



Historic District Commission Staff Report

50 Natoma Street, Council Chambers
Folsom, CA 95630

Project: Zoning Code Amendment to Allow Internally Illuminated Open Signs in the Sutter Street Subarea
File #: ZCAM25-00032
Request: Recommend City Council approval of Zoning Code Amendment
Location: Sutter Street Subarea of Historic District
Parcel(s): N/A
Staff Contact: Nathan Stroud, Assistant Planner, (916) 461-6220
nstroud@folsom.ca.us

Project Summary

The proposed zoning code amendment would allow for the use of small internally illuminated open signs in the Sutter Street Subarea of the Historic District, subject to certain design regulations, in order to address concerns by Sutter Street businesses discussed during the Historic District Commission workshop on June 5, 2024. These concerns included the lack of easily identifiable signage which would indicate whether a business was open or closed during the evening hours due to the prohibition on internal illumination. Staff have prepared a draft ordinance to allow for internally illuminated open signs, subject to certain design standards, at the request of the Historic District Commission.

Background

Folsom Municipal Code Section 17.52.510(E)(4) states that internally illuminated signage, including specifically neon signage, is not allowed in the Sutter Street Subarea within the Historic Commercial Primary Area of the Historic District. FMC 17.59.030(C) (applicable throughout the City) states that incidental signs, such as open/closed signs, and window signs that do not cover more than 25 percent of the window, are exempt from sign permit requirements; however, staff have traditionally not allowed these signs to be internally illuminated in the Sutter Street Subarea due to the prohibition on internal illumination.

In order to support local business during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), the City relaxed its enforcement activities on businesses for minor issues such as sign violations. After the end of the PHE, and as a result of complaints received regarding the appearance of several internally illuminated “Open” signs for businesses on Sutter Street, Code Enforcement sent the Folsom Historic District Association (FHDA) a fact sheet on sign requirements in the Historic District, which was distributed to all businesses within the subarea in early August 2023. At that time, staff asked FHDA to remind business owners



AGENDA ITEM NO. 3
Type: Public Hearing
Date: March 12, 2025

that internally illuminated signs, as well as unpermitted temporary banner signs were not allowed on Sutter Street and that City enforcement would begin shortly.

Code Enforcement and Planning staff also met with the Sutter Street Merchants' Association on August 24, 2023, to educate business owners about the sign regulations. Staff explained the regulations to the merchants but received many concerns about the prohibition on minor internally illuminated "Open" signs. Coming out of the COVID-19 PHE, many of the merchants felt that the internally illuminated open signs were important for their businesses to let the public know that they were now open again. This was especially the case for businesses located within buildings where their storefront was not directly facing the street. The merchants generally felt that the City was telling them what they could not do instead of supporting them as they tried to recover from the economic impact of the PHE.

On June 5, 2024, Planning staff presented a workshop to the Historic District Commission (HDC) to discuss the proliferation of the use of internally illuminated open signs in the Sutter Street Subarea since the COVID-19 PHE. As noted previously, internally illuminated signs are a prohibited sign type under Folsom Municipal Code Section 17.52.510(E)(4). During the HDC workshop, several Sutter Street business owners reiterated concerns regarding the prohibition of minor internally illuminated "Open" signs, and recommended that these types of minor signs be allowed, to support their businesses by clearly identifying which stores are open to customers, especially in the evening hours. These issues are discussed further in the analysis section of this report. The Commission requested that staff return with alternative internally illuminated open sign styles which may be acceptable in the Sutter Street Subarea of the Historic District in consideration of the concerns by local Sutter Street businesses.

On July 24, 2024, the FHDA submitted a letter to staff stating that if internally illuminated open signs are determined to be allowed in the Sutter Street Subarea, the association recommended that the allowed signage be limited to only solid white internal illumination, that blinking lights or colorful illumination not be allowed, and that the size be limited to no greater than 12" x 18" (1.5 square foot). The Historic Preservation League (HPL) submitted two letters in February and early March in opposition to the use of neon-type open signs and in support of more historic multi-bulb marquee signs.

Policy/Rule

Under FMC Section 17.52.120, amendments to FMC Chapter 17.52 require review by the Historic District Commission and a recommendation to the City Council. Under Section



CITY OF
FOLSOM
DISTINCTIVE BY NATURE

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3
Type: Public Hearing
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2.12 of the City Charter, amendments to the FMC require review and approval by the City Council.

Environmental Review

Under Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, this project is categorically exempt from CEQA since this involves a change to the sign standards of Chapter 17.52 of the Folsom Municipal Code. Regardless, the addition of small illuminated open signs at Sutter Street businesses would be categorically exempt under Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines as it is a minor alteration that involves no expansion of the use.

Recommendation

Staff respectfully requests that the Commission recommend City Council approval of the draft ordinance, provided in Attachment 7, to allow for the use of small, internally illuminated open signs in the Sutter Street Subarea of the Historic District, subject to specific design standards, based on the findings (Findings A-H) below.

Table of Contents

- 1 – Description/Analysis
- 2 – Internally Illuminated Open Signs in the Sutter Street Subarea
- 3 – Internally Illuminated Open Signs in other Historic Districts
- 4 – Historic Folsom Residents Association Recommendations
- 5 – Heritage Preservation League Letter
- 6 – Draft Sutter Street Subarea Open Sign Guide
- 7 – Draft Redlined Ordinance
- 8 – Clean Ordinance

Submitted,

PAM JOHNS
Community Development Director

ATTACHMENT 1 DESCRIPTION/ANALYSIS

Unique Circumstances of Sutter Street Businesses

As discussed during June 5, 2024, Historic District Commission workshop on internally illuminated open signs, business owners expressed concerns with the lack of visibility of their businesses, particularly in the evening hours. According to the business owners present, they noted the following challenges associated with not having illuminated open signs:

1. The lack of illumination for open signs in the evening hours makes it difficult for customers to identify which businesses are open or closed.
2. The inconsistency between the closing hours of businesses reduces the foot traffic for multi-tenant buildings, creating a need to better identify which businesses remain open.
3. The visibility issue in the evening is exacerbated for businesses which are located in interior courts in multi-tenant buildings, who have little to no frontage along Sutter street itself.

Given these circumstances, the Historic District Commission provided direction to staff to prepare a solution in order to address the concerns of businesses within the Sutter Street Subarea. As such, staff has proposed an ordinance which will allow for internally illuminated open signs of a certain size, type, illumination color, and design to be allowed for use for commercial uses in the Sutter Street Subarea. Staff believe that the ordinance as proposed would help support the businesses within the district in the evening hours while limiting the effect of internally illuminated signage on the historic character of the Sutter Street Subarea due to the restrictions on size, type of illumination, and colors.

Sign Illumination Standards of other Historic Districts

Staff also notes that the prohibition on internally illuminated open signs is unique to the Sutter Street Subarea of the Historic District. Aside from Nevada City's Historic District which prohibits internally illuminated signs, including neon, the Historic Districts of Auburn and Woodland explicitly allow for neon signs. Sacramento and Grass Valley also allow for internally illuminated signage in their historic district standards, and businesses within these historic districts have been found to use neon open signs. Several examples of internally illuminated open signs from each of these districts as well as others are provided in Attachment 3.

Addition to FMC 17.52.510(E) - Sutter Street Subarea Special Use and Design Standards; Signs

The intent of the amendment is to both address the concerns of Sutter Street business owners with evening visibility, while also ensuring that the amendment will not cause a detrimental effect to the historic character of the Historic District. If approved, the proposed amendment would allow each business in the subarea to use one open sign of a size no greater than 1.5 square feet, to be located in a window or door which may be nonilluminated, externally illuminated, or internally illuminated, subject to certain standards.

After review of the types of readily available internally illuminated open signs on the market, staff determined that most illuminated open signs were of a size ranging between 1 square foot and 1.5 square feet; thus, staff believe that a maximum size of 1.5 square feet was appropriate to allow for flexibility of choice for businesses when choosing an illuminated open sign. Additionally, this size would prohibit the use of excessively large signage which could detract from the historic character of the Sutter Street Subarea.

Furthermore, the proposed amendment would allow for both externally illuminated and internally illuminated open signs in addition to non-illuminated open signs. However, the provided illumination is restricted to red or orange colors in order to limit brightness and encourage historical consistency. Furthermore, multi-bulb signs would be prohibited due to the prevalence of modern LED multi-bulb signs on the market that would detract from the historic character of the subarea. Internal illumination is further limited to specifically neon and face-lit signage, and Neon-imitation signs which utilize LED tubes, which are more readily able on the market, will also be allowed under the ordinance. Allowing for illumination would address the concerns discussed in the previous section.

Neon as a type of sign illumination has been in use since the 1910s, with its use peaking during the 1930s and 1940s. Its colors were fairly limited to red-orange until the 1920s and 1930s when new technology allowed for the use of more diverse and vibrant colors. Since the peak use of neon is within the time period prescribed for the Historic District (1850 – 1950), staff is supportive of the use of neon as an option for open signs, limited to red and orange colors in order to be more consistent with the early 1900s to increase compatibility with the character of Sutter Street. Additionally, the use of red and orange colors also effectively limits the brightness of the signs, allowing for visibility in the evening hours without compromising the historic feel and appearance of Sutter Street. Examples of red neon signs in other historic districts are shown in Attachment 3, and an example is shown in Figure 1 below. Figure 2 below also shows a multicolored neon sign which would be prohibited by the draft ordinance as proposed.



Figure 1 - Red Neon Open Sign
(Grass Valley)

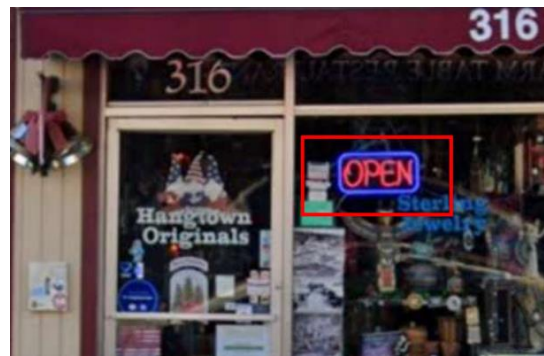


Figure 2 - Multi-Colored Neon Open Sign
(Placerville)

Face-lit open signs were also included in the approved types of open sign illumination since this form of illumination is readily available on the market and can provide an alternative to neon tube illumination. The limitation of the illumination red or orange color will also effectively limit the brightness of such signs and thus limit the impact on the historic character of the Sutter Street Subarea. Examples of an appropriate face-lit open sign are shown in Attachment 6 and in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3 - Appropriate Face-Lit Open Sign

Multi-bulb open signs which use multiple bulbs to create letters are proposed to be prohibited in the proposed zoning code amendment since the vast majority of readily available multi-bulb open signs on the market are modern LED multi-bulb signs with a modern appearance. Some examples of these signs are shown in Attachment 2 in Figure 4 below. Additionally, animated signs are also explicitly prohibited, as this would create a more modern effect that would detract from the historic character of the Sutter Street Subarea.



Figure 4 – Prohibited Modern Multi-Bulb Open Sign

Overall, the amendment will allow businesses on Sutter Street to identify whether their business is open or not. This change to the ordinance will allow for the use of open signs which are small, and which may use historically compatible types of illumination used during the 1850 – 1950 timeframe. Furthermore, staff is recommending limiting the illumination to red and orange colors since those colors are more historically compatible for the time period compared to other colors, and would limit the brightness of the open signs thus further preserving the historic character of the Sutter Street Subarea.

Examples of illuminated open signs which would be allowed or prohibited under the draft ordinance are shown in Attachment 6. This open sign guide may be modified and expanded by staff in the future consistent so long as those signs are consistent with the amended ordinance, and will serve as a reference for Sutter Street businesses.

Public Feedback

As noted earlier, staff received a letter from the Folsom Historic District Association (FHDA), provided in Attachment 4, in support of small internally illuminated open signs using white illumination. While staff initially considered allowing only white illuminated

signs, further research showed that the first neon signs of the 1910s were limited to red and orange colors, with other colors being developed later in the 1920s and 1930s. Since the Sutter Street Subarea is intended to preserve the existing pre-1900s design concept, with some allowances for post-1900 design, staff believed that adhering to the earliest neon colors would be more compatible with the historic character of the subarea. Additionally, as noted in the previous sections, the use of red and orange colors also limits the brightness of the sign used, which will help preserve the visual impact of the neon signs during the day while providing increased visibility during the evenings for businesses.

Staff had also received two letters from the Historic Preservation League (HPL), provided in Attachment 5, in opposition to the use of neon signs and recommended that staff prepare a package of sign standards for all signage in the Sutter Street Subarea rather than amending the code for just one type of signage. HPL preferred the use of wooden or metal marquee signs with naked light bulbs, and supported the use of internally illuminated signage so long as the signs utilized warm tones for illumination.

While staff acknowledges that marquee signs are associated with early illuminated signage for the early 1900s, these signs typically were used for the main sign of a commercial space, and not often used for small and minor signs, like open signs. Additionally, neon signs were more commonly used in the Sutter Street Subarea compared to marquee signs based on historical imagery from the 1920s-1950s. Practically speaking for business owners, historically appropriate marquee open signs are difficult to find, and most multi-bulb signs that are readily available are modern multi-bulb LED signs. Regarding the use of warm tones for internal illumination, staff believe that the restriction of illumination colors to red or orange colors is consistent with this recommendation for internally illuminated signage.

With regard to preparing a comprehensive update to signage for the Sutter Street Subarea, staff would like to do that, but staff does not have the resources to do that currently. Ideally, that would be done as part of the comprehensive update to FMC Chapter 17.52.

General Plan Goals and Policies

With regards to the City's General Plan which guides the physical, economic, and environmental growth of the City, the proposed project is consistent with the following General Plan goal and policies:

Goal LU 2.1

Develop and support thriving urban centers that serve as community gathering places.

GP Policy LU 2.1.1 (Historic Folsom)

Maintain the existing street fabric and pattern and enhance the tourist-oriented, historic commercial uses in the Historic Folsom commercial areas to preserve the unique character of Folsom's historic center and support local business.

The proposed project is consistent with this policy in that it will balance the preservation of the historic character of the Historic District with the needs of local businesses for

visibility in the evening hours through the use of sign illumination that imitates that used in the early 1900s.

Recommendation / Historic District Commission Action

Move to recommend City Council approval of the draft ordinance, provided in Attachment 7, to allow for the use of internally illuminated open signs in the Sutter Street Subarea of the Historic District, subject to specific design standards, based on the findings (Findings A-H) below.

GENERAL FINDINGS

- A. NOTICE OF HEARING HAS BEEN GIVEN AT THE TIME AND IN THE MANNER REQUIRED BY STATE LAW AND CITY CODE.
- B. THE ORDINANCE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE CITY.
- C. THE ORDINANCE SUPPORTS LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL BUSINESSES IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT IN PARTICULAR.

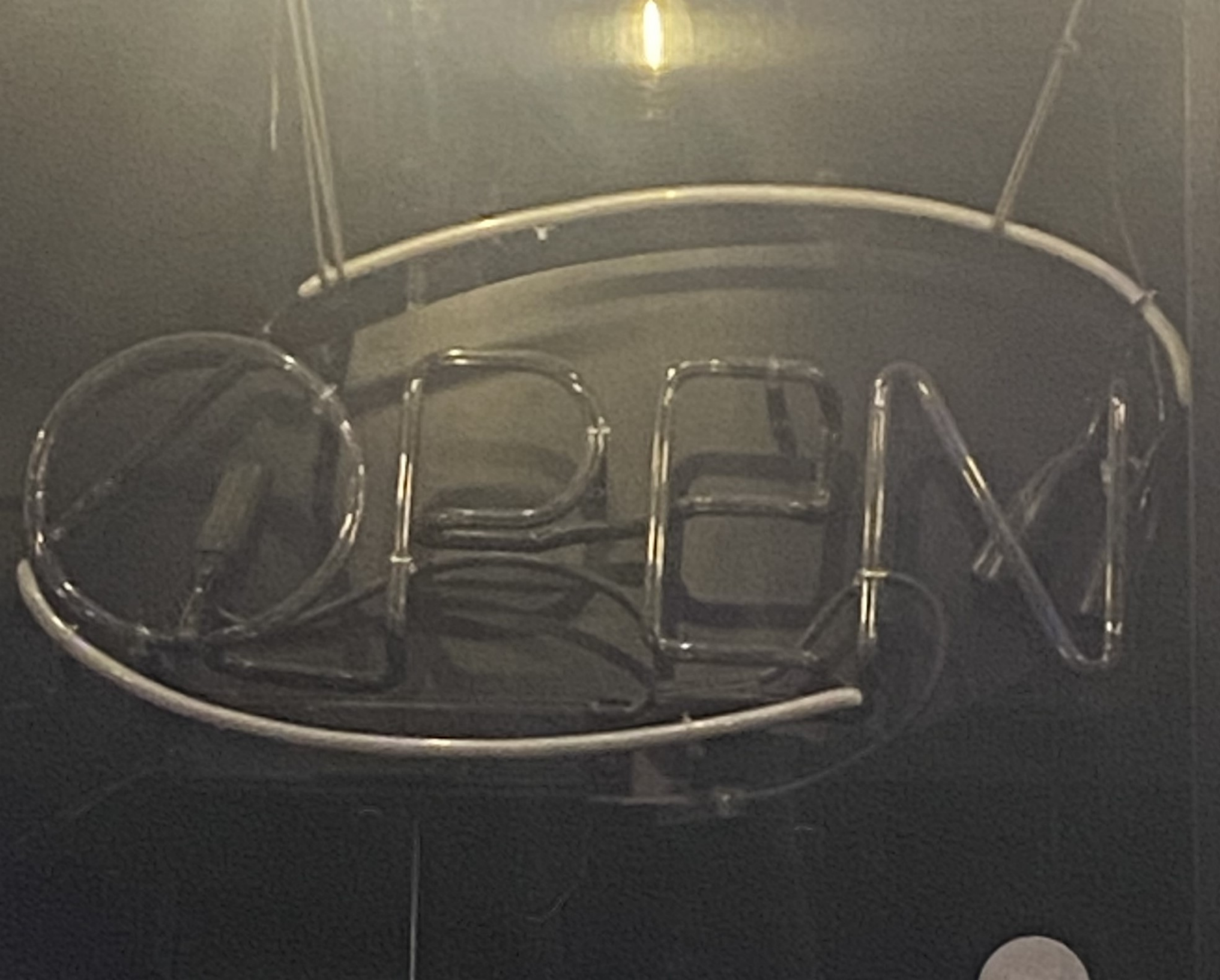
CEQA FINDINGS

- D. THE ORDINANCE IS EXEMPT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW UNDER SECTION 15061(B)(3) SINCE THE AMENDMENT OF THE ZONING CODE IS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION THAT DOES NOT RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.
- E. FURTHERMORE, ALLOWING SMALL ILLUMINATED OPEN SIGNS IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW UNDER CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15301(EXISTING FACILITIES) AS ALLOWING THIS TYPE OF SMALL SIGN INSTALLATION IS A MINOR ALTERATION OF A PRIVATE STRUCTURE AND INVOLVES NO EXPANSION OF THE USE.
- F. THERE ARE NO UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT EXIST TO DISTINGUISH THIS PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDMENT FROM OTHER EXEMPT ACTIONS.
- G. THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT IS NOT SIGNIFICANT IN THIS CASE.
- H. THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE WILL NOT CAUSE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE CHANGE IN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A HISTORICAL RESOURCE.

**Neon Open Signs in Sutter Street Subarea
(Attachment 2)**

open





OPEN

**Face-Lit Open Signs in Sutter Street Subarea
(Attachment 2)**



OPEN



OPEN

BUSINESS HOURS

MON 11:30 TO 9:00



OPEN



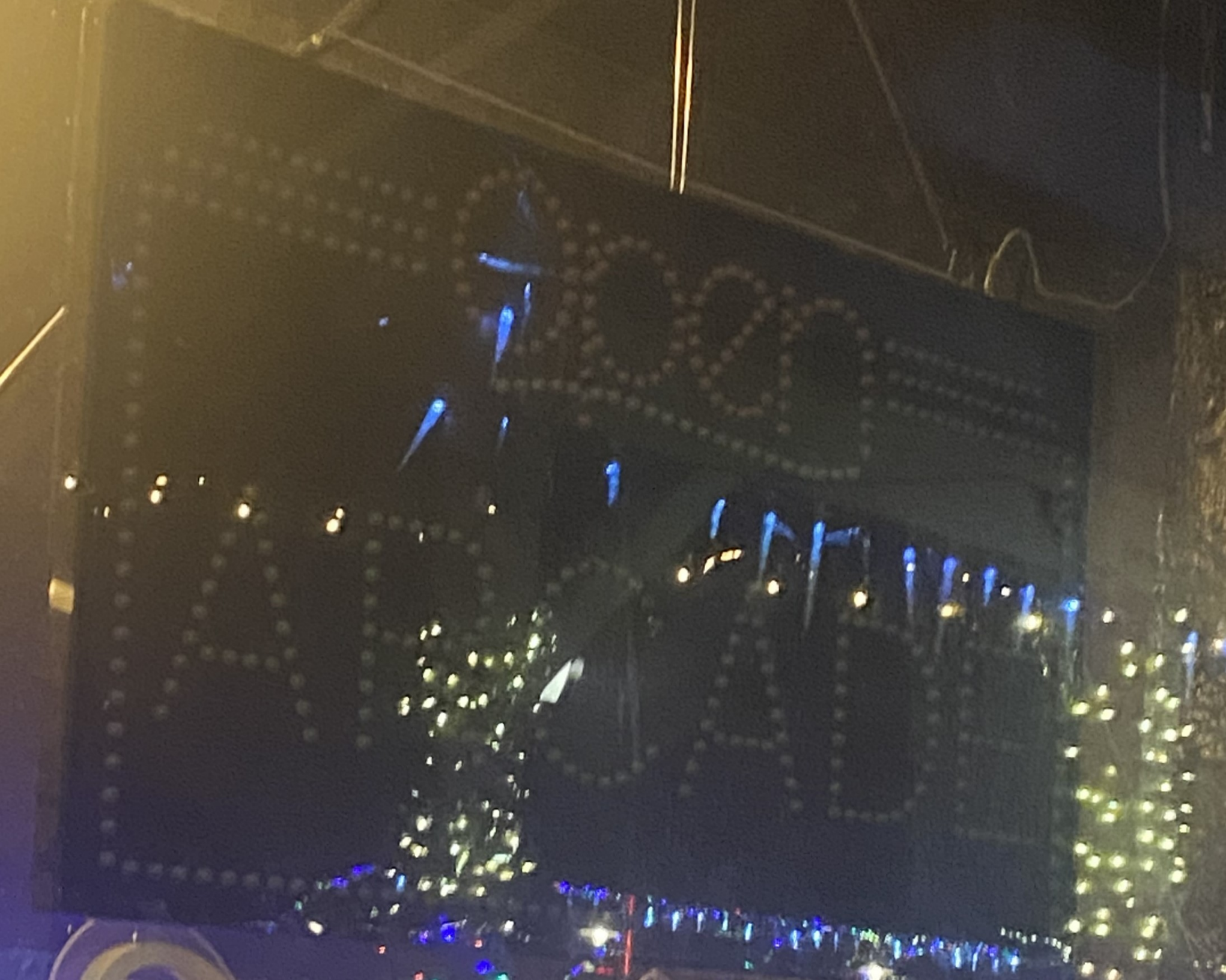
OPEN

BUSINESS HOURS

MON 11:30 TO 9:00

**Multi-Bulb Open Signs in Sutter Street Subarea
(Attachment 2)**





**Internally Illuminated Open Signs in
Old Town Sacramento
(Attachment 3)**

WILLIE'S

EST. 1989 • LOCAL

HAMBURGERS

• French Fries • Soft Drinks

Beignets!



OPEN

Chinese-West Medical Center

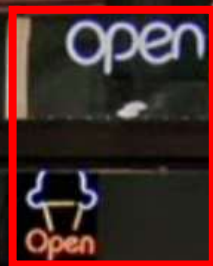
中西醫結合醫療中心

MASSAGE THERAPY
Reflexology Acupuncture

(916)
930-0808

OPEN

PASS



© 2022 Google

1037

OPEN



**Internally Illuminated Open Signs in
Downtown Placerville
(Attachment 3)**

MAN CAVE
PLACERVILLE

PLACERVILLE

SPORTS
AND MORE!

OPEN



Man Cave

316

316

OPEN

Hangtown
Originals

Sterling
Jewelry

Hand Carved
Gifts



THE FARM TABLE RESTAURANT

OPEN

NO
HOLIDAY
SEAT

Local & Imported Wine

Small & Large Plates



KITCHEN
OPEN

OPEN



Franz's
Farm Table
12-15 PM
12-15 PM
12-15 PM

Franz's
Farm Table
12-15 PM
12-15 PM
12-15 PM



Restaurante

CASCO

OPEN



Happy Holidays!



**Internally Illuminated Open Signs in
Historic Downtown Grass Valley
(Attachment 3)**



PEN

WINE BAR





Athletic Shoe Specialist

© 2023 Google



Professional Shoe Fitting

© 2023 Google

OPEN

110

OLD TOWN
Cafe



WELCOME
TO THE
GOLD COUNTRY

OLD TOWN
Cafe

Open
11:30 AM

HELP
WANTED

THE ALPHA BUILDING

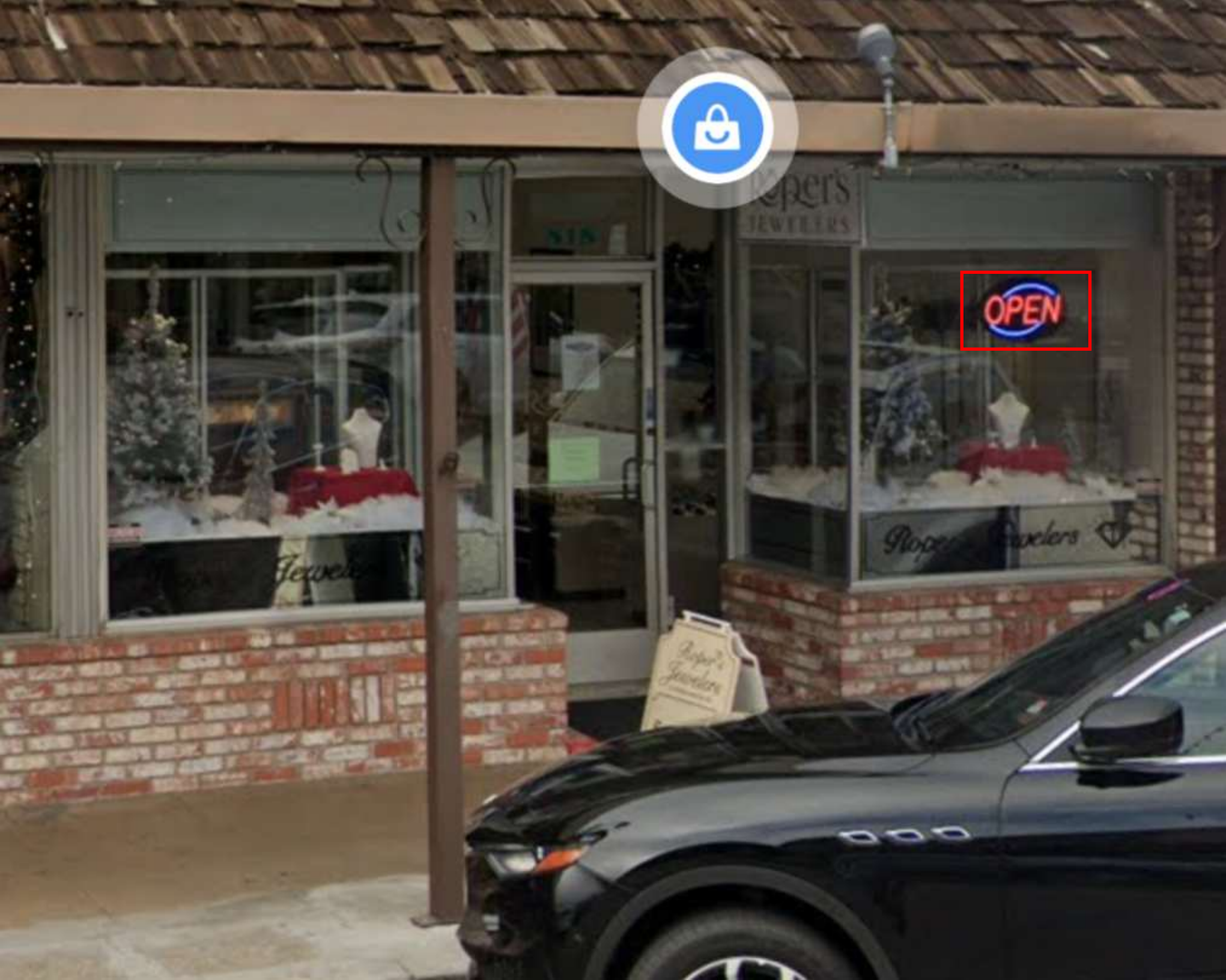
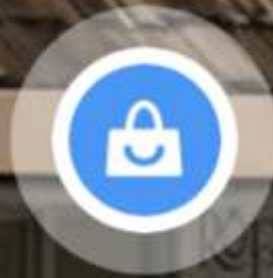


SIERRA HERITAGE
REALTY

TASTE OF TREAT

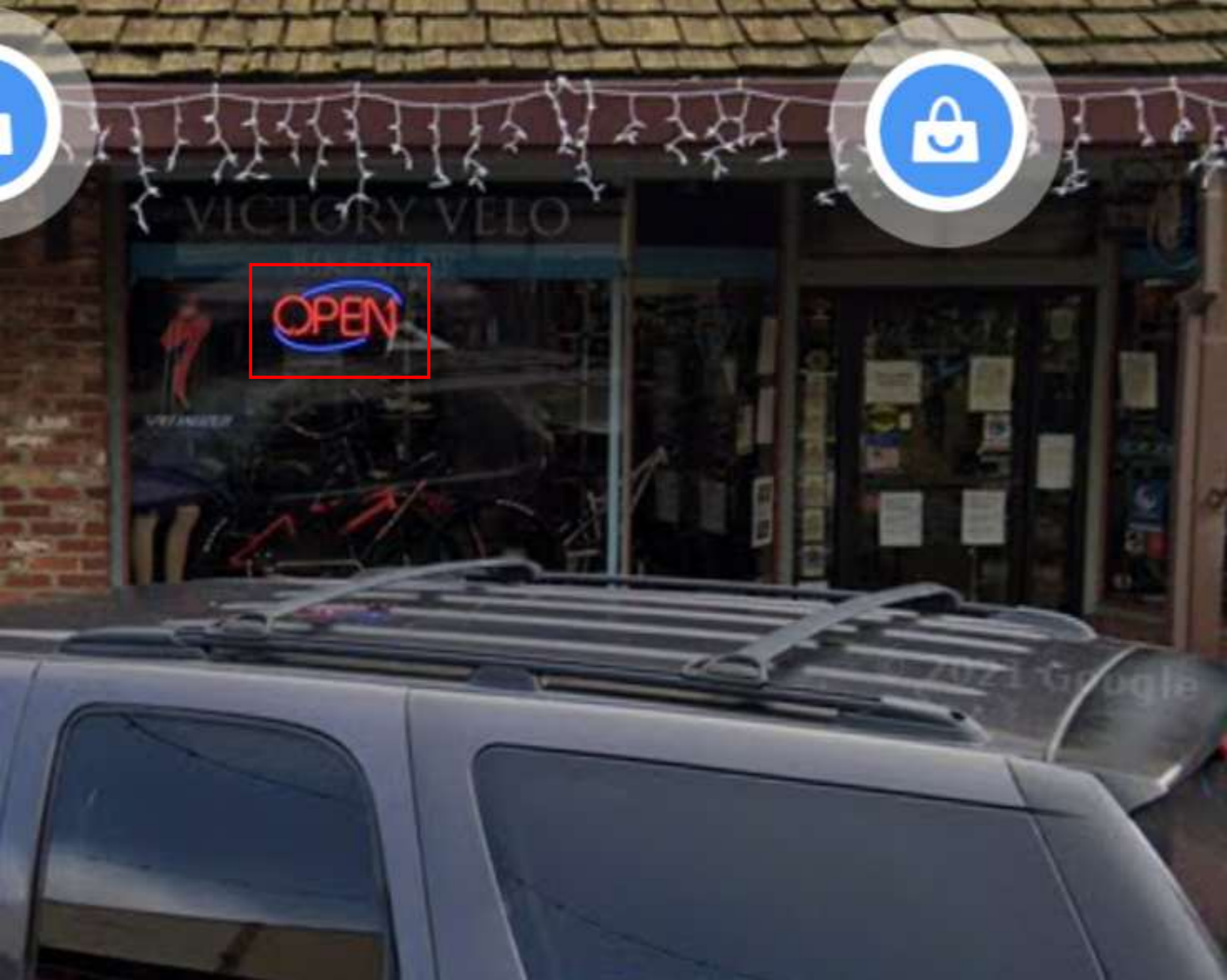
OPEN

**Internally Illuminated Open Signs in
Old Auburn Historic District
(Attachment 3)**





OPEN



OPEN

**Historic Folsom Residents Association
Recommendations
(Attachment 4)**

Nathan Stroud

From: Judy Collinsworth <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, November 21, 2024 7:58 PM
To: Nathan Stroud
Subject: Re: Neon Signs
Attachments: possible alternatives.docx

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Nathan,

D came in first and then E.

The board also liked the idea of simply saying: Your OPEN sign must be static - white only and then give dimensions that are acceptable. We would be very happy with any of these options.

Judy Collinsworth
Executive Director
Folsom Historic District Association
PO Box 515
200 Wool St
Folsom, CA 95630
[REDACTED]



A. \$80.00



B. \$39 (19 x 8)



C. \$140



D. \$169 #1



E. \$84. #2



F. \$85

**Heritage Preservation League Letters
(Attachment 5)**

HERITAGE PRESERVATION LEAGUE OF FOLSOM

DISCUSSION POINTS REGARDING DRAFT SIGN ORDINANCE

February 25, 2025

- ORDINANCE:** Permitting the use of internally illuminated 'Open' signs in the Sutter Street Subarea.
- STAFF REPORT:** Staff will present the Ordinance to City Council for approval.
- SCHEDULE:** Notification provided by City planning staff on February 18, 2025.
Presentation to Historic District Commission scheduled for March 12th.
City Council hearing date to be determined.

SIGNS IN THE SUTTER STREET SUBAREA

General Comment

Sign requirements for the Sutter Street Subarea are specified in the Municipal Code (17.52.510) and further described in the Design & Development Guidelines for the Historic District (Chapter 4 and 5). However, many existing signs do not meet the existing design criteria. The proposed new Ordinance is only addressing 'Open' signs.

Existing Standards

Open signs are normally interior window signs. When these signs are smaller than one square-foot, they are exempt from design review. However, the general restriction against internally illuminated signs and neon signs applies to all signs in the Subarea. In the past, it has been generally accepted that these limitations were necessary to preserve Historic Folsom's image of a small foothill town from the early days of California. It is HPL's opinion that it is important to maintain this restriction.

Marquee Signs

Marquee signs of wood or metal were in use during the early part of the 1900's, before canned or neon signs were available. Because the sign letters on marquee signs are illuminated by small naked bulbs, the overall impression is compatible with signs from the late 1900's. HPL suggests that staff should consider an Ordinance that will permit the use of marquee-type open signs, in-lieu of the proposed internally illuminated signs. These signs should be located inside windows and not along the exterior of the shops.

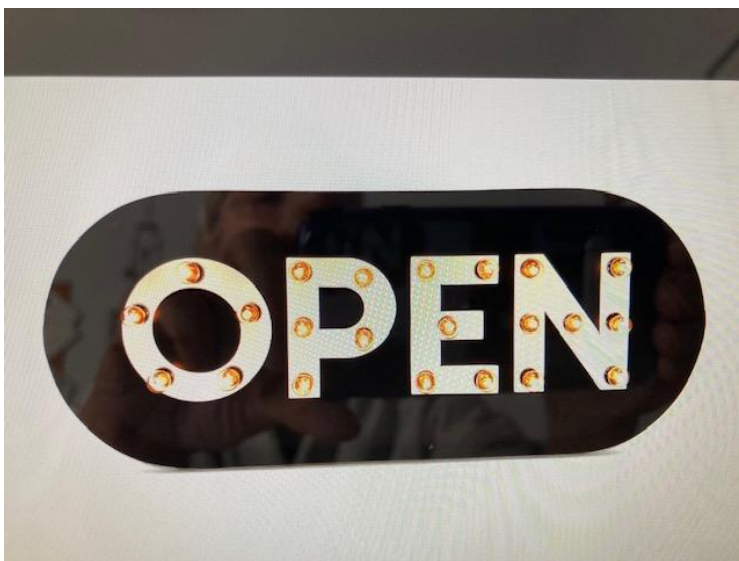
HPL'S SIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to prohibit all internally illuminated and neon signs in the Sutter Street Subarea.
2. Consider permitting smaller, interior, marquee-type 'open' signs in the Sutter Street Subarea.

In addition, HPL believes that it would be beneficial if staff could prepare a complete sign-package for the Sutter Street Subarea, rather than processing one type of sign individually.



Marquee Sign #1



Marquee Sign #2

**HERITAGE PRESERVATION LEAGUE OF FOLSOM
DISCUSSION POINTS REGARDING DRAFT SIGN ORDINANCE
RESPONSE TO STAFF'S FEEDBACK 02.28.25**

February 30, 2025

ORDINANCE: Permitting the use of internally illuminated and exposed neon 'Open' signs in the Sutter Street Subarea.

STAFF REPORT: Staff will present the Ordinance to City Council for approval.

SUBJECT: City planning staff has clarified that the draft sign ordinance will include exposed neon 'Open' signs (in addition to internally illuminated 'Open' signs)

SCHEDULE: Presentation to the Historic District Commission has been scheduled for March 12th.

SIGNS IN THE SUTTER STREET SUBAREA

General Comment

The Design & Development Guidelines specifies that signs in the Sutter Street Subarea should be ...*'directed primarily towards pedestrian, not vehicular traffic'*... [see DDG's 5.02.01(d)(3)]. This guideline is consistent with the prohibition of bright signs, intended to be visible from a distance (including neon, internally illuminated and 'day-glo' signs).

Neon Signs

The early history of neon started in Paris, France (Paris Auto Show in 1910). However, in the early 1900's electricity was still a novelty in the Sacramento Area and neon light was not an option. Exposed neon coils of any color will therefore clash with the Design Criteria for the Sutter Street Subarea.

Marquee Signs

Before canned or neon signs were available, marquee signs provided a greater visual impact. Because these signs are illuminated by small, uncovered light bulbs, they could be considered compatible with externally illuminated signs. However, it is HPL's opinion that marquee signs would not be appropriate along exterior facades.

Internally Illuminated Signs

The first internally illuminated signs were wood boxes with small internal light bulbs. The sign copy was painted on a translucent sheet of glass. This type of sign could also be considered compatible with externally illuminated signs, provided that the light source has a warm tone.

HPL'S SIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to prohibit the use of neon in the Sutter Street Subarea.
2. Consider permitting the following 'open' signs for interior use:
 - a) small marquee signs with exposed light bulbs and a warm tone of light',
 - b) small box signs with internal light bulbs and a warm tone of light.

Because the Zoning Code Update will not be completed for some time, the ordinance may also need to address letter fonts, the size of 'open' signs and the overall limit of window coverage.



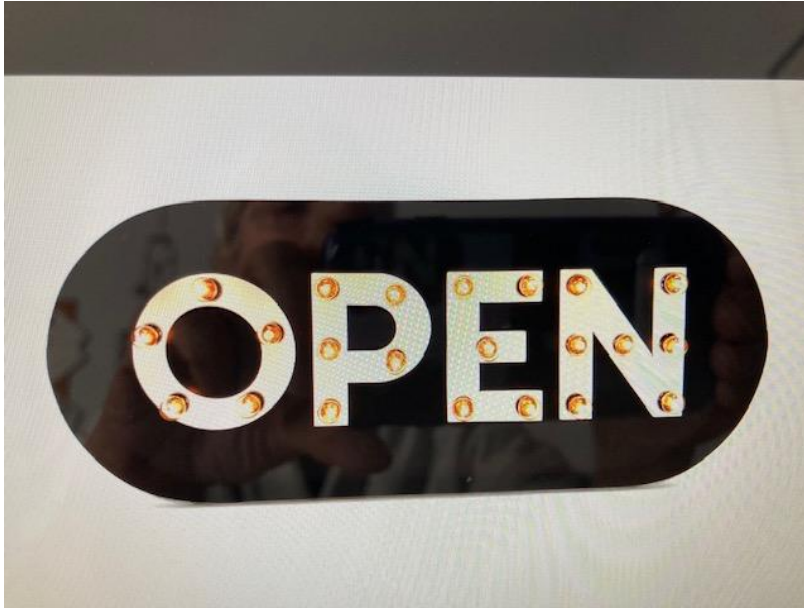
Internal Illumination #1



Internal Illumination #2



Marquee Sign #1



Marquee Sign #2

**Draft Sutter Street Subarea Open Sign Guide
(Attachment 6)**



Historic District Guide: Approved Illuminated “Open” Signs

Illuminated “Open” Signs

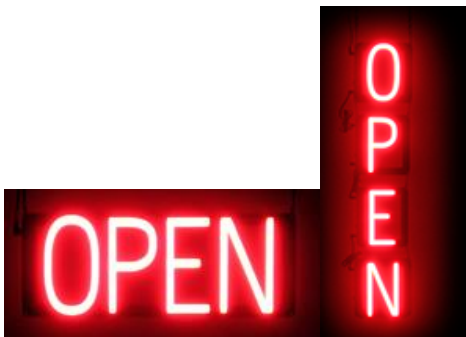
One “Open” sign of a size less than 1.5 square feet is allowed per business in the Sutter Street Subarea, and will count towards the overall 25% window coverage maximum requirement. No Sign Permit is required for “Open” signs.

Nonilluminated and Externally Illuminated “Open” signs are the preferred option in the Historic District.

Illumination for “Open” signs is limited to red and orange hues, including for neon-tube, face-lit, and externally illuminated “Open” signs. “Open” Signs with simple designs are encouraged.

Signs which utilize multiple bulbs to create letters or shapes are prohibited in the Sutter Street Subarea.

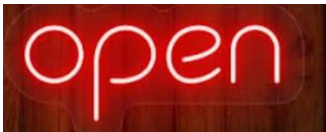
Appropriate Neon “Open” Signs



No Restrictions on Orientation



Red or Orange Hues Allowed for Illumination



No Restrictions on Front



Minor Decorative Elements and Words Allowed



Illuminated Open Signs

One "Open" sign of a size less than 1.5 square feet is allowed per business in the Sutter Street Subarea, and will count towards the overall 25% window coverage maximum requirement. No Sign Permit is required for "Open" signs.

Nonilluminated and Externally Illuminated "Open" signs are the preferred option in the Historic District.

Illumination for "Open" signs is limited to red and orange hues, including for neon-tube, face-lit, and externally illuminated "Open" signs. "Open" Signs with simple designs are encouraged.

Signs which utilize multiple bulbs to create letters or shapes are prohibited in the Sutter Street Subarea.

Appropriate Face-Lit "Open" Signs



Red or Orange Hues Allowed for Illumination



Illuminated Open Signs

One “Open” sign of a size less than 1.5 square feet is allowed per business in the Sutter Street Subarea, and will count towards the overall 25% window coverage maximum requirement. No Sign Permit is required for “Open” signs.

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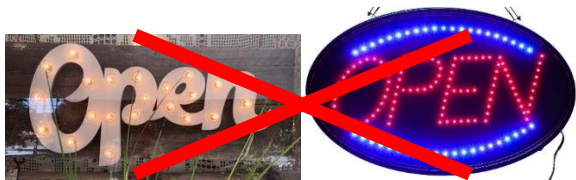
Inappropriate Illuminated “Open” Signs



Colors other than Red or Orange Hues are Prohibited



Elements which Advertise Business, Products, Services are Prohibited



Open Signs which use multiple bulbs to create letters or shapes are Prohibited



Animated Open Signs Are Prohibited

**Draft Redlined Ordinance
(Attachment 7)**

ORDINANCE NO. 0000

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FOLSOM AMENDING SECTION 17.52.510(E) OF THE FOLSOM MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW FOR THE USE OF INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED OPEN SIGNS IN THE SUTTER STREET SUBAREA OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The City Council of the City of Folsom does hereby ordain as follows:

SECTION 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to amend the Folsom Municipal Code to allow for the use of certain internally illuminated open signs in the Sutter Street Subarea of the Historic District.

SECTION 2 AMENDMENT TO CODE

Section 17.52.510(E) of the Folsom Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.52.510 Sutter Street Subarea Special Use and Design Standards

E. Signs

1. Each business whose entry door is located in the building frontage is permitted 1 wall or window sign. A business whose entry is located within an internal mall or corridor may utilize a nameplate incorporated in a wall sign for the entire building. The length of a wall sign may not exceed 75 percent of the shop's frontage. The total of all window signage may not cover more than 25 percent of the window. Wall signs shall be designed and installed with minimal space between the planes of the wall and of the sign. Businesses with frontage on more than one street and/or public parking lot may place a wall or window sign on each frontage, with subsequent signs to be no larger than half the size specified for the first sign and subject to the other requirements of the first sign.
2. Signs are permitted to be hung under a canopy, but shall not exceed 3 square feet in size with a minimum of 8 feet clearance from the sidewalk in addition to any permitted wall or window signs. Businesses without a canopy may utilize a projecting sign of the same size and clearance for this purpose. The historic district commission may approve an increase in the size of the under-canopy or projecting sign in exchange for a reduction in size of the wall or window sign.
3. Signs exempt in Chapter 17.59 are exempt in this subarea except as follows:

- a. On-site directional signs are not exempt unless 2 square feet or smaller and, if freestanding, no higher than 2 feet, including base;
 - b. Exempt real-estate signs do not require a setback from public right-of-way; and
 - c. Window or door signs 1 square foot in size or larger and under-canopy signs are not exempt. Window or door signs smaller than 1 square foot are exempt but subject to the overall requirement regarding window coverage.
4. In addition to those signs prohibited in Chapter 17.59, the following signs are prohibited in this subarea, **except as expressly provided in this section:**
- a. Neon;
 - b. Internally illuminated;
 - c. Backlit canopies; and
 - d. Corporate flags.
5. **Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, each business is permitted to have one “Open” sign, subject to the following standards:**
- a. **Size is no greater than 1.5 square feet.**
 - b. **Located indoors, placed on a window or door.**
 - c. **Does not include logos, symbols, or trade names, and shall bear only information indicating if and when the business is open or closed.**
 - d. **Nonilluminated, externally illuminated, or internally illuminated “Open” signs are allowed.**
 - e. **If internally illuminated, illumination is limited to face-lit, neon-tube, and similar types of illumination.**
 - f. **If illumination is used, colors for external and internal illumination shall be limited to red or orange colors.**
 - g. **The use of multiple bulbs to create letters or shapes are prohibited.**
 - h. **Animated signs are prohibited.**
- 5.6. Freestanding signs are not permitted, unless the historic district commission determines that the exclusive use of wall signage at a particular location is ineffective. The historic district commission may require a reduction in the amount of wall signage otherwise allowed to compensate for the use of a freestanding sign.
- 6.7. Buildings with multiple tenants shall be required to submit a uniform signage program (USP) for historic district commission approval. After a USP is approved, tenant sign permits shall be reviewed and approved by the planning, inspections and permitting director.

SECTION 3 SCOPE

Except as set forth in this ordinance, all other provisions of the Folsom Municipal Code shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 4 SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase in this Ordinance or any part thereof is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, invalid, or ineffective by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of the remaining portions of this Ordinance or any part thereof. The City Council declares that it would have passed each section irrespective of the fact that any one or more section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase be declared unconstitutional, invalid, or ineffective.

SECTION 5 EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days from and after its passage and adoption, provided it is published in full or in summary within twenty (20) days after its adoption in a newspaper of general circulation in the City.

This ordinance was introduced and the title thereof read at the regular meeting of the City Council on xxx xx, 2025 and the second reading occurred at the regular meeting of the City Council on xxxx xx, 2025.

On a motion by Councilmember _____ seconded by Councilmember _____, the foregoing ordinance was passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Folsom, State of California, this XX day of XXXX, 2025, by the following roll-call vote:

AYES: Councilmember(s):
NOES: Councilmember(s):
ABSENT: Councilmember(s):
ABSTAIN: Councilmember(s):

Sarah Aquino, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Christa Freemantle, CITY CLERK

**Clean Ordinance
(Attachment 8)**

ORDINANCE NO. 0000

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FOLSOM AMENDING SECTION 17.52.510(E) OF THE FOLSOM MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW FOR THE USE OF INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED OPEN SIGNS IN THE SUTTER STREET SUBAREA OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The City Council of the City of Folsom does hereby ordain as follows:

SECTION 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to amend the Folsom Municipal Code to allow for the use of certain internally illuminated open signs in the Sutter Street Subarea of the Historic District.

SECTION 2 AMENDMENT TO CODE

Section 17.52.510(E) of the Folsom Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.52.510 Sutter Street Subarea Special Use and Design Standards

E. Signs

1. Each business whose entry door is located in the building frontage is permitted 1 wall or window sign. A business whose entry is located within an internal mall or corridor may utilize a nameplate incorporated in a wall sign for the entire building. The length of a wall sign may not exceed 75 percent of the shop's frontage. The total of all window signage may not cover more than 25 percent of the window. Wall signs shall be designed and installed with minimal space between the planes of the wall and of the sign. Businesses with frontage on more than one street and/or public parking lot may place a wall or window sign on each frontage, with subsequent signs to be no larger than half the size specified for the first sign and subject to the other requirements of the first sign.
2. Signs are permitted to be hung under a canopy, but shall not exceed 3 square feet in size with a minimum of 8 feet clearance from the sidewalk in addition to any permitted wall or window signs. Businesses without a canopy may utilize a projecting sign of the same size and clearance for this purpose. The historic district commission may approve an increase in the size of the under-canopy or projecting sign in exchange for a reduction in size of the wall or window sign.
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 - a. Neon;
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 - d. Corporate flags.
5. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, each business is permitted to have one “Open” sign, subject to the following standards:
 - a. Size is no greater than 1.5 square feet.
 - b. Located indoors, placed on a window or door.
 - c. Does not include logos, symbols, or trade names, and shall bear only information indicating if and when the business is open or closed.
 - d. Nonilluminated, externally illuminated, or internally illuminated “Open” signs are allowed.
 - e. If internally illuminated, illumination is limited to face-lit, neon-tube, and similar types of illumination.
 - f. If illumination is used, colors for external and internal illumination shall be limited to red or orange colors.
 - g. The use of multiple bulbs to create letters or shapes are prohibited.
 - h. Animated signs are prohibited.
6. Freestanding signs are not permitted, unless the historic district commission determines that the exclusive use of wall signage at a particular location is ineffective. The historic district commission may require a reduction in the amount of wall signage otherwise allowed to compensate for the use of a freestanding sign.
7. Buildings with multiple tenants shall be required to submit a uniform signage program (USP) for historic district commission approval. After a USP is approved, tenant sign permits shall be reviewed and approved by the planning, inspections and permitting director.

SECTION 3 SCOPE

Except as set forth in this ordinance, all other provisions of the Folsom Municipal Code shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 4 SEVERABILITY

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase in this Ordinance or any part thereof is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, invalid, or ineffective by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of the remaining portions of this Ordinance or any part thereof. The City Council declares that it would have passed each section irrespective of the fact that any one or more section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase be declared unconstitutional, invalid, or ineffective.

SECTION 5 EFFECTIVE DATE

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On a motion by Councilmember _____ seconded by Councilmember _____, the foregoing ordinance was passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Folsom, State of California, this XX day of XXXX, 2025, by the following roll-call vote:

AYES: Councilmember(s):
NOES: Councilmember(s):
ABSENT: Councilmember(s):
ABSTAIN: Councilmember(s):

Sarah Aquino, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Christa Freemantle, CITY CLERK