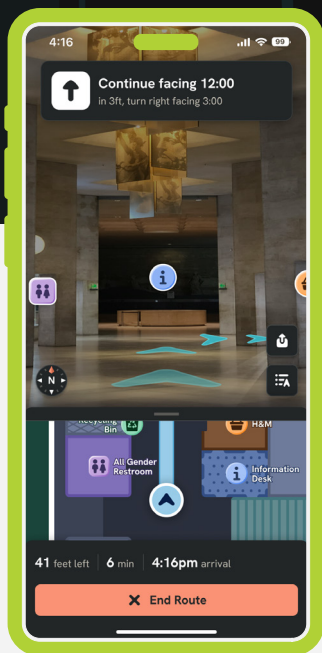# GoodMaps at Portland International Airport

> "Portland International Airport is a place for everyone. Our Accessibility Committee helps us introduce new programs and technology like GoodMaps that can make our airport even more inclusive."
>
> • **Steve Nagy,**
> **Director of Airport**
> **Operations,**
> **Port of Portland**

The Port of Portland believes public spaces like Portland International Airport (PDX) should be welcoming and usable for everybody. And so, when introduced to GoodMaps' fully inclusive wayfinding service, they immediately understood it could be an integral part of the ongoing push to improve accessibility in the airport. Since establishing the PDX Accessibility Committee in 2018, the Port has worked closely with local partners to better understand the lived experiences and challenges faced by the communities it serves – and to introduce solutions and resources based on those insights.

The Challenges of Improving Airport Accessibility

Airports can often seem intimidating to navigate, a fact not lost on the customer experience team at the Port of Portland. To address that challenge, they wanted to offer a variety of alternative travel options and navigation tools to visitors with disabilities. To be able to provide individual travelers with whatever assistance or guidance they need to have an exceptional experience at PDX.

The journey began with a simple question:

• *How can we enhance the airport experience for all travelers, of all needs?*

And one of the key areas that kept coming up was wayfinding.

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Wayfinding is a common challenge because of the complex layout of an airport. It often consists of multiple concourses across varying levels, as well as an assortment of eateries, restrooms, and moving walkways, not to mention gates, kiosks, and baggage areas. Whether seeking a wheelchair-accessible toilet or the quickest route to a gate, being able to find one's way is crucial for a positive customer experience.

Discovering What's Required

In 2018, the Port of Portland set its focus on improving accessibility — and exploring possible technology solutions to do so — by engaging with fifteen advocacy groups to help them better understand the needs and expectations of travelers.

This work led them to GoodMaps, a wayfinding service the Port first tested at Portland State University. Seeing its potential, they took it back to PDX's Accessibility Committee to ensure it met their needs before beginning a trial. As Walt Marchbanks, Port of Portland's Customer Programs and Services Manager, stated, "the accessibility committee [is] the litmus test that we look to whenever we invest in any new technology." The team understood that an accessibility-first approach for all new technologies was a priority. So, after a thorough vetting process, they organized a pilot program for the newly expanded Concourse E.

Finding The Best Solution For Everyone

For the Port of Portland, GoodMaps represented a significant stride for travelers with diverse needs to safely and confidently navigate PDX. The initial target audience included travelers who are blind, have low vision or use wheelchairs. However, as the pilot program continued, GoodMaps' universal appeal and availability was able to help a broader audience with navigation, including the elderly, those who are anxious in busy or loud environments, or anyone who wants to find their way a little bit easier. And as the technology develops and evolves, it will only expand to reach more users at PDX.

PDX Facts & Figures

- In 2023, over **16 million passengers** used the airport, and over **150,000 aircraft operations** occurred.

- First opened in 1936, the airport is built on **3,000 acres** of land and features one terminal with **four concourses** and **three runways** (two for commercial usage).

PDX × GoodMaps

- **373 currently named destinations** across the ticket lobby, baggage claim, and four concourses.

- **10.5 hours** of scanning to replicate PDX's footprint in the app.

- Since the official launch at PDX, there have been **150+ completed uses every month** across the entirety of the airport.

Building Towards an Inclusive Future

After the early success of the Concourse E mapping, the Port of Portland decided to expand the pilot program and initiate a new, long-term partnership with GoodMaps. Analyzing usage data from the pilot phase enabled PDX's teams to better understand travelers' interactions with the airport — and identify areas for new services as a result. As the airport continues its redevelopment, plans are underway to integrate the service across the entire facility, guided by insights from the Accessibility Committee and GoodMaps. As Walt Marchbanks aptly puts it, "at the end of the day, it's not [about] what I want, it's what the customer wants."

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