Management's discussion and analysis

CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES USED BY THE FIRM

JPMorgan Chase's accounting policies and use of estimates are integral to understanding its reported results. The Firm's most complex accounting estimates require management's judgment to ascertain the appropriate carrying value of assets and liabilities. The Firm has established policies and control procedures intended to ensure that estimation methods, including any judgments made as part of such methods, are well-controlled, independently reviewed and applied consistently from period to period. The methods used and judgments made reflect, among other factors, the nature of the assets or liabilities and the related business and risk management strategies, which may vary across the Firm's businesses and portfolios. In addition, the policies and procedures are intended to ensure that the process for changing methodologies occurs in an appropriate manner. The Firm believes its estimates for determining the carrying value of its assets and liabilities are appropriate. The following is a brief description of the Firm's critical accounting estimates involving significant judgments.

Allowance for credit losses

The Firm's allowance for credit losses covers the retained consumer and wholesale loan portfolios, as well as the Firm's wholesale and certain consumer lending-related commitments. The allowance for loan losses is intended to adjust the carrying value of the Firm's loans to reflect probable credit losses inherent in the loan portfolio as of the balance sheet date. Similarly, the allowance for lending-related commitments is established to cover probable credit losses inherent in the lending-related commitments portfolio as of the balance sheet date.

The allowance for credit losses includes a formula-based component, an asset-specific component, and a component related to PCI loans. The determination of each of these components involves significant judgment on a number of matters. Refer to Allowance for credit losses on pages 116–117 and Note 13 for further information on these components, areas of judgment and methodologies used in establishing the Firm's allowance for credit losses.

Allowance for credit losses sensitivity
The Firm's allowance for credit losses is sensitive to numerous factors, which may differ depending on the portfolio. Changes in economic conditions or in the Firm's assumptions and estimates could affect its estimate of probable credit losses inherent in the portfolio at the balance sheet date. The Firm uses its best judgment to assess these economic conditions and loss data in estimating the allowance for credit losses and these estimates are subject to periodic refinement based on changes to underlying external or Firm-specific historical data. Refer to Note 13 for further discussion.

To illustrate the potential magnitude of certain alternate judgments, the Firm estimates that changes in the following inputs would have the following effects on the Firm's modeled credit loss estimates as of December 31, 2019, without consideration of any offsetting or correlated effects of other inputs in the Firm's allowance for loan losses:

- A combined 5% decline in housing prices and a 100 basis point increase in unemployment rates from expectations could imply:
  - an increase to modeled credit loss estimates of approximately $250 million for PCI loans.
  - an increase to modeled annual credit loss estimates of approximately $50 million for residential real estate loans, excluding PCI loans.
- For credit card loans, a 100 basis point increase in unemployment rates from expectations could imply an increase to modeled annual credit loss estimates of approximately $850 million.
- An increase in probability of default ("PD") factors consistent with a one-notch downgrade in the Firm's internal risk ratings for its entire wholesale loan portfolio could imply an increase in the Firm's modeled credit loss estimates of approximately $1.6 billion.
- A 100 basis point increase in estimated loss given default ("LGD") for the Firm's entire wholesale loan portfolio could imply an increase in the Firm's modeled credit loss estimates of approximately $200 million.

The purpose of these sensitivity analyses is to provide an indication of the isolated impacts of hypothetical alternative assumptions on modeled loss estimates. The changes in the inputs presented above are not intended to imply management's expectation of future deterioration of those risk factors. In addition, these analyses are not intended to estimate changes in the overall allowance for loan losses, which would also be influenced by the judgment management applies to the modeled loss estimates to reflect the uncertainty and imprecision of these modeled loss estimates based on then-current circumstances and conditions.

It is difficult to estimate how potential changes in specific factors might affect the overall allowance for credit losses because management considers a variety of factors and inputs in estimating the allowance for credit losses. Changes in these factors and inputs may not occur at the same rate and may not be consistent across all geographies or product types, and changes in factors may be directionally inconsistent, such that improvement in one factor may offset deterioration in other factors. In addition, it is difficult to predict how changes in specific economic conditions or assumptions could affect borrower behavior or other factors considered by management in estimating the allowance for credit losses. Given the process the Firm follows and the judgments made in evaluating the risk factors related to its loss estimates, management believes that its current estimate of the allowance for credit losses is appropriate.

Fair value

JPMorgan Chase carries a portion of its assets and liabilities at fair value. The majority of such assets and liabilities are measured at fair value on a recurring basis, including, derivatives and structured note products. Certain assets and liabilities are measured at fair value on a nonrecurring basis, including certain mortgage, home equity and other