

Web Assessment Directions

To score the web sites we will use a simple ranking but encourage that you make any and all notes you wish on the sheet. The ranking 0-3 is on the first page. Please note that it is basically a yes (3) or no (1) but there may be times that some information is present for an area but not all and that is when you would use the 2. If information is present but seems to be out-of-date from what you can tell, use the rank of 1. Any additional comments you want to add will assist in our understanding of how well the site is constructed and the information present.

Contact Information: This is generally very basic information that should be easily apparent on the web site so that citizens may communicate with the government.

Elected Officials: This is the way citizens may contact the official and there should be a reasonable way that citizens can do so. If an elected official does not have an email, does the web site allow for you to send an email from that site?

Appointments: This refers to committees and boards for which citizens serve but the member is not elected. This may be a Planning Board, Parks Board etc.

Meetings: This is one of the most important ways citizens may find out about the business. Therefore we expect that notification of meetings should be posted. They may post a meeting as *the first Monday of every month* and that works. The time and location of the meeting should also be posted. Sometimes only the Commission/Council meeting is listed but the Committees should also be listed. It may be a harder one to find any information on the Committees.

Public Records: The Federal Freedom of Information Act allows for private citizens to have access to government business and documents. The government should allow for on-line request and the name of a contact person OR instructions on how to apply and the name of the contact person.

Transactions on-line: The government may choose to offer on-line transactions for citizens such as paying for parking tickets or taxes and volunteering to participate on a committee. The government may choose to offer on-line transactions for business such as development proposals, zoning change requests, business license application, business taxes. If they offer on-line transactions that may be of a private basis and especially if credit cards are to be used, they must include a statement regarding the use of a secure server.

Budget Information: Ideally a budget should list details and have current status but at this stage we are looking for minimally a budget that defines general categories and projects for which spending is expected. Additionally last year's (that maybe 2010 at this date) financial statement with details of what was budgeted and what actually transpired would be good. This later document may be an audit document.

Business Licenses, Building permits and zoning: Mainly this is a question of whether the government allows for business via the Internet to expedite and increase efficiency. Much of this would be expected to revolve around building and development but may not be limited to this activity. If businesses may submit information via the web site, will they also have the opportunity to track the process of their submission? For example a developer may submit a proposal to build on a site and has submitted a request for a zoning change. Will the developer be able to see that the report has been received, that the Planning Department has reviewed the submission and sent it further etc.

Web Site: This is mainly the documentation for the web site. If no date is indicated citizens may not know if the material is current. Downloadable files may be pdf files or just the ability to print a page that contains instructions. These may be for any of a number of government related activities. Right now we are just asking if the government has started making information available (rather than having to call or mail a request). It may be hard to determine if information is false or old but use your best assessment after reviewing the information. If it is out of date there is likely to be a “flag” somewhere to make you think the information is old. It is a harder assessment to determine if it is false. If you recognize something is false note it, otherwise at this time we will need to assume it is correct.

General Comments: Please also let us know if there are areas of this web site that you think are especially well done related to content availability. We are not looking for Razzle Dazzle but we are looking for ease of use and full disclosure.

What are we going to do with this? First, we will share the result with the government. We have two people reviewing each site. Second we will use this information to build a document that recommends the minimal information that the sites should have and share this with all the governments. We have already had one municipality request our assessment document from last year as a guide while they build a new site.