

Building permits, March 2020

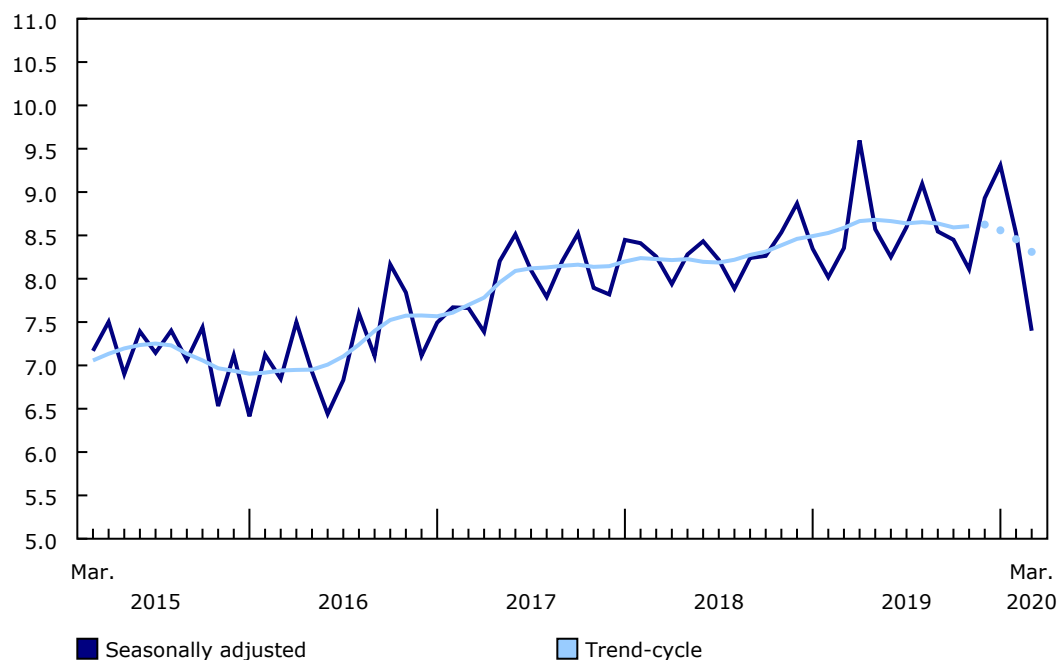
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Friday, May 8, 2020

The total value of building permits issued by Canadian municipalities decreased 13.2% to \$7.4 billion in March, with declines reported in seven provinces and two territories. The \$1.1 billion national decrease was the largest since August 2014. This reflected notable drops in Ontario (-12.9%), Quebec (-18.1%) and British Columbia (-19.4%), which coincided with efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19.

For more information on housing, please visit the [Housing Statistics Portal](#).

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 the note to readers.

Source(s): Table [34-10-0066-01](#).



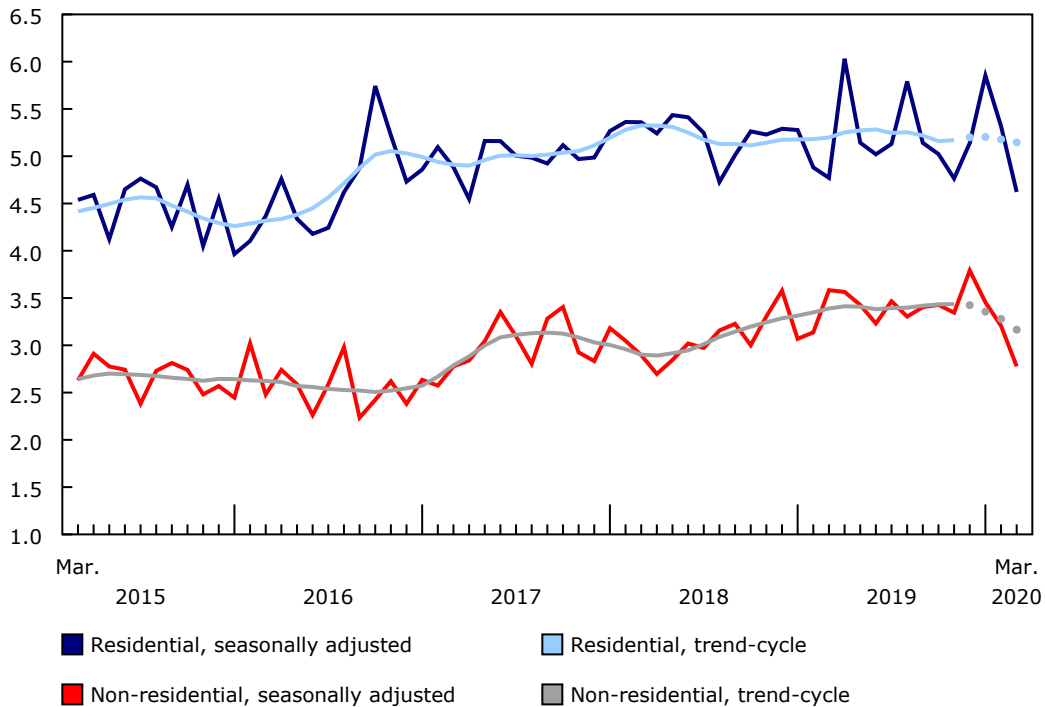
Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Canada

Chart 2
Value of building permits for the 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 the note to readers.

Source(s): Table 34-10-0066-01.

Infographic 1 – Building permits, March 2020

March 2020

Building permits

Figure 1 Month-to-month change in total value of building permits (seasonally adjusted)

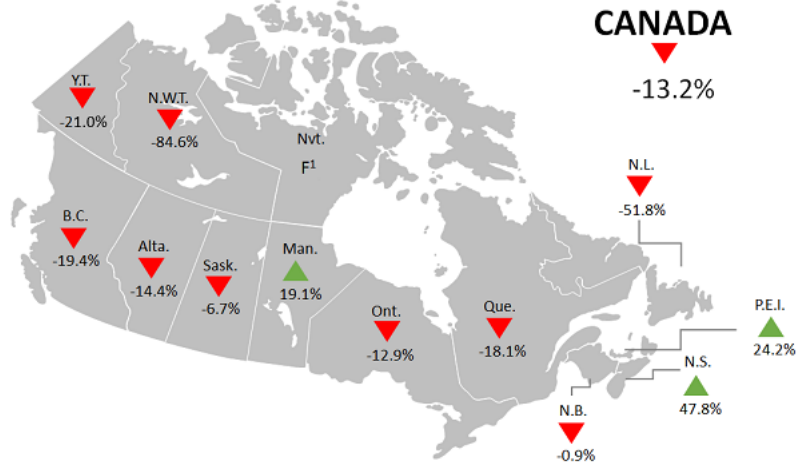
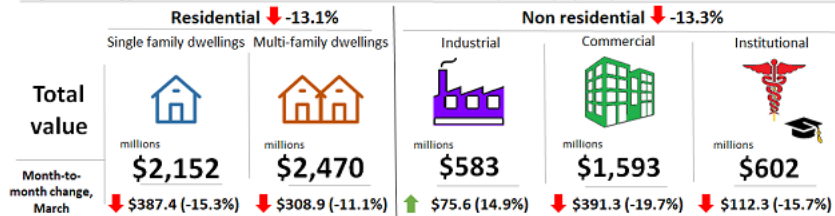


Figure 2 Building permits for residential and non-residential construction in Canada (seasonally adjusted)



Source: Table 34-10-0066-01—Building permits, by type of structure and type of work.

Statistics Canada / Statistique Canada

1, F = too unreliable to be published

Canada

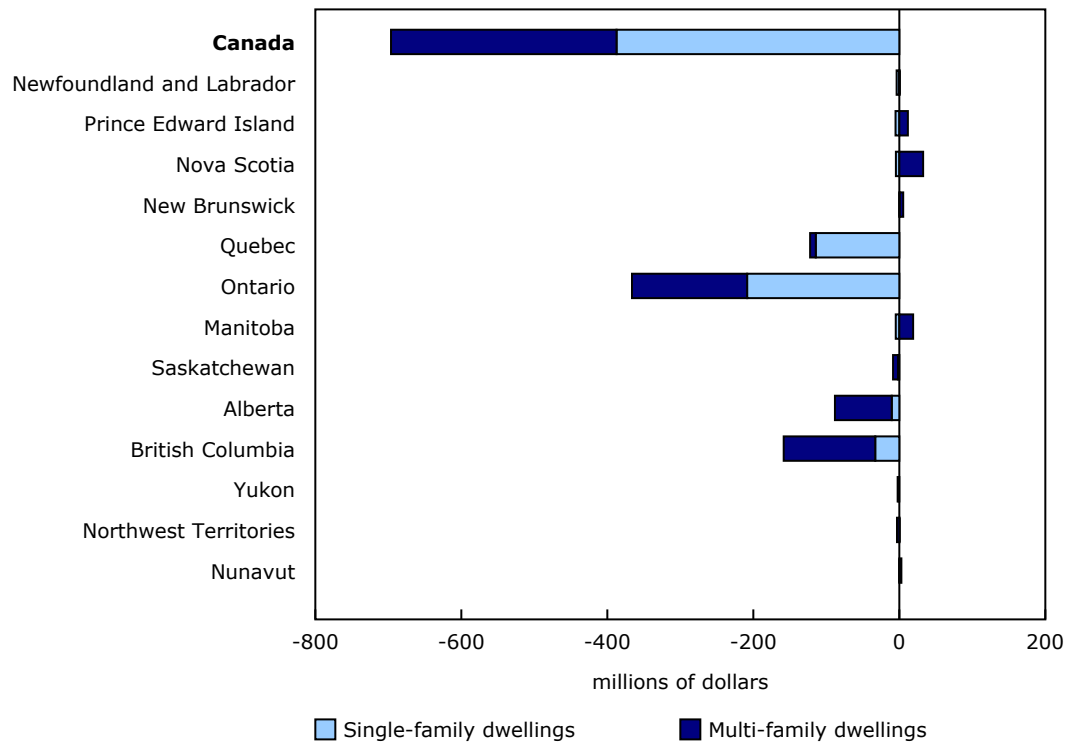
Value of residential permits down

The total value of residential permits decreased 13.1% to \$4.6 billion in March.

The value of permits issued for single-family dwellings fell 15.3% to \$2.2 billion, with the largest percentage declines observed in Prince Edward Island (-31.8%) and Quebec (-27.0%). The province of Quebec shut down all non-essential business activities, such as construction, on March 24. Conversely, the only gains posted nationally in March were in New Brunswick (+2.3%) and the Northwest Territories (+3.0%).

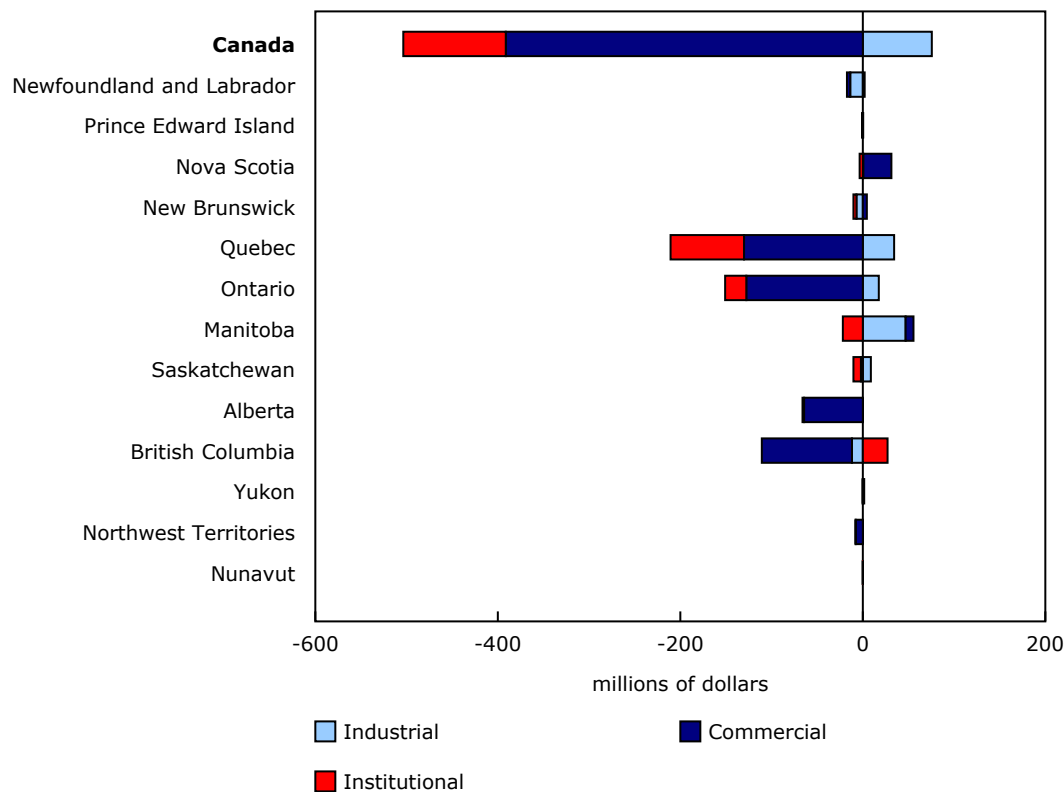
The value of permits issued for multi-family dwellings was down 11.1% to \$2.5 billion, with the largest declines seen in Ontario (-13.0% to \$1.1 billion) and British Columbia (-24.4% to \$389 million).

Chart 3
Month-to-month change in the value of residential building permits



Source(s): Table 34-10-0066-01.

Chart 4
Month-to-month change in the value of non-residential building permits



Source(s): Table 34-10-0066-01.

Non-residential permits decrease for third consecutive month

Seven provinces reported declines in the value of commercial permits issued, bringing the national total down 19.7% to \$1.6 billion. The largest decline in commercial permits was in Quebec (-36.6%), which recorded its third consecutive monthly decrease.

The value of institutional permits (-15.7% to \$602.2 million) was down in eight provinces, with Quebec (-37.0%) posting the largest decline.

Industrial permits (+14.9% to \$583 million) were the only component to show an increase at the national level in March. This was driven by strong gains in Manitoba (+185.9%), reflecting several large permits issued in the Winnipeg metropolitan area.

First quarter 2020: Largest recorded quarter-over-quarter decrease in Quebec

In the first quarter of 2020, the value of building permits declined 1.0% compared with the fourth quarter of 2019. This was the third consecutive quarter-to-quarter decline, yet the value of permits remained 2.1% higher than in the same period a year earlier.

The first quarter started with gains in the value of permits in January that were mainly attributable to British Columbia, where an increase in development fees in Vancouver likely pulled some permits forward as builders submitted their applications before the January 15 deadline. After returning to more normal levels nationally in February, construction intentions dropped in much of Canada as governments and businesses implemented measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 in mid- to late March.

First quarter losses were reported in six provinces, with the most notable decrease in Quebec (-\$1.1 billion). However, quarterly increases in British Columbia (+\$472 million) and Ontario (+\$463 million) offset much of the decline in Quebec. Residential permits issued in the first quarter were valued at \$15.8 billion, representing a 5.8% increase (+\$867 million) compared with the previous quarter, mainly driven by permits issued for multi-family dwellings.

The value of non-residential permits was down 10.7% to \$9.4 billion. Declines in institutional (-\$703 million), commercial (-\$216 million) and industrial (-\$206 million) permits all pushed down the national total.

Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which facilitate month-to-month 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 permit 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 and Quebec) is divided into two areas: the Ottawa part and the Gatineau part.

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

Building components

Single-family dwellings: Residential buildings containing only one dwelling unit (for example, single-detached house, bungalow, linked home [linked at the foundation]).

Multi-family dwellings: Residential buildings containing multiple dwelling units (for example, apartment, apartment condominium, row house, semi-detached house).

Industrial buildings: Buildings used in the processing or production of goods, or related to transportation and communication.

Commercial buildings: Buildings used in the trade or distribution of goods and services.

Institutional and government buildings: Buildings used to house public and semi-public services, such as those related to health and welfare, education, or public administration, as well as buildings used for religious services.

Revision

Unadjusted data for the current reference month are subject to revision based on late responses. Data for the previous month have been revised. Seasonally adjusted data for the previous two months have also been revised.

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

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

	March 2019	January 2020 ^r	February 2020 ^r	March 2020 ^p	February to March 2020	March 2019 to March 2020
	millions of dollars				% change	
Total	8,354.1	9,308.2	8,524.2	7,399.9	-13.2	-11.4
Residential	4,771.0	5,853.0	5,318.2	4,621.9	-13.1	-3.1
Single ¹	2,077.3	2,346.5	2,539.2	2,151.8	-15.3	3.6
Multiple	2,693.8	3,506.6	2,779.0	2,470.1	-11.1	-8.3
Non-residential	3,583.1	3,455.1	3,206.0	2,778.0	-13.3	-22.5
Industrial	605.0	695.8	507.5	583.1	14.9	-3.6
Commercial	2,062.9	2,023.2	1,984.0	1,592.7	-19.7	-22.8
Institutional	915.1	736.2	714.5	602.2	-15.7	-34.2
	number of units				% change	
Total dwellings	17,625	22,412	20,838	18,185	-12.7	3.2
Single ¹	4,680	5,359	6,468	4,776	-26.2	2.1
Multiple	12,945	17,052	14,370	13,409	-6.7	3.6

^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): Table [34-10-0066-01](#).

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

	March 2019	January 2020 ^r	February 2020 ^r	March 2020 ^p	February to March 2020	March 2019 to March 2020
	millions of dollars				% change	
Canada	8,354.1	9,308.2	8,524.2	7,399.9	-13.2	-11.4
Residential	4,771.0	5,853.0	5,318.2	4,621.9	-13.1	-3.1
Non-residential	3,583.1	3,455.1	3,206.0	2,778.0	-13.3	-22.5
Newfoundland and Labrador	39.0	76.5	36.2	17.4	-51.8	-55.3
Residential	20.4	16.6	16.9	13.5	-19.8	-33.8
Non-residential	18.6	59.9	19.3	3.9	-79.8	-78.9
Prince Edward Island	20.5	22.4	25.1	31.2	24.2	52.1
Residential	18.7	18.0	21.2	27.6	30.6	47.5
Non-residential	1.8	4.5	4.0	3.6	-9.3	99.3
Nova Scotia	127.6	132.0	116.3	171.9	47.8	34.7
Residential	90.7	92.4	78.2	106.1	35.6	16.9
Non-residential	36.9	39.6	38.1	65.9	72.8	78.6
New Brunswick	94.5	64.6	76.3	75.6	-0.9	-20.0
Residential	50.0	39.6	48.1	53.3	10.9	6.6
Non-residential	44.5	25.1	28.2	22.3	-21.1	-50.0
Quebec	1,743.9	1,838.7	1,649.0	1,350.3	-18.1	-22.6
Residential	927.5	1,126.1	996.1	873.9	-12.3	-5.8
Non-residential	816.4	712.6	652.9	476.4	-27.0	-41.6
Ontario	3,281.4	3,432.5	3,884.4	3,384.8	-12.9	3.2
Residential	1,995.6	2,018.4	2,470.9	2,104.7	-14.8	5.5
Non-residential	1,285.8	1,414.1	1,413.5	1,280.1	-9.4	-0.4
Manitoba	328.0	284.1	249.4	297.1	19.1	-9.4
Residential	160.3	111.4	150.7	164.7	9.3	2.7
Non-residential	167.7	172.7	98.7	132.4	34.1	-21.0
Saskatchewan	140.6	129.5	150.4	140.3	-6.7	-0.2
Residential	41.1	58.4	63.8	55.2	-13.5	34.4
Non-residential	99.5	71.1	86.6	85.1	-1.8	-14.5
Alberta	917.7	1,026.1	1,074.3	920.0	-14.4	0.2
Residential	576.7	613.9	685.0	596.8	-12.9	3.5
Non-residential	341.0	412.2	389.3	323.2	-17.0	-5.2
British Columbia	1,652.5	2,281.6	1,245.0	1,003.0	-19.4	-39.3
Residential	884.4	1,753.7	778.0	619.7	-20.4	-29.9
Non-residential	768.0	527.9	467.0	383.4	-17.9	-50.1
Yukon	5.2	17.9	4.5	3.5	-21.0	-31.5
Residential	3.7	2.7	4.1	1.9	-53.9	-48.6
Non-residential	1.4	15.3	0.3	1.6	393.9	12.7
Northwest Territories	1.9	1.8	13.0	2.0	-84.6	4.0
Residential	1.6	1.7	5.0	1.8	-63.4	11.5
Non-residential	0.3	0.1	8.0	0.2	-97.8	-38.8
Nunavut	1.3	0.2	F	2.8	F	117.1
Residential	0.2	0.2	F	2.8	F	...
Non-residential	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	...	-100.0

r revised

p preliminary

... not applicable

F too unreliable to be published

Note(s): Data may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.**Source(s):** Table 34-10-0066-01.

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

	March 2019	January 2020 ^r	February 2020 ^r	March 2020 ^p	February to March 2020	March 2019 to March 2020
	millions of dollars				% change	
Total, census metropolitan areas	6,551.3	7,143.6	6,350.6	5,652.0	-11.0	-13.7
St. John's	28.8	15.5	13.2	8.0	-39.3	-72.1
Halifax	70.9	90.4	72.6	118.4	63.1	67.0
Moncton	36.8	21.3	18.0	25.6	42.5	-30.5
Saint John	11.9	12.2	13.2 ^E	8.3	-37.3	-30.4
Saguenay	28.2	24.7	19.5	14.0	-28.4	-50.4
Québec	156.5	185.6	128.6	120.5	-6.3	-23.0
Sherbrooke	60.9	129.9	53.9	51.4	-4.6	-15.6
Trois-Rivières	20.7	23.0	19.3	26.2	35.9	26.7
Montréal	1,031.4	910.2	910.4	698.2	-23.3	-32.3
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario and Quebec	350.7	413.8	448.0	628.9	40.4	79.3
Gatineau part	81.1	47.2	55.3	78.3	41.4	-3.5
Ottawa part	269.5	366.6	392.6	550.6	40.2	104.3
Kingston	36.1	26.3	13.9	21.2	53.2	-41.3
Belleville	14.3	15.5	19.4	22.1	14.0	54.8
Peterborough	12.0	41.6	10.0	11.8	18.9	-1.3
Oshawa	113.6	98.9	100.7	86.3	-14.3	-24.0
Toronto	1,525.7	1,484.2	1,700.4	1,277.7	-24.9	-16.3
Hamilton	203.8	115.9	116.4	123.2	5.9	-39.6
St. Catharines–Niagara	82.3	79.2	128.0	89.4	-30.2	8.7
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	143.5	151.5	161.9	145.4	-10.2	1.3
Brantford	33.0	50.7	37.7	53.5	41.9	62.3
Guelph	34.8	24.0	42.0	37.3	-11.1	7.4
London	96.6	111.2	112.9	149.9	32.8	55.1
Windsor	38.6	68.4	48.1	81.3	69.1	110.8
Barrie	18.3	68.6	32.1	29.5	-7.9	61.7
Greater Sudbury	23.1	25.0	26.1	24.5	-5.9	6.3
Thunder Bay	32.6	9.5	10.4	11.0	6.2	-66.3
Winnipeg	211.6	180.8	164.5	202.3	22.9	-4.4
Regina	27.8	44.4	45.8	37.7	-17.7	35.3
Saskatoon	64.7	60.1	60.5	51.4	-15.0	-20.5
Lethbridge	30.4	22.8	24.8	18.7	-24.5	-38.4
Calgary	476.2	445.4	445.9	359.9	-19.3	-24.4
Edmonton	280.1	346.8	417.3	391.6	-6.2	39.8
Kelowna	127.2	80.5	86.4	56.4	-34.7	-55.7
Abbotsford–Mission	18.8	25.5	26.2	27.3	4.2	44.8
Vancouver	1,002.7	1,638.7	698.1	537.8	-23.0	-46.4
Victoria	106.8	101.3	124.7	105.2	-15.6	-1.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

^E use with caution

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

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

Source(s): Table [34-10-0066-01](#).

Available tables: table [34-10-0066-01](#).

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

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).