Second Quarter 2014: Prices Rise as Expected, Moderate Price Growth Is Anticipated

Crocker H. Liu Ph.D.
Cornell University, chl62@cornell.edu

Adam D. Nowak Ph.D.
West Virginia University

Robert M. White Jr.

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Abstract
Prices do reflect RevPAR. In the previous issue (2014Q1), we had revisited the year-over-year change in RevPAR relative to our Repeat Sale Index. Since we showed that the year-over-year change in RevPAR is a leading indicator of price fluctuations in hotel properties, we expected prices to reflect the positive momentum in the second quarter. The second quarter has come and gone, and we are happy to report that prices have increased as predicted.

Keywords
Cornell, EVA analysis, RevPAR, hotel indices, hotel valuation model, HOTVaL

Disciplines
Real Estate

Comments

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Supplemental File:
Hotel Valuation Model (HOTVAL) We provide this user friendly hotel valuation model in an excel spreadsheet entitled HOTVAL Toolkit as a complement to this report which is available for download from http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/creftools/1/
As discussed in the previous report, we expected prices for hotel properties to rise in the second quarter based on our repeat sales index, and we’re happy to report that they did. Our EVA analysis continues to suggest that hotel investors should expect most of their profit to come from capital gains when the hotel is sold rather than from operating performance. We also expect moderate price gains for both large and small hotels to continue next quarter, barring no unexpected interest rate hikes. This is report number 11 of the index series.
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Analysis of Indices through Q2, 2014

Cornell Real Estate Market Indices: 2014, Q2:

Prices Rise as Expected, Moderate Price Growth Is Anticipated

Crocker H. Liu, Adam D. Nowak, and Robert M. White, Jr.

About the Cornell Hotel Indices

In our inaugural issue of the Cornell Hotel Index series, we introduced three new quarterly metrics to monitor real estate activity in the hotel market. These are a large hotel index (hotel transactions of $10 million or more), a small hotel index (hotels under $10 million), and a repeat sales index (RSI) that tracks actual hotel transactions. These indices are constructed using the CoStar and Real Capital Analytics (RCA) commercial real estate databases. For the repeat-sale index, we compare the sales and resales of the same hotel over time. All three measures provide a more accurate representation of the current hotel real estate market conditions than does reporting average transaction prices, because the average-price index doesn’t account for differences in the quality of the hotels, which also is averaged. A more detailed description of these indices is found in the first edition of this series, “Cornell Real Estate Market Indices,” which is available at no charge from the Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance (CREF). In this fourth edition, we present updates and revisions to our three hotel indices along with commentary and supporting evidence from the real estate market.
Exhibit 1

Economic value added (EVA) for hotels

Exhibit 2

Median sale price and number of sales for large hotels (sale prices of $10 million or more)
Hotel investment based on operating performance continues to languish. Our Economic Value Added (EVA) indicator, shown in Exhibit 1, continues to reflect lackluster operating performance. Total borrowing cost increased from 2013Q4 to 2014Q1, while the current hotel yield (cap rate) continued to remain unchanged—resulting in an increasingly negative EVA spread. This calculation indicates that return for hotel investors continues to come at the back end of the project. That is, investors will make their money when they sell the hotel due to price appreciation rather than making their money immediately from operations.

Hotel transaction volume increased in the second quarter, as did median price. Year over year, the hotel transaction volume increased 48.4 percent (2013Q2 to 2014Q2) while it rose 40.6 percent (2014Q1 to 2014Q2) on a quarter-over-quarter basis. The volume of large hotel transactions rose 21.4 percent, while small hotel transaction volume rose by 49.1 percent from the previous quarter. The transaction volume for large hotels increased 23 percent on a year-over-year basis, and small hotel transaction volume experienced a even greater gain, with a year-over-year growth rate of 60.1 percent. The median price for large hotels rose 17.4 percent, while the median price for small hotels rose 12.9 percent on a year-over-year basis. A slightly different situation existed on a quarter-over-quarter basis, however, with large hotels experiencing a 30.1-percent gain while smaller hotel prices dropped 12.3 percent. Exhibit 2 shows a positive trend in the number of transactions and median price for large hotels. In contrast, Exhibit 3 shows that although the number of transactions for small hotels has also increased, the median sale price declined.

Still déjà vu all over again. It appears that sales history continues to repeat a cycle that we saw nearly two decades ago. Hotel prices continue to behave in a similar manner relative to the 1995Q2 to 2002Q4 cycle, based on repeat sales. Exhibit 4 provides the price index for the repeat hotel sales used to construct our RSI cycle analysis in Exhibit 5 together with the hedonic price indices for small and large hotels. Exhibit 5 continues to confirm our prior calculations based on cycle analysis; we had anticipated a positive trend for the first quarter of 2014. We expect a downward trend in the third quarter of 2014 if history
### Exhibit 4

Hotel indices through 2014, quarter 1

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Exhibit 5

Comparison of hotel real estate cycles using repeat sales

Exhibit 6

Hedonic hotel indices for large and small hotel transactions

Sources: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, CoStar, Real Capital Analytics
Exhibit 7

Large hotel index, with three-year and five-year moving averages

Exhibit 8

Year-over-year change in large-hotel index, with moving-average trendline
Exhibit 9

Small hotel index, with three-year and five-year moving averages

Sources: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, CoStar, Real Capital Analytics

Exhibit 10

Year-over-year change in small-hotel index, with moving-average trendline

Sources: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, CoStar, Real Capital Analytics
either large hotels or small hotels.² The current repeat sale index (full sample) of 137.35 (2014Q2) is above the previous quarter’s (2014Q1) index of 134.98 as well as above the previous year’s index of 128.297 (2013Q2). In percentage terms, the repeat hotel sale index rose 7 percent on a year-over-year basis (2014Q2 to 2013Q2) and also increased 1.75 percent on a quarterly basis (2014Q1 to 2014Q2). Exhibit 12 provides an alternative perspective of this positive price momentum in the repeat sales. Similar to large hotels, the index is now increasing at a decreasing rate. Viewed together, this is a signal that price growth based on repeat sales may be moderating (flattening).

² We report two repeat sale indices. The repeat sale full sample index uses all repeat sale pairs, whereas the repeat sale index (with a base of 100 at 2000Q1) uses only those sales that occurred on or after the first quarter of 2000 and none with an initial sale before that time.

Exhibit 11

Hotel repeat-sale index (full sample), three-year moving average, and five-year moving average

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² Prices of large and small hotels are starting to flatten. Exhibit 6 shows that prices for the large-hotel and small-hotel indices appear to have flattened in general, with prices rising by 1 percent or less. However, Exhibit 7 shows that the large hotel index continues to remain above both its three-year and five-year moving average, signaling a continued “buy.” Exhibit 8 provides further confirmation that the large-hotel index continues to rise on a year-over-year basis, although the index is now increasing at a decreasing rate. Exhibit 9 shows that the current price for smaller hotels has remained relatively constant, with its three-year moving average inching slightly above its five-year moving average. Exhibit 10 reveals that year-over-year growth in the price of small hotels has finally reversed the continued decline in year-over-year price growth since the first quarter of 2013. We are hopeful that this positive momentum will continue in the next quarter.

Hotels continue to trend upwards in terms of repeat sales. The repeat sale of hotels in Exhibit 11 based on the full sample has a more positive price momentum relative to
**Exhibit 12**

Year-over-year change in repeat-sale index, with moving-average trendline

Sources: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, CoStar, Real Capital Analytics

**Exhibit 13**

Decomposition of ACLI hotel capitalization rates into risk premium and risk-free rate

Sources: ACLI, Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance
Exhibit 14

Mortgage origination volume for hotels

Exhibit 15

Interest rates on Class A hotels versus Class B & C properties

Sources: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, Mortgage Bankers Association
spread over the 10-year Treasury increased slightly, to 3.38 percent from 3.24 percent. Given that PKF expects RevPAR to continue to increase for the third quarter as well as over the remainder of this year,3 we expect the gradual upward trend in prices to continue into the next quarter, assuming that cap rates continue to remain relatively flat.

**Mortgage financing volume declined** over the quarter but increased on a year-over-year basis. Exhibit 14 shows that the mortgage origination volume for hotels declined by 51 percent in the first quarter of 2014, reversing the trend from the prior quarter (2013Q4, in which it gained 54 percent). However, the level of loan origination volume was 43 percent greater than during the previous year (2013Q1).

**Cost of debt financing remains constant**, but relative risk premium for hotels continues to rise. The cost of obtaining hotel financing has remained relatively constant since July 2013 (see Exhibit 15), when the interest rate was 4.81 percent for Class A hotels and 5.06 percent for B&C hotels. As of June 2014, the interest rate on Class A hotels is 5.02 percent, and for Class B&C hotels the rate is 5.22 percent. Exhibit 16 shows the spread between Class A hotel rates against B & C interest rates on full-service hotels over the 10-year Treasury bond. On this metric, interest rate spreads have remained relatively flat since 2013Q1, indicating that the lender compensation for risk associated with lending on hotels has not changed. Exhibit 17 shows the spread between the interest rates on Class A full-service properties with those for B&C hotels over the interest rate corresponding to non-hotel commercial real estate, a spread which we refer to as the hotel real estate premium.4 The hotel real estate premiums for both higher quality (.57%) and lower quality (.67%) hotels have risen relative to the previous 2 quarters (.53% (H)/.63%(L) for 2014Q1 and .52% (H)/.61% (L) for 2013Q4). The slight increase in the premium in Exhibit 17 is a signal that the perceived default risk for hotel properties continued to rise relative to the four major commercial real estate property types in the second quarter of 2014.

Expect a moderate rise in the price of large hotels and small hotels, according to the tea leaves. Exhibit 18 compares the performance of the repeat sales index relative to the NAREIT Lodging/Resort Price Index. The repeat sales index tends to lag the NAREIT index by at least one quarter or more. This is consistent with prior academic studies which find that securitized real estate is leading indicator of underlying real estate performance since the stock market.

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3 RevPAR forecast is taken from Hotel Horizons, a PKF publication.

4 The interest rate on hotel properties is generally higher than that for many other types of commercial properties, in part because hotels’ cash flow is commonly more volatile than that of other commercial properties.
Exhibit 17

Interest-rate spreads of hotels versus non-hotel commercial real estate

Source: Cushman Wakefield Sonnenblick Goldman

Exhibit 18

Hotel repeat sales index versus NAREIT lodging/resort price index

Source: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, NAREIT
**Exhibit 19**

Hotel repeat sales index versus architecture billings index

![Graph showing the relationship between hotel repeat sales index and architecture billings index.](image)

Sources: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, American Institute of Architects

**Exhibit 20**

Business confidence and high-price hotel index

![Graph showing the relationship between business confidence and high-price hotel index.](image)

Sources: Cornell Center for Real Estate and Finance, Institute for Supply Management (ISM)
is forward looking or efficient. Looking ahead, the NAREIT lodging index has continued its forward momentum, rising 10 percent this quarter. This is greater than the gain posted in the prior three quarters: 5 percent in 2014Q1, 7.5 percent in 2013Q4, and 5.3 percent in 2013Q3. Consequently, the rate of increase in NAREIT Lodging Index is accelerating. The architecture billings index (ABI) for commercial/industrial property,\(^5\) which represents another forward-looking metric also continued its upward path rising, 8 percent this quarter compared to a 5-percent gain in the previous quarter, as shown in Exhibit 19.\(^6\) Consistent with these indicators, the National Association of Purchasing Managers (NAPM) index,\(^7\) which is an indicator of anticipated business confidence and thus business traveler demand reversed directions and turned up 3 percent this quarter from a 5-percent decline in the previous quarter. The absolute level of the index has continued to stay above 50 since 2009Q3 (55.3 this quarter), indicating that the manufacturing sector continues to gain strength.

While we see this as positive news we hope that this continued gain does not lead to an interest rate hike, given Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen's comment that earlier-than-planned rate hikes are possible if the labor market

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\(^5\) www.aia.org/practicing/economics/aias076265

\(^6\) We used the May ABI index as reported on June 19, 2013 since the June ABI index will be reported after the writing of this report. The ABI anticipates non-residential construction activity by approximately 9-12 months. According to material posted on their website, “The indexes are developed from the monthly Work-on-the-Boards survey panel where participants are asked whether their billings increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the month that just ended. According to the proportion of respondents choosing each option, a score is generated, which represents an index value for each month.”

\(^7\) The ISM Purchasing Managers' Index, (Diffusion index, SA) also known as the National Association of Purchasing Managers (NAPM) index is based on a survey of over 250 companies within twenty-one industries covering all 50 states. It not only measures the health of the manufacturing sector but is a proxy for the overall economy. It is calculated by surveying purchasing managers for data about new orders, production, employment, deliveries, and inventory, in descending order of importance. A reading over 50 indicates that manufacturing is growing, while a reading below 50 means it is shrinking.
continues its surprising improvement.8 Barring any unan-
ticipated interest rate hikes, we anticipate a rise in the price
of large hotels in the next period. Positive momentum is also
expected for hotels based on repeat sales, since both the NA-
REIT index and the ABI are signaling a positive price trend
for the next quarter.

The Consumer Confidence Index from the Confer-
ence Board which we use as a proxy for anticipated con-
sumer demand for leisure travel and a leading indicator
of the hedonic index for low-priced hotels (<$10 million)
rose slightly in June (blue line). The consumer confidence
increased approximately 4 percent on a year over year basis
this quarter (2013Q2 to 2014Q2), which is a smaller increase
than the 36 percent rise year over year in the prior quarter
(2013Q1 to 2014Q1). We anticipate a modest upward trend
in the transaction price for low priced hotels based on the
year over year trend. ■

8 According to Janet Yellen’s statement in the online version of the Wall
Street Journal (online.wsj.com/articles/feds-yellen-u-s-economy-contin-
ues-to-improve-but-recovery-not-yet-complete-1405432838), “If the labor
market continues to improve more quickly than anticipated by the [Fed]
then increases in the federal-funds rate target likely would occur sooner
and be more rapid than currently envisioned.”

Hotel Valuation Model

The Hotel Valuation Model HOTVAL has been updated.
We have updated our hotel valuation regression model to
include the transaction data used to generate this report. We
provide this user friendly hotel valuation model in an Excel
spreadsheet entitled HOTVAL Toolkit as a complement0 to
this report which is available for download from our CREF
website.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Crocker H. Liu**, PhD., is a professor of real estate at the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell where he holds the Robert A. Beck Professor of Hospitality Financial Management. He previously taught at New York University’s Stern School of Business (1988-2006) and at Arizona State University’s W.P. Carey School of Business (2006-2009) where he held the McCord Chair. His research interests are focused on issues in real estate finance, particularly topics related to agency, corporate governance, organizational forms, market efficiency and valuation. Liu’s research has been published in the Review of Financial Studies, Journal of Financial Economics, Journal of Business, Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis, Journal of Law and Economics, Journal of Financial Markets, Review of Finance, Real Estate Economics and the Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics. He is currently the co-editor of Real Estate Economics, the leading real estate academic journal and is on the editorial board of the Journal of Property Research. He also previously served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics and the Journal of Real Estate Finance. Liu earned his BBA in real estate and finance from the University of Hawaii, an M.S. in real estate from Wisconsin under Dr. James Graaskamp, and a Ph.D. in finance and real estate from the University of Texas under Dr. Vijay Bawa.

**Adam D. Nowak**, PhD., is an assistant professor of economics at West Virginia University. He earned degrees in mathematics and economics at Indiana University – Bloomington in 2006 and a degree in near-east languages and cultures that same year. He received a Ph.D. from Arizona State University last May. His thesis title was “Eigenvector Methods and Cointegrated Series.” Nowak taught an introduction to macroeconomics course and a survey of international economics at Arizona State. He was the research analyst in charge of constructing residential and commercial real estate indices for the Center for Real Estate Theory and Practice at Arizona State University.

**Robert M. White**, Jr., CRE., is the founder and president of Real Capital Analytics Inc., an international research firm that publishes the Capital Trends Monthly. Real Capital Analytics provides real time data concerning the capital markets for commercial real estate and the values of commercial properties. Mr. White is a noted authority on the real estate capital markets with credits in the Wall Street Journal, Barron’s, The Economist, Forbes, New York Times, Financial Times, among others. In addition, he was named one of National Real Estate Investor Magazine’s “10 to Watch” in 2005, Institutional Investor’s “20 Rising Stars of Real Estate” in 2006, and Real Estate Forum’s “10 CEOs to Watch” in 2007. Previously, Mr. White spent 14 years in the real estate investment banking and brokerage industry and has orchestrated billions of commercial sales, acquisitions and recapitalizations. He was formerly a managing director and principal of Granite Partners LLC and spent nine years with Eastdil Realty in New York and London. Mr. White is a Counselor of Real Estate, a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Fellow of the Homer Hoyt Institute. He is also a member of numerous industry organizations and a supporter of academic studies. Mr. White is a graduate of the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia.

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We wish to thank Glenn Withiam for copy editing this paper.

Disclaimer

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