Town of Oakville

Town of Oakville, ON

Mayor Rob Burton

Pledge Summary

In the harmonious and vibrant community of Oakville, Ontario, an unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable living is evident. This dedication beautifully intertwines with the town's efforts in monarch and pollinator conservation, showcasing Oakville's profound respect for nature and its inhabitants. Monarch and Pollinator Conservation in Oakville: A Testament to Environmental Responsibility Community Engagement and Education: Oakville's residents and local organizations, such as the Oakville Horticultural Society and Halton Region Master Gardeners, play a pivotal role in educating and engaging the community in pollinator conservation. Workshops, community programs, and informative resources are provided to enhance awareness about the importance of pollinators and the threats they face. Promotion of Pollinator-Friendly Gardens: The town encourages residents to cultivate pollinator-friendly gardens, especially in boulevard spaces. This initiative aligns with Oakville's policy of reducing water usage and avoiding harmful pesticides. Planting native and diverse plant species not only beautifies the town but also creates a haven for monarch butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. Support for Native Plant Species: Oakville's commitment to environmental sustainability is reflected in its encouragement of planting native species that are crucial for pollinators. The town provides guidance on selecting plants that bloom from spring to fall, offering a sustainable source of nectar for monarchs and other pollinators. Habitat Creation and Preservation: The town's green spaces, including its 1,700 hectares of parklands and over 300 kilometres of active recreational trails, serve as vital habitats for pollinators. Efforts are made to maintain these areas in ways that support the life cycles of monarchs and other important pollinators. Reducing Pesticide Use: In line with its environmental policies, Oakville advocates for the minimal use of pesticides, promoting natural alternatives to ensure the health and safety of pollinators. This approach is instrumental in creating a safe environment for monarchs during their critical breeding and feeding times. Collaborative Efforts with Educational Institutions: Sheridan College's innovative programs and the town's partnership with educational and conservation groups play a crucial role in pollinator conservation. Research and projects focusing on sustainable practices contribute significantly to conservation efforts. Community Events Focused on Conservation: Oakville hosts various events and festivals that often include themes of environmentalism and conservation. These events serve as platforms for raising awareness about the plight of monarchs and the importance of pollinators in our ecosystem.

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

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conservation.
- 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

- 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

- 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.
- 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 Rob Burton	2024	1/3/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Rob Burton	2023	3/17/2023	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.).

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

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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.

3

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.

Monarch habitat is being created at town-owned parks and facilities (recreation centres, libraries) as well as in schoolyards, at faith organizations, right-of-ways, roadsides, community gardens and more through the strong relationships and collaborations with OakvilleGreen, the Halton Environmental Network, Grandmother's Voice and the eight OakvilleReady locations. The distribution of the grant money in 2024 helped to increase monarch habitat, support biodiversity and increase the wildlife corridor which is beneficial to all native flora and fauna including monarchs.

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

The Town partners with various community groups and organizations through its OakvilleReady climate resiliency program to help improve local food security, biodiversity, rainwater infiltration as well as deliver climate education. These partner organizations are chosen based on their proximity to areas of town that are vulnerable or where marginalized communities reside. To date, OakvilleReady has installed, maintained and harvested several food, medicinal and pollinator gardens across town. Food harvested on these properties are donated to various food banks in Oakville via HEN's Sowing Hope program. The OR program uses Prizm 5 demographics to ensure the right approaches and languages are being utilized to reach our target audiences and delivers a grant program to help residents financially. The town also organizes and attends inclusive events that are accessible and available free of charge to all Oakville residents.

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

The Town of Oakville has always been proactive regarding limiting its use of harmful chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides, supporting biodiversity, local food security and discouraging the proliferation and introduction of invasive species. The town always looks to the most benign approach and only uses products on the Provincial Allowable List when necessary for the control of invasive species. Participating in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge was just another way to solidify our commitment to the protection and enhancement of pollinators in our community, specifically monarch butterflies.

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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Partnerships have been a key resource to the town being able to plant and maintain various gardens across town and to help educate and engage the public and volunteers. The town introduced two new grant programs in 2024, the OakvilleReady Community Climate Action Fund and the Oakville Mayors Youth Climate Action Fund which allowed the town to further support community inspired and delivered projects. Many of the applications received described projects that would further protect, enhance or educate residents on urban forestry, urban farming and biodiversity.

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

In addition to the actual monarch and pollinator gardens, the town's Climate Action staff host and attend outreach events and include monarch and milkweed education through various engagement activities including trivia and making milkweed seed bombs. The town has procured native wildflower seed packets for distribution at outreach events and the town's Parks and Open Space department have also attended town run events and had youth and adults plant milkweed and butterfly weed to take home and replant on their own properties. The town provides information on pollinator plantings on its Community Climate Action webpage.

Selected Action Items

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.

Bronte Waterfront Pollinator 2024.jpg

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

Jody - opening circle.jpg

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

Oct 19 - Valleybrook 17.jpeg

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

Oct 19 -making seedballs.jpeg

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

Halton Environmental Network Oakvillegreen Bronte BIA Grandmother's Voice Mayor's Youth Climate Action Grant recipients OakvilleReady partner organizations community organizations and volunteers

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

Grandmother's Voice After town staff removed the buckthorn from Valleybrook Park, Grandmother's Voice and a local Grade 8 class planting several native flowers, shrubs and trees, ensuring to protect the existing milkweed but placing flagging tape as seen in the attached picture. Families with young children at the planting event were invited to make seedballs. The milkweed seeds came from the plants lower down the hill, that were protected with the flagging tape. The attached picture shows the mom holding a milkweed seed and all the fluff on the ground. Mayor's Youth Climate Action Fund Mayor Burton joined the Bloomberg Philanthropies to launch the OMYAF in 2024. Eligible projects include those that support native plantings, pollinator gardens and biodiversity. 9 of the 11 successful projects will work to enhance and maintain Oakville's pollinators and local biodiversity with educating youth on urban farming practices, planting over 300 native shrubs in partnership with Oakvillegreen and Oakville Girl Guides, supporting the Halton Environmental Network's (HEN) work with the Halton Food Forest, using AI and drone technology to identify and assess urban forest stands are just a few of the successful applications being funded. OakvilleReady The town's Climate Action staff lead the OakvilleReady in collaboration with HEN and eight community organizations that, as part of the program, work to install and maintain food and pollinator gardens on various sites throughout Oakville. The OakvilleReady Community Climate Action Grant was created in 2024; four of the five successful projects involve native tree and shrub plantings, as well as the installation and maintenance of pollinator and food gardens. HEN & OakvilleGreen The town's continued engagement with both HEN and OakvilleGreen to deliver the majority of public plantings since they have such great knowledge, community connections and eager volunteers. Both HEN and OakvilleGreen work year-round to find funding, areas to plant and volunteers to help plant and educate residents. The town of Oakville staff support them in their efforts by means of supplying, when needed items such as gardening materials (stakes, signage, plants and soil), permits, greenhouse space, post planting maintenance and care, maintaining the canoe pollinator garden planted at Fisherman's Wharf in Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park in partnership with the Bronte BIA, the Kingsford Food Forest and the neighbouring pollinator meadow.

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:

October 1, 2024

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

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Monarch Conservation Month

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Monarch Conservation Month Proclamation.pdf

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?

Several community groups including landscapers, consultants, homeowners, Oakville Green and the Halton Environmental Network (HEN).

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.

All planting within identified woodland areas under our silvicultural management are only comprised of native plantings. Nonnatives are only selectively used on boulevards and in parks to reduce pest and disease issues.

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?

Municipal staff collaborate with several community organizations and volunteers that work to increase and preserve butterfly habitat and milkweed.

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.

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All planting within identified woodland areas under our silvicultural management are only comprised of native plantings. Nonnatives are only selectively used on boulevards and in parks to reduce pest and disease issues. Staff will identify what city landscaping ordinances are in place and that might need amending and report back in 2025.

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.

town-hall-Pollinator garden - oakville-beaver.jpg

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

Town Hall pollinator garden.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)

The Canoe Pollinator Garden was established at Town Hall in 2019, 1225 Trafalgar Road, and is registered on the Butterfly Highway as Monarch Weigh Station #24740. The canoe was saved from the landfill and given a new life as a butterfly garden with the help 16 youth aged 7-12 from ArtHouse Visual Arts with plants from Kayanase Greenhouses on Six Nations to help ensure a healthy habitat for Butterflies and other pollinators.

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

The town has partnered with several community groups and volunteers to design, install, plant and maintain the numerous pollinator gardens within Oakville. The Pollinator Garden at Town Hall was a collaborative effort of the town, ArtHouse Visual Arts, Town Council and the Halton Environmental Network. Other gardens were constructed in partnership with the Halton Environmental Network, OakvilleGreen, Kayanase Greenhouses, Oakville Seniors Centres, OakvilleReady partner organizations with the help of various youth and community groups and volunteers.

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.

0.5

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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?

The town consulted with professional landscapers, gardeners, golf courses, retail outlets, residents, Health Canada, Landscape Ontario and several other organizations and government entities prior to enacting the cosmetic pesticide ban in 2007. The town continued to work with these groups through the implementation stage until the province enacted its by-law in 2009, then the town proceeded to promote the provincial ban to its residents through various outreach and engagement efforts.

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.

Currently the town only uses pesticides for invasive species, such as Hogweed and Poison Ivy, due to the health and safety risk to the public; and an herbicide to prevent regrowth of the buckthorn. The use of this herbicide to control Buckthorn regrowth is in accordance with best practices due to how aggressively it outcompetes native vegetation. Other herbicides are used as necessary to help control other provincially regulated species under the Invasive Species Act with approvals from the Province, such as Japanese Knotweed and Dog Strangling Vine, and insecticides to control other significant issues like Spongy Moth, Emerald Ash Borer and Aphids. This is done in accordance with current best practices.

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.

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

Fire Prevention - native plants pamphlet visable.jpg

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

Town staff from various departments work together to inspire, educate and engage residents and businesses to take action in a variety of ways, one of them being for the protection, enhancement and sustainability of Oakville's natural environment. The attached picture shows Climate Action staff at one of the larger town events, Fire Prevention Day,

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educating residents on the importance of native plants, wildlife and pollinators, as you can see in the background pamphlet.

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

The town's Climate Action staff host and attend outreach events that includes monarch and milkweed education through various engagement activities including trivia and making milkweed seed bombs. The town has procured native wildflower seed packets for distribution at outreach events in the spring. The town's Parks and Open Space department have also attended town run events and had youth and adults plant milkweed and butterfly weed to take home and replant on their own properties. The town provides information on pollinator plantings on its Community Climate Action webpage and plan to launch a No Mow May education campaign in the spring.

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.

The town's 2024 woodland regeneration program is on track to treat 38 hectares of buckthorn, a noxious invasive species.

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 town will replant 49,425 native trees and 5,250 native shrubs into these areas that the buckthorn has been removed. These are not specific areas to support monarchs as they look for open habitats with milkweed – but will support native pollinators overall. One such area was replanted, existing milkweed flagged for protection in October and pictures are included under Action 5. An herbicide to prevent regrowth of the buckthorn is used in accordance with best practices due to how aggressively it outcompetes native vegetation.

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