



The Sonpark Shopping Centre. > Photo: Supplied

Businesses join forces to power traffic lights

Tumelo Waga Dibakwane

MBOMBELA - An idea raised last year by the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism (KLCBT) to address traffic congestion at busy intersections in the city during load-shedding, will soon bear fruit.

According to Linda Grimbeek, KLCBT's COO, they realised there were not enough traffic officers to control traffic during rush hour at busy intersections during power outages.

"The situation was causing unnecessary congestion, negatively affecting the local economy. We then called on businesses to adopt traffic lights situated next to their businesses. Some accepted this initiative and had already adopted some of them, which are now working non-stop," she said.

Despite the fact that the City of Mbombela had rejected the idea before, it is now onboard and speeding up the process to give permission to those who want to help.

"The good thing about this programme

is that businesses will provide their own electricians to avoid complications.

"However, municipal workers will monitor installations. We are inviting other businesses to join us in realising our goal of seeing all traffic lights operational even during power outages, to stop delays and congestion."

Sonpark's property operating manager, Gené van Niekerk, said they adopted the idea because their shopping centre is located at one of the busiest residential intersections in Mbombela. Management recognised the need for continuous operational traffic lights at this intersection to improve safety and ensure traffic flow during load-shedding.

"The request to connect the traffic lights in question to Sonpark Shopping Centre was initially rejected by the CoM's town council, but after the KLCBT officially launched and assisted us in our application, it was formally approved," Van Niekerk said.

They are in the process of connecting the traffic lights on Madiba Drive and Piet Retief Street to a backup generator at the shopping centre.