

U.S. Data Review

- Existing home sales: new cyclical high in February

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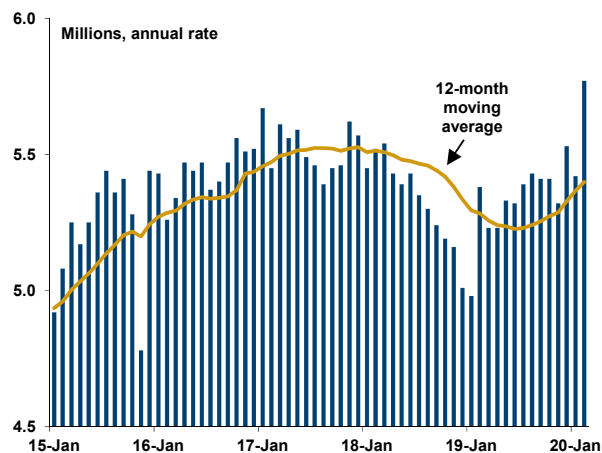
Existing Home Sales

Sales of existing homes jumped 6.5 percent in February, easily beating the expected increase of 0.9 percent. The change occurred from a downward revised level (sales in January were 0.7 percent lighter than previously estimated), but the increase was still strong enough to push activity to the highest level of the current expansion (previous high was 5.67 million homes in January 2017; chart, left).

The geographic performance was slightly less impressive than the headline figure, as the surge was not broadly based. Sales were quite strong in the West and South (up 18.9 percent and 7.2 percent, respectively), but only moderate in the Midwest (0.8 percent) and down 4.1 percent in the Northeast. The South was the only region to register a cyclical high (although the West was close, with only November 2009 showing slightly better results, and tax incentives for home purchases were in place at that time).

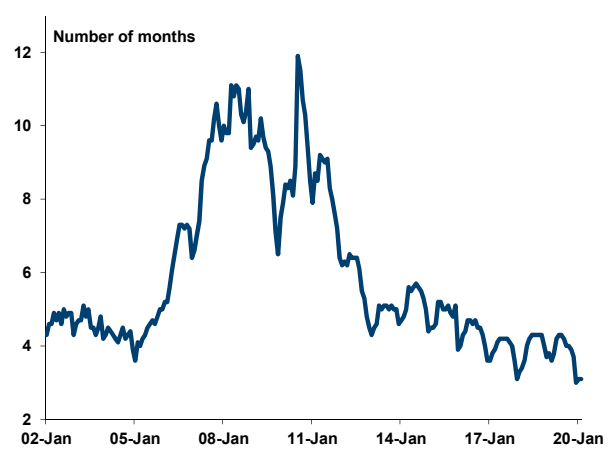
The number of homes for sale rose 5.0 percent in February, close to normal for this month (this series is not seasonally adjusted; the average increase in the past twenty Februaries totaled 4.9 percent). Although the number of homes on the market rose noticeably, the jump in sales kept the months' supply of homes steady at 3.1 (chart, right).

Existing Home Sales



Source: National Association of Realtors via Haver Analytics

Months' Supply of Existing Homes for Sale



Source: National Association of Realtors via Haver Analytics

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