

Community Development Committee

Metropolitan Regional Parks System Overview

Emmett Mullin, Regional Parks Manager





**Theodore Wirth Regional Park
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board**

Role of the Metropolitan Council

- Work in partnership with the Regional Park Implementing Agencies to support the Regional Parks System
- Develop and implement the *Regional Parks Policy Plan*
- Protect the integrity of the Regional Parks System
 - Review Park and Trail Master Plans
 - Review Comprehensive Plans
- Provide funding for the Regional Parks System



Overview of the Regional Parks System

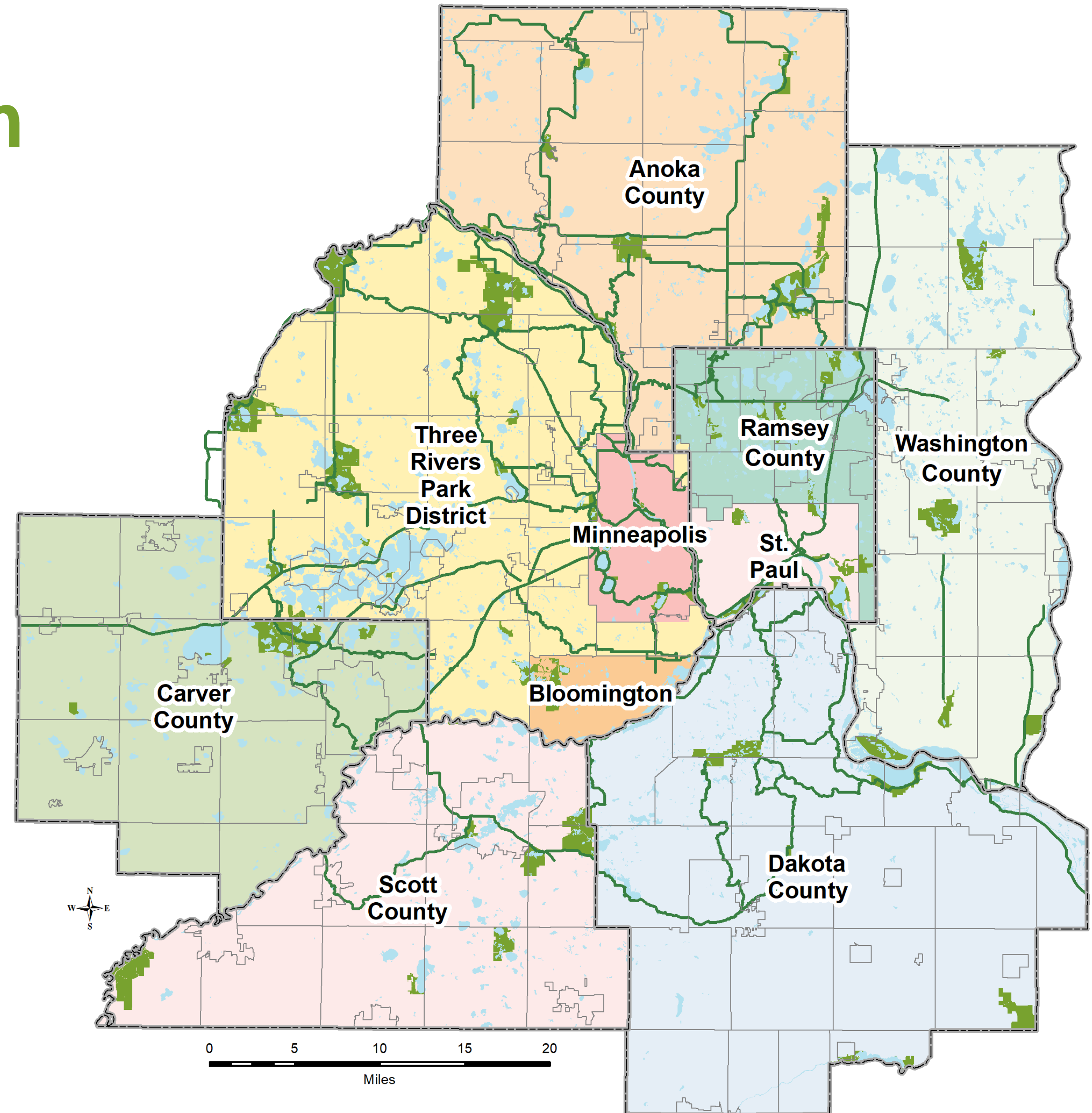
- Natural resource based settings
 - Focus on water bodies
- Natural resource based recreation
- Serve regional audience
- Large acreage
- Nationally renowned system of interconnected regional parks and trails

French Regional Park
Three Rivers Park District



Regional Parks System

- Includes:
 - 44 Regional Parks
 - 12 Park Reserves
 - 8 Special Recreation Features
 - 49 Regional Trails
- 54,400 acres
- 389 miles of regional trails
- Planned to grow to 70,000 acres and 1,100 miles of regional trails by 2040



Regional Parks in Context

Local Parks

- Developed to provide facilities for active recreation
- Serve a local neighborhood or community
- Smaller scale, often located in residential areas

Regional Parks

- High-quality natural resources
- Serve a regional audience
- Large acreage

State Parks, Lands, and Trails

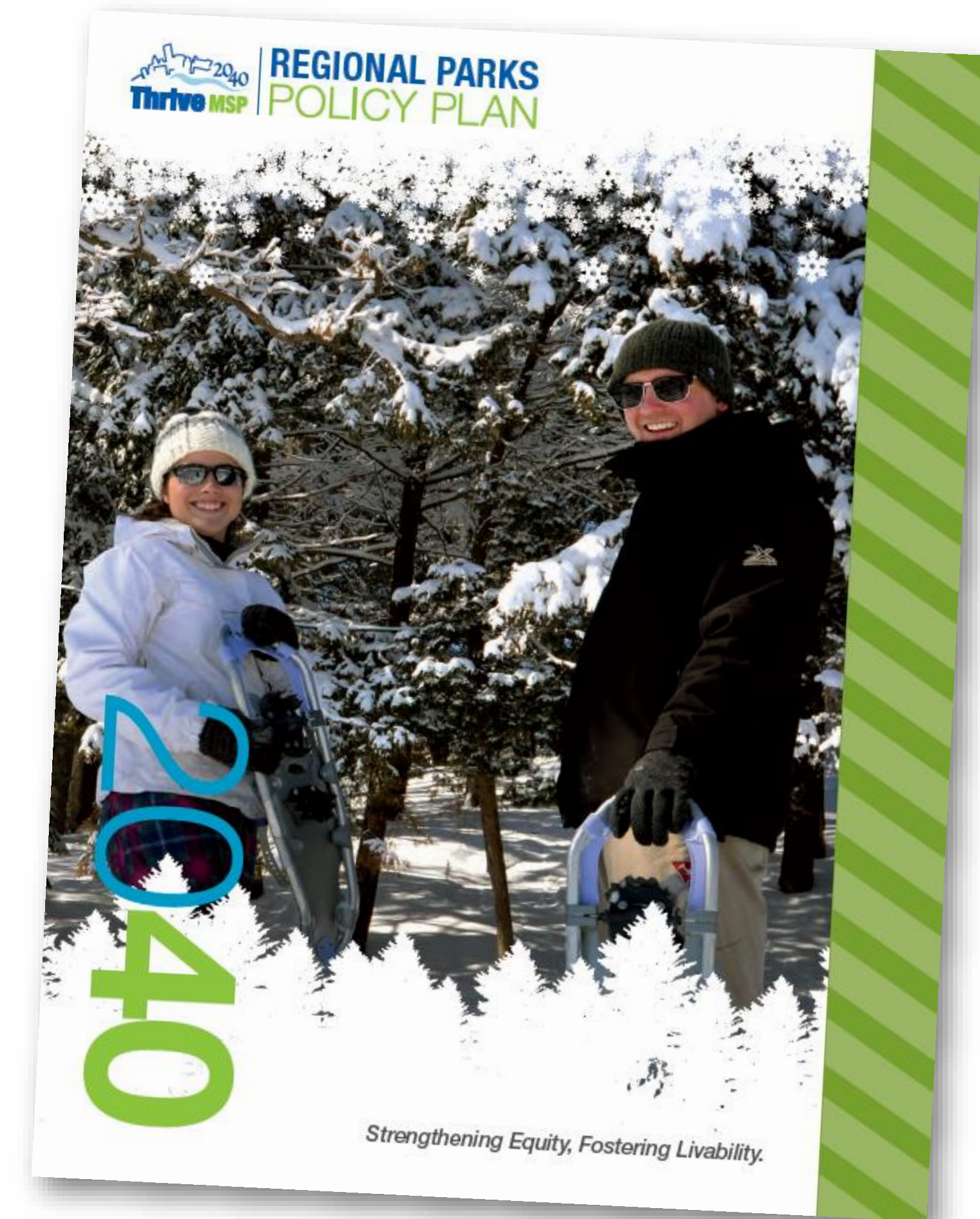
- Managed by the Department of Natural Resources
- Large acreage
- Vast majority of system located outside Metro Region

National Parks and Federal Lands

- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
- St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan

- **Siting and Acquisition:** Identify lands with natural resource and recreation potential, and put in protected status
- **Planning:** Promote and support master planning and integrated resource planning across jurisdictions
- **System Protection:** Protect the public investment in the system
- **Recreational Activities and Facilities:** Provide a regional system of recreation opportunities, while maintaining the integrity of the natural resource base
- **Finance:** Help fund the development and maintenance of the system so that all residents of the region have the opportunity to share in the benefits



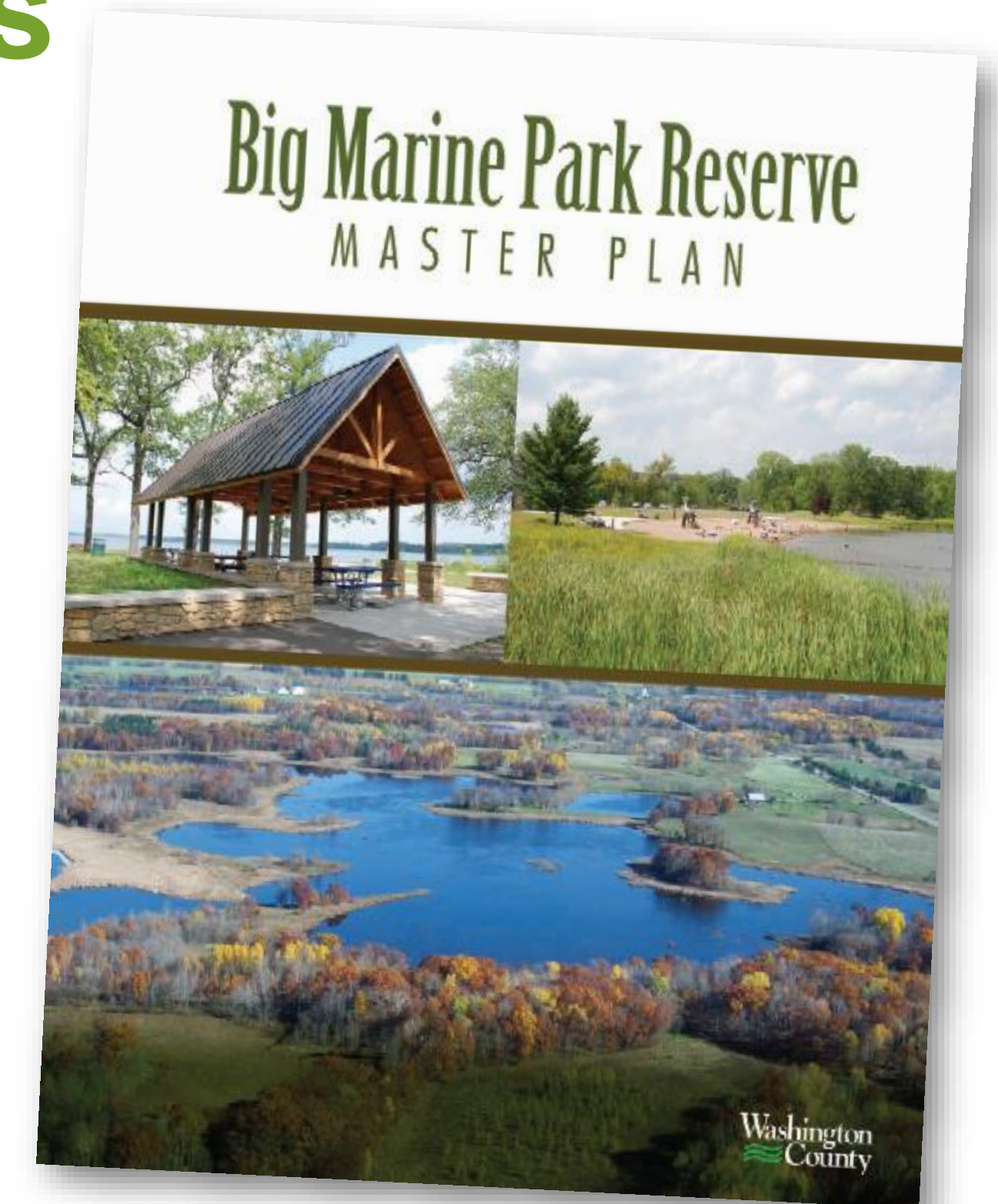
Regional Park Implementing Agencies Own and Operate the System



- Anoka County
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Ramsey County
- Scott County
- Washington County
- Bloomington
- Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
- Saint Paul
- Three Rivers Park District

Regional Park and Trail Master Plans

- Implementing agencies prepare park and trail master plans
- Council reviews and approves
- Meet criteria outlined in *Regional Parks Policy Plan*
- Determines what is eligible for regional funding
- Regional park and trail boundaries are reflected in local communities' comprehensive plans



Regional Parks grant programs

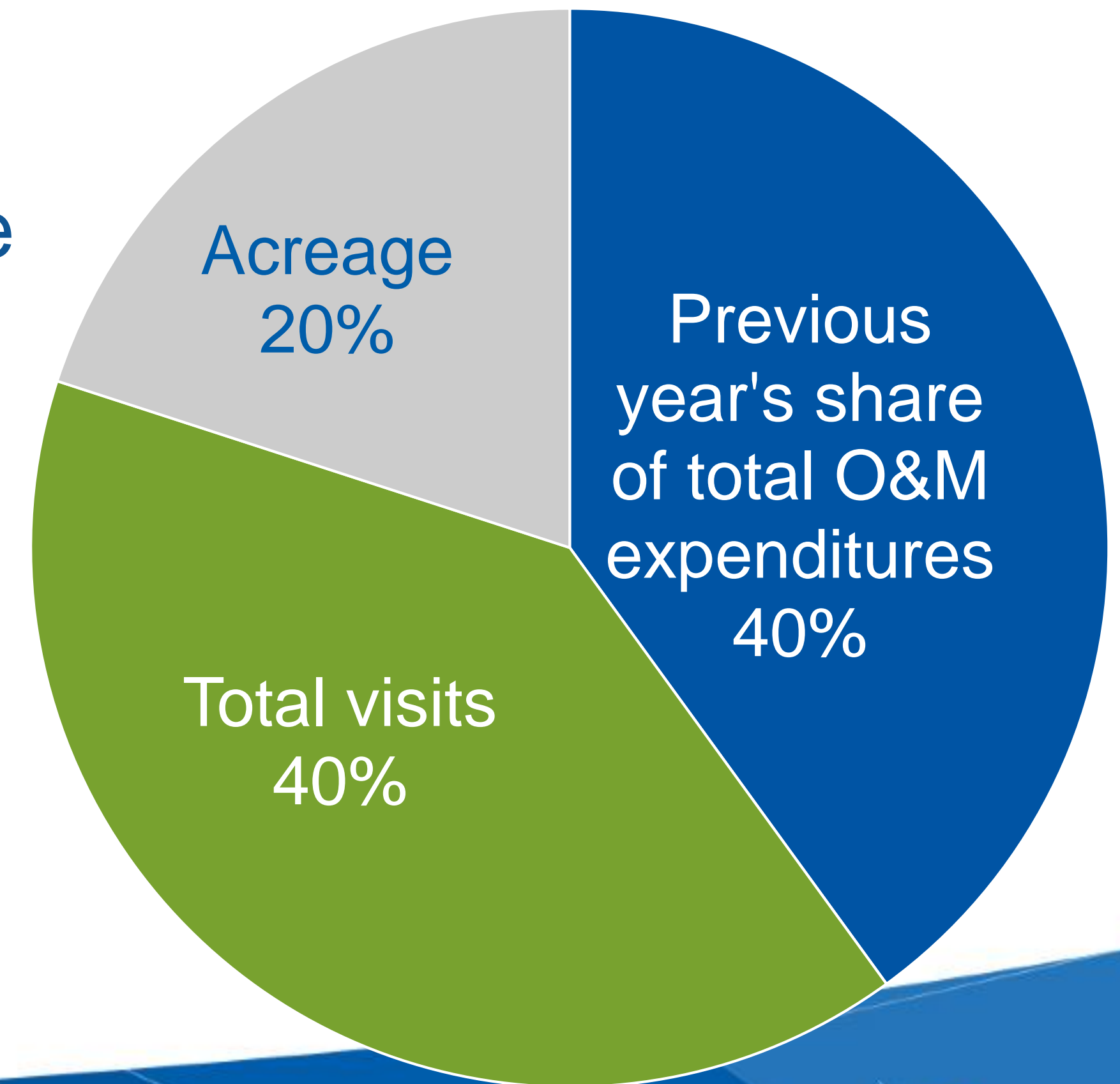
- By statute, the Council can give Regional Parks funding only to the Regional Park Implementing Agencies
- Three of the funding sources are formula-driven:
 - Operations and Maintenance funding
 - Parks and Trails Legacy Fund
 - Regional Parks Bonding program

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding Source• Distribution Methodology |
| Operations & Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State• Formula |
| Parks & Trails Legacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State matched by Council bonds• Formula |
| Parks Acquisition | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State matched by Council bonds• 1st come, 1st served |
| Bonding | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State matched by Council bonds• Formula |

Operations and Maintenance Funding:

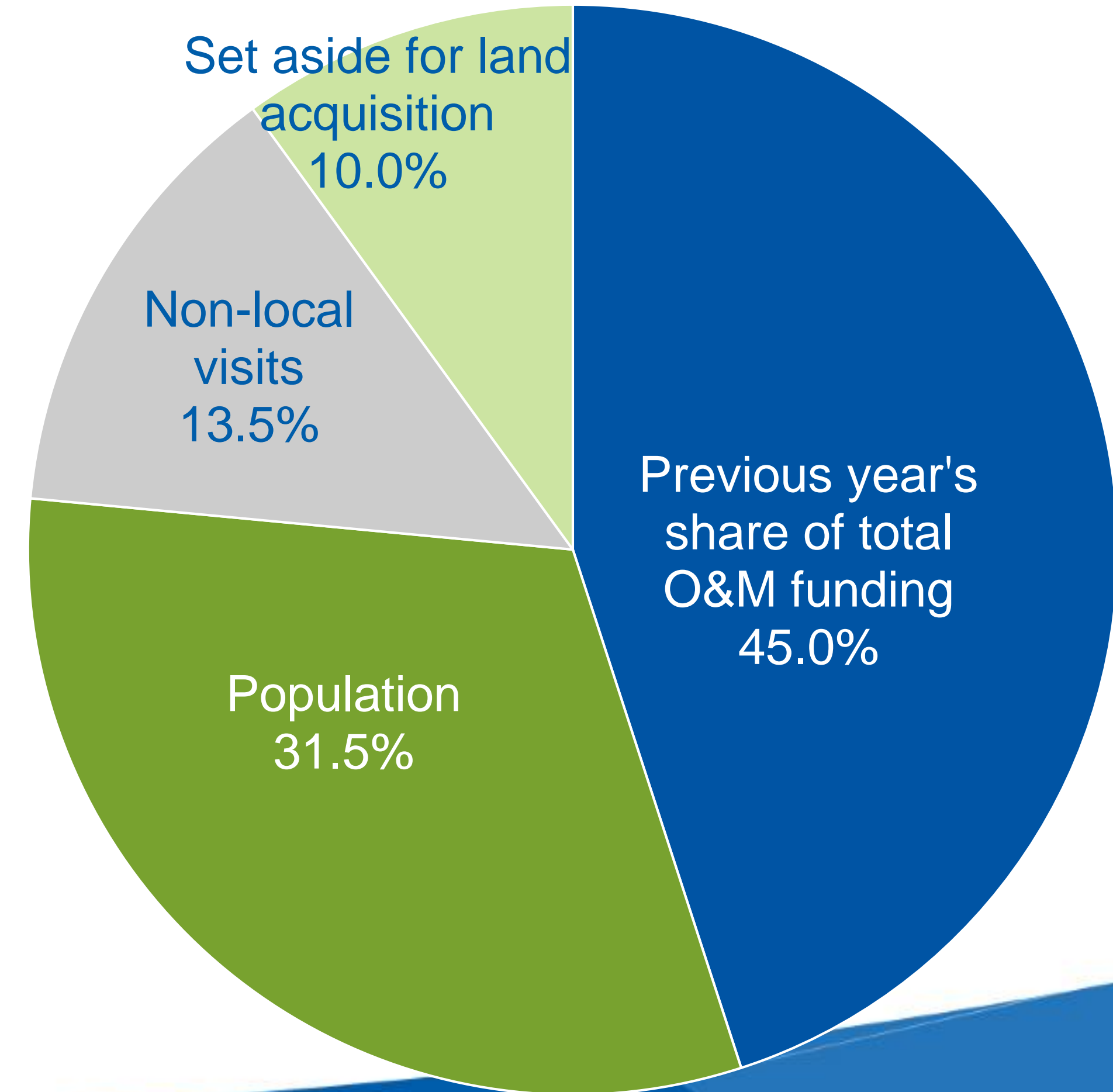
~\$17 million / biennium

- State appropriations to pay for a portion of the cost of providing for the operation and maintenance of waters, lands, and facilities that are part of the Regional Parks System:
 - State appropriations from the General Fund
 - Lottery in lieu of sales tax



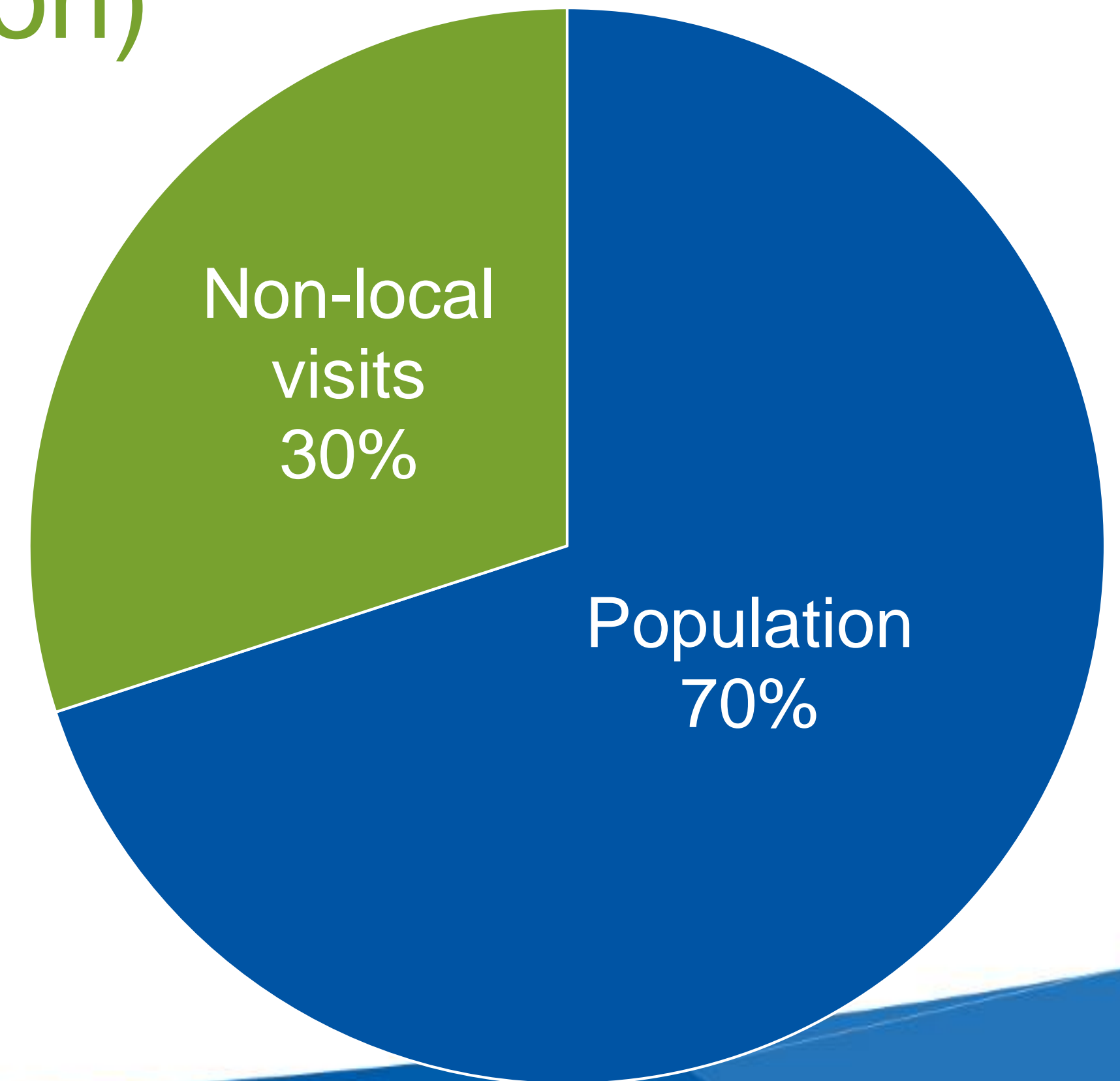
Parks and Trails Legacy Fund: ~\$40 million / biennium

- 0.03725 cent state sales tax supports parks and trails of regional significance
- Supports the four pillars of the statewide Parks and Trails Legacy Plan:
 - Connect People and the Outdoors
 - Acquire Land, Create Opportunities
 - Take Care of What We Have
 - Coordinate among Partners



Regional Parks Bonding: Varies by biennium (\$5 to \$15 million)

- Legislatively-appropriated state general obligation bonds for capital purposes (i.e., development, rehabilitation and restoration)
- The Council matches every \$3 of state bonds with \$2 of regional park bonds



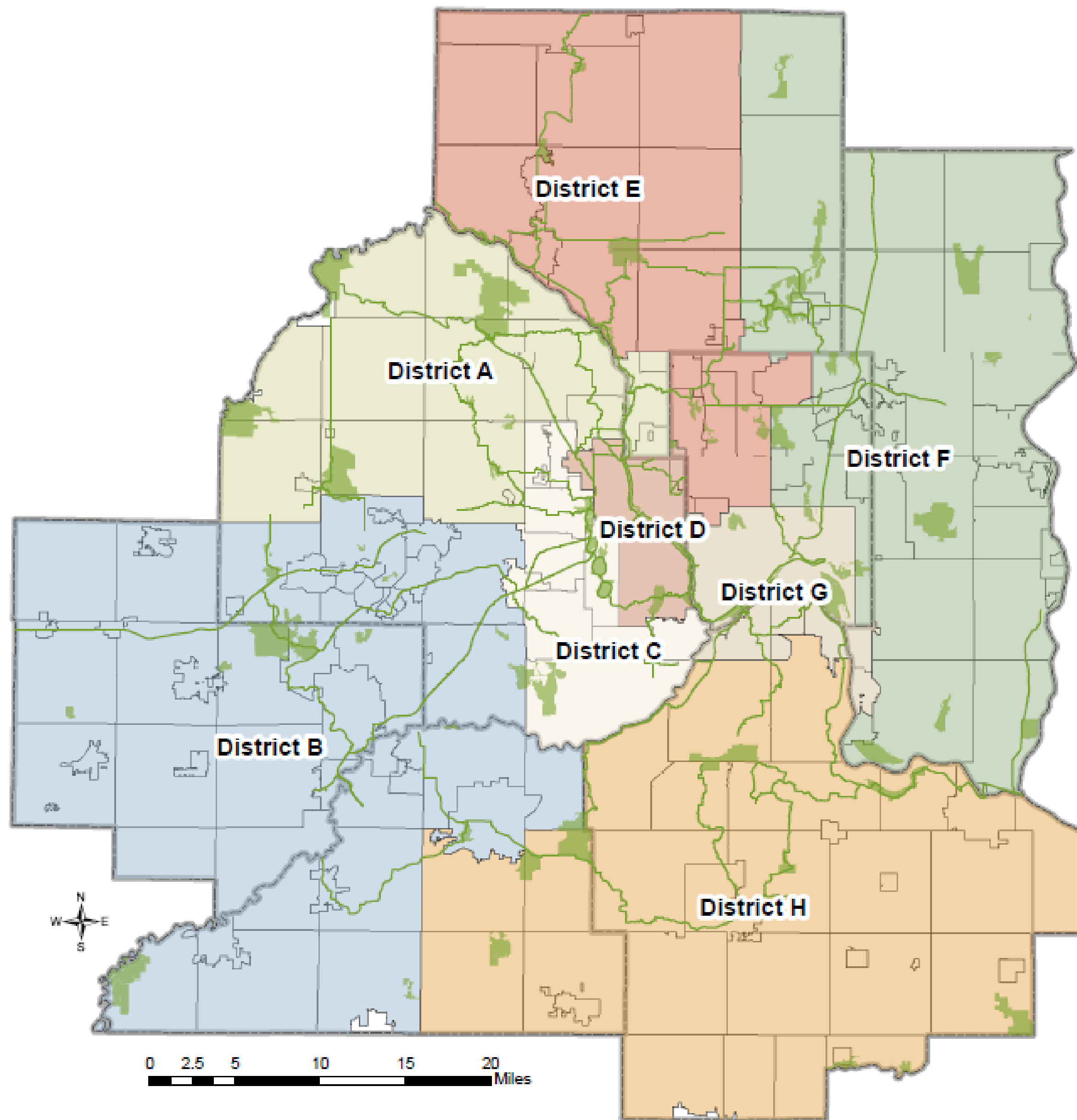
Parks Acquisition Opportunity Fund

Varies by biennium (\$8 to \$10 million)

- Sources:
 - Parks and Trails Legacy Fund: 10% of appropriations
 - Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund: Appropriations from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources
- Matched by Council bonds
- Non-competitive, first-come, first-serve
- Each agency eligible for up to \$1.7 million per account per year
- Requires a 25% local match

Metropolitan Parks & Open Space Commission (MPOSC)

- 8 members + 1 chair
- Serve 4 year terms
- Advises the Council on Parks issues
- Council Member liaison (CM Atlas-Ingebretson)



Role of Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

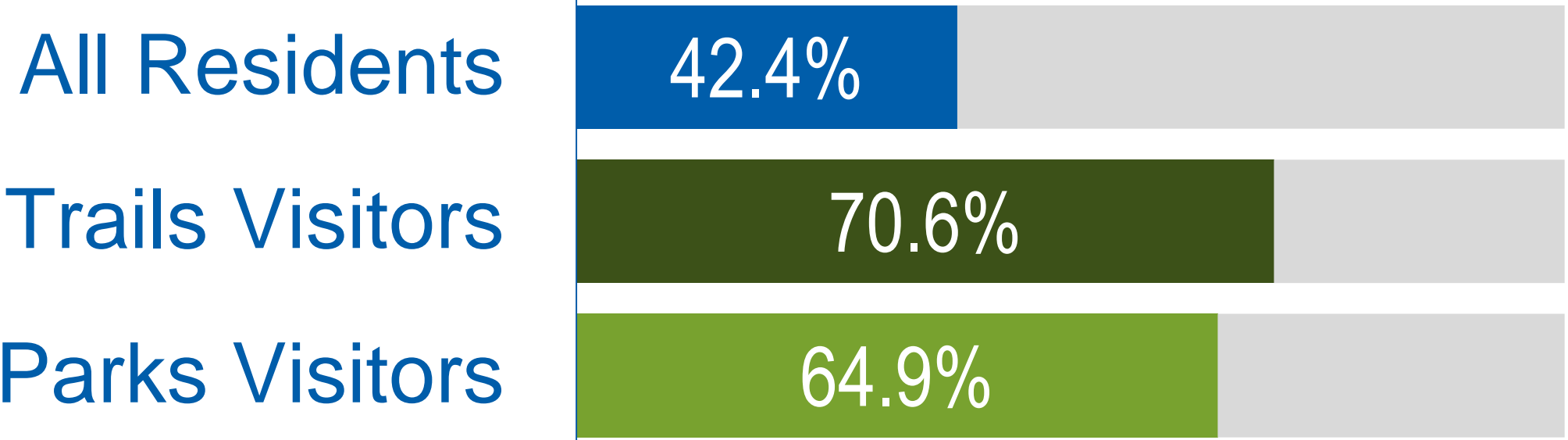
- **Advise the Metropolitan Council on a variety of Regional Parks System topics:**
 - Development of the Regional Parks Policy Plan, which must be reviewed and updated every four years
 - Review of the Regional Park and Trail Master Plans
 - Review of the Regional Parks System Funding Requests



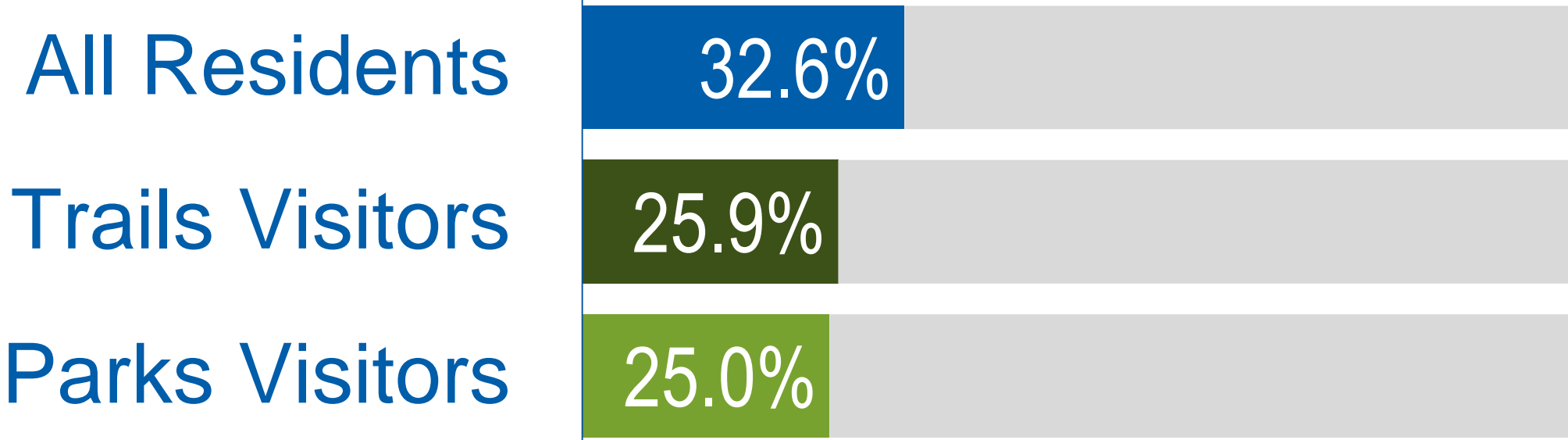
Swinging at Minnehaha Regional Park,
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

58 million visits in 2017: What do we know?

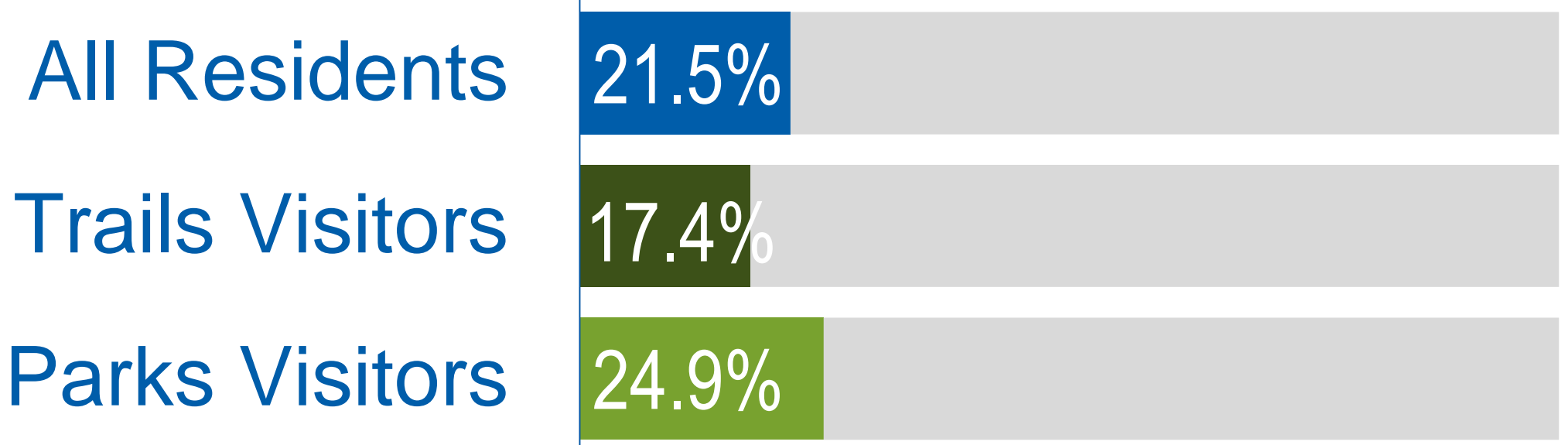
More likely to be college-educated:



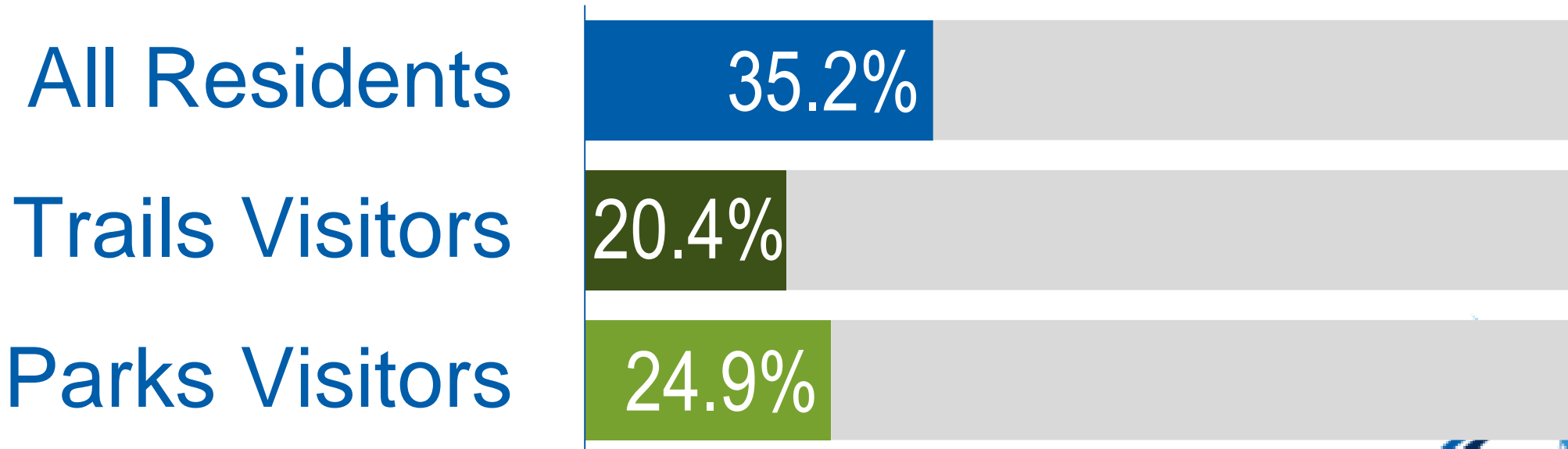
Visitors less likely to be 55+



Trails users less likely to be persons of color



Less likely to have lower incomes (under \$50,000)



Sources: Twin Cities Population (18+)—U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, 2012-2016
 Regional Park System—2016 *Regional Park System Visitor Study*



Upcoming Regional Parks Initiatives coming before the Community Development Committee

Ongoing

- Park and Trail Master Plans and Amendments
- Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund Requests
- Park Funding Recommendations

Upcoming

- Equity Grant Program Pilot (~May-June 2019)
- Interest Earnings (~July 2019)
- System Additions (late 2019-2020)



Sam Morgan Regional Trail, Saint Paul



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