

Willow Vale

Focus Group Workshops Summary Document

01 December 2025



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Contents

- 01 Introduction & purpose
- 02 Frequently asked questions
- 03 Workshop summary
- 04 Process roadmap
- 05 Key directions & principles
- 06 Community Engagement: Next steps
- 07 Useful links

01

Introduction & Purpose

Introduction



10 Sessions

20 Hours

46 Registered Attendees

02 Locations

- Ormeau Community Centre
- Pimpama School of Arts

This document is a concise summary of the Focus Group Workshops undertaken with community stakeholders (local residents) to support the investigation of future development potential at Willow Vale.

Ausbild commissioned Therefor Group to undertake early engagement as part of the investigation process. Local residents were invited to small group workshops attended by 8-10 people.

Small groups have enabled time for discussion and provided the opportunity for a diverse range of perspectives, questions and concerns to be articulated and understood.

The sessions were held at Ormeau Community Centre and Pimpama School of Arts. A total of ten sessions were held and these were attended by 46 people. The attendees were a mix of people from within and around the investigation area.

Early engagement has taken place in advance of the design activity that will determine the pattern of future development. This means that information about the character and form of future development could not be provided during the sessions.

There were many questions. These have been collated and summarised in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section of this document.

Concerns about future development were also raised. Many attendees were aware of the future development intent but wanted more detail. Some were not aware that the inclusion of Willow Vale (the investigation area) within the urban footprint by the State Government brought with it a presumption of future development associated with housing supply for the region.

Some were anticipating development and wanted to know more about timescales.

Some attendees had heard rumours and wanted to understand as much as possible about future development.

Some did not accept the potential change from rural residential to increased density associated with land within the 'urban footprint'. Many were concerned about the impact of development and the capacity of surrounding infrastructure to accommodate further growth. Residents were clear about the character of the Willow Vale environment, the things they value and the things they want to protect.

Most sessions included a range of different perspectives. Many understood the need for increased development to meet the diverse needs of a rapidly growing population. Of those, some did not accept that Willow Vale was the place to meet those needs.

Others had been anticipating redevelopment of the land for some time and were encouraged to see progress.

01

Introduction & Purpose



Willow Vale Investigation Area



01

Introduction & Purpose

Purpose

This document has a dual purpose.

- *Firstly, it has been prepared as a summary for those who attended the sessions. Attendees were very keen to understand what others had contributed – and to ensure that their inputs had been recorded.*
- *Secondly, it will also form part of a package of supporting information for future submissions to Council. This will ensure that City of Gold Coast (Council) is aware of the different issues that have been raised by stakeholders as part of the process.*

The purpose of the early engagement process was to create an opportunity to engage with the local community, and to provide a setting for views to be heard. These views will be collated to enable community perspectives to inform the design process.

Many attendees did not have a clear understanding of the process and timelines associated with Willow Vale as an investigation area. Some did not know the background to the investigation area based on the urban footprint designation and the presumption of development.

The majority of people told us they were not against development in principle but were concerned about the potential for very dense development, and the loss of established community cohesion.

The majority of people told us that they would favour future development that maintained a rural residential character.

Most people were concerned about the loss of habitat and the environmental character that is the core attraction of Willow Vale as a lifestyle destination.

There was also concern related to the capacity of the local setting to accommodate additional growth relative to the demand on roads, schools and other infrastructure.

The process provided an opportunity to respond to questions and concerns, and to explain the anticipated process.

This document has been prepared as an objective record of the views of the community that have been expressed at this early stage in the process.

Questions

1. Why has this investigation area been identified?
2. What are the implications of an 'urban footprint' designation within the SEQ Regional Plan?
3. Why is development being proposed when the City of Gold Coast planning scheme has zoned the area as Rural Residential?
4. Why is Council not doing this investigation (why is Ausbuild doing it?)

Responses

Questions 1-4

The investigation area is land that is designated by the State Government as part of the urban footprint under the South East Queensland Regional Plan (Shaping SEQ 2023). Since the 2017 SEQ Regional Plan, local governments have been required to investigate their rural residential areas in the urban footprint for urban development opportunities as part of their planning scheme reviews. The current Gold Coast planning scheme is under review for the first time since the 2017 South East Queensland Regional Plan.

The 'urban footprint' brings a presumption of future development to meet future demand for housing in areas with existing infrastructure and this area is now being investigated to determine future development potential.

Shaping SEQ 2023 (the Regional Plan) is the lead document when determining future land use. Council planning schemes are required to follow this (and councils have targets for housing delivery), but updates to Council planning schemes take time.

When the planning scheme does not reflect the intent of the Regional Plan it is not uncommon for a developer to be tasked with the investigation of future development potential, using a process that is agreed with Council. This is the process that Council would have gone through to assess development potential and update the local planning scheme to align with the Regional Plan.

*The current version of the South East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Plan is called **Shaping SEQ** and it was adopted in 2023. This replaced the 2017 version.*

South East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Plan
LEAD PLANNING DOCUMENT THAT DEFINES FUTURE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTION

The SEQ Regional Plan is supported by the SEQ Regional Infrastructure Plan
THIS DEFINES INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES TO SUPPORT FUTURE GROWTH

City of Gold Coast Planning Scheme
LOCAL COUNCIL PLANNING SCHEME - REQUIRED TO ADOPT STATE GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

02

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions

5. How many houses will be constructed at Willow Vale?
6. What will be the size of the development lots?
7. Which areas of land have been acquired by Ausbuild?
8. Will I have to sell my land to Ausbuild?
9. Why will Ausbuild not be transparent about how many homes they want to build (when they must know the answer)?

Responses

Questions 5-9

Ausbuild is in the process of acquiring options to purchase land for future development within the investigation area. Because the planning scheme has not yet been updated to reflect the Regional Plan designation, Ausbuild, under the direction of Council, is undertaking an investigation of future development potential for the investigation area as a whole.

This mirrors the investigation that Council would need to do to update a future planning scheme in response to the designation of the land by State Government within the urban footprint (within the SEQ Regional Plan).

Ausbuild will be required to deliver a structure plan to demonstrate how future development of the land could provide appropriate housing and roads and other infrastructure in addition to retaining specific features (protected areas). This will be required to formalise future changes to the planning scheme.

Ausbuild will then submit a detailed development application over any land that it proposes to develop.

Technical studies are underway and these will inform the design process for future development.

It is anticipated that a range of housing types will be delivered in response to different site conditions and to meet market demand for a diversity of residential options. At this point the number of houses has not been determined. The number of houses will be determined by a variety of factors including the structure plan outcomes, any approval given by the Council to an Ausbuild development application and the market need at the time.

There is no obligation for landowners to sell land or to redevelop their land.

02

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions

10. Where can I find more information about the SEQ Regional Plan or other relevant documents?
11. How will we know what is happening in future?

Information: Public Notification

There is a statutory public notification process when a development application is submitted to a local government as part of the development process.

Information will be publicly available on the Council's website and statutory response periods apply for submissions to support, question or oppose a development application.

Responses

Questions 10-11

A series of **useful links** has been included in this document to provide information about the planning process. This includes the South East Queensland Regional Plan (Shaping SEQ 2023) and the City of Gold Coast Planning Scheme (Gold Coast City Plan). These websites include information about protected and sensitive areas in addition to zones for development.

This document also includes an overview of the planning process, in the form of the process steps and summary that was included in the workshops.

It is anticipated that Ausbuild will establish a website as a way to communicate activity and progress relating to the future development proposition.

A Community Reference Group (CRG) is proposed as the next step in direct communication with the local community.

An overview of the CRG is included in section six of this summary.

Please register your interest in response to additional information that will follow, including more details about the purpose of the CRG, the terms of engagement and the likely milestones and frequency of meetings.

03

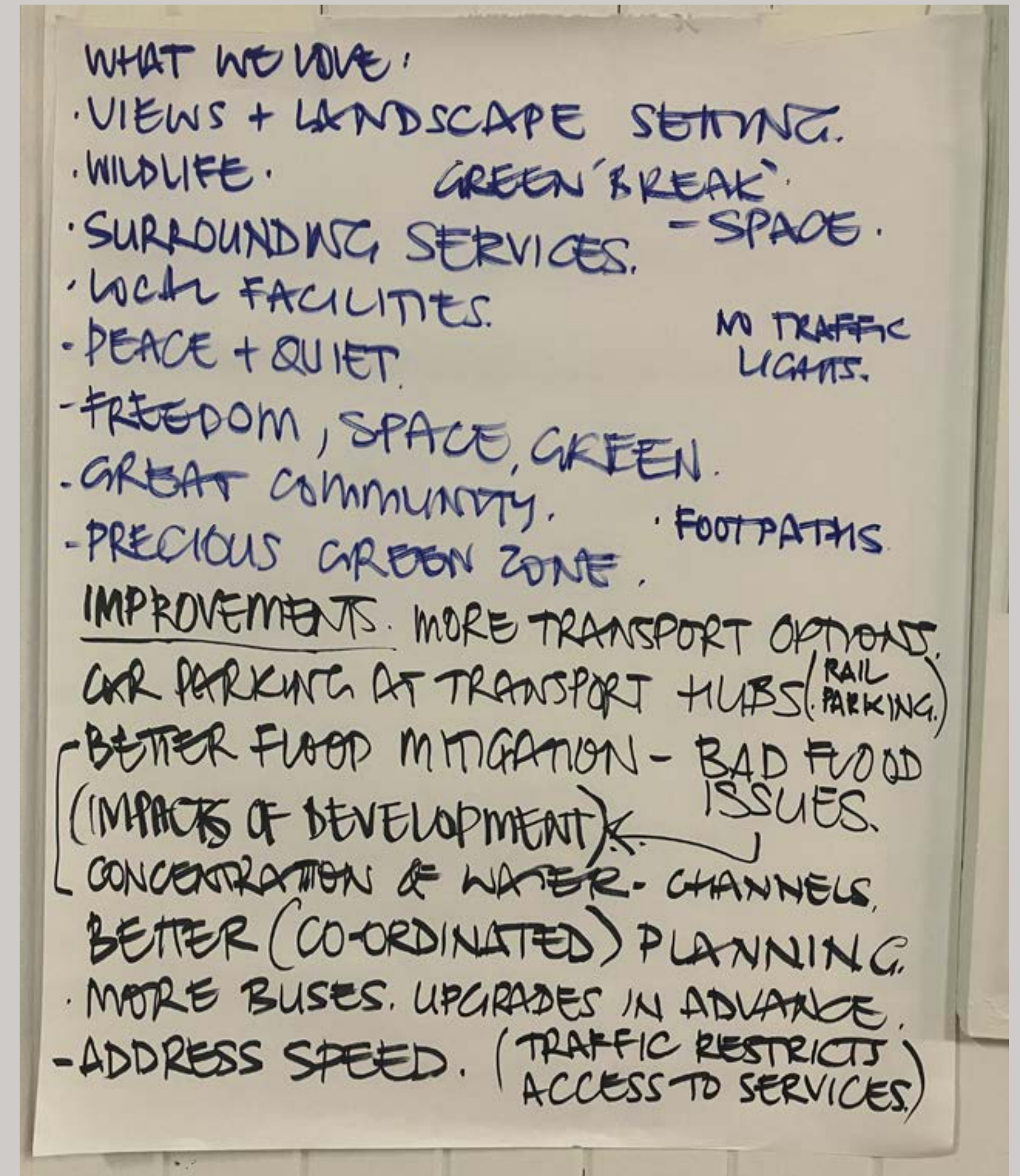
Workshop Summary



The workshops all had the same format and this provided consistency and enabled different discussions in response to the interests of different groups and attendees.

The structure was as follows:

1. What would you like to get from this workshop?
2. Information & context: Planning and development process (timeline)
3. Population & demographic snapshot ('What kind of homes do we need for a growing population?')
4. Things you love about Willow Vale
5. Things you would like to improve
6. Personas reflecting housing need ('Where in Willow Vale could future development accommodate housing diversity and choice?') [Map]



03

Workshop Summary

COLLECTIVE AFFECTION.
OPEN SPACES.
WILDLIFE / QUIET. / BEAUTY.
- RANGE OF TERRAIN. - PERSONAL SPACE/PRIVACY.
- NEIGHBOURS. VIBE COMMUNITY.
- COUNTRY COMMUNITY. (MINDSET).
KNOW HOW TO SAFELY PASS A HORSE.
- COURTESY
- RURAL ENV. + AMENITY. ^{DISTINCTIVE} CHARACTERISTICS.
ARCHES OF TREES. CREEK CROSSINGS.
- NATURAL HABITAT. LIVING WITH NATURE.
SENSE OF OWNERSHIP + STEWARDSHIP.

WHAT WE LOVE:
VIEWS + LANDSCAPE SETTING.
WILDLIFE. GREEN 'BREAK'.
SURROUNDING SERVICES. - SPACE.
LOCAL FACILITIES. NO TRAFFIC LIGHTS.
PEACE + QUIET.
FREEDOM, SPACE, GREEN.
GREAT COMMUNITY. FOOTPATHS
PRECIOUS GREEN ZONE.
IMPROVEMENTS. MORE TRANSPORT OPTIONS.
CAR PARKING AT TRANSPORT HUBS. (RAIL PARKING)
- BETTER FLOOD MITIGATION - BAD FLOOD ISSUES.
(IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT)
CONCENTRATION OF WATER. CHANNELS.
BETTER (CO-ORDINATED) PLANNING.
MORE BUSES. UPGRADES IN ADVANCE.
- ADDRESS SPEED. (TRAFFIC RESTRICTS ACCESS TO SERVICES)



Images from the workshop sessions.



TO IMPROVE =
- PLANNING TOO RIGID. (7ha. USE
- TINY HOME X.
- BRIDGES + ACCESS. (FLOODING).
- ROAD CONNECTIONS. (PIMPARNA/DRIVE
(BETWEEN JUNCTIONS).
- PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- BAIWEY MTN RD. - NO FOOTPATHS FOR
SCHOOL KIDS.
[FOOTPATHS GENERALLY]
HOUSE FOR

03

Objectives of Attendees

‘What would you like to get from this workshop?’

We asked attendees what they would like to achieve from their attendance at the workshops.

This page provides a summary of the main reasons why people attended and what they wanted to get from the session.

Bigger and bolder text indicates the things we heard most consistently.

*More information
to replace rumours*

Understanding

I want to be better informed so that I can oppose future development

I want to know how many houses Ausbuild are intending to deliver (because they must know)

Information about the process and timescales

Understand as much as possible about what is happening

I want to be a positive voice to support future development

I want to know what the community thinks

What are Ausbuild intending to build?

How much land has Ausbuild acquired - and where?

03

What we love about Willow Vale

Wildlife and natural environment

Open space

Community

Personal space & privacy

Great access to facilities

Potential opportunity for future development, to fund retirement

Distinctive local character of Willow Vale

Habitat & wildlife

Sense of ownership & stewardship

Rural lifestyle

Peace and quiet

Horse facilities and lifestyle

Views and landscape

Country community mindset

We asked attendees what they love about Willow Vale. This page provides a summary that captures the responses.

Bigger and bolder text indicates the things we heard most consistently.

03

Things we would like to improve

We asked attendees what they would like to improve about Willow Vale as they experience it today.

This page provides a summary that captures the responses.

Bigger and bolder text indicates the things we heard most consistently.

Less congestion and traffic

Better control of traffic speeds through Willow Vale - too many cars speeding

Better public transport

Fewer Council planning restrictions that limit subdivision potential (& can't build a tiny home)

Infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing population

Improved roads and crossings to manage floods

Car parking available at transport hubs (railway station)

Better coordinated planning

Ability to cross the motorway - Junction 49 & access is a nightmare

Bailey Mountain Road - has no footpaths for school kids

The ability to build a house for family on my land

03

Concerns

Attendees were keen to express their concerns about future development at Willow Vale. This page provides a summary of concerns.

Bigger and bolder text indicates the things we heard most consistently.

Increased traffic demand

Safety impacts and noise of development traffic

Concerned about the impact of uniform high density housing outcomes on character - *houses all the same*

Loss of an important landscape zone

Impact on views and setting

Loss of important landscape

Concerned about poor housing outcomes

Lack of transparency associated with future development plans

Increased crime attached to greater housing density

Loss of established community character

Existing infrastructure cannot cope with a bigger population

No longer as safe for riding a horse

04

Process Roadmap

Anticipated milestones and timescales (estimated)

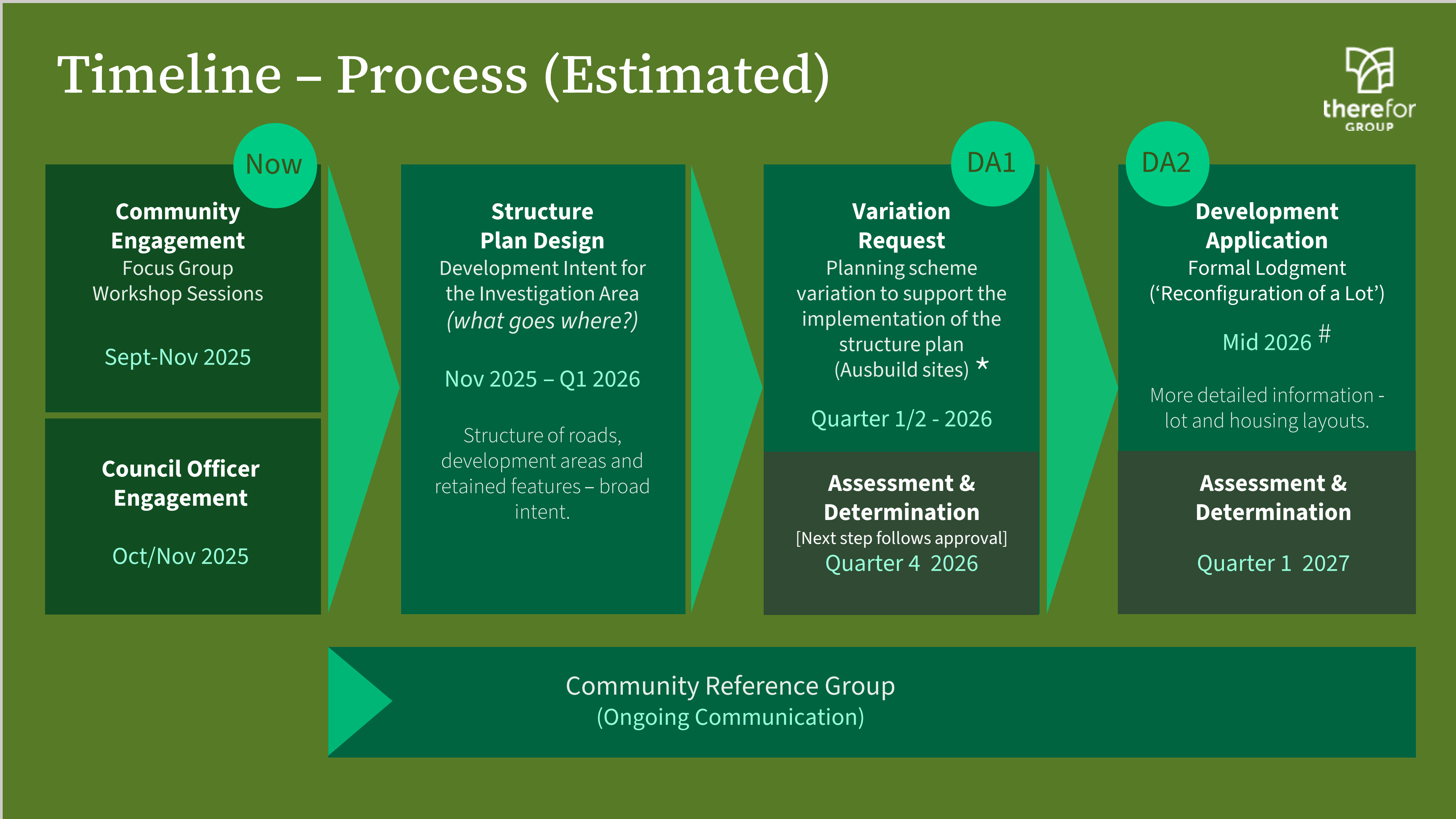
This timeline was used in the workshop sessions to provide an understanding of the process and timescales that relate to development applications for Willow Vale.

Timescales are an estimate as these can be influenced by a number of factors, including Council requests for additional information to support an application.

Minor amendments and clarifications have been added as summarised below:

* To establish use rights for Ausbuild land

Anticipated Quarter 4 2026



05

Key directions & principles

Translating feedback
into actions and
future outcomes

Future Directions

The Focus Group workshops provided the opportunity for the local community to communicate things that they consider to be most important about future development at Willow Vale. The things we heard have been translated into a set of high-level actions and principles to guide future design.

The list is a concise summary and does not reflect an intended hierarchy of importance. All the points are considered to be important. It is intended that this feedback will be used as a starting point for engagement with the Community Reference Group, to enable the local community to assist with shaping future development that is sensitive to conservation and community concerns, whilst still achieving the delivery of diverse housing to support planning intent.

- *Protect important areas of landscape and deliver future development that is sensitive to the balance between housing need and landscape character.*
- *Conserve significant habitat and biodiversity within the Willow Vale environment.*
- *Maintain landscape characteristics that are important to the identity of Willow Vale as a unique place.*
- *Create a place with housing diversity and variety.*
- *Deliver appropriate infrastructure to support the needs of a growing community, to ensure future function and resilience.*
- *Create a place with significant green characteristics and streets with trees.*
- *Ensure that future development can foster a sense of local community.*

06

Community Engagement: Next Steps

What is next?

The Focus Group Workshops have captured a snapshot of the views of the local Willow Vale community.

Additional engagement with local community groups, schools and sporting clubs is proposed to ensure a diversity of perspectives is represented.

A Community Reference Group (CRG) is proposed as the next step in the engagement process. This is not a formal requirement of the planning process but is considered a best practice way to ensure that the community remains engaged and informed through a transparent process.

Community Reference Group

5-7
People

Commence
Q1
2026

The purpose of the CRG is to allow the community to assist in guiding future development that is sensitively designed to respond to conservation and community concerns, while still achieving diverse and affordable housing outcomes. The CRG is intended to represent a diversity of views across the local community, through a mix of community members and local representatives (schools, sporting clubs, etc). The planning and development process requires a balance between different considerations and this process is intended to inform that activity.

Early meetings will involve reviewing community feedback and concerns and translating these into design actions and outcomes.

A high level plan will then be introduced (perhaps most effectively referenced as a 'blob' plan) to start to place these actions and outcomes onto the plan format.

The goal of this is ultimately to achieve a generally agreeable land use plan which will be reflected in the Variation Request.

Ongoing CRG involvement in later stages of the development may cover items such as park and public space design, street naming, community events and initiatives.

The CRG will be an opportunity to share information, and for community members to contribute to enhancing the community outcomes.

Please note that the CRG activity and terms of reference are still to be confirmed and additional information will be provided in due course.

07

Useful Links

‘Where can I find additional information from government sources that relates to future planning in the area?’

Some suggested (government) links:

- SEQ Regional Plan: <https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/plan-making/regional-planning/south-east-queensland-regional-plan>
- Gold Coast City Plan (including planning scheme document and interactive mapping):
 - Gold Coast PD Online (tracking development applications and approvals): <https://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/Planning-building/PD-Online>
 - Gold Coast New Planning Scheme information page: <https://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/Planning-building/Planning-our-city/New-Planning-Scheme>
 - Gold Coast – Draft Local Growth Management Strategy: <https://gchaveyoursay.com.au/directions-for-growth>
- Planning Act 2016: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2016-025>
- Planning Regulation 2017: <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0078>
- Development Assessment Rules: https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/102255/da-rules-version-3.pdf
- South East Queensland Infrastructure Supplement 2023 (South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan): <https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/infrastructure/infrastructure-planning/regional-infrastructure-plans/south-east-queensland>
- State Planning Mapping: <https://www.planning.qld.gov.au/planning-framework/mapping>

Note: Whilst these links have been tested to ensure they connect to the appropriate pages, please note that websites are subject to changes beyond our control. Where a link may change (and a page may not be found), please copy and paste the address to navigate to the required information.