

Sale of state's CSI properties could reap taxpayers \$40M

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The sale of three properties left empty if the College of Staten Island relocates to Willowbrook could reap \$40 million for taxpayers, according to a consultant's study released yesterday.

The study was part of a larger report recommending that CSI consolidate its Sunnyside and St. George campuses at a new campus on the site of the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook. If the college relocates, the study said, the city and state should sell the current CSI properties, along with a 110-acre parcel in Ocean Breeze.

The state purchased the Ocean Breeze site for a new college campus years ago, but while awaiting funds for construction, property became available at SIDC. The consultant's study says it would be less expensive to use the buildings at the Willowbrook site than start from scratch at Ocean Breeze.

The Ocean Breeze site, a vacant field next to Staten Island Hospital and South Beach Psychiatric Center, could support 1,492 condominiums, according to the study by the real estate appraising firm of Raymond A. Vomero Associates Inc. The state could sell the land to developers for \$20 million, the report added.

The authors of the study also suggested that the 42-acre Sunnyside site be sold to developers for an estimated \$12 million, less \$1 million for demolishing the 10 existing buildings. The site could support 645 condominiums, the study said.

"The demand for residential homes is strong," the authors of the report wrote. "The location at the base of Emerson Hill plus its close proximity to the Staten Island Expressway offers exactly what the majority of suburban home buyers are looking for. The use for residential developments is neither speculative or conjectural and will yield the highest net return."

Other options could use the existing buildings, the study said, although any non-residential use of the land would probably spark community resistance

because of traffic and environmental concerns.

"The use as a community facility for training the mentally retarded is possible. This would require an approval process, however, which may be resisted by the local community," the study said.

"The use as a cultural center would require a conversion of some of the buildings. This would require an enormous amount of funding and would be in direct competition to Snug Harbor.

"The use as a civic center primarily for court activities is another possibility. However, that would put governmental activities in a similar position as that of the college, i.e., facilities would be spread over several areas, (causing) a hue and cry from taxpayers ... The city would do much better by taking over 130 Stuyvesant Pl. (in St. George) from the college."

The buildings could also be

used as private office space, but that would require a change in zoning, the consultants said.

The land at the Sunnyside campus is owned by the state; the city holds title to the buildings, according to CSI spokesman Brian Morris.

The St. George site consists of three buildings, a nine-story building at 130 Stuyvesant Place owned by the state, and two other facilities which are privately owned and rented by the City University of New York.

The study suggested the state-owned building could be sold for \$9.5 million to developers who could convert it to office space.

The building, which contains 118,000 square feet of rentable area, could rent for \$16 per square foot for office space, generating a potential annual gross income of \$1.9 million, according to the study.

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