US Macroeconomics

February 14, 2023

Joseph Lavorgna, Chief US Economist | 212.610.1741 | joseph.lavorgna@smbcnikko-si.com

Engineering a Downturn?

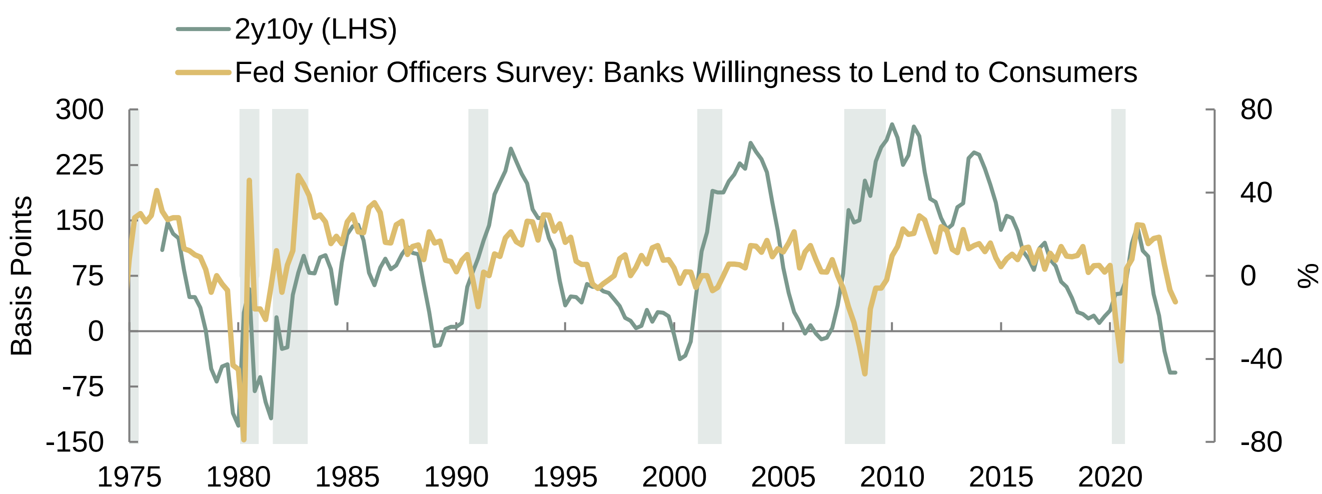
The spread between 2- and 10-year treasury notes inverted to a new four-decade low earlier today, touching -86 basis points (bps). **While the curve was more inverted in September 1981 (-114 bps), official interest rates were also much higher. Today's inversion is more impressive (and worrisome) given a fed funds target of 4.625% compared to nearly the 16% rate over 40-years ago**. Investors should worry about the curve not simply because it has an excellent track record in predicting recession but rather because its slope can also *cause* recessions. How so?

Banking and credit provisioning sectors are all based on the borrow-short and lend-long model. Normally, this is not a concern because **the yield curve is almost always positively sloped**, meaning long rates are higher than short rates. This makes sense because lenders (investors) need to be compensated more for lending (borrowing) for longer periods of time.

But when monetary policy is super tight as it is today, thereby causing short rates to rise above long rates, credit creation grinds to a halt. In essence, the inverted curve does not allow (or incentivize) for lenders to lend. This is directly observable in the Fed's latest Senior Loan Officer Survey (SLOS), which shows a dramatic tightening in lending standards for households and businesses.

For example, last quarter the net percentage of banks willing to make consumer installment loans fell to -12.5% from -6.8% previously, the lowest nonpandemic reading since the 2008-09 downturn. This recessionary level is a direct result of the inverted yield curve. It is also worth noting that the SLOS showed dramatic tightening in lending standards for commerical real estate loans as well as commercial and industrial loans.

The bottome line is that the longer the curve stays inverted, the longer banks will tighten credit and the greater the chance of broad economic activity rolling over. Tracking the 2s10s curve will be central to the evolution of 2023 real GDP prospects.



Sources: FRB, Haver, SMBC Nikko

Disclaimer

This presentation is for discussion purposes only and is not intended to be an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities, or any commitment to underwrite, subscribe for or place any securities, is not an offer or commitment to provide any financing or extension of credit or service, and does not contain any tax or legal advice. This presentation has been prepared by SMBC Group (which may include, collectively or individually, any of the following entities in the Americas Division: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation ("SMBC"), SMBC Nikko Securities America, Inc. ("SMBC Nikko"), SMBC Nikko Securities Canada, Ltd. ("Nikko Canada"), SMBC Capital Markets, Inc. ("SMBC-CM"), SMBC Leasing and Finance, Inc., JRI America, Inc., and SMBC Rail Services LLC) and is being furnished by SMBC Group solely for use by the client or potential client to whom such materials are directly addressed and delivered. This presentation is confidential and is the property of SMBC Group subject to copyright. Any reproduction of this presentation, in whole or in part, is prohibited, and you may not release these materials to any person, except to your advisors and professionals to assist you in evaluating these materials, provided that they are obligated, by law or agreement, to keep the presentation confidential. These materials do not constitute research, a recommendation or an offer or solicitation to any person to enter into any transaction or adopt any hedging, trading, or investment strategy. Prior to participating in any such transaction, you should consult your own independent, competent, legal, tax, accounting, and other professional advisors.

In preparing this presentation, SMBC Group has relied upon information available from third parties, including public sources, and we have assumed, without independent verification, the accuracy and completeness of such information. Specific prices, indices, or measures, including ranges, listed in this document were prepared at the time the document was prepared, and are subject to change without notice. SMBC Group makes no representations to and does not warrant this presentation's accuracy or completeness. SMBC Group expressly disclaims any liability for any use of the information set forth herein, including, without limitation, any use of the information set forth herein in the preparation of financial statements or accounting material.

These materials may contain forward-looking statements, which may include projections, forecasts, income estimates, yield or return, future performance targets or similar analysis. These forward-looking statements are based upon certain assumptions. All forward-looking statements are based upon currently available information and SMBC Group is not obligated to provide an update. Actual events may differ from those assumptions. Opinions, projections, price/yield information and estimates are subject to change without notice. There can be no assurance that estimated returns or projections will be realized, that forward-looking statements will materialize or that actual results will not be materially lower than those presented. Past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results. Any transactions or strategies addressed may not be suitable for all parties. The value, price or income from transactions or strategies may fall as well as rise. SMBC Group or an affiliate may have a position in any of the underlying instruments, assets, indices, or rates mentioned in this document. You should make your own independent judgment or seek independent financial and tax advice with respect to any matter contained herein.

SMBC is subject to Japanese firewall regulations and therefore absent client consent, non-public client information may not be shared with SMBC Nikko Securities Inc.

SMBC Nikko is a U.S. registered broker-dealer of SMBC Group. Nikko Canada is a U.S. and Canadian registered broker-dealer of SMBC Group. SMBC-CM is provisionally registered as a U.S. swap dealer with the CFTC. Capital markets and other investment banking activities for SMBC Group are performed by a combination of SMBC Nikko, Nikko Canada, SMBC Nikko Securities Inc. and SMBC-CM. Lending and other commercial banking activities are performed by SMBC and its banking affiliates. Derivative activities may be performed by SMBC-CM or SMBC. SMBC Group deal team members may also be employees of any of the foregoing entities. SMBC Group does not provide tax advice. Accordingly, any discussion of U.S. tax matters contained herein (including any attachments) is not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used, in connection with the promotion, marketing or recommendation by anyone unaffiliated with SMBC Group or for the purpose of avoiding U.S. tax-related penalties.