

Media Release

Major contract signed for city roading changes

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Work to widen Manchester Street and turn the central arterial route into a boulevard will be carried out by construction firm Downer, following the signing of a \$26 million contract says Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority acting chief executive John Ombler.

The work is part of the next phase of An Accessible City which is the Transport Chapter of the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan. As well as Manchester Street's widening, the contract includes street improvements for Cambridge Terrace and Durham Street, as well as work around Hospital Corner.

An Accessible City is the overarching approach that will encourage better use of buses, which in turn feeds into the need for the city's new Bus Interchange.

It has been developed to proactively address future traffic congestion issues expected to be created through an increase of central city residential areas, and more people travelling to the city to work.

Mr Ombler says changes to the city street include new one-way systems and the widening of Manchester Street into a boulevard which gives priority to buses, as well as wider footpaths.

"This is all part of the big picture to slow the city core down and make it a destination rather than a through-route. And it's important to do that now as we implement the redesign of the central city, so that we get ahead of the issues that other major cities have."

Mr Ombler says the research shows that unless traffic patterns change there will be over 70,000 additional cars on the roads in the next 25 years, leading to a highly congested roading network.

"We want the future city to be as accessible as it can be for everyone, and that means that we want to encourage all sorts of transport modes. I am pleased that one of the last agreements the Government enters into via CERA is this significant contract.

"I look forward to seeing the changes to our CBD take shape."

The work covered in the Downer contract will be completed by the end of next year.