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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNIVERSITY CITY IS THE ‘NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE WORLD’

UNIVERSITY CITY, Mo., March 3, 2012—In celebration of the diversity of University City’s residents and its notably vibrant neighborhood culture, Mayor Shelley Welsch unveiled the City of University City’s new brand identity – “Neighborhood to the World™”—at the city’s “Celebration of Diversity” event on March 3, 2012.

The “Celebration of Diversity” event was held at University City’s Centennial Commons recreational complex and included information booths from dozens of local organizations—all representing the religious and ethnic diversity of the City. The International Folk Dance Association of University City provided a live dance performance for guests and local restaurants provided refreshments.

The new identity is the result of a formalized branding process undertaken by the City that included input from residents, businesses and community leaders.

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“Our new community identity, ‘Neighborhood to the World’ captures the true brand essence of University City,” commented Mayor Shelley Welsch. “It embodies both our pride in our neighborhoods and residences as well as the fact that we are one of the most diverse and welcoming communities within the region.”

University City is at the leading-edge of municipal branding as more and more communities understand the importance of identifying their assets through formalized branding. As competition grows to attract residents, tourists, as well as business, branding provides a differentiated identity that assists communities in promoting and communicating their true core assets.

The University City branding effort began in August 2011. City Manager Lehman Walker charged the Avant Marketing Group, the City’s public communications and marketing firm, to develop a renewed identity for the City that would assist in promoting both the opportunities and quality way of life in the community.

“The Avant Marketing Group provided a formalized analytical approach to define our identity,” stated Walker. “Through focus groups, one-on-one interviews and online surveys, the new identity was developed based on community input and will highly resonate with our residents because of its source.”

The market research included focus groups with 39 residents and business leaders, over 25 one-on-one interviews with key community and business leaders, and participation from over 80 residents through an online survey.

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Through the research, several key community attributes were identified. University City residents value the City's central location, its arts & culture, parks & recreation, and the friendliness of the residents. Most importantly, the research identified University City as a vibrant residential community that is diverse, progressive and open-minded.

"Our diversity provides tolerance and an energy that is not found in other communities," remarked Mayor Welsch. "It prepares us to be a global community and allows us to attract the best and the brightest in both people and business as we continue to grow."

The new brand identity is consistent with strategies employed by many communities that now understand that the competitive arena is no longer just local or regional, but global in scope.

"While most communities in this area are focused on regional competition, our new brand identity elevates University City to a much higher competitive level," says Walker. "We have the assets, diversity and progressive mindset to attract investment in our community on a global basis. Regardless of ethnicity or nationality, you will find our community welcoming, a true place to call home. 'Neighborhood to the World' is not just a slogan, but an open invitation to both individuals and businesses that are seeking a progressive and eclectic environment in which to live, work or play."

The new brand identity will begin appearing on City signage and in communications. It will be used in the City's economic development efforts and as a "calling card" for all marketing and promotional efforts. In addition, the new identity will be featured in several new planned City communications activities including a resident newsletter and website that will assist in the communication needs of residents, businesses, newcomers, tourists and business prospects.

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