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14 February, 2024

Results of Survey: Tobago Residents' Annual Survey of THA Performance Dec 2022- Dec 2023

The Second Annual Residents' Survey of the THA's performance (for December 2022 to December 2023), was held between 18th December, 2023 and 20th January, 2024. This was administered by Tobago CivilNET and the Tobago Council of Elders.

The Survey asked a sample of the population currently resident in Tobago to rate various aspects of the performance of the Administration and Minority Council.

Overall Results

Survey responses show that 34% of respondents had a positive rating for THA's overall performance (**Above Average, Good and Excellent**) whereas 46% had a negative rating for THA's overall performance during the year (**Below Average, Poor and Very Poor**). On the positive side, 9% and 17.3% responded that the overall performance was **Excellent** and **Good** respectively. On the negative side, 12% and 25.3% responded that the overall performance was **Poor** and **Very Poor** respectively. 18.3% rated the administration as **Average** and 1.3% responded **Not Sure**.

Changes in Overall Ratings since First Annual Survey

In comparison to the first survey, conducted for the year 2022 and published in 2023, the latest survey responses revealed that more respondents had a positive opinion on the Administration's overall performance. In the first survey, 22.2% of respondents had a positive rating for THA's overall performance (**Above Average, Good and Excellent**) compared to 34% in 2023, an increase of 11.8%. In 2022, 56.5% had a negative rating for THA's overall performance during the year (**Below Average, Poor and Very Poor**) compared to 46% in 2023 (a decrease of 10.5%). Those who responded that the overall performance was **Excellent** and **Good** respectively increased from 5.7% and 7.9% in 2022 to 9% and 17.3% in 2023. Those who responded that the overall performance was **Poor** decreased from 14.9% to 12% but the rating for **Very Poor** increased from 22.9% to 25.3%.

In 2023 there was a decrease in the number of respondents who rated the administration as **Average**, from 20.3% to 18.3% and the number of persons who were **Not Sure** did not change significantly.

Results by Topic

Of the 19 non- demographic, performance related questions asked, nine were related to the performance of specific Divisions and 10 were general questions related to various aspects of performance including the performance of the Assemblymen.

Respondent Demographics

All Tobago districts were represented but there was an oversampling of West Tobago residents. The respondent ages mostly matched the estimated adult age profile of the nation (18 years and over), although there was *undersampling* of persons in the 18-29 age group. Almost half of all respondents were between the ages of 30 and 49 years. The demographic profile of these results was similar to the previous survey.

Transparency

We asked respondents to rate the success of the government's plan to increase transparency through the use of E- Governance platforms and Information and Communications Technology. The most frequently chosen rating (32.7%) was **Very Poor**. This result was similar to the previous year. When we asked respondents to rate the overall Transparency of the THA, again, the most frequently chosen rating (26.7%) was **Very Poor**.

People Participation

The level of *people participation* in the democratic process during and post-election season was also rated by the majority of respondents as **Very Poor**. There was, however, a 5.2% decrease in the number of respondents with this point of view in 2023.

Forensic Audits on Road Projects

Most respondents were dissatisfied with the progress or outcomes of the forensic audits on road repair that were announced to be performed on road repair projects carried out between October 2019 and November 2022. The most frequently chosen rating (28.7%) was **Very Poor** and there was no similar question for comparison in the previous survey.

Performance Rating by Divisions

Below is the most frequently chosen rating for each Division of the THA:

- **Office of the Chief Secretary – Average:** No information to compare with from the previous survey.
- **Community Development, Youth Development and Sports – Average:** No information to compare with from the previous survey.
- **Education, Research and Technology – Average:** This result was similar to 2022 but there was a 9.2% drop in the number of persons with this perception in 2023.
- **Finance, Trade and the Economy – Very Poor:** No information to compare with from the previous survey.
- **Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment and Sustainable Development – Average:** Similar but with a minor increase in the persons with this perception from 2022
- **Health, Wellness and Social Protection – Average:** While this result was similar to the previous year, the number of persons with this perception dropped by 5.2% from 2022 to 2023.

- **Infrastructure, Quarries and Urban Development – Very Poor:** Was rated as **Average** in the previous survey. The **Very Poor** rating increased by 4.5% from 2022 to 2023.
- **Settlements, Public Utilities and Rural Development – Average:** No information to compare with from the previous survey.
- **Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Transportation – Average:** Similar result but with a minor decline in persons with this perception from 2022.

Note that respondents were given the opportunity to add comments to justify their rating for each Division. These are available upon request.

Results for Emergency Response

The ability of the THA Executive Council to take action to effect emergency repairs was *most frequently* rated as **Average** up from **Very Poor** in 2022. There was a 2% increase in the perception of an **Average** performance from 2022.

Results for Accessibility of Assemblymen

The overall ease of individuals' reaching and communicating with their Assemblymen was **Very Poor**. This was the same rating in 2022 with a 1.5% increase in persons airing this view in 2023.

Results for Assemblymen Relations With the Public

Assemblymen were deemed to have **Very Poor** relations with the public and there was a minor increase in persons with this view in 2023.

Results for Assemblymen Relations With Public Servants

There was an improvement in this rating from **Very Poor** in 2022 to **Average** in 2023. Both ratings saw a decrease of 4.9% and .3% respectively.

Results for Overall Performance of Minority Bench

While the overall performance of the Minority Bench maintained its most frequent rating of **Average** as in 2022, there was a 2.5% decrease in respondents who gave this rating in 2023.

Results for Awareness of Plans and Projects of THA for Implementation in 2023

A third of respondents, 33.3%, were not aware at all of the plans and projects put forward by the THA Executive Council in the last 12 months. This was the most frequently chosen response.

Results for 6 Categories of Overall THA Performance

Most frequent ratings were as follows:

- Transparency- **Very Poor**
- Accountability – **Very Poor**
- Communication- Tie between **Average** and **Very Poor**
- Leadership- **Very Poor**
- Adhering to the mandate - **Very Poor**
- Overall Performance- **Very Poor** (similar to the previous survey)

Additional Themes of Comments

There were 102 added comments by the respondents whose themes were independently categorized and summarized by Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools as follows:

- **Governance and Oversight:** There's a call for restructuring the governance of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) with the establishment of an Oversight body and special committees to guide policies.
- **Performance Assessment:** Some respondents acknowledge that the current administration is doing what they were elected to do, often under difficult circumstances. They advocate for more time to allow the THA to show results.
- **Economic and Employment Concerns:** A recurrent theme is the need for job creation and better employment opportunities, particularly permanent positions, as opposed to short-term contracts.
- **Political Climate and External Relations:** Concerns are raised about perceived undermining efforts by the central government, hyper-policing, and obstruction of THA functions by senior officials. There's a sentiment that the current political climate in Tobago is marked by vindictiveness and is not conducive to progress.
- **Transparency and Communication:** Respondents request more transparency and better communication from the THA, including access to executive council updates and regular community meetings.
- **Public Service and Infrastructure:** Criticism is directed towards the functionality of public services, with calls for improvements in areas like road repair and fisheries management.
- **Youth and Community Involvement:** There is a push for involving youth in governance and creating programs that target their participation and influence.
- **General Dissatisfaction:** A notable portion of the feedback indicates a general dissatisfaction with the current administration, citing failed promises, arrogance, immaturity, and a lack of progress.
- **Calls for Change:** Many responses call for immediate action, including new elections, a re-evaluation of leadership, and a review of administrative strategies.
- **Hope for Improvement:** Despite criticisms, there is hope expressed for better governance, with a belief that Tobago can improve with the right leadership and community involvement.

Interpreting this survey

The aim of this survey is to get opinions of the public on this important issue. Though not a strict scientific survey, it points us in the direction of public sentiment and our hope is that it is used, along with other relevant data, by leaders in key decisions in the future. We also hope that it helps educate the public about the perceptions of others on Tobago's performance to help in uniting civil society activity.

We aimed to keep the questions as similar to those of the previous survey as possible to allow comparison, but in some cases, we added new questions or rephrased them for clarity. The comments at the end are also very useful. We recommend that surveys of the public be used in all major future decisions. Results are presented in comparison to those of the first survey (where possible) to illustrate changes.

Methodology

The survey was mainly performed online with respondents using a Google Form to respond. In addition, a number of printed forms were used to manually collect responses from persons on the streets of all 15 districts to ensure that the less technologically savvy members of the population had the opportunity to be heard. Additionally, results from the first survey indicated that many younger persons in the 18-29 age group do not readily complete these surveys, so a Facebook advertisement targeting this age group was created and was run for 2 weeks. The increase in responses from this age group (compared to last year) illustrates the success of this approach.

Tobago CivilNET

Tobago Residents' Annual Survey of THA Performance Dec 2022- Dec 2023

Survey Results

Total responses: **300**

Margin of error is **6%**.

Interpretation: Assuming an adult population of 51,393[†], we are **95%** confident that the percentages shown in the results are within +/- 6% of the true values.

[†]**Note:** this was the size of the Electorate in Tobago for THA 2021 Elections according to the Elections and Boundaries Commission.

Question by Question Response Review

Including with Comments and Comparison to Previous Survey*

* **Note:** some questions were reworded slightly, so the comparison question from the previous survey may not be a perfect match.

The questions asking respondents to rate various Divisions included followup questions asking them to explain their rating. For brevity, they are excluded from this report, but they are available upon request.

1) Please Select Your District

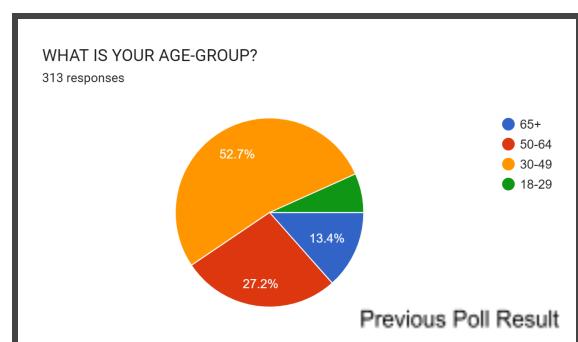
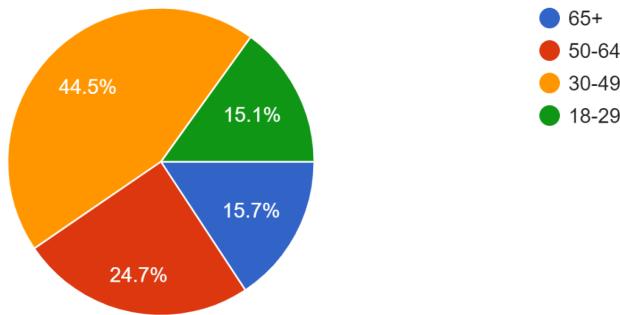
299 responses



All 15 Tobago Districts were represented. This result is similar to the previous survey. The minimum represented districts were Belle Garden/Glamorgan and Parlatuvier/L'Anse Fourmi/Speyside both with 4.3% of the responses. The largest was Buccoo/ Mt Pleasant with 11.7%. There is therefore an oversampling of residents in the West of Tobago.

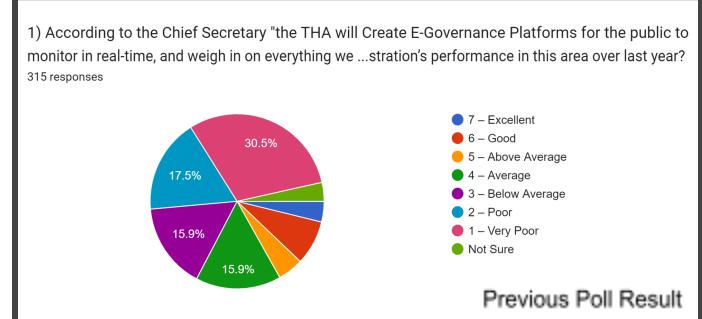
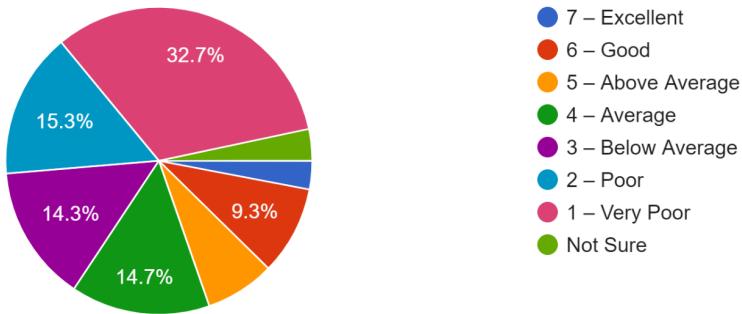
2) What is your Age Group?

299 responses



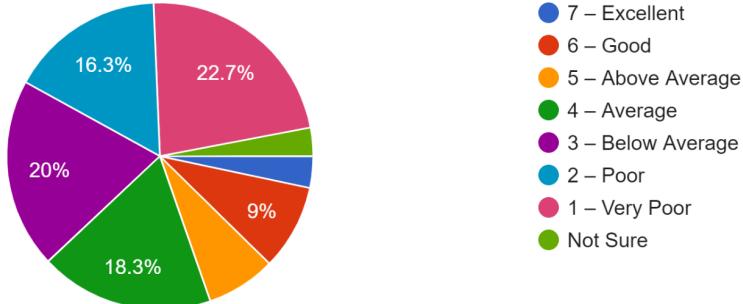
This result shows 15.1% of respondents in the 18-29 age group. Estimates for Tobago's adult population are that 26% are in this age group, so they are underrepresented. Other age groups are overrepresented but in ratios similar to the Tobago adult population. Compared to the previous survey, there was more representation of the 18-29 year old group (only 6.7% were from the 18-29 age group in 2023).

3) In December 2021 in response to a question on increasing transparency, the now Chief Secretary said: "the THA will change the way it does business by creating E-Governance Platforms (utilizing Information and Communication Technology) so the public can monitor in real-time, and weigh in on everything the THA does. The public will be part of every single project each step of the way". After 2-years, how would you rate the THA's progress towards this project?

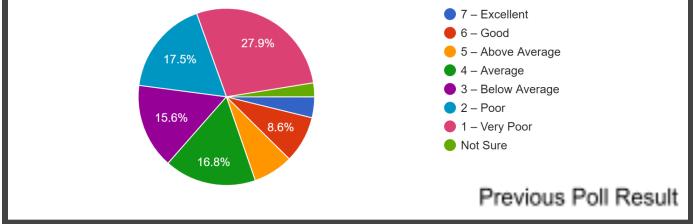


4) According to the Chief Secretary 'The key to reducing corruption and increasing greater transparency is People Participation in Democracy'. For the THA election 2021, the electorate comprised 51,393 voters, of which 29,274 voted. How would you rate the

level of People Participation in Tobago's Democratic process, during and post-election season?

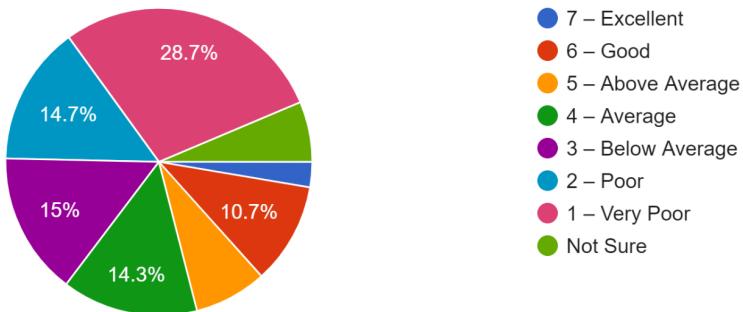


2) According to the Chief Secretary 'The key to reducing corruption and increasing greater transparency is People Participation in Democracy'...pation in Democracy in Tobago over the last year?
315 responses



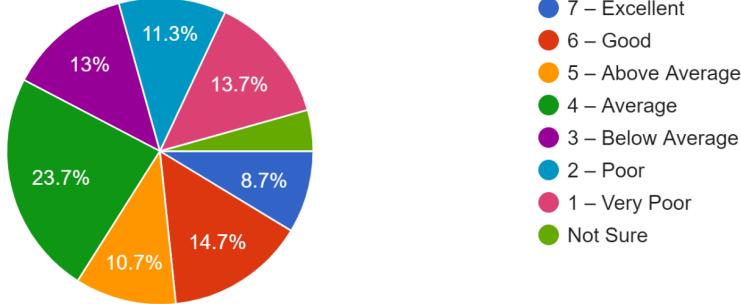
Previous Poll Result

- 5) At a plenary sitting on January 27, 2022, the Finance Secretary announced forensic audits into a number of road projects covering the period October 2019-November 2022. **How satisfied are you with the progress or outcome of these audits?**

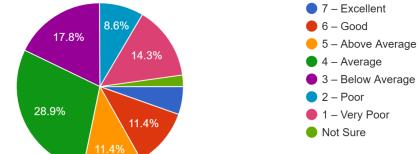


There was no comparable question in the previous survey.

6) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Health, Wellness and Social Protection?

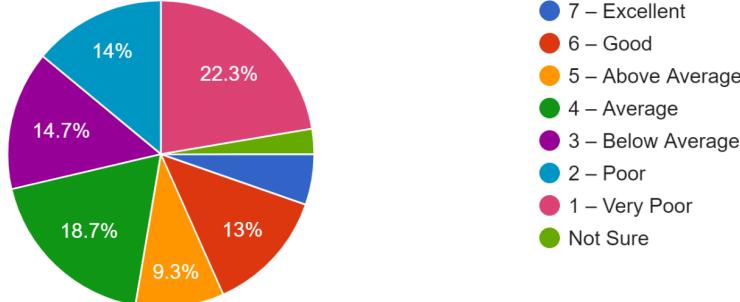


4) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Health, Wellness and Social Protection over the last year?
315 responses

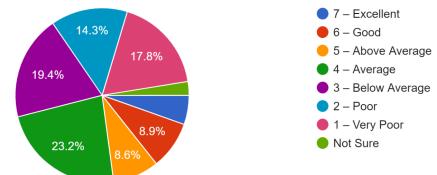


Previous Poll Result

7) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Infrastructure, Quarries and Urban Development?

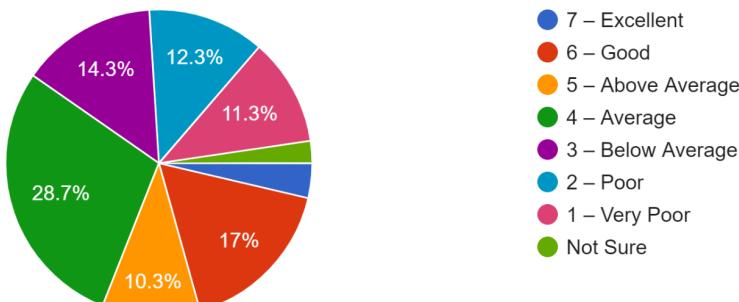


5) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Infrastructure, Quarries and Urban Development over the last year?
315 responses

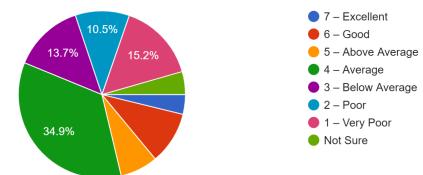


Previous Poll Result

8) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Education, Research and Technology?

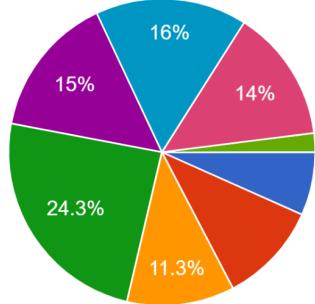


6) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Education, Research and Technology over the last year?
315 responses



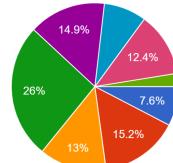
Previous Poll Result

9) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Transportation?



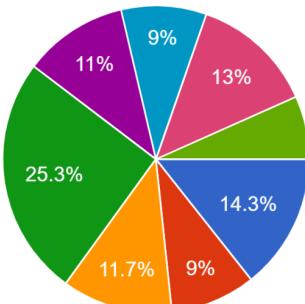
- 7 – Excellent
- 6 – Good
- 5 – Above Average
- 4 – Average
- 3 – Below Average
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Very Poor
- Not Sure

7) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Tourism, Culture, Antiquities and Transportation over the last year?
315 responses



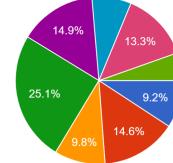
Previous Poll Result

10) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment and Sustainable Development?



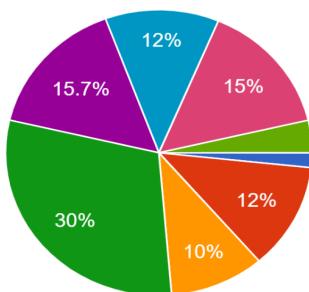
- 7 – Excellent
- 6 – Good
- 5 – Above Average
- 4 – Average
- 3 – Below Average
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Very Poor
- Not Sure

8) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Food Security, Natural Resources, the Environment and Sustainable Development over the last year?
315 responses



Previous Poll Result

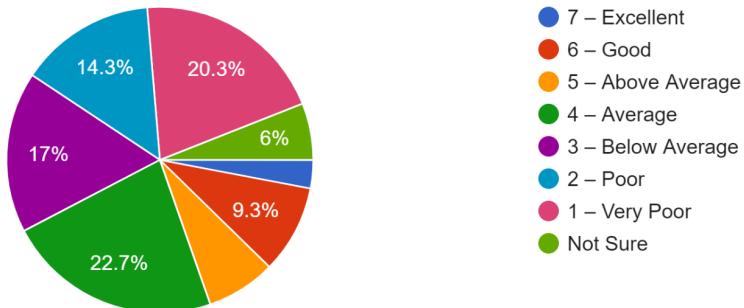
11) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Community Development, Youth Development and Sport?



- 7 – Excellent
- 6 – Good
- 5 – Above Average
- 4 – Average
- 3 – Below Average
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Very Poor
- Not Sure

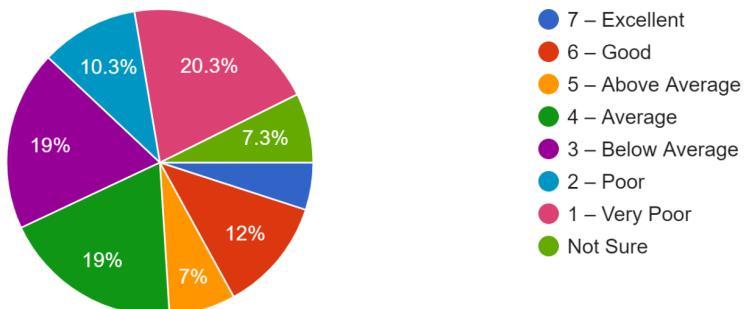
There was no comparable question in the previous survey.

12) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Settlements, Public Utilities and Rural Development?



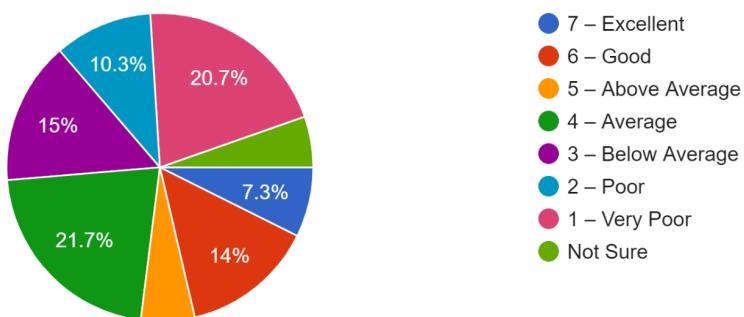
There was no comparable question in the previous survey.

13) How would you rate the overall performance of the Division of Finance, Trade and the Economy?



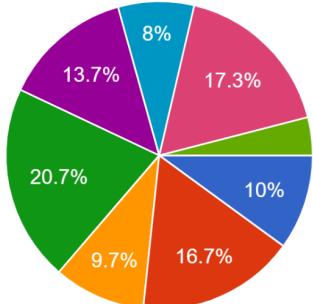
There was no comparable question in the previous survey.

14) How would you rate the overall performance of the Office of the Chief Secretary?



There was no comparable question in the previous survey.

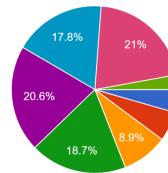
15) How would you rate the **approach of the THA Executive Council to identify, prioritize, and take effective actions on emergency repair issues, for instance landslips?**



- 7 – Excellent
- 6 – Good
- 5 – Above Average
- 4 – Average
- 3 – Below Average
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Very Poor
- Not Sure

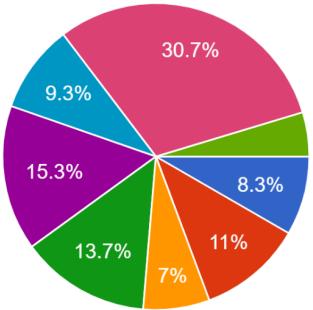
9) How do you rate the approach of the Administration in identifying, prioritizing, and taking effective action on issues over the last year?

315 responses



Previous Poll Result

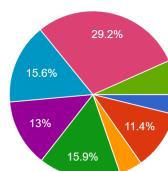
16) How would you rate the **overall ease of reaching and communicating (accessibility) with your Assemblyman?**



- 7 – Excellent
- 6 – Good
- 5 – Above Average
- 4 – Average
- 3 – Below Average
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Very Poor
- Not Sure

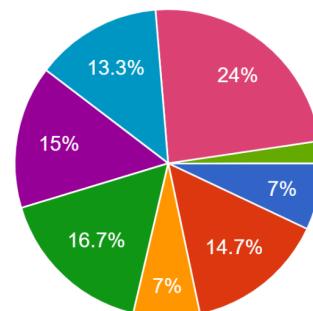
11) How do you rate the overall ease of reaching and communicating (accessibility) with your Assemblyman over the last year?

315 responses



Previous Poll Result

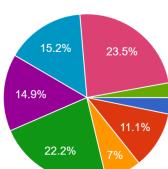
17) How would you rate the **overall manner in which Assemblymen relate to the public?**



- 7 – Excellent
- 6 – Good
- 5 – Above Average
- 4 – Average
- 3 – Below Average
- 2 – Poor
- 1 – Very Poor
- Not Sure

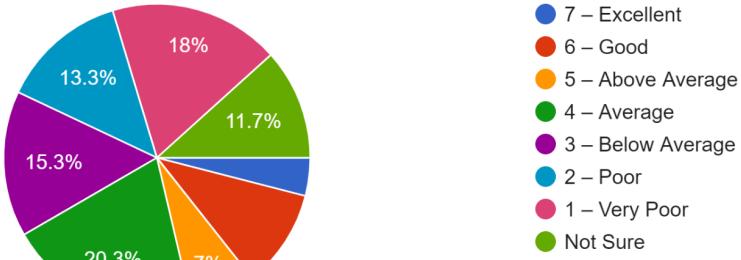
13) How would you rate the overall manner in which Assemblymen relate to the citizens over the last year?

315 responses



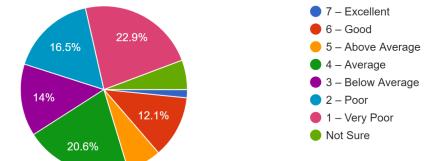
Previous Poll Result

18) How would you rate the *overall manner in which Assemblymen relate to public servants?*



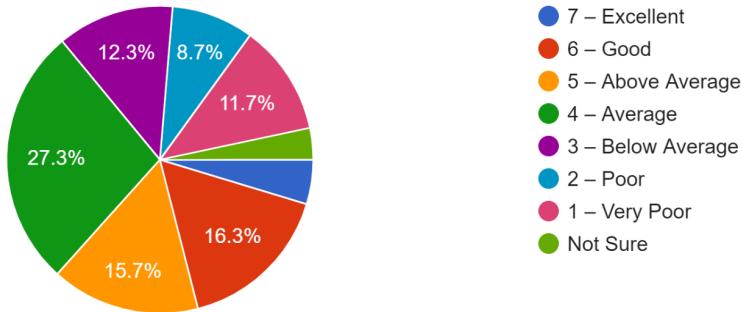
14) How would you rate the overall manner in which Assemblymen have related to one another and public servants over the last year?

315 responses



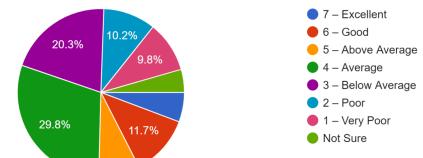
Previous Poll Result

19) How would you rate the *overall performance of the Minority Bench?*



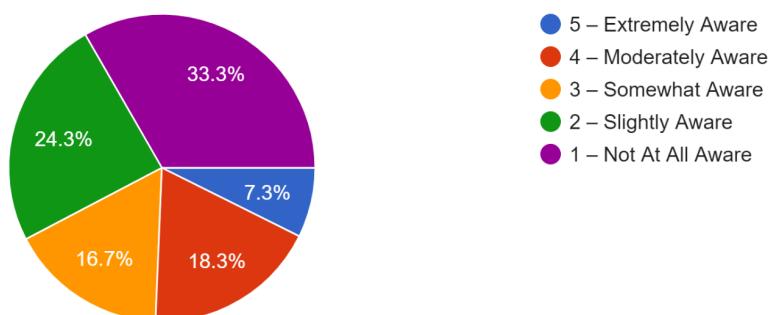
16) How would you rate the overall performance of the Minority Bench over the last year?

315 responses



Previous Poll Result

20) To what extent are you *aware of the plans and projects put forward by the THA Executive Council for implementation in the last 12 months?*

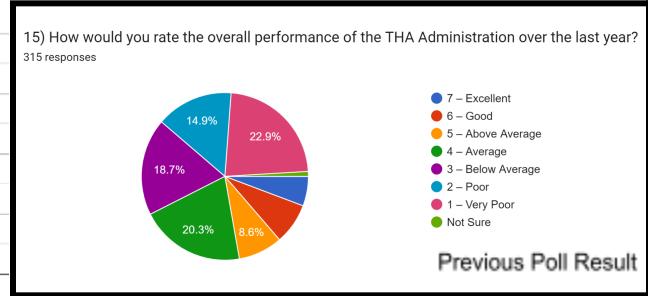
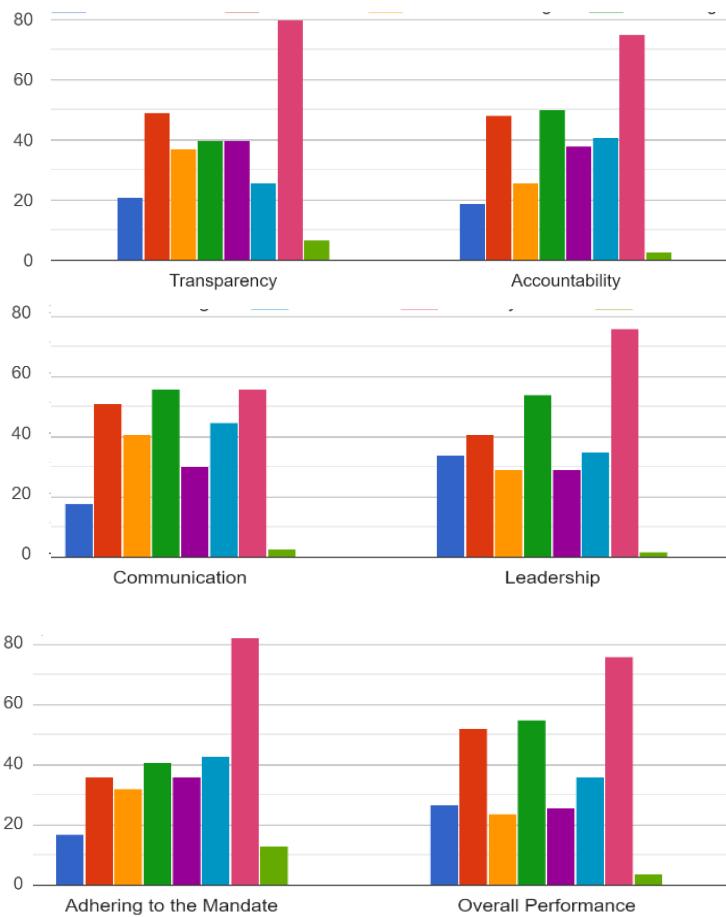


There was no comparable question in the previous survey.

21) Rate the following aspects of the performance of the THA over the last 12 months?

7 – Excellent 6 – Good 5 – Above Average 4 – Average 3 – Below Average 2 – Poor 1 – Very Poor Not Sure

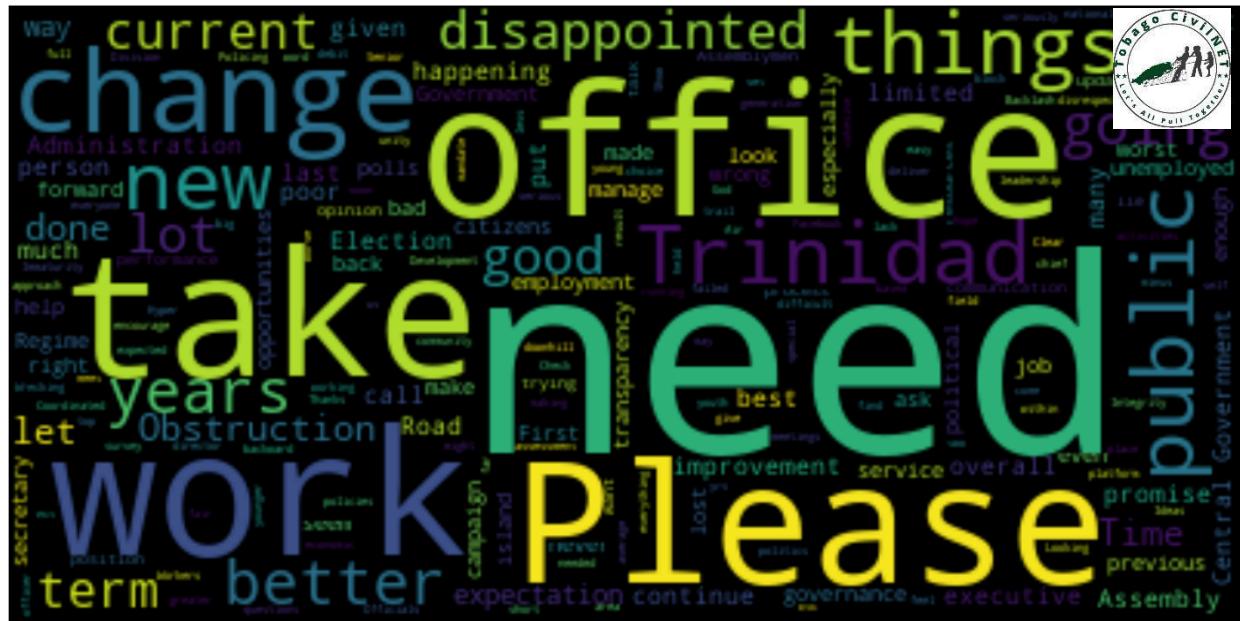
Numbers of respondents shown



There were no other comparable questions in the previous survey.

Question: Please enter any additional comments you may have.

102 Comments were added. The comments are summarized in this word cloud (larger words were used more often):



AI-summarized Themes of the Comments:

Governance and Oversight: There's a call for restructuring the governance of the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) with the establishment of an Oversight body and special committees to guide policies.

Performance Assessment: Some respondents acknowledge that the current administration is doing what they were elected to do, often under difficult circumstances. They advocate for more time to allow the THA to show results.

Economic and Employment Concerns: A recurrent theme is the need for job creation and better employment opportunities, particularly permanent positions, as opposed to short-term contracts.

Political Climate and External Relations: Concerns are raised about perceived undermining efforts by the central government, hyper-policing, and obstruction of THA functions by senior officials. There's a sentiment that the current political climate in Tobago is marked by vindictiveness and is not conducive to progress.

Transparency and Communication: Respondents request more transparency and better communication from the THA, including access to executive council updates and regular community meetings.

Public Service and Infrastructure: Criticism is directed towards the functionality of public services, with calls for improvements in areas like road repair and fisheries management.

Youth and Community Involvement: There is a push for involving youth in governance and creating programs that target their participation and influence.

General Dissatisfaction: A notable portion of the feedback indicates a general dissatisfaction with the current administration, citing failed promises, arrogance, immaturity, and a lack of progress.

Calls for Change: Many responses call for immediate action, including new elections, a re-evaluation of leadership, and a review of administrative strategies.

Hope for Improvement: Despite criticisms, there is hope expressed for better governance, with a belief that Tobago can improve with the right leadership and community involvement.