

McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

From: Robert Nowicki ·
Sent: Monday, October 5, 2026 5:14 PM
To: PublicComment-AutoResponse
Subject: Board item #7: PCL Construction - Preconstruction Services

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Council,

I noted the following in the staff report for item #7: Pasadena's zero-emission strategy includes both hydrogen fuel-cell and battery-electric vehicles. The City's initial order of 17 fuel-cell electric buses is scheduled to arrive in December 2026, and a separate hydrogen fueling facility is being developed to fuel that fleet.

The facility is set to be located at 95 Alessandro Place. The fuel cell buses will be maintained at that location until such time that the TOMF gets constructed, with a target date of 6/30/28.

I would like to provide to the council an update from the City of Santa Clarita, and some recent issues with respect to their fuel cell bus fleet:

<https://signalscv.com/2026/09/council-oks-1-7m-contract-for-temporary-hydrogen-fix/>

The short version of the above is that their fuel cell buses, which began arriving earlier this year, do not have an operational fueling station up and running, so the buses are sitting idle. Temporary fueling infrastructure could end up costing \$1,700,000. City Manager (?) states: "We've had delays with the delivery of certain components that go with the hydrogen fueling station. It's a very complex and not very common project that's out there. So it's a highly specialized field in terms of the number of contractors that do this type of work. A subcontractor that Trillium was using to meet the city's need had a staffing issue and could no longer fill the terms of the contract. Love's then had to find a new provider, which was the primary driver of the delay."

I have written the Council previously concerning the many issues related to choosing to go down the fuel cell bus path. You are not only purchasing buses, you are committing to many years of maintenance, supply chains issues associated with not only all the bus components, but also the maintenance facility components. With fewer and fewer transit agencies choosing fuel cell buses, it again looks to me like this could be a very costly mistake.

We should get a much better idea of what the future construction costs will be when the Phase 2 GMP bids come in. The new facility is being designed with the ability to operate and maintain the fuel cell buses, contributing to the \$91,000,000 estimated cost, of which only \$72,620,000 has been appropriated to date, leaving a shortfall of \$18,400,000. This number will undoubtedly grow by the time the Phase 2 bids get received, not even getting into the kinds of issues that Santa Clarita is experiencing.

I'll be paying close attention to the fuel cell bus rollout, and hope that the Municipal Service Committee provides timely reports on the operation and reliability of the buses. I would again strongly encourage you to find a way to remove fuel cell buses from consideration, even if it requires a delayed rollout of more capable battery buses, versus having inoperable vehicles that will need to be replaced in any case.

Robert Nowicki

10/06/2026
Item 7