US Daily: October FOMC Preview: Sticking to the Plan (Mericle)

- The FOMC is set to deliver another 25bp rate cut to 3.75-4% at its October meeting next week. The median projection in the September dot plot showed a baseline of three cuts this year, and with the official data paused by the government shutdown and alternative labor market data mixed at best, there is no reason to deviate from the plan to support the labor market for now.
- We do not expect formal guidance about the December meeting, but if Chair Powell is asked, he will likely be comfortable referencing the September dots, which imply a third cut in December. We think that a cut in December is quite likely because the dots made it the baseline, the FOMC has delivered risk management cuts in sets of three in the past, and we doubt that the upcoming labor market data—which will be affected by both the DOGE deferred resignations and the impact of the shutdown on data collection—will have sent a convincing all-clear signal by then.
- We continue to expect the economy to strengthen somewhat next year as the drag on growth from tariff increases abates, the boost from the fiscal bill kicks in, and financial conditions remain easy. We have penciled in two 25bp cuts in March and June 2026 to a terminal rate of 3-3.25% but could imagine these coming earlier if the labor market data remain soft or later if the economy looks sturdier and the FOMC decides to wait for inflation to fall closer to its 2% goal.

Jan Hatzius
+1(212)902-0394 | jan.hatzius@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Alec Phillips
+1(202)637-3746 | alec.phillips@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

David Mericle
+1(212)357-2619 |
david.mericle@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Ronnie Walker
+1(917)343-4543 |
ronnie.walker@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Manuel Abecasis
+1(212)902-8357 |
manuel.abecasis@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Elsie Peng
+1(212)357-3137 | elsie.peng@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Pierfrancesco Mei
+1(212)902-8809 |
pierfrancesco.mei@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

Jessica Rindels
+1(972)368-1516 |
jessica.rindels@gs.com
Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC

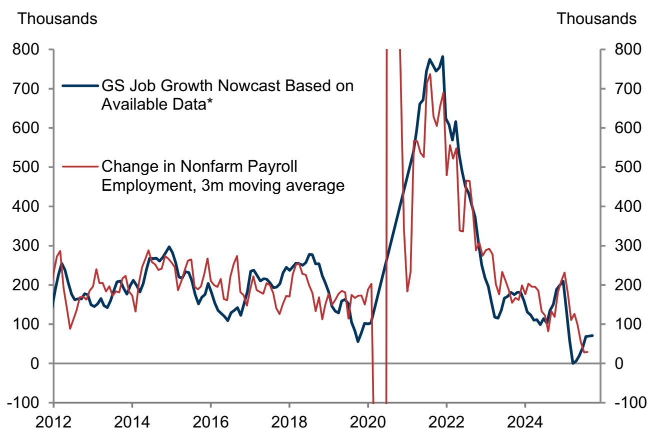
October FOMC Preview: Sticking to the Plan

The FOMC is set to deliver another 25bp rate cut to 3.75-4% at its October meeting next week. The median projection in the September dot plot showed a baseline of three cuts this year, implying cuts at the October and December meetings as well, and with the official economic data mostly paused by the government shutdown, there is no reason to deviate from the plan to support the labor market for now.

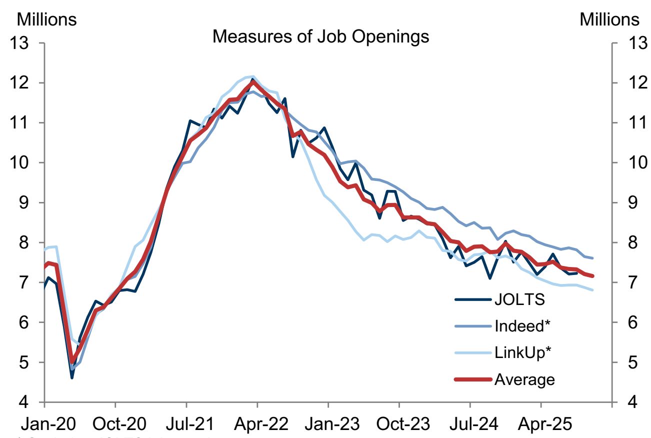
Fed officials, like private forecasters, will surely turn to alternative labor market data for a sense of how the labor market has evolved since the August employment report. Our job growth tracker has picked up from its very low summer rate (Exhibit 1, left), but both alternative measures of job openings (Exhibit 1, right) and alternative measures of overall labor market tightness (Exhibit 2) have continued to decline.

It would likely be a high bar for the FOMC to change its plan on the basis of alternative data, and in any case the data have not given them any reason to. FOMC participants appear to be drawing the same conclusion—several have recently echoed Chair Powell's comment that "the labor market has demonstrated pretty significant downside risks," as noted in our October Fed Chatterbox.

Exhibit 1: Alternative Data Substitutes for the Missing Official Labor Market Data Suggest That Job Growth Rebounded a Bit from a Very Low Rate During the Summer, Job Openings Continued to Fall, and ...



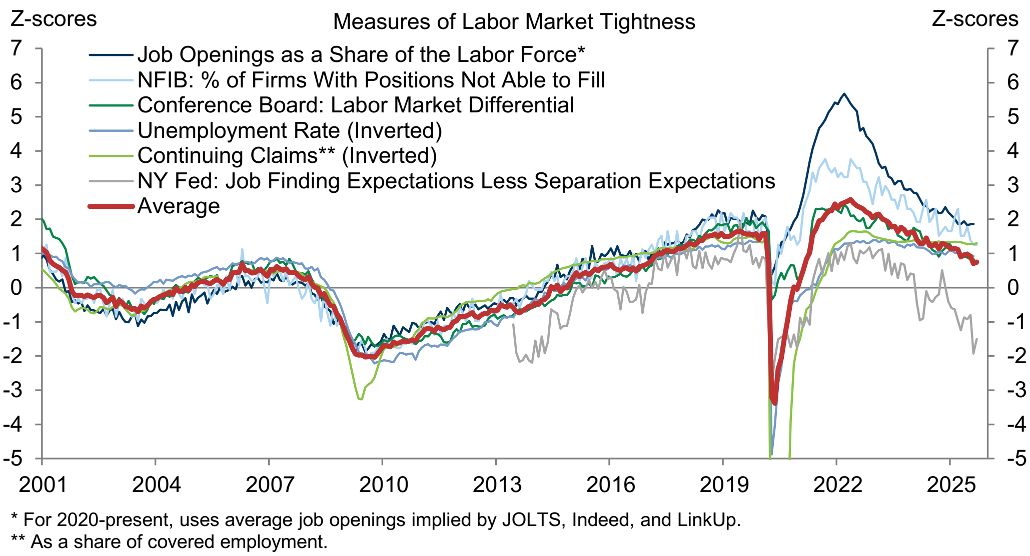
* Includes hiring plans from Manpower and NFIB; household expectations for job growth and changes in the unemployment rate from UMich and Conference Board; measures of job growth from ADP, Intuit, Homebase, and Revelio; layoffs consisting of initial claims, WARN notices, and Challenger job cuts; and the employment components of our manufacturing and nonmanufacturing survey trackers.



* Scaled to JOLTS job openings.

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research, Department of Labor, Indeed, LinkUp

Exhibit 2: ... Overall Labor Market Tightness Fell Further and Is Noticeably Below Its Pre-Pandemic Level



Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research, Department of Labor, NFIB, The Conference Board, NY Fed

We do not expect any formal guidance this week about the December meeting, but if Chair Powell is asked, he will likely be comfortable referencing the September dots, which imply a third cut in December. We continue to think that a cut in December is quite likely, for a few reasons.

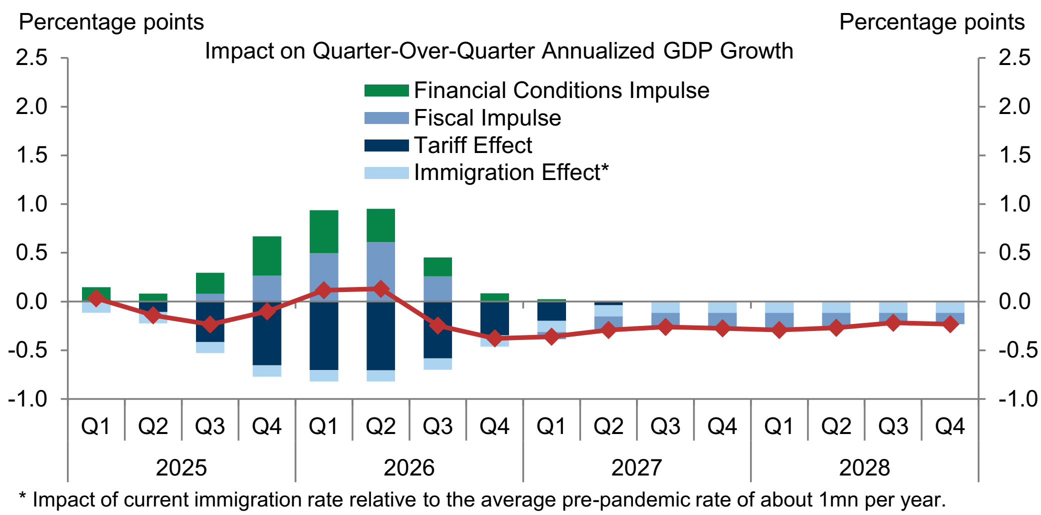
First, the dots made a third cut the baseline, and the market is now fully pricing it.

Second, the FOMC has delivered risk management cuts in sets of three in the past and has preferred to complete the package even when the situation seemed less concerning by the third cut.

Third, we doubt that the upcoming labor market data will have sent a convincing all-clear signal by the time of the December meeting. The message from the broader data set shown above in Exhibit 2 is that the labor market is in a noticeably weaker state than just before the pandemic. The upcoming DOGE deferred resignations are likely to generate a negative payrolls report in October and weigh a bit on November, and even if this is old news, it would make it awkward to skip an already-signaled cut shortly afterward. In addition, the government shutdown has interfered with October data collection and might interfere with November data collection to some degree too, which could cause distortions or missing data points that would make the signal from the labor market data available by December less reliable.

We continue to expect the economy to strengthen somewhat next year as the drag on GDP growth from tariff increases gradually abates, the boost from the fiscal bill kicks in, and financial conditions remain easy (Exhibit 3). Stronger activity growth should help to stabilize the labor market, though it remains an open question whether the improvement in the policy impulse will be enough to prevent a longer period of jobless growth.

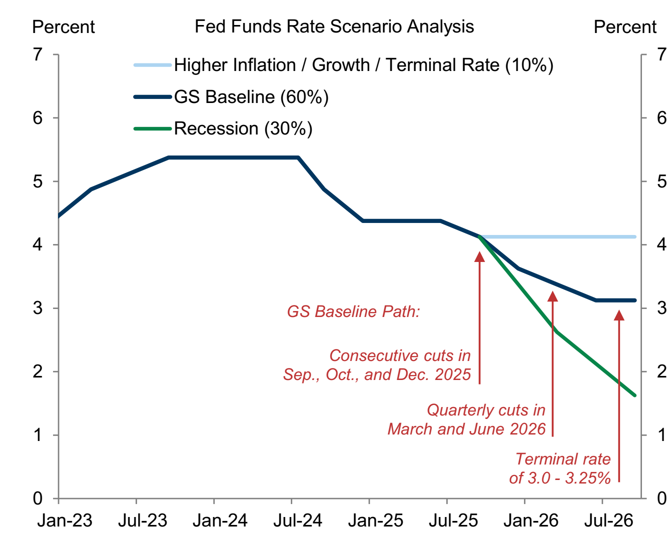
Exhibit 3: Our Estimate of the Combined Growth Impulse from Changes in Financial Conditions and Economic Policy Bottomed in 2025Q3 and Will Rebound in Coming Quarters as the Fiscal Boost Arrives

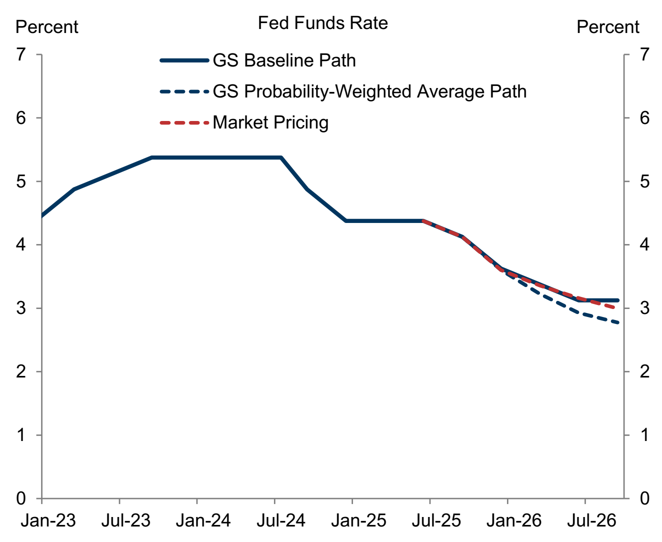


Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

We have penciled in two 25bp normalization cuts in March and June of 2026 to a terminal rate of 3-3.25% (Exhibit 4). But we could imagine these cuts coming earlier if the labor market data remain soft or later if the economy looks sturdier and the FOMC decides to wait for year-over-year inflation to fall closer to its 2% goal as the underlying trend keeps falling and tariff effects diminish.

Exhibit 4: We Continue to Expect 25bp Rate Cuts at the October and December Meetings Followed by Two More in 2026; Our Probability-Weighted Forecast Remains a Bit More Dovish Than Market Pricing





Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

David Mericle

Disclosure Appendix

Reg AC

We, Jan Hatzius, Alec Phillips, David Mericle, Ronnie Walker, Manuel Abecasis, Elsie Peng, Pierfrancesco Mei and Jessica Rindels, hereby certify that all of the views expressed in this report accurately reflect our personal views, which have not been influenced by considerations of the firm's business or client relationships.

Unless otherwise stated, the individuals listed on the cover page of this report are analysts in Goldman Sachs' Global Investment Research division.

Disclosures

Regulatory disclosures

Disclosures required by United States laws and regulations

See company-specific regulatory disclosures above for any of the following disclosures required as to companies referred to in this report: manager or co-manager in a pending transaction; 1% or other ownership; compensation for certain services; types of client relationships; managed/co-managed public offerings in prior periods; directorships; for equity securities, market making and/or specialist role. Goldman Sachs trades or may trade as a principal in debt securities (or in related derivatives) of issuers discussed in this report.

The following are additional required disclosures: **Ownership and material conflicts of interest:** Goldman Sachs policy prohibits its analysts, professionals reporting to analysts and members of their households from owning securities of any company in the analyst's area of coverage. **Analyst compensation:** Analysts are paid in part based on the profitability of Goldman Sachs, which includes investment banking revenues. **Analyst as officer or director:** Goldman Sachs policy generally prohibits its analysts, persons reporting to analysts or members of their households from serving as an officer, director or advisor of any company in the analyst's area of coverage. **Non-U.S. Analysts:** Non-U.S. analysts may not be associated persons of Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC and therefore may not be subject to FINRA Rule 2241 or FINRA Rule 2242 restrictions on communications with a subject company, public appearances and trading in securities covered by the analysts.

Additional disclosures required under the laws and regulations of jurisdictions other than the United States

The following disclosures are those required by the jurisdiction indicated, except to the extent already made above pursuant to United States laws and regulations. **Australia:** Goldman Sachs Australia Pty Ltd and its affiliates are not authorised deposit-taking institutions (as that term is defined in the Banking Act 1959 (Cth)) in Australia and do not provide banking services, nor carry on a banking business, in Australia. This research, and any access to it, is intended only for "wholesale clients" within the meaning of the Australian Corporations Act, unless otherwise agreed by Goldman Sachs. In producing research reports, members of Global Investment Research of Goldman Sachs Australia may attend site visits and other meetings hosted by the companies and other entities which are the subject of its research reports. In some instances the costs of such site visits or meetings may be met in part or in whole by the issuers concerned if Goldman Sachs Australia considers it is appropriate and reasonable in the specific circumstances relating to the site visit or meeting. To the extent that the contents of this document contains any financial product advice, it is general advice only and has been prepared by Goldman Sachs without taking into account a client's objectives, financial situation or needs. A client should, before acting on any such advice, consider the appropriateness of the advice having regard to the client's own objectives, financial situation and needs. A copy of certain Goldman Sachs Australia and New Zealand disclosure of interests and a copy of Goldman Sachs' Australian Sell-Side Research Independence Policy Statement are available at: https://www.goldmansachs.com/disclosures/australia-new-zealand/index.html. **Brazil:** Disclosure information in relation to CVM Resolution n. 20 is available at https://www.gs.com/worldwide/brazil/area/gir/index.html. Where applicable, the Brazil-registered analyst primarily responsible for the content of this research report, as defined in Article 20 of CVM Resolution n. 20, is the first author named at the beginning of this report, unless indicated otherwise at the end of the text. **Canada:** This information is being provided to you for information purposes only and is not, and under no circumstances should be construed as, an advertisement, offering or solicitation by Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC for purchasers of securities in Canada to trade in any Canadian security. Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC is not registered as a dealer in any jurisdiction in Canada under applicable Canadian securities laws and generally is not permitted to trade in Canadian securities and may be prohibited from selling certain securities and products in certain jurisdictions in Canada. If you wish to trade in any Canadian securities or other products in Canada please contact Goldman Sachs Canada Inc., an affiliate of The Goldman Sachs Group Inc., or another registered Canadian dealer. **Hong Kong:** Further information on the securities of covered companies referred to in this research may be obtained on request from Goldman Sachs (Asia) L.L.C. **India:** Further information on the subject company or companies referred to in this research may be obtained from Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Limited, Research Analyst - SEBI Registration Number INH000001493, 951-A, Rational House, Appasaheb Marathe Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400 025, India, Corporate Identity Number U74140MH2006FTC160634, Phone +91 22 6616 9000, Fax +91 22 6616 9001. Goldman Sachs may beneficially own 1% or more of the securities (as such term is defined in clause 2 (h) the Indian Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956) of the subject company or companies referred to in this research report. Investment in securities market are subject to market risks. Read all the related documents carefully before investing. Registration granted by SEBI and certification from NISM in no way guarantee performance of the intermediary or provide any assurance of returns to investors. Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Limited compliance officer and investor grievance contact details can be found at this link: https://publishing.gs.com/disclosures/hedge.html - /general/equity. **Japan:** See below. **Korea:** This research, and any access to it, is intended only for "professional investors" within the meaning of the Financial Services and Capital Markets Act, unless otherwise agreed by Goldman Sachs. Further information on the subject company or companies referred to in this research may be obtained from Goldman Sachs (Asia) L.L.C., Seoul Branch. **New Zealand:** Goldman Sachs New Zealand Limited and its affiliates are neither "registered banks" nor "deposit takers" (as defined in the Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act 1989) in New Zealand. This research, and any access to it, is intended for "wholesale clients" (as defined in the Financial Advisers Act 2008) unless otherwise agreed by Goldman Sachs. A copy of certain Goldman Sachs Australia and New Zealand disclosure of interests is available at: https://www.goldmansachs.com/disclosures/australia-new-zealand/index.html. **Russia:** Research reports distributed in the Russian Federation are not advertising as defined in the Russian legislation, but are information and analysis not having product promotion as their main purpose and do not provide appraisal within the meaning of the Russian legislation on appraisal activity. Research reports do not constitute a personalized investment recommendation as defined in Russian laws and regulations, are not addressed to a specific client, and are prepared without analyzing the financial circumstances, investment profiles or risk profiles of clients. Goldman Sachs assumes no responsibility for any investment decisions that may be taken by a client or any other person based on this research report. **Singapore:** Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte. (Company Number: 198602165W), which is regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore, accepts legal responsibility for this research, and should be contacted with respect to any matters arising from, or in connection with, this research. **Taiwan:** This material is for reference only and must not be reprinted without permission. Investors should carefully consider their own investment risk. Investment results are the responsibility of the individual investor. **United Kingdom:** Persons who would be categorized as retail clients in the United Kingdom, as such term is defined in the rules of the Financial Conduct Authority, should read this research in conjunction with prior Goldman Sachs research on the covered companies referred to herein and should refer to the risk warnings that have been sent to them by Goldman Sachs International. A copy of these risks warnings, and a glossary of certain financial terms used in this report, are available from Goldman Sachs International on request.

European Union and United Kingdom: Disclosure information in relation to Article 6 (2) of the European Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) (2016/958) supplementing Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (including as that Delegated Regulation is implemented into United Kingdom domestic law and regulation following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union and the European Economic Area) with regard to regulatory technical standards for the technical arrangements for objective presentation of investment recommendations or other information recommending or suggesting an investment strategy and for disclosure of particular interests or indications of conflicts of interest is available at https://www.gs.com/disclosures/europeanpolicy.html which states the European Policy for Managing Conflicts of Interest in Connection with Investment Research.

Japan: Goldman Sachs Japan Co., Ltd. is a Financial Instrument Dealer registered with the Kanto Financial Bureau under registration number Kinsho 69, and a member of Japan Securities Dealers Association, Financial Futures Association of Japan Type II Financial Instruments Firms Association, The Investment Trusts Association, Japan, and Japan Investment Advisers Association. Sales and purchase of equities are subject to commission pre-determined with clients plus consumption tax. See company-specific disclosures as to any applicable disclosures required by Japanese stock exchanges, the Japanese Securities Dealers Association or the Japanese Securities Finance Company.

Global product; distributing entities

Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research produces and distributes research products for clients of Goldman Sachs on a global basis. Analysts based in Goldman Sachs offices around the world produce research on industries and companies, and research on macroeconomics, currencies, commodities and portfolio strategy. This research is disseminated in Australia by Goldman Sachs Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 21 006 797 897); in Brazil by Goldman Sachs do Brasil Corretora de Títulos e Valores Mobiliários S.A.; Public Communication Channel Goldman Sachs Brazil: 0800 727 5764 and / or contatogoldmanbrasil@gs.com. Available Weekdays (except holidays), from 9am to 6pm. Canal de Comunicação com o Público Goldman Sachs Brasil: 0800 727 5764 e/ou contatogoldmanbrasil@gs.com. Horário de funcionamento: segunda-feira à sexta-feira (exceto feriados), das 9h às 18h; in Canada by Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC; in Hong Kong by Goldman Sachs (Asia) L.L.C.; in India by Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Ltd.; in Japan by Goldman Sachs Japan Co., Ltd.; in the Republic of Korea by Goldman Sachs (Asia) L.L.C., Seoul Branch; in New Zealand by Goldman Sachs New Zealand Limited; in Russia by OOO Goldman Sachs; in Singapore by Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte. (Company Number: 198602165W); and in the United States of America by Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC. Goldman Sachs International has approved this research in connection with its distribution in the United Kingdom.

Goldman Sachs International ("GSI"), authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority ("PRA") and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority ("FCA") and the PRA, has approved this research in connection with its distribution in the United Kingdom.

European Economic Area: Goldman Sachs Bank Europe SE ("GSBE") is a credit institution incorporated in Germany and, within the Single Supervisory Mechanism, subject to direct prudential supervision by the European Central Bank and in other respects supervised by German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority (Bundesanstalt für Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht, BaFin) and Deutsche Bundesbank and disseminates research within the European Economic Area.

General disclosures

This research is for our clients only. Other than disclosures relating to Goldman Sachs, this research is based on current public information that we consider reliable, but we do not represent it is accurate or complete, and it should not be relied on as such. The information, opinions, estimates and forecasts contained herein are as of the date hereof and are subject to change without prior notification. We seek to update our research as appropriate, but various regulations may prevent us from doing so. Other than certain industry reports published on a periodic basis, the large majority of reports are published at irregular intervals as appropriate in the analyst's judgment.

Goldman Sachs conducts a global full-service, integrated investment banking, investment management, and brokerage business. We have investment banking and other business relationships with a substantial percentage of the companies covered by Global Investment Research. Goldman Sachs & Co. LLC, the United States broker dealer, is a member of SIPC (https://www.sipc.org).

Our salespeople, traders, and other professionals may provide oral or written market commentary or trading strategies to our clients and principal trading desks that reflect opinions that are contrary to the opinions expressed in this research. Our asset management area, principal trading desks and investing businesses may make investment decisions that are inconsistent with the recommendations or views expressed in this research.

We and our affiliates, officers, directors, and employees will from time to time have long or short positions in, act as principal in, and buy or sell, the securities or derivatives, if any, referred to in this research, unless otherwise prohibited by regulation or Goldman Sachs policy.

The views attributed to third party presenters at Goldman Sachs arranged conferences, including individuals from other parts of Goldman Sachs, do not necessarily reflect those of Global Investment Research and are not an official view of Goldman Sachs.

Any third party referenced herein, including any salespeople, traders and other professionals or members of their household, may have positions in the products mentioned that are inconsistent with the views expressed by analysts named in this report.

This research is focused on investment themes across markets, industries and sectors. It does not attempt to distinguish between the prospects or performance of, or provide analysis of, individual companies within any industry or sector we describe.

Any trading recommendation in this research relating to an equity or credit security or securities within an industry or sector is reflective of the investment theme being discussed and is not a recommendation of any such security in isolation.

This research is not an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any security in any jurisdiction where such an offer or solicitation would be illegal. It does not constitute a personal recommendation or take into account the particular investment objectives, financial situations, or needs of individual clients. Clients should consider whether any advice or recommendation in this research is suitable for their particular circumstances and, if appropriate, seek professional advice, including tax advice. The price and value of investments referred to in this research and the income from them may fluctuate. Past performance is not a guide to future performance, future returns are not guaranteed, and a loss of original capital may occur. Fluctuations in exchange rates could have adverse effects on the value or price of, or income derived from, certain investments.

Certain transactions, including those involving futures, options, and other derivatives, give rise to substantial risk and are not suitable for all investors. Investors should review current options and futures disclosure documents which are available from Goldman Sachs sales representatives or at https://www.theocc.com/about/publications/character-risks.jsp and https://www.goldmansachs.com/disclosures/cftc_fcm_disclosures. Transaction costs may be significant in option strategies calling for multiple purchase and sales of options such as spreads. Supporting documentation will be supplied upon request.

Differing Levels of Service provided by Global Investment Research: The level and types of services provided to you by Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research may vary as compared to that provided to internal and other external clients of GS, depending on various factors including your individual preferences as to the frequency and manner of receiving communication, your risk profile and investment focus and perspective (e.g., marketwide, sector specific, long term, short term), the size and scope of your overall client relationship with GS, and legal and regulatory constraints. As an example, certain clients may request to receive notifications when research on specific securities is published, and certain clients may request that specific data underlying analysts' fundamental analysis available on our internal client websites be delivered to them electronically through data feeds or otherwise. No change to an analyst's fundamental research views (e.g., ratings, price targets, or material changes to earnings estimates for equity securities), will be communicated to any client prior to inclusion of such information in a research report broadly disseminated through electronic publication to our internal client websites or through other means, as necessary, to all clients who are entitled to receive such reports.

All research reports are disseminated and available to all clients simultaneously through electronic publication to our internal client websites. Not all research content is redistributed to our clients or available to third-party aggregators, nor is Goldman Sachs responsible for the redistribution of our research by third party aggregators. For research, models or other data related to one or more securities, markets or asset classes (including related services) that may be available to you, please contact your GS representative or go to https://research.gs.com.

Disclosure information is also available at https://www.gs.com/research/hedge.html or from Research Compliance, 200 West Street, New York, NY 10282.