



# **BEACON HILL AREA**

**NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## **NON-RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS**

# BEACON HILL AREA

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICT



### NON-RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS

The Non-residential Design Standards found in this section of the *Beacon Hill Area NCD Plan* are focused on the interior commercial areas found along W. Hildebrand Ave., Blanco Rd. and Fredericksburg Rd. One of the particularly charming characteristics of this area is a pedestrian-oriented commercial center found along a northern section of Blanco Rd., formerly known as *Midtown on Blanco*. While other non-residential areas maintain some the characteristics of the *Midtown* area, much of the commercial areas lack important features, such as a consistent use of awnings, accentuating and articulating storefronts and business entries, and orienting buildings and exterior spaces to the pedestrian that have made the *Midtown* area a unique area in this neighborhood and in San Antonio.

The intent of the design standards is not to replicate the successful buildings in other areas of the neighborhood, but to replicate the spatial arrangement of buildings, parking areas, pedestrian areas and building configurations that are successful today and desired by the community for the future.

The design standards also delineate a specific area along IH-10 West that is entirely different in character. The area is a group of parcels situated between IH-10 and the Union Pacific Railroad on the western edge of the NCD Area (see Map right). The area is primarily zoned for industrial uses and is likely to experience more intense commercial development than that of the interior commercial areas in the future, should the existing industrial and quasi-industrial uses cease to exist.



Map of area exempted from certain Non-Residential Design Standards

With this estimation in mind, these areas have been exempted from several of the design standards so as to not impose standards that would be inconsistent with the existing development or inhibit future commercial development. **Required design standards for the properties in this area can be found on Pages 22, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31 and 34 of this section.**



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### NOTES:

The commercial areas found within the Beacon Hill NCD Area contain few residential dwelling units, however the Midtown Neighborhoods Plan (October 2000) encourages an increase in mixed-use development, which includes increased residential density along these corridors. The mixed-use configuration with small-scale commercial development on first floors with second and higher floors containing residential uses is highly recommended.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Commercial uses should occupy the ground floor and when feasible, residential uses should occupy the second or more floors of a commercial structure. Increased residential density throughout the commercial corridors is encouraged.

## DENSITY

**No applicable design standards**



*Examples of mixed-use development depicting scale and density desired in this district*



*Mixed-use development elevation with appropriate residential density and commercial use*

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### LOT SIZE/COVERAGE

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

Parcels shall not be aggregated to a size of one (1) acre or greater.



Parcels with industrial zoning located within the boundary of W. Hildebrand Ave. to the north, the most western Union Pacific Railroad in the area to the east and IH-10 to the west are not required to comply with the standard.



*Example of desired scale of development (left and above left)*



*Examples of undesired and non-conforming commercial development (left and above left)*

#### NOTES:

The existing character of the primary commercial corridors is identified by typical lot sizes of less than ½ acre.

The commercial developments east of the western-most Union Pacific Railroad have a smaller scale and are more pedestrian-oriented. The design standard limiting the parcel size in commercial areas is intended to maintain that pedestrian-oriented character.

Some more intense uses, generally industrial do exist on multi-acre parcels, primarily on the western periphery on the district along IH-10.



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### NOTES:

The commercial structures along Blanco and Fredericksburg Roads maintain shallow setbacks that bring the buildings close to the street creating a street edge that is more inviting to the passer-by than typical commercial development in other parts of the city. Maintaining the street edge is the focus of the setback standards. Avoiding the typical suburban condition of street, sidewalk, parking lot, building is the primary goal of the setback requirements. The design standards also allow for head-in parking along the street where it exists on the block faces in the commercial areas.

Median setbacks shall be calculated using the same mathematical operation used for calculating front setbacks for residential properties ( see Page 6, Residential Design Standards ).

The industrial areas along IH-10 are significantly different in character than the interior commercial areas and lend themselves to the more intense commercial development typically found along major thoroughfares.

## SETBACKS

### DESIGN STANDARDS

Buildings shall maintain a front setback between 0' and 10% of the median setback of the adjacent structures and shall not exceed 25 feet.

Any structure constructed on a corner lot shall be within 10% of the median setback of its adjacent structures along the front and reverse front setbacks.

Parcels with industrial zoning located within the boundary of W. Hildebrand Ave. to the north, the most western Union Pacific Railroad in the area to the east and IH-10 to the west are not required to comply with the standard.



*Aerial view of Fredericksburg Road, depicting the shallow setbacks, and rear parking configurations.*



*Aerial view of Blanco Road, depicting the shallow setbacks, and head-in / rear parking configuration.*

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### BUILDING HEIGHT

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

The maximum building height for any new construction or vertical addition on a parcel that abuts Blanco Rd, Hildebrand Ave or Fredericksburg Rd, shall be no greater than four (4) stories.

Additional height bonuses allowed through the Unified Development Code due to additional setbacks do not apply.



Parcels with industrial zoning located within the boundary of W. Hildebrand Ave. to the north, the most western Union Pacific Railroad in the area to the east and IH-10 to the west are not required to comply with the standard.



*Example of appropriately scaled of development (above left, left, and below left )*



#### NOTES:

While there are substantially large non-residential structures in the Beacon Hill Area, they do maintain a pedestrian scale that is consistent throughout the NCD Area. A variety of structure heights is also desired and the design standards allow for this flexibility while ensuring the characteristic pedestrian scale.

Again, the industrial areas, along IH-10, do not lend themselves to the type of development found on the interior commercial areas of the NCD area.



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### NOTES:

Storefronts are a unique feature of urban commercial areas in San Antonio. The NCD Area contains many structures that possess this building feature. Within this feature there are several elements that are consistent. One of these elements is the location, depth and composition of the building entrance. The storefront entrances of building and spaces within buildings are typically located along primary street facades, recessed from the plane of the primary façade 0' - 4' and contain some transparent materials in the entrance door(s).

### PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES-ENTRANCES

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

Entrances doors or alcoves shall be located either along the primary street facade or at the corner of a structure where a corner entrance historically existed.

Original door openings are to be maintained and no new entrances shall be created unless a space is being re-configured to increase or decrease the number of tenant spaces in a multi-tenant structure.

Entrance doors shall be recessed no more than eight (8) feet. Entrance doors with glass panes shall not be covered, concealed or filled in with solid building materials.

Parcels with industrial zoning located within the boundary of W. Hildebrand Ave. to the north, the most western Union Pacific Railroad in the area to the east and IH-10 to the west are not required to comply with the standard.



*Example of appropriate entrances and door openings*



*Example of inappropriate entrance configurations in a commercial area*

# BEACON HILL AREA

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### OFF STREET PARKING/LOADING

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

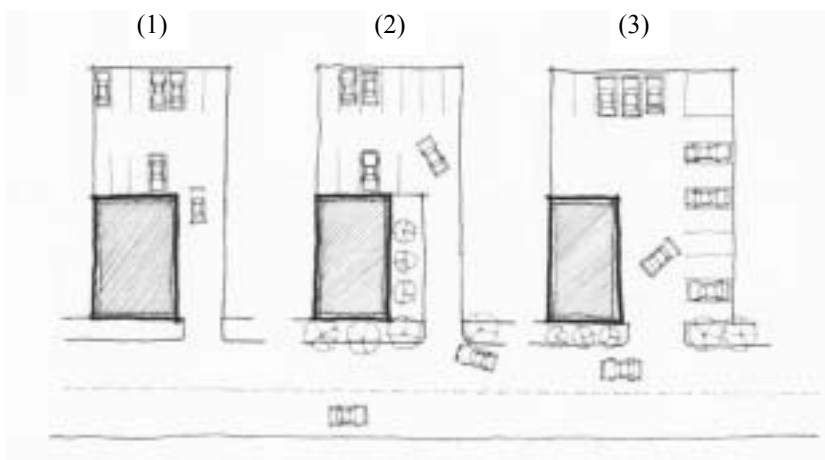
Parking shall be completely separated from the streetscape, located behind buildings, where possible. Side-yard parking may be incorporated if a) at least 50% of the street frontage is occupied by the building, and b) the parking lot is no greater than 65 feet wide along the street. Access drives to parking areas shall be placed on secondary streets, where possible.



*Desired head-in parking configuration*

Surface parking lots shall be designed to screen parked cars from the public sidewalk. Screening shall be continuous on all public frontages using one or a combination of the following: a) building face, b) low wall (3' maximum height), or fence (no wooden) constructed of material similar to the building, c) street furniture, or d) landscaping.

Loading and refuse pick-up/delivery areas shall be located at the rear of the structure (i.e. not within buffer yards), and screened from view of the streetscape.



#### NOTES:

As with other design standards within this section, creating and maintaining pedestrian-oriented environments in commercial areas is the focus of effort in the NCD Plan. The diagrams below depicts ways to configure the spatial arrangement of buildings and parking areas. Figure (1) and (2) show means of minimizing the visual impact of parking areas by confining the parking to the rear of the building. While Figure (3) does place some parking in behind the building, it visually exposes the parking areas by placing them on the side of the building, which is less desirable than the other two schemes.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Shared parking arrangements are preferred as a means of reducing both the amount of paved surface in the neighborhood.

Head-in and parallel parking along the street shall be encouraged throughout the neighborhood.

Minimum parking standards are encouraged. Parking areas that exceed the minimum space requirements are recommended to be constructed of pervious material.

Maximum parking limitations set forth in the *Unified Development Code* are not relieved by the NCD Standards.



# BEACON HILL AREA

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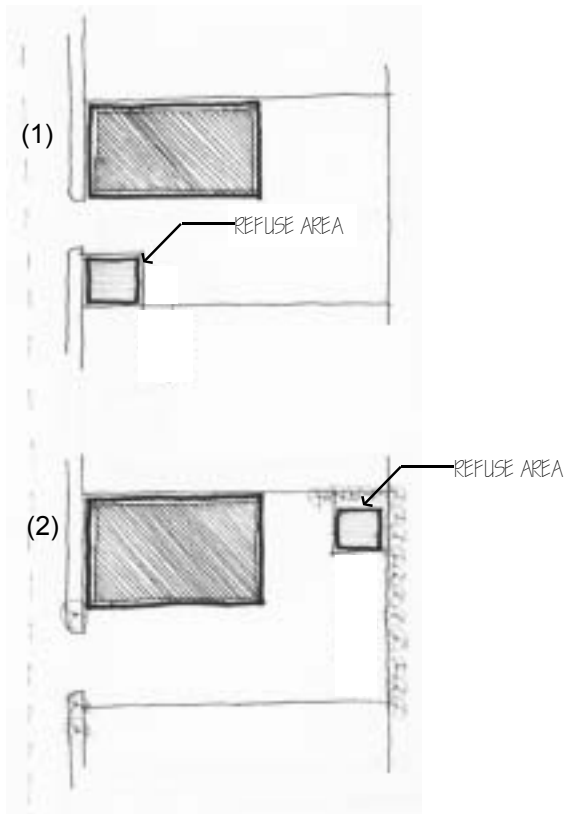
### NOTES:

In addition to parking issues, placement and unsightliness of refuse containers is a concern in the commercial areas. While having refuse containers may be a necessity of doing business, concealing the refuse containers from view by placing them behind buildings or screening and/or enclosing the container entirely are good solutions to improving the visual quality of streetscapes in commercial areas. Figure (1) below depicts, in plan view, a non-conforming and undesired placement of a refuse container, while Figure (2) is the opposite, conforming and desired in this area.

### OFF STREET PARKING/LOADING



*Conforming and desired on-street parking configuration*



*Example of non-conforming placement and visual exposure of refuse container*



*Example of conforming concealed refuse container*

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### PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES- SHADING DEVICES

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

A shading device shall be incorporated to provide continuous sun protection at the midpoint of the sidewalk width. This may be accomplished through the use of building orientation, minimum 3 ft. deep building canopy or awning (metal, wood or fabric; no back-lit), or street trees (one tree for every 100 linear feet of building façade facing a street is required, if using trees to create shade).

Parcels with industrial zoning located within the boundary of W. Hildebrand Ave. to the north, the most western Union Pacific Railroad in the area to the east and IH-10 to the west are not required to comply with the standard.

#### NOTES:

Shading devices such as awnings are good ways of improving the physical environment just outside of building, but also can make these spaces inviting to the passer-by. In addition to improving the environment adjacent to buildings by providing shade and perpetuating a common building technique found in many similar urban commercial areas, the intent of the standards to provide comfort for the pedestrian.



(Above, above right and below) Examples of structures with awnings providing adequate shading for pedestrians along the street





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### NOTES:

Celebrating the storefront is a common goal for many of the design standards in this section of the NCD Plan. Using storefront windows and doors in combination with awnings is an effective solution to making buildings and tenant spaces inviting. In contrast, buildings with fewer wall openings and/or no shading devices are substantially under-utilized and frequented less often by pedestrians. The design standards are focused on maintaining window openings and celebrating the storefront on new buildings and buildings that already have this feature.

### PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES- WALL OPENINGS

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

The area on a facade dedicated to transparent openings (windows, doors) shall be at least 50% of the first floor front façade (Finished floor to finished ceiling).

When replacing original windows or transoms, the original windows forms / profile shall be retained and utilized, using transparent glass.

Transoms, sidelights, and storefront windows shall not be covered, concealed or filled in with solid building materials.

Parcels with industrial zoning located within the boundary of W. Hildebrand Ave. to the north, the most western Union Pacific Railroad in the area to the east and IH-10 to the west are not required to comply with the standard.



*Example of conforming window and door openings on a commercial structure*



*Non-conforming example of a commercial building that has window and door openings that have been partially covered with non-transparent materials*



*Non-conforming example of a commercial building with no window openings*

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### PRINCIPAL ELEVATION FEATURES – WINDOWS

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

Use of non-transparent materials, mirrored glass, Plexiglas or Lexan, and burglar bars (exterior only) on storefronts is prohibited.

Storefront window bases bulkheads shall not be removed, altered or expanded. When repairing, a material of the same size, scale, proportion and composition shall be used on this building component.



*Example of commercial property with appropriate storefront window materials (above and left)*



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### NOTES:

Light pollution is a common problem in the NCD area's commercial areas. The design standards are meant to curtail light pollution, improve the quality of lighting along the commercial corridors and allow business owners to illuminate their spaces to announce their business and provide security in low light conditions.

Examples of good and bad lighting fixtures on the International Dark-Sky Association's website at: [www.darksky.org/infoshts/is22.html](http://www.darksky.org/infoshts/is22.html).

### DEFINITIONS:

*Glare:* The sensation produced by luminance within the visual field that is sufficiently greater than the luminance to which the eyes are adapted to cause annoyance, discomfort or loss in visual performance and visibility.

## LIGHTING

### DESIGN STANDARDS

Site lighting shall be shielded so that light sources are not visible from public right-of-way, or from adjacent residential property; such that any off-site glare is prevented.

No exterior fluorescent lighting shall be used, unless hidden from view from the streetscape (indirect lighting). Lighting pole standards shall not exceed a height of twelve (12) feet.



*Example of commercial property with appropriately shielded exterior light fixtures*



*Example of commercial property with non-conforming lighting that produces glare and 'spill over' light onto adjacent properties*

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### FENCING

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

Any fencing within the front yard area shall not exceed a height of 36", and any solid fencing material shall not exceed a height of 24".

No chain link, "Fencecrete" sheet metal, plastic, vinyl, barbed wire or horizontal metal pipe larger than 2" diameter shall be used.



Example of conforming fencing (above and below)

Parcels with industrial zoning located within the boundary of W. Hildebrand Ave. to the north, the most western Union Pacific Railroad in the area to the east and IH-10 to the west are not required to comply with the standard.

#### NOTES:

Fencing was deemed as an important feature for several reasons, such as security and signifying spatial relationship to buildings. While the capability to install fencing was important to property owners, the single most problematic characteristic of the existing fencing on properties within the NCD area is the visual quality for the materials used for fencing. The intent of the design standards is to improve the quality of the fencing in the commercial areas, while allowing property owners to secure the business or property.





# BEACON HILL AREA

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### FENCING



*Examples of non-conforming fence transparency*



*Examples of non-conforming fence material*



*Examples of non-conforming fence material and height (right and below)*



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### SIGNAGE

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

Primary, individual building signage (1 sign per street facade with spacing no less than a 100 ft radius) shall consist of one of the following:

- 1) *one monument sign that is a) no greater than 8 feet in height, b) does not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights, and c) is no greater than 30 sf (in surface area per side, including sign structure) for a single-tenant building, or 50 sf (in surface area per side, including sign structure) for a multi-tenant building, or*
- 2) *one pole sign (free-standing) that is a) no greater than 8 feet in height, b) does not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights, and c) is no greater than 30 sf (in surface area per side, including sign structure) for a single-tenant building, or 50 sf (per side, including sign structure) for a multi-tenant building, or*
- 3) *one projecting sign attached to principal structure that a) shall not project more than 3 feet horizontally from the face of the building, b) shall not obscure building details such as transoms or sidelights, and c) is no greater than 8 sf (in surface area per side, including sign structure) for a single-tenant building, or 20 sf (in surface area per side, including sign structure) for a multi-tenant building, or*
- 4) *One (1) band sign that consists of a band of lettering across the entire width of the building. The band sign shall not exceed 12 inches in height. Band sign installation: (a) The bottom of the band sign shall not be installed more than 20 feet or less than 8 feet above the sidewalk; or (b) the band sign may be installed on an existing building's sign board area if the sign board is an integral part of the building's original facade design. Band signs may be front-lit with shielded lights that do not create glare or 'spill-over' light to adjacent properties.*

Additional secondary, individual tenant signage shall not exceed a 5 sq. ft. maximum for each tenant space and shall consist of a) one canopy sign under



Example of conforming signage with appropriate sign dimensions and overall sign area

#### NOTES:

Visual clutter created by excess signage and lighting was determined to be a issue of great concern of property owners within the commercial areas of the NCD Area. While business advertising is critical to helping maintain the economic health of the commercial areas, specific sign requirements are necessary to improve the visual appeal of individual tenant spaces and buildings as well as the overall appeal of the commercial corridors

Street façade refers to an exterior wall that faces or is adjacent to a street.

Projecting signs refer to signs that project perpendicular or any angle other than parallel to a building façade.

Attached sign refers to any signage or lettering or advertisement that is placed on the a building facade or any sign structure constructed separately and affixed to a building facade.

#### DEFINITIONS:

Sign: any device, fixture, placard or structure that uses any color, form, graphic illumination, symbol, or writing to advertise, announce the purpose, or identify the purpose of a person or entity, or to communicate information of any kind to the public.

Sign Area: the entire advertising area excluding any framing, trim or moulding and the supporting structure.



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### SIGNAGE (CONTINUED)

canopy/awning or b) one wall sign at entrance to tenant space. Permanent lettering (painted or affixed) used on transparent or opaque surfaces shall not obscure more than 30% of the surface area.

The aggregate area of all signs, excluding primary building signage conditions 1, 2, 3 & 4 (previous page), attached to the building (in any fashion) shall not exceed 10% on each of the tenant space façades and shall not obscure building details such as transoms, sidelights, or architectural features such as columns, arches, porticos, articulation of fenestrations or exposed structure.

The surface area of temporary signs shall be no greater than 15% of the primary street-facing facade's surface area and can be displayed for a period not to exceed 30 aggregate days in any 90 day period.

Internally lit plastic lettering or signs, flashing or strobing (light) signs are prohibited.

Portable, "trailer" signs are prohibited.

Billboard signs are prohibited.

### EXAMPLES OF NON-CONFORMING SIGNAGE



*Example of non-conforming signs (above, above left, right, and above right) with total sign areas and dimensions exceeding district maximums*

# BEACON HILL AREA

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### TREE PRESERVATION

#### No Applicable Design Standards

*Example of commercial development with appropriate amounts of landscaping and vegetation*



*Example of commercial development with appropriate amounts of landscaping and vegetation*



*Example of under-landscaped property*



#### NOTES:

The purpose of the landscaping, street tree, screening, and buffer requirements (UDC (Art. 5, Div. 3)) is to provide standards that will protect the health, safety and general welfare of the public, enhance property values, and improve the appearance of the community through preservation of natural resources, trees, and native plants and maintaining the ecological balance of the area. These minimum requirements will, among other benefits:

Safeguard and enhance property values and to protect public and private investment.

Encourage proper selection, installation, and maintenance of plant materials that result in the conservation of natural resources, including water.

Promote innovative and cost-conscious approaches to the design, installation, and maintenance of landscaping while encouraging xeriscape planting techniques, water and energy conservation.

Screen unsightly equipment or materials from the view of persons on public streets or adjoining properties and buffering from uncomplimentary land uses.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

When possible, exceed the requirements of the Tree Preservation Ordinance and protection of Class I trees. New landscaping should not obscure signage or pedestrian access or building details, such as transoms or sidelights, from the point from the entrance of the building to the sidewalk, and should be designed in accordance with the landscaping and tree preservation standards found in UDC Article 5, Division 3 (Landscaping and Tree Preservation).



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### NOTES:

As with the residential developments in the NCD Area, there are a wide variety of roof shapes, pitches and materials. Therefore, it was determined that it would not be beneficial to require a standard for this component.

### ROOF LINE / PITCH

**No Applicable Design Standards**



*Example of non-residential structures with varying roof shapes, slopes and materials (above, left and below)*



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### BUILDING MATERIALS

#### DESIGN STANDARDS

Covering of original brick or other masonry system details or facing materials on the front facade, with materials such as wood, metal or simulated wood siding or any other textured finish that conceal the original exterior system details is prohibited.

Existing buildings with other types of exterior skin systems shall be maintained and/or repaired or replaced with materials that match in physical composition, size, scale and proportion.

#### NOTES:

Masonry materials are a common material for non-residential structures in this district. The intent of the design standard is to allow for use and creativity with new materials for new structures while maintaining the historical character of buildings that were constructed of masonry. The primary concern is to celebrate the traditional use of masonry by not allowing it to disappear visually by hiding it or covering it.



*Example of new materials appropriate for this district*



*Example of new materials appropriate for this district*



*Example of traditional exterior material common to the district*



*Example of traditional exterior material common to the district*



# BEACON HILL AREA

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### NOTES:

Non-residential building sizes vary greatly throughout the district, therefore there is no applicable standard that would regulate building size or massing other than standards for building height and building location (front setbacks).

### BUILDING SIZE/MASSING

**No applicable design standards**

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