Fellow Designers,

Greetings, and welcome to the Village Design Institute’s first charrette/workshop production of “A Pattern Language for Ecovillages.”

The Village Design Institute (VDI) is a newly forming educational nonprofit with the mission of creating and disseminating an inter- and multi-disciplinary knowledge resource base for promoting the design of sustainable human settlements for the 21st century. A fundamental working hypothesis at VDI is that designing sustainable settlements is most effectively visualized and accomplished at village-scale, with all that implies. One of the first projects of the Institute is the task at hand: conceptualizing and formulating A Pattern Language for Ecovillages.

For those of you familiar with the original A Pattern Language, and especially its predecessor The Timeless Way of Building, the authors encourage users to create their own patterns suitable for their own particular purposes. As it turns out, the original proto-language was designed essentially for the rehabilitation of existing cities; ‘city’ is explicit throughout. For example, pattern 10, MAGIC of the CITY, calls for population centers of 300,000.

In these days of ever-growing eco-consciousness and the subsequent focus on sustainable settlements, it is becoming apparent that a new language is needed. This new language will define and describe the ecologically-based context for the fructiferous emergence of the pattern “ecovillage,” and will assist and guide comprehensive, multidimensional, holistic-organic settlement design processes explicitly at village-scale, with all that implies.

This charrette/workshop will be one in a series of collaborative study groups convened to begin the process of getting this new language underway.

We at VDI believe there is a real need for a book with this title: A Pattern Language for Ecovillages, and so will continue working on this project until the language is coherent enough to be fit for publication. Thanks for your interest and participation in this – the inauguration stage of an important new work.

Authentically,

E. Christopher Mare
President