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Don't Believe Everything You Read About Mortgage Rates

Every Thursday, Freddie Mac releases its weekly mortgage rate survey. It's subsequently used as an authoritative primary source for most major media outlets. That's not **usually** a problem, but this week could be an exception.

First thing's first: over time, Freddie's weekly rate survey (officially, the "Primary Mortgage Market Survey") is **incredibly accurate**. For broad, analytical purposes, it does a perfect job of conveying bigger-picture mortgage rate movement. That's great for market analysts who are studying long-term trends, but the data runs the risk of being stale if you have timely needs.

Naturally, consumers who click on news stories about mortgage rates tend to have timely needs! Fortunately, Freddie's numbers **won't appear** stale if markets are calm.

Unfortunately, markets have been **anything but calm** for the past few weeks, causing Freddie's numbers to lag interest rate reality. The problem is compounded by the fact that Freddie's survey responses only come in during the first 3 days of the week (Thursday and Friday are never counted).

Last Thursday, Freddie reported rates as "unchanged," whereas actual rates rose at their **fastest weekly pace since November 2015!** As such, we would be justified in expecting a sharp increase in this week's Freddie survey. Instead, it rose by a modest 0.05%! That's only about a quarter of the actual move from the recent lows.

While the smaller-than-expected increase in Freddie's survey numbers is likely a **byproduct of the 3-day weekend**, that's of little help to consumers who are seeing one thing in the news and then being told another by their mortgage professional. Rest-assured, as of Wednesday, rates were the highest they've been in more than 4 months.

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.91%	0.00	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.48%	+0.01	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.39%	0.00	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.29%	-0.01	0.00
5/1 ARM	6.61%	0.00	0.00
Freddie Mac			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.79%	-0.65	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.11%	-0.65	0.00

Rates as of: 3/28

Market Data

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 5.5	99.48	-0.17
MBS GNMA 5.5	99.95	-0.15
10 YR Treasury	4.2008	+0.0128
30 YR Treasury	4.3436	-0.0054

Pricing as of: 3/28 2:05PM EST

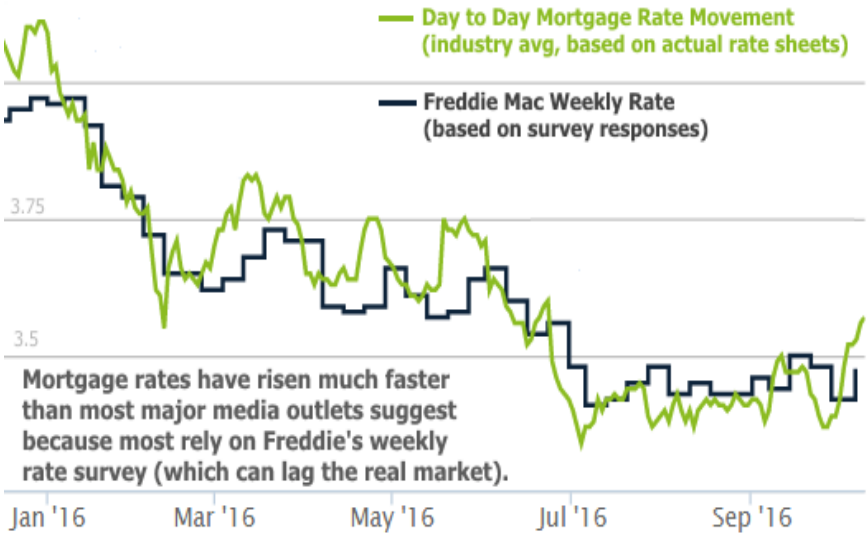
Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Mar 27	196.8	-0.71%
Building Permits	Feb	1.52M	+1.95%
Housing Starts	Feb	1.52M	+10.7%
New Home Sales	Feb	662K	+0.15%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%

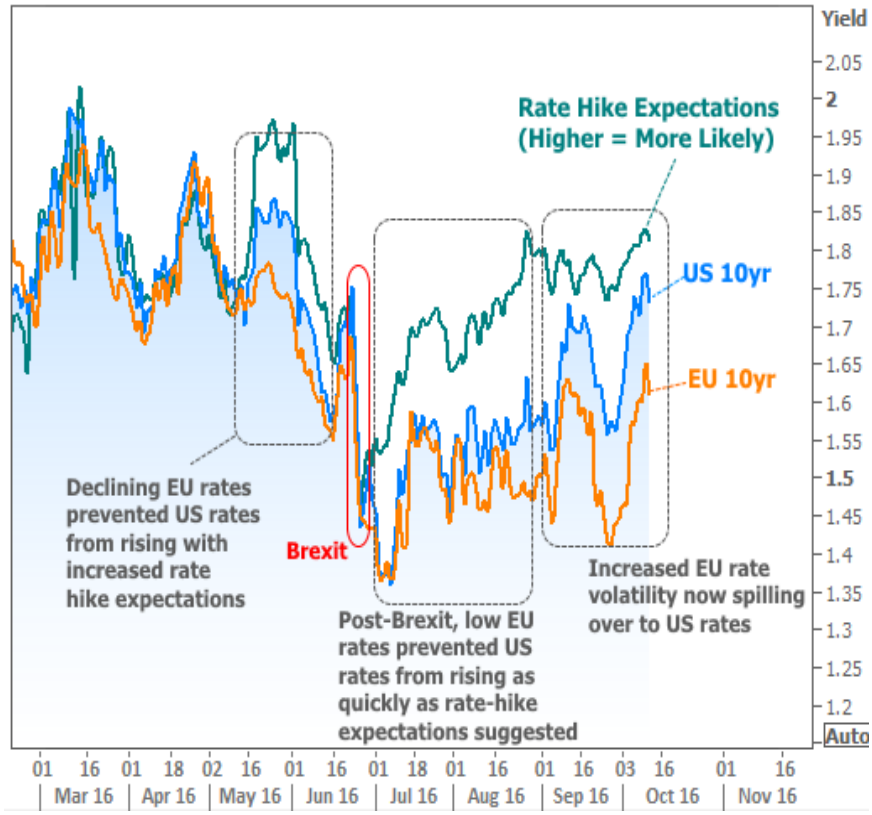
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The motivations for the most recent rate spike are **diverse** and potentially even **debatable**. There are 2 distinct camps though. One camp sees rates moving higher as a result of Fed rate hike expectations. The other focuses more on global central bank stimulus expectations (last week's newsletter discussed this in detail). The truth is probably somewhere in between these two camps, and the following chart supports that conclusion.



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In the chart, the **higher** the green line, the **more** markets are expecting a Fed rate hike. Notice the strong correlation between US rates, EU rates, and rate hike expectations earlier in the year. Fed rate hike rhetoric strengthened in May, causing expectations to spike, but longer term rates (like 10yr Treasuries and mortgage rates) didn't follow because global markets were already buzzing about Brexit (the UK's vote to leave the European Union).

Post-Brexit, US rates have been **less willing to chase** the bounce in Fed rate hike expectations, despite clearly feeling some pressure (as seen in July/Aug, when the blue line inched higher relative to the orange line). Once European rate volatility increased, US rates have had freer rein to follow domestic motivations. This trend toward higher rates can continue if European rates keep moving gradually higher, but that's a big "if."

Bottom line: the Fed isn't the only source of inspiration for rate movement right now. The next few months bring significant risks to the outlook. These include **2 opportunities** for the Fed to hike rates and a **high likelihood** of the European Central Bank specifically addressing its asset purchase plans (the original source of the current rate spike).

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Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Wednesday, Oct 12				
11:30AM	3-Yr Note Auction (bl)	24		
1:00PM	10-yr Note Auction (bl)	20		
Thursday, Oct 13				
8:30AM	Sep Import prices mm (%)	+0.1	0.2	-0.2
8:30AM	Sep Export prices mm (%)	+0.3	0.0	-0.8
8:30AM	w/e Initial Jobless Claims (k)	246	251	249
1:00PM	30-Yr Bond Auction (bl)	12		
Friday, Oct 14				
8:30AM	Sep Retail sales mm (%)	0.6	0.6	-0.3
8:30AM	Sep Core Producer Prices MM (%)	+0.2	0.1	0.1
8:30AM	Sep Core Producer Prices YY (%)	+1.2	1.2	1.0
8:30AM	Sep Producer Prices (%)	+0.3	0.2	0.0
10:00AM	Aug Business inventories mm (%)	+0.2	0.2	0.0
Monday, Oct 17				
8:30AM	Oct NY Fed manufacturing	-6.8	1.00	-1.99
9:15AM	Sep Industrial output mm (%)	+0.1	0.1	-0.4
9:15AM	Sep Capacity utilization mm (%)	75.4	75.6	75.5
Tuesday, Oct 18				
8:30AM	Sep CPI mm, sa (%)	+0.3	0.3	0.2
8:30AM	Sep Core CPI yy, nsa (%)	+2.2	2.3	2.3
Wednesday, Oct 19				
8:30AM	Sep Housing starts number mm (ml)	1.047	1.175	1.142
8:30AM	Sep Building permits: number (ml)	1.225	1.165	1.152

Event Importance:

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

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Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Thursday, Oct 20				
8:30AM	Oct Philly Fed Business Index	9.7	5.3	12.8
10:00AM	Sep Existing home sales (ml)	5.47	5.35	5.33
Wednesday, Apr 05				
2:00PM	FOMC Minutes			

All Your Mortgage Needs, Professionally Delivered with a Personal Touch

Whether you're a first-time homebuyer hoping to navigate the process of buying a home so that it is a fun and anxiety-free process or a homeowner looking for refinance options that deliver more freedom and flexibility, I can help you analyze your current situation and find money saving options. With expertise in all areas of mortgage and financing, my hope is that once I become your mortgage partner, I'll stay your mortgage partner. With clients from A to Z, files never leave my hands or my desk. From start to finish, every step of the way, my goal is to keep the lines of communication open, provide complete and attentive service, and ensure the most seamless and satisfactory process possible.

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