

Postal cuts: What do they mean for our society?

Canada Post's proposal to eliminate door-to-door mail delivery, dramatically increase stamp prices and close public post offices would have a significant impact on our families, our communities and our society. Let's work together to Save Canada Post.

Accessibility

Many individuals have mobility or vision issues that limit their ability to collect mail at a community mailbox. In 2012, 13.7% of Canadians aged 15 and older reported being limited in their daily activities due to a disability.ⁱ The presence of disability increases steadily with age. One-third of Canadian seniors aged 65 and older reported having a disability. **"I am the mother of two young boys. My youngest has cerebral palsy and uses a walker or wheelchair to get around. For me, Canada Post's decision would mean having to bundle them up and struggle through the snow with a wheelchair just to get our mail. And I am just one of thousands of Canadians who must already overcome mobility challenges on a daily basis."** –Susan Dixonⁱⁱ

Moving to community mailboxes will make an accessible public service more inaccessible to the many people who have a mobility or vision impairment.

Public service

Canada Post provides a valuable and accessible public service. Having mail and parcel delivery to the home, accessible public post offices and affordable stamp prices are key features of that service. In fact, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has long advocated for expanded services and innovation, including the expansion of door-to-door mail delivery. **"To me, Canada Post is as vital and as important as any police or fire service that we have and we should be able to count on them."**ⁱⁱⁱ
–Terry Bertrand, resident of Keswick

In 2008, the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review found "considerable if not unanimous support

for maintaining a quality, affordable universal service for all Canadians and communities."^{iv} The strategic review also noted that many Canadians viewed the universal service obligation as fostering Canada's social and economic network and development.^v

Public space

Canada Post's proposal would result in community mailboxes being installed on municipal and private property throughout dense urban and suburban neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods were not designed or built for community mailboxes. Individuals and communities will fight against having unsightly metal boxes installed in their backyard, schoolyard or park. This will affect property values and inevitably have a negative impact on the look, feel and functionality of valued and limited public spaces. Furthermore, the problems with snow removal and litter have been well documented.^{vi} Community mailbox sites are often unsafe, inaccessible and unattractive.

Many have also voiced concern over theft, vandalism and identity theft at community mailbox sites. Valuable parcels and financial documents would be left in community mailboxes that may be low-lit or not have much traffic. Several RCMP branches in

British Columbia warned citizens to safeguard their mail due to community mailbox break-ins in late 2013.^{vii}

Environmental assessment

The switch from door-to-door to community mailbox delivery would inevitably have an environmental impact. How many residents will drive to their mailbox? How many will idle while they collect their mail? These are questions we need answered prior to any changes to Canada Post's delivery network. CUPW thinks Canada Post should release an environmental assessment of its proposed changes prior to any implementation.

The impact on non-profit organizations

Many non-profit organizations have expressed concern that stamp price increases will affect their operations. Several non-profits have described the impact:

- World Vision Canada has estimated that the rate increases will cost them an additional \$300,000 per year, which equates to assisting five to ten thousand fewer children and their families struggling with poverty next year.
- The Toronto Symphony Orchestra estimates \$12,700 per year in donor dollars will be diverted from programming into administrative costs.
- The MS Society, which faces incremental postage costs of \$56,000, estimates the equivalent of 1,400 donations will need to be diverted from research and services.^{viii}

The stamp price increases will put financial pressure on the many organizations that rely on the mail for their day-to-day operations.

What you can do

Please consider writing Lisa Raitt, the Minister responsible for Canada Post (see enclosed template letter) and/or putting up a 'Save Canada Post' window sign. You may also want to tell your municipal councilor that you don't want community mailboxes in your neighbourhood

ⁱ Statistics Canada. 2012 Canadian Survey on disability. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131203/dq131203a-eng.htm>

ⁱⁱ Susan Dixon, petition. <http://www.change.org/en-CA/petitions/don-t-let-canada-post-end-door-to-door-delivery>

ⁱⁱⁱ Riedner, Heidi. Keswick residents express anger at cancellation of home mail delivery. <http://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/4356184-keswick-residents-express-anger-at-cancellation-of-home-mail-delivery/>

^{iv} Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review. Executive Summary, viii.

^v Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review. P. 18

^{vi} Toronto Star. The Fixer: Shameful littering at community mailbox. Jack Lakey Sun Nov 13 2011 http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/the_fixer/2011/11/13/the_fixer_shameful_littering_at_community_mailbox.html; Globe and Mail. From theft to litter: Canada Post's delivery phase-out presents hurdles. Tu Thanh Ha, Dec. 12 2013, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/from-theft-to-litter-canada-posts-delivery-phase-out-presents-hurdles/article15919435/>

^{vii} RCMP. Mail theft prevention Surrey, 2013-12-23 <http://surrey.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=79&languageId=1&contentId=32872>

^{viii} Imagine Canada. Letter to Hon. Lisa Raitt, PC, MP, January 20, 2014. http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/transport_canada_sub_mission_canada_post_14-01-20.pdf