



CITY OF CHICO OFFICIAL PLANNING DIRECTOR INTERPRETATION

Authority: **Chico Municipal Code Section 19.02.030 (Procedures for Interpretations)**

Applicable Code Sections: **Table 5-8 of Municipal Code Section 19.74.120.E -- Signs Permitted in the CN (Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District**

Discussion: The above cited Table indicates that wall and monument-type Business Identification signs in the CN district may or may not, depending upon the type of business being identified, be internally illuminated. Specifically, the Table states that for all businesses other than Gas Stations, such signage may be lit only by an indirect source.

Signs for Gas Stations may, in contrast, be lit by any means permitted by the Code, which includes internal illumination. The Table thus regulates signs in the CN district according to their content (i.e., whether or not the verbiage on the sign relates to a Gas Station), and not by their design. Regulations of this nature raise certain Constitutional issues, and may not be defensible.

Interpretation:

With respect to Business Identification signage, Table 5-8 of Code Section 19.74.120.E is hereby determined to permit lighting of signs for all businesses in accordance with applicable Code requirements. This determination may thus permit signs for businesses other than Gas Stations to be internally illuminated.

It is with this determination stressed that all signs in Chico are subject to Site Design and Architectural Review as established in Chapter 19.18 of the Code. It is further stressed that the approval of a sign permit for any business must be consistent with the purpose of the City's sign regulations, as established by Code Section 19.74.010.

While this determination makes possible a wider range of alternatives for the lighting of signs in the CN district, it should not be interpreted to mean that internal illumination is appropriate in all cases; limiting such lighting to indirect sources may be necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the City's Design Guidelines and the purposes of its sign regulations.

This Official Interpretation is effective immediately and will require an amendment to Title 19 Land Use and Development Regulations.


Mark Wolfe, AICP, Planning Services Director

Date: December 14, 2011