

July 9, 2012 | Erin Durkin

Mayor Bloomberg launches contest to stir development of tiny 300-square-foot apartments for singles

Larger than a jail cell, but smaller than mobile home, ministudios will reflect city's changing demographics. They'll be big enough for bathroom, kitchen, sleeping and dining areas



Mayor Bloomberg with Commissioner of City Planning Amanda Burden, announce new competition to build new housing model for small apartments.

And you thought your apartment was small.

Mayor Bloomberg launched a contest Monday to stir development of teeny-tiny apartments — called micro units — for young singles willing to cram themselves into shoebox-sized digs.

The new closetlike flats will be just 275 to 300 square feet — larger than a jail cell but smaller than a mobile home — and will have special permission to ignore city rules requiring newly built apartments to exceed 400 square feet.



“The city’s demographics have changed,” Bloomberg said. “It used to be the average household was a family, a couple of adults and some children.”

That meant that the city was filled with larger dwellings, leaving just 1 million studios and one bedrooms — not nearly enough for the 1.8 million one-and two-person households.

At a news conference Monday, the mayor announced a contest seeking a developer for about 80 micro units at a city-owned parking lot on E. 27th St. in Kips Bay.

The ministudios will be just big enough for a bathroom, kitchen and sleeping and dining areas — but Bloomberg said tenants shouldn’t plan on doing much entertaining.



Bloomberg (c.) with Amanda Burden, Commissioner of City Planning (l.) and Matthew Wambua, Commissioner of Housing Preservation and Development (r.) standing in a 2-D layout of a micro-unit, the new studio apartment size.

Bloomberg's 12,500-square-foot upper East Side townhouse is about 40 times as big as the micro units, but they'll be three times larger than the smallest dorm rooms at Columbia University — and six times the size of an average 48-square-foot cell on Rikers Island.

City rules mandating bigger apartments were put in place to combat cramped tenement conditions, but Bloomberg said the regulations need to roll with the times.

Real estate experts said young college grads would snap up the apartments — but it all depends on the price tag, which city officials said would be less than \$2,000 a month. "There definitely will be a demand for it," said Jarrod Guy Randolph of the CORE Group.

If you're looking to move into one of the micro units, Janel Laban, executive editor of apartmenttherapy.com, recommends lots of lighting and freeing up floor space with hanging shelves.

"People get a lot of satisfaction from making a small space that they're proud of," she said.

