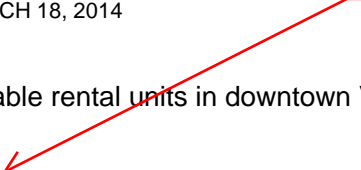




'Huge demand' for tiny rental units the size of large closet

Some of the most affordable rental units in downtown Vancouver would make great closets in a typical home.

BY VANCOUVER SUN MARCH 18, 2014

monthly rent ~
\$5.70 / sq-ft !!!!


Some of the most affordable rental units in downtown Vancouver would make great closets in a typical home.

A 100-square-foot rental in the Living Balance Group's 50-unit complex at 620 West Pender can be had for \$570 a month, but it is not available until June and there's a waiting list of people wanting to rent other units when they become available.

Budget-minded renters who don't mind sharing an apartment can find similar-sized or even smaller cubbyholes downtown for anywhere between \$400 and \$600 a month.

A \$600-a-month "unfurnished den" for rent in a Smithe Street condo appears extremely small, but building amenities include a gym, concierge and outdoor Jacuzzi.

Another Smithe Street den - offered for \$430 a month - looks like it would be hard pressed to accommodate a bed and a chest of drawers.

Living Balance spokesman Geoffrey Howes feels the downtown market for renters looking to pay from \$600 to \$800 a month has been underserved for years.

Rents in the company's Pender Street building - the former Piccadilly Hotel that was renovated three years ago - range from \$570 to \$690 a month for units that range in size from 90 to 150 square feet.

Each unit contains a sink and fridge, but there are no cooking facilities. Renters in the 50 units share 11 bathrooms, and there are laundry facilities on each of the four floors.

Howes said the mini-sized apartments attract a wide range of renters - from ages 19 to 56 - who want to live on their own with a downtown Vancouver address.

"There's a huge demand for these small micro-units in the centre of the city," he said.

"In order to make them affordable, they need to be very small, condensed units with shared washrooms. That's just a fact of life." bconstantineau@vancouver.sun.com

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