

A background image showing a group of people with shocked or surprised expressions. In the foreground, a woman has her mouth wide open in a gasp. Behind her, several other people, including a man with glasses and a blue beanie, also have wide-eyed, open-mouthed looks. The scene appears to be indoors, possibly at a public event or protest.

Environment Canterbury Long Term Plan submission

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30 April 2018

Transport Engineer

(here in a private capacity – concerned about political decision making –
in no way directing any of that concern at staff)

The background of the slide is a photograph of the interior of a bus. The bus is mostly empty, with several rows of blue seats visible. The seats have red handrails. Large windows on the right side of the bus show a view of a brick building and greenery outside. The lighting is bright, likely from the bus's interior lights.

Core problem

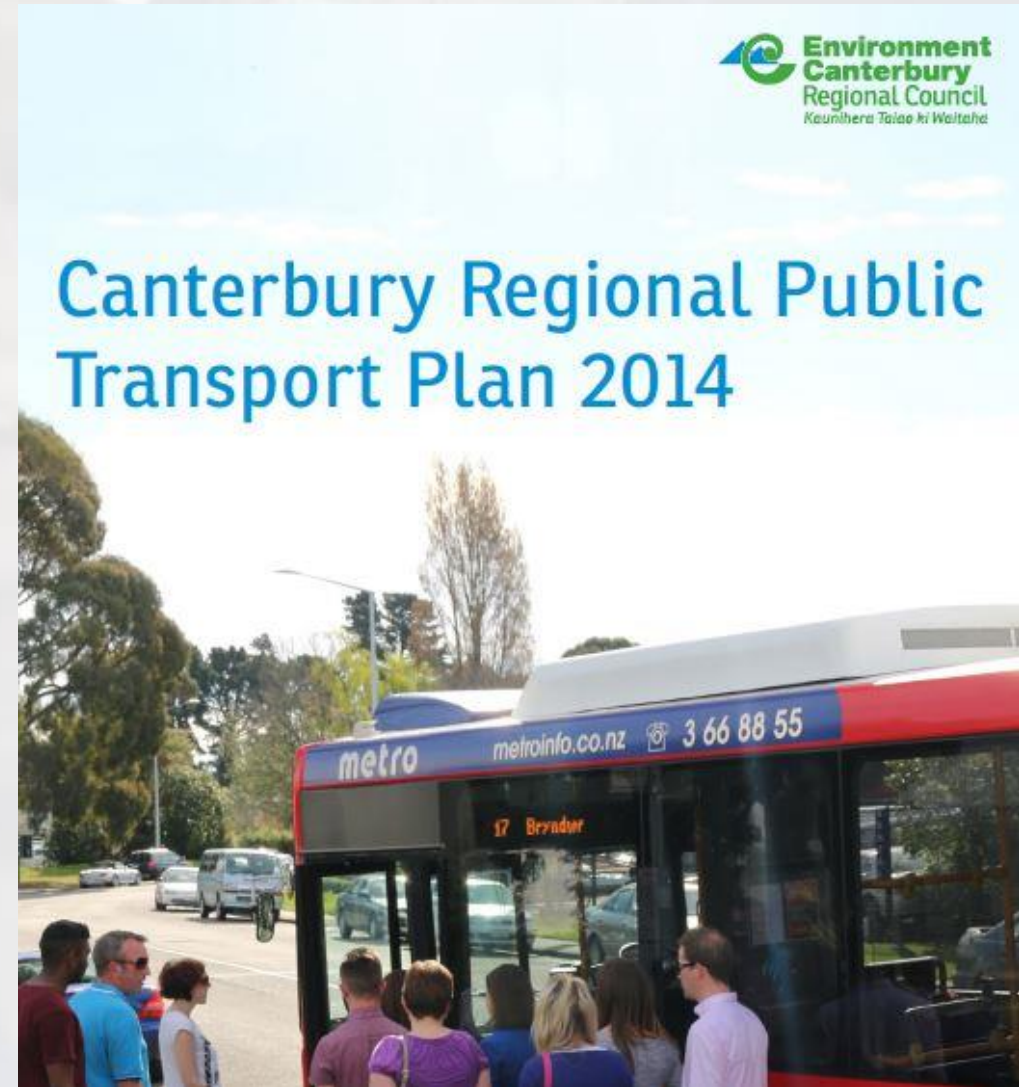
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- Patronage is low ...
 - ... and it is going down

 - What is the root cause?
 - How do we fix this?

Regional Public Transport Plan

- Current plan developed in 2014
- Sets the high-level direction

“Environment Canterbury is now faced with an amazing opportunity to help shape the future of Greater Christchurch and the region through an improved public transport network that meets our changing travel needs.”



Regional Public Transport Plan & LTP disconnect

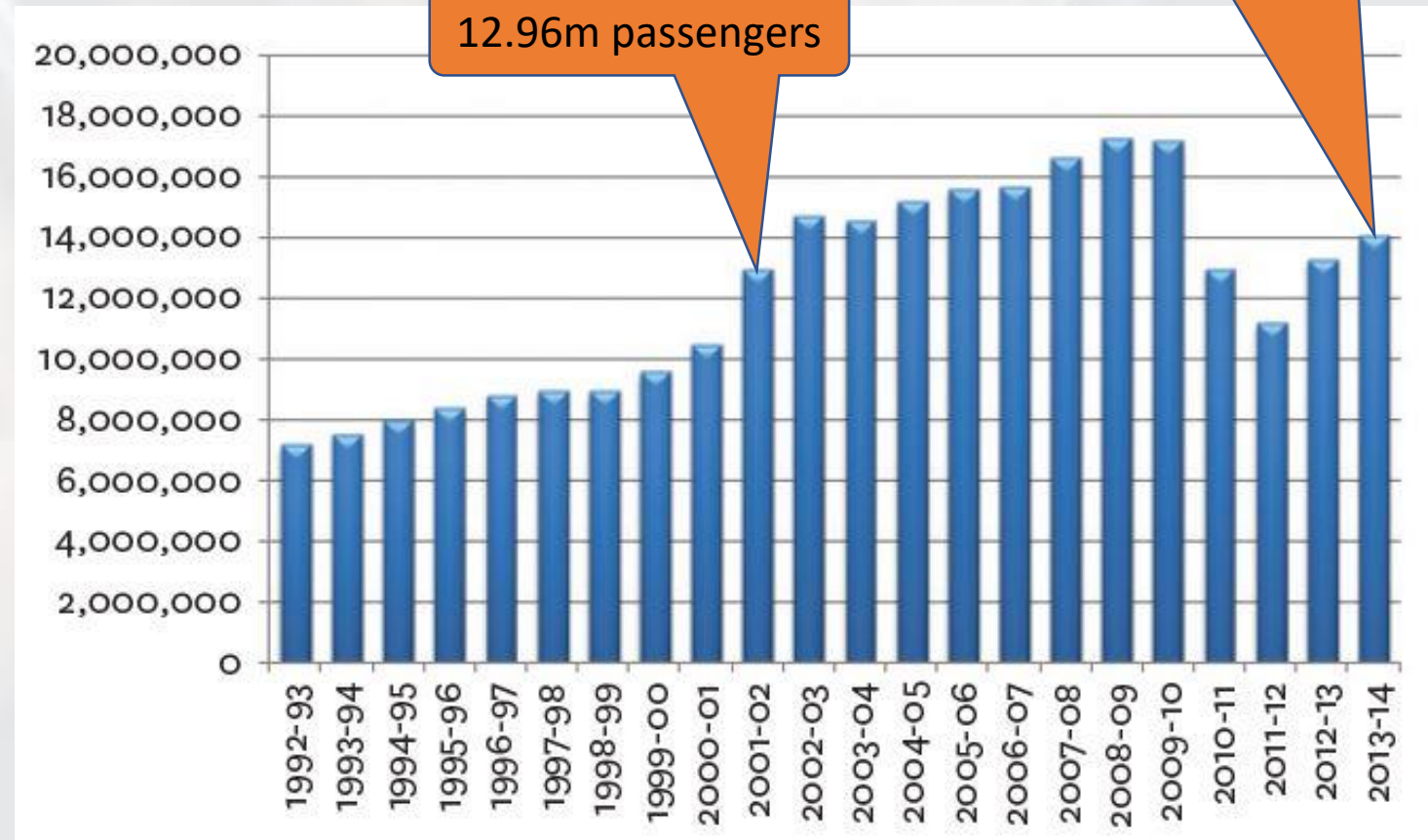
- Attract increased patronage, especially as an alternative to car travel
 - (stated under “Vision and Outcomes”)
- Service levels were cut through the introduction of the “hubs and spokes” model
 - Beginning in December 2012
 - Effectively a 15% cut in services
- LTP proposes further cuts

Outcome – reduced passenger numbers post hubs and spokes
Regional PT Plan and LTP pull in opposite directions

Recommendation 1: Align LTP with Regional PT Plan

Patronage numbers – the science

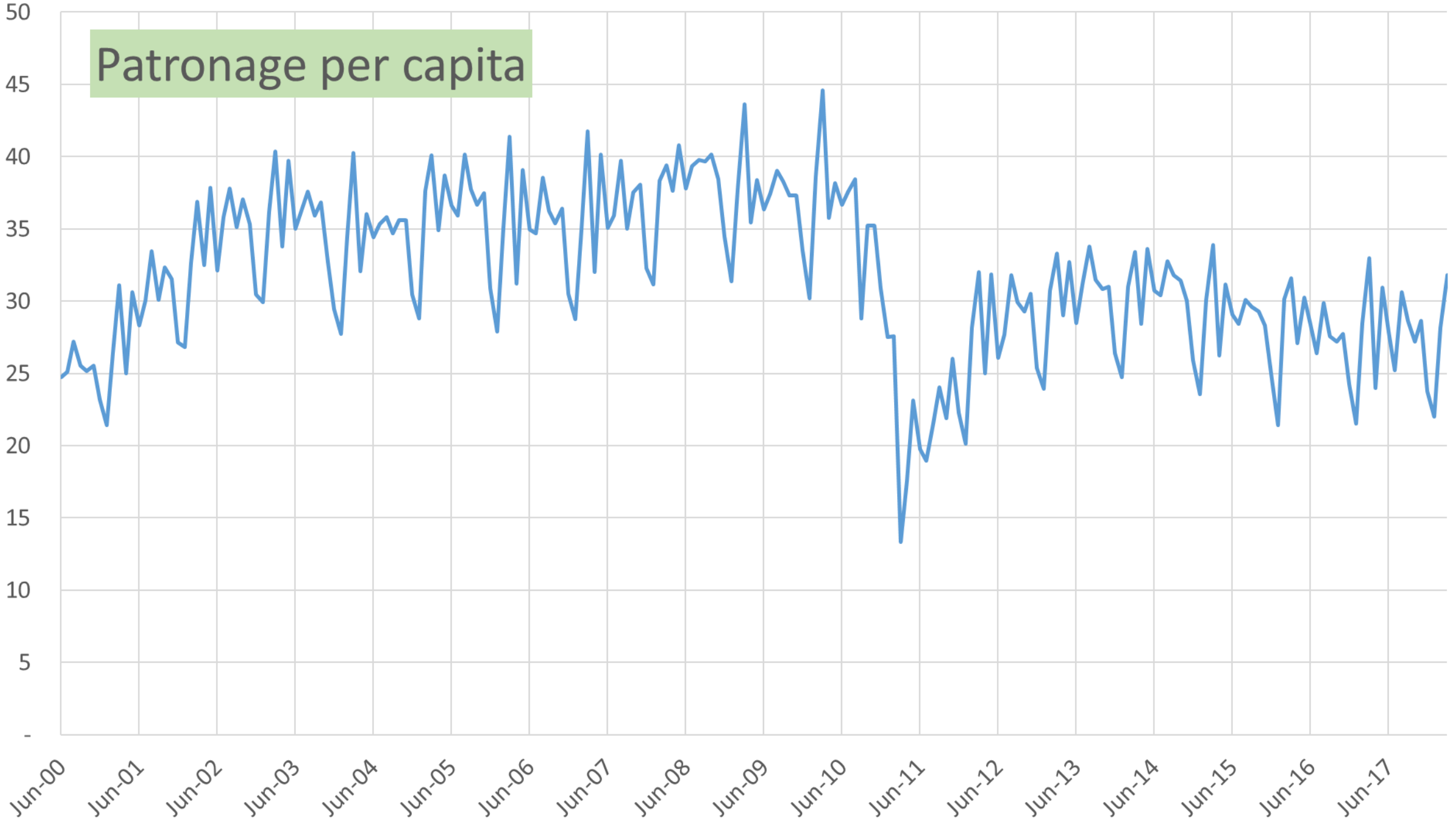
- The way we present data affects our response
 - Current reporting is misleading
 - Significant underlying population growth
- 14% patronage growth and 14% population growth equals zero actual growth



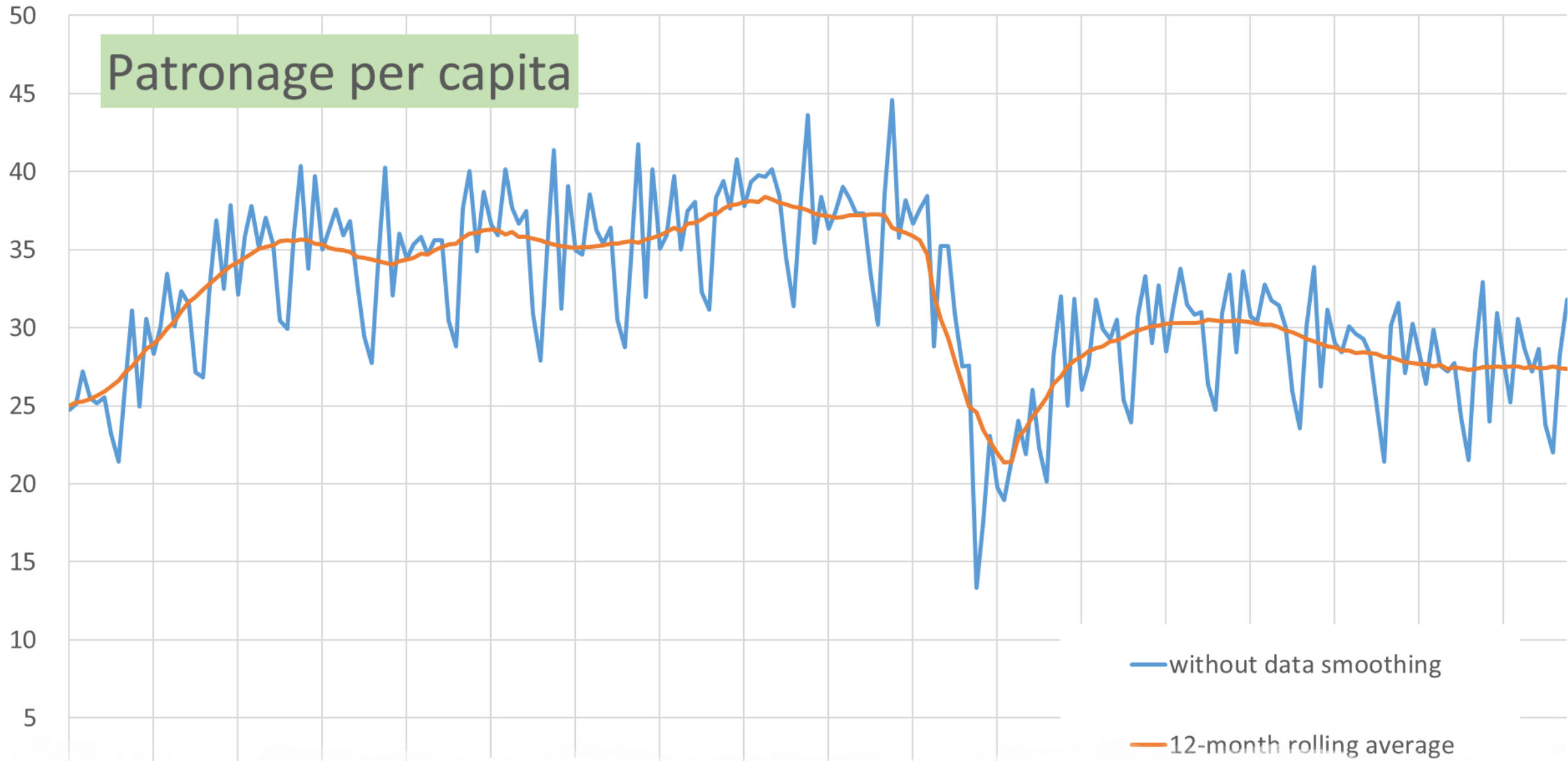
Greater Christchurch annual public transport trips (to 30 June 2014)

Recommendation 2: All future reporting in annual patronage per capita

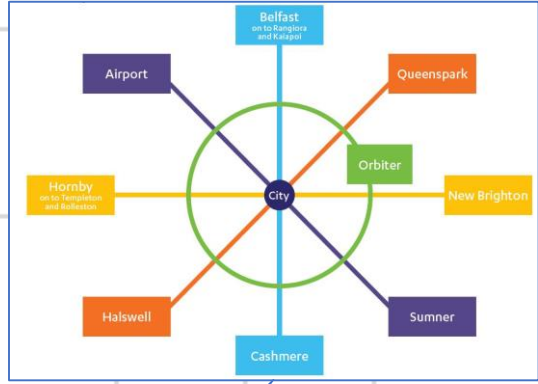
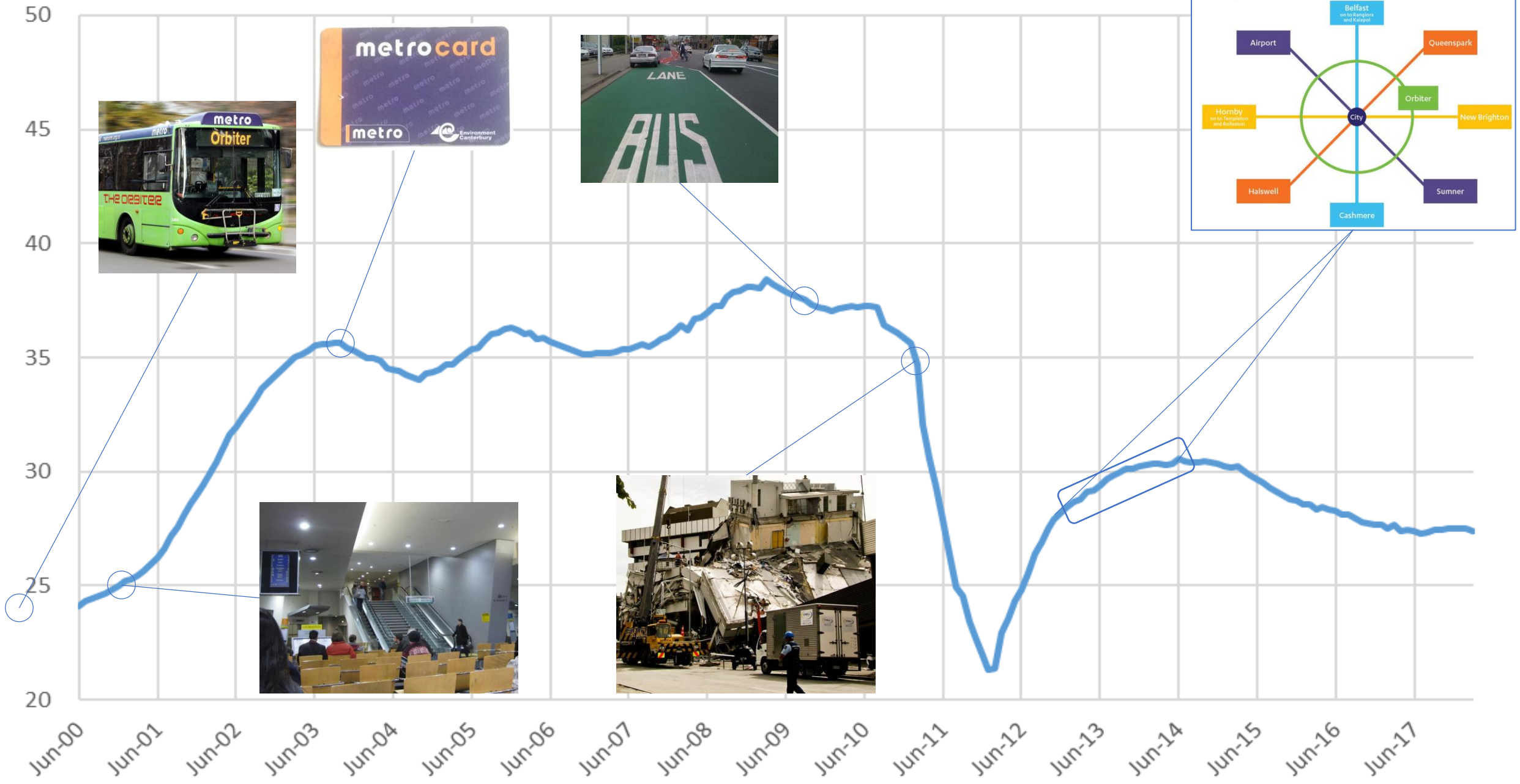
Patronage per capita



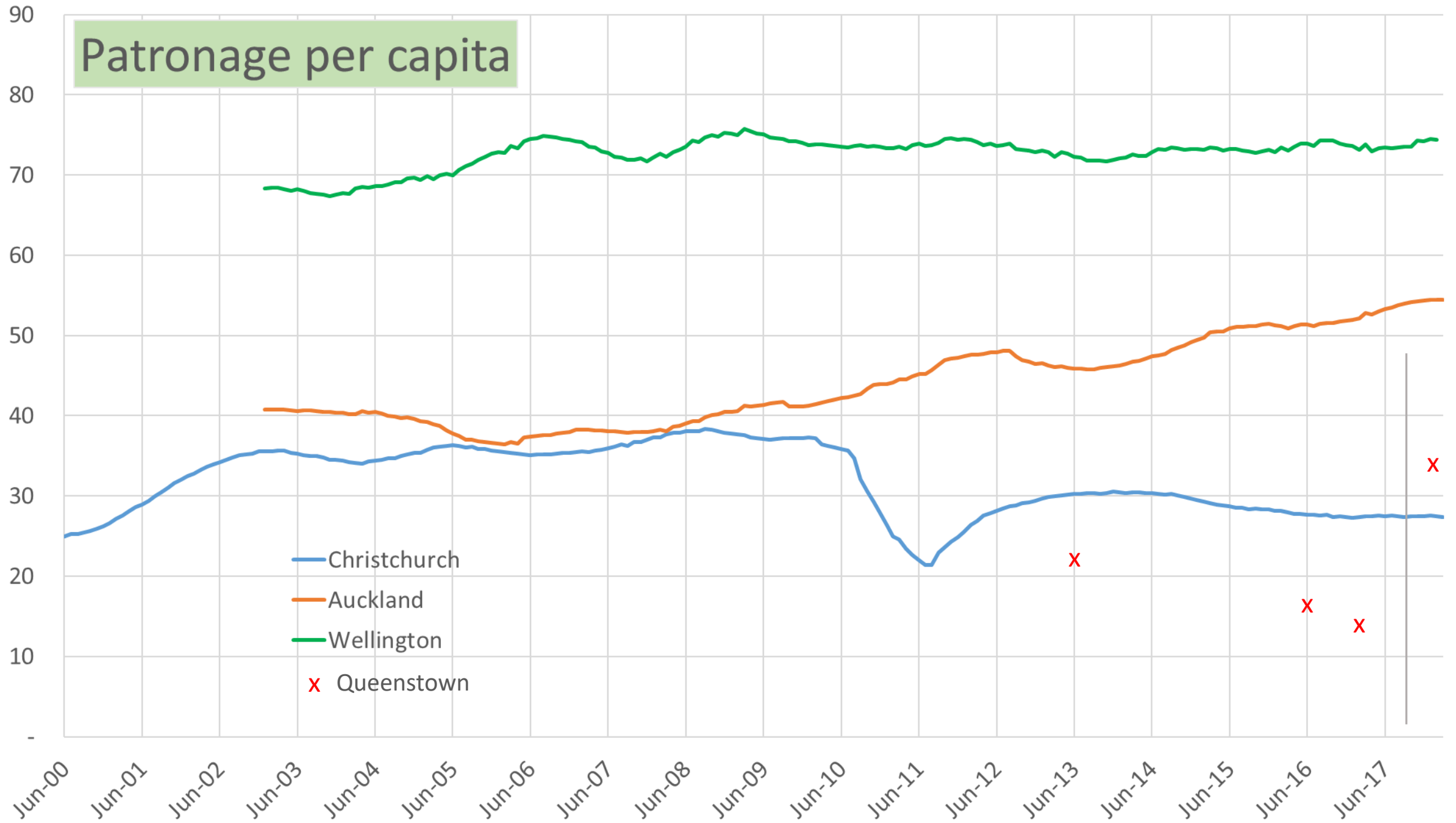
Patronage per capita



Greater Christchurch patronage per capita – 12-month rolling average



Patronage per capita



What happened in Queenstown?

- In Nov 2017 Regional Council introduced:
 - All routes have simple headways (either 15, 30, or 60 min)
 - Flat fares (\$2) on modern vehicles, free Wi-Fi
- NZTA, Regional Council, and District Council collaboration
 - Transport Agency as deal broker
 - Subsidy from district's parking meter revenue
 - Service organised by regional council



Recommendation 3: Focus on opportunities, not the constraints

Public transport snapshot – New Zealand

- Overview of public transport in NZ
 - Auckland – romping ahead
 - Wellington – great service level but static
 - Christchurch
 - Steadily improving (from low to medium service level) until the EQs hit
 - Metrics have been pointing in the wrong direction since
 - Queenstown – a great story (very recent)

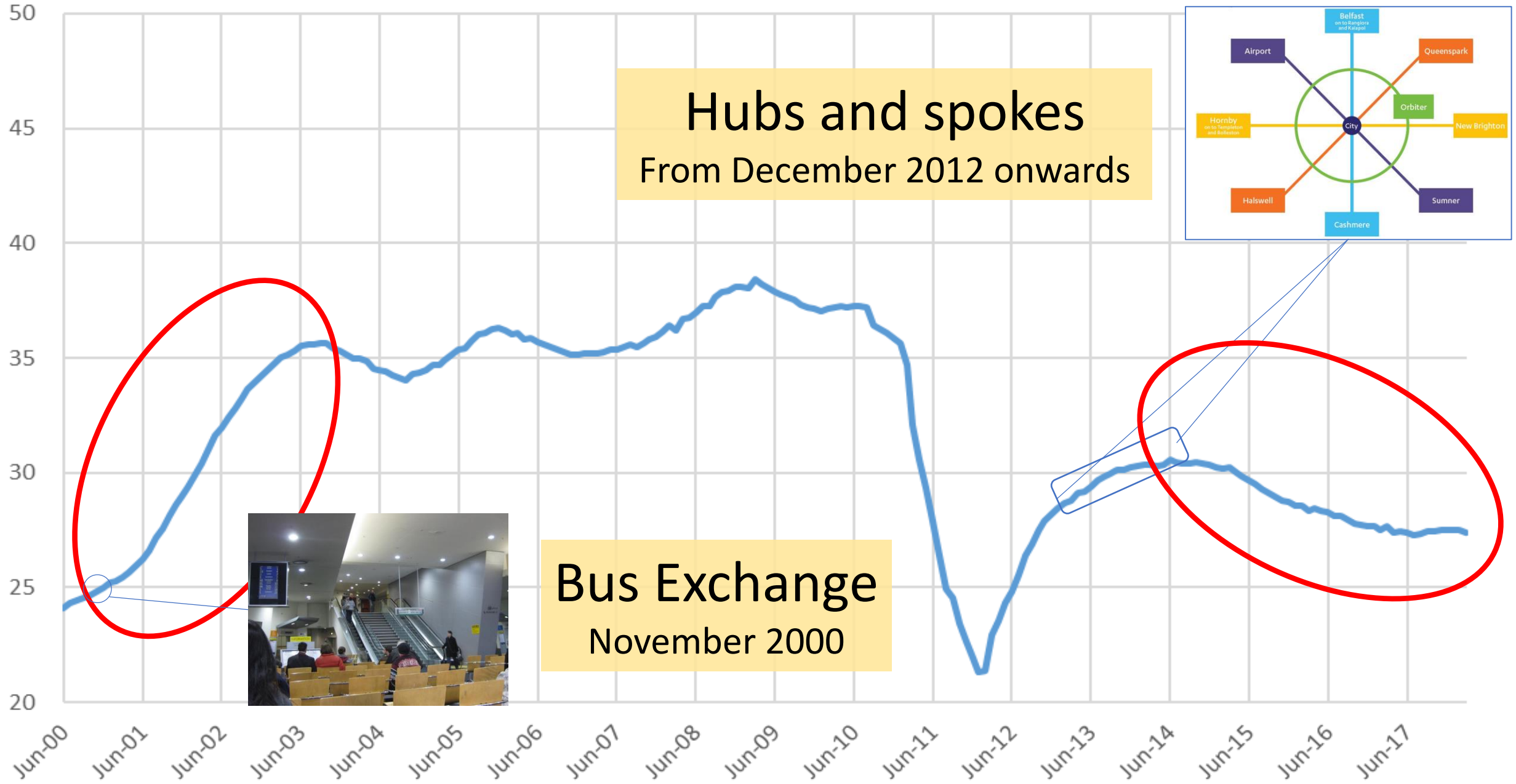
Recommendation 4: Publish ridership data monthly

Attractive & efficient public transport

- Zurich once struggled with having to pay too much subsidy for their trams – they were only 1/3 full at 20 min headways
 - Consultant 1: “You will fill the trams if you run them every 60 min.”
 - Consultant 2: “You will fill the trams if you run them every 6 min.”
- The authorities went with the second suggestion
 - Trams filled up as predicted
- Success (financial & ridership) comes when the service is superb

Recommendation 5: Aim for superb service

Greater Christchurch patronage per capita – 12-month rolling average



Why the rise and fall in patronage?

- Bus Exchange – 2000 onwards
 - More convenient central stop than the windswept Square
 - But over time, significant service improvements as suburban routes were through-routed – requires fewer passengers to change bus
- Hubs and spokes – 2012 onwards
 - 15% fewer buses (a fact that wasn't talked about)
 - Forced an increasing number of passenger to change bus

Hubs and spokes – a mistake

- The H&S concept didn't work
 - Assuming that the intention of “increasing patronage” as per Regional PT Plan was genuine; not just an exercise of getting fare recovery rate up
 - Patronage is falling
- Own the mistake
 - Acknowledge that you got it wrong

Recommendation 6: Acknowledge that you got it wrong with H&S

The core problem

- My hypothesis is that the core problem is attitude of decision makers around the council table
- Hit the reset button
 - Change your outlook
 - Bring your LTP in line with the draft GPS (gov't policy statement)
- I'm appealing to you to bring your attitudes into line with tomorrow's world
 - What do you need to do to promote buses as cool?

Recommendation 7: Believe in public transport as an exciting opportunity



Play video at <https://youtu.be/75F3CSZcCFs>

Recommendations

1. Align LTP with Regional PT Plan
2. All future reporting in annual patronage per capita
3. Focus on opportunities, not the constraints
4. Publish ridership monthly
5. Aim for superb service
6. Acknowledge that you got it wrong with hubs and spokes
7. Believe in public transport as an exciting opportunity
8. Think of “Midttrafik” rather than a loser-cruiser when deliberating

