ELERTS™

Alleviating homelessness?
Yes, there's an app for that.

FAST FACTS
Downtown Dallas

The homeless population in Dallas and Collin counties grew about **nine percent** over 2018

Negative social media posts declined by **90 percent** after the community was made aware of the availability of *See Say Now*.

See Say Now has over **1,200 users** in Downtown who are sending **600 reports** per month

For client Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI), ELERTS' *See Say Now* app has proven to be a great asset for increasing situation awareness about goings-on in the district. DDI has deployed *See Say Now* to great effect in its efforts to improve quality of life for stakeholders across the social spectrum.

DDI is a private, non-profit advocacy group whose mandate is to help make the area in and around Downtown Dallas more livable and pleasant for all comers — commuters, residents, and tourists. It aims to ensure that Downtown remains vibrant and welcoming by embracing ideas and innovations that enhance the urban experience.

ABOUT ELERTS™

In 2010 Massachusetts software developer ELERTS debuted its cutting-edge mobile incident reporting app for cities, mass transit and airport operators, and other public entities. A smarter, more comprehensive alternative to social media, See Say Now enables smartphone users to provide real-time situation awareness and actionable information to the DDI dispatcher for more timely responses to issues such as homelessness, vandalism, panhandling, and disorderly conduct. See Say Now is an easy-to-use app that lowers people's resistance to reporting problems they see in the district.

THE DOWNTOWN DALLAS, INC./
ELERTS SUCCESS STORY

The *See Say Now* app makes it easy for DDI employees, the Safety Patrol, and concerned citizens to file reports on the full range of concerns that need attention. DDI monitors incoming reports on the ELERTS management console, which displays a heat map with pins showing locations of all reported issues so resources can be deployed quickly and efficiently. When appropriate, DDI shares information with Dallas police.

A more effective approach to tackling homelessness

Like many localities across the United States, Downtown Dallas has a homeless population. In its 2019 State of the Homeless Address, the **_Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA)_** reported that the homeless population in Dallas and Collin counties grew about nine percent over 2018.

Besides its quality-of-life-enhancement-for-all agenda, DDI aims for a more permanent solution to the human misery of homelessness. The nonprofit encourages individuals in homeless encampments and those scattered around town to accept referrals to social services agencies for assistance.

Each early morning Martin Cramer, DDI's Vice President, Public Safety, deploys homeless outreach teams throughout Downtown. The teams use the ELERTS app to record homeless locations and take photos and notes. This data help DDI see the big picture and make better decisions about assigning resources to help alleviate the problem. Since 2017 *See Say Now* has made a huge contribution to helping DDI to map, count and stay current on locations of the homeless.

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"Interestingly, we believe a high percentage of incoming reports are sent by people walking their dogs who observe things like trash or disorderly conduct."

— **Martin Cramer**
DDI Vice President, Public Safety

Dallas and Collin counties participate in the federally-required annual documentation of the homeless population nationwide. The counting project is led by MDHA and conducted by 1,500 volunteers who search business parking lots, alleyways, and under overpasses. Says **_David Gruber_**, development and communications director for MDHA, "If you're trying to solve the problem without data, you're flying blind."

Social media reporting can be inaccurate and broadcasting negativity is unhelpful

DDI used to see negative posts on Facebook and Twitter about adverse conditions. Besides being inefficient, it is uncertain whether those authorized to remedy an issue will see a complaint on social media. Often it is not possible to communicate directly with the poster and the location of the incident may be difficult to ascertain. Thus, social media is a poor tool for addressing concerns promptly.

Real-time chat and analytics help advance the mission

With See Say Now users can report via real-time chat to a DDI dispatcher and upload a photo or video

"If you're trying to solve the problem without data, you're flying blind."

David Gruber
Development and Communications
Director, MDHA

while the GPS displays the location of the issue. The two-way communication enables the incident reporter and the dispatcher to discuss status and other details. At last count, the app has over 1,200 users in Downtown who are sending 600 reports per month.

Cramer estimates that negative social media posts declined by 90 percent after the community was made aware of the availability of *See Say Now*. "We strive for a seven-minute reply time to See Say Now users, who tell us they appreciate the quick response," said Martin Cramer.

With ELERTS the dispatcher can access displays from nearby resources such as surveillance cameras. Analytics enable the aggregation of institutional knowledge about recurring problem areas and incident categories.

ELERTS IS DEPLOYED AT 28 TRANSIT AGENCIES WHO VALUE THE SITUATION AWARENESS IT PROVIDES.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) has been using ELERTS mobile incident reporting system since 2016. DART's success with the app was a catalyst for prompting DDI to adopt it for its district. DART's presence in Downtown means that many of its riders are familiar with See Say Now. Moreover, information gathered via ELERTS can be shared by DDI and DART via their management consoles — giving each extra bandwidth for reaching common goals around increasing situation awareness.

Feet on the Street. "Interestingly, we believe a high percentage of incoming reports are sent by people walking their dogs who observe things like trash or disorderly conduct." – Martin Cramer, DDI Vice President, Public Safety

ELERTS = PROBLEM-SOLVING²

Since 2010 ELERTS has been proving its efficacy in helping cities, mass transit and airport operators, and other public entities to solve quality of life issues for multiple stakeholders with improved situation awareness. From rapid response to efficient resource deployment to enhanced short- and long-term decision making, ELERTS is an indispensable tool for meeting your objectives.