



**HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**

**Regional Transportation Planning Agency  
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority  
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies**

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**AGENDA ITEM 7a  
HCAOG Board Meeting  
January 20, 2022**

DATE: January 12, 2022  
TO: HCAOG Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)  
FROM: Oona Smith, Senior Regional Planner  
SUBJECT: **Regional Transportation Plan Update: Certify EIR Amendment #2 and Adopt Final Draft**

**STAFF REPORT**

**Contents:**

- Staff's Recommended Action
- Staff Summary
- “Addendum #2 to the Final Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Humboldt Regional Transportation Plan 2013-14 Update” (*electronic enclosure*)
- *Variety in Rural Options of Mobility (VROOM) 2022-2042* Final Draft (*electronic enclosure*)
- Resolution 22-03 (to certify the Addendum #2 to the Environmental Impact Report)
- Resolution 22-04 (to adopt the RTP update, *VROOM 2022-2042*)

**Staff's Recommended Action:**

1. Introduce the item as an action item;
2. Allow staff to present the item;
3. Receive public comment;
5. Direct staff as necessary or consider making the following motion,  
“I move that the PAC recommend that the HCAOG Board adopt Resolution 22-03 certifying “Addendum #2 to the Final Environmental Impact Report Prepared for the Humboldt Regional Transportation Plan 2013-14 Update, and adopt Resolution 22-04 finalizing the RTP update, *Variety in Rural Options of Mobility 2022-2042.*”

**Staff Summary:**

**Addendum #2 to the Final Environmental Impact Report**

The “Addendum #2 to the Final Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Humboldt Regional Transportation Plan 2013-14 Update” serves to inform the HCAOG Board and the public of the potential negative impacts to the environment that could result from Board action to

adopt the RTP Update, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. The Addendum #2 states the following:

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the above (discussions of potential impacts), no new significant adverse environmental impact nor a substantial increase in previously identified significant impacts would occur as a result of the proposed 2021 RTP Update. Therefore, the impacts introduced as a result of the RTP do not meet the standards for a subsequent or supplemental EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162.

The significance determinations reported in the CEQA Checklist section of the Initial Study have not changed for the applicable topics. Likewise, the significance determinations and the Mitigation and Monitoring Program identified in the Final EIR have not changed.

The Board, at the November meeting, reviewed the Addendum #2 administrative draft, and directed staff to finalize it for certification. HCAOG staff has not received any agency or public comments on the draft addendum. I have finalized the Addendum #2 (changing only a reference to page numbers in the RTP Update), and recommend that the Board certify Addendum #2 today.

#### **Final Draft of RTP Update: *VROOM* 2022-2042**

The final draft of the Regional Transportation Plan update, “Variety in Rural Options of Mobility (*VROOM*) 2022-2042” is presented for your consideration to adopt. We have not made major substantive changes; most edits are to add new and updated information. The table below describes what staff edited in each chapter. (The final draft is presented without tracked changes.)

The final draft has changes that respond to the Board’s directions from November, recommendations from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and comments from the public and Caltrans District 1. Comments and concerns regarding aligning RTP projects with RTP goals is discussed further below.

#### **Aligning RTP Projects and Goals:**

At the October 2021 Board meeting, the Board considered releasing the full public review draft of the Regional Transportation Plan update. At that meeting public comments were received advocating for a different methodology for including projects in the RTP to better align the projects with RTP priorities, specifically the new Safe and Sustainable Transportation Targets. Commenters have advocated that proposed projects listed in the RTP contribute to achieving the Targets.

Currently, each jurisdiction (including Tribes) chooses their projects to be listed in the RTP, with no limitations. For projects listed in the Complete Streets Element, jurisdictions self-identify which RTP objectives the projects will help achieve. HCAOG has never analyzed whether or not jurisdictions’ completed projects have helped achieve HCAOG’s goals and mission.

During the Board meeting, PAC members requested that projects listed in the RTP be tied to outcomes and that the Board to consider including evaluation criteria to rank projects in order for them to align with the RTP goals. (Two members of the public made the same point in their comments.) A PAC member recommended that staff discuss this with the TAC for their input.

The Board voted to release the full public draft and add a policy to explore developing a ranking system for prioritizing projects in the RTP.

Staff brought the discussion to the following TAC meeting (Nov. 4). The TAC recommended against limiting the inclusion of jurisdictions' projects in the RTP because some funding programs only fund projects that are included in an adopted RTP. Several TAC members pointed out that road rehabilitation projects achieve safety objectives. The TAC recommended adding "fix it first" as one of the objectives for Complete Streets projects (Table *Streets-4*).

Staff brought the TAC's recommendations to the November 2021 Board meeting and the Board approved adding it. The introduction to Table *Streets-4* now reads as below:

The table compiles project lists from the seven incorporated cities, unincorporated County, and Tribes that sit on HCAOG's Technical Advisory Committee. TAC members self-reported whether or not their respective proposed projects would help achieve one or more of the objectives:

- Mode shift to active transportation;
- Lowering vehicle miles traveled (VMT) from cars and trucks;
- Access to essential destinations by walking, biking, and/or public transportation;
- Vision Zero, the goal to eliminate all traffic deaths and severe injuries; and/or
- Fix-It-First priority for keeping existing investments in a "state of good repair" over building new infrastructure.

These are some of the objectives from the RTP's Safe & Sustainable Transportation Targets. (See Chapter 2, *Renewing Our Communities*, for full SST Targets table.) Generally speaking, we expect that projects that will meet the most objectives/targets will be the top priorities.

At the November Board meeting, to address public comments and Board direction in October, staff proposed the following language which the Board then approved:

**Funding Consistency Tool:** HCAOG shall develop a tool or process to evaluate projects that qualify for discretionary non-formula funding available through HCAOG (such as the State Transportation Improvement Program). The tool or process is intended to aid in prioritizing projects that provide the most benefit in achieving the priorities set forth in the Regional Transportation Plan and the Safe and Sustainable Transportation Targets.

Staff added this as an action item in the Financial Element final draft, and reviewed it with the TAC at their January 6 meeting.

The TAC has recommended that the Board approve the final RTP *with revised language* for this action item. The main concern stated was that the draft language would result in developing a tool that could "screen out (fix-it-first road rehabilitation) projects that could be a jurisdiction's top priority" and as a result a crucial funding source (mainly the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)) would be lost for these types of projects. Rural counties statewide have long advocated to keep road rehabilitation projects as an eligible use for STIP funding eligible because of the limited State and federal funding sources for these projects.

The TAC also expressed concern that the proposed language would depart from how the TAC has operated in the past and take away from the collaborative nature of the way the TAC reaches project recommendations.

Staff prepared the following alternative language to address the TAC’s concerns:

**Funding Consistency Analysis:** HCAOG staff will prepare a report for review by the TAC and the Board on the history of projects funded with HCAOG discretionary funding sources and the project benefits achieved in relation to RTP priorities including fix-it-first and the Safe and Sustainable Transportation Targets. HCAOG will track annually the benefits of the projects in relation to RTP priorities. Based on the results of this tracking, staff will work with the TAC and Board to explore if and how a ratings program for projects would be beneficial in meeting RTP priorities.

If approved by the Board, this will be an action item in the Financial Element.

Following is the table showing revisions staff has made to the final draft (from the Full Public Draft).

Element/ chapter	Changes made to the “Full Public Draft” for the draft Final RTP (Jan. 2022)
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● (Page 104) Explicitly restated HCAOG’s regional priorities (completing the Humboldt Bay Trail between Arcata and Eureka and the 101 Safety Corridor Interchange), plus emphasized a commitment to safety with a new focus on transportation safety along the Eureka Broadway (101) corridor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2017 RTP highlighted two projects of regional importance: completing the Humboldt Bay Trail between Arcata and Eureka, and completing the 101 Safety Corridor Interchange. Both projects have progressed since 2017 (e.g., additional funding secured, mitigation projects in the works, and necessary permits obtained) and they remain regional priorities to complete in the short-term (within 10 years or less). Additionally, in <i>VROOM 2022-2042</i>, HCAOG is renewing its commitment to transportation safety with emphasizing a focused regional priority to reduce traffic-related fatalities on the Broadway Corridor in Eureka, with the Vision Zero goal of eliminating traffic-related deaths and serious injuries. Priorities for the Broadway Corridor include both short-term safety enhancements and long-term multimodal improvements.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● (Page 1-7) Updated the description of Caltrans’ <i>Smart Mobility Framework</i> (2010) to note that Caltrans released an updated SMF Guide in November 2021.</li> <li>● (Page 1-8, 1-9) Updated description of the CEQA findings and preparation of an Addendum #2 to the Program EIR.</li> </ul>
2. Renewing Our Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In Safe &amp; Sustainable Targets Table: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Revised heading of “EV Charging Infrastructure” to “ZEV Fueling Infrastructure.”</li> <li>□ Revised electric-vehicle charging station targets to be in line with state modeling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2025, install a total of 1,394 public chargers, including 42 DC Fast Chargers (DCFC). By 2030, install a total of 3,560 EVCS of which 127 are DCFC. (Source: California Energy Commission, Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Assessment (July 2021).)</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Added <u>underlined</u> text to the SST target: Double transit trips (<u>including mobility-on-demand trips</u>) by 2025, and again by 2030, and again by 2040.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Added description of equity criteria and added reference to the corresponding Figure 2.4 Disadvantaged Communities.</li> </ul>
3. Global Climate Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Added 3 draft policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ <b>Environmental Stewardship &amp; Climate Protection:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>POLICY CLIMATE-5. Traditional ecological knowledge:</b> HCAOG acknowledges the value of indigenous sciences and knowledge and the need for indigenous perspectives in responding to the climate change crisis. HCAOG shall work to support indigenous-led climate adaptation approaches, and shall work collaboratively with tribes and tribal governments for mitigation, adaptation, and resilience to climate change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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**Equitable & Sustainable Use of Resources:**

**POLICY CLIMATE-7. Equity for resilience:** HCAOG strives to assure that individuals and communities at greatest risk from climate-change related threats in Humboldt County, including low-income communities and communities of color, receive resources necessary to achieve sustainable resilience, mitigation, and/or adaptation.

**Safety & Health:**

**POLICY CLIMATE-8. Health and safety:** HCAOG shall work to identify and implement critical mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency actions to protect Humboldt communities from health and safety threats from transportation-related impacts from extreme weather events (such as flooding, landslides, inundation, wildfire, windstorms, and heatwaves).

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4. Tribal  
Transportation

*Made only minor edits for clarity.*

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5. Emergency  
Transportation

- (Pages 5-5, 5-6) Added that aircraft and airports are assets for emergency evacuation and search-and-rescue efforts.
  - (Table *Emergency-2*, page 5-): Revised performance indicator for clarity/applicability: ~~Has the level of transit or paratransit service increased~~ access increased for transit, paratransit, micro-transit, walking and/or biking for emergency evacuation?
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6. Land Use-  
Transportation

- (Page 6-7) Described new housing legislation, SB9 and SB10:  
The California Legislature and Governor Gavin Newsome passed laws and budgets with concerted objectives to respond to California's housing supply shortage and homeless and houseless crises. On January 1, 2022, new laws will take effect that are intended to multiply housing production statewide, streamline the process for cities to zone for multi-family housing, and increase residential density. Senate Bill 9 (Atkins), the California Housing Opportunity and More Efficiency (HOME) Act, allows for ministerial approval, without discretionary review or hearings, for homeowners to subdivide their current residential single-family zoned parcels or build a duplex thereon. Senate Bill 10 (Weiner) gives local governments a new process for passing ordinances (before January 1, 2029) to zone any parcel for up to ten residential units if located in transit-rich areas and urban infill sites.
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7. Complete  
Streets &  
Connected  
Communities

- (Page 7-1) Added description of Caltrans' new policy directive:  
Caltrans adopted a new "Complete Streets" directive in December 2021 which commits that "all transportation projects funded or overseen by Caltrans will provide comfortable, convenient, and connected complete streets facilities for people walking, biking, and taking transit or passenger rail unless an exception is documented and approved." Furthermore, the policy states, "Caltrans commits to removing unnecessary policy and procedural barriers and partnering with communities and agencies to ensure projects on local and state transportation systems improve the connectivity to existing and planned pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities, and accessibility to existing and planned destinations, where possible." (Director's Policy DP-37).
  - (Page 7-6) Added text about safety benefits of street trees:  
Elements that add aesthetic quality to the streetscape, such as street trees and other landscaping, sidewalks, and parklets, increase safety because adding visual interest and narrowing viewscapes makes drivers slow down.
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- Table *Streets-5* Complete Streets Projects for Caltrans District 1 — moved to Appendix E.
  - (Page 7-14, 7-15, et seq) Added “Fix It First” to list of objectives for proposed projects: Table *Streets-4* Complete Streets Projects for Jurisdictions — Revised with updates sent by TAC members.
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8. Commuter Trails
- (Page 8-4) Added language clarifying the Humboldt Bay Trail is designed as rail with trail so that the rail prism is preserved for potential tourist excursions
  - (Page 8-5) Added text to **POLICY TRAILS-8**: HCAOG will prioritize planning, design, construction, adequate maintenance, education, enforcement, and other actions to improve safety, and the perception of safety, for the intended uses of the regional trails system.
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9. Public Transportation
- (Pages 9-2 to 9-4) Added description of popular routes, ridership trends, and zero-emission vehicles in transit fleets
  - (Page 9-6) Added text to **POLICY TRANSIT-2**: HCAOG shall support transit providers in Humboldt County in coordinating public transit services for local, intercity, tribal area, and interregional travel, including planning with regional and local providers in neighboring counties and encouraging Amtrak to implement new bus-only thruway routes in the region.
  - (Page 9-9) Added description of the now discontinued KT-NeT service and plans for the Yurok Tribe to begin operating a route in Hoopa area.
  - (Table *Transit-2* Regional Projects for Public Transportation) Added projects per HTA: Willow Creek Zero Emission fueling infrastructure; Satellite office/transit hub in Redway; McKinleyville Town Center Transit Center; added Manila and Trinidad to feeder bus-lines; added microtransit pilot in McKinleyville.
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10. Aviation
- (Page 10-1) Added text: public airports/Redwood Coast Airport is an asset for emergency preparedness and disaster response.
  - (Table *Aviation-5*. Performance Indicators for the Regional Aviation System Operations) Renamed “Performance Measures” to “Performance Indicators.” Deleted indicators and associated measures for which no measurable causal data is publicly available.
  - Revised two measures for clarity. *See below.*
  - (Page 10-16) Added discussion of aviation sector GHG emissions, travel strategy for elective air travel, and carbon offsets. *See new text below.*

(Table *Aviation-5*. Performance Indicators)

GOALS	INDICATORS	MEASURES	DATA SOURCES
<b>Efficient, Viable Transportation System</b>	Have investments improved system efficiency and/or productivity?	Per one thousand dollars invested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased frequency and reliability of aviation service.</li> <li>● <del>Increase in Percentage of passenger seats filled on commercial flights</del> passenger miles carried.</li> </ul>	Caltrans, Public Works Departments, local and state environmental compliance reporting, <u>commercial airlines.</u>
	Are aviation market shares increasing for freight or commercial passenger services?		

**Balanced Mode Shares (Complete Streets)**

Has access to active transportation trips to airports increased?

- Travel mode split (shares) for freight transport. Quantity and quality of multi-modal connections to commercial airport (e.g., public transit service, rideshare services, bicycle facilities, pedestrian access).

Passenger surveys.

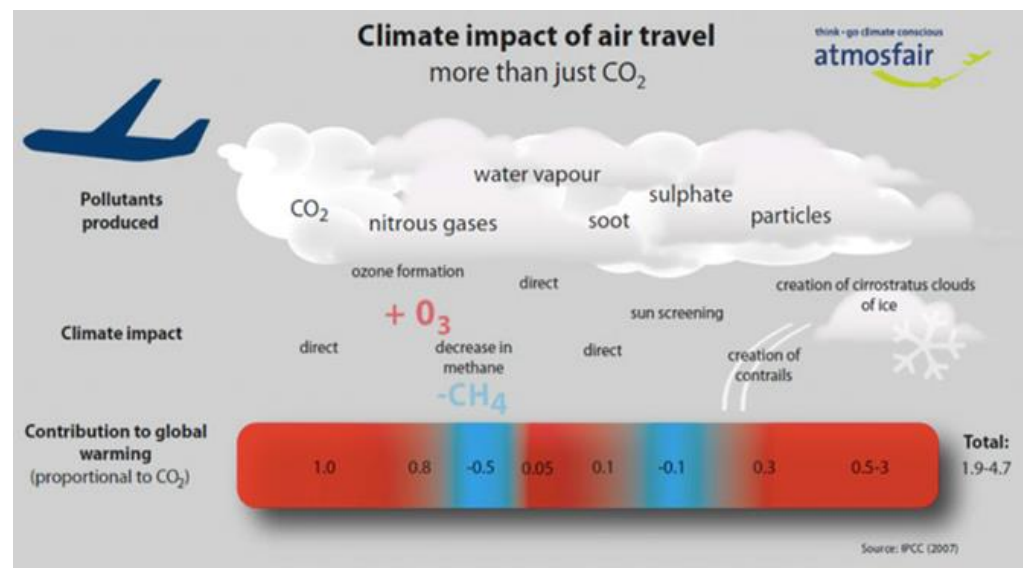
(Page 10-16 et seq.)

The aviation sector contributes greenhouse gas emissions from ground operations to elevations as high as 43,000 feet. In the past 15 to 20 years, airports worldwide have upgraded buildings and ground fleets for energy efficiency, resulting in cutting energy use and GHG emissions. Results from the air, however, have been the opposite: GHG emissions from commercial flights have been increasing due to increases worldwide in air travel and air freight.

Technological prospects for transitioning to zero-emission commercial aircraft lag far behind EV and ZEV cars and trucks. Such a transition is not expected within the next 20 years as it is not, as of yet, a top strategy that state or federal governments are planning or pursuing. Decisions and actions for reducing aviation GHG emissions fall largely on individual choice: To fly or not to fly?

It would make sense to consider the carbon footprint when planning most trips, and whenever deciding on whether or not to fly. A decision-tree or standard framework for weighing the pros and cons can be used at the individual level as well as at an institutional or agency level. One example is the "Tyndall Travel Strategy," developed by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change initially for the academic/scientific research professions. Their framework strategy includes a Code of Conduct to support a low-carbon research culture, a decision tree, and a reporting and scoring tool (Tyndall Travel Tracker <http://travel.tyndall.ac.uk>). The strategy is self-guided and self-monitored voluntarily. The Tyndall Center is open and transparent, making the air-travel emissions public because, they say, "We want the public to know that we are taking our emissions seriously and acting to reduce them." (More information at <https://tyndall.ac.uk/about/travel-strategy/>.)

One simple and available mitigation for air travel is to purchase carbon offsets for the GHG emissions contributed by one's flights. A carbon offset represents reducing one metric ton (approximately 2,205 pounds) of carbon dioxide emissions. Revenue generated from



Source: Atmosfair (Germany) ([www.atmosfair.de/en/air\\_travel\\_and\\_climate/flugverkehr\\_und\\_klima/](http://www.atmosfair.de/en/air_travel_and_climate/flugverkehr_und_klima/))



carbon offsets helps fund projects that sequester carbon. Carbon offsets can be purchased to offset any mode of travel or any activity that contributes GHG to the atmosphere. Carbon offset programs exist at local, state, national, and international levels to fund carbon-sequestration projects across the globe. HCAOG encourages travelers to buy carbon offsets, especially for local sequestration projects.

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11. Goods Movement
- (Pages 11-7, 11-8) Updated descriptions of SB 1029 and SB 69 for the Great Redwood Trail.
  - (Page 11-8) Revised language (suggested by Caltrans-District 1) **Policy GM-6 (Rail Right-of-Way)** HCAOG encourages the highest and best use of rail facilities and rail rights-of-way in Humboldt County ~~and~~. HCAOG supports railbanking and preserving the Northwestern Pacific railroad rail rights-of-way in Humboldt County until it is economically viable and environmentally compatible to restore freight or passenger rail service. HCAOG supports efforts to plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain a trail in, or next to, the rail rights-of-way, consistent with Senate Bills 1029 and 69 (McGuire) to develop the Great Redwood Trail.
  - Table *Goods-3* Goods Movement Projects:
    - Deleted the Harbor District project “Coastal Rail Service from the Samoa Peninsula to Scotia” ~~Project to rehabilitate the coastal section for transporting freight and passengers. \$10M unfunded, no date~~ (Table *Goods-3*)
    - Replaced ~~Redwood Marine Terminal: establish a multipurpose, publicly owned marine terminal, \$43M per 2014 Transp. Study with~~ Port Infrastructure Development Program: Establish a multipurpose, heavy-lift, publicly-owned Redwood Marine Terminal to support emerging offshore wind industry; long term; \$124M
  - Renamed Performance Measures to Performance Indicators. Deleted indicators for which monitoring data is not publicly available, and
    - Under the goal, “Balanced Mode Share (Complete Streets),” deleted the indicator “~~Has road congestion decreased?~~” and added: “Are truck drivers using available truck routes thereby decreasing modal conflicts on alternate local roads?”
    - Under the goal, “Environmental Stewardship & Climate Protection (CO<sub>2</sub> reduction),” added the indicator, “Has the percentage increased for ZEV freight vehicles replacing internal combustion freight vehicles?”

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12. Financial
- (Page 12-5) Added statement that RTP projects are consistent with HCAOG’s projects in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).
  - (Page 12-9) Under “Additional Potential Funding Sources” added metered parking programs.
  - (Page 12-11) Described unanticipated funding sources CRSSA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, Clean California Program, and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)).
  - (Page 12-15) Added Action Plan Project per Board direction (Nov. 2021); revised based on TAC recommendation (1/2022):
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**Funding Consistency Analysis:** HCAOG staff will prepare a report for review by the TAC and the Board on the history of projects funded with HCAOG discretionary funding sources and the project benefits achieved in relation to RTP priorities including fix-it-first and the Safe and Sustainable Transportation Targets. The benefits of the projects in relation to RTP priorities will continue to be tracked annually by HCAOG. Based on the results of this tracking, staff will work with the TAC and Board to explore if and how a ratings program for projects would be beneficial in meeting RTP priorities.

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Maps/Figures • Tribal areas layer added to all applicable maps

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