

Planning EV Charging for Your Condominium Strata Corporation

A workbook for strata owners and councils



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A Workbook for Strata Owners and Councils

This workbook is for strata corporations with condominium buildings or any residential strata corporation planning for electric vehicle charging stations that will use common electricity (electricity billed directly to the strata corporation).

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Gather Information About Your Strata

Before you jump into assessing electrical capacity or learning about electric vehicle charging stations, electrical design, and load management systems, take some time to gather this important information about your strata corporation. This information will provide a basis that will inform all your decisions and planning throughout your project to implement electric vehicle charging. Don't be tempted to copy what other stratas have done. Every strata corporation is unique depending on the following information.

Strata Plan and Parking Areas

Check your strata plan to confirm the legal designation of the parking stalls.

Limited Common Property (LCP)

If a parking stall on the strata plan says LCP # it is Limited Common Property for the exclusive use of the owner of the strata lot number indicated. Council/the strata corporation cannot reassign these stalls. It is also not recommended for strata owners to enter into agreements to switch these stalls as the agreements may not be legally binding on new owners when one or both of the owners sell their strata lots.

Strata Lot

If a parking stall is part of a strata lot such as with some townhouses, the stall will usually say Pt #, meaning part of strata lot #. In rare cases a parking stall may be a separate strata lot. In that case the stall has its own strata lot number (SL #) and is not part of any residential or commercial strata lot. Council/the strata corporation cannot reassign these stalls.

Common Property (CP)

The strata plan might show parking stalls or parking areas as common property (CP). Under the *Strata Property Act*, these stalls can only be assigned to residents for short-term exclusive use of up to one year. These assignments must be renewed or reassigned each year. Reassignment is useful when planning the ideal location for EV charging stations. However, there are exceptions. If CP stalls have been designated as Limited Common Property (LCP) by $\frac{3}{4}$ vote at an annual or special general meeting and the designations have been filed at the Land Title Office, they can only be reassigned by another $\frac{3}{4}$ vote to change those designations and refiled at the Land Title Office.

Long-term Leases

Another exception is that the CP stalls may be controlled by the developer or a corporation set up by the developer by way of long-term leases with individual owners. In that case, it is recommended to consult a lawyer to check the lease agreements and determine what options may be available.

Residential parking stalls:

Number of CP stalls: _____

Number of LCP stalls: _____

Number of SL stalls (rare): _____

Characteristics of residential parking stalls:

Number of stalls in surface parking lot: _____

Number of stalls in one or more carports: _____

Number of stalls in one or more parkades: _____

If there are different building types add notes such as the type of parking for condominium units vs. townhouse units:

Visitor/Guest stalls:

Number of stalls: _____

Are these common property (CP)? (circle one) Y N

Commercial stalls:

If your strata has residential and commercial strata lots, how many parking stalls are for the use of the commercial strata lots only? (e.g. for the commercial owners, their staff, and their customers).

Number of commercial stalls: _____

Total number of all residential, visitor and commercial parking stalls: _____

Additional notes about parking stalls or parking areas:

Current Bylaws and Rules

Check your current strata bylaws filed at the Land Title Office. If your strata hasn't repealed and replaced all the *Strata Property Act* Standard Bylaws, then some or all of the Standard Bylaws may apply.

Read all of your bylaws including:

- Use of property
- Repair and maintenance of property by owner
- Repair and maintenance of property by strata corporation
- Obtain approval before altering a strata lot
- Obtain approval before altering common property
- Parking
- Insurance
- User Fees
- Fines
- Any existing bylaws about using a common property electrical outlet, and charging an electric scooter, e-bike, or electric vehicle.

Many strata corporations also have rules about the use, safety and condition of the common property and common assets. If your strata has rules, read all of the rules including:

- Use of common area facilities
- Parking
- User Fees

Make notes about your current bylaws and rules:

Legal Assistance

It's money well spent to get some legal advice at this point from a lawyer with experience in strata law. They can help council understand your strata plan, LCP designations (if any), leases (if any), bylaws, rules and other legal details you might not be aware of. For example, air space parcel and sectioned stratas are complex and some stratas have legal agreements such as easements or covenants.

Asking questions at this point could save you time and money, and prevent you from making mistakes that may lead to legal action in the future.

List questions for your lawyer here:

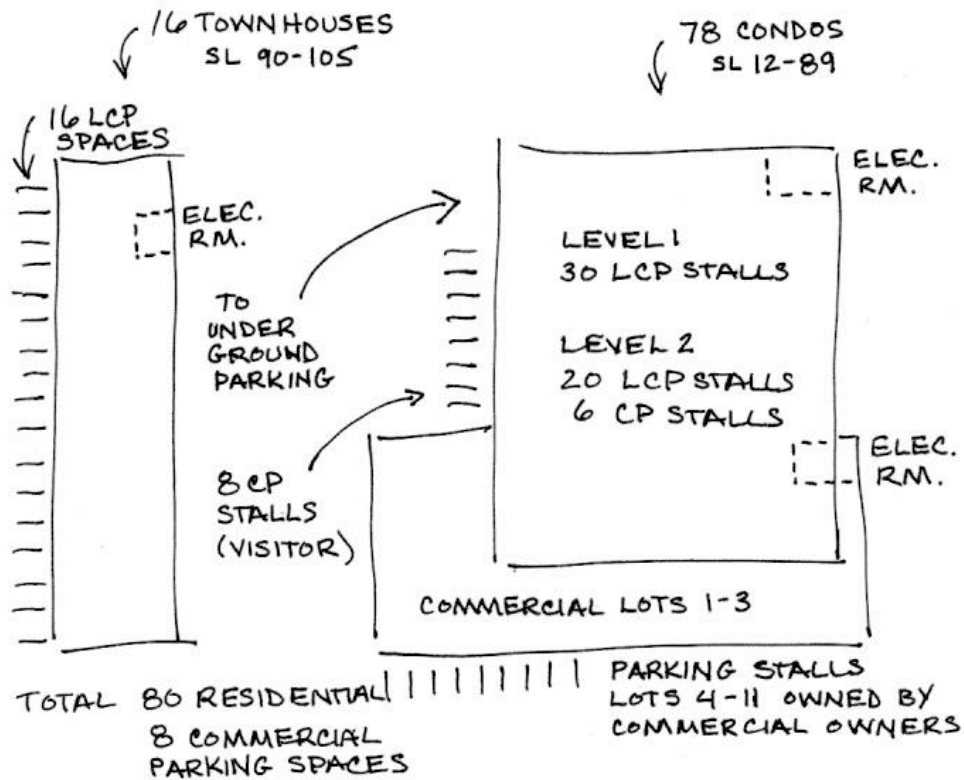
Buildings and Electrical Layout

Factors that affect electrical design include the number of buildings, how many common property electrical rooms exist, and where they are located. A strata property that has parking areas with different characteristics such as a surface parking lot, carport, and an underground parkade, will have a different electrical design than a building with underground parking levels.

Whose electricity is it? If common electricity (billed to the strata by BC Hydro or Fortis) will be used for electric vehicle charging, there are rebates available to the strata corporation. If the electricity that will be used by a charging station is billed to an owner by BC Hydro or Fortis, such as in a townhouse garage, there are rebates available to the individual owner.

Sketch out the characteristics of your strata property. Mark the location of all common property electrical panels/rooms. If you don't know where these rooms are, check your strata plan or building drawings, or ask your manager, caretaker, or electrician.

Here is an example:



Your sketch:

Peak Load Data

What is peak load data?

To understand whether there is sufficient power to supply electricity for EV charging, your electrical engineer or electrical contractor needs to know how much electricity is used by all residents of your strata. The peak load is when residents are using the most electricity, such as when many households are cooking and watching TV, or on a hot day when everyone has turned on air conditioning.

Your engineer and/or electrical contractor can use this data to perform a load calculation to determine if your electrical system has sufficient capacity for EV charging. They can then develop an electrical design that stays within the available capacity or determine whether an electrical service upgrade is required to provide more capacity

Where to get peak load data:

If your building has 10 or more units, you can request peak load data from BC Hydro. There is no cost to obtain this information. The strata council can complete and sign a [BC Hydro Request for Customer Load Data form](#). BC Hydro will provide an Excel file with 12 months of your building's most recent hourly load consumption (shown in kWh).

Learn about Rebates and EV Charging

Learning what rebates are available to your strata is a great way to filter out information that doesn't apply to you, focus on strategies that are most beneficial to your strata, and understand your options.

CleanBC - Go Electric EV Charger Program Rebates

For strata corporations that will use common electricity for their charging stations such as the typical condominium strata, there are 3 rebates available:

EV Ready Plan

An EV Ready Plan is a professional document that includes details of how your strata corporation will provide each residential unit with at least one "EV Ready" parking space. "EV Ready" means the parking space has an energized outlet with a cover that provides a final connection point in an electrical wiring installation for a Level 2 EVSE (electrical vehicle supply equipment) commonly called a charging station. That's a long way of saying all the equipment, wiring, conduit, junction boxes, panels, communications wiring etc. is installed and ready for EV charging stations to be installed at the parking spaces.

Getting a licenced electrical contractor or registered professional electrical engineer to prepare this plan will help your council and owners understand your current electrical capacity, your spare capacity, physical or electrical limitations of your situation (if any). It provides one recommended solution and cost estimates sufficient for budgeting purposes.

Watch VISOA’s video **EV Ready Plans for Condominium Stratas** to learn more about EV Ready Plans, the CleanBC rebate, eligibility, and how to apply: https://youtu.be/_AFUa3p-baY

Make notes here:

- How do you think your strata would benefit from getting an EV Ready Plan?
- Do you think your strata is eligible for a rebate?

Electrical Infrastructure

The second rebate under the CleanBC Go Electric EV Charger program, is called the Electrical Infrastructure Rebate. If the program approves your EV Ready Plan, this rebate helps you implement the plan. It covers some of the costs of purchasing and installing equipment, wiring, conduit, junction boxes, panels, communications wiring etc. to make the parking spaces EV Ready.

Watch VISOA’s video **EV Electrical Infrastructure Rebates for Condominium Stratas** to learn more about electrical infrastructure, the CleanBC rebate, eligibility, and how to apply: <https://youtu.be/OpiXAoru0Mk>

Make notes here:

- What tips can you use in your strata to proceed from an EV Ready Plan to installation of electrical infrastructure?
- Is your strata eligible for the rebate?
- What did you learn about the legal process for the strata owners to approve an electrical infrastructure project?

EV Charging Stations

The third rebate in the CleanBC Go Electric Charger Rebate program is the MURB Charger Rebate. It provides rebates towards the purchase and installation of Level 2 charging stations (also known as Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment - EVSE). If the strata corporation has installed the electrical infrastructure to a parking space, the charging station can be installed.

Watch VISOA's video **EV Charging Stations: Rebates for Stratas** to learn more about types of charging stations and examples of the fees the strata corporation can charge an owner or tenant for using them, the CleanBC rebate, eligibility and how to apply:

<https://youtu.be/twgPd4rxK9o>

Make notes here:

- Which of the three examples of networked charging stations do you think is the best for your strata? Why?

Hiring Professionals

Now that you have an understanding of the rebates, process, and basic knowledge about electrical installations and charging stations, you're ready to talk to electrical professionals.

Engineer, Electrician, or Both?

As you learned in the EV Ready Plan section, the plan can be prepared by a licenced electrical contractor or registered professional electrical engineer or both. If you have a complex electrical situation you may want to hire an engineer. You may want the engineer to work with, or consult with, a licenced electrical contractor that does the installations to ensure that the cost estimate is based on current models, pricing, and availability.

EVITP Certification

If you hire a licenced electrical contractor check to see if they have electricians who have completed the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP). Find EVITP certified installers here: <https://ejtcenterprises.com/evitp-certified-installers/>

Choosing a Contractor

Watch the video **Choosing a Contractor for EV Charging Installations in Stratas** featuring a speaker from the Electrical Joint Training Committee, responsible for the EVITP program. It covers the contractor's responsibilities including compliance with electrical and building codes, obtaining electrical permits, working with BC Hydro or Fortis, standards, best practices, safety, and keeping up with new technology. <https://youtu.be/DTZ-zeeNSHQ>

You may find the following resources helpful to research licenced electrical contractors:

Find a licenced contractor in BC at:

<https://www.technicalafetybc.ca/regulatory-resources/find-a-licensed-contractor>

Find a contractor by submitting an EV Electrician Referral Request Form at:
<https://electricvehicles.bchydro.com/ev-electrician-referral-request-form>

Check the certification of an individual electrician/installer:
<https://legacy.technicalafetybc.ca/regulatory-resources/find-certified-individual>

Check to see if a company has WorkSafeBC coverage at:
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/insurance/why-clearance-letter/get-clearance-letter>

Questions to Ask

When speaking with an engineer or contractor ask:

EV Ready Plans

- Can you provide references from other strata corporations with their contact information where you have completed an EV Ready Plan that qualifies for the CleanBC – Go Electric EV Charger Rebate program?
- How many EV Ready Plans have you completed for strata corporations?
- Have all those EV Ready Plans been approved by BC Hydro or Fortis? If not, why not?
- Can you provide a sample of an EV Ready Plan that you completed?
- Can you provide more than one option for EV charging solutions for our strata corporation and the costs for each?

EV charging electrical installations

- How many EV charging electrical installations has your company completed?
- Can you provide references from other strata corporations where you have completed an EV charging installation?
- What brands of system/charging stations do you install
- For each manufacturer/supplier can you provide information about the operating costs of these systems and charging stations?
- For systems that include an option(s) for processing payments from users, can you provide information about the process, how fees are structured, and operational fees/commissions?
- For each manufacturer/supplier can you provide information about warranties, service contracts (if any), maintenance requirements, and availability of parts?

Other information

- (If an engineer) What installers have you worked with?
- (If an installer) Are your installers EVITP certified?
- What is your company's Technical Safety BC licence number?

- What is your company’s WorkSafe BC number?
- Can you show proof of commercial liability insurance?

Make notes here:

Working with Owners

Now that you have information about your strata corporation and property, rebates and the steps in the process, you’re ready to talk to other strata owners.

Grow Support

Many strata owners and the public in general aren’t familiar with electric vehicles and charging. To gain support, put yourself in their shoes. They may have different priorities. They might not even own a vehicle. Take time to understand their needs and priorities before you try to convince them to support your idea.

EV Champions can get tips in this video: EV Charging - Working with Your Strata Council
<https://youtu.be/nhCPwM5t8go>

Understand Current Priorities

The *Strata Property Act* places a legal obligation on the strata corporation to repair and maintain common property and common assets. EV charging is often seen as a “nice to have” not a “must have”. A strata corporation and its owners have a finite amount of funds. Some strata owners can afford to pay special levies, other cannot. So, the cost of a project for an EV electrical installation is in essence competing with other priorities. To understand what your proposal is competing with, it is helpful to understand the current priorities for repair, maintenance and renewal projects, and the financial health of the strata corporation.

Depreciation Report

Read the most recent depreciation report. List the 3 most expensive projects that are identified in the next 5 years and the cost that the depreciation report estimates for each:

Name of project	Cost
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Minutes

Read the minutes of the annual general meetings (AGMs) and special general meetings (SGMs) from the last 2 years.

Were there any resolutions to approve funding from the contingency reserve fund (CRF) or by special levy? If so, what were the projects, what was the cost for each, and was the resolution passed?

Name of project	Cost	Approved? Yes/No
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Make notes here.

- Do you think there is adequate funding in the CRF to fund upcoming repair, maintenance and renewal projects?
- Do you think special levies will be required?
- Based on voting at past AGMs and SGMs do owners usually approve funding for projects or is it difficult to get enough votes?
- Do you think adding a project for an EV charging installation would cause financial strain?

Owner/Occupant Surveys

A survey can be useful to gauge interest in electric vehicles. However, strata corporations must follow the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) which governs collection, use, storage, and access to personal information. In general, a survey should ask only questions that are necessary, and request the minimum amount of information required to achieve its purpose.

Example: The following survey collects information without requesting any personal information. This example was created using Google Forms. If the strata council or property manager has a Gmail account, they can use Google Forms for free. In the settings, select anonymous. When the survey is ready, send an email to the owners and tenants inviting them to complete the anonymous survey. The strata council and manager should not provide the email addresses of owners and tenants to any other person. This would be a violation of PIPA. Survey: <https://forms.gle/xNRg1TziTJaGjvSdA>

Initially a survey can be helpful to find out how many owners are interested in purchasing electric vehicles in the next 1-5 years, and their attitudes towards supporting installation of EV charging infrastructure.

Later in the process, the engineer or contractor writing the EV Ready Plan will usually have their own, more detailed, survey to collect information they need to make certain calculations. The EV Ready Plan must provide a solution that gives enough charging power to achieve a reasonable driving range that meets the needs of the average owner in your strata. Therefore, the calculations consider factors such as demographics (age, household sizes), average daily distance travelled by vehicles, vehicle sizes, climate etc. The contractor must also comply with PIPA. Their survey should request the minimum amount of personal information necessary.

Town Hall and Information Meetings

It's a good idea to have several town hall or information meetings throughout the process. For example, the one solution presented in the EV Ready Plan should reflect the wishes of the owners regarding features of the system, the ongoing operating costs, and the bylaws and rules that will be needed. Learn more about bylaws and rules below.

Town hall and information meetings are informal. There are no requirements to make an agenda or take minutes. They often feature a guest speaker giving a presentation.

For example, you might hold a town hall or information meeting:

- To discuss BC's transition to electric vehicles, incentives, property values, and other benefits of having EV charging at your strata. This is a good time to learn about the features of different systems, and electrical engineers and electrical contractors in your

area. Your owners are now informed and ready to hold an AGM or SGM to approve funding to get an EV Ready Plan.

- After receiving an EV Ready Plan, you could ask the person who wrote the plan to do a presentation or be on hand to answer questions. This is a good time to get feedback from owners about the solution presented in the plan and the proposed budget for the project.
- The next town hall meeting could discuss how the proposed EV charging system works, the future annual operating costs, and the associated bylaws and rules (including user fees) that owners want to have. You might invite a strata lawyer to answer questions. Your owners are now ready to hold an AGM or SGM to approve funding to install the electrical infrastructure and vote on bylaws and rules.

See a typical sequence of meetings and other steps in the infographic [How to Get EV Ready](#).

Operating Costs, User Fees, Bylaws, and Low Carbon Fuel Credits

Annual Budget

Each year at the annual general meeting (AGM), the owners hold a majority vote to pass the budget, often called the operating budget. It presents the estimated revenue from all sources and the estimated expenses for the day-to-day operations of the strata corporation.

The revenue generally lists revenue from strata fees, and interest. Some strata corporations have revenue from user fees such as when residents rent a guest suite or storage locker, or use a common laundry machine. Strata corporations that have EV charging stations could potentially have lines for revenue from low carbon credits and user fees. However, neither the strata corporation, nor a third-party payment processor, may collect a fee from a user unless a valid bylaw has been passed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote, or a Rule has been ratified by a majority vote of the owners at an annual general meeting (AGM) or special general meeting (SGM). Bylaws don't come into effect until they are filed at the Land Title Office.

Operating Expenses

The expenses in the budget show expenses such as utilities, insurance, waste removal, and much more. The consumption of electricity that is billed to the strata corporation is a common expense. Any other expenses associated with operating the EV charging system will also be expenses of the strata corporation. These expenses will vary depending on the brand and features of the system.

Operating expenses might include:

- Annual electrical operating permit
- Annual fee for each charging station

- Service contract for maintenance
- Payment processing charges
- Other fees

Make notes.

- Have a discussion with the engineer or electrical contractor who is writing the EV Ready Plan. What are the operating costs of the systems they might be suggesting?
- Is there an alternative with lower operating costs?

User Fees

Generally, strata owners want the residents who will be using EV charging stations to pay a fee to cover the operating expenses, however there is no requirement to do so. It is a choice of the owners by a vote at a general meeting. Under the *Strata Property Act* this is called a User Fee. Neither the strata corporation, nor a third-party payment processor may collect a fee from a user unless a valid bylaw has been passed by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote, or a rule has been ratified by a majority vote of the owners at an annual general meeting (AGM) or special general meeting (SGM).

Gauging owners' wishes regarding operating costs and user fees early in the process is essential in order for your engineer or contractor to write an EV Ready Plan that presents one solution that best fits the wishes of your owners.

Bylaws and Rules

It's a good idea for owners to have a discussion about their wishes for bylaws and rules. When the EV Ready Plan is completed, you can confirm the associated operating expenses. You need to know how the system works and all the costs involved before you can think about the associated bylaws or rules.

The following questions are intended to initiate discussion. Once you have an idea of the wishes of your owners, then you'll have a list to give your lawyer. This will save you time and money. Your lawyer can then review your strata plan, your current bylaws, and draft your new bylaws and rules. It's best to work with a lawyer experienced in strata law. Consider the following:

- What is the process for a resident to request approval to install a charging station? You might want a request to be in writing and to include certain information.
- What are the conditions of approval? You might want a copy of a permit, require a certain installer, a certain brand of charging station, and compatibility with networked system (if applicable).
- Who pays for the cost of the charging station and installation?
- If the owner installs it, is an Indemnity Agreement required?
- Once installed, does the station become limited common property or common property? Consider whether stalls can be reassigned (common property), and eligibility for federal carbon credits.
- Who is responsible to repair and maintain the charging station? To insure it?
- If annual servicing or maintenance is required, who is responsible to organize it? Who pays for it? It may be in the best interests of safety and insurance for the strata corporation to keep the stations in good working order.
- If an owner sells, can they remove the station? Is the subsequent owner responsible for it? Does it become property of the strata corporation?
- Who is an authorized user? The owner of a strata lot? A tenant? A visitor? Commercial vehicles?
- Should every EV owner sign a user agreement to be an authorized user, identify their vehicle, and indemnify the strata corporation?
- If applicable, what are the rules about shared use of a charging station?
- What happens if an unauthorized vehicle uses a charging station? Can it be towed?
- Are there situations where access to a charging station can be withdrawn or denied?
- Are there any safety considerations?
- What about responsibility when equipment isn't used according to the manufacturer's instructions?
- If there will be a User Fee, how will it be calculated? *Strata Property Regulation 6.9* permits 4 methods (or a combination of these methods) for the basis of calculating a User Fee. Give your lawyer a list of the operating expenses and a brief explanation of how the system works regarding data tracking and payment processing (if applicable):
 - By "the user's rate consumption". This may require signing an agreement with Measurement Canada. Most systems that track electrical consumption by individual users aren't approved by Measurement Canada yet.
 - "Recovery of operating or maintenance costs"

- By “the duration of use”. Some systems or stations have the capability to track time/bill by the hour.
- “A fixed amount” which is a flat fee per month. This could be a reasonable amount to cover all operating expenses.
- By “the number of users” such as dividing the operating expenses equally by the number of users.

Some EV drivers think that some of the methods above are unfair since some people drive longer distances than others. However, take into consideration, that some systems have higher operating costs. A simple method such as flat fee or dividing expenses by the number of users might result in a lower fee for all drivers than a more sophisticated system that has higher overhead.

Low Carbon Credits

The BC government has introduced legislation that provides credits to fuel suppliers who supply electricity to EV charging stations. Some strata corporations will be eligible to receive Low Carbon Fuel Credits under this legislation

This is revenue of the strata corporation and should be included in the annual budget as a revenue source. All sources of revenue are pooled to pay all types of expenses in the budget. Owners might support an EV charging project if they know that the revenue from BC Low Carbon Fuel Credits will help pay for the strata corporation’s expenses.

The Government of British Columbia passed the *Low Carbon Fuels Act (New Act)* in Spring 2022 to replace the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Renewable and Low Carbon Fuel Requirements) Act*. The *Renewable and Low Carbon Fuel Requirements Regulation* is currently in force and new regulations are expected in 2023 to be in force as of January 1, 2024.

A strata corporation supplying common electricity (electricity billed to the strata corporation and paid by strata fees) to charging stations is considered a fuel supplier. In short, the legislation requires fuel suppliers who supply electricity to charging stations to register every EV charging station and report the total electrical consumption annually. The strata corporation must have a measurement system to ensure an accurate and reliable measurement of the quantity of electricity provided to all stations, such as a reading from a BC Hydro, Fortis, or revenue grade meter that provides electricity to all stations. The first reporting period is January 1 to December 31, 2022 with a deadline of March 31, 2023.

These strata corporations will generally qualify to receive BC Low Carbon Fuel Credits. Credits can then be traded in a “credit market” by an agent acting on behalf of the strata corporation. The credits are usually purchased by fossil fuel suppliers. In simplest terms this is like trading in a stock market.

New regulations expected to be in force as of January 1, 2024 should make the process easier for small fuel suppliers such as strata corporations to find agents (also known as representatives or aggregators) to represent them. In the meantime, strata corporations can “bank” their credits. Credits don’t expire.

Learn more at <https://gov.bc.ca/lowcarbonfuels>

Acknowledgements and Resources

Acknowledgements

Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association (VISOA)

VISOA is an independent, non-profit society that provides information, education and support to strata owners and councils in British Columbia. Since 2016, VISOA has been providing education and resources to help strata corporations prepare for the electric vehicle charging needs of their residents, understand the process and law when approving or installing electrical infrastructure and charging stations, and helping strata corporations access rebates.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023, VISOA is the longest-running society of its kind in Canada. VISOA advocates the interests and concerns of strata owners and strata corporations to facilitate electric vehicle charging and other improvements in legislation, policy and education.

Contact: EVcharging@visoa.bc.ca

Electric Vehicle Charging for Stratas
https://www.visoa.bc.ca/?page_id=10774

Additional Resources

CleanBC – Go Electric EV Charger Rebate Program Guide
<https://www.bchydro.com/content/dam/BCHydro/customer-portal/documents/power-smart/electric-vehicles/EV-incentive-program-guide.pdf>

Federal Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program (ZEVIP)
<https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy-efficiency/transportation-alternative-fuels/zero-emission-vehicle-infrastructure-program/21876>

CleanBC Passenger Vehicle Rebates
<https://goelectricbc.gov.bc.ca/personal-rebate-offers/passenger-vehicle-rebates/>

Federal Incentives for Zero-Emission Vehicles (iZEV) Program
<https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/innovative-technologies/zero-emission-vehicles/light-duty-zero-emission-vehicles/incentives-purchasing-zero-emission-vehicles>

Capital Regional District: Charge Your Ride
<https://www.crd.bc.ca/education/climate-action/charge-your-ride>