

site selection. "There were a lot of people in the regional office of the Facilities Development Corp. looking for sites who didn't know what they were looking for," she said.

The plan provides for a number of changes inside the Facilities Development Corp. (FDC), the state agency charged with selecting and acquiring buildings.

On the staffing side, it proposes to hire about 25 real estate "specialists" who would devote their time to the metropolitan placement project alone. In addition, four "swat" teams composed of 10 staff members each would be assigned to the boroughs, with Queens and Staten Island combined.

The plan goes on to suggest new options for leasing by the FDC. The thrust of these technical innovations is to allow FDC the unprecedented capability to steer properties for sale into the hands of surrogate landlords who, having purchased and rehabilitated the buildings, would then lease them to the state.

Ms. Hoffman explained that outright purchase of property by the state proceeds at a snail's pace due to bureaucratic red tape. State requirements for competitive bidding on construction and rehabilitation, she said, further delay site implementation. An independent landlord, she suggested, might be able to circumvent such restrictions.

But the "biggest reason" for surrogate landlords, according to Ms. Hoffman, is to avoid the loss of a building from the tax rolls which occurs when property is appropriated by the state.

"Philosophically and practically we're out there saying the mentally retarded belong in the community and that they can contribute," Ms. Hoffman said. "Then the first thing you do is buy a house they can live in and take it off the tax roll."

In addition to the facilities slated for development in each borough under the direct auspices of the state, some 170 three-bed apartments are slated for development in the metropolitan area by United Cerebral Palsy, a voluntary agency, which now cares for 537 Staten Island Developmental Center residents, in conjunction with the Department of Mental Retardation. These apartments will be subject to the same FDC procedures as the state-generated facilities.

In Staten Island, the plan projects that 20 community facilities will be in operation by April 1981. At present, the Island has four such facilities, all located in the Community Board 1 area. Hoffman said that future placement efforts would be concentrated in Community Boards 2 and 3.

The state's plan does not address the ultimate fate of 776 former residents of the Staten Island Developmental Center

who, it projects, will be left in other borough developmental centers once the plan's terms have been met.

Ms. Hoffman, however, claimed that they, too, would finally be afforded the opportunity to live in a community setting. "You've got to bite off as much as you think you can chew right now," she said. "Nobody's saying these people have to stay in those institutions."

The review panel since 1975 has been conducting semi-annual audits of state compliance with the Willowbrook Consent Decree. According to the plan, OMRDD is negotiating an alternative form of supervision. Under its proposal, the state Health Department's Division of Quality Assurance would assume the function of surveyor.

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