

Participatory Planning with Local Communities

Programs of
ICA @ Greensboro and greenschemes (1991-2019)
Provide a foundation for Emerging Ecology initiatives

Since 1991 when Elaine and Nelson Stover moved to Greensboro from the Institute of Cultural Affairs' (ICA) International office in Brussels, Belgium, they have conducted a variety of programs with local communities. Elaine had just completed her master's degree in Human Ecology at the Free University of Brussels and was committed to using the ICA's methods in ways that both engaged local people and began to address ecological issues. She designed programs that used the ICAs' *Technology of Participation (ToP)*[®] and drew on the Stover family's 25-year history conducting grassroots development projects with the ICA in Australia, Egypt, India and in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia.

ICA@Greensboro began conducting ToP training programs in Greensboro in the early 1990's. Participants included City of Greensboro staff personnel, including members of the Planning Department, as well as architects and other design professionals. In addition, ToP courses were held in Durham and Asheville and across the Southeast from Washington DC to Atlanta. Beginning in 2000, a team of ToP trained design professionals created a 5-session Participatory Design Module (PDM) that involved neighborhood residents in 20 hours of evening and Saturday planning sessions. This project was funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Greensboro and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

Greensboro communities that participated in the Participatory Design Module included:

- Ardmore Park
- East Side Park
- Kings Forest

After their 5-session PDMs, each of these communities implemented some of the projects they had envisioned. Later, a series of planning and celebratory events were conducted in the Glenwood area, focusing on Grove St. Revitalization and Habitat for Humanity sponsored planning events with the Poplar Ridge Neighborhood.

In addition, planning consultations were held in Sanford with the Brick Capital CDC, with citizens of Northeast Greensboro regarding the Bessemer Shopping Center and the McGirt-Horton library, the Charlotte Hawkins Brown historic site east of Greensboro, the Durham and Burlington Police Departments and parties interested in creating New Garden Village. A multi-year comprehensive series of planning events has been underway with the neighborhoods of Southwest Central Durham in cooperation with the Duke Office of Community Affairs.

While a more thorough documentation of these projects is being conducted by Emerging Ecology as a part of the Care Across the Carolinas (www.emergingecology.org/history) initiative in preparation for its Enlivening Neighborhoods Project, this initial report is being made available containing preliminary background information. Emerging Ecology will draw on the pool of expertise and body of experience generated by these projects as it conducts its Enlivening Neighborhoods Project (www.emergingecology.org/neighborhoods).

Prepared by Emerging Ecology (www.EmergingEcology.org) in consultation with [greenschemes](#).