

# The Harborwalk, from A to Z, is online

Aiming to encourage public use, new site catalogues amenities



BostonHarborwalk.org is said to be the first official index of public facilities along Boston's coastline — a source of information about everything from beaches to bike racks. Amanda Whitcomb paused her morning exercise on the Harborwalk in Dorchester. With its website, Boston Harbor Now aims to encourage the public to take advantage of the waterfront. (Craig F. Walker/Globe Staff/File 2018)

**By Tim Logan**  
**Globe Staff**

Looking for a spot to fish in Boston Harbor or to walk your dog by the waterfront? Or do you need a restroom as you traverse the Seaport's wide expanses?

A new website has you covered.

On Wednesday, Boston Harbor Now launched BostonHarborwalk.org, which it says is the first official catalogue of public facilities along Boston's 40-plus miles of coastline. The harbor advocacy group compiled data on everything from beaches to bike racks to barbecue pits, then put it online in a mappable, searchable format.

The idea, said Boston Harbor Now's president, Kathy Abbott, is to show Bostonians all the stuff that's available along the waterfront for their use.

"It's there, and people should be able to take advantage of it," Abbott said. "We wanted to take a positive approach and have more people utilize the Harborwalk and access the harbor."

Boston Harbor Now (formerly the Boston Harbor Association) has long advocated for the Harborwalk and public access to the waterfront. State law requires new buildings along the waterfront to include public facilities such as restrooms, as well as other amenities — including observation decks in a few spots. But some have poor signage and are little-known to the public.

Staffers at the nonprofit organization often field phone calls from people asking where they can go fishing or put a kayak in the water, said Jill Valdes Horwood, director of waterfront policy.

"Why is that not publicly available information?" she said. "It's the people's harbor. They should know what they can do there, and where."

So for the past year, Boston Harbor Now has been compiling the information about public facilities that waterfront property owners must file with the state Department of Environmental Protection, more than 500 files in all. It worked with DEP and the Boston Planning & Development Agency on the data, designed a website, and posted it last month without any fanfare. The project cost about \$48,000, paid for with mitigation funds from Fallon Co.'s Fan Pier development.

Abbott stressed that the website is a work in progress. Boston Harbor Now hopes to add more data — bathrooms the group doesn't yet know about, Wi-Fi hot spots that haven't come online — and may develop a mobile app, so users can more easily search for "mutt mitts" while on the go.

But it's a good start, Abbott said, and one that may help more Bostonians get more use out of the waterfront.

"We think this is something the public wants," she said. "We'd would like to see grow into something much larger."

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