Community Energy Association

A Policy Planning Companion for Local Governments

Electric Vehicle Charging in Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

Resources, policies, and programs to encourage and enable installation of EV chargers.

Updated October 2025

AT A GLANCE

Local governments have a role to play in expanding electric vehicle (EV) charging access in existing multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs). They can support motivated community members to navigate technical and governance challenges by making it easier to find—or pointing them to—educational resources, funding programs, and support programs. They an also create the conditions for success through enhanced funding, bylaws, zoning, and permitting processes that reduce administrative barriers and clarify rights to install charging equipment.

This document gathers the resources and materials that local governments can point community members to and summarizes key regulatory levers to consider.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Few residents, strata councils, or property managers have experience with EV charging technology or complex building retrofits. With the wealth of readily available resources and supportive programs, local governments can make it significantly easier for motivated community members to initiate and lead EV charging retrofits of their buildings. Combining education and awareness tactics with regulatory tools can establish a more consistent baseline in the community so that charging is simply part of the building environment, rather than something residents have to argue for

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Introduction

Implementing electric vehicle (EV) charging in existing multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs) is a complex process, and not many strata corporations have residents who are EV charging experts. Inexperienced stratas or building owners who have not navigated permit processes or retrofit projects in the past often don't know where or how to get started. In these circumstances, local governments can play a central role in supporting building owners and/or residents to nonetheless become champions for their strata.

Local government have a few levers at their disposal to make it easier for individuals, businesses and organizations to add EV charging to multi-unit residential buildings. These include activities that *encourage* the installation of EV charging and others that *enable* it.

Encouraging EV Charging

Sharing resources with community members and directing them to available resources can save motivated individuals considerable time and fast track their research efforts. It can also help them gain support from their neighbours and strata council and overcome known challenges.

Consider building a page on the local government website with resource links related to technology, planning, rebates, legal requirements, and Low Carbon Fuel Credits. By linking directly to source materials, you can be more confident that information is accurate and up-to-date.

Local governments can also customize educational materials to reflect their context and goals. Furthermore, having readily available resources can build knowledge and awareness within your local government so more staff are prepared to answer resident questions or concerns.

Build Literacy of EV Technologies

The EV and EV charging sector is dynamic and rapidly evolving; best practices can change as quick as monthly. Local government staff do not need to be on the cutting edge of technology advancement, however it is helpful for staff to understand the basics around types of EV charging, terminology, vehicle types and range, and common questions. PlugInBC has great resources to support this type of learning as does BC Hydro.

For those interested in more detail, BC Hydro's Guide, *EV Fast Charging Design & Operational Guidelines*, includes best practices for parking space design, how to select EV technologies, and more. While this resource is intended for publicly available DC fast charging, there is still information that could be useful in the MURB context.

Customize Materials

Many local governments have applied their own communications tools and tactics to develop locally relevant and specific materials to support their communities. Examples of this are the Guide To EV Charging for Apartments and Condos prepared for the Sea to Sky corridor, or the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Shared Parking Areas document prepared by the City of Richmond and BC Hydro.

Increase Awareness of Rebate Programs

Community members and local government staff should be aware of the rebates available for MURBs, not only to access as much financial assistance as possible, but also to ensure requirements are met at each stage of the process.

CleanBC

CleanBC offers rebates for MURB EV ready plans, infrastructure, and chargers.

Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program

The Government of Canada supports EV charging in multi-unit residential programs through the Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Program (ZEVIP). The program is delivered through CleanBC and provides funding for planning efforts, infrastructure, installation, and EV charging units.

KEY RESOURCE

CleanBC EV rebates for Multi-unit residential buildings: https://goelectricbc.gov.bc.ca/rebates-and-programs/for-individuals/save-on-home-and-workplace-charging#multi

Increase Knowledge About Planning an EV Charging Project

Adding EV charging to MURBs or retrofitting a building or garage to offer EV charging can be complex and the pathway is often unique to each context. The advisory service offered by Plug In BC is a great place to direct interested community members. Not only could they receive free support and consultation services, but they can access a number of helpful resources, such as:

- Implementing Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Multi-Unit Residential Buildings
  A practical guide to understanding the basics of EV charging, cost/benefits, step-by-step guidance to doing retrofits, elements unique to buildings with multiple units/customers, and available incentives.
- EV Ready Plan Vetting Questions
  A fulsome list of questions to ask potential electrical contractors when choosing a company and/or contractor to complete an EV Ready plan.

Some property owners or strata corporations may wish to solicit proposals to complete an EV Ready Plan. In this case, the District of Saanich shared an example Request for Proposal for an EV Ready Plan. This template can expedite the development Request for Proposal (RFP).

KEY RESOURCE

The Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association (VISOA) website has a whole section related to EVs and energy efficiency. Their *"How to Get EV Ready"* guide is a step-by-step overview of the key activities a strata corporation could complete to plan, fund, and install EV chargers.

Increase Knowledge about Strata Requirements

Local governments should be aware of recent requirements for stratas to obtain electrical planning reports (EPRs), as set out in the Strata Property Regulation. EPRs are not the same as EV Ready Plans, however there could be cost savings to have the same contractor produce both reports. From the Province of BC:

An EPR can help strata corporations to understand their current electrical capacity and meet new demands for electricity including electric vehicle (EV) charging and heat pumps. An EPR also helps the strata corporation to manage within existing electrical capacity and avoid upgrades to obtain more electricity.

Local governments should also be aware that there is a required process for owners who want to install EV chargers on Strata Common Property. The process is set out in Division 6 of the Strata Property Act with additional details in Part 5.1 of the Strata Property Regulation.

Strata corporations can now approve some EV charging decisions by a majority vote instead of by a ¾ vote. However, in the case of approval of special levies, a ¾ vote is still required. The Province of BC has provided updated guidance on this process.

KEY RESOURCE

A great resource to help strata councils understand EPRs is The Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association's (VISOA) website: https://visoa.bc.ca/resources/about-electrical-planning-reports/

Educate about Revenue Generation through Low Carbon Fuel Credits

Anyone looking to champion EV charging in their MURB or build buy-in by their Strata should the potential to generate revenue from EV charging from the sale of the Low Carbon Fuel Credits. Organizations that own EV chargers and provide electricity (for free or for a fee) are likely eligible for low carbon fuel credits under the Provincial Low Carbon Fuel Credit program. Strata corporations may be able to market, sell, and generate revenue from this "fuel" by using an "allocator". Allocators combine credits from various places to improve the marketability of the credits. This is only an option for buildings that have five or more attached dwelling units. From the Province of BC:

To be eligible to receive low carbon fuel credits the strata corporation must pass 3 tests:

1. *Charging takes place at a building that has 5 or more attached dwelling units.*
2. *Supply and pay for the electricity to final supply equipment (FSE). Charging stations are FSE because the stations are the final equipment through which electricity is provided to an EV.*
3. *Electricity can be measured accurately and the strata corporation has transactional charge data (the information from each charging session).*

KEY RESOURCE

The Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association's (VISOA) delivered a webinar in March 2025, *How BC Stratas Can Get Low Carbon Fuel Credits for EV Charging*, which overviews the Province's new requirement for transactional charge data from each charging session: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Owcu_ewDCX4

Enabling EV Charging

Policies and programs can smooth the pathway for residents who may not have specific expertise around EV charging but are motivated to lead a project in their building. Incentives and financing programs can help reduce upfront costs and bolster the value proposition to a strata council, while clear permitting guidance and supportive bylaws remove barriers to installation.

It is worthwhile for local governments to also consider that policies related to EV charging in new construction can establish a consistent baseline in the community so that charging is simply part of the building environment, rather than something residents have to argue for. For that reason, we have included policy examples related to new construction.

Top Up Incentives

Some local governments are providing top-up incentives to support EV charging deployment. These programs add to the existing rebates discussed above. For example, the District of Saanich offers an EV Ready top-up incentive for multi-unit residential buildings. This program includes a $1,000 top-up for EV Ready Plans and a $100 per parking stall top-up. These are on top of the other rebates available from the Province and utilities. The City of Nanaimo, City of Kamloops, District of Squamish, City of Penticton and Resort Municipality of Whistler offer similar incentives.

Financing Programs

Some local governments can offer financing programs related to EV charging on infrastructure upgrades. For instance, the City of Penticton offers an Electrical Service Payment Plan (ESPP) to allow approved customers to pay for new electrical services and/or upgrades to their existing electrical service over time. This type of program could support multi-unit residential buildings if there are service upgrades required to retrofit a building for EV charging.

Permitting Requirements

Consider your requirements for permitting and whether a permit would be needed to retrofit a multi-unit residential building for EV charging spaces. Developing clear guidance for when a permit would or would not be required will streamline projects in your community.

Transportation Demand Management Authority

The Province of BC recently expanded local government authority to define and require transportation demand management in connection with the subdivision and development of land. This includes the provision of EV charging stations as part of new developments. Some description of these new authorities is available in this newsletter released by Young Anderson in June, 2024.[1]

Development Permit Guidelines

Some local governments require EV charging be considered as part of Development Permit guidelines related to climate action, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and energy conservation. For example, the City of Rossland has included a guideline to ensure the provision of electric vehicle charging stations. As guidelines, the application of these may vary. For local governments interested in a more specific requirement, their parking regulation is likely a better place for this type of regulation.

[1] Note that this brief does not constitute legal advice and any local government considering the use of legislative authority or regulatory changes should consult with legal counsel prior to adopting such changes.

Development Cost Charge Reductions

As a financial incentive, local governments may consider Development Cost Charge reductions for multi-unit residential buildings that include EV charging. This reduction can apply for development that is designed to result in a low environmental impact as described in section 563 (1)(d) of the Local Government Act. This must be done by bylaw. Note that this would only apply in the case of new construction where dwelling units are being added, so would not otherwise support a retrofit project.

EV Ready Bylaws

Local governments across BC have been amending parking regulations to require a certain amount of parking to be EV Ready for new construction. EV Ready means a parking space has been equipped with an adjacent energized outlet, such as a wired junction box or receptacle, where a Level 2 EV charger can be connected in the future. This includes the supporting conduit and infrastructure to deliver the required power.

These types of regulatory changes have been put in place for both residential and non-residential buildings, depending on the jurisdiction. For an up-to-date list of local governments that have made these changes, visit CEA's Dashboard Highlights page.

It is important that local governments take a thoughtful approach to development of these bylaws. A high-quality EV Ready bylaw will be clearer for developers, reduce cost and avoid future need for amendments. BC Hydro produced a best practice guide for local governments to support these efforts.

Parking Reductions

Another regulatory approach that has been used by some local governments is reductions in the overall parking requirement for a building if EV ready spaces are provided. This could be a good approach for local governments who want to incentivize but are not ready to require EV readiness in new construction. For instance, the City of Revelstoke has the following provision in their Zoning Bylaw:

(3) Parking requirements can be waived where cash in lieu of parking is paid to a Municipal Reserve Fund, where the following is achieved:

> *(a) Minimum 30% of parking must be provided on site; and*
>
> *(b) At least 1 EV electric vehicle charging station is installed for every 20 spaces required.*

Notably, this reduction is only available where cash in lieu of parking is also provided.