# City of Ann Arbor

Ann Arbor, MI

Mayor Christopher Taylor

## Pledge Summary

Ann Arbor is a city located along the picturesque Huron River in southeast Michigan. With a population of about 120,000, it is home to over 160 parks, totaling about 2,200 acres. Over half of those acres are comprised of natural areas which are managed and maintained by the Natural Area Preservation division of the Parks and Recreation Services Unit. The University of Michigan and Washtenaw County also own and maintain significant natural acreage within the city. Mayor Christopher Taylor has signed the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in recognition of the importance of the monarch butterfly and other pollinators to the health of our ecosystems and our citizens. We are committed to protecting and restoring our precious pollinator habitat.

## Action Items Committed for 2024

### 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 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.
- 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

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pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- 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.
- 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

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.
- 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 Christopher Taylor | 2026 | 1/13/2026 | |
| Mayor Christopher Taylor | 2025 | 1/17/2025 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Christopher Taylor | 2024 | 2/2/2024 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Christopher Taylor | 2023 | 1/12/2023 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Christopher Taylor | 2022 | 1/25/2022 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Christopher Taylor | 2021 | 1/5/2021 | 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.).**

120000

**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.)**

40000

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**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.**

0.1

**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.**

Parks and private yards

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

Our new Environmental Education and Engagement Coordinator has been hard at work creating connections in traditionally underserved parts of our community. She has forged connections with community centers, senior centers, and after school programs to offer classes revolving around the importance of our local wildlife, including pollinators.

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

We are committed to protecting and enhancing pollinator habitat, due to the fact that monarchs and other pollinator species populations are experiencing widespread declines. We understand the importance of pollinators to the health of our ecosystems, and our Natural Area Preservation unit is committed to protecting and restoring those ecosystems for the benefit of all flora and fauna. We want to inspire our community to continue to take their own actions as well.

**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?**

Educational webinars have been very helpful and have proved to be a great resource to share information among city staff and with members of the community. In the past, grants have also been very helpful for community organizations to purchase or be gifted native plant material, and it would be nice to see more of these. Bigger picture, additional grants for the purpose of hiring more staff could help us expand our habitat restoration and environmental engagement efforts into new areas of our city.

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

Pollinator conservation continues to be a topic of much conversation and activism in Ann Arbor. As in pervious years, residents, city staff, and community leaders and partners are enthusiastic about enhancing pollinator habitat in our city.

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## Selected Action Items

### 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.**

### 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.**

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

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**(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?**

## 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?**

**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 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).**

The Office of Sustainability and Innovation continued its Pollinator-Aware Yard Care(PAYC) program in the spring of 2024, with the goal of increasing resident awareness regarding yard-care strategies that support pollinators and their habitat. This program consists of a webpage that lists actions residents can take to protect pollinators in their yards and serves as a compendium of resources for residents interested in taking those actions. In addition, yard signs are available that indicate that the resident's yard is a part of the program and direct those who are interested to the webpage. In addition, the Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner continued to advertise their design assistance visit program, in which staff visit residents' homes by appointment and offer advice and information on how to build a rain garden, natural shoreline, or native garden. The program recommends native plants that will work well for individual sites and match the homeowner’s aesthetic tastes.

## 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.

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

The Natural Area Preservation program, the Leslie Science and Nature Center, the Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, The Stewardship Network, Michigan Conservation Stewards, Michigan State University Extension

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

The City's Natural Area Preservation program supported the Leslie Science and Nature Center for their annual Monarch Migration Festival (See Action Item 21). NAP and the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner's Office are coordinating partners of the Michigan State University Extension's Conservation Stewards Program, which seeks to educate and involve individuals in environmental and conservation issues in Michigan. This programs focuses on the importance of conserving native habitats for the benefit of all flora and fauna, including butterflies and other pollinators. NAP is also a financial supporter of The Stewardship Network, which connects, equips, and mobilizes people and organizations to care for land and water in their communities, which includes conserving and enhancing pollinator habitat.

## 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.**

Natural Area Preservation staff continued to actively work with developers seeking to incorporate native plants and rain gardens into the landscaping of their developments. NAP staff reviewed seed mixes and plant lists for appropriateness, and advised on minimizing negative impacts to existing natural features.

## Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

0

**What species were collected or propagated?**

Common milkweed, butterfly milkweed, swamp milkweed

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

Washtenaw County Conservation District, Washtenaw County Parks

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

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The Washtenaw County Conservation District facilitated a milkweed seed collection effort in Ann Arbor, including offering educational sessions on cleaning and preparing seeds. The collected seeds will be cleaned by community volunteers and donated to the Washtenaw County Parks for use in their habitat restoration efforts.

## 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)**

A butterfly garden was maintained at Gallup Park (3000 Fuller Rd), one of the busiest parks in Ann Arbor. This garden has high visibility, and is likely to make a significant impact upon visitors to the site. A native shoreline habitat near a highly-visited playground was also maintained in the same park. At Veteran's Memorial Park (2150 Jackson Ave.), an Alternative Mowing Demonstration Garden was maintained and re-planted with more native prairie plants and grasses that can tolerate mowing in a highly-visible area of the park..

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

GIVE 365, Adopt-A-Park

**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.**

0.14

## 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).**

6

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

Michigan Butterfly Network

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

The Natural Area Preservation division continued to be the Ann Arbor hub for the Michigan Butterfly Network (naturecenter.org/michiganbutterfly). Volunteers were trained in the identification of monarchs and other butterfly species, and they were trained in the Pollard method of surveying. Volunteers completed 60 surveys in 11 city parks and public areas, and they reported all the butterflies they saw along their survey routes to www.pollardbase.org. Attendees of the Leslie Science and Nature Center's Monarch Migration Festival also released tagged butterflies in order to enhance local butterfly populations and to contribute to the national tracking and monitoring effort. See Action Item 21.

## 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?**

Volunteer park adopters

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

1000

**Please describe your effort in completing this action.**

The Adopt-A-Park and GIVE 365 programs planted native and nectar-producing shrubs and forbs, including milkweed, in garden beds and native plantings throughout the city. They planted approximately 1000 plants and weeded and removed invasive species from plantings in 38 parks, with the help of volunteers and park adopters.

## 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.**

372

**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.**

Natural Area Preservation continued its extensive ongoing invasive species removal program in natural areas within city parks, which in part focuses on expanding native prairie and wetland habitat where milkweed and other nectar plants thrive. Throughout the

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year, new areas of invasives were removed in order to restore areas of lower ecological quality. Ann Arbor follows an Integrated Pest Management plan, which considers a wide variety of techniques for controlling invasive species. These include mechanical methods such as pulling, mowing, and bagging stumps; burning with prescribed fire or propane torches; and biological controls, in addition to the use of herbicides. When herbicide use is deemed necessary, our goal is always to use the least toxic product, applied at the lowest effective concentration, in the most targeted manner possible, with timing that is most effective for the species we are trying to control. Similarly, the GIVE 365 program removed invasive plants from several native plantings in parks around the city, by pulling, cutting, and bagging stumps. The Office of the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner also regularly removes invasive species from public rain gardens though herbicide treatment, manual cutting and pulling, controlled burns and cutting below the water line as methods of treatment. Where large amounts of invasives are removed, annual seed mix is added during each maintenance visit to reduce the amount of invasive resprouts.

## 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.**

## Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

PAYC Yard Sign - Front & Back.pdf

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

AlternativeLawnBanner.pdf

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

AAPPollinatorWurster.png

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

StemNesting.png

**How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)**

362

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

The first attached sign was used to educate and inform residents about the Pollinator-Aware Yard Care program, which encourages residents to adopt pollinator-friendly yard care practices. A QR code on the sign takes you to a website with extensive details, but short bullet points on the sign encourage residents to plant native plants, reduce mowing and mow taller, leave fallen leaves, and avoid pesticides. The signs were displayed in private yards throughout the city that participated in the program. 358 signs have been distributed to residents. The second sign was posted at our Alternative Lawn Demonstration garden at Veterans Memorial Park. The QR code takes visitors to a web page highlighting the city's sustainability efforts. The third sign was posted at a native garden in Hanover Square Park, a prominent downtown park. The QR code takes visitors to the city's Pollinator Aware Yard Care Initiative website. The fourth sign was posted in pollinator gardens in Wurster Park, and it explains how to create habitat for stem-nesting bees.

## 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)**

5,123

**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?**

Funding for our 10,000 Trees community tree planting program was provided by American Forests. The program is carried out by the city's Office of Sustainability.

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

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

N/A

**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.**

In October 2021, Ann Arbor City Council adopted an outdoor lighting ordinance that promotes good lighting practices and reduces human-sourced light pollution. The new ordinance is intended to benefit the nocturnal ecosystem and reduce unnecessary energy use. See https://www.a2gov.org/news/Pages/article.aspx?i=836 for more information.

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

N/A

## 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.

**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?**

9/8/24

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

Leslie Science and Nature Center, University of Michigan Museum of Natural History

**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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The Monarch Migration Festival was held at the Leslie Science and Nature Center on September 8. Attendees of the festival got their own tagged monarch butterfly to release, as well as access to onsite activities, games, a butterfly tent, information from local partners. The Leslie Science and Nature Center is conveniently located in a walkable location near downtown Ann Arbor, and has several nearby bus stops, making it easily accessible to members of the community. The event was advertised throughout the community by several local and regional news outlets.

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