

Kohls Corporation (KSS)

\$21.50 (As of 09/21/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$23.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 05/04/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:B

Value: A

Growth: C

Momentum: F

Summary

Kohl's shares have outpaced the industry in the past six months. The company has reopened all its stores, following the relaxation of the coronavirus-induced lockdown restrictions, though they operated at reduced working hours during the second quarter of fiscal 2020. Apart from these, digital revenues witnessed a 58% jump during the quarter, given customers' increased shift to online shopping amid COVID-19. Continuation of such trends bodes well. However, the company continued to witness escalated costs and strained margins in the fiscal second quarter – wherein net sales plunged 22.9% due to nearly 25% less operating days. Notably, results were marred by the coronavirus pandemic. Further, management anticipates gross margin to remain pressurized on account of higher shipping costs along with an intense promotional environment.

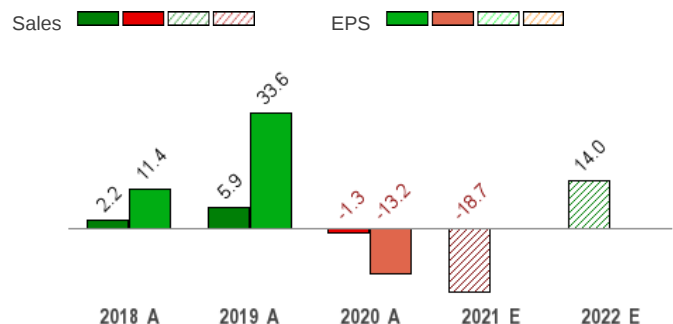
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$59.28 - \$10.89
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	8,640,347
Market Cap	\$3.4 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	-57.8%
Beta	1.66
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	Retail - Regional Department Stores
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 49% (129 out of 251)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	72.8%
Last Sales Surprise	7.4%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-0.1%
Expected Report Date	11/17/2020
Earnings ESP	-22.5%
P/E TTM	NA
P/E F1	NA
PEG F1	NA
P/S TTM	0.2

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	3,394 E	4,144 E	4,336 E	6,656 E	18,505 E
2021	2,428 A	3,407 A	4,039 E	6,346 E	16,239 E
2020	4,087 A	4,430 A	4,625 A	6,832 A	19,974 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2022	-\$0.70 E	\$1.05 E	\$0.20 E	\$1.56 E	\$2.05 E
2021	-\$3.20 A	-\$0.25 A	-\$0.49 E	\$0.49 E	-\$3.33 E
2020	\$0.61 A	\$1.55 A	\$0.74 A	\$1.99 A	\$4.86 A

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

The data in the charts and tables, including the Zacks Consensus EPS and Sales estimates, is as of 09/21/2020. The reports text is as of 09/22/2020.

Overview

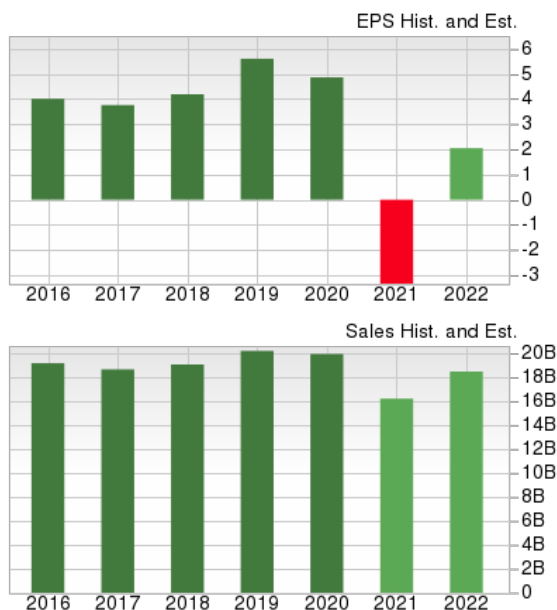
Headquartered in Menomonee Falls, WI, Kohl's Corp. is a U.S. based department store chain that operates specialty department stores and an e-commerce site in the U.S. As of Nov 19, 2019, Kohl's operated more than 1,100 stores across 49 states.

These offer moderately-priced apparel, footwear and accessories for women, men and children; beauty and home articles. The department store appeals to middle-class consumers as it sells discounted branded and private label clothing and home goods.

The company's merchandise includes both national brands and private and exclusive brands that are available only at Kohl's. National brands including Dockers, Levi's, Columbia Sportswear, Reebok, Champion, Oshkosh, Pfaltzgraff, and KitchenAid generally have higher selling prices, but lower gross margins, than private and exclusive brands. Kohl's private brands include Apt. 9, Croft & Barrow, Jumping Beans, SO and Sonoma Goods for Life.

Despite having lower selling prices, private brands generally have higher gross margins than exclusive and national brands. Exclusive brands including Food Network, Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, Rock & Republic and Simply Vera Vera Wang are developed and marketed through agreements with nationally-recognized brands.

In addition, Kohl's also offers online shopping. Its website features a selection of items and categories beyond what is available in stores, with a primary focus on extended sizes, product line extensions and web-exclusive product lines.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Buy:

▲ **Store Reopening & Efforts to Solidify Financial Position Amid Pandemic:** Shares of Kohl's have gained 64.2% in the past six months compared with the industry's growth of 48.9%. The company reopened all its stores, following the relaxation of the coronavirus outbreak-induced lockdown restrictions. While reopening stores, management undertook all health and safety measures. Moreover, Kohl's store drive-ups as well as customer pick up plans amid the pandemic are yielding. Also, the company implemented Amazon return program as the stores reopened. In fact, Kohl's witnessed increased traffic as customers were able to place returns for items bought over the last several months.

Kohl's initiatives to drive traffic amid COVID-19 are encouraging. The company also has a strong brand portfolio and a solid e-commerce business.

The company has taken every step to safeguard its financial position amid the crisis that helped generate positive operating cash flow in the fiscal second quarter. To address challenges related to the pandemic, Kohl's focused on lowering expenses, managing inventory receipts and curbing capital expenditure. The company also secured an additionally \$500 million under its revolver credit facility. Management also informed its intentions to remain in the investment grade rating category for the long term. Markedly, Kohl's ended the second quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$2,428 million. This is sufficient to meet the company's current leases and financial obligations of \$126 million as of Aug 1, 2020. Its long-term debt (including leases and finance obligations) inched up on a sequential basis to \$7,443 million as of Aug 1.

▲ **Digital Business:** The company has been benefiting from its growing digital business for a while now. The company remains focused on making investments in this business, which has seen its sales more than double since 2014. Markedly, digital sales witnessed a 58% jump during second-quarter fiscal 2020, given customers' increased shift to online shopping amid the coronavirus outbreak. Given the need of the hour, management speeded up its digital marketing and enhanced its website to cater to customers' needs. Further, the company generated online sales growth across several categories. Notably, digital revenues in the Home and Active business surged more than 90% and 70%, respectively, in the second quarter.

A large percentage of digital orders was accomplished by Kohl's stores, which also helped lower in-store inventory. In fact, roughly 50% of digital orders were fulfilled by stores. Also, 15% of the digital revenues were attributed to customer pickups in the quarter. Certainly, the company's investments toward boosting online capabilities and improving consumer engagement are yielding well. Management expects to leverage its strong online presence during the upcoming holiday season.

We note that the company's solid endeavors to boost mobile traffic have augmented the adoption of the Kohl app, making it a vital constituent of online sales. To improve online offerings, Kohl's has been expanding its e-commerce fulfillment centers alongside strengthening in-store pickups. In fact, the company has been witnessing increased adoption of Buy-Online-Ship-to-Store (or BOSS) and or BOPIS. Other efforts to bolster digital sales include Smart Cart, Your Price and personalized search. Also, Kohl's is on track to consolidate its call centers that support the company's online and Kohl's Charge customers.

▲ **Strong Brand Portfolio and Regular Innovation:** Kohl's offers moderately priced exclusive and national brands, which include apparel, shoes, accessories, beauty and home products. The company has established a strong brand portfolio with national brands such as Dockers, Levi's, Columbia Sportswear, Reebok, Champion, Oshkosh, Pfaltzgraff, and KitchenAid. Also, Kohl's added Land's End products to its national brand portfolio in March 2020. Further, exclusive brands such as Simply Vera by fashion designer Vera Wang and Chaps by Polo Ralph Lauren have helped draw customers to Kohl's stores in the past as the products can only be found at Kohl's. Private and exclusive brands like Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony and Rock & Republic brands have been doing well in sportswear, dresses and other apparel categories. Moreover, in the active category, brands like Adidas, Under Armour and Nike have particularly been doing well. Kohl's also regularly introduces new brands in order to keep the inventory assortment fresh and drive customer traffic to its stores and website.

▲ **Partnerships Boost performance:** Kohl's has been strengthening its ties with retail giant Amazon to drive traffic. Incidentally, the company has been benefiting from the rollout of its Amazon returns program nationwide. According to this program, Kohl's stores accept free, unpackaged and easy returns for customers of Amazon. The company is witnessing improved store traffic from the Amazon returns program since its stores reopened. One of the prime objectives of this program is to convert more customers as loyal Kohl's shoppers. In an earlier development, Kohl's decided to sell Amazon devices, accessories and smart home devices in selected stores in Los Angeles and Chicago. Kohl's believes that this store-within-store concept will boost traffic, thanks to the availability of Amazon's varied electronics options. In the long run, the company is expected to receive significant boost to its business through this partnership. Further Kohl's partnership with Fanatics, Property Brothers and Home Decor is expected to strengthen performance.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ **Coronavirus Hurts Q2 Results:** The coronavirus outbreak, which led to the closure of stores, impacted Kohl's second-quarter fiscal 2020 results. The company's total revenues were \$3,407 million, down 23.1% year over year. Net sales plunged 22.9% to \$3,213 million due to nearly 25% less operating days compared with the prior-year figure along with reduced working hours amid the pandemic. Also, other revenues declined 25.7% to \$194 million. Further, Kohl's posted adjusted loss of 25 cents per share, which compares unfavorably with adjusted earnings of \$1.55 per share reported in the year-ago quarter. In fact, management expects the overall retail industry and its business to be affected by the impact of coronavirus in 2020. Also, on the fiscal second-quarter earnings call, the company highlighted some concerns regarding a sluggish back-to-school selling season in the wake of the pandemic.
- ▼ **Rising Costs:** Kohl's has been seeing rising selling, general and administrative (SG&A) expenses for a while now. In the fiscal second quarter, as a percentage of total revenues, SG&A expenses increased to 30.8% from 28.6% in the prior-year quarter. Prior to this, the metric came in at 43.9% in the fiscal first quarter from 31.2% in the prior-year period. We believe that the persistence of the trend may continue to exert pressure on the company's performance in the future.
- ▼ **Margin Concerns:** During the second quarter of fiscal 2020, Kohl's gross margin contracted to 33.1% from 38.8% in the year-ago quarter. Gross margin was largely affected by the pandemic. Gross margin contraction can be mainly accountable to escalated shipping costs, owing to higher digital sales penetration as well as promotional activities and mix impacts as Home was the outperforming category. Moreover, management expects gross margin to remain pressurized, owing to higher shipping costs as it anticipates digital penetration to remain high along with an intense promotional environment.
- ▼ **Industry-Wide Headwinds:** Kohl's is exposed to the threat of constantly changing consumer spending habits that may impact the performance of the company's business assortments and categories. Amongst such concerns, the risk of losing foot-traffic in brick-and-mortar stores, thanks to consumer shift toward online shopping poses significant risks. Further, competition from discount retailers poses significant threats to the company's performance.

The company is grappling with soft margins. Also, coronavirus-led impact is concerning.

Last Earnings Report

Kohl's Q2 Loss Narrower-Than-Expected, Sales Fall

Kohl's posted second-quarter fiscal 2020 results, with narrower-than-expected loss. Moreover, the company's top line surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate. However, the metric declined from the year-ago period.

To address challenges tied to the pandemic, Kohl's focused on lowering expenses, managing inventory receipts and augmenting its online business. The company took every initiative to safeguard its financial position amid the crisis that helped generate positive operating cash flow. Also, management informed that it has reopened all stores as coronavirus-induced restrictions are being lifted.

Q2 in Details

Kohl's posted adjusted loss of 25 cents per share, which is narrower than the Zacks Consensus Estimate of a loss of 92 cents. However, the figure was wider than adjusted earnings of \$1.55 per share reported in the year-ago quarter. The deterioration was caused by lower net sales and increased interest expenses.

Total revenues came in at \$3,407 million, down 23.1% from the prior-year quarter's levels. Nevertheless, the metric surpassed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$3,172.5 million. Net sales have plunged 22.9% to \$3,213 million and other revenues declined 25.7% to \$194 million in the quarter.

Gross margin contracted to 33.1% in the quarter under review from 38.8% in the year-ago quarter. Notably, SG&A expenses declined 17.3% year over year to \$1,050 million. However, as a percentage of total revenues, SG&A expenses increased to 30.8% in the quarter from 28.6% in the prior-year quarter. The company reported operating income of \$118 million compared with \$376 million posted in the prior-year quarter.

Other Financial Details

Kohl's ended the quarter with cash and cash equivalents of \$2,428 million, long-term debt of \$3,450 million and shareholders' equity of \$4,837 million. The company generated net cash from operating activities of \$304 million during six months ended Aug 1.

Quarter Ending 07/2020

Report Date	Aug 18, 2020
Sales Surprise	7.39%
EPS Surprise	72.83%
Quarterly EPS	-0.25
Annual EPS (TTM)	-0.72

Recent News

Kohl's Boosts Customers' Experience With New Loyalty Program – Sep 8, 2020

Kohl's unveiled the countrywide rollout of its simplified loyalty program — Kohl's Rewards — which places it well for this holiday season. Customers enrolling for Kohl's Rewards will get 5% Kohl's Cash every day, on every purchase, regardless of how and when they shop. Apart from this, they will be entitled to personalized deals, special birthday gifts and other perks throughout the year. The launch of Kohl's Rewards is likely to provide more value to customers, by offering them more Kohl's Cash every day.

Notably, the company has been piloting this program in 13 markets. Customers' favorable response to this lucrative loyalty program encouraged management to roll it out nationwide. In fact, the Kohl's Rewards program evolves the company's existing Yes2You Rewards loyalty program into a more simplified framework. The 30 million Kohl's Yes2You Rewards program members will be automatically transferred to the new Kohl's Rewards program, with their current Yes2You Rewards points converted into the new program.

Certainly, the Kohl's Rewards program is likely to be a hit, given its exclusive deals, increased customer engagement and miscellaneous perks. Also, the program will be easy and enjoyable to use with new features. These include getting a print out of the Kohl's Rewards balance on their shopping receipt; getting a digital reminder of the Kohl's Cash coupons available, and synchronizing Kohl's Rewards balances across different channels.

Valuation

Kohl's shares are down 57.8% in the year-to-date period and 56.1% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry are down 56.3%, whereas stocks in the Zacks Retail – Wholesale sector gained 26.4% in the year-to-date period. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry declined 53.1% while and the sector gained 33%.

The S&P 500 index is up 3% in the year-to-date period and 11.3% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 0.19X forward 12-month sales, which compares to 0.18X for the Zacks sub-industry, 1.23X for the Zacks sector and 4X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 0.68X and as low as 0.09X, with a 5-year median of 0.42X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in-line with the market. Our \$23 price target reflects 0.2X forward 12-month sales.

The table below shows summary valuation data for KSS

Valuation Multiples - KSS					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/S F12M	Current	0.19	0.18	1.23	4
	5-Year High	0.68	0.6	1.32	4.29
	5-Year Low	0.09	0.11	0.82	3.11
	5-Year Median	0.42	0.43	1.01	3.66
P/B TTM	Current	0.7	0.93	5.81	5.63
	5-Year High	2.51	2.91	6.45	6.17
	5-Year Low	0.33	0.34	3.7	3.75
	5-Year Median	1.53	1.97	5.05	4.85
EV/EBITDA TTM	Current	4.87	8.06	18.73	14.15
	5-Year High	6.34	8.37	20.71	15.61
	5-Year Low	1.4	2.99	11.15	9.51
	5-Year Median	4.25	5.28	12.95	13.01

As of 09/21/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 49% (129 out of 251)



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
Target Corporation (TGT)	Outperform	1
Companhia Brasileira de Distribuicao (CBD)	Neutral	3
Costco Wholesale Corporation (COST)	Neutral	3
Dillards, Inc. (DDS)	Neutral	3
Dollar General Corporation (DG)	Neutral	3
Dollar Tree, Inc. (DLTR)	Neutral	3
Macys, Inc. (M)	Neutral	3
Walmart Inc. (WMT)	Neutral	2

The positions listed should not be deemed a recommendation to buy, hold or sell.

Industry Comparison Industry: Retail - Regional Department Stores				Industry Peers		
	KSS	X Industry	S&P 500	CBD	DDS	M
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Neutral	-	-	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	3	-	-	3	3	3
VGM Score	B	-	-	A	A	A
Market Cap	3.39 B	1.96 B	22.78 B	3.67 B	740.91 M	1.96 B
# of Analysts	9	7	13	1	5	7
Dividend Yield	0.00%	0.00%	1.7%	0.82%	1.81%	0.00%
Value Score	A	-	-	A	A	A
Cash/Price	0.66	0.66	0.07	0.39	0.11	0.67
EV/EBITDA	2.85	2.84	12.89	7.31	3.03	2.82
PEG F1	NA	NA	2.91	0.91	NA	NA
P/B	0.70	0.77	3.17	1.26	0.54	0.84
P/CF	2.00	2.00	12.48	7.19	2.48	1.03
P/E F1	NA	NA	20.84	19.39	NA	NA
P/S TTM	0.20	0.13	2.44	0.23	0.15	0.10
Earnings Yield	-15.49%	-41.71%	4.53%	5.16%	-20.02%	-63.39%
Debt/Equity	0.99	0.70	0.70	1.47	0.41	2.09
Cash Flow (\$/share)	10.77	6.12	6.93	1.92	13.37	6.12
Growth Score	C	-	-	A	B	B
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	-1.11%	-6.35%	10.41%	NA	-6.35%	-12.15%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-168.61%	-208.20%	-4.56%	61.36%	-259.04%	-237.31%
Current Cash Flow Growth	-10.84%	-10.84%	5.26%	-12.81%	-16.01%	-15.88%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	-0.78%	-3.55%	8.49%	-13.56%	-10.66%	-6.32%
Current Ratio	2.22	1.54	1.35	0.98	1.86	1.16
Debt/Capital	49.84%	39.53%	42.95%	59.44%	29.22%	67.61%
Net Margin	-0.61%	-6.80%	10.25%	0.51%	-1.92%	-18.27%
Return on Equity	-2.15%	-5.52%	14.66%	2.88%	-6.48%	-4.56%
Sales/Assets	1.13	1.08	0.50	1.26	1.48	1.01
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-18.70%	-18.70%	-1.44%	0.00%	-24.15%	-32.08%
Momentum Score	F	-	-	F	D	A
Daily Price Change	-8.12%	-6.38%	-2.45%	-1.15%	-6.10%	-6.66%
1-Week Price Change	9.70%	2.96%	0.79%	1.24%	4.82%	-4.11%
4-Week Price Change	5.44%	0.45%	-3.66%	19.12%	20.01%	-4.54%
12-Week Price Change	4.07%	1.37%	5.24%	3.38%	26.62%	-4.68%
52-Week Price Change	-56.15%	-50.29%	-2.08%	-30.17%	-44.43%	-59.40%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	8,640,347	4,541,411	2,038,285	404,747	442,474	26,937,808
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.37%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	-0.07%	6.13%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.27%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	8.17%	21.77%	4.10%	7.58%	35.36%	-0.54%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	-5.66%	0.00%	0.00%	NA	0.00%	7.17%

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Zacks Stock Rating System

We offer two rating systems that take into account investors' holding horizons: Zacks Rank and Zacks Recommendation. Each provides valuable insights into the future profitability of the stock and can be used separately or in combination with each other depending on your investment style.

Zacks Recommendation

The Zacks Recommendation aims to predict performance over the next 6 to 12 months. The foundation for the quantitatively determined Zacks Recommendation is trends in the company's estimate revisions and earnings outlook. The Zacks Recommendation is broken down into 3 Levels; Outperform, Neutral and Underperform. Unlike many Wall Street firms, we maintain a balance between the number of Outperform and Neutral recommendations. Our team of 70 analysts are fully versed in the benefits of earnings estimate revisions and how that is harnessed through the Zacks quantitative rating system. But we have given our analysts the ability to override the Zacks Recommendation for the 1200 stocks that they follow. The reason for the analyst over-rides is that there are often factors such as valuation, industry conditions and management effectiveness that a trained investment professional can spot better than a quantitative model.

Zacks Rank

The Zacks Rank is our short-term rating system that is most effective over the one- to three-month holding horizon. The underlying driver for the quantitatively-determined Zacks Rank is the same as the Zacks Recommendation, and reflects trends in earnings estimate revisions.

Zacks Style Scores

The Zacks Style Score is as a complementary indicator to the Zacks rating system, giving investors a way to focus on the highest rated stocks that best fit their own stock picking preferences.

Academic research has proven that stocks with the best Value, Growth and Momentum characteristics outperform the market. The Zacks Style Scores rate stocks on each of these individual styles and assigns a rating of A, B, C, D and F. We also produce the VGM Score (V for Value, G for Growth and M for Momentum), which combines the weighted average of the individual Style Scores into one score. This is perfectly suited for those who want their stocks to have the best scores across the board.

Value Score	A
Growth Score	C
Momentum Score	F
VGM Score	B

As an investor, you want to buy stocks with the highest probability of success. That means buying stocks with a Zacks Recommendation of Outperform, which also has a Style Score of an A or a B.

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Returns quoted represent past performance which is no guarantee of future results. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate so that when shares are redeemed, they may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be higher or lower than the performance shown.

Investing involves risk; principal loss is possible. There is no guarantee that companies that can issue dividends will declare, continue to pay or increase dividends.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

52-Week High-Low: The range of the highest and lowest prices at which a stock has traded during the past year. This range is determined based on the stock's daily closing price which may differ from the intra-day high or low. Many investors use it as a technical indicator to determine a stock's current value and future price movement. The idea here is that if price breaks out from the 52-week range, in either direction, the momentum may continue in the same direction.

20-Day Average Volume (Shares): The average number of shares of a company traded in a day over the last 20 days. It is a direct indication of a security's overall liquidity. The higher the average daily trading volume, the easier it is to enter or exit the stock at a desired price with more buyers and sellers being available.

Daily Price Change: This is the percentage difference between a trading day's closing price and the prior trading day's closing price. This item is updated at 9 p.m. EST each day.

1-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 5 trading days. This change reflects the collective buying and selling sentiment over the 1-week period.

A strong weekly price increase for the stock, especially when accompanied by increased volume, is an indication of it gaining momentum.

4-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 20 trading days or past 4 weeks. This is a medium-term price change metric and an indication of the stock gaining momentum.

12-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change of a stock's closing price over the last 60 trading days or past 12 weeks. Similar to 4-week price change, this is a medium-term price change metric. It shows whether a stock has been enjoying strong investor demand, or if it has been in consolidation, or distress over this period.

52-Week Price Change: This is the percentage change in a stock's closing price over the last 260 trading days or past 52 weeks. This long-term price change metric is a good reference point for investors. Some investors seek stocks with the best percentage price change over the last 52 weeks, expecting the momentum to continue.

Market Cap: The number of outstanding common shares of a company times its latest price per share. This figure represents a company's size, which indicates various characteristics, including price stability and risk, in which investors could be interested.

Year-To-Date Price Change: Change in a stock's daily closing price in the period of time beginning the first day of the current calendar year through to the previous trading day.

of Analysts: Number of EPS estimates used in calculating the current-quarter consensus. These estimates come from the brokerage analysts tracking this stock. However, the number of such analysts tracking this stock may not match the number of estimates, as all brokerage analysts may not come up with an estimate or provide it to us.

Beta: A measure of risk commonly used to compare the volatility of a stock to the overall market. The S&P 500 Index is the base for calculating beta and carries a value of 1. A stock with beta below 1 is less risky than the market as a whole. And a stock with beta above 1 is riskier.

Dividend: The portion of earnings a company is expected to distribute to its common shareholders in the next 12 months for each share they own. Dividends are usually paid quarterly. Dividend payments reflect positively on a company and help maintain investors' trust. Investors typically find dividend-paying stocks appealing because the dividend adds to any market price appreciation to result in higher return on investment (ROI). Moreover, a steady or increasing dividend payment provides investors a cushion in a down market.

Dividend Yield: The ratio of a company's annual dividend to its share price. The annual dividend used in the ratio is calculated based on the most recent dividend paid by the company. Dividend yield is an estimate of the dividend-only return from a stock in the next 12 months. Since dividend itself doesn't change frequently, dividend yield usually changes with a stock's price movement. As a result, often an unusually high dividend yield is a result of weak stock price.

S&P 500 Index: The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) Index is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. It is a market-capitalization-weighted index of stocks of the 500 largest U.S. companies. Each stock's weight in the index is proportionate to its market value.

Industry: One of the 250+ groups that Zacks classifies all stocks into based on the nature of business. These groups are termed as expanded (aka "X") industries and map to their respective (economic) sectors; Zacks has 16 sectors.

Zacks Industry Rank: The Zacks Industry Rank is determined by calculating the average Zacks Rank for all stocks in the industry and then assigning an ordinal rank to it. For example, an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 1.6 is better than an industry with an average Zacks Rank of 2.3. So, the industry with the better average Zacks Rank would get a better Zacks Industry Rank. If an industry has the best average Zacks Rank, it would be considered the top industry (1 out of 250+), which would place it at the top 1% of Zacks-ranked industries. Studies have shown that roughly half of a stock's price movement can be attributed to the industry group it belongs to. In fact, the top 50% of Zacks-ranked industries outperforms the bottom 50% by a factor of more than 2 to 1.

Last EPS Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported earnings per share from the Zacks Consensus Estimate. Companies with a positive earnings surprise are more likely to surprise again in the future (or miss again if they recently missed).

Last Sales Surprise: The percentage deviation of a company's last reported sales from the Zacks Consensus Estimate.

Expected Report Date: This is an estimated date of a company's next earnings release. The information originated or gathered by Zacks Investment Research from its information providers or publicly available sources is the basis of this estimate.

Earnings ESP: The Zacks Earnings ESP compares the Most Accurate Estimate to the Zacks Consensus Estimate for the yet-to-be reported quarter. The Most Accurate Estimate is the most recent version of the Zacks Consensus EPS Estimate. The idea here is that analysts revising their estimates closer to an earnings release have the latest information, which could potentially be more accurate than what they and others contributing to the consensus had predicted earlier. Thus, a positive or negative Earnings ESP reading theoretically indicates the likely deviation of the actual earnings from the consensus estimate. However, the model's predictive power is significant for positive ESP readings only. A positive Earnings ESP is a strong predictor of an earnings beat, particularly when combined with a Zacks Rank #1 (Strong Buy), #2 (Buy) or #3 (Hold). Our research shows that stocks with this combination produce a positive surprise nearly 70% of the time.

Periods:

TTM: Trailing 12 months. Using TTM figures is an effective way of analyzing the most-recent financial data in an annualized format that helps neutralize the effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variation.

F1: Current fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the ongoing full fiscal year.

F2: Next fiscal year. This period is used to analyze the estimates for the next full fiscal year.

F12M: Forward 12 months. Using F12M figures is an effective way of analyzing the near-term (the following four unreported quarters) estimates in an annualized manner. Instead of typically representing estimates for the full fiscal year, which may not represent the nitty-gritty of each quarter, F12M figures suggest an all-inclusive annualized estimate for the following four quarters. The annualization helps neutralize the potential effects of seasonality and other quarter-to-quarter variations.

P/E Ratio: The price-to-earnings ratio measures a company's current market price per share relative to its earnings per share (EPS). Usually, the trailing-12-month (TTM) EPS, current-fiscal-year (F1) EPS estimate, or forward-12-month (F12M) EPS estimate is used as the denominator. In essence, this ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of EPS. In other words, this ratio gives a sense of what the relative value of the company is at the already reported level of earnings or at a future level of earnings.

It is one of the most widely-used multiples for determining the value of a company and helps comparing its valuation with that of a competitor, the industry group or a benchmark.

PEG Ratio: The price/earnings to growth ratio is a stock's P/E ratio using current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by its expected EPS growth rate over the coming 3 to 5 years. This ratio essentially determines a stock's value by factoring in the company's expected earnings growth and is thus believed to provide a more complete picture than just the P/E ratio, particularly for faster-growing companies.

P/S Ratio: The price-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by trailing 12 months (TTM) sales or revenues per share. This ratio shows what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of TTM sales per share. The P/S ratio is at times the only valuation metric when the company has yet to become profitable.

Cash/Price Ratio: The cash-to-price ratio or Cash Yield is calculated as cash and marketable securities per share divided by the company's current share price. Like the earnings yield, which shows the anticipated yield (or return) on a stock from earnings for each dollar invested, the cash yield does the same, with cash being the source of return instead of earnings. For example, a cash/price ratio of 0.08 suggests a return of 8% or 8 cents for every \$1 investment.

EV/EBITDA Ratio: The EV/EBITDA ratio, also known as Enterprise Multiple, is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization). Usually, trailing-12-month (TTM) or forward-12-month (F12M) EBITDA is used as the denominator.

EV/Sales Ratio: The enterprise value-to-sales ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by annual sales. It is an expansion of the P/S valuation, which uses market value instead of enterprise value. The EV/Sales ratio is perceived as more accurate than P/S, in part, because the market capitalization does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/CF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-cash flow ratio is calculated as a company's enterprise value (market capitalization + value of total long-term debt + book value of preferred shares - cash and marketable securities) divided by the trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow. It's a measure of how long it would take to buy the entire business if you were able to use all the company's operating cash flow.

The EV/CF ratio is perceived as more accurate than the P/CF ratio, in part, because the market price does not take a company's debt into account when valuing it.

EV/FCF Ratio: The enterprise value-to-free cash flow metric compares a company's enterprise value to its trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow (FCF). This metric is very similar to the EV/CF ratio, but is considered a more exact measure owing to the fact that it uses free cash flow, which subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding growth activities and payments to shareholders.

P/EBITDA Ratio: The P/EBITDA ratio is calculated as a company's per share market value divided by EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization). This metric is very similar to the EV/EBITDA ratio, but is considered a little less exact measure as it uses market price, which does not take a company's debt into account. However, since EBITDA is often considered a proxy for cash income, the metric is used as a measure of what the market is willing to pay today for each dollar of the company's cash profitability in the trailing 12 months (TTM) or forward 12 months (F12M).

P/B Ratio: The price-to-book ratio is calculated as a company's current price per share divided by its book value (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks) per share. In short, the book value is how much a company is worth. In other words, it reflects the total value of a company's assets that its common shareholders would receive if it were to be liquidated. So, the P/B ratio indicates whether you're paying higher or lower than what would remain if the company went bankrupt immediately. Investors typically use this metric to determine how a company's stock price stacks up to its intrinsic value.

P/TB Ratio: The price-to-tangible-book value ratio is calculated as the per share market value of a company divided by the value of its tangible assets (total assets – liabilities – preferred stocks – intangible assets) per share. Tangible book value is the same thing as book value except it excludes the value of intangible assets to get a step closer to the baseline value of the company.

P/CF Ratio: The price-to-cash flow ratio measures a company's per share market price relative to its trailing-12-month (TTM) operating cash flow per share. This metric is used to determine whether a company is undervalued or overvalued relative to another stock, industry or sector. And like the P/E ratio, a lower number is typically considered better from the value perspective.

One of the reasons why P/CF ratio is often preferred over P/E ratio is the fact that operating cash flow adds back non-cash expenses such as depreciation and amortization to net income. This feature helps valuing stocks that have positive cash flow but are not profitable because of large noncash charges.

P/FCF Ratio: The price-to-free cash flow ratio is an extension of P/CF ratio, which uses trailing-12-month (TTM) free cash flow per share instead of operating cash flow per share. This metric is considered a more exact measure than P/CF ratio, as free cash flow subtracts capital expenditures (CAPEX) from a company's total operating cash flow, thereby reflecting the actual cash flow available for funding activities that generate additional revenues.

Earnings Yield: The earnings yield is calculated as current fiscal year (F1) EPS estimate divided by the company's current share price. The ratio, which is the inverse of the P/E ratio, measures the anticipated yield (or return) from earnings for each dollar invested in a stock today.

For example, earnings yield for a stock, which is trading at \$35 and expected to earn \$3 per share in the current fiscal year (F1), would be 0.0857 ($3/35 = 0.0857$) or 8.57%. In other words, for \$1 invested in the stock today, the yield from earnings is anticipated to be 8.57 cents.

Investors most commonly compare the earnings yield of a stock to that of a broad market index (such as the S&P 500) and prevailing interest rates, such as the current 10-year Treasury yield. Since bonds and stocks compete for investors' dollars, stock investors typically demand a higher yield for the extra risk they assume compared to investors of U.S. Treasury-backed securities that offer virtually risk-free returns. This additional return is referred to as the risk premium.

Debt/Equity Ratio: The debt-to-equity ratio is calculated as a company's total liabilities divided by its shareholder equity. This metric is used to gauge a company's financial leverage. In other words, it is a measure of the degree to which a company is financing its operations through debt versus its own funds. The higher the ratio, the higher the risk for shareholders.

However, this ratio is difficult to compare across industry groups where ideal amounts of debt vary. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-equity ratio should be compared with other companies in the same industry.

Cash Flow (\$/share): Cash flow per share is calculated as operating cash flow (after-tax earnings + depreciation + other non-cash charges) divided by common shares outstanding. It is used by many investors as a measure of a company's financial strength. Since cash flow per share takes into consideration a company's ability to generate cash by adding back non-cash expenses, it is regarded by some as a more accurate measure of a company's financial situation than earnings per share, which could be artificially deflated.

Current Ratio: The current ratio or liquidity ratio is a company's current assets divided by its current liabilities. It measures a company's ability to pay short-term obligations. A current ratio that is in line with the industry average or slightly higher is generally considered acceptable. A current ratio that is lower than the industry average would indicate a higher risk of distress or default. A higher number is usually better. However, a very high current ratio compared to the industry average could be an indication of inefficient use of assets by management.

Debt/Capital Ratio: Debt-to-capital ratio is a company's total debt (interest-bearing debt + both short- and long-term liabilities) divided its total capital (interest-bearing debt + shareholders' equity). It is a measure of a company's financial leverage. All else being equal, the higher the debt-to-capital ratio, the riskier the stock.

However, this ratio can vary widely from industry to industry, the ideal amount of required debt being different. Some businesses are more capital intensive than others and typically require higher debt to finance their operations. So, a company's debt-to-capital ratio should be compared with the same for its industry.

Net Margin: Net margin is calculated as net income divided by sales. It shows how much of each dollar in sales generated by a company translates into profit. For example, if a company's net margin is 15%, its net income is 15 cents for every \$1 of sales it makes.

A change in margin can reflect either a change in business conditions, or a company's cost controls, or both. If a company's expenses are growing faster than sales, its net margin will decline. However, different net margin rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare net margin rates of companies in the same industry group.

Return on Equity: Return on equity (ROE) is calculated as trailing-12-month net income divided by trailing-12-month average shareholder equity (including reinvested earnings). This metric is considered a measure of how effectively management is using a company's assets to generate profits. For example, if a company's ROE is 10%, it creates 10 cents profits for every \$1 shareholder equity, which is basically the company's assets minus debt. A company's ROE deemed good or bad depends on what's normal for its peers or industry group.

Sales/Assets Ratio: The sales-to-assets ratio or asset utilization ratio or asset turnover ratio is calculated as a company's annual sales divided by average assets (average of assets at the beginning of the year and at the year's end). This metric helps investors understand how effectively a company is using its assets to generate sales. For example, a sales-to-assets ratio of 2.5 indicates that the company generated \$2.50 in sales for every \$1 of assets on its books.

The higher the sales-to-assets ratio, the better the company is performing. However, similar to many other ratios, the asset turnover ratio tends to be higher for companies in certain industries/sectors than in others. So, a company's sales-to-assets ratio should be compared with the same for its industry/sector.

Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years): This is the average annual (trailing-12-month) EPS growth rate over the last 3-5 years. This metric helps investors see how a company's EPS has grown from a long-term perspective.

Note: There are many factors that can influence short-term numbers — a recession will reduce this number, while a recovery will inflate it. The longterm perspective helps smooth out short-term events.

Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0): This is the estimated EPS growth rate for the current financial year. It is calculated as the consensus estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported EPS for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Current Cash Flow Growth: It measures the latest year-over-year change in operating cash flow. Cash flow growth tells an investor how quickly a company is generating inflows of cash from operations. A positive change in the cash flow is desired and shows that more 'cash' is coming in than going out.

Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years): This is the annualized change in cash flow over the last 3-5 years. The change in a longer period helps put the current reading into proper perspective. By looking at the rate, rather than the actual dollar value, the comparison across the industry and peers becomes easier.

Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0): This metric looks at the estimated sales growth for the current year. It is calculated as sales estimate for the current fiscal year (F1) divided by the reported sales for the last completed fiscal year (F0).

Like EPS growth, a higher rate is better for sales growth. A look at a company's projected sales growth instantly tells you what the outlook is for their products and services. However, different sales growth rates are considered good for different industries, so it's better to compare sales growth rates of companies in the same industry group.

EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past week. The change in a company's consensus EPS estimate (or earnings estimate revision) has proven to be strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares. It is an integral part of the Zacks Rank.

If a stock's consensus EPS estimate is \$1.10 now versus \$1.00 a week ago, that will be reflected as a 10% upward revision. If, on the other hand, it went from \$1.00 to 90 cents, that would be a 10% downward revision.

EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past four weeks.

A stock's earnings estimate revision in a 1-week period is important. But it's more meaningful to look at the longer-term revision. And, of course, the 4-week change helps put the 1-week change into proper perspective.

EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year over the past 12 weeks.

This metric essentially shows how the consensus EPS estimate has changed over a period longer than 1 week or 4 weeks.

EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change: The percentage change in the Zacks Consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal quarter over the past four weeks.

While the revision in consensus EPS estimate for the current fiscal year is strongly correlated with the near-term price movement of its shares, the estimate revision for the current fiscal quarter is an important metric as well, especially over the short term, and particularly as a stock approaches its earnings date. If a stock's Q1 EPS estimate decreases ahead of its earnings release, it's usually a negative sign, whereas an increase is a positive sign.