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Plymouth Housing and Bellwether Housing Break Ground on Affordable High-Rise Development in Seattle's First Hill

First affordable high-rise in Seattle in 50 years will bring 365 apartments online

SEATTLE – October 26 – [Plymouth Housing](#) and [Bellwether Housing](#), nonprofits that provide permanent supportive housing and affordable housing, respectively, today announced the groundbreaking of the first affordable high-rise in Seattle in more than 50 years. The project was made possible by a \$0 land transfer from Sound Transit and is a joint development between the two housing organizations, and will bring 365 supportive and affordable housing units to the vibrant First Hill neighborhood.

The groundbreaking, celebrated with a video to members of both organizations and the general public, featured remarks from Paul Lambros, CEO of Plymouth Housing; Susan Boyd, CEO of Bellwether Housing; Brooke Belman, Chief of Staff at Sound Transit; Sherry Williams, Regional Director of Community Health Investment at Swedish Medical Center; as well as residents of Plymouth Housing and Bellwether Housing.

The 17-floor tower, designed by Weber Thompson and to be built by Turner Construction, will hold two distinct apartment complexes and is expected to open in spring of 2022. Bellwether Housing owns and will operate “The Rise on Madison,” including the 250 studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for low-income families and individuals on floors six through 17. Plymouth’s portion on the first five floors of the building, will include commercial retail space, 112 studio apartments for seniors who have experienced chronic homelessness, and offices for the on-site supportive services that have given Plymouth Housing its 97% resident retention rate.

“When Plymouth first began discussions with Sound Transit about the possibility of using this surplus site for such a crucial need, we only dreamed of a project like this,” Paul Lambros said. “We’re thankful to Bellwether for teaming up with us to maximize the public benefit of this land, to Sound Transit for their generosity, and to everyone who has contributed to bring these homes to life. And, we’re especially grateful for the support of the project by the community at large, which has been overwhelmingly positive.”

“This development represents so much of what is great about Seattle—support for an innovative development that will serve a broad range of needs, collaboration among committed partners, and a deep commitment to ensure that lower income people have a place in this city,” Susan Boyd said. “I am grateful for our state and local government leaders who made this development a

priority, to neighborhood leaders who were active proponents of the project, and to the brilliant and committed staff at Plymouth and Bellwether Housing who worked so hard to make this happen.”

A historic and diverse neighborhood, First Hill is densely populated with hospitals, medical clinics and higher learning institutions, which offer plentiful job opportunities. Located on Madison Street at Boylston Avenue, the new building is within walking distance of light rail, the streetcar and major bus lines, providing easy access to the city. The success of this housing project depended not only on the partnership between Plymouth Housing and Bellwether Housing, but also with strategic partnerships with city and state agencies.

“Sound Transit is proud to have donated a half-acre of surplus property for this innovative project, which will provide over 350 affordable homes for low income individuals in the heart of Seattle,” said Sound Transit CEO Peter Rogoff. “The First Hill project is our largest accomplishment to date in advancing our equitable transit-oriented development policy to provide affordable housing in thriving neighborhoods with ready access to transit, jobs, and medical care. These new affordable homes will be a vibrant addition to this welcoming neighborhood.”

“Creating inclusive, healthy, resilient communities is an inherently collaborative process. The Seattle Office of Housing is proud to support this joint endeavor that will provide hundreds of affordable homes to both seniors exiting homelessness, as well as low-wage workers and their families—all in one location near jobs, transit, and healthcare services,” said Emily Alvarado, Director of the City of Seattle Office of Housing.

“I am pleased that we could invest over \$3.4 million in King County funding for the construction of this 365-unit affordable housing project, including 112 units set aside for low-income seniors and senior veterans exiting homelessness,” said King County Executive Dow Constantine. “Along with capital funding, King County has committed \$500,000 over the next five years for a range of onsite services to ensure residents can stay healthy and safe in their new homes.”

About Bellwether Housing

Bellwether Housing is the largest private, nonprofit affordable housing provider in Seattle. Bellwether has developed, owned and operated housing for low-income individuals, families, seniors and households transitioning out of homelessness since 1980 --in total, 2,100 apartments in 31 buildings throughout Seattle. www.bellwetherhousing.org

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

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