City of Evanston

Evanston, IL

Mayor Stephen Hagerty

Pledge Summary

Evanston is a city in the Chicagoland area, on the North Shore along Lake Michigan. It has a population of 72,439 as of 2020. The City of Evanston has a longstanding commitment to sustainability, climate action. and livability. City staff work hard to manage its trees and green spaces to create healthy ecosystems. A robust group of dedicated community members are active in advocating for and working to develop urban natural spaces that host native wildlife and precious pollinator habitat.

Action Items Committed for 2021

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.)
- 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 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.
- 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.
- 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

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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).
- 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).
- 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.

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.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Daniel Biss	2026	3/31/2026	
Mayor Daniel Biss	2025	4/8/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Daniel Biss	2024	3/29/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Daniel Biss	2023	3/30/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Daniel Biss	2022	5/5/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Stephen Hagerty	2021	4/27/2021	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.).

6000

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.)

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500 youth, 5500 adults

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

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 gardens, parkways, parks, public areas

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

Community groups have distributed plants to one of the City's historically disinvested wards and led plantings in this same ward. There have also been plantings at schools with students from vulnerable populations.

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

The City of Evanston recognizes the inherent value of pollinators and is committed to engaging community members in preserving habitat.

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?

Accountability tools would be most helpful. We are relying on community groups to report their impact, but there is no universal method to measure the impact.

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

The pandemic has continued to create challenges for community engagement efforts. However, we are inspired by the resilience and creativity of our community leaders. They continue the engagement work, despite the constraints.

Selected Action Items

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

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

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.

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

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 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)

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)

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

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

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).

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

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.

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

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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?

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

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).

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

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

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?

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

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.

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

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.

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3 community groups have advocated for revised mowing programs -- Friends of Lovelace Park, Natural Habitat Evanston, and a group of community members who maintain a rain garden in a downtown space.

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

These groups have met with City staff and worked with them to express their desire for revised mowing practices. They have also worked with elected officials and published media articles asking for reduced mowing practices where applicable.

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.

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

Natural Habitat Evanston, Evanston Environmental Association, Evanston Host Plant Initiative, Friends of Lovelace Park, Hinman Rain Garden, Harbert Park Stewards

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

These community groups work hard to develop and maintain pollinator plants and habitat throughout in different locations throughout the City. These efforts range from larger gardens with multiple canopy layers to small installations on parkways to portions of parks devoted to broader diversity conservation with special attention to pollinators. In addition, there are 2 active groups devoted to community outreach and engagement. They produce regular volunteer events, newsletters, and educational opportunities.

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)

City staff have planted gardens in the corners of intersections in multiple locations throughout town. The City also supports residents who wish to install flowering plants in the parkways in front of their homes. These residents apply for a permit and commit to maintaining the plants. These parkways are distributed throughout town, since they are resident-driven efforts.

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

50

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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.

5

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

City-planted spaces are maintained annually or more frequently. Resident-driven efforts are required to be maintained but the City does not require a specific schedule.

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.

The City has official committees and commissions to interact with contractors and organizers who complete work throughout town. The Design & Project Review Committee reviews applications for developments and redevelopments before these are submitted to the Council's Planning Committee for approval. Knowledgeable City staff convey the importance of native habitat in the Review Committee and impact the landscaping decisions that developers make. The Environment Board and Lighthouse Landing Complex Committee are 2 other opportunities where the City is able to communicate directly with local landscapers and community leaders so that monarch habitat is incorporated into the decision-making process.

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)

4769

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

5245

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

Evanston Host Plant Initiative, Natural Habitat Evanston, Evanston Environmental Association

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

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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)

Lorraine Morton Civic Center -- 2100 Ridge Ave / Evanston, IL 60201

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

These gardens were planted in conjunction with community groups and is currently maintained by City staff.

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.

0.05

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.

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.

Volunteers have removed buckthorn along the North Shore Channel, in the Ladd Arboretum, in Perkins Woods, and at the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary. The species targeted are buckthorn, bouncing bet, and creeping Charlie. These are mechanically removed and sometimes covered with landscaping fabric, plastic fabric, or other exclusionary fabric. The City allows on very limited use of pesticides on City-owned land, and there is no known herbicide effective against buckthorn that meets City standards. Pesticides are not used at Clark Street Beach.

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?

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This is an effort led by City staff.

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 City is currently revising its Property Standards ordinance to explicitly state that maintained and managed plantings are allowed, both on private property and on the parkway. This measure will allow community members to grow taller plants in their spaces, and recognize the importance of managing and maintaining these plants. This ordinance is expected to be brought before Council in later January 2022.

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?

This is an effort led by City staff.

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.

City employees, who are experts in natural resource management, are working with City property managers to incorporate a greater diversity of native and flowering plants on City-owned properties. This effort requires an assessment of City resources to ensure that these plantings can be adequately managed, so it is a long-term process of increasing the number of spaces that will include native and other flowering plants.

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

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

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

This was a multi-collaborative effort with multiple entities working to establish the document. Implementation is led by City staff.

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.

2018

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

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

CSBBS-newsletter-v2n2-Fall2021.pdf

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

Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary, Harbert Park Stewards

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

2000

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

These 2 community groups planted plugs, milkweed, and other native flowering plants in their respective restoration areas. The City supports these efforts by providing water, mulch, and other resources to ensure that the plants are able to successfully establish and so that the volunteers are able to work effectively.

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.)

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

Screenshot 2021-12-10 141520.png

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

Screenshot 2021-12-10 155120.png

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

Screenshot 2021-12-10 155638.png

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

The City has a permit process so that community members can apply to plant pollinator-friendly species in the parkways. The page is designed to provide outreach and education and will be further revised during the winter season. In addition, City staff are working with a landscaping company to produce a front and back flyer on the advantages of planting flowering plants on the parkway. Community groups also engage in these activities, with multiple groups maintaining websites and sending out newsletters: Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary, Natural Habitat Evanston, Evanston Host Plant Initiative, and Citizens' Greener Evanston.

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