

Pilot Report: Foster Green EcoDistrict Development

Fiscal year 2010-2011



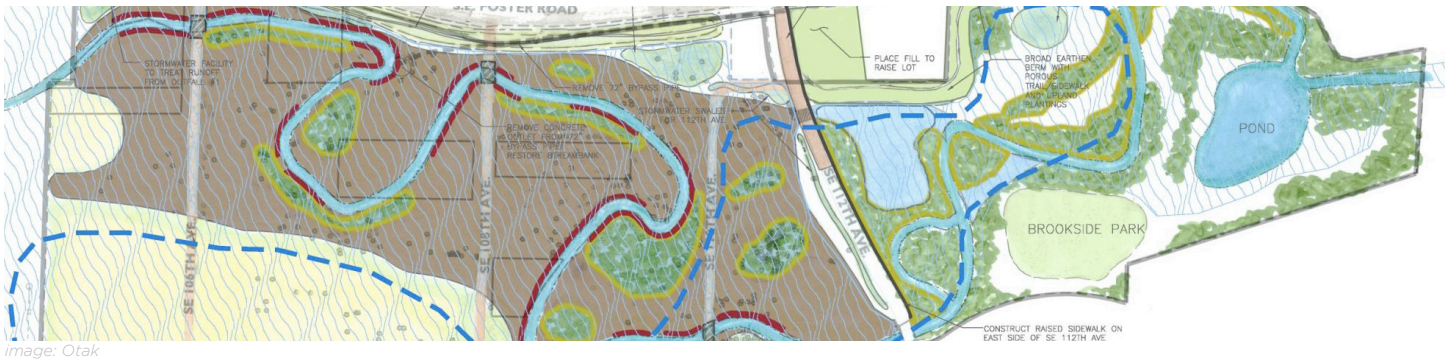


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Introduction

Foster Green at a glance

- Total Area: 4508 acres

Population

- Total Population: 48,141
- % White: 70.3%
- Median Age: 36.3
- Total Employees: 7,825
- Per Capita Income: \$21,885

Built Environment

- Total Area of Buildings: 29,477,299 SF
- % Residential: 80%
- % Commercial: 6%
- % Institutional: 6%
- # LEED certified buildings: 0

District Overview

The Foster Green EcoDistrict describes the area that includes parts of the Foster-Powell, Mt. Scott Arleta, Brentwood-Darlington, Lents, Powellhurst-Gilbert and Pleasant Valley neighborhoods in southeast and east Portland within the Foster Road corridor. These neighborhoods in the Foster corridor are part of a historic community, once connected to downtown Portland via streetcar in the late 1800s. The geography lies partly within the Lents Town Center urban renewal area and encompasses a mix of uses, including residential, industrial and commercial lands. In addition, the district is located in the Johnson Creek watershed, notably featuring acres of important floodplain, sensitive wildlife habitat and a section of a valuable urban stream, Johnson Creek.

Much of the planning efforts in recent years have emphasized renewing the district's historic identity, socioeconomic development, growing family-wage jobs, developing affordable housing, improving access to green space and public safety. The area was identified as an EcoDistrict because of the extensive planning that has already taken place and the significant public investments the city has made through urban renewal and floodplain restoration. There are many opportunities for sustainability strategies to address a number of community needs in this district.

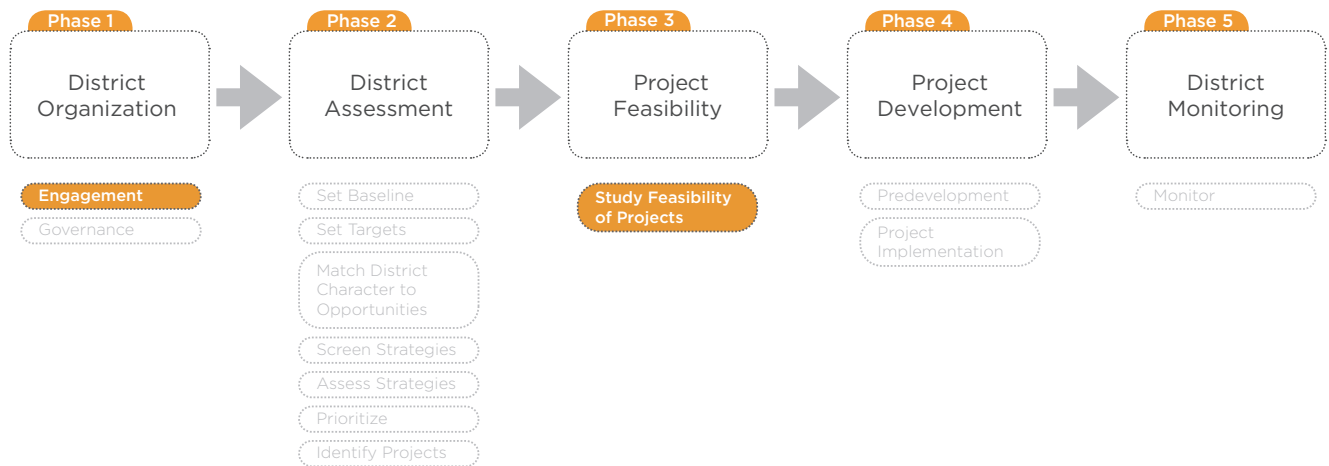
EcoDistricts Overview

The Portland Sustainability Institute (PoSI) created EcoDistricts™, a five-phase, comprehensive approach for accelerating sustainable neighborhood development:

1. District Organization
2. District Assessment
3. Project Feasibility
4. Project Development
5. District Monitoring

This report provides a summary of work to date in the Foster Green EcoDistrict pilot in each of the five phases of implementation. It was written by the Portland Sustainability Institute and represents PoSI's opinion, not necessarily that of the City of Portland or district stakeholders.

Foster Green EcoDistrict Progress





District Organization

To become an EcoDistrict, a neighborhood—in partnership with the City and other public agencies—must create a shared vision and governance structure to ensure that it has the capacity and resources to implement an EcoDistrict. This phase includes the creation of a neighborhood governing entity with the explicit charge to manage district sustainability, and the next steps of EcoDistrict formation, over time.

Engagement

Foster Green EcoDistrict Steering Committee

The Foster Green EcoDistrict is unique amongst the other pilot EcoDistricts because of its large area that covers parts of six established neighborhoods, as well as its diversity of stakeholders made up primarily of community residents, small businesses and small community-based organizations. In addition, the district has a long history of public planning processes with mixed results, and some feeling left out of the process along the way. This history has cultivated a skepticism and fear of engagement processes, so PoSI has been thoughtful and intentional about each step in creating the EcoDistrict.

Through a Bullitt Foundation grant, PoSI hired a part-time community organizer to lead the EcoDistrict engagement and governance work. The EcoDistrict community engagement coordinator, Jalene Littlejohn, is a local resident and founder of Green Lents. PoSI also hired Tony De Falco, a social equity specialist, to provide strategy and direction, particularly pertaining to issues of equity for low-income communities and communities of color in the Foster Green EcoDistrict. These positions were hired in October of 2010, with work beginning in early November of that year.

Why EcoDistricts?

To bring investments that enhance the environment and improve quality of life to the Foster area! EcoDistricts offer a framework to work with Foster area residents to identify community needs and priorities (economic vitality, safety, access to parks and open space, and improved transportation among others) and connect with environmentally based assets and investments to address these needs.

- Foster Green FAQ

The goals of the engagement work in Foster Green are to:

1. Identify the community's vision for the EcoDistrict; and
2. Make recommendations for an appropriate governance structure to maintain the EcoDistrict over time. Individuals and organizations will agree to move forward with the proposed vision and governance recommendations via signing a memorandum of understanding.

A phased approach to achieve these goals has been identified: Phases 1 and 2 focus on engagement, and Phase 3 on governance.

Phase I

- **Focus:** Pre-engagement
- **Timeline:** November 2010—February 2011
- **Action:** Connect with key stakeholders in one-on-one context to identify interests, priorities and willingness to engage, and recommended approach for outreach to diverse groups within the EcoDistrict
- **Outcomes:** Best practices for engagement in this particular community and the creation of a steering committee

The intent of this phase was to “go slow early in order to go fast later.” The first step in the engagement process was to build a stakeholder list. The list included almost 200 identified organizations or individuals with a stake in the Foster Green EcoDistrict.

To gain trust and build relationships, the EcoDistrict organizers conducted extensive one-on-one interviews and held two large group meetings in the winter. This resulted in an awareness of the EcoDistrict project and a level of trust to participate in its development. The organizers also identified best practices for engaging residents and incorporated those into the engagement plan. Foster Green EcoDistrict Steering Committee members were identified and formally invited to participate. Through the cultivation of personal relationships, the extensive nature of the outreach provided insights into the issues and concerns individuals want to see addressed and how the EcoDistrict process can be a part of the solution, as well as awareness of ongoing efforts that fit into the EcoDistrict rubric.

Phase 2

- **Focus:** Engagement to create vision
- **Timeline:** March 2011—August 2011
- **Action:** Develop a coherent vision for a Foster Green EcoDistrict with buy in from the steering committee based on community input
- **Outcome:** Documented input from community residents, organizations and businesses, successful partnerships with community residents and organizations, and agreed-upon vision and project priorities for the future of the EcoDistrict

In this phase, the steering committee creates an inclusive vision of the Foster Green EcoDistrict based on input from multiple engagement sessions. Input includes community priorities, values and issues, as well as specific projects that might address those concerns in the future. Projects will be prioritized by the ability of the project to implement the EcoDistrict vision, meet sustainability performance goals and provide triple-bottom-line benefits within the community (environmental, economic and equity).

Engagement methods to collect this vision data include: youth engagement, targeted and public visioning sessions, workshops, listening sessions, periodic email updates, website and social media, outreach at key community events, informal home and business networking events, and targeted surveys. Steering committee members, youth interns and other partners will be assisting in the collection of data in addition to staff's efforts.

A priority of the engagement work is to build relationships with low-income communities and communities of color to shape the vision. Key groups include Latinos and Asian-Pacific Islander communities, which have grown significantly in the Foster Green area in recent years. While many of these communities' participation in processes like the EcoDistrict is limited by time, the Foster Green approach adapts engagement to fit existing programs for these communities and to show how an EcoDistrict can address already identified goals. For example, APANO (Asian Pacific Islander Network of Oregon) staff have limited time for new projects, but are excited to address their established urban ecology goals through youth visioning around an urban EcoDistrict.

Governance

Phase 3

- **Focus:** Engagement to create governance structure
- **Timeline:** March 2011—August 2011
- **Action:** Propose and discuss various governance structures to enable achievement of vision
- **Outcome:** Agreed-upon governance structure and signed MOU documenting roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group (public and private)

This is a parallel process to Phase 2, but with less community engagement, and is primarily driven by the Foster Green EcoDistrict Steering Committee. The committee will receive information about governance models, identify additional information necessary to create a governance structure that fits the community's needs and recommend next steps for an agreed-upon governance structure by August of 2011. The results of their work will be a Memorandum of Understanding that documents a commitment among partners to create a Foster Green EcoDistrict and recommends an organizing mechanism.

Experts in collaborative governance will attend steering committee meetings to share their knowledge about governance and financing mechanisms for EcoDistricts and to answer questions for the group. The purpose is to provide mentorship and advice as the steering committee considers best practices in developing a governance structure.



Organization Recommended Actions for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

1. **Governance:** Formalize governance recommendation of steering committee
2. **Funding:** Fundraise for short-term staffing capacity and early projects; identify long-term self-assessment strategy to create ongoing source of EcoDistrict revenue for management and projects



image: flickr user Scrunchleface

District Assessment

To achieve the ambitious goals for each performance area, a neighborhood assessment is essential to determine the most effective project priorities for a unique district. An assessment enables districts to determine strategies of greatest impact and prioritize their most appropriate projects.

EcoDistrict Assessment Method™

PoSI developed a ten-step EcoDistrict Assessment Method to guide project selection and prioritization. A consultant team is applying this method in Foster Green through a rigorous technical analysis that will complement the engagement work of the steering committee.

The assessment process currently underway includes:

1. Gathering information to understand the district conditions and develop a performance baseline
2. Setting specific performance targets
3. Identifying strategy opportunities based on the unique characteristics of the district
4. Screening a menu of potential EcoDistrict projects to identify those appropriate for the district
5. Assessing potential projects to determine ease of implementation
6. Comparing assessed projects across performance areas
7. Prioritizing projects for implementation

The remaining steps of the Assessment Method will be overseen by the Foster Green governance group:

8. Conducting feasibility studies on priority projects
9. Implementing projects
10. Monitoring projects against established performance metrics

The product of the consultant work, which will be completed in October of 2011, will be a recommended list of project priorities. The projects will include a combination of built environment strategies (hardware) and human behavior strategies (software).

FOSTER GREEN PROJECTS



Other Assessment

Strategy-specific assessment has been completed in the following areas:

- Solar Site Analysis
- Foster Lents Integration Partnership

See “Project Feasibility” section for details.

Assessment Recommended Actions for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

The following District Assessment actions are recommended for FY 11-12:

1. **EcoDistrict Assessment:** Complete EcoDistrict Assessment Method to identify project priorities
2. **Foster Lents Integration Partnership (FLIP):** Incorporate infrastructure findings from EcoDistrict Assessment into FLIP



Project Feasibility

Once the key project opportunities are identified through assessment, they require deeper feasibility study to determine overall viability and cumulative impact. In the Project Feasibility phase, the steering committee conducts business and technical analysis and develops an implementation and funding strategy for priority projects in the areas of: buildings, infrastructure and behavior.

Project priorities have not yet been set for the Foster Green EcoDistrict. They will result from the engagement and assessment process. Priorities will be dictated by this community-driven process. Once the steering committee sets the EcoDistrict priorities, PoSI will help align existing City project goals (such as green streets and redevelopment at the Lents Town Center) to bring public investment and resources to projects that provide multiple benefits.

Walmart Sustainability Strategy (Building)

The Walmart store in the Lents neighborhood is currently being remodeled. Walmart, the city, Lents Neighborhood Association and community members are seeking to make sustainability improvements to enhance the store and community connectivity. PoSI suggested a range of sustainability investments, such as building a community meeting space, installing solar-covered parking and offering a consumer education campaign on green home repair. The company is interested in using this store for demonstration projects.

Funding: Owner-funded to provide community amenity

Performance Areas: Energy, Mobility

Solar Site Analysis (Building/Infrastructure)

As part of the Solar America cities program the National Renewable Energy Laboratory provided technical assistance through the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) to identify the solar energy potential for Portland's EcoDistricts. The goal of the study was to determine the solar energy potential for five pilot EcoDistricts in the city. Potential locations within the districts were identified through a site visit and Google Earth analysis. Energy generation potential was then analyzed for solar hot water and photovoltaics.

The study determined that there is significant potential for both photovoltaics and solar hot-water technologies to offset a sizeable amount of energy needs in each of the five EcoDistrict pilots. The Foster Green EcoDistrict has 2,178,489 square feet of usable solar rooftop area. Assuming half the area is used for solar electric and half for solar hot water, the potential production is estimated at 9,352,941 kWh and 914,644 Therms. The study recommends the use of economic analysis to identify the most cost-effective installation size for each building depending on electricity and hot water use. The assessment could lead to community-led solar installations similar to the Solarize campaign that BPS facilitated and the federal Department of Energy funded in 2009-2010. For details, refer to the Portland EcoDistrict Solar Site Assessment, March 2010.

Funding: To be determined

Performance Areas: Air Quality & Carbon, Energy



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Foster Lents Integration Partnership (Infrastructure)

In January 2010, Portland Development Commission (PDC) in collaboration with its project team partners (Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), BPS, Portland Parks and Recreation (PPR), Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) and PoSI) developed a grant proposal for the “Foster Lents Integration Partnership Strategy.”

PoSI joined the project team to shape a sustainable infrastructure strategy for the Foster Green EcoDistrict. PoSI refined the scope to ensure that the EcoDistrict concept is a driving vision behind the process and that the work around transportation, stormwater, and energy and water infrastructure all support the EcoDistrict vision. In addition, PoSI and PDC hope that the steering committee can act as the community advisory group for FLIP.

The project is a sustainable infrastructure and economic development strategy that aims to unify individual initiatives and areas into a single strategic framework for public and private investments along Southeast Foster Road and the Johnson Creek Industrial Area. The outcome of the assessment process will be a recommendation for a broad public and private investment strategy where each investment catalyzes the next, resulting in a coordinated sequence of projects that will strengthen neighborhoods in the Foster Green area. It will address synergies that can be achieved through sustainability at a neighborhood scale with an emphasis on infrastructure innovations in transportation, water (as defined in the objectives below), waste materials, and energy and habitat preservation.

Funding: Metro, PDC, PBOT & BES are jointly funding the strategy

Performance Areas: Equitable Development, Placemaking, Social Cohesion, Air Quality & Carbon, Energy, Access & Mobility, Water, Habitat & Ecosystem Function, Materials Management

Project Feasibility Recommended Actions for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

1. **Solar Site Analysis:** Pair solar assessment data with district energy usage and local cost data to determine which rooftop technologies would be the best investment; identify opportunity for third-party solar investment and installation across the district.
2. **Foster Lents Integration Partnership:** Ensure EcoDistrict integration through infrastructure planning process and consistency with goals established by Foster Green EcoDistrict Steering Committee
3. **Project Priorities:** Scope feasibility needs for top one to two projects identified through EcoDistrict Assessment



image: flickr user firepile

Project Development

This phase includes development and implementation of high-impact projects. It includes alignment and coordination between district stakeholders, public agencies and utilities to develop and finance projects at a scale that has meaningful impact. It also involves predevelopment planning, financing, partnership building and regulatory engagement.

92nd and Harold Mixed-Use Development (Building)

The EcoDistrict approach to this project is to use the 3.5-acre redevelopment as a catalyst for district-wide sustainability throughout the Lents Town Center, particularly in the areas of water, energy and materials. The project will provide affordable and senior housing as well as live/work and retail options. The project has been slow to move forward as a result of market conditions, but PoSI will continue to participate on the technical advisory committee.

Funding: PDC and developer driven; as part of EcoDistrict commitment, developer is holding a 5% of total budget line item for sustainability strategy

Performance Areas: Equitable Development, Placemaking, Social Cohesion, Air Quality & Carbon, Energy, Access & Mobility, Water, Habitat & Ecosystem Function, Materials Management

Tool Library (Behavior)

Modeled after other community tool-sharing libraries in Portland's neighborhoods, the Lents site will provide the first step towards an EcoDistrict goal of creating a sustainability demonstration and resource center for the community. Green Lents, a community-based organization, is leading the effort with a goal of having the library act as its home base and potentially serving as the home for the Foster Green EcoDistrict.

Funding: Appropriate funding to be determined upon commitment to a site

Performance Areas: Equitable Development, Placemaking, Social Cohesion, Access & Mobility

Clean Energy Works Oregon (Behavior/Building)

Clean Energy Works Oregon (CEWO) is a nonprofit program focused on residential energy retrofits. It was established to reduce energy waste by encouraging homeowners to take direct action. The program offers no-money-down, easy financing and simple qualifications. CEWO was piloted in several neighborhoods, including the Lents Town center URA area. Lents Town Center URA homeowners can now access the financing and expertise required for energy efficiency home improvements such as new insulation or the installation of a high-efficiency furnace or water heater. Owners may decide which upgrades and financing options make sense, under the helpful guidance of a qualified Energy Advocate. PoSI proposes a neighborhood-based outreach strategy, similar to the approach in the Cully neighborhood, to identify additional home owners for the program. The next step in the partnership is to develop a commercial building energy retrofit program to complement the residential investments.

Funding: Partnerships between public, private and nonprofit interests including local utility companies, local lenders, local governments, Energy Trust of Oregon, the Oregon Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Energy.

Performance Areas: Equitable Development, Social Cohesion, Air Quality & Carbon, Energy, Water

Project Development Recommended Actions Fiscal Year 2011-2012

1. **92nd and Harold:** Implement sustainable strategies that catalyze district strategies throughout the Lents Town Center; opportunities identified around energy, water, and waste
2. **Tool Library:** Ensure effectively serves broader Foster Green EcoDistrict and provides physical center for EcoDistrict activities
3. **Clean Energy Works Oregon:** Use EcoDistrict as platform to spread word about Clean Energy Works Oregon opportunity and the value of energy retrofits across a neighborhood; continue feasibility analysis and fact finding to develop commercial building retrofit program



image: flickr user firepile

District Monitoring

As EcoDistrict projects are planned and built, ongoing monitoring is essential to understand the full range of social, economic and environmental impacts. EcoDistrict performance standards can be used to regularly collect data to show the overall value of particular project interventions. In addition, qualitative documentation and lessons learned about EcoDistrict implementation will be essential to refining the EcoDistricts approach.

The EcoDistrict Assessment Method includes a corresponding database with two metrics for most EcoDistrict performance areas. This creates a baseline of present performance to be used to track performance improvements over time.

Monitoring Recommended Next Steps Fiscal Year 2011-2012

1. None

Summary

Recommended Actions for Fiscal Year 2011-2012

District Organization

1. **Governance:** Formalize governance recommendation of steering committee
2. **Funding:** Fundraise for short-term staffing capacity and early projects; identify long-term self-assessment strategy to create ongoing source of EcoDistrict revenue for management and projects

District Assessment

3. **EcoDistrict Assessment:** Complete EcoDistrict Assessment Method to identify project priorities
4. **Foster Lents Integration Partnership:** Incorporate infrastructure findings from EcoDistrict Assessment into FLIP

Project Feasibility

5. **Solar Site Analysis:** Pair solar assessment data with district energy usage and local cost data to determine which rooftop technologies present the best investment; identify opportunity for third-party solar investment and installation across the district
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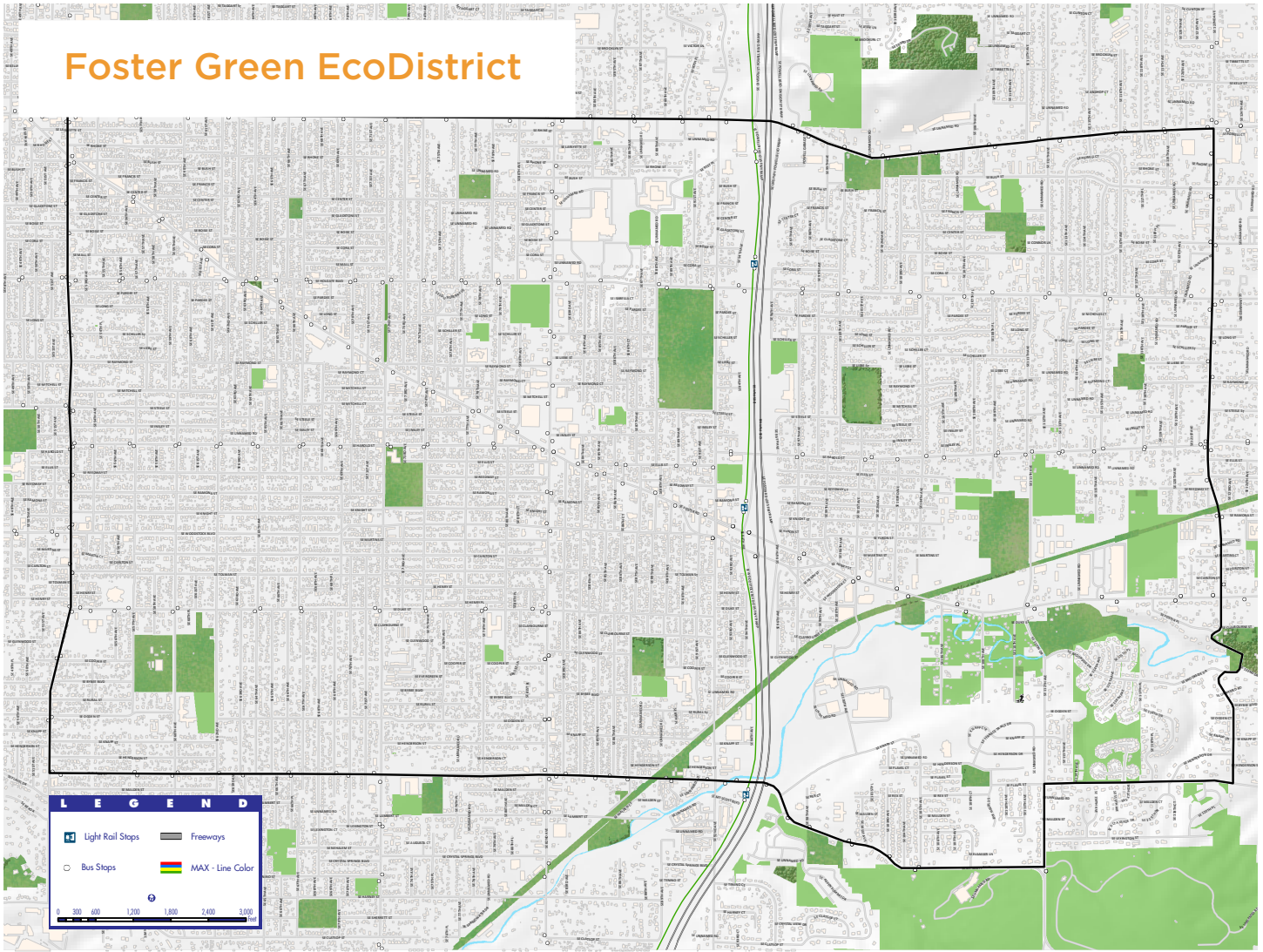
Project Development

8. **92nd and Harold:** Implement sustainable strategies that catalyze district strategies throughout the Lents Town Center; opportunities identified around energy, water and waste
9. **Tool Library:** Ensure that library effectively serves broader Foster Green EcoDistrict and provides physical center for EcoDistrict activities
10. **Clean Energy Works Oregon:** Use EcoDistrict as platform to spread word about Clean Energy Works Oregon opportunity and the value of energy retrofits across a neighborhood; continue feasibility analysis and fact finding to develop commercial building retrofit program.

District Monitoring

11. None.

Foster Green EcoDistrict





ecodistricts@pdxinstitute.org
www.pdxinstitute.org

