





Statement of Qualifications (SOQ)

Utility Undergrounding

Planning for Resilience, Safety, and Community Enhancement



Overview

Utility undergrounding plays a vital role in enhancing community resilience, reducing wildfire risk, improving visual appeal, and modernizing infrastructure. Harris has decades of experience guiding California cities and counties through the complexities of planning, financing, designing, and implementing underground utility projects.

From forming utility undergrounding districts to delivering shovel-ready designs and managing construction, Harris offers a complete, strategic approach tailored to your city's goals. Our team brings technical depth, financial insight, and cross-agency coordination expertise to every phase of the undergrounding process.

Comprehensive Services

Our multi-disciplinary team understands the complex, multi-year nature of undergrounding projects. We help communities plan effectively, optimize funding (including Rule 20A/B/C programs), and minimize service disruptions during construction.



Assessment District Engineering & Formation

Harris collaborates with local agencies and property owners to form utility undergrounding assessment districts in accordance with the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913 or the Community Facilities Act of 1982. These Acts allow local agencies to move forward with shifting existing overhead utilities underground consistent with Proposition 218 (Article XIII D of the California State Constitution). Through coordination with local agencies, utility companies and property owners, our experienced team serves as the Assessment Engineer, developing methodology for allocating the costs of the undergrounding projects, engaging with stakeholders, navigating Proposition 218 requirements, and minimizing the risk of legal challenges.

Our services include:



Financial engineering and equitable cost distribution



Proposition 218 compliance and ballot management



Legal support and litigation defense



Transparent public communication

Whether standalone or part of broader street improvements, our undergrounding projects are rooted in strong planning and stakeholder collaboration. We've provided these services for many clients, including:

- City of Newport Beach
- City of Laguna Beach
- City of Manhattan Beach
- City of Santa Barbara
- City of Coronado
- City of Oakland



Woods Cove Utility Undergrounding Assessment District 2014-2

City of Laguna Beach

Harris supported the City of Laguna Beach in the formation and implementation of the Woods Cove Utility Undergrounding Assessment District, part of the City's long-term effort to improve public safety, reduce wildfire risk, and protect the visual character of its coastal neighborhoods. As the City's Assessment Engineer, Harris guided the formation of the district in accordance with the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913 and Proposition 218 requirements. The team prepared the Engineer's Report, including the method of apportionment, assessment diagram, and boundary map, and coordinated the property owner ballot process.

In close collaboration with City staff, utility providers, and affected property owners, Harris facilitated outreach efforts to explain district goals, financing mechanisms, and anticipated benefits. Following successful district formation, Harris supported the project through joint trench coordination, service conversion planning, and integration of utility provider design requirements. The project area included complex terrain and right-of-way constraints that required careful coordination with Southern California Edison (SCE), Frontier Communications, and other stakeholders. Harris helped the City address design challenges while minimizing construction impacts to residents and positioning the district for successful implementation.



Undergrounding Utility Assessment District AD 120-2

City of Newport Beach

Harris worked with the City of Newport Beach to support the formation of Utility Undergrounding Assessment District AD 120-2, part of the City's ongoing initiative to improve public safety, reduce wildfire risk, and enhance neighborhood aesthetics by relocating overhead utilities underground. In accordance with the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913 and Proposition 218, Harris prepared the Engineer's Report and all supporting legal exhibits, including the boundary map, assessment diagram, and method of apportionment. The team also managed the preparation and mailing of notices and ballots to affected property owners, supporting the City throughout the Proposition 218 compliance process.

This work reflects Harris' long-standing role as a trusted assessment engineer for the City's undergrounding program. Harris coordinated closely with City staff to align the district boundaries and cost allocation methodology with the City's undergrounding goals. The formation of AD 120-2 helped advance a key segment of Newport Beach's broader undergrounding strategy, which is focused on improving system reliability and preserving the community's coastal character. Following successful formation, the district was positioned to move forward with utility design coordination and project implementation.



Civil Design

Harris brings deep expertise in civil design to utility undergrounding, delivering coordinated, constructible plans that align with technical requirements, agency standards, and community needs.



Utility Undergrounding Program City of Coronado

The City of Coronado's Utility Undergrounding Program involves the phased design and implementation of undergrounding overhead utility infrastructure along key corridors, including First Street, Pomona Avenue, and the Silver Strand. Led by the Public Services & Engineering Department in coordination with San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) and other utility providers, the program enhances public safety, reduces visual clutter, and improves long-term infrastructure reliability. Harris is supporting the City through joint trench coordination, integration of Cal-Am Water infrastructure, community engagement and petition management, permitting with agencies such as Caltrans and the Coastal Commission, and design-phase services including utility conflict analysis and phasing strategies.

In response to a petition received from property owners along First Street, Harris is also preparing a preliminary cost estimate and assessment formula to help the City gauge property owner interest in forming an assessment district for future undergrounding efforts.



Piedmont Pines Phase II Utility Undergrounding District

City of Oakland

Harris is providing assessment district formation and design-phase support services for this Rule 20A utility undergrounding project in accordance with the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913. Supporting Phase II of the Piedmont Pines development, Harris prepared the Engineer's Report-including the method of apportionment, boundary map, assessment diagram, and assessment roll-and managed compliance with Proposition 218 through the preparation and mailing of required notices and ballots. Following the successful district formation, Harris is assisting the City with project management through both the design and construction phases. This work includes streetlighting design to be incorporated into the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) led joint trench design. Harris is coordinating closely with PG&E and other utility providers to maintain seamless integration of streetlighting into the trench plan, while supporting the City with agency coordination, design oversight, and preparation of the Notice of Assessment for final City and County recording.



Town Administration Center Undergrounding Project

Town of Ross

This project involves providing comprehensive design engineering and construction/project management services to support the successful undergrounding of overhead utilities The project is being delivered as a CPUC Rule 20A undergrounding effort. The scope includes:

- Undergrounding of three existing wooden joint utility poles (JPs) with overhead electric, telecommunications, and other utility services.
- Relocation of three existing LED streetlights, currently mounted on the JPs, to new underground service locations near their original positions.
- Removal or conversion of three riser poles, currently located at the district perimeter.

A critical element of the project involves crossing Corte Madera Creek at the Lagunitas Road bridge to complete the utility joint trench. Existing bridge plans indicate the presence of an interior duct bank intended for this use, although its condition and suitability must be confirmed through potholing or similar base mapping techniques.

The design shall also include provisions to maintain and reconnect utility services—including power, telecommunications, cable, and gas—to the Town Hall, Police/Fire Station, and staff/admin buildings to support continuity of operations during and after construction.



DBMA #11 Underground Reliability Project Review

City of Anaheim

Serving as the case engineer and plan checker for submittals from Anaheim Public Utilities Electric to Public Works, we lead the review process to confirm that undergrounding efforts are constructable, compliant with city standards, and do not compromise existing infrastructure such as sewer, storm drain, and roadway systems. We manage cross-departmental coordination, compile agency comments, and guide the project through to final permitting so that underground utility work is executed efficiently and responsibly within the public right-of-way.



8th Street Smart Growth Utility Undergrounding

City of National City

As part of National City's Smart Growth Revitalization, Harris led the undergrounding of electrical and telecom utilities along 8th Street, integrating utility work with a major streetscape improvement project. The team mapped existing and proposed underground utilities, coordinated trench routing for SDG&E, AT&T, and Cox, and facilitated meter conversions for affected properties. Harris proactively identified and resolved potential conflicts between underground utility designs and Smart Growth improvements, resulting in a streamlined construction process while enhancing pedestrian accessibility and urban aesthetics.



Catalina Sewer and Fiber-Optic Undergrounding

City of San Diego

Harris played a critical role in the installation of 7,000 linear feet of underground fiber-optic conduit as part of the Catalina Sewer Mains replacement project in San Diego. The team coordinated underground utility relocations with SDG&E, to align with a planned 69KV electrical line while avoiding conflicts with new water and sewer infrastructure. Harris managed unforeseen underground utility challenges and integrated fiberoptic installations without disrupting existing services. This proactive approach helped modernize essential infrastructure while preventing costly delays.



Underground Utility District City of Pittsburg

Harris assisted the City of Pittsburg in establishing an underground utility district covering 10 square blocks, removing overhead power and communication lines. The project included joint trench design, service conversions, and coordination with multiple utility providers, including Pittsburg Power. Harris developed underground district boundary maps, intent plans, and final bid documents to support a seamless transition to underground utilities. Through proactive coordination, the team completed the undergrounding work efficiently while minimizing disruptions to residents and businesses.



Moss Landing Undergrounding (Rule 20B)

County of Monterey

Harris led the design and coordination for undergrounding 34 homes in Moss Landing, optimizing funding through Rule 20B to reduce costs for homeowners. The project included joint trench design for power and telecommunications infrastructure, individual service conversions, and strategic boundary negotiations with PG&E to maximize the PG&E-funded Rule 20A area. By carefully managing underground service designs and addressing unique property challenges, Harris helped the County increase project efficiency while delivering a cost-effective undergrounding solution for residents.



Lower Golden Gate Avenue Utility Undergrounding

City of Belvedere

Harris provided engineering and assessment services for the undergrounding of 3,000 linear feet of utilities along narrow, winding roads in Belvedere, addressing both technical and aesthetic concerns. The project involved joint trench design, coordination with PG&E, and transformer placement adjustments to accommodate space constraints. As district engineer, Harris facilitated stakeholder collaboration, developed intent maps for utility providers, and prepared final bid documents. The undergrounding effort improved safety, reliability, and hillside views by eliminating overhead lines.

Environmental Planning + Compliance

Our environmental planning team supports undergrounding projects with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, permitting, and resource protection strategies tailored to complex field conditions.



Bear Valley Parkway Residential Development Project Environmental Impact Report

City of Escondido

Harris prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a residential project that subdivided 40.62 acres into residential, recreational, street, and open space lots. Pursuant to CEQA, the EIR assessed the environmental ramifications of the project, identified feasible mitigation measures, and evaluated a range of alternatives to reduce significant effects.

The EIR also evaluated impacts associated with the Bear Valley Parkway Specific Alignment Plan, which included widening, a center median, sidewalks, and curb and gutter installation among its improvements.

The project faced challenges such as relocating underground utilities and negotiating with property owners, but overall, it was viewed positively by the community, as it addressed long-standing infrastructure and access issues in the area.



Otay Pipeline 2 Segment A6 Replacement Project Mitigated Negative Declaration

City of San Diego/City of Chula Vista

Harris prepared technical studies and a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the underground replacement of this City of San Diego-owned pipeline that crosses the City of Chula Vista's Multiple Species Conservation Program Preserve. Since the CEQA document was used by both the City of Chula Vista (lead agency) and the City of San Diego (responsible agency) to obtain project approvals, both cities' significance thresholds were identified in the MND. Technical studies prepared for the project include air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, cultural resources, and biological resources. The environmental technical studies influenced the design and construction methodology of the pipeline to avoid and/or minimize project impacts.



Hawthorne Undergrounding Utility Project

Town of Tiburon

Harris provided environmental planning and compliance services for the Hawthorne Undergrounding Utility Project, a critical infrastructure effort in the Town of Tiburon aimed at improving utility safety, service reliability, and visual aesthetics in a residential neighborhood bordering Richardson Bay. The project involves relocating PG&E power, AT&T telephone, and Comcast communications aerial facilities underground along multiple residential streets adjacent to the Old Rail Trail, Belvedere Tennis Club, and Tiburon Boulevard (SR 131).

Harris prepared the IS/MND and led coordination efforts with key regulatory agencies, including Caltrans, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Given the project's location near sensitive cultural and biological resources—including riparian drainages, wetlands, and public trail corridors—Harris supported the Town in navigating complex permitting and compliance requirements. Harris also facilitated tribal consultation with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, resulting in robust mitigation measures and monitoring strategies to preserve cultural and tribal resources during construction.

To protect biological resources, Harris biologists conducted preconstruction surveys for species such as the California red-legged frog and western pond turtle, and worked closely with engineers to help keep drainages, ditches, and native vegetation undisturbed. The environmental team also addressed temporary trail closures and public access along the Old Rail Trail, a popular coastal path, minimizing community impacts during construction.



East County Advanced Water Purification Pipeline — Packages 2 & 4

Padre Dam Municipal Water District

Harris provided environmental support services for Packages 2 and 4 of the East County Advanced Water Purification program—a regional effort led by Padre Dam Municipal Water District in partnership with the City of El Cajon, the County of San Diego, and Helix Water District. The program is designed to create a sustainable, drought-resilient drinking water supply for East San Diego County using advanced treatment technologies to purify recycled water.

For Package 2, Harris supported the design and construction of a 10-mile (approximately 54,000 linear feet) Advanced Water Purification pipeline, Dechlorination Facility, and an inlet to Lake Jennings. For Package 4, Harris supported the East Mission Gorge Force Main Rehabilitation and Regional Brine Line—three separate wastewater conveyance pipelines located in Santee and San Diego that will enhance operational flexibility and provide a regional solution for residuals management.

Across both packages, Harris delivered a full range of environmental services, including CEQA documentation, biological and cultural resources surveys and monitoring, aquatic resources delineation, regulatory permitting support, and development of construction strategies to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.



Construction Management

Harris provides construction management services to guide undergrounding projects through the field phase, supporting efficient execution, regulatory compliance, and minimal community disruption.



Underground District #70 (Wildlife Mitigation)

City of Anaheim

Harris is providing construction management services for the Underground District #70 – Wildfire Mitigation Undergrounding in Fire Threat Zones Project. This critical infrastructure project aims to enhance wildfire resilience by undergrounding existing electrical distribution systems, including service conversions, telecommunication networks, and street lighting installations, while also removing overhead utility facilities within high-risk wildfire zones. The project includes traffic control, potholing, water pollution control program implementation, and Best Management Practices to minimize environmental impacts.



Central Plant Building and Campus Utility Infrastructure Upgrades

Los Angeles City College

Harris played a key role in modernizing 46 acres of underground infrastructure at Los Angeles City College, improving service reliability and capacity. The project included the installation of underground water, sewer, gas, power, and fiber-optic communication systems, as well as new switchgear and distribution panels. Harris oversaw the removal of outdated overhead utilities, transitioning them underground in compliance with Los Angeles Department of Water and Power requirements. The upgrades enhanced efficiency, reduced maintenance costs, and improved campus aesthetics by eliminating overhead infrastructure.



Indian Canyon Drive Widening and Bridge Replacement

City of Palm Springs

The City of Palm Springs is enhancing its infrastructure with the Indian Canyon Drive Widening & Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Bridge Replacement Federal-Aid Project, a \$40 million investment aimed at improving traffic flow, accessibility, and safety. A critical component of this project is the undergrounding of utilities, which contributes to a more resilient and modernized infrastructure for the community. Harris is providing construction management services to support the City in overseeing the undergrounding of electrical, telecommunications, and sewer utilities, as well as coordinating utility relocations with multiple stakeholders, including SCE, Spectrum, Verizon, Southern California Gas, Desert Water Agency, and UPRR.

The scope of undergrounding work includes:

- Installation of a new underground sewer mainline beneath the UPRR tracks to improve wastewater infrastructure.
- Relocation of electrical and telecommunications utilities underground to reduce visual clutter and enhance reliability.
- Removal of outdated overhead utility lines to improve aesthetics and safety.
- Coordination with third-party utility providers to prevent service disruptions and align relocations with construction phases.



I-405 Freeway Improvement Project

Orange County Transportation Authority

To accommodate the growing traffic demand on Interstate 405 (I-405), the Orange County Transportation Authority and Caltrans launched a \$2.16 billion freeway improvement project aimed at expanding capacity and reducing congestion. Harris played a critical role in quality verification, utility coordination, and traffic control, to support compliance with contract requirements and seamless integration of underground infrastructure. Key components included:

- Relocation of underground electrical and telecommunications infrastructure to support new freeway lanes, interchanges, and ramp modifications.
- Coordination with multiple utility providers to minimize service disruptions and align undergrounding activities with roadway construction.
- Installation of underground power and fiberoptic conduit for advanced traffic management systems, tolling operations, and freeway monitoring technology.
- Integration of underground stormwater and drainage systems to enhance roadway sustainability and reduce flooding risks.

Why Harris

At Harris, we don't just manage projects—we help cities shape resilient, future-ready infrastructure.

Explore what sets us apart as leaders in undergrounding and utility coordination.

Depth of Experience

Proven track record in both urban and rural undergrounding across California.

Funding Strategy Experts

Leaders in forming assessment districts and maximizing utility contributions.

Turnkey Support

From engineering design to public outreach and construction management, we do it all.

The Harris Value

Wildfire Resilience Focus

Direct experience in high fire-threat zones and CPUC Rule 20A/B projects.

Trusted by Cities

Longstanding relationships with Newport Beach, Long Beach, Anaheim, Laguna Beach, and others.





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