The Sustainable Community Development Program is designed to give students a home for their personal vision of how to design and implement measures that create or restore communities. The program defines community as humans and all other resident life forms of local ecosystems and the habitats that support all life. Students study the physical environment of their community, the values, practices, and needs of humans who reside there, and the influences of, and access points to, relevant government and private enterprises whose activities affect the well-being of the community. Projects done throughout the program will distill from studies and be designed to address authentic needs in the student’s community. Students may focus on rural or urban settings.
First Realm:

Natural History of the Region: Field-based studies of local ecosystems, as well as patterns of past and current human habitation and use of the land, comprise course themes. Courses may include field methods, botany, conservation biology, sociobiology, biophilia, environmental chemistry, physical geography, disturbed lands ecology, therapeutic use of the wilderness, and holistic natural resources management.

Considerations for the First Realm:

- How might we assess the current health of our local ecosystems and where necessary restore them to full health?
- How is our own physical and psychological health connected to the health of the land? What kind of direct and regular access to local nature do we have? How do we ensure access to niches of living nature for our children and for elders and people who have limited mobility?

Second Realm:

Appropriate Technologies and Assessment: Course themes include planning, design, materials, and assessment to accommodate needs for food, water, shelter, transportation, waste-handling, aesthetics, recreation, entertainment, and other daily living activities in ways also compatible with the needs of natural living systems. Courses may include sustainable shelter design, permaculture, natural systems agriculture, environmental economics, urban or rural planning, hydrology, alternative energy sources and systems.

Considerations for the Second Realm:

- How would we quantify and characterize the ecological footprint, which is the net effect on the natural world of providing for ourselves such things as shelter, water, food, transport, and treatment of wastes? What are ways we can shrink the negative effects while enhancing positive benefits?
- How big is a house?
Third Realm:

Social, Spiritual, and Philosophical Foundations of Community: Course themes explore the psychological connections among members of a community and its natural environment; the evolution of values and behaviors expressed in the community; influences of social and culture groups, and effects of both traditional and alternative economic perceptions and practices. *Courses may include history of the community, human ecology, ecological economics, sociobiology, ethics, overview of land and water law, regional and national politics, eco-psychology, comparative beliefs, consensus and decision-making models.*

Considerations for the Third Realm:

- What psychological, social, and cultural factors may emerge to challenge or support us in the implementation of more sustainable ways of living? Do we have regular social interaction with neighbors, citizens in the town commons, with people from other cultures who live in our midst? How can we enhance opportunities for such interactions?

- How will we inclusively implement the planning, design, and fulfillment of sustainable ways? What developmental process will serve this?

- What pathways can be found to invite communities to make connections between the tenets of their spiritual practice and sustaining actions in the community of human beings and the natural world?

Fourth Realm:

Communication, Celebration, and Education in the Community: Studies of the means and mechanisms by which members of communities identify and express challenges, engage in problem-solving, learn interactively, assess worthiness of community efforts, celebrate accomplishments, preserve and pass on collective wisdom to future generations, are among course themes. *Courses may include small group dynamics, community performance and fine arts, research design and application, documentation of community history, seasons and rituals of the community.*

Considerations for the Fourth Realm:

- How do we communicate honestly and openly among ourselves the challenges and opportunities we have identified in pursuit of a more sustainable way of living? How can the arts help us to effect this communication?

- How will we then implement the planning, design, and fulfillment of sustainable ways? What developmental process will serve this?

- Do we engage in regular participation in civic affairs? Do we study local and regional issues, comment to decision-makers in municipal, county, state, and federal bodies? What will help us to boost our
• How will we evaluate sustainable practices we have developed to know if they are worthy and effective over the span of the coming generations? How will we remember to ask whether our efforts benefit the lives of people of all socio-economic circumstances? How will we remember to ask how our efforts have benefitted the natural neighborhood and our other-than-human creatures with whom we share our region?

• How will we celebrate what we have learned? How will the arts help us to memorialize our knowledge for all time? What kinds of collaboration among the generations will help us to pass along our collective wisdom to the next generations?