



CSX Corporation (CSX)

Updated April 24th, 2022, by Josh Arnold

Key Metrics

Current Price:	\$35	5 Year CAGR Estimate:	7.6%	Market Cap:	\$79 B
Fair Value Price:	\$32	5 Year Growth Estimate:	8.0%	Ex-Dividend Date:	05/25/22 ¹
% Fair Value:	108%	5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:	-1.5%	Dividend Payment Date:	06/15/22
Dividend Yield:	1.1%	5 Year Price Target	\$48	Years Of Dividend Growth:	17
Dividend Risk Score:	A	Retirement Suitability Score:	C	Rating:	Hold

Overview & Current Events

CSX can trace its roots all the way back to 1827 when the B&O Railroad was first chartered. From just 13 miles of track, CSX has grown to cover 23 states and more than 20,000 route miles. CSX provides rail, rail-to-truck, and intermodal transport services. The company's market capitalization is \$79 billion after a recent rally in the stock, and it should produce more than \$14 billion in revenue in 2022.

CSX executed a three-for-one stock split in June of 2021; our tables and calculations have been updated accordingly.

CSX reported first quarter earnings on April 20th, 2022, and results were better than expected on both revenue and profits. Earnings-per-share came to 39 cents in Q1, which was better than expectations by two cents. Revenue soared 21% year-over-year to \$3.4 billion and was \$100 million better than expected. Revenue gains reflected an overall revenue-per-unit increase of 24%, which was partially offset by a small volume decline.

Operating income was \$1.28 billion, which was up 16% year-over-year. The company's operating ratio was up 150bps to 62.4%, which was inclusive of the acquisition of Quality Carriers, as well as higher fuel prices.

We are reiterating our estimate of \$1.80 in earnings-per-share for this year following Q1 results. The massive gain from pricing increases more than offset a somewhat worrying decline in volumes.

CSX also boosted its dividend for the 17th consecutive year, this time adding 7.5% to a new annualized payout of 40 cents per share.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2027
EPS	\$0.60	\$0.61	\$0.64	\$0.67	\$0.60	\$0.77	\$1.28	\$1.39	\$1.20	\$1.56	\$1.80	\$2.64
DPS	\$0.18	\$0.20	\$0.21	\$0.23	\$0.24	\$0.26	\$0.29	\$0.32	\$0.35	\$0.37	\$0.40	\$0.67
Shares²	3,063	3,027	2,976	2,898	2,784	2,670	2,580	2,334	2,304	2,217	2,150	1,700

CSX's earnings-per-share has grown somewhat unpredictably over the past decade as its fortunes are tied to rail volumes and pricing strength, both of which are heavily dependent upon particular industries and economic conditions. CSX stands to gain in the form of modest revenue increases in the coming years, helping to fuel our estimate of 8% earnings-per-share growth annually. The remainder will come from improved operating efficiency leading to higher margins, as well as sizable buyback spending, although this was nearly halted in 2020. We see the share count declining in the mid-single digits annually as CSX generates strong free cash flow and puts it to use. We see a path to recovery that has cleared up in the past couple of quarters and believe that CSX's growth will continue its improvement in 2022.

Likewise, we see the dividend increasing at roughly the rate of earnings, reaching \$0.67 in five years from today's level of \$0.40. CSX has put buybacks first in recent years but with a much-reduced capex budget as part of its operational efficiency initiatives, more cash should be freed up for dividend increases. With the payout ratio still very low, CSX has plenty of room to continue its streak of dividend increases while still affording it the ability to buy back stock.

¹ Estimated date

² Share count 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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Valuation Analysis

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Now	2027
Avg. P/E	12.1	13.6	16.1	15.7	15.5	21.8	16.8	17.2	20.6	21.0	19.4	18.0
Avg. Yld.	2.5%	2.4%	2.0%	2.2%	2.6%	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.1%	1.1%	1.4%

CSX's price-to-earnings multiple is roughly in line with our last update at 19.4 times this year's estimated earnings. This is still slightly more than our estimate of fair value of 18 times earnings, so we continue to see a headwind to total returns from the valuation moving forward. We expect the yield to move up to 1.4% over time from the current 1.1%, stemming from a higher dividend and lower valuation.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2027
Payout	30%	32%	33%	35%	40%	34%	23%	23%	29%	24%	22%	26%

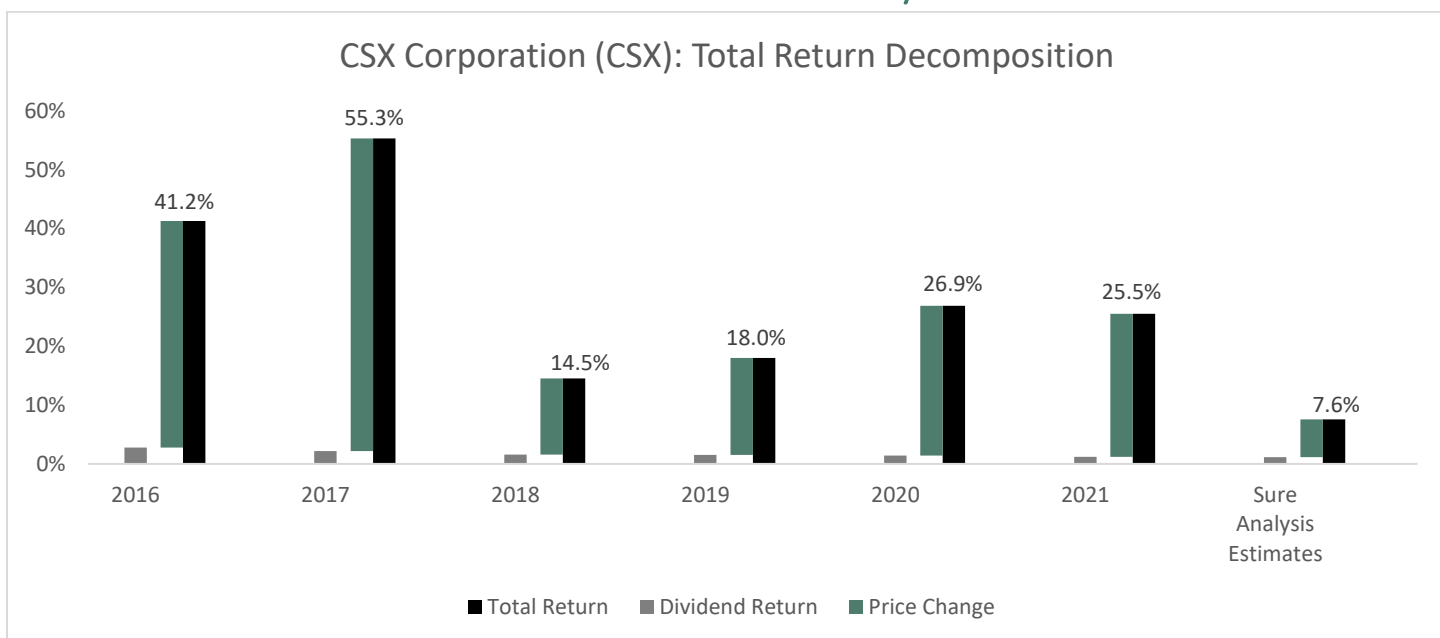
CSX's payout ratio remains low and as a result, is well covered. Indeed, its dividend safety is outstanding, but we note that the company has made it clear buybacks take priority over dividend growth.

The company's competitive advantage is in its lean operating structure, as well as its dominance in its service area. CSX looks poised to gain from its leverage to intermodal transport and the coal export market, although these things will not save it from recessions; rail operators are particularly sensitive to economic conditions and we see that as the key risk to owning CSX in the coming years, particularly considering the pandemic. That weakness was temporary, though, and we forecast more strong growth in 2022.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

In our view, CSX is still trading above fair value. It could see total annual returns in the next five years of 7.6%, consisting of the low current yield, 8% earnings growth and a small headwind from the valuation. CSX could therefore be appropriate for dividend growth investors as well as those seeking earnings growth, but the low current yield would make it unattractive for those seeking high current income. Given these factors, we reiterate the stock at a hold rating.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Revenue	11,763	12,026	12,669	11,811	11,069	11,408	12,250	11,937	10,583	12,522
Gross Profit	3,464	3,473	3,613	3,544	3,363	3,741	4,773	4,874	4,362	5,140
Gross Margin	29.4%	28.9%	28.5%	30.0%	30.4%	32.8%	39.0%	40.8%	41.2%	41.0%
D&A Exp.	1,059	1,104	1,151	1,208	1,301	1,315	1,331	1,349	1,383	1,420
Operating Profit	3,464	3,473	3,613	3,544	3,363	3,741	4,773	4,874	4,327	5,140
Operating Margin	29.4%	28.9%	28.5%	30.0%	30.4%	32.8%	39.0%	40.8%	41.2%	41.0%
Net Profit	1,863	1,864	1,927	1,968	1,714	5,471	3,309	3,331	2,765	3,781
Net Margin	15.8%	15.5%	15.2%	16.7%	15.5%	48.0%	27.0%	27.9%	26.1%	30.2%
Free Cash Flow	605	954	894	808	643	1,432	2,896	3,193	2,637	3,308
Income Tax	1,108	1,058	1,117	1,170	1,027	-2,329	995	985	862	1,170

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Assets	30,723	31,782	33,053	34,745	35,414	35,739	36,729	38,257	39,793	40,531
Cash & Equivalents	784	592	669	628	603	401	858	958	3,129	2,239
Acc. Receivable	1,114	1,052	1,129	982	938	793	828	769	700	937
Inventories	274	252	273	350	407	372	263	261	302	339
Goodwill & Int.	64	64	63	63	63	---	---	---	63	451
Total Liabilities	21,587	21,278	21,877	23,077	23,720	21,018	24,149	26,394	26,683	27,031
Accounts Payable	948	957	845	764	806	847	949	1,043	809	963
Long-Term Debt	9,832	9,555	9,742	10,535	11,293	11,809	14,757	16,238	16,705	16,366
Total Equity	9,122	10,483	11,152	11,652	11,679	14,705	12,563	11,848	13,101	13,490
LTD/E Ratio	1.08	0.91	0.87	0.90	0.97	0.80	1.17	1.37	1.28	1.21

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Return on Assets	6.2%	6.0%	5.9%	5.8%	4.9%	15.4%	9.1%	8.9%	7.1%	9.4%
Return on Equity	21.2%	19.0%	17.8%	17.3%	14.7%	41.5%	24.3%	27.3%	22.2%	28.4%
ROIC	10.2%	9.6%	9.4%	9.1%	7.6%	22.1%	12.3%	12.0%	9.5%	12.7%
Shares Out.	3,063	3,027	2,976	2,898	2,784	2,670	2,580	2,334	2,304	2,255
Revenue/Share	3.77	3.93	4.21	4.00	3.89	4.16	4.74	4.99	4.59	5.55
FCF/Share	0.19	0.31	0.30	0.27	0.23	0.52	1.12	1.33	1.14	1.47

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

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