# China / Hong Kong Company Update

# Yuexiu Transport Infrastructure

Bloomberg: 1052 HK Equity | Reuters: 1052.HK

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

### DBS Group Research . Equity

### 9 Oct 2023

### **BUY**

Last Traded Price (6 Oct 2023): HK\$3.98 (HSI: 17,486)
Price Target 12-mth: HK\$6.00 (51% upside)

#### **Analysts**

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#### **What's New**

- Traffic volume rebounding faster than our expectations
- GNSR Expressway R&E project is on track while M&A may materialise in 2024
- We project DPS to more than double by 2024F on strong earnings recovery post reopening
- Maintain BUY with TP of HK\$6.0



Forecasts and Valuati	on			
FY Dec (RMBm)	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Turnover	3.702	3.289	3.971	4.269
EBITDA	3,045	2,803	3,481	3,734
Pre-tax Profit	2,218	1,065	1,655	1,979
Net Profit	1,465	453	917	1,097
Net Pft (Pre Ex) (core profit)	504	453	917	1,097
Net Profit Gth (Pre-ex) (%)	214.0	(10.1)	102.5	19.6
EPS (HK\$)	0.94	0.29	0.59	0.70
EPS Gth (%)	812.8	(69.1)	102.5	19.6
Diluted EPS (HK\$)	0.94	0.29	0.59	0.70
DPS (HK\$)	0.53	0.19	0.35	0.42
BV Per Share (HK\$)	7.38	7.20	7.44	7.72
PE (X)	4.2	13.7	6.8	5.7
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DPS (HK\$)	0.53	0.19	0.35	0.42
BV Per Share (HK\$)	7.38	7.20	7.44	7.72
PE (X)	4.2	13.7	6.8	5.7
P/Cash Flow (X)	2.4	2.8	2.1	2.4
P/Free CF (X)	4.0	6.1	2.1	2.5
EV/EBITDA (X)	7.5	8.7	6.4	5.5
Net Div Yield (%)	13.4	4.7	8.9	10.6
P/Book Value (X)	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5
Net Debt/Equity (X)	1.0	1.1	0.8	0.7
ROAE(%)	13.4	4.0	8.0	9.3
Earnings Rev (%):			Nil	Nil
Consensus EPS (RMB)			0.57	0.61
Other Broker Recs:		B:5	S:0	H:0

Source of all data on this page: Company, DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited ("DBS HK"), Thomson Reuters

# Dividends to double on strong earnings bounce

#### **Investment Thesis**

Seasoned pan-China toll road operator. Yuexiu Transport Infrastructure (YTI) operates a well-diversified portfolio of toll roads across six provinces in China and has a strong track record of identifying and investing in quality toll road projects in the country. The company has historically paid at least 50% of its earnings as dividends while consistently growing its asset portfolio.

The 'Incubation-Injection-Spin-off' strategy enables the company to continuously strengthen and expand its core business. Under this strategy, the parent company (Yuexiu Group) acquires expressway assets in their early developmental stages (incubation), injecting them into YTI after achieving a certain level of profitability. Conversely, YTI can spin off mature expressway projects through a C-REIT listing to: 1) expedite cash re-cycling, and 2) lower the liabilities-to-assets ratio, allowing the company to leverage more to acquire new projects. We anticipate further asset spin-offs to enhance earnings, ROE, and dividend yield in the long term.

**Multiple re-rating catalysts ahead.** We see two potential catalysts for the stock: 1) a strong recovery in organic earnings is on the cards as China moves away from zero-COVID, and 2) the company could further bolster its portfolio with another value accretive toll road acquisition.

Maintain BUY with HK\$6.0 target price based on a DCF valuation of the company's toll road concessions. We believe that the company's impressive profit growth and generous dividends are particularly attractive to investors in the current market.

#### **Key Risks**

Slower-than-expected acquisition proceeding; delays or overruns for GNSR R&E project may lead to lower investment returns and higher finance costs

#### At A Glance

Issued Capital (m shrs)	1,673
Mkt Cap (HKm/US\$m)	6,659 / 850
Major Shareholders (%)	
Yue Xiu Enterprises (Holdings) Limited	44.2
Free Float (%)	55.8
3m Avg. Daily Val. (US\$m)	1.06
GICS Industry: Industrials / Transportation	





#### **WHAT'S NEW**

#### Strong recovery on track

#### Highlights:

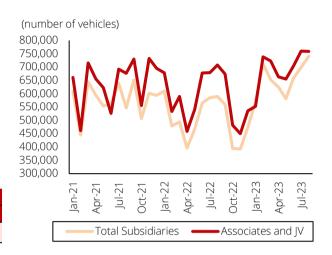
- YTI's traffic volume has rebounded strongly entering 2H23 with total toll revenue/traffic volume both up 19% y-o-y and exceeding pre-COVID levels
- We believe there is a higher possibility that a new acquisition might materialise in 2024 as its financials are not under pressure
- Maintain BUY and TP of HK\$6.0 (51% upside).

#### Operational highlights

operational management				
	Avg toll rev	enue y-o-y	Avg traffic v	olume y-o-y
	Aug	8M23	Aug	8M23
Controlled Projects (Sorte	ed by revenu	ue)		
GNSR Expressway	4.1%	9.3%	13.6%	16.6%
Suiyuenan Expressway	8.3%	11.9%	20.7%	17.2%
Daguangnan Expressway	15.0%	17.2%	18.2%	21.0%
Weixu Expressway	-1.6%	-4.9%	28.7%	23.6%
Lanwei Expressway	-7.6%	-8.9%	32.1%	28.0%
Hancai Expressway	14.1%	16.9%	32.9%	34.9%
Changzhu Expressway	3.6%	5.1%	2.6%	6.4%
Han'e Expressway	57.6%	4.7%	55.1%	16.8%
Cangyu Expressway	13.1%	13.1%	20.4%	23.8%
Jinxiong Expressway	26.9%	21.9%	32.1%	27.6%
Sub-total	21.1%	19.1%	25.7%	23.8%
Non-controlled Projects				
Humen Bridge	34.7%	47.2%	31.8%	42.0%
Qinglian Expressway	1.0%	8.7%	8.9%	12.8%
Northern Ring Road	3.2%	8.8%	2.0%	9.1%
GWSR Expressway	15.0%	17.3%	11.1%	25.1%
Han-Xiao Expressway	21.4%	16.4%	22.0%	16.3%
Shantou Bay Bridge	-27.6%	-31.2%	-27.3%	-30.9%
Sub-total	12.8%	18.1%	7.2%	18.7%

Source: Company, DBS HK

#### Average daily traffic volume



Source: Company, DBS HK

#### What is our view?

Strong operating recovery is on track. YTl's traffic volume has rebounded strongly so far in 2H23. The average daily traffic volume controlled by the company has increased by 26% y-o-y in August. All projects recorded y-o-y growth, mainly due to the robust increase in passenger car traffic during the summer vacation. Overall toll revenue from controlled projects in August also grew by 21% y-o-y.
 Only two expressways in Henan (Weixu and Lanwei) experienced a decline in revenue, mainly due to reduced truck volume during the period (trucks contribute higher toll charges compared to passenger cars). On a year-to-date (YTD) basis, total toll revenue grew by 19% y-o-y, exceeding the 8M19 level by 9%. Total traffic volume also rose by 19% y-o-y in 8M23, which is 27% higher than 8M19. We expect the traffic volume to continue to improve for the rest of 2023.

Update on GNSR Expressway R&E: The GNSR expressway - contributes 28% of the total toll revenue in 1H23. Its Reconstruction and Expansion (R&E) project, with a total investment of c.RMB 17 bn, will kick off by the end of 2023 at the latest. By 2028, the number of lanes on the GNSR Expressway is set to expand from the current 6 to a range of 10 to 12 upon completion. Additionally, the concession period for the GNSR Expressway will be extended from the present 2032 to up to 2053. YTI needs to contribute a total of RMB 3.1bn in cash to this project in the next 5 years. Management emphasized that 1) the RMB 1.5bn gain from its C-REIT listing in 2021 and 2) the consistent operating cash flows every year (RMB 1.3bn in 1H23) are adequate to fund the project. The company's future CAPEX will largely be allocated to this project, with significant spending expected in FY25-26. There will be minimal disruption to the operation of the GNSR expressway during construction in the nearterm, given that the company will maintain the current six lanes for traffic.



M&A and parent company asset injection are certain to take place, but the timetable is unclear. In addition to injecting two assets from the parent company, YTI is also actively seeking large and medium scale expressway projects in the market. Management stated that the GNSR Expressway expansion project won't affect the company's acquisition plans. This is based on: 1) sufficient cash flow, 2) enough headroom for leveraging (liabilities to assets ratio was only 59% in 1H23 vs. upper limit of 65%), and 3) potential project spin-offs for a REIT listing to expedite cash recycling when necessary. We believe there is a higher possibility that the new acquisition might happen in 2024, as its financials are not under pressure in the near term. Our forecasts and TP have not considered any acquisitions yet.

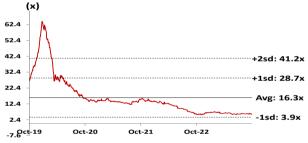
**Valuations still attractive.** The stock is currently trading at 0.54x FY23F P/B, which is c.20% below its 5-year average P/B, with an ROE of 7.9% and yield of 8.0% for FY23F assuming a dividend payout ratio of 60%, hence undemanding in our view. Maintain BUY and TP of HK\$6.0.

#### **Company Background**

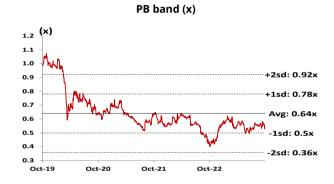
Guangdong-based toll road operator with assets in six provinces. Yuexiu Transport Infrastructure (YTI) is a toll road and bridge operator with road assets in Guangdong and five other provinces in China. It had a total of 17 investment projects (including joint ventures [JVs] and associates) with a total attributable length of 896km as of 1H23.

#### **Historical PE and PB band**

## Forward PE band (x)



Source: Thomson Reuters, DBS HK





### **Key Assumptions**

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Average Daily Traffic Volume of Subsidiary Roads	576.6	580.5	497.4	555.7	586.7
Average Daily Traffic Volume of Associate/JV Roads	587.4	637.4	603.8	748.6	321.1
Total Debt	17,701.1	16,690.2	17,743.4	16,543.4	15,343.4
Effective Interest Cost (bps)	459.8	432.1	363.3	380.0	380.0
Source: Company, DBS HK					

### Segmental Breakdown (RMB m)

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Revenues (RMB m)					_
GNSR Expressway	909	1,121	981	1,121	1,200
Inland Expressways	1,297	1,611	1,414	1,577	1,689
Recently Acquired	666	918	798	1.214	1,320
Expressways	000	910	730	1,214	1,520
Others	48	53	96	60	60
Total	2,920	3,702	3,289	3,971	4,269

Source: Company, DBS HK



### Income Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Revenue	2,920	3,702	3,289	3,971	4,269
Cost of Goods Sold	(1,361)	(1,479)	(1,570)	(1,695)	(1,703)
Gross Profit	1,559	2,223	1,719	2,276	2,566
Other Opng (Exp)/Inc	(222)	(531)	(264)	(280)	(283)
Operating Profit	1,337	1,693	1,455	1,996	2,283
Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc	0	0	0	0	0
Associates & JV Inc	124	264	172	283	247
Net Interest (Exp)/Inc	(779)	(699)	(562)	(625)	(552)
Dividend Income	0	0	0	0	0
Exceptional Gain/(Loss)	0	961	0	0	0
Pre-tax Profit	682	2,218	1,065	1,655	1,979
Tax	(278)	(426)	(328)	(381)	(455)
Minority Interest	(244)	(328)	(285)	(357)	(427)
Preference Dividend	0	0	0	0	0
Net Profit	160	1,465	453	917	1,097
Net Profit before Except.	160	504	453	917	1,097
EBITDA	2,438	3,045	2,803	3,481	3,734
Growth					
Revenue Gth (%)	(3.4)	26.8	(11.2)	20.7	7.5
EBITDA Gth (%)	(17.1)	24.9	(7.9)	24.2	7.3
Opg Profit Gth (%)	(30.3)	26.6	(14.0)	37.2	14.4
Net Profit Gth (%)	(85.9)	812.8	(69.1)	102.5	19.6
Margins & Ratio					
Gross Margins (%)	53.4	60.1	52.3	57.3	60.1
Opg Profit Margin (%)	45.8	45.7	44.2	50.3	53.5
Net Profit Margin (%)	5.5	39.6	13.8	23.1	25.7
ROAE (%)	1.5	13.4	4.0	8.0	9.3
ROA (%)	0.4	4.1	1.3	2.5	3.0
ROCE (%)	2.2	3.9	2.9	4.4	5.1
Div Payout Ratio (%)	60.9	56.9	64.4	60.0	60.0
Net Interest Cover (x)	1.7	2.4	2.6	3.2	4.1
Source: Company, DBS HK					

### Interim Income Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	1H2021	2H2021	1H2022	2H2022	1H2023
					_
Revenue	1,832	1,871	1,616	1,673	1,935
Cost of Goods Sold	(682)	(797)	(718)	(852)	(841)
Gross Profit	1,150	1,074	898	822	1,095
Other Oper. (Exp)/Inc	(78)	(227)	(64)	(200)	(123)
Operating Profit	1,071	847	833	622	971
Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc	0	0	0	0	0
Associates & JV Inc	140	124	91	81	130
Net Interest (Exp)/Inc	(364)	(335)	(305)	(257)	(270)
Exceptional Gain/(Loss)	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-tax Profit	847	636	619	446	831
Tax	(214)	(211)	(173)	(154)	(219)
Minority Interest	(165)	(162)	(151)	(134)	(185)
Net Profit	468	262	295	158	427
Net profit bef Except.	468	262	295	158	427
Growth					
Revenue Gth (%)	118.2	(10.1)	(11.8)	(10.5)	19.8
Opg Profit Gth (%)	441.1	(25.7)	(22.2)	(26.6)	16.5
Net Profit Gth (%)	N/A	(41.6)	(36.9)	(39.7)	44.6
Margins					
Gross Margins (%)	62.8	57.4	55.6	49.1	56.6
Opg Profit Margins (%)	58.5	45.3	51.6	37.1	50.2
Net Profit Margins (%) Source: Company, DBS HK	25.5	14.0	18.3	9.4	22.1



### Balance Sheet (RMB m)

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Net Fixed Assets	53	39	41	36	34
Invts in Associates & JVs	2,024	2,561	2,287	2,342	2,324
Other LT Assets	32,413	29,768	31,233	30,113	28,987
Cash & ST Invts	1,516	2,919	2,480	3,851	4,722
Inventory	0	0	0	0	0
Debtors	204	153	128	278	299
Other Current Assets	158	221	168	168	168
Total Assets	36,368	35,661	36,337	36,788	36,535
ST Debt	2,886	3,466	6,424	6,424	6,424
Creditors	2,000 1,219	3,400 991	922	1,519	1,526
Other Current Liab	1,219	137	87	416	491
LT Debt	14,815	13,224	07 11,319	10,119	8,919
Other LT Liabilities	3,666	3,370			
	10,425	3,370 11,512	3,350 11,230	3,350 11,597	3,350
Shareholder's Equity	,	,	,	,	12,036
Minority Interests	3,229	2,961	3,005	3,361	3,788
Total Cap. & Liab.	36,368	35,661	36,337	36,788	36,535
Non-Cash Wkg. Capital	(984)	(753)	(713)	(1,490)	(1,550)
Net Cash/(Debt)	(16,185)	(13,772)	(15,263)	(12,693)	(10,621)
Debtors Turn (avg days)	23.7	17.6	15.6	18.6	24.7
Creditors Turn (avg days)	1,108.2	1,031.6	885.6	902.4	1,113.4
Inventory Turn (avg days)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asset Turnover (x)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Current Ratio (x)	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.6
Quick Ratio (x)	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.6
Net Debt/Equity (X)	1.2	1.0	1.1	0.8	0.7
Net Debt/Equity ex MI (X)	1.6	1.2	1.4	1.1	0.9
Capex to Debt (%)	1.9	6.1	6.7	0.5	0.5
Z-Score (X)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Source: Company, DBS HK					

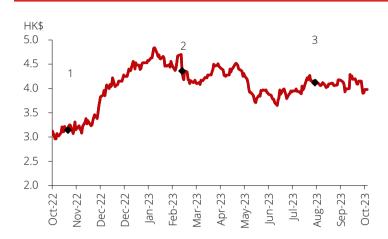
### Cash Flow Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Pre-Tax Profit	682	2,218	1,065	1,655	1,979
Dep. & Amort.	976	1,088	1,175	1,202	1,204
Tax Paid	(218)	(499)	(70)	(51)	(381)
Assoc. & JV Inc/(loss)	(124)	(264)	(172)	(283)	(247)
(Pft)/ Loss on disposal of FAs	0	0	0	0	0
Chg in Wkg.Cap.	113	(219)	(21)	447	(14)
Other Operating CF	673	246	234	0	0
Net Operating CF	2,103	2,570	2,211	2,969	2,541
Capital Exp.(net)	(337)	(1,013)	(1,197)	(76)	(76)
Other Invts.(net)	0	2,031	0	0	0
Invts in Assoc. & JV	0	0	(6)	0	0
Div from Assoc & JV	47	202	471	228	265
Other Investing CF	51	65	64	0	0
Net Investing CF	(239)	1,285	(668)	152	189
Div Paid	(387)	(971)	(1,048)	(550)	(658)
Chg in Gross Debt	(1,396)	(1,480)	(913)	(1,200)	(1,200)
Capital Issues	0	0	67	0	0
Other Financing CF	0	0	(87)	0	0
Net Financing CF	(1,783)	(2,451)	(1,981)	(1,750)	(1,858)
Currency Adjustments	(1)	(2)	0	0	0
Chg in Cash	81	1,403	(439)	1,370	872
Opg CFPS (RMB)	1.19	1.67	1.33	1.51	1.53
Free CFPS (RMB)	1.06	0.93	0.61	1.73	1.47

Source: Company, DBS HK



### **Target Price & Ratings 12-mth History**



S.No	. Date	Closing Price	12-mth Target Price	Rating
1:	25-Oct-22	HK\$3.13	HK\$5.40	Buy
2:	7-Mar-23	HK\$4.70	HK\$6.00	Buy
3:	9-Aug-23	HK\$4.13	HK\$6.00	Buy

Source: DBS HK

Analyst: Paul YONG

Maggie WANG



DBS HK recommendations are based on an Absolute Total Return\* Rating system, defined as follows:

STRONG BUY (>20% total return over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

BUY (>15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, >10% for large caps)

HOLD (-10% to +15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, -10% to +10% for large caps)

**FULLY VALUED** (negative total return, i.e., > -10% over the next 12 months)

SELL (negative total return of > -20% over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

\*Share price appreciation + dividends

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Sources for all charts and tables are DBS HK unless otherwise specified.

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