

# Truist COVID-19 Economic Data Tracker - Week 46, 2020

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*In addition to tracking the impact of COVID-19, we have turned to a wider set of activity-based economic data series from private firms, many of which were previously unavailable. We caution that while these new data series provide valuable insight, many do not provide enough historical data to draw meaningful conclusions individually. Still, these new data are now supplementing tried-and-true existing data and helping provide a more complete mosaic to inform our economic outlook.*

## Trend Watch and New This Week

The recent increase in US COVID-19 infections throughout the US, averaging more than 110,000 per day, is troubling. This week we highlight rural counties, which have been the recent hotspots for new cases on a per capita basis (slide 5).

Hospitalizations, which lag new cases by roughly 10-14 days, have also turned higher. With over 60,000 patients currently, hospitalizations are now above both the initial spring breakout and the mid-summer wave in July (see slide 3, bottom left). Yet, death rates appear relatively stable, which is likely the result of quicker identification (testing) along with better treatment and therapeutics.

Freight volumes at the top five US ports remain unusually strong beyond the traditional August or September peak, when firms stock up ahead of holiday sales (see slide 6). In fact, inbound ships and backed up port traffic indicate that volumes will remain strong through November, which bodes well for overall economic activity.

Lastly, we updated the public transit chart, which remains greatly impacted (slide 7). However, ridership spiked during October in Dallas during the Major League Baseball playoffs and World Series. This suggests that public transit may remain impacted due to work-from-

home and the a lack of large-scale events, such as sporting events and concerts, which typically drive ridership. That said, Dallas appears to have recovered somewhat in early November following the sharp decline in late October.

## Bottom Line

We remain concerned about the surge in infections both in the US and abroad. However, death rates in several European countries and the United Kingdom have spurred reinstated lockdowns. While we do not expect similar widespread lockdowns in the US based on current trends, the backtracking of virus trends will likely push back further reopenings.

Additionally, Hurricane Zeta continues to cycle through some of the weekly activity-based data, particularly in the Gulf Coast and southeastern US. While this is temporary, it obscures an already cloudy view for decision makers.

We maintain our general optimism about the US recovery path. The US economic recovery remains in the early innings. Still, within the US, the recovery will continue to be uneven—both by industry and region.

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# US COVID-19 Economic Data Tracker Matrix

INDICATOR	RELATIVE TREND	WHAT WE'RE WATCHING
US State Reopenings	↔	Rapidly increasing infections and hospitalizations in recent weeks are a growing concern. Most states have paused further reopenings, while some are reinstating limits on certain activities. Rural areas have quickly become the biggest challenge, followed by colleges and schools.
TSA Air Passenger Throughput	▼	Weekly passenger counts rose modestly 1.6% week-over-week to 5.5 million. Passenger throughput is -66.4% year-over-year, down from in recent weeks but a marked improvement from -67% in September.
OpenTable Restaurant Bookings	▼	The weekly average stabilized to -46% YoY after a sharp drop in the prior week. Regional differences persist and are lagging the broader US, especially for some large metros like New York City and San Francisco.
Apple Mobility	▼	Seasonally cooler autumn weather has curtailed activity, which continues to drift lower. Driving 7-day average fell to 111 (from 117), walking dropped at 112 (from 117), while transit stayed at 52.
Google Mobility	↔	Parks recovered after a three-week decline. 7-day average relative to the Jan-Feb 2020 baseline: Retail (& restaurants) & recreation -17%, Grocery/Pharmacy -6%, Transit -32%, Workplaces -25%, Residential +8%.
Hotel Occupancy	▼	Occupancy fell sharply to 44.0% from above 50% two weeks ago; the YoY slipped to -29%. The top 25 markets also declined, to 41%, while average daily rate fell to \$96.91 from above \$101 per night two weeks ago.
Freight	▲	Container traffic at the top five ports rose in September to an new all-time monthly record. Rail freight and intermodal carloads have turned higher in early November, modestly better than seasonal trends.
Staffing Index	▲	Continues to steadily climb, up to 86.65, the highest level since March and nearly back to 2019 average of 89. It has increased in 25 of past 27 weeks since the April reading of 59.6, which was the low for this cycle.

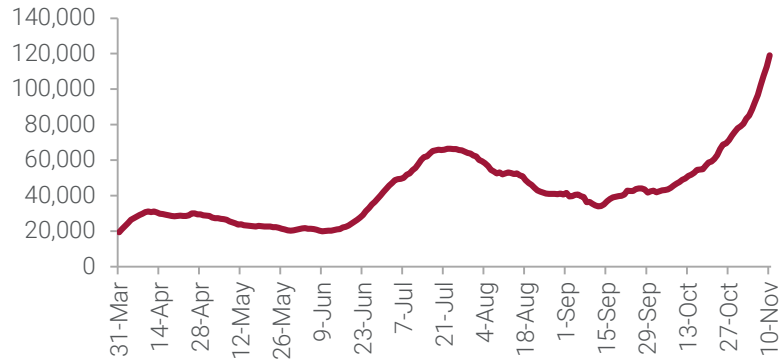
Trend relative to whether it is favorable for economic growth:

▲Positive ▼Negative ↔Neutral / Mixed

Data Sources: SunTrust IAG, NY Times, State Governor Websites, The Covid Tracking Project, Bloomberg, Transportation Security Administration, Apple Mobility Trends, Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Report, STR/CoStar, American Staffing Association.

# Cases & Hospitalizations Rising, But Deaths Stable

New Confirmed Cases 7-Day Moving Average



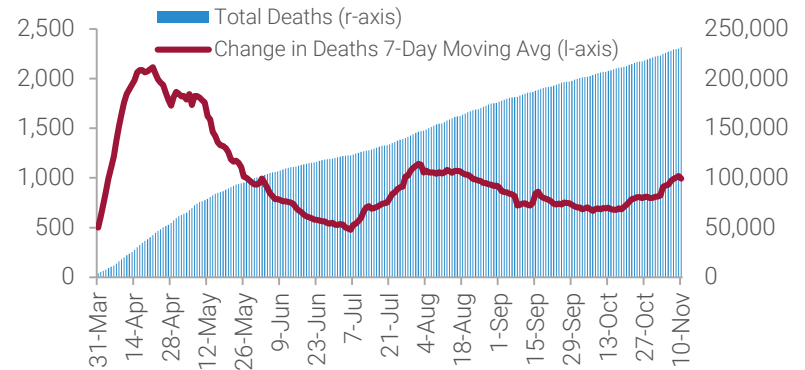
Tests Performed 7-Day Moving Average



Total Hospitalized Currently



US COVID-19 Deaths



Data Sources: SunTrust IAG, The Covid Tracking Project through November 10, 2020. Data for 50 US states plus American Samoa, Washington D.C., Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and US Virgin Islands.

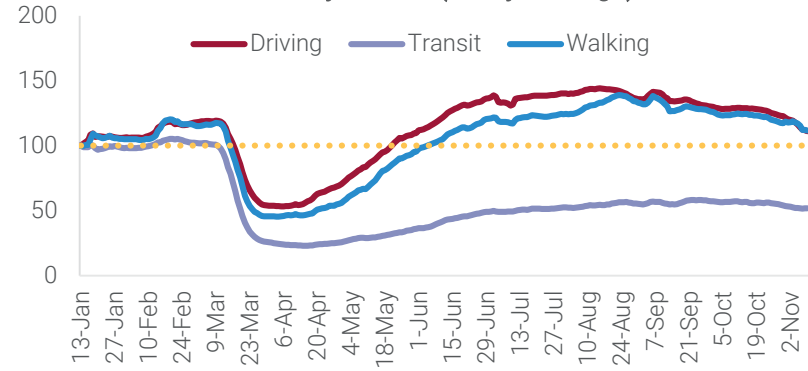


# US Economy: Reopening Progressing But Uneven

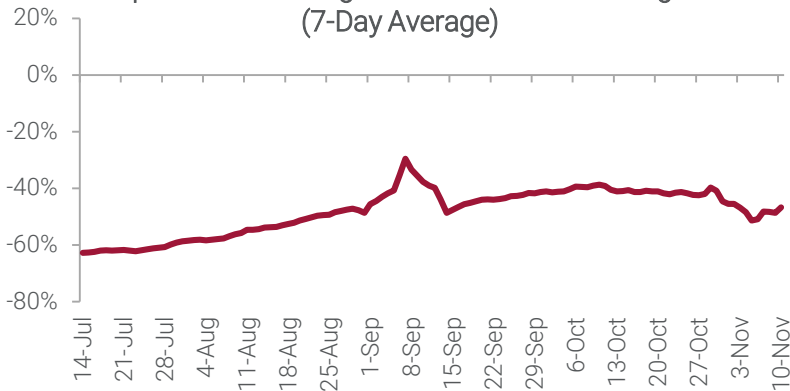
NY Fed Weekly Economic Index



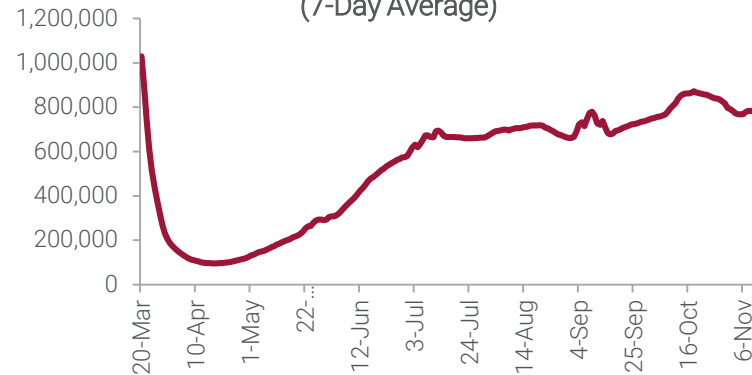
US Mobility Trends (7-Day Average)



OpenTable Bookings Year-over-Year % Change (7-Day Average)



TSA Checkpoint Traveler Throughput (7-Day Average)



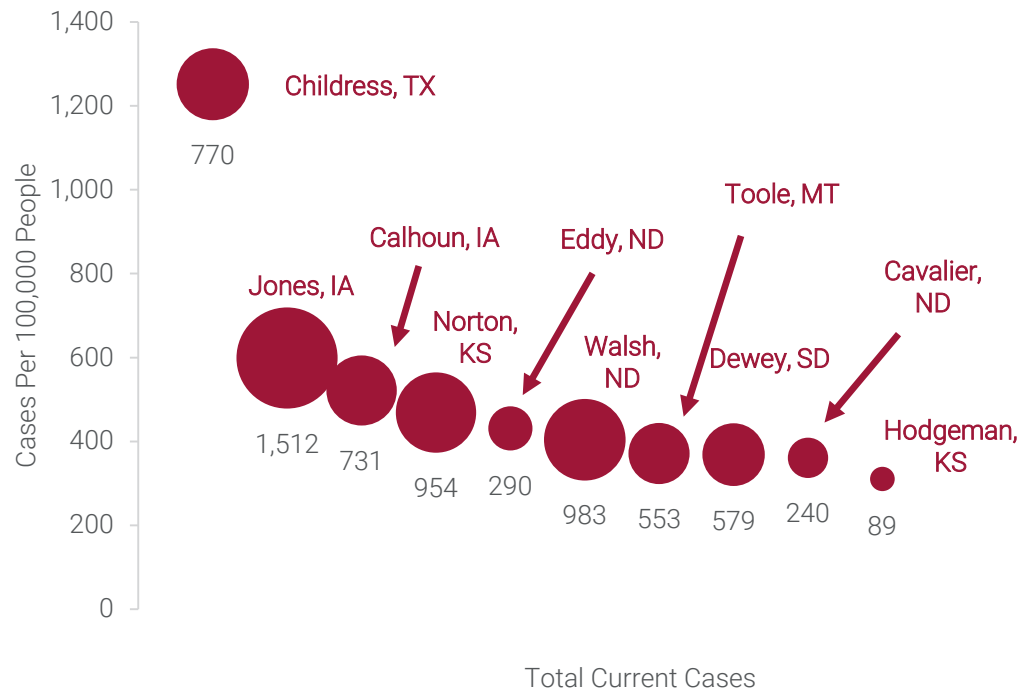
Sources: SunTrust IAG and the following additional sources respectively: Top left: Bloomberg, NY Federal Reserve Weekly Economic Index through November 7, 2020. Top right: (US Mobility Trends) Apple Mobility 7-Day Average through November 9. Bottom left: Bloomberg, OpenTable 7-Day Average through November 10. Bottom right: Bloomberg, Transportation Security Administration 7-Day Average through November 10.

# Rural Counties Are The Recent Hotspots

Rural areas, which had been largely spared during the initial outbreak and summer wave, have seen the highest number of cases per 100,000 people.

Although the total number of current COVID-19 cases (shown below each circle) are fairly low, rural areas generally do not have enough available hospital capacity nearby to accommodate the potential number of hospitalizations that may arise from the recent cases. This could lead to increased death rates in these areas.

US Counties With Highest Per Capita Current Case Rates



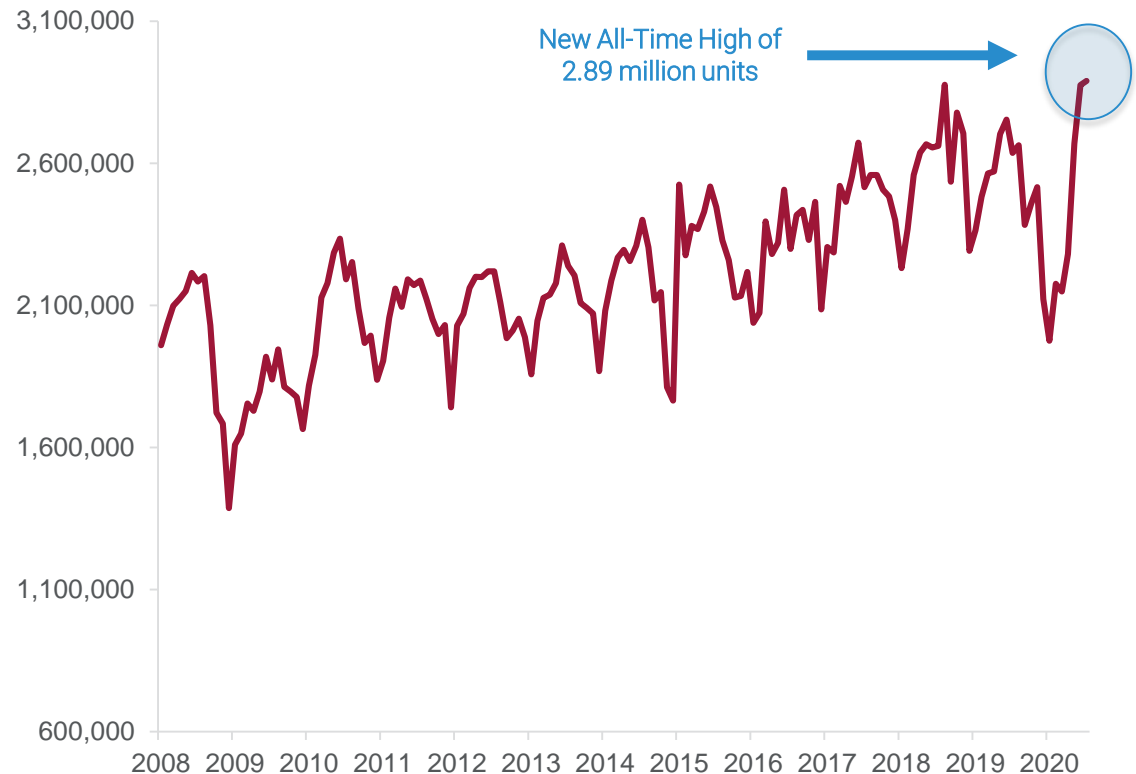
# Shipping Volumes Have Surged And Should Continue Beyond The Normal Peak Period

Unit volumes at the top 5 US ports, which were down nearly 12% year-to-date through May, have quickly snapped back.

Much of the rebound occurred during June, July and August as companies scrambled to replenish inventories after the pandemic shutdown. Yet, volumes remained strong as volumes in September hit a new all-time high, exceeding the October 2018 level.

Furthermore, this heavy volume will likely continue. Port volumes traditionally peak during August or September as firms stock up ahead of holiday sales; however, early indications—based on scheduled inbound ships—are that volumes will remain strong through November.

**Total Unit Volumes at Top 5 US Ports**



Data Sources: SunTrust IAG, Bloomberg. Top 5 US ports are Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, Port of New York New Jersey, Port of Savannah, and Port of Seattle/Tacoma. Total unit volumes in 20-foot-equivalent unit or 20-foot-long cargo container (TEUs).

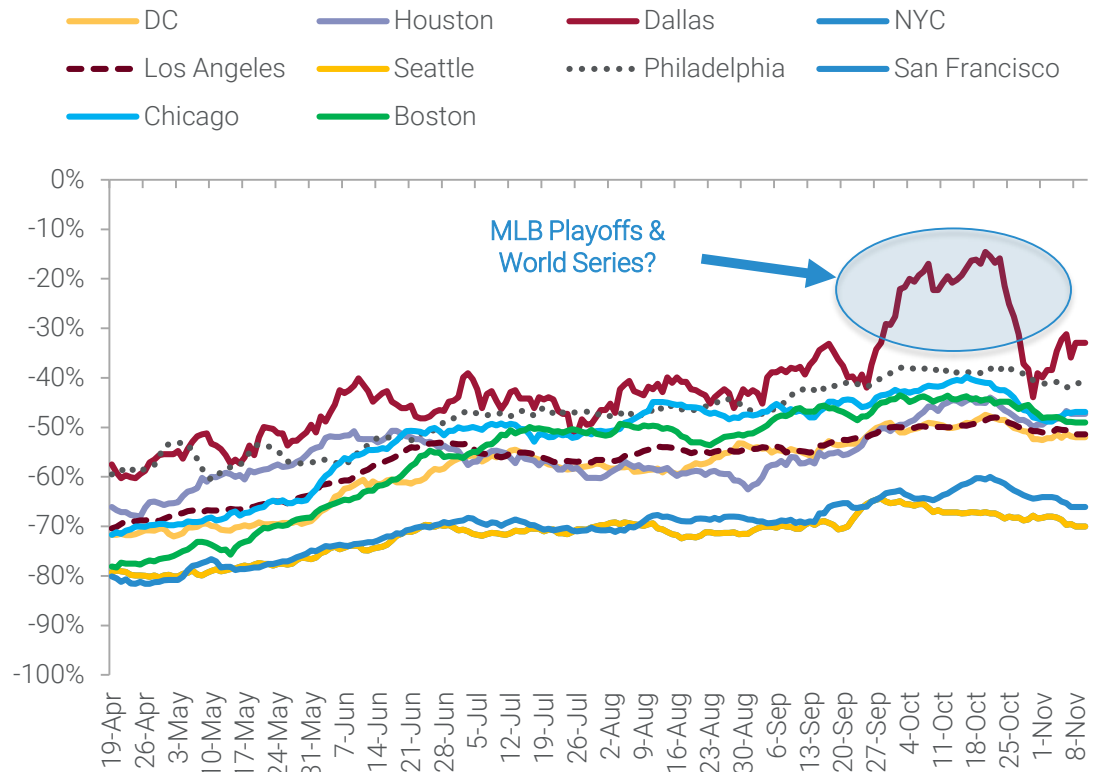
# Public Transit Usage Remains Greatly Impacted; Perhaps It's Because There's No Where to Go

Use of public transit of all types – including buses, light rail, metro/subway trains, as well as local bicycle services, ride-hailing (Uber, Lyft), scooters, and car-sharing – remains greatly impacted by the pandemic. Usage has slowly climbed back near -50% for the 11 of the top US public transit cities.

Interestingly, ridership during early to mid October spiked in Dallas, where Major League Baseball hosted part of their playoffs and the World Series.

Accordingly, public transit may remain impacted due to work-from-home and the a lack of large-scale events, such as sporting events and concerts, which typically drive ridership.

Public Transit % Change from Pre-Pandemic Level



Data Sources: SunTrust IAG, Bloomberg, Moovit. Percent change in Moovit app usage of the previous 7 days in each city compared to the week prior to January 15, 2020.

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