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## **Margate Lawmakers Consider Building Cell-Phone Tower**

(3/2/05) While many towns fight against the construction of cell-phone towers in their community, the city is taking a different approach.

Basically, officials are looking to get some.

The city has entered into a \$15,000 contract with V-COMM, a Cranbury based consulting firm, to gauge whether the city could accommodate towers and attract companies to the city.

“We know there has been some interest,” Mayor Vaughah Reale said. “In the summer, the cell phone use in the area is just unbelievable. And it has created service problems since we have no towers. We know the volume mean there are companies who would be interested.”

The volume of calls is so high that it overwhelms the capacity of nearby towers in Ventor and Ocean City,” Reale said.

“That’s why we’re studying it,” Reale said. “We will only do this if it doesn’t impact our residents negatively and we can show it will produce revenue. If it doesn’t, then we won’t do it.”

Most opposition to cell-phone towers centers on complaints that the towers are ugly and ruin the aesthetics of an area. That could especially apply to a beach resort. But Reale said the city is already planning to disguise the towers.

“In a lot of situations, these towers are but onto existing water towers,” Reale said. “But we don’t think that looks good and we will be avoiding that.”

Instead the city hopes to have the tower disguised are large flag poles. If that’s acceptable to the cell-phone companies, the poles could be visible for miles.

“I’m not ready to say this is something that would enhance the skyline,” Reale said. “But we do want them disguised. If that’s not possible, we’ll back off.”

The contract with V-COMM breaks the process down into several parts. The first stage, at a cost of %5,000, is to locate likely sites for the towers. Some sites under consideration include on top of City Hall, the City Police Station and the Fire Department.

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