

## CSI to launch big drive for new campus

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Armed with a consultant's report that recommends that the College of Staten Island relocate to the grounds of Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook, CSI officials launch their campaign for a new campus this week.

The kickoff will be Thursday, when members of a state task force on disposition of the Willowbrook property will discuss the college proposal for the first time. In upcoming weeks and months, the college proposal needs the approval of the board of trustees of the City University of New York (CUNY), which meets Jan. 28; the task force and the state Office of General Services; Gov. Mario Cuomo, and the state Legislature.

The consultant's report released earlier this month recommends that the college try to obtain 187 acres of the 300 acres being vacated. The property requested by the college includes about 30 brick buildings.

If all goes as planned, the new campus could be ready for occupancy by January 1989, according to Donal Farley, CUNY vice chancellor of facilities planning and management. But he acknowledged that the time frame

is "relatively optimistic" and chances are that it will take five years before a new campus is ready.

The first hurdle has already been crossed: After months of scrutinizing the options, private consultants hired by the university have determined that the state-owned Willowbrook property is the best choice on all counts for the new campus, which would consolidate CSI's present Sunnyside and St. George facilities.

A major advantage of relocating CSI to Willowbrook is that the college could utilize facilities left vacant by the center. The move also would entail an extensive revision of the Willowbrook grounds, according to university officials.

University officials and the consultants say only eight to 12 of the existing buildings would be renovated — providing between one third and one half of the building space needed for the college. The remaining existing buildings would be demolished and new facilities — such as a gymnasium and a student commons — built to fit CSI's more specialized needs.

Farley said the available open space would be more than enough to accommodate the needed facilities and the property's woodlands would be left intact.

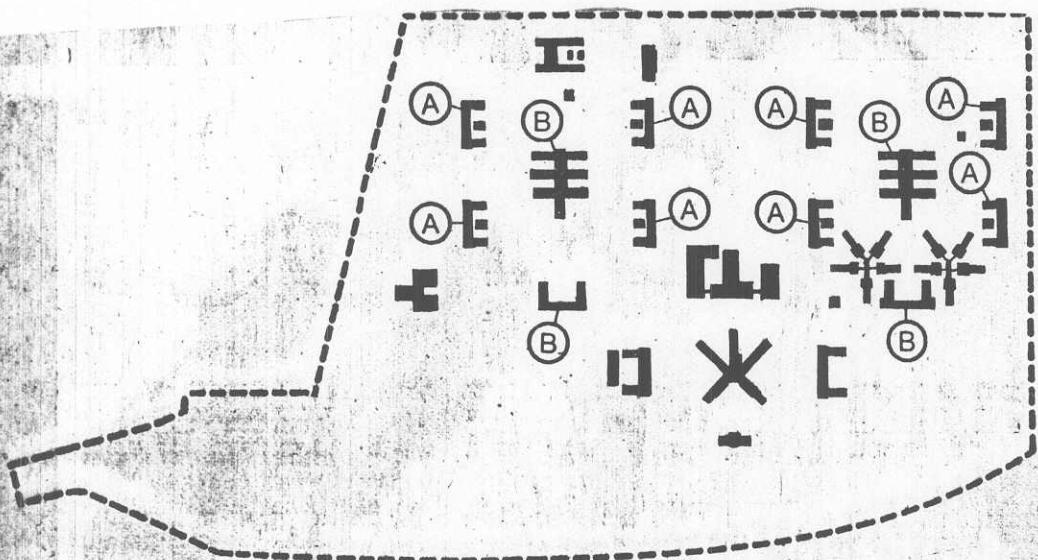
The area requested by the college carves through the middle of the Willowbrook property, but excludes the Karl Warner Complex and the SIDC property along Forest Hill Road including Corson's Brook Woods and the Institute for Basic Research in Mental Retardation.

Of the buildings that CSI would preserve, "you're really talking about just reusing the shells," said Farley. He said the inside of the buildings would be gutted, leaving only the outside walls and floors.

Besides using the buildings, CSI could also utilize much of the infrastructure already in place at Willowbrook. While the current heating plant would need replacement, a massive system of steam tunnels is already in place that the college could use for utility lines, Farley said.

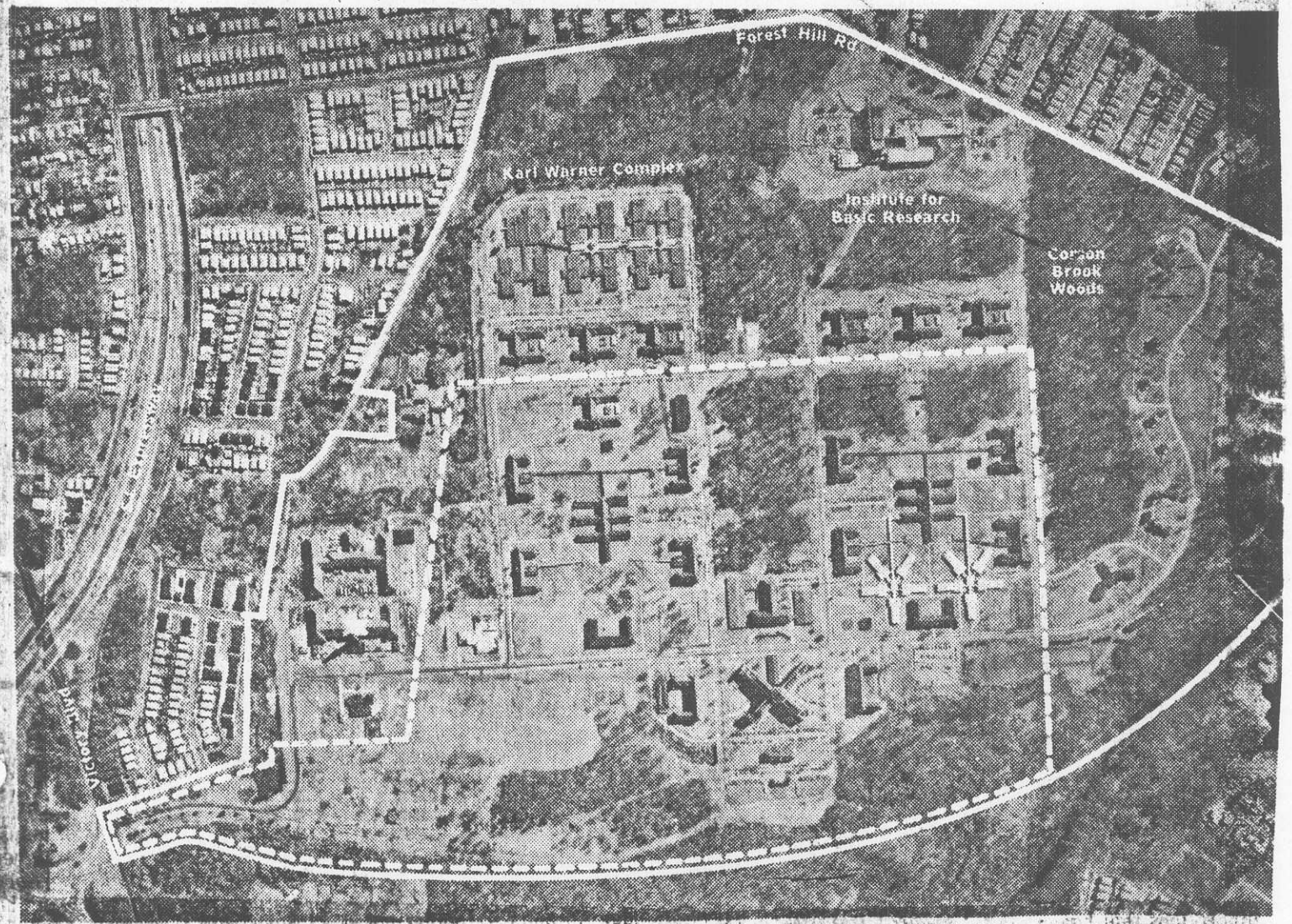
Water lines and storm and sanitary sewers also are already in place and are "more than adequate to meet any anticipated future demand." The college could also utilize the existing roads and parking lots on the property, although both would need expansion to accommodate the estimated 5,200 students who use the college's two present campuses each day.

"I can't imagine wanting any more than the 187 acres," Farley said, adding it would provide ample room for expansion.



### The CSI plan

In the aerial photo below, the solid line outlines the state property in Willowbrook while the dotted line shows the site desired by the College of Staten Island. The diagram at left indicates eight prime buildings (A) and four secondary buildings (B) that could be renovated for use by the college.



To aid traffic flow, the consultant's report suggested that the college campus be connected to the Willowbrook Expressway by an exit/entrance ramp. Such a ramp, originally designed for the proposed Greenway, was partially constructed years ago; college officials suggest the ramp could be completed to keep traffic from overloading Victory Boulevard. However, they acknowledge the concept is "years down the road" from becoming reality.

Both CSI president Edmund Volpe and Farley say the approval of the CUNY board is fairly certain. "It haven't heard anything negative about the proposal from them," Farley said.

At their Jan. 28 meeting, the board is expected to endorse the site recommendation and authorize CUNY Chancellor Joseph Murphy to begin negotiations with the state on acquiring the property.

Those negotiations are crucial to the success of the proposal, Farley noted. "Our board will be saying where they want the consolidated campus to be, but it's up to others to give the property to us," he said.

The college proposal already has the informal support of the state budget office, which sees Willowbrook as the least expensive way to provide CSI with a new campus.

But others — including the city Parks and Planning departments and Island advocates for the handicapped — also have designs on the Willowbrook property, so the university must make its appeal to the task force, comprised of four state officials (including the state budget director) and nine Island representatives.

The task force will make recommendations on how to redevelop the Willowbrook property, which currently houses a state institution for the mentally retarded. SIDC is phasing out its operation and should close by the end of 1987, leaving vacant about 300 acres and 50 buildings.

City Parks and Planning officials want to obtain all the woodlands on the property, along with land currently used as community ballfields — some of the same areas to be requested by the college.

In addition, the Staten Island Regional Retardation and Disabilities Council has submitted to the task force a proposal that includes plans for a 60-acre camp, a 125-acre recreational complex and a 200-bed residential facility for the handicapped.

But even if the task force does not approve the college proposal, the final decision on allocating the property rests with the state Office of General Services (OGS) and ultimately, Gov. Mario Cuomo.

CUNY has already submitted a request for a \$7 million alloca-

tion this year to finance a architect's plan for the new campus. That allocation should be included in the governor's budget, to be released Tuesday. If expenditure is approved by the Legislature, Farley said architects could begin work by July.

Before the design process begins, consultants will work on matching the needs of the college with the resources available at Willowbrook. This report will serve as an outline for the architects, "sorting of a packaging of our needs," Farley said. It will be written by Edward Durell Stone Associates, which did the site selection study.

That study will determine precisely which buildings will be demolished and which will be renovated.

Assuming the design process begins on schedule, the college would seek money for construction in the 1986-87 state budget. "Hopefully by January 1987 we could start construction," Farley said. Construction would take two to three years.

But for now, Farley is cautious about looking too far down the road. "Our major concern at this point is that the state gives us the property," he said. "Until they do that, we really can't do anything."