



Highlights

- Lower Mainland housing market remained weak in April
- Employment fell again by 0.1 per cent month over month
- B.C. exports slide while imports rise

Lower Mainland housing market remains cool in spring selling season

Bryan Yu, Chief Economist

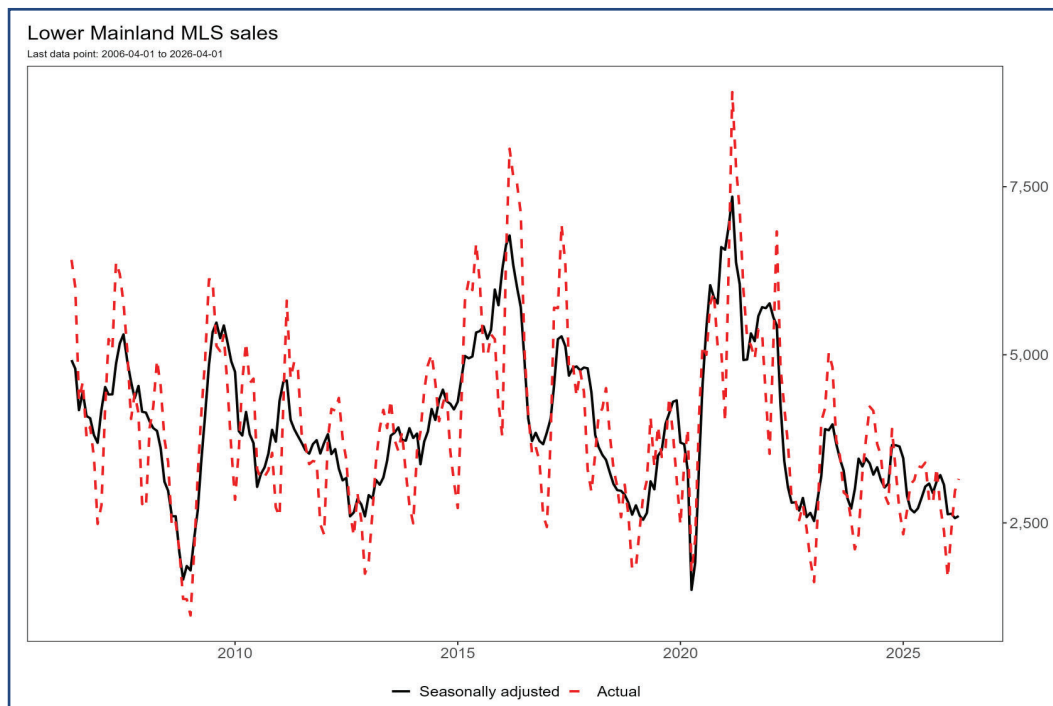
The Lower Mainland housing market story was more of the same in April as home sales and prices held steady, but remained weak, while resale market listings increased. Economic uncertainty amplified by the war, a challenging labour market and higher fixed mortgage rates have contributed to a tepid spring selling season.

The latest data from the Greater Vancouver Realtors and Fraser Valley Real Estate Board showed 3,155 sales in April in an area that spans the Sea-to-Sky, Metro Vancouver and Abbotsford-Mission. While nudging higher from March on a seasonally-adjusted basis by about one per cent, levels were unchanged from a year ago. Sales remained near the bottom of the range seen since 2022, and consistent with previous cycle lows (seasonally adjusted) as buyers remain in a

holding pattern. While affordability has improved, lack of traction has owed to the economic environment, while softening prices and plentiful rental supply has further kept prospective buyers on the sideline.

April also saw more sellers stepping off the sidelines to test the spring market. New listings increased 1.3 per cent (seasonally adjusted) and narrowed the year-over-year (y/y) decline from 11 per cent to 4 per cent. Active listings increased by about 2 per cent from March to reverse a recent slide. As a result, sales-to-active listings, which is a measure of market balance, remained consistent with a buyers' market at 13 per cent.

The region's average price nudged up by over one per cent to \$1.14 million, but figures tend to fluctuate month-to-month due to sales composition. Higher listings may have also added some higher priced homes to the market in April. Broadly, the trend in home values remains negative given the supply-demand imbalance, and while the average price fell 1.3 per cent y/y, the composite price declined 7 per cent. Relative to peak in 2022, both measures are down about 15 per cent. Going forward, soft pricing conditions and sales are expected to continue. High oil prices and threats of interest rate hikes will cool housing sentiment, while a struggling labour market and low population growth will keep a lid on demand.



B.C. labour market deteriorates further amid rising unemployment

Zoe He, Senior Economic Analyst

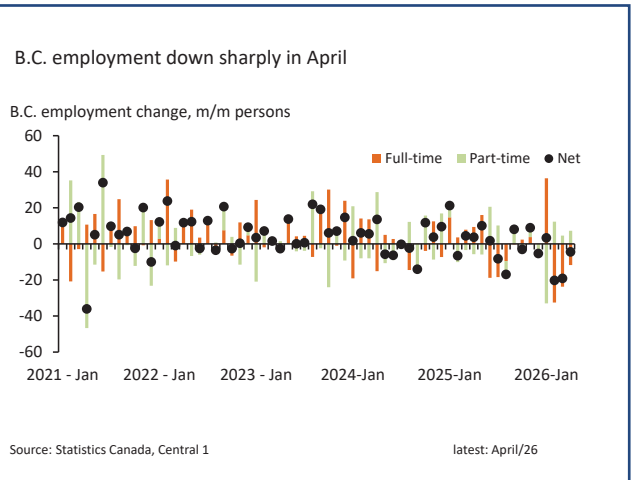
British Columbia's labour market weakened further in April, according to the latest Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey. Employment declined for a third consecutive month, though the pace of job losses moderated sharply from March. Employment fell by 0.1 per cent (4.3k persons) on a month-over-month (m/m) basis, in line with the national decline of 0.1 per cent. On a y/y basis, employment fell 1.5 per cent—the largest contraction among all provinces—heightening concerns that the province may be entering a recessionary phase.

B.C.'s unemployment rate rose to 6.8 per cent in April, near the national rate of 6.9 per cent and the highest level since January 2016 outside the pandemic. The employment rate fell to 60.0 per cent, its lowest level since September 2020 and, outside the pandemic, since September 2015.

The contraction was driven primarily by a sharp decline in full-time employment, which fell by 0.5 per cent (11.7k persons) from March and was down 2.4 per cent y/y. Part-time employment rose by 1.2 per cent, partially offsetting these losses, though it remained 1.5 per cent below year-ago levels. The continued shift away from full-time toward part-time employment suggests increasing labour market slack and may indicate that displaced workers are resorting to part-time work to maintain income or reduction in hours from employers, pointing to less stability for workers.

By industry, employment declines were concentrated in the services sector, which fell by 6.6k persons m/m (-0.3 per cent) and 53.1k y/y (2.2 per cent). On a y/y basis, the largest losses were recorded in transportation and warehousing (25.1k or 15.0 per cent), wholesale and retail trade (24.4k or 5.6 per cent), information, culture and recreation (13.3k or 9.3 per cent), and finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (10.4k or 5.5 per cent). In contrast, goods producing industries posted modest employment gains (+8.5k or +1.6 per cent), driven primarily by strong growth in agriculture (+19.2 per cent) and utilities (+20.4 per cent).

At the regional level, labour market conditions weakened across several Census Metropolitan Areas. Based on 3-month data, employment in Vancouver declined by 0.3 per cent in April and was down 1.6 per cent y/y. In Kelowna, employment fell by 1.5 per cent m/m. In contrast, employment in Nanaimo rose by 1.0 per cent m/m, although the CMA posted the highest unemployment rate in the province at 8.7 per cent.

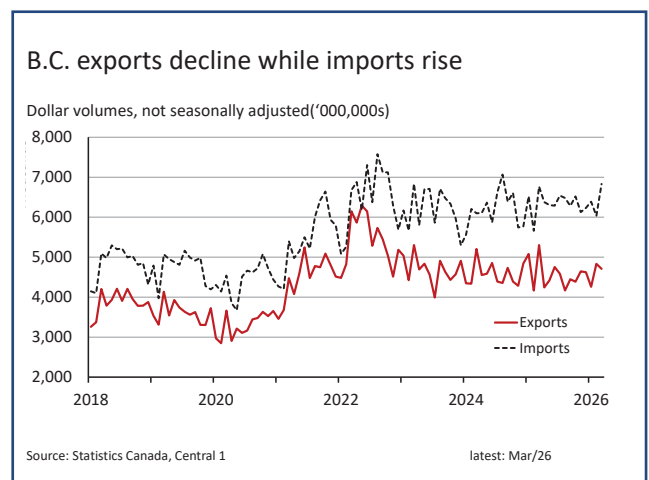


By firm size, payroll employment remains concentrated among small (<20 employees) and mid sized (20–99 employees) firms, underscoring their central role in the labour market. However, recent weakness has been most pronounced among smaller employers, with employment down 1.9 per cent m/m and 7.7 per cent y/y. Employment also declined at mid- and medium large sized firms. In contrast, large employers (500+ employees) provided a partial offset, posting consecutive monthly gains both in March and April and sustaining +13.4 per cent y/y growth, but accounting for a smaller 15 per cent of total employment.

B.C. exports dip in March

Alan Chow, Business Economist

B.C.'s merchandise exports fell in March by 2.5 per cent to \$4.7 billion (unadjusted for seasonality). In contrast, imports surged 13.2 per cent to \$6.8 billion during the same month. Compared to March 2025, exports fell 11.2 per cent, or \$593 million, while imports rose 1.0 per cent, or \$65 million. Year-to-date, exports are down 5.1 per cent, or \$745 million, to \$13.8 billion, while imports are up 1.6 per cent, or \$305 million, to \$19.3 billion. It should be noted however that U.S. companies boosted imports during the early months of 2025 in anticipation of tariffs and thus pushed Canadian exports up higher than what they might have



normally been during that period.

On a y/y basis, the overall decline in exports was led by lower volumes in the beleaguered forestry sector, which were down 35.8 per cent, or \$422 million. Forestry has been impacted by higher duties, section 232 tariffs, timber constraints, and weaker demand. Energy products were also down 15.6 per cent, or \$245 million. On the other end, B.C. saw a 48.7 per cent y/y increase in exports of metal ores and non-metallic mineral products as related prices have surged. Year-to-date, only nine out of the 11 product classifications posted lower exports. B.C. exported 29.4 per cent less (-\$937 million) in forestry products and 23.9 per cent less, (-\$238 million) in electronic and electrical equipment and parts. In contrast, B.C. exported 64.1 per cent more (\$909 million) in metal ores and non-metallic minerals.

The y/y increase in imports was largely attributable to a sharp rise in aircraft and other transportation equipment and parts, which increased by 66.6 per cent, or \$136 million. Imports of electronic and electrical equipment and parts also rose 13.2 per cent, or \$103 million. Partially offsetting growth in those categories was a 28.5 per cent, or \$113 million, y/y decline in basic and industrial chemicals, plastic, and rubber products. Year-to-date, six out of the 11 product classifications recorded higher imports. Industrial machinery, equip-

ment and parts were up 23.2 per cent, or \$555 million, while aircraft and other transportation equipment and parts were up 46.5 per cent, or \$347 million. By contrast, motor vehicle and parts imports were down 14.5 per cent, or \$336 million, while consumer goods imports declined 6.3 per cent, or \$330 million.

Looking at trading partners, B.C.'s exports to the U.S. were unchanged from the previous month at \$2.3 billion and accounted for 49.3 per cent of total exports in March. While this remains the highest share amongst nations, it is down from 51.3 per cent a year earlier. For comparison, the share in 2024 was around 52.5 per cent. A similar pattern is evident in imports. In March 2026, imports from the U.S. dipped 3.5 per cent to \$2.1 billion and accounted for approximately 31.4 per cent of total imports, down from 35.0 per cent a year earlier and 34.7 per cent in 2024.

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