

Canada Post to stop door-to-door delivery next fall

By Brock Weir

If you're one of the approximately 4,500 Aurora homes that still receives mail at your doorstep, enjoy it while you can.

Canada Post will wrap up door-to-door mail delivery to the majority of local households who still receive the service in the fall of 2015. Local services will be replaced by community mailboxes in the latest phase of the rollout which is affecting towns and cities from coast to coast.

According to Jon Hamilton, spokesperson for Canada Post, residents still receiving door-to-door postal service can expect to receive a package over the next week or two outlining the changes. While the shift to community mailboxes is a done deal, questionnaires within the packages will give residents the opportunity to sound off on the placement of the new mailboxes and other aspects of their delivery.

"This feedback is incorporated into [local] plans as we try to find the best location for the boxes," says Mr. Hamilton. "One of the main questions we found really helpful in 2014 was whether or not people preferred smaller clusters of boxes located close to their home in their neighbourhood, or a larger cluster of boxes located a little farther away. Obviously that would mean more boxes and box locations, but it helps us build a plan that is based upon what the neighbourhood is looking for.

"From there, we look to the municipality and we put together a plan. Once we get to a point where we have a draft plan we share that with the municipality as well. We'll go over and knock on the doors of anybody who would be living adjacent to the proposed locations, talk to them, and make any adjustments trying to find the safest, most convenient locations for the boxes."

One aspect of local mail delivery that will change very little is existing services to local businesses. If businesses already receive door-to-door service, this is likely to continue, Mr. Hamilton adds. The reason, he says, is the high volume of mail stemming out from industry.

"Many of the businesses - small, medium and large - rely on the mail to run their business," says Mr. Hamilton.

The same, however, cannot be said of the average household, he adds.

"If you look at Aurora today, community mailbox delivery is by far the main mode of delivery. Before we make a single conversion, there are already 11,000 households that receive their mail through a community mailbox as opposed to just under 5,000 that receive their mail through door-to-door delivery.

"Community mailboxes have been a large part of how we have served Aurora for decades and that fits in with the national average where about two thirds of Canadians don't have door-to-door service. We understand this is a mode of delivery that works and people adjust to. We need to make changes in order to protect the postal service. With the amount of mail on the decline - last year there were 1.2 billion fewer pieces of mail in the system than there were in 2006 - we need to make changes in order to fulfil our mandate, which is to deliver to all Canadian addresses and do so in a financially sustainable manner."

Incoming community mailboxes that will be installed next year will be markedly different than those already serving the majority of Aurora neighbourhoods. New boxes will be shallower, but wider to allow larger pieces of mail to sit flat, and there will be additional secured boxes for oversized mail and parcels. This, adds Mr. Hamilton, reflects changes in the pieces of mail still handled by Canada Post with significant increases in online shopping.

Have your say: Are you part of one of the 4,500 households still receiving door-to-door mail delivery? How will this change effect you? Do you still use Canada Post services? Send your thoughts to letters@auroran.com.