
APPLYING THE INCOME APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

The justified price paid for income producing property is no more than the amount of investment required to produce a comparably desirable return; and since the market can be analyzed in order to determine the net return actually anticipated by investors, it follows that the value of income producing property can be derived from the income which it is capable of producing. What is involved is an estimate of income through the collection and analysis of available economic data, the development of a property capitalization rate, and the processing of the net income into an indication of value by employing one or more of the acceptable capitalization methods and techniques.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CAPITALIZATION

Capitalization is the process for converting the net income produced by property into an indication of value. Through the years of appraisal history, a number of procedures have been recognized and employed by appraisal authorities in determining the value of real estate by the income approach. Although present-day practice recommends only certain methods, we will at least touch on the other approaches to value- even though they may not be accepted in today's appraisal scene because they do not accurately reflect the current market conditions.

EXPLORING THE RENTAL MARKET

The starting point for the appraiser is an investigation of current economic rent in a specific area in order to establish a sound basis for estimating the gross income that should be returned from competitive properties. The appraiser must make a distinction between economic rent or the rent which property is normally expected to produce on the open market, as opposed to control rent or the rent which property is actually realizing at the time of the appraisal due to lease terms established sometime in the past.

The first step then is to obtain specific income and expense data on properties that best typify normal market activity. The data is necessary to develop local guidelines for establishing the economic rent and related expenses for various types of properties.

The next step is to similarly collect income and expense data on individual properties, and to evaluate the data against the established guidelines. The collection of income and expense dated (I & E) is an essential phase in the valuation of commercial properties. The appraiser is primarily concerned with the potential earning power of the property. The objective is to estimate its expected net income. Income and Expense Statements of past years are valuable only to the extent that they serve this end. The statements must not only be complete and accurate, but must also stand the test of market validity. Consideration of the following factors should assist the appraiser in evaluating the

income and expense (I & E) data in order to arrive at an accurate and realistic estimate of net income.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO INCOME DATA

- A. Was the reported income produced entirely by the subject property? Very often the rent will include an amount attributable to one or more additional parcels of real estate. In this case, it would be necessary to obtain the proper allocations of rent.
- B. Was the income attributable to the subject property as it physically existed at the time of the appraisal, or did the appraisal include the value of leasehold improvements and remodeling for which the tenant paid in addition to rent? If so, it may be necessary to adjust the income to reflect economic rent.
- C. Does the reported income represent a full year's return? It is often advisable to obtain monthly and annual amounts as verification.
- D. Does the income reflect current economic rent? Is either part or all of the income predicated on old leases? If so, what are the provisions for renewal options and rates?
- E. Does the reported income reflect 100% occupancy? What percentage of occupancy does it reflect? Is this percentage typical of this type of property, or is it due to special non-recurring causes?
- F. Does the income include rental for all marketable space? Does it include an allowance for space, if any, which is either owner or manager occupied? Is the allowance realistic?
- G. Is the income attributable directly to the real estate and conventional amenities? Is some of the income derived from furnishings and appliances? If so, it will be necessary to adjust the income or make provisions for reserves to eventually replace them, whichever local custom dictates.
- H. In many properties an actual rental does not exist because the real estate is owner occupied. In this event it is necessary to obtain other information to provide a basis to estimate economic rent. The information required pertains to the business operation using the property. Proper analysis of the annual operating statements of the business, including gross sales or receipts, can provide an accurate estimate of economic rent. Information requirements for a few of the more common property uses are as follows:

Retail Stores	The annual net gross sales. (Gross sales less returned merchandise).
Hotels and Motels	The annual operating statement of the business. If retail or office space is leased in these properties, obtain the actual rent paid.
Theaters	The annual gross receipts (including admissions and concessions) and seating capacity.
Automobile Parking	The annual gross receipts.

ANALYSIS OF EXPENSE DATA

The appraiser must consider only those expenses that are applicable to the cost of ownership; that is, those expenses that are normally owner incurred. Any portion of the expenses incurred directly or indirectly by the tenant should not be considered. Each expense item must stand the test of both legitimacy and accuracy. How do they compare with the established guidelines and norms? Are they consistent with the expenses incurred by comparable properties?

Management – refers to the cost of administration. These charges should realistically reflect what a real estate management company would actually charge to manage the property. If no management fee is shown on the statement; an allowance must be made, by the appraiser. On the other hand, if excessive management charges are reported, as is often the case, the appraiser must disregard the reported charges and use an amount that he deems appropriate and consistent with comparable type properties. The cost of management bears a relationship with the risk of ownership and will generally range between 4 to 10% of the gross income.

General expenses- may include such items as the cost of services and supplies not charged to a particular category. Unemployment and F.I.C.A taxes, Workmen's Compensation, and other employee insurance plans are usually legitimate deductions when employees are a part of the building operation.

Reimbursed expenses- refer to the cost associated with the maintenance of public or common areas of the commercial property. This expense is passed on to the tenants and should, therefore, only be considered when the amount of reimbursement is included as income.

Miscellaneous expenses- is the "catch-all" category for incidentals. This item should reflect a very nominal percentage of the income. If expenses reported seem to be excessive, the appraiser must examine the figures carefully in order to determine if they are legitimate expenses, and if so, to allocate them to their proper category.

Cleaning expenses- are legitimate charges. They are for such items as general housekeeping and maid service, and include the total cost of labor and related supplies. All or a portion of the cleaning services may be provided by outside firms working on a "contract" basis. Cleaning expenses vary considerably and are particularly significant in operations such as offices and hotels. "Rules of thumb" norms for various operations are made available through national management associations. The appraiser should have little difficulty in establishing local guidelines.

Utilities- are generally legitimate expenses and if reported accurately, need very little reconstruction by the appraiser, other than to determine if the charges are consistent with comparable properties. Local utility companies can provide the appraiser with definite guidelines.

Heat and Air Conditioning- costs are often reported separately and in addition to utilities. The expenses would include the cost of fuel other than the above mentioned utilities, and may include, especially in large installations, the cost of related supplies, inspection fees, and maintenance charges. These are generally legitimate costs, and the same precautions prescribed for “utilities” are in order.

Elevator expenses- including the cost of repairs and services, are legitimate deductions, and are generally handled through service contracts. These fees can generally be regarded as fairly stable annual recurring expenses.

Decorating and minor alterations- are necessary to maintain the income stream of many commercial properties. In this respect they are legitimate expenses. However, careful scrutiny of these figures is required. Owners tend to include the cost of major alterations and remodeling which are, in fact, capital expenditures, and as such are not legitimate operating expenses.

Repairs and Maintenance- expenses reported for any given year, are not necessarily a true indication of the average or typical annual expense for these items. For example, a statement could reflect a substantial expenditure for a specific year (possibly because the roof was replaced and/or several items of deferred maintenance were corrected); yet the statement for the following year may indicate that repairs and maintenance charges were practically nil. It is necessary for the appraiser to either obtain complete economic history on each property in order to make a proper judgment as to the average annual expense for these items, or include a proper allowance based on norms for the type and age of the improvements to cover annual expenses. Since it is neither possible nor practical to obtain enough economic history on every property, the latter method is generally used and the amounts reported for repairs and maintenance are then estimated by the appraiser.

Insurance- Caution must be used in accepting insurance expense figures. Cost shown may be for more than one year, or may be for blanket policies including more than one building. It is generally more effective for the appraiser to establish his own guidelines for insurance. He must also be careful to include only items applicable to the real estate. Fire extended coverage and owner’s liability are the main insurance expense items. Separate coverage on special component parts of the buildings, such as elevators and plate glass, are also legitimate expenses.

Real Estate Taxes- In making appraisals for tax purposes, the appraiser must exclude the actual amount reported for real estate taxes. Since future taxes will be based on his appraised value, the appraiser must express the taxes as a factor of the estimated value. This can be done, by including an additional percentage in the capitalization rate to account for real estate taxes.

Depreciation- The figure shown for depreciation on an operating statement is a “bookkeeping figure” which the owner uses for Internal Revenue purposes and should not be considered in the income approach. This reflects a tax advantage that is one of the benefits of ownership.

Interest- Although interest is considered a legitimate expense, it is always included in the Capitalization Rate. Most property is appraised as if it were “free and clear”; however, the appraiser does consider the interest of a current mortgage in the Capitalization Rate build-up.

Land Rent- When appraising for real estate tax purposes, only the sum of the leasehold and the leased fee is usually considered. Land rent is not deducted as an expense. Considered separately, rent from a ground lease would be an expense to the leasehold interest and an income to the leased fee. However, if land were rented from another property to supply additional parking for example, that land rent would be an allowable expense.

It is obvious that there are some expense items encountered on operating statements that the appraiser should not consider as allowable. This is because he is interested in legitimate cash expenses only. Income statements are usually designed for income tax purposes where credit can be taken for borrowing costs and theoretical depreciation losses.

It is virtually impossible and certainly not always practical to obtain a complete economic history on every commercial property being appraised. On many properties, however, detailed economic information can be obtained through the use of Income and Expense forms. One must realistically recognize the fact that the data obtainable on some properties is definitely limited.

In most cases, the gross income and a list of the services and amenities furnished can be obtained during the data gathering operation. However, in order to insure a sound appraisal, it may be necessary to estimate the fixed and operating expenses. This is best accomplished by setting guidelines for expenses, based on a percent of Effective Gross Income or a cost per square foot of leased area. These percentages or costs will vary depending on the services supplied and the type of property.

CAPITALIZATION METHODS

The most prominent methods of capitalization are Direct, Straight Line, Sinking Fund, and Annuity. Each of these is a valid method for capitalizing income into an indication of value. The basis for their validity lies in the action of the market, which indicates that the value of income producing property can be derived by equating the net income with the net return anticipated by informed investors. This can be expressed in terms of a simple equation.

Value= Net Income divided by Capitalization Rate

The *Straight Line* and *Sinking Fund* methods are both actual forms of Straight Capitalization, with one using Straight Line recapture and the other using Sinking Fund recapture. Both methods follow the same basic principles as Direct Capitalization, differing only in that they provide for separate capitalization rates for land and buildings; the building rate differing from the land rate in that it includes an allowance for recapture.

Straight Line Capitalization allows for “recapture” based on remaining economic life of the building- implying that the end of that period of time, there would be a zero improvement value. There are three fallacies in this thinking. First, the potential buyer (investor) has no intention of holding the property that long. The average investment period might average ten years. Second, the investor anticipates that at the end of that period he will either get all his money back or will make a profit. And third, is the depreciation allowance possible in connection with federal income taxes.

Depreciation allowances begin to “run out” between seven and ten years, so the advantages of owning the property are reduced considerably. A prudent owner may choose to sell the property at this point and re-invest in another property so that he may begin the depreciation cycle again and continue to take full advantage of the favorable tax laws.

For these reasons, the Straight Line Capitalization Method does not usually follow what the market indicates.

Straight Line recapture calls for the return of investment capital in equal increments or percentage allowances spread over the estimated remaining economic life of the building.

Sinking Fund recapture calls for the return of invested capital in one lump sum at the termination of the estimated remaining economic life of the building. This is accomplished by providing for the annual return of a sufficient amount needed to invest and annually re-invest in “safe” interest-bearing accounts, such as government bonds or certificates of deposit, which will ultimately yield the entire capital investment during the course of the building’s economic life.

Annuity Capitalization lends itself to the valuation of long-term leases. In this method, the appraiser determines, by the use of annuity tables, the present value of the right to receive a certain specified income over stipulated duration of the lease. In addition to the value of the income stream, the appraiser must also consider the value that the property will have once it reverts back to the owner at the termination of the lease. This reversion is valued by discounting its anticipated value against its present day worth. The total property value then is the sum of the capitalized income stream plus the present worth of the reversion value.

CURRENT TECHNIQUES

There are two methods, however, that do lend themselves to an accurate measure of market value based on potential income. These are Direct Capitalization, utilizing the Direct Comparison Method of Rate Selection, and Mortgage Equity Capitalization.

In *Direct Capitalization*, the appraiser determines a single “Overall” capitalization rate. This is done through analysis of actual market sales of similar types of properties. He develops the net income of each property, and divides the net income by the sales price to arrive at an overall rate to provide an indication of value.

Mortgage Equity Capitalization is a form of direct capitalization with the major difference in the two approaches being the development of the overall capitalization rate.

In this method, equity yields and mortgage terms are considered influencing factors in construction of the interest rate. In addition, a plus or minus adjustment is required to compensate for anticipated depreciation or appreciation. This adjustment can be related to the recapture provisions used in other capitalization methods and techniques.

RESIDUAL TECHNIQUES

It can readily be seen that any one of the factors of the Capitalization Equation (Value= Net Income divided by Capitalization Rate) can be determined if the other two factors are known. Furthermore, since the value of property is the sum of the land value plus the building value, it holds that either of these can be determined if the other is known. The uses of these mathematical formulas in capitalizing income into an indication of value are referred to as the residual techniques, or more specifically, the property residual, the building residual, and the land residual techniques.

The *Property Residual Technique* is an application of Direct Capitalization. In this technique, the total net income is divided by an overall capitalization rate (which provides for the return on the total investment) to arrive at an indicated value for the property. This technique has received more popular support in recent years because it closely reflects the market. With this technique, the capitalization rate may be developed be either “direct comparison” in the market or by the Mortgage Equity Method.

The *Building Residual Technique* requires the value of the land to be a known factor. The amount of net income required to earn an appropriate rate of return on the land investment is deducted from the total net income. The remainder of the net income (residual) is divided by the building capitalization rate (which is composed of a percentage for the return on the investment, plus a percentage for the recapture of the investment) to arrive at an indicated value for the building.

The *Land Residual Technique* requires the value of the building to be a known factor. The amount of net income required to provide both, a proper return on and the recapture

of the investment is deducted from the total net income. The remainder of the net income (residual) is then divided by the land capitalization rate (which is composed of a percentage for the return on the investment) to arrive at an indicated value for the land.

MORTGAGE EQUITY METHOD EXAMPLE

For the purposes of illustration, assume an investment financed with a 70% loan at 14.0% interest. The term of the mortgage is 20 years, paid off in level monthly payments. The total annual cost for principal and interest on such a loan can be determined by referring to the mortgage equity tables. Select the Constant Annual percent for an interest rate of 14.0% and a term of 20 years. Note that the constant is 14.92% of the amount borrowed, or .92% more than the interest rate alone.

Assume that the equity investor will not be satisfied with less than a 18% yield. The income necessary to satisfy both Lender and Equity can now be shown. The product of the percent portion and the rate equals the weighted rate. The total of each weighted rate equals the weighted average.

	Portion	Rate	=	Weighted Rate
Weighted loan (principle interest)	70%	.1492	=	.1044
Equity (down payment)	30%	.18	=	.0540
Weighted Average	100%			100%

Note that the “constant annual percent” is used for the rate of the loan.

Since there is a gain in equity’s position through the years by the loan being paid off little by little, it is necessary to calculate the credit for “Equity Build-up”. Assume that the investor plans to hold the property for ten years. Since the mortgage is for 20 years, only a portion of the principal will be paid off and this amount must be discounted, as it won’t be received for ten years. From the Table of Loan Balance and Debt Reduction, at the end of ten years for a 20 year mortgage at 14%, the figure is .199108. Consulting the sinking fund tables indicates that the discount factor for 18% and 10 years is .0425.

The credit for Equity Build-up can now be deducted from the basic rate, thus.....

$$\begin{array}{r}
 .199108 \qquad \qquad \qquad 70\% \qquad \qquad \qquad .0425 \qquad \qquad \qquad = .0059 \\
 (\% \text{ of loan paid in 10 yrs.}) \times (\text{loan rate}) \times (\text{sinking fund 18\% for 10 yrs}) \\
 \\
 \text{Resulting Net Rate} \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad \qquad = .1525
 \end{array}$$