City of Whittlesea Asset Plan 2025- 35
Focus Group - Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Focus Group is to provide valuable insights to assist Council to shape the Asset Plan 2025- 35 that will outline how the City of Whittlesea will plan, build, manage and maintain our assets over the net 10 years to ensure they meet our growing community's needs now and into the future. The plan will cover all of Council's assets, which includes roads, footpaths, playgrounds, sporting grounds, stormwater, open spaces and building. The Focus Group is not a decision-making body of Council.

2. Participation

Participation in the Asset Plan Focus Group will be capped at 25 people per session, with a maximum of three sessions across the municipality. Participants will be chosen to reflect the diversity of the City of Whittlesea community. This diversity will include ages, genders, abilities, cultural backgrounds, suburbs and household structures.

To be eligible to be a participant of the Asset Plan 2025-35 Focus Group you will need to:

- Be a resident of the City of Whittlesea
- Be willing and able to attend all three focus group sessions
- Be willing and able to complete any pre-session reading, assistance can be organised for those requiring it
- Declare membership of any special interest group, community groups, networks such as sporting clubs, craft and hobby groups, seniors' groups, schools etc
- Not be a current staff member or contractor of Whittlesea Council.

If a participant believes that they may have a financial interest in any of the projects discussed during the focus groups, they must discuss that interest with the facilitator. Should the facilitator decide that the financial interest gives rise to a conflict, the participant will not be permitted to contribute to discussions regarding that project.

3. Role of the Asset Plan Focus Group

The Asset Plan Focus Group will help inform the development of the draft Asset Plan 2025- 35. We will capture valuable insights from our Focus Group participants to help us identify, assess, and prioritise community interests. This approach will enable us to achieve balanced outcomes that are informed by the community's perspectives.

Focus Group participants will be provided with a copy of the draft plan following Council endorsement and encouraged to provide feedback through the Engage Whittlesea platform.

4. Code of Conduct

All participants are expected to abide by the City of Whittlesea Code of Conduct and:

- Operate with integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and openness
- Participate and provide feedback that is in the best interest of the City of Whittlesea as a whole
- Declare any potential conflict of interest (including financial) to the facilitator if it arises during the focus group sessions

- Dedicate appropriate time and effort to the focus groups – approximately 3 hours in total over the project period
- Prepare for focus groups by completing pre-reading and actively participate in all three focus group sessions
- Maintain effective and respectful relationships with other participants and facilitators.

5. Focus group sessions

Focus Group participants will be required to attend one of three two-hour sessions held across the municipality and will receive a participatory gift voucher for their time. The sessions are:

- To be scheduled based on availability of successful applicants between 20 and 30 May 2024.

Agenda and session pre-reading

The agenda and any pre-reading will be provided to Focus Group members one week in advance of each session. A summary of what we heard through all separate sessions will be provided to participants following the focus group sessions.

Participatory Gift

Focus Group participants will be required to complete the required pre-reading and attend one two-hour session and will receive a participatory gift voucher for their time.

6. Requirements of participants

Confidentiality

Focus Group participants are expected to maintain confidentiality and refrain from publicly sharing any information related to the focus group materials.

Public Statements

Focus Group participants are not authorised to issue public statements on behalf of Council.

Rescinding members

The City of Whittlesea retains the right to revoke the inclusion in the focus group of any individual who violates the Terms of Reference or Code of Conduct.