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Bulltick Research and Strategy

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Market Strategy:

History Tells Us That The Fed Can Swing Quickly

The past 14 last-hike-to-first-cut periods in U.S. monetary policy averaged only 4.8 months. Many of the shortest ones were in the 1980s when inflation was high. (However, this is at least in part because high inflation necessitated much more frequent and unpredictable action by the Fed during the 1980s, different from today.) The average “plateau” (last hike to first cut periods) lasts much longer in the more recent past several cycles and were much shorter in the earlier ones. Of the past 14 cycles, the first seven (from 1982 - 1986) lasted an average of 1.4 months. The second seven (from 1987 - 2019) lasted an average of 7.8 months. See table below and analysis.

The main take-aways of our analysis: 1) We should be more on our toes for a reversal of a hiking cycle than we were for a reversal of a cutting cycle 2) Could happen sooner than many think 3) Reversal timeline will depend on the depth and duration of the next recession. See the page 2 table, which we did in-house at Bulltick Research. The Fed has encouraged the higher for longer narrative to curb inflation. Monetary history shows that when inflation peaks (which we believe it has with headline this year topping 9% y/y, when unemployment surges, and when inflation collapses, the Fed could move within months to reverse course on rates. This time, however, we also have the balance sheet, which the Fed is currently unwinding. The balance sheet unwind is another monetary tool at its disposal.



Listen to our inflation and FOMC analysis (11/7/22) [here](#).



Plateau Start	Plateau End	Fed Rate	Length (months)	Core PCE At Start	Core PCE At End
Dec-18	Jun-19	2.50	6	2.1	1.7
Jun-06	Aug-07	5.25	14	2.6	2.0
May-00	Dec-00	6.50	7	1.7	1.9
Mar-97	Aug-98	5.50	17	1.9	1.4
Feb-95	Jun-95	6.00	4	2.3	2.1
Feb-89	May-89	9.75	3	4.7	4.4
May-87	Sep-87	6.75	4	3.2	3.4
May-86	Jun-86	6.88	1	3.5	3.5
Aug-85	Nov-85	8.00	3	4.1	4.1
Jan-85	Feb-85	8.25	0	4.3	4.2
Aug-84	Sep-84	11.75	1	4.0	3.7
May-83	Aug-83	9.63	3	5.0	5.1
Aug-82	Sep-82	9.50	0	6.4	6.1
Jan-82	Mar-82	15.00	2	7.4	7.0

In general plateaus last much longer than what we can call “troughs” (period between the last cut followed by the first hike). These have averaged 13 months in the past 13 cycles (12.1 months in the past 14 cycles). In the past 7 cycles, they have averaged 21.8 months, including a massive 83 month stretch.

Trough Start	Trough End	Rate	Length (months)	Core PCE At Start	Core PCE At End
Mar-20	Feb-22	0.25	23	1.7	5.3
Dec-08	Nov-15	0.25	83	1.1	1.2
Jun-03	May-04	1.00	11	1.5	2.0
Nov-98	May-99	4.75	6	1.2	1.2
Jan-96	Feb-97	5.25	13	2.0	1.9
Sep-92	Jan-94	3.00	16	2.7	2.2
Jan-88	Feb-88	6.63	1	3.9	3.9
Aug-86	Nov-86	5.88	3	3.1	3.3
Mar-86	Apr-86	7.25	1	3.6	3.7
May-85	Jul-85	7.75	2	3.9	3.9
Dec-84	Jan-85	8.25	1	4.1	4.3
Aug-83	Feb-84	9.63	5	5.1	4.2
Dec-82	Apr-83	8.50	4	5.8	5.5
Jul-82	Aug-82	11.50	1	6.6	6.4

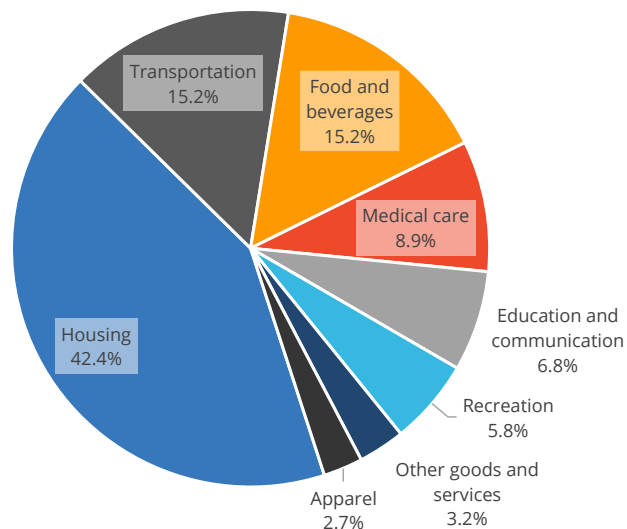
Inflation surprised positively in the October print although shelter costs remain a major factor. These too will fall off in coming months as the lag of housing prices to rents is about six months. **Expect inflation numbers to collapse next year as the unemployment rate rises, consumption and investment slow and the Fed remains higher for longer. Depending on the depth and duration of the recession, we think core PCE could fall quickly towards the Fed’s average target of 2.0%. Core PCE could well drop from the current 5.1% y/y (data for September 2022) down to 2.5%-2.7% end-2023 with an unemployment rate that could break above 5%.**



We reiterate a few points on inflation:

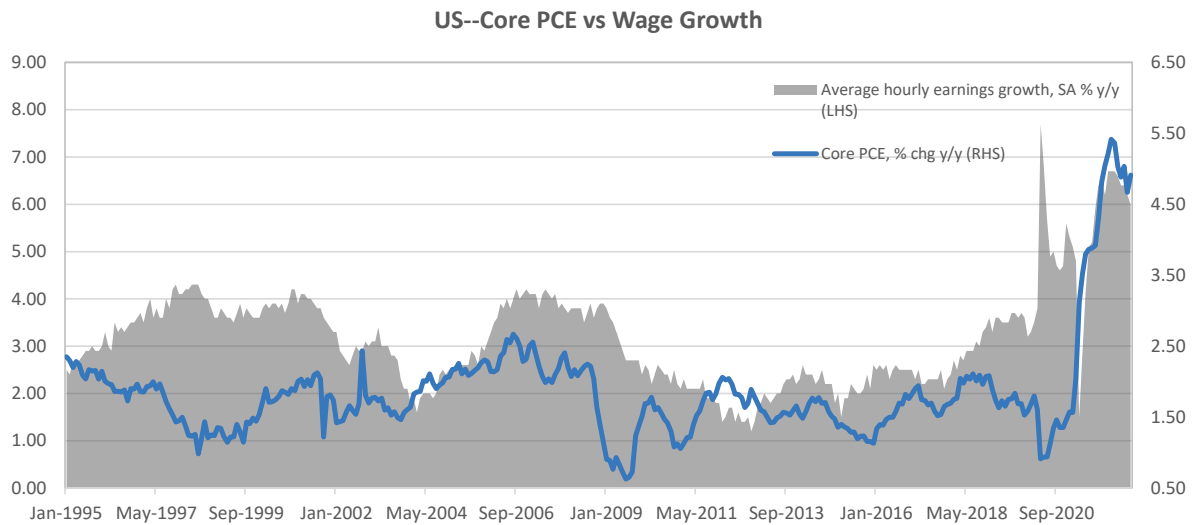
- 1) It will come down as the economy rolls over. How fast is the question.
- 2) Demand side is the sticky part. The labor market remains too hot and wage growth and job openings inconsistent with 2% inflation. This has to change.
- 3) Fed is going to hike to at least 5% in our view.
- 4) Rents (shelter) have been a key impulse and will roll over with the usual ~6 months delay as housing prices plummet across the country.
- 5) Unemployment rate has to move higher, towards what we estimate is the NAIRU, some 4.9%. This will help the demand side of inflation and curb the wage-price spiral.

US--Weightings of CPI Basket, 2020



Sources: Bulltck, Bloomberg, Fed Reserve

The Fed will decelerate the magnitude of its hikes to 50bps in December 2022 in our view but continue to hike to a terminal rate of 5.0% by March of 2023. The economy will need to enter a contractionary period to stamp out inflation. The labor market overheated. Now economic contraction is the only thing to stamp out inflation.



Sources: Bulltick, Bloomberg

We said then, and maintain now, that there is a high chance of recession in 2023 and that the Fed could later be forced to either cut rates and/or choose to resume QE. A resumption of QE brings risks given that its use has been confined to Goldilocks economic environment not a stagflationary one. With headline CPI this year topping 9.0% y/y at its highest, these were rates not seen since 1981, meaning we are living within an inflation climate that before now was out of living memory for many investors, both institutional and retail.

In an environment of recession and dropping inflation, 2023 will bring many opportunities across the spectrum of asset classes. Starting with fixed income. Long duration. Treasuries will become a hedge to risk assets as yields decline as recession unfolds. In equities, defensives have been our call since early 2022. They have outperformed cyclicals with value beating growth. Going into 2023 and as the market moves from inflation to recession and the Fed is given space to ease up, we recommend keeping on the radar cyclicals and tech names, many of which have been severely beaten up in a rising rate environment.



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