RBC Economics
Focus on Canadian Housing

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CANADIAN HOUSING HEALTH CHECK

November 2019

Largest four markets

Toronto — The market recovery is now in full swing, demand-supply conditions are tightening and prices are rising moderately faster. Labour market and demographic fundamentals provide solid support. Near-record condo construction isn't a threat as there are few signs of overbuilding. Overstretched affordability remains a significant issue and top vulnerability.

Montreal — A strong economy continues to sustain solid market momentum. Demand-supply conditions are tight and prices are on an accelerating path. An earlier erosion of affordability has stabilized but booming rental apartment construction warrants close monitoring.

Vancouver — The market is getting over multiple layers of policy actions, and resales are now rebounding. Property values are still declining though more balanced demand-supply conditions point to stabilization in the near term. Despite recent improvement, affordability is at a crisis level and the biggest source of vulnerability. High condo construction levels are unlikely to flood the market.

Calgary — A mild recovery is (very) gradually taking shape: home sales have picked up in recent months and prices are now declining at a slower rate. More balanced conditions will eventually stabilize prices. Energy sector uncertainty still weighs on buyer confidence though an improving job market is a positive factor. High condo inventories remain an issue.

Housing market's risk profile continues to improve

Low odds of a steep downturn nation-wide: Generally stronger market activity reduced already-low odds of a steep and widespread housing downturn over the next 12 months in Canada. There's a greater likelihood that the market will heat up.

Most local markets are seeing positive developments: Demand-supply conditions are improving in previously-soft markets, including Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto. Downward price pressure is now easing (Vancouver, Calgary) or has recently reversed (Toronto). Stronger markets like Montreal and Ottawa maintain solid momentum.

Interest rate risk is muted: Lower longer-term rates this year now act as a tailwind to the market. Our benign interest rate outlook tempers earlier risks of a significant headwind —especially in high-priced Vancouver and Toronto.

Adjustment to housing policy actions is largely complete: Progress to date is uneven, however, with BC markets dealing with more policy layers than elsewhere. Longer term, more stringent mortgage and housing policy rules will reduce risks.

Healthy labour markets and strong population growth maintain solid support: Weak spots in the Prairies are gradually—though still tenuously—turning around.

Oil sector uncertainty weighs on buyer confidence in the Prairies: Crude oil transportation issues ultimately pose a risk to housing markets in these regions.

Affordability remains a key issue in major markets: The high cost of homeownership in Vancouver, Toronto and, to a (much) lesser extent, Montreal are a top vulnerability for Canada's major markets.

Strong condo construction isn't a sign of overbuilding: Elevated levels of apartment construction in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal raise some potential longer-term absorption issues. There's little risk near term, however, as unsold inventories are currently low.

Monitoring dashboard

	Canada	Vancouver	Calgary	Toronto	Montreal
Affordability	🔴	🔴	🟢	🔴	🟡
Resale market balance	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Rental market balance	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢
Interest rates	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Labour market	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Demographics	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
New home inventory - singles	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
New home inventory - multiples	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢
Homes under construction - singles	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢
Homes under construction - multiples	🔴	🔴	🟡	🔴	🔴

🔴 Significantly outside historical norms and posing much higher risk than usual
🟡 Modestly outside historical norms and posing moderately higher risk than usual
🟢 Within historical norms or not posing any immediate threat

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Background

Canadian Housing Health Check provides RBC Economics' assessment of key indicators of Canada's housing market that are deemed to offer early warning of potential imbalances. This monitoring exercise is one of the tools used regularly by RBC Economics to follow developments in this important sector of the Canadian economy. The report focuses on indicators that have been closely correlated (leading or coincident) with housing downturns and significant home price declines during housing cycles in the past three decades or so. While we believe that housing affordability and the sales-to-new listings ratio (and months' inventory) are the best indicators of market stress and price pressure, respectively, no single indicator provides perfect and accurate early warning signals of impending trouble. Accordingly, *Canadian Housing Health Check* emphasizes a 'dashboard' approach to convey the point that trouble in the housing market can arise from many directions and that it is imperative to monitor the situation broadly. This approach is complemented by a detailed review of individual indicators that includes a graphical depiction of the current situation within a historical context and a brief discussion of the rationale of our assessment.

About the graphics and risk 'zone' system

The dashboard graphics display the current values of the indicators (dark blue bar) within zones that we consider safe (green), concerning (yellow) or dangerous (red). The width of each graphics represents the range of values posted by the indicator during the past 30 years (or period of time available). The far left corresponds to the safest measure ever recorded and the far right, to the most extreme imbalance reached historically. For most indicators, the left corresponds to low values but for some (sales-to-new listings ratio and net immigration) to high values.

The yellow and red zones appearing in dashboard graphics and individual indicator charts generally were determined by analyzing past housing downturns and constitute our estimations of thresholds above (or, in some cases, below) which market imbalances and significant home price declines occurred at the national level in Canada. The yellow zone comprises a range of values that, historically, have been mostly associated with imbalances but not always with housing downturns (i.e. sustained price declines). In other words, these values give somewhat ambiguous and sometimes 'false' signals. The red zone, however, comprises values that represent imbalances much more clearly and of larger magnitude. An indicator in the red zone should be considered a source of worry. The farther to the right in the red zone in the dashboard graphics are the values, the more extreme is the imbalance, the more intense is the stress exerted on the market and, ultimately, the more severe the potential correction.

The specific rules at the national level are as follows:

- **RBC Affordability Measure for the aggregate of all housing types**: yellow threshold = 41.5% (0.3 standard deviations above the long-term mean); and red at 45.1% (1.0 standard deviations above the mean).
- **Sales-to-new listings ratio**: yellow threshold = 0.40; and red = 0.35.
- **Months of inventory**: yellow threshold = 7.0; red = 8.5.
- **Rental vacancy rate**: yellow threshold = 3.2% (long-term mean); and red = 3.7% (0.5 standard deviations above the mean).
- **Real 5-year bond yield relative to trailing 12-month average**: yellow threshold = 1.0 percentage point (1 standard deviation above the mean); red = 2.0 percentage points (2 standard deviations).
- **Unemployment rate relative to trailing 12-month average**: yellow threshold = 0.41 percentage points (0.6 standard deviation above the mean); red = 0.9 percentage points (1.5 standard deviations).
- **Net immigration per 1,000 population**: yellow threshold = 6.5 (0.5 standard deviations above the mean); red = 5.0 (0.4 standard deviations below the mean).
- **Completed and unoccupied units per 1,000 population, singles and semis**: yellow threshold = 0.29 (0.3 standard deviations above the mean); red = 0.36 (1.3 standard deviation above the mean).
- **Completed and unoccupied units per 1,000 population, multiples**: yellow threshold = 0.36 (the mean); red = 0.47 (0.9 standard deviation above the mean).
- **Housing under construction per 1,000 population, singles**: yellow threshold = 2.11 (0.5 standard deviations from the mean); red = 2.33 (1 standard deviation from the mean).
- **Housing under construction per 1,000 population, multiples**: yellow threshold = 3.93 (0.5 standard deviations from the mean); red = 4.58 (1 standard deviation from the mean).

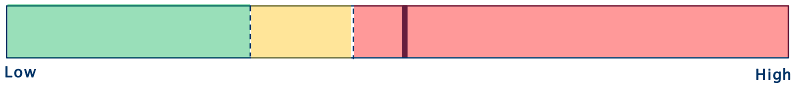
The areas shaded in grey in the indicator charts correspond to housing downturns – i.e., periods during which home prices (as defined as average prices of homes sold on the MLS system) fell by more than 5% from monthly peak to trough. It is important to note that the precise timing of these downturns can vary depending on the home price measure used. The grey shaded areas, therefore, should be seen as broad guidelines.

CANADA

Affordability

Risk implications

RBC affordability measure – aggregate



Near-term: negative
Medium-term: negative

Existing home market balance

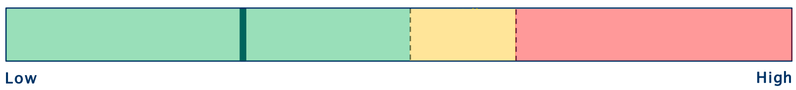
Sales-to-new listings ratio

Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Months of inventory

Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

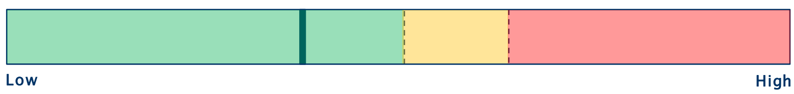
Rental vacancy rate



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

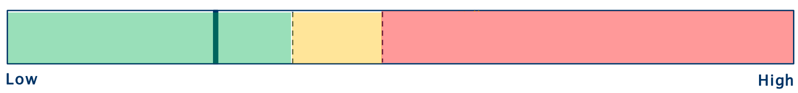
Demand fundamentals

Change in real 5-Year bond yields



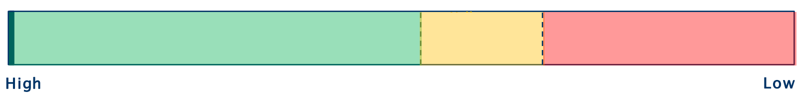
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Change in the unemployment rate



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

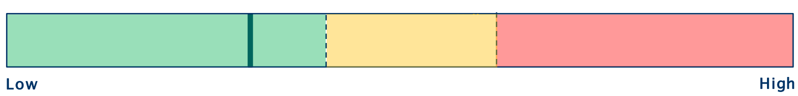
Net immigration rate



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units per capita – singles and semis

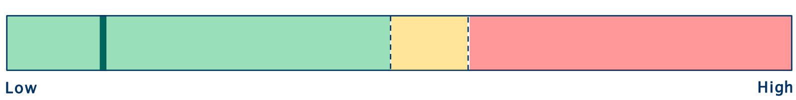


Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

Completed and unsold units per capita – multiples

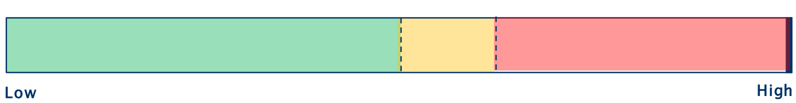
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – singles



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – multiples

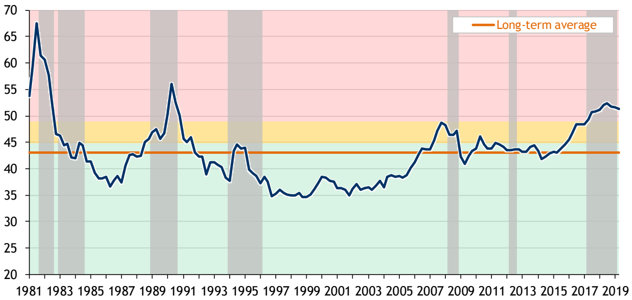


Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

CANADA

Affordability

RBC affordability measure - aggregate
Ownership costs as % of household income, Canada



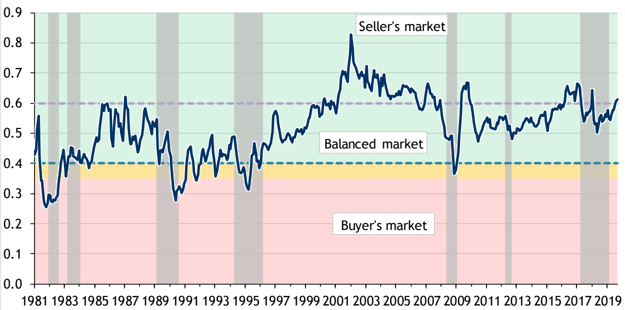
Source: RBC Economics Research, Brookfield RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage

Poor affordability remains a main source of vulnerability for Canada's housing market despite some improvement since last fall.

RBC's aggregate housing affordability measure fell (slightly) for three consecutive quarters to 51.3% in Q2 2019. This historically high level still suggests the presence of significantly greater-than-average market stress for buyers in Canada. Affordability pressure is concentrated in Vancouver and Toronto where prices continue to be very high despite recently coming off their peaks. The situation is not alarming in other markets.

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio
Monthly, S.A., Canada

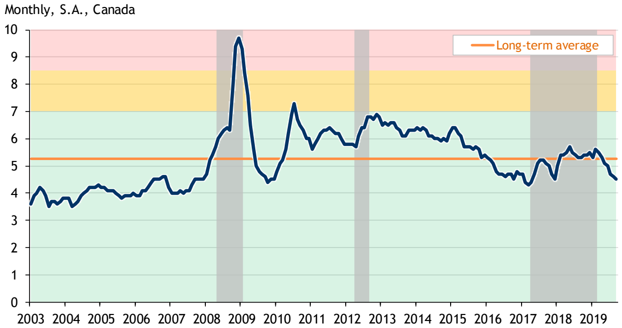


Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

Demand-supply conditions are somewhat tight overall. The odds of an imminent nation-wide price collapse are very low.

The sales-to-new listings ratio has recently risen to a level consistent with a seller's market, implying growing upward pressure on prices. The market is no longer weighed down by the policy changes made in the last two to three years. The decline in mortgage rates this year has contributed to the pick-up in activity.

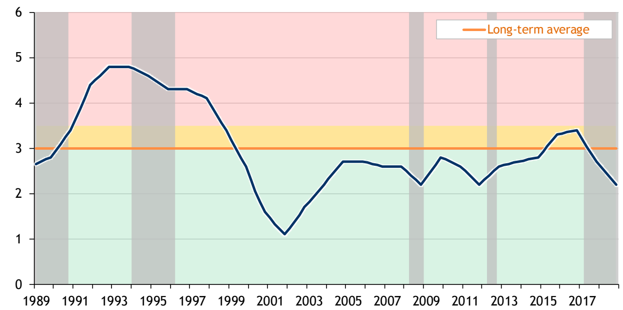
Months of inventory
Monthly, S.A., Canada



Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

The for-sale inventory is well within historical norms and consistent with continued price increases.

Rental vacancy rate
%, total CMAs, purpose-built apartment buildings of three units or more, Canada



Source: RBC Economics Research, CMHC

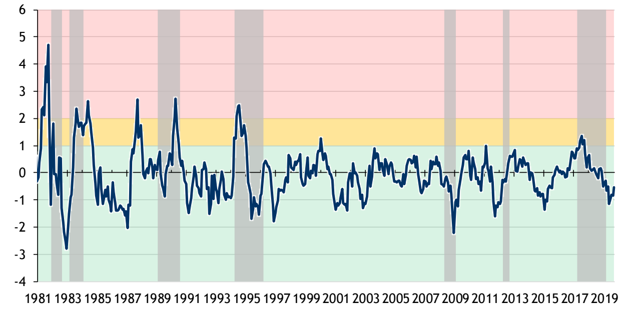
The rental market is tight overall in Canada and does not pose a threat to the home purchase market.

The rental vacancy rate in Canada fell to a seven-year low of 2.2% in October 2018 from 2.7% in 2017 and 3.4% in 2016. This is below the long-term average of 3.0%. The decline in the past two years was widespread across the country.

CANADA

Demand fundamentals

Real 5-year bond yields relative to trailing 12-month average
Percentage points, Canada



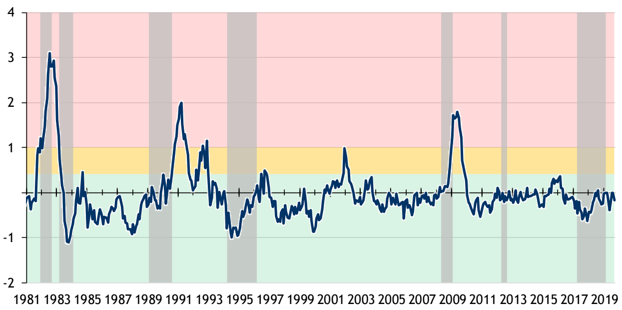
Source: RBC Economics Research, Bank of Canada, Statistics Canada

A drop in longer-term interest rates over the first half of this year significantly eased the risk of an interest rate shock. We expect the Bank of Canada to cut its overnight rate sometime early next year.

Despite rising modestly since August, real 5-year government of Canada yield is markedly below its 12-month trailing average, which is positive for the housing market—although the mortgage stress test limits the pass-through to new buyers.

The outlook for interest rates pose little risk to the housing market at this stage.

Unemployment rate relative to trailing 12-month average
Percentage points, Canada

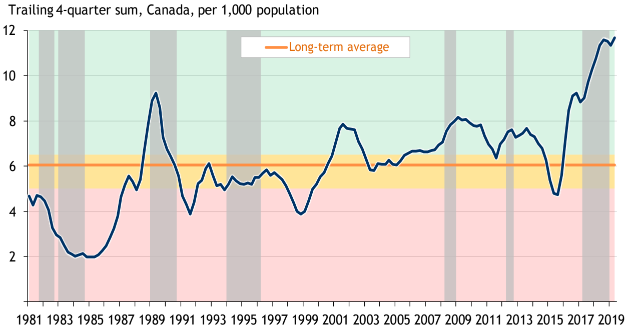


Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

Labour market conditions are positive.

The national unemployment rate is near its lowest level since the mid-1970s and RBC Economics expects it to stay historically low this year and next. The rate has been below its trailing 12-month average over most of the period since May 2016.

Net immigration rate
Trailing 4-quarter sum, Canada, per 1,000 population



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

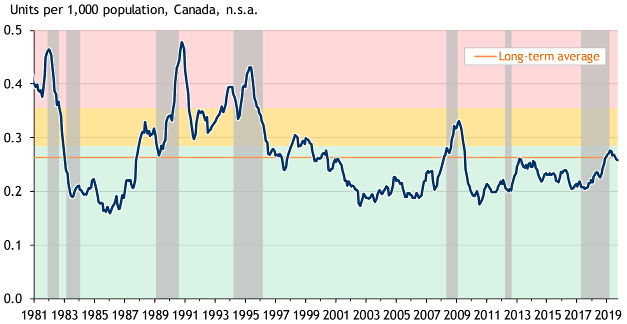
Decades-high levels of immigration offer strong support for housing demand.

The rate of net immigration in Canada (measured per 1,000 population) has surged since late-2015.

The rate is likely to remain elevated in light of the federal government boosting its target for new permanent residents from 300K in 2017 to 310K in 2018, and further to 330K in 2019, 340K in 2020 and 350K in 2021.

Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units - singles and semis
Units per 1,000 population, Canada, n.s.a.



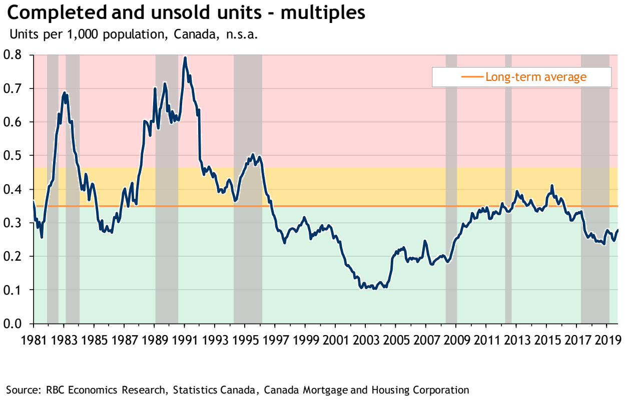
Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

There are few signs of excess supply of new single-detached units in Canada.

The unsold inventory (measured on a per capita basis) is near its long-run average.

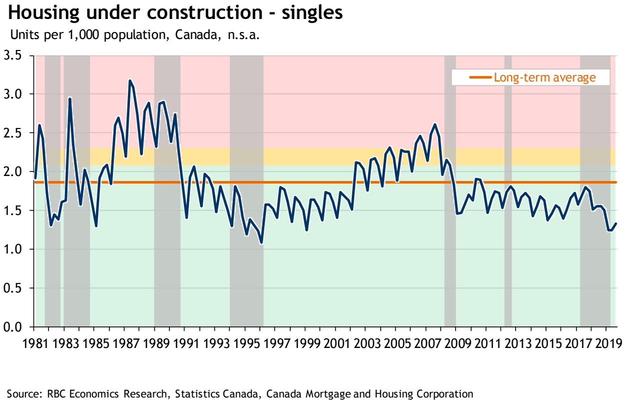
CANADA

Supply fundamentals



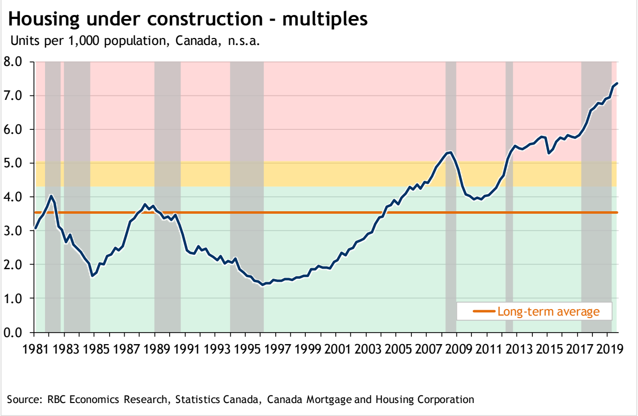
The inventory of completed but unsold multi-unit dwellings also is low in Canada.

It remains close to a 10-year low on a per 1,000 population basis.



There's little risk of overbuilding in the single family home segment.

Construction levels are well below historical averages (when measured on a per 1,000 population basis).



On the multiples side, however, record-high levels of apartments under construction in Canada generate some degree of absorption risks over the medium term.

Strong apartment construction should be weighed against solid demand for lower-priced housing options in markets such Vancouver and Toronto.

Most of the units being built are in the Toronto (30% of total), Vancouver (18%) and Montreal (12%) areas.

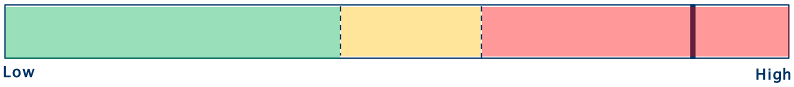
The condo building boom over the past two decades in large part reflected structural changes to the market that arose from policy (e.g. rules limiting urban sprawl) and affordability (condo apartments are the more affordable housing type) considerations, and therefore, represents a market share gain against single-family homes.

GREATER TORONTO AREA

Affordability

Risk implications

RBC affordability measure – aggregate



Near-term: negative
Medium-term: negative

Existing home market balance

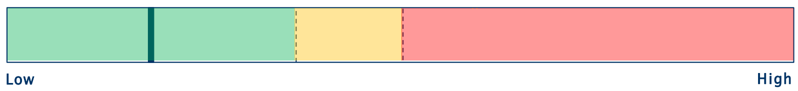
Sales-to-new listings ratio

Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Months of inventory – Ontario

Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

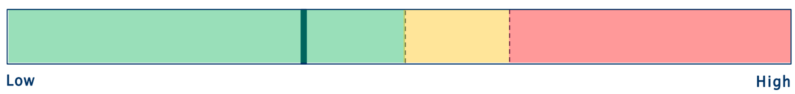
Rental vacancy rate



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

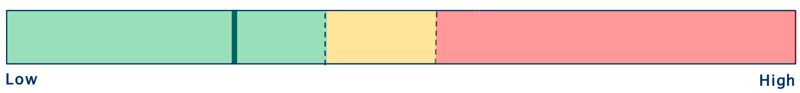
Demand fundamentals

Change in real 5-Year bond yields



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Change in the unemployment rate



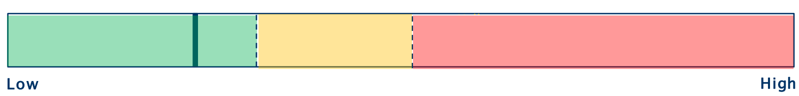
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Population growth

Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

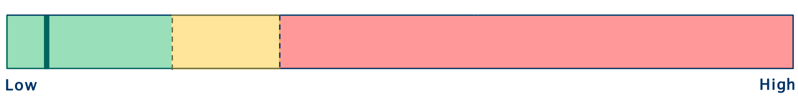
Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units per capita – singles and semis



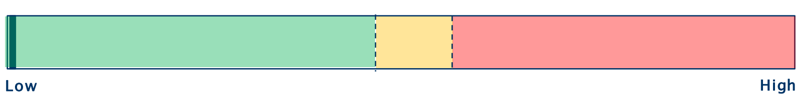
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: neutral

Completed and unsold units per capita – multiples



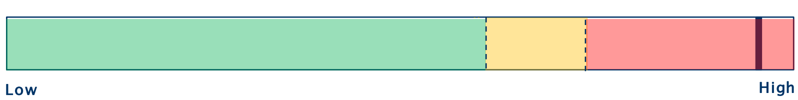
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – singles



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – multiples

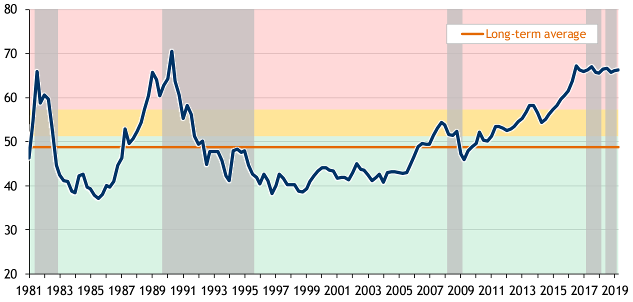


Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

GREATER TORONTO AREA

Affordability

RBC affordability measure - aggregate
Ownership costs as % of household income, Toronto



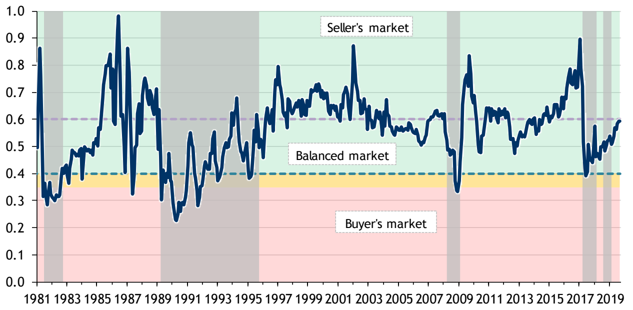
Source: RBC Economics Research, Brookfield RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage

The GTA market has a severe affordability problem though the situation improved marginally over the past two years.

Most of the affordability pressure is concentrated in the single-family home side of the market; however, some degree of stress is also present in the condo segment.

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio
Monthly, S.A., Toronto



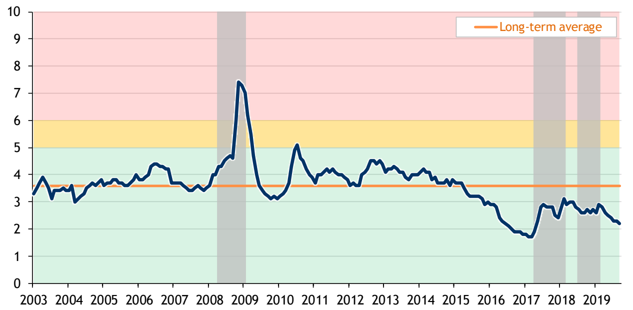
Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

Demand-supply conditions have tightened in recent months (with substantial variations across neighbourhoods).

Home resale activity picked up markedly since spring. The Toronto-area appears to have adjusted to policy changes (including Ontario's Fair Housing Plan and OFSI's updated B-20 guideline).

Home prices are now rising at a moderate but accelerating pace. We expect further appreciation in the year ahead.

Months of inventory
Monthly, S.A., Ontario



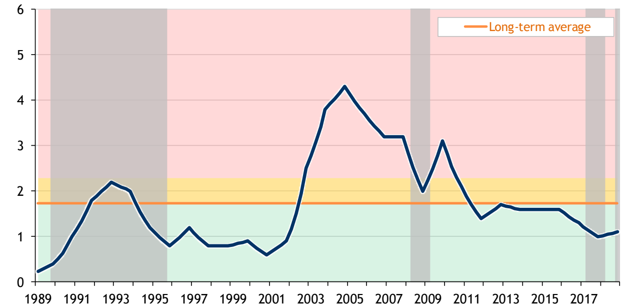
Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

Inventories of homes for sales (active listings) point to a rising degree of market tightness.

Active listings in Ontario fell from 2.9 months' worth of inventory in February 2019 to 2.2 months in September, well below the long-run average of 3.6.

Separate data from the Toronto Real Estate Board show that the number of months of inventory in the Toronto area was 2.3 in September, down from 2.6 a year earlier.

Rental vacancy rate
%, purpose-built apartment buildings of three units or more, Toronto



Source: RBC Economics Research, CMHC

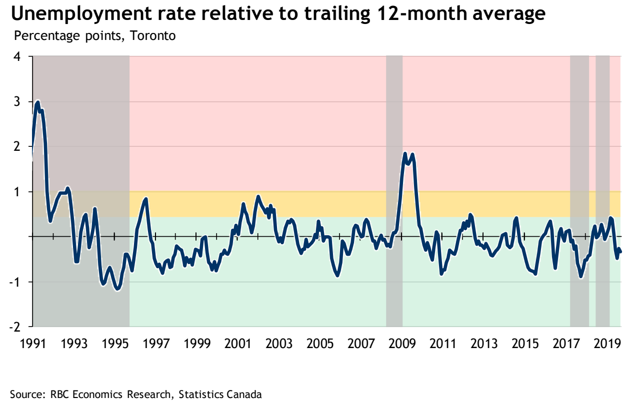
GTA's rental market continues to be very tight with the vacancy rate at 1.1% in the fall of 2018—still near a 16-year low.

Toronto's condo boom hasn't flooded the rental market or caused vacancies to rise materially.

Toronto Real Estate Board statistics show strong condo rental activity rising nearly 15% in Q2/2019 from a year earlier. Solid demand relative to available supply applies intense upward pressure on rent (up 6.7% y/y for a one-bedroom apartment).

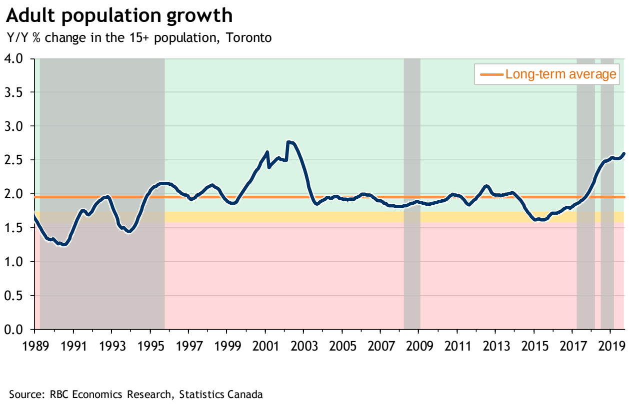
GREATER TORONTO AREA

Demand fundamentals



Labour market conditions in the GTA are positive for the area's housing market.

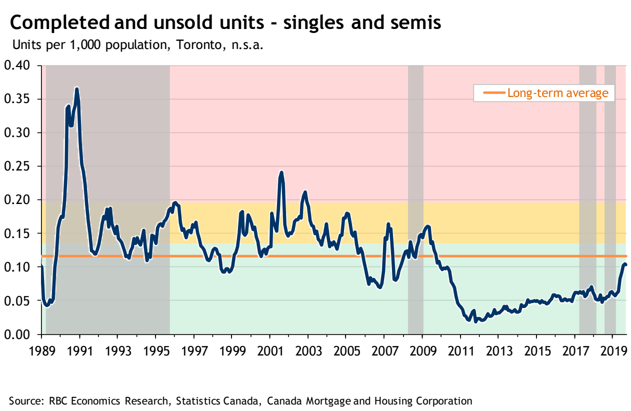
Solid job creation helped lower Toronto's unemployment rate to decades-low this summer.



Demographic fundamentals are very solid in the GTA. They strengthened in the past couple of years with the rate of growth in adult population accelerating to a 17-year high of 2.6% most recently.

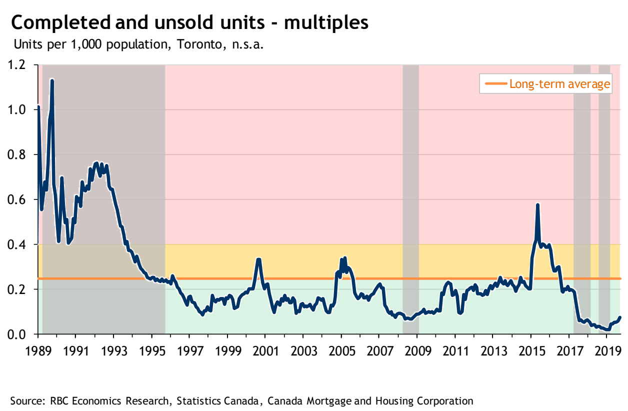
A rate below 1.5% would be a source of concern.

Supply fundamentals



There are few indications of overbuilding of single-family homes in the area at present.

Despite spiking this summer, inventories of newly completed and unsold single-family homes continue to be historically low.

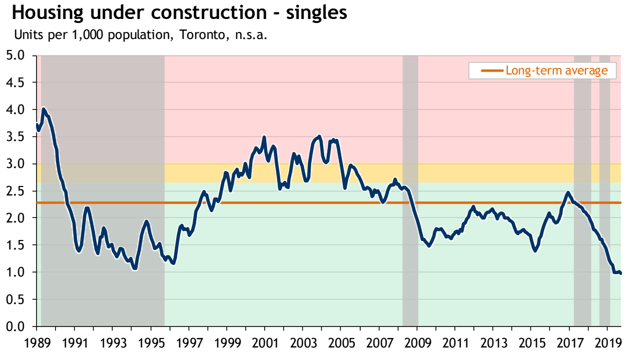


The unsold inventory of newly built condos is virtually bare.

The unabsorbed inventory is close to an all-time low.

GREATER TORONTO AREA

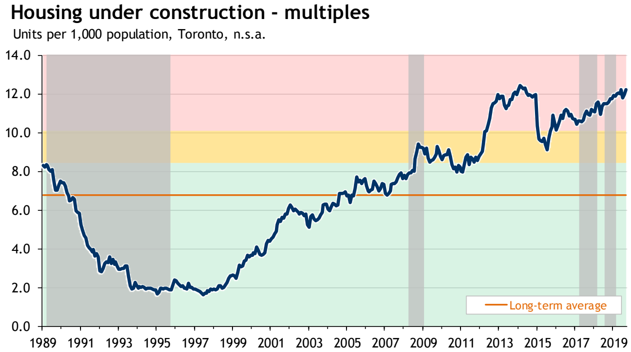
Supply fundamentals



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

The single-unit dwelling construction pipeline is low and falling.

The number of single-detached units under construction in the GTA has been coming down since the spring of 2017 as builders cut back the pace of new starts following Ontario's Fair Housing Plan.



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

The number of multi-unit dwellings under construction is historically high—posing potential absorption risks.

However, this potential is tempered by extremely low inventories and strong demand in the existing condo market.

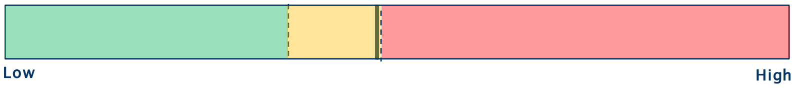
Market absorption has been very strong in recent years, which indicates that current construction levels are unlikely to be excessive. We see only limited risks of trouble for the condo resale and/or rental markets.

GREATER MONTREAL AREA

Affordability

Risk implications

RBC affordability measure – aggregate



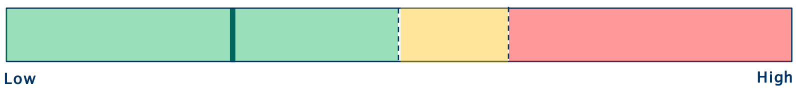
Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: negative

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio

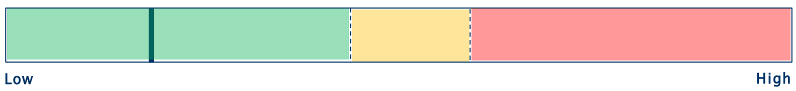
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Months of inventory – Quebec



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

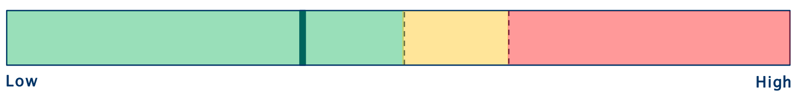
Rental vacancy rate



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

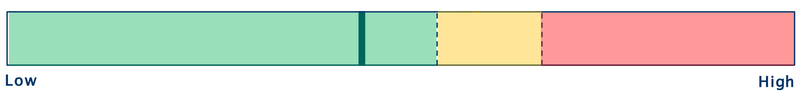
Demand fundamentals

Change in real 5-Year bond yields



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Change in the unemployment rate



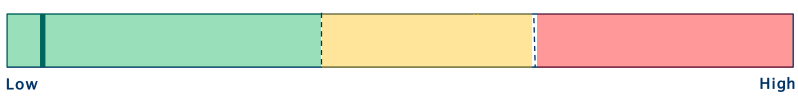
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Population growth

Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

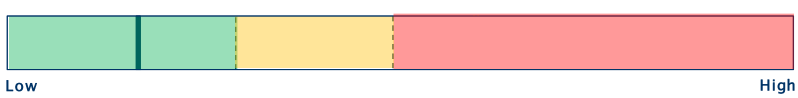
Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units per capita – singles and semis



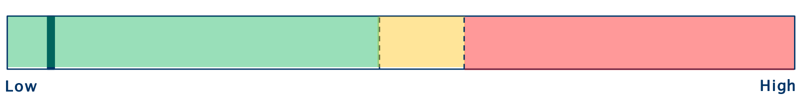
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Completed and unsold units per capita – multiples



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – singles



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – multiples

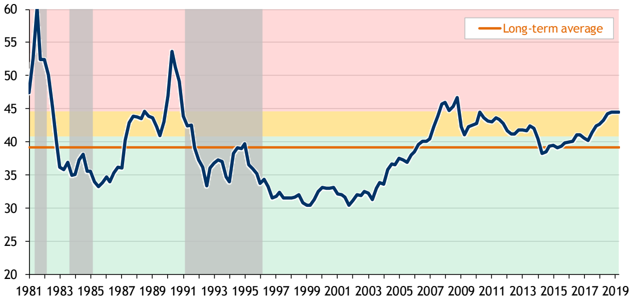
Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: negative

GREATER MONTREAL AREA

Affordability

RBC affordability measure - aggregate

Ownership costs as % of household income, Montreal



Source: RBC Economics Research, Brookfield RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage

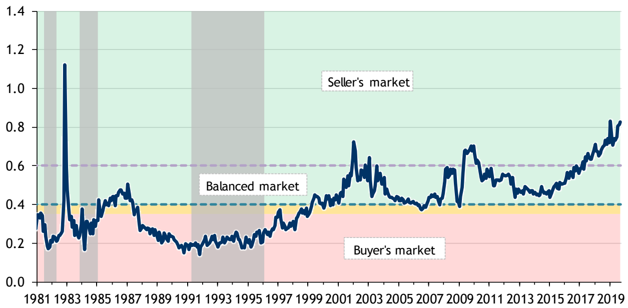
Affordability is a strain for some Montreal buyers but not a severe issue.

RBC's aggregate measure has recently levelled off at 44.5%, just below the threshold indicating higher vulnerability.

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio

Monthly, S.A., Montreal



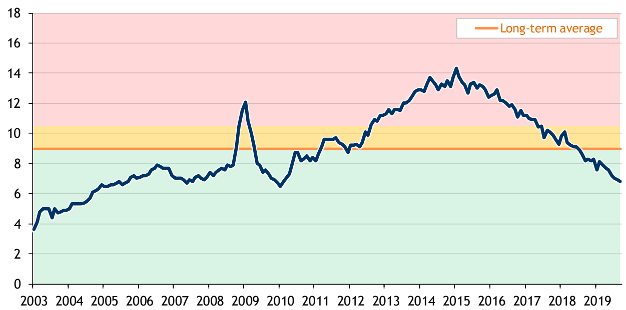
Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

Tight demand-supply conditions in the Montreal area suggests that prices will continue to rise solidly in the near term.

Montreal has been one of the stronger markets in Canada in the past couple of years. Robust sales activity took place amid steady decline in the number of homes put up for sale each month, which resulted in a significant drop in inventories.

Months of inventory

Monthly, S.A., Quebec



Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

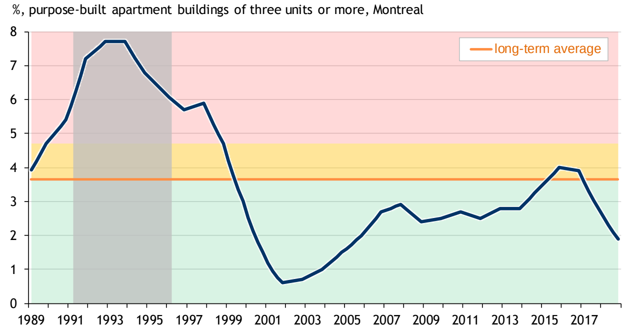
Provincial inventory data provide further evidence of firming market conditions and low risk of an imminent price drop in Montreal.

The number of months' inventory continues to fall deeper into the 'low-risk zone'.

Quebec Professional Association of Real Estate Brokers data show that the number of months' inventory was 4.5 for single-detached homes in September 2019 and 4.8 for condos—both indicating that sellers are in command.

Rental vacancy rate

%, purpose-built apartment buildings of three units or more, Montreal



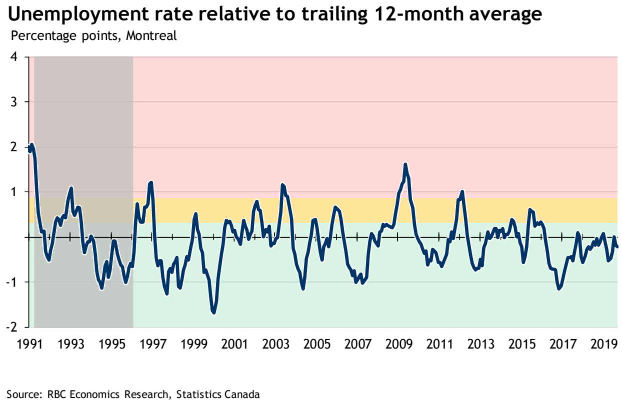
Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

Montreal's rental market is tight and poses little threat to the ownership market.

The rental vacancy rate fell to a 14-year low of 1.9% in October 2018. The rate is unlikely to remain this low, however, as a wave of new rental supply is on its way. There's currently a record-high 15,450 purpose-built rental units under construction in the Montreal area.

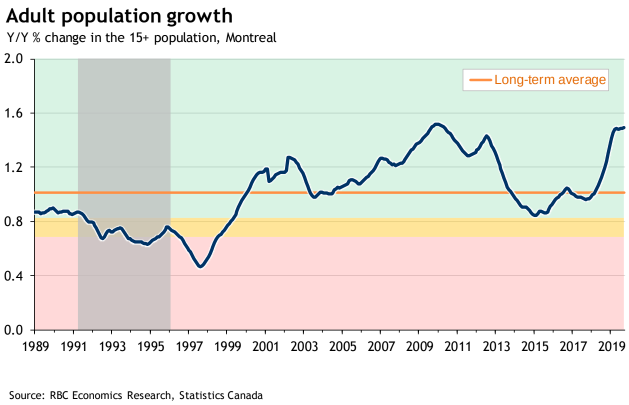
GREATER MONTREAL AREA

Demand fundamentals



Montreal's job market is healthy and offers strong support for the housing market.

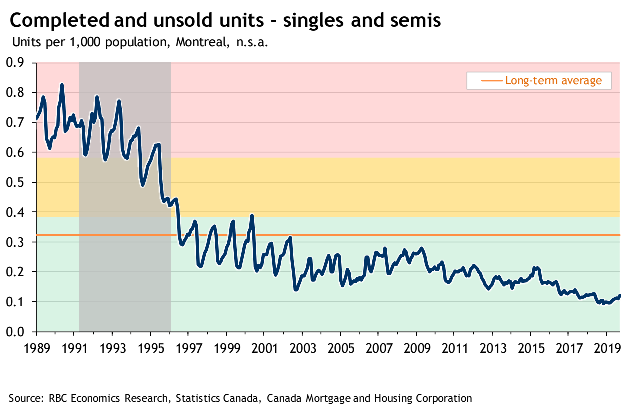
The unemployment rate is trending down, reaching 5.5% in September 2019, near the lowest point on record dating back to 1987.



Overall demographic conditions also are positive.

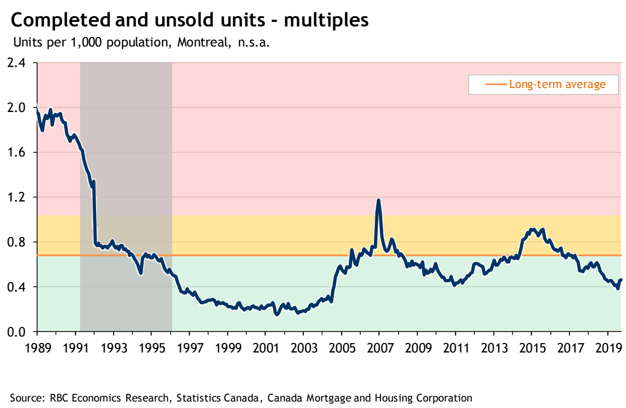
Montreal's adult population growth has accelerated markedly since mid-2015 to an eight-year high of 1.5% so far in 2019, widely exceeding the long-term average of 1.0%.

Supply fundamentals



There's no evidence of overbuilding in the single-family market segment.

Newly completed homes remaining unsold are at close to an all-time low.



There are no signs of overbuilding on the multi-unit dwelling side either.

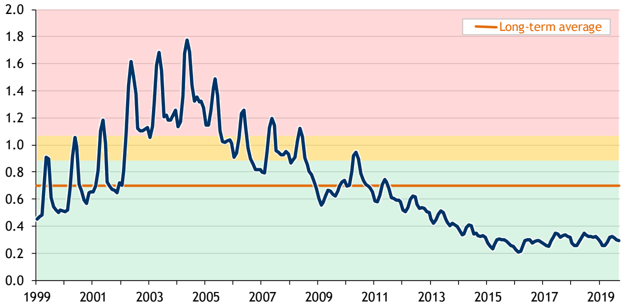
Strong market absorption in the past three years cut the unsold inventory to 0.46 units per 1,000 population in September 2019, near the lowest level in eight years and well within the low-risk zone.

GREATER MONTREAL AREA

Supply fundamentals

Housing under construction - singles

Units per 1,000 population, Montreal, n.s.a.



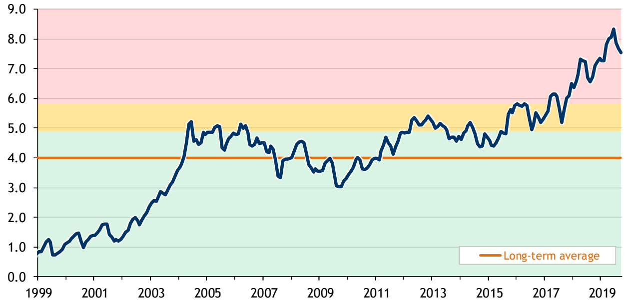
Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

The risk of overbuilding single-family homes is extremely remote.

Current construction levels are historically very low. This has been the case since 2015.

Housing under construction - multiples

Units per 1,000 population, Montreal, n.s.a.



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

There is a potential risk of overbuilding multi-unit dwellings, however.

The number of multi-unit dwellings under construction is close to a record high.

This in large part reflects a significant increase in purpose-built rental apartment projects. Condo units under construction also rose since mid-2017 but remain below their peak reached between 2012 and 2014.

Strong construction activity of higher-density housing categories partly reflects a structural shift from single-detached toward multiple-unit forms of housing. This shift is supported by urban development policy and affordability advantage relative to single-family homes.

GREATER VANCOUVER AREA

Affordability

Risk implications

RBC affordability measure – aggregate

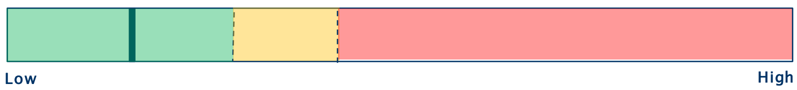
Near-term: negative
Medium-term: negative

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio

Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: positive

Months of inventory – BC



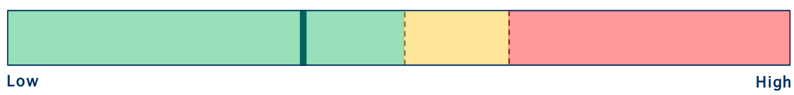
Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

Rental vacancy rate

Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Demand fundamentals

Change in real 5-Year bond yields



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Change in the unemployment rate

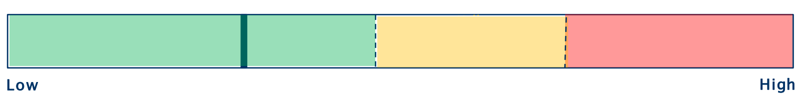
Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

Population growth

Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units per capita – singles and semis

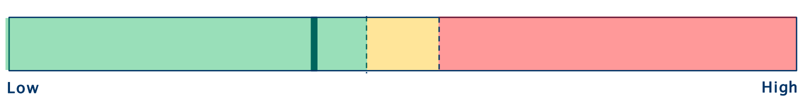


Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Completed and unsold units per capita – multiples

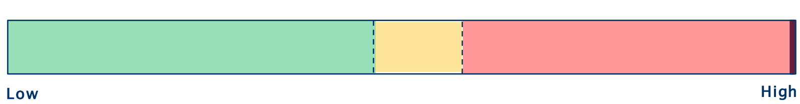
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – singles



Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – multiples



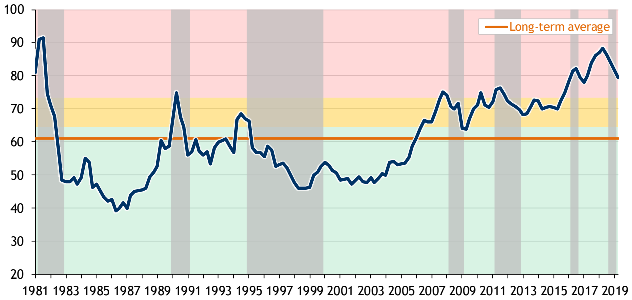
Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

GREATER VANCOUVER AREA

Affordability

RBC affordability measure - aggregate

Ownership costs as % of household income, Vancouver



Source: RBC Economics Research, Brookfield RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage

Housing affordability is extremely poor and poses a major challenge to Vancouver-area buyers.

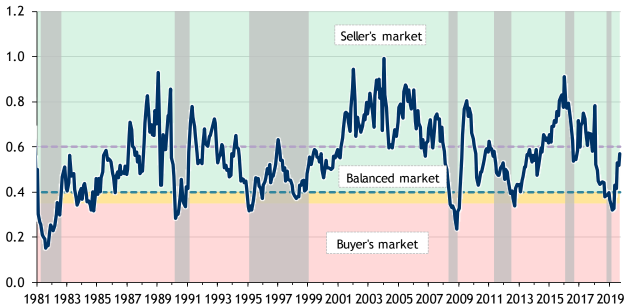
Despite improving since late-2018, affordability issues affect all market segments. Single-family homes are the segment where the strains are the most intense.

While multiple layers of policy actions taken since 2016 addressed earlier overheated conditions, they provided only limited affordability relief to date.

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio

Monthly, S.A., Vancouver



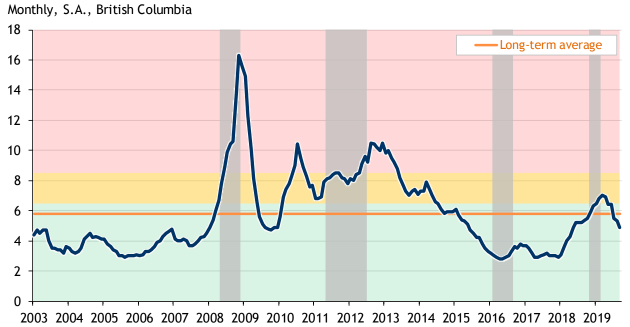
Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

A material rebound in resale activity this summer helped rebalance demand-supply conditions.

The sales-to-new listings ratio almost doubled since April. The tightening of conditions so far has slowed the pace of price decline in the area. It should begin to boost prices in the period ahead.

Months of inventory

Monthly, S.A., British Columbia



Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

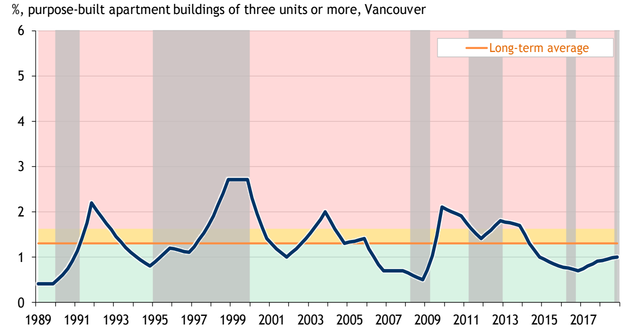
The inventory of homes for sale in BC is now declining and no longer poses a threat.

The number of months' inventory in the province fell from 7.0 in March 2019 to 4.9 in September—below the long-run average of 5.8.

The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver reports a continued rise in active listings (up a small 2.7% year-over-year in September) though the rate of accumulation eased dramatically in recent months (listings were up 52% year-over-year in March).

Rental vacancy rate

%, purpose-built apartment buildings of three units or more, Vancouver



Source: RBC Economics Research, CMHC

Vancouver's rental market shows no evidence of any looming surplus that would cause concerns for the home ownership market.

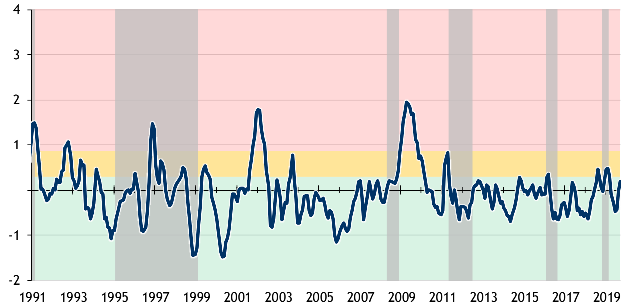
Conditions remain very tight in Vancouver's rental market.

The area's rental vacancy rate was 1.0% in October 2018—among the lowest ones in the country—up marginally from 0.9% in October 2017.

GREATER VANCOUVER AREA

Demand fundamentals

Unemployment rate relative to trailing 12-month average
Percentage points, Vancouver

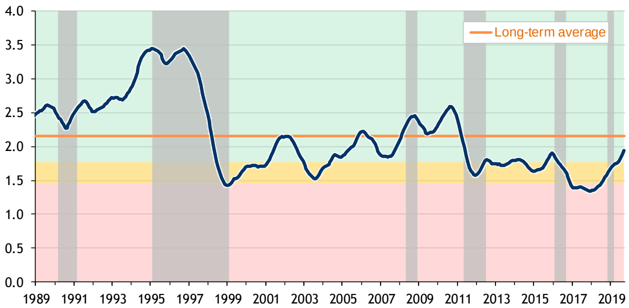


Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

Vancouver's job market is solid.

Employment in the area is growing rapidly this year (up an impressive 4.1% year to date), which has kept the unemployment low (4.6% in September 2019). This is close to a decade low and among the lowest across Canada's larger urban areas.

Adult population growth
Y/Y % change in the 15+ population, Vancouver



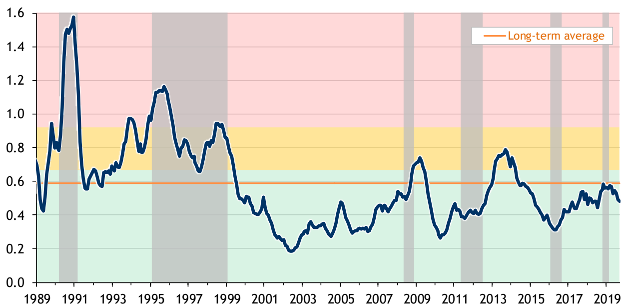
Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

Population growth has re-accelerated, easing earlier concerns about slowing demographics in Vancouver.

The rate of Vancouver's adult population growth rebounded to 1.9% y/y in September 2019 from a low 1.3% in late-2017.

Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units - singles and semis
Units per 1,000 population, Vancouver, n.s.a.

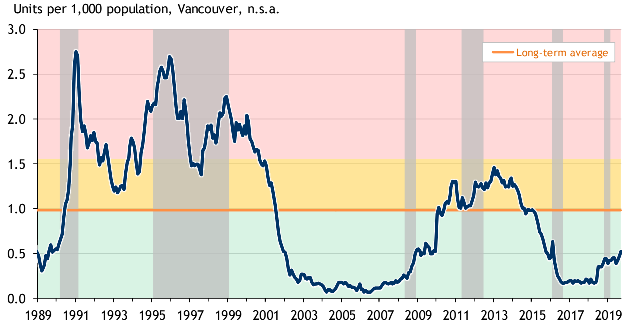


Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Newly completed single– and semi-detached inventories aren't excessive.

They are slightly below the long-run average (on a per capita basis).

Completed and unsold units - multiples
Units per 1,000 population, Vancouver, n.s.a.



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

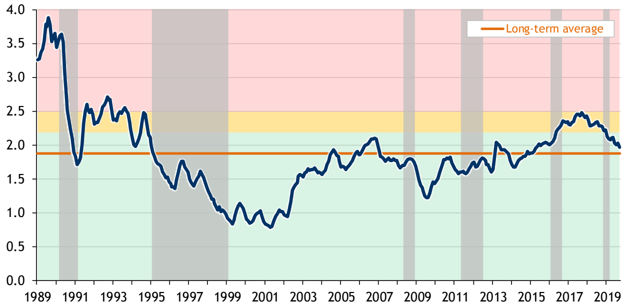
Inventories of multi-dwelling units are very low.

Although they aren't quite as low as they were in mid-2018. That's because stronger condo completions are now bringing more units to market.

GREATER VANCOUVER AREA

Supply fundamentals

Housing under construction - singles
Units per 1,000 population, Vancouver, n.s.a.

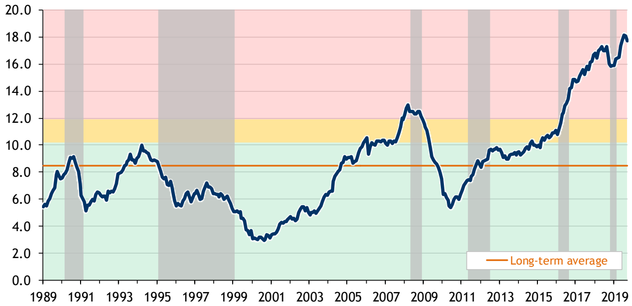


Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Single-detached homes under construction are coming down closer to normal levels.

A sharp cooling of demand for high-priced properties caused single-detached housing starts to plunge to their lowest level in five years—taking down units under construction in the process.

Housing under construction - multiples
Units per 1,000 population, Vancouver, n.s.a.



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Record levels of multi-family dwelling construction hint at greater-than-usual risk of market imbalance down the road.

However, low inventories and rental vacancy rate, as well as rapid population growth largely mitigate such risk.

CALGARY AREA

Affordability

Risk implications

RBC affordability measure – aggregate

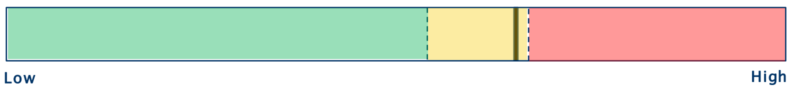
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio

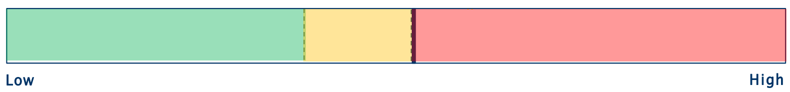
Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

Months of inventory – Alberta



Near-term: negative
Medium-term: neutral

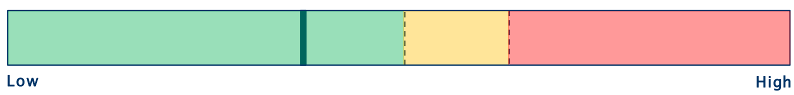
Rental vacancy rate



Near-term: negative
Medium-term: neutral

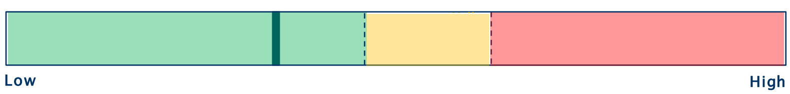
Demand fundamentals

Change in real 5-Year bond yields



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Change in the unemployment rate



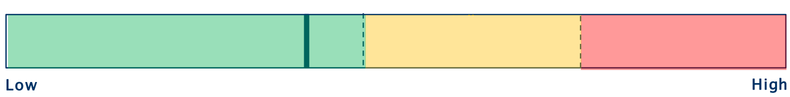
Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Population growth

Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

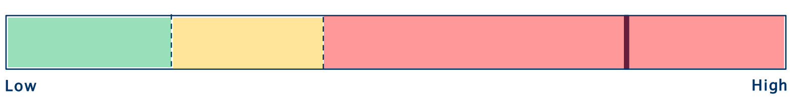
Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units per capita – singles and semis



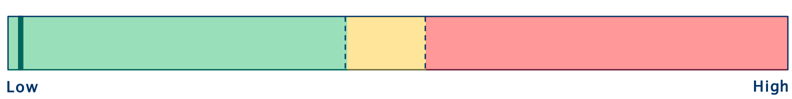
Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

Completed and unsold units per capita – multiples



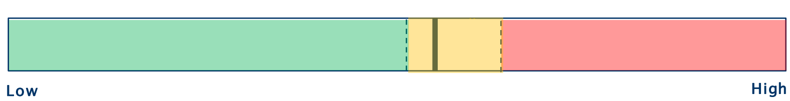
Near-term: negative
Medium-term: negative

Housing under construction per capita – singles



Near-term: positive
Medium-term: positive

Housing under construction per capita – multiples

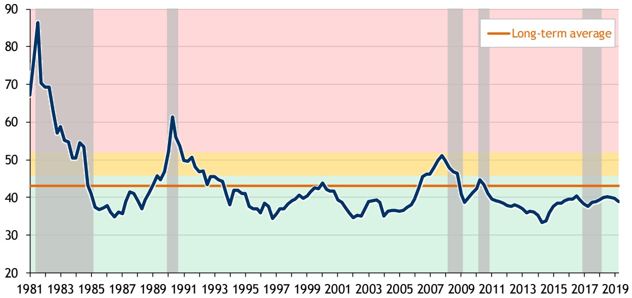


Near-term: neutral
Medium-term: neutral

CALGARY AREA

Affordability

RBC affordability measure - aggregate
Ownership costs as % of household income, Calgary



Source: RBC Economics Research, Brookfield RPS, Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, Royal LePage

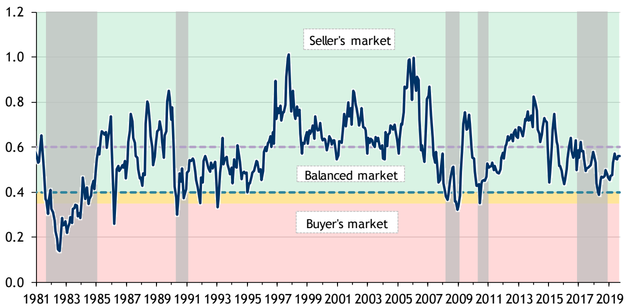
Housing affordability is a generally constructive factor in Calgary.

RBC's affordability measure has been in the 'safe zone' for the last eight years, remaining mostly flat since 2015.

The Calgary market faces a number of issues (e.g. energy sector turmoil, weak confidence, relatively high unemployment rate); however, affordability isn't one of them.

Existing home market balance

Sales-to-new listings ratio
Monthly, S.A., Calgary



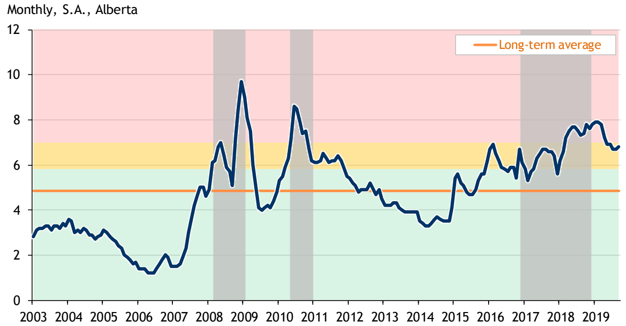
Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

Existing home demand and supply are back in balance as the market recovers progressively. Downward price pressure is easing gradually.

Home resales hit their cyclical bottom this past winter and have picked up modestly since then.

The resulting rise in the sales-to-new listings ratio bodes well for home prices to stabilize in the period ahead.

Months of inventory
Monthly, S.A., Alberta



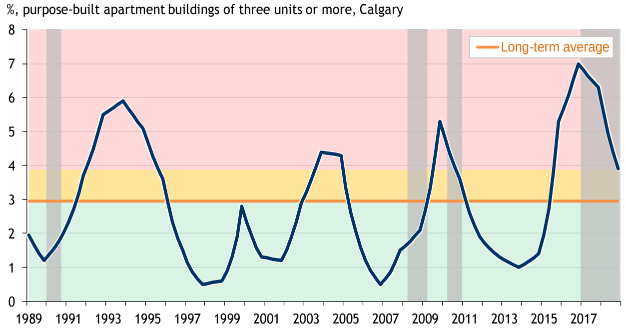
Source: RBC Economics Research, Canadian Real Estate Association

For-sale inventories have diminished but remain somewhat elevated.

The number of months' inventory in Alberta fell from 7.9 at the start of this year (an eight-year high) to 6.8 in September—still a little excessive.

Active listings in Calgary were down 12% in September, according to the Calgary Real Estate Board. This unwound significant increases in 2018.

Rental vacancy rate
%, purpose-built apartment buildings of three units or more, Calgary



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

Oversupply of rental units has partially eased.

The rental vacancy rate dropped materially from 6.3% in 2017 to 3.9% in 2018—though still historically high.

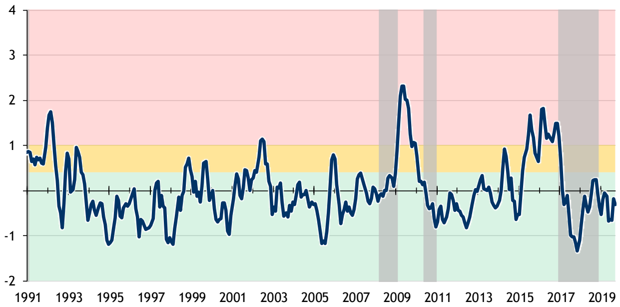
The decline in the vacancy rate relieved some of the downward pressure on rent values that prevailed over the 2015-2017 period. Average rent increased slightly by 1.9% in 2018.

CALGARY AREA

Demand fundamentals

Unemployment rate relative to trailing 12-month average

Percentage points, Calgary



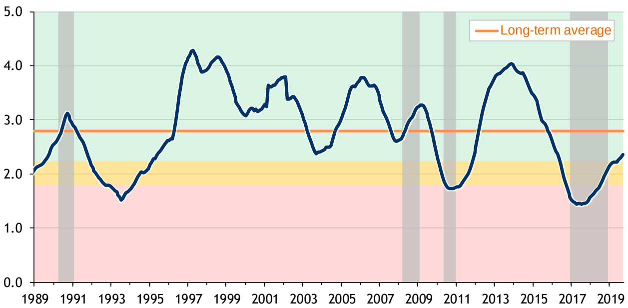
Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

Calgary's job market is still soft but improving.

Job creation resumed this year after stalling in mid-2018. Employment is up solidly by 3.9% year to date. This has kept the unemployment rate on a modest downward trajectory. Yet at 7.1% in September, Calgary's jobless remains high historically, as well as relative to other Canadian markets. Further recovery should slowly bolster confidence.

Adult population growth

Y/Y % change in the 15+ population, Calgary



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada

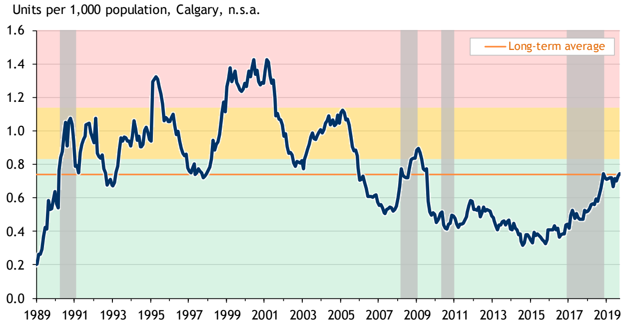
Net population flows are recovering. Earlier concerns about demographic fundamentals are no longer warranted.

Adult population growth re-accelerated to a healthier rate of 2.4% y/y in September, up from a low of 1.5% in early-2017.

Supply fundamentals

Completed and unsold units - singles and semis

Units per 1,000 population, Calgary, n.s.a.



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

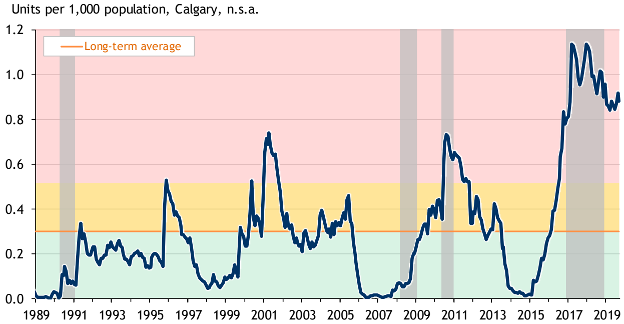
A three-year rise in unsold single-detached and semi-detached units isn't yet pointing to overbuilding.

Despite doubling over that period, the number of unsold units is still close to the long-run average of 0.74 per 1000 population.

That number is unlikely to rise much further because single-detached home starts weakened noticeably in the past year.

Completed and unsold units - multiples

Units per 1,000 population, Calgary, n.s.a.



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

However, there's continuing evidence of a surplus in the multi-unit segment.

The number of unabsorbed units is still excessive despite coming down in the past year.

The earlier rise was driven by sharp increases in condo apartment completions in 2015 and 2016 at a time when demand turned cold. While condo completions declined materially since then, weak demand slowed down market absorption.

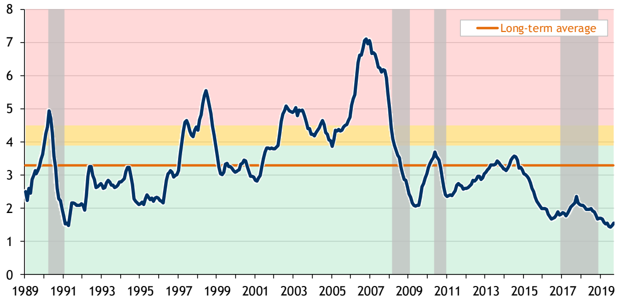
The gradual turnaround in the existing home market bodes well for absorption to increase in the period ahead.

CALGARY AREA

Supply fundamentals

Housing under construction - singles

Units per 1,000 population, Calgary, n.s.a.



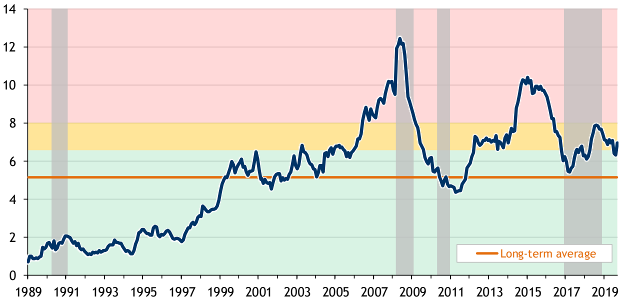
Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

There are very few single-detached units under construction.

This reflects low housing starts levels in the past four years and poses little risk of overbuilding.

Housing under construction - multiples

Units per 1,000 population, Calgary, n.s.a.



Source: RBC Economics Research, Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Multi-unit dwelling construction poses mild absorption risk.

The number of apartments under construction is still high from a historical point of view but has come down since late-2018. More units have been completed than started in the past year.