



Newsletter of the
Zilker
Neighborhood
Association

APRIL 2011

Austin, Texas
Established 1981

This is not your father's South Lamar A Message from ZNA President Andrew Elder

IT'S BEGINNING TO FEEL A LITTLE LIKE 2008 around here. After a few years of relatively little development activity, earth is once again being moved throughout the neighborhood.

New subdivisions are a rarity in Zilker, but there are currently two developments bringing 24 new homes to the neighborhood interior. Both projects are notable for the tangential benefits they bring to the neighborhood. On Goodrich, Turner Residential is working to maintain and preserve the historic church and cemetery next door to its townhouse project. At Melridge and Rabb, PSW Real Estate is helping us procure the most useful sidewalk and bike lanes for the difficult curve and downhill section of Robert E. Lee (see page 8). In both cases, the developers have engaged with ZNA and expanded their interests beyond their property lines.

By far, the largest projects are on South Lamar. Last month, Post Properties finally broke ground on a mixed-use development that will double the capacity (and the cost) of the old Stoneridge apartment property across from Slick Willie's. The new building won't bring back the Zilker residents and (*Continued on page 4*)

ZNA Meeting

April 25

Monday 6:30-8:45 PM

Zilker Elementary School

1900 Bluebonnet



Meet and Greet Social
Save Our School Action
ACL Traffic Plan
Robert E. Lee Sidewalk
Election District Maps



Newcomers, old-timers,
homeowners, renters,
business neighbors

All Welcome



If You Love Zilker



Early voting May 2-10

Election Day, **Saturday, May 14**

Precinct 332 votes at Zilker
Elementary (1900 Bluebonnet),

Precinct 462 at MHMR office
(1700 S. Lamar, off Collier),

Precinct 342 at Barton Hills
Elementary (2108 Barton Hills Dr.)

ANC Endorses Kathie Tovo

THE AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOODS COUNCIL (ANC) has overwhelmingly endorsed Kathie Tovo in the hotly contested race for City Council Place 3. As reported in the February *ZNews*, Tovo provided crucial leadership in the recent Save Austin Schools effort. (See page 6 for an update.)

In a March 24 press release, ANC described Tovo as exceptionally prepared "to assume the responsibilities of civic leadership. While serving in multiple positions of public service, Tovo has demonstrated community leadership, voted according to sound principles, and exhibited a sense of integrity. On the Planning Commission, Tovo supported neighborhoods on various development projects, worked to protect the Waterfront Overlay and neighborhood plans, and helped guide the city's new comprehensive planning efforts. As a Planning

Commission representative on the AISD Facilities Task Force, she co-authored an independent analysis of the AISD facilities budget. By uncovering alternative cost savings, she helped push the district to keep several neighborhood schools open—for now. These are but a few examples. We look forward to seeing Tovo apply her great energy and focus to tackle problems at City Hall."

In Place 4, ANC endorsed incumbent Laura Morrison, noting that she has exceeded the "high expectations" of the group's 2008 endorsement: "Morrison brings to the dais common sense and the courage to stand on her convictions. She continues to demonstrate a vast knowledge and grasp of the intricacies of city government. Her record of bringing together disparate stakeholders and building consensus-based solutions still serves Austin well throughout the broad range of challenges that face the community."

In Place 1, no candidate earned the ANC endorsement. Although many ANC members and environmentalists appreciate incumbent Chris Riley's votes against Water Treatment Plant 4, his reversals on other major issues could not be ignored. Especially troubling to many ZNA members is his position on the Park Planned Unit Development (PUD) at 801 Barton Springs Road. Although the neighborhood plan encouraged mixed use (with multi-

Know the Candidates
Look for the League of Women Voters guide to the City Council election in the *Sunday Statesman* on May 1. Candidate responses to the ANC questionnaire are available at www.ancweb.org

family housing) on the site, Riley voted instead to approve a corporate office tower with an oversized parking garage, breaking five specific promises from his 2009 campaign relating to neighborhood planning and the Waterfront Overlay. We cannot rely on Riley to support livable urban neighborhoods like ours, with a range of housing opportunities like those described by Andy Elder on pages 1 and 4. (No Place 1 challengers participated in the ANC forum.)

Seven candidates filled out the ANC questionnaire on planning, budget, economic, transportation, zoning, community values, environment, and city government issues: Chris Riley in Place 1; Kris Bailey, Max Nofziger, Randi Shade, and Kathie Tovo in Place 3; Laura Morrison and Eric Rangel in Place 4. Their responses are posted on www.ancweb.org.

Early voting begins May 2, and election day is Saturday, May 14. Please don't miss this opportunity to vote for Tovo and Morrison, two strong and smart supporters of urban elementary schools, the heart of Austin's neighborhoods.

Lorraine Atherton, ANC Sector 7 Representative



Climate Controlled Play Areas

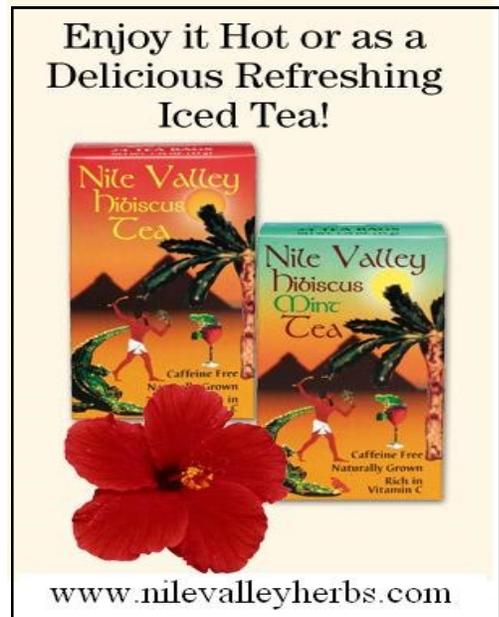
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**New to Zilker?
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Kindergarten Round-Up**

ANY CHILD WHO WILL BE 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2011, is eligible for kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year, but a parent or guardian must register the child. If your child will attend kindergarten at Zilker Elementary next fall, please come to Round-Up on Tuesday, May 3, at the school library, at 9 AM, and pass the word on to families of other new kindergarteners.

This event is an introduction to the school and an opportunity to meet other families as well. New students are welcome to attend with their parents.

When registering, please bring the child's birth certificate, Social Security card, current immunization record, proof of parent's address in the Zilker attendance area (such as a current utility bill or lease agreement with valid address), parent's or guardian's driver's license or other photo ID.

If you bring two copies of each document with you, it will speed up the registration process tremendously and will be greatly appreciated!

If you cannot attend Round-Up, you may still register at the school office May 3-6 (8:30 AM to 3 PM). Please try to register in May so the school staff can plan for next year's classes. Children may be registered until June 1. Later registration will also be available in early August.

If you have questions about registration, please call the school at 414-2327.

*Randall Thomson, Principal
Zilker Elementary School*

See page 6 for more school news.

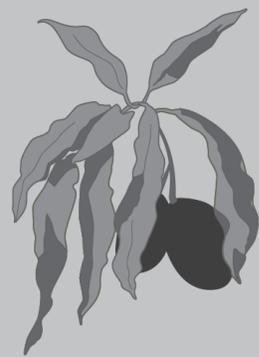



As the former president of the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association, I really value your work as neighborhood advocates. Our efforts have helped make Austin a great place to live. Now I'm asking for your help and your vote to take my work to the Austin City Council.

kathieforaustin.com

This campaign has agreed to comply with the contribution and expenditure limits of the Austin Fair Campaign Chapter. Political advertisement paid for by Kathie Tovo Campaign, P.O. Box 301464, Austin, Texas, 78703, Joe Pinnelli, Treasurer. Printed in house.





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(Continued from page 1) schoolchildren displaced from Stoneridge, but it will bring ground-floor retail and many new residents to the neighborhood. Since the site plan was approved so long ago, we are not sure whether the new commercial design standards that are making such a difference on South Lamar will apply.

To the north, expect the crosswalk at Lamar Square to get much busier. The City Council just approved 200 apartments and a retail site that will displace the Odd Duck and Gour dough's food trailers. Unlike the Stoneridge case, ZNA has given conditional support to this project and will work closely with Ardent Realty to preserve the numerous heritage trees on the site and promote walkable streets across from Lamar Plaza.

In that same area, the Mary Lee Foundation (behind Maudie's) recently unveiled a new affordable housing complex. This is the third major renovation for the foundation, which has quietly turned a derelict apartment complex into a remarkable asset for our community. The directors can also be heard strumming fantastic bluegrass down at the Green Mesquite on occasion, so they improve our quality of life in many ways.

In the last decade, several projects have transformed South Lamar. One of the first mixed use projects supported by ZNA was the Cole (the apartments pictured here); it will soon host a restaurant and den-

tist office next to Spicy Pickle. On the east side of Lamar, Bridges on the Park (shown here) has its own selection of shops. New retail has opened in renovated buildings in the 700 block.



ZNA also supported two small office buildings, at 813 S. Lamar and near W. Mary, and the conversion of Downtown Automotive to the Gibson Bar. The renovations at 2024 and 2110 S. Lamar have attracted new shops, beginning with Bird's Barbershop. Back on the east side of the street, Chris' Liquor has moved into a shiny new building. We can thank the South Lamar Neighborhood Association for making sure the Walgreen's at Bluebonnet is much better than the suburban parking lot originally proposed. Combined with the makeover of the triangle and used car lot at Manchaca by the Juice Box / Soup Peddler and Phil's / Amy's Ice Cream, South Lamar continues to evolve toward a walkable, accessible street with a range of housing and retail options.

Redevelopment invariably raises concerns about parking, safety, environmental impact, affordability, and neighborhood compatibility. The Executive Committee spends



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an inordinate amount of time simply trying to get the City to enforce its own rules consistently, and ensure that projects live up to their agreements in these areas. When special privileges such as code variances or upzoning are requested, ZNA takes additional steps to moderate the negative impacts and promote benefits to the neighborhood.

I don't keep score on how many times we say "no" or "yes," but I do pay attention to the outcomes. In various negotiations, ZNA has obtained hundreds of thousands of dollars for our parks and affordable housing. We have helped guide the city to a more equitable and enforceable approach to entertainment permitting, protecting our neighbors' right to privacy while promoting well-run outdoor music events. We have worked with neighbors to bring parking sanity to Oxford St. and with C3 to do the same during the ACL Festival (see page 8).

All the while, Barton Springs Rd. and South Lamar have continued to thrive through a horrific economic downturn. Hundreds of new residents will be joining us in the coming months. In so many ways, ZNA has developed strong, productive relationships with those who share our interests in our school and our neighborhood.

ZNA will continue to protect and promote those interests while change proliferates around us. We can always do a better job of reaching out to work collaboratively with public and private partners, and will do so to build a stronger community. This process can look like capitulation or conflict, depending on where you stand, but I think the end result is a better neighborhood that residents both new and old can be proud to call home.

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Save Zilker Elementary School Update

BECAUSE OF THE OUTPOURING of community support for Zilker and our other urban schools, AISD has backed off any plans to close specific schools, and the district leadership has recognized that the initial task force recommendations were based on flawed data. The district will be revisiting the issue of school closures later this year as part of a more thoughtful and engaged process. We remain hopeful that AISD will continue to see Zilker as a valuable asset and model for the district and that the district will look at ways to emulate our neighborhood success story. Neighbors and parents need to continue to be involved, especially at the state level right now as the Legislature looks at drastic and harmful funding cuts for public education.

A big thank you to all the neighbors and local businesses for their support of the school.

Heather Way and Amy Spiro, Zilker PTA and Save Zilker School Coalition

ZNA Responds to AISD Budget Crisis

THE SCHOOL BUDGET DEBATE, as Heather and Amy have noted, is likely to continue throughout the year. It will probably figure in the city's budget process as well. That is why Zilker voters should pay close attention to the City Council elections and support those candidates who have shown a commitment to healthy urban schools and neighborhoods with families.

Over the last two months, the ZNA executive committee has outlined some priorities and recommendations relevant to the Zilker School community and the entire neighborhood, to guide our lobbying efforts. Please review these priorities and recommendations and be prepared to vote on them at the April 25 ZNA meeting.

Lorraine Atherton

Statement of Priorities

◆ *At the state level:* Public education is the first priority of state government. Texas must increase its investment in education if it is to have a future in the national and world economy.

◆ *At a regional level:* Public education is the foundation of Austin's economy and our future. AISD must be responsive to the entire community, and all our public institutions (city and county government, Austin Community College, health district, Capital Metro, Chamber of Commerce) must cooperate to ensure a healthy and sustainable education system.

◆ *At the local level:* Neighborhood elementary schools are the foundation of our public education system, and they are the most effective part of the AISD system.

Recommendations

◆ *To address the current budget crisis and long-term effectiveness of the school system,*

1. AISD must make its central administration as efficient as possible to minimize its cost and to focus on classroom needs. ZNA favors the return of the Carruth Administration Center on West Sixth Street to the tax rolls, by the sale of the property or by its conversion to other income-producing uses. The remaining administrative offices should be distributed among underutilized campuses or offices shared with public entities such as ACC.

2. AISD must reverse its practice of committing bond funding to suburban sprawl on the edges of the district, especially over the aquifer. Bond priorities should be adjusted to maximize the use of existing campuses. Expenditures on the new bus depot (Bluff Springs and William Cannon) should also be halted.

3. ZNA supports the alternative proposals for budget cuts outlined by Kathie Tovo and Susan Mofatt of the AISD facilities management task force, and ZNA agrees that every effort must be made to cut expenses without closing schools or laying off teachers.

4. ZNA has always embraced the special needs (PPCD) programs and arts programs at Zilker Elementary, and we urge AISD to continue them through this budget crisis. We also support plans to expand Zilker School to replace portables, rather than demolition and rebuild of the entire school.

◆ *To address our school community's future needs,*

5. ZNA urges AISD to build a relationship with



zilker spring fling

Providing Technology & Enrichment Programs For Zilker Elementary

SUPPORT ZILKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AT SPRING FLING,
 April 29, 7-10 pm, at The Ranch, 710 A W. Sixth
 (see zilkerspringfling.blogspot.com). Funds go toward tutoring
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ACC to provide superior college preparation for high school students and improved teacher training facilities for AISD teachers.

6. In the same vein, ZNA urges the Austin City Council to restore funding of our Parks and Recreation and Library departments in this year's budget deliberations, with an emphasis on making arts, recreation, and educational opportunities readily available to all neighborhoods and their elementary schools, to aid in providing jobs to teachers that AISD may have to lay off in these areas, and to partner with AISD and ACC to supplement school programs.

♦ *To address the actual cause of the budget crisis,*

7. ZNA urges our State Senator Jeff Wentworth and other Austin representatives to the State Legislature to increase state funding of schools, to end the underappraisal of commercial property so that all property owners pay their fair share of school taxes, and to correct the inequities arising from Austin's status as a property-rich district.

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Austin City Limits Traffic Plan

by Steve McGuire

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD'S TRAFFIC PLAN for the ACL Festival comprises restricted parking zones on six streets, barricades with police officers at four intersections, and various types of signs. Last year a temporary No Parking zone, added on the east side of Kinney from the fire station at Collier north to Virginia, was seen as an improvement. This year similar zones are being considered for Garner, Lund, and Meghan. Because the sum of all these measures is quite expensive and because the effectiveness of the barricade at the intersection of Linscomb and Kinney is in question, the traffic committee proposes that festival promoter C3 Presents and the City of Austin remove the Linscomb barricade and police officer, and use the savings to fund temporary No Parking signs for Garner, Lund, and Meghan. This plan will be presented for discussion at ZNA's April 25 meeting.

C3 is working to create a Zilker no-fly zone during ACL to block the noisy aerial banner advertisers. C3 is also aware that fumes from the diesel generators for the temporary cell towers near Robert E. Lee drift into the neighborhood; they are considering moving the towers or finding another solution.



A Sidewalk to the Park

by Lorraine Atherton

COMPLETING THE SIDEWALKS along Melridge and down the Robert E. Lee hill to Zilker Park has been a top priority in the ZNA sidewalk plan since our first survey 10 years ago. Thanks to Ryan Diepenbrock, a Melridge resident and developer of the property at the top of the hill, we now have the opportunity to fill a big gap in that plan. It looks like Ryan will be able to install a sidewalk along his property at street level at the base of the stone outcrop and curve on the downhill side of Robt. E. Lee, and the City of Austin may have funding to extend a sidewalk down to the park.

Because there are no intersecting streets on the east side of Melridge and Robt. E. Lee, and most of the usual right-of-way obstructions (like utility poles) are on the west side, we have the potential for more than half a mile of uninterrupted sidewalk, from Ashby all the way down the hill to the pool entrance and bus stops at Zilker Park.

Ryan needs our support for a sidewalk plan so that he can proceed with his site plan approvals.

The ZNA executive committee is therefore recommending that standard sidewalks (minimum 4 feet wide) and bike lanes be planned for both sides of the street, with car lanes no more than 12 feet wide. A more detailed proposal will be presented at ZNA's April 25 meeting.

Where the bike lane ends: the bottom of the Robert E. Lee hill.

BECOME A ZNA MEMBER TODAY

Membership is open to Zilker residents (renters or homeowners) 18 years old or older. Annual dues are \$7 per person. Additional contributions are welcome. (Many couples pay \$25.)

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

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Dues: _____ Contribution for ZNA general fund: _____

Please make checks payable to Zilker Neighborhood Association and mail with this form to:

ZNA Memberships, 1818 Treadwell St., Austin, TX 78704

Adopt This Sign, Please



ZILKER has 18 existing Neighborhood Watch signs. Most are in great condition, but a few are faded, rusted, or graffiti tagged. The damaged signs do not present a positive image of our neighborhood's

commitment to Neighborhood Watch. Six signs have been identified for replacement: at Treadwell and Ethel, 1700 block of Collier (pictured), Paramount and Rundell, Paramount and Rabb Glen, Josephine and Bluff, and Ashton Green.

A new sign installed on an existing pole costs \$60. ZNA is offering to fund the \$25 installation fee for each sign location that receives \$35 in donations from Zilker neighbors. So pick your sign and send a donation to ZNA at 1818 Treadwell, or contact ZilkerNA@austin.rr.com.

Also, eight locations for new signs have been identified at neighborhood entrance points. Watch ZilkerNeighborhood.org for more information.

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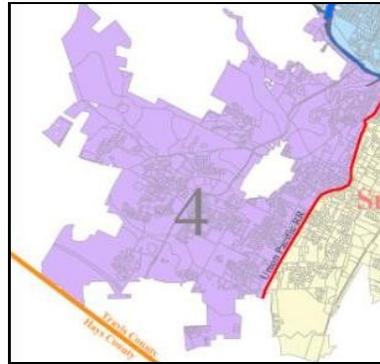
Mapping a New City Council

by Lorraine Atherton, ANC Sector 7 Rep

MAYOR LEE LEFFINGWELL, in his State of the City address on February 25, made a convincing case for geographic representation on the Austin City Council. He proposed adding "6 geographic districts, while retaining 2 at-large representatives and the mayor, for a total of 9 Council members." (Full text at mayorleffingwell.com.)

The position of the Austin Neighborhoods Council has long been that geographic representation should be based on a community process and include an independent body to draw the boundaries of the districts. Zilker neighbors can take the first step in such a process at the April 25 ZNA meeting, by considering various district maps and expressing your preferences for a new Council election model.

In September 2007, J. Gerald Hebert, of the Campaign Legal Center in Washington, D.C., presented sample maps for 6, 8, and 10 districts to a charter review committee appointed by the City Council. The 6-district map shown here, by city demographer Ryan Robinson, puts Zilker in a sprawling southwestern district (including everything west of the Union Pacific tracks), where we would compete with suburban precincts to elect one council member. Most 6-district plans are drawn this way, pitting suburban developments against the central urban neighborhoods. Add at-large seats, and the balance of power is



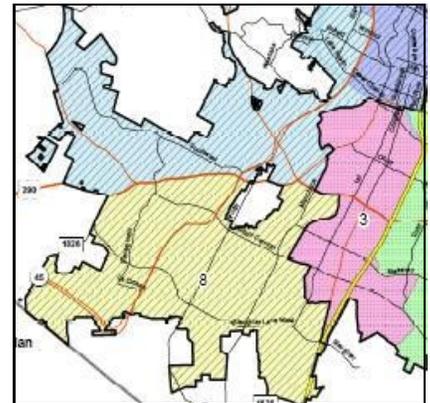
Left: Southwest district from a 6-district election model for the Austin City Council

Below: Southwest quarter of Austin from an 8-district election model

likely to remain the same on any new Council. Many neighborhood and community groups believe that Austin requires at least 8 geographic districts, each with a population of 100,000 or less. Some believe that we need at least 12 council members to provide sufficient diversity and talent to represent a city of Austin's size.

In the 8-district map shown here, Zilker is in District 3, with the rest of South Central Austin. This model does a better job than the 6-district model of joining communities with similar interests. Down-

town and the urban core have their own districts, and neighborhoods on the perimeter of the city can elect representatives familiar with their interests.



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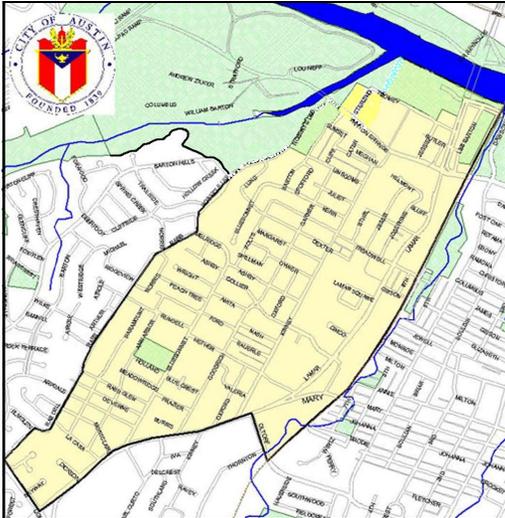
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ZNA extends from Zilker Park on the west to the railroad tracks on the east, and from the lake south to Barton Skyway.

THE ZILKER NEIGHBORHOOD Association welcomes Matt Ditlow (Social Chair), Skip Smith (Treasurer), and Connie Temple (ANC Delegate) to the executive committee. Thank you for volunteering to serve your neighborhood.

To volunteer to serve on ZNA committees, call any of the officers listed on page 12.

For ZNA bylaws and other info, visit zilkerneighborhood.org.

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2011 Executive Committee of ZNA

Elected Officers:

President: Andy Elder, 428-9180
1st VP: Richard Gravois, 441-3430
2nd VP: Steve McGuire, 447-2928
Secretary: Ryan Stryker, 431-4245
Treasurer: Skip Smith, 592-8038
Social Chair: Matt Ditlow, 590-0929
ANC Delegate: Connie Temple, 592-8039
ZNews Editor: Lorraine Atherton, 447-7681

About the Zilker Neighborhood Association

ZNA holds general meetings the fourth or fifth Monday of February, April, July, and October, at Zilker Elementary School. The Executive Committee meets at 7 PM the first Monday of each month, usually at Artz Rib House.

Our Purpose: To improve the quality of life in the neighborhood in matters of land use, environmental protection, public services, consumer protection, preservation of the historic and unique character of the community; to provide support in other matters of neighborhood concern; and to promote and participate in the civic life of the city.

Committee Chairs:

ACL Festival: Steve McGuire
Holiday Family Program: Barbara Cossie, 447-4437
Parks and Environment: Gardner Sumner, 468-6200
Sound: Bill Neale, williamneale@hotmail.com
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