

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:30 p.m. on February 17, 2011, in Room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:  
Senator Anthony Hensley

Committee staff present:  
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Laura Younker, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Jason Long, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Eunice Peters, Office of the Revisor of Statutes  
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, Kansas Department of Education  
Dorothy Gerhardt, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:  
Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director for Advocacy, Kansas Association of School Boards  
Cheryl Semmel, USA Kansas (written only)  
Bob Vancrum, USD #229  
Diane Gjerstad, USD #259  
Stuart J. Little, USD #512 (written only)  
Bill Reardon, USD #500  
Senator Mike Petersen  
Andree Sisco  
Craig Wilford, Superintendent of Schools, USD #260 (written only)  
Evan C. Watson (written only)  
Janet Blanc (written only)  
Angee Sisco (written only)  
Tara Nussbaum (written only)  
Maj. Michael Oliver, SG County Sheriff's Office (written only)

Others attending:  
See attached list.

### Approval of Minutes

Senator Teichman moved to approve the minutes of January 27, January 31, February 3, February 7, February 8, February 9, and February 10, 2011 as written. The motion was seconded by Senator Abrams. Motion carried on a voice vote.

### Hearing on SB 57-School districts; amendments to base state aid per pupil for local option budget purposes

Jason Long, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, provided a summary of the provisions of **SB 57**. The current statutory method of calculating the local option budget (LOB) by a school district is set to expire on June 30, 2012. Under current law, when the amount of base state aid per pupil (BSAPP) is \$4,433 or less, a school board may calculate the LOB based on a BSAPP of \$4,433, or an amount that does not exceed an amount of 30.0 percent of its general fund budget, whichever is greater, plus the amount received in special education state aid in school year 2008-2009, or the current appropriation, whichever is higher.

Current law also allows a school board to calculate the LOB on 31.0 percent of its general fund budget, if an election is held. **SB 57** would remove the sunset date of June 30, 2012, and in addition, would allow a school district to calculate its LOB based on a BSAPP of \$4,492 instead of \$4,433.

If the current method of calculating the LOB is allowed to expire on June 30, 2012, the Kansas Department of Education estimates that LOB state aid would be reduced by approximately \$42.5 million in FY 2013, as school districts would no longer be able to utilize a BSAPP of \$4,433 for its LOB calculation. However, the Department estimates that LOB state aid would increase by approximately \$4.1 million in FY 2012 and subsequent years, as school districts would be able to utilize a BSAPP of \$4,492

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 17, 2011, in Room 152-S of the Capitol.

for its LOB calculation instead of a BSAPP of \$4,433.

Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director for Advocacy, Kansas Association of School Boards, appeared before the committee in support of the passage of **SB 57** (Attachment 1). He stated that increasing the basis from \$4,433 to \$4,492 would inflate the general fund an estimated \$39 million, providing approximately \$12 million in potential additional LOB authority. Under the position adopted by KASB's special Committee on Funding Public Education and Board of Directors, KASB could support this concept, provided the additional authority is equalized at a higher ratio. Under current law, this approach would also allow local boards to access the funding without additional election requirements. Although this action would require an increase in local property taxes, that decision would be made by locally elected boards.

Cheryl Semmel, Executive Director, USA Kansas, provided written testimony in support of **SB 57** (Attachment 2). They feel repealing the June 30, 2012 sunset date and changing the Base State Aid Per Pupil from \$4,433 to \$4,492 for purposes of calculating the Local Option Budget allow districts to offset the impact of reductions to the BSAPP and other programs and allow school districts to plan for the future.

Bob Vancrum, USD #229 (Attachment 3) and Diane Gjerstad, USD #259 (Attachment 4), each provided testimony in support. Stuart J. Little, (Attachment 5) provided written testimony on behalf of the Shawnee Mission School District, USD #512 in support of **SB 57**.

Bill Reardon, USD #500, appeared before the committee with testimony in opposition to the passage of **SB 57** (Attachment 6). He stated the Kansas City school district strongly opposes any expansion in local taxing authority. They feel this legislation applies a district's LOB percentage to an artificial base of \$4,492 and is another example of a dis-equalizing, thinly veiled LOB increase.

Senator Umbarger requested information indicating the difference between a BSAPP of \$4,433 and \$4,492, assuming the LOB remains the same.

The hearing on **SB 57** was closed.

### **Hearing on SB 144 - Providing bus transportation for school children subjected to hazardous walking conditions**

Eunice Peters, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, provided a brief summary of the provisions in **SB 144**. **SB 144** would provide that any student who is subjected to hazardous walking conditions, as established by the Kansas Board of Education rules and regulations, while en route to or from school, to be provided transportation by school districts. Under current law, school districts are required to provide transportation only to students living over 2.5 miles from school. It is upon that basis that state aid is calculated.

Senator Mike Petersen appeared before the committee in support of **SB 144** (Attachment 7). He stated this legislation is the result of a constituent request. The bill requires the State Board of Education to develop standards for determining if a serious hazard exists where walking is alleged to constitute a serious safety hazard due to rail crossings or an intersection greater than 60 feet on a student's route to school. The bill allows a parent or guardian to petition the school board in writing to determine if in walking along normally traveled roads a serious hazard exists. The district may receive transportation funding for hazardous routes inside the 2.5 mile limit.

Andree Sisco also appeared in support of **SB 144** (Attachment 8). She testified she is currently president of the Oaklawn Parent Teacher Organization with 11 grandchildren, five of whom would be directly affected by the passage of the legislation. Craig Wilford, Superintendent of Schools, USD #260 (Attachment 9), Evan C. Watson (Attachment 10), Janet Blanc (Attachment 11), Angee Sisco (Attachment 12), Tara Nussbaum (Attachment 13), and Maj. Michael Oliver, SG County Sheriff's Office (Attachment 14) all provided written testimony in support of **SB 144**. Senator Petersen stated an amendment had been drafted which would limit the provisions of this bill to elementary age students.

There being no further discussion, the hearing on **SB 144** was closed.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 17, 2011, in Room 152-S of the Capitol.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

# SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 17, 2011

NAME	REPRESENTING
Andree Sisco	Oaklawn PTO
Mike PETERSON	USD 500 (KCKs.)
Tracy Russell	SQE
Bob Vancrum	Blue Valley School Board
Nora Lockton	<del>Del</del> Greater KC Chamber
Jen Bruning	OF Chamber
Mindy Brissey	American Federation of Teachers - KS
Roger Stumpf	USD 106
David Ranner	Kearney & Assoc.
Shannon Bell Little	Little Government Relations
Brenna Duffy	Intern
BARBARA BUNTING	USD 373 Newton, K+SB
Tom Kubs	KASB
Negan Umscheid	K-state / Flint Hills Leadership
Jennifer Crow	USD 501



KANSAS  
ASSOCIATION



OF  
SCHOOL  
BOARDS



1420 SW Arrowhead Road • Topeka, Kansas 66604-4024  
785-273-3600

Testimony before the  
**Senate Committee on Education**

on

Testimony on **SB 57** – Base State Aid Per Pupil for Local Option Budget

by

**Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director for Advocacy**  
Kansas Association of School Boards

**February 17, 2011**

Madam Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on **SB 57**. We appear as conditional proponents, for the same reasons presented in testimony on **SB 19**, the bill to allow that Local Option Budgets be calculated on the basis of including state contributions to the Kansas Public Employee Retirement System. On that bill, we expressed support for increasing the authority of school districts to raise the local option budget; provided that state equalization aid is appropriated to cover the increased authority and raises the percentage of equalization, and that boards be able to use this authority without referendum.

Under current law, school districts are allowed to calculate their LOB as though the base budget per pupil was \$4,433, which was the amount used by districts in adopting their budgets in 2008 for FY 2008-09. That was the high water mark before state funding reductions began in the Spring of 2009. The chart I previously presented to you shows how the base declined to \$4,012 last year (FY 2010) and is projected to fall to \$3,937 this year and \$3,780 next year under the Governor's budget. Because the LOB is a percentage of the general fund, which is in turn the product of a district's weighted enrollment and the base budget per pupil, a reduction in the base would result in a reduction in the LOB at any given percentage. To avoid forcing districts at the legal maximum to reduce their LOB along with the general fund budget, the Legislature voted to allow districts to keep the LOB as though the base had not been reduced below the \$4,433 amount. This provision expires after the 2011-12 school year.

**SB 57** does two things. First, it removes the expiration date. KASB strongly supports this action. If the base does, in fact, fall to \$3,780 in FY 2012 as estimated under the Governor's budget, it would require an estimated \$435 million in additional state aid to return to the \$4,433 level. If that is not accomplished, many districts will be forced to reduce their LOB after cutting approximately \$278 million from their general funds statewide since 2009, a reduction of 8.6 percent. Our members are deeply concerned about the impact of these funding cuts on educational quality and outcomes, especially since educational standards under No Child Left Behind continue to increase.

The second provision of **SB 57** would allow districts to use the statutory base budget per pupil of \$4,492 as previously enacted by the Legislature as the basis for determining the LOB percentage. Like **SB 19**, this would inflate the general fund basis and allow more funding to be raised without changing the maximum percentage of LOB.

*Senate Education*  
*2-17-11*  
*Attachment 1*

We estimate that increasing that basis from \$4,433 to \$4,492 would inflate the general fund by \$39 million, providing approximately \$12 million in potential additional LOB authority, far smaller than the amount provided by the KPERS weighting proposal. Under the position adopted by our special Committee on Funding Public Education and Board of Directors, KASB could support this concept, just as we supported the KPERS proposal, provided the additional authority is equalized at a higher ratio. Under current law, this approach would also allow local boards to access the funding without additional election requirements. Although this action would require an increase in local property taxes, that decision would be made by locally elected boards. It would not be required.

Thank you for your consideration.

attest to the truth of the foregoing  
Secretary  
1-2



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**Written Testimony on SB 57  
Senate Education Committee**

Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director  
February 17, 2011

The mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas), through collaboration of member associations, is to serve, support, and develop educational leaders and to establish USA|Kansas as a significant force to improve education.

Education administrators remain committed to ensuring that each and every child in Kansas receives a quality education that will help them reach their potential and become successful, productive adults. There are 465,000 students in our public schools that we strive to impact positively every single day. As you know, Kansas students are making unprecedented academic achievement and we are on a path of continuous improvement.

USA|Kansas supports identifying opportunities to provide increased flexibility that will help maximize resources and impact districts as equitably as possible. This testimony is provided in **support of Senate Bill 57**, which amends K.S.A. 2010 Supp. 72-7433d in two ways:

- repeals the June 30, 2012 sunset date and
- changes the Base State Aid Per Pupil from \$4,433 to \$4,492 for purposes of calculating the Local Option Budget.

In 2009, the Legislature amended K.S.A. 2010 Supp. 72-6433d, allowing districts to adopt a Local Option Budget (LOB) for the 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years based on the 2008-2009 Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) amount of \$4,433.

Administrators support this "decoupling" from the general state aid, as it has allowed districts to offset the impact of reductions to the Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) and other programs. This additional flexibility has been helpful given the extraordinary budgeting challenges we face.

Although this provision is not set to expire until next year, **we encourage you to support SB 57**. Taking action now will allow school districts to plan for the future.

In closing, on behalf of education administrators, I would like to thank you for your continued support of education and for realizing the importance of investing in education. Preparing our children requires a shared commitment, collaboration, and open dialogue among all stakeholders. Thank you for being partners in education.

*Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 2*

Testimony to Senate Education Committee  
Blue Valley USD 229, Bob Vancrum, Government Affairs Specialists  
Senate Bill 57  
February 17, 2011

Chairman Schodorf and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I appreciate this opportunity to speak before you on behalf of Senate Bill 57 (SB 57). SB 57 is an important piece of legislation that can play an important role in helping school districts meet the financial challenges posed to them by the current economy and the proposed FY 2012 budget. As you know, SB 57 allows school districts to use \$4492 as the base amount on which to compute their permitted local option budget. A base amount of \$4492 is the amount that the BSAPP would have been statutorily, had the economic recession and consequent BSAPP budget reductions not occurred.

Over the past 3 years, school districts have experienced a tremendous reduction in the BSAPP as the State of Kansas works on the actions necessary to meet its requirement to balance the budget. While these reductions have not been pleasant, the reductions have been understood in light of the current economic climate. However, when there is opportunity to make-up for that lost funding, whether it is at the state or local level, those options need to be strongly considered. SB 57 is one such option that would allow some level of funding to be made up at the local level.

SB 57 is a concept that is simple to understand, easy to implement, and defensible in its concept. SB 57 merely allows school districts to calculate its LOB on a base of \$4492, the amount the Legislature set several years ago. For Blue Valley, this would mean approximately \$500,000 of additional local budget authority. As you know, the Governor has recently presented his recommended budget, and part of that plan has Blue Valley losing over \$5 million for the 2011-12 school year, according to KSDE estimates. This is in addition to the more than \$11 million that we have had to reduce and reallocate over the past two years to deal with base state aid reductions. We have cut over 100 administrative, teaching and classified positions in the district, while raising fees and reducing programs to meet our budget constraints. This has been very painful and comes at a time where we, and all other school districts, are being required to do more and more with less and less. SB 57 would serve to help meet some of the budget gap that has developed over the past 3 years and possibly stave off deeper, more harmful cuts to education.

I appreciate your consideration of SB 57. We are in full support of the legislation, and also supportive of equalization measures that would better enable some districts to utilize this funding source.

I will be happy to stand for questions.

Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 3



**Senate Education Committee  
Senator Schodorf, Chair**

**S. B. 57 – calculating LOB**

*Submitted by Diane Gjerstad  
February 17, 2011*

Madame Chair and members of the Committee:

Wichita Public Schools participated in the KASB school finance committee last summer and fall. After many long meetings and a great deal of dialogue the group agreed to support removing the sunset from the current calculation of LOB and to extend a temporary equalized local option budget authority. We support this bill as a blending of the two compromise positions.

The enhanced local option budget is important to maintain during the budgetary constraints we are under. Kansas school districts are facing tremendously difficult choices as revenue continues to decline. A bill to extend the LOB calculation provision is important to respond to the series of cuts schools anticipate.

Wichita Public Schools reductions:

10/11	School year reduction	<u>\$14 million</u>
	Plus midyear cuts in the rescission bill	5.3 million (will be covered by contingency)
11/12	Anticipated cuts	
	Additional base reduction	\$11 million
	Special education net loss	1.1
	Loss of stimulus Title funds	10
	<u>Fixed costs increases</u>	<u>3</u>
	11/12 budget reduction target	<b>-\$30.4 million</b>

If SB 57 or a bill similar is not passed, Kansas school districts will face additional cuts. But none of these bills are effective unless equalization state aid is funded. We would encourage the committee to pass the bill and support equalization state aid.

*Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 4*

**STUART J. LITTLE, Ph.D.**  
Little Government Relations, LLC

**Senate Education Committee  
Testimony on Senate Bill 57**

February 18, 2011

Chairwoman Schodorf and Members of the Committee,

I am Stuart Little, lobbyist for the Shawnee Mission School District, located in Johnson County. I appear today in support of Senate Bill 57. Shawnee Mission is the state's third largest school district with 27,827 students enrolled in 2010-11. We are like all other school districts in Kansas who have adjusted to the declining state financial support. We have been reducing teachers and administrators, increasing class size, and closing schools in the last two years. We are very aware of the challenges you face at the state and are preparing to implement additional reductions. We are managing the reductions in funding in our schools and our patrons are noticing the impact of budget cuts on the education their children receive. Senate Bill 57 is one measure that can help us manage this current budget crisis.

Districts across the state have made significant budget reductions starting in 2009-10. Several years ago, legislation allowed districts to use the 2009 BSAPP of \$4,433 for the calculation of the local option budget. The effect of this change was to allow districts to weather, at that time, what we believed was a brief downturn in state revenues and reductions in school funding. The legislation was given a three-year sunset provision. At the end of next school year, the sunset will expire and districts statewide will lose additional local revenue. Shawnee Mission School District anticipates our loss in local revenue will be between \$7 and \$10 million depending on state funding in the 2012-2013 school year. To put this in context, state funding reductions in 2009-10 were \$13.5 million. If the Governor's budget recommendations are enacted, further reductions of \$12.5 million are expected through the 2012-13 school year. The loss of up to \$10 million will exacerbate the combined \$26 million reductions the district may experience.

Although the sunset will not affect the 2011-12 school year, it is important to extend this provision during this legislative session. Districts cannot begin their budget cutting process in May after the close of the legislative session. If a decision is not made this legislative session, the district will need to make plans for another round of budget reductions in case the statute is not extended. Districts have already made significant reductions to their budgets and expect to make more. It is important to shore up this funding now so it does not become another distraction to the most important mission of educating our children.

We support your efforts to consider this bill and other options to adjust and manage the school finance formula more efficiently and fairly for all students in Kansas.

I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.



# Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

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Unified School District No. 500

## SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SB 57

February 17, 2011

Madam Chairperson, Members of the Committee:

As members of this committee are aware, the Kansas City District strongly opposes any expansion in local taxing authority. We believe that additional reliance on local property taxes is disequalizing and, therefore, injurious to Kansas children living in moderate to low income districts.

A few years ago, we did support a bill to utilize \$4,433 as the base for the purpose of LOB calculation in order to prevent a decline in LOB taxing authority. This figure, \$4,433, was the actual base before a contracting economy forced a series of cuts to school funding.

SB 57, however, applies a district's LOB percentage to an artificial base of \$4,492 –the funding level projected for the third and final year of the school bill in the 2005 court ordered school plan. Unfortunately, the third year was never implemented. Consequently, there is no basis in reality for utilizing the artificial number of \$4,492 in computing a district's LOB authority.

SB 57 is another example of a disequalizing, thinly veiled LOB increase, albeit a very creative version.

Therefore, the Kansas City, Kansas District must oppose the passage of SB 57.

Bill Reardon, KCKPS Lobbyist

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mike.petersen@senate.ks.gov



SENATOR MIKE PETERSEN

COMMITTEES  
VICE CHAIR: UTILITIES  
MEMBER: TRANSPORTATION  
ETHICS & ELECTIONS  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## SB 144

Chairman Schodorf and members of the Committee,

SB144 is the result of a constituent request. This bill requires the state Board of Education to develop standards for determining if a serious hazard exists where walking is alleged to constitute a serious safety hazard due to rail crossings or an intersection greater than 60 feet on a student's route to school. The bill allows a parent or guardian to petition the school board in writing to determine if in walking along normally traveled roads a serious hazard exists. the district may receive transportation funding for hazardous routes inside the 2.5 mile limit.

The bill requires the board to notify the KDOT district engineer and Public affairs manager of the determination. This should help keep communications open for possible inclusion in the Safe route to school program which may lead to additional federal funding. Provided in this bill is some liability protection for the board and superintendents that may arise from any action or decision rendered pursuant to this determination. This language is included in several other States hazardous route programs.

Studies by the National Traffic Safety Administration cited in the 2004 American Association of state highway and transportation officials guide book show that younger students are disproportionately involved for a number of reasons

- Young children are shorter than adults; the lower eye height provides a different field of vision.
- Children have 1/3 narrower peripheral vision than adults and are less able to determine the direction of sounds.
- Children are sometimes too small to be seen.
- The movements of children are less predictable than adults.
- Children have shorter attention spans and may grow impatient at crossings
- Children have less experience and limited knowledge of traffic laws and driving patterns
- Since children do not drive they lack the understanding of what a drivers intention might be at an intersection or crossing point

Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 7



The > 60 foot requirement comes from the distance at which a driver can see adult standing beside the road without looking over or through another vehicle. It is also the distance at which the time to cross becomes a major factor in design and safety for pedestrians crossing. The >60ft appears to be the point where the curve increases for serious injuries to occur at intersections.

I have attached photos of hazards along my constituent's route.

1. Start of walk to school outside of development. Please note bridge with no sidewalk.
2. Shows narrowing of right turn lanes to a narrow shoulder without sidewalk on bridge.
3. Shows route across ditch to approach intersection. Right turn lane is long to accommodate heavy morning traffic. This intersection is located within a ½ mile of Spirit.
4. Looking west from the corner; showing culvert on east side of intersection.
5. View looking west; showing narrow area between culvert and right hand turn lane.
6. View from west side of intersection. Note: The narrow walk area on top of the drainage culvert shown in picture 3. This perspective does not show the depth of the drainage canal. The telephone pole on the right upper area of the photo gives you an idea of the depth.
7. West side of intersection with tire tracks where the students stand to wait to cross 7 lanes of traffic.
8. Shows the narrow walk area between the railroad crossing and the street.

Thank you for your consideration,



Senator Mike Petersen

#1

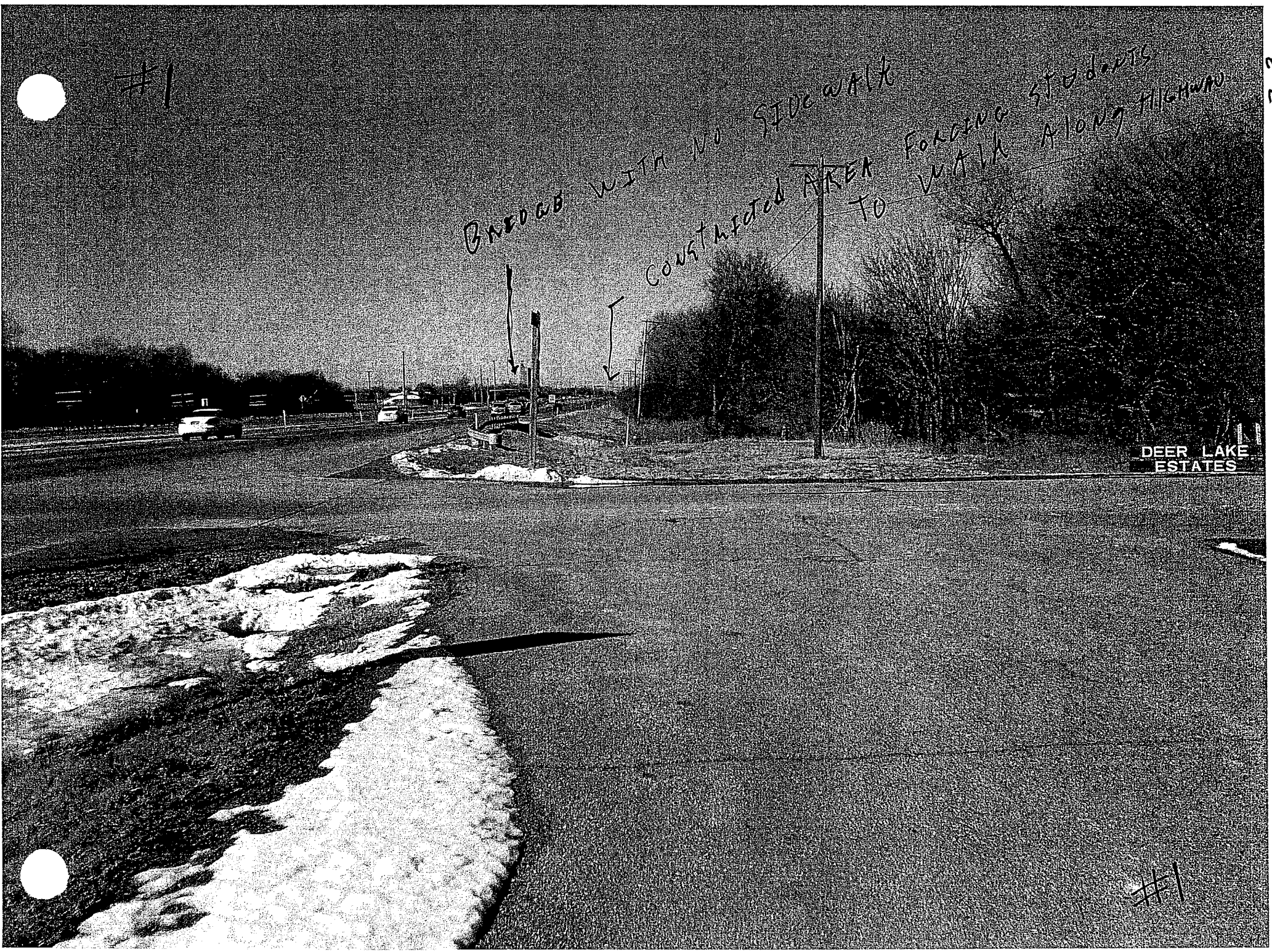
BRIDGE WITH NO SIDE WALK

CONSTRICTED AREA

FORCING STUDENTS  
TO WALK ALONG HIGHWAY

DEER LAKE  
ESTATES

#1





#2

BRIDGE OVER CREEK

#2



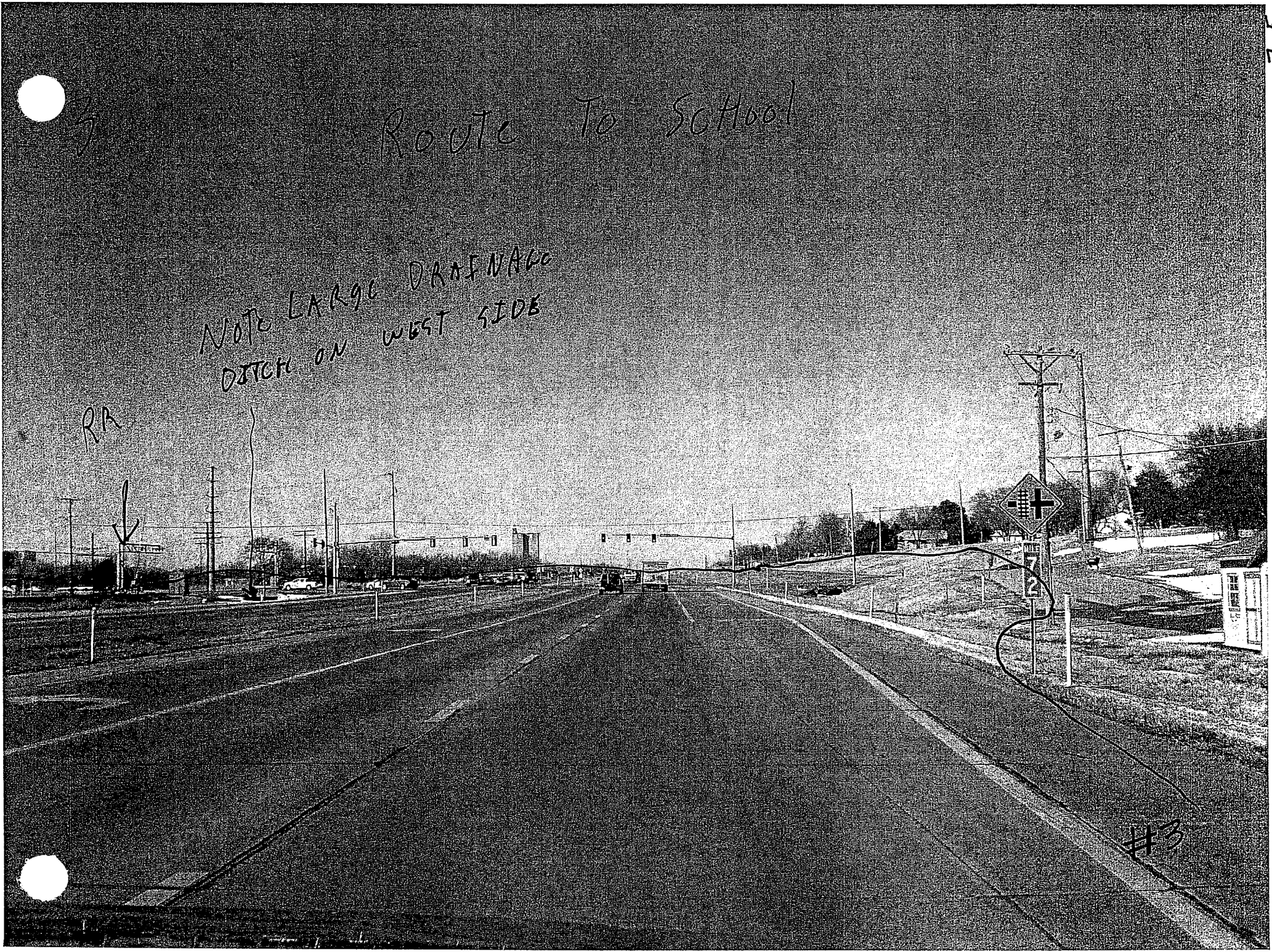


3

Route To School

NOTE LARGE DRAINAGE  
DITCH ON WEST SIDE

RR



#3

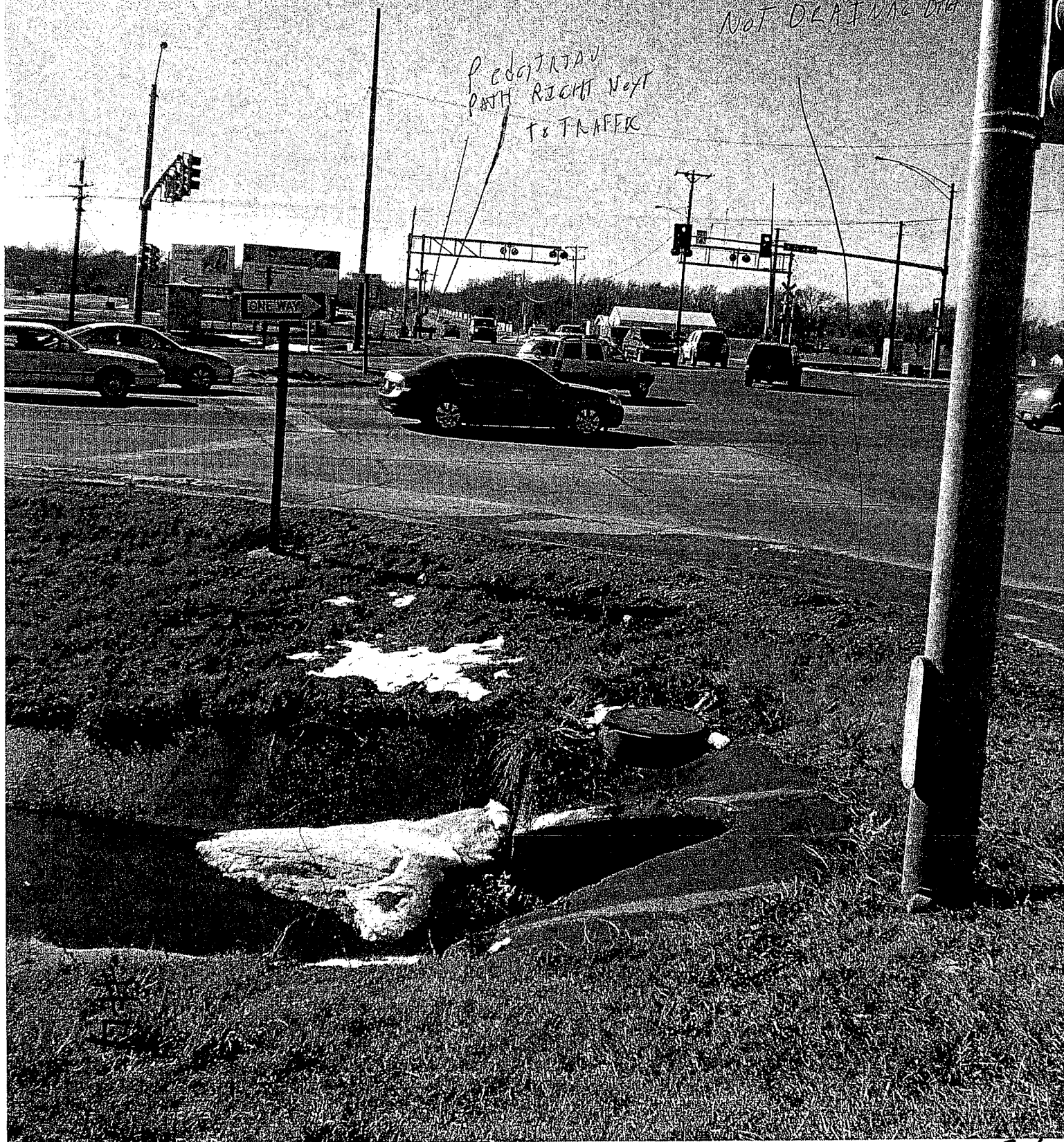


#4

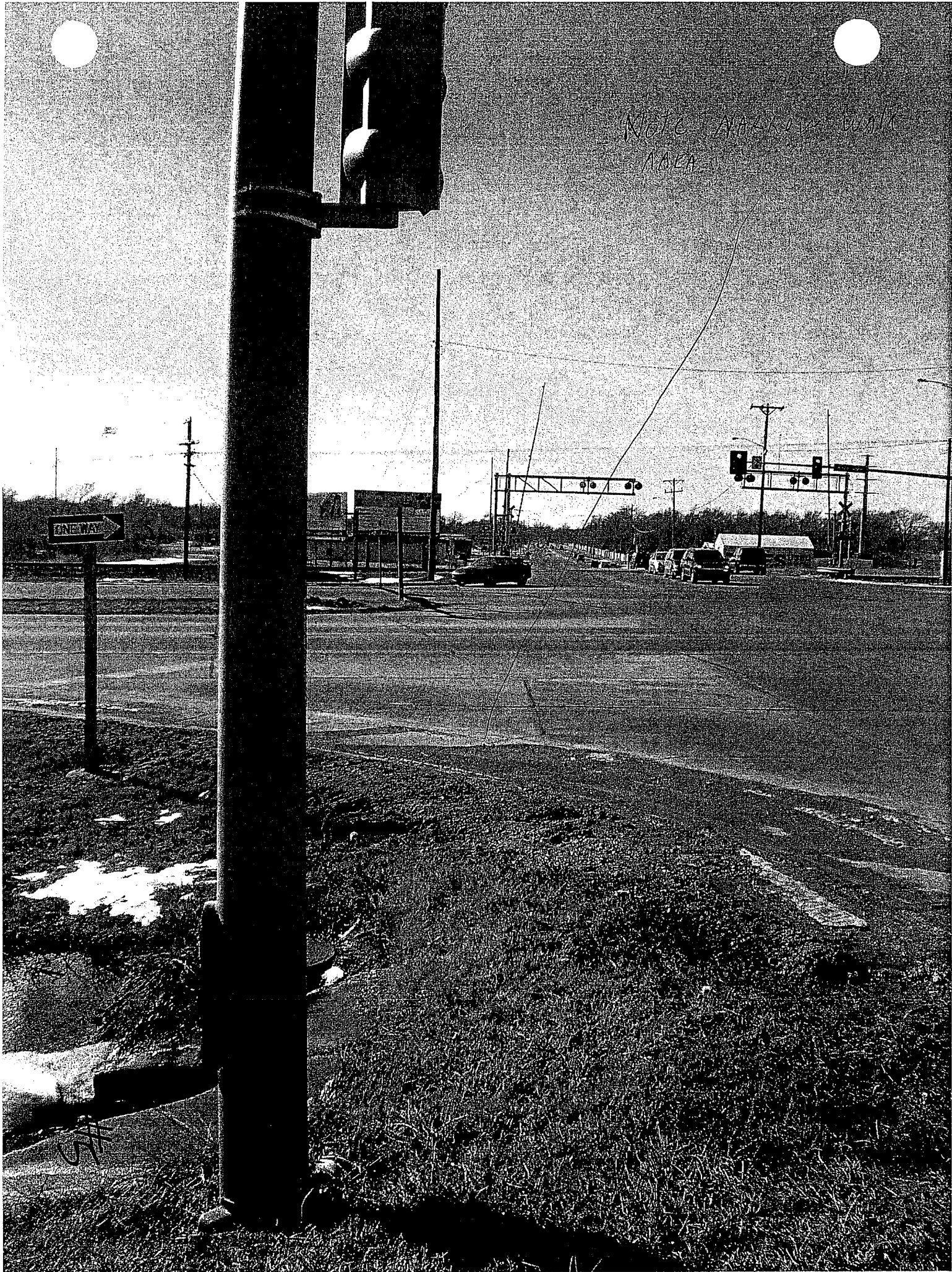
Looking West From Corner

NOT DRAINAGE DITCH

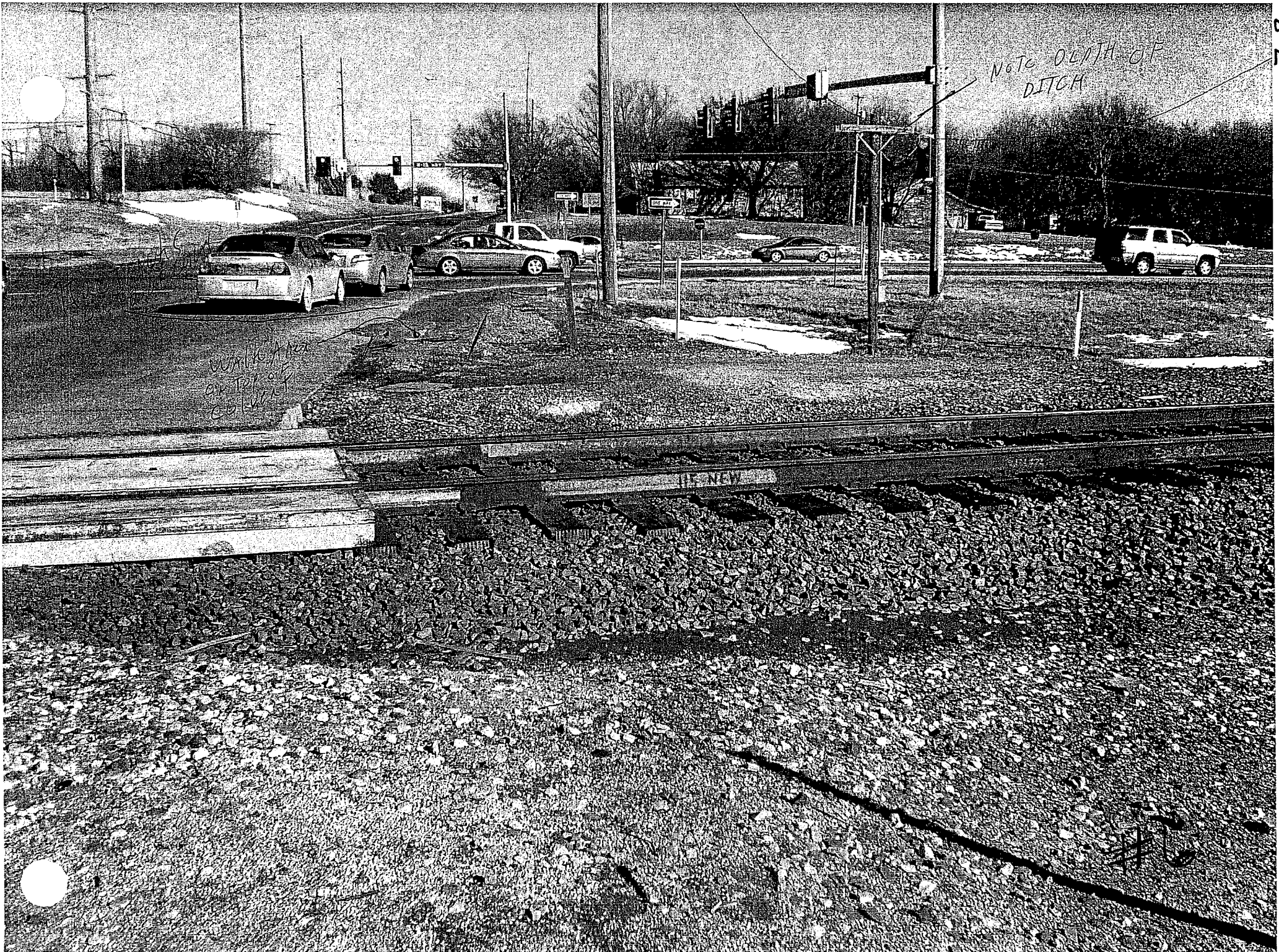
PEDESTALIAN  
PATH RIGHT NEXT  
TO TRAFFIC



NOTE: AARON BARK  
MOCA







NOTE DEPTH OF  
DITCH

DITCH AREA

#2



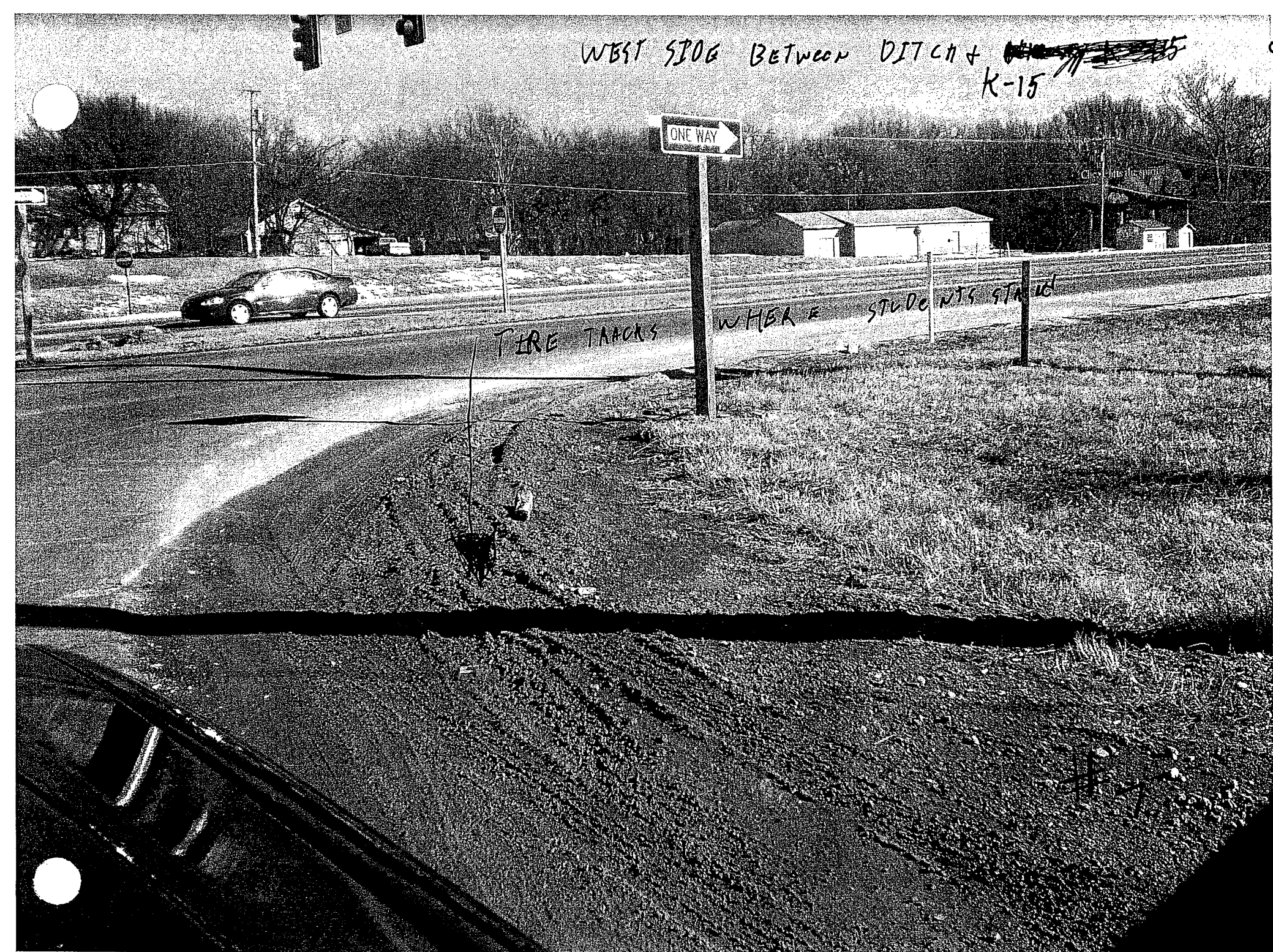
WEST SIDE BETWEEN DITCH + ~~W. 15th~~  
K-15

7-9

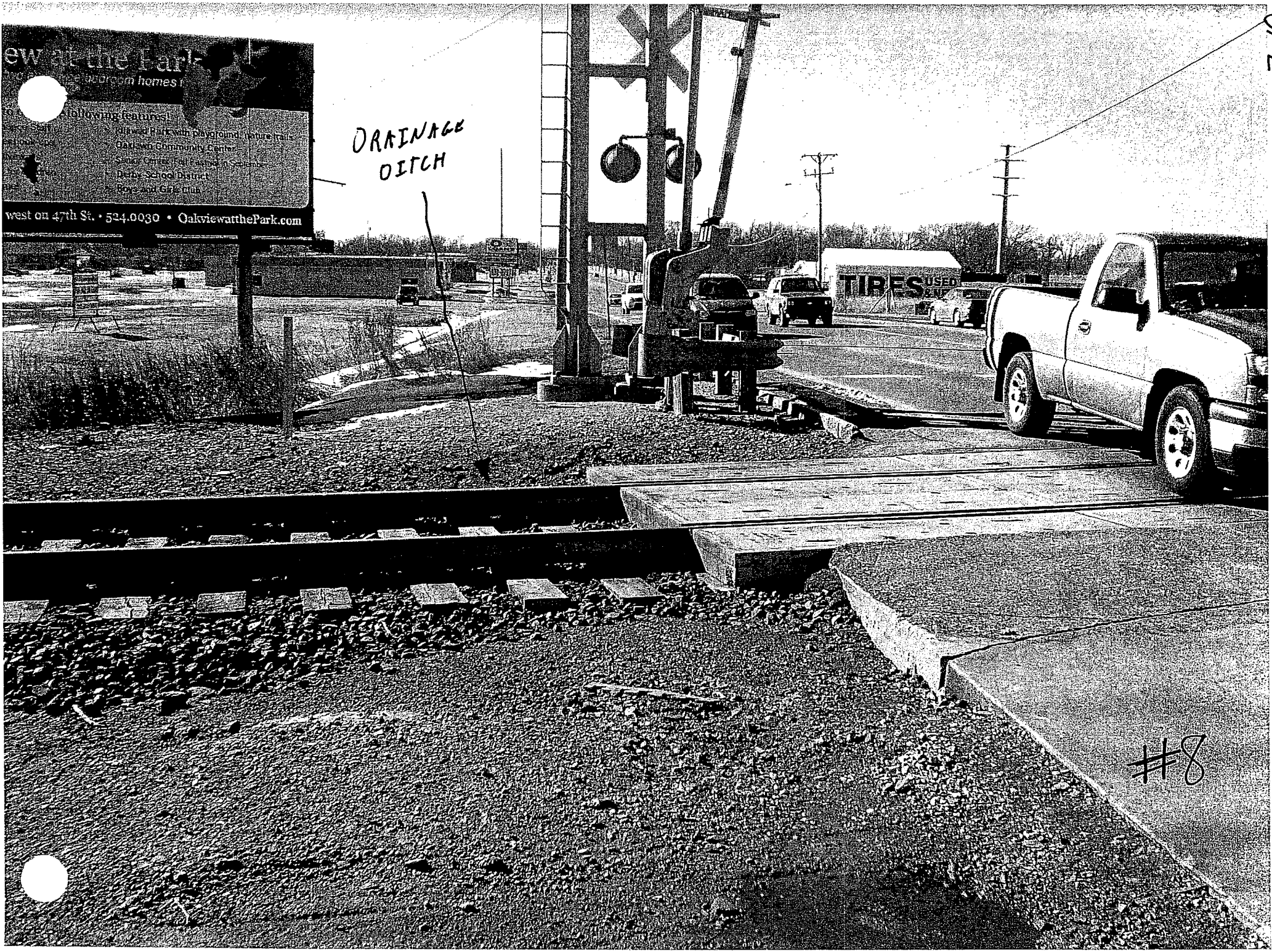
ONE WAY

TIRE TRACKS

WHERE STUDENTS STAND







ew at the Park  
e bedroom homes  
Following features:  
- 1/2 mile of walking trails  
- 100 acre park with playground, nature trails  
- Oakview Community Center  
- Senior Center  
- Derby School District  
- Boys and Girls Club  
west on 47th St. • 524.0030 • OakviewatthePark.com

DRAINAGE  
DITCH

TIRES USED

#8

To: Chairman Jean Schodorf and Members of the Education Committee  
Subject: Constituent Testimony, Senate Bill 144  
From: Andree Sisco, 5015 Jade Wichita, KS, 67216, USD 260 Derby School District

Good Evening All,

May it please the Committee, I am writing this letter in support of Senate Bill 144. I am currently President of the Oaklawn, Parent Teacher Organization and have 11 grandchildren of which five would be directly and positively affected by the passage of Senate Bill 144.

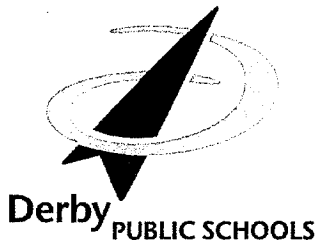
Last year the Derby School Board decided that effective the 2010-2011 school year they would no longer provide bussing to five of my grandchildren because they live within 2 ½ miles of their home school. I cannot argue the distance between the home of my son and his wife, to the elementary (Kindergarten thru 5<sup>th</sup> grades) home school of their children. The direct distance is merely blocks. However, the route to school now includes; passing K-15 highway, passing a set of railroad track, walking the length of two football fields South on K-15 and then West on 47<sup>th</sup> Street, then again two football fields South on Clifton Avenue.

According to a 2006 KDOT study, more than 50,000 vehicles travel North and South on the four lane highway known as K-15 at the intersection of 47<sup>th</sup> Street each day. In addition there are more than 25,000 vehicles that travel East and West on the four lane road known as 47<sup>th</sup> Street at the intersection of K-15 each day. Neither K-15 nor 47<sup>th</sup> Street have crosswalks or sidewalks, there is no button to push or path to follow. 47<sup>th</sup> Street is an identified snow route bringing higher levels of traffic during bad weather. Adding to the traffic is the constant of the railroad tracks the children must cross over to reach the West side of K-15. Keep in mind, the children will travel this road during the morning and evening commute hours and during times of the year when it is not light outside.

The Sedgwick County Sheriff's department has admittedly stopped adults for taking this dangerous route, and KDOT refuses to do a walk over for the same reasons. I speak on behalf of the Oaklawn Parent Teacher Organization, Parents of Deer Lakes Estates, and all other parents and grandparents affected by the unfortunate and financially driven decision to put the lives of our children and grandchildren in direct peril each and every day. Senate Bill 144 will not reinstate all bussing, but merely address the concern of safety. By passing Senate Bill 144 you can help guide school districts to ensure the safety of children by requiring bussing for dangerous routes such as the one described above. My grandchildren are just one of many, please make their lives matter. Thank you for any time and consideration.

Andree Sisco  
(316) 640-2314 Cellular  
(316) 529-1582 Home

Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 8



Craig Wilford  
Superintendent of Schools  
120 E. Washington  
Derby, KS 67037

Testimony on SB 144 in Senate Education Committee  
February 17, 2011

Craig Wilford  
Superintendent of Schools  
USD 260 Derby

My name is Craig Wilford and I serve as superintendent of the Derby Public Schools. I am providing you written testimony today in support of SB 144. USD 260 Derby includes, within the district, a long section of Highway K-15. The parts of this highway that are not within the Derby city limits are a four lane divided highway with speed limits as high as 55 mph. In addition, there is a major railroad line adjacent to the highway. For many years, the district was able to provide bus transportation for students that would have to cross these two items to get to their attendance center even if the distance was less than 2 ½ miles. The cost to the district to provide this service was approximately \$30,000. Last year, our Board of Education approved the elimination of this service along with other services totaling over \$1 million dollars. This transportation service is not currently included in the transportation weighting provided by the state. The district is supportive of the additional language in Senate Bill 144 that allows the State Board of Education to designate hazardous areas that K-12 students have to cross. We support the language in the bill that includes those students affected by the hazardous designations in the school finance formula's transportation weighting. Thank you.

To: Chairman Schodorf and members of the Committee

Please accept this testimony in support of Senate Bill 144. Current state law indicates that school districts must bus students who reside outside of 2 1/2 miles of their base school. The law does not provide any exceptions for dangerous walking conditions, nor does it mandate addressing such conditions to make them safe. With the current law children are being forced to cross four lane highways with no cross walks and dual way railroad tracks as well as walk down four lane streets that have no sidewalks. These are five and six year old children, who may be walking in the dark some mornings just to get to school on time. As budgets tighten and agencies become creative, it is now imperative for the Legislature to guide policymakers in once nominal decisions. This bill will not force all schools to bus all children, it will merely force school officials to consider safety and well being versus the bottom line.

Evan C. Watson  
524 E. 10th  
Belle Plaine, Kansas  
620-488-5237

Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 10

Chairman Schodorf and members of the Committee"

I am urging you to consider the Senate bill 144 as an urgent need for our children. Safety is of utmost importance and as of right now, the intersections these children must walk through to get to school is very dangerous and needs to be addressed. Please do not wait for an accident or worse to happen before funding this bill. We count on your support to keep our children safe.

Thank you,

Respectfully,

Janet Blanc

Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 11

To: Chairman Schodorf and members of the Committee  
From: Angee Sisco, 524 E. 10th Avenue, Belle Plaine, KS 67013

May it please the committee, please accept this testimony in support of Senate Bill 144.

Good Afternoon -

I guess the old adage holds true; people never come forward when things are going well, but certainly do when the tide turns for the worst or so they believe. Current state law mandates that school districts bus students who live outside of 2 1/2 miles from their school. However, the law does not provide any exception when that 2 1/4 mile trek to school includes highways, roads with no crosswalks or sidewalks, and even railroad tracks in some cases. Up to recent years, many school districts have made the "right" decision to consider the safety and well being of students first. This means that until recently school districts would provide bussing if the walk included health or safety conditions that made the path to school dangerous. Unfortunately as budgets have gone south, school officials are throwing all their morals out the door in lieu of a lighter and tighter ship. It is imperative that you address this concern. Senate Bill 144 will force school officials to consider the safety of the path as the primary indicator to whether or not bussing will be provided. It will allow the creation of a definition of "dangerous conditions" so that the decision is not arbitrarily made on a number rather than safety. Please vote in support of this bill and in support of the health and safety of our states school children.

In a final thought - picture a five and six year old crossing a highway that sees more than 75,000 cars in every direction each day - add to that no crosswalks - add to that 6:50a on a winter day (yep its kinda dark out) - add to that a dual lane railroad track. Kinda scary? It's real. It's crazy.

Thank you for any consideration.

Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 12

I would like to send a letter in support of keeping our kids safe by providing busing to those in need but not covered by school districts policies. Thank you.

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Tara Nussbaum  
ESL Teacher  
Oaklawn & Cooper

Senate Education  
2-17-11  
Attachment 13



## SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS

SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
ROBERT HINSHAW  
Sheriff

141 WEST ELM \* WICHITA, KANSAS 67203 \* TELEPHONE: (316) 660-3900 \* FAX: (316) 660-3248

February 16, 2011

Chairman Schodorf and members of the Committee

The Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office supports the changes for KSA 72-6411 and KSA 72-8302 as laid out by Senate Bill 144. As an example of budget cuts from this past year, a local school district decided to discontinue school bus service to a neighborhood within the 2½ mile range of the student's school, consistent with the current statutes. With that bus route gone, those students are now forced to cross K-15 highway and the Burlington Northern- Santa Fe Railroad tracks twice a day going to and coming from school. These changes would allow school boards to take into account particularly dangerous conditions faced by children that would no longer be eligible for busing. The intersection described herein is a four lane divided highway that intersects a heavily traveled four lane county road, in addition to the railroad that parallels the highway.

An eleven year old traffic count put vehicular traffic at 26,400 vehicles a day on K-15 which is a multilane highway between Derby and Wichita. For northbound traffic, there are two northbound lanes and a dedicated left turn lane. For southbound, there are two southbound through traffic lanes. Traffic on 47<sup>th</sup> street south was 18,335 vehicles a day. 47<sup>th</sup> street is also a 4 lane roadway with dedicated left and right turn lanes.

Also at issue here is crossing the double railroad tracks that belong to the Burlington Northern- Santa Fe Railroad. This is a main railroad line for north-south trains and is used by the Burlington Northern- Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroads in this area. There are at least twenty trains a day that travel on these tracks.

Students going from their homes on the east side of K-15 highway to their school on the west side of the highway /tracks must traverse these hazards every day. Certainly the potential for a child to be hurt while going to school is there. The Sheriff's Office supports minimizing those risks.

Major Michael Oliver  
Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office  
Wichita, KS.

<http://www.sedgwickcounty.org/sheriff>

*Senate Education*  
*2-17-11*  
*Attachment 14*