

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Background

The Responsible Pet Ownership By-Law regulates the presence of wild and domesticated animals within Winnipeg, their activities, and the activities of their owners. Since the by-law came into force in 2013, opportunities have been identified to strengthen it to improve the safety of both pets and the community. Best practices in animal control and welfare have also evolved since the last review.

On May 10, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks directed the Winnipeg Public Service to review and report back to the appropriate Committee of Council, within 180 days, on a fuller review of the Responsible Pet Ownership By-law.



Engagement

The City of Winnipeg (City) reached out to stakeholders representing animal rescues, animal welfare, pet businesses, breeders, dog daycares, and exotic animal groups to gather input on proposed ideas to update the Responsible Pet Ownership By-Law. The proposed ideas were intended to start a conversation about improving animal welfare, animal safety and community safety in Winnipeg.

Four stakeholder meetings were held on the topics of animal control and welfare, dog daycares and breeding, urban wildlife, and exotic animals. The meetings began with a presentation of the proposed ideas following by a group discussion on:

- how the proposed ideas affect organizations;
- additional ideas to address by-law gaps; and
- other gaps in the bylaw that need to be addressed.

A list of stakeholders involved in Phase 1 public engagement can be found in Appendix A. Follow-up meetings occurred with stakeholders where additional information was required on alternative ideas and gaps in the bylaw. A list of follow-up meetings can be found in Appendix D.

A project webpage was also created for the general public to learn more about the bylaw review and proposed ideas. The webpage was promoted through a series of Facebook and Twitter posts. The general public was invited to share input through a dedicated project email address.

A summary of Phase 1 public engagement activities is in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Phase 1 Public Engagement Activities

Date	Activity	Participation
August 10 – September 7, 2021	Webpage	8,707 unique visitors
August 10 – September 7, 2021	Written submissions	795 submissions ¹
August 23, 2021	Animal Control and Welfare Meeting	12 attendees
August 24, 2021	Dog Daycares and Breeding of Dogs and Cats Meeting	8 attendees
August 25, 2021	Trapping, Poisoning, and Feeding Wildlife Meeting	7 attendees
August 26, 2021	Exotic Animals Meeting	66 attendees ²
August 27 – October 18, 2021	Follow-up meetings ³	22 meetings

¹ Written submissions do not include email campaigns and petitions; campaigns and petitions are summarized in Appendix C

² Exotic Animals Meeting was also attended by residents

³ Follow-up meetings occurred with stakeholders where additional information was required

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

What We Heard – Stakeholder Meetings

The following section summarizes what we heard through the stakeholder meetings. Feedback on the draft ideas for bylaw updates is summarized below, and sorted by the following themes:

- Dogs and cats
- Wildlife
- Exotic animals

Dogs and Cats

Two stakeholder meetings were held to gather feedback on the proposed bylaw amendments related to dogs and cats — animal control and welfare and breeding of dogs and cats/dog daycares.

Comments from attendees at the Animal Control and Welfare Meeting were largely focused on the overpopulation of dogs and cats. Four comments indicated support for mandatory spay/neuter of dogs and cats. Ideas shared include reducing the timeframe from six months to five months of age for the spay/neuter of cats, specifically addressing feral cats in the bylaw and provisions that allow shelters and rescues to fix unlicensed dogs and cats that are impounded before being returned to their owners.

Five comments from attendees expressed support for adopting standards for dog breeders in Winnipeg. Three attendees requested further clarification of the proposed amendments to the bylaws related to number of litters permitted per animal, per year, and the definition of a breeder. Ideas shared by participants include regulations for rescue organizations, and mandatory microchipping. Participants also indicated the need to be able to prevent people from breeding dogs that have displayed behavioral issues.

Four comments from attendees expressed support for best practice standards in the dog daycare. Many dog daycare businesses already have protocols in place that promote the safety and well-being in animals and people such as minimum square foot per animal, cleaning protocols, minimum ratio of worker to animal, and air quality standards.

Comments were also made regarding the application of regulations for home-based dog daycares vs. dog daycares in commercial spaces.

Wildlife

Comments from attendees at the wildlife stakeholder were predominantly about the lethal trapping and poisoning of wild animals. Attendees provided insight into animal welfare issues that stem from a lack of knowledge and understanding by homeowners on how to properly and safely set and monitor live traps. Two comments by attendees expressed support for continuing to allow the use of indoor glue traps and exterior bait stations by pest control companies and governmental agencies. According to the companies, when used correctly, rodenticide bait stations are an effective means to reduce rodents around the perimeter of a building and designed to prevent non-targeted animals from getting in.

Three comments by attendees indicated that non-target animals continue to get caught in lethal traps and they are supportive of prohibiting body hold traps. An attendee also noted that the safe and appropriate release of wild animals is not always possible and sometimes the best solution is to euthanize the animal in a humane way.

Exotic Animals

Comments from attendees at the exotic animal meeting were primarily about the allowable animal list (35 comments). Of those, 29 comments were about the selection of animals on the allowable list, and six were about the rationale for the allowable list. Attendees provided seven comments about the engagement process and five comments about the decision-making process. Three comments were about the research that was conducted as part of the bylaw review, and two comments were about enforcement. One commenter indicated that exotic animals are often neglected.

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

What We Heard – Written Submissions

The following section summarizes what we heard through the written submissions. Written submissions received through the project email address from August 10 to September 7, 2021 were coded for common themes.

Note that the location of many written submissions could not be verified. Some campaigns and petitions did not require senders to include their location. Analysis of written submissions in this section therefore excludes email campaigns and petitions. Campaigns and petitions are summarized later in this report and in Appendix C.

Dogs and Cats

Table 2 identifies the number of times each theme related to dogs and cats was mentioned in the written submissions. Note that respondents could provide more than one theme in a written submission.



Table 2: Dogs and Cats Themes

Theme	Number of Mentions
Breed-Specific Legislation	209
Overpopulation of Dogs and Cats: Spay/Neuter	71
Breeding	32
Pet and Public Safety: Unattended Vehicles and Cycling with Dogs	31
At Risk Pets: At Risk, Dangerous and Exceptionally Dangerous Dogs	23
Feral, Stray and Roaming Cats	17
Animal and Public Safety: Tethering/Chaining/Dog houses	15
Animal and Public Safety: Dog Daycares	9
Dangerous Dog appeals	5

The following table outlines key ideas that were submitted to the City and explains how the project team considered those ideas when drafting recommendations for the by-law update.

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Table 3: What We Heard Dogs and Cats

What We Heard	How it was Considered
Overpopulation of Dogs and Cats: Spay/Neuter	
Mandatory spay/neuter of dogs and cats over six months of age is supported. It will reduce the strain on animal shelters and rescues.	Support for mandatory spay/neuter of dogs and cats over six months of age is noted.
Spay/neuter should not be mandatory and continue to be the choice of the pet owner.	Dogs and cats that are not fixed contribute to overpopulation which places a strain on shelters and rescues, results in euthanization, and can lead to disease with lack of veterinary care. Unfixed dogs and cats can also demonstrate aggression and an urgency to roam.
The six-month timeframe for fixing dogs is too short for large and giant breeds. Early sterilization of some dog breeds is not recommended by veterinarians for health reasons. Other exemptions like for show animals should be made.	Residents can obtain an intact pet licence so their dogs and cats do not need to be fixed within six months of birth. Some reasons for obtaining an intact pet licence include larger dog breeds that have not met their growth maturity, service dogs, law enforcement dogs, specialty titled dogs, medical issues, and show dogs and cats.
Any cat being placed for adoption or returned to a family should be sterilized regardless if it was impounded or received by a shelter or rescue organization.	Many cats are adopted before this 6-months of age. This would be too early to require sterilization for cats. Unlicensed cats over 6-months impounded at an animal shelter would be required to be sterilized prior to release.
The City will need additional subsidized/free spay and neuter options for both dogs and cats to accommodate the increased demand that will result from mandatory spay/neuter over 6 months of age.	The City and Winnipeg Humane Society have additional low income spay/neuter capacity for cats and dogs. It is not anticipated that additional capacity is needed. Numerous veterinary clinics in Winnipeg also fix cats and dogs.
Proof of alteration should be required in order to receive a discount on licence fees. One-time licences could be considered for fixed animals.	Pet owners currently receive a significant discount on pet licenses once their pet is fixed. The City is not considering any further discounts at this time on pet licence fees or changing to a one-time licence. Pet license fees are the primary source of funding for the Animal Services Agency.
Feral, Stray and Roaming Cats	
The City should increase enforcement and hold owners more accountable for roaming cats.	It is illegal under the current Responsible Pet Ownership By-law to let a cat roam. Owners of roaming cats can be fined up to \$200. The City is not considering any additional changes.

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

The City should consider a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program by which feral cats are trapped, vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and then released into the environment.	The City is generally supportive of this idea being conducted by area animal shelters and rescue organizations; however, City currently does not have the resources for its own TNR program.
At Risk Pets: At Risk, Dangerous, and Exceptionally Dangerous Dogs	
Designation of at risk, dangerous, and extremely dangerous dogs is supported.	Support for the addition of an at risk designation and the existing dangerous and exceptionally dangerous dog designations is noted.
Removal of the option to appeal a dangerous dog designation is supported.	Support for removal of the option to appeal a dangerous dog designation is noted and is a recommended bylaw update.
Removal of the option to appeal a dangerous dog designation is not supported. Appeals are an important right and should be available to owners.	Significant dog on animal or dog on human attacks typically occur before a dog is reviewed for a dangerous dog designation. Owners are allowed to keep a dangerous dog with conditions that are designed to keep other animals and the community safe. Significant resources and investigations are utilized prior to designating a dog as dangerous.
Required dog training is supported. Owners of dangerous dogs should also receive additional education and formal training, including techniques to properly manage the dog.	Support for required training for owners of dangerous dogs is noted and is a recommended bylaw update to attempt to improve the behaviour and control of a dog.
The identity of a person who submits a complaint or incident involving a dangerous dog should not be revealed to the owner. Anonymity of the injured party reduces the risk of retaliation or intimidation by the owner.	The identity and information about a person who submits a complaint to the Animal Services Agency is not shared with the public. This information is protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).
Animal and Public Safety: Tethering/Chaining	
Prohibiting 24/7 tethering/chaining and 24/7 outdoor dog housing is supported. Time limits for tethering or leaving dogs outside unsupervised should be included in the bylaw.	Support for prohibiting 24/7 tethering/chaining and outdoor housing is noted. Time limits would be difficult to enforce because enforcement officers would need to monitor how long the dog is left outside. The goal is to ensure that dogs are always supervised when they are outside.
Animal and Public Safety: Dog Daycares	
Minimum best practice standards for dog daycares is supported.	Support for minimum best practice standards for dog daycares is noted. The City worked with dog daycares to develop a list of dog daycare standards that are included in the draft bylaw update.
The ratio of one staff for every 20 small dogs and one staff for every 15 large dogs is too low.	The ratio was increased to one staff for every 25 small dogs and one staff for every 20 large dogs in the draft dog daycare standards.

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Muzzles and collars should be permitted for certain dogs in playgroups.	The ban of muzzles and collars was removed from the draft dog daycare standards.
Pet and Public Safety: Unattended Vehicles and Cycling with Dogs	
Prohibiting leaving dogs and cats unattended in vehicles during extreme weather is supported.	Support for prohibiting leaving pets unattended in vehicles during extreme weather is noted and is a recommended bylaw update.
The proposed temperature ranges for leaving dogs and cats unattended in vehicles is not supported. Different breeds have different temperature tolerances for hot and cold.	Adopting different temperature ranges for different dog and cat breeds would be very difficult to enforce. A single temperature range will provide protection to all breeds. Without a temperature range, residents would be unaware of the expectation regarding extreme temperatures.
Leaving dogs and cats unattended in idling vehicles is not supported. Idling vehicles produce greenhouse gases that lead to climate change.	The City does not support unnecessary idling and encourages leaving pets at home during extreme temperatures. However, it is understood that a dog or cat will not be at risk if the heating or air conditioning system is running in a vehicle.
Prohibiting cycling with dogs tethered to the bicycle when 22C or greater is not supported. Temperature thresholds for cycling with dogs should be greater than those when leaving animals in unattended vehicles.	The temperature threshold of 22C was established with the Winnipeg Humane Society and will provide protection to all dog breeds. Cycling with dogs on warm days can lead to heat exhaustion and cause burns on paws.
Breeding	
Requiring a breeding permit for dogs and cats is supported. It strengthens efforts to eliminate unregulated breeding, also known as “backyard breeding.”	Support for breeding permits is noted and is a recommended bylaw update. Proposed breeding permits would require active veterinarian care, history of responsible pet ownership, and inspection of the breeding property.
Displaying the permit number everywhere puppies or kittens are advertised for sale, including online sales, is supported. The sale of puppies and kittens by backyard breeders is a concern and should be monitored, especially through avenues such as Kijiji.	Support for displaying permit numbers is noted. A recommended bylaw update proposes that owners be required to display a permit number where puppies or kittens are advertised for sale.
The City should require all dogs and cats get microchipped or tattooed and licensed prior to being adopted or sold.	Licensing is required at 6 months of age, which is also a common age for dogs and cats to get fixed. It is also common for tattooing or microchipping to happen during the operation. Many animals are adopted or sold before this 6-month milestone.
Limiting the number of litters per female dog or cat, per year and over the lifetime of the animal is supported.	Support for limits on the number of litters is noted and limits are recommended bylaw update.
Breed-Specific Legislation	

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Removing breed-specific legislation is supported. The breed does not reflect the animal's behavior. The by-law should focus on the behavior of dogs and the responsibility of pet owners.	Support for removing breed-specific legislation is noted. Additional research on breed-specific legislation will occur before any updates to the bylaw are recommended to City Council.
Removing breed-specific legislation is not supported. Pitbulls and similar breeds should continue to be banned in Winnipeg.	Identification of prohibited dogs is difficult and based only on how a dog looks. Additional research on breed-specific legislation will occur before any updates to the bylaw are recommended to City Council.

Wildlife

Table 4 identifies the number of times each theme related to wildlife was mentioned in the written submissions. Note that respondents could provide more than one theme in a written submission.

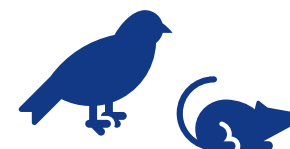


Table 4: Wildlife Themes

Theme	Number of Mentions
Lethal Trapping and Poisoning of Wild Animals	39
Feeding Wildlife	16

The following table outlines key ideas that were submitted to the City and explains how the project team considered those ideas when drafting recommendations for the by-law update.

Table 5: What We Heard Wildlife

What We Heard	How it was Considered
Lethal Trapping and Poisoning of Wild Animals	
Prohibiting the outdoor use of lethal traps and poisoning of wild animals is supported. Non-target animals get caught in traps resulting in injury or death.	Support for a prohibition of poison and lethal traps is noted. A bylaw recommendation includes prohibiting the use of outdoor body hold traps and, limiting the <u>outdoor</u> use of rodenticide to licensed pest control companies and government agencies.

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Prohibiting the outdoor use of rodenticide poison bait stations is not supported. Exemptions are required that allow homeowners to deal with rodent issues without having to hire a pest control company.	Based on feedback, the City will not recommend banning outdoor bait stations for licensed pest control companies. Residents can address indoor pest issues without hiring a licensed pest control company.
Wildlife proofing is not an effective method to prevent rodent issues, particularly small breeds of mice.	Wildlife proofing a property will minimize pest issues and is an integral part of a pest control plan. Other outdoor pest control measures can occur with the use of a licensed pest control company.
The sale of prohibited poison and traps should be regulated or banned.	Support for a prohibition on the sale of poison traps is noted. A bylaw recommendation includes limiting the outdoor use of rodenticide to pest control companies and government agencies.
Feeding Wildlife	
Prohibiting the intentional feeding of wildlife is supported.	Support for a prohibition of wildlife feeding is noted and is a recommended bylaw update.
Limit bird feeding to winter months and restrict bird feeder design to prevent unintentional feeding of wildlife. Bird feeders are a year-round attractant for wildlife.	While the City recognizes that there is some research that supports limiting bird feeding to the winter months, the City is not considering limiting bird feeding to winter months at this time.
Develop restrictions to minimize issues created by garbage. Garbage is a source of food for wildlife.	The Neighbourhood Livability By-law currently regulates the maintenance of properties, including garbage on properties, in section 6.

Exotic Animals

Table 6 identifies the number of times each theme related to wildlife was mentioned in the written submissions. Note that respondents could provide more than one theme in a written submission.

Table 6: Exotic Animal Themes

Theme	Number of Mentions
Allowable list	244
Birds (excluding chickens)	114
Herptiles (reptiles and amphibians)	104
Fish	81
Exotic general	74



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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Possession limits	63
Chickens	16
Mammals (excluding dogs and cats)	15

The following table outlines key ideas that were submitted to the City and explains how the project team considered those ideas when drafting recommendations for the by-law update.

Table 7: What We Heard Exotic Animals

What We Heard	How it was Considered
Allowable Animal List	
The allowable list for exotic animals is not supported. It is too restrictive and excludes many common pets.	Non-support for the allowable list is noted. Additional engagement on exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.
The allowable list for exotic animals is supported. It provides protection to exotic animals and improves animal welfare.	Support for the allowable list is noted. Additional engagement on exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.
The allowable list will impact Winnipeg businesses by severely restricting the types of animals that can be sold. It will also impact the demand for food, habitats, and other products.	Impacts to businesses from an allowable list is noted. Additional engagement on exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.
The allowable list will impact veterinary care. Winnipeg will lose veterinarians that specialize in exotic animals, which will impact care for grandfathered animals and animals outside of Winnipeg that seek veterinary care in Winnipeg.	Impacts to veterinary care from an allowable list is noted. Additional engagement on exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.
The allowable animal list could create a black market for exotic pets. Residents will purchase exotic animals from outside Winnipeg or illegally in Winnipeg.	Education will occur regarding allowed animals. Enforcement of the allowable animal list will be complaint-based, similar to how the current prohibited animal list is enforced. Different types of exotic animals on the City's current prohibited animal list are already available outside of Winnipeg.
The allowable animal list could be too difficult to enforce and would require a lot of resources to monitor the pets people keep in their homes.	The City has experience in enforcement and already enforces the current list of prohibited animals with minimal resources.

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Exotic animals provide options for people with allergies who cannot adopt a cat or dog and are important for people's mental health.	The allowable animal list has many alternatives to dogs and cats for people with allergies. The City recognizes the importance role pets play in mental health.
Urban chickens should be permitted in Winnipeg, as they provide food security and give gardeners a high-quality fertilizer.	Support for urban chickens is noted. Additional engagement on the allowable list will occur before any updates to the bylaw around allowable animals are recommended to City Council.
Residents should be allowed to rehome exotic animals within Winnipeg that are grandfathered as part of the allowable animal list.	Based on feedback, the City will not include a rehoming requirement to outside of Winnipeg for grandfather animals.
Animal welfare needs to be a higher priority than people's desire to keep exotic animals. Exotic animals belong in the wild and not as pets.	The importance of animal welfare is noted. Additional engagement on exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.
Possession Limits	
Possession limits for exotic animals are too low, especially for fish.	Based on feedback, fish will be excluded from the possession limits. Additional engagement on possession limits for other exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.
Possession limits for exotic animals are supported.	Support for possession limits is noted.
Breeding exotic animals is important for conservation, as many natural habitats around the world are in decline. Breeding exotic pets have saved species from extinction.	The role of exotic animal ownership in conservation is noted. Additional engagement on exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.
The exotic animal trade plays a role in the decline of wild species, spread of invasive species, and transmission of diseases.	The impacts of exotic animal ownership on the environment are noted. Additional engagement on exotic animals will occur before any updates to the bylaw on exotic animals are recommended to City Council.

The written submission also included alternative criteria that could be used to develop an allowable animal lists. Ideas included restricting the ownership of animals that are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species list, CITES endangered species list, and provincial and federal lists of banned species for importation. Others submissions did not support an allowable animal list and provide alternative ideas including educate on proper care, create standards for proper care, regulate of the sale of animals at pet stores, provide permits/licences for exotic animal owners.

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RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP BY-LAW REVIEW

Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

January 2022

Campaign Submissions

The City received six different email campaigns and one petition. Campaign submissions were received from across Canada and around the world. Campaign emails and the petition can be found in Appendix C.

Campaign/Petition	Description	Activity
Winnipeg Specialty Pets	Opposes proposed updates because of impacts to specialty pets, owners, and the pet industry.	605 submissions
Animal Justice	Supports proposed updates to protect companion animals, exotic animals, and wildlife.	416 submissions
ZooCheck	Supports the allowable list to provide greater controls over keeping exotic animals.	89 submissions
World Animal Protection	Supports for the allowable list to protect wildlife and prevent keeping exotic animals as pets.	82 submissions
Canadian Kennel Club	Recommends reconsidering mandatory spay/neuter for dogs over 6 months due to growth maturity issue and impounded unlicensed dogs as well as breeding permits.	14 submissions
Manitoba Canary and Finch Club	Opposes proposed updates that limit the types and numbers of birds that could be kept as pets.	8 submissions
Manitoba Canary and Finch Club Petition	Opposes proposed updates that limit the types and numbers of birds that could be kept as pets.	7,400+ signatures

Next Steps

Based on feedback from stakeholders and residents, additional public engagement is needed on exotic animals and the allowable animal list. The Public Service will request an extension to allow for more time to conduct a second phase of public engagement and prepare draft recommendations for exotic animals and the allowable animal list.

Draft recommendations to address gaps in the current bylaw with respect to cats, dogs, and wildlife will be presented to Council in winter 2021/22 for approval.

Appendices

Appendix A – List of Stakeholder Organizations
Appendix B – Meeting Notes
Appendix C – Campaign Submissions and Petitions
Appendix D – Follow-up Meetings

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