
Fitch: US Airport and Toll Road Traffic Slowly Returning to Normal

Fitch Ratings-New York-27 April 2021: Traffic levels are still suppressed at U.S. airports, but the rate of decline is leveling off, according to the latest U.S. Traffic Monitor from Fitch Ratings. While traffic for toll roads was quicker to bounce back, overall traffic still remains below pre-pandemic levels, and toll roads' collective outperformance relative to Fitch's projections is beginning to stabilize.

Airport traffic remains significantly below pre-pandemic levels, with Fitch-projected airport traffic levels of 65% lower year-over-year in 4Q'20, indicating a slight improvement from the 75% decline projected for 3Q'20.

"International gateways and leading business markets like Boston, San Francisco, Chicago, New York and Washington D.C. are still very challenged due to continued restrictions on travel," said Director Henry Flynn. "Instead the recent recovery has been driven by airline hubs at Charlotte, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Denver that funnelled traffic across smaller destination markets. Tourism and small-hub destinations that were quicker to re-open their economies were the leading performers in 4Q20."

Airport traffic declines were still severe in 4Q'20 with even the strongest performing markets (Orlando, Fort Myers, Boise, and Tampa) seeing declines between 37% to 55% relative to 4Q'19.

Toll road traffic levels are still robust, though 4Q'20 data shows the first time since the start of the pandemic that most Fitch-rated toll roads did not significantly outperform its projections. Fitch's latest traffic monitor shows seven toll roads outperforming Fitch's expectations, eight others on course, and six with falling traffic levels. "The recent new wave of coronavirus infections in certain parts of the country and the shut-downs that followed led to traffic slowdowns on some toll roads," said Flynn.

The drop-off, however, may be short lived with toll road traffic recovery set to accelerate this spring thanks to increasing vaccination rates, warming weather and monetary and fiscal stimulus poised to boost economic output.

Copyright © 2026 Bond Case Briefs | bondcasebriefs.com