



Staff Report

Strategic Initiatives

Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: May 26, 2025
Report Number: SI.25.018
Title: Gateway and Wayfinding Design Concept Follow-up
Prepared by: Allan Gibbons, Manager of Communications and Customer Service

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.018, entitled "Gateway and Wayfinding Design Concept Follow-up";

AND THAT Council selects concept design option _____ for the Town Gateway signage and concept design option _____ for Town, Community & Hamlet signage;

AND THAT Council directs staff to proceed with the selected design options and to work with Fathom Studios to refine the selected designs based on feedback received;

AND THAT Council directs staff to prepare a report detailing the fabrication and implementation plan, including considerations related to implementation phasing, sign placement and funding sources.

B. Overview

This report provides Council with the concept design options developed by Fathom Studio for the Town's Gateway and Wayfinding Signage project.

C. Background

The Town is undertaking a refresh and update of its welcome signs and community entrance signs. The project goal is to design a uniform sign program that will instill a strong sense of character and identity throughout the Town of The Blue Mountains, establish a clear and identifiable hierarchy of signs and reduce gaps and omissions in existing Town signage.

On February 24, 2025, Town staff presented report [SI.25.007 "Gateway and Wayfinding Engagement Summary"](#) to the Committee of the Whole, which detailed the findings of the feedback received through public engagement regarding design preferences for the signs. The public engagement process included an online public questionnaire, design concept meetings

with the residents and local business associations, one-on-one interviews with members of Council and an engagement table set up in the atrium of Town Hall.

Following the report, Town Staff were directed to proceed with the design drafts of Town Gateway & Wayfinding signage and present the concept designs back to Council for consideration.

Through feedback and based on their industry expertise, Fathom Studios worked with Town staff to develop two concept options for Town Gateway Signage and two concept options for Community & Hamlet signage.

D. Analysis

The concept designs presented in Attachment #1 were the result of a fulsome development process between Town staff and Fathom Studio. Using the feedback received from public engagement sessions, two separate gateway designs were created, and two separate community and hamlet designs were created.

Many suggestions were received through consultation about what the community would like to see reflected and incorporated into the design of the signs. Through discussions with Fathom Studios, each suggestion was reviewed and considered based on both design best practices and technical fabrication requirements. Through this process, the achievable design goals were refined and determined to be:

- Distinction
- Reflect rural aspect
- Not too loud or showy
- Rustic & Modern
- Cost effective & easy to maintain
- Unify the communities within The Blue Mountains

Additional goals that were not included were goals that asked for nuance or storytelling, concepts that are difficult to convey in the three to five seconds that a driver has while approaching and passing gateway signage.

It's also important to note that longevity and durability were key factors considered within the recommended materials. The goal is to fabricate a sign that withstands the elements and is suited for the community.

Concept #1

The first concept embraces the verticality of The Blue Mountains. The metal profiles of the Gateway Signage reflect the fresh corduroy pattern of a recently groomed run, the embodiment of new beginnings. The wooden base and accompanying natural materials show homage to the natural, rural features of the Town. The sloped planter box represents the escarpment as it runs towards Georgian Bay.

The community and hamlet signage were designed to incorporate the iconography of the Town using the escarpment and the bay alongside vertical slats of wood to once again represent the verticality of the community. Feedback from Council was clear that the signs should distinctly identify all communities as being a part of the Town of The Blue Mountains, which was included with the green stripe at the bottom to be distinctive and attract the viewer's eye.

Concept #2

Concept number two is a more traditional gateway sign that embraces The Blue Mountains icons, including the escarpment, the bay and the colour blue, along with the rustic wood posts that adorn both sides and the natural material that would make up the base of the sign. Leaving the top of the sign 'open' is a way to incorporate the beautiful natural scenery that is prevalent across the Town.

The community and hamlet signage are similar to the gateway signage with common design aspects, iconography and branding, but these would be fully framed in, evoking a postcard feel that allows the natural scenery to be included through the open frame at the top of the sign.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

No direct environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

G. Financial Impacts

Staff have received the following high-level estimated fabrication prices for the sign design concepts.

- Gateway Signs: \$40,000 - \$50,000 per sign
- Community Entrance Signs: \$20,000 - \$25,000 per sign
- Village/Hamlet Signs: \$10,000 - \$20,000 per sign

These prices are ballpark estimates based on industry knowledge and experience. It is also important to highlight that the prices will vary based on the confirmed materials and location-specific conditions.

To outline the steps forward, staff included direction within the recommended motion for staff to prepare a report detailing the fabrication and implementation plan, including considerations related to implementation phasing, sign placement and funding sources.

In addition, staff plan to present a project budget to Council as part of the budget process. Subject to budget approval, accurate pricing will be confirmed through a formal tender process completed in coordination with the Purchasing Department.

Additionally, staff have started the location and implementation planning process to determine potential sign locations. As detailed in the recommended motion, staff plan to present a report outlining the phased fabrication plan, sign installation locations and funding sources.

The fabrication and installation of signs may be funded through various sources, including taxation, the Town's portion of the Municipal Accommodation Tax or department-specific reserves, such as Parks and Trails. Future costs associated with sign fabrication and installation will be presented to Council through the annual budget process.

H. In Consultation With

Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Allan Gibbons, Manager of Communications and Customer Service, si@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. Gateway and Community Entrance Sign Concept Designs

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Gibbons,
Manager of Communications and Customer Service

For more information, please contact:

communications@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 266

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SI.25.018 Gateway and Wayfinding Design Concept Follow-up.docx
Attachments:	- Gateway-and-Community-Entrance-Sign-Concept-Designs.pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 14, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tim Hendry - May 14, 2025 - 12:05 PM

Town of The Blue Mountains

Gateway and community signage

Council presentation

May 26, 2025

Agenda

01 **Project goals**

02 **Concept one**

03 **Concept two**

04 **Concept summary**

05 **Questions**

06 **Next steps**

Project goals

Project goals / asks

Distinction from the neighbours / Reflect rural & heritage aspect / Show unique characters & personalities / Not too loud or showy / Custom illustrations / Rustic & modern / Express interesting themes / Established dates / Cost effective & easy to maintain / Taglines / Unify the communities

Effective achievable goals

**Distinction from the neighbours / Reflect rural
& heritage aspect / Show unique characters &
personalities / Not too loud or showy / Custom
illustrations / Rustic & modern / Express interesting
themes / Established dates / Cost effective & easy
to maintain / Taglines / Unify the communities**

Constraint

The average driver will only have about 3 to 5 seconds to view a sign, read any text, and comprehend the message.

Your gateway signs need to communicate their ideas extremely quickly. The place for nuanced stories is elsewhere.

Recommendation

Your logo, its colours and typography, are similar to other municipalities in the region. The gateway sign is the opportunity to differentiate yourselves from nearby municipalities—and for this, bold and unique are best.

Concept one

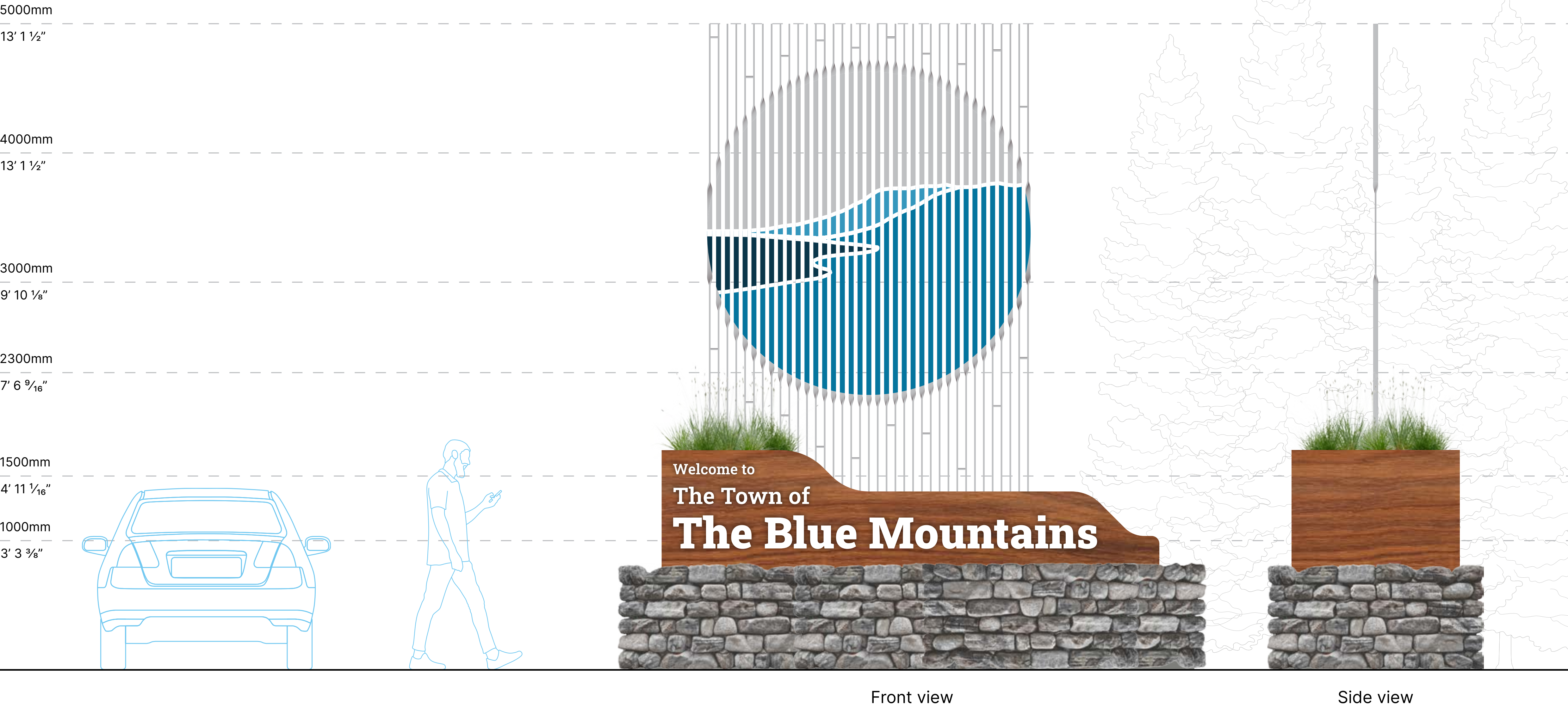


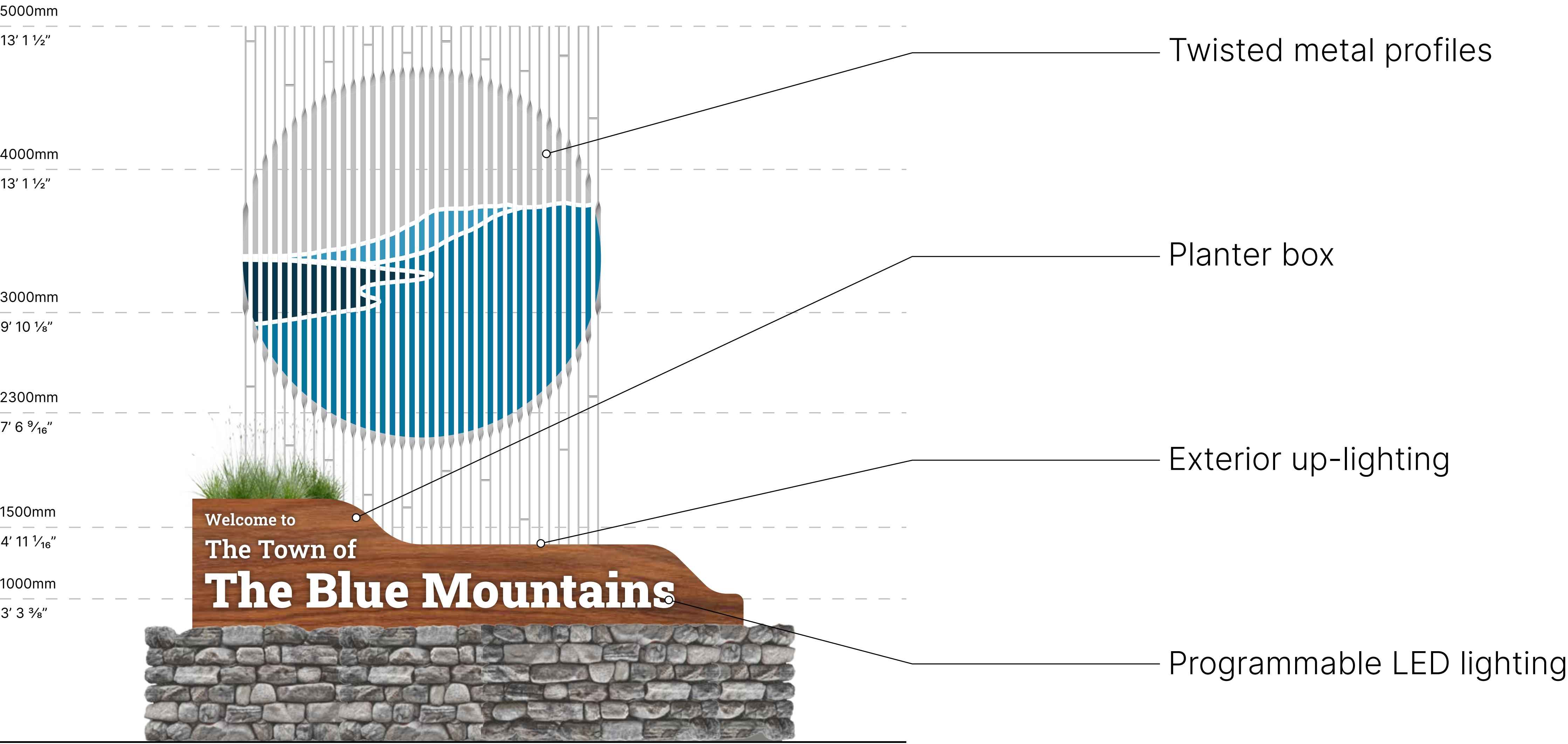
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**Inspired by the
biggest draw of
the town — winter
sports, concept one
derives its influence
from the corduroy
pattern**

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Type A — Town gateway sign







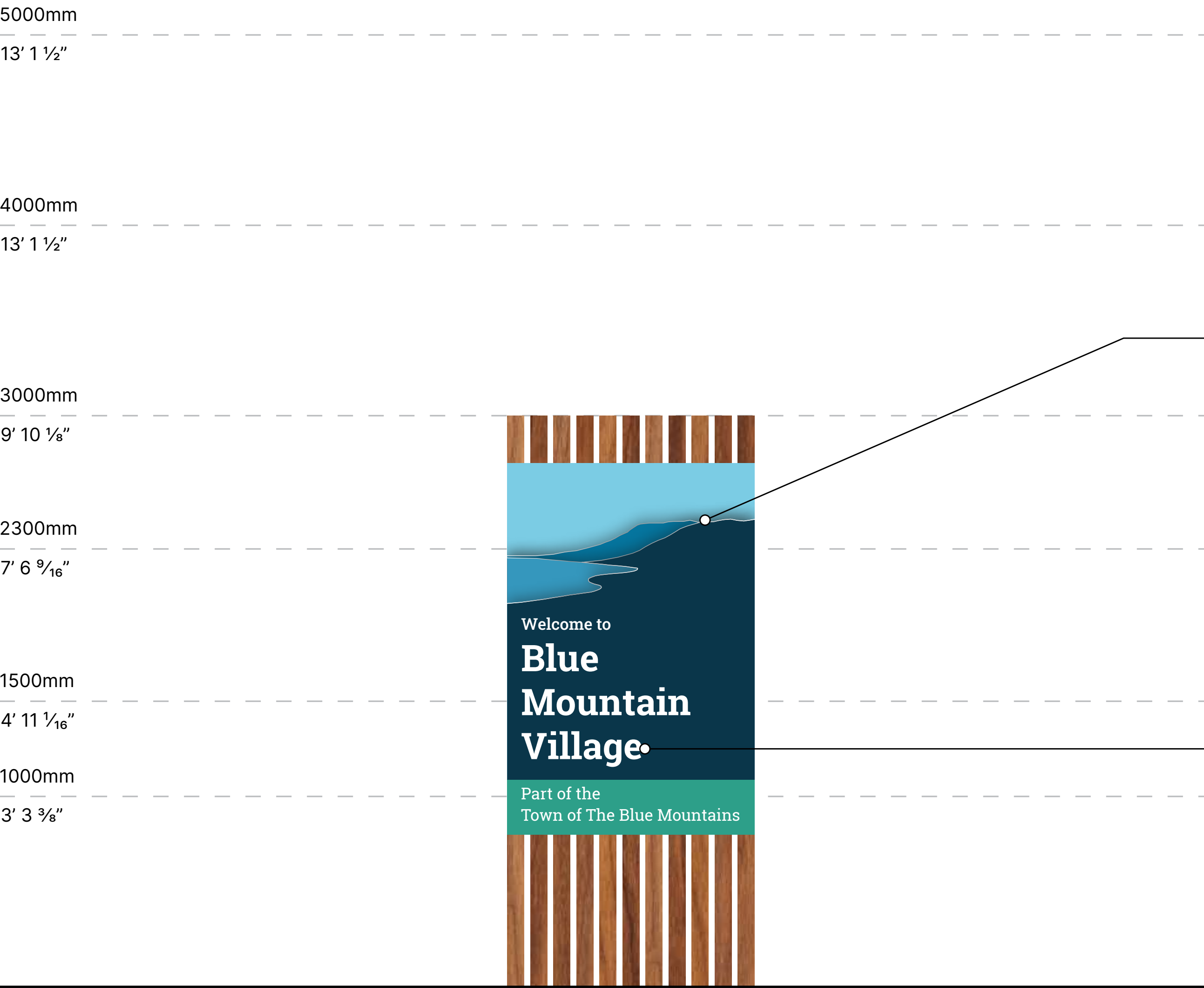




Type B — Community gateway sign

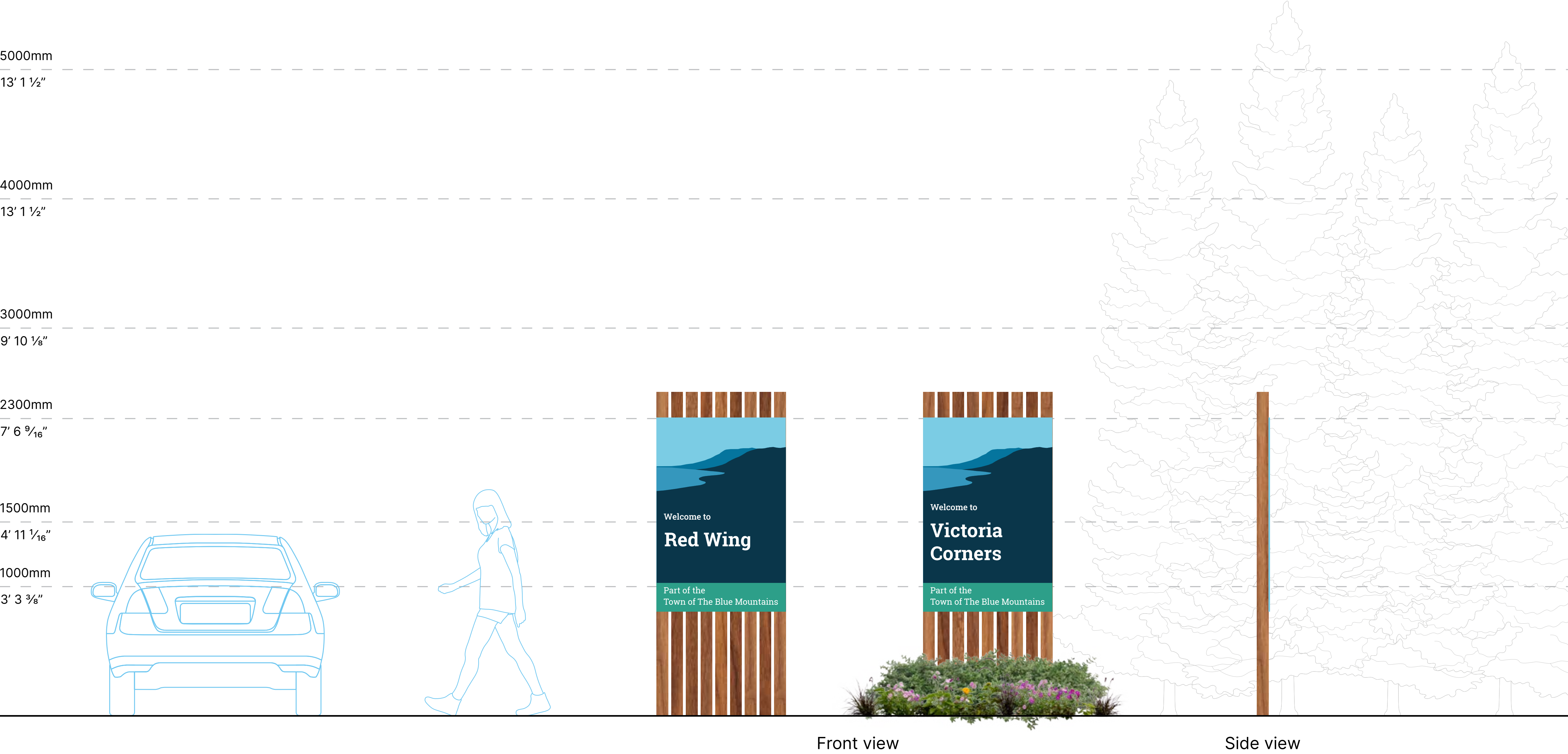


Materials and illumination

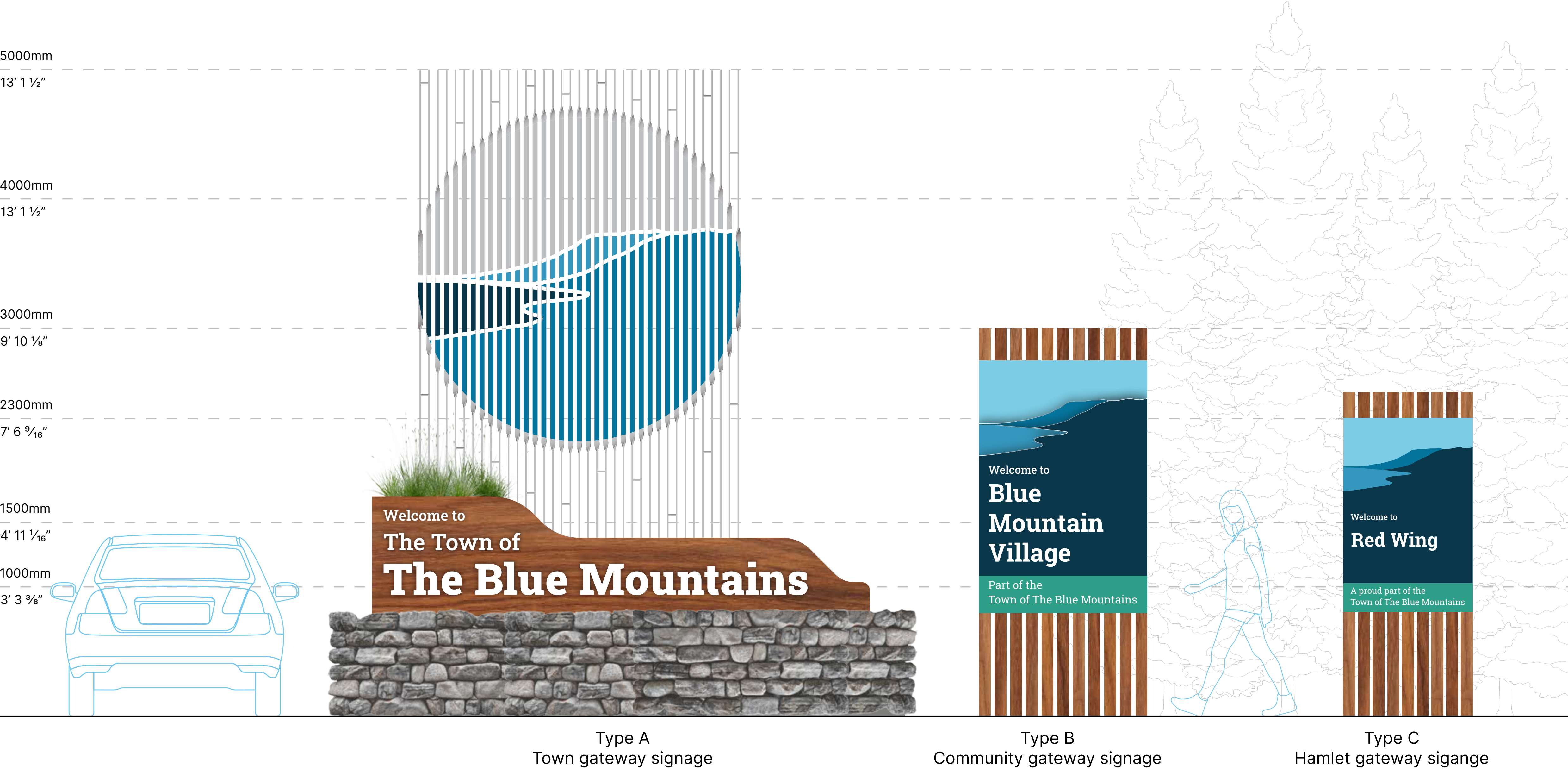


Front view

Type C — Hamlet gateway sign



Concept one — Sign family



Concept two

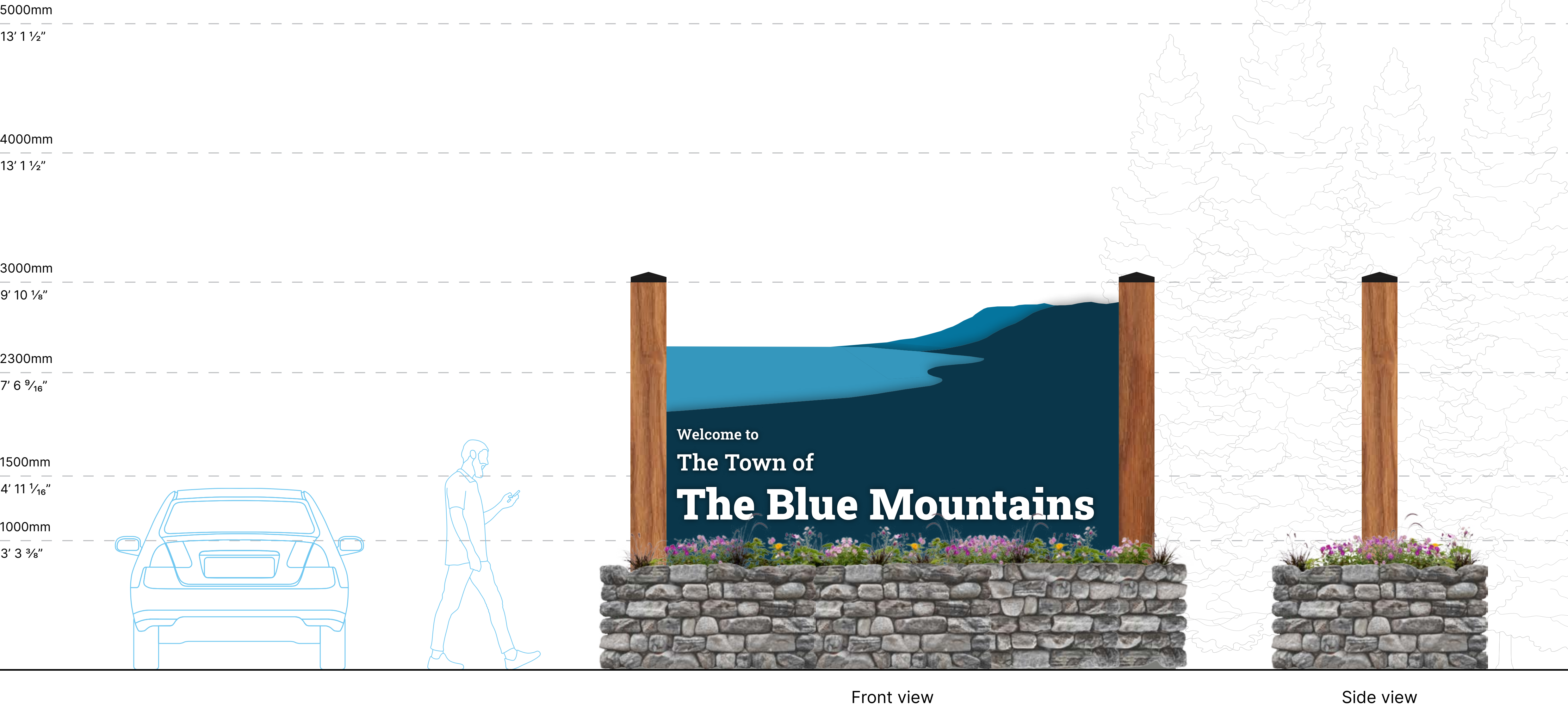


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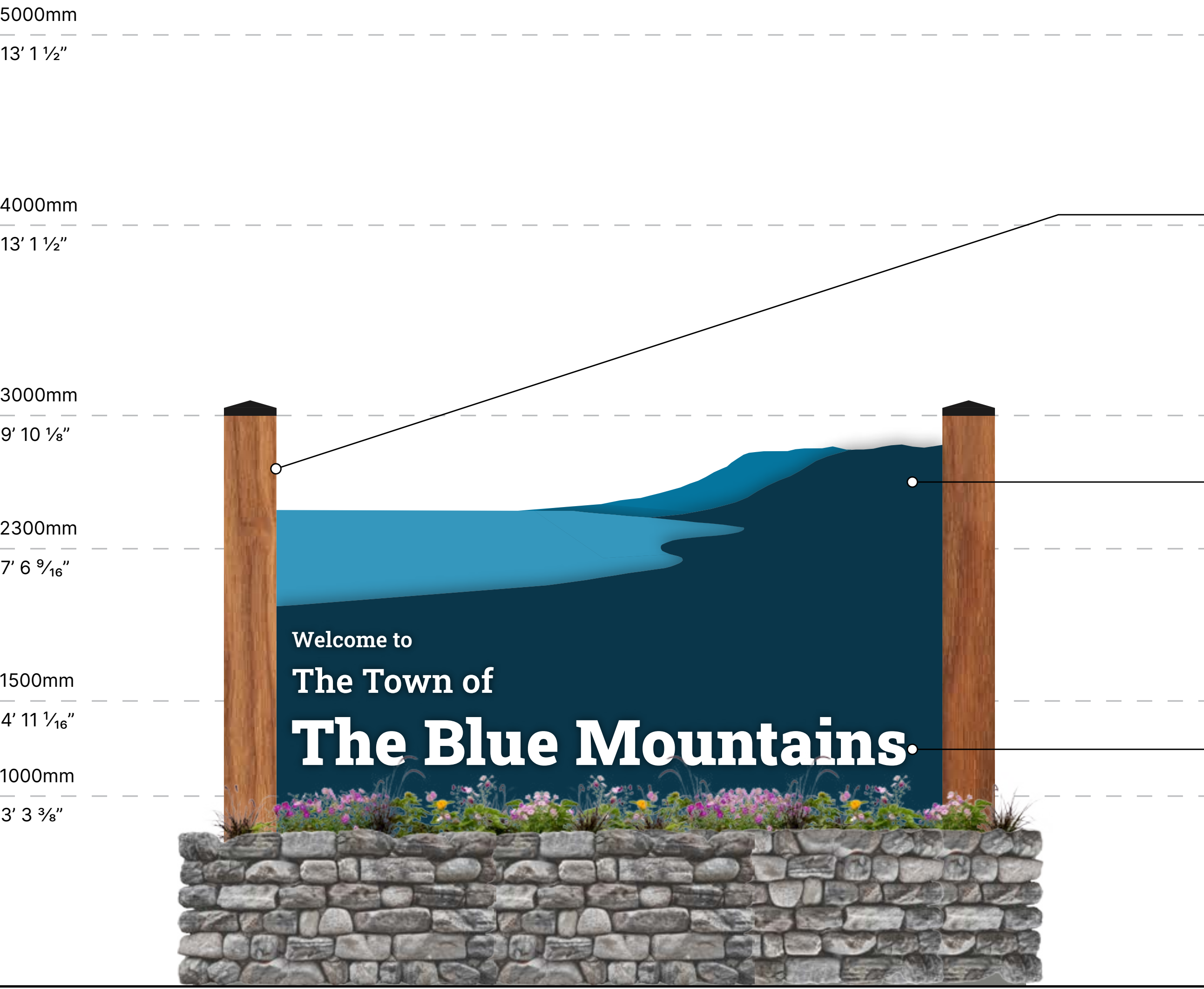
**Concept two is
a reflection of
the picturesque
landscapes and
natural features that
make up the town**

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Type A — Town gateway sign



Materials and illumination



Integrated light strip

Layered PVC panels with layered lighting

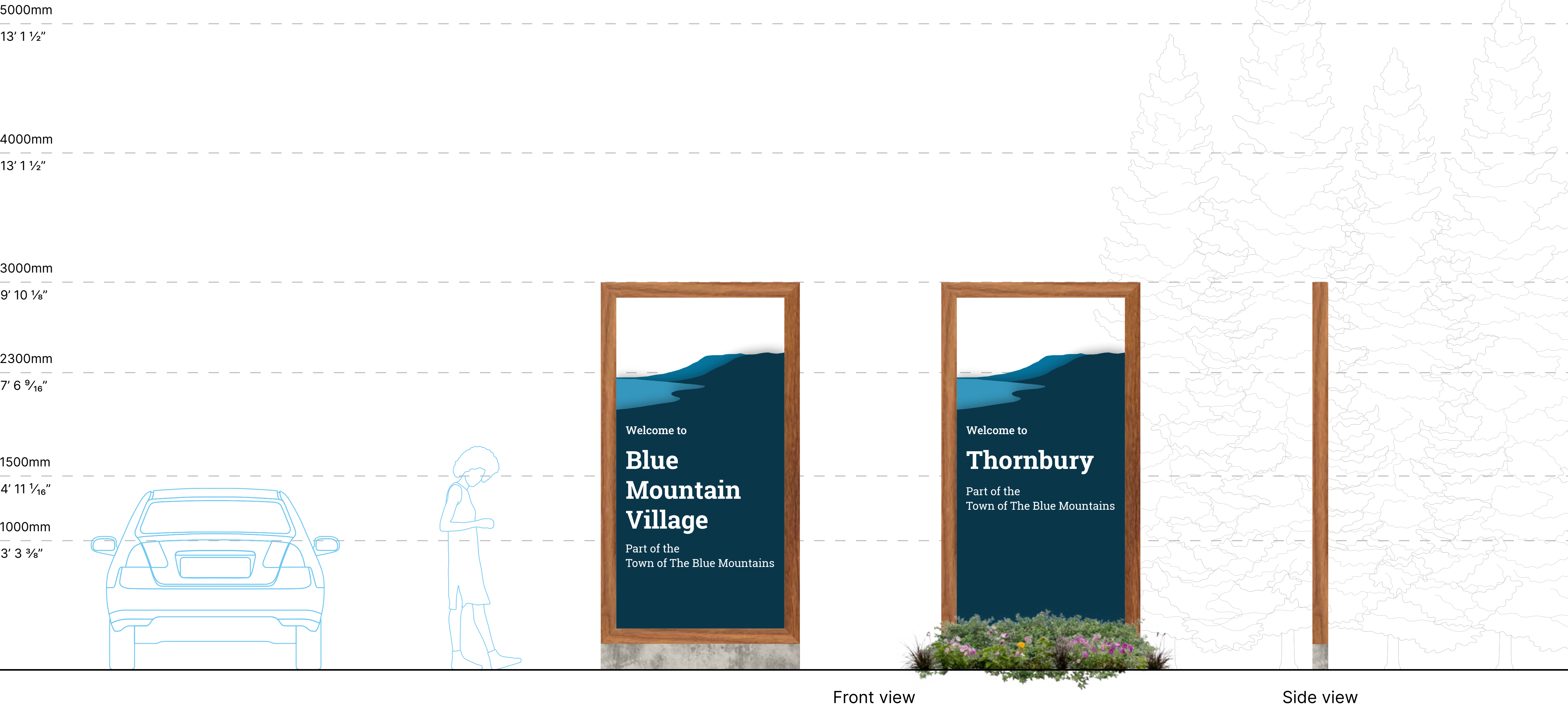
Programmable LED lighting







Type B — Community gateway sign

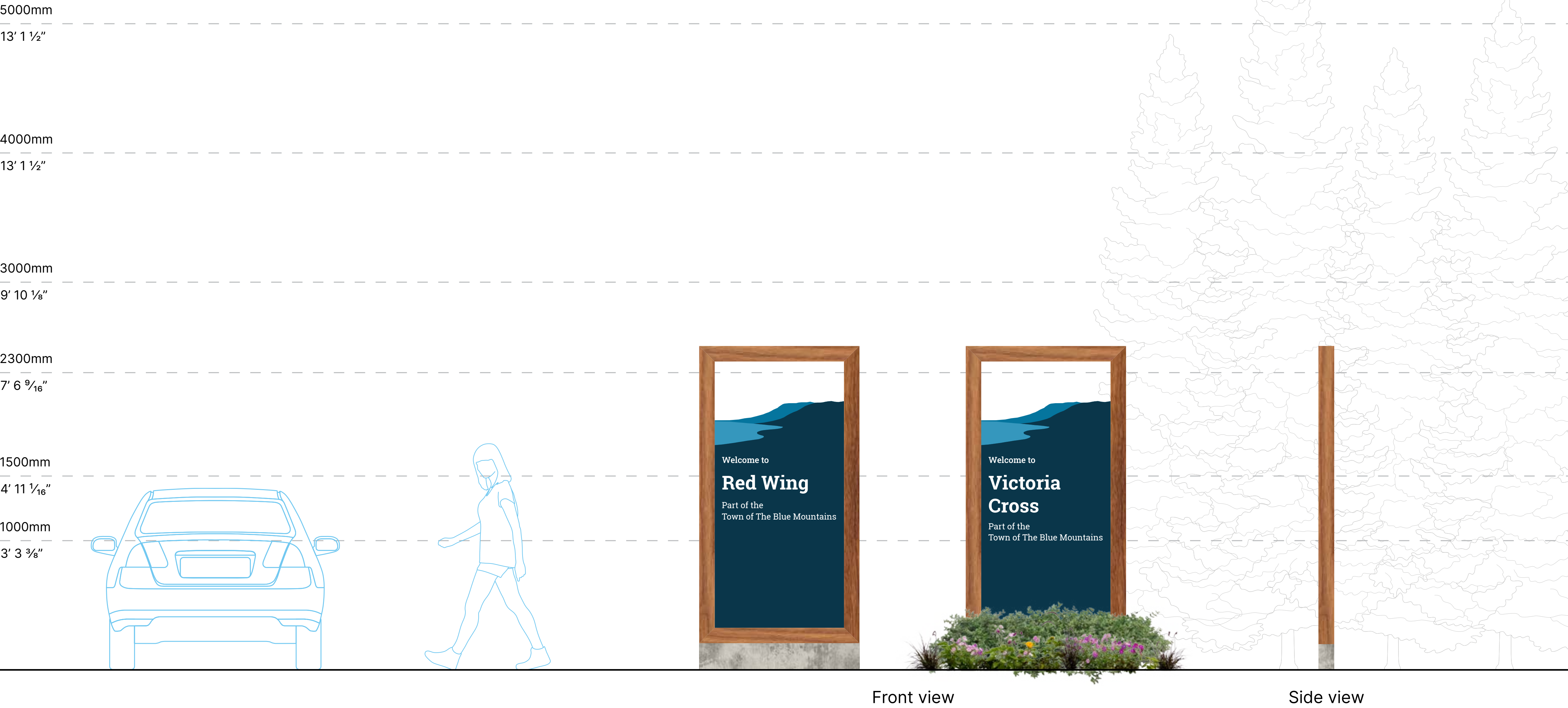


Materials and illumination



Front view

Type C — Hamlet gateway sign



Concept two — Sign family



Concept summary



Concept one



Concept two

Questions

Do you have any questions for us?

Next steps

Next steps

Council selects a concept

Develop the chosen concept

Apply selected concept to park and trail signs

Design development

Thank you!

