



The URB-E bikes increase delivery efficiency by two to three times | Photo source URB-E

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BATTERY-POWERED BICYCLE CARTS OFFER SUSTAINABLE, COMPACT TRANSPORT OF GOODS

 MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

URB-E's battery-powered bicycles designed to tow heavy loads are now towing cargo carts that can hold up to 363kg of groceries

Spotted: With the goal of removing grocery delivery vans from roads and reducing emissions, California-based startup URB-E have rolled out their electric-powered, collapsible containers around New York. Towed by battery-powered bicycle carts that are designed to haul heavy loads, the compact containers can each carry up to 363kg of goods. Not only do they cost a fraction of what a conventional van would, but they also take up much less space, with 20 folded containers designed to fit into a single parking space when not in use. Currently, 1800 containers are circulating around New York.

The concept is that shoppers go to the supermarket as normal and then load their bags straight into a container, and when it is full, a bike will come and start deliveries. Equipped with 750-watt mid-drive motors and travelling up to 12mph, the URB-E bikes increase delivery efficiency by two to three times. The bikes and carts are rented on an as-needed basis for a fee of between €4.17 to €8.35 per hour, in addition to charging a reservation fee that guarantees their availability to users. CEO Charles Jolley is aiming to bring that cost down to as little as €1.67.

URB-E currently operates in mid-Manhattan but is looking at entering the downtown Los Angeles delivery market. They also hope to expand into using autonomous vehicles that are electrically powered, as factors such as weather or terrain could make bikes impractical in certain areas.

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Takeaway:

In the UK, around a fifth of carbon emissions are a result of road traffic, making it important to find solutions to reduce this number. URB-E's containers are designed to replace entire delivery vans and reduce their emissions by 100 per cent. They are extremely efficient for traveling through urban areas, as they are a fraction of the size of conventional vans, and also take up a lot less parking space, with 20 folded containers able to fit into a single space. Furthermore, not only are they environmentally friendly and efficient, but the costs of running these battery-powered bikes are much lower than running a van.