FIRST QUARTER 2023

Core Plus Fixed Income Commentary

March 31, 2023

1Q MARKET REVIEW

It appeared the markets continued to ask the same question during the first quarter of 2023 that it had been asking for several months: Can the Federal Reserve (Fed) get inflation under control without causing the economy to fall into a deep recession? Some market participants felt the Fed could avoid any recession at all and find the perfect balance to ease inflation with minimal impact to employment and economic growth. As market yields declined during January, equity markets rallied from their December retreat and then began to favor growth stocks over value.

The debate over soft versus hard landings took a backseat in March with the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank due to a run of uninsured depositors. The contagion spread to other banks with similar characteristics and forced the government to respond with depositor guarantees and FDIC intervention. The concerns spread to Europe as Credit Suisse financials were called into question, ultimately resulting in an arranged takeover by UBS. These events had a significant impact on the banking sector's equity, fixed income, and preferred securities, negatively impacting prices. The broader markets remained surprisingly resilient with the Russell 1000® Index returning +7.45% for the quarter. Digging deeper, the Russell 1000 Growth Index returned +14.36% and Russell 1000 Value Index +0.99%. Reflective of the turmoil in the banking industry, the Russell 1000 Bank subsector returned -12.35% for the quarter.

Once the banking sector experienced some sense of stability near the close of the quarter, focus returned to inflation, the economy, and how aggressive the Fed could be in light of new banking revelations. The Fed did continue to tighten policy, ending the quarter with a total of two 25-basis point (bps) increases in the Fed Funds target rate. Expectations that banks would tighten lending standards to protect balance sheets and liquidity added to concerns that the economy may be more at risk than initially thought. The 10-Year U.S. Treasury ended the quarter approximately 41 bps lower than the end of 2022 with a 3.47% yield. The rally in yields led the Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index to return +2.96% for the first quarter. This was the second quarter in a row of positive performance for the benchmark.

The first quarter of 2023 only added to the questions surrounding inflation and the broader economy. Employment remains stronger than anticipated, frustrating economic bears and the Fed as they try to tamp down inflation. The banking system challenges could also create a headwind for lending and economic growth. While the worst may be over for banks, the outlook for growth in the near term is probably limited due to the increased likelihood of further regulation and self-imposed balance sheet building. Equities remain resilient but likely have limited significant upside as valuations are stretched and fundamentals will probably not help in the near future. The fixed income markets have repriced over the past 18 months to a point where risk has become more symmetrical, and volatility will create challenges along with opportunities.

CORE PLUS FIXED INCOME PORTFOLIO REVIEW

The Core Plus Composite (Composite) underperformed its benchmark for the quarter ending March 31, 2023. The strategy returned 2.55%, gross of fees (2.46%, net of fees), compared to the strategy's benchmark, the Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index, which had a return of 2.96%.

The strategy's allocation to preferred securities was the primary detractor from relative performance. Preferred securities had a turbulent quarter, starting strong but eventually succumbing to the banking crisis that unfolded in February and March. Security selection was favorable as the Composite did not have any exposure to the four banks the failed during the quarter: Silicon Valley, Signature, Silvergate, and Credit Suisse. While the strategy avoided what could have been a worse outcome, any exposure to the sector negatively impacted performance.

The Composite's underweight duration position also detracted from relative performance. Treasury yields declined 30 to 43 bps along the yield curve. Entering the year, the strategy was positioned for additional Fed tightening and higher interest rates. Once the banking crisis set in, the flight to safety trade took hold. Treasury yields declined as the market started to price in a greater chance of recession and cuts in Fed policy.

Relative outperformance was realized through the strategy's allocation to municipal securities, which benefited from 30-year yields moving lower. The strategy's allocation to securitized securities was also a positive contributor to relative performance. Within the securitized sector, the strategy's allocation to asset-backed securities and agency mortgage-backed securities were positive contributors to performance.

STRATEGY INFORMATION

Benchmark	Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Index
Business Minimum	$15M
Number of Holdings	197
Assets	$85.20M

PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT TEAM

John L. Cassady III, CFA
Chief Investment Officer
Industry start date: 1987
Joined Red Cedar: 2018

Jason M. Schwartz, CFA
Senior Portfolio Manager
Industry start date: 2004
Joined Red Cedar: 2018

David L. Withrow, CFA
Director of Portfolio Management
Industry start date: 1988
Joined Red Cedar: 2018

Michael J. Martin, CFA
Senior Portfolio Manager
Industry start date: 1994
Joined Red Cedar: 2018

INVESTMENT PHILOSOPHY

"We seek income producing opportunities in the capital structure, in a variety of risk profiles where we find relative value in an effort to reduce correlation to traditional bonds."
—David Withrow

continued on page 2

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CORE PLUS FIXED INCOME POSITIONING & OUTLOOK

It was an extraordinary quarter as the world contended with four bank collapses. While much different in depth and breadth, the banking crisis experienced in the first quarter of 2023 had echoes of the 2008-09 Global Financial Crisis. The soundness of the banking system was questioned daily for a two-week period. In the end, actions taken by domestic and Swiss regulators re-established a level of calm and confidence that stemmed the velocity and amount of depositor outflows from regional and community banks. The Composite has always been vigilant about the credit quality of its holdings and held only larger regional banks (PNC and M&T Bank) and money center banks (JP Morgan, Citibank, and Wells Fargo) at the time of the crisis. This positioning served the strategy well as our companies were generally looked on as a haven during the height of the turbulence.

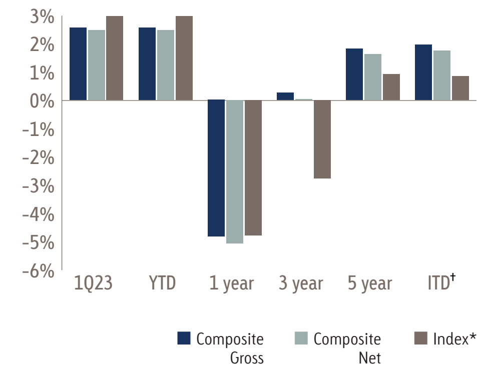
The banking turmoil was not confined to domestic soil as Credit Suisse finally succumbed to years of mismanagement. A shotgun wedding between UBS and the company inadvertently provided an exceptional opportunity in the Additional Tier 1 (AT1) market, which the strategy took advantage of. As part of the combination, Credit Suisse's AT1s were written down to zero, while equity holders were paid a small amount. The lack of respect for the capital structure, while legal, completely caught the market by surprise. Chaos ensued for the next few days as market participants tried to reconcile the bizarre occurrence. The Composite did not have any exposure to the AT1 sector prior to the Credit Suisse collapse, but the volatility provided an opportunity to purchase AT1s of high-quality banks at extremely attractive levels. The strategy added a 5% position in AT1s in names such as Lloyds, HSBC, and UBS, increasing the overall preferred exposure to 17%.

The strategy sold all the holdings in long-dated corporate bonds during the quarter. From a relative value perspective, these bonds did not offer the same total return opportunities as bonds with shorter maturities. Much of the cash has already been redeployed into similar or the same credits, in the 3- to 7-year part of the yield curve.

With the possibility of a recession looming, the strategy remains focused on the credit quality of the companies it holds. The best relative value is currently found in the A-rated sector. Most new purchases have been focused in this area.

Securitized positions were reduced to 32% of the portfolio from 42%, with the majority coming from the commercial mortgage-backed securities sector. Better relative value opportunities were found in corporate bonds.

PERFORMANCE



	Composite Gross	Composite Net	Index*
1Q23	2.55%	2.46%	2.96%
YTD	2.55%	2.46%	2.96%
1 year	-4.83%	-5.07%	-4.78%
3 year	0.26%	0.03%	-2.77%
5 year	1.82%	1.62%	0.91%
ITD†	1.95%	1.74%	0.84%

†Inception Date 5/1/2016
Periods greater than 12 months are annualized
*Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index
Source: Bloomberg, Clearwater Analytics

DISCLOSURES

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All information and performance are reported in U.S. dollars.

The "Net" returns presented are net of fees. Investing involves the risk of loss and investors should be prepared to bear potential losses. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

The "Gross" returns presented are gross of fees. The results do not reflect the deduction of investment management fees. The client's return will be reduced by the management fees and any other expenses incurred in the management of the account. For example, a U.S. $100 million account, paying a 0.50% annual fee, with a given rate of 10% compounded over a 10-year period would result in a net of fee return of 9.5%. Management fees are described in Part 2A of RCIM's Form ADV Part 2A. Investing involves the risk of loss and investors should be prepared to bear potential losses. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

The information herein was obtained from various sources. RCIM does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of information provided by third parties. The information in this report is given as of the date indicated and believed to be reliable. RCIM assumes no obligation to update this information, or to advise on further developments relating to it.

The Core Plus Composite includes all fully discretionary institutional portfolios that invest in Treasury and agency bonds, investment grade and non-investment grade corporate bonds, municipal bonds, asset-backed securities, agency, and non-agency mortgage- backed securities, collateralized mortgage obligations and preferred securities. The strategy may use derivatives, including forward contracts, futures contracts, swap contracts and options in implementing its strategy. The use of derivative instruments allows the strategy to achieve its investment objectives, reduce risks, or manage the strategy more efficiently. The Composite also invests in international securities, foreign exchange, and non-U.S. dollar denominated securities. The Composite was created January 1, 2019. The inception date of the Composite was May 1, 2016.

Benchmark Definition: The Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index is a broad-based benchmark that measures the investment grade, US dollar-denominated, fixed-rate taxable bond market. The index includes Treasuries, government-related and corporate securities, mortgage-backed securities, asset-backed securities, and commercial mortgage-backed securities.

Index Definitions: The Russell 1000 is a stock market index that tracks the highest-ranking 1,000 stocks in the Russell 3000® Index, which represent about 90% of the total market capitalization of that index.The Russell 1000 Growth measures the performance of those Russell 1000 companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values. The Russell 1000 Value measures the performance of those Russell 1000 companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values.

An index is an unmanaged portfolio of specific securities, the performance of which is often used as a benchmark in judging the relative performance of certain asset classes. Investors cannot invest directly in an index. An index does not charge management fees or brokerage expenses, and no such fees or expenses were deducted from the performance shown.

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