Equitism

Unbounded opportunity. Shared prosperity.

Telosa

Equitism is a social and economic framework built around a simple idea: a community is most successful when it creates an environment in which individuals and the community as a whole can thrive together. It should encourage innovation, investment, and individual success while ensuring that the prosperity created benefits the entire community.

What is Equitism?

Equitism brings together two goals that are too often treated as opposites: dynamic growth and broad participation in the prosperity that growth creates. It supports entrepreneurship, private enterprise, and personal achievement while creating a durable way to reinvest part of the value generated by the community back into the community.

It is not a promise of equal outcomes. It is a commitment to expand opportunity, strengthen the foundations of a flourishing society, and help ensure that progress improves quality of life for more people.

The Core Principle

As the city does better, its residents should benefit.

Growth creates value. Equitism creates a path for some of that value to build the next generation of opportunity.

How Does It Work?

A key mechanism is Land Value Return (LVR). Land values often rise because of many forces working together: residents and businesses create activity; public investment adds infrastructure and services; and the growth of the city makes locations more desirable. LVR allows a portion of that increasing land value to be retained or recaptured for public benefit.

1. **GROW**
   People, businesses, and public investment help the community thrive.

2. **CAPTURE**
   A portion of rising land value is retained through ground leases, land-value taxation, or public assets.

3. **REINVEST**
   Returns support opportunity, essential services, and long-term community priorities.

4. **REPEAT**
   Better outcomes can attract further investment and create a virtuous cycle.

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Land Value Return

Flexible Tools. Shared Purpose. Long-Term Community Benefit.

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Who Benefits - And How?

Residents
More resources for housing, education, healthcare, and pathways to good jobs.

Businesses
A stronger workforce, reliable infrastructure, and a community positioned for long-term growth.

The City
A more resilient financial foundation and the ability to invest with a longer time horizon.

How Can My City Use Equitism?

1. **Map Public Assets**
   Create a transparent inventory of land, buildings, and infrastructure including underused assets.
2. **Choose the Right Tool**
   Consider ground leases, community land trusts, land-value taxation, joint development, or an urban wealth fund.
3. **Define the Return**
   Dedicate proceeds to clear priorities and publish how funds are governed, invested, and used.
4. **Start With a Pilot**
   Test the model in one district, corridor, or public site; measure the results and improve the approach before scaling.

Models We Can Learn From

Singapore
Public Land and Long Term Stewardship
Singapore demonstrates how substantial public land ownership, leasehold development, and professionally managed national reserves can preserve value for future generations and help finance public priorities.

Stanford University
Land Stewardship and Ground Leases
Stanford's founding land grant is generally retained rather than sold. Long-term ground leases, including at Stanford Research Park, allow the university to support development while preserving a lasting asset for its educational mission.

Pennsylvania Cities
Land Value Taxation
A number of Pennsylvania municipalities have used split-rate property taxes, taxing land at a higher rate than buildings. The approach can reduce the penalty for improving property while increasing the cost of holding valuable land underused.

These are related precedents, not examples of Telosa's full Equitism framework.

The Promise of Equitism

Build places where growth expands opportunity and where the value created together helps more people thrive.

Sources and Further Reading

Singapore Ministry of Finance, "Who Manages the Reserves?"; Singapore Ministry of Law, "Land Policy & Administration"; Stanford Research Park, "About"; Federal Highway Administration, "Land Value Tax."

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