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Inflation Data Keeps Low Rate Hopes Alive

The much-anticipated Consumer Price Index (CPI) was released this week. For those seeking evidence that inflation will soon be back at the Fed's target level, it wasn't the triumph it might have been. Even so, rates managed to move lower.

Mortgage rates and, indeed, most rates are determined by trading levels in the bond market. Bond yields/rates move higher when inflation is high, and the market has been waiting on signs of lower inflation before trading in a way that allows interest rates to move lower.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is the biggest name in monthly inflation reports. It's caused big reactions in rates many times over the past few years. In recent months, it's been showing more and more promise regarding a return to inflation levels that would allow for significantly lower rates.

But CPI has given false hope before, so traders are wary. This week's report definitely stopped short of providing resounding confirmation that inflation is defeated. That said, it didn't send any signals that were too troubling either.

With that in mind, it's not too surprising that rates actually didn't move much in response to CPI. If anything, the initial impulse was toward slightly higher rates. It wasn't until the following day's Producer Price Index (PPI) that bond traders saw better evidence of calmer inflation. Both CPI and PPI have been moving lower, but PPI is now all the way back down to target levels.

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
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Mortgage News Daily

30 Yr. Fixed	7.07%	+0.02	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.45%	0.00	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.51%	+0.02	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.26%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	7.02%	-0.01	0.00

Freddie Mac

30 Yr. Fixed	6.86%	-0.01	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.16%	+0.03	0.00

Rates as of: 6/28

Market Data

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 5.5	98.49	-0.45
MBS GNMA 5.5	99.10	-0.44
10 YR Treasury	4.3980	+0.1111
30 YR Treasury	4.5640	+0.1383

Pricing as of: 6/28 5:59PM EST

Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jun 12	208.5	+15.58%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%



The following chart shows how 10yr Treasury yields (which tend to correlation with mortgage rate movement) were reacting throughout the week:

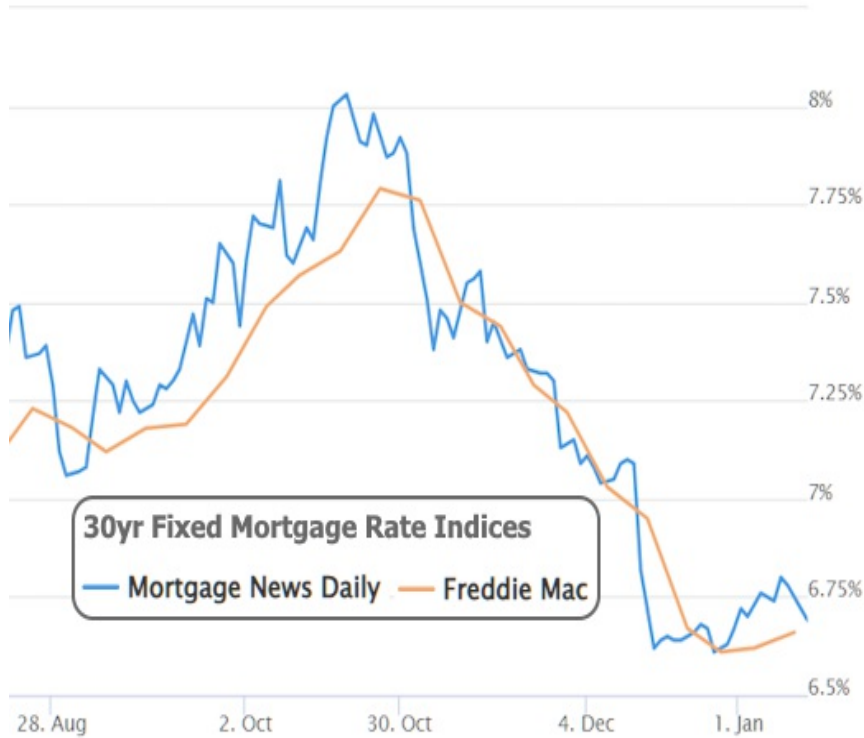


Note the initially bad reaction to CPI. There was a recovery that same afternoon for a variety of potential reasons. At least one of those reasons had to do with speculation that the Fed is still on track to deliver a series of rate cuts this year in addition to making rate-friendly changes to the way it's managing its bond portfolio. Fed policy expectations are even easier to see when we look at actual Fed Funds Rate expectations which are now at the lowest levels since July.

**Fed Funds Rate Expectations, end of 2024
(based on Fed Funds Futures)**



Mortgage rates don't correlate perfectly with Fed Funds Rate expectations (one reason we often advise that a Fed rate cut/hike doesn't mean a mortgage rate cut/hike). As such, they're not back below the recent lows, but they definitely haven't moved much higher. This week's gentle descent means we're continuing to hold a vast majority of the improvement seen in Nov/Dec.



Looking ahead, while next week doesn't have any economic data on the same level as CPI, Wednesday's Retail Sales report can definitely move the needle. It's expected to improve slightly to 0.4% month over month after hitting 0.3% last time.

Beyond the data, we'll hear from several Fed speakers and there's been some speculation that Waller's appearance at the Brookings Institute will bring some important concepts regarding the precursors for friendlier rate policy in 2024. That will happen on Tuesday, which is the first business day of the week next week due to the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

While not as much of a factor for interest rates, we'll also get updates on several key housing metrics including new home construction, builder confidence, and Existing Home Sales.

Subscribe to my newsletter online at: <http://housingnewsletters.com/rateshopkc>

Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Monday, Jan 08				
3:00PM	Nov Consumer credit (bl)	\$23.75B	\$9B	\$5.13B
Tuesday, Jan 09				
6:00AM	Dec NFIB Business Optimism Index	91.9	90.7	90.6
10:05AM	Jan IBD economic optimism	44.7	42	40
Wednesday, Jan 10				
7:00AM	Jan/05 MBA Refi Index	425.4		358.2
7:00AM	Jan/05 MBA Purchase Index	148.6		140.7
10:00AM	Nov Wholesale inventories mm (%)	-0.2%	-0.2%	-0.4%
Thursday, Jan 11				

Event Importance:

- No Stars = Insignificant
- ☆ Low
- ★ Moderate
- ★★ Important
- ★★★ Very Important

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
8:30AM	Dec y/y CORE CPI (%)	3.9%	3.8%	4%
8:30AM	Dec m/m CORE CPI (%)	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
8:30AM	Jan/06 Jobless Claims (k)	202K	210K	202K
Friday, Jan 12				
8:30AM	Dec Core Producer Prices MM (%)	0%	0.2%	0%
8:30AM	Dec Core Producer Prices YY (%)	1.8%	1.9%	2%
Tuesday, Jan 16				
8:30AM	Jan NY Fed Manufacturing	-43.7	-5	-14.5
Wednesday, Jan 17				
8:30AM	Dec Retail Sales (%)	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%
9:15AM	Dec Industrial Production (%)	0.1%	0%	0.2%
10:00AM	Jan NAHB housing market indx	44	39	37
10:00AM	Nov Business Inventories (%)			-0.1%
Thursday, Jan 18				
8:30AM	Dec Building permits: number (ml)	1.495M	1.48M	1.467M
8:30AM	Jan Philly Fed Business Index	-10.6	-7	-10.5
8:30AM	Jan/13 Jobless Claims (k)	187K	207K	202K
8:30AM	Dec Housing starts number mm (ml)	1.46M	1.426M	1.56M
Friday, Jan 19				
10:00AM	Jan Consumer Sentiment (ip)	78.8	70	69.7
10:00AM	Dec Existing home sales (ml)	3.78M	3.82M	3.82M

Real Talk

At The Rate Shop, we're not your average mortgage banker. We specialize in bringing you ridiculously low interest rates that will make you wonder what the other guys are doing. In fact the ONLY objection we ever hear is "your rates sound too good to be true". Well they're not, and here is why...

After 15 years in the retail banking world I was frustrated with the high interest rates that came from that business model. As I looked around at all the bloated layers of management and their expensive salaries and the overhead of running a larger company (think rent costs, employee health and benefit costs, payroll taxes, and on and on) it dawned on me that I was a part of the problem, and the solution, for me at least, was so easy to see.

Start my own mortgage brokerage shop. No expensive executive salaries, no expensive building to pay rent at, no unnecessary employees and all the costs that are associated with that. What happens when you cut out all the fat? You can provide lower rates and lower closing costs. It's simple. Now here is the best part, you still get great service from a local Kansas City Lender. My mission is to let everyone know that low rates and great customer service are NOT mutually exclusive.

Thanks for coming along on this journey where Low Rates meet Great Service. The two do NOT have to be mutually exclusive. It's just a lie that the big box mortgage companies have been telling you for years. Don't believe me? Give me a call or shoot me a text on my personal cell phone today and compare my rates and costs up against any other lender in the country, and be prepared to be blown away.

Mike Baker

