

Frequently Asked Questions

Canada Post Community Mailbox Implementation Program

1. What is the Canada Post Community Mailbox Program?

A: The Canada Post community mailbox program is a cost-saving initiative where Canada Post Corporation will provide mail delivery to residents via a centralized location in the community through a community mailbox. Roughly 5 million Canadian addresses still have mail delivery to their door. Canada Post has determined that this model is not sustainable in the long run and has begun the implementation of centralized locations in communities to serve multiple residents. This delivery method has been in widespread use for about 30 years.

2. Who is implementing and administering this program?

A: Canada Post is fully responsible for the implementation and administration of this program. This is part of a 5-year implementation plan to help the crown corporation achieve financial stability and self-sufficiency. The implementation of community mailboxes will provide Canada Post their largest cost-savings within their [Five-Point Action Plan](#).

3. What is the role of the City of Ottawa?

A: Although the program is run and administered by Canada Post, the City of Ottawa will provide comments on any identified issues or concerns identified for a particular site. In addition, the City has provided Canada Post with some standard [guidelines](#) which have been recommended that they try to meet when choosing their locations.

4. Who selects the community mailbox locations?

A: Canada Post is responsible for the selection and placement of their community mailboxes. While my office along with City officials can help escalate any substantiated issues identified by residents with Canada Post, **it is ultimately up to the discretion of Canada Post to make the final decision whether to relocate a mailbox.**

5. How will I be notified if my property is selected for a community mailbox?

A: A Canada Post representative will visit you at your home to notify you that your property has been proposed for the implementation of a community mailbox. Once your property has been

confirmed, the surrounding community will be notified where their new mailbox will be located for future mail pick up.

6. How can I appeal a selected location?

A: The in-person visit and/or the literature that was left for you at your home will provide you with the dedicated number (1-844-454-3009) that you may contact to object to the proposal with Canada Post directly.

My office can also raise or escalate any substantiated issues on a resident's behalf, however I am not able to force Canada Post to relocate the mailbox.

As this is a program administered by the federal government, I would highly recommend residents contact their local Member of Parliament to help assist with any issues.

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Please note that Canada Post representatives will re-examine and reconsider their recommendation and either relocate or maintain their site selection.

7. Are there any laws or By-laws that can prohibit Canada Post to install a community mailbox within the City right-of-way on my property?

A: No, Canada Post is exempt from any City By-laws. Canada Post has the right under the [Canada Post Corporations Act, Mail Receptacle Regulations](#) Part 1, Paragraph 3 to install their boxes "...in any public place, including a public roadway...."and are not subject to any City By-laws.

8. From a City and legal perspective, what ability does the City have in denying access to municipal right-of-way to Canada Post on behalf of residents who have legitimate concerns?

A: As noted above, under the *Mail Receptacle Regulations* enacted by the Federal Government under the Canada Post Corporation Act, Canada Post is legally allowed to "*install, erect or relocate or cause to be installed, erected or relocated in any public place, including a public roadway, any receptacle or device to be used for the collection, delivery or storage of mail*". The term "public roadway" also includes the road allowance, which usually extends for some feet on either side of the paved portion of the roadway.

The City Clerk and Solicitor has confirmed that given this is Federal legislation, the City of Ottawa does not have the legal authority to prevent Canada Post from installing a community mailbox, nor can it dictate where one can be located within the public roadway or another public place, even if these are owned by the City.

9. Does Canada Post have to pay a property tax for use of municipal right-of-way?

A: Canada Post is not required to pay property taxes. Crown lands are exempt from paying property taxes pursuant to section 3(1) of the Ontario *Assessment Act, R.S.O. 1990*.

10. Are there any minimum setbacks for the community mailboxes from a property line and from the roadway?

A: Canada Post is required to stay within the municipal right-of-way and not encroach on private property. There are no defined setbacks from the property line for locating a community mailbox but Canada Post would have to seek permission from a private landowner if any portion of the mailbox encroached onto their property. Canada Post has their own installation specifications for offset from a road depending on the road, ie. curbed, edge of pavement, ditched etc. They have been accommodating to residents when locating a mailbox near a fence or hedge.

11. Will my property value decrease if a community mailbox is installed on my property? Could I potentially see any decrease in my property taxes?

A: Residential property assessments are completed by the province through the [Municipal Property Assessment Corporation](#) (MPAC). It would be under the discretion of MPAC to decide if a residential property loses any value due to the installation of a community mailbox.

Residents may file an appeal with MPAC for a “request for reconsideration” application pursuant to section 39.1 of the Ontario Assessment Act, to review any potential errors or changes in the valuation. There is an annual deadline which is no later than **March 31** of the taxation year in respect of which the request is made. Further information is available on MPAC’s [website](#).

If MPAC decides that the installation of a community mailbox leads to the decrease in a residential property value, there could be a slight reduction applied to a resident’s property tax given that property tax amounts are generally based on a home’s value.

All this being said and after consulting with the City’s Finance Department, it has been suggested that MPAC would not apply a reduction in an assessment value in this instance.

12. Can installation take place if there are underground utilities nearby?

A: City staff have advised that the various utility companies are aware of the Canada Post community mailbox installation program and provide clearances and work around conditions when a mailbox is located close to their infrastructure. Installers must adhere to the “call before you dig” guidelines and make any adjustments when/where necessary.

13. How will the installation of a community mailbox impact traffic flow in my neighbourhood?

A: Canada Post makes an effort to limit the number of mailboxes per unit, reducing the amount of traffic expected to frequent each location. When this system is implemented, it is expected that while residents may at first check their mail daily, there will often not be a need to do so, and traffic will decrease as residents frequent the locations irregularly. Local residents can aid in traffic reduction by walking to their community mailbox if they are able, as well as creating a habit of checking mail 2-3 times per week as opposed to checking every day.

14. If I have a physical impairment, how will I get my mail?

A: If a resident has any physical impairment and is unable to collect their mail via a community mailbox, Canada Post has committed to making every effort to help accommodate mail delivery and collection for the resident.

15. Who is responsible for the maintenance required for the Community Mailbox locations?

A: Canada Post is responsible for maintenance, including snow removal and salting/sanding operations.