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Atlantic Ocean closing in on North Wildwood

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NORTH WILDWOOD - Beach replenishment along the city's battered shore cannot come soon enough, City Council President Patrick Rosenello said Tuesday.

After the latest round of winter weather sent ocean water into city streets, Rosenello said the situation is quickly becoming a crisis.

"As a result of the rapid deterioration of the beach, we now have to discuss looking into bulkheading along the beachfront," Rosenello said.

The beach has suffered the last several years as storms swept away pieces of the once growing beach. Dunes have turned into cliffs, and outfall pipes, long hidden, have resurfaced.

Ocean water made its way to shore as far as 20th Avenue.

"What was shrinking before was open beach, but now it's affecting structures like the dunes, the bike path and the beach-patrol building," he said.

Beach Patrol Chief Tony Cavalier said concrete barriers placed in front of the 15th Avenue lifeguard headquarters were undermined and overturned by rushing waves. The barriers are all that protects the building's deck.

"There are 10 yards of beach left in front of the building. There used to be hundreds," Cavalier said.

He had to reach far back into his childhood to recall days like Tuesday, when the water actually landed under the Boardwalk.

Rosenello said the \$4 million set aside for beach replenishment will pay for about 1 million cubic yards of sand, which still may only be a stop-gap measure in the ongoing battle against erosion here.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is still looking for a source of sand for that project.