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City of Johannesburg
Johannesburg Roads Agency

66 Sauer Street
Cnr. Jeppe Str.
Johannesburg
2001

P/Bag X70
Braamfontein
South Africa
2017

Tel +27(0) 11 298 5000
Fax +27(0) 11 298 5178
www.jra.org.za
www.joburg.org.za

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MEDIA RELEASE

Traffic Lights: What is going on ...

We've all seen them – traffic lights flashing red after lightning and thunderstorms. It's angering and frustrating, not to mention dangerous. It seems as if the problem has gotten worse over the years, and the plain truth is that it has gotten worse, but probably not for the reasons you suspect.

It seems that things have gotten worse over time. Here are the true facts about traffic lights. The JRA's mandate in terms of the Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) with the CoJ is to install, maintain and repair traffic lights across the City of Johannesburg stretching between Roodepoort in the west to Bruma in the east, and from Midrand in the north to Orange Farm in the south.

This area has 2121 signalised traffic intersections with 2078 intersections, and 43 of the same planned for commissioning within the City of Johannesburg. Amongst the 2121 signalised intersections, 1848 are on municipal road (M) and managed by JRA and 273 are on provincial road (R). Almost all of these traffic lights are supplied from the power grid. The JRA has embarked on a programme where traffic lights located on busy main roads are converted to solar and uninterrupted power supply.

The number of traffic signals for the (7) CoJ Regions are follows: Region "A" consist of 136 traffic signals, Region "B" 402, Region "C" 258, Region "D" 138, Region "E" 358, Region "F" 775, whilst Region "G" has 54.

The perception, it seems that the City of Johannesburg is experiencing more traffic outages than ever before. The truth is that the number of malfunctioning traffic lights on any given day is still below the international standard set for the City of Johannesburg. However, these outages are now reaching areas that used to be stable, and the increase in power outages is mainly due to non-availability of power due to cable theft, vandalism and disconnection because of construction.

In fact, the average number of traffic lights malfunctioning per month is 540 out of the total of 2121. This translates into average of 18 traffic lights per day, still below the 1% of total traffic lights. In addition, on average 70 traffic lights are vandalised and 140 are affected by power supply. The old infrastructure we manage does somewhat contribute to this outlook.

However, we are not content about the whole situation. We have embarked on numerous initiatives such as solar power project, replacement of cables, etc. We have also decentralised technicians who are now based and operating from the regions, closer to customers.

Directors:
Chairman: K Shubane, Managing Director: DG Maseko Non-Executive Directors:
Adv. HWL Kugel, Dr WR Nyabeze, F Crowley, X Hloma, M Maimane, F Matabane,
L Brenner, M Simelane, K Mthimunye Company Secretary: Adv. TP Bokako

Registration No. 2000/028993/07

Last but not least we work closely with regional, local radio stations and newspapers to ensure traffic information is disseminated accurately and quickly to all road users.

Simply stated, if too many people are running into malfunctioning traffic lights, hence the outcry from the media. One of the prominent regional radio stations has invited road users to phone-in and report traffic lights that are not working. Out of the 3,000 odd callers only 54 traffic lights were identified as problematic. We are confident that measures implemented in curbing “repeats” these are traffic lights that break more often than others, will start bearing results.

Ends

Issued on behalf of the Johannesburg Roads Agency

For more information contact:
Adv Thulani Makhubela
Spokesperson: JRA
011 298 5145
082 371 9893