateway markets. New office development in its core L.A. markets is limited due to restrictive zoning laws, density limits and anti-growth community sentiment. Total new supply of offices in these submarkets of L.A. and Honolulu has been only 2% and 0%, respectively, since 2009. These high barriers to entry offer a dominant position to Douglas Emmett, which can thus raise rents by 3%-5% per year. The annual rent hikes greatly support cash flows during downturns and offer reliable growth. Moreover, thanks to economies of scale and its efficient team that optimizes design before move-ins, Douglas Emmett minimizes vacancy time and enjoys higher operating margins than its peers.

Overall, Douglas Emmett is somewhat resilient but not immune to recessions, mostly due to its leverage. Due to the work-from-home trend and multi-year high interest rates, interest expense has surpassed operating income in the last 12 months. In addition, the REIT cut its dividend by 32% in late 2022, after having paid the same dividend for 12 consecutive quarters. The REIT also cut its dividend by -47% during the Great Recession, in 2009.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Douglas Emmett has been severely hurt by high interest expense and a persistent work-from-home trend. We view these headwinds as temporary. Thanks to its depressed price, the stock could offer a 12.2% average annual rate over the next five years thanks to its 5.1% dividend and an 8.8% annualized valuation gain. The REIT maintains its buy rating but we note that it is suitable only for patient investors, who can tolerate stock price pressure and remain confident that interest rates will revert to normal levels over the next three years, in line with the guidance of the Fed.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue	600	636	743	812	881	937	892	918	994	1,020
Gross Profit	398	425	505	554	600	639	586	615	660	659
Gross Margin	66.3%	66.9%	68.0%	68.2%	68.1%	68.2%	65.7%	67.0%	66.4%	64.6%
SG&A Exp.	27	30	35	36	39	38	40	43	45	49
D&A Exp.	186	186	231	259	288	341	369	362	362	449
Operating Profit	168	190	221	241	252	243	161	201	242	150
Operating Margin	28.0%	29.8%	29.7%	29.7%	28.6%	25.9%	18.1%	21.9%	24.3%	14.7%
Net Profit	45	58	85	94	116	364	50	65	97	(43)
Net Margin	7.4%	9.2%	11.5%	11.6%	13.2%	38.8%	5.7%	7.1%	9.8%	-4.2%
Free Cash Flow	158	192	220	231	185	231	123	154	259	196

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Assets	5,939	6,066	7,614	8,293	8,262	9,349	9,251	9,354	9,747	9,644
Cash & Equivalents	19	102	113	177	146	154	172	336	269	523
Accounts Receivable	77	82	95	109	129	140	134	128	122	121
Goodwill & Int. Ass.	6	6	7	6	5	8	7	6	4	3
Total Liabilities	3,625	3,785	4,600	4,391	4,413	4,978	5,255	5,367	5,472	5,799
Accounts Payable	22	24	37	63	75	66	82	83	80	62
Long-Term Debt	3,420	3,611	4,370	4,117	4,134	4,619	4,445	5,012	5,192	5,543
Shareholder's Equity	1,943	1,926	1,921	2,438	2,402	2,712	2,437	2,416	2,562	2,220
D/E Ratio	1.76	1.87	2.27	1.69	1.72	1.70	1.82	2.07	2.03	2.50

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Return on Assets	0.8%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%	4.1%	0.5%	0.7%	1.0%	-0.4%
Return on Equity	2.3%	3.0%	4.4%	4.3%	4.8%	14.2%	2.0%	2.7%	3.9%	-1.1%
ROIC	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	4.3%	0.6%	0.7%	1.1%	-0.5%
Shares Out.	148.1	150.6	153.2	161.2	169.9	173.4	175.4	175.5	175.8	169.6
Revenue/Share	4.05	4.22	4.85	5.04	5.19	5.34	5.08	5.23	5.65	6.02
FCF/Share	1.07	1.28	1.44	1.43	1.09	1.32	0.70	0.88	1.47	1.16

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