



Concept Plan:

The Rotary Stage at the Woodland Opera House Intermission Garden

A Partnership Between the Historic Woodland Opera House, the Woodland
Rotary, and the City of Woodland

Submitted for Consideration as the Woodland Rotary Club Centennial Project

Executive Summary

The Historic Woodland Opera House, in partnership with the City of Woodland, proposes the development of the Rotary Stage in the Intermission Garden as the signature project for the Woodland Rotary Club's Centennial celebration. This project will transform an underutilized but high-traffic space in the heart of downtown Woodland into a vibrant venue for community gathering, live performance, and everyday enjoyment. Situated adjacent to Heritage Plaza and directly connected to the Woodland Opera House, the Rotary Stage will serve as a lasting testament to the Rotary's century of service while creating new opportunities for arts, education, and community connection for generations to come.

The proposed budget range for this project is **\$100,000 to \$150,000**, with final costs to be determined through detailed design and engineering.

Project Location and Context

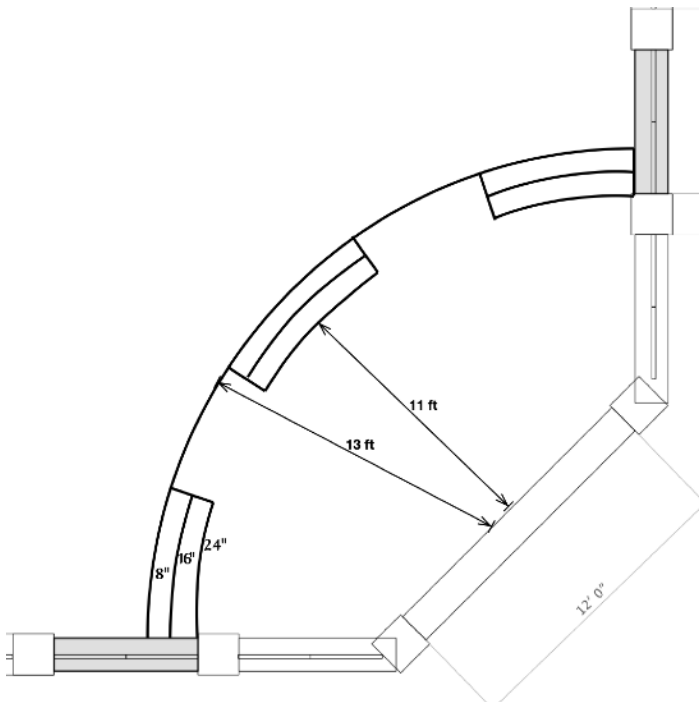


The Intermission Garden occupies the south side of the Historic Woodland Opera House, a California State Historic Park and one of the region's most treasured cultural landmarks. Despite its prime location in the core of downtown Woodland, the garden currently functions as a passive green space with limited programming potential. The site benefits from high visibility along Main Street and natural connectivity to Heritage Plaza, making it an ideal location for a community gathering space that can serve both structured events and casual daily use.

The Six Elements or “Spokes” of the Project

Spoke One: The Rotary Stage

The centerpiece of this project is a purpose-built outdoor stage positioned in the southeast corner of the Intermission Garden. The stage will feature a deck height of 24 inches, providing excellent sightlines for audiences seated on the lawn while remaining accessible and inviting. Three sets of steps with an 8-inch rise will provide performer access at stage left, stage right, and center, allowing for flexible staging configurations and dramatic entrances.



Viewed from above, the stage footprint will evoke one quarter of the iconic Rotary gear logo, creating a subtle but unmistakable visual connection to the organization's identity. This design element transforms functional infrastructure into symbolic architecture, ensuring that the Rotary's legacy is literally built into the foundation of this community space.

The stage dimensions will accommodate a range of performances including acoustic and amplified musical acts, small theatrical productions, spoken word events, public

ceremonies, and community gatherings. The scale is deliberately modest to fit harmoniously within the garden setting while remaining practical for the types of programming most likely to activate the space.

Beyond scheduled performances, the stage will serve as an informal gathering point for everyday use. Children will be drawn to climb the steps and perform impromptu shows, families will use it as a picnic spot, and visitors to downtown will find it a natural place to pause and rest. This dual function as both performance venue and community furniture ensures the investment provides value every day, not only during scheduled events.

Spoke Two: Electrical Infrastructure and Lawn Preservation

Dedicated power conduits will run underground from the Opera House to serve two key locations: the stage itself and the northwest corner of the garden. Weather-resistant outlets at both locations will enable the connection of portable theatrical lighting and sound equipment, allowing for professional-quality productions without permanent visible infrastructure.

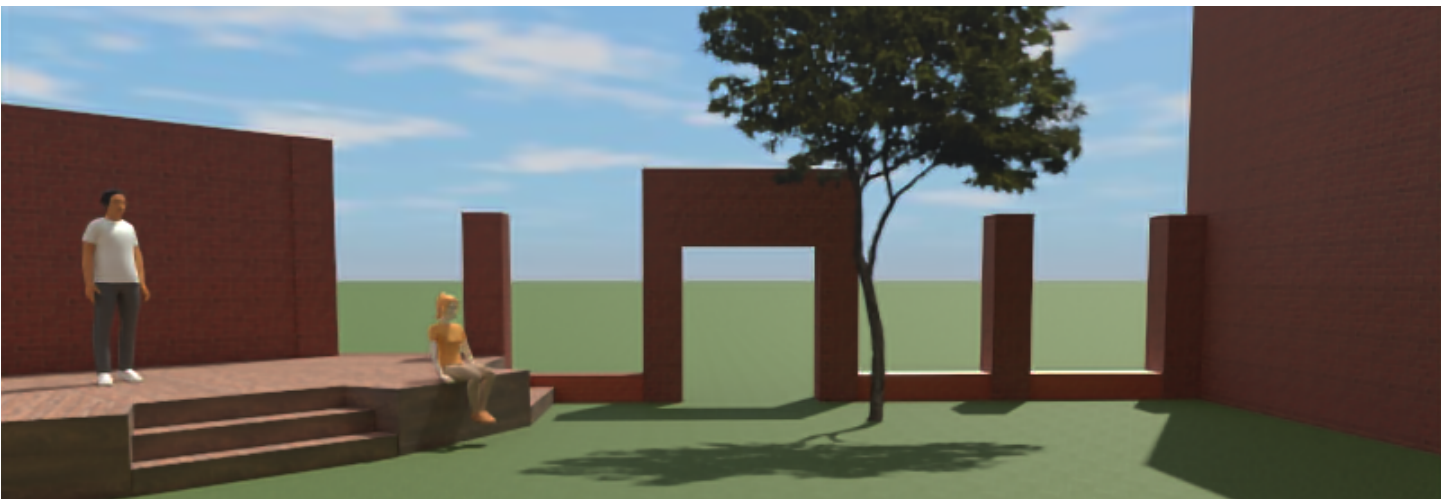
The lawn area within the garden will be restored and maintained as open green space, preserving the flexibility that makes outdoor venues so appealing. This approach supports the picnic-style

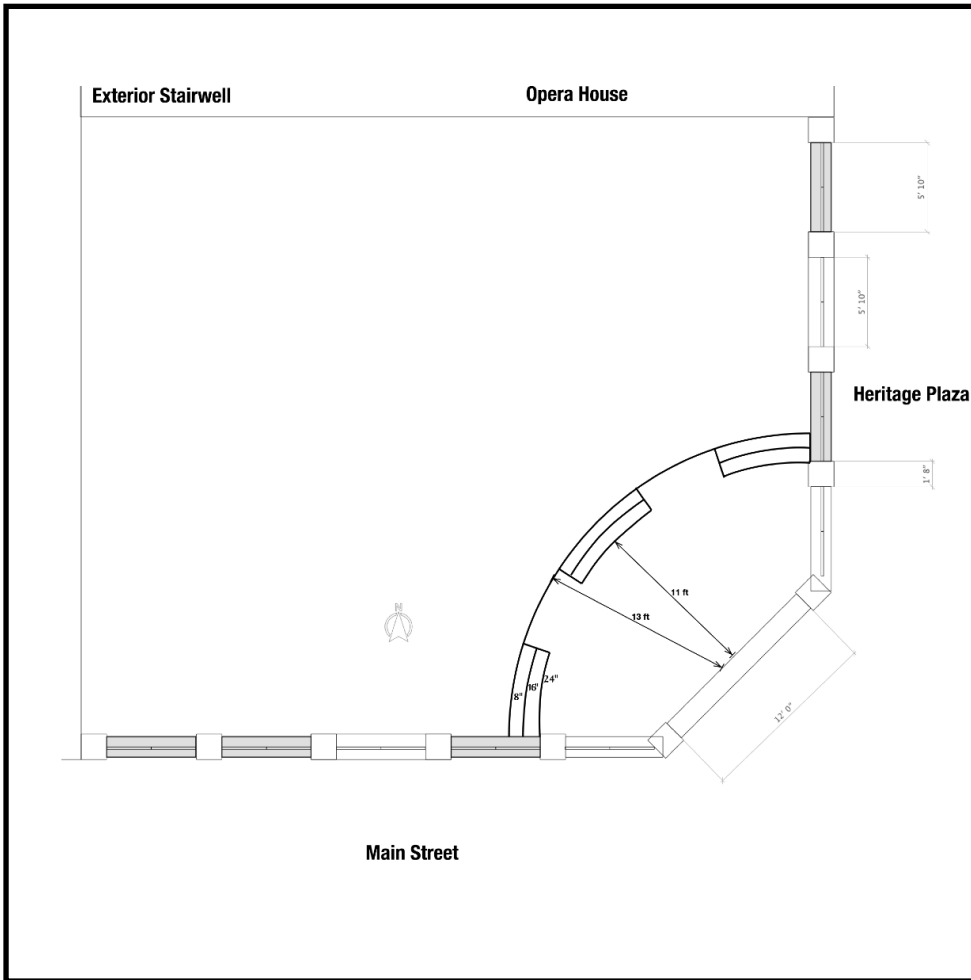
performance model that has proven successful at outdoor venues across the country, where audiences are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs, blankets, and refreshments. The informal seating arrangement creates a relaxed, accessible atmosphere that welcomes community members of all backgrounds and makes attendance feel like a neighborhood gathering rather than a formal outing.



Spoke Three: Brick Enclosure Extension

The project will extend the existing brick enclosure that currently defines the western and partial southern boundaries of the garden. This extension will follow the architectural vocabulary already established, creating visual and material continuity with the historic character of the Opera House and the surrounding downtown district.





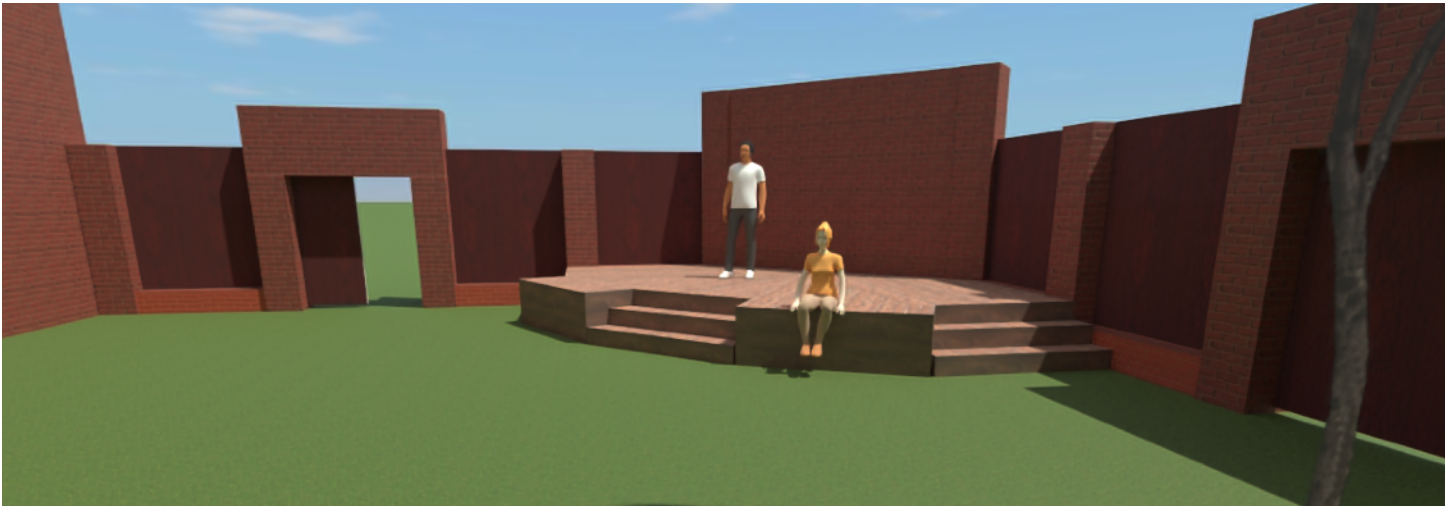
The new enclosure will consist of a low brick wall that can double as informal bench seating, interrupted at regular intervals by brick columns which could also double as outdoor lamp positions. A brick archway on the south side will mirror the existing archway on the west side, creating a sense of symmetry and enclosure that helps define the garden as a distinct space within the downtown streetscape.

The low wall provides practical and casual seating for families watching children play on the stage, or for anyone seeking a moment of rest during a walk through downtown.

Spoke Four: Sound-Baffling Shutter System

Perhaps the most innovative element of this proposal addresses the primary challenge facing any outdoor performance venue in a downtown setting: traffic noise. Multiple steel sconces will be installed on the sides of each column and within the archway openings, creating an anchor system for removable sound-baffling shutters.

These custom-built shutters will be designed for easy installation and removal, allowing the garden to transform within minutes between an open, transparent park and an enclosed performance space. When installed, the shutters will serve multiple functions. They will reduce high-frequency sounds and moderate overall traffic noise from Main Street. While complete sound isolation is not achievable in an outdoor setting, even modest noise reduction significantly improves audience experience and performer audibility. The shutters will also minimize visual distractions during performances by blocking moving traffic and pedestrian activity from the audience's peripheral vision, helping to focus attention on the stage.



From a theatrical perspective, the shutters offer creative possibilities as scenic elements. Performers can use the openings between shutters as entrances and exits, and the shutters themselves can be dressed or lit to contribute to production design.

When not in use for performances, the shutters will be stored offsite, leaving the garden visually open and accessible. This transparency serves an important practical purpose by discouraging use of the space as an overnight campsite, a challenge that enclosed or hidden spaces in downtown areas often face. The garden will remain a welcoming public space that maintains natural surveillance from the street and Heritage Plaza.

The shutters should be constructed from lightweight, durable materials with sound-dampening properties. Options might include acoustic foam sandwiched between weather-resistant panels, or specialized outdoor acoustic materials. The final specification will be determined during detailed design in consultation with acoustic professionals.

Spoke Five: Bird and Bat Mitigation Netting

The southwest exterior stairwell of the Woodland Opera House provides direct access between the garden level and the Opera House's interior public spaces, including restrooms and concession areas. Currently, this stairwell cannot be opened to the public during events due to persistent bird and bat activity in the stairwell.

Installation of appropriate mitigation netting at the top of the stairwell will resolve this issue, allowing the Opera House to open the stairs during Intermission Garden events. This seemingly modest improvement dramatically enhances the venue's functionality by providing audiences with access to restrooms and concessions without leaving the event or requiring the Opera House to arrange for temporary facilities.

Spoke Six: Mobile Light and Sound Package

A dedicated, modest-scale lighting and sound system will enable professional-quality evening performances while helping to address the ambient noise challenges inherent to the location. The



sound system will allow performers and presenters to be amplified above traffic noise, ensuring audience comprehension even during busier traffic periods. The lighting package will extend the usable hours for the venue into the evening, enabling twilight and nighttime performances that offer different atmospheric possibilities than daytime events.

Both systems will be designed for rapid setup and breakdown, using the electrical infrastructure installed as part of Element Two. Equipment will be stored at the Opera House and deployed as needed, minimizing permanent infrastructure in the garden while maintaining professional capability.



Value to the Community

The Rotary Stage at the Woodland Opera House Intermission Garden will serve Woodland in multiple ways, providing value that extends far beyond the hours when formal performances are scheduled.

Everyday Use and Casual Enjoyment

On any given day, the garden will welcome families seeking a pleasant spot for a downtown picnic, children who want to climb onto a stage and perform for their parents, couples looking for a bench to share lunch, and visitors to downtown who need a moment of rest. The stage itself becomes a kind of community furniture, a raised platform that invites interaction and play. The low brick walls provide additional seating that is always available, never reserved, and open to anyone. This transformation of underutilized space into active community space represents a core Rotary value of improving the places where people live.

Programmed Events and Community Gathering

During downtown events, the stage offers a ready venue for live music, public addresses, award ceremonies, and performances of all kinds. Rather than requiring organizers to rent and install temporary staging, the Rotary Stage will stand ready to serve, reducing barriers to activation and encouraging more frequent programming.

Annual Free Shakespeare in the Park

The Woodland Opera House commits to producing an annual Free Shakespeare in the Park production in the Intermission Garden, to take place each late spring or early summer. This



tradition will quickly become a signature community event, offering Woodland residents of all ages the opportunity to experience quality theatrical performances in an accessible, family-friendly outdoor setting.

Free Shakespeare in the Park will provides opportunities for local youth and adult performers to work with classical material under professional direction, building skills and experience that benefit the broader arts community. For audiences, the tradition creates a reliable annual gathering point, a time when neighbors can spread their blankets on the lawn, unpack their picnic baskets, and share in a collective cultural experience. These are the kinds of traditions that define community identity and create lasting memories across generations.

Educational Programming and Community Partnerships

Beyond the Shakespeare commitment, the Opera House will work with community partners to explore additional programming possibilities including educational workshops, youth performance showcases, acoustic music series, poetry readings, storytelling events, and cultural celebrations. The stage's availability and the garden's welcoming atmosphere lower barriers to programming, making it easier for community organizations to offer free or low-cost public events.

Alignment of Historic Organizations

The Woodland Rotary Club and the Historic Woodland Opera House share deep roots in the Woodland community and a common commitment to service and cultural enrichment. Both organizations have histories stretching back more than a century, and both have shaped the character of Woodland in ways both tangible and intangible. The Rotary Stage creates a physical connection between these two storied institutions, threading their narratives together in a visible and lasting way.

Naming the Stage

The stage can bear the Rotary name directly as the Rotary Stage, or can be named in honor of a person or persons the Rotary wishes to recognize. Either approach ensures that visitors to downtown Woodland will encounter the Rotary's legacy every time they pass the Intermission Garden.



Preliminary Cost Estimate

The following estimates are provided for conceptual planning purposes. Final costs will be determined through detailed design, engineering, and contractor bidding. All figures represent anticipated ranges based on comparable projects and current construction costs.

		Low Estimate	High Estimate
Spoke One	Stage Construction	\$35,000	\$45,000
Spoke Two	Electrical Infrastructure	\$12,000	\$15,000
Spoke Three	Brick Enclosure	\$25,000	\$32,000
Spoke Four	Sound-Baffling Shutters	\$8,000	\$12,000
Spoke Five	Bird/Bat Mitigation	\$2,000	\$8,000
Spoke Six	Mobile Sound/Lights	\$15,000	\$23,000
Contingency		\$3,000	\$15,000
	TOTAL	\$100,000	\$150,000

Spoke One: Rotary Stage Construction. This includes structural engineering, foundation work, framing, decking, step construction, and finish work. The custom quarter-gear footprint adds modest complexity to standard deck construction. Estimated cost range: \$35,000 to \$45,000.

Spoke Two: Electrical Infrastructure. This includes trenching, conduit installation, wiring, weather-resistant outlet boxes, connections to Opera House electrical service, and necessary permits and inspections. Estimated cost range: \$12,000 to \$15,000.

Spoke Three: Brick Enclosure Extension. This includes masonry materials, labor for wall construction, column construction, and archway construction, along with foundation work as required. Costs will depend on linear footage and complexity of the archway design. Estimated cost range: \$25,000 to \$32,000.

Spoke Four: Sound-Baffling Shutter System. This includes steel ring hardware installation, custom shutter fabrication using acoustic materials, and storage solutions. Shutter costs will depend on final material selection and acoustic performance requirements. Estimated cost range: \$8,000 to \$12,000.

Spoke Five: Bird and Bat Mitigation Netting. This includes professional assessment, appropriate netting materials, and installation in the stairwell. This is a relatively modest scope item. Estimated cost range: \$2,000 to \$8,000.

Spoke Six: Mobile Light and Sound Package. This includes theatrical lighting instruments, stands, cabling and control equipment, powered speakers, mixing board, microphones and stands, and appropriate storage cases for all equipment. Costs will depend on system size and quality level selected. Estimated cost range: \$15,000 to \$23,000.

Contingency and Soft Costs. This includes design development, permit fees, project management, and unforeseen conditions. Estimated cost range: \$3,000 to \$15,000.

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$100,000 to \$150,000

Next Steps

Should the Woodland Rotary Club express interest in pursuing this project as their Centennial initiative, the following steps would advance the concept toward implementation.

First, representatives from the Rotary, the Opera House, and the City of Woodland would meet to discuss the proposal, raise questions, and confirm mutual interest in proceeding. Second, a site visit with all parties would allow for on-the-ground discussion of the proposal and identification of any concerns or opportunities not apparent from documents alone. Third, assuming continued interest, the partnership would engage appropriate design professionals to develop the concept into detailed plans suitable for permitting and construction bidding. Fourth, with detailed plans in hand, the project would be bid to qualified contractors to establish firm pricing. Fifth, with funding secured and contracts in place, construction would proceed. Sixth, upon completion, the Rotary Stage would be dedicated in a public ceremony celebrating the Rotary's Centennial and the new partnership between these historic Woodland institutions.

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Conclusion

The Rotary Stage at the Intermission Garden represents an extraordinary opportunity to celebrate the Woodland Rotary Club's first century of service while investing in the community's next century. This project transforms an underutilized downtown space into an active gathering place for performance, play, and community connection. It creates a permanent, visible link between two of Woodland's most venerable institutions. And it establishes traditions—Free Shakespeare in the Park and beyond—that will bring residents together year after year.

The Historic Woodland Opera House is honored to propose this partnership and looks forward to working with the Woodland Rotary Club and the City of Woodland to bring the Rotary Stage to life.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Burmester, Executive Director, Woodland Opera House