

US Rates Watch

Bill & SOFR impact from UST debt shift

UST bill shift: slightly lower ON RRP, slightly higher SOFR

Treasury's shift in issuance strategy does not meaningfully impact our Q4 '23 bill supply estimates since their lower financing need and smaller coupon issuance roughly offset each other. Treasury's shift will only marginally speed up the pace of ON RRP depletion due to Fed QT pace and recent bank depositor behavior. SOFR/FF impact should also be modest but risks skew to a sooner and faster increase in SOFR than our forecasts imply.

Bill supply: lower financing need offsets lower coupons

Treasury surprised us this week in 2 ways: (1) lower than expected long-end supply (2) lower financing needs (see: [November refunding](#)). The smaller coupons and financing need largely offset each other and leave our bill supply projections little changed; on net, our Q4 bill projections only increased \$4bn to \$448b (Exhibit 1 and [supplemental charts](#)). We also revised our CY '24 bill supply forecast lower due to a change in our TGA assumption; we had previously grown TGA with nominal GDP expectations but now pencil it flat at \$750b to match UST guidance thru Q1 '24. We acknowledge we will eventually need to refine our TGA forecasts based on debt limit implications that come back into play in early '25.

Pace of ON RRP depletion: only marginally faster

Clients have also asked if Treasury's shift in issuance strategy impacts our outlook for QT drain from ON RRP and reserves. Our answer: only marginally. We have long expected the Fed's liquidity drain to be distributed approximately 90/10 from ON RRP / reserves. To date, this liquidity drain has been distributed 92/0/8 from ON RRP / reserves / other (Exhibit 2). Going forward, we now expect this liquidity drain to be closer to 100/0 for ON RRP / reserves or 90/0/10 for ON RRP / reserves / other. We elaborate on our expectations for the pace of ON RRP depletion using T-tables on page 2.

SOFR/FF impact: modest but risks skew to higher SOFR

Clients have also asked what Treasury's shift in issuance strategy means for the SOFR/FF basis. Our answer is similar to the liquidity drain composition question: only marginally. Higher bill supply should mean more cheapening pressure on bills vs other UST coupons but we think the impact on SOFR/FF basis will largely be a function of how much faster ON RRP declines. Overall, the implications for SOFR/FF are marginal but skew in the direction of a higher SOFR rate sooner than we expected. We still expect SOFR to meaningfully rise within the Fed target range around mid '24 or 2H '24. The shift in Treasury's issuance strategy means this could occur slightly sooner and faster than our projections suggest. We elaborate on the SOFR/FF impact on page 2.

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UST = Treasury

QT = quantitative tightening

TBAC = Treasury Borrowing Advisory
Committee

FY = fiscal year

CY = calendar year

WAM = weighted average maturity

RRP = reverse repo facility

TGA = Treasury General Account

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ON RRP explainer: why still slow with more bills

Higher bill supply does not mean a materially sharper pace of ON RRP reduction or meaningfully higher reserves due to (1) pace of Fed QT (2) bank depositor behavior.

Pace of Fed QT: basic Fed balance sheet accounting implies the pace of liability reduction will be governed by the extent to which assets also decline. The Fed's asset reduction is pre-set with the only material variation driven by speed of their MBS pre-payments or shifts in emergency bank lending programs. If Fed asset reduction pace remains \$75-95b/m, then total liabilities must fall by a similar amount. The distribution of liability reduction may change but we expect nearly all the liquidity drain to continue drawing from ON RRP until it is at or near zero.

Bank depositor behavior: recent bank depositor behavior should limit the ability to which the ON RRP decline accelerates. Bank depositors have proven sensitive to higher rates & shifted out of low yielding deposits & into higher yielding alternatives (including MMF). We expect this behavior to hold even as Treasury bill issuance rises.

To better understand this dynamic, consider the following example. Treasury issues \$100 of new bills instead of 30Y bonds. A MMF with cash at ON RRP shifts \$100 of their investment away from the Fed & into the bill. The Treasury then takes the \$100 bill proceed and pays a depositor. The depositor receives the \$100 Treasury payment in their bank account but prefers higher yielding alternatives. The depositor moves the recently received \$100 into a MMF. The MMF takes the \$100 and invests back into ON RRP. At the end of this Treasury debt outstanding rose \$100, the depositor is \$100 wealthier, MMF AUM increased by \$100 (MMF assets increased with \$100 more bills), and bank deposits & reserves are unchanged. Exhibit 3 shows this in clearer detail.

Not every bank depositor is similarly rate sensitive to the example above. It is possible that more bill issuance drains ON RRP & Treasury payments to depositors end up as reserves. We just think this impact will be marginal, in-line with the shift in our Fed QT liquidity drain composition from 90/10 to 100/0 for ON RRP / reserves. We are open to the notion that the QT liquidity drain might realize closer to 105/-5 or 110/-10 ON RRP / reserves but would be surprised to see a materially faster pace of ON RRP reduction or sharp increase in reserve balances.

SOFR/FF framework: liquidity similar, SOFR slightly higher

If we are right and ON RRP declines only marginally faster, the impact on SOFR should be small. Our preferred framework for estimating SOFR/FF looks at the historical settings of SOFR & FF to IORB as a function of "liquidity / GDP" (we define "liquidity" as ON RRP + reserves) (Exhibit 4). We assume that lower ON RRP would mean higher reserves & vice versa. Therefore, a faster ON RRP drain & offsetting reserve impact would result in a limited change to SOFR / FF.

We acknowledge there may be some shift in MMF preference to own bills vs repo with higher front-end supply. This would mean slightly more upward pressure on SOFR vs the prior Treasury issuance practice. We do not account for this in our standard SOFR / FF framework but it would shift the distribution of risks to cheaper SOFR vs FF.

Bottom line: Treasury's shift in issuance strategy does not meaningfully impact our Q4 '23 bill supply estimates since their lower financing need & smaller coupon issuance roughly offset each other. Our bill forecasts for FY or CY '24 are similarly offset, though a change in our TGA assumption at end '24 means slightly less bill supply over the year. Treasury's shift will only marginally speed the pace of ON RRP depletion due to Fed QT pace & recent bank depositor behavior. SOFR/FF impact should also be modest but risks skew to a sooner & faster increase in SOFR than our forecasts imply.

Exhibit 1: Bill and coupon issuance estimates by month (\$bn)

Marketable borrowing needs will need to grow to meet higher deficits

	Financing Need	TGA EOP	TGA Change	Marketable Borrowing	Buybacks	Net Coupon	Net Bills	Fed Coupon maturities	Fed Bill maturities	Net Coupons to the Public	Net Bills to the Public
	1	2	3 = 1+2	4	5	6	7	8	9 = 5 + 7	10 = 6 + 8	
Oct-23	54	832	175	229	0	33	196	52	8	85	204
Nov-23	380	750	-82	298	0	49	249	60	0	109	249
Dec-23	108	750	0	108	0	127	-19	46	14	173	-5
Jan-24	-96	750	0	-96	0	7	-103	53	7	60	-96
Feb-24	366	750	0	366	0	81	285	60	0	141	285
Mar-24	367	750	0	367	0	157	210	45	15	201	226
Apr-24	-272	750	0	-272	0	66	-338	60	0	126	-338
May-24	283	750	0	283	10	103	180	60	0	163	180
Jun-24	67	750	0	67	10	166	-99	36	24	202	-75
Jul-24	267	750	0	267	10	98	169	0	0	98	169
Aug-24	267	750	0	267	10	141	126	0	0	141	126
Sep-24	-68	750	0	-68	10	196	-264	0	0	196	-264
Oct-24	257	750	0	257	10	100	157	0	0	100	157
Nov-24	330	750	0	330	10	143	187	0	0	143	187
Dec-24	42	750	0	42	10	202	-160	0	0	202	-160

Source: BofA Global Research, US Treasury, Federal Reserve. Gray indicates projections.

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Exhibit 2: Fed balance sheet evolution since QT start (\$bn)

Fed assets have declined \$1 tn+ but reserves balances are unchanged

	Assets				Liabilities					
	Total	USTs	Agy MBS	Other	Reserves	UST Cash Balance	ON RRP	Foreign RRP	Currency	Other
5/25/2022	8964	5769	2707	487	3315	802	1996	262	2276	313
11/1/2023	7917	4873	2463	582	3315	753	1079	317	2325	128
Post QT Δ	-1046	-897	-245	95	0	-49	-916	55	49	-185

Source: Bloomberg

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Exhibit 3: Balance sheet example scenario

At the end of this Treasury debt outstanding rose \$100, the depositor is \$100 wealthier, MMF AUM increased by \$100

Money Market Fund		Stage 1 Bank Depositor		Commercial Bank	
Assets	Liabilities	Assets	Liabilities	Assets	Liabilities
ON RRP	-\$100	Deposit	+\$100	Reserves at Fed	+\$100
T-bill	+\$100		Net Wealth	Deposits	+\$100
Total Change, Stage 1		Total Change, Stage 1		Total Change, Stage 1	
		Stage 2		Commercial Bank	
Assets	Liabilities	Assets	Liabilities	Assets	Liabilities
ON RRP	+\$100	Deposit	-\$100	Reserves at Fed	-\$100
	Depositor Inflow	MMF Holding	+\$100	Deposits	-\$100
Total Change, Stage 2		Total Change, Stage 2		Total Change, Stage 2	
		Net change		Commercial Bank	
Assets	Liabilities	Assets	Liabilities	Assets	Liabilities
ON RRP	\$0	MMF Holding	+\$100	Reserves at Fed	\$0
T-bill	+\$100		Net Wealth	Deposits	\$0
Total Change, Stage 1+2		Total Change, Stage 1+2		Total Change, Stage 1+2	

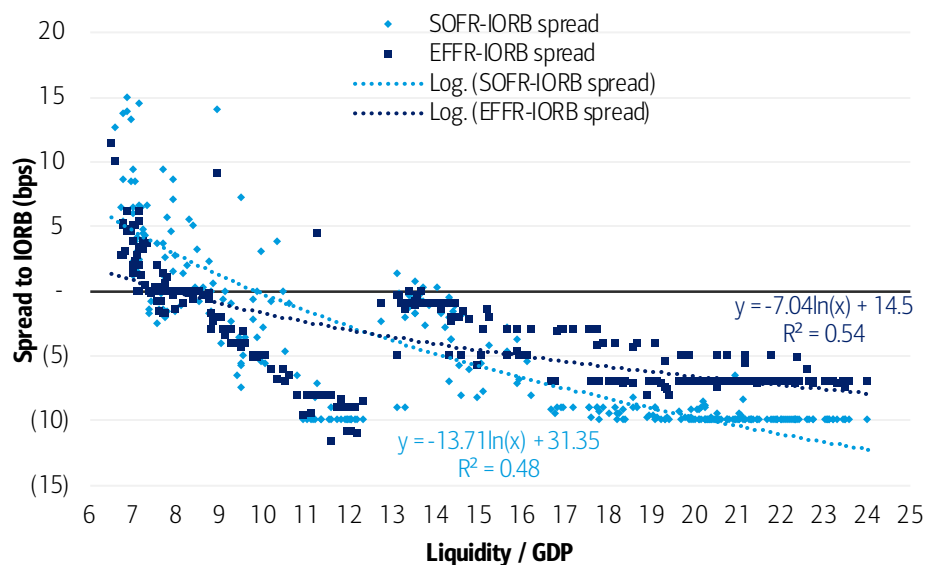
Source: BofA Global Research

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Exhibit 4: SOFR and EFR spread to IORB vs liquidity to GDP

If we are right and ON RRP declines only marginally faster, the impact on SOFR should be small



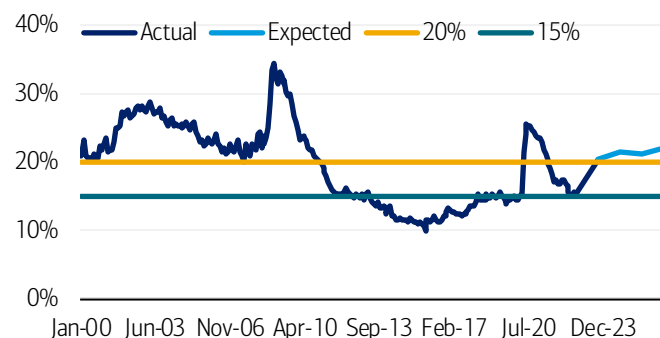
Source: BofA Global Research, Bloomberg

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Supplemental charts

Exhibit 5: Bills as a % of marketable debt

Given our expectations for deficit and QT ending in Jun '24, bills as a share of marketable debt should increase through FY '26

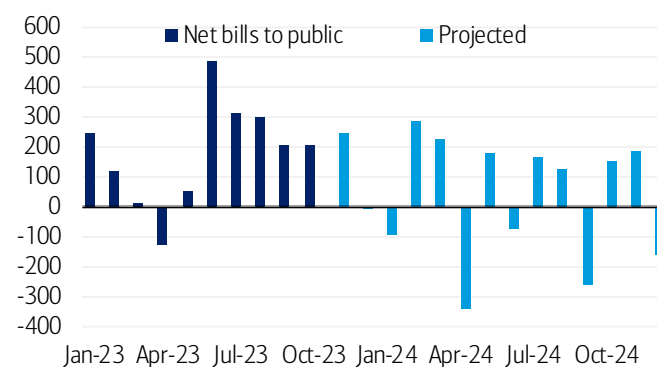


Source: BofA Global Research, US Treasury

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Exhibit 6: Monthly net bill issuance and projections (\$bn)

We forecast \$448b in bill issuance in Q4 '23, \$415bn in Q1 '24



Source: BofA Global Research, US Treasury

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Exhibit 7: BofA bill forecast vs TBAC recommended (\$bn)

Our T-bill forecast is roughly in line with TBAC's recommendation

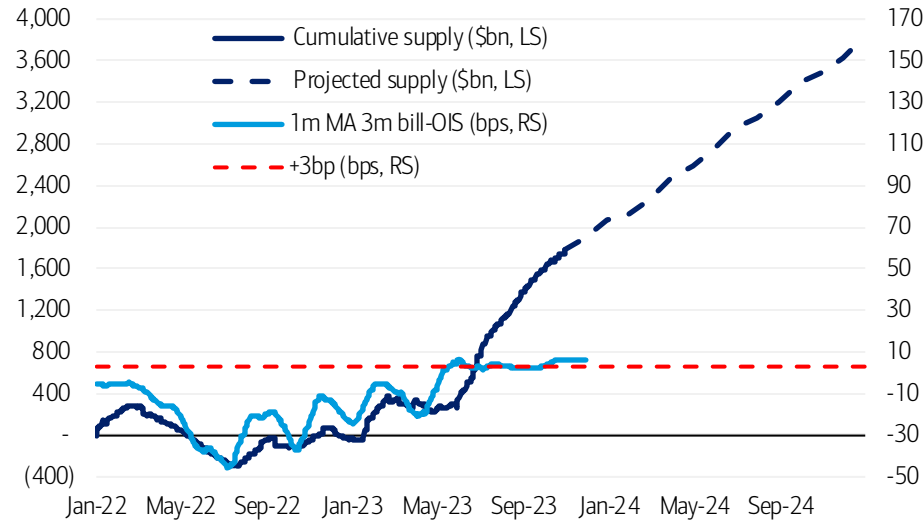
	Q4'23	Q1'24	Total
BofA Bill forecast	448	415	863
TBAC recommended bill issuance	437	468	905
Difference	11	-53	-42

Source: BofA Global Research, US Treasury

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Exhibit 8: Projected bill supply vs 1mo moving avg of 3m bill-OIS

Investors have been buying up 3m bills at just 3bps cheap to OIS

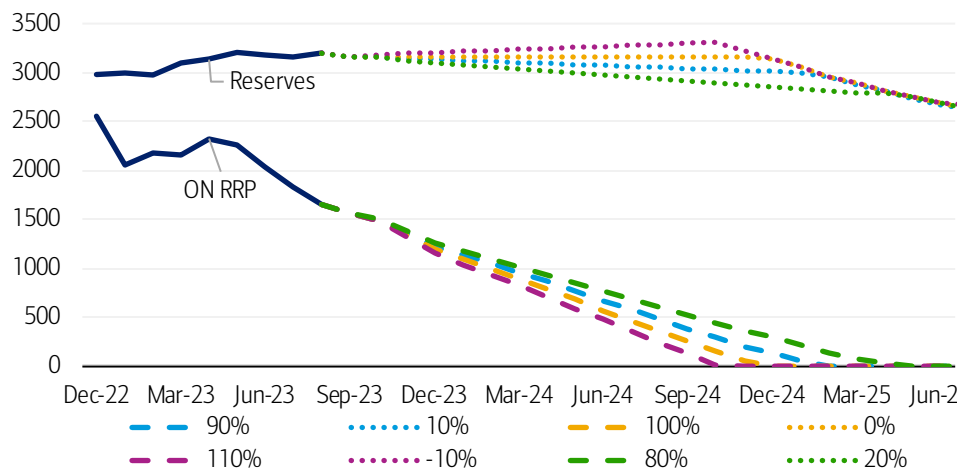


Source: BofA Global Research, Treasury

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Exhibit 9: Projected Fed ON RRP and reserve balances (\$bn)

We forecast ON RRP to fall to \$0 sometime between Q4'24 to Q2 '25



Source: BofA Global Research, Bloomberg

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