

Website Auditing Process and Methodology

A website accessibility audit is performed by an accessibility professional who meticulously evaluates digital assets against the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines are part of a series of web accessibility guidelines published by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium, the main international standards organization for the Internet. The WCAG standard has been tried and tested and is under routine development by accessibility experts, making it a reliable standard. Accessibility is defined as ensuring a digital product, such as a website, is as usable as possible by everyone, including people with a range of disabilities. These recommendations also include standards for documents, video, social media, integrated apps, and navigating content on highly limited devices such as mobile phones. As of May 2021, version WCAG was released as a working draft and is scheduled to be finalized within 2022.

Manual accessibility audits have the major advantage of being the most thorough type of auditing. After completion of the audit, a report will be created containing an assessment of a municipality's assets along with issues that need to be addressed. For every unique issue listed, instructions or examples will be provided. This is so a city or town will know precisely how to make their website accessible from the audit and clients can take immediate action. Always keep in mind that accessibility is an ongoing process and not a one-off project.

City/Town: Shelburne, Massachusetts

Website: <https://www.townofshelburne.com/>

Audit Date: January 2023

Accessibility Area: Website



The following pictures on the main page are missing alternative text:

Page: [Home](#)



Alt text example: A photo of the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls. The footbridge has a garden of flowers covering it.

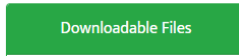
Alternative Text
[WCAG 2.2 – 1.1](#)

Text alternatives for any non-text content provides context for users who use braille, screen readers, assistive technologies, or need simpler language.

Media Captions
[WCAG 2.2 – 1.2.2](#)

N/A: No video media is available on the website

- Captions or transcriptions for all prerecorded audio or video media helps users who are deaf or hard of hearing understand content.
- A full transcript (of captions and audio description) is useful for people who have both hearing and visual impairments including those who are deaf-blind.













Color contrast ratio for the above headings is 3.13:1, not high enough to meet WCAG standards.



All other headers pass with a contrast of at least **4.5:1 or higher**

Color Contrast
[WCAG 2.2 – 1.4.3](#)




- A color contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 helps increase clarity
- [Contrast checker](#)

<p>Flashing WCAG 2.2 – 2.3.1</p>	 <p>Website does not contain any flashing images or text.</p>	<p>Web pages should not contain anything that flashes more than three times in a second. A pair of opposing changes in relative luminance can cause seizures in some people if it is large enough and in the right frequency range.</p>
<p>Plain Language WCAG 2.2 – 3.1</p>	 <p>Appropriate-level language is used throughout the site. However, multiple paragraphs in the History of Shelburne page contain more than 50 words.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use easy to understand words, short sentences, and a simple tense. Content that is readable and understandable ensures accessibility for people of all cognitive abilities. • Reading level should not be more advanced than lower secondary education level. • A paragraph of more than 50 words should be broken up into two. • Avoid double negatives. • Do not use idioms because they cannot be directly translated without losing their cultural or dependent-language meaning.
<p>Clear Organization W3C – 4.3.2</p>	 <p>Toolbars are consistently formatted throughout the site; links are organized in a logical layout. A “Useful Links” section makes the most common needs easily accessible to users. However, the Town should consider moving the function to a more visible spot than the bottom of the webpage.</p> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Useful Links</p> <p>Sitemap</p> <p>Online Tax Payments</p> <p>Town Clerk</p> <p>Announcements</p> <p>Calendar</p> <p>Police Department</p> <p>Fire Department</p> </div>	<p>Users often become confused and lost when they do not understand the visual hierarchy of the site, menus, and structure. Clear sub-menus and a well-defined structure will help the user know what is on the site and how to find it.</p>


<p>Sitemap WCAG 2.0 – G63</p>	 <p>A sitemap is available on the website.</p>	<p>Providing a site map allows users to understand what the site contains and how the content is organized.</p>
<p>External Link Alert</p>	 <p>An external link alert does not appear when users navigate to a webpage outside of the Town website.</p>	<p>Alerting users when they will be leaving the Town website systems helps those using assistive devices keep track of webpage navigation.</p>
<p>Manual Accessibility Test</p>	 <p>Website passes the review of keyboard-only navigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabbing between sections of a webpage to make sure they can be found without a mouse • Testing all menus with the keyboard to ensure none are skipped over • Checking for skip links at the top of the page that allow users to jump directly to each page’s vital content • Verifying that links and form fields are highlighted when using keyboard commands 	<p>As advanced as software is, there are still plenty of situations where an algorithm can’t recognize the nuances of website accessibility or usability. Because of this, manual testing is mandatory; it will provide the most detailed feedback about a website’s accessibility.</p> <p>To ensure consideration is given to as many devices and browser types as possible, manual accessibility tests were conducted in a variety of browsers, including the latest versions of Internet Explorer, Edge, Chrome, and Firefox.</p>
<p>Accessibility Area: Documents</p>		
<p>File Type Section508 - Documents</p>	 <p>Many documents are uploaded as scanned documents, thus lacking accessibility features. Example: Marijuana Regulations, Council Meeting Agendas, Annual Town Meeting Warrant, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save documents as .docx format to preserve accessibility features. Other formats that can be produced by Microsoft Word (RTF, DOC, TXT, and ODF) may not be accessible. • Develop reusable accessible design templates
<p>File Name Section508</p>	 <p>File names are descriptive and unique enough to distinguish between documents.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Selectboard Meetings (452 files)</p> <p> Select Board 2023-01-04 Meeting Agenda.docx (<i>View on Calendar</i>)</p> <p> Select Board 2022-12-19 Meeting Minutes.docx (<i>View on Calendar</i>)</p> </div>	<p>A descriptive file name that identifies the document or its purpose helps everyone locate, open, and switch between documents.</p>

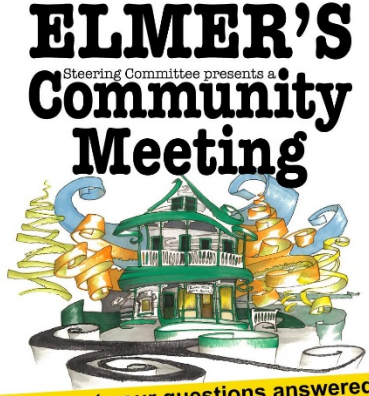
Titles / Labels	 Documents are titled and labeled, but should specify language	All documents should be titled, tables should include headers, and the language of all contents should be noted.
Date Format	 <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <p>Christmas Tree Collection - Monday January 9, 2023 <i>Posted to Town of Shelburne News on Tue, Jan 3, 2023</i> <i>Updated: Tue, Jan 3, 2023</i></p> </div> <p>The Town of Shelburne formats their dates appropriately.</p>	Writing out the month and date in words can avoid confusion.

Accessibility Area: PDFs

Searchable text PDF508	 Not all PDFs are searchable, such as Amendments to the MTRSD document . This file should also be uploaded in its final form without track changes visible.	An ADA compliant PDF has searchable text. PDFs created by scanning pages are pictures of the original. Screen readers cannot infer meaning from just a picture.
Bookmarks PDF508	 Bookmarks are not present for documents greater than 9 pages. Examples of violations include Town of Shelburne Hazard Mitigation Plan .	If the PDF document contains 9 or more pages, bookmarks should be added. Bookmarks allow the reader to quickly navigate to points of interest
Alternative Text PDF508	 Some documents contain images that require alternative text, such as the Town Newsletter .	Type text that describes the image in the Alternative Text field (click Options > Properties)

Accessibility Area: Social Media

Alternative Text	 Posters are missing alternative text. When important information is only listed on an image, it is not accessible to users who utilize assistive technologies.	Provide media with alternative text that describes the image
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ELMER'S
 Steering Committee presents a
Community Meeting

Come get your questions answered!

The Elmer's Revitalization Project steering committee has been meeting every other week since Mid-September, and we have made a huge amount of progress towards securing Elmer's as a community owned resource for our town. We have also collected more than 350 surveys from community members like you!

Wed Jan 18 6:30-8:30pm
Ashfield Community Hall
 521 Main St, Ashfield, MA

<p>Media Captions</p>	 <p>No videos on Shelburne’s Facebook page have captions or allow for embedded YouTube caption capabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure video content includes synchronized captions. • Ensure audio descriptions for people with visual disabilities are included in the default sound track, or as a separate selectable sound track. • Add captions to photos to ensure individuals understand what is going on in the picture.
<p>Plain Language</p>	 <p>The Town does not use any acronyms in their posts.</p> <p>N/A: The Town of Shelburne does not use hashtags in their Facebook posts, however they should consider doing so, so content can be more easily searchable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in plain language, use camel case when appropriate (i.e., capitalize the first letters of compound words. This is helpful as it makes multi-word hashtags easier to read, including for those using a screen reader. • Limit use of hashtags, abbreviations and acronyms.
<p>Acronyms</p>	 <p>Shelburne’s Facebook account does not use any acronyms</p>	<p>Always spell out the first instance of the acronym and add the acronym, in parentheses after. This is especially helpful for those using screen readers, because after the name is heard and the acronym is spelled out, the user will be better able to associate the sound of the acronym with the full name.</p>
<p>Outside content</p>	 <p>When the town shares others’ content, they should note any ADA accessibility barriers such as lack of video captioning. Additionally, they should provide alternative text if there is none.</p>	<p>For content the municipality has not created and thus may not be accessible, make audience aware of these limitations. Provide a note briefly explaining the limitation, such as that: the photo is untagged; the video will auto start; the video does not include captioning; or the audio file is not accompanied by a written transcript.</p>
<p>Accessibility Area: Newsletter</p>		
	<p>Website does not allow users to subscribe to weekly</p>	

	newsletters and/or receive enhanced public safety alerts on their mobile device. To subscribe to the Town newsletter, users must email andrewbaker1959@gmail.com .	
Accessibility Area: E-permitting		
	 Site does not have the option to apply for any type of permit, whether in a downloadable file or embedded fill-in form.	
Accessibility Area: Downloadable Forms		
Form Accessibility	 The site does not contain any downloadable forms.	
Accessibility Area: Public Notice and Grievance Procedure		
Title II	 The site does not list an ADA policy nor the contact information of the ADA Coordinator.	The ADA Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the government entity to comply with Title II and investigating any complaints that the entity has violated Title II. The name, office address, and telephone number of the ADA Coordinator must be provided to interested persons.
Accessibility Area: Secure Electronic Transfers (E-payments)		
Clear confidentiality language	 The site does not support any type of electronic commerce or payment processing.	To facilitate and encourage electronic commerce using payment card products, it will be necessary to assure cardholders that their payment information is safe and can only be accessed by the intended recipient.
Functioning Services	N/A	
Contact Information	N/A	
Accessibility Area: Other / Integrated Apps		
GIS	 Some static zoning maps are available online, however the site does not provide more robust GIS capabilities.	Text alternatives for any non-text content provides context for users who use braille, screen readers, assistive technologies, or need simpler language.
Trash / Recycling	 Trash and recycling information is not listed on site. Occasionally, there are news articles regarding holiday recycling.	
Accessibility Area: Mobile Version		
Layout	 Site layout is compatible with mobile device	

Summary and Recommendations

The Town of Shelburne's municipal website has both strengths and areas for improvement. A big asset is the intuitive layout of the site. The toolbar navigations are uniform, uncomplicated, and easy to understand. All links are accessible by both keyboard, mouse, or a tap of the finger. First time visitors are able to find important documents and forms with ease via the "Useful Links" feature and the sitemap. To improve navigability, the Town should consider alerting users when they deviate to a webpage outside of the Town website.

The language used throughout the site is succinct and written at an appropriate comprehension level. However, some paragraphs should be broken up as to not exceed 50 words per paragraph. Files are named appropriately and organized chronologically by department. The website is mobile friendly and formats correctly on a smartphone.

The site could improve upon many of its accessibility features, specifically in compliance with American Disability Act regulations. Some of the headings do not meet color contrast requirements. To enhance the experience for users who are reliant on-screen readers or assistive technologies, all images should be accompanied by alternative text. Alternative text should be present not only on the website, but all documents and social media channels, where applicable. Important information should not be conveyed via a static graphic unless a copy of the text is also shared.

Many PDFs provided on the website are scanned images and thus prevent text from being searched using a search tool. This practice excludes individuals who rely on screen readers from accessing the content. For files large enough, bookmarks should be added to allow for easy navigation to points of interest. Additionally, never upload documents that still show track changes or are not in their final form.

The website lacks many standard features, such as permitting applications, newsletter sign-ups, e-commerce, trash and recycling schedules, or GIS information. As often as possible, the Town should add online fillable forms over downloadable PDF forms. When users can submit information through a website, rather than printing off and mailing in a form, it not only saves paper and postage costs, but increase involvement by eliminating the "hassle factor." Online payments simplify the process for fee payment, which will lead to increased revenues and time saved chasing down late payments.

Shelburne's Facebook page is adequate for the Town's needs. While few improvements could be made such as adding alternative text to images and being transparent about media limitations when sharing outside content, the platforms post information daily in clear and concise language. Town should consider adding a Twitter or YouTube page to expand reach.

Overall, the underlining structure of the municipal website is efficient and effective, however can be enhanced by adding additional ADA recommended features. Shelburne is obliged to link their ADA policy somewhere on their website, as well as list contact

information for an ADA coordinator. As outlined by Title II, if a public entity has 50 or more employees, it is required to designate at least one responsible employee to coordinate ADA compliance.