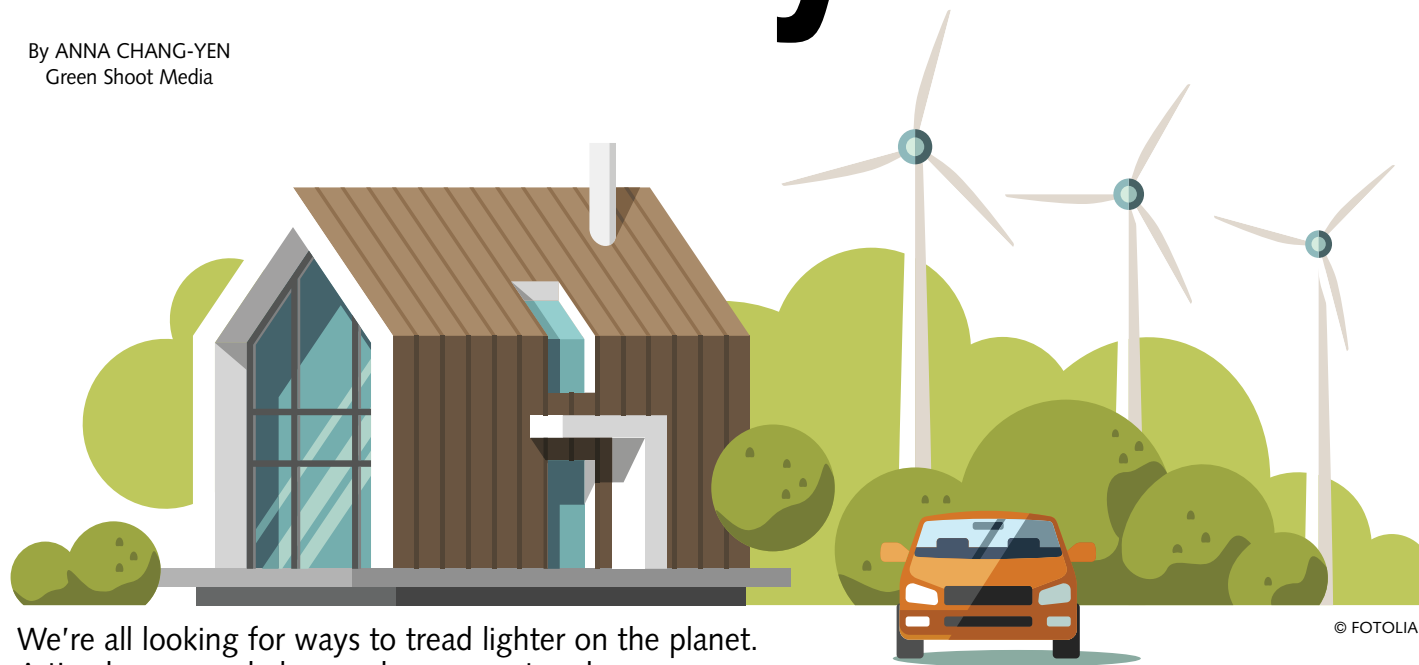


Home Tiny Home

By ANNA CHANG-YEN
Green Shoot Media



We're all looking for ways to tread lighter on the planet. A tiny house can help you do your part and save money at the same time.

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We've all seen tiny houses on TV and the web. These seemingly impossibly small abodes, crammed full of clever space-saving gadgets and design, promise to allow owners to live greener and more cheaply.

Squeezing your life into a home as small as 100 square feet might not sound ideal, but if the headlines are to be believed, it might be worth the sacrifice. "Can These \$20,000 Houses Save the American Dream?" asks Slate.com, while Tumbleweed Tiny House Company outlines "13 Ways a Tiny House Can Save You \$378 a Month or More." Perhaps most compellingly, financial services firm Feex.com pitches in, "How a Tiny House Can Help You Retire Early."

In fact, according to TinyLife.com, 55 percent of people who live in tiny homes have socked away more savings than the average American.

If you're tempted to trade your sprawling suburban home for much, much smaller digs, here are some facts you should know.

THE FACTS

If many Americans are biting on smaller homes, the numbers don't seem to bear out the trend. Fewer than 1 percent of home buyers are purchasing homes smaller than 1,000 square feet, according to the National Association of Realtors' Field Guide to the Small House Movement. In fact, the median size of homes purchased by buyers of all ages is 1,900 square feet, with a

third of buyers opting for homes of 1,501 to 2,000 square feet.

HOW MUCH SMALLER?

Dee Williams of Olympia, Wash., made the news talking about her 84-square-foot home, which has no bathroom and runs completely on solar power. But you don't have to think quite so small. According to TinyLiving.com, the average tiny house is 186 square feet and costs \$23,000.

HOW MUCH CHEAPER?

The question of how much money a homeowner can save is, of course, highly dependent on the area and situation.

Williams spent \$10,000 on the materials to build her uber-tiny pad, while a friend let her put the house on her

property in exchange for "a small amount each month" for water and use of the facilities.

In Hale County, Ala., Auburn University's Rural Studio builds \$20,000 homes for the area's poor through the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture. The goal, explains the program's founders, was to design a home that someone on Social Security could afford — with a \$108-a-month mortgage.

U.S. News and World Report reminds potential tiny home dwellers, however, that home costs can only be scaled down so far, and tiny homes are actually more expensive by the square foot, at \$200-\$400 vs. \$84 for an average-size home.

Of course another way tiny homes save their owners money is through tiny utility

bills — or vanishing utility bills if you go 100 percent solar.

The cost of land also is a consideration, and most tiny homes sit on very small, shared or rented lots.

HOW MUCH GREENER?

Tumbleweed Tiny House Company claims some of their customers pay \$10-\$35 per month in utility bills, which means a lot less energy consumption. Incorporate solar power into your home to really shrink your footprint.

With such small blueprints, you may be able to find recycled building materials for your home, sparing them from the landfill. Additionally, your smaller space will make you less likely to accumulate wasteful "stuff," with less space to furnish and store things.



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REAL ESTATE 101



Housing Outlook

Despite disappointing first-quarter economic growth in consumer spending, manufacturing, auto sales, trade and retail sales, Freddie Mac projects that housing markets will thrive in 2016, thanks in part to declines in interest rates. Read the full report at <http://bit.ly/23OLXRm>.



HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Modular home: any home factory-built to a local state code. A modular home can be built as an "on-frame" or "off-frame" modular. On-frame will be built on a permanent chassis, whereas the off-frame modular will be built with removal of the chassis frame in mind.

Manufactured home: any home factory-built in the U.S. to the HUD Title 6 construction standards (commonly known as 'the HUD-code'). A manufactured home is built on a permanent chassis to ensure transportability. However, typically a manufactured home is not moved from its initial installed site.

SOURCE: NADA Guide

AD SPACE