Town of Whitby

Whitby, ON

Mayor Elizabeth Roy

Pledge Summary

Established in 1855, the Town of Whitby is situated on the north shore of Lake Ontario, 30 km east of Toronto. The Town maintains 125 parks with 840 acres of active parkland, over 1000 acres of passive open space, and approximately 75 kilometres of trails. The estimated population is 138,500 and it is expected to hit 200,000 by 2033. The Town of Whitby's mission to create and maintain a sustainable, healthy, and safe community/environment can be achieved, in part, through the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of the Town's green infrastructure. A healthy habitat for pollinators is an integral component of the municipality.

Action Items Committed for 2025

Communications and Convening

- 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.)

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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

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

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Elizabeth Roy	2026	1/28/2026	
Mayor Elizabeth Roy	2025	3/3/2025	Signatories
Mayor Elizabeth Roy	2024	2/23/2024	Signatories
Mayor Elizabeth Roy	2023	4/25/2023	Signatories

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Mayor Don Mitchell	2021	12/16/2020	Signatories

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.).

2366

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.)

45

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.

2.9

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.

Community parks, along trails and promoting residents to plant native wildflowers suitable for monarchs in their yards. A community garden has been granted final approval allowing a local community group to start the Civic Community Garden located on the Whitby Civic Recreation Complex property. Habitat will be created as a part of the ongoing construction of the Fieldgate Sports Complex and Roybrook Park, to be completed in 2026.

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

The Town is leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities through our Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) in West Lynde. In 2025, the SNAP delivered five events from July 9th to August 1st to coincide with the lifecycle of this endangered species in Ontario. The program consisted of a tabletop display with props and life stages of the butterfly, allowing participants to better understand the lifecycle and connection of this species to the milkweed plant. Milkweed plant kits were distributed, along with tools for rearing monarch butterflies at home. Our audiences varied across all ages and languages, with an estimated 90 individuals participating during the month-long program.

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

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To support our overall commitment to sustainability and specific initiatives including Bee City Canada and Tree Cities of the World.

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?

The workshops/webinars the National Wildlife Federation held throughout the year have been helpful. However, a lot of the context has been United States based and as a Canadian municipality participating in this program it would be great to see further resources tailored to those participating from Canada. A general plan/guidance on how municipalities and residents can expand equitable engagement would be helpful.

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

Our monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year can be observed through our education and outreach to residents, handing out native seed packets and native plants, and creating pollinator friendly habitats throughout the Town.

Selected Action Items

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.

Mayors' Monarch Pledge - Newsletter.png

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

Mayors' Monarch Pledge - Social Media Post 1.jpg

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

Mayors' Monarch Pledge - Social Media Post 2.jpg

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

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Mayors' Monarch Pledge - Social Media Post 3.jpg

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

In 2025, the Town continued maintaining a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighbourhoods. This mainly involved using social media through Facebook to raise awareness about the benefit of pollinators and what residents can do to create more habitat. Additionally, information about our Mayors' Monarch Pledge was included in the Town's Green Quarterly newsletter, October edition, which also encouraged the public to create and protect pollinator habitats across our community. Lastly, during Pollinator Week in June we developed a News Story on the Town's website to provide more details on how residents can get involved and support pollinators (https://www.whitby.ca/news/posts/the-top-ways-to-celebrate-pollinator-week-in-whitby-2025/).

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

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

Brooklin Spring Fair - June 2025.jpg

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

650

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

650

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

We partnered with the Whitby Sustainability Advisory Committee to engage participants and hand out native plants.

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.

0.5

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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.

In 2025, the Town continued to advance invasive species management across parks, rights-of-way, and waterfront areas. Following the discontinuation of Lalcide Chondro in 2024, staff fully transitioned to mechanical removal methods for European Buckthorn, targeting mature stands within manicured parklands areas during the 2024/2025 winter season. Staff will continue monitoring these locations to assess the long-term success of the mechanical approach. Parks crews also managed Dog-strangling Vine in select rights-of-way by cutting back growth from mature trees and revisiting known sites in spring and early summers to remove populations while they remain manageable. As part of the Waterfront Trail improvements project, phragmites was cut back to ground level in July, with plans to treat new growth with pesticide in 2026 under the newly installed pedestrian bridge. Additional phragmites removal began in December along the Rowe Channel between Victoria Street and Watson Street, with work scheduled to continue into January 2026 to clear the channel from Watson Street South to the Whitby marina.

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)

3

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

The Town has an interactive map where residents can find all parks with pollinator gardens - https://www.whitby.ca/explore-and-enjoy/parks-and-recreation/parks/. We currently have an educational sign installed out of Town Hall at the Town's Serenity Pollinator Garden. This sign lists the pollinator friendly plants in the garden, indicates what is pollination, the importance of pollinators, and who are the key pollinators. There is another sign located at Des Newman WhitBEE Park that talks about food for pollinators. There is also a sign at Darren Park that discusses the native species conservation project and the long-term goal of the project, which is to promote a meadow habitat where mountain-mint and native plant communities can thrive and support a healthy ecosystem, including pollinator communities of bees and butterflies.

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

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

Repotting Event 2.jpeg

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

Internal Town of Whitby Departments - Seeds for Bees Native Plant Nursery

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.

The Seeds for Bees Initiative started in 2021 to assist community planting efforts. The nursery enables the Town to sustainably grow native plant stock, which is used to expand our native plant gardens across the Town. This year, Staff helped repot 1630 native plants in June that were later planted in the fall at Town parks. This program will continue in 2026 and beyond to increase the percentage of native plants in the Town's landscaping.

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