

# Flat Bush area strategy

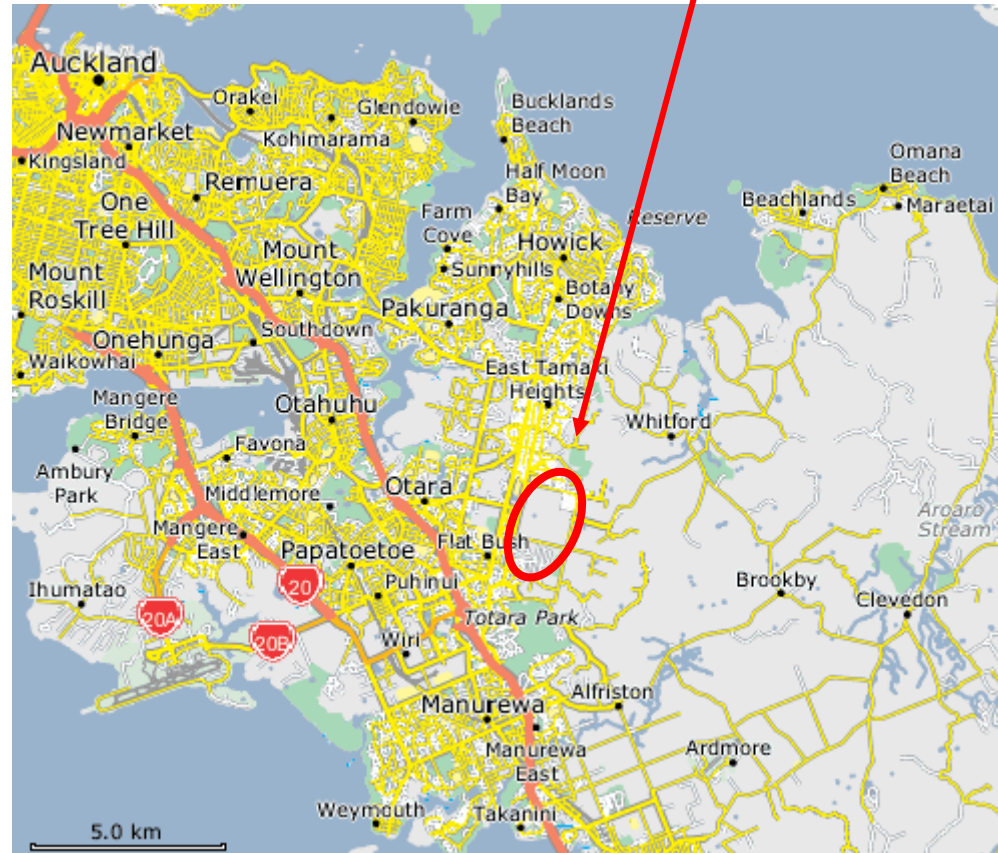
## New schools for the future

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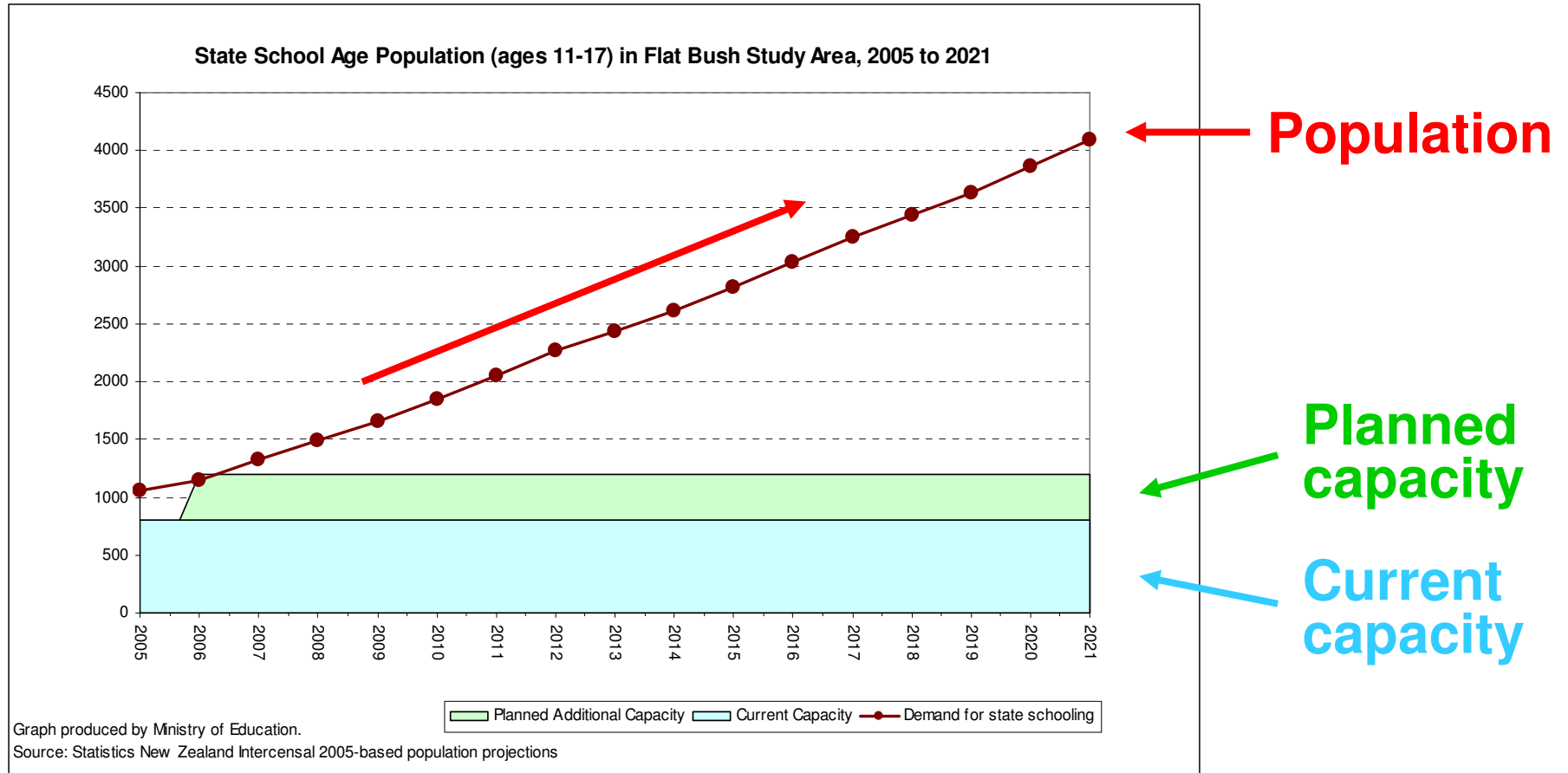
# Background

- Flat Bush is an area in east Auckland with huge growth potential
- Unique in New Zealand – 40,000 people will arrive in the next ten to fifteen years
- Ministry of Education wants to consult on the “area strategy”

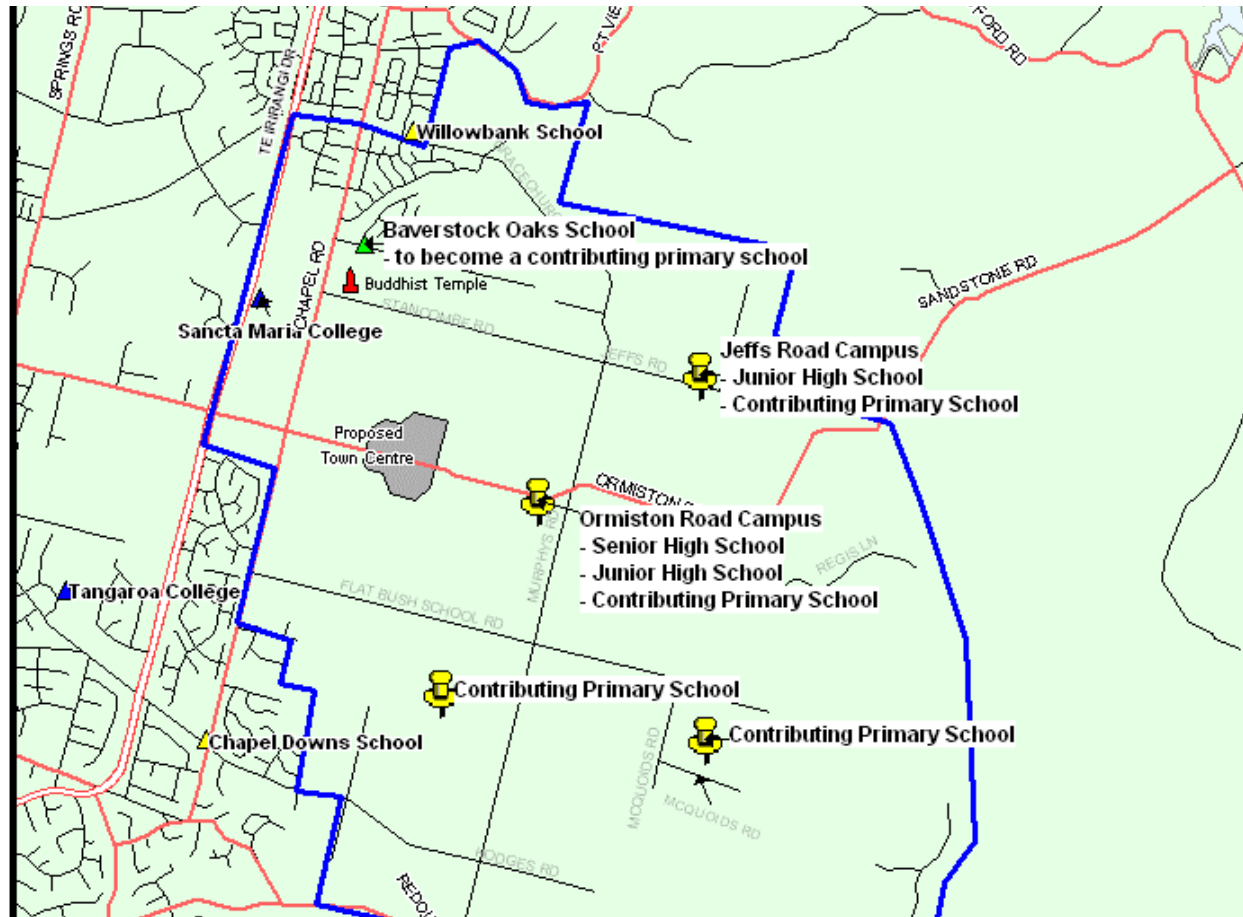
# Where is Flat Bush?



# Why new schools?



# Area strategy map



# Getting started

- Contract let out for tender in April 2005
- Combined bid with Helen, myself and Opus, with Opus taking the lead (through Alan Burton)
- Planned to start work in May, but this was delayed to August (which caused timing issues later on)
- Set up a reference group to help guide the process

# The reference group

- Made up of:
  - two local elected representatives
  - half a dozen board of trustee members or principals of local schools and
  - a couple of planners from Manukau City
- Role of the group
  - advise on the consultation process
  - give insights to the area and help provide contacts
  - members may take part in the consultation, but that process is outside the terms of reference for the group

# The reference group

- Three meetings scheduled for the reference group
  - August (before the consultation had started)
  - September (during the consultation)
  - October (after the consultation)
- Had a fourth one in late November to present the consultation report to the group (they could read it but couldn't take it away)

# Consultation events

- Comprehensive website open for length of project (and still open)
- Staffed display at Botany mall
- Staffed display at Sancta Maria (local school)
- Staffed display at Baverstock Oaks (local school) followed by public meeting
- Individual meetings with other key stakeholders (Manukau City, COMET, Buddhist temple etc)

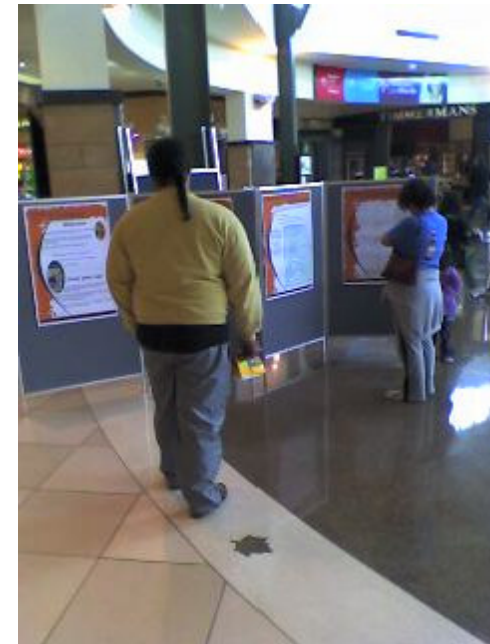
# Botany mall information session

- 11am on the Sunday after the election
- Set up close to Farmers (indoors), near one of the main entrances
- In four hours about thirty people
- Half quite interested, the rest just curious
- Gave flyers to almost everyone who came up
- Not a huge amount of interest in the project

# Botany mall information session

- Most people just wanted some information and expressed no concern about what was happening
- Good range of genders, ages, and ethnicities.
- Just expected the ministry to get on with the job
- Some were even surprised (in a positive way) that the ministry was consulting with them
- No detectable community concern about the specific strategy

# Botany mall information session



# Sancta Maria information session

- 19 September 2005, after school
- Opus, Helen, Ministry, Manukau City and myself
- Seven people (plus three from the school)
- Weather terrible (hail, freezing rain and strong winds)
- Most people were there to learn about the project

# Sancta Maria information session

- Most had been to the website
- Good range of genders, ages, and ethnicities (given there were only seven people)
- Like Botany there seemed to be a sense that they just expected the ministry to get on with the job
- Once again, there did not seem to be any detectable community concern about the specific strategy, only that something happened – and as soon as possible

# Sancta Maria information session



# Public meeting

- Towards end of consultation period
- About 70 attended
- General presentation about Flat Bush (Manukau City)
- Mike Jackson (Albany Junior High) explained about junior high schools
- Alan Burton (Opus) went over proposed area strategy
- Chaired by Michael Stride (head of BOT of Sancta Maria)

# Public meeting

- Quite heated at times
- Some grand-standing by one faction
- Lots of questions, on the whole answered quite well by the ministry reps
- Concern voiced by some that the consultation period ended very soon and felt pressured by time
- As a result, consultation period extended by three weeks (the period for submissions)

# Evaluation

# Overall

- Difficult to consult a community that doesn't exist
- Generally good coverage of stakeholders
- Asian community not well represented
- Barrier to effective consultation was the relatively short time allowed
- Short time meant 'reaction' rather than 'involvement'
- Limited Maori and Pasifika participation

# Reference group

- Good size
- Wide stakeholder representation
- Operated effectively, provided very good input into the consultation process
- Used their contacts and community links to disseminate information and provide feedback
- Ongoing role has been considered for the reference group, focusing on implementation
- Highly recommend using on other projects

# Consultation events

- Website extremely valuable
- Open days and displays of limited value (but probably need to have them)
- Letter box drop very useful
- Public meeting added little value to the process – necessary?

# More than one option?

- For better informed discussion and debate should the consultation have had at least two options for people to consider?
- Some perception that with only one option it was 'a done deal'

# Recommendations

- Take your time
- Reference group (where appropriate)
- Involve community and stakeholders early on
- If you can't involve them in the creation of options, at least give them more than one option (and consider presenting the status quo as an option)
- Think carefully about public meetings