City of Evanston

Evanston, IL

Mayor Daniel Biss

Pledge Summary

Evanston borders Chicago on the north side and is an incredibly unique and passionate community. Climate action and green space preservation are important to our city and our residents. We look forward to doing our part to support monarchs and other pollinators.

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.
- 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.

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).
- 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.

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Systems Change

- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- 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.
- 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.).

1000

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.)

50

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

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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.

N/A

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 free plants, and gardening groups provide vegetables and education on how to build community farms and food forests.

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

The City of Evanston recognizes that pollinators are critical to ecosystem health and is committed to engaging community members in preserving their 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 worked on a strategic plan to develop naturalized landscapes and habitats in our parks and green spaces.

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):

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)

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

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.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

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

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.

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

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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.

.2

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?

The City maintains a couple of rain gardens throughout town that have nectar producing and other pollinator friendly plants.

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

12

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

These gardens are maintained by City staff.

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

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 remove invasive buckthorn and replant native shrubs and forbs.

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).

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The City maintains a sign at the rain gardens at the Civic Center and at the Ladd Arboretum.

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?

This effort 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.

In progress

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

City staff follows the Sustainable Pest Control and Pesticide Reduction Policy and continuously adds pesticides to the list of banned items. Staff closely monitor pesticide reduction activities and add products as they are found to be noxious to ecosystems.

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

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

The City is developing a new comprehensive plan and zoning update.

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

In

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

The City is working with consultants. The project is expected to be complete in the 2nd half of 2025.

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?

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The Climate Action Resilience Plan was an effort that involved a large number of staff, community groups, and other interested parties in town.

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;
https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/45170/636789554133930000

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?

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.

The City maintains a policy to not enforce strict mowing requirements during early spring. Conversations are still evolving to codify these practices and they are expected to continue into 2025.

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.

Natural Habitat Evanston, Ladd Arboretum Stewards, Harbert-Payne Park Stewards, other habitat protection stewards. The City supports community members and other habitat protection stewards throughout town who care for habitat on private property. These groups are provided with material and resource support so that they can maintain gardens and other naturalized landscapes with diverse native plants that supports insect and pollinator populations.

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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.

This effort was led by City staff.

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

City staff have committed to reducing mowing frequency in certain parks to allow for diverse plants to grown. In a couple of parks there are areas that are left unmowed to allow prairie plants to thrive.

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).

Sustainability Newsletter, https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILEVANSTON/bulletins/39ff936 Community Garden Newsletter, https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILEVANSTON/bulletins/393caeb

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.

Evanston Ecology Center, Evanston Environmental Association, Garden Club of Evanston, Lincolnwood, Highland Garden Club, Four Seasons, Natural Habitat Evanston, Ladd Arboretum Stewardship Group, local community gardeners

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

Planted additional pollinator plants (including milkweed), distributed pollinator seeds and plants at community events

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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?

Ladd Arboretum Stewards

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 has passed a no-mow and low-mow ordinance in the past, but continues to to expand pollinator gardens in municipal spaces

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?

Evanston Northshore Bird Club

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

Tree City USA, Bird City designation (https://birdcity.org/), Migratory Bird Day

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)

100+

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

40

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

Evanston Environmental Association

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