

**KA'IULANI SODARO DIRECT TESTIMONY**

**PRESENTATION HEARING**

**Land Block 1, Project 6 (Mahana Ward Village) (KAK 25-045)**

**Q Please state your name, place of employment, and position.**

A Ka'iulani Sodaro, Senior Vice President, Planning and Development, Victoria Ward, Limited ("VWL").

**Q What is VWL's interest in the Amended Planned Development Permit application currently before the Hawaii Community Development Authority ("HCDA")?**

A VWL is the owner and developer of the lands comprising Mahana Ward Village and the 60-acre Ward Neighborhood Master Plan (the "Ward MP") area. VWL's team in Hawai'i consists of over eighty members, some of whom have worked at Ward Village for decades.

**Q Please briefly describe the Ward Master Plan.**

A Consistent with the legislature's vision to "join the strengths of private enterprise [and] public development" to create a new form of long-range planning and improved development in Kaka'ako, HCDA approved the Ward MP on January 14, 2009, pursuant to Hawaii Administrative Rules ("HAR") Title 15, Chapter 22 (the "Vested Rules").

The Ward MP is the largest master plan in Kaka'ako and reflects years of stakeholder and community engagement that included charettes, organization briefings, cultural descendant consultation, and public outreach.

In recognizing the need to maintain flexibility under the Ward MP, HCDA determined in the Ward MP Decision and Order that "[a]pproving the Master Plan will provide greater development flexibility for the purpose of attracting investment capital into the area and encouraging timely redevelopment and better overall planning for the area."

Consistent with the flexibility to respond to evolving market and social conditions in Ward Village, VWL (after its parent corporation transitioned from General Growth Properties to The Howard Hughes Corporation in 2010), spent two years studying the history of the Ward Neighborhood, reaching out to the community, to our tenants, to the cultural descendants and to other stakeholders for their input on the plan. We wanted to ensure that we advanced the master plan properly, listening to the community, and honoring and considering the important history of this area.

As a result of those efforts, VWL, with the support of HCDA, made a number of adjustments in the approach under the Ward MP, the benefits of which are now coming to fruition. These included re-orienting the towers to ensure a primarily mauka-makai

orientation to significantly improve public view planes; refining the orientation of the Central Plaza (now known as Victoria Ward Park) to provide an additional view plane, as well as enlarging the park and providing green, pervious open space in lieu of the original vehicle-centric, hard-scaped plaza design; and providing additional improvements to create comfortable pedestrian walkways and open public space.

The fifteen year term of the Ward MP expired on January 14, 2024. In anticipation of this milestone, VWL and HCDA worked collaboratively throughout 2024 to negotiate and enter into an Amended and Restated Master Plan Development Agreement, which, pursuant to HCDA's approval, became effective on January 13, 2025.

Among other provisions, the Amended and Restated Master Plan Development Agreement governs VWL's commitment to complete various developments and improvements in Ward Village under decisions and orders entered during the effective period of the Ward MP.

The Amended and Restated Master Plan Development Agreement also requires the application of the 2005 Mauka Area Rules to the processing, consideration, and final disposition of any amendment to a planned development permit issued during the effective period of the Ward MP (such as Mahana Ward Village) to ensure consistency with the 2005 Mauka Area Rules and the Ward MP.

**Q Please provide an update on the major community benefits of the Ward MP.**

A The Ward MP is a primary component of HCDA's larger goal of revitalizing Kaka'ako and transforming the district into a cohesive community. The Ward MP has transformed Ward Village into a vibrant neighborhood offering something for everyone: multi-modal streets, Victoria Ward Park (mauka and makai), unique local retailers and neighborhood services, a variety of residences, and a revitalized Kewalo Basin harbor.

The Ward MP is designed to significantly enhance the quality of life for residents, visitors and the general public in Honolulu's urban core. In fulfilling (and in several aspects, materially exceeding) commitments under the Ward MP, VWL's continuing efforts have (and will continue to) transform the neighborhood with major community benefits, including:

- **Parks, open space and public facilities in Kaka'ako:** Nearly ten acres of existing, under construction, and approved open space, and nearly eight and a half acres of completed and pending public facilities (both exceeding the requirements under the Ward MP), which have created new spaces in the neighborhood for community gatherings and events – all secured and maintained without expense to the public.

The completion and opening of Victoria Ward Park makai in January, 2025, Ka La'i o Kukuluae'o Park in September, 2025, and most recently, the expanded and

renovated Victoria Ward Park mauka opened in February 2026, have marked significant milestones in the Ward MP's vision of creating major connected public spaces in Ward Village. The final major connected open space under the Ward MP, Ka Lei Park, is expected to open on the Diamond Head side of Ward Village in approximately 2030.

- **Range of housing opportunities:** Ward Village features a range of housing opportunities, including the full completion and delivery of 1,222 reserved housing homes in Kaka'ako (375 reserved housing homes at Ke Kilohana, 150 reserved housing homes at 'A'ali'i, and 697 reserved housing homes at Ulana Ward Village), which fulfills and exceeds the reserved housing requirements under the Ward MP, inclusive of all of the reserved housing units that would be required for Mahana, years in advance of the completion of market housing in Ward Village. This in turn timely provides local residents with much-needed housing in the urban core (close to the Honolulu business district, the Capitol district, and Waikiki); and provides a conservative estimate of \$150 million in shared equity to HCDA to subsidize future affordable housing projects in Kaka'ako.
- **Realignment and Improvements for Auahi Street:** As envisioned by the Mauka Area Plan and the Ward MP, VWL's fulfillment of the Master Plan condition to realign Auahi Street to connect with Pohukaina street is underway and anticipated to complete in late 2026. In the meantime, Phase I of the Auahi Street improvements have been completed, transforming Auahi Street from Queen Street through Victoria Ward Park into a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly corridor, which increases connectivity and circulation throughout Ward Village, and implements a major component of the Auahi Street Promenade as envisioned in the Ward MP.
- **Extension of Halekauwila:** In conjunction with The Park Ward Village, VWL will complete the extension of Halekauwila as envisioned by the Ward MP. Mahana Ward Village will be along the mauka side of this driveway extension, which will provide an additional east-west connection within Ward Village, and improve pedestrian circulation and walkability along a landscaped, tree-lined sidewalk with numerous retail opportunities.
- **Investment in our economy:** An infusion of approximately \$11.8 billion in economic output during development, and the generation of \$701.1 million of State tax revenues while creating of over 4,250 jobs.
- **Investment in infrastructure:** Investment of approximately \$300 million in street, public infrastructure, and utilities improvements.
- **Pedestrian friendly streets:** Creation of a pedestrian friendly street network, with canopy trees, re-designed streets as landscaped promenades, with proper

street lighting, district sound, wayfinding signage, and parking structures that are screened, landscaped and activated for street level experiences.

- **Investment in Kewalo Harbor:** \$24 million in improvements to over 30 acres of urban waterfront at Kewalo Harbor, including upgrades to the piers, docks, security, restrooms, a life-guard response station and landscaping at this important community facility, which also includes VWL’s support for Ho’okupu Center, a green-jobs training facility and community space used by Kupu Hawai’i.
- **Restoration of Historic Architecture:** VWL restored and renovated the IBM Building, an iconic, mid-century modern building by renowned architect Vladimir Ossipoff, which now includes more than 62,000 square feet of zoned office space and areas for community events, ensuring that this historic part of the Honolulu skyline will remain for future generations.
- **A smart growth community:** Creation of a smart growth community, where residents can live, work, and play, and where the public can enjoy shopping, dining and neighborhood activities all accessible through multiple modes of public transportation.
- **Restoration of cultural landscape and our environment in urban Honolulu:** The engagement and inclusion of host and local culture, community, and the environment in the heart of Honolulu.

**Q Please provide an update on the development that has occurred to date under the Ward MP.**

**A** We have received planned development permits (“PDP”) for projects on Land Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the Ward MP. These include:

- PDP No. KAK 13-038 (Ke Kilohana), approved July 17, 2013, and amended on July 22, 2015, for 424 residential units, of which 375 are reserved housing;
- PDP No. KAK 13-036 (Waiea), approved August 21, 2013, for 177 residential units;
- PDP No. KAK 13-037 (Anaha), approved August 21, 2013, for 318 residential units;
- PDP No. KAK 14-074 (Ae’o), approved on February 4, 2015 for 466 residential units;
- PDP No. KAK 16-075 (A’ali’i), approved January 4, 2017 for 751 residential units, of which 150 are reserved housing;
- PDP No. KAK 18-038 (Kō’ula), approved August 9, 2018 for 570 residential units;
- PDP No. KAK 19-069 (Victoria Place), approved October 2, 2019 for 350 residential units;

- PDP No. KAK 21-001 (Ulana Ward Village), approved May 5, 2021 for 697 reserved housing units;
- PDP KAK 21-002 (The Park Ward Village), approved May 5, 2021 for 546 residential units;
- PDP KAK 22-024 (Kalae), approved August 26, 2022 for 330 residential units;
- PDP KAK 23-001 (The Launiu), approved June 7, 2023 for 486 residential units;
- PDP KAK 23-027 (Mahana), approved September 6, 2023 for 340 residential units;
- PDP KAK 23-037 (Melia), approved October 4, 2023 for 242 residential units; and
- PDP KAK 23-038 (‘Ilima), approved October 4, 2023 for 148 residential units.

Eight mixed-use projects (Waiea, Anaha, Ae’o, Ke Kilohana, ‘A’ali’i, Kō’ula, Victoria Place, and Ulana Ward Village) have been completed, and three projects (The Park Ward Village, Kalae, and The Launiu) are currently under construction.

Interest in, and sales of, VWL’s projects continue to be very strong. As of the third quarter of 2025, for example, 97 percent of the units at The Park Ward Village, 100 percent of the reserved housing units at Ulana, and 93 percent of the units at Kalae were sold or under contract. Sixty-seven percent of the units at The Launiu, which began construction in late 2025, were under contract, and 62 percent and 49 percent of the units at Melia and ‘Ilima respectively (which are both in predevelopment) have already been presold.

As previously noted, development under the Ward MP has also included substantial retail and commercial space, open space, public facilities, and numerous other community and public benefits.

**Q Please provide an update on the Ward Village community and some examples of how the Ward MP has and will continue to revitalize the area.**

**A** We have continued and enhanced many of our popular community events within Ward Village, including Kona Nui Summer Nights, First Saturdays, Happy Aloha Friday Music Series, Read Aloud Series, annual Founder’s Park day, recreational activations, and holiday events. These free events provide much-needed opportunities to gather, connect and rejuvenate with others in Ward Village’s public open spaces, including the newly-expanded and improved Victoria Ward Park.

VWL continued to strengthen our community through its corporate citizenship efforts, with a particular focus on assisting those in need. To date, VWL has contributed approximately \$4 million and hundreds of volunteer hours to over 185 local community partners. Recent development milestone community contributions included \$175,000

at the Victoria Place opening ceremony, \$30,000 at the Launiu Groundbreaking, \$120,000 Ulana Opening, \$20,000 VW Mauka park opening and more than \$100,000 annually in direct community support.

As the neighborhood continues to mature, we are continuing to plan and organize the commercial tenant mix with residential and community use. Special attention is being paid to the mix and proximity of these uses, to ensure a healthy balance between live, work, shop, dine, and play. Ward Village is currently home to 39 restaurants, cafes and entertainment venues, 40 retail shops and 46 specialized neighborhood services.

Certified as the first LEED Neighborhood Development Platinum Certified Project in Hawai'i (and the largest Platinum certified neighborhood in the United States), and recognized by Architectural Digest as the "Best Planned Community in America," and by the National Association of Homebuilders as the "Master Planned Community of the Year" in 2018. We are pleased to share that the Victoria Ward Makai Park is Honolulu's first USGBC SITES certified park and the Mauka park is on track to be certified as well. Ward Village has been a driving factor in transforming Kaka'ako into a dynamic, thriving and vibrant urban community in the heart of Honolulu.

The Park Ward Village, which will be across from Mahana Ward Village, will seamlessly integrate with the recently-opened and expanded Victoria Ward Park Mauka. Construction of Halekauwila will also be completed in conjunction with The Park Ward Village, providing an additional shaded, walkable area with local retail shops steps away from Mahana Ward Village.

The Park Ward Village will also feature a unique and extensive "wraparound" shaded ground floor retail experience that will significantly enhance street and park-level activation and will facilitate access to Victoria Ward Park, Mahana Ward Village, the Auahi Street promenade, and other areas within Ward Village.

The recently-opened Ka La'i o Kukuluae'o Park (formerly known as the Ewa Plaza) adds 30,000 square feet of green, open park space adjacent to Ulana in the heart of Kaka'ako, featuring a keiki play area, grass lawns, landscaped walkways, and shaded seating areas.

**Q Please provide an update on the Auahi Street realignment with Pohukaina Street.**

**A** As noted, VWL's progress to realign Auahi Street to connect with Pohukaina street is well underway pursuant to HCDA's prior decision and orders.

The Park Ward Village Decision and Order (KAK 21-002) provides that the realignment of Auahi Street will be completed as part of Phase 2 of the Auahi Street pedestrian promenade design and phasing plan submitted to HCDA in connection with Condition No. 13 of the Kō'ula Decision and Order (KAK 18-038), which required the submission of a final design and construction schedule for improvement of Auahi Street, including the realignment, to HCDA.

We are currently working with the City and County of Honolulu to effectuate the realignment, which will bring this long-envisioned community improvement to fruition.

The realignment will also create a remnant area on the Diamond Head side of Ward Avenue that VWL plans to extensively renovate and improve in parallel with Kalae's development. This area will include lush landscaping, seating areas and public art, and attractive streetscape design. The realignment will also create an area adjacent to The Launiu, which VWL plans to improve into an active, urban plaza.

**Q Given all of these projects, please provide a status of the construction impacts on the community.**

A While all of the current projects and improvements that I've described will further advance the live, work, and play vision of the Ward Master Plan and will significantly improve vehicular and pedestrian access and activation throughout Ward Village, we're also cognizant of the temporary impacts to residents and visitors from the current level of construction within our community, and we thank everyone for their patience.

Many of the construction impacts within Ward Village, including temporary lane and sidewalk closures, detours, and fencing, are necessary to protect the health and safety of motorists and pedestrians. While we understand these impacts are often inconvenient, shift in area and scope, and occur for extended periods, they are necessary (and often legally required) as improvements proceed, and for major projects, we do our best to notify those affected in as advance as possible.

Our construction partners also constantly monitor compliance with regulatory requirements and employ construction best management practices to ensure that impacts, including noise, dust, runoff, and other site-related issues are managed as required.

In terms of specific areas and projects, we're pleased to share that the construction impacts in the area near Kō'ula and 'A'ali'i will be significantly reduced this year as Victoria Ward Park Mauka opened on February 18, The Park Ward Village is scheduled to open during the summer of this year, and in conjunction with that, Halekauwila will fully open, connecting Ward Avenue to Kamake'e Street. These major milestones will substantially reduce the current effects of the construction noise, fencing, detours and other impacts in this area.

**Q How is the Ward MP fulfilling its vision of sustainability for Ward Village?**

A As a result of its many inherently sustainable attributes and commitments made for future projects, the Ward MP was awarded a Platinum pre-certification rating by the U.S. Green Building Council's program LEED for Neighborhood Development ("LEED-ND"), making it the largest LEED-ND Platinum project certified in the United States, and the only project to garner this achievement in Hawaii. This is a significant achievement

for the urban core of Honolulu, which will benefit Hawaii statewide and provide a useful example of ways in which Hawaii can encourage “green” building through creating a livable, walkable and sustainable mixed-use urban neighborhood. In 2021, Ward Village was featured as a case study development by the World Green Building Council for providing social value with resilience and sustainability.

VWL continues to focus on sustainability. We restriped Auahi street to create protected bike lanes and enhancing safety for bicyclists, which was followed by our founding sponsorship of Biki and the installation of bike share locations and bike racks throughout the neighborhood. We also changed out all of the street lights in the neighborhood to LEDs offering reduced energy use for the city and a safer, better lit street at night. During redevelopment of each project, we have relocated dozens of large, healthy trees throughout Ward Village, Kewalo, and even Kolowalu Park to help improve the urban tree canopy and green the neighborhood.

The newly-opened, expanded, and renovated Victoria Ward Park, a vibrant centerpiece of Ward Village, now provides an ample green space in the heart of urban Honolulu for residents and visitors to relax, play and enjoy cultural and social activities. The park’s design and landscaping will provide natural stormwater filtration, as well as a reduction in soil erosion and urban heat impacts. As is the case throughout Ward Village, lighting and irrigation technology within the park will support energy and water efficiency.

Each of our prior projects implemented a number of sustainability strategies. The mixed-use and urban quality of the area exceeds the community connectivity and public transportation access criteria for sustainable sites. Bicycle storage for residents and visitors will continue to be conveniently located for easy access. Extensive use of thoughtfully-selected indigenous vegetation in open areas provides improved storm water management, reduced local heat island effect and increased opportunities for comfortable recreation and socialization. Drip irrigation system and water efficient plumbing fixtures will continue to substantially reduce water use.

The buildings typically use passive strategies to increase energy efficiency. This includes pursuing highly efficient glass on the façade, high efficiency lighting, operable windows and doors and enhanced commissioning and refrigerant management.

Recycled and renewable materials, use of regional resources, and reduction of on-site waste are all considerations for the selection and specification of materials for building structure and envelope, for exterior and interior finishes, and for the site development. Large windows will provide abundant daylight and views to normally occupied spaces. Material selections will aim to reduce, or to eliminate, volatile organic compounds.

**Q Please describe the history of the Mahana Ward Village project.**

A On September 6, 2023, HCDA approved a planned development permit for Mahana Ward Village through its Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Decision and Order for KAK 23-027 (the “Original Mahana PDP”).

Thereafter, on June 5, 2024, HCDA approved entering into a letter of intent to purchase two parcels within the Ward MP (collectively, “Land Block G”) from an affiliate of VWL, and on December 4, 2024, HCDA formally authorized the HCDA Executive Director to execute the Purchase and Sale Agreement for Land Block G (the “Land Block G PSA”).

The Block P-3 PSA, which HCDA and the VWL affiliate executed on December 24, 2024, provided, among other terms, that the consideration for HCDA’s purchase of Block P-3 would be 163,000 square feet of supplemental floor area from HCDA’s floor area bank (the “Supplemental Floor Area”), which the parties agreed that VWL would have a right to use, in its discretion, for:

[R]esidential, commercial, and/or industrial uses in connection with an amended Mahana Ward Village planned development permit application . . . which, inclusive of design adjustments to accommodate the Supplemental Floor Area and/or reasonable podium tolerances, shall be subject to the HCDA Executive Director’s processing, review and approval under the 2005 Mauka Area Rules.

The Block P-3 PSA also tolled all deadlines in the Original Mahana PDP and the deadline to issue the initial building permit for the project, “until the final disposition by the HCDA Executive Director of the Amended Mahana Ward Village Application.”

HCDA certified the transfer and use of the Supplemental Floor Area for Mahana Ward Village in HCDA’s letter dated January 8, 2025, which is an exhibit in this proceeding.

Thereafter, as contemplated and approved by HCDA, VWL and its consultants worked to efficiently utilize the Supplemental Floor Area to provide additional homes and enhance Mahana Ward Village’s design (all within the constraints of the original parcel) as reflected in Amended Planned Development Permit currently being considered by HCDA.

**Q Please describe the amended Mahana Ward Village design, how it fits into the Ward Village Master Plan, and how it was shaped by community input.**

A Situated at the intersection of Ward Avenue and Halekauwila, and at the crown of Victoria Ward Park Mauka, Mahana Ward Village will continue to significantly advance many of the strategies discussed in the Ward MP as informed by the Board’s prior decisions and orders.

The amended Mahana Ward Village design continues to achieve the placemaking and pedestrian activation envisioned in the Ward MP through various approaches, including ground floor commercial space, expanded podium level homes, wide sidewalks, shade trees and landscaping, minimal curb cuts, public art, and aesthetically interesting liner facades to screen the podium and parking garage.

Featuring approximately 13,600 square feet of ground floor commercial space along Halekauwila and Ward Avenue, including further refined landscaped outdoor plazas and seating areas, Mahana Ward Village will welcome pedestrians and activate this mauka gateway to Ward Village. Halekauwila, in addition to improving east-west connectivity through Ward Village, will serve as an additional retail corridor for the community, allowing pedestrians to leisurely shop, dine, and conveniently experience all the amenities that Ward Village has to offer, including the renovated and expanded Victoria Ward Park.

Mahana Ward Village's ground floor commercial space will complement the ground floor commercial area across Halekauwila at The Park Ward Village, as well as the retail spaces along Halekauwila at 'A'ali'i, Kō'ula, and A'eo. A public transit plaza at the corner of Ward Avenue and Halekauwila is adjacent to the HART station easement and accommodates pedestrian access to the area proposed for the station.

The retail and outdoor areas of Mahana Ward Village will transition into a unique, double-height porte cochere that provides a grand entrance surrounded by windows to facilitate a lobby space filled with natural light. A colonnade matching the height of the porte cochere wraps around the platform, providing a protected walkway between parking, retail and residences, while also providing shade for the ground floor outdoor seating areas adjacent to the platform.

As a result of the 111 additional homes, the amended Mahana Ward Village design also includes commensurately more open space and recreation space than the original design, while maintaining the sleek residential tower and setbacks to preserve the additional view corridor and vista planned for Ward Village between Ward Avenue and Kamake'e Street.

The name Mahana, meaning warmth or warm feeling, and that exuded by the rising and setting sun, evokes the warmth and hospitality of the Ward Estate. Mahana Ward Village respects and embodies this history and sense of place through its pedestrian-friendly design and features, and various architectural elements including those inspired by the natural light and warmth of the sun, native palm motifs, and natural materials.

As with all of our projects, community feedback and input are key elements of our planning and design process for Mahana Ward Village. Mahana Ward Village is responsive to community feedback to provide quality homes, ground floor pedestrian activation and retail in an urban setting, and walkable experiences for residents and visitors to the Ward Village community.

**Q Please describe this Project’s anticipated impact on transit oriented development, including rail, bus, and other modes of rapid transit.**

A Multiple opportunities for public transit will be available from Mahana Ward Village. Bus stops are conveniently located on and near Ward Avenue, short and long-term bicycle facilities will be provided on-site, and Mahana Ward Village is also adjacent to, and accommodates access to, the proposed HART rail station.

**Q Did VWL study the impacts of adding the additional floor area to Mahana in terms of traffic, infrastructure, architectural design, community resources, and construction schedules?**

A Yes. The use of the Supplemental Floor Area will add an additional 111 residential homes in the urban core from the previous design, which will contribute to addressing the critical shortage of housing in Hawai’i, including the shortage of market housing. This provides opportunities for those moving up the housing ladder, and in turn, opens up housing opportunities for others. VWL’s experts have carefully studied the potential impacts of the additional floor area, and as our experts will testify, the impacts of the additional homes and residents are manageable and/or can be effectively mitigated.

In terms of construction, while the additional floor area does add additional time within the anticipated construction schedule, since the project, as amended, is still materially within the same site footprint as the original approved project and the additional floor area is efficiently distributed throughout the development, the construction timeline is not expected to be significantly extended by the additional floor area.

**Q Please describe the economic impacts anticipated from the Project.**

A Mahana Ward Village will provide significant economic benefits for our state, city and community, particularly during this period of state budgetary constraints and uncertainty arising from federal budget reductions, and continued reductions in visitor arrivals. Our VWL team remains committed to doing our part to assist local residents and contribute to Hawai’i’s economy, job growth, and tax base.

Similar to the other projects that are part of the Ward MP, Mahana Ward Village will make significant positive economic impacts to the new housing supply, job creation, spending, property tax receipts, retail sales, and ongoing building operations and maintenance.

Mahana Ward Village’s approximately 451 homes will provide market priced residences in Honolulu’s urban core, and residents will have convenient access to area employment, retail and industrial services, and all of the amenities of Ward Village and beyond.

Beyond enhancing the lives of its residents and the Ward Village community, Mahana Ward Village will have a direct, positive impact on the State and the City and County of Honolulu economy. Accounting for additional indirect and induced economic impacts, the construction of Mahana Ward Village is estimated to generate:

- \$670 million in output;
- \$225 million in workers' earnings;
- \$41 million in state tax revenue (income, GET, and other);
- 395 annual average jobs; and
- 906 peak annual jobs in 2028.

Mahana Ward Village operations and maintenance over a 30-year period are tentatively anticipated to generate, in present value of constant 2025 dollars:

- \$165 million in output;
- \$55 million in workers' earnings;
- \$10 million in state tax revenue (income, GET, and other);
- 19 permanent jobs; and
- \$121 million in real property tax.

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