

Councillor Couros - MoN - Parking options to support city businesses

Tuesday, 13 October 2026
Council

Council Member
Councillor Mary Couros

Public

Contact Officer:
Tom McCready, Director City Infrastructure

MOTION ON NOTICE

Councillor Mary Couros will move a motion and seek a seconder for the matter shown below to facilitate consideration by the Council:

‘That Council requests Administration present the report, including a costed trial proposal, to Council by 8 December 2026.

1. The feasibility of offering up to two hours of free parking at participating UPark facilities when a customer makes a qualifying purchase from a participating City of Adelaide retail or hospitality business, in store. The report should assess validation technology, minimum spend options, business participation, implementation costs and the estimated effect on UPark revenue.
2. An option for customers to collect online purchases from participating city businesses at designated UPark collection points, including the space, staffing, security and access arrangements required.
3. The feasibility and implications of making currently paid on-street parking free on Saturdays and Sundays. This review should assess the effect on Council revenue, parking availability and turnover, residents, businesses and existing parking restrictions, including whether time limits would need to remain in place.
4. Seek input from AEDA, local traders and precinct associations on how the proposals could best support shopping and dining across the city and North Adelaide.
5. Present a costed trial proposal with a commencement date, duration and evaluation process, measuring customer uptake, additional visitation and spending and parking availability.’

ADMINISTRATION COMMENT

1. The proposed motion requests that the Administration prepare a report on the feasibility of car parking incentives to support city businesses.
2. To achieve this through parking validation would require a city-wide program. Key considerations include:
 - 2.1 the cost and complexity for the City of Adelaide
 - 2.2 the level of retailer participation needed to achieve sufficient scale
 - 2.3 the technology and administrative burden on participating retailers
 - 2.4 customer impacts
 - 2.5 the risk of fraud for the City of Adelaide, particularly if retailers are not paying anything for the parking

- 2.6 in setting proposed tariffs for each of Council's UPark facilities, Council is obliged to and does consider the legislated principles of Competitive Neutrality outlined in the National Competition Policy.
3. Any reduction in parking charges through a validation program, is likely to erode existing revenue. If implemented at scale, much of the discount may benefit customers who would have parked in the city regardless of the incentive, reducing income without generating equivalent additional visitation.
 4. Parking revenue makes a significant contribution to the City of Adelaide's financial sustainability and Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and is the City's second-largest source of income after rates.
 5. Council has previously considered and implemented a series of initiatives to improve visitation into the city, namely:
 - 5.1 On 26 April 2017 Council endorsed a 12-month trial from 1 July 2017 for the first hour free parking at Rundle Street UPark
 - 5.2 On 28 November 2017 Council resolved to implement a first hour free parking initiative for all UParks in the vicinity of Rundle Mall/East End.
 - 5.3 On 26 June 2018 Council resolved to approve a further extension of first hour free parking at Rundle Street UPark.
 - 5.4 On 2 March 2019 Council resolved to investigate an automated system for UParks to allow City Businesses to validate a customer's UPark parking ticket.
 - 5.5 A wide array of parking incentives at the Adelaide Central Market specifically designed to support utilisation, short stay parking (0.5 hrs to 2hrs) over long stay parking (2hrs+). Incentives have included validated customer parking and weekend parking offers to name a few. This has resulted in varying success, noting that UPark Central Market is economically priced compared to other UParks.
 6. The above initiatives did not and have not seen a significant increase in visitation.

UPark – Off Street Parking

7. The potential cost of a validation scheme across all UPark stations as described is up to \$10 million based on projections for the 2026/27 financial year (in its entirety). This would be equivalent to a council rate increase of 0.63% per \$1.0 million of lost revenue or 6.3% for \$10.0 million lost revenue for the financial year.
8. Administration is of the view that the provision of 2 hours free parking is not feasible due to the lack of appropriate technology and the impacts to Council's revenue base.

Paid On Street Parking

9. The projected revenue from on street parking generated on weekends is \$2.2 million for the current financial year. The lost revenue would be equivalent to a council rate increase 1.38% for the financial year.

Collection Points in Carparks

10. UPark car parks operate automatically with most customer assistance and operations provided remotely from a Central Control Room. On site support is provided by a mobile team. Car parks are fully automated, and no staff are stationed on site at the car parks.
11. There are three car parks which have spaces that could potentially be utilised as collection points for goods purchased online from a city business, subject to investigation of requirements. These are UPark Rundle, UPark Wyatt and UPark Topham. These car parks have secure spaces restricted by City of Adelaide's security system allowing only authorised staff to access the area. Modifications would be required to make the areas suitable and enable secure transfer of parcels.
12. Resourcing with casual staff during standard Rundle Mall opening hours at these three car parks would incur additional expenses of approximately \$510,756 per annum based on current pay rates. This is currently unbudgeted and will vary depending on changes to shop opening hours.
13. UPark is currently exploring the option of installing parcel lockers in some of these UParks, which may be a more feasible and secure option.

14. Due to the complexity of the motion, competing priorities and the requirement of a thorough investigation, the Administration will not be able to meet the December 2026 timeline.
15. Should Council resolve to support the proposed motion, a report will be prepared for presentation to Council in Q3 of the 2026/27 financial year, which will reflect engagement with AEDA, local traders and precinct associations.

Should the proposed motion be supported by Council, the following implications of this motion should be considered. Note any costs provided are estimates only – no quotes or prices have been obtained:	
Public consultation	Not applicable
External consultant advice	An external consultant would be engaged to provide advice on how a city-wide parking program could be delivered, including technology and resources required, approximate costs, risks, and mitigation.
Legal advice / litigation (eg contract breach)	Legal advice would be sought regarding Council meeting obligations under the <i>Local Government Act 1999</i> (SA) with regard to Competitive Neutrality and the <i>Road Traffic Act 1961</i> (SA).
Impacts on existing projects	All relevant UPark Staff are currently fully committed to existing technology projects as per the 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget.
Budget reallocation	Additional resources would need to be funded due to lack of availability of existing staff.
Capital investment	To be defined in the outcome of the report but any Validation Solution at scale may require equipment such as scanners or validation terminals at point of sale. If this wasn't to be paid by retailers this would be an expense in addition to any other technology requirements for Council. Modifications to office space to facilitate a parcel collection point will also require capital investment.
Staff time in preparing the workshop / report requested in the motion	Not applicable
Other	Not applicable
Staff time in receiving and preparing this administration comment	To prepare this Administration comment in response to the motion on notice took approximately 4.5 hours.

- END OF REPORT -