



AIRTALK

Weekdays 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
with Larry Mantle



AirTalk for September 25, 2012

Living the teeny tiny life in San Francisco

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SLIDESHOW

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Smartspace

Rendering of the Smartspace Soma interior of queen room with bed shown.

"My apartment is so small...I have to go out in the hall to change my mind!" It's no joke -- a newly built apartment building in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood boasts pre-fab mini-units of 300 square feet.

But why stop there? SF's Board of Supervisors is voting today on whether to allow apartments of just 220 square feet - that's including bathroom, kitchen and closet. Why the shrinking spaces? A tech boom has led to a housing crunch and a run on rentals by new hires, desperate for city living on a budget.

Studio apartments in the area typically go for over \$2,000 a month; the micro-units would rent for \$1,200 to \$1,700. Developers, anxious to cash in, say they can build thousands of tiny apartments in available real estate for an increasing influx of single city dwellers. But opponents of the plan cite fears of traffic congestion and strain on city services. They also worry about one unintended consequence: low-income families with few options being shoe-horned into living spaces barely double the size of a prison cell.

Americans have gotten used to "wide-open spaces," but proponents of downsized living extoll the virtues of shedding the possessions and responsibilities associated with large homes. Would you consider living in such a small space? Could you give up your elbow room and walk-in closets? What would make it worthwhile to you - convenience, location, price?

Guests:

Patrick Kennedy, owner of Panoramic Interests, a Berkeley-based developer

Sara Shortt, Executive Director, Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco