

A RESOLUTION

21-69

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

April 14, 2015

To declare the sense of the Council that the District of Columbia supports the principles of the Biophilic Cities Network and commits to promoting, learning about, and sharing biophilic programs and projects with other participating municipalities, to supporting urban biodiversity, and to creating opportunities for all District residents to connect with nature.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council on Biophilic Cities Resolution of 2015”.

Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

- (1) Evidence demonstrates that people are happiest, emotionally and physically healthiest, and most productive, when working and living in close proximity to nature.
- (2) Research shows that exposure to nature can reduce stress, aid recovery from illness, enhance cognitive skills, improve academic performance, and aid in moderating the effects of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, autism, and other child illnesses.
- (3) The District has a rich and unique natural heritage, including a diversity of ecosystems that provide benefits to District residents and the animal species we share it with.
- (4) Greening neighborhoods has been shown to reduce crime, strengthen community connections, and increase walkability.
- (5) All District residents, especially children, in every neighborhood, should have direct experience with nature.
- (6) In an increasingly urbanized world, cities provide vital natural habitat to animal species that may otherwise perish.
- (7) Leading universities, urban thinkers, citizens, corporations, and innovative governments around the world are developing nature-based approaches to design, urban planning, and governance that support human and environmental health.
- (8) The Biophilic Cities Network includes a loose confederation of cities from all over the world whose leaders strive to recognize the important connection between humans and the natural world. Participating municipalities include Birmingham, Brisbane, Milwaukee, New York City, Perth, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, Oslo, San Francisco, Singapore, Vitoria-Gasteiz, and Wellington.

(9) A biophilic city is a city of abundant nature, where residents, young and old, have rich daily contact with the natural environment no matter where they reside; where larger natural areas and deeper natural experiences are an easy walk, bike, or transit ride away; and where the urban environment allows for and fosters connections with diverse flora and fauna. In biophilic cities, residents recognize, respect, are curious about, and actively care for the nature around them, and they spend extensive time outside learning about, enjoying, and participating in the natural world.

(10) In biophilic cities, leaders and elected officials give nature and natural capital a central place in their decision-making, and evaluate their planning and development decisions by the extent to which nature is restored and protected, and connections with the natural environment are enhanced. Leaders and residents of biophilic cities recognize that proximity to nature makes for more desirable communities and provides numerous benefits to all.

(11) A biophilic city recognizes the important role cities play in protecting and increasing biodiversity in a world where biodiversity is greatly threatened.

(12) A commitment to becoming a biophilic city with abundant and accessible nature will support the District's goals for a sustainable DC, environmental literacy plans, and an enhanced science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum in schools.

(13) By joining the Biophilic Cities Network, the District will demonstrate international leadership on the environment and local commitment to the well-being and health of its residents.

Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that the District supports the principles of the Biophilic Cities Network and commits to:

(1) Working to protect and restore nature;
(2) Creating opportunities for new connections to the natural world wherever possible;

(3) Sharing information and insights about biophilic tools, techniques, programs, and projects successfully applied in the District; and

(4) Assisting other cities in becoming more biophilic through technical expertise and political and professional support for efforts to protect and expand urban nature.

Sec. 4. The Chairman shall transmit copies of this resolution, upon its adoption, to the Mayor, the City Administrator, and the Director of the District Department of the Environment.

Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.