

# City of Portland expands electric vehicle capacity with new charging contract and state grant



*By reducing vehicle emissions, CityFleet and PBOT will help fight climate change and advance the City's goal of achieving "net zero" by 2050.*

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From fixing potholes to fighting fires to operating parks, the City of Portland relies on 2,600 motorized vehicles to serve the community – and advance the City's commitment to fight climate change.

This month, the City reached two important milestones in its goal of reducing emissions to net-zero by 2050.

Portland-based [OpConnect](#), a minority and veteran-owned company, was selected to install and manage electric vehicle charging stations that will serve up to 360 City vehicles over the next five years. And a [\\$2.6 million state grant](#) will replace eight diesel trucks used by the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) with electric vehicles and install specialized charging stations to serve them.

"Oregon ranks near the top of the nation in electric vehicles per capita, so it makes sense for our city government to lead by example," said Maty Sauter, who leads the City's Division of Asset Management. "We hope that expanding the City of Portland's electric vehicle fleet will increase visibility and awareness."

Going electric will make a big impact on the City's environmental footprint. Transportation accounts for more than 42 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County, according to the City's [most recent carbon emissions inventory](#).

Within the light-duty sedan class, more than half of the City's vehicles are electric or hybrid. However, just 8 percent of the overall fleet – a total of 195 vehicles – meets that standard. One of the biggest barriers has been installing, maintaining and operating charging infrastructure.

Up to 32 percent of City vehicles may be economically feasible to convert to electric over the next decade, according to a third-party analysis conducted in late 2020. This month's advances will make a difference.

Under the new contract, with an estimated value of up to \$2 million over five years, OpConnect charging stations are expected to begin serving City vehicles by summer 2022. The City will pay a monthly subscription fee for each electric vehicle using the stations, which will be offset by fuel and maintenance savings.

This business model, called “charging as a service,” minimizes upfront costs when organizations want to expand their electric vehicle capacity. Portland is establishing one of the first large-scale municipal contracts in the United States using this approach.



“OpConnect is excited to partner with the City of Portland to provide fleet charging utilizing the innovative charging as a service model. Helping fleets to avoid upfront costs associated with electrification while getting the hardware, software, maintenance and expertise of a turnkey charging station provider like us will encourage further adoption,” said Dexter Turner, founder and chief executive officer of OpConnect. The company hopes to partner with other municipal fleets throughout the country to follow Portland’s lead by electrifying their fleets and working toward a smarter, cleaner, greener future.

Portland’s electric vehicle inventory will continue expanding with a \$2.6 million grant from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, which will replace eight older diesel trucks used by PBOT. The

grant will also pay for eight high-capacity charging stations, speeding the City's green fleet transition and reducing diesel emissions across Portland.

Portland's grant was the largest among \$8.1 million awarded by the state to eliminate air contaminants affecting public health and climate by retrofitting or replacing diesel equipment with new, cleaner alternatives. The 12 selected projects will remove more than 200 tons of harmful air pollution, including nitrogen oxide and fine particulate matter, from Oregon's air.

"We are very excited that the City of Portland has received this grant and that PBOT is part of this initiative," said Chris Warner, director of the Portland Bureau of Transportation. "We believe these new vehicles and charging infrastructure will have a transformational effect on how we do business, allowing us to reduce the bureau's carbon footprint and take a step toward addressing the climate crisis."

Officials at PBOT noted that deploying the new e-trucks will help to reduce emissions at the bureau's Kerby maintenance yard. In addition, the trucks will allow PBOT to perform quieter and more sustainable work in city neighborhoods.