

of deposit, be aware of interest rate risk. If interest rates rise, bond prices will generally fall.

## **REAL ESTATE**

Principal residences, farms, and vacation homes can be deemed necessities, luxuries, investments—or all three. Timberland, commercial property, or raw land may also fit into your investment portfolio. Since real estate investments are more illiquid than investments in stocks and bonds, choose carefully; you're generally investing for the long-term. "Location, location, location" is still the rule of thumb for real estate.

## **LIFE INSURANCE**

There are hundreds of life insurance products in the marketplace now, including term insurance, whole life, universal life, variable life, and many others. Try to compare apples with apples when reviewing insurance. Life insurance costs are generally lower now because people are living longer. If you have an older policy, your premium may be higher than that for a similar policy today. It is advisable to speak with your agent. Evaluate an insurance product by measuring such items as the company's financial strength, investment return, mortality estimates, and renewal rates.

## **A BALANCED PLAN**

Diversification of investments makes good sense. Before you consider specific

investments, decide what your "mix" should be between fixed income investments (such as bonds and bank certificates of deposit) and variable income or growth investments (such as stocks and real estate). The more dependent your monthly budget is on receiving a fixed income, the more fixed income investments you should have.

No investment should be made without a goal and a strategy designed to accomplish it. After receiving the best professional advice possible, determine if the recommendation supports your overall financial objectives. Remember that this brochure is only the briefest of introductions to establishing or revising a financial plan. You are urged to contact your own accountant, attorney, trust officer or financial advisor to learn more about designing or modifying a financial plan.

## **A CHARITABLE NOTE**

While you are considering your financial plan, we hope you will also consider us as a potential "tax-wise" beneficiary. All of the assets that are part of your plan can also be utilized in charitable giving, through outright charitable gifts, wills, unitrusts, annuity trusts, and charitable lead trusts. In many cases, we can help you avoid capital gains taxes, while you receive a charitable contribution deduction. We would be glad to provide you and your advisors with additional information.

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# **Reviewing Your Financial Plan**

**A brief guide on how to prepare your personal balance sheet**

While virtually everyone understands the need for an up-to-date financial plan, most people never get around to having one drafted. **Assets can be maintained and enhanced only through wise investment strategies and financial planning.** Assets must be constantly protected from such ravages as inflation, income taxes, estate taxes, and an unpredictable stock market.

Financial security means developing a detailed financial plan with specific goals and objectives. A financial plan, like any type of strategy, must begin with an analysis of where you are and a realistic projection of where you want to be in the future.

### YOUR PERSONAL BALANCE SHEET

The beginning is your personal balance sheet. By assembling your assets and liabilities in a manner similar to that of the chart provided, you can easily determine your approximate net worth. Once you have analyzed all the components of your net worth, you can begin to establish goals.

A successful financial plan is built upon a healthy diversification of assets. The following is an overview of some of the investments which may compose the asset side of your balance sheet. For information on the potential return and associated risks of these investments—and how they apply to your own situation—please consult your own advisors.



### YOUR PERSONAL BALANCE SHEET

#### ASSETS

Checking/savings accounts	\$	_____
Money market accounts		_____
Stocks		_____
Bonds		_____
Real estate		_____
Personal property		_____
Cash value of life insurance		_____
Retirement accounts		_____
Debts receivable		_____
Other:		_____
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>_____</b>

#### LIABILITIES

Mortgages	\$	_____
Credit card debts, automobile loans, etc.		_____
Other:		_____
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>_____</b>

**NET WORTH** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### SAVINGS/MONEY MARKET

Banks, credit unions, mutual funds, and others offer various forms of savings and money market accounts. Your underlying principal is relatively secure and stable, with the interest rate being the biggest variable. Don't forget about interest rate risk, though. If you tie up your money today for five years to receive a higher interest rate, you may be foregoing an even higher interest rate in a few more months. On the other hand, interest rates could also go down in a few more months. That's the basic concept of interest rate risk.

### STOCKS

Stock is often purchased as an investment in a company's future earnings and growth. There are many variables which affect the price of stock, including its actual earnings, its growth rate, interest rates available in the marketplace, availability of money in the marketplace, and psychological expectations. Historically, stocks have produced a greater total return than savings accounts, money market accounts, or bonds, but with more volatility and risk.

### BONDS

Bonds represent a debt obligation of the issuing corporation or government entity. Bonds are often seen as more secure than stocks, but often with a lower overall total return. If a relatively stable source of income is your primary objective, bonds may be appropriate. As with certificates