



PACE A Partnership To Achieve Comprehensive Equity

Metro, ATU Local 587 reach landmark agreement

By ATU Local 358 President Paul Bachtel and Metro General Manager Kevin Desmond

In April of this year, the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 posted an open letter in its newsletter denouncing practices of workplace disparity and expressing profound disappointment in the leadership of King County Metro. The letter was signed by every officer and Executive Board member and served as a call to action to Metro management. For the union, it presented a clear statement: racial discrimination, tendentious promotional practices, and biased disciplinary actions in the Transit division of Martin Luther King County are unacceptable. The sisters and brothers of Local 587 would wait no longer. The union stated that although these concerns had been clearly expressed on many previous occasions, they were met with “disingenuous and half-hearted measures.” The letter closed with a plea for a sincere labor-management partnership to create “a culture of openness and objectivity.”

If the open letter was intended to ring loud as a wake-up call to Metro, then the message has been unquestionably received. After the letter was published, both of us met with the Executive Board, and the discussion that ensued was an important first step. It allowed members to express their concerns directly and candidly, and it provided an opportunity to listen and hear first-hand the retelling of incidents and experiences from across the agency. From that moment forward, we both asserted an unwavering commitment to creating and maintaining a workplace free of discrimination, and one focused instead on making employees feel both valued and respected, regardless of their background or circumstance.

Now, several months later, the diligence of Metro’s initial response has matched the urgency of the union’s original plea. As leaders of our respective organizations, we brought together a working group tasked with creating a plan to bring about meaningful change throughout the agency. That group’s first step was to draft a charter to document the critical shared interests and lay out the actions that must be taken. (continued on p. 2)

On Sept. 24, Metro and ATU Local 587 launched the Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE).

Both organizations committed to an enduring, historic effort to build and enhance the processes, tools, and standards for advancing diversity and equal opportunity for all Metro employees.

The article starting on this page, also printed in ATU Local 587’s October *News Review*, describes PACE and its importance to both organizations and to King County.

**Read the full PACE
charter inside**

Landmark agreement (continued from p. 1)

That charter, signed by both of us at Central/Atlantic Base last month (September) and reproduced within these pages, now serves as an enduring and undeniable record of the pledge between the union and Metro. The intent is best summarized in the charter's purpose statement: we are mutually committed to building and enhancing the processes, tools and standards to make advances on issues of diversity and equal opportunity for all within the agency. By partnering together, Metro and ATU will create an environment for positive change, improved communication among all employees, and a workforce that reflects, respects and embraces diversity as a shared core value of our service to the public.

We hold no illusions. A charter by itself is not a solution to long-standing and deeply troubling problems in our work environments and our society as a whole. While we can be proud of many things Metro has accomplished with the support and hard work of ATU members, we simply need to do more to promote a work culture that is rich in diversity and provides opportunities for all employees. To assure that meaningful work is accomplished, the charter formalizes a Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE). The partnership is responsible for developing annual goals and objectives along with a comprehensive plan to complete a defined amount of work in set time periods. The work plan will be implemented by use of subcommittees made up of employees from throughout the organization. The work of the subcommittees will center around the following topics: hiring and promotion practices; the patterns and root causes of discipline and adverse actions; communication and the ways we interact across diverse groups; equal opportunity infrastructure; customer service and customer complaints; and training and workforce development.

In the coming weeks, we will announce the specific tasks assigned to the subcommittees

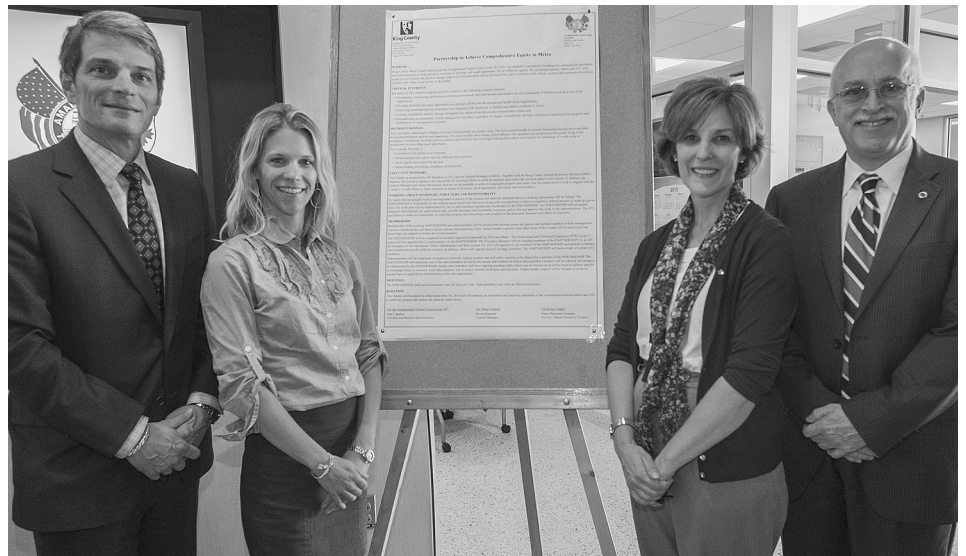
as well as the opportunities to join the effort directly or contribute your ideas and concerns.

Just over 50 years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered an address to civil rights marchers in Washington D.C. It spoke to deep-seated problems in our society, and the highest ideals that would move our nation to strive for something better. Our situation today at Metro is different. The stark lines of segregation and jarring images of violence are not present. Instead, they have been replaced with demarcations and realities far less obvious: subtle, hidden biases; policies and practices well intended, but nonetheless carrying forward a disparate impact; opportunity for some, but not all; and an organization that is challenged and constrained to pay full attention to these matters. Thus, we respectfully invoke what Dr. King referred to as "the fierce urgency of now." We must begin the work alluded to in the charter, and carry it forward with full effect. We must be open to address new challenges as they arise, and devote resources anew if our initial efforts fall short. Take heed: at times, we will find ourselves to have competing perspectives on important issues. But we will work through those moments bound

by our mutual commitment to a better workplace. And most importantly, we will embrace all these challenges in the true spirit of partnership, reminded of the words of President John F. Kennedy: "Civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof."

As you begin to consider your place in this effort, know that we understand diversity to be inclusive of everyone. It is about learning from and working with others who are different from ourselves. It is about dignity and respect for everyone. We undertake this effort not because the open letter called us to do so. We embark on this journey simply because it is the right thing to do. It is a reflection of who we are as an agency, serving a diverse public. To the extent that our problems are society's problems, then Metro and ATU will lead the way to creating a better place to live and work. We ask you to join with us.

If you would like more information on how to get involved with PACE, contact Judy Young, ATU Recording Secretary (jyoungrecsec@atu587.com) or Rob Gannon, Deputy General Manager (rob.gannon@kingcounty.gov).



L-R: Kevin Desmond (Metro general manager), Whitney Abrams (Local 17), Nancy Buonanno Grennan (King County Human Resources), and Paul Bachtel (President, ATU Local 587) at a Sept. 24 kickoff event.



Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity in Metro

Purpose

King County Metro Transit (Metro) and the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 (ATU) are mutually committed to building and enhancing the processes, tools and standards to make advances on issues of diversity and equal opportunity for all within the agency. By partnering together, Metro and ATU will create an environment for positive change, improved communication among all employees, and a workforce that reflects, respects and embraces diversity as a shared core value of our service to the public.

Critical interests

The parties to this charter recognize and fully commit to the following common interests:

- Developing a welcoming and inclusive working environment that both attracts and retains a diverse community of employees at all levels of the organization;
- Elevating diversity and equal opportunity to a strategic priority for the strength and health of the organization;
- Improving communication by listening to and engaging with employees to identify and address problems or issues;
- Creating meaningful, durable changes throughout the organization that produce measureable results; and
- Demonstrating accountability of both management and labor, regardless of changes in leadership, through continuous evaluation of our progress and modification of our approach as needed.

Diversity defined

ATU and Metro understand workplace diversity fundamentally as a people issue. The term is used broadly to include dimensions beyond those specified in non-discrimination policies and statements. Diversity includes those things which influence the identities

and perspectives that people bring to the workplace. In addition, diversity involves policies and practices that encourage learning from others and captures the advantage of a wide array of perspectives by providing equal opportunity.

As a concept, diversity is:

- Considered to be inclusive of everyone;
- About learning from others who are different than ourselves;
- About dignity and respect for all; and
- About creating welcoming workplace environments.

Executive Sponsors

This charter is sponsored by the President of ATU and the General Manager of Metro. Together with the King County Human Resources Division (HRD) Director, the executive sponsors are responsible for directing efforts to fulfill the purpose and realize the interests stated in this charter. In addition, the General Manager and Human Resources Director are accountable to achieve meaningful progress and assure that the organization's work is aligned with the County's overall efforts to make advances on issues of diversity, equal opportunity, and equity and social justice.

Working group oversight, structure and responsibility

To assure that meaningful work is accomplished in pursuit of the purpose and interests identified above, a working partnership will be formed. The PARTNERSHIP is responsible for developing annual goals and objectives along with a comprehensive plan to complete a defined amount of work in a given year. The work plan will be implemented by use of subcommittees guided and coordinated by the PARTNERSHIP. The
(continued on p. 4)

PACE charter, continued from p. 3

PARTNERSHIP will set quality standards and timelines for each defined task, provide necessary and reasonable resources, and review and approve the work of the subcommittees. The ATU and Metro co-leads are responsible for reporting progress and presenting work products to the Executive Sponsors and others as requested.

Membership

Membership of the working PARTNERSHIP and subcommittees will be drawn from sections across the agency and include members of both management (various classifications) and labor (various unions and bargaining units). Subject matter expertise from other areas of the County will be used to provide knowledge and support to further the overall purpose. The PARTNERSHIP will be comprised of members appointed separately by ATU and Metro. The Professional and Technical Employees (PTE) Local 17 union will also appoint one (1) representative to the PARTNERSHIP. The Executive Sponsors will be standing members of the PARTNERSHIP (3), as will the managers of the Operations, Vehicle Maintenance and Rail sections (3). ATU will appoint six (6) members of the PARTNERSHIP and attempt to balance representation across the different sections. In addition, Metro will appoint three (3) at-large members. The PARTNERSHIP will have a total of sixteen (16) members.

Subcommittees will be comprised of employees from the various sections and will either report to or be chaired by a member of the PARTNERSHIP. The PARTNERSHIP will determine size of the subcommittees as well as the means and methods by which subcommittee members will be selected and assigned. As determined by the PARTNERSHIP, certain subcommittees will have ongoing standing while others may be formed on an ad hoc basis to address specific or emerging issues or concerns. Each subcommittee will develop a detailed work plan and schedule. Subject matter experts

will be brought in on an as-needed basis to supplement subcommittee work when appropriate.

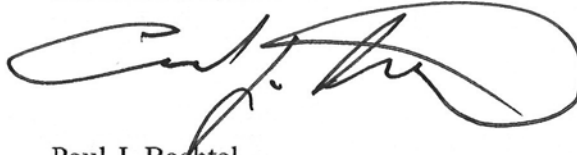
Meetings

The PARTNERSHIP shall meet a minimum four (4) times per year. Subcommittees may meet as often as necessary.

Duration

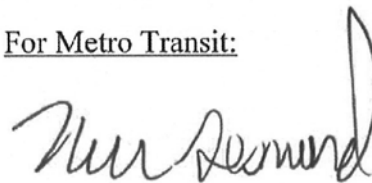
This charter will be placed in effect September 24, 2013 and will stand as an affirmative and enduring statement of the commitment between Metro and ATU to fulfill the purpose and realize the interests stated above.

For the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587:



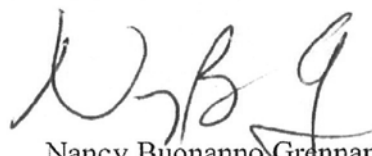
Paul J. Bachtel
President and Business Representative

For Metro Transit:



Kevin Desmond
General Manager

For King County:



Nancy Buonanno Grennan
Director, Human Resources Division