



DOCKET ITEM #10

**Special Use Permit #2010-0079**

**4646 Seminary Road – Francis Hammond Middle School**

17  
6-25-11

Application	General Data	
<b>Request:</b> Consideration of a request to add lighting to an existing athletic field/track and minimum a modification to the minimum front yard setback.	<b>Planning Commission Hearing:</b>	June 7, 2011
	<b>City Council Hearing:</b>	June 25, 2011
<b>Address:</b> 4646 Seminary Road	<b>Zone District:</b>	R-20/R8 – Single Family Residential
<b>Applicant:</b> Alexandria City Public Schools	<b>Small Area Plan:</b>	Seminary Hill / Strawberry Hill

**Staff Recommendation:** APPROVAL subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the recommended permit conditions found within this report.

**Staff Reviewers:** Dana Wedeles, Park Planner [dana.wedeles@alexandriava.gov](mailto:dana.wedeles@alexandriava.gov)  
Patricia Escher, Principal Planner [patricia.escher@alexandriava.gov](mailto:patricia.escher@alexandriava.gov)

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 7, 2011:** On a motion by Commissioner Jennings, and seconded by Commissioner Lyman, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of SUP #2010-0079 with the addition of three conditions. The motion carried on a vote of 4 to 2 with Commissioners Jennings, Lyman, Dunn and Komoroske in support, Commissioners Wagner and Fossum not in support and Commissioner Robinson was not in attendance.

**Reason:** The majority of Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis and associated recommendations and conditions. The Planning Commission added three conditions to their recommendation.

Conditions added by the Planning Commission:

14. The applicant shall provide 4 more trash receptacles on site within close proximity to the recreational amenities. Litter on the site and on public rights-of-way along N. Pickett St. shall be picked up at least once a day. (PC)
15. The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the Special Use Permit one year after approval, and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as the result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions, or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or

revised conditions are needed. (PC)

16. The neighborhood's parking demands shall be reviewed by staff within one year of operation/completion of the athletic amenities and the associated field lights.

Adjustments to the SUP 2010-0079 conditions shall be made if deemed necessary.(PC)

Speakers:

Anthony Zamora, 111 N. Ripley St., Apt 303 – Supports the proposal because he plays sports and believes it is a good influence for young people.

Bill Rivers, 15 W. Mount Ida Ave., Youth Sports – Supports the proposal because he believes that the City doesn't have enough recreational amenities.

Clark Mercer, 3318 Valle Dr., Parks & Recreation Commission – Supports the proposal as he coached at Hammond, but due to the fact he had to keep a very early schedule at work in order to get to Hammond at 4:30pm, he eventually quit coaching.

Fred Wixson, 417 E. Windsor Ave., Alexandria Rugby – Supports the proposal as he is a sports advocate and lives in a neighborhood with lighted fields and doesn't believe the lights negatively effects his area.

Nancy R Jennings, 2115 Marlboro Dr., Seminary Hill Assoc., Inc. - Does not support the proposal because it will have an adverse impact on the neighborhood due to glare, noise, traffic and trash.

Judy R. Guse- Noritake, 605 Prince St., Parks & Recreation Commission – Supports the proposal as she believes the City should provide more recreational opportunities for it's youth.

Steve Beggs, 2508 Terrett Ave. - Supports the proposal as he attended Alexandria schools growing up and hoped that the athletic facilities would be better than they are today.

Donnell R. Fullerton, 1407 N. Pickett St. - Does not support the proposal due to negative effects of the lights will have on his enjoyment of this property and loss in his property value.

John W. Timmons, Alexandria Soccer Association, 2408 Davis Ave., ASA – Supports the proposal and stated that the Bishop O'Connell situation is different as the facility is not a public school and will serve a more limited group than the Hammond fields.

Frank Putzu, 1423 Juliana Pl. - Does not support the proposal due to the impacts of the field lights and believes that the City has not done enough to mitigate the impacts. He believes that the application does not comply with the City's ordinance criteria as it related to the modification's requested to setbacks.

Jim & Suzanne Richardson, 4551 La Salle Ave. - Do not support the proposal due to noise that will occur every night and additional traffic due to the games.

Megan Smith, 1415 N. Pickett St. - Does not support the proposal due the additional noise that will occur late at night as she has a small child who goes to bed early.

Gerry Benson, 4535 La Salle Ave. - Does not support the proposal and thinks the City should improve the fields, but wait on the lights to see the impacts of the improved fields have on the neighborhood.

Jon Sargeant, Hammond PTA, - Supports the proposal and believes that sport activities lead to a sense of community and pride. The new technology lighting has minimal impacts with little light spillage onto adjacent properties.

Jim Gibbson, Knox St., - Supports the proposal because he believes sports are good for children and we should give back to the community by having these improvements for our children.

Joe Gerad, 1401 Knox Pl. - Does not support the proposal believes that it has not been looked a comprehensively with all the other activities in the area such as BRAC and other school activities.

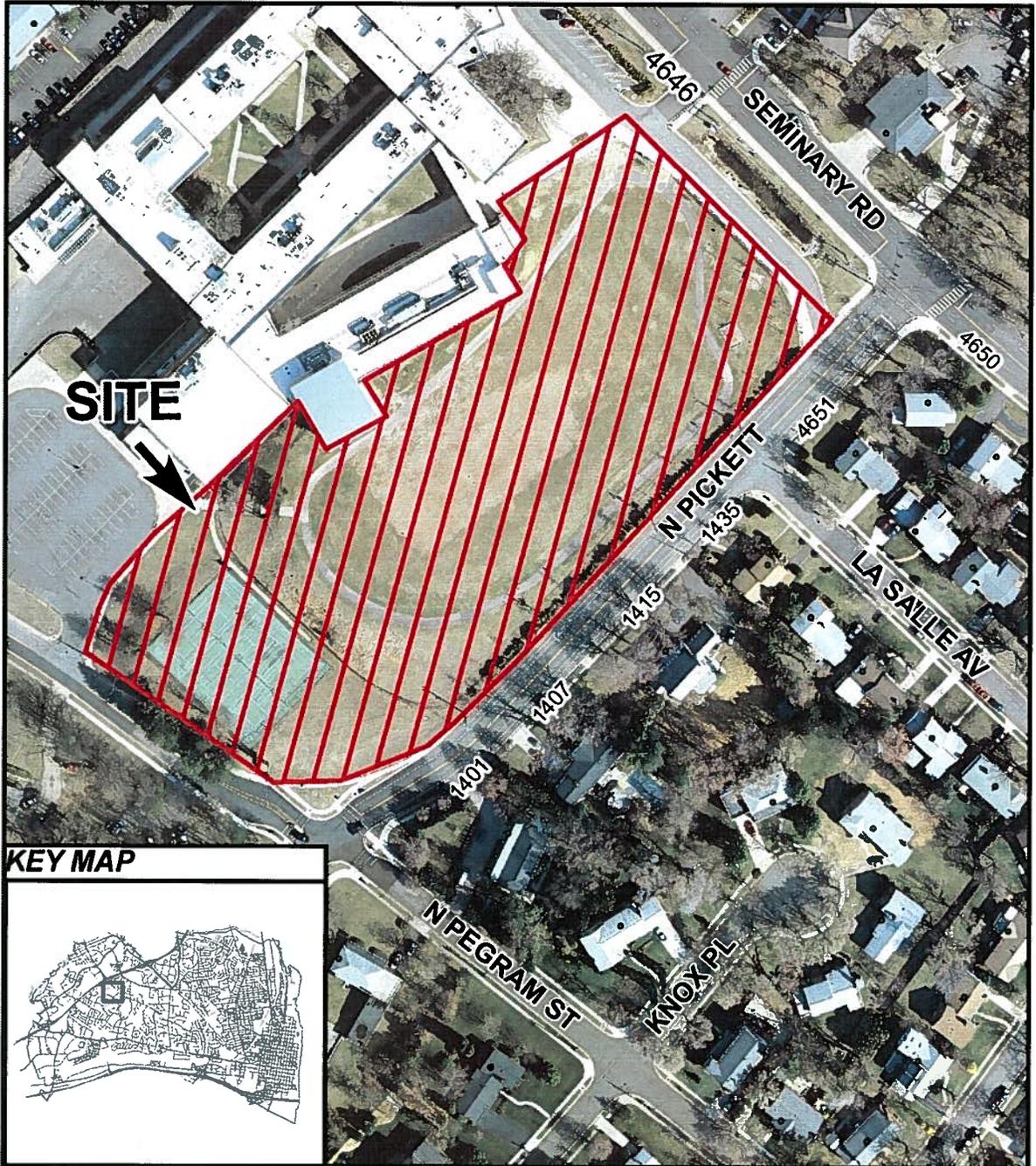
Jeff Murphy, 5106 Sutton Pl. - Supports the proposal as he is a father and coach. He believes that this is about improving the quality of life for the City's children.

Garry Carr, 216 Aspen St. - Supports the proposal to maximize the investment of improving the fields by adding the lights and lengthening the duration of field usage.

Mimi Carter, 106 E. Cliff St., Lacrosse Commission – Supports the proposal because of the growing demand for athletic fields in the City for both soccer and lacrosse.

Joanne Lepanto, 4009 N. Garland St. - Does not support the lights and stated that when the City expanded Hammond, they stated that they would not have lights at this facility.

Dak Harwood, Cameron Station Civic Assoc. – Supports the lights and has not received any complaints from residents adjacent to Ben Brenman Park since their lights were installed.



**SUP #2010-0079 6/7/2011**



## I. SUMMARY

The applicant, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), requests a Special Use Permit (SUP) to construct four, 60 foot tall field lights at Francis Hammond Middle School's existing athletic field/track. The request includes a modification to the R-20 front yard setback of 70 feet from property line to allow two of the four proposed light poles.

## II. BACKGROUND

The 25 acre subject property is located at the corner of Seminary Road and N. Pickett Street, within the R-20/R-8 residential zone districts. The property is an irregularly shaped lot with frontages along Seminary Road, N. Pickett Street and N. Pegram Street.

The site amenities consist of:

- A middle school building along the Seminary Road frontage;
- An athletic field, exercise course, and irregular configured track along the N. Pickett Street and Seminary Road frontages;
- Tennis courts and a large surface parking lot in the rear of the property along the N. Pegram Street frontage;
- A roller skating rink in the western portion of the property; and
- Additional recreational fields northwest of the roller rink in an area known as Hammond's lower field.

The site is surrounded by residential and institutional uses. The Seminary Apartments are located to the northwest of the site; single family homes are located on the southern and western perimeters and multi-family residences are on the northeastern side of Seminary Road as is the City's Fire Station #6 and the Burke Library. Due to the irregular and elongated shape of the property, the school site also abuts the Parkside and the Alexandria Overlook multi-family communities to the northwest.

### Site History

The Hammond school was opened in 1956 as a second high school within the City and dedicated in honor of Francis C. Hammond, a World War II medaled veteran. The school was built in addition to the existing George Washington High School on Mount Vernon Avenue to accommodate the growing demands of the City's student population. The school was used as a high school until 1971, housing both the 9th & 10th grades. Eventually both the Hammond and George Washington high schools' student populations were combined and relocated to the T. C. Williams' site on King Street and Hammond school was converted into middle school facility.

During the original construction of the high school, the campus contained, in the same location as the existing field to be lighted, a full sized track, athletic field, bleachers and an amplified sound system all of which were in active use until the year 2000. At that time, the ACPS requested and received an approval of a development site plan (DSP #2000-0044) for a 55,000 sq. ft. addition to the existing school facility to accommodate an expected increase in the general school population. The redesign of the school facility required the removal of

the bleachers and reconfigured the track into the irregular shape that exists today. The athletic field remained and has since been used continuously by ACPS and for City programs. It was also during the 2000 review process that the Planning Commission amended a development condition requiring ACPS to go through a Special Use Permit review when considering the installation of athletic field lighting.



Hammond Middle School Athletic Amenities Configuration as Existed up to 2000

### III. PROPOSAL

The proposed lighting will consist of four poles, not to exceed 60 feet in height. All four of the poles will feature additional rotated light fixtures to direct light onto the running track surrounding the field. Advanced field lighting technology will be used to significantly limit light spill-over beyond the playing fields. The field will be surrounded by a 6' fence with limited access/use for City-sponsored programs. The field and athletic lights are not to be programmed past 10:00pm Monday through Saturday and 6:00pm on Sundays. Track lighting will be controlled by a user-push button until 10:00pm. Exercise equipment will also be replaced.

#### Parking

Based on industry standards, 38 parking spaces are typically needed for each soccer game, which is when the field will be at its heaviest use. The school currently includes 226 parking spaces that will not be used for school when games are being played, as shown in the application package. The gated entrance to the field will be next to the parking lot,

encouraging participants and spectators to park on and access the field directly from the parking lot and not along the adjacent residential streets.

Compliance with Master Plan

The Hammond School site is located within the 1992 Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill Small Area Plan. The Plan acknowledges the existing land use by designating the land area as an institutional use.

**IV. ZONING**

The Hammond School site is located within both the R-20 and R-8 Zone Districts. While these zone districts are primarily residential, public schools are a permitted use within these districts as are their ancillary uses of athletic fields, tracks, tennis courts, etc.

Special Use Permit

The request for athletic field lighting requires the applicant to obtain a Special Use Permit, of which the permit has two components.

The first portion of the Special Use Permit is the direct result of a condition of a previously approved development site plan (DSP #2000-0044, Cond. 16). The Planning Commission amended the condition to require a Special Use Permit and therefore a public review of any proposed lighting of the athletic fields. ACPS has held (in addition to the required public hearings), two community meetings and a public review with the Parks and Recreation Commission and with the Youth Sports Advisory Board. The second portion of the use permit is to allow a public school facility to construct a structure (athletic field lights) up to 60 feet within the City (Sec.7-2100). Staff is recommending approval of the Special Use Permit.

Front Yard Modification

The site has a unique lot configuration abutting three City streets. Pursuant to the City's Zoning Ordinance, a portion of a lot that abuts a street is considered a front yard. The Ordinance further defines lots with several street frontages as lots with more than one front yard.

In an effort to ensure adequate separation for uses/structures within the residential zone districts, the Ordinance requires buildings/structures to be setback from property lines as defined by their "yard" requirement. In a case when a land use is not a residential use; the non-residential setbacks are usually greater or more restrictive than the residential setback.

The existing athletic amenities lie within both the R-20 and the R-8 zone districts and within both Seminary Road and Pickett Street front yards. The portion of the track/field next to Pickett Street is within the R-20 zone that has a 70' front yard setback requirement due to the non-residential institutional use. Although the City's setback requirements do not apply athletic amenities at ground level, they do apply to structures including, in this case, two of the four proposed light poles that will be located approximately 23 and 25 feet from property line. The impact of the light poles will be mitigated by provision of additional deciduous trees and evergreen trees along N. Pickett Street, the use of cut off shields and advanced

technologies that will direct the light onto the field/track and will have minimal impact the adjacent properties. Therefore, staff is recommending approval of this modification to the front yard requirement.

## V. STAFF ANALYSIS

### Increased Demand for Recreational Amenities

Staff supports the request of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) to add field lighting at Hammond Middle School. The City is in critical need of rectangular fields with safe playing conditions and flexible play hours. RP&CA, alone, has a need for over 6,700 additional annual play hours to meet its current demand for rectangular field intensive use sports, such as soccer and lacrosse.<sup>1</sup> Coaches for youth and adult sports programs are volunteers and are typically only available after-work hours when field lights are most needed. Lighting the field will increase the amount of time each day that the field can be used, particularly during early sunsets in the early spring and late fall when sports seasons are most heavily underway. Moreover, participation in youth recreational programs increased 22% between FY09 and FY10. There is not additional land available for provision of facilities to meet this demand. The demand for programs is anticipated to rise as the City's population continues to grow. ACPS anticipates a 23% increase in student enrollment between FY15 and FY20. The City's recent Capital Improvement Program approval of three new K-8 schools validates this trend. It is projected that this student increase is will also be reflected in recreation participation.

### City's Athletic Fields Master Plan & Fields Priority Strategy

The athletic field lights are consistent with the City of Alexandria Athletic Fields Master Plan conducted in 2006 (adopted by Council with the passage of the 2008 Capital Improvements Program) which found that "field conditions in Alexandria are below acceptable industry standards due to a field shortage, lack of field capacity, and poor field conditions." A recommendation from that study included conversion of natural turf fields to synthetic turf with lights to increase playable hours. Following that plan, a Fields Priority Strategy in 2009 (presented to Council in January, 2010 and documented in a letter from the City Manager in March, 2011) found that Hammond Upper Field had the highest potential for conversion, following Ben Brenman, as determined by its size, location, field condition, access, constructability and fiscal impact. Each of these studies were presented in multiple venues for public comments and adopted by City Council. Subsequently, City Council has provided funding for the conversion of athletic fields from natural grass to synthetic turf with lights as part of the City's ten-year Capital Improvement Program.

A review of similar strategies by nearby jurisdictions found that the Arlington, Virginia 2005 Open Space Master Plan recommended a minimum conversion of one natural grass athletic field to synthetic per year and that all synthetic grass conversions should have existing lighting or a plan for athletic field lighting installation.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of hours in need was determined by finding the difference between the average number of hours RP&CA annually programs the fields and the national standard of annual hours used to keep fields well maintained and safe. A Fields Priority Strategy was conducted in 2009 using this exact method. Since 2009, synthetic turf and lighting have been installed at Ben Brenman Park, decreasing the number of hours in need by 2,750 hours.

Lighting

Spill-over from the new lights is significantly reduced through the use of advanced lighting technology. As the following chart shows, for public safety purposes, the City standard for street lamps in new residential neighborhoods in Alexandria is .6 fc. The highest existing foot candle reading along the residential side of N. Pickett Street (approximately 126 feet) is .26 fc. With the proposed athletic field lights are activated, the light level would increase to .44 fc, an increase of .18 fc but still .16 fc below the City standard of .6 fc.

Full Moonlight	Highest Existing Foot Candle along east sidewalk of N. Pickett Street	Highest Proposed Foot Candle along east sidewalk of N. Pickett Street (combined athletic lights and street lamps)	Alexandria Standard for lighting along sidewalks in single family residential areas
.02	.26	.44	.6

This technology is successfully in use at other City-owned parks, including the fields at Minnie Howard (2006) and Fort Ward Park (2009). Most recently, advanced lighting was successfully used at Ben Brenman Park for both the rectangular and diamond fields. In addition, a “kill switch” that allows coaches and staff to immediately turn the lights off themselves if a practice or game ends earlier than scheduled is being provided at Hammond. Staff views the lights as a positive addition to the school that will improve the quality of evening play and better meet the recreational needs of Alexandria citizens.

Pursuant to discussions with the community, staff reviewed another local jurisdiction’s criteria to evaluate the current proposal and found that in 2003 Fairfax County, Virginia conducted a lighting study and subsequent Athletic Field Lighting Performance Outline Specifications and County ordinance 14-904. Through this ordinance the Fairfax County Park Authority does not have a setback between lights and a residential property, but rather, measures the off-site light spill at 150’, regardless of location. Fairfax County Park Authority specifications require a maximum of .3 fc at 150’ from the light source. In comparison, the proposed lights for Hammond would have a maximum of .09 fc on the North Pickett Street side or less than 1/3 of the Fairfax County Off-Field Spill Light Limitation requirements.

Community Concerns

In response to community concern about noise and litter resulting from field use, staff recommends that the field only be used by RP&CA or ACPS sponsored programs, including P.E. programs, T.C. Williams, Power-Up recreation programs, City of Alexandria youth and adults sports leagues, and summer camps/clinics. Each of these programs requires an on-site staff or coach to supervise the team, monitor sound levels, and ensure that the site is left in clean condition. No private rentals would be permitted. If a team does not respond to the required conditions, their permit will be revoked and they would no longer be allowed to use the field. As with synthetic fields at Minnie Howard, Fort Ward and Ben Brenman there are posted regulations for use of the synthetic fields and a 6’ tall gated fence is proposed to secure the field and would prevent unauthorized use.

Concerns about parking and traffic in Hammond's adjacent residential neighborhood have been expressed by the community. With over 200+ on-site parking spaces, the school can easily accommodate vehicles for both participants and spectators. Industry standard suggests the need for 38 parking spaces for a rectangular field; on average, in Alexandria, youth games generate 20-25 vehicles and, generally, do not coincide with rush hour. The 6' gated entrance to the field will be next to the parking lot, encouraging participants and spectators to park on site and not along the adjacent residential streets.

Additionally, during the community outreach process, the community expressed concern about the amount of increased traffic that is generated by the ancillary use of religious organizations using the school's facilities during the week and on weekends. The greatest traffic impact occurs on Sunday. While this issue is not directly related to this SUP, ACPS has agreed to require that Sunday worship groups contract services with the Alexandria City Police Department for an off duty officer to direct traffic at the intersection of Seminary Road and Pickett Streets.

The field at Hammond has on occasion been used as a helicopter landing zone for emergency situations. The Alexandria Fire Department has been notified of the project and the Emergency Medical Services Operations Manager stated that the Fire Department's use of the site should not affect a decision to install the field; the City may decide to relocate to an alternative landing zone in the area without operational impact.

Staff also notes that ACPS has reached out to the community regarding this proposal. Public meetings were held on both February 7, 2011 and April 26, 2011. The plan was also presented at the Parks and Recreation Commission on January 20, 2011. The Seminary Hill Association, Youth Sports Advisory Board, and Hammond PTA have all been notified.

In conclusion, staff believes the additional field lighting will be a benefit to the community and recommends approval, subject to the recommended conditions and findings contained in Section VI of this report.

**Artist's Rendering of Hammond Lights**



## VI. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff recommends **approval** SUP 2010-0079 as submitted and discussed within this report, with compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following recommended conditions.

1. The front yard minimum setback from Pickett Street shall be reduced to 23 feet for the northern most pole and 25 feet for the southern pole as indicated within the submitted materials. (P&Z)
2. Access to the field will be restricted by installation of a 6 foot fence with a gated entry point at the southwest and northwest portion of the field adjacent to parking lots. (P&Z)
3. Spill-over light from the light poles shall be controlled through the use of advanced lighting technology to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning & Zoning, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities and Transportation and Environmental Services. (P&Z)
4. Field and track lighting shall be turned off no later than 10:00pm Monday through Saturday and 6:00pm on Sunday. (P&Z)
5. A grading plan showing all improvements and alterations to the site must be approved by the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services and Planning and Zoning prior to installation of site improvements for the athletic field, track, and exercise course. (P&Z, T&ES)
6. All loudspeakers shall be prohibited from the exterior of the building, and no amplified sounds shall be audible at the property line. (T&ES)
7. The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
8. The proposed lights shall be shielded and directed in a manner as to not create a nuisance to the residential properties along the south side of North Pickett Street, the east side of Seminary Road or the west side of North Pegram Street. (T&ES)
9. The applicant shall provide additional shade and evergreen trees (15 total) along Pickett Street. Trees shall be used to infill between existing trees and vegetation. Size and species shall be consistent with City of Alexandria Landscape Guidelines. (P&Z, RP&CA)
10. If the staff determines that the newly installed lights have impacted surrounding properties adversely then the Applicant will provide additional improvements to the satisfaction of the Directors of Planning & Zoning, Transportation and Environmental Services and Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities to amend the adverse condition. (T&ES)
11. The proposed installation will require a Building Permit for foundation/footings/erection, etc. and electrical permit for wiring. (Code Administration)

12. Application for the above building permit will require five sets of plans with emphasis on soil conditions and foundation details, anchorage, wind load design, etc. These plans will need to be sealed by a PE licensed in the Commonwealth. (Code Administration)
13. Installation/erection is subject to special inspections. (Code Administration)
14. **CONDITION ADDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** The applicant shall provide 4 more trash receptacles on site within close proximity to the recreational amenities. Litter on the site and on public rights-of-way along N. Pickett St. shall be picked up at least once a day. (PC)
15. **CONDITION ADDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** The Director of Planning and Zoning shall review the Special Use Permit one year after approval, and shall docket the matter for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council if (a) there have been documented violations of the permit conditions which were not corrected immediately, constitute repeat violations or which create a direct and immediate adverse zoning impact on the surrounding community; (b) the director has received a request from any person to docket the permit for review as the result of a complaint that rises to the level of a violation of the permit conditions, or (c) the director has determined that there are problems with the operation of the use and that new or revised conditions are needed. (PC)
16. **CONDITION ADDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** The neighborhood's parking demands shall be reviewed by staff within one year of operation/completion of the athletic amenities and the associated field lights. Adjustments to the SUP 2010-0079 conditions shall be made if deemed necessary.(PC)

STAFF:

James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities  
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director, Planning & Zoning  
Gwen Wright, Division Chief, Development, Planning & Zoning  
Dana Wedeles, Park Planner, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities  
Patricia Escher, Principal Planner, Planning & Zoning Development

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**Staff Note:** In accordance with section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

#### IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

##### Transportation & Environmental Services

F-1 Parcel is flagged as being in a Marine Clay Area.

##### Police Department

F-1 ACPS has agreed to require that the groups using the school facility during the weekends will contract with Alexandria Police Department to have an off duty officer direct traffic at the intersection of Seminary Road and N. Picket Street during their Sunday services.



# APPLICATION

## SPECIAL USE PERMIT

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT #** 2010-0079

**PROPERTY LOCATION:** 4646 Seminary Road (Francis C. Hammond M.S.)

**TAX MAP REFERENCE:** 030.01-01-03 **ZONE:** R8 & R20

**APPLICANT:**

Name: Alexandria Public Schools (ACPS)

Address: 2000 N. Beauregard St. Alexandria, VA

ACPS is requesting a Special Use Permit to add lights to an athletic facility. The SUP application **PROPOSED USE:** has two aspects to it: The first aspect of the SUP is pursuant to a condition of a previously approved Development Site Plan (DSP 2000-0044) which requires public review of any proposed lighting of athletic fields at Hammond. The second aspect of the SUP is to allow a public school facility to construct a structure up to 60' within the City (Sec. 7-2100). ACPS also requests a modification to the minimum front yard setback within the R-20 zoning district per section 3-106(A)

**THE UNDERSIGNED**, hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 4-11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

**THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria staff and Commission Members to visit, inspect, and photograph the building premises, land etc., connected with the application.

**THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4-1404(D)(7) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

**THE UNDERSIGNED**, hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Director of Planning and Zoning on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Kevin Van Hise  
Print Name of Applicant or Agent

Signature

5.12.11  
Date

13221 Woodland Park Road  
Mailing/Street Address

703.674.1306  
Telephone #

703.674.1350  
Fax #

Herndon, VA                      20171  
City and State                      Zip Code

kevin.vanhise@kimley-horn.com  
Email address

<b>ACTION-PLANNING COMMISSION:</b> _____	<b>DATE:</b> _____
<b>ACTION-CITY COUNCIL:</b> _____	<b>DATE:</b> _____

**PROPERTY OWNER'S AUTHORIZATION**

As the property owner of 4646 SEMINARY ROAD, I hereby  
(Property Address)  
 grant the applicant authorization to apply for the ATHLETIC FIELD LIGHTS use as  
(use)  
 described in this application.

Name: MARK KRAUSE

Phone: 703 461 4168

Please Print  
 Address: 2000 N. BEAUBIARD ST

Email: mKrause@acps.k12.va.us

Signature: *Mark Krause*

Date: 5/5/11

1. Floor Plan and Plot Plan. As a part of this application, the applicant is required to submit a floor plan and plot or site plan with the parking layout of the proposed use. The SUP application checklist lists the requirements of the floor and site plans. The Planning Director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver.

Required floor plan and plot/site plan attached.

Requesting a waiver. See attached written request.

2. The applicant is the (check one):

Owner

Contract Purchaser

Lessee or

Other: \_\_\_\_\_ of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant or owner, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

N/A

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**USE CHARACTERISTICS**

- 4. The proposed special use permit request is for (check one):
  - a new use requiring a special use permit,
  - an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
  - an expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
  - other. Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

- 5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:
  - A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?  
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).  
No change from existing use in capacity. But hours will be extended with approval of lights (see attached existing users list)
  - B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?  
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).  
No Change

- 6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:
 

Day:	Hours:
_____	_____
<u>Monday - Saturday</u>	<u>8:00am - 10:00pm</u>
<u>Sunday</u>	<u>8:00am - 6:00pm</u>

\*Times proposed are for both the track safety lighting and the field lighting.

- 7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use.
  - A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.  
Normal noise associated with athletic field use.  
No amplified sound permitted.
  - B. How will the noise be controlled?  
When programmed, RPCA staff/coaches will always be on site and will monitor sound.

8. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

N/A

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9. Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use.

A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. office paper, food wrappers)  
Waste associated with athletic field use. (cups, bottles, etc.)

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B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. # of bags or pounds per day or per week)

N/A

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C. How often will trash be collected?

No Change

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D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

Trash cans will be provided in the field area.

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10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

[ ] Yes.

No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

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11. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

[ ] Yes.      [X] No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

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12. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of nearby residents, employees and patrons?

User-controlled safety lighting is proposed to light the track  
for neighbors to use.

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**ALCOHOL SALES**

13.

A. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

[ ] Yes      [X] No

If yes, describe existing (if applicable) and proposed alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales.

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**PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS**

14. A. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

- 216 Standard spaces
- Compact spaces
- 6 Handicapped accessible spaces.
- Other.

<p>Planning and Zoning Staff Only</p> <p>Required number of spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200A <u>          </u></p> <p>Does the application meet the requirement?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
--

B. Where is required parking located? (check one)

on-site

off-site

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located?

**PLEASE NOTE:** Pursuant to Section 8-200 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

C. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to Section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the Zoning Ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

Parking reduction requested; see attached supplemental form

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

A. How many loading spaces are available for the use? N/A

<p>Planning and Zoning Staff Only</p> <p>Required number of loading spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200 <u>          </u></p> <p>Does the application meet the requirement?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
---

B. Where are off-street loading facilities located? N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

C. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?  
N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

D. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

Existing access is adequate.

\_\_\_\_\_

**SITE CHARACTERISTICS**

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building?  Yes  No

Do you propose to construct an addition to the building?  Yes  No

How large will the addition be? N/A square feet.

18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be? No Change / N/A

\_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft. (existing) + \_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft. (addition if any) = \_\_\_\_\_ sq. ft. (total)

19. The proposed use is located in: (check one)

a stand alone building

a house located in a residential zone

a warehouse

a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: \_\_\_\_\_

an office building. Please provide name of the building: \_\_\_\_\_

other. Please describe: Athletic Field

End of Application

**Narrative Request for a Special Use Permit to Install Athletic Field Lighting at Hammond Middle School (SUP # 2010-0079)**

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is requesting approval to add lighting to an existing athletic field at Francis C. Hammond Middle School (4646 Seminary Road). The property is located in the R-8 and R-20 zoning districts.

The Special Use Permit (SUP) Application to add lighting has two aspects to it. The first aspect of the SUP is pursuant to a condition set forth in a previously approved Development Site Plan (DSP#2000-0044, Cond. 16). The Planning Commission amended a condition to require a public review process for the addition of any proposed lighting to the athletic fields at Francis C. Hammond Middle School. The second aspect of the SUP is to allow a public school facility to construct a structure up to 60 feet in height within the City (Sec. 7-2100).

In addition, ACPS is requesting a modification to the minimum front yard setback within the R-20 zoning district per section 3-106(A). Two of the light poles located in the R-20 zoning district are within a 70' front yard setback.

The existing rectangular athletic field is a well-used, and much needed athletic/recreational resource in the City. In order to better meet the recreational needs of Alexandria's citizens and the students of Hammond Middle School, and to provide evening use of the site, ACPS is proposing to add lighting to the athletic field. The proposed lighting for the athletic field will consist of field lights mounted on four poles, with a maximum height of 60 feet.

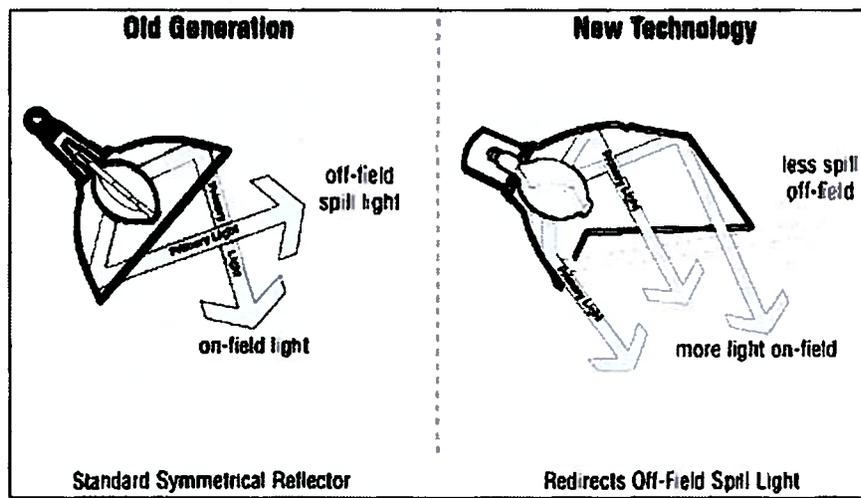
In addition to lighting the field, ACPS proposes to add safety lighting for the track as a courtesy to citizens so that they have the ability to use the track in the evening. Safety lighting for the track will be provided with fixtures that will be mounted on the same four 60' poles at a lower height and lower lighting intensity.

Locations for the light poles are indicated on the proposed site plan (attached). The proposed lighting system will use technologically advanced fixtures that significantly limit light spill-over beyond the playing field area and track. An example of a similar product is attached for information/demonstration only (please see below in this narrative).

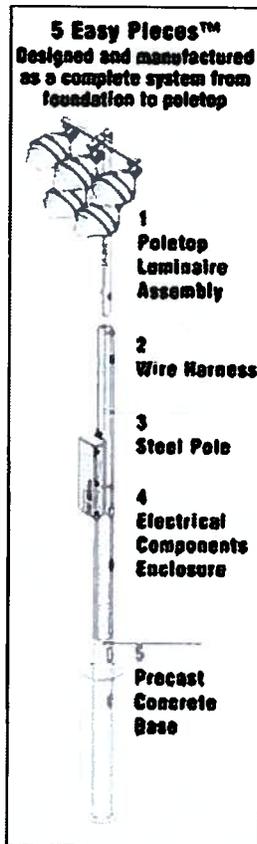
Additional improvements to the Hammond Middle School athletic field and track are planned, including the replacement of the existing natural turf field with a synthetic turf infill system. In addition, the existing track will be reconfigured around the synthetic turf field. These improvements will better accommodate athletic activities at Hammond Middle School. These field and track improvements have been submitted to the City under a separate grading plan application.



**Existing Athletic Field at Hammond Middle School**



**Advance Field Lighting Technology**



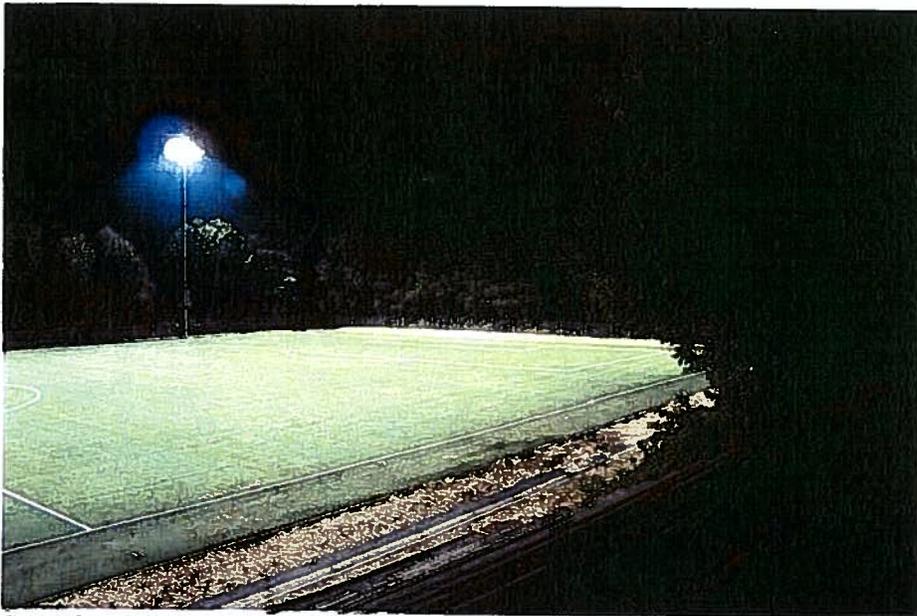
**Standard Pole Mounted Lighting**



**Proposed Safety Lighting Concept for the Track – Lower mounted fixtures on the same pole as the athletic field lighting. A similar concept was used at Ben Brenman Park to light an adjacent playground.**



**Sample Field Lighting with Low-Spill Technology at Minnie Howard Field**



**Sample Field Lighting with Low-Spill Technology at Fort Ward Field**



**Sample Field Lighting with Low-Spill Technology at Ben Brenman Park**

# Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

		Athletic Field & Tennis Court Users			
		FY 2011	July 2010 - June 2011		
Field	Season	User Group	Dates of Use	Days of Use	Time of Use
Francis Hammond MS Upper	Spring	Adult Sports Soccer (Rentals) (several teams)	February 28 - June	Saturday/Sunday	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Spring	Physical Fitness Classes	March - June	Monday - Friday	8:00 am - 4:00 pm
	Summer	Adult Sports Soccer (Rentals)	June - August	Saturday/Sunday	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Fall	TC Williams Soccer Teams	September - October	Monday - Friday	3:00 - 6:30 p.m.
	Fall	Adult Sports Soccer (Rentals) (several leagues)	September - November	Saturday/Sunday	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Fall	Physical Fitness Classes	September - December	Monday - Friday	8:00 am - 4:00 pm





**LEGEND:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ PARCEL LOT LINE  
 □ PARCEL BOUNDARY

2011-01-18

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**HAMMOND SCHOOL**  
 ATHLETIC FIELD IMPROVEMENTS  
 SUP # 2010-0079  
 ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**OWNER / DEVELOPER**  
 CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
 301 KING STREET  
 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314  
 ALEXANDRIA CITY  
 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

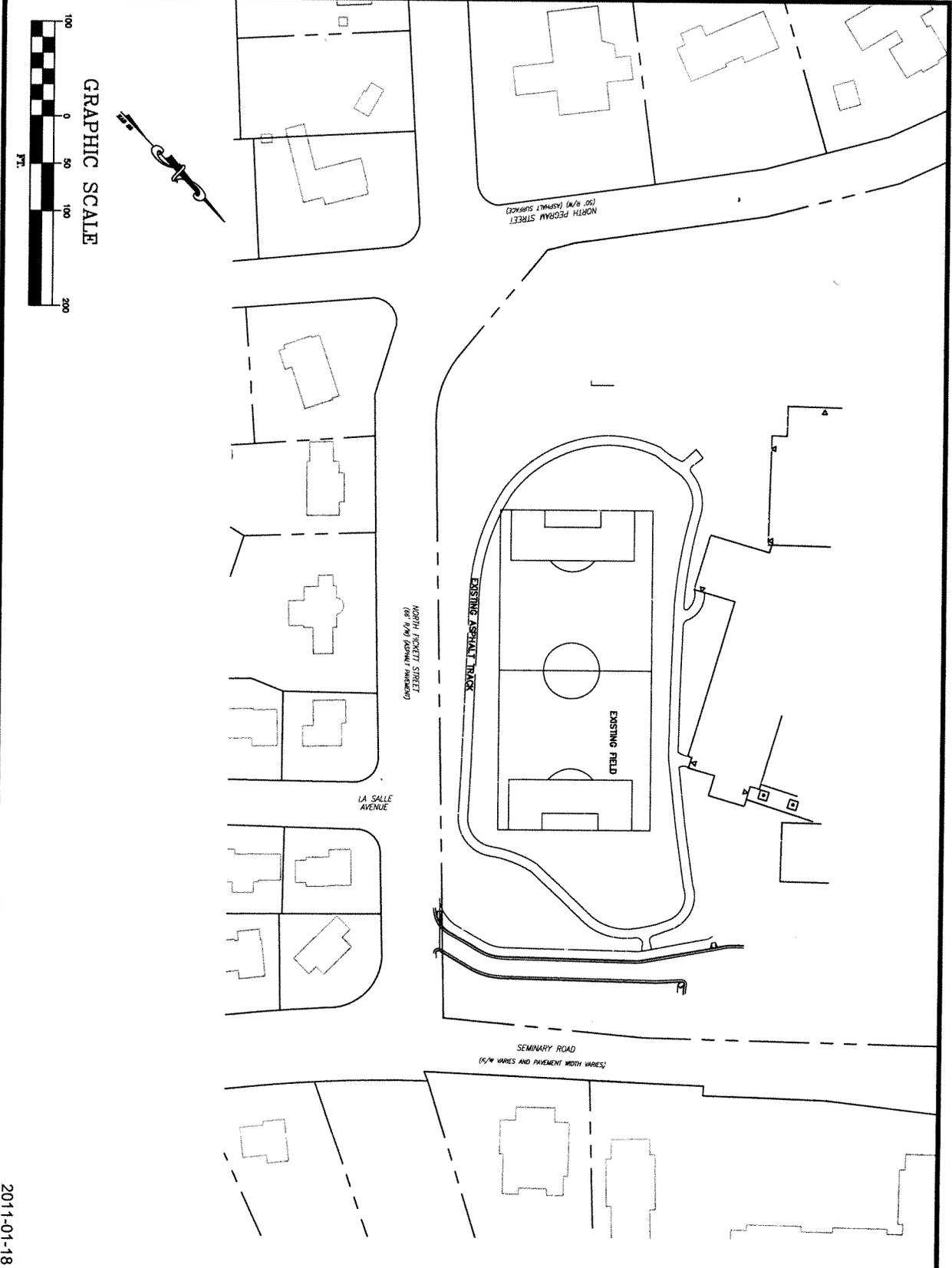
**ADDRESS:** 13221 WOODLAND PARK ROAD, SUITE 400  
 HERNDON, VIRGINIA 20171  
**PHONE NO:** 703-674-1300 **FAX NO:** 703-674-1350  
**PROJ. MANAGER:** KEVIN VAN HISE  
**EMAIL:** KEVIN.VANHISE@KIMLEY-HORN.COM

OVERALL SITE EXHIBIT

**CONTACT: MARK KRAUSE**  
 (703) 370-7704



**Kimley-Horn**  
 and Associates, Inc.



2011-01-18

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3

**HAMMOND SCHOOL**  
**ATHLETIC FIELD IMPROVEMENTS**  
 SUP # 2010-0079  
 ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

EXISTING CONDITIONS

**OWNER / DEVELOPER**  
 CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
 301 KING STREET  
 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314  
 ALEXANDRIA CITY  
 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

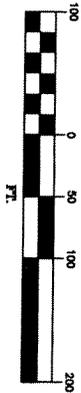
CONTACT: MARK KRAUSE  
 (703) 370-7704

ADDRESS: 13221 WOODLAND PARK ROAD, SUITE 400  
 HERNDON, VIRGINIA 20171  
 PHONE NO: 703-674-1300 FAX NO: 703-674-1350  
 PROJ. MANAGER: KEVIN VAN HISE  
 EMAIL: KEVIN.VANHISE@KIMLEY-HORN.COM



**Kimley-Horn  
 and Associates, Inc.**

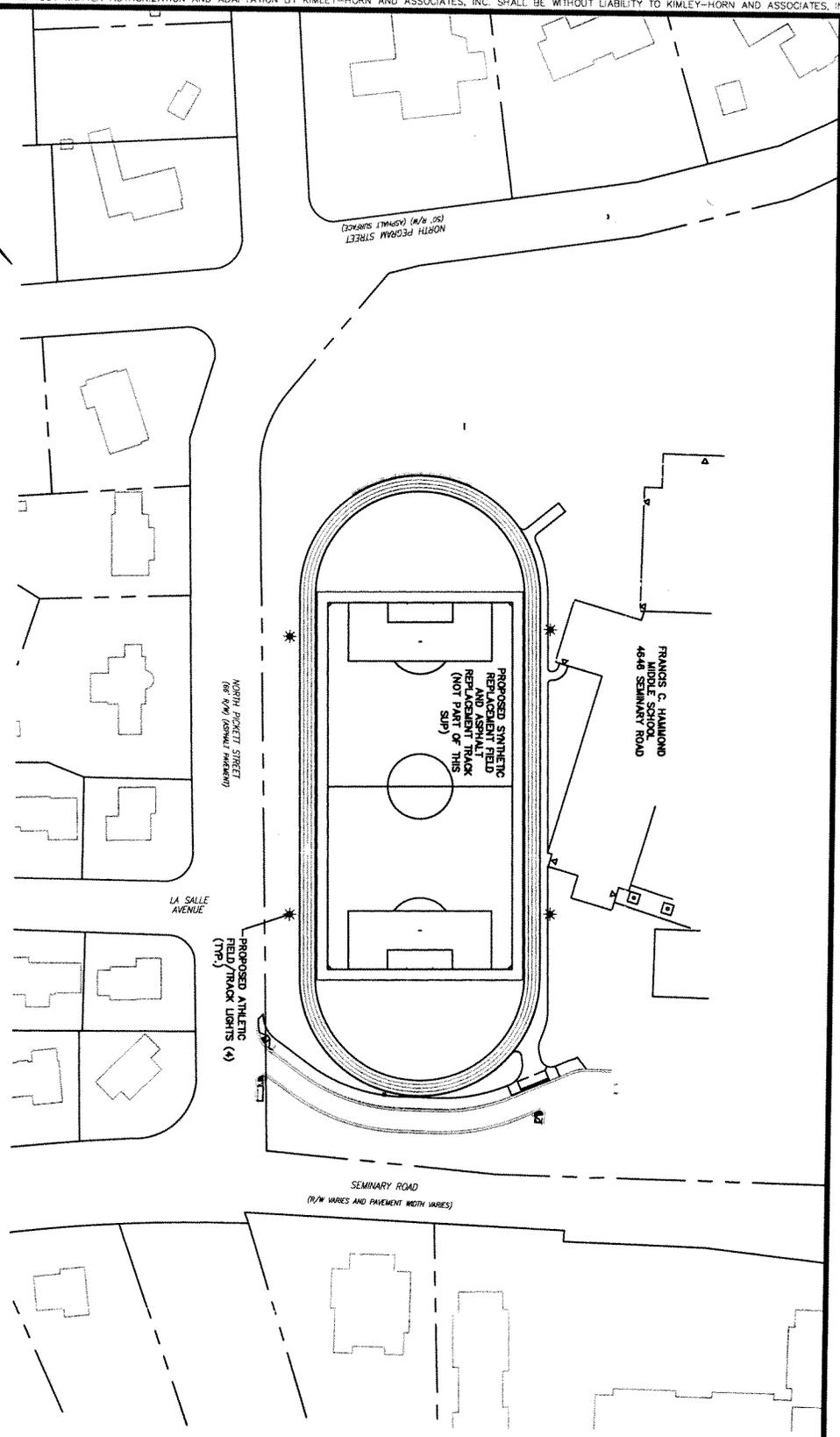
29



GRAPHIC SCALE



- ITEMS INCLUDED IN THIS SUP\***
- PROPOSED FIELD/TRACK LIGHTS (4)
  - \* THE PROPOSED FIELD REPLACEMENT AND TRACK RECONSTRUCTION ARE NOT PART OF THIS SUP APPLICATION AND WILL BE PERMITTED SEPARATELY AS A GRADING PLAN.



2011-01-18

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4

**HAMMOND SCHOOL**  
 ATHLETIC FIELD IMPROVEMENTS  
 SUP # 2010-0079  
 ALEXANDRIA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**OWNER / DEVELOPER**  
 CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
 301 KING STREET  
 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314  
 ALEXANDRIA CITY  
 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**ADDRESS:** 13221 WOODLAND PARK ROAD, SUITE 400  
 HERNDON, VIRGINIA 20171  
**PHONE NO:** 703-674-1300 **FAX NO:** 703-674-1350  
**PROJ. MANAGER:** KEVIN VAN HISE  
**EMAIL:** KEVIN.VANHISE@KIMLEY-HORN.COM

**CONTACT:** MARK KRAUSE  
 (703) 370-7704



**Kimley-Horn**  
 and Associates, Inc.

30

**Kendra Jacobs**

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**Subject:** FW: Lighting Francis Hammond Field

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**From:** jns-rshea@comcast.net [mailto:jns-rshea@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 20, 2011 11:12 AM  
**To:** Bob.Barusefski@kimley-horn.com  
**Cc:** Mac Slover  
**Subject:** Lighting Francis Hammond Field

January 16, 2011

Ms. Judy Guse-Noritake

Chairperson

Park and Recreation Commission

City of Alexandria

Dear Chairperson Guse-Noritake:

I am writing on behalf of the Alexandria Lacrosse Club. We would like to voice our strong support for lighting the field at Francis Hammond Middle School. Not only is the shortage of field space in the city a concern for us, but our lack of volunteer coaches hinders the amount of children we can accept into our program. Only by accommodating working coaches can we supply a sufficient number to maintain a strong program. This requires practicing into the evening. You can clearly see the benefits of field lighting to our program.

Lighting Francis Hammond Middle School's field would not only help our club, but we strongly feel it would benefit the Alexandria community as a whole. Adult leagues would be able to make use of this field at night, as well.

As you know, technological enhancements have dimmed the impact of extraneous light on surrounding communities. As the city plans to implement such technology at Francis Hammond's field, we applaud such efforts to minimize any negative effects. We likewise applaud the city's stated intent to closely regulate the fields use.

Sports enhance Alexandria city life. However, with continued growth, field space is increasingly limited. Any effort we can make to lengthen a field's useful day will cost-effectively increase field space for all Alexandrians.

Sincerely,  
Eva Shea  
Commissioner Alexandria Lacrosse Club

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✓

January 28, 2011

Ms. Judy Guse-Noritake  
Chair  
Park and Recreation Commission  
City of Alexandria

Dear Chairwoman Guse-Noritake:

On behalf of the Youth Sports Advisory Board (YSAB), I am writing to you to express the full support of the YSAB to the proposal to install an artificial turf field along with lights at Hammond Middle School. The Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) has developed this proposal and would like to implement it this calendar year.

We believe that this initiative will benefit Alexandria is at least two ways: during the school day, Alexandria's youth will be able to use the field for physical education classes with minimal interruption due to weather conditions, and after school, the kids can use the field both for after-school sponsored activities and for City sponsored activities through the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (DRPCA).

An artificial turf field has already been proven to provide three times the use of a natural grass field. This is particularly important in a City that has extreme limits on the availability of open space. The installation of lights helps contribute to the threefold increase in usage. Not only can more activities be scheduled for the field due to increased available time, but also the ability to use the field later in the day means that more volunteer coaches can attend practices. Just as field availability is a limiting factor in being able to provide safe activities for our youth, the availability of qualified coaches is also a factor. The use of lights at Hammond will help resolve both issues for our kids. In addition, the ACPS proposal includes a state of the art light system that minimizes the impact on adjoining neighborhoods.

We appreciate the support that the Park and Recreation Commission have provided the youth of Alexandria through the years. This has been continued through your support of the ACPS initiative at Hammond. We want you to know that we at the YSAB are also in agreement with you about the Hammond project. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jim Gibson  
Chair  
Youth Sports Advisory Board

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## Kendra Jacobs

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**From:** Mary MacPherson <marysmacpherson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 20, 2011 4:05 PM  
**To:** Patricia Escher  
**Subject:** re: stadium lighting.  
**Attachments:** DSC00147.JPG

Hi, here is an example of a minivan parked too closely to a fire hydrant on Sunday afternoon. This is a quiet Sunday, no games on the field and only 1 church service in attendance. Even so, I will try to forward you a pic on what the street looks like on a quiet Sunday so you can see what it would be like on a busy Sunday. The lower parking lot is empty today, because everyone parks in the neighborhood street. Many are unaware that there is another parking lot to use.

At one time, I pointed out what a fire hydrant was to these church folks. Hydrants are not in developing countries. Many thought they were Religious Icons!

Mary MacPherson  
1435 N. Pickett Street, Alexandria, Va.  
703-370-8569



## Kendra Jacobs

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**From:** Mary MacPherson <marysmacpherson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 20, 2011 4:17 PM  
**To:** Patricia Escher  
**Subject:** Re: another pic on traffic  
**Attachments:** DSC00148.JPG

Hi, here is the pic on a quiet Sunday with not much going on at all. By 6:00 pm, the traffic will be all backed up at the traffic light near the intersection of Seminary Road and N. Pickett Street. When that light finally turns green, the other two going west and east on Seminary Road turn red, causing more gridlock! Thanks, Mary MacPherson



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## Kendra Jacobs

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**From:** Ruth Nottingham <ruthnottingham@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 03, 2011 11:02 AM  
**To:** Patricia Escher  
**Subject:** Plans for Hammond Field

Ms. Echer,

My wife & I attended the recent community meeting at Hammond re the artificial turf & lighting planned for the school field. As a former school teacher & principal & as a former coach in the Rec program of the City, I understand the value of a strong athletic program for our children & adults. I also have complained for decades about the too few fields and the poor condition of them. My youth baseball teams played on such lousy fields that we never knew which way the ball would bounce & we often had injuries due to holes & clumps of weeds on the fields. We won the 12 yo championship one year & coached the All-star team that competed vs. FXCO teams. Imagine showing up in our worn out, too big uniforms that arrived 2 mins. before the 1st game, playing on a FX field that was immaculate against a team dressed like the Yankees. We were representing Alexandria & it was embarrassing.

The reps. from the Rec Dept. said that they would monitor the newly lighted field to minimize the negative impact on the neighborhood. My years of experience taught me not to count on the Rec people to do anything efficiently. Very poorly managed, no pride – everything that could go wrong re practice fields, equipment, uniforms, etc. did go wrong.

We need more fields & we need lights – but lights that will not ruin the quality of life for a section of the community facing BRAC, parking problems already, trash left by people who park to attend the quite frequent meetings held at the school nights & weekends. I support the artificial turf, but I think lights would be a disaster for a neighborhood that is facing many urban problems as it is.

I met a man who attended the meeting who was from a neighborhood near TCWHS. I asked him why there was not a lighted field on the high school grounds like all the other HSs in the country, and he said that he & his community association blocked it because of objections about the negative impact of the lights on the surrounding homes. Interesting. We on the West End already feel that other areas of the city receive the lion's share of the attention and resources of the city government. Is it really a good idea to plop lights on Hammond field with an already threatened neighborhood just a few feet away?

My grandson plays soccer on the field near Crystal City off Route 1. No lights or any other improvements are planned there as far as I know. This area has great potential & lights there would not cause concern for anyone. There are problems to be addressed – parking in a nightmare & quite dangerous, the fields get no attention from the City & are a mess. However, an artificial turf & lighting project there makes all the sense in the world.

The lighting project makes no sense for Hammond, & I am sure if you or any of the other people advocating this lived in Varsity Heights, you would all be opposed to it too.

John Nottingham  
4543 LaSalle Ave.  
Alexandria  
(703)823-1420 [j1nott@comcast.net](mailto:j1nott@comcast.net)

85

✓

## Kendra Jacobs

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**From:** Carter Flemming <carterflemming@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 06, 2011 11:57 AM  
**To:** Patricia Escher  
**Subject:** Hammond Lights

Ms. Escher: Thanks for giving us the opportunity to submit comments regarding the lights at Hammond. I want to be clear up front that I oppose these lights and any future lights that are in residential areas.

Just to begin the discussion, I think I speak for other residents in Alexandria who feel that all the increased density, building thousands of townhouse developments and including virtually no open space is what has brought us to these decisions that you and the Rec Dept must now face. It should come as no surprise to anyone in the city that when you add tens of thousands of residents, you are going to have increased demand for services, including recreation spaces. But does that justify destroying residential neighborhoods in established areas of Alexandria that are inappropriate locations for lighted fields? I don't believe so. I would argue that right now the same thing is getting ready to happen in Potomac Yards as the most recent revision of the site plan there eliminates a huge percentage of the open space that was originally called for. When families with children move into those hundreds of dwellings, will it be a surprise to your department and the Rec Department that they demand fields and play space? It certainly shouldn't be. But I can envision another series of meetings in 10-15 years with different officials and citizens saying the same things that we are saying now. I frankly do not hear the voices of the Planning Department or the Rec Department arguing for more open spaces for organized play. Instead, open space is satisfied with rooftop gardens on buildings and small, unusable grass areas. But there is no provision for accommodating the large numbers of families that will demand playing fields for their children. So we are compounding the problem rather than addressing it.

As far as the Hammond proposal goes, I think there needs to be a much more detailed presentation about what groups rent these fields at late night hours. It seems to all of us that we are talking about spending money and threatening a residential neighborhood so that adults can rent the field every night of the week, including weekends. That is just too much intrusion into a residential area. We are not talking about kids here - we are talking about adults. And while the comment was made at the last meeting that "adults have the right to recreate too", I would argue that most citizens in Alexandria do not want their neighborhoods destroyed so adults can yell and scream at all hours of the night in their backyards. Simply turfing a field changes the whole equation for neighbors by itself. The field is then used every day up until dark. There are no rain-outs, or "off days". So the noise coming from constant use of the field already intrudes upon a neighborhood far more than a grass field does. We experience this at TC Williams now on a daily basis. I don't think there is evidence that children do not have enough spaces to practice on with the newly lighted fields elsewhere in the city. If you give children the total priority for use of the fields, I think every team could schedule practice time. But when you decide that you need to rent out the facilities to pay for the upkeep, you have changed that argument completely. Our own citizens would not, I assume be paying to rent the fields, so it seems to be adult groups who are paying to play.

I also think the question of who from the Rec Dept is going to be out supervising these fields every single night until 10:00 pm and at what cost to the taxpayers has not been addressed at all. It is fine to say that it is the plan to have supervision. Such supervision does not exist at any of the other lighted fields and we would like to know what the cost of providing such supervision is. There is no data about the cost of operating these lights until 10 every night either.

What does the cost of the rental need to be to pay for Rec Dept personnel overtime and the energy costs as well?

As far as Hammond goes, we heard that the soccer field does not even conform to standard size regulations due to the way the new building sits on the site. So why would TC Williams and other high school level teams want to use such a field? Here again, it does not seem to be designed for those kinds of uses, but rather for adults from all over the region who want to play night time sports and don't care what size the field actually is..

I will not go on any more, but I just wanted to say that to me, there seems to be no plan to police the facility, no valid cost projections for all factors involved in building and then operating the lights, and no justification for what youth cannot find access to the city fields during daylight hours. This neighborhood is a close-in residential neighborhood that

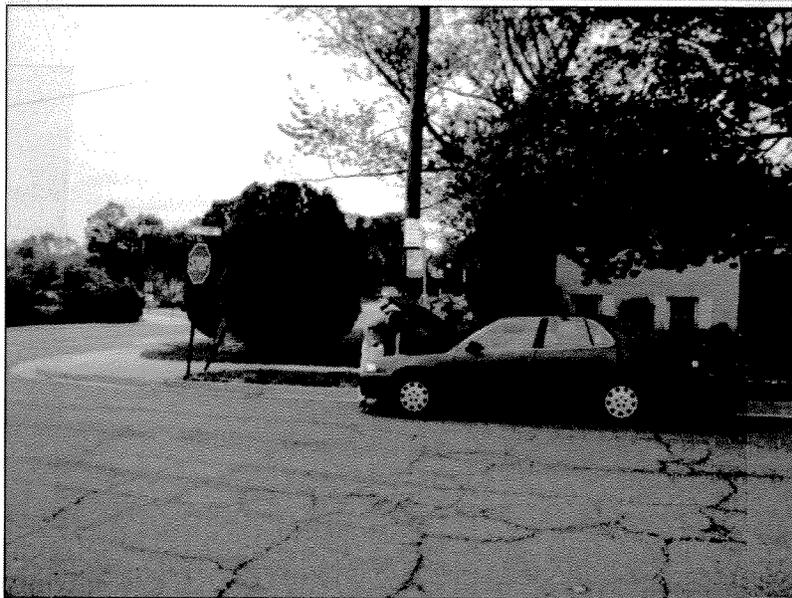
is already likely to be adversely affected by the BRAC traffic disasters and they should not have to be the default location for adult leagues to play games all night in their back yards. Carter Flemming

## Kendra Jacobs

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**From:** Mary MacPherson <marysmacpherson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 30, 2011 9:51 AM  
**To:** Patricia Escher; Khoadinh Tran  
**Cc:** Jim Richardson  
**Subject:** car maintenance on LaSalle Ave.  
**Attachments:** DSC00156.JPG

As you can see, soccer players perform routine car maintenance on LaSalle Street. Mr. Tran, I'm afraid hanging wires off of telephone poles contribute to the problem Mary MacPherson



Seminary Hill Association, Inc.  
2115 Marlboro Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22304

May 18, 2011

Alexandria City Public Schools  
2000 N. Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

Superintendent Morton Sherman and School Board Chair Yvonne Folkerts:

On November 17, 2010, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) filed an application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to erect four (4) 70 foot lighting poles at the upper field at Francis C. Hammond Middle School (Hammond). The SUP application contains a short narrative in support of the application but does not address many basic questions normally applicable to SUP applications, nor does it address technical analysis of the effects of stadium lighting on surrounding neighborhoods or how it plans to comply with City Code. The City held public meetings to discuss the issues on February 8, 2011, and April 26, 2011. Neither the applicants nor staff disclosed significant new information during these meetings or stated plans to modify the SUP application slightly. For the reasons below, Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (SHA) strongly recommends and requests that ACPS withdraw this application before the Planning Commission hearing scheduled for June 7, 2011.

1. Hammond has been designated as an emergency response staging area, and there has been no indication that Inova Alexandria Hospital or regional emergency planners concur with the loss of a facility that is already used for urgent purposes;
2. The SUP application appears to violate City Code in at least three significant ways—exceeding height restrictions of 40 feet, exceeding setback restrictions of 25 feet, and exceeding illumination restrictions—thus requiring a variance at a minimum;
3. There has been no technical or economic impact analysis performed (Note: Arlington has decided against lighting athletic fields adjacent to residential properties and Fairfax has adopted regulations which effectively bar it); and
4. The City has repeatedly recommended against installing stadium lighting at Hammond and with the opening of the Witter Fields next March, the City met its recommendations of four lighted turf fields as explained at the February public meeting.

In addition, SHA is disturbed that this proposal violates long-standing agreements between it, ACPS, the School Board, and the City, and that there was no input from the community before filing and no regard to the potentially devastating impacts the area faces when the BRAC-133 at Mark Center opens later this year. In lieu of developing and responding to the issues identified in this letter and in public meetings, City personnel were marshaled to defeat the “push back from the community,” according to recent City documents describing naked political efforts.

SHA supports a strong athletic program, especially for our youth. Two lighted fields—Minnie Howard and Fort Ward Park—are within SHA boundaries but away from residential properties. SHA is disturbed by the City’s handling of this issue and the lack of economic impact analysis. SHA lacks confidence in City staff in Planning & Zoning and Parks & Recreation who are advocating for their own interests rather than those of the taxpayers of Alexandria.

Sincerely,



President Nancy R. Jennings  
Seminary Hill Association, Inc.

CC:

Members of the Alexandria School Board  
Mayor and City Council  
Planning Commission  
Farroll Hamer, Planning & Zoning  
James Spengler, Parks & Recreation

Mr. Mark Krause  
Director, Educational Facilities  
Alexandria City Public Schools  
2000 N. Beauregard St.  
Alexandria Virginia 22311

Mr. Krause,

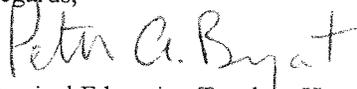
The purpose of this letter is to express support for the Hammond Middle School synthetic turf field project. As a physical education teacher at Hammond Middle School, I understand the importance of providing adequate facilities for Alexandria youth to participate in athletic programs. The existing athletic facilities at Hammond Middle School are in poor condition and are in need of upgrading to better serve the youth of our school and community. The proposed upgrades that are part of the Hammond Middle School synthetic turf field project will provide much needed improvements to better serve the youth that attend our school and live in our community.

The existing natural turf field at Hammond Middle School is in poor condition and suffers from overuse. The poor playing conditions increase the likelihood of injuries. The field is unusable after weather events because it is too wet and muddy for students to play on. The proposed synthetic turf field will provide an even playing surface that is all-weather and requires much less maintenance. Additionally, the existing track around the field is not an ideal configuration and often has standing water after weather events. The reconfigured track and associated drainage improvements around the field will provide a much better facility for the students and youth in the area.

The other important component of the project is the addition of athletic field lights. The addition of lights will extend the hours of use for the field, especially for fall and spring programs. Overall, the lights will increase the potential usability of the newly surfaced field and track and provide a great benefit to the both the adjacent residents and youth in the area.

We appreciate the opportunity for these improvements to be made at the Hammond Middle School athletic facilities. The newly surfaced field, reconfigured track, and athletic field lighting will be of great benefit to our students and Alexandria youth.

Regards,

  
Peter A. Bryant  
Physical Education Teacher, Hammond Middle School

Mr. Mark Krause  
Director, Educational Facilities  
Alexandria City Public Schools  
2000 N. Beauregard St.  
Alexandria Virginia 22311

Mr. Krause,

The purpose of this letter is to express support for the Hammond Middle School synthetic turf field project. As a physical education teacher at Hammond Middle School, I understand the importance of providing adequate facilities for Alexandria youth to participate in athletic programs. The existing athletic facilities at Hammond Middle School are in poor condition and are in need of upgrading to better serve the youth of our school and community. The proposed upgrades that are part of the Hammond Middle School synthetic turf field project will provide much needed improvements to better serve the youth that attend our school and live in our community.

The existing natural turf field at Hammond Middle School is in poor condition and suffers from overuse. The poor playing conditions increase the likelihood of injuries. The field is unusable after weather events because it is too wet and muddy for students to play on. The proposed synthetic turf field will provide an even playing surface that is all-weather and requires much less maintenance. Additionally, the existing track around the field is not an ideal configuration and often has standing water after weather events. The reconfigured track and associated drainage improvements around the field will provide a much better facility for the students and youth in the area.

The other important component of the project is the addition of athletic field lights. The addition of lights will extend the hours of use for the field, especially for fall and spring programs. Overall, the lights will increase the potential usability of the newly surfaced field and track and provide a great benefit to the both the adjacent residents and youth in the area.

We appreciate the opportunity for these improvements to be made at the Hammond Middle School athletic facilities. The newly surfaced field, reconfigured track, and athletic field lighting will be of great benefit to our students and Alexandria youth.

Regards,



Physical Education Teacher, Hammond Middle School

Dear Pat,

As per your request I am sending some thoughts and ideas regarding concerns for the lights at the Hammond athletic field.

1. I feel there should be a monetary deposit placed when a contract is issued to a group who wants to use the playing field. This deposit would be in addition to the fee paid to use the field. The deposit would be refunded if the field was left in pristine condition and all terms of the contract were fulfilled.
2. I feel the fee charged for field use should be an amount that not only recovers the cost of the electricity to run the lights but also add to the repair/replacement of the lights as needed. The lamp replacement will be a huge expense. Groups paying to use the field should be responsible for the maintenance of the lights and field.
3. There needs to be one person/facility responsible to handle community complaints and needs. With more than one responsible entity fingers can always point to another group when things go wrong. I have seen this happen time after time. Schools say it was not us. Recreation says its not us. Well then who is it?
4. In the contract it needs to state those using the field are responsible for trash pickup along Picket and Pegram streets. Part of the bargain. Maybe they did not cause all of the trash but they take on this responsibility when they contract to use the field. It would not take any time at all for a team of players to walk the area at the end of playing and make sure both sides of the streets were free of trash. If residents report this was not the case then the deposit would not be refunded.
5. My opinion is that lights should not be installed at the Hammond upper field. Such close proximity to a residential area will have a negative impact on the quality of life for those living there.
6. The increase in field hours will increase the traffic and noise at the field. The last thing needed in this area is more traffic.
7. I have a suspicion that there will be requests for portable bleachers for 'special events'. It needs to be clear from the beginning that this will not be a possibility now or in the future.
8. No food vending trucks should be allowed along the streets surrounding the field. Dangerous and will cause additional trash.

I have witnessed the field use at Gunston Middle in Arlington, Virginia. At 10:00pm the lights are blazing and enormous groups are playing and watching soccer games. Vending trucks line the street with engines running. The trash is incredible. I personally witnessed this from September through November.

Carolyn Griglione  
1416 N. Ivanhoe St.  
703 370-0653

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## Kendra Jacobs

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: lights at Hammond Middle School

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 01, 2011 11:15 AM  
**To:** elena zaytseva  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: lights at Hammond Middle School

Dear Ms. Zaytseva,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

**From:** elena zaytseva [mailto:zaytseva@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 01, 2011 11:02 AM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: lights at Hammond Middle School

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Wed Jun 01, 2011 11:02:11] Message ID: [30525]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** elena  
**Last Name:** zaytseva  
**Street Address:** 1427 woodbine street  
**City:** alexandria  
**State:** va  
**Zip:** 22302  
**Phone:** 7036714167  
**Email Address:** [zaytseva@hotmail.com](mailto:zaytseva@hotmail.com)  
**Subject:** lights at Hammond Middle School  
I strongly support artificial turf and lights installation at Hammond Middle School. As a mother of 2 boys involved in lacrosse and soccer we really need to improve our field situation. Half of the games and practices are canceled because of the weather each season. The kids want to play and they need to exercise but opportunities are not there. The field is not close to the houses and 10 pm curfew is a great idea. while I am writing

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this, I also think that we should be able to use TC Williams field more and  
have lights there as well.  
our taxes go up every year in the city but the  
level of services is going down every year.

## Kendra Jacobs

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Hammond Lights

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 01, 2011 9:49 AM  
**To:** Brian McPherson  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Hammond Lights

Dear Mr. McPherson,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

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**From:** Brian McPherson [mailto:brian.mcpherson@raymondjames.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 01, 2011 9:40 AM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Hammond Lights

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Wed Jun 01, 2011 09:40:01] Message ID: [30515]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** Brian  
**Last Name:** McPherson  
**Street Address:** 2356 No Early St  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** VA  
**Zip:** 22302  
**Phone:** 703-931-6748  
**Email Address:** [brian.mcpherson@raymondjames.com](mailto:brian.mcpherson@raymondjames.com)  
**Subject:** Hammond Lights

As the Alexandria Little League representative to the Alexandria Youth Sports Advisory Board I wish to express our support for the installation of lights @ the Hammond School.

**Comments:** The city needs to make full use of the remaining available fields in order to accommodate the number of youths and adults who wish to participate in the city's sports programs.

The

scheduling of games and practice times is becoming increasingly difficult for the Alexandria Youth Sports Organizations. It is more complex for the spring and fall seasons when daylight becomes an issue. Coaches are forced

to schedule afternoon practices so the players have adequate daylight.

Lack of sufficient lighting becomes a safety issue. Afternoon practices

starting before 5PM also puts a strain on the parents. In many households,

both parents work full time jobs and don't have the flexibility of leaving work early so their player can participate.

It will be a shame to turn

away players who wish to participate in the city sports programs - but can't because the city lacks the necessary facilities.

**Krisna Earley**

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: In Favor of Lights for Hammond MS Turf Field

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Cicely Woodrow <[Cicely.Woodrow@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Cicely.Woodrow@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Date:** June 2, 2011 12:10:38 PM EDT  
**To:** John Quinn <[jquinn1213@comcast.net](mailto:jquinn1213@comcast.net)>  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno <[Graciela.Moreno@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Graciela.Moreno@alexandriava.gov)>, Kendra Jacobs <[Kendra.Jacobs@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Kendra.Jacobs@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: In Favor of Lights for Hammond MS Turf Field

Dear Mr. Quinn,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,

Cicely Woodrow

**From:** John Quinn [mailto:[jquinn1213@comcast.net](mailto:jquinn1213@comcast.net)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 02, 2011 11:42 AM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: In Favor of Lights for Hammond MS Turf Field

**COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback**

Time: [Thu Jun 02, 2011 11:42:08] Message ID: [30574]

Issue Type: Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
First Name: John  
Last Name: Quinn  
Street Address: 1205 Summit Avenue  
City: Aleaxndria  
State: VA  
Zip: 22302  
Phone: 7/ 379-1875  
Email Address: [jquinn1213@comcast.net](mailto:jquinn1213@comcast.net)  
Subject: In Favor of Lights for Hammond MS Turf Field  
Comments: Dear city planning and zoning,  
I understand that Hammond MS will soon have

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a playing field converted to turf and feedback is now being sought to determine the popularity and need for this facility to be lighted. As a parent of two children who are heavily involved in Alexandria City Youth Sports I strongly support the addition of lights for the facility. There is a severe shortage of quality playing fields in the city and providing lights to the facility will greatly expand the usefulness, time of playability on the field. The City is desperately short of playing fields for both youth and adult sports. The City calculates that a turfed field with lights can be used up to 3 times more than a regular grass field. The City fields at Minnie Howard, Ft. Ward, and Ben Brenman are all used at night under the lights with minimal impact upon the surrounding neighborhoods. There is a significant lack of playing fields in the West End. Increasing the use of Hammond will help alleviate some of that shortage, reducing car trips to other locations for West-end residents. Youth sport coaches report that they cannot get to the fields from their jobs to hold practices until 6:30 PM many nights. Lights are essential to the youth sports programs in order to support the participation of employed adults as coaches. The City's proposal for the lights actually gives the community and the City a greater control over how the field is used and by who as permits will be required for its use. A fence will be built around the field so only permitted use can be made of the field. The track around it will not be fenced and will be available at most times. Gates exit to the established parking lots to help control traffic and parking. The City will provide on-site staff during evening games. Thank you for your action on this important issue for the city.

John Quinn

**Krisna Earley**

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**Subject:** FW: Seminary Hill ALERT: Contact Planning Commission re lights at Hammond Middle School

**From:** Nancy Jennings [mailto:nrjennings@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Friday, June 03, 2011 4:58 AM

**To:** Faroll Hamer; Patricia Escher; [donna.fossum@verizon.net](mailto:donna.fossum@verizon.net); [erwagner@comcast.net](mailto:erwagner@comcast.net); [jssjennings@aol.com](mailto:jssjennings@aol.com); [john.komoroske@finra.org](mailto:john.komoroske@finra.org); [jlr@cpma.com](mailto:jlr@cpma.com); [mslyman@verizon.net](mailto:mslyman@verizon.net); [hsdunn@ipbtax.com](mailto:hsdunn@ipbtax.com); Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; [delpepper@aol.com](mailto:delpepper@aol.com); Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; [paulcsmedberg@aol.com](mailto:paulcsmedberg@aol.com); [council@krupicka.com](mailto:council@krupicka.com); William Euille

**Cc:** [dosthomp@comcast.net](mailto:dosthomp@comcast.net)

**Subject:** FW: Seminary Hill ALERT: Contact Planning Commission re lights at Hammond Middle School

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**From:** [dosthomp@comcast.net](mailto:dosthomp@comcast.net) [mailto:dosthomp@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 02, 2011 3:32 PM

**To:** Seminary Hill Association

**Subject:** Re: Seminary Hill ALERT: Contact Planning Commission re lights at Hammond Middle School

Thank you, Nan, for all the good work you do for the SHA. Please feel free to forward my comments to the City council or whomever, concerning the lighting proposal for the Hammond school fields. I am unable to attend their meeting.

I am a resident of Varsity Park, and am **shocked** that the council would even consider adding to the chaos of BRAC 133 for this neighborhood. If the traffic isn't going to be bad enough, the traffic and parking during games would be appalling. Why do they "dump" all problems onto West End residents? There were already group homes set up in this neighborhood for drug addicts, unwed mothers, etc., and then they wanted to convert the Burke Library into a center for troubled teens, right across from a middle school! Add to that the fact that the traffic light at the intersection of Seminary and N. Pickett is faulty - sometimes I have to sit through 3 light changes before the Picket St. traffic can get onto Seminary Rd., and the traffic jam will probably make the national news. Since they aren't paying attention, I guess I can only exert influence with my vote (and I do vote) - I won't vote for any one of them unless they rethink their strategies.

Regards,  
Linda Thompson

PS: I have a neighbor who has lived here for 50+ years who feels the same way.

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**Krisna Earley**

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Hammond Lights

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Cicely Woodrow <[Cicely.Woodrow@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Cicely.Woodrow@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Date:** June 3, 2011 10:52:57 AM EDT  
**To:** Suzanne Laboy <[suzannelaboy@gmail.com](mailto:suzannelaboy@gmail.com)>  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno <[Graciela.Moreno@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Graciela.Moreno@alexandriava.gov)>, Kendra Jacobs <[Kendra.Jacobs@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Kendra.Jacobs@alexandriava.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Hammond Lights

Dear Ms. Laboy,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,

Cicely Woodrow

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Cicely B. Woodrow, PHR  
Management Analyst III  
Department of Planning & Zoning  
301 King Street, Room 2100  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
Direct: 703-746-3810  
Fax: 703-838-6393

ECO-CITY ALEXANDRIA

In keeping with Eco-City Alexandria please consider the environment before printing this e-mail, print on paper certified for sustainability, and save energy by turning off your computer and printer at night.

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**From:** Suzanne Laboy [<mailto:suzannelaboy@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 31, 2011 9:33 PM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Hammond Lights

**COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback**

Time: [Tue May 31, 2011 21:33:20] Message ID: [30508]

Issue Type: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

First Name: Suzanne

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Last Name: Laboy  
Street Address: 608 N. Pickett st  
City: Alexandria  
State: Va  
Zip: 22304  
Phone: 703-509-4547  
Email Address: [suzannelaboy@gmail.com](mailto:suzannelaboy@gmail.com)  
Subject: Hammond Lights

Dear Planning Commission:

I am writing to you today to support the Alexandria Public School System's (ACPS) request for a Special use permit (SUP) for lights at the playing field next to Hammond Middle School.

The City of Alexandria is in serious need of playing fields for both its youth and adults. The school age population has increased significantly and is expected to continue that growth. The expectation of this is shown in the recently approved City budget that provides funds to build two new replacement schools, which will be much larger than the ones being replaced. Just looking at the recent census data shows us that Alexandria also has a growing adult population. Both segments of Alexandria will need fields for recreation purposes. However, as great  
Comments: as Alexandria is, it is an urban environment that has limited amount of space available anywhere in the City limits. Other than the Roth-Witter project, it is unrealistic to expect more space to open up for additional fields. Therefore we have to maximize what field space we have. The City has stated that we need 9 artificial turf fields, along with lights, to meet our current recreation demands. We now have 4 such fields. Adding the Hammond field, along with the lights, is critical to meeting our current needs, much less our future needs. Each turf field with lights can get three times the usage of an unlit grass field. That is the only way we will be able to serve the population of the City. Please vote to support the SUP so that the entire City can benefit from this action.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Laboy, mother of 4 boys who play sports

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DONNELL R. FULLERTON  
1407 N. Pickett Street  
Alexandria, VA 22304

June 3, 2011

Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria  
Alexandria City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Docket Item # 10  
Special Use Permit #2010-0079  
4646 Seminary Road- Francis Hammond Middle School.

I received an announcement last week about a Request for Consideration to add lighting to an existing athletic field/track and minimum a modification to the minimum front yard setback by the Alexandria City Public School ("ACPS"). I live directly across the street from the existing field and will be directly and adversely impacted by this requested Special Use Permit #2010-0079.

The application is significantly deficient in its description of the proposed project, activities to be conducted relative to the construction and use thereof and the adverse impacts resulting there from.

Absent a full description of the project including, but not limited to, light pollution, noise impacts, traffic and parking impacts and the adverse impact on the value of neighboring properties this application fails to establish any basis for the grant of two special use permits or the variances which are required but not requested by this applicant.

I live at 4722 North Pickett Street immediately across the street from the existing athletic field and within approximately 125 feet of one of the proposed sixty (60) feet tall lighting structures.<sup>1</sup> Below I identify a number of issues of concern relative to this application and proposal.

### **1. Light Pollution**

Light pollution is a serious problem in Northern Virginia. The subject athletic field is immediately in front of my home. The existing skyline is in clear view of my home from the master bedroom, living room, sun room and front yard. Stars are clearly visible and the view unobstructed.

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<sup>1</sup> My property is shown on page 2 of Staff's report identified as "1407". The application fails to contain sufficient detail to establish exactly where applicant proposes to situate its light towers but seeks to locate at least two approximately 23 and 25 feet from its property line.

Applicant proposes to introduce a series of light towers with multiple levels of lights and will fill the sky with light three hundred sixty five days a year until at least 10 p.m. every night other than Sunday which will feature illumination up until 6 pm. No dimensions are included in the application but applicant proposes to shower light over a large rectangular area roughly the size of a football field to service a yet to be installed replacement soccer field. Applicant intends to add to the towers at a lower level additional directed lights to illuminate beyond the field onto a yet to be installed oblong four lane wide running track.

The application provides no details as to total candle power of lighting to be installed, no information as to average constant illumination on the field or the track, no meaningful technical data regarding foot-candles of design, types of fixtures or manufacturing specifications.

This proposal seeks to retrofit an athletic field yet to be installed in an existing suburban neighborhood. Installation and operation of artificial lights in the manner described in the application presents significant quality of life issues. There is inadequate space between the athletic field and existing residences. Given the expansion of Hammond Middle School approximately four years ago then existing regulation track was removed as there wasn't sufficient space to keep it and erect the school addition. Now a smaller non-regulation size track and non-regulation size soccer field are the intended recipients of the lights.

Light trespass is when light crosses property lines. As noted in the White Paper on Athletic Field Lighting issued by Fairfax County Park Authority – “When light crosses property lines it can detract from the property value and quality of life of those whose property it is improperly directed. It can be a particularly objectionable problem when obtrusive recreational or commercial lighting is immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods...”<sup>2</sup>

My property is currently the subject of light trespass and is impacted by “security” flood lights mounted on the walls of the new addition proximate to the existing athletic field which shine into the front of my house.<sup>3</sup> This existing spill light is not addressed in the application at all.

The application utterly ignores and fails to address the new “spill light” which will be created by the installation of these light towers. No mention is made of the spill effect of the lower lights which applicant plans to direct outside the athletic field and illuminate the track which is to surround the field. A meager reference is made to spill on sidewalks but it is insufficient to inform.

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<sup>2</sup> White Payer Athletic Field Lighting and Control of Obtrusive Light Pollution - Fairfax County Park Authority July 2010 at page 6.

<sup>3</sup> After months of repeated complaints, recently modifications in the form of shades have been made to lessen this intrusion.

The application fails to address at all glare. Glare is excessive brightness occurring in the normal field of vision. Glare differs from spill light as would occur when I look out my windows or walk into my front yard and while not directly facing the source see illumination of the field and other objects receiving light from it. As addressed in the White Paper, "Glare can be a significant problem that seriously impairs both safety and quality of life. Glare can be a serious safety hazard (for example for drivers and pedestrians) in that it demands attention since one's eyes are naturally attracted to bright light, and at night this destroys the eye's dark adaptation (i.e., the eye's sensitivity to lower light levels)."<sup>4</sup>

Glare is exasperated by the degree of the light being cast. For this reason Fairfax County prescribes either a 70' or 80' light pole to minimize glare and its impact. This applicant fails to identify the height of the poles it intends to install but specifies that they "will not exceed 60' in height. It is clear that the pole height applicant proposes will not meet recommended standards to attempt to minimize the impact of glare.

This application will result in spill light and glare and impact detrimentally Varsity Park and my property. There is no basis for granting any special use permit or making any finding of hardship or grounds for a variance as this lighting proposal is entirely an elective being sought by this applicant.

The applicant claims separately to have obtained all necessary approvals and funding to install both a new athletic field and track and has repeatedly admonished concerned citizens that regardless of its lighting application these facilities will be installed.<sup>5</sup>

There is no intention for students at Hammond Middle School to use the lighted field as part of educational or physical education curricula sponsored by ACPS. The fields will not even be under the control of ACPS after 6 pm in the evening.

The instant application for a Special Use Permit is by the repeated statements of the applicant independent and not subject to their existing commitment to install an upgraded

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<sup>4</sup> White Paper at page 7.

<sup>5</sup> Applicant claims to have received authorization and budget approval at a special meeting months prior to alerting this community of its plan to install lighting at Hammond Middle School. Two public hearings have been held at Hammond Middle School to which the public has been invited. At the last public meeting the School Board Chair, Yvonne Folkerts, attended. I spoke at the meeting and related to Ms. Folkerts, the meetings with ACPS and my community immediately prior to the expansion of Hammond Middle School and the statements made by Board Member Roger D'Giolo at that time on behalf of ACPS that there would be no stands and no lighting of this field. I requested that Ms. Folkerts withdraw the pending proposal. I never received a response, however, I am advised that at the most recent City/Schools meeting at which the Mayor, Councilman Krupicka, Ms. Folkerts and Sheryl Gorsuch and staff members for both the City and ACPSSS an agenda item dealing with lights at Hammond was discussed.

athletic field and track on their property. As such Hammond's educational mission is unaffected in any manner by a rejection of the pending Special Use Permit request.

## 2. Noise

Applicant proposes to deliver possession of its athletic field to the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities ("RCPA"). Applicant proposes operations from 8 am until 10 pm Monday through Saturday and 8 am until 6 pm on Sunday. It describes its proposed use as "Athletic Field". The current schedule attached at page 26 indicates that Adult Sports Soccer (Rentals) (several leagues) will use the field September through November.

Noise from players will present itself when ever games are played. It exists now. Noise from officials, whistles, will intrude upon and punctuate my property and the community evenings all year long. The noise of parking cars, horns as players and spectators lock and unlock their vehicles will be present ending officially at 10 pm but in reality until players and spectators leave either dressing on the field or in or next to their cars some time later.

I plainly hear in my house and rear yard the ongoing noise from players as do a number of my neighbors. It is annoying and detracts from my enjoyment of my house and pool and interferes with my use of my property. It is a nuisance to permit such noise to continue after dark when it currently ends until after 10 p.m. in the evening. There are small children in the neighborhood whose sleep is interrupted. My grandchildren go to bed at 7:30 pm. Shouts and yells, car alarms being disengaged, doors and trunks being opened and closed are intrusive and obnoxious. This all is a natural result of this application and can not be minimized and it has a significant adverse impact on me and my neighbors.

## 3. Parking

Varsity Park has a serious and ongoing parking problem. The application does nothing to address this problem only will add to it. The applicant assumes because there is a parking lot at the rear of Hammond Middle School that it's projected 20-25 additional vehicles "can be easily accommodated". It ignores the "Industry Standard suggestion of 38 parking spaces for a rectangular field. It ignores the overlap between games ending and the need for the next team to have already parked and be suiting up for play. It ignores the reality which is that often there are competing functions at the school which take up the parking lot and that human nature being what it is that convenience will dictate parking on the street as close as one can get to the corner of Seminary and North Pickett.

I have lived at 1407 N. Pickett Street for over twenty years and observe it on a daily basis. Users of the track and of the field routinely park in front of my house and up the street. Users routinely ignore the No Parking signs, routinely make U turns on North Pickett Street and create hazards as they park their vehicles. All this will only be exasperated when the hours of usage extend into the night.

ACRP will do nothing to address the parking impact. ACPS will patrol its lot and possibly write a ticket if someone is blocking a lane or an exit. They have no jurisdiction and no interest in what goes on outside of their lot. I and my neighbors are left to Traffic Enforcement which is ill staffed especially in the evenings or weekends to deal with parking issues.

As a result of BRAC our current parking problems will only be worsened. In fact the Mayor as part of his request for impact payments from the federal government has acknowledged this and is requested \$300,000 + to hire and equip additional traffic enforcement resources for this area.

Grant of this application will draw a significant number of additional vehicles will result in parking and traffic congestion and will materially detract from the quality of life in Varsity Park.

#### **4. Traffic**

Hammond Middle School generates significant traffic during the day especially when school buses drop off and pick up students. This is augmented by parents lining up to drop off and pick up their children. BRAC is projected to add at least four thousand vehicles a day to the already congested area surrounding Hammond Middle School. BRAC will not restrict its limited parking spaces to car pools and thousands of employees will descend on Varsity Park (circling Hammond Middle School into Varsity Park) seeking parking and short cuts to avoid grid lock on I-395.

The addition of an evening draw of traffic to play and observe evening soccer leagues will compound an already existing problem. Applicant has no solution to this other than ignore its contribution to the problem.

#### **5. Health and Safety**

The Fire Station, at the corner of North Pickett and Seminary is extremely busy and will only get busier. Fire Trucks routinely are called out on emergencies as is their paramedic unit. Often they drive down North Pickett on emergency runs under full siren. They are the designated "Jaws of Life" unit and respond to accidents on I-395 and throughout the city where motor vehicles are involved and entrapment exists. Their mission will be compromised by the addition of traffic to Hammond in the evenings.

The Mayor has gone on record to the federal government seeking impact assistance noting that the critical response time (less than 4- 6 minutes) is already illusive in this area and will not be able to be maintained once BRAC opens. A request for an additional paramedic unit has been made and is pending.

The addition of a steady stream of soccer players to Hammond Middle School every evening of the week and congestion and traffic, glare and light pollution resulting from this application will further degrade the health and safety of our community.

## **6. Aesthetic Issues**

Varsity Park is suburban community zoned R-20 in large part. It features lawns and well maintained neighborhoods in scale stepping down from the high rise apartments bordering I-395. We have beautiful trees, birds and an open and quiet community. Our skyline is beautiful not marred by commercial structures and is in proportion. Erection of sixty foot towers will mar our vistas and is out of character and will negatively impact and detract from the quality of life in this community.

Applicant has chosen to site its lights in what is know as the upper field. Curiously, Applicant has other areas on its property which if used would significantly mitigate on the aesthetic impact on the skyline these towers present, address significant glare abatement issues due to the existing large vegetation and tree borders separating the lower fields from the road and neighbors. This applicant could, if it so chose, mitigate substantially some of the previously identified negative impacts by locating any lighted athletic field on the North end of its property, i.e. in "death valley" and reconfiguring the existing fields located there.

## **7. Negative Impact of the Value of Homes**

Approval of this application will materially and adversely impact the value of homes in Varsity Park. Despite this issue having been raised by me and others at these public meetings and direct reference being provided to the recent application to install artificial lights at Bishop Dennis J. O'Connell High School, the study conducted as to diminution in property values and the decision by Arlington County to reject the proposal, neither the applicant nor staff in its report address this vital concern.

The applicant has retained and spent considerable sums on a consultant to package its application and market its proposal for the addition of lights at Hammond Middle School. The applicant was made aware of the serious concern held by me and others that this lighting project would seriously reduce property values in our neighborhood. Applicant has chosen to ignore the issue.

I have discussed this situation with four highly credentialed and experienced appraisal companies in recent days and shared with them the application, staff's report and the Arlington study conducted as to impact on values in Arlington and its conclusions. All concurred with the soundness of the Arlington study's approach and its conclusion that there will be a negative impact on the value of homes as a result of installation of athletic lighting.

The issue each appraiser expressed is how to best quantify the magnitude of impact as a result of this application. All concurred that given my home's location directly across the street from a light tower and the field that a diminution in value would exceed the Arlington County study average impact and likely result in a twenty to thirty percent diminution in the value of my property. Each indicated that a detailed analysis could be done and that it would take eight to twelve weeks. I am awaiting a proposal at this time.

Applicant has presented nothing to address the serious and significant adverse economic impact on neighbors which will result if this application were approved. The Planning Commission must draw a negative inference from this conscious omission by applicant and conclude that as a matter of fact surrounding homes will be materially impacted as a result of this proposal reducing home values from 9 to 30%.

### **8. Other observations and concerns**

#### **No Cost Information - we as taxpayers are to pay for this**

There is no cost information provided in the application. These proposed light towers and improvements and the extensive expenditures by ACPS on its agent Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. will all be funded at tax payer expense. Estimates by Mr. Hise at the public meetings suggest the lights will cost upwards of \$700,000.00. Issues have been raised not only with the installation costs but the operating costs- again nothing in the application or staff's review. This information should be required of the applicant. Any analysis of this application should include a review of this information and the analysis in staff's report as to fields and strategy omits this entirely. How can the Planning Commission consider this application without this basis cost information being a part of the record?

Here are some estimated costs -

- \* \$1,200,000 - The cost to convert Hammond Middle School to an artificial turfed athletic field with non-regulation oval track;
- \* \$ 700,000 - The addition of lights; and
- \* \$3-5,000,000 - Reduction in Varsity Park home values

### **9. No Hardship on Applicant for relief from setbacks**

The application seeks relief from the 70' front setback to install one of this light towers within 25' feet of the property line. The proposal lacks detail sufficient to identify how close to my property or others the nearest pole will be. No support for a variance is presented.

No hardship exists. ACPS has sufficient land to locate its light poles within side yard setbacks. Applicant chooses to situate its new athletic field in an area of its Property where it must seek variances from the 70' set back requirements. ACPS has a large parcel. It includes a large parcel immediately served by the rear parking lot naturally shielded by mature trees currently and for years operated for soccer and other athletic activities.

ACPS suggests that there is a VA Power transmission line which would complicate installation of a new synthetic field in that area of its property. ACPS ignores the huge negative economic impact it will cause driving down home values by ignoring this alternative and pushing forward with its current plan.

Any positioning of light towers can be easily accommodated on the vast expanse of property owned by ACPS, the fact that it chooses to position a tower within 23 or 25 feet from its property line does not create a hardship.

### **Summary**

The application filed in this matter is deficient on its face and should be denied. If leave to amend or supplement is permitted applicant then adequate notice should be afforded the public.

Sincerely yours,

s/s

Donnell R. Fullerton

60

## Kendra Jacobs

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Lights on Francis Hammond MS

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 9:37 AM  
**To:** bridget spaniel  
**Cc:** Mary Christesen; Peter Leiber; Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Lights on Francis Hammond MS

Dear Ms. Spaniel,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

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**From:** bridget spaniel [mailto:bhm\_16@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 6:52 AM  
**To:** Mary Christesen; Peter Leiber; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Lights on Francis Hammond MS

### COA Contact Us: Zoning Questions or Complaints

Time: [Mon Jun 06, 2011 06:52:11] Message ID: [30655]

**Issue Type:** Zoning Questions or Complaints  
**First Name:** bridget  
**Last Name:** spaniel  
**Street Address:** 905 e timber branch pkwy  
**City:** alexandria  
**State:** va  
**Zip:** 22302  
**Phone:** 703838955  
**Email Address:** [bhm\\_16@yahoo.com](mailto:bhm_16@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** Lights on Francis Hammond MS  
ACPS will have use of the fields until approximately 6:30 pm most seasons,  
with City recreational leagues using the fields after that time. The  
**Comments:** installation of lights will allow greater use of the field, both by youth  
and adults. As with all other parks in the City, the use would be  
curtailed at 10:00 pm.  
Please consider adding lights to the Francis

Hammond MS.

The City is desperately short of playing fields for both youth and adult sports. The City calculates that a turf field with lights can be used up to 3 times more than a regular grass field.

The City fields at Minnie Howard, Ft. Ward, and Ben Brenman are all used at night under the lights with minimal impact upon the surrounding neighborhoods.

There is a significant lack of playing fields in the West End. Increasing the use of Hammond will help alleviate some of that shortage, reducing car trips to other locations for West-end residents.

Youth sport coaches report that they cannot get to the fields from their jobs to hold practices until 6:30 PM many nights. Lights are essential to the youth sports programs in order to support the participation of employed adults as coaches.

The City's proposal for the lights actually gives the community and the City a greater control over how the field is used and by who as permits will be required for it use.

A fence will be built around the field so only permitted use can be made of the fields. The track around it will not be fenced and will be available at most times.

Gates exit to the established parking lots to help control traffic and parking.

The City will provide on-site staff during evening games.

Thank you for your consideration, Bridget Spaniel

62  
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## Kendra Jacobs

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Hammond

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 9:34 AM  
**To:** Steve Beggs  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Hammond

Dear Mr. Beggs,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

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**From:** Steve Beggs [mailto:stephen.beggs@transwestern.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 05, 2011 9:47 PM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Hammond

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Sun Jun 05, 2011 21:47:13] Message ID: [30653]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** Steve  
**Last Name:** Beggs  
**Street Address:** 2508 Terrett Ave.  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** VA  
**Zip:** 22301  
**Phone:** 571.334.8098  
**Email Address:** [stephen.beggs@transwestern.net](mailto:stephen.beggs@transwestern.net)  
**Subject:** Hammond  
Facilities in Alexandria, including outdoor ballfields, should continually  
be improved.  
The West End of town lacks adequate recreation space  
including athletic fields.  
**Comments:** It is important as a community that we  
provide recreational opportunities at all hours.  
A track will not only  
dramatically improve the curriculum of the athletic program for the

43

students at hammond, but it will also be a safe place for all members of the community to run and jog.

## Kendra Jacobs

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Hammond SUP

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 9:32 AM  
**To:** Michael Neilson  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Hammond SUP

Dear Mr. Neilson,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

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**From:** Michael Neilson [mailto:michaelrneilson@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 05, 2011 2:36 PM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Hammond SUP

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Sun Jun 05, 2011 14:35:54] Message ID: [30642]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** Michael  
**Last Name:** Neilson  
**Street Address:** 4110 Fort Worth Place  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** Virginia  
**Zip:** 22304  
**Phone:** 703 751 6053  
**Email Address:** [michaelrneilson@gmail.com](mailto:michaelrneilson@gmail.com)

**Subject:** Hammond SUP

Dear Planning Commission members,

Due to business commitments, I will be

unable to attend the meeting at which you will consider the SUP amendments

**Comments:** for lights at the Hammond athletic field. I wish to express my support for

approving the ACPS requests to install lights at the field.

The schools

and community face a shortage of adequate athletic fields which the city is

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working to overcome. We face a multi year process to overcome this problem.

One part of the solution is the use of synthetic turf fields and lighting which will enable us to get the most use of our existing facilities. For many of our youth and adult sports, lights are required to use fields during most of the year, except just a few summer months.

The lighting

technology to be installed at Hammond will be "full cut off"

lighting and will not disturb the surrounding neighborhood. The

longstanding use of the Hammond athletic fields have been in place for many

years and the facility offers ample parking for use of the field. In

addition, use of the athletic field will not make any meaningful impact on

use of the streets providing access which carry much more traffic unrelated

to the fields.

In summary, ACPS and the community need the lighted

fields at Hammond, city staff has properly supported the recommendation for

approval of the SUP action, there will be no adverse effects of installing

the lights, and the Planning Commission should recommend approving this.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Neilson

2 66

## Kendra Jacobs

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Francis Hammond Field - Adding Lights

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 10:51 AM  
**To:** Geralyn McNally  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Francis Hammond Field - Adding Lights

Dear Ms. McNally,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

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**From:** Geralyn McNally [mailto:gmcnva@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 10:50 AM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Francis Hammond Field - Adding Lights

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Mon Jun 06, 2011 10:49:35] Message ID: [30660]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** Geralyn  
**Last Name:** McNally  
**Street Address:** 1641 Francis Hammond Pkwy  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** VA  
**Zip:** 22302  
**Phone:** 703-370-7834  
**Email Address:** [gmcnva@comcast.net](mailto:gmcnva@comcast.net)  
**Subject:** Francis Hammond Field - Adding Lights  
Dear Planning Commission,  
I have been involved with the Alexandria  
Lacrosse Club (ALC) for seven years and served as a Field Commissioner  
for  
**Comments:** four seasons. The club is a youth sports organization with participants in  
K through 8th grade. The home game field for ALC is Minnie Howard. We  
started playing on the field when it was grass covered and continue to this  
day on the artificial turf surface using the lights when needed.

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The

Francis Hammond Field requires lights because the investment of the tax dollars for the artificial turf surface is only justified if the entire community benefits from the facility. The facility has to be available in the evening to meet this criterion. The registered youth and adult sport groups have a record of good citizenship regarding the use of the fields and need post sunset access. The addition of lights allows for working tax payers to volunteer as coaches and benefit from adult recreation activities.

Minnie Howard was the first rectangular field with a locked fence which made the enforcement of the permit-only play easier for the city. It was also the first field with cut-away lights which allowed ALC to recruit working adults as coaches by adding the evening practice option. The field is a fabulous facility because of the combination of the playing surface, cut-away lights and locked fence. The permit users respect the facility and keep it in good condition. The lights drive the return on investment as the play time is maximized.

The City Parks and Recreation

Department deserves high marks for the management of the Minnie Howard field. There was a learning curve. The neighborhood concerns about lax field management are based on out-dated information regarding the skill and care the city employees currently direct toward the grass and artificial turf fields. The fields are patrolled; the garbage is removed on a scheduled basis with extra pickups completed in response to observations during the patrols or in response to a request from a permit user. The lights cut off automatically at the set evening time or are kept off by the city workers when the field is not scheduled for activities by a permit user. Non-permit groups are removed from the field.

My only objection

to the plan for lighting the field is the neighborhood desire to have the field fenced but unlocked. This will place an undue burden on the Parks and

Recreation Department and the police as it leaves the field open to all

including those violating the rules regarding care of the facility. This includes people exercising their dogs, owners that fail to clean up after their pets, people holding gatherings such as birthday parties and not cleaning up and unofficial sports groups holding spontaneous competitions.

A locked permit-only field limits access to known entities. The permit is put at risk if the group leaves the facility in poor condition or they violate noise and crowd control ordinances.

Sincerely,  
Geraldyn  
McNally

Dear Members of City Council, School Board, Planning Commission, and City and ACPS Staff,

My name is Brendan Orsinger, in my fifth year of residence in the City of Alexandria. I am writing you **to express my strong support for the approval of lights at Hammond Middle School**. I am a west-ender, living just down the road from Hammond Middle School in Ramsey District.

I spent my youth growing up in Vienna, Virginia, benefiting from the many lighted fields in Fairfax County. Those fields that were unlighted would from time to time leave us quite literally in the dark, forcing a postponement or my baseball games into an early end. Just as in my case, lights add to the opportunities that youth and adult sports have to hold athletic events, and safety to those events that run into twilight.

The additional playing time that the lighted athletic fields afforded me was instrumental in my success with baseball, a skill that helped me gain acceptance into college. I think it would be safe to argue that without the opportunity to play after dark, my skill would not have reached its full potential, hampering my ability to be recruited to play NCAA sports and admission into the school of my choice.

Aside from points I personally made above, here are some other advantages that installation of these lights would bring to our community:

1. ***Increase playing time and fitness and recreation opportunities for youth.***

Having lights, especially in the spring and fall, will allow for practices to extend into the evening.

With the track being installed at Hammond, youth will be able to jog in the evening as well in safe environment.

2. ***Increase playing time and fitness and recreation opportunities for adults.***

It is very difficult for many of our adults to find playing fields for soccer that accommodate a full work schedule. Extra hours would help these busy professionals get the exercise they severely need after a long day of work.

The old track at Hammond was used extensively by neighbors for exercise. Having lights around the new track will give adults a chance to get their physical exercise performed in a safe environment.

3. ***Provide a greater return on investment for Alexandria taxpayers.***

Putting lights on the field at Hammond will increase the number of hours it can be used which is a better return on our investment than not having the lights.

Sincerely,

Brendan Orsinger

Dear Members of City Council, School Board, Planning Commission, and City and ACPS Staff,

My name is Clark Mercer, a lifelong resident of Alexandria and Seminary Hills, and I am writing you to express my strong support for the approval of lights at Hammond Middle School.

Both of my parents attended Hammond High School, with my father playing football and running track there all four years under Coach Yoast, made famous in the movie "Remember the Titans". I grew up in the same house my grandfather built, directly abutting Chinquapin Park— my family is one of the few that has lived in the neighborhood prior to T.C. Williams being built. All the members of my family are strong supporters of lights being installed along with synthetic turf on fields such as Hammond.

I grew up playing recreation soccer on Hammond's upper field, and then practiced there for four years when I played at T.C. Williams. After graduating from college, I came back to Alexandria and coached the men's varsity soccer team for seven seasons- coaching at Hammond every day in the spring, six times a week.

In addition to having used the Hammond field probably more than just about anyone in the city, I also am a member of the City's Parks and Recreation Commission (having also served on it as a high school member), and have worked on a variety of planning issues as a former employee of the Urban Land Institute. Given my background, I think I am in a unique position to discuss this proposal and would offer the following reasons in support of having lights at Hammond:

***1. Increase playing time and fitness and recreation opportunities for youth.***

Having lights, especially in the spring and fall, will allow for practices to extend into the evening. As a coach, I can tell you that I encourage my players first and foremost to stay after school, if needed, to get additional help in the classroom. This leads to our practices starting that much later and having to end when it gets dark- which, as you know, in the spring and fall is fairly early.

With the track being installed at Hammond (and it was a shame it hasn't been replaced any earlier), youth will be able to jog in the evening as well in safe environment.

**2. *Increase playing time and fitness and recreation opportunities for adults.***

It is very difficult for many of our adults to find playing fields for soccer that accommodate a full work schedule. I have played in an adult soccer league for a few years comprised mostly adults who live on the West End of the City. We all work fulltime jobs and usually cannot begin playing soccer until the evening. We don't have many options in terms of where we can play, and as a result we have two or three teams worth of players playing on the same field in the early evening, trying to get whatever playing time we can in before it gets dark. This is too many people to have playing on one field. Putting lights on a field and fencing it off will result in only teams that have schedule practices and games playing, and will result in a more appropriate number of players on a field at one time. The adults I play with, most of whom are immigrants, love the game of soccer and deserve fields to play on in the evening. Because the fields are used by the youth in the afternoon and early evening, and because many adults work until the early evening, the best option for giving taxpayers in the community a chance to enjoy playing soccer is to have lights installed on appropriate fields in the community.

Additionally, the old track at Hammond was used extensively by neighbors for exercise. Having lights around the new track will give adults a chance to get their physical exercise performed in a safe environment.

**3. *Provide a greater return on investment for Alexandria taxpayers.***

Putting lights on the field at Hammond will increase the number of hours it can be used which is a better return on our investment than not having the lights.

**4. Give parents and adults the opportunity to coach.**

When I coached the T.C. Williams' soccer team, I was working at Tyson's Corner and had to be at work by 5AM to get my hours in so I could be at Hammond in the afternoon for practice. That is simply not doable for most parents who not only work, but also have family duties to attend to. By putting lights in, we will open the opportunity to coach to more parents and adults. Drive by the fields at Ben Brenman Park in the evening and you will see the fields full of children being coached by their parents and adults in the community.

**5. Increase the competitiveness of Alexandria sports- soccer, for example.**

The Alexandria Soccer Association and the T.C. Williams Soccer teams do an excellent job teaching soccer to our youth. We compete against some very good teams from Arlington and Fairfax Counties. I believe every public high school in both of those counties has lights, not only at their high schools, but on turf fields throughout the counties. For the reasons I am listing here, Arlington and Fairfax have realized the advantages of having turf fields and lights, and are ahead of Alexandria in this area. The result is that they have more playing time for their youth and adults and that gives them a competitive advantage.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't address some of the comments I heard about the Hammond lights' issue at a recent public information session at Hammond.

First, our open space and fields exist for all residents of our community— rich, poor, black, white, or Latino. There was discussion at the hearing about the amount of taxes some neighbors pay relative to the amount that the adults

playing soccer do, suggesting that those who pay more taxes should have more of a say over how we program our fields and open space. There were complaints that some adult soccer players who play at Hammond have beat up automobiles and are an eye sore. I cannot be more opposed to this way of thinking and believe that all of our youth and adults in the community deserve open space and recreational opportunities. As I've cited above, putting lights in will increase these opportunities and, for many, give them a chance to play on a field that they otherwise will not be able to play on.

Second, we live in an urban community. I grew up next to T.C. Williams High School and my family realizes what that means— that we will see high school kids around, we will hear high school kids, and we are part of a larger community. We really enjoy that and, while we are one of the few families to have lived next to T.C. before there was a high school, we enjoy being so close to our city's only high school. For Hammond, the situation is similar for many of my neighbors— they have chosen to live near a middle school and, as a result, there should be a reasonable expectation that youth and adults will be playing sports outside and that given the limited amount of open space we have in the city, coupled with a growing population, that Alexandria will follow Arlington and Fairfax and put lights in at appropriate fields in the city.

Third, the city has made a concession to put a six-foot fence around Hammond's field and keep it locked when not "programmed" as a way to calm concerns from neighbors. I'm not sure what those concerns are— that the field might be used by residents? While I understand that certain concessions need to be made in any effort such as this, I think walling off our open space and only letting it be used for official, "programmed" activities is unfortunate. What if I want to head out one Saturday and throw the football with a friend, kick the soccer ball around, throw a Frisbee, or if I have a dozen buddies and the field is not being used, use it for a game of pick up soccer? This is what our city's fields are supposed to be used for. I cannot always commit to a full season worth of soccer games (and many cannot pay the requisite fee to play in an organized league) and instead enjoy being able to get in exercise on a ball field when I can. I am not suggesting there be no fence at Hammond—I am pointing out this is a major concession that has been made

and it will result in only programmed activities taking place— currently there is no such fence and people have the opportunity to enjoy the field in a more casual way.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this and consider approving to put lights in at Hammond.

Sincerely,

Clark Mercer

Dear Members of City Council, School Board, Planning Commission, and City and ACPS Staff,

My name is Brendan Orsinger, in my fifth year of residence in the City of Alexandria. I am writing you **to express my strong support for the approval of lights at Hammond Middle School**. I am a west-ender, living just down the road from Hammond Middle School in Ramsey District.

I spent my youth growing up in Vienna, Virginia, benefiting from the many lighted fields in Fairfax County. Those fields that were unlighted would from time to time leave us quite literally in the dark, forcing a postponement or my baseball games into an early end. Just as in my case, lights add to the opportunities that youth and adult sports have to hold athletic events, and safety to those events that run into twilight.

The additional playing time that the lighted athletic fields afforded me was instrumental in my success with baseball, a skill that helped me gain acceptance into college. I think it would be safe to argue that without the opportunity to play after dark, my skill would not have reached its full potential, hampering my ability to be recruited to play NCAA sports and admission into the school of my choice.

Aside from points I personally made above, here are some other advantages that installation of these lights would bring to our community:

1. ***Increase playing time and fitness and recreation opportunities for youth.***

Having lights, especially in the spring and fall, will allow for practices to extend into the evening.

With the track being installed at Hammond, youth will be able to jog in the evening as well in safe environment.

2. ***Increase playing time and fitness and recreation opportunities for adults.***

It is very difficult for many of our adults to find playing fields for soccer that accommodate a full work schedule. Extra hours would help these busy professionals get the exercise they severely need after a long day of work.

The old track at Hammond was used extensively by neighbors for exercise. Having lights around the new track will give adults a chance to get their physical exercise performed in a safe environment.

3. ***Provide a greater return on investment for Alexandria taxpayers.***

Putting lights on the field at Hammond will increase the number of hours it can be used which is a better return on our investment than not having the lights.

Sincerely,

Brendan Orsinger

DONNELL R. FULLERTON  
1407 N. Pickett Street  
Alexandria, VA 22304

June 3, 2011

Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria  
Alexandria City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Docket Item # 10  
Special Use Permit #2010-0079  
4646 Seminary Road- Francis Hammond Middle School.

I received an announcement last week about a Request for Consideration to add lighting to an existing athletic field/track and minimum a modification to the minimum front yard setback by the Alexandria City Public School ("ACPS"). I live directly across the street from the existing field and will be directly and adversely impacted by this requested Special Use Permit #2010-0079.

The application is significantly deficient in its description of the proposed project, activities to be conducted relative to the construction and use thereof and the adverse impacts resulting there from.

Absent a full description of the project including, but not limited to, light pollution, noise impacts, traffic and parking impacts and the adverse impact on the value of neighboring properties this application fails to establish any basis for the grant of two special use permits or the variances which are required but not requested by this applicant.

I live at 4722 North Pickett Street immediately across the street from the existing athletic field and within approximately 125 feet of one of the proposed sixty (60) feet tall lighting structures.<sup>1</sup> Below I identify a number of issues of concern relative to this application and proposal.

### **1. Light Pollution**

Light pollution is a serious problem in Northern Virginia. The subject athletic field is immediately in front of my home. The existing skyline is in clear view of my home from the master bedroom, living room, sun room and front yard. Stars are clearly visible and the view unobstructed.

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<sup>1</sup> My property is shown on page 2 of Staff's report identified as "1407". The application fails to contain sufficient detail to establish exactly where applicant proposes to situate its light towers but seeks to locate at least two approximately 23 and 25 feet from its property line.

Applicant proposes to introduce a series of light towers with multiple levels of lights and will fill the sky with light three hundred sixty five days a year until at least 10 p.m. every night other than Sunday which will feature illumination up until 6 pm. No dimensions are included in the application but applicant proposes to shower light over a large rectangular area roughly the size of a football field to service a yet to be installed replacement soccer field. Applicant intends to add to the towers at a lower level additional directed lights to illuminate beyond the field onto a yet to be installed oblong four lane wide running track.

The application provides no details as to total candle power of lighting to be installed, no information as to average constant illumination on the field or the track, no meaningful technical data regarding foot-candles of design, types of fixtures or manufacturing specifications.

This proposal seeks to retrofit an athletic field yet to be installed in an existing suburban neighborhood. Installation and operation of artificial lights in the manner described in the application presents significant quality of life issues. There is inadequate space between the athletic field and existing residences. Given the expansion of Hammond Middle School approximately four years ago then existing regulation track was removed as there wasn't sufficient space to keep it and erect the school addition. Now a smaller non-regulation size track and non-regulation size soccer field are the intended recipients of the lights.

Light trespass is when light crosses property lines. As noted in the White Paper on Athletic Field Lighting issued by Fairfax County Park Authority – “When light crosses property lines it can detract from the property value and quality of life of those whose property it is improperly directed. It can be a particularly objectionable problem when obtrusive recreational or commercial lighting is immediately adjacent to residential neighborhoods...”<sup>2</sup>

My property is currently the subject of light trespass and is impacted by “security” flood lights mounted on the walls of the new addition proximate to the existing athletic field which shine into the front of my house.<sup>3</sup> This existing spill light is not addressed in the application at all.

The application utterly ignores and fails to address the new “spill light” which will be created by the installation of these light towers. No mention is made of the spill effect of the lower lights which applicant plans to direct outside the athletic field and illuminate the track which is to surround the field. A meager reference is made to spill on sidewalks but it is insufficient to inform.

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<sup>2</sup> White Payer Athletic Field Lighting and Control of Obtrusive Light Pollution - Fairfax County Park Authority July 2010 at page 6.

<sup>3</sup> After months of repeated complaints, recently modifications in the form of shades have been made to lessen this intrusion.

The application fails to address at all glare. Glare is excessive brightness occurring in the normal field of vision. Glare differs from spill light as would occur when I look out my windows or walk into my front yard and while not directly facing the source see illumination of the field and other objects receiving light from it. As addressed in the White Paper, "Glare can be a significant problem that seriously impairs both safety and quality of life. Glare can be a serious safety hazard (for example for drivers and pedestrians) in that it demands attention since one's eyes are naturally attracted to bright light, and at night this destroys the eye's dark adaptation (i.e., the eye's sensitivity to lower light levels).<sup>4</sup>

Glare is exasperated by the degree of the light being cast. For this reason Fairfax County prescribes either a 70' or 80' light pole to minimize glare and its impact. This applicant fails to identify the height of the poles it intends to install but specifies that they "will not exceed 60' in height. It is clear that the pole height applicant proposes will not meet recommended standards to attempt to minimize the impact of glare.

This application will result in spill light and glare and impact detrimentally Varsity Park and my property. There is no basis for granting any special use permit or making any finding of hardship or grounds for a variance as this lighting proposal is entirely an elective being sought by this applicant.

The applicant claims separately to have obtained all necessary approvals and funding to install both a new athletic field and track and has repeatedly admonished concerned citizens that regardless of its lighting application these facilities will be installed.<sup>5</sup>

There is no intention for students at Hammond Middle School to use the lighted field as part of educational or physical education curricula sponsored by ACPS. The fields will not even be under the control of ACPS after 6 pm in the evening.

The instant application for a Special Use Permit is by the repeated statements of the applicant independent and not subject to their existing commitment to install an upgraded

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<sup>4</sup> White Paper at page 7.

<sup>5</sup> Applicant claims to have received authorization and budget approval at a special meeting months prior to alerting this community of its plan to install lighting at Hammond Middle School. Two public hearings have been held at Hammond Middle School to which the public has been invited. At the last public meeting the School Board Chair, Yvonne Folkerts, attended. I spoke at the meeting and related to Ms. Folkerts, the meetings with ACPS and my community immediately prior to the expansion of Hammond Middle School and the statements made by Board Member Roger D'Giolo at that time on behalf of ACPS that there would be no stands and no lighting of this field. I requested that Ms. Folkerts withdraw the pending proposal. I never received a response, however, I am advised that at the most recent City/Schools meeting at which the Mayor, Councilman Krupicka, Ms. Folkerts and Sheryl Gorsuch and staff members for both the City and ACPSSS an agenda item dealing with lights at Hammond was discussed.

athletic field and track on their property. As such Hammond's educational mission is unaffected in any manner by a rejection of the pending Special Use Permit request.

## **2. Noise**

Applicant proposes to deliver possession of its athletic field to the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities ("RCPA"). Applicant proposes operations from 8 am until 10 pm Monday through Saturday and 8 am until 6 pm on Sunday. It describes its proposed use as "Athletic Field". The current schedule attached at page 26 indicates that Adult Sports Soccer (Rentals) (several leagues) will use the field September through November.

Noise from players will present itself when ever games are played. It exists now. Noise from officials, whistles, will intrude upon and punctuate my property and the community evenings all year long. The noise of parking cars, horns as players and spectators lock and unlock their vehicles will be present ending officially at 10 pm but in reality until players and spectators leave either dressing on the field or in or next to their cars some time later.

I plainly hear in my house and rear yard the ongoing noise from players as do a number of my neighbors. It is annoying and detracts from my enjoyment of my house and pool and interferes with my use of my property. It is a nuisance to permit such noise to continue after dark when it currently ends until after 10 p.m. in the evening. There are small children in the neighborhood whose sleep is interrupted. My grandchildren go to bed at 7:30 pm. Shouts and yells, car alarms being disengaged, doors and trunks being opened and closed are intrusive and obnoxious. This all is a natural result of this application and can not be minimized and it has a significant adverse impact on me and my neighbors.

## **3. Parking**

Varsity Park has a serious and ongoing parking problem. The application does nothing to address this problem only will add to it. The applicant assumes because there is a parking lot at the rear of Hammond Middle School that it's projected 20-25 additional vehicles "can be easily accommodated". It ignores the "Industry Standard suggestion of 38 parking spaces for a rectangular field. It ignores the overlap between games ending and the need for the next team to have already parked and be suiting up for play. It ignores the reality which is that often there are competing functions at the school which take up the parking lot and that human nature being what it is that convenience will dictate parking on the street as close as one can get to the corner of Seminary and North Pickett.

I have lived at 1407 N. Pickett Street for over twenty years and observe it on a daily basis. Users of the track and of the field routinely park in front of my house and up the street. Users routinely ignore the No Parking signs, routinely make U turns on North Pickett Street and create hazards as they park their vehicles. All this will only be exasperated when the hours of usage extend into the night.

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ACRP will do nothing to address the parking impact. ACPS will patrol its lot and possibly write a ticket if someone is blocking a lane or an exit. They have no jurisdiction and no interest in what goes on outside of their lot. I and my neighbors are left to Traffic Enforcement which is ill staffed especially in the evenings or weekends to deal with parking issues.

As a result of BRAC our current parking problems will only be worsened. In fact the Mayor as part of his request for impact payments from the federal government has acknowledged this and is requested \$300,000 + to hire and equip additional traffic enforcement resources for this area.

Grant of this application will draw a significant number of additional vehicles will result in parking and traffic congestion and will materially detract from the quality of life in Varsity Park.

#### **4. Traffic**

Hammond Middle School generates significant traffic during the day especially when school buses drop off and pick up students. This is augmented by parents lining up to drop off and pick up their children. BRAC is projected to add at least four thousand vehicles a day to the already congested area surrounding Hammond Middle School. BRAC will not restrict its limited parking spaces to car pools and thousands of employees will descend on Varsity Park (circling Hammond Middle School into Varsity Park) seeking parking and short cuts to avoid grid lock on I-395.

The addition of an evening draw of traffic to play and observe evening soccer leagues will compound an already existing problem. Applicant has no solution to this other than ignore its contribution to the problem.

#### **5. Health and Safety**

The Fire Station, at the corner of North Pickett and Seminary is extremely busy and will only get busier. Fire Trucks routinely are called out on emergencies as is their paramedic unit. Often they drive down North Pickett on emergency runs under full siren. They are the designated "Jaws of Life" unit and respond to accidents on I-395 and throughout the city where motor vehicles are involved and entrapment exists. Their mission will be compromised by the addition of traffic to Hammond in the evenings.

The Mayor has gone on record to the federal government seeking impact assistance noting that the critical response time (less than 4- 6 minutes) is already illusive in this area and will not be able to be maintained once BRAC opens. A request for an additional paramedic unit has been made and is pending.

The addition of a steady stream of soccer players to Hammond Middle School every evening of the week and congestion and traffic, glare and light pollution resulting from this application will further degrade the health and safety of our community.

## **6. Aesthetic Issues**

Varsity Park is suburban community zoned R-20 in large part. It features lawns and well maintained neighborhoods in scale stepping down from the high rise apartments bordering I-395. We have beautiful trees, birds and an open and quiet community. Our skyline is beautiful not marred by commercial structures and is in proportion. Erection of sixty foot towers will mar our vistas and is out of character and will negatively impact and detract from the quality of life in this community.

Applicant has chosen to site its lights in what is know as the upper field. Curiously, Applicant has other areas on its property which if used would significantly mitigate on the aesthetic impact on the skyline these towers present, address significant glare abatement issues due to the existing large vegetation and tree borders separating the lower fields from the road and neighbors. This applicant could, if it so chose, mitigate substantially some of the previously identified negative impacts by locating any lighted athletic field on the North end of its property, i.e. in "death valley" and reconfiguring the existing fields located there.

## **7. Negative Impact of the Value of Homes**

Approval of this application will materially and adversely impact the value of homes in Varsity Park. Despite this issue having been raised by me and others at these public meetings and direct reference being provided to the recent application to install artificial lights at Bishop Dennis J. O'Connell High School, the study conducted as to diminution in property values and the decision by Arlington County to reject the proposal, neither the applicant nor staff in its report address this vital concern.

The applicant has retained and spent considerable sums on a consultant to package its application and market its proposal for the addition of lights at Hammond Middle School. The applicant was made aware of the serious concern held by me and others that this lighting project would seriously reduce property values in our neighborhood. Applicant has chosen to ignore the issue.

I have discussed this situation with four highly credentialed and experienced appraisal companies in recent days and shared with them the application, staff's report and the Arlington study conducted as to impact on values in Arlington and its conclusions. All concurred with the soundness of the Arlington study's approach and its conclusion that there will be a negative impact on the value of homes as a result of installation of athletic lighting.

The issue each appraiser expressed is how to best quantify the magnitude of impact as a result of this application. All concurred that given my home's location directly across the street from a light tower and the field that a diminution in value would exceed the Arlington County study average impact and likely result in a twenty to thirty percent diminution in the value of my property. Each indicated that a detailed analysis could be done and that it would take eight to twelve weeks. I am awaiting a proposal at this time.

Applicant has presented nothing to address the serious and significant adverse economic impact on neighbors which will result if this application were approved. The Planning Commission must draw a negative inference from this conscious omission by applicant and conclude that as a matter of fact surrounding homes will be materially impacted as a result of this proposal reducing home values from 9 to 30%.

### **8. Other observations and concerns**

#### **No Cost Information - we as taxpayers are to pay for this**

There is no cost information provided in the application. These proposed light towers and improvements and the extensive expenditures by ACPS on its agent Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. will all be funded at tax payer expense. Estimates by Mr. Hise at the public meetings suggest the lights will cost upwards of \$700,000.00. Issues have been raised not only with the installation costs but the operating costs- again nothing in the application or staff's review. This information should be required of the applicant. Any analysis of this application should include a review of this information and the analysis in staff's report as to fields and strategy omits this entirely. How can the Planning Commission consider this application without this basis cost information being a part of the record?

Here are some estimated costs -

- \* \$1,200,000 - The cost to convert Hammond Middle School to an artificial turfed athletic field with non-regulation oval track;
- \* \$ 700,000 - The addition of lights; and
- \* \$3-5,000,000 - Reduction in Varsity Park home values

### **9. No Hardship on Applicant for relief from setbacks**

The application seeks relief from the 70' front setback to install one of this light towers within 25' feet of the property line. The proposal lacks detail sufficient to identify how close to my property or others the nearest pole will be. No support for a variance is presented.

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No hardship exists. ACPS has sufficient land to locate its light poles within side yard setbacks. Applicant chooses to situate its new athletic field in an area of its Property where it must seek variances from the 70' set back requirements. ACPS has a large parcel. It includes a large parcel immediately served by the rear parking lot naturally shielded by mature trees currently and for years operated for soccer and other athletic activities.

ACPS suggests that there is a VA Power transmission line which would complicate installation of a new synthetic field in that area of its property. ACPS ignores the huge negative economic impact it will cause driving down home values by ignoring this alternative and pushing forward with its current plan.

Any positioning of light towers can be easily accommodated on the vast expanse of property owned by ACPS, the fact that it chooses to position a tower within 23 or 25 feet from its property line does not create a hardship.

### Summary

The application filed in this matter is deficient on its face and should be denied. If leave to amend or supplement is permitted applicant then adequate notice should be afforded the public.

Sincerely yours,



Donnell R. Fullerton

attachment • Photos with INDEX  
• O'Connell HS Impact Study

DONNELL R. FULLERTON  
1407 N. Pickett Street  
Alexandria, VA 22304

June 7, 2011

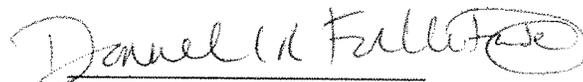
**ERRATA NOTICE**

Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria  
Alexandria City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Supplemental Documentation  
Docket Item # 10  
Special Use Permit #2010-0079  
4646 Seminary Road- Francis Hammond Middle School.

Donnell R. Fullerton's opposition to Special Use Permit #2010-0079 was filed with the Planning Commission on June 6, 2011. Please note that the description for Picture 1& 2 included in the submission should read:

Typical Sunday traffic after **church** at N. Pickett and Seminary Road, as opposed to  
Typical Sunday traffic after **soccer** at N. Pickett and Seminary Road.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Donnell R. Fullerton

# Impact on Real Estate Values of a Proposal to Increase the Stadium Capacity and Install Lights at Bishop O'Connell High School

December 21, 2010

## SUMMARY

The installation of lights and the expansion of the stadium at Bishop O'Connell High School will bring significant changes to the Williamsburg and Arlington East Falls Church neighborhoods. So residents of those neighborhoods conducted a survey of real estate agents to determine the impact on home values.

The survey shows that an overwhelming majority of real estate agents (80 percent) expect home values will decline for houses immediately adjacent to O'Connell and that a substantial majority of agents (65 percent) believe values will also decline for homes within one block of the private school. As expected, the impact declines farther from the school, although 35 percent of agents predicted that home values would decline within a three-block radius of the school.

The decline in home values would be significant:

- Agents estimated that the first row of homes would decline in value by 11 percent, or about \$72,000 for a typical home.
- Homes in the first block would fall by slightly over 9 percent, or about \$60,000 for an average home.

As one agent wrote on the survey, "You will absolutely see an impact on value." Another wrote that "the residential area is too dense for any such lighting . . . This goes against original planning of the area."

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## METHODOLOGY

To calculate the impact of lights and a stadium expansion at Bishop O'Connell, residents of the neighborhood distributed surveys to Arlington real estate agencies (see Attachment 2).

The study relied on local agents because they have tremendous familiarity with the real estate market in Arlington, the variations in different neighborhoods and how changes to a school would impact the desirability of a nearby home.

The survey sought to determine 1) if the agent believed the O'Connell proposal would increase, decrease or have little or no impact on home values; 2) the amount of the increase or decrease; and 3) if agents had any comments about the impact. To calculate the impact on homes of varying distances from O'Connell, the survey asked the same question for three sets of homes:

- Homes that are immediately adjacent to O'Connell, in the first row along Little Falls Road, 26th, Trinidad or Underwood Streets (34 homes).
- Homes that are within one block of O'Connell (156 homes)
- Homes that are within three blocks of O'Connell (406 homes).

Eighty-eight surveys were distributed and 46 were returned, a response rate of more than 50 percent. The surveys were anonymous so agents would feel free to be candid with their answers.

Tracking numbers were used on each survey to keep track of return rates, but the numbers were not associated with individual agents. Forty-three of the responses were returned on the survey forms; three were returned in email answers that were equated with questions on the survey.

## **RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

The results were tabulated on a spreadsheet. Agents were given the option of estimating the change in home value using a percentage or actual dollars. Because most agents used percentage, the four responses that used dollars were translated into percentages based on a typical home valued at \$650,000.

The findings:

- None of the agents expect that the O'Connell plan will result in higher home values -- not even for homes three blocks from the private school.
- An overwhelming majority of agents -- 80 percent -- believe the homes that are contiguous with O'Connell will decline in value.
- A substantial majority of agents -- 65 percent -- believe the homes within one block will also suffer a decline in value.
- A smaller but still substantial number of agents -- 35 percent -- believe that homes within three blocks will suffer a decline in value.

The agents were asked to quantify the impact of the increase or decrease:

- Agents estimated that the 34 homes immediately adjacent to O'Connell will decline in value by an average of 11.07 percent, which would reduce the value of a typical home by \$71,955.
- The agents estimated that the 156 homes within one block of the private school would fall in value by an average of 9.28 percent, which would reduce the value of a typical home by \$60,320.
- The value of all 406 homes within three blocks is expected to decline 11.8 percent, or \$76,700 for a typical home. We were surprised at this finding initially, but believe it reflects the feelings of a smaller group of agents, the 35 percent that believe values will decline for that larger radius. In general, this group believes the lights and stadium will have a greater impact on the entire neighborhood.

### COMMENTS OF THE AGENTS

Of all 46 respondents, about one-third provided comments about the O'Connell proposal and its impact on home values.

Some excerpts:

"Parking on neighborhood streets will be awful. Will have negative impact on appeal and access."

"The closer to a high school, the lower the price regardless...lights don't help!"

"Lights and noise from the stadium will definitely negatively impact the values of the homes nearby."

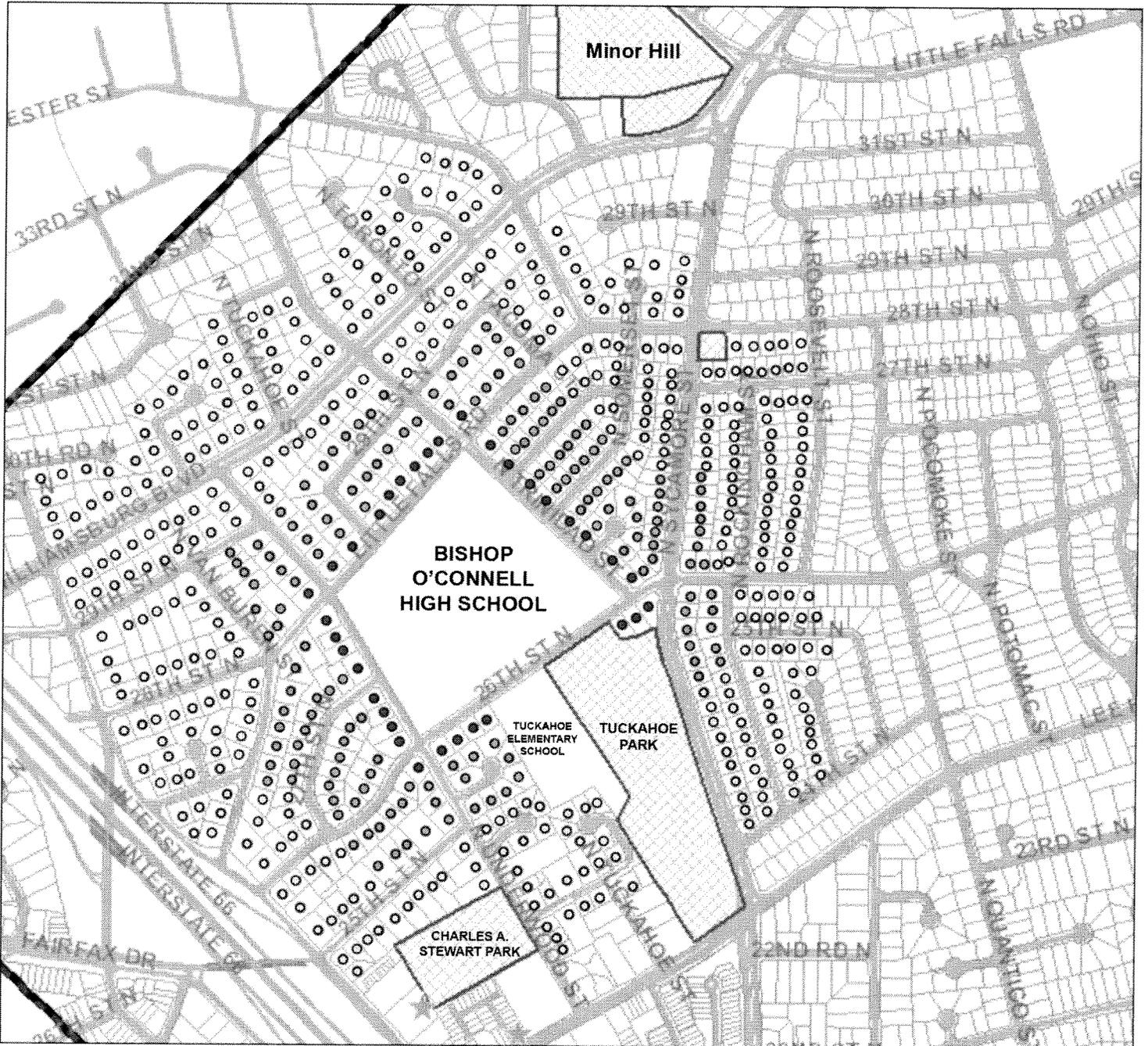
"The residential area is too dense for any such lighting adding much more congestion/traffic and will have a negative impact overall to values. This goes against original planning of the area."

"You will absolutely see an impact on value."

-- Submitted by residents of Williamsburg and Arlington/East Falls Church Civic Associations

Contact: Bill Adair  
[adairbook@gmail.com](mailto:adairbook@gmail.com)

# PROPOSED O'CONNELL ATHLETIC FIELD EXPANSION: IMPACT ON REAL ESTATE VALUES



■ 34 First Row Houses:  
11% decline in property  
values

▣ 156 Houses in One Block Radius:  
9.3% decline in property values

▤ 406 houses 2-3 Blocks from  
School

## **Real Estate Survey**

### **Impact of Lighted Fields and Expanded Stadium on Home Values**

The residents of the Williamsburg and Arlington East Falls Church Civic Associations are conducting this survey to measure the impact of stadium lights and an expanded football stadium on home values. We would appreciate your answers to these questions. You do not need to give your name.

As you may know, Bishop O'Connell High School (6600 N. Little Falls Road) has traditionally held its football, soccer, baseball and lacrosse games during daylight hours and has used its sports complex only for its own events. O'Connell is now seeking approval from Arlington County to reconstruct its fields, turning them into an NCAA-level athletic facility with 11 light poles (70- to 90-feet-tall), 30 percent more seats and an expanded PA System. The high school plans to allow Marymount University to hold collegiate events throughout the year, with lights as late as 11 p.m. every day.

The O'Connell proposal will lead to many more nighttime events at the school, bringing traffic, commotion and causing a parking shortage. The neighborhood is conducting this survey to determine the impact on home values.

1. What impact do you believe the lights and stadium expansion will have on home values for the homes **closest to O'Connell, those in the first row immediately across the street**? The project will:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Increase home values
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease home values
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have little or no impact on home values

They will increase/decrease the value of a typical home by \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ percent

2. What impact do you believe the lights and stadium expansion will have on home values for the homes **within a 1-block radius**? The project will:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Increase home values
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease home values
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have little or no impact on home values

They will increase/decrease the value of a typical home by \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ percent

(Over)

3. What impact do you believe the lights and stadium expansion will have on home values for homes near the school but outside a 1-block radius (that is, **homes that are 2 to 3 blocks** from O'Connell). The project will:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Increase home values
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease home values
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have little or no impact on home values

They will increase/decrease the value of a typical home by \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ percent

We welcome any comments you may have about the impact of the lights and stadium expansion on home values:

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Please leave the survey in the envelope provided by Friday, Dec. 17, or mail it to:

Bill Adair  
6559 N. 28th Street  
Arlington, VA 22213  
[adairbook@gmail.com](mailto:adairbook@gmail.com)

Thanks!

DONNELL R. FULLERTON  
1407 N. Pickett Street  
Alexandria, VA 22304

June 6, 2011

Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria  
Alexandria City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

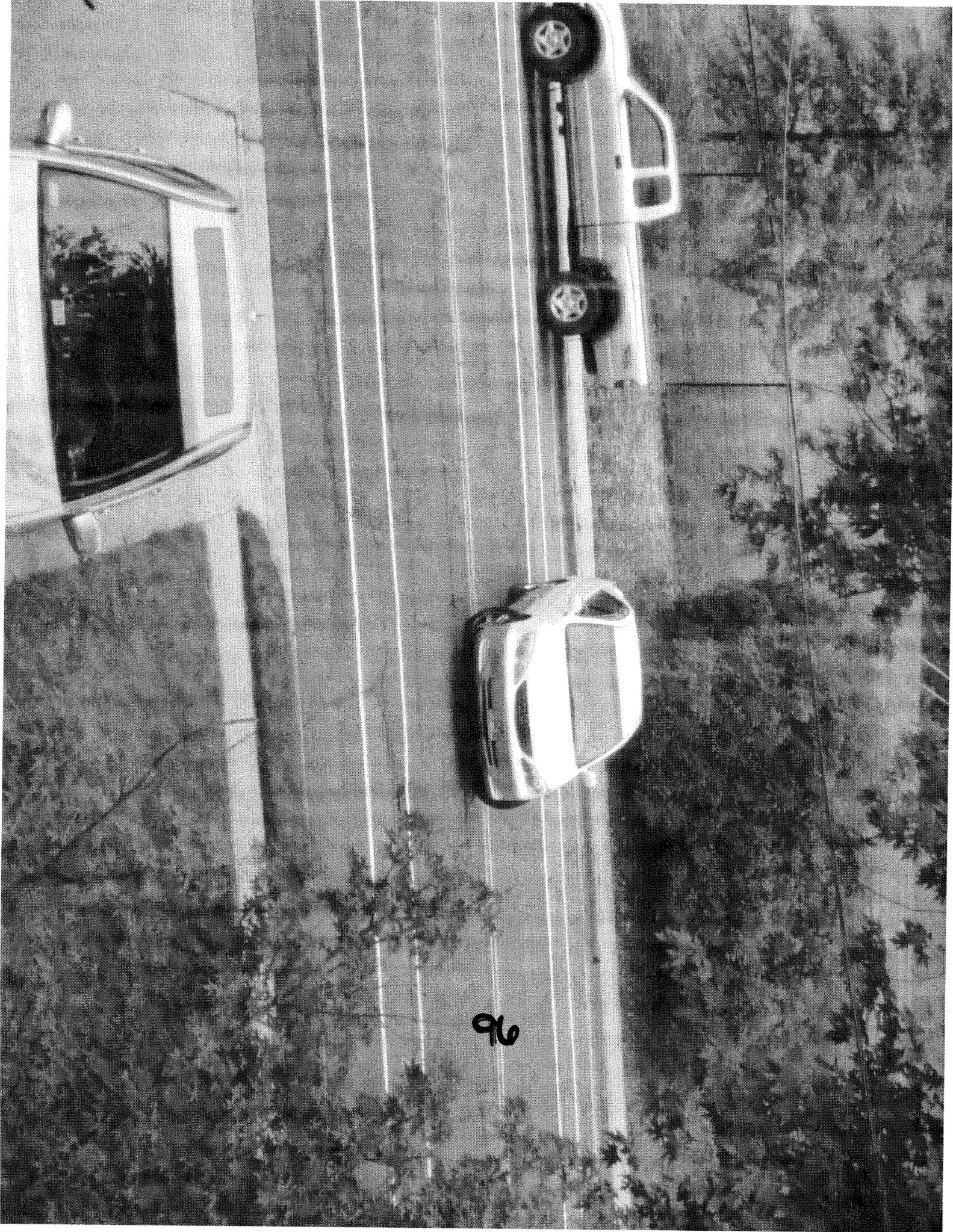
Re: Supplemental Documentation  
Docket Item # 10  
Special Use Permit #2010-0079  
4646 Seminary Road- Francis Hammond Middle School.

Please allow the following pictures to supplement my opposition to Special Use Permit #2010-0079:

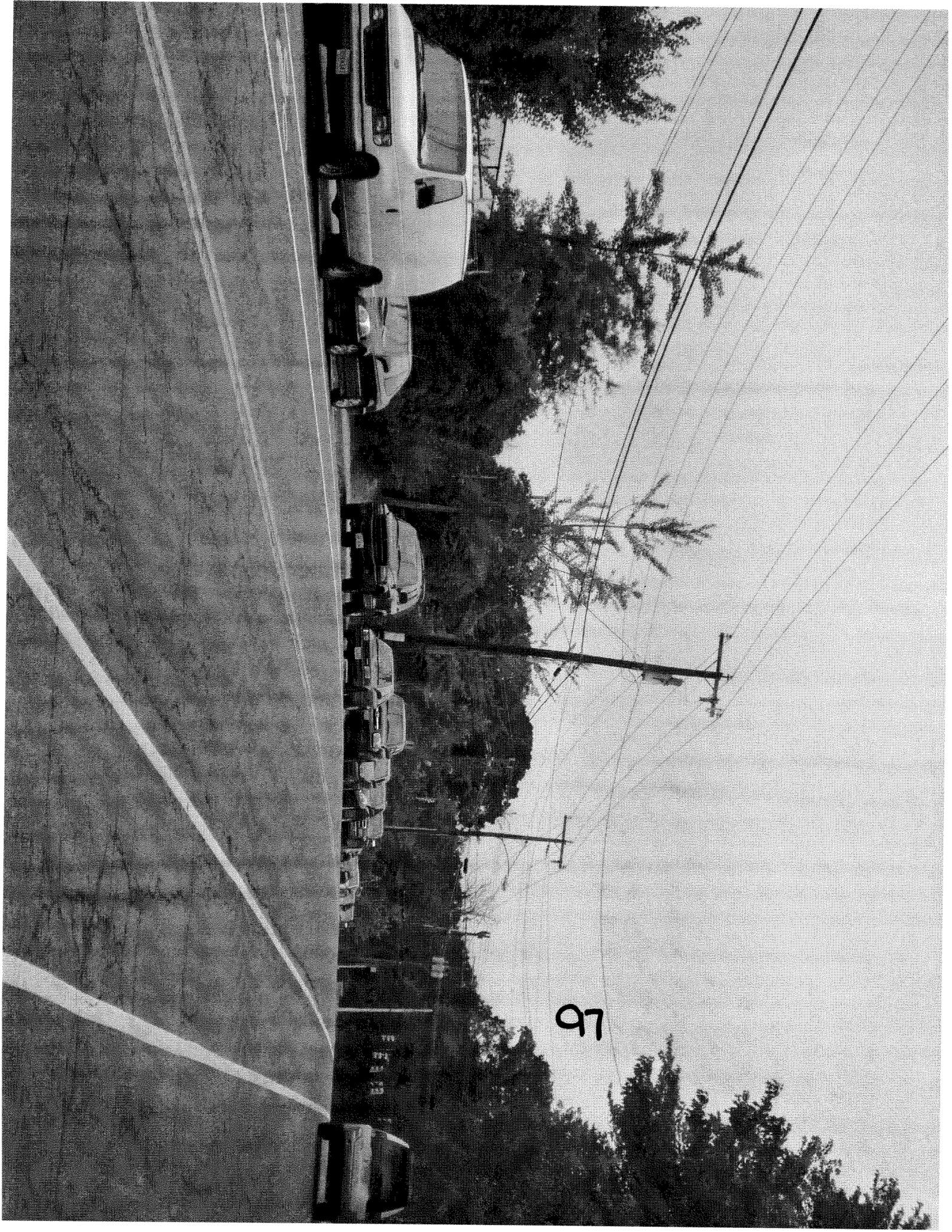
Picture	Description
1 & 2	Typical Sunday traffic after soccer at N. Pickett and Seminary Road
The following pictures were taken on Thursday at 6:00 pm	
3	Parking in front of 1407 N. Pickett
4	N. Pickett parking
5	N. Pickett—Illegal parking (left lane – approximately 26 vehicles)
6	No Parking Sign
7	Traffic prowling for space to park
8	Notice of SUP
9	Illegal parking to corner of N. Pickett and Seminary
10	LaSalle Street parking
11	Traffic
12	Student Drop Off Zone
13	LaSalle Street Parking 18+Cars
14	Typical parking in front of 1407 N. Pickett
15	Car searching for space
16	1407 impacted by parking
17	same
18	Illegal parking entering block of N. Pickett Street on left
19	Hammond rear lot full
20	Hammond upper rear Lot full
21	Cars in search of Space/Drop Off
22	Cars heading up near Death valley

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23	N. Pickett Street parking (illegal)
24	1407 N. Pickett Street
25	Front Yard –N. Pickett Street
26	Hammond Rear Lot – Screening Trees to Death Valley Fields
27	Screening Trees – Death Valley Field
28	Upper Parking Lot – Death Valley – Storage for ACPS
29	Same
30	Pick Up soccer players – Illegally parked opposite 1407 Drive way (observed with soccer ball)
31	Typical U-Turn adjacent to 1407 driveway
The following pictures were taken on Sunday, 12:30 pm	
32	Illegal Parking - 1407 N. Pickett Street
33	Parking - 1407 N. Pickett Street
34	Lot Full -Sunday
35	Rear lot with Food Service Truck
36	Teacher Parking
37	Same
38	Stafford and Washington Blvd. Arlington, VA Sunday , 3:00 pm
39	Washington and Lee Lights
40	Washington and Lee Lights
41	Washington and Lee Lights
The following pictures were taken on Sunday at 4:30 pm	
42	Parking in front of 1407 N. Pickett
43	Same
44	Parking on N. Pickett
45	Illegal parking – Length of N. Pickett
46	No parking sign--Ignored
47	Same
48	Parking at intersection of N. Pickett and Seminary— Firehouse in rear
49	Illegal parking – N. Pickett
50	Illegal parking – N. Pickett
51	LaSalle Street Parking
52	LaSalle Street Parking
53	N. Pickett Street Parking - Legal
54	N. Pickett Street Parking - Legal
55	N. Pickett - Illegal
56	N. Pickett - Illegal
57	Disputed property – 1407 N. Pickett Street



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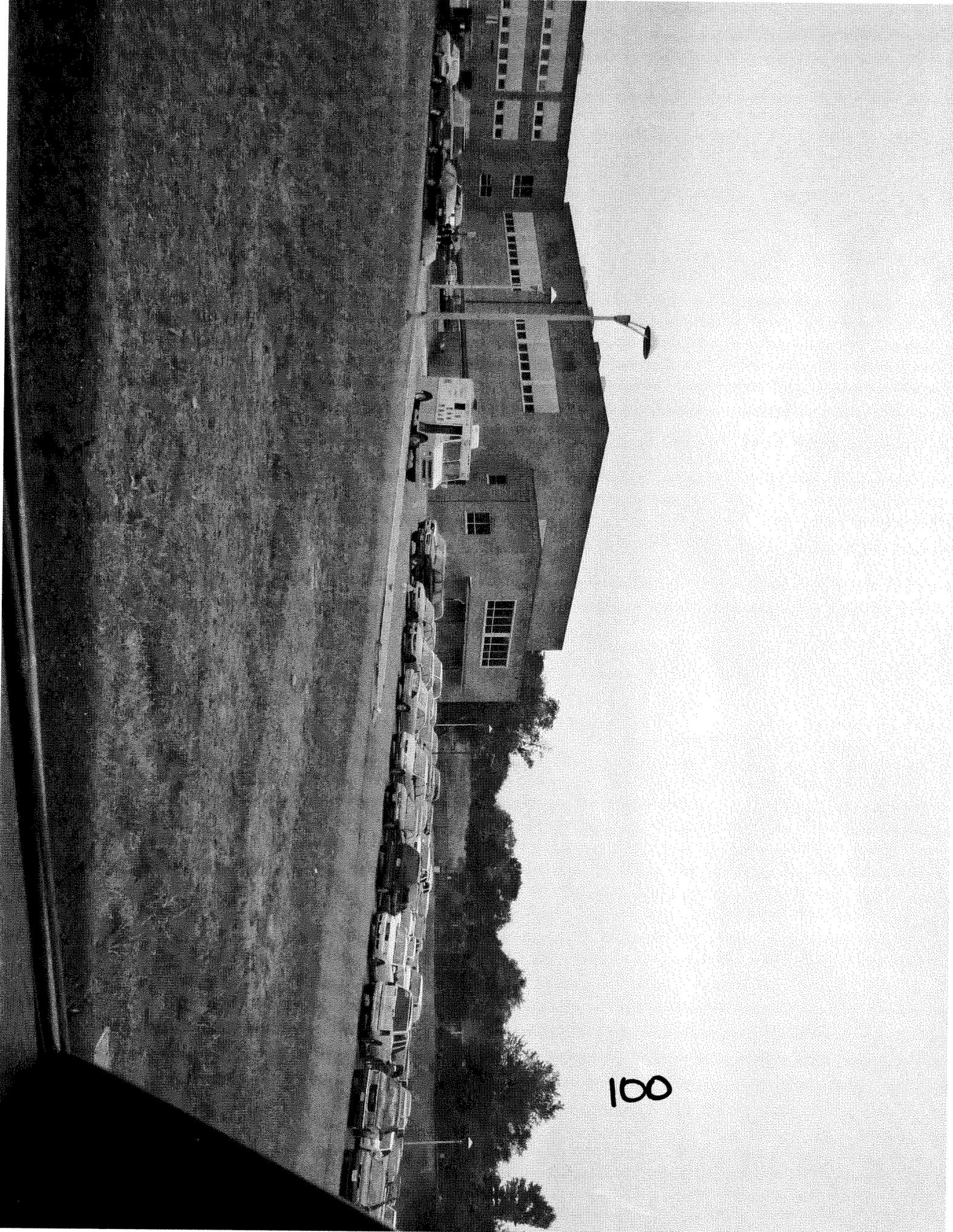


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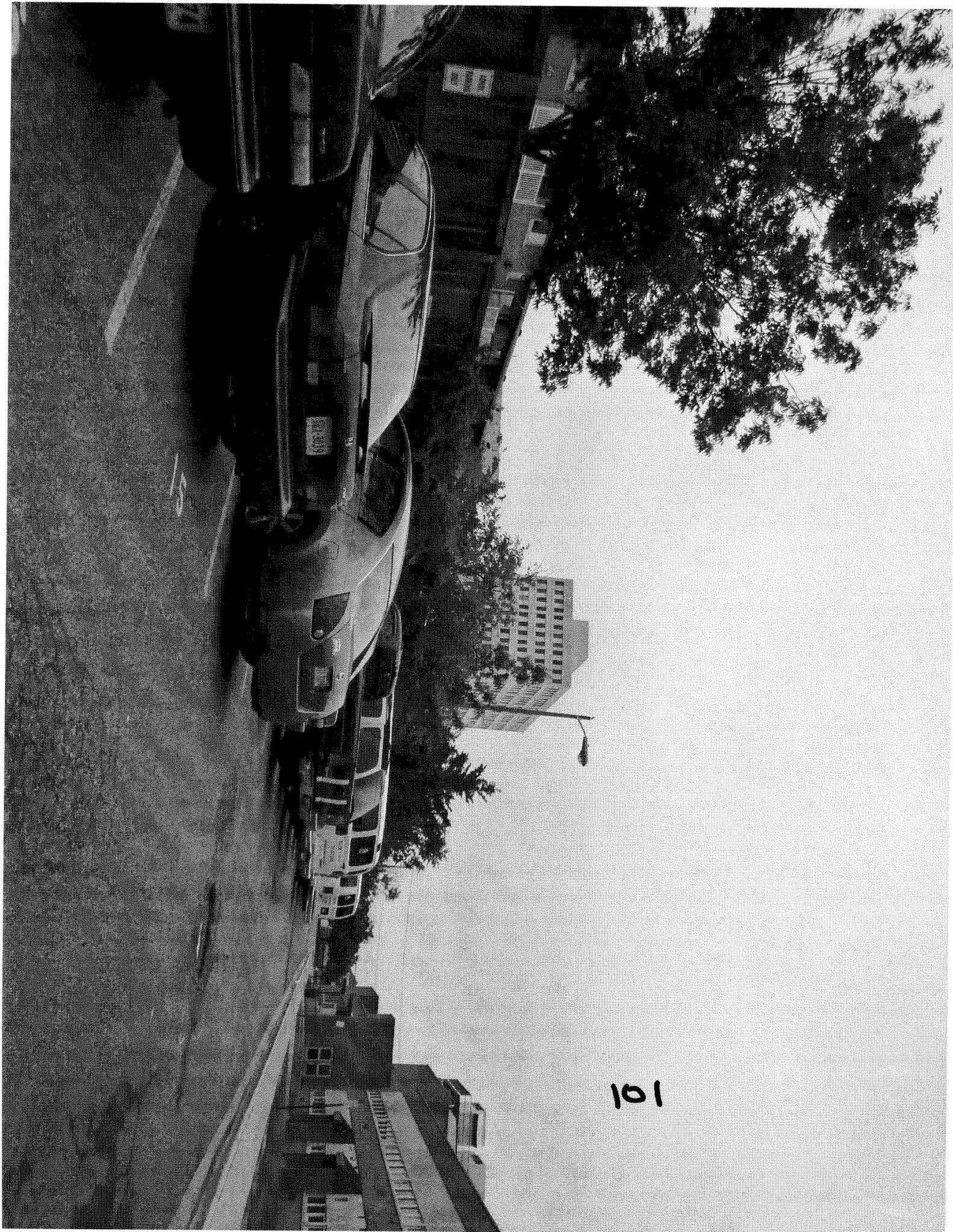




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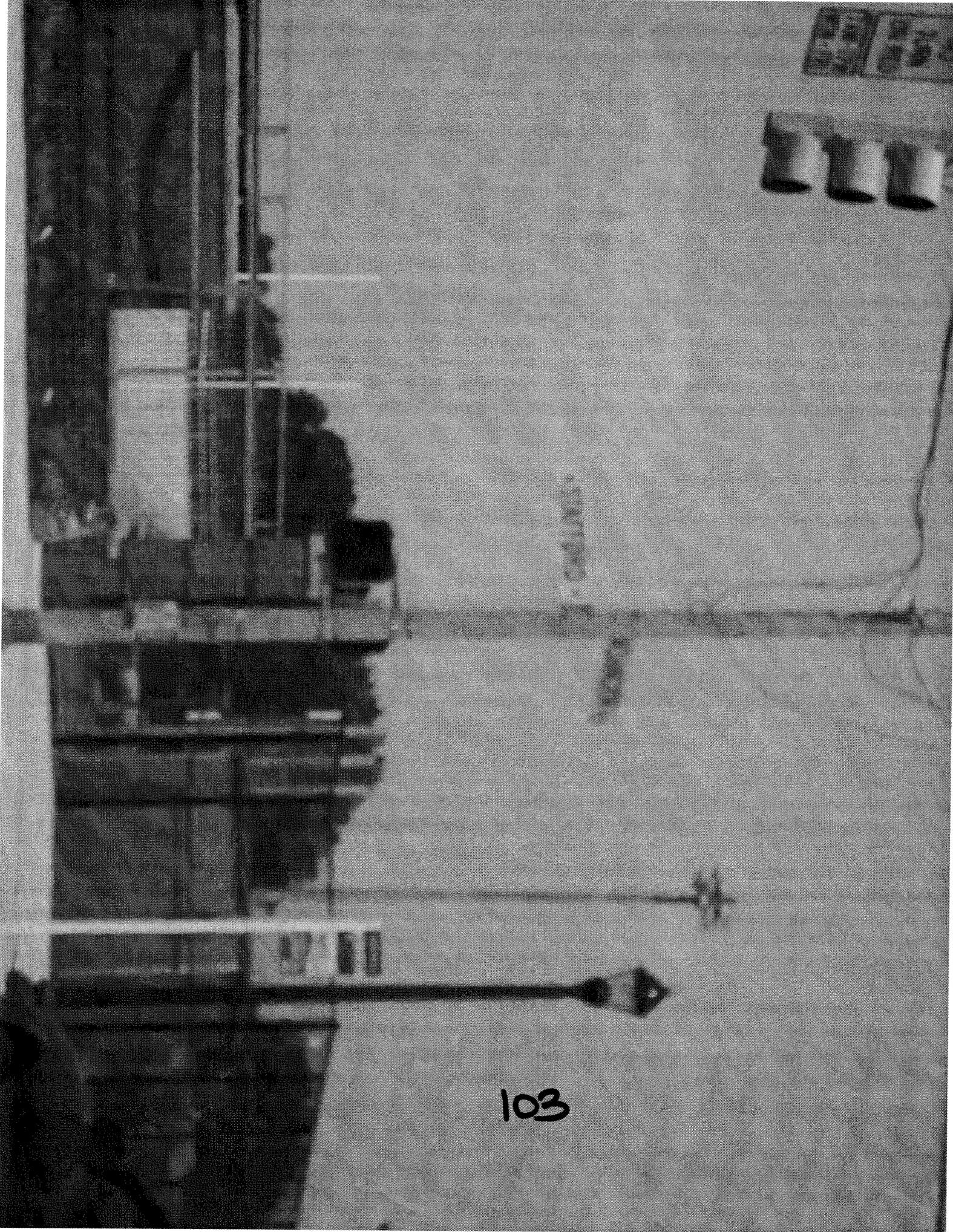


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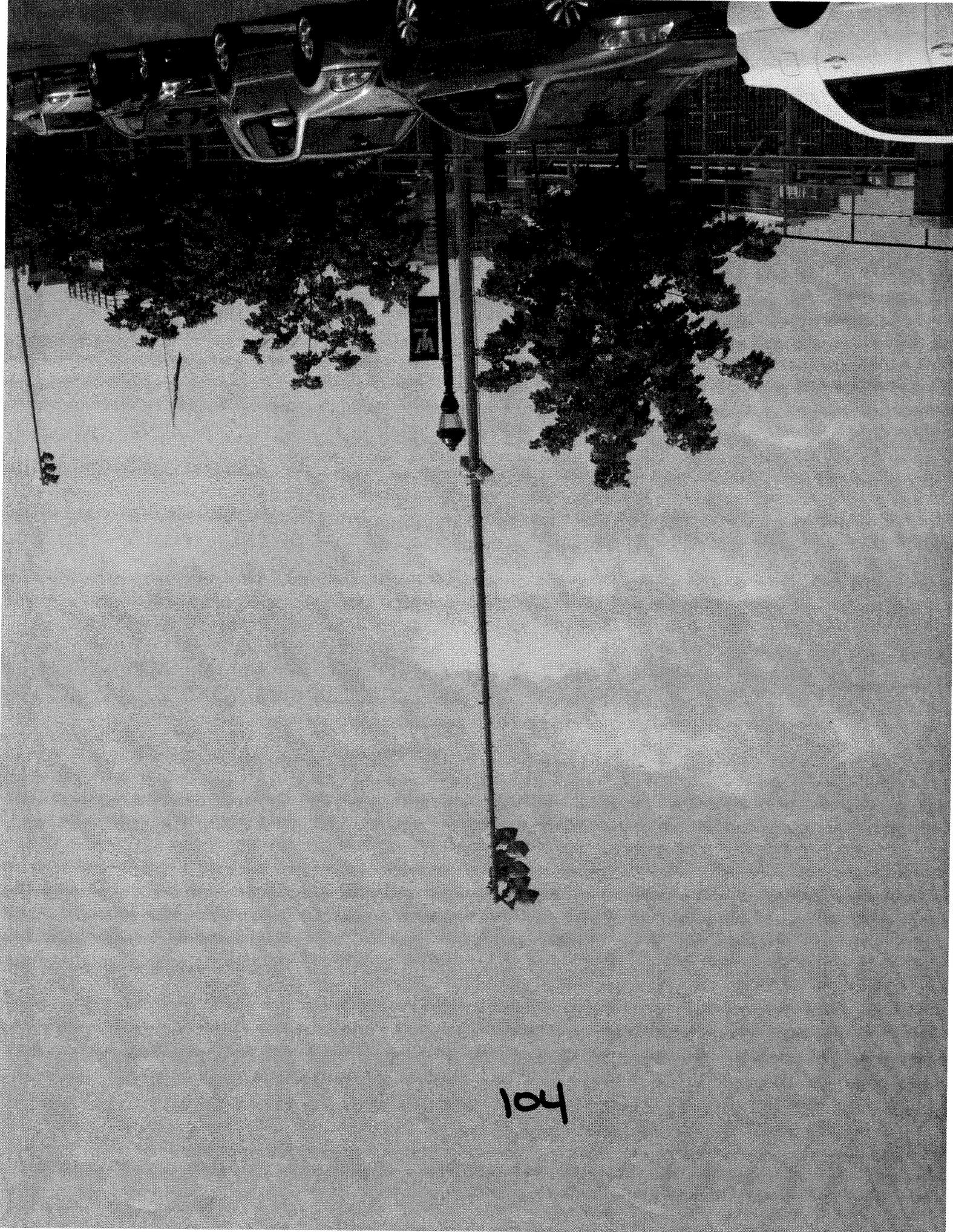


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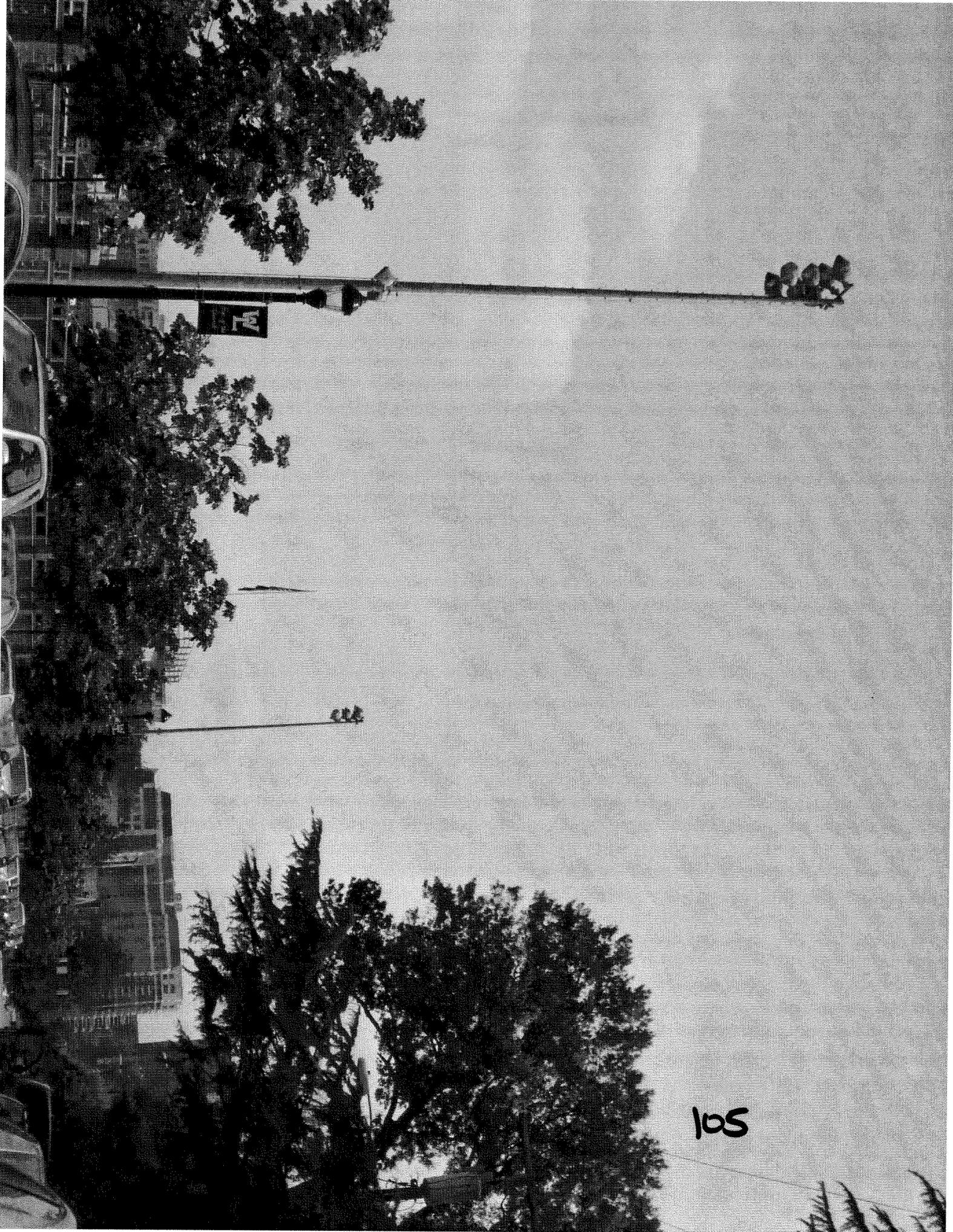




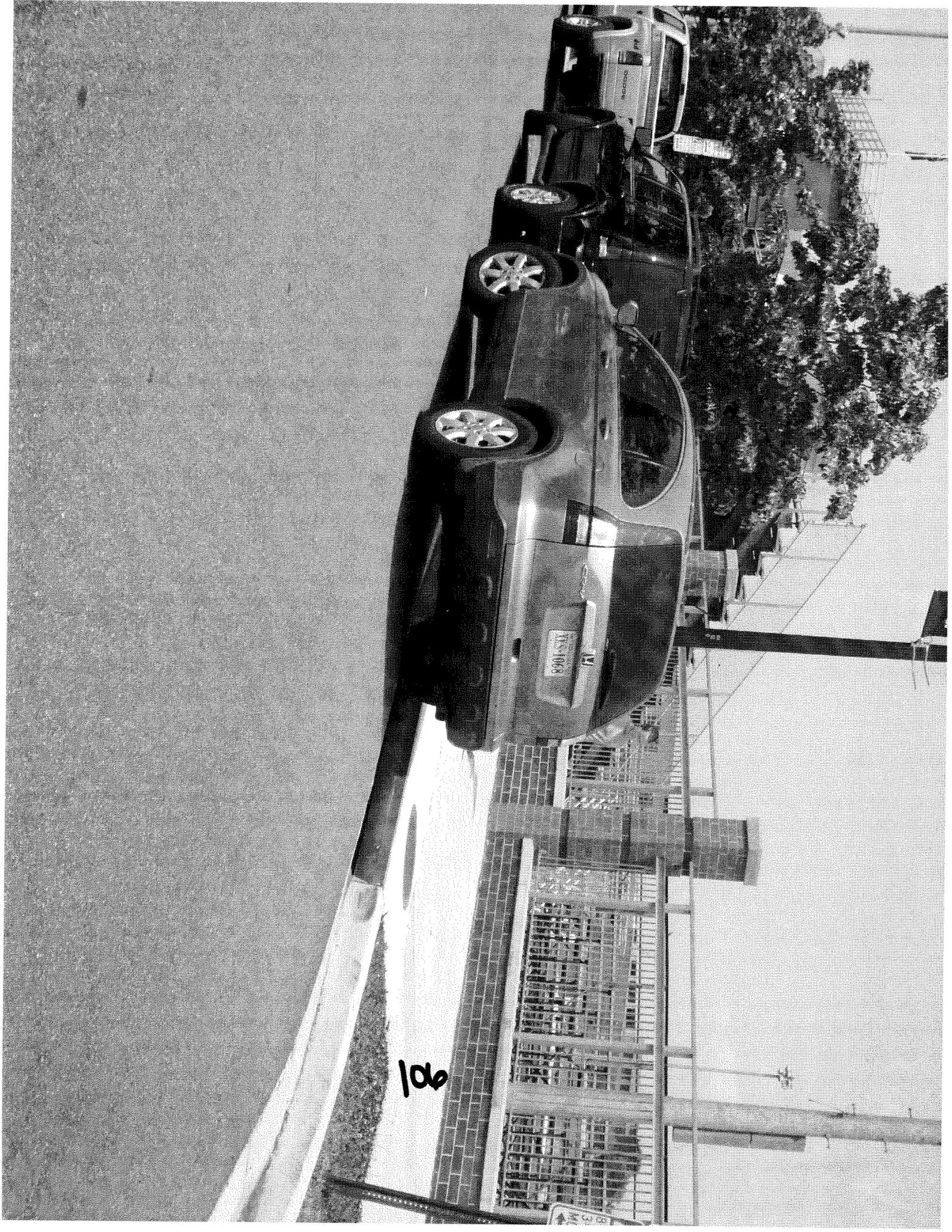
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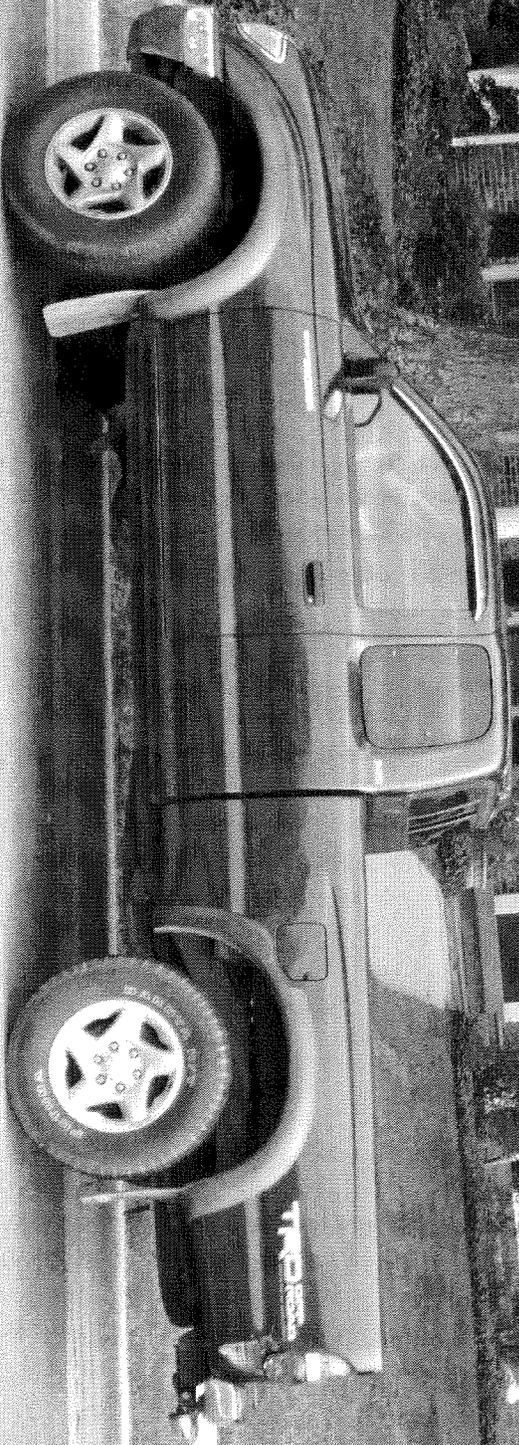


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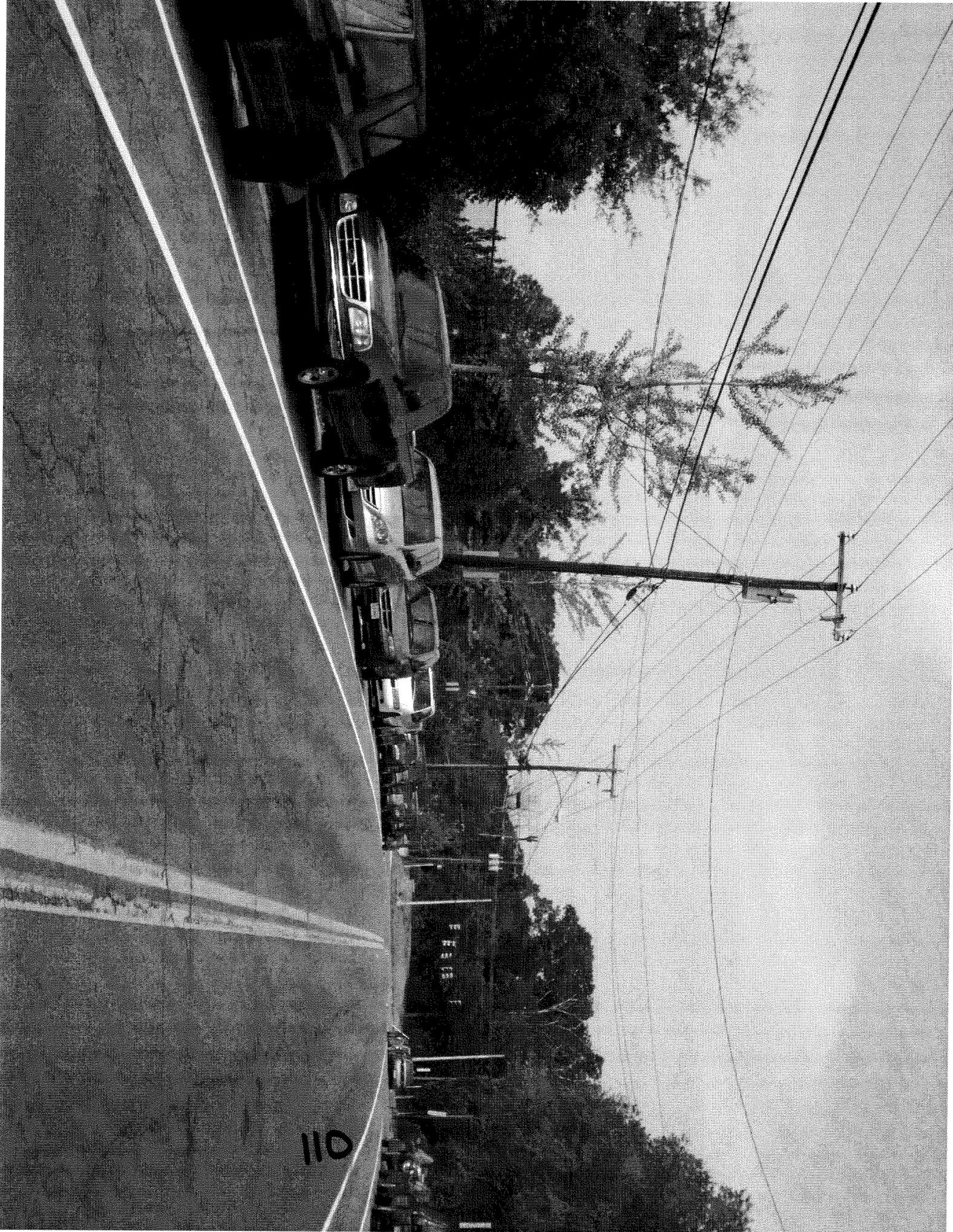


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LIMIT  
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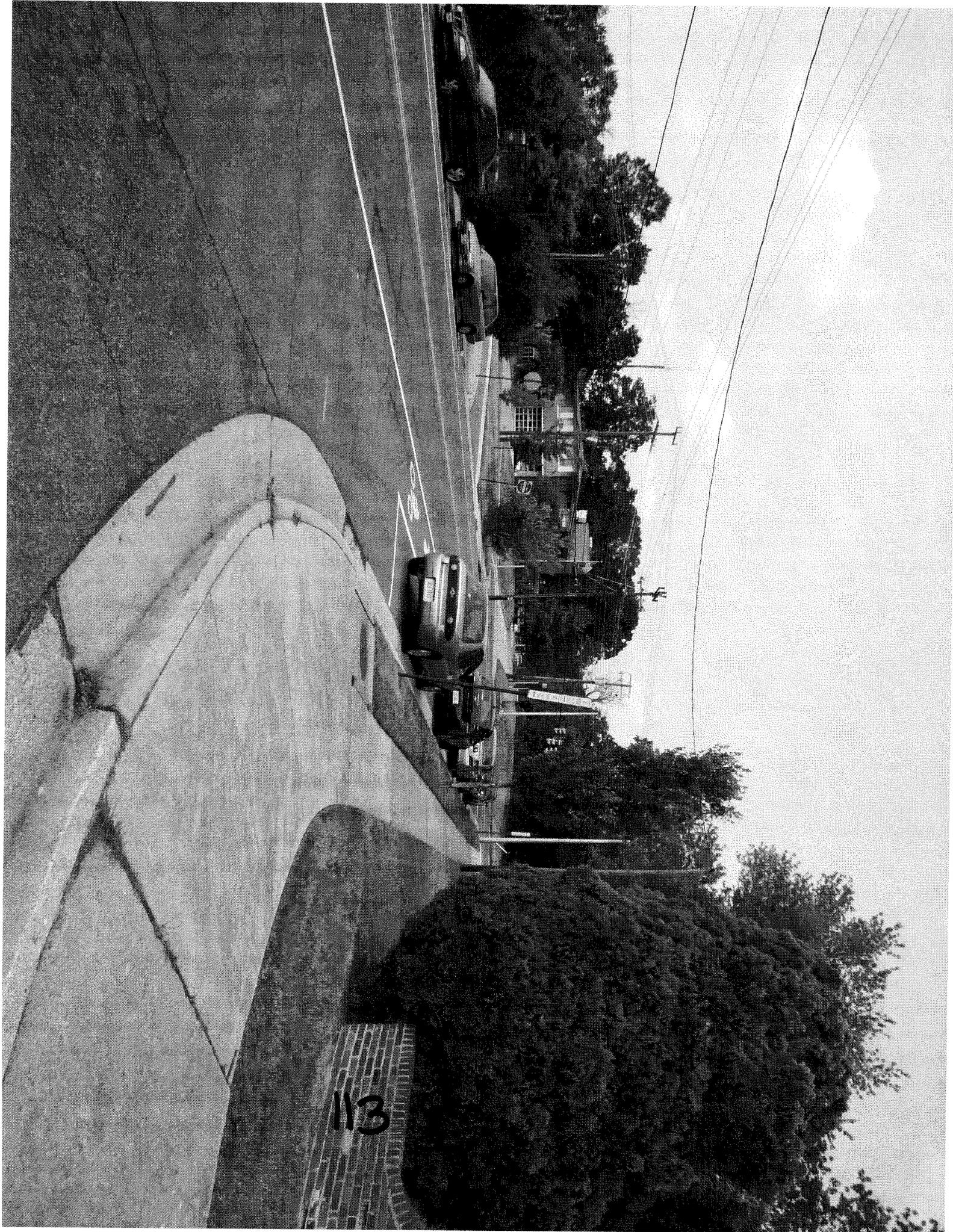


STATE OF TEXAS  
XLN-8841

SPEED  
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NO  
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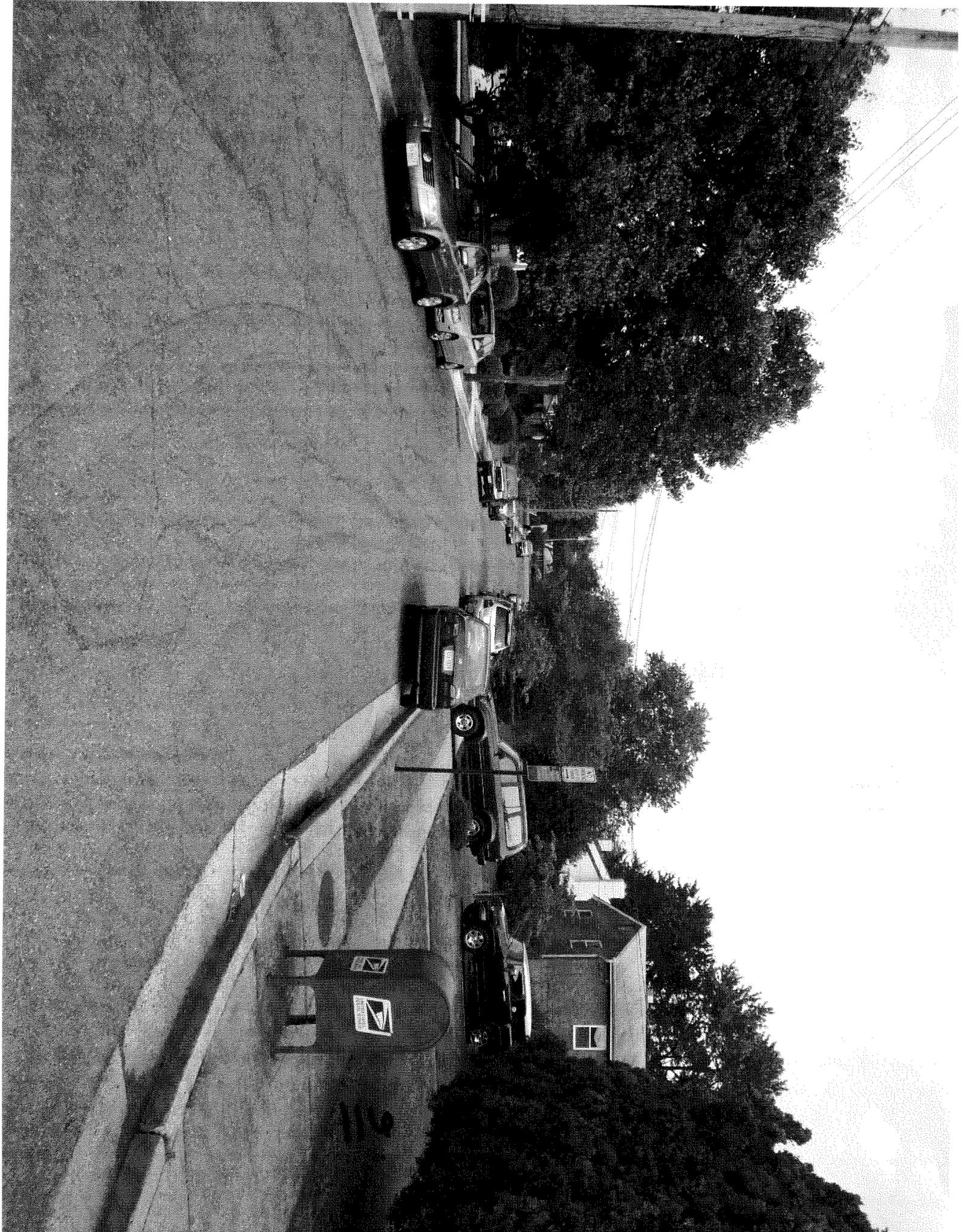
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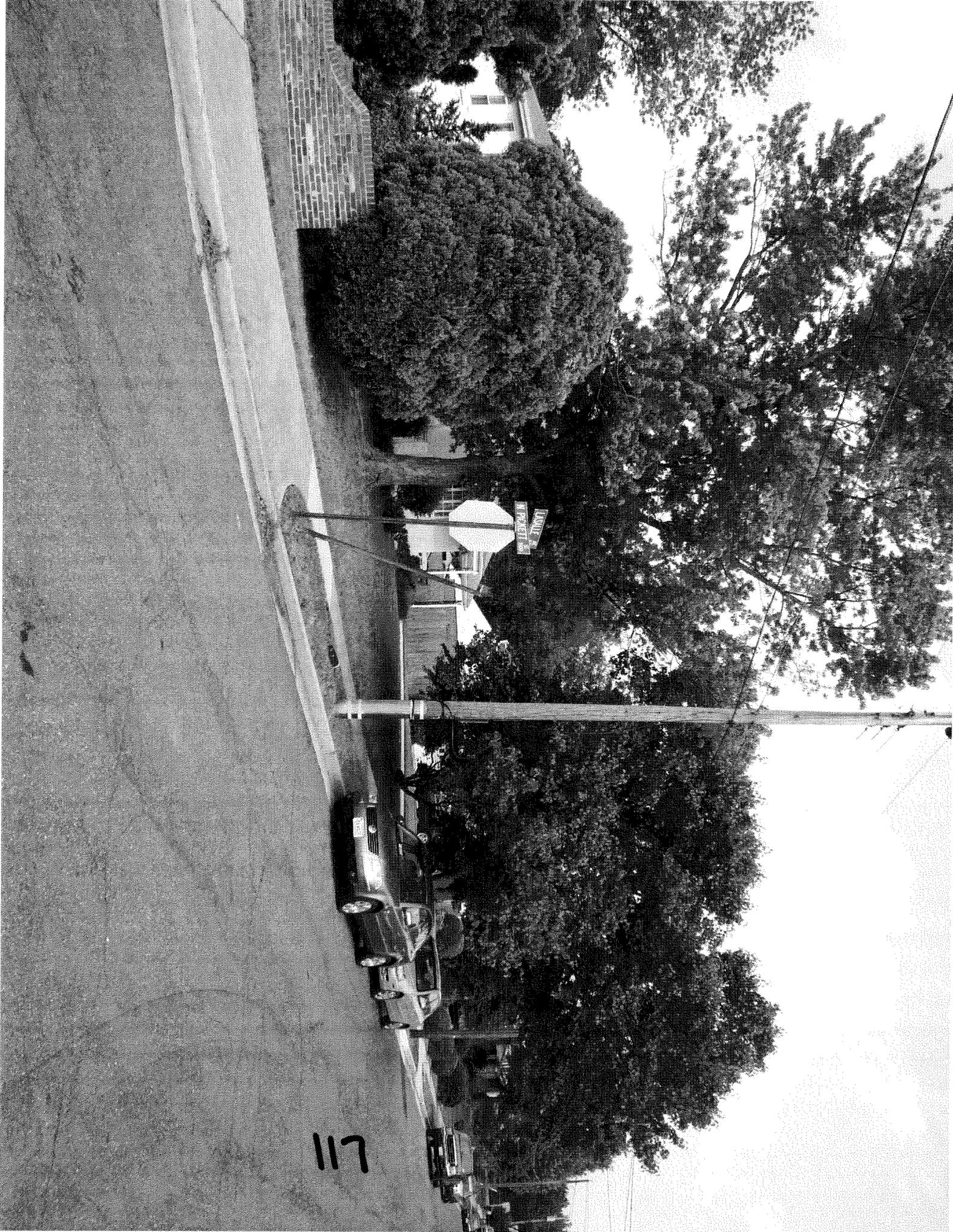


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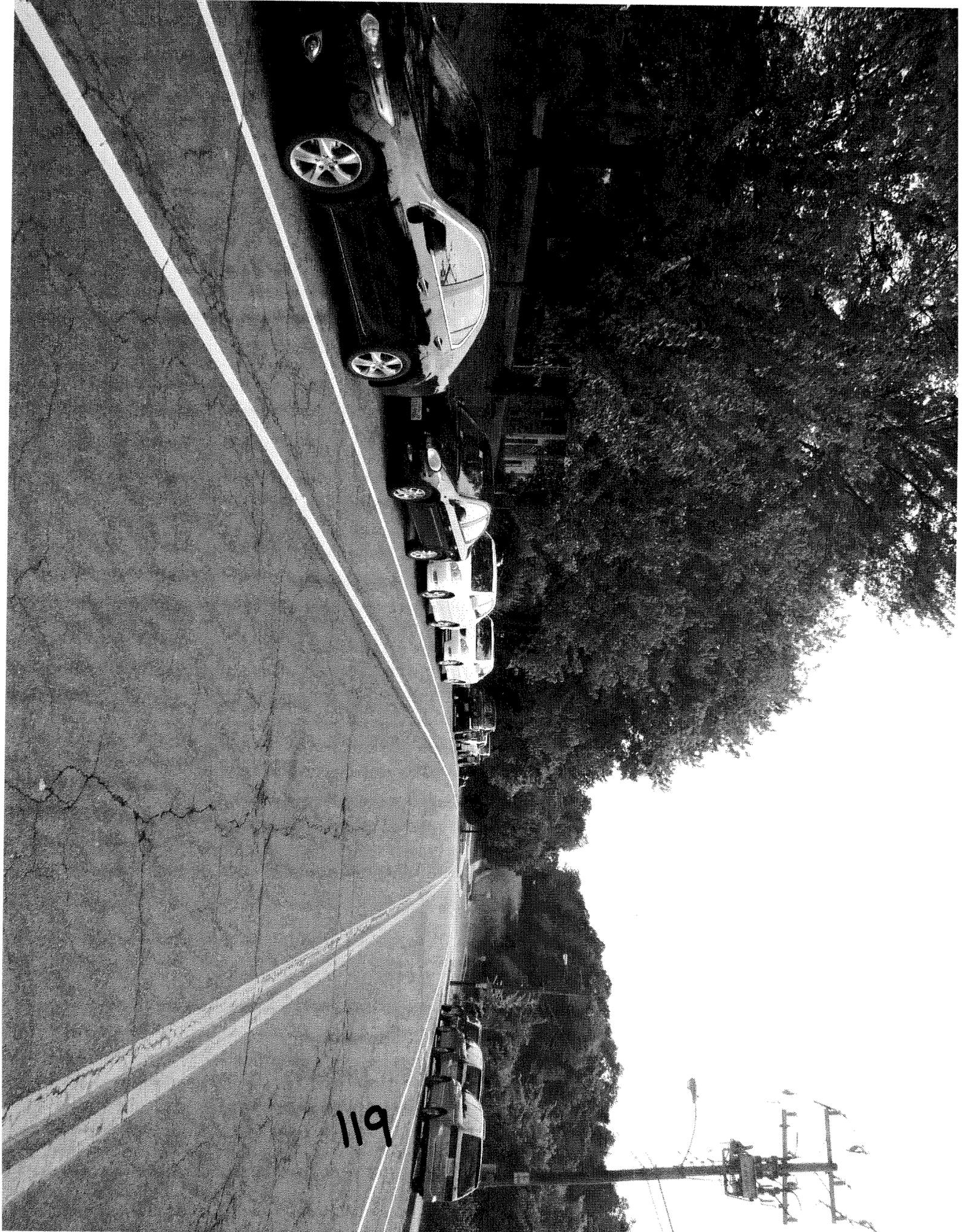




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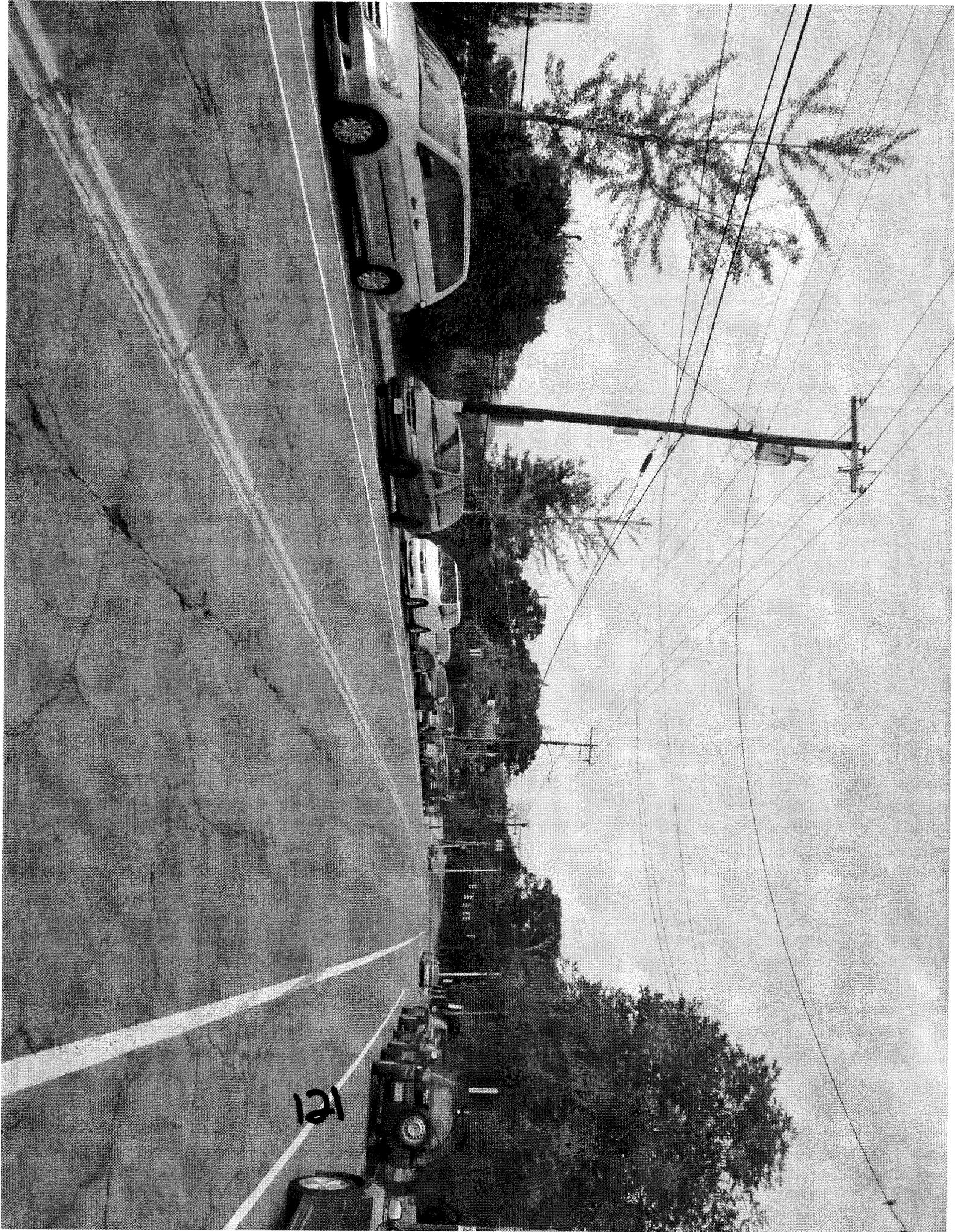
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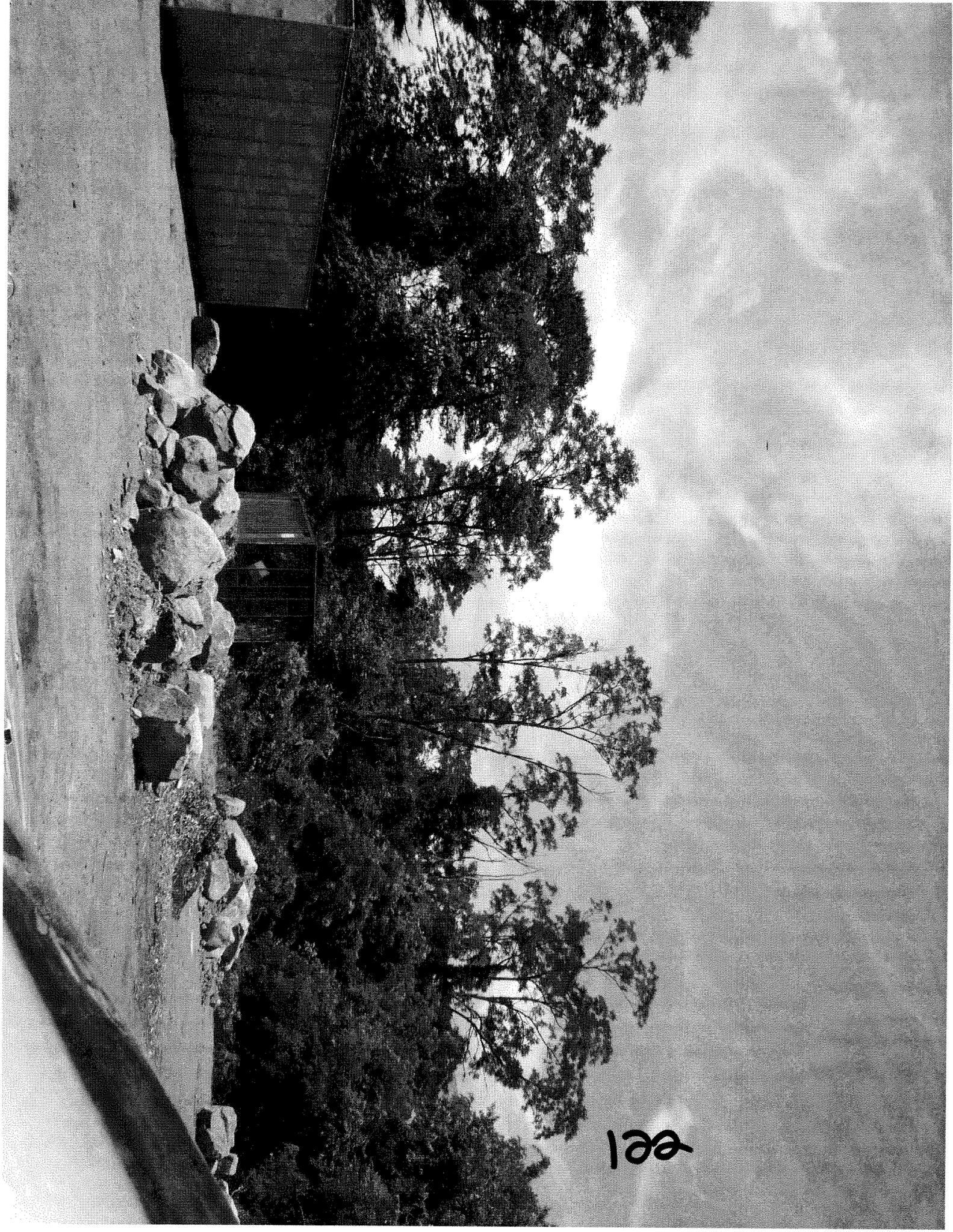
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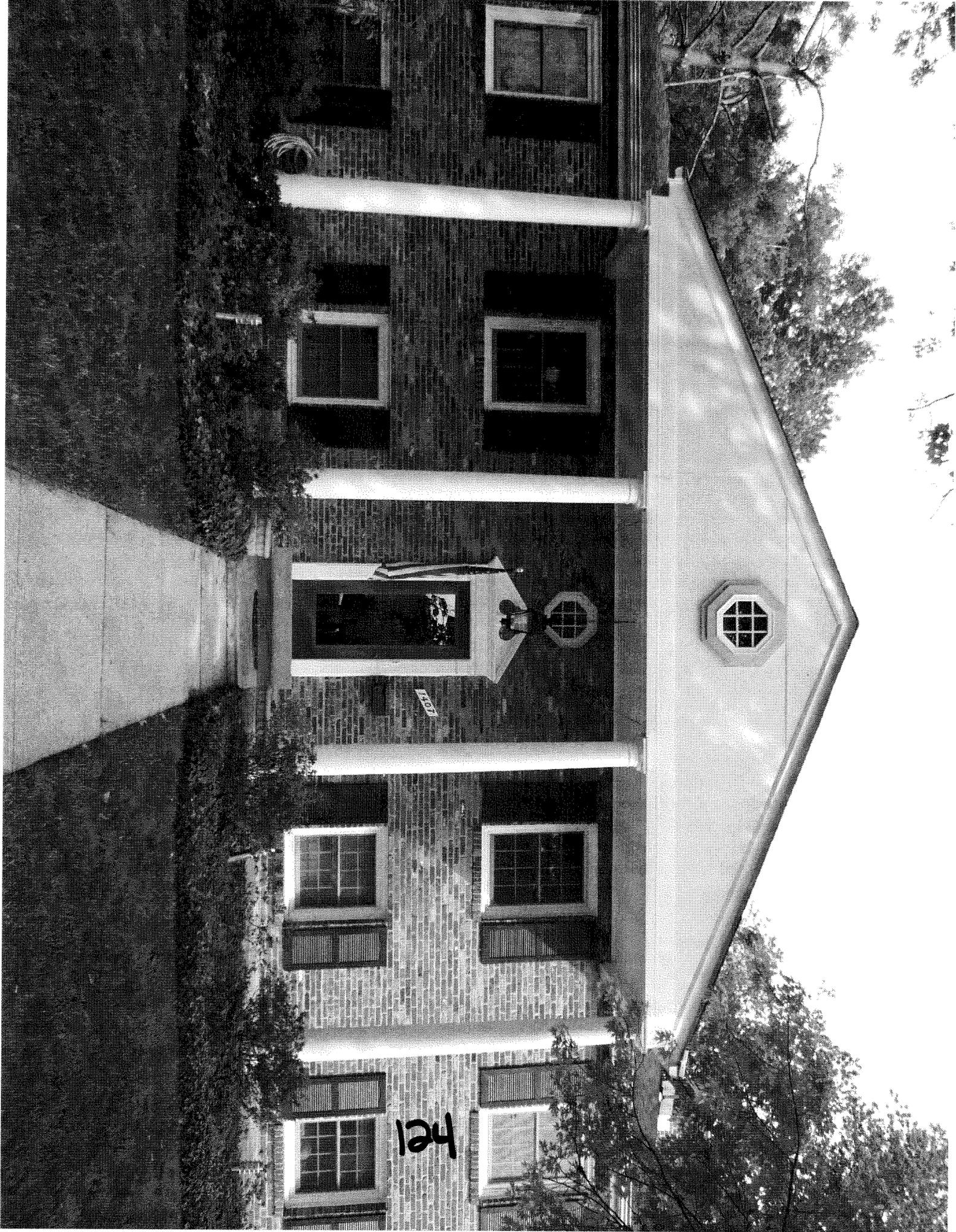
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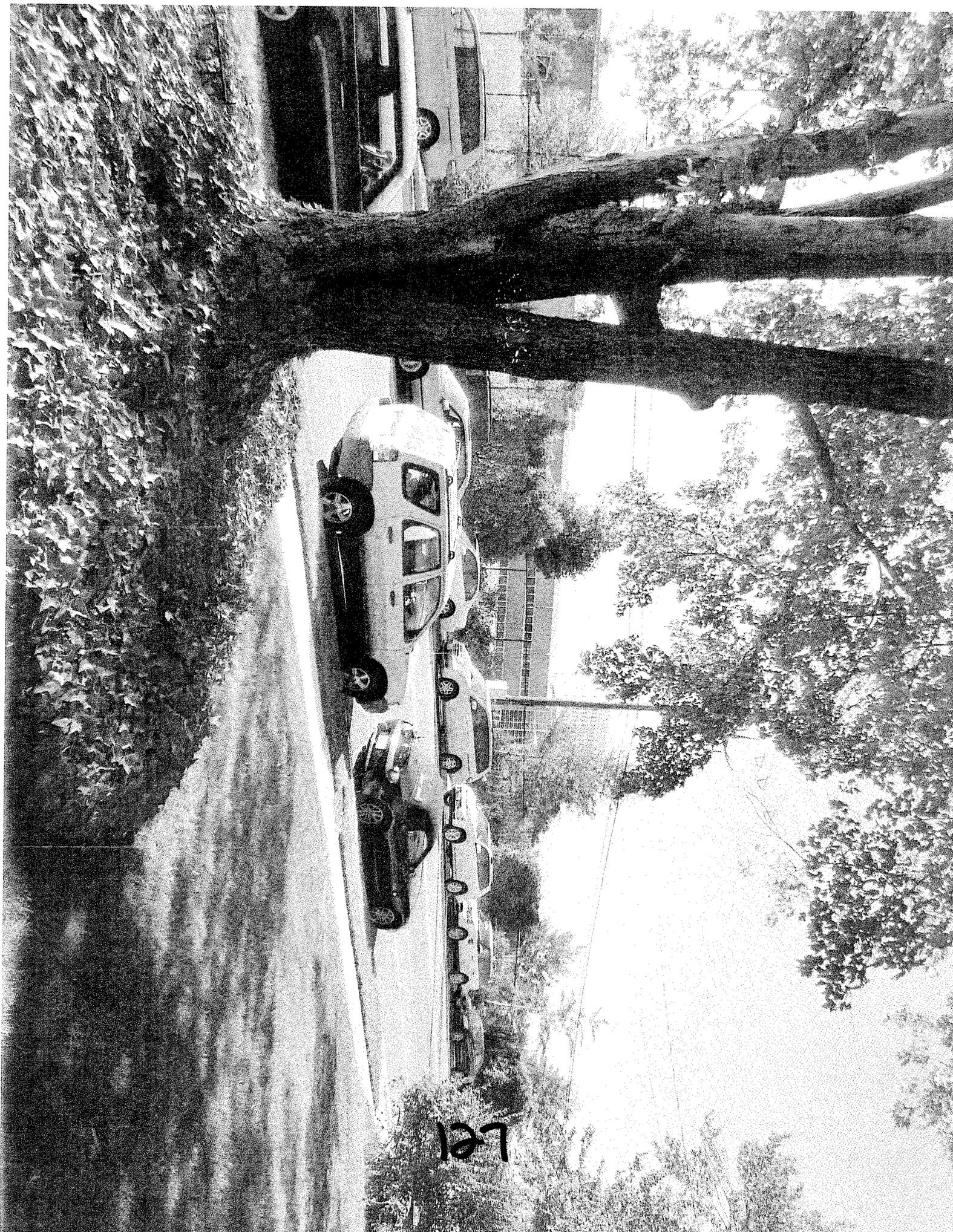
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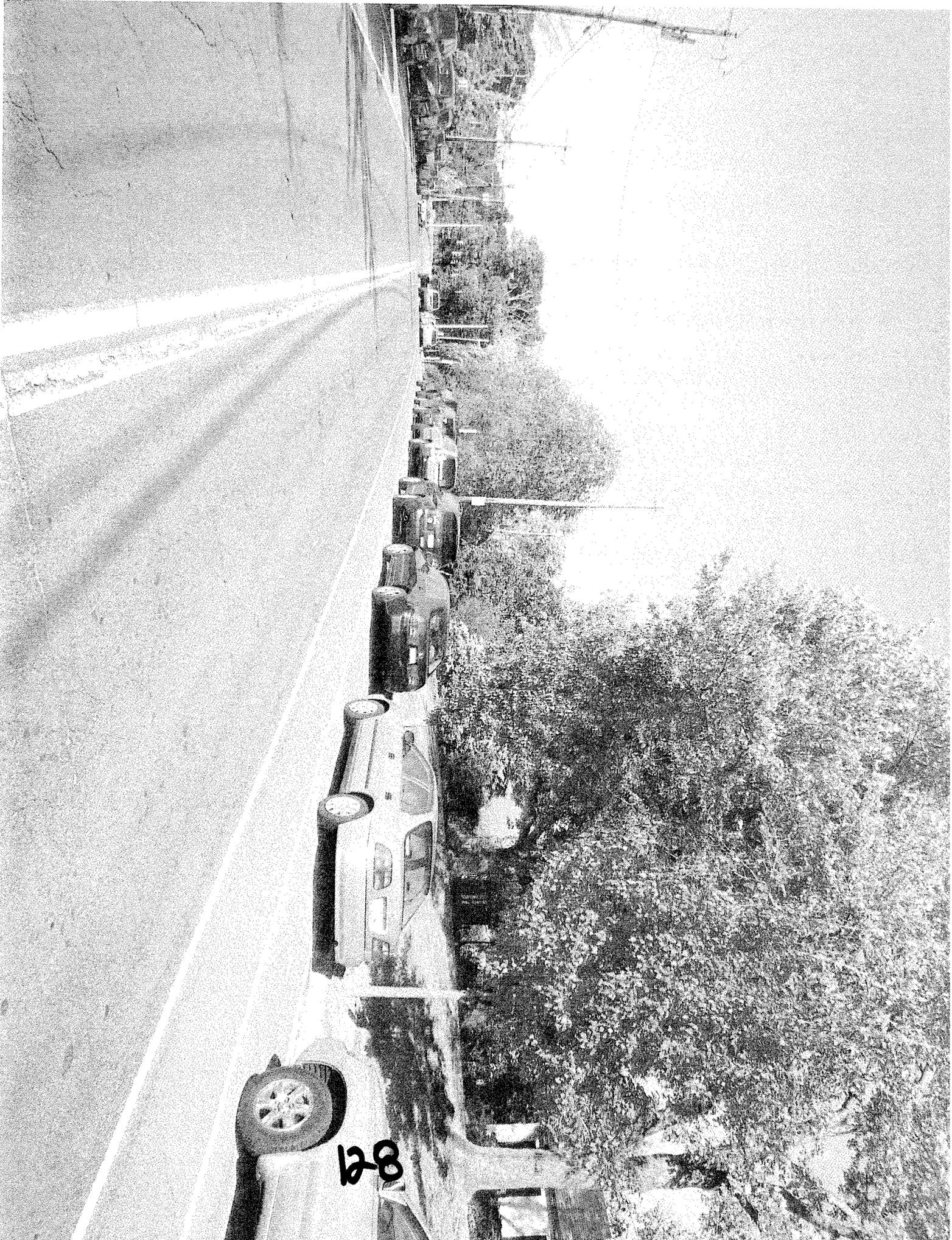
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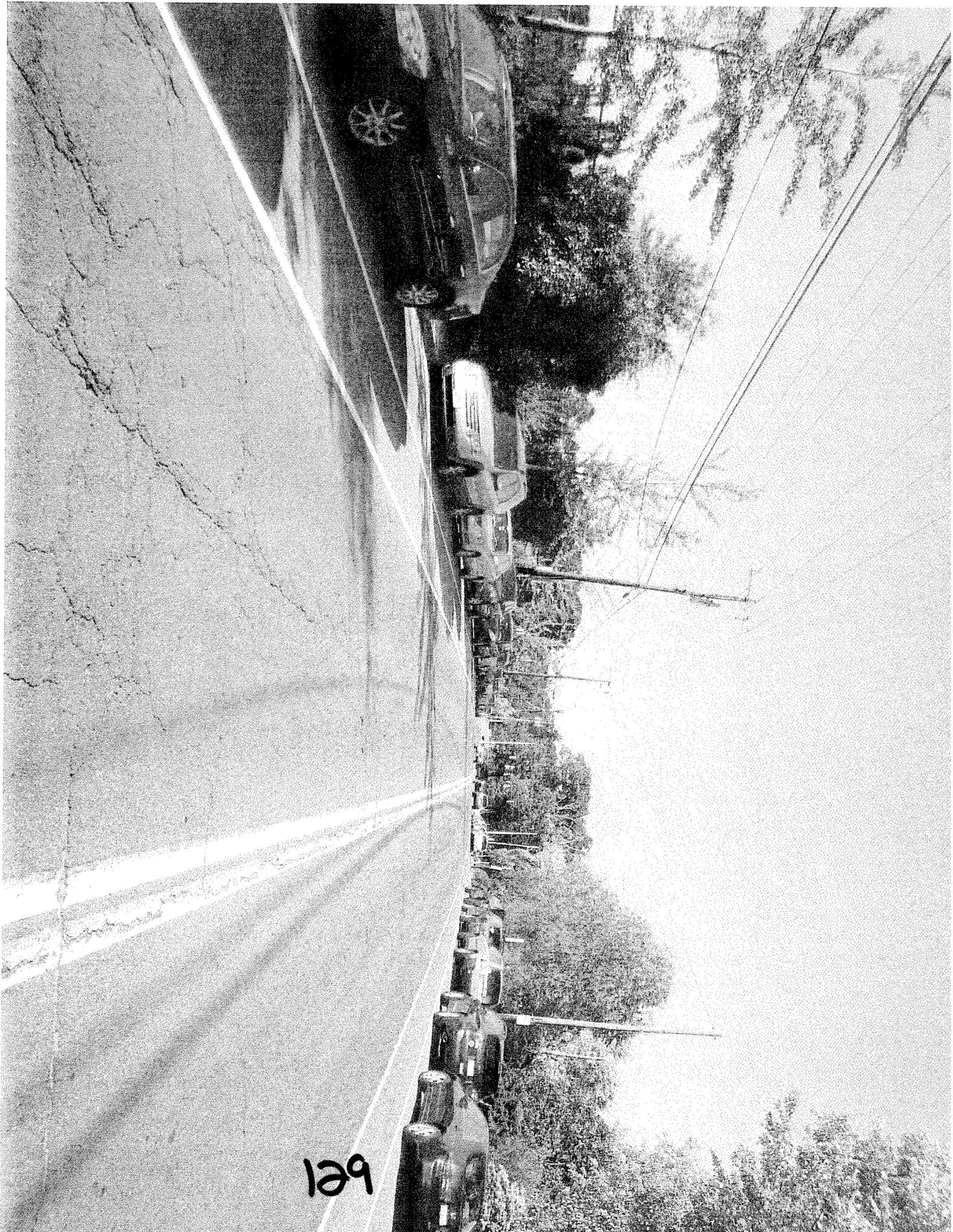
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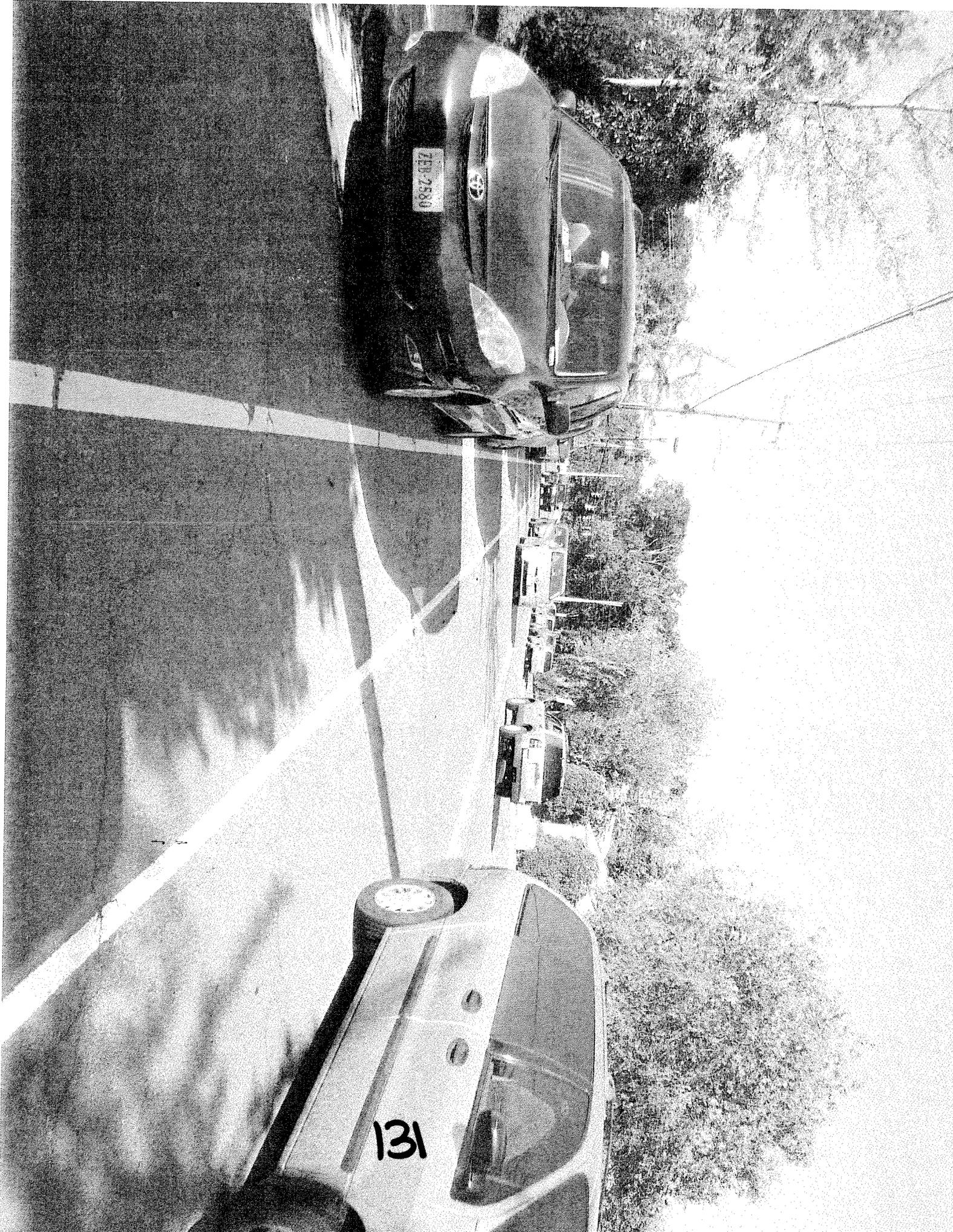
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7ED-2580

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CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

# NOTICE PUBLIC HEARINGS

**RESIDENCE PERMIT #2010-0079**  
**ADJUTARY ROAD**  
...and consideration of a proposal for  
...on an existing athletic field and  
...to the minimums from yard setback  
...Single Family Applicant. Attendees  
...Schools represented by Kristi Parfitt

**COMMISSION: TUES. JUNE 7, 2011 7:00 PM**

**CITY COUNCIL: SAT. JUNE 25, 2011 9:30 AM**

**FILED BY THE CITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN  
AT 11:30 AM, 201 KING ST., ALEXANDRIA, VA**

**FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA**

132

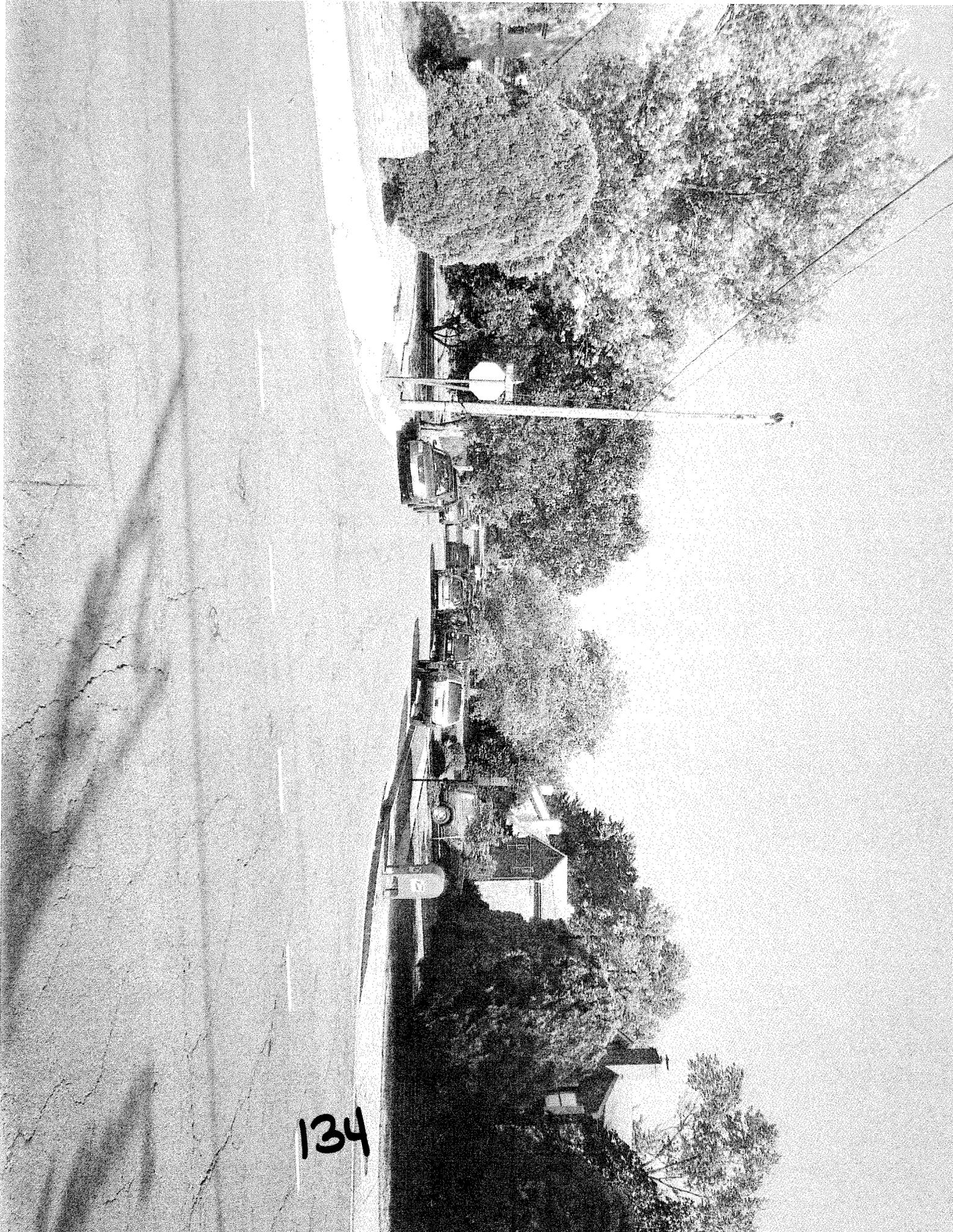
CITY OF ALBANY  
**NOTICE**  
PUBLIC HEARINGS

SPECIAL USE PERMITS  
FOR SHEDS AND POOLS  
Public hearings and applications  
will be held on the following dates and times  
in addition to the regular public hearings held  
for a Single Family Residential Zoning District  
City Public Schools or

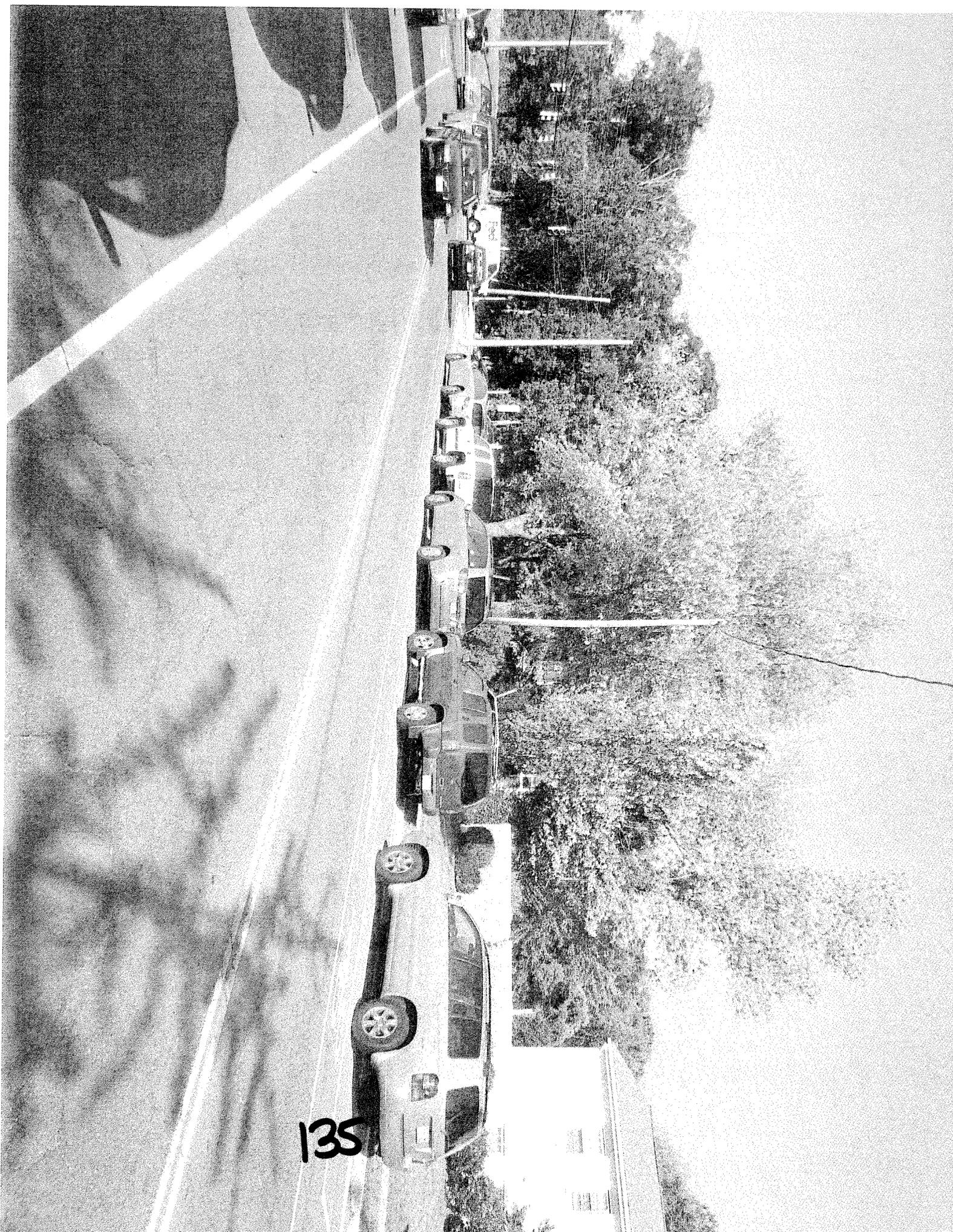
PLANNING COMMISSION



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STUDENT  
DROP OFF  
AREA



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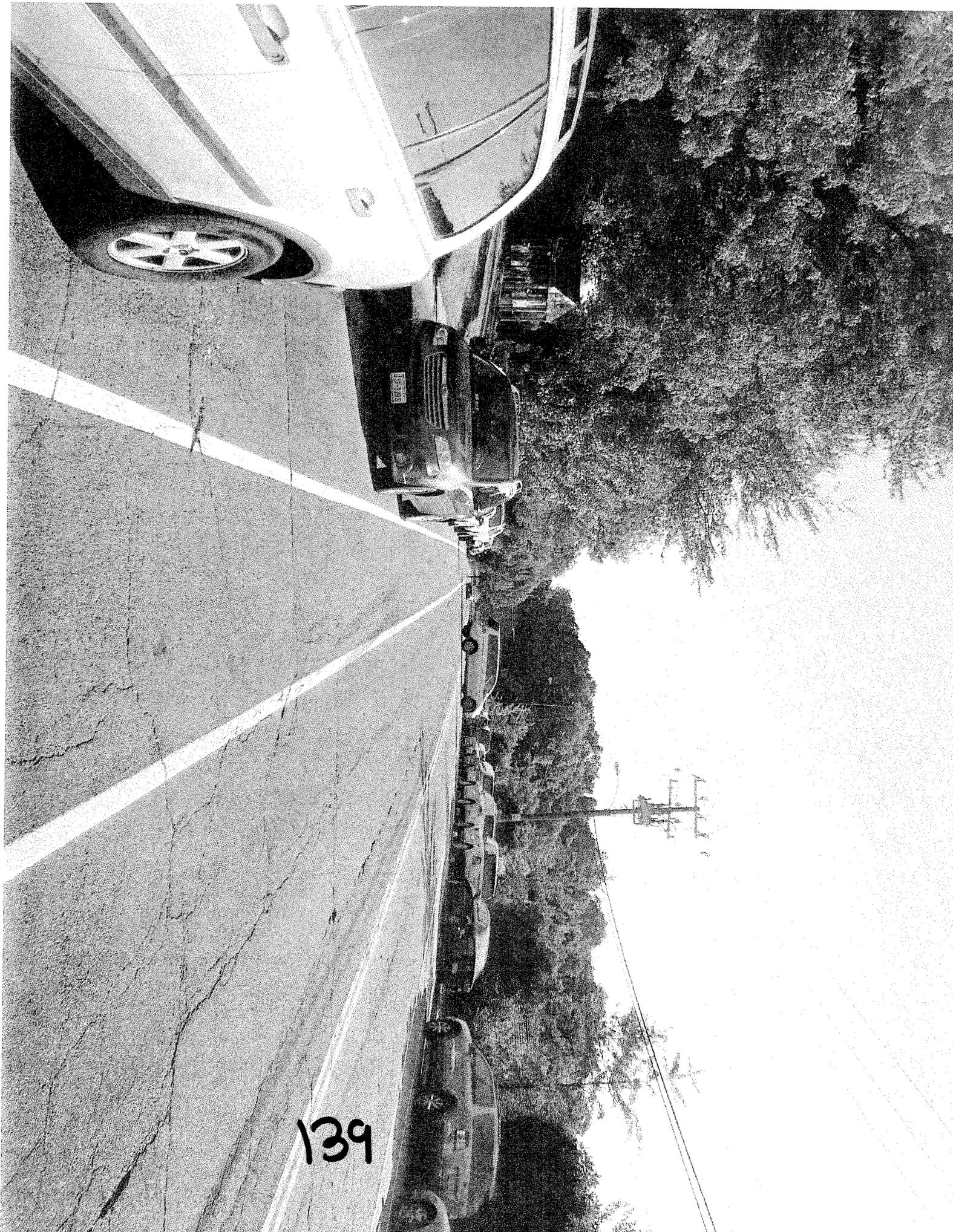
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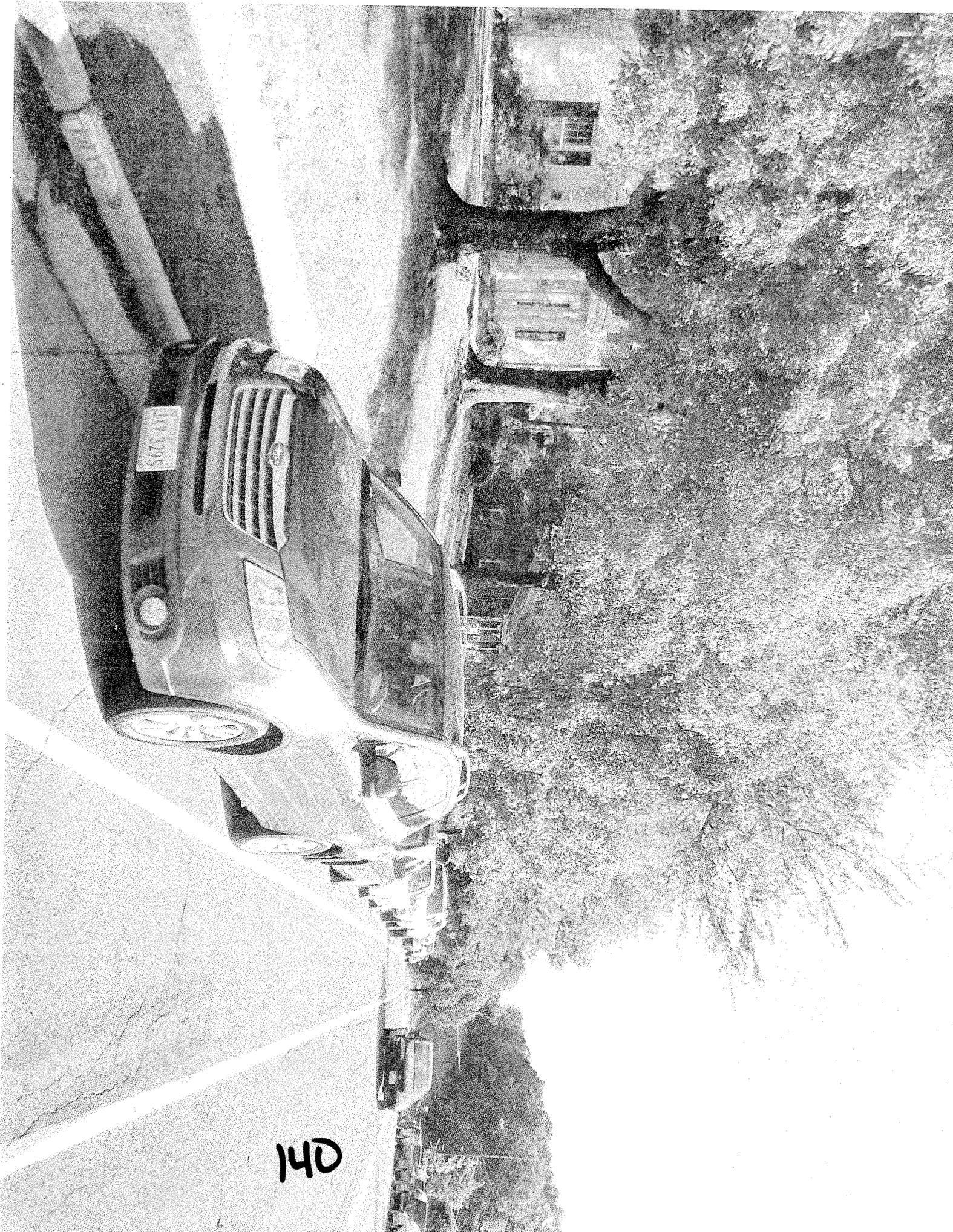
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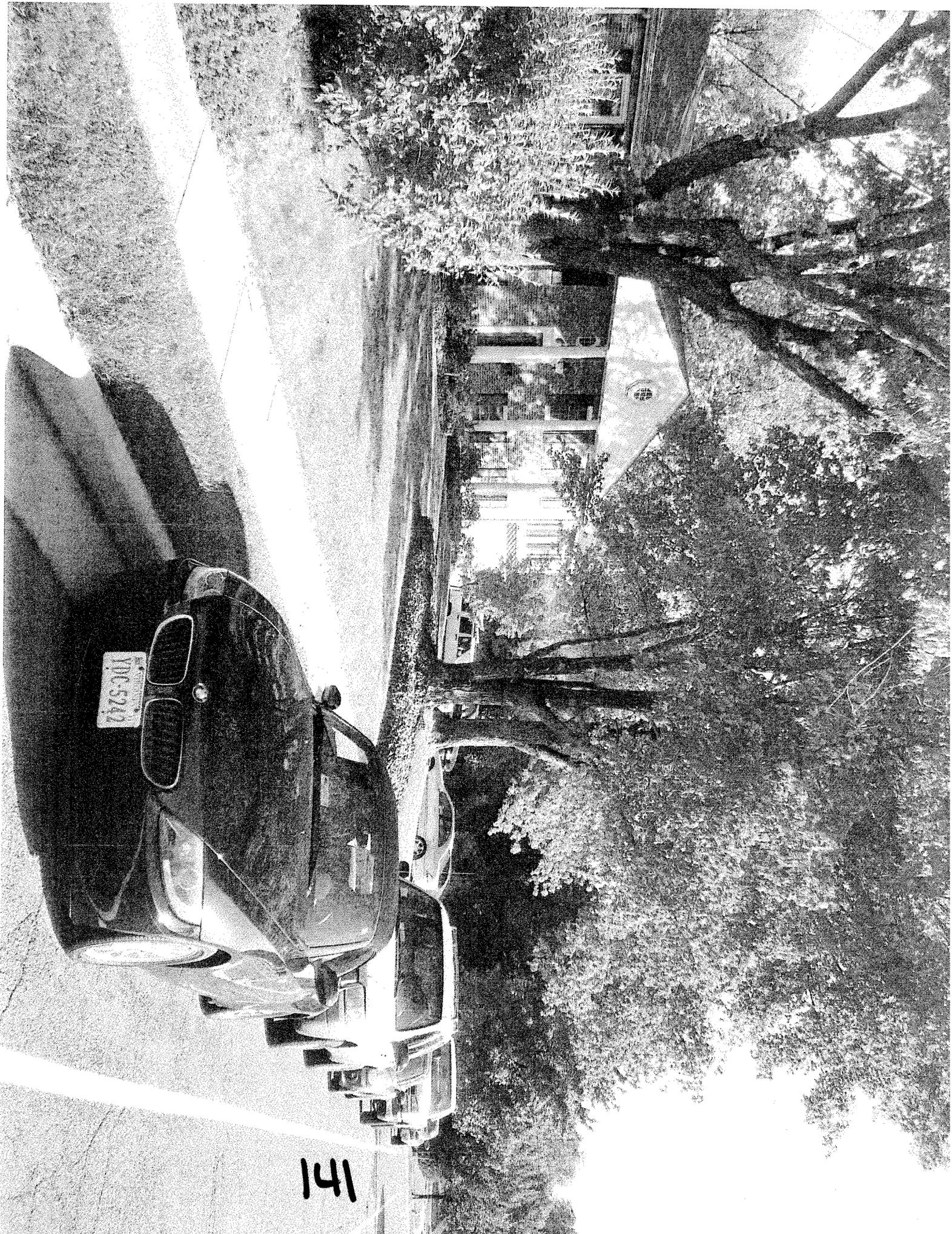
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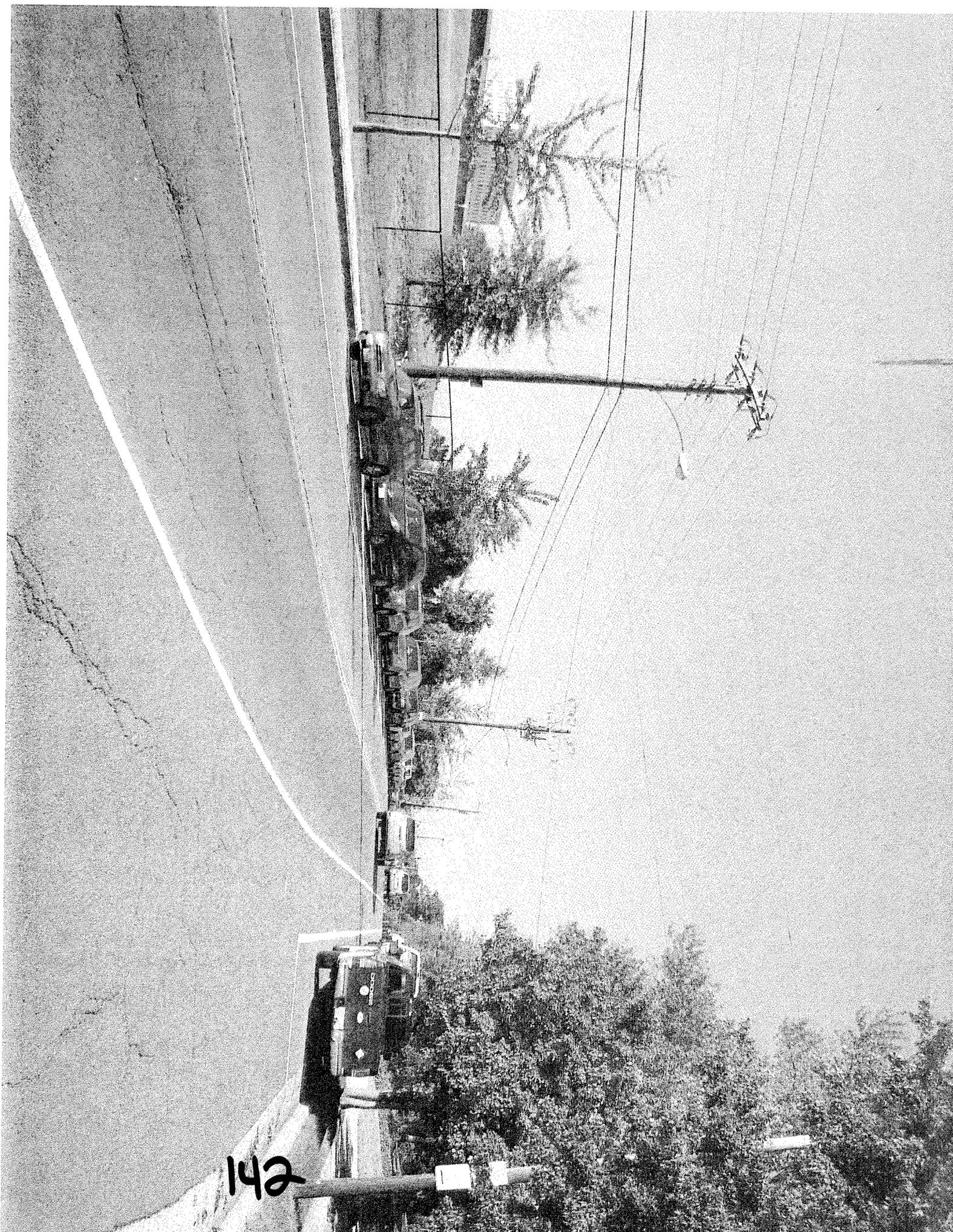


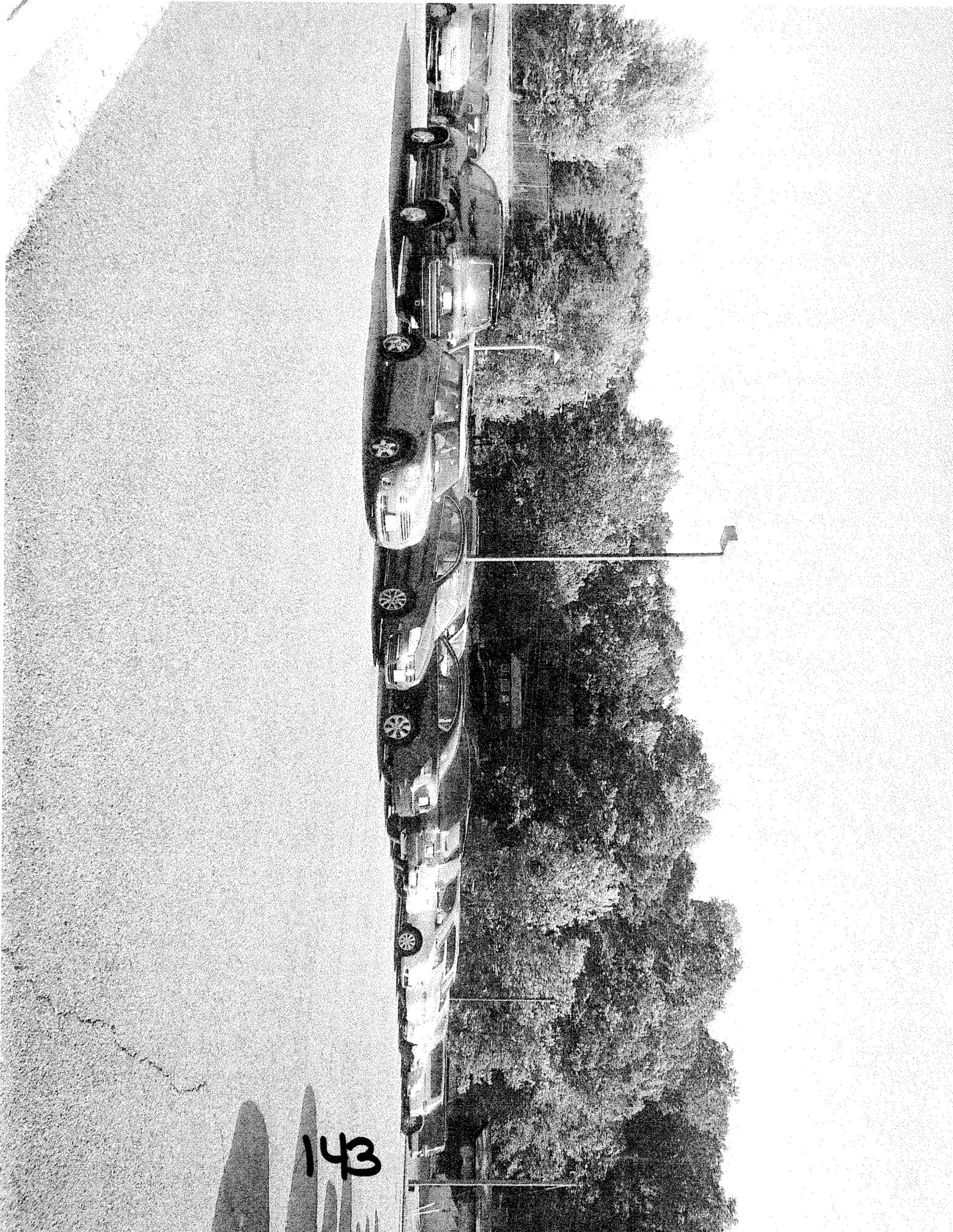
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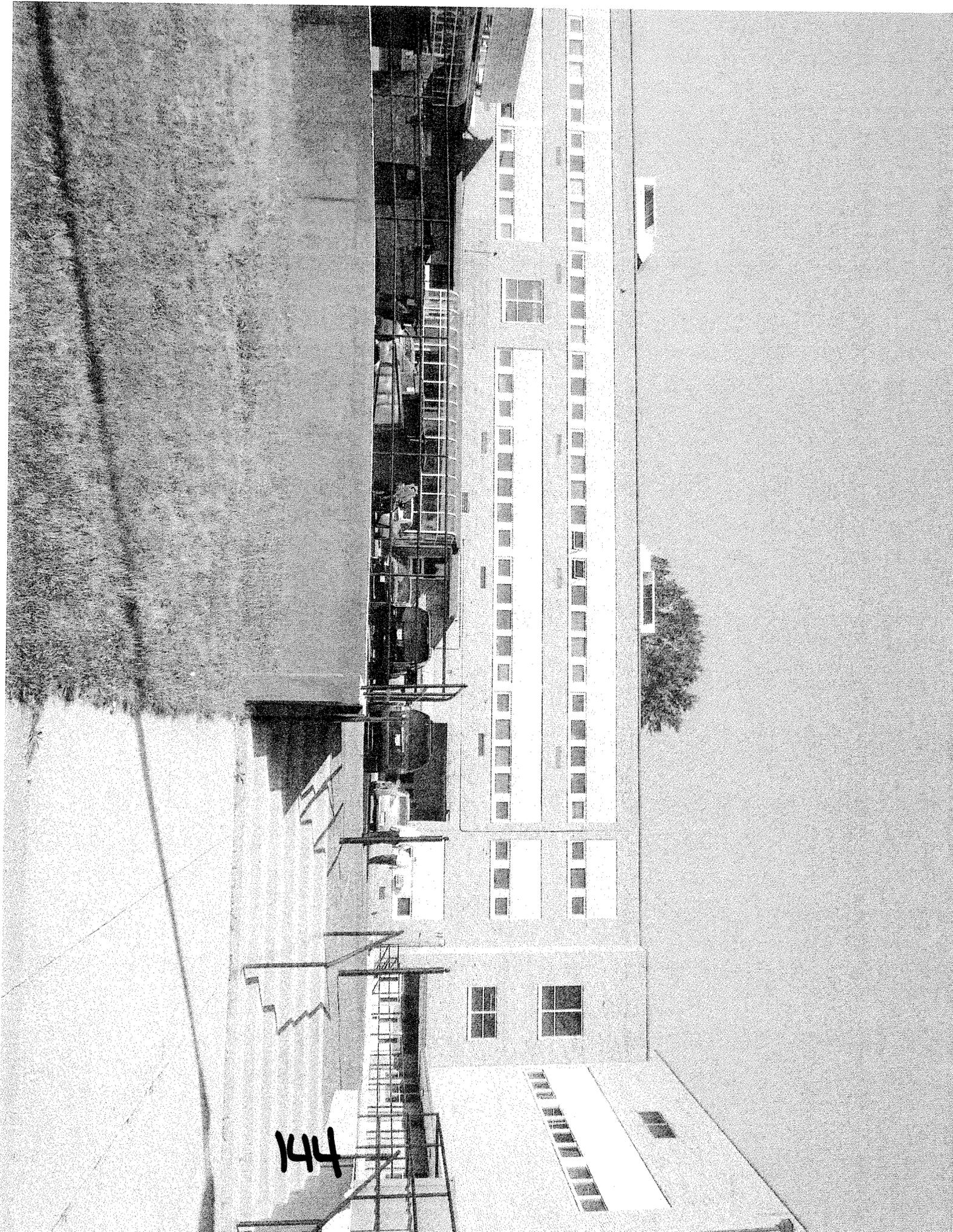
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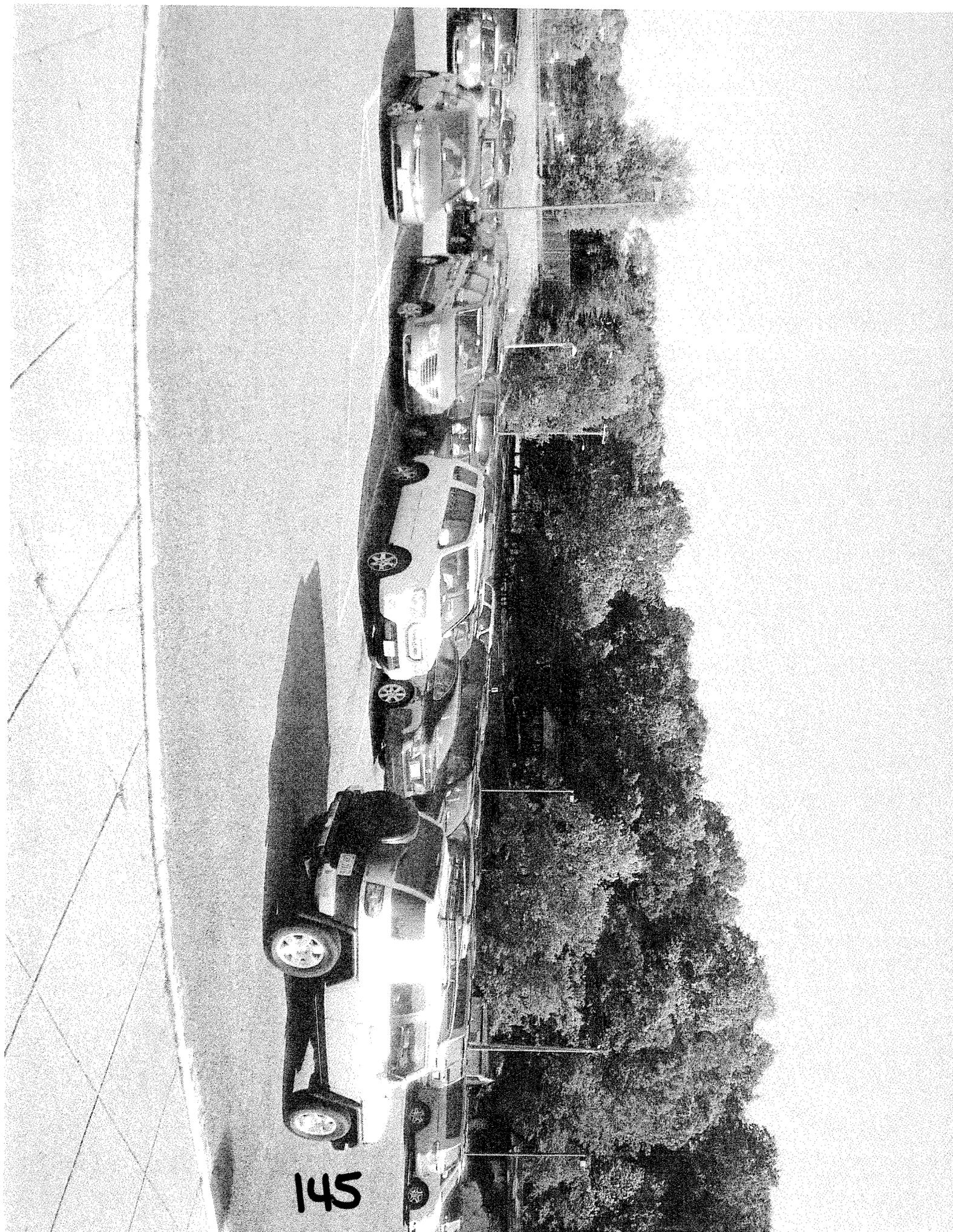




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A black and white photograph showing a white fence in the foreground, with a dark, dense background of trees. The fence is composed of several vertical posts and horizontal rails. The background is very dark, making the white fence stand out. The overall image has a grainy, high-contrast appearance.

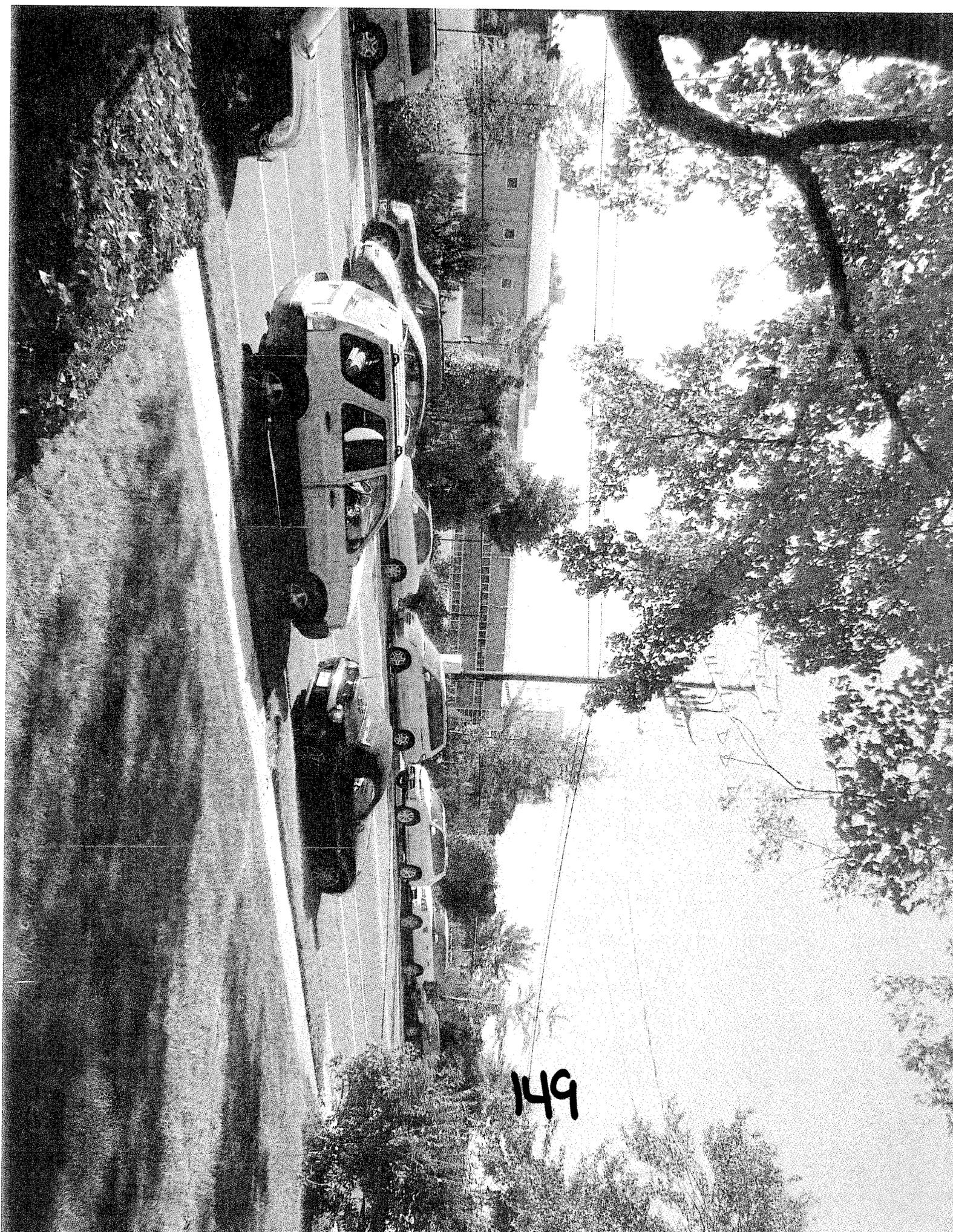
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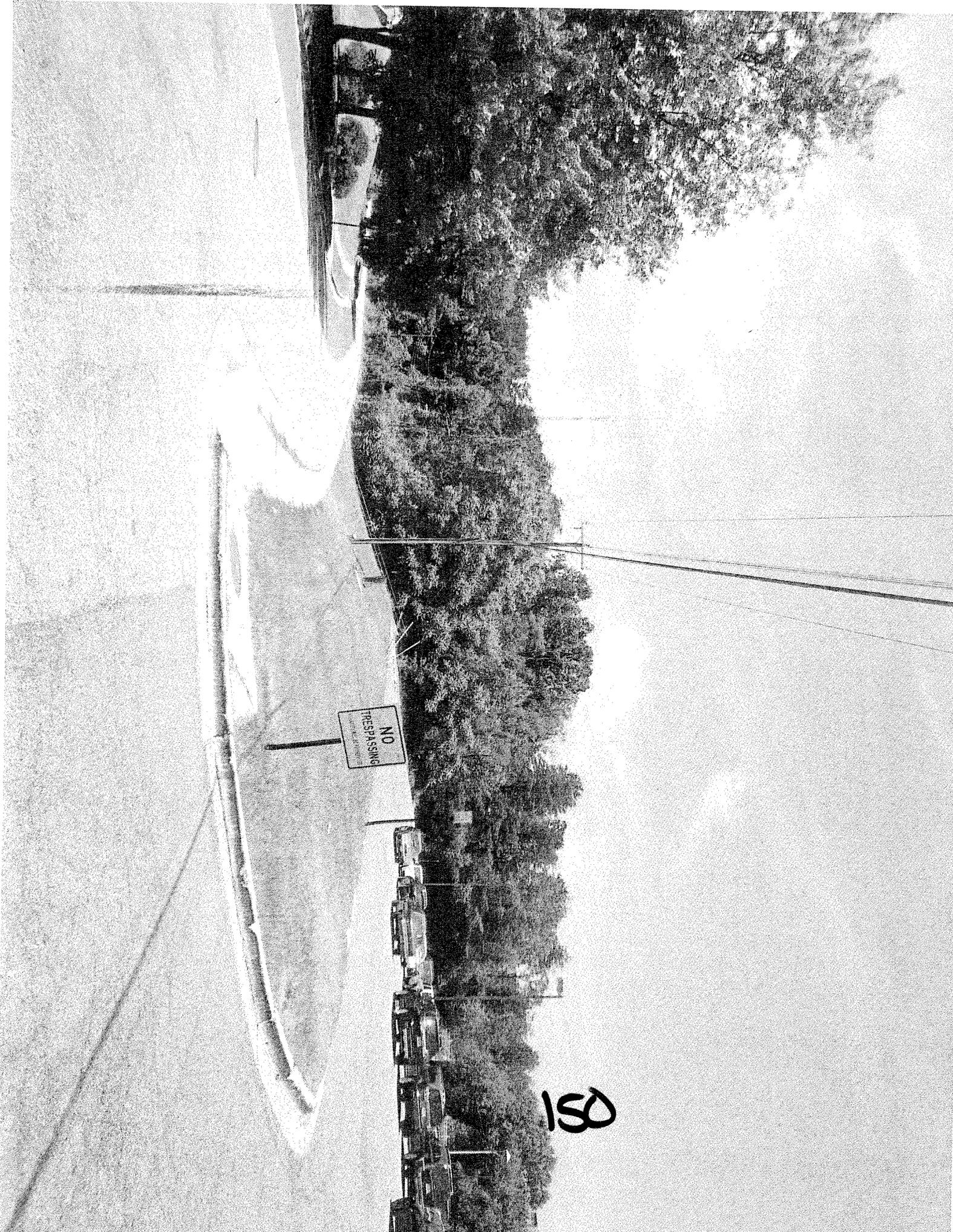
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NO  
TRESPASSING

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151



152

## Kendra Jacobs

---

**To:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Hammond and Lighting

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 9:13 AM  
**To:** Robert Clark  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Hammond and Lighting

Dear Mr. Clark,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

---

**From:** Robert Clark [mailto:robert@clark325.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 8:28 PM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Hammond and Lighting

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Mon Jun 06, 2011 20:28:26] Message ID: [30687]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** Robert  
**Last Name:** Clark  
**Street Address:** 602 Virginia Avenue  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** VA  
**Zip:** 22302  
**Phone:** 7036262366  
**Email Address:** [robert@clark325.com](mailto:robert@clark325.com)  
**Subject:** Hammond and Lighting  
Hi City Planning.

**Comments:** I write today to express my support for lighting on the soon-to-be-turfed Hammond field. I am a coach and a father of 3 children in the prime of their Alexandria city sports life. We are in desperate need of more fields that can be used for longer periods of time. I have a very hard time running practices before its too dark. More

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lit fields will allow us the opportunity to hold slightly later practices.

I also have kids on my teams that have to come from the West End and having

more fields toward the West End will alleviate the commuting pain associated with coming to practices.

The Ben Brenman lit field has made

a huge difference - but we as a city need so much more.

I urge you to

approve the lighting on the new Hammond field.

Thank you!

Robert Clark

## Kendra Jacobs

---

**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Lights at Hammond

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 9:14 AM  
**To:** Katie Rivers  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Lights at Hammond

Dear Ms. Rivers,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

---

**From:** Katie Rivers [mailto:riverskj@pwcs.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 9:55 PM  
**To:** PrZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Lights at Hammond

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Mon Jun 06, 2011 21:54:38] Message ID: [30691]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** Katie  
**Last Name:** Rivers  
**Street Address:** 136 N Gladden Street  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** Va  
**Zip:** 22304  
**Phone:** 5717223349  
**Email Address:** [riverski@pwcs.edu](mailto:riverski@pwcs.edu)  
**Subject:** Lights at Hammond

**Comments:** I am writing in support of adding lights to the new field at Hammond. I am a former soccer player (rec league and TC Williams) and a parent of a future Hammond student. The lights will allow more children and adults to participate in athletics. How can that be a bad thing? Providing more opportunities for positive activities will only help strengthen our community. It seems a waste to build a turf field and then so severely limit its potential use. If you are going to spend the money, I want the

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City to get as much benefit as possible,

I have heard that the

community is concerned about an increase in traffic, but that seems

unrealistic. A soccer games has at most 30 players and evening adult games

have few fans so the traffic impact seems minimal. In addition, if any

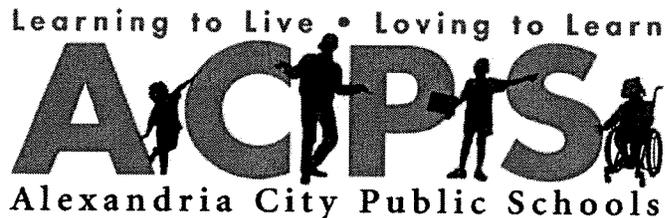
traffic improvements are made due to the BRAC moves, the situation will be

even better.

I hope you vote to support lights at Hammond field.

Thank you!

✓ 156



June 6, 2011

2000 N. Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

Telephone: (703) 824-6600

Facsimile: (703) 824-6699

TDD: (703) 824-6666

[www.acps.k12.va.us](http://www.acps.k12.va.us)

Mr. John Komoroske, Chairman  
And Members of the Planning Commission,  
City of Alexandria, City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Chairman Komoroske and Members of the Planning Commission:

On behalf of the Alexandria School Board and Superintendent Morton Sherman, I ask that at your Tuesday, June 7 meeting, you vote in favor of installing lights at the upper field of Francis C. Hammond Middle School.

Superintendent of Schools  
Morton Sherman Ed.D

The School Board unanimously approved its fiscal year 2011 budget, in which funding for upgrading this field is included. These upgrades include installing a turf field and lights. The turf field will be installed this summer.

School Board

I attended one of the public meetings about this issue this Spring and appreciate concerns expressed by the school neighbors. It is my hope that if these lights are installed, the City of Alexandria and the Alexandria City Public Schools will work together to demonstrate we are responsible neighbors. This would include making certain that following each after school use, either an employee of ACPS or of the city's Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Department will insure the gates are locked, lights are turned off, and trash is collected, among other responsibilities.

Chairman  
Yvonne A. Folkerts

Vice Chairman  
Sheryl Gorsuch

Members  
Ronnie Campbell

Mimi Carter

Blanche D. Maness

Helen Morris

Arthur E. Peabody Jr.

The School Board and Superintendent Sherman have been very public about the constraints our climbing enrollment is placing on our facilities. Therefore, we must look at all avenues for expanded use of the facilities we have. Having an improved field and lights at Hammond Middle School will allow ACPS to schedule after-school practice times for all our soccer teams at TC Williams High School, for example. We do not have enough space to meet the time demands. The improvements to our field will help.

Marc Williams

Charles H. Wilson

If lights are installed with the turf field at Hammond Middle School, we expect increased requests for use. ACPS and the city's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Department will work together to make certain outside groups are requesting

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June 6, 2011  
Page 2

permits for use. Beyond school use, priority will be given to the Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Department. The Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Department will handle additional scheduling for non-ACPS activities.

The Alexandria School Board encourages all of you to vote in favor of installing lights at Hammond Middle School. We are facing capacity challenges across the city and must do what we can to accommodate all our students and their needs. Having lights at one of our fields provides us extended use of the field for our students. We would welcome continued cooperation with the city's Parks and Recreation Commission for use beyond school needs.

Sincerely,



Yvonne Folkerts  
Chairman

Cc: School Board Members  
Dr. Morton Sherman  
Ms. Margaret Byess  
Mr. Mark Krause  
Mayor Euille  
Members of City Council  
Mr. Bruce Johnson  
Ms. Faroll Hamer

## Kendra Jacobs

---

**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Lights with new turf field at Hammond

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 4:04 PM  
**To:** Don Simpson Jr  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Lights with new turf field at Hammond

Dear Mr. Simpson,

Thank you for submitting comments to the Department of Planning and Zoning. By copy of this email, I'm forwarding your message to Kendra Jacobs, Administrative Staff to the Planning Commission, who will make your comments available to the Planning Commission as part of the official record. You are welcome to attend the hearing where you may express your views also.

Best regards,  
Cicely Woodrow

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**From:** Don Simpson Jr [mailto:[dsimpson@simpsondev.com](mailto:dsimpson@simpsondev.com)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 4:00 PM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Lights with new turf field at Hammond

### COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback

Time: [Tue Jun 07, 2011 16:00:05] Message ID: [30739]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** Don  
**Last Name:** Simpson Jr  
**Street Address:** 610 Oakley Place  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** Va.  
**Zip:** 22302  
**Phone:** 703-299-0029  
**Email Address:** [dsimpson@simpsondev.com](mailto:dsimpson@simpsondev.com)  
**Subject:** Lights with new turf field at Hammond  
Dear Planning Commission members, it is very improtant to include and  
approve the lights with the new field install at Hammond School. The  
ACPS  
**Comments:** has addressed the neighbors concerns including noise, traffic and field  
use  
which are minor impacts to say the least. With the shortage of field space  
in the city we need to maximize the use of each field and that happens  
with

✓ 159

lights for evening youth sports use with volunteer coaches after work. This school only has one field, not multiple fields like most schools so the neighborhood impact is very small relatively speaking to a normal school in other jurisdictions. Why make this investment upgrade without lights. it should not even be a question at this school location with this application request by the ACPS! Thank you very much and I hope your will approve this low impact field request that will be used by all of the City youth sports programs. It is the correct decision! Sincerely, Don Simpson Jr. long time citizen, ACPS graduate, coach, and member of the Youth Sports Comission.

1/16/0

## Kendra Jacobs

---

**Subject:** FW: Planning & Zoning letter to SHA re SUP for Hammond Middle School  
**Attachments:** 2011-06-07 Memorandum--Lights at Hammond.doc; Patricia Escher.vcf

**From:** Nancy Jennings [mailto:nrjennings@comcast.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 6:34 AM

**To:** Faroll Hamer

**Cc:** 'Morton Sherman'; 'Alexandria School Board'; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; 'Del (personal) Pepper'; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; 'Paul Smedberg'; 'Rob Krupicka'; William Euille; James Spengler; Mark Jinks; Patricia Escher; 'Donna Fossum'; 'Eric Wagner'; 'Jesse Jennings'; 'John Komoroske'; 'Larry Robinson'; 'Marilyn Lyman'; 'Stuart Dunn'; Mark Jinks; Gwen Wright; Barbara Ross

**Subject:** Planning & Zoning letter to SHA re SUP for Hammond Middle School

Faroll,

Just to be clear: on May 18, 2011, and June 1, 2011, Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (SHA), wrote letters addressing the application of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to add stadium lighting to Francis C. Hammond Middle School . About 100 citizens attended the February 8 and April 26 public meetings expressing concerns and seeking information. The applicant and the City provided very little information at those meetings . City staff has finally submitted a report in support of adding stadium lighting without addressing the issues and concerns. As explained below, and in the attached memorandum, the report fails to address requirements and stubbornly refuses to address issues and concerns. Members of SHA are also concerned that personnel identified as "staff" preparing the report represent organizations within the City government with a direct conflict of interest in this matter. Yet, they represent themselves as independent and objective evaluators of the SUP application.

The responses SHA has received that were prepared by Parks and Rec on ACPS's behalf have ignored the issues. For example, SHA raised four (4) reasons for ACPS to withdraw the application in its May 18, 2011 letter. The Planning report addresses little or nothing of those matters, except in a tangential and inadequate way. For example, the staff report ignored the recent and relevant evaluations in Arlington and Fairfax. SHA encouraged them to review Arlington County's comprehensive review and rejection of stadium lighting in a residential neighborhood similarly situated to the neighborhood near Hammond that occurred from July 2010 until its rejection in March 2011. The staff report does not even mention the Arlington case and analyses, choosing to reach back to the early 2000's when Arlington approved stadium lighting at two fields that would affect very few homes. SHA also encouraged staff to review the July 2010 Fairfax study of the issue, and Fairfax regulations that effectively bar stadium lighting near residences. Instead, the staff report reaches back to a 2003 Fairfax study, cherry picks a couple of facts and ignores findings of the deleterious effects on residential neighborhoods. SHA members are disappointed that the staff report simply ignores recent and relevant information in an obvious effort to use their positions as City officials to push the application through and defeat the community.

In addition, the staff report makes no effort to address economic impact analysis upon the community, when there are studies showing a significant negative impact upon real estate values; no analysis of the expected devastating impact of BRAC 133 on an already overburdened neighborhood; no mention of the City's recommendations in 2006 and 2009 that Hammond should not be subject to stadium lighting; no mention of the significant impact upon the neighborhood, as ACPS stated in numerous budget documents; no mention of existing and planned lighted fields being well separated

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from any residences, while citing lack of complaints (from residences which do not exist) as evidence of success; among other concerns and issues the community has brought to ACPS and City staff attention.

Because of the weaknesses and biases of the report, SHA has prepared its own report fleshing the issues raised in the May 18 and June 1 letter in more detail. The attached memorandum explains in detail why and how Hammond became designated as an emergency response site, and its importance; the height, setback and illumination requirements and why that is relevant and important; why and how Hammond was rejected for lighting in the recent past at least twice; why our neighboring jurisdictions have decided against installing stadium lighting in residential neighborhoods; among many other issues that the applicant and its staff report refuse to address or glibly dismiss. Residents are prepared to discuss the attached in detail tonight at the June 7 Planning Commission hearing.

Residents have remarked in particular that personnel identified as "City staff" who are preparing the report openly advocated on behalf of the applicants during public meetings. According to minutes of meetings, City staff marshaled City resources to assist the applicants and defeat the "pushback from the community." I must point out that that City personnel who are identified as staff preparing the report are the same personnel who dismissed residents' concerns on behalf of the applicant. This is a clear conflict of interest. While it is normal for an SUP applicant to emphasize facts that support their position and de-emphasize or ignore facts that do not, taxpayers expect their staff to review fairly and objectively such advocacy pieces. Because the applicant includes City personnel who prepared the report, that fair and independent evaluation did not occur here.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to seeing you tonight where we can air the issues that have remained unaddressed.

Nan Jennings  
President, Seminary Hill Association, Inc.

On November 17, 2010, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) filed an application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to erect four (4) 70 foot lighting poles at the upper field at Francis C. Hammond Middle School (Hammond). The SUP application contains a short narrative in support of the application but does not address many basic questions normally applicable to SUP applications, nor does it address technical analysis of the affect of stadium lighting on surrounding neighborhoods or how it plans to comply with City Code. The city held public meetings to discuss the issue on February 8, 2011, and April 26, 2011. Neither the applicants nor staff disclosed significant new information during these meetings. On May 5, 2011, ACPS filed an updated SUP application to add requests for relief from height and setback restrictions, and lowering the height to 60 feet. No other new information was in the updated SUP application.

On May 18, 2011, Seminary Hill Association, Inc. (SHA) requested that ACPS withdraw the application before the Planning Commission hearing scheduled for June 7, 2011. Mr. James Spengler, Director of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RCPA) responded to the May 18 letter on behalf of ACPS. The response did not address the concerns and issues SHA raises.

On June 1, 2011, SHA sought a decision from the Planning Director regarding the proper processes and standards for violating Zoning and City Code, and requested a postponement of the June 7 hearing to allow adequate time to review the new SUP requests. On June 3, the Planning Director sent SHA an informal note stating that, if viewed a certain way, the applicant can violate the code through an SUP. The Planning Director did not respond to a request to postpone. SHA plans to request a formal ruling to appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals and, if necessary, the court of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

There are four main reasons to withdraw the SUP application:

- (1) Hammond has been designated as an emergency response staging area, and there has been no indication that Inova Alexandria Hospital nor regional emergency planners concur with the loss of a facility that it already uses for urgent purposes;
- (2) The SUP application appears to violate city code in at least three significant ways, requiring a variance at a minimum;

(3) There has been no technical or economic impact analysis performed (Arlington has studies showing a 10% decline in real estate values and has rejected lighting in residential neighborhoods, and Fairfax has adopted regulations which effectively bar it); and

(4) With the opening of the Witter Fields next March, the city has met its 2009 Athletic Field study recommendations of 4 lit turf fields, as represented at the February 8 meeting and in Mr. Spengler's memoranda. Note: There is another lighted synthetic field planned at Eisenhower Avenue and Holland Lane.

This is not an exhaustive list, and there are many other issues of concern to the community, such as light pollution and glare, traffic, security, noise, congestion, health and safety, and others areas of concern. These issues have been raised to city officials with little or no response.

In addition, SHA is disturbed that the proposal violates long-standing agreements between SHA, ACPS and the city, with no input from the community before filing and no regard to the potentially devastating impacts the area faces when the BRAC-133 at Mark Center opens later this year. In its updated application, ACPS gave no indication that it considered any of the issues raised by the community. In lieu of developing and responding to the issues identified in letters and in public meetings, City personnel were marshaled to defeat the "push back from the community," according to recent City documents describing naked political efforts.

## **BACKGROUND**

SHA and the community surrounding Hammond have had an interest in Hammond since its founding. SHA and the community worked closely with the School Board during the renovation planning in 2001, and during its expansion in 2006. Development Site Plan #2000-0044 represented the culmination of months of negotiations between ACPS, planning staff and SHA, as well as concerned neighbors. The Planning Commission imposed the following restriction on Hammond (among many others agreed upon by the parties) in connection with its renovation:

16. **CONDITION AMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION:** Show existing and proposed street lights and site lights. Indicate the type of fixture, and show mounting height, and strength of fixture in Lumens or Watts. Provide manufacturer's specifications for the fixtures. Provide

lighting calculations to verify that lighting meets City Standards. **The play field shall not be lighted unless, as required by the POS zone, a special use permit is granted for such lighting.** (T&ES)

Development Site Plan #2000-004 (emphasis in original). In 2006, the city floated the idea of converting Hammond to a Regional Soccer Sportsplex, serving athletes from the metropolitan area. At that time, Hammond was converting to three (3) schools within itself, and worked with the SHA and the community to develop a plan and garner public support. As part of the negotiation, ACPS and the School Board, represented by Mr. Roger DiGilio, committed that it would not seek lighting of the field in return for community support for the significant expansion of the student population at Hammond. City documents since then have confirmed the agreement that no lights would be placed at Hammond, consistent with the agreements of the community. For example, in FY11, the Schools requested about \$1.5 million to install an athletic field on the upper field at Hammond, and noted that a running track would cost about \$300,000. It only requested the turf field in the budget. In addition, there is a narrative in the proposed FY11 School budget stating that funding was limited to a new athletic turf field and that "no stadium lighting is currently planned for this field." For FY12, the schools approved \$1.6 million for a new athletic field only on the lower field, to be installed in 2016. They also repeat the statement that "no stadium lighting is planned for this field."

We are disturbed that the city changed its budget documents at the last minute without any notification to or input from interested parties in a matter that represented a significant policy shift. As a community we believe we are entitled to rely upon the good faith efforts of the city to keep its word and engage us in good faith on matters it knows to be of interest. That did not happen here, and we request that the SUP application be withdrawn.

**Hammond is Designated as an Emergency Response Staging Area and Ineligible for Lights**

Hammond is used as a staging area for medical emergencies and emergency response. Helicopters have landed and taken off from the field during emergencies. For example, after a huge car pile-up with a lot of injuries, helicopters have landed and taken off a few times, ferrying injured back and forth. During these emergencies, the Alexandria police have closed Seminary

Road between Hammond and the Hospital to allow a swift and timely transportation of patients between the landing field and the hospital, generally closing Seminary Road for at least 30 minutes to allow for the safe landing, transportation of patients to the hospital (or from the hospital to the helicopter), and a safe take-off from the field. It is also used it to transport emergency patients to Fairfax and other hospitals on occasion. On September 11, 2001, Hammond was a central facility for helicopter aviation and emergency response that dreadful day. Since then, residents who live nearby have personally seen it used between 2 and 5 times per year, but it may be more. Installing a series of 60 foot lighting structure introduces a risk that it could no longer be used in this way.

We have contacted Inova Alexandria Hospital, which has confirmed that Hammond is designated as the alternate hospital site for emergencies. We have also reviewed some city emergency plans (such as the plan for Pandemic Flu response), which have also designated Hammond as the emergency response site. In fact, Hammond was selected as the site after careful analysis of alternate sites, including Minnie Howard, T.C. Williams High School, and George Washington, and was selected because (among other reasons), of its proximity to the hospital, I-395, and its relative high-point in the city.

We attempted to raise this issue with city officials over the last 6 months and have received no response. We are disturbed that it required the knowledge and efforts of individual citizens to raise this issue, and conduct the research to learn that Hammond is designated for emergency aviation. Hammond was selected after a detailed and exhaustive site selection process (that included Minnie Howard, T.C. Williams, George Washington Middle School and others) for its proximity to Inova Alexandria Hospital, I-395, open areas suitable for aviation, among other reasons. SHA has contacted the Department of Homeland Security, and is equally disturbed at the city's refusal to make reasonable efforts to learn whether Hammond is eligible for lighting structures under city, regional and federal emergency response plans.

The city's response on this issue is particularly weak. It merely states that it has an email from January 2011 that the city may be able to find an alternative site. That glib dismissal of a significant issue completely ignores the comprehensive process of identifying an emergency response area for aviation, as well the interest in that identification from multiple governmental and private entities. SHA maintains that

there is no basis to approve lighting towers at Hammond until all interested parties have been consulted, and a similar site review occur to identify appropriate alternatives.

**The SUP Application Appears to Violate City Code in at least Three Material Respects**

The SUP application also appears to violate City Code in at least three ways: (1) exceeding height restrictions, (2) exceeding setback restrictions and (3) exceeding illumination restrictions. The proposed lighting towers are 60 feet in height, two of which appear to be adjacent to the property line along Pickett Street. Hammond is zoned R-8 and R-20. In both instances, the following restriction is in place in the City Code for both zones:

"Height. The maximum permitted height of a structure is 35 feet except for a church or school use in which case the maximum permitted height is 40 feet."

Similarly, the minimum setback on R-8 and R-20 zoned property is 25 feet. We raised this issue at both the February and April 2011 public meetings and have received no response. As stated in the City Code, schools have similar height and setback restrictions to residences. None of us would be permitted to erect structures significantly in excess of height and setback restrictions. In its updated application, ACPS attempts to subvert the variance requirement for height by treating lighting towers as if it were equivalent to a public school being constructed, expanded or reconstructed, under Section 7-2100, and therefore can get a new SUP for a 60 foot structure. That regulation does not apply to construction of lighting towers that provide no benefit to public schools. Indeed, at the April 26 public meeting, Chairwoman of the School Board Yvonne Folkerts admitted that ACPS' interest in supporting the lights was for the benefit of its fellow government entity, RPCA, which is seeking to expand conveniences for some adult sports (many of whom do not live in Alexandria). As a result, a variance is needed for height violations. ACPS does not even attempt to argue that it does not need a variance from the setback restrictions.

ACPS needs to seek a variance from the City Code in order to violate the height and setback restrictions. City Code clearly spells out the criteria for obtaining variance from height and setback restrictions. Other jurisdictions, including

Arlington, have required SUP applicants seeking stadium lighting (usually for public and private high school or college use) to comply with height and setback restrictions. There is nothing different about this case.

City Code also provides a maximum illumination upon properties in a residential zone. Specifically, City Code Section 13-1-3 states that "it shall be unlawful" to use outdoor lighting if the illumination and glare from the lights is "thrown upon" property occupied for residential purposes in an amount of illumination which measures more than "point twenty-five hundredths footcandles . . . ." The regulation goes on to state that all lights shall be "shielded or directed so as to confine the area of diffusion to the property which it is intended to illuminate." This standard applies to both residential and commercial zones. The SUP application contains no analysis or review of footcandles expected to spill into surrounding neighborhoods and properties. At the April 26 meeting, the contractor stated that illumination across the street would be forty-four one hundredths footcandles. The contractors also stated that the maximum illumination is sixty one-hundredths but we have been unable to locate that standard in the code. At a minimum, we request that the city substantiate its belief that adding such significant light pollution to neighbors is consistent with the code, and if not it must seek a variance. No resident would be permitted to shed such significant light pollution on neighboring properties, and there does not appear to be anything different about this applicant.

On May 18, 2011, SHA sent a letter pointing these issues out to the Planning Director. On May 31, 2011, SHA requested a formal ruling from the Planning Director on these issues. While SHA continues to work with Planning Director on formalizing her decision, we note that there is no effort made to assess whether it is a good idea to violate height, setback and illumination restrictions. Beyond what legal processes and standards are required, no effort is made to explain why it is a good idea to allow ACPS to violate code as it proposes. For example, while the city insists that the proposal would meet illumination requirements regarding public sidewalks, it never states how much light pollution and glare will penetrate the front, side and rear yards of adjacent property, and whether that meets City Code requirements. Nor is any effort made to assess whether permitting a reduction of setback from 70 feet to 23 and 25 feet is good policy and precedent. The city simply states that they

can do what they want using slick procedural devices and tortured reading of code.

**An Economic Impact Analysis was Performed in Arlington County Revealing that Property Values Will Decrease about 10% in The Surrounding Neighborhood**

On March 16, 2011, the Arlington County Board voted 3-1 (one member recused) to reject an application for lighted fields at Bishop O'Connell High School. The dissenting Board member (Chairman Fisette) wanted to give the applicant more time. The issues raised in that proceeding are strikingly similar to the proposal at Hammond, although the record for the application at Hammond is far, far less well developed. Among other reasons, the Board considered and in some instances relied upon the negative impact on the neighborhood in terms of light pollution, and quality of life considerations (traffic, noise, etc.); the inability to demonstrate a need; the lack of studies and information to show the impact on the neighborhood; the devaluation of homes within a one block radius (a few dozen local real estate agents commissioned to evaluate lighting in a residential neighborhood estimated an 11% decrease in property values starting within a one block radius); breaking height and setback restrictions; among many other issues -- in short, the issues raised with the Hammond application, although far more well developed in terms of policy and technical issues than here. The rejection of lighting at O'Connell did not affect its plans to upgrade the field to artificial turf. Those plans will continue. For its part, Fairfax County has conducted comprehensive technical and policy studies of lighting fields as recently as July 2010 that are available on its website as it considered new lighting regulations and its application. To our knowledge, Fairfax has not approved lighting fields in residential neighborhoods based upon these studies (most of which started in 2002-3) because of its adverse impacts. The Hammond application is nowhere near as developed as any of the other applications we have reviewed in Arlington or Fairfax.

Significantly, an economic impact analysis that civic associations in Arlington County commissioned when lights were proposed at Bishop O'Connell High School revealed the devastating impact of lighted fields on neighboring properties. They surveyed real estate agents to assess the impact of lighted fields on real estate values, and the conclusions are below. In particular, there is a map of the surrounding community with homes marked red (11% decrease), orange (9.3% decrease) and yellow (undetermined decrease but lower since they are farther

away). All homes near Hammond would be either red or orange. The study concluded the following:

- Agents estimated that the first row of homes would decline in value by 11 percent, or about \$72,000 for a typical home.
- Homes in the first block would fall by slightly over 9 percent, or about \$60,000 for an average home

The link to the entire report, which contains more detailed findings and conclusions, is immediately below. Arlington County accepted and considered the report in rejecting the application. There are also academic studies that mention the deleterious effects of lighting fields on a neighborhood in terms of value and nuisance.

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/file79396.pdf>

In this instance, and using the same radius as the study in Arlington County, there are at least 115 homes (using Google map) that would lose property value because of its proximity to the lit fields. We assumed the average value of the house would be roughly \$750,000 (which may be understated in light of some very expensive homes in the area). Arlington County concluded that homes would lose over 11% directly across the street, and over 9% within a one block radius. Sticking to those numbers, it comes to about a 10% average loss of value per home in the neighborhoods near Hammond. A simple calculation reveals the following:

115 homes X \$750K Average Value = \$86,250,000 in total home value

10% loss = \$8,625,000

**Lost tax revenue at current rate of 0.978 per \$100 = about \$825,000 per year in current dollars.**

Assuming the city follows through on its plan to increase tax rates on residences to spare commercial interests any further burdens, that gap will increase, and will widen over time. While we rely upon the economic impact analysis of Arlington County to reach our conclusions, neither ACPS, RPCA, nor any entity of the city has made any effort to learn whether and how much value will be lost as a result of placing stadium lighting in the neighborhood. We have found no study or academic paper suggesting that lighting fields improves quality of life or property values; the only studies we located noted the

deleterious effect of lights upon the community and ultimately property values and taxes.

The staff report, as prepared by Parks and Rec, ignored the issues in Arlington and Fairfax. We encouraged them to review Arlington County's comprehensive review and rejection of stadium lighting in a residential neighborhood similarly situated to the neighborhood near Hammond that occurred from July 2010 until its rejection in March 2011. The staff report does not even mention the Arlington case and analyses, choosing to reach back to early 2000's when Arlington approved stadium lighting at fields that would affect very few homes. We also encouraged them to review the July 2010 Fairfax study of the issue, and Fairfax regulations which effectively bar stadium lighting near residences. Instead, the staff report reaches back to a 2003 Fairfax study, cherry picks a couple of facts and ignores findings of the deleterious affects on residential neighborhoods. We are disappointed that the staff report simply ignores recent and relevant information in an obvious effort to use their positions as city officials to push the application through and defeat the community.

### **The Applicants Reliance on 2006 and 2009 Athletic Field Studies is Misplaced**

At both the February and April public meetings, representative of the city state that it relies upon a 2009 Athletic Field Study and other information to conclude that lights at Hammond are required and desirable. The information supports neither conclusion. As of today, there are 5 lighted fields existing or expected soon: (1) Minnie Howard, (2) Fort Ward Park, (3) Ben Brenman Park and (4) and (5) two new fields at the Witter site. There is 6<sup>th</sup> site being evaluated at Eisenhower Avenue and Holland Lane. All sites are in or near SHA boundaries. In the 2009 Athletic Field Study, the city stated that it picked Ben Brenman Park as the next site for lighted fields because of several factors, including location and costs. More importantly, Hammond was rejected as a site for the reasons stated in this letter and other reasons. For example, the study noted that the closest residence to Ben Brenman Park was 440 feet; the closest residence to Hammond is a little over 100 feet. Ben Brenman Park could support a regulation soccer field; Hammond can only support a "junior size" field, meaning that regulation games could not be played on it. The 2009 study also noted that the SHA area support other lighted fields and is more than carrying its share of the burdens associated with lighted fields. Finally, the 2009 study

cautioned that it should not be interpreted for anything beyond 2010.

A 2006 Athletic Field Study reached the same conclusions, and also recommended that lights should not be installed at the upper field at Hammond for the reasons discussed in this letter and at public meetings. No explanation is given in the budget documents, SUP application or at any public meeting as to why those studies were wrong or obsolete, nor is ACPS able to point to any recent studies or analysis supporting its views. We note that in the recent budget documents city officials stated that there is a significant increase in traffic and other nuisance issues associated with lighted fields (although it provides no further details on what those problems are or how it plans to address them).

The 2009 study also included a criterion entitled "Process," which was an assessment of the opposition to be expected in each neighborhood. Hammond scored a 2 in that category (meaning some political opposition was expected but could be overcome), while many other sites scored a 1 (meaning that political opposition would be more significant and difficult to overcome). The authors of the study do not explain the basis of their political assessments. This factor alone accounted for Hammond being rated in the upper tier on the assessment. Indeed, the scoring on the 2009 study found that Hammond was one of the two worst sites in the city under its "location" factor, with constructability, fiscal impacts and public access and site amenities problems. Had Hammond been treated like other sites for political purposes, or had political purposes not been a factor, Hammond would have been viewed technically as a mediocre candidate and other sites would have been elevated from a technical and neighborhood perspective, according to the study.

In addition, at the February public meeting, the applicant presented slides suggesting that its needs are 21 natural turf fields, which equate to 4 lighted turf fields. Mr. Spengler confirmed this in his recent memoranda (although since the community learned of undisclosed fields, he now states that he needs two more fields, providing no substantiation for that view). Neither the applicant nor city officials disclosed the impending two Witter Fields development, which would push the inventory of lit fields over the recommendation. They also failed to disclose the proposal for a new, lighted turf field at Eisenhower Avenue and Holland Lane, which would be a 6<sup>th</sup> new lighted field. We note that at the April meeting, this slide

was no longer used, without explanation. Thus, the community learned of at least 4 lighted fields (3 rectangular and one baseball) being added to inventory from sources outside this process, and has no confidence that the city has disclosed other lighted fields being planned. In any case, any statement that lights at Hammond meet some vague need has no substantiation.

**The Applicants Made no Effort to Assess the Potentially Devastating Impacts of BRAC 133 on the Application**

SHA has been concerned about the impact of the new building at the Mark Center (BRAC 133) which will house about 6,400 federal employees upon residents of SHA and the West End. The transportation analysis in support of BRAC 133 has come under fire from the Department of Defense Inspector General and it continues to be a source of great concern, especially since occupancy remains scheduled for September 2011. SHA has requested ACPS and City staff to consider this issue in light of the application for stadium lighting to assess the potential impact of BRAC 133 on the community if stadium lighting were introduced at Hammond. To date, the applicant and city staff has refused to consider the matter.

For its part, the applicant has acknowledged that BRAC 133 could have a potentially huge impact on the operation of public school and activities. According to recent news articles, the School Board and Dr. Morton Sherman, Superintendent of ACPS, have expressed great concern about the impact of BRAC 133 upon its students (including those at Hammond:

"We have several schools in this corridor we think will be impacted," Superintendent Morton Sherman told the board . . . "I understand there is a call for a reassessment, a restudy and reevaluation. I would ask at this point the school board turn and say the needs of the school division also need to be addressed . . . We have thousands and thousands of children whose lives would be impacted through the course of the school year and forever."

<http://www.alextimes.com/news/2011/apr/29/school-officials-join-mark-center-dod-d/>. Chairwoman Folkerts supported that view.

We concur with Dr. Sherman and Chairwoman Folkerts that BRAC 133 will have to be assessed and understood for its impacts upon the schools and facilities. In that regard, we renew our request that ACPS and city staff conduct and complete its evaluation of BRAC 133 to understand whether adding stadium lighting to Hammond (and its attendant skyrocketing use, according to the

city) in addition to BRAC 133 places a community already at risk because of BRAC 133 at even greater risk. Dr. Sherman and the School Board emphasized engaging with city staff and the community on BRAC 133, and we look forward to discussing this with them. It would also be an appropriate forum to discuss adding stadium lighting to Hammond.

### **CONCLUSION**

SHA supports a strong athletic program, especially for our youth. Two lighted fields—Minnie Howard and Fort Ward Park—are within SHA boundaries but away from residential properties. Three other lighted fields (as well as a fourth under development) - Ben Brenman Park and Witter Fields - are very close to SHA boundaries and also away from residential properties. SHA is disturbed by the City's handling of this issue, the lack of technical and economic impact analysis, and the unwillingness to treat our concerns fairly and respectfully. SHA lacks confidence that City staff who are inappropriately using their positions to advocate for their own interests in a raw political campaign are performing their duties in a neutral, independent manner.

Planning Commission  
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

Regular Public Hearing

10. SPECIAL USE PERMIT #2010-0079

4646 Seminary Road, Alexandria City Public Schools – Francis Hammond  
Public hearing and consideration of a request to allow lighting on an existing athletic field  
and a modification to the minimum front yard setback; zoned R-8 & 20/Single Family &.  
Applicant: Alexandria City Public Schools represented by Kevin Van Hise

Comments of Nancy Jennings  
President, Seminary Hill Association, Inc.

Members of the Planning Commission:

My name is Nancy Jennings, and I live at 2115 Marlboro Drive. I am President of Seminary Hill Association, Inc., and speak tonight on its behalf.

You been copied on several letters from Seminary Hill that lay out in detail the position of our neighborhoods about this application for lights on the upper athletic field at Hammond Middle School. I will let the lawyers speak to the finer points of this case—relief, variances, setbacks—and simply summarize our objections that fall into roughly three categories or issues: quality of life, public safety, and money.

**Quality of Life** issues include concerns like glare from the lights, noise late at night from the sporting events, trash, and increased traffic. No one in the City is ready to enforce existing regulations designed to preserve quality of life. When we asked at the public meetings whom should we call when there is a problem: school officials said not us, we are only there from 7-4 on week days and cannot pick up all the trash; Parks & Rec staff said not us, unless their staff in the evenings is increased; and the police nicely told us they lack the manpower, too, which we already knew from the problems we had with large groups in Fort Ward Park a few years ago.

**Public Safety** issues relate mainly to the fact that this field is designated by the City as an emergency response staging area and occasionally used as an alternate landing site for emergency helicopters. It is only three blocks from the Inova Alexandria Hospital and was used on 9-11. With the opening of the BRAC at Mark Center in less than 90 days, we will need this capability more than ever. If there is an incident at the BRAC's RIF facility—that is poorly fortified—an additional helicopter landing site will be essential. We cannot afford to reduce our EMS capability that is 24/7 365 days a year so a few people can recreate for a few more hours in the evening.

**Money** issues. Maybe we can afford to spend \$1.3 million on a field that is too small for soccer and too small for track. But maybe those funds would be better spent on a different larger field or something else entirely. The money issue isn't just about the expenditure, but includes the impact of the installation of lights on the property values for residences nearby. These lights will reduce the value of homes in Varsity Park, which in turn will reduce the City's tax base. So, this proposal is another great idea like inviting the Army to build at Mark Center. It will result in lost revenue to the City, not as much as the BRAC, but perhaps \$800,000 annually.

This application lacks merit and should be denied in the interest of preserving:

- The quality of life in the Varsity Park neighborhood.
- The safety of all of us.
- And the City's tax base!

Thank you.

175a

## Let's Shed Some Light

### Statement to the Alexandria City Planning Commission June 7, 2011 by Gary J. Carr

Mr. Chairman and members of the Planning Commission, my name is Gary Carr. I rise in support of the addition of lights to the field and running track being constructed at Francis Hammond Middle School.

Some of you may be aware that I have been a advocate of running tracks in general, and specifically to improving the dismal condition of the facility at Hammond. To that end, the School Board and City Council have allocated the resources to repair the field with synthetic turf and reconstruct the historic track that once graced that site. The issue before you is whether we maximize our million dollar investment in infrastructure, and by extension in our children, by adding lighting to this project. The answer is "Yes".

I am not going to recite the benefits or needs for lighting, they have been amply expressed in many forums. (Introduce for the record notes from Community Informational Forums). Quoting the SUP: the field is a "well-used, and much needed athletic/recreational resource in the City" and "to better meet the recreational needs of Alexandria's citizens and the students of Hammond Middle School, and to improve evening use of the site" we should add lights. Sounds straight forward, logical and simple. But nothing is ever so clear-cut. The proposal goes further, "In addition to lighting the field, ACPS proposes to add safety lighting for the track as a courtesy to neighboring citizens so that they have the ability to use the track in the evening". Additionally, "The proposed lighting system will use technologically advanced fixtures that significantly limit light spill-over beyond the playing field area and track". The field makes the site better, the track makes the field better, and the lights make the facility better. The design is smart and efficient.

As a proponent of lights, let me address some of the concerns raised by the opponents. *It's a school*. This cannot be overstated, Hammond is one of only two middle schools in the City of Alexandria. So, criticism of lights have to be viewed from this perspective, *it's a school*. Every effort have been made to address the concerns of the neighboring homes and the nearby community. It therefore begs the question, "Is there anything further that can be done to mitigate the impact of lights, given the fact that *it's a school*"? Trash, noise, traffic- all are being addressed to the best possible contingency. Operations will be periodically reviewed to deal with any new concerns. But a playing field at a school cannot be, and should not be, some dark, quiet, sterile environment. These are children in a learning situation, let them have fun.

As the opponents to lights make their case, children are rarely mentioned. It is perhaps unfair to ask if they have, or will have, children attending Hammond Middle School, or know it's history. Its location in close proximity to residential housing has significant implications to the City's past. Frankly, we can't change that. The recreation staff, the school and city officials have all pledged to make this work, with the least possible disruption to the quality of life for those most directly effected. Vagrant behavior will not be tolerated around our children, anymore than it will for the school's immediate neighbors.

Many of the objections go to the core issue that this is an urban school in a densely populated area. *Item*: this will be the only illuminated running track in the entire City. *Item*: in the winter it is dark by five o'clock. *Item*: in the summer it is often too hot to play during the heat of the day. *Item*: we have one of the highest childhood obesity rates in the area. *Item*: there is an unmet and growing need for play areas. This string of statements leads to one conclusion: the lighting of this field, and all the fields at our secondary schools for that matter, is a *need*, not a want.

There is a suggestion of delaying this decision and having more studies. The construction on the field will proceed regardless. The fact is, deferring on this opportunity effectively changes the future physical and emotional development of thousands of children for decades, if not generations. Make no mistake, lighting this track and field is beneficial, and in the same converse way that not lighting it is detrimental. This is not a zero-sum decision. Over time, the positives will be amplified and negatives will be diminished. Our children have waited long enough, at Hammond Middle School Field, let's shed some light.



*Field Usage and Need for Synthetic Turf Fields and Lights*

Dana Wedeles, RP&CA

*Costs Associated with Lights and Traffic Impacts of the Project*

Dana Wedeles, RP&CA

*Litter and Noise Impacts*

Dana Wedeles, RP&CA

*Proposed Lighting Technology and Proposed Light Levels*

Kevin Van Hise, Kimley-Horn and Associates

*Proposed Site Plan and Usage*

Kevin Van Hise, Kimley-Horn and Associates

*The Pros and Cons of the Project*

Jim Spengler, Director, RP&CA

*Next Steps*

Mark Krause, ACPS

*Questions and Comments (see below)*

*Recap of the Next Steps*

Patricia Escher, Principle Planner, P&Z.

**Questions and Comments:** The following is a synopsis of questions and comments raised during the question and comment portion of the presentation. Questions and comments that were gathered have been organized into two general categories of comments and questions in *support* of the SUP application for lights and *against* the SUP application for lights. Some comments were addressed and are noted.

**Comments and Questions in Support of the SUP Application for Lights at Francis C. Hammond Middle School:**

- The City of Alexandria is not meeting the recreational needs for adults or children. The lights will increase the capacity of the new Field at Hammond. If the City wants strong and healthy people it needs to provide places or people to exercise and recreate. The City is unable to buy new parcels of land for recreation because of its urban conditions. The City must look to existing sites to be used more intensely to meet the current and future needs of the City's citizens. *(From Judy Noritake, Chair, Alexandria City Park and Recreation Commission)*
- The School Board is in a difficult position. Enrollment is going up by leaps and bounds and has new demands that must be met to provide proper facilities for Alexandria's youth. While the schools expand their facilities it is also important to be a good neighbor. The School Board must strike a balance of being a good neighbor and providing facilities to Alexandria's youth which is why provisions such as the use of light technology and fencing are being proposed at Hammond. The School Board is in support of this project *( From Yvonne Folkerts, Chair, Alexandria City School Board)*



- Residents of the City of Alexandria are at a disadvantage when compared to other jurisdictions in the DC metro area. The facilities in Alexandria do not provide the opportunity for play after dark like many of the surrounding jurisdictions.
- This application is not about BRAC and it isn't about the traffic issues when the school is being used for church services. This application is about expanding the usability of the sports facility at Hammond. Not converting the field to synthetic turf and providing lighting is underutilizing the facility in this urban environment.
- Everyone in the City of Alexandria must be considered when this SUP moves forward. Everyone in the City, whether they are children or adults should have access to adequate sports facilities. Adjacent residents are being considered by proposing lighting technology that prevents a nuisance from occurring to their property.
- The City needs these facilities to bring people from different backgrounds together to play sports. This facility will use taxpayer's money and reinvest in the youth of Alexandria. The lights will prolong the usable hours of the field and take kids off the streets at night to provide alternatives for at-risk youth in the City.
- From the perspective of an Alexandria youth who is now graduating from TC Williams High School and going to Norfolk, it was Alexandria sports that took him off the streets and gave him an activity to do after school. Providing lights at Hammond will give more opportunities for Alexandria youth of all backgrounds to participate in after school activities and be successful like he was. (*Comments from a youth representative to the Alexandria City Park and Recreation Commission*).
- From the perspective of a Cameron Station resident that is adjacent to Ben Brenman Park where field lights were installed this past year, the lights have had the following impacts:
  - The lights have added another dimension that did not exist in the park before
  - The lights have helped deter vagrants in the park because it safely lights the area and because it attracts programmed sports users into the park at night.
  - There have been no complaints in Cameron Station about light levels
  - There have been no complaints in Cameron Station about noise related to the lights.
  - The 6' fence at Ben Brenman is locked and prohibits non-permitted users from using the field.
  - There has been a collaborative relationship between the residents of Cameron Station and RP&CA throughout their SUP process and after the lights were installed.



From the perspective of a Cameron Station resident, there have been no negative impacts on their adjacent neighborhood since they have been installed.

*(Comments from the President of Cameron Station Civic Association)*

- The City of Alexandria is at a disadvantage when compared to neighboring Fairfax County. Field development and player development lags behind in the City of Alexandria and residents must drive to Fairfax County for sufficient playing facilities. The lack of facilities in Alexandria puts the City at a competitive disadvantage for its youth.
- Comparing the 4,000 cars associated with BRAC to the minimal amount of cars associated with the lighting at the field is an unfair comparison.
- The obesity rate in this country is over 50%. Lack of fields and space to recreate in Alexandria is a health issue.
- Youth sports in Alexandria are primarily coordinated with volunteers. Proximity to different neighborhoods is important for volunteers to be available after work hours. Right now there are insufficient facilities in the West End of Alexandria and it is too far for volunteers to have to travel to Old Town or Jones Point to participate in sports activities.
- Alexandria is an urban community and this project is proposed in an urban area. Noise and traffic already exist and are to be expected in an urban area.
- This is a great opportunity for children in the West End of Alexandria to have a facility that they can play sports at after dark where none exists today.
- Immigrants that live in the West End need a facility that they can play and volunteer at. If the facilities are too far from the West End it will be hard for them or other residents to participate in sports in the City of Alexandria.
- The lack of capacity for sports field facilities is an issue that faces all of the City of Alexandria. Seminary Hill is not the only group that should be considered when making the decision for this SUP.
- As a resident that lives diagonally across the street to the proposed lights, they support this project. Sometimes when a project comes about that is beneficial to the City as a whole, sacrifices must be made for the benefit of the larger community. If the City and its residents aren't willing to make a sacrifice for the youth of the City then they aren't willing to invest in the youth of the City. As a neighboring resident, they rather hear kids or adults playing sports than the noise of sirens taking unoccupied kids to jail. Residents must be sensitive to the needs of the children in the City of Alexandria.
- As a City of Alexandria volunteer coach, they support this project. It is not only difficult for coaches to make games while there is still daylight because of their jobs; it is also difficult for the parents. In many families in Alexandria both parents work. Having these lights will allow kids to play sports that couldn't before because their parents will be able to get them to games and practices later in the evening.
- As a resident of the City of Alexandria, residents shouldn't want a quiet neighborhood – they should want a lively neighborhood. There are



- accommodations being made for surrounding residents. This will be the only place in the City where there will be a lit track and surrounding residents will have the opportunity to go out and have a safe place to exercise in the evenings.
- If the City provides a facility with artificial turf and they do not install lights, they are only realizing half of the potential of the facility.

**Comments and Questions Against the SUP Application for Lights at Francis C. Hammond Middle School:**

- The Base Relocation and Closure Program (BRAC) is about to open a new facility in the vicinity of Hammond. Faulty traffic assumptions have been made and this Community will be inundated with traffic from both BRAC and the proposed lit field at Hammond if the SUP is approved. The residents disagree that the figure of 25 additional cars presented tonight is accurate.
- The increased traffic from BRAC will negatively impact emergency response times, presenting a safety concern to the community. If the lights are put in at Hammond it will add to the traffic issues that are about to plague the neighborhood.
- When the neighborhood was approached about the expansion of the building at Hammond, the City made an agreement that there would be no lights at Hammond.
- Residents who live adjacent to Hammond complain that security lights already shine into their houses.
- Fencing already exists along North Pickett Street and it does not stop people from parking along North Pickett Street and using the facility. Field users will park on neighborhood streets.
- Neighboring residents worry that there will be noise from whistles and people playing on the field
- Residents complain that RP&CA has been unresponsive to issues in surrounding parks for noise and trash in the past. What will make Hammond any different?
- As a tax payer, some residents are disappointed that so much money would go into providing the lights at the field. These lights will disrupt a peaceful residential neighborhood at night.
- This facility will not be for Alexandria youth, it will be used for adults and others that do not pay taxes.
- As a resident who lives across North Pickett Street, they know that there is noise associated with the field, as it already exists today. The lights will exacerbate the noise and make it hard for their young children to go to sleep at night, especially if the lights are on until 10pm.
- New fields are being built in other areas of the City that are not next to residential neighborhoods and are more suitable locations for the installation of lights. Hammond is in a residential neighborhood and the residents must be considered.



- The proposed lights at Hammond are 30' from residential properties. At Ben Brenman they are over 400' away. This is a different situation where the residential properties are much closer to the proposed lights. *(Please see the Follow Up Item section below for further explanation).*
- Seminary Hill has had problems with RP&CA at Fort Ward Park. Seminary Hill has requested the gates at Fort Ward to be locked for years and they have not been locked. Seminary Hill has also requested a shroud for one of the playground lights at Fort Ward that shines into a neighboring residential area but this also has not been done. What will make the situation at Hammond any different?
- Lights at other sports facilities are always on, even during weather events when the sports facilities are not in use.
- The field at Hammond is currently a landing spot for emergency helicopters. Now they have to find an alternate location to land their helicopters.
- As a resident of the surrounding neighborhood, it is important to note that this project is not just about Alexandria; it is also about the people that live there. This project will hurt the peaceful way of life of this community.
- If there are issues with using the field at night, is it possible to use the facilities in the morning?
- Question: How will the games be regulated? How can we be sure that an official will always be on site when the field is being used?  
Response from Mac Slover, RP&CA: For all youth teams there are coordinators on site for every game and practices. For adults there is always an RP&CA staff member before, during, and after the game.
- As a resident of the neighborhood, they aren't only concerned about the problems on the field. Residents are also concerned about the activities associated with the field that take place in the surrounding neighborhood. They have seen men disrobe and change before games in the front yard of their house. In addition, they find beer cans in their front yard and people perform maintenance on their cars in their front yard.
- Kids won't be the users of the field at 9:30 at night. Adults will be the users.
- Arlington recently rejected an application for lights on a project because homes are approximately 100' away and they said the homes would lose too much value if the lights were approved. Also, Arlington did a traffic impact study for recent field lighting projects. Through analysis Arlington also found that the lights will have an impact on surrounding major thoroughfares as they will be highly visible. This is nowhere near the level of research that has been done for this project. This project is not ready to move forward until further research is done.
- Fairfax will not allow field lighting within a certain distance of residential properties.
- There have been serious issues at Hammond Middle School in the past with traffic. How will these issues be remedied?



- The Dept. of Homeland Security uses this site as a staging facility. Where will they use after this is built?
- There are height and distance issues that are not being addressed in this application.
- Is the 2009 field report valid to use in this instance when additional fields have been installed?
- Documents that have been compiled for Minnie Howard say that there will be a “spike” in traffic associated with field lights.
- Cameron Station had a one year process. This application for Hammond is being rushed and is not ready.
- Could the lower field be the site for field lighting? It is not as close to residential properties and it may not bother as many people – explore more options for lighting.
- The report for field usability is faulty as it makes the assumption that fields are only usable until 4:30 every day which is an unfair assumption.

**Next Steps:**

The City will send the Meeting Minutes from the Second Community Informational Meeting out to citizens that left their emails on the sign in sheet. In addition, the notes will be posted online on the ACPS website. Tentatively, the SUP application will move forward to the **Planning Commission on June 7, 2011 and City Council on June 25<sup>th</sup>**. Proper notification will be sent to residents for both of those upcoming meetings.

The track and field will move forward regardless of the lights.

**In the meantime, residents are encouraged to send comments and questions to Patricia Escher, City of Alexandria Planner, by COB May 3, 2011.**

Patricia Escher’s email is:

**Follow Up Item to the Community Informational Meeting:**

- During the Community Informational Meeting the comment was made that the proposed lights at Hammond are 30 feet from residential properties.

For clarification purposes, the closest house to a proposed light pole is approximately 126 feet and the closest residential property boundary to a proposed light pole is is approximately 90 feet.

**Kendra Jacobs**

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**Subject:** FW: COA Contact Us: Compliment on Commission Hearing

**From:** Cicely Woodrow  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 08, 2011 12:47 PM  
**To:** William Rivers  
**Cc:** Graciela Moreno; Faroll Hamer; Barbara Ross; Kendra Jacobs  
**Subject:** RE: COA Contact Us: Compliment on Commission Hearing

Dear Mr. Rivers,

Thank you for your kind comments. I have copied Kendra Jacobs, Administrative staff to the Planning Commission so that she can share your message with the Commissioners.

Best regards  
Cicely Woodrow

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**From:** William Rivers [mailto:rivers15@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 08, 2011 12:39 PM  
**To:** PnZFeedback; Cicely Woodrow; Graciela Moreno  
**Subject:** COA Contact Us: Compliment on Commission Hearing

**COA Contact Us: Planning and Zoning General Feedback**

Time: [Wed Jun 08, 2011 12:39:15] Message ID: [30775]

**Issue Type:** Planning and Zoning General Feedback  
**First Name:** William  
**Last Name:** Rivers  
**Street Address:** 15 West Mount Ida Avenue  
**City:** Alexandria  
**State:** VA  
**Zip:** 22305  
**Phone:** 6526  
**Email Address:** [rivers15@comcast.net](mailto:rivers15@comcast.net)  
**Subject:** Compliment on Commission Hearing  
I attended the Planning Commission meeting last night (June 7th) and participated as a speaker. I want to pass my compliments on to the Commission members. Regardless of the outcome, I thought that the Chair  
**Comments:** ran the meeting very effectively - particularly given the number of speakers and the volatility of certain issues - and that the members asked good questions that showed that they were listening to the speakers.

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Even when they disagreed between themselves, it was done in a respectful

manner. In addition, all speakers were treated with the same respect, no

matter their issue or their comfort with speaking in public.

And the

hours that they put in!! My subject was over at 11:15, but there were

still two major issues to be addressed on the docket. I can't imagine

that they were able to finish up before midnight. The residents of

Alexandria should be thankful for such dedicated people helping out our City.

My issue was the SUP about the lights at Hammond. I was in

support of the SUP. I want to thank Members Jennings, Lyman, and Dunn

for being such strong advocates to help out the kids and adults in the

City. And of course, the Chair for casting the deciding vote. It was a

contentious issue with points on both sides, but they all made the

decision that benefits the entire City the most.

Thanks,  
Bill Rivers

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6-25-11

**Jackie Henderson**

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**From:** Barbara Ross  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 21, 2011 10:23 AM  
**To:** Jackie Henderson  
**Cc:** Faroll Hamer; Joanna Anderson; Gwen Wright; Michele Evans; Patricia Escher; Ron Kagawa; James Spengler; frank.putzu@navy.mil  
**Subject:** Appeal to BZA of Hammond Field case

This will confirm that an appeal has now been filed in the Hammond case. Under section 11-1204, the case at City Council scheduled for Saturday, 6/25, is stayed. Council may not consider the case on Saturday.

*Barbara Ross*  
Deputy Director  
Planning and Zoning  
(703)746-3802