

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned in to another  
edition of The Break Room, a

weekly conversation about how  
the City of St Augustine

works from those who do the  
work everyday. Hosted by the

City of St Augustine's  
Communications Director, Melissa

Wissel. The Break Room offers a  
closer look at the different

City departments and provides  
updates on current and upcoming

projects and events. And now  
your host, Melissa Wissel.

MELISSA: Thanks for tuning in to The  
Break Room. I'm Melissa Wissel,

Communications Director for the  
City of St Augustine. If you

live or work near the city's

downtown Historic Core, you

are keenly aware of traffic,  
congestion, and finding a way

to get around and finding  
places to park. But we do have

the Parking Garage and now we  
have a new Star Circulator Bus.

I've invited X Pellicer to join  
me this week to talk about

these initiatives. X, you were  
here exactly a year ago this

week. X: Yeah. MELISSA: And we were  
talking, I do want to ask you

real quick. Last year, we were  
talking about the express lane

at the Parking Garage. It was a  
pilot. We were going to try it

out Did we like it? X: most  
people liked it. There

there's some kinks that we  
gotta work out but we we're

going to try to get that back  
full time. But there are

some hard things that we do  
need to get figured out and

we're in the process of trying  
to get that figured out. It's

just taking a lot of time to  
work that out. But for the most

part, for the, by far most part,  
people loved it. MELISSA: Good. And it

served its purpose. X: It's  
purpose. We do want to get it

back in there, but there are  
some issues and and we'll

get there eventually. MELISSA: It may be  
next year. We may be back here

again next year. X: Well hopefully  
it won't be that long. MELISSA: Let's hope. X: But so.

But we're we're we're working  
in that direction. MELISSA: Okay. But

the big news right now, this  
time this year. And I will say

we were talking last year about  
the hopes of a circulator. The

hopes of this downtown bus and  
here we are. It's a reality.

It's happening. People are  
writing it. Give it, give us the

the low down. Tell us about it.

X: Finally got there. We were

trying to get this thing  
started about a half a year

ago. But there were some  
issues with right away permits

and stuff like that with the  
DOT. But we eventually got that

worked out. And so finally we

started it and and things

seemed to be working very well.

A lot of ridership on it.

So the buses are not just  
riding around empty. MELISSA: Excellent.

But it it's a it's a very  
frequent service. So that's one

big complaint that I've heard  
over the past many years is

that say, for instance, the Sunshine  
Bus is a very good public

service that the St Johns  
County provides, but the one big

complaint that they hear from  
that a lot of times is that the

buses only come like once an  
hour, or it might even be an

hour and a half, or maybe almost  
two hours. And so this service,

what's really good about this  
service, is it's every 15

minutes. And it and we do it  
from 10 o'clock in the morning

till 10 o'clock in the evening  
and it's everyday. And now there

will be some days like the  
Fourth of July and Light Up

Night and sometimes we have  
parades downtown and so the

streets are closed, so we'll  
have to temporarily suspend it

for for that short period of  
time. But but basically

for the most part, this is  
everyday from 10 AM to 10 PM.

And and every 15 minutes a bus  
is coming. And they're nice,

beautiful, new buses, air  
conditioned. It starts at

the downtown Parking Garage,  
which is adjacent to our

Visitor Information Center. So  
that's a huge source of the

folks that are wanting to ride  
it. And so, they can pick up on

it as they come walking out of  
the Parking Garage and hop on

the bus. There's, we call it the  
clock circle, but it's a red

brick huge cul-de-sac that's  
right between the Visitor

Information Center and the  
Parking Garage. And so that's

our main hub. MELISSA: Which is cool,  
because I don't think most

people find that we use that  
very much. I mean, I know we do

use it, but it's great that

we're going to actually start

to see that traffic coming  
through there. X: It's being, it's

very heavily utilized now.

So we we've got a

least two buses operating out  
of it and every every 15

minutes we have two buses going  
in and out of it. So, it's,

this is kind of our initial  
step, if you will with this

public transportation. And  
it is funded by the DOT. I

want to say thank you very much  
to the DOT because they are the,

by far, bulk of the funding of  
this operations. And so

it and it covers the  
downtown historical core area.



And so our plans are to branch  
out from this, but you have

to walk before you run. And so  
right now, it initiates at

the Visitor Information Center.  
It comes out on the Orange

Street. It drives along the  
Fort and the Bayfront and so

our our first stop is right in  
front of the River and Fort

business, which is also where  
the crosswalk is to get over to

the Fort and so that's our stop  
number one. Our stop number two

is on Cathedral Place, and it's  
about halfway between St

George Street and Cordova, and  
then it comes back to the hub.

And so every 15 minutes we're  
hitting these three spots. MELISSA: I

was downtown having lunch and  
looking, I was facing the street

and through the windows, and the  
the day that it launched the

bus drove by three times. I was  
like oh my gosh, there's the

bus. And it's a pretty  
bus, too. The wrap out looks great. X: Brand spanking

new and we call it our star. And  
star is kind of an acronym for Augustine Rider. A  
little catchy phrase that we

kind of, it was a team effort,  
if you will, of trying to come up

with, we wanted something that  
would kind of strike a cord

with folks out there. And this  
isn't just for the tourists. So

so this is really, we we're  
trying to get this tailored for

the residents and the business  
owners and the workers that

work downtown, the waiters, the  
waitresses, the bus boys, the bus

girls, the everybody downtown.

And so, just just to throw an

idea out there for the folks, is  
they always say they can't find

parking and stuff like that now.

So the locals can go buy, for

\$34. You can buy a monthly pass  
in the parking garage. You can

go in and out of the parking  
garage just as much as you want

and then you can hop on the  
free shuttle. That's another

thing. I didn't get that out  
there. Is this shut, it's not a

shuttle. We like to call it our  
star circulator. And so the Star

Circulator is free. And  
so they can hop on that and

it'll drive you around to these  
two stops that I mentioned and

it'll get you fairly close to  
where they're, where they're

working, the businesses. And so  
it it gives the employees a

place to go park. Because  
that that's a big demand that

we hear about. So, basically for  
a dollar a day. The

employees can park in the  
parking garage. Go go to work

and then come back. So  
that's that's something that we

hope we're trying to get the  
word out. MELISSA: And don't forget

residents can get the Park Now

Card. So residents can do the park now card,

which is, if you don't come  
downtown where you would need

it, you know that daily discount,  
like you just said a dollar a

day. I can get in for \$3  
with the Park Now card as a

St Johns County resident.  
And even if I come down

once or twice a month, still  
cheaper. X: Oh yes.

Absolutely. MELISSA: And get on the Star  
Circulator. X: That that's another

avenue. So you know, a lot  
of times the the locals, say

we'll make it good  
for us, and hard for the

tourists. Right. You know and  
so well, so the tourists are

only here for a few days. So,  
they'll park in the parking

garage for \$15. The  
locals can buy, you kind of have

two alternatives, like we  
explained that the park now

card, which is, works out to  
about a dollar a day, or the

park now card which is \$3 for  
every occurrence that you

should. So, there there's  
some big incentives there for

the locals. MELISSA: And the you're  
mentioning the DOT funding.

We've got that, this initial  
piece of it as a five year

contract, but we're looking, you  
started to mention, the

expansion of this. Talk about  
that, because when we posted

this on social, we explained,  
Jessica Clark did an interview

to clarify some things, as well,  
with us. And we want folks to

know we want to expand. The  
idea is this is a mobility

solution long term. Talk a  
little bit about some of those

other places, the Broudy and  
the beach maybe. People

people feel like it's only all  
about the downtown and it's not

ultimately. X: Well, this is our  
first step. And then we hope to

branch out from this. And you  
had mentioned Broudy's, so so

there's a lot of work in the  
direction of trying to develop

the area we call it the

Broudy's lot, but it's at the

intersection of US-1 at King  
Street. And the Broudy's business

is at that location and he owns  
all that property. And so there,

he's worked out an agreement  
with the City of St

Augustine, and so there's  
going to be a lot of

development coming there and  
and a parking garage.

Probably about maybe 800 cars.  
Something in that ballpark.

There's a lot of things that  
still need to get worked out in

that, but it does appear  
to have out of traction and it

does appear to be coming. MELISSA: And  
there and it's a vision, so...



X: And so it's

a year two or three down the

line. But it's it it appears to

be coming. MELISSA: It'll be here before

we know it though. X: And so we

hope to get another Star

Shuttle branching out along the

West King Street direction.

So there's a lot of

things that we gotta get worked

out on that. But that's our

plan is to branch out this

initial core and then branch

out of a branch that goes out

West King Street, also a branch

goes out towards Anastasia

Boulevard across the Bridge

of Lions. There's some

challenges when the bridge

closes and stuff like that

which we we know. And but that's  
our intent is to branch this

out. And then also get a branch  
going up north either San Marco

Avenue or US-1. So this is  
a first step. It it will be

branching out. It might take a  
few years, but we're headed in

that direction. MELISSA: That's a great vision.  
Well, if you're just now tuning

in, you're listening to The  
Break Room. I've got X Pellicer here

with us this week. We're  
talking about the new Star

Circulator. We're going to  
look forward to seeing an

update on the express lane at  
the Parking Garage, one of

These days. Also, real quick

before we wrap up, new Parking

Spot Finder. It's web, the web

address is [CityStAug.com/ParkingSpotFinder](http://CityStAug.com/ParkingSpotFinder) and it does just that.

Give us a quick, what's the

parking spot finder for? X: So,

well, that's a very new program,

and so it's, we're working out

some kinks in it also. But it's,

it gives the general public

a way where they can pull this

up and it gives availability of

parking downtown. Is it

likely? Is it highly unlikely,

or is it scarce? You know, is

it very unlikely? And when they

say very unlikely, it's

basically there's there's no

parking downtown. But we

have it identified for each

block, for each street, for  
each, and so it's very broken

out into.. MELISSA: It's exactly where the  
parking is. X: Yeah. Well, it's

not each exact spot. But  
it is each street's lot. MELISSA: Area

of parking. X: And so and it says  
for this one run of say ten

parking spots, you know, it'll  
give you the ideas to yes,

there's parking  
available there, or no

there's 50/50,  
and then there's, and then

there's the very unlikely thing  
where basically no. MELISSA: This is if

folks drive by the Parking  
Garage and some some spots

nearby, it's got the counter, but  
that's just for the Parking

Garage. This actually is a map.

So, if you go to [CityStAug.com/ParkingSpotFinder](http://CityStAug.com/ParkingSpotFinder) is going to pull up a

web page and it's got a map of  
the downtown with green and red

and color coding of the  
likelihood of a place to park.

X: And you can zoom in to the area  
that you're desiring to park,

and you can find out very  
precisely whether there's

parking or not available.

MELISSA: Excellent. X: And it's real

time. MELISSA: And downtown too, we've  
got the ParkStAug app

where I pay online, pay on my  
phone, or I can put the money in

the meter and use the phone.

So, you guys are really getting

it together there with

technology and mobility and

mobile apps and... We're really  
trying to answer the call of..

what about the parking?! X: Well,  
I'll put in... MELISSA: You're doing a lot

of hard work, X, doing a great  
job. X: Well, I'll put in a plug

for Reuben Franklin. He  
is really pushing hard to bring

in this modern technology to  
the downtown area. You know,

one little clicky phrase that gets thrown out there a

lot of times is we're the  
Nation's Oldest City.

And we're trying to get it to  
say we're the Nation's Oldest

City with the most modern  
technology. MELISSA: Excellent.

I like that. X: So for so for

mobility and for parking and

those type of things. And  
for the locals out there, you

know, we're we're trying to get  
the satellite parking, we call

it, where the the folks can park  
out on the perimeter of town

and then we'll either shuttle  
them in or or using our Star

circulators, you know, bring them  
in through public

transportation. So, that's how  
we're trying to expand the

parking and make it year for  
the locals and for the tours.

MELISSA: And better yet that it can be  
free. X: And with the DOT

is really helping us out, and  
and so with the help of the DOT

we are able to make it for  
free. MELISSA: Great. Well I think we've

run out of our time. It's  
a lot of good updates. X: Well, you

know, it's always cool to be in  
here with you, Melissa. You know,

what'd you say, it was a year  
since I was in here last? Well

you don't have to wait a whole  
year. MELISSA: I won't. You've got a lot

going on, so we'll make sure to  
have you back, and we appreciate

all your hard work. X: Thank you  
Melissa. MELISSA: If you missed part of

this podcast and want to go  
back and listen from the

beginning. You can now find us  
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listening to The Break Room, a

weekly program addressing  
projects and programs offered

by the City of St Augustine.  
Join us each week as the City's Communications

Director Melissa Wissel has  
in-depth conversations with the

people who make our town work  
to meet the needs of our

community. The Break Room is  
produced by Communication

Specialist for the City of St.

Augustine, Cindy Walker. See you

at this time next week for  
another edition of The

Break Room.