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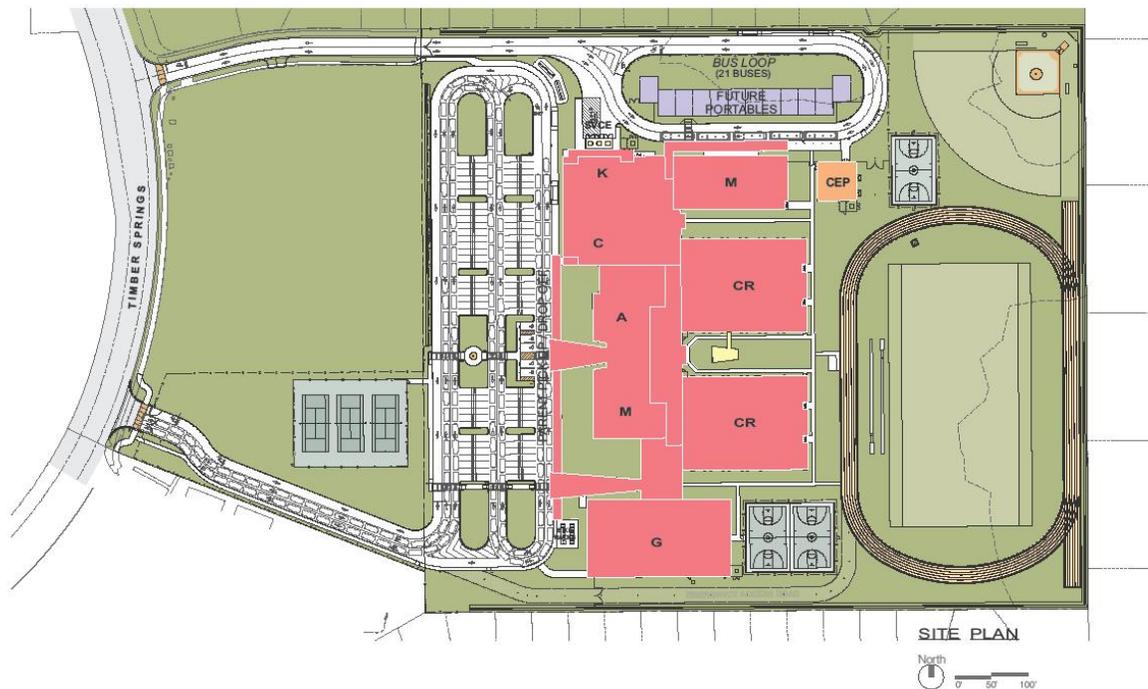
ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Orange County Government rejects Avalon relief middle school



OCPS - MIDDLE SCHOOL PROTOTYPE
Orlando, Florida
April 20, 2015

HuntonBrady
ARCHITECTS

Orange County Public Schools' plans for a middle school on a site in Timber Springs to relieve Avalon Middle School were rejected Tuesday by the Board of County Commissioners. (HuntonBrady Architects)

May 19, 2015 – Plans to build a relief middle school on school land in Timber Springs were halted Tuesday after a unanimous “no” vote from the Board of County Commissioners.

“I’m sorely disappointed,” said board member Daryl Flynn, who represents the area. “I want to thank Parents United for a Middle School for all the work they put into this.” More than 100 parents and neighbors wearing blue t-shirts reading “United for a Middle School” attended the commissioners’ meeting to support the project.

Without approval from the county to reclassify their property from an elementary to a middle school site, Orange County Public Schools will move ahead on plans to rezone about 1,600 students at eight middle schools in the eastern part of the county. That is necessary because Avalon Middle currently has 1,804 students at a school designed for 970. By 2017, the school would be expected to have 2,095 students.

District counsel Woody Rodriguez said other options will be pursued, including buying additional land to expand the Timber Springs site. But even if that happens, it would likely be 2019 before a new middle school could be built in Avalon.

The compactness of the 16.7 acre Timber Springs site was one of the concerns expressed by commissioners at Tuesday's meeting. They also objected to the district's water filtration plans and expressed concerns about traffic.

Superintendent Barbara Jenkins said school district staff will continue to work with county staff on advance planning.

However, "there's no way you can have a perfect crystal ball," she said. "You have leaps in population you didn't plan on initially."

Parents, some in tears, consoled each other after the meeting. "I think it was a mistake," Avalon parent Jackie Carroll said of the commissioners' decision. "This is just wrong across the board."

(For more information, please contact Lauren Roth in Facilities Communications at 407.317.3700 ext. 2023774.)

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