

MARKET SURVEY (JUNE 2008)

H.R.M. OFFICES

Scope

This survey included every office building with a total rentable area of 10,000 ft² or greater, available for rent in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Rental, operating expense and vacancy data was collected on 137 buildings with an aggregate rentable area of 9,716,942 ft² using a team of trained researchers. The survey successfully collected information on 99% 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

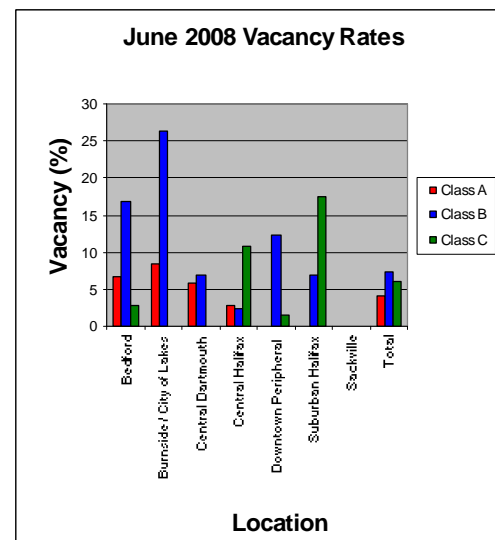
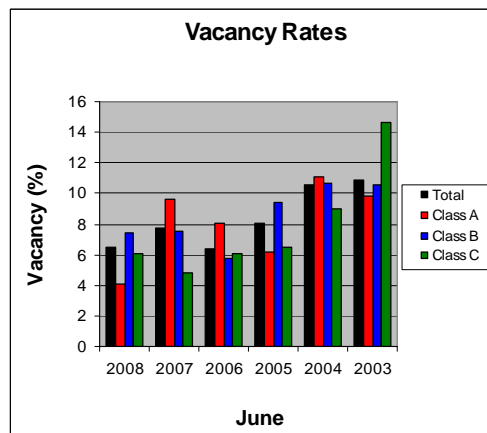
The vacancy rate **excludes** any space available for sub-lease: it is the total amount of space which is vacant and not currently leased. Our survey measured vacancy rates by class of building. Class A buildings command the highest rents in their community, have “presence” by virtue of their distinctive 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 vacancy rate for all classes of office buildings has been between 6% and 8% since 2005. The current vacancy rates in H.R.M. are: Class A 4.05%; Class B 7.40%; Class C 6.07%; Overall 6.44%.

Our survey also measured the vacancy rate by geographic node. The graph indicates the vacancy rate for each building class in the various areas of HRM. The **overall** vacancy rate by location is as follows: Bedford 12.78%; Burnside 14.91%; Central Dartmouth 5.81%; Central Halifax 3.17%; Downtown Peripheral Halifax 9.74%; Suburban Halifax 7.12%; Sackville 0%.

The **overall** vacancy rate is a useful predictor of changes in the net absolute rental rate/ft². A falling vacancy rate portends increasing rents, and vice versa. Empirical data indicates that net absolute rent/ft² 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 increase to 8.24% in the next year, driven by an increase in supply of rental space. The new space and the low vacancy in the CBD will cause a modest increase in the net absolute rent/ft.², in the region of 1%.



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