

Purchase Applications Improve; Refinancing Ebbs

This week's update on refinance application demand accurately reflects the fact that rates came into the week near their recent highs, but managed to fall in line with recent lows several days later. The net effect for the Mortgage Bankers Associations (MBA) Refinance Index was a modest drop from last week while remaining elevated relative to the trend seen between November and late February.



MBA's purchase index is far less concerned with short term rate fluctuations, and managed to move up to the best levels since early February. In addition, purchase activity is holding in the upper portion of the range that's been intact for nearly 2 years.



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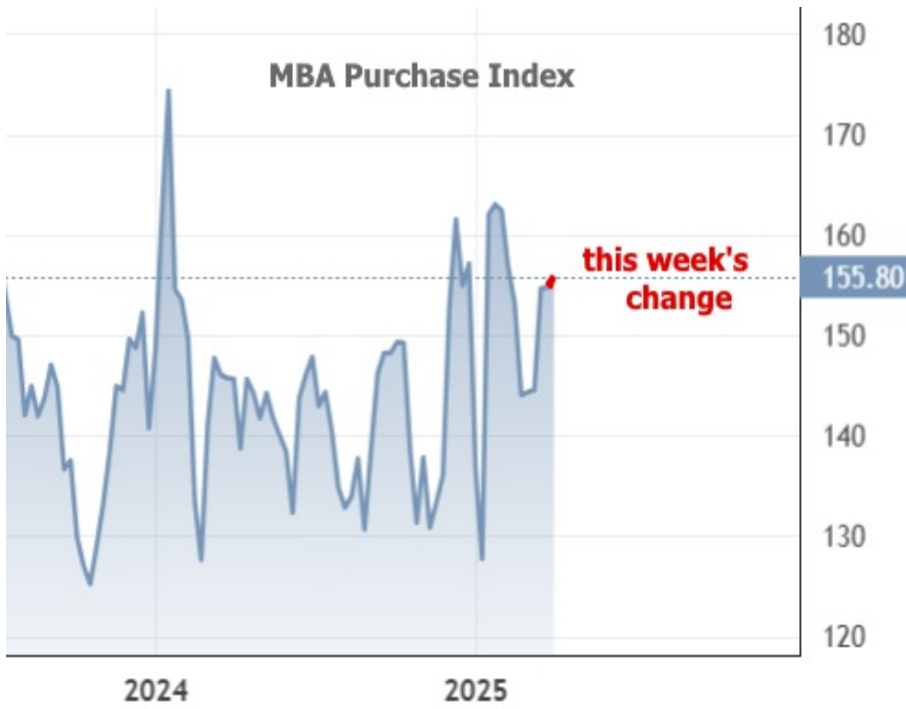
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“Purchase applications saw the strongest weekly pace in almost two months and were 7 percent higher than a year ago. Last week’s purchase activity was driven primarily by a 6 percent increase in FHA applications, as the combination of loosening housing inventory and slowly declining mortgage rates have presented this segment of buyers with more opportunities,” said Joel Kan, MBA’s Vice President and Deputy Chief Economist. “Additionally, VA purchase applications saw a modest increase over the week. Overall applications declined, however, as refinance applications were down 5 percent to its lowest level in a month.”