



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MAYOR JAKE WILSON

DENISE TAYLOR
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Date: May 12, 2026
To: City Council
From: Denise Taylor, Director of Communications & Community Engagement
RE: WCAG 2.1 Accessibility Compliance Update
Attachment: Compliance Summary Report from City vendor Evolving Web

Dear Members of the City Council:

The following information from the Communications & Community Engagement Department (CCE) is being provided to the members of City Council in response to an email request from Ward 3 Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen for an update on WCAG compliance efforts, and in an effort to update the full Council on a matter of interest to members.

Summary:

Although the federal government has extended the compliance deadline by one year to 4/26/27, all City digital assets were brought into compliance by the original April 2026 deadline.

Deadline for Compliance Extended to April 26, 2027:

On April 20, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice issued an interim final rule extending compliance deadlines for state and local governments with the ADA's WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility requirements. Under this update, Somerville, as a city with a population of 50,000 or more, now has a deadline of April 26, 2027, to comply.

The City Website, somervillema.gov, is in Compliance:

CCE's Web Content and Development Office and CCE core team members working with our vendor Evolving Web have achieved compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA for the City of Somerville's website (somervillema.gov). As detailed in the attached summary, Evolving Web completed comprehensive accessibility remediation for somervillema.gov. Through a cross-functional effort spanning development, content writing, visual design, and user experience (UX) the following key outcomes were achieved.



Key outcomes include:

- Overall accessibility score increased by 12.3 percentage points, from 78.2% to 90.5%
- ADA Title II compliance score: 93.1%
- WCAG 2.1 Level A conformance: 91.6%
- WCAG 2.1 Level AA conformance: 86.3%
- 1,274,530 individual accessibility occurrences resolved across 29 issue categories

Additional Digital Assets:

Comprehensive work to ensure City microsites and digital tools (embedded tools on the website; City apps including 311 and WasteWizard) was also carried out by the Web Team and CCE leadership.

- Arts Council and Police Dept. microsites were designated for additional targeted work by Evolving Web and brought into compliance.
- All other tools, embedded sites such as MyRec, and microsite owners (Libraries, Schools, Somerville Hub via SomerPromise, etc.) were either directly reviewed/tested by Evolving Web or assessed and confirmed compliant by individual site/tool owners/developers.
- A range of microsites such as Somerville Hub, Nibble, SomerVoice, the Somerville Public Libraries, are managed by vendors who have already or are working to bring these sites into full compliance. The majority are currently in compliance. The Somerville Public Schools website is in process to undergo a full overhaul which will include full compliance.
- All embedded tools are in compliance, such as Legistar, Parking Pay/City Hall Systems, CitizenServe, etc.
- Both City apps are now in compliance with the 311 App also slated for an update that will remain in compliance.

“The ADA is the floor, not the ceiling”:

As Mayor Wilson has made clear: “the ADA is the floor, not the ceiling”. In addition to working to retain our compliance-qualifying scores (a daily task), CCE and the Web team will continue to strive to raise our scores where possible. We are also working to establish training and guidance for staff at large, and will continue to be responsive to needs flagged by community members.

Compliance and Communication Going Forward:

- To maintain the current compliance score (and to strive to improve our high scores beyond requirements), the City of Somerville will follow a Content Entry Guide developed by Evolving Web, providing content editors with clear standards for accessible authoring going forward.
- CCE is procuring software that will convert pdfs on the site to accessible HTML on demand.
- This information will be shared directly with the City Council, the Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and the general public in the coming days/weeks and posted to a dedicated webpage in the coming weeks. We are hoping to install and get the pdf conversion tool prior to broader community announcement.

Please let the IGA team know if there are any further questions on any of the above information.

Thank you and kind regards,

Denise Taylor
Director of Communications and Community