

COVID-19 economic data tracker

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The Truist COVID-19 Economic Tracker will not be published during the last week of December. It will return to a weekly schedule in the first week of January 2022.

Trend watch and what's new this week

U.S. virus trends have sharply increased nationally (slide 3) and regionally (slide 6). In a matter of weeks, the omicron variant became the dominant U.S. strain (slide 8), accounting for nearly three quarters of new cases. While omicron appears to be more transmissible than prior strains, the symptoms are reportedly milder.

Still, surging new infections have prompted European governments to re-impose restrictions. The Netherlands has reinstated a strict nationwide lockdown, while Ireland announced an 8 pm curfew for bars and restaurants, and set limits on large gatherings. France and Germany announced travel restrictions for passengers from the United Kingdom. France has also clamped down on holiday events and large gatherings. Canada has paused indoor group events and sports. Israel is once again banning traveling to and from the U.S. or Canada.

Lastly, West coast port congestion has continued to improve in the past month (slide 9). This is the combination of fewer inbound container ships, which appears to have peaked in September, and better throughput at the ports. Ultimately, clearing the logjam of container ships at these ports should help reduce the supply shortages that have

fanned some of the inflationary pressure in recent months.

Bottom line

Despite rising infections, overall activity levels remain consistent with recent trends and seasonal norms. Accordingly, overall economic activity has likely peaked – as it normally does in mid-December – and should taper off quickly near year-end.

We maintain our base case that the U.S. won't experience lockdowns, which also didn't occur during last summer's delta variant surge. That is based on the fact that nearly three quarters of Americans adults are fully vaccinated (over 200 million), and over one-third of adults have already received a booster. Additionally, there are better therapeutics compared to 2020, including two recently approved COVID-19 treatment pills. Both pills are effective against the omicron variant based on recent lab data.

That said, we wouldn't rule out localized restrictions by certain cities. As we have repeatedly mentioned here, COVID-19 isn't going away anytime soon, but the world is definitely managing it better.

Last but certainly not least – we wish you and yours happy holidays. We look forward to prosperous 2022!

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U.S. COVID-19 economic data tracker matrix

Indicator	Relative trend	What we're watching
U.S. state reopenings	▲	Air travel is rising ahead of the Christmas holiday, which is typical, as has hotel occupancy. Similarly, overall economic activity remains steady through mid December, but tends to weaken through yearend. Overall activity levels are consistent with recent trends.
TSA air passenger throughput	▲	Weekly passengers up 8.0% WoW, snapping a 2-week down streak, to 13.6 million. Passenger counts are now -15.2% below the 2019 weekly average of 16.1M and -16.6% compared to the same week in December 2019.
OpenTable restaurant bookings	▲	Drifted down to -12.8% from -11% a few weeks ago. Top positive states were led by Nevada (+47%); bottom was New York (-38%). Top city was Las Vegas (+48%); bottom were Minneapolis (-58%) and NYC (-47%).
Google mobility	↔	Activities skewed as the year winds down. 7-day averages relative to 2020: Parks -8%, Transit -21%, Grocery/Pharmacy +3%, Residential +4%, Retail/Restaurant/Recreation -4%, Workplaces -17%.
Hotel occupancy	▲	Occupancy rebounded to 57.4%, though remains in a seasonally weak period. The average daily rate rose to \$128.35, up 2.3% from the same week in Dec. 2019, while revenue per available room was \$73.73, down 2.7%.
Apartment rent payments	▲	Payments through December 6 rose slipped to 77.1% from 78.2% in November. Full month rents for November '21 edged up to 93.1% from 93.0% in October, but were down from 95.2% in November '19.
Freight	▲	Rail carloads jumped 22% WoW two weeks ago, but slipped 2.7% last week. Shipping container counts for the top three U.S. ports fell 6.6% in November and volumes were up 19.6% YTD compared to 2019.
Staffing index	▲	Rebounded to 107.1 after falling to 102.8 during Thanksgiving week, which is typical. We expect it to jostle around during the holiday season as it has historically. The low for this cycle was 59.6 set in April 2020.

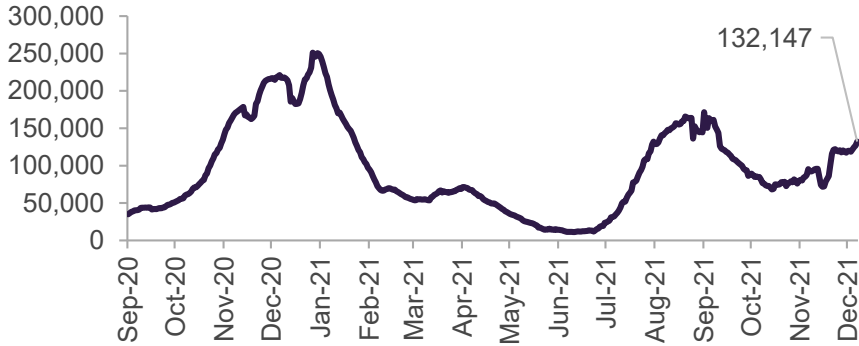
Trend relative to whether it is favorable for economic growth:

▲ Positive ▼ Negative ↔ Neutral / Mixed

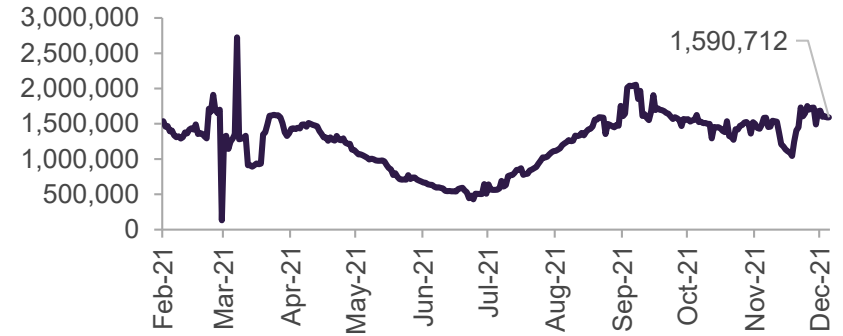
Data sources: Truist IAG, Bloomberg, Our World in Data, Transportation Security Administration, OpenTable, Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Report, STR/CoStar, National Multifamily Housing Council Rent Payment Tracker, American Staffing Association. Week-over-week and year-over-year change are abbreviated as WoW and YoY, respectively.

U.S. cases, hospitalizations, and death rate trending higher nationally

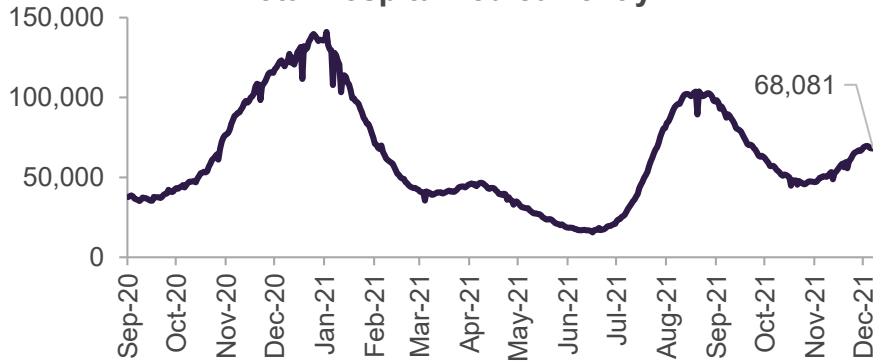
New confirmed cases 7-day moving average



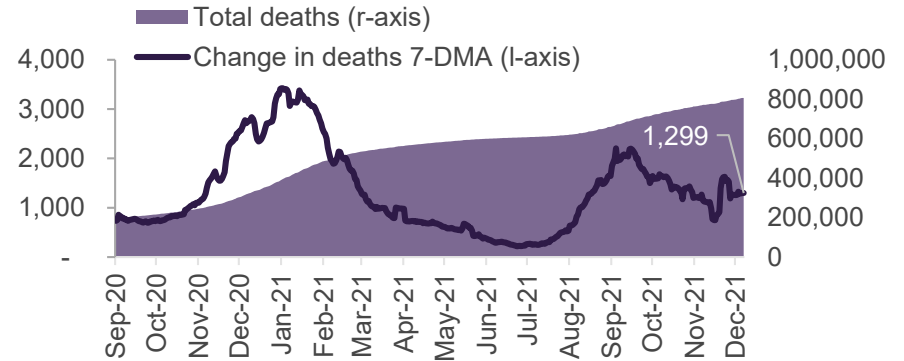
Tests performed 7-day moving average



Total hospitalized currently

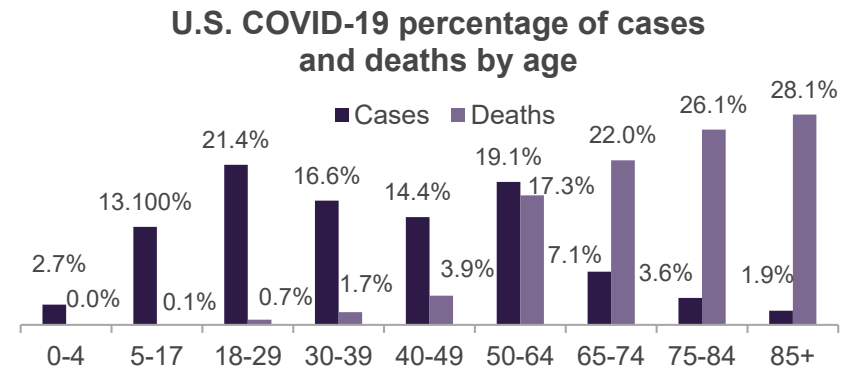
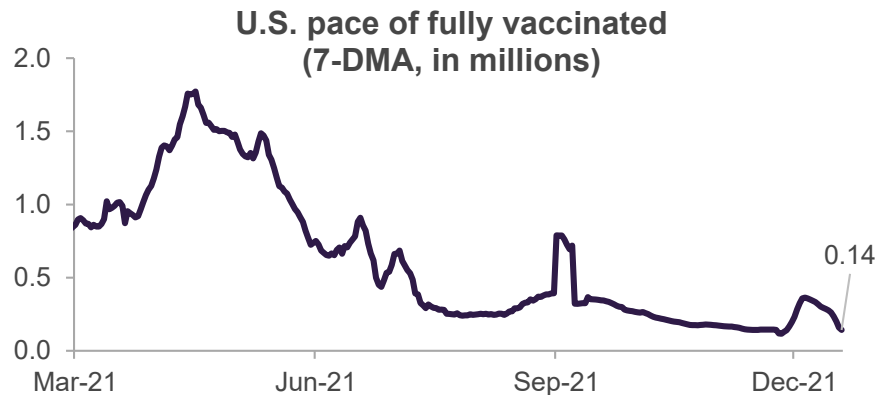
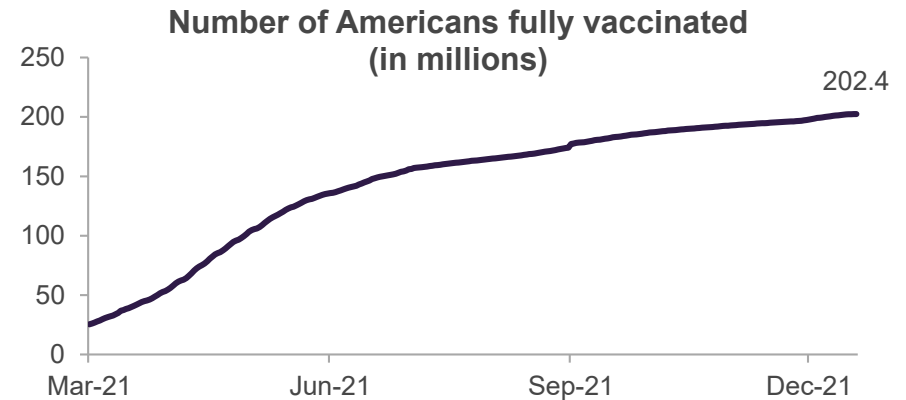
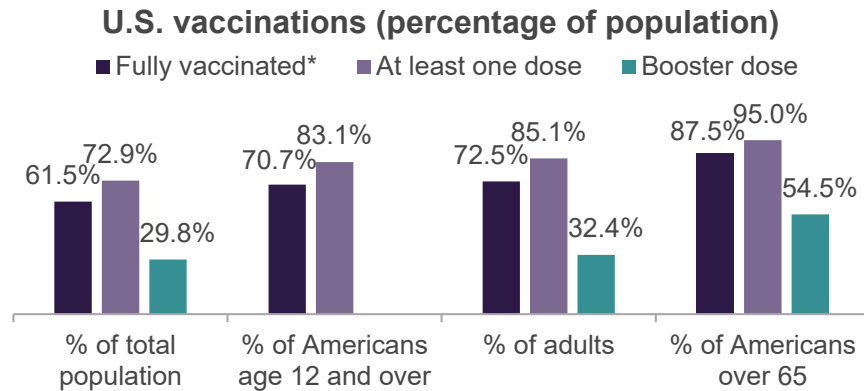


U.S. COVID-19 deaths



Data sources: Truist IAG, Bloomberg, Johns Hopkins University through December 19, 2021. Data for 50 U.S. states plus American Samoa, Washington D.C., Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands. 7-day moving average (DMA).

Nearly three quarters of Americans adults are fully vaccinated (over 200 million), and over one-third of adults have already received a booster



Data sources: Truist IAG and the following additional sources respectively: Top left, bottom right: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), through December 20, 2021. Top right, bottom left: Our World in Data, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), through December 19, 2021. U.S. figures includes all 50 states plus Washington D.C., U.S. military installations and territories. *Fully vaccinated is defined as receiving two doses on different days (regardless of time interval) of the two-dose mRNA series or receiving a single-dose vaccine regimen.

Activity-based trends have shifted recently with the holiday season

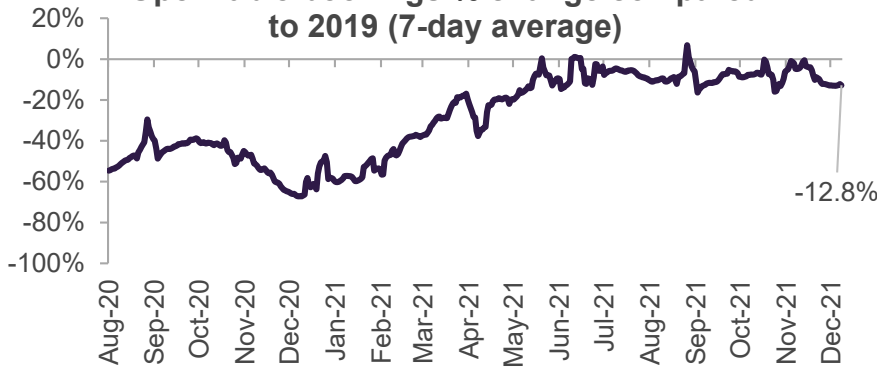
NY Fed weekly economic index



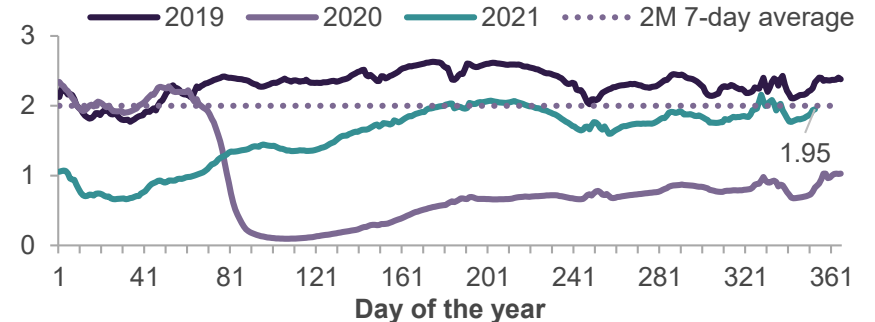
U.S. community mobility (7-day average)



OpenTable bookings % change compared to 2019 (7-day average)



TSA checkpoint traveler throughput (7-day average, in millions)

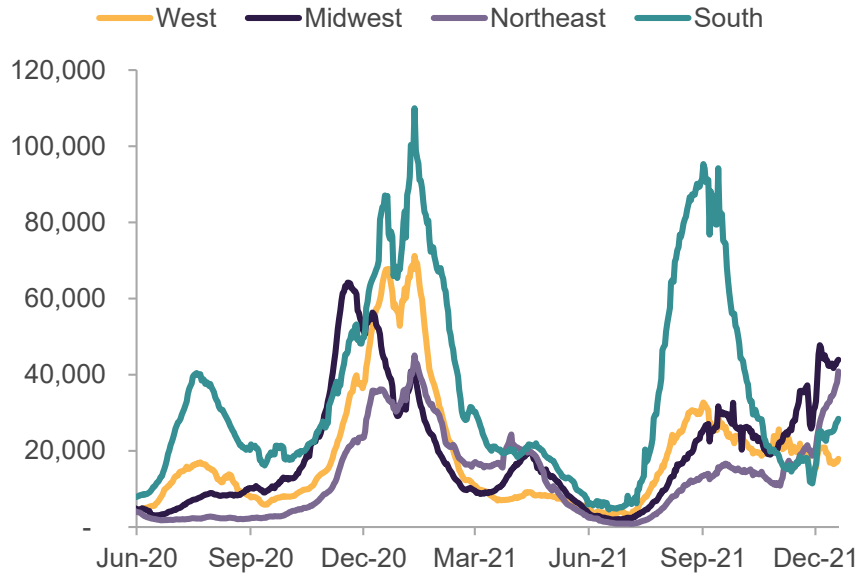


Data sources: Truist IAG and the following additional sources respectively: Top left: Bloomberg, NY Federal Reserve Weekly Economic Index through December 11, 2021. Top right: (U.S. Community Mobility) Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Reports 7-day average through December 17. Bottom left: Bloomberg, OpenTable 7-day average through December 19. Bottom right: Bloomberg, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) 7-day average through December 19.

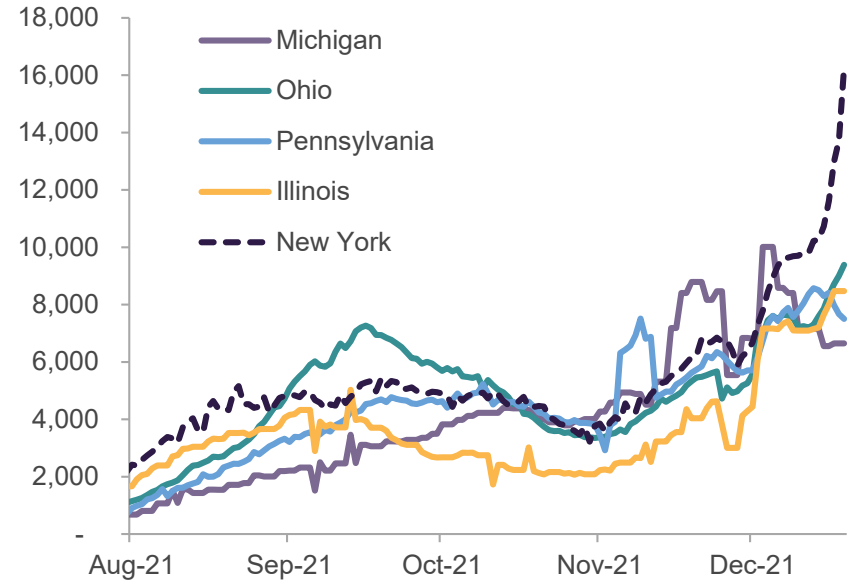
U.S. COVID-19 cases surging again in New York and the Midwest

The onset of the omicron variant has quickly pushed new infections higher. New cases continue to climb in the Midwest, particularly in Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois. There's also been a marked increase in the Northeast, which is mostly due to New York.

COVID-19 new cases by region (7-day moving average)



COVID-19 new cases – select states (7-day moving average)



Data source: Truist IAG, Bloomberg, Johns Hopkins University, data through December 19, 2021.

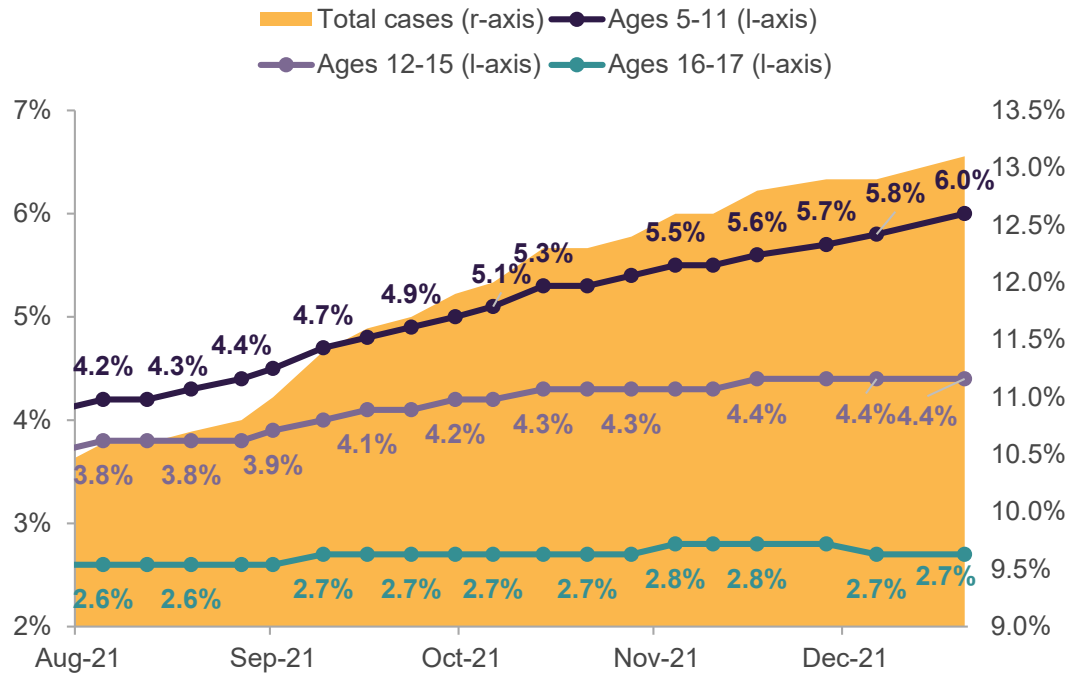
Elementary school cases continue climbing, pushing up U.S. school-aged new cases, but older student cases have stabilized

The total number of new COVID-19 cases of school-aged children rose to 13.1% of all new U.S. cases.

However, new cases in the 5-11 age group continued to climb, up to 6.0% in the past week. Meanwhile, the 12-15 age cohort has remained at 4.4% since mid-November, while the 16-17 age group held steady at 2.7% for the second straight week.

There have been 692 deaths in school-aged children during the entire pandemic, or 0.1% of all U.S. COVID deaths.

New COVID-19 cases of school-aged children as a percentage of total new U.S. cases



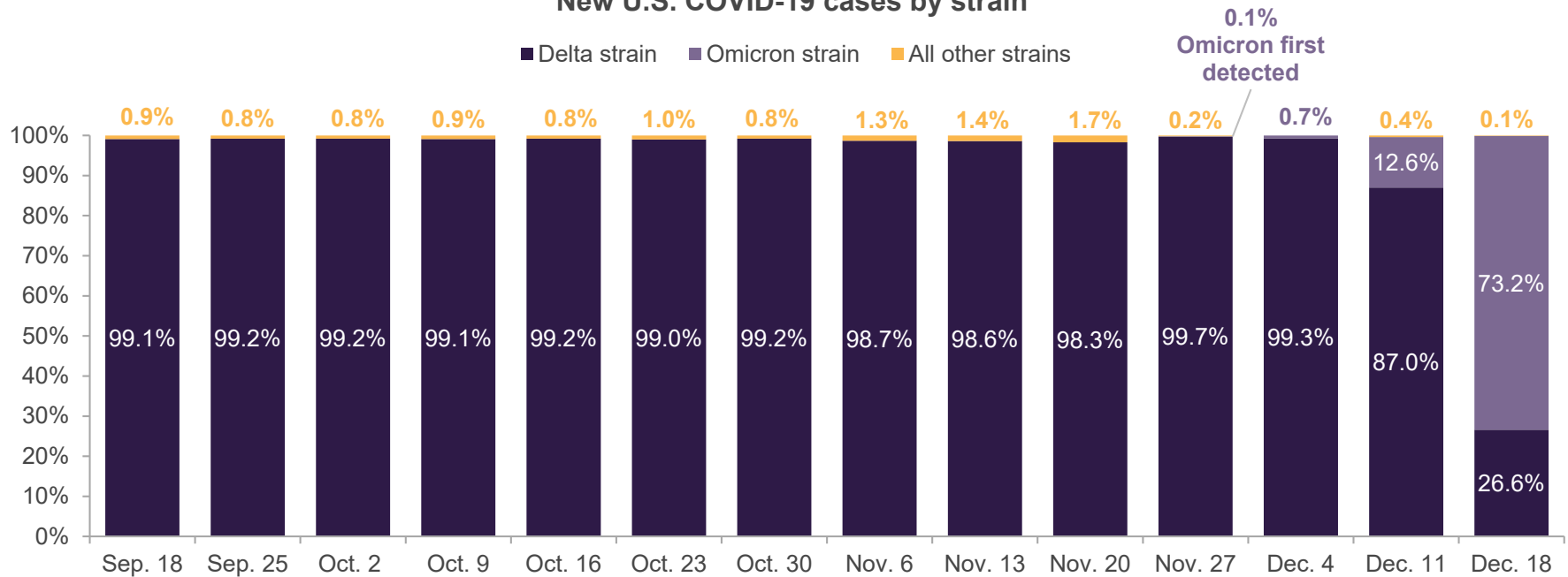
Data sources: Truist IAG, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Data from July 29, 2021 through December 20, 2021.

Omicron variant became dominant U.S. strain in a matter of weeks

The omicron variant was first detected in the U.S in late November. Within four weeks, it became the dominant strain, with just three states have yet to report a case of omicron (Oklahoma, South Dakota and Montana).

New U.S. COVID-19 cases by strain

■ Delta strain ■ Omicron strain ■ All other strains

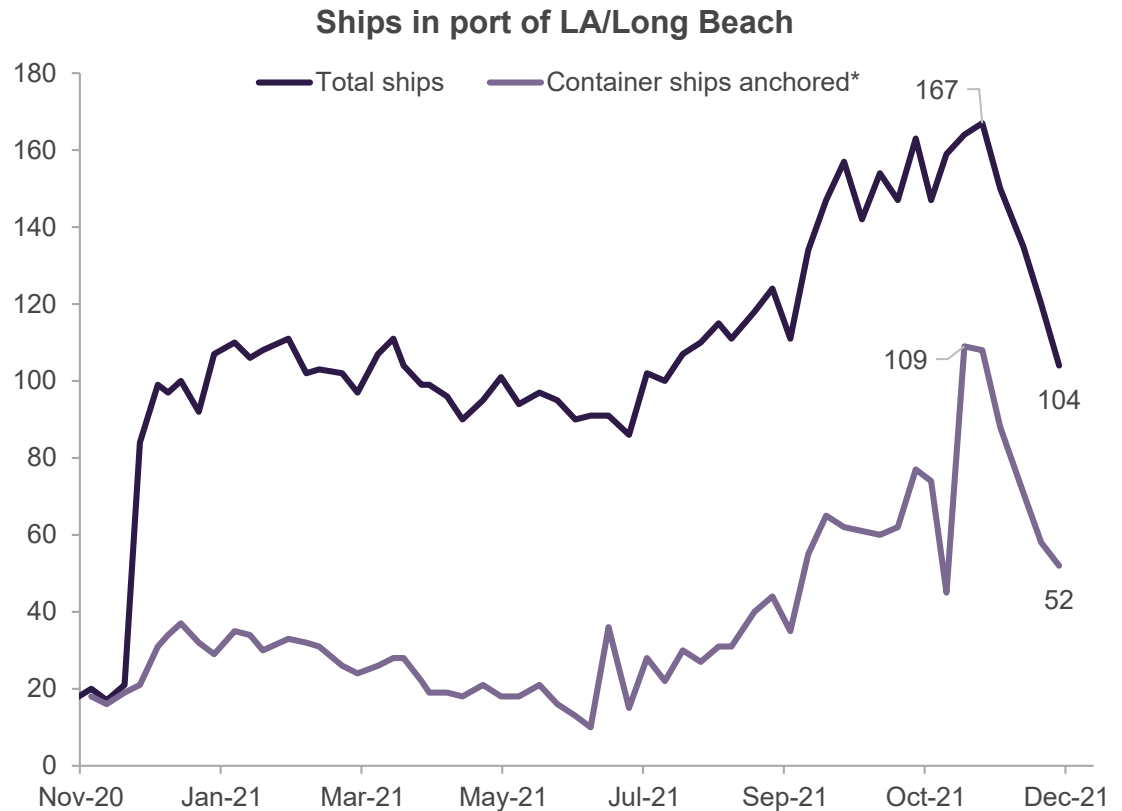


Data sources: Truist IAG, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Weekly data from September 18, 2021 through December 18, 2021.

West coast port congestion continues to improve

The two largest U.S. ports—Los Angeles and Long Beach—share San Pedro Bay. Prior to late 2020, most ships never anchored in San Pedro Bay aside from rare occasions due to storms, maintenance, or an accident, and it would be a handful of ships if it did occur.

In 2021, an average of 38 container ships carrying cargo have been anchored* per day and a high of 109 in early November. As of December 17th, the number of container ships anchored* dropped to 52, the fewest since early September, while the total number of ships in-port dipped to 104, the fewest since mid July.



Data sources: Truist IAG, Marine Exchange of Southern California; data from November 12, 2020 through December 17, 2021.

* Container ships anchored includes anchored, loitering or in designated drift areas.

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