

# MARKET SURVEY (JUNE 2007) GREATER SAINT JOHN OFFICES

## Scope

This survey included every office building with a total rentable area of 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup> or greater, available for rent in the Greater Saint John Area. Rental, operating expense and vacancy data was collected on 36 buildings with an aggregate rentable area of 2,094,854 ft<sup>2</sup> using a team of trained researchers. The survey successfully collected information on 97% of the rental stock polled. Data analysis prior to June 2006 is based on information gathered by a similar but smaller survey conducted by Cushman & Wakefield LePage for PWGSC.

## Vacancy Rates

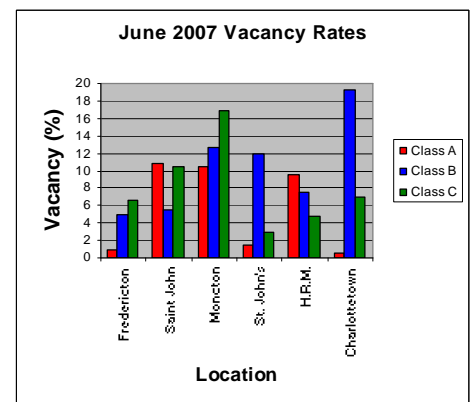
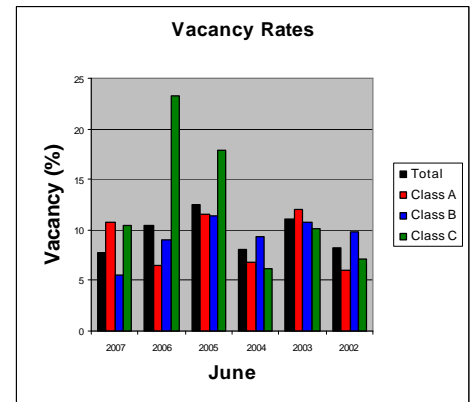
The vacancy rate **excludes** any space available for sub-lease: it is the total amount of space which is vacant and not currently leased. Our survey measured vacancy rates by class of building. Class A buildings command the highest rents in their community, have “presence” by virtue of their distinctive design and lobbies, and attract the largest firms of lawyers and accountants. Class B buildings offer “no frills” modern, airconditioned space. Tenants typically include second tier firms of lawyers and accountants, together with a wide selection of private sector companies, provincial and local government agencies. Class C buildings include all offices not classed as “A” or “B”. The **overall** vacancy rate for office buildings has been declining since 2005. The current vacancy rates in Greater Saint John are: Class A 10.75%; Class B 5.50%; Class C 10.48%; Overall 7.78%.

Our survey includes all the major centres in Atlantic Canada. The graph indicates the vacancy rate for each building class in each city. The **overall** vacancy rate by location is as follows: Greater Fredericton 4.15%; Greater Saint John 7.78%; Greater Moncton 12.43%; Greater St. John’s 7.44%; Halifax Regional Municipality 7.79%; Greater Charlottetown 10.43%.

The **overall** vacancy rate is a useful predictor of changes in the net absolute rental rate/ft<sup>2</sup>. A falling vacancy rate portends increasing rents, and vice versa. Empirical data indicates that net absolute rent/ft<sup>2</sup> movements follow the following pattern in a **falling** vacancy rate market: Fairly Stable ( $\geq 12\% < 16\%$ ); Very Slight Increase, Reduced Rental Incentives ( $\geq 10\% < 12\%$ ); Slight Increase, Rental Incentives Removed ( $\geq 8\% < 10\%$ ); Modest Increase ( $\geq 6\% < 8\%$ ); Strong Increase ( $\geq 4\% < 6\%$ ); Major Increase ( $< 4\%$ ).

## Forecast (Next 12 months)

We anticipate that the overall vacancy rate will fall to 6.36% from the current 7.78%. There will be a 5% increase in the net absolute rent/ft<sup>2</sup>.



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