ALMOST 40% OF BUSINESSES SAY THEY MAY NOT SURVIVE ANOTHER TWO YEARS IF STREET DISORDER AND PROPERTY CRIME EPIDEMIC CONTINUES

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Vancouver, BC – Businesses that are under siege by the epidemic of street disorder and property crime are sounding the alarm, suggested if the current situation is allowed to continue, as many as 40% face the prospect of closing over the next two years.

The findings are contained in a survey of more than 500 businesses in **Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Kelowna, Kamloops, Prince George, and Victoria** about the impact of street disorder and crime – and was conducted between October 24 and November 10.

- When asked to rank key issues of concern, 35% of businesses cite property crime and vandalism, 32% highlight homelessness and/or encampments as a key concern, followed by drug-related activity (17%) and violence and aggression (10%).

- When asked to rank how these issues of concern are impacting their business, almost 33% cited an increase in fear and anxiety at the top of the list, while 33% also report a loss of customers and street traffic/decreased revenue. Other key impacts include increased expenses associated with crime and vandalism (25%) and loss of employees/hiring challenges (8%).

- When asked if conditions regarding public safety and crime persist, what is the time frame the business can remain viable or continue operating successfully, almost 17% responded less than one year – a further 22% suggested two years.

"The fact that almost 40% of respondents indicate if the present conditions don't change in the next two years, that they may not be able to continue operating successfully or remain viable, underlines that we have a crisis on our hands," says Teri Smith, President of BIABC. "Businesses are waiting for our elected leaders to answer their call for urgent and collective action to deal with the untenable street issues and crime plaguing businesses in communities across the province."

In September, members of Business Improvement Areas of BC (BIABC) launched an urgent appeal to all three levels of government to deal with untenable street issues and crime plaguing communities across the province.

About the Business Improvement Areas of British Columbia:

Formed in 1991 to assist and promote the BIA movement in British Columbia, Business Improvement Areas of British Columbia (BIABC) is the provincial champion of strong, vibrant, and successful downtowns, main streets, and commercial districts throughout our province.

Our members together represent more than 70 business districts that employ hundreds of thousands of retail, service, and office employees within their defined business districts. Mostly small- and medium-sized businesses, they are part of maintaining your community's excellence and highest quality of livability.

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