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## NIGHT MARCH IN RONDEBOSCH TO HIGHLIGHT DISCRIMINATORY ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC LIGHTING

Press statement  
28 May 2019

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### Key points (expanded on below):

- The City leaves areas most reliant on non-motorised and public transport in the dark.
  - The City leaves areas with a high number of pedestrian deaths in the dark.
  - The City leaves areas with a high number of street robberies in the dark.
  - The City has changed its piecemeal commitments on public lighting on 3 occasions in 3 months.
  - The City of Cape Town discriminates on the basis of race and poverty in the allocation of public lighting.
  - The City has put forward no adequate responses to this address this discriminatory allocation.
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The SJC has engaged the City of Cape Town on the issue of the discriminatory allocation of public lighting to poor, working-class Black and coloured wards across the City over the last two years. To date the City has not shown a willingness to address the discrimination in a clear and substantive manner.

Maps showing the provision of public lighting across Cape Town, compiled using the City's own data, reveals that effective public lighting is reserved for all roads in wealthier predominantly white and coloured neighbourhoods. The same maps reveal that many roads in poorer Black and coloured communities are not provided with the same effective public lighting. The differential treatment between these communities is self-evident. The inequality is self-evident.

### Safety and security of pedestrians and public transport users

Given the consequences of apartheid spatial planning, low and low-to-medium income communities continue to live on the periphery of Cape Town. Given Cape Town's extreme levels of traffic congestion, the worst in the country, residents in these low and low-to-medium income

communities, 95% of whom are public transport users, are often required to leave home before sunrise and often get home after sunset.

According to the City of Cape Town's Transport Authority, the largest indirect costs carried by these public transport users, whose journeys start off on foot, is crime and a lack of safety.

In 2017/2018 Khayelitsha had 15 times more street robberies than Rondebosch. Between 2011 and 2015 Khayelitsha also had the highest number of pedestrian fatalities in the City.

Yet, in Khayelitsha the vast majority of roads have no street lights. Instead, Khayelitsha is predominantly provided with high-mast lights which the City itself says should be avoided (see Khayelitsha Lights Map attached).

These high-mast spotlights have never been installed in former whites only, middle-class suburbs like Rondebosch (see Rondebosch Lights Map attached).

No clear, transparent and reasonable plan and budget for the provision of public lighting

This reality informed a submission from the SJC on the City of Cape Town's draft budget in 2017/2018. In response to a submission made by the SJC into the City of Cape Town's draft budget in 2017/2018 the City made a R40 million budget allocation commitment, in the final budget, to be spent in Khayelitsha over four years.

The fact that the City had to make changes to its draft budget to include a commitment of R40 million for public lighting in Khayelitsha in the 2017/2018 budget revealed the lack of a clear and transparent, reasonable plan to address the inequitable and discriminatory provision of public lighting across Cape Town.

Since then the SJC has repeatedly asked the City to provide us with a clear breakdown of where and how the R40 million committed to Khayelitsha has been and is being spent.

We sent another request on 5 February 2019. In response the City of Cape Town's Mayoral Committee Member (Mayco Member) for Energy and Climate Change, Cllr Phindile Maxiti, provided the SJC with "a brief report on existing and planned high-mast and street lighting in Khayelitsha" which he claimed "is an abstract of a greater plan in the Metro."

The SJC has requested the "greater plan" from the City on two previous occasions. We have not yet received it.

The report for Khayelitsha that we did get, drew on statistics compiled by the City in January 2019. It stated that at the time there were 212 high-mast spotlights in Khayelitsha. It added that over the next five financial years there would be an additional 33 new high-mast spotlights

installed. The report, supposedly part of “a greater plan in the Metro”, made no mention of any new streetlights planned for Khayelitsha.

Then in response to a Cape Argus front-page article on 12 March 2019 titled *Township left in the dark* things changed. On the same day Cllr Maxiti released a press statement claiming the City would be spending R6 million on street lights and R4 million on high-mast spotlights (a total of R10 million) in Khayelitsha in the 2019/2020 financial year.

However, in the 2019/2020 draft budget only R7 million for all public lighting has been allocated for the entirety of Area East, of which Khayelitsha is a part.

The fact that the City’s claims around the delivery of public lighting has changed on 3 occasions, in as many months this year, reveals the lack of a clear and transparent, reasonable plan to address the inequitable and discriminatory provision of public lighting across Cape Town.

As a result, today, Tuesday 28 May 2019, the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) will be undertaking a night march in the suburban areas of Rondebosch. The march will be the second night march undertaken by the SJC in a residential area this year. The previous march, on 19 February 2019, was in SST, Khayelitsha. These marches are aimed at highlighting the discriminatory allocation of public lighting between predominantly white, middle-class areas and predominantly black and coloured poor, working-class areas across the City of Cape Town.

[ENDS]

**Details of the night march:**

Date: 28 May 2019

Time: 18:00 to 20:00

Start: Rondebosch Park (cnr Campground Road and Oakhurst Avenue)

**For Comment:**

Axolile Notywala - General Secretary

074 386 1584

Dalli Weyers - Head of Policy & Research

082 460 2093

**\*\*\*Note to Press:**

*When engaging with the City of Cape Town, we have received numerous responses from them that are inadequate, do not engage with the issue at hand or shifts responsibility for the provision of effective public lighting from local government, which is where it ultimately lies. We urge journalists, in the interests of democracy, justice and equality, not to accept the following responses from the City, and to challenge them on these responses.*

**Inadequate responses:**

Ward allocations:

In 2017/2018 wards covering Khayelitsha spent R1 674 270 of their ward allocation budgets on public lighting (R1 349 270 on streetlights and R325 000 on high-mast spotlights). According to the 2019/2020 draft budget, councillors in Khayelitsha plan to spend R2 010 000, or one-fifth of their ward allocations on "Sidewalk Construction". Ward 97 alone plans to spend R1 350 000. This spend is possible because the wards in the sub-councils that cover Khayelitsha have created a 'stokvel' to allow for each ward, in a five year cycle, to undertake a substantive capital intensive project.

It goes without saying that the construction of R1 350 000's worth of sidewalks in Sea Point or Constantia, or Camps Bay, or Rondebosch has never fallen to ward councillors there. In Ward 58, where the SJC will be marching tonight, R1 330 000 has however been spent on the upgrading of existing parks over the last 4 years.

Ward councillors in Khayelitsha are clearly trying to remedy apartheid-era inequalities and the ongoing inadequate provision of infrastructure by the City, by using and pooling their limited ward allocations. (This is not to say that the entirety of their allocations are spent in the most useful or productive ways. This is however true for wards across the City).

The City cannot claim to have a pro-poor budget if it is outsourcing the delivery of basic services in areas that are poor and historically underdeveloped, to be delivered by those same wards that are poor and historically underdeveloped. Doing so merely serves to extend the burden of past injustices into the present, hampering new development in the now and in so doing extending unequal development into the future.

Vandalism, copper theft and illegal connections

Justifying the discrimination using any of these reasons has no merits. The vast majority of road users and informal settlement residents aren't criminals. Forcing children, the elderly, women, everyone to live in the dark because of the crimes of a few amounts to communal punishment. Solutions to the issue of copper theft have been developed. Instead of having cables run along the ground, cables can be spun between the top of lamp posts. In addition, connectors on each post can ensure that only a single length of cable between posts can be stolen at a time making it that much harder and riskier to steal. The City's own *Design and Management Guidelines for a Safer City* acknowledge these issues but places a requirement on the City to mitigate the impact. One of the solutions the Guidelines suggest is the installation of CCTV cameras.

### Eskom is the bulk-supplier of electricity to many of the adversely affected areas

Even though this might be true the responsibility of providing public lighting infrastructure ultimately rests with the City of Cape Town. If Eskom limits or restricts the ability of the City to deliver this service the City should file an intergovernmental dispute to remedy the situation. If this step is required, the Social Justice Coalition would support such an action.

### Community preference

This response would be disingenuous. Given the City's own definition of what constitutes effective public lighting, giving communities the option of an ineffective public lighting solution is irresponsible and wasteful. The assertion that, for example, the whole of Khayelitsha has opted for high-mast spotlights while the whole of Rondebosch has opted for effective public lighting on all streets, is implausible. The fact that ward councillors have used their ward allocation funds to install effective public lighting on some of the streets in ineffectively lit areas illustrates that these communities do, in fact, want effective public lighting.