



CITY OF  
**PALO  
ALTO**

## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: INFORMATION REPORTS**

**Lead Department: Administrative Services**

**Meeting Date: September 23, 2024**

Report #:2311-2235

### **TITLE**

City of Palo Alto's Energy Risk Management Report for the first half of Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023-December 31, 2023).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

This is an informational report and no City Council action is required.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Staff continues to purchase electricity and gas in compliance with the City's Energy Risk Management Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures. This report is based on market prices and load and supply data as of December 31, 2023, the first half of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.

The projected cost of the City's fixed-price electricity purchases is \$0.2 million lower than the market value of that electricity as of December 31, 2023 for the 12-month period beginning January 1, 2024. During the first half of FY 2024 (July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023) the City's credit exposure to fixed price contracts is minimal. The projected Electric Supply Operations Reserve is above the FY 2024 minimum guideline reserve level and the projected gas reserve is within the FY 2024 guideline reserve level range.

There were no exceptions to the Energy Risk Management Policies, Guidelines, or Procedures during this reporting period.

### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council about the status of the City's energy portfolio and transactions executed with energy suppliers for the first half of FY 2024. The City's Energy Risk Management Policy requires that staff report on a semi-annual basis on: 1) the City's energy portfolio; 2) the City's credit and market risk profile; 3) portfolio performance; and 4) other key market and risk information. The City's Energy Risk Management Policy describes the management organization, authority, and processes to monitor, measure, and control market risks. "Market risks" include price and counterparty credit risk. These are risks that the City is exposed to on a regular basis in procuring electric supplies, and to a lesser extent for gas supplies

which are purchased at market rates via a monthly index price. The City's Energy Risk Management function, whose role is to monitor and mitigate these energy market risks, is a part of the Treasury Division of the Administrative Services Department. This semi-annual of FY 2024 Energy Risk Management report contains information on the following:

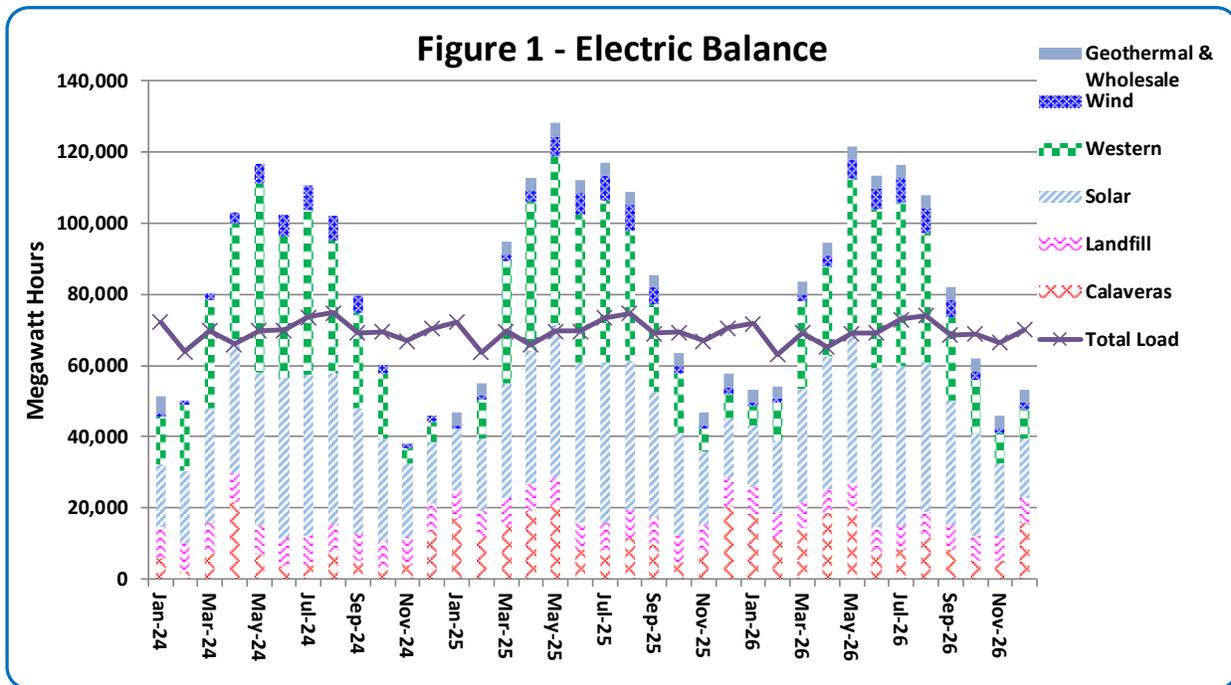
- Electric Supplies
- Hydroelectricity
- Fixed-Price Forward Electricity Purchases
- Gas Supplies
- Credit Risk
- Electric Forward Mark-to-Market Values
- Electric and Gas Supply Operations Reserves Adequacy
- Exceptions to Energy Risk Management Policies, Guidelines, or Procedures

## **ANALYSIS**

### Electric Supplies

In order to serve the City's electric supply demands, the City obtains electricity from hydroelectric resources (from Western and Calaveras Hydroelectric Projects); long-term renewable energy contracts (from landfill gas converted to electricity, wind, and solar projects); wholesale purchases which are carried out via fixed-priced forward market purchase contracts; and the electric spot market.

Figure 1 below illustrates the projected sources and expected purchases of electricity supplies by month for the 36 months from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026, in megawatt-hours (MWh). The negative bars represent sales of excess power on the wholesale market.



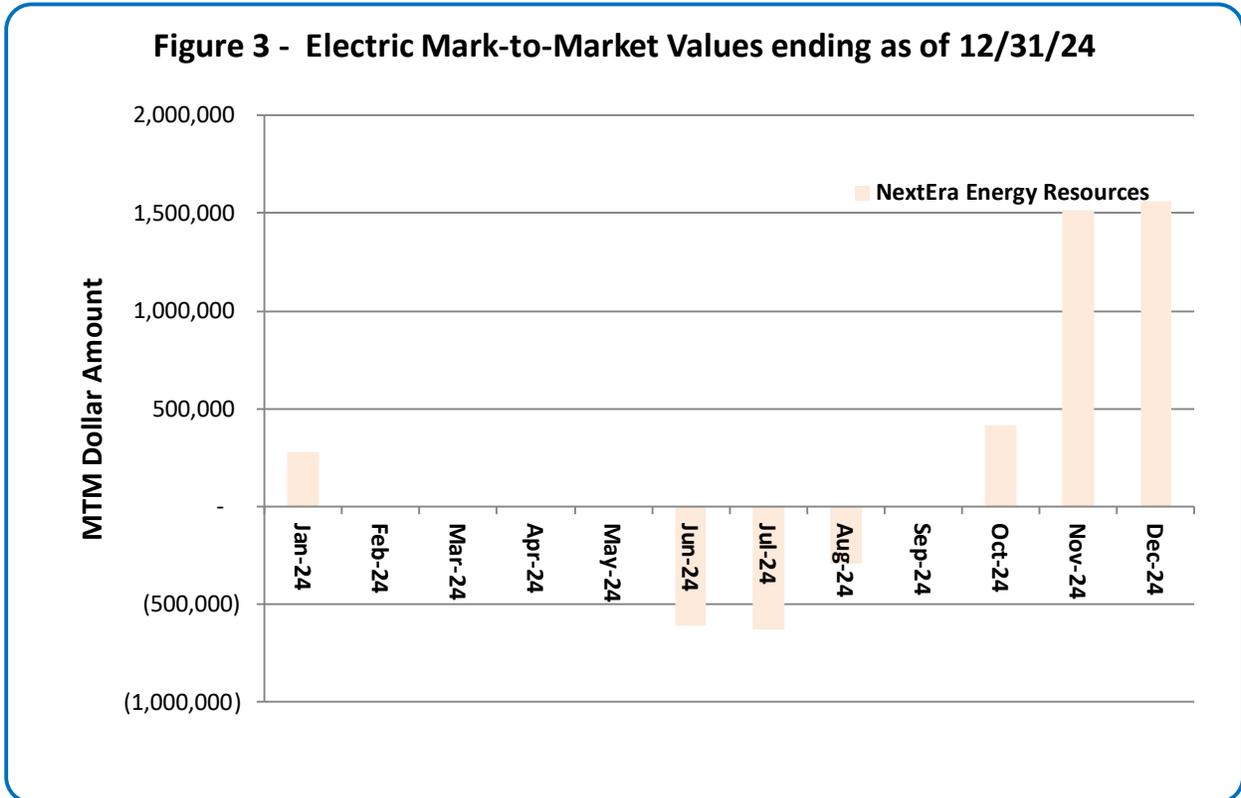
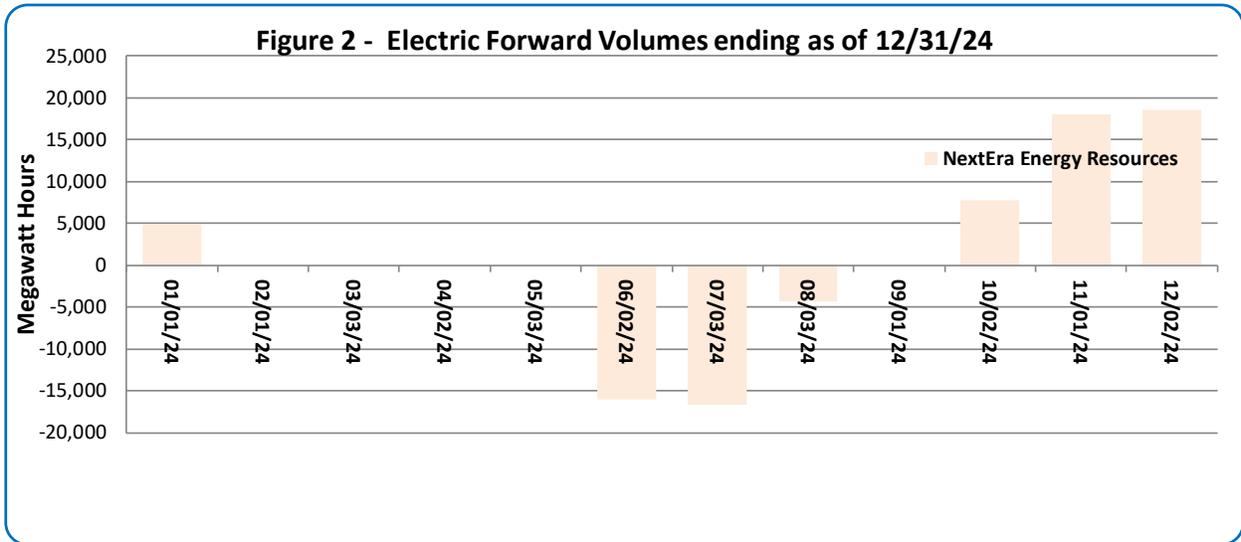
Hydroelectricity

The cost of hydroelectricity received from Western over the 12-month period ending December 31, 2023 is lower than the market value of electricity by \$5.7 million. Hydroelectric power from Calaveras was expected to cost \$8.4 million (as of December 31, 2023) more than the market value of electricity. Note that Calaveras provides benefits not reflected in the mark-to-market (MTM, defined in the following section) calculation, including, for example, ancillary services (e.g., the ability to regulate energy output when the electric grid needs change), and that much of the above-market costs are related to debt service on the cost of constructing the dam. This debt is due to be retired in 2032, and retirement will substantially improve the value of the project relative to the market price of electricity.

Fixed-Price Forward Electricity Purchases

The City, as of December 31, 2023, has purchased and sold fixed-priced supplies of electricity for the next 12 months totaling 41,790 MWh with an average price of \$87.59 per MWh and totaling 69,280 with an average price of \$47.08, respectively. The City contracted for these purchases with one of its approved counterparties: NextEra Energy Resources. The 12-month MTM value of the City’s forward transactions for wholesale power were \$0.2 million for calendar year 2024; a positive MTM means that the sales price for these transactions was lower than the market value as of December 31, 2023. The City tracks the mark to market value of its forward contracts to measure the value that would be lost due to a counterparty failing to deliver on its contractual commitments, forcing the City to purchase replacement electricity in the market. The exposure listed above is well within risk management guidelines and presents little risk to the City’s financial outlook.

The figures below represent the electric forward volumes (Figure 2) and MTM positions (Figure 3) for each electric supplier by month of delivery for all forward fixed-price electricity contracts over the 12-month period ending December 31, 2024.



Gas Supplies

In order to serve the City’s natural gas needs, the City purchases gas on the monthly and daily spot markets. The City purchases all of its forecasted gas needs for the month ahead at a price based on the published monthly spot market index price for that month. Within the month, the

City’s gas operator buys and sells gas to match the City’s daily needs if the actual daily usage is different from the forecasted daily usage. Those daily transactions are made at an average price based on the published daily spot market index. These costs are passed through directly to customers using a monthly rate adjustment mechanism, leaving the City with little or no price risk or counterparty risk exposure for the gas utility.

Credit Risk

Staff monitors and reports on counterparty credit risk based on the major credit rating agencies (S&P and Moody’s) scores, Ameresco has a 6.93 percent Expected Default Frequency (EDF) which is higher than the recommended EDF level of 0.08%. Staff is continuing to monitor Ameresco’s EDF and will continue to report to City Council in this semi-annual report. Table 1 below shows the EDF values for the City’s renewable energy counterparties. Table 2 below shows the EDF values and credit exposure for the City’s electric suppliers. There is virtually no credit exposure to the City’s gas suppliers since the supplies are purchased on a short-term basis.

**Table 1 - Renewable Counterparties Credit Ratings and EDFs as of 12/31/23**

Renewable Counterparty	Current Expected Default Frequency	Moody’s (EDF) Implied Rating
Ameresco	6.93%	Ca
Avangrid (fomerly Iberdrola)	0.01%	Baa3

Source: Moody’s CreditEdge website

**Table 2 - Credit Exposure and Expected Default Frequency of Electric Suppliers as of 12/31/23**

Electric Counterparty	Cost of Transaction	Market Value of Transaction	Cost vs. Market (MTM) Value	Current Expected Default Frequency	Moody’s (EDF) Implied Rating	Expected Loss (MTM x Expected Default Frequency)
NextEra	\$ 2,439,365	\$ 2,237,891	\$ (201,474)	0.042%	A3	\$ (85)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 2,439,365</b>	<b>\$ 2,237,891</b>	<b>\$ (201,474)</b>			<b>\$ (85)</b>

Electric Forward Mark-to-Market Values

It is important to note that, for contracts with renewable energy companies, Council waived the investment grade credit rating requirement of Section 2.30.340(d) of the Palo Alto Municipal Code, which applies to energy companies that do business with the City. In addition, the City does not pay for renewable energy until it is received, thereby reducing risk.

An EDF of 0.08% or below indicate supplier’s current expected default frequency falls within the investment grade range. An EDF above 0.08% indicates the supplier may have financial issues that require monitoring.

Electric and Gas Supply Operations Reserves Adequacy

As shown in Table 3 below, the Electric Supply Operations reserve’s unaudited balance as of December 30, 2023 is \$60.6 million, which is \$40.7 million above the minimum reserve guideline level. Contributing to this higher reserve are related to a favorable litigation settlement of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and an increase in wholesale revenues. The plan is to transfer the excess reserves to other reserves (e.g., Special Projects, CIP, etc.). The audited Gas Operations reserve balance is \$9.8 million, which is at the minimum reserve guideline level.

**Table 3 - Electric Supply Operations and Gas Operations Reserve Levels for FY 2024**

Fund	Audited Reserve for Operations Balance as of 06/30/2023 (\$ Millions)	Changes to the Reserves for Operations (\$ Millions)	Unaudited Reserve for Operations Balance as of 12/31/23 (\$ Millions)	FY 2024	
				Minimum Guideline Reserve Level (\$ Millions)	Maximum Guideline Reserve Level (\$ Millions)
Electric	\$38.88	\$21.72	\$60.60	\$19.90	\$39.80
Gas	\$14.44	(\$4.64)	\$9.80	\$9.76	\$19.52

Exceptions to Energy Risk Management Policies, Guidelines, or Procedures

There were no exceptions to the Energy Risk Management Policies, Guidelines, or Procedures to report during the semi-annual of FY 2024.

**FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

This is an information report; no Council action required.

**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

ASD staff works internally with the Utilities Department to prepare this report.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This Council informational report is not a project under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as defined in CEQA Guidelines, section 15378, because it has no potential for resulting in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

**APPROVED BY:** Lauren Lai, Director of Administrative Services