LOWES COMPANIES INC Form DEF 14A April 18, 2019 Table of Contents

UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

SCHEDULE 14A INFORMATION

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a)

of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Filed by the Registrant

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant

Check the appropriate box:

Preliminary Proxy Statement

Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))

Definitive Proxy Statement

Definitive Additional Materials

Soliciting Material Pursuant to § 240.14a-12

LOWE S COMPANIES, INC.

(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

No fee required. Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11. (1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies: (2) Aggregate number of securities to which transaction applies: (3) Per unit price or other underlying value of transaction computed pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 0-11 (set forth the amount on which the filing fee is calculated and state how it was determined): (4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction: (5) Total fee paid: Fee paid previously with preliminary materials. Check box if any part of the fee is offset as provided by Exchange Act Rule 0-11(a)(2) and identify the filing for which the offsetting fee was paid previously. Identify the previous filing by registration statement number, or the Form or Schedule and the date of its filing. (1) Amount Previously Paid:	
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(2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:

(3) Filing Party:

(4) Date Filed:

2019

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

OF SHAREHOLDERS & PROXY STATEMENT

April 18, 2019

Dear Fellow Shareholders:

We are pleased to invite you to attend our 2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held at 10:00 a.m., Eastern Time, on Friday, May 31, 2019 at the Ballantyne Hotel, 10000 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, North Carolina 28277. Details regarding admission to the meeting and the business to be conducted are described in the accompanying Notice of 2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders and Proxy Statement.

Your vote is important. Regardless of whether you plan to attend the meeting, we strongly encourage you to vote as soon as possible to ensure that your shares are represented at the meeting. The accompanying Proxy Statement explains more about voting. Please read it carefully, and thank you for your investment in Lowe s.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Dreiling

Marvin R. Ellison

Chairman of the Board

President and Chief Executive Officer

LOWE S COMPANIES, INC.

1000 Lowes Boulevard

Mooresville, North Carolina 28117

(704) 758-1000

Notice of 2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders

April 18, 2019

The 2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders (the Annual Meeting) of Lowe's Companies, Inc. (the Company) will be held at 10:00 a.m., Eastern Time, on Friday, May 31, 2019 at the Ballantyne Hotel, 10000 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, North Carolina 28277, for the purpose of voting on the following matters:

- 1. To elect the 12 candidates nominated by the Board of Directors for election as directors;
- 2. To approve, on an advisory basis, the Company s named executive officer compensation in fiscal 2018;
- 3. To ratify the appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as the Company s independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2019; and
- 4. To transact such other business as may properly come before the Annual Meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof.

The Board of Directors unanimously recommends a vote FOR items 1, 2 and 3. The persons named as proxies will use their discretion to vote on other matters that may properly arise at the Annual Meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof.

Only shareholders of record as of the close of business on March 22, 2019 will be entitled to notice of, and to vote at, the Annual Meeting.

Your vote is important. Whether or not you plan to attend the Annual Meeting, you are encouraged to vote as soon as possible to ensure that your shares are represented at the meeting. If you received a printed copy of the proxy materials by mail, you may vote your shares by proxy using one of the following methods: (i) vote via the Internet;

(ii) vote by telephone; or (iii) complete, sign, date and return your proxy card in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you received only a Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials by mail, you may vote your shares at the Internet site address listed on your notice. If you hold your shares through an account with a bank, broker or similar organization, please follow the instructions you receive from the holder of record to vote your shares.

Sincerely,

Ross W. McCanless

Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary

Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials

for the Annual Meeting of Shareholders To Be Held on May 31, 2019:

The Notice of 2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders, Proxy Statement and

2018 Annual Report to Shareholders are available at www.proxyvote.com.

PROXY SUMMARY

We have demonstrated a strong commitment to returning capital to our shareholders and have had continued dividend growth since 1961.

\$17.3 Billion SHARES REPURCHASED UNDER OUR SHARE 17% 2018 INCREASE IN \$5.6 Billion DIVIDENDS PAID IN THE

REPURCHASE PROGRAM IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

ANNUAL DIVIDEND

LAST FIVE YEARS

This summary includes certain financial, operational, governance and executive compensation highlights. This summary does not contain all of the information that you should consider, and you should read the entire Proxy Statement carefully before voting.

Executive Compensation Highlights

Our executive compensation program is designed to hold our executives accountable for business results and reward them for consistently strong financial performance and the creation of value for our shareholders. To that end, the primary objectives of our executive compensation program are to:

Attract and retain talented executives to support the Company s culture and strategic growth priorities;

Maximize long-term shareholder value through alignment of executive and shareholder interests;

Align executive compensation with the Company s business strategies, which are focused on driving operational excellence and better service to our customers; and

Target executive total compensation at the market median with an opportunity to earn above market pay when the Company s results exceed performance targets or below market median if results fall short of targets.

Governance Highlights

Our Board of Directors is committed to sound and effective corporate governance practices. The following are highlights of our corporate governance practices:

Active Board Oversight of Lowe s Strategy, Business Initiatives and Industry Positioning; Active Board Oversight of Enterprise Risk Management, including Cybersecurity; Enhanced Shareholder Engagement Program; Demonstrated Commitment to Board Refreshment; Active Board Engagement in Succession Planning of Executive Officers; Commitment to Sustainability and Social Responsibility Matters; Adoption of Proxy Access; 11 of 12 Director Nominees are Independent; Audit, Compensation, Nominating and Governance, Sustainability and Technology Committees are comprised only of Independent Directors; Regular Executive Sessions of Independent Directors; Annual Board, Committee, Individual Director and CEO Evaluations; Stock Ownership Guidelines for Executive Officers and Non-Employee Directors; Shareholders may call Special Meetings; and

Majority Voting for Directors and Declassified Board.

i NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND PROXY STATEMENT 2019

FISCAL 2018 FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

\$6.2 \$1.5 \$3.0

Billion
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATIONS

Billion DIVIDENDS PAID Billion REPURCHASED UNDER

THE SHARE REPURCHASE PROGRAM

Fiscal 2018 was a rebalancing year in which we took the necessary steps to begin building a sustainable foundation from which to drive long-term value creation. We have a great opportunity to capitalize on a healthy home improvement sector and a tremendous brand by focusing on retail fundamentals and simplifying our business.

We are focused on generating long-term profitable growth and substantial returns for our shareholders. This means taking a balanced approach to capital allocation with a focus on making strategic investments to grow our business while returning excess value to shareholders in the form of dividends and share repurchases. Given our strong cash generation capabilities and improving outlook for the Company, our Board of Directors authorized an incremental \$10 billion in share repurchases.

\$71 BILLION IN SALES +3.9% SALES YOY*

+5.2% AVERAGE TICKET YOY*

-1.3% TRANSACTIONS YOY*

\$1.85 DI	VIDENDS/
SHARE	

+17.1% DIVIDENDS YOY

\$2.84 DILUTED EPS \$5.11 ADJUSTED EPS*

-30.5% DILUTED EPS +16.4% ADJUSTED EPS*

YOY

YOY = Year over Year Comparison

Board
2019 PROPOSALS
Recommends

Proposal 1: Election of Directors

Proposal 2: Advisory Vote to Approve Named Executive Officer Compensation

Proposal 3: Ratification of the Appointment of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

^{*} Adjusted diluted earnings per common share is a non-GAAP financial measure. Refer to Appendix B for a reconciliation of non-GAAP measures. Fiscal 2017 diluted earnings per share was \$4.09 and adjusted diluted earnings per share was \$4.39.

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Proxy Statement

The Board of Directors (the Board of Directors or the Board) of Lowe s Companies, Inc. is providing these materials to you in connection with the 2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders (the Annual Meeting). The Annual Meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m., Eastern Time, on Friday, May 31, 2019 at the Ballantyne Hotel, 10000 Ballantyne Commons Parkway, Charlotte, North Carolina 28277. References in this Proxy Statement to Lowe s, the Company, we, us, and similar terms refer to Lowe s Companies, Inc.

General Information

Why am I receiving these materials?

You have received these materials because the Board is soliciting your proxy to vote your shares at the Annual Meeting. This Proxy Statement includes information that the Company is required to provide you under the Securities and Exchange Commission rules and regulations (the SEC rules) and is designed to assist you in voting your shares.

What is a proxy?

The Board is asking for your proxy. This means you authorize the individuals selected by the Company to vote your shares at the Annual Meeting in the way that you instruct. All shares represented by valid proxies received and not revoked before the Annual Meeting will be voted in accordance with the shareholder s specific voting instructions.

Why did I receive a one-page notice regarding Internet availability of proxy materials instead of a full set of proxy materials?

The SEC rules allow companies to choose the method for delivery of proxy materials to shareholders. For most shareholders, the Company has elected to mail a notice regarding the availability of proxy materials on the Internet (the Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials or the Notice), rather than sending a full set of these materials in the mail. The Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials, or a full set of the proxy materials (including the Proxy Statement and form of proxy), as applicable, was sent to shareholders beginning April 18, 2019, and the proxy materials were posted on the investor relations portion of the Company s website, www.Lowes.com/investor, and on the website referenced in the Notice on the same day. Utilizing this method of proxy delivery expedites receipt of proxy materials by the Company s shareholders and lowers the cost of the Annual Meeting. If you would like to receive a paper or e-mail copy of the proxy materials, you should follow the instructions in the Notice for requesting a copy.

What is included in these materials?

These materials include:

the Notice of Annual Meeting and Proxy Statement; and

the 2018 Annual Report to Shareholders, which contains the Company s audited consolidated financial statements. If you received a printed copy of these materials by mail, these materials also include the proxy card or voting instruction form for the Annual Meeting.

What items will be voted on at the Annual Meeting?

There are three proposals scheduled to be voted on at the Annual Meeting:

the election of the 12 director candidates nominated by the Board;

the approval, on an advisory basis, of the Company s named executive officer compensation in fiscal 2018; and

the ratification of the appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as the Company s independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2019.

The Board is not aware of any other matters to be brought before the Annual Meeting. If other matters are properly raised at the meeting, the proxy holders may vote any shares represented by proxy in their discretion.

What are the Board s voting recommendations?

The Board unanimously recommends that you vote your shares:

FOR the election of each of the director nominees named in this Proxy Statement to the Board;

FOR the approval, on an advisory basis, of the Company s named executive officer compensation in fiscal 2018; and

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND PROXY STATEMENT 2019

1

General Information

FOR the ratification of the appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as the Company s independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2019.

Who can attend the Annual Meeting?

Admission to the Annual Meeting is limited to:

shareholders of record as of the close of business on March 22, 2019;

holders of valid proxies for the Annual Meeting; and

invited guests.

Admission to the meeting will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Each shareholder may be asked to present valid photo identification, such as a driver s license or passport, and proof of stock ownership as of the record date for admittance.

When is the record date and who is entitled to vote?

The Board set March 22, 2019 as the record date. As of the record date, 796,325,174 shares of common stock, \$0.50 par value per share, of the Company (Common Stock) were issued and outstanding. Shareholders are entitled to one vote per share of Common Stock outstanding on the record date on any matter presented at the Annual Meeting.

What is a shareholder of record?

A shareholder of record or registered shareholder is a shareholder whose ownership of Common Stock is reflected directly on the books and records of the Company's transfer agent, Computershare Trust Company, N.A. If you hold Common Stock through an account with a bank, broker or similar organization, you are considered the beneficial owner of shares held in street name and are not a shareholder of record. For shares held in street name, the shareholder of record is your bank, broker or similar organization. The Company only has access to ownership records for the registered shares. If you are not a shareholder of record and you wish to attend the Annual Meeting, the Company will require additional documentation to evidence your stock ownership as of the record date, such as a copy of your brokerage account statement, a letter from your bank, broker or other nominee, or a copy of your voting instruction form or Notice.

How do I vote?

You may vote by proxy or in person at the Annual Meeting. If you received a printed copy of the proxy materials by mail, you may vote your shares by proxy using one of the following methods: (i) vote via the Internet; (ii) vote by telephone; or (iii) complete, sign, date and return your proxy card in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you

received only a Notice

of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials by mail, you may vote your shares at the Internet site address listed on your Notice. If you hold your shares through an account with a bank, broker or similar organization, please follow the instructions you receive from the holder of record to vote your shares. Even if you plan to attend the Annual Meeting, you are encouraged to vote by proxy prior to the meeting. You can always change your vote as described in the following Q&A.

How can I revoke my proxy or change my vote?

You may revoke your proxy or change your vote as follows:

Shareholders of record. You may revoke your proxy or change your vote at any time prior to the taking of the vote at the Annual Meeting by (i) submitting a written notice of revocation to Ross W. McCanless, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, at Lowe s Companies, Inc., 1000 Lowes Boulevard, Mooresville, North Carolina 28117; (ii) delivering a proxy bearing a later date using any of the voting methods described in the immediately preceding Q&A, including via the Internet or by telephone, and until the applicable deadline for each method specified in the accompanying proxy card or voting instruction form or Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials; or (iii) attending the Annual Meeting and voting in person. Attendance at the Annual Meeting will not cause your previously granted proxy to be revoked unless you specifically make that request or vote in person at the meeting. For all methods of voting, the last vote cast will supersede all previous votes.

Beneficial owners of shares held in street name. You may change or revoke your voting instructions by following the specific directions provided to you by the holder of record, or, if you have obtained a legal proxy from your bank, broker or other nominee, by attending the Annual Meeting and voting in person.

What happens if I vote by proxy and do not give specific voting instructions?

Shareholders of record. If you are a shareholder of record and you vote by proxy, via the Internet, by telephone or by signing, dating and returning a proxy card, without giving specific voting instructions, then the proxy holders will vote your shares in the manner recommended by the Board on all matters presented in this Proxy Statement and as the proxy holders may determine in their discretion for any other matters properly presented for a vote at the Annual Meeting.

Beneficial owners of shares held in street name. If you are a beneficial owner of shares held in street name and do not provide the organization that holds your shares with specific voting instructions, under the rules of various national and regional securities exchanges, the organization that holds your

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General Information

shares may generally vote on routine matters but cannot vote on non-routine matters. If the organization that holds your shares does not receive instructions from you on how to vote your shares on a non-routine matter, the organization that holds your shares will inform the inspector of election that it does not have the authority to vote on that matter with respect to your shares. This is referred to as a broker non-vote.

The election of directors and the advisory vote to approve the Company s named executive officer compensation in fiscal 2018 are non-routine matters. Consequently, without your voting instructions, the organization that holds your shares cannot vote your shares on these proposals. The ratification of the appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as the Company s independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2019 is considered a routine matter.

What is the voting requirement to approve each of the proposals?

Proposal 1: Election of Directors. In uncontested elections, directors are elected by the affirmative vote of a majority of the outstanding shares of the Company s voting securities voted at the meeting in person or by proxy, including those shares for which votes are cast as withheld. In the event that a director nominee fails to receive the required majority vote, the Board may decrease the number of directors, fill any vacancy, or take other appropriate action. If the number of nominees exceeds the number of directors to be elected, directors will be elected by a plurality of the votes cast by the holders of voting securities entitled to vote in the election.

Proposal 2: Advisory Vote to Approve Named Executive Officer Compensation. Approval, on an advisory basis, of the Company s named executive officer compensation in fiscal 2018 requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes cast on the proposal at the Annual Meeting in person or by proxy (meaning the number of shares voted for the proposal must exceed the number of shares voted against such proposal). The results of the advisory vote will not be binding on the Company, the Compensation Committee or the Board. The Compensation Committee and the Board will, however, review the voting result and take it into consideration when making future decisions regarding executive compensation.

Proposal 3: Ratification of the Appointment of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm. Ratification of the appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as the Company s independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2019 requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes cast on the proposal at the Annual Meeting in person or by proxy (meaning the number of shares voted for the proposal must exceed the number of shares voted against such proposal).

Other Items. Approval of any other matters requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes cast on the item at the Annual Meeting in person or by proxy (meaning the number of shares voted for the item must exceed the number of shares voted against such item).

What is the quorum for the Annual Meeting? How are withhold votes, abstentions and broker non-votes treated?

The presence, in person or by proxy, of the holders of a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the holders of Common Stock is necessary for the transaction of business at the Annual Meeting. Your shares are counted as being

present if you vote in person at the Annual Meeting, via the Internet, by telephone or by submitting a properly executed proxy card or voting instruction form by mail. Abstentions and broker non-votes are counted as present or represented for the purpose of determining a quorum for the Annual Meeting.

With respect to Proposal 1, the election of directors, only for and withhold votes may be cast. Broker non-votes will not be counted as votes cast and, therefore, will not have any effect on the election of director nominees.

With respect to Proposals 2 and 3, the advisory vote to approve the Company s named executive officer compensation in fiscal 2018 and the proposal to ratify the appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as the Company s independent registered public accounting firm for fiscal 2019, respectively, abstentions and broker non-votes will not be counted as votes cast and, therefore, will not have any effect on the outcomes of these proposals.

Who pays for solicitation of proxies?

The Company is paying the cost of soliciting proxies and will reimburse brokerage firms and other custodians, nominees and fiduciaries for their reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for sending proxy materials to shareholders and obtaining their proxies. In addition to soliciting the proxies by mail and the Internet, certain of the Company s directors, officers and employees, without compensation, may solicit proxies personally or by telephone, facsimile and e-mail. The Company has engaged Innisfree M&A Incorporated to assist in distributing proxy materials and soliciting proxies for the Annual Meeting for a fee of approximately \$25,000.

Where can I find the voting results of the Annual Meeting?

The Company will publish final voting results in the Company s Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the first quarter of fiscal 2019 or in a Current Report on Form 8-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC) within four business days of the Annual Meeting.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND PROXY STATEMENT 2019

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Shareholder Engagement

Shareholder Engagement

Understanding the issues that are important to our shareholders is critical in ensuring that we address their interests in a meaningful and effective way. Lowe s recognizes the value of and is committed to engaging with our shareholders and soliciting their views and input. In fiscal 2018, members of Lowe s management and the Board continued this long-standing practice of shareholder engagement, reinforcing our commitment to building long-term relationships with our shareholders. We conduct shareholder outreach throughout the year to ensure that we understand and consider the issues of importance to our shareholders and are able to address them appropriately. During fiscal 2018, we engaged with representatives of many of our top institutional shareholders to discuss performance, strategy, board composition, refreshment and tenure, cybersecurity and risk management, climate change and sustainability efforts, governance practices, executive compensation and other matters. We report to our Nominating and Governance Committee and Board about these meetings and provide feedback from our shareholders.

The following diagram provides an overview of Lowe s shareholder engagement practice:

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Shareholder Engagement

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We have a proven track record of responsiveness to shareholders and are committed to continued engagement. The following diagrams illustrate changes we have made to our governance and executive compensation practices over the years in response to shareholder feedback as well as our commitment to ongoing improvement.

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Shareholder Engagement

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Proposal 1: Election of Directors

Proposal 1: Election of Directors

We are asking our shareholders to vote on the election of the 12 candidates nominated by the Board of Directors for election as directors.

The Board has nominated the 12 candidates named in this proposal for election as directors at the Annual Meeting. If elected, each nominee will serve until his or her term expires at the 2020 Annual Meeting of Shareholders or until his or her successor is duly elected and qualified. Each nominee has agreed to be named in this Proxy Statement and to serve if elected.

All of the nominees are currently serving as directors. Mr. Marvin R. Ellison was appointed to the Board effective in July 2018. The other current directors were elected to the Board at the 2018 Annual Meeting of Shareholders. Mr. Marshall O. Larsen will retire after 15 years of service on the Board and will not stand for re-election at the 2019 Annual Meeting of Shareholders.

The Nominating and Governance Committee identifies, considers and recommends to the Board director candidates who have expertise that would complement and enhance the current Board's skills and experience. It also reviews the existing time commitments of director candidates to ensure that they do not have any obligations that would conflict with the time commitments of a director of the Company. The Nominating and Governance Committee also looks to recruit candidates with different perspectives so that they can contribute to the cognitive diversity on the Board, while also recognizing the importance of having diversity of age, gender, race and ethnicity on the Board. Generally, the Nominating and Governance Committee identifies candidates through third-party search firms and, from time to time, through business and organizational contacts of the directors and management.

In the past five years, the Company has refreshed more than half of its Board by adding eight new independent directors. At the same time, the Company also believes that it benefits from having several longer tenured directors, including our Chairman, on the Board who are familiar with the Company s business and can help facilitate the transfer of institutional knowledge. We believe the average tenure for our independent directors of less than five years reflects the balance the Board seeks between different perspectives brought by longer-serving and new directors.

Although the Company knows of no reason why any of the nominees would not be able to serve, if any nominee is unavailable for election, the proxy holders intend to vote your shares for any substitute nominee proposed by the Board. At the Annual Meeting, proxies cannot be voted for a greater number of individuals than the 12 nominees named in this Proxy Statement.

The Board of Directors unanimously recommends a vote FOR the election of each of the 12 nominees named in this proposal. Unless authority to vote in the election of directors is withheld, it is the intention of the persons named as proxies to vote FOR the election of each of the 12 nominees named in this proposal.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND PROXY STATEMENT 2019

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Proposal 1: Election of Directors

IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING DIRECTOR NOMINEES

IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING DIRECTOR NOMINEES

Board Nomination Process

The Nominating and Governance Committee, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board, reviews each director s continuation on the Board prior to his or her renomination to serve on the Board. The Nominating and Governance Committee evaluates whether or not the director, based upon his or her skills, background, expertise and contribution to the Board, is capable of supporting Lowe s present and future needs. After the evaluation of a director, the Chair of the Nominating and Governance Committee and the Chairman of the Board inform each director under consideration of the Committee s decision.

Additionally, with the assistance of an independent search firm, the Nominating and Governance Committee conducts targeted searches to identify well-qualified candidates who may have different skills or backgrounds needed for the Company to execute its strategic vision. If an independent search firm is used, the Nominating and Governance Committee retains the search firm and approves payment of its fees.

The Nominating and Governance Committee will consider nominees recommended by shareholders, and its process for doing so is no different than its process for screening and evaluating candidates suggested by directors, management of the Company or third parties. See Shareholder Proposals for the 2020 Annual Meeting elsewhere in this Proxy Statement for the timeframe for shareholders to provide notice of any nominations of persons for election to the Board.

Board Composition and Refreshment

At least annually, the Board seeks input from each of its directors with respect to the current composition of the Board in light of changes in our current and future business

strategies, as well as our operating environment, as a means to identify any backgrounds or skill sets that may be helpful in maintaining or improving alignment between our Board composition and our business. In addition, we seek feedback from our shareholders regarding the backgrounds and skill sets that they would like to see represented on our Board. The Nominating and Governance Committee considers this feedback in its director search process.

The Board also prioritizes having robust director orientation and on-boarding programs to ensure that new directors are rapidly integrated into boardroom discussions and their contributions are maximized.

Following Mr. Larson s retirement and the election of our director nominees, the Board will be reduced to twelve directors and two-thirds of the directors will have joined the Board within the past five years.

Board Commitment

The Board understands the significant time commitment involved with serving on the Board and its committees, and it takes steps to assess that all directors and director nominees have the time necessary to fulfill their duties. Our Nominating and Governance Committee and Board only nominate candidates who they believe are capable of devoting the necessary time to successfully meet their duties, taking into account principal occupations, memberships on other boards and other responsibilities. Directors must advise our Chairman of the Board prior to joining the board of another public company, or any assignment to the audit or compensation committee of the board of directors of any public company of which such director is a member. In addition, directors must offer to resign from the Board as a result of changes to their principal occupation, subject to further consideration by