

## Computerized Zoning: PC No Longer Just Means Planning Commission

By Paul H. Sedway, AICP

Over the course of the past three decades, those glistening zoning ordinances so grandly unveiled in the 1950's have turned from innovation to obfuscation. Amendment layered upon amendment have made most of these ordinances, particularly those in larger cities, largely impenetrable to all but the most knowledgeable and sophisticated practitioner. As these few informed professionals necessarily decline in number, since comprehension becomes almost a full-time job, so does their advice become more valuable. Indeed, there is often great resistance to making the needed overhauls as the political and financial stakes along with ordinance complexity increase.

The task of total revision, although the optimal way to proceed, is often too daunting for many jurisdictions. Even the more modest effort of reconfiguring the ordinance, without substantive change, may be too difficult for some public officials to take on. Yet the complaints increase - from citizens interested in land use matters, landowners and developers.

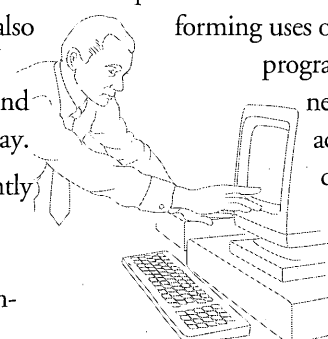
Although it is no substitute for a comprehensive revision or simply an ordinance reorganization, several new approaches, broadly encompassed under the term "computerized zoning" are fast becoming, if not yet the norm, at least the known ideal in zoning practice. At its most basic level, simply putting an ordinance onto a computer provides a useful first step. Generally, only about half of all jurisdictions have even accomplished this. But computerization also provides an enormous opportunity for helping the user make his or her way around the labyrinth of regulations, so typical today.

Planners and software designers are currently and have been working on programs that will simplify the process of computerized zoning, and that will provide a comprehensive

database for planners and the public. One such tool that has been developed is Easy Access™, a new software system that allows fast access to development codes, zoning ordinances, and other planning and regulatory documents. The program works on any PC that can run the Windows™ graphical-interface system. The software allows anyone with a familiarity with Windows™ to have access to important regulatory and planning information. Easy Access™ works by producing a custom-engineered Windows™ Help document.

This program has two features that allow users to find information and move within a document such as zoning ordinance:

- **Search Using the Table of Contents.** The user can search the document through an expanding table of contents by pointing and clicking the mouse. For example, if a document was organized into divisions, chapters, and sections, the user can click on a division title to see the names of all chapters in that division and on a chapter title to see the names of sections. Clicking on a section title will bring the text of the section to the screen. From that screen, the user can jump to a related screen or browse through the document, one screen at a time.
- **Search Using a List of Keywords.** The user can search for sections that contain, or are associated with, a specific keyword or idea from a predetermined list of keywords, e.g., nonconforming uses or home occupations. The program works almost instantaneously because it is not actually searching the document, but is linking the selected keyword to a menu list of all sections that contain the keyword.



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## DIRECTORS COLUMN

Since our first newsletter is published in February, I will dispense with a new year's salutation and get down to business. With this newsletter, I bring mostly good news, along with a healthy dose of political reality. First the good news. The APA Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) granted reaccreditation to the planning programs at the University of California, Berkeley, and San Jose State University. Planning programs accredited by the PAB were assessed as having met the educational standards of the planning profession. Congratulations to Alan Jacobs of Cal and Don Rothblatt at San Jose State for a job well done.

On a more somber note, APA's National/State Coordinating Committee wrote a set of Policy Implementation Principles (PIP's) on takings, a matter which is of serious consequence to the planning profession. In light of inclusion of a takings bill in the Republican's Contract with America, this issue will receive even more attention than it did last year. It will be debated and adopted at the Chapter Delegate Assembly to be held in Toronto. A draft PIP is available to any section member who is interested in reviewing the document and forwarding comments to me, prior to February 20. If you are interested, please contact me at my new work number - (510) 283-3771, or fax your request to (510) 283-0780

## BOARD MEMBER BIO

**June Catalano, AICP**, is the Ethics Review Coordinator for the Northern Section and has been on the Board for approximately four months. June received her Master's Degree in Communication from Syracuse University, where she has also completed postgraduate work in planning and economics. June's work in California began as a planner in the County of Orange, and then Huntington Beach. June has served as Planning Director in Laguna Beach and Santa Ana. Following the position in Santa Ana she went to work for the Law Firm of Baker and McKenzie as Director of Planning-Land Use Practice. Currently, June is the Development Services Director for the City of San Leandro.



June enjoys City Planning because she loves cities. She says that planners can have a real impact on the places where people work and live, and that helping to shape the built environment is one of the aspects of planning she enjoys most. June's future goals are to be as good a Director as she possibly can, and to deliver the short and long range planning and customer service that the public is entitled to have. Her goals for the Board are to make sure that there is an Ethics Committee that is operable, and that is coordinated with National. June and her husband have an eight year old daughter, and in her spare time June likes to read, and travel, and she likes science. When asked whether she had a favorite field of science, she would only narrow it down to...science. June also enjoys the opera and her favorite is *La Traviatta*.



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# National APA Award Winners

California took five of the 14 major award categories in this year's National APA Awards, which will be presented at the Annual Conference in Toronto, April 8 - 12. Two of the award winners are Northern Section counties and a third was prepared by a Northern Section firm.

## Outstanding Planning Award Comprehensive/Large Community

- ◆ Santa Clara County

## Planning Landmark

- ◆ Napa County

## Outstanding Planning Award Comprehensive/Small Community

- ◆ Lemoore Revitalization  
Brady & Associates

The two other award winners from California are:

## Distinguished Leadership

- ◆ Mark Ridley-Thomas  
L.A. City Councilman

## Distinguished Service

- ◆ Janet Ruggerio

In addition, the California Chapter won the Karen B. Smith Award for Overall Chapter Achievement.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### ANNOUNCING THE 1995 NORTHERN SECTION AWARDS PROGRAM

Once again it's time to share the best of your projects and programs with your colleagues by submitting applications for the Section Awards Program. Last year there were 14 Section awards given, seven of which won State awards, and two of which won National awards. It all starts with a simple, no fee, categorically exempt application submitted to your Awards Coordinator. A panel of Northern Section planners then selects efforts worthy of professional recognition. Those that are selected are acknowledged at the Section awards banquet, tentatively set for June 23, 1995 at the University of California Faculty Club. Begin thinking about worthy programs and people now. The deadline for applications is April 14, 1995 and... we'll leave a light on for you! To obtain a complete listing of the awards categories and application materials please write or call:

Wayne Goldberg, Director of Community  
Development

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Santa Rosa, CA 95402

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### A NOTE ON THE DECEMBER 2, 1994 INFILL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

I and several other San Jose State University Graduate Planning students attended the Infill Development Seminar, sponsored by NSCCAPA and hosted by the City of Mountain View, on December 2, 1994, and found it to be very informative. In addition, the morning design charrette provided a valuable "hands on" opportunity to learn more about infill development strategies. Both of the hosts, Shelley Poticha and Matt Taecker of Calthorpe Associates were excellent and their introduction to neo-traditional concepts was interesting. The afternoon panel discussion provided insight on design, entitlement, marketing, and other issues pertaining to the development of a pedestrian and transit-oriented project that is located on the former Old Mill Shopping Center site in Mountain View.

*Joe Sordi, APA Student Representative  
SJSU Department of Urban Planning*

### NEW APA BENEFITS PACKAGE

To enhance services to the members of the CCAPA a benefits program has been designed that gives members the opportunity to protect their personal and business investments. The package entails services in the areas of: Business Planning; Medical Insurance; Estate Planning; Investment Analysis; and, Investment Strategies for Successful Retirement. Designated benefits coordinators have been asked to contact each CCAPA member to establish a convenient time to meet and review the benefits package. We want this to be a win-win situation for all. By participating in the program you will not only benefit your company, but help strengthen your relationship with CCAPA. If you would like to contact a coordinator now, call Jared Meyers at the Equitable, at (415) 627-6854.

### EXTENSION PROGRAM

The Northern Section Board is currently working with a couple of educational institutions who are interested in providing an extensive educational extension program in the Bay Area. The Board is soliciting your ideas for courses and programs that will be relevant to Bay Area planners. This is your opportunity to help set a direction for an extension program close to home. Please contact Michael Bethke, AICP, Director Pro-Tem, at (707) 586-3650 with your ideas and suggestions.



The Bulletin Board section of the Northern News is intended to provide a forum for individuals to provide the membership with information about events or current topics. If you would like to submit an item for the Bulletin Board section, contact the Newsletter Editor at (408) 866-2140.

# Computerized Zoning...

(continued from page 1)

In addition to these two basic searching functions, the program facilitates movement within the document according to the following functions whose names are descriptive: Jumps, Browse, See Also, Where am I?, Glossary, Supplemental Material, Bookmark, Annotate, Copy and Paste, Printing, Back, and History.

An important application of the Easy Access™ system is to include policies from comprehensive and specific plans and complete regulatory codes (zoning, subdivision, signs, environmental review, etc.) in one user friendly system. For instance, assume a user who is interested in installing a recycling center. The user could access regulations on the topic through the table of contents or keyword search. If this use required a special use permit, the user could click on this requirement to go to the part of the code that described the special use permit procedure. If policies in the comprehensive or specific plan addressed recycling centers, these policies also could be brought up on the screen. All the information on recycling centers could then be printed out.


Computerized zoning programs such as Easy Access™ offer local governments and regulatory agencies many advantages:

- Improving the efficiency of local government staff by making information readily available so

that questions can be answered immediately, and even by modem, instead of requiring research and a call back to the person needing assistance.

- Saving costs by reducing the time needed to train staff in using complex codes and plans.
- Improving efficiency of the development community so that overhead costs can be reduced to bring down the cost of development.
- Improving public access to local plans and ordinances by making the system available for use in public libraries and information kiosks.
- Ensuring that everyone has access to current versions of plans and ordinances by maintaining up-to-date master files on a central computer that users can access with a modem.

By making this type of land use and zoning information readily accessible and making it far more comprehensible and usable, planning and land use may become less forbidding and not the sole province of a few "insiders". What may roll down the "land use information superhighway" in the future may be a set of automatic buses offering far more mobility, convenience, and accessibility to the general public. Computerized zoning will doubtless help in that effort.

*Paul H. Sedway, AICP is a Principal with Sedway Cooke Associates, San Francisco.* 



## Principal Planner

City of Santa Barbara

\$56,142 - 67,371 / year

Must have significant experience performing a wide variety of professional level urban planning duties and have knowledge of state and local laws including CEQA, land development and permit review. Requires five years of related experience with a private/public agency or local government. At least two of the five years must have been at a supervisory or management level. A brochure is available. A degree in a closely related field and coastal planning experience are highly desirable. To apply, submit 2 current resumes, cover letter, City application and supplemental questionnaire to Dr. Richard Garcia, President, RJA Management Services, Inc., 550 W. Duarte Rd., Ste. 6, Arcadia, CA 91007, (818) 447-3318. Application deadline is March 10, 1995.

### CORRECTION

The following is information that should have been included in the December '94 issue's BART feature article by Peter Gertler, AICP. —*Ed.*

#### BART Phase II and III Extensions

Phase II and III extensions would ultimately "ring-the-bay" with BART. Phase II and III extensions are in various stages of the planning process. BART planners are participating in several regional corridor studies to evaluate BART extensions and other reasonable and effective transit options along the I-80, I-880, and I-580 corridors. In addition, BART is currently in the midst of planning studies to extend BART one more station along the Phase I Pittsburg-Antioch extensions to Pittsburg, and to the Oakland Airport.

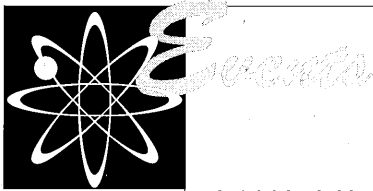
#### Oakland Airport Extension

In July 1992, BART teamed with the Port of Oakland and AAI Corporation to apply for a federal grant under the

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) to study the feasibility of Suspended Light Rail Technology (SLRT) for the Oakland Airport Connector Project. The team was selected as one of three finalists nationally to prepare the feasibility study. In September 1993, the team completed the Feasibility Study and submitted it to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Subsequently, the FTA will select a winner to proceed with federal grant monies to prepare the environmental review, preliminary engineering, and eventually final design and construction of the proposed system.

BART and the Port of Oakland are confident that this is a viable and feasible project, and that they could be selected to proceed with subsequent phases of the SLRT Project. This is an exciting project that addresses a regional intermodal transit need with a bold and innovative transit technology.

(continued on next page)



#### **NSSCAPA Monthly Event**

### **Historic Renovation and Economic Development**

Join Northern Section planners for a discussion of specific historic renovation projects and how they have revitalized downtowns throughout the Bay Area. Speakers include Allen Michaan who has renovated many historic theaters, including the Grand Lake Theater in Oakland; City Staffers who have worked on renovation projects; and Keith Gelstrom from the California Main Street Program. Wine and cheese will be served, and the evening's featured movie "Murder in the First" will immediately follow the discussion.

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, February 15,  
7:00 p.m.

**Location:** The historic Orinda Theater, located adjacent to the Orinda BART Station in downtown Orinda. Parking is also available.

**Info:** For more information, contact Parke Patterson or Brian Millar at the City of Orinda, (510) 253-4210.

Sponsored by the East Bay Regional Advisory Committee of the NSSCAPA.

### **Sonoma County Transportation and Land Use Conference**

In an unusual partnership, the Sonoma County Alliance, Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Club, Sonoma State University's Environmental Studies Department, and the Sonoma County Transportation Coalition (an environmental group) will join together to cosponsor a countywide conference on the connection between transportation and land use. Keynote speakers include Peter Calthorpe, Principal of the San Francisco based Calthorpe Associates; Peter M. Settle, Principal-in-Charge of Parsons Brinckerhoff's San Francisco office; Cate Braschi of the Sonoma County Transportation Authority; and Larry Dahms of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

**Date:** Saturday, February 11, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Location:** Finley Community Center, 2060 West College Avenue, Santa Rosa.

**Cost:** \$25 per person, registration deadline is February 7.

**Info:** For more information contact Marty Roberts at (707) 576-1791 or Sharon Wright at (707) 575-3677.

Sponsored in part by the North Bay Regional Advisory Committee of NSSCAPA

### **Transportation Research Forum**

#### **The Growth of Auto Travel in the United States: Can Public Policy Make a Difference?**

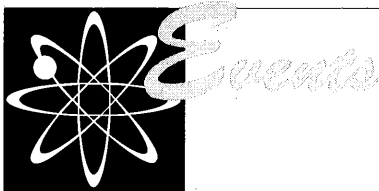
Conventional wisdom in planning circles holds that public policy should be to discourage auto use by adopting controls or penalties for use of autos, or by providing incentives for public transit use. The speaker for this meeting will be Charles Lave who is a Professor of Economics at U.C. Irvine. Professor Lave will provide evidence that parts of Europe have had anti-auto policies for decades and auto use and ownership have increased, so why should Americans think that such policies will make any difference over here? This meeting will provide an opportunity to review the evidence and to debate Professor Lave who is a well known contrarian in the field of transportation policy.

**Date:** Wednesday, February 15, 1995

**Location:** Mandarin Garden Restaurant,  
2025 Shattuck Ave., Downtown  
Berkeley  
BART: Berkeley Station

**Cost:** \$13.00 for TRF members, \$14.00 for non-members.

**Info:** For more information and reservations call Steve Gregory, Port of Oakland, at (510) 272-1363.



## Retirement Party for Bob Sturdivant

Bob Sturdivant, Chief Planning Officer for Santa Clara County is retiring after 37 years of public service. A Mardi-Gras like atmosphere is planned to celebrate and honor Bob's many accomplishments in the County and the region.

Date: March 10

Location: David's Restaurant, Santa Clara

Cost: \$32.50 per person

Info: For more information or to RSVP please contact Lisa or Andrea at (408) 299-2521.

## Presidio Lease, Request for Proposals

The National Parks Service (NPS) is pleased to offer the opportunity to qualified for-profit and non-profit organizations to submit a proposal to lease space at the historic Main Post of the Presidio of San Francisco. NPS will accept proposals to lease space for programs that incorporate goals whose activities further the NPS vision for the Main Post: cross-cultural communication, multi-cultural awareness, community renewal, international exchange, environmental awareness and education, and the arts. The center will serve as a focal point for visitor services and public activities. The conference will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the Main Post and to get details about the Request for Proposals.

Date: Tuesday, February 7, at 10:00 a.m

Location: Building 102 at the Presidio, San Francisco

Info: If you have any questions regarding the Request for Proposals or the Presidio, please contact Ms. Carolyn Peterson of the Presidio Project Office at (415) 556-1388, ext. 251.

## University of California, Berkeley, Department of City and Regional Planning

### 1995 Seminar and Job Fair

The seminar will be an opportunity for faculty, alumni, graduate students, and professionals to exchange current issues in planning. The Job Fair will provide an opportunity for prospective employers to interview current students and graduates, and to provide information about summer internships and permanent employment possibilities.

Date: Saturday, April 22, 1995

Location: College of Environmental Design, U.C. Berkeley

Info: For more information call Kaye Bock, Graduate Assistant, at (510) 643-9440, or by fax at (510) 642-1641.

## University of California, Davis Extension

### Infill Development Conference

This one day conference will provide an overview of the policies, financing and design issues of infill development. Topics include strategic relationships between infill development and land use, environmental and social issues, current policy adopted by local governments to encourage infill projects, neighborhood and community concerns, financing, and the effectiveness of infill projects. Case studies of actual developments will be reviewed, focusing on successful actions and lessons learned.

Date: Wednesday, March 22, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Location: Sacramento

Cost: \$170 fee includes lunch and course materials.

Info: For more information call toll free (800) 752-0881.



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# The Transportation Debate—It Lives

Typically this section of the newsletter would be devoted to a commentary article that is germane to the feature story. However, the transportation related articles in the December '94 issue produced so many Letters to the Editor, that I decided to write some excerpts from a few of them. It is nice to know that you are reading your Newsletters, and thinking about the information therein. Keep the thought processes flowing Northern Section — *Ed.*

Dr. Holtzclaw points out a well-understood fact in the transportation planning profession that higher-density development equates to more transit and walking trips. However, his advice to "reform our planning laws to direct future residential, commercial, and office growth to our transit centers..." is misguided. Our planning documents represent the will of the people, and the people in many communities in the Bay Area have expressly rejected the clustering of high-density, development around transit centers in favor of continued suburban single-family densities...

**Gary K. Black, AICP**  
Transportation Planner, San Jose

I have come to view today's exhortations to "transit-oriented development," "increased density," and "infill" as more similar to, than distinct from the "auto-oriented development," "suburbanization," and "sprawl" which they promise to remedy...I can propose settlement patterns for current population, and for populations a fraction or several times as large, which will entail less resource depletion or degradation per unit of human satisfaction than will heaping more people and artifacts - however they are distributed - into the Bay Area.

**Robin Bayer**  
Stanford, CA

It is good to have Visions but if we are to use public funds we need to be more pragmatic. Gertler's piece on BART was good on history but visionary on BART's future. Planner's should be cognizant of the costs involved for some of BART's undertaking. We should strive for Appropriate Public Infrastructure and Planning...Unfortunately, to date, all the talk of Fast Track (FT) was only on Capital Funds or costs to get FT in place. Once FT is in place, however, there will be big funding problems to operate FT. Under current procedures, FT would have to compete with existing transit systems for regional operating funds, unless other outside funds become available.

**Roy Nakadegawa, P.E.**  
BART Director

The Commentary section of the newsletter is intended to provide a forum for members to express their views relative to planning related topics, or to express an opinion relative to articles printed in this newsletter. If you would like to submit an article, contact the Newsletter Editor at (408) 866-2140.

**CORRECTION**

*(continued from previous page)*

The need for an improved transit link between BART and the Oakland Airport was recognized at the inception of BART. It is estimated that a Connector such as SLRT could generate significant ridership and increase transit use to the Airport, and decrease air pollution and traffic congestion. The SLRT Connector would be an intermodal connector between BART (a regional transit network) and the Oakland Airport and could generate as many as 1.8 million passengers by the year 2010.

# Good News is No News

Like many of you, I have worked in several communities that have real success stories to tell in terms of revitalized downtowns created by innovative redevelopment programs; the preservation of open space at no cost to the taxpayer through a TDC program; and the completion of specific plans with citizens taking charge of the process. Funny thing though, no one really takes notice. This is due in large part, to a lack of interest on the part of the media to report good news, particularly when it comes from City Hall. After all, the public sector is established to insure that good things happen, right?

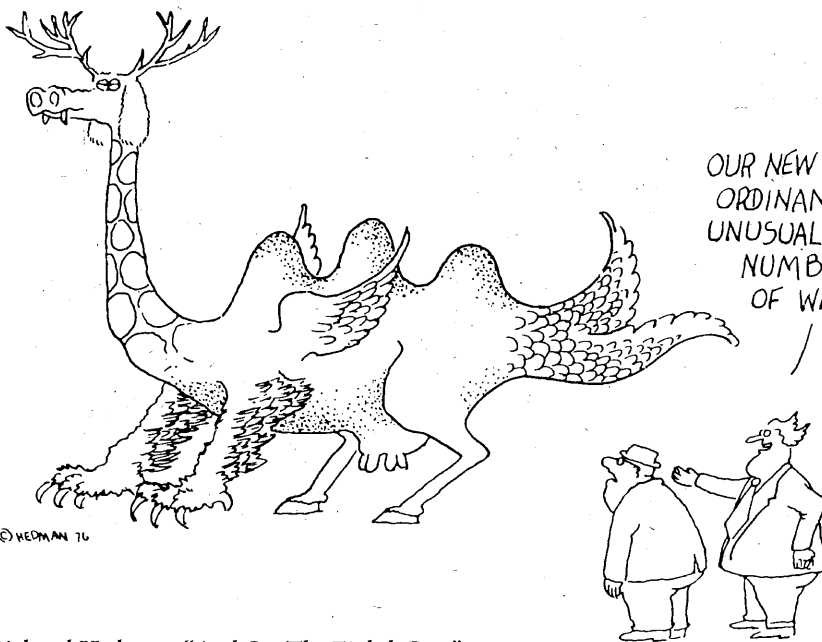
On the other hand the media loves to publicize public debacles like Orange Counties recently infamous "reverse repurchase" investment program (although, this event was newsworthy). Granted, the public sector should be held to a higher standard since we have a fiduciary responsibility regarding the public interest. But gee whiz Will\*

(I wish I was on a first name basis with Mr. Hearst) at least put some of the public success stories on page 10, right next to the obituaries.

Another part of the blame for this lack of "horn-tooting" can be placed on the legitimate paranoia derived from municipal Murphy's Law (if anything can go wrong, it will go wrong) which causes many of us bureaucrats to continue keeping our fingers crossed and lips sealed as we work in successful planning environments. We are metaphors to a line from "Broadcast News", when the idiot anchorman asks newswriter Albert Brooks what to do when everything in your life is going so well. Brooks' response, "you keep it to yourself."

\* Note: Shortly after this article was written and a copy was sent to Mr. Hearst, he resigned from the Chronicle staff, seeing the error of his ways.

*Steve Matarazzo is the Community Development Director of Sand City*



Richard Hedman, "And On The Eighth Day", by Hedman and Bair, APA Press, Chicago

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- 7 Presidio Lease Presubmittal, San Francisco
- 11 Sonoma County Transportation and Land Use Conference,  
Sonoma State University
- 15 Growth of Auto Travel in the U.S., Berkeley  
Historic Renovation and Economic Development, Orinda
- 22 UC Davis Extension, Transportation Impacts of Land Use Planning
- 23-25 UC Davis Extension, Designing Communities of Place

**March**

- 10 Bob Sturdivant Retirement Party, Santa Clara
- 22 UC Davis Extension, Infill Development Conference

**April**

- 22 UC Berkeley, Job Fair

**FEBRUARY**

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