

TRANSITION



STREETS



PREVIEW

This preview consists of sample pages from each of the seven Transition Streets chapters.

Each of the five main content chapters is filled with information, tips, and resources for you and your neighbors. This preview is just a sample of what's in store if you choose to embark on bringing Transition Streets to your neighborhood. The full curriculum is over 100 pages. Complementary resources including facilitator and outreach guides are also available on www.transitionstreets.org.

Version May 2015

1. Getting started

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1.2 HOW IT WORKS

How it works

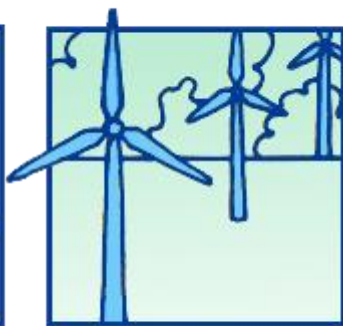
The program is based around 7 group sessions. The first and the final sessions start and close the work, and the other five cover areas of our lifestyle where we can easily reduce energy use and save money: home energy use, water, food, waste, and transport.

Usually the group meets about every 2-4 weeks for 2 hours; people in the groups take turns to host this at their home. Members of your group take turns to facilitate each session so that it is truly a group effort and not all driven by one person. Ideally the host is not also the facilitator, or it's a bit too much to take on.

It is important that the facilitator for the session keeps good time, as it's easy to get off track and not get through everything you mean to. At each of the 5 core sessions, the group can follow the suggested meeting outline provided at the end of this section. It's also useful to have a note taker at each session and to keep a record of decisions. For extra support, download the facilitator guide from www.transitionstreets.org.



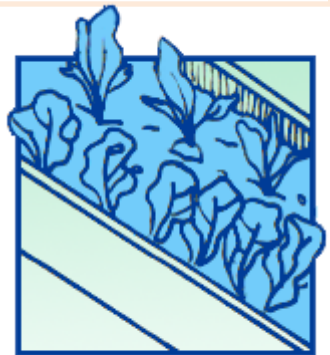
1. Getting Started



2. Energy



3. Water



4. Food



5. Waste



6. Transportation



7. What's Next?

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1.8 SUGGESTED AGENDA

Suggested agenda

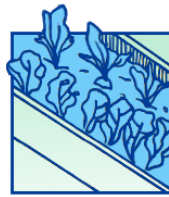
This suggested agenda can be used at the next 5 sessions. You can adjust it as needed to best serve your group: e.g., by spending more time on 'The Bigger Picture' discussion topics and less on discussing the actions.

For the next session on energy, try the proposed timing below and see how it works for the group. Given that you are not starting your action plan until then, the first agenda item is not needed for the next session. You will probably use this time talking about the actions. It's a good idea to nominate a time-keeper and possibly someone to take notes.

Section	Timing (2 hours total)
Review actions & progress from previous session	15 minutes
Discuss the facts & the actions for this session	70 minutes
Write personal action plan	10 minutes
The Bigger Picture – discussion	20 minutes
Re-confirm next meeting	5 minutes

2. Energy

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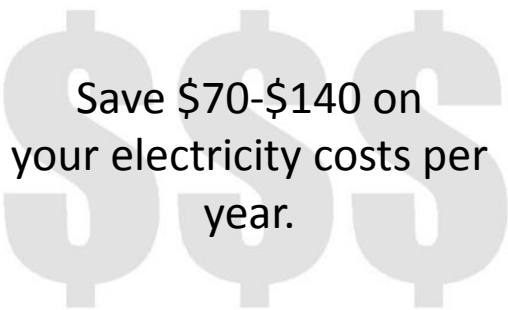


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Your savings

Studies have shown that people who monitor their energy use typically see reductions of 5-10% per year (\$70-\$140), just by being aware of when things are on and how much each appliance uses.^[1]



Notes:

Next steps, hints, & tips

Reading your gas & electric meters

- Start recording your meter readings.
- Read numbers from left to right.^[2]
- Call your utility or check their website if it's not clear how to read your meter(s).
- Write down your readings at the same time each day, week, or month.
- Subtract the previous reading from the new one to see how many kWh, therm, or cu ft you have used (see page after next).
- Compare it to previous periods to see if and why it's changed.
- Or invest in an electricity monitor (see next page).
- Complete this online Home Energy Saver for your home: <http://hes.lbl.gov/consumer> to get a personalized report of potential savings. Be sure to note your "Session #" so you can return to your report.
- Once you know your usage, shop around for best prices and consider renewable energy sources.

Yes, but ... I can't read my meters. Your bill also has your energy usage per month. Your utility company may also provide your past year's usage online. (See Local Resources: Energy Usage.)

I'm a renter. If you're a renter and your energy bill is included in your rent, ask your landlord to share your bill – they might be motivated by potential energy savings, and might even want to implement some of these changes themselves. You can also learn from your neighbors – see which actions work best for them, and explore which actions might be most applicable for you and your home.

When you first use your monitor, you'll probably wander around the house turning things on and off, and marveling at the information at your fingertips!

Your library or Transition Group may have a plug-in monitor you can use. You may want to borrow or buy a monitor with your group and use it for a week each in turn. This gives you time to find out how much each appliance or lamp uses, and your typical daily use. Then, when you don't have the monitor, you could simply read your electric meter to see your consumption every week, or check your electric bill every month.

Some whole house electricity monitors:

- PowerCost Monitor (about \$110)
- OWL Electricity Monitor (about \$115)
- Efergy Smart Meter (about \$115)
- The Energy Detective (\$200)

Plug-in electricity monitor

- Kill-A-Watt (about \$25)

Online Stores

- www.realgoods.com (independent)

Also check manufacturers' websites for local stores or where to buy. ^[3]

How do I use a plug-in monitor? Plug the monitor into a wall outlet and plug your appliance into the monitor to see how much energy the appliance is eating up. Do this around the house, writing down how much power each appliance uses when switched on, switched off, and if it's on standby.

Do this once and you will have a much better idea of which appliances are using the most energy. You get up-to-the-minute info about how much electricity you are using and how much it is costing you (along with CO2 emissions info).



3. Water

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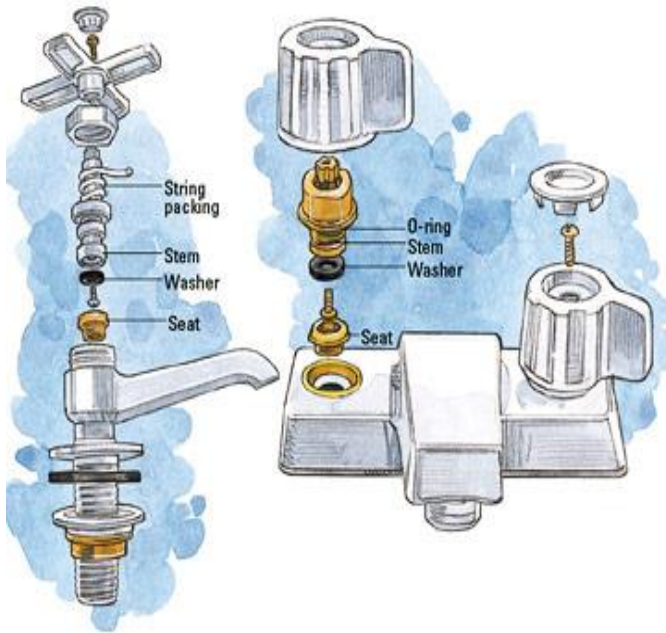


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Your savings

You can save an additional 3,000 gallons of water a year, if you turn off the tap while you brush your teeth (assuming you do this for 2 minutes twice a day). You can improve on these savings by doing the same when you wash the veggies, or rinse the dishes.



Next steps, hints, & tips

- Some water providers distribute free faucet aerators to their customers.
- Search for a YouTube video called “Collins DIY Survival Demos - How to Fix a Dripping Tap”.
- See your local hardware store. They often offer written guides or will give you specific advice.
- If you’re not into DIY, contact a local plumber or handyman to do it for you. Do not try any major DIY project without professional guidance.
- Check your pipes regularly for visible leaks (also see section 3.4).
- Use dye tabs to check if your toilet has a leak. Replacement flappers are often under \$5.
- Call your local water provider to ask about free leak detection kits and water reduction devices.
- For more info visit http://www.epa.gov/watersense/products/bathroom_sink_faucets.html

Notes:

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3.17 OUTDOORS

The Practical
Action Plan

Cost: low-med

\$ Savings: med-
high

Effort: low

CO2 saved: low-
medium

Challenge

The average American household uses 320 gallons of water per day, about 30 percent of which is devoted to outdoor uses.^[3] In dry areas like the Southwest, a household's outdoor water use can be as high as 60%.^[3] Nationwide, landscape irrigation is estimated to account for nearly one-third of all residential water use, totaling nearly 9 billion gallons per day.^[3] Many of us still use water that has been treated to drinking-quality to irrigate thirsty lawns and gardens. Improving our outdoor water use efficiency is one of the best ways we can improve our resiliency to times of drought and water scarcity.



Photos above from flickr. Sprinkler by Robert Couse-Baker and rain barrel by Metropolitan Planning Council. Licensed under Creative Commons <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>

Solution

When planning your landscaping, consider using native or horticultural varieties of native plants. These plants are typically better suited for the local weather patterns, and provide excellent micro-habitat for native insect and bird species.

By using water-efficient gardening practices like drip irrigation, mulching, and swales, you can still have a beautiful, living garden even in times of drought.

Try to avoid using tap water to water the garden. Instead, collect rainwater (rainwater is also better for your plants) and/or consider reusing water, or grey water, on the garden. See reference section at end for more info on grey water and on rainwater harvesting systems.

Yes, but ... I can't re-use my water in the garden because of the soap. Biodegradable soaps are now widely available. These soaps use compounds that easily break down over time in the soil.

4. Food

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Supporting Local Food Systems

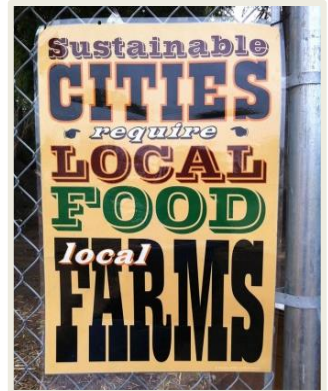
When the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) began publishing the National Directory of Farmers' Markets in 1994, there were 1,755 farmers' markets. In 2014 that number had grown to 8,268.^[3] Increasingly, towns and cities offer spring and winter markets. Additionally, "pick your own" options (for blueberries, apples, corn, etc.) are popular in many regions of the country. Supporting agro-tourism is another way to support the financial viability of small, local farms.

Another popular way for consumers to support local food systems and get access to fresh, local, seasonal foods is by joining a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program: an economic partnership with a local farmer that guarantees stable markets for their crops. CSA farms in the U.S. currently number more than 4,000. Most are located near urban areas in the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and Great Lakes regions, with growing numbers in other areas, including the West Coast.

Many CSAs sell only organic produce, but not all – so it's important to ask how the produce was grown. CSAs generally vary from week to week depending on what is ripe enough to harvest. A few farms exclusively sell home-grown produce while others source additional stock from other local growers. And many CSAs ask for a list of up to three vegetables you don't like which they swap for something else.

CSA boxes are competitively priced, often coming in cheaper than organic supermarket produce. Some CSAs will deliver to your door, while others deliver to a central location for pickup. Local Harvest (<http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>) is a great resource to explore to see what kind of CSA works for you and your family.

Use the "Local Resource" Section 4.21 (at the end of this chapter) to share information about local farmers markets, farm stands and tours, and CSAs with your group members.



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4.6 REDUCE FOOD PACKAGING

The Practical Action Plan

Cost: none

\$ Savings:
none-low

Effort: low

CO2 saved: low-med

Challenge

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), food and food packaging account for almost 45% of the materials landfilled in the United States.^[4] Waste from food packaging is a significant portion of trash discarded by the public .

In addition to producing unnecessary waste, packaged, pre-chopped vegetables go bad faster and often cost more. Bagged salads have also been found to harbor pathogens.^[5]



Solution

Reduce the amount of food and packaging you throw away by buying planning ahead, buying fresh ingredients, and wasting less (see hints and tips on the following page).

Packaging we can't avoid can sometimes be disposed of through reuse or recycling rather than sending it to a landfill.

EPA Food Recovery Challenge: To reduce the amount of food and packaging that reaches landfills, the Environmental Protection Agency started the Food Recovery Challenge.

Visit <http://www.epa.gov/foodrecoverychallenge/> for additional tips and resources, including an assessment tool for tracking food and packaging waste.



5. Waste

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So what can you do about it?

5.2 WASTE

Each of these actions will help you reduce the amount of waste that you produce. In your group, have a brief chat about each item and then decide which ones you want to tackle and when. Record your own action plan on the page at the end of this section.

- **The Story of Stuff**—learn more about the impacts of our excessive consumption and see if this affects your buying decisions. (5.3)
- **Reduce & reuse**—ideas for making things go further. (5.4)
- **Recycling**—your definitive guide to what we can recycle, when, where and how in your town. Some towns even collect compostable materials separately. (5.6)
- **Make your own compost**—for anyone who loves to grow things and is ready to take care of their own compostable waste. (5.8)

Notes:



Cost: none-low

\$ Savings: low

Effort: low

CO2 saved: low

Getting started

You can make a traditional compost heap, or use a worm bin. There are many types of compost bins on the market, although perfectly satisfactory ones can be constructed from scrap timber, trash barrels, bricks, or wire mesh. Instructions for making compost or worm bins are widely available.

A worm bin is a container housing a colony of special types of worm that are ideal for composting. Worm bins can be kept indoors (with careful management) or outside, and are ideal for households with no garden, as they produce only a small quantity of worm castings (compost) and a liquid, which forms a concentrated plant food ("compost tea"). There are a variety of worm bins available for sale, complete with "worm starter kits," or you can build your own. Not all compostable materials are good worm food, so it's best to do some research on vermiculture before getting started.



Photo at left: Transition founder Rob Hopkins visits a community compost site run by Kompost Kids in Milwaukee, WI.

Yes, but ... I only have pots and window boxes, not a garden. You don't need to have a garden to make and use your own compost. Technology has caught up with modern, compact living, and today's compost and worm bins are totally sealed and come in a range of sizes. Once the composting stage is over, add the mix to a window box or give it to a neighbor who gardens.

I have absolutely no space for a compost or worm bin. Find a neighbor who is an avid gardener or composter, and ask if you can bring over your organic waste once a week to add to their compost bin.

Additional Resources: For composting tips and instructions to build your own composters or worm bins see:

<http://www.treehugger.com/lawn-garden/4-diy-compost-bins-you-can-build-one-day-video.html>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Worm-Compost-System>

<http://www.recyclenow.com/reduce/home-composting/making-compost>

6. Transportation

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Reminder

Possible actions:

- Walk this way (6.3)
- Get on your bike (6.4)
- Take buses & trains (6.6)
- Try car sharing (6.8)
- Try car pooling (6.9)
- Fuel-efficient driving (6.11)
- To fly or not to fly? (6.13)
- Vacation local (6.15)

**What other ideas does your group have that aren't covered above?
Add them below if you think they are relevant for you.**

My actions	Already done	When I'll do this	Notes

Group actions

How can you help each other out in your group? List team actions here (with named person and due date).



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6.18 TRANSPORTATION: THE BIGGER PICTURE

Questions for discussion

It seems that giving up our cars is one of the hardest things to do. Obviously, this is influenced by the cost and availability of suitable public transportation options. Given that this may take some time to change,

- What sort of changes would you need to make in your life to significantly cut your dependence on your car?
- What would your friends and family think?
- Given what we've learned about air travel, when do you think it is appropriate or responsible to fly?

Notes:

7. Wrapping up



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7.2 FINAL EVALUATION

How did you do?

Please now complete the “after” section of the evaluation form that you started at the beginning of your very first session. Hopefully you will clearly see your progress as you add up the number of actions you have completed, or which are still in progress (some of which might have already been underway before you started Transition Streets).

Also please complete the feedback section at the end of the evaluation form to let us know what you liked and what you didn’t like about the program. Thank you!

Please collect all the completed evaluation forms send them to the Transition US office at PO Box 917, Sebastopol, CA 95473. We are keeping track of the overall impacts of the program and will use the evaluation forms to continue improving and providing support for Transition Streets.

Transition Streets Evaluation Form

PLEASE COMPLETE THE BLUE COLUMNS AT THE START OF THE PROGRAM (first session):					AND THE GREEN ONES AT THE END OF THE PROGRAM (last session):				
1.	What do you hope to gain from being part of Transition Streets (please list up to 3 things):	Did you meet your objectives (e.g. all, most, some, none):							
In this section, please rate the following statements:		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
2.	I feel positive about the future.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3.	I feel that a strong sense of community is important in these uncertain times.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
4.	I feel connected to, and a part of, my local community.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Your stories

Would you like to write a success story about your group? Would you be willing to supply us a quote about your experiences of doing the project so that we can tell other people about how it has been for you? We can put these on the website and use them to help inform others about the benefits of Transition Streets. If so, please call or email us and we’ll give you some help.

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7.5 YOUR NEXT STEPS

Where to now?

Think about and discuss where you will go from here, either on your own or with some or all of your group. Will you:

- Continue to complete the basic actions?
- Come up with new actions?
- Get more involved with Transition or other local community groups?
- Engage your local government around sustainability issues?
- Develop an emergency preparedness plan for your neighborhood?
- Join a rally or protest?
- Tell your friends about Transition Streets?
- Start a Transition Initiative in your community?

For additional resources and inspiration, check out the Guide to Building Thriving, Resilient Communities at: www.resilience.org/communities-guide

Mentor

Would you like to become a Transition Streets mentor? Now you know what it's all about, you could help another group to get started and to get the most from the program. This is a great way you can give back to your local community. Please contact us to find out more.

Celebrate!

And now – celebrate what you've already achieved with your group!

Celebration is an important part of Transition. Our task is great, and we will always have more to do and more to learn. It's important to take the time to celebrate accomplishments along the way! Regardless of what you decide to do next, your participation in Transition Streets (including the actions you've taken, the bigger-picture context you've gained, and the time you've spent getting to know your neighbors) is well worth celebrating.

