



CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA CITY COUNCIL Staff Report

November 7, 2023
ORDERS OF BUSINESS

TO:	Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
SUBMITTED BY:	Emily Garay, Administrative Analyst
APPROVED BY:	Chip Rerig, City Administrator
SUBJECT:	Receive a presentation on the exploration of street addresses and provide staff with direction

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a presentation on the exploration of street addresses and provide staff with direction.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

Tradition and preservation of Carmel-by-the-Sea's charm, unique look, history, and culture have been at the forefront of its governing body and community throughout its almost 107-year history. Throughout the City's history and culture, a daily trip to the local post office to pick up mail, chat with person behind the counter, and catch up with friendly faces has become a tradition for many residents and community members. Changing times have brought increased scrutiny and requirements for a verifiable street address from financial institutions to secure loans and lines of credit, the California Secretary of State made changes to its filing requirements for businesses to have a verifiable street address, utility companies regularly rely on street addresses to set-up utilities services, and the COVID-19 pandemic brought some people to rely on online ordering of essential necessities and medications. With attention to the concerns of residents, expressions of frustration navigating the increasing standards for address verification, delivery of packages, findability in an emergency, and concern for public safety, the issue of street addresses was placed on the City Council's 2022-2023 priority project list.

On October 4, 2022, City Council received a presentation from staff of preliminary research, historical context, City Council and residents' consideration of street addresses in the past, and a "white paper" (**Attachment 2**). With a focus on the City's intention of not having door-to-door mail delivery and its firm intention to keep the downtown post office open, staff identified as a critical element the necessity to obtain an official answer from the USPS on whether implementing a street address system would compel mail delivery and/or result in the closure of the downtown post office. City Council directed staff to continue research on the issue of exploring a street address system implementation and confirm if implementing a street address system would compel mail delivery service. Staff moved forward exploring street addresses with a recognition and emphasis on the topics of implementing street addresses and at-home/door-to-door mail delivery as two separate issues, with the intention of only exploring implementation of the former.

Staff has worked diligently to continue researching the process of implementing a street address system,

finding answers to questions asked by City Councilmembers and community members (**Attachment 1**), gaining thorough knowledge and understanding of the USPS processes and policies, and developing more consistent lines of communication with USPS representatives. Although staff cannot definitively advise that the downtown post office will never close or move, or that mail delivery beyond the established PO Box system will never happen in the City, staff has found a process within the USPS system of operations that could answer the question of whether street addresses would compel mail delivery beyond the established system.

Staff has identified the “USPS Postal Operations Manual, Issue 9” (USPS POM) (**Attachment 3**), the “US Postal Service National Delivery Planning Standards” (**Attachment 4**), the City’s Municipal Code, and the City’s General Plan as the foundation for exploring a street address system implementation process.

The USPS POM, “serves as a blueprint” and details the USPS’ policies, regulations, and procedures of postal operations. Staff’s analysis of the POM focused on Chapter 63, Sections 631.1-643.1. The US Postal Service National Delivery Planning Standards explains the collaborative process required to establish an addressing system, addressing system requirements for USPS system recognition, and the required point of contact for the process. The point of contact is a local USPS delivery planning individual, referred to as a Growth Manager. The Growth Manager works within the USPS policies and procedures to assist and “work closely with you to determine the best approach to providing mail delivery service” and in determining the “appropriate mode of delivery while considering input from the parties involved.”

A significant development is that USPS has moved to a preferred “centralized delivery” approach or “mode of delivery,” and “curbside, sidewalk delivery, and door modes are generally not available for new delivery points, with very rare exceptions” or “in very unusual circumstances.” Centralized delivery includes a variety of options, including call windows, horizontal mail receptacles, cluster box units (CBUs), and wall-mounted receptacles. The USPS operational policies for delivery services include recognition of local ordinances that may affect the mode of delivery available, listing that PO Box or general delivery service may be provided at the nearest postal facility. If a collaborative process is initiated with the USPS and the Growth Manager, staff would emphasize the City’s general plan and municipal code as it relates to the importance of the City’s character, tradition, and attention to safety due to the City’s unique landscape. At this point, staff has contacted the local Growth Manager for informational purposes only.

Staff’s analysis concludes that implementing a street address/street numbers system would require a collaborative process between the City and the USPS Growth Manager, Postmaster, and/or designee but it will not necessarily automatically trigger at-home/door-to-door mail delivery. Implementing a mode of delivery or delivery method of at-home/door-to-door mail delivery would involve staff and the City taking an intentional and proactive approach in requesting at-home/door-to-door mail delivery from USPS.

Staff’s presentation to City Council will include an explanation of its analysis and conclusion regarding the USPS’ process of street address system and delivery mode implementation, California’s Fire Code and Building Code as it relates to street addresses, and seek direction from City Council on whether to move forward with street addresses exploration and implementation by initiating and engaging in the established process with the local USPS Growth Manager or whether to conclude its research and maintain the status quo of not having a street address system in the City. If staff is directed to move forward, once a collaborative working relationship is established with the USPS Growth manager or representative, staff would return to the City Council with a roadmap and timeline for community engagement and outreach for the process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

On October 4, 2022, Council gave direction to staff to continue to do research on the topic and confirm if implementing a street address system will require mail delivery service.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1) Questions from City Council & Community

Attachment 2) Street Addresses White Paper

Attachment 3) USPS Postal Operations Manual (POM)

Attachment 4) USPS Handbook PO-632

Attachment 5) USPS POM Chapter 63, Sections 631.1-643.1