



METROPOLITAN  
C O U N C I L

# 2021 Regional Parks System Annual Use Estimate

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# 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

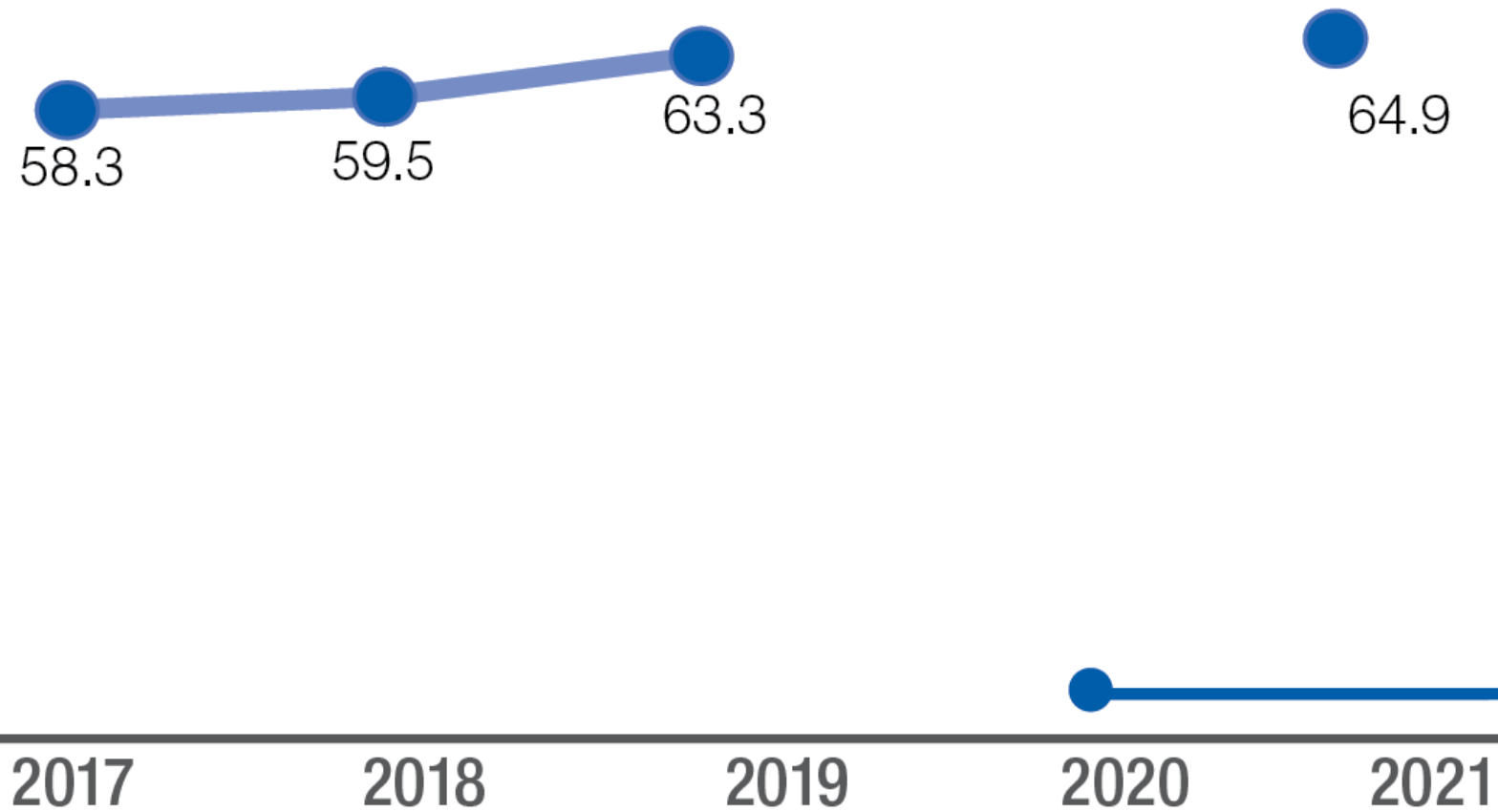
## Expansion

- 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



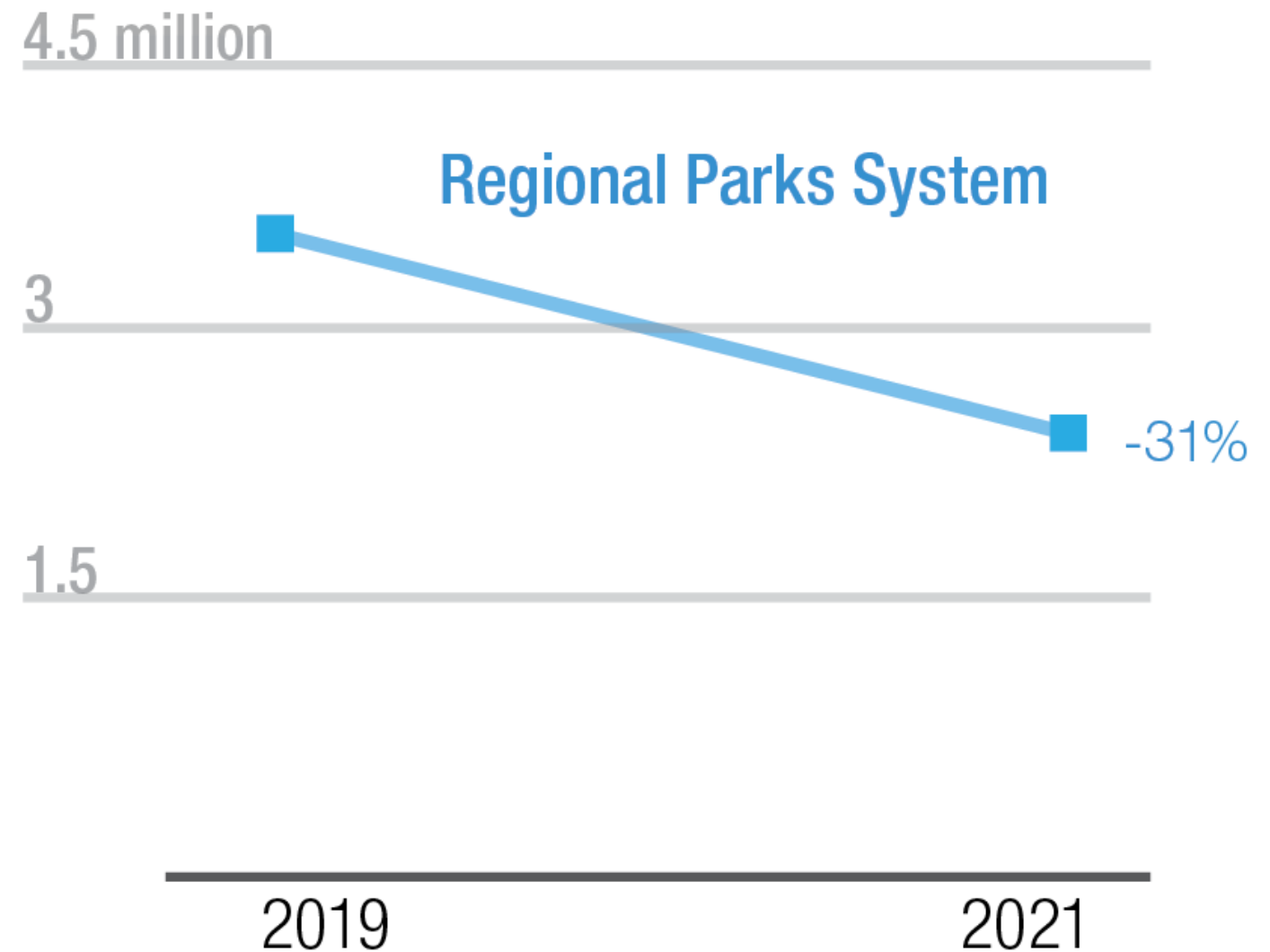
Due to the pandemic, the 2020 use estimate was canceled. The 2016 visitor study informed annual use estimates from 2016-2019. The 2021 Visitor Study informed the 2021 use estimate. As a result, we caution against direct comparisons between these two time periods

Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates.

# COVID-19 Effects

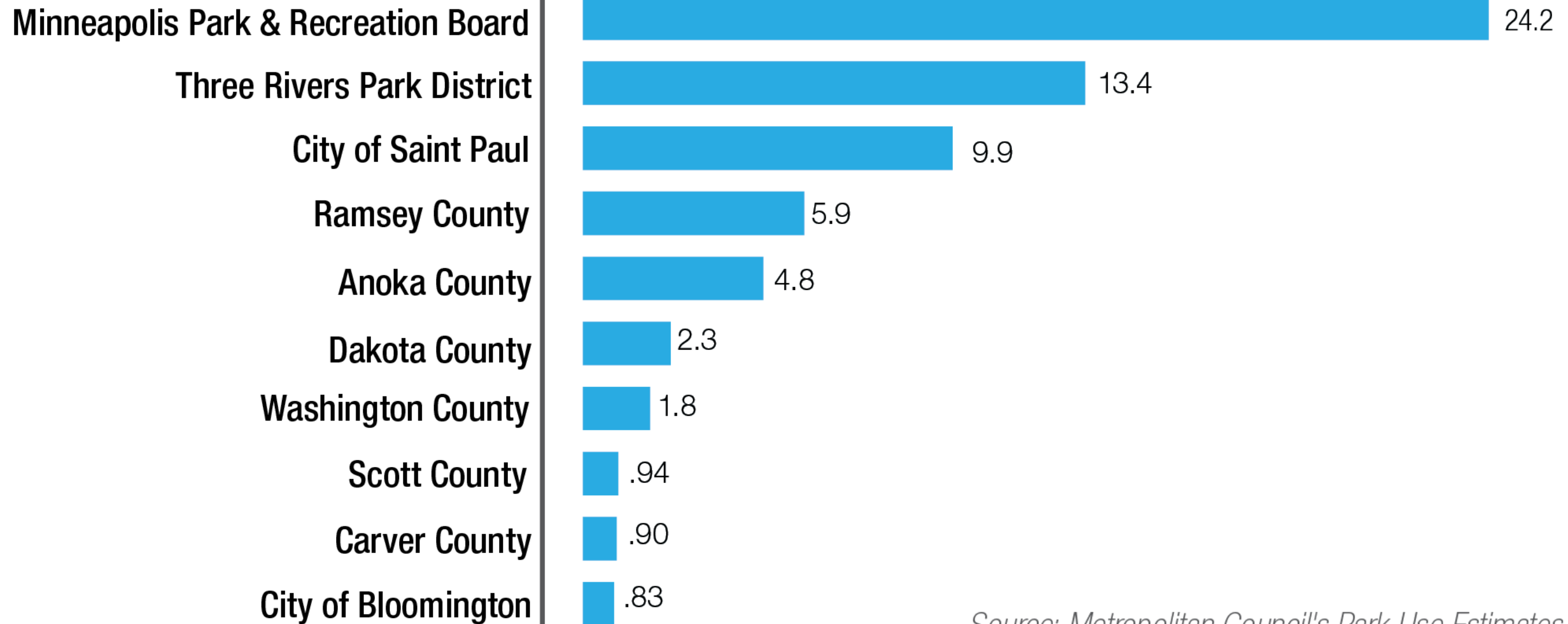
- Special events decreased by over a million visits (31.1% decrease)
- Person per vehicle decreased, affecting estimation process.

*Change in Special Events Visits 2019-2021*



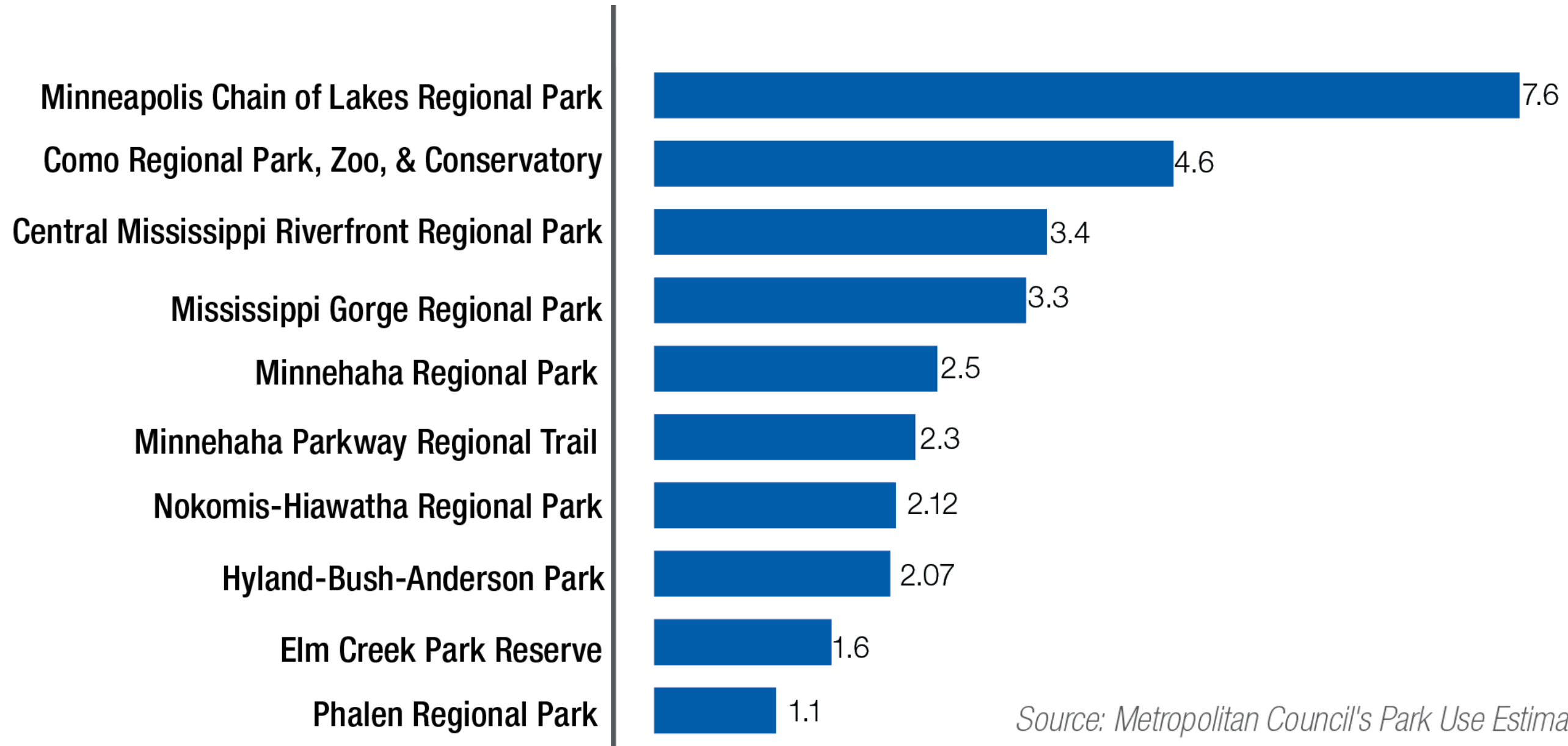
Source: Metropolitan Council's Park Use Estimates.

# 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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