

Ottawa Home Sales Pull Back Sharply in August While Prices Hold Steady

OTTAWA, September 3, 2026

Ottawa's housing market lost momentum in August. Sales declined sharply both year over year and from the previous month, reversing July's incremental improvement and widening the year-to-date gap compared with 2025.

The slowdown was not driven by a new influx of supply. New listings and active listings both declined from July, but sales fell much faster, weakening the relationship between available supply and demand. Listing activity also suggests that some sellers may be pausing or reassessing their plans, rather than proceeding under current conditions. Months of inventory rose to its highest August level since 2016.

Pricing remained comparatively stable. The average sale price and composite benchmark price were both slightly higher than a year earlier, while the median price declined modestly. Overall, August presents a softer picture heading into the fall market, with mixed indicators of market strength and weakness.

"Prices remained relatively steady despite the pullback in sales, which tells us this is not a simple story of the market moving uniformly in one direction," said OREB President Tami Eades. "Buyers are seeing less competitive conditions and have more time to make decisions, while sellers are facing more competition and may need to be thoughtful about pricing and positioning their homes for the current market. One month does not establish a trend, but the shift in sales and inventory is something we'll be watching closely as we head into the fall market."

Residential Market Activity

A total of 1,002 homes were sold through the MLS® System in August, down 18.6% from August 2025. Sales also declined 24.4% from July. By comparison, the median July-to-August decline over the previous 10 years was 5.8%, confirming that this year's slowdown was substantially larger than normal seasonal variation. The August total tied 2022 for the lowest August sales count since 2016.

The sales decline extended across all three major property types:

- Single-family sales fell 16.3% year over year to 535 transactions.
- Townhouse sales fell 19.9% to 310.
- Apartment sales fell 22.3% to 136.

This broad-based weakness differs from earlier months, when the softer activity was more concentrated in townhouses and apartments.

Year to date, 9,283 homes have sold in Ottawa, down 6.9% from the same period in 2025. The year-to-date shortfall widened from 5.2% at the end of July, reversing the incremental improvement recorded last month. Total year-to-date dollar volume was approximately \$6.5 billion, down 7.2% year over year.

Prices and Market Balance

The average residential sale price was \$688,253 in August, up 0.3% from a year earlier and 0.7% from July.

The median price was \$622,357, down 1.2% year over year and 2.0% from July.

The MLS® Home Price Index, a measure less affected by changes in the types of properties sold, recorded a composite benchmark price of \$637,700. This was 1.0% higher than in August 2025 and 0.6% higher than in July. Taken together, the price measures indicate that values were considerably steadier than sales activity.

There were 2,119 new listings in August, unchanged from a year earlier and down 16.2% from July. Active listings totalled 4,496, up 11.3% year over year but down 3.9% from July. The monthly declines in new and active listings were broadly consistent with seasonal patterns, but active inventory remained at its highest August level since 2016.

The decline in active listings should not be interpreted as inventory being absorbed primarily through sales. An OREB review of listing records indicates that terminations, cancellations and expirations became more prominent relative to completed transactions through the summer. Although these non-sale removals declined from July, sales fell more sharply, meaning a greater proportion of properties left the market without producing a sale. One explanation for this behaviour could be that some sellers may be stepping back or reassessing their plans to sell under current conditions.



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The sales-to-new-listings ratio fell from 52.4% in July to 47.3% in August as sales declined faster than new listings. Months of inventory increased from 3.5 to 4.5. Over the previous 10 years, the median July-to-August change in months of inventory was zero, and no increase exceeded 0.4 months. This year's one-month jump in MOI therefore represents a meaningful weakening in absorption rather than a typical summer movement.

Other transaction measures changed only modestly. Homes sold for an average of 97.9% of their listing price, unchanged from August 2025, while the median time on market increased from 28 days last August to 29 days. These figures remain consistent with broadly balanced conditions, despite the softening of other indicators.

Single-family homes remained the most stable major segment. The single-family benchmark price rose 2.2% year over year, while months of inventory reached 4.0. Townhouses recorded 4.1 months of inventory, with active listings 27.1% above last year and a benchmark price 4.0% lower year over year. The weakening of the townhouse market is something worth monitoring closely.

Of all the property segments, apartment conditions remained the softest in August, continuing the pattern observed throughout 2026 and the second half of 2025. Apartments recorded 6.3 months of inventory, a 43.0% sales-to-new-listings ratio and a median of 42 days on market. However, active apartment listings declined from July, the sales-to-new-listings ratio improved slightly and the apartment benchmark rose 1.9% month over month. The August figures therefore show continued softness, but not a decisive new deterioration.

Regional Market Comparison

Ottawa's three suburban submarkets continued to account for more than 70% of residential sales in August, but all three recorded year-over-year declines. Sales fell 14.3% in Ottawa Suburb West, 20.0% in Ottawa Suburb East and 25.1% in Ottawa Suburb South.

Ottawa Suburb West had the firmest absorption among the three suburban markets, with a sales-to-new-listings ratio of 51.9% and 3.6 months of inventory. Ottawa Suburb East and Ottawa Suburb South each recorded 4.1 months of inventory, with sales-to-new-listings ratios below the citywide level.

Softer conditions were more pronounced in Ottawa Center and Ottawa Rural East. Ottawa Center recorded 81 sales, a sales-to-new-listings ratio of 38.2% and 7.0 months of inventory. Ottawa Rural East recorded 84 sales, a ratio of 40.6% and 6.5 months of inventory.

Ottawa Rural West was the only submarket to record a year-over-year sales increase, rising 22.6%, and had the highest sales-to-new-listings ratio at 62.3%. However, its 76 transactions represented a relatively small share of citywide activity, and the percentage increase should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Overall, the regional results indicate that August's slowdown was not confined to one part of Ottawa. Absorption remained comparatively firmer in the western suburban and rural markets, while central Ottawa and Rural East experienced more supply-sensitive conditions.

Looking Ahead

August's softer housing results came against an uncertain, though improving national economic backdrop. [Statistics Canada](#) reported that real GDP grew at an annualized rate of 3.3% in the second quarter, while first-quarter growth was revised upward to 0.3%. [The Bank of Canada's July outlook](#) similarly described the economy as showing signs of improvement, while emphasizing that uncertainty remained elevated.

[CMHC's 2026 outlook](#) expects sales in the Ottawa metropolitan area to stabilize, while slower demand growth and increasing supply limit price increases. CMHC also expects the local rental market to continue softening as elevated construction moves toward completion.

At the national level, [RBC Economics expects](#) home resales and benchmark prices to decline overall in 2026 before beginning a modest recovery in 2027. Its latest outlook forecasts national transactions rising 6.7% next year, but cautions that the recovery is likely to remain irregular as affordability pressures, slower population growth and economic uncertainty continue to affect demand.

For Ottawa, the central question heading into the fall market is whether August represents a temporary interruption or the beginning of a more sustained slowdown. One month does not establish a trend, but the unusually sharp sales decline, lower sales-to-new-listings ratio, higher months of inventory and wider year-to-date shortfall are important signals to monitor. Whether properties that left the market without selling return during the fall, perhaps with new pricing strategies, will also help indicate whether some sellers were temporarily pausing their plans or withdrawing for a longer period.



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