

ENTAL MARKET

Trois-Rivières

October 2001 Survey

REPORT

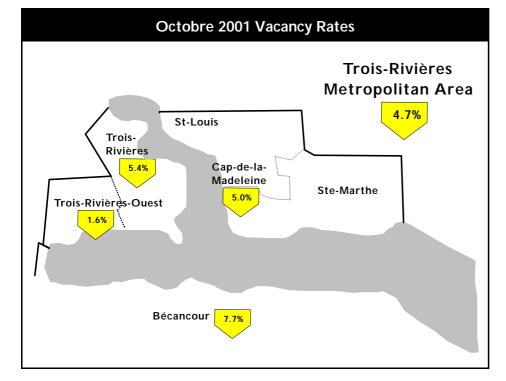
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

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Rental housing vacancy rate falls significantly in 2001

Highlights

- ✓ With 359 fewer unoccupied units in 2001 than in 2000, the vacancy rate fell to 4.7 per cent.
- ✓ Weaker apartment construction and improved youth employment conditions are the reasons for this decrease in the vacancy rate.
- ✓ Newer buildings and larger units are still favoured by tenants.
- Buildings with 50 or more units continue to stand out with vacancy rates below those of smaller structures.
- ✓ The vacancy rate is expected to go down again in 2002.



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Vacancy rate falls significantly in Trois-Rivières

The Trois-Rivières census metropolitan area (CMA) posted the second greatest rental vacancy rate decrease in Canada, after Sherbrooke. In fact, the proportion of unoccupied units fell for a fifth consecutive year in the area. According to the results of CMHC's latest annual survey, the proportion of vacant units went from 6.8 per cent in October 2000 to 4.7 per cent in October 2001. This rate, which represents 750 vacant dwellings, was the lowest recorded since 1987.

The slowdown in rental housing construction observed in recent years, combined with a stronger demand thanks to improved youth employment conditions, brought about this decrease in the vacancy rate. In fact, the last time a comparable youth employment level was recorded dates back to the beginning of 1990. Still, the vacancy rate remains higher than the levels registered in the other CMAs across Quebec. For the last few years, the supply of affordable homes for sale and the

relatively low interest rates have enabled many renters to become homeowners, which curbed the decrease in the vacancy rate in the area.

Vacancy rate remains higher in Trois-Rivières than in other CMAs

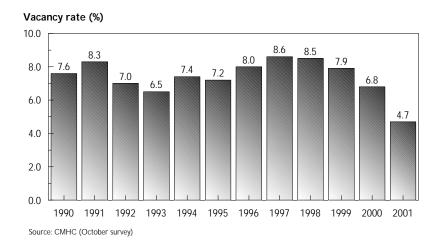
Such a low vacancy rate had not been recorded since the mid-1980s on the Trois-Rivières rental market. However, this rate still remains higher than those observed in the other CMAs across the province. The case of Trois-Rivières is therefore different from the other markets where it is very difficult to find a dwelling. But why is this happening in the Mauricie area?

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, rental housing construction was doing well in the area, but perhaps too well for the sector. During the past decade, those who were to ensure the renewal of the

rental housing client group--mostly young people aged from 20 to 34 years born at a time when there was a drastic decline in the birth rate--were simply not sufficiently numerous to replace the imposing baby boomer contingent who had preceded them on the rental market. In fact, for a slightly higher monthly payment than their rent, baby boomers could buy a bungalow, so many of them took advantage of the very attractive interest rates offered as of the mid-1990s and the very affordable prices of homes in the area to access homeownership. With the decline in youth employment at the time and a still shaky regional economic context, everything was in place for the vacancy rate to embark on an upward course.

The enthusiasm of builders upon the arrival of the many baby boomers looking for a dwelling had resulted in the construction of a large number of apartments. This abundance of new units, along with a demographic context that would be unfavourable to the rental market, and the difficult events on the job market in the last decade, caused the proportion of vacant units to rise to 8.6 per cent in 1997. These factors, combined with the affordable prices for existing homes and the very low mortgage rates, maintained the vacancy rate at high levels for several years. Recently, the weak rental housing construction and the favourable youth employment conditions contributed to bringing the proportion of vacant units back down below the 5-per-cent mark.

Vacancy Rate Down Significantly in Trois-Rivières in 2001



Certain sectors stand out

A review of the latest rental market survey results shows significant variations between the different sectors of the Trois-Rivières area. In fact, the northern sector of the city of Trois-Rivières and the municipality of Trois-Rivières-Ouest both have vacancy rates below the 2-per-cent mark (1.8 per cent and 1.6 per cent, respectively). It should be noted that these are the sectors with newer units, which are more popular among renter clients. At

Apartment Vaca	ncy Rates	
Canada	2000	2001
Metropolitan Areas		
Calgary	1.3	1.2
Charlottetown Chicoutimi-Jonquière	2.6 4.4	1.8 4.4
Edmonton	1.4	0.9
Halifax	3.6	2.8
Hamilton	1.7	1.3
Hull	1.4	0.6
Kitchener London	0.7 2.2	0.9 1.6
Montréal	1.5	0.6
Oshawa	1.7	1.3
Ottawa	0.2	0.8
Québec	1.6	0.8
Regina Saint John	1.4 3.4	2.1 5.6
Saskatoon	3.4 1.7	2.9
Sherbrooke	4.7	2.3
St. Catharines-Niagara	2.6	1.9
St. John's	3.8	2.5
Sudbury	7.7	5.7
Thunder Bay Toronto	5.8 0.6	5.8 0.9
Trois-Rivières	6.8	4.7
Vancouver	1.4	1.0
Victoria	1.8	0.5
Windsor	1.9	2.9
Winnipeg	2.0	1.4
Total Canada	1.6	1.1
Québec Province		
Urban Areas from		
50,000 to 99,999		
Drummondville	1.8	1.8
Granby Shawinigan	2.0 8.4	2.5 7.7
St-Hyacinthe	1.8	1.3
Sub-Total 50,000-99,999	3.1	2.6
Urban Areas from		
10.000 to 49.999		
Alma	1.8	4.4
Amos	10.5	14.2
Baie-Comeau	16.7	16.2
Cowansville Dolbeau-Mistassini	6.6 7.1	6.0 3.9
Gaspé	15.0	3.9 9.2
Joliette	4.2	2.2
La Tuque	10.6	13.0
Lachute	6.6	5.5
Magog	3.1	1.1
Matane Montmagny	14.4 1.5	11.4 1.3
Rimouski	6.5	3.9
Rivière-du-Loup	4.5	3.4
Roberval	5.3	4.1
Rouyn-Noranda	12.2	15.5
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield	3.7	3.7
Sept-Îles Sorel-Tracy	12.3 11.9	7.7 8.4
St-Georges	2.1	2.7
St-Jean-sur-Richelieu	2.8	1.2
Ste-Marie	1.7	2.8
Thetford-Mines	7.8	11.5
Val d'Or	11.4	11.4
Victoriaville Sub-Total 10,000-49,999	2.3 5.9	2.0 6.2
Total Province of Québec	2.2	1.3

the other end of the spectrum, the downtown sector, where the oldest units are located, still had a high vacancy rate this past year, with 10.1 per cent of its dwellings vacant. Bécancour was close behind with 7.7 per cent of its apartments unoccupied. And, lastly, Cap-de-la-Madeleine (5.0 per cent) and the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières sector (3.1 per cent) complete the picture with vacancy rates that were down. Conditions improved throughout the area, with the exception of the downtown sector, which saw its proportion of vacant units stay relatively stable at 10.1 per cent.

Many vacancies elsewhere in the Mauricie area...

Throughout the 1990s in the agglomeration of Shawinigan, the vacancy rate constantly remained between 7 per cent and 9 per cent. This past year was no exception, as 7.7 per cent of apartments in Shawinigan were vacant. However, this level, the lowest since 1993, represents a fourth consecutive decrease in the proportion of vacancies in this area. In La Tuque, conditions stayed difficult, as 13 per cent of units remained unoccupied. In this sector, the surplus of vacant units has been persisting for several years now, due to the local employment structure and demographic conditions that are unfavourable to the rental market.

... few in the province overall

The vacancy rate fell for a fourth consecutive year in the province overall. In privately initiated buildings with three or more units, the vacancy rate reached 1.3 per cent, compared to 2.2 per cent at the time of the 2000 survey.

Once again, the good performance of youth employment buoyed up demand for rental housing during the past year. As well, multiple housing construction was mainly focused on the condominium and retirement home market segments.

The survey results indicate that the vacancy rates decreased in all census metropolitan areas across Quebec. On the rental markets in Montréal (0.6 per cent), Hull (0.6 per cent) and Québec (0.8 per cent), the rates have now fallen below 1 per cent. In Sherbrooke, the vacancy rate went from 4.7 per cent down to 2.3 per cent in October 2001. The Trois-Rivières and Chicoutimi-Jonquière markets are not as tight. In Chicoutimi-Jonquière, the vacancy rate remained stable at 4.4 per cent. It should be pointed out that the rental increase was slightly above inflation on the markets that tightened.

According to the survey results, the vacancy rates were down for units of all sizes, but somewhat less so for dwellings with three or more bedrooms, for which the vacancy rate fell by only 1 percentage point. Also, there are slightly more bachelor apartments available than units in the other size categories.

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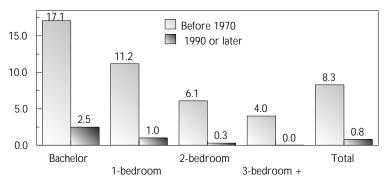
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Newer, Larger Apartments More Popular

Vacancy rates (%) - Structures built before 1970 and in 1990 or later



Source: CMHC (October survey)

Comfort without compromise

One would be wrong to think that tenants seek the least expensive units at any cost. In Trois-Rivières, as in other centres across the province, it can be noted that the vacancy rates are higher for apartments that rent for lower prices. Looking only at two-bedroom apartments renting for under \$450, it can be seen that 4.9 per cent of these units were unoccupied. In the case of mid-range dwellings (\$450 to \$549), 1.2 per cent of units were vacant. But when considering units priced at \$550 or over, it can be observed that the vacancy rate stood at just 0.5 per cent. Tenants therefore prefer newer, more modern or recently renovated apartments, and they are often prepared to pay a little more for such units, while still looking to get the best value for their money.

And, a review of the Trois-Rivières rental housing stock according to the age of the buildings reveals the same finding just as clearly. Tenants seek the newest units, which generally rent for higher prices than apartments in older buildings. There are some major differences between the vacancy rates of various buildings in the area, depending on when they arrived on the market. Available

units are scarce in structures built during the past decade. In fact, for buildings that were completed in the 1990s or later, the vacancy rate was only 0.8 per cent this past October, even if the rents are nearly \$120 higher than for dwellings built before the 1970s. Conversely, for structures built before 1970, the same survey shows that the vacancy rate goes up to 8.3 per cent.

Some owners of structures built before the 1970s were able to keep their units well maintained and be receptive to their clients' needs by renovating as required. Landlords who did not do this gradually found themselves with chronic vacancy problems. As the income from their buildings went down, many owners did not have the means to brighten them up and consequently lost other tenants who chose more modern structures, which resulted in a further loss of income.

In the other building age categories, vacancy rate decreases were also observed. Structures built during the 1980s saw their vacancy rate fall by 2.4 percentage points to 3.2 per cent in October 2001. For buildings started between 1970 and 1979, a comparable decrease (2.6 percentage points) was noted, and 4.1 per cent of dwellings in this age category remained available.

Larger units popular among tenants

Over the years, and in all markets across the province, there has been a relation between unit sizes and vacancy rates. In fact, it has been noted that the larger the dwelling, the easier it is to rent. An analysis of the percentages of vacant units by apartment size reveals that this relation continues to exist again this vear. Units with two bedrooms and those with three or more bedrooms are posting good performances for the area, with vacancy rates below the 4-per-cent mark. At the other end of the spectrum, the smallest units have the highest vacancy rates. The proportions of available rental housing units reached 5.8 per cent for one-bedroom units and 9.4 per cent for bachelor apartments.

Demand is stronger for larger apartments, which offer possibilities for sharing accommodations or are intended for families. In fact, these roomier units are increasingly sought by younger clients who wish to split the costs of the dwelling and thereby reduce each person's monthly bill. In the case of families with children, it is easy to see that a more spacious unit is greatly appreciated when it is within their budget.

Conditions favourable in largest buildings

Apartments in the largest buildings tend to be easier to rent than those in smaller structures. The latest results confirm this phenomenon, as buildings with fewer than 50 units had vacancy rates above 4.5 per cent. In the category of structures with 50 or more units, the rates stayed under the 3-per-cent mark, even falling below 1 per cent in the case of buildings with 50 to 99 units. Several of these structures are actually retire-

ment homes. In the Trois-Rivières area, the increasingly aging population will be tending to seek residences of this type because, as they older, people first want to have safe apartments in buildings equipped with a controlled-access security system and offering a full range of services, generally available in large residential complexes.

Moderate rental increase in 2001

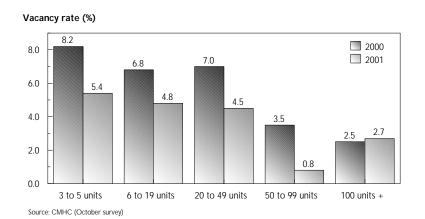
In the overall Trois-Rivières area, a rental increase of 2 per cent was observed. This moderate rise was still below the inflation rate in effect. During the past year, the rental hike was caused by the increase in energy costs, more particularly oil prices. However, it was attenuated by vacancy rates that remain relatively high compared to other centres.

Rents went up for units of all sizes. In line with the stronger demand for larger units, the rent for apartments with three or more bedrooms posted the greatest hike. In terms of supply and demand, larger units manage to do better, and tenants are willing to pay more to benefit from the extra space.

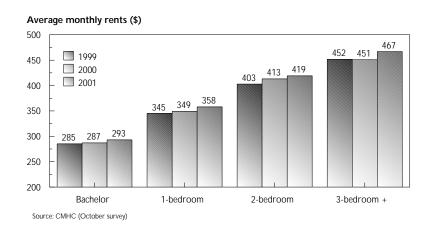
Vacancy rate should continue to fall in 2002

Despite the expected decline in employment in 2002 due to the economic slowdown, the vigorous conditions on the youth job market observed in recent years and the low level of rental housing construction will cause the vacancy rate to fall below the 4-per-cent mark in 2002 (3.7 per cent). Following two forgettable years in the rental housing construction sector, activity should pick up with the announcement of the second phase of a retirement home project and other traditional rental buildings.

Structures with 50 or More Units Continue to Stand Out



Falling Vacancy Rate Leads to Moderate Rental Increase



retirement homes Reports

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Market Analysis Center publishes reports on the Retirement Homes for six Metropolitan Areas in Québec (Chicoutimi, Hull, Montréal, Québec, Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières).

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METHODOLOGY

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation conducts the Rental Market Survey every year in October to determine the number of vacancies and the rents charged in the rental structures. The survey is conducted on a sample basis in all urban areas with populations of 10,000 and more. Only structures which have been on the market for at least three months are included. While this publication is mainly about privately initiated apartments with three units and more, the CMHC survey also examines row houses and publicly initiated rental and co-op housing.

The survey is conducted by telephone or site visit, and information is obtained from the owner, manager or building superintendent. The survey is usually conducted in the first two weeks of October and these results reflect market conditions at that time.

Definitions

Vacancy: A unit is considered vacant if, at any time of the survey, it is physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental.

Rent: The rent data refers to the actual amount tenants pay for their unit. Amenities and services such as heat, light, parking, hot water and laundry facilities may or may not be included in the monthly rent reported in individual cases. The average rent figures reported in this publication represent the average of different units in the market area, some of wich may have some or all of these services.

Rental apartment structure: Any building containing three or more rental dwellings which are not ground oriented.

Acknowledgement

The Rental Market Survey could not have been conducted without the co-operation of the many property owners and managers throughout Canada. We greatly acknowledge their hard work and assistance in providing timely and accurate information. We sincerely hope that the results of this work will provide a benefit to these clients and to the entire housing industry.

Market Zones

The various zones are described as follows:

Zone 1: Downtown

Zone 2: UQTR Sector

Zone 3: North Sector

Zone 1 to 3: City of Trois-Rivières

Zone 4: Municipality of Trois-Rivières-Ouest

Zone 5: Cap-de-la-Nadeleine and Ste-Marthe

Zone 6: Cap-de-la-Madeleine and St-Iouis-de-France

Zone 7: Municipality of Bécancour

Zone 1 to 7: Trois-Rivières Metropolitan Area

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Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) By Market Zone and Unit Size Trois-Rivières Metropolitan Area											
Zone	Bach	nelor	1-Bed	room	2-Bed	room	3-Bedr	oom +	Total		
20110	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	
Downtown (1) UQTR Sector (2)	11.9 7.7	17.6 5.7	11.9 4.5	13.4 3.3	8.3 3.5	7.1 1.9	7.9 6.5	4.0 3.9	10.0 4.9	10.1 3.1	
North Sector (3)	***	***	3.7	2.5	4.2	1.6	0.9	0.3	3.1	1.8	
City of Trois-Rivières (1-3)	9.2	12.5	7.6	7.4	5.5	3.8	4.7	2.3	6.3	5.4	
Trois-Rivières-Ouest (4)	***	***	5.2	1.0	5.0	2.8	1.3	0.5	4.1	1.6	
Cap-de-la-Mad. & Ste-Marthe (5)	***	***	11.0	6.0	8.8	4.1	7.7	3.4	9.5	4.4	
Cap-de-la-Mad. & St-Louis (6)	***	***	8.7	4.3	6.8	3.0	9.6	9.4	8.3	5.4	
Cap-de-la-Madeleine (5-6)	***	4.1	9.7	5.0	7.8	3.6	9.0	7.8	8.8	5.0	
Bécancour (7)	***	13.3	20.6	5.9	14.5	7.8	14.1	7.8	17.0	7.7	
Metropolitan Area	9.5	9.4	8.0	5.8	6.3	3.6	5.4	3.6	6.8	4.7	

Apartment Average Rents (\$) By Market Zone and Unit Size Trois-Rivières Metropolitan Area										
Zone	Bachelor		1-Bedroom		2-Bed	Iroom	3-Bedroom +			
Zone	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001		
Downtown (1)	282	276	316	329	353	362	382	406		
UQTR Sector (2)	307	325	378	396	452	477	541	557		
North Sector (3)	***	***	382	378	452	456	479	495		
City of Trois-Rivières (1-3)	290	294	352	361	416	427	464	488		
Trois-Rivières-Ouest (4)	***	***	353	351	434	435	483	485		
Cap-de-la-Mad. & Ste-Marthe (5)	***	***	353	374	408	404	386	393		
Cap-de-la-Mad. & St-Louis (6)	***	***	333	337	389	393	421	430		
Cap-de-la-Madeleine (5-6)	***	284	344	355	399	400	411	421		
Bécancour (7)	***	233	290	293	343	347	362	368		
Metropolitan Area	287	293	349	358	413	419	451	467		

Number of Apartments - Vacant and Universe (Units) By Market Zone and Unit Size Trois-Rivières Metropolitan Area										
7	Back	nelor	1-Bed	1-Bedroom		2-Bedroom		oom +	Total	
Zone	Vacant	Univ.	Vacant	Univ.	Vacant	Univ.	Vacant	Univ.	Vacant	Univ.
Downtown (1)	66	373	168	1,257	85	1,198	21	523	339	3,351
UQTR Sector (2)	15	261	28	845	18	950	19	490	80	2,546
North Sector (3)	***	***	20	809	16	1,019	3	817	49	2,733
City of Trois-Rivières (1-3)	91	723	216	2,911	119	3,167	42	1,829	468	8,630
Trois-Rivières-Ouest (4)	***	***	8	754	36	1,309	4	725	48	2,946
Cap-de-la-M. & Ste-Marthe (5)	***	***	27	455	43	1,054	9	267	82	1,852
Cap-de-la-Mad. & St-Louis (6)	***	***	33	753	27	910	70	747	136	2,527
Cap-de-la-Madeleine (5-6)	8	194	60	1,208	70	1,964	79	1,013	217	4,379
Bécancour (7)	4	30	6	101	10	129	5	64	25	324
Metropolitan Area	104	1,104	290	4,974	235	6,569	130	3,632	759	16,279

^{***} Not available or sample too small to be disclosed

Apartment Average Rents (\$) With or Without Services * By Market Zone and Unit Size Trois-Rivières Metropolitan Area

Zone	Bach	nelor	1-Bed	lroom	2-Bed	lroom	3-Bedroom +		
	With Services	Without Services	With Services	Without Services	With Services	Without Services	With Services	Without Services	
Downtown (1)	288	257	375	276	476	324	561	350	
UQTR Sector (2)	328	290	419	326	523	437	606	493	
North Sector (3)	***	***	368	385	477	439	520	467	
Trois-Rivières-Ouest (4)	***	***	375	351	462	436	503	479	
Cap-de-la-M. & Ste-Marthe (5)	***	***	306	406	400	410	456	374	
Cap-de-la-Mad. & St-Louis (6)	***	***	341	333	406	389	470	416	
Bécancour (7)	***	***	281	320	296	352	320	369	
Metropolitan Area	299	273	376	341	471	402	541	437	

^{*}Note: Average rents with services include heating, electricity and hot water. The reader will note that, in certain market zones, the average rent with services is lower than the rent without services. This phenomenon results from that recently built units, which are generally more expensive, are almost always offered without services, while older units usually include services. This is more frequent in zones where stock is newer.

Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) By Structure Size and Unit Size Trois-Rivières Metropolitan Area											
Structure Size	Bach	elor 1-Bedroom		2-Bedroom		3-Bedroom +		Total			
Structure Size	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	2000	2001	
3 to 5 units	11.0	5.9	12.2	9.8	6.6	4.6	6.1	1.9	8.2	5.4	
6 to 19 units	10.7	15.7	8.6	5.9	6.3	3.3	5.1	4.4	6.8	4.8	
20 to 49 units	13.3	10.8	5.6	3.2	6.4	3.6	6.3	4.3	7.0	4.5	
50 to 99 units	9.8	1.0	1.4	0.8	6.0	1.1	***	***	3.5	8.0	
100 units and more	4.0	4.8	2.0	2.5	0.0	0.7	4.3	0.0	2.5	2.7	
Metropolitan Area	9.5	9.4	8.0	5.8	6.3	3.6	5.4	3.6	6.8	4.7	

Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) and Average Rents (\$) By Year of Construction and Unit Size Trois-Rivières Metropolitan Area											
Year	Bach	elor	1-Bedroom		2-Bedroom		3-Bedroom +		Total		
Year	Vac. Rate	Rent	Vac. Rate	Rents	Vac. Rate	Rents	Vac. Rate	Rents	Vac. Rate		
1990 or later	2.5	***	1.0	406	0.3	490	0.0	506	0.8		
1980 to 1989	5.2	274	3.8	343	3.2	418	2.7	451	3.2		
1970 to 1979	8.2	336	3.5	404	2.5	471	6.6	535	4.1		
Before 1970	17.1	258	11.2	306	6.1	355	4.0	411	8.3		

^{***} Not available or sample too small to be disclosed

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