

CITY OF TURLOCK

DISCOVERY REPORT





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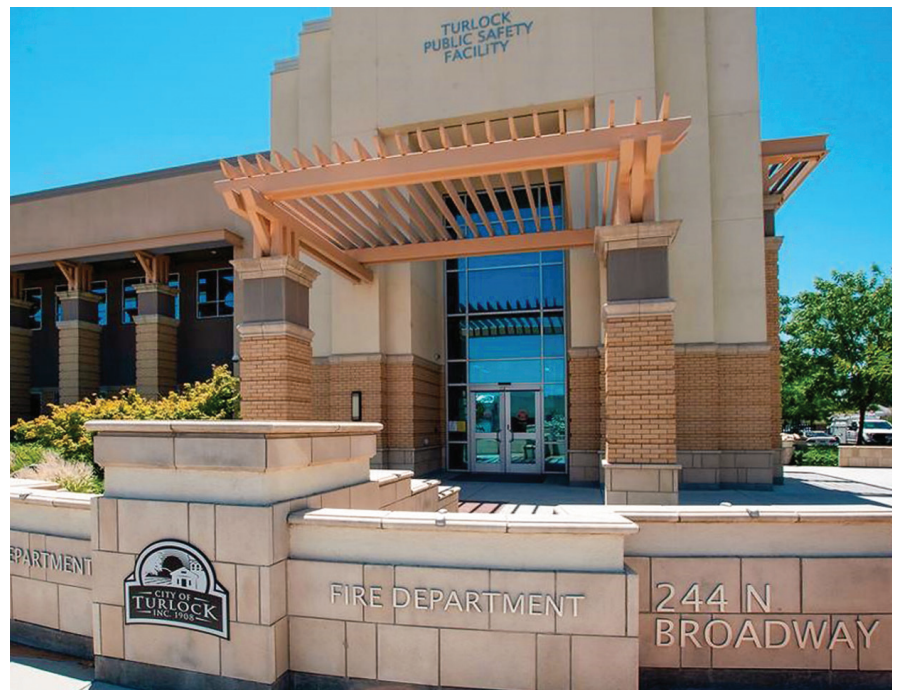
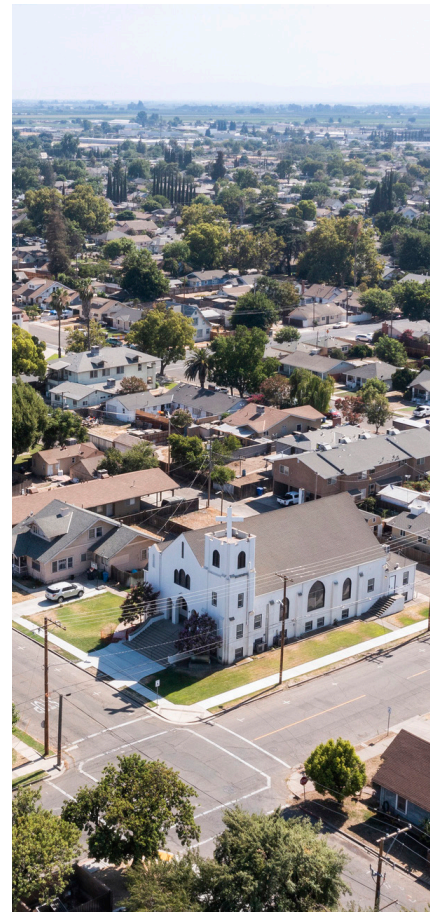


ABOUT TURLOCK

Turlock, California, is a mid-sized city located in the heart of California's Central Valley, known for its agricultural roots and a growing community atmosphere. It has a population of around 73,000 people and is the second-largest city in Stanislaus County. Historically, Turlock started as a farming town, and agriculture remains a significant part of its economy, with many surrounding farms dedicated to crops like almonds, dairy production, and other produce.

Building on its agricultural heritage, Turlock has evolved into a more diverse and modern city, with a mix of suburban neighborhoods, shopping centers, and parks. California State University, Stanislaus, located in Turlock, gives the city a vibrant, youthful energy, and there's a noticeable presence of students, which adds to the cultural diversity of the area.

Turlock's central location makes it convenient for travel to both coastal and mountain destinations in California and sits about two hours from San Francisco to the west and close to Yosemite National Park to the east.





AT A GLANCE

POPULATION:

73,631



MEDIAN AGE:

34



HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE:

53.55%



HOUSEHOLDS:

25,660



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

\$81,595



LABOR FORCE:

36,015



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:

35.84%

OF THE POPULATION HAVE AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR HIGHER.



82.15%

HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE OR HIGHER.

SIZE:

16.88

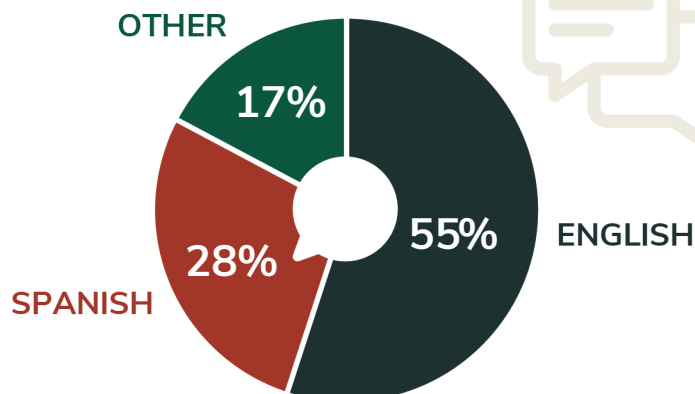
SQUARE MILES

AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME:

21 MINUTES



LANGUAGES SPOKEN:



Data Sources:
data.census.gov
zoomprospector.com
datacommons.org



GATHERING THE DATA

Every community is different, so Slate Communications spent time in Turlock in September to experience the City firsthand. Slate met with City staff members and community stakeholders and toured the City. Additional discussions and focus groups were also conducted on Zoom.

5

CITY STAFF
INTERVIEWS

17

EXTERNAL
STAKEHOLDER
INTERVIEWS

2

IN-PERSON
COMMUNITY
CONVERSATION
WORKSHOPS

53

EXTERNAL
COMMUNICATION
SURVEY
RESPONSES

(AS OF 11/4/24)



AUDIENCE PROFILES

The City of Turlock can be segmented in various ways. Demographically, Turlock is quite diverse. The median age is 34, which is slightly lower than the state average of 37. 16.5% of the population is over 65, and 28% is under 18. Looking at different segments of our audience allows us to better understand how they prefer to receive information. The City can tailor its messaging to reach different people more effectively.

RESIDENTS

The City has many long-time residents who have deep roots in the community. The overall community makeup is very diverse in age, ethnicity, primary language(s) spoken, and socio-economic status. Both traditional and nontraditional communication tools are necessary to connect with such a diverse population.

BUSINESSES

The City is home to approximately 2,388 businesses that employ roughly 22,279 people. Different business hours require multiple opportunities and times to participate in City meetings or events. The top employment industries in Turlock are healthcare and social assistance, education, manufacturing, and retail. Individual relationships are key to keeping this audience informed.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The City values its many community partners, including local schools and the university, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, public entities and more. Many of these groups work together to share information and meet regularly to collaborate. In-person meetings and email are good tools for reaching this audience.

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

45% of the population speaks a language other than English. (Note that this amount does not account for individuals who speak multiple languages and may also speak and understand English.) The City does translate some communication material into Spanish, but there are still difficulties reaching these and other speakers, and translation can cause lag time.



CURRENT COMMUNICATION TOOLS

INTERNAL

- Employee intranet
- City email
- Posters/flyers in breakroom
- Department/staff meetings
- All-staff meetings
- Staff celebrations and gatherings

EXTERNAL

- City website
- City social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, NextDoor)
- Email notifications
- Public meetings
- News releases
- Direct mail
- Mobile app
- Online polls and surveys
- Flyers/door hangers
- Digital information boards
- Partner collaboration



SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

COMMON THEMES

There's overall positive sentiment about the City of Turlock and the community.

Residents feel empowered to provide input to the City and view the organization as one of many partners that can make Turlock a better place.

Residents feel connected to each other and take pride in the community.

Communication has improved over the last few years, but there's still room for improvement.

There's a desire to receive more impactful and timely information from the City and not just general news or event updates.

As an organization, the City is making a renewed investment in quality communications to ensure both immediate and long-term improvements.

COMMON CHALLENGES

Communication is more reactive and information isn't shared far enough in advance for the community to respond or participate.

Communication from the City isn't segmented, so it's difficult to decipher what's beneficial to residents versus businesses.

The City's website is difficult to navigate, and it's challenging to find information quickly.

Most information is readily available but not always easy to find or easy to understand.

The quality of customer service/response is inconsistent across the City organization.

Internal communications is informal and dependent on interpersonal communication more than systemic tools. As a result, staff turnover has made internal communications challenging.



SURVEY RESULTS

Survey results will be added once data collection is complete.



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Turlock is a close-knit community.
- The City has developed strong relationships with community organizations and is viewed as a willing partner in creating community.
- The City Council and staff are approachable and listen to residents' and businesses' concerns.
- There's a sense that the City and the community are moving in the same direction and have the same goals for the future of Turlock.
- The City's diverse population creates a welcoming community.
- The City has built positive momentum with community and business outreach efforts.
- Many families have generations worth of history in Turlock. It's not uncommon for young people who grow up here to also attend college here and choose to stay in Turlock permanently.

WEAKNESSES

- Communications staff is spending more energy maintaining day-to-day operations, leaving limited capacity to expand strategic communication efforts.
- There isn't a process for creating mini-communication strategies or plans for larger citywide projects with high community impact.
- Access to some communication tools and platforms are missing for current staff.
- Inconsistent communication creates an environment where residents don't know where to look for the most timely and accurate information.
- Customer response is inconsistent across the City, which results in issues being elevated higher than needed.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Community partners are interested and willing to collaborate to expand communication reach.
- Increase multilingual communications, especially in Spanish.
- Enhance the City's online presence with timely website, social media, Turlock app, and electronic newsletter updates.
- Improve the City's website mobile accessibility.
- Visual communication should reflect the diversity found in the community.
- Provide more targeted messaging for businesses vs residents.
- Build an understanding of the City's role in the community and the services provided.
- Increase transparency by making important data easy to find and understand.
- Targeted outreach to the youth population as future engaged residents, since many choose to stay in town.
- With senior leadership stabilizing, the City organization can set new norms for communications and customer response, ensuring that any new programs or policies are developed for the long-term and not dependent on a single person.

THREATS

- The cost of living in Turlock continues to increase.
- General lack of trust in local government.
- The potential for misinformation and negative comments to spread online by community members who don't represent the City.
- Approximately 45% of the population speaks a language other than English. Multilingual communication can be time-consuming and expensive, and the City doesn't currently have the tools or resources to translate all messages consistently.
- A tight-knit community means that word of mouth is still an important, although not always accurate, form of communication.
- Homelessness is a community-wide challenge that impacts residents' perceptions of City services related to safety, parks, economic development, etc.
- As a growing community, Turlock is at risk of losing its small town feel, which is universally praised among residents.
- As a small organization, changes in staff and skills can impact the City's willingness and ability to communicate.



BRAND ANALYSIS



LOGO

The City of Turlock's current logo is straightforward and clear. The logo is flexible and effectively used in a variety of applications (digital, print, and both large and small formats).



BRAND

The City does not have clear guidelines for the use and application of the logo. A Brand Standards document or policy is recommended and should include approved colors, fonts, and application examples. Clear brand guidelines would help with brand recognition and consistency.



TONE

The City organization prides itself on being approachable and community-oriented. The City is generally friendly and conversational on social media, but on the website, information is more sterile and bureaucratic. There is an opportunity for content on the City's website to be less formal and for the City brand to take on a more welcoming tone.



DIGITAL AUDIT

SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT*

*Data year-to-date

CITY OF TURLOCK CITY HALL (FACEBOOK)

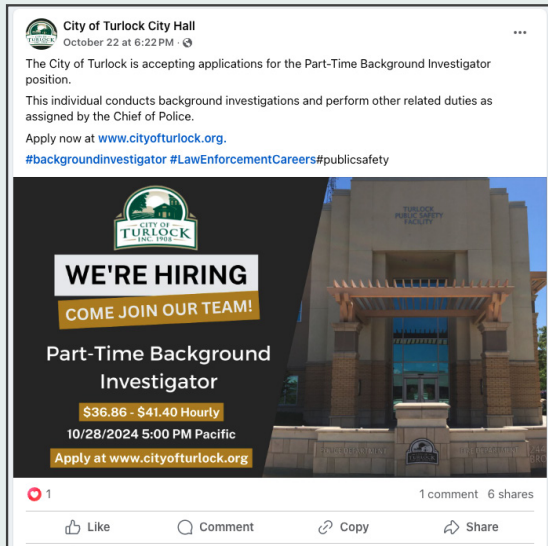


781 Followers

37.5K Reach (11% increase)

Response Time: 16 hours and 47 minutes

Top post of 2024:



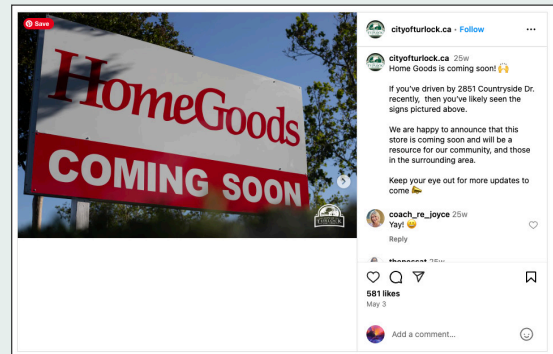
CITY OF TURLOCK CITY HALL (INSTAGRAM)



3,603 Followers

234.2K Reach (989% increase)

Top post of 2024:



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FOR CITY HALL PAGES:

- Instagram is significantly more popular than Facebook. More effort should be put into engaging with residents on Instagram.
- Post frequency on Facebook is extremely high, often with multiple posts per day. This may be decreasing reach. Consider combining posts, such as different job openings, into one post rather than multiple, individual posts.
- Posts with photos of real people (as opposed to graphics with lots of words) perform better on Facebook.

**CITY OF TURLOCK
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
(FACEBOOK)**



387 Followers (58% increase)
26.3K Reach (124% increase)

**CITY OF TURLOCK -
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
(FACEBOOK)**



1,441 Followers
2.1K Reach (114% increase)

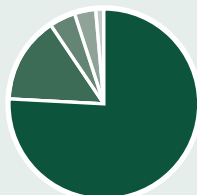
**CITY OF TURLOCK
(LINKEDIN)**



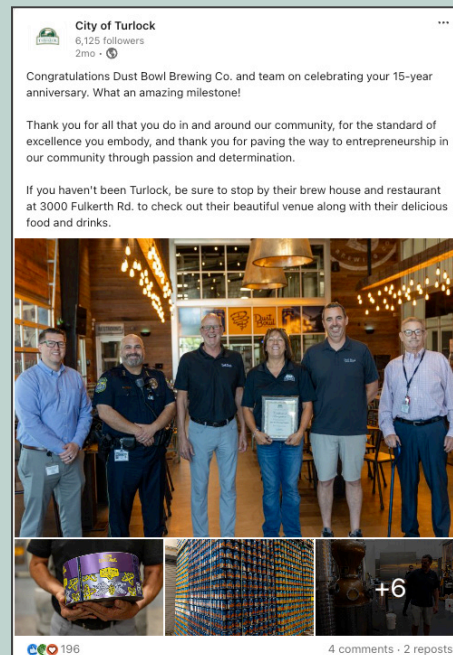
6,125 Followers
(1,563 new followers since
January 1, 2024)
6,273 Page views
2,603 Unique visitors

FOLLOWER DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Modesto-Merced Area:
60.8%
- San Francisco Bay Area:
11.8%
- Greater Sacramento Area:
3.7%
- Los Angeles Metropolitan Area:
2.8%
- Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex Area:
<1%



**Top post: Congratulations Dust Bowl
Brewing Co.! 8/26/24**



5,254 Impressions
327 Views
26 Clicks
50.7% Click Through Rate (CTR)



WEBSITE ANALYSIS



USER EXPERIENCE

The City's website is difficult to navigate and the overall user experience is poor. The site is not mobile-responsive and is a challenge to use on a phone. There are quite a few broken links, and a considerable amount of information is outdated. Most content on pages isn't skimmable making it difficult to find important information quickly.



ORGANIZATION

The homepage top navigation menu is hidden and difficult to find. There is some standardization with page layout on primary landing pages, but secondary and tertiary pages are poorly organized and difficult to navigate.



ACCESSIBILITY

A free accessibility scan was completed and identified 153 compliance issues across the site. The top violations included unclear links missing descriptive explanations; color and contrast impacting readability; and missing or unclear labels on form fields. There is a lot of text that is displayed over images that can't be interpreted by screen readers.



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

The website ranks high in search results and many top pages are listed. The website has fast upload and download speeds. More consistent use of Alt text will help improve page descriptions and SEO ranking.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

Residents speak positively about the City and have deep roots and pride in the community.

2

Segmenting communication messages to reach different audiences (businesses versus residents) can help improve communication reach and engagement.

3

City communication efforts should include both traditional and nontraditional communication tools and tactics to reach the City's diverse population.

4

Creating consistency in communication methods, timing, and distribution will increase the reliability and credibility of information.

5

Developing response standards and guidelines will make interactions more effective and efficient for staff and residents.