

Hilltop Holdings Inc.
Form 10-K
February 15, 2018
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UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended: December 31, 2017

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission file number: 1-31987

Hilltop Holdings Inc.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Maryland
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

84-1477939
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

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2323 Victory Avenue, Suite 1400
Dallas, TX 75219
(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)

(214) 855-2177

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common Stock, par value \$0.01 per share	New York Stock Exchange

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act.
Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Website, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (§229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company or an emerging growth company. See the definitions of “large accelerated filer,” “accelerated filer,” “smaller reporting company” and “emerging growth company” in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer		Accelerated filer
Non-accelerated filer	(Do not check if a smaller reporting company)	Smaller reporting company
		Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No

Aggregate market value of the voting and non-voting common equity held by non-affiliates, computed by reference to the price at which the common stock was last sold on the New York Stock Exchange on June 30, 2017, was approximately \$1.95 billion. For the purposes of this computation, all officers, directors and 10% stockholders are considered affiliates. The number of shares of the registrant’s common stock outstanding at February 15, 2018 was 95,987,840.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

The Registrant’s definitive Proxy Statement pertaining to the 2018 Annual Meeting of Stockholders, filed or to be filed not later than 120 days after the end of the fiscal year pursuant to Regulation 14A, is incorporated herein by reference into Part III.

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MARKET AND INDUSTRY DATA AND FORECASTS

Market and industry data and other statistical information and forecasts used throughout this Annual Report on Form 10-K (this “Annual Report”) are based on independent industry publications, government publications and reports by market research firms or other published independent sources. We have not sought or obtained the approval or endorsement of the use of this third party information. Some data also is based on our good faith estimates, which are derived from our review of internal surveys, as well as independent sources. Forecasts are particularly likely to be inaccurate, especially over long periods of time.

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Unless the context otherwise indicates, all references in this Annual Report to the “Company,” “we,” “us,” “our” or “ours” or similar words are to Hilltop Holdings Inc. and its direct and indirect wholly owned subsidiaries, references to “Hilltop” refer solely to Hilltop Holdings Inc., references to “PCC” refer to PlainsCapital Corporation (a wholly owned subsidiary of Hilltop), references to “Securities Holdings” refer to Hilltop Securities Holdings LLC (a wholly owned subsidiary of Hilltop), references to “Hilltop Securities” refer to Hilltop Securities Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Securities Holdings), references to “HTS Independent Network” refer to Hilltop Securities Independent Network Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Securities Holdings), references to the “Bank” refer to PlainsCapital Bank (a wholly owned subsidiary of PCC), references to “FNB” refer to First National Bank, references to “SWS” refer to the former SWS Group, Inc., references to “First Southwest” refer to First Southwest Holdings, LLC (a wholly owned subsidiary of Securities Holdings) and its subsidiaries as a whole, references to “FSC” refer to First Southwest Company, LLC (a former wholly owned subsidiary of First Southwest), references to “PrimeLending” refer to PrimeLending, a PlainsCapital Company (a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bank) and its subsidiaries as a whole, references to “NLC” refer to National Lloyds Corporation (a wholly owned subsidiary of Hilltop) and its subsidiaries as a whole, references to “NLIC” refer to National Lloyds Insurance Company (a wholly owned subsidiary of NLC) and references to “ASIC” refer to American Summit Insurance Company (a wholly owned subsidiary of NLC).

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This Annual Report and the documents incorporated by reference into this report include “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “Exchange Act”), as amended by the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. All statements, other than statements of historical fact, included in this Annual Report that address results or developments that we expect or anticipate will or may occur in the future, and statements that are preceded by, followed by or include, words such as “anticipates,” “believes,” “could,” “estimates,” “expects,” “forecasts,” “goal,” “intends,” “might,” “plan,” “probable,” “projects,” “seeks,” “should,” “target,” “view” or “would” or the negative of these words and phrases or similar words or phrases, including such things as our business strategy, our financial condition, our efforts to make strategic acquisitions, our revenue, our liquidity and sources of funding, market trends, operations and business, capital levels, mortgage servicing rights (“MSR”) assets, stock repurchases, dividend payments, expectations concerning mortgage loan origination volume and interest rate compression, expected losses on covered loans and related reimbursements from or to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (“FDIC”), anticipated amortization of the value of the receivable under our loss-share agreements with the FDIC (“FDIC Indemnification Asset”), expected levels of refinancing as a percentage of total loan origination volume, projected losses on mortgage loans originated, loss estimates related to natural disasters, anticipated changes in our revenues or earnings, taxes, the effects of government regulation applicable to our operations, the appropriateness of our allowance for loan losses and provision for loan losses, anticipated investment yields, our expectations regarding accretion of discount on loans in future periods, the collectability of loans and the outcome of litigation are forward-looking statements.

These forward-looking statements are based on our beliefs, assumptions and expectations of our future performance taking into account all information currently available to us. These beliefs, assumptions and expectations are subject to risks and uncertainties and can change as a result of many possible events or factors, not all of which are known to us. If an event occurs, our business, business plan, financial condition, liquidity and results of operations may vary materially from those expressed in our forward-looking statements. Certain factors that could cause actual results to differ include, among others:

the credit risks of lending activities, including our ability to estimate loan losses as well as the effects of changes in the level of, and trends in, loan delinquencies and write-offs;

changes in general economic, market and business conditions in areas or markets where we compete, including changes in the price of crude oil;

changes in the interest rate environment;

· risks associated with our concentration in real estate related loans;
risks associated with merger and acquisition integration;

severe catastrophic events in Texas and other areas of the southern United States;

effectiveness of our data security controls in the face of cyber attacks;

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- the effects of our indebtedness on our ability to manage our business successfully, including the restrictions imposed by the indenture governing our indebtedness;
- cost and availability of capital;
- changes in state and federal laws, regulations or policies affecting one or more of our business segments, including changes in regulatory fees, deposit insurance premiums, capital requirements and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (the “Dodd-Frank Act”);

changes in key management;

competition in our banking, broker-dealer, mortgage origination and insurance segments from other banks and financial institutions as well as investment banking and financial advisory firms, mortgage bankers, asset-based non-bank lenders, government agencies and insurance companies;

legal and regulatory proceedings;

our obligations under loss-share agreements with the FDIC, including the possibility that we may be required to make a “true-up” payment to the FDIC;

failure of our insurance segment reinsurers to pay obligations under reinsurance contracts; and

our ability to use excess cash in an effective manner.

For a more detailed discussion of these and other factors that may affect our business and that could cause the actual results to differ materially from those anticipated in these forward-looking statements, see Item 1A, “Risk Factors,” and Item 7, “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations,” herein.

We caution that the foregoing list of factors is not exhaustive, and new factors may emerge, or changes to the foregoing factors may occur, that could impact our business. All subsequent written and oral forward-looking statements concerning our business attributable to us or any person acting on our behalf are expressly qualified in their entirety by the cautionary statements above. We do not undertake any obligation to update any forward-looking statement, whether written or oral, relating to the matters discussed in this Annual Report except to the extent required by federal securities laws.

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PART I

Item 1. Business.

General

Hilltop Holdings Inc. is a diversified, Texas-based financial holding company registered under the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956, as amended (the “Bank Holding Company Act”). Our primary line of business is to provide business and consumer banking services from offices located throughout Texas through the Bank. We also provide an array of financial products and services through our broker-dealer, mortgage origination and insurance segments. We endeavor to build and maintain a strong financial services company through organic growth as well as acquisitions, which we may make using available cash, excess liquidity and, if necessary or appropriate, additional equity or debt financing sources.

Following our acquisition of PlainsCapital Corporation in November 2012 (the “PlainsCapital Merger”), we further expanded our operations through our assumption of substantially all of the liabilities and acquisition of substantially all of the assets of FNB, including former FNB branches, in an FDIC-assisted transaction on September 13, 2013 (the “FNB Transaction”) and our acquisition by merger of SWS for stock and cash consideration on January 1, 2015 (the “SWS Merger”). As a result of the SWS Merger, SWS’s broker-dealer subsidiaries, including Hilltop Securities, became subsidiaries of Securities Holdings, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hilltop, and SWS’s banking subsidiary was merged into the Bank.

On January 22, 2016, we merged FSC and Hilltop Securities into a combined firm operating under the “Hilltop Securities” name. We use the term “Hilltop Broker-Dealers” to refer to FSC, Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network prior to such date and Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network after such date.

The following includes additional details regarding the financial products and services provided by each of our primary business units.

PCC. PCC is a financial holding company that provides, through its subsidiaries, traditional banking and wealth, investment and treasury management services primarily in Texas and residential mortgage loans throughout the United States.

Securities Holdings. Securities Holdings is a holding company that provides, through its subsidiaries, investment banking and other related financial services, including municipal advisory, sales, trading and underwriting of taxable and tax-exempt fixed income securities, equity trading, clearing, securities lending, structured finance and retail brokerage services throughout the United States.

NLC. NLC is a property and casualty insurance holding company that provides, through its subsidiaries, fire and homeowners insurance to low value dwellings and manufactured homes primarily in Texas and other areas of the southern United States.

At December 31, 2017, on a consolidated basis, we had total assets of \$13.4 billion, total deposits of \$8.0 billion, total loans, including loans held for sale, of \$8.1 billion and stockholders' equity of \$1.9 billion.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE") under the symbol "HTH."

Our principal office is located at 2323 Victory Avenue, Suite 1400, Dallas, Texas 75219, and our telephone number at that location is (214) 855-2177. Our internet address is www.hilltop-holdings.com. Our Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Current Reports on Form 8-K and amendments to those reports filed or furnished pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Exchange Act are available on our website at <http://ir.hilltop-holdings.com/> under the tab "SEC Filings" as soon as reasonably practicable after we electronically file such reports with, or furnish them to, the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"). The references to our website in this Annual Report are inactive textual references only. The information on our website is not incorporated by reference into this Annual Report.

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Organizational Structure

Our organizational structure is comprised of three primary business units: PCC (banking and mortgage origination); Securities Holdings (broker-dealer); and NLC (insurance). The following provides additional details regarding our current organizational structure.

Geographic Dispersion of our Businesses

The Bank provides traditional banking and wealth, investment and treasury management services. The Bank has a presence in every major market in Texas and conducts substantially all of its banking operations in Texas.

Our broker-dealer services are provided through Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network, which conduct business nationwide. Public finance financial advisory net revenues represented 21% of total net broker-dealer revenues during 2017, and 74% of such public finance financial advisory revenues were from entities located in Texas. Additionally, retail brokerage service net revenues represented 25% of total broker-dealer net revenues during 2017, and 90% of such retail brokerage service revenues were generated through locations in Texas, California and Oklahoma.

PrimeLending provides residential mortgage origination products and services from over 330 locations in 45 states. During 2017, an aggregate of 64.2% of PrimeLending's origination volume was concentrated in ten states. None of the other states in which PrimeLending operated during 2017 had origination volume of 3% or more.

The following table is a summary of the mortgage loan origination volume by state for the periods shown (dollars in thousands).

	Year Ended December 31, 2017		2016		2015			
	Volume	% of Total	Volume	% of Total	Volume	% of Total		
Texas	\$ 3,129,008	21.6 %	\$ 3,352,469	21.7 %	\$ 2,967,740	22.2 %		
California	1,846,172	12.8 %	2,235,915	14.4 %	1,965,039	14.7 %		

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Florida	853,727	5.9	%	797,578	5.2	%	644,090	4.8	%
Ohio	634,142	4.4	%	637,435	4.1	%	555,106	4.2	%
Arizona	554,463	3.8	%	527,055	3.4	%	415,215	3.1	%
South Carolina	472,935	3.3	%	446,221	2.9	%	385,347	2.9	%
Washington	465,501	3.2	%	538,857	3.5	%	451,277	3.4	%
Missouri	448,565	3.1	%	441,125	2.9	%	379,621	2.8	%
North Carolina	440,456	3.1	%	512,087	3.3	%	492,879	3.7	%
Maryland	430,668	3.0	%	521,686	3.4	%	452,280	3.4	%
All other states	5,182,276	35.8	%	5,449,785	35.2	%	4,643,525	34.8	%
	\$ 14,457,913	100.0	%	\$ 15,460,213	100.0	%	\$ 13,352,119	100.0	%

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Our insurance products are distributed through a broad network of independent agents. During 2017, total gross written premiums were concentrated in five states, with Texas insureds representing 68.8% of the aggregate. None of the other states in which we operated during 2017 had gross written premiums of 3% or more. The following table sets forth our total gross written premiums by state for the periods shown (dollars in thousands).

	Year Ended December 31,					
	2017		2016		2015	
	Gross		Gross		Gross	
	Written	% of	Written	% of	Written	% of
	Premiums	Total	Premiums	Total	Premiums	Total
Texas	\$ 102,629	68.8 %	\$ 115,108	70.1 %	\$ 125,264	70.5 %
Arizona	16,389	11.0 %	16,714	10.2 %	17,117	9.6 %
Tennessee	9,201	6.2 %	9,823	6.0 %	10,575	5.9 %
Oklahoma	8,853	5.9 %	10,258	6.2 %	11,660	6.6 %
Georgia	5,070	3.4 %	5,434	3.3 %	6,050	3.4 %
All other states	7,098	4.7 %	6,971	4.2 %	7,072	4.0 %
Total	\$ 149,240	100.0 %	\$ 164,308	100.0 %	\$ 177,738	100.0 %

Business Segments

Under accounting principles generally accepted in the United States (“GAAP”), our three business units are comprised of four reportable business segments organized primarily by the core products offered to the segments’ respective customers: banking, broker-dealer, mortgage origination and insurance. These segments reflect the manner in which operations are managed and the criteria used by our chief operating decision maker function to evaluate segment performance, develop strategy and allocate resources. Our chief operating decision maker function consists of our President and Co-Chief Executive Officer and our Vice Chairman and Co-Chief Executive Officer.

Corporate includes certain activities not allocated to specific business segments. These activities include holding company financing and investing activities, merchant banking investment opportunities, and management and administrative services to support the overall operations of the Company including, but not limited to, certain executive management, corporate relations, legal, finance, and acquisition costs. Hilltop’s merchant banking investment activities include the identification of attractive opportunities for capital deployment in companies engaged in non-financial activities through its increasingly active merchant bank subsidiary, PlainsCapital Equity, LLC.

For more financial information about each of our business segments, see Item 7, “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations,” herein. See also Note 30 in the notes to our consolidated financial statements included under Item 8, “Financial Statements and Supplementary Data.”

Banking

The banking segment includes the operations of the Bank, which, at December 31, 2017, had \$9.6 billion in assets and total deposits of \$7.6 billion. The primary sources of our deposits are residents and businesses located in Texas. At December 31, 2017, the Bank employed approximately 1,200 people.

Business Banking. Our business banking customers primarily consist of agribusiness, energy, health care, institutions of higher education, real estate (including construction and land development) and wholesale/retail trade companies. We provide these customers with extensive banking services, such as Internet banking, business check cards and other add-on services as determined on a customer-by-customer basis. Our treasury management services, which are designed to reduce the time, burden and expense of collecting, transferring, disbursing and reporting cash, are also available to our business customers. We offer our business banking customers lines of credit, equipment loans and leases, letters of credit, agricultural loans, commercial real estate loans and other loan products.

The banking segment's loan portfolio includes "covered loans" acquired in the FNB Transaction that are subject to loss-share agreements with the FDIC, while all other loans held by the Bank are referred to as "non-covered loans." The tables below set forth a distribution of the banking segment's non-covered and covered loans, classified by portfolio segment and segregated between those considered to be purchased credit impaired ("PCI") loans and all other originated or acquired loans at December 31, 2017 (dollars in thousands). PCI loans showed evidence of credit deterioration at the time of acquisition that made it probable that all contractually required principal and interest payments would not be collected. The commercial and industrial non-covered loans category includes a \$2.2 billion warehouse line of credit extended to

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PrimeLending, of which \$1.5 billion was drawn at December 31, 2017. Amounts advanced against the warehouse line of credit are included in the table below, but are eliminated from net loans on our consolidated balance sheets.

	Loans, excluding PCI Loans	PCI Loans	Total Loans	% of Total Non-Covered Loans	
Non-covered loans					
Commercial and industrial:					
Secured	\$ 3,089,402	\$ 6,099	\$ 3,095,501	42.8	%
Unsecured	122,889	—	122,889	1.7	%
Real estate:					
Secured by commercial properties	2,217,723	19,675	2,237,398	30.9	%
Secured by residential properties	766,016	9,865	775,881	10.6	%
Construction and land development:					
Residential construction loans	177,252	—	177,252	2.5	%
Commercial construction loans and land development	783,915	1,438	785,353	10.9	%
Consumer	40,319	127	40,446	0.6	%
Total non-covered loans	\$ 7,197,516	\$ 37,204	\$ 7,234,720	100.0	%

	Loans, excluding PCI Loans	PCI Loans	Total Loans	% of Total Covered Loans	
Covered loans					
Commercial and industrial:					
Secured	\$ 861	\$ 194	\$ 1,055	0.6	%
Unsecured	—	—	—	—	%
Real estate:					
Secured by commercial properties	11,794	23,559	35,353	19.4	%
Secured by residential properties	80,650	63,356	144,006	79.1	%
Construction and land development:					
Residential construction loans	—	—	—	—	%
Commercial construction loans and land development	1,711	4	1,715	0.9	%
Total covered loans	\$ 95,016	\$ 87,113	\$ 182,129	100.0	%

Our lending policies seek to establish an asset portfolio that will provide a return on stockholders' equity sufficient to maintain capital to assets ratios that meet or exceed established regulations. In support of that goal, we have designed our underwriting standards to determine:

- that our borrowers possess sound ethics and competently manage their affairs;
- that we know the source of the funds the borrower will use to repay the loan;
- that the purpose of the loan makes economic sense; and

- that we identify relevant risks of the loan and determine that the risks are acceptable.

We implement our underwriting standards according to the facts and circumstances of each particular loan request, as discussed below.

Commercial and industrial loans are primarily made within Texas and are underwritten on the basis of the borrower's ability to service the debt from cash flow from an operating business. In general, commercial and industrial loans involve more credit risk than residential and commercial real estate loans and, therefore, usually yield a higher return. The increased risk in commercial and industrial loans results primarily from the type of collateral securing these loans, which typically includes commercial real estate, accounts receivable, equipment and inventory. Additionally, increased risk arises from the expectation that commercial and industrial loans generally will be serviced principally from operating cash flow of the business, and such cash flows are dependent upon successful business operations. Historical trends have shown these types of loans to have higher delinquencies than mortgage loans. As a result of the additional risk and complexity associated with commercial and industrial loans, such loans require more thorough underwriting and servicing than loans to individuals. To manage these risks, our policy is to attempt to secure commercial and industrial loans with both the assets of the borrowing business and other additional collateral and guarantees that may be available. In addition,

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depending on the size of the credit, we actively monitor the financial condition of the borrower by analyzing the borrower's financial statements and assessing certain financial measures, including cash flow, collateral value and other appropriate credit factors. We also have processes in place to analyze and evaluate on a regular basis our exposure to industries, products, market changes and economic trends.

The Bank offers term financing on commercial real estate properties that include retail, office, multi-family, industrial, warehouse and non-owner occupied single family residences. Commercial mortgage lending can involve high principal loan amounts, and the repayment of these loans is dependent, in large part, on a borrower's on-going business operations or on income generated from the properties that are leased to third parties. Accordingly, we apply the measures described above for commercial and industrial loans to our commercial real estate lending, with increased emphasis on analysis of collateral values. As a general practice, the Bank requires its commercial mortgage loans to (i) be secured with first lien positions on the underlying property, (ii) maintain adequate equity margins, (iii) be serviced by businesses operated by an established management team and (iv) be guaranteed by the principals of the borrower. The Bank seeks lending opportunities where cash flow from the collateral provides adequate debt service coverage and/or the guarantor's net worth is comprised of assets other than the project being financed.

The Bank also offers construction financing for (i) commercial, retail, office, industrial, warehouse and multi-family developments, (ii) residential developments and (iii) single family residential properties. Construction loans involve additional risks because loan funds are advanced upon the security of a project under construction, and the project is of uncertain value prior to its completion. If the Bank is forced to foreclose on a project prior to completion, it may not be able to recover the entire unpaid portion of the loan. Additionally, the Bank may be required to fund additional amounts to complete a project and may have to hold the property for an indeterminate period of time. Because of uncertainties inherent in estimating construction costs, the market value of the completed project and the effects of governmental regulation on real property, it can be difficult to accurately evaluate the total funds required to complete a project and the related loan-to-value ratio. As a result of these uncertainties, construction lending often involves the disbursement of substantial funds with repayment dependent, in part, on the success of the ultimate project rather than the ability of a borrower or guarantor to repay the loan. The Bank generally requires that the subject property of a construction loan for commercial real estate be pre-leased, because cash flows from the completed project provide the most reliable source of repayment for the loan. Loans to finance these transactions are generally secured by first liens on the underlying real property. The Bank conducts periodic completion inspections, either directly or through an agent, prior to approval of periodic draws on these loans.

In addition to the real estate lending activities described above, a portion of the Bank's real estate portfolio consists of single family residential mortgage loans typically collateralized by owner occupied properties located in its market areas. These residential mortgage loans are generally secured by a first lien on the underlying property and have maturities up to thirty years. At December 31, 2017, the Bank had \$569.7 million in one-to-four family residential loans, which represented 9.7% of its total loans held for investment.

Personal Banking. The Bank offers a broad range of personal banking products and services for individuals. Similar to its business banking operations, the Bank also provides its personal banking customers with a variety of add-on features such as check cards, safe deposit boxes, Internet banking, bill pay, overdraft privilege services and access to

automated teller machine (ATM) facilities throughout the United States. The Bank offers a variety of deposit accounts to its personal banking customers including savings, checking, interest-bearing checking, money market and certificates of deposit.

The Bank loans to individuals for personal, family and household purposes, including lines of credit, home improvement loans, home equity loans, and loans for purchasing and carrying securities. At December 31, 2017, the Bank had \$40.4 million of loans for these purposes, which are shown in the non-covered loans table above as “Consumer.”

Wealth and Investment Management. The Bank’s private banking team personally assists high net worth individuals and their families with their banking needs, including depository, credit, asset management, and trust and estate services. The Bank offers trust and asset management services in order to assist these customers in managing, and ultimately transferring, their wealth.

The Bank’s wealth management services provide personal trust, investment management and employee benefit plan administration services, including estate planning, management and administration, investment portfolio management, employee benefit accounts and individual retirement accounts.

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Broker-Dealer

We conduct operations through Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network. From the date of the SWS Merger until January 22, 2016, when we merged FSC into Hilltop Securities to form a combined firm operating under the “Hilltop Securities” name, our broker-dealer segment was operated through FSC, Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network as separate broker-dealers under coordinated leadership. At December 31, 2017, the Hilltop Broker-Dealers employed approximately 900 people and maintained 48 locations in 19 states.

The Hilltop Broker-Dealers include the operations of Hilltop Securities, a clearing broker-dealer subsidiary registered with the SEC and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (“FINRA”) and a member of the NYSE, HTS Independent Network, an introducing broker-dealer subsidiary that is also registered with the SEC and FINRA, and First Southwest Asset Management, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hilltop Securities. Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network are both registered with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (“CFTC”) as non-guaranteed introducing brokers and as members of the National Futures Association (“NFA”). At December 31, 2017, Hilltop Securities had consolidated assets of \$3.4 billion and net capital of \$186.8 million, which was \$176.3 million in excess of its minimum net capital requirement of \$10.5 million.

Our broker-dealer segment has six primary lines of business: (i) public finance, (ii) capital markets, (iii) retail, (iv) structured finance, (v) clearing services, and (vi) securities lending.

Public Finance. The public finance group assists public bodies nationwide, including cities, counties, school districts, utility districts, tax increment zones, special districts, state agencies and other governmental entities, in originating, syndicating and distributing securities of municipalities and political subdivisions. In addition, the group provides specialized advisory and investment banking services for airports, convention centers, healthcare institutions, institutions of higher education, housing, industrial development agencies, toll road authorities, and public power and utility providers.

Additionally, First Southwest Asset Management, LLC, Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network are investment advisers registered under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 and provide state and local governments with advice and assistance with respect to arbitrage rebate compliance, portfolio management and local government investment pool administration.

Capital Markets. The capital markets group specializes in trading and underwriting U.S. government and government agency bonds, corporate bonds, municipal bonds, mortgage-backed, asset-backed and commercial mortgage-backed securities and structured products to support sales and other customer activities, and trades equities and option orders on an agency basis on behalf of its retail and institutional clients, including corporations, insurance companies, banks, mutual funds, money managers and other clients. In addition, the capital markets group provides asset and liability

management advisory services to community banks.

Additionally, the equity trading department focuses on executing equity and option orders on an agency basis for clients, while the syndicate department, housed within its fixed income sales group, coordinates the distribution of managed and co-managed corporate equity underwritings, accepts invitations to participate in competitive or negotiated underwritings managed by other investment banking firms and allocates and markets the sales of allotments to institutional clients and to other broker-dealers.

Retail. The retail group acts as a securities broker for retail investors in the purchase and sale of securities, options, commodities and futures contracts that are traded on various exchanges or in the over-the-counter market through our employee-registered representatives or independent contractor arrangements. Through our retail group, we extend margin credit on a secured basis to our retail customers in order to facilitate securities transactions. Through our insurance subsidiaries, we hold insurance licenses to facilitate the sale of insurance and annuity products by Hilltop Securities and HTS Independent Network advisors to retail clients. We retain no underwriting risk related to these insurance and annuity products. In addition, through our investment management group, the retail group provides a number of advisory programs that offer advisors a wide array of products and services for their advisory businesses. In most cases, we charge commissions to our clients in accordance with an established commission schedule, subject to certain discounts based upon the client's level of business, the trade size and other relevant factors. The HTS Independent Network advisors may also contract directly with third party carriers to sell specified insurance products to their customers. The commissions received from these third party carriers are paid directly to the advisor. Hilltop Securities is also a fully disclosed client of

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two of the largest futures commission merchants in the United States. At December 31, 2017, we employed 120 registered representatives in 16 retail brokerage offices and had contracts with 218 independent retail representatives for the administration of their securities business.

Structured Finance. The structured finance group provides structured asset and liability services and commodity hedging advisory services to facilitate balance sheet management primarily to public finance clients. In addition, the structured finance group participates in programs in which it issues forward purchase commitments of mortgage-backed securities to certain non-profit housing clients and sells U.S. Agency to-be-announced (“TBA”) mortgage-backed securities.

Clearing Services. The clearing services group offers fully disclosed clearing services to FINRA- and SEC-registered member firms for trade execution and clearance as well as back office services such as record keeping, trade reporting, accounting, general back-office support, securities and margin lending, reorganization assistance and custody of securities. At December 31, 2017, we provided services to 162 financial organizations, including correspondent firms, correspondent broker-dealers, registered investment advisers, discount and full-service brokerage firms, and institutional firms.

Securities Lending. The securities lending group performs activities that include borrowing and lending securities for other broker-dealers, lending institutions, and internal clearing and retail operations. These activities involve borrowing securities to cover short sales and to complete transactions in which clients have failed to deliver securities by the required settlement date, and lending securities to other broker-dealers for similar purposes.

Mortgage Origination

Our mortgage origination segment operates through a wholly owned subsidiary of the Bank, PrimeLending, a residential mortgage banker licensed to originate and close loans in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. PrimeLending primarily originates its mortgage loans through a retail channel, with limited lending through its affiliated business arrangements (“ABAs”). During 2017, funded loan volume through ABAs was less than 5% of the mortgage origination segment’s total loan volume. At December 31, 2017, our mortgage origination segment operated from over 330 locations in 45 states, originating 21.6% and 12.8%, respectively, of its mortgage loans (by dollar volume) from its Texas and California locations. The mortgage lending business is subject to variables that can impact loan origination volume, including seasonal and interest rate fluctuations. Historically, the mortgage origination segment has typically experienced increased loan origination volume from purchases of homes during the spring and summer, when more people tend to move and buy or sell homes. An increase in mortgage interest rates tends to result in decreased loan origination volume from refinancings, while a decrease in mortgage interest rates tends to result in increased loan origination volume from refinancings. Changes in interest rates have historically had a lesser impact on home purchases volume than on refinancing volume.

PrimeLending handles loan processing, underwriting and closings in-house. Mortgage loans originated by PrimeLending are funded through a warehouse line of credit maintained with the Bank. PrimeLending sells substantially all mortgage loans it originates to various investors in the secondary market, the majority servicing released. PrimeLending's determination of whether to retain or release servicing on mortgage loans it sells is impacted by, among other things, changes in mortgage interest rates, and refinancing and market activity. PrimeLending may, from time to time, manage its MSR asset through different strategies, including varying the percentage of mortgage loans sold servicing released and opportunistically selling MSR assets. As mortgage loans are sold in the secondary market, PrimeLending pays down its warehouse line of credit with the Bank. Loans sold are subject to certain standard indemnification provisions with investors, including the repurchase of loans sold and the repayment of sales proceeds to investors under certain conditions.

Our mortgage lending underwriting strategy, driven in large measure by secondary market investor standards, seeks primarily to originate conforming loans. Our underwriting practices include:

- granting loans on a sound and collectible basis;
- obtaining a balance between maximum yield and minimum risk;
- ensuring that primary and secondary sources of repayment are adequate in relation to the amount of the loan; and
- ensuring that each loan is properly documented and, if appropriate, adequately insured.

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PrimeLending had a staff of approximately 3,000 people as of December 31, 2017 that produced \$14.5 billion in closed mortgage loan volume during 2017, 83% of which related to home purchases volume. PrimeLending offers a variety of loan products catering to the specific needs of borrowers seeking purchase or refinancing options, including 30-year and 15-year fixed rate conventional mortgages, adjustable rate mortgages, jumbo loans, and Federal Housing Administration (“FHA”), Veteran Affairs (“VA”), and United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) loans. Mortgage loans originated by PrimeLending are secured by a first lien on the underlying property. PrimeLending does not currently originate subprime loans (which it defines to be conventional and government loans that are ineligible for sale to the Federal National Mortgage Association (“FNMA”), Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (“FHLMC”) or Government National Mortgage Association (“GNMA”), or that do not comply with applicable investor-specific underwriting guidelines).

Insurance

The operations of NLC comprise our insurance segment. NLC specializes in providing fire and limited homeowners insurance for low value dwellings and manufactured homes primarily in Texas and other areas of the southern, southeastern and southwestern United States through its subsidiaries, NLIC and ASIC. NLC’s product lines also include enhanced homeowners products offering higher coverage limits with distribution restricted to select agents. NLC targets underserved markets through a broad network of independent agents primarily located in five states.

Ratings. Many insurance buyers, agents and brokers use the ratings assigned by A.M. Best and other rating agencies to assist them in assessing the financial strength and overall quality of the companies from which they purchase insurance. The financial strength ratings for NLIC and ASIC of “A” (Excellent) were affirmed by A.M. Best in May 2017. An “A” rating is the third highest of 16 rating categories used by A.M. Best. This rating assignment is subject to the ability to meet A.M. Best’s expectations as to performance and capitalization on an ongoing basis, and is subject to revocation or revision at any time at the sole discretion of A.M. Best. NLC cannot ensure that NLIC and ASIC will maintain their present ratings.

Product Lines. NLC’s business is conducted in two product lines: personal lines and commercial lines. The personal lines include homeowners, dwelling fire, manufactured home, flood and vacant policies. The commercial lines include commercial multi-peril, builders risk, builders risk renovation, sports liability and inland marine policies.

The NLC companies specialize in writing fire and homeowners insurance coverage for low value dwellings and manufactured homes. The vast majority of NLC’s property coverage is written on policies that provide actual cash value payments, as opposed to replacement cost. Under actual cash value policies, the insured is entitled to receive only the cost of replacing or repairing damaged or destroyed property with comparable new property, less depreciation. Replacement cost coverage does not include such a deduction for depreciation; however, it does include limited water coverage.

Underwriting and Pricing. NLC applies its regional expertise, underwriting discipline and a risk-adjusted, return-on-equity-based approach to capital allocation to primarily offer short-tail insurance products in its target markets. NLC's underwriting process involves securing an adequate level of underwriting information from its independent agents, identifying and evaluating risk exposures and then pricing the risks it chooses to accept. Management reviews pricing on an ongoing basis to monitor any emerging issues on a specific coverage or geographic territory.

Catastrophe Exposure. NLC maintains a comprehensive risk management strategy, which includes actively monitoring its catastrophe-prone territories by zip code to ensure a diversified book of risks. NLC utilizes software and risk support from its reinsurance brokers to analyze its portfolio and catastrophe exposure. Biannually, NLC has its entire portfolio analyzed by its reinsurance broker who utilizes hurricane and severe storm models to predict risk.

Reinsurance. NLC purchases reinsurance to reduce its exposure to liability on individual risks and claims and to protect against catastrophe losses. NLC's management believes that less volatile, yet reasonable returns are in the long-term interest of NLC.

Reinsurance involves an insurance company transferring, or ceding, a portion of its risk to another insurer, the reinsurer. The reinsurer assumes the exposure in return for a portion of the premium. The ceding of risk to a reinsurer does not legally discharge the primary insurer from its liability for the full amount of the policies on which it obtains reinsurance.

Accordingly, the primary insurer remains liable for the entire loss if the reinsurer fails to meet its obligations under the reinsurance agreement and, as a result, the primary insurer is exposed to the risk of non-payment by its reinsurers. In

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formulating its reinsurance programs, NLC believes that it is selective in its choice of reinsurers and considers numerous factors, the most important of which are the financial stability of the reinsurer, its history of responding to claims and its overall reputation.

Additionally, NLC further reduces its exposure to liability through an underlying excess of loss contract that provides aggregate coverage in excess of NLC's per event retention and aggregate retention for sub-catastrophic events.

Competition

We face significant competition in the business segments in which we operate and the geographic markets we serve. Many of our competitors have substantially greater financial resources, lending limits and branch networks than we do, and offer a broader range of products and services.

Our banking segment primarily competes with national, regional and community banks within the various markets where the Bank operates. The Bank also faces competition from many other types of financial institutions, including savings and loan associations, credit unions, finance companies, pension trusts, mutual funds, insurance companies, brokerage and investment banking firms, asset-based non-bank lenders, government agencies and certain other non-financial institutions. The ability to attract and retain skilled lending professionals is critical to our banking business. Competition for deposits and in providing lending products and services to consumers and businesses in our market area is intense and pricing is important. Other factors encountered in competing for deposits are convenient office locations, interest rates and fee structures of products offered. Direct competition for deposits also comes from other commercial bank and thrift institutions, money market mutual funds and corporate and government securities that may offer more attractive rates than insured depository institutions are willing to pay. Competition for loans is based on factors such as interest rates, loan origination fees and the range of services offered by the provider. We seek to distinguish ourselves from our competitors through our commitment to personalized customer service and responsiveness to customer needs while providing a range of competitive loan and deposit products and other services.

Within our broker-dealer segment we face significant competition based on a number of factors, including price, perceived expertise, quality of advice, reputation, range of services and products, technology, innovation and local presence. Competition for successful securities traders, stock loan professionals and investment bankers among securities firms and other competitors is intense. Our broker-dealer business competes directly with numerous other financial advisory and investment banking firms, broker-dealers and banks, including large national and major regional firms and smaller niche companies, some of whom are not broker-dealers and, therefore, are not subject to the broker-dealer regulatory framework. Further, our broker-dealer segment competes with discount brokerage firms that do not offer equivalent services but offer discounted prices. We seek to distinguish ourselves from our competitors through our commitment to personalized customer service and responsiveness to customer needs while providing a range of investment banking, advisory and other related financial brokerage services.

Our competitors in the mortgage origination business include large financial institutions as well as independent mortgage banking companies, commercial banks, savings banks and savings and loan associations. Our mortgage origination segment competes on a number of factors including customer service, quality and range of products and services offered, price, reputation, interest rates, closing process and duration, and loan origination fees. The ability to attract and retain skilled mortgage origination professionals is critical to our mortgage origination business. We seek to distinguish ourselves from our competitors through our commitment to personalized customer service and responsiveness to customer needs while providing a range of competitive mortgage loan products and services.

Our insurance business competes with a large number of other companies in its selected lines of business, including major U.S. and non-U.S. insurers, regional companies, mutual companies, specialty insurance companies, underwriting agencies and diversified financial services companies. The personal lines market in Texas is dominated by a few large carriers and their subsidiaries and affiliates. We seek to distinguish ourselves from our competitors by targeting underserved market segments that provide us with the best opportunity to obtain favorable policy terms, conditions and pricing.

Employees

At December 31, 2017, we employed approximately 5,500 people, substantially all of which are full-time. None of our employees are represented by any collective bargaining unit or a party to any collective bargaining agreement.

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Government Supervision and Regulation

General

We are subject to extensive regulation under federal and state laws. The regulatory framework is intended primarily for the protection of customers and clients, and not for the protection of our stockholders or creditors. In many cases, the applicable regulatory authorities have broad enforcement power over bank holding companies, banks and their subsidiaries, including the power to impose substantial fines and other penalties for violations of laws and regulations. The following discussion describes the material elements of the regulatory framework that applies to us and our subsidiaries. References in this Annual Report to applicable statutes and regulations are brief summaries thereof, do not purport to be complete, and are qualified in their entirety by reference to such statutes and regulations.

Recent Regulatory Developments. New regulations and statutes are regularly proposed and/or adopted that contain wide-ranging proposals for altering the structures, regulations and competitive relationships of financial institutions operating and doing business in the United States. Changes in leadership at various federal banking agencies, including the Federal Reserve, can also change the policy direction of these agencies. Certain of these recent proposals and changes are described below.

On July 21, 2010, President Obama signed into law the Dodd-Frank Act. The Dodd-Frank Act aims to restore responsibility and accountability to the financial system by significantly altering the regulation of financial institutions and the financial services industry. Most of the provisions contained in the Dodd-Frank Act have delayed effective dates. Full implementation of the Dodd-Frank Act requires many new rules to be issued by federal regulatory agencies, which profoundly affect how financial institutions will be regulated in the future. The ultimate effect of the Dodd-Frank Act and its implementing regulations (or any amendments thereto) on the financial services industry in general, and on us in particular, is uncertain at this time.

The Dodd-Frank Act, among other things:

- Established the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (the “CFPB”), an independent organization within the Federal Reserve which has the authority to promulgate consumer protection regulations applicable to all entities offering consumer financial products or services, including banks and mortgage originators. The CFPB has broad rule-making authority for a wide range of consumer protection laws, including the authority to prohibit “unfair, deceptive or abusive” acts and practices. The CFPB has exclusive examination authority and primary enforcement authority with respect to financial institutions with total assets of more than \$10.0 billion and their affiliates for purposes of federal consumer protection laws. After June 30, 2011, a financial institution becomes subject to the CFPB’s exclusive examination authority and primary enforcement authority after it has reported total assets of greater than \$10.0 billion in its quarterly call reports for four consecutive quarters.

- Established the Financial Stability Oversight Council, tasked with the authority to identify and monitor institutions and systems which pose a systemic risk to the financial system, and to impose standards regarding capital, leverage, liquidity, risk management, and other requirements for financial firms.
- Changed the base for FDIC insurance assessments.
- Increased the minimum reserve ratio for the Deposit Insurance Fund from 1.15% to 1.35% (the FDIC subsequently increased it by regulation to 2.00%).
- Permanently increased the deposit insurance coverage amount from \$100,000 to \$250,000.
- Directed the Federal Reserve to establish interchange fees for debit cards pursuant to a restrictive “reasonable and proportional cost” per transaction standard.
- Limits the ability of banking organizations to sponsor or invest in private equity and hedge funds and to engage in proprietary trading in a provision known as the “Volcker Rule”.
- Grants the U.S. government authority to liquidate or take emergency measures with respect to troubled nonbank financial companies that fall outside the existing resolution authority of the FDIC, including the establishment of an orderly liquidation fund.
- Increases regulation of asset-backed securities, including a requirement that issuers of asset-backed securities retain at least 5% of the risk of the asset-backed securities.

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- Increases regulation of consumer protections regarding mortgage originations, including banker compensation, minimum repayment standards, and prepayment consideration.
- Establishes new disclosure and other requirements relating to executive compensation and corporate governance.

On June 21, 2010, the Federal Reserve Board, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Office of Thrift Supervision and the FDIC jointly issued comprehensive final guidance on incentive compensation policies (the “Incentive Compensation Guidance”) intended to ensure that the incentive compensation policies of banking organizations do not undermine the safety and soundness of such organizations by encouraging excessive risk-taking. The Incentive Compensation Guidance sets expectations for banking organizations concerning their incentive compensation arrangements and related risk-management, control and governance processes. The Incentive Compensation Guidance, which covers all employees that have the ability to materially affect the risk profile of an organization, either individually or as part of a group, is based upon three primary principles: (i) balanced risk-taking incentives, (ii) compatibility with effective controls and risk management, and (iii) strong corporate governance. Any deficiencies in compensation practices that are identified may be incorporated into the organization’s supervisory ratings, which can affect its ability to make acquisitions or perform other actions. In addition, under the Incentive Compensation Guidance, a banking organization’s federal regulator may initiate enforcement action if the organization’s incentive compensation arrangements pose a risk to the safety and soundness of the organization.

On April 14, 2011, the Federal Reserve Board and various other federal agencies published a notice of proposed rulemaking implementing provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act that would require reporting of incentive-based compensation arrangements by a covered financial institution and prohibit incentive-based compensation arrangements at a covered financial institution that provide excessive compensation or that could expose the institution to inappropriate risks that could lead to material financial loss. The Dodd-Frank Act defines “covered financial institution” to include, among other entities, a depository institution or depository institution holding company that has \$1 billion or more in assets. There are enhanced requirements for institutions with more than \$50 billion in assets.

On January 10, 2013, the CFPB issued a final rule to implement the “qualified mortgage”, or “QM” provisions of the Dodd-Frank Act requiring mortgage lenders to consider consumers’ ability to repay home loans before extending them credit. The final rule describes certain minimum requirements for creditors making ability-to-repay determinations, but does not dictate that they follow particular underwriting models. Lenders will be presumed to have complied with the ability-to-repay rule if they issue “qualified mortgages”, which are generally defined as mortgage loans prohibiting or limiting certain risky features. Loans that do not meet the ability-to-repay standard can be challenged in court by borrowers who default and the absence of ability-to-repay status can be used against a creditor in foreclosure proceedings. The CFPB’s QM rule took effect on January 10, 2014.

We cannot predict whether or in what form any proposed regulation or statute will be adopted or the extent to which our business may be affected by any new regulation or statute.

Hilltop is a legal entity separate and distinct from PCC and its other subsidiaries. On November 30, 2012, concurrent with the consummation of the PlainsCapital Merger, Hilltop became a financial holding company registered under the Bank Holding Company Act, as amended by the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (“Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act”). Accordingly, it is subject to supervision, regulation and examination by the Federal Reserve Board. The Dodd-Frank Act, Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, the Bank Holding Company Act and other federal laws subject financial and bank holding companies to particular restrictions on the types of activities in which they may engage and to a range of supervisory requirements and activities, including regulatory enforcement actions for violations of laws and regulations.

Changes of Control. Federal and state laws impose additional notice, approval and ongoing regulatory requirements on any investor that seeks to acquire direct or indirect “control” of a regulated holding company, such as Hilltop. These laws include the Bank Holding Company Act, the Change in Bank Control Act and the Texas Insurance Code. Among other things, these laws require regulatory filings by an investor that seeks to acquire direct or indirect “control” of a regulated holding company. The determination whether an investor “controls” a regulated holding company is based on all of the facts and circumstances surrounding the investment. As a general matter, an investor is deemed to control a depository institution or other company if the investor owns or controls 25% or more of any class of voting stock. Subject to rebuttal, an investor may be presumed to control the regulated holding company if the investor owns or controls 10% or more of any class of voting stock. Accordingly, these laws would apply to a person acquiring 10% or more of Hilltop’s common

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stock. Furthermore, these laws may discourage potential acquisition proposals and may delay, deter or prevent change of control transactions, including those that some or all of our stockholders might consider to be desirable.

Regulatory Restrictions on Dividends; Source of Strength. It is the policy of the Federal Reserve Board that bank holding companies should pay cash dividends on common stock only out of income available over the past year and only if prospective earnings retention is consistent with the organization's expected future needs and financial condition. The policy provides that bank holding companies should not maintain a level of cash dividends that undermines the bank holding company's ability to serve as a source of strength to its banking subsidiaries. The Dodd-Frank Act requires the regulatory agencies to issue regulations requiring that all bank and savings and loan holding companies serve as a source of financial and managerial strength to their subsidiary depository institutions by providing capital, liquidity and other support in times of financial stress; however, no such proposed regulations have yet been published.

Under Federal Reserve Board policy, a bank holding company is expected to act as a source of financial strength to each of its banking subsidiaries and commit resources to their support. Such support may be required at times when, absent this Federal Reserve Board policy, a holding company may not be inclined to provide it. As discussed herein, a bank holding company, in certain circumstances, could be required to guarantee the capital plan of an undercapitalized banking subsidiary.

Scope of Permissible Activities. Under the Bank Holding Company Act, Hilltop and PCC generally may not acquire a direct or indirect interest in, or control of more than 5% of, the voting shares of any company that is not a bank or bank holding company. Additionally, the Bank Holding Company Act may prohibit Hilltop from engaging in activities other than those of banking, managing or controlling banks or furnishing services to, or performing services for, its subsidiaries, except that it may engage in, directly or indirectly, certain activities that the Federal Reserve Board has determined to be closely related to banking or managing and controlling banks as to be a proper incident thereto. In approving acquisitions or the addition of activities, the Federal Reserve Board considers, among other things, whether the acquisition or the additional activities can reasonably be expected to produce benefits to the public, such as greater convenience, increased competition, or gains in efficiency, that outweigh such possible adverse effects as undue concentration of resources, decreased or unfair competition, conflicts of interest or unsound banking practices.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, effective March 11, 2000, eliminated the barriers to affiliations among banks, securities firms, insurance companies and other financial service providers and permits bank holding companies to become financial holding companies and thereby affiliate with securities firms and insurance companies and engage in other activities that are financial in nature. The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act defines "financial in nature" to include: securities underwriting; dealing and market making; sponsoring mutual funds and investment companies; insurance underwriting and agency; merchant banking activities; and activities that the Federal Reserve Board has determined to be closely related to banking. Prior to enactment of the Dodd-Frank Act, regulatory approval was not required for a financial holding company to acquire a company, other than a bank or savings association, engaged in activities that were financial in nature or incidental to activities that were financial in nature, as determined by the Federal Reserve Board.

Under the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, a bank holding company may become a financial holding company by filing a declaration with the Federal Reserve Board if each of its subsidiary banks is “well capitalized” under the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Improvement Act prompt corrective action provisions, is “well managed”, and has at least a “satisfactory” rating under the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (the “CRA”). The Dodd-Frank Act underscores the criteria for becoming a financial holding company by amending the Bank Holding Company Act to require that bank holding companies be “well capitalized” and “well managed” in order to become financial holding companies. Hilltop became a financial holding company on December 1, 2012.

Safe and Sound Banking Practices. Bank holding companies are not permitted to engage in unsafe and unsound banking practices. The Federal Reserve Board’s Regulation Y, for example, generally requires a holding company to give the Federal Reserve Board prior notice of any redemption or repurchase of its equity securities, if the consideration to be paid, together with the consideration paid for any repurchases or redemptions in the preceding year, is equal to 10% or more of the company’s consolidated net worth. In addition, bank holding companies are required to consult with the Federal Reserve Board prior to making any redemption or repurchase, even within the foregoing parameters. The Federal Reserve Board may oppose the transaction if it believes that the transaction would constitute an unsafe or unsound practice or would violate any law or regulation. Depending upon the circumstances, the Federal Reserve Board could take the position that paying a dividend would constitute an unsafe or unsound banking practice.

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The Federal Reserve Board has broad authority to prohibit activities of bank holding companies and their nonbanking subsidiaries that represent unsafe and unsound banking practices or that constitute violations of laws or regulations, and can assess civil money penalties for certain activities conducted on a knowing or reckless basis, if those activities caused a substantial loss to a depository institution. The penalties can be as high as \$1.92 million for each day the activity continues. In addition, the Dodd-Frank Act authorizes the Federal Reserve Board to require reports from and examine bank holding companies and their subsidiaries, and to regulate functionally regulated subsidiaries of bank holding companies.

Anti-tying Restrictions. Subject to various exceptions, bank holding companies and their affiliates are generally prohibited from tying the provision of certain services, such as extensions of credit, to certain other services offered by a bank holding company or its affiliates.

Capital Adequacy Requirements and BASEL III. Hilltop and PlainsCapital are subject to capital adequacy requirements under the recently adopted comprehensive capital framework for U.S. banking organizations known as “Basel III”. Basel III, which reformed the existing frameworks under which U.S. banking organizations historically operated, became effective January 1, 2015 but will not be fully phased-in until January 1, 2019. Basel III was developed by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision and adopted by the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

The federal banking agencies’ risk-based capital and leverage ratios are minimum supervisory ratios generally applicable to banking organizations that meet certain specified criteria, assuming that they have the highest regulatory rating. Banking organizations not meeting these criteria are expected to operate with capital positions well above the minimum ratios. The federal bank regulatory agencies may set capital requirements for a particular banking organization that are higher than the minimum ratios when circumstances warrant. Federal Reserve Board guidelines also provide that banking organizations experiencing internal growth or making acquisitions will be expected to maintain strong capital positions substantially above the minimum supervisory levels, without significant reliance on intangible assets.

Final rules published by the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency implemented the Basel III regulatory capital reforms and changes required by the Dodd-Frank Act. Among other things, Basel III increased minimum capital requirements, introduced a new minimum leverage ratio and implemented a capital conservation buffer. The final Basel III rules take important steps toward improving the quality and increasing the quantity of capital for all banking organizations as well as setting higher standards for large, internationally active banking organizations. The regulatory agencies believe that the new rules will result in capital requirements that better reflect banking organizations’ risk profiles, thereby improving the overall resilience of the banking system. The regulatory agencies carefully considered the potential impacts on all banking organizations, including community and regional banking organizations such as Hilltop and PlainsCapital, and sought to minimize the potential burden of these changes where consistent with applicable law and the agencies’ goals of establishing a robust and comprehensive capital framework. Under the guidelines in effect beginning January 1, 2015, a risk weight factor of 0% to 1250% is assigned to each category of assets based generally on the perceived credit risk of the asset class. The risk weights are then multiplied by the corresponding asset balances to determine a “risk-weighted” asset

base.

Under Basel III, total capital consists of two tiers of capital, Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 capital consists of common equity Tier 1 capital and additional Tier 1 capital. Below is a list of certain significant components that comprise the tiers of capital for Hilltop and PlainsCapital under Basel III.

Common equity Tier 1 capital:

- includes common stockholders' equity (such as qualifying common stock and any related surplus, undivided profits, disclosed capital reserves that represent a segregation of undivided profits and foreign currency translation adjustments, excluding changes in other comprehensive income (loss) and treasury stock);
- includes certain minority interests in the equity capital accounts of consolidated subsidiaries; and
- excludes goodwill and various intangible assets.

Additional Tier 1 capital:

- includes certain qualifying minority interests not included in common equity Tier 1 capital;

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- includes certain preferred stock and related surplus;
- includes certain subordinated debt; and