City of Evanston

Evanston, IL

Mayor Daniel Biss

Pledge Summary

The City of Evanston is committed to monarch and pollinator conservation. In 2018 the City of Evanston unanimously approved the City's Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), which called for a number of ambitious measures including the conservation, preservation, and expansion of green space in the City.

Action Items Committed for 2022

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 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 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.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- 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).
- 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.

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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.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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.).

5500

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.)

500 youth, 5000 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.

0.5

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

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public spaces, and more.

Parks, ROW, community gardens

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

Community groups distribute plants, gardening groups provide vegetables and education

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 City's efforts are always evolving. We have moved into strategic planning and policy-driven efforts.

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):

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?

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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.

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.

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?

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.

These initiatives are spearheaded by city staff. Some community groups are involved in this process, but they are largely internal projects.

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

City staff regularly reevaluate mowing procedures and areas best suited for alternative plantings to reduce mowing efforts. In addition, staff have hired contractors to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to determine which areas would be best suited for conversion to native and/or prairie mix.

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

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

Natural Habitat Evanston

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.

A City of Evanston Councilmember made a referral to consider amending existing ordinances to encourage relaxing weed enforcement in the spring and promoting naturalizing residential yards. It was discussed by the Environment Board, recommendations were forwarded to Planning & Development Committee, and the item awaits scheduling for further discussion.

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.

City staff are working on a few comprehensive strategic plans -- both specific to the parks and for the City as a whole. Each of those plans presents an opportunity to plan around the development of monarch habitat. Diverse native plantings are an integral part of the plan.

Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

Bird Friendly Evanston.pdf

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

Green Building Ordinance 8.pdf

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

Bird-Friendly Evanston/Evanston North Shore Bird Club

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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.

June 2022

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 City maintains a demonstration garden at the Civic Center (2100 Ridge Ave., Evanston 60201), and at the Ladd Arboretum. There are also rain gardens at Main & Hinman and in Trahan Park. Lovelace Park has a site planted with native prairie mix.

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

All of these projects were developed and installed in collaboration with quite a few community groups and leaders, including Citizens Greener Evanston. Individual leaders are Tony Rothschild, Elizabeth Cunniff, Wendy Pollock, Leslie Shad, and Rick Mihevic

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.

0.75

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.

2 groups of stewards remove buckthorn along the canal, on either side. They work weekly to remove the buckthorn and replant with native plants. Each group has an average of 5-10 volunteers per site per week.

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.

These groups are mostly self-driven and City staff interactions are usually with individual groups. These groups are: Friends of Lovelace Park, Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary, individual school groups, Ladd Arboretum stewards, Harbert Park Stewards, Trahan Park stewards, and others.

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

The City maintains a relationship with community groups throughout town that work to plant pollinator habitat and remove invasive plants. City staff support their activities by providing plant material, mulch, water, and other material and resource support.

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)

2

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

The City maintains educational signs at the Civic Center and at the Ladd Arboretum.

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).

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The City of Evanston maintains a parkway plantings permit program to encourage homeowners to plant something other than turf on the parkways in front of their homes. The City is developing an interactive list of native plants that will be published to the website so that property owners will be able to easily choose which plants would thrive in front of their homes. This information and the permit process is posted to the website and we send reminders through social media in the spring.

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.

Evanston nonprofit offers free native plants to Fifth Ward residents - Evanston RoundTable.pdf

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

evanston-native-plant-sale-blossoms-to-benefit-birds-bugs.pdf

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

400

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

500

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

Evanston Environmental Association and Natural Habitat Evanston

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 yet.

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

In Progress

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

The City's Park and Green Space Strategic Planning process is underway, with completion expected in 2023, and plan implementation anticipated over the next 10 years.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

25

What species were collected or propagated?

Stiff goldenrod, New England aster, Wild bergamot, Sweet black eyed susan, Rattlesnake master

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

Allison Sloan of Shady Grove Wildflower Farm spearheaded a native seed collection effort for some sites around town that have remnant populations.

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

Allison Sloan has collected seeds from plants in town and has grown these into plants that are sold and/or donated. Notably, some of these have been planted at Lovelace Park in the meadow that is planted with native prairie mix.

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?

Bird Friendly Evanston

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

Tree City USA, Bird City Illinois

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