

Opinion

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patchable electricity: electric power that can be depended upon 24/7 to operate critical infrastructure: police, fire, traffic and street lights, gas, water, wastewater, and the website.

Solar and wind energy isn't dispatchable; it doesn't work when the sun goes down and when the wind either isn't blowing or blows too strong.

In 2007 Google put its brightest engineers to work on making renewable less expensive than coal at the scale needed to provide reliable energy for their server farms; the project was called "RE<C."

Within a few years they concluded the cost of manufacturing the components of the renewable power facilities exceeded the cost of the total recoverable energy — renewable facilities could never produce enough energy to balance the budget of what was consumed in their construction.

I paraphrase what they said in an IEEE journal: "Even if we electrified all transport, industry, heating, etc, so much renewable generation and balancing/storage equipment would be needed to power it that astronomical new requirements for steel, concrete, copper, glass, carbon fiber, neodymium, shipping, haulage, etc. would appear. All these consume mammoth amounts of energy: far from achieving massive energy savings, which most plans for a renewables future rely on implicitly, we'd wind up needing far more energy—even more vast renewables farms — and even more materials and energy to make and maintain them."

That was 2007-2010. With horizontal drilling and fracking the costs of natural gas have plummeted below coal, making the economics even more unfavorable.

I doubt Council's ability to outsmart Google's engineers.

*Robert W Endlich
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City goals are a display of ignorance

I find the City Council's stated goals to achieve ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy — 25% of the city's use by 2022 and 100% by 2050 — a stunning display of ignorance in basic understanding of electricity generation and economics.

The city's basic infrastructure depends on dis-