
ALL HANDS ON DECK





The Prince George Public Library (PGPL) is embarking on a multi-year revitalization of the outdoor deck space at the Bob Harkins Branch, through the “All Hands on Deck” initiative. Backed by the City of Prince George and supported by the PGPL Board, the goal is to transform this underused space into a welcoming, multi-purpose outdoor extension of the library.

To guide this process, PGPL conducted a public survey and in-person engagement activities from March 10 to June 13, 2025, inviting community members to share ideas, priorities, and suggestions. This report summarizes the insights collected, offering clear guidance for future planning and design.

The City of Prince George is performing an engineering upgrade to the deck space using its capital funds, and this fundraising project is for enhancement of the completed project only.

Your Deck. Your Space.



Survey Engagement Summary

- **Total Responses:** 220
- **Completion Rate:** 100%
- **Engagement Period:** March 10 – June 9, 2025
- **Written Comments:** 100+
- **In-Person Feedback:** Dozens of ideas gathered via community whiteboards and pop-up boards at library events

This level of input reflects a strong community appetite for shaping the space into something meaningful and inclusive.



What We Asked

- The survey received **220 responses, with a 100% completion rate!** This strong participation reflects a high level of community interest in shaping a space that supports connection, creativity, and inclusive access.

Please rate the importance of the following enhancements for the deck:

(Seating and picnic table-style furniture, Play structures for children, Public art pieces, Gardens and natural elements, Other enhancements (please specify))

How frequently do you visit the Prince George Public Library?

What activities do you typically engage in at the library? (Select all that apply)

What potential uses for the deck are most appealing to you? (Select all that apply)

How should the deck be used? (Select all that apply)

Would you support renting the deck for private events to generate funds for library services?

Do you have any specific ideas or suggestions for activities or features you would like to see on the deck?

Would you be interested in participating in a focus group?

Additional comments or suggestions on how we can make the deck a better space for the community?

What We Heard Overview

Four Key Findings

The following four findings reflect the most commonly expressed ideas from the community survey and whiteboard feedback. They represent an integrated summary of preferences, expectations, and aspirations for the future deck space.

- 1. The deck should be green, flexible, and community-focused**
- 2. Functionality first: enhancements that matter most**
- 3. Support for mixed use — but keep it public first**
- 4. Strong ideas/opinions from the community**



1.

What We Heard

The deck should be green, flexible and community-focused

- Strong preference for a green, nature-oriented space (78%)
- High interest in community gatherings, events, and quiet reading areas
- Respondents want a space that supports both calm and connection
- Families value child-friendly elements, but not at the expense of other uses
- Many suggested a “park-like” feel with casual access

Top Preferred Uses:

- Green space (78%)
- Events (76%)
- Quiet reading (64%)
- Family-friendly use (56%)
- Cultural displays (50%)

“It should feel like a park — accessible, shaded, and beautiful.”

“A place to read outside, sip a coffee, or enjoy a poetry night.”

Respondents clearly see the revitalized deck as an extension of the library’s welcoming, inclusive atmosphere. They emphasized a strong desire for a **nature-forward space** that invites informal use while also accommodating small-scale programming and events

There was a notable interest in designing a **flexible space**—one that can feel peaceful and calm during the day, yet support live events, family-friendly activities, or casual social gatherings when needed.



2.

What We Heard

Functionality first: enhancements that matter most

When asked to rank specific enhancements, respondents prioritized practical, comfortable features over decorative or child-specific additions. The two most important improvements were **gardens and natural elements (weighted average: 4.33)** and **seating and picnic furniture (4.01)**.

There was consistent mention of the need for **shade, weather-resilient seating, and natural integration with the existing architecture**. While public art and play structures were acknowledged, they were viewed as **secondary to comfort and usability**.

“Shade and greenery are a must—it gets so hot in the summer and there’s nowhere to cool off.”

“Picnic tables or benches where you can read or eat would make it usable year-round.”



3.

What We Heard

Support for mixed use — but keep it public first

Community members were largely supportive of a mixed-use model for the deck—69% said they wanted a combination of open visitor use, library-led programming, and occasional private rentals. There was also **strong interest (75.5%) in renting the space for private or community events, particularly as a way to support library funding.**

However, this support was accompanied by a consistent caveat: **public access must remain a priority.** Respondents emphasized the need for transparency around rental use, including who can book the space, how often, and whether usage aligns with the library's values.

“Rentals are fine — as long as the public still has access.”

“Balance is key. Some days for events, some for quiet.”



4.

What We Heard

Strong ideas/opinions from the community

The 100+ open-ended responses were full of imaginative, thoughtful, and practical ideas—ranging from pop-up cafés and seasonal market stalls to rotating art exhibits, pollinator gardens, and evening lighting for year-round use.

Common themes included:

- A desire for authentic, local features (art, materials, food)
- Emphasis on comfort, care, and cleanliness
- Features that support seasonal activation without heavy infrastructure
- Requests for inclusive and accessible design
- Coffee shop pop-up

“Keep it local, accessible, and useful.”



Conclusion

The community's vision for the PGPL outdoor deck is clear:

A green, flexible, welcoming space that reflects Prince George's identity and supports everyday use, cultural connection, and shared belonging.

From shaded seating and nature integration to creative programming and equitable rentals, residents see the deck as an opportunity to extend the library's values outdoors.

This input will directly inform next steps as PGPL begins design and planning. With strong engagement and community buy-in already established, the foundation is set for a revitalized space shaped by (and for) the people who use it.

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