



CRESTDALE COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSISTANCE TEAM

**Crestdale Rising: What unites us is
greater than what divides us**

Final Report
Crestdale Neighborhood
Matthews, North Carolina
October 27, 2011



American Planning Association

Making Great Communities Happen

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Cover Credit: Train tracks that run through the Crestdale neighborhood. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger

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INTRODUCTION

In July 2011, the American Planning Association (APA) and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), organized a Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) project in the Crestdale neighborhood of Matthews, North Carolina. Matthews is the eighth community to participate in APA's Community Planning Assistance Teams initiative.

The project was selected from proposals submitted during CPAT's Winter 2011 community application cycle, which closed in February. Kathi Ingrish, AICP, planning director for the Town of Matthews, submitted the successful application and served as APA's primary community liaison throughout the effort.

Through a series of site visits, public meetings, and scheduled interviews, the Team—comprised of expert planners and urban designers with expertise matched to the specific challenges that Crestdale faces—conducted an intensive study of the community. Team members gained valuable insights from Crestdale residents, stakeholders, and people with a genuine interest in the community's past, present, and future.

This report presents the Team's vision and recommendations for the neighborhood and the Town of Matthews to consider as they decide how to move forward as a community.

OVERVIEW

Community assistance is built into the professional role of a planner. One principle of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct states that "certified planners shall aspire to seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration." Yet another principle is that certified planners should aspire to "contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities."

In service to these values, APA and AICP developed the CPAT initiative.

The purpose of the CPAT initiative is to serve communities facing limited resources by helping them address planning issues such as social equity and affordability, economic development, sustainability, consensus building, and urban design. By pairing expert urban planning professionals from around the country with citizens from local communities, the initiative seeks to foster education, engagement, and empowerment.

As part of the Teams' goals, each CPAT community develops a vision plan that promotes a sustainable, livable, economically vibrant, and healthy urban environment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After reading the CPAT application and materials prepared by the Town of Matthews; meeting with residents, advocates, stakeholders, officials, and private sector representatives; spending time in the area; and discussing possibilities and concerns among ourselves, the CPAT prepared this Vision Plan. We offer it as a reference document for all those interested in the potential of Crestdale. The plan title evokes the future direction for an area of Matthews with strong roots, committed residents, real challenges, and many allies. As alluded to in the original CPAT application, Crestdale's powerful legacy does in fact foretell the great potential for its future.

The full plan presents the following:

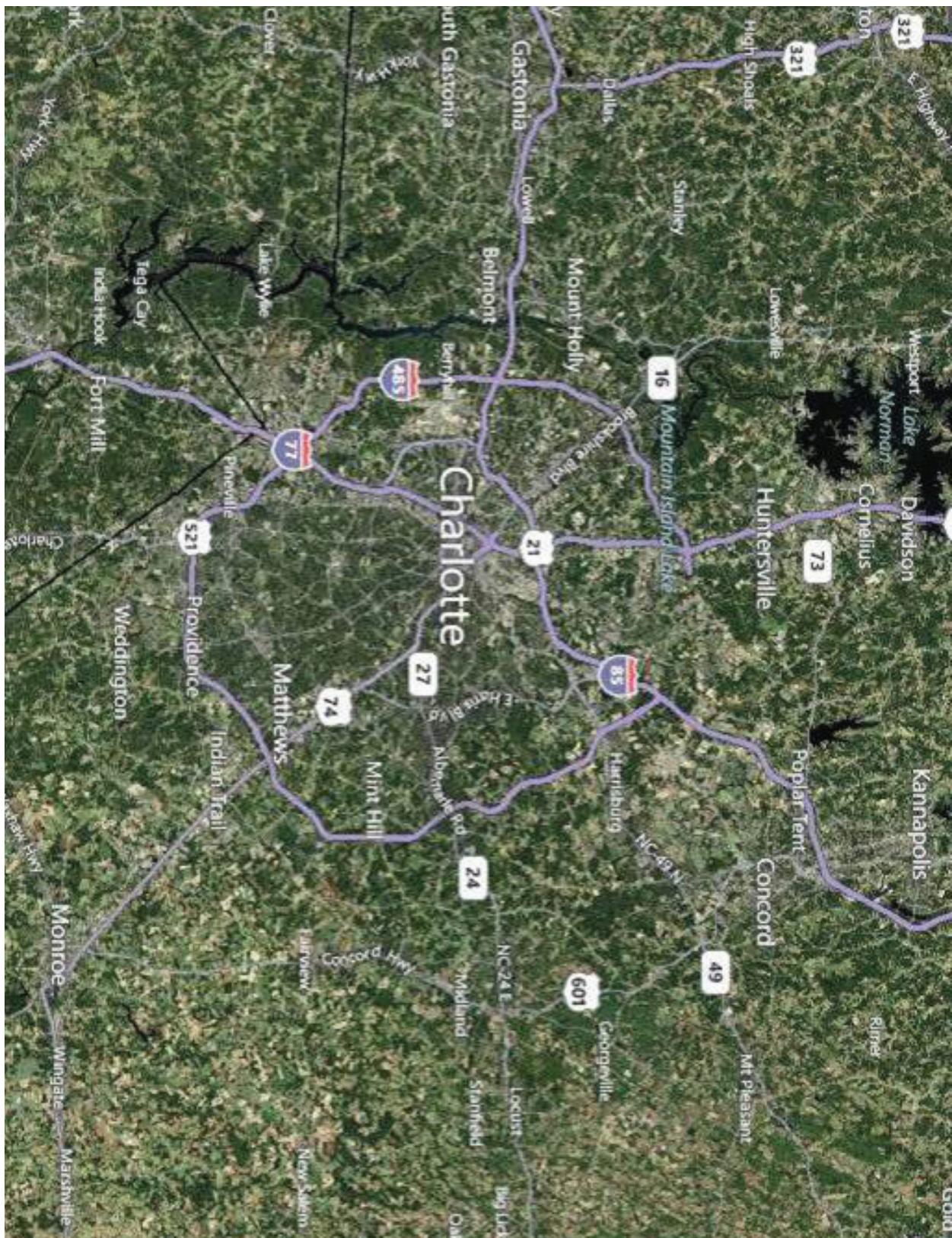
- background on the CPAT program;
- a profile of Crestdale's history and current demographics;
- description of the Crestdale CPAT planning process;
- assessment of five focus areas for moving forward; and
- detailed recommended actions.

Table 1:
SUMMARY: RECOMMENDED
ACTION PLAN

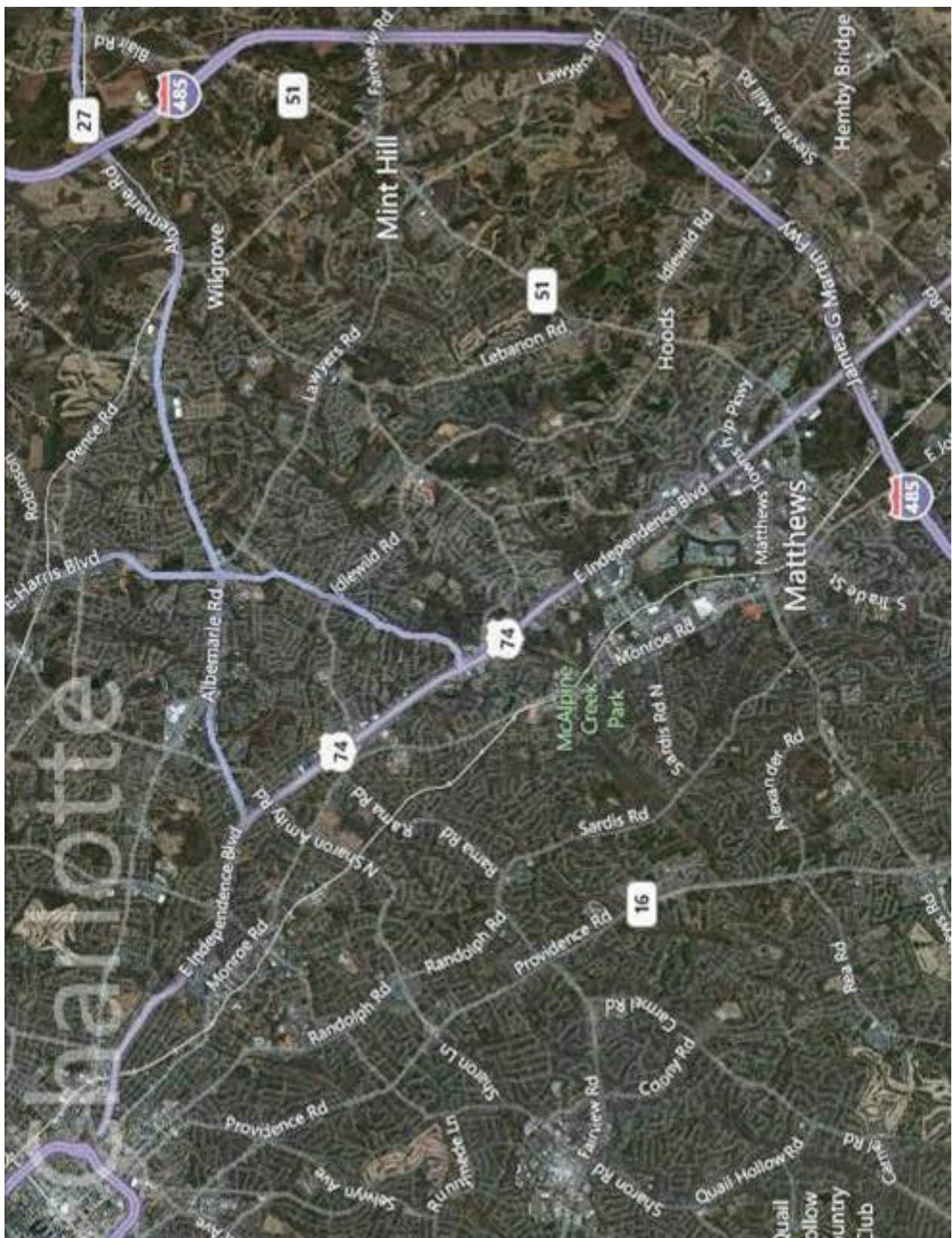
PRIORITY ACTIONS	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
	Form a neighborhood association to represent, advocate, pseudo-govern, and plan for Crestdale's interest and welfare.	Residents (long term and recent); local groups and churches; extended family members
	Prepare a Neighborhood Improvement Plan identifying locations for such uses as: open space/public park, civic or community center, community gardens, senior housing, multifamily housing, and new connectors (roadways, paths, etc).	Residents; neighborhood association; extended family members; Town of Matthews
	Establish a Heritage Trail in Crestdale with markers at noteworthy sites within Crestdale (the former school site, the Tank Tower, etc.). Work with the Matthews Public Art program.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews; Residents (long term and recent); local groups and churches; extended family members
	Design and install entrance signage and street markers to reinforce the identity of Crestdale and recognize its historical role in Matthews. Include directional signage to Crestdale on major routes into the neighborhood.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews
	Distribute information on property tax relief programs and pursue programs that provide financial assistance for home repairs.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews; County of Mecklenburg
	Pursue CIP funding for a priority project in the next funding round (be it a multiuse path, Heritage Trail or the creation of a public park/community garden facility).	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews
	With assistance, tap into state/federal funding, the faith-based community, private sector partnerships, and private foundations to pursue planning, capital, and programming actions.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews; Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Foundation; Foundation For The Carolinas; Crossroads Charlotte; County of Mecklenburg, etc.

Table 1:
SUMMARY: RECOMMENDED
ACTION PLAN

SUPPORTING ACTIONS	
RECOMMENDED ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
Develop arts and humanities initiatives to explore and teach about Crestdale and its legacy. This can include: lesson plans; historical exhibits at the Depot Museum; a booth at Matthews Alive Festival; and programming through the Matthews Community Center.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews; Matthews Schools; Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Foundation; Foundation For The Carolinas; Crossroads Charlotte
Develop Community Gardens in Crestdale to bring people together, connect to the farmers market, and link to the area's agricultural heritage.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews, Residents (long term and recent); local groups and churches; extended family members
Promote a variety of housing types and mixed-income development for the remaining developable land area within Crestdale.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews; Habitat for Humanity; Residents (long term and recent); local groups and churches; extended family members
Actively work with private developers (and public entities) developing around Crestdale to negotiate benefits and mitigate impacts.	Neighborhood association; Town of Matthews; County of Mecklenburg



The Crestdale neighborhood is part of Matthews, North Carolina, which is approximately 12 miles southeast of downtown Charlotte.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Crestdale project began in April 2011 when APA staff worked with Kathi Ingrish, AICP, planning director for the Town of Matthews, her staff, and community leaders to identify the expertise needed for the project. Particular areas of focus included consensus building, economic development, implementation, and urban design. From this set of desired expertise, Team member selection began.

On June 27, Team Leader Jason Beske, AICP, and APA staff member, Ryan Scherzinger, traveled to Matthews for an initial visit. During the visit, Beske and Scherzinger toured the Crestdale community and Matthews area. They also met with stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with the Crestdale study area. Following the meeting, Beske addressed the Matthews Town Council to introduce the CPAT project and its goals.

APA staff organized conference calls with the Team prior to visiting Crestdale to discuss the project and strategies to engage the community. Team members used the application submitted by Ingrish to guide initial discussions. After compiling and organizing relevant materials (local history, proposed site plans, maps, etc.) with the help of the Matthews Planning Department and other local entities, APA staff compiled the briefing book to study and reference throughout the project.

The Team arrived in Matthews on July 19. The following day, the Team met with Kathi Ingrish, who gave them a tour of the study area. From 1:00 to 7:00 p.m., the Team held an "open house" at the Matthews Town Hall. Residents were invited to come to share their perspectives and hopes for the Crestdale community. Attendees were asked to place a sticker on a map indicating where they live or work. In addition, they were asked to participate in a visual preference survey whereby they placed a green ("I would like to see this in Crestdale") or red ("I wouldn't like to see this in Crestdale") sticker on a number of photographs that demonstrated different housing typologies, commercial areas, and open spaces—all located in the greater Charlotte region. The event generated many informal conversations between Team members and attendees that shed light on the myriad existing perspectives in the community.



Image 1: Open house participants marked where they live (blue dot) or work (white dot) on a map. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger



Image 2: Examples from the visual preference survey conducted at the open house. Photos by Ryan Scherzinger

On Thursday, July 20, and the early part of Friday, July 21, the Team met individually with residents and other stakeholders representing both Crestdale and the Town of Matthews. The Team analyzed the data, gathered additional information, and generated a preliminary report. The report was organized around five focus areas that emerged from the Team's interactions. The preliminary findings and recommendations were presented in a public meeting at the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in Crestdale on Saturday, July 22. The presentation was followed with comments and questions by the community members and stakeholders in attendance. The presentation was then made available on the APA website to solicit further feedback for the Team's final report.

From this process, the Team generated an overall vision and general recommendations intended to inform and assist residents, local stakeholders, and government agencies as they move forward with any formal planning processes. This final report of the Team's findings was delivered to Kathi Ingrish to distribute to the Town of Matthews leaders, community members, and local and regional stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

Crestdale faces a stark set of challenges as desires to preserve the historic neighborhood and its affordability are met with new development arising in and around Matthews. Change is a constant, and the most recent decades have markedly remade the physical landscape and makeup of the neighborhood. As Crestdale continues to evolve, its basic values and history must inform the choices made for neighborhood development. While a variety of projects have been proposed to take advantage of emerging opportunities, the community has struggled with achieving communitywide support for ways to move forward. It is clear, however, that Crestdale has one very critical resource for moving forward—a group of residents and others committed to its future.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CRESTDALE STUDY AREA

Crestdale began as a post-Civil War settlement founded by free African Americans and freed plantation slaves in the 1860s. It is considered the oldest African American community in the state of North Carolina. The first settlers grew into a close-knit community near the railroad tracks along Tank Town Road, now East Charles Street. Tank Town was the original name of the settlement, which referred to the large wooden tank that supplied water to passing trains. According to sources, the name officially changed to Crestdale in 1963. However, the Team and long-time residents were unable to determine why the particular name "Crestdale" was chosen.

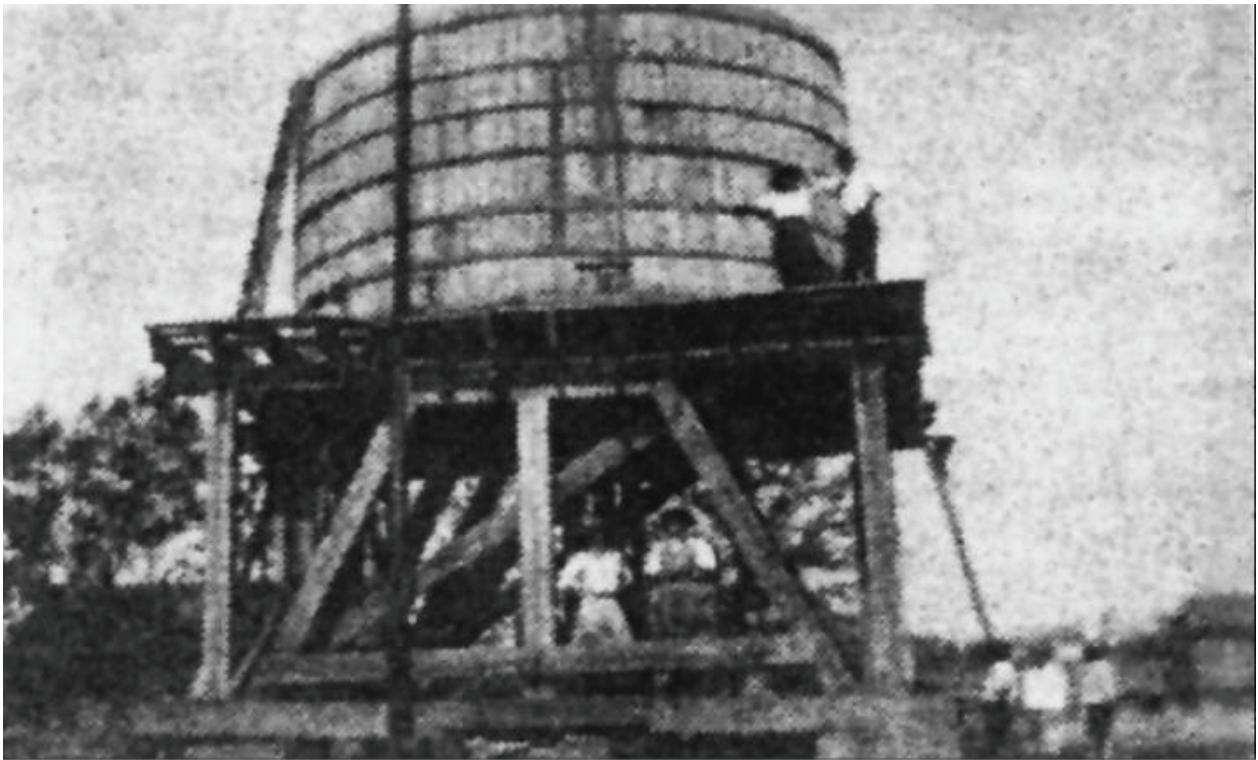


Image 3: Photo of the large wooden tank that once stood next to the railroad tracks in Tank Town.

Source: Southeast News

Throughout much of its history, Tank Town consisted of home-based stores, barber shops, and the churches that served its residents. In the years following the Civil War, the community lacked basic and essential resources, including a school for its children. Residents were finally able to construct the Tank Town School (Matthews Colored School) through fundraising and foundation support. The school was eventually constructed and opened in 1918. The school served the isolated Tank Town residents in a variety of ways by providing a place to hold social events. Desegregation closed the school in 1966 when children were integrated into Matthews schools. The historic Tank Town School building is now long gone and the property where it once stood is currently occupied by a church, the United House of Prayer, located near the entrance of the neighborhood off of Crestdale Road. The area was annexed by Matthews in 1988, which provided Crestdale much needed water and sewer lines.

Crestdale's past is vital to American history and its ability to help us understand the world that continues to shape our lives today. A significant amount of work has been done to capture the remarkable oral history that still lives in the hearts and minds of its long-time residents and families. Crestdale's history is linked to place. And like many—if not most—places, it is threatened by the effects of time and change. The foundational values upon which Tank Town was built, however, are still present. Some of these values include resiliency and adaptation, thriving and perseverance in the face of oppression and neglect, taking care of each other, and having pride in this shared history.



Image 4: The Tank Town School. Photo by Frederick Stitt.

KEY SITE/AREA FEATURES

Crestdale covers an area of 135 acres, partly developed with single-family homes. Crestdale is less than a half-mile from downtown Matthews, a block off the former NC51 route, and adjacent to corporate industrial facilities. Yet Crestdale is tucked out of sight from surrounding higher-income areas, and its accessibility is limited.

The 2010 Census figures provide information on the population, housing units, and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood. Table 2 reflects block-level data aggregated within the boundary of the Crestdale neighborhood. Some adjustments have been made based on the boundary lines and are noted in the Table notes (also see Appendix A). The total population for the neighborhood is estimated at 743 and the housing units at 238. Approximately 34 percent of the population self-identifies as African American, and five percent as Hispanic.

Construction of I-485 in the 1990s blocked one of three access roads, further isolating it. The CSX railroad bisects the community physically and visually. Over the past few decades, inadequate roads, poor-draining soils, land shape and ownership, and traditional suburban zoning standards all limited construction potential while the surrounding Town of Matthews boomed.

Matthews is now an affluent and fast-growing municipality. As the Charlotte metropolitan region expands outward, toward and beyond the beltway (I-485), Matthews expects its population to grow and development to intensify and increase in density.

**Table 2:
CRESTDALE—2010 CENSUS INFORMATION**

Census Tract	Block	Total Population	Total Housing Units	Unoccupied Housing Units	African American Population	Hispanic Population
37119-005834	2000	123	22	0	26	2
	2001	55	12	1	17	1
	1028	0	0	0	0	0
	1003	6	2	1	0	0
	1002	0	0	0	0	0
	1001 ¹	331	111	6	117	20
	1004	91	32	1	17	12
portion of	1005	15 ²	6 ³	X	15 ⁴	0 ⁵
portion of	1011	122 ⁶	53 ⁷	X	64 ⁸	6 ⁹
TOTALS		743	238	X	256	41

NOTES:

To determine Crestdale totals without Rainbow Ridge (the southernmost Habitat subdivision) subtract Blocks 2000 and 2001 from the totals. X= Cannot be calculated from totals.

RECENT PLANNING BACKGROUND

The first neighborhood plan for Crestdale was completed by Mecklenburg County in 1987. That plan focused on infrastructure and housing needs. After the community was annexed into the Town of Matthews, a new study of the area culminated in the creation of a unique zoning category, the Crestdale Conservation, or CrC, District. Updates have been done by student interns through the town government and by private consultants hired by property owners, but none have fully incorporated the concerns of all stakeholders into a single comprehensive vision.

Living conditions in Crestdale have improved. In the 1980s, Mecklenburg County and the Town of Matthews directed Community Development Block Grant funding in Crestdale to extend water and sanitary sewer mains and to rehabilitate housing. Habitat for Humanity of Matthews has built three subdivisions from the ground up within Crestdale, first bringing in new generations of residents with family ties to Crestdale, and then introducing families with different language and cultural backgrounds for assimilation into the community.

¹The land area in Block 1001 that lies outside the neighborhood boundary is listed on Mecklenburg County POLARIS system as either vacant or warehouse, so it does not affect the data here.

² Only a Portion of 1005 is within the neighborhood boundary. By using the Mecklenburg County POLARIS system it was determined that six single-family homes within the Crestdale neighborhood boundary are within Block 1005. To estimate population, these six were multiplied by 2.61, the average household size for Matthews for 2010, to arrive at an estimated population of 15.

³ See footnote 1.

⁴ Estimate based on knowledge of area.

⁵ Estimate based on knowledge of area.

⁶ Only a portion of 1011 is within the neighborhood boundary. By using the Mecklenburg County POLARIS system it was determined that (19) single-family homes within Block 1011 lie outside the Crestdale neighborhood boundary. To estimate population these 19 were multiplied by 2.61, the average household size for Matthews for 2010, and this total (50) was subtracted from the Block total population of 172 to arrive at the estimate of 122 persons within the neighborhood boundary.

⁷ See footnote 5; 19 was subtracted from the total of 72 housing units reported by the 2010 Census.

⁸ Estimated by applying total block percentage African American (53 percent) to estimated population total within neighborhood boundary: $122 \times .53 = 64$.

⁹ Estimated by applying total block percentage Hispanic (five percent) to estimated population total within neighborhood boundary: $122 \times .05 = 6$.

CRESTDALE: AERIAL, NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL



Map 1: Aerial map of Crestdale. Courtesy of Matthews Planning Department

Irregular parcel shape and size and absentee ownership hinder new development. While specific development projects for several key sites have been proposed, ownership and financing constraints have not been resolved.

CRESTDALE CONTEXT: LEADERSHIP IN FLUX

Crestdale is no longer made up of a cohesive group of families that share a social and cultural background. Long-time residents and newer arrivals may want to see beneficial changes, but it is not clear what those changes should be or how they could be accomplished.

Today, no single person or group is seen as the "go-to" authority for Crestdale. Leadership is in flux. Landowners and development interests need to achieve the "right fit" before development opportunities can be pursued.

Whereas no one voice speaks for Crestdale, several leaders have been important in representing parts of the community. Mt Moriah Missionary Baptist Church has exhibited strong support for the community since the early 1900s. Sam Boyd was considered the "mayor" of Crestdale in the 1960 to 1980s era. Other long-time residents rose to respected-elder status through the Crestdale Community Organization. Habitat for Humanity of Matthews quickly gained recognition as a voice for the community when their first subdivision focused on bringing extended family back to their roots. Each group, though, has its own distinct future plan for the neighborhood. Old and new ideas about how the neighborhood should evolve have at times created friction. At the same time, the town, county, and private developers have pursued projects that will impact Crestdale.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CRESTDALE RISING: WHAT UNITES US IS GREATER THAN WHAT DIVIDES US

There are divisions within the Crestdale neighborhood—both physical and social—yet it is clear from the many residents, activists, and volunteers we spoke with that what is shared is a strong commitment and optimism for Crestdale's future. In this section the Team outlines recommended actions within five focus areas:

- Community Identity and Cohesion
- Heritage Preservation, Education and Outreach
- Security and Dignity for Long-term Residents
- Connectivity and Neighborhood Improvements
- Major Adjacent Development Proposals: Wingate Commons & Sportsplex

The positive forces within the neighborhood, with the assistance of government agencies, resource agencies, and funders, must coalesce into a productive group in order to move some of these ideas forward. The potential exists to transform some barriers (such as the railroad tracks) into unifying forces and to unite in the difficult but satisfying work of seeing Crestdale rise. The fate of the larger town is linked to this place, and vice versa.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND COHESION

We humans are social creatures who demand association with others of our kind. Although we often behave poorly toward one another, our need for contact with others is powerful and enduring. Thus we social folk come together to build communities within our civilizations to accommodate our need to

interact with one another.

A community may be variously defined. However, at the simplest, a community contains the following elements:

- A collection of people (an individual does not make a neighborhood/community)
- Members live within a geographic area (defined boundaries, even if elastic)
- Members share related history and values
- Members are capable of collective action to solve problems confronting residents
- Members demonstrate a sense of pride in their neighborhood/community

Crestdale is a neighborhood/community. Its roots have grown out of the times of institutional African American slavery in the state of North Carolina. Over the years, the Crestdale neighborhood has been dynamic as evinced in its demographics, land uses, opportunities, and challenges. However, history never gets old. History may be enhanced as new realities come to play. It may be articulated by different actors. But the awareness and knowledge of a community's history is value added to the health and welfare of the residents.

Community is family. In spite of the commonly shared values, members will sometimes differ about issues, approaches to solving problems, or sustainability. These differences produce conflict. Conflict is not always to be seen as negative. In fact, when conflict or disagreements lead to productive outcomes, the challenges among residents are positive. In the Crestdale neighborhood, a number of ideas, proposals, and approaches presented for problem solving are intended to improve the quality of life in the environment. Thus it is important for residents to appreciate those differences in opinions, proposals, and approaches, but family matters must be resolved. Productive families or communities understand that struggles among members are nothing more than a step in moving toward closure in solving problems.

Crestdale shares the characteristic of most families and has extended family members. In the case of Crestdale, the extended family members are the citizens of the Town of Matthews. As with all extended family members, interactions may be smooth and supportive, rough and challenging, or distant and neglectful. Each of these conditions exists in Crestdale to some degree. Historically, Crestdale has been ignored or neglected by its extended family members. This condition has contributed to the failure of some residents to have the opportunity to fully develop their abilities or talents. Because historically the extended family relationships have not been productive, steps need to be taken to enhance future relationships.

Several strategies may prove useful to strengthen family ties in the Matthews-Crestdale community. They are:

- Create active efforts to make Crestdale visible and engaging in extra-neighborhood affairs and activities. The Town of Matthews comes to embrace Crestdale and feels a sense of ownership, kindredship, and pride. Over time, the two family elements become one, indivisible.
- To demonstrate that it has value to the larger community, Crestdale may consider forming a communitywide association to represent, advocate, pseudo-govern, and plan for its interest and welfare. This entity will serve as a green light or beacon that Crestdale is a viable, dedicated neighborhood whose interest is to develop an improved posture and creditability with its external family members.
- The Town of Matthews may expand its sponsorship and facilitation of social, economic, cultural, and environmental activities expressedly focused to its Crestdale family. The Town can provide fiscal resources, civic educational programming, technical assistance for competitive grantsmanship, and property protection strategies.



Image 5: Entrance sign to Fullwood Trace, one of the Habitat for Humanity subdivisions in Crestdale.
Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.

Image 6: Example of one of the Habitat for Humanity houses. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.





Image 7: A property along Charles Street in Crestdale. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.

Image 8: Entrance to Rainbow Crossing, a Habitat for Humanity subdivision located in the triangular-shaped, southern area of Crestdale (see Map 3 for reference). Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.



- The Matthews/Crestdale team or family may seek strategies or programs that will "raise the boats" of the Town and Crestdale. Jointly the family members may seek support for the development of cultural or art-related activities such as pottery making and selling, race-specific tourism, youth-centered programs, and senior citizen activities.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION, EDUCATION, AND OWNERSHIP

History shapes and informs us. Who we are today is formed by who we were, as individuals and as communities; we do not emerge from a blank slate. Acknowledging, understanding, and honoring the past are an important part of moving forward. Crestdale is considered the oldest African American community in the state of North Carolina, as it was established in the 1860s by free African Americans and freed plantation slaves. Originally known as Tank Town, the settlement grew up alongside the rail line in the late 1800s, with small homes and home-grown businesses close together.

As described in *Discover Matthews: from Cotton to Corporate*,

After the Civil War many African Americans still struggled. It was difficult just keeping food on the table for their families. Only a few had received their thirty acres of land and a mule¹⁰ promised them when the Civil War ended. The lucky few who did were a little better off but life was still hard. In the late 1800s and the early 1900s, many people in the Tank Town community were sharecroppers, working the land for white owners. Some performed service jobs for local residents in Matthews and the surrounding communities.¹⁰

This history is essential to an understanding of today's world, and the oral histories and stories gathered to date illustrate how the foundational values of Crestdale shaped and defined life in the neighborhood. Long-term residents want Crestdale's history and its values, cited earlier, to play a role in the neighborhood as it evolves.

Recently settled residents are unfamiliar with Crestdale's history and the role it has played in the larger community. Although located roughly within the geographic boundaries of the neighborhood of Crestdale, the residents of the new subdivisions Crestdale Commons, Fullwood Trace, Sunrise Crossing, and Rainbow Ridge do not fully identify themselves as part of the neighborhood. Confusion may come from the use of the name for the middle school and the new "Crestwood Commons." There is certainly a lack of adequate identifiers to orient new residents or visitors to the Crestdale neighborhood proper.

Crestdale as a neighborhood could benefit from increasing the awareness of this heritage among all residents. Making the heritage visible and integrating the rich cultural legacy into neighborhood events and the education of future generations are important. Some of this is already going on in Crestdale (for instance, with the Reunion Days) but more measures and expanded programming are called for.

Equally important, the greater Matthews community needs to embrace Crestdale as a part of its history. Wherever the history of Matthews is displayed, Crestdale should be present—a true representation of the reality of the intertwined communities. Matthews needs to claim ownership of Crestdale, a transformation possible by touching minds and hearts through education, music, storytelling, and other arts. As clearly stated by one resident at the open house: "Crestdale is a part of Matthews." A clear affirmation of this can be achieved by committing resources and time to documenting and disseminating the full legacy of Crestdale.

¹⁰ *Discover Matthews: From Cotton to Corporate* by Paul H. Lester, 1999.

As is the case for most African American history, much more is known and documented for the evolution of Matthews than that of Crestdale. Work and attention are needed to fill this gap as accurately and comprehensively as possible. A concentrated effort of collecting oral histories, reviewing archives, and preserving photos and artifacts is needed. Such an effort would support the following potential Heritage Preservation and Education actions:

- Establish a Heritage Trail in Crestdale. The trail would include markers at noteworthy sites within Crestdale (the former school site, the Tank Tower, etc.) and relay information about significant events and people or describe the rhythms of ordinary life in early Crestdale. The Heritage Trail could be the basis of special event or regular monthly walking tours. See Map 2 below.
- Design and install entrance signage and street markers to reinforce the identity of Crestdale and recognize its historical role in Matthews. Include directional signage to Crestdale on major routes into the neighborhood. See Map 3 below.
- Use the Matthews Public Art program to sponsor graphic pieces (visual and material) related to the legacy and history of Crestdale. These pieces may be part of the Heritage Trail in the neighborhood or placed in downtown locations.
- Continue programming (building on the quilt and storytelling exchange done in conjunction with the Arts and Science Council) that uses the arts to explore and teach about Crestdale and its legacy. Possibilities may include: a play produced by middle school children, or spoken word and poetry slam performances on themes from the history and legacy of Crestdale or multimedia exhibits.
- Develop lesson plans, aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, on Crestdale's role in the Matthews area. This can be done to meet a variety of the Competency Goals outlined by grade, for example the geography and history theme for fourth grade social studies or English and language arts activities for high school students. The lesson plans can include tours of Crestdale, guest speakers from the neighborhood, or use of the proposed Heritage Trail.
- Establish a Crestdale Exhibit at the Depot Museum; include Crestdale in other town historical displays, e.g. Town Community Center. Seek funding to develop a Crestdale collection, with professional assistance, and explore cooperative ventures with the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Levine Museum of the New South in Charlotte.
- Establish a Crestdale presence at the Matthews Alive Festival. This could take the form of a booth highlighting the history that features the previous quilt and the video loop of the oral histories, a float in the parade, or food vending based on traditional foods.

CRESTDALE NEIGHBORHOOD

Local Landmark Opportunities

1 to 200 scale @ 24"x36" sheet

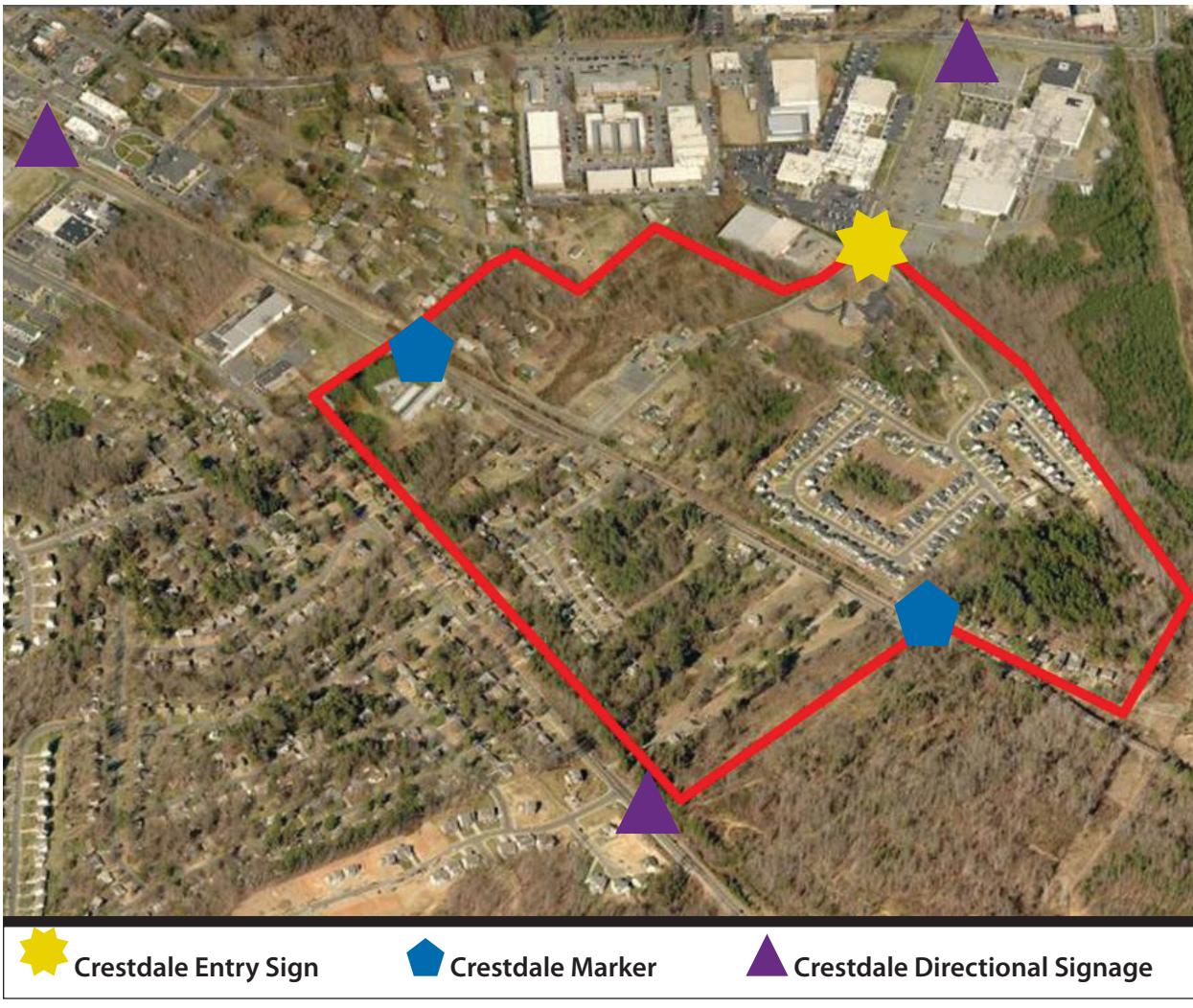


Legend

- [Green square] Current Park Spaces
- [Yellow square] Current Civic Spaces
- [Red line] Proposed Heritage Trail
- [Purple circle] Landmarks
- [Grey line] Right of Way
- [White line] Streets
- [Grey square] Existing Buildings
- [Dark blue line] Crestdale Neighborhood Boundary



Map 2: Local Landmark Opportunities for a Heritage Trail in Crestdale



Map 3: Key sites for Crestdale signage and historical markers

SECURITY AND DIGNITY FOR LONG-TERM RESIDENTS

Many residents of Crestdale have deep roots in the neighborhood, developed through decades of living, raising families, and participating in the community. Now in their retirement years serious financial challenges loom—in the face of rising costs, fixed incomes can only be stretched so far. Home owners can face some tough choices as health-related expenses expand, fuel costs rise, and property taxes increase. Some residents find themselves in the position of being “land rich and cash poor”; the property they own has value but they lack sufficient cash to cover living expenses. For some, needed house repairs and routine maintenance, such as painting or roof replacement, have been deferred. Others have had difficulty paying property taxes on time. These residents need options to remain part of the neighborhood and for homes to be adequately maintained to meet safety and aesthetic standards. These options include development of affordable senior housing in the neighborhood (see page 19), financial assistance programs to cover home repairs, and property tax relief.

Financial Assistance for Home Repairs

- Habitat for Humanity of Matthews is launching a program known as the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. Once up and running, this program would work with existing low- and moderate-income home owners on small- to mid-size house projects. This could include landscaping, building ramps, repairing steps and porches, or undertaking energy-efficiency improvements. This program would help Crestdale seniors live with dignity in their own homes.
- A neighborhood revitalization plan for Crestdale that incorporates housing repairs, open space creation, and multiuse paths could be eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding through the Centralina Council of Governments. A Home Repair fund could be part of the application, providing home owners with low- to no-interest loans for making necessary home improvements.
- Explore a relationship or initiative with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership—an existing regional housing community development corporation that oversees housing rehab and new development.¹¹

Assistance with Property Tax Bills

- Mecklenburg County provides three property tax relief programs.¹² Crestdale home owners should determine their eligibility for the Low Income, Veterans Homestead Exclusion, or the Elderly Tax Deferral or (Circuit Breaker) provision. It is important to complete the applications and documentation for these provisions in a timely fashion. The County Senior Program can provide assistance from a senior advocate who can walk home owners through the paperwork related to tax relief applications.
- Mecklenburg County also has an alternative “use” assessment program to reduce property taxes for land in productive agricultural or forestry use. The minimum acreage under these provisions is likely to make it difficult for Crestdale property owners to be eligible.
- In some places communities have developed programs for seniors to offset portions of property tax bills by completing work hours. This could be an innovative program developed by the newly formulated neighborhood association. Work in the neighborhood or community garden could be tracked and used as cash credits the association paid directly to tax bills from grant funds. The county could also participate in the program.¹³

CONNECTIVITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS

Both a review of maps and a visit to the neighborhood reveal one of the most conspicuous characteristics of Crestdale—its physical isolation and disconnection from other parts of Matthews. A lack of connections is an issue both internally to the neighborhood and externally between the neighborhood and adjacent hubs, including downtown and the areas slated for development by Wingate and the Sportsplex (see Map 4). This, in part, explains its relative anonymity to other town residents (especially newcomers) and the lack of neighborhood cohesion across the distinct subdivisions within Crestdale.

¹¹See <http://www.cmhp.org>.

¹²See <http://charmeck.org/mecklenburg/county/AssessorsOffice/Pages/Tax%20Relief.aspx>.

¹³For example see: <http://www.bouldercounty.org/live/taxes/pages/senior tax work off.aspx> or http://www.wareham.ma.us/Public_Documents/WarehamMA_COA/index.

The main entryway to Crestdale is from Crestdale Road, a thoroughfare off Matthews-Mint Hill Road lined with commercial and industrial uses. Once in the neighborhood, the street network consists of a series of cul-de-sacs with only two vehicular crossings over the railroad tracks, which bisect the neighborhood in two. The railroad tracks, limited throughways, and surrounding land uses all act as barriers and limit the ease and means of residents' travel. There are no street connections from the neighborhood to East Matthews Street or East John Street—routes that have appeal as they would link to downtown and other destinations in Matthews, such as the community college.

Evaluating connectivity means considering the street network for vehicles and the options for nonautomobile mobility including walking, bike riding, or wheelchair access. Cul-de-sacs and limited throughways concentrate traffic on certain routes and make walking a more time-consuming, and thus less feasible, option for residents. Sometimes it's simply not possible to get *it there* from *here*.¹ Street networks with safe and aesthetically pleasing sidewalks and short block distances (generally no longer than 1,500 feet total), or multiuse paths, make trips on foot possible and pleasant. Through-street connections disperse traffic and, if needed, traffic-calming devices can be used to slow the speed of vehicles. Map 5, "Connectivity Analysis-Current Conditions," illustrates the lack of connectivity in Crestdale, and Map 6, "Connectivity Analysis-Proposed Conditions," portrays concepts for possible new street connections to facilitate movement in the neighborhood. Also shown is how new street connections could improve access to some vacant landlocked parcels, increasing their development potential and integration into the neighborhood.



Map 4: Crestdale in relation to downtown Matthews and two potential development projects

Pedestrians have created a clear, informal path alongside the railroad tracks from Crestdale to downtown Matthews and residents to the open house reported using the sidewalks in the new subdivisions. Crestdale could increase and enhance these existing pedestrian trips with a complete street/sidewalk network and the addition of formal multiuse paths. A multiuse path that follows the railroad tracks, turning this dividing line into a neighborhood connector, would be a valuable addition to the area—and one residents have already voted in favor of with their feet. With a formal path residents of all ages could make trips to downtown locations (library, town offices, Community Center, retail outlets, restaurants, farmers

CRESTDALE NEIGHBORHOOD

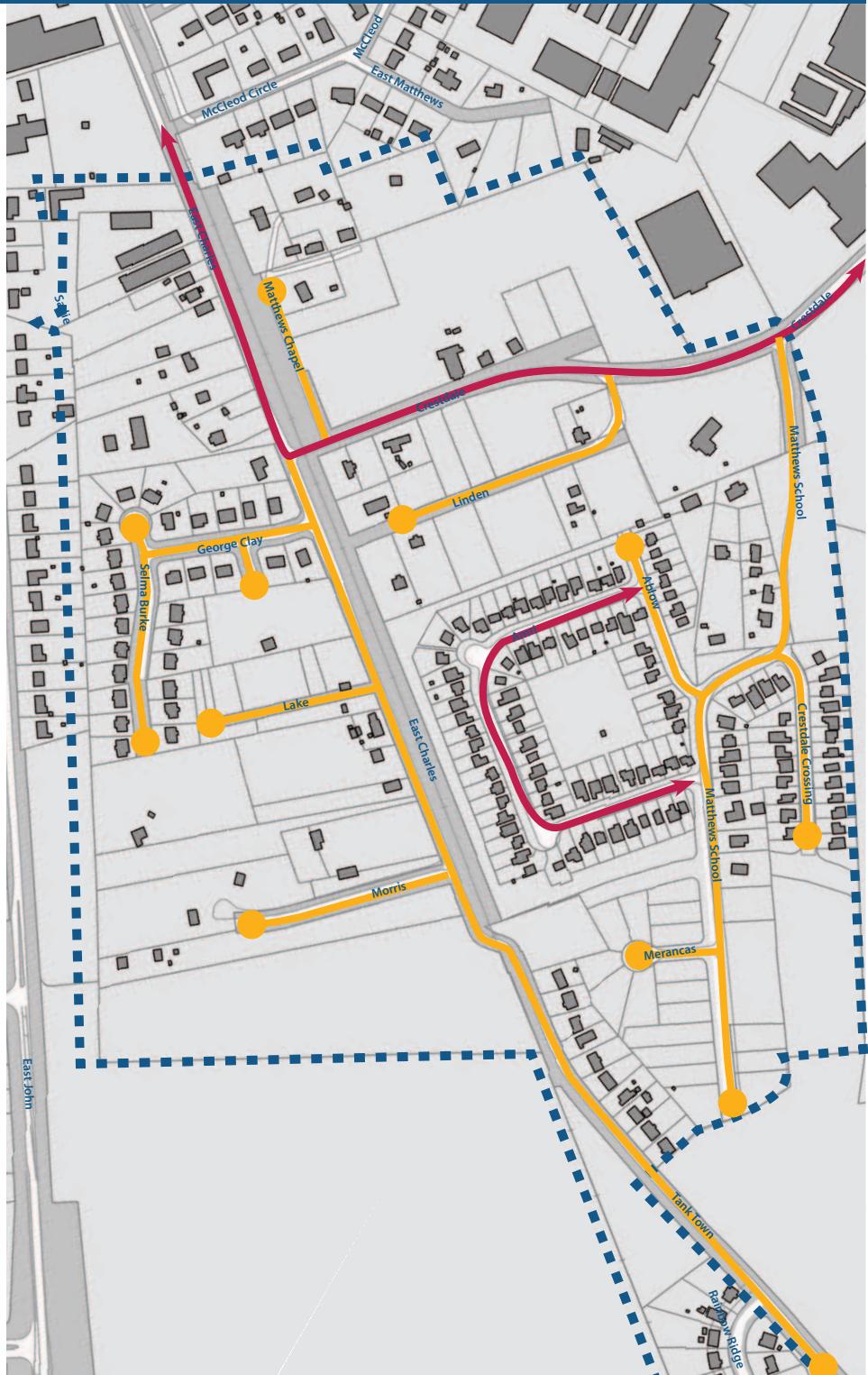
Connectivity Analysis - Current Conditions

1 to 100 scale @ 24"x36" sheet



Legend

- [Yellow square] No Outlet Streets
- [Maroon square] Connected Streets
- [Grey square] Right of Way
- [White square] Streets
- [Grey square] Existing Buildings
- [Dark Blue square] Crestdale Neighborhood Boundary



Map 5: Connectivity Analysis—Current Conditions. Created by Josye Utick.

CRESTDALE NEIGHBORHOOD

Connectivity Analysis - Proposed Conditions

1 to 100 scale @ 24"x36" sheet



Legend

- [Green line] Existing Street Network
- [Red dashed line with arrows] Proposed Street Connections
- [Grey shaded area] Right of Way
- [Light blue line] Streets
- [Grey square] Existing Buildings
- [Dark blue line] Crestdale Neighborhood Boundary



Map 6: Connectivity Analysis—Proposed Conditions. Created by Josye Utick.

market, etc.) safely and easily. It is less than one mile (0.8 mile) from Crestdale Commons to downtown Matthews via the rail line, roughly a 10-minute walk. Improved walkability has many potential benefits for neighborhoods (see Table 3) and Crestdale's location near downtown makes it likely residents can use pedestrian and bicycle facilities within their daily routines.

Improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Crestdale should begin with a path along the rail corridor. This can be extended with a complete sidewalk system and other path connections between subdivisions and to relevant destinations identified by residents. In addition to multiuse path connections, new street connections via the extension of dead-ends through stubs, or new layouts should be explored as part of a comprehensive neighborhood planning process, refining some of the conceptual connections indicated on Map 6.

**Table 3:
Potential Benefits of a Walkable Neighborhood^a**

Health Benefits
Walking is a low-impact physical activity that can be undertaken by all ages; it can build fitness and strength, lower cholesterol, reduce blood pressure, and help avoid diabetes. ^b
More walking equals more physical activity and is a way to manage weight and lower obesity. ^c
Mental well-being can be enhanced by avoiding the frustrations associated with traffic and connecting with nature or other residents in the neighborhood while on foot.
Environmental Benefits
Fewer vehicle miles traveled (and the associated decreased traffic congestion) reduces greenhouse gas contributions.
A closer connection to the natural environment in a neighborhood builds appreciation for natural resources.
Social Capital Benefits
A walkable neighborhood is one that provides an equitable mobility system—that is, everyone, regardless of income, can meet his basic needs (groceries, drug store, post office, doctor's office, banking, recreation, etc.) in a simple and affordable way.
Neighborhood connection and civic pride can be enhanced through walking; this, in turn, can lead to cleaner and safer streets.
Walking increases the support of local businesses, strengthening economic opportunities.

a. See: <http://www.walkinginfo.org/why/benefits.cfm>; Accessed April 30, 2011.
b. See: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/walking/HQ01612>; Accessed May 7, 2011.
c. Ibid.

This process should go beyond neighborhood connectivity to review connections from Crestdale to the development areas of Wingate and the Sportsplex. As noted below, Crestdale residents may gain employment openings, educational opportunities, and recreational access when Wingate and the Sportsplex are completed. The design of both of these projects should include safe, easy, multiuse connections between the Crestdale neighborhood and the new facilities. For example, Matthews's very successful Four Mile Creek Greenway could be extended into the Wingate development area and potentially link up with a rail corridor path through Crestdale. Such a connection would provide Crestdale with an off-road way through the Wingate development to the large municipal Squirrel Lake Park, roughly 1.5 miles away. Additionally, the fields of the Sportsplex could be made accessible with a multiuse path

coordinated with a new road or coming off of a rail line multiuse path system. Matthews should explore coordinating this planning with the Carolina Thread Trail system, a much larger regional initiative that includes small grant opportunities.¹⁴

Mirroring the rest of Matthews, the past two decades has meant extensive residential growth in the Crestdale neighborhood. Compared to the 1987 Special Project Plan figure of 45 housing units, the 2010 census reports a total of 238 housing units (including the Rainbow Ridge subdivision in the southern area; see map) in the neighborhood (see Table 1). The vast majority of this growth consists of the three Habitat for Humanity-sponsored subdivisions (Fullwood Terrace, Sunrise Crossing, and Rainbow Ridge) and the market-rate Crestdale Commons. There remains developable land in Crestdale with the CrC zoning permitting single-family residential and home occupations by-right, and commercial, assisted living, and other residential uses by special permit. As noted earlier, development of these parcels is complicated by odd lot shapes, a lack of existing frontage, multiple ownership of the same parcel, and absentee ownership of parcels.

Neighborhood groups, nevertheless, have been willing to consider the future development of the area, having faith in the potential for a strong collaboration to overcome these challenges. Several actors have developed proposals to address a need for open and active recreational space; community gathering spots; senior housing options; multifamily and attached single-family housing; and artist live/work space. TheTeam is not in a position to weigh in on the specifics of these proposals, but does see the types of uses identified as appropriate for the neighborhood and consistent with the desires expressed by residents. Ultimately these ideas must pass the test of financial viability, and will need the full backing of a neighborhood-level association and the Town.

Given the absentee ownership of parcels, property tax pressures, and the aging population, there is a critical and time-sensitive need for the completion of a Neighborhood Improvement Plan to guide future development. In the absence of such a plan, the incremental and isolated development of parcels may prevent meeting certain objectives such as interior connections, links to adjacent development, or housing diversity. Some, but not all, of the infrastructure improvements recommended in the 1987 Special Project Plan have been completed, but ideas such as creation of a community gathering spot or public park space are yet to be realized. In conjunction with the Town's planning department, the newly formed Neighborhood Association, residents, and other interested parties, should undertake a focused planning process to refine locations for the desired uses—open space/public park, community gardens, senior housing, and multifamily housing—and evaluate street connectivity and other infrastructure systems. This plan can become the basis for pursuing CDBG funding, Capital Improvement Plan funding, or private foundation support. It can also be used to guide and negotiate features of development proposals as parcels come on to the open market.

The CPAT recommends that the Neighborhood Improvement Plan pay special attention to the principles of good design captured in Traditional Neighborhood Design guidelines, the Congress for New Urbanism Charter, and other current planning and design manuals.¹⁵ The basic guidelines on mixed uses, including civic and private spaces, an organized center, the connectivity of street networks, mobility options, and a diversity of housing types, are all relevant to Crestdale's future development.

¹⁴ <http://www.carolinathreadtrail.org>

¹⁵ See, for example, Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines: An ITE Recommended Practice by ITE Transportation Planning Council Committee 5P-8, 1999. Available at: http://www.cues.fau.edu/cnu/docs/Traditional_Neighborhood_Development_Street_Design_Guidelines-ITE.pdf or North Carolina DOT's TND standards at: <http://ntl.bts.gov/lib/22000/22600/22616/tnd.pdf> and the neighborhood and street sections of the CNU Charter at <http://www.cnu.org/charter>; and Smart Codes: Modal Land Development Regulations Planning Advisory Service Report No. 556. Chicago: American Planning Association.

In addition to the neighborhood proposals mentioned above, Habitat for Humanity of Matthews owns some undeveloped land in the neighborhood and has stated its interest in continuing to develop in the area.¹⁶ CPAT's analysis of the area indicates the 238 housing units all are single-family structures, and 98 are estimated to be Habitat-sponsored. The Habitat homes meet a regional need of low- and moderate-income families for affordable home ownership. This model also provides the continuity that has historically (the recent exception noted) been associated with home ownership. However, continued development of Habitat single-family homes at the scale of the existing subdivisions is not recommended for Crestdale.

Community members expressed a strong desire for a diversity of housing types and mixed income housing. Housing other than single family, and housing of better quality were desired so households could remain in Crestdale while moving up the economic ladder. At this point in time, the Habitat stock represents approximately 42 percent of the total housing units in Crestdale. These homes are considered permanently affordable as all resales must be made to income-eligible households. Thus, the existing housing stock ensures Crestdale will remain a gateway for home ownership within Matthews. Continuing subdivision-scale affordable housing in the area, however, risks a concentration of affordable units. Affordable housing should be located throughout Matthews—not just in Crestdale. Federal housing funds (HOME, CDBG, etc.) are competitively awarded, consistent with the Consolidated Plan prepared by the City of Charlotte and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Consortium. The 2010–2015 Five-Year Consolidated Plan states:

Four guiding principles are at the core of Charlotte's affordable housing and community development strategic plan and priority setting. These principles include: 1) **targeting investments** in low wealth and distressed areas of the community; 2) **de-concentrating poverty** where possible by promoting sustainable, mixed-income development or redevelopment; 3) **leveraging federal, state and local government resources with private and non-profit resources** to expand opportunities; and 4) **identifying and creating partnerships** and other collaborative relationships within all sectors and stakeholder groups in the community [emphasis original].¹⁷

Applying these principles to Crestdale, federal funds may be used for community development activities within the neighborhood (open space and recreational space development, job training, home improvements, etc.), and for mixed income development proposals. In addition, these principles imply attention should turn to how the larger Matthews community (not just Crestdale) can play a role in meeting the need for scattered-site affordable housing in the region.

The housing needs of seniors was another focus of concern during the interviews and open house, with residents expressing the need for housing types that would allow aging residents the opportunity to remain in their neighborhoods. Addressing senior housing could take the form described above of subsidized property improvements, accessory units on existing lots, and tax relief provisions. In addition, new development of housing for seniors is appropriate and has been identified by neighborhood groups. The scale of such a proposal can vary—a smaller neighborhood facility may be possible or a larger development bordering Crestdale that could serve area residents is another potential way to meet this need (see page 19). Funding to support this development would not be at odds with the deconcentration of affordable housing, as these new units would serve current residents and create a specialized housing type not currently in the neighborhood.

¹⁶ Conversation of July 21, 2011 with Cristen Wolf, executive director, Habitat for Humanity of Matthews.

¹⁷ Plan available at: <http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/nbs/housing/Pages/HousingPoliciesandPlans.aspx>, p.48, Accessed July 22, 2011.

Community gardens are another improvement mentioned by residents and included in neighborhood proposals that CPAT can endorse. Gardens could be developed on a portion of a larger site that becomes a public park in Crestdale, or on land ultimately controlled by the new neighborhood association.

Matthews has had a great response to the existing gardens and the Matthews Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department has pursued grant funding to expand these efforts. Typically community gardens provide plots for a small fee and the gardeners have access to water, tools, training, and security for their plots. Community gardens provide another venue for neighbors to come together in shared labor, generations to interact, and children to learn about healthy food. Often community gardens become the site of neighborhood events such as dinners, fairs, or plant sales. Community gardens in Crestdale would provide a link to the area's agricultural past and a connection to today's vibrant downtown farmers market. As mentioned earlier, Crestdale could have its own booth at the market and surplus from the gardens could be distributed through the Mt. Moriah Help Center. The gardens could be supervised through the neighborhood association or the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department.

In summary, recommendations for Connectivity and Neighborhood Improvements include:

- Prepare a Neighborhood Improvement Plan identifying locations for such uses as an open space/public park, a civic or community center, community gardens, senior housing, and multifamily housing. The plan should also evaluate street connectivity, multiuse paths, and other infrastructure systems, presenting options for improving connections within the neighborhood and connections to adjacent future hubs and larger trail systems. This plan can become the basis for pursuing CBDB funding, Capital Improvement Plan funding, or private foundation support. It can also be used to guide and negotiate features of development proposals as parcels come on to the open market.
- Promote a variety of housing types and mixed income development for the remaining developable land area within Crestdale.
- Evaluate existing proposals for how they meet the objectives of the neighborhood plan and their financial viability.
- Develop Community Gardens in Crestdale to bring people together, connect to the farmer's market, and link to the area's agricultural heritage.
- Pursue CIP funding for a priority project in the next funding round (be it a multiuse path, Heritage Trail, or the creation of a public park/community garden facility).
- Recognize Crestdale as a distinct area in the Town's Land-Use Plan and incorporate the Neighborhood Improvement Plan for the area.
- Derive any zoning recommendations from the policy guidance in the Land Use Plan.
- With assistance, tap into state/federal funding, the faith based community, private sector partnerships, and private foundations to pursue planning, capital, and programming actions.

MAJOR ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Wingate Commons

Wingate Commons (WC) is a 45-acre development to the southeast of Crestdale adjacent to I-485, with five major land uses including university buildings, office, retail, residential, and hotel. The anchor is the new three-building campus of Wingate University; construction on the first building is expected to begin in the fall of 2011. The private developers intend to build the necessary road and parking infrastructure and an office building in the same time frame on the eastern side of the site. Market conditions will dictate the pace and eventual mix of uses.

The university expects to offer evening classes that will bring students, faculty, and staff to campus regularly. The hotel could be feasible in part to serve the proposed Sportsplex project. These groups could be the customers for uses such as restaurants, a bookstore, and a fitness facility. Joint business ownership opportunities among the university, hotel, and private companies may be formed to meet this demand.

Over the next few years, WC should generate new employment opportunities for area residents. Although the university will not need to add much staff at the new campus, the adjacent office buildings should provide space for about 300 employees. The hotel and retail cluster nearby could support about 30 and 70 jobs, respectively.

Crestdale residents with physical access to WC could benefit in several ways. Some may be able to pursue educational opportunities at Wingate. Others may be able to secure part-time jobs at retail establishments or full-time positions with the property management companies responsible for building maintenance. The most numerous new full-time jobs would be located in the two new office buildings next to the Wingate campus. Crestdale residents should remain alert to opportunities there.

Sportsplex

The Sportsplex will begin its initial phase in 2012 with the development of five fields and related road and trail infrastructure. Eventually, the facility will include 11 fields, one stadium, concession area, restrooms, and additional roads and trails. The county owns the land and will provide \$32 million for the project over the next five years, with the Town of Matthews contributing an additional \$2 million.

The Sportsplex implementation could be enhanced with additional market research of comparable facilities, especially Bryan Park in Greensboro which now captures many statewide soccer tournaments. Other sports such as lacrosse and field hockey could extend the uses beyond girls and boys soccer. Creative thinking about leasing concession space and kiosks could generate additional revenues.

With sophisticated land planning, the Sportsplex could reduce the runoff coming from the site currently in its natural state. For example, parking areas could use pervious tiles. Grading could create detention channels and areas. Trees could be added to the site on a net basis. Artificial turf could be used on one or two fields that could cover water diffusion elements and cisterns. The latter could be used as a first source of irrigation. Measures like these could solve the flooding problem that exists currently at Tank Town Road.

Crestdale residents would benefit from these recreational facilities both as potential users and as spectators. However, the traffic impacts need to be addressed to minimize the negative effects of the project. Suggestions for improved connectivity and circulation are addressed elsewhere in this report (see page 20).

Entrepreneurial Business Development

The Town of Matthews and Wingate University are working with the Small Business Technology Development Center, based at the University of North Carolina, to examine the feasibility of a business incubator. Wingate has an entrepreneurship program that would provide the training; the town owns a facility near downtown that could provide the space once repairs are completed. Students in this program could draw from or complement those attending evening college at Wingate.

If the project moves forward, the partners may want to consider creating a scholarship fund for low-income individuals who have completed high school. Interested and qualified residents of the Crestdale neighborhood could be invited to participate.

Other Development Options

Opportunities for family-oriented development in Crestdale should be explored. Houses priced above Crestdale Commons and below existing areas south of East John Street could hit a sweet spot in the market. The elementary, middle, and high schools serving Crestdale are important assets that should attract future residents.

Accessory apartments (allowed in the CRC zoning of Crestdale through the special permit process) are another option that would allow the development of small housing units on existing lots or apartments within existing homes. These new units could also provide small, more affordable housing options for seniors located within the neighborhood.

One attractive location is near the entrance to Crestdale across from Mt. Moriah church. If the vacant lots that back onto Linden Street could be combined, an attractive site would be created that was close to downtown and very accessible to the hospital and commercial areas to the north. New development in this location would signal the growing vitality of Crestdale.

These lots are owned by individuals from Crestdale and Habitat. These parties could come together to offer their land at a fair market price for development. The benefits of cooperation among landowners should far exceed any costs associated with options they have individually.

Additional Resources

Good ideas require resources to be brought to fruition, and most of those identified in this report need funding from some source. In addition to current government services that will continue to be provided to Crestdale, the town should consider projects for inclusion in its capital improvements program. Such improvements would enhance the health and safety in Crestdale. Other ideas:

- In this economy, financial resources are scarce for community development. Town staff should continue to work with the COG to secure state and federal funding for Crestdale. CDBG funds are the most obvious, but other public funding sources should also be investigated.
- The most prominent part of the nonprofit sector that could provide financial assistance is the faith community. The churches in Crestdale are already making important contributions to the neighborhood. They could participate in producing additional affordable housing.
- The private sector could also be approached to fund specific initiatives. The Levine family (Family Dollar) has had a major impact on the Charlotte region in recent years and may want to help improve Crestdale. Other foundations and donors in Matthews could also be identified.

- Corporate neighbors have a stake in the neighborhood but have not reached out to help. One is the Ruddick Corporation, a multibillion-dollar, publicly traded holding company that owns Harris-Teeter and American & Efrid, a local steel fabricator. Harris-Teeter occupies the site on Crestdale Road at one entrance to the neighborhood. Jefferson Hospital is across the street and employees many Crestdale residents.
- Public-private partnerships are increasingly used to fund redevelopment. Geographic areas are addressed with business improvement districts or TIFs. In the Charlotte area, synthetic TIFs have been successfully used to implement projects. The scale of development anticipated for the Crestdale neighborhood, however, is too small to make these tools appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Crestdale faces challenges but is also poised to take advantage of upcoming opportunities. It has committed and enthusiastic groups and individuals willing to continue working to improve the neighborhood. Such an asset should not be minimized; not all neighborhoods have such an active force. The vision, energy, and time of these groups should be channeled into the unified neighborhood association discussed by those in attendance at the Team's final presentation. In addition, Town staff and elected representatives have endorsed some of the initial ideas discussed at the final presentation. The Matthews's original application for CPAT assistance, the focused attention of the CPAT planning process, and, most importantly, the participation of residents and extended family members have created a momentum around Crestdale Rising. The ideas in this document are not a specific blueprint for Crestdale but a vision to be refined and shaped through implementation. Some of the ideas may be accomplished quickly; others may take many years to become reality and still others may not come to pass. Nevertheless, the next step, continuing and widening the conversation begun at the final presentation, should begin immediately.

PHOTO GALLERY

The following pictures were taken during the Crestdale CPAT project. A brief description is provided for each image.



Image G-1: A view from East Charles Street looking across the railroad tracks that run through Crestdale. The houses shown are part of the Crestdale Commons subdivision on Amir Circle, a private development in the Crestdale neighborhood



Image G-2: Downtown Matthews, looking southwest, at the intersection of Trade and Matthews Station Streets.



Image G-3: On the final day of the project, just before presenting their preliminary findings and recommendations to the community, the Team stopped for a group photo. Team members (from the left): William Harris, FAICP; Jason Beske, AICP; Emil Malizia, AICP; Marijoan Bull, AICP; Guy Pearlman; and Josye Utick. The bronze statue, titled Family, is by Dr. Selma Burke, a celebrated artist who lived in the Crestdale neighborhood. It is in the Matthews Town Hall. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger

Image G-4: Looking down Crestdale Road from Charles Street. Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church is in the distance on the left. The steep railroad crossing is a hazard for semis that often get "hung" on the tracks when attempting to cross. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.





Image G-5: Downtown Matthews, looking down Matthews Station Street. The Matthews Town Hall and Library is facing forward in the distance. The Team worked in the Town Hall throughout their visit, including the community open house and all stakeholder interviews. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.

Image G-6: As part of the Team's effort to meet with any and all stakeholder during their visit, the Team met with a group of Town employees to discuss their local knowledge of Crestdale and Matthews. Members of the Matthews Police, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development and Fire and EMS Departments were on hand for the discussion. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.





Image G-7: Team Leader Jason Beske, AICP, and the other team members discussed issues with residents at the open house. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.

Image G-8: During the open house, residents used a map of Crestdale and Matthews to help team members understand the areas they mentioned. The maps offered community participants a chance to think spatially about their neighborhood and surrounding areas. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.





Image G-9: Following the Team's final presentation, residents asked questions about the future of Crestdale. Following the period of questions and answers, community members agreed to hold a meeting, including others not in attendance, to discuss the team's recommendations and decide on the next steps. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.

Image G-10: After the final presentation and resulting discussion, the Town of Matthews and members of Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church served lunch to the Team and community participants. Photo by Ryan Scherzinger.



MEET THE TEAM



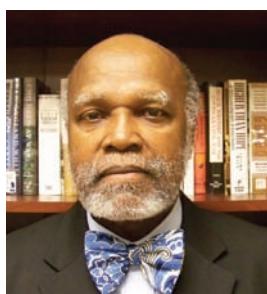
Jason Beske, AICP | Team Leader

Jason Beske is a community planner and urban designer with local government and nonprofit experience. He is a principal planner for Arlington County, Virginia, and has focused his planning career on restoring suburban communities into vital pedestrian places. Beske is chair of the American Planning Association's Urban Design & Preservation Division and serves on the board of the Form-Based Code Institute. He is a frequent speaker on the topics of urban design and site planning at American Planning Association National Planning Conferences.



Marijoan Bull, AICP

Marijoan Bull is assistant professor of Regional Planning at Westfield State University in Massachusetts. Before becoming an educator, she spent over 20 years working in land-use planning at the local and regional levels in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Her work ranged from comprehensive planning, zoning changes, and development review to neighborhood revitalization efforts centered on brownfield cleanup and affordable housing and regional smart growth initiatives. For the past three years, Bull has been working with colleagues in western Kenya on a project with subsistence farmers, looking at best management practices for sustainability and public engagement.



William M. Harris, FAICP

William Harris is Martin Luther King, Jr. Visiting Professor Emeritus of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Presently he is adjunct professor of Political Science at Augusta State University. He is the founder and former professor and chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Jackson State University. Harris's research interests focus upon the areas of inner city economic development and citizen empowerment. Harris was the first African American elected to the AICP College of Fellows. He is author of four books (most recently, *African American Community Development: A Plan for Self Determination*—forthcoming Fall 2011) and numerous scholarly articles. He has traveled and lectured throughout the world.



Emil Malizia, AICP

Emil Malizia is professor and chair of the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His expertise is in the related areas of real estate development, regional economic development, and urban redevelopment. For over four decades, he has conducted research, taught graduate-level and in-service courses, and engaged in consulting for private, nonprofit, and public clients. Malizia is the author or coauthor of four books and over 140 scholarly articles, monographs, and other publications. During leaves, he has been a senior real estate adviser to a major company, a visiting professor, and in federal service. He has international experience in Austria, Colombia (Fulbright Scholar), Jamaica, and Nova Scotia.



Guy Pearlman

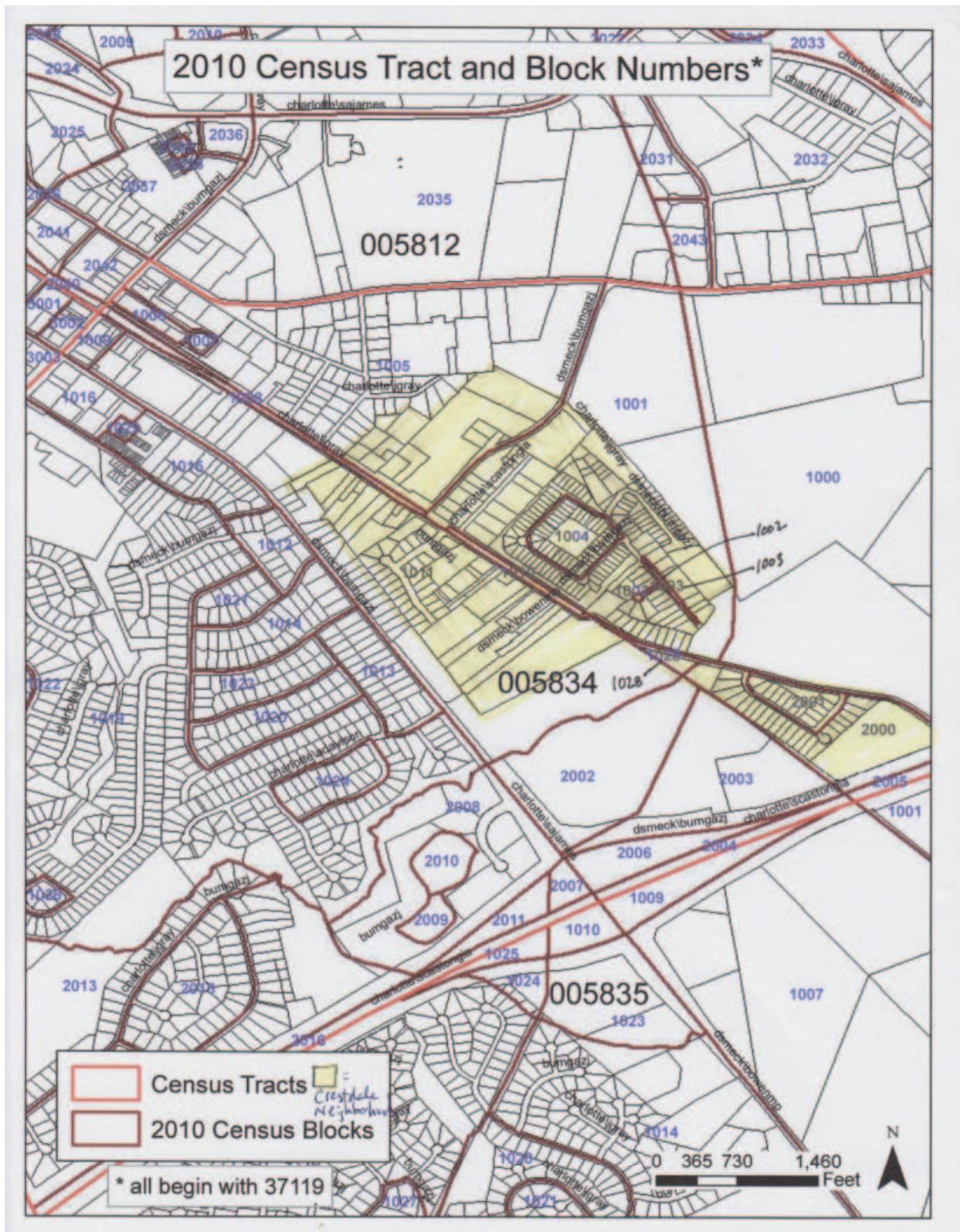
Guy Pearlman is a landscape architect and urban designer, having managed projects with Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company for over five years. He has extensive experience in town planning, campus planning, and traditional neighborhood development with a focus on green infrastructure. Pearlman is an accredited new urbanist and a registered landscape architect in North and South Carolina with over 15 years of experience in planning, permitting, and implementation. He is a coauthor of Light Imprint Handbook: Integrating Sustainability and Community Design. As part of the Light Imprint Initiative, Pearlman works with clients during

the development and construction phases to best implement environmentally sensitive practices.

Pearlman travels extensively to conferences and workshops championing Light Imprint; he has recently presented the initiative at two Congresses for the New Urbanism and to the New Partners for Smart Growth.

*Special thanks to **Josye L. Utick** who offered her time and expertise throughout the Team's visit to Matthews; **David Nelson**, GIS Planner for the Matthews Planning Department, who provided many useful and informative maps throughout the project; and **Kathi Ingrish, AICP**, planning director for the Town of Matthews, who was present throughout the entire project and offered her expertise and local knowledge every step of the way.

APPENDIX A—2010 CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK NUMBERS FOR CRESTDALE



APPENDIX B — EXAMPLE OF A SENIOR CITIZEN TAX WORK-OFF PROGRAM (WAREHAM, MASSACHUSETTS)



Town of Wareham Senior Citizen Tax Work-off Program Policy

What is the Senior Citizen tax work-off program?

The Wareham Senior Citizen Tax Work-off Program is a program that offers seniors the opportunity to contribute up to 100 hours of service to the Town and receive up to a \$750.00 reduction in real estate taxes. The pay rate is \$7.50/hour, the Massachusetts minimum wage, but participants will not earn paychecks. Instead, they will receive a voucher that can be submitted to the Tax Collector as evidence of the amount earned, which will then be deducted from the property tax bill. (Only good for the year of service).

Under the law (CH 59 5K) the reduction in property taxes is exempt for State income tax purposes; it is considered income for Federal income tax purposes. The Town of Wareham will issue a 1099 to all residents that participate in this program. Each individual property owner should discuss with a financial advisor or an accountant to determine how this may effect any retirement benefit they currently receive. The Town has available information from Social Security that may help.

What are the eligibility requirements?

Participants in the Town of Wareham must be 60 years of age or older as of July 1, 2009. They also must be year-round Wareham tax-paying primary residents that have demonstrated financial hardship or need in order to have first priority in the program. Applicants that have some special skill of particular use to the Town will receive second priority.

What is the nature of the work to be performed?

Depending on the interest or experience of the participants, the work may be clerical work, assistance at the library or council on aging, assistance at municipal maintenance, harbormaster's office or any Town department listed on the application. Preference is not guaranteed.

What are the days and hours?

The participant's schedule and the needs of the department will be coordinated by the department head. The actual number of hours will depend on the tasks at hand, but participants may not work more than 100 hours in the tax year. For the first year, participants may begin after July 1, 2009 and must finish the program by November 30, 2009. Work performed after November 30, 2009 will be credited to the following year's actual tax bill.

How do I apply?

Applications are available at the Selectmen's Office, the Council on Aging department, or on the Town website. The Council on Aging staff will verify information provided and approve the application. If accepted, you must also complete an employment contract with the Town. Please note that only the Board of Assessors can approve the actual tax deduction and will do so upon certification from the Town department that the work was actually performed.



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The Tax Work-off Program offers Wareham seniors the opportunity to participate in a property tax relief program to a maximum of \$750.00 per year in return for volunteer service to the Town. Each year, after the first year of implementation, the program will run from December 1st to November 30th. Participants in the program may earn credits in addition to any property tax exemptions they may be eligible for under other statutes, such as personal property exemptions under MA General Law Ch. 59, Section 5 or residential exemptions under MA General Law Ch. 59 Section 5C. Residents may also defer the balance of their taxes under MA General Law Ch. 59 Section 5 (41A) if they are eligible to do so. The Town of Wareham has adopted the provisions of MA General Law Chapter 59 Section 5K, as amended, and the policy for the implementation of the Wareham Senior Citizen Tax Work-off Program is issued by the Board of Selectmen as follows:

1. Any full-time, year-round resident homeowner and taxpayer who is at least sixty (60) years old in the Town of Wareham may receive, on a home that he/she owns and occupies, a Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-off Credit, not to exceed seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$750.00) in any fiscal year.
2. The program shall be coordinated through the Council on Aging, which shall oversee the program. The program will be administered through the coordinated efforts of the Council on Aging, the Board of Assessors, the Tax Collector, and the Town Administrator.
3. The program shall include the following information, which the Council on Aging shall oversee:
 - a. The documentation of year-round residency
 - b. Selection of participants.
 - c. The signing of an Affidavit by the applicant attesting to his/her qualifications for the program.
 - d. The signing of the participation agreement under which the applicant agrees to adhere to the policies of the program.
 - e. The determination of the skills and assignment preferences of the applicant, and the recommendation to the Town Administrator for the assignment of the applicant to a Town department.
4. Applicants must submit to:
Cori Check
5. Applicants must fill out a:
Liability waiver to Town
6. Town of Wareham Employees will not be eligible for this program.



Town of Wareham Senior Citizen Tax Work-off Program

APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Part A: Eligibility Requirements

Please answer all of the following by checking Yes or No.

YES

NO

Are you at least 60 years old? _____

Is Wareham your primary residence? _____

Can you produce a current tax bill? _____

Do you have limited financial resources? _____

Do you have special skills or work experience? _____

Please describe your special skill/experience: _____

Part B: Gross Receipts Requirements

Explain why you are applying. _____

Please explain the issue of need, include extenuating circumstances: _____

Part C: Work Environment

Please check departments where you would like to work for the Town of Wareham:

Assessors _____ Clerk _____ Municipal Maintenance _____

Library _____ Council on Aging _____ Harbormaster _____

Planning Dept. _____ Inspectional Services _____

Do you have any disability that would limit your ability to perform the essential and major functions of the work you have requested to perform?

If I qualify for the Senior Citizen Tax Work-off program, I understand that I will earn a \$750.00 tax credit (which may be subject to back-up federal withholdings) for working 100 hours and that this tax credit can only be applied toward my Town of Wareham real estate tax bill.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

This application is: Granted _____ Denied _____

Interviewed on: _____

Job assignment and department: _____

Waiting List for: _____

OR

Reason for denial: _____

Other or Pending Job Assignments/Departments: _____

Staff Signature: _____

Department: _____



Town of Wareham Senior Citizen Tax Work-off Program

Participation Agreement

The Town of Wareham, a municipal corporation with offices at 54 Marion Road, Wareham MA, hereinafter "the Town" and _____ of _____, Wareham MA, hereinafter "the participant" on this _____ day of _____, agree as follows:

The Participant will provide service to the Town for a maximum of one hundred hours (100) between the date of execution of this Agreement and November 30, 2009.

It is agreed and understood by both parties that the actual work assignments may be made on a week-to-week basis and may vary according to the needs of the department to which the Participant is assigned.

The nature of the work assignment shall be dictated by the needs of the Town and the head of the department to which the Participant is assigned.

The Participant is a volunteer in this program and is not entitled to benefits under any classification, compensation, or benefit schedule.

This Agreement will terminate on November 30, 2009, but may be terminated sooner at the discretion of the Wareham Board of Selectmen upon no less than seven (7) days written notice of termination, which shall be given or mailed to the Participant's residential address listed above.

Volunteer Participant: _____

Director, Council on Aging: _____

Department Head: _____



Town of Wareham Senior Citizen Tax Work-off Program

**Certification of Completion of Volunteer Services
MA General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5K, as amended**

To: The Board of Assessors
Wareham, MA

_____, Owner of a parcel at:

_____, Wareham, MA, has completed _____ hours of volunteer work to be credited toward the fiscal year _____ tax assessed on the parcel listed above at the rate of \$7.50 per hour, for a total credit of \$_____ for the fiscal year stated herein.

Signature of Person Certifying the Work

Printed Name of the Person Certifying the Work

Action taken by the Board of Assessors:

Approved: _____ Amount Abated: \$_____

Other action taken: _____

WRHBS/G
CORI REQUEST FORM

The Wareham Board of Selectmen is certified by the Criminal History Systems Board for access to conviction and pending criminal case data. As an applicant for _____, I understand that a criminal record check will be conducted for conviction and pending criminal case information only and that it will not necessarily disqualify me. The information below is correct to the best of my knowledge.

APPLICANT/EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE
(Unless otherwise preempted by law)

APPLICANT/EMPLOYEE INFORMATION
(PLEASE PRINT)

LAST NAME

FIRST NAME

MIDDLE NAME

MAIDEN NAME OR ALIAS (IF APPLICABLE) PLACE OF BIRTH

_____/_____/_____
DATE OF BIRTH

_____/_____/_____
SOCIAL SECURITY #
(Requested, not required)

ID THEFT INDEX PIN
(if applicable)

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME

CURRENT AND FORMER ADDRESSES:

SEX: _____ HEIGHT: ____ ft. ____ in. WEIGHT: _____ EYE COLOR: _____

STATE DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER: _____
(include state of issue)

***THE ABOVE INFORMATION WAS VERIFIED BY REVIEWING THE FOLLOWING FORM OF
GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION: _____

REQUESTED BY: _____
SIGNATURE OF CORI AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEE

* The CHSB Identify Theft Index PIN Number is to be completed by those applications that have been issued an Identity Theft Index PIN Number by the CHSB. Certified agencies are required to provide all applicants the opportunity to include this information to ensure the accuracy of the CORI request process. All CORI request forms that include this field are required to be submitted to the CHSB via mail or by fax to 617-660-4614.

TOWN OF WAREHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN CORI POLICY

Where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks are part of a general background check for employment, volunteer work or licensing purposes, the following practices and procedures will generally be followed.

- I. CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by CHSB. All applicants will be notified that a CORI check will be conducted. If requested, the applicant will be provided with a copy of the CORI policy.
- II. An informed review of a criminal record requires adequate training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to review CORI in the decision-making process will be thoroughly familiar with the educational materials made available by CHSB.
- III. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CORI checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.
- IV. If a criminal record is received from CHSB, the authorized individual will closely compare the record provided by CHSB with the information on the CORI request form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant, to ensure the record relates to the applicant.
- V. If the Board of Selectmen is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the CORI check, the applicant will be notified immediately. The applicant shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and the organization's CORI policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position or license, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the CORI record.
- VI. Applicants challenging the accuracy of the CORI record shall be provided a copy of CHSB Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record. If the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, Board of Selectmen will make a determination based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant. The Board of Selectmen may contact CHSB and request a detailed search consistent with CHSB policy.
- VII. If the Board of Selectmen reasonably believes the record belongs to the applicant and is accurate, based on the information as provided in section IV on this policy, then the determination of suitability for the position or license will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but not be limited to the following:
 - (a) Relevance of the crime to the position sought;
 - (b) The nature of the work to be performed;
 - (c) Time since the conviction;
 - (d) Age of the candidate at the time of the offense;
 - (e) Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense;
 - (f) The number of offenses;
 - (g) Whether the applicant has pending charges;
 - (h) Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof;

(i) Any other relevant information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority

VIII. The Board of Selectmen will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.

TOWN OF WAREHAM
54 Marion Road
Wareham, MA 02571

(FOR AN INDIVIDUAL ONLY)

**STANDARD HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNITY CLAUSE FOR USE IN LEASES,
USE AGREEMENTS, ETC.**

I, _____, through the signing of this document, indemnify, hold harmless and defend the Town of Wareham and its agents and employees from all suits and actions, including attorney's fees and all costs of litigations and judgment of every name and description brought against the Town as a result of loss, damage or injury to person or property by reason of any act by:

Print Name

Signature

**Town of Wareham
Senior Citizen Tax Work-off Program
Record of Hours Worked**

OFFICE/DEPARTMENT: _____

ATTENDANCE FOR THE MONTH OF: _____

NAME OF SENIOR: _____

I certify that I have worked the hours as recorded above.

Date _____

Signature

Department Head Approval