

Cell tower plans in progress

■ A University committee is drafting visual guidelines for cell tower construction

By Brook Reinhard
Oregon Daily Emerald

University-area resident Michael Carney has been fighting a losing battle with Verizon Wireless and thinks the school hasn't made an effort to examine sites on campus.

"The University has taken a hands-off approach," Carney said.

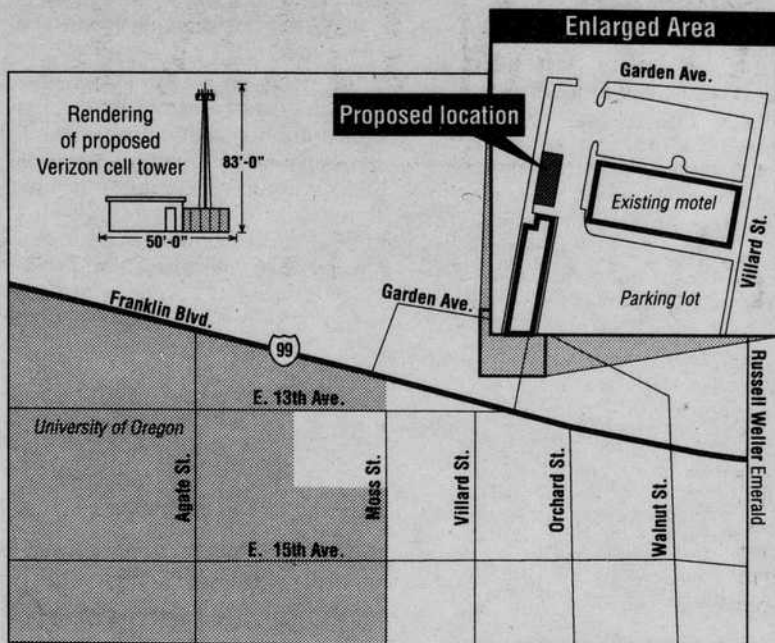
Carney hopes the University will consider siting towers on campus, and industry representatives agree.

Verizon spokeswoman Susan Shepard said her company wanted to put an 80-foot tower on campus instead of the residential neighborhood where it will be built. But the University and Verizon could not reach agreement, and the company decided to build the tower near campus on Garden Avenue, which students can expect to use within the year.

University telecommunications spokesman David Barta said the school is cautious about new development because the planning department doesn't want to give up any tower sites until new rules can be drafted. The school may even want to build a communications system of its own, Barta said.

Three cell towers are currently proposed or being developed in the Eugene area, according to Eugene city planner Shawna Adams-Jacobs. One is off River Road, and the other two are in the University area.

Barta would not rule out future cooperation with cell tower companies. "Could we put an antenna on top



of Mac Court? Maybe," Barta said.

A committee of staff and students is in the process of drafting visual guidelines so the University will have clear procedures to follow the next time a cell company wants to build on campus. University officials hope these policies will help companies devise more efficient designs than the controversial 120-foot tower proposed by Sprint PCS at 15th Avenue and Villard Street.

Barta said the committee can only examine visual impact issues right now. The committee is not factoring health into the equation because the 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act prohibits health issues from being considered when cell towers are proposed, as long as

the proposed plan complies with Federal Communications Commission standards.

"Nobody likes the way (the towers) look," Barta said. "But if it's killing you, it's a bigger concern."

Opponents of cell phone towers have historically focused on the safety issue. Towers emit radiation, but at this time all studies conducted on the topic are inconclusive, said University radiation safety officer Don Elting.

Carney finds no solace in such opinions.

"By the time we're done, we're going to be irradiating the whole damn town," he said.

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Men's Center

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reviewed the mission statement for the proposed Men's Center and found it to be on track with their own mission, according to Women's Center spokeswoman Kristina Armenakis.

Because the center is being created to address real men's health issues rather than as a reaction to the Women's Center, Armenakis said, the two centers will be able to work together to deal with issues affecting everyone.

"If you have a Men's Center and a Women's Center working on the same issues, it makes University events much stronger," Armenakis said. "That will push the movement faster."

E-mail higher education editor Leon Tovey at leontovey@dailyemerald.com.

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