

# Strategy Overview

Fourth Quarter, 2023

## Sustainable US Value Equity Strategy



Boston Common's US Large Cap Value strategy invests in a diversified portfolio of misvalued sustainable companies with catalysts for re-rating. Portfolio companies generate free cash flow and meet our demanding ESG guidelines. Strategy vehicle options include Separate Account and Model/ADR.

### Portfolio Activity

We favor undervalued companies operating in areas of recession-agnostic growth, with sustainable cash flow and catalysts for re-rating. This quarter, we further diversified holdings, adding exposure to transforming companies with improving fundamentals and ESG momentum.

Metal packaging company Ball Corp. benefits from increased legislative and consumer support for aluminum as an alternative to plastics in packaging. The sale of its aerospace business allowed us to invest in Ball Corp.'s improving balance sheet and ESG profile. After its recent sell-off, we added spice company McCormick to our Staples holdings. Post-pandemic supply chain and inventory issues appear behind them. First Industrial, an industrial-focused REIT expanding in high-growth metro areas, should see leasing growth and secular demand from on-shoring e-commerce and third-party logistics companies. We see ESG momentum as this company addresses greenhouse gas emissions measurements, reporting, and mitigation. After a period of slow technological upgrades, Intel is regaining momentum, and we believe market share will follow. Concurrently, labor practices have improved, including efforts to address forced labor in the supply chain.

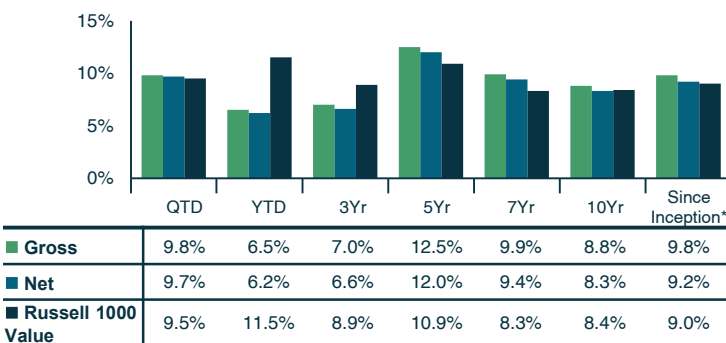
Two recent purchases diversify our holdings in the Financials sector. Global financial services company Bank of New York Mellon, the world's largest custodian bank, is among the leading trustees in green bonds by deal volume. In 2023's challenging operating environment, BNY Mellon was selling at valuations near 10-year lows but has held up well relative to peers due to its short-duration asset profile and differentiated client base. Truist Financial, created from the 2019 merger of regional banks BB&T and SunTrust, is a super-regional bank exposed to a vibrant economic region. After a lackluster start, intensified integration efforts should create positive operating leverage in 2024. Truist is a leader in creating "access to finance" for diverse and underbanked communities, combining community benefits with comprehensive education services to deliver integrated, tangible impacts.

We exited two holdings this quarter. Sustainable infrastructure financier Hannon Armstrong, whose market cap fell below our guidelines, and cloud computing and software company VMWare, which Broadcom, a portfolio holding, acquired.

### Portfolio Review

Boston Common's Tax-Exempt US Value Equity composite rose +9.8% before fees, ahead of the Russell 1000 Index ("the Index"). Stock selection in the Consumer Staples, Healthcare, and Materials sectors helped relative returns, while the

### Performance



### Annual Returns

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Gross	6.5%	-7.6%	24.3%	14.0%	29.0%	-8.8%	17.8%	13.0%	-1.6%	8.5%
Net	6.2%	-7.8%	23.7%	13.4%	28.3%	-9.3%	17.1%	12.3%	-2.3%	7.7%
Russell 1000 Value	11.5%	-7.5%	25.2%	2.8%	26.5%	-8.3%	13.7%	17.3%	-3.8%	13.5%

### Portfolio Characteristics

	Boston Common	Russell 1000 Value
# Holdings	58	848

#### Valuation

Price/EPS (NTM)	15.4	15.6
Enterprise Value/EBITDA (NTM)	11.0	10.8
Price/Book	2.8	2.4
Price/Sales	2.0	2.0
Dividend Yield	1.8%	2.1%

#### Growth

3yr EPS Consensus Growth	2.1%	2.3%
3yr Sales Growth	3.2%	2.1%

#### Quality

Beta**	0.94	1.00
LT Debt to Cap	44.2%	40.4%
Net Debt to EBITDA	1.3	2.1
Return on Equity	14.1%	13.7%
Earnings Variability***	22.2%	24.3%
Free Cash Flow Yield	4.6%	4.6%

## Portfolio Review (continued)

Consumer Discretionary and Technology sectors detracted. Not owning the underperforming Energy sector was a positive. A wide range of portfolio names had strong returns: shared economy company United Rentals and rail transportation supplier Wabtec in the Industrials sector, Financials American Express, Schwab, Fifth Third Bank, general retailer Target, and Technology company Broadcom.

For 2023, the composite returned 6.5% before fees, underperforming the Index. Being underweight in the Communications sector and not owning strong-performing Meta accounted for almost half the underperformance. Stock selection in Financials was a significant detractor—owning regional banks and not owning large banks such as JP Morgan hurt relative returns. Strong stock selection added value in the Healthcare and Staples sectors, overcoming our overweight to these lagging sectors. Stock selection and our overweight to the Technology sector added value. Not owning the lagging Energy sector also helped returns.

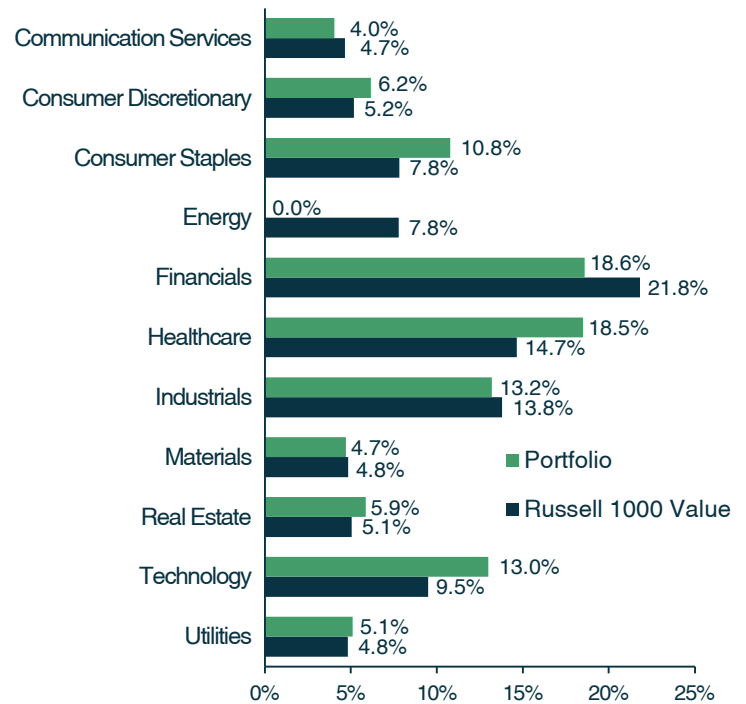
## Outlook and Positioning

Federal Reserve policy and interest rates earned headlines this quarter. Inflation reports continue to moderate, with core personal consumption expenditures (PCE) falling towards 3% at year's end. While still above the Fed's 2% PCE target, the continued downward trend reinforces confidence in the trajectory. In December, the Fed signaled a pivot from "higher rates for longer" to potential cuts over the next six months. As quickly as the 10-year bond yield moved towards 5% in October, the yield fell dramatically below 4% at year-end. Lower interest rates could reinvigorate housing, support consumer balance sheets, and assist corporate earnings. For the banking system, lower rates could improve the lending environment and relieve the significant unrealized losses on long-term bonds (a source of the banking disruption in the Spring).

While a soft landing looks likely, the dramatic rise in interest rates in the last two years still poses risks. It is encouraging that employment remains robust, capital spending for infrastructure and technology provides attractive returns, and the market has shaken off major geopolitical crises. However, much of the good news is reflected in valuations, especially for mega-cap names, as the S&P500 trades just shy of 20x 2024 earnings.

We expect 2023's narrow market, dominated by the Magnificent Seven, to broaden. The pandemic and its aftermath have created economic crosscurrents, resulting in asynchronous or "rolling" slowdowns across industry groups. Extreme market concentration has also left valuation gaps, creating opportunities for active management.

## Sector Allocation



## Top 10 Equity Holdings

Name	% Weight	Sector Name
MERCK & CO INC	3.3%	Healthcare
PROCTER AND GAMBLE	3.2%	Consumer Staples
AMERICAN EXPRESS CO	3.1%	Financials
REGENERON PHARM	2.6%	Healthcare
COLGATE PALMOLIVE CO	2.6%	Consumer Staples
SCHWAB CHARLES CORP	2.6%	Financials
T-MOBILE US INC	2.5%	Comm. Services
UNITED RENTALS INC	2.5%	Industrials
WABTEC	2.3%	Industrials
TJX COS INC	2.2%	Consumer Discretionary
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	

Source: APX Advent Portfolio Exchange. Past performance does not guarantee future results. All investments involve risk, including the risk of losing principal. The information in this document is not a recommendation to buy or sell any security. There is no assurance that securities discussed will remain in a strategy upon receiving this document. Securities discussed represent only a portion of a strategy's holdings. It should not be assumed that securities transactions discussed were or will be profitable. Composite returns are presented in U.S. dollars, net of transaction costs, management fees and withholding taxes, with interest and dividends accrued. Returns for periods greater than one year are annualized. The Russell 1000 Value Index is a capitalization-weighted index of the largest publicly-traded U.S. companies that have a low price-to-book, price-to-earnings, and price-to-cash-flow valuations relative to a broader universe of companies. The index is unmanaged and does not incur management fees, transaction costs, or other expenses associated with separately managed accounts. The composition of our composite varies from the composition of the Index because of differences in sector and industry exposure, risk, volatility and holdings. Boston Common claims compliance with Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®). For a full listing of Boston Common's composites and to request a GIPS® Compliant presentation, please call 617-720-5557.