**MEDIA AVAILABILITY AND NEWS RELEASE**

**For Release Wednesday, July 28**

**Media Availability with DVBA Executive Director, Jeff Bray**

Date: Wednesday, July 28

Time: 9:30am to 11am

Location: Zingaro Floral Perfumery, 561 Johnson St #102

**DVBA Releases its Third Annual Report on Downtown**

Key facts from the report:

* 36% of downtown businesses have been operational for 20+ years
* Survey respondents credited loyal community support, changes to their business model (including e-commerce, delivery, and curbside pick-up/takeout), federal and provincial support programs, and staff remote work as some of the key reasons their businesses survived the COVID-19 pandemic
* 2020 retail vacancy rates were 6.4%, up from 3.1% in 2019, but the number of business licenses issued was only down by 1.5%
* The average business responding to our survey spent 62% more on crime reduction measures in 2020 than in 2019
* 85% of downtown businesses contribute financially to support community organizations; 16% of businesses donate $5000 or more as cash or in-kind donations
* Key negative impacts to downtown business vitality were identified by survey respondents as parking availability, followed by safety and security, and then perception of a clean downtown

**VICTORIA, BC**—The Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) proudly announces the release of their Third Annual Report on Downtown. The report paints a fact-based picture of downtown, using quantitative data to measure the economic vitality of downtown.

The second annual report was never finalized. The 2021 data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and became irrelevant when the business landscape changed drastically. This 2021 report highlights the impacts of the pandemic on the downtown business community.

Two key themes emerged for the report. First, safety and cleanliness are central issues for downtown businesses. Second, despite the pandemic, the resiliency of Victoria’s downtown businesses was stronger than many other downtowns in North America. Downtown’s small and medium sized business owners, their staff, and the tremendous efforts Greater Victorians to shop and support local all made a positive difference to our local economy.

Read the full report online at [www.dvba.ca/report](http://www.dvba.ca/report).

Quotes:

“This report identifies some challenges faced by downtown businesses,” says DVBA executive director, Jeff Bray, “but it also highlights the tremendous resiliency of our business community; and illustrates the success of our community’s dedication to supporting local!”

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Media inquiries are encouraged. Please contact:

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**Media Links**

* DVBA Website: www.downtownvictoria.ca
* DVBA Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DowntownVictoria>
* DVBA Instagram: [instagram.com/downtownvictoriabc/](https://www.instagram.com/downtownvictoriabc/)