

#### MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760 301-495-4500, www.mncppc.org MCPB ITEM NO. 2 / 6-22-06

June 2, 2006

#### **MEMORANDUM**

TO:

Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA:

Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor DKH

Transportation Planning

TROM:

Scott A. James, Planner/Coordinator

Transportation Planning

SUBJECT:

DPWT Docket No. AB 684

Abandonment of the segment of Woodmont Avenue between Bethesda Avenue

and Leland Street in Bethesda Central Business District

Bethesda Central Business District

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's review of the subject abandonment case (AB 684), pertaining to the abandonment of a public street located in the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). The abandonment request is related to the application for rezoning #G-850 and Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) Mandatory Referral # 06806-DPWT-1 for the proposed redevelopment of the surface parking lots 31 and 31A being reviewed concurrently by the Planning Board.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board support approval of the request to abandon the subject right-of-way in downtown Bethesda with the following conditions:

- 1. The proposed abandonment becomes effective with the recordation of the record plat establishing dedication of right-of-way for the relocated Woodmont Avenue between Bethesda Avenue and Leland Street. The precise area of dedication will be determined by the Planning Board as a condition of a future preliminary plan review for the proposed redevelopment of Lot 31 and Lot 31A, and will include:
  - a. A minimum of 80 feet of right-of-way across the property to accommodate the relocation of Woodmont Avenue on a new alignment between Bethesda Avenue and Leland Street.

b. Sufficient width to accommodate necessary improvements at the intersections with Bethesda Avenue and with Leland Street, as defined by the Planning Board as a condition of preliminary plan approval.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The subject abandonment comes under the review of the County Council since the public right-of-way provides local and through access to properties along Woodmont Avenue and within the Bethesda CBD. The abandonment is therefore proceeding via the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), per Section 49-62(a) of the Montgomery County Code. DPWT Docket No. AB 684, describing the proposed abandonment, is included as an attachment.

Woodmont Avenue was dedicated as a public street with connection to Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355) at two points, north and south of the Bethesda CBD. Woodmont Avenue operates as an alternative route for southbound traffic through Bethesda. Northbound traffic along Woodmont Avenue is redirected east and west at the intersection of Hampden Lane in downtown Bethesda.

According to the applicant's development proposal defined in the submission for zoning case G-850 and mandatory referral number 06806-DPWT-1, the current alignment would be abandoned and incorporated into a mixed-use development of 245 residential units (with 300 on-site private parking spaces), approximately 40,000 square feet of retail space and a structured underground public parking garage of ±1200 spaces. A new dedication of 80 feet of right-of-way would allow for Woodmont Avenue to be shifted westward across the property, increasing the available surface area on the eastern parcel (currently the site of parking lot 31A). There would be two points of access to the parking garage: one from Woodmont Avenue within the realigned roadway and one on Bethesda Avenue east of its intersection with Woodmont Avenue. Both entrances are proposed as full movement driveways (with left turns allowed into and out of the driveways).

#### **FINDINGS**

Per Section 49-63(e) of the Montgomery County Code, staff recommends approval of the proposed abandonment of the segment of Woodmont Avenue between Bethesda Avenue and Leland Street with the finding that the subject right-of-way may be abandoned with the provision of an equivalent right-of-way, of 80-foot width to the west of the current alignment and to serve the same application of the original roadway for pedestrian and vehicular access to Bethesda Avenue and Leland Street.

The staff finding is based upon the assessment that the subject right-of-way is to be incorporated into a comprehensive redevelopment of public parking lots 31 and 31A, with a reconstruction of pedestrian and vehicular access across the property. The abandonment of the current roadway, with concurrent rededication of a new alignment as proposed, will not create any landlocked parcels. There is a need for north-south pedestrian and vehicular access in this location as identified in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan. The associated development proposal addresses this need with the dedication of an equivalent right-of-way for the relocated Woodmont Avenue between Bethesda Avenue and Leland Street, including such intersection improvements as may be determined at the time of subdivision.

SAJ:gw Attachments

cc: Michael Cassedy

Shahriar Etemadi

John Carter

Marilyn Clemens

mmo to MCPB re AB684 Lot 31

LINOWES | BLOCHER LLP

SCETT 3/24

March 22, 2006



C. Robert Dalrymple 301.961.5208 bdalrymple@linowes-law.com

The Honorable Douglas M. Duncan County Executive Montgomery County, Maryland 101 Monroe Street, Second Floor Rockville, Maryland 20850

Hand Delivered

Mr. Michael S. Cassedy Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation Division of Capital Development 101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor Rockville, Maryland 20850

Hand Delivered

Re: Petition for Closure/Abandonment of Woodmont Avenue, south of Bethesda Avenue, Bethesda Central Business District

Dear Messrs. Duncan and Cassedy:

On behalf of Lot 31 Associates LLC, and pursuant to Section 49-62, et seq. of the Montgomery County Code (the "Code"), we hereby petition Montgomery County for the closure and abandonment of a section of Woodmont Avenue located south of its intersection with Bethesda Avenue in the Bethesda Central Business District. A detailed statement in support of the closure and abandonment is attached hereto, but by way of summary the proposed closure/abandonment is necessary to permit the relocation of Woodmont Avenue in this location slightly to the west of its existing location. This closure/abandonment and relocation of Woodmont Avenue will accomplish two significant public purposes:



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- 1) It will make the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue operate more safely and efficiently for both pedestrians and vehicles, a goal identified in the approved and adopted Bethesda CBD Sector Plan; and
- 2) It will allow for optimal vehicular ingress and egress to the new public parking garage to be developed on existing Public Parking Lots 31 and 31A (located on either side of Woodmont Avenue) by permitting two points of ingress and egress, one on Bethesda Avenue and one on relocated Woodmont Avenue, at locations removed from the new intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue.

Lot 31 Associates LLC is the development partner of Montgomery County in the joint public/private redevelopment of Lots 31 and 31A. The redevelopment project will include the new County parking garage (below ground) and an above ground mixed use, residential and retail, development. Because the closure and right-of-way abandonment is a necessary element to the relocation of Woodmont Avenue as part of this redevelopment project, and because the processes are ongoing for the rezoning of Lots 31 and 31A and mandatory referral review for the proposed public parking garage, we are requesting that this Petition for Closure/Abandonment be processed by the County Executive as quickly as possible in order to permit a quick consideration of this matter by the Montgomery County Council. The County is already investing substantial resources in the design of the public parking garage that envision the



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relocation of Woodmont Avenue, so it is again in the public interest to facilitate the review of this Petition as quickly as the statutes regulating this process allow.

Pursuant to a previously issued agency authorization, Lot 31 Associates LLC is authorized to submit this Petition which will impact the County-owned Lots 31 and 31A. Pursuant to Section 49-62(c) of the Code, we are enclosing a filing fee in the amount of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00). This filing fee is attached to the copy provided to Mr. Cassedy. Pursuant to Section 49-62(d) of the Code, please be advised that the County is the only owner of property abutting the right-of-way proposed to be closed and abandoned; accordingly, no notice by certified mail pursuant to Section 49-62(d) of the Code is required. We request that the Department of Public Works and Transportation provide the posting of a notice of this application and publish notice, both as required by Section 49-62(e) of the Code.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and please advise if additional information is necessary to process this Petition or if you have any questions pertaining to the request.

Very truly yours,

LINOWES AND BLOCHER LLP

C. Robert Dalrymple

On behalf of Lot 31 Associates LLC

Enclosures

# AND BLOCHER LLP

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cc: Mr. Al Roshdieh

Mr. Rick Siebert

Mr. Jefferey Riese

Mr. Stephen Nash

Ms. Heidi Metzger

Diane Schwartz-Jones, Esquire

Ms. Elizabeth Davison

Ms. Lisa Rother

Ms. Rose Krasnow

Mr. John Carter

Mr. Daniel Janousek

Mr. Shahriar Etemadi

Mr. Douglas Firstenberg

Mr. Lamont Hoffman

Mr. Kevin Cosimano

Mr. Josh Dix

Anne C. Martin, Esquire

# APPLICATION TO CLOSE AND ABANDON RIGHT-OF-WAY

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 49-62 et seq. of the Montgomery County Code, Lot 31 Associates LLC (the "Applicant") requests the closure and abandonment of the existing road and right-of-way constituting Woodmont Avenue south of Bethesda Avenue and north of the intersections of Leland Street and Miller Avenue in the Bethesda Central Business District (the area of the proposed abandonment is shown in black on the tax map excerpt attached hereto as Exhibit "A"). The requested road closure and right-of-way abandonment is sought in conjunction with the proposed redevelopment of Public Parking Lot 31 ("Lot 31") and Public Parking Lot 31A ("Lot 31A") (together, the "Properties") by the Applicant in joint public/private partnership with Montgomery County. The proposed redevelopment of the Properties will include a below grade public parking garage containing 1200± public parking spaces (actual amount to be determined by the County) and an above grade mixed-use, residential and retail project with appropriate amenities and open spaces (together, the "Redevelopment Project"). As part of the Redevelopment Project, it is proposed that Woodmont Avenue south of Bethesda Avenue will be relocated slightly to the west to improve the operations and safety of the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue and to permit optimal means of ingress and egress to the new public parking garage away from the intersection. The closure of Woodmont Avenue in this location and the abandonment of the existing right-of-way is necessary to facilitate this relocation.

The Applicant was selected by Montgomery County to be the County's development partner for the Redevelopment Project after a very thorough and competitive selection process in response to a request for proposal ("RFP") issued by the County. The RFP specified numerous

mandates for a responsive proposal, including the construction of the public parking garage and several other design/build requirements, the provision of a significant affordable housing component in the future residential development of the air rights, and compliance with the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan among others. There were several respondents to the RFP, with several different proposals for relocating Woodmont Avenue and reconfiguring the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue in order to make feasible the construction of the large public parking garage while also permitting a development parcel that could sustain a private mixed-use development above the public parking garage. In selecting the Applicant to be its development partner, the County's selection committee determined that the Applicant's proposal to relocate Woodmont Avenue to the west provided several critical benefits for the vehicular and pedestrian system in the immediate area: 1) maintaining Woodmont Avenue as key connection to Wisconsin Avenue, 2) creating two means of ingress and egress to the new public parking garage away from the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue (one access to the east on Bethesda Avenue and another access to the south on relocated Woodmont Avenue), and 3) creating a safer pedestrian environment for the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue, as recommended in the Approved and Adopted Bethesda CBD Sector Plan (the "Sector Plan"). These three components of the redevelopment plan were the foundation of the Committee selecting this proposal as the best redevelopment alternative.

The right-of-way for which road closure and abandonment is sought is described by metes and bounds on Exhibit "B" attached hereto. As part of the entitlement processes for the Redevelopment Project, a new 80-foot wide public right-of-way (consistent with the Sector Plan)

will be created by appropriate legal document prior to or concurrent with the disposition of the abandoned right-of-way (the approximate location of the new right-of-way is shown on Exhibit "C" hereto, and is shown overlaid with the proposed abandoned right-of-way on Exhibit "D" hereto). The relocated Woodmont Avenue will thereafter be constructed in accordance with County road standards and in compliance with the streetscape recommendations set forth in the Sector Plan as part of the Redevelopment Project.

Due to the sheer volume of the proposed public parking garage (1,200+/- spaces in an underground parking structure), it became readily apparent early on in the RFP selection process that the public parking garage would need to extend beneath the entire Properties, including extending beneath existing Woodmont Avenue. With this essentially as a known factor for the Redevelopment Project, and with the established project goals of providing safety enhancements to the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue (as set forth in the Sector Plan) and providing optimal access to the public parking garage (with two separate means of ingress and egress being an absolute requirement), the relocation of Woodmont Avenue to the west logically evolved. By shifting the right-of-way and road to the west, the "necking down" of the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue creates a much better pedestrian crossing experience by shortening the crossing distances while also making the intersection safer from an operational standpoint for vehicles by shrinking the overall width of the intersection. The relocation of the Woodmont Avenue right-of-way and the road also permits the establishment of a means of ingress and egress on Bethesda Avenue (east of the intersection) and a separate means of ingress and egress along Woodmont Avenue (south of the intersection), both at distances removed from the intersection (thereby minimizing the impacts of vehicles accessing

the public parking garage on the intersection). Either of these two objectives (intersection safety and garage accessibility) by itself is a legitimate public purpose for supporting the closure and abandonment of the right-of-way to allow for the resulting relocation of Woodmont Avenue; taken together, they are an overwhelming justification for granting the requested closure and abandonment.

The Applicant and the County are currently completing negotiations of a general development agreement (GDA) for the Redevelopment Project. By agency authorization granted by the County, the Applicant has also submitted an application for a local map amendment to rezone the entire Properties to the TS-M (Transit Station-Mixed Use) zone to facilitate the Redevelopment Project. The public parking garage is required to be the subject of a mandatory referral application by the County. Accordingly, the private development above the surface of the Properties will be controlled and regulated by the proposed rezoning of the Properties to the TS-M zone, including concurrent approval of a development plan and subsequent approval of a preliminary plan of subdivision and site plan approval, while the subsurface public parking structure will be regulated pursuant to the mandatory referral process.

Ultimately, it is the mutual desire and intention of the Applicant and the County to create a single lot of record for the Properties, including the abandoned right-of-way, but to have that single lot of record encumbered by a volumetric right-of-way easement establishing in perpetuity the relocated public right-of-way "cube" for Woodmont Avenue. It is currently anticipated that the right-of-way easement would be recorded against the Properties (thus establishing the new right-of-way) by the County prior to the County's conveyance of any of the Properties, including the abandoned existing Woodmont Avenue, to the Applicant. Upon creating the new right-of-

way for Woodmont Avenue, the record plat creating the Properties as a single lot of record would then be recorded among the Land Records, subject to the new right-of-way easement. It is proposed that the final act of abandonment of the existing right-of-way would be the recordation of the plat creating the entire property as a single lot of record, including incorporating the abandoned right-of-way into the lot of record.

Consistent with the above, it is requested that the requested road closure and right-of-way abandonment be approved by resolution of the County Council conditioned upon the following:

- 1. Approval by the County of fully engineered construction drawings for the construction of relocated Woodmont Avenue;
- 2. Provision by the Applicant of sufficient and appropriate guarantees through performance bond, letter of credit or other surety acceptable to the County guaranteeing the completion of construction of relocated Woodmont Avenue (with related streetscape and other typical improvements within the public right-of-way);
- 3. Approval by the Montgomery County Planning Board of a preliminary plan of subdivision for the Properties (including the existing right-of-way being abandoned and the relocation of Woodmont Avenue);
- 4. Recordation among the Montgomery County Land Records of a volumetric public right-of-way easement creating an 80-foot wide public right-of-way "cube" for relocated Woodmont Avenue; and
- 5. Recordation of a subdivision plat creating the Properties as a single lot of record subject to the easement creating the relocated Woodmont Avenue right-of-way

and incorporating the abandonment of the existing Woodmont Avenue right-ofway.

In this manner, the ability to preserve Woodmont Avenue as a thru public street south of Bethesda Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue is preserved under all circumstances, with the ability to relocate Woodmont Avenue fully guaranteed for completion. Naturally, all required public easements and other typical reservations within public rights-of-way will be adequately addressed through the subdivision process.

Pursuant to Section 49-63(e) of the Montgomery County Code, the requested closure and abandonment of this portion of Woodmont Avenue right-of-way is appropriate in that the existing right-of-way, once replaced with the new right-of-way and relocated road, is no longer necessary for present public use or anticipated public use in the foreseeable future. By conditioning the abandonment on having the relocated Woodmont Avenue right-of-way created and the road fully bonded for construction, the current function of Woodmont Avenue as a public street is guaranteed to be maintained (except for the period of closure while construction of the relocated road is underway). In the event that the conditions of abandonment are not satisfied, the existing right-of-way and roadbed will remain. On the other hand, in the event that the conditions of abandonment are fulfilled, Woodmont Avenue will be relocated to the west with the resulting public benefits as described herein. With the creation of the new right-of-way and the guarantee of completion of the relocated road, the old (existing) road and right-of-way are no longer necessary for present or anticipated future public use. Accordingly, it is appropriate for that right-of-way to be incorporated into the Properties for purposes of the Redevelopment Project.

While the proposed closure and abandonment of the existing Woodmont Avenue rightof-way is being sought in conjunction with the efforts of the Applicant and the County to pursue
the Redevelopment Project, the relocation of the road as proposed is in the public interest
irrespective of the Redevelopment Project. In fact, while the Sector Plan does not specifically
envision the Redevelopment Project occurring as it is now being proposed (as the Sector Plan did
not envision the joinder of Lots 31 and Lot 31A with a public parking garage extending in a
continuous fashion beneath both parcels, including the existing road), the Sector Plan does
expressly recommend that the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue be
modified to provide for safer and more efficient operation for pedestrians and vehicles.

Accordingly, independent of the public benefits created by optimal access to the proposed public
parking garage resulting from relocated Woodmont Avenue, relocating Woodmont Avenue (and
thus abandoning the existing right-of-way) fulfills the objectives and recommendations of the
Sector Plan to provide for a better functioning intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont
Avenue.

For all of the reasons stated herein, the Applicant requests that the County Council adopt a resolution closing to public use and abandoning the County's right to use the described section of Woodmont Avenue south of Bethesda Avenue in the Bethesda CBD, subject to the conditions identified above. The Applicant further requests that the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation take all necessary actions to allow the soonest possible hearing by the County Executive or the County Executive's designee to permit the County Executive to expeditiously forward to the County Council a recommendation for approval of this closure/abandonment. The proposed closure/abandonment and resulting relocation of

Woodmont Avenue, all as described herein, is in the overwhelming public interest to permit a safer and more efficient road and pedestrian network in this location, in addition to facilitating the construction of a public parking garage to serve the parking needs of the Bethesda Parking Lot District.

Respectfully submitted,

LINOWES AND BLOCHER LLP

By

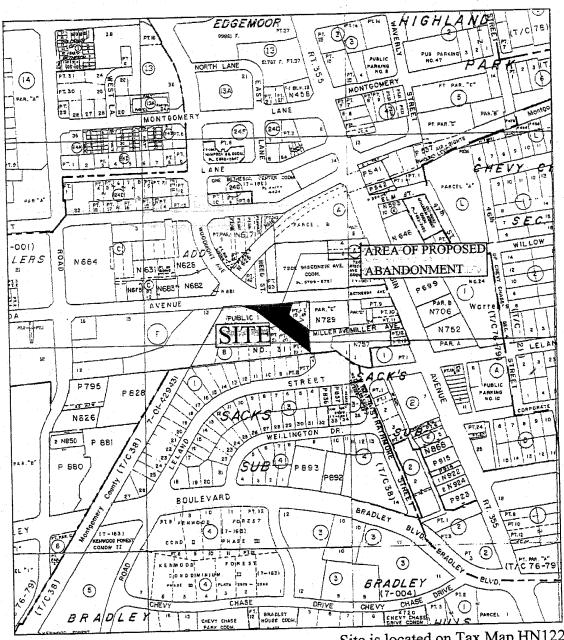
C. Robert Dalrymple

On behalf of Lot 31 Associates LLC

By:

Anne C. Martin

On behalf of Lot 31 Associates LLC



Site is located on Tax Map HN122

PROPOSED LOT 31 RIGHT-OF-WAY ABANDONMENT LOCATION ON TAX MAP

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898-A TPO

DESCRIPTION OF
PART OF THE RIGHT OF WAY
OF WOODMONT AVENUE TO BE ABANDONED
BETHESDA (NO. 7) ELECTION DISTRICT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Being all of the right of way area of Woodmont Avenue (80 foot wide right of way) as established on Montgomery County Maryland Department of Transportation Right of Way Plat File Number 155; also being part of the property acquired by Montgomery County, Maryland, a Body Corporate and Politic, from Eisinger Mill and Lumber Co. Inc., a Body Corporate, by a deed dated February 18, 1957 and recorded among the Land Records of Montgomery County, Maryland in Liber 2312 at Folio 134 and being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning for the same at a PK nail set in a concrete expansion joint at the northwesterly end of the westerly or North 74° 58' 02" West, 59.02 foot right of way line of Woodmont Avenue (80 foot wide right of way) as established on Montgomery County Maryland Department of Transportation Right of Way Plat File Number 155; thence running with the northerly or North 87° 25' 30" East, 246.48 foot line as shown on said Plat File Number 155, with part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> or South 87° 25' 20" West, 411.52 foot line, reversed, as described in the aforesaid deed recorded in Liber 2312 at folio 134 and binding on the southerly right of way line of Bethesda Avenue the following course and distance

- North 87° 29' 11" East, 246.48 feet to a drill hole set in concrete; thence running with the easterly right of way lines of Woodmont Avenue as shown on said Plat File Number 155 the following 3 courses and distances
- 2. South 21° 12' 18" West, 62.11 feet to a drill hole set in concrete; thence

Job No. 898-A

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- 3. South 51° 07' 09" East, 109.88 feet to a nail set in a concrete expansion joint; thence
- 4. South 72° 56' 29" East, 22.38 feet to a PK nail set in a brick joint; thence running with part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or North 02° 34' 40" West, 255.97 foot line, reversed, as described in the aforesaid deed recorded in Liber 2312 at folio 134 and binding on part of the westerly line of Parcel C as shown on a plat of subdivision entitled "PARCEL C J.H. MILLERS ADDITION TO BETHESDA" and recorded among the aforesaid Land Records as Plat Number 17951 and crossing Woodmont Avenue the following course and distance
- 5. South 02° 32' 48" East, 118.75 feet to a rebar and cap set at the easterly end of the southerly or South 85° 08' 33" West, 4.89 foot right of way line of Woodmont Avenue as shown on said Plat File Number 155; thence running with said line and binding on the 1st or North 85° 10' 20" East, 596.51 foot line described in the aforesaid deed recorded in Liber 2312 at folio 134, reversed, the following course and distance
- 6. South 85° 12' 12" West, 4.89 feet to a rebar and cap set; thence running with the westerly right of way lines of Woodmont Avenue as shown on said Plat File Number 155 the following 3 courses and distances
- 7. North 02° 33' 19" West, 5.46 feet to a drill hole set in concrete; thence
- 8. North 51° 07' 09" West, 351.83 feet to a drill hole set in concrete; thence

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9. North 74° 54' 21" West, 59.02 feet to the Point of Beginning; containing 27372 square feet or 0.62838 acres of land.

This description is in conformance with a boundary survey performed by Rodgers Consulting, Inc., September - December, 2005, Job No. 898-A and is in the meridian of the Maryland Coordinate System.

The undersigned, being a licensed surveyor, personally prepared or was in responsible charge of the preparation and the survey work reflected in this metes and bounds description, in compliance with the requirements set forth in "COMAR" Title 09, Subtitle 13, Chapter 06, Regulation .12.



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