

Risk Factors Comparison 2025-03-03 to 2024-02-27 Form: 10-K

Legend: **New Text** ~~Removed Text~~ ~~Unchanged Text~~ **Moved Text Section**

RISKS RELATED TO OUR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ~~The possibility of~~ **Inflationary pressures and increases in market interest rates may affect our results of operations and financial condition. Inflation continued at elevated levels 2024 and may remain elevated in 2025. In response to a pronounced rise in inflation, the FRB raised the federal funds rate several times in 2023. While the FRB cut the federal funds rate in 2024, we cannot predict whether or when the FRB may increase or decrease the federal funds rate in the future. Moreover, while the inflation rate has decreased, prices remain high. Small to medium- sized businesses may be impacted by higher costs as they are not able to leverage economies of scale to mitigate cost pressures compared to larger businesses. Consequently, the ability of our business customers to repay their loans may deteriorate, and in some cases this deterioration may occur quickly. Sustained higher interest rates by the FRB, changes to fiscal policy, including expansion of U. S. federal deficit spending and resultant debt issuance, could also affect market interest rates, push down asset prices and weaken economy-economic s return to recessionary activity. A deterioration in economic conditions and in the United States and possibility of further turmoil or our volatility markets could result in the an increase in loan delinquencies and non- performing assets, decreases in loan collateral values and a decrease in demand for our products and services, any of which, could adversely impact our business, financial condition and results of operations. Further, continued high markets- market interest rates may reduce our loan origination volume, particularly refinance volume, and / or reduce our interest rate spread, which would likely have an adverse effect on our profitability business, financial position, and results of operations .** ~~The economy in the United States and globally has experienced volatility in recent years and may continue to experience such volatility for the foreseeable future. There can be no assurance that economic conditions will not worsen. Unfavorable or uncertain economic conditions can be caused by declines in economic growth, business activity, or investor or business confidence, limitations on the availability or increases in the cost of credit and capital, increases in inflation or interest rates, the timing and impact of changing governmental policies, natural disasters, climate change, epidemics, future pandemics, terrorist attacks, acts of war, or a combination of these or other factors. A worsening of business and economic conditions could have adverse effects on our business, including the following: • investors may have less confidence in the equity markets in general and in financial services industry stocks in particular, which could place downward pressure on our stock price and resulting market valuation ; • economic and market developments may further affect consumer and business confidence levels and may cause declines in credit usage and adverse changes in payment patterns, causing increases in delinquencies and default rates ; • our ability to assess the creditworthiness of our customers may be impaired if the models and approaches we use to select, manage, and underwrite loans become less predictive of future behaviors ; • we could suffer decreases in demand for loans or other financial products and services or decreased deposits or other investments in accounts with us ; • competition in the financial services industry could intensify as a result of the increasing consolidation of financial services companies in connection with current market conditions or otherwise ; and • the value of loans and other assets or collateral securing loans may decrease. Our business may be adversely affected by changes in economic conditions in our market area. We primarily serve individuals and businesses located in the Greater Boston metropolitan area, eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, the Lower Hudson Valley in New York, and the Greater New York and New Jersey metropolitan area. Our success is largely dependent on local and regional economic conditions. Unlike other larger institutions, we are not able to spread the risks of unfavorable local economic conditions across a large number of diversified economies. An economic downturn could, therefore, result in losses that materially and adversely affect our business. Recessionary economic conditions, increased unemployment, inflation, a decline in real estate values or other factors beyond our control may adversely affect the ability of our borrowers to repay their loans, and could result in higher loan and lease losses and lower net income for us. In addition, deterioration or defaults made by issuers of the underlying collateral of our investment securities may cause additional credit- related other- than- temporary impairment charges to our income statement. Our ability to borrow from other financial institutions or to access the debt or equity capital markets on favorable terms or at all could be adversely affected by disruptions in the capital markets or other events, including actions by rating agencies and deteriorating investor expectations.~~ ~~Changes to interest rates could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition. Our consolidated results of operations depend, on a large part, on net interest income, which is the difference between (i) interest income on interest- earning assets, such as loans, leases and securities, and (ii) interest expense on interest- bearing liabilities, such as deposits and borrowed funds. As a result, our earnings and growth are significantly affected by interest rates, which are subject to the influence of economic conditions generally, both domestic and foreign, to events in the capital markets and also to the monetary and fiscal policies of the United States and its agencies, particularly the FRB. The nature and timing of any changes in such policies or general economic conditions and their effect on us cannot be controlled and are extremely difficult to predict. An increase in interest rates could also have a negative impact on our results of operations by reducing the ability of borrowers to repay their current loan obligations, which could not only result in increased loan defaults, foreclosures and charge- offs, but also necessitate further increases to our allowances for loan losses. A decrease in interest rates may trigger loan prepayments, which may serve to reduce net interest income if we are unable to lend those funds to other borrowers or invest the funds at the same or higher interest rates.~~ **We may be adversely affected by volatility in U. S. and global economic conditions and changes in fiscal, monetary, trade and regulatory policies. The economy in the U. S. and globally has experienced volatility in recent years and may continue to experience such volatility for the foreseeable future. Unfavorable or uncertain economic conditions can be caused by declines in economic growth, business activity,**

or investor or business confidence; limitations on the availability of or increases in the cost of credit and capital; increases in inflationary pressures or interest rates; uncertainties regarding fiscal and rising monetary policies; the timing and impact of changing governmental policies, including changes in guidance and interpretation by regulatory authorities; changes in trade policies by the U. S. or other countries, such as tariffs or retaliatory tariffs as those proposed by the incoming U. S. Administration; supply chain disruptions; consumer spending; employment levels; labor shortages; challenging labor market conditions; wage stagnation; federal government shutdowns; energy prices; home prices; commercial property values; bankruptcies and a default by a significant market participant or class of counterparties; natural disasters; climate change; epidemics; pandemics; terrorist attacks; acts of war; or a combination of these or other factors. Volatile business and economic conditions could have adverse effects on our business, including the following: • investors may have less confidence in the equity markets in general and in financial services industry stocks in particular, which could place downward pressure on our stock price and resulting market valuation; • economic and market developments may further affect consumer and business confidence levels and may cause declines in credit usage and adverse changes in payment patterns, causing increases in delinquencies and default rates; • our ability to assess the creditworthiness of our customers may be impaired if the models and approaches we use to select, manage, and underwrite loans become less predictive of future behaviors; • we could suffer decreases in demand for loans or other results of operations and financial products and services or decreased deposits or other investments in accounts with us; • competition in the financial services industry could intensify as a result of the increasing consolidation of financial services companies in connection with current market conditions or otherwise; and • the value of loans and collateral securing loans may decrease. Inflation continued at elevated levels in 2023. Inflationary pressures, including the impact of recent increases in inflation, may remain elevated in 2024. Small to medium-sized businesses may be adversely affected by changes in economic conditions in our market area. We primarily serve individuals and businesses located in the Greater Boston metropolitan area, eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, the Lower Hudson Valley in New York, and the Greater New York and New Jersey metropolitan area. Our success is largely dependent on local and regional economic conditions. Unlike other larger institutions, we are not able to leverage economic conditions across a large number of diversified economies. An economic downturn could, therefore, result in losses that materially and adversely affect our business. Consequently, recessionary economic conditions, increased unemployment, inflation, a decline in real estate values or other factors beyond our control may adversely affect the ability of our business customers to repay their loans and could result in some cases this higher loan and lease losses and lower net income for us. In addition, deterioration or defaults made by issuers of the underlying collateral of our quickly investment securities may cause additional credit-related charges to our income statement. Our ability to borrow from other financial institutions or to access the debt or equity capital markets on favorable terms or at all could be adversely affected by disruptions in the capital markets or other events, including actions by rating agencies and deteriorating investor expectations. Increased market volatility and adverse changes in financial or capital market conditions may increase our market risk. Our liquidity, competitive position, business, results of operations and financial condition are affected by market risks such as changes in interest rates, fluctuations in equity, commodity and futures prices, the implied volatility of interest rates and credit spreads and other economic and business factors. These market risks may adversely affect, among other things, the value of our securities, the cost of debt capital and our access to credit markets, customer allocation of capital among investment alternatives, and our competitiveness with respect to deposit pricing. In times of market stress or other unforeseen circumstances, previously uncorrelated indicators may become correlated, which may limit the effectiveness of our strategies to manage these risks. If we are unable to access the capital markets, have prolonged net deposit outflows, or our borrowing costs increase, our liquidity and competitive position will be negatively affected. Liquidity is essential to our business. We must maintain sufficient funds to respond to the needs of depositors and borrowers. To manage liquidity, we draw upon a number of funding sources in addition to in-market deposit growth and repayments and maturities of loans and investments. Any inability to access the capital markets, illiquidity or volatility in the capital markets, the decrease in value of eligible collateral or increased collateral requirements (including as a result of credit concerns for short-term borrowing), changes to our relationships with our funding providers based on real or perceived changes in our risk profile, prolonged federal government shutdowns, or changes in regulations or regulatory guidance, or other events could negatively affect our access to or cost of funding, affecting our ongoing ability to accommodate liability maturities and deposit withdrawals, meet contractual obligations, or fund asset growth and new business initiatives at a reasonable cost, in a timely manner and without adverse consequences. Additionally, our liquidity or cost of funds may be negatively impacted by the unwillingness or inability of the FRB to act as lender of last resort, unexpected simultaneous draws on lines of credit or deposits, the withdrawal of or failure to attract customer deposits, or increased regulatory liquidity, capital and margin requirements. Although we maintain a liquid asset portfolio and have implemented strategies to maintain sufficient and diverse sources of funding to accommodate planned, as well as unanticipated, changes in assets, liabilities, and off-balance sheet commitments under various economic conditions, a substantial, unexpected, or prolonged change in the level or cost of liquidity could have a material adverse effect on us. If the cost effectiveness or the availability of supply in these credit markets is reduced for a prolonged period of time, our funding needs may require us to access funding and manage liquidity by other means. These alternatives may include generating client deposits, extending the maturity of wholesale borrowings, borrowing under certain secured borrowing arrangements, using relationships developed with a variety of fixed income investors, selling or securitizing loans, and further managing loan growth and investment opportunities. These alternative means

of funding may result in an increase to the overall cost of funds and may not be available under stressed conditions, which would adversely impact our results of operations and financial condition. Furthermore, a prolonged period of inflation could cause **us to liquidate a portion** wages and other costs increase, which could adversely affect our results of operations and financial condition **our liquid asset portfolio to meet any funding needs**. We face significant and increasing competition in the financial services industry. We operate in a highly competitive environment that includes financial and non-financial services firms, including traditional banks, online banks, financial technology companies, wealth management companies and others. These companies compete on the basis of, among other factors, size, quality and type of products and services offered, price, technology and reputation. Emerging technologies have the potential to intensify competition and accelerate disruption in the financial services industry. In recent years, non-financial services firms, such as financial technology companies, have begun to offer services traditionally provided by financial institutions. These firms attempt to use technology and mobile platforms to enhance the ability of companies and individuals to borrow money, save and invest. Our ability to compete successfully depends on a number of factors, including our ability to develop and execute strategic plans and initiatives; to develop competitive products and technologies; and to attract, retain and develop a highly skilled employee workforce. If we are not able to compete successfully, we could be placed at a competitive disadvantage, which could result in the loss of customers and market share, and our business, results of operations and financial condition could suffer. Our business may be adversely affected if we fail to adapt our products and services to evolving industry standards and consumer preferences. The financial services industry is undergoing rapid technological changes with frequent introductions of new technology driven products and services. The widespread adoption of new technologies, including payment systems, could require substantial expenditures to modify or adapt our existing products and services as the introduction of new or modified products and services can entail significant time and resources. We might not be successful in developing or introducing new products and services, integrating new products or services into our existing offerings, responding or adapting to changes in consumer behavior, preferences, spending, investing and / or saving habits, achieving market acceptance of our products and services, reducing costs in response to pressures to deliver products and services at lower prices or sufficiently developing and maintaining loyal customers. Development of new products services and technologies may impose additional costs on us and may expose us to increased operational risk. The introduction of new products and services can entail significant time and resources, including regulatory approvals. Substantial risks and uncertainties are associated with the introduction of new products and services, including technical and control requirements that may need to be developed and implemented, rapid technological change in the industry, our ability to access technical and other information from its clients, the significant and ongoing investments required to bring new products and services to market in a timely manner at competitive prices and the preparation of marketing, sales and other materials that fully and accurately describe the product or service and its underlying risks. Our failure to manage these risks and uncertainties also exposes it to enhanced risk of operational lapses which may result in the recognition of financial statement liabilities. Regulatory and internal control requirements, capital requirements, competitive alternatives, vendor relationships and shifting market preferences may also determine if such initiatives can be brought to market in a manner that is timely and attractive to our clients. Products and services relying on internet and mobile technologies may expose us to fraud and cybersecurity risks. Implementation of certain new technologies, such as those related to artificial intelligence, automation and algorithms, may have unintended consequences due to their limitations, potential manipulation, or our failure to use them effectively. Failure to successfully manage these risks in the development and implementation of new products or services could have a material adverse effect on our business and reputation, as well as on its consolidated results of operations and financial condition. If our allowance for credit losses is not sufficient to cover actual loan and lease losses, our earnings may decrease. We periodically make a determination of an allowance for credit losses based on available information, including, but not limited to, the quality of the loan and lease portfolio as indicated by trends in loan risk ratings, payment performance, economic conditions, the value of the underlying collateral and the level of nonaccruing and criticized loans and leases. Management relies on its loan officers and credit quality reviews, its experience and its evaluation of economic conditions, among other factors, in determining the amount of provision required for the allowance for credit losses. Provisions to this allowance result in an expense for the period. If, as a result of general economic conditions, previously incorrect assumptions, or an increase in defaulted loans or leases, we determine that additional increases in the allowance for credit losses are necessary, additional expenses may be incurred. Determining the allowance for credit losses inherently involves a high degree of subjectivity and requires us to make significant estimates of current credit risks and trends, all of which may undergo material changes. We cannot be sure that we will be able to identify deteriorating credits before they become nonperforming assets or that we will be able to limit losses on those loans and leases that are identified. We have in the past been, and in the future may be, required to increase our allowance for credit losses for any of several reasons. State and federal regulators, in reviewing our loan and lease portfolio as part of a regulatory examination, may request that we increase the allowance for credit losses. Changes in economic conditions or individual business or personal circumstances affecting borrowers, new information regarding existing loans and leases, identification of additional problem loans and leases and other factors, both within and outside of our control, may require an increase in the allowance for credit losses. Any increases in the allowance for credit losses may result in a decrease in our net income and, possibly, our capital, and could have an adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. Our loan and lease portfolios include commercial real estate mortgage loans and commercial loans and leases, including equipment leases, which are generally riskier than other types of loans. Our commercial real estate and commercial loan and lease portfolios, including equipment leases, currently comprise 84.71% of total loans and leases. Payments on loans secured by commercial real estate are often dependent on the income produced by the underlying properties which, in turn, depends on the successful operation and management of the properties and the businesses that operate within them. Accordingly, repayment of these loans is subject to conditions in the real estate market or the local economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a **potentially** long-term negative impact on certain commercial real estate assets due to the risk that tenants may reduce the office space they lease

as some portion of the workforce continues to work remotely on a hybrid or full- time basis. Commercial loans and leases generally carry larger balances and involve a higher risk of nonpayment or late payment than residential mortgage loans. Most commercial loans and leases are secured by borrower business assets such as accounts receivable, inventory, equipment and other fixed assets. Compared to real estate, these types of collateral are more difficult to monitor, harder to value, may depreciate more rapidly and may not be as readily saleable if repossessed. Repayment of commercial loans and leases is largely dependent on the business and financial condition of borrowers. Business cash flows are dependent on the demand for the products and services offered by the borrower' s business. Such demand may be reduced when economic conditions are weak or when the products and services offered are viewed as less valuable than those offered by competitors. Because of the risks associated with commercial real estate and commercial loans and leases, including equipment leases, we may experience higher rates of default than if the portfolio were more heavily weighted toward residential mortgage loans. While we seek to minimize these risks in a variety of ways, there can be no assurance that these measures will protect against credit- related losses. Environmental liability associated with our lending activities could result in losses. In the course of business, we may acquire, through foreclosure, properties securing loans originated or purchased that are in default. Particularly in commercial real estate lending, there is a risk that material environmental violations could be discovered on these properties. In this event, we might be required to remedy these violations at the affected properties at our sole cost and expense. The cost of remedial action could substantially exceed the value of affected properties. We may not have adequate remedies against the prior owner or other responsible parties and could find it difficult or impossible to sell the affected properties. These events could have an adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. Our securities portfolio performance in difficult market conditions could have adverse effects on our results of operations. Unrealized losses on investment securities result from changes in credit spreads and liquidity issues in the marketplace, along with changes in the credit profile of individual securities issuers. Under GAAP, we are required to review our investment portfolio periodically for the presence of impairment of our securities, taking into consideration current and future market conditions, the extent and nature of changes in fair value, issuer rating changes and trends, volatility of earnings, current analysts' evaluations, our ability and intent to hold investments until a recovery of fair value, as well as other factors. Adverse developments with respect to one or more of the foregoing factors may require us to deem particular securities to be impaired, with the credit- related portion of the reduction in the value recognized as a charge to our earnings through an allowance. Subsequent valuations, in light of factors prevailing at that time, may result in significant changes in the values of these securities in future periods. Any of these factors could require us to recognize further impairments in the value of our securities portfolio, which may have an adverse effect on our results of operations in future periods. The fair value of our investment securities can fluctuate due to factors outside of our control. Factors beyond our control can significantly influence the fair value of securities in our portfolio and can cause potential adverse changes to the fair value of these securities. These factors include, but are not limited to, rating agency actions with respect to individual securities, defaults by the issuer or with respect to the underlying securities, and changes in market interest rates and continued instability in the capital markets. For example, in 2023, inflation and rapid increases in interest rates led to a decline in the trading value of previously issued government securities with interest rates below current market interest rates. Any of these factors, among others, could cause ~~other than temporary~~ impairments and realized and / or unrealized losses in future periods and declines in other comprehensive income, which could materially and adversely affect our business, results of operations, financial condition and prospects. The process for determining whether ~~impairment of~~ a security is **impaired** ~~other than temporary~~ usually requires complex, subjective judgments about the future financial performance and liquidity of the issuer and any collateral underlying the security in order to assess the probability of receiving all contractual principal and interest payments on the security. Significant negative changes to valuations could result in impairments in the value of our securities portfolio, which could have an adverse effect on our financial condition or results of operations. Potential downgrades of U. S. government securities by one or more of the credit ratings agencies could have a material adverse effect on our operations, earnings and financial condition. A possible future downgrade of the sovereign credit ratings of the U. S. government and a decline in the perceived creditworthiness of U. S. government- related obligations could impact our ability to obtain funding that is collateralized by affected instruments, as well as affect the pricing of that funding when it is available. A downgrade may also adversely affect the market value of such instruments. We cannot predict if, when or how any changes to the credit ratings or perceived creditworthiness of these organizations will affect economic conditions. Such ratings actions could result in a significant adverse impact on us. Among other things, a downgrade in the U. S. government' s credit rating could adversely impact the value of our securities portfolio and may trigger requirements that we post additional collateral for trades relative to these securities. A downgrade of the sovereign credit ratings of the U. S. government or the credit ratings of related institutions, agencies or instruments could significantly exacerbate the other risks to which we are subject and any related adverse effects on the business, financial condition and results of operations. ~~The replacement of LIBOR may adversely affect our business, financial condition and results of operations. LIBOR has been used extensively in the United States as a benchmark for various commercial and financial contracts, including funding sources, adjustable rate mortgages, corporate debt, interest rate swaps and other derivatives. LIBOR was set based on interest rate information reported by certain banks, which stopped reporting such information after June 30, 2023 (although certain U. S. dollar LIBOR settings will continue to be published using a synthetic methodology until September 2024). Other benchmarks may perform differently than LIBOR or may have other consequences that cannot currently be anticipated. The transition from LIBOR to another benchmark rate or rates, such as the Secured Overnight Financing Rate, or "SOFR", could have adverse impacts on our funding costs or net interest margins, as well as any floating- rate obligations, loans, deposits, derivatives, and other financial instruments that currently use LIBOR as a benchmark rate and, ultimately, adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations. We are subject to liquidity risk, which could negatively affect our funding levels. Market conditions or other events could negatively affect our access to or the cost of funding, affecting our ongoing ability to accommodate liability maturities and deposit withdrawals, meet contractual obligations,~~

or fund asset growth and new business initiatives at a reasonable cost, in a timely manner and without adverse consequences. Although we maintain a liquid asset portfolio and have implemented strategies to maintain sufficient and diverse sources of funding to accommodate planned, as well as unanticipated, changes in assets, liabilities, and off-balance sheet commitments under various economic conditions, a substantial, unexpected, or prolonged change in the level or cost of liquidity could have a material adverse effect on us. If the cost effectiveness or the availability of supply in these credit markets is reduced for a prolonged period of time, our funding needs may require us to access funding and manage liquidity by other means. These alternatives may include generating client deposits, securitizing or selling loans, extending the maturity of wholesale borrowings, borrowing under certain secured borrowing arrangements, using relationships developed with a variety of fixed income investors, and further managing loan growth and investment opportunities. These alternative means of funding may result in an increase to the overall cost of funds and may not be available under stressed conditions, which would cause us to liquidate a portion of our liquid asset portfolio to meet any funding needs. Loss of deposits or a change in deposit mix could increase our cost of funding. Deposits are a low cost and stable source of funding. We compete with banks and other financial institutions for deposits. Funding costs may increase if we lose deposits and are forced to replace them with more expensive sources of funding, if clients shift their deposits into higher cost products or if we need to raise interest rates to avoid losing deposits. Higher funding costs reduce our net interest margin, net interest income and net income. Wholesale funding sources may prove insufficient to replace deposits at maturity and support our operations and future growth. We and our banking subsidiaries must maintain sufficient funds to respond to the needs of depositors and borrowers. To manage liquidity, we draw upon a number of funding sources in addition to core deposit growth and repayments and maturities of loans and investments. These sources include Federal Home Loan Bank advances, proceeds from the sale of investments and loans, and liquidity resources at the holding company. Our ability to manage liquidity will be severely constrained if we are unable to maintain access to funding or if adequate financing is not available to accommodate future growth at acceptable costs. In addition, if we are required to rely more heavily on more expensive funding sources to support future growth, our revenues may not increase proportionately to cover our costs. In this case, operating margins and profitability would be adversely affected. Turbulence in the capital and credit markets may adversely affect our liquidity and financial condition and the willingness of certain counterparties and customers to do business with us. Potential deterioration in the performance or financial position of the **Federal Home Loan Bank ("FHLB")** of Boston and New York might restrict our funding needs and may adversely impact our financial condition and results of operations. Significant components of our liquidity needs are met through our access to funding pursuant to our membership in the FHLB. The FHLB is a cooperative that provides services to its member banking institutions. The primary reason for joining the FHLB is to obtain funding. The purchase of stock in the FHLB is a requirement for a member to gain access to funding. Any deterioration in the FHLB's performance or financial condition may affect our ability to access funding and / or require us to deem the required investment in FHLB stock to be impaired. If we are not able to access funding through the FHLB, we may not be able to meet our liquidity needs, which could have an adverse effect on our results of operations or financial condition. Similarly, if we deem all or part of our investment in FHLB stock impaired, such action could have an adverse effect on our financial condition or results of operations. **Adverse developments affecting the financial services industry....., would have their intended effect.** The soundness of other financial institutions could adversely affect us. Our ability to engage in routine funding transactions could be adversely affected by the actions and commercial soundness of other financial institutions. Financial services institutions are interrelated as a result of trading, clearing, counterparty and other relationships. ~~institutions or transactional counterparties, could adversely affect our financial condition and results of operations.~~ Actual events involving limited liquidity, defaults, non-performance or other adverse developments that affect financial institutions, transactional counterparties or other companies in the financial services industry or the financial services industry generally, or concerns or rumors about any events of these kinds or other similar risks, have in the past and may in the future lead to market-wide liquidity problems. **For example, If such events were to occur again in the future and result in the receivership of financial institutions, on May 1, 2023, First Republic Bank went into receivership and there is no guarantee that the systemic risk exception would be invoked to allow the FDIC to complete its resolution deposits and substantially all of its assets were acquired by JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association such financial institutions in a manner that fully protects depositors or counterparties.** Similarly, ~~on~~ **many a number of** different counterparties, and we routinely execute transactions with counterparties in the financial industry, including brokers and dealers, other commercial banks, investment banks, ~~mutual and hedge funds,~~ and other financial institutions. ~~As a result, defaults by, or even rumors or questions about, one or more financial services institutions, or the financial services industry generally, could lead to market-wide liquidity problems and losses or defaults by us or by other institutions and organizations.~~ Many of these transactions expose us to credit risk in the event of default of our counterparty or **client-customer**. In addition, our credit risk may be exacerbated when the collateral held by us cannot be liquidated or is liquidated at prices not sufficient to recover the full amount of the financial instrument exposure due to us. There is no assurance that any such losses would not materially and adversely affect our results of operations. Damage to our reputation could significantly harm our business, including our competitive position and business prospects. We are dependent on our reputation within our market area, as a trusted and responsible financial services company, for all aspects of our business with customers, employees, vendors, third-party service providers, and others, with whom we conduct business or potential future businesses. Negative public opinion about the financial services industry generally (including the types of banking and other services that we provide) or us specifically could adversely affect our reputation and our ability to keep and attract customers and employees. Our actual or perceived failure to address various issues could give rise to negative public opinion and reputational risk that could cause harm to us and our business prospects. These issues include, but are not limited to, legal and regulatory requirements; properly maintaining customer and employee personal information; record keeping; money-laundering; sales and trading practices; ethical issues; appropriately addressing potential conflicts of interest; and the proper identification of the legal, reputational, credit, liquidity

and market risks inherent in our products. Failure to appropriately address any of these issues could also give rise to additional regulatory restrictions and legal risks, which could, among other consequences, increase the size and number of litigation claims and damages asserted or subject us to enforcement actions, fines and penalties and cause us to incur related costs and expenses. The proliferation of social media websites utilized by us and other third parties, as well as the personal use of social media by our employees and others, including personal blogs and social network profiles, also may increase the risk that negative, inappropriate or unauthorized information may be posted or released publicly that could harm our reputation or have other negative consequences, including as a result of our employees interacting with our customers in an unauthorized manner in various social media outlets. Any damage to our reputation could affect our ability to retain and develop the business relationships necessary to conduct business, which in turn could negatively impact our financial condition, results of operations, and the market price of our common stock. We may be unable to attract and retain qualified key employees, which could adversely affect our business prospects, including our competitive position and results of operations. Our success is dependent upon our ability to attract and retain highly skilled individuals. There is significant competition for those individuals with the experience and skills required to conduct many of our business activities. We may not be able to hire or retain the key personnel that we depend upon for success. The unexpected loss of services of one or more of these or other key personnel could have a material adverse impact on our business because of their skills, knowledge of the markets in which we operate, years of industry experience and the difficulty of promptly finding qualified replacement personnel. Frequently, we compete in the market for talent with entities that are not subject to comprehensive regulation, including with respect to the structure of incentive compensation. Our inability to attract new employees and retain and motivate our existing employees could adversely impact our business. Our ability to service our debt and pay dividends is dependent on capital distributions from our subsidiary banks, and these distributions are subject to regulatory limits and other restrictions. We are a legal entity that is separate and distinct from the Banks. Our revenue (on a parent company only basis) is derived primarily from dividends paid to us by the Banks. Our right, and consequently the right of our shareholders, to participate in any distribution of the assets or earnings of the Banks through the payment of such dividends or otherwise is necessarily subject to the prior claims of creditors of the Banks (including depositors), except to the extent that certain claims of ours in a creditor capacity may be recognized. It is possible, depending upon the financial condition of our subsidiary banks and other factors, that applicable regulatory authorities could assert that payment of dividends or other payments is an unsafe or unsound practice. If one or more of our subsidiary banks is unable to pay dividends to us, we may not be able to service our debt or pay dividends on our common stock. Further, our ability to pay dividends on our common stock or service our debt could be restricted if we do not maintain a capital conservation buffer of common equity Tier 1 capital. A reduction or elimination of dividends could adversely affect the market price of our common stock and would adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations and prospects. See Item 1, “ Business-Supervision and Regulation- Dividend Restrictions ” and “ Business- Supervision and Regulation- Capital Adequacy and Safety and Soundness- Regulatory Capital Requirements. ” We face continuing and growing security risks to our information base, including the information we maintain relating to our customers. In the ordinary course of business, we rely on electronic communications and information systems to conduct our business and to store sensitive data, including financial information regarding customers. Our electronic communications and information systems infrastructure, as well as the systems infrastructures of the vendors we use to meet our data processing and communication needs, could be susceptible to cyber-attacks, such as denial of service attacks, hacking, terrorist activities or identity theft. Financial services institutions and companies engaged in data processing have reported breaches in the security of their websites or other systems, some of which have involved sophisticated and targeted attacks intended to obtain unauthorized access to confidential information, destroy data, disable or degrade service or sabotage systems, often through the introduction of computer viruses or malware, cyber- attacks and other means. Denial of service attacks have been launched against a number of large financial services institutions. Hacking and identity theft risks, in particular, could cause serious reputational harm. Cyber threats are rapidly evolving and we may not be able to anticipate or prevent all such attacks. Although to date we have not experienced any material losses relating to cyber-attacks or other information security breaches, there can be no assurance that we will not suffer such losses in the future. No matter how well designed or implemented our controls are, we will not be able to anticipate all security breaches of these types, and we may not be able to implement effective preventive measures against such security breaches in a timely manner. A failure or circumvention of our security systems could have a material adverse effect on our business operations and financial condition. We regularly assess and test our security systems and disaster preparedness, including back- up systems, but the risks are substantially escalating. As a result, cyber- security and the continued enhancement of our controls and processes to protect our systems, data and networks from attacks, unauthorized access or significant damage remain a priority. Accordingly, we may be required to expend additional resources to enhance our protective measures or to investigate and remediate any information security vulnerabilities or exposures. Any breach of our system security could result in disruption of our operations, unauthorized access to confidential customer information, significant regulatory costs, litigation exposure and other possible damages, loss or liability. Such costs or losses could exceed the amount of available insurance coverage, if any, and would adversely affect our earnings. Also, any failure to prevent a security breach or to quickly and effectively deal with such a breach could negatively impact customer confidence, damaging our reputation and undermining our ability to attract and keep customers. We may not be able to successfully implement future information technology system enhancements, which could adversely affect our business operations and profitability. We invest significant resources in information technology system enhancements in order to provide functionality and security at an appropriate level. We may not be able to successfully implement and integrate future system enhancements, which could adversely impact the ability to provide timely and accurate financial information in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, which could result in sanctions from regulatory authorities. Such sanctions could include fines and suspension of trading in our stock, among others. In addition, future system enhancements could have higher than expected costs and / or result in operating inefficiencies, which could increase the costs

associated with the implementation as well as ongoing operations. Failure to properly utilize system enhancements that are implemented in the future could result in impairment charges that adversely impact our financial condition and results of operations and could result in significant costs to remediate or replace the defective components. In addition, we may incur significant training, licensing, maintenance, consulting and amortization expenses during and after systems implementations, and any such costs may continue for an extended period of time. We rely on other companies to provide key components of our business infrastructure. Third party vendors provide key components of our business infrastructure such as internet connections, network access and core application processing. While we have selected these third party vendors carefully, we do not control them or their actions. Any problems caused by these third parties, including as a result of their not providing us their services for any reason or their performing their services poorly, could adversely affect our ability to deliver products and services to our customers or otherwise conduct our business efficiently and effectively. Replacing these third party vendors could also entail significant delay and expense. We may incur significant losses as a result of ineffective risk management processes and strategies. We seek to monitor and control our risk exposure through a risk and control framework encompassing a variety of separate but complementary financial, credit, operational, compliance, and legal reporting systems; internal controls; management review processes; and other mechanisms. **In some cases, management of our risks depends upon the use of analytical and / or forecasting tools and techniques, which, in turn, rely on assumptions and estimates. If these tools and techniques used to mitigate these risks are inadequate, or the assumption or estimates are inaccurate or otherwise flawed, we may fail to adequately protect against risks and may incur losses.** While we believe employ a broad and diversified set of risk monitoring and risk mitigation techniques, those techniques and the judgments that accompany we have adopted appropriate management and compliance programs, compliance risks will continue to exist, particularly as we anticipate and adapt to new and evolving laws, rules and regulations and evolving interpretations by regulatory authorities. **In addition their- there application may be risks that exist, or that develop in the future, that we have not appropriately anticipated, identified or mitigated, which could lead to unexpected losses and our results of operations or financial condition could be materially adversely affected effective and may not anticipate every economic and financial outcome in all market environments or the specifics and timing of such outcomes.** Our internal controls, procedures and policies may fail or be circumvented. Management regularly reviews and updates our internal controls, disclosure controls and procedures, and corporate governance policies and procedures. Any system of controls, however well- designed and operated, is based in part on certain assumptions and can provide only reasonable, not absolute, assurances that the objectives of the system are met. Any failure or circumvention of the controls and procedures or failure to comply with regulations related to controls and procedures could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition. Natural disasters, acts of terrorism, **future** pandemics and other external events could harm our business. Natural disasters can disrupt our operations, result in damage to our properties, reduce or destroy the value of the collateral for our loans and negatively affect the economies in which we operate, which could have a material adverse effect on our results of operations and financial condition. A significant natural disaster, such as a tornado, hurricane, earthquake, fire or flood, could have a material adverse impact on our ability to conduct business, and our insurance coverage may be insufficient to compensate for losses that may occur. Acts of terrorism, war, civil unrest or future pandemics could cause disruptions to our business or the economy as a whole. While we have established and regularly test disaster recovery procedures, the occurrence of any such event could have a material adverse effect on our business, operations and financial condition. Our financial statements are based in part on assumptions and estimates, which, if wrong, could cause unexpected losses in the future. Pursuant to U. S. GAAP, we are required to use certain assumptions and estimates in preparing our financial statements, including in determining loan loss and litigation reserves, goodwill impairment and the fair value of certain assets and liabilities, among other items. If assumptions or estimates underlying our financial statements are incorrect, we may experience material losses. See the " Critical Accounting Policies" section in Item 7, " Management' s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations." Changes in accounting standards can be difficult to predict and can materially impact how we record and report our financial condition and results of operations. Our accounting policies and methods are fundamental to how we record and report our financial condition and results of operations. From time to time, the Financial Accounting Standards Board, or " FASB", changes the financial accounting and reporting principles that govern the preparation of our financial statements. These changes can be hard to anticipate and implement, and can materially impact how we record and report our financial condition and results of operations. In some cases, we could be required to apply a new or revised standard retroactively, resulting in our restating prior period financial statements. Additionally, significant changes to accounting standards may require costly technology changes, additional training and personnel, and other expense that will negatively impact our results of operations. Changes in tax laws and regulations and differences in interpretation of tax laws and regulations may adversely impact our financial statements. From time to time, local, state or federal tax authorities change tax laws and regulations, which may result in a decrease or increase to our net deferred tax assets. Local, state or federal tax authorities may interpret tax laws and regulations differently than we do and challenge tax positions that we have taken on tax returns. This may result in differences in the treatment of revenues, deductions, credits and / or differences in the timing of these items. The differences in treatment may result in payment of additional taxes, interest or penalties that could have a material adverse effect on our results. Future capital offerings may adversely affect the market price of our common stock. In the future, we may attempt to increase our capital resources or, if our banking subsidiaries' capital ratios fall below required minimums, we could be forced to raise additional capital by making additional offerings of debt, common or preferred stock, trust preferred securities, and senior or subordinated notes. Upon liquidation, holders of our debt securities and shares of preferred stock and lenders with respect to other borrowings will receive distributions of our available assets prior to the holders of our common stock. Additional equity offerings may dilute the holdings of our existing stockholders or reduce the market price of our common stock, or both. Because our decision to issue securities in any future offering will depend on market conditions and other factors beyond our control, we cannot predict or

estimate the amount, timing or nature of our future offerings. Moreover, we cannot assure you that such capital will be available to us on acceptable terms or at all. Our inability to raise sufficient additional capital on acceptable terms when needed could adversely affect our businesses, financial condition and results of operations. The market price and trading volume of our common stock may be volatile. The market price of our common stock may be volatile. In addition, the trading volume in our common stock may fluctuate and cause significant price variations to occur. We cannot assure you that the market price of our common stock will not fluctuate or decline significantly in the future. Some of the factors that could negatively affect our share price or result in fluctuations in the price or trading volume of our common stock include: • quarterly variations in our operating results or the quality of our assets; • operating results that vary from the expectations of management, securities analysts and investors; • changes in expectations as to our future financial performance; • announcements of innovations, new products, strategic developments, significant contracts, acquisitions and other material events by us or our competitors; • the operating and securities price performance of other companies that investors believe are comparable to us; • our past and future dividend practices; • future sales of our equity or equity- related securities; and • changes in global financial markets and global economies and general market conditions, such as interest rates, stock, commodity or real estate valuations or volatility. ~~Anti-takeover provisions could negatively impact our stockholders. Provisions of Delaware law and provisions of our certificate of incorporation and by-laws could make it more difficult for a third party to acquire control of us or have the effect of discouraging a third party from attempting to acquire control of us, even if a merge might be in the best interest of our stockholders. Our articles of organization authorize our Board of Directors to issue preferred stock without stockholder approval and such preferred stock could be issued as a defensive measure in response to a takeover proposal. These and other provisions could make it more difficult for a third party to acquire us. If we acquire or seek to acquire other companies, our business may be negatively impacted by certain risks inherent with such acquisitions. We have acquired and will continue to consider the acquisition of other financial services companies. To the extent that we acquire other companies in the future, our business may be negatively impacted by certain risks inherent with such acquisitions. Some of these risks include the following: • We may incur substantial expenses in pursuing potential acquisitions; • Management may divert its attention from other aspects of our business; • We may assume potential and unknown liabilities of the acquired company as a result of an acquisition; • The acquired business will not perform in accordance with management's expectations, including because we may lose key clients or employees of the acquired business as a result of the change in ownership; • Difficulties may arise in connection with the integration of the operations of the acquired business with the operations of our businesses; and • We may lose key employees of the combined business.~~ We may be required to write down goodwill and other acquisition- related identifiable intangible assets. When we acquire a business, a portion of the purchase price of the acquisition may be allocated to goodwill and other identifiable intangible assets. The excess of the purchase price over the fair value of the net identifiable tangible and intangible assets acquired determines the amount of the purchase price that is allocated to goodwill acquired. As of December 31, 2023-2024, goodwill and other identifiable intangible assets were \$ 265-258.4-7 million. Under current accounting guidance, if we determine that goodwill or intangible assets are impaired, we would be required to write down the value of these assets. We conduct an annual review to determine whether goodwill and other identifiable intangible assets are impaired. We conduct a quarterly review for indicators of impairment of goodwill and other identifiable intangible assets. Our management recently completed these reviews and concluded that no impairment charge was necessary for the year ended December 31, 2023-2024. We cannot provide assurance whether we will be required to take an impairment charge in the future. Any impairment charge would have a negative effect on stockholders' equity and financial results and may cause a decline in our stock price. ~~Attractive acquisition opportunities may not be available to us in the future, which could limit the growth of our business. We may not be able to sustain a positive rate of growth or expand our business. We expect that other banking and financial service companies, many of which have significantly greater resources than us, will compete with us in acquiring other financial institutions if we pursue such acquisitions. This competition could increase prices for potential acquisitions that we believe are attractive. Also, acquisitions are subject to various regulatory approvals. If we fail to receive the appropriate regulatory approvals for a transaction, we will not be able to consummate such transaction which we believe to be in our best interests. Among other things, our regulators consider our capital, liquidity, profitability, regulatory compliance and levels of goodwill and intangibles when considering acquisition and expansion proposals. Other factors, such as economic conditions and legislative considerations, may also impede or prohibit our ability to expand our market presence. If we are not able to successfully grow our business, our financial condition and results of operations could be adversely affected.~~

RISKS RELATED TO OUR REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT We operate in a highly regulated industry, and laws and regulations, or changes in them, could limit or restrict our activities and could have a material adverse effect on our operations. We and our banking subsidiaries are subject to extensive state and federal regulation and supervision. Federal and state laws and regulations govern numerous matters affecting us, including changes in the ownership or control of banks and bank holding companies, maintenance of adequate capital and the financial condition of a financial institution, permissible types, amounts and terms of extensions of credit and investments, permissible non- banking activities, the level of reserves against deposits and restrictions on dividend payments. The FRB and the state banking regulators have the power to issue cease and desist orders to prevent or remedy unsafe or unsound practices or violations of law by banks subject to their regulation, and the FRB possesses similar powers with respect to bank holding companies. **Further, we expect to become subject to future laws, rules and regulations beyond those currently proposed, adopted or contemplated in the U. S., as well as evolving interpretations of existing and future laws, rules and regulations.** These and other restrictions limit the manner in which we and our banking subsidiaries may conduct business and obtain financing. The laws, rules, regulations, and supervisory guidance and policies applicable to us are subject to regular modification and change. ~~Such~~ **These** changes could, among other things, subject us to additional costs, including costs of compliance; limit the types of financial services and products we may offer; and / or increase the ability of non- banks to offer competing financial services and products. Failure to comply with laws, regulations, policies, or supervisory guidance could

result in enforcement and other legal actions by federal or state authorities, including criminal and civil penalties, the loss of FDIC insurance, revocation of a banking charter, other sanctions by regulatory agencies, civil money penalties, and / or reputational damage, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, and results of operations. See the "Supervision and Regulation" section of Item 1, "Business." We are subject to numerous laws designed to protect consumers, including the Community Reinvestment Act and fair lending laws, and failure to comply with these laws could lead to a wide variety of sanctions. The CRA, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Fair Housing Act, and other fair lending laws and regulations impose community investment and nondiscriminatory lending requirements on financial institutions. The CFPB, the Department of Justice and other federal agencies are responsible for enforcing these laws and regulations. A successful regulatory challenge to an institution's performance under the CRA, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Fair Housing Act or other fair lending laws and regulations could result in a wide variety of sanctions, including damages and civil money penalties, injunctive relief, restrictions on mergers and acquisitions, restrictions on expansion and restrictions on entering new business lines. Private parties may also have the ability to challenge an institution's performance under fair lending laws in private class action litigation. Such actions could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We may become subject to enforcement actions even though noncompliance was inadvertent or unintentional. The financial services industry is subject to intense scrutiny from bank supervisors in the examination process and aggressive enforcement of federal and state regulations, particularly with respect to mortgage-related practices and other consumer compliance matters, and compliance with anti-money laundering, BSA and OFAC regulations, and economic sanctions against certain foreign countries and nationals. Enforcement actions may be initiated for violations of laws and regulations and unsafe or unsound practices. We maintain systems and procedures designed to ensure that we comply with applicable laws and regulations; however, some legal / regulatory frameworks provide for the imposition of fines or penalties for noncompliance even though the noncompliance was inadvertent or unintentional and even though there was in place at the time systems and procedures designed to ensure compliance. Failure to comply with these and other regulations, and supervisory expectations related thereto, may result in fines, penalties, lawsuits, regulatory sanctions, reputation damage, or restrictions on our business. We face significant legal risks, both from regulatory investigations and proceedings and from private actions brought against us. As a participant in the financial services industry, many aspects of our business involve substantial risk of legal liability. From time to time, customers and others make claims and take legal action pertaining to the performance of our responsibilities. Whether customer claims and legal action related to the performance of our responsibilities are founded or unfounded, if such claims and legal actions are not resolved in a manner favorable to us, they may result in significant expenses, attention from management and financial liability. Any financial liability or reputational damage could have a material adverse effect on our business, which, in turn, could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations. There is no assurance that litigation with private parties will not increase in the future. Actions currently pending against us may result in judgments, settlements, fines, penalties or other results adverse to us, which could materially adversely affect our business, financial condition or results of operations, or cause serious reputational harm to us. The FRB may require us to commit capital resources to support the Banks. Federal law requires that a holding company act as a source of financial and managerial strength to its subsidiary bank and to commit resources to support such subsidiary bank. Under the "source of strength" doctrine, the FRB may require a holding company to make capital injections into a troubled subsidiary bank and may charge the holding company with engaging in unsafe and unsound practices for failure to commit resources to a subsidiary bank. A capital injection may be required at times when the holding company may not have the resources to provide it and therefore may require the holding company to borrow the funds or raise capital. Any loans by a holding company to its subsidiary bank are subordinate in right of payment to deposits and to certain other indebtedness of such subsidiary bank. In the event of a holding company's bankruptcy, the bankruptcy trustee will assume any commitment by the holding company to a federal bank regulatory agency to maintain the capital of a subsidiary bank. Moreover, bankruptcy law provides that claims based on any such commitment will be entitled to a priority of payment over the claims of the institution's general unsecured creditors, including the holders of its note obligations. Thus, any borrowing that must be done by us to make a required capital injection becomes more difficult and expensive and could have an adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. We are subject to stringent capital requirements which may adversely impact return on equity, require additional capital raises, or limit the ability to pay dividends or repurchase shares. Federal regulations establish minimum capital requirements for insured depository institutions, including minimum risk-based capital and leverage ratios, and define "capital" for calculating these ratios. The minimum capital requirements are: (i) a common equity Tier 1 capital ratio of 4.5%; (ii) a Tier 1 to risk-based assets capital ratio of 6%; (iii) a total capital ratio of 8%; and (iv) a Tier 1 leverage ratio of 4%. The regulations also establish a "capital conservation buffer" of 2.5%, which if complied will result in the following minimum ratios: (i) a common equity Tier 1 capital ratio of 7.0%; (ii) a Tier 1 to risk-based assets capital ratio of 8.5%; and (iii) a total capital ratio of 10.5%. An institution will be subject to limitations on paying dividends, engaging in share repurchases and paying discretionary bonuses if its capital level falls below the capital conservation buffer amount. The application of these capital requirements could, among other things, require us to maintain higher capital resulting in lower returns on equity, and we may be required to obtain additional capital to comply or result in regulatory actions if we are unable to comply with such requirements. See Item 1, "Business- Supervision and Regulation- Capital Adequacy and Safety and Soundness- Regulatory Capital Requirements."

RISKS RELATED TO OUR PROPOSED MERGER WITH BERKSHIRE The need for regulatory approvals may delay the date of completion of the Merger or may diminish the benefits of the Merger. Approvals of certain regulatory agencies are required before completing the Merger. Satisfying any requirements of these regulatory agencies may delay the date of completion of the Merger. The requisite regulatory approvals may not be received at all (in which case the Merger could not be completed), may not be received in a timely fashion, or may contain conditions or restrictions on completion of the Merger that cannot be satisfied. In addition, any conditions or restrictions imposed could have the effect of imposing

additional costs on or limiting the revenues of the combined company following the Merger, which might have an adverse effect on the combined company following the Merger. Further, it is possible that, among other things, restrictions on the combined operations of the two companies, including divestitures, may be sought by governmental agencies as a condition to obtaining the required regulatory approvals. This may diminish the benefits of the Merger to the combined company or otherwise have an adverse effect on the combined company following the Merger. Litigation against us, or the members of our board of directors, could prevent or delay the completion of the Merger. Our stockholders may file lawsuits against the Company and / or our board of directors in connection with the Merger. Such legal proceedings could delay or prevent the Merger from being completed in a timely manner. The existence of litigation related to the Merger could affect the likelihood of obtaining the required regulatory and stockholders approvals. Moreover, any litigation could be time- consuming and expensive and could divert our management' s attention away from their regular business and their focus on a successful integration of the two companies. Any lawsuit adversely resolved against the Company or members of our board of directors could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations. Moreover, one of the conditions to the completion of the Merger is the absence of any restraining order, injunction or decree issued by a court of competent jurisdiction or other legal restraint or prohibition preventing the consummation of the Merger, and that no governmental authority or regulatory authority of competent jurisdiction shall have enacted, promulgated or enforced any statute, rule, regulation, judgment, decree, injunction or other order prohibiting consummation of the transactions contemplated by the Merger Agreement or making the Merger illegal. Consequently, if a settlement or other resolution is not reached in any lawsuit that is filed or any regulatory proceeding and a claimant secures injunctive or other relief or a governmental authority issues an order or other directive restricting, prohibiting or making illegal the consummation of the transactions contemplated by the Merger Agreement (including the Merger), then such injunctive or other relief may prevent the Merger from becoming effective in a timely manner or at all. We will be subject to business uncertainties and contractual restrictions while the Merger is pending. Uncertainty about the effect of the Merger on employees and customers may have an adverse effect on the Company. These uncertainties may impair our ability to attract, retain and motivate key personnel until the Merger is completed, and could cause customers and others who deal with the Company to seek to change existing business relationships with us. In addition, the Merger Agreement requires that we conduct our business in the ordinary course of business consistent with past practice and restricts us from taking certain actions prior to the effective time or termination of the Merger Agreement without Berkshire' s consent in writing. These restrictions may prevent us from pursuing attractive business opportunities that may arise prior to the completion of the Merger. The announcement of the proposed Merger could disrupt our relationships with our customers, suppliers, business partners and others, as well as their operating results and businesses generally. Whether or not the Merger is ultimately consummated, as a result of uncertainty related to the Merger, risks relating to the impact of the announcement of the merger on our business includes the following: • our employees may experience uncertainty about their future roles, which might adversely affect our ability to retain and hire key personnel and other employees; • customers, suppliers, business partners and other parties with which we maintain business relationships may experience uncertainty about their respective futures and seek alternative relationships with third parties, seek to alter their business relationships with us or fail to extend an existing relationship with us; and • We have expended and will continue to expend significant costs, fees and expenses for professional services and transaction costs in connection with the proposed Merger. If any of the aforementioned risks were to materialize, they could lead to significant costs which may impact each party' s results of operations and financial condition. The Merger Agreement limits our ability to pursue alternatives to the Merger and may discourage other companies from trying to acquire us. The Merger Agreement contains “ no shop ” covenants that restrict our ability to, directly or indirectly, among other things initiate, solicit, knowingly encourage or knowingly facilitate, inquiries or proposals with respect to, or, subject to certain exceptions generally related to the exercise of fiduciary duties by our board of directors, engage in any negotiations concerning, or provide any confidential or non- public information or data relating to, any alternative acquisition proposals. These provisions, which include a \$ 45. 0 million termination fee payable under certain circumstances, may discourage a potential third- party acquirer that might have an interest in acquiring all or a significant part of the Company from considering or making that acquisition proposal. If the Merger Agreement is terminated in certain circumstances, a termination fee of \$ 45. 0 million will be payable by either Company or Berkshire, as applicable. The combined company will incur significant transaction and merger- related costs in connection with the Merger. We and Berkshire will incur costs to combine the operations of the two companies. We and Berkshire are collecting information to formulate detailed integration plans to deliver planned synergies. Additional unanticipated costs may be incurred in the integration of our business and Berkshire' s business. Whether or not the Merger is consummated, we will incur substantial expenses, such as legal, accounting, printing and financial advisory fees, in pursuing the Merger. Although we expect that the elimination of duplicative costs, as well as the realization of other efficiencies related to the integration of the businesses, may offset incremental transactions and merger- related costs over time, this net benefit may not be achieved in the near term, or at all. If the Merger is not completed, we will have incurred substantial expenses without our stockholders realizing the expected benefits of the Merger. We have incurred and will incur further substantial expenses in connection with the Merger, which are charged to earnings as incurred. These costs include legal, financial advisory, accounting, consulting and other advisory fees, severance / employee benefit- related costs, public company filing fees and other regulatory fees, financial printing and other printing costs and other related costs. If the Merger is not completed, these expenses will still be charged to earnings even though we would not have realized the expected benefits of the Merger. There can be no assurance that the Merger will be completed. The Company and Berkshire may not be able to successfully integrate the two companies or to realize

the anticipated benefits of the Merger. The Merger involves the combination of two companies that previously have operated independently. A successful combination of the operations of the two entities will depend substantially on our ability to consolidate cultures, personnel, operations, systems and procedures and to eliminate redundancies and reduce costs of the combined operations. The combined company may not be able to combine our operations with the operations of Berkshire without encountering difficulties, such as: • the loss of key employees and customers; • the disruption of operations and business; • the inability to maintain and increase competitive presence; • those associated with entering a new geographic market; • deposit attrition, customer loss and revenue loss; • possible inconsistencies in standards, control procedures and policies; • unexpected problems with costs, operations, personnel, technology and credit; and / or • problems with the assimilation of new operations, sites or personnel, which could divert resources from regular banking operations. Additionally, general market and economic conditions or governmental actions affecting the financial industry generally may inhibit the successful integration of the two companies. We entered into the Merger Agreement with the expectation that the Merger will result in various benefits including, among other things, enhanced revenues, a strengthened market position for the combined company, cross selling opportunities, improved technology, cost savings and operating efficiencies. Achieving the anticipated benefits of the Merger is subject to a number of uncertainties, including whether the Company and Berkshire integrate in an efficient and effective manner, and general competitive factors in the marketplace. Failure to achieve these anticipated benefits could result in increased costs, decreases in the amount of expected revenues and diversion of management's time and energy and could materially adversely impact our business, financial condition and operating results. Finally, any cost savings that are realized may be offset by losses in revenues or other charges to earnings. The Merger Agreement may be terminated in accordance with its terms, and the Merger may not be completed. The Merger Agreement is subject to a number of conditions that must be fulfilled to complete the Merger. Those conditions include, among others, certain regulatory and stockholder approvals, the absence of orders prohibiting the completion of the Merger, the effectiveness of a registration statement to be filed by Berkshire, which will include a joint proxy statement / prospectus, the continued accuracy of the representations and warranties by both parties, the performance by both parties of their covenants and agreements, and the receipt by both parties of legal opinions from their respective tax counsels. Any of these conditions to closing of the Merger may not be fulfilled, and as a result the Merger may not be completed. The future results of the combined company following the Merger may suffer if the combined company does not effectively manage its expanded operations. Following the Merger, the size of the business of the combined company will increase beyond the current size of either the Company's or Berkshire's business. The combined company's future success will depend, in part, upon its ability to manage this expanded business, which may pose challenges for management, including challenges related to the management and monitoring of new operations and associated increased costs and complexity. The combined company may also face increased scrutiny from governmental authorities as a result of the increased size of its business. There can be no assurances that the combined company will be successful or that it will realize the expected operating efficiencies, revenue enhancement or other benefits currently anticipated from the Merger. The results of operations of the combined company and the market price of the combined company's common stock after the completion of the Merger may be affected by factors different from those currently affecting the independent results of operations of each of the Company and Berkshire. In addition, the issuance of shares of the Company's common stock in the Merger could depress the market price for the combined company's common stock. For example, some of our stockholders may decide not to hold the shares of the combined company's common stock they receive as a result of the Merger. Other Company stockholders, such as funds with limitations on their permitted holdings of stock in individual issuers, may be required to sell the shares of the combined company's common stock they receive as a result of the Merger. Any such sales of the combined company's common stock could depress the market price for the combined company's common stock. Current holders of the our common stock will have a significantly reduced ownership and voting interest in the combined company after the Merger and will therefore have less voting influence over the combined company. In the Merger, each of our stockholders will become a holder of common stock of the combined company. Upon completion of the Merger, we estimate that the Company's stockholders will collectively own approximately 45 % and Berkshire's stockholders as of immediately before the Merger will own approximately 51 % of the outstanding shares of common stock of the combined company (in each case, on an as-converted and fully diluted basis and without regard to the fact that immediately before the Merger, certain holders may own both Company and Berkshire stock), and investors in new shares from Berkshire's private placement will own approximately 4 % of the outstanding shares of the combined company. As a result, the Company's current stockholders will have less voting influence on the combined company and may have less influence on its management and policies than they now have over the Company. Because the market price of Berkshire's common stock may fluctuate, our stockholders cannot be certain of the precise value of the merger consideration they may receive in our proposed Merger with Berkshire. At the time the Merger is completed, each issued and outstanding share of our common stock will be converted into the right to receive a combination of 0.42 shares of Berkshire's common stock. There will be a time lapse between each of the date of the proxy statement / prospectus for the special stockholders' meetings to approve the Merger Agreement and the issuance of the merger consideration, the date on which our and Berkshire's stockholders vote to approve the Merger Agreement (with regard to the Company) and the issuance of the merger consideration (with regard to Berkshire), and the date on which our stockholders entitled to receive shares of Berkshire's common stock actually receive such shares. The market value of Berkshire's common stock may fluctuate during these periods as a result of a variety of factors, including general market and economic conditions, changes in Berkshire's and our businesses, operations and prospects, the volatility in the prices of securities in global financial markets and regulatory considerations. Many of these factors are outside of both our and Berkshire's

control. The actual value of the shares of Berkshire' s common stock received by our stockholders will depend on the market value of shares of Berkshire' s common stock at the time the Merger is completed.