

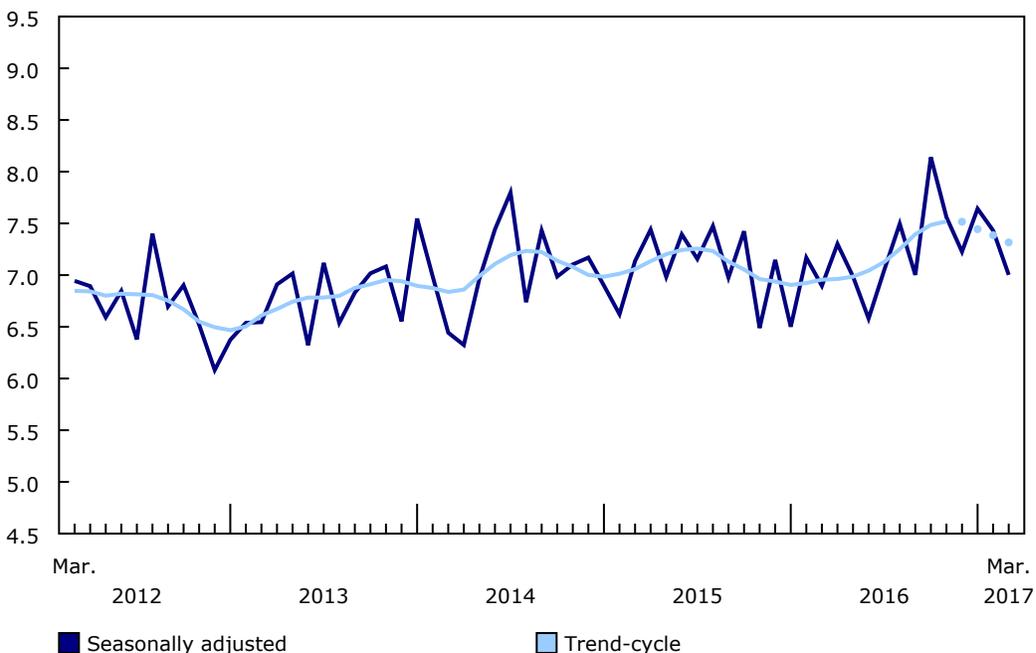
Building permits, March 2017

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, May 9, 2017

The value of building permits issued by Canadian municipalities fell 5.8% to \$7.0 billion in March, marking a second consecutive monthly decrease. Nationally, the decline was mainly the result of lower construction intentions for multi-family dwellings, particularly in British Columbia and Ontario. All provinces and territories, except Ontario and Quebec, registered decreases in the total value of building permits in March.

Chart 1
Total value of building permits

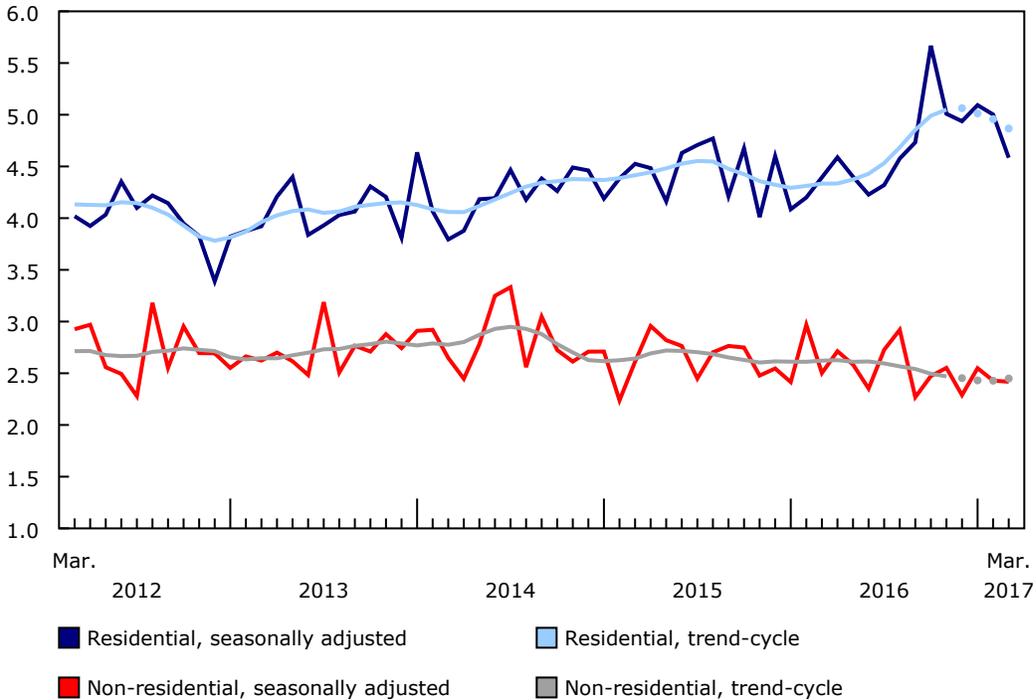
billions of dollars



Note(s): The higher variability associated with the trend-cycle estimates is indicated with a dotted line on the chart for the current reference month and the three previous months. For more information, see note to readers.
Source(s): CANSIM table [026-0010](#).

Chart 2
Value of building permits for residential and non-residential sectors

billions of dollars



Note(s): The higher variability associated with the trend-cycle estimates is indicated with a dotted line on the chart for the current reference month and the three previous months. For more information, see note to readers.
Source(s): CANSIM table [026-0010](#).

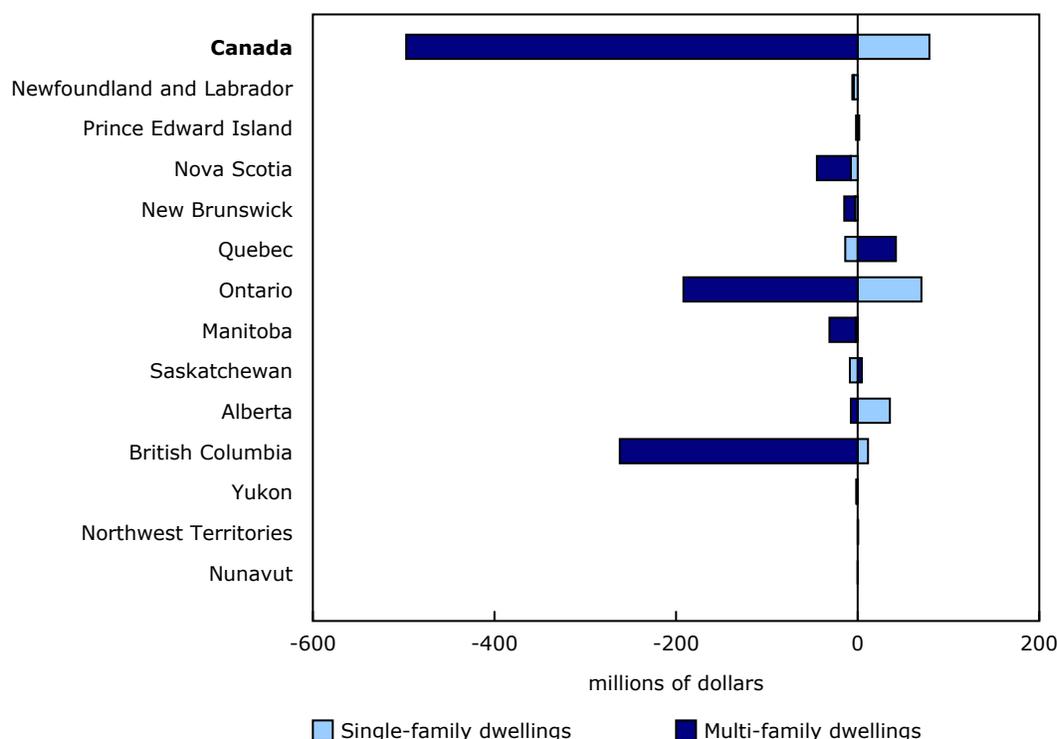
Residential sector: Multi-family component registers large decline

Municipalities issued \$4.6 billion worth of residential building permits in March, down 8.4% from February. A notable decrease in the multi-family component more than offset higher construction intentions for single-family dwellings. Eight provinces reported declines in the residential sector in March, led by British Columbia and Ontario.

The value of building permits for multi-family dwellings dropped 20.9% to \$1.9 billion in March, falling below the \$2.0 billion mark for the first time since July 2016. The decrease was largely attributable to lower construction intentions for apartment buildings in nine provinces. British Columbia and Ontario registered the biggest declines in the multi-family component in March, stemming from apartment buildings and, to a lesser extent, row houses. Conversely, single-family construction intentions rose 3.0% to \$2.7 billion in March, with Ontario and Alberta leading the four provinces that posted gains.

In March, Canadian municipalities approved the construction of 16,821 new dwellings (-14.7% compared with February), consisting of 10,745 multi-family units (-19.4%) and 6,076 single units (-4.8%).

Chart 3
Month-to-month change in value of residential building permits, March 2017



Source(s): CANSIM table [026-0006](#).

Non-residential sector: Lower commercial construction intentions lead the sector's decrease

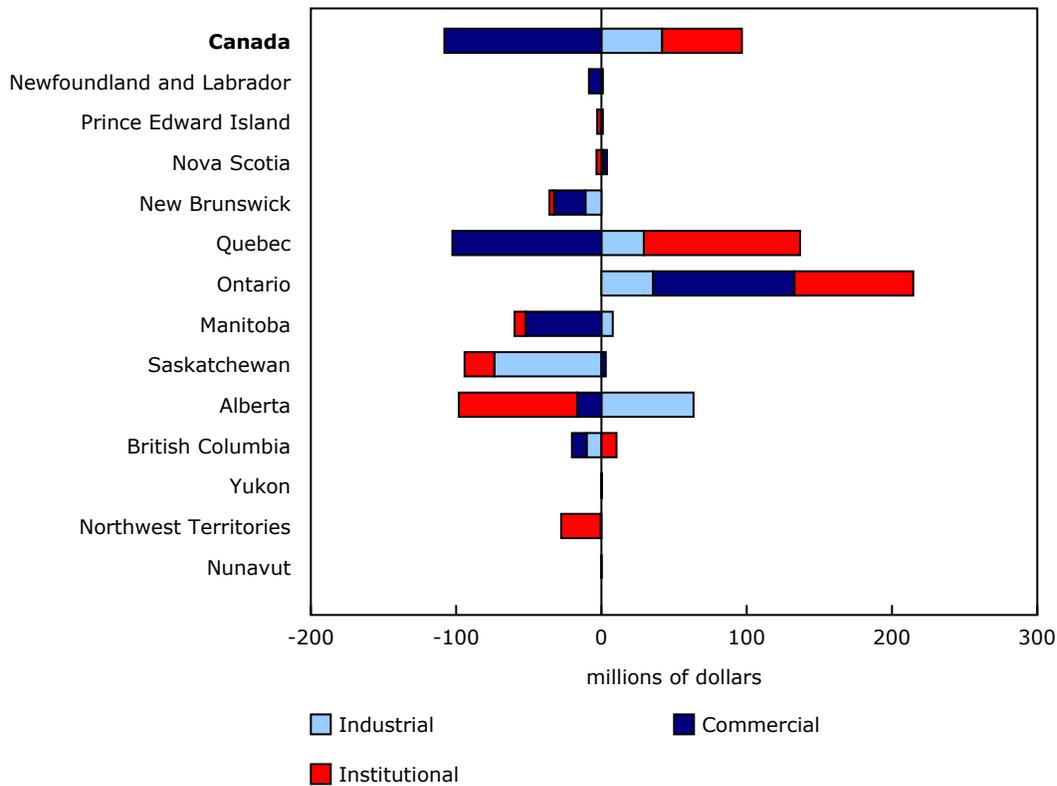
The value of building permits for non-residential structures edged down 0.5% to \$2.4 billion in March, a second consecutive monthly decline. Lower construction intentions for commercial buildings led the drop, moderated by gains in the institutional and industrial components. Seven provinces registered decreases in the value of non-residential permits in March, led by Saskatchewan. Ontario and Yukon reported increases in all three non-residential building components.

In March, construction intentions for commercial structures fell 7.6% to \$1.3 billion. Quebec and Manitoba posted the largest decreases, following notable increases in the office building category in both provinces in February.

The institutional component climbed 9.1% to \$658 million in March, led by Quebec and Ontario. Higher intentions for nursing homes were mainly responsible for the gain in Quebec. In Ontario, the increase was largely attributable to university buildings, a result of the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund announced in the 2016 Federal Budget.

The value of building permits issued for industrial structures rose 10.5% to \$440 million in March, with construction intentions for a new bus storage facility in Alberta contributing most to the gain.

Chart 4
Month-to-month change in value of non-residential building permits, March 2017



Source(s): CANSIM table [026-0006](#).

Provinces: British Columbia posts notable decline

British Columbia registered the largest decrease in the value of building permits in March, while Ontario and Quebec were the only provinces to report higher construction intentions.

Multi-family dwellings were mainly responsible for the decline in British Columbia, led by apartment buildings. In Ontario, the large decrease in multi-family construction intentions was more than offset by increases in every other building component. Meanwhile, the gain in Quebec was mainly due to institutional structures, specifically nursing homes.

Census metropolitan areas: Vancouver registers largest decrease

The value of building permits fell in 19 of 36 census metropolitan areas in March. Vancouver reported the largest decline, while Montréal registered the biggest increase.

After posting two consecutive monthly increases, Vancouver registered a decrease in the value of building permits in March on the weakness of multi-family dwellings. Every component reported declines, except single-family dwellings.

In Montréal, the gain was mainly due to construction intentions for a retirement nursing home, as well as increased intentions for apartment-condominium constructions.

Edmonton posted the second-largest gain in the value of building permits among the census metropolitan areas in March, mainly the result of higher construction intentions for residential buildings. Apartment buildings led the advance while the single-family dwelling component increased for a third consecutive month.

First quarter 2017

Canadian municipalities issued \$22.1 billion worth of building permits in the first quarter of 2017, up 7.3% compared with the first quarter of 2016. The residential sector led the national increase, with both the single-family and multi-family components reporting gains.

Construction intentions for residential dwellings climbed 15.8% from the first quarter of 2016 to the first quarter of 2017, to \$14.7 billion. On the other hand, the value of non-residential building permits fell 6.2% from the first quarter of 2016 to the first quarter of 2017, to \$7.4 billion, led by the commercial component and the industrial component.



In celebration of the country's 150th birthday, Statistics Canada is presenting snapshots from our rich statistical history.

Every single-family housing boom of the last half-century has been followed by a bust of varying length and severity. All three busts encountered over the last 50 years were triggered by a recession.

The first significant bust occurred in 1982, when the number of building permits issued for new single-family homes fell by half from the highs of the 1970s.

The bust was sharp, but short. In 1983, single-family dwelling permits began their ascent to the record highs of the late 1980s.

Permits fell again in the early 1990s, bottoming out in 1995, when they were 50% below the annual averages of the late 1980s.

The recession of 2008/2009 brought the number of new single-family home building permits down by almost 30% from the boom of the mid 2000s, but the drop was less sharp than the busts of 1982 and the early 1990s.

Nevertheless, the current level of new single-family home permits issued yearly (averaging 75,000 over the last five years) remains well below the highs of the past (upwards of over 110,000 permits per year).

While previous booms and busts were closely tied to economic conditions, the current lull in new single-family building permits may be attributable to other factors such as smaller families, changing household types (more single people living alone, divorcees and lone-parent families), delayed household formation and an ageing population.

Higher prices, land shortages, and development policies in Canada's major cities may also be contributing factors to lower levels of new single-family home permits issued over the last few years.

Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which facilitate comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations. For information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

The Building Permits Survey covers over 2,400 municipalities, representing 95% of the Canadian population. The communities representing the other 5% of the population are very small and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total for the entire population.

Building permits data are used as a leading indicator of activity in the construction industry.

The value of planned construction activities presented in this release excludes engineering projects (such as waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.

For the purposes of this release, the census metropolitan area of Ottawa–Gatineau (Ontario/Quebec) is divided into two areas: the Gatineau part and the Ottawa part.

Unless otherwise specified, the highlights refer to seasonally adjusted current dollars and are ranked in terms of dollar change rather than percentage change.

Revision

Data for the current reference month are subject to revision based on late responses. Data for the previous month have been revised.

Trend-cycle estimates have been added to the charts as a complement to the seasonally adjusted series. Both the seasonally adjusted and the trend-cycle estimates are subject to revision as additional observations become available. These revisions could be large and even lead to a reversal of movement, especially at the end of the series. The higher variability associated with the trend-cycle estimates is indicated with a dotted line on the chart.

For information on trend-cycle data, see the [StatCan Blog](#) and [Trend-cycle estimates – Frequently asked questions](#).

Next release

Data for April on building permits will be released on June 7.

Table 1
Dwelling units, value of residential and non-residential building permits, Canada – Seasonally adjusted

	March 2016	January 2017	February 2017 ^r	March 2017 ^p	February to March 2017	March 2016 to March 2017
	millions of dollars			% change		
Total	6,895.7	7,642.2	7,431.2	7,001.6	-5.8	1.5
Residential	4,394.0	5,093.0	5,002.2	4,584.0	-8.4	4.3
Single ¹	2,404.0	2,759.6	2,625.7	2,704.7	3.0	12.5
Multiple	1,990.0	2,333.4	2,376.5	1,879.3	-20.9	-5.6
Non-residential	2,501.7	2,549.2	2,429.0	2,417.7	-0.5	-3.4
Industrial	416.3	406.1	397.8	439.5	10.5	5.6
Commercial	1,466.6	1,416.1	1,428.4	1,320.3	-7.6	-10.0
Institutional	618.8	726.9	602.9	657.8	9.1	6.3
	number of units			% change		
Total dwellings	16,189	19,350	19,717	16,821	-14.7	3.9
Single ¹	5,649	7,044	6,382	6,076	-4.8	7.6
Multiple	10,540	12,306	13,335	10,745	-19.4	1.9

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Included in this category are the following types of dwellings: single-detached, mobile home and cottage.

Note(s): Data may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): CANSIM tables [026-0006](#) and [026-0010](#).

Table 2
Value of building permits, by province and territory – Seasonally adjusted

	March 2016	January 2017	February 2017 ^r	March 2017 ^p	February to March 2017	March 2016 to March 2017
	millions of dollars				% change	
Canada	6,895.7	7,642.2	7,431.2	7,001.6	-5.8	1.5
Residential	4,394.0	5,093.0	5,002.2	4,584.0	-8.4	4.3
Non-residential	2,501.7	2,549.2	2,429.0	2,417.7	-0.5	-3.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	59.3	43.6	45.0	31.5	-30.0	-46.8
Residential	45.5	32.6	31.7	25.8	-18.6	-43.3
Non-residential	13.7	11.0	13.3	5.7	-57.3	-58.7
Prince Edward Island	22.0	15.2	19.6	17.6	-10.3	-20.1
Residential	15.0	12.2	12.5	12.3	-1.4	-18.2
Non-residential	7.0	2.9	7.1	5.3	-25.9	-24.2
Nova Scotia	115.7	148.0	137.1	92.6	-32.5	-20.0
Residential	79.7	93.5	101.8	56.8	-44.2	-28.7
Non-residential	36.0	54.5	35.4	35.8	1.1	-0.6
New Brunswick	74.0	99.3	113.3	62.6	-44.8	-15.4
Residential	40.4	36.2	52.5	37.6	-28.3	-7.0
Non-residential	33.6	63.1	60.9	25.0	-59.0	-25.5
Quebec	1,222.1	1,235.9	1,202.5	1,264.9	5.2	3.5
Residential	707.5	806.9	749.3	777.7	3.8	9.9
Non-residential	514.6	429.0	453.1	487.2	7.5	-5.3
Ontario	2,905.3	3,258.1	3,035.5	3,128.5	3.1	7.7
Residential	1,967.4	2,339.2	2,181.0	2,059.3	-5.6	4.7
Non-residential	937.8	918.9	854.6	1,069.2	25.1	14.0
Manitoba	243.4	302.3	264.1	180.9	-31.5	-25.7
Residential	125.0	218.8	152.1	120.9	-20.5	-3.3
Non-residential	118.4	83.5	112.0	60.0	-46.4	-49.3
Saskatchewan	133.6	148.3	246.4	151.2	-38.6	13.2
Residential	71.2	83.3	94.2	90.2	-4.2	26.8
Non-residential	62.4	65.0	152.2	61.0	-59.9	-2.3
Alberta	1,011.1	1,221.4	1,117.0	1,110.1	-0.6	9.8
Residential	508.6	625.5	661.5	689.4	4.2	35.6
Non-residential	502.6	595.9	455.6	420.7	-7.6	-16.3
British Columbia	1,081.3	1,161.7	1,218.6	958.2	-21.4	-11.4
Residential	827.9	840.2	961.7	711.1	-26.1	-14.1
Non-residential	253.4	321.5	256.9	247.0	-3.9	-2.5
Yukon	12.1	4.2	2.9	1.7	-40.2	-85.8
Residential	3.1	2.6	2.6	1.0	-61.1	-67.5
Non-residential	9.0	1.5	0.3	0.7	151.1	-92.1
Northwest Territories	15.6	3.6	29.1	1.8	-93.8	-88.3
Residential	2.4	1.9	1.3	1.7	27.8	-27.5
Non-residential	13.2	1.7	27.7	0.1	-99.7	-99.3
Nunavut	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.0	-100.0	-100.0
Residential	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	-100.0	-100.0
Non-residential	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0

^r revised

^p preliminary

... not applicable

Note(s): Data may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): CANSIM table [026-0006](#).

Table 3
Value of building permits, by census metropolitan area – Seasonally adjusted¹

	March 2016	January 2017	February 2017 ^r	March 2017 ^p	February to March 2017	March 2016 to March 2017
	millions of dollars				% change	
Total, census metropolitan areas	5,303.3	5,911.0	5,736.9	5,569.3	-2.9	4.5²
St. John's	38.2	25.3	30.1	17.9	-40.4	-53.1
Halifax	50.1	83.2	82.3	54.4	-33.9	8.6
Moncton	19.8	25.6	42.2	22.9	-45.8	15.5
Saint John	13.9	39.4	18.5	9.0	-51.6	-35.7
Saguenay	20.4	12.9	9.6	10.1	5.2	-50.5
Québec	136.9	79.7	141.7	120.1	-15.2	-12.3
Sherbrooke	34.2	32.7	34.6	30.0	-13.3	-12.4
Trois-Rivières	23.2	11.4	17.2	20.1	17.0	-13.4
Montréal	599.0	692.1	605.6	756.3	24.9	26.3
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	278.5	219.2	257.3	202.7	-21.2	-27.2
Gatineau part	56.8	79.8	71.3	31.5	-55.8	-44.5
Ottawa part	221.7	139.4	186.1	171.1	-8.0	-22.8
Kingston	25.8	10.8	49.2	74.7	51.8	189.5
Belleville	..	23.0	19.8	16.6	-16.2	..
Peterborough	18.6	6.6	14.8	7.7	-48.1	-58.8
Oshawa	52.2	91.7	76.4	116.2	52.1	122.7
Toronto	1,383.5	1,654.9	1,571.9	1,640.7	4.4	18.6
Hamilton	213.1	240.7	165.0	168.0	1.8	-21.2
St. Catharines–Niagara	52.7	70.9	74.7	50.5	-32.3	-4.1
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	144.5	103.9	101.4	78.8	-22.3	-45.5
Brantford	31.7	17.0	5.9	23.6	302.7	-25.5
Guelph	22.1	54.4	40.3	44.6	10.7	101.7
London	161.8	86.7	140.4	115.9	-17.4	-28.3
Windsor	46.0	70.6	63.7	58.7	-7.8	27.7
Barrie	19.8	57.2	34.7	41.1	18.4	107.5
Greater Sudbury	6.7	15.3	7.4	31.4	324.7	368.4
Thunder Bay	4.3	10.7	26.4	7.7	-71.0	78.6
Winnipeg	181.2	253.2	208.8	136.1	-34.8	-24.9
Regina	56.2	49.2	46.5	52.9	13.8	-5.9
Saskatoon	39.5	65.1	88.8	65.9	-25.8	66.7
Lethbridge	..	12.4	83.1	10.7	-87.1	..
Calgary	350.9	348.9	344.6	408.8	18.6	16.5
Edmonton	404.3	548.1	358.2	453.8	26.7	12.2
Kelowna	35.9	86.0	75.0	120.1	60.2	234.6
Abbotsford–Mission	17.0	44.5	14.2	21.8	53.2	28.7
Vancouver	731.8	674.0	810.2	495.3	-38.9	-32.3
Victoria	89.5	93.8	76.4	84.2	10.2	-5.9

^r revised

^p preliminary

.. not available for a specific reference period

1. Go online to view the census subdivisions that make up the [census metropolitan areas](#).

2. This figure excludes Belleville and Lethbridge.

Note(s): Data may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): CANSIM table [026-0006](#).

Available in CANSIM: tables [026-0001 to 026-0008](#) and [026-0010](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2802](#).

The March issue of *Building Permits* ([64-001-X](#)) will soon be available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).