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How U.S. Public Transit Can Survive Coronavirus.

Subway and bus systems in the U.S. face financial peril as ridership collapses due to lockdowns. To keep transit alive, here's a playbook for immediate and long-term fixes.

Public transportation has been in a state of crisis since the coronavirus pandemic began. Ridership in major cities in the U.S., Europe and China is down by 50-90% from pre-crisis levels. Local taxes used to subsidize systems in America, such as sales taxes, have taken a big hit as well. Transit operators are running out of money quickly. While the federal government has allocated $25 billion in emergency aid to help cover operational losses, the next six months will still present an enormous financial challenge to local agencies as they struggle to attract riders back onto buses and subways and continue capital projects.

As urban research scholars specializing in public transit costs, we worry that this dynamic could result in damaging decision-making. Historically, it has been during times of crisis that agencies have deferred maintenance, cut service and canceled expansion projects. It's these choices, made under extreme duress, that have crippled American transit agencies before.

But there is a way forward. We offer these pathways for saving transit, immediately and into the future.

Continue reading.

CITY LAB

by ALON LEVY & ERIC GOLDWYN

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