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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Attorney General  
Ministry of Community Services

### **BYLAW DISPUTE SYSTEM EXPANDS TO SIX NEW COMMUNITIES**

VANCOUVER – Residents of six B.C. communities will be able to resolve disputes around parking tickets and other minor bylaw offences at the local level rather than going to court, Attorney General Wally Oppal announced today.

The communities of Surrey, Richmond, Coquitlam, Chilliwack, Kent and Hope are joining a municipal bylaw dispute program that diverts cases from the courts and makes justice more accessible. The original pilot project was established on the North Shore in May 2004.

“Through this program, minor bylaw infractions are being addressed in a more appropriate way, outside the formal court process,” said Oppal. “Dealing with bylaw disputes at the local level saves time and money for both taxpayers and local government, and it opens up courtroom time for more serious cases. This is an important part of our work in building public confidence in the administration of justice.”

Oppal made the announcement at the Union of BC Municipalities convention at the same time an evaluation report on the pilot project showed the project has been successful in creating a more efficient and effective system for the resolution of municipal bylaw disputes. The study shows that:

- The number of parking tickets disputed dropped by 94 per cent.
- The length of time for a ticket dispute to be heard and a decision rendered went down by 10 per cent.
- The municipalities also saw a four per cent improvement in the number of fines paid in full.

“Local governments asked for projects such as this one that benefit the community and the taxpayer,” said Community Services Minister Ida Chong. “The expansion of the pilot project reflects our commitment to seeing more powers go to local governments so they can do the best job for their residents.”

“Local government has long advocated implementing a program to deal with bylaw disputes,” said UBCM president Aaron Dinwoodie. “We are pleased the program is being expanded, because it is a much more effective way of dealing with bylaws, and ensures that disputes are dealt with promptly and in a fair manner.”

“The bylaw dispute system has been a positive experience for the City of North Vancouver,” said City Mayor Barbara Sharp. “Through this opportunity, the City and District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver have co-operated to improve service delivery to our residents, minimize costs and improve local accountability. The evaluation report issued by the attorney general today shows that the North Shore Partnership has been successful by all measures.”

Until now, the only option has been to dispute tickets in provincial court. Under the new system, if no agreement can be reached with a municipal screening officer, the issue will be decided by an independent adjudicator chosen from a list approved by the attorney general.

Implementation of the program will vary by each community starting in fall 2005. The Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act was passed during the fall 2003 sitting of the legislature. It enables local governments to set up municipal bylaw dispute programs, with order-in-council approval.

For the evaluation results, please visit: [www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/index.htm](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/index.htm).

For local governments considering starting their own municipal bylaw program, a municipal toolkit will be posted on the above website on Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2005.

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