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Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — March 25, 2009 Another low bid for major University Link contract

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Another low bid for major University Link contract

Sound Transit opened more good news today as the agency unsealed two bids for the largest contract on the University Link light rail extension. The apparent low bidder to dig twin tunnels from the University of Washington to Capitol Hill was Traylor Frontier – Kemper Joint Venture with a \$309,175,274 bid for the work.

The Sound Transit engineers' estimate was \$395,354,000.

The contract will excavate a portion of the area for the UW Station and dig 11,400 feet of tunnels from the UW to Capitol Hill.

“We are pleased with the response of the contracting community as well as the favorable results today,” said Sound Transit Link Light Rail Director Ahmad Fazel. “We will carefully evaluate the bid proposals to start what will be a great partnership on an exciting job.”

Sound Transit will review the low bid to ensure it meets all project requirements. Sound Transit set a goal of six percent of the contract award to be performed by small businesses subcontractors with three percent to be performed by disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE). The Traylor Frontier-Kemper Joint Venture bid set a 7.06 percent small business goal with a 3.46 percent DBE goal.

The second bid was from JCM U-Link Joint Venture with a bid of \$360,775,000.

The winning contractor will launch two tunnel boring machines to excavate the light rail tunnels from UW to the Capitol Hill Station area. The work is scheduled to begin late this year and last about three years.

A separate contract scheduled to be awarded early next year will drill two tunnels from Capitol Hill to the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. Sound Transit has broken the University Link work into several contracts to generate greater competition among bidders for the work.

Today's bid opening was the second major U-Link contract bid. In December Condon Johnson was the low bidder with a \$19.4 million bid to prepare the area where a tunnel boring machine will pass beneath Interstate 5 in downtown Seattle. The engineers' estimate for that contract was \$29.6 million.

Sound Transit contractors began preparing the UW station site earlier this month and site preparation at the Capitol Hill station site is also underway.

Located entirely underground, University Link includes stations at Capitol Hill and the University of Washington and is an extension to the Link light rail line that will open between downtown Seattle and Sea-Tac International Airport in 2009. The \$1.9 billion University Link extension is expected to open in 2016. With the Sound Transit 2 package that voters approved on Nov. 4, daily light rail ridership across a 55-mile regional light rail system is projected to total more than 286,000 by 2030.

The population of the corridor served by University Link is projected to increase by 56 percent between 2000 and 2030. Based on its tremendous benefits serving this densely-populated corridor, the University Link project received the highest possible ranking in the extremely competitive federal funding process.

University Link will provide a reliable option for drivers and transit users who are stuck on I-5, a facility that operates over capacity for up to eight hours a day, with vehicle speeds running between 15 and 35 mph. Already, buses can run up to 30 minutes behind schedule due to congestion. Compared to bus service, University Link travel times will be almost three times faster. From the University District, it will take 9 minutes instead of 25 minutes to get downtown and 3 minutes instead of 22 minutes to get to Capitol Hill.

The local share of University Link is funded through existing Sound Transit revenues and was not part of the successful ballot measure that will fund the Sound Transit 2 package. With the passage of Sound Transit 2, Sound Transit will extend the University Link light rail line 12.5 miles further north to Northgate, Mountlake Terrace, Shoreline and Lynnwood by 2023 as part of a 36-mile light rail expansion plan. The 55-mile light rail system achieved by Sound Transit 2 will also reach Mercer Island, Bellevue, Redmond, Highline and the Star Lake/Redondo area north of Federal Way.