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From the Puget Sound Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/news/2019/11/21/ballard-food-bank-permanent-home-gates-foundation.html>

Ballard Food Bank buys land for first permanent home

Nov 21, 2019, 3:16pm PST

Ballard Food Bank has served the community for more than 40 years, but never had a permanent home.

That's about to change.

The Seattle nonprofit recently closed on the purchase of a lot at 1400 NW Leary Way that will allow the food bank to double its size. The new location is about five blocks from the current food bank at 5130 Leary Ave. NW. The plan is to break ground next fall and be ready to open in the fall of 2021, when the food bank's lease expires.

"It's been a lot of work, and we're super excited to only be moving four or five blocks away to a location that is super convenient for the community we serve," Ballard Food Bank Executive Director [Jen Muzia](#) said Thursday.

The nonprofit bought the property, formerly the site of Nix Auto Wrecking, from 1400 Leary LLC for \$4.3 million. The deal, which was made possible through fundraising efforts and a \$750,000 grant from the state, closed Sept. 11.



BALLARD FOOD BANK

This rendering shows the planned permanent home of the Ballard Food Bank, which is scheduled to break ground in 2020 and open at 1400 NW Leary Way in 2021.

“Securing the land is only the beginning of our journey,” Andrew Weber, president of the Ballard Food Bank board of directors, said in a news release. “We have a long road ahead as we build the community and civic support necessary to invest in the food bank’s future home and sustain daily operations.”

Muzia said the process of finding a permanent home took more than two years, and now that the land is secured, the group is in the design and development phase. Drawings from Graham Baba Architects submitted to the city show plans for an 11,500-square-foot facility, nearly twice the size of the 6,000-square feet the food bank uses now.

Ballard Food Bank has nine people on staff now, and it expects to grow that number when the new space opens, but Muzia did not have specifics. She said the new location will also give more room to the 15 community service providers that supply medical services, mental health care and utility assistance to food bank users.

"We see so many connections being made through food," Muzia said. "Food is often that starting point to getting services, and we just know that by building a space that allows people to be connected, it will make it easier to get the services they need."

Muzia said the nonprofit has not determined a fundraising goal for construction costs, although the Gates Foundation and the city of Seattle have committed \$1.5 million to the effort.

"It's really an ongoing effort," Muzia said. "There's still more to raise. We're still in the envisioning process."

One thing that will help raise funds is the annual Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving. Now in its 13th year, the race draws more than 4,500 participants and brings in sponsors and businesses including Ethan Stowell Restaurants and Columbia Bank.

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