



CSX Corporation (CSX)

Updated January 26th, 2023, by Josh Arnold

Key Metrics

Current Price:	\$31	5 Year CAGR Estimate:	8.3%	Market Cap:	\$66 B
Fair Value Price:	\$32	5 Year Growth Estimate:	6.0%	Ex-Dividend Date:	02/28/23 ¹
% Fair Value:	96%	5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:	0.9%	Dividend Payment Date:	03/15/23 ²
Dividend Yield:	1.3%	5 Year Price Target	\$43	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 \$66 billion after a recent rally in the stock, and it should produce about \$14.7 billion in revenue in 2023.

CSX reported fourth quarter and full-year earnings on January 25th, 2023, and results were better than expected on both the top and bottom lines. Earnings-per-share came to 49 cents, two cents ahead of expectations. Revenue was \$3.73 billion, up almost 9% year-over-year, and \$10 million better than estimates.

The revenue gain was driven by higher fuel surcharges, pricing gains, and an increase in storage revenues. The company noted severe winter weather in December crimped volumes and revenue for the quarter, so results could have been slightly better.

CSX noted its operating ratio was 60.9%, which was 0.2% worse than expected. Management noted they expect to see strong growth in 2023 from merchandise and coal volumes. In addition, management is focused on efficiency gains for the year to help offset headwinds facing international intermodal volumes.

We see \$1.80 in earnings-per-share for this year, with the risk that a recession strikes and potentially reduces volumes and margins for CSX.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2028
EPS	\$0.61	\$0.64	\$0.67	\$0.60	\$0.77	\$1.28	\$1.39	\$1.20	\$1.56	\$1.89	\$1.80	\$2.41
DPS	\$0.20	\$0.21	\$0.23	\$0.24	\$0.26	\$0.29	\$0.32	\$0.35	\$0.37	\$0.40	\$0.40	\$0.67
Shares³	3,027	2,976	2,898	2,784	2,670	2,580	2,334	2,304	2,217	2,137	2,080	1,900

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 6% 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 normalize as we head into 2023, but note that this year's earnings have the potential to be lower than 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

¹ Estimated date

² Estimated date

³ Share count in millions

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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.

Valuation Analysis

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Now	2028
Avg. P/E	13.6	16.1	15.7	15.5	21.8	16.8	17.2	20.6	21.0	16.4	17.2	18.0
Avg. Yld.	2.4%	2.0%	2.2%	2.6%	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	1.1%	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%

CSX's price-to-earnings multiple is much lower than our last update, given the share price has declined while earnings estimates are higher. Shares go for 17.2 times this year's estimated earnings. This is now only slightly lower than our estimate of fair value of 18 times earnings, so we now see a small tailwind from the valuation. We expect the yield to potentially rise from 1.3% to 1.6% in the years to come.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2028
Payout	32%	33%	35%	40%	34%	23%	23%	29%	24%	21%	22%	28%

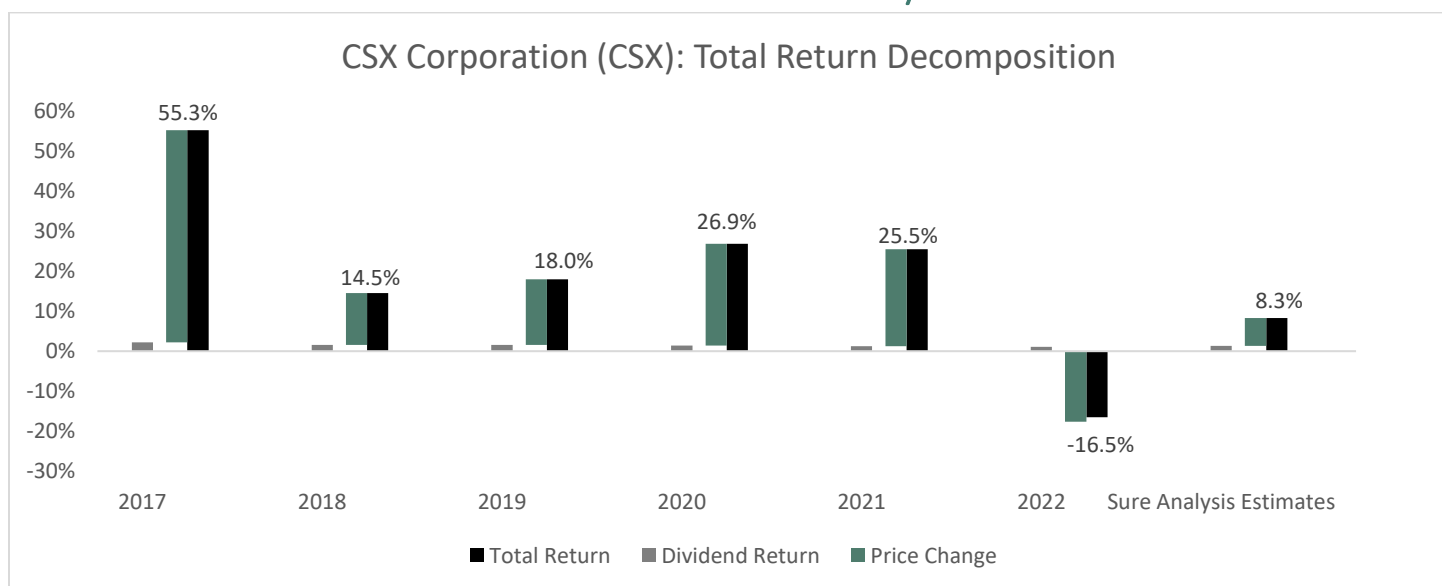
CSX's payout ratio remains low and as a result, is well covered. Indeed, its dividend safety is outstanding, but we note that the company has made it clear buybacks take priority over dividend growth.

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 quarters as a potential recession looms.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

CSX is now trading slightly under fair value. It could see total annual returns in the next five years of 8.3%, consisting of the 1.3% current yield, 6% earnings growth and a 0.9% tailwind 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. We see lower total returns as driving a hold rating, down from buy.

Total Return Breakdown by Year



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Income Statement Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Revenue	12,026	12,669	11,811	11,069	11,408	12,250	11,937	10,583	12,522	14853
Gross Profit	3,473	3,613	3,544	3,363	3,741	4,773	4,874	4,362	5,140	5785
Gross Margin	28.9%	28.5%	30.0%	30.4%	32.8%	39.0%	40.8%	41.2%	41.0%	38.9%
D&A Exp.	1,104	1,151	1,208	1,301	1,315	1,331	1,349	1,383	1,420	1500
Operating Profit	3,473	3,613	3,544	3,363	3,741	4,773	4,874	4,327	5,140	5785
Operating Margin	28.9%	28.5%	30.0%	30.4%	32.8%	39.0%	40.8%	41.2%	41.0%	38.9%
Net Profit	1,864	1,927	1,968	1,714	5,471	3,309	3,331	2,765	3,781	4,166
Net Margin	15.5%	15.2%	16.7%	15.5%	48.0%	27.0%	27.9%	26.1%	30.2%	28.0%
Free Cash Flow	954	894	808	643	1,432	2,896	3,193	2,637	3,308	3486
Income Tax	1,058	1,117	1,170	1,027	-2,329	995	985	862	1,170	1248

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Assets	31,782	33,053	34,745	35,414	35,739	36,729	38,257	39,793	40,531	41912
Cash & Equivalents	592	669	628	603	401	858	958	3,129	2,239	1958
Acc. Receivable	1,052	1,129	982	938	793	828	769	700	937	
Inventories	252	273	350	407	372	263	261	302	339	
Goodwill & Int.	64	63	63	63	---	---	---	63	451	
Total Liabilities	21,278	21,877	23,077	23,720	21,018	24,149	26,394	26,683	27,031	29,287
Accounts Payable	957	845	764	806	847	949	1,043	809	963	
Long-Term Debt	9,555	9,742	10,535	11,293	11,809	14,757	16,238	16,705	16,366	18,047
Total Equity	10,483	11,152	11,652	11,679	14,705	12,563	11,848	13,101	13,490	12,625
LTD/E Ratio	0.91	0.87	0.90	0.97	0.80	1.17	1.37	1.28	1.21	1.43

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Return on Assets	6.0%	5.9%	5.8%	4.9%	15.4%	9.1%	8.9%	7.1%	9.4%	10.1%
Return on Equity	19.0%	17.8%	17.3%	14.7%	41.5%	24.3%	27.3%	22.2%	28.4%	31.9%
ROIC	9.6%	9.4%	9.1%	7.6%	22.1%	12.3%	12.0%	9.5%	12.7%	13.8%
Shares Out.	3,027	2,976	2,898	2,784	2,670	2,580	2,334	2,304	2,255	2,141
Revenue/Share	3.93	4.21	4.00	3.89	4.16	4.74	4.99	4.59	5.55	6.94
FCF/Share	0.31	0.30	0.27	0.23	0.52	1.12	1.33	1.14	1.47	1.63

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

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