

Adherence to the consultant's recommendation, for instance, could result in a population growth of from 3,000 to 4,000 persons in the very Mid-Island area subjected to an extraordinary level of residential development in recent years. Could schools in the area accommodate such growth? Could roads in the area handle the additional traffic? And what of the impact of further development on public recreational facilities in the area?

The latter point is worthy of particular examination. The only city recreational facility available to serve the growing communities around the state property is Willowbrook Park. But that park — as anyone who has visited it on a summer weekend knows — already is taxed to the limit; its athletic fields are in constant use, as are its picnicing facilities.

Development of the Willowbrook property as proposed by the consultant obviously would result in more potential users of Willowbrook Park. At the same time, sale and development of the state property would result in destruction of the athletic fields on the developmental center grounds. The Mid-Island area, in short, would be left with fewer recreational facilities for more people.

State officials must be compelled to view their decision on the Willowbrook property in the context of its overall impact on the Island. They must be made to recognize that open space — left either in its natural state or made available for recreational uses — is a valuable commodity in this fast-growing borough.

It should not be up to Mrs. Connelly alone to convince state officials that any sort of large-scale development on the Willowbrook property would be contrary to the Island's long-term interests. Every public official and community leader must join with the assemblywoman in her effort to ensure that the Island's needs are taken into account in disposition of the state land.