

CSI study finds SIDC site better in every respect

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Staten Island Developmental Center is superior in every area of consideration for consolidating the College of Staten Island, according to a study officially released yesterday by CSI President Edmond Volpe. The Advance reported Dec. 29 that the study would recommend the SIDC site.

The report, which evaluated four sites for the consolidation, concluded that SIDC in Willowbrook was the superior choice in terms of budget, physical factors, construction time and quality of the finished campus.

The Manhattan firm of Edward Durrell Stone Associates, which the college commissioned to make the study, ranked a 110-acre site in Ocean Breeze as a second choice for a consolidated campus. The study rejected consolidation at either of CSI's present campuses in Sunnyside and St. George.

The study's recommendation for the Willowbrook site was endorsed Monday by the CSI's facilities and finance committee, and the college board of trustees will vote on the issue at its next meeting, on Jan. 28.

Volpe said the board's approval of the Willowbrook site is "fairly certain."

He is submitting the report to a state task force studying disposition of the 390-acre SIDC, which has housed an institution for the mentally retarded for the past 30 years. The state plans to close the institution by the end of 1987 and adapt the land for other uses.

Since CSI's proposal already has the approval of state budget officials, the state Office of General Services — which controls disposition of the land — will probably support transferring part of the property to the college, CSI spokesman Brian Morris said.

The study suggests that CSI could use 187 acres of the Willowbrook campus and renovate between eight and 12 existing buildings. The renovation would give the college between 342,000 and 534,000 square feet in space — between a third and a half of the space the consolidated college would need.

"One thing I think we were really amazed about was the condition of the buildings; they are really in very good shape," said Kenneth Klindtworth, CSI's resident architect. The college can save \$36 a square foot by utilizing existing buildings, according to the study.

The other dozen or so buildings not used would be razed and CSI would build new facilities for a total of 1.1 million square feet of building space, the requirement set by college officials.

The potential offered by the acreage and existing buildings scored high points in the evaluation process used in the study. "The significant advantage of this site is the possibility of reuse of many suitable existing buildings," the study said. "The existence of service tunnels is another significant advantage."

There is also the appearance of the grounds, with its wide grassy spaces and low brick buildings. "It looks like the classic college campus," Volpe said. "It's perfect."

By comparison, the study said, the Ocean Breeze site has no buildings to use, while the Sunnyside and St. George sites have no room for adequate expansion.

The consolidated campus requires at least 60 acres of land. The Sunnyside campus has only 330,000 square feet in building space on 42 acres and the St. George campus has less than 300,000 square feet in three buildings with virtually no surrounding property.

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