North America | Q1 2026

RLB CRANE INDEX®

WHAT IS THE RLB CRANE INDEX®?

Rider Levett Bucknall's Crane Index® for North America is published biannually. It tracks the number of operating tower cranes in 18 major cities across the U.S. and Canada.

Our index was the first of its kind, and unlike other industry barometers that track cost and other financial data, the Crane Index® tracks the number of fixed cranes on construction sites and gives a simplified measure of the current state of the construction industry's workload in each location.

OVERALL STATUS

LEGEND

- Crane numbers steady
- Decrease in number of cranes
- Increase in number of cranes

6 of the 18 cities surveyed saw a significant decrease (of greater than 20%) from their previous count.

Commercial cranes are up **60%** (or 6 cranes) collectively, in the cities surveyed.

The overall crane count has held steady

Q1 2026 SUMMARY:

The first quarter of 2026 signals a steady start to the year for construction activity across North America, with crane counts showing moderate movement among the 18 cities surveyed. While broader economic uncertainties continue to shape development pacing, overall activity remains relatively balanced heading into the new year.

Of the cities surveyed, eight held steady, six experienced a decline, and four saw an increase in crane activity.

This mix of declines, stability, and modest growth reflects a market still weighing long-term investment decisions while selectively advancing projects in key sectors. The predominance of steady counts suggests developers are maintaining a cautious but stable approach as interest rates and construction costs gradually normalize.

AUSTIN
Q1 2026 in Austin saw a net loss of one crane from 16 to 15, as cranes for a few large commercial, hospitality, and residential projects downtown came down while five cranes for new mixed use and residential projects downtown and in East Austin went up. Projects in the education sector remain steady and active.

BOSTON
Boston currently has just one active tower crane, reflecting fewer new high-rise starts as major projects reach completion. High-rise starts have dipped, but mid-rise, institutional, and conversion projects continue, and newly approved developments keep a future pipeline alive.

CALGARY
Calgary added one crane in Q1 2026, bringing the total to 26, mostly for residential work. Housing activity remains strong, with 2025 starts up 15.9% and leading Canada for the second year. Nearly 28,000 homes received occupancy—far above typical levels. With $20 billion in major projects ahead and a $3.7 billion city capital plan, growth remains robust, though labor shortages are a rising concern.

CHARLOTTE
Charlotte reported a noticeable decline in tower crane activity in this quarter's survey. The decrease suggests a cooling period in new construction activity, though ongoing mixed-use and residential developments continue to anchor the city's growth.

CHICAGO
Chicago's crane count rose by three this period, reaching nine. River West now leads with four cranes, driven by the Bally's Casino & Hotel project. Fulton Market remains active with two residential projects and two cranes, with two more expected soon. Ongoing renovations at the Thompson Center and Shedd Aquarium add two more cranes in Streeterville and the South Loop. Overall, the increase reflects steady growth in residential and hospitality development.

DENVER
The Denver crane count saw a slight reduction in total number of cranes within the Urban core as new construction is shifting towards neighborhoods outside Central Denver. Development south of Cherry Creek and West of Platte River are seeing more crane activity as new construction growth continues to evolve.

HONOLULU
Honolulu recorded a decrease of one crane this quarter as several major projects reached completion. Despite the slight drop, construction activity remains steady, supported by continued investment in housing, infrastructure, and military facilities. Two new cranes were added for a mixed-use condominium project with partial affordable housing. Current activity is led by mixed-use residential, healthcare, and industrial developments. Overall, the market remains stable heading into 2026, backed by long-term capital and housing programs across the island.

LAS VEGAS
Southern Nevada construction is led by major projects like the $12B Brightline West rail line, the A's MLB ballpark, and the Mirage's conversion to the Hard Rock Hotel. While 2025 tourism softened, 2026 is expected to rebound with major conventions and events boosted by the $600M convention center renovation. New developments are planned across the valley, including projects near Red Rock Canyon, in the Northwest and North side, and a new health club in the Southwest.

LOS ANGELES
The number of cranes in Los Angeles has slightly decreased since August 2025, as a few mixed-use projects have reached substantial completion. Other sectors are holding steady, and no new projects have reached the structural stage.

MIAMI

Miami remains in strong growth mode, driven largely by residential construction. February's count shows a net increase of 18 cranes, underscoring the market's steady expansion. The civil sector is unchanged from August, continuing work on the same major project. Meanwhile, the mixed-use sector dropped from six to three cranes as several projects reached completion.

NASHVILLE

Nashville continues to grow despite a decrease of two cranes. The Paramount Building, a new 60-story luxury condo, has joined the count, while Albion Music Row fell off as its first phase wrapped up. Nearby, Mid City Nashville is progressing and will soon add seven towers to the skyline. Just outside the survey zone, the $475 million Belle Meade Village project is taking shape, bringing major redevelopment to the area. VUMC's Jim Ayers Tower and the Titans stadium remain active projects.

NEW YORK CITY

Manhattan's crane activity slowed in Q1, dropping from six to three cranes compared with last quarter. A new mixed-use crane appeared at 54th and Broadway, while ongoing work continues near 46th Street, and a commercial crane remains active on West 36th Street. The decline signals fewer new vertical starts and continued caution among developers, who are advancing only priority projects amid financing and market uncertainty.

PHOENIX

Phoenix's downtown is growing around its expanding Bioscience Core, with two cranes at the University of Arizona's CAMI project and another at the EV Hotel near Van Buren and Grand Ave, while ASU prepares to start its new medical school nearby. The lower crane count likely reflects projects moving into later phases, as many active hospitality and multifamily developments no longer require tower cranes.

PORTLAND

Seasonal slowdowns and a lack of demand for new office and commercial space in the city contribute to the low crane count. Much of the current construction activity in sectors such as data centers and logistics is located outside of the city of Portland.

SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco's crane activity spans key projects, including UCSF Parnassus Heights' campus expansion, UC Law SF's seismic upgrade at 100 McAllister, and Casa Adelante's new affordable housing tower in the Mission. The Sunnydale HOPE SF redevelopment also continues across multiple phases. Downtown, 88 Spear Street uses a crane for a major office renovation, while 200 Folsom Street prepares for crane installation to build new affordable housing towers.

SEATTLE

A continued reduction in crane count in Seattle since August 2025 last year, particularly in the mixed-use sector, with a decrease of nine cranes. Healthcare also reduced by one crane but there was an increase of two cranes in the commercial, and two cranes in the residential sectors.

TORONTO

Toronto's construction activity has slowed, with fewer cranes and a significant drop in residential starts. Cultural work has also declined, but institutional sectors—especially healthcare—continue to grow, supported by education, transportation, and steady mixed-use projects. Overall, the market is shifting from residential-driven growth toward more diversified, community-focused development.

WASHINGTON, DC

Washington, DC's crane count dipped from seven to five in February 2026 as a few major projects wrapped up. The market remains steady, supported by ongoing residential construction and government-related work. Residential activity continues to lead, boosted by office-to-apartment conversions that reflect strong housing demand in the District.

Miami experiences a 54% increase (18 cranes) from Q3 2025.

Boston experiences an 80% decrease (4 cranes) from Q3 2025.

LEGEND

— Crane numbers steady
▼ Decrease in number of cranes
▲ Increase in number of cranes

KEY SECTOR	
CIVIL	—
COMMERCIAL	▲
CULTURAL	▼
EDUCATION	—
FEDERAL GOVT.	—
HEALTHCARE	▲
HOSPITALITY	▲
INDUSTRIAL	▼
MIXED-USE	—
PUBLIC/CIVIC	—
PUBLIC ASSEMBLY	▼
RESIDENTIAL	▲
SPORT	▼
TRANSPORTATION	▲
OTHER	▲

RLB Rider Levett Bucknall

LOCATIONS

NORTH AMERICA
Austin
Boston
Calgary
Charlotte
Chicago
Dallas
Denver
Hilo
Honolulu
Kansas City
Kona
Las Vegas
Los Angeles
Maui
Miami
Minneapolis
Nashville
New York
Orlando
Phoenix
Portland
San Francisco
Seattle
Toronto
Tucson
Washington, DC
Mexico City

CARIBBEAN
Saint Lucia

SOUTH AMERICA
Colombia
Brazil

CONTACT

PAUL BRUSSOW
+1 808 521 2641
paul.brussow@us.rlb.com

TARYN HARBERT
+1 602 443 4848
taryn.harbert@us.rlb.com

RLB.com