Cheltenham Township

Elkins Park, PA

President, Board of Commissioners Matthew Areman

Pledge Summary

Cheltenham Township is a first-ring suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a population of close to 38,000. Its 9-square-mile community boasts 23 parks and open spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy. Cheltenham Township adopted a Sustainability Plan in 2013, and is looking to approve its updated Comprehensive Plan in 2026, further supporting its commitment to the environment and to pollinators. Cheltenham is taking the Monarch Pledge for the fifth year in 2026 to include cultivating its existing and monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration gardens, continuing public communication efforts to encourage monarch gardens at homes and neighborhoods, hosting its third annual Monarch Festival, and reviewing Township ordinances, regulations and practices. The Township's efforts are supplemented by the partnership of community organizations and resident volunteers, including through the Cheltenham Township Library System, the Township's Environmental Advisory Council, and parks Friends groups.

Action Items Committed for 2026

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.)

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.
- 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.

Systems Change

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

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- 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
President, Board of Commissioners Matthew Areman	2026	3/26/2026	
Township Manager Alyson Elliott	2025	3/11/2025	Signatories
President, Board of Commissioners Matthew Areman	2024	3/5/2024	Signatories
Township Manager Alyson Elliott	2023	3/16/2023	Signatories
Acting Township Manager Alyson Elliott	2022	3/25/2022	Signatories

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.).

250

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.)

20

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

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 at Township parks and libraries have been maintained/cultivated, but I'm unaware of added acreage, other than homeowners adding naturalized spaces to their yards.

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

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Through partnerships with our libraries, for free access to information about pollinators, educational workshops, and even to native seeds.

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

Our strong belief that the health of the Monarch is a bigger signal of the health of our ecosystem as a whole, and a community-wide commitment to furthering sustainability.

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?

The NWF email nuggets of information have been a helpful educational resource, as we have shared some of that information on our website. In the future, we'd like to be able to come to the table with our libraries and parks friends groups to create a purposeful plan for engagement, and from there, to see what available resources might support those efforts.

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

We still haven't had the staff capacity to plan and carry out new conservation efforts, but this year, we looked long-term as we adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. We made sure to incorporate support for pollinators and native plants so that these priorities will be part of what guides our community into the future.

Selected Action Items

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.

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must

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incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

03/18/2026

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

2026 Monarch Pledge Proclamation

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2026 Monarch Pledge Proclamation.pdf

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.)

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

Screenshot Pollinator Corner 1.png

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

Screenshot Pollinator Corner 2.png

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

We continued occasional updates on our "Pollinator Corner" news release on our website, where we've also maintained resources shared since its inception for our 2024 pledge. We also occasionally share social media posts from the PA Dept of Conservation and Natural Resources and other channels sharing beneficial information about native plants and initiatives like Leave the Leaves.

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.

Pages from 05-CheltenhamCP2021_Sustainability_FA 7.9.pdf

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

The Township's updated Comprehensive Plan was worked on through the partnership of the Montgomery County Planning Commission, alongside a stakeholder group representing Township elected officials, staff, and citizen committee members, including from the Township' Planning Commission and Environmental Advisory Council.

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.

The new Comprehensive Plan was adopted July 15, 2026 and will serve as a guiding document for the Township's priorities. The full document is available at cheltenhampa.gov/comprehensive plan. The attachment is a pertinent goal page from the Sustainability chapter that includes some focus on supporting pollinator habitat.

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.

G65A2013.JPG

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

G65A2022.JPG

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

G65A2038.JPG

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

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

G65A2066.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)

25

What was the date of your festival?

September 29, 2026

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

The Glenside Library and the Friends of Grove Park

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).

In lieu of the festival tradition we started in 2024, this year, we only did a Monarch butterfly release. Due to other scheduled events and the Rosh Hashanah holiday, this was our Monarch celebration for this year and we have already selected a festival date for 2027. A member of the Friends of Grove Park (one of our Township spaces with pollinator habitat from our 2024 pledge) raised the monarch butterflies and we were able to coordinate with the Glenside Library to do a release during their daytime programming when families with young children are present. We started inside the library with a brief explanation of the Township's pledge, the Monarch life cycle, and migration, and then headed outside to release two butterflies. The families and kids present were excited about the event!

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

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

IMG_0364.jpg

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)

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Township Administration Building, 8230 Old York Rd, Elkins Park, PA 19027. Forgot to take a photo during the heart of the season, but you can tell from the attached it included coneflower that has gone to seed!

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

Township Public Works Parks staff maintains this patio boundary demonstration garden.

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.

.05

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.

Screenshot Native Plant Sale Ad.png

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

250

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

100

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

The Friends of High School Park is a 501c3 group that stewards this Township park. They host a plant sale annually, and we support this and shared the information through our channels..

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?

Friends of Grove Park, Friends of High School Park

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

275

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Pollinator gardens / native habitat were maintained by Public Works and stewards (Friends) of our park locations where these habitats are specifically present - Grove Park (demonstration garden) and High School Park (full maintained meadow). In High School Park, an estimated 275 native plants were added, with swamp milkweed being the most widely planted.

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