

A Sudden, Positive Shift in Economic Indicators

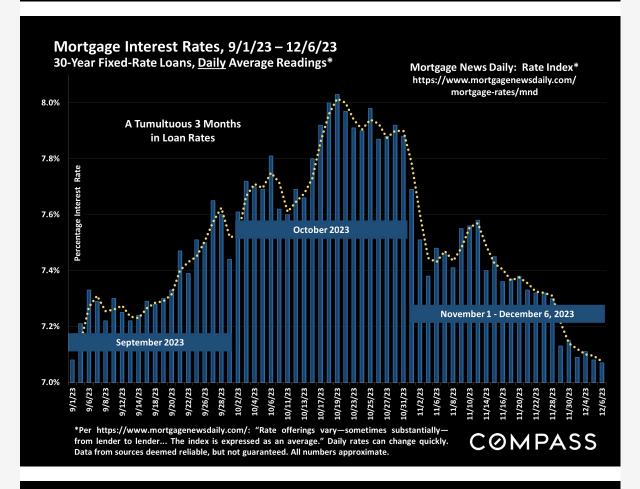
"For the third sixth straight week, mortgage rates trended down, as new data indicates that inflationary pressures are receding. The combination of continued economic strength, lower inflation and lower mortgage rates should likely bring more potential homebuyers into the market." Freddie Mac (FHLMC)

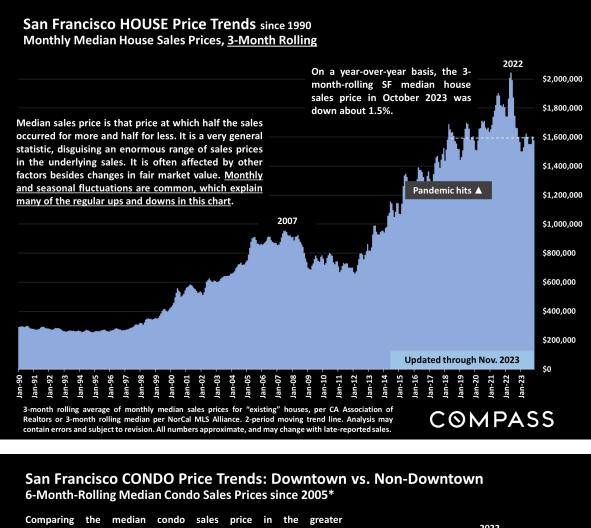
Stock and bond markets - which greatly impact household wealth, consumer confidence, and interest rates - were generally characterized by deep pessimism in October, but with significant changes in economic indicators such as inflation, and a continued pause in benchmark rate increases by the Fed, financial markets abruptly shifted to enthusiastic optimism in November. That translated into a dramatic plunge in mortgage rates, which has caused mortgage applications to increase over recent weeks.

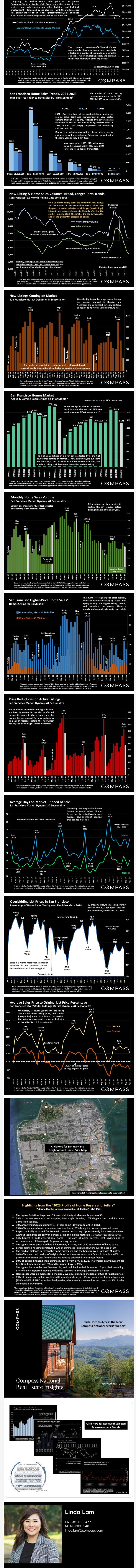
Since the homebuying process usually takes 30 to 60 days, from loan qualification and making an offer to a closed sale, sales might see a bounce in December, or - since the midwinter holiday period typically sees the annual low point in new-listing (and thus sales) activity - more likely in early 2024 (subject to these positive trends continuing).

In January 2023, buyer demand saw a substantial rebound due to a similar drop in interest rates in late 2022.

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Statistics are generalities, essentially summaries of widely disparate data generated by dozens, hundreds or thousands of unique, individual sales occurring within different time periods. They are best seen not as precise measurements, but as broad, comparative indicators, with reasonable margins of error. Anomalous fluctuations in statistics are not uncommon, especially in smaller, expensive market segments. Last period data should be considered estimates that may change with late-reported data. Different analytics programs sometimes define statistics - such as "active listings," "days on market," and "months supply of inventory" - differently: what is most meaningful are not specific calculations but the trends they illustrate. Most listing and sales data derives from the local or regional multi-listing service (MLS) of the area specified in the data. "Homes" signifies real-property, single-household housing units: houses, condos, co-ops, townhouses, duets and TICs (but not mobile homes), as applicable to each market. City/town names refer specifically to the named cities and towns, or their MLS areas, unless otherwise delineated. Multicounty metro areas will be specified as such. Data from sources deemed reliable, but may contain errors and subject to revision. All numbers to be considered approximate. Many aspects of value cannot be adequately reflected in median and average statistics: curb appeal, age, condition, amenities, views, lot size, quality of outdoor space, "bonus" rooms, additional parking, quality of location within the neighborhood, and so on. How any of these statistics apply to any particular home is unknown without a specific comparative market analysis.

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