SBA Communications Corporation (SBAC)

Updated August 1st, 2023 by Nikolaos Sismanis

Key Metrics

Current Price:	$228	**5 Year CAGR Estimate:**	11.2%	**Market Cap:**	$23.9 B
Fair Value Price:	$234	**5 Year Growth Estimate:**	9.0%	**Ex-Dividend Date:**	08/23/2023
% Fair Value:	98%	**5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:**	0.5%	**Dividend Payment Date:**	09/20/2023
Dividend Yield:	1.5%	**5 Year Price Target**	$359	**Years Of Dividend Growth:**	4
Dividend Risk Score:	B	**Retirement Suitability Score:**	C	**Rating**	Buy

Overview & Current Events

SBA Communications Corporation a leading independent owner and operator of wireless communications infrastructure, primarily including tower structures that support antennas used for wireless communications. The company owns nearly 40,000 tower sites which it leases to multiple wireless telecom providers. SBA also owns a site development business, through which it assists telecom providers in developing and maintaining their own wireless service networks. The company generates about $2.6 billion in annual revenues and is headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida.

On July 31st, 2023, SBA Communications reported its Q2 results for the period ending June 30th, 2023. The company posted revenues of $678.5 million, 4.0% higher year-over-year, driven by a larger portfolio of towers and higher leasing activity. In fact, thousands of new towers were acquired and constructed over the past 12 months, enlarging SBA's portfolio. That said, activity slowed down in Q2. Specifically, during the quarter SBA acquired just nine communication sites for total cash consideration of $7.2 million and also constructed 64 towers on its own.

AFFO grew by 5.2% year-over-year to $352.7 million. On a per-share basis, AFFO grew by 5.5%, boosted further by share buybacks. Subsequent to the quarter-end, SBAC purchased or is under contract to purchase 134 communication sites for an aggregate consideration of approximately $72.9 million, suggesting its growth pipeline is being well sustained.

Management boosted its FY2023 outlook. They are now expecting site leasing revenues between $2.502 and $2.522 billion (up from $2.481 to $2.501 billion) and AFFO/share between $12.80 and $13.16 (up from $12.55 to $12.91). We have applied the midpoint of $12.98 in our estimates.

Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2028
AFFO/shr[1]	$4.10	$5.23	$5.69	$5.95	$6.95	$7.60	$8.48	$9.43	$10.74	$12.25	***$12.98***	***$19.97***
DPS	---	---	---	---	---	---	$0.74	$1.86	$2.32	$2.84	***$3.40***	***$7.78***
Shares[2]	127.8	128.9	127.8	124.4	119.9	114.9	112.8	111.5	109.3	108.0	***108.9***	***100.0***

SBA Communications displays an excellent record of AFFO/share growth powered by continuous development and acquisitions of new towers, increased leasing activity, and rate hikes (typically in the range of 3-4% per year). Additionally, the company maximizes its tower capacity by accommodating multiple tenants per tower structure without incurring additional costs just by placing additional antennas. SBA currently accommodates around 2 tenants per tower, with the capacity for more to be added going forward. As a result, we forecast AFFO/share of 9% in the medium-term, powered by the aforementioned drivers, as well as stock buybacks, which are rare for REITs, and showcase the company's ability to self-fund its future growth without diluting shareholders.

Despite its REIT status, due to SBA reporting losses amid reinvesting the majority of its gross profits over the past decade, the company was not required to pay dividends. Dividend payments were initiated in 2019 and are growing

[1] The metric is used due to real estate-related depreciation, amortization, and accretion as well as other meaningful adjustments.
[2] Share count is 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.

rapidly amid starting out from humble levels. The previous two quarterly hikes were 22.4% and 19.7%, respectively, with ample room for further growth. We forecast DPS growth of around 18% in the medium-term, expecting the company to gradually pay out a larger chunk of its bottom line to shareholders.

Valuation Analysis

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Now	2028
Avg. P/AFFO	19.5	17.2	20.7	16.6	20.1	20.4	26.5	31.8	29.3	24.9	***17.6***	***18.0***
Avg. Yld.	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.3%	0.6%	0.7%	0.9%	***1.5%***	***2.2%***

SBA Communications has historically traded at around 22.7X its underlying AFFO. Investors have historically attached a premium price tag to the stock due to improving growth prospects, the 5G rollout, and economies of scale expanding its profitability potential. Following the stock's correction from our previous report, its valuation is now 17.6X its projected AFFOs. We find this multiple to be slightly humble for the stock. Following a robust Q2 report and a raised outlook, we have set our fair multiple at 18X AFFOs, implying the potential for a valuation tailwind. Although the dividend yield hovers at just 1.5%, we expect the dividend to grow rapidly over time.

Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

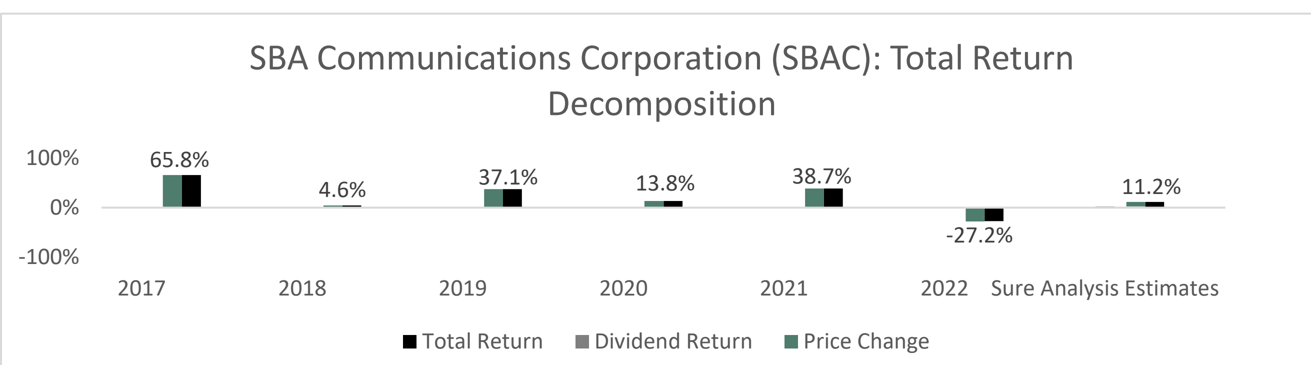
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2028
Payout	---	---	---	---	---	---	9%	20%	22%	23%	***26%***	***39%***

We consider SBA's dividend quite safe and widely covered by the underlying AFFO. The company enjoys several qualities, including a highly scalable business model, a credit-worthy tenant base of telecom majors, contractually secured and predictable revenues, and a clear runaway for gradual growth ahead. The company also enjoys a distinct competitive advantage along with the handful of other tower REITs which have formed an oligopoly in the space, which has become quite expensive to penetrate into. Unlike traditional real estate properties, whose tenants may struggle to pay rent during a potential recession, telecom companies enjoy extremely resilient revenues, while the essential and mission-critical nature of telecommunication ensures no adverse impact on SBA's performance. This was proven both during the Great Financial Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic when revenues continued to grow during both periods.

Final Thoughts & Recommendation

SBA has produced great returns for its shareholders over the past decade, powered by consistent growth in financials. The current dividend, while not substantial, should gradually contribute to total returns. Our growth forecasts remain strong, and the company enjoys unique qualities. With the stock's valuation in -ine with our fair estimate, we forecast annualized returns of 11.2% in the medium-term. Thus, we continue to rate SBA Communications a 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	1,305	1,527	1,638	1,633	1,728	1,866	2,015	2,083	2,309	2,633
Gross Profit	897	1,099	1,194	1,212	1,281	1,397	1,522	1,607	1,763	1,956
Gross Margin	68.7%	71.9%	72.9%	74.2%	74.2%	74.9%	75.5%	77.1%	76.4%	74.3%
SG&A Exp.	85	103	115	143	131	143	193	194	220	262
D&A Exp.	533	627	660	638	643	672	697	722	700	708
Operating Profit	278	368	419	431	508	580	629	689	841	995
Operating Margin	21.3%	24.1%	25.6%	26.4%	29.4%	31.1%	31.2%	33.1%	36.4%	37.8%
Net Profit	(56)	(24)	(176)	76	104	47	147	24	238	461
Net Margin	-4.3%	-1.6%	-10.7%	4.7%	6.0%	2.5%	7.3%	1.2%	10.3%	17.5%
Free Cash Flow	329	463	514	603	671	701	816	997	1,056	1,071
Income Tax	(1)	9	9	11	13	4	40	(42)	15	66

Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Assets	6,783	7,841	7,313	7,361	7,320	7,214	9,760	9,158	9,802	10,590
Cash & Equivalents	122	39	118	146	69	143	108	309	367	144
Accounts Receivable	71	104	83	78	91	111	132	74	102	184
Goodwill & Int. Ass.	3,387	4,190	3,735	3,657	3,598	3,331	3,627	3,156	2,803	2,776
Total Liabilities	6,426	8,502	9,019	9,357	9,919	10,591	13,427	13,982	15,090	15,830
Accounts Payable	24	43	27	28	33	34	32	110	34	51
Long-Term Debt	5,877	7,861	8,452	8,776	9,311	9,939	10,334	11,096	12,300	12,870
Shareholder's Equity	357	(661)	(1,706)	(1,996)	(2,599)	(3,377)	(3,667)	(4,824)	(5,283)	(5,276)
LTD/E Ratio	16.46	(11.90)	(4.95)	(4.40)	(3.58)	(2.94)	(2.82)	(2.30)	(2.33)	(2.44)

Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Return on Assets	-0.8%	-0.3%	-2.3%	1.0%	1.4%	0.7%	1.7%	0.3%	2.5%	4.5%
Return on Equity	-11.1%	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
ROIC	-0.9%	-0.4%	-2.5%	1.1%	1.5%	0.7%	2.2%	0.4%	3.6%	6.3%
Shares Out.	127.8	128.9	127.8	124.4	119.9	114.9	112.8	111.5	111	109.4
Revenue/Share	10.21	11.84	12.82	13.05	14.28	16.01	17.57	18.36	20.77	24.07
FCF/Share	2.57	3.59	4.02	4.81	5.55	6.01	7.11	8.79	9.50	9.79

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