

Contacts: Rebecca Kiernan Newman, Senior Resilience Coordinator (412) 255-2254 or rebecca.kiernan@pittsburghpa.gov or Connie George, Phipps Conservatory cgeorge@phipps.conservatory.org

City of Pittsburgh Receives Biophilic Cities Designation

PITTSBURGH, PA (September 16, 2016) – At a press conference today at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Mayor William Peduto declared the City of Pittsburgh has officially been designated as a Biophilic City. The mayor made the announcement inside the Center for Sustainable Landscapes at Phipps Conservatory. When making the announcement he said, “Pittsburgh is committed to sustainable revitalization and creating land use policies that protect our environment by improving air and water quality and maintaining our open spaces. These practices connect people to our wealth of natural infrastructure and benefit all of our residents and visitors.”

The City is partnering with Phipps Conservatory on this project, whose monthly Biophilia: Pittsburgh Meetup group initiated the City’s desire for designation. The 500-member group is dedicated to strengthening the bond between people and the natural world through education, discussion and action. Phipps Conservatory will provide resources and support the City with meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the application.

“Biophilic Cities are cities that contain abundant nature; they are cities that care about, seek to protect, restore and grow this nature, and that strive to foster deep connections and daily contact with the natural world,” said Professor Tim Beatley, project director, Biophilic Cities. Professor Beatley is an internationally recognized sustainable city researcher and author and Teresa Heinz Professor of Sustainable Communities, Department of Urban and Environmental Planning, School of Architecture at the University of Virginia (UVA).

Rebecca Kiernan Newman, senior resilience coordinator for the City of Pittsburgh Office of Sustainability, worked closely with Professor Beatley, as well as city departments and Biophilia: Pittsburgh, to secure the City of Pittsburgh as a partner of Biophilic Cities.

“Museums and organizations like Phipps Conservatory are in a perfect position to demonstrate to the public the important interconnection between human and environmental health,” said Richard Piacentini, executive director of Phipps Conservatory. “Our visitors experience our beautiful gardens and recognize and appreciate their natural connection with the environment.”

Other partner cities from around the world, include Milwaukee, WI; Phoenix, AZ; San Francisco, CA; Portland, OR; Washington, D.C.; Wellington, New Zealand; Birmingham, UK; Victoria-Gasteiz, Spain; and Singapore. Biophilic Cities are globally responsible cities that recognize the importance of actions to limit the impact of resource use on nature and biodiversity beyond their urban borders.

Tonight, Professor Beatley will host a film about the “Nature of Cities” and a discussion following the film at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens at 7 p.m. Tickets are available at the Phipps Conservatory Welcome Center.

