

New amenities possible on Wildwood beaches

By Kathleen Duffy

For NewsWorks

Visitors to the far-reaching beaches of Wildwood, N.J. will not need to purchase beach tags this summer to soak up the sun, but they can expect some changes on the sand.

Beach bars, cabanas, and storage units potentially may stand in areas between the ocean and the boardwalk to better accommodate visitors and create additional revenue for the city. There will be limited areas with these features—they will not be seen throughout the whole strip.

Wildwood will be introducing its 2012 budget on March 14.

“We have some of the best beaches in the country,” says Mayor Ernie Troiano. “We welcome people to come and join us.”

Troiano hopes that the new services this summer will help offset rising costs for taxpayers, and provide funds for lifeguards, police, and the general upkeep of the beach.

“It’d be something different in Wildwood,” says Elk Township, N.J. resident Colleen Mulholland. “I think it’s a great idea.”

Mulholland, a former beach lifeguard, was born in Wildwood and now spends the summer months at her beach house in North Wildwood with her family.

She would take advantage of the convenient bars on the beach.

“We’re Irish so we always hit the bars,” she laughs. “We’re all beach people.”

Joanna Martin, a manager at Good Night Irene’s Brew Pub who has lived in Wildwood for nine years, is skeptical of the beach bar proposition.

“I don’t know that I think it’s so much of a good idea in terms of it being a family resort,” she says. “Being close to the water, that would concern me.”

“I’d think they’d need stringent rules with their bartenders.”

A fair alternative, she suggests, would be to revitalize Pacific Avenue to make the street more appealing to potential renters.

“It’s a totally run down, abandoned area,” she says.

Troiano says that the leased beach bars would be highly protected with security and proper fences. The bars would only be in service during the daytime hours to maintain safety and avoid interference with similar businesses in the city.

“There are certain rules and regulations,” he says. “It’s not an open area.”

Atlantic City has beach bars as well, he explains.

“They do very well.”

Troiano hopes to also initiate a transportation system to carry beach-goers over the long stretch of sand from water’s edge to the boardwalk.

“Across the desert, so to speak,” he says.

For water lovers, a surfing beach may even be created this year.

A plethora of fun occasions including a Monster truck event and a Frisbee tournament are scheduled to be held on the beach during the summer months and will help produce city funds.

“The only way to generate a lot of money is to get people here,” he says.

As a yearlong resident of the city, Martin believes that beach tags would have been beneficial to implement.

“I was for the beach tags,” she says. “Every other shore town up the coast does it.”

Costs for the possible new amenities are not yet certain.

Calls sent to Commissioner Peter Byron, Wildwood's director of revenue and finance, were not returned. Several local businesses contacted for this article did not wish to comment.

“We understand most of our people are hardworking, blue collar people who have saved up all year to come to Wildwood,” says Troiano. “We certainly don’t want to chase them out the door.”