

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Common Council

**From:** Dan Boldt, GIS Analyst

**Date:** 4/27/2026

**Subject:** Review of City's Primary GIS Application

A Council Member has requested a review of the accessibility of the City's primary GIS (Geographic Information Systems) web application. Accessibility of digital services falls under the Americans with Disabilities Act, with updated requirements published in the Federal Register and a compliance deadline of April 26, 2028. These updates clarify that public-facing websites and applications must be usable by individuals with disabilities, including those relying on screen readers or keyboard-only navigation.

The City's GIS applications currently include some accessible features. Users can navigate buttons and interface elements using the NVDA screen reader which has been tested on Windows devices. NVDA is a free screen reader that reads on-screen text aloud and allows users to navigate applications without using a mouse. The distributor of our GIS software, Esri, recommends it as the best screen reader to use on a Windows computer. Labeling on layers such as zoning also helps improve usability for users with color vision deficiencies. However, interaction with the map itself using only the keyboard, such as moving around the map or selecting parcels, is not possible.

A CSV (Comma-Separated Values) download option is available, which provides access to the underlying data in a simple table format that can be opened in Excel or other spreadsheet software, but does not fully replace the map-based experience. Moving toward full accessibility would likely require developing a more robust alternative interface such as a structured, table-based view. This would allow users to navigate and interpret GIS data without relying on the map, which may involve more changes to how information is presented.

This requirement applies more broadly to other City web content as well. While there is time before the 2028 deadline, additional review and planning will be needed.

Separately, a Council Member raised adding "last updated" dates in GIS applications. This has been reviewed and moving forward, update dates will be



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captured as part of the data maintenance process where applicable, such as parcel rezone dates when zoning changes occur. This will be displayed in the pop-up table that appears when clicking on a feature like a parcel.

We are dedicated to providing accessible access to our data and will continue to monitor accessibility guidance and requirements from federal and state agencies.