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Housing Showing Some Signs of Stabilizing

It wouldn't be 2018 in the housing market if there wasn't at least one report painting a gloomier picture. The National Association of Homebuilders Housing Market Index (or "builder confidence" for short) did those honors this week.

Up until now, builder confidence had been holding up better than other housing metrics in 2018. **That changed abruptly** this week as confidence dropped to the lowest levels in more than 2 years, and at the fastest pace in more than 4 years.

Builder Confidence



What's up with this sudden shift? Builders chalked it up, in large part, to recently **higher rates and home prices**. One other factor to consider is the psychological effect of sharp losses in the stock market.

Builder confidence was the **only** downbeat housing report of the week though! Numbers were roughly as-expected elsewhere. This keeps longer-term trends in decent shape, especially with respect to residential construction numbers.

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News	Daily		
30 Yr. Fixed	6.89%	0.00	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.33%	+0.01	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.33%	+0.01	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.05%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	6.58%	0.00	0.00
Freddie Mac			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.77%	-0.09	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.05%	-0.11	0.00

Market Data

Rates as of: 7/22

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 5.5	99.39	-0.01
MBS GNMA 5.5	99.78	+0.00
10 YR Treasury	4.2525	0.0000
30 YR Treasury	4.4701	-0.0024

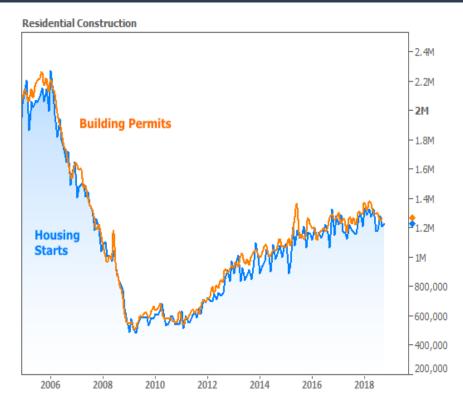
Pricing as of: 7/23 3:04AM EST

Recent Housing Data

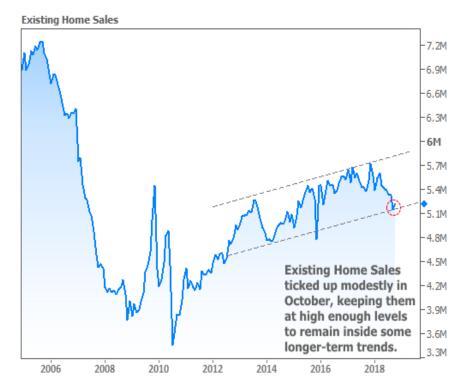
		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jul 10	206.1	-0.19%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%

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Existing Home Sales have fallen a bit more noticeably in 2018, but by bouncing here, they would be able to maintain a **longer-term uptrend** that began roughly 5 years ago.

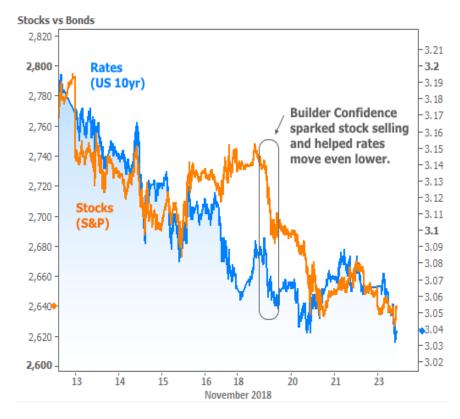


In terms of market movement this week, interest rates remained fairly flat while stocks continued lower. Incidentally, the builder confidence numbers (which don't tend to move markets) were **shocking enough** to cause a bit of a stir on Monday morning.

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Simply put, rates might have moved **higher** this week had it not been for the builder confidence data setting the tone (it was the first and only economic report on Monday morning).

In general though, it doesn't make much sense to read too much significance into Thanksgiving week market movement. As market participants return in greater numbers for the last few full weeks of the year, we'll be watching to see if stocks break below the key floors seen in the following chart. If they do, that could provide the inspiration for rates to continue lower.



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Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Tuesday, N	ov 20			
8:30AM	Oct Build permits: change mm (%)	-0.6		1.7
8:30AM	Oct Housing starts number mm (ml)	1.228	1.225	1.201
8:30AM	Oct House starts mm: change (%)	+1.5		-5.3
8:30AM	Oct Building permits: number (ml)	1.263	1.267	1.270
Wednesday	y, Nov 21			
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	227.7		220.8
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	783.7		824.7
8:30AM	Oct Durable goods (%)	-4.4	-2.5	0.7
8:30AM	Oct Nondefense ex-air (%)	0.0	0.2	-0.1
8:30AM	w/e Jobless Claims (k)	224	218	216
10:00AM	Oct Existing home sales (ml)	5.22	5.20	5.15
10:00AM	Oct Exist. home sales % chg (%)	+1.4	1.0	-3.4
10:00AM	Nov U Mich Sentiment Final (ip)	97.5	98.3	98.3
10:00AM	Nov U Mich 1Yr Inf Final (%)	2.8		2.8
10:00AM	Nov U Mich 5-Yr Inf Final (%)	2.6		2.6
Tuesday, Nov 27				
9:00AM	Sep CaseShiller 20 yy (%)	+5.1	5.3	5.5

Event Importance:

No Stars = Insignificant
Low
Moderate
Important
Very Important

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Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
9:00AM	Sep Monthly Home Price mm (%)	0.2		0.3
10:00AM	Nov Consumer confidence	135.7	135.9	137.9
1:00PM	5-Yr Note Auction (bl)	40		
Wednesday	y, Nov 28			
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	247.8		227.7
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	787.7		783.7
8:30AM	Q3 GDP Prelim (%)	3.5	3.5	3.5
10:00AM	Oct New home sales-units mm (ml)	0.544	0.575	0.553
10:00AM	Oct New home sales chg mm (%)	-8.9	3.7	-5.5
1:00PM	7-Yr Note Auction (bl)	32		
Thursday, Nov 29				
8:30AM	Oct Core PCE (y/y) (%)	+1.8	1.9	2.0
8:30AM	w/e Jobless Claims (k)	234	220	224
10:00AM	Oct Pending Sales Index	102.1		104.6
10:00AM	Oct Pending Home Sales (%)	-2.6	0.5	0.5
Friday, Nov 30				
9:45AM	Nov Chicago PMI	66.4	58.0	58.4

Update: Buyer Broker Agreement

After requests from real estate companies, a nonprofit consumer watchdog group the Consumer Federation of America has developed a list of factors to consider when creating a buyer contract in preparation for upcoming practice changes in the industry.

CFA released its "Proposed Criteria for Evaluating Home Buyer Contract Forms" on Tuesday. The 15 criteria focus on the contracts' form — whether the documents are readable and understandable — and content — whether they are fair to homebuyers.

- -the document's expiration date (CFA recommends buyers asks for a three-month contract and never sign one longer than six months)
- -the right to terminate the contract
- -the disclosure that compensation is negotiable
- -the broker's compensation clearly stated and that the buyer broker can't receive additional compensation for facilitating a sale
- -that any additional fees, such as for showing a home, will be deducted from the broker's commission if there is a successful sale
- -that the commission is due only if there is a successful closing
- -that buyers have an obligation for no longer than 60 days, CFA recommends to pay a broker who earlier showed them a home they purchased after the contract ended
- -seller concessions paid directly to buyers
- -dual agency not pre-approved by the contract
- -an explanation of how a broker treats different buyer clients interested in the same property
- -that buyers should not be required to first go through mediation or arbitration if they have a complaint

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