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Releases

Building permits, April 2015

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New products and studies

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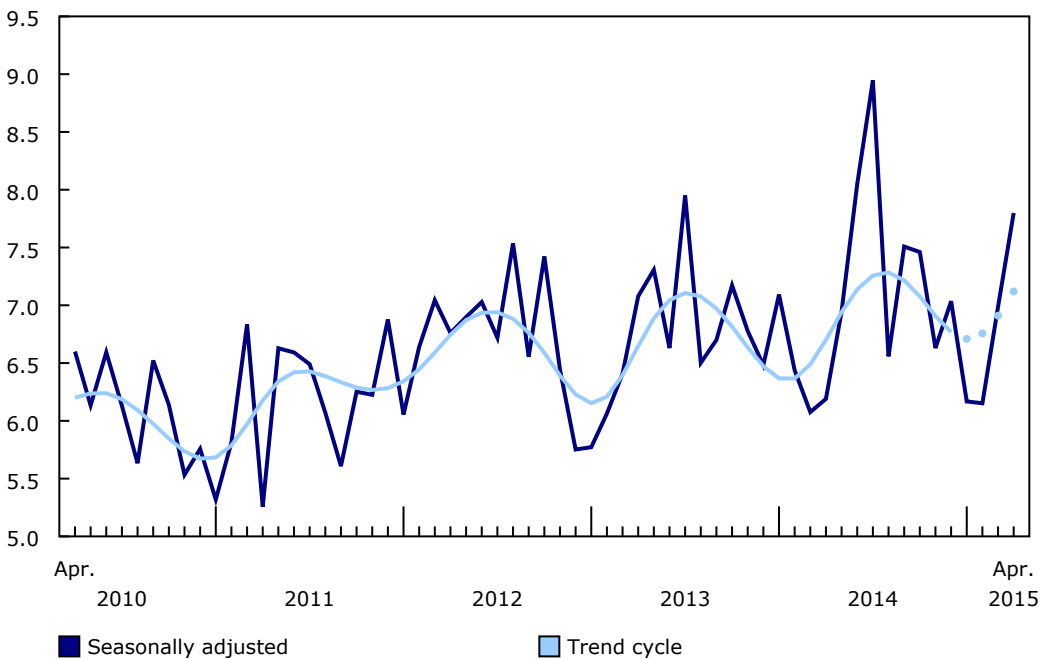
Releases

Building permits, April 2015

Contractors took out \$7.8 billion worth of building permits in April, up 11.6% from the previous month and a second consecutive monthly advance. The gain in April stemmed from higher construction intentions in both the residential and non-residential sectors in Ontario.

Chart 1
Total value of 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. See note to readers.

Source(s): CANSIM table [026-0010](#).

In the non-residential sector, the value of permits rose 30.2% to \$3.3 billion in April, following a 24.8% gain in March. Increases were posted in three provinces, led by Ontario, followed by Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador. British Columbia and Quebec registered the largest declines in construction intentions for non-residential buildings.

Construction intentions for residential buildings increased 1.2% to \$4.5 billion, a third consecutive monthly advance. Gains were noted in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. The largest decrease occurred in British Columbia, which had posted a notable increase the previous month.

Non-residential sector: Notable increase in the institutional component

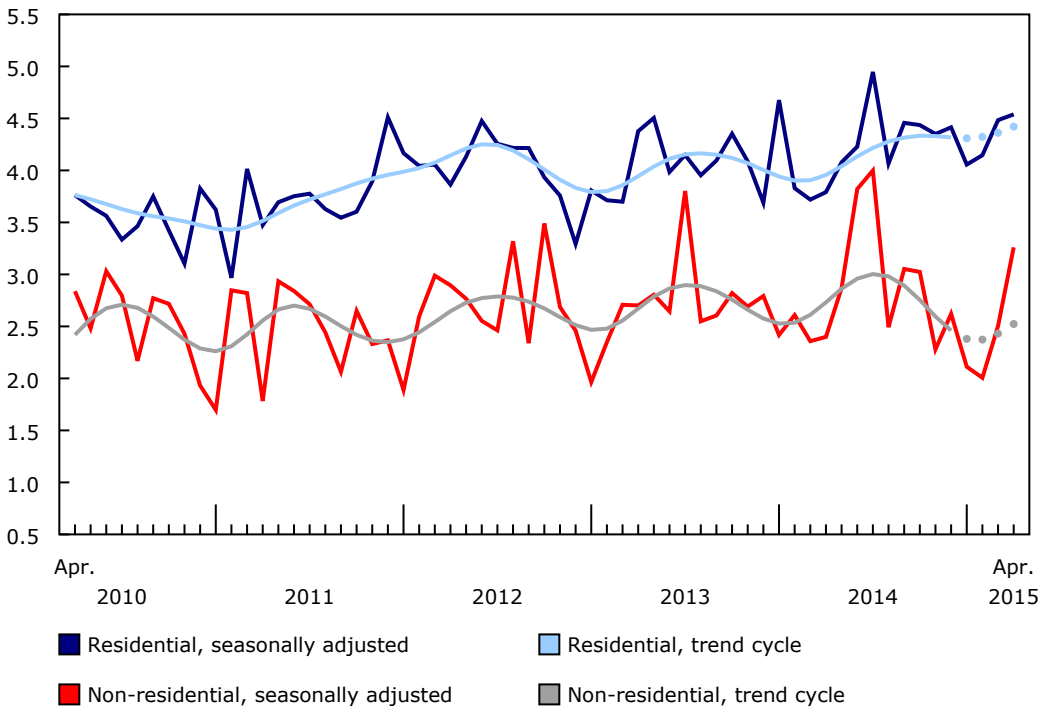
In the institutional component, the value of permits rose 86.2% to \$1.3 billion in April, following an 83.7% gain the previous month. The national advance was attributable to higher construction intentions for medical facilities and government buildings. The value of permits rose in three provinces, with Ontario registering the largest advance, and Newfoundland and Labrador as well as New Brunswick placing a distant second and third. Quebec and Alberta posted the largest declines among the remaining provinces.

The value of permits issued for commercial buildings increased 7.8% to \$1.5 billion in April. This was the second straight monthly advance. Nationally, the gain came mainly from increased intentions for retail and wholesale outlets as well as retail complexes. Increases were posted in six provinces, led by Alberta and Ontario. British Columbia recorded the largest decrease, following large gains in February and March.

Municipalities issued \$480 million worth of building permits for industrial buildings in April, up 10.9% from March. This was the third increase in four months. Higher construction intentions for transportation-related buildings and utilities buildings were responsible for the advance in this component. Ontario, Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador registered gains. Quebec and British Columbia posted the largest declines.

Chart 2
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. See note to readers.

Source(s): CANSIM table 026-0010.

Residential sector: Higher construction intentions for single-family dwellings

The value of single-family dwelling permits rose 6.6% to \$2.5 billion in April, marking the first increase in three months. Increases were recorded in five provinces, led by Ontario and Alberta. Saskatchewan and British Columbia registered the largest declines.

Construction intentions for multi-family dwellings fell 4.5% to \$2.1 billion in April. The decline came after two strong consecutive monthly gains. British Columbia and Alberta accounted for most of the decrease, while advances were registered in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Nationally, municipalities authorized the construction of 17,896 new dwellings in April, down 4.5% from March. The decline came from an 8.1% drop in the number of multi-family dwellings to 12,141 units. Conversely, the number of single dwelling units increased 4.1% to 5,755.

Provinces: Ontario posted gains in all types of buildings

The total value of building permits increased in four provinces in April, led by Ontario, followed by Alberta, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The gain in Ontario occurred mainly as a result of higher construction intentions for institutional structures and residential buildings. In Alberta, the advance came from increased intentions for commercial buildings, single-family dwellings and industrial buildings. In Nova Scotia, the increase was the result of higher construction intentions for residential buildings, principally multi-family dwellings; while in Newfoundland and Labrador, the gain originated from industrial buildings.

British Columbia, which recorded an increase in March, posted the largest decline in April. This was the result of lower construction intentions in all types of buildings, with multiple dwellings accounting for much of the decrease. In Quebec, higher construction intentions for residential structures were not sufficiently large to offset the decrease registered in the non-residential sector.

Higher construction intentions in more than half of the census metropolitan areas

The total value of permits rose in 20 of the 34 census metropolitan areas in April, led by Toronto, Edmonton, Halifax and St. John's.

The increase in Toronto was mainly attributable to institutional buildings and multi-family dwellings. In Edmonton, the gain was the result of increased intentions for commercial buildings and, to a lesser extent, single-family dwellings. The increase in Halifax came mostly from multiple dwellings, while in St. John's, higher construction intentions for industrial buildings explained the advance.

In contrast, Vancouver posted the biggest drop, mostly as a result of lower construction intentions for multi-family dwellings and, to a lesser extent, commercial and industrial buildings. In Québec, the decline originated from lower intentions for residential structures and commercial buildings. In Kelowna, which had a notable gain the previous month, the decrease came from commercial buildings.

Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which facilitates comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations. For more 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 shown in this release excludes engineering projects (for example, waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.

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

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.

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

	April 2014	February 2015	March 2015 ^r	April 2015 ^p	March to April 2015	April 2014 to April 2015
	millions of dollars				% change	
Total	6,190.3	6,151.8	6,986.7	7,798.9	11.6	26.0
Residential	3,791.3	4,145.7	4,483.4	4,538.5	1.2	19.7
Single ¹	2,208.5	2,349.2	2,301.5	2,453.9	6.6	11.1
Multiple	1,582.8	1,796.4	2,182.0	2,084.6	-4.5	31.7
Non-residential	2,398.9	2,006.1	2,503.2	3,260.4	30.2	35.9
Industrial	393.9	405.6	433.0	480.3	10.9	21.9
Commercial	1,289.4	1,220.4	1,371.9	1,479.6	7.8	14.8
Institutional	715.7	380.1	698.3	1,300.4	86.2	81.7
	number of units				% change	
Total dwellings	15,608	14,884	18,735	17,896	-4.5	14.7
Single ¹	5,947	5,747	5,530	5,755	4.1	-3.2
Multiple	9,661	9,137	13,205	12,141	-8.1	25.7

^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

	April 2014	February 2015	March 2015 ^r	April 2015 ^p	March to April 2015	April 2014 to April 2015
	millions of dollars				% change	
Canada	6,190.3	6,151.8	6,986.7	7,798.9	11.6	26.0
Residential	3,791.3	4,145.7	4,483.4	4,538.5	1.2	19.7
Non-residential	2,398.9	2,006.1	2,503.2	3,260.4	30.2	35.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	59.1	57.4	47.4	86.4	82.1	46.2
Residential	40.0	38.6	34.2	36.1	5.7	-9.8
Non-residential	19.0	18.7	13.3	50.3	279.0	164.2
Prince Edward Island	11.6	9.8	11.1	10.5	-5.8	-9.5
Residential	7.8	5.3	6.0	5.8	-4.4	-26.0
Non-residential	3.8	4.5	5.1	4.7	-7.4	24.5
Nova Scotia	128.7	118.7	88.9	132.2	48.6	2.7
Residential	75.8	97.5	56.7	101.0	78.2	33.3
Non-residential	52.9	21.2	32.3	31.1	-3.5	-41.1
New Brunswick	36.8	55.1	49.4	40.2	-18.8	9.1
Residential	21.6	34.6	24.6	21.7	-11.8	0.6
Non-residential	15.2	20.5	24.8	18.5	-25.6	21.2
Quebec	1,235.9	1,191.8	1,117.9	1,039.5	-7.0	-15.9
Residential	687.9	772.0	636.4	694.5	9.1	1.0
Non-residential	548.0	419.8	481.5	344.9	-28.4	-37.1
Ontario	2,243.1	2,223.9	2,451.5	3,673.0	49.8	63.7
Residential	1,426.6	1,324.8	1,724.9	1,944.0	12.7	36.3
Non-residential	816.5	899.1	726.6	1,729.0	138.0	111.8
Manitoba	192.7	182.5	223.2	163.6	-26.7	-15.1
Residential	119.1	119.7	121.6	107.8	-11.3	-9.5
Non-residential	73.5	62.8	101.6	55.8	-45.1	-24.1
Saskatchewan	251.8	193.5	247.9	192.1	-22.5	-23.7
Residential	126.3	119.7	120.5	114.8	-4.7	-9.1
Non-residential	125.5	73.8	127.3	77.2	-39.3	-38.5
Alberta	1,336.2	1,193.6	1,349.9	1,425.9	5.6	6.7
Residential	801.9	908.1	832.9	811.2	-2.6	1.2
Non-residential	534.4	285.5	517.0	614.7	18.9	15.0
British Columbia	686.8	911.7	1,394.6	1,028.3	-26.3	49.7
Residential	479.3	715.5	921.9	696.1	-24.5	45.2
Non-residential	207.5	196.3	472.7	332.1	-29.7	60.1
Yukon	3.4	2.7	1.6	4.9	200.7	43.8
Residential	2.8	1.0	1.5	4.8	220.7	71.6
Non-residential	0.6	1.7	0.1	0.1	-18.1	-81.9
Northwest Territories	4.2	8.6	1.8	2.5	37.1	-40.9
Residential	2.2	6.4	0.9	0.6	-36.9	-72.6
Non-residential	2.0	2.3	0.8	1.9	119.9	-6.0
Nunavut	0.0	2.5	1.3	0.0	-98.7	...
Residential	0.0	2.5	1.3	0.0	-100.0	...
Non-residential	0.0	0.0	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

	April 2014	February 2015	March 2015 ^r	April 2015 ^p	March to April 2015	April 2014 to April 2015
	millions of dollars				% change	
Total, census metropolitan areas	4,681.7	4,871.6	5,443.1	6,476.4	19.0	38.3
St. John's	41.6	40.4	30.6	70.9	131.8	70.4
Halifax	79.1	87.2	52.7	105.5	100.2	33.4
Moncton	9.8	18.8	20.7	10.7	-48.2	8.9
Saint John	7.5	9.1	9.6	6.4	-33.3	-14.8
Saguenay	25.4	21.5	29.8	23.8	-20.0	-6.4
Québec	142.0	108.0	145.6	97.8	-32.8	-31.1
Sherbrooke	29.2	40.3	40.9	34.3	-16.3	17.3
Trois-Rivières	24.4	17.7	14.4	36.3	152.2	48.9
Montréal	563.0	695.1	503.5	504.4	0.2	-10.4
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	224.1	183.9	165.0	204.6	24.0	-8.7
Gatineau part	37.3	32.7	19.5	46.2	137.2	24.0
Ottawa part	186.8	151.2	145.5	158.4	8.9	-15.2
Kingston	19.0	33.6	9.5	24.3	155.1	27.9
Peterborough	8.7	6.3	10.2	12.9	26.2	49.3
Oshawa	74.8	31.5	100.1	91.5	-8.6	22.4
Toronto	1,078.8	1,012.9	1,384.3	2,532.3	82.9	134.7
Hamilton	144.7	136.1	99.0	104.5	5.5	-27.8
St. Catharines–Niagara	46.6	74.8	43.5	49.1	13.0	5.4
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	89.8	210.3	86.9	104.7	20.5	16.6
Brantford	11.7	28.8	12.3	12.9	5.4	10.6
Guelph	17.1	21.5	28.2	48.9	73.2	185.4
London	132.0	90.0	60.4	77.5	28.3	-41.3
Windsor	48.7	32.0	56.2	48.4	-13.9	-0.8
Barrie	30.7	21.3	31.3	12.5	-60.2	-59.4
Greater Sudbury	12.4	14.5	7.9	8.2	3.7	-33.9
Thunder Bay	12.7	16.6	2.7	9.1	232.6	-28.6
Winnipeg	132.2	125.8	134.2	110.0	-18.1	-16.8
Regina	60.0	65.8	77.9	54.1	-30.6	-9.8
Saskatoon	88.8	86.5	99.1	94.6	-4.6	6.5
Calgary	601.2	361.9	617.1	649.0	5.2	8.0
Edmonton	453.4	574.5	431.0	502.6	16.6	10.9
Kelowna	37.3	24.7	62.5	29.5	-52.8	-20.8
Abbotsford–Mission	19.4	12.0	18.2	10.1	-44.6	-48.1
Vancouver	380.3	613.7	985.6	718.3	-27.1	88.9
Victoria	35.4	54.6	72.1	76.8	6.4	116.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

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

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 April 2015 issue of *Building Permits* ([64-001-X](#)) will soon be available.

The May building permits data will be released on July 8.

For more information, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Mariane Bien-Aimé (613-951-7520), Investment, Science and Technology Division.

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