

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****March 3, 2026**

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**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON WATER SERVICE DISCONNECTIONS AND WINTER WEATHER PRACTICES**

The purpose of this Informal Report is to provide a focused update on the Water Utility's disconnection and winter weather shut-off practices, building upon information previously provided to City Council in IR 23-0742 (Water Utility Shut-Off Practices) and IR 25-0008 ("No Water" Incidents Involving Code Compliance and Neighborhood Services Participation).

**Background**

Fort Worth Water's delinquency management and service disconnection processes are designed to balance customer assistance, financial integrity of the Water and Sewer Fund, and public health considerations. These practices - including customer notification timelines, payment options, service restoration requirements, and weather-related suspensions - have been outlined in prior Informal Reports to City Council and remain in effect.

**Delinquency Management and Shut-Off Practices**

As detailed in IR 23-0742 and reiterated in IR 25-0008, Fort Worth Water provides customers with multiple opportunities to resolve outstanding balances prior to service interruption. These include:

- A minimum 52-day notification and outreach period following bill issuance
- Multiple mailed notices (including a second bill with past due balances noted)
- Automated phone notifications
- Availability of payment extensions and installment plans
- Referrals to Community Action Partners and other assistance programs, and
- Restoration of service based on approved payment arrangements or verifiable third-party pledges of assistance

Service disconnections for delinquency occur only after these steps have been exhausted and are performed in accordance with City code and established utility procedures.

**Friday Shut-Off Policy**

In IR 23-0742, Fort Worth Water recommended discontinuing delinquency-related water shut-offs on Fridays in order to reduce the likelihood that customers would be without service over a weekend. That recommendation was fully implemented immediately following issuance of the Informal Report in late August 2023.

Accordingly:

- Fort Worth Water does not perform delinquency-related water shut-offs on Fridays;
- All routine delinquency shut-offs occur Monday through Thursday only; and
- Shut-offs occur as early in the day as possible, and no later than 2:30 pm, to allow time for customer awareness/action and same day water service restoration.

**CY2025 Service Disconnections by Council District:**

- See the attached map



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**Winter Weather Protocols**

Fort Worth Water maintains an internal practice of suspending delinquency-related water shut-offs during extreme cold or heat events, consistent with the guidance previously provided in IR 23-0742.

For cold weather events, shut-offs are suspended when forecasted conditions meet defined temperature thresholds that pose a risk to public health and safety. Accordingly, shut-offs are suspended when the previous day's high temperature does not exceed 28 degrees and temperatures are forecasted to remain at or below that level for the next 24 hours. For the January 2026 winter weather event, shut-offs were suspended from Friday, January 23 (before freezing weather started) through Wednesday, January 28. During that time, no shut-offs occurred.

The disconnection referenced by Councilmember Peoples occurred Wednesday, January 21, 2026, before winter weather conditions, and only after the customer defaulted on prior payment arrangements. Service was restored within two hours of receiving a pledge for payment facilitated by Councilmember Martinez.

**Restoration of Service and Legal Framework**

Following service interruption, City Code and governing utility documents require that delinquent balances be resolved before water service can be restored. While the utility may restore service based on approved payment arrangements or verified assistance pledges without payment in full, staff does not have discretion to forgive debt or provide free service. These requirements are governed by:

- Fort Worth Code of Ordinances, Chapter 35
- Water and Sewer Master Ordinance No. 10968 and associated bond covenants which specify "no free service"
- Texas Constitution, Article III, Section 52(a), which prohibits the gifting of public funds

**Affordability**

Fort Worth Water works diligently to keep water and sewer services affordable for all ratepayers and to manage the impact of rate increases on residential customers. The utility regularly benchmarks average residential bills using the industry standard EPA metric comparing the annual water and sewer bills as a percentage of median household income using a scale of 0% (most affordable) to 6% (least affordable). Fort Worth Water's bills are always in the "affordable" range between 1%-1.50%.

**Summary**

The water service disconnection practices currently in use by Fort Worth Water reflect the processes and operational practices previously communicated to City Council in IR 23-0742 and IR 25-0008. Delinquency-related shut-offs are performed Monday through Thursday only, are suspended during qualifying extreme weather events, and are carried out only after extensive customer notification and outreach. These practices continue to be applied consistently and in accordance with City Code, state law, and governing utility requirements.

For questions regarding this information, please contact Water Director Chris Harder at (817) 392-5020.

**Jesus "Jay" Chapa,  
City Manager**

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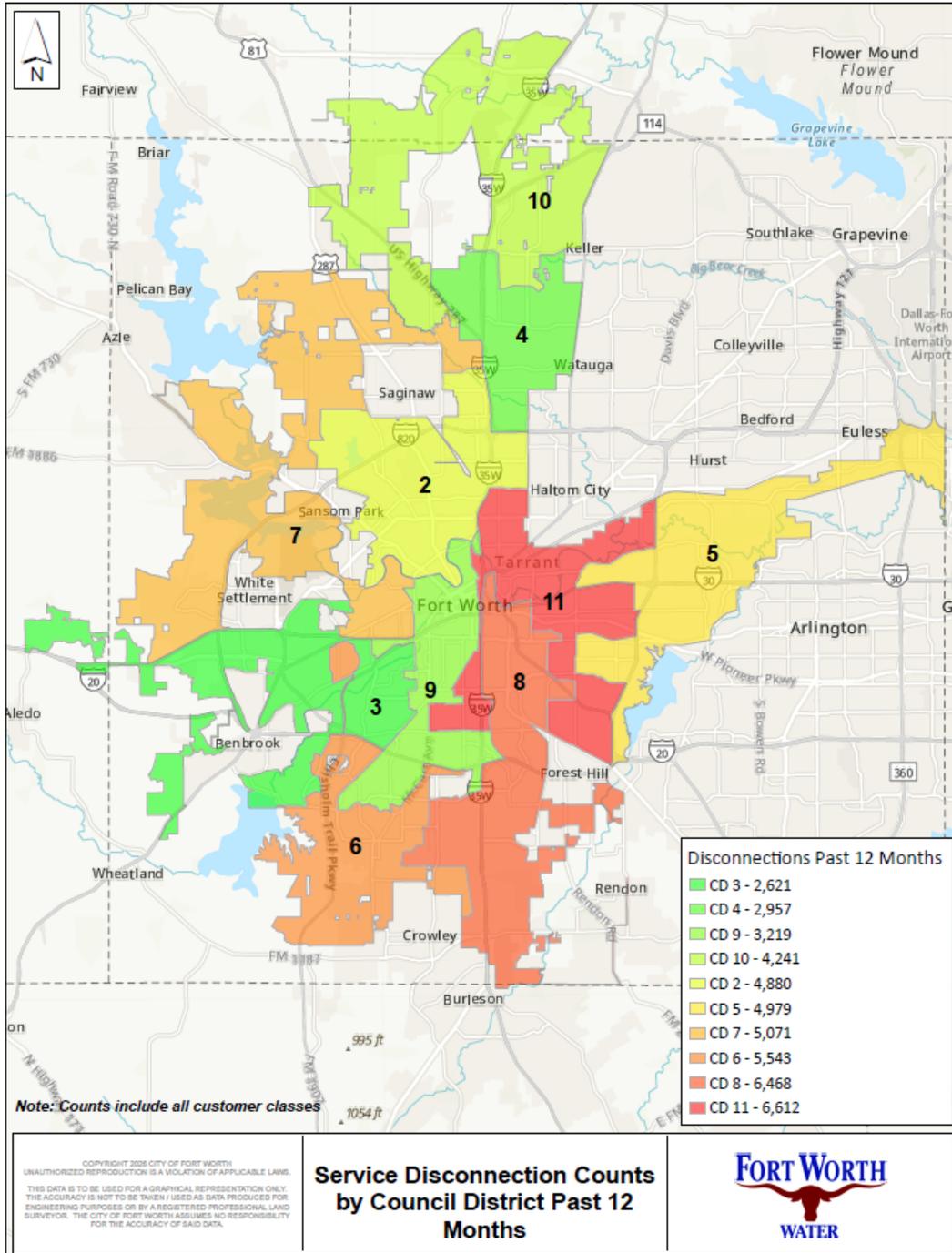
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**Attachment "A" – Service Disconnections by Council District**



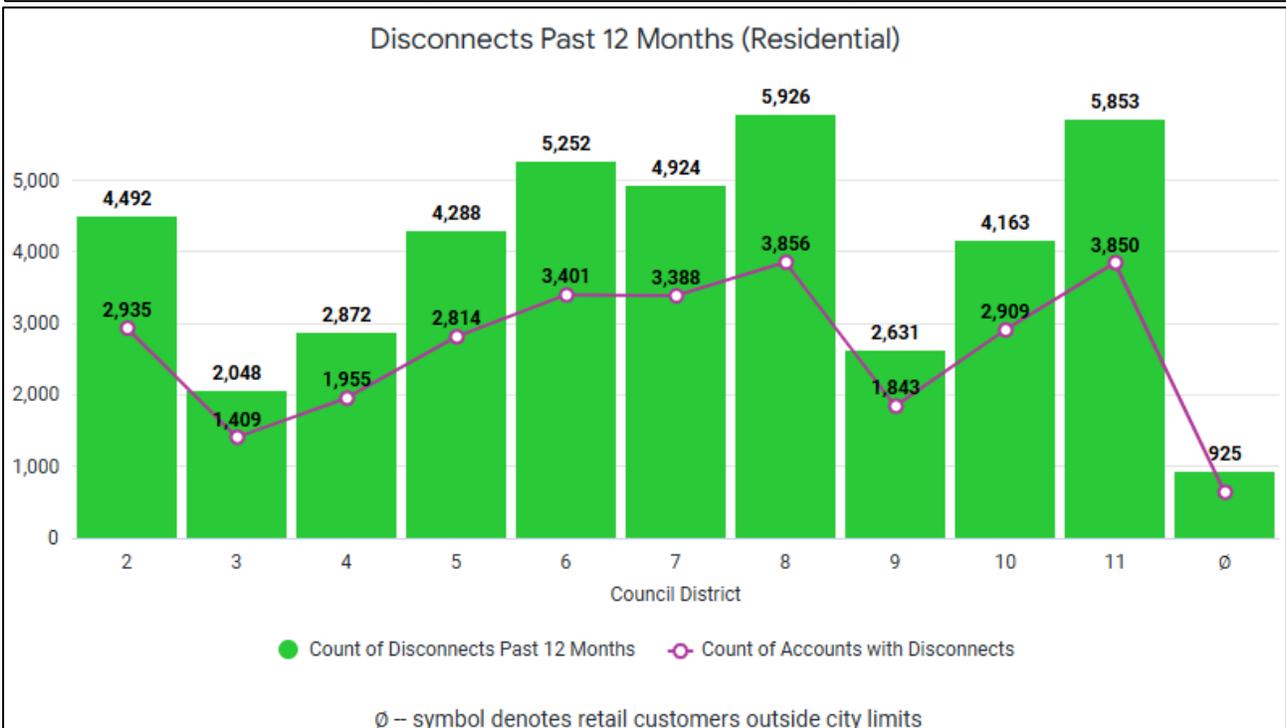
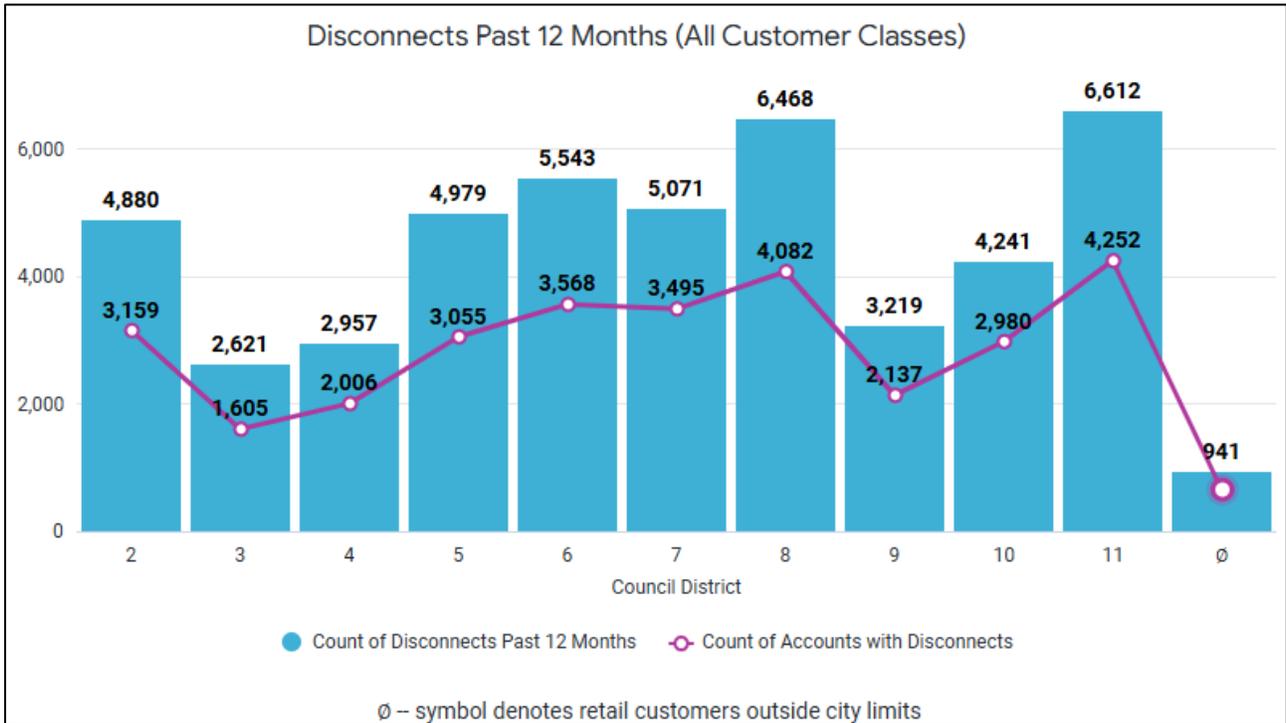
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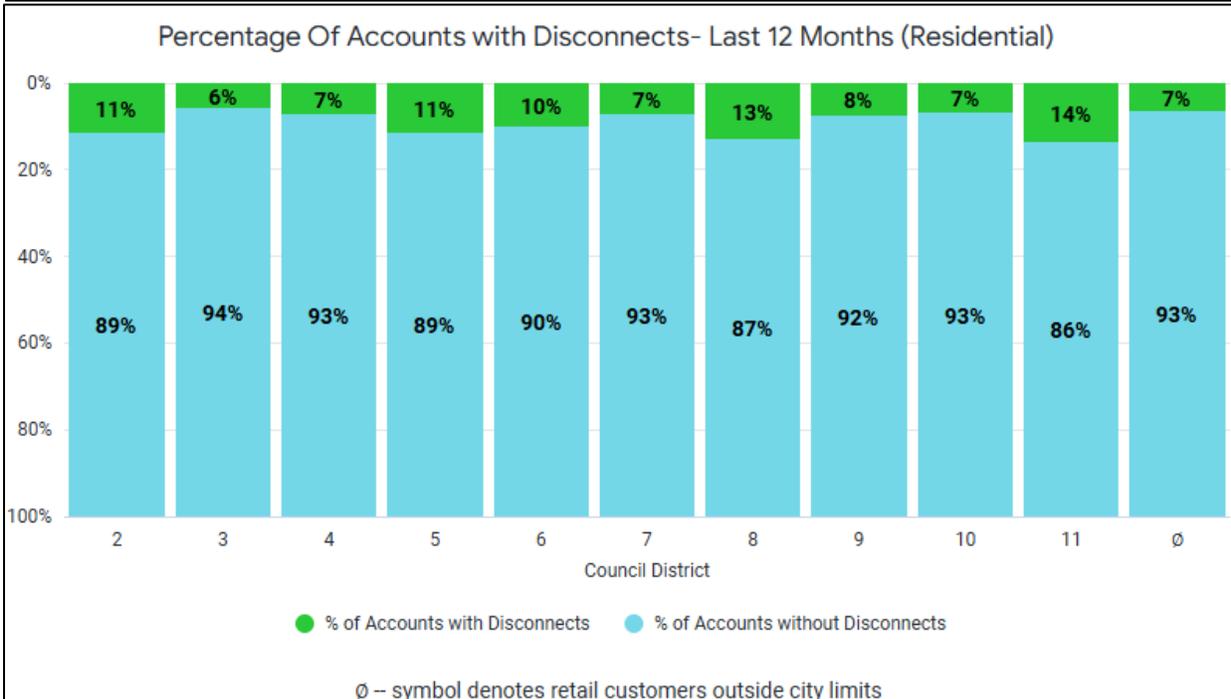
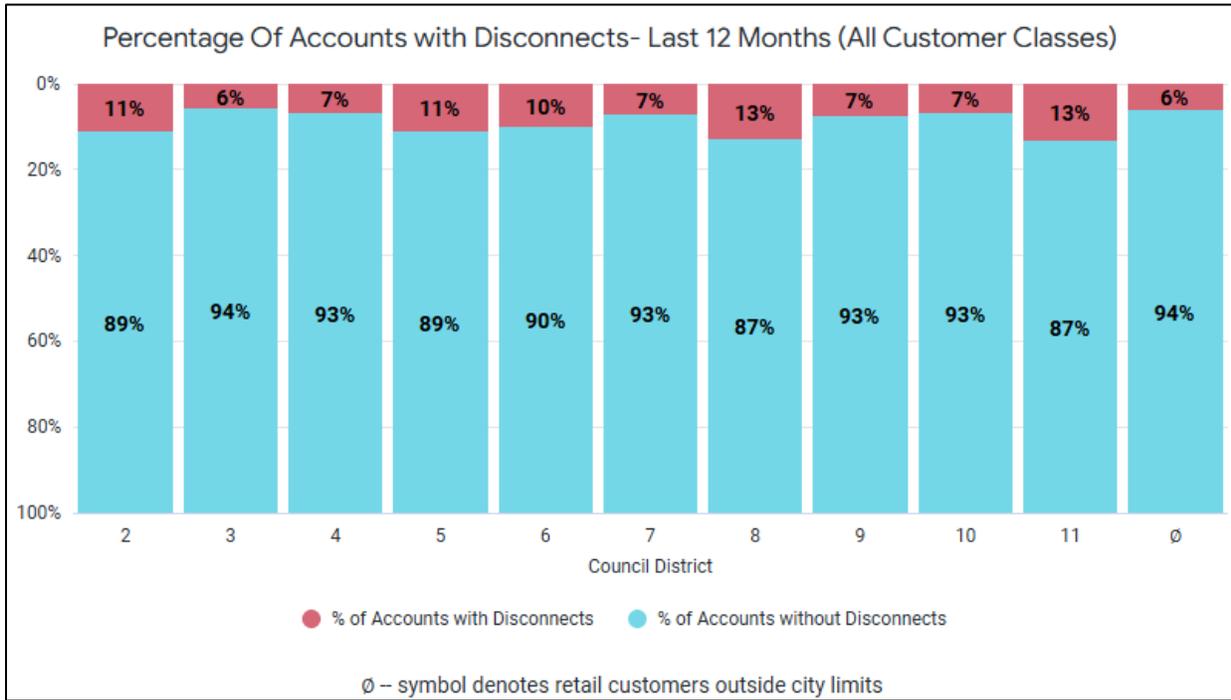
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