

# International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management

## Urban/City Logistics: Driving Towards Sustainability

*Special issue Call for Papers*  
*International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*

Submission Deadline: May 31, 2019

**Guest Editors:**

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As the growing world population continues to become increasingly urbanized, firms face increased pressure to manage their urban logistics<sup>1</sup> activities. Goods distribution in urban areas is a necessity for a vibrant city. Yet, as populations rise, existing (often old) city infrastructures can exacerbate the challenges of urban logistics. Furthermore, city planners do not always incorporate logistics considerations into new urban development, further complicating logistics efforts of firms trying to serve their urban customers. Issues of congestion, traffic flow, pollution, visual intrusion, and road safety (see, for example, Allen et al., 2015) become increasingly important from the perspective of those inhabiting or working within city boundaries, but are often beyond the control of logistics managers themselves. At the same time, increased freight demands combined with demand for faster deliveries presents further challenges for logistics managers in what is already a complex business environment.

In the urban/city logistics literature, researchers have primarily focused on issues of vehicle routing or last mile challenges. Innovations such as the use of urban consolidation centers, public-private collaboration, off-peak deliveries, and crowdsourced deliveries provide interesting solution options. Some authors have addressed underlying challenges behind failed initiatives, such as the lack of stakeholder collaboration (Gammelgaard, 2015), or the absence of financially viable business models (Björklund et al., 2017). However, the overriding focus of the extant urban logistics literature has taken on the mantle of efficiency-while-meeting-customer-service-expectations as the primary goal of firms.

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<sup>1</sup> “Urban logistics” and “city logistics” are used here as synonyms for the logistics associated with transportation, consolidation and distribution of goods in cities, to business customers and/or end consumers.

Therefore, this call for papers seeks to expand the research focus of urban/city logistics scholars to address growing concerns of sustainability within urban contexts. Initial forays into urban sustainability are seen within urban freight research; city logistics has been singled out as one of five themes within green logistics (McKinnon, 2015). However, researchers have yet to address the challenges of urban logistics employing a more holistic sustainability lens. Researchers are urged to address their urban logistics research from a broader triple bottom line perspective, taking into consideration synergies and tradeoffs. Authors are also encouraged to go beyond the traditional environmental and social aspects of congestion, outlets, and energy use. Sustainable city logistics must take into consideration the goals put forward in the United Nations Sustainability goals for 2030.

To that end, scholars are urged to submit thought provoking research on sustainable solutions within the urban logistics context. Submissions can be conceptual, inductive or deductive, but must demonstrate theoretical rigor, employing grand-theories or middle-range theorizing approaches (Stank et al. 2016; Pellathy et al 2017). The call for papers is methodologically open, including synthesizing and integrative literature reviews, conceptual theory development, large-scale empirical studies, experimental designs, qualitative research such as case study or grounded theory research, or design-oriented methods such as action research and design science, as long as rigor is apparent. This list of suggested methodologies is indicative, without being definitive of the types of papers sought. However, consistent with IJPDLM guidelines, quantitatively oriented mathematical modelling and simulation studies are unlikely to meet the requirements of this Special Issue. Regardless of method employed, preference will be given to theoretically grounded research papers that are able to effectively and appropriately address the theme of this special issue.

The following list provides an illustrative set of topics for the special issue, but is far from exhaustive. Any questions about the suitability of a topic may be directed to the special issue guest editors.

- Urban Logistics Systems
  - Widening system boundaries to consider urban sustainability initiatives within a broader scope beyond city boundaries, along the supply chain, and even over time or development phases (see e.g. Lagorio et al., 2016; Björklund and Johansson, 2018)
  - Synergies and tradeoffs between sustainability dimensions when implementing different city logistics initiatives
  - Issues of scalability (e.g., gaining social and environmental economies of scale) or overcoming challenges regarding scalability.
- Urban logistics solutions addressing social/environmental issues such as
  - equal rights, labour rights
  - infrastructural changes, including cultural aspects of the urban landscapes
  - social/environmental aspects of green cities, including e.g. pollution, noise, and accessibility
  - inclusive and safe cities
  - population health
  - food security and/or availability
- Stakeholder Issues
  - Involvement of stakeholders in achieving sustainable solutions (particularly given the sustainability goals of different stakeholders)
  - The involvement of often overlooked stakeholder groups such as shippers, consumers, citizens, or others
  - Private and public interaction for sustainable city logistics
- Managerial Challenges Related to New Demands and Technologies
  - The impact of new technology such as digitalization/big data, drones on sustainable city logistics; Industry 4.0
  - Innovative urban logistics solutions for improved sustainability

**Manuscript Submission:**

Prospective authors are encouraged to submit abstracts of their papers to the Guest Editors in advance of actual submission. In preparing and submitting your articles, please follow the author guidelines that can be found on the IJPDLM website:

[http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/author\\_guidelines.htm?id=ijpdlm](http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/author_guidelines.htm?id=ijpdlm)

All papers should be submitted between May 15 – 31st, 2019. Authors should ensure that the Sustainable Urban/City Logistics Special Issue option is selected. All appropriate papers will go through the normal journal review process.

**References**

Allen, J., Browne, M., Hulguín-Veras, J. (2015), "Sustainable strategies for city logistics," Chapter 14 in *Green Logistics, improving the environmental sustainability of logistics*, Ed. McKinnon, A., Browne, M., Piecyk, M., Whiteing, A. Kogan Page, London.

Björklund, M., Abrahamsson, M. & Johansson, H. (2017), "Critical factors for viable business models for urban consolidation centres", *Research in Transportation Economics*. Vol. 64, pp. 36-47.

Björklund, M., Johansson, H. (2018), "Urban consolidation centre – a literature review, categorisation, and a future research agenda", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 48 Issue 8, pp.745-764.

Gammelgaard, B. (2015), "The emergence of city logistics: the case of Copenhagen's citylogistik-kbh", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 45 No. 4, pp. 333-351.

Lagorio, A., Pinto, R., Golini, R. (2016), "Research in urban logistics: a systematic literature review", *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, Vol. 46 No 10, pp.908-931.

McKinnon, A. (2015), "Environmental sustainability: A new priority for logistics managers, Chapter 1 in *Green Logistics, improving the environmental sustainability of logistics*, Eds. McKinnon, A., Browne, M., Piecyk, M., Whiteing, A. Kogan Page, London.

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Stank, T.P., Pellathy, D., In, J., Mollenkopf, D.A., Bell, J.E. (2017), "New frontiers in logistics research: Theorizing at the middle range", *Journal of Business Logistics*, Vol 38 No 1, pp.6-17.