

Digital Realty Trust, Inc.
Form 8-K
May 23, 2006

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

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 OR 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported): May 23, 2006

DIGITAL REALTY TRUST, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Maryland
(State or other jurisdiction

of incorporation)

001-32336
(Commission File Number)

26-0081711
(I.R.S. Employer

Identification Number)

560 Mission Street, Suite 2900

San Francisco, California
(Address of principal executive offices)

94105
(Zip Code)

(415) 738-6500

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions (*see* General Instruction A.2. below):

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- “ Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
 - “ Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
 - “ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
 - “ Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))
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Item 8.01 Other Events.

Digital Realty Trust, Inc., a Maryland corporation, is disclosing the following information to supplement the disclosure included in our Registration Statement on Form S-3 (File No. 333-129688) and our Registration Statement on Form S-3 (File No. 333-132980):

United States Federal Income Tax Considerations

for Holders of Our Common Stock

The following summary describes the principal United States federal income tax consequences to U.S. stockholders (as defined below) of purchasing, owning and disposing of our common stock. This summary is for general information only and is not tax advice.

The information in this summary is based on current law, including:

the Code;

current, temporary and proposed Treasury regulations promulgated under the Code;

the legislative history of the Code;

current administrative interpretations and practices of the IRS; and

court decisions;

in each case, as of the date of this prospectus supplement. In addition, the administrative interpretations and practices of the IRS include its practices and policies as expressed in private letter rulings that are not binding on the IRS except with respect to the particular taxpayers who requested and received those rulings. Future legislation, Treasury regulations, administrative interpretations and practices and/or court decisions may adversely affect the tax considerations contained in this discussion. Any such change could apply retroactively to transactions preceding the date of the change.

We have not requested and do not intend to request any rulings from the IRS that we qualify as a REIT or regarding the statements in this prospectus supplement, and the statements in this prospectus supplement are not binding on the IRS or any court. Thus, we can provide no assurance that the tax considerations contained in this summary will not be challenged by the IRS or will be sustained by a court if so challenged.

You are urged to consult your tax advisors regarding the specific tax consequences to you of:

the acquisition, ownership, and/or sale or other disposition of the common stock offered under this prospectus supplement, including the federal, state, local, foreign and other tax consequences;

our election to be taxed as a REIT for federal income tax purposes; and

potential changes in the applicable tax laws.

This summary deals only with common stock held as a capital asset (generally, property held for investment within the meaning of Section 1221 of the Code). Your tax treatment will vary depending on your particular situation, and this discussion does not address all the tax consequences that may be relevant to you in light of your particular circumstances. State, local and foreign income tax laws may differ substantially from the corresponding federal income tax laws, and this discussion does not purport to describe any aspect of the tax laws of any state, local or foreign

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jurisdiction. In addition, this discussion does not address the tax consequences relevant to persons who receive special treatment under the United States federal income tax law, except to the extent discussed below under the headings "Taxation of Tax-Exempt Stockholders" and "Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders." Holders of common stock receiving special treatment include, without limitation:

financial institutions, banks and thrifts;

insurance companies;

tax-exempt organizations;

S corporations;

traders in securities that elect to mark to market;

persons holding our common stock through a partnership or other pass-through entity;

holders subject to the alternative minimum tax;

regulated investment companies and REITs;

foreign corporations or partnerships, and persons who are not residents or citizens of the United States;

broker-dealers or dealers in securities or currencies;

United States expatriates;

persons holding our common stock as a hedge against currency risks or as a position in a straddle; or

United States persons whose functional currency is not the United States dollar.

When we use the term "U.S. stockholder," we mean a holder of shares of our common stock who is, for United States federal income tax purposes:

a citizen or resident of the United States;

a corporation, partnership, limited liability company or other entity created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or of any state thereof or in the District of Columbia unless, in the case of a partnership or limited liability company, Treasury regulations provide otherwise;

an estate the income of which is subject to United States federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

a trust whose administration is subject to the primary supervision of a United States court and which has one or more United States persons who have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust.

Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, to the extent provided in the Treasury regulations, certain trusts in existence on August 20, 1996, and treated as United States persons prior to this date that elect to continue to be treated as United States persons, also will be considered U.S. stockholders.

If you hold shares of our common stock and are not a U.S. stockholder, you are a non-U.S. stockholder. See "Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders" below.

Taxation of Taxable U.S. Stockholders Generally

Distributions Generally. Distributions out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits will be treated as dividends and, other than with respect to capital gain dividends, and certain amounts that have previously been subject to corporate level tax, discussed below, will be taxable to our taxable U.S. stockholders as ordinary income. See "Tax Rates" below. As long as we qualify as a REIT, these distributions will not be eligible for the dividends-received deduction in the case of U.S. stockholders that are corporations. For purposes of determining whether distributions to holders of our common stock are out of current or accumulated earnings and profits, our earnings and profits will be allocated first to our outstanding preferred stock and then to our outstanding common stock.

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To the extent that we make distributions on our common stock in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, these distributions will be treated first as a tax-free return of capital to a U.S. stockholder. This treatment will reduce the U.S. stockholder's adjusted tax basis in its shares of our common stock by the amount of the distribution, but not below zero. Distributions in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits and in excess of a U.S. stockholder's adjusted tax basis in its shares will be taxable as capital gain. Such gain will be taxable as long-term capital gain if the shares have been held for more than one year. Dividends we declare in October, November, or December of any year and which are payable to a stockholder of record on a specified date in any of these months will be treated as both paid by us and received by the stockholder on December 31 of that year, provided we actually pay the dividend on or before January 31 of the following year. U.S. stockholders may not include in their own income tax returns any of our net operating losses or capital losses.

Capital Gain Dividends. Dividends that we properly designate as capital gain dividends will be taxable to our taxable U.S. stockholders as a gain from the sale or disposition of a capital asset, to the extent that such gain does not exceed our actual net capital gain for the taxable year. These gains may be taxable to non-corporate U.S. stockholders at a 15% or 25% rate. U.S. stockholders that are corporations may, however, be required to treat up to 20% of some capital gain dividends as ordinary income. If we properly designate any portion of a dividend as a

capital gain dividend then, except as otherwise required by law, we presently intend to allocate a portion of the total capital gain dividends paid or made available to holders of all classes of our stock for the year to the holders of our common stock and preferred stock in proportion to the amount that our total dividends, as determined for United States federal income tax purposes, paid or made available to the holders of such stock for the year bears to the total dividends, as determined for United States federal income tax purposes, paid or made available to holders of all classes of our stock for the year.

Retention of Net Capital Gains. We may elect to retain, rather than distribute as a capital gain dividend, all or a portion of our net capital gains. If we make this election, we would pay tax on our retained net capital gains. In addition, to the extent we so elect, a U.S. stockholder generally would:

include its pro rata share of our undistributed net capital gains in computing its long-term capital gains in its return for its taxable year in which the last day of our taxable year falls, subject to certain limitations as to the amount that is includable;

be deemed to have paid the capital gains tax imposed on us on the designated amounts included in the U.S. stockholder's long-term capital gains;

receive a credit or refund for the amount of tax deemed paid by it;

increase the adjusted basis of its common stock by the difference between the amount of includable gains and the tax deemed to have been paid by it; and

in the case of a U.S. stockholder that is a corporation, appropriately adjust its earnings and profits for the retained capital gains in accordance with Treasury Regulations to be promulgated by the IRS.

Passive Activity Losses and Investment Interest Limitations. Distributions we make and gain arising from the sale or exchange by a U.S. stockholder of our shares will not be treated as passive activity income. As a result, U.S. stockholders generally will not be able to apply any passive losses against this income or gain. A U.S. stockholder may elect to treat capital gain dividends, capital gains from the disposition of stock and qualified dividend income as investment income for purposes of computing the investment interest limitation, but in such case, the stockholder will be taxed at ordinary income rates on such amount. Other distributions made by us, to the extent they do not constitute a return of capital, generally will be treated as investment income for purposes of computing the investment interest limitation.

Dispositions of Our Common Stock. If a U.S. stockholder sells or disposes of shares of our common stock to a person other than us, it will recognize gain or loss for federal income tax purposes in an amount equal to the difference between the amount of cash and the fair market value of any property received on the sale or other disposition and the holder's adjusted basis in the shares for tax purposes. This gain or loss, except as provided below, will be long-term capital gain or loss if the holder has held the common stock for more than one year. If, however, a U.S. stockholder recognizes loss upon the sale or other disposition of our common stock that it has held for six months or less, after applying certain holding period rules, the loss recognized will be treated as a long-term capital loss to the extent the U.S. stockholder received distributions from us which were required to be treated as long-term capital gains.

Backup Withholding

We report to our U.S. stockholders and the IRS the amount of dividends paid during each calendar year, and the amount of any tax withheld. Under the backup withholding rules, a stockholder may be subject to backup withholding with respect to dividends paid unless the holder is a corporation or comes within certain other exempt categories and, when required, demonstrates this fact, or provides a taxpayer identification number, certifies as to no loss of exemption from backup withholding, and otherwise complies with applicable requirements of the backup withholding rules. A U.S. stockholder that does not provide us with its correct taxpayer identification number may also be subject to penalties imposed by the IRS. Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amount paid as backup withholding will be creditable against the stockholder's federal income tax liability. In addition, we may be required to withhold a portion of capital gain distributions to any stockholders who fail to certify their non-foreign status. See Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders.

Tax Rates

The maximum tax rate for non-corporate taxpayers for (1) capital gains, including certain capital gain dividends, has generally been reduced to 15% (although depending on the characteristics of the assets which produced these gains and on designations which we may make, certain capital gain dividends may be taxed at a 25% rate) and (2) qualified dividend income has generally been reduced to 15%. In general, dividends payable by REITs are not eligible for the reduced tax rate on corporate dividends, except to the extent that certain holding requirements have been met and the REIT's dividends are attributable to dividends received from taxable corporations (such as its taxable REIT subsidiaries) or to income that was subject to tax at the corporate/REIT level (for example, if it distributed taxable income that it retained and paid tax on in the prior taxable year). The currently applicable provisions of the United States federal income tax laws relating to the 15% tax rate are currently scheduled to sunset or revert to the provisions of prior law effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2010, at which time the capital gains tax rate will be increased to 20% and the rate applicable to dividends will be increased to the tax rate then applicable to ordinary income.

Taxation of Tax-Exempt Stockholders

Dividend income from us and gain arising upon a sale of our common stock generally will not be unrelated business taxable income to a tax-exempt stockholder, except as described below. This income or gain will be unrelated business taxable income, however, if a tax-exempt stockholder holds its shares as debt-financed property within the meaning of the Code or if the shares are used in a trade or business of the tax-exempt stockholder. Generally, debt-financed property is property, the acquisition or holding of which was financed through a borrowing by the tax-exempt stockholder.

For tax-exempt stockholders which are social clubs, voluntary employee benefit associations, supplemental unemployment benefit trusts, or qualified group legal services plans exempt from federal income taxation under Sections 501(c)(7), (c)(9), (c)(17) or (c)(20) of the Code, respectively, income from an investment in our shares will constitute unrelated business taxable income unless the organization is able to properly claim a deduction for amounts set aside or placed in reserve for specific purposes so as to offset the income generated by its investment in our shares. These prospective investors should consult their tax advisors concerning these set aside and reserve requirements.

Notwithstanding the above, however, a portion of the dividends paid by a pension-held REIT may be treated as unrelated business taxable income as to certain trusts that hold more than 10%, by value, of the interests in the REIT. A REIT will not be a pension-held REIT if it is able to satisfy the not closely held requirement without relying on the look-through exception with respect to certain trusts or if such REIT is not predominantly held by qualified trusts. As a result of limitations on the transfer and ownership of stock contained in our charter, we do not expect to be classified as a pension-held REIT, and as a result, the tax treatment described in this paragraph should be inapplicable to our stockholders. However, because our stock is publicly traded, we cannot guarantee that this will always be the case.

Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders

The following discussion addresses the rules governing United States federal income taxation of the ownership and disposition of our common stock by non-U.S. stockholders. These rules are complex, and no attempt is made herein to provide more than a brief summary of such rules. Accordingly, the discussion does not address all aspects of United States federal income taxation that may be relevant to a non-U.S. stockholder in light of its particular circumstances and does not address any state, local or foreign tax consequences. We urge non-U.S. stockholders to consult their tax advisors to determine the impact of federal, state, local and foreign income tax laws on the purchase, ownership, and disposition of shares of our common stock, including any reporting requirements.

Distributions Generally. Distributions that are neither attributable to gain from our sale or exchange of United States real property interests nor designated by us as capital gain dividends will be treated as dividends of ordinary income to the extent that they are made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits. Such distributions ordinarily will be subject to withholding of United States federal income tax at a 30% rate or such lower rate as may be specified by an applicable income tax treaty unless the distributions are treated as effectively connected with the conduct by the non-U.S. stockholder of a United States trade or business. Under certain treaties, however, lower withholding rates generally applicable to dividends do not apply to dividends from a REIT. Certain

certification and disclosure requirements must be satisfied to be exempt from withholding under the effectively connected income exemption. Dividends that are treated as effectively connected with such a trade or business will be subject to tax on a net basis at graduated rates, in the same manner as dividends paid to U.S. stockholders are subject to tax, and are generally not subject to withholding. Any such dividends received by a non-U.S. stockholder that is a corporation may also be subject to an additional branch profits tax at a 30% rate or such lower rate as may be specified by an applicable income tax treaty.

We expect to withhold United States income tax at the rate of 30% on any distributions made to a non-U.S. stockholder unless:

a lower treaty rate applies and the non-U.S. stockholder files with us an IRS Form W-8BEN evidencing eligibility for that reduced treaty rate; or

the non-U.S. stockholder files an IRS Form W-8ECI with us claiming that the distribution is income effectively connected with the non-U.S. stockholder's trade or business.

Distributions in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits will not be taxable to a non-U.S. stockholder to the extent that such distributions do not exceed the non-U.S. stockholder's adjusted basis in our common stock, but rather will reduce the adjusted basis of such common stock. To the extent that these distributions exceed a non-U.S. stockholder's adjusted basis in our common stock, they will give rise to gain from the sale or exchange of such stock. The tax treatment of this gain is described below.

For withholding purposes, we expect to treat all distributions as made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits. However, amounts withheld should generally be refundable if it is subsequently determined that the distribution was, in fact, in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits.

Capital Gain Dividends and Distributions Attributable to a Sale or Exchange of United States Real Property Interests. Distributions to a non-U.S. stockholder that we properly designate as capital gain dividends, other than those arising from the disposition of a United States real property interest, generally should not be subject to United States federal income taxation, unless:

(1) the investment in our common stock is treated as effectively connected with the non-U.S. stockholder's United States trade or business, in which case the non-U.S. stockholder will be subject to the same treatment as U.S. stockholders with respect to such gain, except that a non-U.S. stockholder that is a foreign corporation may also be subject to the 30% branch profits tax, as discussed above; or

(2) the non-U.S. stockholder is a nonresident alien individual who is present in the United States for 183 days or more during the taxable year and certain other conditions are met, in which case the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual's capital gains.

Pursuant to the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act, which is referred to as FIRPTA, distributions to a non-U.S. stockholder that are attributable to gain from our sale or exchange of United States real property interests (whether or not designated as capital gain dividends) will cause the non-U.S. stockholder to be treated as recognizing such gain as income effectively connected with a United States trade or business. Non-U.S. stockholders would generally be taxed at the same rates applicable to U.S. stockholders, subject to a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals. We also will be required to withhold and to remit to the IRS 35% of any distribution to a non-U.S. stockholder that is designated as a capital gain dividend, or, if greater, 35% of a distribution to the non-U.S. stockholder that could have been designated as a capital gain dividend. The amount withheld is creditable against the non-U.S. stockholder's United States federal income tax liability. However, any distribution with respect to any class of stock which is regularly traded on an established securities market located in the United States is not subject to FIRPTA, and therefore, not subject to the 35% U.S. withholding tax described above, if the non-United States stockholder did not own more than 5% of such class of stock at any time during the one-year period ending on the date of the distribution. Instead, such distributions will be treated as ordinary dividend distributions.

Retention of Net Capital Gains. Although the law is not clear on the matter, it appears that amounts designated by us as retained capital gains in respect of the common stock held by U.S. stockholders generally should

be treated with respect to non-U.S. stockholders in the same manner as actual distributions by us of capital gain dividends. Under this approach, a non-U.S. stockholder would be able to offset as a credit against its United States federal income tax liability resulting from their proportionate share of the tax paid by us on such retained capital gains, and to receive from the IRS a refund to the extent their proportionate share of such tax paid by us exceeds their actual United States federal income tax liability.

Sale of Our Common Stock. Gain recognized by a non-U.S. stockholder upon the sale or exchange of our common stock generally will not be subject to United States taxation unless such stock constitutes a United States real property interest within the meaning of FIRPTA. Our common stock will not constitute a United States real property interest so long as we are a domestically-controlled qualified investment entity. A domestically-controlled qualified investment entity includes a REIT in which at all times during a specified testing period less than 50% in value of its stock is held directly or indirectly by non-U.S. stockholders. We believe, but cannot guarantee, that we have been a domestically-controlled qualified investment entity. Even if we have been a domestically-controlled qualified investment entity, because our capital stock is publicly traded, no assurance can be given that we will continue to be a domestically-controlled qualified investment entity.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, gain from the sale or exchange of our common stock not otherwise subject to FIRPTA will be taxable to a non-U.S. stockholder if either (1) the investment in our common stock is treated as effectively connected with the non-U.S. stockholder's United States trade or business or (2) the non-U.S. stockholder is a nonresident alien individual who is present in the United States for 183 days or more during the taxable year and certain other conditions are met.

Even if we do not qualify as a domestically-controlled qualified investment entity at the time a non-U.S. stockholder sells or exchanges our common stock, gain arising from such a sale or exchange would not be subject to United States taxation under FIRPTA as a sale of a United States real property interest if:

- (1) our common stock is regularly traded, as defined by applicable Treasury regulations, on an established securities market such as the NYSE; and
- (2) such non-U.S. stockholder owned, actually and constructively, 5% or less of our common stock throughout the five-year period ending on the date of the sale or exchange.

If gain on the sale or exchange of our common stock were subject to taxation under FIRPTA, the non-U.S. stockholder would be subject to regular United States federal income tax with respect to such gain in the same manner as a taxable U.S. stockholder (subject to any applicable alternative minimum tax and a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals) and the purchaser of the common stock would be required to withhold and remit to the IRS 10% of the purchase price.

Backup Withholding Tax and Information Reporting. Generally, we must report annually to the IRS the amount of dividends paid to a non-U.S. stockholder, such holder's name and address, and the amount of tax withheld, if any. A similar report is sent to the non-U.S. stockholder. Pursuant to tax treaties or other agreements, the IRS may make its reports available to tax authorities in the non-U.S. stockholder's country of residence.

Payments of dividends or of proceeds from the disposition of stock made to a non-U.S. stockholder may be subject to information reporting and backup withholding unless such holder establishes an exemption, for example, by properly certifying its non-United States status on an IRS Form W-8BEN or another appropriate version of IRS Form W-8. Notwithstanding the foregoing, backup withholding and information reporting may apply if either we have or our paying agent has actual knowledge, or reason to know, that a non-U.S. stockholder is a United States person.

Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Rather, the United States income tax liability of persons subject to backup withholding will be reduced by the amount of tax withheld. If withholding results in an overpayment of taxes, a refund or credit may be obtained, provided that the required information is furnished to the IRS.

Other Tax Consequences

State, local and foreign income tax laws may differ substantially from the corresponding federal income tax laws, and this discussion does not purport to describe any aspect of the tax laws of any state, local or foreign jurisdiction. You should consult your tax advisor regarding the effect of state, local and foreign tax laws with respect to our tax treatment as a REIT and on an investment in our common stock.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

Digital Realty Trust, Inc.

By: /s/ Joshua A. Mills
Joshua A. Mills
General Counsel and Assistant Secretary

Date: May 23, 2006