City of Houston

Houston, TX

Mayor Sylvester Turner

Pledge Summary

The City of Houston is the largest city in Texas and fourth-most populous city in the United States with over 2.3 million residents. Houston is situated in the convergence of the piney woods and the gulf coast prairie, with 10 major bayous and waterways leading to Galveston Bay. Mayor Sylvester Turner has committed to protecting the monarch butterfly and other pollinators through actions taken by City of Houston staff to propagate and plant milkweed plants, establish and restore native habitat, and engage the community in monarch conservation.

Action Items Committed for 2023

Communications and Convening

- 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, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

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.

Past Pledge Archive

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Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor John Whitmire	2026	4/7/2026	
Mayor John Whitmire	2025	3/24/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Sylvester Turner	2023	3/23/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Sylvester Turner	2022	2/3/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Sylvester Turner	2021	1/22/2021	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.).

200

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.)

100 youth and 100 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.

28

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

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

Yes

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

Community support for monarch habitat restoration

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

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help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

N/A

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

N/A

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?

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.

The Natural Area Ordinance was passed in 2003 to allow homeowners to grow native plants and use natural landscaping techniques on their property.

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

https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH32PARE_ARTIINGE_S32-10MAADNAAR

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.

Houston Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of Lorraine Cherry Nature Preserve, Friends of Halbert Park, the Westbury Community Garden, and Friends of Franklow Park.

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

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department purchases native wildflower seed each year to be spread in certain park locations. During the time of year when the wildflowers are germinating, blooming, and producing seed, these sites are not mowed. This program allows for reduced mowing in sites that are typically regularly mowed, and for the increase in native flowering plants in parks throughout the city. The community groups engaged with the project are given a portion of the wildflower seeds to spread with community members as an interactive engagement method.

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.

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

Memorial Volunteers 2.jpg

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

Texas Master Naturalist Gulf Coast Chapter, Texas Master Naturalist Galveston Bay Chapter.

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

The Texas Master Naturalist Gulf Coast Chapter provides volunteers for a bi-weekly plant propagation volunteer workday at Houston Parks and Recreation Department's greenhouse. These volunteers propagate thousands of milkweed and other native nectar plants each year. The Texas Master Naturalist Galveston Bay Chapter provides volunteers for a monthly plant propagation volunteer workday at the Houston Parks and Recreation Department's lath house. These volunteers propagate thousands of milkweed and other native nectar plants each year.

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.

The City of Houston Mayor's Office of Resilience implemented a prairie restoration project at New Hope Housing, an affordable supportive housing development. The project will serve as a demonstration for how to best incorporate an urban prairie ecosystem that

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prepares the community to be more resilient and provides habitat for wildlife such as the monarch butterfly. Partners included the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, the Coastal Prairie Conservancy, and the Houston Parks Board.

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.

Earth Day 2023_Wildflower Giveaway.jpg

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

750

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

1000

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

The plant giveaway took place at the City of Houston Earth Day HTX 2023 event on April 19th, 2023. Many city departments and city-partnered organizations participated in this large Earth Day celebration. Houston's mayor and many city council members attended.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

148

What species were collected or propagated?

Green milkweed and aquatic milkweed

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

Master Naturalist Gulf Coast Chapter, Master Naturalist Galveston Bay Chapter

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

The Texas Master Naturalist Gulf Coast Chapter provides volunteers for a bi-weekly plant propagation volunteer workday at Houston Parks and Recreation Department's greenhouse. These volunteers propagate thousands of milkweed and other native nectar

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plants each year. The Texas Master Naturalist Galveston Bay Chapter provides volunteers for a monthly plant propagation volunteer workday at the Houston Parks and Recreation Department's lath house. These volunteers propagate thousands of milkweed and other native nectar plants each year.

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)

Houston's City Hall Annex, 900 Bagby St, Houston, TX 77002.

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

N/A

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.

.1

Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

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

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What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

82

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.

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department continued to remove invasive species in natural areas throughout the park system and added multiple new work sites during the

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reporting period. Practices include chemical herbicide application and mechanical methods such as chainsaw, hydro-ax, and hand tools.

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?

N/A

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.

Houston Parks and Recreation Department created a native tree list in 2020. The natural resources division is currently using the list for all tree planting projects, and is encouraging other groups to do the same.

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