# Deutsche Bank Research

North America United States **Economics** 

# US Economic Perspectives



Date

6 December 2022

# Trend inflation still inching up, but at a snail's pace

- The latest October PCE price data showed some tentative signs of inflationary pressures abating, though still at an elevated level. Updating our suite of statistical models, we find that our underlying inflation measures inched a few bps higher and hovered above 3.5%. Our monthly mean estimate ticked up 1bps to 3.7% and the median estimate edged up 4bps to 3.5%. Both measures remain at historically high levels since our gauge began in the early 1990s. Across our dashboard, both quarterly and monthly measures point to underlying inflation far above the Fed's 2% target.
- The alarmingly high levels of underlying inflation reinforced Fed officials' messages that there is still a long way to go. While last Wednesday Chair Powell's speech essentially sealed the deal for a downshift to 50bps next week, he emphasized that terminal rate estimates could be "somewhat higher" than the September SEP indicated, which likely set a floor on where the Committee sees the ultimate destination for rate hikes in 2023H1 and pointed to a peak rate at least up to 4.9% in the December SEP (See Fed Watcher: Less is more). As a reminder, in our outlook last week we lifted our terminal rate estimate by one more hike to 5.1%, to be reached in May next year. We continue to see risks skewed to the upside and caution that the transition to a pause and eventual cuts may not be entirely linear (See US Outlook 2023: Dark side of the boom).

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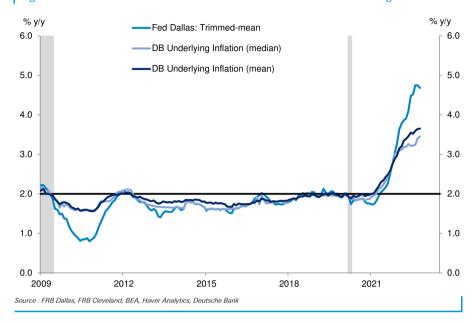
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Figure 1: Measures of broad-based inflation continue to set new highs





# Trend inflation update

Core PCE prices increased by 22bps (month-over-month) in October, a meaningfully slower pace versus the trailing 3-month average of around 41bps and closer to the pre-pandemic period. Within the component details, prices of durable goods (-0.59%) – in particular motor vehicles and parts (-0.64%) as well as household furnishings and equipment (-0.80%) – showed meaningful drops, subtracting around 8bps from the overall core PCE print. However, core services inflation remained strong, rising by 40bps, and contributed 27bps to core PCE. Though the monthly growth rate of housing and utilities costs (+0.43%) was half of its previous monthly pace, this was largely offset by a +1.45% gain in food services and accommodations – the fastest monthly gain since the 1970s. As Chair Powell pointed out, a historically tight labor market and supply-demand imbalances continue to exert upward pressure on services inflation.

With these data, we updated our trend inflation dashboard, which replicates a variety of measures from the Fed staff's past work (See <u>Transient or persistent? A trend inflation dashboard for decoding monthly data</u> for details about the dashboard components). Our preferred approach for interpreting these data is to average across the ten models that we track. Our monthly mean estimate ticked up 1bp to 3.7% and the median estimate increased 4bps to 3.5% – well above the Fed's 2% target and record highs going back to the early 1990s.

Within the individual measures, trimmed mean PCE inflation showed some tentative signs of rolling over with the year-over-year rate falling by 7bps to 4.68%, though still at a historically high level. Similarly, the FRB Cleveland Median PCE inflation gauge dropped by 11bps, posting a 5.7% year-over-year gain and consistent with inflation rates last seen in 1980. The rest of our individual measures saw little change from September, except for two based on inflation expectations. The Phillips curve metric edged up by 20bps to 3.2%, reflecting the recent increase in inflation expectations from 2.7% to 2.9% in October based on the University of Michigan survey. The marginal increase in SPF inflation expectations from Q3 also brought up its trend metric by 4bps to 3.5%.

Figure 2: Headline inflation and some common measures of underlying inflation: Core and trimmed mean

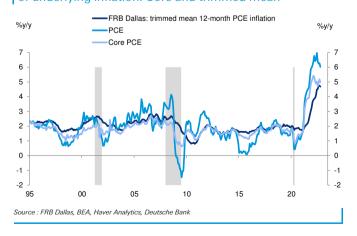
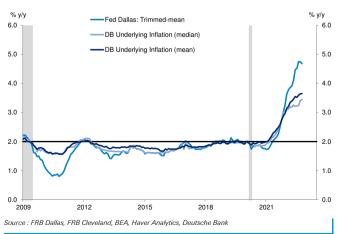


Figure 3: Measures of broad-based inflation remain historically high



While there are tentative signs of dissipating inflation pressure, underlying inflation

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remains well above the Fed's target, reflecting persistent supply-demand imbalances and reinforcing Fed officials' messages that there is still a long way to go. Though Chair Powell's speech last Wednesday essentially sealed the deal for a downshift to 50bps next week, he emphasized that terminal rate estimates could be "somewhat higher" than the September SEP indicated, which likely set a floor on where the Committee sees the ultimate destination for rate hikes in 2023H1 and pointed to a peak rate at least 4.9% in the December SEP (See Fed Watcher: Less is more). As a reminder, in our outlook last week we lifted our terminal rate estimate by one more hike to 5.1%, to be reached in May next year. We continue to see risks skewed to the upside and caution that the transition to a pause and eventual cuts may not be entirely linear (See US Outlook 2023: Dark side of the boom).

Figure 4: Summary of trend measures of PCE inflation

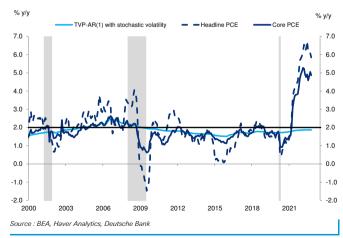
	Average Average				Latest values	
	1998-2007	2010-2019	2022Q2	2022M9	2022Q3	2022M10
FRB Dallas Trimmed mean	2.0%	1.9%	4.2%	4.8%	4.7%	4.7%
FRB Cleveland Median PCE	2.4%	2.3%	5.0%	5.8%	5.7%	5.7%
NY Fed's UIG price only (adjusted for PCE)	1.9%	1.8%	3.7%	3.4%	3.5%	3.5%
TVP-AR(1) with stochastic volatility	1.9%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	1.7%	1.9%
TVP-VAR, with unemployment rate	1.9%	1.8%	1.9%	3.2%	1.9%	3.3%
Phillips curve, Michigan	2.2%	2.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%
Phillips curve, SPF	2.0%	2.0%	3.1%	3.4%	3.4%	3.5%
Augmented AR inflation gap, Michigan	1.8%	1.6%	3.8%		3.8%	
Augmented AR inflation gap, SPF	1.7%	1.6%	3.8%		3.8%	
Augmented AR inflation gap, DB CIE	1.6%	1.7%	4.0%		4.0%	
Median estimate	1.9%	1.8%	3.8%	3.4%	3.6%	3.5%
Mean estimate	2.0%	1.8%	3.4%	3.6%	3.6%	3.7%

Source : Deutsche Bank

Figure 5: Measures of underlying inflation: Core, trimmed mean & UIG



Figure 6: Univariate approaches to estimating underlying inflation



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Figure 7: Inflation-expectations-based measures of underlying inflation (1)

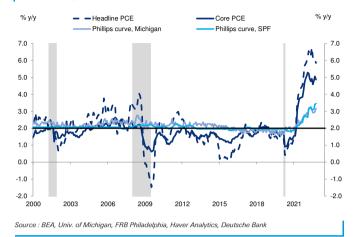
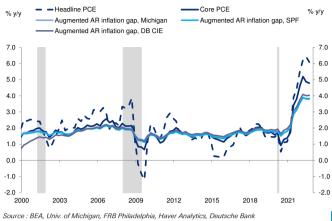


Figure 8: Inflation-expectations-based measures of underlying inflation (2)



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# Appendix 1

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