



In these times of climate change, rising energy costs, and economic instability, how can we build stronger communities and more satisfying lives based on sharing and cooperation? What if creating networks of mutual support is our best hope for security in these uncertain times? Transition Ann Arbor seeks to catalyze conversation and collaboration around these questions.

The Transition Towns movement is devoted to unleashing the collective genius of those around us to creatively and proactively design our descent to a low-energy future, by building ways of living that are more connected, more enriching and that recognize the biological limits of our planet. In the spirit of “think globally, act locally”, we support small-scale solutions to the large-scale problems facing us today. And that’s where you come in!

**It's easier in a peer group.** Big change – lifestyle transformation – can be tough. It can seem like an insurmountable upheaval. When we make big changes together with neighbors, family and friends, we're no longer striking out alone. The journey starts to feel more like a fun and exciting adventure.

### **Ideas for Getting Started**

- Find a few like-minded others. Start simply. Perhaps just meet for coffee. Invite newcomers as you find them. Begin.
- Decide on your main focus: study group, support group for reducing carbon footprint, neighborhood action group. Create a brief description of your purpose.
- Host a potluck.
- Form monthly or weekly discussion groups to support one another in reducing carbon footprint and energy costs
- Arrange for neighborhood energy audits
- Start a community bulletin board
- Create a tool-sharing library
- Create car or van pools for commuting to and from work.
- Organize a walk-shop treasure hunt to investigate the walk-ability of your neighborhood
- Have a street party.
- Organize periodic car-free days
- Create an asset inventory to identify community resources, gifts and talents of neighborhood residents.

## Bolder Steps

- Create centrally located compost piles and recycling bins
- Plant trees and shrubs for fruit and to create wildlife habitat
- Plant a community garden and orchard.
- Replace asphalt and concrete with porous pavers and greenery.
- Establish a more edible landscape – incrementally remove grass in front lawns and replace with vegetables and fruit trees.
- Convert a street intersection into a public square. (See Intersection Repair section of <http://cityrepair.org>)
- Create a neighborhood work-share program. Neighbors hold work parties for projects that increase energy efficiency, build resilience. Work-share agreements also can develop as a rotating series of projects that benefit individual households. In some groups, neighbors receive credits for every hour they work on a project, and the house with the most credits calls the next work party.
- Tear down fences: opening back yards to create communal play space and a space for neighbors to mingle and a community garden
- Create a car-share program–purchasing a van or truck for rent to community members.
- Begin community-wide retrofitting of homes and yards for energy and water efficiency.
- Solarize your homes.

## Boldest Steps

- Create a community energy system.
- Establish alternative water and wastewater systems.
- Establish a more environmentally friendly transportation strategy.
- Create a common house.
- Create a community-shared office.
- Establish weekly entertainment for the community.
- Narrow or eliminate streets, converting more space to park and edible landscape, walkways and picnic areas.
- Retrofit garages and rooms in your homes into apartments or add granny flats to house students or others in need of housing.
- Establish a mixed-use neighborhood by opening a coffee shop, convenience store, and garden market.

## How We Can Help

- Transition Ann Arbor will:
  - Provide an online forum for connecting with like-minded people and sharing best practices.
  - Organize monthly meetings of neighborhood representatives to share strategies and resources.
  - Help you brainstorm ways to get started.
  - If sufficient interest: coordinate training for neighborhood leaders.

**Sources:** [www.envirochangemakers.org](http://www.envirochangemakers.org), [www.terrain.org/articles/13/superbia.htm](http://www.terrain.org/articles/13/superbia.htm), <http://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org>, [www.motherearthnews.com/Nature-Community/2004-08-01/Easy-Steps-to-Enliven-Neighborhoods.aspx](http://www.motherearthnews.com/Nature-Community/2004-08-01/Easy-Steps-to-Enliven-Neighborhoods.aspx)