



RELEVANT RESEARCH

Civic Leadership Assessment Report

*How the public, staff, and elected officials see
local governance differently — and where they
agree.*

Overview

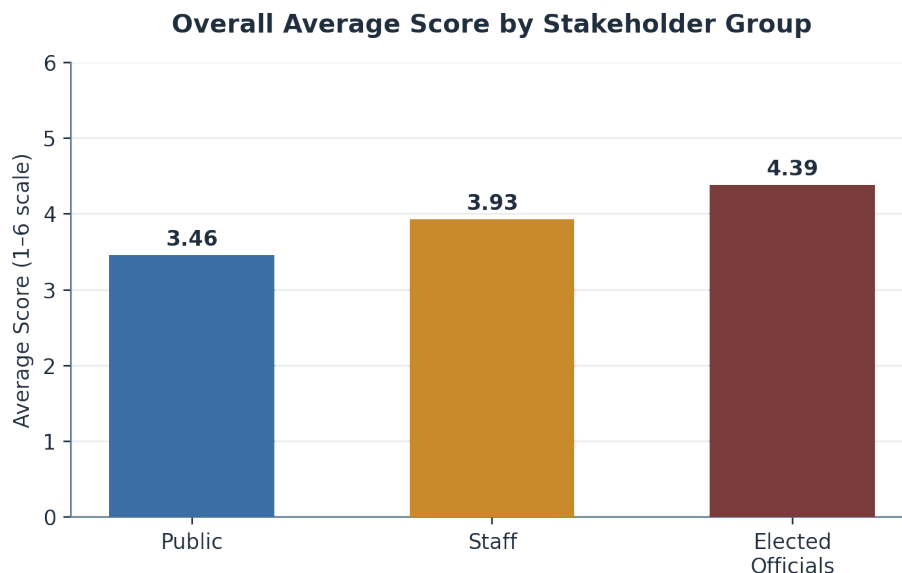
This report compares responses to a 31-item governance perception survey across three groups: the general public (C-1), government staff (C-2), and elected officials (C-3). The figures shown for C-1, C-2, and C-3 are **group averages that were computed outside this report**; they are presented here as supplied. Each item was scored on a 1-6 scale, where higher scores indicate stronger agreement with the statement.

Respondents were volunteers and referrals from city staff and elected officials, and all of their scores were weighted the same way.

Perception, not necessarily reality. These scores measure what people believe and experience, not verified facts about how the government actually performs. A low score signals that a concern is felt, whether or not the underlying conditions match that perception; a high score does not prove a problem is absent.

Items marked with a dash (—) have no reported average for that group and were excluded from calculations rather than treated as zero.

Overall Findings

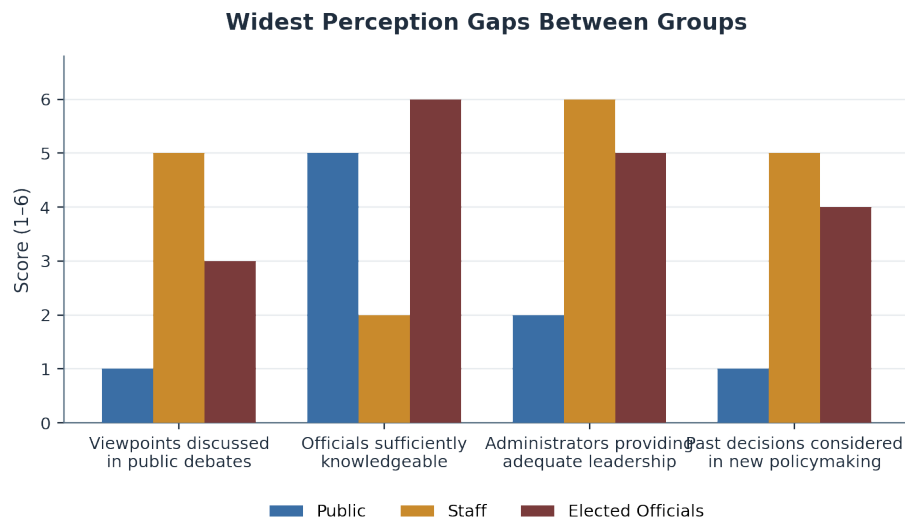


A clear gradient emerges across the three groups. The public rates institutional performance lowest overall (average 3.46 of 6), staff rate it moderately higher (3.93), and elected officials

rate it most favorably (4.39). This pattern — where those closer to institutional power report more favorable perceptions than the public they serve — is common in governance surveys, but a gap approaching a full point on a 6-point scale is a meaningful signal that outside perception and inside self-assessment are not well aligned.

A nearly one-point gap between how the public and elected officials rate the same institution suggests a communication or trust deficit worth investigating further, independent of any single question's content.

Where Perceptions Diverge Most



Are all viewpoints discussed in public debates? — The public rated this a 1, the lowest possible score, while staff rated it a 5. This is the single sharpest disconnect in the survey: the public feels shut out of debate in a way that staff does not perceive at all.

Are elected officials sufficiently knowledgeable? — Staff is the outlier here, rating this a 2 while both the public (5) and elected officials themselves (6) rate it much higher. Staff may be observing gaps in decision-making competence that remain invisible from outside the organization.

Are administrators providing adequate leadership? — The public rates this a 2; staff rates it a 6. Internally, staff and administration appear to hold a far more favorable view of leadership than the public perceives from the outside.

Are previous policy decisions considered in new ones? — The public again gives the lowest score (1), suggesting a perception that institutional memory and consistency are not valued, while staff (5) and elected officials (4) see this differently.

Where All Three Groups Agree

Some of the most actionable findings are the points of *convergence* across groups — these represent either shared strengths to build on or shared blind spots that no single constituency is likely to raise alone.

Shared Strengths

Contractors and vendors are appropriately utilized — all three groups rated this a 5, the only question with perfect agreement.

Information is readily available — 6, 5, 6.

Minutes are accurately taken and published — 6, 5, 6.

Reports are accurate and timely — 5, 6, 6.

Shared Concerns

The Budget is managed well — 1, 3, 2. A shared concern.

Political harmony among the Board/Council — 3, 2, 2.

Mutual trust between staff, public, and officials — 2, 2, 3.

Enough money for necessary services — 2, 3, 3.

Because these low scores appear across every stakeholder group rather than from the public alone, budget management and political harmony stand out as the most defensible priorities for leadership attention — no single constituency can be said to be driving the concern.

Full Response Data

Complete item-by-item scores for all three respondent groups, with the average of the three groups shown in the final column. Shaded averages mark items where the groups' scores differ widely.

■ Groups differ by 4+ points ■ Groups differ by 3 points

#	Survey Item	Public	Staff	Elected	Average
1	Public meetings are well conducted.	5	6	3	4.7
2	All viewpoints are discussed in public debates.	1	5	3	3.0
3	Generally the public trusts their elected leaders.	2	2	4	2.7
4	Elected officials appear sufficiently knowledgeable to make decisions for the public.	5	2	6	4.3
5	There seems to be enough money to provide necessary services.	2	3	3	2.7
6	The Board President/Mayor is adequately prepared for this leadership position.	6	4	6	5.3
7	Elected officials, the public, and staff treat each other with mutual respect.	2	2	4	2.7
8	Explanations and apologies are rendered when errors have occurred.	2	2	4	2.7
9	The elected officials are honest persons.	4	—	5	4.5
10	Information is readily available to anyone wishing it.	6	5	6	5.7
11	Federal/State/County monies are appropriately utilized.	4	6	5	5.0
12	Administrators are providing adequate leadership.	2	6	5	4.3
13	Reports are accurate and submitted in a timely fashion.	5	6	6	5.7
14	Staff and elected officials manage their misunderstandings well.	2	4	4	3.3
15	Elected officials are vigilant in preventing unethical conduct.	—	—	6	6.0
16	Staff has appropriate professional qualifications to do their jobs.	5	5	4	4.7
17	There is evidence of long term financial planning.	2	3	5	3.3
18	Elected officials improve policy making skills through workshops/seminars.	—	3	6	4.5
19	Minutes of public meetings are accurately taken and published.	6	5	6	5.7

#	Survey Item	Public	Staff	Elected	Average
20	When votes are cast, there are no grudges held by any losing side.	—	3	1	2.0
21	Council/Board members do not use their public office for personal gain.	—	—	3	3.0
22	Previous policy decisions are considered when making new ones.	1	5	4	3.3
23	Departments utilize their financial resources well.	4	5	4	4.3
24	Supervision of employees is performed well.	4	3	5	4.0
25	Disagreements are seen as a natural part of the democratic process.	—	3	5	4.0
26	The public can request/receive public records without unnecessary delay.	5	5	6	5.3
27	There is mutual trust between staff, the public and elected officials.	2	2	3	2.3
28	Contractors and vendors are appropriately utilized.	5	5	5	5.0
29	The Budget is managed well.	1	3	2	2.0
30	There is a strong commitment to public service from officials and staff.	4	5	5	4.7
31	There is adequate political harmony among the Board/Council.	3	2	2	2.3

Scale: 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Public, Staff, and Elected columns are group averages computed outside this report. The Average column is the mean of the groups' reported averages; dashes (—) are excluded. All scores reflect perception, not necessarily reality.

Next Steps: Consultation

The findings in this report describe perceptions, and perceptions can be addressed. Political Harmony offers a consultation with the client by Zoom meeting to present practical ideas for responding to the concerns identified here, including budget management, political harmony, and mutual trust among the public, staff, and elected officials.

To arrange a Zoom consultation, please visit politicalharmony.us.