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## GOVERNMENT WATCH

### High-rises lose bid to cut fees

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#### ORANGE COUNTY

A trio of downtown high-rise developers seeking school impact-fee reductions were shot down Tuesday by Orange County leaders who argued the city's inner core could someday attract more children.

A lawyer for developers behind the Paramount Lake Eola, 55 West and Verde projects sought a roughly \$3.3 million projected impact-fee discount because the builders say the school system vastly overestimates how many children move into Orlando's high-rises.

Combined, the three projects anticipate building roughly 1,200 units. But developers say their research of current downtown projects showed few children move into high-rises, attorney Hal Kantor said.

"We think the School Board is way, way overcharging us," Kantor said.

County staff and commissioners agreed that current school estimates could overstate the effect of drawing children there now. But future rail and major downtown arts and sports projects should attract more families, justifying higher fee charges.

"Over a period of years, it's going to become more family-friendly" downtown, Deputy Orange County Administrator David Heath said.

County leaders agreed, voting 7-0 to turn back the discount request.

Commissioner Teresa Jacobs said other cities should be included in any downtown school-impact research, especially where the "urban evolution" has progressed faster than Orlando's.

*Mark Schlueb, David Damron and Rich McKay of the Sentinel staff contributed to this report.*

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