

Memo

To: Mayor and Council
From: Renée Mask, CAO
Subject: Calabogie Junction Health & Wellness Hub – Progress Update

The purpose of this memo is to update Council on work completed since the adoption of the Calabogie Junction Health & Wellness Hub Strategic Framework in October 2025, summarize what we heard through public and stakeholder engagement, and outline next steps, including the confirmed delegation with the Minister of Health at ROMA 2026.

In just a few months, the Township has confirmed and strengthened relationships with key health, community and housing partners; heard directly from residents across the Township; validated that the Health & Wellness Hub concept aligns with local demand and private-sector interest; and begun to pivot from a single-site concept towards a “hub-and-community network” model, with Calabogie Junction as a central anchor and a clear recognition that the Griffith end of the Township must also see tangible improvements in services and spaces.

Partnership and Stakeholder Outreach

Since October, staff have moved from concept to active relationship-building. A meeting log now records more than forty meetings with partners and stakeholders, including Calabogie Medical Centre, County of Renfrew – Community Paramedicine and Social Services, Ancient Rivers Family Health Team, Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team (OVOHT), Calabogie & Area Home Support, GM Seniors Housing Corporation, and various other health care experts.

These conversations have confirmed strong interest in the Hub concept and a willingness to explore the co-location of primary care, community paramedicine, seniors' wellness programming, home support, and, potentially, seniors /supportive housing on the Township-owned lands in Calabogie. They have also helped clarify roles: the Township as convener, facilitator and advocate; health and community partners as service providers and potential tenants; and private developers as delivery partners for the built form, including mixed-use and housing components.

Public Consultation Sessions

In December, the Township hosted two “Let’s Kick Off the Health & Wellness Hub” community sessions — one in Griffith and one in Calabogie. Residents heard from local partners (GM 55+ SALC, Calabogie & Area Home Support, County of Renfrew Paramedic Service, GM Seniors Housing Corp.) and then participated in table discussions using four themed boards: Living Well in Our Community; Care & Support; Spaces, Programs & Community Activities; and Looking Ahead.

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Key themes emerged consistently across both locations: a strong desire for better information and navigation; the importance of local bloodwork and diagnostic clinics, physiotherapy/rehab, and access to primary care closer to home; concern about home support, PSW availability, transportation, and volunteer fatigue; interest in youth programs, drop-in/wellness spaces, and community activities; and recognition that housing (particularly seniors and supportive housing) is part of health and wellness.

The Griffith session also highlighted a desire for tangible investment in the Griffith/Matawatchan area. Residents suggested a network of “community hubs” rather than a single hub focused in Calabogie.

Community Survey

To broaden participation beyond the in-person sessions, the Township launched an online survey in December. As of closing, 176 residents had responded, with a mix of year-round and seasonal residents and representation from across the Township.

Most respondents are year-round residents, with the majority aged 35 and older and the largest group in the 55–74 range. Over 80% report having a family doctor or nurse practitioner, with only 25% rostered in Greater Madawaska, reinforcing concerns about care closer to home. Family doctor locations were as close as Denbigh and Renfrew, then further away in Arnprior, Carleton Place, Carp, Ottawa, and some in southern Ontario.

When asked what would make the most significant difference for their own household in the next 2–3 years, the top items were: access to a family doctor/nurse practitioner, local bloodwork/lab clinics, physiotherapy/rehab, better information/“one place to start,” community drop-in/wellness space, youth and seniors programs, and housing options.

When thinking about priorities for the whole community over the next 3–5 years, respondents again ranked access to a family doctor/nurse practitioner as the top priority, followed by home support and PSW capacity, local lab services, physio/rehab, and housing options for seniors and people needing support. Transportation, youth and seniors programming, mental health supports, and better information/navigation also ranked highly.

These findings mirror the themes heard at the Griffith and Calabogie sessions and provide a clear, community-validated list of priorities to take forward in advocacy and partnership discussions.

Developer Consultation

When consulting with local developers, we heard that health and wellness amenities are increasingly a factor in whether people choose to move to, or remain in, Greater Madawaska. Developers told us that buyers often ask about access to primary care, bloodwork and pharmacy services; that recreation and active-living amenities (trails, fitness, youth activities) are a major draw; and that limited services in parts of the Township can be a barrier for some households considering a permanent move. This feedback reinforces that investing in health and wellness infrastructure is not only about care closer to home, but also about supporting a resilient housing market and year-round population growth.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

In parallel with public and partner engagement, the Township issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) to test market interest in the Hub lands and concept. A submission was received and confirmed private-sector interest in partnering with the Township and our service providers on a multi-phase health, wellness, and housing campus, and it offers early thoughts on site layout, phasing, and delivery models that will inform the next stage of work.

Ministry Advocacy

The next milestone is the confirmed delegation with the Minister of Health at ROMA on January 19, 2026. This delegation will allow the Township to present the vision for the Calabogie Junction Health & Wellness Hub and the broader Health & Wellness Initiative, share key findings from the community sessions and survey, highlight our rural context and investments already made, and request provincial support for planning, capital and operating resources to bring additional primary care, community paramedicine, diagnostics and wellness programming closer to home.

Strategic Plan Alignment

- Open Communication and Engagement
- Growth Management
- Culture and Wellness
- Efficient and Effective Governance

Respectfully Submitted,
Renée Mask, CAO

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