

Taubman Centers, Inc. (TCO)

\$42.99 (As of 12/28/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$43.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation: Underperform

(Since: 11/25/20)

Prior Recommendation: Neutral

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

5-Strong Sell

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:D

Value: C

Growth: F

Momentum: A

Summary

Taubman Centers' shareholders recently gave the nod for merger with Simon Property Group. Per the prior-announced amended and restated merger agreement, Simon Property will pay the purchase price of \$43 per share in cash, down 18% from the previously-agreed price of \$52.50 in February. The transaction is now expected to close in late 2020 or by early 2021. Therefore, considering the current price, there is no scope for further price appreciation. Moreover, the pandemic-led disruptions including widespread mall closures, tenant bankruptcies and uncollected rent affected the top line. In fact, Taubman Centers, which was already battling against store closures and tenant bankruptcy, is seeing low mall sales and occupancy rates due to reduced footfall at its properties amid the social-distancing wave and higher e-commerce adoption.

Price, Consensus & Surprise

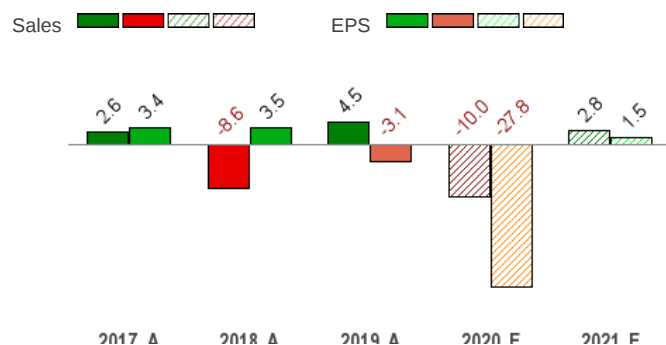


Source: Zacks Investment Research

Data Overview

52-Week High-Low	\$53.40 - \$26.24
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,865,969
Market Cap	\$2.7 B
Year-To-Date Price Change	38.3%
Beta	0.09
Dividend / Dividend Yield	\$0.00 / 0.0%
Industry	REIT and Equity Trust - Retail
Zacks Industry Rank	Bottom 8% (235 out of 255)

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



Last EPS Surprise	3.5%
Last Sales Surprise	4.0%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.0%
Expected Report Date	02/08/2021
Earnings ESP	-29.1%

P/E TTM	15.0
P/E F1	16.0
PEG F1	NA
P/S TTM	4.5

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	137 E	134 E	134 E	149 E	556 E
2020	147 A	114 A	124 A	139 E	541 E
2019	149 A	150 A	145 A	160 A	601 A

EPS Estimates

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual*
2021	\$0.60 E	\$0.65 E	\$0.66 E	\$0.69 E	\$2.72 E
2020	\$0.88 A	\$0.41 A	\$0.60 A	\$0.68 E	\$2.68 E
2019	\$0.93 A	\$0.94 A	\$0.88 A	\$0.97 A	\$3.71 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 12/28/2020. The reports text is as of 12/29/2020.

Overview

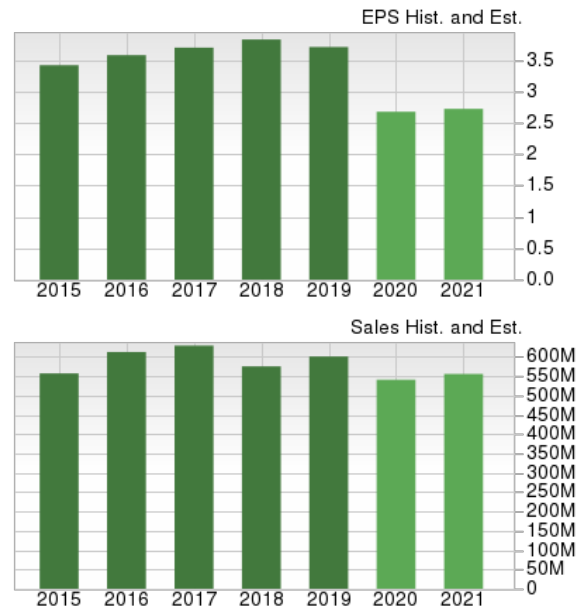
Bloomfield Hills, MI-based Taubman Centers, Inc. is a retail real estate investment trust (REIT), which owns, develops, manages, acquires and operates regional and super-regional malls throughout the United States. The shopping centers are strategically located in major metropolitan areas, which include Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, New York City, Orlando, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, San Juan, Sarasota, St. Louis, Tampa and Washington, D.C.

Moreover, the company has an operating arm, Taubman Properties Asia LLC and its subsidiaries (Taubman Asia). This arm, headquartered in Hong Kong, serves as the platform for Taubman Centers' expansion plans in China and South Korea.

Currently, Taubman Centers enjoys ownership, management and/or leasing of 26 regional, super-regional and outlet malls in the United States and Asia.

In November, Taubman Centers and Simon Property Group Inc. negotiated the share price for the merger between the two companies. Per the agreement Simon Property will pay the purchase price of \$43 per share in cash, down 18% from the previously-agreed price of \$52.50 in February to acquire an 80% stake in The Taubman Realty Group Limited Partnership. The Taubman family will remain a 20% partner. At a special meeting of shareholders held in December, Taubman Centers' shareholders approved and adopted the prior-announced amended and restated merger agreement. The transactions are now expected to close in late 2020 or by early 2021, subject to customary closing conditions.

Note: All EPS numbers presented in this report represent funds from operations ("FFO") per share. FFO, a widely used metric to gauge the performance of REITs, is obtained after adding depreciation and amortization and other non-cash expenses to net income.



Source: Zacks Investment Research

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ Mall traffic continues to suffer amid rapid shift in customers' shopping preferences and patterns, with online purchases growing by leaps and bounds. These have made retailers reconsider their footprint and eventually opt for store closures. In addition, retailers unable to cope with competition have been filing bankruptcies. This has emerged as a pressing concern for retail REITs like Taubman Centers, as the trend is considerably bringing down demand for the retail real estate space and impacting occupancy rates. In fact, bankruptcy filings by the company's mall tenants have recently been higher.
- ▼ Moreover, the pandemic has significantly affected mall-tenant sales and customer traffic. This is taking a toll on tenants' ability to pay rent obligations. As a result, the company received request for rent relief or deferrals from its tenants and has high amount of uncollectible tenant revenues.
- ▼ Further, the regional shopping center industry is seasonal in nature, with the fourth quarter recording the highest levels of mall tenant sales due to the Christmas season, while in the first quarter most leases are slated to expire. In addition, bulk of new stores opening take place in the second half of the year. Moreover, maximum overage rents are recorded in the fourth quarter. Therefore, revenues and occupancy levels are usually highest in the fourth quarter.

Stiff competition, growing online sales, store closures and retailers' bankruptcies remain major concerns for Taubman Centers. Moreover, unfavorable foreign-currency movements add to its woes.

Risks

- Taubman Centers' dominant retail malls, located in posh regions, generally have high average sales productivity in the United States. The company boasts a high-quality roster of national retailers.
 - Taubman Centers has been focused on the development of retail properties and tenant improvements. In fact, on Oct 7, 2020, the company along with its joint venture partner Shinsegae Group unveiled a 1-million square foot shopping center — Starfield Anseong — in Anseong, Gyeonggi Province, South Korea. It opened with more than 90% occupancy and nearly 100% was leased. The company expects occupancy to reach 99% by the year-end. This marks Taubman Asia's fourth investment. In the same month, Taubman Centers sold its ownership stake in Stamford Town Center — a shopping center in Connecticut. Additionally, the company has been spending significant amounts in mall tenant allowances for tenant improvements. Such efforts will attract great retailers, thereby driving traffic and productivity to its centers as well as enhancing the long-term strategic position of properties. Moreover, Taubman Centers has introduced digitally native retailers, emerging brands, as well as co-working and entertainment concepts at its malls.
 - Taubman Centers undertook several liquidity enhancement initiatives amid the potential disruption related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Total liquidity, including cash on hand and borrowing capacity under the company's lines of credit, was \$455 million at the end of the July-September period. Moreover, in August, it amended a \$1.1-billion primary unsecured revolving line of credit, \$275-million unsecured term loan, and \$250-million unsecured term loan agreements to waive compliance with quarterly financial covenants for third-quarter 2020 through second-quarter 2021. Further, Taubman Centers decreased planned capital expenditure by \$135 million, indicating a reduction of nearly 65% from the original budget.
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Last Earnings Report

Taubman Centers Q3 FFO Tops Estimates, Revenues Dip Y/Y

Taubman Centers reported third-quarter 2020 adjusted FFO (AFFO) per share of 60 cents, surpassing the Zacks Consensus Estimate of 58 cents. However, the figure declined 30.2% from the year-ago quarter's reported figure of 86 cents.

The pandemic-led disruptions, including widespread mall closures, tenant bankruptcies and uncollected rent, resulted in year-over-year declines.

Adjusted revenues (consisting of rental revenues, overage rents, and revenues from management, leasing, and development services for consolidated businesses) were \$123.8 million, outpacing the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$119 million. However, the figure declined from \$147 million reported in third-quarter 2019.

Quarter in Detail

Comparable center net operating income at the company's beneficial interest (excluding lease cancellation income and using constant foreign exchange rates) slumped 29% year over year. A year-over-year increase in uncollectible tenant revenues resulted in comparable center net operating income decline.

Average rent per square foot in U.S. comparable centers for the quarter was \$59.28, marking a 6.4% decrease from the year-ago period's \$63.36. Trailing 12-month sales per square foot in the United States was \$790, down 19.4% year over year. In Asia, sales per square foot improved modestly during the third quarter.

As of Sep 30, 2020, leased space in U.S. comparable centers was 92.6%, down 3% from Sep 30, 2019. Additionally, ending occupancy in U.S. comparable centers of 89.9% was down 2.7% year over year at the end of the reported quarter.

Liquidity

Taubman Centers exited third-quarter 2020 with cash and cash equivalents of \$256.5 million; up from 102.8 million reported as of December 2019 end.

Total liquidity, including cash on hand and borrowing capacity under its lines of credit, was \$455 million at the end of the July-September period, up \$90 million from the second quarter.

Quarter Ending	09/2020
Report Date	Nov 09, 2020
Sales Surprise	4.03%
EPS Surprise	3.45%
Quarterly EPS	0.60
Annual EPS (TTM)	2.86

Recent News

Taubman Gets Shareholder Approval for Simon Property Merger — Dec 28, 2020

At a special meeting of shareholders held on Dec 28, Taubman Centers' shareholders approved and adopted the prior-announced amended and restated merger agreement on Nov 14, 2020 among the company, The Taubman Realty Group Limited Partnership, Simon Property and certain other parties. The transactions are now expected to close in late 2020 or early 2021, subject to customary closing norms.

Simon Property, Taubman Centers Lower Merger Price – Nov 15, 2020

After backing out of the merger deal with Taubman Centers, Inc. in June, Simon Property has negotiated the share price for purchasing the majority stake in the former company.

Both companies have reached a definitive agreement to change certain terms of the original merger agreement. Now, Simon Property will pay the purchase price of \$43 per share in cash, down 18% from the previously-agreed price of \$52.50 in February.

Moreover, per the modified merger agreement, Taubman Centers will not pay a dividend on its common stock before Mar 1, 2021.

Nonetheless, Simon Property will continue to acquire an 80% ownership stake in The Taubman Realty Group Limited Partnership, while the Taubman family will remain a 20% partner. The revised terms of the merger have been approved by the board of directors of both companies and Taubman Centers' Special Committee of independent directors.

Notably, on Jun 10, Simon Property called off its merger agreement with Taubman Centers by exercising its contractual rights to the termination, based on two separate and independent grounds. First, the coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted Taubman Centers' operations, relative to other retail real estate industry peers.

Moreover, amid the coronavirus mayhem, Taubman Centers breached its obligations to operate its business in the ordinary course. Particularly, unlike others in the industry, the company was unable to take necessary steps to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, including failing to make essential reductions in operating expenses and capital expenditure.

With the termination of the deal, Simon Property also filed a lawsuit against Taubman Centers. Nonetheless, both companies have now settled their pending litigation in Michigan state court.

Taubman Centers' Subsidiary Unveils Mall in South Korea – Oct 7, 2020

Taubman Centers' subsidiary Taubman Asia along with its joint venture partner Shinsegae Group, unveiled a shopping center — new Starfield Anseong — in Anseong, Gyeonggi Province, South Korea. The company has a 49% stake in the newly-opened retail property.

The modern shopping, entertainment and dining destination spans one million square feet of space and is the largest mall in the southern region of Gyeonggi. It is the second JV between the companies and Taubman Asia's fourth development project. The property is fully leased and 90% of tenants are open. Full occupancy is expected to be reached by 2020 end.

The property's location in one of the fastest-growing regions of South Korea along with its 280 retail, dining and entertainment offerings will likely attract decent mall footfall.

Anchor tenants include Shinsegae Factory Store, E-Mart, Toy Kingdom Aquafield, Sports Monster and Megabox. Moreover, the mall includes 100 first-store-of-the-kind brands in this region of Greater Seoul.

Retail brands include well-known international brands like Zara, Nike, Uniqlo, H&M and Vans as well as national brands like SPAO, Genesis, Beanpole and Studio Tomboy. It also offers 113,000 square feet of dining space.

Dividend Update

On Mar 5, Taubman Centers announced a regular quarterly cash dividend of 67.50 cents per share of common stock. The dividend was paid on Mar 31, to shareholders of record as of Mar 16, 2020.

The company suspended the dividend for the second and third quarters on its common stock, preserving \$120 million of additional cash.

Valuation

Taubman Centers' shares have been up 39.9% in the trailing 12 months. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Finance sector have declined 13.3% and 3.6%, over the past year, respectively.

The S&P 500 Index is up 17.1% over the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 15.79X forward 12-month FFO, which compares with the 15.61X for the Zacks sub-industry, 16.87X for the Zacks sector and 22.85X for the S&P 500 Index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 21.28X and as low as 7.08X, with a 5-year median of 14.59X. Considering the merger agreement, there is no scope for further price appreciation. Hence, we have underperform recommendation and our price target is \$43.

The table below shows summary valuation data for TCO.

Valuation Multiples - TCO					
		Stock	Sub-Industry	Sector	S&P 500
P/E F12M	Current	15.79	15.61	16.87	22.85
	5-Year High	21.28	19.43	16.87	23.79
	5-Year Low	7.08	9.71	11.59	15.3
	5-Year Median	14.59	14.64	14.45	17.81
P/S F12M	Current	4.78	8.26	7.08	4.34
	5-Year High	7.94	14.45	7.08	4.34
	5-Year Low	2.61	5.55	5.02	3.17
	5-Year Median	5.40	8.29	6.11	3.67

As of 12/28/2020

Source: Zacks Investment Research

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Bottom 8% (235 out of 255)



Top Peers

Company (Ticker)	Rec	Rank
CBL & Associates Properties, Inc. (CBL)	Neutral	3
National Retail Properties (NNN)	Neutral	3
Retail Properties of America, Inc. (RPAI)	Neutral	3
STORE Capital Corporation (STOR)	Neutral	3
Washington Prime Group Inc. (WPG)	Neutral	2
Weingarten Realty Investors (WRI)	Neutral	3
EPR Properties (EPR)	Underperform	5
Kite Realty Group Trust (KRG)	Underperform	5

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

Industry Comparison Industry: Reit And Equity Trust - Retail				Industry Peers		
	TCO	X Industry	S&P 500	EPR	STOR	WPG
Zacks Recommendation (Long Term)	Underperform	-	-	Underperform	Neutral	Neutral
Zacks Rank (Short Term)	5	-	-	5	3	2
VGM Score	D	-	-	F	D	D
Market Cap	2.65 B	1.85 B	26.16 B	2.38 B	8.93 B	146.81 M
# of Analysts	4	5	13	4	9	1
Dividend Yield	0.00%	2.65%	1.48%	0.00%	4.24%	0.00%
Value Score	C	-	-	C	D	A
Cash/Price	0.10	0.07	0.06	0.41	0.02	0.63
EV/EBITDA	20.62	12.98	14.71	11.13	16.13	8.11
PEG F1	NA	3.79	2.81	NA	NA	NA
P/B	NA	1.31	3.65	0.90	1.69	0.28
P/CF	6.71	8.60	13.91	7.53	15.11	0.53
P/E F1	16.04	13.17	22.17	15.89	18.68	2.12
P/S TTM	4.53	4.65	2.84	4.84	12.85	0.27
Earnings Yield	6.23%	7.57%	4.37%	6.31%	5.35%	47.23%
Debt/Equity	-13.08	0.97	0.70	1.45	0.47	6.14
Cash Flow (\$/share)	6.41	2.28	6.93	4.23	2.25	13.39
Growth Score	F	-	-	F	F	F
Historical EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	-1.68%	-1.47%	9.71%	0.07%	6.83%	-15.63%
Projected EPS Growth (F1/F0)	-27.83%	-22.05%	1.26%	-63.14%	-8.54%	-68.64%
Current Cash Flow Growth	65.38%	1.58%	5.23%	-21.96%	26.71%	-18.05%
Historical Cash Flow Growth (3-5 Years)	-16.80%	5.61%	8.33%	6.11%	36.02%	-5.54%
Current Ratio	1.56	1.95	1.38	15.50	0.53	0.83
Debt/Capital	NA%	49.26%	41.97%	59.26%	31.96%	81.61%
Net Margin	-10.19%	12.12%	10.40%	-15.35%	31.33%	-16.75%
Return on Equity	-94.88%	3.76%	14.99%	-2.15%	4.76%	-14.80%
Sales/Assets	0.13	0.11	0.50	0.07	0.08	0.13
Projected Sales Growth (F1/F0)	-10.31%	-7.44%	0.35%	-36.65%	7.67%	-25.43%
Momentum Score	A	-	-	D	B	F
Daily Price Change	0.09%	0.57%	0.26%	-1.15%	2.84%	-3.42%
1-Week Price Change	0.09%	-0.35%	-0.44%	0.19%	2.83%	-4.59%
4-Week Price Change	0.63%	1.78%	2.25%	-11.55%	4.42%	-23.21%
12-Week Price Change	21.44%	21.44%	12.66%	25.43%	17.77%	27.15%
52-Week Price Change	39.90%	-29.64%	6.46%	-54.56%	-7.78%	-78.06%
20-Day Average Volume (Shares)	1,865,969	752,036	1,838,365	1,048,831	2,109,923	466,904
EPS F1 Estimate 1-Week Change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 4-Week Change	0.00%	-0.37%	0.00%	-3.65%	0.12%	0.00%
EPS F1 Estimate 12-Week Change	-1.11%	-1.61%	3.72%	-15.40%	-0.33%	-49.32%
EPS Q1 Estimate Monthly Change	-3.79%	-0.25%	0.00%	-4.00%	0.07%	0.00%

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	C
Growth Score	F
Momentum Score	A
VGM Score	D

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.