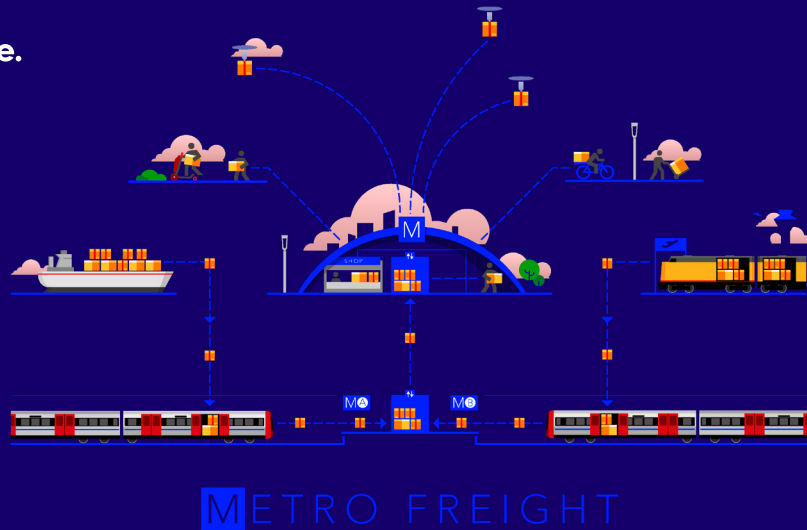


PriestmanGoode.



Metro Freight Maximising infrastructure to improve our future cities

Metro Freight is a concept that sees rapid transit infrastructure repurposed for freight delivery in city centres in a bid to get delivery vans off the roads.

Leading design company PriestmanGoode unveils Metro Freight, a concept that sees rapid transit infrastructure repurposed for freight delivery in city centres in a bid to get delivery vans off the roads. The concept addresses the problem of goods delivery - from food to fashion or consumer products - and aims to raise awareness of the impact of consumer behaviour on urban infrastructure and its broader implications on the environment.

Paul Priestman, Designer and Chairman of PriestmanGoode says "The continued rise of online shopping, while providing convenience to consumers, has a negative impact on our cities as it significantly increases the number of delivery vans on the road. In New York City alone, an estimated 1.5 million packages are delivered every day. As this trend continues, we have to rethink the delivery infrastructure in order to ensure sustainable communities going forward. Metro freight is part of our vision for what transport and mobility could look like in future cities. It is designed to integrate with other concepts we have designed or are currently working on including scooters, drone deliveries and shared autonomous taxis."

Taking the grit out of the system

The Metro Freight concept is about taking the grit out of the system: repurposing existing infrastructure to maximise efficiency. Most cities around the world with existing rapid transit systems already have infrastructure that connects them to nearby airports, rail hubs or ports. In this concept, goods would be loaded onto existing rapid transit vehicles or dedicated vehicles at night, when public transport is either not in use or operating at much reduced capacity. Goods would then be transported on these public rapid transit vehicles and taken to various metro stations around the city - as close as possible to the final delivery address.

Platforms at these metro stations could be adapted to enable the loading and offloading of goods, which are then taken to a collection point at the station.

Consumers would then have the option to pick up goods directly from their local station and from there continue their journey whether on foot, bicycle, scooter or shared autonomous vehicle. While the idea of a centralised pick up location does already exist in many places, Metro Freight goes one step further by considering the entire freight journey from arrival into a city until its destination.

Priestman continues "The makeup of our cities is changing. High streets are changing, as are train and metro stations. Meanwhile, consumers are demanding both convenience and a more sustainable environment. This concept is an opportunity to address all of these points, and allows us to revisit the role of stations not just as a transport hub, but as a community point."

A more democratic approach to delivery

Metro Freight also provides a more democratic approach to goods delivery, making use of public transport infrastructure and working on the basis of public private partnerships with the goal of improving local communities through infrastructure, public space, air quality and employment.

Metro Freight would for example see local people employed to help deliver goods for the 'first and last mile' in a bid to help the local economy as well as make people feel more invested in their communities.

Metro Freight would also be used for the delivery of locally manufactured goods.

An opportunity to green the city

As we reclaim the spaces taken up by delivery vans in urban centres, we have an opportunity to redesign the city in an environmentally friendly way. The Covid-19 pandemic has enabled many local governments around the world to accelerate a greening of the city, implementing increased pedestrian and cycle lanes, not just as an immediate means of combating the virus, but as part of a long term strategy to provide citizens with green and blue public spaces and an enhanced urban environment.

PriestmanGoode's own concept Walk Lines was first unveiled in 2012 and proposed integrating walking as part of a city's urban transport network. Walk Lines uses wayfinding and product design to create better walking infrastructure in cities to encourage people to walk, especially over shorter distances, as a means to take pressure off of public transport networks, improve physical and mental health, and improve air quality.

The freeing up of urban infrastructure can also be an opportunity to be more ambitious with what the future city should look like, and could include biodiversity corridors for instance.

Tackling environmental equality

The Metro Freight concept would also help address the issue of environmental equality. Large delivery hubs or depots are often located in lower income neighbourhoods, resulting in particularly poor air quality in those areas. There are many implications this has, causing health concerns for those who do not have the means to get better, impacting their ability to work. If we want to redress the balance and improve equality, Metro Freight can be part of the solution.

Restructuring delivery networks in this way would also allow spaces in low income areas to be repurposed to create green and blue spaces, which have both physical and mental health benefits (ref. Public health England report on Improving Access to Green Spaces).

Expectations vs reality

The problem we are facing with the rise of delivery vans on city roads is in part due to a lack of awareness of the impact of consumer behaviour. All over the world, there has been a growing trend towards environmental responsibility, particularly in 2019, when the word of the year was chosen as 'climate emergency'. Consumers are becoming more demanding of corporations and of the products that they buy. But at the same time, the rise of next day or same day delivery services in many areas has led to extremely high customer expectations for instant delivery and convenience. This expectation does not match the desire for environmental responsibility. We need to raise awareness of the environmental impact of deliveries, as this is key to engendering change.

The rise in online deliveries also creates an additional packaging problem, with vast quantities of packaging used

and thrown away after a single use. With the Metro Freight concept, stations and pick up points could be redesigned to offer changing rooms enabling customers to try on clothes then and there, where they can arrange for returns or exchanges immediately. These spaces would also act as a collection point for packaging, which would then be put back into the system for re-use.

Interactions at metro stations around the world are increasingly digital, a trend that is being accelerated by the global pandemic. Increasingly, technology will allow us to control every element of the journey through our own devices. This means that station infrastructure can be repurposed for alternative uses, like pop-up shops or delivery points and become anchor points for local communities.

Priestman finishes "The last few months have shown that we are capable of quickly adapting our behaviours. We also anticipate long term implications on cities, as if people are no longer required to work in city centres five days a week, the nature of the city will change. Whatever change is afoot, cities will remain important hubs for connection, innovation and community, and if we want to keep attracting great talent, offering a good quality of life, convenience and a green environment will be paramount.

Metro Freight is part of a larger exploration of future cities that PriestmanGoode is currently developing. Other concepts in this larger framework also include the Scooter for Life, Walk Lines and the Dragonfly drone delivery system.



NOTES TO EDITORS

About PriestmanGoode

PriestmanGoode is a design consultancy that specialises in delivering exceptional brand experiences for a roster of leading international companies.

Using design as a strategic tool to transform businesses, we use our unique global viewpoint to deliver solutions that are tailored to place brands and cultures on the world stage, helping our clients achieve holistic brand experiences and customer loyalty.

From aircraft interiors, airports, public transport and high speed trains to hotels and consumer products, our diverse portfolio enables us to draw from our experience across different sectors to deliver new innovations. This unique way of thinking has led us to become brand and innovation partners with a number of leading companies around the world.

Our designs are about people: from end users to maintenance staff, they are used by millions every year. We're interested in how things work and how to improve them. We believe great design should be simple, elegant, intuitive, easy to maintain and efficient to manufacture.

Our company is steeped in the tradition of great British design, but our experience over the years, our interest in the new and our ambition to redefine expectations of great design has led us to become leaders in our field. We define future trends and are at the forefront of global design today.

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