



Finding Our New Nest

Frequently Asked Questions about Our Headquarters Move

What made you decide to leave the current building?

Birds Connect Seattle has chosen not to stay in our current building for several reasons related to a need to downsize and streamline operations.

- **Space.** The simplest reason is that we no longer need such a large physical space. The world has changed a lot since we moved into our building in 1996. Many of our staff work remotely now and most of our programming is conducted in parks and open spaces around our service area. It's not the best use of financial or natural resources to heat and power a largely unused space.
- **Customer needs.** Retail environments and how people shop have also changed dramatically in the last few decades. The explosion of online retailers means that small shops like ours need to adjust their operations to draw in shoppers to brick-and-mortar stores. Wedgwood's shopping center to our north side is being redeveloped, but we won't see new neighbors for several more years and expect significant construction interruptions in the interim.
- **Accessibility.** As much as we love our Wedgwood home, to reach the most diverse audience possible, we'd like to be more centrally located, in an ADA-compliant building, and more accessible via the newer transit pathways opening across the region. Birds Connect Seattle's mission to advocate and organize for cities where people and birds thrive is difficult to achieve from our quiet enclave tucked off the beaten path.
- **Costs.** The list of deferred maintenance on our building has now reached a point where significant investments would need to be made to ensure the ongoing safety and comfort of our staff and volunteers working on site. The building is also not able to fully welcome wheelchair users, which isn't aligned with our organizational values. At the same time, cost-of-living in Seattle has skyrocketed and the board of directors wants to prioritize continuing to pay our staff living wages and operate in an environmentally and

socially responsible manner. Our limited resources will be best applied in a new nest that is better suited to our current and future needs, so that we can be more agile in responding to urgent conservation concerns.

When are you moving?

We are still in the early stages of planning and much remains to be decided. The board has convened an “HQ Task Force” to help with research and recommendations around everything from the sale of the building to the lease of a new location. Current thinking is that we would like to keep operating out of our Wedgwood headquarters and Nature Shop through early 2025 and open our new location shortly thereafter.

Where will you go?

A new location has not been identified, and we plan to engage the community in answering this question. Birds Connect Seattle will be reaching out to members, Nature Shop customers, volunteers, and the public soon about where you’d like to see us land next and what features you’d like to see in our new space.

Will you need to pause programming during the move?

Birds Connect Seattle doesn’t expect any significant interruption in our education, science, or conservation programming during the transition between physical spaces. Classes for youth and adults, field trips and outings, and community science projects are mostly conducted off-site already and will continue to be so while we relocate.

Whether and for how long we may have to close our retail operation remains an open question that will be dependent upon where we move and how much work will need to be done to set up our new space. We learned through the pandemic that we can conduct some retail business online and through curbside pickup, which we will consider to bridge a temporary closure should it prove necessary.

What will happen to the garden and the trees on the Wedgwood property when you leave?

We know through our own advocacy that the City of Seattle’s tree ordinance is deeply flawed. Birds Connect Seattle hired an arborist to do a comprehensive assessment of the trees and vegetation on the property to prepare a range of conservation strategies for the garden. The board

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of directors is also consulting with attorneys and our Garden Committee volunteers about creative strategies to preserve as much as we can of this unique urban habitat.

Where will I get my birdseed/feeders/guidebooks when you move?

Our new strategic plan, *Spreading Our Wings*, seeks to make our Nature Shop *more* accessible through relocation, so we plan to maintain easy access to our products and programs wherever we land next. Your engagement with pending outreach from the HQ Task Force will help us ensure that we do.

How can I help?

Thank you! Your gifts and volunteerism make all our programs possible. Be sure that you subscribe to our monthly newsletter to stay up to date on all the latest news and opportunities to provide feedback on our pending move.

Still have unanswered questions? Email Executive Director Claire Catania at clairec@birdsconnectsea.org