



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

2011 Census/National Housing Survey Housing Condition Series Issue 4: The Private Housing Stock, 2006-2011

November 2015 Socio-economic Series

1. INTRODUCTION

Using data from the Census of the Population, this Research Highlight summarizes the main changes in the private housing stock from 2006 to 2011. The first section provides an overview of how Statistics Canada defines and classifies housing units, and the second section discusses major changes in the stock.

2. STOCK OF PRIVATE DWELLINGS

Statistics Canada classifies a building as a **private dwelling** when it has a separate set of living quarters built for human occupancy or adapted to meet this purpose. A set of living quarters is considered separate if it has a private (that is, non-shared) entrance. The entrance can be a direct one from outside, as in the case of a single-detached dwelling, or it may be from a common hall, lobby, vestibule or stairway inside the building, as is often the case with multiple-unit residential structures.

Statistics Canada divides the stock of enumerated private dwellings into two broad categories: regular and marginal dwellings (see figure 1).

Regular private dwellings must have a source of heat or power and must be enclosed spaces that provide shelter from wind, rain, snow and other natural elements. In other words, these structures, which may include movable dwellings, must have been built or converted to make them suitable for year-round habitation. The 2011 Census counted nearly

14.6 million private dwellings in Canada, virtually all of which (99.97%) were classified as *regular* private dwellings (see figure 1).

Marginal private dwellings are those not suitable for year-round habitation, including non-winterized cottages, barns and garages. The 2011 Census counted 4,450 marginal private dwellings (0.03% of all private dwellings).

Components of private dwellings

Both categories of private dwellings are further subdivided into three components:

1. occupied by usual residents;
2. occupied exclusively by foreign residents or temporarily present persons; and
3. unoccupied.

Because of concerns about data quality, Statistics Canada publishes the census count of all private dwellings but does not publish counts of its various components.¹ Statistics Canada has noted concerns about the quality of the data on unoccupied dwellings and those occupied exclusively by foreign residents or temporarily present persons. Still, given that these structures together amounted to about 1.2 million, or nearly 9%, of the total stock of dwellings in 2011, there is some value in taking a closer look at their evolution from one census to the next.

¹ CMHC obtained data on these components through a custom data request.

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The first component, *dwelling occupied by usual residents*, refers to those in which one or more individuals permanently resided² on Census Day and includes those dwellings whose residents are temporarily absent from their homes at the time of the Census. It excludes those occupied solely by foreign residents (that is, persons whose usual place of residence is outside Canada) and those occupied on a temporary basis by persons who have a usual place of residence elsewhere. Regular private dwellings occupied by their usual residents accounted for about 13.3 million, or about 91%, of all private dwellings in 2011. Marginal dwellings occupied by their usual residents accounted for 4,305, or about 0.03%, of all private dwellings in 2011.

The second component, termed *temporary resident/foreign resident (TRFR)* dwellings in this Research Highlight,

includes those units with occupants present on Census Day who have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada and those occupied exclusively by foreign residents. For example, a dwelling that houses the embassy staff of a foreign government would be included in this category. Also included are dwellings occupied solely by vacationers from abroad or winterized cottages with an occupant present on Census Day but whose primary residence is elsewhere in Canada.

The 182,470 regular TRFR dwellings counted in 2011 represented about 1% of all private dwellings, and the 145 marginal TRFR dwellings amounted to a negligible proportion. The number of TRFR dwellings is likely to be highly variable because of its relatively small magnitude and the fact that it is partly determined by a segment of the

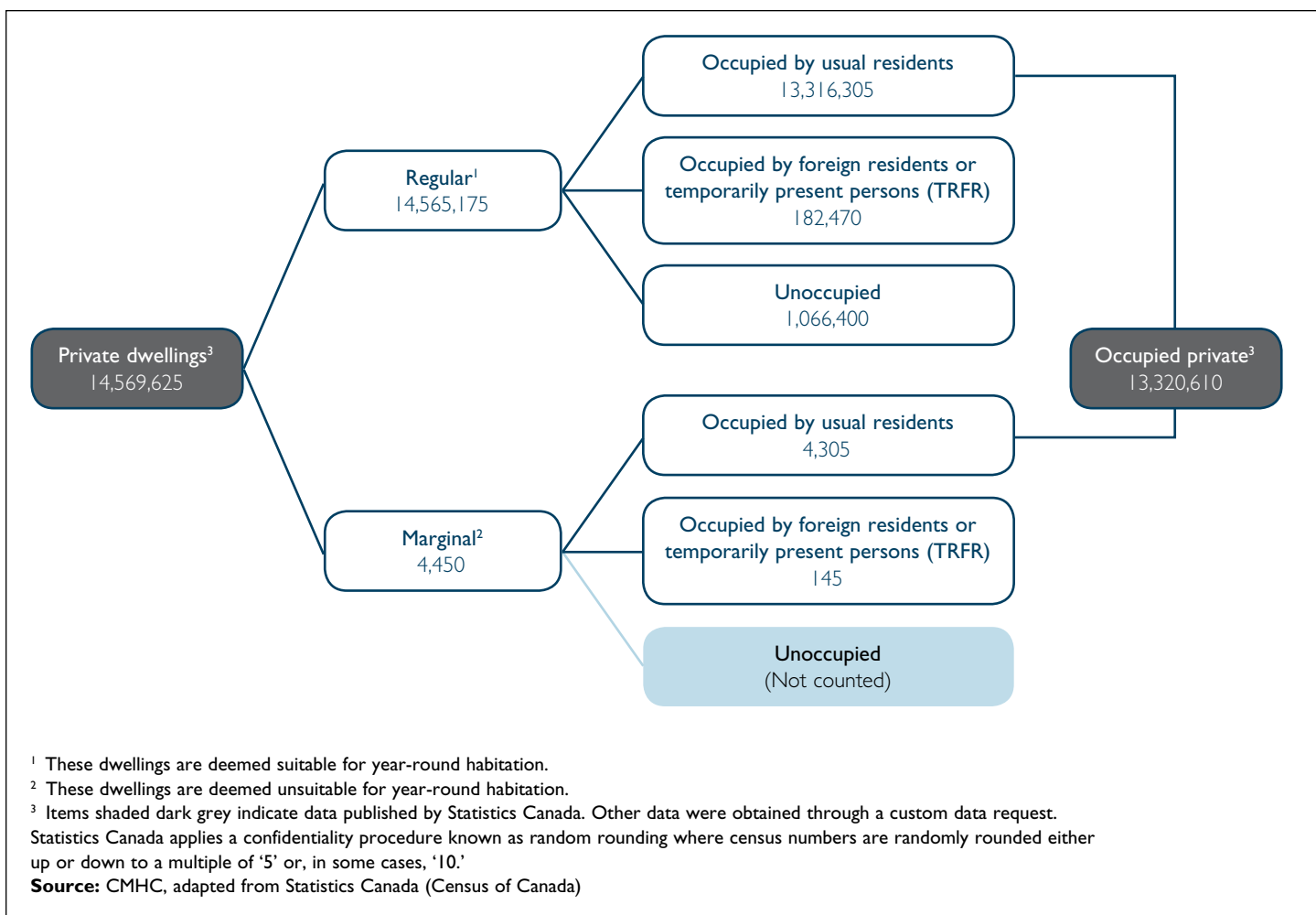


Figure 1 Census classification of private dwellings and counts, Canada, 2011

² A given dwelling is considered a person's permanent or usual place of residence if that person resides there most of the time. Usual residents can include Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, persons seeking refugee status and foreign nationals residing in Canada with a work or study permit.

population whose numbers are likely to change considerably from one census to another.³

Although a significant number of regular TRFR dwellings (72,320) were located within census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in 2011, most were located outside of CMAs.

Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver together accounted for the largest numbers of regular private TRFR dwellings located within CMAs (see figure 2), but many smaller CMAs had higher rates of TRFR dwellings⁴ (see figure 3).

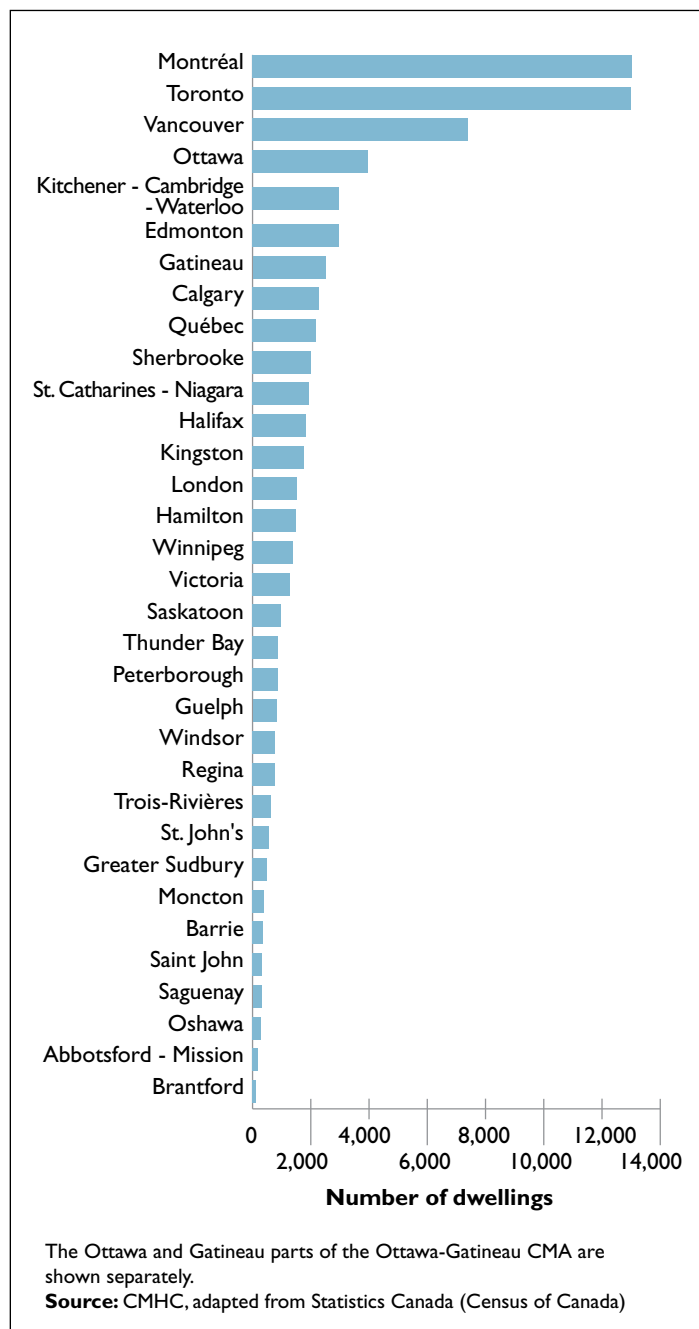


Figure 2 Dwellings occupied by temporary or foreign residents, by CMA, 2011

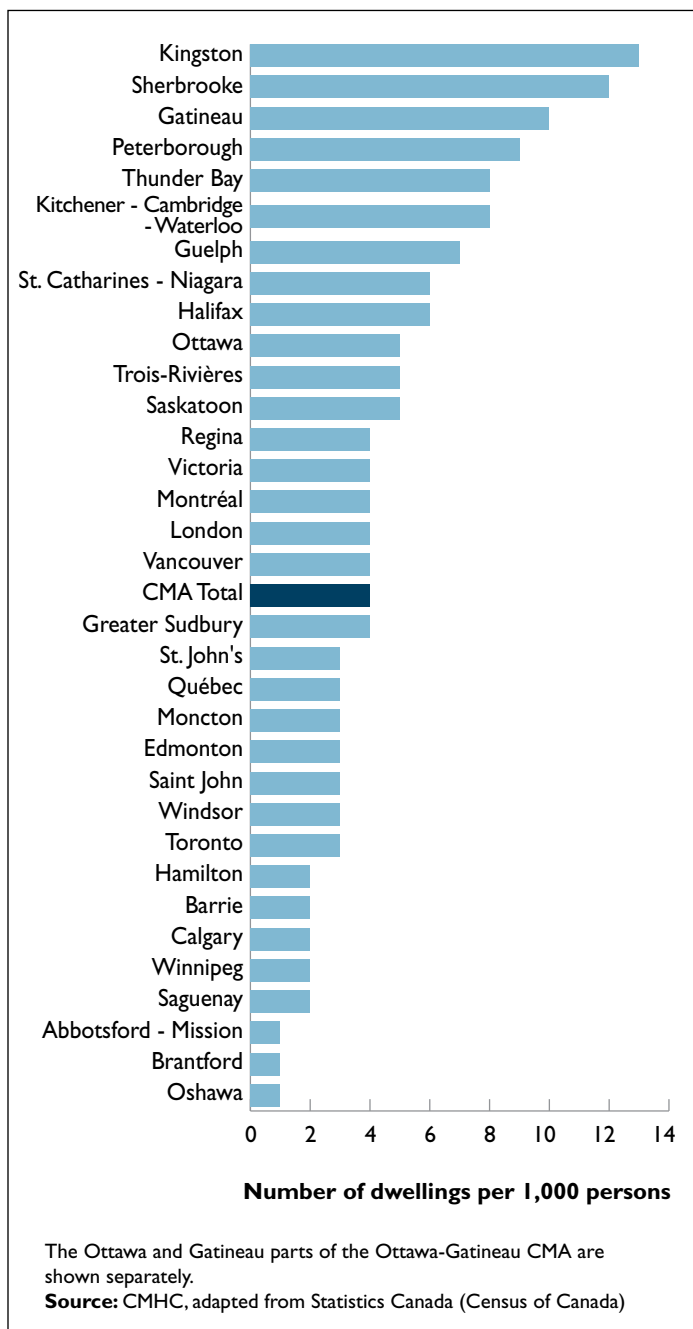


Figure 3 Dwellings occupied by temporary or foreign residents per 1,000 persons, by CMA, 2011

³ The number of Canadian residents found in temporary residences on a given Census Day can be expected to vary over time and could depend on factors such as weather or work arrangements.

⁴ The rate is measured as the number of TRFR dwellings per 1,000 persons.

The third category, *unoccupied dwellings*, comprises those housing units that were neither a usual place of residence nor a unit temporarily occupied by a TRFR on the day of the census. Included in this grouping are unoccupied secondary dwellings—such as winterized cottages and cabins and unoccupied dwellings that have been placed on the market for sale or rent, that is, vacant dwellings. The number of unoccupied dwellings is therefore greater than the number of vacant dwellings on the market. The 2011 Census enumerated about 1.1 million unoccupied regular private dwellings, 7.3% of all private dwellings.

Census enumerates most, but not all, private dwellings

The census does not aim to enumerate all marginal dwellings: it excludes those that are unoccupied marginal dwellings (see figure 1).

Most unoccupied dwellings are located in less urbanized areas

There were 9.6 million enumerated private dwellings located within Canada’s 33 CMAs in 2011, accounting for about two thirds of all private dwellings. About 453,000, or 4.7%, of these dwellings were classified as unoccupied at the time of the census.

Although most private dwellings are located within CMAs, only about 42% of those that were unoccupied in 2011 were

located in CMAs (see figure 4). The majority of unoccupied dwellings were located in the less urbanized areas of the country. This is expected, given that many unoccupied dwellings are secondary recreational residences such as rural cottages. Of the unoccupied dwellings located in CMAs, about 55% were in five CMAs: Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary (see figure 5).

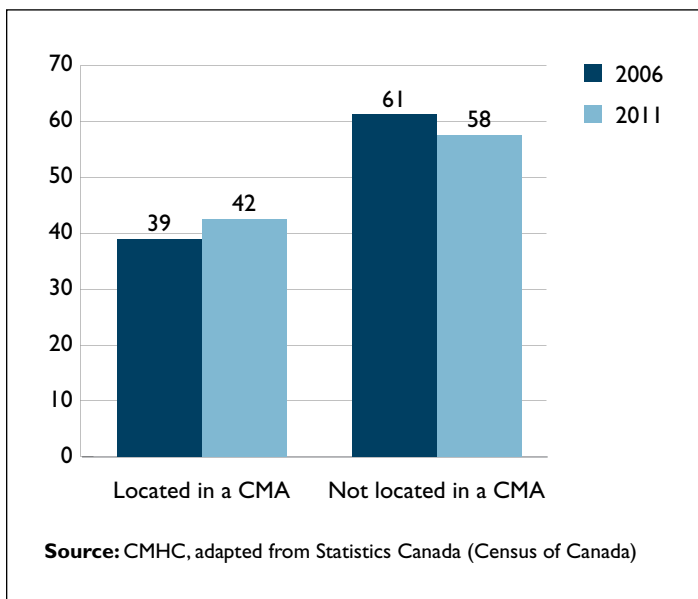


Figure 4 Distribution of unoccupied dwellings by location (%)

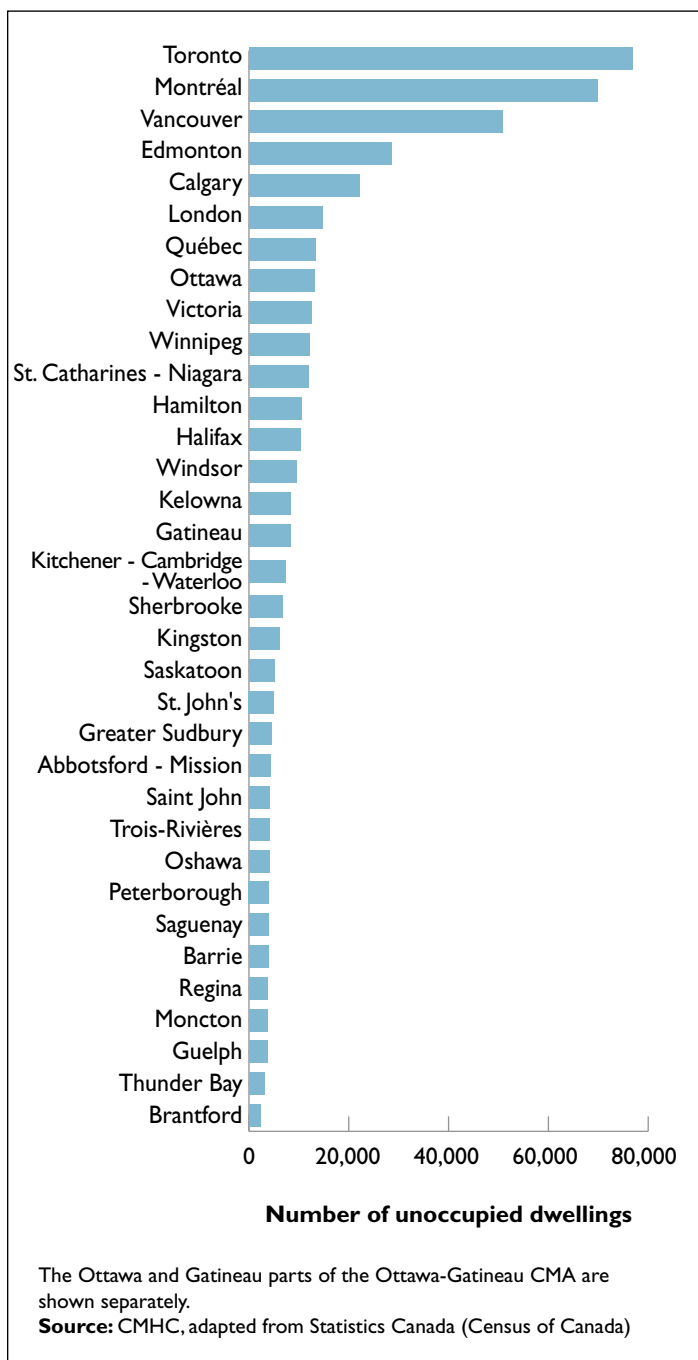


Figure 5 Unoccupied dwellings, by CMA, 2011

Occupied private dwellings are equal to private households

The stock of occupied private dwellings represents those private dwellings that are occupied by their usual residents. This is the sum of *regular* and *marginal* private dwellings occupied by their usual residents, about 13.3 million in 2011. Since a household is defined as one or more individuals who permanently occupy a private dwelling, the number of occupied private dwellings is identical to the number of households usually resident in Canada.

3. CHANGES IN THE STOCK OF PRIVATE DWELLINGS FROM 2006 TO 2011

Nearly 1 million private dwellings were added from 2006 to 2011

The count of private dwellings rose from 13.6 million in 2006 to 14.6 million in 2011 (see table 1), a net gain of about 993,000 (see table 2). This amounts to an additional 199,000 dwellings per year, on average.

Table 1 Private dwellings, by category, Canada, provinces and territories, 2006 and 2011

Region	2011				2006			
	Total	Usual Residents	TRFR ¹	Unoccupied ²	Total	Usual Residents	TRFR ¹	Unoccupied ²
CA	14,569,625	13,320,610	182,615	1,066,400	13,576,860	12,435,520	224,685	916,655
NL	250,280	208,845	2,885	38,550	235,960	197,245	4,855	33,860
PE	66,945	56,465	930	9,550	62,750	53,085	845	8,820
NS	442,150	390,275	5,870	46,005	425,685	376,830	7,300	41,555
NB	348,470	314,010	3,465	30,995	331,625	295,875	4,570	31,180
QC	3,685,925	3,395,340	57,495	233,090	3,452,305	3,188,715	81,630	181,960
ON	5,308,780	4,887,510	65,565	355,705	4,972,870	4,554,250	69,865	348,755
MB	512,685	466,140	8,030	38,515	491,725	448,765	4,630	38,330
SK	460,505	409,640	6,660	44,205	438,620	387,160	5,255	46,205
AB	1,505,000	1,390,270	11,595	103,135	1,335,745	1,256,195	14,975	64,575
BC	1,945,365	1,764,635	19,715	161,015	1,788,470	1,642,710	30,195	115,565
YT	16,260	14,120	145	1,995	15,290	12,610	220	2,460
NT	17,180	14,700	200	2,280	16,775	14,225	180	2,370
NU	10,080	8,660	60	1,360	9,040	7,855	165	1,020

¹ TRFR represents temporary resident/foreign resident dwellings.

² Includes only unoccupied regular dwellings.

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

The ratio of total private dwellings⁵ per 1,000 adults (that is, those over age 14) provides a rough gauge of the extent to which changes to the housing stock are keeping pace with changes in the population. This metric changed little for Canada from 2006 to 2011.⁶ Still, there were notable differences in the changes observed across the country. In Ontario, for example, the ratio more or less held steady at a relatively low level; it likewise held steady at a higher level in British Columbia (see figure 6). By contrast, the ratios rose and were relatively high in every province east of Ontario. While the smaller Prairie provinces (Saskatchewan and Manitoba) saw declines in the numbers of dwellings per adult, Alberta experienced an increase.

Not surprisingly, most of the housing units added from 2006 to 2011 were occupied private dwellings. There were 13.3 million of these units in 2011, which was 885,000 more than in 2006 (see table 2), for an average yearly increase of about 177,000.

At slightly over 4,000 in 2011, the number of structures occupied by their usual residents but deemed marginal was relatively small and nearly 10,000 lower than in 2006. Given the relatively small magnitude of this component, the discussion below will focus on all regular dwellings.

Table 2 Change in number of private dwellings, by type of occupancy, Canada, provinces and territories, 2006-2011

Region	Total	Occupied by Usual Residents	Not Occupied by Usual Residents		
			Total	TRFR ¹	Unoccupied
CA	992,765	885,090	107,675	-42,070	149,745
NL	14,320	11,600	2,720	-1,970	4,690
PE	4,195	3,380	815	85	730
NS	16,465	13,445	3,020	-1,430	4,450
NB	16,845	18,135	-1,290	-1,105	-185
QC	233,620	206,625	26,995	-24,135	51,130
ON	335,910	333,260	2,650	-4,300	6,950
MB	20,960	17,375	3,585	3,400	185
SK	21,885	22,480	-595	1,405	-2,000
AB	169,255	134,075	35,180	-3,380	38,560
BC	156,895	121,925	34,970	-10,480	45,450
YT	970	1,510	-540	-75	-465
NT	405	475	-70	20	-90
NU	1,040	805	235	-105	340

¹ TRFR represents temporary resident/foreign resident dwellings.

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

⁵ This includes unoccupied dwellings.

⁶ It was virtually flat at about 522 dwellings per 1,000 adults in both years, though up slightly from 517 in 2001.

Almost one half of all housing units added were multiple-unit dwellings

Single-detached dwellings were the most prominent type of housing added to the housing stock between 2006 and 2011. The Census counted slightly more than 8 million single-detached dwellings in 2011 (see table 3), about 510,000 (or 6.8%) more, on a net basis, than in 2006 (see table 4). Thus, about 51% of the dwellings added to the stock were single-detached. The proportion of this category of shelter in the stock of total dwellings remained at about 55%.

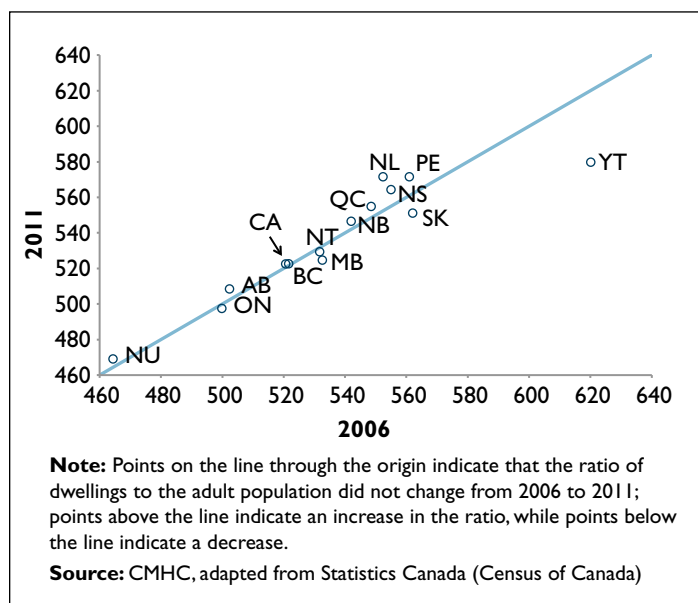


Figure 6 Number of private dwellings per 1,000 adults, Canada, provinces and territories, 2006 versus 2011

Table 3 Stock of regular private dwellings, by type and occupancy status (000s), Canada, 2006 and 2011

Dwelling Type	2011				2006			
	Total	Usual Residents	TRFR ²	Unoccupied	Total	Usual Residents	TRFR ²	Unoccupied
Single-detached	8,025	7,329	113	583	7,515	6,871	123	520
Apartment	3,986	3,632	50	304	3,713	3,404	67	242
Row and semi-detached	1,518	1,438	8	71	1,354	1,282	12	60
Other ¹	1,040	921	11	108	995	878	23	94
Total	14,570	13,321	183	1,066	13,577	12,436	225	917

¹ Includes apartments or flats in a duplex, other single-attached houses and movable dwellings (see 2011 Census Dictionary).

² TRFR represents temporary resident/foreign resident dwellings.

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

Apartments were the next biggest contributor to the increase in the stock, with the number of units rising from 3.7 million to about 4 million, an increase of 7.4%. Nearly 28% of the housing units added were apartments, and of this percentage share, most were units in low-rise buildings of fewer than five storeys. Overall, the share of apartments in the total stock in 2011 barely changed from the 27% observed in 2006.

The number of row and semi-detached houses rose from about 1.4 million to 1.5 million, a gain of about 12%. Although they made up about 10% of the overall stock in 2006, row and semi-detached houses recorded the fastest pace of increase, consequently accounting for about 17% of the dwellings added between 2006 and 2011.

The remaining type of dwellings, other dwellings,⁷ numbered slightly over 1 million in 2011 and increased by about 45,000 (or 4.5%) from 2006.

Nearly one half (44%) of all housing units added to the stock from 2006 to 2011 were multiple-unit dwellings; apartments and row and semi-detached houses accounted for most of these. The relatively strong pace of growth in these types of residences partly reflects their relative affordability compared to single-detached dwellings.

Not surprisingly, Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia accounted for about 896,000, or 90%, of the net rise in the private dwelling stock from 2006 to 2011 (see table 2). Despite having a smaller population and fewer

⁷ Other dwellings comprise the following categories of dwellings: apartments or flats in a duplex, other single-attached houses and movable dwellings.

households, Alberta added more private dwellings than British Columbia, reflecting Alberta's relatively strong pace of economic and population growth during this time.

Alberta was a big contributor to the growth in the stock of single-detached dwellings

Even with a strong pace of house price inflation, Alberta added a relatively large number of single-detached homes; the province was responsible for 20% of the single-detached dwellings added, well above its 11% share of all single-detached dwellings. By comparison, Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia were responsible for 33%, 22% and 10%, respectively, of the single-detached dwellings added.

Dwellings not occupied by usual residents were up 108,000

The number of housing units that were either unoccupied or occupied by TRFR on Census Day amounted to about 1.2 million in 2011, up by about 108,000, on a net basis, from 2006. The broad dwelling-type makeup of this residual category of dwellings did not change significantly between the two censuses. Single-detached houses remained the single biggest component, accounting for 696,000, or nearly 56%, in 2011 (see figure 7), a slightly lower share than in 2006.

Apartments made up the second-largest segment (about 354,000, or 28%, in 2011) of this category. Low-rise structures accounted for the vast majority (about 70%) of apartments in this category. This is not surprising, given that low-rise apartments accounted for about 66% of the apartments enumerated in 2011.

Close to 150,000 unoccupied private dwellings were added from 2006 to 2011

The increase in the number of dwellings not occupied by usual residents was entirely reflected in those units classified as unoccupied, whose number rose by nearly 150,000 (see table 2). The count of TRFR units was about 183,000 in 2011, about 42,000 fewer than in 2006.

Like the ratio of private dwellings to the population, the ratio of unoccupied dwellings to the adult population is another way of roughly gauging the extent to which additions to the total dwelling stock evolve in line with population growth. While the number of unoccupied dwellings per 1,000 adults rose slightly at the national level (from about 35 to 38), there was significant variation across the country (see figure 8). The numbers rose in most Atlantic provinces, where they were already relatively high. They likewise increased in British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta. Consistent with the evolution in the number of private dwellings per adult, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan saw declines in the numbers of unoccupied dwellings per adult.

Single-detached houses accounted for about 42% of the net rise in the number of unoccupied dwellings, and apartments accounted for 41%.

Regionally, the biggest contributors to the rise in unoccupied dwellings were Quebec (51,000), British Columbia (45,000) and Alberta (39,000). Ontario's contribution (7,000) was small compared to its size and was even lower than that of the Atlantic provinces (10,000).

Table 4 Change in the stock of regular private dwellings, by type and occupancy status (000s), Canada, 2006-2011

Dwelling Type	Total	Usual Residents	Not Unoccupied by Usual Residents		
			Total	TRFR ²	Unoccupied
Single-detached	510,310	457,825	52,485	-9,990	62,475
Apartment	273,145	228,010	45,135	-16,575	61,710
Row and semi-detached	163,975	155,750	8,225	-3,225	11,450
Other ¹	45,265	43,505	1,760	-12,310	14,070
Total	992,695	885,090	107,605	-42,100	149,705

¹ Includes apartments or flats in a duplex, other single-attached houses and movable dwellings (see 2011 Census Dictionary).

² TRFR represents temporary resident/foreign resident dwellings.

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

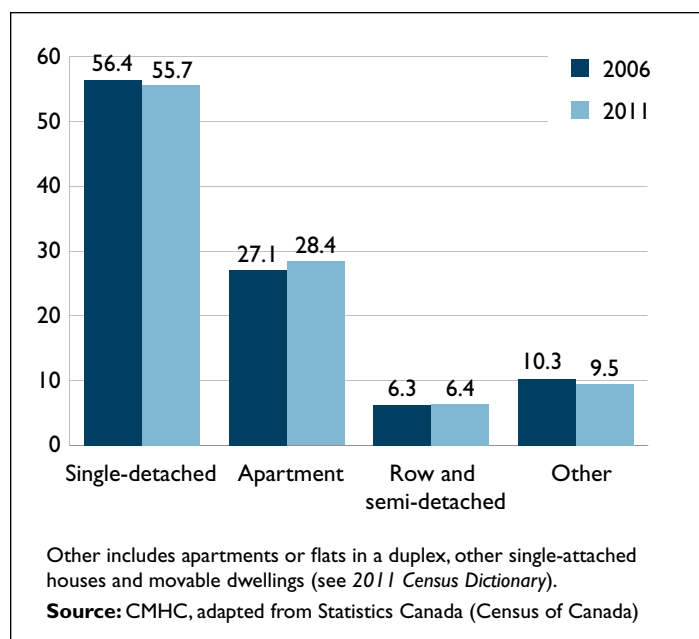


Figure 7 Distribution of unoccupied dwellings and temporary resident/foreign resident dwellings by type (%)

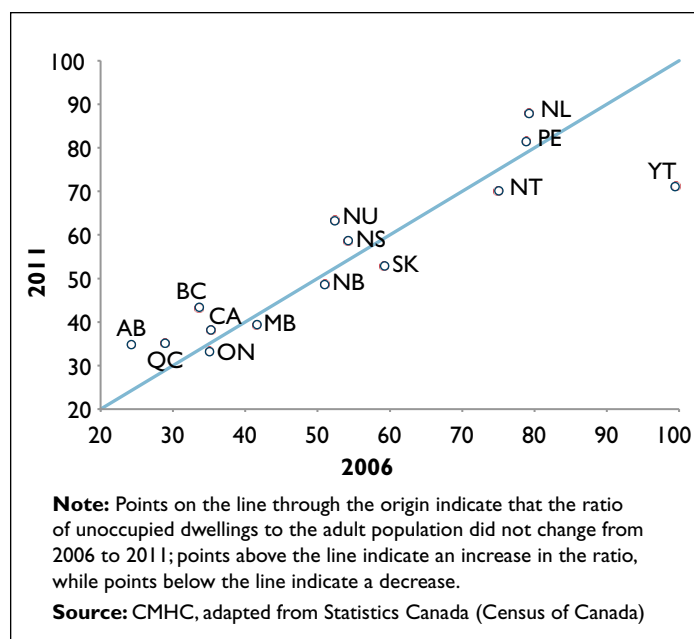


Figure 8 Number of unoccupied dwellings per 1,000 adults, Canada, provinces and territories, 2006 versus 2011

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For further information on CMHC's census-based housing data, refer to *Housing in Canada Online* on the CMHC website, at www.cmhc.ca. To inquire or comment on this Highlight or make suggestions for further research, please contact us, either by e-mail at HiCO-LaCel@cmhc-schl.gc.ca, or via regular mail at:

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Alternative text and data for figures

Figure 2 Dwellings occupied by temporary or foreign residents, by CMA, 2011

	Number of dwellings
Brantford	125
Abbotsford - Mission	185
Oshawa	300
Saguenay	305
Saint John	330
Barrie	360
Moncton	380
Greater Sudbury	505
St. John's	570
Trois-Rivières	635
Regina	770
Windsor	780
Guelph	820
Peterborough	865
Thunder Bay	865
Saskatoon	990
Victoria	1,285
Winnipeg	1,390
Hamilton	1,485
London	1,530
Kingston	1,755
Halifax	1,835
St. Catharines - Niagara	1,950
Sherbrooke	2,005
Québec	2,180
Calgary	2,295
Gatineau	2,505
Edmonton	2,955
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo	2,970
Ottawa	3,975
Vancouver	7,405
Toronto	12,990
Montréal	13,020

The Ottawa and Gatineau parts of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA are shown separately.

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

Figure 3 Dwellings occupied by temporary or foreign residents per 1,000 persons, by CMA, 2011

	Number of dwellings per 1,000 persons
Oshawa	1
Brantford	1
Abbotsford - Mission	1
Saguenay	2
Winnipeg	2
Calgary	2
Barrie	2
Hamilton	2
Toronto	3
Windsor	3
Saint John	3
Edmonton	3
Moncton	3
Québec	3
St. John's	3
Greater Sudbury	4
CMA Total	4
Vancouver	4
London	4
Montréal	4
Victoria	4
Regina	4
Saskatoon	5
Trois-Rivières	5
Ottawa	5
Halifax	6
St. Catharines - Niagara	6
Guelph	7
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo	8
Thunder Bay	8
Peterborough	9
Gatineau	10
Sherbrooke	12
Kingston	13

The Ottawa and Gatineau parts of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA are shown separately.

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

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Figure 4 Distribution of unoccupied dwellings by location (%)

	2006	2011
Located in a CMA	39	42
Not located in a CMA	61	58

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

Figure 5 Unoccupied dwellings, by CMA, 2011

	Number of unoccupied dwellings
Brantford	2,270
Thunder Bay	3,140
Guelph	3,665
Moncton	3,730
Regina	3,760
Barrie	3,960
Saguenay	3,965
Peterborough	4,015
Oshawa	4,040
Trois-Rivières	4,065
Saint John	4,165
Abbotsford - Mission	4,315
Greater Sudbury	4,465
St. John's	5,015
Saskatoon	5,085
Kingston	6,175
Sherbrooke	6,805
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo	7,280
Gatineau	8,300
Kelowna	8,335
Windsor	9,475
Halifax	10,300
Hamilton	10,495
St. Catharines - Niagara	11,940
Winnipeg	12,065
Victoria	12,615
Ottawa	13,210
Québec	13,380
London	14,675
Calgary	22,150
Edmonton	28,505
Vancouver	50,825
Montréal	69,930
Toronto	76,765

The Ottawa and Gatineau parts of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA are shown separately.

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)

Figure 7 Distribution of unoccupied dwellings and temporary resident/foreign resident dwellings by type (%)

	2006	2011
Single-detached	56.4	55.7
Apartment	27.1	28.4
Row and semi-detached	6.3	6.4
Other	10.3	9.5

Other includes apartments or flats in a duplex, other single-attached houses and movable dwellings (see 2011 Census Dictionary).

Source: CMHC, adapted from Statistics Canada (Census of Canada)