



## King County

### Dow Constantine

King County Executive

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August 23, 2023

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, ratify a negotiated collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and four memoranda of agreement (MOA) with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 (ATU 587), covering employees in the Metro Transit Department bargaining unit for the contractual period of November 1, 2022, through October 31, 2025. Adoption of this proposed Ordinance will enable King County and the Metro Transit Department (Metro) to provide bargained for wages, hours, and working conditions to employees in the many job classifications covered by this CBA.

Employees covered by this CBA perform work in support of Metro's bus, streetcar and light rail operations. Approximately 3,700 employees are covered by this agreement, performing work in 121 job classifications. These employees carry out a wide range of functions, such as driving buses, trolleys, trains, and streetcars; maintaining Metro's vehicle fleets; and maintaining Metro's facilities, including bases, the downtown Seattle transit tunnel, rail and streetcar buildings and facilities, and bus zones throughout the County. These employees also perform first line supervision to operations and a multitude of customer service and pass sales functions. Their work supports King County Metro bus services as well as Sound Transit's Link light rail and the two City of Seattle streetcar lines.

This negotiated CBA was reached pursuant to good faith negotiations and collective bargaining between the County and the ATU 587. It has been ratified by the bargaining unit. The terms and conditions of the negotiated agreement updates several provisions and standards in alignment with the coalition labor agreement (CLA) provisions, such as those related to donated leave, special duty and working-out-of classification assignments, holidays, and sick leave. If approved, the negotiated CBA would make the following noteworthy changes:

- **Rail Contracting:** Allow for Rail to contract with third party external entities to augment certain positions when staffing levels are inadequate to meet Rail expansion needs.
- **Annual Picks:** Reduce annual schedule and vacation selection picks from three per year, to two per year. The elimination of the summer picks will create a significant operational efficiency.
- **Compensatory Time:** Update donated leave provisions to comport with new internal revenue service (IRS) compliant County policies. ATU 587 employees will also be required to cash out all compensatory time bank balances in last pay period of each year, per IRS tax regulation.
- **Bus Operations:** To avoid a cancellation of service, a qualified part-time operator's assignment may be traded with another qualifying assignment which has been left vacant. The parties also clarified probationary rules for employees who move from Bus to Rail positions, allowing a more dependable workforce for bus operations.
- **Vehicle Maintenance:** The Vehicle Maintenance Division may utilize a new trainee program to fill key trades positions allowing conditional probation for minimally qualified applicants.
- **Facilities:** Update and clarify provisions regarding the Building Operating Engineer and Facilities Painter Apprenticeship programs. The parties will develop a tiered maintenance constructor classification series to address added certifications required to perform various functions.
- **Rail:** Add flexibility for Rail management discretion to hire at a higher pay step when recruiting needs warrant such action.
- **Employee development:** Enhance the hiring process through development of a trainee program for key trades positions, to incentivize more people entering these positions. This agreement makes improvements to the Bus and Rail Supervisor-in-Training programs.

The wage settlement for the duration of the contract reinstates a 95 percent Consumer Price Index (CPI) formula in the amount of 7.17 percent, effective August 5, 2023 (a straight application of formula at 95 percent with no ceiling); six percent, effective November 1, 2023 (six percent ceiling and two percent floor, CPI is known and is above six percent); and two to four percent effective November 1, 2024 (95 percent formula with four percent ceiling and two percent floor, the exact percentage will be updated once the CPI known).

Employees will receive a lump sum of nine percent on all hours worked between November 1, 2022 and August 4, 2023. Market wage adjustments will be applied to various positions for internal and/or external alignment; shortened wage step progression will apply to part-time operators, to align with full-time employees.

A recruitment and retention bonus will be offered to existing employees, in the amount of \$2,500 and to new employees in the amount of \$3,000. Additionally, based on ATU Local

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587's ratification of the tentative agreement on the first vote, there is a \$2,500 ratification incentive payment for each ATU 587 employee who was employed on the date of the vote.

A complete breakdown of the costs associated with this agreement can be found in the accompanying fiscal note, which has been reviewed by the Metro Transit Department and the Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget. The 2023-2024 Biennial Budget included a general wage increase assumption of four percent each year, significantly lower than the amounts negotiated in this agreement. Other obligations, such as the ratification and retention bonuses, were also not included in the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget. Although no supplemental Ordinance is transmitted at this time, implementation of this CBA will require additional budget authority. Additional budget authority will be requested in the second Omnibus Supplemental of 2023-2024.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation will ratify the negotiated CBA which provides standardized working conditions and the competitive wages that are necessary to recruit and retain the qualified employees in our public transit system.

If your staff have questions, please contact Megan Pedersen, Director, Office of Labor Relations, at 206-263-2898.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff  
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council  
Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive  
Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive  
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget  
Megan Pedersen, Director, Office of Labor Relations