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U Link will open March 19 — that's 6 months early, \$150M under budget

By JOURNAL STAFF

Now here's some good news involving a tunnel in Seattle. Yesterday Sound Transit said it will open the \$1.8 billion University Link light rail extension on March 19 — six months ahead of schedule and \$150 million under budget.

The 3.1-mile line consists of two tunnels connecting to new stations at Capitol Hill and the University of Washington.

“With fast, frequent trains bypassing some of the region's worst traffic, thousands of people will now be able to get to work, school and appointments on time, every time,” said Sound Transit Board Chair and King County Executive Dow Constantine in a news release.



Photo by Don Wilson/courtesy Sound Transit [\[enlarge\]](#)

A new bike/pedestrian bridge connects University of Washington Station to the campus and Burke-Gilman Trail.

Capitol Hill Station was built by Turner Construction and designed by Hewitt. Jacobs was the structural engineer.

University of Washington Station was built by Hoffman Construction and designed by Northlink Transit Partners.

Joint venture contractor Traylor-Frontier Kemper was in charge of tunneling between Capitol Hill and the UW. JCM U-Link Joint Venture did the tunnel from downtown to Capitol Hill.

Stacy and Witbeck installed the rail and related systems.

The trip between the station near Husky Stadium and downtown Seattle will take eight minutes and cost riders \$2.50. A ride from the stadium to the airport will take 45 minutes and cost \$3.25.

University Link is expected to add up to 12 million more annual riders to the light rail system by 2020.

Next fall, Sound Transit will open the 1.6-mile light rail extension from SeaTac/Airport Station to the new Angle Lake Station near South 200th Street in SeaTac.

The agency is adding another 4.3 miles of track from Husky Stadium to Northgate as part of the \$1.9 billion Northgate Link project, which is scheduled to open in 2021.

By 2023, Sound Transit will operate nearly 50 miles of light rail between Lynnwood in the north; Bellevue and Redmond's Overlake area to the east; and the Kent/Des Moines area in the south.