

Canadians want federal government to deliver on protecting door-to-door mail service

Most Canadians like the idea of changing mail delivery from 5 to 3 days a week

May 25, 2017 – With a decision on the future of Canada Post [promised](#) for sometime “this spring,” a new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians still largely opposed to eliminating door-to-door mail delivery in urban areas, but open to a reduction in the number of days per week mail is delivered.

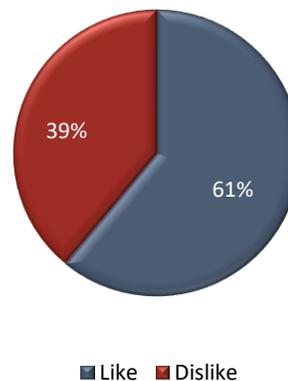
Initiated by the previous government of Stephen Harper and put on hold at the beginning of Justin Trudeau’s mandate, the switch from door-to-door delivery to community mailboxes has the support of fewer than two-in-five Canadians (37%). More than half (54%) oppose the change. These views are essentially unchanged since Angus Reid [first asked about this issue](#) in 2013.

Even though more than three quarters of Canadians (77%) say, “Canada Post is an essential service and should maintain its current service levels”, three-in-five (61%) like the idea of changing mail delivery from five days a week to three.

Key Findings:

- Canadians are near-unanimous in their dislike of the idea of closing rural post offices (89% do) or increasing the price of stamps (83%) to improve Canada Post’s bottom line
- While the privatization of Canada Post [has been debated](#) in recent years, Canadians oppose the idea at a rate of more than two-to-one (63% – 24%)
- More than half of Canadians (54%) are against eliminating door-to-door mail delivery in urban areas, while almost two-in-five like the idea (37%)

Please Indicate whether you like or dislike the idea of changing delivery from 5 to 3 days a week:



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from April 7 – 10, 2017, among a representative randomized sample of 1,508 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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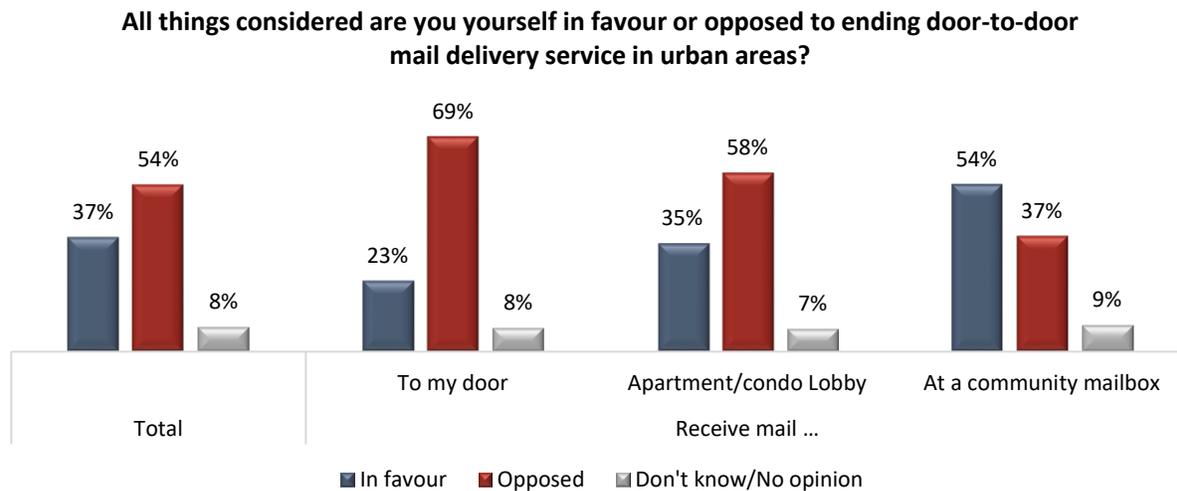
More than half of Canadians oppose ending door-to-door delivery

Declining rates of mail usage in the last two decades have led Canada Post to look for changes to its business model – [including an increased focus on parcel delivery](#). Most notably, in 2015, with the approval of the Harper government, the crown corporation began installing community mailboxes in urban areas, replicating a common practice in less densely populated areas. Rather than receiving mail at their doors, residents of the affected neighbourhoods would pick up their mail at a central location.

Roughly [900,000 households were converted](#) to the new model before the Trudeau government halted the changeover. The federal government is currently reviewing a December 2016 report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, and says it will decide on what route to take this spring.

The committee found that [9 in 10 Canadians are satisfied](#) with Canada Post's services, leading it to recommend continuing the moratorium on installing community mailboxes and reinstating door-to-door delivery.

More than half of Canadians are against the idea of eliminating door-to-door mail delivery (54%), and four-in-five (81%) worry that losing home delivery would pose a real hardship for some people. As was the case when Angus Reid [asked in 2013](#), opposition to ending door-to-door delivery is substantially higher among those who currently receive mail to their door, especially when compared to those who already receive their mail at a community box:



How often one uses Canada Post also seems to be correlated to one's opinion on the topic. People who say they send out fewer pieces of mail monthly are more likely to favour the elimination of door-to-door delivery. The inverse is true of those who send out more mail per month (see summary tables at the end of this release).

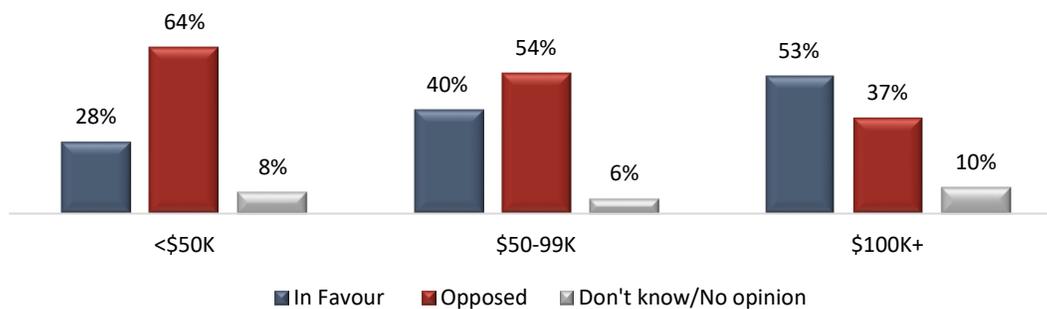
These findings are reinforced by different groups' perceptions of Canada Post's relevance. Overall, slightly more than one-third of respondents (36%) say private delivery services have made Canada Post irrelevant. Among those who use the service only rarely, however, roughly half (48%) agree with a statement to this effect.

Age also seems to have an impact on opinions on the elimination of door-to-door delivery. Canadians older than 35 are more likely than their younger counterparts to oppose the change. This is likely driven by apathy toward the topic among young Canadians (18-34), who are seven times more likely than the oldest cohort (55+) to say they don't know or have no opinion on the matter ([see comprehensive tables at the end of this release](#)). This is not surprising as almost half of the people who say they rarely send mail are 18-34 (45%).

Though an end to door-to-door delivery would disproportionately affect urban residents, urban and rural Canadians do not differ substantially on their views of Canada Post. Rural populations – who are less likely to have door-to-door delivery currently – are only slightly more likely to support the elimination of such service in urban areas. Almost half favour the idea (46%) compared to roughly one-third of urban residents (36%).

Income also appears to be related to views on the idea. High income earners (those making \$100,000 or more) are nearly twice as likely as low income earners (less than \$50,000) to favour getting rid of door-to-door delivery:

All things considered are you yourself in favour or opposed to ending door-to-door mail delivery service in urban areas?

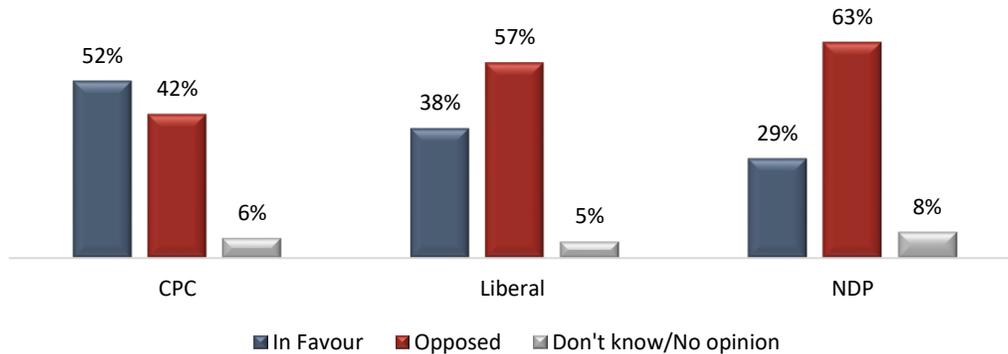


Not only are low income earners the most staunchly opposed to ending door-to-door delivery, more than four-in-five (83%) within the group claim that Canada Post provides an essential service and should maintain its current service levels, the highest among any income category.

The impact of delivery reform on jobs is at the front of lower-earners' minds as well, with three-quarters (76%) saying they are worried about potential job losses, compared to just over half of those making more than \$100k (55%) expressing the same concern. Overall, seven-in-ten Canadians (69%) say they are concerned with job losses related to possible door-to-door delivery reform.

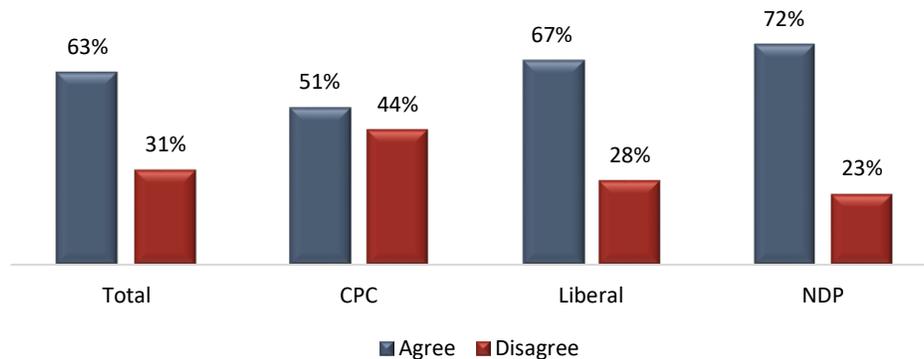
Opinions on eliminating door-to-door delivery are also split along partisan lines. People who voted for Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party in the 2015 federal election – whose preferred party was in power when the changes began – are the most likely to agree with cutting the service. More than half say they are in favor compared to just two-in-five past Liberal Party voters and less than three-in-ten past New Democratic Party voters:

All things considered are you yourself in favour or opposed to ending door-to-door mail delivery service in urban areas?



When asked whether they agree with a series of statements about service reform and Canada Post more generally, past Conservative voters are less likely than others to convey sentimental opinions. For example, not only are past Conservative supporters nearly twice as likely as past NDP voters to say “private delivery services have made Canada Post mostly irrelevant,” they are also considerably more likely than others to disagree that door-to-door delivery is a hallmark of a developed country:

Having door-to-door mail service is a hallmark of a developed country:



Past Conservatives are also significantly more likely than others to be against subsidizing Canada Post and are the least likely to worry about potential job losses, with just over half voicing this concern (54%).

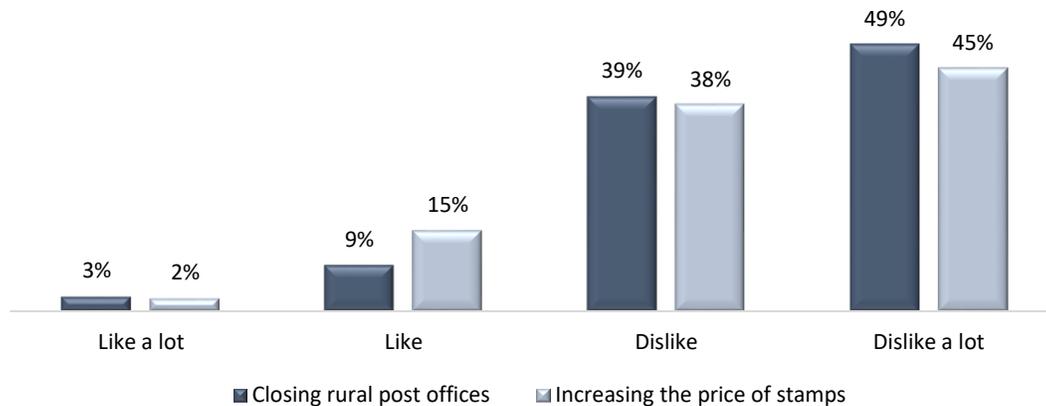
These findings suggest that although experts say [Canada Post has played an integral role in building the nation](#), opinions on its continued operation and relevance are politically contested.

Other proposals for change

The committee studied a variety of alternative means for reducing Canada Post's costs and helping it adapt to declining usage. The Angus Reid Institute put three ideas the committee considered, but ultimately did not recommend, to Canadians in this poll, asking whether they like or dislike each one.

Two of the options – closing rural post offices and increasing the price of stamps – appear to be political non-starters. More than eight-in-ten Canadians say they dislike each of these options, with the largest group in each case saying they dislike it “a lot”:

Here are some other proposals for changing the way Canada Post operates. For each one, please indicate whether you like it or dislike it.



Dislike for these two proposals is highest among women and older respondents, but it remains a sizeable majority across all age and gender groupings ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

As might be expected, residents of rural Canada are particularly adamant in their dislike of closing rural post offices. Nearly all of them (94%) dislike the idea, and fully seven-in-ten (70%) dislike it “a lot.”

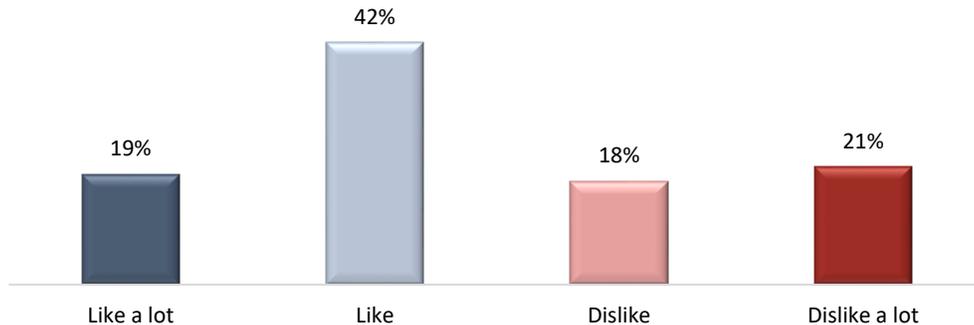
That said, urban Canadians also strongly object to the concept. Almost nine-in-ten (88%) dislike the idea, though a substantially smaller number (45%) do so “a lot.”

The Canada Post Charter has included [a moratorium](#) on closing rural post offices since 1994, and the committee report recommends strengthening the enforcement of that moratorium, noting that 350 post offices in rural areas have been effectively shuttered despite the prohibition.

On the question of stamp prices, the committee recommended pegging increases to inflation, but did not recommend any additional upping of the cost of postage.

A third idea – changing delivery from five days per week to three – is considerably more popular with the Canadian public. Three-in-five respondents (61%) say they like this option, though fewer than one-in-five (19%) say they like it “a lot.”

"Changing delivery from 5 to 3 days a week"

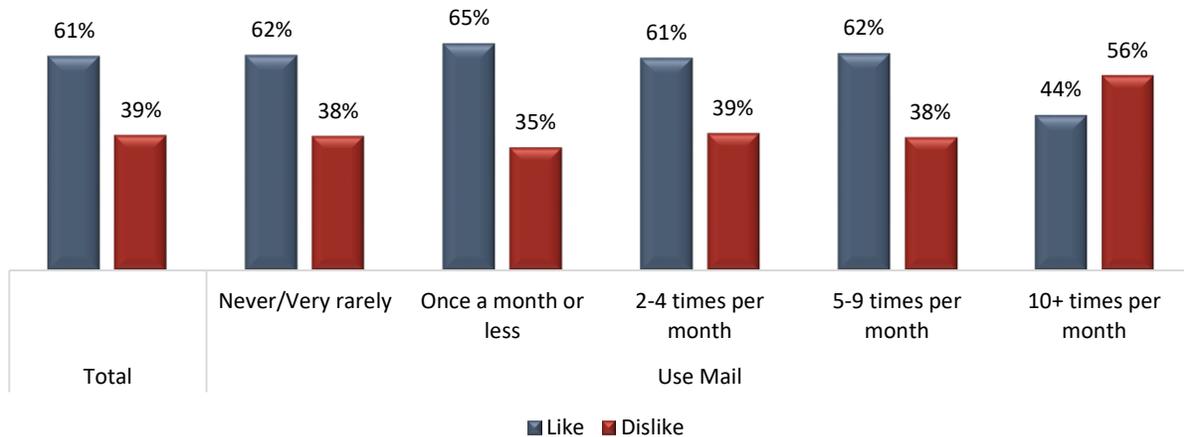


Perhaps surprisingly, given that they are one of the demographic groups least likely to oppose ending door-to-door delivery, younger respondents are among those most likely to feel negatively about this other delivery-related proposal.

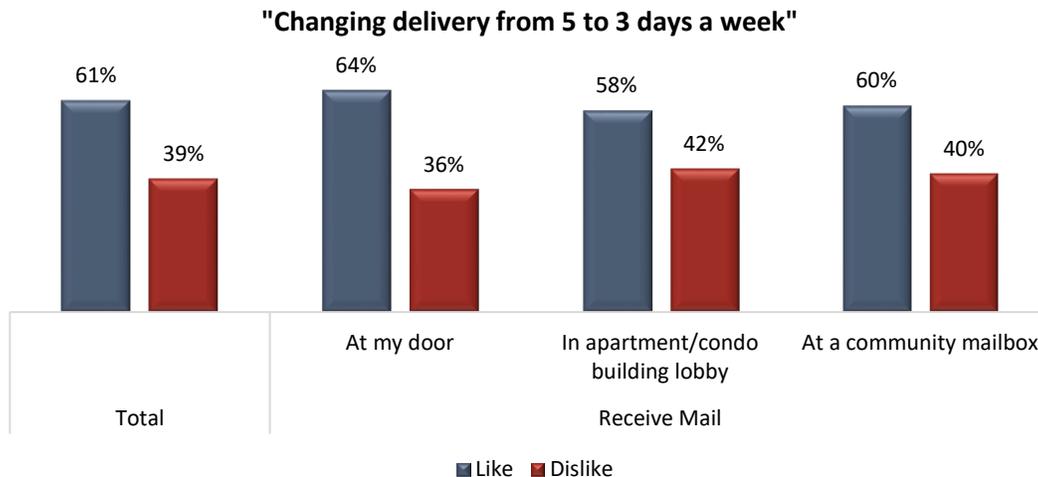
While nearly two-thirds of those ages 35 and older like the idea of reducing the number of delivery days, this falls to a bare majority (53%) among those under 35. Indeed, among the youngest respondents – those ages 18-24 – more than half (52%) *dislike* the concept ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

The heaviest mail users – those who send 10 or more pieces per month – are also less-than-enthusiastic about the prospect of changing from five-day to three-day delivery, as seen in the following graph:

"Changing delivery from 5 to 3 days a week"



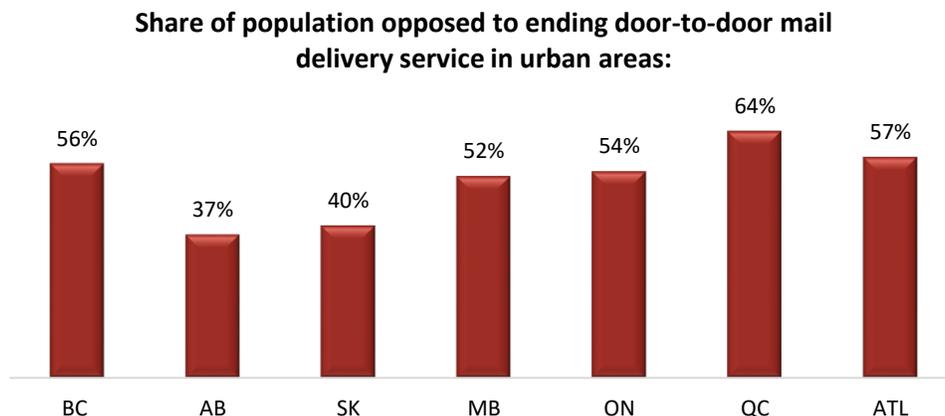
Opinions do not differ significantly by location of mail delivery. Those who receive mail to their door are most likely to like the idea of reducing service by two days:



Although a government-commissioned survey found – as this survey finds – significant favourability toward the idea of “alternate day delivery,” the committee recommended against pursuing it, concluding that “reducing the frequency of delivery does not fit the business models of either Canada Post or its paying customers.”

Eliminating door-to-door delivery, a sure-fire way to anger Quebecers

Provincially, the strongest opposition to ending door-to-door delivery is in Quebec, where almost two-thirds of residents say they are against the idea. Opposition is weakest in Alberta:

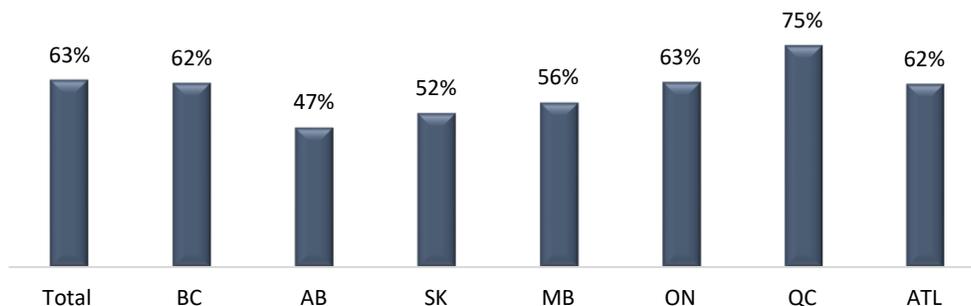


This finding could reflect the relatively higher proportion of the Quebec population that receives mail to its door. It may also be indicative of the strong local dissatisfaction with the idea of switching to community boxes in the province, which [was the scene of protests](#) against the change.

Perhaps surprisingly, given their opposition to eliminating door-to-door delivery, Quebecers are the most likely to support changing delivery to three times a week. Although this is a popular proposal among three-in-five Canadians, roughly seven-in-ten Quebecers (71%) like the idea. This could reflect their desire to hold on to some type of door-to-door service if reform is an inevitability.

Likewise, Quebec residents are the most likely to say Canada Post provides an essential service with more than four-in-five in agreement (83%) as well as the most likely to agree that door-to-door mail service is a hallmark of a developed country:

Share of population that agrees that "door-to-door mail service is a hallmark of a developed country"



These findings might convey a sentimental attachment to Canada Post and to the idea of the Corporation as a Canadian icon among French Canadians. Or, more simply, they might reflect the dependence of many Quebecers on the service and the popularity of the industry in the province. Either way, not only would the federal Liberals risk abandoning another campaign promise if they continued the Canada Post reforms of their predecessors, but the federal government would likely face political backlash in Quebec if it decided to eliminate door-to-door mail delivery.

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Summary tables follow. For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

All things considered are you yourself in favour or opposed to ending door-to-door mail delivery service in urban areas?

weighted sample sizes	Total (1508)	Mail Delivery			
		To my door (572)	Apartment/condo Lobby (286)	At a community mailbox (560)	Other (90*)
Strongly in favour of ending door-to-door delivery	18%	10%	13%	29%	14%
Somewhat in favour	19%	13%	21%	25%	21%
Somewhat opposed	18%	17%	20%	16%	26%
Strongly opposed to ending door-to-door delivery	37%	52%	38%	21%	28%
Don't know/no opinion	8%	8%	7%	9%	11%

**small sample size*

All things considered are you yourself in favour or opposed to ending door-to-door mail delivery service in urban areas?

weighted sample sizes	Total (1508)	Mail Usage				
		None/Very rarely (301)	Less than 1/ month (525)	2-4 times a month (453)	5-9 times a month (125)	10+ a month (104)
Strongly in favour of ending door-to-door delivery	18%	26%	18%	14%	17%	16%
Somewhat in favour	19%	22%	23%	16%	17%	13%
Somewhat opposed	18%	13%	21%	19%	15%	16%
Strongly opposed to ending door-to-door delivery	37%	27%	31%	45%	48%	42%
Don't know/no opinion	8%	13%	7%	6%	3%	12%

Here are some other proposals for changing the way Canada Post operates. For each one, please indicate whether you like it or dislike it. [“Changing delivery from 5 to 3 days a week”]

weighted sample sizes	Total (1508)	Mail Usage				
		None/Very rarely (301)	Less than 1/ month (525)	2-4 times a month (453)	5-9 times a month (125)	10+ a month (104)
Like a lot	19%	21%	22%	17%	15%	14%
Like	42%	41%	43%	43%	47%	30%
Dislike	18%	19%	16%	20%	16%	17%
Dislike a lot	21%	19%	19%	19%	22%	38%

Age of Respondents

weighted sample sizes	Total (1508)	Mail Usage				
		None/Very rarely (301)	Less than 1/ month (525)	2-4 times a month (453)	5-9 times a month (125)	10+ a month (104)
18-34	29%	45%	29%	22%	20%	26%
35-54	35%	34%	39%	31%	30%	39%
55+	36%	21%	33%	46%	50%	35%