

A Significant Number of Joburg CBD Traffic Lights Dysfunctional

By Yonela Gebengu

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Several traffic lights around the Johannesburg CBD have been lying dysfunctional for a while. This is partly due to poor maintenance service by the City of Johannesburg. The continued mowing down of traffic lights raises a lot of concerns for those affected, particularly motorists who rely on functional lights for improved safety on the roads.

Passengers are also affected as they must cross the city's busy roads. In many parts of the city, there is no assistance. Traffic operators are not always deployed in the affected areas, for smooth traffic operation, to help minimise road accidents and harm to passengers.

During the morning rush, it gets very busy and chaotic; drivers often do not pay attention to pedestrians or give them the right of way when traffic lights are not in service. This often affects learners who are going to school as they must carefully squeeze themselves between the vehicles.

The City of Joburg recently advertised short-term contract positions for pointsmen and patrollers to assist with traffic management and control in the most affected areas.

Johannesburg Road Agency (JRA) acting HOD for Mobility and Freight, Siphonhlapo, during an interview with IOL News talked about the 200 warning signals that have been recently vandalised.

Nhlapo said that while they are replacing the damaged traffic lights, the number of ones still to be replaced is constantly changing. The Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) is looking for the latest technology and smart solutions to curb the problem.

According to some reports, the JRA must spend at least R70 million to do repairs at all the vandalised intersections.

Thapelo Sam, (25), a resident of Johannesburg, said the theft of traffic lights is a real concern. Some traffic lights around his neighbourhood were damaged following a car accident and it took almost a year for the lights to be fixed.

"They have been replaced recently... and I think the matter is a maintenance issue. I listen to [the] radio everyday in the morning, there's always traffic updates, it's not like nobody knows about these issues," he said.

His friend, Thabang Molapo, 23, also shared his opinion on the matter highlighting that some traffic lights lay down on pavement corners after being cut at the bottom.

"I think people who cut these traffic lights are professional criminals looking for copper to sell them, and they can do a lot of things just for them to get profit," he added and continued saying that the lack of maintenance, and the problem of theft are one of many reasons for traffic lights not to operate.

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