

Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Noon - MoN - City Visitation and Parking Options

Tuesday, 13 October 2026
Council

Council Member
Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor
Carmel Noon

Public

Contact Officer:
Tom McCready, Director City
Infrastructure

MOTION ON NOTICE

Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Carmel Noon will move a motion and seek a seconder for the matter shown below to facilitate consideration by the Council:

‘That Council:

1. Requests the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with AEDA and relevant city stakeholders, to investigate and report on options to use Council-controlled parking more strategically to support city visitation and economic activity, including:
 - targeted UPark incentives such as off-peak, evening, weekend, short-stay and validated parking;
 - opportunities for partnerships with retailers, hospitality businesses, Precinct Groups and major property owners, including models where property owners or landlords contribute towards customer parking;
 - better utilisation of underused UPark capacity, including dynamic or demand-based pricing;
 - opportunities to improve the customer experience of on-street parking, including notifications and remote extension of parking sessions where permitted;
 - opportunities to use Council-controlled parking strategically during identified quieter periods or in areas experiencing prolonged disruption, including seasonal downturns and major Main Street, public realm or infrastructure works; and
 - opportunities to strengthen the city’s point of difference from suburban shopping centres, including destinations such as the Adelaide Central Market and the city’s broader retail, hospitality, cultural and visitor experiences.
2. Requests that the investigation identify any legislative, regulatory, financial or policy constraints relevant to these options, including competitive neutrality, consumer and competition law, commercial and tenancy considerations, and Council’s powers and obligations under the *Local Government Act 1999*.
3. Requests that the investigation identify, in consultation with AEDA, priority periods or locations where targeted and time-limited parking initiatives could support visitation and local business activity.
4. Requests that a report be presented to Council within the first quarter in 2027, outlining available options, relevant constraints, pilot or trial opportunities, budget implications and proposed measures of success.’

ADMINISTRATION COMMENT

1. Recent media activity has commented on a decrease of visitation into the city for the period January to March 2026 compared to the same time last year. Discussion centred around impacts to businesses and their viability, noting that the same update also indicated an increase in spending across the city and North Adelaide. Turnover figures increased from the baseline figure of \$3.99 billion in 2023 to \$4.3 billion in 2025, an increase of 7.8% (total local spend/not inflation adjusted) with the City of Adelaide Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continuing to grow as a proportion of state GDP.
2. This media activity has led to discussions relating to paid parking being one of the contributors to this perception.
3. Advice provided by the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) as at August 2026 reflects a broader picture of the current state of the city, beyond just visitation including:
 - 3.1. Card spending, hotel demand, parking transactions and public transport boardings remain positive or broadly stable, while city-wide foot traffic has moderated year-on-year.
 - 3.2. Total spending in the city reached \$360 million in August 2026, up 4% year-on-year (before adjusting for inflation). Work-hour spending was \$198 million, also increasing by 4% year-on-year, while night-time spending was \$88 million, broadly stable both year-on-year and compared with the previous month.
 - 3.3. Public transport validations, comprising Adelaide Railway Entries and bus/tram validations, were 1.5 million in August, 6% higher year-on-year and 9% higher than the previous month.
 - 3.4. Forward hotel occupancy on the books for August was 55%, up by 3 percentage points year-on-year, while actual occupancy was 73%, in line with August 2025.
 - 3.5. The city recorded 9.5 million foot traffic movements in August. The city-wide foot traffic was marginally down from the previous month by 1.4%, while Hindley Street and Hutt Street recorded increased visitation by 6%-7% compared to the previous month. Year-on-year comparison reveals 7% less visitation at a city-wide level, while Hutt Street, O'Connell Street and the Market Precinct attracted significant visitation, increasing by 13%-24% compared with August 2025.
4. AEDA advised that there are a number of factors that can influence visitation to the city including:
 - 4.1. Changes in student activity in the city. StudyAdelaide reports that international student enrolments in South Australia have been declining since 2024 and were around 9% lower year-on-year as at June 2026. Fewer international students can reduce not only campus-related daytime visitation, but also the broader contribution students make to city living, evening activity and spending.
 - 4.2. At the same time, greater access to online and flexible study options means some local students are visiting city campuses less frequently. With major universities operating city campuses, the combined effect of lower international student numbers and more flexible study patterns is likely contributing to softer daytime visitation.
 - 4.3. Hybrid and work-from-home arrangements remain a structural factor affecting weekday city visitation. While current South Australia-specific work-from-home data is not available, the ABS reports that nationally, 36% of employed Australians usually worked from home as of August 2025.
 - 4.4. Cost-of-living pressures are also likely contributing to softer visitation. Higher interest rates, persistent inflation, and elevated fuel and transport costs have reduced household discretionary spending and increased the cost of travelling into the city.
 - 4.5. Emergence of on-line shopping and impacts to brick and mortar retail.
5. However, although visitation is lower, spending has remained relatively stable year-on-year. This suggests fewer but more purposeful city trips, with visitors maintaining relatively strong spend per visit, consistent with findings from AEDA's 2025 City Workers' Focus Group survey.
6. At the same time, Adelaide's strong calendar of events, conferences and business activity continues to attract interstate and international visitors, supporting hotel occupancy, hospitality and broader city spending.

UPark Initiatives and Information

7. UPark offers discounted parking and targeted promotions during periods of lower occupancy, including evenings and weekends. These offers respond to parking demand and vary by precinct and car park.
8. UPark regularly reviews pricing and products at each car park using analysis of demand, occupancy and product mix. Prices are adjusted across sales channels to maintain availability during peak periods and encourage use when occupancy is lower.
9. UPark partners with city businesses, enabling them to pre-purchase parking for their customers at agreed discounted rates.
10. UPark provides approximately 6,000 of the approximately 28,000 publicly available parking spaces in the CBD, representing about 20% of the current off-street parking market. While this is a significant share, UPark incentives alone are unlikely to generate a material increase in overall city visitation.
11. Previous initiatives, including Driver's Month (Park and Play) and 2-hours free, have not materially increased visitation. Parking promotions delivered in isolation are generally less effective than coordinated investment in, and promotion of, city attractions such as events, cultural experiences, entertainment and retail offers.
12. Parking promotions that are not linked to broader visitation initiatives may simply shift customers from competing car parks to UPark rather than increase overall city visitation. This could reflect a reduction in revenue to both private off-street car parks and the City of Adelaide's revenue and may breach competitive neutrality requirements.
13. Achieving the intent of the Motion on Notice through parking validation would require a city-wide program. Key considerations include the cost and complexity for the City of Adelaide; the level of retailer participation needed to achieve sufficient scale; the technology and administrative burden on participating retailers; customer impacts; and the risk of fraud for retailers and the City.
14. A survey of CBD businesses undertaken in 2019 indicated business interest in paying for customers parking was relatively low in all trading districts. The Rundle Mall precinct had the highest level of interest at between 11 and 13%, followed by Hutt Street and Gouger Street. Most of these survey respondents were willing to pay up to \$7.
15. Parking revenue contributes significantly to the City of Adelaide's financial sustainability and Long-Term Financial Plan and is the City's second-largest source of income after rates. Overall parking revenue equates to approximately 24% of Council's income. Revenues collected are allocated to Council's strategic priorities, capital works and Council services.
16. The endorsed 2026/27 Business Plan and Budget forecast annual parking revenue of \$66 million, compared with \$165 million in rates revenue.

UPark Technology

17. The UPark App supports payment and service options for both on-street and off-street parking. It provides notifications when tickets or bookings are due to expire and, where permitted, allows customers to extend parking sessions remotely.
18. The UPark app supports a seamless experience through licence plate recognition, a Quick Park function that enables customers to repeat a previous parking purchase in a few steps, and pre-booking at UPark facilities.
19. The UPark app utilises leading technology to provide an integrated approach to city parking. Customers can benefit through its use for all paid on-street parking and at all UPark facilities.
20. The UPark app was recognised at the 2025 Parking Australia Excellence in Parking Awards, where UPark received the Outstanding Customer Service award. The app was also a key factor in UPark being named Parking Organisation of the Year at the same event.
21. The Administration is currently working on a project which will further improve the customer journey by consolidating all UPark customers, including on-street parking users, onto a single digital platform.
22. Future investment in the UPark app is planned, including potential enhancements such as dynamic wayfinding. These improvements will be considered through the upcoming 2027/28 Business Plan and Budget process.

23. Should Council resolve to support the proposed motion, the Administration with the support of AEDA, will prepare a report responding to the intent of the motion.
24. The report will be presented to Council within the first quarter of 2027, detailing the investigations and analysis undertaken for Council's consideration.

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	To be determined.
Legal advice / litigation (eg contract breach)	To be determined.
Impacts on existing projects	To be determined.
Budget reallocation	Subject to Council direction potential flow on effects to revenue budget lines.
Capital investment	To be determined.
Staff time in preparing the workshop / report requested in the motion	75 hours
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 5.5 hours.

- END OF REPORT -