# FORTIS GROUP ADVISORS, LLC

Part 2A of Form ADV: Firm Brochure

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This brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Fortis Group Advisors, LLC ("Fortis"). If you have any questions about the contents of this brochure, please contact us at (201) 383-0630. The information in this brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any state securities authority. Fortis is a Registered Investment Adviser. Registration as an Investment Adviser with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any state securities authority does not imply a certain level of skill or training.

Additional information about Fortis is available on the SEC's website at <u>SEC Adviser Info, https://adviserinfo.sec.gov</u>. You can search this site by a unique identifying number, known as an IARD number. The IARD number for Fortis is 290427.

# ITEM 2 – MATERIAL CHANGES

# **SUMMARY OF MATERIAL CHANGES**

There have been the following material changes since our last annual amendment filing dated January 23, 2024, the following material changes have been made:

- Item 9-Disciplinary Information: The Firm has updated disciplinary information.
- Item 12-The Custodian and Brokers We Use: Effective September 5, 2023, FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC has transitioned to utilizing Schwab's custodial services as part of the TD Ameritrade to Charles Schwab merger for advisory custodial and brokerage services.

If you would like another copy of this Brochure, please download it from the SEC Web-site www.adviserinfo.sec.gov. You can search this site by a unique identifying number, known as an IARD number. The IARD number for Fortis Group Advisors, LLC is 290427. Or you may contact our Chief Compliance Officer:

Austin Sweerus at 732-409-2644 or <a href="mailto:compliance@fortisgroupadvisors.com">compliance@fortisgroupadvisors.com</a>

We encourage you to read this document in its entirety.

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# ITEM 4 – ADVISORY BUSINESS

This Disclosure document is being offered to you by Fortis Group Advisors, LLC ("Fortis" or "Firm") about the investment advisory services we provide. It discloses information about our services and the way those services are made available to you, the client.

We are an investment management firm located in Westwood, New Jersey. We specialize in investment advisory services for individuals, high-net-worth individuals, employee-sponsored retirement plans, institutions, charitable organizations, trusts, and estates. Our Firm became a registered investment adviser in January 2018. Fortis Group Advisors, LLC is a limited liability company formed in Delaware owned by Christopher Kenneally, Eva Rullo-Naphor, and Michael Koch.

We are committed to helping clients build, manage, and preserve their wealth and to provide assistance that helps clients achieve their stated financial goals. We will offer an initial complimentary meeting at our discretion; however, investment advisory services are initiated only after you and Fortis execute an Investment Management Agreement.

# INVESTMENT AND WEALTH MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION SERVICES

We manage advisory accounts on a discretionary and non-discretionary basis. For discretionary accounts, once we have determined a profile and investment plan with a client, we will execute the day-to-day transactions without seeking prior client consent. Account supervision is guided by the written profile and investment plan of the client. We may accept accounts with certain restrictions if circumstances warrant. We primarily allocate client assets among mutual funds, cash, equities, bonds, ETFs, US Government Treasuries, REITS, and alternative investments per their stated investment objectives. These are considered asset allocation categories for the client's investment strategy.

During personal discussions with clients, we determine the client's objectives, time horizons, risk tolerance, and liquidity needs. As appropriate, we also review a client's prior investment history, family composition, and background. We develop a client's personal profile and investment plan based on the client's needs. We then create and manage the client's investments based on that policy and plan.

The client's obligated to notify us immediately if circumstances have changed regarding their goals.

Once we have determined the types of investments to be included in your portfolio and allocated them, we will provide ongoing investment review and management services. This approach requires us to review your portfolio periodically.

With our discretionary relationship, we will make changes to the portfolio, as we deem appropriate, to meet your financial objectives. We trade these portfolios based on the combination of our market views and your objectives, using our investment process. We tailor our advisory services to meet the needs of our clients and seek to ensure that your portfolio is managed in a manner consistent with those needs and objectives. You will have the ability to leave standing instructions with us to refrain from investing in particular industries or invest in limited amounts of securities.

If a non-discretionary relationship is in place, calls will be placed presenting the recommendation made and only upon your authorization will any action be taken on your behalf.

In all cases, you have a direct and beneficial interest in your securities, rather than an undivided interest in a pool of securities. We do have limited authority to direct the Custodian to deduct our investment advisory fees from your accounts, but only with the appropriate written authorization from you.

You are advised and are expected to understand that our past performance is not a guarantee of future results. Certain market and economic risks exist that adversely affect an account's performance. This could result in capital losses in your account.

#### NITROGEN (FORMERLY RISKALYZE)

To further fine-tune our understanding of a client's risk tolerance, our Firm utilizes Nitrogen, a third-party vendor tool, to assist in identifying the client's risk tolerance.

Nitrogen technology assists financial planners in two critical tasks: (1) measuring the risk preferences of investors and (2) applying these preference measurements to portfolio selection. Nitrogen summarizes an investor's mean-variance risk aversion on a 99-point scale. In connection with this output, the N tool "quantifies" the client's indicated investment risk tolerance through the illustration of expected return (plus/minus) and investment volatility (investment variance), which uses past data to calculate expected variance.

#### LEGACY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Our Firm may advise a Client about legacy positions or other investments in Client portfolios. Clients can limit or restrict our trading in these positions

# ERISA SECTION 3(21) INVESTMENT ADVISOR AND 3(38) INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE

For employer-sponsored retirement plans with participant-directed investments, Fortis may provide its advisory services as an investment advisor as defined under Section 3(21) and as an investment manager as defined under Section 3(38) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended ("ERISA").

When serving as an ERISA 3(21) investment advisor, the plan sponsor and Fortis share fiduciary responsibility. The plan sponsor retains ultimate decision-making authority for the investments and may accept or reject the recommendations in accordance with the terms of a separate ERISA 3(21) Investment Advisor Agreement between Fortis and the plan sponsor. Fortis provides the following services to the plan sponsor:

- Screen investments and make recommendations.
- Monitor the investments and suggests replacement investments when appropriate.
- Provide a quarterly monitoring report.
- Assist the plan sponsor in developing an Investment Policy Statement ("IPS").

Fortis will prepare an IPS for the plan. The purpose of the IPS is to provide guidelines for making investment-related decisions in a prudent manner. It outlines the underlying philosophies and processes for the selection, evaluation, monitoring, and, if necessary, replacement of the investment options offered by the plan. Fortis will perform on-going monitoring of the investment options within the plan. The ongoing monitoring of investments is a regular and disciplined process. Monitoring confirms that the criteria remain satisfied and that an investment option continues to be appropriate. The process of monitoring investment performance relative to specified guidelines will be consistently applied.

Fortis will make available to participants, either through the provider's recordkeeping platform, a stand-alone form, or a third-party website, a risk tolerance questionnaire. The questionnaire's sole purpose is to provide participants with general assistance in order to identify their risk tolerance and investment objectives and, based on this information, help determine which investment is most aligned with their risk tolerance/investment objectives.

#### DISCLOSURE REGARDING ROLLOVER RECOMMENDATIONS

A client or prospect leaving an employer typically has four options regarding an existing retirement plan (and may engage in a combination of these options): (i) leave the money in the former employer's plan, if permitted, (ii) roll over the assets to the new employer's plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted, (iii) rollover to an Individual Retirement Account ("IRA"), or (iv) cash out the account value (which could, depending upon the client's age, result in adverse tax consequences). Our Firm may recommend an investor roll over plan assets to an IRA for which our Firm provides investment advisory services. As a result, our Firm and its representatives may earn an asset-based fee. In contrast, a recommendation that a client or prospective client leave their plan assets with their previous employer or roll over the assets to a plan sponsored by a new employer will generally result in no compensation to our Firm. Our Firm therefore has an economic incentive to encourage a client to roll plan assets into an IRA that our Firm will manage, which presents a conflict of interest. To mitigate the conflict of interest, there are various factors that our Firm will consider before recommending a rollover, including but not limited to: (i) the investment options available in the plan versus the investment options available in an IRA, (ii) fees and expenses in the plan versus the fees and expenses in an IRA, (iii) the services and responsiveness of the plan's investment professionals versus those of our Firm, (iv) protection of assets from creditors and legal judgments, (v) required minimum distributions and age considerations, and (vi) employer stock tax consequences, if any. All rollover recommendations are also reviewed by our Firm's Chief Compliance Officer in a best effort to determine that the recommendation to a client was reasonable or that the client has determined to make the rollover after being provided ample information about their options. No client is under any obligation to roll over plan assets to an IRA advised by our Firm or to engage our Firm to monitor and/or advise on the account while maintained with the client's employer. Our Firm's Chief Compliance Officer remains available to address any questions that a client or prospective client has regarding this disclosure.

We are fiduciaries under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 and when we provide investment advice to you regarding your retirement plan account or individual retirement account, we are also fiduciaries within the meaning of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and/or the Internal Revenue Code, as applicable, which are laws governing retirement accounts. We have to act in your best interest and not put our interest ahead of yours. At the same time, the way we make money creates some conflicts with your interests.

#### FINANCIAL PLANNING

Through the Financial Planning process, the Fortis team strives to engage our clients in conversations around the family's goals, objectives, priorities, vision, and legacy – both for the near term as well as for future generations. With the unique goals and circumstances of each family in mind, the Fortis team will offer wealth planning ideas and strategies to address the client's holistic financial picture, including estate, income tax, charitable, cash flow, wealth transfer and family legacy objectives. Fortis does not provide tax or legal advice. We will work with your independent tax/legal advisor (CPA, Estate Attorney, Insurance broker, etc.) to help create a plan tailored to your specific needs. Such services include various reports on specific goals and objectives or general investment and/or planning recommendations, guidance to outside assets and periodic updates.

Our specific services in preparing your plan include:

- Review and clarification of your financial goals.
- Assessment of your overall financial position including cash flow, balance sheet, investment strategy, risk management and estate planning.
- Creation of a unique plan for each goal you have, including personal and business real estate, education, retirement or financial independence, charitable giving, estate planning, business succession and other personal goals.
- Development of a goal-oriented investment plan, with input from various advisors to our clients around tax suggestions, asset allocation, expenses, risk and liquidity factors for each goal. This includes IRA and qualified plans, taxable and trust accounts that require special attention.
- Design of a risk management plan including risk tolerance, risk avoidance, mitigation and transfer, including liquidity as well as various insurance and possible company benefits.
- Crafting and implementation of, in conjunction with your estate and/or corporate attorneys as tax advisor, an estate plan to provide for you and/or your heirs in the event of an incapacity or death.

A written evaluation of each client's initial situation or Financial Plan is provided to the client. An annual review will be provided by the Adviser, if indicated by the Client and Advisor per the Financial Planning Agreement. More frequent reviews occur but are not necessarily communicated to the client unless immediate changes are recommended.

Where appropriate, we provide advice about any type of legacy position held in client portfolios. Typically, these are assets that are ineligible to be custodied at our primary custodian. Clients will engage us to advise on certain investment products that are not maintained at their primary custodian, such as variable life insurance, annuity contracts and assets held in employer sponsored retirement plans and qualified tuition plans (i.e., 529 plans). If these accounts can be held at a custodian and no advisory fee is charged to the account, the account will pay ticket charges.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

#### Provided by Panoramix

We have contracted with Panoramix to utilize its technology platforms to support data reconciliation, performance reporting, fee calculation and billing, research, client database maintenance, quarterly performance evaluations, payable reports, web site

administration, trading platforms, and other functions related to the administrative tasks of managing client accounts. Due to this arrangement, Panoramix will have access to client accounts, but Panoramix will not serve as an investment advisor to our clients. Fortis and Panoramix are non-affiliated companies. Our Firm is charged an annual fee for each account administered by Panoramix. Please note that the fee charged to the client will not increase due to the annual fee Fortis pays to Panoramix, the annual fee is paid from the portion of the management fee retained by Fortis.

# SUB-ADVISORY AGREEMENTS

Fortis may utilize independent third-party investment advisers to aid us in the implementation of investment strategies for your portfolio. In certain circumstances, we may allocate a portion of a portfolio to an independent third-party investment adviser ("independent manager") for separate account management based upon your individual circumstances and objectives, including, but not limited to, your account size and tax circumstances. Upon the recognition of such situations, in coordination with you, we will hire an independent manager for the management of those securities.

Fortis evaluates a variety of information about independent managers, which may include the independent managers' public disclosure documents, materials supplied by the independent managers themselves and other third-party analyses it believes are reputable. To the extent possible, we seek to assess the independent managers' investment strategies, past performance and risk results in relation to its clients' individual portfolio allocations and risk exposure. Fortis also takes into consideration each independent manager's management style, returns, reputation, financial strength, reporting, pricing and research capabilities, among other factors.

Fortis continues to provide services relative to the discretionary or non-discretionary selection of the independent managers. On an ongoing basis, we monitor the performance of those accounts being managed by independent managers. Fortis seeks to ensure the independent managers' strategies and target allocations remain aligned with its clients' investment objectives and overall best interests.

#### THIRD PARTY MANAGERS

Fortis may provide investment advice and recommendations based on the investment strategies of Third-Party Managers ("Managers" or "TPM"). Selected Managers are evaluated by Fortis for client use. (See more about Third Party Managers in Item 8 below).

Our services include assisting you in identifying your investment objectives and matching personal and financial data with a select list of Managers. The intent of this service is to have a selected list of high quality and recognizable third-party investment management firms from which you select one or more Managers to handle the day-to-day management of your account(s). Managers selected for your investments need to meet several quantitative and qualitative criteria established by Fortis. Among the criteria that may be considered are the Manager's experience and regulatory record, assets under management, performance record, client retention, the level of client services provided, investment style, buy and sell disciplines, capitalization level, and the general investment

process. Information collected by our firm regarding Managers is believed to be reliable and accurate, but Fortis does not necessarily independently review or verify it on all occasions.

Following recommendations by our Investment Adviser Representatives ("IAR"), you will have final authority to select a Manager. The IAR will assist you in completing appropriate documents. Fortis' IARs assist clients with identifying their risk tolerance and investment objectives. IARs will recommend TPMs in relation to the client's stated investment objectives and risk tolerance. A client may select a recommended TPM based upon the client's needs. Clients will enter a Third-Party Advisory Program Agreement directly with Fortis.

You are advised and should understand that:

- A Manager's past performance is no guarantee of future results;
- There is a certain market and/or interest rate risk which may adversely affect any Manager's objectives and strategies, and could cause a loss in a Client's account(s); and
- Client risk parameters or comparative index selections provided to Fortis are guidelines only and there is no guarantee that they will be met or not be exceeded.

Fortis IARs shall be available to answer questions the client may have regarding their account and act as the communication conduit between the client and the Manager. Managers may take discretionary authority to determine the securities to be purchased and sold for the client. Neither Fortis nor its associated persons will have any trading authority with respect to clients' managed account with the TPM(s).

All accounts are managed by the selected Manager and Fortis does not have any discretionary trading authority with respect to such accounts. All performance reporting will be the responsibility of the respective Manager. Such performance reports will be provided directly to you and Fortis. Fortis does not audit or verify that these results are calculated on a uniform or consistent basis as provided by a manager directly to Fortis or through the consulting service utilized by the Manager.

Fortis has entered into agreements with various independent Managers. Under these agreements, Fortis offers client's various types of programs sponsored by these Managers. All third-party Managers to whom Fortis will refer clients will be licensed as registered investment advisors by their resident state and any applicable jurisdictions or registered investment advisors with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Third-party managed programs generally have account minimum requirements that will vary from investment advisor to investment advisor. Account minimums are generally higher on fixed income accounts than equity-based accounts. A complete description of the Manager's services, fee schedules and account minimums will be disclosed in the Manager's Form ADV or similar Disclosure Brochure which will be provided to clients at the time an agreement for services is executed and account is established.

#### CONSULTING SERVICES

We also provide clients investment advice on a more-limited basis on one-or-more isolated areas of concern such as variable sub-account management, estate planning, real estate, retirement planning, or any other specific topic. Additionally, we provide advice on non-securities matters about the rendering of estate planning, insurance, real estate, and/or annuity advice or any other

business advisory / consulting services for equity or debt investments in privately held businesses. In these cases, you will be required to select your own investment managers, custodian and/or insurance companies for the implementation of consulting recommendations. If your needs include brokerage and/or other financial services, we will recommend the use of one of several investment managers, brokers, banks, custodians, insurance companies or other financial professionals ("Firms"). You must independently evaluate these Firms before opening an account or transacting business and have the right to effect business through any firm you choose. You have the right to choose whether to follow the consulting advice that we provide.

#### WRAP FEE PROGRAM

We are the sponsor and manager of the Fortis Group Advisors Wrap Program (the "Program"), a wrap fee program (i.e., an arrangement where brokerage commissions and transaction costs are absorbed by the Firm). The fee covers transaction costs or commissions resulting from the management of your accounts, however, most investments trade without transaction fees today, so our payment of these and other incidental custodial related expenses should not be considered a significant factor in determining the relative value of our wrap program. Participants in the Program may pay a higher aggregate fee than if brokerage services are purchased separately. Additional information about the Program is available in Fortis Group Advisors' Wrap Brochure, which appears as Part 2A Appendix 1 of the Firm's Form ADV.

# REGULATORY ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT

As of December 31, 2023, we have \$731,690,834 in discretionary assets under management and \$51,639,158 in non-discretionary assets under management for a total of \$783,329,992 of Assets Under Management.

#### **ITEM 5 - FEES AND COMPENSATION**

#### INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT FEES AND COMPENSATION

Our Firm charges a fee as compensation for providing Investment Management services on your account. These services include advisory services, trade entry, investment supervision, and other account-maintenance activities. For non-wrap accounts, our custodian charges transaction costs, custodial fees, redemption fees, retirement plan and administrative fees or commissions. The client will pay these fees. See Additional Fees and Expenses below for additional details.

The fees for investment management are based on an annual percentage of assets under management and are billed either monthly or quarterly in advance. The monthly or quarterly fee will be calculated on the month end or quarter end balance of the account, plus weighted cash flows. Only flows over \$5,000 cash will either be credited or debited to calculate the fee. Fees are assessed on all assets under management, including securities, cash and money market balances. Margin account balances are not included in the fee billing.

Our maximum investment advisory fee is 1.75% or we may negotiate a lower advisory fee. The specific advisory fees are set forth in your Investment Management Agreement. Fees may vary based on the size of the account, complexity of the portfolio, extent of activity in the account or other reasons agreed upon by us and you as the client. In certain circumstances, our fees and the timing of the fee payments may be negotiated. Our employees and their family related accounts are charged a reduced fee for our services.

Unless otherwise instructed by the Client, we may aggregate related client accounts for the purposes of determining the account size and annualized fee. The common practice is often referred to as "house-holding" portfolios for fee purposes and may result in lower fees than if fees were calculated on portfolios separately. Our method of house-holding accounts for fee purposes looks at the overall family dynamic and relationship. When applicable and noted in **Exhibit A** of the Investment Management Agreement, legacy positions will also be excluded from the fee calculation.

The independent qualified custodian holding your funds and securities will debit your account directly for the advisory fee and pay that fee to us. You will provide written authorization permitting the fees to be paid directly from your account held by the qualified custodian. Further, the qualified custodian agrees to deliver an account statement to you on a monthly basis indicating all the amounts deducted from the account including our advisory fees.

Either Fortis or you may terminate the management agreement immediately upon written notice to the other party. The management fee will be pro-rated to the date of termination, for the month in which the cancellation notice was given and the fee will be refunded to your account. Upon termination, you are responsible for monitoring the securities in your account, and we will have no further obligation to act or advise with respect to those assets. In the event of client's death or disability, Fortis will continue management of the account until we are notified of client's death or disability and given alternative instructions by an authorized party.

# THIRD PARTY MANAGEMENT ("TPM PROGRAM" OR "TPM") FEES

Fees and billing methods are outlined in each respective Manager's Brochure and Advisory Contract. The Client pays an on-going fee directly to the Manager based upon a percentage of your assets under management with respect to each Manager. You will receive disclosure of all fees by the TPM, which include the terms of the compensation arrangement and a description of the compensation paid, at the time of signing an advisory agreement with the TPM.

The minimum account size for participating in a TPM Program will vary from Manager to Manager. All such minimums will be disclosed in the respective Manager's Brochure. Fortis may have the ability to negotiate such minimums for you.

You may terminate your relationship in accordance with the respective Managers' disclosure documents. If you terminate your participation in the Program within five business days of inception, you will receive a full refund of the fee. Pre-paid fees will be refunded in accordance with the respective Manager's agreement and disclosure documents.

A Manager relationship may be terminated at your or your IAR's discretion. Fortis may at any time terminate the relationship with a Manager that manages your assets. Fortis will notify you of instances where we have terminated a relationship with any Manager you are investing with. Fortis will not conduct on-going supervisory reviews of the Manager following such termination.

Factors involved in the termination of a Manager may include a failure to adhere to their stated management style or your objectives, regulatory issues, a material change in the professional staff of the Manager, unexplained poor performance, unexplained inconsistency of account performance, or our decision to no longer include the Manager on our list of approved Managers.

Fortis offers several investment management programs. Account custodial services may be provided by several account custodians depending on the investment management program offered. Programs may have higher or lower fees than other programs available through Fortis or available elsewhere. Investment management programs may differ in the services provided and method or type of management offered, and each may have different account minimums. Client reports will depend upon the management program selected. Please see complete details in the program brochure and custodial account agreement for each program recommended and offered.

# FINANCIAL PLANNING FEES

Fortis will negotiate the planning fees with you. Fees may vary based on the extent and complexity of your individual or family circumstances and the amount of your assets under our management. We will determine your fee for the designated financial advisory services based on a fixed fee or hourly arrangement described below.

Under our fixed fee arrangement, any fee will be agreed in advance of services being performed. The fee will be determined based on factors including the complexity of your financial situation, agreed upon deliverables, and whether or not you intend to implement any recommendations through Fortis. Fixed fees for financial plans range from \$500 to \$25,000. The specific fixed fee for your financial plan is specified in your planning agreement with Fortis.

Under our hourly arrangement, financial planning fees are billed at an hourly rate up to \$400.00 per hour depending on the complexity of the client's financial situation. Prior to beginning service, Fortis will provide an estimate of the approximate hours necessary to complete the plan. If we anticipate exceeding the estimated hours, your IAR will contact you to request authorization to provide additional services. Upon delivery of the plan and billing invoice, the hourly fees will be deducted from any retainer you paid, and any hourly fee balance remaining will be billed.

Typically, we complete a plan within a month and will present it to you within 90 days of the contract date, if you have provided us all information needed to prepare the financial plan. Fees are billed in with one half (50%) of the estimated fee due and payable at the time you enter into the financial planning agreement, with the balance due and payable at the time the financial plan is delivered. You may terminate the financial planning agreement by providing us with written notice. Upon termination, fees will be prorated to the date of termination and any unearned portion of the fee will be refunded to you based on an hourly rate of \$400.00. Services provided up to date of termination but not yet paid to Fortis will be billed to you based on the hourly rate of \$400.00. We will not require prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six (6) or more months in advance of providing any services.

In no case are our fees based on, or related to, the performance of your funds or investments.

When both investment management or plan implementation and wealth planning services are offered, there is a conflict of interest since there is an incentive for us offering wealth planning

services to recommend products or services for which Fortis receives compensation. However, Fortis will make all recommendations independent of such considerations and based solely on our obligations to consider your objectives and needs. As a wealth planning client, you have the right not to act upon any of our recommendations and not affect the transaction(s) through us if you decide to follow the recommendations.

#### CONSULTING

Fortis provides consulting services for clients who need advice on a limited scope of work. Fortis will negotiate consulting fees with you. Fees may vary based on the extent and complexity of the consulting project. Fees will be billed as services are rendered. Either party may terminate the consulting agreement at any time. Upon termination, fees will be prorated to the date of termination and any unearned portion of the fee will be refunded to you as described above.

# ADDITIONAL FEES AND EXPENSES

In addition to the advisory fees paid to our Firm, clients may also incur certain charges imposed by other third parties, such as broker-dealers, custodians, trust companies, banks and other financial institutions (collectively "Financial Institutions"). These additional charges may include securities, transaction fees, custodial fees, fees charged by the Independent Managers, charges imposed directly by a mutual fund or ETF in a client's account, as disclosed in the fund's prospectus (e.g., fund management fees and other fund expenses), deferred sales charges, odd-lot differentials, transfer taxes, wire transfer and electronic fund fees, and other fees and taxes on brokerage accounts and securities transactions. Fortis' brokerage practices are described at length in Item 12, below. Neither our Firm nor its supervised persons accept compensation for the sale of securities or other investment products. Further, our firm does not share in any of these additional fees and expenses outlined above.

#### ITEM 6 - PERFORMANCE BASED FEES AND SIDE-BY-SIDE MANAGEMENT

We do not charge advisory fees on a share of the capital appreciation of the funds or securities in a client account (so-called performance-based fees) nor engage side by side management.

# ITEM 7 - TYPES OF CLIENTS

We provide investment advice to individuals, high net worth individuals, retirement plans, partnerships, institutions, charitable organizations, trusts and estates. Our minimum initial account value is \$50,000; however, we may accept accounts for less than the minimum at our sole discretion.

# ITEM 8 - METHODS OF ANALYSIS, INVESTMENT STRATEGIES AND RISK OF LOSS

#### **OVERVIEW**

We seek to recommend investment strategies that will give a client a diversified portfolio consistent with the client's investment objective. We do this by analyzing the various securities, investment strategies, and third-party management firms. The goal is to identify a client's risk tolerance, and then find a manager with the maximum expected return for that level of risk.

Our investment strategies and advice may vary depending upon each client's specific financial situation. As such, we determine investments and allocations based upon your predefined objectives, risk tolerance, time horizon, financial horizon, financial information, liquidity needs, and other various suitability factors. Your restrictions and guidelines may affect the composition of your portfolio.

We utilize both fundamental and technical analysis. We gather our information from a broad array of financial resources including financial newspapers, magazines, research prepared by others, corporate rating services, company press releases, annual reports, prospectuses and filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

We determine how to allocate assets among the various asset classes based on the investment strategy chosen, prevailing economic conditions and our determination of where we are in the economic cycle. Potential risks and opportunities are weighed to determine to what degree the portfolio should be invested.

From time-to-time, market conditions may cause your account to vary from the established allocation. To remain consistent with the asset allocation guidelines established, your account is monitored on an ongoing basis and rebalanced to the original allocation, or if deemed beneficial, to a new allocation based on the then prevailing economic conditions and within the guidelines of the chosen investment strategy.

In addition to the rebalancing, overall market conditions and microeconomic factors that affect specific holdings in your account may trigger changes in allocation. Your account may also receive informal reviews more frequently.

#### INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY

Prior to making recommendations, we determine your financial status, needs, time horizon, investment objectives, risk tolerance, and tax status. From this, we create an investor profile and general asset allocation target. While we believe asset allocation is a key factor affecting long-term rate of return, we also believe fundamental research and securities selection are vital. To that end, we select from a narrow, refined list of institutional fund managers known for excellence in their respective disciplines. We focus primarily on the people, processes, research, consistency, and culture rather than simply recent "high performance" or "track record".

As much as reasonably possible, we strive to:

- Diversify strategically with non-correlating assets.
- Balance between growth and value styles.
- Diversify globally.
- Rebalance as markets change.
- Manage for tax efficient returns wherever possible or as your goals and objectives dictate.

Generally, the firm uses an "advance and protect" strategy which essentially uses market data to identify trends and take risk on or off based on individual models and the accounts within them. "Buy and hold" is only used when determined to be the most appropriate strategy for an appropriate period of time for individualized client needs.

#### MUTUAL FUND DISCLOSURE

Fortis may include mutual funds and exchange traded funds, ("ETFs") in our investment strategies. Fortis policy is to purchase institutional share classes of those mutual funds selected for the client's portfolio. The institutional share class generally has the lowest expense ratio. The expense ratio is the annual fee that all mutual funds or ETFs charge their shareholders. It expresses the percentage of assets deducted each fiscal year for funds expenses, including 12b-1 fees, management fees, administrative fees, operating costs, and all other asset-based costs incurred by the fund. Some fund families offer different classes of the same fund and one share class may have a lower expense ratio than another share class. These expenses come from client assets which could impact the client's account performance. Mutual fund expense ratios are in addition to our fee, and we do not receive any portion of these charges. If an institutional share class is not available for the mutual fund selected, the adviser will purchase the least expensive share class available for the mutual fund. As share classes with lower expense ratios become available, Fortis may use them in the client's portfolio, and/or convert the existing mutual fund position to the lower cost share class. Clients who transfer mutual funds into their accounts with Fortis would bear the expense of any contingent or deferred sales loads incurred upon selling the product. If a mutual fund has a frequent trading policy, the policy can limit a client's transactions in shares of the fund (e.g., for rebalancing, liquidations, deposits or tax harvesting). All mutual fund expenses and fees are disclosed in the respective mutual fund prospectus.

#### NON-TRANSACTION FEE (NTF) MUTUAL FUNDS

When selecting investments for our clients' portfolios we might choose mutual funds on your account custodian's Non-Transaction Fee (NTF) list. This means that your account custodian will not charge a transaction fee or commission associated with the purchase or sale of the mutual fund.

The mutual fund companies that choose to participate in your custodian's NTF fund program pay a fee to be included in the NTF program. The fee that a mutual fund company pays to participate in the program is ultimately borne by the owners of the mutual fund including clients of our Firm. When we decide whether to choose a fund from your custodian's NTF list or not, we consider our expected holding period of the fund, the position size and the expense ratio of the fund versus alternative funds. Depending on our analysis and future events, NTF funds might not always be in your best interest.

#### THIRD PARTY MANAGER ANALYSIS

We seek to recommend investment strategies that will give a client a diversified portfolio consistent with the client's investment objective. We do this by analyzing the various securities, investment strategies, and third-party management firms. The goal is to identify a client's risk tolerance, and then find the most appropriate manager for that client.

We examine the experience, expertise, investment philosophies and past performance of independent third-party managers in an attempt to determine if that manager has demonstrated an ability to invest over a period of time and in different economic conditions. We monitor the managers' underlying holdings, strategies, concentrations and leverage as part of our overall

periodic risk assessment. Additionally, as part of our due-diligence process, we survey the managers' compliance and business enterprise risks.

A risk of investing with a third-party manager who has been successful in the past is that he/she may not be able to replicate that success in the future. In addition, as we do not control the underlying investments in a managers' portfolio, there is also a risk that the manager may deviate from the stated investment mandate or strategy of the portfolio, making it a less suitable investment for our clients. Moreover, as we do not control the managers' daily business and compliance operations, we may be unaware of the lack of internal controls necessary to prevent business, regulatory or reputational deficiencies.

# RISK OF LOSS

Clients must understand that past performance is not indicative of future results. Therefore, current and prospective clients should never assume that future performance of any specific investment or investment strategy will be profitable. Investing in securities involves risk of loss. Further, depending on the different types of investments there will be varying degrees of risk. Clients and prospective clients should be prepared to bear investment loss including loss of original principal.

Because of the inherent risk of loss associated with investing, our Firm is unable to represent, guarantee, or even imply that our services and methods of analysis can or will predict future results, successfully identify market tops or bottoms, or insulate you from losses due to market corrections or declines.

Investors should be aware that accounts are subject to the following risks:

**Market Risk** — Even a long-term investment approach cannot guarantee a profit. Economic, political and issuer-specific events will cause the value of securities to rise or fall. Because the value of investment portfolios will fluctuate, there is the risk that you will lose money and your investment may be worth more or less upon liquidation.

Foreign Securities and Currency Risk — Investments in international and emerging-market securities include exposure to risks such as currency fluctuations, foreign taxes and regulations, and the potential for illiquid markets and political instability.

**Capitalization Risk** — Small-cap and mid-cap companies may be hindered as a result of limited resources or less diverse products or services, and their stocks have historically been more volatile than the stocks of larger, more established companies.

**Interest Rate Risk** — In a rising rate environment, the value of fixed-income securities generally declines, and the value of equity securities may be adversely affected.

**Credit Risk** — Credit risk is the risk that the issuer of a security may be unable to make interest payments and/or repay principal when due. A downgrade to an issuer's credit rating or a perceived change in an issuer's financial strength may affect a security's value and, thus, impact the fund's performance.

Securities Lending Risk — Securities lending involves the risk that the fund loses money because the borrower fails to return the securities in a timely manner or at all. The fund could also lose money if the value of the collateral provided for loaned securities, or the value of the investments made with the cash collateral, falls. These events could also trigger adverse tax consequences for the fund.

**Performance of Underlying Managers** — We select the mutual funds and ETFs in the asset allocation portfolios. However, we depend on the manager of such funds to select individual investments in accordance with their stated investment strategy.

ETF and Mutual Fund Risk — When we invest in an ETF or mutual fund for a client, the client will bear additional expenses based on its pro rata share of the ETFs or mutual fund's operating expenses, including the potential duplication of management fees. The risk of owning an ETF or mutual fund generally reflects the risks of owning the underlying securities the ETF or mutual fund holds. Clients may also incur brokerage costs when purchasing ETFs. ETFs and mutual funds face market-trading risks, including the potential lack of an active market for shares, losses from trading in the secondary markets and disruption in the creation/redemption process of the ETF or mutual fund. Any of these factors may lead to the fund's shares trading at either a premium or a discount to its "net asset value."

Management Risk – Your investment with us varies with the success and failure of our research, analysis and determination of portfolio securities and the investment strategy employed. If the investment strategy does not produce the expected returns, the value of the investment will decrease.

Options Risk — Options on securities may be subject to greater fluctuations in value than an investment in the underlying securities. Purchasing and writing put and call options are highly specialized activities and entail greater than ordinary investment risks. Liquidity Risk — Liquidity risk exists when particular investments would be difficult to purchase or sell, possibly preventing clients from selling such securities at an advantageous time or price.

Leveraged and Inverse ETFs and Mutual Funds — Leveraged ETF's and mutual funds, sometimes labeled "ultra" or "2x" for example, are designed to provide a multiple of underlying index's return, typically on a daily basis. Inverse products are designed to provide the opposite of the return of the underlying index, typically on a daily basis. These products are different from and can be riskier than traditional ETFs and mutual funds. Although these products are designed to provide returns that generally correspond to the underlying index, they may not be able to exactly replicate the performance of the index because of fund expenses and other factors. This is referred to as tracking error. Continual re-setting of returns within the product may add to the underlying costs and increase the tracking error. As a result, this may prevent these products from achieving their investment objective. In addition, compounding of the returns can produce a divergence from the underlying index over time, in particular for leveraged products. In highly volatile markets with large positive and negative swings, return distortions may be magnified over time. Some deviations from the stated objectives, to the positive or negative, are possible and

may or may not correct themselves over time. To accomplish their objectives, these products use a range of strategies, including swaps, futures contracts and other derivatives. These products may not be diversified and can be based on commodities or currencies. These products may have higher expense ratios and be less tax-efficient than more traditional ETFs and mutual funds.

Cybersecurity Risk — In addition to the Material Risks listed above, investing involves various operational and "cybersecurity" risks. These risks include both intentional and unintentional events at Fortis or one of its third-party counterparties or service providers, that may result in a loss or corruption of data, result in the unauthorized release or other misuse of confidential information, and generally compromise our Firm's ability to conduct its business. A cybersecurity breach may also result in a third-party obtaining unauthorized access to our clients' information, including social security numbers, home addresses, account numbers, account balances, and account holdings. Our Firm has established business continuity plans and risk management systems designed to reduce the risks associated with cybersecurity breaches. However, there are inherent limitations in these plans and systems, including that certain risks may not have been identified, in large part because different or unknown threats may emerge in the future. As such, there is no guarantee that such efforts will succeed, especially because our Firm does not directly control the cybersecurity systems of our third-party service providers. There is also a risk that cybersecurity breaches may not be detected.

Alternative Investments – Investments classified as "alternative investments" may include a broad range of underlying assets including, but not limited to, hedge funds, private equity, venture capital, and registered, publicly traded securities. Alternative investments are speculative, not suitable for all Clients and intended for only experienced and sophisticated investors who are willing to bear the high risk of the investment, which can include: loss of all or a substantial portion of the investment due to leveraging, short-selling, or other speculative investment practices; lack of liquidity in that there may be no secondary market for the fund and none expected to develop; volatility of returns; potential for restrictions on transferring interest in the fund; potential lack of diversification and resulting higher risk due to concentration of trading authority with a single advisor; absence of information regarding valuations and pricing; potential for delays in tax reporting; less regulation and typically higher fees than other investment options such as mutual funds. The SEC requires investors to be accredited to invest in these more speculative alternative investments. Investing in a fund that concentrates its investments in a few holdings may involve heightened risk and result in greater price volatility.

Real Estate Securities And Related Derivatives — The Fund may gain exposure to the real estate sector by investing in real estate-linked derivatives, REITs, and common, preferred and convertible securities of issuers in real estate-related industries. Each of these types of investments are subject to risks similar to those associated with direct ownership of real estate, including loss to casualty or condemnation, increases in property taxes and operating expenses, zoning law amendments, changes in interest rates, overbuilding and increased competition, variations in market value, and possible environmental liabilities.

REITs are subject to management fees and other expenses, and so the Fund, when investing in REITs, will bear its proportionate share of the costs of the REITs' operations. An investment in a REIT or a real estate-linked derivative instrument that is linked to the value of a REIT is subject to additional risks, such as poor performance by the manager of the REIT, adverse changes to the tax laws or failure by the REIT to qualify for tax-free pass-through of income under the Code. In addition, some REITs have limited diversification because they invest in a limited number of properties, a narrow geographic area, or a single type of property. Furthermore, REITs are not diversified because they only operate in the real estate business and are heavily dependent on cash flow. Also, the organizational documents of a REIT may contain provisions that make changes in control of the REIT difficult and time-consuming.

Concentration Risk – Strategies concentrated in only a few securities, sectors or industries, regions or countries, or asset classes could expose a portfolio to greater risk. They may cause the portfolio value to fluctuate more widely than a diversified portfolio. Overexposure to certain sectors or asset classes (e.g., MLPs, REITs, etc.) may be detrimental to an investor if there is a negative sector move.

#### ITEM 9 - DISCIPLINARY INFORMATION

We do have legal, financial or other "disciplinary" items to report.

# ITEM 10 - OTHER FINANCIAL INDUSTRY ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATIONS

#### **INSURANCE**

IARs of Fortis may act as agents appointed with various life, disability, or other insurance companies, and receive commissions, trails, or other compensation from the respective product sponsors and/or as a result of effecting insurance transactions for clients. However, clients should note that they are under no obligation to purchase any insurance products through Fortis.

#### BROKER-DEALER

Certain IARs of Fortis are registered representatives of LPL Financial ("LPL") a securities broker-dealer and will be compensated for effecting securities transactions or providing advisory services. A portion of the time of Fortis and these IARs is spent in connection with broker/dealer activities.

As a broker-dealer, LPL engages in a broad range of activities normally associated with securities brokerage firms. Pursuant to the investment advice given by Fortis or its IARs, investments in securities may be recommended for clients. If LPL is selected as the broker-dealer, LPL and its registered representatives, including IARs of Fortis, may receive commissions for executing securities transactions. When IARs of Fortis receive commissions in connection with the advice given to advisory clients, Fortis may reduce a portion of its fees by the amount of the commissions earned by Fortis' IARs.

You are advised that if LPL is selected as the broker-dealer, the transaction charges may be higher or lower than the charges you may pay if the transactions were executed at other broker/dealers. You should note, however, that you are under no obligation to purchase securities through IARs of Fortis or LPL.

Fortis may provide advice regarding investment company securities. You should be aware that, in addition to the advisory fees you pay in connection with any Fortis program, each investment company also pays its own separate investment advisory fees and other expenses. Such fees and expenses are disclosed in the mutual fund's prospectus. In addition, clients should be aware that mutual funds may be purchased separately, independent of the investment management services of Fortis.

Moreover, you should note that under the rules and regulations of FINRA, LPL has an obligation to maintain certain client records and perform other functions regarding certain aspects of the investment advisory activities of its registered representatives. These obligations require LPL to coordinate with and have the cooperation of its registered representatives that operate as, or are otherwise associated with, investment advisers other than LPL.

Certain IARs of Fortis may, in their capacity as registered representatives of LPL, or as agents appointed with various life, disability or other insurance companies, receive commissions, 12(b)-1 fees, trails, or other compensation from the respective product sponsors and/or as a result of effecting securities transactions for clients. As previously noted, when commissions or fees are received by Fortis or these IARs in connection with the advice given to advisory clients, Fortis may, but is not obligated to, reduce its fee proportionate to the amount of the commission or fee earned by Fortis or these IARs. However, clients should note that they are under no obligation to purchase any investment products through Fortis or it IARs.

# ITEM 11 - CODE OF ETHICS

Our Firm and persons associated with us are allowed to invest for their own accounts or to have a financial investment in the same securities or other investments that we recommend or acquire for your account and may engage in transactions that are the same as or different than transactions recommended to or made for your account. This creates a conflict of interest. We recognize the fiduciary responsibility to act in your best interest and have established polices to mitigate conflicts of interest.

We have developed and implemented a Code of Ethics that sets forth standards of conduct expected of our advisory personnel to mitigate this conflict of interest. The Code of Ethics addresses, among other things, personal trading, gifts, the prohibition against the use of inside information.

The Code of Ethics is designed to protect our clients to detect and deter misconduct, educate personnel regarding the firm's expectations and laws governing their conduct, remind personnel that they are in a position of trust and must act with complete propriety at all times, protect the reputation of Fortis, guard against violation of the securities laws, and establish procedures for personnel to follow so that we may determine whether their personnel are complying with the firm's ethical principles.

We have established the following restrictions in order to ensure our firm's fiduciary responsibilities:

- A director, officer, or employee of Fortis shall not buy or sell any securities for their personal portfolio(s) where their decision is substantially derived, in whole or in part, by reason of his or her employment unless the information is also available to the investing public on reasonable inquiry. No supervised employee of Fortis shall prefer his or her own interest to that of the advisory client.
- We maintain a list of all securities holdings of anyone associated with this advisory practice with access to advisory recommendations. These holdings are reviewed on a regular basis by an appropriate officer/individual of Fortis.
- We emphasize the unrestricted right of the client to decline to implement any advice rendered, except in situations where we are granted discretionary authority of the client's account.
- We require that all supervised employees must act in accordance with all applicable Federal and State regulations governing registered investment advisory practices.
- Any supervised employee not in observance of the above may be subject to termination.

# **INVESTMENT POLICY**

None of our associated persons may affect for himself/herself or for accounts in which he/she holds a beneficial interest, any transactions in a security which is being actively recommended to any of our clients, unless in accordance with the Firm's procedures.

You may request a complete copy of our Code by contacting us at the address, telephone or email on the cover page of this Part 2; Attn: Chief Compliance Officer.

# **ITEM 12 - BROKERAGE PRACTICES**

For the past several years, FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC has participated in the TD Ameritrade Institutional program. TD Ameritrade Institutional was a division of TD Ameritrade, Inc. ("TD Ameritrade" "TDA") member FINRA/SIPC. TD Ameritrade was an independent and unaffiliated SEC-registered broker-dealer and has been acquired in a merger/acquisition by Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. (Schwab) a broker-dealer registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and a member of FINRA and SIPC. Like TDA, Schwab offers custodial services to independent investment advisors that include custody of securities, trade execution, clearance, and settlement of transactions. FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC received some benefits from TD Ameritrade through its participation in the program and will likely receive some benefits from Schwab. (Please see the disclosure under Item 14 below.)

# THE CUSTODIAN AND BROKERS WE USE

Effective September 5, 2023, FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC has transitioned to utilizing Schwab's custodial services as part of the TDA to Schwab merger for advisory custodial and brokerage services. In limited circumstances, LPL Financial Corporation, an SEC-registered broker-dealer member FINRA/SIPC (LPL), may be utilized as custodian and broker. Schwab and LPL (the "custodian") will act solely as a custodian/broker-dealer and not as an investment advisor to you. Schwab or LPL will have no discretion over your account and will act solely on instructions it receives from us (or you). Schwab and LPL (when referring to LPL advisory custodial services) have no responsibility for our services and undertake no duty to you to monitor our firm's management of your account or other services we provide to you.

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC is independently owned and operated and is not affiliated with any custodian. Schwab and LPL will hold your assets in a brokerage account and buy and sell securities when we instruct them to. While we require that you use either Schwab or LPL as custodian/broker, you will decide whether to do so and will open your account with Schwab or LPL by entering into an account agreement directly with them. Conflicts of interest associated with this arrangement are described below as well as in Item 14 (Client referrals and other compensation). You should consider these conflicts of interest when selecting your custodian.

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC does not maintain custody of your assets on which we advise, although we may be deemed to have custody of your assets if you give us authority to withdraw assets from your account (see Item 15—Custody, below). Your assets must be maintained in an account at a "qualified custodian," generally a broker-dealer or bank. As previously mentioned, we require that our clients use the qualified custodians Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (Schwab), a registered broker-dealer, member SIPC, or in limited circumstances LPL Financial Corporation (LPL), a registered broker-dealer, member SIPC.

# **INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

While we recommend that clients use Schwab or LPL as custodian/broker, the client must decide whether to do so and we will assist the client in opening accounts with Schwab or LPL by entering into account agreements directly with them. We do not open the account for or on behalf of the client. The custodian will notify the client in writing of the custodian's name, address, and the title of the account, promptly when the account is opened and following any changes to this information. The accounts will always be held in the name of the client and never in our firm's name. Even though clients maintain accounts at Schwab or LPL, we can still use other brokers to execute trades for client accounts (see Client Brokerage and Custody Costs, below).

# **HOW WE SELECT BROKERS/CUSTODIANS**

We seek to recommend a custodian/broker who will hold client assets and execute transactions on terms that are, overall, most advantageous when compared to other available providers and their services. We consider a wide range of factors, including, among others:

- Combination of transaction execution services and asset custody services (generally without a separate fee for custody)
- Capability to execute, clear, and settle trades (buy and sell securities for client accounts)
- Capability to facilitate transfers and payments to and from accounts (wire transfers, check requests, bill payment, etc.)
- Breadth of available investment products (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, exchange-traded funds [ETFs], etc.)
- Availability of investment research and tools that assist us in making investment decisions
- Quality of services
- Competitiveness of the price of those services (commission rates, other fees, etc.) and willingness to negotiate the prices
- Reputation, financial strength, and stability
- Prior service to FFEC Advisory Group and our other clients

• Availability of other products and services that benefit us, as discussed below (see Products and Services Available to Us)

# CLIENT BROKERAGE AND CUSTODY COSTS

For our clients' accounts that Schwab maintains, Schwab generally does not charge separately for custody services. However, Schwab receives compensation by charging ticket charges or other fees on trades that it executes or that settle into clients' Schwab accounts. In addition to commissions, Schwab charges a flat dollar amount as a "prime broker" or "trade away" fee for each trade that we have executed by a different broker-dealer but where the securities bought or the funds from the securities sold are deposited (settled) into a client's Schwab account. These fees are in addition to the ticket charges or other compensation the client pays the executing broker-dealer. Because of this, in order to minimize trading costs, we have Schwab execute most trades for client accounts. We have determined that having Schwab execute most trades is consistent with our duty to seek "best execution" of client trades. Best execution means the most favorable terms for a transaction based on all relevant factors, including those listed above (see How We Select Brokers/Custodians).

# PRODUCTS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO US

Schwab Advisor Services™ (formerly called Schwab Institutional®) is Schwab's business serving independent investment advisory firms like us. They provide us and our clients with access to its institutional brokerage, trading, custody, reporting, and related services, many of which are not typically available to Schwab retail customers. Schwab also makes available various support services. Some of those services help us manage or administer our clients' accounts; others help us manage and grow our business. Schwab's support services generally are available on an unsolicited basis (we do not have to request them) and at no charge to us.

#### FOLLOWING IS A MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SCHWAB'S SUPPORT SERVICES:

#### Services That Benefit Our Clients

Schwab's institutional brokerage services include access to a broad range of investment products, execution of securities transactions, and custody of client assets. The investment products available through Schwab include some to which we might not otherwise have access or that would require a significantly higher minimum initial investment by our clients. Schwab's services described in this paragraph generally benefit our clients and their accounts.

#### Services That May Not Directly Benefit Our Clients

Schwab also makes available to us other products and services that benefit us but may not directly benefit our clients or their accounts. These products and services assist us in managing and administering our clients' accounts. They include investment research, both Schwab's own and that of third parties. We may use this research to service all or a substantial number of our clients' accounts, including accounts not maintained at Schwab.

In addition to investment research, Schwab also makes available software and other technology that:

- Provide access to client account data (such as duplicate trade confirmations and account statements)
- Facilitate trade execution and allocate aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts
- Provide pricing and other market data
- Facilitate payment of our fees from our clients' accounts
- Assist with back-office functions, recordkeeping, and client reporting

#### Services That Generally Benefit Only Us

Schwab also offers other services (soft dollars) intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. These services include:

- Educational conferences and events
- Consulting on technology, compliance, legal, and business needs
- Publications and conferences on practice management and business succession
- Access to employee benefits providers, human capital consultants, and insurance providers

Schwab may provide some of these services itself. In other cases, it will arrange for third-party vendors to provide the services to us. Schwab may also discount or waive its fees for some of these services or pay all or a part of a third party's fees. Schwab may also provide us with other benefits, such as occasional business entertainment for our personnel.

#### Our Interest in Schwab's Services

The availability of these services from Schwab benefits us because we do not have to produce or purchase them. These services are not contingent upon us committing any specific amount of business to Schwab in trading commissions. We believe that our selection of Schwab as custodian and broker is in the best interests of our clients.

Some of the products, services and other benefits provided by Schwab benefit us and may not benefit our client accounts. Our recommendation or requirement that you place assets in Schwab's custody may be based in part on benefits Schwab provides to us, or our agreement to maintain certain Assets Under Management at Schwab, and not solely on the nature, cost or quality of custody and execution services provided by Schwab.

We place trades for our clients' accounts subject to our duty to seek best execution and other fiduciary duties. We may use broker-dealers other than Schwab to execute trades for your accounts maintained at Schwab, but this practice may result in additional costs to clients so that we are more likely to place trades through Schwab rather than other broker-dealers. Schwab's execution quality may be different than other broker-dealers.

#### RECOMMENDATION OF LPL FINANCIAL

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC will generally [recommend, request or require] that clients establish an advisory/brokerage account with LPL Financial to maintain custody of clients' assets and to effect trades for their accounts. LPL Financial provides brokerage and custodial services to independent investment advisory firms, including FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC. For FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC accounts custodied at LPL Financial, LPL Financial generally is compensated by clients through commissions, trails, or other transaction-based fees for trades that are executed through LPL Financial or that settle into LPL Financial accounts. For IRA accounts, LPL Financial generally charges account maintenance fees. In addition, LPL Financial also charges clients miscellaneous fees and charges, such as account transfer fees. LPL Financial charges FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC an asset-based administration fee for administrative services provided by LPL Financial. Such administration fees are not directly borne by clients but may be taken into account when FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC negotiates its advisory fee with clients.

While LPL Financial does not participate in, or influence the formulation of, the investment advice FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC provides, certain supervised persons of FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC are Dually Registered Persons. Dually Registered Persons are restricted by certain FINRA rules and policies from maintaining client accounts at another custodian or executing client transactions in such client accounts through any broker-dealer or custodian that is not approved by LPL Financial. As a result, the use of other trading platforms must be approved not only by FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC, but also by LPL Financial.

Clients should also be aware that for accounts where LPL Financial serves as the custodian, FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC is limited to offering services and investment vehicles that are approved by LPL Financial, and may be prohibited from offering services and investment vehicles that may be available through other broker-dealers and custodians, some of which may be more suitable for a client's portfolio than the services and investment vehicles offered through LPL Financial.

Clients should understand that not all investment advisers [require, request or recommend] that clients custody their accounts and trade through specific broker-dealers.

Clients should also understand that LPL Financial is responsible under FINRA rules for supervising certain business activities of FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC and its Dually Registered Persons that are conducted through broker-dealers and custodians other than LPL Financial. LPL Financial charges a fee for its oversight of activities conducted through these other broker-dealers and custodians. This arrangement presents a conflict of interest because FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC has a financial incentive to recommend that you maintain your account with LPL Financial rather than with another broker-dealer or custodian to avoid incurring the oversight fee.

#### OVERSIGHT FEE FOR ASSETS HELD AWAY

As stated previously, individuals associated with FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC are licensed as registered representatives of LPL Financial. As a result of this licensing relationship, LPL Financial is responsible for supervising certain activities of FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC to the extent FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC manages assets at a broker/dealer and custodian other than LPL Financial. LPL Financial charges a fee for this oversight. This presents a conflict of interest in that FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC has a financial incentive to recommend that you maintain your account with LPL Financial rather than another custodian in order to avoid the oversight fee. However, to the extent FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC recommends you use LPL Financial for such services, it is because

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC believes that it is in your best interest to do so based on the quality and pricing of the execution, benefits of an integrated platform for brokerage and advisory accounts, and other services provided by LPL Financial.

#### BENEFITS OF USING LPL AS CUSTODIAN

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC receives support services and/or products from LPL Financial, many of which assist FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC to better monitor and service program accounts maintained at LPL Financial; however, some of the services and products benefit FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC and not client accounts. These support services and/or products may be received without cost, at a discount, and/or at a negotiated rate, and may include the following:

- investment-related research
- pricing information and market data
- software and other technology that provide access to client account data
- compliance and/or practice management-related publications
- onsulting services
- attendance at conferences, meetings, and other educational and/or social events
- marketing support
- omputer hardware and/or software
- other products and services used by [Advisor] in furtherance of its investment advisory business operations

LPL Financial may provide these services and products directly or may arrange for third-party vendors to provide the services or products to FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC. In the case of third-party vendors, LPL Financial may pay for some or all of the third party's fees.

These support services are provided to FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC based on the overall relationship between FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC and LPL Financial. It is not the result of soft dollar arrangements or any other express arrangements with LPL Financial that involves the execution of client transactions as a condition to the receipt of services. FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC will continue to receive the services regardless of the volume of client transactions executed with LPL Financial. Clients do not pay more for services as a result of this arrangement. There is no corresponding commitment made by the FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC to LPL or any other entity to invest any specific amount or percentage of client assets in any specific securities as a result of the arrangement. However, because FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC receives these benefits from LPL Financial, there is a potential conflict of interest. The receipt of these products and services presents a financial incentive for FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC to recommend that its clients use LPL Financial's custodial platform rather than another custodian's platform.

# LIMITATIONS DUE TO LPL LICENSING/REGISTRATION

The individuals that are licensed as registered representatives of LPL Financial are subject to regulations that restrict them from conducting securities transactions away from LPL Financial without written authorization from LPL Financial. Clients should, therefore, be aware that for accounts where LPL Financial serves as the custodian, FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC is limited to offering services and investment vehicles that are approved by LPL Financial and may be prohibited from offering services and investment vehicles that may be available through other broker/dealers and custodians.

#### BENEFITS RECEIVED BY FORTIS GROUP ADVISORS, LLC PERSONNEL

LPL Financial makes available to FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC various products and services designed to assist FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC in managing and administering client accounts. Many of these products and services may be used to service all or a substantial number of FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC accounts, including accounts not held with LPL Financial. These include software and other technology that provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmation and account statements); facilitate trade execution (and aggregation and allocation of trade orders for multiple client accounts); provide research, pricing information and other market data; facilitate payment of FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC fees from its clients' accounts; and assist with back-office functions; recordkeeping and client reporting.

LPL Financial also makes available to FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC other services intended to help FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC manage and further develop its business. Some of these services assist FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC to better monitor and service program accounts maintained at LPL Financial, however, many of these services benefit only FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC, for example, services that assist FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC in growing its business. These support services and/or products may be provided without cost, at a discount, and/or at a negotiated rate, and include practice management-related publications; consulting services; attendance at conferences and seminars, meetings, and other educational and/or social events; marketing support; and other products and services used by FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC in furtherance of the operation and development of its investment advisory business.

Where such services are provided by a third party vendor, LPL Financial will either make a payment to FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC to cover the cost of such services, reimburse FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC for the cost associated with the services, or pay the third party vendor directly on behalf of FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC.

The products and services described above are provided to FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC as part of its overall relationship with LPL Financial. While as a fiduciary FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC endeavors to act in its clients' best interests, the receipt of these benefits creates a conflict of interest because FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC's [requirement, request or recommendation] that clients custody their assets at LPL Financial is based in part on the benefit to FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC of the availability of the foregoing products and services and not solely on the nature, cost or quality of custody or brokerage services provided by LPL Financial. FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC's receipt of some of these benefits may be based on the amount of advisory assets custodied on the LPL Financial platform.

# TRANSITION ASSISTANCE BENEFITS - LPL

LPL Financial provides various benefits and payments to Dually Registered Persons that are new to the LPL Financial platform to assist the representative with the costs (including foregone revenues during account transition) associated with transitioning his or her business to the LPL Financial platform (collectively referred to as "Transition Assistance"). The proceeds of such Transition Assistance payments are intended to be used for a variety of purposes, including but not necessarily limited to, providing working capital to assist in funding the Dually Registered Person's business, satisfying any outstanding debt owed to the Dually Registered Person's prior firm, offsetting account transfer fees (ACATs) payable to LPL Financial as a result of the Dually Registered

Person's clients transitioning to LPL Financial's custodial platform, technology set-up fees, marketing and mailing costs, stationary and licensure transfer fees, moving expenses, office space expenses, staffing support and termination fees associated with moving accounts.

The amount of the Transition Assistance payments is often significant in relation to the overall revenue earned or compensation received by the Dually Registered Person at his/her prior firm. Such payments are generally based on the size of the Dually Registered Person's business established at their prior firm and/or assets under custody on the LPL Financial platform. Please refer to the relevant Part 2B brochure supplement for more information about the specific Transition Payments your representative receives.

Transition Assistance payments and other benefits are provided to associated persons of FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC in their capacity as registered representatives of LPL Financial. However, the receipt of Transition Assistance by such Dually Registered Persons creates conflicts of interest relating to Fortis's advisory business because it creates a financial incentive for Fortis's representatives to recommend that its clients maintain their accounts with LPL Financial. In certain instances, the receipt of such benefits is dependent on a Dually Registered Person maintaining its clients' assets with LPL Financial and therefore FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC has an incentive to recommend that clients maintain their account with LPL Financial in order to generate such benefits.

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC attempts to mitigate these conflicts of interest by evaluating and recommending that clients use LPL Financial's services based on the benefits that such services provide to our clients, rather than the Transition Assistance earned by any particular Dually Registered Person. Fortis considers LPL Financial's trading expertise, commission rates, value of research financial stability and broker infrastructure when recommending or requiring that clients maintain accounts with LPL Financial. However, clients should be aware of this conflict and take it into consideration in making a decision whether to custody their assets in a brokerage account at LPL Financial.

# EXTERNAL CUSTODIAN DISCLOSURE

Certain associated persons of the FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC are registered representatives of LPL Financial. As a result of our relationship with LPL, LPL may have access to certain confidential information (e.g., financial information, investment objectives, transactions, and holdings) about Fortis' clients, even if client does not establish any account through LPL. If you would like a copy of the LPL Financial privacy policy, please contact (201)-383-0630 or compliance@fortisgroupadvisors.com.

#### BROKERAGE FOR CLIENT REFERRALS

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC does not receive client referrals from any custodian or third party in exchange for using that broker-dealer or third party.

# AGGREGATION AND ALLOCATION OF TRANSACTIONS

We may aggregate transactions if we believe that aggregation is consistent with the duty to seek best execution for our clients and is consistent with the disclosures made to clients and terms defined in the client investment advisory agreement. No advisory client will be favored over any other client, and each account that participates in an aggregated order will participate at the average share price (per custodian) for all transactions in that security on a given business day.

If we do not receive a complete fill for an aggregated order, we will allocate the order on a prorata basis. If we determine that a pro-rata allocation is not appropriate under the particular circumstances, we will base the allocation on other relevant factors, which may include:

- When only a small percentage of the order is executed, with respect to purchase allocations, allocations may be given to accounts high in cash;
- With respect to sale allocations, allocations may be given to accounts low in cash;
- We may allocate shares to the account with the smallest order, or to the smallest position, or to an account that is out of line with respect to security or sector weightings, relative to other portfolios with similar mandates;
- We may allocate to one account when that account has limitations in its investment guidelines prohibiting it from purchasing other securities that we expect to produce similar investment results and that can be purchased by other accounts in the block;
- If an account reaches an investment guideline limit and cannot participate in an allocation, we may reallocate shares to other accounts. For example, this may be due to unforeseen changes in an account's assets after an order is placed;
- If a pro-rata allocation of a potential execution would result in a de Minimis allocation in one or more accounts, we may exclude the account(s) from the allocation.
- We will document the reasons for any deviation from a pro-rata allocation.

# TRADE ERRORS

We have implemented procedures designed to prevent trade errors; however, trade errors in client accounts cannot always be avoided. Consistent with our fiduciary duty, it is our policy to correct trade errors in a manner that is in the best interest of the client. In cases where the client causes the trade error, the client will be responsible for any loss resulting from the correction. Depending on the specific circumstances of the trade error, the client may not be able to receive any gains generated as a result of the error correction. In all situations where the client does not cause the trade error, the client will be made whole, and we will absorb any loss resulting from the trade error if the error was caused by the firm. If the error is caused by the Custodian, the Custodian will be responsible for covering all trade error costs. If an investment gain results from the correcting trade, the gain will be donated to charity. We will never benefit or profit from trade errors.

# DIRECTED BROKERAGE

We do not routinely recommend, request, or require that you direct us to execute transaction through a specified broker dealer. Additionally, we typically do not permit you to direct brokerage. We place trades for your account subject to our duty to seek best execution and other fiduciary duties.

#### **ITEM 13 - REVIEW OF ACCOUNTS**

# ACCOUNT REVIEWS AND REVIEWERS – INVESTMENT SUPERVISORY SERVICES

Our Investment Adviser Representatives will monitor client accounts on a regular basis and perform annual reviews with each client. All accounts are reviewed for consistency with client investment strategy, asset allocation, risk tolerance and performance relative to the appropriate

benchmark. More frequent reviews may be triggered by changes in an account holder's personal, tax or financial status. Geopolitical and macroeconomic specific events may also trigger reviews.

# STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

The custodian for the individual client's account will provide clients with an account statement at least quarterly.

Reports may also be provided at every client meeting. Communication to clients will be done on an as needed basis with a minimum of 1 contact per calendar year.

You are urged to compare the reports provided by Fortis against the account statements you receive directly from your account custodian.

Consulting clients (i.e. those who have no assets under management with us in our advisory program) will receive no regular reports from the Firm.

#### ITEM 14 – CLIENT REFERRALS AND OTHER COMPENSATION

We pay referral fees to independent Promotors for the referrals of their clients to our Firm in accordance with Rule 206 (4)-1 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. Such referral fees represent a share of our investment advisory fee charged to our clients. This arrangement will not result in higher costs to you. In this regard, we maintain Promotors Agreements in compliance with Rule 206 (4)-1 of the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 and applicable state and federal laws. All clients referred by Promotors to our Firm will be given full written disclosure describing the terms and fee arrangements between our Firm and Promotor(s). In cases where state law requires licensure of Promotors, we ensure that no referral fees are paid unless the Promotor is registered as an investment adviser representative of our Firm. The Promotor will not provide clients any investment advice on behalf of our Firm.

FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC may be asked to recommend a financial professional, such as an attorney, accountant, or mortgage broker. In such cases, our Firm does not receive any direct compensation in return for any referrals made to individuals or firms in our professional network. Clients must independently evaluate these firms or individuals before engaging in business with them and clients have the right to choose any financial professional to conduct business. Individuals and firms in our financial professional network may refer clients to our Firm. Again, our Firm does not pay any direct compensation in return for any referrals made to our Firm. Our Firm does recognize the fiduciary responsibility to place your interests first and have established policies in this regard to mitigate any conflicts of interest.

As disclosed under Brokerage Practices, we participate in LPL's and Schwab's institutional customer program and we may recommend one of these custodians to you for custody and brokerage services. There is no direct link between our participation in the program and the investment advice we give to our clients, although we receive economic benefits through our participation in the program that are typically not available to any other independent Investment Advisors participating in the program. These benefits include the following products and services (provided without cost or at a discount): receipt of duplicate Client statements and confirmations; research related products and tools; consulting services; access to a trading desk serving advisor

participants; access to block trading (which provides the ability to aggregate securities transactions for execution and then allocate the appropriate shares to Client accounts); the ability to have advisory fees deducted directly from Client accounts; access to an electronic communications network for Client order entry and account information; access to mutual funds with no transaction fees and to certain institutional money managers; and discounts on compliance, marketing, research, technology, and practice management products or services provided to us by third party vendors. The custodians may also have paid for business consulting and professional services received by some of our related persons. Some of the products and services made available by our custodians through the program may benefit us but may not benefit your account. These products or services may assist us in managing and administering your account, including accounts not maintained at LPL or Schwab. Other services made available by our custodians are intended to help us manage and further develop our business enterprise. The benefits received by Fortis or our personnel through participation in the program do not depend on the amount of brokerage transactions directed to the custodians. As part of our fiduciary duties to clients, we endeavor at all times to put the interests of our clients first. You should be aware, however, that the receipt of economic benefits by Fortis or our related persons in and of itself creates a potential conflict of interest and may indirectly influence our choice of Schwab or LPL for custody and brokerage services.

# ITEM 15 – CUSTODY

Custody has been defined by regulators as having access or control over client funds and/or securities. Our firm does not have physical custody, as it applies to investment advisors.

#### **DEDUCTION OF ADVISORY FEES**

For all accounts, our firm has the authority to have fees deducted directly from client accounts. Our firm has established procedures to ensure all client funds and securities are held at a qualified custodian in a separate account for each client under that client's name. Clients or an independent representative of the client will direct, in writing, the establishment of all accounts and therefore are aware of the qualified custodian's name, address and the manner in which the funds or securities are maintained. Finally, account statements are delivered directly from the qualified custodian to each client, or the client's independent representative, at least quarterly. You should carefully review those statements and are urged to compare the statements against reports received from our Firm. When you have questions about your account statements, you should contact our Firm or the qualified custodian preparing the statement. Please refer to Item 5 for more information about the deduction of adviser fees.

# ITEM 16 - INVESTMENT DISCRETION

For discretionary accounts, prior to engaging FORTIS Group Advisors, LLC to provide investment advisory services, you will enter a written Agreement with us granting the firm the authority to supervise and direct, on an on-going basis, investments in accordance with the client's investment objective and guidelines. In addition, you will need to execute additional documents required by the Custodian to authorize and enable Fortis, in its sole discretion, without prior consultation with or ratification by you, to purchase, sell or exchange securities in and for your accounts. We are authorized, in our discretion and without prior consultation with you to: (1) buy, sell, exchange and trade any investment company registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940 and (2)

determine the amount of securities to be bought or sold and (3) place orders with the custodian. Any limitations to such discretionary authority will be communicated to our Firm in writing by you, the client.

The limitations on investment and brokerage discretion held by Fortis for you are:

- For discretionary accounts, we require that we be provided with authority to determine which securities and the amounts of securities to be bought or sold.
- Any limitations on this discretionary authority shall in writing as indicated on the investment advisory Agreement, Appendix B. You may change/amend these limitations as required.

Research products and services received by us from custodians will be used to provide services to all our clients.

In some instance, we may not have discretion. We will discuss all transactions with you prior to execution or you will be required to make the trades if in an employer sponsored account.

#### ITEM 17 – VOTING YOUR SECURITIES

We will not vote proxies on your behalf. You are welcome to vote proxies or designate an independent third-party at your own discretion. You designate proxy voting authority in the custodial account documents. You must ensure that proxy materials are sent directly to you or your assigned third party. We do not take action with respect to any securities or other investments that become the subject of any legal proceedings, including bankruptcies. Clients can contact our office with questions about a particular solicitation by phone at (201) 383-0630.

#### ITEM 18 – FINANCIAL INFORMATION

We do not require or solicit prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance. Therefore, we are not required to include a balance sheet for our most recent fiscal year. We are not subject to a financial condition that is reasonably likely to impair our ability to meet contractual commitments to clients. Finally, we have not been the subject of a bankruptcy petition at any time.