

THE DAILY PULSE

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PAYMENTS • BANKING • LENDING



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COVERAGE WINDOW: OCTOBER 15–22, 2026

THIS WEEK IN BRIEF



Debanking enforcement escalated as the CFPB opened probes into nine of the largest banks following an OCC report, and the OCC finalized its first GENIUS Act stablecoin rule. Money20/20 spotlighted cross-border rails and open banking while PayPal's new CEO vowed to move faster, and mortgage demand showed strain with the Fed set to meet Oct. 28.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

[PayPal isn't agile enough, CEO says](#)

Payments Dive · Oct 20

Speaking at Money20/20 in Las Vegas on Oct. 19, PayPal CEO Enrique Lores said the company had been too slow to decide under prior leadership, weighed down by "too many management layers," and that PayPal needs to "simplify how we work, remove (and) accelerate decision makers, reduce management layers, and become a more agile company." He said Venmo and the Braintree processing system had not received enough investment and that the company is leaning into consumer financial services such as buy now, pay later and personal banking. Lores, who became CEO on March 1, said PayPal expects no meaningful agentic-commerce volume until 2028, per Payments Dive.

WHY IT MATTERS

After a bruising stretch — the article notes PayPal's stock is down about 76% over five years — and a reported, later abandoned approach by Stripe and Advent, the "agile" messaging and Venmo/Braintree focus signal where investment will go. The new leadership team is signaling that a new approach in management that delivers speed to market is necessary to turn things around. It remains to be seen if that is all that has been ailing the payments company.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

[New payment rails catch on, slowly](#)

Payments Dive · Oct 21

At Money20/20 on Oct. 19, speakers said financial institutions and businesses still face hurdles before they can capture the full benefit of instant payments and stablecoins. Federal Reserve Financial Services' Amy Burr said customers "don't care about the rails" and that institutions are reluctant to add layers to their technology stacks — "The fatigue is real" — noting banks are only beginning to use the features of the ISO 20022 standard adopted by Fedwire. Modern Treasury CTO Sam Aarons urged treating rails as a menu and keeping low-cost options like ACH, while Circle's Irfan Ganchi said large companies are mixing stablecoins and fiat based on receiver preference. The piece cites McKinsey figures showing global payments revenue rose from \$1.7 trillion in 2020 to \$2.6 trillion last year.

WHY IT MATTERS

Adoption of instant rails and stablecoins is gated by integration cost and institutional inertia, not by the technology itself. For banks and fintechs, the near-term advantage lies in orchestration — meeting customers on the rail they already prefer — rather than betting on a single dominant system.

PAYMENTS & STABLECOINS

[Money20/20 USA 2026 wraps with cross-border payments and open banking in focus](#)

FinTech Futures · Oct 22

FinTech Futures reported that Money20/20 USA (Las Vegas, Oct. 18–21) closed with cross-border payments and open banking as the dominant themes. Standard Chartered's Danielle Sharpe cited a 2026 CPMI survey showing 24/7 or extended-hours RTGS systems rose to 66% from 38% in 2023, with 47% of faster-payment systems now able to support cross-border payments and called orchestration "the most important advancement" for the sector. PNC's Natalie Talpas said a secure-API standard and industry buy-in for data sharing are now in place. Among launches, Mastercard introduced "Stablecoin Security," a risk-screening API for cross-border and B2B stablecoin payments, and JP Morgan Payments said its Embedded Payments will support Mercado Libre's US cross-border selling program.

WHY IT MATTERS

The read-out shows the industry's center of gravity shifting from building faster domestic rails to connecting them across borders and permissioned data. Bank-fintech partnerships (JPM/Mercado Libre, Mastercard's risk tooling) look like the vehicle, with open-banking APIs becoming table stakes rather than a differentiator.

BANKING & REGULATION

[CFPB Opens Debanking Investigation Into Nine Large National Banks](#)

Forbes · Oct 16

On Oct. 14 the CFPB said it will examine whether nine large national banks — JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citibank, Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank, Capital One, PNC, TD Bank and BMO — violated federal consumer financial law when they closed or restricted customer accounts, per Forbes. The move follows an OCC report that found the banks had policies denying or restricting access based on customers' political or religious views or on lawful business activities, with firearms, oil and gas, and tobacco cited as the most affected sectors. The CFPB named the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act's adverse-action requirements and the prohibition on unfair, deceptive or abusive acts or practices, and said it is reviewing complaints and supervisory data. The initiative cites Executive Order 14331, "Guaranteeing Fair Banking for All Americans."

WHY IT MATTERS

"Debanking" has moved from a political talking point to live supervisory — and potentially enforcement — exposure for the biggest banks. Account-closure policies, reason codes and adverse-action notices are now compliance risk, and banks should expect scrutiny of how they document and communicate account decisions.

BANKING & REGULATION

[OCC Finalizes GENIUS Act Stablecoin Rules Ahead of January Deadline](#)

Yahoo Finance · Oct 21

The OCC finalized its first GENIUS Act rule on Oct. 21, setting reserve, redemption, custody and supervision standards for stablecoin issuers under its jurisdiction, with requirements taking effect Jan. 18, 2027. Issuers must hold reserve assets at least equal to their outstanding stablecoins and generally process redemptions within two business days and still may not pay interest directly to holders. The OCC dropped a proposed presumption that certain affiliate or related-party reward arrangements violate that prohibition, opting instead to review third-party rewards case by case. The American Bankers Association's Rob Nichols criticized the approach, arguing intermediaries could offer economically similar yield and shift deposits away from lending.

WHY IT MATTERS

The rulebook gives issuers a concrete compliance path months before the GENIUS Act takes effect, and the softened rewards stance reads as a win for stablecoin issuers and a setback for banks worried about deposit flight. By reviewing rewards case by case, the OCC leaves the central question — whether "rewards" become de facto yield — unresolved.

LENDING & CREDIT

[Mortgage applications drop 5.3% despite rate decline](#)

HousingWire · Oct 21

Mortgage applications fell 5.3% in the week ending Oct. 16 even as the average 30-year conforming contract rate slipped to 7.41% from 7.5%, its first decline in more than two months — according to the Mortgage Bankers Association's weekly survey as reported by HousingWire. Purchase applications dropped 7% week over week and sat 18% below the same week a year earlier, while refinance applications fell 2% and were 59% below year-ago levels; the refinance share rose to 39% from 37.7%.

WHY IT MATTERS

The news on housing and mortgages continues to be bleak every week as rate increases take its toll on this sector. Rate hikes are creating the desired effect of reducing economic activity, at least in the housing sector. However, a prolonged drop or drought in housing will not bode well for the economy.

LENDING & CREDIT

[Ally Financial's auto originations grow 10.3% YoY in Q3](#)

Auto Finance News · Oct 20

Ally Financial's auto originations rose 10.3% year over year to \$12.9 billion in the third quarter, though they fell 3% from the prior quarter, according to the company's earnings supplement reported by Auto Finance News on Oct. 20. The article credits record application volume and strong dealer relationships for the growth, while noting that auto net charge-off and early delinquency rates "ticked up."

WHY IT MATTERS

Ally's results show auto-lending demand holding up even at elevated rates. The affordability story has gotten worse over the years with significant rise in car prices and higher interest rates pushing monthly payments for consumers up materially in the last 3-4 years. However, the sector seems to be holding up well, signaling continued consumer appetite and ability to spend.



WHAT TO WATCH

[What To Look For From The Fed's October Meeting](#)

Forbes · Oct 19

Stay ahead of what's moving markets, regulation, and the business of banking.
