



Access Portsmouth: An economic driver for our city

www.accessportsmouth.com

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So you want to do an accessibility check for your business / town?

PLANNING

- Prioritize your scope. What will have the biggest benefit and can be realistically accomplished? (entry access has a greater priority than grab bars in a restroom that a person with disabilities can't get to)
- We have diagrams to share, and want to be your resource. We are architects, we know buildings, we can help. Todd Hanson: info@accessportsmouth.com Anne Weidman: anne@accessportsmouth.com
- Maybe you need a tech-savvy helper? Our website is a simple blog format. Each venue name is a hyperlink to their website. Our mapping is a link to a custom google map. Easy to develop.
- Do you need funding? Our site is hosted by our employer, JSA Inc Architects, enhancing JSA's corporate social responsibility and giving AccessPortsmouth.com a free ride on web fees.
- Develop collateral materials. Our postcard sized business card works as a credibility piece and 'leave-behind.' It helps people understand what we're doing and why.
- Although you should have knowledge of ADA requirements, **YOU ARE NOT THE ADA POLICE**. Your job is to simply report facts to help visitors plan ahead.
- There are great documents online from www.ada.gov including a simple illustrated Small Business Primer: <https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/smallbusiness/smallbusprimer2010.htm> The folks at the New England ADA Center are terrific at explaining everything accessibility related: www.NewEnglandADA.org

INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING

- Think holistically, plan for an entire visit. Include parking suggestions.
- Avoid visiting during busy hours. We visit restaurants between 2:00 and 4:00, performance spaces in the morning by appointment. If you're not sure, drop in or call and ask a manager what time would be best.
- Make sure the owner/manager sees this as an economic driver, not some sort of regulatory inspection. Don't use a clip board, it's intimidating.
- Do not expect an owner or manager to know accessibility details about their building. "Do you have an accessible rest room? Yes? **May I see it?**" You might see furniture or boxes blocking the path, missing signage, or missing grab bars.
- Avoid opinions. Use facts. "The entry is narrow" is not as helpful as "The entry is 28" wide with no pull side clearance." (Be sure you understand pull side clearance...)
- On www.accessportsmouth.com, some listings require a higher level of detail. Under 'Restaurants' take a look at: Caffe Kilim, Kilwins, Portsmouth Brewery, Rira. The 'Attractions' list includes a variety of accommodation descriptions for cultural institutions. When a business is tricky on accessibility, go back and have the owner approve your review. No wall of shame.
- **If you are an able-bodied inspector...** enlist the help of fact-checkers in wheelchairs. We have recruited friends, people from disability focused organizations, and strangers on the street. When approaching someone on the street, speak to the person in the chair as well as their companion. Ask for their help. Explain that they see it better than you and they would be of great assistance. Along with getting very good intel, this is a subtle way to have potential users visit the site. I have been told that it feels very different for a person in a chair to be seen as an expert.
- Use 'people first language.' It's disability etiquette. *From Wikipedia:* 'The basic idea is to use a sentence structure that names the person first and the condition second, for example "people with disabilities" rather than "disabled people" or "disabled", in order to emphasize that they are people first.'



INSPECTION CHECKLIST

BUSINESS NAME _____

WEBSITE _____

DATE _____

SPOKE TO _____

Public entrance

- Free of steps / threshold
- Pull and push side clearance (see diagrams)
- Necessary door opening (ADA says 32" clear but if less include dimensions)
- Proper size and configuration of vestibule, description if non-standard (large enough for a wheelchair and a companion to maneuver without being struck by doors - see diagrams)

Comments:

Interior travel path and usability

- Clear path between furniture and fixtures to allow equitable circulation to all public areas and restrooms (see diagram)
- Furniture and fixtures of usable dimensions (standard height tables, not hi-tops)
- Free of interior steps or level changes unless ramps, lifts or elevators are provided

Comments:

Restrooms

- Clearances at the doorway, both inside and outside
- Clearances around toilet and sink
- Appropriate grab bars, the right size in the right location

Comments:

Parking / Exterior access

- Availability and reliability of convenient accessible parking

Comments:
