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QuickPoint! – Green Shoots of Business Need Room to Blossom

By Vlad Yurlov

It's a bad sign when businesses need to fortify their storefronts to survive. But after the pandemic and lockdowns shuttered many Portland businesses, spiraling crime rates added to the damage. The Portland Police Bureau reports burglary and vandalism are up 35% over the past year. Reported arsons doubled.

Eager to re-open, many businesses are trying to beef up security by installing gates and more lighting. But Portland's lengthy and costly design review process has stood in the way. In response, the city council exempted lighting and security gates from design review to help what they call the "green shoots" of our economy.

It's encouraging to see the City of Portland recognize some of the harmful effects of design review laws. City council **should** treat its recent decision to relax rules as the first step toward removing all of its design review requirements. So often, the best way for government to allow green shoots to blossom into gardens is to simply get out of the way.

Vlad Yurlov is a Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research center.