

## — Editorial Page

# Our opinion/ In CSI's wake

News that progress is being made on the College of Staten Island's plan to combine its Sunnyside and St. George campuses on Staten Island Developmental Center land in Willowbrook is encouraging.

But we think there are still other important questions about the shift that remain to be answered.

A spokesman for the state Office of General Services (OGS) said Gov. Mario Cuomo has asked OGS to complete the paperwork on the project for his final review. CSI is asking for about 215 acres of the 380-acre developmental center campus, with 150 acres remaining for group homes and the existing Institute for Basic Research off Forest Hill Road.

With the Staten Island Developmental Center scheduled to close in late 1987, we're pleased that the valuable state property is being preserved for a compatible use.

There's no doubt that CSI's unified campus would be an asset for all Staten Islanders, and the college's preliminary plans there call for the construction of five additional ballfields on the property to replace existing fields now used by the community at large.

But our concern focuses on the campuses in St. George and Sunnyside that CSI will leave behind. We think the fate of those two are just as important as the new Willowbrook site. We've had enough dump and run in this community.

After all, the Sunnyside campus is located in the heart of Staten Island, in an area that has already

witnessed the dangers of unchecked, ill-planned development. Just down the road, a gouged hillside contains nothing but empty foundations.

St. George, meanwhile, is already suffering from a high commercial vacancy rate. Having the college abandon its two Stuyvesant Place buildings with no plans for a replacement would severely aggravate that problem.

Already, judges in the Supreme Court in St. George, located directly across from the college, have suggested using the college buildings to help relieve overcrowding in the Island's courts. We think that suggestion is definitely worth further study, particularly since it would help preserve St. George as the Island's civic center.

Thus far, however, the only official recommendation we've heard for the CSI property in Sunnyside came from a consultant retained by the college. And he suggested that the land be sold for condominium development. That hardly strikes us as a compatible, highly beneficial use for land on the edge of the Island's Greenbelt that has become a resource for all Staten Islanders.

Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano has already asked the City University trustees to explore the possibility of relocating John Jay College of Criminal Justice to Sunnyside. That certainly sounds better than the consultant's idea.

No matter what happens, we urge both Gov. Cuomo and the Island legislators who serve on the Governor's Advisory Council to insure that CSI's two existing campuses are protected before any Willowbrook land is transferred.