

**For Immediate Release**

Media Contact:  
Emily Crawford, Luminosity PR  
(206) 880-3977  
[emily@luminositypr.com](mailto:emily@luminositypr.com)



*Image courtesy of Plymouth Housing*

**Plymouth Housing to Celebrate Groundbreaking  
of 2<sup>nd</sup> & Mercer Affordable Housing Building**

Newest project to deliver 91 permanent housing apartments and arts space  
Thursday, January 16, 11 a.m.

**SEATTLE – January 13, 2020** – [Plymouth Housing](https://www.plymouthhousing.org) will celebrate the groundbreaking of an affordable housing development near Seattle Center, to deliver 91 permanent housing apartments for adults who have previously experienced homelessness, on Thursday, January 16 beginning at 11 a.m. The event will include remarks by Emily Alvarado, Director, City of Seattle Office of Housing and Plymouth Housing CEO Paul Lambros, and attendance by city and state representatives, Plymouth Housing board members, Path with Art representatives and a performance by the Path with Art choir.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> & Mercer site is the second of eight new buildings planned by the nonprofit housing developer to meet the need for housing for those experiencing chronic homelessness in King County. Slated to open in 2021, the groundbreaking represents a major milestone in the PROOF Capital Campaign launched by Plymouth Housing in June 2019.

An exchange of land owned by Seattle Center to the city's Office of Housing enabled the development. Subsequently, the city awarded the land to Plymouth Housing; and the city's Office of Housing and Office of Arts and Culture made a first-time joint investment in an affordable housing and arts space. The 2<sup>nd</sup> & Mercer project features a ground-floor space for Path with Art, a local organization that utilizes art as a means to assist people recovering from homelessness, addiction or other trauma. In addition to operating out of this new building, Path with Art will offer classes and community arts space.

Plymouth Housing CEO Paul Lambros remarked, "The realization of the 2<sup>nd</sup> & Mercer site is a tremendous success story in the struggle against homelessness—it will provide permanent housing for adults, including veterans, who are recovering from life on the streets and create a new arts space in the Seattle Center neighborhood. Even more so, it demonstrates that coordinated efforts at the local, regional and national level matched with commitment from the community brings real results: homes for those without."

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan said, "The City of Seattle celebrates the groundbreaking of the 2<sup>nd</sup> & Mercer building. Ensuring that our most vulnerable citizens have a home is a marker of who we are as a city and using surplus city-property to develop these homes is an excellent use of public resources. Plymouth Housing is a valued partner in our efforts to increase housing for our neighbors experiencing chronic homelessness. I am delighted to know that this new building will also have an arts space that can connect the entire community."

Additional funding for the project came from an expansion to the Affordable Housing Tax Credit program championed by Sen. Maria Cantwell and Rep. Suzan DelBene, allowing for the project to move forward on an accelerated timeline.

"Congratulations to Plymouth on breaking ground on this new project to provide 91 new units of permanent, affordable housing for formerly homeless people in Seattle," said Cantwell. "This project and so many others throughout our state demonstrate the power of the Affordable Housing Tax Credit to help our communities provide resources to help people in our state and across the country."

"I am so pleased that my work with Senator Cantwell to secure additional funding for affordable housing projects is yielding results in Washington State," said DelBene. "Congratulations to Plymouth Housing for breaking ground on their new project to open more affordable housing options, which will aid hardworking people throughout the greater Seattle area. Their dedication to addressing homelessness and its causes is worthy of admiration, and is deserving of the accelerated financing they received as a result of our efforts in Congress."

Residents for the Uptown building will include individuals experiencing homelessness who have relied on temporary shelter for many years as well as people currently housed with Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) or Catholic Housing Services, and residents in Plymouth Housing's "Moving On" program.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> & Mercer building will serve residents who need less than 24-hour care and will open up apartments among these three housing providers to bring people experiencing chronic homelessness off the streets and into housing with the critical services they need.

The project includes offices for building staff and on-site case management to provide the supportive services that have shown to dramatically improve the success rate of permanent housing for those exiting chronic homelessness.

“We are so grateful to Plymouth Housing and the City of Seattle for recognizing the arts can empower people and communities to reach their potential. Path with Art is at the forefront of an emerging movement to utilize the power of art to transform individuals, communities, and society, and for the past several years has been gaining momentum, locally and internationally. 2nd & Mercer is so much more than a building, it will be a home for people who are ready to re-write their own narratives, and for our community – Path with Art community, the Uptown arts community, and indeed our city – to celebrate our humanity and build a better future,” said Holly Jacobson, Executive Director of Path with Art.

Funding for the project comes from the City of Seattle Office of Housing, low income housing tax credits from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Enterprise Community Partners, Heritage Bank, Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines Affordable Housing Program (sponsored by Sound Community Bank), City of Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, and Plymouth Housing PROOF Capital Campaign.

SMR Architects designed the Uptown building; BNBuilders is the general contractor. In addition, this project will be participating in the City of Seattle’s Workforce Development Program.

With a 94% success rate, Plymouth Housing is proof the cycle of chronic homelessness is broken by permanent, supportive housing. Plymouth provides housing and critical support services for those with the highest needs and who have struggled with homelessness for many years. Many of these individuals, including seniors and veterans, live with disabilities, mental health challenges, substance use conditions and more. Without a home, shelters, hospitals, institutions and jails meet their needs. In comparison, Plymouth Housing provides 365 days of housing and support services for the cost equivalent of three days in a hospital, three months in King County jail, or one year of temporary shelter.

Recognized locally, regionally and nationally as an early adopter and pioneer in the “Housing First” model, Plymouth offers residents a home without asking them to prove that they’re ready for it. At Plymouth, barriers of entry to housing access are lowered so that people who are shut out of many places to live have an opportunity to succeed.

### **About Plymouth Housing**

*Plymouth Housing’s mission is to eliminate homelessness and address its causes by preserving, developing and operating safe, quality, supportive housing and by providing adults experiencing homelessness with opportunities to stabilize and improve their lives. Plymouth follows the “Housing First” philosophy, operating on the principle that people cannot improve their lives*

until they have a safe, stable place to live. [www.plymouthhousing.org](http://www.plymouthhousing.org)

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**Plymouth Housing Spokesperson**

Amanda Vail, Director of Communications

Plymouth Housing

Tel: (206) 374-9409 x151

Cell: (206) 931-5084

[avail@plymouthhousing.org](mailto:avail@plymouthhousing.org)

[www.plymouthhousing.org](http://www.plymouthhousing.org)

**Media Contact**

Emily Crawford, Founder

Luminosity PR

(206) 880-3977

[emily@luminositypr.com](mailto:emily@luminositypr.com)

[www.luminositypr.com](http://www.luminositypr.com)