## China / Hong Kong Company Update

# **Hongkong Land**

Bloomberg: HKL SP EQUITY | Reuters: HKLD.SI

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

## DBS Group Research . Equity

## 4 Mar 2022

## BUY

Last Traded Price (3 Mar 2022): US\$5.40 (STI: 3,254) Price Target 12-mth: US\$6.61 (22% upside) (Prev US\$6.64)

#### **Analyst**

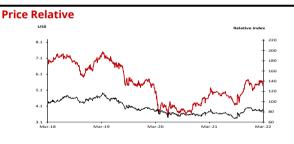
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## What's New

- Underlying profit was flat at US\$966m, slightly below our forecast
- Rental income remained resilient in FY21
- Continued share buybacks to support share price, BUY

•	Acquired land sites in China, taking advantage of reduced
	market competition

## with US\$6.61 TP



#### **Forecasts and Valuation**

FY Dec (US\$ m)	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F
Turnover	2,094	2,490	2,443	1,759
EBITDA	974	960	976	818
Pre-tax Profit	1,111	1,144	1,055	1,112
Underlying Profit	963	966	883	994
Underlying Profit Gth (%)	(10.5)	0.3	(8.6)	12.6
EPS (US\$)	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.44
EPS Gth (%)	(10.5)	0.5	(6.7)	12.6
PE (X)	13.1	13.0	14.0	12.4
P/Cash Flow (X)	10.1	18.3	13.1	14.5
EV/EBITDA (X)	17.9	18.2	17.9	21.4
DPS (US\$)	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22
Div Yield (%)	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
Net Gearing (%)	13	15	16	16
ROE (%)	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.8
Est. NAV (US\$):			11.6	12.0
Disc. to NAV (%)			(53)	(55)
Earnings Rev (%):			(5)	(2)
Consensus EPS (US\$):			0.44	0.48
Other Broker Recs:		B:10	S:1	H:3
Other broker Mets.		5.10	ا . ا	11.5

Source of all data on this page: Company, DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited ("DBS HK"), Thomson Reuters

## Price support from share repurchase

#### **Investment Thesis**

**BUY with US\$6.61 TP.** Following the share price appreciation led by share repurchase, the stock is now trading at a 53% discount to our appraised current NAV. Continued share buybacks should support the share price.

Continued share buybacks to support share price. In early Sep. Hongkong Land announced its intention to invest up to US\$500m in a share repurchase program extending till end-2022. Up to end-Feb 2022, the company has bought back 50.5m shares from the market for US\$272m, which prompted strong share price rally.

COVID resurgence weighs on retail income. The retail market disruption and delayed border re-opening led by the COVID resurgence would inevitably weigh on retail income in FY22. On the other hand, office market downturn in Central showed signs of bottoming out prior to this recent COVID outbreak. Office vacancy of Central portfolio improved to 4.9% on a committed basis in Dec-21 from Jun-21's 5.5%. given modest increase in new lettings.

#### Valuation:

Our target price (TP) for Hongkong Land is premised on a 45% discount to our Dec-2022 NAV estimates.

#### Where we differ:

We believe the Hongkong Land's Central office portfolio is set to benefit from "flight-to-quality" demand.

#### **Key Risks to Our View:**

Any further deterioration in leasing demand for offices in Central and Singapore could drag earnings. Slow demand and property market cooling measures could adversely affect residential sales earnings from China. Cap rate expansion could lead to lower property valuations.

#### At A Glance

Issued Capital (m shrs)	2,334
Mkt Cap (US\$m)	12,604
Major Shareholders (%)	
Jardine Strategic Holdings Ltd	50.8
Free Float (%)	49.2
3m Avg. Daily Val. (US\$m)	10.57
GICS Industry: Real Estate / Real Estate Management &	
Development	







#### **WHAT'S NEW**

#### Rental income remained resilient

Hongkong Land's FY21 underlying profit was broadly stable at US\$966m, 4% below our forecast because of smaller-than-expected growth in development income. The increase in development profit from China was largely offset by higher net financing cost. Final DPS stayed flat at US\$0.16, taking the full-year DPS to US\$0.22.

Gross rental receipts rose by a marginal 1% to US\$947m with increased retail income being offset by lower office revenue. Central office portfolio continued to suffer from negative reversionary growth. Average passing rents fell 2.5% y-o-y to HK\$117psf in 2021. However, with modest recovery in leasing demand from legal firms, wealth management and asset management companies towards the year-end, office vacancy of its Central portfolio improved to 5.2% from Jun-21's 6.4%. On a committed basis, the vacancy was lower at 4.9% (Jun-21: 5.5%). In 2022, 18% of leases are scheduled for expiry or rent review with expiring rents high at HK\$130psf. As such, negative reversionary growth should persist.

Central retail portfolio remained effectively fully let. With reduced rental relief due to improving domestic consumption after the relaxation of social distancing protocols, average retail rents recovered to HK\$190psf from FY20's HK\$164psf. Nonetheless, base rental reversion remained negative during the year.

Singapore office portfolio benefitted from favourable rental growth upon renewals and new lettings. Average office rents rose to \$\$10.3psf from 2020's \$\$9.9psf. As of Dec-21, the portfolio vacancy remained low at 2.9% on a committed basis (Jun-21: .2.1%).

WF Central in Beijing witnessed higher tenants' sales and footfall in 2021 on the back of strong luxury retail market sentiment. This led to increased rental contributions from this luxury retail mall.

Operating profit from property development increased 23% due to higher contributions from China as a result of more residential sales completions. Despite weak market sentiment in 2H21, Hongkong Land attained attributable contracted sales of US\$2.65bn in China in 2021, up 24% yo-y. In Dec-21, sold but unrecognised contracted sales reached US\$2.85bn, of which 62% will be booked in FY22. This points to visible development earnings stream in the years ahead.

In Singapore, the company's contracted sales in attributable terms fell 48% to US\$328m in 2021 as 2020 sales was boosted by the contributions from Parc Esta. Sold but unrecognized sales reached US\$362m in Dec-21. Parc Esta, scheduled for completion in 2022, has been fully pre-sold.

Since Hongkong Land announced its US\$500m share buyback plan in Sep-21, the company has repurchased 50.5m shares from the market for US\$272m in total up to Feb-22. The company could still buy back US\$228m worth of shares before the year-end.

In Apr-21, Hongkong Land launched a new shopping mall in Chongqing with a net leasable area of 72,000sm under a new lifestyle retail brand "The Ring". Besides, the company has three other luxury retail malls and six premium lifestyle retail malls under development in China which altogether offer attributable net leasable area of 259,000sm upon scheduled completion in 2023-26. By then, Hongkong Land would boast a retail property portfolio of 425,000sm in attributable net leasable area terms.

Taking advantage of reduced competition in land market led by tightened credit conditions, Hongkong Land acquired eight sites, primarily for residential use, in China, with developable area of 977,000sm in 2021. They include three in Chengdu, two in each of Chongqing and Wuhan and one in Nanjing. In Singapore, following the acquisition of two joint venture sites for residential use in 2021, the company acquired a 49% interest in another residential site in Feb-22

Due to land bank replenishment in China and share buyback, the company's net debt increased to US\$5.1bn in Dec-21 from Jun-21's US\$4.3bn. This put its gearing at 15% which remains comfortable. Even allowing for capital outlay for continued share repurchase, there is room for the company to gear up for more land acquisitions to drive its earnings growth.

Meanwhile, the stock is trading at a 53% discount to our appraised current NAV, against its 10-year average of 41%. Ongoing share repurchase should help support its share price and sustain its outperformance. Maintain BUY with US\$6.61 TP. This is premised on target discount of 45% to our Dec-22 NAV estimate.





## **Company Background**

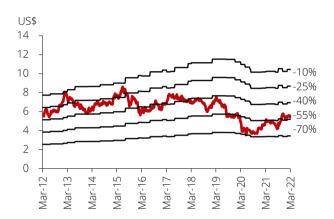
Hongkong Land is one of Asia's leading property investment, management, and development groups. The Group owns and manages a portfolio of prime and luxury retail properties in key Asian cities, principally in Hong Kong and Singapore. In Feb-20, the company secured a mixed-use site in West Bund of Shanghai via a government auction, for Rmb31.05bn.

#### **Discount to NAV**

#### **Discount to NAV**

#### % 0 (10) +2SD: -15% (20)+1SD: -28% (30) Average: -41% (40)(50) -1SD: -55% (60)-2SD: -68% (70)(80) Mar-17 Mar-22 Mar-12 Mar-13 Mar-14 Mar-15

#### Discount to NAV band



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS HK





## **Result Summary**

FY Dec (US\$m)	FY20	FY21	% Chg	Comments
Rental income	937.6	946.7	1	FY21: the growth in retail income largely offset by the
				decrease in office income from Hong Kong
Service income	147.5	182.3	24	
Sales of properties	1,009.1	1,255.3	24	FY21: due to increased residential sales completion
				in China
Revenue	2,094.2	2,384.3	14	
Cost of sales	(982.6)	(1,283.9)	31	
Gross profit	1,111.6	1,100.4	(1)	
Other income	37.4	51.5	38	FY21: Include US\$37.6m gains on disposal of a
				subsidiary
Administrative expenses	(190.0)	(208.5)	10	
Operating profit	959.0	943.4	(2)	
Net financing charges	(115.9)	(155.2)	34	
Share of results of associates and joint ventures	267.5	355.9	33	FY21: increased contributions from residential sales
Profit before tax	1,110.6	1,144.1	3	
Tax	(149.5)	(178.7)	20	
Non-controlling interests	2.2	0.6	(73)	
Underlying profit	963.3	966.0	0	
Interim DPS (US cents)	6.0	6.0	-	
Final DPS (US cents)	16.0	16.0	-	
Total DPS (US cents)	22.0	22.0	-	
Lindari ing FDC (LIC conts)	41.3	41 F	1	
Underlying EPS (US cents)		41.5	1	
NAV (US\$/sh)	15.3	15.1	(2)	

Source:Hongkong Land



## **Key Assumptions (%)**

	2022F	2023F
Office rental - HK	0	0
Retail rental (Shopping	0	5
centre) - HK	O	J

Source: DBS HK

## Segmental Breakdown (US\$ m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F
Revenues (US\$ m) Rental income	999	938	947	912	922
Service and mgmt charges	153	148	182	189	207
Sale of trading properties	1,168	1,009	1,361	1,342	630
Total	2.320	2.094	2.490	2.443	1.759

Source: DBS HK

## Income Statement (US\$ m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F
Turnover	2,320	2,094	2,490	2,443	1,759
EBITDA	1,184	974	960	976	818
Depr / Amort	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(17)
EBIT	1,170	959	943	959	801
Associates Inc	273	268	356	261	490
Interest (Exp)/Inc	(121)	(116)	(155)	(165)	(178)
Exceptionals	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-tax Profit	1,322	1,111	1,144	1,055	1,112
Tax	(247)	(150)	(179)	(151)	(118)
Non-controlling Interest	1	2	1	(21)	0
Underlying Profit	1,076	963	966	883	994
Sales Gth (%)	(13)	(10)	19	(2)	(28)
Net Profit Gth (%)	4	(11)	0	(9)	13
EBITDA Margins (%)	51	47	39	40	46
EBIT Margin (%)	50	46	38	39	46
Tax Rate (%)	19	13	16	14	11

Source: DBS HK





## Balance Sheet (US\$ m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F
Fixed Assets	33,331	30,221	28,740	28,754	29,339
Long-term Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Other LT Assets	48	43	32	32	32
Deferred Tax Asset	27	36	68	68	68
Associates/JVs	7,226	8,921	9,515	9,761	10,235
Bank Balance/Cash & Liquid	1,424	1,997	1,480	1,273	1,568
Inventory	2,042	1,949	2,971	2,922	3,127
Debtors	1,141	1,082	1,029	1,114	1,214
Other Non Cash Current	20	14	28	28	28
Total Assets	45,259	44,262	43,863	43,952	45,612
ST Debt	715	690	865	650	651
Creditors	1,461	1,572	2,195	1,845	2,045
Other Current Liab	261	153	203	203	203
LT Debt	4,300	5,875	5,718	6,283	6,682
Deferred Tax Liabilities	211	196	228	228	228
Other LT Liabilities	22	38	36	36	36
Non-controlling Interests	43	29	34	50	45
Shareholder's Equity	38,247	35,709	34,584	34,658	35,722
Total Cap. & Liab.	45,259	44,262	43,863	43,952	45,612
Share Capital (m)	2,334	2,334	2,328	2,282	2,282
Net Cash/(Debt)	(3,591)	(4,568)	(5,104)	(5,660)	(5,765)
Working Capital	2,190	2,627	2,245	2,641	3,040
Net Gearing (%)	9	13	15	16	16

Source: DBS HK

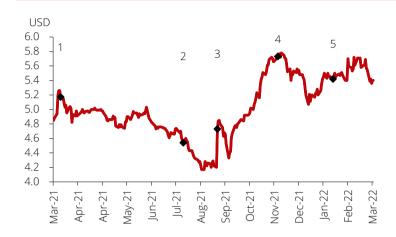
## Cash Flow Statement (US\$ m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F
EBIT	1,170	959	943	959	801
Tax Paid	(116)	(268)	(157)	(151)	(118)
Depr/Amort	14	15	16	17	17
Chg in Wkg.Cap	(161)	346	(306)	133	217
Other Non-Cash	275	(71)	32	(170)	(184)
Operating CF	1,182	981	529	788	732
Net Capex	(170)	(2,015)	(95)	(530)	(330)
Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Associates & JVs	(489)	599	(338)	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0
Investing CF	(658)	(1,416)	(432)	(530)	(330)
Net Chg in Debt	25	1,458	76	350	400
New Capital	0	0	(192)	(300)	0
Dividend	(511)	(511)	(510)	(514)	(507)
Other Financing CF	(5)	(5)	(3)	0	0
Financing CF	(491)	943	(629)	(464)	(107)
Chg in Cash	33	508	(533)	(206)	295

Source: DBS HK



## **Target Price & Ratings History**



S.No	. Date	Closing Price	12-mth Target Price	Rating
1:	12-Mar-21	US\$5.26	US\$5.07	Hold
2:	30-Jul-21	US\$4.57	US\$5.23	Buy
3:	7-Sep-21	US\$4.20	US\$5.41	Buy
4:	15-Nov-21	US\$5.68	US\$6.55	Buy
5:	17-Jan-22	US\$5.45	US\$6.64	Buy

Source: DBS HK Analyst: Jeff Yau



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STRONG BUY (>20% total return over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

BUY (>15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, >10% for large caps)

HOLD (-10% to +15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, -10% to +10% for large caps)

FULLY VALUED (negative total return, i.e., > -10% over the next 12 months)

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