

City/County Government Promotion



TallahasseeVoices

February 2010



TallahasseeVoices is a pro bono internet survey panel sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research, which is solely responsible for information contained within TallahasseeVoices' reports.

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The following media partners have graciously agreed to provide coverage of results of TallahasseeVoices' surveys: WCTV, WFSU-FM, and the Tallahassee Democrat.

The present survey on local issues was conducted in November 2009. 507 of the 6,000 panel members responded. Results were weighted to reflect the demographics of the 90%+ local residents who have access to the internet at home, work, or school.

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Whose money is it?

Citizens prefer that media change the way they report about local government projects.

For example, citizens prefer :
“\$30,000 of taxpayers money used to fund the Shelter.”

vs.

“The City releases \$30,000 to fund the Shelter.”

TallahasseeVoices founder, Phillip Downs, Ph.D., adds, “It’s just not semantics – citizens want more control over government actions, and how issues are worded is part of the struggle to feel in control.”

Using tax dollars to promote city/county government

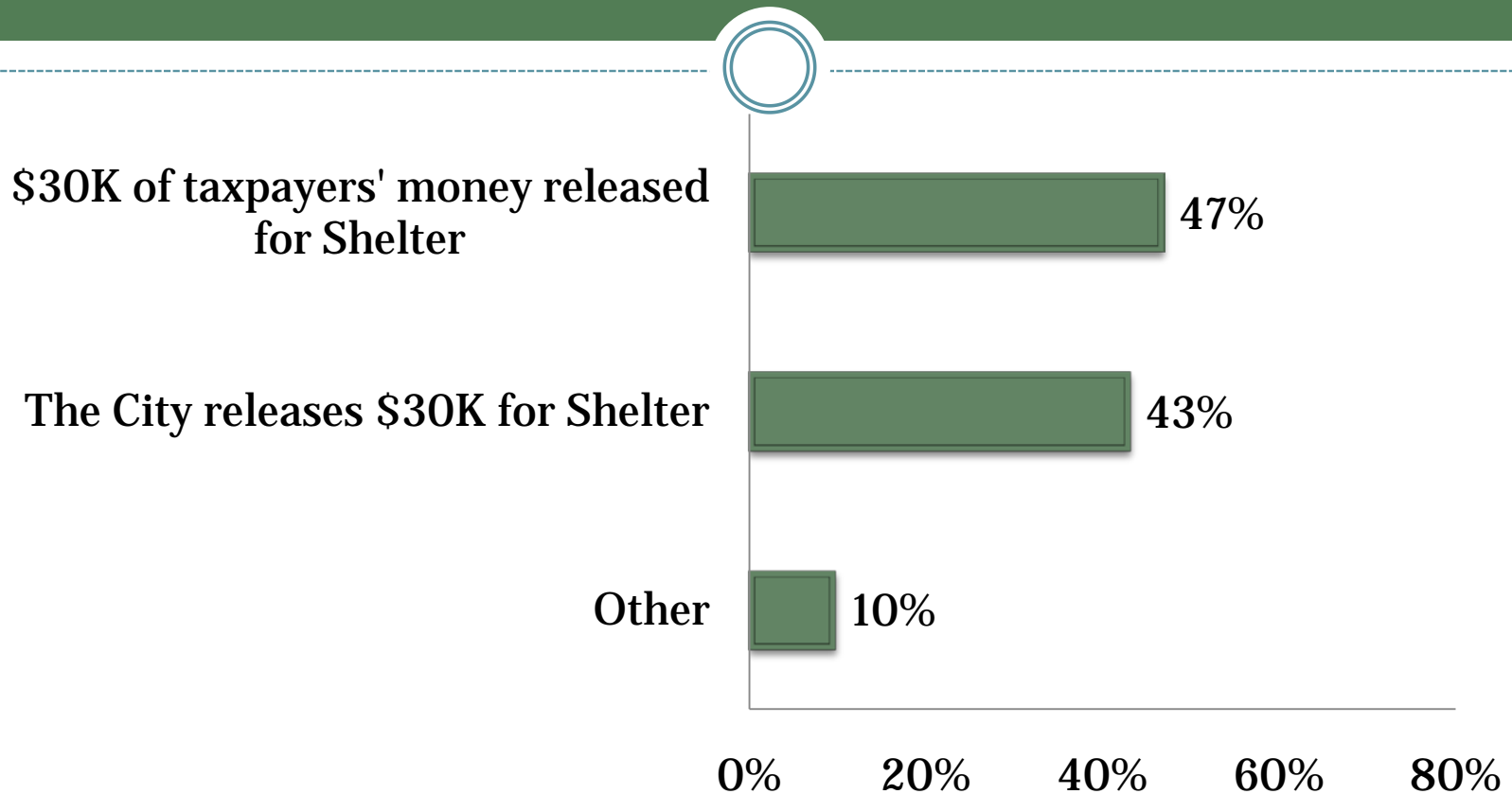
Citizens think the City spends too much to promote its agenda. A majority of citizens believe the City should spend less on advertising and less on running the City television station, WCOT.

Citizens are less critical of the County’s promotional efforts, yet a plurality (44%) of citizens believe the County should spend less of taxpayers’ dollars promoting what it does.

TallahasseeVoices founder, Phillip Downs, Ph.D., claims “the backlash against local government promotional efforts results from difficult economic times during which a majority of citizens have cut back their standard of living.”

When local media report that the City or County spend money on X, Y, or Z, the wording of headlines and articles make it appear that the money is the City's or the County's when the money is really taxpayers'.

For example, the Tallahassee Democrat recently reported that the “City releases \$30K for shelter.” Which do you think local media should say when local governments spend money (we’ll use the shelter as an example):



An edited excerpt from the City of Tallahassee's website reads as follows:
“WCOT, channel 13, is the City of Tallahassee's government TV station. It offers shows like Tallahassee Matters and On Location, talk shows like City Talk and City Law/City Justice, broadcasts of City Commission meetings, special events, and Source One message board. WCOT is designed to let citizens KNOW more government.”



The City also regularly buys pages of advertising in the Tallahassee Democrat to promote its agenda and services, runs advertisements on radio or television, sends mailings to citizens, and maintains a website. This communication program (some would call it promotion) is run by public relations staff and videographers who work for the City. The City also pays consultants in public relations and advertising from time-to-time to assist in its communication/promotion efforts.

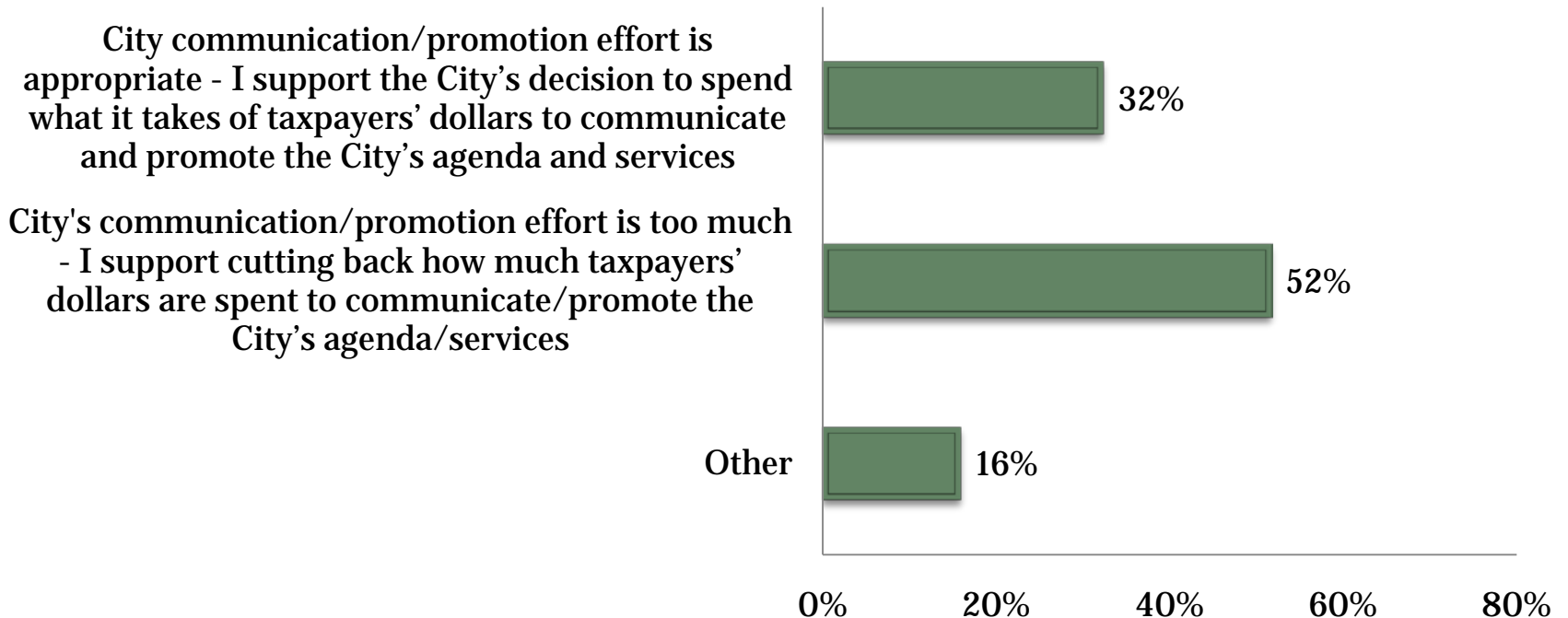
The City's communication/promotion efforts are paid for by taxpayers' dollars.

Some people argue that the City must operate its communication/promotion effort at this level to make certain citizens are fully informed.

Some people argue that the City's communication/promotion effort spends more taxpayers' dollars than it is worth, especially during difficult economic times when property taxes, fire service fees, utility payments, etc. are stretching household budgets.



WITH WHICH GROUP DO YOU AGREE?



Leon County government does not have its own TV channel as does the City of Tallahassee, but it does run some local programming.



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WITH WHICH GROUP DO YOU AGREE?

County communication/promotion effort is appropriate - I support the County's decision to spend what it takes of taxpayers' dollars to communicate and promote the County's agenda and services

County's communication/promotion effort is too much - I support cutting back how much taxpayers' dollars are spent to communicate/promote the County's agenda/services

Other

