



METROPOLITAN
C O U N C I L

2021 Regional Parks System Annual Use Estimate

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Community Development Committee

August 1, 2022



Use Estimate Background



- Produced annually since 1995. No estimate in 2020 due to pandemic.
- Used in formulas to calculate each implementing agency's share of Regional Parks & Trails System grant program dollars
- Allows for monitoring trends over time
- One of two ongoing research responsibilities: Other is Visitor Study, approximately every 5 years

2021 Annual Use Estimate



- The estimate includes data from 128 regional parks, trails, park reserves and special recreation features.
- New multipliers from the 2021 Visitor Study
- Annual estimated visitation is one way to demonstrate the value of the Regional Park System. Other demonstrations of value include climate mitigation and public health benefits

Calculating the Annual Use Estimate

Raw Counts

- Parks staff count all people entering all parks and trails at designated locations
- Schedule has randomized times, days, and entrances, Memorial Day to Labor Day

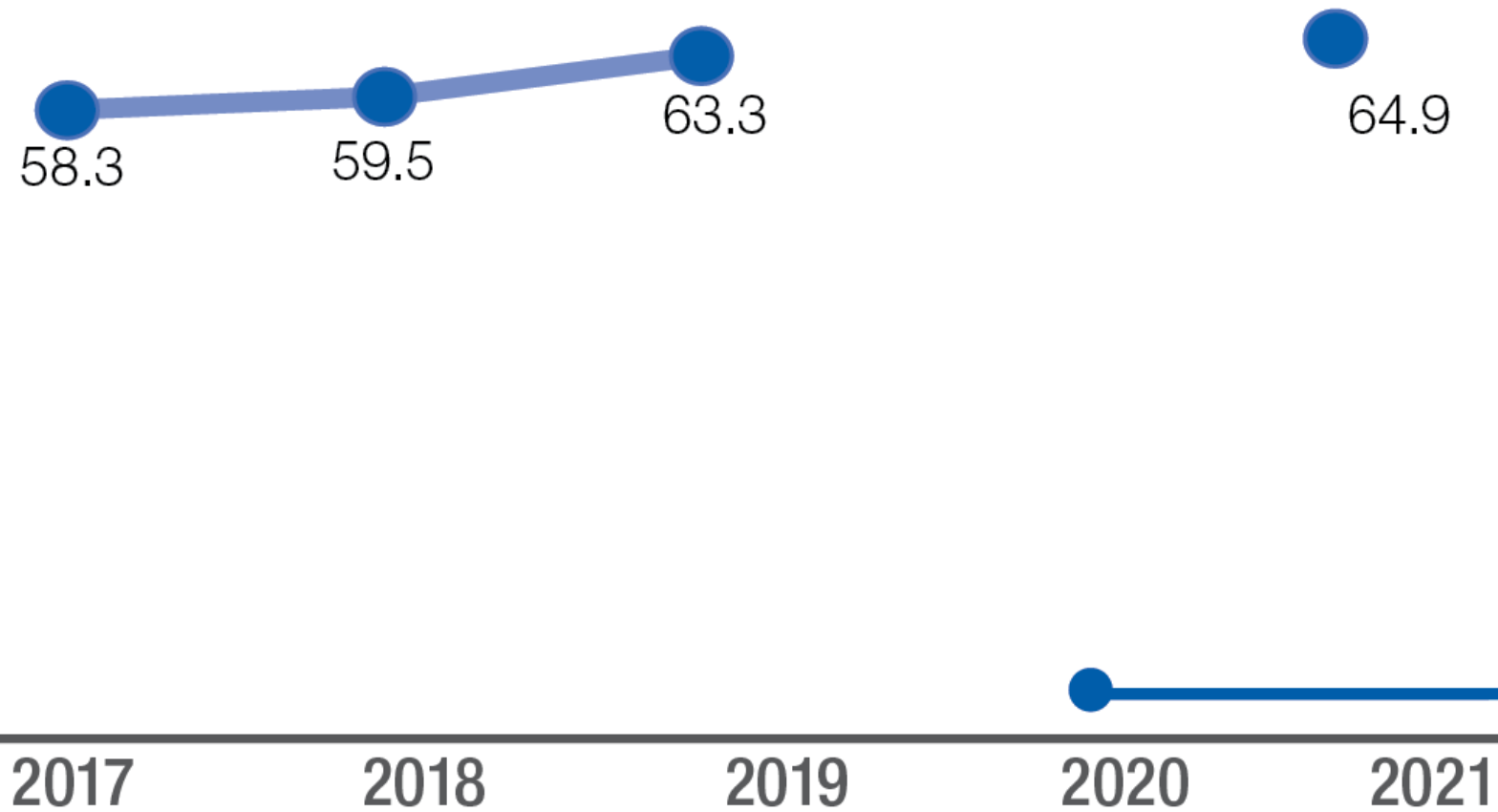
Expansion

- Averaged with previous three years to account for weather, flooding
- Counts are “expanded” to apply to all days and entrances

Special Events / Camping

- Agency-submitted special event, camping use is added in
- Estimated non-summer use based on 2021 Visitor Study multipliers

Annual Visits to the Regional System



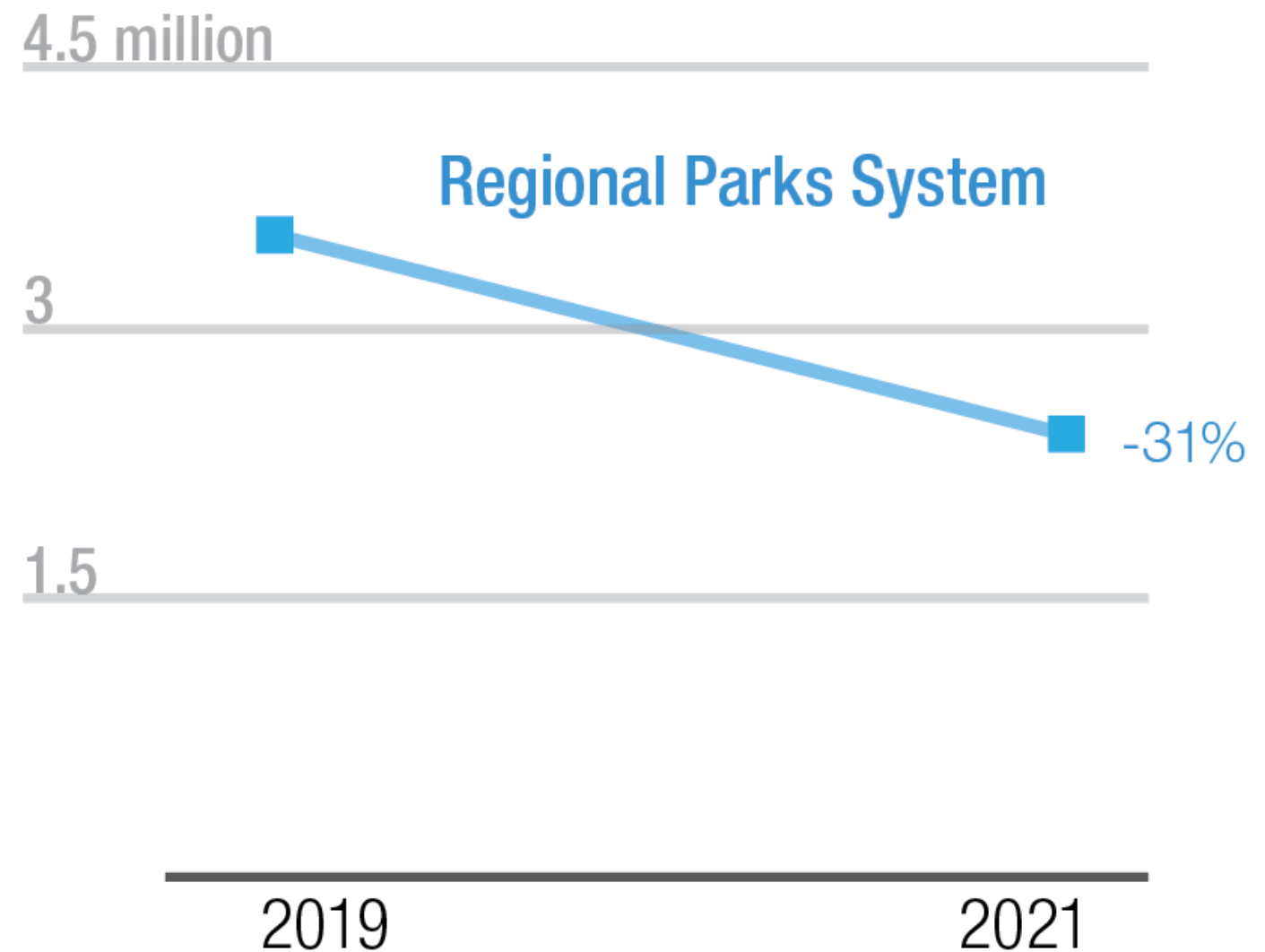
Due to the pandemic, the 2020 use estimate was canceled. The 2016 visitor study informed annual use estimates from 2016-2019. The 2021 Visitor Study informed the 2021 use estimate. As a result, we caution against direct comparisons between these two time periods

Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates.

COVID-19 Effects

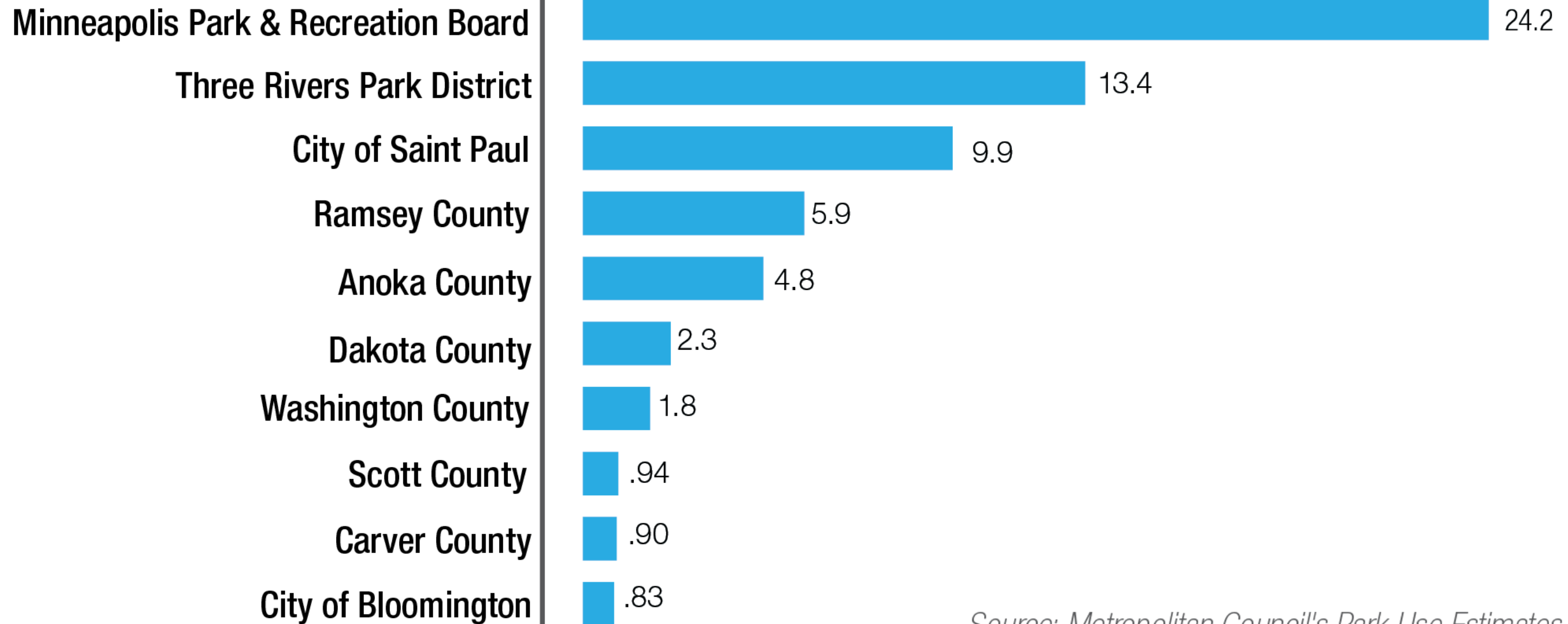
- Special events decreased by over a million visits (31.1% decrease)
- Person per vehicle decreased, affecting estimation process.

Change in Special Events Visits 2019-2021



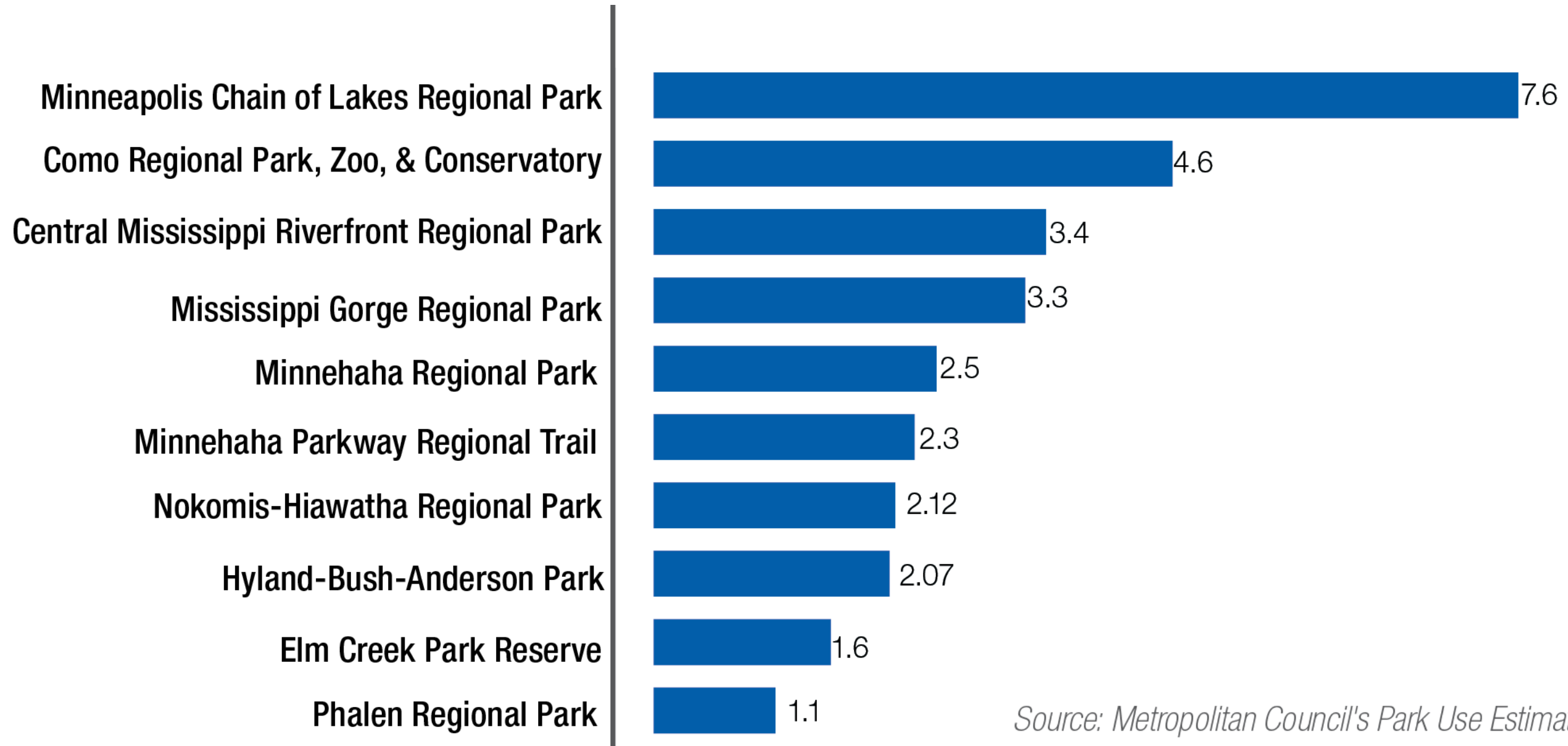
Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates.

2021 Visits by Implementing Agency



Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates.

Most Visited Units in the Regional System



Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates.



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