PublicCoordinate Accessibility Statement

Accessibility is a core part of PublicCoordinate's mission to support inclusive public engagement. We believe that everyone – regardless of age, ability, technology, or context – should be able to access and interact with our solution.

Our Commitment

PublicCoordinate is committed to creating meaningful web experiences that are usable by all people, regardless of ability or circumstance. We strive to make our platform as accessible as possible by using the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA as a foundation for our design, development practices, and future roadmap. These guidelines inform our ongoing efforts to build an inclusive and equitable user experience.

A Note on Interactive Maps and Accessibility

PublicCoordinate is an interactive map-based solution that includes features such as base maps, geospatial visualizations, and drag-and-drop tools — elements that, by their nature, can pose challenges to full WCAG compliance. While these features are central to how project teams present project information and gather public input, we recognize they may not always be fully accessible to screen reader users or those who rely solely on keyboard navigation.

To address this, we provide alternative ways to configure projects, access content, and participate, such as:

- Project teams can provide descriptive text summaries of mapped data on hover

- Project teams can integrate alternate feedback surveys in addition to the map

- Ongoing enhancements to ARIA labeling, focus control, and map-based actions

- Project teams have the ability to select from a large selection of icons to use as visual alternatives to supplement text for comment categories and map layers

- Project page configuration includes a text editor that supports accessible display of color contrast and font sizes

We are actively working to improve the accessibility of mapping technologies.

Accessibility Considerations

While we are committed to maximizing accessibility across PublicCoordinate's public-facing interface, there are certain areas where limitations may exist or where additional consideration is needed when configuring the solution. For example:

- **Keyboard Navigation**: Map comments and map navigation currently use drag-and-drop functions and are not fully accessible using keyboard-only navigation.

- **Contrast Limitations**: Certain elements within the public-facing map, like map layers and base maps, may not fully meet recommended contrast ratios as base maps can be unpredictable (e.g., satellite view).

Tips for Building Accessible PublicCoordinate Projects

As a site creator or project manager, you play a key role in ensuring your PublicCoordinate projects are accessible. Here are some recommended practices:

- **Use clear, descriptive headings**: Break content into logical sections using properly nested headings (H1, H2, etc.) for screen reader compatibility.

- **Write in plain language**: Use concise, jargon-free text to improve comprehension for all readers.

- **Provide alternative ways for users to provide feedback, beyond just comment categories:** Consider utilizing survey questions to allow users to provide open-ended project feedback beyond the map commenting (drag-and-drop) feature.

- **Provide alt text for images, graphics, and videos**: Use meaningful alternative text for any uploaded images, infographics, and videos.

- **Avoid color-only distinctions**: Don't rely on color alone to convey meaning—use text labels or icons as visual indicators.

- **Use accessible colors for map layers**: Ensure adequate contrast between text and background elements. For example, avoid using light gray layers on white or similar low-contrast combinations, or avoid using shades of blue over water on base maps.

- **Label form fields clearly**: Include descriptive labels and placeholder text where applicable, especially if you are using an integrated survey.

- **Offer text-based alternatives to maps**: Summarize map content or instructions in plain text so users who can't access the map can still understand and participate.

- **Assess accessibility for external or supplemental materials:** When using hyperlinks to external websites, or when uploading PDF files on your project page, make sure you're using best practices for accessibility on these resources, too.

We're here to support you in building inclusive digital experiences. Our team continues to improve PublicCoordinate's design and documentation to help you meet accessibility goals confidently.

Contact Us

We welcome feedback from all users about their experience using PublicCoordinate. If you encounter any accessibility barriers, or if you have suggestions for improvement, please contact us via email at: info@publiccoordinate.com.