

## Condo Smarts

Headline: User Fees and Electric Vehicles

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**Dear Tony:** We are a 118 unit strata in Vancouver with plenty of extra parking. We have 4 owners who are asking for the installation of charging stations so they may purchase electric vehicles. Council would like to grant them permission but the changes and upgrades to the electrical system requires some significant changes and the owners voted against the upgrades at our annual general meeting. The majority of owners have questioned why we are paying for the upgrade for only 4 people? A fair question, but if we can manage the upgrade, we could accommodate 12 stations and make them accessible to everyone. We are getting conflicting information from the city, the manufacturer and our property manager as to how we can recover this cost. Are there simple steps we can implement?

*John K.*

**Dear John and all strata councils across BC:** The past week has brought a number of changes to the regulations and to programs for the purpose of installing charging stations and implementing user fees. First and most important, the *Strata Property Regulation* was amended on March 7, 2018 to include user fees for services or costs of service that only apply to common property and common assets. User fees may be established in either a bylaw or a rule. The user fee may now include a fixed amount or an amount determined on a reasonable basis for the user's rate of consumption, the recovery of operating or maintenance costs by the strata corporation, the number of users and the duration of use. Simply put, a strata corporation could adopt a bylaw or rule that sets out a cost for electric vehicle charging at a fixed rate per hour of charging that would include both the reasonable cost of electricity and the cost of any upgrades or maintenance requirements of the strata corporation. It is intended to be a user pay system if the rates and use

are adjusted correctly. For those eager councils, this does not mean you can charge strata lots for more hot water because they have more occupants.

The Province has also launched a charging solutions and incentives program that will provide rebates towards the cost of electric vehicle (EV) charging equipment and provide support services for planning and installing EV chargers. The application needs to be completed by the strata corporation if the installation and upgrades are part of the common property or common assets of the strata corporation; however, the additional funding to install charging stations is an excellent funding source for strata corporations considering the installation of charging stations. Go to: <https://pluginbc.ca/> and select charging solutions and incentives.

Not all installations are simple. If your strata corporation has surplus common area parking that can easily accommodate charging stations and is located close to electric service the installation and cost may be easily accommodated, but many strata corporations have assigned parking by licences and limited common property and no surplus parking. This may require stations in dedicated parking only for those owners requiring charging. This may require an alteration agreement, where the owner takes responsibility for the cost of the station, installation, and any other related costs. For the ease of strata corporations and car owners the future will be much easier as local governments, as the City of Vancouver has recently done, adopt bylaws that require electrical services be available at parking spaces to facilitate the ease of installation and management.