

Global Real Estate Securities Market Review

GRES Strategy Performance (%)	Inception Date	First Quarter	1-Year	Annualized			
				3-Year	5-Year	10-Year	Since Inception
Global Real Estate Strategy	1/31/2007	-4.25	16.73	8.88	9.88	8.72	5.00
FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Index		-3.96	14.46	5.43	6.50	6.91	2.91
Variance		-0.29	2.27	3.45	3.38	1.81	2.09
U.S. Real Estate Strategy	12/21/2010	-3.75	30.34	15.86	14.20	11.99	12.47
FTSE NAREIT Equity REIT Index		-3.89	26.45	11.11	9.62	9.81	10.61
Variance		0.14	3.89	4.75	4.58	2.18	1.86
Select Real Estate Strategy	8/1/2014	-2.81	19.75	14.77	14.13	--	11.01
FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed Index		-3.96	14.46	5.43	6.50	--	5.33
Variance		1.15	5.29	9.34	7.63	--	5.68
Real Estate Income Strategy	9/29/2014	-2.01	12.19	7.97	7.66	--	6.90
Blended Benchmark ¹		-4.24	10.71	5.17	6.21	--	5.41
Variance		2.23	1.48	2.80	1.45	--	1.49

Source: PGIM Real Estate, Bloomberg. Performance based on gross returns for the period ending 31-Mar-2022 and does not include expenses or sales charges. If included, returns would be lower. Past performance is not a guarantee or a reliable indicator of future results.

Global Market Review

The first quarter of 2022 was marked by uncertainty as geopolitical-factor risk spiked along with inflation. The good news is that in terms of relative performance, REITs performed well against other asset alternatives like stocks and bonds in a very sharply rising interest rate environment. REITs of course were not insulated from the events that were transpiring—whether it was the invasion of Ukraine by Russia or the spike in inflation—and as a result, they traded slightly down for the quarter.

Looking across the regions, Asia Pacific REITs were down about 1%, and our performance was flat relative to the Asia benchmark. North America was down about 4%. And Europe—as expected because it has the most geopolitical risk based on events in Russia and Ukraine—was down about 7%. So, when we thought about the portfolio in the quarter, we really had to keep in mind those factor risks. What were not necessarily going to drive performance for the quarter were fundamentals. Even though real estate fundamentals typically drive REIT performance, in certain periods REIT performance separates from that and trades more on geopolitical risk.

With regard to regional positioning during the quarter, we were underweight Europe, and that worked to our advantage. We created positive alpha as a result of being underweight Europe, and we were overweight North America and neutral Asia. Within Europe, the really big and important shift for us was an underweight in Germany. We had that on for much of the second half of last year, but we increased our conviction around it.

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When you think about Germany in the context of the countries we invest in, Germany is experiencing the most-direct impact from the most exposure to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in that Germany is very dependent on oil it receives from Russia. We have no direct exposure to Russia because we do not invest in Russian securities. We also do not invest in any of the Baltic republics directly. Our Russia–Ukraine exposure in the portfolio lies in second-derivative dependences in areas like Germany—which we were underweight—and that resulted in our outperformance.

Interest rates spiked significantly in the quarter, and we are very mindful of how that affects real estate prices. Headlines have said mortgage rates are going up significantly, and the main area we have identified at this point—an area that is feeling an impact—would be M&A activity. As debt costs go up, highly levered buyers will have a harder time financing transactions, and so we’ve seen a bit of a stall in some of the M&A activity that had been a theme. The good news is that as rates have gone up, we find ourselves in a period in which a lot of landlords have pricing power. In this inflationary environment, reflation has been historically very good for real estate and REITs. We are seeing a lot of companies continue to deliver strong top-line revenue growth because occupancies are tight and supply is still not keeping up with demand.

In areas like self-storage, which have monthly rents, significant price increases are going on to the tune of double digits, which is quite small on a nominal dollar basis, but on a percentage basis, they are large increases. Self-storage companies have pricing power and very low risk to inflationary pressure on their cost structures—particularly on wage inflation because there are usually not many employees, if any, at the properties. Therefore, self-storage companies are not really vulnerable to things like wage inflation.

In the backdrop of all this, we are still in the midst of reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic, and reopenings are in various stages across the world. During the first quarter, Asia started to benefit. Some of the reopening themes around hotel companies and some retail companies, both of which sectors we were overweight, really started to perform well in the first quarter. And because Asia was one of the last markets to fully embrace the reopening, numbers began coming through that showed a little bit more than green shoots, and there was a favorable outcome in the revenue streams of those reopening companies.

There is still some reopening upside left on the table in the United States. Areas like hotels, which really benefited from leisure or pleasure travel in the summer of 2021 but ran into a bit of a stall because of concern about the pace of corporate travel coming back, are starting again to benefit, as we are seeing the same surge in corporate travel that we saw in leisure travel. In addition, leisure travel is holding up strong.

With that said, there are some concerns—particularly around inflation and high oil prices and whether those will cause a slowdown or a recession. The spike in office-driven or corporate traveler demand seems to be sustainable and has some legs. And in spite of whether we do get a slowdown, we would expect strong continued growth in that area as the pent-up demand for office travel gets exhausted. In the United States, there is certainly still upside with some of those themes—and in Europe as well, where we see continued benefits for some of the hotel and retail names we have been overweight as part of the reopening.

When it comes to the backdrop in general, reflation/inflation is a good environment for real estate. That means that a look at real estate shows longer-term leases in general and that many of them have inflationary bumps built into them. Therefore, there is a built-in protection right in the lease. This is unlike a bond, which has a fixed payment and no opportunity to adjust to inflation. If rates go up and if inflation goes up, there will be a negative impact on a bond, but real estate can adjust contractually, or it can adjust based on market conditions. An example is self-storage with 30-day leases. When self-storage companies have pricing power, like now, they are getting above inflationary top-line growth, and their cost structures are not too vulnerable to inflation. That is a favorable environment, and then when you think about the cost of building during an inflationary environment, you know construction costs go up a lot. The result is a muted supply effect and demand that generates pricing power that can be in line with or can exceed inflation. It's a powerful place to be in a reflationary environment.

We have not seen the impact of interest rates on pricing in commercial real estate but will continue to monitor the situation. M&A activity should temper a bit, but in terms of what we've seen in cap rates for higher-quality assets, we really haven't seen pressure there at all. Where we have seen maybe longer lease durations with increases or rent bumps that are below inflation has been in B locations or for B products, which have maybe seen a few bump-ups in cap rates.

With regard to attribution for the quarter, we were in line with the benchmark on the Global Core Real Estate Strategy, and we outperformed the benchmark in the Select Real Estate Strategy during a challenging environment that was driven by macroevents. In terms of the top contributors, the underweight position to Germany was a large contributor. Stock selection in U.S. health

care and being overweight the sector were beneficial because of some of the reopening opportunities like assisted living. Stock selection in U.S. triple net and stock selection in Japan and Singapore were contributors.

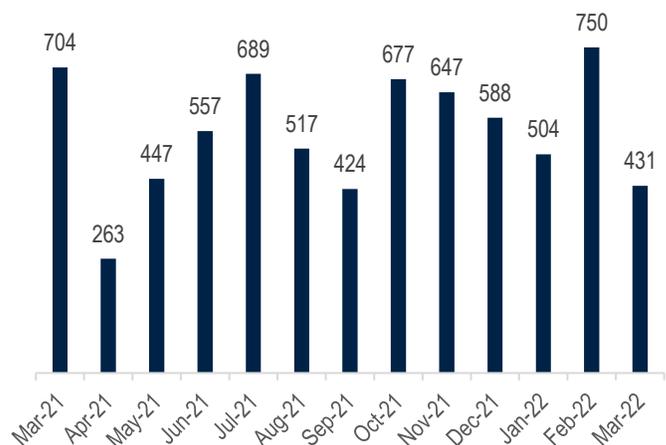
Detracting from performance was negative stock selection in Australia. Australia had some reopening names that benefited from reversion but that we were underweight. We were overweight self-storage and manufactured housing in Australia—both of them areas with great fundamentals. Plus, stock selection in Canada was unfavorable, driven by an industrial name that has great pricing power and limited supply but that got caught up in the sell-off at the beginning of the year.

We are looking for companies that are taking advantage of the inflationary environment—companies that can grow their top lines in order to achieve at or above inflationary revenue growth with cost structures that do not rely as much on wage labor and whose bottom lines in this environment continue to grow. That would include areas like self-storage. It would also include assisted living—certainly from a top-line perspective—and apartment rental, multifamily rental and single-family rental. Part of what is going on in the housing market in general will cause more individuals and families to move into the renter market, which will benefit single-family rental and apartments.

United States Market Review

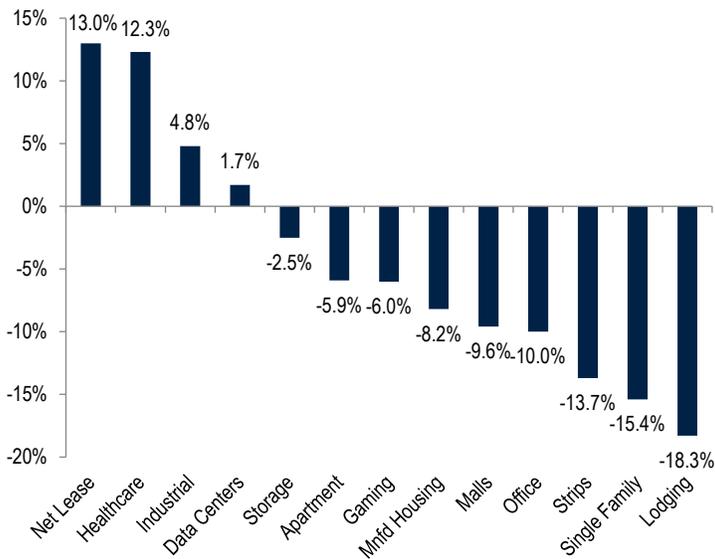
The U.S. REIT market bounced back an impressive 6.3% in the month of March, thereby limiting the 2022 first-quarter decline to 4.4%, which was slightly better than the S&P 500's 4.6% decline. The relative strength of the REIT market thus far in 2022 has surprised many investors given the 47% return posted in 2021 and the 90-basis-point jump in the 10-year Treasury yield to start the year. However, as we've pointed out in recent updates, we see a favorable setup for the U.S. REIT market given above-average earnings growth in the next two years, limited exposure to overseas tensions and capacity to protect investors from inflationary pressures.

Monthly Gains ('000) For Office/Non-Office Using Jobs²



The outlook for the U.S. economy remains uncertain, but the average U.S. household balance sheet remains strong, supported by a strong labor market. Unemployment dropped to 3.6% at the end of March, with 1.7 million new jobs added during the quarter. However, inflation remains persistently high, which is placing more pressure on the Federal Reserve to aggressively raise rates over the course of 2022. It remains to be seen how the Federal Reserve's monetary policy actions taken this year will ultimately weigh on economic growth. In addition, monetary policy is unlikely to significantly affect the current supply chain issues plaguing many businesses, thereby raising doubts that the Fed will be effective in its efforts to bring down inflation. Fortunately for the REIT market, higher input costs have almost no direct impact on REIT margins, and the inflationary environment has only served to give REITs greater pricing power. Even though higher labor costs could affect margins for hotels and senior housing, most of the sectors in real estate have limited numbers of employees and are therefore unlikely to be affected by such cost pressures. In addition, higher construction costs are likely to further curtail new construction, which will give landlords the benefit of exerting greater pricing pressure on tenants to raise their rents as the economy continues recovering. The favorable operating environment can be seen through recent earnings estimate revisions, which continue to move higher for both 2022 and 2023.

U.S. Sector Price/NAV³



The best-performing sectors during March were hotels and health care. After witnessing several pandemic-driven false starts in 2021, the lodging sector finally appears to be picking up real steam, with record rates and climbing occupancy. Strength thus far has largely been leisure driven, but as we enter the endemic phase of the pandemic, we expect a meaningful pickup in corporate travel to return. Health-care strength during the quarter was driven largely by senior-housing-focused REITs, which are well positioned to benefit from recovering occupancy, demographic support and an improving labor dynamic.

The worst-performing sectors were the data center and mall sectors. Data centers continue to suffer from limited organic growth. In addition, the sector has struggled with a negative sentiment on tech-related equities, resulting in widespread multiple compressions. Plus, increasing recession concerns have weighed on mall sentiment in recent months. Despite rising economic risks in the country, we expect spending by high-end U.S. consumers to remain robust in the short term.

Market Outlook

We continue to view the U.S. REIT market as well positioned for 2022. We estimate funds-from-operations-per-share growth of roughly 12% in 2022 and 10% in 2023. Forecasts of earnings growth in the next two years have consistently moved higher because market rents have come in largely higher than expected. Given the highly inflationary backdrop and limited operating-costs exposure, we see more upside potential in the earnings growth outlook.

We also expect 2022 to be another active year on the REIT M&A front. In 2021, the market witnessed 12 REIT takeovers across a variety of sectors representing both public-to-public and take-private deals. Favorable debt and equity capital markets, combined with a multiyear recovery outlook in fundamentals, are likely to keep private-equity interest focused on additional opportunities in the REIT market.

We continue to favor a barbell approach to our sector allocation, which minimizes unintended factor exposure. We remain positive on secular winners—specifically, the self-storage and residential sectors. In addition, we continue looking for opportunities to participate in the robust occupancy recovery and improving pricing power across the more-discounted sectors. Specifically, we view the shopping-center sector as one of the best-positioned sectors to outperform in 2022. In many ways, the pandemic served as a cleansing mechanism for the retail world by enabling public REITs to gain market share in the best-located centers with top retailers. As such, bankruptcy risk is currently at one of the lowest levels in recent memory, and many REITs are in strong positions to demand higher rental rates upon lease expirations. In addition, we see significant upside in senior-housing-focused REITs in the next several years. Although Omicron-related labor issues could affect margins in the short term, the sector is well positioned to benefit from an occupancy rebuild and sustained demographic tailwinds for years to come.

Europe Market Review

The European public real estate index suffered a sharp correction in the first quarter of this year, returning minus 7.2% (U.S. dollar gross total return) for the quarter. Inflation concerns and a rapid spike in bond yields began the sell-off at the start of the year but really gained momentum at the end of February with the advent of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Following a sharp sell-off in the first two months of the year, the European public real estate index recovered some of its losses later in March and finished the month broadly flat, at a total return of minus 0.2%. Dollar strength in the first quarter against all major European currencies further depressed European returns when translated into U.S. dollars.

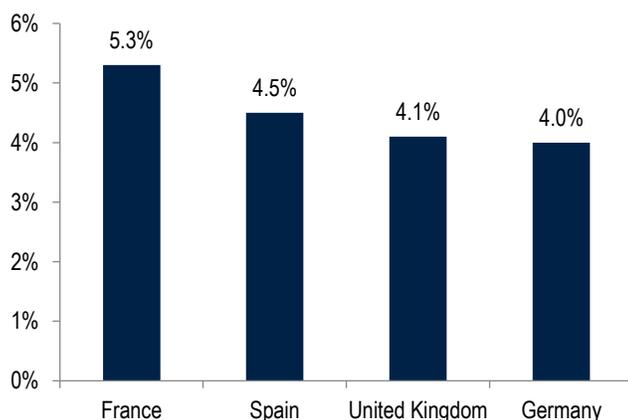
The sectors and countries that outperformed in 2021—and especially in the fourth quarter of 2021—were the laggards in first-quarter 2022. Industrial and self-storage stocks that had seen such strong performance last year were clear underperformers in the first quarter of 2022, and retail stocks bounced back at the start of the year after underperforming throughout 2021. Almost all countries saw negative total returns in the first quarter. The weakest performances were in Germany and Sweden, with both of them returning minus 14.6% for the quarter. Sweden had been the best-performing country in 2021 but reversed sharply from the start of 2022, as climbing interest rates raised concerns about the higher average leverage and short-term financing of Swedish stocks. And because of Germany’s extensive dependence on Russian energy supplies, the German equity market saw sustained selling pressure after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The UK, too, had a negative total return—of minus 5.4% in the first quarter—as its industrial and self-storage sectors significantly underperformed. France was one of very few countries in positive territory for the first quarter, with a positive total return of 1.6%, as the retail sector that dominates the index there recovered.

Market Outlook

The shocking, Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24 unleashed turmoil in financial and energy markets. Because Europe is most exposed to those financial and energy market risks based on its geographic proximity to and energy dependence on Russia, European equity markets have suffered the greatest negative impact of all of the global regions. The risk premium of the entire European market has increased significantly at the same time that central banks globally are trying to bring high inflation under control and that government bond yields have experienced a significant jump.

We have constructed a balanced risk profile in our portfolio, which has helped cushion some of the negative market impact. More-defensive stocks with lower leverage have relatively outperformed on the whole since the invasion. Net-asset-value (NAV) discounts have widened even further in Europe with the market collapse after the invasion. Europe is now trading on an average 13% forward NAV discount, with the UK averaging a 7% discount and continental Europe a 15% discount.

Europe Sector Implied Cap Rates⁴



The equity market correction in the first quarter of 2022 elevated implied yields across the region—especially in continental Europe. The average European implied cap rate is currently 4.4% (4.1% UK and 4.5% continental Europe). However, rapidly climbing government bond yields have also compressed the yield gap between implied cap rates and government bond yields.

Although it is impossible to know at this point how the war and its wider crisis will develop, we do feel that valuations following the significant market correction have priced in much of the known risks so far. The energy dependency of several continental European economies does put them at greater risk of inflation spikes and energy supply interruptions. We will continue to take a cautious stance, monitor the rapidly changing situation and make appropriate portfolio changes.

Asia Pacific Market Review

In the first quarter, the Asian real estate equity market was mired by concerns about quicker-than-expected liftoff of global interest rates and rising bond yields, coupled with heightened geopolitical risks brought about by the Russia–Ukraine conflict. All in all, the market ended the quarter with a minus 1.1%⁵ return but was still better than the minus 1.7% of the previous quarter. Developers in Singapore rose by 1.6%⁶ (in U.S. dollar terms) for the quarter, followed by Hong Kong, at 0.4%, and Japan, at 0.1%. For REITs, Singapore rose by 0.4%, and A-REITs and J-REITs fell by minus 4.9% and minus 8.2%, respectively. Of note is the 5.8% depreciation of the Japanese yen versus the U.S. dollar, which eroded much of the gain in Japanese developers in yen terms during the quarter. On the bright side, the reopening theme in Australia in February, in Hong Kong and Singapore in March, and in Japan partially was a key mitigating factor.

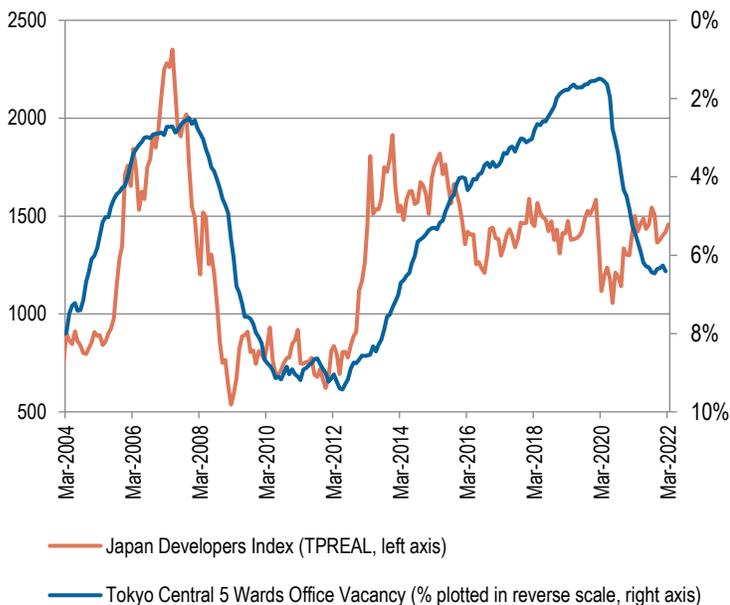
In Australia, the central bank left the cash rate unchanged, at 0.10%, in its latest meeting,⁷ but the market now strongly expects the rate to rise earlier than projected—in either May or June—by 25 basis points. A-REITs reported December end-of-year earnings in the quarter, and key takeaways were (1) improved retail conditions through 2021 and improved cash collections in November and December; (2) a robust earnings outlook for logistics REITs with the likes of GMG, whose strong development earnings resulted from a tripling of work in progress in the past two years to A\$12.7 billion and continued margin expansion; and (3) better-than-expected results from office REITs with the likes of Dexus, based on higher office income and lower interest expense.

The big three Japanese developers’ earnings were in line with market expectations. Key highlights were (1) upward revisions of 2022 guidance—from JPY44 to JPY55 for Mitsui Fudosan and from JPY33 to JPY36 for Mitsubishi Estate, and (2) Mitsui Fudosan’s share buyback of up to JPY15 billion (buyback period from February 7, 2022 to September 30, 2022). J-REITs fell minus 8.2% during the quarter, but a large part of the decline was attributable to a 5.8% depreciation of the yen vs the U.S. dollar. Across Japan, the number of COVID-19 daily cases slowed to about 50,000 at the end of March—significantly below the nearly 100,000 cases per day in early February.⁸ On reopening, it was reported that Japan will consider gradually raising the entry limit on arrivals to 5,000 after easing border controls for foreign workers and students in March.

Hong Kong's Omicron daily cases receded meaningfully toward the end of the first quarter, which was in stark contrast to the vast numbers of cases at the beginning of March, so things are not all doom and gloom. Unprecedented mass testing of the entire population of more than 7 million has become deferred. The government has laid out a plan to relax physical-distancing measures beginning in April; the plan could be positive for retail sales recovery. Residential prices ebbed minus 4.8% during the quarter.⁹ The residential price outlook remains uncertain, but transaction volume could improve as physical-distancing measures ease in coming months.

Singapore's reopening theme is gaining meaningful traction, thanks to the community's high vaccination rate. Fully 95% of Singapore's eligible population have completed the full vaccination regimen under the national vaccination program.¹⁰ Both developers and REITs gained during the quarter, which outperformed Australia, Japan and Hong Kong. Large-cap commercial landlords like CapitaLand Integrated Commercial Trust gained more traction than industrial REITs did during the quarter because of upbeat results in both office and retail segments—on the backs of improved tenant sales and shopper traffic—and commitment to new office development CapitaSpring continued improving, which in turn improved its bottom line. Key takeaways from the government's 2022 budget included higher property tax rates—which is an element of the overall taxation on wealth so that wealthier property owners contribute more—and a staggered increase in the goods and services tax to 8% in 2023 and 9% in 2024 (currently 7%).

Japan Developers Index vs Tokyo Central 5 Wards Office Vacancy¹¹



Market Outlook

We believe Asia should witness a more sustained recovery heading into 2022. COVID-19 ushered in a period of unprecedented global monetary easing and fiscal stimulus as countries coped with the economic fallout. As Asia was emerging from the depths of the Delta variant, Delta became replaced by the Omicron variant. However, with more-advanced vaccine infrastructure, better COVID readiness and the milder strain, there remains considerable hope that the impact could be better contained. Sectors that witnessed significant contraction in demand (i.e., hospitality and retail) should see gradual recovery in coming months. Equity markets are focusing on the pace of Fed hikes and the potential for policy mistakes because inflation expectations are no longer seen as transitory. The evolving Russia–Ukraine conflict poses another threat to global economic recovery, with surging energy prices potentially adding to tail risks on the downside.

In the near term, the following themes could be in focus: (1) Omicron variant, (2) Fed hikes, (3) Russia–Ukraine conflict, (4) flattening yield curve on risk of Fed policy mistake and (4) recovery in reopening names (retail and hospitality).

We remain positive on the Australian logistics, manufactured housing and self-storage sectors, for which e-commerce growth, demographics and market consolidation trends are providing structural tailwinds. Australia retail sectors are also in recovery, as most of the physical-distancing and border restrictions have been lifted. Because COVID cases in Hong Kong peaked in March and because the government laid out its plan to relax physical-distancing measures, we are positioning discretionary retail for reopening. We are neutral the Japanese developers, with a preference for retail and hospitality exposures levered to a COVID-19 recovery. We are overweight the J-REITs and favor heavily discounted hospitality names that could benefit from the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. J-REITs currently trade at a 3.8% dividend yield (a 365-basis-point spread to a 10-year Japanese government bond yield). In Singapore, we are overweight the developers in fund manager–landlord plays. For S-REITs, we favor data centers that offer acquisition accretion and diversified names that are reopening proxies.

Market concern now centers on the Russia–Ukraine conflict, reinforcing inflationary fears as surging commodity prices threaten the pace of global economic recovery. Global reopening remains fraught with the risk of subsequent COVID-wave impacts amid growing economic and social marginalizations. China is still figuring out its strategy for dealing with COVID, and the current zero-COVID strategy poses high risk to the government's 5.5% GDP growth target. For the rest of Asia, the effectiveness of incremental vaccine delivery via booster shots will shape domestic recovery and determine when borders reopen going forward. At the same time, a strong recovery in the United States could stoke inflationary pressures beyond mere transitory impacts and could drive expectations of quicker and additional interest rate hikes. Concerns about supply chain, too, could hamper growth while causing an inflation spiral that will be harder to arrest. Within our individual sectors, sharper rises in long-term real interest rates could negatively affect regional REIT valuations. And in the events of setbacks on the geopolitical front and potential COVID-19 variants, risk appetite could remain in check heading into the year.

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¹ Blended benchmark is 80% FTSE/EPRA NAREIT Developed Index/ 20% BofA Merrill Lynch 7 Const. REIT Preferred Securities Index.

² Bloomberg. As of 31-Mar-2022.

³ PGIM Real Estate. As of 31-Mar-2022.

⁴ Morgan Stanley. Citi. As of 31-Mar-2022.

⁵ FTSE EPRA/NAREIT Developed, as of March 31, 2022.

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⁶ Bloomberg, as of March 31, 2022.

⁷ April 5, 2022.

⁸ Bloomberg.

⁹ Centaline Property Centa-City Leading Index.

¹⁰ CNA.

¹¹ Bloomberg. As of 31-Mar-2022.