

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT + HOUSING

California's housing crisis has resulted in state laws that add a number of planning and implementation requirements at the local level. Harris has combined expertise in the lifecycle of a variety of planning policies, funding opportunities and implementation strategies to meet state requirements and achieve housing goals. We help city and county governments improve the production and equity of all forms of housing and community assets.

To date, we've helped dozens of local government leaders assess and address complex housing needs with General Plan and Housing Element updates that reflect the unique priorities, goals, and values of each community. Our services span all facets of community development and housing, from planning for housing, community engagement, assessing financial feasibility, identifying and obtaining needed funding to implementing projects. Our expertise spans not only housing but also economic development and real estate economic analysis to provide a clear picture of what policies, programs, actions, and ultimately development projects, will work for each community.

Harris adds value at each step as a trusted advisor. We assist cities with:

- Comprehensive affordable housing policies and programs
- Leveraging resources to implement development projects
- Complete due diligence to ensure limited public resources are committed to feasible and beneficial projects (such as pro forma analysis and peer review of developer proposals)
- Compliance and reporting
- Obtaining available public funding

As community needs change and new focus areas emerge—such as social and environmental justice or climate adaptation and resilience—Harris can assist lead agencies in developing ordinances and associated zoning codes that allow communities to evolve in an organized, flexible, and sustainable way.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT + HOUSING SERVICES + PROJECTS

■ HOUSING ELEMENTS

Harris helps cities and counties prepare legally compliant housing elements that meet the expanded and detailed new requirements of the California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Using our expertise in market analysis, development trends, funding, implementation, and more, our team prepares HCD-compliant housing element documentation that reflect each community's unique needs. Harris can also assist clients with transparent and effective community engagement strategies that maximize participation to ensure all community voices are heard and facilitating an effective and efficient process.

■ GENERAL PLAN UPDATES

Housing Element updates every 8 years trigger additional General Plan updates, such as Safety Element and Land Use Element updates and the preparation of Environmental Justice Elements for some communities. Harris has assembled a team of planning experts to provide a complete range of planning services tailored for nearly every General Plan Element. We help communities prepare **zoning ordinance amendments** required as part of changes in State law and triggered by Housing Element updates, as well as **objective design standards** that preserve local control with the advent of by right developments. Harris staff approach each planning assignment with a focus on delivering clear communications to the residents, businesses, community organization, elected and local government leaders, and other stakeholders.

■ HOUSING PLANS AND STRATEGIES

Harris helps communities tailor realistic, actionable housing plans that provide a clear short- or long-term vision and track effectiveness. We work with City staff and stakeholders to transform their unique priorities, challenges, and funding needs into viable opportunities. We leverage our deep knowledge of the legal landscape as well as incentives for market rate and affordable housing developers to further housing goals and compliance.

■ FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY / UNDERWRITING

Harris can effectively analyze the feasibility of affordable housing projects with expert analyses of development proposals as well as associated costs and revenues. Affordable housing requires substantial public subsidies and involves a complicated and lengthy process to secure multiple funding sources. We help explore all available funding sources, including bonds, tax credits, and other scenarios, to minimize financial or land subsidies. Additionally, we can help monitor schedules to make sure milestones are met to minimize delays in project completions.

■ GRANT WRITING

We have helped clients secure nearly \$10 million in grants since 2019 for affordable housing. We identify applicable grants when they're announced, quickly assess their feasibility, and prepare applications tailored to communities' needs. Strong relationships with sponsoring organizations and a deep understanding of state legal requirements enable our staff to provide the latest information and prepare successful applications.

■ DEVELOPER OUTREACH, PEER REVIEW, AND NEGOTIATIONS

Developing affordable housing requires strong public-private partnerships. Harris assists with outreach, including drafting notices of funding availability and RFPs for development projects involving land subsidies. We also perform peer reviews of development proposals to ensure compliance and confirm effective leveraging of all available public funding sources. Harris also helps negotiate with chosen developers and draft agreements that promote project success.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION / PROJECT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Harris remains current on new housing laws to help your agency navigate the creation, modification, and implementation of California State Department of Housing and Community Development or HCD-required programs. Our Community Development and Housing team acts as an extension of City staff to help agencies remain fully compliant and on track to meet state requirements.

INCLUSIONARY HOUSING STUDIES & INCENTIVES

Harris staff has ample experience conducting inclusionary housing studies to assess the need for and feasibility of affordable housing within communities, particularly in relation to market-rate housing and commercial development. Our services include nexus analyses, in-lieu fee estimates, and compliance support for Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirements.

COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING

Harris helps communities navigate the complexities of compliance and reporting—ensuring that accurate annual reports, like Annual Progress Reports for Housing Elements, are submitted on time to allow communities to continue to qualify for important state funding. Additionally, Harris can provide compliance monitoring of income restricted housing units to ensure that residents continue to meet qualification requirements. We prepare annual progress reports for other General Plan Elements, Consolidated Plans, annual SB 341 reports, and annual housing authority reports. Our thorough compliance monitoring and reporting services help reduce the risk of heightened California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) scrutiny, legal action, and fines as well as assist with compliance with federal agencies for those funding sources.



City of Irvine 6th Cycle Housing Element, Amended Affordable Housing Strategy, and Implementation Plan

City of Irvine

Irvine, CA

Harris prepared the City's certified 2021-2029 Housing Element (involving 60,000 planned housing units). The Housing Element Update required creativity and complex analysis related to the redevelopment of commercial uses to residential to meet these requirements. Per State law, densities for affordable housing sites must adhere to requirements and the location of affordable units must be dispersed throughout the City in accordance with fair housing requirements.



City of Victorville 6th Cycle Housing Element, General Plan Update, Housing and Community Development Consulting Services

City of Victorville

Victorville, CA

Harris prepared the City's 2021-29 Housing Element (certified in February 2022) and continues to coordinate updates to the Land Use Element (LUE) and Safety Element as well as a new Environmental Justice (EJ) Element. The LUE and Housing Element were directly correlated early in the planning process to facilitate the sites inventory for the 6th Cycle Housing Element. Harris also prepared environmental documentation in support of the Housing Element and the Land Use, Safety, and EJ Elements.

