



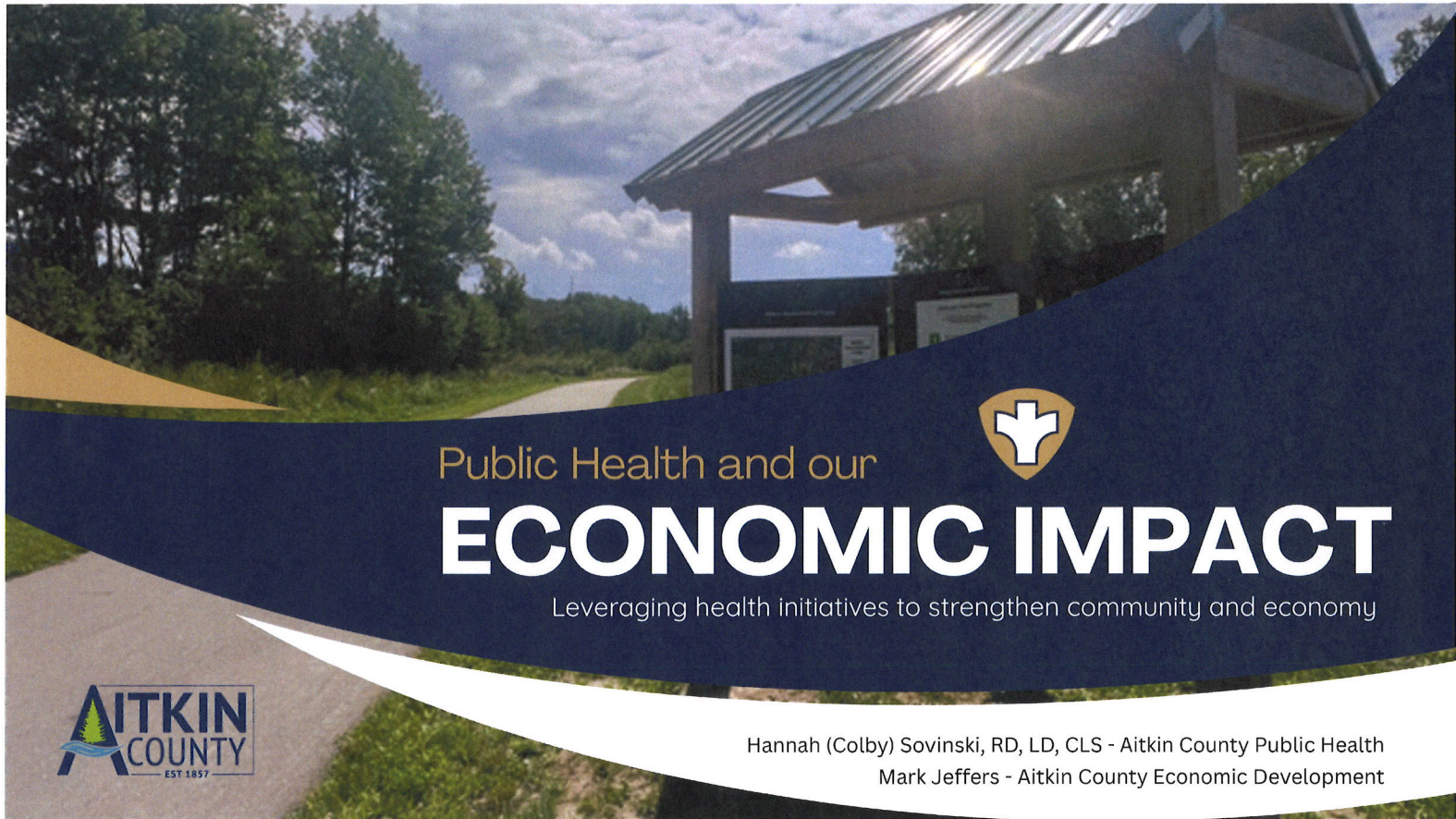
Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

5A
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: October 14, 2025

Title of Item: Public Health and Economic Impact Presentation

☒ REGULAR AGENDA ☐ CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: ☐ Approve/Deny Motion ☐ Adopt Resolution (attach draft) ☐ Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i> ☐ Direction Requested ☒ Discussion Item ☐ Information Only	
Submitted by: Paula Arimborgo		Department: H&HS Administration
Presenter (Name and Title): Hannah Sovinski, H&HS Public Health & Mark Jeffers, Economic Dev. Coordinator		Estimated Time Needed: 20 min
Summary of Issue: Public Health and Economic Impact: Strengthening Community Through Health Initiatives Investing in public health boosts the local economy, reduces healthcare costs, and builds stronger, more resilient communities.		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments: 		
Recommended Action/Motion: 		
Financial Impact: <i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i> <i>Is this budgeted?</i> ☐ Yes ☐ No <i>Please Explain:</i>		



Public Health and our

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Leveraging health initiatives to strengthen community and economy



Hannah (Colby) Sovinski, RD, LD, CLS - Aitkin County Public Health
Mark Jeffers - Aitkin County Economic Development



Lower healthcare costs →
More money stays local

Kids thrive in school → **Future leaders in the making**

Workers stay productive →
Local businesses grow

Seniors stay independent →
Families and care systems benefit

PUBLIC HEALTH IS NOT JUST ABOUT HEALTH

Local government, healthcare, businesses, and schools all benefit when public health investments are made.



Stronger Workforce

Healthy residents are more productive, miss fewer workdays, and contribute to local businesses.



Attractive Communities

Parks, trails, and walkable spaces attract families, tourists, and even new employers.



Stronger Local Food Systems

Supporting farmers and food access keeps dollars circulating locally.



Funds stay local:

- Support local contractors for signage, trail work, and park planning.
- Help small farmers sell products directly to schools, families, and restaurants.
- Strengthen community assets like libraries, parks, and trails — making towns more attractive to visitors and new residents.



What is SHIP

Focuses on preventing chronic disease by increasing access to healthy food, physical activity, and tobacco-free living. Launched in 2008.

Why it matters economically

SHIP funds are spent locally, supporting businesses, contractors, farmers, and community organizations.

How it works locally

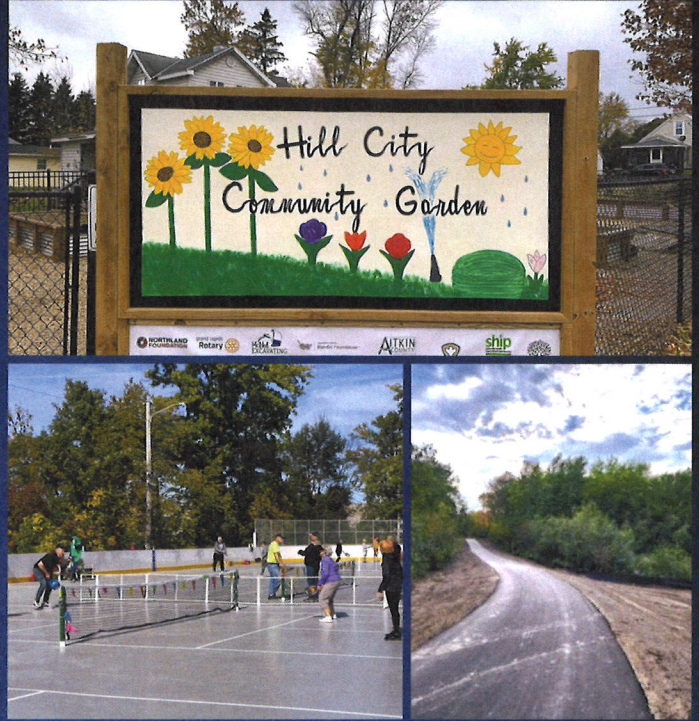
Builds cross-sector partnerships with schools, cities, healthcare, and community groups.

Long - term payoff

Infrastructure projects like community gardens, parks and trails keep attracting users year after year, multiplying the original investment.

Every \$1
invested in
prevention
saves \$5.60 in
healthcare

SOURCE - TRUST FOR AMERICA'S HEALTH
(USING CDC DATA)



ENHANCING LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

How park improvements support economy

Economic impact:

- Increases tourism and visitors.
- Encourages local spending at nearby businesses.
- Enhances property values and community appeal.

**Aitkin City Park
Concept Map**



**Aitkin Recreational Trails
Wayfinding Signage**



**Aitkin City Park Ice Rink
Signage & Pickleball**



**Community
Fieldhouse**



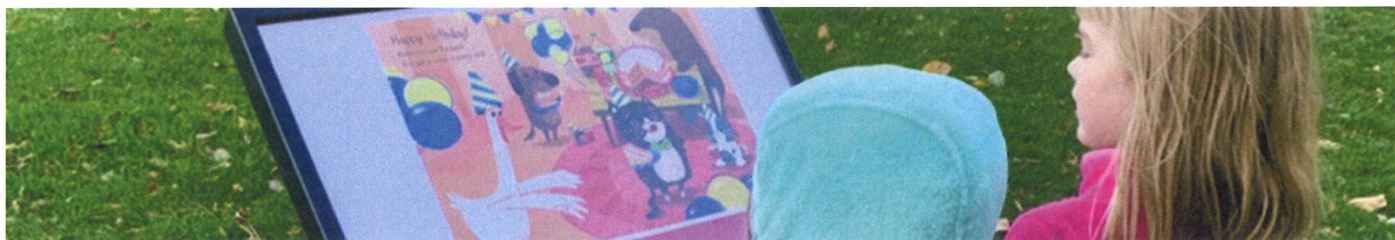


Every **\$1 spent on park and trail development** can return \$3 – \$5 in economic value through **increased tourism, higher property values, and reduced healthcare costs.**

Source - National Recreation and park Association - “The Economic Impact of Parks”



Trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes increase nearby property values — studies show homes within walking distance of trails **sell for up to 6% more.** That means stronger local tax bases and community reinvestment.



HEALTHY SPACES AS ECONOMIC ENGINES

Story Walk demonstrates how public health can invest small amounts that spark lasting community benefits — health, education, recreation, and local economy.

Health Impact:

- Promotes early literacy, which is linked to long-term educational and economic success.
- Increases park use, encouraging daily physical activity.

Economic Impact:

- Draws families into the park who may also visit a local business before or after.
- Strengthens the library's role as a community hub, increasing visibility and value.
- Well - used parks boost property values and make communities more attractive to potential new residents.

The Economic Impact of SHIP in Our Communities

Community Partner Awards

\$8,308.44

2022 - 2023

SHIP Dollars Invested

Aitkin County Care	\$750.00
Aitkin School District	\$658.44
Aitkin Farmers Market Hub	\$900.00
The Terrace Project	\$1,500.00
City of Aitkin	\$2,500.00
Aitkin Farmers Market	\$1,500.00
First Lutheran Church	\$500.00

\$12,073.77

2023 - 2024

SHIP Dollars Invested

Aitkin County Mother & Infant Rest Area Tent	\$773.77
Aitkin County Schools Tobacco Signage	\$1,000.00
Aitkin Farmers Market Hub	\$300.00
City of Aitkin	\$10,000.00

\$13,815.29

2024 - 2025

SHIP Dollars Invested

McGregor Area Food Shelf	\$7,815.29
Aitkin First Lutheran Church	\$1,500.00
City of Aitkin & Friends of the Library	\$4,500.00

\$34,197.50

SHIP Efforts Yield Funding for Local Impact

Through SHIP partnerships, local organizations secured state and federal funding that supports health, recreation, and the local economy. SHIP efforts built the partnerships that brought these dollars home, keeping funding local and growing community resilience.



\$107,418.00

Awarded the NACDD BRIC Grant (Building Resilient Inclusive Communities) Grant Timeline: February 2021 - June 2023

- Community Garden in Hill City – local produce, community engagement (social connection)
- Aitkin City Park – pickleball nets for active recreation and tourism. Along with the development of the park concept map.
- Terrace Project in Downtown Aitkin – local food sign and furniture (social connection) that boost downtown vitality
- Aitkin First Lutheran Church SuperShelf Project



\$178,350.00

Awarded the GusNIP Grant (Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program) Grant Timeline: September 2022 - March 2026

- Food Rx, expanding access to fresh, healthy food through healthcare
 - Supports the local economy by directing healthcare dollars toward nearby farmers, grocers, and food producers, keeping resources circulating within the community

\$285,768.00

SUPPORTING LOCAL AGRICULTURE

Public health investment in local food systems keeps dollars local, supports farmers, and strengthens the economy.

Health Impact:

- Increased access to fresh, nutrient-dense foods.
- Stronger connection between residents and their food system.

Economic Impact:

- Small farmers gain access to larger, more reliable markets.
- Keeps food dollars circulating within Aitkin County instead of leaving the region.
- Stimulates job growth in farming, food distribution, and related industries.
- Strengthens rural entrepreneurship and resilience.



Supporting Local Farmers and Producers

By attracting visitors to explore local farms, the Aitkin Farm Trail stimulates spending in the community. Activities such as farm tours and workshops experiences encourage tourists to spend on accommodations, dining, and other local services, thereby supporting small businesses and enhancing the county's tourism sector.

BOOSTING AGRITOURISM AND VISITOR SPENDING



Maple Ridge Farms Member of the Aitkin Sustainable Farming Association, MN Chapter. Quality certified, Pollinator-friendly. 17555 220th Ave, Aitkin, MN 56442 Phone: 218-242-1303 Email: info@mapleridgefarms.com	Buck Hills Farms Member of the Aitkin Sustainable Farming Association, MN Chapter. Quality certified, Pollinator-friendly. 14412 270th Ave, Aitkin, MN Phone: 218-242-1303 Email: info@buckhillsfarms.com
Maple Ridge Farms Member of the Aitkin Sustainable Farming Association, MN Chapter. Quality certified, Pollinator-friendly. 17555 220th Ave, Aitkin, MN 56442 Phone: 218-242-1303 Email: info@mapleridgefarms.com	Ole Lake Farm Member of the Aitkin Sustainable Farming Association, MN Chapter. Quality certified. 17555 220th Ave, Aitkin, MN 56442 Phone: 218-242-1303 Email: info@olelakefarm.com

INVESTING IN LOCAL AGRICULTURE THROUGH AITKIN EATS



Participating Restaurants		
	The Beanery	- thebeanery 223 Minnesota Ave N, Aitkin, MN 56431 218-927-7811
	Block North Brew Pub	- BlockNorthBrewPub 302 Minnesota Ave N, Aitkin, MN 56431 218-928-8090
	The Locker Room	- BlockNorthLockerRoom 12 3rd St NE Aitkin MN 56431 218-928-8090
	Rosallini's	- rosallinispizzas.com - Locally owned and operated pizzeria with homemade products. 119 Minnesota Ave N Aitkin, MN 56431 218-920-3969
	The Joint Tavern & Eatery	- Joint169 26838 US-169 Aitkin, MN 56431 218-678-3799
	The Rustic Trail	- RusticTrail 204 Main St Palisade, MN 56469 218-845-2127
	McGregor Baking Company	301 East Highway 210 McGregor, MN 55760 218-768-2253

Herbs



Enhancing Restaurant Offerings

Participating restaurants, including The Beanery, Block North Brew Pub, and Rosallini's, incorporate locally sourced ingredients into their menus. This not only enhances the quality and appeal of their dishes but also attracts customers interested in supporting local food systems.



Enjoy menu specials with just-picked, aromatic, seasonal herbs from Aitkin farmers at participating restaurants.

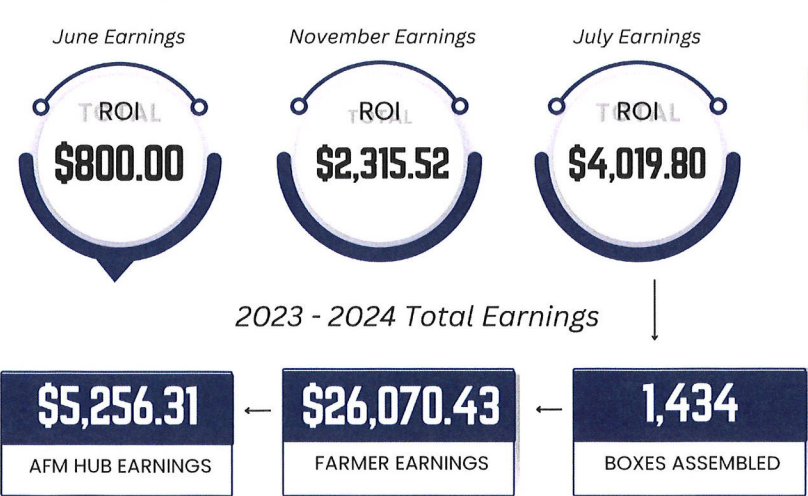
Stimulating Local Spending

By fostering partnerships between local farmers and restaurants, Aitkin EATS encourages the circulation of money within the community. Dollars spent on locally produced food are more likely to be reinvested in the local economy, supporting a range of businesses and services.

AITKIN FARMERS MARKET HUB ECONOMIC IMPACT

July 2023 → November 2023 → July 2024

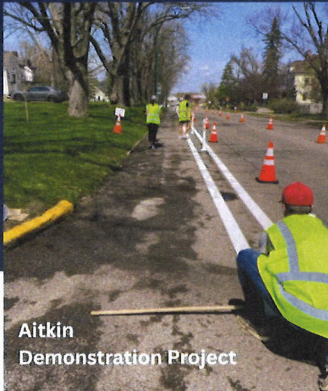
Return on Investment for Local Farmers



\$32,341.74

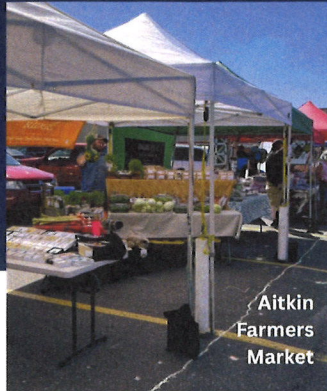
WAS SPENT ON FRESH & LOCAL PRODUCE





Aitkin
Demonstration Project

Walkable Downtowns



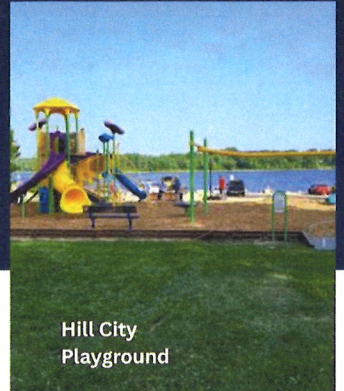
Aitkin
Farmers
Market

Access to Fresh Food



Hill City Community
Garden

Community Gardens



Hill City
Playground

Vibrant City Parks

Positioning for Growth

Businesses and families **want** to locate where communities are vibrant, healthy, and connected.

Public Health is a **Vital Catalyst** for the Economy!



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Aitkin County





THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?