



Regional  
Transportation  
Authority

# Peer Regional Review

Report Year 2021

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# Executive Summary

The regional peer review was developed to provide context to the performance of the Chicago region's transit service by relating it to comparable peer regions from across the country. To accomplish this goal, the Regional Peer Review incorporates data reported to the National Transit Database (NTD) by all transit agencies that receive federal funding. Data submission by transit agencies is a requirement of receiving federal funding and thus follows guidelines and procedures established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This report includes NTD data for report year 2021, the most currently available, which was published in November 2022.

Peer regions were selected based on population, so that the top ten US metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are represented: Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, with the Chicago metropolitan area being the third-largest.

For each of the top ten regions, the main transit operators were determined to best represent each region's public transportation service. This report is based on published data from the National Transit Database (NTD) to ensure as much comparability between agencies in definition and collection of data elements as possible. However, while this report reflects the 2021 report year for each agency, the time period that constitutes a 'report year' varies by agency. Chicago and New York transit agencies use the calendar year as their NTD report year, while other regions use a state or federal fiscal year as their NTD report year. Accordingly, the other regions' 2021 report year reflects performance for either July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 or October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021, and as such reflect more the early unfavorable trends related to the onset of the COVID pandemic than is reflected in the Chicago and New York performance data. Thus, direct peer comparisons for measures that reflect service, operating cost, and fare revenue are not reasonable; **results are stated herein to maintain continuity of the performance reporting effort and to provide general information regarding each agency's operations.**

The pandemic's impact on public transportation ridership remains significant; at the time of this report (early 2023) national public transportation ridership has improved to roughly half of pre-pandemic levels.

# Peer Selection

The peer group selected for use in the Regional Peer Review consists of the top ten metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) as defined by the US Bureau of the Census: Chicago, Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. Population and land area data correlate to each MSA region. For consistency with the six-county RTA area, the main transit properties serving each MSA were included in this report.

## PEER AGENCIES INCLUDED WITHIN METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS

Geographic Region	Transit Agencies Included
<b>Chicago</b>	Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, Pace
<b>Atlanta</b>	Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, CobbLinc
<b>Boston</b>	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
<b>Dallas/Fort Worth</b>	Dallas Area Rapid Transit, Fort Worth Transportation Authority
<b>Houston</b>	Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County
<b>Los Angeles</b>	Access Services, Foothill Transit, Long Beach Transit, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Montebello Bus Lines, Omnitrans, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside Transit Agency, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Southern California Regional Rail Authority
<b>Miami</b>	Broward County Transit, Miami-Dade Transit, PalmTran, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority
<b>New York</b>	All Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) operating agencies (Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Commuter Railroad, MTA Bus, New York City Transit, Staten Island Railway), Nassau Inter-County Express, New York City Department of Transportation, Port Authority Trans-Hudson, Suffolk County Transportation Division, Westchester County Bee-Line System
<b>Philadelphia</b>	Port Authority Transit Corporation, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
<b>Washington, DC</b>	City of Alexandria DASH, Ride-On Montgomery County Transit, Virginia Railway Express, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

# Notes/Methodology

1. To address differences resulting from the use of varying report year time periods, this report omits agency performance rankings and instead illustrates percentage changes from the last report year, and the actual results for the current report year. Additionally, results for the Chicago and New York regions are shown physically separated from the other regions' results to reflect their different reporting time frame.
2. The fare recovery ratio used in this report follows the NTD definition, which is the proportion of operating costs that are covered by fare revenues paid by passengers. The NTD recovery ratio differs from the RTA recovery ratio, which takes into account certain adjustments as enumerated in the RTA Act such as the exclusion of various costs, the treatment of depreciation, and the inclusion of in-kind services.
3. The use of the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) was selected as the standard representation for each urban area and has been incorporated into this report for both population and square mileage data. *Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021 (CBSA-MET-EST2021-POP); accessed November 11, 2022.*
4. New Jersey Transit, which serves both the New York and Philadelphia regions, has been excluded from this and prior year reports because there is no way to disaggregate the data between the two urban areas. As a result, there is some under-representation of transit service for these urban areas. Similarly, the Maryland Transit Administration, which primarily serves the Baltimore region and also serves the DC area, has not been included in this or prior reports as its operating data cannot be divided among the DC and Baltimore metropolitan statistical areas. As a result, Washington, DC metropolitan area transit service is slightly understated.
5. In the instances where a reporting agency did not provide a revenue vehicle's useful life benchmark, the default Federal Transit Administration (FTA) benchmark specific to each revenue vehicle type was used for peer agency calculations.

# Peer Characteristics

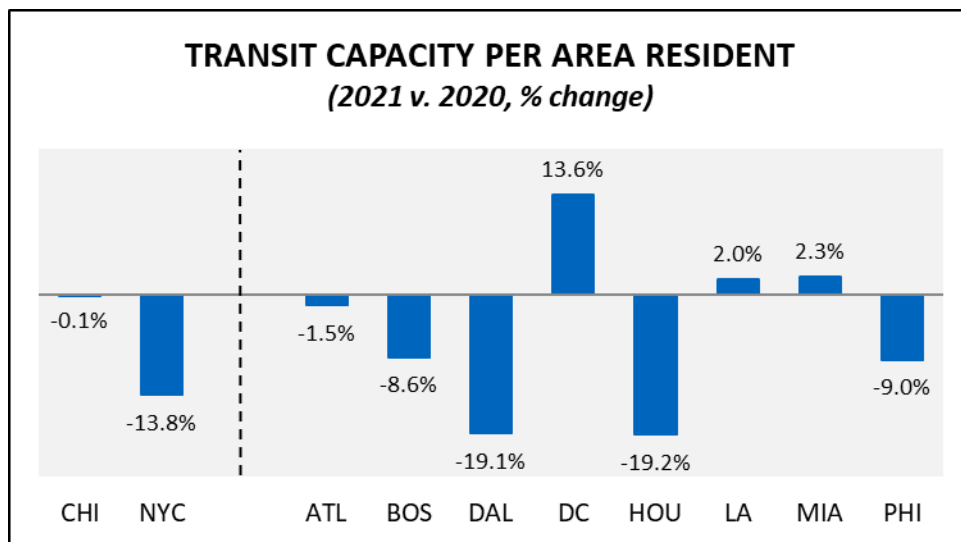
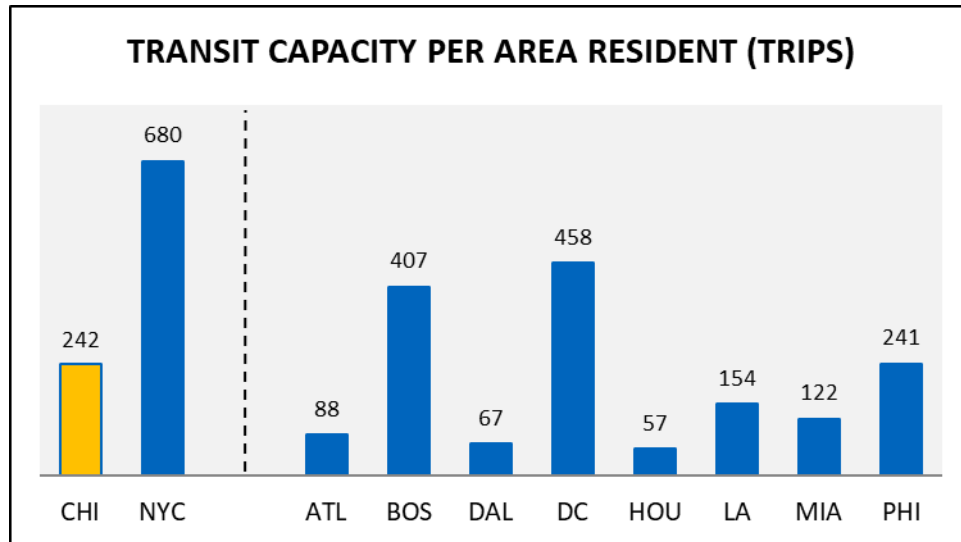
2021	CHICAGO	ATLANTA	BOSTON	DALLAS	HOUSTON	LOS ANGELES	MIAMI	NEW YORK	PHILADELPHIA	WASHINGTON, DC
Population Ranking	3	8	10	4	5	2	9	1	7	6
Population (thousands)	9,510	6,144	4,900	7,760	7,207	12,997	6,092	19,768	6,229	6,356
Square Miles	7,197	8,339	3,487	8,928	8,827	4,848	4,602	6,687	5,077	5,598
Population Density	1,321	737	1,405	869	816	2,681	1,324	2,956	1,227	1,135
Vehicle Revenue Miles (millions)	202	52	80	54	53	195	90	633	79	130
Passenger Trips (millions)	226	48	121	39	45	263	76	1,969	109	102
Passenger Miles (millions)	1,214	257	484	246	254	1,131	453	9,514	463	425
Operating Cost (millions)	\$2,612	\$536	\$1,568	\$655	\$556	\$2,857	\$940	\$13,020	\$1,332	\$2,353
Fare Revenue (millions)	\$346	\$53	\$167	\$35	\$23	\$86	\$46	\$3,188	\$161	\$111
Capital Funds Expended (millions)	\$892	\$242	\$1,931	\$319	\$94	\$2,261	\$308	\$4,946	\$519	\$1,735
Average Trip Length (miles)	5.4	5.4	4.0	6.3	5.7	4.3	6.0	4.8	4.2	4.2
Average Vehicle Passenger Capacity	61.2	55.8	99.8	61.1	43.7	44.0	49.4	102.6	80.6	93.1

# Results

## Service Coverage

### Transit Capacity per Area Resident

The amount of transit service, as measured by average vehicle capacity and vehicle revenue miles, expressed as the number of trips available per resident to take annually.



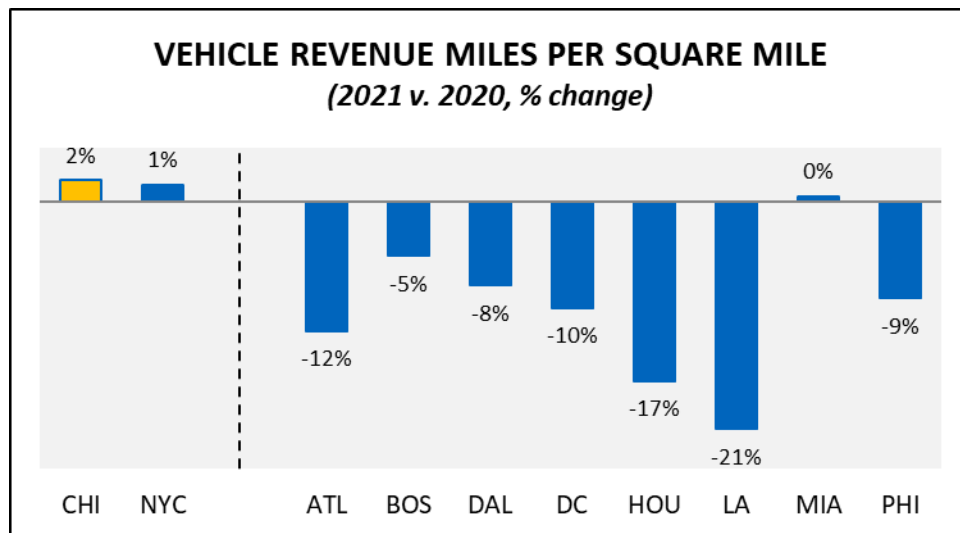
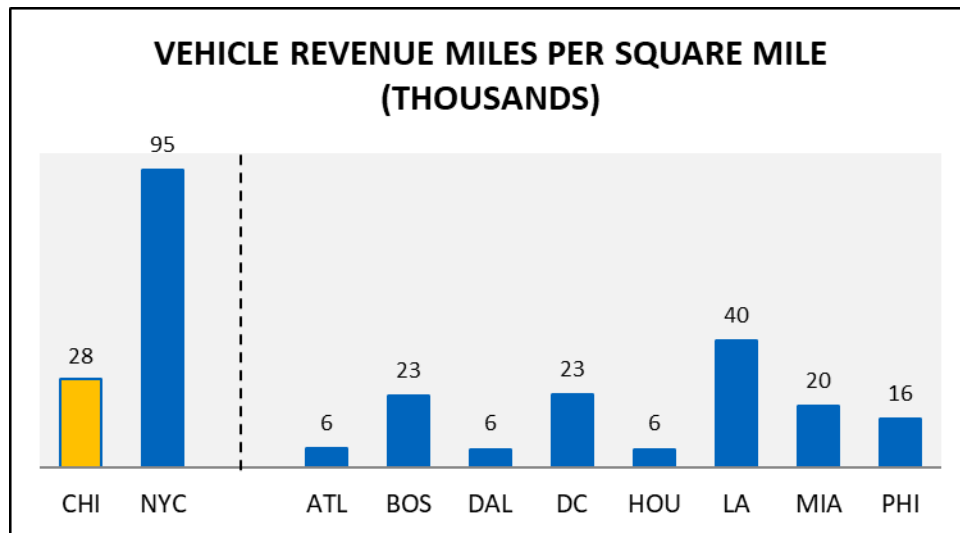
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# Results

## Service Coverage

### Vehicle Revenue Miles per Square Mile

The total number of miles traveled annually by transit operators in a region per square mile of the metropolitan statistical area (MSA).



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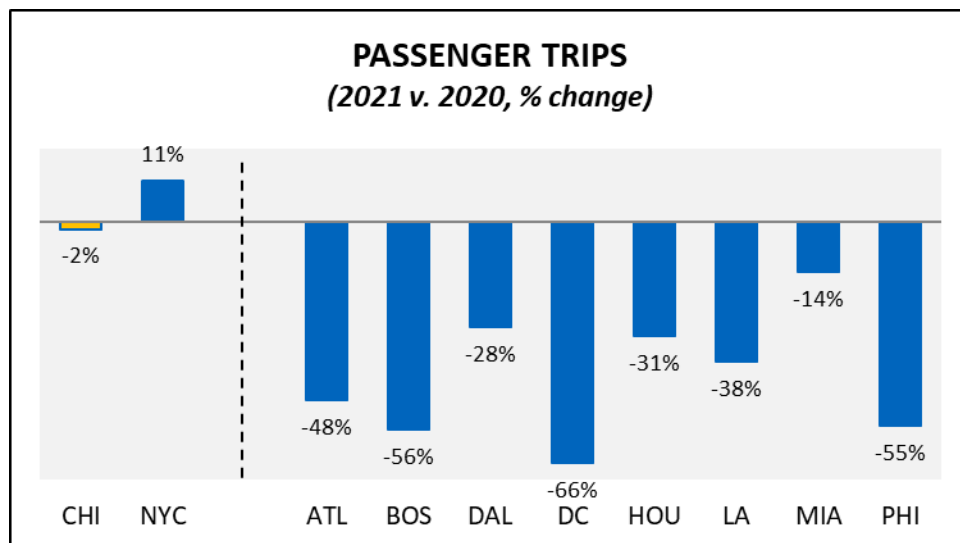
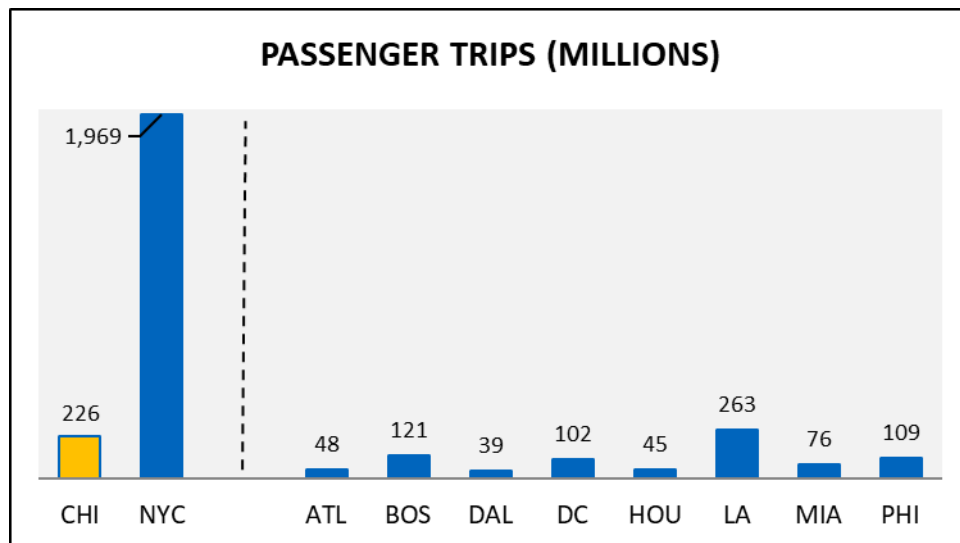


# Results

## Service Coverage

### Passenger Trips

Also known as ridership, refers to the number of trips taken on public transportation. A trip is counted each time a public transit bus or train is used. Each transfer between vehicles from the beginning to the end of an individual journey is counted as a separate “unlinked” trip.



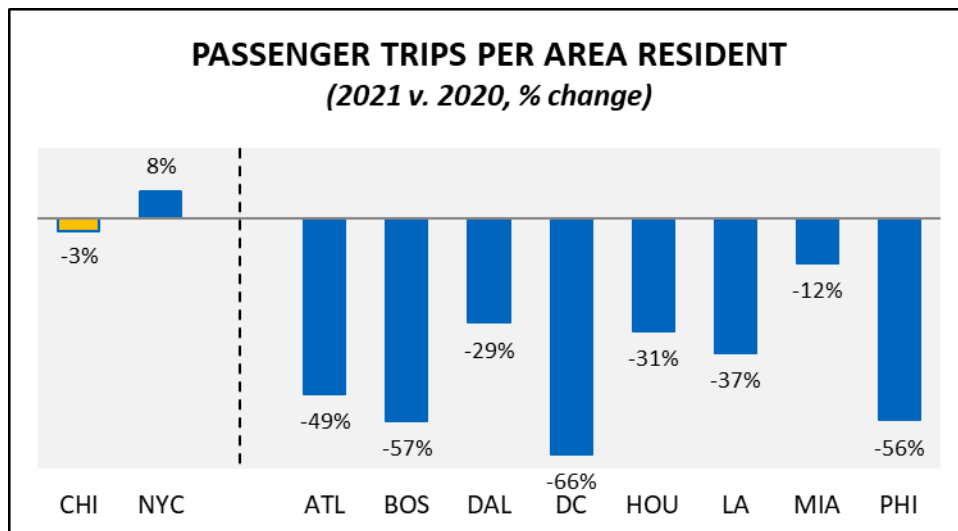
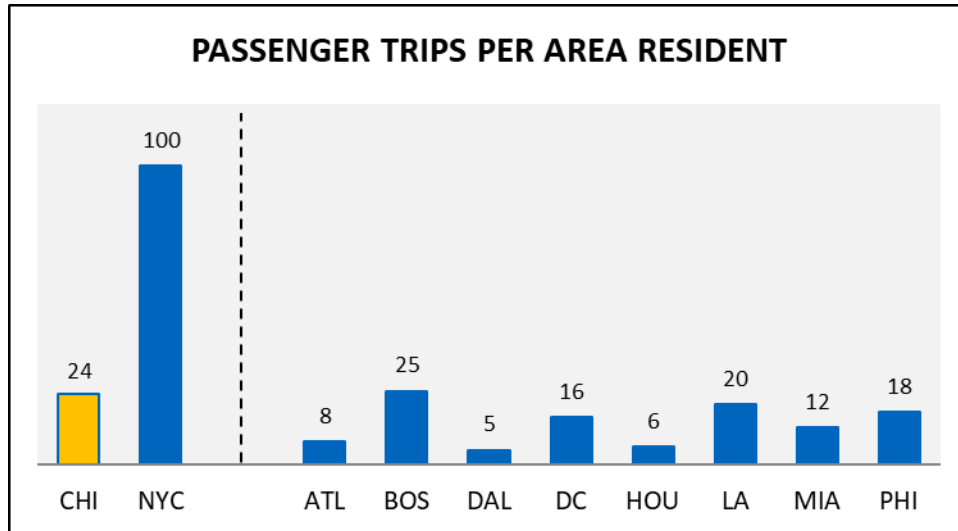
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# Results

## Service Coverage

### Passenger Trips per Area Resident

The average number of rides taken per resident annually.



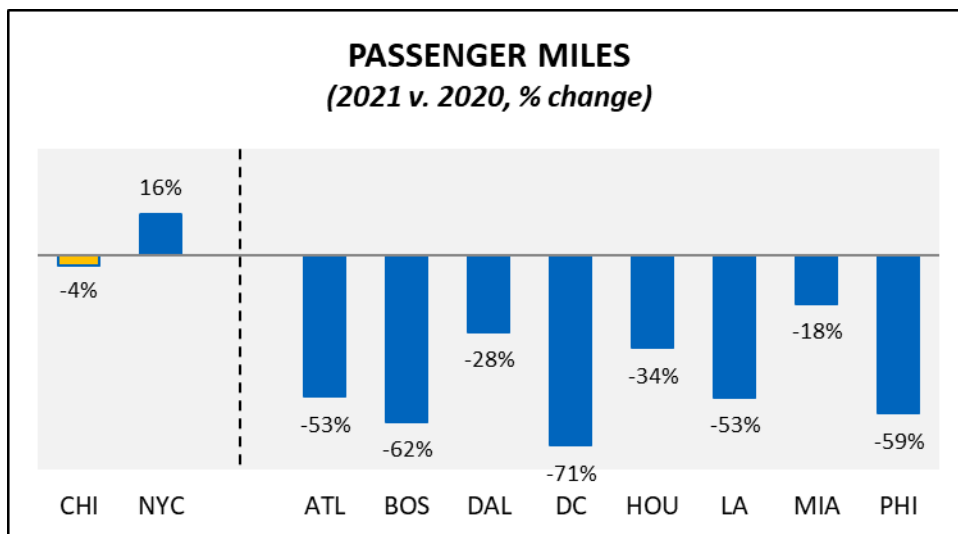
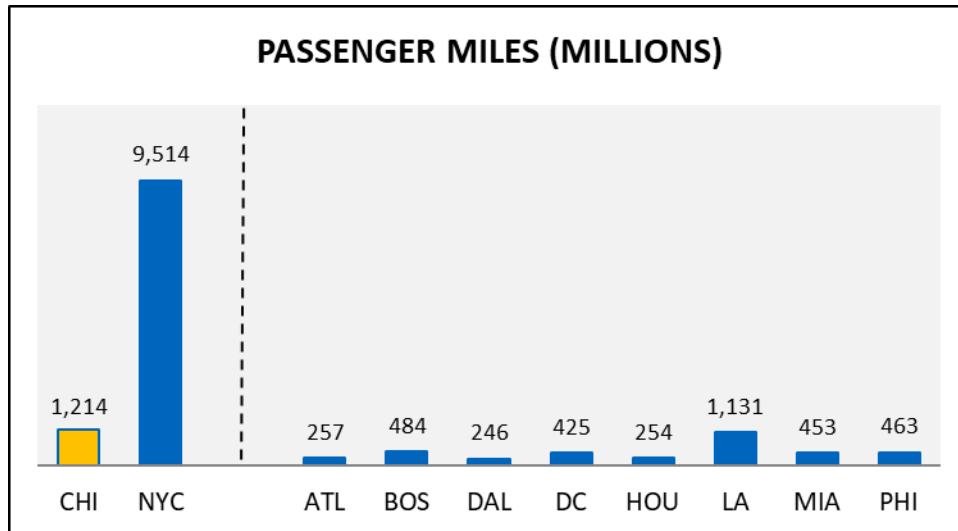
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# Results

## Service Coverage

### Passenger Miles

The cumulative sum of the distance ridden by passengers.



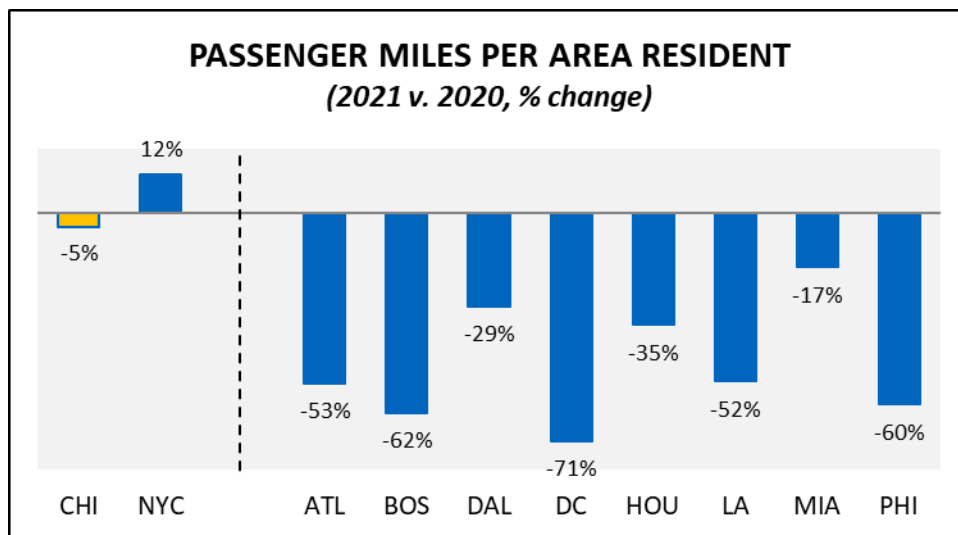
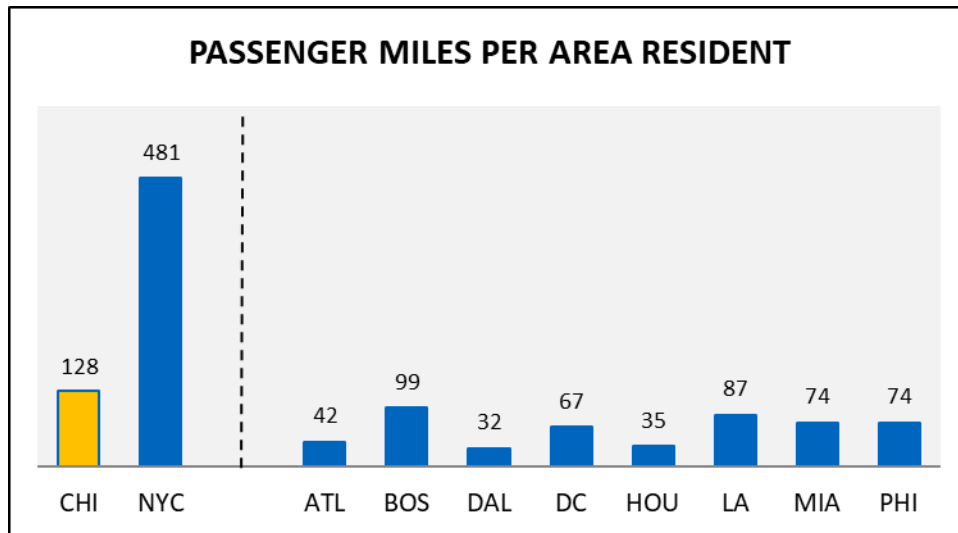
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# Results

## Service Coverage

### Passenger Miles Traveled per Area Resident

The average number of passenger miles traveled per resident annually.



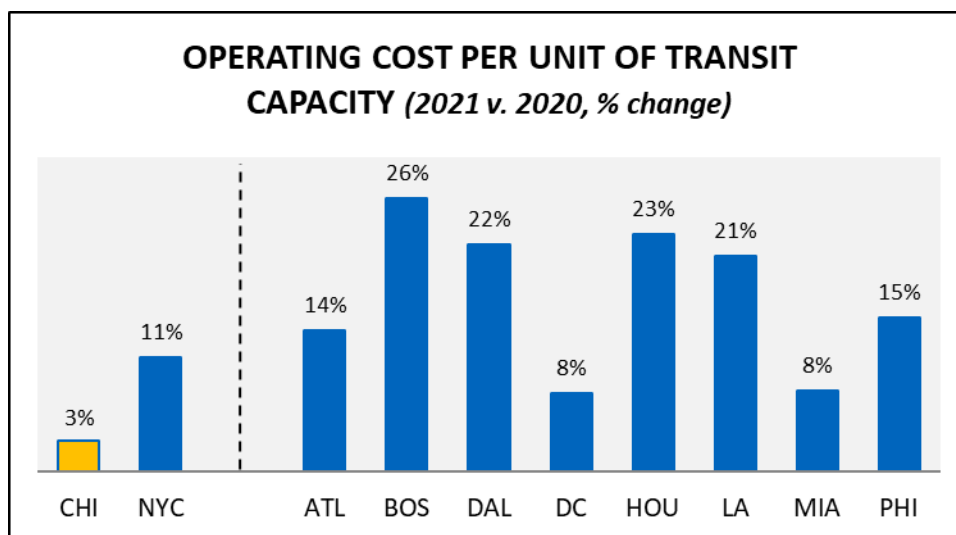
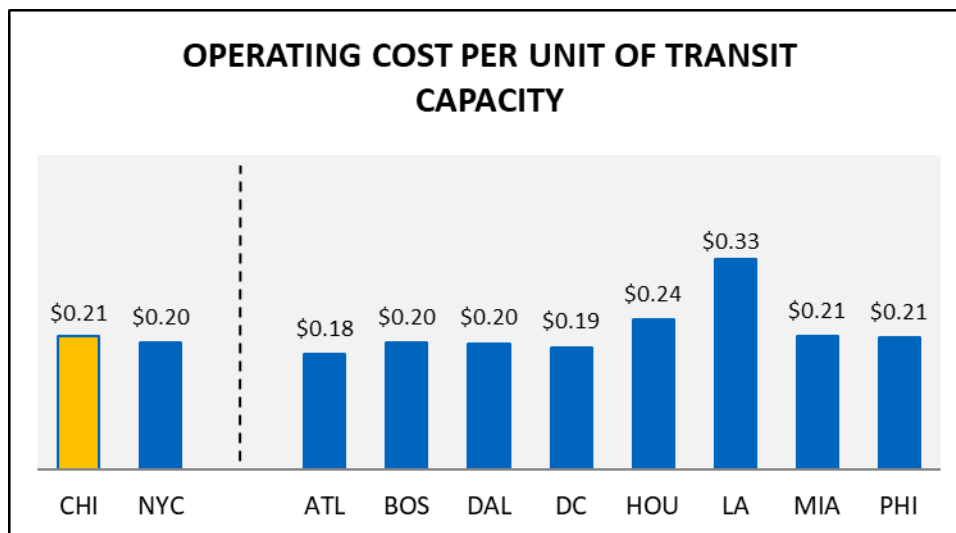
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# Results

## Service Efficiency & Effectiveness

### Operating Cost per Unit of Transit Capacity

The average cost of providing a passenger seat (or space) for each mile of an individual trip, whether or not it is taken.



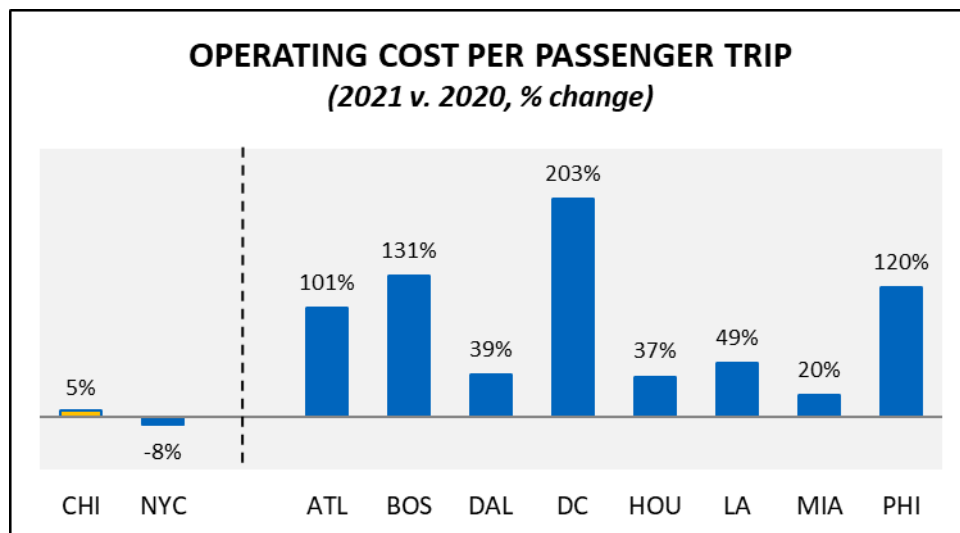
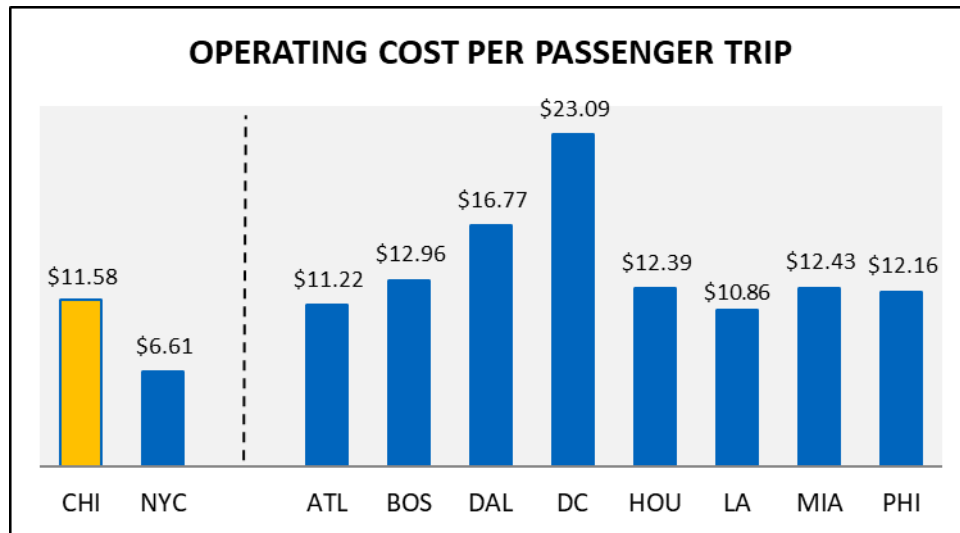
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# Results

## Service Efficiency and Effectiveness

### Operating Cost per Passenger Trip

The total operating cost divided by the total number of unlinked passenger trips taken on public transit vehicles.



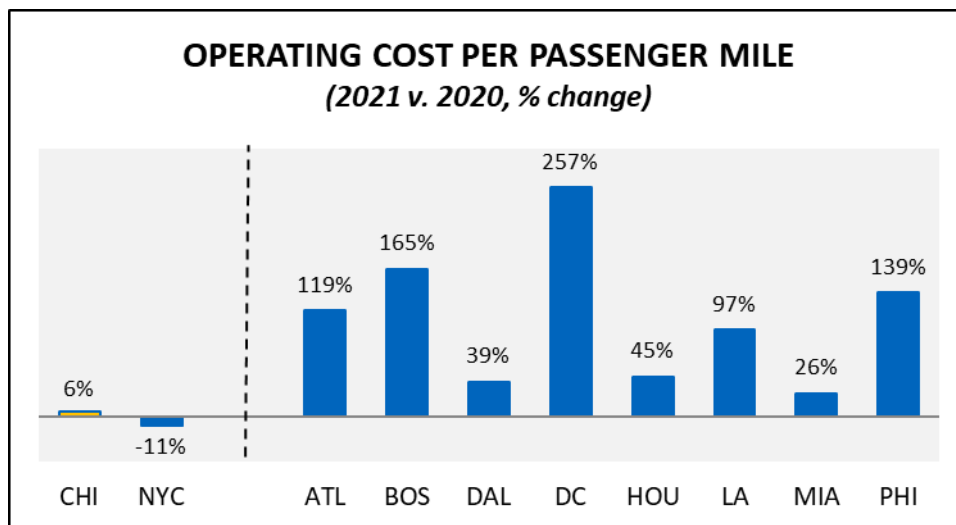
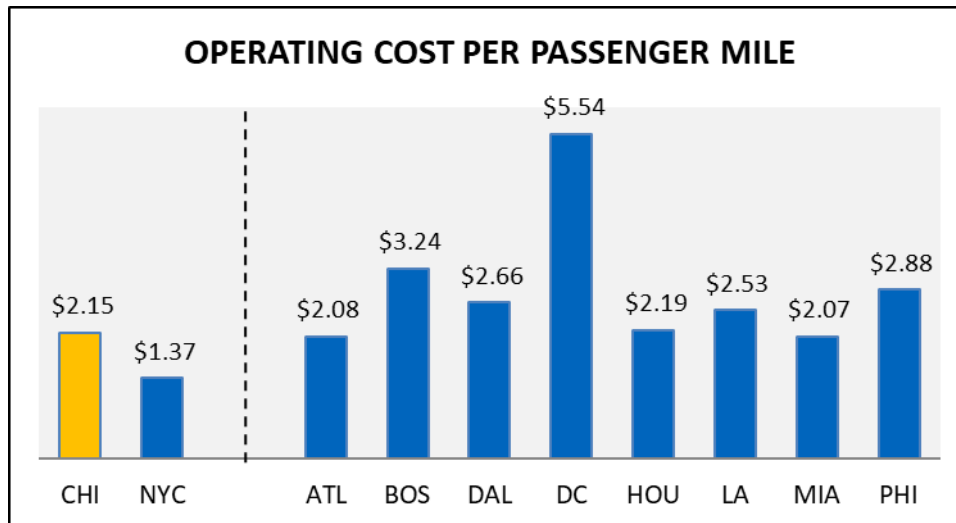
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# Results

## Service Efficiency and Effectiveness

### Operating Cost per Passenger Mile

The total operating cost divided by the total number of miles traveled by passengers.



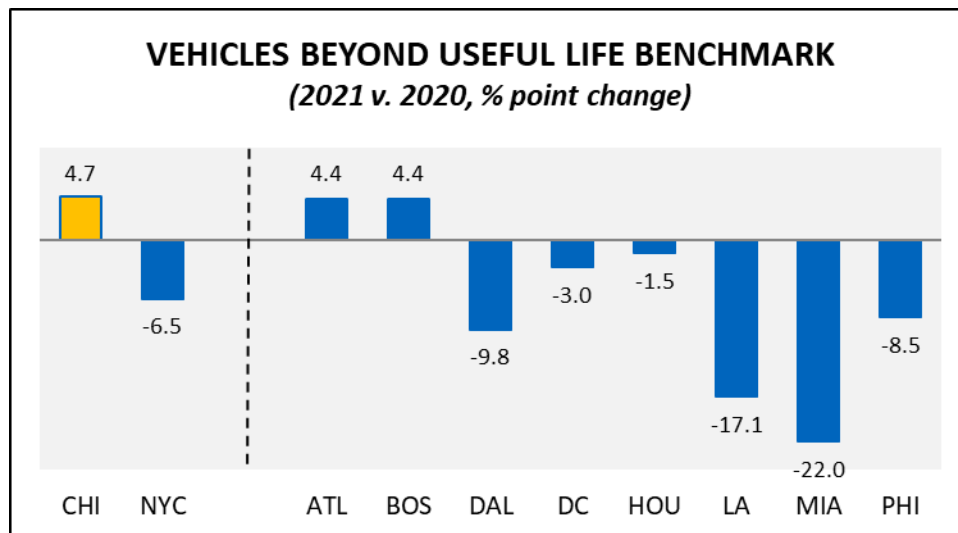
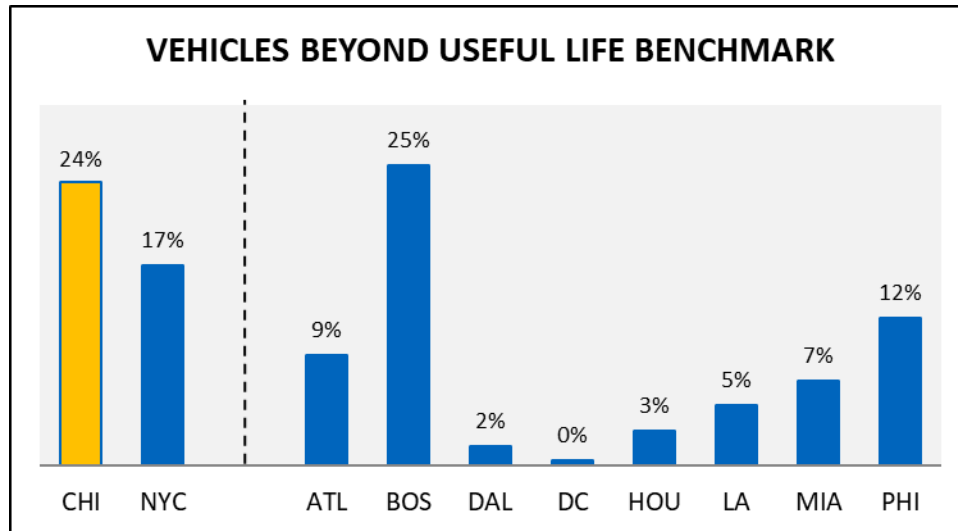
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# Results

## Service Maintenance & Capital Investment

### Percent of Vehicles Beyond Useful Life Benchmark

The percentage of a revenue vehicle fleet in service beyond the expected lifecycle of a capital asset. Expected lifecycles take into account a particular transit agency's operating environment, and also reflect vehicle rehabilitations and overhauls.



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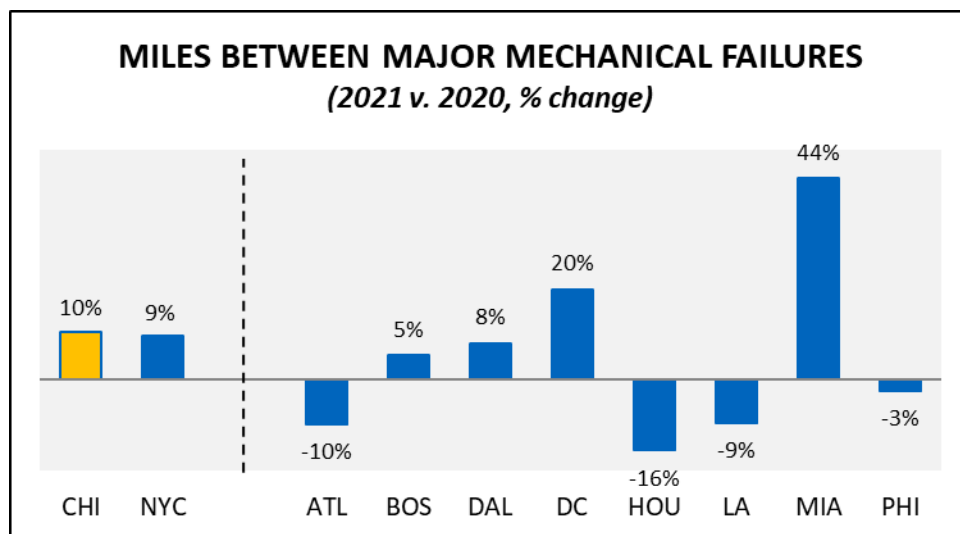
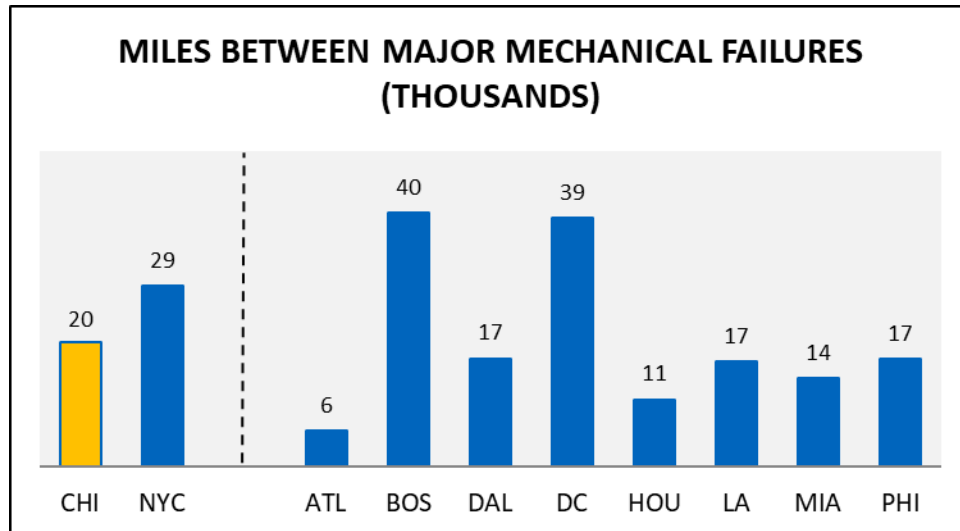


# Results

## Service Maintenance & Capital Investment

### Miles Between Major Mechanical Failures

The average number of miles that vehicles travel while in revenue service between failures of some mechanical element or a safety concern that prevents a vehicle from completing a scheduled trip or from starting the next scheduled trip.



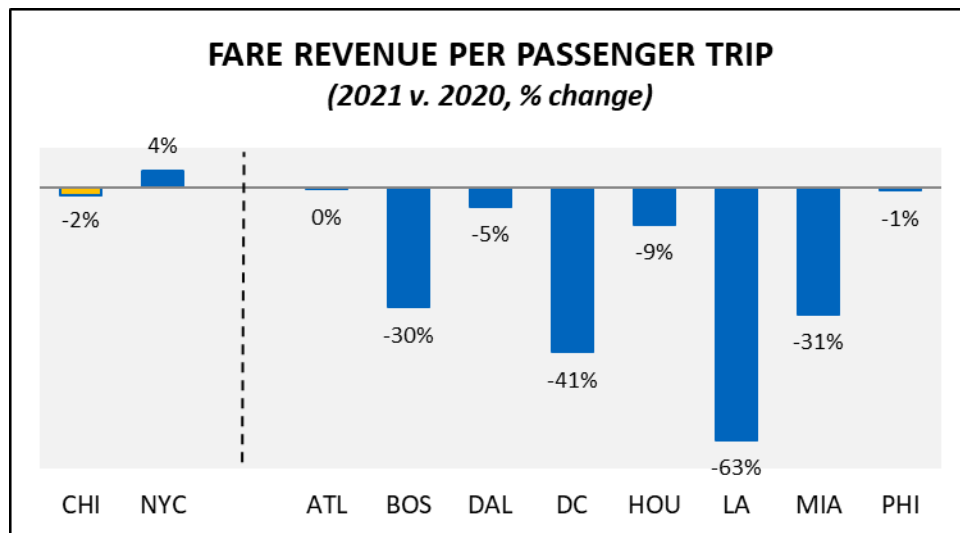
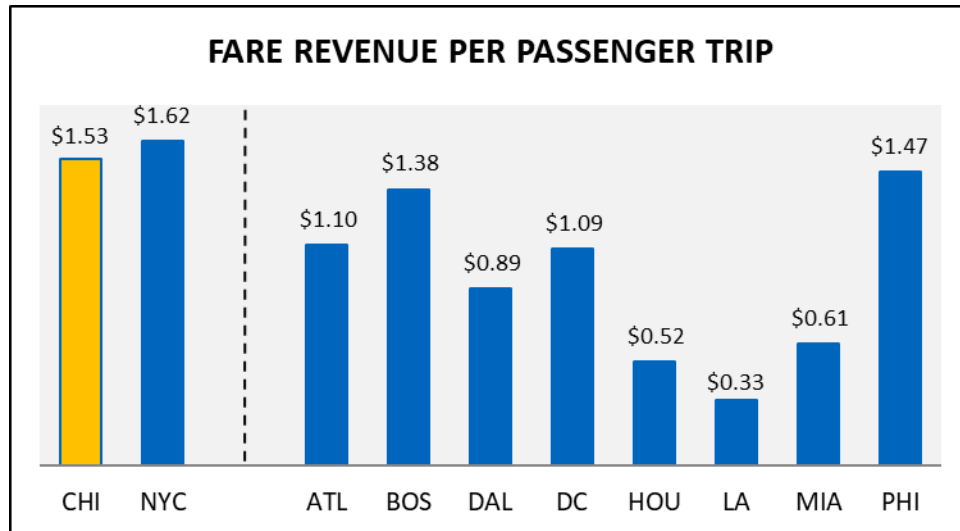
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# Results

## Service Level Solvency

### Fare Revenue per Passenger Trip

The average fare paid by customers per trip.



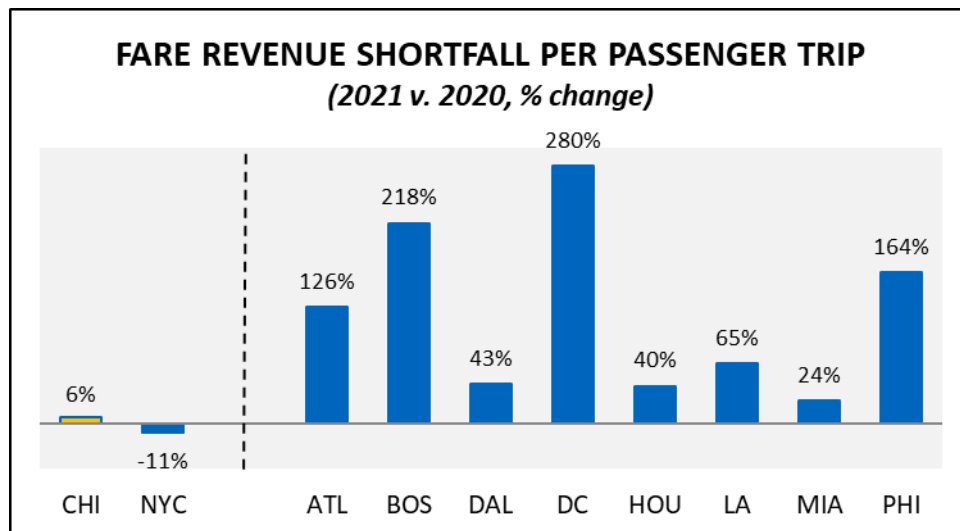
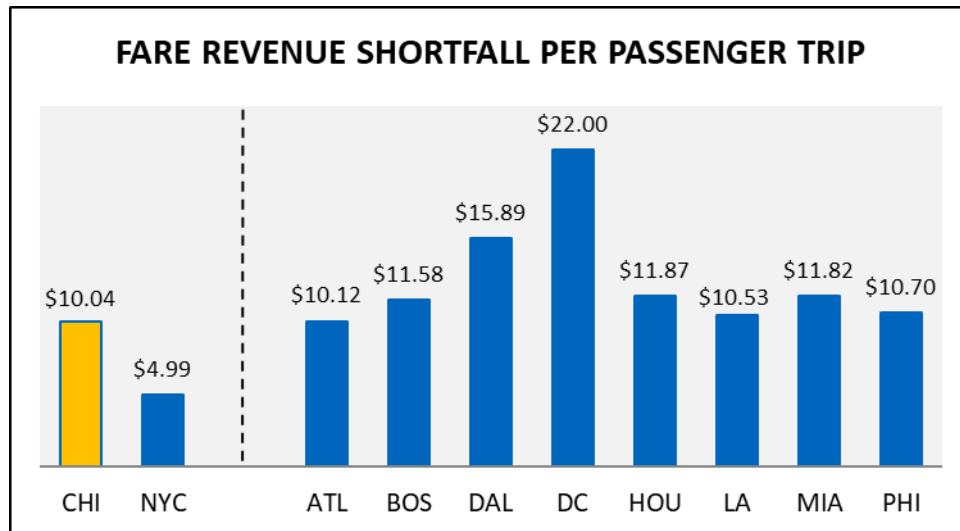
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# Results

## Service Level Solvency

### Fare Revenue Shortfall per Passenger Trip

The average cost of each trip that is not covered by the fare paid by customers. The balance of operating costs is covered by other directly-generated revenue (advertising, concessions, etc.) and public funding (local, state, and federal).



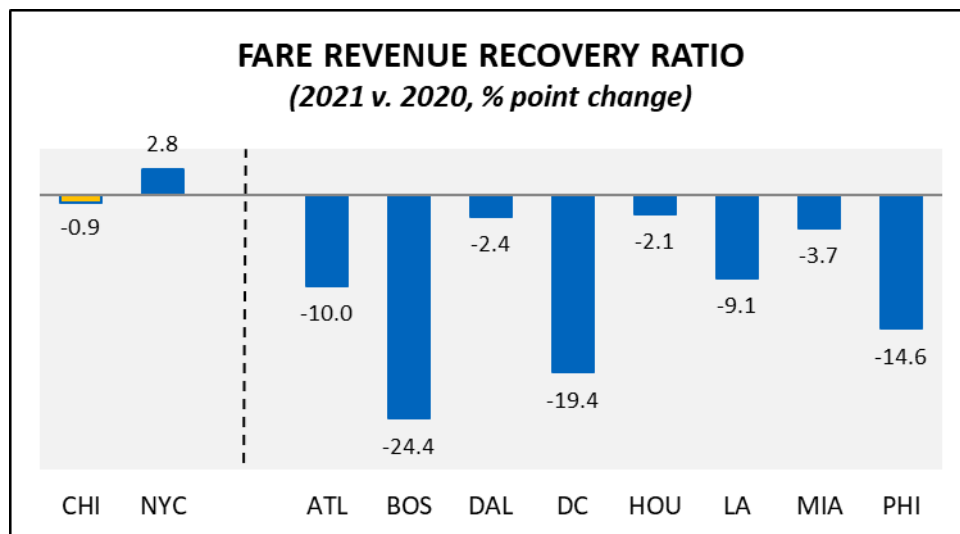
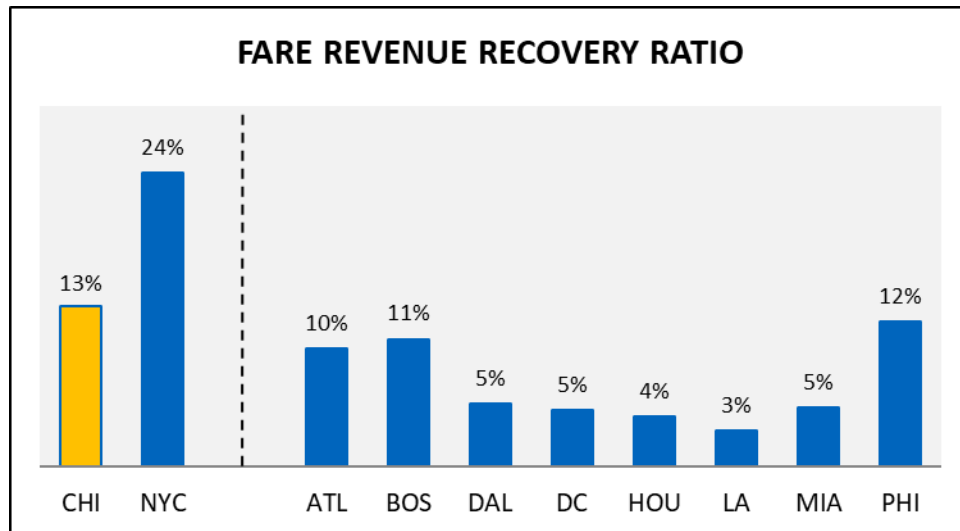
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# Results

## Service Level Solvency

### Fare Revenue Recovery Ratio

As defined by the NTD, the proportion of operating costs that are covered by fare revenues paid by passengers; this differs from the RTA statutory recovery ratio, which takes into account other system-generated revenue and certain adjustments as enumerated in the RTA Act.



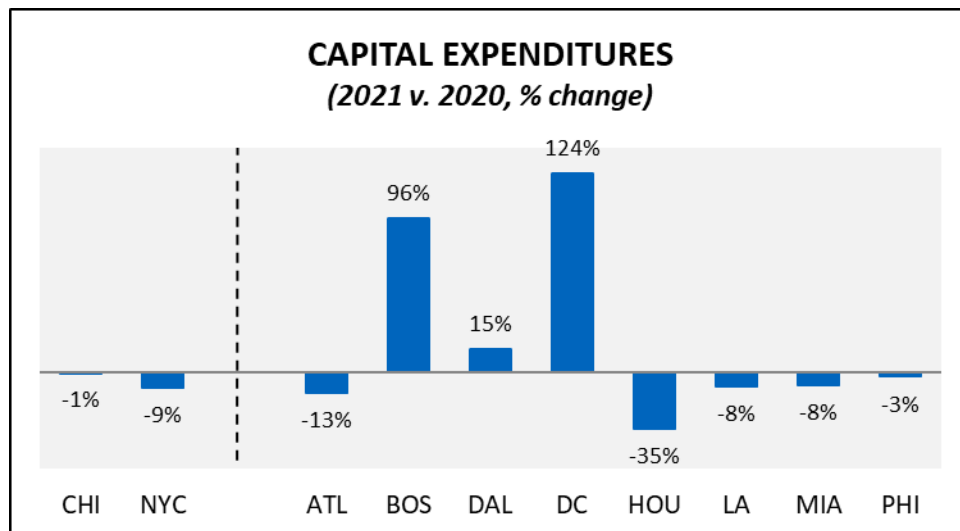
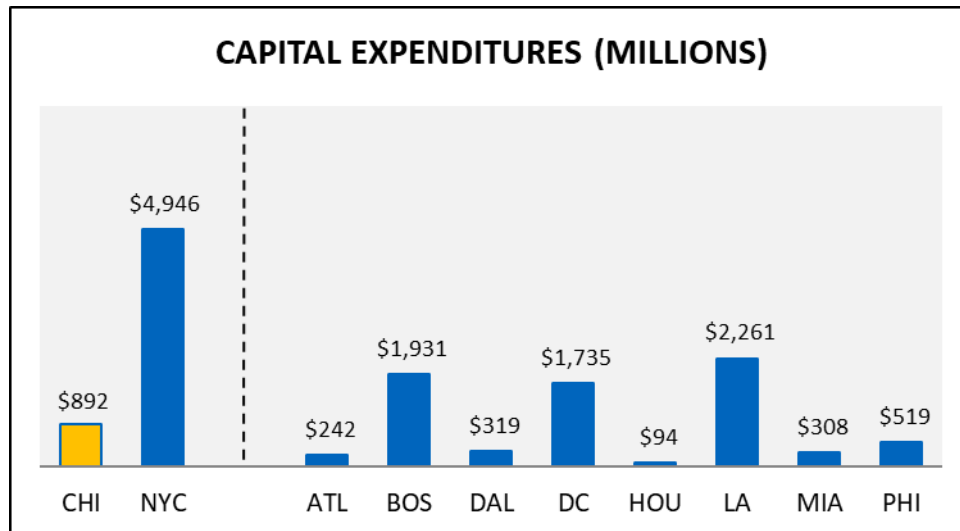
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# Results

## Service Level Solvency

### Capital Expenditures

Funds expended to finance the maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of the transit system’s infrastructure. Capital funds expended in one year may include funding from prior years due to the longer-term nature of capital project implementation.



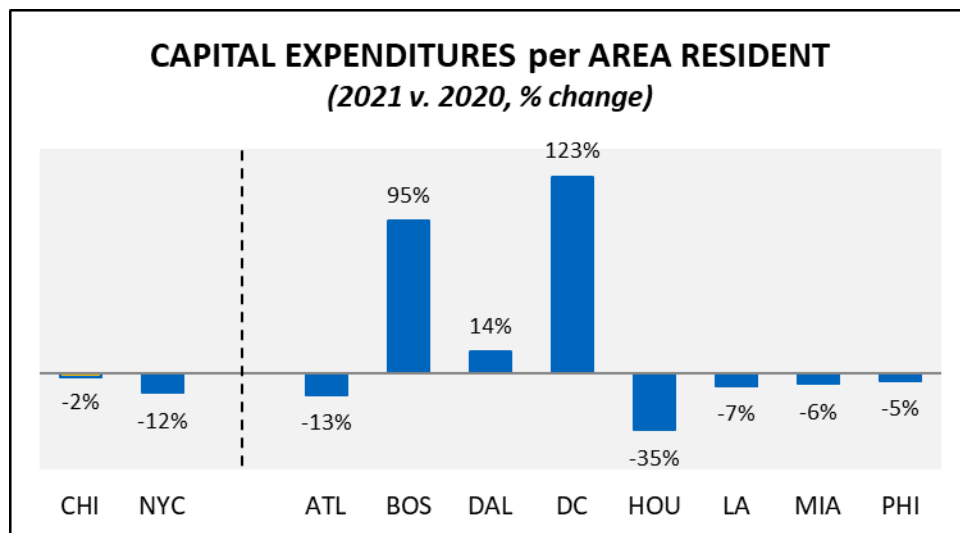
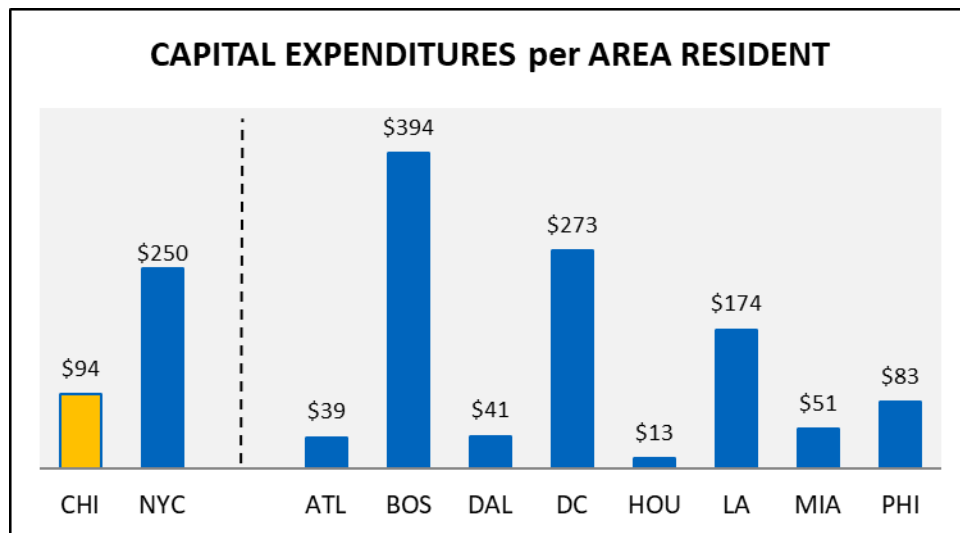
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# Results

## Service Level Solvency

### Capital Expenditures per Area Resident

The total amount of capital expenditures per resident of the metropolitan statistical area (MSA).



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