

# ECONOMIC ELEMENT

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# ECONOMIC ELEMENT - Introduction

1  
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3  
4 The future economy of Bainbridge Island is linked to the community’s *vision* and  
5 strategy for dealing with future needs. A healthy, resilient economy, based on our  
6 collective future vision of the Island, is a tool for accomplishing larger community *goals*  
7 that will help create a robust future.  
8

9 “The *vision* a community has of itself is important to its economy.  
10 Each community plays a crucial role in creating for itself an  
11 environment that is attractive to and nurturing of new and existing  
12 businesses. A vital economy requires adequate *public facilities*  
13 (water, sewer, roads, schools, parks, libraries, emergency  
14 services and utilities). A community that does all that AND  
15 preserves its natural features will have an edge when it comes to  
16 improving its economy.” (Washington State Department of  
17 Commerce).  
18

19 The *Growth Management Act* (GMA) addresses the concerns of  
20 “uncoordinated and unplanned growth that potentially pose a threat to the  
21 environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety and  
22 high quality of life enjoyed by residents.” An important part of a healthy  
23 economy is the quality of the environment.  
24

25 The Economic Element of the *Comprehensive Plan* is intended to guide the  
26 climate for enterprise and commercial exchange on Bainbridge Island and  
27 reinforce the overall vision and values of the *Comprehensive Plan* adopted in  
28 1994, and subsequently updated in 2004 and 2016: to steward a sustainable  
29 community; to protect the quality of its environment: the water, air and land;  
30 and to encourage traditional resource based activities such as agriculture.  
31

## FRAMEWORK

32  
33  
34 **Retain and enhance an economy that reinforces Bainbridge Island’s**  
35 **diverse character and capitalizes on its assets, including: history and**  
36 **heritage, high educational attainment, diverse skills, artistic creativity,**  
37 **rural quality, agricultural base, natural resources, preserved *open***  
38 ***spaces*, beaches and shorelines, maritime orientation, and proximity to**  
39 **the Seattle metropolitan area and the Kitsap Peninsula.**  
40

41 **These critical elements of our community identity and economy are all**  
42 **susceptible to anticipated changes in our climate, population and the**  
43 **subsequent responses we make with regard to that change. By**  
44 **considering these changes explicitly we can work to increase the**  
45 **resilience of our economy and thrive in the face of change.**

1  
2 The intention is to integrate the Economic Element with other parts of the  
3 *comprehensive plan* because the economy is intertwined with all aspects of  
4 community life. The Economic Element recommends *goals and policies*  
5 which recognize the following considerations:  
6

7 **1. The Island’s economic future *should* include enterprises that are**  
8 **diverse by type and scale, under local ownership and control; that offer**  
9 **a variety of employment options; and that support a broad range of**  
10 **income and skill levels.**

11  
12 Bainbridge Island residents have high incomes relative to the rest of the state and  
13 region. However, the prospect of functioning solely as an exclusive high-income  
14 bedroom community is not desirable. The Comprehensive Plan aims to foster diverse  
15 residential and business opportunities, as does the Economic Element. Creating a  
16 diversity of jobs and affordable housing coupled with provisions for responding to  
17 market conditions and encouraging innovative business activity are important  
18 economic policy steps for the City’s future.  
19

20 **2. Bainbridge Islanders are enterprising and are establishing small scale**  
21 **businesses which create jobs and grow bigger businesses.**

22  
23 Over half of Island-based businesses are home-based. National studies indicate  
24 that small businesses provide impetus for new business development and job  
25 creation. Existing land use codes and City business tax structure are supportive  
26 of home-based and small-scale businesses. This support *should* be continued  
27 and expanded into a more complete continuum of opportunities for locating and  
28 maintaining Island-grown business.  
29

30 **3. When weighing choices regarding our future economy, the fundamental**  
31 **considerations *should* be the quality of the Island’s natural environment**  
32 **and the community’s desire to maintain the visual character.**  
33

34 Bainbridge Island’s quality of life is associated with forests and fields, waters and  
35 harbors, *open space* and abundant natural resources, and a thriving town center.  
36 These elements of Bainbridge Island are anticipated to be affected by climate change  
37 over the coming decades. Careful stewardship of our land and other resources - the  
38 foundation for our invaluable sense of place—will be necessary as we promote and  
39 permit new development, both residential and commercial.  
40

41 The Economic Element incorporates fifteen *goals* and related *policies* as  
42 enumerated below. The order of the *goals* and *policies* does not indicate  
43 preference or priority.  
44  
45

## ECONOMIC VISION

1  
2 Bainbridge Island has balanced economic development with stewardship of our Island's  
3 finite natural resources and the needs of a diverse population. Affordable housing is  
4 available for much of the local service sector workforce and improvements in  
5 communications infrastructure have enabled more successful local enterprises,  
6 including home-based business.

7  
8 The economy of Bainbridge Island reaps advantages from proximity to the Seattle area  
9 and the Kitsap peninsula. The Island is a destination for visitors interested in learning  
10 about sustainability and resilient community development. Local employment  
11 opportunities are diverse, including small manufacturing, artisanal crafts, high tech, e-  
12 commerce, arts, and food. Small retailers are thriving by serving the needs of local  
13 residents as well as visitors.

14  
15 Agriculture is a thriving part of the Island's economy: all City-owned agricultural land is  
16 now under cultivation and producing seasonal foods for local consumption. The number  
17 of farms on private acreage has increased and is supplementing the local food supply.

18  
19 Innovative and flexible city programs encourage the real estate market to adapt to  
20 trends that favor conservation, efficient use of land and resources, and homes of  
21 modest size and price.

22  
23 Islanders recognize that a sense of community as well as economic value is achieved  
24 by neighborly acts. A robust non-profit sector strengthens social capital, provides  
25 services and employment opportunities.

26

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY

#### GOAL EC-1

##### **Promote economic vitality, growth and stability.**

31 Bainbridge Island has the opportunity to create a robust, resilient and durable economy  
32 by demonstrating early leadership and acknowledging the changes that will affect our  
33 economy. Planning for these changes and taking actions that support and encourage a  
34 local economy will help reduce community vulnerability to issues such as aging  
35 demographics, housing availability, transportation constraints, and climate change.

36  
37 By providing enterprises that both serve and employ local residents, Bainbridge Island  
38 will be better able to withstand fluctuations in the larger regional economy. In addition,  
39 people who live and work in their community are available to invest time and money in

1 their families, organizations, and community life. A key to a healthy, stable and vital  
 2 economy is to create and undertake business opportunities that anticipate and respond  
 3 to conditions that affect our community. This would include identifying emerging needs  
 4 and markets so that Bainbridge Island businesses benefit from being on the leading  
 5 edge of change.

#### 7 **Policy EC 1.1**

8 Develop and maintain regulations that provide support for our community's business  
 9 sectors. These will prepare our strong existing business sectors for change, while  
 10 encouraging the business community to look for emerging sectors that will be part of  
 11 responses to change on Bainbridge Island and beyond.

#### 13 **Policy EC 1.2**

14 The city *should* embrace diverse and innovative business opportunities compatible with  
 15 community values and develop programs to make Bainbridge Island an attractive  
 16 location for those businesses.

17  
 18 Bainbridge Island is affected by regional, national, international and global  
 19 environmental and economic trends and changes in the physical environment. While we  
 20 cannot control global economic or environmental conditions we can support the local  
 21 economy by providing *policy* direction and land use *infrastructure* to allow for and  
 22 encourage robust economic activities that are prepared for and responsive to change.

#### 24 **Policy EC 1.3**

25 Coordinate with local business groups to track commercial activity, identify trends and  
 26 assess the economic health of the Island. Adopt an economic vitality strategy to identify  
 27 creative and appropriate ways for the City to encourage and stimulate business activity.

#### 29 **Policy EC 1.4**

30 Support entrepreneurship by providing adequate *land use* designations in keeping with  
 31 the character of the Island, while avoiding investment in sectors/activities/*infrastructure*  
 32 that will not remain viable in the foreseeable future

#### 34 **Policy EC 1.5**

35 In order to provide opportunities for business enterprise, adequate space must  
 36 be provided for growth that recognizes and protects the Island's valued natural  
 37 amenities, its limits of land and water and the quality of its residential  
 38 *neighborhoods*. █

#### 40 **Policy EC 1.6**

41 Establish, maintain and share with interested parties a data base of indicators of the  
 42 health of the sectors of the Island's economy.

#### 44 **Policy EC 1.7**

45 Partner with the Chamber of Commerce, the Bainbridge Island Downtown Association,  
 46 and others to monitor the Island's business climate and make appropriate adjustments  
 47 to the economic vitality strategy

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### GOAL EC-2

**Provide sufficient and resilient infrastructure that is supportive of a healthy economy and environment.**

#### Policy EC 2.1

Identify long-term *infrastructure* needs that support economic sustainability and are designed to withstand future conditions.

#### Policy EC 2.2

Support *infrastructure* enhancement to accommodate new information technology and changing conditions.

#### Policy EC 2.3

Implement infrastructure and technology improvements around *designated centers* to provide enhanced service and to retain and attract business.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### GOAL EC-3

**Promote business practices that protect the Island's natural beauty, and environmental health, and support long-term business success.**

Environmental protection is a value expressed in the *guiding principles* that are the foundation of the comprehensive plan. A quality environment promotes and enhances economic vitality of the community.

#### Policy EC 3.1

Encourage the use of *green building* materials and techniques in all types of construction, as well as design approaches that are responsive to changing conditions.

#### Policy EC 3.2

Help businesses find markets for surplus materials, by-products and waste.

#### Policy EC 3.3

Encourage local enterprises to participate in programs, such as the Kitsap County Waste Wise and Green Community Initiative, which recognize and assist business efforts to protect the environment.

#### Policy EC 3.4

Encourage public sector solid waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

1 **Policy EC 3.5**

2 Encourage existing and new businesses to become part of a linked cooperative  
3 whereby the by-products and waste of one enterprise become the raw materials  
4 of another.

5  
6 **Policy EC 3.6**

7 Create opportunities to foster green technology and industries, such as energy, waste  
8 and information technology, which have the potential to create local, family wage jobs in  
9 our community at the same time we are protecting our natural beauty, environmental  
10 and economic health.

11  
12 **CIVIC LIFE**

13  
14 **GOAL EC-4**

15 **Encourage a broad range of civic activities and organizations.**

16  
17 Non-profit organizations are a source of employment and other economic  
18 benefits for Islanders and utilize many local commercial and service providers.  
19 Volunteers also provide significant contributions to the local economy.  
20 Organizations such as Helpline House, Arts and Humanities Bainbridge,  
21 Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, Housing Resources Bainbridge, Bainbridge  
22 Island Downtown Association, and the Chamber of Commerce rely largely on  
23 volunteer efforts and provide irreplaceable human resources to the  
24 community.

25  
26 **Policy EC 4.1**

27 Support the non-profit sector of human and social service providers.

28  
29 **Policy EC 4.2**

30 Encourage and recognize individuals, organizations, and businesses that  
31 volunteer time and skills to the community.

32  
33 **Policy EC 4.3**

34 Encourage local business groups, educational institutions, and other entities  
35 to provide continuing education and skills development.

36  
37 **Policy EC 4.4**

38 Promote Bainbridge Island as a family-friendly community with high quality schools,  
39 recreational opportunities and a safe, clean environment.

40  
41 **JOBS/HOUSING BALANCE**

42  
43 **GOAL EC-5**

44 **Provide a variety of affordable housing choices so that more people**  
45 **who work on Bainbridge Island can live here.**

46

1 The Housing Element of the *comprehensive plan* provides several options for the  
2 development of *affordable housing* on the Island.

### 3 **Policy EC 5.1**

4 Continue to monitor the progress in implementing the Housing Element  
5 and evaluate new ways of providing *affordable housing*.  
6

### 7 **Policy EC 5.2**

8 In concert with the Housing Element's Goals and Policies, pursue a housing strategy  
9 that seeks to accommodate a wide variety of housing options, both in design and  
10 affordability, to meet the demands of the full range of the population, including  
11 service sector employees, retirees, students, artists, farmers and craftspeople.  
12

## 13 **DEVELOPMENT IN DESIGNATED CENTERS**

### 14 **GOAL EC-6**

15  
16 **As the city's *designated centers* evolve, balance their functions as places of  
17 commerce and employment with their roles helping to meet housing needs and  
18 provide focal points for civic engagement and cultural enrichment.**  
19

### 20 **Policy EC 6.1**

21 Create attractive *designated centers* that will help the Island economy prosper and  
22 provide a high quality of life, creating ancillary benefits such as decreasing pollution  
23 (including *greenhouse gas emissions*), protecting *open space*, and creating local family  
24 wage jobs.  
25

### 26 **Policy EC 6.2**

27 Utilize urban design strategies and approaches to ensure that changes to the built  
28 environment are at a locally appropriate scale and enhance the Island's unique  
29 attributes, in recognition of the economic value of "sense of place."  
30

### 31 **Policy EC 6.3**

32 Develop urban design strategies to ensure that the built environment is appropriate for  
33 present and future conditions, including the impacts of *climate change*.  
34

### 35 **Policy EC 6.4**

36 Ensure the efficient flow of people, goods, services, and information in and throughout  
37 the Island with infrastructure investments, particularly within and connecting to  
38 designated centers, to anticipate the needs of the Island's businesses.  
39

### 40 **Policy EC 6.5**

41 Promote emerging business sectors such as artisanal and craft producers, including  
42 specialty foods and beverages, as well as low-impact, specialty manufacturing,  
43 including software, electronics and green technology.  
44

### 45 **Policy EC 6.6**

46 Preserve and enhance activities that feature Bainbridge Island's history of maritime,



1 agricultural and artistic enterprises.

2

3 **Policy EC 6.7**

4 Monitor parking requirements in the *designated centers* and revise them as needed to  
5 encourage business development, while reasonably accommodating parking demand.  
6 This should be done in concert with efforts to reduce dependence on automobiles and  
7 improve our local environment.

8

9

10 **PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

11

12 **GOAL EC-7**

13 **Partner with local businesses and business associations on programs and**  
14 **projects to diversify and grow the City’s economic make-up, reduce sales**  
15 **leakage, attract spending by visitors, enhance local employment, and increase**  
16 **municipal tax revenues to support local services.**

17

18 **Policy EC 7.1**

19 Leverage technology assets, such as existing fiber connections, to support technology-  
20 based businesses and potentially to pursue new revenue streams.

21

22

23 **Policy EC 7.2**

24 Focus “buy local” community marketing on consumer spending segments in which  
25 there is significant “leakage” and also a strong possibility of recapturing spending.

26

27 **Policy EC 7.3**

28 Support and enhance social, cultural, artistic, recreational and other learning activities  
29 for residents, workers and visitors.

30

31 **Policy EC 7.4**

32 Integrate programs and activities related to economic prosperity with objectives related  
33 to environmental sustainability, social and political equity, climate change adaptation  
34 and cultural engagement.

35

36 **Policy EC 7.5**

37 Continue to support and enhance the arts/culture sector and the visitors that arts and  
38 cultural events attract.

39

40 **Policy EC 7.6**

41 Support and enhance recreational, nature-based, and other outdoor events that attract  
42 visitors.

43

44 **Policy EC 7.7**

45 Support and make Bainbridge Island a model community for *climate change*  
46 preparedness and sustainability practices that ensure long-term business viability while  
attracting and protecting visitors, businesses and residents.

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**Policy EC 7.8**

Support and enhance our waterfront, including docks and maritime services that attract visitors and residents.

**Policy EC 7.9**

Provide an efficient, timely and predictable regulatory environment within the framework of a strong customer service approach.

**Policy EC 7.10**

Encourage the private, public, and non-profit sectors to incorporate environmental and social responsibility into their practices.

## RETAIL AND SERVICES

### GOAL EC-8

**Maintain and enhance Winslow as the commercial hub of Bainbridge Island. Position the Neighborhood Centers to provide the opportunities for smaller-scale commercial and service activity.**

**Policy EC 8.1**

Reinforce Winslow as the mixed-use center for commerce and exchange by fully implementing the Winslow Master Plan.

**Policy EC 8.2**

Neighborhood Centers *should* be developed at higher residential *densities*, as recommended in the Land Use Element, in order to attract a variety of small-scale retail and service providers.

## SERVICES SECTOR

### GOAL EC-9

**Grow a healthy service sector to increase employment opportunities, enhance local revenues, and meet emerging needs of the Island's changing demographics.**

**Policy EC 9.1**

Increase availability of housing to enable service sector employees to live on the Island.

**Policy EC 9.2**

Increase access to transportation options that better enable service sector employees who live off- Island to work on-Island.

**Policy EC 9.3**

Promote an emerging professional services sector that recognizes the Island's linkage to the Seattle job market for managerial jobs and information-based industries.

**Policy EC 9.4**

Promote on-Island access to healthcare facilities and medical services, particularly those addressing the needs of the Island's increasing older population.

## **BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SECTOR**

### **GOAL EC-10**

**Support building design and construction industries to increase employment opportunities, enhance local revenues, and help ensure a built environment that responds to and reflects the Island's Vision and Guiding Principles.**

The professions and trades involved in design, construction, furnishing, renovation, and marketing of commercial and residential real estate constitute a large and very important sector of the Island's economy. Productivity and profits within that sector are crucial factors in the stability and wellbeing of the entire community. The built environment is no less important than our natural resources in defining Bainbridge Island as a unique and attractive place. Good development, in a community such as ours, must work within limits and be compatible with the goals of environmental conservation.

**Policy EC 10.1**

Make the City's development permit process ~~more~~ timely, fair and predictable.

**Policy EC 10.2**

Partner with Island architects, landscape architects, builders and related construction professionals to draft development standards and practices that incorporate green building practices and context-sensitive design.

## **TOURISM**

### **GOAL EC-11**

**Tourism is a key sector of the Island's economy and needs to be supported. Bainbridge Island provides unique opportunities for visitors to experience internationally recognized gardens, cultural centers, parks, and recreational events.**

**Policy EC 11.1**

Improve pedestrian links between the ferry terminal, downtown Winslow, and the harbor. Visitors on foot and bicycle *should* be encouraged. Encourage and support public transit and shuttle services.

1 **Policy EC 11.2**

2 The predominant focus of downtown Winslow *should* be to serve the commercial  
3 and social needs of Island residents. A lively, *pedestrian-oriented* town center that  
4 provides a mix of commercial and *residential uses* is a potential tourist destination.  
5

6 **Policy EC 11.3**

7 Support the Island as a visitor destination by preserving and enhancing the unique  
8 qualities of our community.  
9

10 **Policy EC 11.4**

11 Encourage multiple-day stays and participation in selected Island events  
12 and destinations by off-Island visitors.  
13

14 **Policy EC 11.5**

15 Encourage bed and breakfasts and other creative tourist accommodation  
16

17 **ARTS**

18 **GOAL EC-12**

19  
20 **Continue to promote the arts as a significant component of the Bainbridge**  
21 **Island economy.**

22 **Policy EC 12.1**

23 Encourage and support the creative and economic contribution of the arts  
24 by implementing the *goals* and *policies* of the Cultural Element.  
25

26 **Policy EC 12.2**

27 Promote the arts community within the northwest region as an economic  
28 asset of the Island.  
29

30 **HOME-BASED BUSINESSES**

31  
32 **GOAL EC-13**

33 **Foster home-based businesses as a key to a present and future vital**  
34 **economy.**

35  
36 Nearly half of all businesses licensed on Bainbridge Island are reported as home-  
37 based. Bainbridge Island allows home-based businesses in all zones, and 16.3%  
38 of the Island workforce works from home.  
39

40 **Policy EC 13.1**

41 Continue performance standards to harmonize impacts of home-based businesses  
42 in residential *neighborhoods*.  
43

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**Policy EC 13.2**

Support home-based businesses through business licensing and other City programs.

**AGRICULTURE**

**GOAL EC-14**

**Recognize that farming is a part of the Island’s heritage and contributes to the island’s economy.**

The Environmental and Land Use Elements contains several *goals* and *policies* intended to sustain and enhance agriculture.

**Policy EC 14.1**

Support the market for Island-grown agriculture products by:

- Recognizing and supporting the Bainbridge Island Farmers’ Market, including permanently dedicating space for the market and enhancing the market area.
- Allowing and promoting roadside stands that sell Island-grown products.
- Promoting and supporting Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).
- Encouraging the development of value-added processing facilities that can be shared by many farmers.
- Encouraging food crops to be planted on public land.

**Policy EC 14.2**

Support a program that helps working farms through educational, historic, farmstay and tourist visits.

**BUSINESS/INDUSTRIAL**

**GOAL EC-15**

**The Business/Industrial (B/I) land use designation should provide space for job creating enterprises. Island based businesses provide the possibility of living and working in the community. It is the purpose of the B/I land use designations to provide opportunities for light industrial and other non-retail activities. The City should be prepared to respond to a changing marketplace and the business opportunities perceived by its citizens, when those opportunities require pre-existing infrastructure and well-designed accommodations in order to flourish.**

**Policy EC 15.1**

Promote manufacturing and business/industrial employment as an important source of family wage jobs on Bainbridge Island.

**Policy EC 15.2**

New Business/Industrial (B/I) *land use* designations *shall* be considered based on the following:

- Proximity to existing B/I.
- The total amount of and expected need for B/I-zoned land.
- Compliance with all *policies* in the Land Use Element.
- Reasonable proximity to SR 305.
- Availability of public sewer and water, *or* whether permitted uses might safely use wells and septic systems or other alternative systems that are approved by the Kitsap Public Health District.
- Consideration of pollution and *aquifer recharge* concerns.
- Adjacency to *non-residential land uses*.
- Minimal impact to *residential land uses, neighborhoods* and *open space/conservancy* and agriculture areas.

**Policy EC 15.3**

Business/Industrial development *shall* conform to all Business/Industrial performance standards, the requirements of Site Plan and Design Review, and applicable design guidelines.

## ECONOMIC IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the goals and policies in this Element, the City must take a number of actions, including adopting or amending regulations, creating partnerships and educational programs, and staffing or other budgetary decisions. Listed following each action are several of the comprehensive plans policies that support that action.

### HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS

**Action #1. Adopt and maintain an Economic Development Strategy to coordinate public and private efforts to grow and sustain a healthy economy on the Island**

**Policy EC 1.3**

Coordinate with local business groups to track commercial activity, identify trends and assess the economic health of the Island. Adopt an economic vitality strategy to identify creative and appropriate ways for the City to encourage and stimulate business activity.

**Policy EC 1.7**

Partner with the Chamber of Commerce, the Bainbridge Island Downtown Association and others to monitor the Island's business climate and make appropriate adjustments to the economic vitality strategy.

1  
2 **MEDIUM PRIORITY ACTIONS**  
3

4 **Action #1. Continue efforts to promote and support agriculture as a component**  
5 **of the Island's economy, landscape and culture.**  
6

7 **Policy EC 14.1**

8 Support the market for Island-grown agriculture products by:

- 9 • Recognizing and supporting the Bainbridge Island Farmers' Market,  
10 including permanently dedicating space for the market and enhancing the  
11 market area.  
12 • Allowing and promoting roadside stands that sell Island-grown products.  
13 • Promoting and supporting Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).  
14 • Encouraging the development of value-added processing facilities that can  
15 be shared by many farmers.  
16 • Encouraging food crops to be planted on public land.  
17

18 **Action #2. Identify capital projects and streetscape standards to enhance non-**  
19 **motorized mobility within Winslow and connecting to shoreline activities.**  
20

21 **Policy EC 11.1**

22 Improve pedestrian links between the ferry terminal, downtown Winslow, and  
23 the harbor. Visitors on foot and bicycle *should* be encouraged. Encourage  
24 and support public transit and shuttles.  
25  
26

27 **OTHER PRIORITY ACTIONS**  
28

29 **Action #1. Assure that adequate parking is available to support businesses.**  
30

31 **Policy EC 6.7**

32 Monitor parking requirements in the *designated centers* and revise them as needed  
33 to encourage business development, while reasonably accommodating parking  
34 demand. This should be done in concert with efforts to increase use of non-motorized  
35 transportation and improve our local environment.  
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