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Transit Leaders See New Federal Money as a Bridge, Not the End of the Line.

Bus, subway and local rail systems nearly shut down when the pandemic first struck. Now they're trying to find a new way forward.

Congress pulled public transit agencies from the brink of financial collapse during the darkest days of the pandemic, and it is getting closer to helping them upgrade their physical assets too. But that doesn't mean the agencies running buses and trains are in the clear yet.

The actual impact could vary greatly from one agency to the next, but overall, the industry is still worried about whether ridership will return to pre-pandemic levels.

Recent estimates show that ridership levels are now about 58 percent of what they were before the pandemic. Many agencies hope to see that number climb as offices reopen after Labor Day. If not, agencies may have to change the services they offer, make spending cuts or find new sources of funding to make up the difference.

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ROUTE FIFTY

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