



December | 2022

## Success Story

### PARK PLANNING IN AITKIN



Comprehensive and inclusive park planning addresses improved access to parks, trails, greenways, and open spaces, and provides opportunities for physical activity, especially for communities experiencing the greatest barriers to access.

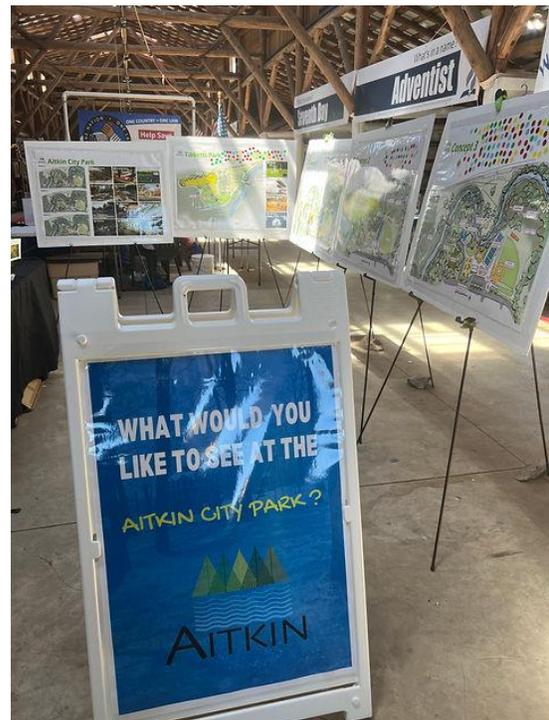
The City of Aitkin Park Committee has embarked on just this kind of planning effort. The mission of the committee is to enhance the quality of life for community members by providing well-maintained parks and public places, preserving open space, caring for

people, prioritizing safety, and strengthening the bonds of community.

With that mission in mind, the City of Aitkin used SHIP and BRIC (Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities) funding to contract with Confluence, a company specializing in landscape architecture, planning, and urban design. Together, the Park Committee and Confluence are creating a concept map of Aitkin City Park. The process has included engagement from the community and focus groups to identify and designate space, encourage sustained use, and develop park access improvements.

One engagement activity invited community members to consider how they would invest funds in the park. Six imitation dollars were handed out to each participant, who then had to choose categories such as an iconic playground, trails, and an outdoor classroom to deposit their money into. Another opportunity for feedback occurred at the Aitkin County Fair this past July, when over 200 people viewed **3 proposed concept maps** and voted for their favorite, with concept number three receiving the most votes.

The next steps in this project will be to host a final input session. Confluence will be coming to Aitkin to facilitate this in early 2023. The Park Committee is inviting community members and anyone with vested interest in this project to be part of the discussion. The goal is to gather at the table to determine a preferred concept map together. Confluence will present the final concept to the city council by spring of



2023. With this roadmap in place to help our community visualize what the park can become, the work of securing funding opportunities and implementing pieces of the map will begin.

## Staff Spotlight

### **KHAYMAN GOODSKY and AVERY MAKES ROOM FOR THEM**

American Indian Community Housing Organization



Khayman (left) and Avery (right) at the Indigenous First Gift Shop

Boozhoo! (Hello in Ojibwe)

My name is Khayman Goodsky! I am the Co-Coordinator for the [\*\*Indigenous First Gift Shop in Duluth, MN\*\*](#). My role in the gift shop is working with the amazing artists, making sure they're getting the exposure and support they need, keeping the store stocked with wonderful items, shipping ([\*\*we do online orders!\*\*](#)), and always finding ways to connect with new artists, authors, food producers, fashion designers, and so much more! I am a self-taught film maker with a deep love for comics, comic cons, Indigenous rights, and spending time with family!

Hau! (Greeting in Lakota)

My name is Avery Makes Room For Them. I'm Rosebud Sioux & White Mountain Apache. I work at the American Indian Community Housing Organization as the Indigenous First Gift Shop Co-Coordinator. My role involves working with artists, authors and food producers, primarily locally. The Indigenous First Gift Shop's mission is to advance, promote, and highlight BIPOC and diverse entrepreneurs. I find my job very rewarding. I enjoy cooking, different mediums of art, traveling, and spending time with my friends and family.

## Partner Spotlight

### **INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT**

Carlton Cook Lake St Louis Community Health Board

You may remember hearing a few months back that the Carlton-Cook-Lake-St. Louis Community Health Board (CCLS CHB) was awarded an infrastructure grant from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). The purpose is to expand local public health's capacity for planning, data, and communications. Two new positions (funded by the MDH Infrastructure Grant) have been added to CHB staff. Stephany Medina, Project Manager & Public Health

Planner, and Jenna Olson, Communications Coordinator, are available to work with local public health across the 4-county region on communication projects, data collection and analysis, and planning in whatever ways best suit each county. A third position—Anne Graves, Project Manager for St. Louis County—is contracted with St. Louis County Public Health to best meet the needs of our largest member county. Together we are working towards alignment and replicability across the 4 counties, creating platforms for sharing resources, documenting what’s working well, and sharing success stories with local, regional, and statewide partners and policy makers.

The infrastructure team is working on a variety of projects in Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties including community health assessments and community health improvement plans (CHAs/CHIPs), community partner surveys, health program campaigns, public health program planning, and more! If you have questions or ideas about how this work could support local public health in your county, reach out to Stephany at [medinas@communityhealthboard.org](mailto:medinas@communityhealthboard.org).

This work has amplified the work of Healthy Northland too! You may have noticed increased activity on the Healthy Northland Facebook page. That’s thanks to Jenna! If you don’t follow Healthy Northland on Facebook, [follow us here](#). Jenna has also been working on these [newsletters](#) and certain updates to the Healthy Northland [website](#). If you have a story to share, event to highlight, or resource to include in upcoming newsletters, reach out to Jenna at [olsonj1@communityhealthboard.org](mailto:olsonj1@communityhealthboard.org).

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## Upcoming Events & Resources

- Dec. 8, 9am-12:30pm: [Health Equity Network's Core Training Series](#)
- Jan 25, 9-11am: [Health Equity Network Northeast Regional Gathering](#)
- Jan 23-27, 12-1pm: [2023 Montana Winter Institute on Diversity, Inclusion & the Science of the Positive](#)
- Are you familiar with the Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting program? Check out [this flier](#) and [these videos](#)!



The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) supports community-driven solutions to expand opportunities for active living, healthy eating, commercial tobacco-free living, and well-being.

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