Transition Van Buren-Allegan (hereafter TVBA) is a non-profit Michigan corporation that is active in Van Buren and Allegan counties.

**Vision:**
The Transition Model emboldens communities to look fearlessly at peak oil, climate change and economic instability because it knows that people in communities can find ways of coping with these challenges to create thriving and resilient neighborhoods.

Integral to the Transition Model are the Permaculture ethics of:
- * Earthcare: recognizing that the Earth is the source of all life, that the Earth is our only home and that we are part of Earth’s web of life, not separate from it.
- * Peoplecare: supporting and helping each other to live in a way that is not harmful to ourselves or the planet as we develop healthy societies.
- * Fairshare: ensuring that the Earth’s limited resources are utilized in ways that are equitable and wise for both the present and future wellbeing of the entire biosphere.

**Mission:**
TVBA is working to build stronger local communities in Van Buren and Allegan counties in the face of peak oil, climate change, and economic disruption. More specifically, as a “Temporary Initiating Hub” TVBA intends to catalyze and support emerging Transition Initiatives in our area.

**Objectives:**
- * Raise public awareness of the issues associated with climate change, the peaking of global oil supplies, and the related economic instability.
- * Encourage the formation of Working Groups to help communities recover and affirm more self-reliant activities that are less dependent on fossil fuels.
- * Inspire our communities to unleash the collective genius of our citizens to create a response that reduces our carbon emissions (in response to climate change), increases our resilience (in response to the shocks of peak oil) and strengthens our local economy (in response to economic instability).
- * Collaborate and coordinate with governments, agencies, organizations, and other groups at local, regional, national and global levels as appropriate to achieve these objectives.

**Actions:**
- * Provide programs and events such as talks, film screenings, demonstrations, fairs, education and training.
- * Provide communications and publicity such as websites, blogs, media articles and interviews, event calendars, and posters.
- * Provide opportunities to share advice, guidance and training.
- * Provide opportunities to share social events, entertainment and the arts, food and fun.
- * Assist in setting up Transition Initiatives and organizing structures.
* Collaborate and coordinate with other Transition Town Initiatives and others working with the Transition Model, at regional, national and global levels.
* Work with our communities and neighborhoods to create an Energy Descent Action Plan and relocalization projects.
* Engage with other organizations, including government, citizen, nonprofit, and business, in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the Energy Descent Action Plan.
* Undertake all of the above in the spirit of fun and joy as we come together to co-create the future that we are visioning.

Guiding Principles:
We work together because we know that together we are greater than the sum of our parts. We work in a collaborative way because we get better results for less effort.

We do not need permission to act. There is no hierarchy. Leadership in TVBA is shared by everyone, but may be delegated to specific persons or groups for limited terms or projects.

In representing TVBA individuals agree to abide by and uphold all TVBA principles and take responsibility for their own decisions, actions and results. We trust that those who step forward have good intentions and will make good decisions. We give autonomy and support to those who wish to be part of TVBA. We are open to working with everyone. We welcome diversity and see it as strength.

We avoid categories of “them” and “us”. We acknowledge initiatives of other organizations (including government, citizen, nonprofit and business) and seek to find ways to collaborate to further the objectives of TVBA.

Individually and as a group we identify what needs to be done. People volunteer for tasks when they already have the skills or want to develop the skills. We help and support each other’s learning.

We do not have a blueprint. We believe in multiple paths, ideas, and possibilities. We think questions are as important as answers. It is OK to make mistakes and learn from them.

We are transparent in everything we do. Everyone is responsible for ensuring the free flow of information and knowledge within the TVBA network and also in the wider Transition network. We always consider the effects of our actions on our public reputation.

Internal Organization:
I. Membership.
   1. A “member” is a person who agrees with the objectives, principles, and provisions of this constitution and who lives, works or operates in our two-county area and its adjacent counties. An “associate member” is one who agrees with our objectives but lives outside our 2-county area. Membership is not affected by wealth, politics, religion, sex, disability, age or
sexual preference.

2. A member shall cease to be a member if she or he resigns or dies or is requested to resign by three fourths of the members voting to this effect. Members asked to resign will be given full opportunity to answer any allegations made against them and may be reinstated.

3. The secretary shall maintain a list of active members.

4. There are no membership dues, but members must participate in a Working Group.

II. Elected Officers.

The members shall elect three officers for terms of one year:

1. A chairperson who shall provide oversight of all projects and guidance to the members as they move through the Twelve Steps of Transition,

2. A secretary who shall send out minutes of all meetings and keep records of members.

3. A treasurer who shall be custodian of the group’s money and may advise on fund-raising and spending. Working Groups may ask the treasurer to hold and disburse funds for them.

III. The Initiating Group.

1. The incorporators shall constitute the original Initiating Group.

2. Elected officers shall be members of the Initiating Group.

3. The Initiating Group may invite other members to join them.

4. Each Working Group shall appoint or elect a person to join the Initiating Group.

5. The Initiating Group shall plan for its evolution at the outset.

IV. Working Groups.

1. These groups include people who are self-selected and organize as needed to do what needs to be done. They dissolve when the work is done.

2. These groups are formed by people who are competent in their chosen area, or are interested and willing to learn in that area. Each group may encourage others to join it.

3. Topics under which groups might form are such as local food systems, raising and preserving food, renewable energy, water, waste and recycling, transportation, education, housing, health care, etc. Such topics must contribute to the development of community resilience and/or help in reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Working Groups may also organize to carry out public relations projects such as film screenings or meetings with other groups.

4. Working Groups will determine the times, places, or methods of their meetings, such as by phone or email.

V. Fundraising.

1. Projects for which funding is sought must have the approval of the Initiating Group.

2. The project must support the objectives of TVBA, be in line with its principles, and be designed to deliver on key objectives.

3. The individuals who raise funds will hold the budget for the project, keep careful records and report regularly to the treasurer, and be willing to account for all money publicly.
4. The individuals who developed the project are responsible for monitoring the project, its processes and outcomes. They shall keep the chairperson informed of their activities.

5. If any member in TVBA does not agree that a project is in line with TVBA objectives and principles, that member can take the issue to the Initiating Group for discussion.

VI. Membership Meetings.

1. Members have been meeting every two weeks, but it is likely that as Working Groups begin to assume the work of the organization, meetings of all members may be less frequent.

2. Meetings will be led by a rotating facilitator who will be identified at the previous meeting. Decisions will be made as members make motions and seconds, with a majority vote necessary for passage of a motion. Each member shall have one vote. A quorum of at least five members must be present for business to be conducted.

3. An annual meeting may be scheduled each October to elect new officers.

VII. Amendments to this Constitution.

This constitution may be amended only by consensus, which means that members who do not agree with the amendment also agree not to block the amendment.

VIII. Dissolution of this Organization.

If or when this organization decides to terminate its work, any cash or other assets in its treasury should be passed on to a nearby Transition Initiative or to TransitionUS.

This constitution is effective as the governing document of TVBA only when it is signed below by the incorporators of this organization. All subsequent members should have a copy and read it carefully.