



BUSINESS / RETAIL

# Atelier Logistique's Underground Storage Hub to Transform Champ-Élysées Retail

Built beneath Paris' famed shopping street, the nine-story facility frees up prime storefronts, accelerates deliveries and cuts emissions.

By RHONDA RICHFORD  APRIL 7, 2025, 2:00PM



A rendering of the Atelier Logistique. COURTESY ATELIER LOGISTIQUE

**PARIS** — Five stories below the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, AI-controlled robots are already at work.

They are testing the systems for Atelier Logistique, a 172,200-square-foot stock storage and logistics space being built by Swiss Life Asset Managers and Mont Thabor to support the retail infrastructure of the nearby shopping areas.

The partners converted a disused nine-story underground parking garage, which reaches well below the level of the Seine river, and was originally intended to be refurbished. But with Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo's ambitious plan to reduce car use, with schemes like revamping the famed shopping street with fewer traffic lanes, the project was reconsidered and transformed into a remote storage solution for retail.

With only a 3 percent vacancy rate on the Champs-Élysées, brands are fighting for space but using valuable square footage on storing stock. Swiss Life's research put that number at between 8 percent and 14 percent of space that could instead be used for retail. The median price per square meter on the Champs-Élysées and surrounding luxury streets rings up at 15,000 euros, the group said, making that loss of shopping space costly.

"In the luxury market, we know that some of the retailers may want to boost the retail experience," said Swiss Life Asset Managers head of research and innovation Béatrice Guedj.

That retail experience is two-fold, she said: first, to upscale space and shopping services in-store; second, to hold more product to support omnichannel supply for online ordering, in-store pick-up and returns. "This is the vision we have, and luxury brands also have, in mind. That's why we assume that there is a winning play for them to rethink their retail supply chain," she said.

This should also reinforce the luxury goods market in Paris, as it risks losing sales to 1/5 other fashion capitals such as Milan.

Brands will be able to store their goods in Atelier Logistique and have them delivered by bike, on foot or pick them up in person within minutes. The center can also serve the nearby Avenue Montaigne within five minutes, Rue Saint-Honoré within 10 minutes, the Saint-Germain district within 15 minutes and the Marais within 20 minutes by bike or small electric vehicle.

"With the performance of the avenue, they will need extensions, and we are like a mutualization of storage for them. The cost of logistics and also the centralization here could be something that makes it easier on [the retailers] on a day-to-day basis," said Swiss Life Asset Managers head of asset management Waiseng Ma



*Fabrice Lombardo Stephan Knecht / Courtesy Atelier Logistique*

The Atelier Logistique project was developed with the support of the city, as well as the Developed with the Comité Champs-Élysées retail organization. The transformation of the parking lot was led by architect Damien Antoni.

Of the space, 108,000 square feet will be dedicated to storage alone, while the rest will be devoted to customer service. An above-ground entrance will host a space for employees to pick up stock on foot, while other spaces will be dedicated to prepping and packaging stock for personal or hotel delivery after an in-store order, for example. In this case, brands may place their own employees or those trained in their packaging style inside the Atelier, which will also hold the correct shopping or garment bags with branding. Other spaces will be lounges for employees. 2/5

The center will also provide reverse logistics quality control, in order to have any returned items inspected and back on the sales floor without the need to transport them hundreds of miles.

“We want to bring services to retail, and be seen as an extension of retail and not just pure logistics,” said Swiss Life Asset Managers head of retail Fabrice Lombardo.

Executives did not disclose the cost per square foot but said that leasing space within the Atelier will be “clearly competitive for them [and] far less expensive than a pure retail area.

### **The Tech Specs**

While the developers expect to create about 100 jobs with the Atelier, much of the space will be managed by AI and autonomous robots which accept deliveries, move the merchandise and monitor stocks.

With an entrance on the Champs-Élysées, there are two delivery docks on Rue de Ponthieu and Rue de La Boétie, with incoming deliveries taking place at the former and pickups or external deliveries leaving through the latter. Small 12-ton trucks will be able to deliver at night, offloading all their goods within 20 minutes, with the merchandise stored or delivered to the retailers as needed. The center will be in operation 24 hours a day.



*A rendering of inside the Atelier Logistique. Courtesy Atelier Logistique*

The robots were developed by Swiss Life in conjunction with a French defense contractor that cannot be disclosed, to operate specifically within the building’s parameters. The robots, which accept, deliver and move goods within the warehouse levels, will never cross the pickup area or bike lane to avoid bottlenecks.

Swiss Life developed the small electric vehicle delivery trucks with Renault for the project, and Kleusters for the cargo bikes, and will oversee the transport operations as well. 3/5

Brands and hotels will be directly connected to the Atelier's AI warehouse management system. Clients can then directly request goods, which can be delivered or picked up within 15 to 30 minutes.

The use of robots will help the Atelier stay in line with new emissions and traffic rules, which will ultimately ban large trucks and day deliveries in many retail areas around Paris.

The delivery restrictions will not only affect the luxury brands, but the mass market retailers such as Zara, which opened an omnichannel-focused flagship on the Champs Élysées in 2023 and is set to soon double its size, which will need to restructure its' daily deliveries of goods, for example.

"With the [low traffic zone] it's a math exercise against the potential turnover they can generate by [storing and sorting stock] here. When you do a simulation, it's a winning game that's twofold," Guedj said.

"We are able with this asset to be able to cope with the low emissions regulations. It's really compliant with the municipality's anticipated regulations from 2030," Ma said. Some of the low traffic zone rules are already in effect and will continue to roll out over the next five years.



A rendering of product delivery to Atelier Logistique. *Courtesy Atelier Logistique*

The use of small electric vehicles, bike or foot delivery is estimated to save 476 tons of carbon annually, cutting delivery emissions for the associated brands by 32 percent per year. 4/5

The Atelier Logistique will begin functionality later this year and be fully operational by mid-2026. The developers are currently seeking an operating partner that is specialized in logistics to manage the space, though options from a single brand contracting exclusivity to acquisition remain on the table.

The Paris facility is a pilot project and Swiss Life hopes to develop the concept in other cities to reduce carbon emissions and make "last-mile" delivery more efficient for brands.