

Port Severn Library Relocation Proposal

Oak Bay Community Survey Findings

Presented to: Township of Georgian
Bay Council June 1, 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sixty-six Oak Bay residents — 85% year-round — responded to an 18-question survey on the proposed relocation of the Port Severn Library to the Baxter Ward Community Centre. Their input is fresh, transparent, and represents the community most directly affected.

Critically: 0 out of 66 Oak Bay respondents reported completing another survey (Q2) — not a single Oak Bay resident participated in the Library Board survey being cited to justify relocation.

What the data shows:

- **56% oppose relocation; only 12% support it** — a nearly 5:1 ratio against the proposal (Q5)
- **70% rate BWCC access as important or very important;** 79% are concerned about losing community space (Q7, Q9)
- **47% say library expansion is not important;** no mandate exists for expanded services (Q10)
- **94% demand transparency and data** before any Council decision (Q12, Q13)
- Residents cite **mental health, winter isolation, and community bonds** as reasons to protect BWCC (Q14, Q15)

Note: In the process of compiling these results, **broader governance concerns also surfaced** — including gaps in data transparency, community consultation, and compliance with planning obligations. These findings are documented separately for Council's reference.

Oak Bay Survey Overview

Oak Bay Community Feedback

18 survey questions (17 public responses)

9 Key Findings:

5 direct (Q5, Q7, Q9, Q10, Q11)

2 combined quantitative (Q3/Q4/Q6 & Q12/Q13)

2 qualitative comments (Q14/Q15)

Survey Findings reflect fresh, transparent input from long-term, mostly full-time residents — the community members most affected by changes to services and facilities, including the Baxter Ward Community Centre.

66

Respondents

41% | 49%

1-5 Years vs > 5 Years

85%

Year-Round Residents

Key Finding 1: Community Opposition

56%

Oppose

Q5: Overall view of proposal

12%

Support

Q5: Overall view of proposal

32%

Undecided / Need
More Info

Q5: Overall view of proposal

Opposition outweighs support nearly 5 to 1. Only 12% of respondents back relocation (Q5, n=66)

Key Finding 2: Poor Information

44%

Not Familiar with
Proposal Before This
Survey

Q3: Familiarity with proposal

52%

Find Information about
Proposal Unclear

Q4: Clarity of public information

72%

Confident Forming
Opinions

Q6: Confidence forming opinion

Despite communication/information failures, 72% of residents are confident in their position. Views were formed despite poor information — not because of it (Q3, Q4, Q6)

Key Finding 3: Community Centre Importance

70%

Say Access to BWCC Is Very Important or Important

Q7: Importance of BWCC access

Majority rely on multiple functions (sports, events, food bank, gatherings)

Q8: Important activities at BWCC

70% rate BWCC access as important or very important. This is a critical community hub — not surplus space available for repurposing (Q7, Q8)

Key Finding 4: Concern About Space Loss

59%

Very Concerned

Q9: Concern if spaces reduced

20%

Somewhat Concerned

Q9: Concern if spaces reduced

79% of residents express concern about losing community space. This is the strongest risk signal in the survey (Q9, n=66)

Key Finding 5: Library Expansion Priority

47%

Say Not Important

Q10: Importance of expanded services

27%

Say Important

Q10: Importance of expanded services

No mandate exists for expanded library services. Nearly half (47%) say expansion is not important — fewer than 1 in 3 support it (Q10, n=66)

Key Finding 6: Current Library Adequacy

Mixed

Responses on Adequacy

Q11: Current library meeting needs

29%

Unsure

Q11: Current library meeting needs

No evidence of dissatisfaction justifying relocation. 29% are unsure, responses are mixed — the case for moving has not been made (Q11, n=66)

Key Finding 7: Demand for Transparency

76%

Want Usage Data

Q12: Info needed before
decision

64%

Want Alternatives
Analysis

Q12: Info needed before
decision

94%

Say Information Is
Important Before
Decisions

Q13: Importance of info before
decision

94% demand transparency before any Council decision. Residents are asking for data the Township has not provided (Q12, Q13, n=66)

Key Finding 8: Planning & Consultation Concerns

Lack of Consultation

Community voices not adequately included in planning

Q14: Additional info needed

Unclear Rationale

Justification for relocation not well communicated

Q15: Comments for Council

Limited Transparency

Evaluation process lacks openness and public access

Q14: Additional info needed

Residents describe a top-down process with no meaningful public engagement. Their own words demand consultation the Township has not offered (Q14, Q15)

Key Finding 9: Social Infrastructure Priority

Social Connection

A gathering place for
neighbours and community
events

Q14, Q15: Resident comments

Mental Well-Being

Supports mental health
through social interaction

Q14, Q15: Resident comments

Winter Activity

Essential hub for activity
during long winter months

Q14, Q15: Resident comments

BWCC is not a building — it is the social lifeline of this community. Residents cite mental health, winter isolation, and community bonds as reasons to protect it in its current form (Q14, Q15)

Important Observation: Measurement & Access Gaps

Booking Barriers

No online booking, no visibility into availability — low usage may reflect access barriers

Structural Limitation

Incomplete Metrics

Booking frequency does not capture participants per event, activity type, or social value

What's Missing

No Clear Framework

No public definition of “underutilization,” no stated metrics, no link to planning decisions

Transparency Gap

Utilization metrics based solely on bookings may underrepresent actual demand. A complete assessment must also consider how many people benefit, how accessible the space is, and what programming could look like with genuine community input

Important Observation: The “Use It or Lose It” Dynamic

Labelled “Underutilized”

BWCC lounge logged at 48 days / 269 hours — roughly 13% utilization

Staff Report / FCA Data

Linked to Repurposing

Low usage directly cited as justification for reallocating community space

Facility Condition Assessment

The Decision Pathway

Low usage → underutilized
→ repurpose → reduced community access

Implication for Residents

A “use it or lose it” dynamic does not need to be stated explicitly. When continued access depends on measured usage, and lower usage justifies reallocation, the effect is the same — community space is at risk

Key Insights

Majority Opposition

56.1% oppose relocation; support is just 12.1% — a nearly 5:1 ratio (Q5)

Core Issue = Community Space

70% value the community centre; 79% are concerned about losing access (Q7, Q9)

Information Gaps Exist — But Opinions Are Firm

Despite poor public engagement, a strong majority are confident in opposing relocation (Q3, Q4, Q6)

Library Expansion Not a Priority

47% say expansion is not important; no mandate for expanded services exists (Q10)

Strong Demand for Transparency

94% demand data and transparency before Council decides (Q12, Q13)

Utilization Metrics Are Incomplete

Booking data alone does not capture actual demand, participation, or community value

Three Core Gaps Remain

Information, measurement, and engagement gaps must be addressed before proceeding

Takeaway Message



Open to Improvement

Residents welcome genuine improvements to Baxter Centre programs — not the reallocation of community space

- Residents support new or expanded programs such as coffee mornings, fitness classes, and similar additions.
- Program enhancements do not require relocating the library or reducing access to existing community-use spaces.
- The Township has an opportunity to engage residents directly on what new programs they would value — a process that is **independent of** and **should not be tied to** repurposing the Baxter Centre.

However...

Relocation Not Justified

Survey data does not support relocation (Q5, Q10, Q11)

Community Space Priority

Protecting BWCC is the community's top priority (Q7, Q9)

Transparency Expected

94% demand data and consultation before any decision (Q12, Q13)