City of St. Louis

St. Louis, MO

Mayor Cara Spencer

Pledge Summary

The City of St. Louis is located on the eastern border of Missouri along the banks of the mighty Mississippi River. This location is a natural byway for Monarch butterfly migration. In 2014, St. Louis began its Milkweeds for Monarchs initiative and has established well over 400 green spaces with milkweed and nectar sources to support the Monarch and other pollinators. Mayor Tishaura O. Jones continues the City's important efforts to support pollinators and connect residents with nature. Monarch and pollinator gardens will continue to be established and maintained along greenways, in city parks, neighborhoods, schools and at homes across St. Louis.

Action Items Committed for 2025

Communications and Convening

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

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.
- Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Systems Change

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- Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).
- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Cara Spencer	2026	3/20/2026	
Mayor Cara Spencer	2025	3/11/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Tishaura O. Jones	2024	3/29/2024	Signatories
Mayor Tishaura Jones	2023	3/28/2023	Signatories
Mayor Tishaura Jones	2022	2/8/2022	Signatories
Mayor Tishaura Jones	2021	2/19/2021	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.).

100

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.)

0

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.

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.

Habitat is being created on vacant lots, community gardens, tree lawns, city parks, City Hall, traffic-calming planters and medians, senior centers and along greenways. Further, greenspaces with Monarch habitat continued to be maintained in cul-de-sacs, senior citizen centers and various other public spaces. Beyond Neighbors Naturescaping gardens, residents are also restoring habitat in their own home gardens. Further, the City of St. Louis through the office of the Nature Steward in the City Forestry Division, continues to add and

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maintain native plants in City parks and other public spaces including 36 acres of prairie restoration sites in the Butterfly Byway within a mile of the Mississippi River.

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

Every effort is made to reach and engage marginalized communities. This year, 65% of the gardens that Brightside provided free native plants to are located in primarily low-income and/or communities of color or the organization serves primarily low-income clients. Moreover, the City's Nature Steward manages 36 acres of prairie restoration projects which are all located in low-income communities or communities of color.

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

Our community residents and leaders are motivated by the opportunity to make a difference for future generations of pollinators as well as people as they are very reliant upon each other.

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?

To date, the City of St. Louis has had limited involvement with the resources offered by the National Wildlife Federation although we anticipate taking more advantage of these resources in the future.

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

In 2023, the City of St. Louis hired a Native Plant Steward. In 2024, a second Nature Steward was hired and in 2025, a part-time Nature Steward was hired. Their primary responsibility is to manage the City's engagement with and maintenance of native plantings at City Hall, in City Parks and along the Butterfly Byway which includes 36 acres of prairie restoration sites as well as areas along Great Rivers Greenway bike trails. To this end, this year they added 250 native plants to their garden beds at City Hall plus 200 more forbs and native plants in City parks. In Brightside's Demonstration Garden, volunteers planted an additional 687 native plants including Asclepias incarnata. In other greenspaces, 50 milkweed plants were planted this fall, along with 1,368 Missouri native perennials, 194 native grasses and sedges, 60 shrubs and 13 trees through Brightside's Neighbors Naturescaping program. Brightside supported 17 Neighbors Naturescaping gardens with native plants and tools to care for the gardens. In addition to these newly-established gardens and enhanced community greenspaces, there continues to be significant interest in volunteers and volunteer groups helping maintain the native plants in Brightside's Demonstration Garden including a weekly group of Master Gardeners.

Selected Action Items

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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.

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

Where is the monarch habitat located? (Please provide an address, if possible)

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

What is the total acreage of land that has been converted? 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.

How many lots were converted to monarch habitat? Please limit your answer to only the number of lots in the answer field below (e.g., 3)

Please describe when the lots were converted to monarch habitat and the planned maintenance schedule.

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)

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

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.

Through Brightside's Neighbors Naturescaping program, community groups in the City of St. Louis are encouraged to plant native milkweed and nectar-producing plants. Neighborhood groups and nonprofit organizations may request up to $1,500 worth of native plants to improve public spaces in the city to restore habitat for Monarchs as well as other pollinators. In 2025, Brightside worked with 17 community groups to establish or enhance community gardens. Of the 17 groups, 7 were new to the Neighbors Naturescaping

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program creating new gardens or enhancing existing greenspaces. The other 10 groups expanded their greenspaces with native plants provided by Brightside. In addition to restoring habitat at City Hall, this year the new green spaces or enhanced existing gardens included vacant lots, community gardens, city parks, street medians, a traffic calming project, a senior citizens center, and other community greenspaces including a bird sanctuary in a city park. These groups planted 50 milkweed plants and 1,368 nectar-producing perennials in addition to 194 native grasses and sedges, 60 shrubs and 13 trees.

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.

There were 17 community groups which stepped up to help restore native habitat in 2025. In addition, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, St. Louis Audubon's Bring Conservation Home representatives and Wild Ones' members, along with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the City of St. Louis Nature Steward team helped support Monarch conservation in 2025. In addition, scores of volunteer groups helped supplement the ongoing efforts of the community groups in caring for pollinator-friendly plants. The 17 groups that participated in restoring habitat through Neighbors Naturescaping include: Academy-Sherman Park Community Garden African People's Education and Defense Fund City Forestry Nature Steward team Fairground Neighborhood Revitalization Organization Forest Park Southeast Neighborhood Association Forest ReLeaf of Missouri in Triangle Park Friends of Benton Park Friends of Carondelet Park Friends of Hebert Garden Lafayette Square Beautification Committee Louisiana Calm Streets Neighbors of Old North St. Louis Shaw Place Association SouthSide Senior Citizens Center Tower Grove South Neighborhood Association VAL Community Garden (intersection of Virginia, Alabama and Liberty) Your Garden in Tower Grove East

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

St. Louis Master Gardeners and Missouri Master Naturalists volunteered to assist with maintenance efforts of pollinator-friendly gardens. They also encouraged other neighborhood leaders at the St. Louis Urban Gardening Symposium (SLUGS) to support Monarch conservation efforts by selecting milkweed and other native plants for their community plantings. The keynote speaker at SLUGS highly stressed the importance of monarch conservation efforts as did all of the other native plant experts who presented at the event. Each of the groups applying for Neighbors Naturescaping were given the opportunity to meet with technical experts prior to submitting their application to help further the success of their application and their pollinator-friendly garden. In addition, through support from the Missouri Department of Conservation, Brightside sponsored a native plant garden tour. There were 40 participants who participated visiting 7 native plant gardens in public spaces across the City of St. Louis.

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

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

In 2025, between the two native plant sales, plantings in Brightside's Demonstration Garden, other community greenspaces and the Neighbors Naturescaping native plant giveaway, St. Louisans planted a total of 2,290 native perennials including 77 milkweed plants and 2,213 nectar-producing perennials. This is in addition to 194 native grasses and sedges, 60 shrubs and 13 trees.

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

200

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

As always, Brightside partnered with the City of St. Louis for the plant distribution event and relied on the Missouri Department of Conservation for funding for Neighbors Naturescaping. There were 17 other neighborhood or community groups that established or enhanced greenspaces in their area. St. Louis Master Gardeners assisted with the Spring sale in conjunction with the St. Louis Urban Gardening Symposium.

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)

The Milkweeds for Monarchs garden at City Hall continues to be maintained as habitat for Monarchs and other important pollinators. In 2023, the primary responsibility for maintaining this garden became the City's new Native Plant Steward's responsibility. This year, the Nature Steward's team continued to maintain approximately 5,000 square feet of native pollinator gardens at City Hall, this year planting an additional 250 more native plants including milkweed. St. Louis City Hall is located at 1200 Market Street, St. Louis, MO 63103. In addition, Brightside also maintains a Demonstration Garden at one of St. Louis' most heavily-traveled intersections adjacent to 4646 Shenandoah. The Monarch banners are part of a three-banner set surrounding the Demonstration Garden and the Monarch archway is the entrance to the garden. Community volunteers often get their group picture taken in front of the Monarch entrance. In the attached photo, many of the volunteers are seen holding their appreciation gift of a Monarch reusable bag which serves as a constant reminder about the importance of protecting the Monarch.

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

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In 2025, Brightside and City of St. Louis partnered with St. Louis Master Gardeners, Missouri Master Naturalists, corporate volunteer groups, schools, organizations and other community volunteers to maintain the Demonstration Garden and the City's Nature Steward team maintained the City Hall Monarch garden areas. Many of the volunteers who work in the Demonstration Garden are given a Monarch reusable bag as an appreciation gift for their service. The bag serves as a constant reminder about the importance of protecting the Monarch. There were also 17 organizations that enhanced or developed Neighbors Naturescaping gardens in 2024.

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.

.5

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)

Lafayette at Mississippi – medians Louisiana Calm Streets – along Louisiana Ave. from Chippewa to Meramec Morganford and Utah 1400 North Market – median I-44 eastbound Grand/DeTonty exit

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

539

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.

Less than one acre of milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants in these five locations.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Community groups requesting plants for each of these locations will maintain. City Forestry Nature Steward team maintains 36 acres of prairie restoration areas.

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?

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In 2025, Brightside and City of St. Louis partnered with St. Louis Master Gardeners, Missouri Master Naturalists and other corporate and community volunteers to maintain Brightside's Demonstration Garden. The City's Nature Steward team continues to maintain City Hall Monarch gardens and added 250 new nectar-producing plants this year. The 17 Neighbors Naturescaping gardens were planted and are cared for by the groups that requested the native plants.

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

2557

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Through Brightside's Neighbors Naturescaping program and other planting efforts, in 2025 a total of 2,557 native plants were added which included 2,290 native milkweed and nectar-producing plants plus 194 grasses and sedges, 60 shrubs and 13 trees were planted in community gardens and other public spaces including City Hall. Brightside purchased the plants from local growers to ensure high quality and locally-sourced plants. Brightside received all of the plants at the City of St. Louis Greenhouses or Brightside's Demonstration Garden. Representatives from 17 neighborhood gardens came to the greenhouses on the designated pick-up days to get their plants and take them back to their neighborhood. They worked with residents in their area as well as outside volunteers for site prep and planting. Neighborhood residents take care of the community gardens on an on-going basis. In addition, some of the plants were purchased for home gardens to strengthen and better connect the butterfly byway.

Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in city weed / landscaping ordinances (if applicable).

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 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.

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Exact organizations unknown. City leaders worked with community members to revise ordinance to allow more milkweed/native nectar plants to be grown on private and public property.

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

Through the revised ordinance, both city and private property owners are now able to grow milkweed/native nectar plants in locations previously not allowed.

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?

The City of St. Louis worked with community members and City leaders to update its weed ordinance to allow for more native plantings in public and private locations.

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.

10.3.25 The updated weed ordinance allowing for more native plantings was co-sponsored by eight of the City's 12 alders plus the President of the Board of Aldermen.

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