City of Howell

HOWELL, MI

Mayor Nikolas Hertrich

Pledge Summary

The City of Howell consists of just over 10,000 people, in the heart of Michigan. Last year, one of our local community gardens was upgraded to add pollinators as a focus. This year, we are looking to repurpose vacant lots, spaces near parking lots, and around our lake for Monarch conservation. This includes expanding and preserving milkweed throughout town. To help, signs will be posted to help educate the community. We will also use our Arbor Day event to help celebrate the cause.

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 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

- 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.
- Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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).
- 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

- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Nikolas Hertrich	2026	3/27/2026	
Mayor Nikolas Hertrich	2025	3/30/2025	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.).

150

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.)

105

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.

.5

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.

Our habitats include our local City parks, right of ways, landscaped parking lots, and around our benches throughout town where it is applicable.

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

We rotate inviting every elementary school in the district to be a part of our Arbor Day celebration, where the pledge is a prominent feature. These schools are compiled of a diverse socioeconomic culture, from agricultural to rural to urban.

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

Our Team Lead Robin brought the importance of Monarchs, their endangerment, and their beauty. She had started planting milkweed already. Our mayor brought it to our attention

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about the pledge and it made sense to add this initiative to our plan.

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 Monarch Conservation Webinar series has been really useful. Utilizing other webinars of similar fashion have been the most effective. We have a lot of free space in our parks, so proper planning and budgeting will be vital for our pledge. We also will be actively pushing our social media and registering our events with the state to amp up engagement.

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

Overall, we have made it a priority to plant native and pollinator friendly plants, and milkweed specifically for the Monarchs. We have reduced the amount of pesticides we use overall.

Selected Action Items

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?

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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 (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?

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.

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)

We have a couple locations in town that we utilize. One is Howell Summit Gardens, where we worked with our local garden club to put in a local pollinator garden. We utilize local parking lot landscaping throughout our walkable downtown to showcase our efforts.

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

We worked with the Howell Garden Club and between DPW and Parks and Cemetery.

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.

.75

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)

We utilized our parking lots (McCarthy, 204 West, Cleary's, Egnash, and City Hall). We did utilize the right of ways around Cleary's lot as well.

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

275

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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.

.25

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Watered weekly, weeded weekly. Plants added and expanded each month. We used a team of 3-4 to stay on top of it.

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?

We worked with Howell Garden Club and the City Parks and Cemetery

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

275

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

A small group of dedicated workers slowly transformed some of our right of ways and parking lot landscaping to gardens. We started off with a quick upheaval of the areas and slowly dialed them in to what they have become today.

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.

We work alongside The Howell Garden Club and the Howell Beautification Committee every year. We share plants, tips, and tools to help get the jobs done. I have spoken at local Garden Club meetings, as well. We worked alongside Recycle Livingston to enhance their property with native plants and milkweed.

Convert vacant lots to monarch habitat.

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

Milkweed sign 2.png

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

Milkweed Sign.png

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

The monarch gardens are small but mighty, around our parking lots. Cleary's parking lot and McCarthy are our biggest efforts, with a median being utilized between.

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

The DPW and Parks and Cemetery

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.

.75

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)

5

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

These lots were transformed to monarch habitat in late spring of 2025. We will continue to plant more milkweed and pollinators to fill in the areas and expand. We will weed and continue to use safe alternatives to chemicals.

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.

Public Works, Parks and Cemetery, Water Treatment Plant, Howell PD, Howell FD, Howell Garden Club, Howell Beautification Committee, Howell Public Schools

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

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We sat down with Parks and Cemetery (they mow for the City) and discussed our new plans and gardens at our municipal properties. We sat down with the local groups and discussed the importance of proper lawn maintenance and identifying native plants and milkweed.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

monarch sign.jpg

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

2

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

The signs say "This site provides milkweeds, nectar sources, and shelter needed to sustain monarch butterflies as they migrate through North America"

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?

Between the DPW and Parks and Cemetery, we have been working on eliminating pesticides as much as possible, as a general rule.

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.

We are making progress but using natural alternatives for spraying weeds and fertilizing. This is mostly complete, and should be done this upcoming year. We are looking into any and all alternatives and native plants as options. This will be a continual process for the length of the program.

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