

COUNCIL GROVE CITY LAKE PARK

Master Plan 2006



Council Grove Lake Association

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Acknowledgements

The following people provided their assistance in the development of this plan:

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Council Grove City Lake Park

Council Grove City Lake Park is the smaller of Council Grove's twin lakes and is located 3.5 miles northwest of Council Grove, Kansas. This 434 acre multi-use lake is surrounded by 348 waterfront cabins and homes. The Council Grove City Lake Park also includes five public park areas, boat ramps and city-owned common areas. This community is home to both permanent and weekend residents who enjoy water sports, fishing, wildlife and beautiful scenic views.

The lake itself was originally built in 1942 by the City of Council Grove as its primary water source. Soon after its construction, however, locals began leasing resident lots from the city and constructing waterfront cabins for recreational use. Decades later, The City Lake Park is being transformed once again. Today, beautiful year-round lake homes are slowly being added to the lakefront landscape.

Council Grove Lake Association

The Council Grove Lake Association is a volunteer organization of lake residents who promote, advise and recommend policies that affect the Council Grove City Lake Park. The Association serves as an advisory board to the city council and helps guide ordinances, policies and set priorities for lake area improvements. The Council Grove Lake Association is the primary sponsor of the Master Plan.



Purpose of the Master Plan



It is the belief of the Lake Association that an improved City Lake Park will spur additional economic development as well as improve the quality of life for lake residents.

The purpose of this Master Plan is to serve as a guide for future lake area improvements. This plan is not a detailed construction document, but rather, a set of priorities that establish a general direction for the future. It calls for both short-term and immediate improvements as well as action that will position the City Lake Park for more long-term and comprehensive improvements.

More than anything else, this Master Plan encourages the development of a new “public/private partnership” where private sector activity is matched by increased public investment. Together, these resources can be used to make substantial improvements to the City Lake Park. It is the belief of the Lake Association that an improved City Lake Park will spur additional economic development as well as improve the quality of life for lake residents.

The plan is divided into five key strategic issue areas. Each has been identified by the Association membership as an area needing improvement. Action steps, strategies and a timeline provide additional detail for each initiative. Short-term timeframe refers to improvements in years one and two; intermediate-term, refers to improvements over years three-five; and long-term, five-ten years. The strategic issues include:

- Governance, Financial Stability and Development Policy
- Infrastructure
- Beautifications and Park Area Improvements
- Water Quality, Environmental Issues and Water Level
- Recreation, Public Safety and Fishery Management

Finally, this Master Plan is a “work in progress.” An effective planning document is never done. Planning, change and improvement are a process without a finish line. Seeking improvement is more of a state of mind than ideas on paper. Further, it is our hope that this plan will encourage a new spirit of cooperation between lake residents and the City of Council Grove.

Master Plan Process

This planning process was conducted from September 2005 to February 2006 and has involved more than 40 volunteers from the Lake Association and the community of Council Grove. The planning process has included three community-wide forums and a comprehensive survey administered to all lake residents. The process included an orientation meeting, vision statement development, identification of key strategic issues, topic research and analysis, and task force development of action steps and strategies.

The entire planning phase has been conducted in an open process where all interested parties have been encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas. In addition, the Lake Association newsletter and website have been used to keep the membership updated on all the latest developments and collaborative efforts.

The plan further recommends that each year the Lake Association review this document and update as needed. The executive committee should replace accomplished initiatives with new proposals and revise others with new strategies.

Vision Statement

It is the ultimate goal of the Lake Association to insure that the Council Grove City Lake Park becomes a quality lakefront living community. This will include both a multi-use lake for recreation and a friendly residential living environment with its blend of historic fishing cabins and modern lake homes. The Council Grove City Lake Park will provide the surrounding region with substantial economic activity and provide its residents with a quality of life unmatched anywhere else in Kansas. Above all, this lakefront community lifestyle will be a place where families congregate and memories are created.





Working together, this public/private partnership can provide an environment where new permanent and weekend residents will bring even greater economic activity to the entire region.

City Lake Park and Economic Development

The economic impact of lake residents on Council Grove and Morris County over the last several decades has been substantial. Currently there are 50 permanent families located at the lake and roughly another 200 cabins/families who regularly visit on weekends. In fact, on summer weekends the population of the City Lake Park swells to between 750-1,000, making the City Lake Park the second largest community in Morris County. These “weekenders” come from all corners of our state, as well as the surrounding states of Nebraska, Missouri, and Iowa. Both weekenders and permanent residents spend many dollars in Morris County. They buy building materials, automobiles, fuel, insurance, groceries, clothing and banking services here. When the economic multiplier is considered, lake residents provide millions of dollars to the local economy.

The Council Grove City Lake Park is also experiencing a home construction boom. In 2004 and 2005 alone, 14 new homes have been (or are in the process of being) constructed. Clearly, the City Lake Park is evolving from the 1940’s and 1950’s seasonal fishing cabins to modern lake homes. This “re-development” of the City Lake Park will likely encourage more permanent residents and regular weekenders. Recent survey data showed that 60 weekend home owners are considering moving to the lake permanently to retire or bring their work and careers with them (thanks to the internet).

The Lake Association is calling for a new public/private partnership to help guide and encourage this re-development. The private sector is moving in the right direction, however, the Association believes it’s time for public investment. To create and enhance the economic potential of the City Lake Park, public improvements are needed. This Master Plan calls for the public to invest in one of Morris County’s largest industries. Working together, this public/private partnership can provide an environment where new permanent and weekend residents will bring even greater economic activity to the entire region.

City Lake Park and the Quality of Life



More important than the economic activity, lake residents choose to live and visit the City Lake Park for its lake lifestyle and atmosphere. The Council Grove City Lake provides residents with a unique waterfront living rarely found in Kansas. All cabins and lake homes have direct access to the water, where the lake provides residents with numerous water sports, fishing, and related hobbies and activities.

The City Lake Park community is a place where families and extended families come together. It is a place where different generations learn and interact with one another and where memories are created. The City Lake Park has a sense of place, a sense of community.



Implementation of the Master Plan

By itself, the Master Plan means very little unless the Association membership acts to carry out and implement the ideas.

This Master Plan provides the Lake Association with a general outline and a set of priorities for improvements. By itself, the Master Plan means very little unless the Association membership acts to carry out and implement the ideas. Almost every initiative listed in this plan has been discussed, debated and even proposed over the last several decades. Where things stall is at the implementation stage. Most of the plans suggested are not new issues. Therefore, implementation efforts and strategies are what will make this planning process successful. The following items are recommendations as the Lake Association moves forward:

- The Lake Association must move from the general proposals listed in this Master Plan to more detailed working documents on the various initiatives. This plan, therefore, should encourage another dozen plans.
- Lake Association members will need to step forward and volunteer their time and efforts to implement the plan. It will take a small committee or at least one person to “champion the cause” for a particular issue.
- At various times over the next several years, a larger group of Association members will need to be mobilized for action. The lake residents will be called on to vote, lobby and provide direct action when needed.
- For many of the initiatives to become reality, federal and state grant dollars are going to be needed to offset local investment. The Lake Association, City and County should begin laying the ground work for such grant proposals.
- To be successful, all involved partners will need to work together and collaborate. The Association leadership, membership, City of Council Grove, City Council, Morris County Commissioners, and the various state agencies will need to work together to benefit the entire region.
- Finally, those who implement this plan will need to look for creative solutions to many of the complex problems facing the City Lake Park. It may take unconventional approaches to address some of these issues.

1. Governance, Financial Stability and Development Policy	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>1a. <u>Lake Residents Purchase the Council Grove City Lake Park</u> This plan recommends that the Lake Association (or a newly formed group-possibly the Governance Task Force) negotiate the purchase of the city-owned real estate around the lake. Once the transaction is completed, each homeowner will be encouraged to purchase their own residential lot. This process would guarantee long-term financial stability and encourage further private sector investment. <i>Strategy:</i> A City Lake Association Task Force should be formed and, with the help of legal counsel, negotiate this transaction. A majority of council members and Lake Association members would then need to ratify the agreement.</p>	short-term
<p>1b. <u>Establish an “Improvement District” for Self-Governance</u> This plan recommends that the Lake Association and lake residents establish an Improvement District to serve as the legal governing structure for the City Lake Park. Created under Kansas Statute 19-2753, the elected board of the Improvement District will govern and provide all basic services for lake residents. The Improvement District will establish resolutions (ordinances), serve as enforcement agency, provide all lake area maintenance, and levy taxes for improvements. This action removes the City of Council Grove from most of its responsibilities at the City Lake Park. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the Morris County Commission to submit an application to the state for the establishment of the City Lake Park Improvement District. Once developed, elections will be held to fill the Board of Directors positions.</p>	short-term
<p>1c. <u>Establish/Verify Lot Boundaries</u> This plan recommends that a professional real estate surveyor establish all boundaries between lots at the City Lake Park. This should include setting pins (when necessary) and a legal description for each lot leased from the City. This action will need to be completed before negotiations for the purchase of the lakefront property can take place. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the City of Council Grove to contract with a surveyor and complete this action step as soon as possible. When needed, a mediator may be utilized to resolve disputed boundaries.</p>	short-term

1. Governance, Financial Stability and Development Policy	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>1d. <u>Neighborhood Revitalization Program</u> To further encourage private sector economic activity and investments, this plan recommends that the Improvement District adopt a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. For any remodeling or new construction that results in a \$10,000 or more increase in the appraised value, the resulting tax increase is rebated and then pro-rated for 5 years. It further recommends that other similar incentives be investigated as well. <i>Strategy:</i> Either the City of Council Grove or Morris County can submit this proposal to the state on behalf of the City Lake Park and the Improvement District.</p>	short-term
<p>1e. <u>Economic Impact Study</u> This plan recommends that the Lake Association and the City of Council Grove have an economic impact study conducted detailing the economic activity and contributions the lake residents have on Council Grove and Morris County. This data will be extremely important to the Lake Association and the City as they pursue state and federal grant dollars for the City Lake Park Improvements. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the Lake Association, City of Council Grove, Morris County, and Morris County Economic Development Corporation to join together and contract with a rural economic development consulting firm for the study in 2006.</p>	short-term
<p>1f. <u>Development Policy</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District establish a residential development policy for the City Lake Park. This policy should restrict residential home construction to 348 homes on the current surveyed leased lots. Because of the lake size (434 acres of surface water) and the current water and sewer condition, this policy should prohibit “2nd tier” lots and homes and buildings on lakefront public park areas at this time. Thus, the development policy is calling for the “re-development” of the current residential areas around the lake. This policy should encourage the private sector to continue their investment in current cabins and leased lots while the public sector seeks to improve the public infrastructure.</p>	short-term

1. Governance, Financial Stability and Development Policy	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>1g. <u>Improvement District Establish Resolutions and Enforcement Practices and Policies</u> This plan recommends that all city ordinances (that relate to the City Lake) and City Lake rules and regulations be reviewed and be replaced by Improvement District resolutions. Many of the current ordinances and rules were established many years ago and likely will need some changes. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the Board of Directors of the Improvement District to review the city ordinances and lake rules (with feedback from the lake residents) and submit resolutions shortly after the establishment of the Improvement District.</p>	<p>short-term</p>

2. Infrastructure	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>2a. <u>Hard Surface for County Roads</u> This plan recommends that the three county roads (1200 Rd., 1300 Rd., and U Rd.) be asphalted. These high traffic county roads are important arterials to the City Lake Park. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan recommends that the Improvement District formally request the Morris County Commissioners to include these three roads in the county’s capital road construction plans. Grant dollars from the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas Department of Transportation may be possible funding sources.</p>	<p>short-term to intermediate-term</p>
<p>2b. <u>Hard Surface for City Lake Park Roads</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District develop a comprehensive plan to asphalt all interior City Lake Park roads. Priority should be given to the most heavily traveled roads first. In the interim, dust reduction products and methods should be researched and applied if feasible. <i>Strategy:</i> The Improvement District should contract a feasibility study for City Lake Park road improvements. This should include researching grant dollars and how Improvement District tax funds can be leveraged.</p>	<p>long-term</p>
<p>2c. <u>Development of a City Lake Park Sewer System</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District develop a comprehensive plan to add a sewer system to the City Lake Park. It further suggests that alternative or unconventional methods and other new creative solutions to sewer treatment be researched. <i>Strategy:</i> Using the 2002 feasibility study as a starting point, this plan recommends that the Improvement District begin the process of researching both sewer systems as well as possible funding sources.</p>	<p>intermediate-term</p>

2. Infrastructure	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>2d. <u>Development of a Water District System</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District develop a comprehensive plan for a water system at the City Lake Park. Using the 2002 feasibility study as a general guide, a water distribution system should be constructed consisting of twelve inch and eight inch water lines with a ten foot by 100 foot standpipe. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan recommends that the Improvement District investigate the various options of implementing a comprehensive water distribution system for the City Lake Park.</p>	<p>long-term</p>
<p>2e. <u>Engineering Study for the Dam</u> This plan recommends that the City of Council Grove have an engineering study conducted on the structural integrity of the city lake dam. The dam is nearly 70 years old and the Lake Association suggests a proactive approach to addressing any potential problems or related issues before they may become serious.</p>	<p>long-term</p>

3. Beautification and Park Area Improvements	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>3a. <u>Mowing and Weed Control</u> This plan recommends that City Lake Park residents and the Improvement District be responsible for mowing the grass and controlling weeds in City Lake Park. First, lake residents shall be responsible for regularly mowing the grass and controlling weeds on their own property and septic system areas. Second, during the growing season the Improvement District shall be responsible for mowing and weed control in all public park areas, interior common areas and along all roadways. Third, the Improvement District shall embark on a program of noxious and obnoxious weed control. <i>Strategy:</i> Division of responsibility between individual residents and the Improvement District along with height/frequency requirements shall be included in Improvement District Resolutions and Rules and Regulations.</p>	<p>short-term</p>
<p>3b. <u>Trash Receptacles and Related Issues</u> In lieu of placing trash receptacles in City Lake Park public areas, those using such areas should be encouraged to properly dispose of trash individually by taking it with them when they leave. This plan further recommends that a permanent Green-Thumb and Beautification committee of City Lake Park residents be established whose members would periodically control litter within and on roadways adjacent to City Lake Park. In addition, this group, in conjunction with the Improvement District, would sponsor an annual "Spring Cleanup Week" where City Lake Park residents would be encouraged to divest their lots of any and all refuse (such as brush, scrap iron, tires, old boats, trailers, building materials, etc.). <i>Strategy:</i> Establishment of the City Lake Park Green-Thumb and Beautification committee and their duties and responsibilities. These shall be included in the Improvement District Resolutions and Rules and Regulations.</p>	<p>short-term</p>

3. Beautification and Park Area Improvements	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>3c. <u>Signage</u> This plan recommends that the City Lake Park adopt a comprehensive signage program. This includes uniform address signs for each residency (two signs-one that can be viewed from the lake and the other from the frontage road); consistent maintenance of sectional signs; purchase and install two new City Lake Park identification signs on US Hwy 56 at the intersections of 1200 and 1300 roads; and improve and enhance the four City Lake Park entrance signs with new paint and landscaping. <i>Strategy:</i> Signage requirements and regulations shall be included in the Improvement Districts Resolutions and Rules and Regulations.</p>	<p>short-term</p>
<p>3d. <u>Public Parks</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District leadership study the public park issue and make decisions about which parks should be improved and updated and which ones should be returned to general common areas or made available for development. It is further recommended that at least one or two public parks remain and be equipped with public restrooms, a fish cleaning station, modern picnic facilities, and a public swimming area. <i>Strategy:</i> The Improvement District, working with an ad hoc committee of interested residents, should propose a comprehensive program to improve the city lake public park areas. Kansas State University’s park and landscaping architectural program may be a source of expertise and should be consulted.</p>	<p>short-term to intermediate-term</p>
<p>3e. <u>Boat Ramps and Public Docks</u> This plan recommends that the two public boat ramps (near Section A) be repaired as soon as possible. Next, new floating public boat docks should be purchased to replace the existing and unsafe dock and boathouse near the north boat ramp. <i>Strategy:</i> Various grant options for improvements should be researched by the Improvement District and should be included in the public park overall improvement program.</p>	<p>short-term</p>

3. Beautification and Park Area Improvements	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>3f. <u>Marina on Lake</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District negotiate a contract with the marina at the Council Grove Federal Reservoir to add marina services on City Lake Park property. Possibly using the Section A public park as a location, the marina could start by providing basic services and expand when/if financially feasible. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the lake residents and the marina to work together to begin the process of providing fuel, and related services this summer at the City Lake Park.</p>	short-term
<p>3g. <u>Boat, Trailer and RV Storage</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District establish a common boat, trailer and RV storage/parking area for City Lake Park residents. A year-round secure parking area (possibly the area directly east of the Section A park) would provide residents a voluntary storage location. <i>Strategy:</i> The Improvement District should provide resources necessary for fencing, lighting, and maintenance of the storage/parking area.</p>	intermediate-term

4. Water Quality, Environmental Issues and Water Level	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>4a. <u>City of Council Grove Should Seek Alternative Water Sources</u> To help maintain the water level at the city lake, this plan recommends that the City of Council Grove obtain its primary water source from the federal reservoir. In addition to the 160 million gallons per year draw-down of the city lake, the City’s new water purification equipment would be better suited for the reservoir water. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the City of Council Grove to begin the process of constructing a pipeline from the federal reservoir to the city water treatment plant. It is further recommended that the city lake remain as a secondary/back-up water source for the city.</p>	<p>short-term to intermediate-term</p>
<p>4b. <u>Precautions Against Harmful Chemicals</u> This plan recommends that the lake residents, the Improvement District, City of Council Grove, Morris County and area farmers and ranchers restrict chemical applications that are not compatible with the Clean Water Act. First, this plan endorses the continued requirement that persons applying chemicals to lawns have proper training and use only approved products. Second, this plan discourages any wide-spread use of chemical spraying anywhere in the drainage watershed. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the continuation of chemical classes as well as publicizing a list of chemicals which have the greatest threat to water quality. Additionally, the Improvement District and Morris County should create strict resolutions and county ordinances to control dangerous wide-spread chemical use.</p>	<p>short-term</p>
<p>4c. <u>Residential Environmental Issues</u> This plan recommends that lake residents should be stewards of their own property. This means residents should avoid disposing of leaves, fish waste, grass clippings and other unwanted substances in the lake. Residents should also properly dispose of old batteries, gasoline, paint, etc. at the Morris County landfill. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan encourages the Improvement District to develop environmental-related resolutions and enforcement practices for the City Lake Park.</p>	<p>short-term</p>

4. Water Quality, Environmental Issues and Water Level	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>4d. <u>City Lake Park Environmental Study</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District and Morris County hire a qualified environmental biologist to study the entire lake and drainage watershed. A comprehensive study could provide lake residents and surrounding landowners with a list of “best practices” that, if adopted, would help stabilize the water level and maintain water quality. <i>Strategy:</i> The Improvement District should contact the appropriate state and federal agencies to assist with this issue.</p>	intermediate-term
<p>4e. <u>Wildfowl Control</u> This plan recommends action to control the resident Canada Goose population at the lake. This population is increasing and causes fouling of docks, boat ramps and lawns. Leaseholders should not feed these geese or provide breeding habitat for them. The lake is increasingly becoming a refuge in the winter for large numbers of waterfowl, especially geese. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan recommends further study in conjunction with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to evaluate the water quality problem and what control measures, if any, are needed.</p>	short-term
<p>4f. <u>Zebra Mussels Control</u> Zebra mussels are a serious threat to lakes in Kansas and have already been found in El Dorado lake. This plan strongly recommends that the City Lake Park residents avoid fishing or boating in El Dorado lake. If they do so, boots, boats, minnow buckets, tools and anything that has touched the water of that lake should be washed in hot water, with a chlorine or salt solution, and away from boat ramps, and all bilge and live wells pumped out.</p>	short-term

5. Recreation, Public Safety and Fishery Management	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>5a. <u>Water Safety – Rules, Regulations, and Enforcement</u> This plan recommends that the Improvement District review, update and endorse the current safety-related rules and regulations in the City Ordinances. Concurrently, enforcement practices should also be reviewed and new approaches implemented if warranted. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan calls on the Improvement District to work closely with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to research more effective boat safety regulations. The plan also encourages increased lake patrol and enforcement of safety rules (especially during summer weekends).</p>	<p>short-term</p>
<p>5b. <u>Water Safety – Public Education</u> This plan recommends an active water and boating safety education program for lake residents. In addition to regularly enforcing state boating laws, the lake residents should endorse a program that trains new boaters (both children and adults) in safe practices. Lake residents should be reminded that they are primarily responsible for making certain that their children and visitors are of legal age to operate watercraft and have completed required state water safety instruction. This plan further recommends that safety-related rules and regulations be published frequently. <i>Strategy:</i> First, have the Department of Wildlife and Parks provide yearly “on the water” safety instruction at the city lake. Second, water safety regulations should be mailed to lake residents on a yearly basis. Third, this plan recommends that a “black box” warning section be published in the Lake Association newsletter and on the website listing the latest infractions cited at the city lake.</p>	<p>short-term</p>

5. Recreation, Public Safety and Fishery Management	
<i>Action Steps and Strategies</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
<p>5c. <u>Study the High-Speed Boat Area</u> Currently the best estimate is that there are between 450 and 600 resident and non-resident boats registered at the lake, and approximately 100 jet skis. It is believed that weekend boating may pose a safety issue due to increasing numbers of boaters. A study is needed to determine “best use” policies to promote safety. It is agreed that the City of Council Grove and the Lake Association should be proactive in this area and not wait until a severe or fatal accident occurs. A majority of Task Force members opposed enlarging the high-speed boating area of the lake for safety reasons at this time. <i>Strategy:</i> The lake residents should enlist the Department of Wildlife and Parks Safety Division to conduct a comprehensive study on the water and boating density and determine the best wake area for the city lake.</p>	short-term
<p>5d. <u>Fishery Management</u> Fishery management will be considerably improved by a study of lake fish populations and habitat, already underway and directed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks regional biologist. Since the City Lake Park is now a part of the Community Fisheries Assistance Program (CFAP), more frequent and intensive surveys will be undertaken. Preliminary information indicates that the population of key game fish species is declining. <i>Strategy:</i> This plan recommends that the Department of Wildlife and Parks begin a stocking program based on fish survey results. The Improvement District may also want to survey lake residents asking them about their preferences for fishery development.</p>	short-term