Town of Arlington
Office of the Town Manager

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To: James Feeney, Town Manager, Tim Ross, ADA Coordinator, Arlington Disability Committee, Arlington Select Board, and Arlington Finance Committee

RE: Online ADA Compliance Report as outlined in the Online ADA Compliance Strategy and Training Plan.

Date: May 9, 2024

We are pleased to submit this update on the Online ADA Compliance Strategy and Training Plan. At the end of March 2024, the Town's ADA score was 82.6. In our last report (August 2023) our ADA score was 75.2. The Town's goal is to reach and maintain a score 90 or over. We are pleased with the improvement, but continue to work to achieve, and exceed, our digital accessibility goal.

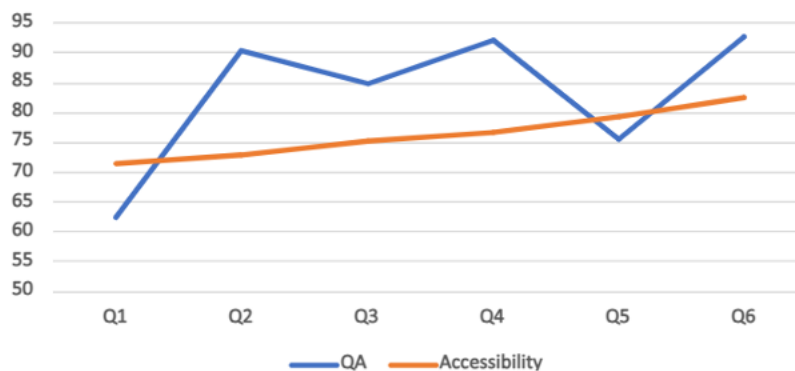**Accessibility**

Site: Town of Arlington

Score

82.6 /100

+0.6 ⑦
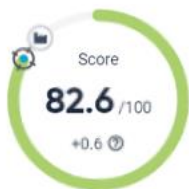
Fix this issue and reach 84.2 points:
Scrollable element is not keyboard accessible

View Accessibility overview

Accessibility & Quality Assurance Scores
Q1-Q6

About ADA Monitoring

Siteimprove is a 3ʳᵈ party vendor that scans the Town's website and provides reports on possible ADA and Quality Assurance (QA) issues and provides an overall score for both these metrics. Siteimprove currently scans for WCAG 2.1 compliance. These are the scores used in this report. As outlined in the Online ADA Plan the Town has a set a goal score of 90+ for both Accessibility and Quality Assurance. At the end of March, 2024 the Town's QA score was 86.4.

Accessibility errors reported by Siteimprove fall into one of 3 categories, Visual Design, Development, and Content Writing. Visual Design and Development errors need to be fixed by the website vendor, while Content Writing errors can be fixed by staff. Staff are generally conscientious about resolving Content Writing errors when they are reported. The Town's website vendor, Granicus, is generally responsive to our requests to fix ADA errors, but sometimes a request can take significant time to fix.

Here are the three outstanding global errors we are working with Granicus to fix:

- Text is clipped when resized:
  - When you use the regular zoom function on your browser everything is fine, but text-only zoom hinders the user's ability to use the hamburger menu.

- Container element is empty
  - Staff Directory widget is being flagged for empty fields that we do not need to fill. The vendor should add code to skip the field if empty.

- Table cell missing context
  - Calendar pages are being flagged with the "previous month" and "next month" links as missing descriptive data for those fields. We see the previous and next month description for these fields and are working with Siteimprove to better understand the error.

When these errors are fixed it should greatly improve the Town's accessibility score. However, compliance is also changing. Siteimprove is currently rolling out the ability to scan for WCAG 2.2 compliance. When Siteimprove completes their rollout, Arlington will scan for WCAG 2.2 compliance and update, accordingly.

About the Online ADA Compliance Strategy and Training Plan: According to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international body that develops standards for the web, about one billion people -- 15-20% of the world's population -- have some type of disability. According to the 2020 Census, 8% of Arlington residents have a disability.

In the Town's continuing efforts to improve customer service and online accessibility for all, it developed the Online ADA Compliance Strategy and Training Plan (Online ADA Plan), supported by investments by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). With ARPA funding the Town was able to hire a Communications Coordinator whose duties include responding to findings identified in the Town's ADA Self-Assessment Report and implementation of the Online ADA Plan. The latter, aimed at building institutional

knowledge of ADA best practices among staff that post digital media for the Town. Additionally, with funding from the Disability Commission the Town was able to purchase Adobe Acrobat Licenses for staff who post documents to the Town's website, mainly agendas and minutes. These funding resources allowed the Town to address online accessibility in meaningful ways since October 2022, when the Online ADA Plan was implemented.

Online ADA compliance is never fully achieved. It is an ongoing process of improving website infrastructure, correctly preparing content to post online, fixing reported errors, and adjusting to new requirements as they are published by the W3C. In a phased approach, the Online ADA Plan was developed to guide the Town in this effort with a focus on educating staff to perform this ongoing work. Below are past Plan milestones and updates.

Phase 1 Completed: ADA Orientation and Siteimprove Training
Phase 1 trainings introduce participants to the Siteimprove product and an introduction to online ADA compliance and the Town's online ADA goals. Phase 1 trainings were conducted began in October 2022 and continue as needed. To date we have trained 29 staff members and provide ongoing staff support.

Phase 2 Conducted: ADA Compliance Training | Simple Documents
This training began in May 2023 and focused on properly preparing agendas and minutes for the web so that they are ADA compliant. The Town posts approximately 1,500 documents per year and most of them are either an agenda or minutes. Improving workflow and using Adobe Acrobat Pro's Accessibility Checker, staff are able to check and fix documents for ADA compliance. They are also now working with their respective boards and committees to better prepare their documents and providing them with templates to streamline their workflow with an emphasis on making documents accessible to all. To date, we have trained 28 staff members and provide ongoing staff support.

Social Media Best Practices and Accessibility Workshops
Since we held the social media best practices workshop the Town has greatly improved compliance on its social media channels. Most notably, alt text is being included on social media posts and there has been a greater adherence to color contrast rules and the use of simple, understandable language in social media graphics and messaging. To date, we have trained 6 staff members that use social media and provide ongoing staff support.

Phase 3
Since the last report we adjusted our focus for Phase 3 from developing training of complex documents to supporting staff to improve their ADA score and reach out scoring goal.

Meeting Management
Granicus is sunsetting its NovusAgenda product, which the Town uses to manage the meetings of the Select Board, School Committee, Redevelopment Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, and Conservation Commission. The Town aims to use this

change to move to a new meeting management system that has improved ADA compliance built in, plus a system it can roll out to all boards and committees. Currently agendas and minutes live in two systems and combining them into one system will make these documents more accessible to all who seek this information.

Assessing Resources for Plan Continuation
ADA compliance is dense with rules for navigation, pages, documents, and images. Compliance is ever changing as new requirements are released by the W3C. With the support of the Communications Coordinator, ADA training will continue to be part of staff onboarding for those that post digital content for the Town, plus ongoing support as requirements change.

There are numerous sections of the website that do not fall under a particular department or a department that does not conduct much public outreach. These parts of the website are monitored and updated by the Communications Coordinator and account for approximately 30% of the website.

With the continued growth of digital communications and the complexity to make digital content accessible for all it is recommended Town officials consider making the Communications Coordinator position a permanent one. Doing so will provide a necessary resource to help the Town achieve its online ADA compliance goals.

Report Feedback
Comments or questions on this report may be directed to Joan Roman at jroman@town.arlington.ma.us or 781-316-3350.