City of Pickering

Pickering, ON

Mayor Kevin Ashe

Pledge Summary

Over the past several years, Pickering has developed and implemented a number of initiatives to support the Monarch butterfly and other important pollinators such as birds, bats and bees. Through participation in the Mayors' Monarch Pledge, Pickering will continue to help create Monarch habitat, raise community awareness about the importance of these species, and educate residents on roles they can play. Through collaboration we also endeavor to encourage other Canadian cities to do the same.

Action Items Committed for 2024

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Kevin Ashe	2026	3/27/2026	
Mayor Kevin Ashe	2025	3/28/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Kevin Ashe	2024	3/28/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Kevin Ashe	2023	3/30/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Kevin Ashe	2022	2/10/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor David Ryan	2021	3/9/2021	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.1

What was your community’s motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

Over the past several years, Pickering has developed and implemented a number of initiatives to assist not only the monarch butterfly, but also other pollinators. By participating in the Mayors’ Monarch Pledge, we want to help these species, while also encouraging other Canadian cities to do the same.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

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The news/updates we receive from the Mayors' Monarch Pledge are very helpful as it keeps us updated on the current trends in monarch conservation and what other municipalities are doing. We would like to learn about community-led invasive species control to help the survival of native, pollinator-friendly plants.

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

1000

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

We added pollinator-friendly plants to our existing park pollinator gardens and school gardens.

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

n/a

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

125

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

n/a

Selected Action Items

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

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Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

We continuously promote sustainable related activities on the City's website (Pollinator Action) and social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). For example, during Earth Month the City hosted a gardening webinar, which emphasized the important role pollinators play in a healthy and sustainable food system. We also completed social media posts for national campaigns such as Pollinator Week. The City also issued news releases, and eNewsletters for various pollinator initiatives and projects.

Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

This year the City worked with Toronto and Region Conservation Youth Corps and a local high school to plant 240 pollinator plants in Pickering. The planting helped encourage groups to plant more native, pollinator-friendly plants within their gardens.

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

During Earth Month, we work with expert horticulturalists from Durham Master Gardeners and TRCA to host a series of educational workshops including the importance of pollinators, and planting native, pollinator plants to support these populations.

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How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Durham Master Gardeners

Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.

During review of development proposals, the City makes recommendation to incorporate native pollinator-friendly plant material. The City's Integrated Sustainable Design Standards (ISDS), includes mandatory and optional performance requirements for all new developments. These standards were developed in collaboration with staff, the development community and public. One of the ISDS performance criteria reflect the requirement to plant 50% native plant species, including trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants preferably drought-tolerant and pollinator friendly outside of the buffer area and within the development limits.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

200

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

During City events related to sustainability (e.g. farmers' markets, sustainability pop-up events, town halls, educational roadshows, etc.) the City gives away free native wildflower seeds to participants.

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

200

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

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Schools

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

Pickering Environmental Schools Grant

How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

5

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

We have a section for teachers on the City’s website that provides them with a list of resources including activities, programs, educational links, and other helpful resources related to helping pollinators.

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

As part of the grant guidelines, all schools are required to describe how their gardens will be maintained which varies based on the school project schedules.

How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

125

How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

5

Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

St.Mary Catholic Secondary School Father Fenelon Catholic School St. Monica Catholic School Gandatsetiagon Public School Elizabeth B Phin PS

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

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When did this challenge take place?

September 7

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

100

What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Pickering West Shore Community Association (PWSCA) and the Fairport Beach Neighbourhood Association

Please describe your challenge and the results.

The City supported two neighbourhood associations in their event to bring awareness to the Monarch butterfly and other pollinators. The City provided the group with kid's educational pollinator worksheet activities, and butterfly buttons to help increase education and awareness about pollinators. The associations stated the event was very well attended and received by participants.

Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

Complete

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

We do not use pesticides, we use integrated pest management practices. Ontario's Cosmetic Pesticide Ban took effect April 22, 2009. Under the ban, more than 250 pesticide products are banned for sale and over 95 pesticide ingredients are banned for cosmetic uses. See link here (bottom of City page): https://www.pickering.ca/en/discovering/Parks-Maintenance.aspx#

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If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

n/a

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

City of Pickering Operations Department

Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

Complete

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

The City of Pickering's Integrated Sustainable Design Standards requires all new development in Pickering to Plant 50% native plant species, including trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants preferably drought-tolerant and pollinator¬ friendly outside of the buffer area and within the development limit. Remaining non-native species must be non-invasive. See page 8.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Appendix-I---ISDS-Checklist-Low-Rise-Residential_ACC2.pdf

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Building and Development Community

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

n/a

Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

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What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

City of Pickering Operations Department

If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.

n/a

What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.

Complete - See bylaw page 4. For noxious weed definition.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

By-law 7887_21 (1).pdf

If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.

“Noxious Weed” is as any weed classed under Weed Control Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. W.5. Milkweed is not listed under this act. See link here: https://www.ontario.ca/page/noxious-weeds-ontario#section-2

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

240

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Community groups and volunteers helped the City to plant over 240 nectar-producing plants in some of Pickering’s pollinator garden at Ernie L. Stroud and in a nature centre in Pickering. Volunteers from a local high school and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority’s Riversong program helped to do this planting. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Youth Corps volunteers help to maintain these gardens. The pollinator gardens help add diversity to the City’s landscape, provide a food source, and enhance the natural habitat for pollinators.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

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High school students, Toronto and Region Conservation Youth Corps, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Riversong Program

Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.1

Please describe the extent of revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs, as well as the practices or techniques used to remove the invasive plants.

As in previous years, the City worked with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Youth Corps volunteers to pull invasive species from our City parks and gardens, which were then safely disposed by the City's Operation’s Department.

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