

# ZTO Express (ZTO US/2057 HK)

# Lower volume guidance but likely ASP surprise

We believe ZTO's lower parcel volume growth guidance for the full year (14-18%, vs. 20-24% previously) is a response to the government's anti-involution campaign. While weak 2Q25 profit (-26% YoY) and lower guidance look unattractive, we see chances of an ASP surprise over the coming 6-12 months which will likely serve as a major share price catalyst. We only slightly fine-tune our 2025E-27E earnings forecast by 1-2%. We roll over our valuation base to 2026, and accordingly revise up our TP for ZTO US/2057 HK to US\$23.9/HK\$187 (previously US\$22.2/HK\$174) based on an unchanged target multiple of 15x 2026E P/E (1SD below historical average). Maintain BUY.

## Key highlights in 2Q25 results:

- Core net profit declined 26% YoY to RMB2bn in 2Q25, attributable to 10% revenue growth but offset by unit gross profit contraction of 30% YoY (to RMB0.3/parcel). In 1H25, the core net profit dropped 13% YoY to RMB3.98bn which accounted for 46% of our full-year estimate (run rate in 1H24: 48%).
- Parcel volume grew 16.5% YoY to 9.8bn units. Market share in 2Q25 was 19.5% (-0.1ppts YoY and +0.6ppts QoQ). ZTO remained the largest player in term of express delivery parcel volume in 2Q, followed by YTO (16%) and Yunda (13.2%).
- ASP dropped 4.7% YoY. ASP in 2Q25 dropped RMB0.06/parcel (or 4.7%) YoY to RMB1.18/unit (breakdown: KA +RMB0.17, parcel weight -RMB0.05, volume incentives -RMB0.18).
- Unit cost increased 9% YoY to RMB0.89/parcel. Unit cost of transportation decreased RMB0.06 (or 14%) YoY to RMB0.33/parcel, helped by economies of scale, improved load rate and decrease in diesel prices. Unit cost of sorting hubs dropped RMB0.01 (or 7%) YoY to RMB0.25/parcel, helped by scale and the increase in automation level. Other unit cost unexpectedly surged RMB0.15/unit (or 102%) YoY to RMB0.29/unit, due to an increase in KA cost based on our understanding.

## **Earnings Summary - ZTO US**

(YE 31 Dec)	FY23A	FY24A	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E			
Revenue (RMB mn)	38,419	44,281	48,197	53,809	59,580			
YoY growth (%)	8.6	15.3	8.8	11.6	10.7			
Adjusted net profit (RMB mn)	8,579.0	9,555.8	8,745.2	9,439.1	10,339.8			
EPS (Adjusted) (RMB)	10.62	11.45	10.79	11.65	12.76			
Consensus EPS (RMB)	na	na	11.52	12.83	14.21			
P/E (x)	13.1	13.4	13.1	12.2	11.1			
P/B (x)	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5			
Yield (%)	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.7	4.1			
ROE (%)	15.4	14.6	13.7	13.7	13.8			
Net gearing (%)	(41.6)	(40.0)	(41.3)	(42.7)	(46.3)			
Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates								

**ZTO US** 2057 HK BUY BUY Maintain Maintain TP US\$23.90 HK\$187.00 **Prior TP** US\$22.20 HK\$174.00 Up/Downside 21.1% 20.0% **Current Price** US\$19.7 HK\$155.8

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## 12-mth Price Performance



Source: FactSet
Stock Performance

	ZT	o us	20	57 HK
	Abs.	Rel.	Abs.	Rel.
1-mth	4.0%	2.1%	2.4%	2.8%
3-mth	12.8%	4.5%	7.9%	6.3%
6-mth	-4.1%	-8.5%	0.3%	-13.8%

Source: FactSet

Stock Data		
(LC)	ZTO US	2057 HK
Mkt Cap (mn)	15996.1	126250.8
Avg 3 mths t/o (mn)	14.56	413.2
52w High	26.99	215.4
52w Low	16.51	132.9
Issued Shares (mn)	810.3392	810.3392

Source: FactSet

## Related reports:

- Express delivery Price floor in Guangdong likely set an example for other regions; Staying +ve on the sector – 8 Aug 2025 (link)
- Express delivery Strong policy momentum to curb price war; a similar price hike story like 2022 – 4 Aug 2025 (link)
- ZTO Express 1Q25 earnings below expectation; further pricing pressure on parcel ahead – 21 May 2025 (link)



Figure 1: ZTO's 2Q25 results

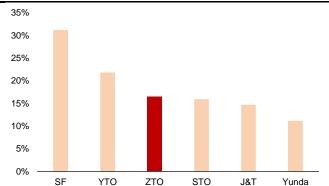
(RMB mn)	1Q24	1Q25	Change YoY	2Q24	2Q25	Change YoY	3Q23	3Q24	Change YoY	4Q23	4Q24	Change YoY
Total revenue	9,960	10,891	9.4%	10,726	11,832	10.3%	9,076	10,675	17.6%	10,619	12,920	21.7%
Cost of sales	-6,958	-8,202	17.9%	-7,105	-8,887	25.1%	-6,369	-7,340	15.2%	-7,491	-9,160	22.3%
Gross profit	3,002	2,689	-10.4%	3,620	2,944	-18.7%	2,706	3,335	23.2%	3,128	3,760	20.2%
Other income	161	454	181.3%	188	154	-17.8%	151	52	-65.8%	327	349	6.7%
SG&A expenses	-897	-738	-17.7%	-593	-624	5.2%	-434	-545	25.6%	-700	-656	-6.4%
EBIT	2,267	2,405	6.1%	3,215	2,475	-23.0%	2,424	2,842	17.3%	2,755	3,453	25.3%
D&A	786	827	5.2%	755	809	7.1%	745	731	-1.8%	739	751	1.6%
EBITDA	3,053	3,232	5.9%	3,970	3,284	-17.3%	3,168	3,573	12.8%	3,494	4,204	20.3%
Net finance income/(expense)	161	130	-19.6%	172	111	-35.8%	163	172	5.9%	140	150	7.6%
Finance income	245	198	-19.0%	288	209	-27.5%	246	239	-3.2%	201	222	10.2%
Finance expenses	-84	-69	-17.9%	-116	-98	-15.3%	-84	-66	-20.8%	-62	-72	16.1%
Gain/(loss) on disposal of subsidiaries	0	0	n/a	12	-1	n/a	11	-1	n/a	-5	-21	362.2%
Impairment of investment in equity investees	-478	0	n/a	-194	-84	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	-259	n/a
Fair value changes of financial instruments	43	37	-14.3%	55	-4	n/a	9	-63	n/a	-51	168	n/a
FX gain/(loss)	5	-4	n/a	15	16	8.2%	5	-38	n/a	18	-0	n/a
Share of profit of JV and associates	16	3	-80.4%	4	27	519.4%	11	22	107.5%	-10	15	n/a
Pretax profit	2,014	2,571	27.6%	3,279	2,540	-22.5%	2,621	2,934	11.9%	2,846	3,506	23.2%
Income tax	-566	-532	-6.1%	-665	-576	-13.5%	-271	-555	104.5%	-637	-1,059	66.4%
After tax profit	1,448	2,039	40.8%	2,614	1,965	-24.8%	2,350	2,379	1.3%	2,210	2,447	10.7%
MI	-22	-46	111.7%	-2	-26	1094.9%	-4	17	n/a	-18	-64	266.2%
Net profit	1,426	1,993	39.8%	2,612	1,938	-25.8%	2,345	2,396	2.2%	2,192	2,383	8.7%
Core net profit	1,862	1,956	5.1%	2,740	2,027	-26.0%	2,326	2,460	5.8%	2,248	2,494	11.0%
Ratios:			ppt			ppt			ppt			ppt
Gross margin	30.1%	24.7%	-5.5	33.8%	24.9%	-8.9	29.8%	31.2%	1.4	29.5%	29.1%	-0.4
EBIT margin	22.8%	22.1%	-0.7	30.0%	20.9%	-9.1	26.7%	26.6%	-0.1	25.9%	26.7%	0.8
After tax profit margin	14.5%	18.7%	4.2	24.4%	16.6%	-7.8	25.9%	22.3%	-3.6	20.8%	18.9%	-1.9
Effective tax rate	28.1%	20.7%	-7.4	20.3%	22.7%	2.4	10.4%	18.9%	8.6	22.4%	30.2%	7.8

Source: Company data, CMBIGM

Figure 2: ZTO's quarterly parcel volume growth (YoY)

Source: Company data, CMBIGM

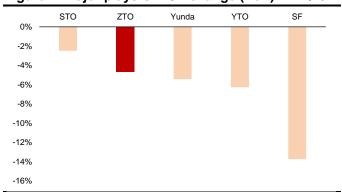
Figure 2: ZTO's quarterly parcel volume growth Figure 3: Major players' parcel volume growth in 2Q25



Source: Company data, CMBIGM

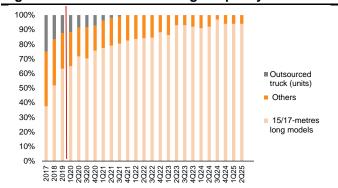


Figure 4: Major players' ASP change (YoY) in 2Q25



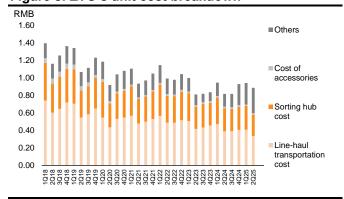
Source: Company data, the State Post Bureau, CMBIGM

Figure 6: ZTO's self-owned high-capacity truck ratio



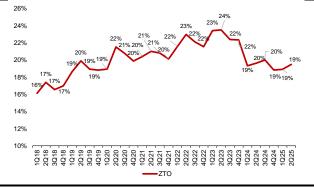
Source: Company data, CMBIGM

Figure 8: ZTO's unit cost breakdown



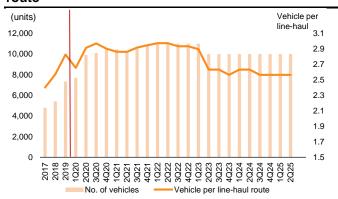
Source: Company data, CMBIGM

Figure 5: ZTO's market share in China in terms of parcel volume



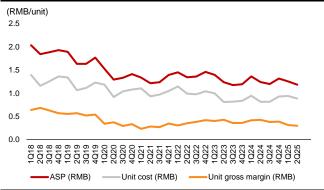
Source: Company data, CMBIGM

Figure 7: ZTO's number of vehicles per line-haul route



Source: Company data, CMBIGM

Figure 9: ZTO's ASP, unit cost & unit gross margin



Source: Company data, CMBIGM



	·	Old			New			Change	
	2025E	2026E	2027E	2025E	2026E	2027E	2025E	2026E	2027E
Shipment volume (mn units of parcel)									
Unit of parcel	41,493	47,717	53,921	39,113	44,197	49,501	-5.7%	-7.4%	-8.2%
ASP (RMB/unit)									
Per unit of parcel	1.20	1.18	1.16	1.21	1.20	1.19	1.1%	2.1%	2.1%
Unit cost (RMB)									
Line-haul transportation cost	-0.37	-0.36	-0.35	-0.37	-0.36	-0.35	-1.1%	-1.1%	-1.1%
Sorting hub cost	-0.25	-0.24	-0.23	-0.25	-0.24	-0.23	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Others	-0.25	-0.26	-0.27	-0.25	-0.27	-0.28	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
Total	-0.88	-0.88	-0.87	-0.89	-0.88	-0.88	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%
Unit gross margin (RMB)	0.32	0.30	0.29	0.33	0.32	0.31	2.6%	6.6%	6.5%
(RMB mn)									
Revenue									
Express delivery, accessories & others	49,766	56,086	62,743	47,409	53,037	58,807	-4.7%	-5.4%	-6.3%
Freight forwarding services	868	859	859	788	772	772	-9.2%	-10.1%	-10.1%
Total	50,633	56,945	63,602	48,197	53,809	59,580	-4.8%	-5.5%	-6.3%
Revenue growth								ppt	
Express delivery, accessories & others	15%	13%	12%	9%	12%	11%	(5.4)	(0.8)	(1.0)
Freight forwarding services	-2%	-1%	0%	-11%	-2%	0%	(9.0)	(1.0)	0.0
Revenue	14%	12%	12%	9%	12%	11%	(5.5)	(8.0)	(1.0)
SG&A expense ratio	-6.0%	-6.0%	-6.0%	-6.0%	-6.0%	-6.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net profit	8,794	9,527	10,540	8,745	9,439	10,340	-0.6%	-0.9%	-1.9%
Core net profit	8,794	9,527	10,540	8,745	9,439	10,340	-0.6%	-0.9%	-1.9%

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 11: Earnings sensitivity to ASP and unit line-haul transportation cost

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2025E Net profit (RMB mn)		ASP (RMB/unit)							
		1.15	1.19	1.21	1.24	1.27			
	-0.388	6,427	7,483	8,187	8,890	9,946			
	-0.377	6,763	7,818	8,522	9,225	10,281			
Unit line-haul	-0.370	6,986	8,042	8,745	9,449	10,504			
transportation cost (RMB)	-0.362	7,210	8,265	8,969	9,672	10,728			
	-0.351	7,545	8,600	9,304	10,008	11,063			

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

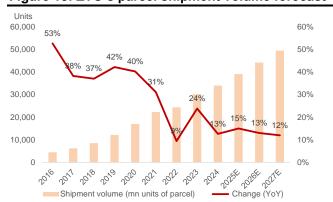
Figure 12: Earnings sensitivity to ASP and unit sorting hub cost

2025E Net profit (RMB mn)		ASP (RMB/unit)							
		1.15	1.19	1.21	1.24	1.27			
	-0.257	6,615	7,671	8,375	9,078	10,134			
	-0.250	6,838	7,893	8,597	9,301	10,356			
Unit sorting hub cost	-0.245	6,986	8,042	8,745	9,449	10,504			
(RMB)	-0.240	7,134	8,190	8,893	9,597	10,653			
	-0.233	7,357	8,412	9,116	9,820	10,875			

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

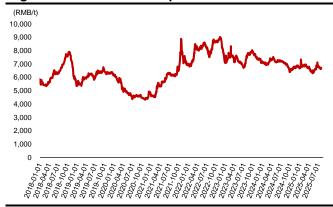


Figure 13: ZTO's parcel shipment volume forecast



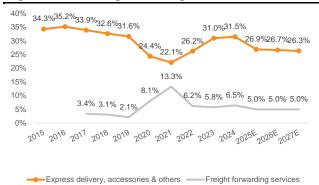
Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 14: China's diesel price



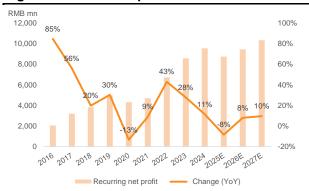
Source: Wind, CMBIGM

Figure 15: ZTO's gross margin trend



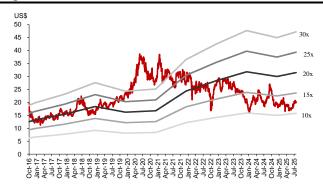
Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 16: ZTO's net profit forecast



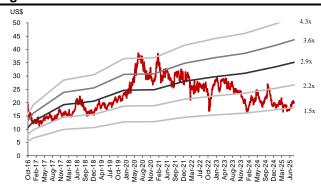
Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 17: ZTO US's P/E band



Source: Bloomberg, company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 18: ZTO US's P/B band



Source: Bloomberg, company data, CMBIGM estimates

**Major risk factors include:** (1) a prolonged price war, and (2) further slowdown of overall consumption.



## **Financial Summary**

INCOME STATEMENT	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Revenue	35,377	38,419	44,281	48,197	53,809	59,580
Cost of goods sold	(26,338)	(26,756)	(30,564)	(35,411)	(39,632)	(44,065)
Gross profit	9,039	11,663	13,717	12,787	14,177	15,514
SG&A expense	(2,077)	(2,425)	(2,690)	(2,892)	(3,229)	(3,575)
Others	775	771	750	964	1,076	1,192
Operating profit	7,736	10,008	11,777	10,859	12,025	13,131
Investment gain/loss	90	170	(739)	0	0	0
Share of (losses)/profits of associates/JV	6	4	57	60	45	50
Interest income	504	707	994	901	988	1,087
Interest expense	(191)	(290)	(338)	(371)	(371)	(371)
Net Interest income/(expense)	313	417	656	530	617	716
Foreign exchange gain/loss	147	94	(18)	0	0	0
Pre-tax profit	8,292	10,693	11,733	11,449	12,687	13,898
Income tax	(1,633)	(1,939)	(2,845)	(2,633)	(3,172)	(3,474)
Minority interest	150	(5)	(71)	(71)	(76)	(83)
Net profit	6,659	8,754	8,888	8,816	9,515	10,423
Adjusted net profit	6,720	8,579	9,556	8,745	9,439	10,340
Gross dividends	2,063	3,592	4,056	3,935	4,248	4,653
BALANCE SHEET	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Current assets	24,475	26,954	30,354	31,908	36,889	41,153
Cash & equivalents	11,693	12,334	13,465	16,192	19,444	24,919
Account receivables	819	573	1,504	160	1,756	366
Inventories	41	28	39	58	50	71
Prepayment	862	822	784	784	784	784
Other current assets	11,061	13,197	14,562	14,714	14,855	15,014
Non-current assets	54,049	61,512	61,987	65,698	66,656	68,913
PP&E	28,813	32,181	33,915	36,039	36,962	37,485
Deferred income tax	750	880	985	985	985	985
Investment in JVs & assos	3,951	3,455	1,871	2,131	2,376	2,626
Intangibles	29	23	17	11	5	2
Goodwill	4,242	4,242	4,242	4,242	4,242	4,242
Other non-current assets	16,264	20,731	20,957	22,291	22,087	23,574
Total assets	78,524	88,465	92,340	97,606	103,545	110,066
Current liabilities	16,405	20,061	28,273	28,779	29,138	29,484
Short-term borrowings	5,394	7,766	9,514	9,514	9,514	9,514
Account payables	2,203	2,557	2,463	2,969	3,328	3,674
Tax payable	228	333	489	489	489	489
Other current liabilities	8,580	9,405	15,807	15,807	15,807	15,807
Non-current liabilities	7,646	8,124	1,392	1,392	1,392	1,392
Long-term borrowings	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obligations under finance leases	510	456	378	378	378	378
Other non-current liabilities	7,135	7,668	1,015	1,015	1,015	1,015
Total liabilities	24,051	28,185	29,665	30,172	30,530	30,876
Total shareholders equity	54,029	59,802	62,062	66,752	72,256	78,348
Minority interest	444	479	612	683	759	842
Total equity and liabilities	78,524	88,465	92,340	97,606	103,545	110,066



CASH FLOW	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Operating						
Profit before taxation	8,292	10,693	11,733	11,449	12,687	13,898
Depreciation & amortization	2,671	2,881	3,030	3,826	4,236	4,643
Tax paid	(1,633)	(1,939)	(2,845)	(2,633)	(3,172)	(3,474)
Change in working capital	1,498	700	(1,035)	700	(819)	406
Others	148	318	(446)	(590)	(662)	(766)
Net cash from operations	10,976	12,654	10,436	12,752	12,270	14,706
Investing						
Capital expenditure	(6,837)	(6,529)	(5,900)	(5,800)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Acquisition of subsidiaries/ investments	136	63	0	(200)	(200)	(200)
Others	(9,845)	(6,494)	(1,074)	401	488	587
Net cash from investing	(16,546)	(12,960)	(6,974)	(5,599)	(4,712)	(4,613)
Financing						
Dividend paid	(1,353)	(2,063)	(3,592)	(4,056)	(3,935)	(4,248)
Net borrowings	1,936	2,372	1,748	0	0	0
Proceeds from share issues	(85)	(1,006)	0	0	0	0
Others	6,560	(72)	(3,151)	(371)	(371)	(371)
Net cash from financing	7,058	(770)	(4,995)	(4,427)	(4,306)	(4,619)
Net change in cash						
Cash at the beginning of the year	9,721	11,693	12,334	13,465	16,192	19,444
Exchange difference	483	1,716	2,665	0	0	0
Cash at the end of the year	11,693	12,334	13,465	16,192	19,444	24,919
GROWTH	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec						
Revenue	16.3%	8.6%	15.3%	8.8%	11.6%	10.7%
Gross profit	37.2%	29.0%	17.6%	(6.8%)	10.9%	9.4%
Operating profit	40.6%	29.4%	17.7%	(7.8%)	10.7%	9.2%
Net profit	41.6%	31.5%	1.5%	(0.8%)	7.9%	9.5%
Adj. net profit	43.0%	27.7%	11.4%	(8.5%)	7.9%	9.5%
PROFITABILITY	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec	25.6%	30.4%	31.0%	26.5%	26.3%	26.0%
Gross profit margin	21.9%	26.0%	26.6%	22.5%	22.3%	20.0%
Operating margin  Adj. net profit margin	19.0%	22.3%	21.6%	18.1%	17.5%	17.4%
Return on equity (ROE)	13.0%	15.4%	14.6%	13.7%	13.7%	13.8%
GEARING/LIQUIDITY/ACTIVITIES	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec	LULLIN	202071	202-77	20202	20202	
Net debt to equity (x)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.5)
Current ratio (x)	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.4
Receivable turnover days	23.0	17.3	16.1	16.3	16.5	17.0
Inventory turnover days	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Payable turnover days	28.8	32.5	30.0	28.0	29.0	29.0
VALUATION	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec						
P/E	16.9	13.1	13.4	13.1	12.2	11.1
P/B	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5
Div yield (%)	1.8	3.1	3.4	3.4	3.7	4.1

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates. Note: The calculation of net cash includes financial assets.



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