



City Will Appeal BC Supreme Court Decision

Date: Thursday, October 16, 2008

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — City Council has decided to appeal Tuesday's Supreme Court of British Columbia's ruling that the City cannot prohibit the erection of temporary shelter in City parks and public spaces.

"This issue is not about the right to camp or the right to sleep in parks; it's about one's right to shelter. And no one will argue that everyone should have a roof over their head," said Acting Mayor Dean Fortin. "But the answer to not having enough shelter beds and supported housing is not opening up our parks and public spaces for camping."

In addition to passing a motion to appeal the ruling, City Council also passed a bylaw enforcement policy outlining how the City of Victoria will administer and enforce the *Parks Regulation Bylaw* and the *Streets and Traffic Bylaw* in a manner that is consistent with the Supreme Court decision.

Noting instances of camping in a children's playground and in areas of sensitive ecosystems in the first 48 hours since the judgment was made, Acting Mayor Fortin added, "Our primary objective is to ensure our parks are safe and people living in our parks introduce new hazards that we cannot control. This new policy is an interim measure to regulate the use of temporary shelters in public spaces and gives our Police tools to enforce the Parks bylaw."

A meeting has been scheduled between the City of Victoria and BC Housing officials for Tuesday, October 21. The City of Victoria will be looking to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Union of BC Municipalities for support in the appeal process.

The appeal process is expected to take approximately one year.

— 30 —

Attached: Bylaw Enforcement Policy for Erecting Temporary Shelter in Public Spaces

For More Information:

Katie Josephson
Manager, Corporate Communications
Telephone: 250.361.0210
Cellular: 250.217.8343