



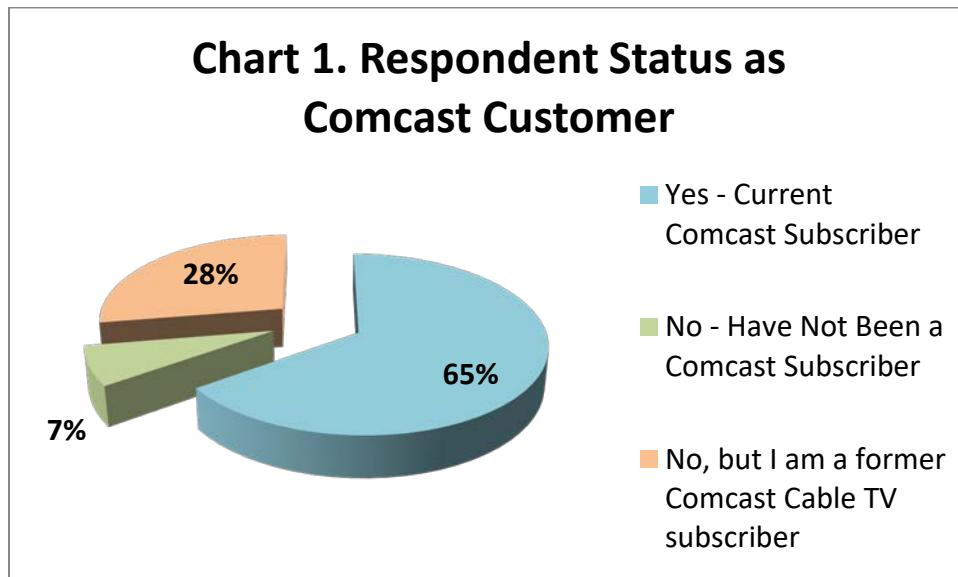
**City of Albuquerque**

**COMCAST CABLE SURVEY REPORT  
IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO**

**November 2016**

## Comcast Cable Survey Report

From October of 2015 to March of 2016, the City of Albuquerque conducted an opt-in survey to gather information from Albuquerque citizens regarding their experiences with Comcast cable television (a.k.a Xfinity). The survey was publicized using the city's main website, the city's Facebook page, and press releases, which were reported on by various news outlets. The survey consisted of 41 questions relating to Basic Subscriber Information; Program Availability; Local Public, Education, and Government Channels; Signal/Picture/Sound Quality; Termination; Customer Service; and Areas for Improvement. Responses were received from 1,306 individuals; however, many did not respond to all questions. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents were either current or former Comcast customers as shown in Chart 1 below.



The seven percent of respondents who identified as non-subscribers gave reasons for not subscribing to Comcast, including:

- Use internet streaming
- Not enough value for the price
- Poor company customer service
- Cannot afford
- Too many different fees
- Do not watch television
- Have satellite
- Use antenna to watch over-the air

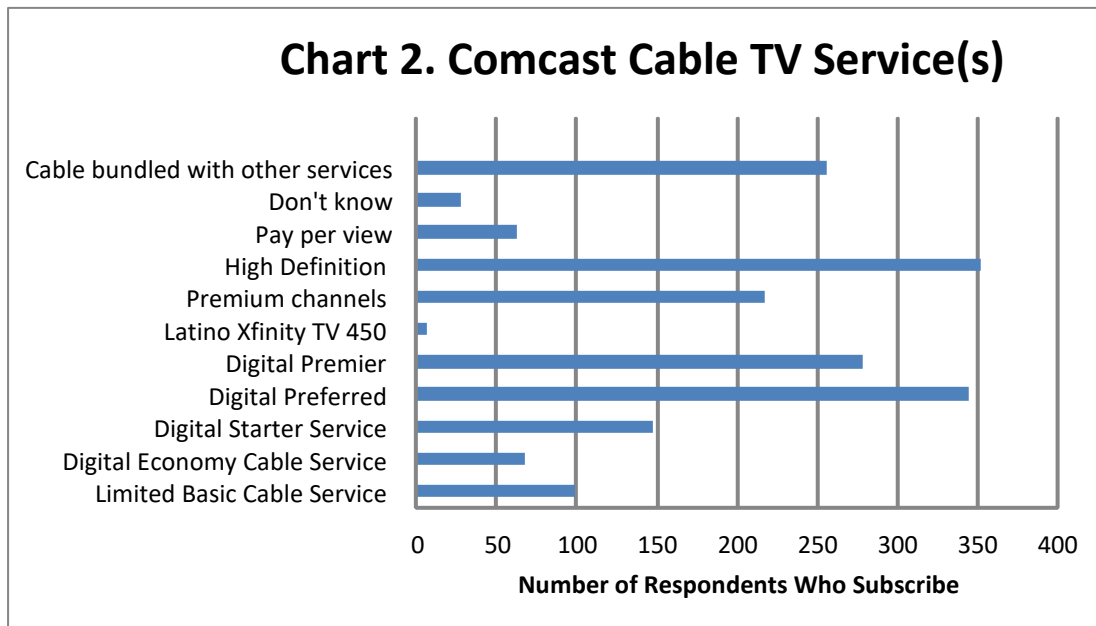
Respondents who were former subscribers to Comcast Cable Television identified reasons for terminating the service, including:

- Poor company service when a subscriber
- Not enough value for the price
- Too many different fees

- Problems with quality of service when a subscriber
- Use internet streaming
- Cannot afford
- Do not like equipment requirements
- Prices constantly increased

**A. Basic Subscriber Information**

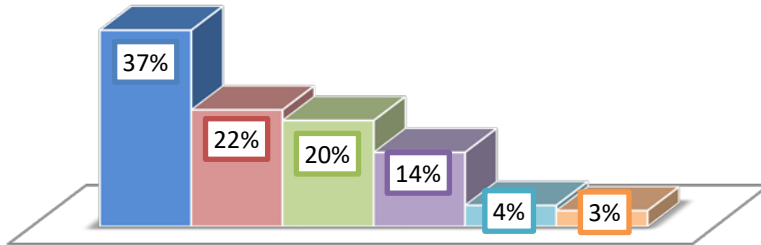
Survey respondents identified the services they currently subscribe to, or subscribed to in the past, as shown in Chart 2 below. The most common service reported was the Digital Preferred (\$59.99 per month), at twenty nine percent (29%) and twenty four percent (24%) reported subscribing to Digital Premier for \$99.99 per month. Eight percent (8%) subscribe to the Limited Basic (\$16.35 per month).



Subscribers received information about the services offered by Comcast through a variety of methods. The most common means of obtaining information was by accessing Comcast’s website, as shown in Chart 3 below.

### Chart 3. How Customers Learned About Comcast Services

- Comcast Website
- Customer Representative (phone or in-person)
- Promotional Materials (flyers/mailers)
- Television Advertisement
- Other
- Lon-term customer/Previous Customer



The seven percent (7%) of respondents who identified as non-subscribers gave reasons for not subscribing to Comcast cable television, including:

- Use internet streaming
- Not enough value for the price
- Poor company customer service
- Cannot afford
- Too many different fees
- Do not watch television
- Have Satellite
- Use antenna to watch over-the air

Respondents who were former subscribers to Comcast cable television identified reasons for terminating the service, including:

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- Too many different fees
- Problems with quality of service when a subscriber
- Use internet streaming
- Cannot afford
- Do not like equipment requirements
- Prices constantly increased

Customer service was the most frequently cited issue with Comcast for the former subscribers. One respondent wrote, *“Customer service is incredibly rude unless you threaten to discontinue service, then Customer Loyalty team tries to sweet talk you into staying. Had a billing dispute once and took close to*

*20 phone calls to resolve, probably because it was their mistake, which they really don't like admitting. One of the worst corporations in America to deal with."*

Former subscribers provided commentary on Comcast's billing practices, such as, *"Comcast repeatedly added many different 'services' to my bill without my knowledge or authorization. They made it very difficult to have such unauthorized additions removed from the bill, and would simply reinstate them later. I feel these practices genuinely constituted fraud."*

Respondents also said that terminating Comcast cable television services resulted in problems such as difficulty returning equipment, charges for equipment returned, and charges continuing after the date of termination. For example, one respondent wrote, *"Terminated my contract but Comcast continued to bill me months after service was cut off."*

Survey respondents identified the services they currently subscribe to, or subscribed to in the past, as shown in the table below.

### **C. Program Availability and Interest**

Survey respondents were asked which Comcast Cable TV service tier that they previously or currently subscribe to.

- Of 287 respondents to this question, the most common subscribed to service was Internet, including Xfinity Broadband Internet, at thirty five percent (35%)
- The second most subscribed to service was Triple Play, a bundle of cable, phone and Internet, sixteen 16 percent (16%)
- The third most common response was Double Play, a bundle of cable and Internet, eleven percent (11%), followed by Phone only at ten percent (10%)
- Twenty one percent (21%) of the respondents answered one of several services ranging from basic cable, sports channels, HD service, premium channels and digital service
- Seven percent (7%) answered "unsure" or had dropped service

**The responses fell into twelve categories, with Internet most commonly answered and Triple Play, Double Play and phone service next. See the table below.**

<i>Internet</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Triple Play</i>	<i>16%</i>
<i>Double Play</i>	<i>11%</i>
<i>Phone</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>Basic cable</i>	<i>8%</i>
<i>Sports channels</i>	<i>6%</i>
<i>Unsure/Dispute about prices</i>	<i>6%</i>
<i>Xfinity Broadband Internet/Internet Performance</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Digital</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>HD</i>	<i>2%</i>

<i>Premium channels</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>Dropped Service</i>	<i>1%</i>

One respondent marking Double Play submitted: *“I primarily subscribe to Comcast internet service, but it is even more expensive without being bundled with the Limited Basic Cable Service.”*

These customers were unsure about pricing, stating: *“Pricing was all over the place and was raised three times in six months, while we received two letters apologizing that we had been getting more channels than we should have, so higher pricing for fewer and then fewer channels. The pricing in your list does not at all reflect the actual cost of services.”*

*“I pay 189.00 per mo and am a senior citizen.”*

*“Not quite sure but pay 118.00 per month.”*

A Triple Play customer said: *“I received my Comcast bill, I pay 119.99 for Internet, basic tv and phone. Total bill is 161.64, they add on 41.65 additional fee's every month. Not quite sure what to do, but I think 41.00 additional fee is ridiculous.”*

**Survey respondents were asked which tiers of cable television service were offered when Comcast called them, with multiple answers available.**

- Of the 2,003 respondents, the most common answer was Digital Preferred service offered by Comcast, at fifty two percent (52%)
- The second most common answer was Digital Premier, at fifty one percent (51%)
- The third most common response was Digital Starter, at thirty two percent (32%)
- Twenty one percent (21%) of the respondents answered Limited Basic service, followed by Digital Economy service at twenty percent (20%)
- Twenty two percent (22%) answered “other” television services were offered by Comcast

It is unclear as to the order Comcast may have offered these services or why more than one service was offered.

<i>Digital Preferred</i>	<i>52%</i>
<i>Digital Premier</i>	<i>51%</i>
<i>Digital Starter</i>	<i>32%</i>
<i>Limited Basic</i>	<i>21%</i>
<i>Digital economy</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Other</i>	<i>22%</i>

Comments from Comcast subscribers include:

*“Don't remember but I think they tried to get us to go with the most expensive package.”*

*“Their up sell policy is bothersome. If you have a service complaint, or any issue, the response is usually an offer to add on additional services.”*

*“I was offered (sic) all packages demending (sic) on the needs I had.”*

*"None, very confusing set of tiers."*

*"We subscribed to the services we wanted."*

*"Super overpriced internet with 1 year contract."*

*"Of course they try to sell you all services including home security."*

*"Bundle with phone, internet, cable and alarm but I had to keep the phone so I would have 3 services included in the bundle, now I can't disconnect the land line."*

*"I'm always offered more, even when I call to lower my bill they offer to raise it instead."*

*"They listened to what I was looking for and then offered the appropriate packages."*

*"They did not offer. They asked channels/services I wanted and then offered the package those."*

*"They always start with a bundled package that has a surprise (sic) elevated rate at the end of introduction period."*

*"Don't remember. There is a lack of transparency (sic) on what things cost or what options are available."*

**Survey respondents were asked to rate three sections of Comcast programming for importance.**

- Regarding level of importance for the Type and Variety of Programs and channels, 81 percent (81%) stated it was Somewhat Important or Very Important, with Very Important at 55 percent (55%)
- Regarding level of importance for Local Broadcast programming availability, 81 percent (81%) stated it was Somewhat Important or Very Important, with Very Important at 62 percent (62%)
- Regarding level of importance for Premium or special channels availability, 29 percent (29%) stated it was Somewhat Important, 23 percent (23%) stated it was Very Important, 18 percent (18%) were neutral, and 17 percent (17%) stated it was Not Important At All

**Survey respondents were asked to rate three sections of Comcast programming for satisfaction.**

- Regarding level of satisfaction with the Type and Variety of Programs and channels, eighty four percent (84%) fairly evenly chose a range between Very Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, neutral or Somewhat Satisfied, with about twenty one percent (21%) or so in each category
- Twelve percent (12%) said they were Very Satisfied with the Type and Variety of Programs and channels
- Regarding level of satisfaction with Local Broadcast programming availability, seventy six percent (76%) stated they were neutral, Somewhat Satisfied or Very Satisfied, with Very Satisfied at 31 percent
- Eleven percent (11%) said they were Very Dissatisfied with Local Broadcast programming availability

- Regarding level of satisfaction with Premium or special channels availability, thirty one percent (31%) stated they were neutral, while twenty nine percent (29%) were Somewhat Satisfied or Very Satisfied
- Seventeen percent (17%) were Very Dissatisfied, while 10 percent (10%) were Somewhat Dissatisfied

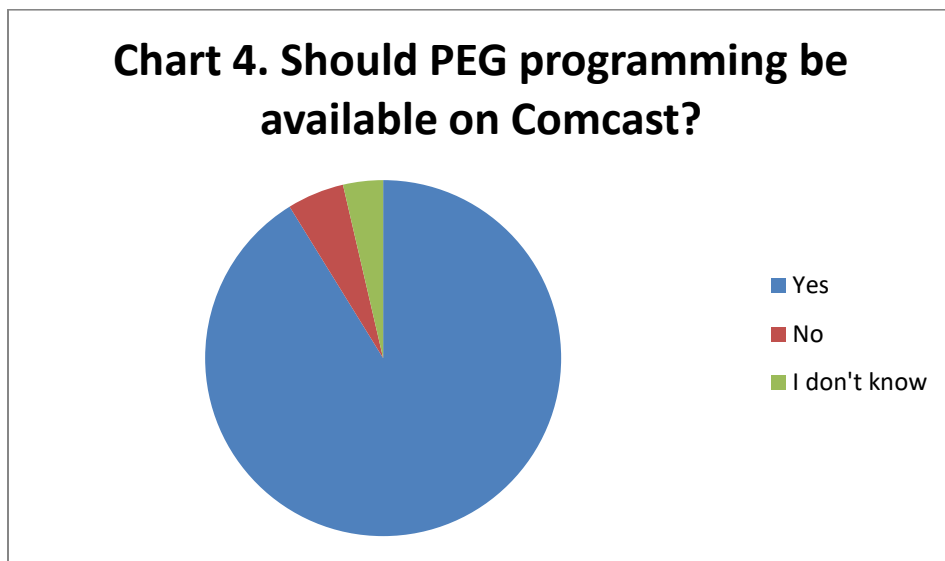
**C. Public, Education, and Government (PEG) Channels**

**Survey respondents were asked if they think that Local Public, Education, and Government information and programming should be available to view on Comcast cable television.**

Communities with a cable provider have the option of having channels designated by the cable provider for Public, Education and Government (PEG) access programming, per the FCC. On Comcast in Albuquerque, there are three separate channels designated and operating, one for each of the PEG components. Public and Education channels are operated by a vendor under contract with the City of Albuquerque. The Government channel is operated by the City of Albuquerque.

The survey indicates there is a clear mandate among respondents for PEG access programming on Comcast cable television.

- Of 1,173 responses, 88 percent (88%) answered “Yes”, PEG Programming should be available on Comcast, five percent (5%) answered “No” and seven percent (7%) answered “I don’t know.”

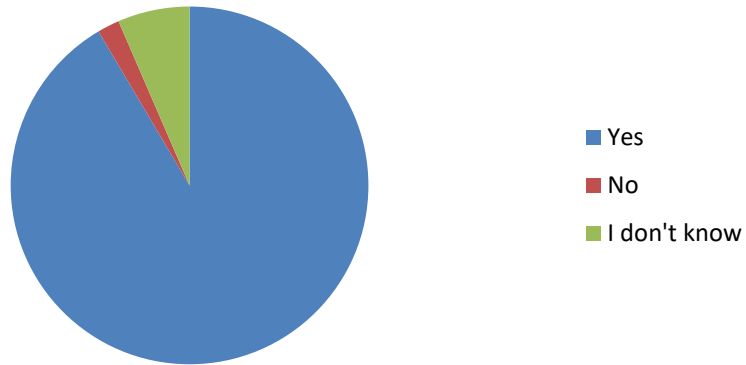


**Survey respondents were asked if they think that Local Public, Education, and Government information and programming should be available to view on the internet.**

- The survey indicates near unanimous agreement among respondents that Public, Education and Government programming should be available to view on the internet.
- Of 1,162 responses, 91.5 percent (91.5%) answered “Yes,” 2 percent (2%) answered “No” and 6.5 percent (6.5%) answered “I don’t know.”



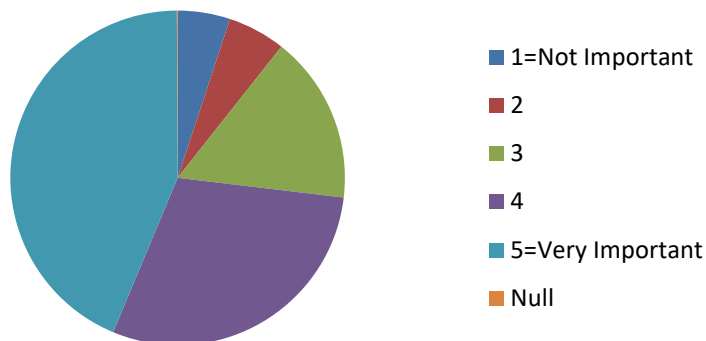
**Chart 5. Should PEG programming be available on Internet?**



Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance to them of the ability to view local Public, Education, and Government programming in Albuquerque.

- A total of 1,100 respondents answered on a 1 to 5 scale, 1=Not Important and 5=Very Important, with a majority, seventy two percent (72%), rating at the top two levels
- Eleven and half percent (11.5%) split almost evenly on a range between 1 and 2
- Sixteen percent (16%) weighed the importance at level 3
- Twenty nine percent (29%) weighed the importance at level 4
- Forty three (43%) percent weighed the importance at level 5, Very Important
- 8 responses were deemed to be Null

**Chart 6. Importance of Viewing PEG Programming**



**D. Signal/Picture/Sound Quality**

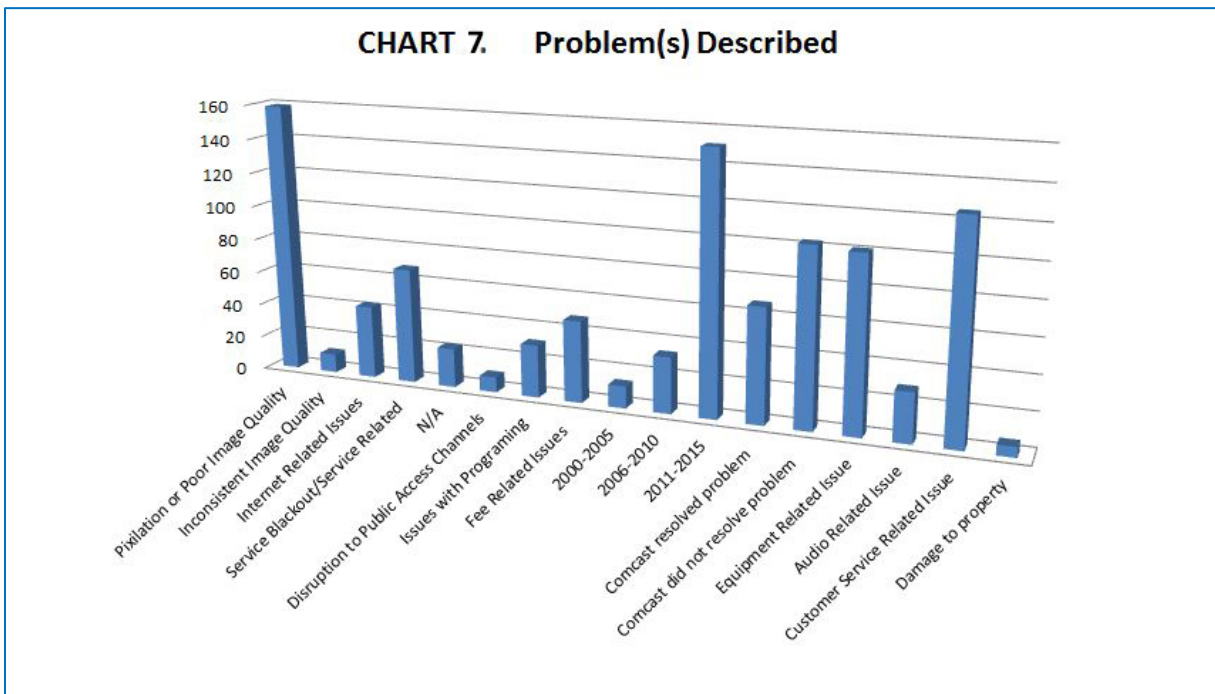
The survey asked questions regarding signal, picture and/or sound quality.

**Respondents were asked if they have contacted Comcast about poor picture or sound quality (including pixilation and double images or “ghosting”). If they answered yes, they were asked if Comcast began work to correct the problems the next business day.**

Roughly half of the respondents, 489, indicated that they reached out to Comcast to address issues relating to poor picture or sound quality. When asked if Comcast began work to correct the problem the next business day, a large majority of the responses, seventy three percent (73%), indicated that the problem was not addressed the next business day.

**Respondents were asked to describe the problem(s), the outcome of the work, and identify the year(s) these problems occurred.**

Responses were organized by topic areas and the numbers of related responses were recorded. Common issues described were most notably: pixilation or poor image quality; customer service related issues; and service blackout or service related issues. Many of the respondents (151 or approximately 31 percent (31%)) indicated that the issues occurred between 2011-2015. The majority of respondents (103 or twenty one percent (21%)) mentioned that Comcast did not resolve the issue, compared to the 67 respondents or fourteen percent (14%) that mentioned Comcast did resolve the issue. See Chart 7 below for themes and the number of mentions:



Work Outcomes

- **103** (about 21%) responses mentioned that **Comcast did not resolve the problem.**
- **67**(about 14%) responses mentioned that **Comcast did resolve the problem.**

Dates

- **151** (about 31%) responses mentioned that problems occurred during **2011-2015**
- **33**(about 7%) responses mentioned that problems occurred during **2006-2010**
- **13** responses mentioned that problems occurred during **2000-2005**

**Below are a few survey responses highlighted with additional detail to the question above.**

*“Channels freezing, ghosting, sound not matching picture. Issues have been on and off between 2007 and 2016.”*

*“Year after year problems, starting in 2011. Loss of picture, pixilation, ghosting, and black screen have occurred repeatedly: little concern at Comcast. When they originally installed their system, they ruined my wall inside the house. The "technicians" do not know what they are doing.”*

*“We have had ongoing problems with reception and picture issues for the past three years - starting in 2011 and coming forward. Our service has been completely out for up to 3 and 4 days at a time. Comcast's response time is slow and they keep taking channels away but never reduce the cost for the reduced selection. In fact, the price has gone up even as they eliminate channels, so we are paying more and getting less all the time.”*

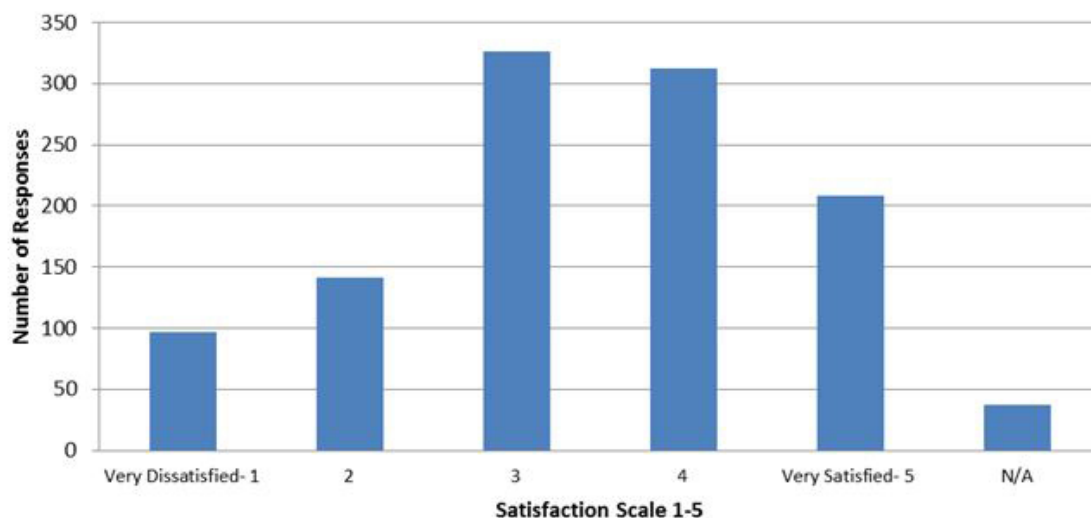
**Respondents were asked if they have contacted Comcast about the complete loss of picture or sound and if they answered yes, they were asked if Comcast began work to restore the picture or sound.**

The majority of those responding, Sixty percent (60%) of the 1,141 responses, indicated that they had contacted Comcast about the complete loss of picture or sound. When asked when Comcast began working to restore the picture or sound, fifty one percent (51%) of the 707 respondents indicated that Comcast had begun to work to restore the picture or sound in less than 24 hours after they were contacted.

**The respondents were asked how they would rate the signal and sound quality in the cable TV serves received from Comcast.**

The majority of responses indicated a satisfaction rating of 3 or 4 out of a 1-5 scale. See Chart 8 below.

**CHART 8. Satisfaction Rate with Comcast Cable TV Services Signal and Sound Quality**



**Respondents were asked to explain their rating to the question above.** Responses were organized by topic area and the numbers of responses in each area were recorded. Common problems described were most notably; “Good- No Complaints- Average”; “Inconsistent Intermittent Service”; “Connection Issues”; and “Poor Signal in General.” Themes and the number of mentions are identified in bold below by category in ranking order:

- **187** responses noted that Comcast offered Good-No Complaints- Average Service
- **89** responses mentioned Inconsistent Intermittent Service
- **72** responses mentioned Poor Signal in General
- **68** responses mentioned Connection Issues
- **66** responses mentioned Picture issues
- **49** responses mentioned Sound issues
- **45** responses mentioned Pixilation
- **36** responses mentioned Cable Box Issues
- **5** responses mentioned that technicians came but did not fix issue
  - 103 responses were not applicable to the survey question.

**Below are some of the survey responses relating to the question above by rating selection.**

**Responses with Rating 5 out of 5**

*“Most of the time, the picture/sound quality is very good.”*

*“We have had no serious problems with either sound or signal.”*

*"We have some issues in our area but most of the time they are resolved."*

#### **Responses with Rating 4 out of 5**

*"The signal has greatly improved in 2015. 2014 was a constant problem pixelating and loosing sound and signal. Our entire neighborhood had problems for more than a year. The Home Owners Association management got involved as a focal point for dealing with Comcast on behalf of the homeowners. Comcast was very slow to respond with the appropriate engineering solutions."*

*"Quality was fine as long as it was working. It would just go out entirely about once a month, sometimes more."*

*"When it's good, it is clear and sharp. When there's a problem, it always seems to be inconvenient and a hassle to deal with."*

#### **Responses with Rating 3 out of 5**

*"The picture quality of my new X1 box is not as good as my old box. I haven't reported it because I hate having to call. They always try to sell me something, instead of fixing before they try to fix my problem."*

*"It was okay service, but if service was bad, it was better to not call because they never knew what was the problem themselves."*

*"Picture frequently disappears in the middle of a [p]rogram and is replaced with the words that I am not authorized for the program. Picture becomes pixelated with no sound. Comcast always says rebot[sp] your box which takes several minutes. It's Comcast's equipment which is "leased" to me, but they want me to bring it in to see if it warrants replacement."*

#### **Responses with Rating 2 out of 5**

*"The signal and sound are reliable but of poor quality. The High Definition picture appears to be overly compressed, and is inferior to high definition broadcast television. This area needs to be improved."*

*"Sometimes it is okay, but we have gone for periods of several months - on more than one occasion where reception was so bad that you just gave up and turned the TV off. This has happened many times and the problem has gone on for months. We were paying for service that we were not getting - and this was happening to our entire neighborhood."*

*"We still get pixilation although not quite as often. In addition, the TV screen suddenly goes black. It can take anywhere from seconds to many minutes for the picture to return. Sometimes, the screen suddenly says "this network is not authorized for use" and we get no picture at all."*

#### **Responses with Rating 1 out of 5**

*"In 2009 or 2010 my signal started dropping. I called and had a technician scheduled to come out. Since the window of arrival was so large I had to take the day off work. The technician never showed up and I had to schedule another day (and take another day off work) for them to come out. When they finally arrived it was determined that I needed to have a new line buried in my back yard. A few days later a*

*man showed up around 9pm at night with a shovel wanting access to my back yard. Since I have an easement in my back yard I asked him if he knew where he could and could not dig. He was unable to answer my question (partly because he didn't speak English very well) so I asked him to leave. After speaking to yet another rude customer service rep who told me it's just the way there process works I decided Comcast wasn't for me. I will NEVER recommend Comcast to anyone, ever!!!"*

*"Sound problems, frequent blank screens, pixilating screens, screens would 'hang' when changing channels, service interrupted by maintenance staff working on other areas of the system in my area."*

*"very dissatisfied; my TV picture quality was better with my over-the-air indoor antenna than with Comcast cable"*

## **E. Installation and Repair**

**Respondents were asked when Comcast installed their cable television service after placing their order.**

- Forty five percent (45%) reported seven days or less after the order was placed
- Forty percent (40%) reported they did not remember how long it took
- Fourteen percent (14%) reported more than seven days after the order was place

**There were a total of 1,176 customers who responded to this question if more than seven days, how many days elapsed and identify the year this occurred.**

- Twenty eight percent (28%) of the respondents reported they had to wait 7-14 days for either installation and or repairs

Below are comment made by some Comcast consumer respondents:

*"In 2005, before Comcast went digital, tried to get service for 3 months. They said but the cable distance was too great a distance for digital and they would have to put in newer cable to make it possible IF they did a site survey and it was PROFITABLE enough,. I went to satellite W/O internet and 1 YEAR LATER they put in a new cable from the street."*

*"Initial install was within 7 days but they could not get the services activated properly and it took about two weeks to get our cable and internet fully working."*

*"In 2013, I called to have service moved to our new address a few weeks in advance. on moving day Comcast told me they couldn't come out when scheduled!!!!!! It took another 2 days after i was supposed to have service for them to come out i had all the cable boxes and house was wired for them before they came!!!!!!!!!!!!"*

*"14 days. 2012. I live in an apartment that is prewired for Comcast. I didn't understand why it took so long. When I cancelled Comcast and subscribed to DIRECTV they were out the next day."*

Twenty six percent (26%) of the consumers, from 2011 to 2016, reported the following:

- Took about 10 days to get everything up and running, occurred in 2015

- Approximately 2 weeks/January of 2013
- 14 days in 2012
- 2015, and nearly 3 weeks because the guy never showed up and then repeatedly cancelled. WORST SERVICE EVER. Quit monopolizing Comcast which sucks. Give us better options!
- 20 days in 2013
- 2 weeks and occurred in 2014
- 2014. Had several issues with multiple installation attempts and the techs working on the wrong apartment several times until I took the issue to social media and I had a tech manager and several techs at my door fixing my internet
- I purchased this house in 2007 and had my first two installation appointments cancelled, finally having service installed after a 15 day wait. The installer was unprepared to complete my request (remove outlet in master bedroom, wall fish to add outlets in loft and front bedroom that we intended to use as an office) so another appointment was scheduled. When that contractor showed up, he completed the two wall fishes but left a mangled mess of the recessed box in my master bedroom, with no cover over the hole and the now patched-together coax hanging out into the room. He indicated that he would pick up another recessed box and a flat wall plate to cover it, and return after another appointment that day, but was never seen again. I've had numerous, tearful conversations about the situation with Comcast through the years with no further action taken on their part. Luckily, the hole in my bedroom wall is covered by the door as long as it is standing open, so it's a private eyesore (that still exists to this day because I am not handy enough to pull out the broken box and set a new one in place, and because the damage was caused by Comcast, and I feel both embarrassed to need to call a professional for such simple work and angry that the company that caused the problem refuses to fix it.)

**Respondents were asked if they have contacted Comcast to schedule an appointment for installations, repairs or other service issues and asked to check all that apply.**

- Fifty two percent (52%) reported a Comcast representative arrived within the time scheduled
- Thirty seven percent (37%) of the respondents stated that they waited longer than four hours for the Comcast representative to arrive to his scheduled appointment
- Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents reported Comcast told them they would have to wait over four hours for a service representative
- Twenty two percent (22%) of the respondents reported the Comcast representative never showed up for his scheduled appointment
- Ten percent (10%) of the respondents reported a representative called a day before the scheduled to cancel the consumers scheduled appointment
- There were 1,457 respondents who responded to this question

## **F. Termination Issues**

**Respondents were asked their reasons for terminating their subscription to Comcast cable television.**

- The most common answer provided, at nineteen percent (19%) of the respondents answered that they terminated service due to poor customer service
- The second most common answer provided was, "Non enough value for the cost/price" at seventeen percent (17%)

- The third most common response selected was, “Too many different fees” at thirteen percent (13%)

Q3. What were your reasons for terminating your subscription to Comcast cable television? (Please select all that apply)		
Responses	Count	% of Total
Poor company customer service when I was a subscriber	274	19%
Not enough value for the cost/price	244	17%
Too many different fees	196	13%
Problems with quality of cable service when I was a subscriber	148	10%
I use Internet streaming (e.g., Netflix, Hulu)	120	8%
Other (Please specify)	95	6%
Can't afford	80	5%
Do not like equipment requirements	74	5%
I have satellite	65	4%
I use antenna to watch over-the-air broadcast television	62	4%
Lack of interesting programs	45	3%
Don't want cable or more channels	23	2%
Don't watch television	15	1%
Too many objectionable programs, including objectionable programming for children	11	1%
Don't want my kids to watch more television	7	0%
I don't understand cable and all the choices	4	0%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>1463</b>	

Of those selecting “Other”, forty percent (40%) reported billing issues and billing practices. Some of the detailed responses are noted below.

- Comcast was deceitful in disclosing their installation costs
- Upon the respondents receiving their first bill, they discovered there were hidden costs that were never mentioned
- Continual billing after returning equipment
- Comcast would deny receiving returned equipment
- Comcast service was too expensive for the quality of service
- Comcast prices are constantly increasing with no justification or notification and the consumer is not given the opportunity to reject the added costs
- Channels are removed from their current package, and the package price remains the same. When the consumer inquired about a lost channel they were told the channel has been upgraded and to continue having that channel they will need to upgrade their service
- Customer billing complaints are met with poor customer service and long waiting periods to resolve service issues
- Comcast charges a \$300.00 fee to cancel the contract
- Respondents reported monthly billing are never the same, the cost is always higher

Twenty four (24%) of the respondents selecting “Other” reported Technical Support/Customer Service concerns. Some of the detailed responses are noted below.

- Several calls were being made to Comcast to report technical issues sometimes monthly
- Comcast failed to make improvement to its infrastructure
- Respondents reported not receiving the advertised internet speeds capacities
- Too many outages due to lack of system upgrades, poor picture quality



- Combative customer care from representatives
- Representatives are rude when the consumer has a concern regarding the overage in their bill and/or technical issues
- Long waiting times with no resolution to service issues
- Never the same bill amount always higher charges
- Comcast online support, offered no support
- Service issues never get corrected
- Old and exposed cable
- Poor equipment boxed that don't work and have not been upgraded in decades
- A respondent commented about Comcast practices, stating, "They [have] exorbitant hidden fees and beat-around –the bush customer service."
- Took Comcast six months before cancelling the customer's service

Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents reported Technical Difficulties. Some of the detailed responses are noted below.

- Poor quality in picture reception
- Too many technical problems
- Charged for returned equipment
- Incorrect billing installation fees
- Representatives gave different information to the same question.
- Comcast was unwilling to provide cable cards for TiVo DVRs
- Many outages, due to system upgrades, picture and service never was upgraded
- Old and outdated equipment
- Poor standard clear QAM tuners

**Respondents were asked to select from a list of issues they may have experienced when they terminated their Comcast cable service.**

- Thirty one percent (31%) had problems returning equipment
- Twenty six percent (26%) were charged for service after the date service was discontinued

Q4. Did you experience any of the following issues when you terminated your Comcast cable television? (Please check all that apply)		
Responses	Count	% of Total
I had problems returning equipment	141	31%
I was charged for service after the date on which services should have been discontinued	119	26%
I was charged for equipment I returned	108	23%
Other (Please specify)	92	20%
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>460</b>	

Of the responses where "Other" was selected, thirty three percent (33%) reported the customer service issues. Some of the detailed responses are noted below.

- Respondents reported extremely rude customer service, noting that representatives were unprofessional regarding the customer concerns and service needs

- When the customer cancelled service and returned Comcast equipment, Comcast continued to bill the consumer for the returned equipment. The consumer also reported when they returned equipment they were told they did not need a receipt
- Many of the respondents noted that they believe Comcast is a dishonest company and is taking advantage of the customer on monthly billing increases, including Comcast's practice of removing channels that were originally in the package the consumer agreed to pay for

Of the "Other" responses, eighteen percent (18%) of the consumers reported the following concerns and issues related to charges for equipment that was not needed and the difficulties cancelling service.

- Long waiting lines in returning equipment with some respondents reporting they were harassed when cancelling their service with Comcast
- Comcast insists on justification as why the consumer is cancelling their Comcast service
- Comcast bills customer for equipment already purchased by the customer
- Respondent reported they were billed after cancelling service with Comcast
- Respondent noted that when Comcast added channels they would increase their bill without notification

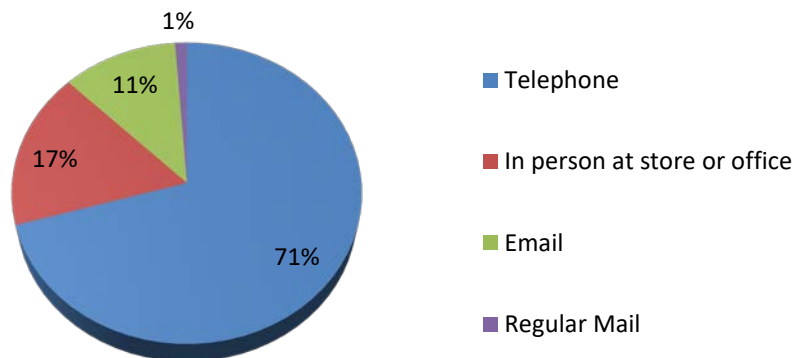
Of the "Other" responses to this question, sixteen (16%) reported issues with communication concerning monthly billing. Some of the detailed responses are noted below.

- Comcast does not keep record of returned equipment
- Consumers reported they were sent to a collection agency after returning equipment
- Some consumers were billed a higher rate for a plan they did not agree upon
- Many un-kept promises, and Comcast does not follow through with what they say there are going to do
- Consumer was charged for termination fees despite being told they wouldn't be charged a termination fee
- Comcast has lots of hidden fees, that is not mention[ed] to the customer

## **G. Customer Service Satisfaction**

Customers have several options for reporting problems to Comcast. The majority of respondents called Comcast to report a problem. As shown below in Chart 9.

**Chart 9. How Customers Report Problems to Comcast**



Respondents who were current or previous Comcast subscribers reported several issues they experienced with their Comcast service. They reported dissatisfaction with treatment they received when dealing with service complaints. The problems were reported over a number of years, with the frequency of reporting problems to Comcast increasing in recent years.

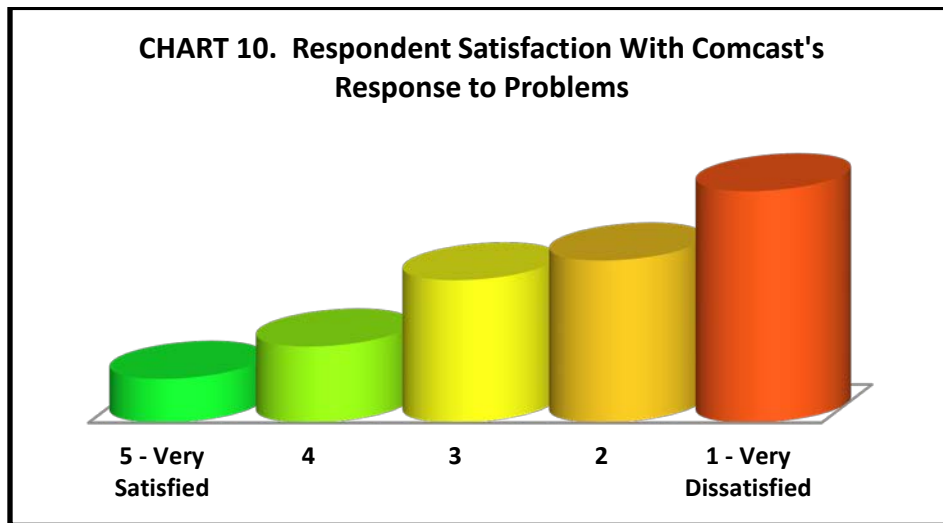
Individuals who responded to the survey reported the following experiences they incurred.

- Seventy eight percent (78%) of the respondents reported that when calling Comcast they had to call several times during the year to report service issues. Often several calls had to be made before the service issue was resolved
- Four percent (4%) of the respondents reported that the representative needed additional training to have a better understanding of their product. When a representative could not provide assistance with correcting service call issues, the representative would transfer the consumer to another representative. Often the consumer had to explain the service problem again, and spent hours on the phone trying to resolve the service issue, and sometimes getting hung up on once again and having to call back and explain the problem
- Four percent (4%) of the respondents reported long waiting times to resolve service issues
- Three percent (3%) of the respondents reported poor customer service from rude representatives, including representatives hanging up on the consumer
- Three percent (3%) reported they were told they had outdated equipment, and when equipment was replaced the consumer often had to pay for the updated equipment
- Two percent (2%) of the respondent reported they are satisfied with Comcast's service
- Two percent (2%) of the respondents felt Comcast's cost was too high, and some had issues with receiving correct charges on their bills
- One percent (1%) of the respondents had difficulty understanding the accents of the representatives
- One percent (1%) of the respondents were frustrated with the automated phone system. Many complained the routing system was incorrect and the consumer reported long periods of wait time before being able to speak to a representative when using the automated phone system
- One percent (1%) of the respondents reported cancelling Comcast service

Nine percent (9%) of the respondents indicated that when they contacted Comcast by telephone to report problems, the call was answered promptly and the customer representative was knowledgeable. The remaining respondents reported having issues when calling Comcast to report a problem. The most frequent issues reported included having to wait more than 30 seconds to be connected with a customer representative, and customer representatives who were not trained or were not knowledgeable. Respondents identified numerous issues as identified in the table below.

<b>Issues Identified By Respondents</b>	<b>Respondents Who Identified as an Issue</b>
Waited Longer than 30 seconds after call connected to talk to a customer representative	864
Talked with a customer representative who was not trained or was not knowledgeable	705
Received a busy signal	113
Poor customer service	68
Long hold time	59
Language Barrier	57
Issue was not resolved	55
Call was dropped or customer was hung up on and had to call again	50
Experienced another problem or problems	42
Transferred between representatives	35

Respondents were asked to rate Comcast’s response to their reported problems. Rating were on a five point scale with five representing “Very Satisfied” to one representing “Very Dissatisfied.” The average rating was 2.3. The many respondents were neutral or expressed some dissatisfaction as shown in Chart 10 below.



**H. How can the City better help Comcast Customers and how can Cable Offerings in Albuquerque be Improved**

The survey asked various questions regarding areas of concern, customer satisfaction, suggestions for improvement, and what the city can do to help resolve issues.

**Survey respondents were asked, if they have contacted the City of Albuquerque about Comcast, to please tell us what those calls were in relation to.**

- The most common type of concerns raised to the city, according to the respondents, was related to billing practices, 44 percent (44%)
- The second most common issue was related to customer service, at thirty five percent (35%)
- The third most common response related to signal quality at twenty one percent (21%)
- Fifty percent (50%) stated “Other” and, of those, a large majority (68%) of the respondents said they were unaware that they could contact the city about Comcast. Added Costs and Billing and TV programming were also mentioned most frequently in the “Other” category.

When asked to summarize the problem or problems, the responses fell into eleven categories, with billing and price issues accounting for over a quarter of the responses, then customer service and installation. See all of the categories in the table below.

<b>Reasons for Calls to City</b>	
Billing/Price Issues	26%
Did Not Know Could Contact City re: Comcast	20%
Issues with Customer Service/installation	14%
Other	9%
Channel Line Up	6%
Equipment Issues	6%
Comcast in General	6%
Lack/loss of Service	4%
City Complaint - general	3%
Pixilation/Signal quality	3%
Technical Issues	1%

How can the City Help Comcast Customers

**When asked how satisfied the respondents were with the assistance they received from the City of Albuquerque in helping with Comcast cable related issues, of the non “NA” answers, eleven percent (11%) were satisfied to extremely satisfied, while 11 percent (11%) were extremely dissatisfied.**

Seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents answered NA to this question. The most common reason given for the dissatisfaction responses was that they did not know they could complain to the city. The next most common reason cited was that they were told or it was implied that there was nothing the city could do (nine percent), while six percent (6%) said the city has not helped. Four percent (4%) said they got no response.

**When asked for suggestions that respondents had for the City of Albuquerque so that it can better serve them in resolving their cable television problems and concerns, the number one answer at forty percent (40%) was asking that the city bring in and/or attract more competition for this service.**

Thirteen percent (13%) of the respondents asked for the city to change providers. The third most common answer was asking the city to try to do something to reduce prices and/or regulate billing practices.

**With respect to the significant response related to bringing in competition, below are a few of the comments that were received by the respondents.**

*“Albuquerque is a high tech city and should expand competition for cable services or attempt to solicit support to establish their own metropolitan cable services in conjunction with UNM, Intel and Sandia National Labs as many other forward looking cities have done nationwide. What the city offers now with a Comcast Monopoly is unsatisfactory and doesn't meet the current and future needs of its citizens.”*

*“Get more options other than Comcast, to drive competition, there needs to be actual competition. Fight against any data cap implementations, that is nothing more than a money-grab, and they have already admitted as much.”*

The term monopoly was used 72 times in these comments. Many of the comments expressed a desire for the city to form some type of municipally run fiber/cable network. Below are a few of the more specific comments that were received relating to this concept.

*“Follow the example of other cities and roll out our own network.”*

*“Give Comcast some competition, and provide high speed internet through a Co-op like some municipalities. I would love to keep my money local and pay Albuquerque for the service.”*

*“I would love to see an internet co-op in Albuquerque, especially with fiber-connections.”*

*“install our own fiber network with TV and internet - come on, we're a HUGE tech city - we should get this down.”*

*“very simple the city should take over cable TV operations this would create more revenue for the city and more jobs”*

*“Municipal internet service. Dropping Comcast like a [expletive].”*

*“Get rid of Comcast....Tell them they are a monopoly here , they know they can do anything they want....higher bills, poor customer service, cheating on promotions, Data caps...list goes on and on. ABQ needs to have a good alternative municipal cable networks and ISPs run by the state or city that offer reasonable rates and reliable service.... if the city would do this you would have 90% of the population coming to you for service. That is how bad Comcast is to so many of your people. Please don't take kickbacks and special privileges to keep this crappy company here, We the people need your help to stop the too big to fail companies take advantage of us and the greater United States. Please look at the statistical data, the level of greed represented by this company is a total tragedy.”*

*“If the City of Albuquerque offered free Internet service for the community, I would not have to pay exorbitant fees to contribute to Comcast profits.”*

*“Invest in Fiber Optic cabling. Attract companies that can offer the service to residential customers.”*

*“Start a less expensive internet service provider run by the city*

*“1. Develop municipally-owned broadband systems. 2. Contact Google about putting one of their gigabit broadband facilities in ABQ. 3. Foster competitive broadband providers.”*

*“City should provide high-speed Internet service (see what Santa Fe is doing).”*

Based on some of the comments, it was apparent that some respondents believed that the city was not allowing other cable companies to have a franchise or that the city had an exclusive franchise with Comcast. A few comments in this area were as follows:

*“Allow different companies to bid”*

*“I didn't realize that Comcast was Albuquerque's sole cable franchise. That's a problem.”*

*“ALLOW MORE THAN ONE COMPANY TO PROVIDE HIGH SPEED SERVICES- not just DSL and Comcast . Albuquerque should contract with an independent isp and build its own fiber network.”*

With respect to pricing practice concerns, a few comments were as follows:

*“I think since Comcast is a monopoly, the city should be able to require certain price adjustments, especially for people on assistance.”*

*“City should clamp down on price increases and create residential high-speed Internet services at reasonable rate.”*

*“There should be an independent committee set up to review and approve Comcast's request for price increases, their billing practices should be required to be more transparent and there should be recourse when Comcast does not honor the agreement that their independent representatives have made with customers. Most customers cannot understand their bill because Comcast hides fees and charges that only nickel and dime customers.”*

Of note, five percent (5%) of the respondents asked that the city do a better job of making people aware of the ability to contact the city and the options the city has to address the issues raised.

#### Areas of Improvement for Cable Offerings

When asked what changes they would make to improve cable television and offerings in Albuquerque, the responses fell into 19 different topical areas, including an “other” category. The number one area noted, once again, was adding, allowing for, encouraging, and inviting additional cable provider competition into the Albuquerque service area.

Thirty six percent (36%) of the responses included this as a way cable television could be improved. The respondents noted other cable and internet companies that would be welcomed, including AT&T, Fios, and Google. Below are some observations and comments from the survey regarding competition.

*“From a television standpoint, I would argue for ala carte programming. I have stronger feelings for Internet connectivity issues. When dial-up was popular, you bought a transport service (the phone line) and a separate Internet service from an ISP. If you were not happy with your ISP, you could change by dialing a new number. The ease of switching ISPs made network neutrality issues moot. If you didn't like what your ISP was doing, you moved to another one. There is no technical reason that multiple ISPs can't be reached by a cable system. The fact that the transport and the internet services are handled by the same companies now stems from profit maximization for the current ISPs. In exchange for a franchise agreement, I would require Comcast to allow other ISPs the use of their local network for transport. This would negate all worries of "network neutrality." Consumers would be able to use the cable system to reach other ISPs if they found that Comcast was "throttling" or otherwise disrupting consumer traffic.”*

*“End the non-competitive market for Comcast in Albuquerque. Allow other wired cable providers into the city, e.g. AT&T Uverse, and Verizon FiOS. We need Fiber Optic access to Albuquerque residential customers NOW. If Mayor Berry wants to attract younger, more educated and affluent talent to the city we need a television and data infrastructure that will attract them. No one who has a \$80,000 a year job in the technology sector wants to go home to low quality cable, congested Internet service, and be told they only have one option for who they deal with. Especially if that option is Comcast. Follow in the steps of cities all over the United states who have challenged the conventional (and antiquated) model of single carrier monopolies, and have built or expanded their own municipal fiber optic networks to allow residents to participate in those services.”*

*“I want Google Fiber. Our town has a huge tech industry, and bringing in Fiber will only increase that. It will be bring the businesses and citizens we need. Seriously, it would greatly improve things and give Albuquerque a better reputation.”*

*“A local cable/internet provider (such as Comcast, Google, AT&T, etc) needs to provide fiber internet as an option - Comcast and CenturyLink both currently throttle their speeds to average subscribers, unless you are willing to pay inordinate amounts of money to get their premier level of service. Competition (and fiber internet) would attract new, high tech businesses, and younger people to the city, while addressing the price gauging issue that Albuquerque has been suffering under Comcast's current monopoly.”*

*“Allow direct competition in the market. Give options like Google Fiber reasons to want to come to our market. In order to have quality Internet and one TV channel I want to watch, I'm required to pay Comcast just under \$200. That's outrageous. Changing the monopolistic grasp of Comcast in Albuquerque will force their service to improve. If we want to see companies move in to Albuquerque and encourage job growth, we need services like quality Internet to help drive that.”*

*“First of all - I have little to no interest in having a access to a cable TV service. My primary interaction with Comcast is for high-speed internet only, and I consume most of my media content (news, tv, movies, music, etc) through there service. I would appreciate having public domain media (local, public or government programming) available over the internet or public airwaves. Second - If it is not obvious from my answers already, I despise Comcast, and have in every city I have lived in that is "served" by this*



*company. I would like ABQ to support a publicly-owned municipal broadband network for its residents that provides high-speed internet connectivity to residents. Comcast could function as an ISP and content provider over this network, as could numerous other companies, and their success in this market would be determined by their ability to provide high quality service to customers, rather than their ability to defend a government-sanctioned monopoly over the "last-mile" of wire into customers' homes. If this is not politically or financially feasible, ABQ should solicit bids from other corporations willing to build out high-speed networks in urban areas and provide incentives for them to compete with Comcast. The best choice for this would probably be Google Fiber."*

*"Follow the example of other cities and roll out our own network. Partner with Google and Intel to create a top of the line communications network here in this poverty stricken state. Federal funding might even be available if you spin it that we could better connect the labs, universities, schools, and businesses. Possibly even partner with SolarCity (Tesla) for solar energy and storage solutions."*

*"Again, open it up to a bid. There are a number of other cable providers that could provide a comparable or superior service at a lower cost to residents without treating them like the scum on the earth. Cable is hardly rocket science - it has been around for 40 years and there are better ways to serve our community than allowing one of the single worst companies in this country to run the monopoly that is our cable utility. Give someone else a chance to prove that we can have better."*

*"The broadband internet services should be extended to schools, libraries and all public buildings where children and the under-served are visiting. WiFi in public areas would be a great addition, or at least in certain public areas like civic plaza, major parks and attractions for tourists and non-commercial areas. European cities are way ahead of the US in this area of service. The government channel should also be on HD tier so it shows up clearer for city council and county commission meetings...like CSPAN. After all, the city holds the franchise and the city operates that channel. Comcast could provide student scholarships or sponsorships for STEM-based educational programs in facilities like the balloon museum, explora, the nuclear science museum and biopark. Scholarships and/or sponsorships could be granted to film and TV related teaching programs, maybe to help sustain Comcast's programming in the future. They should provide a menu of services and programming to be offered, so you can opt out of sports channels but opt in for home and garden channels, or movie channels (not premium). When Wise-pies defaults, Comcast should take on name sponsorship of the The Pit and put in top notch audio and video services. Or turn civic plaza into a high-tech wonderland that would rival any civic plaza in the US."*

*"DO NOT renew the franchise (aka monopoly) with Comcast. Comcast internet service is way too expensive and the only way we'll see better service for the price is to encourage competition. In addition, Comcast is implementing 250GB data caps in select markets. With a newly minted monopoly agreement in Albuquerque, you can be sure Comcast's data caps will be in our city soon. We need Google Fiber here. Their basic service (5 Meg down/1 Meg up) is FREE! And one GB service (10 times what Comcast offers) is only \$80 a month. Or how about the city work with the locally owned CityLink to expand the fiber beyond downtown. Not only is better/affordable gigabit internet a win for consumers, but it will also encourage economic development in Albuquerque. Comcast is the most hated company on the planet. Don't tie Albuquerque to this horrible company for another 10 years!"*

*“So much of this is tied to the quality of the internet service provided by the cable company; please consider that!!! Comcast is rolling out data caps in other cities because they refuse to compete with streaming services; there are so many other far less hostile ways of protecting their market share and competing in the new world. For the cost they ask, they really don't provide much. Internet signal is inconsistent at best, phone service people are absolutely rude and often quite stupid (granted the people I dealt with in the Abq physical location were decent, but I'm not going there when service is out at 7pm). Also, please look closely at service to the folk who live on base. I do not, however my friends who do have had problems getting service techs out onto base. Appointments dropped/changed , often without letting the customer know; rude service techs.”*

The second most noted area for improvement was related to the desire for more options for channel packages, custom packages, and the discontentment with channel bundling, at fourteen percent (14%). Below are a few noteworthy comments provided by the respondents.

*“A MUCH larger selection of choosing only the channels the customer wants. TV providers always give mixed packages with many channels that a customer doesn't want.”*

*“Give us a choice of cable providers, with better bundling prices than currently available.”*

*“Pricing for individual services instead of bundling. It doesn't make sense that I had to add a phone line that I never use and have no phone connected to and waste a phone number so that I could have more channels and pay \$15 less per month.”*

*“let you pick your channels I don't need 200 Channels that I don't watch”*

*“Ala cart selection of channels so you can pay for what you use.”“Offer ala-carte services, lower rates, higher speed internet. Get something like AT&T's new solution - U-Verse or Google's gigabit”*

The next two most frequently raised areas were prices at eleven percent (11%) and billing practices at four percent (4%), which are related, in many cases, and accounted for a combined, fifteen percent (15%) of the responses. Below are a few noteworthy comments provided by the respondents.

*“Find a company that will allow its customers to build custom packages and not force a bunch of channels on us. And offer us decent process from the start rather than deceptive introductory prices.”*

*“Make it possible for subscribers to create their package/bundle; no price increase of any kind during the term of the contract; should channel lineups change during the contract period, subscribers have the option to terminate the contract and receive a refund.”*

*“Get Google fiber. Comcast is ridiculous and expensive. I will never buy cable TV from Comcast again.”*

*“Rules for clear publication of pricing, no fine print in 20 page contracts. If the customer has to commit to a contract, so should the provider, with no price or service changes unless approved by customer.”*

*“Work to ensure accurate billings.”*

*“Force an extremely low dollar extremely basic package that would allow customers to choose it (even if they don't watch it) in order to qualify for the bundled internet price. Better yet, lock a competitive market rate!”*

*“Make billing more consistent and fair. New customers are offered better deals than existing customers. Existing customers can call and get some deals, but they expire, and the prices go up inexplicably.”*

*“Some hearing on price increases to the advertised and contracted rates.”*

*“We need more options and competition. Comcast is a horrible company. I have to call to correct bills at least every other month. Usually when they provide a discount in one area (for example, free HBO for 6 months), they offset it with another charge that magically appears on the next bill, requiring yet another call to correct that. I will seriously weigh getting rid of Comcast cable this year.”*

*“More affordable. Can't raise prices on consumers more than every year or two. Our prices increased 4 times in the last 12 months for the same service. Not charging for multiple outlets to the same location. Not charging for mandatory boxes to get cable to work!”*

*“In recent years, Comcast charges their long-time customers with higher fees while offering new customers better rates. All customers should be offered better deals not just new customers. In the last few years, we have seen channels disappear while the rates just keep increasing. Comcast offers less while charging more.”*

Last but not least, the desire for better customer service from Comcast was noted in five percent (5%) of the responses, which was the 5<sup>th</sup> most stated area for improvement in the survey. Below are some of those comments provided by the respondents.

*“I would personally offer the franchise to another cable provider. It has been a long known issue that Comcast does not care about their customers and have consistently won the worst customer service for a US based company.”*

*“I would require the provider to make substantial improvements to its equipment and infrastructure. I would require expanded discounted service plans to all hospitals, medical rehabilitation facilities, senior centers and educational facilities, i would require the Comcast call centers be located in the city, I would negotiate for more and better opportunities for local TV production programming and training. I would require the provider improve substantially communication access between its local customer service representatives & management staff and its customer base. independent third party audits should be performed annually to insure the provider is delivering the programming and services at rates they have advertised and be held accountable when they fail to do so!”*

*“Offer better service, with reps who actually care about solving an issue. It's become an "Us versus them" sort of relationship and that needs to stop.”*

*“Bring back the call centers to the US.”*

*“Not sure. Find a cable company that has customer service like that offered by DirecTV. My experience with DirecTV is nothing short of awesome. Their customer service knows how to be nice to people, they are polite and knowledgeable. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.”*

*“Give more options for both cable and internet. Comcast is a monopoly and does not treat their customers well because they know they really have no other choice.”*

*“Improved customer service---no more cr's that are off shore(Phillipines) and speak clear English. Comcast needs more product/service stores. Look at how many places you can go for Verizon, AT\*T etc phone service. Comcast has one outlet and because they have NO competition(sorry DirectTV and DISH don't qualify) they have no need to increase customer outlets. Whatever happened to the Cable board the city had? Better communication from the city on it's role with Comcast.”*

*“The City needs to sign a franchise agreement with a provider that places a priority on customer service. My impression of comcast is that they have a staff meeting every week and discuss how to mis-treat their customers. It is common knowledge that Comcast is one of the most hated companies in the US. Comcast customer service leaves a lot to be desired. My suggestions: 1. agree to not make channel lineup changes without notifying the customers two or three months in advance. 2. Do not allow rate increases without having public hearings. 3. only allow scheduled rate increases approved by the City. 4. Assign an INDEPENDENT hearing representative of the public to handle customer complaints. 5. The City should audit quality of service on a yearly service. Finally, I find it laughable that the City and Comcast have written a draft franchise agreement before even notifying the public and before allowing any Public comment.”*

*“1-To pay ONLY for stations we watch and not be charged for a package deals which contain stations we have no interest in. 2-Too man taxes (tax upon tax) legislative tax 3-Please bring customer service back to America, so I can get someone I can understand. I hate the OUTSOURCING to other countries. Bring the jobs back. May I suggest to open a large customer service call center here in Albuquerque, it will bring us a lot of jobs and help our city financially. Please, Please. Not other complaints. Service has been very good and we LOVE our Comcast servie. Great company.”*

See Chart 11 below listing the types of responses by major category.

**CHART 11. If you had the ability to improve cable television and offerings in Albuquerque, what changes would you make?**

