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The Emergency Funding Ideas That Could Help Keep Transit Alive.

As U.S. agencies push Congress for aid, transit advocates are exploring other ways to scrape together funds, from online delivery fees to gas tax hikes.

As transit operators in major U.S. cities plan drastic service cuts to address pandemic budget holes, leaders and advocates are advancing ideas to scrape together new funds, whether or not fresh federal aid arrives.

One proposal to support the New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which faces a \$16.2 billion deficit by 2024, is a bill by state assemblyman Robert Carroll to charge a flat \$3 fee for every online purchase delivered in New York City, starting Jan. 1. In an op-ed for the New York Daily News, Carroll estimates that his bill would raise more than \$1 billion annually for the MTA from the 1.8 million packages delivered in the city every day.

A related idea appears in the state budget plan passed by the Massachusetts Senate in November — a 7% fee on single-occupancy ride-hailing trips, and a 3% fee for shared trips, up from a 20-cent flat fee. A calculator from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council estimates that the new fees would generate about \$72 million annually. Some of that could fund the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which operates Boston's "T" and faces a budget shortfall as high as \$600 million next year.

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Bloomberg CityLab

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December 11, 2020, 4:00 AM PST

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