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Lower Mainland-Southwest building permits rise in November

Residential permits push total permits up, while non-residential values dip after strong October

VANCOUVER, January 9, 2014 – Total building permit values in the Lower Mainland-Southwest region rose 21 per cent in November 2013 from October 2013 on the strength of permit value increases in the residential sector, according to Vancouver Regional Construction Association’s analysis of today’s Statistics Canada Building Permit Report.

“While non-residential permits saw a drop, total building permit values in the Lower Mainland-Southwest region were pushed up this month by residential permits, due largely to a more than doubling in multi-unit building permits,” said Fiona Famulak, president of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association (VRCA). “This month’s decline in non-residential permits was not surprising after the large commercial and industrial permit gains we saw in October.”

Total permit values in November 2013 rose to \$743.1 million compared to \$613.1 million in October 2013. Non-residential permits fell 15 per cent to \$199.7 million in November from \$234.7 million in October, with commercial permits down 18 per cent to \$161.4 million from \$196.6 million, industrial permits fell 29 per cent to \$16.6 million from \$23.3 million, while institutional-government permits bounced back 48 per cent to \$21.7 million from \$14.7 million. Residential permit values surged 44 per cent to \$543.4 million from \$378.3 million during the same period.

“Commercial permits, while down in November from October, are trending up from a year ago,” said Famulak. “While prospects in this category for 2014 will be driven by project-specific investments, commercial market conditions should continue to steadily and gradually improve.”

Total building permit values were six per cent lower at \$6.624 billion from \$7.056 billion in the first 11 months of this year compared to the same period last year. VRCA’s 2013 forecast with one month to go for total building permits is likely a modest decline from 2012. Prospects for 2014 appear set for a modest gain, with commercial and industrial permits expected to rise, while the public sector will likely decline again, though by a much smaller amount than in 2013.

Regional Building Permit Highlights:

- Total permit values in November 2013 rose 21 per cent to \$743.1 million compared to \$613.1 million in October 2013.
 - Total non-residential permit values were down 15 per cent in November 2013 to \$199.7 million compared to \$234.7 million in October 2013.
 - Commercial permits declined 18 per cent to \$161.4 million from \$196.6 million.
 - Institutional-government permits were up 48 per cent to \$21.7 million from \$14.7 million.
 - Industrial permits fell 29 per cent to \$16.6 million from \$23.3 million.
 - Residential permit values were up 44 per cent to \$543.4 million in November 2013 compared to \$378.3 million in October 2013.
- Total building permit values were six per cent lower at \$6.624 billion from \$7.056 billion in the first 11 months of this year compared to the same period last year.
 - Total non-residential permits were 25 per cent lower at \$1.843 billion compared to \$2.45 billion last year.
 - Residential permit values were four per cent higher at \$4.78 billion compared to \$4.605 billion last year.

With close to 700 members, VRCA is British Columbia’s largest and most inclusive regional construction association, representing union and non-union, general and trade contracting companies, manufacturers, suppliers and other professionals throughout the Lower Mainland from Hope to Whistler.