

City Council Staff Report



Subject: Follow-Up Information RE: Cluster Mailboxes in Old Town
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Date: September 17, 2020
Type of Item: Work Session

Summary Recommendation

Staff recommends Council review the follow-up information requested at the July 16, 2020 Work Session and provide direction on the following policy questions:

1. Does the City Council want to change their current policy regarding the installation of cluster mail boxes within the Public Right-of-Way in the Old Town area?
2. If the City Council does not want to change their current policy, would you like to pursue any of the following alternatives:
 - a. Does the City Council want to allow individual HOAs to request cluster mail boxes?
 - b. Is the City Council interested in subsidizing primary residents' P.O. Boxes within the area deemed deliverable within Old Town?
 - c. Does the City Council want to refer this issue to the Planning Commission for review?

Acronyms

HOA	Homeowner's Association
P.O. Box	Post Office Box
ROW	Right-of-Way
USPS	United States Postal Service

Executive Summary and Background

On July 16, 2020 ([Staff Report](#) and [Minutes](#), page 3) the Council reviewed the history of cluster mailboxes in Old Town and gave staff direction to return with additional information prior to making any policy decisions. Council requested information on:

- o Quantity of cluster mailboxes needed.
- o Possible locations for cluster mailboxes in Old Town.
- o Staff has also brought approximate costs associated with the purchase of the cluster mailboxes and installation.

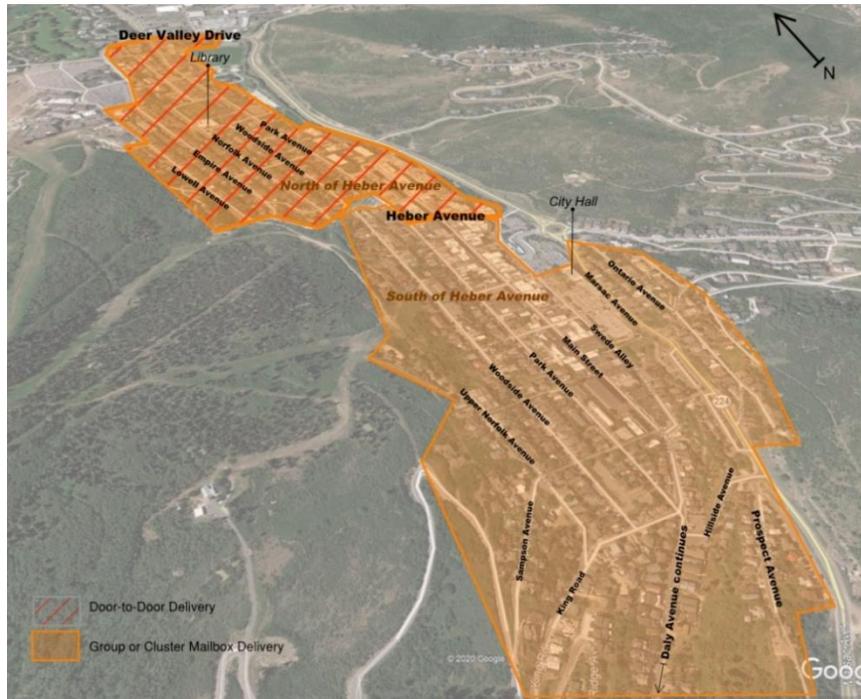
Analysis

The follow-up information requested at the July 16, 2020 Work Session includes:

- **Quantity of cluster mailboxes required** (see Map 1 for delivery areas).
 - One (1) cluster mailbox is required per dwelling unit. The following quantities identify the number of dwelling units based on information available in GIS and Summit County property records.
 - 1550 units in door to door area (red hatched door-to-door delivery area)
 - 1173 units in cluster area (orange shaded group or cluster mailbox delivery area)

- 2723 total units = 2723 cluster mailboxes required.

Map 1: Delivery areas defined by the Postmaster's delivery methods.



- **Possible locations for cluster mailboxes.**

- The Planning, Engineering, and Economic Development Departments have convened to determine possible locations for groupings of cluster mailboxes. While there will be operational challenges with each location (snow removal, parking, access, Sundance Film Festival operations, etc.), staff is confident that some locations could be successful with infrastructure improvements and careful site planning. Staff created an [interactive map](#) on Google Maps which identifies all possible locations. A list of possible locations includes:

- Behind Miner's Hospital
- Library Parking Lot
- Woodside Park Phase I
- Woodside Park Phase II
- Lower Main Trolley Turnaround
- Flagpole Parking Lot
- Bob Wells Plaza
- North Marsac Parking Lot
- Lower Sandridge Parking Lot
- Upper Sandridge Parking Lot
- Upper Main Trolley Turnaround
- New Treasure Hill Trailhead
- Near Alice Claim Retaining Wall
- *Not included on the map:* Within Certain Unbuilt Platted Right-of-Ways (to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the City Engineer)

- On average, most cluster mailbox units contain 16 individual mailboxes. This would equate to 171 cluster mailbox units. Some locations could serve more cluster mailboxes than others – staff believes that 171 could be scattered throughout the area with careful site planning at some or all of the locations outlined above.
- **Approximate cost of purchase and installation of cluster mailboxes.**
 - The average cost of a 16-unit cluster mailbox is \$1,500. This does not include installation.
 - Without assuming a discount for a bulk order or installation, the total cost of 171 cluster mailbox units would be: **\$256,500.**
 - Installation would require a concrete foundation/base for each cluster mailbox unit and site improvements that will likely differ at each cluster mailbox location. This will be an increased cost that would be dependent on what the improvements of each location are required.

Based on the additional information outlined above, staff requests that the Council consider the following policy questions:

1. Does the City Council want to change their current policy regarding the installation of cluster mail boxes within the Public ROW in the Old Town area?

Staff has outlined potential opportunities and challenges to shifting the current policy decision:

Opportunity	
Respond to Constituent Requests	There have been multiple requests by constituents for the Council to reconsider their decision regarding cluster mailboxes. They have cited the increased cost, lack of convenience, and desire for door-to-door delivery .
Neighborhood Nodes	The cluster mailbox locations could serve as a location for more precise and focused public outreach. While notices are posted at the Post Office, these smaller neighborhood nodes could allow for notification of very neighborhood-centric issues, events, etc.
Resolve USPS Issues	As stated previously, the USPS experiences significant issues with second homeowners forwarding mail to their undeliverable physical address which creates issues for returning mail and packages.
Challenge	
Cost	The City Council denied a previous request by the USPS to pay for and install cluster mailboxes within the Old Town area. City Staff has reached out to the USPS to determine if the USPS would still be willing to incur the cost and responsibility to install cluster mailboxes in the future – their answer was no. Any future cluster mailbox installations would be the responsibility of- and paid for by the homeowners or the City.
Maintenance	The City would likely be responsible for maintenance of the mailboxes – including, but not limited to: general upkeep, snow removal, etc.
Public ROW Concerns	Generally speaking, the safety concerns and site constraints for the Public ROW have not changed since 2011. Snow removal, vehicular movement, maintenance, etc. all remain concerns.
Aesthetic	Staff has concerns about the aesthetic of the cluster mailboxes within the Historic Districts. This may compound the cost challenge because as the cluster mailboxes become more customized or non-generic, the cost increase is significant.
Sustainability	In 2011, City Council identified a concern regarding increased carbon footprint resulting from the cluster mailboxes. This could probably go either way. While people are probably more likely to idle while they get mail out of a cluster mailbox, many

residents still do drive to the post office on Main Street. This is a concern in either scenario.

Not all locations are deemed deliverable for door-to-door delivery so this request may not be possible depending on the location within Old Town.

2. If the City Council does not want to change their current policy, would Council like to pursue any of the following alternatives:

a. Does the City Council want to allow individual HOAs to request cluster mailboxes?

City Staff has determined that there may be instances where cluster mailboxes are appropriate for condominium projects within the Old Town area. The City Engineer would review any installation within the ROW to mitigate any challenges outlined above, but the cluster mailboxes would ideally be installed on the condominium's property. This scenario would also require that the cluster mailboxes be the responsibility of the condominium (most likely the HOA). No cost would be incurred by the City. The cluster mailboxes would be subject to a Building Permit Review, Work in the ROW Permit (when applicable), and the Design Guidelines for Historic Districts and Historic Sites – a Historic District Design Review Pre-Application would be required.

b. Is the City Council interested in subsidizing primary residents' P.O. Boxes within the area deemed deliverable in Old Town?

The City Council could set aside funds to offset the Post Office's costs for the P.O. Box fees. In 2018, the City GIS department determined that there are approximately 300 Old Town primary residents with a P.O. Box. Since 2013, the rate for a P.O. Box has increased to ~\$100-\$200/year per P.O. Box – this would equate to an expenditure of ~\$3,000-\$6,000/year. The City could consider using the base price for a P.O. Box (~\$100) and any amount over that would be the responsibility of the primary resident.

c. Does the City Council want to refer this issue to the Planning Commission for review?

The City Council may refer this issue to the Planning Commission to review for issues related to ROW, aesthetics, etc. The Planning Commission would make a recommendation to City Council for final policy direction.