



# City of Portland Green Purchasing Case Study

## Delivery of Office Supplies by Cargo Trike

### Purchasing Green

Starting in December 2010, Office Depot began delivering office supplies to downtown City offices by electric-assist cargo trike through B-Line, a local certified B Corporation. Using cargo trikes instead of trucks to deliver orders allows the City to improve downtown traffic, lower its carbon footprint, and help establish an efficient and sustainable distribution system in the Portland urban area. Although Office Depot employs a similar service in London, this is the first time the company has used cargo trikes for delivery in the U.S.

### Benefits

By switching to trike delivery of office supplies, the City of Portland reduces carbon emissions associated with traditional delivery trucks. B-Line estimates that the City avoids over 7,700 lbs of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually through this “last-mile” trike delivery program. Additionally, cargo trike delivery helps alleviate traffic congestion in the busy downtown Portland area.

The City is not the only one that benefits from this service. Making deliveries by trike rather than by truck allows companies to use delivery trucks more efficiently (saving money and gas), especially in congested areas where parking can be a challenge. It’s not uncommon for delivery trucks to circle downtown City blocks, waiting for the limited delivery zones to become vacant.

### Cost

Office supplies are delivered to downtown offices by electric-assist cargo trike at no additional cost to the City. Office Depot is able to make delivery by cargo trike a cost competitive option in two ways. First, cargo trike delivery is contained within one area — downtown — which allows B-Line to establish an efficient delivery route. Second, Office Depot has expanded its downtown delivery via trike to other area businesses, such as Portland State University (PSU), making the downtown route even more cost effective.

### Performance

Although one may think capacity might be an issue with transitioning from trucks to trikes, this is not the case. Each electric-assist cargo trike has over 55 cubic feet of space and can haul up to 600 pounds. The City has not had to increase the frequency of delivery and has experienced virtually no change in service since the switch.

Trike delivery is also better suited to some types of delivery routes. For example, delivering office supplies to campuses like PSU can be logistically difficult with a truck. Finding parking near all of PSU’s various delivery points can be



*Electric-assist cargo trikes like this one deliver office supplies to nine of the City’s downtown offices.*

## At a glance –

### Who –

- Procurement Services

### Product –

- Delivery of office supplies by cargo trike

### Cost –

- Cost neutral

### Benefits –

- Reduces carbon emissions
- Improves downtown traffic
- Makes certain types of routes easier to navigate

*“B-Line is happy to partner with the City of Portland and Office Depot to handle their daily downtown delivery needs in a cost-effective manner while reducing carbon emissions and traffic in downtown Portland.”*

Franklin Jones,  
CEO and Founder, B-Line

challenging. B-Line’s cargo trikes can navigate more easily around the campus to make building-specific deliveries.

## **Lessons Learned**

Transportation costs and benefits aren’t the only things to consider when evaluating the environmental impact of deliveries. In addition to reducing emissions by using B-Line’s cargo trike delivery services, the City utilizes Office Depot’s GreenerOffice Delivery Service. Through this service, Office Depot delivers office supplies to the City in paper bags containing 40 percent post-consumer recycled content and reusable plastic totes containing 60 percent post-consumer recycled content.

The City’s switch to cargo trike delivery via B-Line has not enabled Office Depot to replace a full delivery truck. However, the City’s push to pilot this innovative service allows Office Depot to establish a successful program, and potentially to extend this service to more customers. Eventually, Office Depot may be able to serve enough customers in the downtown Portland area to eliminate a truck, reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion even further.

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## **About Procurement Services**

*Procurement Services is part of the Bureau of Revenue and Financial Services within the Office of Management and Finance. Procurement Services is responsible for making sure the procurement process is fair, efficient, effective, and accountable to everyone.*

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