City of Vaughan

City of Vaughan, ON

Mayor Steven Del Duca

Pledge Summary

The City of Vaughan is located in the Regional Municipality of York, just north of Toronto. In 2018 City Council adopted a resolution committing to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and the City has worked diligently to fulfil the actions annually since. Mayor Del Duca is excited to be taking the pledge in 2023 and for the City of Vaughan to be launching new actions around citizen science, and maintenance and mowing programs.

Action Items Committed for 2023

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.
- 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 community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.
- Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Steven Del Duca	2025	4/30/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Steven Del Duca	2024	3/25/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Steven Del Duca	2023	3/2/2023	Leadership Circle
Mr Maurizio Bevilacqua	2022	3/15/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua	2021	12/9/2020	Leadership Circle

Action Items

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.).

950

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.)

Roughly 10% were youth (95) and 90% adults (855)

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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.

1.34

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.

Yards, balconies, schools, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, parks. New areas in 2023 included the creation of one new No Mow Zone at Mackenzie Glen Park, the expansion of another No Mow Zone at Sugarbush park, the creation of pollinator gardens at Oakbank Pond Park and Doctor's McLean Park and the distribution of 971 pollinator seed packets.

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

Messaging, education and campaigns for the Mayors' Monarch Pledge are delivered to all residents and neighbourhoods across Vaughan. However, the City's Thornhill SNAP engages specifically with people living in subsidized housing - through the SNAP, and in support of the Monarch Pledge, a pollinator garden was planted in that neighbourhood in 2023. Further, through geospatial analysis we are working to determine which areas of the City are lacking monarch and other pollinator habitat to make sure our programming is equitable and give future priority to those areas. The City is taking an active approach to engage marginalized communities though our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force, and multi-year action plan. Staff are aware of the need to incorporate DEI into Mayors' Monarch Pledge engagement.

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

The City of Vaughan recognizes that pollinator species are essential in producing the food we eat, play a vital role in the health of our forests and grasslands and provide environmental benefits to maintain healthy ecosystems. Taking the Pledge demonstrates the City's commitment to initiatives that provide opportunities to celebrate biological diversity and educate citizens and City staff on the importance of pollinators. Additionally, on December 17, 2019, Council adopted Green Directions Vaughan, the City's community sustainability plan. Actions within Green Directions Vaughan direct staff to improve greenspace as community amenities and promote habitat condition for wildlife, and to promote green infrastructure, including pollinator habitat, to build resilience based on the effects of climate change.

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 policy recommendations/documents are useful. Since we are a Canadian City, some of the resources are not applicable as they focus on American communities and best practices. Additional Canadian best practices/case studies would be useful.

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

A few trends emerged in 2023. Uptake for our pollinator seed packet giveaways increased to the point that we doubled the number of packets ordered compared to 2022. Next, we have been able to begin and relaunch some outdoor programming that had been stalled by the pandemic. As alluded to in the previous answer, we have also reached a point in our programming where we have begun to systematically look into spatial gaps in our programming and pollinator habitat network to ensure our work is effective across Vaughan.

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:

June 19, 2023 (Pollinator Week). August 20, 2023 (Flight of the Monarch Day).

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

Pollinator Week and Flight of the Monarch Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Proclamations _ City of Vaughan.pdf

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.)

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

It's National Pollinator Week! _ City of Vaughan.pdf

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

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Public service announcements, local Councillor newsletters and social media posts were utilized to raise awareness about protecting our pollinators and encouraging residents to plant pollinator gardens at home. The largest campaign surrounded National Pollinator Week (PSA attached), however education was also promoted around a local campaign, called Flight of the Monarch Day, in August. The City's sustainability website also hosts information about planting pollinator gardens which stays online year-round (Vaughan.ca/environment).

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

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

Attachment 1- Draft Sustainability Metrics Guidebook March 2022.pdf

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

The update to the Sustainability Metrics Program (SMP) includes a pollinator metric (NE-6 Supporting Pollinators) encouraging developers to designate space for pollinator habitat. All Block Plans, plans of Subdivision of 10 or more residential units, site plans and zoning By-law amendments to facilitate any of the above must participate in the SMP. For new city buildings and retrofits projects, Policy Planning staff have included the need to plant pollinator species in the specifications; for new buildings it is encouraged that spaces for pollinator gardens and education programs be incorporated. For Streetscape Master Plans, the design of new parks and trails development, Policy Planning staff have also requested that areas be set aside to plant pollinator gardens. Further, in 2023 we began reaching out to largescale landowners to discuss the possibility of partnering on the creation of pollinator habitat in commercial areas such as in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and Vaughan Mills Mall.

Engage with Homeowners Associations (HOAs), Community Associations or neighborhood organizations to identify opportunities to plant monarch gardens and revise maintenance and mowing programs.

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

5. The Woodbridge Pollinator Group, Concord West Ratepayers Association, Woodbridge Rotary Club, the Butterflyway Project and the Maple Lions.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions implemented for mowing and maintenance programs.

These community and neighbourhood groups were all engaged in dialogue throughout the year around Vaughan's pollinator programs. One of these groups, the Concord West Ratepayers Association, has the right kind of profile to be able to influence maintenance

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and mowing in their neighbourhood. Our relationship with this group was strengthened in 2023 through partnering on a pollinator seed packet giveaway. We will plan to leverage this growing relationship in 2024 to help complete this action.

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

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

971 pollinator seed packets were given away in 2023. Roughly 100 seed packets were given away/exchanged at the 2023 Seed Swap event in collaboration with Vaughan Public Libraries. Event attendance below is just for the Seed Swap.

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

30

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

Woodbridge Pollinator Group, Vaughan Public Libraries, Woodbridge Rotary Club, Concord Ratepayers Association, and the Butterflyway Project..

Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)

The pollinator garden at City Hall (2141 Major Mackenzie Drive West) was planted in 2019 with the assistance of York Region Food Network, local bank employees and residents from Mapleglen Residences. This garden is being maintained by the Mapleglen residents.

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

York Region Food Network, the residents of the Mapleglen Residences.

What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? 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.

0.01

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Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).

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

Nature Canada

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

In June 2023 the City of Vaughan was recognized as a certified Bird-Friendly City by Nature Canada.

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

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

York Region Food Network, Mapleglen Residences, Human Endeavour,

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

323

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

This action is complete. The City Hall pollinator garden is located within a community garden. In 2019, an additional pollinator garden was planted at Vellore Park, a future location for a community garden. The City Hall community garden group actively maintains the pollinator garden on site and planted additional nectar producing plants in the garden in 2022. Sustainability staff are working on a Community Garden Strategy that will guide future expansion and current operations of our community gardens. Moving forward, all new community gardens will include a pollinator garden.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

7

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

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i. Oakbank Pond – 250 Centre Street, Vaughan, ON ii. City Hall – 2141 Major Mackenzie Dr, Vaughan, ON L6A 1T1 iii. Vellore Hall – 9541 Weston Road, Vaughan ON L4H 3A5 iv. Doctors McLean Park – 8100 Islington Avenue, Vaughan, ON L4L2P1 v. Veterans Park – 21 Woodbridge Avenue, Vaughan, ON vi. Fred Armstrong Park – 28 Woodbridge Avenue, Vaughan, ON L4L 1L2 vii. York Hill Park – to be installed in spring 2023, 330 York Hill Blvd, Vaughan, ON L4J 4E5 viii. BAYT Synagogue- 613 Clark Avenue West, Vaughan, ON L4J 5V3 Signs denote a pollinator garden and the reasoning behind why it is there including a link to vaughan.ca/environment for more information on pollinators. The Oakbank Pond, York Hill Park and BAYT signs are more detailed, providing more information on the importance of pollinators and pollinator gardens.

Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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

Clean Air Council

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

In progress

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

In 2023 a university student completed a term in the Policy Planning and Sustainability department is undertaking a review of City of Vaughan bylaws to determine what guidelines we have for native prairie and plant habitats and conducting a municipal scan of other municipalities to determine their weed or mowing ordinances. This work is part of a larger project that would launch an education campaign to encourage residents to plant boulevard pollinator gardens. We are also looking into partnering with the Clean Air Council to launch a study/program which would include a jurisdictional scan, technical assessment, policies and enforcement, incentive programs and engagement with major retailers (e.g., Home Depot, Canadian Tire, Home Hardware) and service providers (e.g., Landscape Ontario) in supporting municipalities and the community to transition to low-emission equipment.

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

None.

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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.

2021

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

This action is complete. It is standard City practice to include native plants, shrubs and trees in City landscaping. In 2022, the City planted 22 sponsorship flower beds and 50 beds under the Beautification Strategy – these beds included pollinator-friendly plants, ornamental shrubs and some annuals. The City has a list of approved tree species for homeowners and contractors planting trees on private property. In addition, the Beautification Strategy was revised, and approved by Council in September 2021. The new strategy outlines the use of only native trees in plantings and converting medians and roundabouts to pollinator gardens.

Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

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

None.

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

Sustainability staff are actively engaging City Project Mangers in the planning of various building upgrades, park revitalization plans and streetscape plans to encourage planting pollinator habitat. Additionally, Sustainability staff have provided the Parks Development team with recommendations for a pollinator seed mix to utilize in parks projects. For new city buildings and retrofits projects, Policy Planning staff have included the need to plant pollinator species in the specifications; for new buildings it is encouraged that spaces for pollinator gardens and education programs be incorporated.

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Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

None.

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

In progress.

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

Pollinators are a part of Green Directions Vaughan, the city's community sustainability plan. Sustainability staff are working in collaboration with a Recreation staff member, whom is obtaining a Lean Green Belt certification, to develop a Pollinator Garden Best Practices document. This document will guide pollinator and monarch habitat building throughout the City. Through the Official Plan Review update project, City staff will be including language promoting the need for pollinator habitat enhancement in the Natural Heritage Network and promote Environmental Stewardship initiatives. We will aim to have this work finished for end of 2024.

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

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

None.

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.

2008

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

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This action is complete. The City’s Pesticide Bylaw (Bylaw 88-2008) has been in effect since 2008.

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.

The City Hall community garden group was engaged through York Region Food Network, a non-profit that manages all of the City’s community gardens, and the group actively maintained the pollinator garden on site, planting additional nectar producing plants to the garden. The Growing to Give community garden group was also engaged through York Region Food Network.

Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

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

Two internal departments were engaged.

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions/maintenance implemented for mowing or planting programs.

In 2019, the City of Vaughan's Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations (PFHO) department piloted a revised mowing program to leave strategic "Grow Zones" un-mowed. These Grow Zones focus on converting specific areas in City parks covered by grass into naturalized meadows and pollinator gardens. There are 29 "Grow Zones" designated throughout the City. Staff in Parks, Forestry and Horticulture Operations are undertaking an annual workplan to determine which Grow Zones are suitable for tree planting or to be seeded with native and pollinator plants. In 2023, a new Grow Zone initiative was piloted in which 12 kg of wildflower seeds were added across a 1.1 acre park.

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

Pollinator-friendly plants were planted in 50+ beds across the City in right of ways, most of them as entryway features. The City can provide locations and exact data on the number of plants planted upon request.

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

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100

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

Available if absolutely required (by request).

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Maintenance occurs between 5-10 times per bed, per year and includes weeding, pruning, mulching and watering.

Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).

0

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

Wildlife Preservation Canada, North American Butterfly Association

Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.

In 2023, we had preliminary conversations with Wildlife Preservation Canada to add a site in Vaughan to their Bumble Bee Watch citizen science program. Bumble Bee Watch is a collaborative effort to track and conserve North America's bumble bees. We have also begun research into establishing a count circle in Vaughan so as to be able to lead and contribute to the North American Butterfly Count. The count results in annually published reports which provide a tremendous amount of information about the geographical distribution and relative population sizes of the species counted. Comparisons of the results across years can be used to monitor changes in butterfly populations and study the effects of weather and habitat change on North American butterflies. https://naba.org/butterfly-counts/ https://wildlifepreservation.ca/bumble-bee-community-science/

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

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

Available upon request if absolutely required.

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.

Invasive species removal community events will be piloted in 2024 as part of Green Guardians, Vaughan's environmental stewardship program. Work was done in 2023 to support this launch which is a multiyear project. We are aiming to have at least two events in 2024. Our current removal programs come in the form of the City’s Horticulture team removing anything invasive as they come across it. Typically, these species are garlic mustard, buckthorn suckers, knotweed. Invasive species removals also occur at a project scale, when new garden, shrub or tree plantings and/or clearing and safety work is planned. Additionally, the City’s Forestry team is undertaking an Urban Forest Management Plan and Woodlot Management Strategy that will include recommendations and strategies for invasive species removal and management. Internal and external groups also flag invasive sightings to Vaughan's Horticulture team for them to remove.

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