



# Telephone & Data Systems (TDS)

Updated November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 by Quinn Mohammed

## Key Metrics

<b>Current Price:</b>	\$20	<b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>	9.3%	<b>Market Cap:</b>	\$2.3 B
<b>Fair Value Price:</b>	\$25	<b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>	2.0%	<b>Ex-Dividend Date<sup>1</sup>:</b>	12/15/2020
<b>% Fair Value:</b>	80%	<b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b>	4.5%	<b>Payment Date<sup>2</sup>:</b>	12/31/2020
<b>Dividend Yield:</b>	3.5%	<b>5 Year Price Target</b>	\$28	<b>Years of Dividend Growth:</b>	45
<b>Dividend Risk Score:</b>	B	<b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>	A	<b>Last Dividend Increase:</b>	3%

## Overview & Current Events

Telephone & Data Systems is a telecommunications company that provides customers with cellular and landline services, wireless products, cable, broadband, and voice services across 24 U.S. states. The company's Cellular Division accounts for more than 75% of total operating revenue. TDS started in 1969 as a collection of 10 rural telephone companies. Today the company has a market cap of \$2.3 billion and more than \$5.2 billion in annual revenues.

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, TDS reported financial results for the third quarter. The company's total operating revenues were essentially flat at \$1.3 billion. Net income was \$28 million for the company, down significantly from last year's \$28 million. Diluted earnings per share of \$0.24 compares unfavorably to \$0.66 per share posted a year ago. Higher postpaid average revenue per user (ARPU) at US Cellular drove service revenue growth since customers chose higher-value plans. Postpaid ARPU of \$48.12 was a 22% increase year-over-year.

Total broadband connections increased 7% to 487,400 connections and residential broadband revenue grew 13%. More than half of these total connections are within service range of the 1Gig offering. In 2021, TDS plans to build out its fiber network and their suite of products to another 150,000 service addresses. Additionally, TDS is now able to deliver 2Gig internet speeds in certain markets, and they will offer it in all of its fiber expansion markets going forward.

Management narrowed their previously provided 2021 guidance and expect service revenues at U.S. Cellular of around \$3.1 billion, in-line with 2020 results. Total expected operating revenues for TDS Telecom is around \$1 billion, also in-line with actual 2020 results.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2026
<b>EPS</b>	\$1.83	\$0.75	\$1.29	(\$1.26)	\$1.98	\$0.39	\$1.37	\$1.17	\$1.03	\$1.93	<b>\$0.93</b>	<b>\$1.19</b>
<b>BPS<sup>3</sup></b>	\$33.60	\$37.16	\$37.85	\$36.39	\$37.86	\$37.67	\$38.45	\$40.00	\$40.46	\$42.02	<b>\$42.00</b>	<b>\$46.37</b>
<b>DPS</b>	\$0.48	\$0.48	\$0.51	\$0.52	\$0.56	\$0.59	\$0.60	\$0.64	\$0.66	\$0.68	<b>\$0.70</b>	<b>\$0.81</b>
<b>Shares<sup>4</sup></b>	118.0	108.0	109.0	108.0	109.0	110.0	112.0	115.0	116.0	116.0	<b>115.0</b>	<b>125.0</b>

TDS has an 82% stake in U.S. Cellular and essentially relies on this stake to achieve growth. In 2021, U.S. Cellular is focusing on connecting customers in underserved areas with their high-quality network, as well as market share expansion, increasing business with government customers in 5G and IoT, and improving network modernization and 5G programs. TDS Telecom aims to grow broadband revenue with an increase in customer connections and by expanding the reach of their fiber and 1Gig services.

The company has exhibited a volatile earnings record. During the last decade, its earnings-per-share have increased approximately 0.6% compounded per year on average. While the earnings trend has not produced much in terms of growth, book value per share has grown by 2.5% per year over the last decade. The book value trend is much more

<sup>1</sup> Estimate

<sup>2</sup> Estimate

<sup>3</sup> Book value per share

<sup>4</sup> In millions

*Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.*



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consistent. As TDS distributes roughly half of its earnings in dividends, we are projecting a book value per share around \$46.37 by 2026 for a 2% average annual growth of book value over the next five years.

## Valuation Analysis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Now	2026
Avg. P/B	0.87	0.64	0.67	0.7	0.74	0.73	0.75	0.73	0.70	0.50	0.48	0.60
Avg. Yld.	1.6%	2.1%	2.0%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.3%	3.4%	3.5%	2.9%

Due to the volatility in the company's earnings history, we believe that the best way to assess the valuation of TDS is by looking at its price-to-book ratio. TDS is currently trading at a price-to-book ratio of 0.48, which is lower than its 10-year average of 0.71. If the stock reverts closer to its average valuation level over the next five years, it will enjoy a 4.5% annualized gain.

## Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

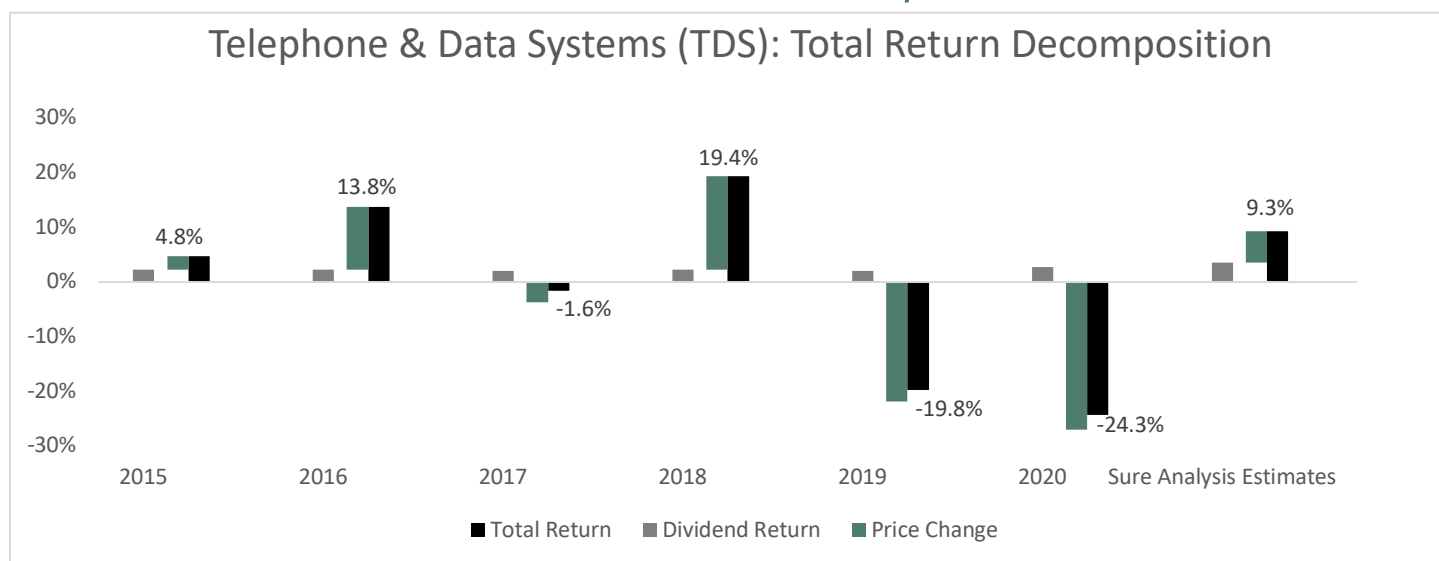
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2026
Payout	26%	64%	40%	-41%	28%	44%	44%	55%	64%	35%	75%	68%

TDS has raised its dividend for 45 consecutive years. It has grown its dividend by 3% per year on average over the past 5 years. Today, its 3.5% dividend yield is above the yield of the S&P. As TDS and U.S. Cellular operate in a highly competitive business, the corporation lacks a meaningful competitive advantage. As U.S. Cellular generates the vast majority of the revenues and earnings of TDS and is currently its most important growth driver, any headwind that may show up in the way of U.S. Cellular will have an impact on TDS. TDS Telecom is fortunate in that its services are heavily in-demand throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

TDS relies heavily on the performance of U.S. Cellular, however management is not forecasting exceptional growth currently. We forecast the stock will offer a 9.3% average annual return over the next five years. We have been somewhat conservative in our growth forecast due to the volatile performance record. We expect the bulk of returns to come from a roughly even mix of growth, valuation expansion and yield. Given the corporation trades 20% under our estimated fair value and has strong total return prospects, we rate TDS a buy today.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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## Income Statement Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Revenue	5180	5345	4901	5009	5210	5155	5044	5109	5176	5225
Gross Profit	3130	3073	2676	2498	2795	2726	2685	2773	2839	2871
Gross Margin	60.4%	57.5%	54.6%	49.9%	53.6%	52.9%	53.2%	54.3%	54.8%	54.9%
SG&A Exp.	2002	2034	1948	1865	1781	1762	1689	1694	1717	1681
D&A Exp.	766	814	1018	837	844	850	844	883	932	909
Operating Profit	362	225	-290	-204	170	114	152	196	190	281
Operating Margin	7.0%	4.2%	-5.9%	-4.1%	3.3%	2.2%	3.0%	3.8%	3.7%	5.4%
Net Profit	201	82	142	-136	219	43	153	135	121	226
Net Margin	3.9%	1.5%	2.9%	-2.7%	4.2%	0.8%	3.0%	2.6%	2.3%	4.3%
Free Cash Flow	284	110	-389	-404	-11	146	91	241	59	164
Income Tax	114	74	126	-5	172	40	-279	46	64	19

## Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Assets	8201	8624	8904	8854	9422	9446	9295	9783	10781	12525
Cash & Equivalents	563	740	830	472	985	900	619	921	465	1429
Accounts Receivable	394	410	552	549	705	753	861	992	1005	1004
Inventories	130	161	245	274	158	151	145	150	169	154
Goodwill & Int. Ass.	2342	2336	2456	2534	2901	2938	3020	2957	3266	3398
Total Liabilities	3598	3968	4234	4399	4718	4696	4403	4490	5377	6932
Accounts Payable	365	377	496	387	349	365	368	365	374	508
Long-Term Debt	1531	1723	1722	1942	2454	2445	2457	2439	2326	3429
Shareholder's Equity	3962	4012	4118	3926	4126	4144	4269	4560	4653	4804
D/E Ratio	0.39	0.43	0.42	0.49	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.53	0.50	0.71

## Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Return on Assets	2.5%	1.0%	1.6%	-1.5%	2.4%	0.5%	1.6%	1.4%	1.2%	1.9%
Return on Equity	5.2%	2.1%	3.5%	-3.4%	5.4%	1.0%	3.6%	3.1%	2.6%	4.8%
ROIC	3.3%	1.3%	2.2%	-2.1%	3.2%	0.6%	2.1%	1.8%	1.6%	2.7%
Shares Out.	118.0	108.0	109.0	108.0	109.0	110.0	112.0	115.0	116.0	116.0
Revenue/Share	47.48	49.07	44.91	46.38	47.36	46.44	45.04	44.82	44.62	45.43
FCF/Share	2.60	1.01	-3.57	-3.74	-0.10	1.32	0.81	2.11	0.51	1.43

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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