
To: Township of Georgian Bay Council

From: Laurie Russell, Oak Bay Community Representative

Cc: Jim Bodnaruk, Lorne Cameron, Cathy Korpi

Date: June 1, 2026

Subject: Review of Staff Report 2026-097 Against Verified Resident (Oak Bay) Survey Evidence

Executive Summary

The Oak Bay survey evidence shows that residents **prioritize protecting community space and social infrastructure**, and **do not support the library relocation** to the Baxter Ward Community Centre as a means of meeting their needs.

Purpose

This memo evaluates the **validity of key assumptions and claims** within Staff Report 2026-097 by comparing them against **direct resident evidence** from the Oak Bay Community Survey (n=66), representing a community directly affected by the proposed relocation of the Port Severn Library.

Executive Finding

The analysis shows a **consistent misalignment** between Staff Report 2026 097 and verified resident evidence.

Across the major justifications for relocation, the Oak Bay survey reveals either:

- **Direct contradiction**, or
- **Absence of supporting evidence**

No core rationale for relocation is validated by transparent, community specific data.

Repeated Assumptions Across Multiple Documents: Why the Missing Survey Record Matters

A broader evidentiary issue emerges across the record: the same assumptions about resident needs are repeated in multiple documents over time, yet the underlying evidence is undisclosed or incomplete.

Claims first introduced in the Branch Assessment presentation reappear in background materials, meeting minutes, and ultimately the Staff Report — **without the foundational survey data ever being released**. Repetition has replaced verification.

The Oak Bay survey is therefore significant not only because it contradicts several assumptions, but because it is **the only transparent, testable dataset** available. It demonstrates **strong resident support for preserving community space and no clear mandate for relocation**.

This context also explains the importance of **Exhibit A**: it documents repeated, reasonable attempts to obtain the very data used to justify the recommendation — attempts that were not fulfilled. Council is therefore not weighing competing opinions; it is being asked to decide without access to the evidence said to support the proposal.

Key Areas of Misalignment

Against this broader context, the following sections compare specific Staff Report assumptions with the verified Oak Bay survey evidence.

1. Assumption: Expanded Library Services Are a Community Priority

Staff Position: Expanded programming is needed to meet community needs.

Survey Evidence:

- 47%: expanded services **not important**
- 27%: important

Finding:

There is **no demonstrated community mandate** for expanded library services.

Conclusion: Not supported

2. Assumption: Relocation Aligns with Community Needs

Staff Position: Relocation improves service delivery and meets needs.

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

- 56.1% oppose relocation
- 12.1% support

Conclusion: Directly contradicted

3. Assumption: Community Hub Model (Co-location) Is Desired

Staff Position: Co-locating services creates beneficial “community hubs.”

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

- 70% value access to BWCC
- 79% concerned about loss of space

Finding:

Residents strongly support the **community centre as a dedicated social space**, but **not its repurposing**.

Conclusion: Concept partially supported, implementation rejected

4. Assumption: Baxter Ward Community Centre Is Underutilized

Staff Position: Low booking rates (~13%) indicate underutilization.

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

- High importance across multiple uses (events, sports, food bank, gatherings)
- Strong concern about losing access (79%)
- Identified measurement gaps (booking ≠ actual use/value)

Finding:

There is a **fundamental mismatch between administrative metrics and lived community value.**

Conclusion: Interpretation contradicted

5. Assumption: No Negative Impact on Community Programming

Staff Position: Relocation “will not negatively impact” community events

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

- 79% concerned about reduced space
- Repeated qualitative concerns regarding loss of programming capacity and social space

Conclusion: Directly contradicted

6. Assumption: Programming Expansion Requires Relocation

Staff Position: Relocation enables programming growth.

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

- Residents support **additional programming**
- Residents explicitly reject **reducing space to achieve it**

Conclusion: Partially valid concept, incorrectly linked

7. Assumption: Prior Consultation Adequately Captured Community Views

Staff Position: Decisions informed by surveys and patron feedback.

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

- 0% of Oak Bay respondents participated in any Library Board survey
- 94% demand more information before decisions
- Strong perception of insufficient consultation

Conclusion: Not supported

8. Assumption: Relocation Addresses a Priority Need

Staff Position: Project framed as necessary and beneficial.

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

Top community priorities are:

- Protecting community space
- Maintaining social infrastructure

Conclusion: Priority mismatch

9. Assumption: Trial Approach Is Appropriate Decision Path

Staff Position: Trial allows assessment of needs.

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

- 94% want data **before decisions**

Conclusion: Procedural misalignment

10. Assumption: Relocation Is Low Impact

Staff Position: Minimal impact, low risk.

Oak Bay Survey Evidence:

Residents identify risks including:

- Loss of social connection
- Increased isolation
- Mental health impacts

Conclusion: Impact underestimated

Overall Conclusion

The Staff Report reflects a **top-down, asset-management-driven rationale** that:

- Prioritizes utilization metrics and cost efficiency
- Assumes benefits not validated by community data

The Oak Bay survey demonstrates that:

- **Community priorities are fundamentally different**
- **Social infrastructure value is central**
- **Relocation lacks a demonstrable community mandate and is not supported by the only transparent, verifiable dataset currently available.**

Recommendations

1. **Stop implementation if already initiated**
 2. **Undertake inclusive, location-specific consultation**
 3. **Develop a validated community needs assessment**
 4. **Decouple programming improvements from spatial reallocation**
 5. **Establish transparent decision criteria and data disclosure**
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Governance and Decision Integrity: Procedural Fairness, Evidentiary Sufficiency, and Decision Risk

The proposed relocation raises concerns not only about policy alignment, but about the integrity of the decision-making process itself. A core premise — that the current library is inadequate and residents are dissatisfied — has been repeatedly asserted but not substantiated, because the underlying survey data has not been disclosed.

Without transparent evidence, Council cannot reasonably determine whether the recommendation is supported by fact, representative of community needs, or consistent with statutory obligations for accountability and transparency.

1. Procedural Fairness

Under established principles of municipal governance and administrative law, decision-making processes must meet minimum standards of **fairness, transparency, and accountability**, particularly where decisions affect public assets and community access.

Procedural fairness requires that:

- decision-makers have **access to the information relied upon**, and
- affected stakeholders have a **meaningful opportunity to understand and respond to that information**.

In this case:

- The survey is **relied upon but not disclosed**;
- Requests for **non-confidential, aggregate data were refused or unanswered**; and
- Council is being asked to decide **without visibility into the evidentiary basis of key claims**.

This raises a serious concern that the decision-making process does not meet the standard of **informational fairness**, as stakeholders cannot assess or test the validity of the evidence being relied upon.

2. Evidentiary Sufficiency and Reasonableness

Administrative decisions must be **reasonable**, meaning they must be based on **relevant, reliable, and demonstrable evidence**.

Here:

- The claim of community dissatisfaction is **asserted but not substantiated**;
- The survey supporting that claim is **unavailable and untestable**;
- Additional “community input” cited consists of **unstructured, unquantified conversations**, which do not meet basic standards of evidence.

By contrast, the only fully disclosed dataset in the record—the Oak Bay Community Survey—provides **transparent methodology, known respondent counts, and published aggregate results**, allowing for scrutiny and validation.

Without access to equivalent information from the Library Board survey, Council cannot:

- verify whether dissatisfaction exists,
- assess whether the sample is representative, or
- determine whether the data supports the conclusion drawn.

This creates a material risk that the recommendation rests on **unverified or insufficient evidence**, undermining the reasonableness of any resulting decision.

3. Statutory Accountability and Transparency Obligations

The Municipal Act requires Council to:

- **represent the public interest**, and
- **ensure accountability and transparency in municipal decision-making processes**.

Proceeding with a decision that:

- relies on undisclosed evidence, and
- denies access to non-confidential supporting data is inconsistent with those obligations.

Further, Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) requirements emphasize that public facilities must:

- reflect **community needs**, and
- support **equitable access and social well-being**.

Without transparent data, there is no demonstrable basis to conclude that these criteria have been met.

4. Decision Risk

The current situation creates clear and identifiable risks:

- **Process Risk:** Decision may be challenged as procedurally unfair due to lack of transparency and access to evidence
- **Evidentiary Risk:** Decision may be considered unreasonable due to reliance on unverified or undisclosed data
- **Governance Risk:** Perception of decision being predetermined or not evidence-based
- **Public Trust Risk:** Erosion of confidence in Council's commitment to transparency and accountability

5. Requested Remedy

Given these concerns, the appropriate and proportionate response is to reject the proposal today. In future, **decision-making processes should meet required legal and governance standards.**

Accordingly, it is respectfully recommended that Council:

1. **Defeat the Staff Report Recommendation**
2. **Direct the release of aggregate survey data**, including:
 - respondent counts
 - survey questions
 - geographic distribution
 - summarized results
3. **Require a complete evidentiary record**, including:
 - quantification of informal “community conversations”
 - explanation of how survey findings were interpreted and applied
4. **Undertake a transparent reassessment**, including:
 - evaluation of whether the current library is demonstrably inadequate
 - consideration of alternative options
 - a documented community impact assessment
5. **Ensure meaningful community consultation** prior to any future consideration

Conclusion

This is not a dispute of opinion; it is a matter of decision integrity. Council is being asked to make a significant decision affecting public infrastructure and community access **without access to the evidence used to justify it.**

A defensible decision requires transparent, testable data. The appropriate course is to disclose and validate the evidence before proceeding.

Significance Tags

- **PF** = Procedural Fairness
- **ES** = Evidentiary Sufficiency / Reasonableness
- **TR** = Transparency / Accountability
- **DR** = Decision Risk

Purpose of Exhibit

This exhibit documents the chronology of requests for the **2024–2025 Library Survey data** and demonstrates that the evidentiary basis relied upon to support the library relocation recommendation **was not disclosed despite repeated, reasonable requests** by community members and a sitting Councillor.

Table A: Chronology of Requests and Responses

Date & Time	Requestor / Source	Recipient	Role / Responsibility	Issue / Action	Response / Outcome	Significance
March 10, 2026	Library Board Delegation (Stephanie Clare, CEO; Susan McGibbon, Chair)	Council	Library Board (GBPL)	Proposed relocation to Baxter Ward Community Centre to expand services and programming for Port Severn residents	Council directed staff to review and report	ES: Establishes proposal requiring evidentiary support
March 10, 2026	Council discussion	—	Council Members	Members noted current Port Severn Library location is “undersized and does not adequately meet the needs of the community”	Forms part of rationale for further analysis and Staff Report	ES: Foundational claim requiring proof; later tied to survey
March 10, 2026	Township Staff (Mara Engel)	Council	Director of Operations (Township)	Advised that several steps were required and that staff would prepare a report outlining	Staff directed to proceed	TR: Formal accountability to produce evidence-based recommendation

Date & Time	Requestor / Source	Recipient	Role / Responsibility	Issue / Action	Response / Outcome	Significance
				requirements and associated costs for Council		
Nov 2025 – Mar 2026	Library Board & Township Staff	Council	Library Board + Township Staff	Ongoing discussions regarding relocation and expansion of programming; development of cost-effective relocation option	Option advanced	ES: Proposal evolves without disclosed supporting data
May 20, 2026	Susan McGibbon (via Karen Way)	Delegations	Library Board Chair / Clerk	Background document states that a majority of Port Severn library users are dissatisfied , based on the 2024–2025 survey and ongoing conversations with library users	No underlying data provided	TR + ES: Core evidence asserted but not disclosed
May 25, 2026	Laurie Russell, Oak Bay resident and delegation requester on behalf of the Oak Bay Community	Mara Engel; Greg Mariotti; Karen Way	Township staff responsible for Staff Report / Clerk	Requested a copy of the 2024–2025 library survey or where it could be accessed	Redirected to Library CEO; no data provided	PF + TR: Stakeholder denied access to relied-upon evidence
May 25–26, 2026	Stephanie Clare (Library CEO)	Laurie Russell (same designation)	Library CEO	Advised that survey results were not publicly available due to confidentiality and referred to the Branch Assessment Study	No aggregate data provided	TR: Aggregate data withheld despite non-identifying nature

Date & Time	Requestor / Source	Recipient	Role / Responsibility	Issue / Action	Response / Outcome	Significance
May 26, 2026	Karen Way	Delegations	Clerk (Township)	Circulated email reiterating that survey results were not public due to confidentiality and referencing the Branch Assessment Study	No data provided	TR: Official communication repeats claim without evidence
May 27, 2026	Laurie Russell (same designation)	Council and Township staff	Community representative	Follow-up request for aggregate survey data (respondent counts, questions, geographic breakdown) to support informed Council decision on June 1	No response recorded	PF: Continued denial of access to decision-critical information
May 27, 2026	Catherine Browne (Baxter Ward Lions Club Inc.)	Karen Way, Council	Community organization	Requested number of surveys completed, respondent locations, survey questions, and collated results	No response recorded	TR + PF: Independent request confirms pattern of non-disclosure
May 28, 2026 – 8:23 AM	Greg Mariotti	Laurie Russell (same designation)	Chief Administrative Officer (Township)	Did not provide requested data; stated “this is in the realm of the library and its board”	Responsibility deferred to Library Board	TR + DR: Reliance on data while disclaiming responsibility for producing it
May 28, 2026 – 8:46 AM	Councillor Kristian Graziano	Susan McGibbon, Council	Councillor Ward 3 (decision-maker)	Requested total respondents, Ward-level breakdown, survey questions, and methodology ; noted he had confirmed with legal counsel	No response recorded	PF + ES + TR + DR: Decision-maker denied access to evidence despite legal confirmation

Date & Time	Requestor / Source	Recipient	Role / Responsibility	Issue / Action	Response / Outcome	Significance
				that aggregate data could be disclosed without breaching confidentiality		
June 1, 2026 (pending)	Staff Report 2026-097	Council	Chief Administrative Officer & Director of Operations	Recommendation to relocate Port Severn Library to Baxter Ward Community Centre	Decision pending	DR: Recommendation proceeds despite unresolved evidentiary and transparency gaps
