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Architecture Canada

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OTTAWA Dec. 23, 2013 — Canada Post needs to deliver excellent design if it goes ahead with a controversial plan to replace door-to-door service with community mailboxes, says the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC).

The RAIC, who advocates for a livable built environment, says group mailboxes will affect the urban landscape and quality of life of Canadians.

Allan Teramura, RAIC regional director for Ontario North, East and Nunavut, says the impact on streets and green spaces will be significant.

“The problem of retrofitting these to existing neighborhoods is going to be extremely challenging,” he says. “There’s no information provided to date that shows how this will be done in a way that’s acceptable to anyone.”

As the first G-8 country to end door-to-door service, this experiment will receive international attention.

“Architects and urban designers should be involved in the development and planning of such postal nodes,” says RAIC president-elect **Wayne De Angelis**.

“They must be considered as part of the urban fabric just as mail slots and post boxes were considered in the planning of our homes,” he says.

Canada Post’s proposal raises many questions. When we are advocating sustainable cities, will people drive to collect their mail? While we improve accessibility in buildings, how will strollers, wheelchairs and seniors safely reach the clustered boxes in the dark and snow of winter?

If you’d like to start a conversation about why Canada Post’s plan needs careful and creative design thinking, RAIC board members across the country are available for comment.



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Here's what some of our board members are saying:

***Samuel Oboh, regional director for Alberta/Northwest Territories.
Based in Edmonton.***

“Being the only G8 country soon to be without door-to-door delivery service, fails the aspirations shared by Canadians – a society of equity, social justice, caring, inclusiveness, non-discrimination and access to the greatest extent possible.

“Creative and innovative urban design and architectural solutions will be needed to mitigate the impacts on the quality of life of Canadians.

“A good design solution will ensure best value, sustainability and avoid additional financial burden to taxpayers.”



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***Wayne De Angelis, president-elect and first vice-president.
Based in Vancouver.***

“A country such as Japan with unplanned city streets — address numbers are inconsistent and do not follow any specific order — still delivers mail door-to-door in single-family homes and offices.

“The delivery of mail to homes is not only is an essential service but, it is also about employing individuals.

“In subdivisions I have seen, home owners tend to drive to these boxes instead of walking.”

***Jean-Pierre Pelletier, second vice-president, regional director for Quebec.
Based in Montreal.***

“The mail boxes might be acceptable in new developments with mainly younger families but the model is not replicable in an urban context where the population is of all ages and conditions.”

RAIC | Architecture Canada is a voluntary national association established in 1907 as the voice for architecture and its practice in Canada. Its mission is:

- To affirm that architecture matters;
- To celebrate the richness and diversity of architecture in Canada; and
- To support architects in achieving excellence.

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