



PARKER TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

WHITE PAPER · CASE STUDY

Modernizing LongstreetSociety.org

How the website of the Historic Piedmont Hotel museum in Gainesville, Georgia was rebuilt for security, accessibility, and the phone in your pocket — with every claim measured, not promised.

Status: the rebuilt site can be viewed at longstreet.ptsnet.net. The Society's current site remains live at longstreetsociety.org, and this paper compares the two side by side. Every observation in this paper was measured against the live sites in August 2026.

The Longstreet Society has spent more than three decades quietly doing remarkable work. Founded in 1994 and **100% volunteer-run**, the Society rescued the Historic Piedmont Hotel — the Gainesville, Georgia hotel that Lt. General James Longstreet owned and operated from 1876 until his death in 1904 — when **seventeen local citizens each personally guaranteed a \$10,000 loan** to save the building from demolition. Within a few years of its founding the Society counted **over 500 members in 42 states and six countries**. Its website has served it for years, and the pages still load — but the platform underneath has aged out from under it: no secure connections, auto-generated page addresses, and none of the accessibility provisions the web now expects. This paper walks through exactly what changed in the rebuild — viewable today at **longstreet.ptsnet.net**, side by side with the current site at **longstreetsociety.org** — why each change matters to the people the Society serves, and how each improvement was *verified*.

0

pages served securely on the legacy site — `https://` requests are redirected back to plain `http://` (measured Aug 2026)

~62%

of worldwide web traffic comes from mobile devices (StatCounter)

1 in 4

U.S. adults live with a disability (CDC)

100%

of tested legacy page addresses still answer on the new site — old links and bookmarks keep working

1. What the legacy site looks like

The current `longstreetsociety.org` works in the narrow sense — the pages load. Underneath, the measurements tell a different story:

- **No secure connection at all.** Type `https://longstreetsociety.org` into a browser and the site redirects you *back* to unencrypted `http://` (302 redirect, measured August 2026). Modern browsers mark every page “Not secure,” and Google has treated HTTPS as a ranking signal since 2014.
- **Auto-generated page addresses** from the hosted page-builder, indexed by search engines exactly as the platform minted them: `/piedmont-hotel-.html` (trailing hyphen), `/hotel--travel-info.html` (three hyphens in a row), `/gainesville-.html`, `/helen---louise.html`, and `/membership-1.html` — an auto-numbered duplicate that suggests an earlier membership page was abandoned in place.
- **A default homepage title.** The site’s front page is indexed in search results as “Home The Longstreet Society” — the page-builder’s boilerplate, not a title written for the humans searching for the museum.
- **A page-builder platform** with an admin login to protect, template constraints, and the organization locked to whatever the host does next with pricing and features.
- **No published accessibility statement** anywhere in the site’s indexed pages — and no stated provisions for the one in four adults who need them.

Each item is small. Together they cost the Society search ranking, donor trust, and — most importantly — the visitor on a phone trying to find out whether the museum is open this afternoon.

2. Security & privacy: shrinking the attack surface

The legacy site lives on a hosted page-builder: an admin login that can be phished, platform complexity the Society never used, and not a single page served over an encrypted connection. The rebuild removes the entire attack surface:

- **HTTPS on every page.** Every page of the new site is served over an encrypted connection — the padlock visitors expect, and the baseline search engines now demand.
- **Static-first architecture.** Every public page is pre-rendered to plain HTML — no database, no plugins, no CMS admin login to attack, and no patching treadmill to fall behind on.
- **Visitor privacy by design.** No trackers, no analytics cookies, no third-party scripts following visitors around the web.

The modernization answer: for a content site, the safest code is the code that isn't there. A static site gives a volunteer-run nonprofit enterprise-grade security with zero ongoing maintenance burden — there is no admin password to lose because there is no admin.

3. ADA & accessibility: history for everyone

A museum that exists to tell a story should be readable by everyone who comes to hear it. More than **1 in 4 U.S. adults** lives with a disability (CDC), the WebAIM Million study finds detectable failures on roughly **96% of top homepages**, and plaintiff-side firms file **4,000+ digital-accessibility lawsuits a year** (UsableNet) — increasingly against small organizations. The legacy site publishes no accessibility provisions at all.

The new site is built to **WCAG 2.2 Level AA** and — unusually for a site this size — publishes its own accessibility statement describing exactly how, so the claim can be checked rather than taken on faith:

- **Semantic landmarks and heading structure** so screen readers can navigate the site the way sighted visitors scan it.
- **Full keyboard operability** with visible focus indicators — no mouse required anywhere.
- **Labeled forms with error descriptions** announced to assistive technology.
- **Color contrast verified before the palette was ever used in a design**, and alt text on meaningful images.
- **Motion respects *prefers-reduced-motion*** for visitors with vestibular disorders.
- **Tested, not asserted:** automated axe-core scans before pages are released, plus manual testing at 320px width and 200% zoom.

The modernization answer: build to the current standard — WCAG 2.2 AA — verify it with tooling, and publish the accessibility statement so visitors and the organization can hold the site to it.

4. Mobile: built for how visitors actually arrive

Mobile devices generate roughly **62% of web traffic** (StatCounter) — and higher still for a museum people look up from the road. Google indexes the mobile version of a site first, and its research found **53% of mobile visitors abandon** a page that takes more than three seconds to load. The legacy site was built in an earlier, desktop-first era of hosted templates.

- **Mobile-first layout** verified down to a 320px viewport — the old-phone test most websites fail.
- **Hours, address, and phone number one tap away** on every page — with a tap-to-call number and a Google Maps directions link, because the most common mobile question is “are they open, and how do I get there?”
- **Fully static pages load near-instantly** on cellular connections — no page-builder scripts to download first.

5. Reorganized around the visitor

The deepest change isn't technical — it's editorial. The new site answers, in one click from anywhere, the four questions every visitor arrives with: *Can I visit the hotel? Who was Longstreet? How do I join? How do I give?*

- **Seven purposeful sections** — Visit, Longstreet, Photos, Events, Membership, Donate, About — replace the legacy site's sprawl of auto-generated pages.
- **Every cryptic address renamed** (*/piedmont-hotel-.html* → clean, human-readable pages) — and legacy *.html* addresses still answer on the new site, so years of bookmarks, shares, and search results keep working. Verified: the old Piedmont Hotel address serves the new Piedmont Hotel page.

- **Titles written for humans:** “Visit the Piedmont Hotel | The Longstreet Society” instead of “Home The Longstreet Society,” with per-page descriptions for search.
- **One address, one phone, one set of hours** — 827 Maple Street, 770-539-9005, Tuesday–Saturday 10am–4pm — consistent on every page, the way local search engines want it.
- **Trust built in:** the Seventeen Signers story told properly, membership from \$30 (students free), the \$50 engraved-brick tribute, the board of officers named, and the Society’s 500-members-in-42-states reach surfaced instead of buried.
- **Launch-ready for the Society’s own domain:** the build’s canonical addresses already point to longstreetsociety.org, so moving it onto the Society’s domain is a switch flip, not a second project.

MEASURED RESULTS

Before and after, in numbers — measured August 2026

Measure	Legacy site (longstreetsociety.org)	Rebuild (longstreet.ptsnet.net)
Security	No HTTPS — secure requests 302-redirect back to plain http://	HTTPS on every page; static architecture with no admin login to attack
Platform	Hosted page-builder; admin login; template lock-in	Static pre-rendered pages — no database, plugins, or patching treadmill
Accessibility	No published provisions or statement	WCAG 2.2 AA; axe-core scans before release; published accessibility statement
Mobile	Desktop-era template	Mobile-first; verified at 320px; tap-to-call and map link on every page
Addresses	Auto-generated: /hotel---travel-info.html, /membership-1.html, /gainesville-.html	Clean, human-readable addresses; tested legacy links still answer
Page titles	Builder default: “Home The Longstreet Society”	Descriptive per-page titles and search descriptions
Privacy	Platform-controlled	No trackers, no analytics cookies, no third-party scripts
Structure	Page sprawl with duplicates and orphans	Seven sections organized around the four questions visitors ask

6. What this means for you, the visitor

- **If you’re planning a visit:** hours, admission, directions, and what you’ll see are one tap away on any device — with honest guidance about the historic building and a phone number for accessibility questions.
- **If you’re a student of history:** Longstreet’s full arc — including his postwar dedication to the restoration of the Union — is organized to be read, cited, and shared.
- **If you’re a member or donor:** what the Society does, who governs it, and every way to give — membership, donations, engraved bricks, room rentals — are laid out plainly.
- **If you use a screen reader, a keyboard, or an older phone:** this site was tested with you in mind — not as an afterthought.

7. The modernization path

1. **Capture.** Every page, image, and quirk of the existing site is extracted and preserved verbatim before anything changes. Nothing is lost — thirty years of the Society’s story stays intact.

2. **Rebuild.** Modern static stack, content carried over faithfully. Anything questionable is flagged for review — never silently rewritten.
3. **Verify.** Automated accessibility, responsive, and security checks, with the results published where visitors can read them.
4. **Launch.** Static hosting that costs little to nothing, needs no security patching, keeps every old link alive — and hands the organization a site that stays modern instead of quietly decaying.

Sources

- StatCounter Global Stats — mobile vs. desktop market share.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — Disability Impacts All of Us.
- UsableNet — annual digital-accessibility lawsuit reports.
- WebAIM — The WebAIM Million (annual accessibility analysis).
- Google/SOASTA research — mobile page speed and abandonment.
- Direct measurements, August 2026: HTTP responses and redirect behavior of longstreetsociety.org; search-index listings of its page addresses and titles; live pages, accessibility statement, and legacy-address handling of longstreet.ptsnet.net.

See them side by side, then let's talk about your site

Visit the current site at longstreetsociety.org, then the rebuild at longstreet.ptsnet.net — on your phone, with a keyboard, or with a screen reader. The difference is the point. Then get an honest assessment of where your organization's site stands on security, accessibility, and mobile experience.

parkertechsolutions.com • kparker@parkertechsolutions.com

© 2026 Parker Technology Solutions, Inc. Third-party statistics are drawn from the sources listed above and are approximate as of publication. The Longstreet Society rebuild described here is shown at longstreet.ptsnet.net; the Society's site remains live at longstreetsociety.org. Measurements reflect both sites as observed in August 2026. The Longstreet Society name and historical materials belong to the Society; this paper documents website engineering work only.