

# **Interest Rates Rise and REITs Outperform**

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Although the primary catalyst for the recent sell-off in the broader market has been higher interest rates, REITs have delivered strong outperformance relative to equities. We make two points about this counter intuitive phenomena. First, given persistent investor caution regarding REITs and interest rates since the Global Financial Crisis, we believe interest rate risk has already been baked into current REIT valuations. In fact, we believe the interest rate risk blind spot for investor portfolios is in technology stocks, with easy money having led to an overvaluation in public tech companies feeding through to a classic over-investment cycle by the private tech industry. Second, as demonstrated by recent performance, REITs remain a very strong late cycle hedge in investor portfolios. Even with the recent outperformance, REITs are trading at valuations versus equities that have not been seen since the Global Financial Crisis. While the REIT market is already pricing in a 40bps cap rate expansion in the private real estate market, commercial real estate fundamentals look strong with healthy demand as demonstrated by high occupancies and rising rents.

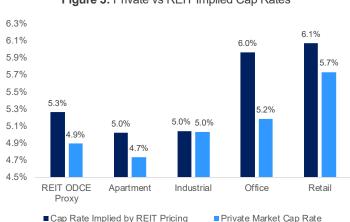
#### Recent Rise in Interest Rates Have Led to Increased Market Volatility and REIT Outperformance

Figure 1: Total Return Since Equity Market Peak (September 20, 2018)1



# REITs Are Already Pricing in Approximately 40bps of Private Real Estate Cap Rate Expansion

Figure 3: Private vs REIT Implied Cap Rates<sup>3</sup>



Relative to the Broader Equity Market, Reits Have Not Traded at Such Attractive Valuations Since the Global Financial Crisis

Figure 2: Relative P/E Valuations (REITs & Equities)2



Real Estate Fundementals Remain on Firm Footing With Steady Occupancy And Rising Rents

Figure 4: REIT Major Sector Occupancy and Rent Growth<sup>4</sup>



Note: Refer to footnote references on Page 2. Also refer to important disclosures on Page 3.

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- <sup>1</sup> U.S. REITs = FTSE Nareit Equity REITs Index, Global REITs = FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Index, U.S. Equities = S&P 500, Technology = S&P Technology Index. Source: Bloomberg, September 20, 2018 November 23, 2018.
- <sup>2</sup> Equities based on S&P 500, REITs based on the FTSE Nareit Equity REITs Index. Source: Bloomberg, as of March 29, 2018. Average covers 20 years ending May 31, 2018.
- <sup>3</sup> Source: CenterSquare implied cap rate research, as of September 30, 2018. REIT Implied cap rates are generated by a proprietary calculation that divides a company's reported net operating income ("NOI") adjusted for non-recurring items by the value of its equity and debt less the value of non-income producing assets. See the full CenterSquare REIT Cap Rate Perspective report at www.centersquare.com for more information.
- <sup>4</sup> Sectors: Apartment, Industrial, Retail, and Office. Source: Green Street Advisors, as of December 31, 2018 (projected).

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FTSE NAREIT Equity REITs Index

The FTSE NAREIT U.S. Real Estate Index includes all tax-qualified real estate investment trusts ("REITs") that are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, the American Stock Exchange and the NASDAQ National Market List. The index constituents span the commercial real estate space across the US economy and provides investors with exposure to all investment and property sectors.

#### S&P 500

The S&P 500 is an index that is considered to be a gauge of the U.S. equities market. The index includes 500 leading companies spread across the major sectors of the U.S. economy. The index focuses on the larger cap segment of the U.S. market and represents approximately 75% of the market capitalization of U.S. securities. The index is the most notable of the many indices owned and maintained by Standard & Poor's, a division of McGraw-Hill Companies.

#### FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Index

The FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Real Estate Index Series covers both the FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Equity REITs Index and the FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed ex-U.S. Index. Designed to track the performance of listed real estate companies and REITs worldwide, the series acts as a performance measure of the overall market. The Gross benchmark presented is based on total return calculations which add the income a stock's dividend provides to the performance of the index. The Gross benchmark is presented is gross of withholding taxes and investment management fees. The Net benchmark presented is calculated as a total return net of foreign withholding taxes on dividends from an U.S. investor perspective, and gross of investment management fees. The index changed names on March 23, 2009 and was formerly known as the FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Global Real Estate Index.

These benchmarks are broad-based indices which are used for illustrative purposes only and have been selected as they are well known and are easily recognizable by investors. However, the investment activities and performance of an actual portfolio may be considerably more volatile than these indices and may have material differences from the performance of any of the referenced indices. Unlike these benchmarks, actual portfolios are actively managed. Furthermore, actual portfolios may invest in substantially fewer securities than the number of securities comprising each of these benchmarks. There is no guarantee that any of the securities invested in by actual portfolios comprise these benchmarks. Also, performance results for benchmarks may not reflect payment of investment management/incentive fees and other expenses. Because of these differences, benchmarks should not be relied upon as an accurate measure of comparison.

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#### About the Author



## Scott Crowe, Chief Investment Strategist

Mr. Scott Crowe is the Chief Investment Strategist at CenterSquare Investment Management and joined the firm in 2015. Scott is a member of CenterSquare's listed real estate, listed infrastructure and private real estate investment committees. In his capacity as Chief Investment Strategist, Scott works with each team's portfolio managers and investment professionals in the leadership of the investment process, with a particular focus on thought leadership by synthesizing our real asset views across the business. Scott is the portfolio manager of the Global Concentrated real estate securities strategy. Scott also works directly with CenterSquare's clients, providing education and guidance on the market and helping them execute

their investment goals. Prior to joining CenterSquare, Scott was CIO of Liquid Alternatives at Resource Real Estate where he built and led a global investment and distribution platform. Prior thereto, Scott was the lead Global Portfolio Manager for Cohen & Steers, where he was responsible for \$10B in assets under management and led the investment and research team of over 20 portfolio managers and analysts. Prior to this, Mr. Crowe held the position of Head of Global Real Estate for UBS Equities Research, where he built and managed the U.S. REIT division while leading a global team of more than 40 analysts. Scott began his career at Paladin Property Securities and holds an Honors Finance Degree from the University of Technology Sydney and a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of NSW / National University of Singapore.



#### Uma Pattarkine, Investment Strategy Analyst

Ms. Pattarkine is an Investment Strategy Analyst for CenterSquare Investment Management. She joined the team in 2017 and focuses primarily on top down analysis, research and product development, and is an active member of the public side research effort. Prior to joining CenterSquare, Ms. Pattarkine spent three years in corporate finance and strategic planning at ExxonMobil in Houston. Ms. Pattarkine graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with Interdisciplinary Honors and High Distinction and holds a BS in Finance with a minor in International Business, BS in Accounting, and Master of Accountancy.

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CenterSquare Investment Management is headquartered in suburban Philadelphia, with offices in Los Angeles, Denver, London and Singapore. CenterSquare is proud to manage investments on behalf of some of the world's most well-known institutional and private investors.



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