# The Grove at Lehi McDowell And Lehi Roads Mesa, Arizona

Annexation, Rezoning and Pre-Plat Project Narrative
April 8, 2021





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#### Introduction

Pew & Lake, PLC, on behalf of Reserve 100, LLC (dba Blandford Homes), is pleased to submit this project narrative and related documents in support of an annexation and rezoning request for the approximate 41.55-acre property located on the west side of Lehi Road between McDowell and Thomas Roads. The property is known as Maricopa County Assessor parcel number 141-02-005X and is shown in the aerial photograph below outlined in blue.



#### **About Blandford Homes**

Blandford Homes is an award winning, Arizona-based private homebuilder with significant ties to Mesa. The company's largest signature master planned communities are in the City of Mesa including Las Sendas (3,300 homes on 2600 acres), Mountain Bridge (1475 homes on 717 acres) and Mulberry (706 homes on 192 acres). In addition, past and present Blandford Homes has and is building a number of smaller boutique residential communities in the premium to luxury end of the housing market in north

Mesa including The Estates at Thirty-Second Street, The Grove at Valencia, Estates on McDowell, Estates at Mandarin Grove, and Hermosa Ranch. These Mesa communities are recognized for their attractive gated entries, themed walls, lush landscaping, open space amenities and beautiful homes. To add to this list, Blandford Homes recently purchased 115 acres from the City of Mesa on the northwest corner of Thomas and Recker Roads to develop 294 homes in what will be a premium gated community in north east Mesa under the marketing name of Reserve at Red Rock.

Blandford Homes is excited to work with the neighbors and the City on the proposed Grove at Lehi residential community, to annex, rezone, plat and develop a quality new residential community that will be an attractive addition to the east Lehi area, and pay tribute to the citrus history of the property and those who homesteaded and farmed it through the years.

#### Existing General Plan Land Use Designation

The property is in unincorporated Maricopa County. Therefore, the property is included in the City of Mesa General Plan, and is currently zoned in Maricopa County as RU-43. The entire county island is shown below in gray. The Mesa 2040 General Plan designates this property as "Neighborhood", as is shown in the graphic below.



City of Mesa General Plan

#### Relationship to Surrounding Properties

The Site is bound on the north by undeveloped land (existing gravel pit), on the east by Lehi Road and the Lehi Crossing development, on the west by the Red Mountain Loop 202 Freeway, and on the south by an existing plant nursery.

	General Plan Designation	Zoning Classification	Existing Use
North	Neighborhood	RU-43 (Maricopa County)	CEMEX gravel Pit
South	Neighborhood	RU-43 (Maricopa County)	Plant Nursery
East	Neighborhood	RS-43 PAD, RS-15 PAD	Residential
West	Neighborhood	RU-43 (Maricopa County)	202 Freeway/AG
Project Site	Neighborhood	RU-43 (Maricopa County)	Citrus/Agricultural

#### Existing Site Conditions/Topography

The site was formerly used for agricultural and citrus production. On the northern portion of the site, the existing CEMEX excavation pit will need to be remediated. Piles of debris need to be removed, and the pit face will need to be filled and stabilized. CEMEX and Blandford homes have agreed that CEMEX will perform the remediation and will regrade the initial 50-feet of the adjacent property to the north at a 1% grade, then use a 2:1 slope into the pit to meet the existing grade.

#### **Utilities and Services**

Utilities and services are provided to the site by the providers as shown below:

Utility	Provider
Electric	Salt River Project
Water	City of Mesa
Sewer	City of Mesa
Solid Waste	City of Mesa or Other
Telephone	Century Link or Other
Internet	Cox Communications
Law Enforcement	City of Mesa
Emergency Services	City of Mesa

#### Requests

The requests to the City of Mesa are:

- 1. Annexation of the 41.55- acre property into the City of Mesa;
- 2. Rezoning of the property from RU-43 to RS-15 PAD, with a Planned Area Development (PAD) overlay to allow for oversized lots and development standard deviations; and
- 3. Preliminary Plat approval.

Approval of these requests will allow for the development of The Grove at Lehi, a 108-lot single-family, detached residential subdivision.

#### Compliance with General Plan

As previously stated, most of the site is currently designated in the City of Mesa 2040 General Plan as a *Neighborhood/Suburban* character area. This is the predominant pattern of neighborhoods in the City. The predominant building heights in the Neighborhood category are one-and two-stories, and the typical density is between 2 and 12 dwelling units per aces. The General Plan for this area also calls for accessible, community open space within a new subdivision.

The Grove at Lehi will help implement the Mesa 2040 General Plan in the following ways:

- The ultimate design and configuration of the site will buffer and maintain the neighborhoods to the south and east using adequate landscaping, building orientation and building heights.
- The quality architecture and entrance to the development will provide the residents with a sense of arrival on Lehi Road. The community is designed to attract a moveup buyer, many of whom may already live in the area and are seeking a larger home.
- Accessible, usable community open space is spread throughout the community and provides a focus for smaller neighborhoods in the land use category.

• The addition of The Grove at Lehi will contribute to the General Plan goal of "Creating and Maintaining a Variety of Great Neighborhoods." This new community will contribute to the diversity of housing in the area, with minimal impact to the surrounding neighborhoods. Moreover, the RS-15/PAD zoning district we are seeking is a primary zoning district within the Neighborhood land use designation, and the proposed density, at 2.60 du/ac, is at the very low end of the Suburban character area, and all of the lots exceed the lot size requirements for the proposed zoning district.

For the foregoing reasons, the proposed rezoning and subsequent development is consistent with the Mesa 2040 General Plan Neighborhood land use designation.

# Compliance with Chapter 22: Planned Area Development Overlay District

Section 11-22-1 of The City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance specifies that the use of a Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay District is to allow for innovative design and flexibility in projects of sufficient size that are planned for development as a cohesive unit. The intent of the district is to provide for creative, high-quality development incorporating:

- A. Well designed and integrated open space and/or recreational facilities held in common ownership and of a scale that is proportionate to the use;
- B. Options for the design and use of private or public streets;
- C. Preservation of significant aspects of the natural character of the land;
- D. Building design, site design, and amenities that create a unique and more sustainable alternative to conventional development;
- E. Sustainable property owners' associations;
- F. Maintenance of property held in common ownership through the use of recorded covenants, conditions, and restrictions; and
- G. Single or multiple land use activities organized in a comprehensive manner and designed to work together in common and in a synergistic manner to the benefit of both the project and the neighboring area.

The proposed development is appropriate for a Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay District.

#### **Proposed Development**

#### The Development Plan

This site has a unique location adjacent to the Loop 202 freeway, the CEMEX sand and gravel operation, a plant and tree nursery and "Lehi Crossing", a residential subdivision of a density similar to what is proposed at The Grove at Lehi. Notwithstanding the adjacency to the freeway and former gravel pit, the proposed development is envisioned as a "stepup" community for many of the neighbors in the immediate area and as an ideal location for executive homebuyers.

The Grove at Lehi is proposed as a high-quality, gated, family-oriented neighborhood of single-family detached homes, with recreational amenities, and a network of common area open spaces. A key component of this vision is to provide compatibility with the Lehi Crossing neighborhood and large lot executive residential developments to the east and southeast, while paying homage to the citrus and farming heritage of the property and surrounding Lehi area. To that end, the proposed residential density for The Grove at Lehi is compatible with and of a similar density as the adjacent Lehi Crossing subdivision.

Much attention has been paid in the design of the Lehi Road frontage. Large-lot executive homesites are proposed along the Lehi Road frontage, behind a double row of citrus trees. A gated entry provides a sense of arrival into the community with the placement of a "gate house" structure, beyond which lies a central amenity area. Additionally, the homes along Lehi Road will be on executive, oversized lots that range from 10,000 to 19,000 square feet. The lot sizes transition to just 9,100 square feet, towards the center of the community. This mix of lot sizes provides a range of choices to homebuyers, creates a vibrant neighborhood and will provide a transition of residential densities from low density next to Lehi Road to a medium density next to the freeway. The lots near the 202 Freeway are oriented so that they are perpendicular to the freeway. This has been done so that no homes "back on to the freeway", and to provide space for a landscape buffer and an 8-foot high wall next to the ADOT right-of-way.

As part of this development, the north part of the property adjacent to the existing gravel pit, and the pit face will be remediated and improved. The existing stone piles and irregular terrain on the north part of the property will be excavated, refilled and compacted to meet residential geotechnical standards. The pit face will be rehabilitated to extend the slope 50' beyond the north property line, it will subsequently be engineered to a 2:1 slope down to the pit floor.

The plan provides a substantial amount of open space (over 21%) for both active and passive recreation. The central amenity area features a large turf area, tot lot, basketball court, ramada and yard games. The open space in The Grove at Lehi is easily accessible from all homes within the subdivision and is in a configuration consistent with other successful Blandford Homes communities in the City of Mesa.

#### Architectural Design Intent

The step-up and executive homes proposed for The Grove at Lehi are proposed to range from 2,355 to 5,242 square feet. There will be a mix of single and two-story homes, with 3, 4 and 5 car garages. All of the homes will feature a front porch or courtyard, with covered rear patios. There will be approximately nine different floorplans in a variety of elevation choices, some of which are shown below. To provide for a rich character in the neighborhood, care and attention has been given to using high-quality, authentic building materials in the Grove at Lehi. Standard architectural details include concrete roof tiles, iron railings and gates, shutters, brick or stone accents. These homes showcase an unparalleled attention to detail and the architectural details are found on all four sides. The homes will comply with, and in most cases, exceed the City's Residential Design Guidelines to ensure a high-quality development. Shown below are some of the elevation themes that will be offered within this community:





#### Request for Alternative Compliance

Pursuant to Section 11-5-3(B)9 of the City's zoning ordinance, we are requesting alternative compliance with the Materials requirement in Section 11-5-3(B)7, that requires two kind of primary building materials, with any one material used on at least 15% of the front façade of the home. This request for alternative compliance is only for the homes in the Spanish/Old World style within this community. The Spanish elevation occurs in the Craftsmen Collection (45' wide), and the Old World style occurs in the larger Artisan Collection (50'wide). Shown on the next page, these styles are deliberately designed with only a smooth, stucco finish and tile roofing in keeping with the architectural details of those two elevation styles . The Spanish elevations include pop-outs, tile accents and wrought iron details. The Old World elevations include pop-outs, exposed rafter details and wrought iron accent features.

These elevations, taken in the context of all the other elevations offered, will contribute to the aesthetic diversity in The Grove at Lehi. The number of elevations offered will improve the architectural appeal of the neighborhood while exceeding the design objectives described in the City's General Plan.



#### Landscape and Open Space

The proposed Landscape Plan complies with and is consistent with the zoning ordinance requirements found in Chapter 33 of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance by providing aesthetically pleasing landscaping that blends with the surrounding community. Of greatest significance is the commitment to preserving a citrus theme in this community. Two rows of citrus trees are provided along Lehi Road, and at the entrance to the community. There are over eight acres of open space within the community, which is over 21% of the entire site. As suggested in the residential guidelines for single residences, the main open space amenity area is centrally located and the street system has been developed around the central open space in order to provide maximum visibility and access to all residents. There is a secondary open space area at the southwest corner of the community that will have an informal turf play area and will ultimately serve as the connection point with the Lehi Trail, that is currently planned west of the development, between the Grove at Lehi, the SRP canal and 202 Freeway. Blandford will continue to work with the Lehi Trail Association throughout the development process, and provisions will be made for a future gate for use by the Grove at Lehi residents upon completion of the trail adjacent to this community.



#### **Community Entries**

The main, gated entry on Lehi Road will provide a sense of neighborhood arrival and includes monument signage and a gatehouse structure. To allow for easy access onto Lehi Road and for emergency access, there are also two additional gates planned, at the north and south sides of the development along Lehi Road. The gate on the north side will provide secondary egress for the Grove at Lehi residents as well as emergency vehicles, while the gate on the south side will be behind a crash gate and will be for emergency and maintenance vehicle access.





#### Amenities

Amenities at The Grove at Lehi will include a large turf area, tot lot, yard games, ramada with seating area, a basketball court and flower garden.



#### Walls

The wall program at The Grove at Lehi includes walls of various textures and materials. The community will be enclosed by a 6-foot-tall theme wall along Lehi Road. Where homes back on to open space or pedestrian walkways, two-over-four view fencing will allow for security, while providing those residents to enjoy the adjacent greenery. An 8-foot-tall boundary wall is proposed to provide screening along the Red Mountain Freeway frontage. It is important to note, again, that no homes will be "backing" to the Freeway. The boundary wall will be placed behind a landscape buffer, and is adjacent to either open space, or the private roadway within the community.



#### Parking and Solid Waste Program

This community is designed with adequate parking for both residents and guests. Each home has, at a minimum, a two-car garage, with at least two driveway parking spots. In reality, there will be additional parking on each lot, as homebuyers opt for floorplans with 3, 4 or 5-car garages. The roadways are designed to allow for parking on both sides of the private street. Waste receptacles will be stored inside the garages and pulled to the curb on solid waste collection days. The solid waste trucks will have ample room to maneuver through the community, even with on-street parking provided.

#### Proposed Development Standards and Justification

A Planned Area Development overlay is being requested with this application to allow for oversized lots that will be distributed throughout The Grove at Lehi. The conventional RS-15 development standards are shown on the next page, and the manner in which this proposed development meets them is also shown. Where a deviation is requested, it is shown in red text.

Development Standard	RS-15 Required (11-5-3)	The Grove at Lehi Crossing Proposed PAD
Minimum lot area	15,000 s.f.	9,100 s.f.(minimum) 9,960 s.f. (average)
Minimum Lot Width	110′	65'
Minimum Lot Depth	120′	140′
Maximum Density	2.9 du/ac	2.60 du/ac
Maximum Height	30'	30′
Minimum Yards:		
Front (Enclosed Livable Areas, Porches and Porte Cocheres)	22′	15′
Front- Garages	30′	20' (front-facing; 15' side facing)
Minimum Interior Side	7′	7'
Minimum aggregate of 2 sides	20′	15′
Street Side	10′	7'
Rear Yard	30'	25'
Maximum Lot Coverage (% of Lot)	40%	50%*
Maximum Wall Height	6′	8' (Adjacent to 202 Freeway)
3-Car Garages allowed on 65' wide Lots (11-5-3-B-4)	No	Yes
Minimum Garage Dimensions (11-32-4-F)	20′ w x 22′d	20' x 19' (Plans 2342, 2568 and 3177 only)

<sup>\*-</sup> For floorplans 2568 and 3177 only, or two equivalent single-story floorplans.

As shown in the preceding table, the deviations for this proposed development are as follows:

- 1. A reduction in the minimum lot area
- 2. a reduction in lot width,
- 3. a reduction in the front setbacks;
- 4. a reduction in the aggregate side yard setbacks;
- 5. 4) a reduction in the street-side yard setbacks;

- 6. A reduction in the rear-yard setback;
- 7. an increase in the maximum lot coverage for two of the floorplans that will be offered in the community;
- 8. an increase in the amount of allowable wall height; and
- 9. deviations from the code requirements for the dimensions and configurations of garages.

The requested deviations for lot area, width and front, side and rear yard setback reductions, are being requested in response to homebuyer preferences. In return for these deviations, the backyards have been planned with a 20-foot increase in the minimum lot depth. This is over 15% more than the RS-15 lot depth required in the zoning ordinance. This deeper backyard configuration is well-received in other Blandford communities and satisfies the needs of homebuyers want to live in a community with deeper back yards and ample, amenitized community open space.

The requested reduction for the street-side yard setback is simple. All of the homes in The Grove at Lehi that side onto the private street are adjacent to a landscape tract that will be at least 10-feet wide. This landscape tract, in addition to the 7-foot side yard setback, will result in a building setback of at least 17-feet, which is greater than the required 10-foot setback.

The requested reduction in the garage requirements is to allow for flexible garage configurations. As previously noted, there will be homes in The Grove at Lehi with 3 and 4- car garages. By having extra garage storage space, homeowners will have ample room to store additional vehicles and belongings in an organized manner. The extra garage space will allow for the majority of guest parking to take place in the driveway, keeping the overall look of the community organized, and uncluttered. However, when a buyer opts to enclose the third-car garage stall as a bonus room, the remaining garage size is less than the minimum required by the zoning ordinance. In these situations, Blandford homes will encourage the buyer to add either a two or four-foot extension to the front of the garage to provide additional interior garage space.. The requested deviation will allow for more variety in garage sizes and combinations. This allows for the community to be aesthetically interesting while avoiding "garage dominance" along the streetscape.

The requested increase in lot coverage for floorplans 2568 and 3177, is to allow Blandford Homes to offer some of their most popular single-story floorplans on all of the lots in the community. These two floorplans are deeper, single story homes, with 3-car, split garage configurations. These floorplans are popular with move-up buyers that want to enjoy a large home on a single story. Similarly, these floorplans are perfect for older homebuyers

that are downsizing from larger homes in the area and need a home that allows them to age-in-place.

Finally, we are requesting a modification in the allowable wall height for only the portion of the perimeter wall that runs parallel with the 202 Freeway. This is to provide sufficient height to buffer noise that may be coming from the 2020 Freeway.

This community has been planned thoughtfully, intentionally and with much consideration to these deviation requests. The backyards are nearly 30% deeper than required, and nearly one-quarter of the lots in The Grove at Lehi are larger than 10,000 square feet. The oversized lots in this community, most of which are placed along Lehi Road, will give the impression of an entirely large lot community. The increase in lot depth and the oversized lots in this community provide ample justification for the requested deviations. Moreover, the proposed developments standards are consistent with the zoning districts and communities that have been previously approved and developed in this area.

#### Additional Information

#### Phasing

The Grove at Lehi is proposed to be completed in a single building phase. As is typical in residential communities, there will be a an initial model home complex to showcase the proposed quality and elevation finishes. With the amount of interest in this community and pent-up demand for homes in this area, it is likely that the homes and community amenities and improvements will be completed at the same time.

#### Ownership and Maintenance

All private streets, common areas and private onsite improvements including walls, landscaping and recreational amenities located within the Grove at Lehi will be dedicated to a Homeowner's Association (HOA) that will administer the ownership and maintenance of those elements. Public utilities and Lehi Road will be maintained by the City of Mesa and the corresponding utility provider.

#### Citizen Participation

The applicant held a neighborhood meeting for this project on November 19, 2020, and has had numerous ZOOM and in-person meetings with individual neighbors and other

interested stakeholders. In addition, the Applicant has met with individuals in the adjacent neighborhoods to discuss the proposed development and obtain feedback about the layout of the subdivision. The feedback has been mainly supportive, with the primary interest in the project relating to the need for executive and step-up homes, lot sizes, home sizes and the potential pricing for these executive homes. A Citizen Participation Report including a summary of the meeting is included with the application materials.

#### Conclusion

Blandford Homes has identified this location in Mesa as ideal for another of its award-winning communities. The vision for the Grove at Lehi is for a new residential neighborhood that will incorporate elements from the adjacent neighborhoods in a new and updated configuration. The Applicant looks forward to working with the City of Mesa and the Lehi neighbors to make this vision a reality.

#### **Development Team:**

#### **Property Owner**

CEMEX USA Construction Materials 909.974.5569 Mr. Alejandro Ortiz Robles Alejandro.ortizr@cemex.com

#### **Applicant/Land Use Counsel**

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#### Developer

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#### **Planning / Landscape Architecture**

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#### List of Exhibits

- A. Conceptual Site Plan
- B. Community Amenity Exhibit
- C. Community Signage and Gate Access
- D. Community Wall Plan
- E. Conceptual Landscape Plan
- F. Entry Feature and Gate House
- G. North and South Gates
- H. Parking and Trash Plan
- I. Ramada



**BLANDFORD** HOMES

N 100' 200' 300' Plan Scale 1:100' Date: 03-08-2021















## **LEGEND**

- 1 RETENTION
- TURF
- TOT LOT
- (4) WOOD CHIPS
- (5) ARTIFICIAL TURF
- BAG TOSS
- 7) SEATING
- (8) RAMADA WITH PICNIC TABLES
- (9) PET WASTE STATION
- (10) RECEPTACLE
- (11) 1/2 BASKETBALL COURT
- (12) TRELLIS STRUCTURE/SEATING
- (13) FLOWER GARDEN
- 14) PEDESTRIAN GATE
- 15 KEY PAD
- (16) GATE HOUSE
- (17) ENTRY MONUMENT
- (18) VEHICULAR GATES
- 19 VEHICULAR PAVERS



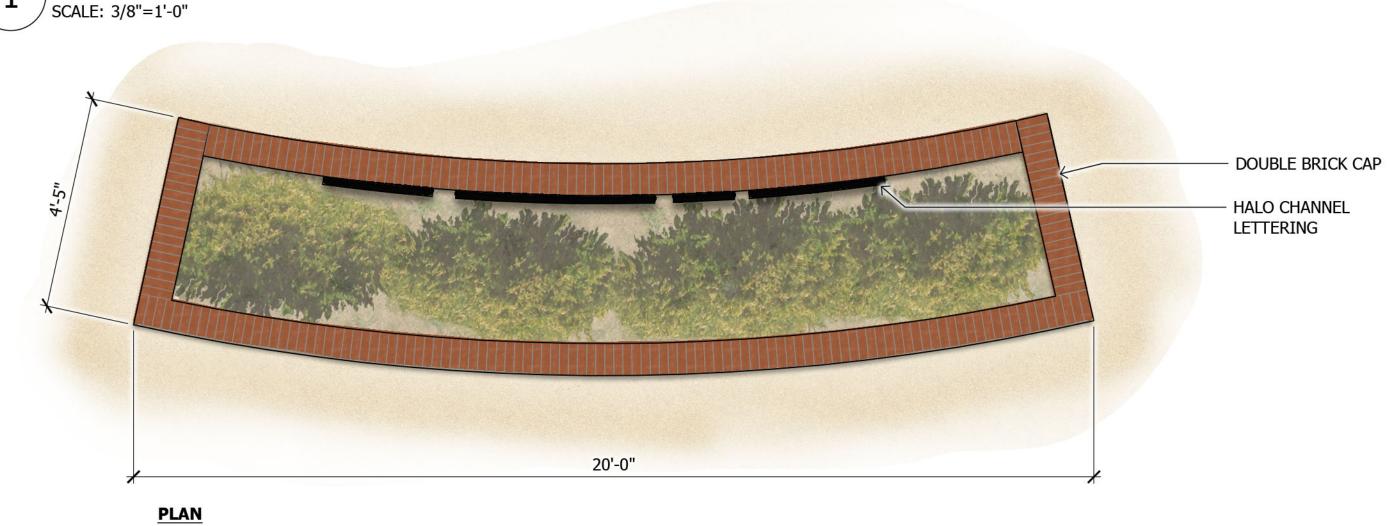






Neighborhood Entry Gate

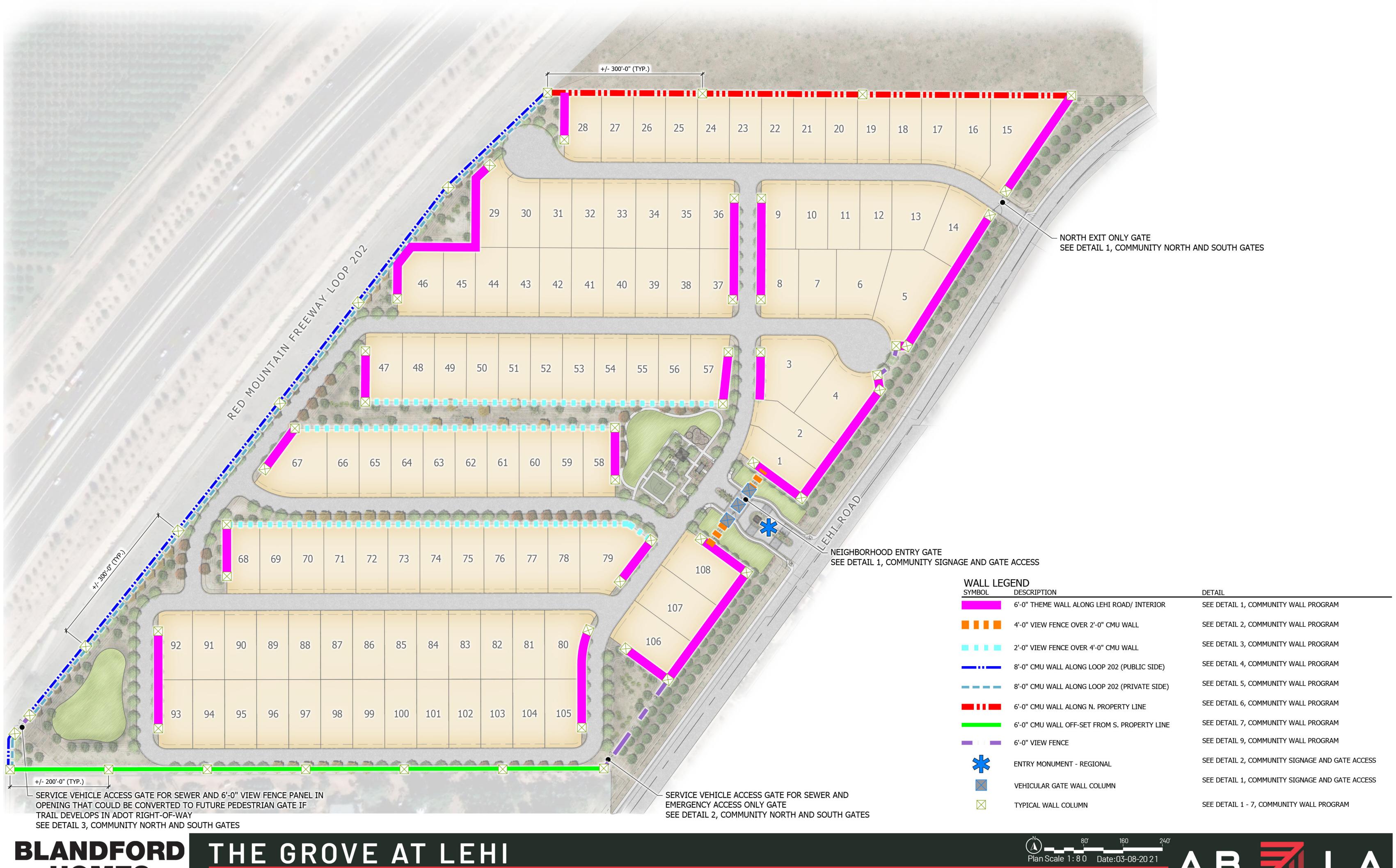
SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"





2 Entry Monument

BLANDFORD HOMES



HOMES

Community Wall Plan









HOMES

BLANDFORD THE GROVE AT LEHI

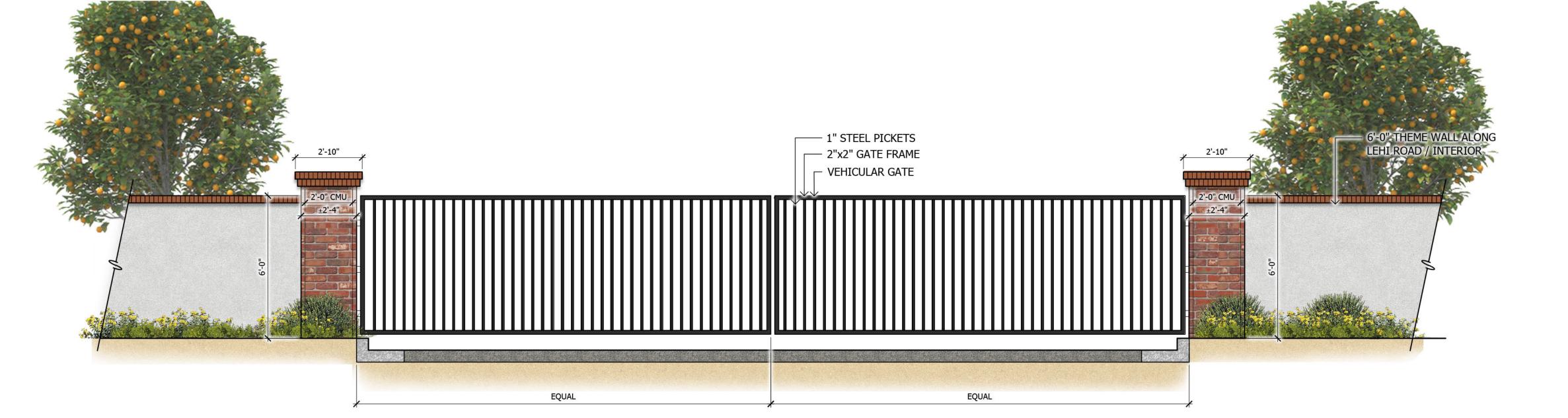
Plan Scale 1:80 Date:03-08-2021

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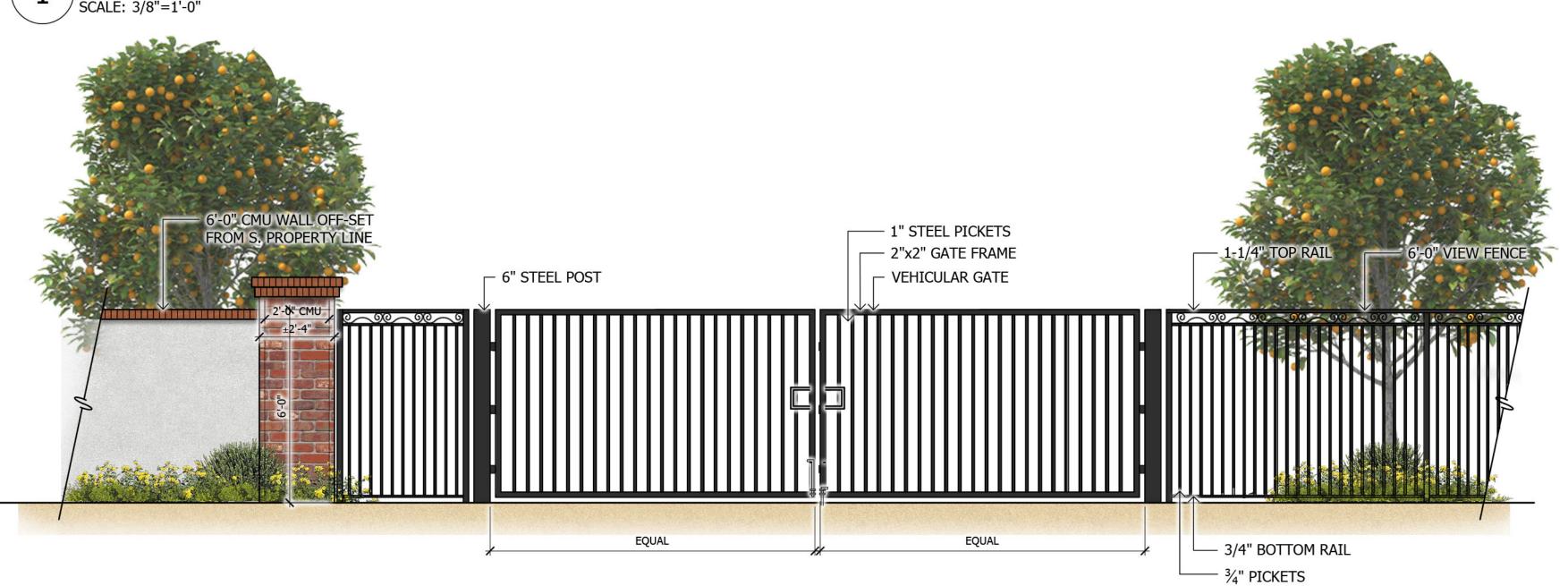






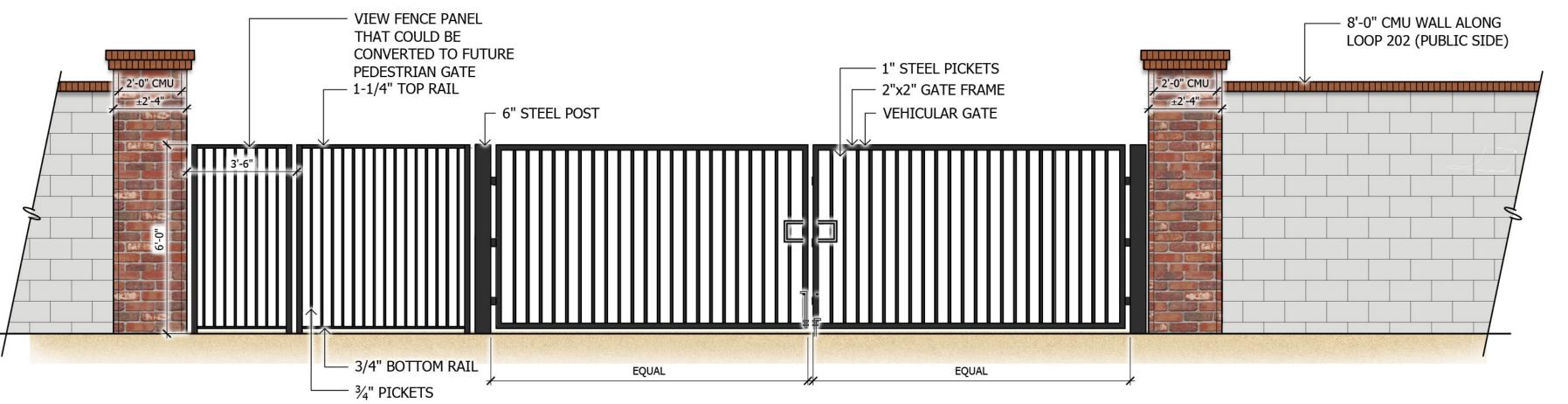






SERVICE VEHICLE ACCESS GATE FOR SEWER AND EMERGENCY ACCESS ONLY GATE

# South East Corner Access Gate



SERVICE VEHICLE ACCESS GATE FOR SEWER AND 6'-0" VIEW FENCE PANEL IN OPENING THAT COULD BE CONVERTED TO FUTURE PEDESTRIAN GATE IF TRAIL DEVELOPS IN ADOT RIGHT-OF-WAY

South West Corner Access Gate

SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0





**HOMES** 

BLANDFORD THE GROVE AT LEHI Parking and Trash Plan

