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Why Are Rates Suddenly at 4-Month Highs?

After the abrupt rise in May and June, mortgage rates have enjoyed an extended period of low volatility and consistent improvement. In fact, by October 27th, the average lender was quoting their best rates in 6 months. Why then, did they **wind up at 4-month highs** less than 2 weeks later?

As I've mentioned over the past 2 weeks, the Fed Announcement on October 28th was the **primary catalyst** for the recent rate spike. It caused a rapid shift in the calm, positive trend. It continues to be a potential game-changer for the mortgage rate environment heading into the end of the year.

Even when the Fed doesn't have the spotlight, Fed-related considerations are still moving markets. Last Friday's jobs report is a **great example**. The Employment Situation (frequently referred to as the jobs report, NFP, or nonfarm payrolls) is the most important piece of economic data in the US. It is fully capable of influencing interest rates on its own.

In Friday's **case, the jobs report was doubly important because it was the last refuge** of those who didn't think the Fed was likely to hike its policy rate in December. The logic is simple: stronger job creation = higher likelihood of a Fed hike.

Over the past few weeks, several Fed speakers had been **reminding markets** that it would only take job creation in the 100-150k range to reinforce the rate hike timeline. Some sceptics concluded that the Fed had early access to the data and was trying to prepare markets for a low number.

When payroll creation came out at 271k, **all manner of critics were silenced**. Odds of a December rate hike moved quickly higher, as did most domestic interest rates. This is why rates made an additional, abrupt move to 4-month highs last Friday after they looked to be leveling-off just a day before.

Trading levels began holding their ground on Tuesday. This is a pretty quick bounce, and it could signal some measure of **exhaustion** in the market's effort to push rates higher (that's a good thing). Even then, lenders have been reluctant to pass along the market gains in the form of lower mortgage rates. This reluctance **could continue** to be a problem with a likely Fed rate hike now just over a month away.

In industry-specific news, the Mortgage Bankers Association notes that the rise in rates has yet to translate to a **big drop in mortgage applications**. Given the tendency for the MBA's app survey to lag late-week rate movement, it wouldn't be a surprise to see things slow down next week in terms of refi

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			
30YR Fixed	7.33%	-0.12	0.00
15YR Fixed	6.89%	-0.10	0.00
30YR FHA	6.95%	-0.10	0.00
30YR Jumbo	7.44%	-0.06	0.00
7/6 SOFR	6.81%	-0.19	0.00
30YR VA	6.97%	-0.10	0.00

Rates as of: 11/20

MBS and Treasury

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 6.0	99.51	+0.41
10 YR Treasury	4.9403	-0.1033
30 YR Treasury	5.3324	-0.0738

Pricing as of: 11/20 5:59PM EST

Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Nov 11	199.8	-2.35%
Building Permits	Oct	1.3M	-7.5%
Housing Starts	Oct	1.31M	+7.21%
New Home Sales	Sep	676K	-1.17%
Pending Home Sales	Oct	63	-4.69%
Existing Home Sales	Oct	3.99M	+0.25%
Builder Confidence	Nov	25	-13.79%

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numbers.

Fannie on the other hand, notes that the rising rate environment is **already having an impact** on its **Home Purchase Sentiment Index**. A majority of those surveyed expect rates to rise over the next year. While consumer surveys have little to do with where rates actually go, if more consumers fear higher rates in the future, it can paradoxically serve to bolster purchase demand in the short term.

On a final note, as we discussed 2 weeks ago, Freddie Mac's **weekly mortgage rate survey** was likely to reflect the recent rise in rates. As it turns out, the survey now shows the **sharpest two week increase** of the year, rising by 22 basis points from 3.76 to 3.98.

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Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Tuesday, Nov 10				
8:30AM	Oct Import prices mm (%)	-0.5	-0.1	-0.1
8:30AM	Oct Export prices mm (%)	-0.2	-0.2	-0.7
Wednesday, Nov 11				
12:00AM	Veterans Day			
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	190.1		190.0
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	1656.2		1692.9
Thursday, Nov 12				
8:30AM	w/e Continued jobless claims (ml)	2.174	2.170	2.163
8:30AM	w/e Jobless claims 4-wk avg (k)	267.75		262.75
8:30AM	w/e Initial Jobless Claims (k)	276	272	276
Friday, Nov 13				
8:30AM	Oct Retail sales mm (%)	+0.1	0.3	0.1
Monday, Nov 16				
8:30AM	Nov NY Fed manufacturing	-10.74	-6.20	-11.36
Tuesday, Nov 17				
8:30AM	Oct CPI mm, sa (%)	+0.2	0.2	-0.2
8:30AM	Oct Core CPI mm, sa (%)	+0.2	0.2	0.2
8:30AM	Oct Core CPI index, sa	243.70		243.21
10:00AM	Nov NAHB housing market indx	62	64	64
4:00PM	Sep Foreign buying, T-bonds (bl)	+17.4		-35.0
Wednesday, Nov 18				
8:30AM	Oct Building permits: number (ml)	1.150	1.150	1.105
8:30AM	Oct Build permits: change mm (%)	+4.1		-4.8
8:30AM	Oct Housing starts number mm (ml)	1.060	1.160	1.206
Thursday, Nov 19				
8:30AM	Nov Philly Fed Business Index	1.9	-1.0	-4.5

Event Importance:

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

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Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Wednesday, Jan 13				
1:00PM	10-yr Note Auction (bl)	21		
Thursday, Jan 14				
1:00PM	30-Yr Bond Auction (bl)	13		

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Jeff Statz 

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