2026 Municipal Election
Candidate Questionnaire Results

Gravenhurst

About these results. The Save South Muskoka Hospital Committee (SSMHC) invited municipal election candidates to state their positions on issues affecting the future of hospital care in South Muskoka. Candidate responses are presented to help residents understand where candidates stand. Written comments are reproduced as submitted; SSMHC has not interpreted or paraphrased candidates' positions.

At-a-glance key: Yes | No | Undecided / Need more information | Written response | Statement provided | Declined to respond. 'Written response' means the candidate supplied a narrative response rather than selecting one of the offered response choices. 'Statement provided' means the candidate supplied written comments for publication with consent. 'Declined to respond' means the candidate did not provide questionnaire answers or a statement authorized for publication.

Table of Contents

Click any entry to jump directly to that section.

Candidates Who Did Not Submit a Response — 3

At-a-Glance — 4

- At-a-Glance - Mayor — 4
- At-a-Glance - District Council — 5
- At-a-Glance - Municipal / Ward Council — 6

Detailed Candidate Responses — 7

- Jo Morphy - Mayor — 7
- Marc Mantha - Mayor — 10
- Christina Hunter - District Council — 15
- Erin Strength - District Council — 18
- Sandy Cairns - District Council — 21
- Brad Rundle - Ward 1 — 22
- Erin Gauthier - Ward 1 — 32
- Heidi Welker - Ward 1 — 36
- David Kellam - Ward 2 — 29
- Stephen Sims - Ward 2 — 39
- Carol Ann LeMoine - Ward 3 — 25

Candidates Who Did Not Submit a Response

The following candidates were invited to complete the SSMHC 2026 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire but did not submit a completed questionnaire or written statement by the stated deadline.

Gravenhurst

Office	Candidate
Mayor	**Heidi Lorenz**
Mayor	**Jeff Watson**
Ward 1 Councillor	**Gordie Merton**
Ward 1 Councillor	**Elizabeth Shannon**
Ward 2 Councillor	**Anita Latner**
Ward 4 Councillor	**Randy Jorgensen**
Ward 5 Councillor	**Samantha Renee Ennest**
District Councillor	**Penny Varney**
District Councillor	**Jaden Hollingshead**

Declined to respond to questionnaire

Office	Candidate
Ward 3 Councillor	Larry Brassard
Ward 5 Councillor	Tina Kilbourne

At-a-Glance

Mayor

Issue	Jo Morphy	Marc Mantha
1. Equitable access	Yes	Yes
2. Minimum 60 acute-care beds	Yes	Yes
3. Local acute-care services	Yes	Yes
4. Equitable ALC resources	Yes	Yes
5a. Fully functioning obstetrics	Yes	Yes
5b. Obstetrics affects support	Yes	Undecided / Need more information
6. Population & seasonal demand	Yes	Yes
7. Transparency & disclosure	Undecided / Need more information	Yes
8. Pine Street site demonstrated	Undecided / Need more information	Yes
9. Municipal funding if plan inadequate	No	Undecided / Need more information
10a. Active municipal advocacy	Yes	Yes
10b. Support municipal resolutions	Yes	Yes
11. Current MAHC model adequate/equitable	No	Undecided / Need more information

District Council

Issue	Christina Hunter	Erin Strength	Sandy Cairns
1. Equitable access	Yes	Yes	Statement provided
2. Minimum 60 acute-care beds	Undecided / Need more information	Yes	Statement provided
3. Local acute-care services	Yes	Yes	Statement provided
4. Equitable ALC resources	Yes	Undecided / Need more information	Statement provided
5a. Fully functioning obstetrics	Yes	Yes	Statement provided
5b. Obstetrics affects support	Yes	No	Statement provided
6. Population & seasonal demand	Yes	Yes	Statement provided
7. Transparency & disclosure	Yes	Yes	Statement provided
8. Pine Street site demonstrated	Yes	Yes	Statement provided
9. Municipal funding if plan inadequate	Undecided / Need more information	Yes	Statement provided
10a. Active municipal advocacy	Yes	Yes	Statement provided
10b. Support municipal resolutions	Yes	Undecided / Need more information	Statement provided
11. Current MAHC model adequate/equitable	Undecided / Need more information	Yes	Statement provided

Note: "Statement provided" indicates that Sandy Cairns was unable to complete the full questionnaire but provided written comments for publication with her consent. Her statement appears in the Detailed Candidate Responses section.

Municipal / Ward Council

Issue	Brad Rundle Ward 1	Erin Gauthier Ward 1	Heidi Welker Ward 1	David Kellam Ward 2	Stephen Sims Ward 2	Carol Ann LeMoine Ward 3	Larry Brassard Ward 3	Tina Kilbourne Ward 5
1. Equitable access	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
2. Minimum 60 acute-care beds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
3. Local acute-care services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
4. Equitable ALC resources	Yes	Yes	Undecided / Need more information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
5a. Fully functioning obstetrics	Yes	Yes	Undecided / Need more information	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
5b. Obstetrics affects support	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
6. Population & seasonal demand	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
7. Transparency & disclosure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
8. Pine Street site demonstrated	Undecided / Need more information	No	Undecided / Need more information	Yes	No	Undecided / Need more information	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
9. Municipal funding if plan inadequate	No	No	Undecided / Need more information	Yes	No	Undecided / Need more information	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
10a. Active municipal advocacy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
10b. Support municipal resolutions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Declined to respond	Declined to respond
11. Current MAHC model adequate/equitable	Undecided / Need more information	No	No	Yes	No	No	Declined to respond	Declined to respond

Note: Larry Brassard and Tina Kilbourne declined to respond to the questionnaire. No detailed response is included.

Detailed Candidate Responses

Candidates are grouped by office sought. Responses below are reproduced from the submitted questionnaire. Email addresses, timestamps and the candidate declaration are not included in this public presentation.

Mayor

Jo Morphy

Mayor

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

How can we considering building anything that is not equitable to all?

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I do not believe in building a smaller hospital when our population is growing. We are already being treated in chairs around the ER desk while those in ER rooms are waiting to be admitted to the hospital.

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I hate the transfer model. Once I arrive at my local hospital, the only transfer that's acceptable is to Southlake or St Margaret's etc where immediate specialized care is necessary.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I simply believe in a full service hospital.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

What woman would pick Huntsville over Orillia for check ups and delivery when it is so much farther away? It makes no sense.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Every business and service needs to consider these factors.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

There is the question of salaries in operating budgets that should be kept confidential which speaks to capacity. However all else should be available to the public. Especially the cost of transfers which would be ongoing instead of a one time cost instead of investing up front in a full service hospital.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

I am not a professional in this regard so cannot offer an informed position about site development and expansion.

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

I hate to be repetitive but I believe Gravenhurst residents who already travel in great numbers to Orillia would increase.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

Work with the Mayor of Bracebridge to see if we can come up with a coordinated plan that helps both of our communities.

As a duo, meet with MAHC to share our concerns.

Request a delegation to share our concerns with the Province.

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

I do not like the transfer model. I dislike the idea that I have to triage whatever situation I am dealing with before deciding to go to Bracebridge or Orillia because I do not want to end up as far away as Huntsville. If I am alone, is my car left in the parking lot at Bracebridge?

Marc Mantha

Mayor

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I was at that initial District Municipality of Muskoka meeting when the public was told that the path forward was two acute care hospitals.

Even with its existing beds, South Muskoka Memorial Hospital has demonstrated challenges to manage increased demand, particularly during the peak summer months. The hospital's emergency department sees more than 22,000 patients annually, with approximately one quarter of those visits occurring in July and August.

There are understandable concerns when we consider the population growth forecast for Muskoka and the healthcare needs that will come with it.

I've attended many of the meetings and discussions, including the meeting at the Norwood Theatre in Bracebridge, where I was there as the photographer to help tell the story.

And yet, I would still like to know more.

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

My response to the first question supports this. I believe the District Municipality of Muskoka's population growth forecast may be exceeded. With current utilization, seasonal demand and continued growth, we need to plan ahead rather than catch up.

Healthcare infrastructure is too important to size only for today's needs. I support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital, while continuing to assess what will be required as our population and healthcare needs evolve.

Let's be prepared.

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes. I believe South Muskoka residents should have appropriate acute-care services available locally.

We should not accept routine transfers simply because South Muskoka lacks the capacity or allocation of services to meet the needs of our growing and increasingly seasonal population.

The future hospital model should be based on the healthcare needs of the communities it serves, with the capacity to provide timely care close to home whenever it is clinically appropriate. This should be part of the planning discussion as we look at the future of healthcare across Muskoka.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes. I support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care resources between the two hospital communities.

If patients no longer require acute care but still need support before they can safely return home or move to another appropriate care setting, those resources should be available where they are needed.

As we plan for the future, I would want decisions about the allocation of these services to be based on population, utilization, seasonal demand and the needs of each community, rather than simply concentrating resources at one site.

For me, this comes back to making sure people receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

Families should be able to receive maternity care close to home whenever it is clinically appropriate. Routine travel outside South Muskoka for maternity care would be a significant burden for families, particularly as our population

grows and seasonal demands increase.

That includes making sure the future hospital has the capacity and appropriate services to support families in South Muskoka.

Of course, there will always be circumstances where specialized care requires travel elsewhere. But where care can safely and appropriately be provided locally, I believe we should have the capacity to do so.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes. I believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital needs to account for where our communities are headed.

That means looking at permanent population growth, an aging population, significant seasonal increases and the healthcare needs that will come with them.

We are already seeing the pressure that population and seasonal demand can place on our healthcare system. I'm concerned that actual growth may exceed current projections, and I would rather plan ahead than find ourselves trying to catch up later.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes. I believe in meaningful transparency and public input. I also recognize that confidentiality, negotiations, privacy and legal considerations can sometimes limit what can be disclosed. Where information cannot be shared, the reasons should be clearly explained. The public deserves to understand the decisions being made and have meaningful opportunities to ask questions before major decisions are finalized.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes. MAHC has provided extensive information and supporting documentation on the Pine Street site. The challenge is making that information accessible and understandable to the public.

For a decision of this importance, I believe residents should have clear, plain-language summaries of the key findings, including site suitability, development costs, infrastructure requirements, financial risks and future expansion capacity.

The information already exist within the extensive documentation. The opportunity is to bring the most important conclusions forward so residents can understand them and ask informed questions.

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

I would need to be satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka before committing municipal taxpayer funding.

I support the hospital redevelopment and understand the importance of municipal participation. But I also have a responsibility to ensure that any investment of taxpayer dollars reflects the long-term healthcare needs of our community and represents good stewardship of those dollars.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

A Council Supported Motion to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model to our MPP.

Meeting of Council with our MPP.

Community of Gravenhurst Engagement and Town Hall

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

Based on the information currently available to me, I believe there are still important questions that need to be answered before I could say with confidence that the proposed model provides adequate and equitable access for South Muskoka residents.

I support the redevelopment and want to see a strong future for healthcare in South Muskoka. But adequacy needs to be measured against population growth, aging, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs.

For me, this is about making sure we are prepared

District Council

Christina Hunter

District Councillor

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Absolutely. Muskoka is a vast place with the furthest south in Severn Bridge which would take 45 minutes to reach Huntsville hospital if needed. That's the equivalent of driving to Barrie for care.

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

I would be in support of increasing the bed total but also understand that addressing the alternate level of care beds with adding more long-term care beds at seniors care homes like the Pines, Alexander, Muskoka Shores etc. will help to address the issue.

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes, the key word being appropriate. It makes sense not to duplicate specialized services for those requiring longer stays or specialized care. But some of the more common services should stay at both hospitals to ensure less transfers and provide residents with an option closer to their home.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes, however I do believe the issue is best addressed by adding ACL beds to senior care homes to relieve the hospital burden of longer term stays.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

As mentioned previously, driving to Huntsville for obstetrics for someone living in remote areas of South Muskoka would be the equivalent of driving to Barrie, which is too far for obstetrics care.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

We have an aging population but are also in a rapidly changing technology era. We need to adapt and ensure we are growing with the needs of the community while also ensuring we aren't duplicating specialized care and making use of the innovative ways to care for our residents where they are at.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Yes

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

Before endorsing or supporting a plan with funding attached I would need to be presented with a final plan that addresses the ACL plan and obstetrics amongst other issues mentioned previously.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

Staying engaged and up-to-date on the process, attending and public meetings and speaking with constituents about their concerns and ensuring those are addressed.

Supporting resolutions that speak to the need for equitable acute care my

Continuing to work with the District on addressing ACL beds in long-term care homes.

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

More work needs to be done to ensure we have adequate obstetrics care, and we need to address the ACL beds at long-term care facilities to lessen the burden on hospital beds. These are the two areas I would like to see changes happen before supporting a proposal.

Erin Strength

District Councillor for Gravenhurst

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I believe South Muskoka should have access to all types of health care that any large city of community might have. To serve all types of situations from young family's to older residents to facilitate any type of medical need. I worked in health care for 25 years and have seen first hand the needs of the community.

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

My understanding of the initial proposal is that it starts with 46 beds but can expand to a larger amount of acute care beds as the community grows. But if 60 should be the starting point I am happy to advocate for that. I don't have any experience in building a hospital.

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I believe the hospital should provide appropriate services to that location. Specialty services have always been referred to other areas. I am hopeful that the Gravenhurst Health Hub will provide any acute care services that aren't at the new hospital for the residents of South Muskoka. And I believe we are well on our way to seeing that come to fruition.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

This is a difficult answer because I know that recently we in Gravenhurst have been awarded ALC & transitional beds at both The Alexander and Granite Ridge RR. So to keep people out of hospital when they don't require full hospital attention and send them to these fully qualified establishments to receive care is a GREAT option.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

I am sincerely worried that if we as a community keep saying NO we won't get a new hospital and then we will be in big trouble. Again, I am hopeful that with the Gravenhurst Health Hub obstetrical services (or a version of) can be accommodated there if a full department isn't incorporated into the mix at the new site in Bracebridge.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I believe it should be considered. I currently sit on the Community and Planning Services Committee at the District and we have had significant conversations about forecasted population increases. By 2051 it is suggested that the Muskoka population will be 99,000 an increase of 41% - so where will we be with this hospital in that time? Will this new hospital be obsolete? It is something that needs to be seriously considered in future development.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

There isn't one specific thing that I believe should be provided but I believe transparency is key in making big decisions that affect the entire community. It makes me feel very uneasy when discussions that directly affect the citizens of South Muskoka (or all of Muskoka) that are behind closed doors. Quite frankly I don't understand why anything that has to do with hospital redevelopment shouldn't be done in the public eye.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I think I would have been happier with Royal Muskoka site as a resident of Gravenhurst but my understanding is that site doesn't have services that are easily connectable. The Pine street site does and I have constituents who have driven to both locations and timed that the Pine Street site is closer then the Royal Muskoka site.

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I have supported this already by way of the hospital share that we currently have at the Town of Gravenhurst.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate response / actions:

Being a strong voice around the District table, in advocating for proper distribution of services to the South Muskoka site, as I have done for the last four years.

Continue to advocate for the Gravenhurst Health Hub in ensuring that potentially missing services be included in their regiment.

Keeping the pressure on our MPP to get the right compliment of services to provide proper health care at the new site.

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Once again, I am worried that if we continue to fight against the proposal that we have that we won't get anything. However, staying involved and informed as we move forward is critical to getting a hospital that provides South Muskoka with good sound health services. That coupled with the Gravenhurst Health Hub and making it a Hub of necessary services I believe the residents of South Muskoka will be taken care of very WELL.

Sandy Cairns

District Councillor

Sandy Cairns was unable to complete the full questionnaire due to personal circumstances. With her consent, SSMHC is publishing the following comments she provided by email.

Statement provided by candidate:

I do believe though that we must fight for the rights for equal rights and opportunities at our South Muskoka hospital I believe this hospital is only going to get busier then what do we do!!!! Also drive in either by car or ambulance up the highway to have a baby or to get stroke care may be a life and death circumstance and that is so wrong !!

Even mum had to wait in emerg overnight to get admitted. They don't have the beds now ! I have seen people in hallways because no beds. I have grandkids that will be giving me great grands someday and heaven forbid anything happen to them not making it in time to Huntsville

I sit on Health Services at the district I am the Vice Chair of Simcoe Muskoka District Health unit and worked in as a respiratory therapist tech in my early years and now select to be on the MAHOt patient advisory committee

Editor's note: The comments above were provided by the candidate by email and are reproduced with her permission. Personal details unrelated to her position on hospital redevelopment have been omitted.

Municipal / Ward Council

Brad Rundle

Councilor | Ward: 1

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

All residents of Muskoka deserve quality health care. I'm unaware of any argument that would make sense of a contrary statement.

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes, I believe that we need at least this number of beds to address the needs of the 70,000 permanent residents (84,000 residents during summer months) with growth expected to be nearly 100,000 by 2051

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Transporting patients takes life saving time and money that could be used to reinforce services at the South Muskoka Memorial Site. It makes no sense to transport patients to a facility elsewhere when there is an existing facility in South Muskoka. Residence of South Muskoka deserve equal quality health care.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

As I have stated there is no sensible argument to support better care for a particular area, or group of residents as it where.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

While I will continue to support SMMH, I would not support the PROPOSAL that does not include sufficient Obstetrical facilities and services.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Absolutely. As I mentioned 100,000 (projected figures) residents over a considerable area requires two fully staffed and equipped facilities. Anything less is unfair to residents of South Muskoka.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Information from any studies or relevant provincial government communications should be made public. Public meetings should be provided in order for our concerns to be heard.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

I'm not sure that all of the site issues have been fully addressed. It is my understanding that preparations and fill costs because of the terrain could be between $50 to $180 million.

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

No. There is no point in committing to the development of a substandard and unaffordable facility.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

I will attend public meetings and/or meeting to which I am invited, of relevant organizations that champion our health care concerns.

I will stay current regarding the issues by reading media articles.

I will address the issues in any appropriate public forums that I am afforded in my position as a councilor. I will also bring the matter to the attention of other politicians that I have the opportunity to meet.

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

I am committed to educating myself further in this matter. My impression is, at this time that there needs to be some changes to the proposal. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with someone in your group about this.

Carol Ann LeMoine

Ward Councillor | Ward: 3

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Every Muskoka resident deserves reasonable access to acute hospital care, wherever they live. Ward 3 sits at the southern edge of MAHC's catchment, which extends to Severn Bridge. For families at Sparrow Lake, Kahshe Lake or along the Severn River, a transfer to Huntsville can mean well over an hour each way, often on winter roads. Equity doesn't mean both hospitals must be identical. It does mean South Muskoka residents shouldn't face longer travel and fewer local inpatient options simply because of how the decisions are made.

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

The Stage 1.3 plan reduces South Muskoka from 65 inpatient beds (2019/20) to 46, while Huntsville grows from 49 to 121. Muskoka's population is older than the provincial average, the 80+ age group is projected to grow by 65%, and our population swells every summer. Planning below today's capacity for a hospital meant to serve for decades doesn't make sense. A minimum of 60 beds is a reasonable, evidence-based target. With the plan still under provincial review, now is the time for advocacy.

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Transfers should happen because a patient needs specialized care, not because South Muskoka lacks beds or services. Every unnecessary transfer uses ambulance time, separates patients from family, and adds stress and cost for people who are already unwell. The plan expands day surgery and outpatient services at South Muskoka, and that is positive. Routine inpatient care, however, should remain available locally so residents aren't moved north simply because capacity was allocated elsewhere.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Under the current plan, all 37 reactivation and complex medical management beds would be in Huntsville. These beds serve mainly older patients recovering before they can return home. Those are the patients who benefit most from nearby family visits and local connections to home care. Concentrating all of them at one site places a heavy travel burden on South Muskoka families, including many seniors in my ward. A fair share of transitional beds in South Muskoka would support better recovery and smoother discharges home.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Labour and delivery at South Muskoka was moved to Huntsville in March 2025 as a "temporary" measure of up to 12 months. Eighteen months later, it hasn't returned, and there is still no timeline. Expecting mothers from southern Gravenhurst now face a long drive in labour. As a former educator, I know strong communities depend on young families choosing to live here year-round. I want a clear, funded plan and a firm timeline to restore a fully functioning service.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

A new hospital will serve South Muskoka for 40 or 50 years, so its capacity must reflect the population it will actually serve. That includes permanent growth, a rapidly aging population, and a population that multiplies each summer. MAHC's own data show emergency visits rising in summer and a large share of residents over 60. Building for today's minimum leaves no room for tomorrow's needs. Capacity planning should use transparent, realistic projections that include seasonal peaks, not just annual averages.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Residents should receive: the full bed-projection model and the assumptions behind the 46-bed allocation; projected annual patient transfers from South Muskoka to Huntsville, including transportation costs and who pays them; the full site-selection scoring and the engineering reports explaining why the consultants' top-ranked site was not chosen;
servicing and site-development cost estimates for 300 Pine Street; and a plan and timeline for restoring obstetrics. This information should be released publicly, not obtained through Freedom of Information requests, before decisions are finalized.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

MAHC says Pine Street offers over 45 acres, room to expand and lower infrastructure costs. However, its own consultants ranked 1975 Muskoka Beach Road as the preferred site, and the engineering evidence for the change has not been made public. Residents should see:
full servicing and site-preparation cost estimates, and who pays them; usable acreage and any additional land needed; traffic and emergency access studies; and a side-by-side cost comparison with the higher-ranked site.

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

Taxpayers contribute to this project both through the Town of Gravenhurst's pledge and through the District's $77.3 million local share. I support investing in our hospitals. But taxpayer funding should come with accountability, meaning a plan that serves South Muskoka equitably and regular public reporting on how the money is used. I would want future contributions tied to clear commitments on bed capacity, services and transparency to ensure responsible stewardship of the taxpayers' money.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

Bring forward or support a council resolution reaffirming District Council's 2015 position that full core hospital services, including acute inpatient care, be maintained at both hospitals. The resolution would also ask the Province to review bed capacity, transitional care and obstetrics at South Muskoka before approving Stage 1.3.

Work with Bracebridge and District council members to present a united South Muskoka position to our MPP and the Minister of Health.

Advocate for District Demand-Responsive Transit connections from rural Ward 3 to both hospital sites, and push for public reporting on patient transfers.

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

Based on the information available, the current model does not provide equitable access for South Muskoka residents. It plans fewer beds than we have today and places all transitional care in Huntsville. Obstetrics has been absent from South Muskoka for 18 months with no timeline to return. I support two strong hospitals working together, and would require compelling evidence from MAHC to ensure that South Muskoka's needs will be met close to home.

David Kellam

Councillor | Ward: 2

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

I don’t believe currently our Bracebridge hospital has the services available to provide adequate acute care for the Gravenhurst and Bracebridge areas .with 46 beds it would definitely help but with the future growth of these communities not sure that would be enough .

2. South Muskoka’s Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

We definitely need more acute beds to provide adequate care for our growing population abd agsing population. Our towns are growing more care is needed to keep up with this demand .

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka’s capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

We need better care locally so our citizens don’t have to drive long distances for these services . Many of our seniors don’t have a way to get to these appointments so we need better local access to public health care .

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Both locations would better suit that needs of the larger community as a whole . Less distance travelled for our residents.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

I think younger families have the ability to travel for these services but ideally it would be good to have them available locally so our younger community can grow.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Without question we need to have this hospital be built to allow for future growth of our population so there isn't issues with lack of service in the future.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I think this information should be shared with the local municipalities to be discussed at council but not necessarily available to the public as a whole but the population projections based on the town thirty year plans forecasts needs to be in this information.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Yes

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I think it's important that our residents have adequate care at our hospitals and if required the municipality should be there to help as it's representing its citizens future needs for health care and that comes with some costs .

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

Would make sure our forecasts for Muskoka are in tune with the South Muskoka projections so that our future hospital can be a suitable size to look after the needs of our community as a whole.

Would look into the funding from the provincial and potential municipalities to insure we are adequately funded to meet the needs our of communities.

Would get involved with the recruiting of health care professionals to make sure we have adequate health care jobs filled once this new hospital is up and running .

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes I believe we are definitely moving in the right direction to provide adequate care to our residents both local and seasonal in the years to come .

Erin Gauthier

Councillor | Ward: 1

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I absolutely believe South Muskoka deserves equal access to proper, acute hospital care. Having raised a family here, I know our hospital is crucial. True equity isn't a spreadsheet number; it's knowing your spouse, children, or elderly parents can get life-saving care when every minute counts. Forcing families to travel to Huntsville for acute care—especially during brutal winter storms—is terrifying. We have a larger year-round population and higher admission rates, so cutting local beds makes no sense. Without them, we risk losing the wonderful local doctors who keep us healthy. Our families deserve peace of mind close to home.

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I truly support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at our future South Muskoka hospital. We aren't just statistics on a piece of paper—we are families, seniors, and hard-working people. Our year-round population is growing, our seniors are aging, and our towns burst with seasonal visitors every summer. Cutting our beds makes absolutely no sense. Forcing loved ones to be routinely transferred up to Huntsville for acute care is heartbreaking for families, especially those without reliable transportation. If we don't stand up for 60 beds, we will lose the wonderful local doctors who keep our community safe.

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I absolutely believe our future hospital must provide proper acute care locally. Working at a shelter, I see firsthand how devastating these transfers are for vulnerable people who don't have a car or gas money. Forcing sick patients up the highway isolates them from their support networks when they need them most. It's a matter of basic human dignity. South Muskoka has the population to justify these services, and constantly shipping people away damages our local safety net.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I support an equitable allocation of transitional and ALC resources between both sites. I see every day how critical local stability is for vulnerable people and seniors. Concentrating transitional care at one site forces people out of their home communities when they are at their most fragile. Displacing people to another town makes recovery harder and delays safe discharges. We need these resources right here in South Muskoka so our neighbors can heal close to home with dignity.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Yes, losing fully functioning obstetrical services would completely break my support for this model. Having raised a family here, I find it terrifying to think of a young mother in labor forced onto a hazardous highway to Huntsville during a winter storm. Bringing new life into the world should be safe, dignified, and supported close to home, not treated as a regional inconvenience. Stripping these essential services tears at the fabric of our community safety net. Our young families deserve equal access to proper, safe birthing care right here in Bracebridge.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

The future South Muskoka hospital must account for our population growth, aging seniors, seasonal visitors, and future healthcare demands. Cutting our beds below what we have now makes absolutely no sense. I stand with the Save South Muskoka Hospital Committe. It saddens me when they put a price on human life and safety.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

The MAHC must publicly disclose all their information and evidence. True transparency shouldn't be something we have to fight for. These are our tax dollars and, more importantly, our lives on the line. Major decisions about bed numbers, costs, and forcing sick patients to be transferred up the highway shouldn't happen behind closed doors. Our community deserves the respect of an open conversation and a real say before anything is finalized. We need total honesty and meaningful public input to keep our healthcare safe.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: No

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

I absolutely would not support committing municipal tax dollars to a plan that leaves South Muskoka behind. Money is tight for so many families right now, and hard-working taxpayers shouldn't be forced to fund a redevelopment that doesn't provide adequate, equitable acute care right here at home. If our local hospital is stripped of essential services and beds, then this plan doesn't serve our community's needs. We should only commit municipal funding if the final plan guarantees a safe, fully capable, and fair hospital for South Muskoka.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

> Encourage municipal resolutions demanding MAHC and the Province halt any model that strips South Muskoka of its acute care beds.
>
> Lobby our local MPP and provincial health ministers. Bring the data and real-world stories of our vulnerable residents directly to their desks.
>
> Foster total transparency by hosting public town halls, ensuring our community remains united and informed.

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

Based on the information available, I do not believe the proposed model is adequate or equitable.
I see every single day how devastating these healthcare gaps are for our most vulnerable neighbors. True equity means protecting human lives, not counting pennies. We all deserve a safe, fully capable hospital right here at home.

Heidi Welker

Councillor | Ward: 1

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

All residents in Muskoka, regardless of location should have accessibility to acute care.

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

According to the OPA 61 Draft, Gravenhurst municipality is targeting to grow its population to approximately 15,800 by 2036 (additional 3,500) and to 20,500 by 2051 (additional 6,900. An increase in beds should align with the population growth. We are the second largest with Huntsville being the first, 31,700 (additional growth by 9,900). Bracebridge is 3rd, 20,500 (additional growth by 6,900). Gravenhurst 20,500 population + Bracebridge 44,700 = 44,700 population by 2051 compared to Huntsville, 31,700 + Lake of Bays, 6,100= 37,800.
Clearly, the numbers speak for themselves.

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Acute care is stressful enough, then to be moved to another hospital is that much more stressful for the patient and for the caregiver. That said, the Health Hub in Gravenhurst may play a role in bringing patients to a closer location to their home. Just speculating about this. I have not factual information to say this would happen.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

I need more information. It is common for hospitals to specialize in care. By example, in Kitchener-Waterloo, St Mary's specializes in heart and stroke, Waterloo in Cancer. The distance between the 2 is a little less than Bracebridge and Huntsville. The UHN hospitals in Toronto are also specialized. And much closer together in proximity.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

We are growing our population and the Gravenhurst Municipal my goal and part of my platform is to create employment for middle income families (at minimum) to move to Gravenhurst. This will be a new generation that will have families in our municipality. Some form of obstetrical care is essential.

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Please refer to my answer about population growth in Question 2. Also, the current population is an aging population that will increase the future health care demand.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Specialized, support services, and capacity for sure.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

I would like to see the details about the site selection chosen.

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: Undecided / Need more information

Candidate comments:

Again, need more details. I would suggest a applying a percentage of the town and district development levies instead of tax dollars.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

I would call a motion with council for a complete review of this project.

I would create a committee of health professionals and constituents to formulate a list of opportunities and challenges.

Present the stakeholder findings and solutions to the province and district. What is the saying, "The squeeky wheel gets the oil."

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

We need more beds in Bracebridge and equitable care in each location

Stephen Sims

Councillor | Ward: 2

1. Equitable Access to Hospital Care

Do you believe residents of South Muskoka should have equitable access to acute hospital care comparable to residents elsewhere in Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

Health care should be available to all. Growth in S Muskoka requires appropriate facilities

2. South Muskoka's Future Acute-Care Capacity

Do you support advocating for a minimum of 60 acute-care beds at the future South Muskoka hospital to better address current utilization, projected population growth, seasonal demand and future healthcare needs?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I live in rural Gravenhurst. I know it's growing like all of south muskoka. We need superb care facilities that will enable us to attract the best care givers

3. Access to Hospital Services Close to Home

Do you believe the future hospital model should provide South Muskoka residents with appropriate acute-care services locally and minimize routine transfers to Huntsville that occur because of limitations in South Muskoka's capacity or allocation of services?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

The dream of transferring patients or seeking first class care year round with a drive of over an hour is just that. A dream. Services in Bracebridge are essential.

4. Transitional / Alternate Level of Care (ALC)

Do you support an equitable allocation of transitional and Alternate Level of Care (ALC) resources between the two hospital communities rather than concentrating these resources at one site?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

The plan has to be revisited to actually do what the communities agreed to. Two equivalent sites that will endure for years to come. Not one satellite that will wither.

5. Obstetrical Care

Do you support maintaining a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital so that South Muskoka families are not routinely required to travel elsewhere for maternity care?

Selection: Yes

Would the absence of a fully functioning obstetrical service at the future South Muskoka hospital affect your support for the proposed redevelopment model?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

I would prefer full service in Bracebridge. But as a senior citizen, with offspring living elsewhere, it would not impact me

6. Population Growth and Seasonal Demand

Do you believe the capacity of the future South Muskoka hospital should account for projected permanent population growth, Muskoka's aging population, significant seasonal population increases and anticipated future healthcare demand?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

After 60 seasonal years, I moved here year round 10 years ago. My wife and I are not alone. The place is growing. Plan for more.

7. Transparency and Public Accountability

Do you believe MAHC should publicly disclose the information, assumptions and supporting evidence used to make major decisions regarding hospital capacity, allocation of services between the two sites, site-development requirements and costs, and projected patient transfers — and provide meaningful opportunities for public questions and input before major decisions are finalized?

Selection: Yes

Candidate comments:

I attended several of the MAHC public meetings and found them frustrating because we never got the full answers. It is shocking that the senior management team continues to avoid disclosing details of site selection and cost estimates. I grit my teeth every time I read the updates, and never feel we are getting the whole story.

8. Pine Street Site and Future Expansion

Do you believe MAHC has adequately demonstrated that the selected Pine Street site can accommodate the proposed hospital, necessary site-development requirements and reasonable future expansion in a financially responsible manner?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

Candid summary of options and costs for all sites.

9. Municipal Taxpayer Funding

Would you support committing municipal taxpayer funding to the hospital redevelopment if you were not satisfied that the final plan provides adequate and equitable acute-care capacity and services for South Muskoka?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

The Town contribution was worded in a way that expected two equivalent sites. That's not what was dropped on us.

10. Municipal Advocacy & Action

If elected, will you actively advocate throughout your term to MAHC, the District Municipality of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario for a hospital redevelopment model that provides equitable access to acute hospital care for South Muskoka?

Selection: Yes

Would you support municipal resolutions, where appropriate, calling upon MAHC and/or the Province of Ontario to address concerns regarding the hospital redevelopment model?

Selection: Yes

Candidate response / actions:

Review past contributions from the Town

Speak out in support of a leadership review (and turnover)

If no traction on restoring balance in the plans, begin renegotiating access to the Orillia hospital options

11. Do You Support the Current MAHC Redevelopment Model?

Based on the information currently available to you, do you believe the proposed MAHC redevelopment model provides adequate and equitable access to hospital care for South Muskoka residents?

Selection: No

Candidate comments:

Haven't we already answered this?