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#### **Inflation Roundup**

#### September 2, 2021

- Inflation Expectation Returns and Seasonality
- The State of Market-Based Inflation Expectations
- Stagflation?! Nah
- Team Transitory Has Won the Battle, but Not the Inflation War
- Rents Getting Spicy
- Commodities and Yields Destined to Enter Trading Ranges
- Consumer Spending Expectations Mildly Recede
- Central Banks Primed to Get Less Passive

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	Conditions Fueling an Inflation Premium	Oct '20	Nov '20	Dec '20	Jan '21	Feb '21	Mar '21	Apr '21	May '21	Jun '21	Jul '2 I	Aug '21	Notes
Wider TIPS Breakevens	Commodities ex-energy and gold: 50+% produce + YOY return	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	80+% of commodities rallying YOY. But! Correlations are relaxing and dispersion rising. IOW, not all ships rising at the same time.
	Global econ data releases: 50+% economies growing above one-year trend	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	80+% of economies growing above trend led by Asia Pacific and the US.
	Investors pricing in 2+% YOY headline CPI next 10 years	Ν	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Inflation swap caps/floor place a very firm floor in for TIPS breakevens at 200 bps
	TIPS breakeven curve inversion confirms committal to AIT	N	Ν	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Curve inversion confirms Federal Reserve's FAIT is in action.
	Fed purchases diminishing liquidity premium	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Fed purchases remain above 25% of total outstanding.
	Search activity forecasts rising OER YOY	Ν	N	Ν	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Search activity synonymous w/ higher rents.Apartment List and Zillow suggest OER could reach as much as ~7% YoY by EOY.
Impairs Risk Assets	VIX and US 10 year TIPS breakeven positively correlated	N	Ν	Y	N	N	Ν	N	Y	N	N	Ν	45-day rolling correlation at -0.49, indicating inflation fears have moved far into the backseat.
	Short-end swaption volatility shows tightening fears	N	Ν	Ν	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Swaption vol for 2-year rates into 2023 remains elevated with Eurodollars maintaining 70+ bps of tightening into Dec 2023.
	TIPS breakevens near fair value implied by risk assets	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Ν	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Ν	10y TIPS breakevens have fallen away from fair value at 254 bps.
	Investors pricing in 2.5% YOY headline CPI next 10 years	N	Ν	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	?	Inflation swap caps/floors pricing in headline CPI above 2.5% YOY for the next 10 years remains stuck just above 50%.

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#### **TIPS** TOTAL RETURNS:



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#### **TIPS BREAKEVENS** TOTAL RETURNS:



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#### **TIPS BREAKEVENS** SEASONALITY: Narrowing Favored



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#### **INFLATION** SEASONALITY: Data Releases Have Routinely

Peaked in August/September



Inflation Data Releases Often Lose Steam as Summer Ends Median YTD change since 2003 in official inflation releases (e.g. CPI and PPI)

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40

60

20

80

120

100

140

Trading Days

160

180

200

0

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240

260

220

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## **US 10-YEAR YIELDS** SEASONALITY:

Nominal and Real Yields Lose Bullish Bias



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## The State of Inflation Expectations

#### **Economist Expectations**

- Economists are bracing for ~5% YoY inflation through Q4 2021.
- Be aware the right-side tail is minimal with the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile at 5.6% YoY for Q4 2021.
- Headline CPI is not expected to drop back below 2.5% YoY until Q3 2022.



#### Shelter Inflation the Fulcrum

• We used plain-vanilla time series forecasts (ARIMA) for the major components of **core** CPI over the next 12 months as a baseline.

• In addition, we incorporate the growth of private rents (see Apartment List and Zillow on slide #32) to determine the potential path of **core** CPI. One series uses the full growth in private rents over the past six months, while the other runs at half speed. We allow private rent growth to recede beginning in January 2022.

• Assuming private rents show up one-forone in CPI, then **core** inflation could run as high as 6.5% YoY in early 2022 and persist above economist expectations through late 2022.



#### **US Inflation Expectations**

• USD inflation swap caps and floors show investors remaining on the fence (50/50 chance) over 2.5+% YoY headline CPI.

• The 3.0% YoY strike remains a small concern further out the curve at a 21% probability. Investors are NOT emphatically pricing in a right-side tail, instead siding with team 'transitory.'

• Investors have seemingly created a narrow band for headline CPI between 2.0% and 3.0% YoY.All in all, certainty over this range is running oddly high!



#### Eurozone Inflation Expectations

• EUR inflation swap caps and floors reveal improving expectations headline CPI can run at or above 1.5% YoY for the next five-plus years.

The US / German 5-year inflation
breakeven spread has been range bound since
February (115-150 bps), but has potential to
narrow with Germany playing catch-up.
Remember this spread has averaged 85 bps
since the financial crisis.



#### TIPS Breakevens Deviating From Risk Asset-Based Fair Value

• Quantile regression forests (QRF) are used to estimate the median and 20<sup>th</sup> / 80<sup>th</sup> percentiles for each maturity.

• Inputs include WTI crude oil, industrial commodities, implied vol, liquidity, USD, rate hike timing, cyclicals vs non-cyclicals performance.

• US 10-year TIPS breakevens have fallen below the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile estimate at 228 bps with the median wider at 254 bps.



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#### 10Y Inflation Breakevens Establish Trading Range



#### 10Y Inflation Breakevens Again Lose Breadth

- The chart shows the rolling 3-month change in 10-year inflation breakevens for 14 economies has fallen by an average of -4.2 bps.
- Breadth is again faltering with only 36% of inflation expectations widening. Needless to say, the wind has come out of the inflation sails.



#### **TIPS ETF Demand Rises**

- TIPS ETFs have seen rolling five-day inflows build yet again, reaching a pace near \$1 billion.
- Nonetheless, flows are not being matched by a continued drop in real yields.



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#### Energy, Materials, and Industrial Lose Ground, While TIPS Demand Remains



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## Stagflation?! Nah

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#### Stagflation Gaining Interest

• Fortunately, calls for stagflation have been limited among financial media. However some corners, namely so-called perma-bears, have brewed fears of slow growth and persistently high inflation (what's new right?!).

• Consumers' search activity reveals the concern may be real with the 'stagflation' topic frequent relative to the tails, deflation and hyperinflation. Shoppers have been quick to acknowledge apprehension over the prices of housing, large household durables, and vehicles.



#### Stagflation-Friendly Assets Bound to Lose Flows

 Further signs of low growth and high inflation fears are present in investor flows.
We created baskets of assets commonly referred to when discussing outlooks for strong economic growth versus stagflation.
Stagflation assets include commodities, consumer staples, precious metals, real estate, and TIPS.

• Investors have sent sizable flows into these stagflation preferred assets, while avoiding the fringe of growth (e.g. small caps and emerging markets). Do note this gap favoring stagflation has reached an extreme, suggesting mean reversion and return to growth may not be that far down the road. In a similar vein, cyclicals are finally gaining flows relative to defensives in recent weeks.





**Stagflation** = commodities, consumer staples, precious metals, real estate, TIPS **Growth** = consumer discretionary, small caps and emerging market equities



#### Inflation Momentum to Cool

• The chart below shows the momentum behind US economic and inflation data releases as they come in relative to one-year average growth rates.

• The mere fact inflation is lingering just long enough while economic growth decelerates from its breakneck pace offers room for fearmongering. However the momentum behind inflation is now also rolling over.

• Remember jobs and inflation habitually lag other economic data including confidence, manufacturing, and more.



#### Peak TIPS Dominance?

• TIPS have been making waves with record in-flows despite confusing inflation releases (e.g. CPI vs PPI) and ultra-low real yields.We can mostly thank the hefty accrual during what has been quite low volatility.

• However when assessing the demand for TIPS relative to US Treasuries outside the ultra-short-end of the curve, we find signs inflation fears are again tempering. The chart below shows the spread between rolling oneyear flows into TIPS minus nominal US Treasury ETFs. Plain-vanilla nominals have finally gained some demand relative to hothot-hot TIPS.





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## Team Transitory Has Won the Battle, but Not the Inflation War

#### Flexible and Sticky CPI Oddly Align

- Flexible CPI is set to recede over the months to come. However sticky CPI have been exceptionally positively correlated with flexible CPI through the pandemic.
- High correlation between flexible and sticky prices suggests the pandemic is not creating one-off jumps in inflation.
- We need to see this correlation quickly abate to keep #teamtransitory in control of the debate.



#### Nearly All of the Most Watched Inflation Measures Peaked Between May and July

- The chart shows the average z-score across these measures peaking at the highest level on record looking back to the 1960.
- Supplier deliver times and prices paid are retreating, along with the costs of delivering goods via flatbed within the US.

• We fully expect these measures to recede, while rents and wages build. As we have been saying, let the confusion continue!

#### US Prices Peaked Between May and July 2021

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Aggregate of most heavily watched markets and surveys surrounding the transitory debate



#### Delivery Times Peaking Suggests Range-Bound Inflation Expectations

• We ran a query for market reactions after supplier delivery times peaked at least one standard deviation above average. Six instances were found since 1960, helping produce the data to the right. The overwhelming conclusion is investors should prepare for range-bound trading across risk and safe assets.

• US 10-year TIPS breakevens (i.e. inflation expectations) saw sideways action and a moderate right-side tail. Note we simulate TIPS breakeven prior to 2000 using gold, silver, headline inflation, nominal yields, and more.



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## Container Rates Set to Lose Steam?!

• Getting goods from China to Europe and the US remains exceptionally expensive.

• The Meishan terminal at the Ningbo port has reopened, meaning delays would persist only through early September.

• We continue to believe container rates will be a coincidental or lagging indicator.



#### Trucking Rates Cool Along With Demand

• Drivers remain difficult to find, but the cost of shipping goods within the US via flatbed trucks has also moderated since early June.

• Truckstop.com indicates market demand for these flatbeds has also receded from incredibly lofty heights.

• The average rate per mile has dropped to \$2.90 from the peak at \$3.24 with much further to go assuming mean reversion.





#### Apartment Rentals Heat Up According to Surveys

• The National Multifamily Housing Council's (NMHC) survey revealed greatly accelerating paces of sales and tightness through Q2 2021.

• Both surveys have habitually led the owners equivalent rent (OER) by roughly 12 months, suggesting 3.5+% YoY gains should persist well into 2022.



#### Rising Rents Ubiquitous Across Metros

• The chart compares YoY changes in Zillow and Apartment List rent estimates through July 2021.

- All metros have accelerated in recent months with behemoths like Chicago, NYC, and San Francisco greatly rounding the corner.
- Shelter inflation is clearly here, the question is for how long.



#### Apartment List and Zillow Rent Estimates Imply Big Rent Growth

• Rent estimates have a limit history from Apartment List and Zillow, which also have very different methods (e.g. collected vs asking rents).

• Nonetheless, lagging the six-month average of both data sets seemingly matches the slower moving OER.

• Private rents indicate OER could reside between 6.0% to 7.6% YoY by early 2022.

#### Owners Equivalent Rent of Residences Set to Jump Into Year-End **ARBOR** DATA US CPI OER = mean across core 23 metros Apartment List = mean of 40th-60th percentile estimates across core 23 metros, lagged 6 months Zillow = mean across core 23 metros, lagged 6 months 7.6% 7.5% US CPI Owners Equivalent Rent of Residences Apartment List Rent Estimates 7.0% Zillow ZORIs 6.5% 6.0% 6.0% Rent Estimates Year-Over-Year 5.5% 5.0% 4.5% 4.0% 3.5% 3.0% 2.7% 2.5% 2.0% 1.5% Jun 1, 18 Dec 1, 18 Dec 1, 19 Jun 1, 20 Jun 1, 21 Dec 1, 21 Jun 1, 19 Dec 1, 20 Data Sources: Apartment List, BLS, and Zillow © 2021 Arbor Research & Trading, LLC. All Rights Reserved datascience.arborresearch.com

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#### Rent Searches Slow, but Outlook Remains Optimistic

- Rent-favorable Google searches subsided for the third month in August, but remain quite healthy.
- Searches for bankruptcy to unemployment benefits have consistently diminished.

• We are watching favorable searches very closely as they tend to lead private rents by one to three months. Falling search activity (sub-zero z-score) would suggest shelter inflation (OER) would peak approximately 7 to 10 months ahead.





# Commodities and Yields Were Destined to Enter Trading Ranges

## Commodities to Enter the Chop

- The chart shows spot commodity prices' average returns for two periods: 1960-1990 and 1990-2020.
- Commodities habitually enter trading ranges over the ensuing six months before recommencing bull trends.
- Again, the phase of a ubiquitous commodity rally is likely behind us. Past inflation regimes of strong, widespread commodity growth likely will not occur this time around.



#### Which Path Will Inflation Expectations Follow?!

• The next chart breaks apart past global recoveries into the pre and post-1995 periods.

• US 10-year TIPS breakevens have recently deviated from the average widening seen pre-1995. Nonetheless, both periods saw trading ranges to moderate narrowing over the months ahead.


#### US 10-Year Yields and US Dollar Tracking Past Global Recoveries

• The chart shows the average changes in US 10-year nominal yields and US dollar into and after global recoveries since 1960.Again, we use the month the % of economies growing above trend exceeds 50%.

• This historical playbook suggests rangebound activity over the months to come. Let the confusion continue for investors!!!



# Consumer Spending Expectations Improving After Summer Swoon

## Consumer' Enthusiasm to Spend Rebounding

• US consumer search activity for both staying-in and going-out topics had receded from late March 2021 through early June. Fortunately, intentions have begun to rebound in August.

• A global average of these same search topics has tracked quite well for long-end sovereign yields, helping explain lower sovereign yields.

• We need to see search activity remain near average (z-score = 0) or better to keep the 'good times rolling.'



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# Housing Market Attempts to Rebound

• US consumer search activity for all aspects of the home search and buying process quickly fell from mid-May through early June, hence continued weakness in housing data releases.

• Searches have troughed, suggesting housing demand remains and may revive ahead of the fall months.

#### **ARBOR** DATA U.S. Consumers: Housing Market Search Activity Attempting to Rebound Rolling five-week changes in Google search trends with noise and seasonality removed 50 5/24/2020 Topic appraisal Iand or lot Rolling 5-Week Change in Search Activity (z-score, stacked) closing costs Iumber Date 1/1/2020 to 8/22/2021 commercial property preapproval real estate agent down payment first-time buyer real estate investing renovation home construction home financing single family home home inspection 3/21/2021 6/6/2021 -20 Jan 1, 20 Apr 1, 20 Jul 1, 20 Oct 1, 20 Jan 1, 21 Apr 1, 21 Jul 1, 21 Data Source: Google © 2021 Arbor Research & Trading, LLC. All Rights Reserved datascience.arborresearch.com

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## Job Market Improves Into August

• US consumer search activity for nearly all aspects of the job seeking process have rebounded.

• However telecommuting continues to gain interest with many companies delaying the return to the office.

#### **ARBOR** DATA U.S. Job Market Stays Optimistic According to Searches Rolling five-week changes in Google search trends with noise and seasonality removed 40 Topic Workers refuse to Rolling 5-Week Change in Search Activity (z-score, stacked) 0 give up on WFH layoff telecommuting termination unemployment benefits self employment salary & wage truck driver shift work resume Lavoffs and UE recruiter benefits recede part-time job onboarding job interview internship indeed hourly worker full-time job entry level job employee rention commuting -60 1st Stimulus Checks 2nd Stimulus Checks 3rd Stimulus Checks Jan 1, 20 Apr 1, 20 Jan 1, 21 Jul 1, 21 Jul 1, 20 Oct 1, 20 Apr 1, 21 Data Source: Google © 2021 Arbor Research & Trading, LLC. All Rights Reserved datascience.arborresearch.com

## Consumers Fear High Prices

• Consumers suddenly became VERY agitated by rising prices across houses, large household durables, and vehicles.

• The bottom fell out in April for UMich surveys measuring buying conditions related to price. Quite the dramatic turn of events!



## Consumers Fear High Prices

• Consumers of all age groups are forecasting a larger right-side tail, even while financial markets move in the opposite direction.

• Do note this burst in potential for 5+% headline inflation is very similar to that seen directly after the financial crisis. Consumers have habitually offered more noise than signal.



## Central Banks Primed to Get Less Passive

#### Fed Remains Committed to the 'Transitory' Mantra

• Central banks' use of temporary or transitory inflation within speeches has yet to abate.

• Both the ECB and Federal Reserve lead this charge, despite intensifying inflation across the eurozone.



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#### Fed Has Yet to Lose Passive Perspective

• The Federal Reserve is uniquely passive relative to history (more than 5 standard deviations above average!).

• A few other banks are also being cautious, but none rival the Fed.

• We expect this trend will reverse if the Fed truly begins seeing a worthy foe in inflation as they begin discussing clear timeframes.



#### Central Bank Shadow Rates Set to Climb

- We employ a model (support vector machine) to forecast the shadow rates as determined by the Reserve Bank of New for five major central banks using only natural language processing of speeches by bankers.
- The latest forecasts suggest a rise across the board over the next year with the RBA's rate the most dramatic in the next few months. This tracks well with their plan to taper starting in September.
- Rising shadow rates may be a big concern for TIPS investors thanks to easy policy having tremendous downward pressure on liquidity premiums.



#### Fed Ownership of TIPS Extremely High at Longer-Maturities

Maturity.Date	Cusip	Coupon	
1/15/2022	'912828SA9'	0.125	
4/15/2022	'912828X39'	0.125	22%
7/15/2022	'912828TE0'	0.125	23%
1/15/2023	'912828UH1'	0.125	• 5%
4/15/2023	'9128284H0'	0.625	
7/15/2023	'912828VM9'	0.375	• 8%
1/15/2024	'912828B25'	0.625	• 12%
4/15/2024	'9128286N5'	0.5	32%
7/15/2024	'912828WU0'	0.125	<b>1</b> 7%
10/15/2024	'912828YL8'	0.125	• 10%
	'912810FR4'	2.375	
1/15/2025	'912828H45'	0.25	
4/15/2025	'912828ZJ2'	0.125	26%
4/15/2025			
7/15/2025	'912828XL9'	0.375 0.125	• 7%
10/15/2025	'91282CAQ4' '912810FS2'		• 7% —• 35%
1/15/2026		2	
4/45/2026	'912828N71'	0.625	
4/15/2026	'91282CCA7'	0.125	23%
7/15/2026	'912828S50'	0.125	
1/15/2027	'912810PS1'	2.375	
	'912828V49'	0.375	• 31%
7/15/2027	'9128282L3'	0.375	
1/15/2028	'912810PV4'	1.75	32%
	'9128283R9'	0.5	
4/15/2028	'912810FD5'	3.625	-• 50%
7/15/2028	'912828Y38'	0.75	• 26%
1/15/2029	'912810PZ5'	2.5	• 28%
	'9128285W6'	0.875	• 36%
4/15/2029	'912810FH6'	3.875	
7/15/2029	'9128287D6'	0.25	-• 29%
1/15/2030	'912828Z37'	0.125	23%
7/15/2030	'912828ZZ6'	0.125	• 19%
1/15/2031	'91282CBF7'	0.125	• 14%
7/15/2031	'91282CCM1'	0.125	• 1%
4/15/2032	'912810FQ6'	3.375	-• 22%
2/15/2040	'912810QF8'	2.125	-• 59%
2/15/2041	'912810QP6'	2.125	63%-
2/15/2042	'912810QV3'	0.75	34%
2/15/2043	'912810RA8'	0.625	-• 48%
2/15/2044	'912810RF7'	1.375	• 27%
2/15/2045	'912810RL4'	0.75	• 19%
2/15/2046	'912810RR1'	1	• 52%
2/15/2047	'912810RW0'	0.875	-• 35%
2/15/2048	'912810SB5'	1	
2/15/2049	'912810SG4'	1	43%
2/15/2050	'912810SM1'	0.25	• 14%
2/15/2051	'912810SV1'	0.125	• 17%
			0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% Percent.Outstanding

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