



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN CITY OF TURLOCK, CA September 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Turlock Strategic Communications Plan establishes a comprehensive roadmap to strengthen transparency, build community trust, and ensure that residents, businesses, and stakeholders are engaged and informed. Developed through extensive research, including interviews, focus groups, surveys, and digital audits, this plan reflects the community's communication needs, preferences, and expectations, while positioning the city organization to proactively tell its story and respond effectively in a fast-changing information landscape.

DISCOVERY AND KEY FINDINGS

The discovery phase highlighted Turlock's unique character as a diverse, close-knit community with deep agricultural roots, a growing economy, and a vibrant student population from California State University, Stanislaus. Data gathering included interviews with some members of City Council and staff, 17 stakeholder groups, community workshops, and two surveys capturing the perspectives of 87 residents and 43 employees.

Residents expressed pride in their community and appreciation for improved communications in recent years. However, challenges remain: communication is often reactive rather than proactive, the city's website is difficult to navigate, and residents desire more timely, clear, and accessible information. Employees similarly noted gaps in internal communication processes, emphasizing the need for consistency, more direct updates, and opportunities for staff-wide connection.

A SWOT Analysis was conducted, which identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the city's current communication efforts. The SWOT Analysis reinforced that Turlock's strengths lie in its strong sense of community and approachable city leadership, while weaknesses include limited communications

capacity and inconsistent information sharing. Opportunities exist to expand multilingual communication, improve digital tools, and strengthen collaboration with community partners. Threats include growing misinformation, limited resources for translation, and a general lack of trust in government institutions across the country.

VISION, GOALS, AND MESSAGING

The plan's vision is to ensure Turlock is a transparent, inclusive, and engaging community, empowered through clear, accessible, and timely communication. Five overarching goals guide the plan. They are:

1. Enhance Transparency: Increase understanding of services and decisions by aligning communication with citywide priorities.
2. Foster Community Engagement: Build two-way channels that encourage feedback, participation, and civic pride.
3. Improve Accessibility: Provide information in multiple languages and formats that meet accessibility standards.
4. Leverage Technology: Invest in digital platforms, social media, and innovative tools to reach residents where they are.
5. Strengthen Brand Identity: Establish consistent, welcoming, and inclusive messaging that reflects Turlock's character.

Foundational messaging underscores that Turlock is close-knit, proactive, strategic, approachable, inclusive, and collaborative.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The communications division is responsible for carrying out this plan, supported by clerical staff and cross-department collaboration. Key priorities include:

- Providing open, timely, and accessible communication: This includes a redesigned monthly resident e-newsletter, quarterly business newsletter, bilingual materials, updated social media policy, and consistent response standards.
- Fostering robust public participation: Tactics include council recap summaries, neighborhood pop-up events, coffee with Council (or other similar informal gatherings), project-specific FAQs, and early sharing of information on major initiatives.
- Developing a cohesive brand framework: The plan introduces brand guidelines to ensure consistency across departments.
- Expanding community partnerships: Collaboration with schools, nonprofits, and cultural organizations will help extend reach and ensure inclusivity.
- Utilizing technology: Enhancements include auditing social media accounts, integrating communications into the city's app, improving website navigation, and budgeting for boosted digital posts.

TOOLKIT AND IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure sustainability, the plan provides practical tools and templates for staff, including:

- A Communications Matrix to match tools with audiences
- An Internal Communications Request Process to standardize workflows
- A Crisis Communications Plan for emergencies
- A Translation Implementation Plan to support multilingual outreach
- A Social Media Account Relevance Check-List
- A Media Relations Tip Sheet
- And more

The plan also outlines staffing recommendations and a budget framework to ensure adequate capacity for both proactive and day-to-day communication needs. Metrics for success include media coverage, website analytics, email engagement, social media performance, and printed material distribution.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this Strategic Communications Plan positions the City of Turlock to meet community expectations for clarity, transparency, and engagement. By investing in staff capacity, digital tools, and inclusive messaging, Turlock can continue to strengthen trust, celebrate its unique identity, and foster meaningful participation in local government. The plan is a living document that should be reviewed regularly and adapted to evolving needs, ensuring that Turlock remains responsive, welcoming, and connected to its residents.



CITY OF TURLOCK

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN





TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCOVERY REPORT

About Turlock.....1

At a Glance2

Gathering the Data3

Audience Profiles4

Current Communication Tools5

Summary of Interviews6

Survey Results:

 External Community7

 Internal Employee 14

SWOT Analysis..... 23

Brand Analysis..... 25

Digital Audit..... 26

Website Analysis..... 28

Key Takeaways..... 29

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Plan Purpose 31

Plan Vision & Goals 32

Foundational Messaging..... 33

Communications Division - Core Functions 34

Communication Priorities 36

Strategies and Tactics 37

Implementation & Budget Plan..... 43

Brand Guidelines & Visual Identity 46





TABLE OF CONTENTS

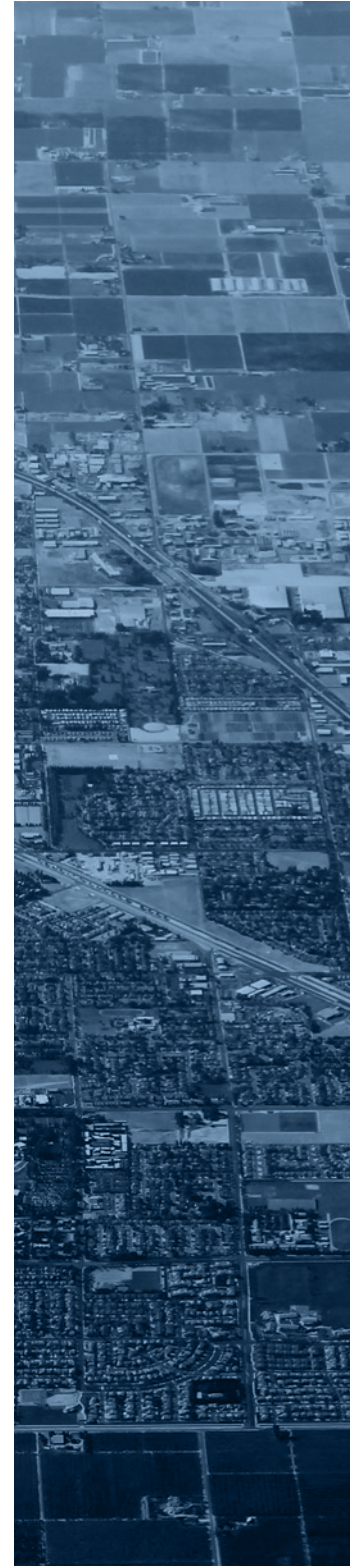
TOOLKIT

IAP2 Chart	52
Communications Matrix	53
Internal Communications Request Process	54
Communications Planning Worksheet.....	55
Crisis Communications Plan.....	56
Translation Implementation Plan.....	59
Social Media Account Relevance Check-List.....	61
Media Relations Tip Sheet	64
Staffing Recommendations	66
Metrics for Success	69
Social Media Policy - <i>Draft</i>	70

This plan was developed in collaboration with the following contributors:

- Slate Communications
- Anthony Sims,
Economic Development Director/Communications Officer
- Joseph Spangler,
Communications Specialist

A special thank you to the members of the Turlock City Council, department directors, interim city manager, city staff, community partners, and community members who participated in stakeholder interviews, community workshops and responded to online surveys.





DISCOVERY REPORT

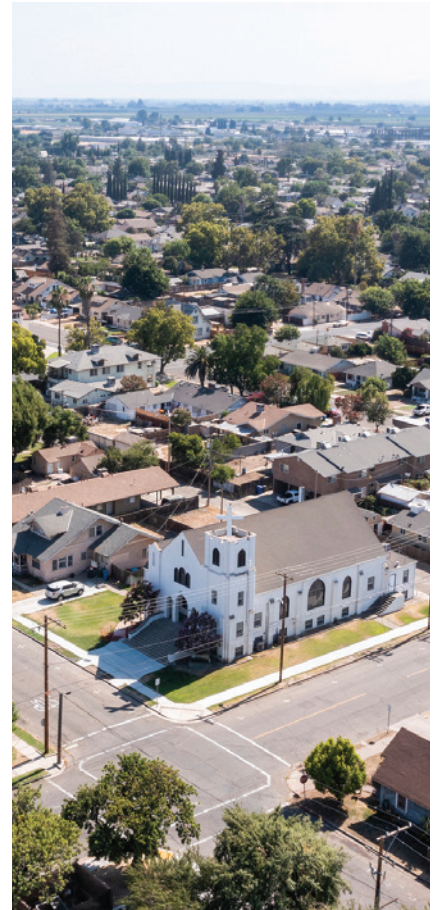


ABOUT TURLOCK

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 73,100 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:

AROUND

73,100



MEDIAN AGE:

36



HOMEOWNERSHIP
RATE:

53.55%



HOUSEHOLDS:

24,500



AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
INCOME:

\$103,900



LABOR FORCE:

29,000



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

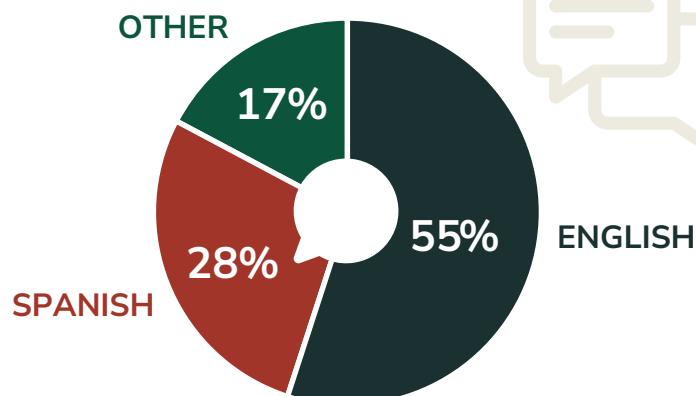
SQUARE MILES

AVERAGE
COMMUTE TIME:

21 MINUTES



LANGUAGES SPOKEN:



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



GATHERING THE DATA

Every community is different, so Slate Communications spent time in Turlock in September 2024 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.

8

CITY DIRECTOR
AND STAFF
INTERVIEWS

17

EXTERNAL
STAKEHOLDER
GROUP INTERVIEWS

2

IN-PERSON
COMMUNITY
CONVERSATION
WORKSHOPS

87

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION
SURVEY RESPONSES

43

INTERNAL EMPLOYEE
COMMUNICATION SURVEY
RESPONSES



AUDIENCE PROFILES

The City of Turlock can be segmented in various ways. Demographically, Turlock is quite diverse. The median age is 36, 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 29,000 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.

Data sources:
zoomprospector.com
datacommons.org
data.census.gov
ESRI



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)
- 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.

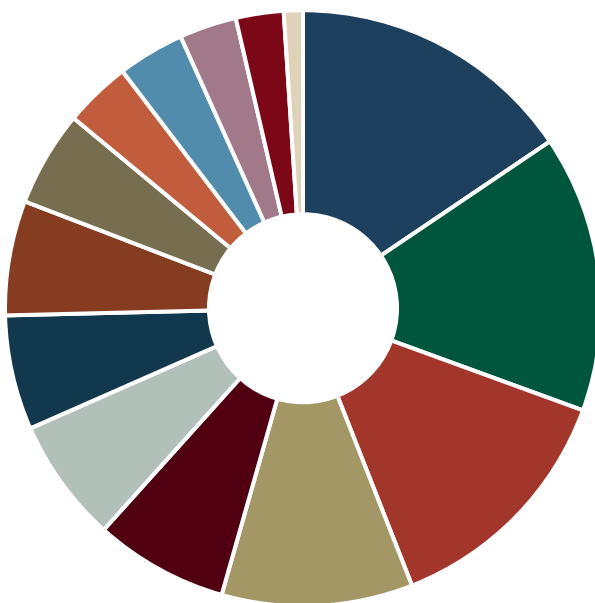


EXTERNAL COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The City of Turlock conducted a short online and printed survey to help understand how respondents prefer to receive City news and information. 87 surveys were completed, and the results are below.

1.

How do you currently receive information and updates about what is going on in the City of Turlock? (Check all that apply)



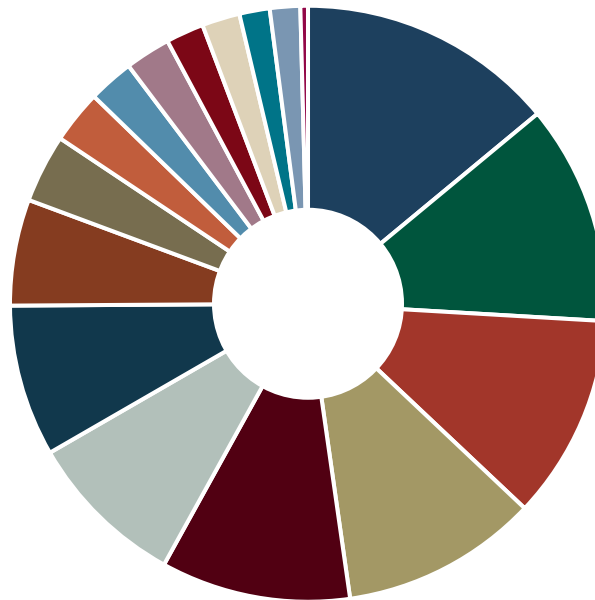
Instagram.....	35.71%
Facebook.....	34.52%
City website	30.95%
Word of mouth (from friends or family)	23.81%
City email/e-subscription service.....	16.67%
Public meetings	15.48%
Local newspaper	14.29%
Other (please specify)	14.29%
Direct mail	11.90%
LinkedIn.....	8.33%
YouTube	8.33%
Mobile app.....	7.14%
Flyers and/or door hangers.....	5.95%
None of the above	2.38%

OTHER (open-ended):

City of Turlock News	I called and asked what projects were available to volunteer for
Chamber	Emails from the Economic Development Director – Communications Officer
X (formerly Twitter)	In my bill
Turlock Journal	Bill inserts
Watch the City Council meetings	I get little to nothing as a hospital
I tried to get on the city email and was never out on the list. I will try again	Save Turlock, Turlock News, Turlock City News

2.

How do you want to receive information from the City in the future? (Choose up to 5)



City email/e-subscription service.....	40.48%	Public meetings	10.71%
City website	34.52%	Local newspaper	8.33%
City e-newsletter (bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly)	32.14%	LinkedIn	7.14%
Instagram.....	30.95%	Flyers and/or door hangers.....	7.14%
Facebook.....	29.76%	Digital information boards	5.95%
Text message.....	25.00%	Other (please specify).....	5.95%
Direct mail	23.81%	YouTube	4.76%
Mobile app.....	16.67%	Word of mouth (from friends or family)	4.76%
		Radio	1.19%

OTHER (open-ended):

Bills

X (formerly Twitter)

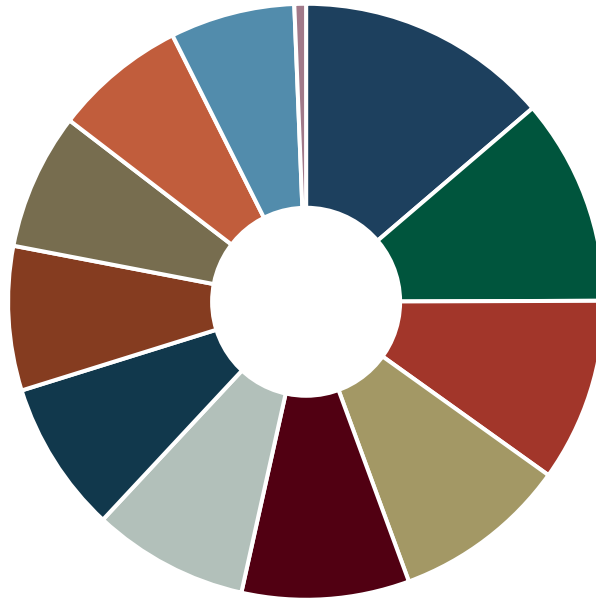
Town hall meetings with elected officials and city staff

Bill inserts

Call in option to City Council Meetings

3.

What type of information are you most interested in? (Check all that apply)



Community events.....	77.38%	Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) (roads, sidewalks, etc.)	46.43%
City Council updates.....	63.10%	Arts and cultural opportunities	44.05%
Economic development and new business information	55.95%	Budget/City finances.....	41.67%
Public safety alerts (police and fire news).....	53.57%	Development activity in your neighborhood.....	40.48%
Special projects (strategic plans, workforce housing, etc.)	51.19%	Utilities (water and wastewater).....	38.10%
Parks and recreation opportunities	47.62%	Other (please specify).....	3.57%

OTHER (open-ended):

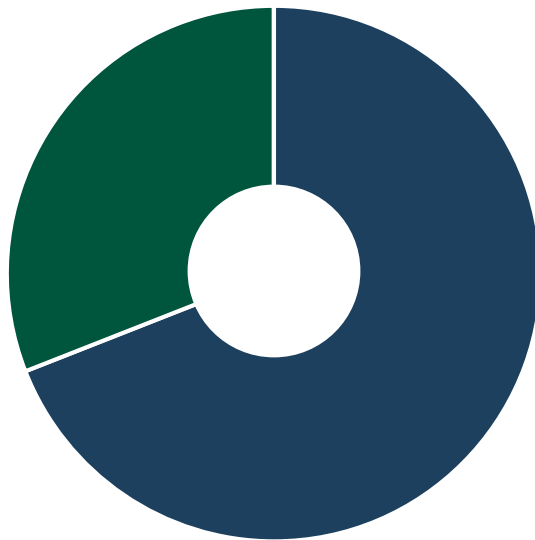
Office hours for billing payment

Emergency management issues

Homeless solutions

4.

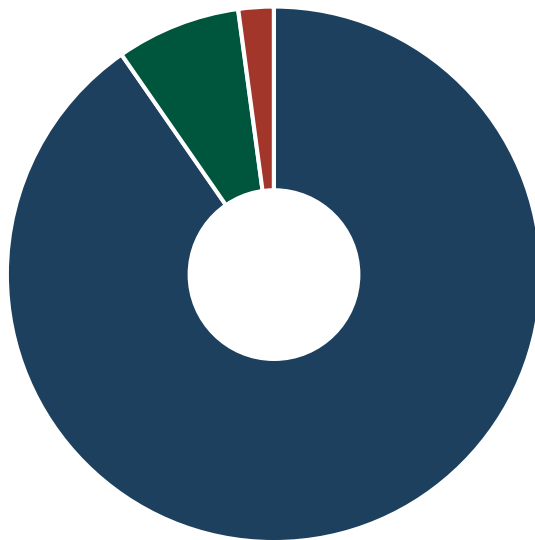
How would you describe the current communication frequency from the City?



■ Not enough	69.05%
■ Just the right amount.....	30.95%
■ Too much	0.00%

5.

In what language would you prefer to receive information from the City?



■ English	100.00%
■ Spanish.....	8.33%
■ Punjabi.....	2.38%
■ Assyrian	0.00%
■ Portuguese.....	0.00%
■ Other (please specify).....	0.00%

6.

Do you have any other suggestions on how the City of Turlock can improve communication with the community? (Verbatim Responses)

Don't say one thing and lie on the phone I heard you were open till 2pm the day before new year and the office for payment was not opened.

By text message or Email

Monthly emails

Having more community engagement within the Central Valley as a whole. We have a great community with some of the best stuff in the valley, and it seems that we should have more engagement with the rest of, not only the valley, but the state at large.

Currently, information that comes with the city bill is very helpful and could, to some extent, be increased.

Get rid of the 3-minute limit to speak at City Council meetings, it's not enough time to ask questions and make a comment.

I would rather have the information multiple times than never get it. I would like information pushed to me (even if it is a link to something else) rather than me hunt for it on social media or other means.

Hosting more events with partners

See your question 2

Clear and concise - "executive summary" versus 100 page contract.

I am with the Modesto Nuts and would like to be able to promote and help out with events. Just receiving what the city is doing via email will be good. Mary Cortez

More outdoor recreation — accessible water amenities. Kayaks would be lovely

We need better communication as a city for emergency response and awareness

Posting flyers at local businesses such as Starbucks, Raley's, and other high traffic locations. Have a Live-chat or Zoom available a couple times a week for people who are unable to attend locations so they can ask questions about the community.

6.

Do you have any other suggestions on how the City of Turlock can improve communication with the community? (Continued)

You are doing a great job by asking -- that is a huge step forward. Congrats! Jeffrey Lewis

Regular social media posts

Transparency

Have call in on the city council meetings and term limits for mayor

Podcast or videos on social media that help digest complex issues that makes it easier for everyone to understand

Allow members of the community to call in or ask questions via YouTube Chat during City Council Meetings

YES BETER HELP AND UNDERSANDING

Make information more available for all

Transparency

When revisiting an item that has been discussed in previous council meetings, give a brief summary of what has already happened so everyone can be in the know.

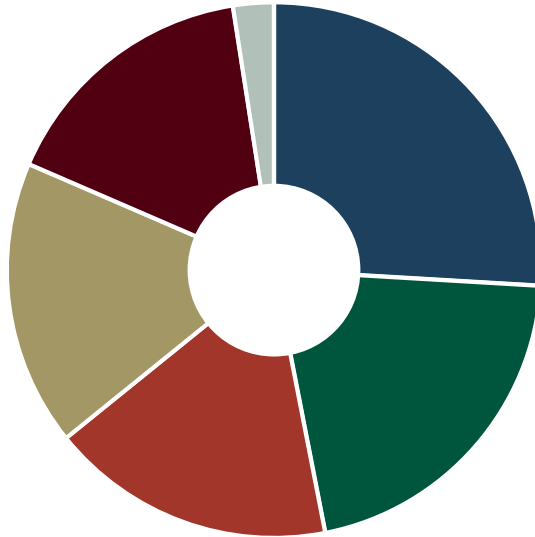


TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

(Your participation in the following questions is optional)

7.

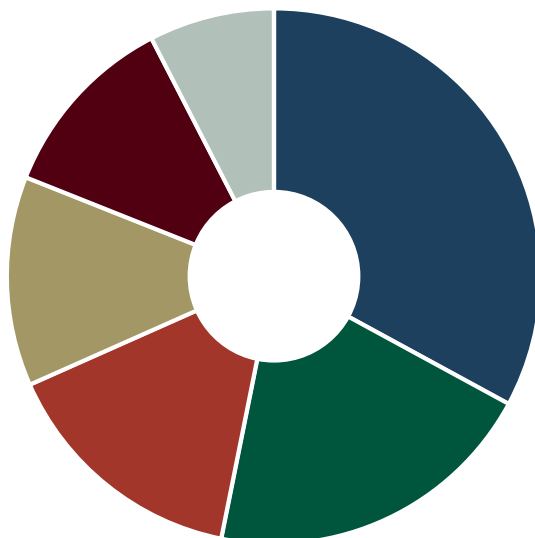
What is your age?



35-44	25.93%
45-54	20.99%
25-34	17.28%
65+	17.28%
55-64	16.05%
24 or younger	2.47%

8.

How long have you lived in the City of Turlock?



More than 30 years	32.91%
Less than 2 years	20.25%
6-10 years	15.19%
21-30 years	12.66%
11-20 years	11.39%
2-5 years	7.59%

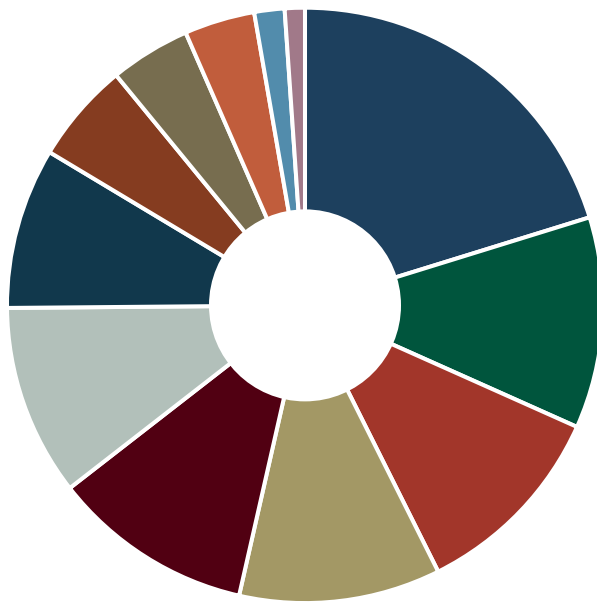


INTERNAL EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

The City of Turlock conducted a short online survey to help understand how City employees prefer to receive City news and information. 43 surveys were completed, and the results are below.

1.

How do you currently receive information about the City of Turlock? (Check all that apply)



City email.....	86.05%
City social media accounts.....	48.84%
City website	46.51%
Department/staff meetings	46.51%
Direct from your manager or supervisor	46.51%
Employee intranet.....	44.19%
City Council, Commission or Committee agendas/packets.....	37.21%
City memos	23.26%
Break room displays	18.60%
Mobile app.....	16.28%
All Hands Meetings.....	6.98%
Other (please specify).....	4.65%

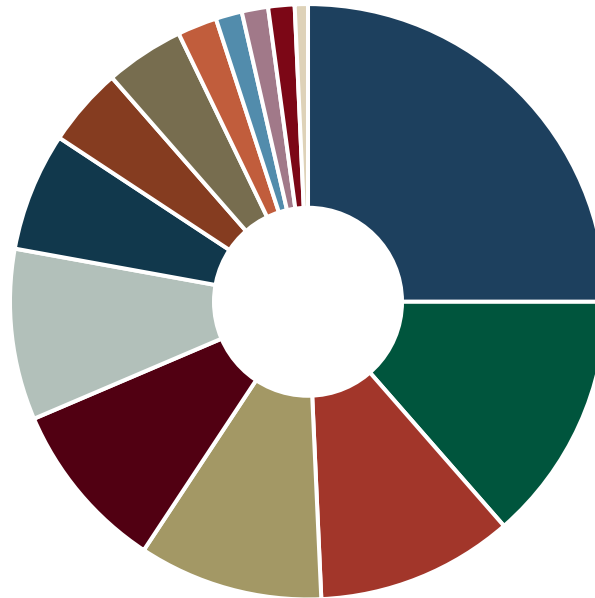
OTHER (open-ended):

I do my own research

Union social media accounts & local news media accounts

2.

How would you prefer to receive information about the City of Turlock in the future? (Choose up to 5)



City email.....	81.40%	Mobile app.....	13.95%
Department/staff meetings	44.19%	Breakroom displays.....	13.95%
Employee intranet.....	34.88%	Handouts placed in your mailbox.....	6.98%
Weekly, bi-monthly or monthly internal email newsletter	32.56%	City Council, Commission or Committee agendas/packets.....	4.65%
City social media accounts.....	30.23%	All Hands Meetings.....	4.65%
Direct from your manager or supervisor	30.23%	Other (please specify).....	4.65%
City website	20.93%	City memos	2.33%

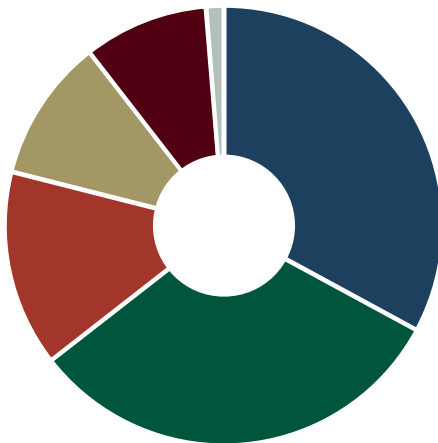
OTHER (open-ended):

If it is related directly to staff via text message would be quicker

None of the above. I feel amply able to find information I need.

3.

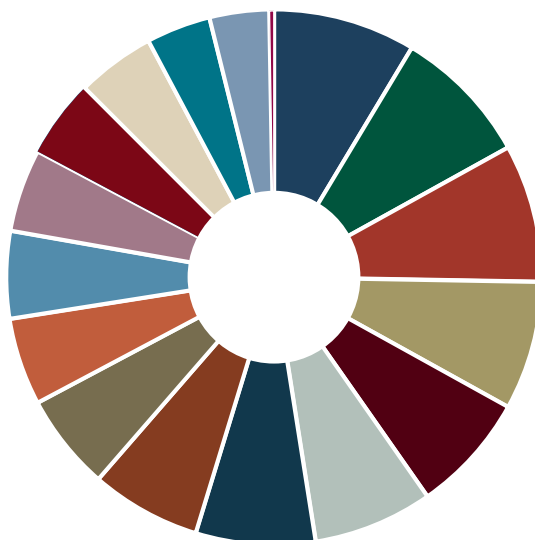
What City social media accounts do you currently follow?
(Check all that apply)



Instagram.....	58.14%
Facebook.....	55.81%
None of the above	25.58%
LinkedIn.....	18.60%
YouTube.....	16.28%
NextDoor	2.33%

4.

What type of information are you most interested in?
(Check all that apply)



City events.....	72.09%
Organizational updates (new hires, positions, promotions)	69.77%
Training opportunities	69.77%
Policy updates and information.....	65.12%
City Council updates & actions.....	60.47%
Job opportunities.....	60.47%
Benefit information & changes	60.47%
City project updates	55.81%
Parks and recreation events and activities.....	48.84%
Arts and culture events and activities.....	44.19%
Planning/new development	44.19%
Economic development and business news	41.86%
Facility and construction updates.....	39.53%
Employee success stories (awards, certifications, recognitions)	39.53%
IT updates or changes	32.56%
How our work benefits the community	30.23%
Other (please specify).....	2.33%

OTHER (open-ended):

None of the above

5.

Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve communication with City of Turlock employees? (Verbatim answer)

Share information

More is always better.

Communicate with employees prior to events being reported by non-city affiliated media

It would be great to have the capability to receive text messages for important information, changes, emergencies, etc.

I think it in respect to City-wide happenings/projects/council items sending out the CM newsletter could help keep everyone in the loop. For things related to personnel, hiring, training using an app specific for employees could be a centralized place to get info.

No but I think it's a great idea that you reached out to the employees for their input via this survey, thank you.

One way to improve communication is to include the every Manager will all information so they can timely disseminate information to their staff.

You are doing a fantastic job!

More timely, more direct

Regular email updates on safety measures would be a nice addition to current communication

Continue to push things out via email or notifications rather than us having to go look for the information.

Private Facebook group for employees of the City. Provides an open forum to share information and engage. Clear path for emergency engagement with the public such as, SMS Alerts. Weekly 60 second scoop video from communication team on bullet point items affecting key issues for the week/month.

Search Employee Directory by Department

5.

Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve communication with City of Turlock employees? (Continued)

Is there a way to be contacted if there is a threat going on in the building so we can stay out of danger.

You create the content and then share it with us

This is step 1- in my opinion a survey shows you care about the service you are providing so you can continue to enhance your department's expectations based on the metrics you gather. I personally appreciate the professionalism and can do attitude the team as embraced from day one. Additional staff may help alleviate the day to day work to allow you to focus on City business.

6.

How familiar are you with City communication functions and processes? (Verbatim answer)

I see emails, press releases, and printed handouts in common areas. I'm not into social media.

Not very

Not familiar at all. Nothing has ever been shared.

Not familiar at all.

Not very familiar

Not familiar

Not quite familiar. I do not have social media, so I do hear about a lot of things through word of mouth because of this

Not entirely sure what you are asking but if my interpretation of your question is correct, I am fairly familiar with how the City communicates (ex. website, social media, council meetings, press releases, etc.)

I am very familiar with communication functions and processes. Most of the information I receive, I am not interested in. I filter what I deem relevant or important.

NEW

6.

How familiar are you with City communication functions and processes? (Continued)

Fairly familiar

Not sure

I am not familiar with the process

Mildly

Enough to support my position

Very

Very familiar

Unfamiliar

Somewhat familiar

I think I'm fairly familiar with how things are communicated.

Fairly familiar with communication functions.

Somewhat

Semi familiar

Pretty familiar.

Not very familiar.

Familiar

Familiar

Pretty familiar

I read the CM monthly report. It is a great resource of what each department is currently

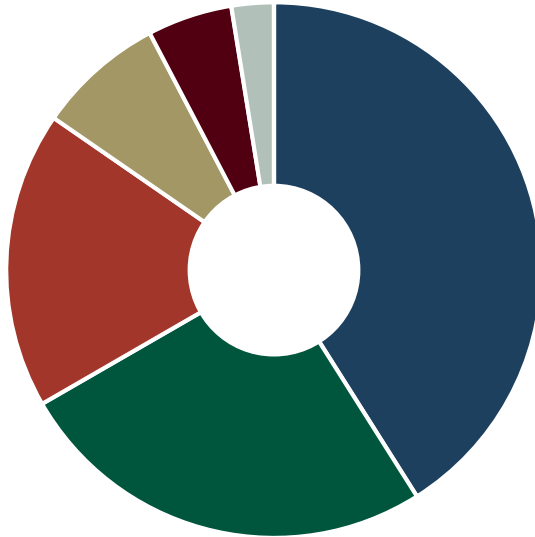


TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

(Your participation in the following questions is optional)

7.

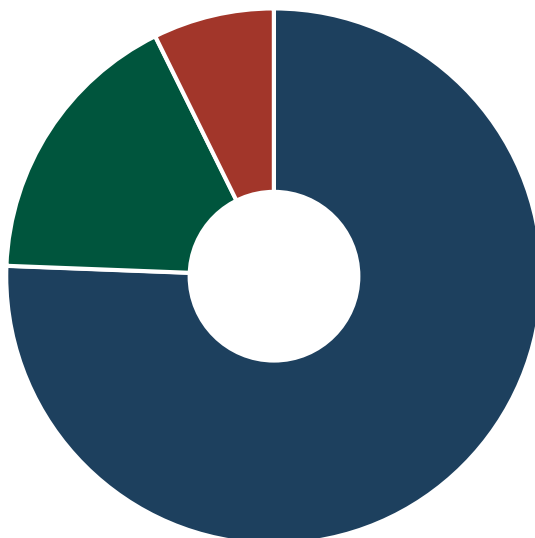
What department or division do you work in?



Executive/Administration (Economic Development, HR, IT, Risk Management, Finance, City Clerk, City Treasurer)	41.03%
Municipal Services (Public Works, Transit)	25.64%
Do not wish to disclose.....	17.95%
Development Services (Planning, Building, Housing)	7.69%
Police Department.....	5.13%
Fire Department	2.56%

8.

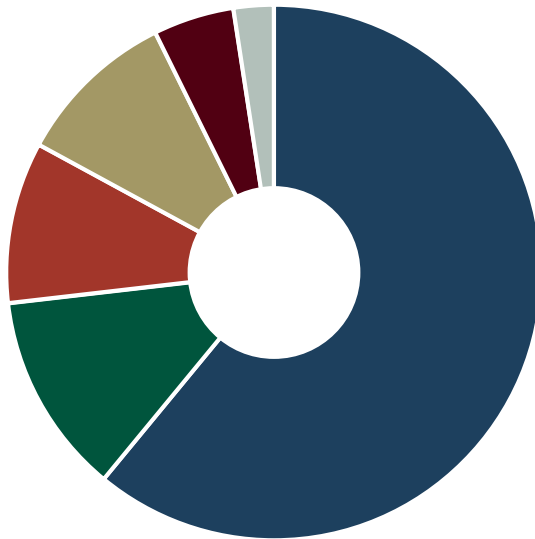
What is your employment status with the City?



Full time	75.61%
Do not wish to disclose.....	17.07%
Part time.....	7.32%

9.

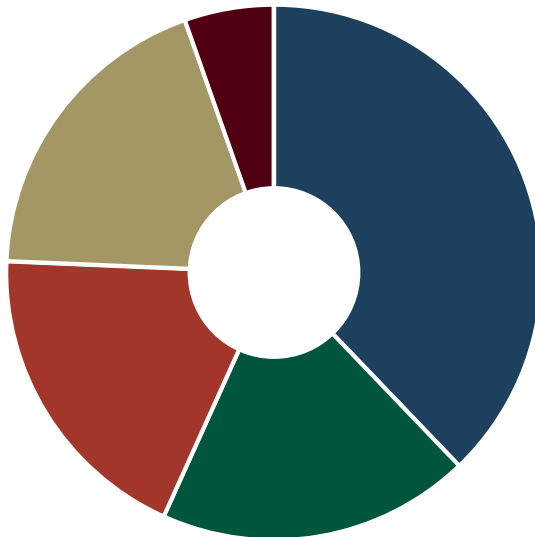
How long have you worked for the City of Turlock?



5 years or less	60.98%
Do not wish to disclose.....	12.20%
16-20 year.....	9.76%
21 years or more	9.76%
6-10 years	4.88%
11-15 years	2.44%

10.

What is your highest level of education?



Bachelors Degree	37.84%
High School.....	18.92%
Associate's Degree.....	18.92%
Do not wish to disclose.....	18.92%
Masters Degree	5.41%
PhD	0.00%

11.

If you completed college, which school did you graduate from?

MJC

CSU, Stanislaus

Brigham Young University (BYU)

Brandman university

Do not wish to disclose

I WENT TO A TRADE SCHOOL

CSU Stanislaus

University of Rhode Island.

CSU Stanislaus

UC Merced

San Diego State University

MJC

CSU Stanislaus

UoP



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)

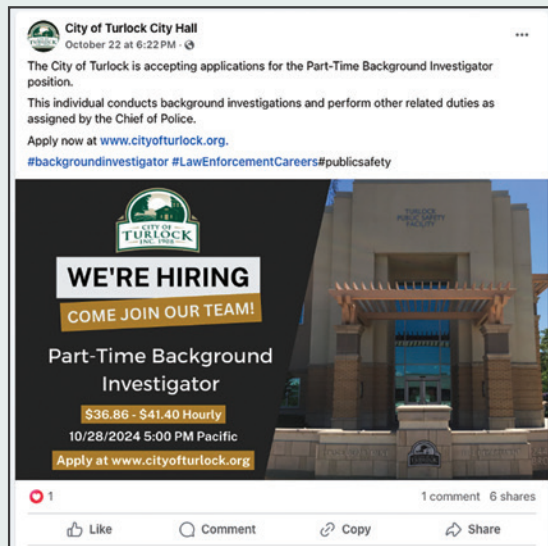


1,200 Followers

37.5K Reach (11% increase)

Response Time: 16 hours and 47 minutes

Top post of 2024:



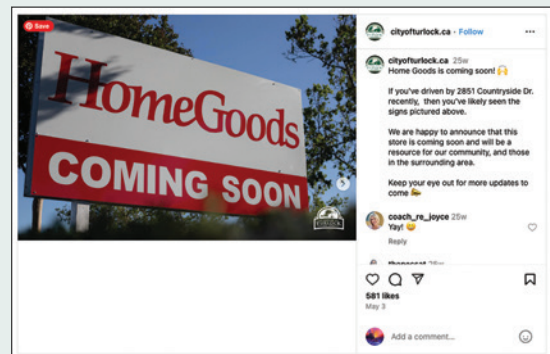
CITY OF TURLOCK CITY HALL (INSTAGRAM)



5,029 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)**



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

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



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

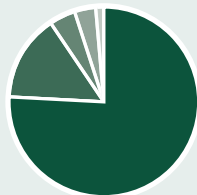
**CITY OF TURLOCK
(LINKEDIN)**



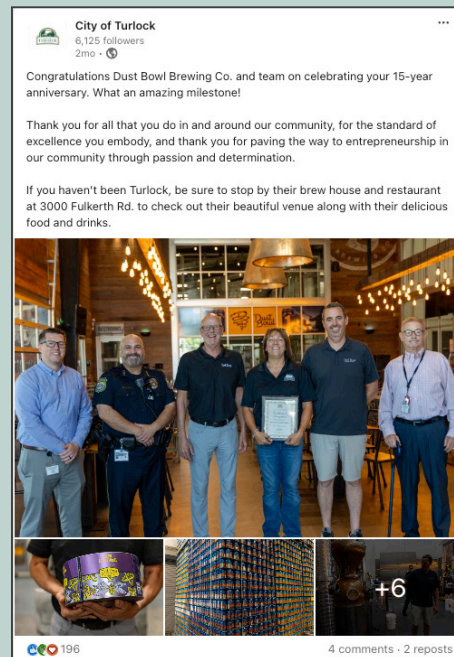
7,137 Followers
(1,563 new followers since
January 1, 2024)
6,273 Page views
2,603 Unique visitors

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

An accessibility assessment of the City's website was recently completed, providing recommendations to improve usability and access. Suggestions include clearer link descriptions, improved color contrast, and enhanced labels for form fields. These recommendations will guide ongoing efforts to ensure the website is more user-friendly for all visitors.



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.

In alignment with these efforts, the City of Turlock has also begun the initial stages of revamping the City's website to improve accessibility and user experience.



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.

A red-tinted photograph of the exterior of Turlock City Hall. The building is constructed of brick and features the words "TURLOCK CITY HALL" in large, raised letters. Below the name, there are three spherical outdoor light fixtures mounted on the wall. Bare tree branches are visible in the upper right corner, and some low-lying shrubs are in the bottom left corner. Overlaid on the right side of the image is the title "STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

TURLOCK
CITY HALL

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



PLAN PURPOSE

The City of Turlock is dedicated to fostering open, honest, and transparent communication with its community. A thoughtful and strategic communications approach helps residents, businesses, and stakeholders stay informed and engaged.

This plan, spearheaded by communications staff, serves as a guide for all city employees and provides direction for strengthening internal and external communication efforts.

Recognizing that effective communication is a shared responsibility, the plan is designed for staff at all levels, regardless of role or department. Its success relies on the active participation of the City Council, leadership, and employees. As a relevant resource, this plan should be reviewed regularly to adapt to evolving priorities, projects, and community needs.





PLAN VISION & GOALS

VISION

To ensure the City of Turlock is a transparent, inclusive, and engaging community by fostering clear, accessible, and timely communication that empowers residents, businesses, and stakeholders to actively participate in local government decision-making.

GOALS

ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY

- Align communication efforts with citywide goals and priorities.
- Increase community understanding of city services, initiatives, and decisions.
- Regularly update the community on projects, policies, and upcoming events.

FOSTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Build two-way communication channels to encourage feedback and participation.
- Promote civic involvement through diverse and inclusive outreach strategies.
- Enhance engagement opportunities with community partners.

IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure all communication platforms meet accessibility standards for people of all abilities.
- Translate key materials into multiple languages to serve Turlock's diverse population.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

- Invest in innovative tools to streamline communication with residents and businesses.

STRENGTHEN BRAND IDENTITY

- Create a cohesive brand identity and framework for Turlock's communication efforts.
- Highlight the city's unique attributes, history, and community pride in messaging.
- Ensure the city's visual brand assets represent the people and businesses in Turlock.



FOUNDATIONAL MESSAGING

#1

Turlock is a close-knit community that takes pride in its rich history and culture.

Key Words:

Community, Close-knit, Family-friendly, Heritage, Tradition, Belonging

#2

Turlock is approachable and open to receiving feedback from community members.

Key Words:

Responsive, Collaborative, Accessible, Receptive, Community-minded

#3

Turlock is proactive and transparent.

Key Words:

Forward-thinking, Open, Trustworthy, Accountable

#4

Turlock values diversity and seeks input from all perspectives.

Key Words:

Inclusive, Respectful, Diverse, Representative

#5

Turlock is strategic about decisions and thoughtful about long-term planning initiatives.

Key Words:

Thoughtful, Strategic, Deliberate

#6

Turlock is a collaborative community partner that values two-way communication.

Key Words:

Public engagement, Community partnerships, Trust



COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

The communications division is responsible for delivering accurate and timely information to City of Turlock stakeholders and staff. The city's communications staff coordinates external and internal activities and works closely with City Council and city departments to provide information to residents, businesses, visitors, and media outlets. The department also helps foster public outreach efforts to strengthen ties between the city and community members.

CURRENT POSITIONS (AS OF JULY 2025):

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR/COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

PRIMARY ROLES

Develop and implement programs to achieve city goals in economic development, business retention, and community revitalization.

Plan and execute public relations strategies for city services, programs, and events.

Conduct media outreach, including press briefings, writing news releases, and issuing advisories or public service announcements.

Establish and maintain effective relationships with business communities, citizen groups, and public agencies.

Monitor engineering work and planning processes.

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

PRIMARY ROLES

Write, edit, and prepare informational materials to inform the public about city issues, services, and events.

Compose and update city website content, including news releases.

Create and maintain city social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube), and monitor and respond to comments as needed.

Build and maintain relationships with the media for accurate event coverage.

Coordinate video and photography needs.

TWO PART-TIME CLERICAL POSITIONS (BOTH 20-HOURS EACH)

PRIMARY ROLES	POSITION #1:	Multimedia support, including video creation and editing as well as photography.
	POSITION #2:	Business outreach and development services liaison.
		Financial processing and grant administration.

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Public Engagement: Communications staff works to develop and carry out successful strategies to engage the public in their local government through participation at events, through print and digital platforms, and with city services and programs.

Strategic Communications Support: Implement City Council's strategic goals and align communication efforts with the organization's guiding documents, work plans, strategic initiatives, and large-scale projects.

Partner Collaboration: Communications staff works with city staff, elected officials, board & commission members, other governmental agencies, nonprofit partners, and community organizations to enhance collaboration and educational opportunities across the community.

Communications Support for Offices and Departments: As department leaders and city staff seek communications support for programs and projects, the communications division helps to ensure that projects, initiatives, and events are promoted using communication best practices.

Brand Management: The communications division ensures the Turlock brand is implemented consistently and brand messages are used appropriately and often in all communication efforts.

Emergency Communication: These communication efforts are unexpected and take many forms. When a crisis occurs, the communications staff will develop and position emergency messages, correctly and effectively disseminate information, prepare department leaders and emergency responders, and manage media relations.



COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES

PRIORITY

#1

Improve the city's credibility and build trust among citizens.

#2

Foster robust public participation and civic engagement.

#3

Develop a cohesive brand framework.

#4

Expand community partnerships.

#5

Utilize technology to enhance communication efforts and reach.





STRATEGIES & TACTICS

PRIORITY #1

PROVIDE OPEN, TIMELY, AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION TO ALL AUDIENCES.

Build visible, recurring communication routines.

- ☐ Reorganize e-newsletter and e-notification distribution lists based on audience instead of topic. Begin with a dedicated monthly resident-focused city e-newsletter and a quarterly business e-newsletter. Other segmented notifications can remain, but be strategic about what's shared and when.
- ☐ Launch a "Council Recap" summary (written or podcast) after each City Council meeting, highlighting decisions, upcoming votes, and how resident feedback was used.
- ☐ Create an annual Budget Brief document that clearly communicates the city's annual budget in a shorter, easier-to-digest format, roughly four pages long.

Ensure information is accessible for community members who do not speak English as a first language.

- ☐ Adopt a phased approach to providing all Town materials in Spanish and English as outlined in the Translation Implementation Plan in the Toolkit.
- ☐ Employ a Spanish-speaking staff member to build connections with Latino residents and business owners. This tactic can evolve into a word-of-mouth, grassroots approach to reach the Turlock community.
- ☐ Have a contracted translator on retainer to provide quick translation services.
- ☐ Consider a different graphic design style for materials created primarily for Spanish-speaking audiences.
- ☐ Translate pre-recorded telephone messages into Spanish.

Share information through the platforms residents already use.

- ☐ Share information on Facebook, Instagram, e-newsletters, and bill inserts as primary channels, and in accordance with resident survey preferences.
- ☐ Utilize the Communications Matrix in the Toolkit to identify the best communication tool(s) for your intended audience(s).

PROVIDE OPEN, TIMELY, AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION TO ALL AUDIENCES. (CONT.)

Conduct a social media audit of existing accounts.

- ☐ Utilizing the Social Media Account Relevance Check-List in the Toolkit section, determine if certain department social media accounts should be decommissioned or reallocated.
- ☐ Standardize social media protocols across all departments to ensure they align with city goals.

Adopt an updated Social Media Policy.

- ☐ Review and adopt an updated Social Media Policy. (See draft in Toolkit)

Develop an internal social media committee to collaborate on messaging and calendar planning.

- ☐ Create a social media sub-committee of staff members from each department who manage their own social media content and calendar and meet quarterly to collaborate on messaging and communication goals.
- ☐ Share social media best practices.
- ☐ Establish an annual budget for boosting posts and placing social media ads. Look ahead each quarter to identify which topics should be boosted, and distribute the budget accordingly.
- ☐ Review top-performing posts from each platform.

Standardize communication processes and procedures.

- ☐ To help ensure consistent communication across the organization, the city should establish well-defined processes for how, what, and when to communicate. (See the Internal Communications Request Process Worksheet and Communications Planning Worksheet in Toolkit)

Adopt an Emergency Communications Plan.

- ☐ Review and adopt an Emergency Communications Plan. (See draft in Toolkit)

FOSTER ROBUST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

Use less formal, more collaborative communication approaches to maintain an ongoing dialogue between residents and the city government.

- ☐ Organize small and local outreach opportunities like Coffee with Council, Neighborhood Nights, or other informal pop-up events. For example, host a pizza in the park or movie night, or invite food trucks to a neighborhood for a block party.
- ☐ Capitalize on already-established community events by hosting a city booth to share updates and get feedback. Have at least one 'ask' you want residents to provide feedback on, even if it's fun, funny, or insignificant.
- ☐ Maintain a contact list of HOA managers and work with each community to share city information. Ex. In HOA newsletters or on their social media accounts.

Reach community members where they are.

- ☐ Have a city presence at primarily Latino festivals and events, with a Spanish-speaking staff member at the booth, or resources printed in Spanish.
- ☐ Continue to provide communication in more traditional, printed forms. Ex. Door hangers, mailed postcards, etc.
- ☐ Prioritize posting on social media accounts that have the highest engagement and reach.

Share early and often.

- ☐ Plan to share information regularly throughout the process for large projects or initiatives of high interest to residents. Sharing information as early as possible keeps residents informed.
- ☐ Create project-specific FAQs or 'Fact vs. Fiction' info sheets to help dispel rumors and educate the community about important topics.

Equip community members with tools for informed input.

- ☐ Use the website and social media to share issue or topic one-pagers, FAQs, and timelines ahead of public meetings and feedback windows.
- ☐ Launch a digital campaign to increase awareness of how and when residents can weigh in on projects (Ex. permitting, road work, budget) and how and where to sign up for city news and notifications.

DEVELOP A COHESIVE BRAND FRAMEWORK.

Standardize the city brand across all departments.

- ☐ Provide departments with templates that align with brand standards. Examples include PowerPoints, quarterly reports, department logos (most commonly the city logo with the department name), Canva templates, memos, flyers, etc.
- ☐ Create a one-page brand guide to be posted in offices and common spaces for all departments to refer to quickly. This guide should provide brand colors, fonts, and basic logo usage at a glance.
- ☐ Include brand training during new hire onboarding, regardless of department. New staff should understand the importance of a brand, how to access brand guidelines and templates, and who to contact if they have questions about properly implementing the brand into the materials they create.

Audit and update legacy branding.

- ☐ Conduct an inventory of department materials and social media to identify misaligned messaging or style inconsistencies.
- ☐ Use the Social Media Relevance checklist to determine which department accounts should be merged or sunsetted.

Tell the story of Turlock through visual communication and brand consistency.

- ☐ Create branded templates for flyers, presentations, and social media graphics with department-specific customization.



EXPAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

Utilize community partnerships to reach more audiences.

- ☐ Schedule quarterly meetings with key stakeholders, including those from the media and partner organizations, to share timely information and build rapport.
- ☐ Build out a partner contact database and offer quarterly engagement meetings or roundtables to align on communication goals.
- ☐ Formalize recurring info-sharing partnerships with CSU Stanislaus, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations through shared e-blasts, co-branded events, and newsletters.

Explore opportunities to partner with California State University Stanislaus.

- ☐ Explore internship and volunteer opportunities for university students to get involved and learn about their local government. For example, have a college student serve on existing city boards and commissions.
- ☐ Find ways to collaborate on communication, messaging, and outreach. For example, host city news sign-up days for students on campus to connect to social media, news alerts, emergency notifications, etc.
- ☐ Partner with the university on game days and offer engagement opportunities at sporting events for students to provide feedback on topics or issues that interest and impact them.
- ☐ Partner with the student newspaper to buy ads or share editorial content about city programs.



UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION EFFORTS AND REACH.

Redesign and streamline the city website.

- ☐ Prioritize homepage redesign and navigation improvements focusing on top-searched terms and services.
- ☐ To ensure accessibility for non-English-speaking residents, prioritize having content directly on the website rather than linked in PDFs or other documents. In this format, web browsers can automatically translate web content.
- ☐ Create project-specific pages on the city website to use as a repository for important project information and milestones.

Drive adoption of the city mobile app.

- ☐ Create a marketing and outreach campaign to promote the city's mobile app.
- ☐ Utilize existing city communication channels to share information about the platform and encourage sign-ups.

Centralize service tracking and outreach.

- ☐ Fully implement the CRM for tracking inquiries and complaints across departments and integrate with app feedback loops.
- ☐ Publish regular analytics on response time, service quality, and community feedback trends.

Utilize video to tell engaging stories.

- ☐ Launch a series of short "Day in the Life", "City in a Minute" or "Behind the Scenes" videos to highlight staff roles and meaningful projects that impact the community.
- ☐ Create a short (less than 10 minutes) State of the City video that recaps city goals and how various projects for the year will contribute to each goal.
- ☐ Develop an implementation plan and schedule to share videos across all city communication platforms.



IMPLEMENTATION & BUDGET PLAN

ONGOING OR CONTINUE DOING...	BUDGET
Share information on Facebook, Instagram, e-newsletters, and bill inserts as primary communication channels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize posting on social media accounts that have the highest engagement and reach. 	0
Utilize the Communications Matrix in the Toolkit to identify the best communication tool(s) for your intended audience(s).	0
Continue to provide communication in more traditional, printed forms.	0
Plan to share information regularly throughout the process for large projects or initiatives of high interest to residents.	0
HIGH PRIORITY <i>IMPLEMENT WITHIN 4-6 MONTHS FOLLOWING PLAN ADOPTION</i>	BUDGET
Reorganize e-newsletter and e-notification distribution lists based on audience instead of topic.	0
Launch a “Council Recap” summary (written or podcast) after each City Council meeting.	0
Utilizing the Social Media Account Relevance Check-List in the Toolkit section, determine if certain department social media accounts should be decommissioned or reallocated.	0
Review and adopt an updated Social Media Policy.	0
Maintain a contact list of HOA managers and work with each community to share city information.	0
Conduct an inventory of department materials and social media to identify misaligned messaging or style inconsistencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardize social media protocols across all departments to ensure they align with city goals. 	0
Include brand training during new hire onboarding, regardless of department.	0
Develop an implementation plan and schedule to share videos across all city communication platforms.	0

Budget Key

0 = No additional funds needed
 \$ = May require some additional funding
 \$\$ = Additional funding required
 \$\$\$ = Additional funding and staff required

MEDIUM PRIORITY <i>IMPLEMENT WITHIN 7-12 MONTHS FOLLOWING PLAN ADOPTION</i>	BUDGET
Create an annual Budget Brief document that clearly communicates the city's annual budget in a shorter, easier-to-digest format.	0
Adopt a phased approach to providing all Town materials in Spanish and English as outlined in the Translation Implementation Plan.	\$
Have a contracted translator on retainer to provide quick translation services.	\$\$
Consider a different graphic design style for materials created primarily for Spanish-speaking audiences.	0
Create a social media sub-committee of staff members from each department.	0
Establish well-defined processes for how, what, and when to communicate using the Internal Communications Request Process Worksheet and Communications Planning Worksheet in Toolkit.	0
Review and adopt an Emergency Communications Plan.	0
Organize small and local outreach opportunities like Coffee with Council, Neighborhood Nights, or other informal pop-up events.	\$\$
Capitalize on already-established community events by hosting a city booth to share updates and get feedback.	0
Launch a digital campaign to increase awareness of how and when residents can weigh in on projects.	\$
Provide departments with templates that align with brand standards.	0
Create a one-page brand guide to be posted in offices and common spaces for all departments to refer to quickly.	0
Schedule quarterly meetings with key stakeholders, including those from the media and partner organizations, to share timely information and build rapport.	0
Build out a partner contact database and offer quarterly engagement meetings or roundtables to align on communication goals.	0
Redesign and streamline the city website.	\$\$
Create a marketing and outreach campaign to promote the city's mobile app.	\$\$
Utilize video to tell engaging stories. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a series of short "Day in the Life", "City in a Minute" or "Behind the Scenes" videos. • Create a short (less than 10 minutes) State of the City video. 	0

Budget Key

0 = No additional funds needed

\$ = May require some additional funding

\$\$ = Additional funding required

\$\$\$ = Additional funding and staff required

LOW & LONG-TERM PRIORITY

BUDGET

IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE STRATEGIES MAY TAKE A YEAR OR LONGER AND INVOLVE COORDINATION WITH LEADERSHIP, OUTSIDE CONTRACTOR SUPPORT, OR REQUIRE POLICY CHANGES AND ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Employ a Spanish-speaking staff member to build connections with Latino residents and business owners.	\$\$\$
Translate pre-recorded telephone messages into Spanish.	\$
Have a city presence at primarily Latino festivals and events, with a Spanish-speaking staff member at the booth, or resources printed in Spanish.	\$\$\$
Formalize recurring info-sharing partnerships with CSU Stanislaus, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations through shared e-blasts, co-branded events, and newsletters.	0
<p>Explore internship and volunteer opportunities for university students to get involved and learn about their local government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to collaborate on communication, messaging, and outreach. • Partner with the university on game days and offer engagement opportunities at sporting events. • Partner with the student newspaper to buy ads or share editorial content. 	0
<p>Centralize service tracking and outreach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully implement the CRM for tracking inquiries and complaints across departments. • Publish regular analytics on response time. 	0

Budget Key

0 = No additional funds needed

\$ = May require some additional funding

\$\$ = Additional funding required

\$\$\$ = Additional funding and staff required





BRAND GUIDELINES & VISUAL IDENTITY

This section outlines when and how to use each of the City of Turlock's four primary brands: the city's main administrative brand, Turlock Transit, the Police Department, and the Fire Department. It provides clear guidance to ensure consistency, clarity, and alignment across all communications, while recognizing the unique role each brand plays in serving the community. These standards help staff and partners use the right brand, in the right place, for the right audience.

CITY BRAND (PRIMARY BRAND)



PRIMARY USE:

Communications from general city administration and service departments such as the City Manager's Office, Economic Development, Municipal Services, Finance, Development Services, IT, and Human Resources.

Website, citywide newsletters, public notices, budget briefs, and community updates not tied to a specialized service.

WHERE TO USE:

- City Hall social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn).
- Printed materials like annual reports, council summaries, newsletters, and flyers for general services.
- Outreach and engagement at events not specific to safety or transit.

NOTES:

- This is the umbrella brand. It should lead all general communication efforts and set the tone and visual identity for the city as a whole.
- Other departmental branding (except the other three primary brands listed below) should be aligned with this in tone, typeface, and message clarity.
- Each administrative department may have a custom logo utilizing the City of Turlock logo and the division or department name incorporated below.

TRANSPORTATION BRAND



TURLOCK TRANSIT

PRIMARY USE:

Communications focused on public transportation services, updates, schedules, changes, promotions, and policies related to Turlock Transit.

WHERE TO USE:

- Turlock Transit website and its dedicated Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X accounts.
- Bus stop signage, route maps, transit apps, and passenger alerts.
- Campaigns promoting ridership, transit passes, accessibility, and public engagement on mobility issues.

NOTES:

- As a revenue-generating and customer-facing brand, Turlock Transit can maintain its distinct identity and logo system as long as it maintains visual consistency with overall city brand standards.
- Should align with the city's accessibility and inclusion standards for multilingual and ADA-compliant materials.
- When possible and where it makes sense, incorporate the city's primary brand and logo to strengthen the connection between the city and transportation brands.



POLICE DEPARTMENT - PUBLIC SAFETY BRAND



PRIMARY USE:

Communications related to public safety, law enforcement, emergency response, community policing, crime prevention, and departmental updates.

WHERE TO USE:

- Turlock Police Department's Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, YouTube, and Nixle alert systems.
- Emergency notifications, press releases, recruitment materials, and community policing initiatives.
- Branded uniforms, vehicle graphics, and station signage.

NOTES:

- As a well-established public safety brand, the Police Department should have autonomy over its branding while adhering to core messaging strategies and accessibility standards.
- Collaboration with city communications is recommended for high-impact incidents or citywide messaging.



FIRE DEPARTMENT - PUBLIC SAFETY BRAND



PRIMARY USE:

Communications related to fire suppression, emergency medical response, fire prevention, disaster preparedness, and public education.

WHERE TO USE:

- Fire Department Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, YouTube accounts.
- Station signage, apparatus branding, safety campaign materials, wildfire updates, and educational outreach (Ex. smoke alarm campaigns).

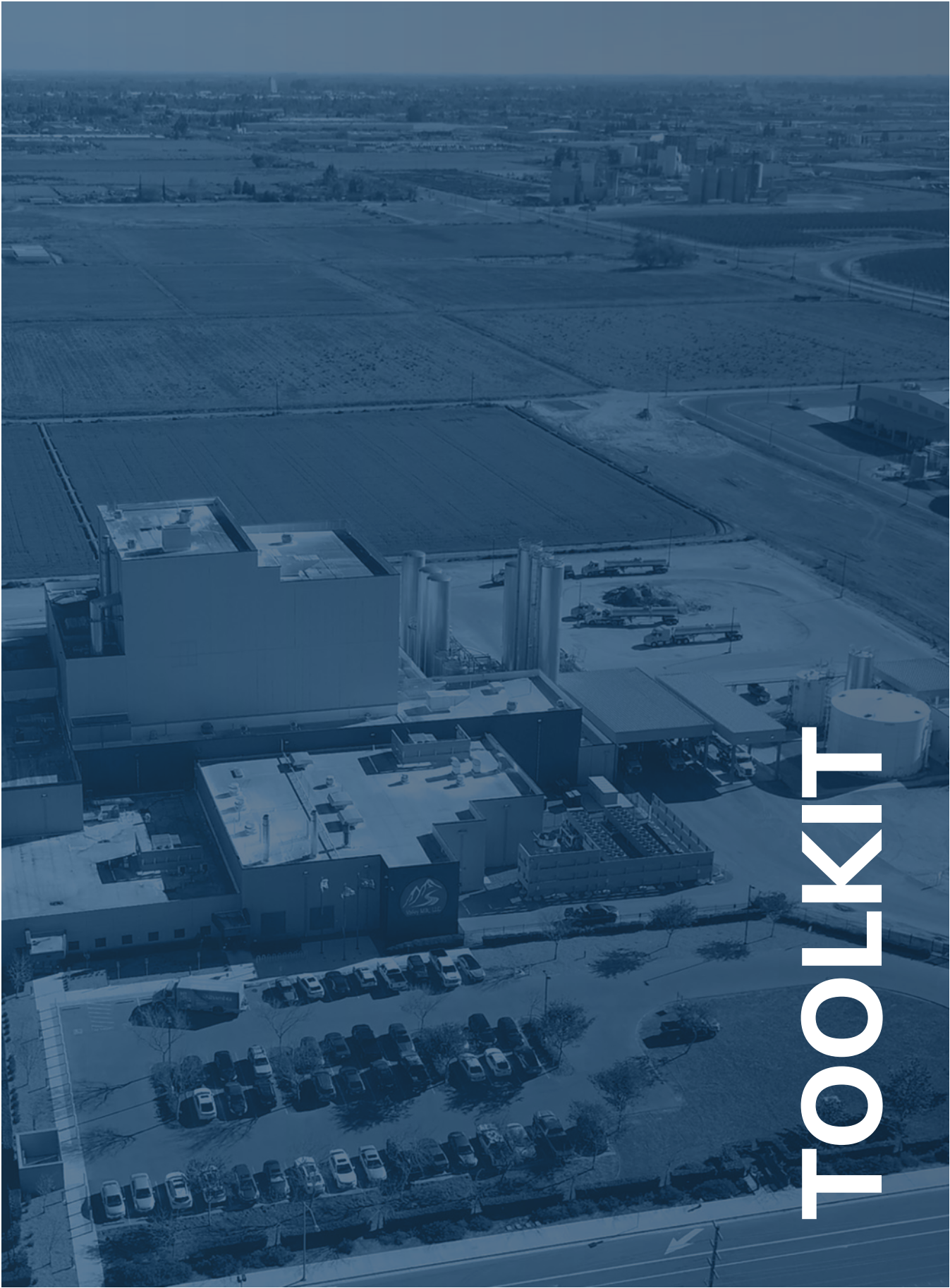
NOTES:

- The Fire Department brand is also a public safety identity and should be used independently for issues related to emergency and fire services, but in alignment with the city's voice and tone as needed.
- Collaboration with city communications is recommended for high-impact incidents or citywide messaging.



BRAND SUMMARY CHART

	BRAND	USE FOR	WHERE TO USE IT
	City of Turlock	Citywide services and general administrative departments	Website, City Hall social accounts, newsletters, events
	Turlock Transit	Transit services and customer information	Transit social accounts, bus signage, schedules
	Police Department	Public safety, enforcement, alerts	PD social, Nixle, press releases, recruiting materials, education events
	Fire Department	Emergency response, fire safety, EMS	Fire social, alerts, safety campaigns, education events



TOOLKIT



IAP2 CHART

IAP2 developed a Spectrum of Public Participation designed to help communicators determine what the public's role should be in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally and is considered best practice for determining public engagement levels, especially in public sector work.

Refer to this Spectrum to determine the most appropriate and effective level of public engagement based on the scope and impact of your project.

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT					
INFORM					
CONSULT					
INVOLVE					
COLLABORATE					
EMPOWER					
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



COMMUNICATIONS MATRIX

The Communication Matrix is a resource that helps identify the best tools to reach or hear from specific audiences when communicating about the City of Turlock. Tools are organized by effectiveness to assist with implementing communication outreach initiatives or campaigns.

		AUDIENCES											
		Residents	Business Owners/Managers	Workforce/Commuter	Non-English Speakers	Families with Young Children	City Staff	Visitors	Baby Boomers (1946-64)	"Generation X" (1965-1980)"	Millennials (1981-1996)	Generation Z (1996-2010)	Generation Alpha (2011-2024)
TOOLS	City website												
	Direct emails/phone calls												
	Direct mailers												
	Variable Message Signs (VMS)/ Message boards												
	Print advertising (newspaper ads)												
	Newspaper letters to the editor												
	Email notifications												
	Public meetings												
	Radio ads												
	Digital information boards												
	Self-serve info/kiosks												
	Facebook												
	Instagram												
	X (formerly Twitter)												
	YouTube												
	NextDoor												
	LinkedIn												
	Utility bill inserts												
	Mobile app												
	Door hangers												
	Digital ads												
	CSUS Signal (University student newspaper)												
	Signage (wayfinding, a-frames, yard signs)												
	Partner collaboration (schools, university, employers, industry or advocacy groups, etc.)												



INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS REQUEST PROCESS

1

STEP 1: COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT REQUEST OR NEED IS RECEIVED

The request can come from any level in the organization. Requests are sent to the Economic Development Director/Communications Officer and shared with the Communications Specialist.

2

STEP 2: IDENTIFY NEEDS

Determine the following:

- Do you have all the pertinent information from the requestor to move forward?
- Is this a short-term project or long-term initiative?
- Is a separate communications plan needed?

3

STEP 3: BUILD THE TEAM

If the project is larger than a simple request, the Economic Development Director/Communications Officer will determine which team members need to be involved. This team will meet to discuss:

- **Roles:** How will each team member contribute to the effort and who will take on the leadership role?
- **Goals:** What's the intended result of the effort? Define metrics for success.
- **Alignment:** How does this effort align with the City's strategic plan or other guiding documents?

4

STEP 4: DEVELOP THE PLAN

Determine the following:

- Project timeline
- Audience(s)
- Key messages
- Tools and tactics
- Implementation schedule
- Measurements of success

5

STEP 5: REPORTING AND ONGOING COMMUNICATION

The communications staff person identified as the primary point of contact for the project will be the person to coordinate with the requestor for approvals, and they will also provide consistent updates on progress and results.

6

STEP 6: SET EXPECTATIONS

Communicate with the requestor the expectations required for department support and delivery timelines.



COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING WORKSHEET

What is the timeline of the project?

One month 6 months
2-3 months 1+ year

Who are the key target audiences?

Also consider the characteristics of your audience (i.e. Mostly Spanish-speaking, age range(s), tech savvy, etc.).

What are your key messages?

A project should have 1-3 key messages that are straightforward. Every piece of communication should support at least one of these messages.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What tools and tactics should be used?

Refer to the Communications Matrix to select tools most effective for your audience.

What are potential issues or challenges that may affect communications?

Is there anything currently going on locally, nationally, or among staff that may affect how or what you communicate about this project? Be aware of how your audience may respond to certain messages.

Outline an implementation schedule:

Identify key dates such as deadlines and frequency of communication (i.e. Does frequency increase in the weeks leading up to an event or launch?)

How will you measure success?

Remember to check in on these metrics periodically throughout the process and adjust your strategy as necessary.



CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

PURPOSE

The City of Turlock's Emergency Communications Plan outlines the roles, responsibilities, and protocols that will guide the City in promptly sharing information with identified audiences during an emergency or crisis.

A crisis is defined as a substantial event that prompts significant and sustained media coverage and public scrutiny and has the potential to damage the City's reputation, image, or financial stability. A crisis could be precipitated by an emergency or controversy. An emergency is also a weather incident, crime, or similar event that presents a threat and typically involves a response from the police, fire, or emergency medical personnel.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

The guiding principle for this plan is to communicate facts as quickly as possible, update information regularly as circumstances change, keep the Turlock community safe, and ensure the continuity of essential services.

To achieve these goals, updates should be simultaneously accurate and delivered as quickly as possible. In many crisis situations, this may mean that the official information that is shared is incomplete as events unfold. Reacting swiftly with accurate information about what is known for certain during an emergency or crisis is key to avoiding lasting damage and spreading misinformation.

The City of Turlock will use multiple platforms to reach all audiences with accurate, timely information. The goal is to be accessible to all decision-makers, community members, and interested parties while being mindful of legal and privacy concerns.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Before an incident or crisis occurs, it's important to develop a network of subject matter experts and helpers. The most important aspect of any emergency plan is knowing who to contact for help and to keep key partner contact information up to date. Identify one shared location accessible to everyone in a leadership capacity to save contact lists and stakeholder information.

AUDIENCES

The City of Turlock must reach several important audiences during emergency situations. These include City staff, elected officials, community members, businesses, community and regional partners, and those in surrounding areas. Keep these audiences in mind when drafting emergency messages and determining which communication tools to use.

PROCEDURE

Conveying critical information when a crisis occurs is essential to ensuring community safety and allowing for appropriate decision-making in an emergency or crisis situation. A series of statements will be drafted and properly distributed across media and City of Turlock platforms in a timely manner.

The following steps will be used to convey critical information in a crisis situation:

1. Conference call with:
 - a. City Manager – lead coordinator of crisis response, primary spokesperson, liaison to elected officials, liaison to other local governments
 - b. City Mayor – secondary spokesperson, secondary liaison to elected officials
 - c. City Attorney – ensures legality and limit liability of statements and communication
 - d. Police Department – ensures appropriate coordination, updated information and public safety
 - e. Other staff as needed, depending on the event.
2. Establish a spokesperson and key point of contact for all statements
3. Establish a point of origin and coordination with the City Manager for all outgoing communications
4. Compose statements and speaking points
5. Coordinate with the Mayor and elected officials
6. Distribute through existing channels, prioritizing audiences as follows:
 - a. City Council
 - b. City staff
 - c. City residents (direct channels)
 - d. Local media
 - e. Regional and national media
7. Compose a message from the City Manager to the City staff
8. Compose social media posts and monitor posts for needed responses
9. Craft press releases and respond to press/reporters
10. Update the website with appropriate updates
11. Craft and distribute e-mail notifications
12. Hold press conference (if necessary)

IMPLEMENTATION

It's important to use all communication tools available to share critical information efficiently and accurately. Below is a checklist of platforms and outlets available to the City to use in an emergency:

- City website
- City social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, NextDoor)
- Email notifications
- News releases
- In-person meeting/press conference
- Mobile app
- Digital information board
- Printed collateral (posters, flyers, door hangers, rack cards, A-frame signage, etc.)

MESSAGE PREP AND EXAMPLE STATEMENTS

PREPARE THE MESSAGE

a. Avoid saying 'no comment'. Prepare holding statements if the full details are unknown or unable to be released.

b. Determine three major points. (The Messaging Triangle)

i. What happened?

ii. How does it affect your audience?

iii. What are you doing about it?

Ensure your message is true, use compassion, show that you're working toward a solution or gathering more information, and let your audience know where they can go to stay up to date on the issue or incident.

If the issue is due to staff misconduct allegations.

ASPIRATIONAL

"We hold our employees to high ethical and professional standards. Any violation of those standards will be addressed appropriately."

PROCEDURAL

"When an employee is under investigation for misconduct, we conduct a thorough internal review to determine the appropriate next steps. Our process ensures fairness while prioritizing the integrity of our organization."

TRANSPARENT

"We take allegations of misconduct seriously. We recognize the public's interest in this matter and are committed to gathering and verifying the facts. We will provide updates as soon as possible."

EXAMPLE HOLDING STATEMENTS



TRANSLATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Effective communication is critical to ensure understanding, empower constituents and provide high-quality government services. Below is a general guide for developing an organization-wide translation action plan.



IDENTIFY GOALS

Develop top goals for the plan which may include increasing access to public meetings in real-time, print materials, online communication, in-person interactions, phone recordings, etc.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Outline how the City will assess the language assistance needs of the community.

- Use available data and known resources to understand the unique needs of the City of Turlock.
- Identify points of contact, such as over the phone, in person, online, in printed paperwork, fillable forms, on signage, etc.
- Conduct stakeholder interviews to get feedback from residents and community-based organizations and other stakeholders before the plan is finalized.



LANGUAGE SERVICES

Identify how the City will consistently provide interpretation services (verbal) and translation services (written).

- Create a hierarchy of needs, with the most important and critical information being translated or interpreted first.



IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICES

- Leverage technology and partnerships to streamline processes and minimize costs.
- Contact peer communities and learn from others who have implemented similar translation plans.



DETERMINE BUDGET

Establish what can be accomplished with current resources. Evaluate and adjust accurate cost estimates for full implementation.



SET POLICY

Determine internal standard operating procedures related to translation and interpretation services.



TRAIN AND EDUCATE STAFF

Training should include everyone who interacts with customers or will be responsible for creating multilingual communication.



PROMOTE THE PROGRAM

Share the plan and multilingual services with the community.



EVALUATION

Periodically evaluate and monitor the plan to ensure that it continues to work effectively for the organization and community.





SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT RELEVANCE CHECK-LIST

City of Turlock departments should consider decommissioning social media accounts when they are no longer an effective or efficient means of communication with the public, or when the account is no longer aligned with the department's mission or goals. Decommissioning should be a planned process with clear communication to the public and proper archiving of content.

CHECK-LIST FOR ACCOUNT RELEVANCE

If you can check two or more boxes below when analyzing a social media account, it may be time to consider decommissioning the account.

- ☐ **Low Engagement:** If an account consistently has low engagement (likes, shares, comments), it may indicate a lack of interest or that the platform is not the best way to reach the target audience.
Threshold: A consistent decline in key metrics like reach, engagement rates, or clicks associated with the account.
- ☐ **High Maintenance Costs:** Maintaining an active social media presence requires time, resources, and potentially specialized skills. If these costs outweigh the benefits, it may be time to reconsider.
Threshold: If the resources required to maintain the account exceed the allocated budget or staff capacity.
- ☐ **Changing Communication Needs:** As the community's needs and preferences evolve, the way the department communicates with the public should also adapt. If social media is no longer the primary or preferred channel, it may be appropriate to decommission the account.
Threshold: If the department is transitioning to a new platform or communication strategy, it may be appropriate to decommission the old account.
- ☐ **Policy Changes:** Changes in relevant policies, such as those related to data privacy or content moderation, could make it difficult or impractical to maintain an account while remaining compliant.
Threshold: If the account cannot be maintained in a way that complies with relevant policies, including those related to accessibility, data privacy, or content moderation.
- ☐ **Lack of Alignment with Mission:** If the social media account is not effectively promoting the department's mission or if the content is not relevant to its goals, it may be wise to decommission the account.
Threshold: If the content posted on the account is no longer relevant to the department's current priorities.
- ☐ **Redundancy:** If another department or agency within the local government already effectively manages a social media presence for similar purposes, maintaining a separate account might be redundant.
Threshold: If the account is duplicative of another department's account content and communication goals.

DECOMMISSIONING PROCESS

If it is determined that an account should be decommissioned, follow the steps below to ensure stakeholders are adequately notified.

1

Notification: Provide clear and timely notice to your stakeholders that the account will be decommissioned.

2

Content Archiving: Ensure all content is archived properly, potentially including a final post explaining where to find future information.

3

Account Closure: Deactivate or delete the account according to the platform's procedures.

4

Communication of Alternatives: Inform stakeholders about alternative channels for accessing information or interacting with the department.



ACTIVE CITY SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

ACCURATE AS OF JULY 2025

- City Hall Facebook
- City Hall Instagram
- City Hall LinkedIn
- Economic Development Facebook
- Development Services Facebook
- Development Services Twitter/X
- Fire Department Facebook
- Fire Department Instagram
- Fire Department Twitter/X
- Fire Department YouTube
- Municipal Services Facebook
- Municipal Services Instagram
- Municipal Services Twitter/X
- Parks, Recreation, & Public Facilities Facebook
- Parks, Recreation, & Public Facilities Instagram
- Turlock Transit Facebook
- Turlock Transit Instagram
- Turlock Transit Twitter/X
- Police Department Facebook
- Police Department Instagram
- Police Department Twitter/X
- Police Department YouTube
- Police Department/Emergency Notifications (Nixle)
- Turlock Animal Services Facebook
- Turlock Animal Services Instagram



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MEDIA

Strong media relationships help ensure accurate, timely, and fair coverage. Focus on proactive engagement and transparency.

Best Practices for Relationship-Building

- Be Accessible and Responsive: Return media calls and emails promptly. Timeliness builds credibility and trust.
- Maintain a Local Media Contact List: Include reporters and editors at local outlets such as the Turlock Journal, TV news bureaus, and regional radio stations.
- Share Updates Proactively: Send regular news releases and media advisories about major initiatives, decisions, or events. Even smaller updates help foster goodwill.
- Offer Context and Background: Help reporters understand Turlock's processes, terminology, and local context, especially for complex or controversial topics.
- Foster Informal Relationships: Meet reporters for coffee, invite them to events, and thank them for accurate reporting, even if the story isn't entirely positive.
- Be Transparent and Honest: If you don't have an answer, say so, and commit to following up.

Spokesperson Strategy

- The City's Economic Development Director/Communications Officer is the designated primary media contact and Public Information Officer (PIO).
- Department heads may serve as subject-matter spokespeople as needed. Media training is recommended for these leaders.





RESPONDING TO DAY-TO-DAY MEDIA INQUIRIES

GENERAL RESPONSE GUIDELINES

Acknowledge All Inquiries Promptly: Respond within the same business day when possible, even if it's just to confirm receipt and provide a timeline.

1. BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. Identify Your Audience:

The media is not your audience. Who are you trying to reach with your message?

- Primary Audience(s):
- Secondary Audience(s):

2. Determine Key Takeaways:

What do you want your audience to know or remember?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2. BEFORE YOU ENGAGE

Ask the Reporter These Questions:

1. What is the story about?
(*Tell me what you know*)
2. Who have you talked to already?
What did they say?
3. Are you talking to anyone else?
4. What's your deadline? (*Buy time if you can*)

3. DURING THE INTERVIEW

Remember to...

- Keep it simple
- Avoid jargon or acronyms
- Speak only to your area of expertise
- There's no "off the record"
- Speak in short sentences or soundbites

4. AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Ask where and when the interview or story will be published or aired
- Ask if you can review the article or quotes if allowed
- Share the interview takeaways with the PIO and your department director

Track media metrics:

- Number of inquiries
- News release pickups
- Circulation or reach of coverage



STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

A well-staffed communications team is essential for providing day-to-day communications support to the city organization and tackling long-term strategic communication initiatives.

Slate Communications reviewed current communication roles for the City of Turlock and evaluated anticipated future needs of the city.

The following recommended positions are in addition to the Economic Development Director/ Communications Officer and Communications Specialist and may be added or modified as budgets and staff needs dictate.

STAFFING GOALS

- Ensure the City’s communications program is appropriately supported to meet the needs of the community and organization.
- Provide a path to long-term success focused on communication strategy for the department as it grows.

CONSIDER ADDING IN THE NEXT 1-2 YEARS



ADD: COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST (FULL TIME)

The first recommended step is to expand the communications team to include a second Communications Specialist role. The purpose of adding a second position in this capacity is to help the current team increase internal support for departments. Each strategist should support different departments within the city. They are “embedded” in these departments to become familiar with department needs, projects, and colleagues. Each Specialist operates with one foot in their represented department(s) and one foot supporting the larger communications team.

Primary Job Duties:

With a communications strategy focused on the needs of the assigned department(s)

- Content creation
- Public engagement
- Community outreach
- Media relations
- Project management
- Social media management
 - department-focused
- Website management
 - department-focused
- Internal communications support
 - (as needed)



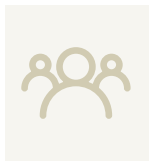
EXPAND: CONVERT PART-TIME CLERICAL POSITION TO FULL-TIME DIGITAL/MULTIMEDIA SPECIALIST

Consider expanding the current part-time clerical position focusing on video and photography into a full-time position managing the city website and City Hall social media accounts.

Primary Job Duties:

- Video production
- Graphic design
- Presentation development
- Photography
- Content creation for digital use
- Brand management
- Social media management
 - citywide
- Website management
 - citywide

CONSIDER ADDING IN THE NEXT 2-4 YEARS



ADD: COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER OR SPLIT CURRENT ROLES

Split the current Economic Development Director/Communications Officer position into a full-time Communications Manager or Director-level position while maintaining the Economic Development Director position. With a city population of over 73,000 residents, it is recommended that you have a dedicated, full-time position focused on communication strategy and support that guides a team of communication professionals. This position sets the department's strategic path and manages the department's day-to-day activities.

Primary Job Duties:

- Communications & marketing strategy
- Media relations/city spokesperson
- Campaign development & direction
- Partner liaison lead
- Internal communications lead
- Crisis communication





ADD: BILINGUAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

The Bilingual Communications Specialist role is essential to expanding the translation services provided by the City of Turlock. 28% of the population speaks Spanish in Turlock, highlighting the need for a full-time bilingual communications professional housed in the communications division.

Primary Job Duties:

- Support assigned department(s) like other Communication Specialist positions
- Spanish translation and interpretation support
- Offer a perspective on communicating with Spanish-speaking community members

WAYS TO EXPAND THE TEAM NOW

Contractors may be considered in the case of special projects when additional equipment, skills, or staff are needed beyond what the current communications team has available. As needed, and as funds allow, it is recommended that the City hire contractors for special one-time or ongoing projects, including:

- Photography/Drone support
- Videography/B-roll
- Graphic design
- Website/Webmaster support
- Social media management and support
- Marketing plan development and project management

DEVELOP A LONG-TERM COMMUNICATIONS STAFFING PLAN

Ensure the communications division is staffed appropriately to meet the needs and expectations of community members, the City Council, and city leadership. With regard to long-term planning, consideration should be given to the following positions:

- Dedicated Special Events Coordinator
- Community Engagement Specialist or Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator
- Additional Communications Specialist focused on Internal Communications (*along with other department support duties*)
- Dedicated Marketing Coordinator (*potentially with a focus on transit or parks and recreation*)



METRICS FOR SUCCESS

The following metrics can be used to track the success of a project's communication goals and priorities. These metrics should be analyzed throughout a project to evaluate the tools' effectiveness. Adjustments should be made to the communications strategy if the tools used do not prove effective.



MEDIA

- Number of times Turlock is mentioned by the media
- Interview requests
- Media outlet circulation
- Number of news releases distributed
- Number of editorial articles distributed and published



WEBSITE

- Unique Visitors: The number of distinct individuals visiting the website
- Page Views: The number of pages viewed
- Top Pages: The pages that are visited most frequently
- The top 10-20 should be tracked and monitored for necessary updates or improvements
- Top Search Terms: The terms searched most often on the website
- The top searches should be monitored to ensure ease of access and accurate information on these landing pages



EMAIL

- Number of Subscribers: The number of people signed up to receive email
- Engagement Rate: The percentage of email alerts that subscribers opened



PRINTED MATERIALS

- Distribution: The approximate number of people reached through print materials, including flyers, rack cards, direct mailers, and door hangers



SOCIAL MEDIA

- Followers: The number of people who follow a page
- Engagement: The number of people who like, comment on, or share posts
- Reach: The number of people the post was served to
- Impressions: The number of times a post was viewed (individuals could view it multiple times)
- Video Views: The number of times a video was watched



DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENTS

- Reach: The number of people an ad was served to
- Impressions: The number of times an ad was seen
- Click-Through Rate: The number of times an ad was clicked on



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY - DRAFT

INTERNAL POLICY

PURPOSE

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for the City of Turlock, the “Agency.” To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and how residents communicate and obtain information online, agency departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The agency encourages using social media to further its goals and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

PERSONAL VS PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

PERSONAL USE

All Agency employees may have personal social media profiles. These profiles should remain personal in nature and share personal opinions. While Agency employees may have a First Amendment right to comment on some Agency issues of significant public concern, employees should know that posts about Agency issues closer to employment complaints or human resources concerns may not be protected. Employees should be mindful of the distinction between sharing personal and agency views.

Agency employees must never use their agency e-mail account or password in conjunction with a personal social media profile. The following guidance is for agency employees who decide to have a personal social media presence or who decide to comment on posts about official Agency business:

- State your name and, if relevant, role when discussing agency business.
- Use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this profile are my own and don’t reflect or represent the opinions of the agency for which I work.”

If social media is used for official agency business, the entire agency profile, regardless of personal views, is subject to best practice guidelines and standards.

PROFESSIONAL USE

All official agency-related communication through social media should remain professional and always be conducted per the Agency’s communications policy, practices, and expectations. Employees must not use official agency social media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities. Agency employees should be mindful that inappropriate use of official agency social media can be grounds for disciplinary action. Only individuals authorized by the Agency may publish content to the Agency’s online platforms.

POSTING

Official social media content must be clear, precise, and follow industry best practices for posting updates. All content posted to agency social media profiles should be:

- Relevant: Information that engages residents and pertains to their daily lives.
- Timely: Pertains to deadlines, upcoming events, or current news.
- Actionable: Prompts residents to take action.

WHAT NOT TO POST

Agency employees may not publish content on agency social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information.
- Copyrighted material without permission.
- Profane, racist, sexist, threatening, or derogatory content or comments.
- Partisan political views.
- Commercial endorsements or spam.

EXTERNAL POLICY

PURPOSE

To build communication and trust with our residents and visitors, and encourage participation through comments and feedback.

GOALS

The City of Turlock aims to effectively use its social media accounts to:

- Provide information.
- Support community engagement and outreach.
- Support marketing and promotional campaigns.
- Frame the public conversation around Turlock.
- Assist with recruitment efforts.

REGISTERING A NEW PAGE

All agency social media profiles shall be:

1. Approved by the lead Communications Officer
2. Published using an approved social networking platform and tools.
3. Administered by the contact or their designee.

DEREGISTERING AN EXISTING PAGE

If a social media profile is no longer of use:

1. Utilize the Social Media Account Relevance Check-List
2. Notify the lead Communications Officer
3. Ensure records have been archived according to agency guidelines.
4. Unpublish and delete the account.

MODERATION OF THIRD-PARTY CONTENT

The agency does not necessarily endorse, support, sanction, encourage, verify or agree with third-party comments, messages, posts, opinions, advertisements, videos, promoted content, external hyperlinks, linked websites (or the information, products or services contained therein), statements, commercial products, processes or services posted on any social media account. This Agency's social media account serves as a limited public forum, and all content published is subject to preservation and disclosure in accordance with state public record law. User-generated posts may be rejected or removed if the content:

- Contains obscenity.
- Incites or promotes violence or illegal activities.
- Contains spam or links to malware.
- Promotes illegal discrimination (e.g., housing discrimination).
- Contains actual defamation.
- Uses the copyrighted work of another.

We do not allow information intended to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems. You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username, and any information provided.

City staff that is responsible for managing social media platforms on behalf of the City should make every effort to respond to routine questions or comments within 24 hours. If the response requires additional support from another staff member or review by a supervisor, it is expected that the response be uploaded and shared within 48 hours.

RETENTION AND DISCLOSURE

Any communications sent to or received by the Agency and its employees via social media may be subject to our retention and disclosure requirements. We are required to comply with [applicable public records statute] to ensure the government is open and that the public has access to public records and information of which our agency is the custodian. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (Ex. digital text, photos, audio, and video). All information posted on this account may be subject to public disclosure under [applicable public records statute], even if it has been deleted. The department maintaining an account shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule. To assist with records retention, the city utilizes Archive Social for social media archiving. It should be noted that Turlock uses third-party social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and X, to share news and information. These platforms have their own rules and regulations, and the city does not have the authority to change or override their rules.

EMERGENCY POSTINGS

Social media accounts are not monitored 24/7. If there is an emergency, contact 911.