

17 November 2002

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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