

Los Angeles Unified School District

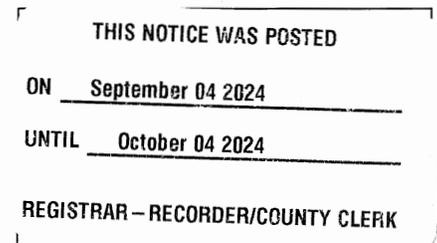
Office of Environmental Health and Safety

ALBERTO M. CARVALHO
Superintendent of Schools

CARLOS A. TORRES
Director, Environmental Health and Safety

JENNIFER FLORES
Deputy Director, Environmental Health and Safety

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



To:
County Clerk and Registrar-Recorder
County of Los Angeles
12400 Imperial Highway
Norwalk, CA 90650

From:
LAUSD OEHS
333 S. Beaudry Avenue
21st Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Project Title:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Projects at three LA Unified Campuses (Group 17)

Project Location – Specific:

- Halldale Elementary School - 21514 Halldale Avenue, Torrance, CA 90501
- Strathern Street Elementary School - 7939 St. Clair Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 91605
- Utah Street Elementary School - 255 Gabriel Garcia Marquez Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033

Project Location – City:

Various

Project Location – County:

Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The scope of the project includes Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance improvements at three Los Angeles Unified School District (LA Unified or District) school campuses; Halldale Elementary School (ES), Strathern ES, and Utah ES (Campuses) (Project). These ADA compliance improvements are legal requirements mandated by the Division of State Architect (DSA) and may include one or more components at each of the Campuses (Figures 1 through 3). The table below summarizes the various ADA compliance improvements that would occur at each school as part of the Project.

Summary of Proposed ADA Compliance Improvements at Each School

School	Accessible Route Upgrades and Barrier Removal	ADA Restroom Upgrades	ADA Compliant Ramps	Platform Lift Installation	ADA Compliant Drinking Fountains and Sinks	Locker Room/Changing Room Upgrades	Accessible Gates, Doors, Thresholds and/or Hardware	ADA Compliant Signage	Furniture and Counter Modification	Accessible Parking Stalls/ Loading Zones	Assembly Seat Modification	Railing Modification	Assistive Listening Devices/ Intercom/Phones	Playground Upgrades	New Elevator
Haldale ES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	
Strathern ES	●	●			●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Utah ES	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●

The LA Unified Board of Education approved the Project for a total budget of \$32,100,420 on December 12, 2023.¹ The Project will be constructed per DSA-approved plans. The Project will be implemented per all applicable local and State regulations, as well as all District Standards and Specifications; such as those provided in the updated Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects (SCs) as adopted by the Board of Education in December 2023.²

The primary purpose of the Project is to comply with current ADA access requirements. The Project would not cause an increase in student capacity or enrollment and would not result in an increase in the intensity of use. The beneficiaries of the Project include students and staff at each of the respective schools and the community at large who may request access to the facilities and grounds of each Campus pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130 - 38139).

Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:

Los Angeles Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Los Angeles Unified School District

¹ LAUSD Board of Education, Board Report No.128-23/24, Adopted on December 12, 2023.

² LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects" <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.



Exempt Status: (check one below)

- Ministerial [Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines Section 15268³]:
- Declared Emergency [PRC Section 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(a)]:
- Emergency Project [PRC Section 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(b)(c)]:
- Categorical Exemption (PRC Section 21084; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15300 -15333):
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities*
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction*
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures*
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 – Accessory Structures*
- Statutory Exemption:

Reasons why project is exempt:

Section 15301 Existing Facilities

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

The Project entails ADA compliance improvements at three LA Unified Campuses. Such improvements may include upgrades to accessible routes and removal of barriers; upgrades to ADA restrooms; installation of ADA compliant ramps; installation of platform lifts; installation of ADA compliant drinking fountains and sinks; locker room/changing room upgrades; installation of accessible gates, doors, thresholds, and/or hardware; ADA compliant signage; modification of counters; installation of accessible parking stalls/loading zones; modification of assembly seats; modification of railings; installation of assistive listening devices/intercom/phones; installation of a new elevator; and installation of playground components.

All of the proposed Project components would involve minor alterations to existing public structures and would occur within the area occupied by existing facilities at the Project sites. The Project components would not present a new or expanded use of the Project sites. Therefore, the Project constitutes minor alterations to existing school sites that result in no expansion of use and meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Section 15302 Replacement or Reconstruction

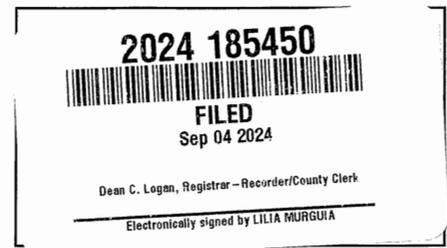
Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

The Project includes upgrades or replacement of existing structures and facilities, such as upgrades to accessible route upgrades and removal of barriers; upgrades to ADA restrooms; modification to counters; locker room/changing room upgrades; installation of accessible parking stalls/loading zones; modification of assembly seats; modification of railings; installation of assistive listening devices/intercom/phones; and installation of a new elevator. The Project would not change the location or the purpose of the structures and facilities being replaced and will not expand the capacity of the Campuses. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15302.

Section 15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made to the structure.

³ CEQA Guidelines can be found at California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 - Section 15387.



The Project includes the construction and location of small new structures, such as the installation of ADA compliant ramps; installation of platform lifts; installation of ADA compliant drinking fountains and sinks; installation of accessible gates, doors, thresholds, and/or hardware; creation of accessible parking stalls and loading zones through restriping; and installation of playground components. The Project also includes the installation of small new equipment, such as the installation of assistive listening devices, intercoms, and/or phones. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

Section 15311 Accessory Structures

Class 11 consists of construction or replacement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including, but not limited to, on premise signs and small parking lots.

The Project includes the construction or replacement of minor structures accessory to existing institutional facilities, including upgrades to accessible routes; installation of ADA compliant ramps; installation of platform lifts; installation of ADA compliant drinking fountains and sinks; installation of accessible gates, doors, thresholds and/or hardware; modification of counters; installation of accessible parking stalls/loading zones; modification of assembly seats modifications; modification of railings; modification of assistive listening devices/intercom/phones; and installation of a new elevator. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15311.

Section 15300.2 – Exceptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines, Exceptions, provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. Review of the Project indicates that they would not violate any of the exceptions, as described below.

1. *The project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments or locations;*

The Project sites are fully developed Campuses within urbanized communities.⁴ The Project sites are not designated as biologically sensitive locations. The nearest sensitive environment to the Project sites is an area supporting the Coastal California gnatcatcher, located approximately 3.7 miles southwest of Halldale ES, and the Madrona Marsh Preserve, located 2.3 miles southwest of Halldale ES.^{5,6} As such, the Project will not impact sensitive environments or locations.

2. *Cumulative impacts would be considerable because successive projects of the same type would occur at the same place over time;*

The Campuses are active school sites and there will likely be ongoing maintenance activities and minor projects on the Campuses to keep the schools operational. As the Project would not result in any lasting impacts once construction of the Project is complete, the Project would not contribute to cumulative impacts when considered with expected successive projects.

3. *There is a reasonable possibility that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

There are no known unusual circumstances that would have a significant effect on the environment. The removal of trees is not anticipated as part of the proposed scope of work. However, should the Project be altered to include the removal of trees, LA Unified's Office of Environmental Health & Safety (OEHS) must be notified immediately. District policy requires consultation with an arborist to determine if the trees are a protected native species. All tree

⁴ City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, <http://zimas.lacity.org/>, accessed March 2024.

⁵ United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> accessed March 2024.

⁶ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed March 2024.



trimming and removal conducted on District property is required to adhere to the procedures described in the OEHS Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure.⁷ Additionally, written approval from the school principal will be required before any trees can be removed. If tree removal is scheduled to occur between February 1 and August 31, a nesting bird survey would be performed prior to removal activities, per Standard Condition of Approval (SC) SC-BIO-3 of the Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR).⁸

The Project may include minor ground-disturbing activities. These activities are not considered unusual circumstances for the classes of projects under which an exemption is claimed. Nevertheless, consideration must be given to the management of pavement removal and excavated soils associated with earthwork activities for the Project. As the Project involves the removal of pavement, soil sampling and testing for characterization is required prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. If construction or earthmoving activities require import or export of soils and materials, OEHS must be notified to provide oversight to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the requirements of District Specification 01 4524, relevant provisions of South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1466, and other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.⁹ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-6, SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-10, and SC-GEO-2 of the SPEIR, construction activities must be stopped immediately and OEHS notified upon discovery of subsurface features, such as buried resources (i.e., paleontological resources, archaeological resources), tanks or seepage pits, or stained/odoriferous soils.¹⁰ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1 of the SPEIR.¹¹ Therefore, the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

4. *The project may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway;*

The closest designated state scenic highway to any of the Project sites is State Route 2 (SR2), which is located approximately 12.4 miles east of Strathern ES.¹² In addition, the Project would not result in the removal of historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or other scenic resources. Therefore, the Project would not result in damage to scenic resources or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

5. *The project is located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code; or*

None of the Project sites are located on sites that are included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.¹³ Therefore, the Project would have no impacts related to being located on a hazardous waste site.

6. *The project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

Halldale ES and Strathern ES are not eligible for federal, state, or local listing under any of the applicable criteria and are therefore not considered to be historical resources pursuant to CEQA. Therefore, Project activities at these schools would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.

⁷ LAUSD OEHS, "Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure," <https://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>

⁸ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects" <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

⁹ LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

¹⁰ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed March 2024.

¹³ http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed March 2024.



LA Unified has identified Utah ES as eligible for listing as a historic resource per Section 18955 of the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC).¹⁴ The Campus appears to meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources through survey evaluation due to the Campus' architectural design. Although the District has not formally evaluated the buildings, SurveyLA found that the buildings are eligible as an excellent example of a LA Unified elementary school, representing campus planning and design concepts from the post-1933 Long Beach Earthquake period of school construction and the PWA Moderne architectural style. Notable architectural features include horizontal massing emphasized by bands of windows and string courses, symmetrical facades, flat roofs, smooth stucco walls with rounded corners, and monumental entrance portals.¹⁵

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3), a project that conforms to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Secretary's Standards)* is generally considered to be a project that will not cause a significant adverse impact. (14 CCR Section 15126.4(b)(1)). If a project meets the *Secretary's Standards*, the project can, in most cases, be considered categorically exempt from CEQA (14 CCR Section 15331) and qualify for a Notice of Exemption.

Secretary's Standards conformance review was completed by OEHS's Historic Preservation Specialist for Utah ES to ensure compliance with applicable guidelines (the *Secretary's Standards* and *Los Angeles Unified School District Design Guidelines and Treatment Approaches for Historic Schools (LAUSD Design Guidelines)*). The *Secretary's Standards* conformance review found that the Project conforms to the *Secretary's Standards* at Utah ES¹⁶. As the work at the school shall conform with the *Secretary's Standards* and the *LAUSD Design Guidelines*, OEHS' Historic Preservation Specialist has determined that the Project meets the requirements specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3) and will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Should the scope of the Project activities be altered from the components that are described above, standard District procedure requires that OEHS must be notified immediately to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the *Secretary's Standards* and would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

¹⁴ State of California. 2003. State Historical Building Code, Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 2.7, Section 18955. Available at: http://www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/AboutUs/shbsb/shbsb_health_safety.aspx. Also see California Building Standards Commission. 2014. California Code of Regulations, Title 24, California Historical Building Code, Section 8-101.2. Washington, DC. p. 4.

¹⁵ LAUSD OEHS. 2024. "Utah ES SOIS Compliance Review"

¹⁶ Ibid.



Prepared By:

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Signed by:

Date:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CA Torres', written over a horizontal line.

8/16/2024

Carlos A. Torres,
CEQA Officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District

Figure 1 - Halldale ES Site Plan

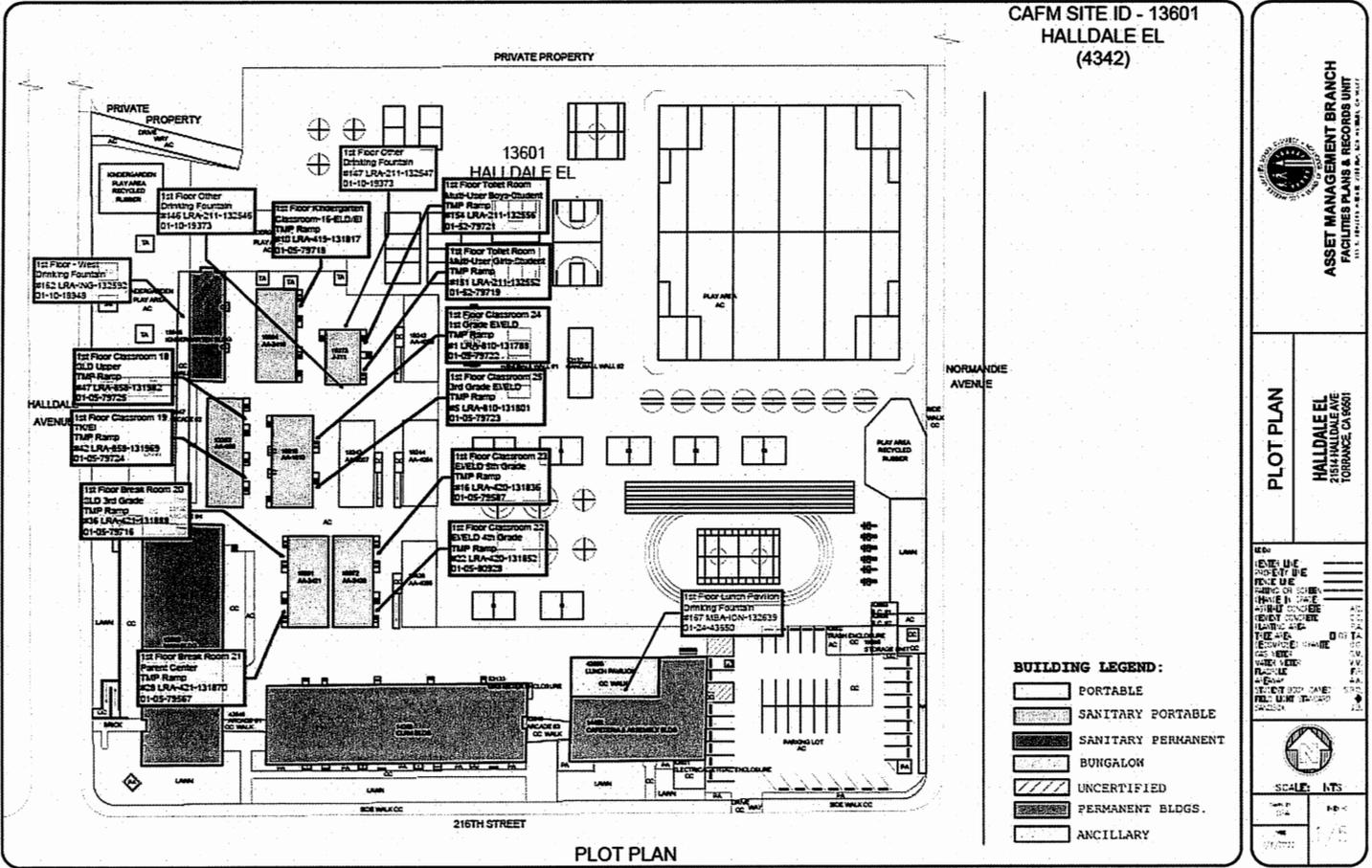


Figure 2. Strathern ES Site Plan

