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Experts Gather with Residents to Discuss Pittsburgh as a Biophilic City

Pittsburgh, PA – Two representatives from the Pittsburgh Resilient Cities Initiative will attend the Biophilia: Pittsburgh meetup hosted by Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens tonight at 5:30 p.m. At the meeting, Phipps Executive Director Richard Piacentini and Phipps Director of Science Education Emily Kalnicky, PhD, will be joined by City of Pittsburgh Senior Resilience Coordinator, Rebecca Kiernanan, and Resilience Analyst, Ari Lattanzi to lead a **visioning session** about Pittsburgh becoming part of the [Biophilic City Network](#) and to highlight biophilic initiatives already happening in Pittsburgh and the connection to the Resilient Cities initiative the City is already involved with. More than 80 attendees will learn about what the City of Pittsburgh, Phipps and its partners are already doing, and can get involved by having their voices and ideas be heard.

The term “biophilia,” which literally means “love of life,” is defined by conservationist E.O. Wilson as “the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms.” The implications of biophilia extend across a vast array of disciplines including design and engineering, nutrition, psychology, public health, education, biology and the humanities. Biophilia is expressed all over the world every day, through complex collaborations such as the design and construction of buildings and landscapes; and intimate, personal encounters including nature hikes and home gardening.

The discussion will focus on Pittsburgh becoming a “Biophilic City.” The website biophiliccities.org explains, “Evidence of the emotional and psychological benefits of nature is mounting and impressive: research shows its ability to reduce stress, to aid recovery from illness, to enhance cognitive skills and academic performance, and to aid in moderating the effects of ADHD, autism and other childhood illnesses. Recent research suggests even that we are more generous in the presence of nature; all these values are in addition to the immense economic value of the ecological services provided by natural systems.

“Support for the practice of *biophilic design* has been growing and there are now many exemplary examples of buildings that seek to integrate natural features and qualities... Less attention, however, has been focused on the city or urban scale, despite the fact that the planet continues an inexorable trend in the direction of urbanization. Urban residents need nature more than ever, and much work is needed to find creative and effective means for incorporating it into urban environments.”

The Resilient Cities Initiative helps cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st Century. These challenges can include anything from low air quality or high unemployment to recovering from an earthquake.

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About Phipps: Founded in 1893, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, Pa. is a green leader among public gardens with a mission to inspire and educate all with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and promote human and environmental well-being through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse. Learn more: phipps.conservatory.org.