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Crane count hits 60 in Seattle, says RLB

- *That's up 43 percent over last summer.*

By [JOURNAL STAFF](#)

Cranes are still popping up at construction sites in Seattle, according to the most recent count by Rider Levett Bucknall.

RLB in January counted 60 fixed cranes here, an increase of 43 percent over last summer's count.

RLB produces the North American crane index by counting cranes every six months in 11 U.S. cities and two Canadian cities. Other cities that added cranes were Portland, Los Angeles, Denver and Chicago. Counts in the other cities held steady.

In a report, RLB says 9,000 residential units have been built in Seattle over the last three years, following a similar trend across the country. Local cranes are being used for commercial, mixed-use and housing projects, such as office buildings for Amazon, Madison Centre by Schnitzer West, The Mark mixed-use tower by Daniels Real Estate and Midtown21 by Trammell Crow Co.

And cranes are multiplying not just downtown, but also in Pioneer Square, Capitol Hill and the University District. About 20 other cranes in this area were not included in the count because they are in Bellevue, Redmond and Mercer Island.

So has Seattle's crane population peaked? RLB says no. More are coming because demand for construction here shows no signs of decreasing.

An RLB spokesman told the DJC last summer that removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct is fueling new development — and more cranes — near the waterfront.

Demand for cranes in Portland is also strong: up 29 percent over last summer's count, with 18 cranes there now. The report attributed the increase to four construction projects, but no one was available at RLB's Portland office to name them.



Photo by Benjamin Minnick [\[enlarge\]](#)

Mack Urban is building Cyrene, a 16-story apartment tower near the waterfront.

Wait times to get cranes in Portland have jumped from about three months to nearly 10 months. A recent report from Portland's Bureau of Development Services shows commercial building permits are up 8 percent over the past year and residential permits are up 10 percent.

Nearly half of Portland's cranes are at commercial projects, bucking the national trend. Nationally, 45 percent are used for residential projects. Big projects in Portland are in the Pearl District and downtown, as well as Nike's major expansion in nearby Beaverton.

In the 13 cities that RLB tracks, there are 194 cranes at residential projects, 111 cranes at mixed-use projects and about 60 cranes at commercial projects.

RLB predicts crane counts will gradually increase this year in all 13 cities.

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