Executive Summary

The Portland Sustainability Institute’s (PoSI) current activities center around the EcoDistrict program. While there are other activities as well, this project constitutes the vast majority of PoSI’s work and mine as well. The goal of this program is to develop community groups that can design and implement sustainability projects. PoSI then supports these groups by promoting an integrated and innovative approach to sustainability along with coordinating their actions and aligning resources with the City of Portland. The work of the organization then depends on what the EcoDistrict committees are doing at the time. During my six weeks, the majority of the EcoDistrict groups were doing project development and prioritization.

With project prioritization I did two main things. First, I synthesized the City plans relevant to the South of Market EcoDistrict in order to fully understand the context and opportunities available to the area. This involved reading through all of the City’s plans, attending EcoDistrict meetings, and presenting the research in an easily digestible manner informing their recommendations for projects. Secondly, I did a literature review of existing Social Bottom Line Assessment Tools which will be further refined into an EcoDistrict process helping groups evaluate how projects will affect the community.

With project development, I researched and made project recommendations for the Re-Energize Gateway project. This is a community-based marketing approach for energy efficiency and energy production opportunities. This market activity is then leveraged to create local employment opportunities. My work consisted of a review of all key documents outlining best practices for these programs and interviewing key partners in the city and similar programs
nationwide. I then synthesized this research into a recommended project design which PoSI will now use to apply for grants and approach partners.