

# Condominium Home Owners' Association

Serving BC's Strata Property Owners since 1976

Bulletin: 300-223

## Condo Smarts

Headline: Beware bare-land strata costs

Topic: Bare-land stratas

Publication date: April 15, 2007

Publication: The Province

Written by: Tony Gioventu

**Dear Condo Smarts:** We bought a lovely single family home in a quiet Fraser Valley neighbourhood 15 years ago.

Until this winter we believed that living in a bare land strata was no different than owning a single family home on a standard city lot.

The one difference was our community was gated and we had the use of a community club house.

Now that our community is beginning to show its age, the real cost of living in a bare land has reared its head.

The heavy winter weather resulted in a number of water and sewer system failures in our complex. We wrongly believed that our sewer and storm water discharge like any other neighbourhood was maintained by our local city.

Now, over \$250,000 later at \$5,000 per home we are suddenly aware of the costs and risks. Is it not the city's responsibility to maintain our services? We pay taxes like everyone else!

— Dee & Karl Hudson

**Dear Dee and Karl:** A bare land strata is no different from any other strata.

The strata is responsible for all common assets, common property and common insurance. Anything shown on the strata plan that is not part of a strata lot, including water lines, hydro, street lights, sewer systems, club houses, irrigation systems, roadways, sidewalks, will all be the responsibility of the strata.

Many bare land strata owners are not prepared for the cost of a water-main break, sewer-line failure or repaving roadways.

There are literally tens of thousands of bare land units in the province. Their common property includes golf courses, marinas, orchards, farm lands, forests, ski areas, and other recreational facilities.

Bare land developments are frequently model communities and can provide greater assets for lower costs shared by each unit, but the long term costs may be high.

Once a service crosses the property line into the strata, the strata is responsible. Water services, fire fighting and waste disposal are also services often provided by rural strata corporations, but they incur both higher operating costs and liability.

Bare land strata corporations need to consider both their future costs and their liability. Your liability insurance is also extremely important in a bare land strata. Bylaws can regulate the use of property like any other strata. However there is one important difference: The strata has no insurable interest or obligations for buildings not shown on the strata plan that are on strata lots. You must maintain and repair your own strata lot, including your buildings. Bare land costs are a sleeping giant for the unaware strata community. Education is a key component to strata success.

Contact our office for info regarding a one-day strata symposium April 21 at Robson Square.

For more information on CHOA resources and benefits visit [www.choa.bc.ca](http://www.choa.bc.ca)  
or contact the office at 1-877-353-2462 or email [office@choa.bc.ca](mailto:office@choa.bc.ca).

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