

# **Tallahassee Voices**

## **Solid Waste Survey February 26, 2007**

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And The Tallahassee Democrat

\*TallahasseeVoices is a pro bono Internet survey panel sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and the Tallahassee Democrat. There were 660 responses to the survey sent out on February 20, 2007. Panel results have been weighted to reflect the demographics of Leon County and results are representative of all local residents who have access to the Internet at home, work, or school. Go to our website at [www.tallahasseevoices.com](http://www.tallahasseevoices.com) to learn more about us.

# Survey - Implications

“Our recent *Tallahassee Voices* survey shows that City residents are not happy about proposed changes to their solid waste service, and feel they have not had an opportunity to be heard on the proposed changes,” states Phillip Downs, Professor of Marketing at FSU and founder of *Tallahassee Voices*. “While the City is a monopoly supplier of solid waste services, it should not take customers for granted. Surveys by Kerr & Downs Research over the past 25 years have shown that solid waste services regularly receive high ratings from customers. While governments look for ways to save taxpayers’ dollars, cutting garbage collection may not be the most prudent alternative,” Downs adds.

“The first Mayor Daley of Chicago claimed that picking up the garbage was an essential element for keeping citizens happy. Local residents do not feel it is fair to charge \$20 extra for the level of service they have been used to getting especially when the price has been \$15.30 per month. Either the pricing strategy in the past was totally wrong, or the new pricing strategy is price gauging,” Downs states. We normally expect quality enhancements when prices rise dramatically. The City is offering a service reduction or a dramatic price increase for residents who want to maintain backdoor garbage service. This is a pricing tactic only a monopolist could execute successfully. It remains to be seen if the City will be successful with this tactic,” concludes Downs.

# Survey Highlights

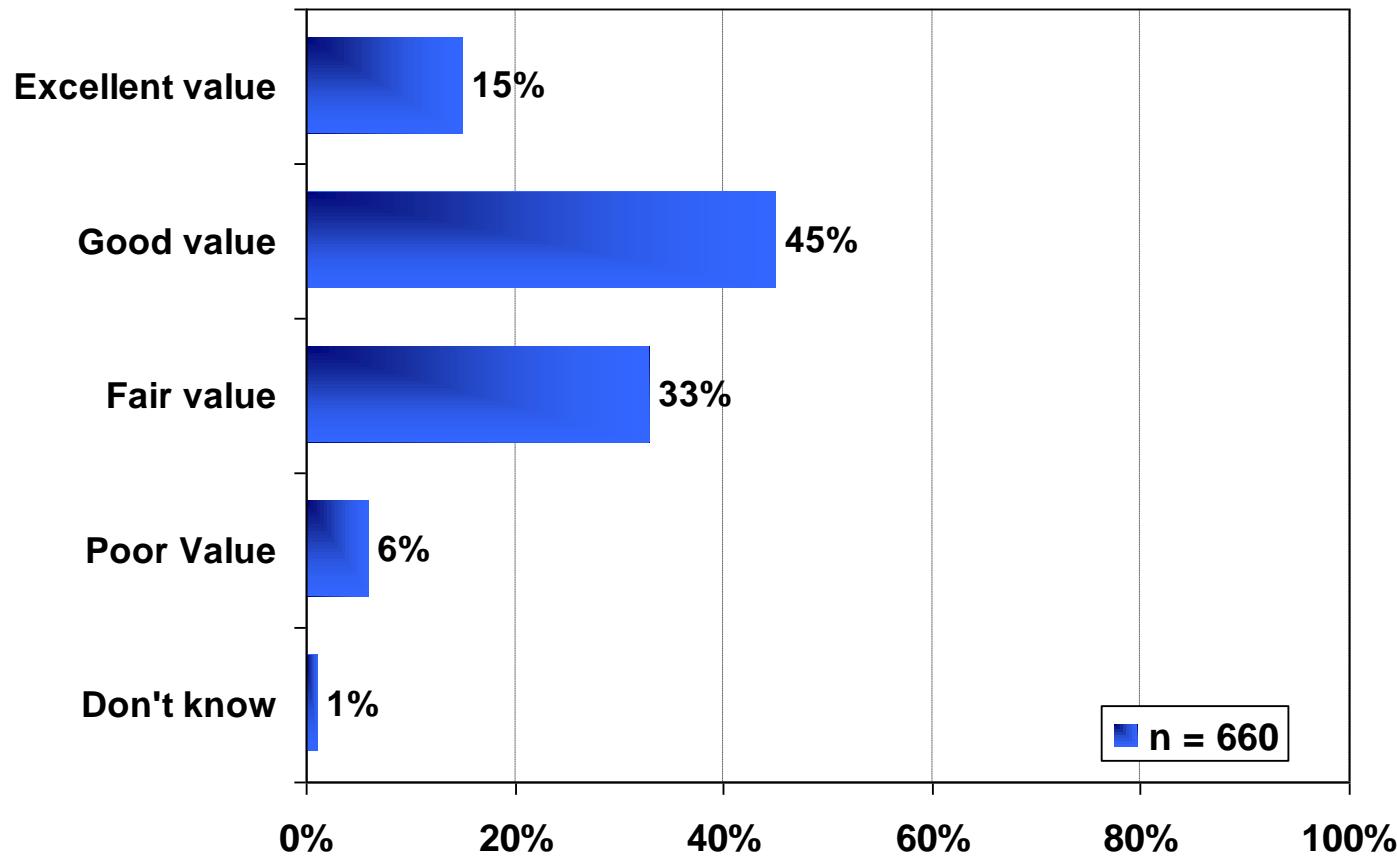
- City residents are not happy about proposed changes to the City's solid waste service.
- City residents do not think the \$20 charge for backdoor service is fair
- City residents feel they did not have a chance to express their feelings about the change in service.

# Survey Highlights

- Only 1 in 3 City residents (32%) supports switching to 1 curbside trash collection per week
- Only 13% of City residents believe that paying \$20 extra per week to keep their backdoor trash service is fair.
- Fewer than 1 in 10 City residents (9%) feel they were given an opportunity to voice their concern on the solid waste collection change proposed by the City.
- 6 in 10 City residents (60%) say solid waste services are an excellent or good value.
- 6 in 10 County residents (58%) say solid waste services are an excellent or good value.

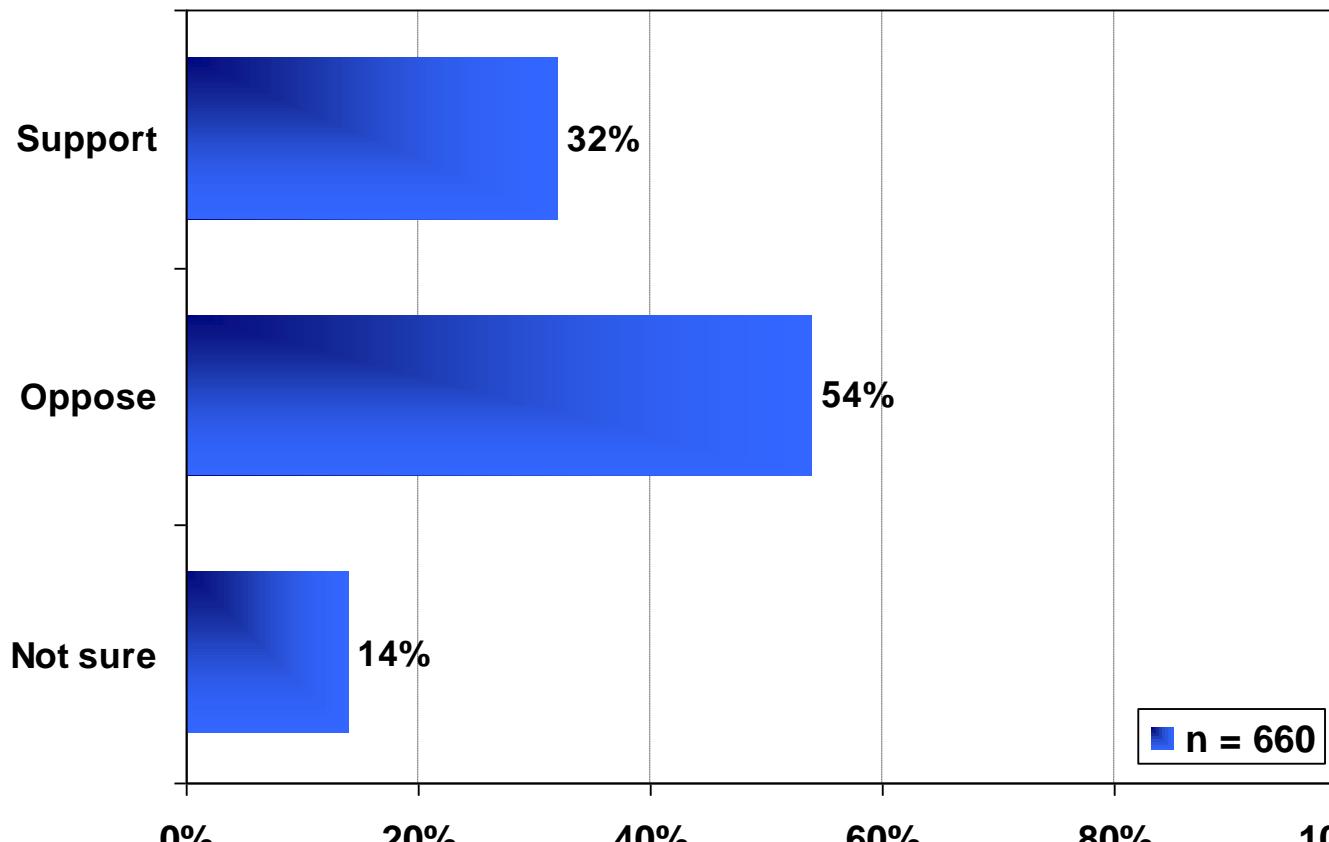
# City Results

Given what you pay and what you receive, how would you rate the value of the solid waste services\* you receive?



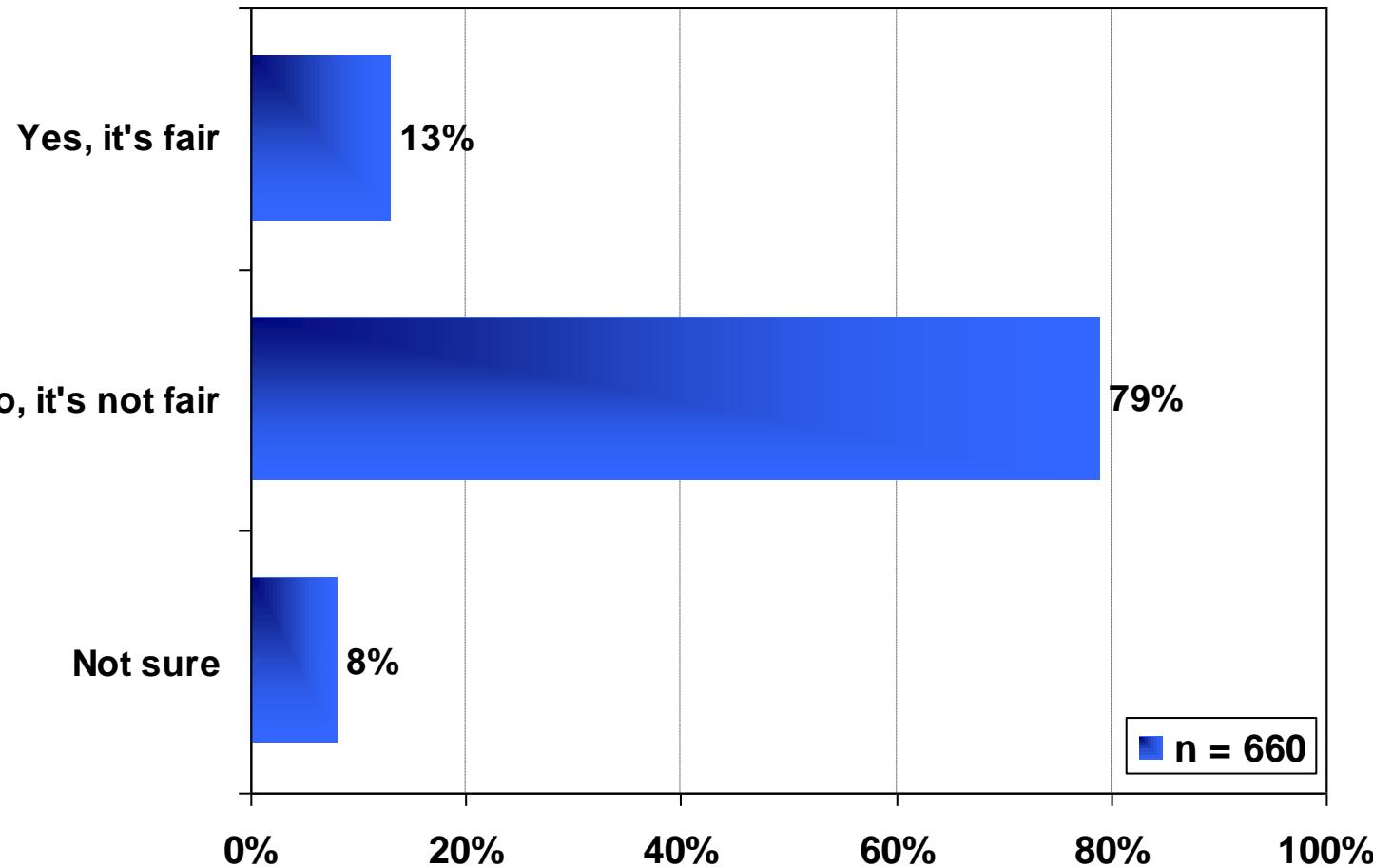
\*Solid waste services include (garbage, trash, bulky items, yard waste, recyclables)

# Do you support or oppose the change in the City solid waste service?\*



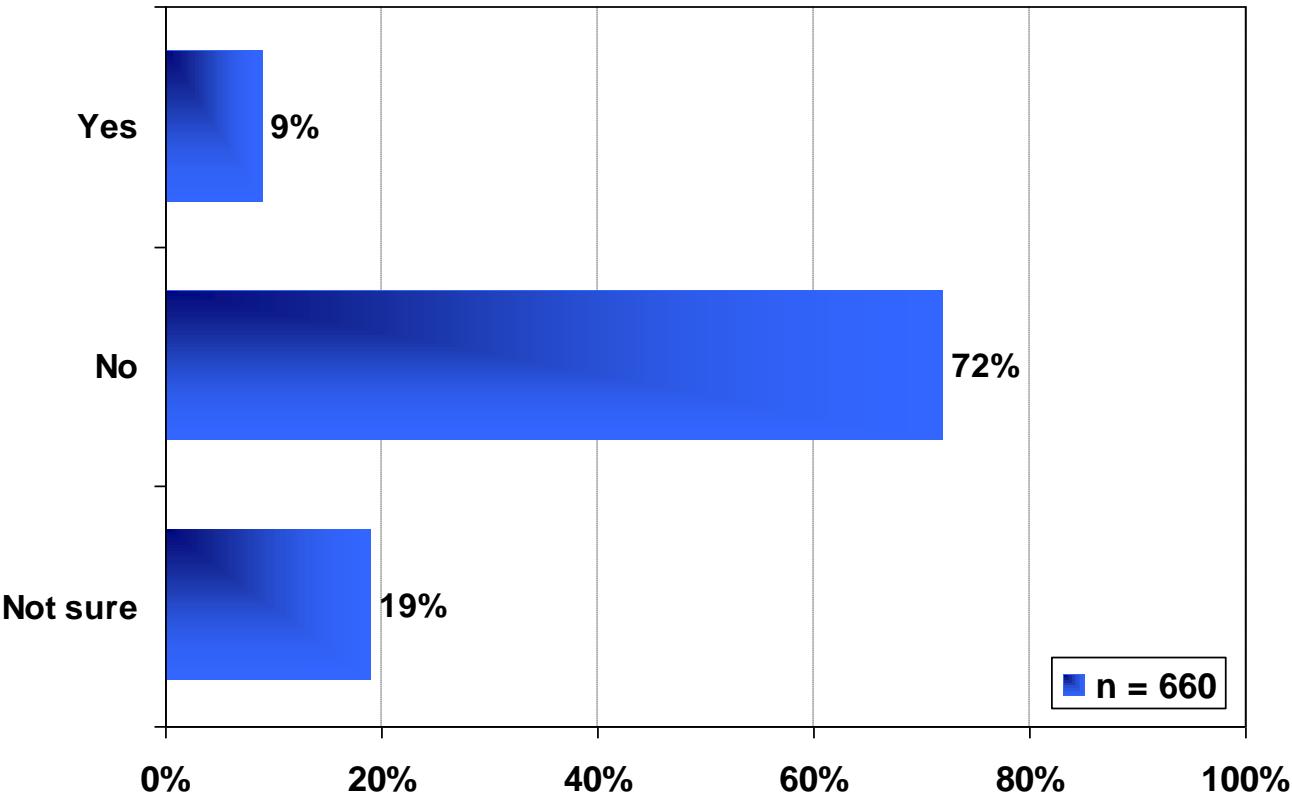
\*Actual question read: Presently, the City of Tallahassee's solid waste service now covers: 1 "backdoor" and 1 "curbside" garbage collection *each week*, 1 "curbside" yard trash and bulky item pick-up *every other week*, 1 "curbside" recycling pick-up *every other week*. This service costs \$15.30 *per month*. Starting in May 2007, the City will: discontinue backdoor garbage collection, eliminate 1 garbage collection *each week*, increase recycling pick-ups to *once a week*. So as of May 2007, your solid waste service for the City will include: 1 "curbside" garbage collection *each week*, 1 recycling collection *each week*, 1 "curbside" yard trash and bulky item collection *every other week*. This price will remain \$15.30 *per month*. Do you support or oppose the change in the City solid waste service?

# Is the \$20 extra charge for “backdoor” garbage collection fair?\*



\*Actual question read: Under the new service starting in May, you can pay \$20 per month extra to receive one “backdoor” garbage collection per week. Given that the price of a month’s solid waste service is \$15.30, is the \$20 extra charge for “backdoor” garbage collection fair?

# Were you given the opportunity to voice your preferences to the City?\*



\*Actual question read: Do you feel you were given an opportunity to voice your preferences to the City regarding changes in the City's solid waste collection service?

# County Results

# How would you rate the value of the solid waste services you receive from the County?

