



ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	February 28, 2012
Subject:	Report on Parks and Trails Legacy Fund Appropriations for Metropolitan Regional Park System
District(s), Member(s):	All Council Districts
Policy/Legal Reference:	Laws of MN 2009, Chapter 172, Article 3, Section 3(b)
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Arne Stefferud, Planning Analyst-Parks (651-602-1360)
Division/Department:	Community Development Division, Parks

Proposed Action

None. This is an information item

Background

Under the provisions of MN Statute 473.147 enacted in 1974, the Metropolitan Council is authorized to prepare a regional parks policy plan that must identify land that should be acquired and developed by cities, counties and special park districts to create a regional recreation open space system that complements State parks and trails in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region. These regional parks provide services to persons on a regional basis—not just to those who live near that park or trail. Studies on the origin of visitors to the Metropolitan Regional Park System indicate that 45% of the visitors to the system live outside the city, county or special park district that owns/manages that park or trail unit. Consequently funding from regional (Metropolitan Council bonds) and State sources have been used to help partially finance the capital and operations/maintenance costs of the system.

Ten regional park implementing agencies own and manage portions of the Metropolitan Regional Park System within their political jurisdiction. The regional park implementing agencies as defined in MN Statute 473.351 are:

- Anoka County
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Ramsey County
- Scott County
- Washington County
- City of Bloomington
- City of St. Paul
- Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
- Three Rivers Park District

The regional park implementing agencies must prepare master plans which describe the park or trail unit boundary, generally locate recreation and visitor support facilities in the park or trail, and estimate the costs to acquire, develop and operate/maintain the park or trail unit. The Metropolitan Council reviews and approves these master plans based on their consistency with the Council's regional parks policy plan.

The Metropolitan Council provides capital grants to the regional park implementing agencies for projects that are consistent with the Council-approved park or trail master plan. Those grants have been funded traditionally with State appropriations from State bonds, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and bonds issued by the Metropolitan Council.

Beginning in 2009 appropriations from the Constitutional Land and Legacy Amendment's "Parks and Trails Fund" have been made to the Metropolitan Council for grants to regional park implementing agencies to finance projects that support the Metropolitan Regional Park System.

Laws of MN 2009, Chapter 172, Article 3, Section 3(b) requires the Metropolitan Council to submit a report to the Legislature on March 1 every year which must describe the expenditure and use of the Parks and Trails Fund appropriations. Attached is the Executive Summary of the report which will be presented as an information item.

Rationale

An annual report on the use and expenditures of Parks and Trails Fund appropriations must be prepared by the Metropolitan Council and submitted to the Legislature by March 1 every year.

Funding

The annual report describes the expenditure and use of Parks and Trails Fund appropriations to support the Metropolitan Regional Park System. Those appropriations are:

\$ 12,641,000 FY 2010
\$ 15,140,000 FY 2011
\$ 15,763,000 FY 2012
\$ 43,544,000 Total

**2012 Annual Report to Minnesota Legislature
Regarding
Constitutional Land and Legacy Amendment
Parks and Trails Fund Appropriations for
Metropolitan Regional Park System**



March 1, 2012

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The mission of the Metropolitan Council is to develop, in cooperation with local communities a comprehensive regional planning framework, focusing on transportation, wastewater, parks and aviation systems that guide the efficient growth of the metropolitan area. The Council operates transit and wastewater services and administers housing and other grant programs.

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Executive Summary

Background on Metropolitan Regional Park System

Under the provisions of MN Statute 473.147 enacted in 1974, the Metropolitan Council is authorized to prepare a regional parks policy plan that must identify land that should be acquired and developed by cities, counties and special park districts to create a regional recreation open space system that complements State parks and trails in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region. These regional parks provide services to persons on a regional basis—not just to those who live near that park or trail. Studies on the origin of visitors to the Metropolitan Regional Park System indicate that 45% of the visitors to the system live outside the city, county or special park district that owns/manages that park or trail unit. Consequently funding from regional (Metropolitan Council bonds) and State sources have been used to help partially finance the capital and operations/maintenance costs of the system.

In 1974, the Metropolitan Council designated about 31,000 acres of existing city, county and special park district lands as regional parks, park reserves, special recreation features and regional trails in its first regional parks policy plan. Today, over 54,600 acres in 39 regional parks, 12 park reserves, 7 special recreation features and 43 regional trails (over 231 miles) are open for public use. The park system hosted an estimated 40.9 million visits in 2010 based on visitation samples taken at each park and trail unit.

Ten regional park implementing agencies own and manage portions of the Metropolitan Regional Park system within their political jurisdiction. The regional park implementing agencies as defined in MN Statute 473.351 are:

- Anoka County
- Carver County
- Dakota County
- Ramsey County
- Scott County
- Washington County
- City of Bloomington
- City of St. Paul
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The Metropolitan Council provides capital grants to the regional park implementing agencies for projects that are consistent with the Council-approved park or trail master plan. Those grants have been funded traditionally with State appropriations from bonds, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, and bonds issued by the Metropolitan Council.

Beginning in 2009 appropriations from the Constitutional Land and Legacy Amendment's "Parks and Trails Fund" have been made to the Metropolitan Council for grants to regional park implementing agencies to finance projects that support the Metropolitan Regional Park System.

Those appropriations are:

\$ 12,641,000 FY 2010

\$ 15,140,000 FY 2011

\$ 15,763,000 FY 2012

\$ 43,544,000 Total

This report describes the expenditure and use of these appropriations in compliance with Laws of MN 2009, Chapter 172, Article 3, Section 3(b). The report details the outcomes in terms of additional use of parks and trails resources, user satisfaction surveys, and other appropriate outcomes. An increase in park visitation resulting from the projects financed from the grants is being analyzed at this time and consequently was not available for use in this report. This report contains measurable outcomes of completed projects when data is available, and proposed measurable outcomes for projects currently under way or when park and trail visitation will be provided in future reports. Future annual reports will include the results of those measurable outcomes as well as updated information on the expenditures of the appropriation at that point in time.

Allocation of Appropriation

The FY 2010 appropriation included a \$40,000 earmark to plant trees along Victory Memorial Parkway. Ninety percent of the remainder was for grants to 10 regional park implementing agencies and 10% for land acquisition grants in accordance with a formula in Minnesota Statutes, section 85.53.

Chart 1 illustrates the allocation of the FY 2010-11 appropriations (\$27,281,000) to Hennepin County and the ten regional park implementing agencies based on the appropriation rider language and the results of applying the formula in Minnesota Statutes, section 85.53.

Chart 1: Allocation of FY 2010-11 Parks and Trails Fund Appropriation for Metropolitan Regional Park System (\$27,281,000)

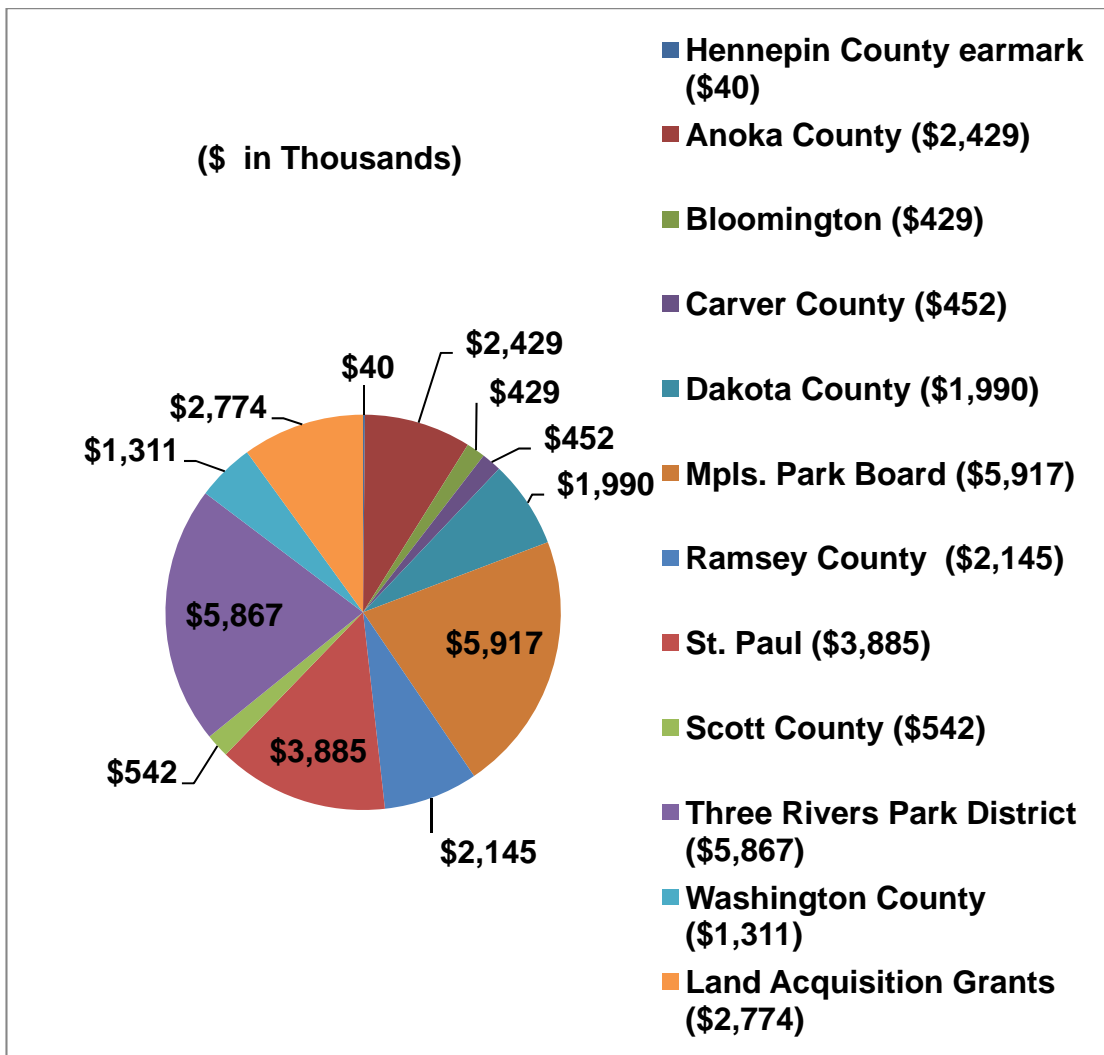
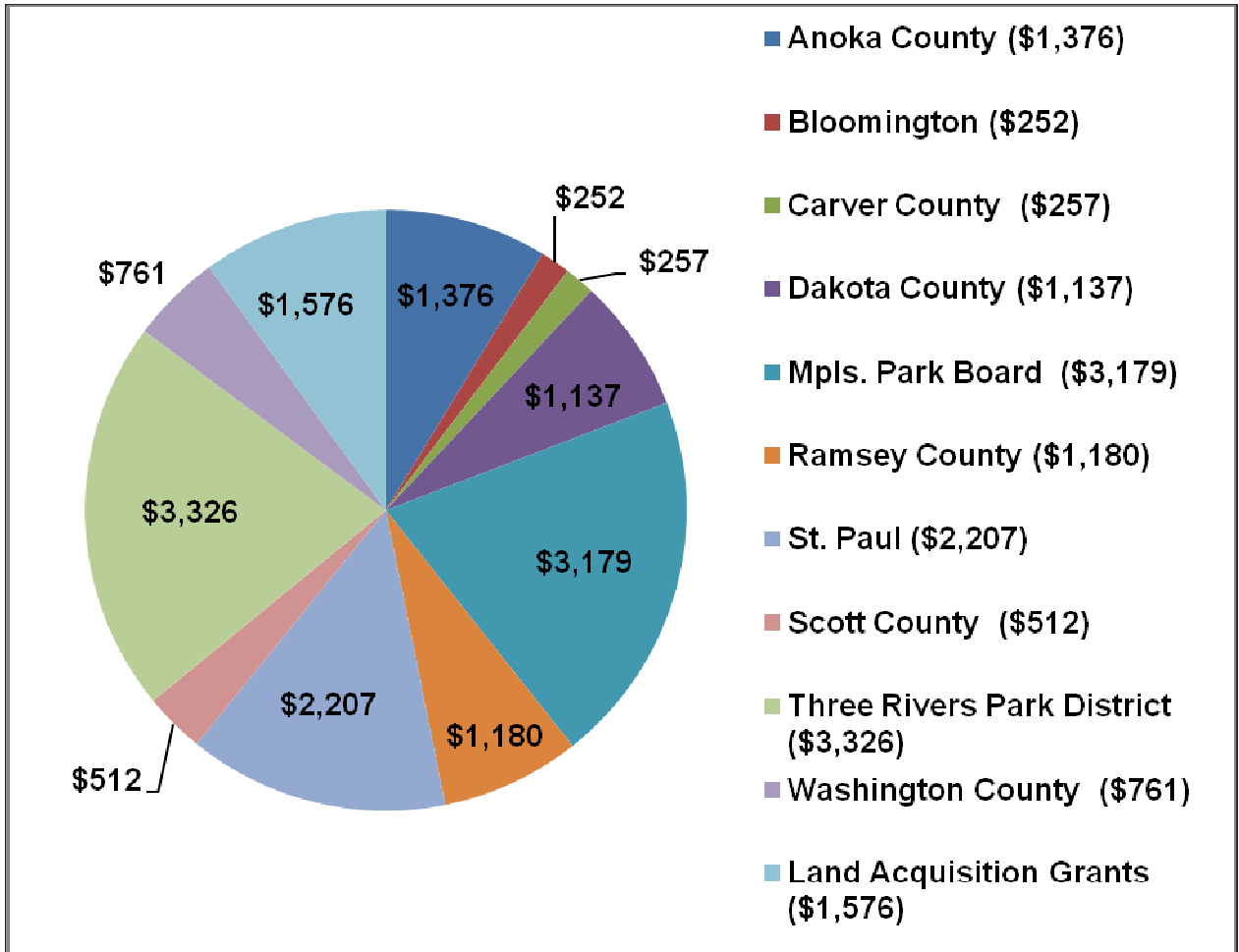


Chart 2 illustrates the allocation of the FY 2012 appropriation (\$15,763,000) to the ten regional park implementing agencies based on the results of applying the formula in Minnesota Statutes, section 85.53.

Chart 2: Allocation of FY 2012 Parks and Trails Fund Appropriation for Metropolitan Regional Park System (\$15,763,000)



Parks and Trails Legacy Plan Strategic Directions

The 25-Year Parks and Trails Legacy Plan [Feb. 14, 2011] calls for investing the Parks and Trails Fund under the following strategic directions:

- Connect people to the outdoors (e.g. improved marketing, increase access)
- Acquire land (e.g. acquire land within existing park boundaries and new parks)
- Create opportunities (e.g. build new recreation and visitor support facilities)
- Take care of what we have (e.g. renovate and maintain existing infrastructure)
- Work better together (e.g. inter-agency coordination to create a seamless park and trail system. This also includes preparation of regional park and trail master plans developed in cooperation with affected local units of government and the general public)

Chart 3 illustrates how the FY 2010 and FY 2011 appropriations were expended consistent with these strategic directions.

Chart 3: Fiscal Years 2010-11 Appropriation Expenditures on Parks and Trails Legacy Plan Strategic Directions (\$27,281,000)

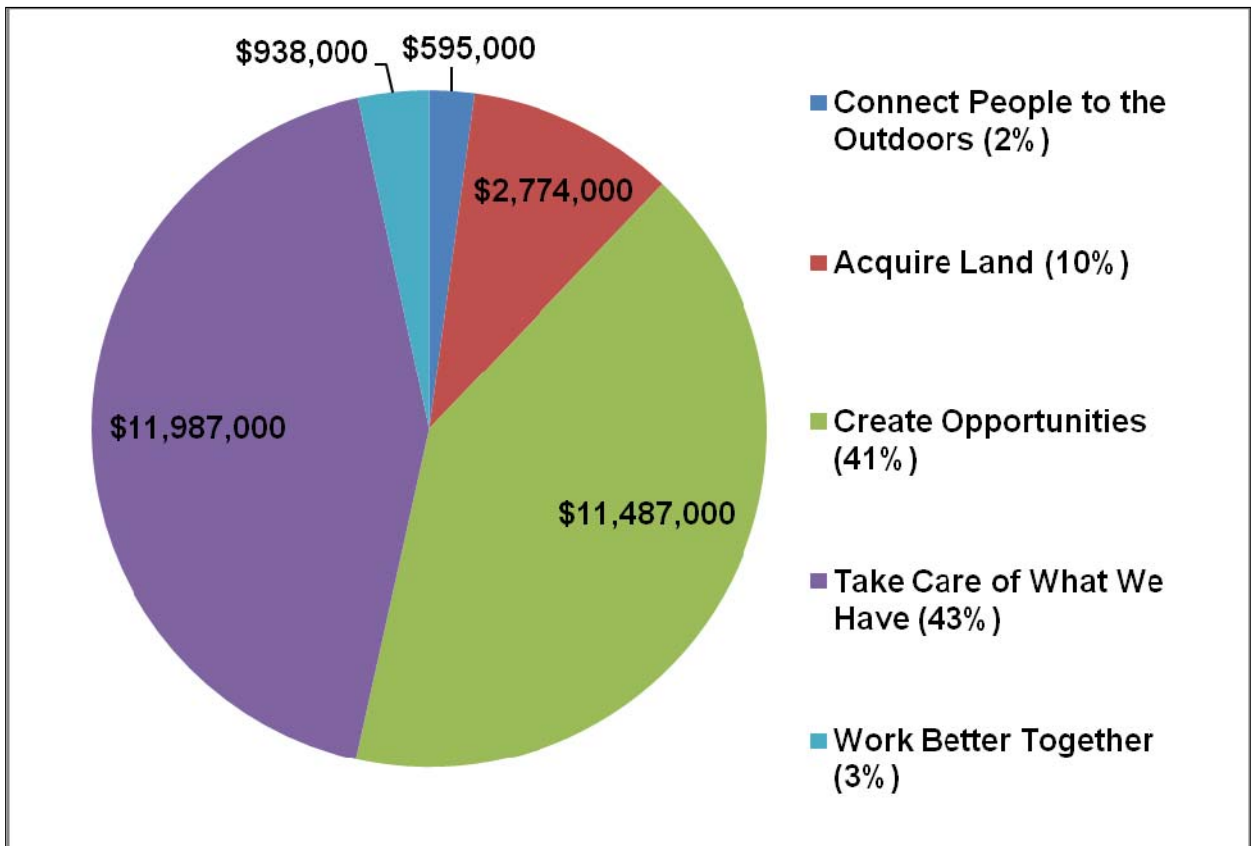
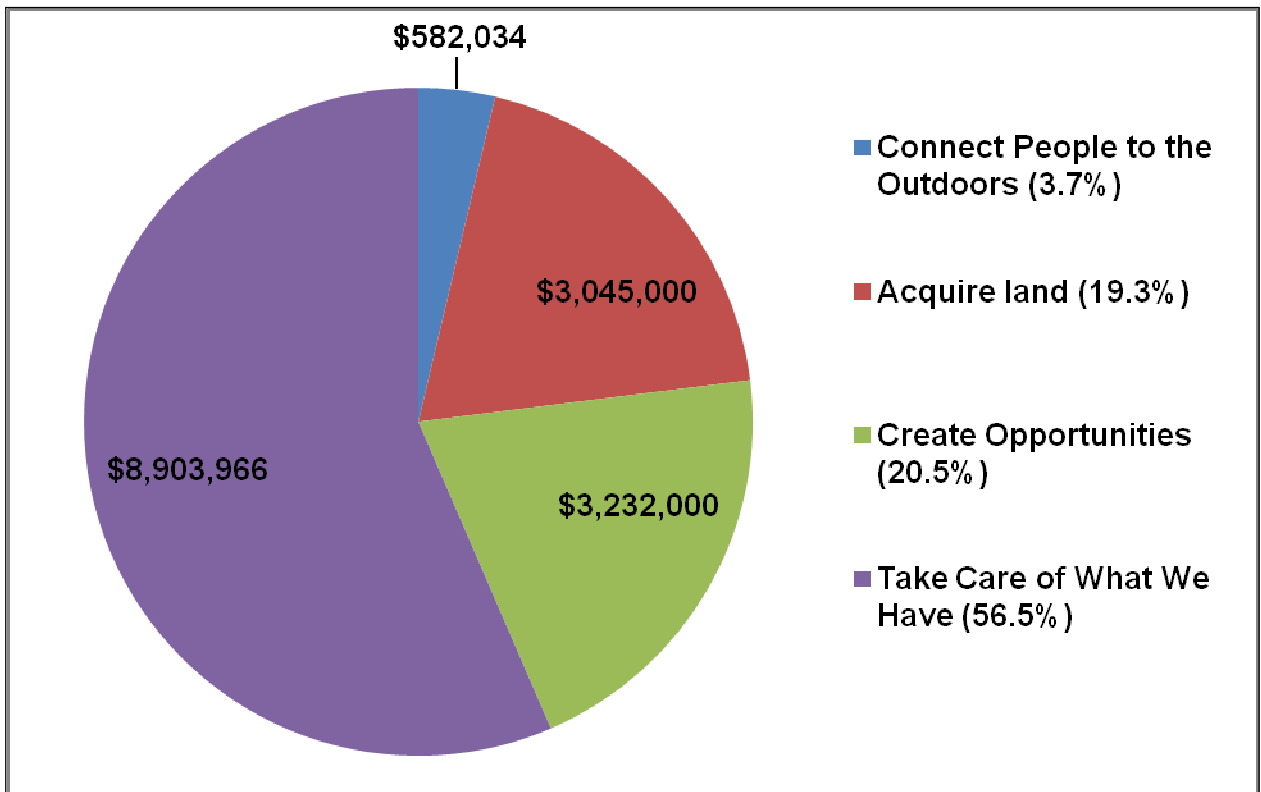


Chart 4 illustrates how the FY 2012 appropriation will be expended consistent with these strategic directions.

Chart 4: Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriation Expenditures on Parks and Trails Legacy Plan Strategic Directions (\$15,763,000)



Expenditure Status of Appropriations

Chart 5 illustrates the amount of funds from the FY 2010 appropriation that have been disbursed as of March 1, 2012; the amount not spent by June 30, 2011—the appropriation's expiration that was returned to the Fund's corpus; and what part of the appropriation that is carried-over beyond June 30, 2011 because it is matching a federal grant. The chart shows that about 87.5% (\$11,062,347) of the appropriation has been disbursed for completed projects. Only 0.09% (\$11,675) was returned to the corpus because two projects were completed for less than their granted amount and there was insufficient time to amend the scope of these grants to finance additional work. About 12.5% (\$1,581,607) remains to be disbursed because these grants are matching Federal funds for projects which have expiration dates beyond June 30, 2011.

Chart 5: Expenditure Status of Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriation (\$12,641,000)

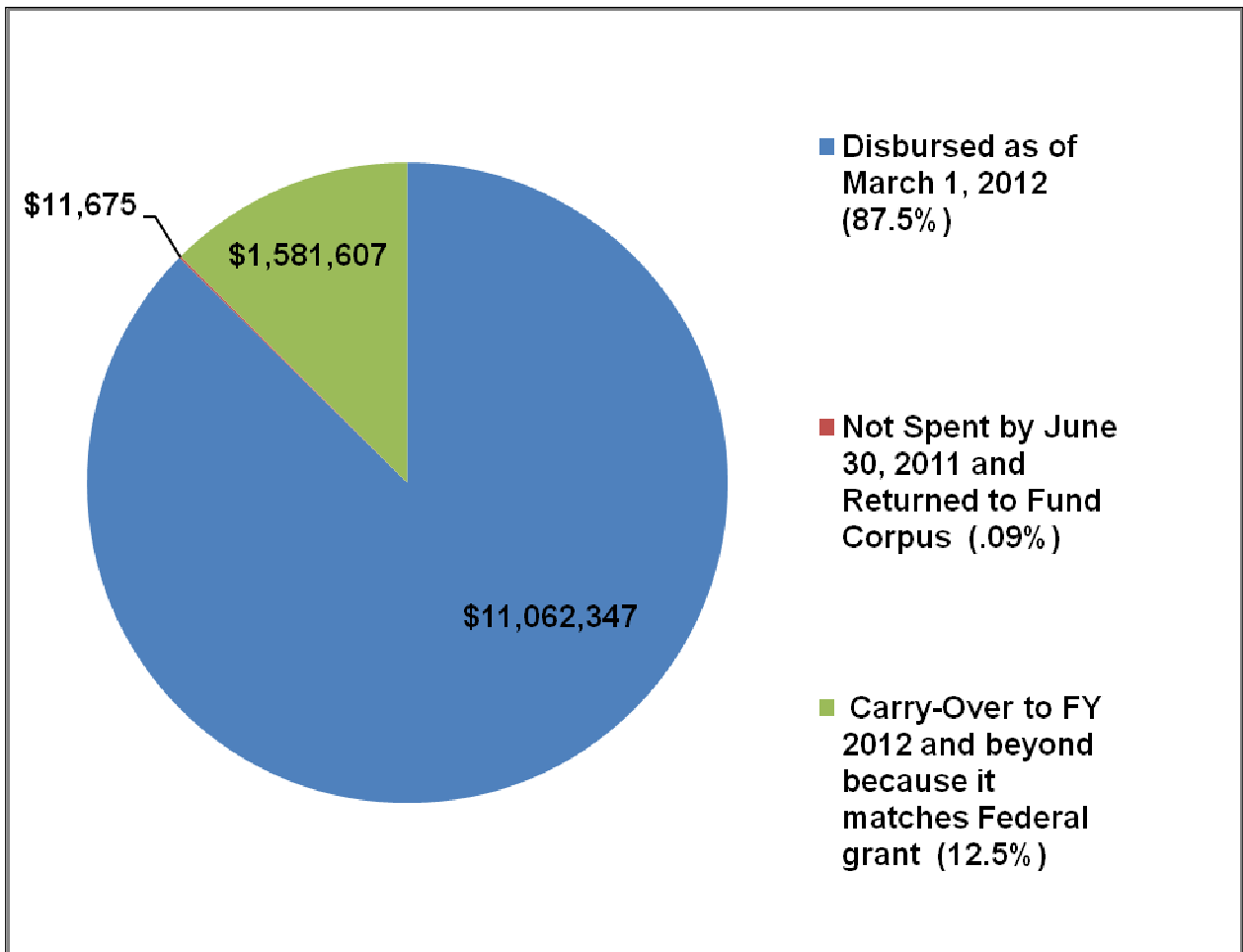


Chart 6 illustrates the amount of funds from the FY 2011 appropriation that have been disbursed as of March 1, 2012; what remains to be spent from that appropriation by its expiration date of June 30, 2012; and what part of part of the appropriation may carry-over into a future fiscal year because it is matching a federal grant, which has a later expiration date. The chart shows that about 62% (\$9,390,323) of the appropriation has been disbursed as of March 1, 2012. About 33% (\$5,062,977) remains to be disbursed by June 30, 2012 – the expiration date of the FY 2011 appropriation for projects that are not being partially funded with Federal grants. About 5% (\$686,700) are matching Federal grants for projects which have expiration dates beyond June 30, 2012.

Chart 6: Expenditure Status of Fiscal Year 2011 Appropriation (\$15,140,000)

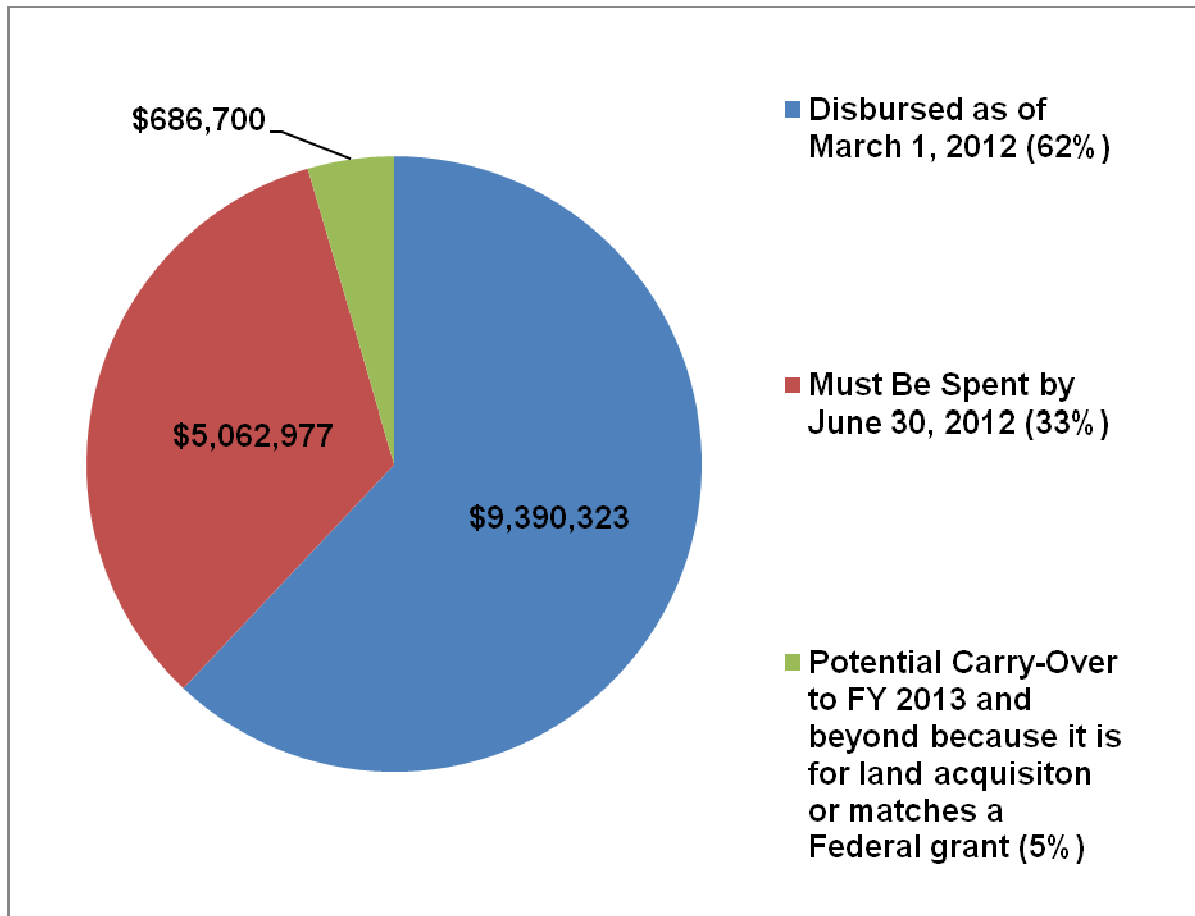
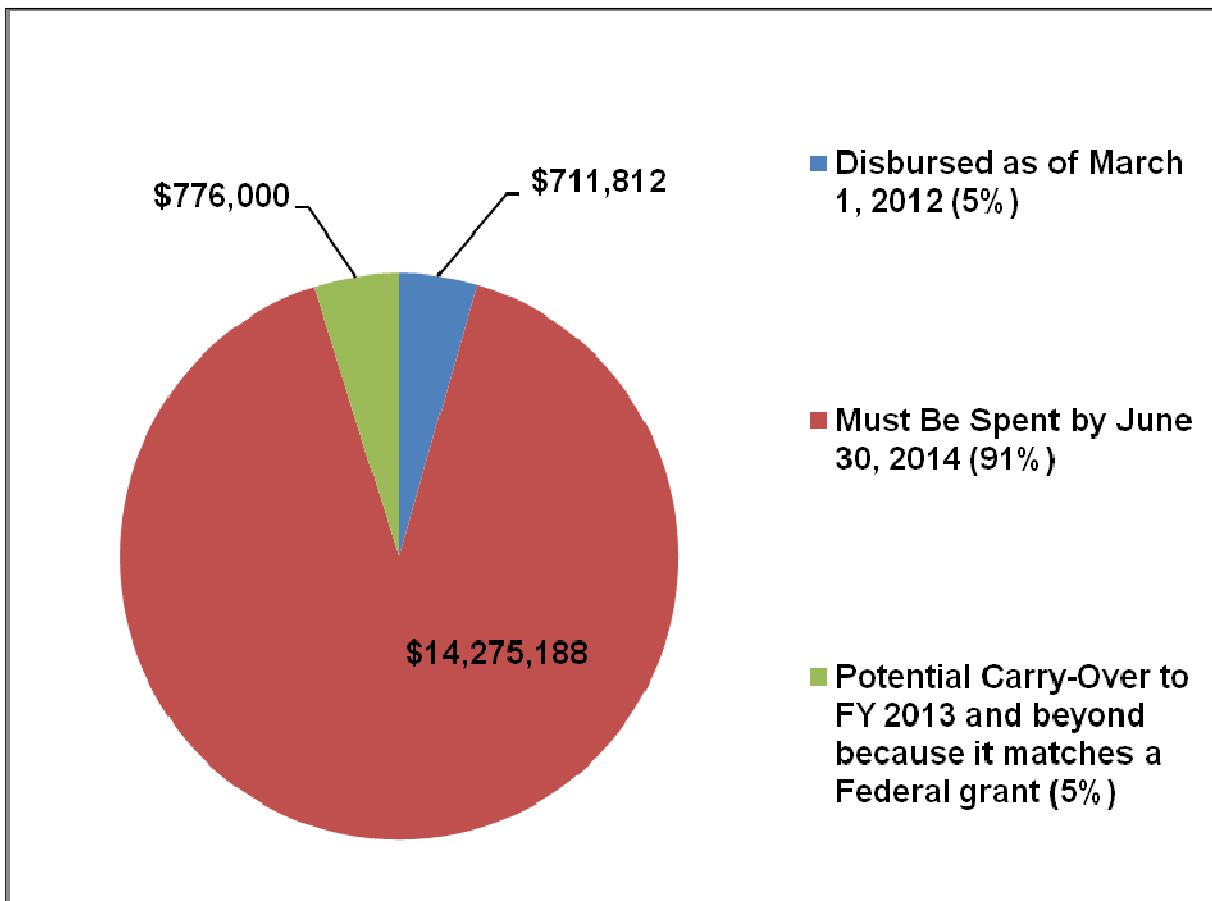


Chart 7 illustrates the amount of funds from the FY 2012 appropriation that has been disbursed as of March 1, 2012; what remains to be spent from that appropriation by its expiration date of June 30, 2014; and what part of the appropriation may carry-over beyond June 30, 2014 because it is matching a federal grant which has a later expiration date. The chart shows that about 5% (\$711,812) of the appropriation has been disbursed as of March 1, 2012. About 91% (\$14,275,188) remains to be disbursed by June 30, 2014 –the expiration date of the FY 2012 appropriation for projects that are not being partially funded with Federal grants. About 5% (\$776,000) are matching Federal grants for projects which have expiration dates beyond June 30, 2014.

Chart 7: Expenditure Status of Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriation (\$15,763,000)



Where Appropriation Was Invested for Non-Land Acquisition Projects

Figure 1 illustrates the location of FY 2010 Parks and Trails Fund financed projects other than land acquisitions for the Metropolitan Regional Park System

Figure 1

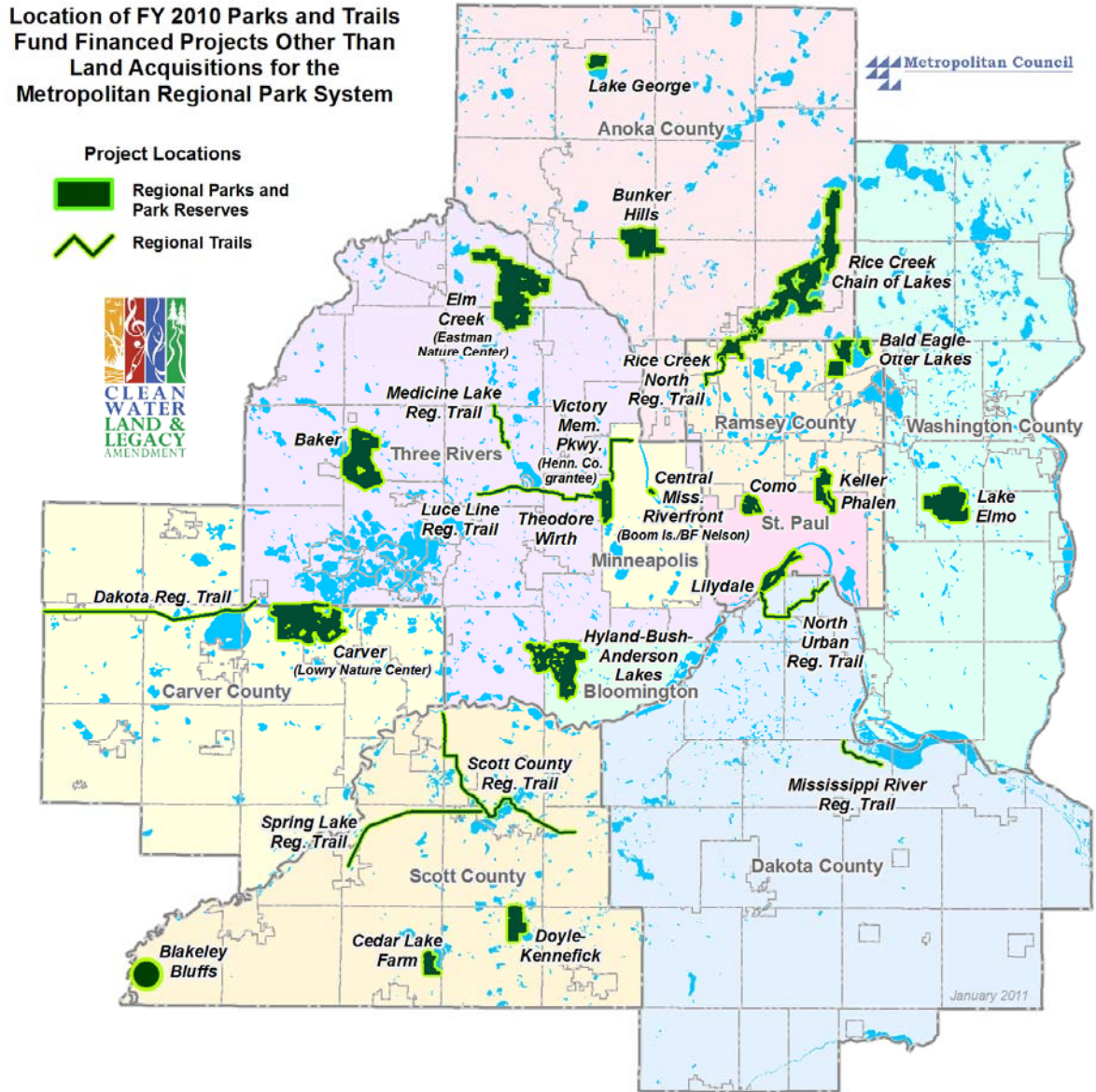


Figure 2 illustrates the location of FY 2011 Parks and Trails Fund financed projects other than land acquisitions for the Metropolitan Regional Park System.

Figure 2

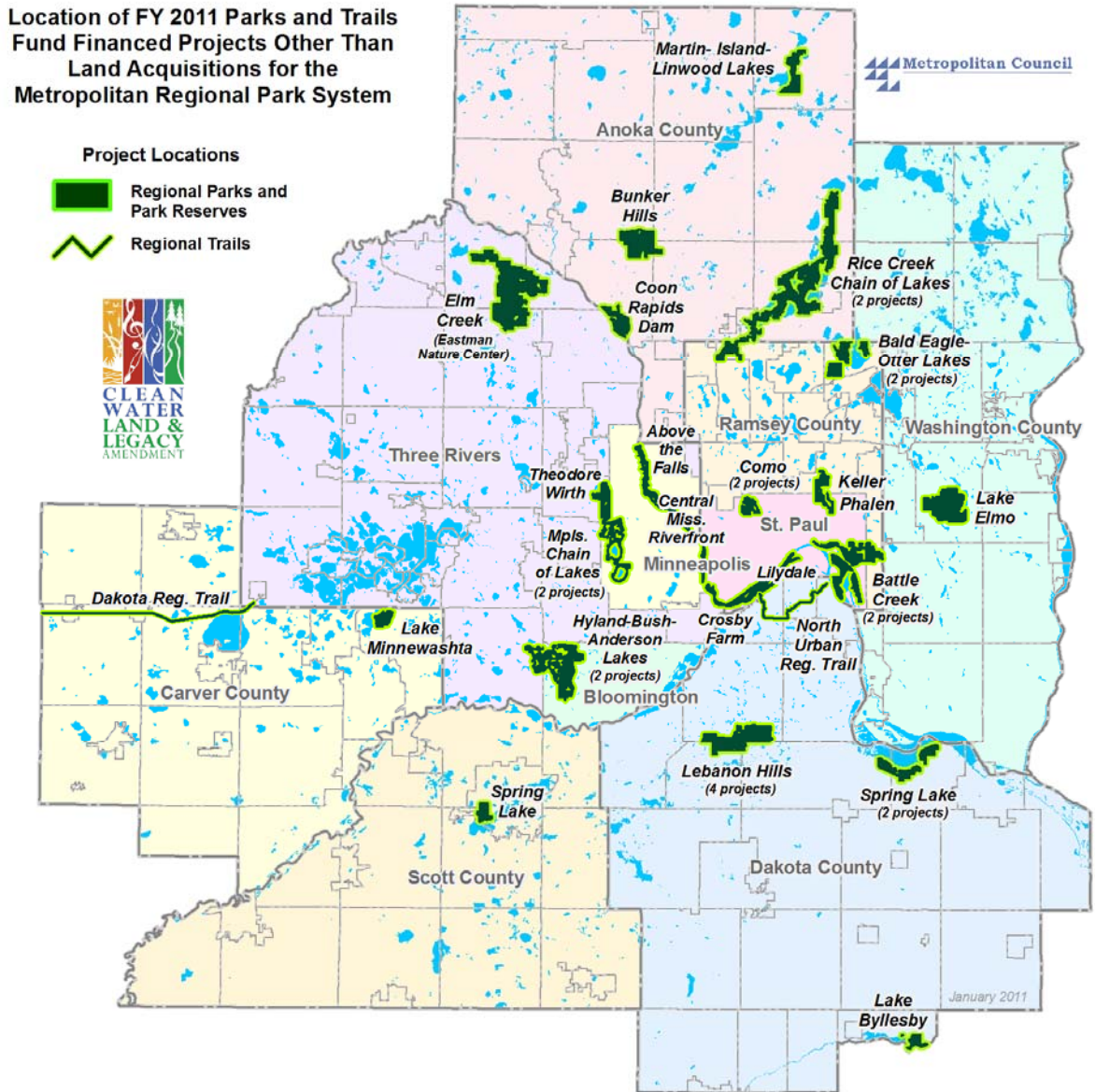
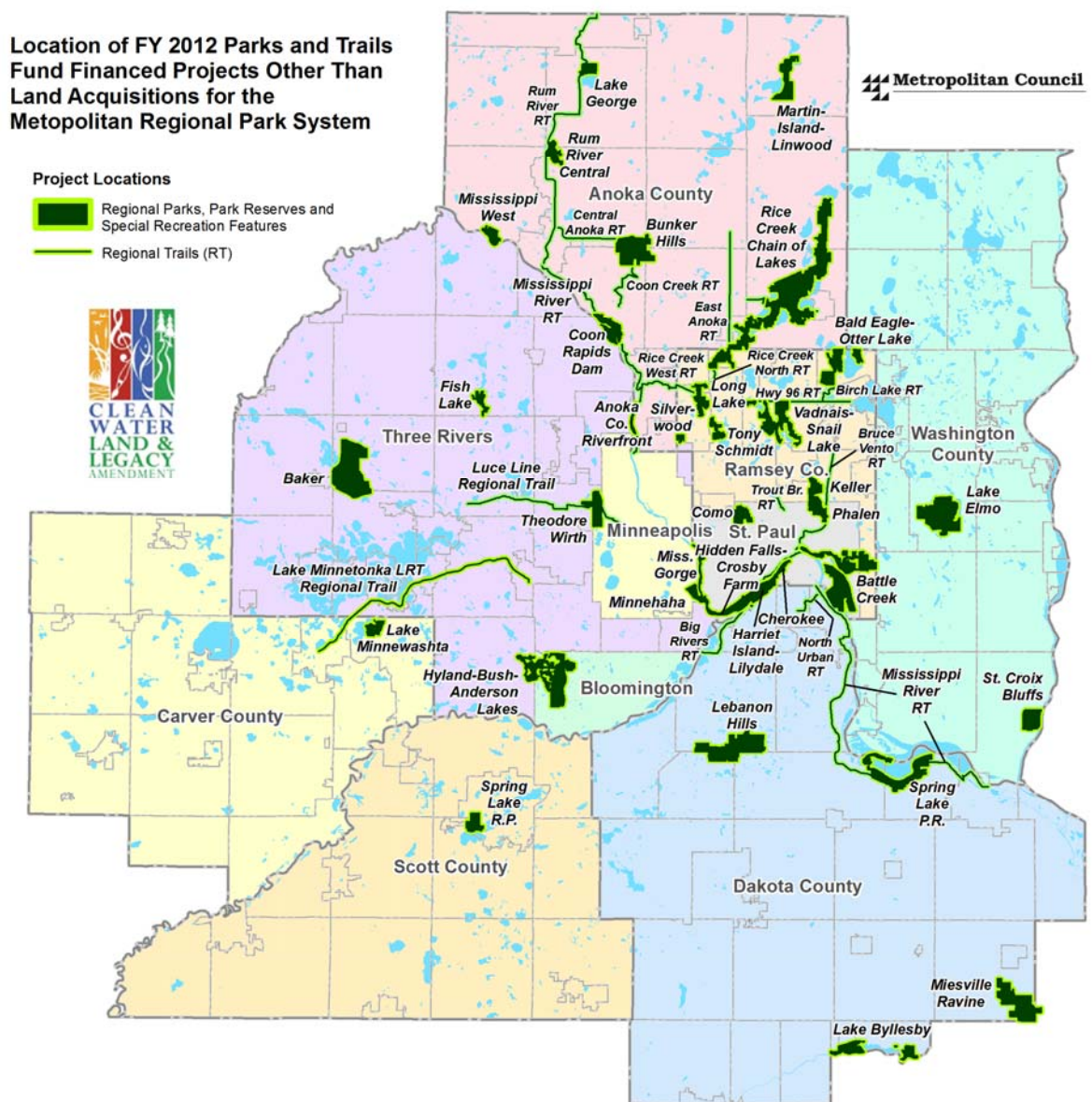


Figure 3 illustrates the location of FY 2012 Parks and Trails Fund financed projects other than land acquisitions for the Metropolitan Regional Park System.

Figure 3

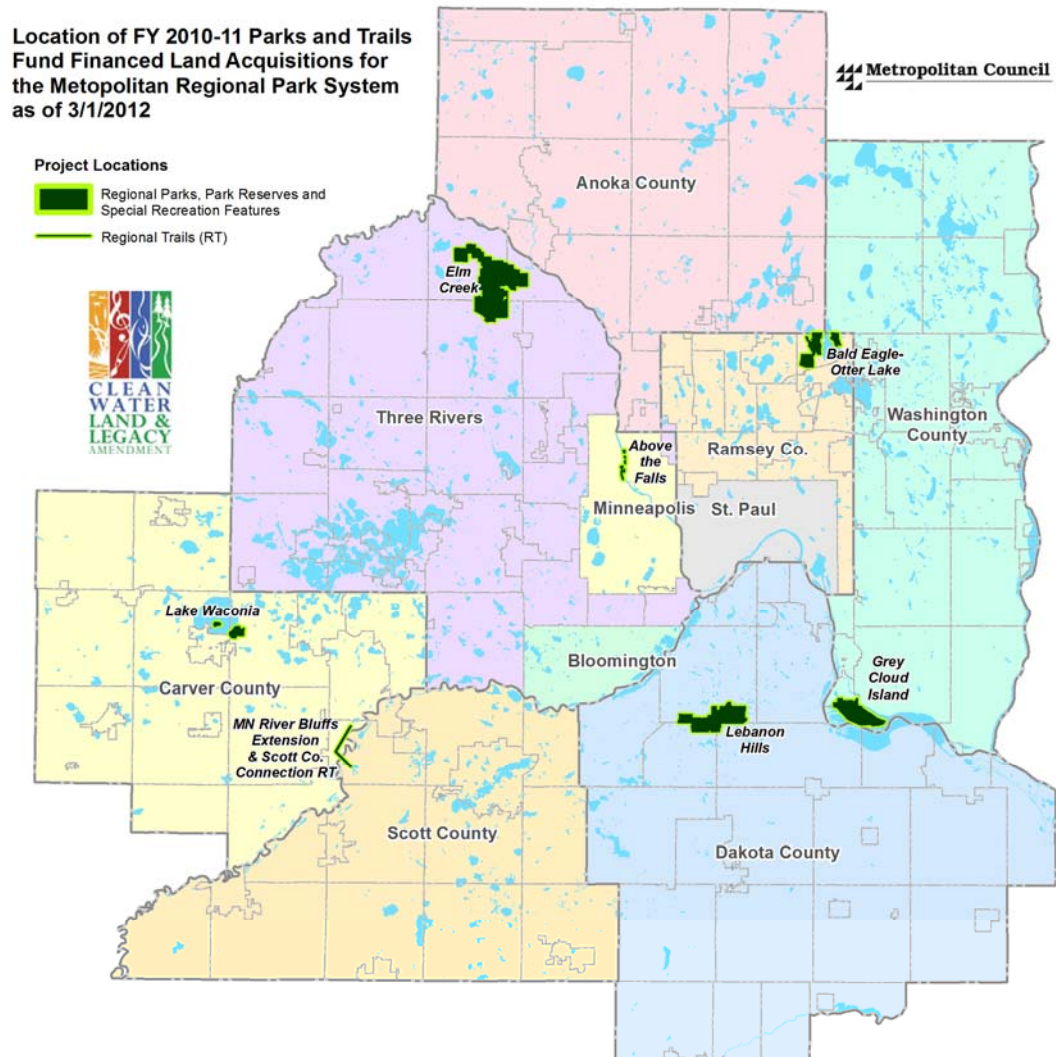


Park Acquisition Opportunity Grants

In accordance with the provisions of MN Statute 85.53, Subd. 3, 10% of the FY 2010 appropriation (\$1,261,000) and the FY 2011 appropriation (\$1,513,000) was set aside for grants to regional park implementing agencies for land acquisition within Metropolitan Council approved regional park and trail master plan boundaries. The grant program calls for State funds to finance 45% of acquisition costs, Metropolitan Council bonds to finance 30% and the acquiring park agency to finance 25% of costs. The maximum amount a park agency can receive in grant funds from the program is \$1.7 million in a State fiscal year (July to June).

Grants are considered when park agencies submit sufficient documentation on the proposed acquisition and related costs as required by the Metropolitan Council. As of March 1, 2012, 94 acres has been acquired. Figure 4 illustrates the location of parks and trails where land has been acquired. All of the FY 2010 appropriation and all but \$8,161 of the FY 2011 appropriation was granted as of March 1, 2012. \$651,272 of the FY 2011 appropriation remains to be disbursed for two grants pending submittal of appropriate documentation by the grant recipients. No park acquisition opportunity grants have been awarded yet from the FY 2012 appropriation (\$1,576,000).

Figure 4



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