



# Downtown Dallas Inc. uses compassion, action to address homelessness

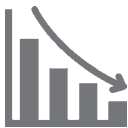
For client Downtown Dallas, Inc. (DDI), ELERTS' See Say app has proven to be a great asset for increasing situation awareness about goings-on in the district. DDI has deployed See Say to great effect in its efforts to improve quality of life for stakeholders across the social spectrum.

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.

## FAST FACTS Downtown Dallas



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



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



As of 2022, See Say has over **3,000 users** in Downtown Dallas. They send **hundreds of helpful reports** each month

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## The Downtown Dallas, Inc./ ELERTS Success Story

The See Say app makes it easy for DDI employees, the Safety Patrol, and concerned citizens to report issues that need attention. DDI monitors incoming reports on the ELERTS web-based 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 or Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART).

## 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.



***“If you’re trying to solve the problem without data, you’re flying blind.”***

**David Gruber**  
Development and Communications  
Director, MDHA

The nonprofit encourages individuals in homeless encampments and those scattered around town to accept referrals to social services agencies for assistance.

Early each morning, Martin Cramer, DDI’s Vice President of 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 has made a huge contribution to helping DDI to map, count and stay current on locations of the homeless.

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.”

DDI’s Homeless Outreach team is devoted to supporting the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness in Downtown Dallas. Through a

“relate and refer” approach, Outreach team members engage individuals and connect them to resources that meet their specific needs and circumstances.

In 2022, the Homeless Outreach team made over 5,800 engagements and 479 reunifications of homeless individuals with their support systems across the country through our Homeward Bound program — setting a new annual record.

## **Social media posts can be inaccurate and broadcast negativity**

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**

See Say users can report issues via real-time chat to a DDI dispatcher and upload a photo or video 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 3,000 users in Downtown, with hundreds of reports sent every month.

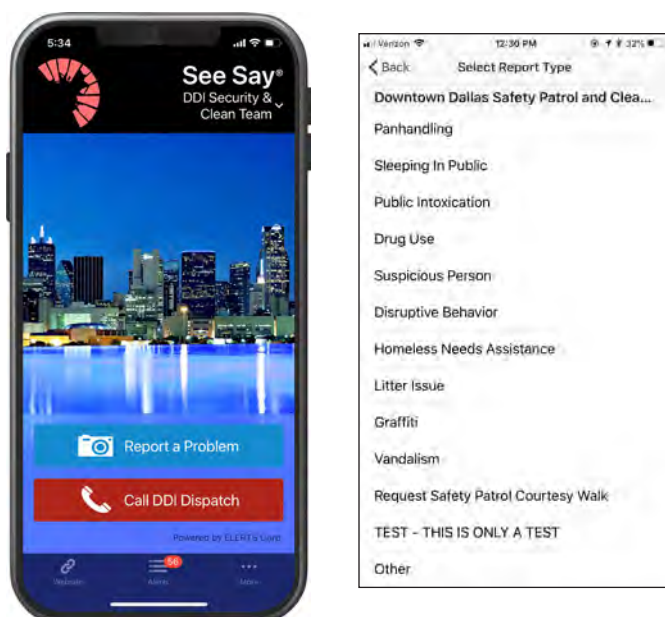
Cramer estimates that negative social media posts declined by 90 percent after the community was made

aware of the availability of See Say. “We strive for a seven-minute reply time to See Say users, who tell us they appreciate the quick response,” said 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 delivers actionable situation awareness to transit agencies, airports, and downtowns across America

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. 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.



## Get the help of everyday people

ELERTS is the proven technology that leverages a powerful force for good: Everyday people who step up to help by reporting the issues they see. Whether its passengers at airports, riders on public transit, visitors downtown, or employees and volunteers at all of the above, ELERTS makes it easy for them to share what they see with helpful accuracy — so you can know more quickly what needs to be done and where to deploy your resources. ELERTS improves safety, security, operations, customer experience, and reputation management.

***“A high percentage of incoming reports are sent by people walking their dogs who see things like trash or disorderly conduct.”***

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

## About ELERTS Corporation

Massachusetts software developer ELERTS created its cutting-edge mobile incident reporting solution for cities and BIDs, transit agencies and airports, and other public entities. A smarter, more comprehensive alternative to social media, See Say 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 is an easy-to-use app that lowers people’s resistance to reporting problems they see in the district.