

COVID-19 Airport Passenger Traffic Recovery INSIGHT from the Unison TSA Throughput Tracker

2021 Opened with a Lull, January Data Shows

Summary

COVID-19 has upended the commercial passenger aviation industry in unprecedented ways. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) throughput at all U.S. airports fell nearly 97 percent on April 14, 2020—the slowest day in US passenger air travel. Passenger traffic has risen since mid-April, but it remains well below pre-pandemic levels, as indicated by TSA airport passenger screening throughput data.

On Jan. 31, 2021, TSA throughput was 55% lower than on the same day in 2020. For the entire month of January 2021, TSA throughput was 61.7% lower than in January 2020.

TSA airport passenger screening throughput reported daily has been valuable in tracking U.S. airport passenger traffic trends, especially amid rapid changes since COVID-19 became a global pandemic in March 2020.

Unison developed the TSA Airport Passenger Throughput Tracker to facilitate access and analysis of the TSA throughput data, so we can stay current on passenger traffic recovery nationwide and benchmark recovery by hub size, by region, and by airport.

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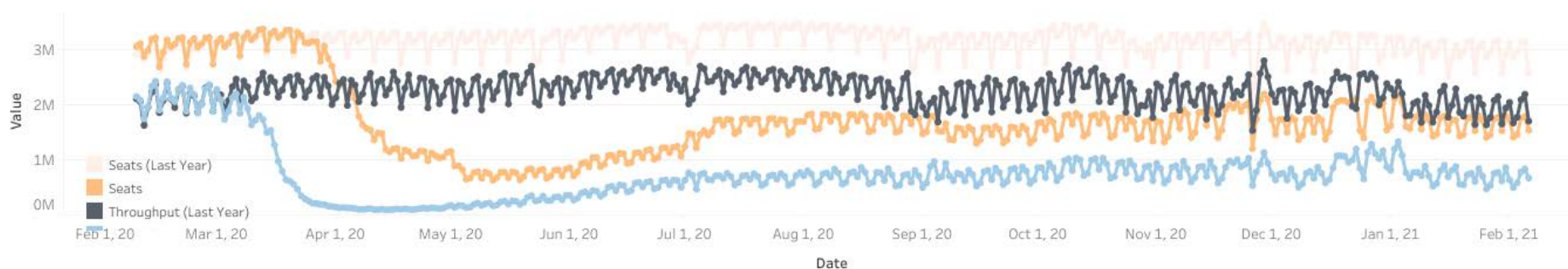
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March 10, 2021



TSA throughput at all U.S. airports on January 31, 2021, was 55.6% lower than on the same day in 2020.

- TSA screened 859,481, down 55.6% from the same day in the previous year.
- Scheduled flights and seats were 37.2% and 38.5% lower, respectively.
- The Throughput-to-Seats Ratio was 47.6%, compared with 66.3% on the same day last year.



Day (Week)	Throughput	Throughput (Last Year)	Flights	Flights (Last Year)	Seats	Seats (Last Year)	Throughput-to-Seats Ratio	Throughput-to-Seats Ratio (Last Year)	Throughput Change YOY	Flights Change YOY	Seats Change YOY
1/31/2021	859,481	1,944,191	14,657	23,336	1,803,947	2,932,989	47.64%	66.29%	-55.79%	-37.19%	-38.49%
1/30/2021	617,481	1,654,937	12,444	20,208	1,532,145	2,568,369	40.30%	64.44%	-62.69%	-38.42%	-40.35%
1/29/2021	776,056	2,154,036	14,634	25,738	1,773,304	3,166,457	43.76%	68.03%	-63.97%	-43.14%	-44.00%

Data sources:

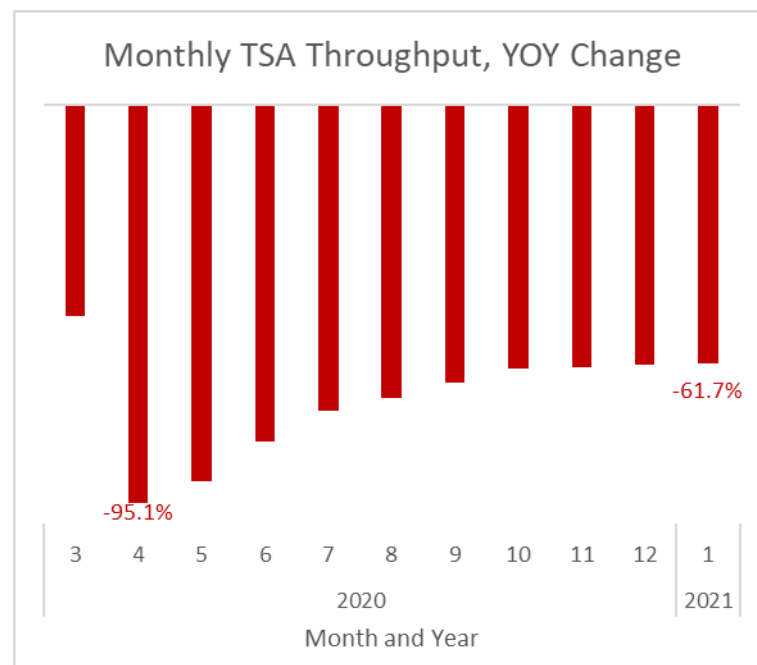
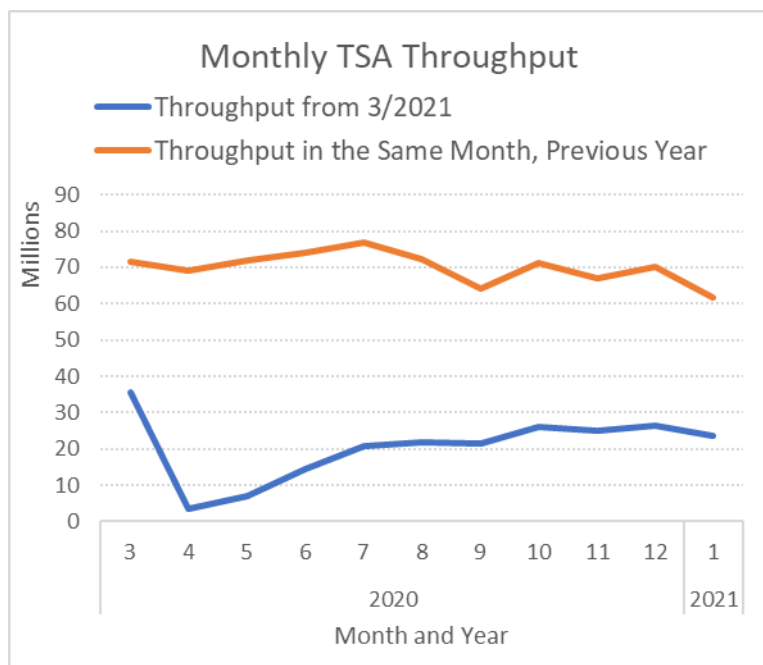
Transportation Security Administration: Performance Management Information System (PMIS) Total Customer Throughput (Unadjusted), OAG Schedules Analyzer, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD).

Notes: The ratio of TSA customer throughput to scheduled seats (throughput-to-seats ratio) is a useful proxy for boarding load factor, defined as the ratio of enplaned passengers to actual seats. However, the TSA customer throughput count overstates total enplaned passengers since it includes non-travelers. It also understates total enplaned passengers, particularly at hubs, because it misses connecting passengers. Scheduled seats overstate actual seats when the flight completion rate is low.

Data for previous years are shifted to represent the same day of the week in the current year.

TSA throughput at all U.S. airports in January 2021 was 61.7% lower than in January 2021.

- For the entire month of January 2021, TSA throughput was down 61.7% year over year, a small improvement from the previous month, during which TSA throughput was down 62.2%.
- The worst year-over-year decrease occurred in April 2020 (-95.1%).



Source: Unison TSA Airport Passenger Screening Throughput Tracker, TSA Performance Management Information System (PMIS) Total Customer Throughput (Unadjusted) and National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD).

Benchmarking Traffic Recovery – All U.S. Airports

- TSA throughput fell to its lowest level on April 14, 2020, the turning point in the recovery. For the entire period from Apr. 14, 2020, through Jan. 31, 2021, TSA throughput at all U.S. airports was down 72% year over year (vertical reference line). Scheduled seats were down 54% (horizontal reference line).
- Airports to the right of the vertical reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in TSA throughput, indicating faster passenger traffic recovery. Airports above the horizontal reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in scheduled seats, indicating faster recovery in airline service.
- Small airports lead in traffic recovery. They share the following attributes: outdoor leisure destinations, served by low-cost carriers (Southwest Airlines and ULCCs).

Current Year Date Range:
4/14/2020 to 1/31/2021

Highlight Airport
No items highlighted

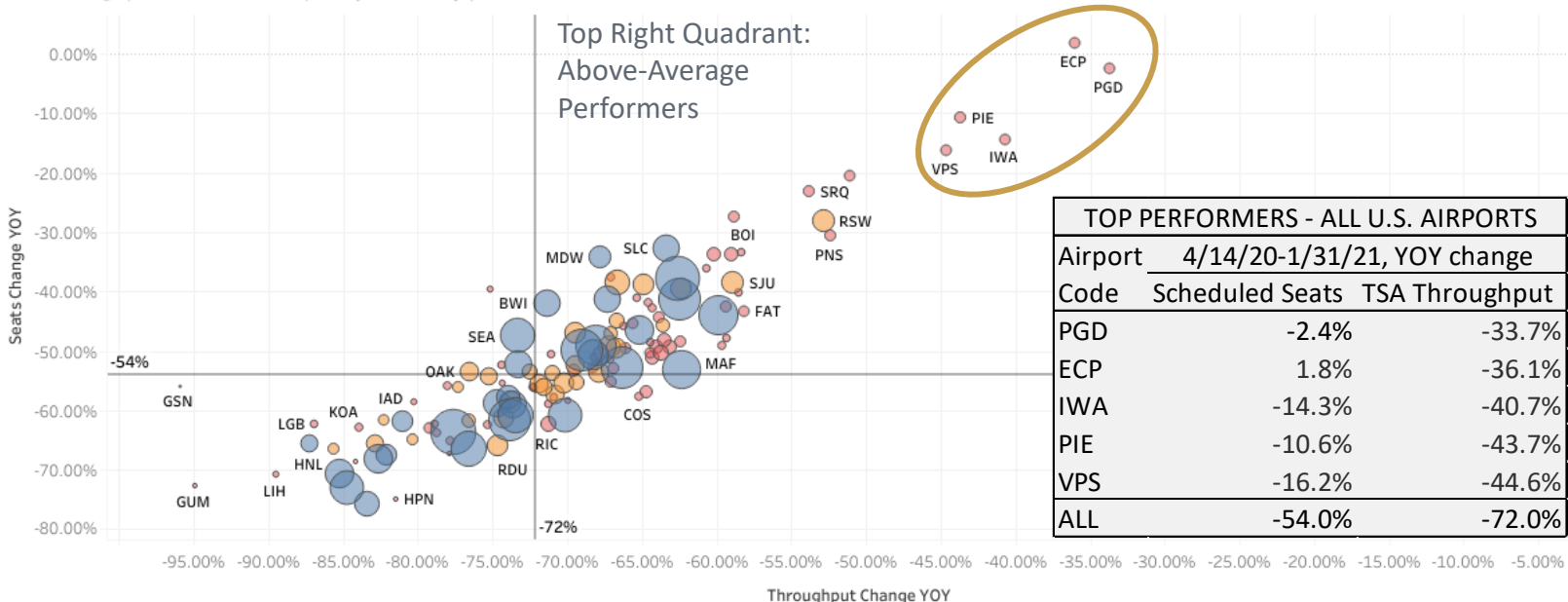
Region
All

Hub Status
All

Hub Status
■ Large
■ Medium
■ Small

Throughput
● 8,513
● 2,000,000
● 4,000,000
● 6,000,000
● 7,467,252

TSA Throughput and Airline Capacity Recovery post COVID-19 Crisis



Source: Unison TSA Airport Passenger Screening Throughput Tracker, TSA Performance Management Information System (PMIS) Total Customer Throughput (Unadjusted) and National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD).



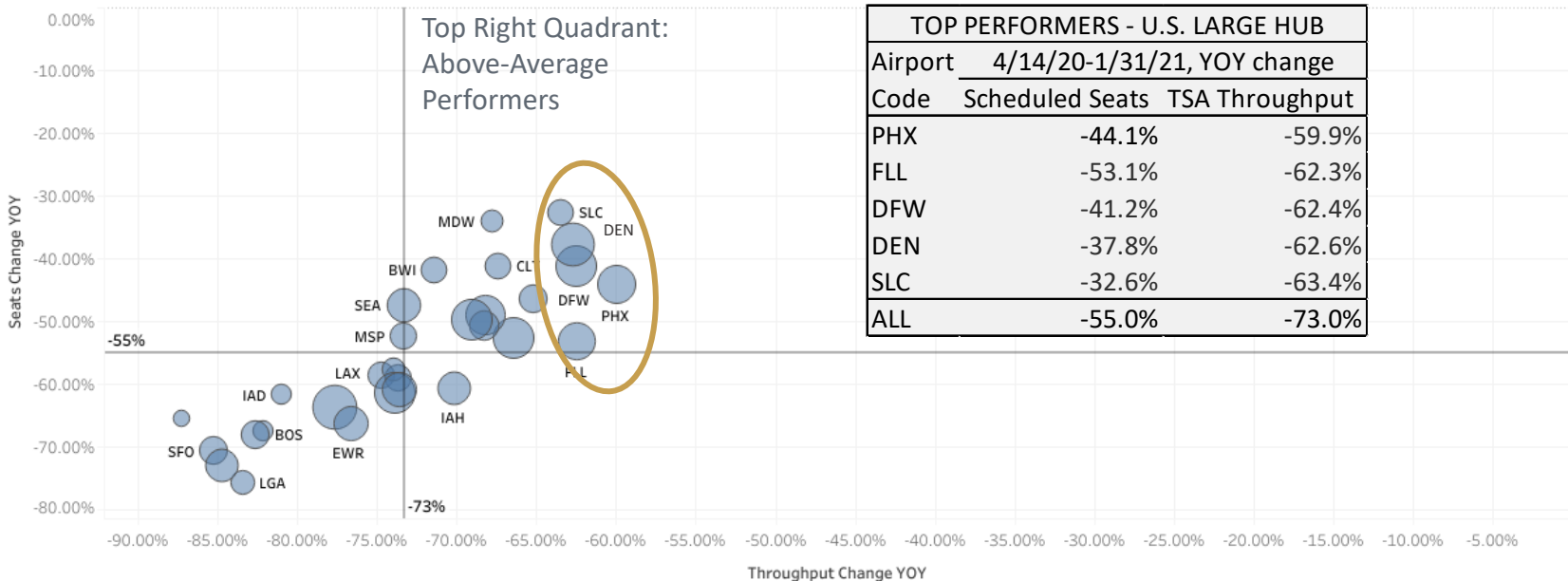
Benchmarking Traffic Recovery – U.S. Large Hub Airports

- For the entire period from Apr. 14, 2020, through Jan. 31, 2021, TSA throughput at all U.S. large hub airports was down 73% year over year (vertical reference line). Scheduled seats were down 55% (horizontal reference line).
- Airports to the right of the vertical reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in TSA throughput, indicating faster passenger traffic recovery. Airports above the horizontal reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in scheduled seats, indicating faster recovery in airline service.

Current Year Date Range:
4/14/2020 to 1/30/2021

Highlight Airport
No items highlighted

TSA Throughput and Airline Capacity Recovery post COVID-19 Crisis



Region
All

Hub Status
Large

Hub Status
Large

Throughput
 ● 1,031,383
 ● 4,000,000
 ● 6,000,000
 ● 7,440,559

Source: Unison TSA Airport Passenger Screening Throughput Tracker, TSA Performance Management Information System (PMIS) Total Customer Throughput (Unadjusted) and National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD).

Benchmarking Traffic Recovery – U.S. Medium Hub Airports

- For the entire period from Apr. 14, 2020, through Jan. 31, 2021, TSA throughput at all U.S. medium hub airports was down 71% year over year (vertical reference line). Scheduled seats were down 52% (horizontal reference line).
- Airports to the right of the vertical reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in TSA throughput, indicating faster passenger traffic recovery. Airports above the horizontal reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in scheduled seats, indicating faster recovery in airline service.

Current Year Date Range:
4/14/2020 to 1/30/2021

Highlight Airport
No items highlighted

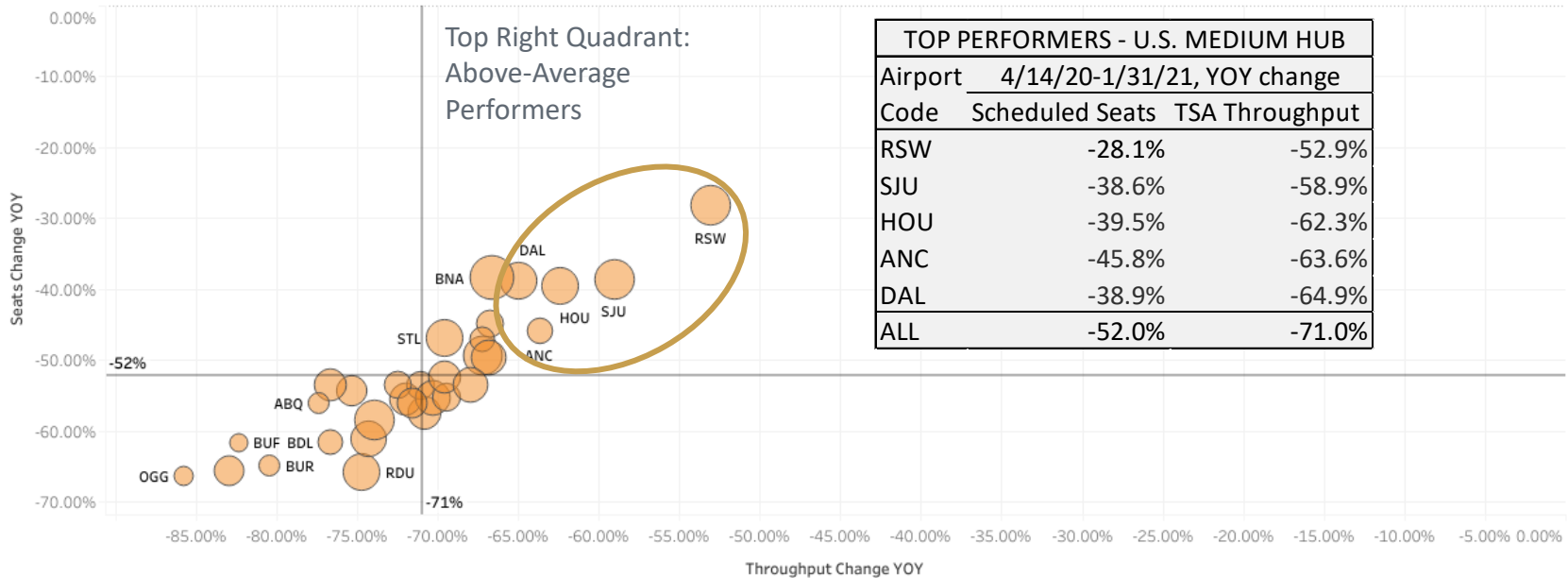
Region
All

Hub Status
Medium

Hub Status
Medium

Throughput
 ● 387,667
 ● 1,000,000
 ● 1,500,000
 ● 2,236,255

TSA Throughput and Airline Capacity Recovery post COVID-19 Crisis



Source: Unison TSA Airport Passenger Screening Throughput Tracker, TSA Performance Management Information System (PMIS) Total Customer Throughput (Unadjusted) and National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD).



Benchmarking Traffic Recovery – U.S. Small Hub Airports

- For the entire period from Apr. 14, 2020, through Jan. 31, 2021, TSA throughput at all U.S. small hub airports was down 68% year over year (vertical reference line). Scheduled seats were down 49% (horizontal reference line).
- Airports to the right of the vertical reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in TSA throughput, indicating faster passenger traffic recovery. Airports above the horizontal reference line suffered smaller proportional decreases in scheduled seats, indicating faster recovery in airline service.

Current Year Date Range:
4/14/2020 to 1/30/2021

Highlight Airport
No items highlighted

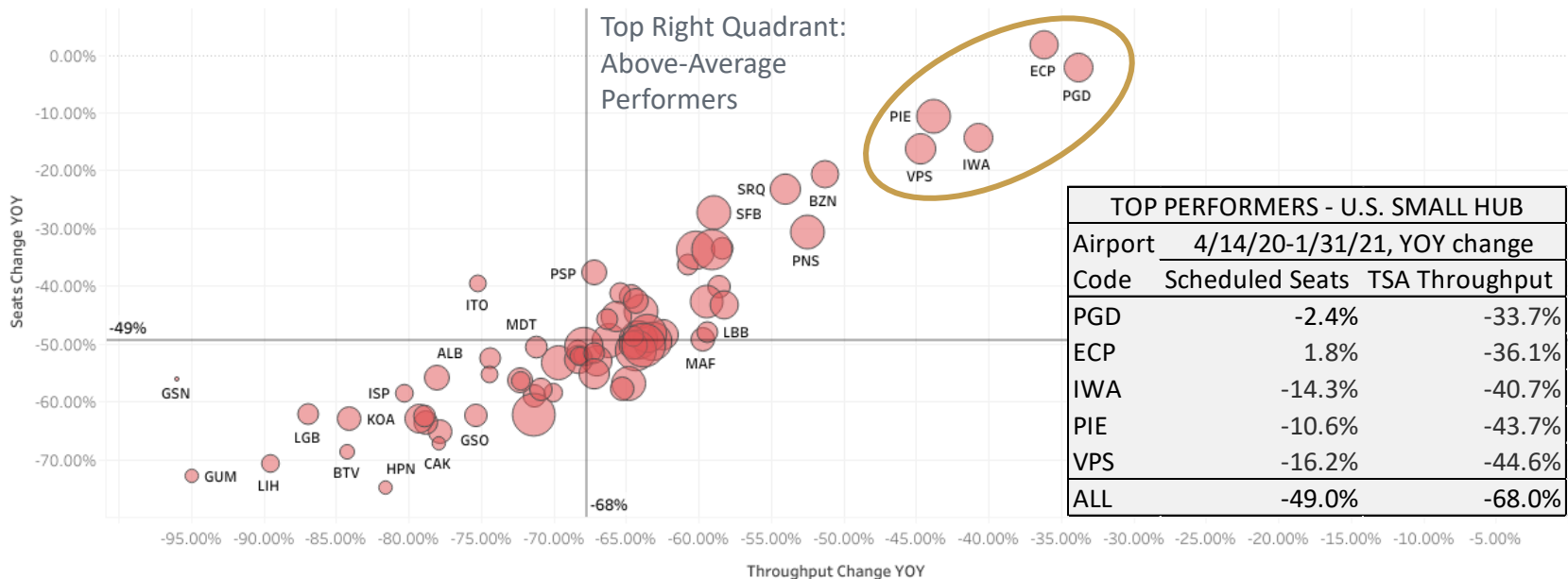
Region
All

Hub Status
Small

Hub Status
Small

Throughput
 • 8,513
 ○ 200,000
 ○ 400,000
 ○ 600,000
 ○ 864,368

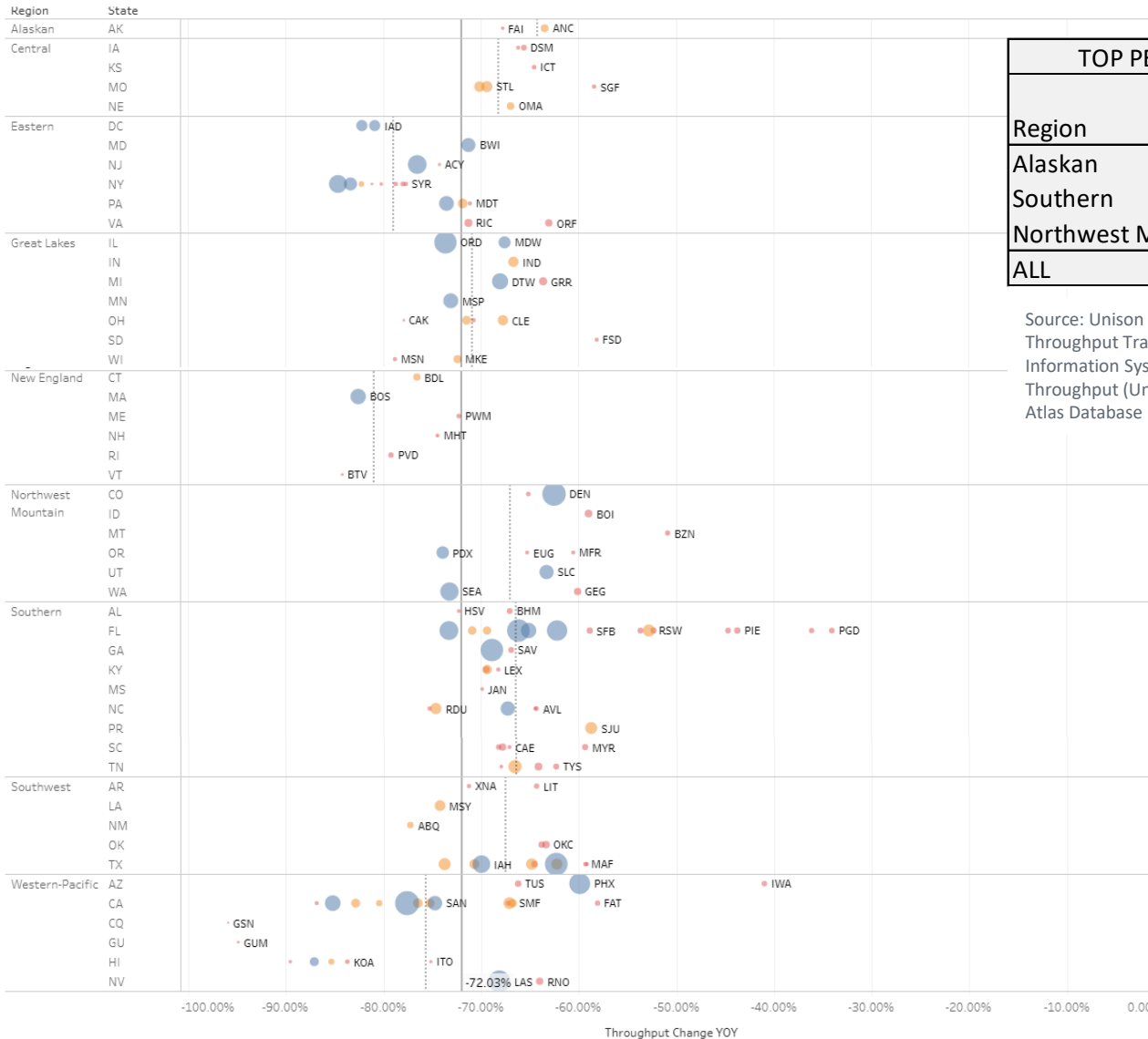
TSA Throughput and Airline Capacity Recovery post COVID-19 Crisis



Source: Unison TSA Airport Passenger Screening Throughput Tracker, TSA Performance Management Information System (PMIS) Total Customer Throughput (Unadjusted) and National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD).

Benchmarking Traffic Recovery by Region

TSA Airport Passenger Screening Throughput, 4/14/20-1/31/21, YOY Change



TOP PERFORMERS BY REGION	
Region	TSA Throughput YOY change
Alaskan	-63.4%
Southern	-66.4%
Northwest Mountain	-67.0%
ALL	-72.0%

Source: Unison TSA Airport Passenger Screening Throughput Tracker, TSA Performance Management Information System (PMIS) Total Customer Throughput (Unadjusted) and National Transportation Atlas Database (NTAD).

LEGEND

Hub Status

- Large
- Medium
- Small

Throughput

- 8,746
- 2,000,000
- 4,000,000
- 6,000,000
- 7,604,723

