City of Columbia Heights

Columbia Heights, MN

Mayor Amáda Márquez Simula

Pledge Summary

Columbia Heights is a first-ring suburb of Minneapolis, MN, with a population of 20,000. The city is nestled between the large metropolis of Minneapolis and the sprawling suburbs. There are 15 parks in this 3-square mile city with many native pollinator gardens and room for more. Many organizations are improving conditions and habitat for Monarchs and pollinators; private and public schools, non-profits, faith communities, local government, businesses, etc. Mayor Márquez Simula is committed to connecting, inspiring, and engaging the community to continue to grow and improve spaces for the Monarch butterfly throughout Columbia Heights.

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 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.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

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- 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.
- 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 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).
- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- 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.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- 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.
- 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 Amada Marquez Simula	2023	4/11/2023	
Mayor Amáda Márquez Simula	2022	12/21/2021	Leadership Circle
Mayor Amáda Márquez Simula	2021	4/27/2021	Leadership Circle

Action Items

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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.).

800

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 and 300 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.

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.

residences, city-owned lots, schools, places of worship, community gardens, shared public spaces and common areas.

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

New this year was our Biligual Monarch Festival which took place in both SPanish and English. We had the Ballet Folklorico (Mexican folk dancing) and Mariachi musicians to bring in our Latino community members. We provide information at multiple community events which are greatly attended by our full community. We are the 6th most diverse city in Minnesota. We engage and have volunteers who speak Spanish, Somali, and English.

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

The Monarch butterfly is beautiful and brings our smiling community together. Everyone wants to help Monarchs and other pollinators and enjoys learning how they can assist in their habitat and lifecycle.

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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I would love materials in multiple languages that I could download and print for our table and events.

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

More groups are working toward Monarch habitat and pollinator efforts than five years ago. The ripple effect has taken hold in our city and we are seeing positive efforts from multiple businesses, faith communities, and schools. We look forward to continuing our work in 2023!

Selected Action Items

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.

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.

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)

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.

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e.,

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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)

Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).

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

When did this challenge take place?

What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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.

Please describe your challenge and the results.

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.

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.

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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.

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?

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.

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?

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

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

Rotary pollinating garden day.jpeg

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

HeightsNEXT has a berm with native pollinator plants. They partnered with the local Rotary club for donations and to have a morning garden party and planted $200 of native plants for habitat and nectar-producing plants for Monarchs and other pollinators.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

DSC08765.jpg

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

500

What species were collected or propagated?

Milkweed, Bluestem grass, marigolds, zinnia for example

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

Master Gardeners, HeightsNEXT, and local volunteers

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

We collected milkweed seeds last winter and at all our events we gave out seeds and information on how to plant each species.

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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https://www.facebook.com/groups/903686817053719
https://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/news_detail_T17_R506.php
https://heightsnext.org/monarch/ https://www.facebook.com/bloomingsunshinegarden I'm not able to upload my attachments. I'm happy to email them if necessary. We have flyers and stickers, posters and postcards.

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.

HeightsNEXT Master Gardeners of Anoka County Master Water Stewards Daughters of the American Revolution Sister Cities International Rotary International Columbia Heights Public School District

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

We have a public community garden and food forest called Blooming Sunshine Garden. We plant many native plants in our garden. We have all these groups collaborating and partnering to better the future of Monarch butterflies and other pollinators. We have many city events with all these groups serving at our table to share with the community how individuals can be a part of the solution. They also speak multiple languages.

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.

IMG_8164.jpg

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

HeightsNEXT, Master Gardeners of Anoka County, Master Water Stewards, Daughters of the American Revolution, Sister Cities International, Rotary International, Columbia Heights Public School District, the City of Columbia Heights

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

75

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

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We have a public community garden and food forest called Blooming Sunshine Garden. We plant many native plants in our garden. We have all these groups collaborating and partnering to better the future of Monarch butterflies and other pollinators. We have many city events with all these groups serving at our table to share with the community how individuals can be a part of the solution. They also speak multiple languages.

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)

National Wildlife Federation, https://www.hometownsource.com/abc_newspapers/community/fridley/national-wildlife-federation-certifies-new-schoolyard-habitat-at-north-park-school-for-innovation/article_94659762-3f65-11ed-973f-cbd58d55206a.html?fbclid=IwAR0GCidPMMp9thuEg1ZoMLMbIeBjePh7WOfOst9OBAfVbJKH_CKO3FxtIRY

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)

1

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

North Park Elementary School

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

Sharing successes through social media

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).

56 staff, 400 students

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

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Waste to Energy Canada granted us the biodigester that creates the biodigestate we use to enrich the soil. We engaged with Mayor Marquez Simula to create 400+ seed bombs for students to place in our front rain garden to grow more pollinators in that space.

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.

0.3

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

Students and our STEM/Sustainability Educator maintain the gardens throughout the school year. In the summer, our summer Encore program will have students who maintain the gardens. In addition, we have the support of our district grounds custodian, as needed.

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

IMG_2735.jpg

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

500

What was the date of your festival?

August 17, 2022

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

Food trucks, Faith communities, Anoka county recycling ambassadors, HeightsNEXT, Master Gardeners of Anoka County, Master Water Stewards, Daughters of the American Revolution, Sister Cities International, Rotary International, Columbia Heights Public School District, Kiwanis, City of Columbia Heights, Columbia Heights Public Library, Thrivent, Girl Scouts,

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

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This was our second Monarch festival, and this time it was Bilingual. We had our event on a weeknight at a local park. We had 40 vendors/tables with educational materials about Monarch butterflies and pollinators in English and Spanish. We had a food truck with Mexican food. We had entertainment with Mexican folk dancing (Ballet Folklorico), Mariachi Musicians, our local puppet wagon who did a play in English only, had a bilingual store teller read a book in English and Spanish, and had an Encanto dance party. It was a hugely Succesful event! The event was from 5-8 pm. We advertised in the local newspapers and on social media.

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?

Public Works Department, City Forester

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

Complete and ongoing

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.

I don't have a link but the city forester has planted many trees that are native and many that are great for pollinators.

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

This will be ongoing as the City Forest will continue to plant native and diverse trees, especially trees that provide habitat and food for pollinators.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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 host the event?

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We partnered with HeightsNEXT and hired a local artist to create the standing Monarch selfie stop.

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

7

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

A local artist created a child-size and an adult-size Monarch Butterfly wooden sculpture for people to stand in front of and take photos with the Monarch wings. This was revealed at the Monarch festival and was a big hit. They will be installed in 2023 concrete at our Blooming Sunshie garden with signage and a demonstration garden.

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:

Dec. 12, 2022

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

Plant Milkweed Month

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Plant Milkweed Month.png

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.

City staff participated in a No-Mow-May initiative. May Proclamation for No-Mow-May City staff allowed and shared park land with HeightsNEXT, Rotary, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Sister Cities International Group as they expanded the native pollinator garden. This year we added 10'x20' section to the berm planting.

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

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We have almost monthly conversations with the Public Works Department about the garden. Including having our City Forester out to a Kindergarten Day in the garden. He has let us know that trees are a significant source of nectar for pollinators. HeightsNEXT and Rotary volunteers will maintain the native pollinator garden throughout the growing season.

Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.

Strategy is to connect with “underserved” residents. We meet the community at city-led and private events. We ask High School students to help too. Our strategy goal is to get residents to join the “Map Our Monarchs” activity and pledge to not use pesticides or herbicides on their property. That they can grow pollinator plants in planters on balconies. We attend four events over the summer to do this. We give away seeds. We also connect with local schools and their native plant gardens. Our city is the 6th more diverse city in Minnesota and so we engage with recent immigrants to the United States, new people to the city. We have our Monarch festival materials in Spanish and English. We have Somali friends and neighbors/leaders who volunteer at events and are able to translate English to Somali.

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)

We give away seeds at every event. Along with materials on what the plant will become and instructions for healthy plants. We attend four events a summer. We probably give away 50-100 envelopes of seeds at each event. People see me and share that they had butterflies on the plants that they planted last year!

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?

HeightsNEXT, Master Gardeners of Anoka County

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

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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)

This is planted at Łomianki Park. We applied for a grant for the signage explaining what the garden is. Residents who grew up in the area had said that when they were children, the area of the city where the park is, used to be all fields, and in the summer, there would be hundreds of orange Monarch butterflies. “Like a cloud of orange.” This is where the HeightsNEXT Food Forest Blooming Sunshine Garden is also located.

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

HeightsNEXT, Rotary, Columbia Heights Public School District, Daughters of the American Revolution, Sister Cities International, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

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.

.12

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).

We have a total of two signs. One is a general sign for the whole Blooming Sunshine Garden and the second sign is specifically for the Native Pollinator Garden.

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