MPO Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

July 7, 2022, Meeting

10:00 AM-11:30 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Steve Woelfel, Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Decisions

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of May 26, 2022
- Approve the work scope for MBTA Transit Service Data Collection for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023–25
- Approve for endorsement FFY 2022–26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Adjustment Four
- Approve for release for public review FFY 2022-26 TIP Amendment Seven

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 13.

2. Chair's Report-Steve Woelfel, MassDOT

There was none.

3. Executive Director's Report—Tegin Teich, Executive Director, Central Transportation Planning Staff

T. Teich announced Anne McGahan's upcoming retirement. T. Teich stated that Anne McGahan has been a member of the Certification Activities group and go-to staff for air quality reporting for 30 years and has led the MPO through many long-range transportation plans. Anne McGahan has been an invaluable member of the team, and the MPO and staff will miss her in many ways and wish her a wonderful retirement.

Anne McGahan stated that she was hired for air quality work, went on to manage the long-range plan and performance measure work, and most recently was managing the MPO's resiliency work. The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is being left in the hands of Michelle Scott and the resiliency work is being managed by Judy Taylor.

T. Teich announced that the new Climate Resilience and Air Quality Planner, Judy Taylor, as well as the new Graphic Designer, Adriana Fratini, started yesterday. T. Teich further reminded the MPO that there are two jobs that are currently posted for the Data Analyst position and the TIP Manager position. The MPO is currently holding interviews for the TIP Manager, although there are still opportunities to apply.

T. Teich announced two engagement opportunities following the July 7 MPO meeting. MPO staff will be holding an MPO Member Workshop on refreshing the MPO Vision and Goals related to the upcoming LRTP. The meeting is scheduled for 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM via Zoom. Further, the Boston MPO will send a delegation to meet with the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization on Friday July 8, 2022, at Boston City Hall. At the next MPO meeting, there will be a presentation and discussion on the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program discretionary grant and a communication will be sent to the MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) contacts. There will be further discussion regarding the SS4A program at future MPO meetings.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Brian Kane reported that the Administration and Finance Committee met on July 6, 2022, to discuss the MPO elections as part of the work to create the new Operations Plan. The Committee was able to agree to a couple of changes to the MPO process, including planning to hold hybrid elections, both online and in-person, at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Fall Council Meeting, if the meeting can take place in person. There was also a strong consensus to reduce the number of nominations required to qualify as a candidate from five to three. These changes will be in place for the upcoming fall election. The committee is moving forward with the Operations Plan, and everyone is welcome to participate.

Derek Krevat reported that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee last met on June 30, 2022, and had a productive discussion on the final list of proposed UPWP discrete studies. Part of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 UPWP project universe, the committee received a list of studies that MPO staff is finalizing, as well as sending a table to UPWP committee members for their final review and approval shortly. D. Krevat expected to have one more meeting ahead of the July 21, 2022, MPO Meeting to obtain a final sign-off on the list of studies to be included in the UPWP before the draft 2023 UPWP is released on July 21, 2022, with intent to endorse on August 18, 2022.

6. Regional Transportation Advisory Council Report—Lenard Diggins, Chair, Regional Transportation Advisory Council

Lenard Diggins stated that the Advisory Council had not held a meeting since the last MPO board meeting. The next Advisory Council meeting will be discussing the presentation *Facing the Challenges of Creating the Pipeline of Transportation Projects in the Boston Region MPO* with special guest Ken Miller of the Federal Highway Administration. L. Diggins invited everyone to attend the Advisory Council meeting.

7. Action Item: Approval of May 26, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes

- 1. May 26, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes (pdf)
- 2. May 26, 2022, MPO Meeting Minutes (html)

Discussion

There was none.

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 26, 2022, was made by MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Three Rivers Interlocal Council, Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce (Tom O'Rourke. The motion carried.

8. Action Item: Work Scope: MBTA Transit Service Data Collection for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023–25–Jonathan Belcher, Chief Transit Analyst/Planner

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

- 1. MBTA Transit Service Data Collection for FFY 2023–25 (pdf)
- 2. MBTA Transit Service Data Collection for FFY 2023–25 (html)

Jonathan Belcher introduced the work scope for the MBTA Transit Service Data Collection for FFY 2023–25. The scope of the project is a three-year, \$595,000 contract with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) for transit service data collection. This is a continuation of work the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) staff has been providing since 1996. Task 1 is the collection of data. The primary focus will be on buses doing peak point checks, especially on routes where buses are not equipped with automatic passenger counters. Further data collection will take place on portions of the surface level Green Line, where they are also not equipped with automatic passenger counts and rely on manual counts. Data collection will be expanded in further years to include portions of the Green Line Extension project. Task 2 includes analysis of the data before it is sent to the MBTA and includes reviews of the MBTA's own bus passenger network data. In addition, CTPS staff will participate in the MBTA's quarterly internal service committee. Task 3 includes funding should the MBTA have more specific actions that CTPS staff could perform. A recent example of a specific action was for MPO staff to proofread MBTA public timetables before they were put onto the internet.

Discussion

Brian Kane commented on how the proposed work scope was important to all the work the MBTA does and underpins scheduling as well as resource allocation.

David Koses, City of Newton asked for an explanation of the 120 weeks of work for task 3 in the proposed budget, and whether CTPS would consider hiring someone new to work on this project. J. Belcher responded that this has been the standard for the last 20 years and it would not interfere with the MPO's other work.

Vote

A motion to approve the work scope for MBTA Transit Service Data Collection for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023–25, was made by the MBTA Advisory Board (Brian Kane) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

9. Action Item: FFY 2022–26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Adjustment Four–Jonathan Church, Manager of Certification Activities

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. FFY 2022–26 TIP Adjustment Four (pdf)

Jonathan Church introduced TIP Adjustment Four, which proposes funding source adjustments for two existing FFY 2022 projects. The adjustment include reallocation of FFY 2022 Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program funds to FFY 2022 MPO Regional Target Program funds for Project #608943 Neponset River Greenway Construction in Boston. Further, the adjustment includes reallocation of matching funds from SFY 2022 RTACAP to SFY 2023 RTACAP for Project #RTD0011462 CATA 35-foot Replacement Buses. J. Church presented the following table showing the proposed changes of Adjustment Four.

Project Name	Change	Amount
608943: Boston – Neponset	Cost Increase (FFY 2022	\$320,673
River Greenway	Statewide Bicycle and	(from \$8,809,272 to
Construction	Pedestrian Program)	\$9,129,945)
	Change Funding	
608943: Boston – Neponset	Program (FFY 2022	
River Greenway	Statewide Bicycle and	
Construction	Pedestrian Program)	-\$9,129,945
	Change Funding	
608943: Boston – Neponset	Program (FFY 2022	
River Greenway	MPO Regional Target	
Construction	Program)	\$9,129,945
	Section 5307: Urbanized	
	Area Formula /	
	Change Match	
	Funding Source (SFY	
RTA0011462: CATA – Buy 35-	2022 RTACAP to SFY	
foot Replacement Buses	2023 RTACAP)	\$1,415,000

Table 1 Adjustment Four Project Changes

CATA = Cape Ann Transportation Authority. FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization. RTACAP = Regional Transit Authority Capital Assistance. SFY = State Fiscal Year.

MPO staff requested that the MPO vote to endorse Adjustment Four.

Discussion

Eric Bourassa, MAPC, asked about the proposed funding surplus in the 2022 Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program and what projects the funding would be used for. Marie Rose, MassDOT, said that MassDOT is exploring options, such as multiuse trails that have cost overruns. These funding allocations are not yet finalized, but MassDOT is exploring many options. D. Krevat stated that after funding is moved from Statewide to Regional Target funding, the funding can be flexibly used on other project cost overruns that are in the Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian program.

Daniel Amstutz, Town of Arlington, asked if TIP Adjustment Four could be approved before the TIP Amendment Six is formally approved, noting that TIP Amendment Six removes project funding from the #607738: Bedford-Minuteman Bikeway Extension, from Loomis Street to Concord Road (Route 62) project. D. Krevat responded that the MPO's TIP adjustments and amendments would be compiled as a larger Statewide Transportation Improvement Program action that will be sent for federal approval. Adjustment Four assumes that the Bedford-Minuteman Bikeway Extension will be removed, given the challenges of the project. A situation where projects have been simultaneously amended has happened before, and this course of action is something federal partners have approved. If there are challenges to Amendment Six, there can be opportunities to revert these changes.

Jim Fitzgerald, City of Boston, asked if #607670 MassDOT Maffa Way + Mystic Ave Bridge Project would be a potential candidate for funding freed by TIP Adjustment Four. D. Krevat responded that the funding could be used for the Maffa Way project, which has experienced an eight to nine percent cost increase over time.

Vote

A motion to approve the endorsement of FFY 2022–26 TIP Adjustment Four as presented, was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Inner Core Committee, City of Somerville (Tom Bent). The motion carried.

10. Action Item: FFY 2022–26 TIP Amendment Seven–Jonathan Church,

Manager of Certification Activities

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. FFY 2022–26 TIP Amendment Seven (pdf)

Jonathan Church introduced TIP Amendment Seven, which proposes the addition of eight new projects awarded to various recipients under MassDOT's FFY 2022 Community Transit Grant Program. The funding sources for the Community Transit Grant Program include the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 formula funds and State Mobility Assistance Program (MAP) funds. J. Church presented the following table showing the proposed changes of Amendment Seven.

Table 2	
Amendment Seven Project Changes	

Project Name	Change	Amount
RTD0010442: Mystic Valley		
Elder Services, Inc		
Coordination of Non-		
Emergency Human Service	Add Project (FFY 2022	
Transportation	Transit Program)	\$132,750
RTD0010456: CATA - Cape		
Ann TA Dialysis and	Add Project (FFY 2022	
Medical Van	Transit Program)	\$109,850
RTD0010508: Hull Council on		
Aging - Buy Replacement	Add Project (FFY 2022	
Van	Transit Program)	\$66,489
RTD0010511: City of Revere -	Add Project (FFY 2022	
Mobility Management	Transit Program)	\$62,120
RTD0010549: MWRTA - MAP		
Replacement Vehicle	Add Project (FFY 2022	
Capital Request	Transit Program)	\$668,706
BCG0010486: SCM		
Community		
Transportation, Inc Buy	Add Project (FFY 2022	
Replacement Vans	Transit Program)	\$195,037
BCG0010510: Town of		
Arlington - Buy	Add Project (FFY 2022	
Replacement Van	Transit Program)	\$63,323
FFY = Federal Fiscal Year. MAP =	Mobility Assistance Program. M	IWRTA = MetroWest Regional
Transit Authority. TA = Transportati	on Authority.	

MPO staff requested that the MPO vote to release Amendment Seven for a 21-day public comment period.

Discussion

There was none.

Vote

A motion to approve FFY 2022–26 TIP Amendment Seven for public review, was made by the MAPC (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the At-Large Town, Town of Arlington (Daniel Amstutz). The motion carried.

11. Presentation: Route 9 Priority Corridor Study in Framingham and

Natick, MA—Seth Asante, Chief Transportation Planner Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

- 1. Route 9 Corridor Study (pdf)
- 2. Route 9 Corridor Study (html)

Seth Asante, Chief Transportation Planner, presented the findings of the Route 9 Priority Corridor Study in Framingham and Natick. The priority corridor study addresses arterial roadways identified in the Needs Assessment of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The goals and objectives of the priority corridor study align with those of the LRTP, which are to make all transportation modes safe, maintain and modernize the system, use existing facilities more efficiently and increase multimodal transportation, provide comparable transportation access and service quality among communities regardless of income level or minority population, and to ensure that our transportation network serves as a strong foundation for economic vitality.

Following a selection process that involved a review of safety conditions, congestion, and multimodal transportation, MPO staff selected the Route 9 corridor in Framingham and Natick for study. The corridor is approximately nine miles long and is one of the major east-west routes within Massachusetts. The corridor is a two-way operation, four-lane divided, principal arterial, which is also part of the National Highway System. The corridor carries approximately 50,000 vehicles a day and is open to all traffic. The right-of-way is generally 85 feet wide, but is wider at the signalized intersections, where it widens to accommodate up to turn lanes.

Over the years, MPO staff has conducted several priority corridor studies. MassDOT and the communities like the priority corridor studies because they provide at a conceptual level what will be required to address deficiencies in the corridors before they commit to design and engineering. Many of the short-term recommendations have been implemented, and some of the study recommendations have advanced into projects on the MassDOT project database.

Public engagement is a crucial part of the priority corridor studies. An advisory task force composed of the City of Framingham, the Town of Natick, MassDOT Highway District 3, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, and MetroWest Regional Transit

Authority (MWRTA) was established to guide the study. MPO Staff met with the advisory task force and presented the existing conditions and the improvements for feedback. The task force also reviewed the draft report of the study, and the current draft reflects their feedback.

S. Asante presented two videos showing the existing conditions of the Route 9 corridor in Framingham and Natick (viewable here) and then discussed the challenges with the Route 9 Corridor related to walking, biking, and driving. For people walking, the issues include poor sidewalk conditions and gaps in the sidewalk network. Safe pedestrian crossing locations are limited, which creates a barrier between the neighborhoods and businesses north and south of Route 9. In addition, several side streets at signalized interactions lack pedestrian signals for crossing. Many streets and driveways also need ADA-compliant curb ramps for persons using assisted mobility devices. Other walking issues include long crosswalks, typically eight to nine lanes wide, and a lack of pedestrian refuge islands.

For people who bicycle, the main issue is the lack of bicycle facilities. Although there are bikeable shoulders on Route 9, the shoulders are not marked as bicycle lanes, are inconsistent in width and end at signalized intersections. Further, Route 9 is a high-stress environment for people biking because of high-vehicle speeds and traffic volumes. People biking usually ride on the sidewalks. There is also a lack of connectivity for bicycle trips between Route 9 and crossing arterials.

For people driving, the main issues are the high number of crashes, congestion and queuing, insufficient wayfinding and advance notifications, insufficient street lighting, and signal timing and phasing. S. Asante presented a table summarizing intersection crashes on the corridor from 2015 to 2019. There were four fatalities, three of which were vehicle pedestrian crashes. Twenty-seven (27 percent) of the crashes occurred under dark conditions. Rear-end and angle crashes were the predominant crash type, and 32 percent of crashes occurring during peak travel periods.

Based on the existing conditions analysis, the top five weaknesses are the high number of crashes, an automobile-centric corridor design, lack of facilities for bicycling, congestion and queuing of vehicles, and poor connectivity between neighborhoods north and south of Route 9. The strengths and opportunities for the corridor are to improve safety for all users, to transform the roadway for current and future uses, to improve the quality of life of neighborhoods, to create a strong foundation for economic vitality, and support smart growth.

Some short-term improvements for the corridor include upgrading sidewalks and curb ramps, adding pedestrian signals and pushbuttons to side streets, installing pedestrian refuge islands for long crosswalks, installing countdown timers, and moving the order of the pedestrian phase to occur before the Route 9 mainline phase. Additional short-term safety and operations upgrades include upgrading signal equipment to improve safety, optimizing signal timing to reduce congestion, improving wayfinding and advance notifications, improving street lighting to reduce nighttime crashes, providing uniform speed regulations, and lengthening acceleration and deceleration lanes.

Long-term improvements for walking and bicycling accommodations include upgrading and closing gaps in the sidewalk network, providing sidewalk-level separated bike lanes, providing safe crossing opportunities to connect neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and workplaces, and providing a welcoming environment for all users using aesthetics and landscaping. S. Asante presented several long-term improvement alternatives, along with proposed locations for safe crossing opportunities. In conclusion, the study meets the LRTP goals described previously. The proposed improvements will increase safety for all users, enhance accommodations for all users, enhance the economic vitality of the Route 9 corridor, connect neighborhoods and businesses, and worked with MassDOT, the MPO, and other stakeholders.

Discussion

Dennis Giombetti, City of Framingham, asked when the study concluded and who did the CTPS work with to gain input from the municipalities of Framingham and Natick. In addition, D. Giombetti asked how MassDOT can advance this project from the perspective of the State and if there have been any cost estimates for short-term and long-term recommendations. S. Asante responded that when the study began, an advisory task force was formed that included officials from Framingham, including planners and engineers. The advisory task force provided comments that were helpful to the study. In later parts of the study, there were changes in Framingham and Natick's staff. In the study, CTPS analyzed the selected Route 9 corridor, all the intersections and crossing materials, and proposed improvements for all intersections. Some of the crossing materials may be under the municipality's jurisdiction, but much of the corridor and signalized sections are under the jurisdiction of MassDOT. During the study, MassDOT also sent staff to participate and to work on a route safety audit for the entire corridor. MassDOT will be including short-term improvements in the upcoming #609402 Framingham-Natick Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 9 project. For long-term improvements proposed by the study, MassDOT, the Boston Region MPO, and communities will need to work together to implement these proposals into projects. The study did not include a cost analysis, but there are consultants who are designing the upcoming pavement project, so cost would be more beneficial at the design stage.

D. Giombetti asked if Framingham and Natick should reach out to MassDOT District 3 to look at next steps to ensure short-term solutions and to plan out the long-term recommendations. S. Asante responded yes, and that long-term projects should be advanced by MassDOT

David Koses, City of Newton, asked if there were certain recommendations that rose to the top in terms of focus or priority in the study. S. Asante responded that one comment received was from the Natick Select Board. The Select Board was looking for more choices in transportation, and one priority that came up was how to improve the transportation choices of the Route 9 corridor, as well as the Golden Triangle area. Natick says that sidewalk-level bicycle lanes would help connect neighborhoods. Further, improving the crossing opportunities would help connect businesses and neighborhoods across Route 9.

L. Diggins expressed his support for the study and was looking forward to what the Boston Region MPO could do to implement the study recommendations.

E. Bourassa asked if cross-section narrowing was considered as part of the study. S. Asante responded that the car lanes of Route 9 were initially 12 feet wide, but were reduced to 11 feet in the last pavement project. Since many trucks and other vehicles use Route 9, the study was not able recommend reducing the number of lanes by the current amount. On the corridor, there is a wide shoulder that is six feet to eight feet wide and that is what the study proposes to modify to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel in the corridor.

Collette Aufranc, Town of Wellesley, noted that some sidewalk improvement work was done along Route 9 in Wellesley and one of the issues the Town is facing is maintenance and plowing of snow off the sidewalks to ensure their long life and long use. There needs to be a budget at MassDOT for maintenance of these assets, otherwise they deteriorate very quickly. C. Aufranc asked why the study stops at Framingham and Natick. S. Asante answered that CTPS considered the length of the corridor, normally studies do not go longer than six miles, but an exception was made due to the two communities being linked together. CTPS will investigate studying other areas in the future.

Josh Ostroff, Chair of Natick Transportation Advisory Committee, thanked CTPS and all participants in the corridor study. J. Ostroff stated that it is critical that municipalities are assertive with State partners to redeem on the commitments the State has made towards the climate and shifting transportation modes. For many years, MassDOT would resurface Route 9 and not look at the sidewalks, today we are facing snow

removal issues. In years to come, municipalities will need to be much more creative and assertive to make these corridors better for the communities they serve. J. Ostroff further thanked the study authors for integrating the Town of Natick's recommendations into the study and hopes that this corridor study can be used as a template for other corridor studies in the future.

Mark Abbott commented about participation in the study and noted that in the appendix of the report, Appendix A - part III, there is a list of people who participated in the Natick Transportation Advisory Committee, including several people from Framingham.

12.Members' Items

There was none.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by MAPC, (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
At-Large City (City of Everett)	Jay Monty
At-Large City (City of Newton)	David Koses
At-Large Town (Town of Arlington)	Daniel Amstutz
At-Large Town (Town of Brookline)	Heather Hamilton
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald Amira Patterson
City of Boston (Boston Transportation Department) Federal Highway Administration	William Conroy
Federal Transit Administration	
Inner Core Committee (City of Somerville)	Tom Bent
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Steve Woelfel Marie Rose
MassDOT Highway Division	John Romano
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)	Laura Gilmore
Massachusetts Port Authority	Sarah Lee
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (Town of Acton)	
North Shore Task Force (City of Beverly)	Darlene Wynne
North Suburban Planning Council (Town of Burlington)	Melissa Tintocalis
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
South Shore Coalition (Town of Rockland)	Jennifer Constable
South West Advisory Planning Committee (Town of Medway)	
Three Rivers Interlocal Council (Town of Norwood/Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce)	Tom O'Rourke Steven Olanoff

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Collette Aufranc	
Sarah Bradbury	MassDOT District 3
Casey Campetti	
Maynard Clark	
Paul Cobuzzi	
Joe Collins	Town of Norwood
Margo Costigan	MassDOT
Jon Fetherston	MWRTA
James Fitzgerald	
Tiffany Garcia	
Michael Garrity	MassDOT
Joy Glynn	MWRTA
Michelle Ho	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Roth Jeffrey	666-MITLL
Paul Joseph	
Josh Klingenstein	
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Josh Levin	MassDOT District 4
Chase Modestow	MWRTA
Paul Nelson	
Josh Ostroff	Town of Natick
Sheila Page	Town of Lexington
Jeanette Rebecchi	Transportation Manager, Town of Bedford
C Senior	MassDOT District 5
Jon Seward	
Ishmael Sharif	
Derek Shooster	MassDOT
Ann Sullivan	MassDOT District 3
Tyler Terrasi	MWRTA
Emily V	MWRTA
Andrew Wang	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director Mark Abbott Seth Asante Jonathan Belcher Logan Casey Jonathan Church Annette Demchur Adriana Fratini Betsy Harvey Sandy Johnston Stella Jordan Anne McGahan Marty Milkovits Rebecca Morgan Srilekha Murthy Meghan O'Connor Gina Perille Sean Rourke Michelle Scott Judy Taylor

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Title VI Specialist

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857.702.3700 (voice)

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