MONTHLY INTELLIGENCE REPORT

The Canadian Construction Economy Snapshot

September 2026

THE ISSUE · ECONOMY

August Starts Slow Following Strong June and July

ConstructConnect announced today that Canadian Total Nonresidential Construction Starts — the sum of Nonresidential Building and Civil Construction — totaled $4.0 billion in August 2026, down from July's revised reading of $8.9 billion and well below the trailing 12-month average of $7.9 billion.

By Devin Bell, Associate Economist · Published September 30, 2026

August's Canadian Construction Starts

Through the month ending August 31, 2026. All values in current C dollars, NSA

TOTAL CANADIAN CONSTRUCTION STARTS

$6.2B

Sum of Residential, Nonresidential Building, and Civil. 12-month moving average: $10.6B.

YoY (Aug)	MoM (Aug)	YTD (Jan–Aug)
-48.0%	-46.0%	-28.0%

TOTAL NONRESIDENTIAL

$4.0B

Sum of Nonresidential Building (NRB) and Civil.

YoY	MoM
-52.8%	-55.0%

TOTAL RESIDENTIAL

$2.2B

Single- and Multi-Family.

YoY	MoM
-35.7%	-14.4%

NONRESIDENTIAL BUILDING

$2.8B

Includes structures like schools, hospitals, and manufacturing plants.

Sums with Civil to Total Nonresidential.

YoY	MoM
-50.9%	-4.4%

CIVIL

$1.2B

Includes subcategories like Roads and Power Infrastructure.

Sums with NRB to Total Nonresidential.

YoY	MoM
-56.7%	-80.1%

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What's Behind the August Numbers

Slow August Civil Starts

Civil starts fell 80.1% month-over-month, following an exceptionally strong $6.0 billion figure in July.

Rook I Uranium Mine Project

$2.2 Billion groundbreaking drove 164.1% month-over-month increase in Industrial.

Institutional Behind Year-Ago Pace

Institutional construction fell 76.0% month-over-month, dropping year-to-date activity 52.1% below the same period a year ago.

Construction Starts Update

August 2026 Total Nonresidential starts in Canada totaled $4.0 billion, down 55.0% from July's revised figure. The sector struggled year-to-date (YTD), with starts reaching $45.6 billion through August, 34.6% below last year's pace of $69.8 billion over the same period.

Nonresidential Building

Nonresidential Building (NRB) closed August at $2.8 billion, down 4.4% from July. NRB covers structures such as Offices, including Data Centres, Schools, Hospitals, and Manufacturing plants. Month-over-month (MoM) declines were widespread across NRB subcategories, concentrated most heavily in Offices, which fell 97.8%, Educational dropped 79.7%, and Hospitals/Clinics lost 74.1%. Manufacturing was the main subcategory offsetting declines, as it rose 218.6% MoM from $0.7 billion in July to $2.2 billion in August.

Civil

Civil construction, also known as Heavy Engineering, drove most of the decline in Total Nonresidential in August, falling 80.1% from July. All six Civil subcategories posted MoM decreases, with the steepest drop in All Other Civil, including oil and gas pipelines, which struggled to keep pace after July's groundbreaking of the $4 billion Enbridge Sunrise pipeline expansion. Roads also registered a notable decline, down 45%, along with Bridges, down 31%.

Residential

Total Residential construction starts fell 14.4% MoM, from $2.5 billion in July to $2.2 billion in August. Multi-Family drove the decline, dropping 29% from July, slightly counterbalanced by a 9.1% increase in Single-Family construction.

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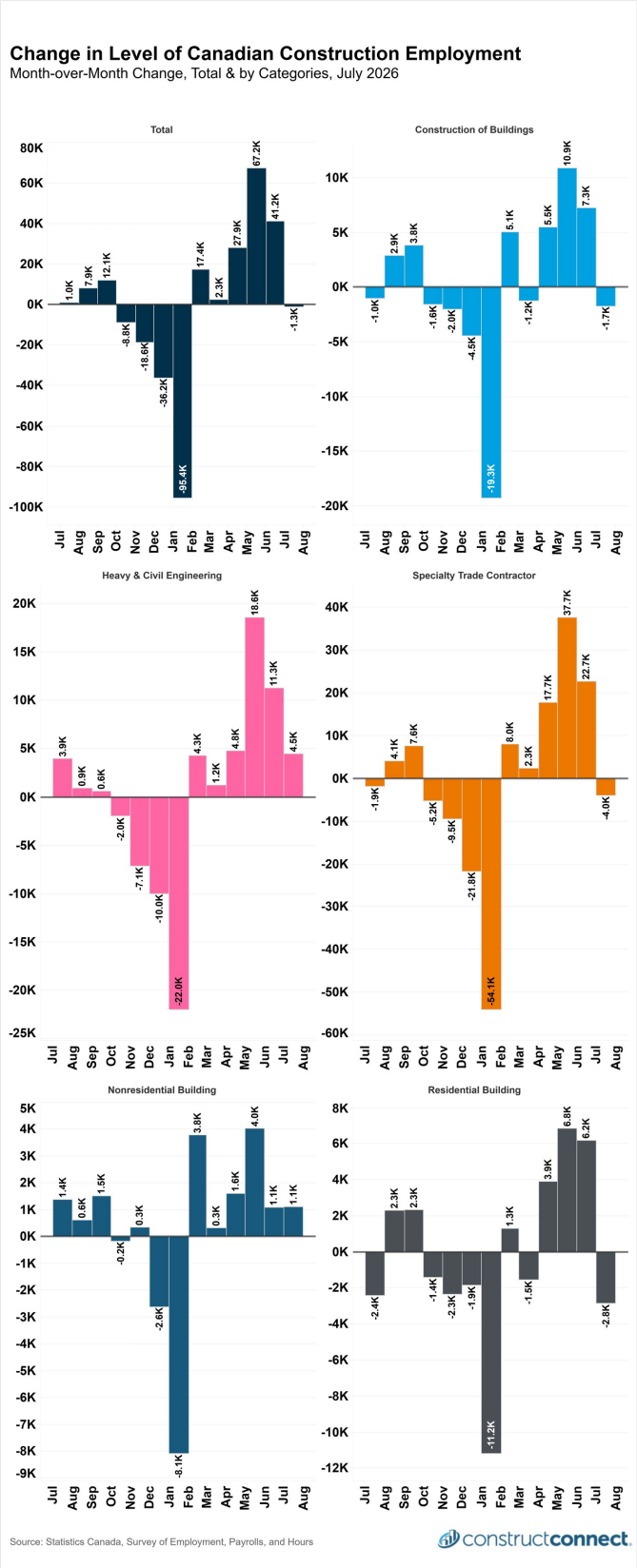
Construction Labour Update

Canadian construction employment dropped by 1,250 jobs in July, according to the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours (SEPH). The decline followed back-to-back months of strong growth in May and June, which together added more than 100,000 jobs. Specialty trade contractors lost nearly 4,000 jobs, and residential employment fell by roughly 2,800, in July. Conversely, nonresidential sectors added jobs in July, with nonresidential building employment growing by 1,100 and heavy and civil engineering adding 4,500 jobs.

Compared to year-ago levels, construction employment gained 1.3%, adding 15,800 jobs. Heavy and civil engineering and Nonresidential building led those gains, each up 2.7% year-over-year, despite weak construction starts activity in both categories year to date.

Hourly construction workers received an average of $40.07 per hour in July, down 0.8% from the $40.40 observed in June. Despite the small month-over-month decrease, construction workers still earned a $6.98 per hour premium compared to the broader all-industry average. In addition to the hourly premium, construction workers worked more hours on average than the broader economy. In July, average weekly hours worked for construction workers totaled 37.6, well above the all-industry average of 31.3.

The combination of higher hourly wages and more hours worked lifted average weekly pay for construction workers to $1,504, a $468, or 45.2%, premium over the all-industry average of $1,036.



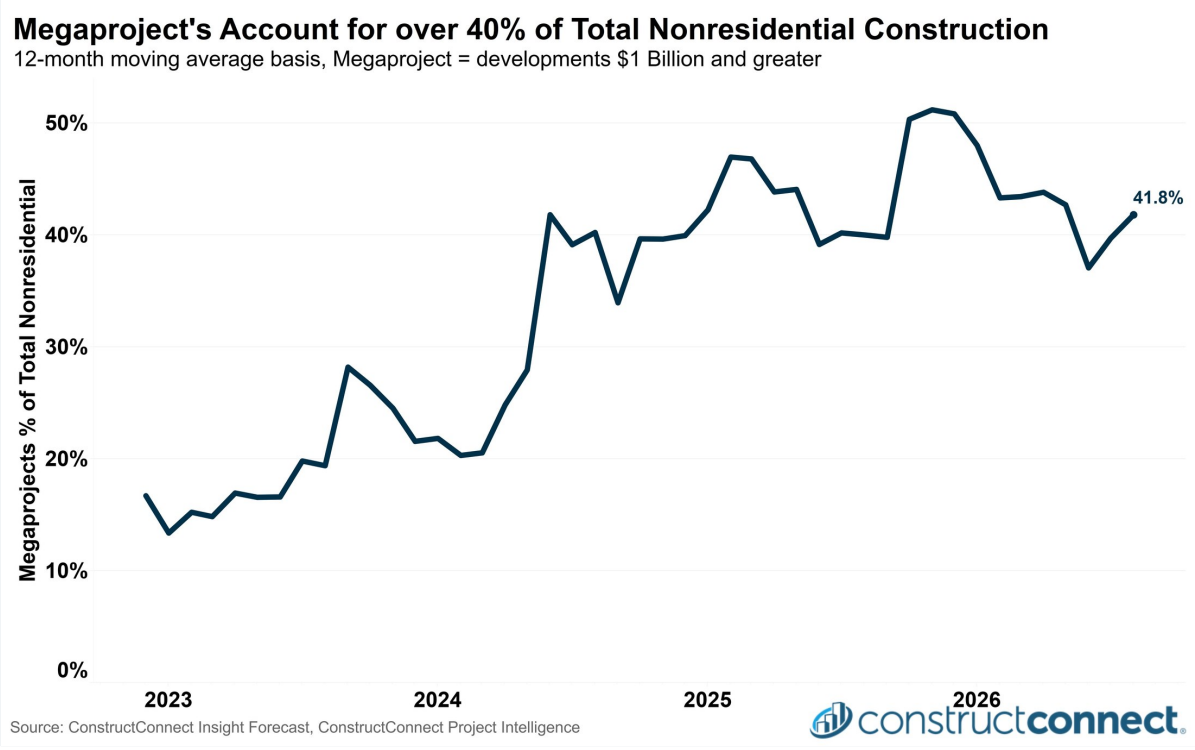
Canada Investment Summit

Toronto hosted the first-ever Canada Investment Summit in August, as Prime Minister Carney's government looks to catalyze $1 trillion in total investment over the next five years. The Summit introduced a prospectus of 167 projects spanning energy, mining, ports, transportation, and manufacturing. ConstructConnect estimated the projects in the prospectus totaled nearly $330 billion in planned or under-construction developments.

The Summit could provide a significant tailwind for construction, given the importance of megaprojects on Canada's construction economy. Megaprojects, defined as developments with start values exceeding $1 billion, accounted for over 40% of Total Nonresidential construction starts in August on a 12-month moving-average basis, up from 19.4% in August 2023.

Further, megaprojects accounted for much of the year-to-date gap in Total Nonresidential starts. Stripping them out, year-to-date results were only 8.2% below the same period in 2025, compared with the 34.6% shortfall when megaprojects were included.

Should the Summit succeed in catalyzing investment and moving prospectus-listed projects toward groundbreaking, the gap seen between construction activity in 2025 and 2026 could narrow.



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Provincial Analysis

Year-to-date starts by province, compared with the same period a year ago.

Total Nonresidential | Nonresidential Building | Civil

Through August 2026, Total Nonresidential starts were negative in every one of Canada's four largest provinces — Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec — which together account for more than 80% of Canadian construction activity. The steepest declines were in Alberta, down 46.2% YTD, and British Columbia, down 55.1%. The only province posting YTD gains in Total Nonresidential starts was Saskatchewan, up nearly sevenfold from the comparable period, driven largely by August's largest groundbreaking, the $2.2 billion Rook I uranium mine project.

