



Infrastructure and Service Delivery Challenges in Carlswald Agricultural Holdings

1. Background

Carlswald, established in the early 1960s, remains primarily an agricultural holdings area with infrastructure originally designed to support low-density rural living.

In recent years, however, a significant number of high-density residential developments have been approved both within and surrounding Carlswald by the City of Johannesburg. These approvals have not been matched by the necessary upgrades to supporting infrastructure, placing severe strain on existing systems and negatively impacting residents' quality of life.

2. Key Infrastructure Constraints

2.1 Road Infrastructure

- The road network in Carlswald was originally constructed as farm roads, later covered with a thin layer of tar, and was never engineered to accommodate current traffic volumes.
 - Increased development in Midrand has led to substantial growth in both residential and construction-related traffic.
 - Heavy vehicles servicing new developments are causing rapid deterioration of road surfaces.
 - Roads such as Springfield Road, Norfolk Road, Guildford Road, and Milford Road are severely affected by potholes, creating dangerous driving conditions.
 - Temporary repairs are ineffective, often lasting only until the next rainfall.
 - Narrow roads without sidewalks pose significant safety risks to pedestrians, particularly given increased foot traffic from nearby developments.
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2.2 Stormwater Management

- Stormwater infrastructure is largely inadequate and poorly maintained.
- Blocked or non-existent stormwater channels result in water flowing over roads, accelerating road degradation and creating hazardous conditions during rainfall.
- Severe stormwater runoff from developments along Walton Road and surrounding areas flows into the Carlswald Valley.
- This has caused extensive damage to properties along Lyncon Road and Springfield Road.
- A large and growing erosion donga—approximately three storeys deep and 30 metres wide—has formed between Springfield and Milford Rds, posing a serious safety risk to residents and animals.
- Another growing donga is forming across two properties in Lyncon Road and Springfield Road.

Residents have been forced to implement their own mitigation measures, including:

- Construction of holding dams
 - Development of wetlands to manage water flow and prevent flooding
 - Stormwater channels
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2.3 Water Supply (Johannesburg Water)

- New infrastructure such as the Erand Water Tower and the Carlswald Reservoir (Walton Road) has been developed to support the broader area.
 - However, insufficient pumping capacity from Rand Water prevents these reservoirs from being adequately filled.
 - There is a **significant risk that further developments will be approved based on perceived infrastructure capacity rather than actual water supply availability.**
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2.4 Sewer Infrastructure

- Most Carlswald properties rely on septic tanks.
 - A single sewer line (along the base of the valley and between Springfield and Milford Rds), originally constructed approximately 25 years ago for one development, now services multiple developments east of Carlswald.
 - This line is:
 - Overloaded
 - Difficult to monitor
 - Environmentally vulnerable
 - **The sewer line runs adjacent to the erosion donga and has already collapsed into it on two occasions.**
 - A replacement sewer line has been under consideration since 2015 but has not yet been implemented.
 - In addition regular sewerage eruptions caused by blockages at the Umthunzi Complex on Walton road flush down the storm water of the neighbouring properties on Lyncon and Springfield Roads.
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2.5 Street Lighting

- Most streetlights in Carlswald are not functioning. They were poorly installed (most are not even vertical) and the electricity lines have been stolen.
 - Streetlights in Lyncon Road are reportedly disconnected due to outstanding payments to Eskom.
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3. Town Planning and Development Concerns

3.1 Overdevelopment without the necessary support infrastructure

- Certain developments have been approved at densities significantly exceeding planning recommendations.
- Example:
 - Carlswald Estate Extension 61 was approved at 68 units per hectare
 - Official planning frameworks recommend approximately 25 units per hectare
- An appeal submitted in 2022 has received no response to date.

A new development proposal is for 96 units on 2,24 hectares (43 d/u per hectare) Carlswald Ext 78 at 82 Milford Rd. The norm is 25 d/u per hectare (including the other two developments in Milford Rd)

3.2 Lack of Developer Accountability

Developers are not consistently held accountable for required infrastructure upgrades, including:

- Road improvements
- Traffic calming measures
- Intersection upgrades

Examples include:

- Installation of speed humps on Springfield Road (linked to Balwin's Whisken development)
- Upgrade of the Norfolk / Harry Gaulaun intersection (linked to Curro)
- Speed calming measures on Norfolk Road (Portion 1 of 68)

These commitments remain incomplete.

4. Service Delivery Challenges

4.1 Waste Management (Pikitup)

- Irregular waste collection due to:
 - Vehicle breakdowns
 - Labour strikes
 - Restrictions at the Kyalami site limit residents to one load of garden refuse per day, creating inefficiencies and added burden.
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4.2 Road Maintenance (Johannesburg Roads Agency)

- Lack of stormwater maintenance leads to blocked drainage systems. Stormwater has destroyed the drain and gauged a deep furrow in parts of Milford Rd. Extremely dangerous for oncoming traffic.
 - Debris and rubbish accumulation—particularly under the low-water bridge on Norfolk Road and on 7th Rd between Springfield and Milford—is not cleared.
 - Gravel roads are frequently washed away due to inadequate drainage infrastructure.
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5. IDP (Integrated Development Plan) Failures

- The Carlswald Residents Association (CRA) has submitted annual requests to the City.
- To date, none of these requests have been implemented.

Critical example:

- The intersection of 7th Road and Harry Galaun Road:
 - Requires urgent upgrading
 - Lacks turning lanes
 - Experiences severe traffic congestion daily
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6. Public Safety and Crime

Crime levels in the area are increasing, driven by:

- Poor lighting
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Lack of traffic calming
- Vacant and unmanaged properties

Recent incidents include:

- Violent attacks on residents
- Suspicious and unexplained incidents
- Frequent break-ins
- Regular theft of gate motors

Residents are facing escalating costs for security measures, including:

- Advanced alarm systems
- Backup power solutions
- Physical security upgrades

7. Community Response

In the absence of adequate municipal support, residents have taken proactive steps, including:

- Installing multiple layers of security systems
- Funding private patrol vehicles
- Installing surveillance cameras
- Creating community WhatsApp groups for communication and crime alerts
- Participating in Community Policing Forums (CPF)
- Cleaning public spaces and managing waste independently
- Clearing invasive species and overgrown areas
- Maintaining sidewalks and improving visibility to deter crime

In addition, Carlswald Residents Association (which celebrates its 25th year this year) tries to ensure structured, consistent engagement and accountability between the community, the City of Johannesburg, and the ward councillors representing the area.

8. Conclusion

Carlswald is undergoing rapid transformation, and residents are not opposed to development or change. However, this growth must be managed responsibly and supported by infrastructure that is fit for purpose.

The current pattern of approving high-density developments without corresponding upgrades to essential infrastructure is unsustainable and places an unfair burden on residents—who continue to meet their financial obligations through rates, taxes, and service payments.

Without urgent and coordinated intervention, the continued deterioration of infrastructure and service delivery will further impact safety, property values, and overall quality of life in the area.

We highlight the need for engaged and proactive leadership—whether currently appointed or otherwise—who are willing to work closely with the community, engage the appropriate municipal departments, and help translate ongoing challenges into tangible progress in infrastructure and service delivery.