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TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT: AN EXPLORATION  
OF LABOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP  
IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR

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A Research Project  
Presented to the Faculty of  
The George L. Graziadio  
School of Business and Management  
Pepperdine University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science  
in  
Organization Development

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by  
Lisa Marie Voight  
August 2016

This research project, completed by

LISA MARIE VOIGHT

Under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2016

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## **Abstract**

This case study explored the use of Labor Management Partnerships in the government sector through the Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE), a partnership between Metro, a division of King County government and Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 587 (ATU). The study examined the partnership's influence on organizational outcomes and the manner in which the partnership functioned and sustained itself, as well as the challenges and obstacles that threatened both the partnership and outcomes. Two key findings emerged from this study. First, partnerships are supported by flexible structures and practices that foster relationship-building through dialogue and co-learning. Second, partnerships must confront contextual challenges, such as changes in leadership and organizational resistance that threaten their viability. As this case study illustrates, it is the community's ability to establish strong and dynamic relationships that ensures members are respected, empowered, and engaged in the partnership's outcomes.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The core mission of the public sector is to provide the essential public services and infrastructure to support a strong and thriving society. The public sector accomplishes this mission through a complex web of services, ranging from early childhood education to law enforcement and public safety, health and human services to code enforcement, and from public infrastructure, facilities maintenance to real estate assessments.

Several factors are converging to make the delivery of public services more complex. Demographic changes are creating new demands for public services. Communities are growing, challenging agencies to accommodate needs by increasing urban densities or allowing rural areas to sprawl. An aging and more diverse population challenges agencies to reassess long-standing business models, mindsets and practices to meet new community needs (Municipal Services & Research Center, 2016). Public services must also be managed through government coffers that are always subject to the general state of the economy--a lean economy leads to lean public services. And agency discretion over the use of public funding is restricted, which limits flexibility to respond to the needs of its customers. The Great Recession exacerbated this dynamic, creating fiscal crises for most state and local jurisdictions (Lewin, Keefe, & Kochan, 2012) as agencies scrambled to manage growing labor costs without reducing direct services (Bennett & Masters, 2003).

At the same time, public frustration with the government sector has grown (Houston & Harding, 2013). According to the Pew Research Center (2013), only 28% of Americans surveyed in 2013 had a favorable view of the federal government. This was down from the 38% rating it received in 1997 (Pew Research Center, 2013). Local and state governments fared better. Local governments earned a 63% favorability rating and state governments earned a 57% favorability

rating (Pew Research Center, 2013). However, those too were decreases from their respective 68% and 66% favorability ratings in 1997 (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Facing public scrutiny, government jurisdictions have embraced public performance reporting platforms and employed various performance management tools such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Six Sigma, and Lean to improve service efficiency and demonstrate effectiveness to the public. These efforts brought, and continue to bring, performance improvements to the government sector (Bernard, 2013; Cummings & Worley, 2015; Lean Government Center; Shaw, 2008). However, their effectiveness can be hampered by a litany of “laws, arbitration rulings, civil service classifications and collective bargaining contracts” that “undermine efforts to find better, faster, and cheaper ways of providing public services (Goldsmith, 2010, para. 8). In unionized workplaces, “even talking to employees about how to do things better can be against the rules” (Goldsmith, 2010, para. 8).

### **Labor Relations in the Government Sector**

Labor relations in the United States began with President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s enactment of the New Deal that empowered the American worker through three key pieces of legislation. The Social Security Act of 1935 provided insurance benefits to American workers, the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 allowed workers to organize and collectively bargain workplace and compensation issues with employers, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 abolished child labor and guaranteed workers with minimum wage rights as well as compensation for overtime work (Kochan & Osterman, 1994; Kochan, 2016). However, union rights were not immediately extended to public sector employees. It was in Wisconsin that the first public-sector employees were granted the right to collectively bargain in 1959 (Lewin et al,

2012). This was followed by most other states between 1960 and 1975 (Lewin et al, 2012). Collective bargaining rights were granted to limited federal employees with Executive Order 10988 in 1962 (Lewin et al, 2012).

While total union membership in the United States began to decline in the 1980's, representation in the public sector remained relatively steady. As shown in Table 1, private sector unionization decreased from 15% to 7% of the workforce between 1985 and 2015 while union presence in the government sector saw only a minimal decrease, from 36% to 35% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Local governments employ four of 10 unionized workers in the government sector, most in education and public safety (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

**Table 1**

***Percent Union Membership: Private and Government Sector Workers***

	Private Sector Workers	Government Sector Workers
1985	15%	36%
2015	7%	35%

The traditional labor-management relationship is characterized as adversarial wherein employers and unions navigate collective bargaining and grievance processes. In the face of growing economic and political pressures, the labor-management relationship continues to be strained. Struggling to balance budgets, government officials call unions recalcitrant, insistent upon preserving “wage level and benefits that were hard-won over the decades, even as the financial terrain changed and made them both fiscally and politically unsustainable” (Greenblatt, 2011, para. 22). In this environment, state governors and legislators have taken steps to limit collective bargaining rights for unions (Katz, 2013) and allow municipal governments to unilaterally alter employee health benefits as a means to manage costs (Greenhouse, 2011). By

2012, 20 states had effectively reduced employee retirement and health care benefits (Lewin, Keefe, & Kochan, 2012). Union leaders assert that they are not to blame for these financial constraints, rather pointing to the Great Recession's effects on government resources (Whoriskey, & Gardner, 2011). They decry government efforts to reduce collective bargaining rights as veiled efforts to disempower unions, not only to secure health-care and other cost savings (Pitsch, 2011).

### **Partnership in the Government Sector**

While collective bargaining and grievance processes are critical, they are not adequate to resolve many of the challenges facing government agencies today such as “quality enhancement, improved cost-effectiveness of service delivery, customer relations, neighborhood development, and welfare reform” (Rubin & Rubin, 2007, p. 194). Traditional service delivery methods and management practices will be inadequate to meet pressing community needs and the demands facing government agencies (Department of Labor, 1996). Consequently, government agencies and unions are finding ways to enhance agency performance and reduce costs through “interest-based mutual gains negotiations and workplace innovations... such as coalition bargaining, joint partnerships, and multiparty arrangements” (Lewin et al, 2012, p. 770). For example, in the 1990's, Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith engaged employees and unions in an effort to turn around a budget deficit and improve productivity while avoiding layoffs and decreasing labor grievances (Goldsmith, 2003). Similarly, the city of Montgomery, Ohio engaged employees in an effort to reduce employee healthcare costs. Committees consisting of management and employee representatives successfully implemented several cost-saving efforts including a “program incentivizing employees to complete health-risk assessments and

participate in wellness activities” (Maciag, 2014, para. 9). Additionally, public education partnerships have resulted in improved student performance data and teaching practices, more opportunities for teacher mentoring, and greater collaboration around curriculum development (Rubinstein, 2013-2014).

## **Research Objective**

The objective of this research was to explore the use of Labor Management Partnerships in the government sector by analyzing the Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE), a partnership undertaken by King County Metro and Amalgamated Transit Unit, Local 587 (ATU). The partnership sought to address long-standing allegations of inequity in the division to create a culture of fairness, equity, and inclusion. Using PACE as a case study, the intent was to answer three research questions:

RQ1. How do Labor Management Partnerships influence organizational outcomes?

RQ2. How do Labor Management Partnerships function and sustain themselves?

RQ3. What challenges do partnerships face?

## **Implications of This Study**

It is imperative that government agencies find innovative solutions to serve the community and provide critical infrastructure within existing economic and political constraints. It seems unlikely that such innovations will surface without the engagement of leadership, management, unions, and front-line employees through acts of collaboration and partnership

(Lewin et al, 2012). This research will contribute to collective understanding of how partnerships can support innovative solutions.

### **Organization of this Study**

This study continues in the following chapters. Chapter Two summarizes the extant literature, offering a definition of Labor Management Partnership for purposes of this study, introducing the frameworks under which partnerships have been analyzed, and reviewing the findings of previous partnership study. Chapter Three describes the research methodology and the validation means. Chapter Four summarizes findings based on the research objectives. Finally, Chapter Five presents conclusions and offers considerations for future research and the practice of Organization Development.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The purpose of this research was to explore the use of Labor Management Partnerships in the government sector by answering three research questions:

RQ1. How do Labor Management Partnerships influence organizational outcomes?

RQ2. How do Labor Management Partnerships function and sustain themselves?

RQ3. What challenges do partnerships face?

This chapter serves three primary purposes through a review of the extant literature on Labor Management Partnership. First, it defines Labor Management Partnership and introduces the frameworks under which partnerships have been studied. Second, the chapter highlights potential positive outcomes and benefits of partnership. Finally, it discusses those conditions and practices present in successful partnerships and common challenges in the maintenance and viability of a partnership.

### **Labor Management Partnership Defined**

“Partnership is... a development that represents the emergence of a new approach to employment relations that attempts to reconfigure the form and content of management-union relations” (Stuart & Martinez-Lucio, 2005, p. 7). Put simply, a Labor Management Partnership is a collaborative arrangement between management and union representation that addresses a workplace issue negatively impacting organizational effectiveness. Labor Management Partnerships arise when the existing collective bargaining process is deemed inadequate to address workplace problems.

Partnerships are built upon the existing collective bargaining relationship and function alongside it (Masters, Albright & Eplion, 2006). Each arrangement is likely to influence the other, creating complexity in both forums and for the labor-management relationship (Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Attention should be given to this, because the impermanence of the Labor Management Partnership makes it a tenuous arrangement to maintain alongside its institutionalized counterpart, the collective bargaining process (Kochan, Adler, McKersie, Eaton, Segal, & Gerhart, 2008). The literature was unambiguous: only when the benefits of partnership exceed its costs and neither party nor the collective bargaining process are threatened by it, will there be incentive to collaborate and maintain the partnership (Cooke, 1990; Ospina & Yaroni, 2003). Given this precariousness, it is accepted that partnership requires a significant amount of attention to be viable in the workplace (Ospina & Yaroni, 2003).

No single form dominates partnership and no single form is universally appropriate (Delaney, 1996). As Rubinstein, Bennet, and Kochan (1993) described, partnerships vary in both the manner they engage employees and union members and in the degree to which the partnership engages directly in the operations of the organization. Table 2 illustrates these forms of partnership. Direct employee participation efforts, such as Quality of Life (QWL), Process Improvement (PI), and Employee Involvement (EI) programs, engage front-line employees in problem-solving and decision-making processes in the workplace (Eaton, 1990; Brewster, Brookes, Johnson, & Wood, 2014). Conversely, indirect representative participation efforts do not engage employees or union members directly, but might include joint labor-management committees that serve in advisory or consultative functions regarding the workplace (Masters, Albright & Eplion, 2006; Rubinstein, 2013-2014).

**Table 2**

***Forms of Labor Management Partnership***

	Representative Participation (Union Leadership Only)	Employee/ Union Member Participation
Indirect (off-line)	Labor-Management Committees	Consultation of Employees in Operational/ Workplace Issues
Direct (on-line)	Union Leadership as Co- Managers	Direct Involvement of Employees in Day- to-Day Operations/ Processes

**The Study of Partnership**

The extant literature includes a variety of frameworks and perspectives to examine partnerships. Attention has been given to the stages of partnership, from initiation of the partnership to its institutionalization within the organization (Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Other studies highlight outcome achievement through partnership (Ospina & Yaroni, 2003; Masters et al, 2006) while others concentrate on the management practices and processes (Mahony, 2007; Rubinstein, Bennett, & Kochan, 1993) or inherent challenges (Kochan et al, 2008). What all shared was recognition of the unique circumstances under which partnerships have emerged. As Wilkinson, Dundon, Donaghey, and Townsend (2014) contend, no partnership can be understood without recognizing that its viability “depends upon various contextual factors including management and union strategies, the aims of partnership and related human resource policies, along with wider economic conditions” (p. 737). The remainder of this chapter focuses on two perspectives of partnership. First, it highlights the potential outcomes and benefits of partnership. It then describes practices, mindsets, and structures that support partnership.

## **Partnership Outcomes**

Partnership holds the potential to achieve positive organizational outcomes and provide myriad benefits to both management and labor, including: improved performance, improved quality of work life, expanded mindsets toward change, and improved labor-management relations. These outcomes are described below in turn.

**Performance improvement.** Partnerships established to improve organizational performance engage employees in problem-solving and decision-making processes to increase job flexibility and restructure the workplace (Brewster et al, 2014; Deery & Iverson, 2005; Eaton, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 2007). Such outcomes may include effectiveness and efficiency gains (Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 1991; Cooke, 1990; Department of Labor, 1996; Milinski, 1998) as well as improved product quality (Rubinstein 2013-2014; Woodworth & Meek, 1994), customer service (Department of Labor, 1996; Ospina & Yaroni, 2003), and public perception (Bennett & Masters, 2003).

**Quality of life.** In addition to achieving economic benefits through performance improvement, partnership can provide social benefits to employees by improving the quality of work life in the organization (Delaney, 1996; Johnstone, Ackers & Wilkinson, 2009; Ospina & Yaroni, 2003). These internally-focused outcomes include improved supervisor-employee relations, workplace communications, and trust (Cooke, 1990; Guess & Peccei, 2001; Ospina & Yaroni, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 2007; Rubinstein, 2013-2014; Woodworth & Meek, 1994); greater workplace flexibility and security (Mahony, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2007) and employee

voice and involvement in decision-making processes (Johnstone et al, 2009; Mahony, 2007). Such gains can increase the level of employee ownership and commitment to both the union and the workplace, which may result in further performance improvements over time (Deery & Iverson, 2005; Johnstone et al, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2007).

Quality of work life outcomes may also be realized as the avoidance of negative outcomes including job cuts, wage reductions, absenteeism and employee turnover (Deery & Iverson, 2005). For example, as a result of its partnership with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the City of Indianapolis avoided job and wage cuts while also reducing the number of grievances filed by employees (Rubin & Rubin, 2007). Other studies reinforced such findings, indicating that improvements in the quality of work life for employees result in improved collective bargaining processes, fewer grievances, arbitrations, and allegations of unfair labor practices (Cooke, 1990; Masters et al, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2007).

**Expanded mindsets toward change.** Partnering can foster changes in the mindsets of participants to better appreciate the perspectives of others in the workplace, to accept a sense of ownership for problems and solutions, and take the risk to trust and partner with people formerly viewed as adversaries (Harrison, Roy, & Haines, 2011; Ospina & Yaroni, 2003). Ospina and Yaroni (2003) found that such shifts led to more cooperative relations both within and outside the partnership. In the same manner, Masters, Albright, and Eplion (2006) credited partnership as a critical means to foster “a culture conducive rather than resistant to change. Both parties... benefited from working together to smooth the process of change... and served as conscious allies to mitigating hardship” (pp. 379-380).

**Improved labor-management relations.** Positive organizational outcomes also contribute to the improvement of labor-management relations. In a study of partnerships within the federal sector, Masters, Albright, and Eplion (2006) asserted that partnerships have the potential to deescalate conflicts that typically result in grievances and litigation. A positive labor-management relationship “stimulates a more positive labor-management climate which further reinforces the predisposition to resolve disagreements amicably rather than litigiously” (p. 370).

However, there is no guarantee that such results will materialize and the question remains whether partnership arrangements are ultimately “more productive and successful than pre-existing union-management relationships” (Wilkinson, Dundon, Donaghey, & Townsend, 2014, p. 738). A review of the literature found that this uncertainty is partly due to evaluation challenges in partnership. First, evaluation practices are often underutilized in these settings. Absent effective and well-practiced evaluation methods, partnership results remain ambiguous (Masters et al, 2006). Second, evaluation is handicapped by poorly defined outcomes and objectives. Where outcomes are perceived as too ambitious or ambiguous, it is unlikely that participants will be driven by them, resulting in unfulfilled objectives (Johnstone et al, 2009; Kochan et al, 2008). Finally, outcomes are often articulated in anecdotal terms due to the difficulty in quantifying the subtle attitudinal changes that arise from partnerships (Johnstone et al, 2009; Roper, 2000). Much of the extant literature assessed partnership results through participant interviews and surveys, subject to individual perspectives and opinions. Because participants in partnerships often disagree about the actual benefits and outcomes gained, it is difficult to assess whether such results are actually attained.

### **The Practice and Viability of Partnership**

The extant literature is expansive in its articulation of those conditions, practices, and structures that sustain a Labor Management Partnership as well as those that challenge it. The following section describes:

- (a) antecedents to partnership (the presence of a pivotal event, shared vision, and mutual benefits);
- (b) leadership mindsets and capacities (sustained commitment, belief in a power balance and interdependence, and the capacity to integrate collective bargaining in the partnership);
- (c) collaborative infrastructure (shared governance and collaborative practices and structures); and
- (d) challenges in partnership.

**Antecedents to partnership.** Several conditions are necessary for the creation of a Labor Management Partnership. Once initiated, management and union leadership must recognize mutuality in the benefits of partnership and share a vision for its creation in responding to a critical event through collaboration.

**Pivotal event.** Labor Management Partnerships rise out of external or internal pressures that threaten or negatively impact organizational performance and cannot be adequately resolved through either the existing collective bargaining process or management prerogative alone (Walton, Cutcher-Gershenfeld, & McKersie, 1994). External pressures might include market shifts, regulatory changes, fiscal constraints or negative public perception of service delivery (Department of Labor, 1996; Kochan et al, 2008; Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Internal pressures might include changes in leadership, redirection of strategic positioning, or significant technical/

technological changes requiring new work processes (Department of Labor, 1996; Kochan et al, 2008; Rubin & Rubin, 2006). These events represent pivot points for the organization, creating a sense of urgency that compels the organization and participants to innovate and engage in partnership (Ospina & Yaroni, 2003). Studies suggest, however, that urgency can be neither too weak nor too strong. Because partnerships create their own stress and uncertainty in an organization, a pivotal event that introduces too much pressure may incapacitate the partnership. Conversely, too little pressure may create a sense of ambivalence among partnership participants, resulting in inaction (Jacoby, 1983; Kochan et al, 2008).

***Shared vision.*** To align its membership and overcome resistance to change, a partnership requires a strong vision that resonates with the experiences and needs of participants and employees throughout the organization (Kochan et al, 2008; Rubinstein & Kochan, 2001; Rubinstein, 2013-2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Masters, Albright, and Eplion (2006) further argue that the vision should be targeted:

[labor-management ] councils that focused on improving customer satisfaction, reducing work place disputes, and increasingly productivity achieved demonstrable results. This explicit focus gave councils a driving purpose linked to measurable goals, in contrast to more global ambitions such as furthering the agency's "mission" or promoting cultural change. (p. 381)

***Mutual benefits.*** The extant literature was diffuse regarding the benefits of partnership, indicating that management and labor are more likely to engage in and maintain partnership if each party stands to benefit from it (Kochan et al, 2008; Harrison, 2011; Mahony, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Mutuality is key as studies indicated that a partnership's ability to achieve broad organizational acceptance was actually hampered in circumstances where outcomes were



perceived to benefit one group (such as management) without compensatory benefits to others (such as union members and employees) (Kochan et al, 2008; Woodworth & Meek, 1994).

Unfortunately, “the potential gains from partnership are often far from obvious” (Stuart & Lucio, 2005, p. 14) and subject to any number of contextual and environmental factors (Wilkinson et al, 2014). Given this, management and union leadership commitment often comes from the belief any potential benefits from partnership will outweigh its risks and that individual efforts are better served through collaboration and partnership than traditionally adversarial tactics (Cooke, 1990; Deery & Iverson, 2005; Ospina & Yaroni, 2003). For example, the city of Indianapolis and AFSCME together faced a financial crisis that threatened direct services and employment security in the city. Without assurances that either the city or union would benefit from partnership, they assumed the risk of collaboration and ultimately moved the city toward secure fiscal footing while protecting union membership and minimizing the negative consequences to employees (Ospina & Yaroni, 2003).

**The mindset and capacity of leadership.** A Department of Labor (1996) congressional report stated that Labor Management Partnerships in federal sector agencies were successful when

management [operated] in less hierarchical ways and [agreed], through joint and team structures... to share decision-making authority where it [had] not traditionally done so.... The counterpart phenomenon [was] that union leaders [shared] power in a responsible fashion while still vigorously defending worker interests. (pp. 7-8).

This statement captures the sentiment of much of the research, indicating that management and union leadership must adopt new mindsets toward collaboration and shared power while respecting their autonomy (Deery & Iverson, 2005; Hammer & Stern, 1986; Kochan et al, 2008;

Wilkinson et al, 2014). The manifestations of this mindset—commitment, interdependence & power, and integration—are described below.

***Leadership commitment.*** Commitment from management and union leadership to both the partnership and subsequent organizational changes is critical to sustain the partnership and overcome organizational resistance to its existence (Eaton, 1994; Kochan et al, 2008; Rubinstein, 2013-2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Commitment can be demonstrated in a number of ways including: formalization of the partnership (Harrison et al, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2006; Woodworth & Meek, 1994), active and sustained engagement in the partnership (Kochan et al, 2008; Mahony, 2007; Rubinstein, 2013-2014), the provision of resources and infrastructure to support the partnership (Kochan et al, 2008; Milinski, 1998), and through statements of public support and advocacy for the partnership (Eaton, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Leadership may also need to ensure job security as a means to secure organizational buy-in (Department of Labor, 1996; Eaton & Rubinstein, 2006) and should be prepared to acknowledge mistakes, redoubling their efforts to maintain organizational support of the partnership in the aftermath (Department of Labor, 1996).

***Power and interdependence.*** The very nature of partnership intimates that management and union leadership recognize their fates are intertwined and must accordingly find ways to share power in the partnership. Power manifests in a variety of ways including shared decision-making, shared governance, and accountability for the partnership's success (Harrison et al, 2011; Kochan et al, 2008; Masters et al, 2006). But this comes with some loss and potential costs to both parties (Wilkinson et al, 2014). For management, partnership may result in a “perceived loss of authority, power, and status for managers and supervisors... as well as inappropriate

compromises necessary to maintain consensus” (Deery & Iverson, 2005, p. 589). Unions too must be prepared to “give up some control over detailed contractual rules of work organization and allocation” (Wever, 1989, p. 602).

Interestingly, the perception of power may be a contextual one. Woodworth and Meek (1994) suggested that partnership must be entered voluntarily; because each party possesses an element of power, neither can be forced to participate against its will. Contradicting this argument are federal sector partnerships that were mandated by Executive Order, many of which resulted in positive outcomes for the agencies and unions alike (Department of Labor, 1996; Masters et al, 2006). These findings may be attributed to their contexts. Where private sector firms and unions maintain relative autonomy, government agencies are subject to the interests of many masters. As such, the perception and manifestation of power that is held by both the organization and union varies and should be considered in the study of partnership.

***Integrating collective bargaining in the partnership.*** Partnership assumes that the existing collective bargaining process—while appropriate for matters of employee compensation, hours, and working conditions—is not equipped to engage employees in matters of workplace efficiency and effectiveness. Yet both processes benefit the employee, the union and the organization: “workers receive respect through participation and protection through bargaining. Management gets results” (Horvitz, 1994, p. 291). Recognizing this, the extant literature recommended integration of the collective bargaining process in partnership.

Integration of these processes begins with the negotiation of the terms of the partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding or partnership charter (Hammer & Stern, 1986; Rubinstein, 2013-2014; Woodworth & Meek, 1994) and continues as decisions made in

partnership are subsequently negotiated in the collective bargaining process (Kochan et al, 2008; Miliniski, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2006). Masters, Albright, and Eplion (2006) found that “partnerships achieve their ultimate impact when partnering, collective bargaining, and contract administration become seamlessly cooperative” (p. 381).

Eaton’s analysis of partnership expands the notion of integration. In analysis of partnership survey data, Eaton (1994) attributed partnership viability to the openness of the collective bargaining process. Eaton found that those partnerships whose content and terms were unconstrained by the collective bargaining process were strongly and positively correlated with sustainability. When the collective bargaining process placed even slight limits on the terms of partnership, its viability was limited.

**Collaborative infrastructure.** In their analysis, Ospina and Yaroni (2003) asserted that successful partnerships were those where “labor representatives, employees, and managers shared the problem that triggered cooperation, as well as the information, decision-making authority, and leadership capacity required to solve it. They also shared accountability for the consequences of the choices made” (p. 456). This section highlights those practices and conditions that sustain partnership as described in the extant literature.

**Shared governance.** Shared governance, manifested as joint planning, problem-solving, and decision-making, encourages collaboration and empowerment in a partnership (Harrison, Roy, & Haines, 2011; Masters et al, 2006; Rubinstein, 2013-2014). Shared governance may be formalized through the partnership charter (Woodworth & Meek, 1994), but this does not guarantee a culture of truly shared governance. In reality, partnership may “simply represent a pragmatic management decision rather than evidence of a long-term commitment to working

with unions, as managers decide to “involve” unions, but only within strictly defined parameters” (Johnstone et al, 2009, p. 264).

Eaton’s (1994) research offered insight into the practice of shared governance, finding that union representatives have a more positive view of partnerships when they have a greater level of control and more significant role in partnership. Perhaps not surprisingly, her study also found that management representatives may have a different perspective and don’t correlate a partnership’s viability with the union’s control over partnership processes (Eaton, 1994). This could speak to management frustration at the loss of management prerogative and inherently slow decision-making processes in partnership (Johnstone et al, 2009).

***Collaborative practices and structures.*** Labor Management Partnerships are often cumbersome, time-consuming, and resource-heavy efforts (Johnstone et al, 2009; Kochan et al, 2008). Supportive structures, adequate training, and the practice of open communications will enable their maintenance. Supportive structures include meeting agendas and neutral facilitation as well as process predictability and clearly defined roles (Department of Labor, 1996; Kochan et al, 2008; Mahony, 2007; Masters et al, 2006).

In many cases, training is necessary as participants may have little experience in collaborative and participatory work environments. Skills development in areas such as problem-solving, managing change, conflict management and leading teams are helpful, particularly for those managers, union representatives and stewards who will be responsible for implementing the changes that are born out of partnership (Department of Labor, 1996; Kochan et al, 2008; Milinski, 1998). It is noteworthy that when done in community, training also creates shared understanding and strengthens relations among members (Rubinstein, 2013-2014).

Lastly, open communication and transparency critically support partnership viability and effectiveness (Harrison et al, 2011; Ospina & Yaroni, 2003; Stuart & Lucio, 2005; Rubinstein, 2013-2014). The extant literature maintained that regular and consistent communications, both within the partnership and externally to the broader organization throughout the life of the partnership, support partnership viability.

Together, these practices and structures support the development of trust in a partnership (Brewster, Brookes, Johnson, & Wood, 2014). While trust is necessary to sustain partnership (Milinski, 1998), it is likely not a pre-existing condition of the partnership (Ospina & Yaroni, 2003; Wilkinson et al, 2014). The benefits of trust are not limited to the partnership. Ospina and Yaroni (2003) noted that trust in the partnership has the potential to impact relationships and interactions throughout the organization. Ospina and Yaroni's findings suggest that even where labor and management revert back to traditional adversarial relationships as a course of business, those representatives who participate in a successful partnership may bring their experiences of trust and interpersonal growth to the workplace in a manner that positively impacts the ongoing labor-management relationship and organizational effectiveness.

**Challenges in partnership.** Managing a collaborative partnership in an environment of collective bargaining and grievance processes is difficult. Partnership studies indicated that negative experiences in collective bargaining have subsequently negative effects on the partnership (Eaton, 1994; Eaton & Rubinstein, 2006). This is particularly true for unions who view the collective bargaining process as their dominant form of power in the organization. In such cases, concessions made in collective bargaining negatively impact union commitment to partnership (Eaton, 1994).

Likewise, parties are likely to “change their approach... from cooperation to the recognition of conflict and the reinstatement of power relations” when significant challenges arise in partnership with no clear resolution (Harrison et al, 2001, p. 427). Union leaders struggle especially with this dynamic when their commitment to the principles of partnership challenge their ability to uphold the interests of their constituents (Harrison et al, 2011). It should not be forgotten that union members have the power to vote union leaders out of office should they perceive that the partnership threatens the union’s resources and viability, member solidarity, or employee interests or that union leadership has become too cozy with or emasculated by management (Deery & Iverson, 2005; Eaton & Rubinstein, 2006; Hammer & Stern, 1986; Kochan et al, 2008; McKersie & Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 2009; Wever, 1989). These challenges may have cascading effects throughout the partnership as cited in one study where the “replacement of a [union] leader with a new leader less committed to participation [coincided] with some withdrawal of commitment on management’s side” (Eaton & Rubinstein, 2006, pp. 15-16).

Resistance is ubiquitous in organizational change, including that brought about by partnership. Change may trigger feelings of loss (to power, competence, identity and group membership) among employees, managers and union members that are difficult to overcome (Schein, 2009). Manifestations of resistance can range from indifference to active sabotage (Milinski, 1998; Woodworth & Meek, 1994). For example, employees may be indifferent toward the partnership, viewing it as an initiative that will fade with time or an inconvenience that diverts attention from the workplace and requires too much time and effort to sustain. They may also be more targeted in their cynicism, actively refusing to engage and support the partnership (Kochan et al, 2008; Milinski, 1998; Woodworth & Meek, 1994).

## Summary

The literature on partnership is expansive. It provides perspective on the historical trends in partnership, their form and function, their effectiveness, and the conditions that sustain them. This chapter provided an overview of Labor Management Partnership and introduced the frameworks under which they have been studied. The chapter also discussed the potential outcomes and benefits of partnership before describing the conditions and practices that have been found in successful partnerships, with recognition of common challenges to the maintenance and viability of a partnership.

The literature indicated that partnership study must pay careful attention to the context in which a partnership exists as it determines a partnership's viability as much as the conditions within the partnership (Eaton, 1994; Johnstone et al, 2009; Masters et al, 2006; Wilkinson et al, 2014). Wilkinson et al (2014) asserted that "models of partnership may need to be developed for different sectors and groups of workers rather than assuming a one size fits all approach" (p. 737). In that spirit, this study adds to the extant literature by examining a single Labor Management Partnership, paying attention to its inception, the practices and processes employed by its membership and its environment as a means to better understand viability and success in achieving stated outcomes. The method of research employed follows in Chapter Three.



### **Chapter 3: Research Methods**

The purpose of this research was to explore the use of Labor Management Partnerships in the government sector by answering three research questions:

RQ1. How do Labor Management Partnerships influence organizational outcomes?

RQ2. How do Labor Management Partnerships function and sustain themselves?

RQ3. What challenges do partnerships face?

To answer these questions, I analyzed the organizational context in which the Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE) occurred, investigated those conditions that allowed the partnership to sustain itself (over the year-long period of analysis), described the partnership's impact toward creating a culture of comprehensive equity, and identified those conditions that may impede its long-term viability. This chapter describes the research and sampling methodology, approach for data collection and analytical process. This study does not seek to develop a generalized theory about Labor Management Partnership but adds to the existing literature by providing an in-depth analysis of a single partnership through a qualitative research methodology.

#### **Research Design**

Qualitative research methods are inductive in nature, allowing the researcher to “[explore] and [understand] the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). In qualitative research, the study emerges through the data collection process, providing the researcher a deep understanding of relevant variables. This

differs from a quantitative approach that tests for predetermined theories and allows the researcher to deduce relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014).

This research is founded upon a social constructivist perspective, which asserts that individuals seek to understand their world by subjectively assigning meaning to their experiences and perceptions. Because individual perceptions vary, a researcher creates understanding through the complexity of individual views (Creswell, 2014). A case study process was utilized to solicit the views of PACE participants as a means to understand the partnership—its meaning, its functionality, and its ability to impact organizational outcomes. The approach provides “in-depth [and evidence-led] exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a “real-life” context” (Simons, 2009, p. 16). While generalized theories may evolve from such research, it was my intention to create deep understanding of the experiences of participants of a singular case.

### **Data Instrumentation and Interview Protocol**

Qualitative research allows for many different types of data collection. The present study used artifacts, observations and interviews. Artifacts included meeting notes and materials, communications and work plans, annual progress reports and annual employee engagement survey results. As a participant-observer in the partnership, a journal was maintained of observations and experiences over the course of the study to assuage bias.

The principal form of data collection, however, was research interviewing. While artifacts and observations provided meaning and context for study, interviewing provided a richness of understanding not otherwise available. In-depth interviewing provides four key benefits to qualitative research. A researcher can document the interviewee’s perspectives and

understanding; promote shared understanding of issues with the interviewee; uncover variables as they emerge in dialogue with the interviewee; and validate observations (Simons, 2009). All of these benefits were realized in this study.

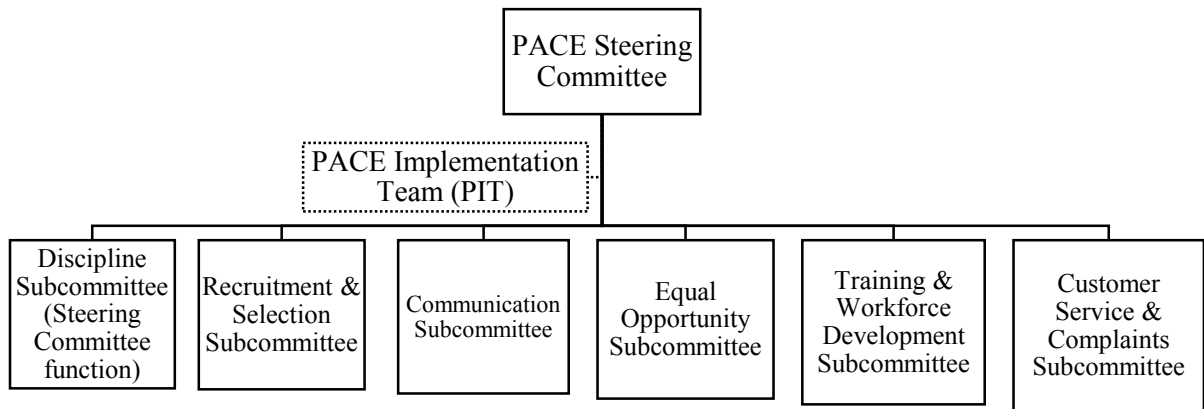
This study took place from April 2015 until April 2016 but included analysis of the partnership from its inception in 2013. Observations occurred over the duration of the study. Interviews occurred between October 2015 and January 2016. To initiate the project, the Deputy General Manager formally introduced the study and my role to the PACE community in person and through email. Potential interviewees were contacted via email, phone, and in-person as appropriate. The study employed semi-structured interviews with 29 individuals that sought to address the study's research objectives as described above. While a core set of interview questions provided structure, the interviewees were encouraged to expand upon the concepts shared that were of the greatest significance to them. Due to a scheduling conflict, one interview was conducted via email. All other interviews were in person and ranged from 60-75 minutes. Interviews were conducted in a work location selected by the interviewee. The intent was to create as convenient and comfortable a setting as possible for the interviewee. It also allowed me to experience the interviewee in his/her work setting. Interview questions can be found in appendix A.

### **Research Setting and Sampling Methodology**

The Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE) is a partnership between the King County Metro Transit division (Metro) and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 (ATU) that was established to address long-standing concerns of discrimination in the division. Roughly 100 people have actively participated in PACE, representing King County; Metro; ATU; and

Professional and Technical Employees Union Local 17 (Local 17). The primary manifestations of the partnership are its Steering Committee, six subcommittees, and a small team of support staff. Most of the PACE activities occur in committee meetings, outside the day-to-day operations of the 4,500-strong workforce.

Shown in Figure 1, the PACE community consists of the Steering Committee, subcommittees, and the PACE Implementation Team (PIT). The Steering Committee and subcommittees include representatives from the Operations, Vehicle Maintenance, and Facilities Maintenance sections as well as the General Manager’s Office and Metro Human Resources. As chartered, the Steering Committee allows for 28 members. Subcommittees average 10 members, with an additional two Subject Matter Experts per team. Subject Matter Experts are King County employees with expertise in fields including communications, human resources, and Lean.



**Figure 1**

***Governing Structure of the Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE)***

The Steering Committee is led by four sponsors and facilitated by ATU and Metro-appointed co-chairs. The committee identified the scope of PACE work, established the subcommittees, and provides them high-level direction on an ongoing basis. Subcommittee members were appointed by the Steering Committee through an application process and supported by Subject Matter Experts to identify the root causes of organizational inequity and develop corresponding recommendations for Steering Committee consideration. Each subcommittee is co-chaired by appointees designated by ATU and Local 17. The PIT, consisting of the Steering Committee co-chairs and PACE staff, supports the committees and manages the overall PACE effort.

This study employed purposive sampling to secure diverse and comprehensive perspectives from the PACE community. Forty-seven PACE participants were solicited for interviews. The potential interviewees provided representation from:

- PACE governing structure: Steering Committee, the PIT team, and six subcommittees;
- PACE roles: sponsors, Steering Committee and subcommittee co-chairs, Steering Committee and subcommittee members, and subcommittee Subject Matter Experts;
- Organizational structure: King County Human Resources, ATU, Local 17, the Metro General Manager's Office, Transit Human Resources and three operational sections—Operations, Vehicle Maintenance, and Facilities Management; and
- Organizational roles: job functions including organizational leadership, section/ front-line management, front-line staff, and central staff.

Of the 47 people solicited, 38 responded affirmatively and 29 participants were ultimately interviewed. While it was my hope to secure as many interviews as possible, I only engaged with those members who volunteered to participate. Table 3 identifies their representation by the categories above. Because PACE participants served in multiple roles over the course of their participation in PACE, the total count in the categories of “PACE Governing Structure” and “PACE Role” exceeds the number of participants interviewed. For example, a member of the Steering Committee might also have served as a subcommittee co-chair and is counted in each category. Because that interviewee brought perspective and experience from each forum, Table 3 identifies the dual role. Also, several PACE participants were employed in different roles within their respective organizations over the course of the partnership. As such, I made every effort to identify them in the roles they served at the time of their interview. This is recognized to provide a sense of organizational representation.

**Table 3**

***Interview Respondent Profiles***

N=29 (Men: 20 Women: 9)	
<u>PACE Governing Structure*</u>	<u>PACE Role*</u>
Steering Committee (SC): 17 PIT Team: 4 EEO Subcommittee: 5 Comms Subcommittee: 2 TWD Subcommittee: 3 CSCC Subcommittee: 3 RS Subcommittee: 3	Sponsor: 4 SC Co-Chair: 3 SC Member: 17 Subcommittee Co-Chair: 7 Subcommittee Member: 13 Subcommittee SME: 3

<u>Organizational Structure**</u>	<u>Organizational Role**</u>
King County Human Resources (HR): 1 Dept Dir/ General Manager's (GM) Office/ HR: 6 Operations: 11 Vehicle Maintenance: 3 Facilities Maintenance: 3 ATU 587: 4 Local 17: 1	Organizational Leadership: 6 Section/ Front-Line Mgmt: 7 Front-Line/ Central Staff: 11 Labor Leadership: 5
<p>*Because individual PACE participants served in multiple roles within the partnership, the total count in "PACE Governing Structure" and "PACE Role" exceeds the number of participants interviewed.</p> <p>**Over time, PACE participants also served in different roles within their respective organizations. As such, I made every effort to identify them in the roles they served at the time of their interview.</p>	

**Analysis Plan**

In this study, analysis occurred through four primary processes: clarifying the research questions and defining the corresponding concepts, coding and categorizing data, interpreting the findings, and mapping the conceptual framework as it emerged (Simons, 2009). To answer the first question, this study accepted organizational outcomes as those defined specifically by the PACE community; namely the creation of a fair, inclusive and equitable workplace for all. Fairness, inclusivity, and equity were defined by the *PACE Strategic Plan for Comprehensive Equity, 2<sup>nd</sup> Installment* and included in the Interview Protocol provided in Appendix A. PACE participants recognized that the achievement of those outcomes would be a years-long effort. As such, PACE participants were asked what impact they thought PACE might have on their organization and to identify those changes (toward fairness, inclusivity and equity) that they already perceived in their workplace.

To answer the second question, I focused on the collaborative principles and practices reviewed in the extant literature and amended them to have meaning for the partnership in question. Over the course of study, these concepts evolved in meaning and importance:

- (a) Mutual gains: the degree to which labor leadership and management perceive mutual gain from PACE;
- (b) Leadership commitment: consistency in participation, public support and provision of support structures/ resources;
- (c) Collaborative practices and enabling structures: the degree to which Respect, Engagement, and Empowerment are experienced and enable collaboration in the partnership (definitions provided by the *PACE Strategic Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Installation* and included in the Interview Protocol in Appendix A);
- (d) Information sharing and communication: the degree to which interviewees feel information is shared among participants and communication is open and honest; and
- (e) Training: the degree to which participants acquire the learning necessary to participate in partnership.

To answer the third question, I asked participants to describe the most difficult aspects of PACE and how the community managed them. These open-ended concepts were not defined in advance. Rather, I allowed them to evolve over the course of the research, describing them through observation and interviews with PACE participants.

All interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed for analysis. Through interview transcription, I ascertained interviewees' main points and coded them accordingly. I then organized the coded data into meaningful categories and developed themes to shape the



study's findings as described in Chapter Four. The findings grew from a foundation provided by the extant literature but proved more complex than originally anticipated. To manage that complexity, I developed a concept map that identifies the practices that supported the partnership's functionality; the outcomes of partnership; and the challenges that may impact its viability. I refined the concept map over the course of the study and provided it as a model of the PACE partnership in Chapter Four.

### **Validity**

In conducting this research, there were several challenges to the potential validity of the findings. First, as with all qualitative research, I risked subjectivity in analysis. As a researcher as well as an employee of the organization, I held my own assumptions and perspectives of the partnership, the forums I participated in, and the partnering organizations. Second, as a participant-observer, I influenced the system I was studying. As a participant, I supported the maintenance of the partnership, provided leadership with feedback about my observations throughout the research period, and facilitated several large group interventions with the community. In so doing, I may have influenced the opinions and perspectives of my subjects, though I cannot say with certainty the degree to which I did so.

To address these challenges, several validation strategies were employed. First, I acknowledge the potential bias that I bring to this research as a result of employment with and commitment to King County and its purpose, my conviction for equity in the workplace, and my own experiences of organizational life. I made every effort to be aware of and manage those biases over the course of this research through journaling. Second, I triangulated data sources as much as possible, using interview responses, artifacts, and observations to create a coherent story

of partnership. In some cases, interview responses did not seem consistent with emerging patterns. Recognizing their validity, I included such inconsistencies to enrich the findings and reflect the true complexity of partnership.

Having based much of my analysis on interviews and interactions with partnership participants, I also validated my findings with the community. I first presented my findings to the PACE sponsors, followed by a second presentation of findings with the full PACE community. As another means to validate the findings and shape the analysis, I discussed and inquired about my observations with PACE participants throughout the course of the project. Finally, this research occurred over a prolonged period of study. The richness of these findings were only possible through observation of the partnership over the course of a full year.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

This chapter presents the study findings, which seek to answer the following questions:

1. How do Labor Management Partnerships influence organizational outcomes?
2. How do Labor Management Partnerships function and sustain themselves?
3. What challenges do partnerships face?

To answer these questions, this chapter provides the organizational context for the study, including a description of King County Metro Transit and its history of equity initiatives, before describing the event that catalyzed the creation of the PACE partnership. The study's findings are then presented in three sections. The chapter highlights those characteristics of the PACE partnership that allowed it to function effectively. It then introduces the partnership's outputs and anticipated organizational outcomes. Finally, it proposes conditions that threaten its viability and challenge its ability to positively influence the anticipated organizational outcomes.

### **Organizational Context: King County Metro Transit**

King County, Washington is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest county in the United States with a population of 2.1 million, almost 30% of the state's total (Washington State Employment Security Department, 2015). The county is bordered by Puget Sound to the west and the crest of the Cascade Range to the east, in an area roughly twice the land area of the state of Rhode Island. The government of King County employs more than 14,900 people (C. Burgert, personal communication, July 6, 2016), providing both local and regional services to residents and businesses in its unincorporated area and 39 cities (King County, 2016b). Elected officials

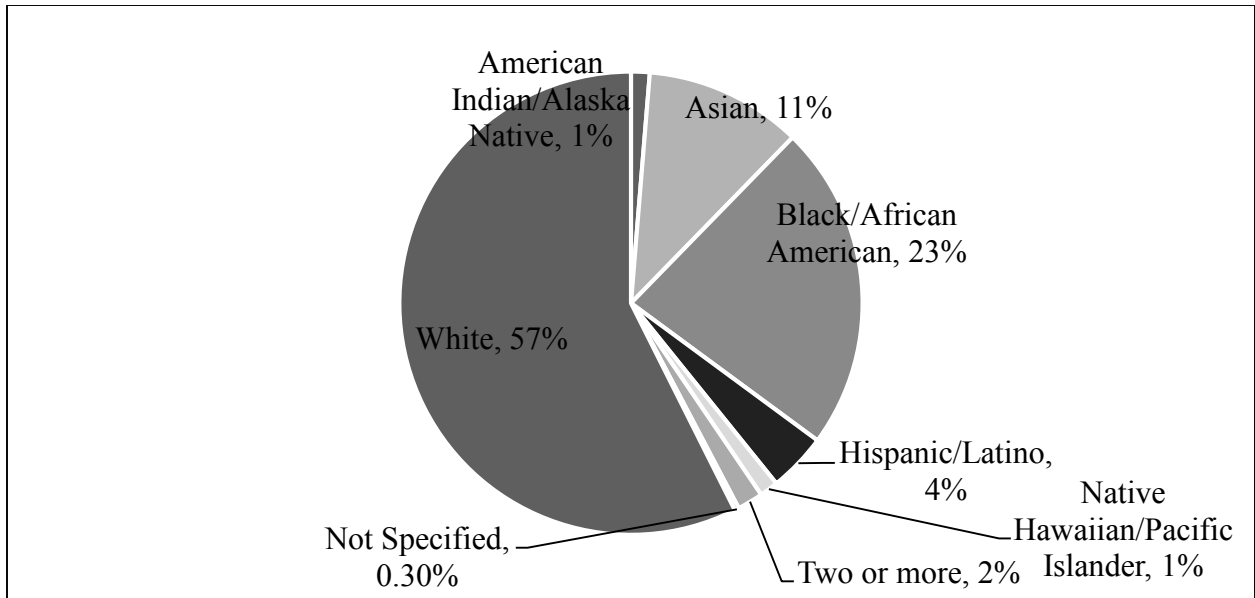
include: the King County Executive, nine Council members, County Assessor, Elections Director, Prosecutor, Sheriff, and Superior Court and District Court judges.

King County Metro began operations in 1973 under the auspices of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (King County, 2016c). In 1996, Metro was merged with King County, becoming a division of the Department of Transportation. The transition was difficult and Metro's culture is still bound in its past. Despite the passing of 20 years, many employees lament the merger and the perception of a lost culture subsumed by the County (personal communications, 2015).

Metro is the largest of five divisions within the Department of Transportation. The division is managed under a traditional administrative hierarchy, led by the General Manager who oversees six sections. The division employs more than 4,700 employees (C. Burgert, personal communication, July 6, 2016) who support long-term regional transportation planning efforts; provide more than 400,000 daily passenger trips; service a fleet of 1,800 buses, trolleys, and vehicles; and maintain transit facilities including more than 8,500 bus stops and 13 transit centers (King County, 2016a).

Metro employs a diverse workforce. Its racial diversity is illustrated in Figure 2 below, showing that 43% of the workforce is non-white. Seventy-eight percent of Metro employees are male. With a median age of 54, nearly 84% of the workforce is 40 years of age or older (S. Namkung, personal communication, April 27, 2016). With regard to tenure, 48% of the workforce has less than 10 years of service, 29% have 10-19 years of service, and 23% have more than 20 years of service under their belts (S. Namkung, personal communication, April 27, 2016). Relative to King County's median per capita income of \$19.55 per hour (United States Census Bureau, 2014), Metro employees are well-compensated. Nearly 87% of the workforce

earns \$20 to \$40 per hour. (S. Namkung, personal communication, April 27, 2016) However, of the 6% that earn more than \$40 per hour, the majority are white; 16% of the division’s white employees earn more than \$40, compared to 8% of their non-white counterparts earning more than \$40 per hour (S. Namkung, personal communication, April 27, 2016).



**Figure 2**

***King County Metro Employees by Race/ Ethnicity***

Metro is a heavily represented workforce. Five unions represent 97% of the division’s workforce through 12 labor contracts (109 bargaining units within 33 unions represent 81% of the county’s close to 15,000 employees under 79 contracts) (C. Burgert, personal communication, July 6, 2016). Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 (ATU) alone represents more than 3,900 Metro employees, whose contracts are negotiated for three-year durations (C. Burgert, personal communication, July 6, 2016).

**Equity in King County Metro Transit.** Metro first attempted to address inequities in the division in 1990. That study found that Metro’s para-military culture and focus on technical and budgetary objectives overwhelmed the agency, resulting in an “overall lack of management accountability and commitment to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action and human relations issues” (King County, 1990, p. 2). Two more efforts were undertaken in the subsequent 20 years. A 2000 study found that disciplinary procedures were inconsistent and punitive, creating divisive and sometimes hostile working relationships between transit operators and management (King County, 2000). In 2010, Metro again reviewed its disciplinary activity to find enduring inconsistencies in disciplinary procedures for its 2,700 transit operators (King County, 2010). Appendix B highlights these efforts.

**Creating PACE.** Efforts to correct such inconsistencies were hampered over the years; by the 1996 merger, budgetary pressures and other political events that took attention away from the work. It was the result of those incomplete efforts and allegations of ongoing inequity that PACE was initiated through an Open Letter by the ATU Executive Board in April, 2013. Metro leadership acknowledged this history and committed to correcting historical inequities in partnership with ATU. Following six months of dialogue, the PACE charter was signed on September 24, 2013 (provided in Appendix C). Eighteen months later, ATU members replaced its five union officers and in December, 2015 a new PACE charter was signed under the new ATU leadership (provided in Appendix D).

Given a history of perceived and real inequity, PACE would confront organizational skepticism that Metro could become a fair, inclusive, and equitable workplace. As one PACE participant said, “it’s still the Wild West out there.... No matter what you say or do, people are going to bring up the old war wounds and it’s going to bring up a constant burning ember.”

Skepticism was reflected in the *2015 King County Employee Engagement Survey*. As reported, only one-half of the division’s employees believed that Metro management was committed to creating an equitable workplace. And fewer than four in 10 believed they could speak to a superior about an equity or inclusion matter without repercussion. A comparable proportion of employees believed that division leadership communicated with openness and honesty. However, employees spoke more favorably about their work units. Most employees believed that their coworkers and supervisors made efforts to improve equity in the workplace. Despite that, only one-third felt that their colleagues and peers were learning to address issues of bias and inclusion, with honesty and courage. Table 4 provides responses to questions pertaining specifically to concepts of equity, fairness and inclusion taken from the 72-question survey.

**Table 4**  
*2015 King County Employee Engagement Survey Responses*

<b>Question</b>	<b>% Positive Response*</b>
Senior Division leadership communicate openly and honestly.	39%
Senior Division leadership models the behavior they expect of me.	41%
My supervisor gives me regular, constructive feedback on my performance.	50%
My supervisor is accessible to me when I need them.	73%
My supervisor is open to new ideas to improve the way we work.	49%
My supervisor takes actions to create an inclusive, fair, respectful and equitable workplace.	57%
My work unit is working to improve equity and fairness in our internal practices.	50%
In my work unit, employees treat each other with respect.	68%
I am satisfied with the opportunities available to achieve my career goals at King County.	52%
I have full and equal access to employee development opportunities.	48%

I am treated with respect in my workplace.	72%
I feel valued for what I bring to the workplace.	51%
I am familiar with Metro’s Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE) program and its focus on building and sustaining an inclusive, fair and equitable workplace for everyone.	57%
Metro Transit management is committed to the creation of an equitable workplace.	50%
Metro Transit management clearly communicates its vision and expectations for equity and inclusion.	44%
In can disagree with Metro Transit management, or a person in a position of power, about equity and inclusion issues without fear of repercussions.	36%
My colleagues/ peers are learning to address issues of bias and inclusion, with honesty and courage.	33%
<i>2015 King County Employee Engagement Survey: Metro Transit Division (48% response rate)</i>	
<i>*Rating scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither, Disagree, Strongly Agree. Positive responses combine Strongly Agree and Agree responses.</i>	

This introduction to Metro’s organizational context does not provide a comprehensive assessment of Metro’s culture but offers insight into the challenges faced by PACE. In that way, it enhances understanding of the Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity and the organizational outcomes it sought to achieve. The following discussion presents the study findings that describe those characteristics that sustained PACE, its outputs and anticipated outcomes, and those conditions that threaten its viability and effectiveness.

**Sustaining Characteristics of Partnership**

Observation and interview responses suggest that a number of characteristics are necessary to establish and sustain a Labor Management Partnership. As described in this section, PACE participants spoke to the partnership’s core principles and working agreements, the benefit of a shared vision, their motivations to participate, the need for leadership commitment,



and those practices and structures that enabled PACE’s viability. This section presents each of these characteristics.

**Collaborative principles and working agreements.** PACE was founded upon the principles of respect, empowerment, and engagement. When asked of the significance of these principles, one PACE participant observed that “respect is a cultural hunger.... If I feel respected, that is a lot of energy I now have to put somewhere else. I can ask, ‘what’s *your* story? What do *you* think?’” It is freeing. I don’t have to prove myself anymore. Respect is the foundation. Without it, there is no engagement and empowerment.”

To understand the impact of respect, empowerment, and engagement on PACE, interview respondents were asked how these principles fostered collaboration in partnership. Respondents offered numerous substantial manifestations of respect, empowerment, and engagement. Highlighted in Table 5, I observed these working agreements in practice during committee meetings and interview respondents spoke of their impact on PACE:

**Table 5**

***Manifestations of Respect, Empower, and Engagement***

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Manifestation</b>	<b>Interviewee Observation</b>
Respect	PACE is a safe place where you will not face retaliation	"One of the things they talked about was that this was a safe place. This was the place where the hard questions need to be asked. So you can bring up this elephant that they are always talking about and put it out there."
	PACE demonstrates equality by leaving titles at the door	"In both subcommittees and the Steering Committee, people did leave their titles at the door. There was real respect for and attention to all voices in the room. No one with a title dominated the room or conversation."
	Participants speak honestly and listen earnestly	"I think speaking your truth and good listening [is how you build trust]. Especially the listening skills. Once you start doing that, you start building trust."

	Participants work through their conflict	"We worked together and we really diligently tried to resolve things. We worked together. Put our heads together and worked like a team. We agreed to disagree and worked out problems. Each and every problem.... Once we know how each other think... we can smooth out the rough edges."
Empowerment	Focus on the big picture	"We're always looking for what is best. Always going back to 'what are we here for? What are our duties to this movement?'"
	Separate PACE work from the day-to-day work	"You're keeping... contract language away from PACE. There was an agreement with the first Steering Committee to keep that separate. That's not what we're here for. We're here to talk about PACE in general. You can't get anything accomplished if you bring the day-to-day into the Steering Committee meeting. It defeats the purpose. And it's a drag. It's a downer. [And] it's not for everybody to sit and hear those kind of conversations. That's another reason why they were separated from PACE."
Engagement	The emergent nature of the partnership requires learning on the go and often feels messy	"It's a little bit naive to think the path is a smooth, linear line. It's more chaotic, it's got gaps, and hiccups and gashes and things... so I think if we appreciate that that's highly likely, we don't freak out."
	Community is built through shared language	"We are trying to adopt a common language and common framework to understand our efforts. So that is me surrendering some of my language norms and trying to adopt theirs. And it's them trying to adopt mine and also to teach me theirs. There's a language acquisition component to this that is very challenging."
	Balance process and progress	"I care about process and form. To an extent. I also like decisions and moving forward.... But it's a fine line. You also need to let people talk and be real."

This is not to say that these principles and working agreements were in practice at all times. For example, interviewees generally held that honesty and conflict were not retaliated against, but some respondents questioned whether the environment was safe enough to actually engage in conflict. One participant spoke about the skepticism that conflict was truly tolerated,

saying “subliminally, [we are all] going to take it in. They can say retaliation isn’t going to happen. But we’re human beings! We are human beings! So I can’t actually say [we’re] not going to store [stuff].”

Likewise, the community’s ability to manage conflict clearly changed over time. In interviews, long-standing members spoke of the community’s willingness to speak honestly, listen earnestly and work through conflict as they struggled to propose recommendations for implementation. Those were challenging, but bonding times for the community. However, Steering Committee conversations were strained following the ATU elections and subsequent change in PACE leadership. In several meetings, union leadership brought challenging discussions to the committee, which did not seem equipped to manage them. A participant described one such meeting:

At [the meeting] when we were talking about the elephant in the room... those three people.... One grabbed his cell phone and was on his cell phone. That tells me you don’t care a lick about anything. Secondly, the person that shocked me most said, “it doesn’t matter what you do... we’re going to go forward with [PACE], whether you like it or not.” And the third person, through this whole spiral of stress, didn’t say *anything* and I’m like, “you’re supposed to say what you’ve gotta say and I can’t say it for you!”

Unresolved conflict continued as the PACE charter was revised to recognize new ATU leadership. Following the election, Metro leadership drafted and presented a revised PACE charter to the ATU president for his consideration. ATU officers responded with dismay, asserting that it felt they were being drawn into a predetermined arrangement without the opportunity to co-create it. Whether an imbalance of power was real or perceived, it had significant bearing as Metro leadership continued to seek union commitment to the partnership and ATU sought a foothold of power in crafting the charter. This gridlock may have resulted from the lack of relationship-building to create an environment of mutual respect, true

empowerment, or engagement with the new members. Unresolved conflict became the norm as the Steering Committee struggled to adjust to its new constitution and evolving purpose.

Taken together, these manifestations of respect, empower, and engagement can best be described as the ethos of the PACE community, observably its greatest asset. While leadership provided the conditions for this ethos to exist, it was ultimately co-created by its members over time. Without question, the principles of respect, empowerment, and engagement were critical to the partnership. They were reinforced by the PACE vision and interviewees described how they enabled collaboration, motivated them to participate, and were demonstrated by leadership, as the following sections illustrate. What is not as clear, however, is whether these principles would have carried such meaning were they not formally established as PACE's founding principles, particularly following the transition of union leadership. While the principles were nominally preserved, their manifestation was not always evident. As described throughout this chapter, the partnership's viability was tenuous as the Steering Committee struggled to regenerate shared values, working agreements, and expectations. Also unclear at the time of this study was the manner in which those principles would be embodied as the partnership transitioned into the implementation phase of work.

**Shared vision.** The vision of PACE states: "King County is committed to building and sustaining an inclusive, fair, and equitable workplace for everyone. Our culture thrives on the richness and diversity of our unique workforce. We are a community built on a foundation of collaboration and mutual respect" (King County, 2014, introduction). While aspirational, the vision lacked specificity and evoked different meaning to PACE participants. Some members of the PACE community believed that PACE was a means to put an end to institutional racism. When discussing the partnership's vision, one respondent stated, "you know, it is [about

racism... but] I try not to use that word a lot. Here at Metro, if you use the word, ears shut, eyes shut, doors shut.” Others felt that its vision transcended race: “When I first came, I thought that PACE was positioned as a black-white issue. But I don’t think that is really what it is about. I think it is about diversity. Gender diversity. Age diversity. Ethnic diversity. Those are all issues that I have to think about in my job.” Still others believed that PACE had a very tactical purpose to provide all Metro employees with equal access to information and development opportunities. Regardless of what PACE participants believed PACE to be about, interviewees generally agreed that “the truth is, people are out there [in Metro] talking about it and they are deciding what the vision should be.”

Over the course of this case study, I observed disagreement about the presupposition that Metro was not already an inclusive, fair, and equitable workplace for everyone. While not a majority, some respondents refuted the Open Letter allegations, maintaining that organizational data simply did not support them, particularly from a legal perspective. As one respondent said, “I believe there *is* equity in [Metro]. [Metro] has no problem as far as equal employment that is provable discrimination. Are people’s feelings hurt? Yes! Did it feel unfair? Yes! But again, it’s about provable stuff.” Others acknowledged the existence of institutional inequity, but wondered how employees should be held accountable for what is really a social legacy. One manager offered that

PACE is difficult for people because you’re asking people to do something different. Or to *think* about doing something different. It’s hard. Most of us are on auto-pilot. Most of us have been together here for 25 years! It’s been working for [most of these people and they are saying,] “now you’re telling me it’s not working anymore? And you’re saying, maybe it’s *my* fault?!” And what it really is, is that no one ever really supported us.

Regardless of such differences, PACE participants shared a desire for an inclusive, fair, and equitable workplace built upon collaboration and mutual respect. As such, the PACE vision

seemed sufficient to motivate the work of the partnership and to address their interests in mutually beneficial ways.

**Motivation and mutual gains.** To test for the concept of Mutual Gains, I posed the following questions to interview respondents:

1. Why did you engage in PACE and what have you hoped to gain in partnership?
2. What do you think the union and management hoped to gain in partnership?

Interview respondents surfaced deeply held personal motivations for participating in PACE. Members of the community felt compelled to engage in PACE as a result of personal experiences of discrimination; as a means to represent current and future Metro employees unable or unwilling to speak up; to act on personal values around equity; and out of faith that Metro leadership was fully committed to creating change in the organization.

PACE participants also spoke of the complexity of the problem and recognized that labor and management would need to find new ways to work together if Metro was to remain a leading public transit agency. As one participant shared, “it is a huge undertaking... We have a business imperative to be more inclusive, fair and equitable because we are becoming a more diverse population with different expectations.... We need [one another].” Supporting PACE, the Director of the Department of Transportation recognized the need for collaboration:

Partnering was just a natural, positive extension of what we could be doing.... It’s almost suicidal to think you can get things on your own or you can alienate people to get what you want. That’s crazy. So it is a much more natural extension of what makes sense to work together to figure things out. It involves a lot of letting go on both sides, dropping some history which might be impossible to do, [accepting] joint ownership of successes, rolling up your sleeves and not bailing when it gets tough. It seems like a better path, more often than not, to work together to resolve things than to be more adversarial.

Interview respondents also spoke of the hope for improved employee morale and productivity as well as the promise of better service to the public through partnership. They shared a sense of pride in Metro's legacy as a leading transit agency among its national peers and felt the partnership was a means to maintain its reputation as a frontrunner organization. "Metro's famous for cleaning up Lake Washington... and the bus system. [It was the] first one with lifts, first with wheelchair cutouts, first with [articulated coaches]. Now we can be famous for tackling the social problems that are endemic in our society."

PACE participants speculated that a culture of equity in Metro would benefit the union if it resulted in the filing and maintenance of fewer grievances. Several interview respondents also suggested that the union's own culture could improve as much as that of Metro through these efforts. One respondent articulated that inequities were not unique to Metro; after all "ATU is part of Metro. It has the exact same "isms" as Metro. It has the same culture, same racism, same disparate treatment. You bet."

***Power and interdependence.*** As discussed in the extant literature, partnership requires that both labor and management recognize their interdependence to accomplish their objectives. This implies a sense of balanced power such that each party can utilize their sources of power toward partnership without undue threat to their organizational authority. Though interviewees did not speak to the notions of power and interdependence explicitly, observations indicated that perceptions of power and interdependence did impact the partnership, as described below.

PACE evolved over a period of months during which Metro and ATU leadership engaged in dialogue to develop relationships, discuss roles and expectations, and co-create desired outcomes. I observed a key difference in the manner in which the PACE charter was revised

under new ATU leadership. Where the initial group of Metro and ATU participants co-created an understanding of the problem and the subsequent charter, new ATU leadership was provided the opportunity to renegotiate membership to the Steering Committee and edit the existing charter. The difference between co-creating and co-editing was subtle, but represented a critical shift in how power was manifested in the partnership.

The perception of power maintained by ATU leadership also seemed a significant factor in the PACE partnership. At the inception of PACE, Metro and ATU leadership agreed to separate the collaborative PACE relationship from the traditional collective bargaining relationship. This suggests that each party was willing and able to renegotiate and leverage their power in the name of partnership. For example, ATU's access to front-line staff and their knowledge of the workplace were critical to the community's understanding of the problems facing PACE. Trusting Metro leadership's commitment to the PACE process, they effectively used that access and knowledge in support of the partnership rather than in opposition to management. The ability to engage in collective bargaining and grievance processes was not diminished in partnership, but each party was empowered to engage in PACE simultaneously.

Again, I observed a different dynamic as new ATU leadership entered the PACE community. During this transition, ATU leadership spoke of their lack of individual and organizational power, which led to hesitation to maintain the partnership until Metro leadership demonstrated change in the workplace. Coupled with ambiguity about ATU's role in PACE moving forward, their skepticism about Metro leadership's commitment resulted in a "wait and see" posture toward PACE.



**Leadership commitment.** Much of the extant literature focuses on formal leadership as a condition of partnership success. However, because PACE advocated for leadership by all members of the community, I expanded the definition of leadership to include demonstrations of leadership by any member of the community. The following discussion highlights how leadership was demonstrated by formal (Metro and ATU) leadership and by members of the community at large.

**Formal leadership.** When asked about leadership, interview respondents generally felt that the act of creating the partnership through the ATU Open Letter was a demonstration of leadership. Metro leadership received the Open Letter as an articulate, well-structured call to action that demanded a response of equal respect. The Deputy General Manager reflected on that time and the union members that participated in those initial conversations, saying “[their recording secretary] was tenacious in making sure we stayed on top of this.... They all believed in these issues so passionately that we couldn’t just walk away from them. They harnessed that passion. For us, we were committed to the union, to the relationship, to the workforce to address these concerns. That group... really became the driving force.”

Subsequently engaging the union in dialogue about the allegations was a management decision that diverged from historical practice:

[we listened,] rather than deny... or show them the data that proves they are wrong or marginalize the concerns they brought forward. That had been an embedded practice in the labor relations of [Metro], within the mindset of too many leaders. [We] had a very compliance oriented, defensive posture. Likely because we had been sued many, many times.

It is notable that ATU’s approach to engage Metro through the Open Letter was not universally approved by members. While some considered it a statement of strong leadership, others perceived it as another concession to management and argued that only legal action would compel change by management. One ATU member shared, “I would have moved forward in

legal action, because this has been tried. Attempted several times before.... So why come back to this point again? Obviously it wasn't taken serious the first time or we wouldn't be back a third or fourth time." Disagreement about the partnership approach would cripple the outgoing ATU president as he worked to secure buy-in from members who felt he was losing touch with the membership.

One interview respondent noted that "the past union managers and president were on board but it was too one-sided. Whatever the management said was OK. They didn't rebut anything." For his part, the outgoing president recognized this, saying that "every time you make a move as a president in a labor union, you help one group and you make another group angry. So you just collect enemies."

Following the ATU election, PACE's future was uncertain and perceptions of ATU leadership changed with the election of new union officers. One union member said, "Under [the previous president's] leadership, [ATU] was certainly supportive [of PACE]. I guess things have gotten so confusing with the union. And in hindsight in evaluating [the previous president's] performance... it's gotten so confusing. I think it's too early to say anything about the current [ATU] administration." Unsure of the union's position, members of the PACE community paid great attention to the actions of the newly-elected ATU president. When asked how new union leadership demonstrated commitment to PACE, one participant said

I see the commitment... but almost like they were being pulled along. I see the union managers like, "well, they have to do it, it is their problem, they have to fix it." And not necessarily, "how are WE going to fix it?" It's almost like [the union is saying] "we're giving too much and it's not equal. We're giving in and they're not doing."

After six months of discussion on the Steering Committee, ATU signed the new charter, which signaled its support of the partnership as offered by an ATU member: "because the current

president signed off on [the] charter this week, I am going to take it as a sign that he is committed.”

Reflecting on the ambiguity of this transition, the King County Director of the Human Resources Division, a PACE sponsor, shared:

I think there were a couple of moments of worry... as to whether or not the new leadership would be all in and whether they would attempt to pull back. But I think that everybody ended up realizing the new leadership was new and PACE was one of a million new things on their plate and they would need time and we needed to be considerate of their need to pull back and think about what they need. Not what we need, but what they need.

Throughout the transition of ATU leadership, interview respondents credited management with their ongoing presence and participation in committee meetings. “The General Manager (GM) still devotes his time [and] still allows his Deputy General Manager to devote sizable amounts of his time. That's been huge. That has allowed us to keep this as a top priority, a strategic priority for the agency. The weight of the GM was huge.” Participants also praised Metro leadership for committing resources to PACE by detailing employees, hiring support staff, and funding facilitated retreats for the community.

However, some PACE participants struggled to reconcile Metro leadership’s commitment to PACE with what they perceived to be a “business-as-usual” mentality in the workplace. One interviewee referred to management’s workplace decisions as being unPACElike, saying

You can undermine this entire effort by stuff like this. You *said* you were different. You *said* this was going to be different. No! We’re all paying attention. That’s what you’ve done. You got us to pay attention and you got us to believe.... Every step of the way you’ve gotta walk the walk. You said you were going to be fair and equitable. Now do it.... Every time! You’ve gotta do it every time!

As PACE entered the implementation phase of work, the challenges before Metro leadership grew. The lack of sufficient resources and organizational resistance complicated the implementation of the PACE recommendations. Management struggled to communicate the

administrative, logistical, and resource challenges of forging cultural change in the division to members of the PACE community who were growing frustrated by ongoing experiences of inequity and discrimination in the workplace. It seemed that the perceived incongruence of Metro leadership behaviors within the community and in the workplace was intolerable for members of the PACE community. Members called for management to force changes upon the workforce and terminate those employees who refused to engage. That the PACE community perceived the division's cultural change a sole function of management was an indication that the community was struggling to embody its founding principles and share ownership of the PACE recommendations in this implementation phase of work.

***Informal leadership.*** Because PACE functioned through advisory committees outside the daily operations of the division, PACE participants served as ambassadors of PACE in the organization. However, the PACE community did not explicitly define this role and it was not embraced by all members. Those respondents who self-identified as ambassadors spoke of their challenge in advocacy, particularly during the months after the recommendations were accepted but had not yet resulted in noticeable change in the organization. Faced with organizational skepticism, one PACE participant said,

we sold this stuff... to all the people in the bases. Then all of a sudden, everything stops and we start to question why. How come we aren't following through with the changes? I would follow [the Deputy General Manager] through hellfire and back if he asked. But... they let me out there [to talk about all the good stuff and then] they turned off the spigot and now I've got a bunch of people out there going, "Hey come on! What's going on?"

Being an ambassador also meant that participants brought the hopes and frustrations of their coworkers to the PACE community. As one Steering Committee noted, "[I had to be] accountable. Be responsible. Carry the weight of some of my peers. To take the weight for them. I carry it." In such an environment, advocacy required strength and honesty. The subcommittees

were designed to foster it: “when we gathered the people and started putting people together, we needed people that could work together. Cuz everybody can’t work together up in that room! And we still needed some people who were controversial. We do! We need to hear their input.” Intense and emotionally-charged subcommittee meetings were a frequent occurrence as the groups uncovered the root causes and experiences of workplace discrimination. PACE participants overwhelmingly agreed that willingness to speak with honesty and engage in subsequent conflict was a hallmark of subcommittee meetings. Authenticity became a true demonstration of leadership by members.

**Enabling practices and structures.** This section highlights the practices and infrastructure that appeared prominent in the PACE community: establishment of a charter; structure and role clarity; shared governance; project management and facilitation; training; and communications.

**Charter.** The result of months of negotiation, the PACE charter (Appendix C) made a clear statement of labor and management support for PACE, sanctioning its work as an “affirmative and enduring statement of the commitment between Metro and ATU” (King County, 2013, p. 2). Sponsored by the President of ATU, the General Manager of Metro, and the Director of King County’s Human Resources Division, the charter unambiguously bound ATU, Metro and King County to “make advances on issues of diversity and equal opportunity for all with the agency” in alignment with those of the county’s overall efforts toward equity and social justice (King County, 2013, p. 2). The charter was accompanied by an article of unwavering support, co-authored by the ATU President and General Manager that was published in both the Metro Transit *InTransit* and ATU *News Review* newsletters (King County, 2013, p. 1).

Eighteen months after the signing of the PACE charter, ATU members removed the incumbent president from office and elected new officers who shared a skepticism of the partnership. Six months of uncertainty passed before the PACE charter was renegotiated and signed by its sponsors, including the new ATU president (Appendix D). This time, the King County Executive also became an Executive Sponsor of the partnership. The significance of the Executive's signature cannot be overstated. The newly elected ATU president perceived an historic imbalance of power between ATU and Metro management and the Executive's signature signaled its rebalancing. Following the charter signing, the ATU president confirmed support of PACE to his 3,800 members in the union's newsletter, but reiterated his belief that accountability was "the sole responsibility of managers. Local 587 is limited in that we cannot hold anyone accountable; however, we can demand accountability from those in power" (McCormick, 2016, p. 1). For him, the Executive's signature empowered ATU as a partner to management by providing a mechanism of accountability.

***Structure and role clarity.*** As defined in the PACE charter, the partnership created a formal governing structure, consisting of a Steering Committee and subject-area subcommittees. The structure was introduced in Chapter 3 of this study.

The Steering Committee's primary responsibilities were to serve as the PACE decision-making body, develop annual goals, and provide guidance to and approve the work of the subcommittees. The subcommittees bore responsibility for proposing changes to division processes, practices, and structures toward enhanced equity in the division. Working toward a set of recommendations, the subcommittees were empowered with very little structure and no rules of engagement. A Steering Committee member noted that "[we told them to] just get in there and do what you need to do. It was engaging and empowering. We gave them freedom. No

constraints that would normally happen.” And subcommittee members did feel empowered. The six subcommittees established their own schedules, roles, and working agreements in order to propose meaningful recommendations to the Steering Committee. As one member said,

we worked together and we really diligently tried to resolve things. We worked together. Put our heads together and worked like a team. We agreed to disagree and worked out problems. We worked ‘em out. We went through the problems and worked them out. Each and every problem.

Another voiced that subcommittee meetings “got interesting! There was a lot of discussion and everybody had their tantrums and voiced their things.... But we could sit down and talk about it.”

As the subcommittees proposed their recommendations to the Steering Committee, the lack of structure and clarity of expectations caused some confusion. While every subcommittee recommendation was accepted by the Steering Committee through a consensus-based decision-making process, the committee prioritized (and made some revisions to) those recommendations that would be most impactful and possible within available resources. As one subcommittee member said, “[I was frustrated by] the Steering Committee response to our initiatives, saying, ‘here, do this work’ and then saying, ‘but no, we have to revisit every single little thing... no, we don’t like that idea... try this idea.’” [It was] a real mixed message about our autonomy and authority.”

Through observation of the Steering Committee over the course of this study, however, the committee did not have a method of establishing decision-making rules. In general, few decision points were brought to the Steering Committee during this period of study. For those decision points that did reach the Steering Committee, the predominant decision-making rule was lack of response, resulting in either presumed consent by committee members or the absence of a decision. During this period of study, it was observed that the committee tended to avoid and

delay topics of potential conflict as they arose. In this manner, decision points returned to the committee over the course of many months. It is notable that the avoidance of conflict and subsequent decision-making occurs throughout the jurisdiction of King County (personal communication, 2016). In this sense, the PACE community reverted to the county's cultural norms around conflict management and decision-making during this transition.

One example of avoidant decision-making is offered by way of example. As PACE moved into the implementation phase, vacancies were created on each subcommittee, which the Steering Committee was chartered to fill. However, several questions were outstanding. By what method would the Steering Committee populate the subcommittees? How would it assign co-chairs? Would it engage subcommittee members in this process? As observed in Steering Committee meetings, there was general disagreement about each of these questions. However, as conflict about subcommittee membership arose, the committee navigated around the issue, tabling the discussion for a future meeting.

At the time of this writing, some progress had been made. The Steering Committee reaffirmed roles and expectations for subcommittees through facilitated dialogue and simple majority rule. Likewise, the Steering Committee co-chairs had agreed to a process for reestablishing the subcommittees, though the process had not been brought before the Steering Committee for review.

***Shared governance.*** PACE is facilitated by ATU and Metro-appointed co-chairs. With support from key Metro staff, the co-chairs:

- Visited Metro worksites to engage employees in discussion about equity in the workplace;
- Established and managed the Steering Committee agenda;



- Convened and facilitated Steering Committee meetings;
- Participated in and tracked the progress of the subcommittees; and
- Ensured that both labor and management interests were addressed.

Through this model of shared governance, the relationship between the ATU and Metro co-chairs seemed critical to the PACE community. In the early months of partnership, the co-chairs engaged in an aggressive outreach campaign and collaborated in the crafting of Steering Committee agendas. Likewise, each used his/ her skills, capacities, and access for the betterment of the partnership, demonstrating empowerment in the community as described above. As the outgoing ATU president stated, “[the co-chairs were] a match made in heaven... I [was] just the lame executive officer running the union [who] got to tag along for the ride. So all the credit goes to them. They were just incredible in how they put things together.”

With the transition of ATU leadership, a period of six months elapsed without an ATU-appointed co-chair. What followed was a period of great uncertainty for the partnership. Management's unilateral ownership of Steering Committee agendas exacerbated the union perception of an imbalance of power between management and labor. As one newly-elected ATU officer stated, "if they really *invite* the sponsors to contribute to the agenda, that would be good. Because the structure is there, right?"

A dramatic shift in the tenor of the Steering Committee meetings occurred following the appointment of the ATU Financial Secretary as PACE co-chair. In this role, the ATU co-chair established relationships with the Deputy General Manager and PIT staff, began to assume greater ownership of PACE, and effectively brought ATU interests and issues to light. That the tenor of Steering Committee meetings improved following the appointment and active engagement of the ATU co-chair again suggests that the co-chair relationship was critical to

PACE and that a practice of shared governance supports a balance of power in the labor-management relationship.

***Project management and facilitation.*** PACE directly engaged roughly one hundred employees within a complex division that manages service commitments demanding significant and consistent attention with limited resources. In its two and a half years of existence, three project managers came into the partnership in temporary, special-duty capacities, supported by various Metro staff when subject matter expertise was needed. Resources to implement the PACE recommendations were also limited, falling on staff who absorbed PACE work plans into their existing duties as they were able. Consequently, a recurring theme to emerge from interviews with PACE participants and in committee discussions was the sluggish "pace of PACE." The perception that PACE failed to make good on its promises was largely due to resource constraints that made implementation of the recommendations slower than projected. The General Manager summed up this frustration, saying that the most difficult aspect of PACE was balancing "wins with the need to be methodical. We didn't take on a single little effort, like fixing the customer service complaint system. We took on a huge effort. It's hard. This isn't the only initiative we have. We could get so much done if this was it; if this was the only thing we had to do with the union."

Inconsistent project management and facilitation was also a challenge for the subcommittees. Subcommittee members spoke of their frustration with the lack of structure and adequate project management skills, such as distribution of meeting agendas, scheduling meetings and detailing staff, and meeting facilitation. Some subcommittee co-chairs felt unprepared to facilitate meetings and found themselves learning these skills through trial and error, which frustrated the progress of some teams. As one subcommittee co-chair said, "by the

time I came into it, they really had to start getting organized about the recommendations they were going to make, how they were going to structure [them], how to pull it together, and how to move the subcommittee off of sitting around and just sort of telling stories, sharing their histories, talking about how [messed] up the organization is and moving them along. That's where my mediation skills came in."

**Training.** Given the sensitive nature of the PACE work, Metro leadership hosted three community-wide PACE retreats to increase awareness of concepts such as implicit and institutional bias, privilege, and equity in the workplace. Using a Courageous Conversations framework, the retreats encouraged participants to engage in dialogue and prepare for PACE work. Participants generally found the retreats effective. The community-building events were powerful for many participants and created greater awareness of equity issues. However, participants lamented that they were unable to effectively carry these conversations back into the workplace with coworkers who had not participated in them. Interview comments included:

- "[The facilitator] is powerful and she speaks her truth. For some people it is hard to take their truths. It's too heavy for some people. Too real."
- "For me the retreat was a start. But it's not done. It made me aware and gave me a small education. We had a training. But now I go back and face my peers that did not attend the retreat and are still doing the same thing and sometimes people have that fear not to put forward what they know to make a change in their workplace because they don't want to be attacked."
- "[The retreats] were eye-opening... but I don't think people took it back or incorporated those learnings into how they did their work differently. [They] sort of

felt like stand-alones, [but] there might be a lot of results that are not apparent but that people carry with them and come out later."

- "Great start, regarding dialogue. It provided some educational benefit around cultural competency. However, I'm concerned about follow-through."

While the PACE community was provided training in Courageous Conversations to prepare for difficult conversations around race, privilege and institutional bias, the community did not provide additional training to develop skills in collaborative problem-solving and decision-making, conflict management, or change management. In general, PACE participants learned these practices as they were needed in the community. As discussed above, the general lack of such skills created frustration, particularly for subcommittee co-chairs and members who found themselves engaging in problem-solving and conflict management processes to arrive at proposed recommendations for Steering Committee approval. In response to those frustrations, the Steering Committee provided facilitation training to subcommittee co-chairs in preparation for the reestablishment of the subcommittees in April 2016.

**Communication.** Formal PACE communications were largely under the purview of the Communications subcommittee, which served as a workgroup to create a PACE website, PACE newsletter, and an outreach campaign. While the Communications subcommittee led the effort, Metro leadership provided final editing of all communications to approve messaging and ensure consistent tone. This final step created some tension among subcommittee members who felt it caused delays and ultimately resulted in messaging that lacked the accessible voice of the employee. A Steering Committee member noted that it felt like "there [was] so much thought about perfecting communication that it [didn't] ever really happen."

Communications within the PACE community were also inadequate following the acceptance of 130 recommendations as part of the *PACE Strategic Plan: First Draft, Initial Recommendations*. As Metro leadership converted these recommendations into actionable work plans, subcommittee members lost their sense of purpose. Absent meaningful communications from the Steering Committee about their role, subcommittee members became discouraged. In both subcommittee meetings and interviews I observed frustration by subcommittee members:

the Steering Committee has taken like ‘they’re *it*.’ I don’t know if I am jealous of the Steering Committee but they seem to be making all of the decisions. And our subcommittee was disbanded basically. But the Steering Committee goes on and they don’t do a good job of communicating. I think that’s a problem that it looks like a closed system... that they’re going to do something and when they’re ready, they’ll let us know what’s going on. Rather than a constant, open communication.

The sheer size, diversity, and geographic distribution of Metro’s employee base complicated the subcommittee’s efforts. PACE required far more resources than were available to properly communicate to the division’s 4,500 employees. Consequently, a lack of communications exacerbated the restlessness in the organization as employees waited to see whether PACE would create equity in the workplace. The effect was far-reaching, frustrating members of the PACE community and intensifying feelings of skepticism throughout the organization.

### **Organizational Outcomes**

When asked about PACE accomplishments, interview respondents were effusive about the personal and interpersonal outcomes that they had gained from partnership. As shared by PACE participants:

- “[PACE] raised issues. For me too. It changed my thinking.... Participating and sitting at the table hearing people tell their stories was powerful. I have more optimism now.”
- “I was quieter at first... [but] I found my voice.”
- “What I get is leadership experience. For me. I get to listen to these cats process.”
- “[Our] ability to empathize is growing.... We can talk without calling someone racist. There is no demonizing.”
- “PACE is helping me better understand how our policies are affecting people.”

But participants were less certain of PACE’s impact on the organization at large. Of the 130 policy, procedural and structural recommendations, PACE implemented several key changes including new recruiting, hiring and training processes; mentoring and career development programs; a new customer service and complaints system; and several components of a new discipline policy. The division also hired a Director of Diversity and Inclusion and construction of Metro’s Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion Program was underway at the time of this writing.

While significant, these accomplishments were underappreciated, in large part because their impact was not felt to a meaningful degree in the workplace. As one interview respondent indicated, “I think we're the source of much criticism right now as people say, ‘well, what have you DONE?’ and they don't see the visible manifestation of it or the tangible manifestation of it because it is a shift in policy or practices or the way we communicate that don't look like a street car rolling down the street that we point to and say, ‘we built that.’ It's not that sort of thing.”

PACE participants too became impatient to see results. One interviewee shared: “PACE is almost a joke. Nobody believes in it. In order for PACE to be different, it’s gotta *be*

different. You need an example. Without an example... how can you take something seriously if it never raises its head?" Another asserted that

if they really wanted to shake the tree and prove that PACE is here permanently, they'd have to turn around and fire middle management.... Instill the fear the first time and they'll never do it again. We have managers that still break the union contract and have been going around the system and it's being blatantly done.... And people are saying, "how can you say PACE is alive and well if this is still happening?"

While such perspectives were extreme, they were not necessarily representative of the PACE community. In fact, interview respondents shared very different perspectives about PACE's viability and potential to deliver tangible results:

- "I do believe in the possibility of opening eyes for change and for people to have truly transformative experiences. [And they] will believe it when they experience a shift in the culture. [But] I am not sure that even if [the recommendations] are implemented that [they] will say, 'I feel it now.' It comes down to bias and individual people have to change to transform... [and that] has not happened to people outside [PACE]."
- "It could be something great. On a lot of levels. I know there's always going to be an old guard that's going to be hanging out. Still a part of the system.... You're not going to be able to get to that. But overall."
- "Working *for* partnership is going to be the work that we do for the next 3 years to find some common ground to start from. I don't think we'll ever get to change in the next three years."
- "I'm just stupidly hopeful to believe [in PACE]. Right now it is stressful, hurtful, and I am saddened. But hopeful."

## **Obstacles to Partnership Viability and Institutionalization**

It is the intention of the PACE community that the partnership will exist in perpetuity. Given this, the remainder of this chapter discusses the future of PACE and the challenges it may face to sustain itself. PACE participants spoke of four potential obstacles to PACE's viability and its ability to achieve comprehensive equity in the Metro Division. First, PACE functions in relative isolation in the organization and remains outside the awareness of the majority of the division's employees. Second, middle management was not effectively brought into PACE and has not yet embraced the effort. Absent their collective support, PACE's effectiveness will remain hampered. Third, the PACE community has struggled to adjust to its emerging form following the ATU leadership transition. Fourth, an avoidance of conflict and decision-making has exacerbated inaction and confidence in the partnership. Finally, a lack of shared ownership for PACE, Metro's culture, and the PACE recommendations could impede the effectiveness of the partnership.

**Isolation.** Functioning largely outside the daily operations of the division, PACE is perceived as a discrete initiative; a program responsible for bringing change to the division, rather than a movement to enable it. PACE participants spoke of combatting a mindset among peers who perceived themselves as objects of change:

I tell folks, "this conversation depends on *you* now. We're getting it started. You may or may not believe, but when you come here every day and you do your best, you really do believe, you really are PACE. You just don't know it. You think it's this little package or something. But it's not. It's about who you are when you come [to work]."

Metro leadership recognized that the onus for change and diffusion of the PACE principles into the division would require a sense of ownership that did not exist throughout the organization. In discussing this challenge, the Deputy General Manager stated, "if we can have our people start to believe that they can fix things, [we can create an] ownership culture." The



diffusion of PACE into the operational units of the division continues to challenge the partnership.

**Absent stakeholders: middle management.** As primary implementers of the PACE recommendations, middle management is critical to PACE success, but its buy-in has not been widespread. One manager noted a sense of betrayal that managers were not sought out to participate in PACE at the outset, saying “you guys missed out by not having us there.”

Their under-representation in PACE is reflected in the PACE charter, which invites their representing union (Local 17) to appoint members to the Steering Committee, but does not recognize Local 17 as a sponsor of PACE. The Steering Committee acknowledged this omission. At the writing of this report, the Steering Committee was contemplating the incorporation of all five unions into PACE to ensure full stakeholder representation.

The lack of middle management buy-in was also attributed to Metro leadership’s approach in establishing PACE. The ATU Open Letter was unequivocal, alleging discriminatory practices by management. The decision by Metro leadership to enter in dialogue with ATU to understand the allegations, rather than deny them, was unexpected and upset many managers. As one base chief described, “people felt attacked, saying ‘wait a minute! That’s not how you’re supposed to do that! We don’t accept blame here and you just did! You are not on our side! You’re not supposed to apologize. Accept blame. Any of those things. That’s not how we do it.’” Another manager acknowledged that “there was a fear that all the focus of PACE would be to vilify and punish the chiefs and supervisors.” Whether these fears will be realized through implementation of PACE recommendations is yet unknown.

**Leadership change.** PACE participants overwhelmingly agreed that the ATU leadership transition created uncertainty for PACE as newly elected and skeptical officers brought their

perspectives, priorities, and expectations to PACE. In their new roles, they were also being tested by their membership and had to find ways to balance the needs of their constituents and their newfound relationship with management through PACE. One ATU officer observed that “the discomfort between the everyday world of representing members in a push-pull relationship and sitting in PACE talking about more fairness in hiring... is really difficult.”

Not surprisingly, this was a critical time for PACE as the partnership risked the loss of union leadership commitment and the unknown consequences. Metro leadership recognized the criticality of the transition and hoped that the previous two years of relationship-building would hold the partnership in place: “if we didn’t have enough unofficial support from ATU, [from] people who had had the positive experience of various subcommittees and PACE retreats and seeing small change occurring... if we didn’t have those people as ardent supporters, working [with] the new ATU leadership, we probably would have died.”

When asked about this transition in leadership, PACE participants were unsure whether PACE could achieve its objectives without union commitment. Interview respondents shared:

- “I have fear we can only make change on the fringes without the union.”
- “You have to have management believe and you have to have labor believe management. So you have to have both parties believe in each other and if you don’t, then PACE doesn’t go anywhere.”
- “I think PACE can go on [if they] create an environment of belief... an attitude that PACE, up to the top, will do what they say they’re going to do.... And once they show labor that they are committed, then perhaps the union membership can force the union leadership to come on board.”

- “In the beginning, yeah [the county needed the union]. But not going forward. The reason I think the county doesn’t need the union now is because now the responsibility falls on the county to implement those recommendations.”

**Decision-making.** Decision-making suffered in this transition. At its inception, PACE strove to employ consensus-based decision-making in the community. Both Steering Committee and subcommittee members spoke to this, particularly as it pertained to the creation and prioritization of PACE recommendations. A noticeable change in decision-making occurred following the transition of ATU leadership, with most decision points being avoided or postponed.

To be sure, fewer decisions needed to be made during this transition. Having prioritized the PACE recommendations, the Steering Committee did not have an active role in their implementation. This allowed the Steering Committee to focus much of its attention on information-sharing and level-setting with new and existing members as the new Steering Committee began to meet.

Over the course of this study, the Steering Committee’s regression from a performing group to a newly formed group was observable. It struggled to reconfigure itself, establish new relationships and team-build as a committee. Consequently, conflicts were unresolved and decisions were postponed because the group was not prepared to engage in any task functions during this tenuous transition period. While progress has been made, the Steering Committee will need to continue its work to strengthen relationships with the new membership and build trust as a committee in order to reestablish group processes (including decision-making rules). This will become critical for PACE as Metro and ATU initiate the collective bargaining process for the *Labor Agreement Between ATU, Local 587 and King County Metro Transit 2017-2020*.

**Shared ownership.** The responsibility of creating a culture of equity in the Transit division fell squarely on the shoulders of management. Indeed, every PACE recommendation required action by the division without expectation that union leadership would act in concert with or in support of the recommendations. One manager feared that PACE achievements would be limited if managers and union shop stewards could not collaborate in the workplace, saying “I would still have drivers that would come in and see their base chief on a discipline issue or service issue and have a shop steward come in and say, ‘you don't have to say anything... we're gonna fight this... the investigation is flawed... we're going to take this to... file a grievance.’” A union representative noted the potential difficulty collaborating with management while representing employees: “You want there to be consistency and fairness.... We have bad apples you know and we don't try to give them up to the company and say, ‘here, make an example of *this* guy.’ Cuz we're defending him. Cuz we're like a defense attorney.”

When asked about the union's role to support the implementation of PACE, a respondent offered that both ATU and Local 17 would need to “take on some of the responsibility.... Step back and think about the things you need to hold yourself accountable for. Ourselves for. Take some responsibility. Help yourself and the members you represent to take on some of these things. Stand up.... Let's do it together. You don't blame me. And I don't blame you.” Members generally agreed that unambiguous statements of union support from both ATU and Local 17 would pave the way for the management to implement the recommendations by securing organizational buy-in and trust that PACE could create positive change.

It is notable that the PACE community has continued to hold the collective bargaining process outside of the partnership as they enter the bargaining process at the time of this writing. While it has been a condition of partnership, it is likely to surface as an obstacle to the

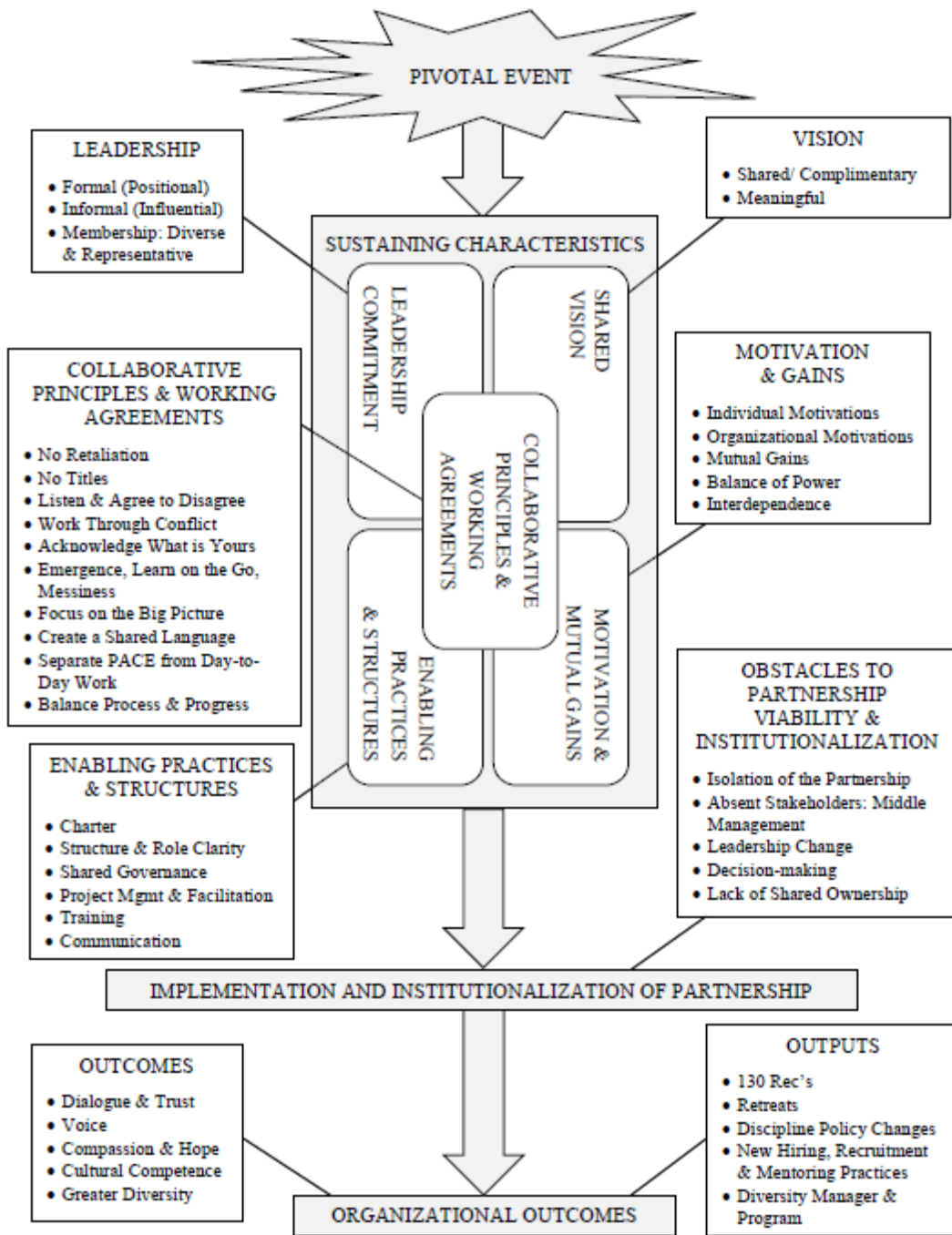
effectiveness and viability of PACE. To date, the PACE recommendations have been implemented under the purview of management without impact on the bargaining agreements. However, the partnership has begun to discuss how to address disciplinary practices that have been the source of ire for 25 years. If any substantive changes are to be made, they will most certainly intersect with contract language. In that event, the role of union leadership will become critical. Not only will they be in a position to advocate for their members in the revision of those practices, but they will be responsible for representing them through the collective bargaining process and ensuring the implementation of those practices. A significant amount of engagement with Metro's workforce will be required of both management and union leadership to surmount resistance during the drafting of policy changes, the implementation and assessment of their practice, and the crafting of the subsequent bargaining agreement. Separation of PACE from the collective bargaining process may no longer be possible to sustain PACE and its vision.

## **Summary**

This chapter presented the findings of a case study to understand the influence of Labor Management Partnerships on organizational outcomes, the means by which they function and sustain themselves, and the challenges inherent in them. Through interviews and observation, the following model of partnership emerged as a means to understand PACE. It is composed of the following elements and illustrated in Figure 3:

- **Pivotal Event:** the event that catalyzed the creation of the Labor Management Partnership. In this instance, ATU's Open Letter to management served as a catalyst for PACE.

- **Sustaining Characteristics:** those characteristics that allow a partnership to function and sustain itself. In this instance, those characteristics include: collaborative principles and working agreements, shared vision, motivation and mutual gains, leadership commitment, and enabling practices and structures.
- **Implementation and Institutionalization of Partnership:** the actions that rise out of the partnership to affect organizational outcomes. This study also identified those obstacles to the partnership's viability and its institutionalization in the organization.
- **Organizational Outcomes:** the outputs and subsequent outcomes gained through partnership.



**Figure 3**

*The Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity: A Model of Partnership*

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

This study explored how a partnership might effectively achieve its vision, thereby impacting organizational practices and culture. Based on interviews and observation of the PACE community, this study offers a model of partnership that responds to the study's original study questions, as described here.

***RQ1. How do Partnerships Influence Organizational Outcomes?*** PACE crafted and enacted organizational policies, practices, and procedures to recruit and retain a diverse workforce; provide equal access to development opportunities; support and engage the division's workforce; and create a fair and effective disciplinary system. While many of these changes have been implemented, their results are not yet fully realized so the degree to which they are deemed effective at influencing organizational outcomes is yet unknown. Regardless, participants spoke strongly about the positive changes in individual mindset and personal affect that rose from partnership.

***RQ2. How do Partnerships Function and Sustain Themselves?*** In this study, I found that a meaningful vision, diversity of membership, leadership commitment, and the perception of mutual gains for both labor and management are important conditions of partnership. Enabling practices and structures—including a charter, structure and role clarity, shared governance, project management, facilitation and training—also matter. Finally, partnerships are supported by the establishment of collaborative principles and working agreements. For PACE, an ethos of collaboration emerged through a set of largely unspoken principles and working agreements including:

- (a) No retaliation
- (b) No titles



- (c) Listening and agreeing to disagree
- (d) Working through conflict
- (e) Acknowledging what is yours
- (f) Emergence: learning on the Go
- (g) Focusing on the big picture
- (h) Creating a shared language
- (i) Separating PACE from the day-to-day work
- (j) Balancing process and progress

***RQ3. What Challenges do Partnerships Face?*** When asked about the most difficult aspect of PACE, the Deputy General Manager (PACE co-chair) said:

Can I just say that every single thing of it has been difficult? Every single thing has been difficult. From presenting it to the agency to keeping it alive to managing the project to making sure we have a way to measure that progress to documenting our achievements to communicating what we're doing to interacting with the union on a shifting set of priorities and issues to just having a larger view to what we can achieve to make sure that there is somebody who will believe in the thing. To be tested every single day. The transition with ATU. Every single thing has been difficult. I cannot think of one thing that has been easy with PACE. And I am not exaggerating. It has taken a tremendous amount of effort and time and energy.... Just knowing that no matter what we have gotten done yesterday and today, it is not enough for tomorrow and it is going to take more.

This statement captures the challenging nature of Labor Management Partnership in the government sector, particularly one attempting to create meaningful cultural change in an organization. Partnerships are heavily influenced by the existing labor-management relationship (Johnstone, et al, 2009; Eaton, 1994) and subject to divergent environmental influences including those from the political arena, public opinion and myriad stakeholders (Wilkinson et al, 2014; Williams, 2002). As such, they must be negotiated with deliberation, leadership commitment, and significant support to sustain them. Entering partnership is laden with risk; management and

labor must be willing to step outside their traditionally adversarial positions and face organizational resistance as new ground is tilled in partnership. The pull to retreat to familiar power relations is strong when faced with conflicts that do not seem readily resolved (Hammer & Stern, 1986; Harrison et al, 2011; Wever, 1989).

Even if sustaining characteristics are present at a partnership's inception, participants must be prepared to manage the dynamic nature of partnership. This study suggested that PACE's viability will continue to be subject to the care and attention given to establishing and maintaining relationships. At the outset, a shared sense of interdependence created a critical bond between the ATU and Metro-appointed Steering Committee co-chairs who effectively used their respective sources of power in support of partnership. Likewise, motivation to correct institutional bias in the division created an ethos of collaboration that compelled the PACE community to work through significant conflict in order to change the division's underlying practices, policies, and processes.

However, the partnership struggled to maintain that ethos as changes in leadership altered the power and relationship dynamics within both the PACE community and the Metro division at large. It is not surprising then that the primary obstacles to PACE's viability are also relationship-based. First, PACE is viewed with skepticism in the organization due to its relative isolation from the organization. Similarly, middle management felt vilified and inadequately engaged in the partnership, despite their criticality in PACE's success. Finally, the PACE community's struggle to engage in relationship-building dialogue and address perceived power imbalances following the ATU leadership transition may decrease the likelihood that Metro and

union leadership can simultaneously maintain a partnership and traditional collective bargaining relationship.

### **The Relationship Imperative**

This study highlighted the critical nature of relationship as a condition of partnership. These findings have led me to believe that a partnership might best be understood by examining its relationships and the practices employed to foster them. The collaborative principles and working agreements that grew out of PACE are relationship-based and the community attempted to create enabling practices and structures to foster the relationship. For example, months of dialogue allowed Metro and ATU leadership to establish a new form of collaborative relationship, co-create desired outcomes and leverage their respective sources of power toward partnership. Likewise, the relationship between the Metro and ATU co-chairs was critical to the viability of the partnership. Finally, relationship-building occurred through community-wide training where participants developed shared language and understanding of inequity, privilege, and institutional bias. PACE participants spoke about the community-building that occurred during these retreats and acknowledged that it was through courageous conversations and their shared learning that the community ultimately recommended organizational changes to correct for inequities in the division.

Based on these insights, the remainder of this chapter identifies opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of Labor Management Partnerships by better understanding the role of relationships. As described, the fields of Transorganization Development and Community Psychology provide insights into relationship power, principles of community organizing, and theories of collaborative change. These fields also provide practical advice for Organization

Development practitioners to develop the professional competencies to foster collaborative efforts such as PACE.

### **Considerations for Research and the Practice of Organizational Development**

This study revealed the significance of relationship-building in the PACE partnership. I believe that relationship-building bore such significance due to the deeply challenging purpose of the partnership itself – diversity and inclusion. PACE was not designed to drive organizational performance in the division. Rather, it was an effort to improve the experiences of Metro employees by changing the underlying assumptions, norms, and practices that impeded equity and inclusion in the division. As such, the PACE partnership represented a complex systems change effort; an intentional process to alter the status quo of the system for the purpose of improving the outcomes of those persons in it (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, & Yang, 2007, p. 197).

For this reason, I believe that the study of partnerships that seek systems change can be enhanced by insights from the field of Community Psychology, particularly those related to community organizing and collaborative decision-making. I also believe that their study and application will be enhanced by theories of Transorganization Development. Future partnership inquiries might seek to answer questions including:

- How is order negotiated in partnership to foster shared ownership of community outcomes?
- How do labor and management representatives reorient their relationship from one that is adversarial to one that is collaborative in partnership?

- How is the collaborative relationship maintained as the context of partnership shifts over time?
- What role does power play in the labor-management relationship under partnership?
- How is power generated and leveraged in partnership?

**Understanding power.** Power was a significant factor in the dynamic relationship between ATU and Metro leadership and impacted the viability of PACE. For example, ATU's expertise and access to workplace issues, as well as its influence over union membership mindsets were sources of power in the partnership. For its part, Metro leadership was in a position of power following the transition of ATU leadership. Its ownership of meeting agenda, legacy in the community, and control of PACE recommendations were sources of frustration for union leadership. Regardless of the intent behind the enactment of union and management power in partnership, each impacted PACE.

If Labor Management Partnerships grow in relevance and frequency in the government sector, they will benefit from the support of Organization Development practitioners with understanding of how power shapes relationships and is negotiated. In partnership, "power relationships... are more contested and dispersed than is often the case in traditional bureaucracies" (Williams, 2002, pp. 116-117). This perspective indicates that labor and management representatives engaging in partnership will need to renegotiate the terms of their relationship. In her study of union and management perceptions of partnership, Eaton (1994) found that unions find greater significance in union control of partnership processes and the existing labor-management relationship than do management representatives (pp. 383-384). Huxham and Vangen (2005) similarly assert that "those who see themselves as disempowered... argue that the power disparity is an important contributor to their frustration and the failure of the

collaboration” (pp. 173-174) and identify three forms of power that can be leveraged to influence collaboration viability:

- Power over: the use of power over another for the purpose of having control of the relationship;
- Power to: the use of power to achieve mutual gain for the purpose of enabling collaboration;
- Power for: the sharing of power for the purpose of empowering collaborative partners (Huxham & Vangen, 2005, pp. 175-176).

Building from this, the field of Community Psychology offers insight into how labor and management representatives, accustomed to negotiating power and resource imbalances through adversarial processes, might reassess their relationship and respective sources of power in partnership. Community Psychology perspectives of community organizing structures, practices, and processes can provide the Organization Development practitioner a deeper understanding of “the underlying process through which power operates in relationships... and the evolution of power dynamics over time” (Watson & Foster-Fishman, 2012, p. 151). For example, Neal and Neal (2012) found that community decision-making efforts were strengthened when the collaboration expanded the roles of disenfranchised participants and actively utilized their unique skills and capacities. By promoting the capabilities of traditionally disenfranchised participants and expanding their functional boundaries within the community, such collaborations corrected long-standing power imbalances and effectively empowered the full community. Similarly, Lasker and Weiss’s (2003) study of community governance attributed collaboration success to those processes that “promote broad and active participation, assure broad-based influence and control, facilitate productive group dynamics, and extend the scope of the process” (p. 35). In

application, partnership participants are encouraged to equip themselves to “foster conditions that promote authentic participation by all members [by obtaining a more] sophisticated understanding of the processes through which power operates” (Watson & Foster-Fishman, 2012, p. 152).

**Facilitating partnership.** Theories of Transorganization Development compliment learnings from Community Psychology to enable an Organization Development practitioner to facilitate effective partnership. For example, using a transorganization intervention framework of Identification, Convention, Organization and Evaluation may have alerted the PACE community that inclusion of Local 17 would ensure appropriate representation of middle management and potentially lessen organizational resistance (Cummings & Worley, 2015).

Further, Transorganization Development reminds practitioners to ensure that structure in the partnership does not hamper its flexibility to “manage itself in whatever ways it may devise to avoid inertia and to react to its own developing needs and to externally imposed pressures” (Huxham & Vangen, 2005, p. 147). Balancing structure with the benefit of flexibility enables a partnership to alter its structures and processes through ongoing dialogue about the dynamic nature of participant interests. As observed in this study, PACE was well-designed to deliver a set of recommendations, but was ill-equipped to transition the partnership to the implementation phase of work. Complicated by the simultaneous change in leadership and growing organizational resistance, the partnership did not alter its processes or redirect its sources of power to be effective in implementation.

Finally, with a grounding in Transorganization Development, practitioners will be equipped to manage uncertainty and the conflicting and evolving needs of participants (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Successful facilitation requires the ability to span the

organizational boundaries of partnership in a manner that engenders collaboration within the community (Williams, 2002). Such facilitators build sustainable relationships, influence the network through those relationships, navigate its complexity, and manage their roles through the power dynamics of the network (Williams, 2002). More importantly, an effective facilitator will be able to serve as a boundary spanner while also fostering that capacity by members of the community.

### **Study Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study of partnership. First, I risked subjectivity in analysis. Engaging with members of the partnership and as an employee of the organization, I held my own assumptions and perspectives of partnership, the forums I participated in, and the partnering organizations. Second, as a participant-observer, I influenced the system I was studying by facilitating large group interventions with the community and participating as a member of the PIT. A third limitation is that the participant interviews took place in the months following the ATU election. Though the period of study spanned a 12-month period, the perceptions of interview respondents were influenced by the uncertainty that existed during the transition of ATU leadership. Finally, the study sample only included members of the PACE community. At the time of the interviews, PACE recommendations had not been implemented and knowledge about PACE throughout the division was weak. As a researcher, I elected to not get ahead of PACE by engaging with Metro employees before implementation of the recommendations. Analysis of PACE's impact in the division would be enhanced by the perspective of those employees outside the partnership. This was an unavoidable limitation given



the point in time of this study, but it could be addressed with ongoing inquiry with Metro employees.

## **Conclusion**

The Partnership to Achieve Comprehensive Equity (PACE) was inspired by a small community of people, which confronted the consequences of institutional bias by challenging the underlying system that created them. It was an extremely ambitious partnership that required its participants to redefine the labor-management relationship and create enabling practices and structures that would sustain it. Building from the extant literature, this case study presented an analysis of the conditions that sustained the partnership and its potential to impact cultural change. It also identified those obstacles that threaten its diffusion into the organization, including: organizational isolation, incomplete stakeholder representation, inability to evolve and renegotiate strained relationships, unresolved conflict and absent decision-making, and a lack of shared ownership by key members of the community.

Reflecting on these considerations, I believe that relationship-building through dialogue, co-learning, and empowerment are critical to partnership viability. Supplementing the current body of knowledge of Labor Management Partnership with learnings from the fields of Transorganization Development and Community Psychology provide an opportunity for Organization Development practitioners to build more comprehensive and nuanced models that ensure adequate representation in the community, foster collaborative and empowered relationships, and create shared ownership of partnership outcomes to inspire the change they seek to create.

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## **Appendix A**

## Appendix A: PAC Interview Protocol

***PACE VISION: King County Metro is committed to building and sustaining an inclusive, fair and equitable workplace for everyone. Our culture thrives on the richness and diversity of our unique workforce. We are a community built on a foundation of collaboration and mutual respect.***

**Research Question: How do Labor Management Partnerships function and sustain themselves?**

Concept: Mutual Gains/ Interdependence

Definition: The degree to which labor leadership and management perceive mutual gain through a partnership.

Sponsors	Steering Committee Members	Subcommittee Members and SMEs
1. Why did you engage in PACE and what have you hoped to gain <i>in partnership</i> ? (Do you see partnership as a critical element in changing the work culture? Why?)  2. What do you think [your counterparts] have hoped to gain <i>in partnership</i> ?	1. Why did you engage in PACE and what have you hoped to gain <i>in partnership</i> ? (Do you see partnership as a critical element in changing the work culture? Why?)  2. What do you think [your counterparts] have hoped to gain <i>in partnership</i> ?	NA

Concept: Leadership Commitment (Management & Labor)

Definition: Consistency in participation, public support and provision of support structures/ resources.

Sponsors	Steering Committee Members	Subcommittee Members and SMEs
3. How do you, as a Sponsor of PACE provide leadership to PACE?  4. What has been the most difficult aspect of your role as a PACE sponsor? (How do you manage that difficulty?)	3. How do you, as a PACE Steering Committee member, provide leadership to PACE?  4. Have you had the resources and support you have needed to participate as a PACE Steering Committee member?	1. From your perspective, how have Metro Transit, county and labor leadership committed to PACE? (What have you experienced? Examples....)  2. What has it required for you to participate as a subcommittee member? Have you had the resources and support you have needed to participate?

<p>Concept: Collaborative Practices and Enabling Structures (Respect, Engage, Empower)</p>		
<p>Definition: PACE has established Engagement, Empowerment and Respect as the guiding principles to “distinguish it from traditional forms of labor-management interaction” (1<sup>st</sup> Installment).</p>		
<p>Engagement: "The traditional adversarial approach has been suspended, and posturing and the trading of concessions has given way to collaboration and consideration for the good of the whole. PACE participants are modeling a refreshing approach to joint problem solving... they are exchanging their experiences with their colleagues..." (1st installment)</p>		
<p>Empowerment: "The use of employee-based subcommittees-- not labor-management committees, or management dominated committees.... Given this direction: work together to create recommendations for a specific scope of work. No other rules were imposed." (1st installment)</p>		
<p>Respect: "All participants have been asked to demonstrate respect. It has come in the form of respect for one another and the diverse perspective each individual brings to the workplace. It has shown itself as respect for the underlying issues of inclusion, fairness and opportunity. It has even come in the form of considering difficult concepts such as privilege and indifference." (1st installment)</p>		
<p><b>Sponsors</b></p>	<p><b>Steering Committee Members</b></p>	<p><b>Subcommittee Members and SMEs</b></p>
<p><i>Preface: seeking an understanding of how it has felt to participate in PACE; of how the partnership itself has functioned.</i></p> <p>5. In what ways have PACE's guiding principles-- Respect, Empower and Engage-- fostered collaboration among PACE participants?</p> <p>6. What do you think are the key things that PACE has done well?</p> <p>7. What has been the most difficult aspect of PACE? How have participants managed that?</p>	<p><i>Preface: seeking an understanding of how it has felt to participate in PACE; of how the partnership itself has functioned.</i></p> <p>5. In what ways have PACE's guiding principles-- Respect, Empower and Engage-- fostered collaboration among PACE participants?</p> <p>6. What do you think are the key things that PACE has done well?</p> <p>7. What has been the most difficult aspect of PACE? How have participants managed that?</p>	<p><i>Preface: seeking an understanding of how it has felt to participate in PACE; of how the partnership itself has functioned.</i></p> <p>3. In what ways have PACE's guiding principles-- Respect, Empower and Engage-- fostered collaboration among PACE participants?</p> <p>4. What do you think are the key things that PACE has done well?</p> <p>5. What has been the most difficult aspect of PACE? How have participants managed that?</p>
<p>Concept: Collaborative Practices and Enabling Structures (Information Sharing/ Communication)</p>		
<p>Definition: The degree to which participants feel information is shared among participants/ communication is open and honest.</p>		

Sponsors	Steering Committee Members	Subcommittee Members and SMEs
<p><i>Mine for information sharing/ communication if not addressed with questions re: guiding principles</i></p> <p>8. Have PACE participants learned how to engage in courageous conversations and address conflict? (What does that look like? Has it changed over time?)</p> <p>9. How would you compare communication within the PACE community relative to Metro Transit/ your workplace?</p>	<p><i>Mine for information sharing/ communication if not addressed with questions re: guiding principles</i></p> <p>8. Have PACE participants learned how to engage in courageous conversations and address conflict? (What does that look like? Has it changed over time?)</p> <p>9. How would you compare communication within the PACE community relative to Metro Transit/ your workplace?</p>	<p><i>Mine for information sharing/ communication if not addressed with questions re: guiding principles</i></p> <p>6. Have PACE participants learned how to engage in courageous conversations and address conflict? (What does that look like? Has it changed over time?)</p> <p>7. How would you compare communication within the PACE community relative to Metro Transit/ your workplace?</p>

**Concept:** Collaborative Practices and Enabling Structures (Training)

**Definition:** The degree to which participants acquire the learning necessary to participate in partnership.

Sponsors	Steering Committee Members	Subcommittee Members and SMEs
<p><i>Mine for training if not addressed with questions re: guiding principles</i></p> <p>10. How would you describe the PACE retreats that you participated in?</p> <p>11. How did the retreats prepare you to participate as a Sponsor of PACE?</p>	<p><i>Mine for training if not addressed with questions re: guiding principles</i></p> <p>10. How would you describe the PACE retreats that you participated in?</p> <p>11. How did the retreats prepare you to participate as a PACE participant?</p>	<p><i>Mine for training if not addressed with questions re: guiding principles</i></p> <p>8. How would you describe the PACE retreats that you participated in?</p> <p>9. How did the retreats prepare you to participate as a PACE participant?</p>

**Research Question:** How do Labor Management Partnerships influence organizational outcomes?

**Concept:** Culture Change (Outcomes)

**Definition:** Inclusive, Fair, and Equitable Workplace for Everyone ("This plan is needed to eliminate... barriers and replace them with a truly inclusive work environment that welcomes and values diversity, provides equitable access to development opportunities, and supports

effective leadership and an engaged and culturally competent community." (2nd installment, p 10))		
Inclusive Workplace: "PACE defines inclusion as a sense of belonging, connectedness and shared responsibility. Inclusion is being respected and valued for our contributions and for who we are as individuals. It encompasses a "level of supportive energy and commitment from leaders and colleagues, so that we-- individually and collectively-- can do our best work." ... People's diverse thinking can be fully leveraged based on the realization that talent and ideas can be found at every level of the organization.... Differences are valued and thought of as a resource." (2nd installment)		
Fair Workplace: Perception of fair treatment of all employees by Metro management. "Metro's disciplinary system is free of bias, leads to enhanced customer service to the public and incorporates a balance between consistency, discretion and compassion" (2nd installment)		
Equitable Workplace: "PACE focus on ensuring fairness and equity in Metro's policies and procedures... [to] enhance the productivity of new and existing employees" (2nd installment)		
<b>Sponsors</b>	<b>Steering Committee Members</b>	<b>Subcommittee Members and SMEs</b>
12. How has your participation in PACE impacted your daily work?	12. How has your participation in PACE impacted your daily work?	10. How has your participation in PACE impacted your daily work?
13. As you look ahead, what do you expect will be the impact of PACE on diversity, inclusion and equity in Transit? Why? (Have you noticed change, where Metro has become a more inclusive, fair and equitable workplace? Is PACE moving the needle?)	13. As you look ahead, what do you expect will be the impact of PACE on diversity, inclusion and equity in Transit? Why? (Have you noticed change, where Metro has become a more inclusive, fair and equitable workplace? Is PACE moving the needle?)	11. As you look ahead, what do you expect will be the impact of PACE on diversity, inclusion and equity in Transit? Why? (Have you noticed change, where Metro has become a more inclusive, fair and equitable workplace? Is PACE moving the needle?)

## **Appendix B**

## Appendix B: Milestones Toward Equity in King County Metro Transit

Year	Milestone	Description
1990	Myriad Report	Cultural change effort initiated to achieve greater openness and inclusion.
2000	Blue Chip Report	Recommendations about policies and recommendations, programs, and skill development to address disciplinary disparities in Metro.
2010	Operator Discipline Report	Recommendations to improve Metro’s record of addressing issues of inequality, particularly in the area of discipline.
April 2013	ATU Open Letter	ATU Executive Board calls on King County and Metro to respond to longstanding issues of inequality.
September 2013	PACE Charter Signed	King County Metro and ATU establish PACE- a formal partnership to advance diversity and equal opportunity for all with the agency.
2013-2014	Steering Committee & Subcommittees Convene	PACE participants (Metro management, union leadership, and Metro employees) meet to identify obstacles to diversity and equal opportunity in the agency and create recommendations to address them.
October 2014	PACE Strategic Plan: 1 <sup>st</sup> Installment	All 130+ subcommittee recommendations are approved by the Steering Committee. 15 are prioritized for immediate action. The Strategic Plan memorializes these decisions.
Spring 2015	PACE Strategic Plan: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Installment	Metro management creates strategies and corresponding work plans to implement the 130+ PACE recommendations, memorialized in the PACE Strategic Plan: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Installment.
June 2015	ATU, Local 587 Election	ATU members elect a slate of new union officers. No incumbent officer maintains his/ her office.
December 2015	New PACE Charter Signed	A new PACE charter is drafted to recognize new ATU officers. The King County Executive becomes a PACE sponsor.
March 2016	Resignation of King County Metro General Manager	The Deputy General Manager assumes position as Interim General Manager and corresponding role as one of four PACE sponsors. At the time of this writing, the PACE co-chair position appointed by management will be occupied by the Interim Deputy General Manager, to be named.
Spring 2016	Contract Negotiations Begin	ATU and Metro initiate the bargaining process for the <i>Labor Agreement Between ATU, Local 587 and King County Metro Transit 2017-2020</i> .

## **Appendix C**



## Appendix C: PACE Charter 2013



### Charter



## 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.

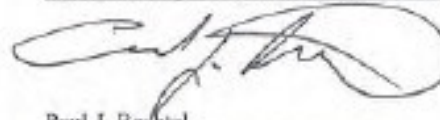
### Meetings

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:



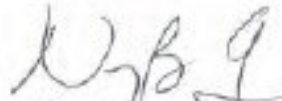
Paul J. Bachtel  
President and Business Representative

For Metro Transit:



Kevin Desmond  
General Manager

For King County:



Nancy Buonarroti-Creanan  
Director, Human Resources Division

## **Appendix D**

## Appendix D: PACE Charter 2015

### PACE Charter

Department of Transportation	Amalgamated Transit Union
Metro Transit Division	Local 587
General Manager's Office	2815 Second Avenue
201 S. Jackson Street	Suite 230
KSC-TR-0415	Seattle, WA 98121
Seattle, WA 98104-3856	

#### 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 work culture, processes, tools and standards to make advances on issues of diversity, equal opportunity and inclusion for all within the agency. By partnering together, Metro and ATU will create and work to sustain 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 and sustaining a welcoming and inclusive working environment that both attracts and retains a diverse community of employees at all levels of the organization;
- Elevating diversity, equal opportunity and inclusion 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, as amended, is sponsored by the President of ATU and the General Manager of Metro. Together with the King County Human Resources Division (HRD) Director and the Metro Transit Diversity/Inclusion Manager, 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, the Human Resources Director and the Metro Transit Diversity/Inclusion Manager 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 has been formed. Through the Steering Committee, 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 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. Members of the PARTNERSHIP (as defined in the next section) shall together form the PACE Steering Committee. The ATU and Metro co-leads of the PARTNERSHIP shall jointly chair the Steering Committee and 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.

Attempting to incorporate representation from across the different sections of Metro Transit, 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 four (4) representatives to the PARTNERSHIP. The Executive Sponsors will be standing members of the PARTNERSHIP (4), as will the managers of the Operations, Vehicle Maintenance and Rail sections (3). ATU will appoint up to 12 members of the PARTNERSHIP. In addition, Metro will appoint five (5) at-large members. The PARTNERSHIP will have a total of up to twenty-eight (28) 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 roles/responsibilities and 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. Subject matter experts will be brought in on an as-needed basis to supplement subcommittee work when appropriate.

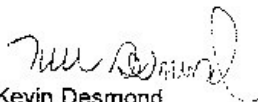
The ATU and Metro co-leads shall be identified and assigned by the PACE Sponsors.


**MEETINGS**


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

**DURATION**

This charter, as amended will be placed in effect as of December 14, 2015 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.

  
Kevin Desmond  
Transit General Manager  
Department of Transportation


  
Kenny McCormick  
President, Amalgamated Transit Union  
Local 587

  
Nancy Buonanno-Grennan  
Human Resources Division Director

  
Anita Whitfield  
Transit Diversity & Inclusion Manager

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By the signature below, I hereby officially endorse the PACE principles as well as the purpose and critical interests identified in this charter; and recognize them as beneficial to Metro Transit, its work environment, employees and the service it provides to the public.

  
Dow Constantine  
King County Executive