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City of Johannesburg
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MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Mayoral Intervention in Tackling Traffic Signal Downtime

City of Johannesburg Executive Mayor, Herman Mashaba together with Transport Member of Mayoral Committee, Councillor Nonhlanhla Makhuba have embarked on interventions to tackle the City's traffic signal downtime.

"The City's 2135 traffic signalized intersections are a vital cog to move our economy towards 5% growth and I and my administration are committed to fixing Joburg's traffic lights issue by issue, intersection by intersection, and suburb by suburb," announced Executive Mayor, Councillor Herman Mashaba.

Cable faults, pole overs and power failures make up 86% of the number of faults reported to the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) on an average day. These issues are the major contributors to the overall traffic light downtime experienced city-wide.

MMC Makhuba confirmed: "The cause of these outages can vary from highly complex electrical technical issues, wet weather conditions, poor quality maintenance, or theft of cables, to accidents at intersections where vehicles crash into the poles effectively knocking poles over and damaging the cables."

Mashaba said, "The four immediate interventions that we are implementing to significantly reduce traffic signal downtime are:

Chairman: J Manche,
Executive Directors: Dr. S Phillips - Managing Director, G Mbatha CA(SA) - Chief Financial Officer
Non-Executive Directors: P Govender, A Torres, N Msezane, E Ngomane, L Mashamaite, L Nxumalo, H Mashele.
Company Secretary: K Mills

Registration No. 2000/028993/07

- the implementation of a “no joint” cable policy at key intersections, to reduce the risk of technical faults resulting from water getting into joints;
- closer working relationships with power supply utilities to ensure that power is restored quickly when it goes off;
- the use of a Smart Traffic System including remote monitoring of the traffic signals to ensure that faults are detected and repaired quickly by the JRA;
- the establishment of a 24/7 Traffic Operations Centre, to ensure that the condition of the traffic lights can be monitored continuously so that technicians can be dispatched timeously to carry out repairs.”

“As the City government we have the responsibility to allocate the required resources to address the issues. I have already allocated R6-million in the recent adjustment budget for the current financial year to fix some of the issues such as increased traffic light security systems in our fight against vandalism and theft, staffing of the new 24/7 Traffic Operations Centre, supply of mobile generators to temporarily supply power to intersections affected by power supply outages, as well as the enhancement of the smart traffic system technology” confirmed Mashaba.

Mayor Mashaba today launched the “no joint” cable policy, for the most critical high-volume intersections intended to reduce the high number of electrical faults over time. JRA technicians will no longer join old cables when an electrical fault is reported at a downed traffic light but replace the damaged cable with one new cable. “We intend progressively realising this no joint policy city-wide over the coming years. If we continue to just implement quick fix solutions we create long term problems which make the network even more susceptible to rain, lightning and electrical surges.” Mashaba said.

Power supply interruptions to traffic signal intersections contributes 28% of daily traffic signal outages with repairs taking an average of 4 days. “Power supply is outside of the control of the JRA and I have requested City Power to produce plans to address this critical issue. Dedicated City Power teams working alongside traffic signal technicians to address these faults the same day is essential. The same high levels of cooperation with Eskom is also critical.”

As an interim measure, the JRA is also currently installing Uninterrupted Power Supply units (UPS) at key intersections to ensure back-up power is provided during power outages.

Furthermore, in the City's recent adjustment budget, the Mayor announced the recruitment of an additional 1,500 JMPD officers and the establishment of a specialised JMPD unit to ensure the smooth flow of peak hour traffic at faulty intersections.

MMC Makhuba confirmed the JRA would soon be establishing a 24/7 Traffic Operations Centre to enhance service delivery. "Extending our operating hours will mean JRA is able to continuously monitor the traffic lights and process reported faults; immediately dispatch technicians and ensure the city's traffic lights are fixed with speed as they occur, including weekends and evenings. While we are aware we can never fully eliminate traffic light failures, the JRA wants to reach a stage where the teams have repaired the broken traffic light even before the public has become aware of the problem."

"We will continue to commit more resources, better technology, newer equipment and better trained teams to respond effectively to all the vexing issues that frustrate our residents and have an impact on our objective to achieve a 5% economic growth rate for the City" concluded Mashaba.

Follow JRA for the latest developments, journey planning tips, alternative routes, and traffic advisory via:

- Website: www.jra.org.za
- Twitter: @MyJra,
- Facebook: Johannesburg Roads Agency
- Email hotline@jra.org.za,
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ENDS

About the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA)

The JRA is a City-owned agency responsible for the maintenance, repair and development of Johannesburg's road network and storm water infrastructure, including bridges and culverts, traffic lights and signage. The organisation is committed to providing quality roads that are accessible, safe and liveable for our communities.