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August 3, 2015

Pearl Nucich  
Executive Assistant  
Mennonite Benevolent Society  
32945 Marshall Road  
Abbotsford, BC

Dear Ms. Nucich:

Here is my report regarding the construction of a Canada Post outlet at Mennonite Benevolent Society, Abbotsford. In preparing this report I have gained firsthand experience about how residents feel about their postal service experience. As well, I have researched about the cost and revenue of a Canada Post retail franchise. I believe this information will be of benefit to you.

As you now, Mennonite Benevolent Society has an obligation towards its residents: to provide supportive independence. Although most basic amenities are present at MBS, one important amenity is missing: a post office. The lack of a post office requires most residents to travel themselves to the nearest post office or ask another individual to travel on their behalf. This defeats the purpose of MBS, which is to encourage safe and independent living.

With the construction of a Canada Post outlet, MBS will become more appealing for future residents, as well, the revenue generated from the retail outlet will help support other establishments in the coming years.

I appreciate your time and consideration into reading this proposal. I have worked hard to gather research and data for this report and I hope you find the information to be beneficial for the success of MBS. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the report, please contact me at 604-834-3289 or by email at ruhanigrewal@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Ruhani Grewal  
Encl. Construction of a Canada Post Outlet at Mennonite Benevolent Society

**Construction of a Canada Post Outlet at Mennonite Benevolent Society**

for  
Pearl Nucich, Executive Assistant  
Mennonite Benevolent Society  
Abbotsford, BC

by  
Ruhani Grewal  
ENGLISH 301 Student

August 3, 2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

A survey of residents at Mennonite Benevolent Society (MBS) on 32945 Marshall Road was conducted to determine their response to the current postal service system and experience. In person surveys and interviews were conducted during last week of June 2015 in both Menno Hospital and Menno Home. Data generated by the survey and online research has been tabulated and analyzed for this report.

The results of the survey show that residents are not satisfied with their postal service experience and would prefer a post office on campus for convenience and self-assurance. The lack of a post office defeats the purpose of MBS which is to provide supportive independent living with basic facilities.

Research from Canada Post Corporation has revealed that an initial investment to own a retail franchise is \$171 217 and the cost of construction and maintenance is their responsibility. An annual revenue of \$25 000 to \$30 000 is expected from the retail outlet which will eventually benefit the community at MBS in the future. For the generation of the initial investment amount, MBS needs to control current expenses.

Proposed recommendations to help create the funds are:

- Minimize gardening and landscaping costs.
- Reduce energy costs of unoccupied units.
- Consider a decrease in the number of care-aide staff members on weekends.
- Extend the hours of Fireside Treasures Café on weekends and offer family specials.

## **INTRODUCTION**

While the Mennonite Benevolent Society (MBS) is motivated by concern for the elderly, and is supported by government funding and donations to provide housing and other services: café, pharmacy, hair salon, there is one important facility that is not available to the elderly residents: a post office.

At the moment, residents either seek assistance from others or travel alone to the nearest post office. However, the assistance of others does not provide a confidential experience and travelling is not feasible for those who are incapable of leaving campus. This situation fails to support the obligation that MBS has towards its residents, which is to provide 'supportive independence.' As you know, MBS describes supportive independent living as, "a community housing model that combines homelike building features with the basic support services to enhance quality of life and enable seniors to live safely, comfortable, and independently for as long as possible" (1). This motto seems to be neglected as residents are missing a basic service: a post office.

Based on examination of research and interviews with locals of Mennonite Benevolent Society, this report assesses the potential for construction of a Canada Post outlet on campus.

### ***Method of Research***

One hundred residents of Menno Hospital and Menno Home (29% of total population) responded to a short survey designed to analyze the demand and need of a post office. The survey questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix I. In addition, an interview with Diane Urquhart, the Recreation and Volunteer Manager at MBS, was conducted to gain insight on the current postal system offered to residents and to assess the importance of such a facility. The interview questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix II. An overall analysis of the procedure and potential costs and revenue was performed to determine the feasibility of implementing a Canada Post outlet.

### ***Limitations***

The survey participants include those from all three wings of Menno Hospital and the west dining hall of Menno Home. Collecting primary data from residents in Menno Apartments was not available as those residents live in private homes, thus public solicitation is not possible. However, the trend found in the data provides sufficient insight into the current state of postal services at MBS.

## ***Scope of Inquiry***

This report covers five major topics:

1. How do residents of MBS access the nearest Canada Post outlet?
2. How do residents of MBS feel about their postal experience?
3. How large is the demand for a Canada Post outlet on campus?
4. What is the current postal system offered to residents and how effective is it?
5. What is the procedure and cost of opening an authorized Canada Post outlet?

The collected data shows a need for a post office on campus. The report concludes by outlining the benefits of a Canada Post outlet to MBS and by recommending immediate and cost effective steps that the community can pursue in order to accommodate a Canada Post retail outlet.

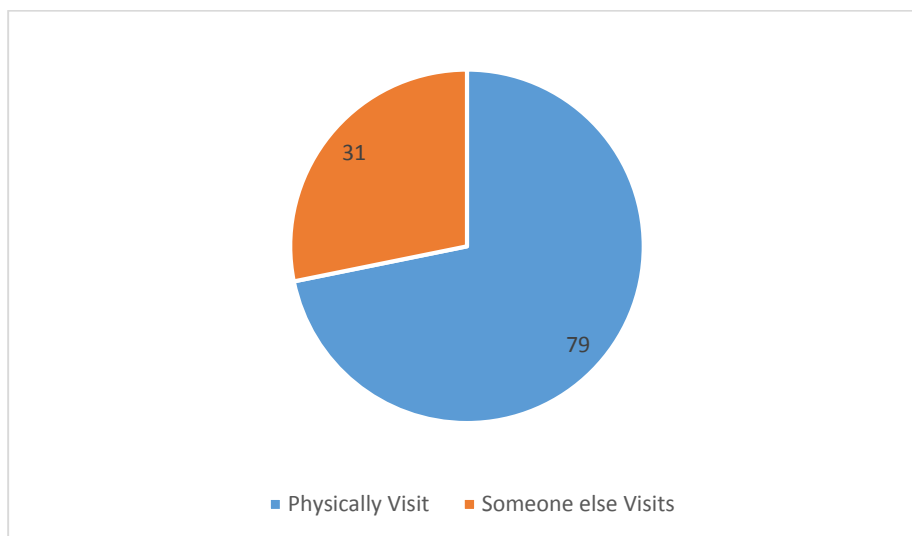
## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### ***Survey Data***

Each question of the survey has been analyzed individually below.

### **Do residents personally visit the post office or ask someone else to go on their behalf?**

Figure 1 shows the method of visit that residents use to access a Canada Post outlet. As indicated, most residents visit a Canada Post outlet themselves. The other 31 residents ask someone else, such as a friend or relative, to travel on their behalf. These residents are those who are incapable or forbidden to leave campus due to health and safety concerns.

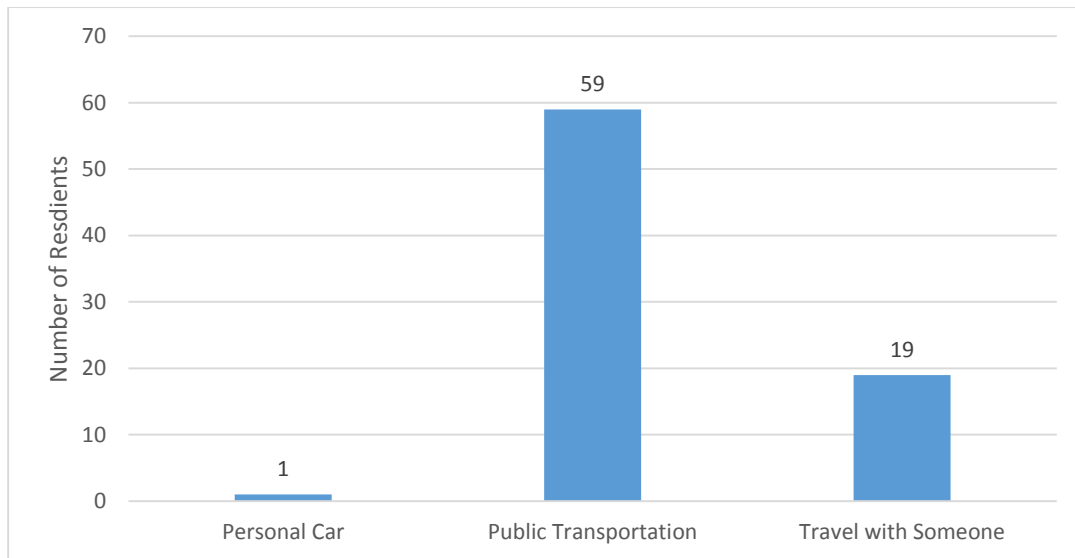


**Figure 1.** Method of Visit to Canada Post.

### Those who personally visit, how do they access the nearest Canada Post outlet?

Figure 2 outlines the method of transportation that residents use to travel to the nearest Canada Post outlet from MBS. As shown, from a total of 79 residents who personally visit a post office, 59 of them travel via public transportation, such as a public bus or community shuttle. Residents resort to public transportation because most do not have access to a personal vehicle, due to age and poor health, and others have to wait for their care-taker or friend to find time and travel with them.

Although Figure 2 shows public transit to be most popular among the residents, it fails to include those who are completely incapable to leave MBS grounds. As well, one must consider that public transit is exhausting and precarious for those who use it, since most residents are weak and require constant attention.



**Figure 2.** Method of Transportation to Canada Post office.

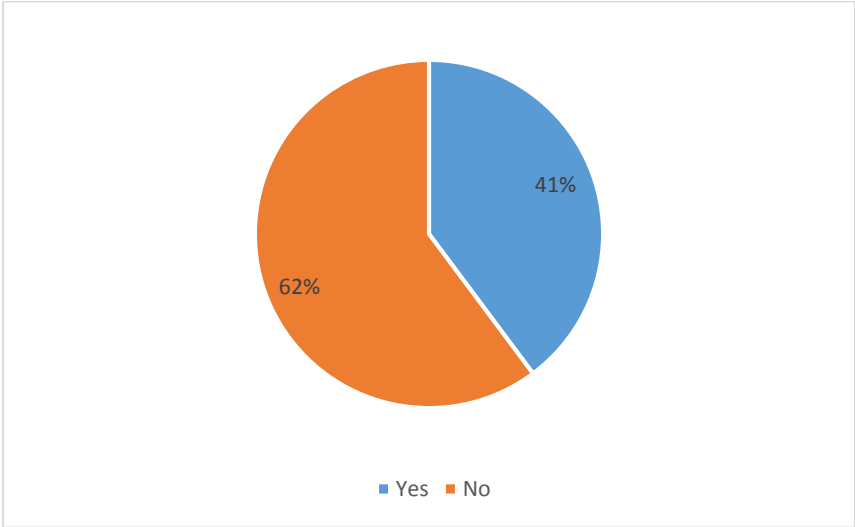
### How far is the nearest Canada Post office?

According to the survey (Appendix I), the nearest Canada Post outlet to Mennonite Benevolent Society on 32945 Marshall Road, Abbotsford BC is more than one kilometer away. To be precise, Canada Post is approximately 3.2 kilometers from campus. This is quite far for residents, especially those who are unable to travel. Moreover, the inconvenience leaves residents feeling helpless, even though the motto of MBS is to provide ‘supportive independence.’

**Those who ask someone else to visit the post office, is the experience confidential and satisfactory?**

Figure 3 shows the residents’ opinion regarding their experience when another person completes their errands to the post office. From the 31 residents who responded, 62% of them find their postal experience to be unsatisfactory and disappointing.

In fact, one the residents, named Angela Adair from Menno Hospital, said her experience was ‘sad and discouraging.’ She had sent a care-taker from the hospital to post a blanket she hand-made for her great-granddaughter. For unknown reasons, the blanket never reached her great-granddaughter in Iowa, USA. Of course, it is possible that the blanket was misplaced by the sorting facility, but Ms. Adair considers the situation to be avoidable if she had personally sent the package. Such situations make other residents, like Ms. Adair, feel helpless and unimportant.



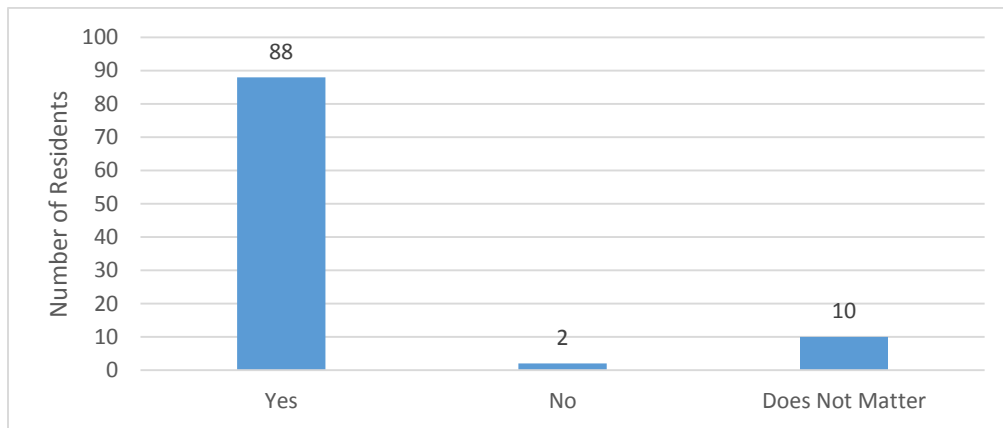
**Figure 3.** Is the experience confidential and satisfactory for those who allow someone else to visit a Canada Post outlet?

**Do the residents prefer a Canada Post outlet on-site at Mennonite Benevolent Society?**

Figure 4 highlights the demand of a Canada Post outlet at MBS. As shown in Figure 4, a strong majority of the residents would prefer a post office that is within their reach. The 10 residents who responded as ‘does not matter’ were those who are comfortable using public transit or other transportation means, such as a taxi. Nonetheless, most residents who do travel personally to a post office responded to a ‘yes’ for construction of Canada Post. A small minority of the residents were apprehensive about the construction of a post office because of the potential rise in living expenses at



MBS. The two residents, however, did mention that if costs do not exceed their financial limit, then the construction of a post office would be most appreciated.



**Figure 4.** Demand of a Canada Post outlet.

### ***Interview Data***

In the interview with Diane Urquhart, the Recreation and Volunteer Manager, the current situation of postal services at Mennonite Benevolent Society was outlined. The interview questionnaire has been appended to this report (Appendix II). Ms. Urquhart mentioned that regular Canadian and international postage stamps can be purchased at the front reception desk in Menno Hospital. A red postbox is located outside of Menno Hospital for the postage of letters. However, express mail, packages and other parcels need to be sent from an authorized Canada Post office which the residents either access themselves or send someone else.

Diane Urquhart said that a ‘mini post office’ did exist inside Fireside Treasures Gift Shop at Menno Hospital about five years ago. Postage stamps and packaging materials were available 7 days a week, but shipping of the package was still done at the nearest Canada Post outlet. Nonetheless, the postage materials had to be removed because it was entirely volunteer run. The volunteers were not well trained and inexperienced with handling money, distributing postage stamps and keeping up with the constant fluctuation in stamp prices. This resulted in poor service and displeased residents.

According to Diane Urquhart, if an authorized Canada Post opens on-campus with paid workers, then this will be a wonderful experience for all residents of MBS. The hospice will be ‘complete’ with all facilities and it will be true to its motto of ‘supportive independence.’

## **Construction of an Authorized Canada Post Office**

According to the Canada Post Corporation, ‘New retail post offices are opened in suitable businesses in response to the needs of our customers. We analyze potential new areas through a combination of locational analysis, customer input and local management expertise’ (2). Canada Post requires an initial investment of \$171 217 to own a retail franchise (3). All costs related to: site selection, site preparation, construction and ongoing maintenance will be covered by Canada Post (3). A modest income of \$25 000 to \$30 000 can be expected for the owner (3). As you see, this means the initial investment can be repaid by the revenue of the post office in approximately five to six years.

The construction of a post office will not only benefit the residents, but MBS, in terms of finances, for the coming years.

## **CONCLUSION**

### ***Summary and Overall Interpretation of Findings***

Mennonite Benevolent Society in Abbotsford has an obligation left to fulfil: to provide supportive independence. With the presence of Canada Post on campus, residents will feel more comfortable and independent as they will complete their own duties in their convenience. At the moment, the nearest Canada Post office is 3.2 kilometers away and is not reachable for those who are unable to travel. As well, those who do travel, risk their health and safety.

Overall, the study shows that a vast majority of the residents would prefer a post office on campus, that is, if annual living expenses are not significantly affected. As mentioned by Canada Post Corporation, after the initial investment of \$171 217, the cost of construction will be taken care of Canada Post. Once the revenue of \$25 000 – \$30 000 recovers the initial investment, the income generated can be used for other expenses at MBS, such as creating more beds for residents in Menno Hospital.

For the future, the construction of a post office would attract future seniors to join MBS as there is no other hospice in British Columbia that offers a community with all essential amenities. In addition, further establishments can be ventured in coming years with the continuous generation of revenue from a Canada Post retail outlet.

## ***Recommendations***

The initial investment to own a Canada Post franchise can be difficult. Although MBS receives government funding, we need to consider the annual budget of MBS and ensure residents are not affected with the added expense. Despite this financial uncertainty, however, MBS can still take some immediate and cost-cutting steps to accommodate a Canada Post outlet. Please consider the following recommendations.

- Gardening and landscaping budget can be minimized.
- Reduce energy costs by lowering heat and turning off lights in unoccupied units.
- Decrease the number of care-aide staff members on weekends as trained volunteers can accomplish the same tasks, such as feeding the residents.
- Consider extending the hours for Fireside Treasures Café on weekends and offering family specials, to encourage the business of residents and their families and friends.

We need to reduce unnecessary expenses and use the government funds wisely for the betterment of the community at Mennonite Benevolent Society.

## **WORKS CITED**

1. Menno Place Campus. *Compassionate Christian Care for All*. Web. 30 June 2015.
2. Canada Post Corporation. *Becoming an Authorized Dealer for Canada Post*. Web. 30 June 2015.
3. Canada Post Corporation. *Five-point Action Plan*. Web. 28 July 2015.

## Appendix I – Survey Questionnaire

I am an undergraduate student at UBC involved in a technical writing project. The purpose of this survey is to collect primary data for analysis and investigation that aims to provide recommendations for improving your access to a Canada Post office on the Mennonite Benevolent Society campus, Abbotsford. The final formal report will be addressed to Pearl Nucich, the executive assistant at Mennonite Benevolent Society. The survey contains 5 multiple-choice questions, and it should take about 5 minutes of your time. Your responses are voluntary and anonymous. Thank you, I appreciate your valuable participation in my survey.

Do you personally visit the post office or do you ask someone else to go on your behalf?

- a. Personally visit
- b. Someone else goes on my behalf

If you personally visit, how do you access the nearest post office?

- a. By a personal car
- b. By public transportation
- c. Go with someone else, such as a friend, care-taker or relative.

Also, if you personally visit, how far is the nearest Canada Post office?

- a. Within 1 kilometer
- b. More than 1 kilometer

If someone else goes for you at the post office, do you find the experience to be confidential and satisfactory?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Would you prefer a Canada Post office on-site at Mennonite Benevolent Society?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Does not matter

## Appendix II – Interview Questionnaire

I am an undergraduate student at UBC involved in a technical writing project. My research is based on the proposal to allow easy access to a Canada Post office for the residents of Mennonite Benevolent Society. In order to collect primary data for analysis and investigation on the feasibility of postal services on campus, I would like to ask you a few questions. Together with the answers provided by the residents of Mennonite Benevolent society, the data I gather from this interview will serve the ultimate purpose of providing recommendations for improving the current status of postal services. The final formal report will be addressed to Pearl Nucich, the executive assistant at Mennonite Benevolent Society. This interview will take about 10-15 minutes of your time and your answers are completely voluntary.

1. Mennonite Benevolent Society has almost every facility, such as a hair salon, grocery store, etc., on-site to fulfill the needs of its residents, then why is there not a Canada Post office?
2. Currently, how do the residents fulfill their postal service needs?
3. Do you think the residents are satisfied with the current postal service system?
4. Do you think that the residents who live in Menno Hospital and are unable to travel feel that their postal service experience is confidential?
5. Do you think the residents will better prefer a Canada Post office on campus?
6. If so, then where would you prefer that the Canada Post office is located on campus?
7. Do you think that Mennonite Benevolent Society has the budget to build a Canada Post office?
8. If not, then where, in your opinion, can the budget be cut in order to build a Canada Post office?