

For people tired of miles of brake lights, the smell of car exhaust, and the many joys of a long commute, a local developer is creating a solution.

Behind old homes, down a narrow alley, away from the busy downtown streets, lies a hidden oasis. At least that is what Tai Biesinger of Biesinger Associates LLC envisions.

Today the lot he is planning to build on holds two old and very decrepit houses. It is run-down and tired. But by the end of Oct. he plans to have transformed it.

Biesinger designed and plans to build six single-family, attached homes at the end of Markea Ave, located mid-block between 200 and 300 South and 800 and 900 East in Salt Lake City.

Biesinger wants people to “get out of their cars and into the city.”

This is no easy goal. More people than ever are moving to the suburbs. The downtown area has stigmas of high crime, pollution and being crowded. This project is designed to alleviate all three. Shifting the balance from renter-occupied to owner-occupied homes in an area has been shown statistically to drop crime. Homes located on a mid-block lot will be in a quiet location away from busy city streets. Single-family, attached homes have yards and are a comfortable alternative for people who don't like being stacked in apartment buildings.

The town-homes will have two or three bedrooms with two and a half bathrooms, single-car garages, and backyards ranging from 330 to 430 square feet. They will cost about \$170 per square foot and range in size from 1300 square feet to 1700 square feet.

Not everyone has been enthusiastic about the project. One neighbor objected to making the private alley a public street. Also, six homes will be built in an area that formerly held only two homes.

The project was nearly derailed in Dec. when the City passed the “Monster House” ordinance that limited the height of new residential construction to 28 feet. The developers were able to get an exception for building on a mid-block lot.

Biesinger is hoping to attract young, two-income professionals or older professionals who want to be close to work and downtown society without paying the high prices of most available housing. The homes will be built with modern amenities such as radiant floor heating and insulated windows to cut down on utility costs.

Biesinger bills this development as “Live downtown in modern comfort.”

The project will be funded by Holladay Bank and Trust.