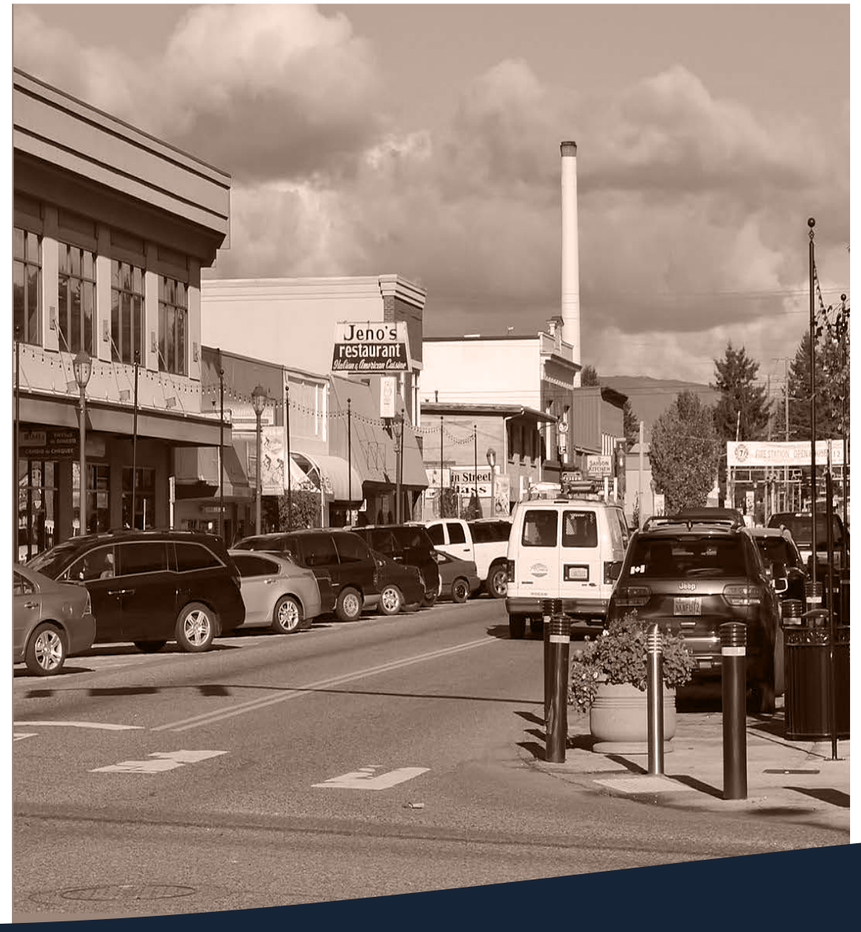
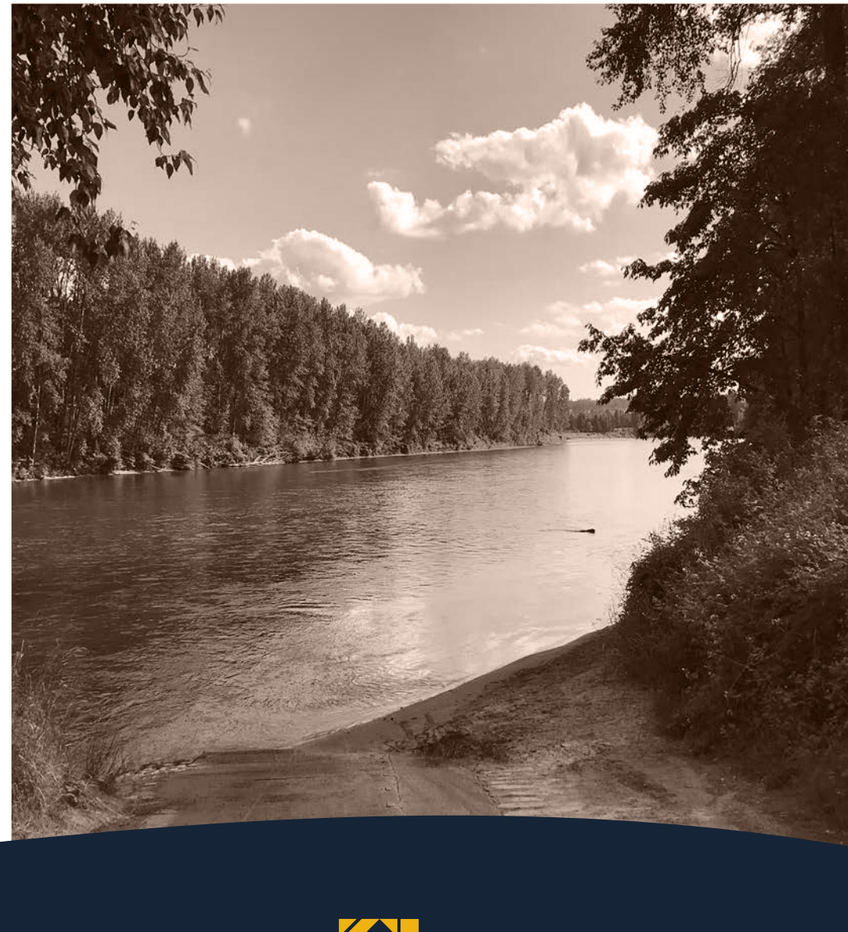
CITY OF MONROE

GATEWAY SIGNAGE CONCEPT DESIGN

12/31/2019





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INTRODUCTION

The City of Monroe is working with design consultants, Tangram Design, to create gateway signs that will greet visitors and residents at main entrances into the city with a sign design that reflects the city's identity and makes a good first impression. They will also develop a vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding sign program that will help people navigate through the community and promote economic development by highlighting key destinations and attractions.

Tangram held a project kick-off meeting on November 14, 2019 with the City of Monroe's Economic Advisory Board. At this meeting, Tangram conducted a stakeholder engagement, question and answer session. This was done in order to obtain stakeholder feedback about their desires and expectations for the city's signage system and to gather information on keywords and elements they felt defined the City of Monroe. Tangram also provided the city with an online survey that asked the local community the same questions that were posed to the stakeholders to obtain their feedback as well. All signage that is developed for this project takes into consideration the responses Tangram received from these efforts.

A gateway is an entry or access point into the city which typically represents a visitor's introduction or first physical impression of a place. Gateways utilize elements like brand, signs, lighting, architectural or landscape elements, art, or graphics to communicate a place's identity. By weaving the city's brand, character or spirit into the gateway entrances, visitors are given a good first impression of a city; it also creates a sense of comfort and security knowing that they have arrived.

The first phase of the project is to design two gateway signs. The Western Gateway is located at the roundabout near the intersection of Main Street and the Route 522 exit ramp. The Eastern Gateway is located on the East side of Main Street where the railroad tracks intersect the road which is close to the intersection of Main Street and Railroad Avenue. This document illustrates concepts that have been designed solely for the Western Gateway. Designs for the Eastern Gateway will be developed at a later time. Illustrations of the signs within their environment and in 3D drawings are enclosed to show the design intent of the concept designs.

Concept Design

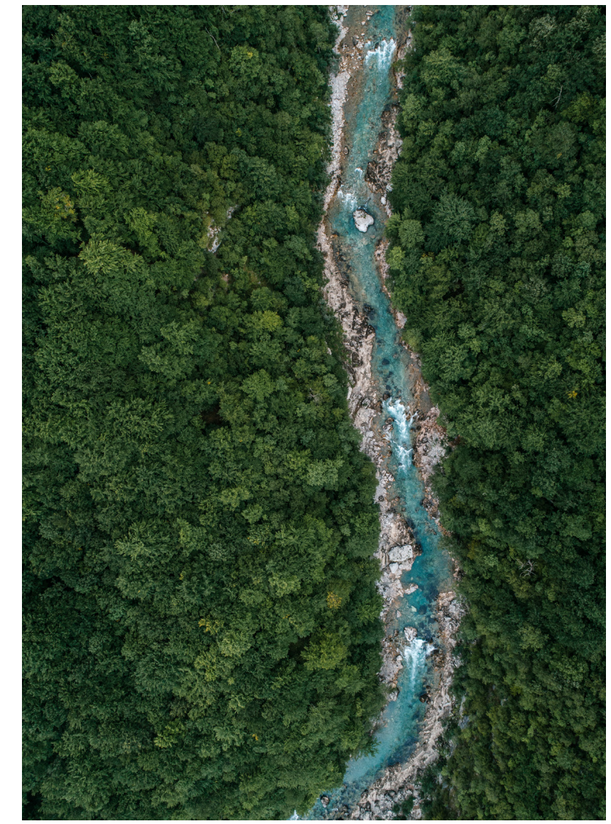
Tangram was directed by the city to develop a gateway concept that would cater to a “timeless” design. The city desired a signage concept that would consistently represent the City of Monroe for years to come without being subjected to using the city’s current logo or identity, as that may change over time. To develop a signage design that could last several years, represent the City of Monroe, create a sense of place and arrival for visitors, and offer a timeless feel, Tangram focused on using elements of the city’s environment and culture which have endured the test of time to develop the concept designs. Specific elements that recur in multiple concepts include the following:

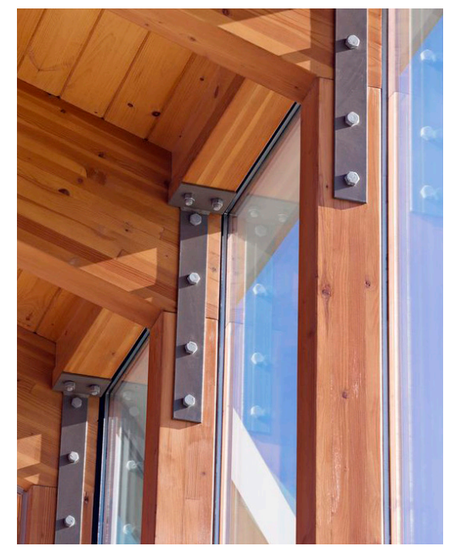
Wood - Wood elements represent the abundant trees that surround the area and the city’s past logging history. Wood also creates a visual connection to an outdoorsy recreational feel or a Pacific Northwest inspired design.

River - The City of Monroe is located near the confluence of the Skykomish, Snohomish, and Snoqualmie rivers. The rivers have played a large role in the history and development of the city. Visual elements like waves or organic curves are used in the concepts to represent water or the rivers.

Mountains - Monroe is nestled within the Sky Valley at the foot of the Cascade Mountains. It is the city where many traveler’s adventures begin, before they head to the Cascades. Because of this, the city has been coined with the motto of “Gateway to the Cascades”. In the online survey, holding onto this piece of Monroe’s identity seemed important to people in the community. As such, many of the concepts incorporate a visual design element that represents mountains.

Outdoor Recreation - Monroe is treasured by its residents and visitors for its healthy, active and outdoorsy lifestyle. Considered the sports capital of Snohomish County, Monroe is a destination for athletes and outdoor enthusiasts year-round. Materials that provide a more recreational or outdoorsy feel are used in the concepts to represent this spirit.





KEYWORDS

Wood	Mountains	Outdoorsy	Friendly
Rivers	Gateway to Cascades	Recreation	Hometown-feel
Nature	Pacific Northwest	Sports	Quaint

CONCEPT 4

Concept 4

Large wood timbers symbolize the abundant trees in the environment and pay homage to the city's past logging history. The decorative waves represent the river. The offset corten panels are designed to mimic the Cascade Mountains. Elements like the wood and waves sit in front of the mountains to illustrate that Monroe is the "Gateway to the Cascades". Natural colors and materials are used to give the sign a more outdoorsy and recreational feel.

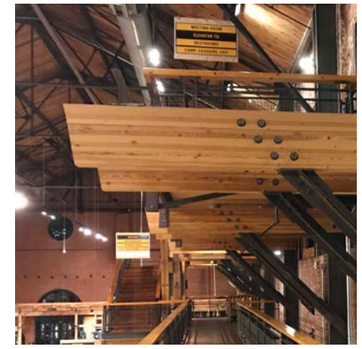
THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE
MONROE

THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE
MONROE

CONCEPT 5

Concept 5

This concept combines elements from the natural environment and railroad surrounding Monroe. The three wood posts include angled cuts and architectural details to resemble Pacific Northwest Modern architecture. The posts and angles are vary in height and locations to mimic the Cascade Mountains. The metal wavy pattern and river rock base/cage represent water and the Skykomish River. An I beam and c-channel are used in the design to symbolize the historical and present influence of the railroad. These various elements are combined to create an abstract and modern gateway, that can speak to Monroe's past as well as point to the future.



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THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

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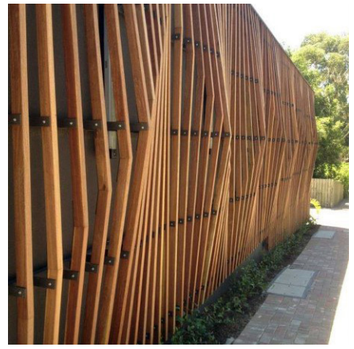
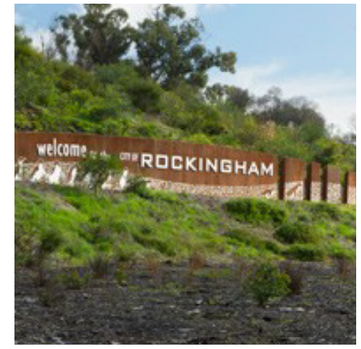
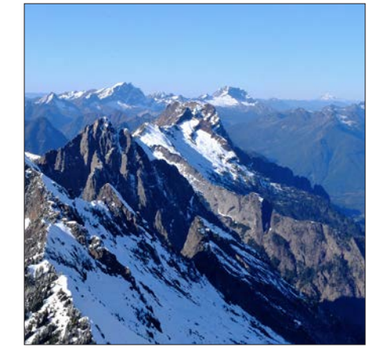
CONCEPT 6

Concept 6

The wood posts are angeled in a specific way to create a dimensional form that is meant to represent the Cascade Mountains. The interesting form created by the wood posts gives more of a progressive and modern feel to the signage. The organic concrete forms in front of the wood posts are designed to depict the Skykomish River. The forms vary in shape and depth to imply the feel or movement of the river. Various kinds of plants will grow between the concrete forms to symbolize the life that the river provides.







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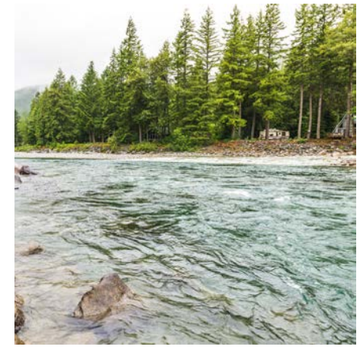
CONCEPT 7

Concept 7

This concept integrates the roundabout's landscape with the signage design. Large "MONROE" type and metal pipes are placed at the top of a stepped landscape with plantings. The wavy shape of the steps are meant to symbolize the Skykomish River and integrate with the circular shape of the roundabout. The metal pipes are angled and vary in height to mimic the form of the Cascade Mountains. The white pipes are inserted into larger grey pipes to replicate the snow caps seen in the Cascade Mountains. The "MONROE" type is located between the metal pipes and the wavy stepped landscape to signify that Monroe is the "Gateway to the Cascades" and a connector between the mountains and the river.



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CONCEPT 1

Concept 1

Large wood timbers with corten steel panels that cascade from their tops form the letter “M” to represent the City of Monroe. The timbers symbolize the abundant trees in the environment while the organic forms of the corten are meant to symbolize the Skykomish River. Natural colors of the corten steel and wood give the sign a more outdoorsy feel and the black bands provide a hint of rural architecture and Pacific Northwest design.

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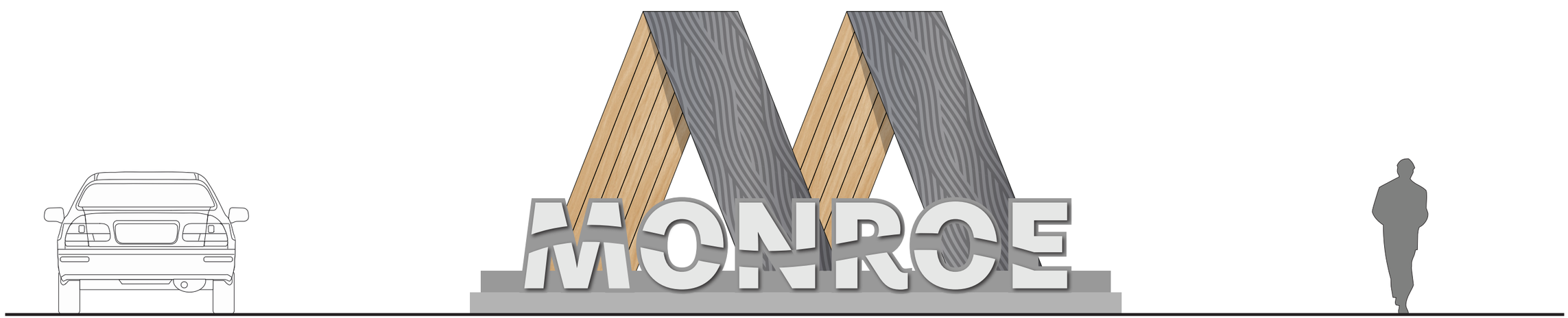
CONCEPT 2

Concept 2A

Large wood timbers and decorative waves on metal panels come together to form an elegant representation of the letter “M” for Monroe. This concept uses elements like wood and water graphics to celebrate key environmental features in Monroe which include the trees, river, and mountains. The sculptural “M” and the word “Monroe” are placed into plant beds that vary in height so that low growing plants can be incorporated into the design.



Concept 2B

This design is similar to Concept 2A, though the decorative waves on the metal panels are blue to represent Monroe's blue brand color, as well as insinuate the blue of the Skykomish River.

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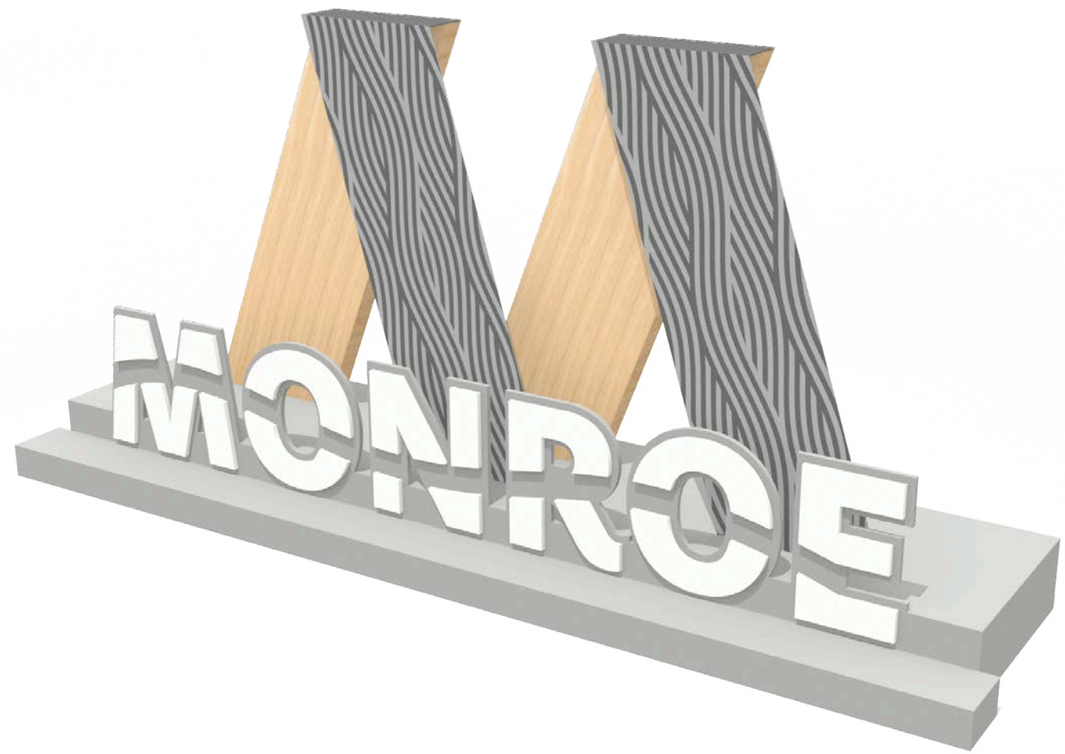


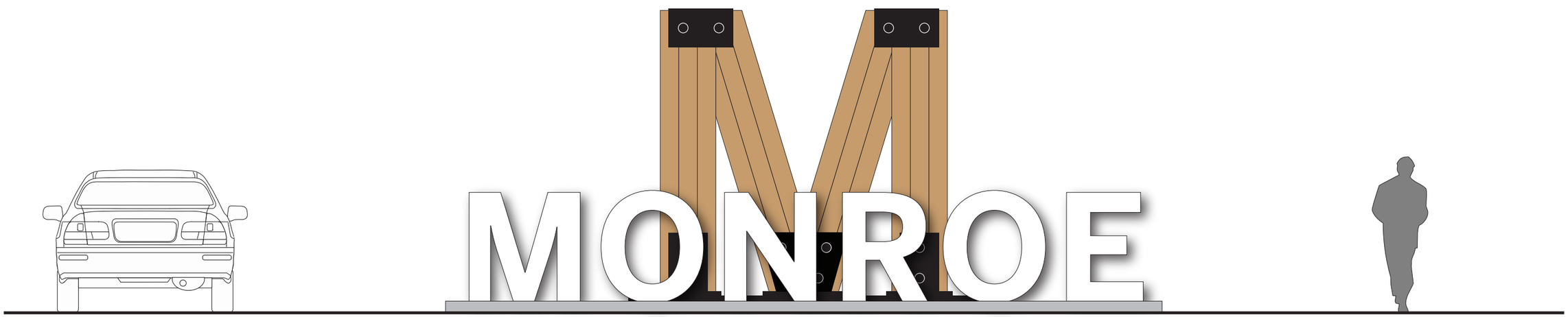
Concept 2A

Concept 2B

CONCEPT 3

Concept 3

This sculptural “M” is designed using wood timbers and black metal brackets. These are architectural elements that are commonly used in Pacific Northwest Modern architecture and design. Large letter forms are placed in front of the “M” to spell out the city’s name. The design celebrates Monroe’s locality in the Pacific Northwest and reflects a rural feel, while touching on a more progressive direction for the future of Monroe.



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