

CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** March 6, 2017

SUBJECT: Review and discuss the United States Postal Service's Cluster Box Unit Policy.

PRESENTER: Clayton Comstock, Planning Manager

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

With the rise in parcel deliveries from online retailers, the Fort Worth District of the United States Postal Service (USPS) has recently implemented a very important postal policy change that impacts all single family residential neighborhoods moving forward, regardless of lot size or neighborhood density. All new single family developments will be required to utilize Cluster Box Units (CBUs), or "Centralized Delivery," rather than the traditional individual mailbox in front of each home. Examples of upcoming developments that this will effect include Fresh Meadows, Cambridge Estates, Thornbridge North, and HomeTown Canal District. A webinar was recently given through the North Central Texas Council of Governments on the topic. Information from the webinar can be viewed online here: <http://www.nctcog.org/envir/usps-webinar.asp>. Planning staff has already opened a dialogue with the USPS District Office on development review procedures as well as with neighboring North Tarrant cities regarding their anticipated next steps.

Staff is seeking Council's input and direction on whether staff should pursue possible designs for cluster boxes and cluster box sites.

Siting of cluster boxes goes through USPS review and approval. It is possible, however, that the areas themselves could be required by the City to have such improvements as adequate lighting, resident access from the sidewalk rather than the street, integrated HOA open space amenities (i.e. landscaping, trash receptacle for mail litter, bench, etc.), adjacent sidewalk ramps for accessibility, marked crosswalks, dedicated off-street or marked on-street parking spaces, or other elements.

Standard cluster boxes themselves come in a variety of color options in the market, as well as decorative pedestals, posts and toppers. The following page shows the variety of options for cluster box units.



Various examples of cluster box units (CBUs).

While these cluster box units will change the way new neighborhoods look and function moving forward, there are some benefits. Boxes are key-locked and special parcel units allow for larger packages to be secured, whereby decreasing mail theft. The centralized location also allows for greater utilization of the street for on-street parking. The USPS will not deliver to homes that have parked cars less than 15 feet from a mail box. There is also a neighborhood engagement aspect to CBUs, where neighbors have an opportunity to meet and become familiar with one another.