

BERKSHIRE INCOME REALTY INC
Form 10-K
March 31, 2005

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K
FOR ANNUAL AND TRANSITION REPORTS PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 13 OR 15(D) OF THE SECURITIES
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

(Mark One)

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

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2004

OR

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

For the transition period _____ or _____

Commission File number 001-31659

Berkshire Income Realty, Inc.

Maryland 32-0024337
(State of other jurisdiction of incorporation or (IRS employer identification no.)
organization)

One Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108
(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip code)

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code) (617) 523-7722

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act: None

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

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 X No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K 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. [x]

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an accelerated filer (as defined in Rule 12b-3 of the Act)

Yes No X

Aggregate market value of voting securities held by non-affiliates: Not applicable.

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There were 1,283,313 shares of Class B common stock outstanding as of March 31, 2005.

Documents incorporated by reference: Certain documents incorporated by reference are listed in the Exhibit Index herein.

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SPECIAL NOTE REGARD FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

Certain statements contained in this report, including information with respect to our future business plans, constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. For this purpose, any statements contained herein that are not statements of historical fact may be deemed to be forward-looking statements, subject to a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ significantly from those described in this report. These forward-looking statements include statements regarding, among other things, our business strategy and operations, future expansion plans, future prospects, financial position, anticipated revenues or losses and projected costs, and objectives of management. Without limiting the foregoing, the words may, will, should, could, expects, plans, anticipates, believes, estimates, predicts, potential or continue or the negative or comparable terminology are intended to identify forward-looking statements. There are a number of important factors that could cause our results to differ materially from those indicated by such forward-looking statements. These factors include, but are not limited to, changes in economic conditions generally and the real estate and bond markets specifically, legislative/regulatory changes (including changes to laws governing the taxation of real estate investment trusts (REITs)), availability of capital, interest rates and interest rate spreads, changes in generally accepted accounting principles and policies and guidelines applicable to REITs, those factors set forth herein in Part I, Item 1A. Risk Factors and other risks and uncertainties as may be detailed from time to time in our public announcements and our reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC).

The risks here are not exhaustive. Other sections of this report may include additional factors that could adversely affect our business and financial performance. Moreover, we operate in a competitive and rapidly changing environment. New risk factors emerge from time to time and it is not possible for management to predict all such risks factors, nor can it assess the impact of all such risk factors on our business or the extent to which any factor, or combination of factors, may cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in any forward-looking statements. Given these risks and uncertainties, undue reliance should not be placed on forward-looking statements as a prediction of actual results.

PART I

Executive Summary

2004 was a productive and exciting year for Berkshire Income Realty, Inc. (the Company or BIR). BIR acquired an interest in twelve new properties in six transactions with an aggregate market value at purchase of approximately \$140,000,000, interest rates were fixed on more than \$120,000,000 of both new and refinanced mortgages, occupancies improved at our Same Portfolio Properties (properties acquired or placed in service prior to January 1, 2003) and we continued our strategy of exploring and implementing renovation opportunities at our properties.

In 2004 interests were acquired in twelve new multifamily apartment communities. Five of these communities were acquired through ventures, providing additional diversification. During 2004 the Company also entered two new markets, Virginia and Illinois, while expanding its presence in its existing Florida, Texas and Maryland markets.

During 2004 a large portion of the portfolio was aggressively financed and refinanced to take advantage of historically low mortgage rates. Fixed rate mortgages of \$47,767,000 were financed on new acquisitions during the year at an average interest rate of approximately 5.0% and \$72,320,000 of mortgages were replaced, reducing mortgages with an average fixed interest rate of a 5.95% to an average fixed interest rate of 4.86%.

In 2004, market related occupancy increased from 92.09% to 94.72%, at the Same Portfolio Properties. This increase was primarily driven by increases in occupancy at the Maryland properties. Occupancy

levels are expected to stabilize during 2005 as the economy continues its slow but steady upward movement.

The Company's strategy for setting rental rates generally tries to balance occupancy with rental increases to achieve market level occupancy rates. In soft markets, BIR will offer short-term concessions to new and renewing tenants to maintain occupancy without producing significant fluctuations in market rental rates. This strategy allows the Company to react more quickly to temporary changes in market conditions without obligating the Company to long-term commitments of lower than necessary rental rates.

The renovation of Seasons of Laurel in Maryland, which began 2003, crossed the halfway point in October 2004. This \$8,100,000 project continues to meet our expectation with respect to return on investment and it is expected to be complete by early 2006. The retro fit of Hannibal Grove to provide in unit washer and dryer connections is progressing quickly and a decision will be made to implement a full internal unit renovation project at the property in 2005.

2005 is off to a good start with the acquisition of Westchester West Apartments, a 345 unit multifamily apartment community located in Silver Spring, Maryland from an affiliate of the Company for \$39,250,000. The Company will continue exploring acquisition sourcing strategies that include market, non-market/seller direct, bank and lender owned real estate and foreclosure auctions. 2004 included an acquisition from each of these sources.

As used herein, the terms we, us or the Company refer to Berkshire Income Realty, Inc. (the Company), a Maryland corporation, organized on July 19, 2002. The Company is in the business of acquiring, owning and operating multifamily apartment communities.

RISK FACTORS

The following risk factors should be read carefully in connection with evaluating our business and the forward-looking statements contained in this report and other statements we or our representatives make from time to time. Any of the following risks could materially adversely affect our business, our operating results, our financial condition and the actual outcome of matters as to which forward-looking statements are made in this report. In connection with the forward-looking statements that appear in this report, you should also carefully review the cautionary statement referred to herein under Special Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements.

Risk Factors Relating to the Company

Maintenance of our Investment Company Act exemption imposes limits on our operations.

We intend to conduct our operations so as not to be required to register as an investment company under the Investment Company Act of 1940. We believe that there are exemptions under the Investment Company Act that are applicable to us. The assets that we may acquire are limited by the provisions of the Investment Company Act and the exemption on which we rely. In addition, we could, among other things, be required either to change the manner in which we conduct our operations to avoid being required to register as an investment company, or to register as an investment company. Either of these could have an adverse effect on us and the market price for our publicly traded securities. For example, one exception from the definition of an investment company we believe we could rely on would require us to manage our assets such that no

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more than 40% of our total assets (exclusive of government securities and cash) are invested in investment securities. Generally speaking, investment securities are all securities except securities issued by majority-owned operating company subsidiaries and government securities. To be able to continue to rely on this exception in the event the value of our investment securities were to increase relative to our total assets, we may need to sell certain investment securities that we otherwise would not want to sell. Furthermore, we may be required to hold other non-investment security assets, such as some

of our real property assets that we may otherwise want to sell, in order to avoid increasing the value of our investment securities relative to our total assets.

Certain Federal Income Tax Risks

Our failure to qualify as a REIT would result in higher taxes and reduced cash available for distribution to our stockholders.

We intend to operate in a manner to allow us to qualify as a REIT for federal income tax purposes. Although we believe that we will be organized and will operate in this manner, we cannot be certain that we will be able to operate so as to qualify as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the Code), or to remain so qualified. Qualification as a REIT involves the application of highly technical and complex provisions of the Code for which there are only limited judicial or administrative interpretations. The determination of various factual matters and circumstances not entirely within our control may affect our ability to qualify as a REIT. The complexity of these provisions and of the applicable income tax regulations under the Code is greater in the case of a REIT that holds its assets through a partnership, as we do. Moreover, our qualification as a REIT depends upon the qualification of certain of our investments as REITs. In addition, we cannot be certain that legislation, new regulations, administrative interpretations or court decisions will not significantly change the tax laws with respect to the qualification as a REIT or the federal income tax consequences of this qualification. We are not aware of any proposal currently being considered by Congress to amend the tax laws in a manner that would materially and adversely affect our ability to operate as a REIT.

If for any taxable year we fail to qualify as a REIT, we would not be allowed a deduction for distributions to our stockholders in computing our taxable income and would be subject to federal income tax (including any applicable alternative minimum tax) on our taxable income at regular corporate rates. In addition, we would normally be disqualified from treatment as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year of losing our REIT status. This would likely result in significant increased costs to us. Any corporate tax liability could be substantial and would reduce the amount of cash available for distribution to our stockholders and for investment, which in turn could have an adverse impact on the value of, and trading prices for, our publicly traded securities.

Although we intend to operate in a manner designed to qualify as a REIT, future economic, market, legal, tax or other considerations may cause our Board of Directors (the Board) and the holders of our common stock to determine that it is in the best interests of the Company and our stockholders to revoke our REIT election.

We believe that our operating partnership will be treated for federal income tax purposes as a partnership and not as a corporation or an association taxable as a corporation. If the Internal Revenue Service were to determine that our operating partnership were properly to be treated as a corporation, our operating partnership would be required to pay federal income tax at corporate rates on its net income, its partners would be treated as stockholders of the operating partnership and distributions to partners would constitute dividends that would not be deductible in computing the operating partnership's taxable income. In addition, we would fail to qualify as a REIT, with the resulting consequences described above.

REIT distribution requirements could adversely affect our liquidity.

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To obtain the favorable tax treatment for REITs qualifying under the Code, we generally are required each year to distribute to our stockholders at least 90% of our real estate investment trust taxable income, determined without regard to the deduction for dividends paid and by excluding net capital gains. We are subject to a 4% nondeductible excise tax on the amount, if any, by which distributions paid by us with respect to any calendar year are less than the sum of: (1) 85% of our ordinary income for the calendar year; (2) 95% of our capital gain net income for the calendar year, unless we elect to retain and pay income tax on those gains; and (3) 100% of our undistributed amounts from prior years.

Failure to comply with these requirements would result in our income being subject to tax at regular corporate rates.

We intend to distribute our income to our stockholders in a manner intended to satisfy the distribution requirement and to avoid corporate income tax and the 4% excise tax. Differences in timing between the recognition of income and the related cash receipts or the effect of required debt amortization payments could require us to borrow money or sell assets to distribute enough of our taxable income to satisfy the distribution requirement and to avoid corporate income tax and the 4% excise tax in a given year.

Legislative or regulatory action could adversely affect holders of our securities.

In recent years, numerous legislative, judicial and administrative changes have been made to the federal income tax laws applicable to investments in REITs and similar entities. Additional changes to tax laws are likely to continue to occur in the future, and we cannot be certain that any such changes will not adversely affect the taxation of a holder of our securities.

Risk Factors Relating to Our Business

Operating risks and lack of liquidity may adversely affect our investments in real property.

Varying degrees of risk affect real property investments. The investment returns available from equity investments in real estate depend in large part on the amount of income earned and capital appreciation generated by the related properties as well as the expenses incurred. If our assets do not generate revenue sufficient to meet operating expenses, including debt service and capital expenditures, our income and ability to service our debt and other obligations could be adversely affected. Some significant expenditures associated with an investment in real estate, such as mortgage and other debt payments, real estate taxes and maintenance costs, generally are not reduced when circumstances cause a reduction in revenue from the investment. In addition, income from properties and real estate values are also affected by a variety of other factors, such as interest rate levels, governmental regulations and applicable laws and the availability of financing.

Equity real estate investments, such as ours, are relatively illiquid. This illiquidity limits our ability to vary our portfolio in response to changes in economic or other conditions. We cannot be certain that we will recognize full value for any property that we are required to sell for liquidity reasons. Our inability to respond rapidly to changes in the performance of our investments could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

Our properties are subject to operating risks common to apartment ownership in general. These risks include: our ability to rent units at the properties; competition from other apartment communities; excessive building of comparable properties that might adversely affect apartment occupancy or rental rates; increases in operating costs due to inflation and other factors, which increases may not necessarily be offset by increased rents; increased affordable housing requirements that might adversely affect rental rates; inability or unwillingness of residents to pay rent increases; and future enactment of rent control laws or other laws regulating apartment housing, including present and possible future laws relating to access by disabled persons or the right to convert a property to other uses, such as condominiums or cooperatives. If operating expenses increase, the local rental market may limit the extent to which rents may be increased to meet increased expenses without decreasing occupancy rates. If any of the above were to occur, our ability to meet our debt service and other obligations could be adversely affected.

In order to achieve or enhance our desired financial results we may make investments that involve more risk than market rate core and core-plus acquisitions.

In many of the markets where we may seek to acquire multifamily apartment communities we may face significant competition from well capitalized real estate investors, including private investors, publicly traded REITs and institutional investors. This competition can result in sellers obtaining premiums on their real estate, which sometimes pushes the price beyond what we may consider to be a prudent purchase price. We have thus begun expanding our sourcing strategy to include non-market/seller direct deals, bank and lender owned real estate and foreclosure auctions. Some of these acquisition strategies can involve more risk than market rate core and core-plus acquisitions, but may allow the Company to realize higher returns if the underlying assumptions are achieved. However, if the underlying assumptions are not achieved, the additional risks associated with these broader sourcing strategies could result in lower profits, or higher losses, than would be realized in market rate acquisitions.

We may renovate our properties, which could involve additional operating risks.

We expect to be working on the renovation of multifamily properties that we may acquire. We may also acquire completed multifamily properties. The renovation of real estate involves risks in addition to those involved in the ownership and operation of established multifamily properties, including the risks that specific project approvals may take longer to obtain than expected, that construction may not be completed on schedule or budget and that the properties may not achieve anticipated rent or occupancy levels.

We may not be able to pay the costs of necessary capital improvements on our properties, which could adversely affect our financial condition.

We anticipate funding any required capital improvements on our properties using cash flow from operations, cash reserves or additional financing if necessary. However, the anticipated sources of funding may not be sufficient to make the necessary improvements. If our cash flow from operations and cash reserves prove to be insufficient, we might have to fund the capital improvements by borrowing money. If we are unable to borrow money on favorable terms, or at all, we may not be able to make necessary capital improvements, which could harm our financial condition.

Our tenants-in-common or future joint venture partners may have interests or goals that conflict with ours, which may restrict our ability to manage some of our investments and adversely affect our results of operations.

One or more of our properties that we acquire may be owned through tenancies-in-common or by joint venture partnerships between us and the seller of the property, an independent third party or another investment entity sponsored by our affiliates. Our investment through tenancies-in-common or in joint venture partnerships that own properties may, under certain circumstances, involve risks that would not otherwise be present. For example, our tenant-in-common or joint venture partner may experience financial difficulties and may at any time have economic or business interests or goals that are inconsistent with our economic or business interests or our policies or goals. In addition, actions by, or litigation involving, any tenant-in-common or joint venture partner might subject the property owned through a tenancy-in-common or by the joint venture to liabilities in excess of those contemplated by the terms of the tenant-in-common or joint venture agreement. Also, there is a risk of impasse between the parties since generally either party may disagree with a proposed transaction involving the property owned through a tenancy-in-common or joint venture and impede any proposed action, including the sale or other disposition of the property.

Our inability to dispose of a property we may acquire in the future without the consent of a tenant-in-common or joint venture partner would increase the risk that we could be unable to dispose of the property, or dispose of it promptly, in response to economic or other conditions. The inability to respond promptly to changes in performance of the property could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.

We may face significant competition and we may not compete successfully.

We may face significant competition in seeking investments. We may be unable to acquire a desired property because of competition from other well capitalized real estate investors, such as publicly traded REITs, institutional investors and other investors, including companies that may be affiliated with Berkshire Property Advisors, L.L.C. (Berkshire Advisor). When we are successful in acquiring a desired property, competition from other real estate investors may significantly increase our purchase price. Some of our competitors may have greater financial and other resources than us and may have better relationships with lenders and sellers, and we may not be able to compete successfully for investments.

We plan to borrow, which may adversely affect our return on our investments and may reduce income available for distribution.

Where possible, we may seek to borrow funds to increase the rate of return on our investments and to allow us to make more investments than we otherwise could. Borrowing by us presents an element of risk if the cash flow from our properties and other investments is insufficient to meet our debt service and other obligations. A property encumbered by debt increases the risk that the property will operate at a loss and may ultimately be forfeited upon foreclosure by the lender. Loans that do not fully amortize during the term, such as bullet or balloon-payment loans, present refinancing risks. Variable rate loans increase the risk that the property may become unprofitable in adverse economic conditions. Loans that require guaranties, including full principal and interest guaranties, master leases, debt service guaranties and indemnities for liabilities such as hazardous waste, may result in significant liabilities for us.

Under our current investment policies, we may not incur indebtedness if by doing so our ratio of debt to total assets, at fair market value, exceeds 75%. However, we may reevaluate our borrowing policies from time to time, and the Board may change our investment policies without the consent of our stockholders. At December 31, 2004 and 2003, our ratio of debt to total assets, at fair market value, was 70.00% and 74.21%, respectively.

Our insurance on our real estate may not cover all losses.

We carry comprehensive liability, fire, extended coverage and rental loss insurance covering all of our properties, with policy specifications and insured limits that we believe are adequate and appropriate under the circumstances. Some types of losses, such as from terrorism, are uninsurable or not insurable on economically feasible terms. In addition, many insurance carriers are excluding asbestos-related claims and most mold-related claims from standard policies, pricing asbestos and mold endorsements at prohibitively high rates or adding significant restrictions to this coverage. Because of our inability to obtain specialized coverage at rates that correspond to the perceived level of risk, we have not obtained insurance for acts of terrorism or asbestos-related claims or all mold-related risks. We continue to evaluate the availability and cost of additional insurance coverage from the insurance market. If we decide in the future to purchase insurance for terrorism, asbestos or mold, the cost could have a negative impact on our results of operations. If an uninsured loss or a loss in excess of insured limits occurs on a property, we could lose our capital invested in the property, as well as the anticipated future revenues from the property and, in the case of debt that is recourse to us, we would remain obligated for any mortgage debt or other financial obligations related to the property. Any loss of this nature could adversely affect us.

Environmental compliance costs and liabilities with respect to our real estate may adversely affect our results of operations.

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Our operating costs may be affected by our obligation to pay for the cost of complying with existing environmental laws, ordinances and regulations, as well as the cost of complying with future legislation with respect to the assets, or loans secured by assets, with environmental problems that materially impair the value of assets. Under various federal, state or local environmental laws, ordinances and regulations, an owner of real property may be liable for the costs of removal or remediation of hazardous or toxic substances located on or in the property. These laws often impose liability without regard to whether the owner knew of, or was responsible for, the presence of the hazardous or toxic substances. The costs of any

required remediation or removal of these substances may be substantial. In addition, the owner's liability as to any property is generally not limited under these laws, ordinances and regulations and could exceed the value of the property and/or the aggregate assets of the owner. The presence of hazardous or toxic substances, or the failure to remediate properly, may also adversely affect the owner's ability to sell or rent the property or to borrow using the property as collateral. Under these laws, ordinances and regulations, an owner or any entity who arranges for the disposal of hazardous or toxic substances, such as asbestos, at a disposal facility may also be liable for the costs of any required remediation or removal of the hazardous or toxic substances at the facility, whether or not the facility is owned or operated by the owner or entity. In connection with the ownership of any of our properties, or participation in joint ventures, or the disposal of hazardous or toxic substances, we may be liable for any of these costs.

Other federal, state and local laws may impose liability for the release of hazardous material, including asbestos-containing materials, into the environment, or require the removal of damaged asbestos containing materials in the event of remodeling or renovation, and third parties may seek recovery from owners of real property for personal injury associated with exposure to released asbestos-containing materials or other hazardous materials. We do not currently have insurance for asbestos-related claims.

Recently there has 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. Some of these lawsuits have resulted in substantial monetary judgments or settlements. We do not currently have insurance for all mold-related risks. Environmental laws may also impose restrictions on the manner in which a property may be used or transferred or in which businesses may be operated, and these restrictions may require additional expenditures. In connection with the ownership of properties, we may be potentially liable for any of these costs. The cost of defending against claims of liability or remediating contaminated property and the cost of complying with environmental laws could materially adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition.

We have been notified of the presence of asbestos in certain structural elements in our properties, which we are addressing in accordance with various operations and maintenance plans. The asbestos operations and maintenance plans require that all structural elements that contain asbestos not be disturbed. In the event the asbestos containing elements are disturbed either through accident, such as a fire, or as a result of planned renovations at the property, those elements would require removal by a licensed contractor, who would provide for containment and disposal in an authorized landfill. The property managers of our properties have been directed to work proactively with licensed ablation contractors whenever there is any question regarding possible exposure.

We are not aware of any environmental liability relating to our properties that we believe would have a material adverse effect on our business, assets or results of operations. Nevertheless, it is possible that there are material environmental liabilities of which we are unaware with respect to our properties. Moreover, we cannot be certain that future laws, ordinances or regulations will not impose material environmental liabilities or that the current environmental condition of our properties will not be affected by residents and occupants of our properties, by the uses or condition of properties in the vicinity of our properties, such as leaking underground storage tanks, or by third parties unrelated to us.

Our failure to comply with various regulations affecting our properties could adversely affect our financial condition.

Various laws, ordinances, and regulations affect multifamily residential properties, including regulations relating to recreational facilities, such as activity centers and other common areas. We believe that each of our properties has all material permits and approvals to operate its business.

Our multifamily residential properties must comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA) to the extent that such properties are "public accommodations" and/or "commercial facilities" as defined by the ADA. Compliance with the ADA requires removal of structural barriers to handicapped access in certain public areas of such of our properties where such removal is "readily achievable." The ADA

does not, however, consider residential properties to be public accommodations or commercial

facilities, except to the extent portions of such facilities, such as a leasing office, are open to the public. We believe that our properties comply in all material respects with all current requirements under the ADA and applicable state laws. Noncompliance with the ADA could result in imposition of fines or an award of damages to private litigants. The cost of defending against any claims of liability under the ADA or the payment of any fines or damages could adversely affect our financial condition.

The Fair Housing Act (the "FHA") requires, as part of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, apartment communities first occupied after March 13, 1990 to be accessible to the handicapped. Noncompliance with the FHA could result in the imposition of fines or an award of damages to private litigants. We believe that our properties that are subject to the FHA are in compliance with such law. The cost of defending against any claims of liability under the FHA or the payment of any related fines or damages could adversely affect our financial condition.

We face risks associated with property acquisitions.

We intend to acquire additional properties in the future, either directly or by acquiring entities that own properties. These acquisition activities are subject to many risks. We may acquire properties or entities that are subject to liabilities or that have problems relating to environmental condition, state of title, physical condition or compliance with zoning laws, building codes, or other legal requirements. In each case, our acquisition may be without any recourse, or with only limited recourse, with respect to unknown liabilities or conditions. As a result, if any liability were asserted against us relating to those properties or entities, or if any adverse condition existed with respect to the properties or entities, we might have to pay substantial sums to settle or cure it, which could adversely affect our cash flow and operating results. However, some of these liabilities may be covered by insurance. In addition, we intend to perform customary due diligence regarding each property or entity we acquire. We also intend to obtain appropriate representations and indemnities from the sellers of the properties or entities we acquire, although it is possible that the sellers may not have the resources to satisfy their indemnification obligations if a liability arises. Unknown liabilities to third parties with respect to properties or entities acquired might include