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New units avoid street construction

By LYNN COOK

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Joe Hightower, a founder of Hospitality Apartments, was a little shaken four years ago when a plan to ease traffic gridlock threatened to level the free housing complex for Texas Medical Center patients.

Bertner, now a small street running through the heart of the Medical Center, is being extended to Old Spanish Trail. And Hightower realized the design called for several lanes of traffic to run through the middle of the apartments.

Because most of its residents are in town for treatment at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, the hospital worked out a land swap and kicked in \$1.6 million to help build a new complex from scratch on a parcel of land adjacent to the old location but clear of the street construction.

Individuals, churches and foundations paid the rest of the \$4.1 million project's tab. Architectural firm Gensler and Rice University architecture professor William Cannady did nearly half a million dollars worth of design and architecture work pro bono.

Hospitality trustee Steve Sandifer said the organization hopes to find underwriters for new furnishings and appliances.