

# U.S. Data Review

- Existing home sales: firm increase to the highest level of 2019

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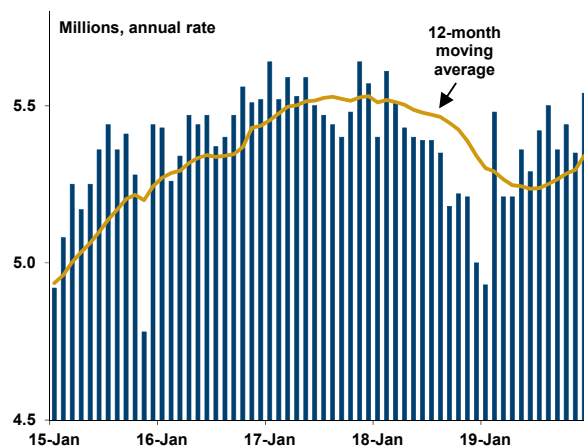
## Existing Home Sales

Sales of existing homes jumped 3.6 percent in December, easily beating the expected gain of 1.5 percent. The level of sales totaled 5.54 million units (annual rate) versus the expected reading of 5.43 million. The new level of activity was the best of 2019, although it did not represent a cyclical high, as seven observations in the current expansion were higher. Most of the firmer readings were only marginally better; the strongest results (5.64 million units on January 2017 and November 2017) were 1.8 percent above the December total (chart, left).

The advance in sales was broad-based geographically, with three of the four major regions of the country posting gains. Only the Midwest lost ground, but its drop of 1.5 percent occurred from a strong showing in November; activity in the Midwest remained in the upper portion of the range from the current expansion. All other regions also were in the upper portions of recent ranges.

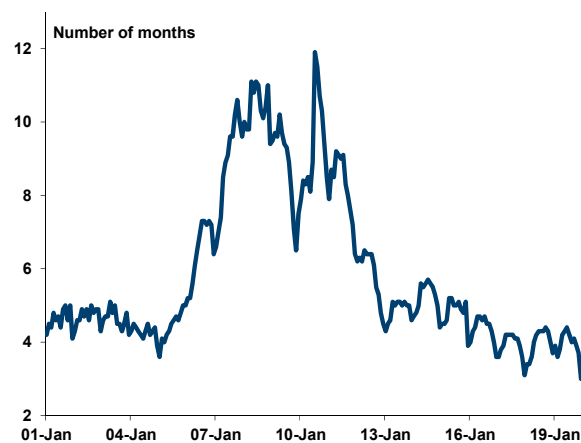
The National Association of Realtors again cited tight inventories as a constraint on sales, and conditions tightened even further in December, as the number of homes on the market fell 14.6 percent in December. This series is not seasonally adjusted, and inventories typically fall in the final month of the year, but the latest drop was noticeably larger than the average of 10.0 percent in the prior 10 years. The months' supply of homes moved to 3.0 months, a new record low (chart, right). This series includes condominiums and figures begin in 1999. Sales and inventories of single family homes have longer histories, and too moved to a record low of 3.0 months.

### Existing Home Sales



Source: National Association of Realtors via Haver Analytics

### Months' Supply of Unsold Homes



Source: National Association of Realtors via Haver Analytics

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