



The Daily

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Releases

Building permits, September 2005

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New products

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Releases

Building permits

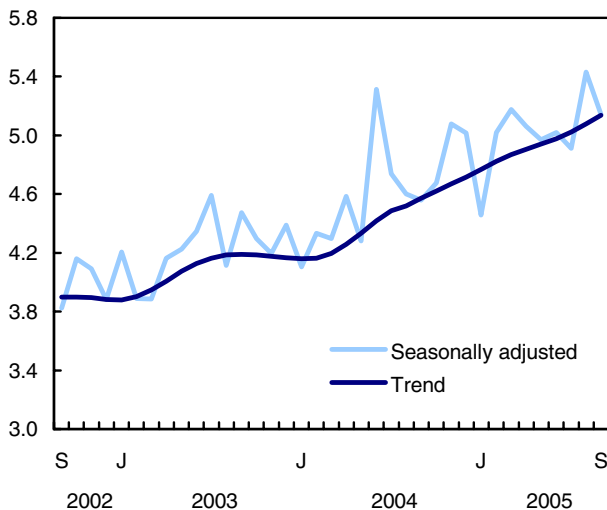
September 2005

The value of building permits retreated in September from the record high a month earlier, despite an on-going gain in the value of construction intentions in the housing sector.

Contractors took out \$5.1 billion in permits in September, down 5.3% from August. A plunge in non-residential intentions far offset the fifth monthly gain in the housing sector during the last six months.

Total value of permits declines from August's record

\$ billions



The value of non-residential permits totalled \$1.9 billion, down 17.1% from the record \$2.3 billion reached in August. A strong decline in institutional permits was behind the drop. Even so, the value of non-residential construction intentions remained 20.2% above the average monthly level last year.

In the housing sector, municipalities issued \$3.3 billion in permits, up 3.2% from August, thanks to gains in both the single- and multi-family components.

On a year-to-date basis, the total value of building permits reached \$45.2 billion between January and September, up 10.7% from the first nine months of 2004.

Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.

The Building Permits Survey covers 2,380 municipalities representing 95% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 5% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.

The value of planned construction activities shown in this release excludes engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.

In the non-residential sector, permits have been on an upward trend since the beginning of 2004. So far this year, contractors have taken out \$16.8 billion in industrial, institutional and commercial permits, up a resounding 24.2% from the same period last year, the result of massive investment projects in several provinces.

The value of proposed non-residential projects has already surpassed last year's annual total in five provinces: Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

In the residential sector, the cumulative value of permits is up 4.1% so far this year to \$28.4 billion. However, this gain was the result of the increase in the price of new dwellings. The number of new units approved since the beginning of the year has declined 3.3% to 175,560, compared with the first nine months of 2004.

Regionally, year-to-date gains (in dollars) in building permits in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver have largely surpassed increases in all other census metropolitan areas. In Calgary and Edmonton, the strength came from both housing and non-residential permits. In Vancouver, the non-residential sector solely fuelled the advance.

Residential sector: Rebound in the multi-family component

The value of multi-family permits reached \$1.2 billion in September, an 8.3% rebound from August. This gain followed two consecutive monthly declines.

At the same time, the value of single-family permits edged up 0.6%. Over the last quarter, the monthly value of single-family dwellings has changed little at around \$2.1 billion.

Advantageous mortgage rates have combined with the favourable employment situation to have a positive impact on the housing sector. However, September's plunge in consumer confidence, higher costs for utilities and the anticipation of rising mortgage rates might have started to erode the demand for new dwellings.

Except for Alberta and British Columbia, every province recorded advances in the value of housing permits in September. The largest gain came from Quebec, where the value of multi-family dwellings rebounded after an important decline in August.

Despite the decline in the value of housing permits in Alberta and British Columbia in September, the numbers remained high when compared with 2004. On a year-to-date basis, the largest increase in the value of housing permits came from Alberta (+22.3%) and British Columbia (+12.0%).

The high price tag associated with the purchase of a new single-family dwelling has induced a shift in demand. The demand for new single-family dwellings has definitely slowed as the number of new units approved has fallen for a third consecutive quarter.

The number of new single-family units approved between January and September declined 6.5% compared with the same period last year. On the other hand, the number of multi-family units was up 0.5%.

New multi-family dwellings represented 48.3% of all units approved since the beginning of the year, their highest share since 1982.

Non-residential: Declines in institutional and industrial intentions

The 17.1% decline in non-residential permits in September was the result of retreats in two sectors: industrial and institutional.

Institutional permits fell 47.5% to \$401 million, their lowest level in eight months. This followed an exceptional month in August, which was largely the result of big medical projects in Ontario. As a result, the value of institutional permits in Ontario plunged 69.5% to \$148 million, the largest drop among the provinces.

Industrial intentions tumbled 22.1% to \$346 million, with the biggest decline in communication and utility buildings. Again, Ontario posted the largest decline in industrial intentions, a 28.7% decrease to \$136 million.

Commercial intentions rose 7.0% in September to \$1.1 billion, the third highest level on record. This came on the heels of a 31.0% gain in August. September's increase was mainly the result of gains in hotels, restaurants and recreational buildings. Ontario recorded the strongest gain in this component.

Non-residential permits fell in 14 out of the 28 census metropolitan areas, Ottawa recording the strongest decrease. In August, Ottawa had the biggest gain, thanks to a rise in construction intentions in the medical building category. The largest increase in September occurred in Hamilton, the result of a strong gain in the warehouse category.

Provincially, the largest decrease (in dollars) in September occurred in Ontario where the value plunged 24.5% to \$806 million, but still remained 11.3% higher than the average monthly level in 2004. Only Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan recorded increases.

Contractors took out \$16.8 billion worth of non-residential permits between January and September, up 24.2% from the same period of 2004. The rise was due to the increases in all three components. The commercial sector experienced the biggest gain, surging 23.5% to \$9.2 billion.

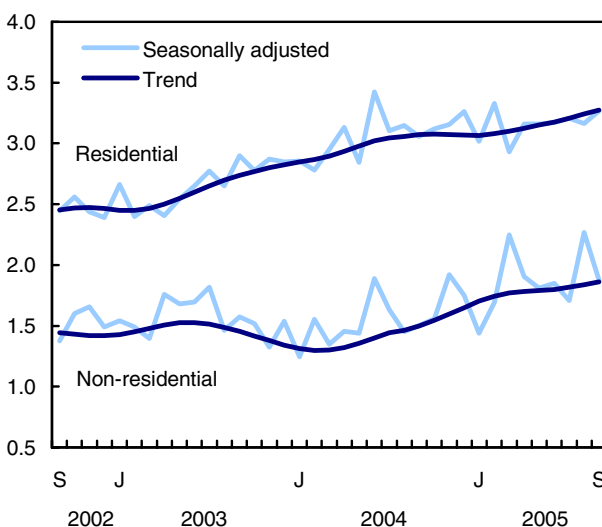
Permits for industrial projects moved up 27.4% to \$3.0 billion, while intentions in the institutional sector rose 23.6% to \$4.6 billion.

Several factors served to maintain a fertile environment for construction intentions: strength in retail sales, lower vacancy rates for office buildings in the past few quarters, favourable interest rates and record profits posted by large corporations. Furthermore, manufacturers are slightly more bullish about production prospects for the last quarter of 2005, according to the latest Business Condition Survey.

Among the provinces, the largest cumulative increase in the non-residential sector was in Alberta

Value of non-residential permits falls

\$ billions



where intentions recorded an outstanding 80.0% rise to \$3.0 billion. The strength was widespread across the province. The strongest decrease occurred in Quebec where intentions fell 6.6% to \$2.6 billion.

Available on CANSIM: tables 026-0001 to 026-0008, 026-0010 and 026-0015.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2802.

The September issue of *Building Permits* (64-001-XIE, \$15/\$156) will be available soon.

The October building permit estimates will be released on December 6.

To order data, contact Brad Sernoskie (613-951-4646 or 1-800-579-8533; bdp_information@statcan.ca). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Value of building permits, by census metropolitan area¹

	August 2005 ^r	September 2005 ^p	August to September 2005	January to September 2004	January to September 2005	January–September 2004 to January–September 2005
seasonally adjusted						
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions		% change
St. John's	34.2	36.7	7.2	273.9	281.5	2.8
Halifax	45.0	48.7	8.3	455.8	431.6	-5.3
Saint John	12.0	19.8	65.1	88.7	119.9	35.1
Saguenay	18.1	17.4	-3.8	102.6	127.4	24.2
Québec	95.9	104.6	9.0	909.6	911.7	0.2
Sherbrooke	18.3	17.7	-3.1	184.8	186.4	0.9
Trois-Rivières	23.7	21.2	-10.7	147.1	138.9	-5.5
Montréal	486.8	602.9	23.8	4,572.2	4,605.4	0.7
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	319.3	218.0	-31.7	1,748.7	1,776.2	1.6
Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part)	33.1	39.8	20.4	425.6	311.4	-26.8
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part)	286.3	178.2	-37.7	1,323.1	1,464.9	10.7
Kingston	17.2	11.2	-35.0	178.3	148.0	-17.0
Oshawa	121.9	91.4	-25.1	591.6	708.0	19.7
Toronto	811.1	877.1	8.1	8,487.8	8,061.0	-5.0
Hamilton	93.9	142.7	52.0	786.8	831.2	5.6
St. Catharines–Niagara	62.6	29.7	-52.6	400.2	410.3	2.5
Kitchener	68.5	47.8	-30.2	678.8	708.7	4.4
London	68.2	76.6	12.3	617.2	639.9	3.7
Windsor	58.9	36.1	-38.7	421.8	349.2	-17.2
Greater Sudbury/Grand Sudbury	13.4	15.1	13.2	101.0	135.9	34.5
Thunder Bay	9.9	9.8	-0.6	92.1	101.5	10.2
Winnipeg	54.9	57.1	4.0	566.6	519.2	-8.4
Regina	18.3	14.5	-21.0	184.7	185.8	0.6
Saskatoon	30.3	24.6	-18.8	200.1	268.2	34.0
Calgary	309.3	281.6	-8.9	2,118.3	2,821.4	33.2
Edmonton	263.2	222.5	-15.4	1,454.3	2,070.0	42.3
Abbotsford	22.0	18.9	-14.1	150.9	234.8	55.5
Vancouver	541.7	579.3	6.9	3,686.9	4,170.0	13.1
Victoria	58.1	71.9	23.7	388.9	516.6	32.8

^r Revised.

^p Preliminary.

1. Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the census metropolitan areas.

Note: Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

Value of building permits, by province and territory

	August 2005 ^r	September 2005 ^p	August to September 2005	January to September 2004	January to September 2005	January–September 2004 to January–September 2005
	seasonally adjusted					
	\$ millions		% change	\$ millions		% change
Canada	5,430.0	5,144.3	-5.3	40,809.6	45,193.1	10.7
Residential	3,164.1	3,265.9	3.2	27,293.5	28,403.7	4.1
Non-residential	2,265.9	1,878.4	-17.1	13,516.1	16,789.3	24.2
Newfoundland and Labrador	49.1	50.3	2.5	361.7	401.6	11.1
Residential	33.0	35.5	7.6	262.5	257.4	-2.0
Non-residential	16.1	14.8	-7.9	99.2	144.3	45.5
Prince Edward Island	42.6	19.9	-53.2	144.6	195.7	35.3
Residential	8.7	10.2	18.0	95.8	97.6	1.9
Non-residential	33.9	9.7	-71.4	48.8	98.1	100.8
Nova Scotia	95.6	119.6	25.2	842.9	873.9	3.7
Residential	64.7	68.1	5.3	575.3	580.6	0.9
Non-residential	30.9	51.5	66.7	267.6	293.3	9.6
New Brunswick	97.4	98.8	1.5	587.4	647.5	10.2
Residential	40.1	47.6	18.8	366.3	372.4	1.7
Non-residential	57.3	51.2	-10.7	221.1	275.1	24.4
Quebec	989.9	1,075.7	8.7	8,681.5	8,786.1	1.2
Residential	647.7	785.1	21.2	5,854.9	6,146.3	5.0
Non-residential	342.2	290.7	-15.1	2,826.6	2,639.8	-6.6
Ontario	2,159.6	1,906.3	-11.7	17,377.5	17,791.5	2.4
Residential	1,091.4	1,100.1	0.8	11,216.8	10,745.6	-4.2
Non-residential	1,068.2	806.1	-24.5	6,160.7	7,045.9	14.4
Manitoba	95.7	95.5	-0.2	879.6	844.1	-4.0
Residential	61.6	65.6	6.6	511.0	492.8	-3.6
Non-residential	34.1	29.9	-12.5	368.6	351.3	-4.7
Saskatchewan	74.6	84.0	12.6	577.8	657.7	13.8
Residential	26.5	28.2	6.3	299.2	284.7	-4.9
Non-residential	48.1	55.8	16.1	278.6	373.0	33.9
Alberta	846.8	775.3	-8.4	5,218.6	7,347.0	40.8
Residential	517.5	455.7	-11.9	3,548.8	4,341.9	22.3
Non-residential	329.3	319.6	-3.0	1,669.8	3,005.1	80.0
British Columbia	965.3	906.3	-6.1	5,968.2	7,531.2	26.2
Residential	664.7	661.2	-0.5	4,482.8	5,022.0	12.0
Non-residential	300.7	245.1	-18.5	1,485.4	2,509.2	68.9
Yukon	4.2	8.4	101.5	60.5	43.6	-28.0
Residential	1.6	5.9	268.2	28.7	29.5	2.7
Non-residential	2.6	2.5	-2.5	31.8	14.1	-55.7
Northwest Territories	3.5	3.5	0.3	82.2	64.1	-22.0
Residential	2.0	2.3	10.5	35.5	25.9	-27.0
Non-residential	1.4	1.2	-14.4	46.7	38.2	-18.1
Nunavut	5.9	0.6	-89.3	27.2	9.1	-66.4
Residential	4.8	0.4	-91.4	16.0	7.3	-54.5
Non-residential	1.1	0.2	-79.6	11.2	1.8	-83.5

^r Revised

^p Preliminary.

Note: Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

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MAJOR RELEASES

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Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about six trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.	
• Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1995	4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was notably weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.	

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