

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



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April 3, 2023

REF: EXE-097-23

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
Room 395, City Hall  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Public Works Committee

Subject: **AT&T PLAIN OLD TELEPHONE SERVICE LANDLINE OUTAGES (23-0168)**

## SUMMARY

On February 24, 2023, Council adopted Motion (Harris-Dawson - Price) instructing the Information Technology Agency to report on ongoing traditional landline phone service outages in Council District 8. This motion is also instructing the Information Technology Agency, with the assistance of the Department of Public Works, to report if these outages are the result of construction activity, on the presence of and adherence to "before you dig" signs, and on if "locates" were provided prior to construction activity commenced. This report includes findings and recommendations on the outages.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Starting around January 24, 2023, numerous residents of Council District 8 reported AT&T Plain Old Telephone Services (POTS) landline outages. The Information Technology Agency (ITA) contacted the telecommunications vendor (AT&T) and had multiple meetings to understand the cause and impacts. The following are our findings:

### 1. The cause of phone service outages in the area:

Due to unusually heavy January rains, water got into a cable duct, became pressurized, and caused the cable to fail i.e., large sections of AT&T's copper cable experienced physical and water damage. These cables became exposed due to an ongoing relocation project. The circuit had been down since January 10, 2023. AT&T Trouble ticket# CS271661 was created in response.

AT&T experienced additional delays to complete restoration due to having to stabilize the physical site first (to prevent injury or loss of life for those working at the site) before AT&T infrastructure could dry out and they could safely evaluate the extent of the damage.

AT&T Customers in the area around West 76th Street, 110<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Avenue were impacted by the outage.

**2. The types of the services affected, including Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) lines, internet, Voice over IP (VoIP) and mobile services:**

The majority of the impacted residences were traditional copper landlines (POTS) in this occurrence. According to AT&T, the number was below 200 customers impacted by the outage.

**3. What actions have been taken to date to resolve service outages**

AT&T ordered 1,800 feet of cable and worked to redirect the lines from the impacted flooding. Restoration efforts included working inside two manholes and manually splicing each pair while also mitigating any issues from the continuous rain.

According to AT&T, their technicians worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to place new cable, with individual connections to each customer needing to be built-out before service could be restored.

Once the full cable replacement had been completed, AT&T maintenance technicians were dispatched to complete the restoration of services.

According to AT&T, this was treated as a high priority restoration project which prompted the assignment of additional technicians to assist with the restoration.

**4. Why AT&T has not provided updates to their customers:**

According to AT&T, they provided information about the outage on their website and through their customer service department.

Their information on AT&T outages could be found at [att.com/outages](http://att.com/outages). AT&T customers could sign-in to get the latest information about outages affecting their AT&T services and additionally sign up for text alert updates.

AT&T also recommended contacting their customer service agents at 800-288-2020.

**5. An estimated time frame for service restoration:**

According to AT&T, as of March 2, 2023, 100% of these services have been restored.

**6. Any steps the City could take to mitigate this problem and ensure that residents who rely on landline phone service have it:**

AT&T has proposed that if a Council District office hears from a constituent regarding an issue, to please contact AT&T External Affairs team, and the AT&T team will immediately escalate the issue and start a trouble ticket in order to quickly restore the service.

**7. Is it correct that customers have to opt into getting credit as opposed to providing it automatically since the company knows who was affected?**

AT&T needs customers to call in and submit a trouble ticket so that AT&T can ensure to investigate their individual case, resolve the issue at their location, and offer an appropriate credit for that customer's individual situation. For example, not every customer

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will need to set up remote call forwarding, but for those who do need it we need them to call to set that up and we will provide the appropriate credit for it.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ted Ross", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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General Manager

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