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St. Louis Park, MN, December 11, 2015 — /EPR NETWORK/ — On December 9, 2015 and after overwhelming enthusiasm and support from a rigorous application and vetting process, the Metropolitan Council approved funding for PLACE's St. Louis Park Community. The Council approved 2 million dollars in funding from its Livable Communities Account for a Transit-Oriented Development (LCA-TOD) grant after the proposed project demonstrated a breakthrough approach to meeting housing and economic development needs in the Twin Cities. The funds will be used to help secure site acquisition at the former McGarvey Coffee property, pioneer alternative energy sources, and integrate stormwater improvement with infrastructure like green roofs and an urban forest.

A nonprofit called PLACE (Projects Linking Art, Community, and Environment) heads up the community endeavor in concert with the City of St. Louis Park,

fellow eco-minded and socially conscious companies like Allianz Life, Stantec, Shaw-Lundquist, Lindquist & Vennum, MSR, LIFT, and Rachel Contracting that have invested in the project, other private partners, and public collaborators like Hennepin County. The community will elevate affordable living, design, and artistic culture in the city and will be located near the expected Green Line extension (Southwest Light Rail) Wooddale Station. The development's potential positive impact is staggering, with healthy homes for 300 households across the income spectrum supported by a mobility hub, urban agriculture, live and work spaces, a hotel, and a renewable energy generation system that consumes food waste created by its inhabitants and surrounding neighbors.

Chris Velasco, PLACE's Executive Director, observed, "I think this project will be of national significance for communities that want to effectively leverage their scarce resources."

Ryan Kelley, City of St. Louis Park Planner, says, "The City of St. Louis Park is extremely proud to be the co-recipient with PLACE of the Met Council's largest transit oriented development grant for a new sustainable community of regional significance."

"PLACE is an excellent project, for the city and the region. Turning vacant, unused property into a community space with alternative energy features, that is connected to other uses, like transit, is just the kind of investment the Council wants to make toward a livable communities and a prosperous region" – Erin Heelan, TOD Grants Coordinator, Metropolitan Council Livable Communities.

Executive Director Velasco thanks the Metropolitan Council for its confidence and support on behalf of the entire team and the residents of St. Louis Park.

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