

FinEst Centre  
for Smart Cities

## SMART CITY CHALLENGE 2025

### City Challenge

Max 3 pages

send to [smartcity@taltech.ee](mailto:smartcity@taltech.ee) by Sept 30, 2025

**Challenge Title – Urban Freight Loading Zones** (max 5 words, no acronyms)

**City/county and country:** City of Tallinn, Estonia

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#### 1. What is the future urban challenge that would need a solution to?

- **Please describe the challenge of your city / county neighbouring a city?**  
From 1 July 2025, Estonia's amended traffic law repeals the clause that allowed stopping on pavements for loading/unloading; stopping on the pavement is only allowed where explicitly permitted by traffic control devices. In Tallinn's dense centre, where curb space is scarce and many businesses currently depend on short stops right by entrances, this creates an immediate operational gap for urban freight and service vehicles.
- **Which category your challenge is primarily in: safe city, happy city, and climate resilient city?**  
**Primary category:** Safe city (pedestrian safety and conflict reduction on sidewalks). Secondary benefits align with **happy city** (less obstruction/clutter) and **climate-resilient city** (less cruising for curb space and scope for low-emission last mile).
- **Why is it important for your city to solve it? How big priority it is for you and why?**  
Legal compliance is required as of 1 July 2025, so the city must provide workable curbside alternatives to avoid widespread non-compliance, unsafe improvised stopping, and delivery delays.  
Without intervention, freight vehicles will circulate longer to find legal space, reducing delivery productivity and increasing risk on carriageways and crossings. Both drivers and companies anticipate time loss and operational strain, particularly for larger consignments and winter conditions.
- **Is this a unique challenge/problem of your city, why or is this by your knowledge a challenge/problem that many cities have – which kind of other cities?**  
No. Many cities that restrict pavement loading pair it with dedicated loading bays, time-window rules, and "smart" curb management (e.g., UK, Germany, Netherlands).

#### 2. Innovation.

- **How have you solved that issue so far? Why aren't the present solutions good enough? Are there legal obstacles, which ones?**  
Historically, Tallinn has tolerated (and law allowed) short pavement stops for loading; dedicated, well-placed loading bays are **insufficient** in the most constrained central areas. With the repeal of the general pavement-loading permission, existing arrangements no longer cover actual demand, and drivers report poor information and preparedness.



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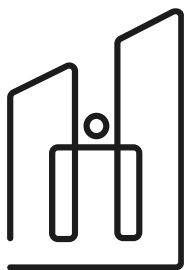


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The amended law removes the generic right to stop on pavements for loading, allowing it only where traffic control explicitly permits—so solutions must be legal, signed, and enforced curbside.

- **What should be the main features, characteristics of the future solution to be potentially best for that challenge or problem?**

The future solution should be a package combining infrastructure + rules + digital tools, including:

- **Time-windowed, signed loading bays** on-street near trip generators (office/commercial areas), with enforcement.
- **Smart loading zones** (digital booking / dynamic regulation to match demand, collect usage data, and reduce cruising).
- **“Loading pockets”/curb extensions** and **street widenings** where feasible to add safe curb capacity without blocking sidewalks.
- **Passenger pick-up/drop-off style short-stop zones** repurposed at selected times/locations for freight.
- **Consolidation/micro-consolidation** hubs and **cargo bikes** for the very last stretch in the densest areas, reducing the need for vans to reach the door.

### 3. Expected impact of your pilot solution.

- **What is the expected impact to your city environment you expect to see if the challenge gets solved?**

Fewer vehicles on pavements; reduced conflicts at crossings; shorter search time for stopping space; less double-parking. (Pedestrians already report obstruction today; moving to bays/time windows addresses this directly.)

Potential emission and noise reductions from less cruising and mode shift of the shortest trips to cargo bikes where hubs exist.

- **What is the expected impact to your citizens you expect to see if the challenge gets solved?**

Safer, more comfortable sidewalks; clearer separation of space and predictable freight activity windows.

- **What is the expected impact to your city governance you expect to see if the challenge gets solved?**

Data-driven curb management: occupancy, dwell times, and compliance data from smart zones inform scaling locations/times and enforcement.

Clear, lawful framework aligned with the new traffic regulation; improved communication to drivers and companies (who currently report low awareness)

### 4. Piloting

- **Why would you be interested to become a piloting partner of a proposed solution to the challenge you are describing here? Describe shortly your capability to participate.**

The law change in Estonia on 1 July 2025 has created an immediate need to test workable alternatives in real streets.

City roles in pilot:

- Designate and sign 3–5 priority loading bays per corridor near offices/shops; add time windows.
- Trial smart booking for selected bays to gather data and manage peak times.
- Create one micro-hub + cargo-bike feeder for a compact delivery zone.

KPIs for pilot:

- pedestrian conflicts/complaints;
- bay occupancy and dwell;



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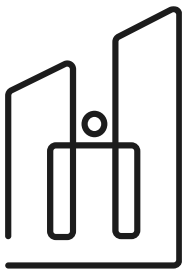


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- delivery time loss vs. baseline;
- infringement rates;
- driver/company satisfaction; cruising time

**City capability to participate:** Authority to allocate/sign curb space and enforce; experience coordinating with operators; access to survey insights identifying hot spots (City Centre corridors, office/commercial frontages).



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