

Constitution of Transition Sebastopol (1.0)

Drafted July 5, 2011 and ratified by all Working Groups August 22, 2011

Article I: Organizational structure

The representative body of Transition Sebastopol (previously known as the "Initiating Group") shall be called the "Transition Sebastopol Working Group Council" (WGC).

The Transition Sebastopol Working Group Council will be the governing body of Transition Sebastopol and vested with the overall responsibility for finances, liability, general reputation, public policy, advocacy, organizational affiliations, overall goals of the organization, and initiating and dissolving working groups.

In making decisions, the Working Group Council will strive for consensus; however, if full consensus is unachievable, the vote will be carried by 80% favor.

Every working group will send a representative to the Transition Sebastopol Working Group Council. Council members are responsible for reporting significant Council decisions—decisions that affect individual WGs and the entire initiative—to the WGs they represent.

If a working group cannot send a representative to the Council, then that WG needs to align with another WG and have that WG's rep be a representative for both groups. That rep is required to report to the Council about what is going on with each WG they represent. However, though one rep may represent two groups, each rep still has only one vote on the Council. It is noted that if the Council finds that this system becomes too unwieldy, they may be able to make changes as needed, which could include solutions such as aggregating groups. Two thirds of WGC membership constitutes a quorum.

A "Coordinating Administration Group" will be formed that is a full working group with voting representation on the Council.

The Coordinating Administration Group (CAG) will be responsible for the decisions pertinent to the operational tasks that are necessary for the ongoing support of the organization, with consultation and collaboration from the Working Group Council (WGC) on all decisions that relate to the Council's domain.

Multiple sub-administrative groups may also be formed as needed, and as capacity allows, which will focus on specific administrative tasks and functions.

Article 2: Decision Domains

The domains of the sub admin groups are the decisions pertaining to the tasks they are charged with by either the Coordinating Administration Group (CAG) or the Working Group Council (WGC), in consultation with the CAG and WGC on decisions that are relevant to the domains of either. Sub admin group representation on the Council will be through the Coordinating Administration Group.

The decision domains of the Working Groups are decisions pertaining to their work, in consultation with the Working Group Council on matters pertaining to the Council's domain.

Article 3: Council Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Working Group Council to see that the Coordinating Administration Group is sufficiently staffed.

The Working Group Council will have the authority to approve and/or review members of the Coordinating Administration Group and its sub groups.

The Working Group Council is responsible to make sure that there is a minimum of one annual gathering to which every TS participant is invited to come.

The Working Group Council will post its meeting minutes online after they are approved. Specific items in the meeting, however, may be deemed "executive session" (confidential) and will therefore not be included in the minutes. "Executive session" can also be invoked retroactively after a discussion is in progress if the group feels (upon reflection) that the discussion should be confidential. "Executive session" can also be invoked retroactively after the minutes have been shared among Council members as a Google doc if, after consideration, Council members feel that certain conversations should be kept confidential. Minutes will not be shared publicly until they are approved by all Council members, who will have had a chance to examine and modify the minutes in a Google doc.

Strong Recommendation: Working Group Council members should have the full support and agreement of their WG that this person can represent them, be someone that WG members feel confident can fulfill the role well and responsibly, and have read the [Transition Primer](#) and agree to TS principles.

Strong Recommendation: Working Group Council members should serve for no longer than one to two years and no less than three months. Power should be spread in a healthy way within groups, insofar as possible, but there should also be a history of gradual growth within the Council—no sudden turnover of everyone at once. There may be a one to two month overlap period where both the outgoing rep and the new rep from a WG attend Council meetings together in order to effectively orient the new rep.

Article 4: Working Group Responsibilities

Each Working Group will submit a brief quarterly report to the Council, which includes: “here’s what we’ve done, here’s what we’re doing, here’s who is on our core team, here’s what we’re thinking of doing.”

Each Working Group is responsible to report their sources and uses of funds (the money they take in and pay out for things) to the Working Group Council, on a quarterly basis.

Strong recommendation:

- Each Working Group should have a web liaison, either a person who knows how to—and will—feed content to the website, or uses the regular WG report as a feed to the website. WGs must get their events on the web calendar.
- Each Working Group should submit 10-20% of revenues from events to Transition Sebastopol

Article 5: Conflict Resolution

A new Working Group or “heart team” (tentative designation) will be established that serves the entire TS community (Working Groups and Council) and is a resource for conflict resolution. This group will be an admin group, serving the whole initiative, internal only to TS, and not for projects or workshops in the community.

Strong recommendation:

- TS should have a way that any TS participant can have their grievances and individual issues heard in a healthy way.
- The new team will decide the title as it sees fit
- The team should be comprised of individuals that are experienced in conflict resolution
- The team members should be approved by the WGC
- If a team member has any vested interest in the issue put before the committee, that member should step aside from the process.

Article 6: Initiating a New Working Group

Criteria for beginning a new WG:

- a. short write up about the group and its purpose.
- b. The person/s desiring to found a new group should present themselves personally to the WG Council for an interview.
 - The person/s needs to have read the Transition primer and agree to do their WG’s work in alignment with the principles expressed in the [Transition Primer](#).
 - The person/s should be familiar with TS mission and values and in agreement with them.
 - The person/s should be willing to survey their field so they’re not totally improvising or duplicating others’ work, (should be networking with existing community organizations in the field).
 - The person/s should be open to advisory input.

Article 7: Volunteers

A volunteer coordinating working group will be established. Working Groups will not have to go through this group to get volunteers for their work, but will be able to call upon it when needed.

Article 8: Transition Sebastopol Website

Currently, each Working Group can post info on their own page on the website. A Google group has been created for several of the working groups, as well as a sign-up box on individual Working Groups' pages.

The website also has the capacity to accept comments, and a Google discussion group for general TS is set up (not for a specific working group), though it has not been publicized.

Strong recommendation: In the future, the website could also have:

- blogs & other updates from groups
- more info from groups about their activities and their basic group descriptions
- who's the contact rep for each Working Group
- who some of the groups are allied with/collaborations
- calls for volunteers
- website polls