



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

October 4, 2022
EXTRAORDINARY BUSINESS

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Maxine Gullo, Ass't. City Administrator

APPROVED BY: Chip Rerig, City Administrator

SUBJECT: Receive a presentation on street addresses to be discussed, and provide staff with direction

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a presentation on street addresses to be discussed, and provide staff with direction.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

In its 106-year history, Carmel-by-the-Sea has not implemented a formal street address system. Tradition and preservation of the City's charm, unique look, and culture have been at the forefront of its governing body and residents' preference in the past to reject implementing a street addressing system have maintained the absence of house street numbers until this day. Based on community feedback and the placement of street addresses on City Council's 2022-2023 priority project list, City staff presents historical context, residents' and Council's approach in consideration of street addresses in the past, and reasons to reconsider the issue with changing times. At-home mail delivery for all residents in Carmel-by-the-Sea by the US Postal Service is not an action City staff will advocate for or pursue with the possible implementation of street addresses. City staff has established a line of communication with the Carmel Postmaster and plans to continue the discussion and communication of the City's hardline stand of not wanting at-home mail delivery for Carmel-by-the-Sea and maintaining the downtown post office open and operational.

As times change, as financial institutions change their requirements for filing paperwork, as the COVID-19 pandemic spurred a turn to online ordering and delivery of essential necessities, the notion of exploring a street address system has made its way to the City Council's 2022-2023 priority project list. The reasoning behind making this a priority item comes from the changing times and residents expressing difficulties in opening or maintaining financial accounts, securing loans, activating or changing basic utilities like wireless internet, having packages delivered to the correct house, or being "findable" in an emergency as a matter of public safety. Carmel-by-the-Sea residents provide new neighbors with workarounds and look out for each other's packages when a new UPS or FedEx driver accidentally delivers a package to the wrong house. The current descriptive address system, the use of unique house "names" on a sign outside of residents' houses, and use of the US Post Office's physical address for vendors that do not ship to PO Boxes can prove to be efficient and straightforward to many Carmel-by-the-Sea residents. The City's proposal of

exploring the idea of street addresses for its one square mile is rooted in listening to residents who have exhausted the workarounds and expressed the need to be findable in emergencies, to have an address to which they can reliably receive packages containing medical necessities, and maintain financial affairs in order.

The City administration recognizes the topics of implementing street addresses and at-home mail delivery as two separate issues with the intention of exclusively exploring consideration of the former. The local post office has a long history in Carmel-by-the-Sea as being a local hub to where residents can make a daily visit to check their PO boxes, pick up packages from the friendly faces at the counter who many residents know by name, and catch up with other neighbors making the visit that day. Carmel-by-the-Sea's downtown post office is one of about 4,400 independent post offices in the United States that do not have carrier delivery and not a status the City wants to change.^[1] City staff plans to have a direct line of communication with Carmel's Postmaster, J.R. Valeriano, in continuing communication of the City's hardline stand of not wanting at-home mail delivery for Carmel-by-the-Sea and maintaining the downtown post office open and operational.

Priorities in exploring a street address development process would include the following:

- Ensuring and maintaining the downtown post office in operation.
- Clear stand against implementing at-home mail delivery.
- Consideration of street address signs would be subject to specifically developed design standards.

Additionally, there is the possible consideration of implementing street addresses solely for purpose of being findable on a map or GPS device without exterior display of house numbers, a choice for residents to decide, or approaching the system with the expectation of design standards-approved street number signs outside every house and building in Carmel-by-the-Sea.

With the presentation of its preliminary research, City staff looks for direction from City Council to begin exploring a street address implementation process or maintain the status quo.

[1] Patricia Lee Brown, "Fighting for a Carrier-Free Zone," *The New York Times*, September 6, 2000.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1) Street Addresses White Paper