



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** March 16, 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 affects 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 affect 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: 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.

Siting of cluster boxes goes through USPS review and approval. Attached is a copy of the USPS builder and developer information packet for cluster box units. It is possible, however, that additional standards could be adopted for the cluster box areas such as adequate lighting, resident access, integrated HOA open space amenities (i.e. landscaping, trash receptacle for mail litter, bench, etc.), 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, there are some benefits. Boxes are key-locked and special parcel units allow larger packages to be secured, which decreases 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 or trash cans less than 15 feet from a mailbox. There is also a neighborhood engagement aspect to CBUs, where neighbors have an opportunity to meet and become familiar with one another.

CITY COUNCIL DIRECTION: Staff presented this policy to City Council discussed at the March 6, 2017, work session. City Council directed staff to work with the Planning



and Zoning Commission to develop amendments to the zoning ordinance that include standards for cluster box units. Suggested standards include, but are not limited to, pedestal design, site lighting, and distance from driveways. Standards such as wall-mounted units and trash receptacles are not preferred.