

Help the Rotary Reading Garden Flourish into the Future

**Central Library
Rotary Reading Garden Renovation**



Tucked behind Central Library, the Rotary Reading Garden has offered Londoners a rare gift for over 20 years: a green oasis in the heart of the city.

Each day, downtown residents, workers, students, and visitors from across the city and region pass through Central Library. For many, the Reading Garden is a quiet constant—a place for reflection, nature, and community. It’s a space to sit under the trees with a book, meet a friend for lunch, or join a storytime.

Today, we stand at a moment of opportunity.

We’re embarking on an exciting renovation to reimagine the Reading Garden as a more vibrant, fully accessible, and multi-use community space. Our renovation will create a welcoming outdoor hub that continues to honour the Reading Garden’s history while preparing it to meet the evolving needs of all Londoners.

A Beloved Public Space, Reimagined for the Future

The Rotary Reading Garden will be transformed into a lively, fully accessible space that connects directly to downtown London’s Dundas Place Flex Street corridor and supports free, year-round programming for all ages.

We’re creating:

- An inclusive and welcoming public space where everyone feels inspired to gather, learn, and relax.
- Free access to programs for families, children, and individuals from all walks of life.
- A stronger, more connected downtown, with a destination that adds energy, culture, and beauty to the core.

This renovation is an investment in a more inclusive and creative London.



Rooted in Community, Growing Toward the Future

London Public Library (LPL) has been a cornerstone of learning, culture, and community for 130 years. Through 16 locations, we provide free programs, technology access, learning tools, and inclusive services that support Londoners at every life stage.

Our mission is rooted in creating spaces that foster lifelong learning, cultural connection, and personal empowerment.

Revitalizing the Rotary Reading Garden allows us to take our work even further. It's a way of transforming our downtown footprint into an even more inclusive and inviting destination, where learning and community can flourish under the open sky.

Its revitalization is part of our broader vision to:

- Expand environmental learning opportunities
- Foster literacy and learning through outdoor programs
- Encourage community belonging and interaction
- Provide accessible, welcoming space for people of all backgrounds
- Enhance the cultural vibrancy of Dundas Place



Creating New Spaces with New Possibilities.

Central Library's Rotary Reading Garden has long been a refuge for those seeking both quiet contemplation and community connection. Yet, the current layout with its singular entrance through the Children's Library prevents many community members from enjoying the space.

The renovation will resolve these issues by offering a direct, accessible entry from Dundas Place and modernizing the space to support diverse, year-round programming.

This revitalization project will transform the Reading Garden into a fully accessible outdoor community space, seamlessly connected to Dundas Place and equipped to support a broad range of free programming, performances, and cultural events.

Thanks to City of London funding and early support from Rotary Club and private donors, we're more than halfway to our fundraising goal. With your help, we can complete the transformation.

With more people living and visiting downtown, and momentum growing, accessible outdoor space is more important than ever.

The redesigned Reading Garden will:

- Create **a new accessible entrance** from Dundas Place
- Ensure **inclusive access** for all members of the community
- Offer new **free public programming** in music, literacy, wellness, and the arts
- Provide a **flexible, welcoming space** for educational initiatives, festivals, and performances
- Support the **City of London's goals** for a vibrant downtown core

"The library's reading garden, a beautiful green space, is beloved by our patrons. With street level accessibility from Dundas Place, it will allow easier entry for those with mobility challenges."

— Barbara Maly, Executive Director, Downtown London



The Renovation at a Glance

Scheduled to begin in Spring 2025 and completed by the end of Summer 2025, the renovation will include:

- **A New Accessible Entrance:** A ramp and secure gate on Dundas Place will replace the current, limited access through the Children’s Library.
- **Versatile Performance and Gathering Areas:** A dedicated stage area, enhanced with artificial turf, will host music, storytimes, and cultural performances.
- **Engaging Sensory Elements:** New musical instruments, sensory play features, and outdoor art installations will stimulate creativity and interaction.
- **Improved Landscaping and Infrastructure:** Thoughtfully designed green spaces, upgraded lighting, and flexible seating will create a safe, inviting environment for year-round use.
- **Enhanced Connectivity:** Direct access to downtown will further integrate the Rotary Reading Garden with the city’s cultural and community scene.



The pergola moves to the upper section of the Garden, where a stage area and artificial surface in front of the stage create a purpose-built area for performances and programs.



New gate and accessible ramp open the Garden to Dundas Place.



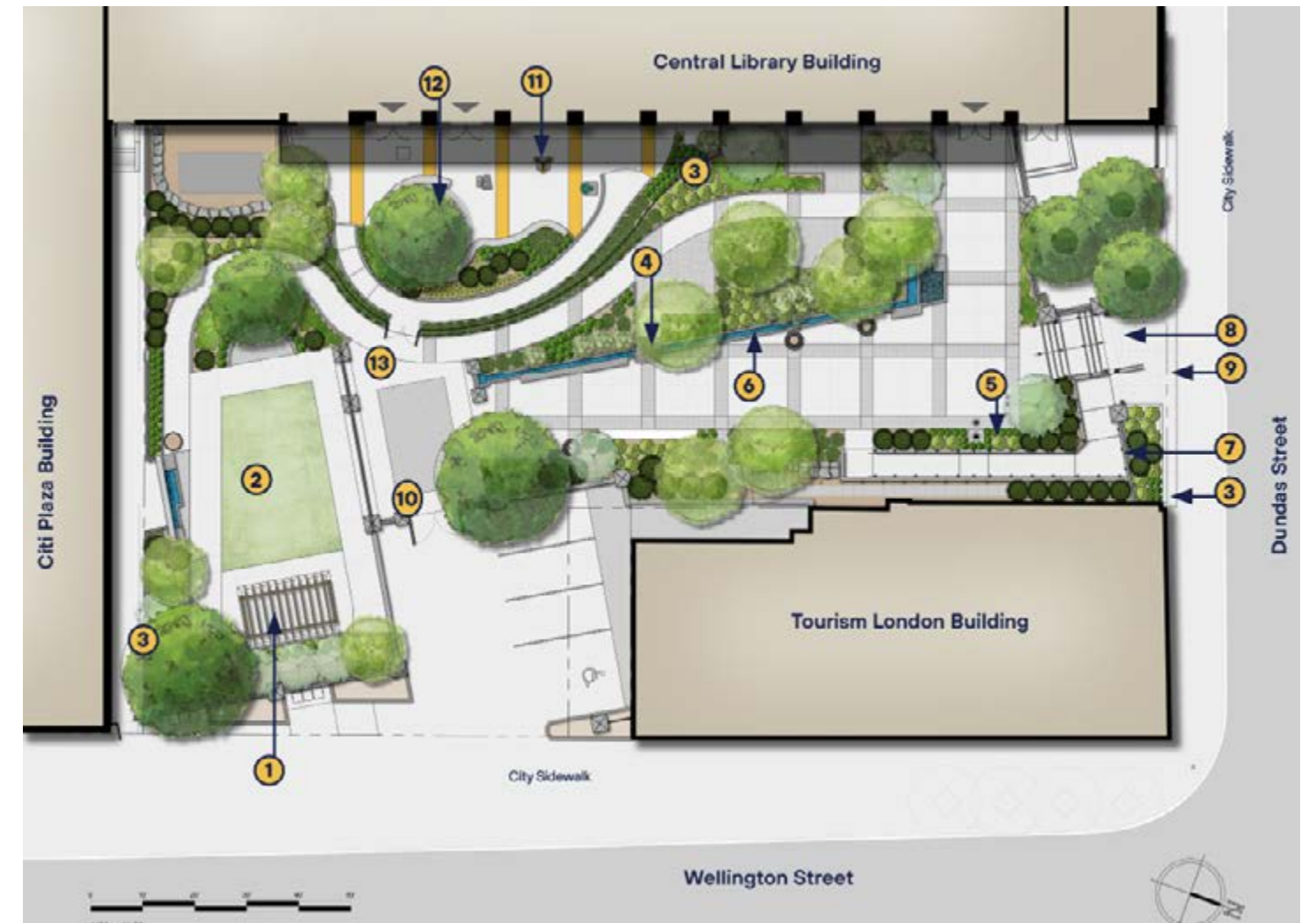
In the Children’s Play Space, outdoor musical instruments invite families to interact.



"This generous gift will help us create a more vibrant and engaging space and one that fosters music literacy for children and families in our community." – The Rotary Club of London



Musical instruments in the Children's Play Space.



Rotary Reading Garden

1. New Pergola
2. New Artificial Turf Lawn
3. Updated Plantings
4. Stone Bridge
5. Existing Sculpture
6. Existing Water Feature

Entrances

7. New Accessible Ramp from Dundas Street
8. New Staircase from Dundas Street
9. New Lockable Gates
10. Existing Gates

Children's Garden

11. New Musical Play Features
12. Refreshed Paving
13. Existing Fencing and Gate



Bringing the Rotary Reading Garden to Life

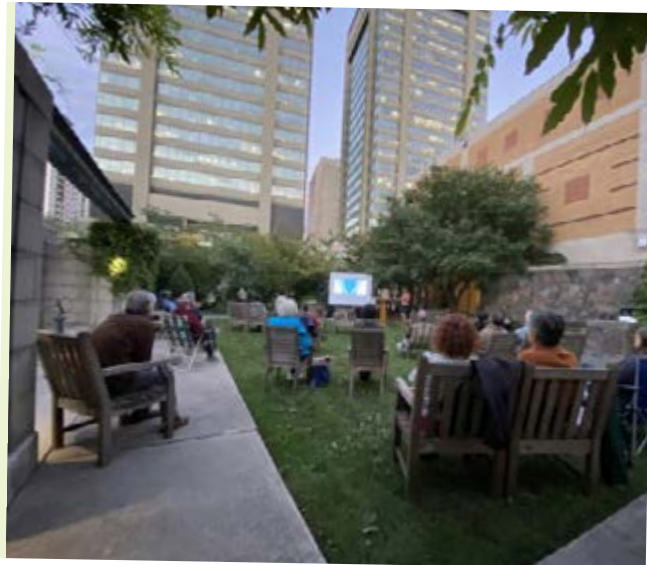
Beyond its physical transformation, the renovated Reading Garden will spark a series of innovative community programs. Designed to be flexible and welcoming, the Reading Garden will support everything from quiet reflection to energetic community gatherings.

- Carolinian native plantings to connect people with nature
- Outdoor wellness programs, such as yoga and tai chi
- Family storytimes that spark early literacy and imagination
- Story walks and outdoor movie nights that bring stories to life under the stars
- Live music performances, supporting London's UNESCO City of Music designation
- Art exhibits, festivals, and performances that celebrate local creativity
- Community and third-party events, with opportunities to generate sustainable revenue

Life in the Reading Garden: Arts & Culture

On a sunny afternoon, families gather in the Rotary Reading Garden for a free outdoor concert—children dancing, neighbours swaying, and local musicians sharing their talents as part of London's UNESCO City of Music designation. Nearby, an art installation by a local artist adds a splash of colour and conversation to the space, while volunteers set up for an evening cultural festival celebrating diverse voices in the community.

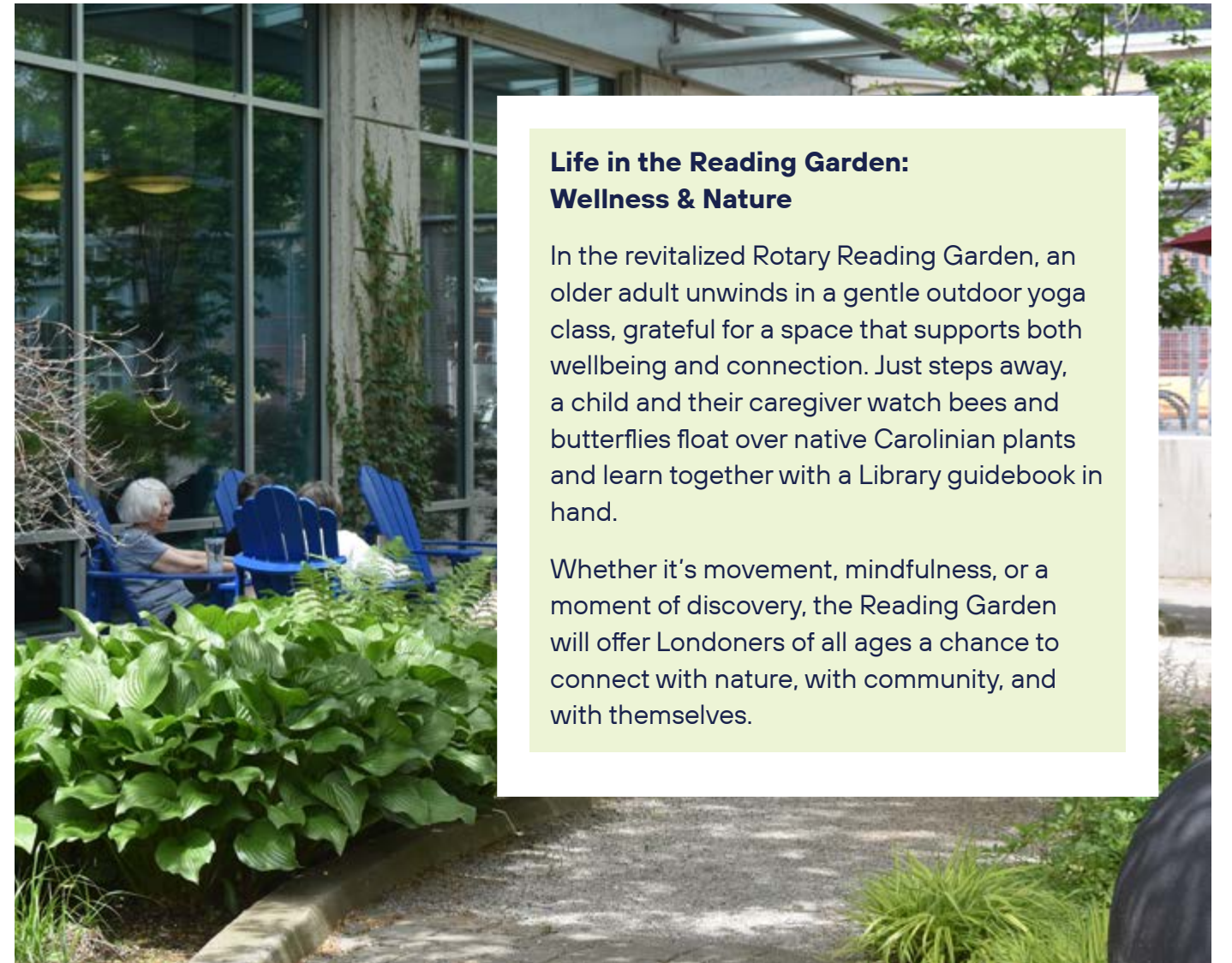
These moments—where music fills the air, art sparks connection, and people of all backgrounds come together—reflect the heart of the Reading Garden: a downtown stage for local creativity, shared joy, and belonging.



Life in the Reading Garden: Wellness & Nature

In the revitalized Rotary Reading Garden, an older adult unwinds in a gentle outdoor yoga class, grateful for a space that supports both wellbeing and connection. Just steps away, a child and their caregiver watch bees and butterflies float over native Carolinian plants and learn together with a Library guidebook in hand.

Whether it's movement, mindfulness, or a moment of discovery, the Reading Garden will offer Londoners of all ages a chance to connect with nature, with community, and with themselves.



Real Stories. Real Impact.

When you give to the Central Library Rotary Reading Garden renovation, you are helping to create a space the provides:

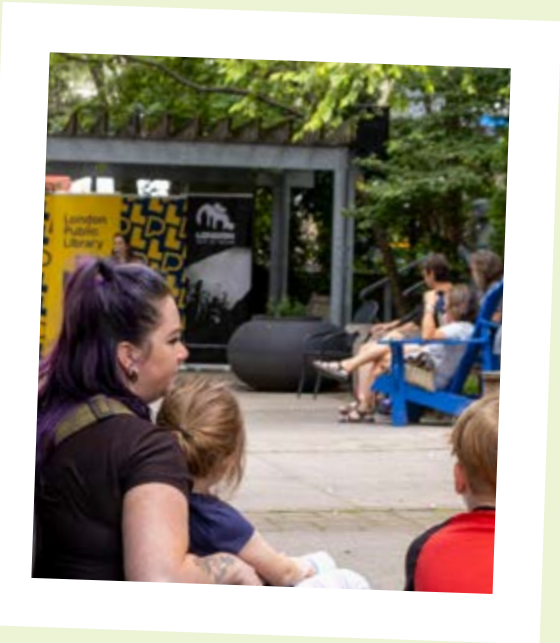
- Cultural Vibrancy: Supports music and arts programming and events, local festivals, literacy programs such as outdoor book clubs.
- Wellbeing & Social Connection: Provides rare green space for urban residents, green space promotes physical and mental wellness, offers a welcoming place to gather, read, and relax, encourages community interaction, a sense of belonging.
- Inclusion: Accessible design will welcome newcomers, children, seniors, people living with disabilities, and others who may not currently feel comfortable accessing the Reading Garden.
- Environmental Stewardship: Enhances the garden space and supports environmental educational program offerings.
- Economic & Tourism Boost: Direct access from Dundas Place helps LPL serve as a major anchor of the core, and draws visitors to downtown.

This is not just a renovation, it is a renewal of our commitment to a connected and equitable London.

Life in the Reading Garden:
Literacy & Learning

As the sun begins to set, families gather on blankets beneath the trees for an outdoor movie night, popcorn in hand, laughter rising with the glow of the screen. Earlier that day, toddlers sat cross-legged at a lively storytime, clapping and giggling as a librarian brought a picture book to life. Along the winding path, pages of a storywalk invited children to read as they moved, sparking imagination with every step.

These experiences will turn the Reading Garden into a place where literacy takes root in joyful, meaningful ways—supporting early learning, family bonding, and a lifelong love of stories.



Libraries Enrich Neighbourhoods

London Public Library serves nearly 2 million visitors annually through 16 neighbourhood branches, each one a trusted source for learning, connection, and creativity. Together, we lend more than 4 million items every year, deliver thousands of programs, and provide vital access to technology and resources.

We listen to what Londoners need, and we build solutions with purpose.

At the heart of this work is our mission: to strengthen people and neighbourhoods by creating connections that enrich lives, inspire discovery, foster creativity, and expand possibilities. We are guided by core values: exceptional customer service, intellectual freedom, digital empowerment, foundational literacies, and a deep commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression.

Support from donors brings these values to life. Your generosity helps.

IMPACT



Why Your Support Matters

Libraries are more than buildings. They are “palaces for the people”—essential public infrastructure that brings us together across differences, fosters democratic values, and creates places of connection and belonging.

As sociologist Eric Klinenberg writes, “They are the kinds of places where the public, private, and philanthropic sectors can work together to reach for something higher than the bottom line.”

By contributing to the Rotary Reading Garden renovation, you help us :

- Expand access to transformative outdoor learning and community programming.
- Champion equity, inclusion, and the well-being of every Londoner.
- Secure a public asset that touches lives, inspires creativity, and brings our community together.
- Support downtown revitalization and cultural enrichment.



Help the Reading Garden Flourish into the Future

The Rotary Reading Garden renovation is a bold and beautiful next step in our work to serve Londoners. With your support, we will create a space that reflects the heart of our city—welcoming, inclusive, creative, and alive with possibility.

LPL has embarked on a campaign to raise funds for the Reading Garden at Central Library. The total project cost is \$492,503. The City of London and LPL donors have generously contributed \$280,000 to date.

We are grateful to the Rotary Club of London for their leadership and ongoing support as a founding donor to this space. The Library is supported by the City of London, the Province of Ontario, and private sector donors who believe in building a vibrant, inclusive downtown.

We invite businesses, individuals, foundations, associations, and service clubs to join this transformative campaign. Every gift, no matter its size, brings us closer to realizing a Reading Garden that welcomes everyone, fuels creativity, and nurtures community ties.

Ways to Give:

Naming Opportunities

Personalize your contribution by naming a feature of the Reading Garden.



Community Contributions

Every gift is a building block for our shared future.



Corporate Partnerships

Make a contribution and demonstrate your commitment to community impact.



To learn more or make your gift, please contact:

Christine Walker

Fund Development & Special Projects

London Public Library

519-661-5114

christine.walker@lpl.ca

www.lpl.ca/Donate

Charitable Registration # 11902 4065 RR0001

Find out more at www.lpl.ca/ReadingGarden

