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SPRING 2022

## Trends in Capital Improvement Projects

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Retrofits for Existing Buildings

Inspecting and Maintaining Caulk Joints  
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The Weather & Your Landscape

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**Project Manager:**  
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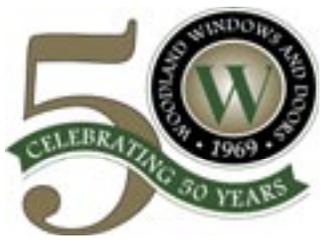
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By Pamela Dittmer McKuen

# Trends in Capital Improvement Projects

Contractors and their clients are busy as ever, but they face new challenges in an evolving business climate.

It's often been said that Chicago has two seasons: Winter and Construction. Well, winter is only temporary, but construction never really stops. That truism is good news for anyone involved even tangentially in the building restoration and maintenance environment, yet the industry is also susceptible to societal trends and unforeseen circumstances.

Welcome to Spring 2022, when building owners, engineers and architects, consultants and contractors are gladly booked with work but often find themselves navigating new terrain.

The COVID-19 pandemic alone has produced restrictions on movement, the Great Resignation, rising costs and an international supply chain breakdown. Add to that the rising popularity of electric vehicles and concerns

about another building collapse like the one in Surfside, Florida.

Let's take a closer look at the current Chicago agenda:

## What Are You Working On?

Many of the projects commencing or studied are evergreen, meaning the need is ongoing year after year. Others are emerging trends as end-users, guided by their own circumstances and experiences, re-evaluate their needs and lifestyles, and they place demands on building owners and management.

Restoration Architects and Structural Engineers Klein & Hoffman in Chicago reports less window replacement than usual while roofing and water infiltration remediation are

in demand. Facade repair and ordinance-related inspections also are strong. The company has seen an uptick in requests for structural assessments, reserve studies, and garage investigations and repair programs.

"We are seeing a whole host of capital projects coming along, some of which were delayed during the peak of Covid," says David Barnhart, vice president of condominium management at The Habitat Company in Chicago. "Particularly in-unit, intrusive work was postponed, but many associations are resuming this important work like riser replacements. More of the optional items such as hallway improvements seem to have taken a backseat during this time.

Interestingly, many associations are exploring EV charging stations to keep ahead of the coming

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demand in this area.”

Boilers, chillers and plumbing riser replacements are steady at Elara Engineering in Hillside. Within the past year or two, the firm has fielded greater interest in electric vehicle charging stations as well as the feasibility of installing in-unit clothes washers and dryers in residential buildings that do not have them.

“Washer and dryer installations within residential units represent an added value to building occupants and are popular as a result,” says Adam Sanders, project engineer and team leader at Elara Engineering. “However, if buildings were not constructed specifically to accommodate these appliances, the plumbing and electrical infrastructure must be reviewed in detail, and code calculations must be performed.”

The plumbing distribution piping must be reviewed to determine if additional capacity is available to deliver water to the washing machines in each unit and remove the waste along with an analysis of suds zones due to the presence of detergent in the waste water.

Similar reviews are required to determine whether the building’s electrical capacity can

accommodate the additional load created by dryers.

“Results vary from being able to install washers and dryers in an existing building without major modifications to multi-million-dollar investments to upgrade both the electrical and plumbing infrastructure,” Sanders says.

**The Impact Of Surfside**

Although the 2021 collapse of the 12-story Champlain Towers South condominium in Surfside, Florida, has prompted much concern, Hans Kiefer, principal and architect at Kellermeyer Godfryt Hart in Des Plaines, reminds us that the reason for the disaster is still unknown. The possible cause, he says, is likely a coming-together of multiple possible--and as yet unproven--issues such as design, construction defects, lack of correction of design deficiencies and construction defects, and lack of maintenance over time.

“It appears that the building was trying to meet their obligation to the law by obtaining the required reports, but then did not perform the recommended repairs,” he says. “Budgets and

reserves were reportedly part of the issue since Surfside knew of the issue and did not pursue the repairs due to the cost.”

That said, Kiefer reports KGH has taken requests for limited structural integrity inspections but has not yet found it necessary to take the next step of destructive or non-destructive testing such as ground-penetrating radar (GPR), X-ray or radiographic testing based on those initial inspections. Nor have geotechnical investigations been undertaken.

“We have found typical deterioration such as masonry deterioration and concrete spalls and delaminations due to corrosion for which we have recommended standard repairs,” he says.

“Since Surfside, we have noticed a forward movement on restoration projects for facade and garage repair that were on hold or waiting for a board approval to move forward,” says Peter Santangelo, president at Wintrust Community Advantage in Barrington.

At Klein & Hoffman, questions came in immediately after the collapse and simultaneously from various parts of the country, reports President and Principal Architect Peter Power.



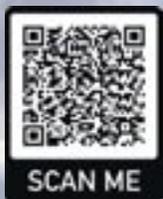
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Historically, different geographic areas have had different concerns due to more local factors. The universal concern stemming from the Florida collapse enabled the firm to provide a consistent team approach.

“Our typical recommendation involves performing a high-level visual assessment of the property or specific area of concern,” he says. “Focusing on specific tests or detailed investigation efforts would be performed as next steps. In several cases, we were able to offer combined services related to the structural integrity condition assessment and reserve studies, since the field inspection portion of the assessments covered similar components and areas of the buildings.”

Power added that when the Surfside collapse findings are released and the litigation is settled, he is especially interested in understanding the culpability, if any, of the engineering consultants and management.

“We often question how far someone has to go beyond identifying deficiencies and making recommendations regarding necessary repairs,” he says. Sometimes the situation may require escalation to ensure life safety.

### Covid's Lingering Impact, Part One

The ramifications of the pandemic have spread far beyond the fear of becoming gravely ill or dying. In the beginning, many people sequestered themselves at home and off the streets, fearful of the slightest contact with another human being. Today, with the availability of widespread vaccination and testing, some but not all of those fears have been ameliorated.

Says Klein & Hoffman's Power: “Exterior work was initially impacted on construction sites, but not so notable anymore now that protocols are



*Various lockdowns and restrictions have slowed production of materials, caused workers to find new careers or leave the labor force entirely, and prompted price increases on the goods and services that are available.*

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generally understood and accepted. Covid has impacted our site work more so when performing any effort that requires interior access, unit inspections and onsite meetings. Online meetings have been a welcome addition to our typical client meeting efforts.”

While some clients focus on personal contact, others are looking at improved ventilation systems in an effort to curtail the virus’ spread, says Elara’s Sanders.

“It is best to begin by evaluating the operation of your existing ventilation systems and

optimizing their control to reduce the likelihood of the transmission of airborne contaminants via a building’s mechanical system,” he says. “Then, increase filtration where there is space to do so, modify control sequences to increase outdoor air delivered to the spaces while keeping in mind that freeze protection must be maintained and the performance of the equipment’s heating or cooling elements could be impacted by the increased outside air, and implement portable filtration as required at locations of dense populations.”

**Covid’s Lingering Impact, Part Two**

Although building owners are motivated to launch their projects, getting them completed is increasingly challenging. Pandemic woes have disrupted the entire supply chain, from manufacture to delivery to installation. Various lockdowns and restrictions have slowed production of materials, caused workers to find new careers or leave the labor force entirely, and prompted price increases on the goods and services that are available. With all these factors, construction delays of months, even a year, are not uncommon, and relief is not yet in sight.

Delays can negatively impact a building owner, manager and occupants due to a lack of service when needed or when required to meet local ordinances, Sanders says.

Elara’s design teams are tracking MEP equipment delivery lead times as long as 16 to 20 weeks, with certain situations extending beyond this duration. This includes major equipment such as air handling units, chillers, and boilers as well as major components like larger-size valves and pipe fittings, which are impacting both retrofits and repair projects.

The current business climate requires a longer planning timeline than building owners might be accustomed to, Sanders says.

“Simply put, if a building representative believes they need a new chiller, boiler or other MEP equipment by the summer of 2023, they should be planning to have their project in design in Summer 2022,” he says.

As soon as Elara is made aware of a client’s interest in undertaking a project, even before being retained or formally asked for a proposal, the firm makes inquiries with major equipment manufacturers about lead times. The information is then integrated into proposed timelines.

“We then advise our potential client about when approval to proceed is needed, particularly if the project is driven by a seasonal need like winter heating or summer cooling,” he says. “As part of our proposals, we also identify and incorporate tactics to pre-order long-lead equipment, if required, to ensure that the project schedule can be achieved. Proposals may even include a preliminary schedule so that stakeholders know what to expect and when key decisions should be made.”

Even with the most conservative planning and best information, delivery delays may be out of anyone’s control. Depending on the situation, workarounds may be possible like deferring a project or looking at alternative materials or repair and replacement systems, Power adds. 🍃



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By Adam Sanders and Bhupendra Tailor - Elara Engineering

# Electrical Vehicle Charging Station Retrofits for Existing Buildings

As electric vehicles (EV) continue to increasingly displace internal combustion engine vehicles, stakeholders of existing buildings are seeking to install EV charging stations to support the demands of building occupants. However, unlike new construction where EV charging stations can be incorporated into the original design of the building, retrofitting EV charging stations into existing buildings presents numerous unique considerations and challenges.

**F**or example, while the installation of a single, or even a few, EV charging stations may not represent a significant initial challenge, providing the ability to install EV charging stations on a large scale in the future -- as a retrofit into an existing parking garage -- is a complex undertaking as an electrical service upgrade is often eventually required.

## Existing Electrical System Capacity Analysis

The capabilities of an existing facility's electrical systems are the biggest factor in

determining the cost and complexity of installing EV chargers. A detailed engineering analysis of the existing electrical system is required to determine what can be added to existing infrastructure without substantial upgrade and establish the preliminary scope of work, budget, and approach to install EV charging stations. As electric vehicles are not yet commonplace in the automotive industry, building code currently does not allow for diversification (adjusting electrical load calculations to consider user habits) in the design or determination of the capabilities of the

supporting infrastructure (electrical risers and equipment) unless an automatic load management system is in place. This places increasing importance on maximizing the capabilities of the existing electrical infrastructure to support the addition of EV charging stations.

Facilities such as multi-family condominium and multi-tenant commercial buildings typically have two types of power sources that can be utilized for new EV charging stations. The first source is a common electrical service that provides power for common area lighting, plug loads (outlets), and HVAC which is paid for by the building owner. This electrical service usually has a single meter and existing utility bills will indicate peak power usage over the course of any given year. A determination of how much additional power is available to support future charging stations can readily be made from this information.

However, if there is minimal or insufficient

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common area power available to support the desired number of charging stations, the second source of power -- residential/tenant electrical service(s) -- is then considered.

Residential/Tenant electrical services typically employ numerous individual meters which are paid for by the individual unit owners/tenants. Because of the difficulties associated with collecting historic utility bills from all unit owners/tenants within a building, available electrical service capacity is typically determined by performing a load study which entails connecting a temporary meter or meters to the residential/tenant service(s) to monitor usage. This approach quantifies actual usage and remaining capacity in lieu of performing standardized calculations which are typically conservative and overestimate usage.

**Variables to Consider**

Once the capacity of the building's existing electrical infrastructure has been determined, the next step is to understand the performance goals and preferences of the building's stakeholders relative to the new EV charging stations. There are severable variables that have significant impact on the project approach and cost of installing EV charging stations.

**1.Number and Location of Stations**

Stakeholders of existing buildings should consider the number of EV charging stations that are desired to accommodate the needs of building occupants, both in the immediate term and in the foreseeable future. This typically requires a survey of interest among unit owners/tenants and building guests.

Additionally, the locations of the new stations should be considered, especially as they relate to individual unit owners/tenants versus community stations open to building visitors and guests. EV charging station proximity to major electrical system equipment and infrastructure will also impact implementation costs. Finally, available incentive funding along with the extent of modifications required to the building infrastructure may ultimately influence the number of charging stations building stakeholders pursue.

**2.Who is Paying the Bill?**

Often a legal opinion may be required to assist in determining cost responsibility associated with the installation of new EV charging stations among building entities. For example, in many cases a parking garage may be under separate ownership despite it being part of the same building structure as commercial or



residential space. Some may even be partially operated as public garages. Thus, the project will necessitate the installation of equipment within spaces owned by separate entities. Ownership and the allocation of the cost to design, install, and manage new EV charging stations should be determined as part of the project planning in advance of installation.

Building stakeholders will also need to consider how ongoing costs for the electricity provided to the EV charging stations are allocated. EV charging stations may be owned, and usage paid for, by individual unit owners/tenants via individual utility meters or, the building owner(s) may choose to absorb the electricity charges associated with the

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operation of the EV charging stations or reflect costs in recurring fees (i.e. assessments). Alternately, power draw can be monitored via sensors and charged back to users to avoid individual utility meters. Flat fees for usage can also be considered.

Each of these solutions impact the design, the physical layout of the EV charging stations, and the installation costs associated with the EV chargers.

### 3. EV Charging Equipment

There are many types of EV charging stations offered at various voltages and charging rates that have different direct impacts on a building's infrastructure. Additionally, as electric vehicles become more popular, charging technology is likely to evolve. Therefore, it is important to base the EV charging design on equipment specifications that are likely to cater to the largest variety of vehicles and users over the longest period of time.

### 4. Available Incentive Funding

The increasing demand for EV charging stations has been a key driver for the procurement of utility incentives. Recently approved State of Illinois legislation will allow additional incentives to become available on July 1st, 2022, though it should be noted that these additional incentives will apply only to the installation of the EV charging stations themselves, and not to infrastructure upgrades required to support multiple EV chargers. However, incentive programs are continually changing and should be evaluated at the time an individual project is being considered.

### Project Approach

Given the complexities and available options for installing EV charging stations within an existing building, an initial planning phase is crucial to identify a cost-effective, practical, and flexible approach. Decisions on the variables listed above will have substantial impact on the final design, budget, and potential phasing of the project. Several of these variables will be decided based on the outcome of the electrical engineering calculations and findings.

The planning phase should provide stakeholders with the information needed to make informed, investment grade decisions regarding the installation of EV charging stations within their building. It also allows for a subsequent design to be approached with an agreed upon goal and budget. Stakeholders interested in installing EV charging stations within existing buildings should enlist the services of a professional engineer with experience implementing EV charging stations in similar buildings and jurisdictions. 🍃



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By Michael C. Davids

# Inspecting and Maintaining Caulk Joints Help Prevent Water Intrusion

One of the best ways for making a building maintenance program more cost-effective, according to Larry Puder who is Technical Operations Manager at Community Specialists, is to make sure to inspect a property's caulk joints on a regular basis.

“Caulking is the first line of defense against water getting into your building, and failed caulking is the primary and many would say the number one cause of water issues in all types of buildings,” said Puder. The good news is that there's a straightforward way to help avoid those issues. Puder recommends having a building's caulk joints inspected by a qualified professional at least every two years (in conjunction with visual facade inspection) to look for any signs of deterioration, which could include cracking, flaking or missing caulk.

One can understand why caulking is so often overlooked at buildings. The size and cost of caulking seems relatively small compared to other components of the building and related maintenance. However, Hans Kiefer of KGH

Architects and Engineers, “money can be saved by performing inexpensive sealant repairs prior to more expensive repairs from damaged or missing caulk.” If caulk deterioration is present, Kiefer and Puder both recommend having the damaged caulk removed and replaced immediately by an experienced specialty contractor.

“If one component fails, like the caulk, it doesn't matter what kind of shape the other components are in, water is going to get into your building,” said Puder. “The main thing to keep in mind is that your building is made up of a bunch of different components. The only way your multiple building components can work together is if each one is properly transitioned into the other parts. That transition we're talking about is usually the caulking.”

## Part of Preventive Maintenance Program

Why is Joint Caulking So Important? First and foremost, joint caulking helps to keep your building airtight. By sealing the holes and gaps in the expansion joints, windows and especially the windows' perimeters, your building has a lower risk of incurring any water damage. It's not only good for protecting the exterior of your building but the inner walls as well. Caulking is therefore usually done around windows, doors, sidings and other building elements. Materials used for caulking are also called sealants, but unlike caulks (think interior home caulks), sealants are more suitable for areas that expand or contract.

Professionals involved in building management and maintenance whether they are architects, engineers, property managers or contractors, all know that proper maintenance helps avoid larger emergency expenses. “Often

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the caulking at a building is the only barrier at that location preventing water/air infiltration and pests,” says Kiefer.

**Benefits of Caulk Joint Inspections**

Inspecting the caulking helps the building owner(s) and managers in a number of ways as listed below by Kiefer:

- Identify the gaps so that they can be sealed
- Maintaining the caulk also assists with energy efficiency and humidity levels
- Sound Caulk helps block out exterior noise
- Sound caulk prevents insect infestation
- Sound caulk prevents corrosion from moisture infiltration.
- Sound caulk prevents mold from moisture infiltration
- Worn and cracking caulk can be identified and repaired.
- Caulk at an incorrect location can be identified and replaced.
- Interior caulking around windows is important to limit humidity within the wall cavities
- Interior caulking around tubs and showers is vital to residents below



“With all construction materials there are other concerns such as freeze-thaw cycling,” added Kiefer.

Water that is allowed into a system can then cause additional damage such as:

- Creating additional cracks
- Heaving concrete
- Corroding metals
- Galvanic corrosion
- Potholes
- Brick/concrete spalling
- Trip hazards for concrete if the caulk joints are at sidewalks or any area of pedestrian traffic

**Extends Useful Life**

Investing in caulking inspection and maintenance does more than simply avoid unnecessary repair costs. By preserving and extending the life of caulks and sealants, it also extends the useful life of your building components.

Dirt, mold, mildew, and other contaminants tend to accumulate and grow in areas where old caulk exists. Safe and proper cleaning of your commercial building as part of its regular maintenance program gently lifts mold, mildew, and dirt off its surface, including its caulking. Since all caulk has an expiration date, though, there comes a time when you need to replace the existing caulk with new caulk 

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# INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS

## Draper and Kramer, Inc.

Draper and Kramer, a national full-service real estate firm, announced in November 2021, that **Colleen Needham**, assistant vice president and general manager, was installed as the 2022 president of the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM) Chicago chapter during a Nov. 10 meeting at Revolution Brewing in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood. Needham officially assumed her duties on Jan. 1, 2022. A 20-year industry veteran, Needham joined Draper and Kramer in 2009. Since 2018, she has served as the general manager of Lake Meadows, a nine-building, 1,869-unit rental community in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood that has been managed by Draper and Kramer for more than 65 years.

## Alliance Association Bank

Alliance Association Bank is pleased to announce the addition of **Matt Hall** to our team, where he will serve as Vice President of HOA Lending for the central region. You may recognize Matt, as he has worked in the community association banking industry for the past several years in the Midwest.

In his role at Alliance Association Bank, Matt will work closely with community associations to develop and tailor loan products and structures to meet each community's unique needs. Matt's extensive experience in the community association industry allows him to draw on previous experiences to recognize and understand the unique opportunities and challenges that face the communities you serve.

A graduate of Western Illinois University, Matt has also earned certifications in leadership course. He is an active member of the Community Associations Institute (CAI), and has served on the Educational and Golf committees for CAI of Illinois.



**Barbara Al-Saigh**

## FirstService Residential Illinois

FirstService Residential, a leading residential property management company based in Chicago, has appointed **Barbara Al-Saigh** as Vice President of Portfolio Property Management.

Ms. Al-Saigh began her career in property management as an administrative assistant seven years ago, and quickly moved through manager, supervisor and regional director roles at FirstService Residential. Barbara brings to us a wealth of knowledge and in-depth professional experience through her oversight of a vast range of communities throughout Chicago, including her most recent work with the iconic Tribune Tower Residences.

"We are extremely fortunate to have Barbara's diverse experience and depth of knowledge on our leadership team," said Asa Sherwood, President. "In her new role, Barbara will be overseeing and supporting our city portfolio regional directors and their portfolio management teams."

## Bartzen Rosenlund Kasten, LLC

Altus Legal, LLC and Rosenlund Legal, P.C. are proud to announce the merger of the two firms effective January 2022. The new firm name is Bartzen Rosenlund Kasten, LLC (or "BRK Legal") and will continue to represent condominium and homeowner associations in Chicago and throughout Illinois. The partners - **Nicholas Bartzen, Scott Rosenlund, and Kristofer Kasten** - are very pleased with the merger and bring a uniquely qualified set of skills to the representation of community associations from high-rise condominiums to suburban HOA's. The three partners are joined by a staff of four, including Clifford Garrett as associate attorney, as well as paralegal and legal assistant staff.



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# INDUSTRY HAPPENINGS



## Temperature Service Company

Established in 1982, Temperature Service Company has been providing top-notch HVAC/R Commercial & Industrial Mechanical Contractor services to Chicago, the surrounding suburbs, southeast Wisconsin, and northwest Indiana for 40 years.

"While we are undoubtedly proud to be celebrating our 40th anniversary," said Vice President of Sales, **Adam Webb**, "We are most grateful for the relationships we've built with our Clients and the opportunity to be of service in a way that genuinely helps them with any needs and challenges they have in terms of their HVAC/R systems while working towards the ultimate goal of lowering annual operating costs." He added, "From day one, Temperature Service Company has remained a leader in the industry through its ability to uphold their company's guiding principles of integrity, innovation, and customer satisfaction. This allows us to provide our forward thinking solutions and to deliver unparalleled service and support, time and time again, while building long-lasting working relationships with our clients."

Adam continued, "Of course, we couldn't have done it without the support and leadership of our President, **Scott Templin**, as well as our Executive Team, General Manager - **Ronni Gibson**, VP of Construction - **John Kowalczyk**, VP of Service -



Temperature Service Company is celebrating their 40th anniversary in 2022.

**Chris Rushing** but at the end of the day we all realize none of this would be possible without our talented team of Field Personnel, Mechanical Engineers and Customer Service professionals."

"What truly puts Temperature Service Company into the league of HVAC Industry Leaders is our company's culture to be constantly learning, continually improving, and to maintain consistent professionalism and extensive technical aptitude to provide competitive, cost-effective solutions for our customers," he concluded.

## MCD Pool Party featuring Condolympics

The MCD Pool Party featuring Condolympics will be held on April 1, 2022 at the Pyramid Club in Addison. Join over 200 attendees that are involved in the community association industry for a fun filled afternoon that features industry networking, a food buffet, games, and special raffles that benefit Special Olympics Illinois. Medals are awarded for all games including darts, billiards and cornhole/bags. Last year's fundraising challenge was won by Property Specialists, Inc. with over \$3,000 in donations collected. For more information visit [www.condolifestyles.net](http://www.condolifestyles.net) or call 630-932-5551.



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**M**ost of us are eager to get past the winter season and are looking forward to the warmer temperatures of spring that allow us to enjoy the outdoors for extended periods of time. Of course, we know that there is less spread of Covid-19 when we are in outdoor settings so we all hope that stays true and that our test positivity rate continues to decline so we can resume many of our regular activities.

The economy seems to be on a good track with low unemployment and many people are optimistic about 2022. The housing market is still hot but starting to cool with interest rates expected to creep higher. While inflation is very high and impacting expenses of all types, it is expected to come down. Supply chain disruptions causing issues with availability of some products and materials are beginning to ease but are still a major issue. Just as with the weather, it's best to be prepared for whatever happens with our economic conditions. Hopefully some warmer weather will provide an opportunity to get an early start on exterior maintenance, repair, and restoration.

Our cover story for this issue of CBE explores current trends in capital improvement projects. We touched on several trends in this regard in our January issue of Condo Lifestyles and we are covering some of those topics in more depth as well as covering some additional trends. If you are considering or have a need to perform any capital projects, advance planning and research is more important than ever before.

The best way to extend the useful life of your building is by performing preventive maintenance. Inside this issue we have three articles on the importance of inspecting and maintaining including various building components including caulk joints, roofing, windows and doors. The benefits of investing in proactive maintenance programs are significant and cannot be emphasized enough. Having regular inspections by professionals and a capital reserve study are fundamentals of managing a building. Not following the recommendations or delaying necessary maintenance, repairs, or restoration work on your building for an unreasonable period of time can lead to having more serious problems occur.

Electric cars have become ever more popular. We have two articles inside this issue that discuss important aspects of having electric vehicle (EV) charging stations installed at an existing building. While it may or may not be a big deal to install one or two EV charging stations at a property, it is a big deal to plan for a larger scale installation of EV charging stations as an electrical service upgrade is often eventually required. Other critical factors that must be considered are the number/location of stations, who is paying the bill, what type of equipment is desired or needed and what incentive funding is available. There are also important legal issues and governance issues to consider such as parking rights and licensing agreements.

Our regular feature on the weather and your landscape also serves as our The Landscape Buyer column article in this issue. This article provides a recap of how the recent past weather is affecting your outdoor landscape and a forecast of general weather conditions for the coming seasons.

We will continue to explore other relevant building management trends, challenges and initiatives in coming issues of CBE. If you have an idea or story to share, please let us know.

While we all hope that Covid-19 conditions improve, the coming year will undoubtedly be filled with more challenges as we monitor new variants and make determinations on how we conduct our everyday lives as well as our business, civic, and other activities. Please just always be considerate of others in all that you do.

Thanks to the many new subscribers that have found our publications useful and informative. Special thanks to the firms, organizations and groups that are Authorized Distributors of Chicagoland Buildings and Environments and Condo Lifestyles. Those of you who are interested in becoming subscribers can obtain subscription information on our website [www.chicagolandbuildingsandenvironments.com](http://www.chicagolandbuildingsandenvironments.com)

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by James A. Fizzell

## The Weather and Your Landscape

After a quiet fall, winter finally roared in January and February in the Chicagoland area.

**S**hovelable snow did not fall in December and first arrived with the storm of New Year's weekend. The unusually mild weather that had been the norm for the last many months continued.

October was warm with no frost or freezes. Rain was abundant reducing any concerns about plantings entering winter in dry soils. November continued with warmer than expected weather and only occasional rains that did not add to the soil moisture reserve. However, they were sufficient to prevent more of the drought conditions prevalent earlier in the year. The first heavy frost occurred early in the month, about two weeks later than the generally expected date. The first hard freeze arrived Thanksgiving week, but there was still no measurable snowfall at that time.

December continued milder than expected, temperatures getting as high as the 50s and even 60s at mid-month. By month's end, temperatures were running about normal, and rainfall about normal as well. Again, no measurable snow.

### Drought Indicator Update

The Palmer drought index was showing that the D0 (D zero is abnormally dry) drought indicator had been removed for Cook County and areas to the South. These areas were no longer considered droughty. This was not true in the Northern Countries, Lake, McHenry, Boone, and Winnebago, and into Southern Wisconsin where the indicators remained at D1 and D2, moderately to severely droughty.

Dryness is not the only weather-related problem our plantings experienced. Last fall, the increased moisture was conducive to excellent renewed growth. Many plants were reluctant to develop the normal dormancy and held their leaves well into December. Landscape crews were still collecting leaves the week before Christmas. The lack of sufficient cold also was detrimental to any developing dormancy. Plants in this condition are candidates for damage should cold arrive suddenly.

### Winter Arrived with the New Year

As the calendar turned over to 2022, winter arrived, right on schedule I might add. This is in line with what was predicted in this column last fall... no winter until changing quickly at the end of the year. We can't take credit for this prognostication. It is the work of our long-time professional weather expert, Greg Soulje.

The cold did arrive in the first week of the new year. Temperatures dropped from highs in the 30s and lows in the 20s, to night-time temperatures near zero and daytime highs in the teens. The first snow cover, about 3 inches fell on New Year's Day. However, it was not long-lived. The roller-coaster weather of a typical La Nina was firmly in control.

Severe cold alternated with above-normal temperatures every seven days or so. The laminar East-West jet stream that had kept the arctic air bottled up in Canada broke down with Rossby waves bringing frequent surges of the cold south. These surges brought Polar air, but no Polar Vortex as of the time of this

writing in February.

The three inches of snow cover were blown around by the strong winds and many areas of bare ground showed up. Three inches of snow is minimally effective in protecting low-growing plants, and especially susceptible shallow roots from the low temperatures. Extended, ten-degree temperatures can kill exposed roots.

As the up-and-down weather continued, frequent light snow events in 2 to 4-inch amounts accompanied the cold fronts every few days. Frigid temperatures kept the ground white. Total snow accumulation was several inches and increasing. There still had been no heavy snow storm by the end of January.

In the first week of February, after a couple of unusually mild days, a significant snow event finally came. Heavy snow in two waves accumulated another six-to-twelve inches of snow on top of that already on the ground, followed by the coldest weather in some years.

### What to Expect in Coming Months

As usual, to find out whether this return to winter would continue, and what we might expect for the next few months, we contacted Meteorologist Greg Soulje, to get his thoughts.

Soulje has access to the same resources that all other weather gurus have, and also some he has developed on his own. However, his long-range interpretations are guided by the needs of us who use them to make our agricultural and/or business decisions. We are the farmers, produce growers, ranchers, nurserymen, landscape and tree service professionals, snow removal experts, and others who will rely on these forecasts for the seasonal planning upon which our livelihoods depend.

**Late Season Cold and Snow Possible**

According to Mr. Soulje, the late-developing winter will stay around for a while. The persistent La Nina will weaken resulting in a busy, wet conclusion to winter, 2022. After the snowless start to the winter, total snowfall for the season will approach normal, with the potential for a late-season heavy snow.

Frequent warm fronts accompanied by snow and then followed by cold fronts are expected through March and maybe into April.

**Cool and Wet Spring Expected**

Spring will be cooler than normal and wetter, similar to what occurred in 2019. Persistent East winds will bring the cooler air off Lake Michigan making for a late start to spring. Expect frost as late as Mother's Day, and maybe into June. The full moon, May 16 is considered by old-timers as the date of last frost for the year. Average latest date of last frost here is May 30. Instead of any residual drought, above average rainfall until June will make for standing water.

**Conditions Should Normalize for Summer**

Summer will feature a return to more normal weather, drier with average temperatures. There should be no drought this summer. As the La Nina breaks down, more stable weather might be expected, Soulje concludes.

As usual we do look at the US Weather Service and even the Old Farmer's Almanac to

see what they predict. The USWS indicates that the period will begin about normal temperature-wise, and trend to warmer than normal as the seasons develop. Precipitation will be above to much-above for the period, they say.

According to the Almanac, winter will start out colder than normal and snowier. Temperatures will moderate as the season progresses and become warmer and drier.

Punxsutawney Phil did see his shadow on Groundhog Day, thus six more weeks of winter.

**Impact of Past Weather on Your Landscape**

The past weather can have lasting effects on our plantings. During the droughty conditions of 2020 and 2021, many plants were suffering from lack of water. We noticed die-back and other symptoms of decline last year and earlier. These have been discussed in previous articles.

The fall moisture allowed plants to begin some repair of the damage, but that will take a long time, years. Meanwhile plantings will continue to show the results of the adverse conditions. If the past is any indication, it may take a decade for complete recovery. Plants, especially large woody plants that decline and die in the next few years, may well be the result of the insults they received during this period.

Postponed dormancy due to the extended mild fall also can affect plantings in a couple of ways:

Fast-onset cold, with temperatures quickly dropping twenty-to-thirty degrees or more,

may not kill twigs and branches but may destroy their immunity to otherwise harmless organisms. This damage shows up in the next season as cankers and dieback.

The sudden absolute cold can kill susceptible tissues outright. These branches will fail to leaf out in spring. This is common in red-twig dogwood, for instance, with selected branches killed all the way to the ground while others are unaffected.

Severe cold can cause frost cracks to develop in trunks and limbs. These are due to moisture in the sun-warmed cells on the sunny sides of trees on very cold days. When the sun is suddenly hidden or sets, the moisture cannot move out of the cells fast enough, freezing, expanding, and popping the wood apart. I recall while skiing in the Northwoods, hearing loud pops among the trees when the sun went behind the hill. These were the tree trunks splitting open from the frost cracking.

Certain kinds, birch, linden, and red maples, seem to be more susceptible to frost cracking. When planting such kinds of plants, look for the evidence of previous cracking. It normally happens on the sunny sides of the trees, generally the South. To avoid more cracks after the trees are relocated, try to orient the trees so the cracks are on the sunny sides of the trees in the new locations.

Usually these cracks close up when the weather warms and may heal over only to crack again the next winter. The danger is that the open wounds could be invaded by wood rotting

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organisms or cankering fungi. Eventually trees can grow sufficient wood that they are structurally strong enough to resist the cracking. The old scars from the cracks persist.

Up-and-down temperatures during the snowless early winter cause freezing and thawing, possibly heaving out perennials and ground cover plants. Subsequent snow cover should have prevented desiccation, but these plants should be firmed back into the ground while soils are still moist in spring.

Removing the later heavy snow resulted in more damage. Snow plow and snow blower damage to turfgrass has been severe. Salting for ice control has killed grass along walks and drives. Some of this damage is already evident. Repair these areas as soon as the ground is workable. Reset pieces of grass scraped up by plowing. Leach out turf that had been salted. Seed or sod damaged spots early so they can regrow before hot weather arrives.

**Check for Winter Damage**

Rodent damage is still possible this late in

the season. Rabbits will chew on trees and shrubs especially when there is heavy snow cover. Mice will nest in mulch, and in old weeds and grass next to the bases of plants they are feeding on. Make sure rabbit guards are still in place and walk down the snow around the bases of trees and shrubs where mice may hide. Renew mouse baits.

When spring arrives, take your time with trimming winter damage, especially evergreens. Sometimes the needles are brown but the underlying buds are still alive. Wait to see where the plants try to grow before cutting off the “dead” twigs.

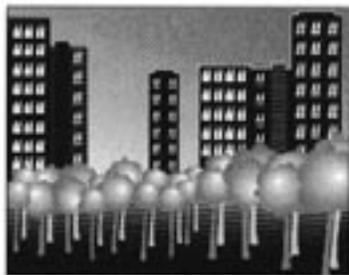
As soon as the weather turns mild and before perennials begin to grow, the old stems and foliage need to be removed. Once the plants start growth, new shoots are easily damaged in trimming out the old.

**Make Plans Now for the Coming Growing Season**

Spring will be here very soon. Days already are visibly longer. Are your plans for the season in

order? Have you signed all your vender contracts? Now is the time to do so. Arrange to meet with your landscape and tree care professionals to finalize the plans. Incorporate reports from people that see your landscaped areas every day. Share any information you and others familiar with your property have seen and share it with your landscape professionals. And of course, your landscape and tree professionals should conduct inspections for you. They are well aware of commons challenges in your landscape and what to do to correct any issues. There may be shortages of some plants and supplies due to ongoing supply chain disruptions, so get your orders in early. It is not too soon.

It might be a good idea to walk through your site with your landscape contractors to understand what they plan to do this year, and to make sure you all are on the same page. Getting things in order now is sure better than having a misunderstanding in the midst of a hectic season. 



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By Michael C. Davids

# Inspections & Maintenance Protect Your Roofing Investment

Professionals of all types believe that simple roof inspections are a task that can yield tremendous benefit and protect the investment in your building's roof. "Our firm is a proponent of proper building maintenance and this includes roofs," says Hans Kiefer of KGH Architects and Engineers. "Typically, a warranty requires the building owner(s) to maintain a roof in order for the warranty to remain in effect. Roofs require at least annual inspection by a qualified professional, but some could require more depending on the roof activity."

It's also a good idea that a building's maintenance personnel or a contractor go up on the roof and check for debris at least once a month, or after a trade contractor has been working on the roof. Debris on a roof can clog drains, scuppers and downspouts and lead to ponding water that can quickly seep into an open seam or split wall flashing. Roof drains should be cleaned at least twice per year, by building personnel or a PM contractor. The lifespan of many roofs can also be extended by simply only going on the roof as little as possible

"Roof Maintenance is a simple, common-

sense thing to have performed, but it's surprising how many people neglect doing it," said Larry Puder, Technical Operations Manager of Community Specialists. "To me, roof maintenance all starts with simple visual inspections."

There are several types of damage-causing debris that can be found on rooftops. Poor clean up by workers who have performed work on a roof and left behind trash and debris such as a caulk tube or rags can cause major problems if not cleaned up.

"If there is anything on the roof that shouldn't be there and a high wind came through

and blew it around, it could cause damage to your roof or to people or property below if it blew off the roof," Puder continued.

Other types of debris found on roofs that should be removed include leaves, tree limbs and twigs, bird droppings and even fireworks.

Puder also recommends checking HVAC access panels on the roof to make sure they are securely in place during routine inspections. "It happens more often than you would think that when we have a visual roof inspection done, we find a loose access panel or an access panel laying on the roof," he said. If the metal panel was just tossed down it can puncture the roof. And if it's just left on the roof, the next time you've got strong winds come through it gets picked up and does cartwheels across the roof, putting holes in it along the way. Or it could blow off the roof and land below causing other damage or injury. In any case, it's important to simply look at the roof or have your roof(s) inspected regularly."

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Kiefer went on to explain how roof inspections can prevent costly roof repairs from failures that could lead to leaks and damage. According to Kiefer, roof inspections by a qualified professional can identify:

- Possible warranty claims
- Storm damage
- How the roof is weathering or aging
  - » Are granules missing?
  - » Is the reinforcement exposed?
- Holes and failed seams
- Roof soft spots, sagging or drooping
- Failed sealant
- Failed lead flashings or baby tins
- Debris as well as possibly clogs in gutters or drains
- Failure of drain bowls or pipes
- Plant growth
- Missing, cracked or curling shingles
- Missing drain screens
- Ponding and poor drainage areas
- Corrosion and wet insulation
- Leaks

"Warranties typically do not allow ponding, continued Kiefer, and ponding on roofs increases the possibility of leaks." A leaking roof is not always the first indication of roof damage. Often

there is other structural damage in concert with a leak. Inspections can detect the problems on time and stop further damage or not having it leak in the first place. "Identifying faults in the roof with professional inspections and performing suggested repairs before the issue may cause moisture damage is obviously important. Performing small repairs will assist in the roof withstanding possible worse weather conditions," he said.

"Wet insulation will also reduce the energy efficiency of the roof," Kiefer concluded.

Puder added, "In general, we are seeing more Associations going to a Preventive Roof Maintenance Contract that provides for inspections of the roofs and making minor repairs that might be needed to the roof (repairs can be additional cost). Typically, a contract such as this will include two inspections per year, once in the spring and again in the fall. Costs for such a preventive maintenance roof contract (at a typical high rise roof) can vary from about \$1500 to \$2500 a year depending on the size of the roof(s), accessibility, type and age (many other factors such as multiple roofs and scope of inspections will also impact pricing) The average lifespan of a roof can be extended by five years or more by regular cleaning and simple maintenance." 🍃



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# Wintrust Sports Complex Offers Diverse Uses

Wintrust Sports Complex at Bedford Park – a multi-purpose sports tourism and local programming facility – recently opened its doors after completing construction in September 2021.

The 2-story, 111,000 square foot venue houses 8 high school hardwood basketball courts (or 16 NCAA volleyball courts), one championship court, a Redemption Arcade, Laser Tag/Laser Frenzy, an e-Sports Café, flexible meeting and event space, a café with full kitchen service and lounge, and offices.

Working in collaboration with ALPA Construction, Elara Engineering’s services for the project included Schematic Design, Design Development, Permit/Bid/Construction Documents, Bidding, Construction Services, and Functional Testing.

## Creative Solutions

A key challenge for this project was the need to address the many, highly diverse uses of the building which included individual offices, café/lounge space, recreational areas (e-Café, laser tag), flexible event spaces, and a large, high-ceiling sports facility (gymnasium). As the project’s MEPFP

engineer responsible for the design of MEPFP equipment and infrastructure for the newly constructed facility, Elara’s design team – beyond addressing the overall MEPFP design challenges posed by the diverse uses of the facility – successfully incorporated the following sustainable project features:

- Outdoor air CO2 control, saving energy by tracking CO2 levels within the occupied spaces.
- Energy recovery enthalpy wheels to recapture energy from the discharge air stream to pre heat or pre cool the mixed air.
- Variable speed compressors for rooftop units operate efficiently based on space load.
- Fabric ductwork distribution system within the gymnasium.
- State-of-the-Art web-based, open protocol building automation system.
- Lighting control that includes occupancy sensors and automatic daylight harvesting.

Additional design elements include:

- Gas-fired packaged rooftop units that are either single-zone VAV or VAV for individual room control to effectively serve all areas and functional uses of the building.
- VAV systems are a combination of perimeter fan powered and interior single-zone VAV boxes with electric reheat.
- Bathrooms are exhausted with variable flow toilet exhaust, including automatic Control dampers.
- Natural gas generator for life safety, elevator, and fire pump.
- Event power distribution system.



The multi-purpose sports tourism and entertainment facility offers a wide variety of options for all types of people and groups. It is a modern yet inviting venue that embraces everyone ranging from the traveling athlete to local families. Whether you are hosting a large tournament or trade show or having a family event, the Wintrust Sports Complex is a great new option to consider. 🍃



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By Angela Duea – FirstService Residential and Shannon Skeels, FSCM

# Check Flashing Around Doors and Windows

Many Chicago-area townhomes were built in the 80s and 90s as four to six units, two stories, with a balcony over a two-car garage. During inspections of these homes, it is often found that proper flashing was not installed around the doors and balconies.

**A**round the garage area are structural headers that support the opening, and weights above the garage opening. These structural members take the weight of balcony floor joists, first floor, second floor and part of the roof load. If metal or self-adhering flashing tape is not installed under the siding, around the windows, doors and balcony ledger board, water will penetrate the building envelope and slowly move towards the lowest point in the building. If it doesn't drain away or dry out, water will pool behind the trim and the structural members. Over time, this rots out the structure and becomes a major life safety hazard.

It often takes many years to notice a problem. What should you be looking for?

- Rotted/stained wood trim
- Exposed level header(s)
- No flashing above door or around windows

There are a few different ways to fix these issues. The procedure that FirstService Construction and Maintenance (FSCM) begins with is removing all the trim and siding around the garage door. We must properly shore up the structure, remove the existing rotted level headers and install new structure. Once that is installed, all new flashing is installed around the



Shown here is decaying wood

doors, balcony and around the sides of the balcony with "butyl tape", also known as self-adhering flashing tape.

A cap flashing is also installed above the patio door with self-adhering tape over the top of the cap flashing. Generally, the trim above the garage is rotted away as well and most of the time this must be replaced. Once all the pieces are installed, wood to wood areas are caulked and the trim is painted. These tasks take expert coordination with the residents to be sure that they move vehicles from the garages, allow indoor access when necessary, and that accurate time estimates are communicated to all.



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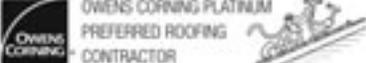
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Shown here is a window with no flashing



Shown here is an area where flashing work was completed above a garage door.



Pictured above is work in progress to replace flashing around a patio door.

A contractor should be aware of all relevant building codes before beginning work and should do a thorough inspection to determine the scope of work. Once completed, the repairs will help homeowners save energy, eliminate safety hazard concerns as well as preventing water leaks and damage for many years to come. 🍃



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By: Howard S. Dakoff, Esq. and Adam T. Kahn, Esq. – Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC

# Practical Considerations for Requests to Install Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Electric vehicles becoming increasingly popular. As of 2021, the total cumulative sales of electric vehicles in the U.S. surpassed the 2 million mark, and it is estimated that by 2030, nearly a quarter (or more) of all new car sales in the U.S. will be electric vehicles.

Unlike their internal combustion counterparts, electric vehicles need to be charged, often via a hardwired charging station. Many condominium associations with common element garages lack sufficient capacity on electrical panels to hardwire many charging stations for electric vehicles, which can pose an obstacle for unit owner / resident parkers who wish to charge their electric vehicles in the garage.

To address this situation, unit owners with increasing frequency are requesting permission from the condominium board to connect to the common element building electrical

system and install the necessary electrical conduit to a charging station to be affixed to a wall adjacent to their parking space. As electric vehicles become more popular, condominium association boards will face more frequent requests from unit owners to install electric vehicle charging stations adjacent to their parking spaces in order to conveniently charge their electric vehicles.

Below is a list of practical considerations and recommended best practices for condominium boards in handling such requests.

1. **Engage an Electrical Consultant to Confirm Electrical Capacity:** Because the electrical panel for the building may have limited electrical capacity for multiple charging stations, it is recommended that the board first engage a duly licensed and reputable electrical consultant to confirm the existing electrical capacity. Knowing the electrical capacity for the garage will help condominium boards plan for the current and future requests to install charging stations as the current capacity may only support a limited number of charging stations.
2. **Confirm the Type of Parking Rights:** There are three types of condominium parking rights: (i) separately deeded parking units that are owned by the unit owner; (ii)

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limited common element parking spaces that are assigned to a particular unit exclusively; and (iii) common element parking spaces that are owned by the association and are not assigned to a particular unit (though unit owners may rent/license a particular space from the association). Charging stations are not customarily installed in common element parking spaces by unit owners because the parker does not own or have the exclusive right to use the parking space.

**3. Enter into a License Agreement:** If the board is inclined to grant a unit owner's request to install a charging station, it is highly recommended and a best practice to require a formal written license agreement be prepared and executed by the board and unit owner covering business and legal terms, at the unit owner's cost, including terms such as:

**a. Approved Plans.** The exact approved scope of work, equipment, and location for the installation, including the plans and specifications for installation of the charging station, which plans should be



submitted by the unit owner for board approval;

**b. Installation Costs.** Because the license is being granted as an accommodation to the unit owner, the unit owner should be

responsible for all costs incurred in connection with installing the Charging Station, including engineers' fees to review the plans, attorneys' fees to prepare the license agreement, etc.

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*c. Electricity.* The unit owner is responsible for costs for electricity consumption either via a set fee to offset the cost or by having a submeter installed with the unit owner paying directly for energy consumption.

*d. Maintenance.* The unit owner is responsible for any maintenance, repair and replacement of the charging station at their sole cost, and the association has the right (but not the obligation) to undertake

any such necessary maintenance, repair or replacement of the charging station and assess the cost back to the unit owner.

*e. License Fee.* A fee to be paid by the unit owner for the privilege of being allowed to install a charging station (can be one-time, annual, or monthly). As noted above, the current electrical capacity for the garage may factor into the license fee amount.

*f. Indemnification.* An indemnification provision for the benefit of the Association if the electrical charging station causes damages or casualty loss to property or injury to persons;

*g. Additional Terms.* Whether the license is transferrable, required insurance to be maintained by the unit owner covering the charging station and parking space, insurance, enforcement, other customary contract provisions, and any additional business terms that the board wishes to incorporate.

Note: It is a recommended best practice to have the association's legal counsel prepare the license agreement to ensure that the association's interests are properly protected.

**4. Plan Approval.** The association's electrician/engineer should review the plans for the proposed installation of the charging station at the requesting unit owner's expense to confirm that such installation is in compliance with applicable building code, is acceptable, and will not pose any issues.

**5. Ensure the Charging Station is Properly Installed.** Installation of a charging station is subject to, and must comply with, the governing documents including any construction rules, and should be performed by a qualified and properly insured contractor. It is a recommended best practice that the association engage an engineer, customarily at the requesting unit owner's expense, to inspect the installation and ensure that the proposed charging station installation is code compliant and will not pose any issues.

As electric vehicles continue to rise in popularity, it is likely that there will be continuing increased demand for the installation of electronic vehicle charging stations in condominium garages. Condominium boards should carefully consider unit owner requests to tie into the Common Element electrical system and install charging stations and take appropriate measures when granting such requests.

The above list is not exhaustive and instead is intended as a starting point to help condominium association boards better navigate requests from unit owners to install electric vehicle charging stations in the common element garage. 🍃

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