



DOWNTOWN VICTORIA REPORT HIGHLIGHTS PLIGHT OF BUSINESSES ACROSS BRITISH COLUMBIA

DVBA's Annual Report on Downtown highlights how all levels of government are failing BC communities

VANCOUVER, B.C (June 11, 2025) – Following the Downtown Victoria Business Association's (DVBA) release of its [2025 Report on Downtown](#), in which nearly half of the surveyed businesses said they would consider closing if they were not tied to their lease, Save Our Streets is echoing the organization's call on governments to start treating this as the crisis they have allowed it to become.

At its press conference in downtown Victoria this morning, DVBA CEO Jeff Bray said "Our call is simple: all levels of government must act now. No more studies. No waiting on perfect solutions. The focus must shift to supporting business owners, their staff, and their customers. The data is clear: downtown businesses cannot wait three to five more years. We need bold, immediate action in 2025, or we risk a wave of closures, job losses, and a dramatic erosion of downtown's vitality."

Among the notable finding of the survey, which received a record number of responses, were:

- 48 per cent of businesses would consider closing if their lease were up within the next 12 months;
- 39 per cent of businesses reported a decline in net profit over the past year;
- 69 per cent of respondents said they think crime has increased over the past year; and
- nearly 54% of businesses gave downtown a C+ or lower as a place to do business.

"Sadly, this report comes as no surprise to the members of Save Our Streets, who, like the DVBA's members are experiencing the ongoing chaos of retail theft, vandalism, open drug use, violence and other criminal activity on a daily basis," says Jess Ketchum, Co-founder, SOS. "Victoria is not only our Capital but an iconic, idyllic symbol of beautiful, safe, friendly British Columbia. We are allowing that global perception to be destroyed. Our *Communities Driving Change Forum* in January renewed the call for action from across the province, while also showing there are evidence-based approaches that are working elsewhere, and yet we are not seeing the investments being made to respond to these needs on a provincial basis."

In its report, the DVBA identified key advocacy priorities based on member feedback, including:

Municipal Government: 1. Enforce Bylaws Immediately and strengthen them if necessary to address the disorder caused by individuals sitting or camping on sidewalks with belongings scattered around. 2. Increase Police Presence Downtown to deter disorder and support bylaw enforcement.

Provincial Government: 1. Expand mental health and addiction services including mandatory care where appropriate. While permanent facilities are developed, implement temporary solutions such as treatment portables. 2. Strengthen the justice system by increasing funding to fully staff Crown prosecutors, sheriffs, court services, and jail/remand facilities. Use temporary infrastructure if necessary to detain and prosecute repeat offenders driving the majority of criminal activity.

Federal Government: Reform bail legislation, to allow the pretrial detention of repeat offenders charged with theft, violence, drug-related offences, and vandalism.

“These changes could significantly reduce street disorder in urban centres across British Columbia, so what are we waiting for,” says Ketchum. “We need our three levels of government to establish and implement a plan of action that addresses policing, the judicial system, housing and health care. The cost of not doing this will outweigh the cost of doing it right. The cost of continuing as we have, with pilot projects and ‘initial steps’ instead of real foundational change, will be so much higher and the damage to communities long-lasting and profound. It’s time our politicians stopped putting criminals first and started focusing more on the B.C. families, taxpayers, business owners, and the vulnerable living with addiction and mental illnesses, who are suffering the impacts of their inaction. Finally, where is the plan? What do we need in facilities and services? Where do we need them? When do we get them?”

About Save Our Streets

Save Our Streets is a coalition of 120-plus community and business organizations representing every corner of British Columbia. SOS members are committed to seeing governments bring order and public safety back to communities across British Columbia. Concerned citizen groups, and B.C. businesses interested in joining or supporting SOS are invited to submit online at SaveOurStreets.ca or contact info@saveourstreets.ca.

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