

## WHAT IS TRANSITION?

Transition is a worldwide movement started in Kinsale, Ireland, and Totnes, England, by Rob Hopkins, who is currently in the “Transition Town” of Totnes. The objective of Transition is to help people become aware of the coming problems, then to implement creative ways of facing and overcoming them.

The fundamental book of the Transition Movement is *The Transition Handbook* by Mr. Hopkins, published in 2008. It describes concrete approaches that we can take to prepare for the inevitable changes, using the experience gained in Kinsale and Totnes as examples of how to do it.

## WHAT IS TRANSITION AUSTIN?

Austin’s implementation of the Transition concept is being led by Transition Austin, a certified Transition Initiative dedicated to guiding Austin to be a clean, safe, successful city during and after the powerdown we all face in the not to distant future.

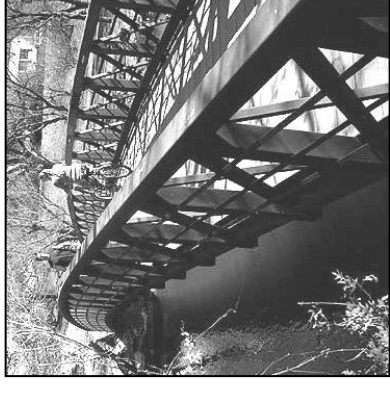
## Organization

Different areas and neighborhoods of Austin have different people, with different skills and resources; Austin is just too big to implement one single Transition Initiative overall.

The Austin Neighborhoods Council has divided Austin into “sectors” – neighborhood areas that share common resources and goals. Each sector has its own diverse population, its own needs, and its own strengths.

Transition Towns are being established in these sectors, so that each area of Austin can implement Transition in the way that works best for it. In addition, there is a central Hub, providing common services such as Internet presence, communications, and government liaison to the Transition Towns.

# Transition



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Transition Austin, visit our web site at

<http://www.TransitionAustin.org>

For a presentation about Transition to your group, visit our web site and click on the link at the bottom-right of our home page.

To learn more about Transition worldwide, visit these web sites:

Transition Texas:

<http://TransitionTexas.ning.com>

Transition United States:

<http://www.TransitionUS.org>

Transition Globally:

<http://TransitionCulture.org/>

# Austin

**Working for a sustainable,  
resilient, and liveable  
future for Austin.**

## THE PROBLEMS FACING US

We of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are faced with not just one, but a combination of challenges that are unprecedented in human history. How we respond to them will determine the future of humanity, not just in Austin, but globally.

### The End of the Age of Oil

We aren't running out of oil; we're just running out of oil that's cheap enough to extract and use without bankrupting ourselves. We're on our way to a *powered down* society, in which we won't have cheap oil any more, meaning we're going to have to use less of it – a lot less.

Oil supports an astonishing variety of aspects of our life – from gasoline to plastics to the fertilizer we use to grow our food. That's all winding down, and we need to plan how we're going to respond to that fact.

### Global Climate Change

The climate of Earth's atmosphere is changing. We've all heard of global warming; but there are other aspects to the problem, too. For example, the warming is melting fresh water off the Arctic ice pack; as that fresh water spills into the Atlantic, it could slow or even stop the Gulf Stream, which would (among other things) bring a new ice age to Europe.

Can we stop it? Good question. And if we can't, how can we live in a world in which global climate change is a fact of life?

### The Global Financial Melt-down

The world banking system can no longer support the demands being placed on it. No matter what the cause, the result is that meltdowns like the one that happened in the fall of 2008 are more and more likely. How can we ordinary people live our lives when the financial system isn't there so support us any more?

## APPROACHES TO THE SOLUTION

Be assured: these problems *will* be solved. If we do nothing, Mother Earth will solve them for us; but her solutions won't be very pretty for humanity.

### The Ostrich Approach

The approach that most people & governments are using now is to pretend that the problems don't exist. There hasn't been a problem up to now; why should the future be any different?

Just remember, though: when an ostrich has his head stuck in the sand: what's the most vulnerable part of him, sticking up in the air? The problems are going to bite us – right there – if we don't pay attention to them and solve them.

### The Technology Approach

The next most common approach is, basically, “Aaaaugh! It's too scary! I can't think about it right now; we should wait until things are so bad that we have no choice but to solve them.” In other words, “Technology will save us.”

Maybe so. But maybe not; and do you want to pin your hopes on some vague possibility, or do you want to start planning – and working – to come up with solutions we can implement with what we have and know now?

### The Transition Approach

Transition is about working to devise, and then implement, solutions to the big problems that we can get started on *now*. It means preparing ourselves to create a sustainable, resilient culture that can support us into the future.

At heart, Transition asks, “How can we prepare ourselves to live, and even thrive, in the world that's coming? How can we change our society so everyone can live healthy, satisfying lives, even with the problems we're going to face?”

## THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSITION

So what *is* Transition? It is applying established principles to the way we live today, to prepare ourselves for life in an age where oil is expensive or unavailable, the climate is not as hospitable as it is today, and financial systems are based on local, not global, principles.

It is based on these principles, among others:

### Re-skilling

Our grandparents had a lot of skills that most of us have forgotten today – for example, how to grow our own food. Transition is about getting those skills back into the hands of the people, so we aren't so dependent on global systems.

### Locality

We have to prepare for a world in which long-distance travel isn't possible for most people. Shopping locally, eating locally-grown food, and even local economies – all these will be facts of life post-oil. Transition groups around the world are now experimenting with what it means to live in this kind of world.

### Powerdown

The cheap, abundant energy we've taken for granted for so long isn't going to be there very much longer. If we choose to voluntarily withdraw from our addiction to oil and its luxuries now, we won't have to go “cold turkey” when things get tight.

### Community

How can we do all this? We can't – by ourselves. But if we build local, supportive, active communities, we *can* do it. We can help each other through the coming times, turning Austin from a collection of people into a set of “Transition Towns” built up from neighborhoods, small businesses, and spiritual communities.