

Agencies hoping state funds will be restored

Island items slashed in budget

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ALBANY — In what has become a yearly ritual, the governor's budget message, sent to the Legislature this week, proposes an elimination of funding for several Staten Island programs.

As a result, lawmakers from districts around the state, including Staten Island, will be in the position of fighting to restore, and perhaps increase, those appropriations as the budget talks get under way in earnest during the next few weeks.

The budget is supposed to be approved by both houses of the Legislature by March 31. Last year was the first in several years that the budget was finished by the deadline.

But legislative leaders say they are not totally confident that will happen again this year. As a result, borough agencies may have to wait, as in prior years, for monies to be allocated before planning their agendas for the year and paying certain bills.

Senate Finance Committee

Chairman John J. Marchi, R-Staten Island, last night released an outline of Island and citywide program aid that would be eliminated under Gov. Mario M. Cuomo's proposed \$35 billion state budget for 1984-85 as it now stands.

The figures, worked up by staff analysts during the past two days, include the appropriations that were included in the current, 1983-84 budget. Elimination of funding as of today is planned for:

- Staten Island Learning Center, \$65,000.
- Richmondtown Restoration, \$200,000.
- High Rock Park Conservation Center, \$58,000.
- Staten Island Cooperative Continuum, \$250,000.

● Although excluded from the eight-page memorandum, titled "Items of Interest to Sen. Marchi," the executive budget would also wipe out the \$300,000 budgeted last year for the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Livingston.

The center was included this

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year in a list of major items as categorized in the 676-page budget proposal with the allocation figure of "zero."

Meanwhile, there are also several borough programs that Cuomo suggests get the same or increased funding in the coming fiscal year.

Among them:

- \$300,000 in new capital funding for "program improvements" at the Arthur Kill Correctional Facility.

- Establishment of a new Staten Island Independent Living Center for the Disabled at Sea View Hospital and Home, for an allocated \$100,000.

- For the College of Staten Island, \$147,000 is added to the \$27.3 million allocated last year in state operating assistance.

Also, the college would be eligible for additional faculty positions. A pool of \$4.8 million in special payments is proposed for the whole City University system to use for this purpose at its discretion.

A separate \$380,000 is proposed in capital funding for the college to include physical improvements that would "make the college accessible to the physically disabled."

- The South Beach Alcoholism Treatment Center would get \$164,400 more. This could lead to an increase in the number of people that the center could treat at any given time.

- For the South Beach Psychiatric Center, Cuomo proposes nearly \$40 million in operating funds, plus \$1.13 million in capital funds.

Then there are the Island highway and bridge projects for which state officials committed themselves last fall to funding with the help of the \$1.25 billion "Rebuild New York" bond issue.

They include, according to the fiscal analysts:

- Morningstar Road and LaSalle Street bridge, Elm Park, \$1.1 million.

- Tompkins Avenue bridge at Greenfield Street, over the Staten Island Rapid Transit tracks, Rosebank, \$2.2 million.

- Union Avenue bridge over the Staten Island Rail Road tracks, Mariners Harbor, \$11 million.

- Additional lane for the Staten Island Expressway to meet the West Shore Expressway, \$2.5 million.

Capital funding for mass transit is also included, with the budget plan calling for \$52 million in state service contracts for the Transit Authority and Staten Island Rapid Transit.

Those funds are expected to be part of the continuing five-year \$8 billion capital improvement plan for mass transit approved two years ago.

In addition, special operating aid for the Staten Island Ferry and city buses and subways — tied to income from corporate taxes due to be phased out next Dec. 31 — is projected at \$7.34 million and \$354.7 million, respectively.

Cited in the memo is the special money question that surrounds the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook, which Cuomo seeks to close in 1987.

"Recommended appropriations for the facility in 1984-85 would appear to reflect some staff displacement," the memo states.

However, the number of staff per patient will still be at a level mandated by the courts arising from the now-famous litigation over Willowbrook, it says.

"Monies will be made available in the coming fiscal year for the development of community facilities for deinstitutionalized clients" at the center.

Furthermore, in what is expected to come up as an issue in further discussions of the center closing, Marchi states in the memo:

"Expect the state to assume United Cerebral Palsy responsibilities at the Karl Warner Center," a privately run facility on the state center's grounds.

"Negotiations are in progress," Marchi says. "I would not expect a service disruption, however."

Reported in the memo is a plan to spend \$100,000 in consulting fees "in connection with the potential sale" of the Willowbrook property through the office of General Services (OGS).

A private study commissioned by mental health officials of the same site was reportedly completed in 1982 by a consulting firm, but the officials have refused to release the full document to the public.

At the same time, \$11 million for rents and moving costs out of the World Trade Center is identified. "It warrants a close examination," Marchi said. OGS officials have said for months the center property in Willowbrook should one day house state offices.

Also outlined in the Marchi budget memo are programs that will be of concern, not only on the Island and in the city, but statewide.

For now, Cuomo has tied several of these programs to the introduction of a new sports lottery. With that program facing legal and legislative obstacles, Cuomo said Wednesday that the programs could still be saved through other funding still to be negotiated.

The programs include \$20 million for pre-kindergarten programs; \$8 million in increased

aid to libraries; \$1.3 million more for public television; \$8 million for arts in education and \$350,000 for a student "mentor" program jointly run by the city Board of Education and the City University.

Not currently tied to the lottery proposal, but of particular interest:

- A "reduced emphasis" on school-based programs to fight substance abuse "could impact programs on Staten Island."

- Similar funding to last year's, adjusted for inflation, for criminal justice programs such as bulletproof vests for police and transit police aid, also are proposed.

- New higher education programs for a total of \$31.7 million, including tuition assistance for part-time students and those getting occupational training; a supplement to the student loan program and Cuomo's proposed teacher corps program designed to attract better skilled teachers into the public education system.

- A \$146,000 cut in the Labor Department's "displaced homemaker program," which Marchi staffers say would finance only 9 of the 12 existing programs in the state.

Four of them, in the city, now get a total of about \$400,000.

- Under rail and port projects, \$20 million for expansion of Red Hook Terminal in Brooklyn "and/or other port improvements in Brooklyn."