A COMMUNITY OF ACTION / DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

Room to Belong

A Davis Housing & Care Commons



Shared power. Dependable support.
A lasting place in community.

An illustrated proposal for Safe Heart, SCHA, DCMH, IHJD, H4AD, residents, and community partners.

A lasting home. More than one way in.

A jointly governed network where people can reach housing and support through places they already trust, and help shape the communities they join.

The proposal in one minute

Bring Safe Heart / HEART of Davis, Solar Community Housing Association (SCHA), Davis Community Meals and Housing (DCMH), Interfaith Housing Justice Davis (IHJD), Housing 4 All Davis (H4AD), and residents into a shared planning process. Explore one accessible cooperative household alongside services offered at additional trusted locations.

Who the design should center

Older adults, disabled adults, people waiting for income-support decisions, and people rebuilding stability after homelessness, including people living in vehicles. Co-design with these communities; establish lawful, transparent eligibility before recruitment.

What we can begin now

Fund listening and coordination, map the gaps between existing services, and test one recurring off-site support session. Develop the property and operating plan while those smaller steps are underway.

> The first commitment is to learn and build together. Larger commitments follow evidence, resources, and explicit agreement.

Read a little. See the whole.

This is a common starting point for residents, volunteers, staff, boards, neighbors, and potential funders.

If you have five minutes

Read The invitation, Meet the proposed partners, The first 90 days, and Start where you are. You will have the purpose, the people, and a practical next step.

If you are considering a commitment

Read Who decides what, Money that makes flexibility real, and Before we say yes. These chapters describe the responsibilities and unanswered questions behind the vision.

Three kinds of statements

Public facts carry numbered source references. Proposed arrangements describe choices for future partners to negotiate. Illustrative scenarios show how a model could work; they are not accounts of identifiable residents or promises of available services.

Use this as a working document

Bring corrections, constraints, and alternatives. Participation in a discussion is not organizational endorsement. No one should publish a partner's name as a committed participant until that partner has authorized it.

> The online edition offers chapter navigation and a role-based starting guide. The chapbook contains the full proposal for reading, printing, and circulating.

Make humane flexibility dependable.

A late payment, a disability flare, or an overwhelming service setting should trigger a workable response before it becomes a lost home or a missed connection.

What this idea grows from

The initiating experience is that cooperative housing can offer meaningful room to navigate irregular income, companion animals, and changing capacity. The proposal asks how to make such flexibility consistent, funded, and available through a fair process.

The gap to investigate

People may need a quieter home, help with benefits, accessible participation, or support delivered somewhere they feel comfortable. Planning must include people who use existing services and people who avoid them. Neither group can speak for everyone.

The long-term promise to work toward

Several welcoming places to enter; support that continues across a move; housing people can keep as their circumstances change; and real resident authority over decisions that affect daily life.

> Housing stability, belonging, and the ability to raise a concern are outcomes worth designing and funding together.

Local roots. Room to grow.

The proposal builds on distinct local strengths and lessons. It does not assume that any organization has spare capacity.

A cooperative foundation

SCHA's off-campus houses accept students and nonstudents. Its founding purposes include expanding nonprofit housing for people with low incomes. This supports exploring a broader resident community, subject to current property and program requirements. [1, 2]

A service network already in motion

Safe Heart offers safe parking and referrals to Turning Point or other case-management providers. DCMH lists permanent supportive housing at three locations and a community meals program at St. Martin's Episcopal Church. A new partnership should coordinate with these existing relationships. [4, 5, 6]

A lesson to carry forward

SCHA's account of its former Homestead project describes maintenance, funding administration, and resident needs that exceeded organizational capacity. The property was transferred in 2006. Paid capacity and maintainable buildings belong in the design from the beginning. [3]

> Public descriptions establish a starting point. Current capacity, eligibility, site conditions, and willingness to participate still require direct confirmation.

Different strengths. Shared direction.

Each role below is an invitation to negotiate. Organizations keep their existing responsibilities and approve their own commitments.

Safe Heart / HEART of Davis

Bring participants' perspectives on vehicle homelessness, trusted introductions, and coordination with existing case managers. Help design continuity before and after a housing move. Protect confidential site locations. [4]

SCHA

Explore property stewardship, cooperative tenancy, flexible participation, and resident governance. Assess feasibility without displacing current residents or assuming an existing house will change its purpose.

DCMH

Explore funded tenancy support, housing navigation, benefits connections, and food access across participating locations. Define staffing, supervision, service scope, and response responsibilities in writing.

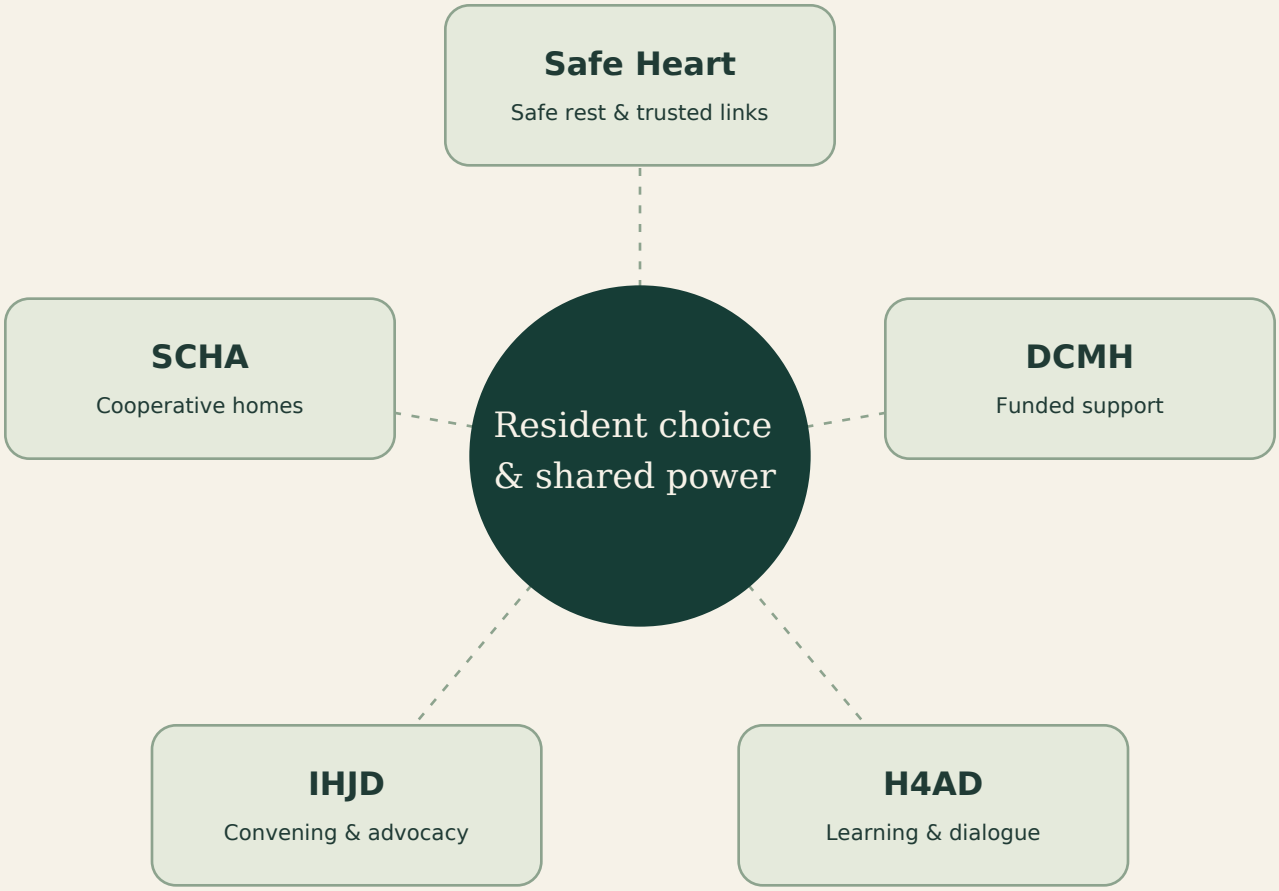
IHJD and H4AD

IHJD could convene faith-community relationships and explore policy, property, and funding opportunities; its published housing principles support cooperatives and cohousing. H4AD could contribute public education and community dialogue, consistent with its announced forum on homelessness and housing pathways. [7, 8]

> Residents and prospective residents are governing partners throughout. Lived experience carries decision-making authority, with paid time and access support.

The network at a glance

Distinct organizations. Resident choice and shared power at the center. Every role requires agreement.



Enter through a trusted partner. Choose the support you use. Keep your voice in decisions that affect your home.

Lines show proposed collaboration, not a required service sequence. Existing providers and county pathways remain part of the wider network.

Many doors. A dependable handoff.

People should be able to approach a participating organization and get help reaching the next appropriate person, with their permission.

Agree on the handoff

A worker explains the options, asks what the person wants, and obtains permission for the specific information needed. The receiving partner confirms capacity and names a contact. The referring worker checks whether the connection happened.

Keep choice intact

People may decline a referral, prefer another provider, or use only one part of the network. Participation in safe parking, a faith community, advocacy, or a volunteer activity is not a proposed prerequisite for housing.

Connect to the wider system

Work with existing county and provider referral systems where required. Publish actual eligibility, openings, and limitations. A referral cannot guarantee a vacancy or override a program's lawful allocation requirements.

Share only what is needed

Keep personal case information within authorized service relationships. Coalition meetings use de-identified patterns and aggregate results. Advocacy partners do not receive applicant histories or decide individual admissions.

> The network's job is to reduce the work a person must do to reach help. A shared directory is useful only when someone follows through.

Support that stays connected.

These are illustrative scenarios. They describe the proposed experience, not existing placements or individual residents.

A person living in a vehicle

Through Safe Heart, a participant chooses to meet a navigator. Together they review housing preferences, access needs, and actual openings. If a cooperative placement is available and appropriate, a funded rent subsidy and move-in support make the transition possible. The navigator remains available after the move.

An older resident already housed

A tenant seeks help after mobility changes make household tasks difficult. A participation plan, physical modifications where feasible, and paid maintenance support help sustain the tenancy. The person can remain a full voting member while doing fewer physical chores.

Someone who avoids a busy service location

A recurring appointment at another accessible partner site offers benefits assistance and a reliable follow-up. The person receives support without having to join a cooperative or explain their preferences in a public meeting.

> Receiving benefits, recovering capacity, or changing providers should make a person's home more sustainable. Plan for continuity rather than an automatic move-out.

A quieter rhythm. Equal membership.

Explore one accessible household where residents can choose a calmer environment and shape it together.

Design the physical space with residents

Assess step-free access, bathrooms, private rooms, usable kitchens, ventilation, storage, mobility-device space, transport, and proximity to services. Complete a professional accessibility assessment before selecting a property. No building or bed count is assumed here.

Make participation adaptable

Offer shorter meetings, written or remote input, different kinds of contributions, and individual accommodations. Fund essential work when residents cannot cover it. Rest and disability-related absences do not diminish a member's voice.

Write household agreements together

Set understandable expectations for quiet hours, visitors, shared food, smoke exposure, consent, animals, and use of common areas. Provide a clear accommodation process and distinguish assistance-animal obligations from general pet policies.

Keep support realistic

State what staff can provide, how personal support services can be arranged, and how urgent needs are addressed. Before launch, determine whether the service design creates licensing or other regulatory obligations.

> Design around older and disabled residents' needs. Review any age- or disability-specific eligibility rules before advertising or accepting applications. [9]

Practical support, close to trust.

Begin with a limited, funded service offer and expand when the team can reliably deliver it.

A recurring support session

Test a regular session at a trusted accessible location. Offer housing navigation, help arranging benefits assistance, and follow-up. Define the worker's training, supervision, appointment capacity, private meeting space, and backup coverage.

Food people can confidently use

Offer a practical mix of prepared meals, groceries, or pickup options based on participant preferences. Assign responsibility for safe storage, handling, cleaning, serving, and transport. Make ingredient and dietary information accessible, and verify local requirements for each site.

A specific response to concerns

Record the setting and conditions involved in a report; arrange qualified review and corrective action when needed. Food safety, interpersonal conduct, and service access are distinct issues with named owners. Track whether the person raising a concern receives a response.

Benefits expertise

Build relationships with qualified benefits advisers, legal assistance, or SOAR-trained providers where available. SSA identifies SOAR as a route to application support for eligible people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Local capacity must be confirmed. [11]

> Trust is earned through reliable service and visible follow-through. This proposal makes no finding about conditions at any existing provider.

Share power in the structure.

Proposed starting charter: a partnership council with equal resident and organizational representation, subject to negotiation and each organization's authority.

Ten voting seats to start

Five seats for resident and prospective-resident representatives, selected by their constituencies through an accessible process. Five seats for authorized representatives of the five invited organizations. Pay resident participation and fund access needs. Avoid double-counting a person as both a resident and organizational seat.

A decision rule that needs both groups

Seek agreement first. As a draft fallback, require at least three of five votes from each group for shared strategy, pilot budgets, and changes to the charter. Require at least three members from each group for quorum. Record objections and revisit blocked decisions through facilitated review.

Defined authority

The council governs only work and funds expressly delegated to it. Partner boards retain their legal duties; housing operators retain lease and property responsibilities. Residents govern everyday household matters within law, leases, and agreed safeguards. Service teams manage authorized care and casework.

Accountability built in

Use resident and organizational co-chairs, accessible agendas, plain-language minutes, conflict-of-interest rules, and a published budget. Define recusal, vacancies, term limits, and tie-resolution before adopting the charter.

> These seats and voting rules are a concrete discussion model. They create no present authority over an organization, its residents, or its resources.

Clear boundaries. Fair process.

Every person deserves clean shared spaces, respect, privacy, and an effective response to harmful conduct.

Assess conduct and support needs

Use published, relevant criteria and individual accommodations. Disability, housing history, or an addiction label cannot serve as a shortcut for judging a person's behavior. Federal guidance requires objective, individualized evidence for disability-related direct-threat determinations and consideration of accommodations. [10]

Respond without making residents investigate

Create separate routes for urgent safety concerns, routine complaints, and interpersonal disagreements. Designate trained responders and backup coverage. Mediation is voluntary and may be inappropriate where threats, coercion, or violence are involved.

A way to challenge decisions

Provide accessible notice of decisions, reasons, an opportunity to respond, and review by someone outside the immediate dispute. Adopt a non-retaliation policy. Network procedures must preserve applicable tenancy rights and lawful emergency responses.

Protect choice and identity

Participation does not require religious observance, public disclosure of a diagnosis, a personal testimony, or political advocacy. Collect only information necessary for lawful eligibility and services. Set permissions, retention periods, and access limits.

> Mutual care includes taking harmful conduct seriously and giving people a fair, accessible process. Both need staffing and follow-through.

Money that makes flexibility real.

Separate the cost of creating a home, operating it, providing support, and helping residents afford it.

Four connected budgets

Property: acquisition or lease, due diligence, accessibility work, repairs, and furnishings. Operations: utilities, maintenance, insurance, administration, and reserves. Services: staff, supervision, travel, training, and resident governance. Affordability: rent assistance, deposits, and emergency grants.

Plan for an income gap

A payment plan changes timing; a subsidy pays a cost. Define who funds rent during a benefits application or appeal, how assistance is reviewed, and what happens if income never arrives. Do not budget on assumed approval or back pay. Have a benefits adviser review how support may affect individual entitlements.

Test difficult scenarios

Cost longer-than-planned benefit delays, vacancy, higher support needs, major repairs, and loss of a grant. Set cash-reserve and funding thresholds before commitments. DCMH's published permanent-housing page lists income among eligibility requirements; confirm site-level rules when designing a new option. [5]

Keep responsibility visible

Use an agreed legal or fiscal host, restricted project accounting, written contribution agreements, and regular reports. Treat city, county, philanthropic, congregational, and other funding as prospects until confirmed; no award or amount is assumed.

> Project funding gap = property costs + operations + services + rent assistance + reserves, minus reliable income. Volunteer time is not guaranteed staffing.

Small steps with something to show.

The clock begins only after partners authorize the pilot and minimum staffing and participation funds are in place.

Days 1-30 / Listen and agree

Invite authorized representatives and paid resident participants. Hold accessible listening sessions, including with people who avoid existing services. Map current offers, gaps, and complaints routes. Select a fiscal host, draft the charter, and assign a coordinator. Deliver: a short needs brief, role agreement, and costed pilot.

Days 31-60 / Test a connection

Launch one recurring off-site support session if staff, space, privacy, and funding are ready. Test consent-based referrals and follow-up. Assess possible housing models and properties without promising placements. Deliver: an operating log, participant feedback, and a property-feasibility shortlist.

Days 61-90 / Review and choose

Review who was reached, whether referrals led to help, unresolved concerns, staff workload, and costs. Produce a preliminary housing budget and partner responsibilities. Deliver: a public aggregate learning report and a documented decision to continue, revise, pause, or stop.

> A successful pilot produces evidence and dependable relationships. It does not have to acquire a house in 90 days.

Grow at the speed of reliability.

An illustrative one-to-three-year direction, with decisions based on readiness rather than calendar pressure.

Establish / First 3 months

Demonstrate that resident governance, a paid coordinator, a service session, and follow-through can work together. Continue only with participant support, manageable workload, and a funded next phase.

Create / Approximately months 4-12

If feasible, secure one property or formal housing partnership, complete design and legal review, fund the operating plan, and prepare admissions. A different property timeline is acceptable. Existing service improvements can continue independently.

Learn / Approximately year 2

Assess housing retention, resident experience, accessibility, actual costs, repairs, and staff sustainability. Adjust the model. Maintain support when someone's income, health, or preferred provider changes.

Extend / Approximately year 3 and beyond

Consider additional homes or service locations only when residents support expansion, financing is credible, and existing commitments are consistently met. Share tools and lessons with other communities while allowing each household its own culture.

> The destination is a durable local commons: distinct homes and organizations connected by shared commitments, resources, and resident power.

A useful first step for everyone.

Offer one specific contribution within your capacity. Each action should have an owner, a limit, and a date to check back.

Residents and Safe Heart participants

Name one barrier, one condition that makes a place feel workable, and one change you want decision-making power over. Join a paid listening session or nominate a representative. Participation does not affect access to existing services.

SCHA and DCMH members or staff

SCHA: authorize a bounded feasibility review and list property, accessibility, and governance constraints. DCMH: identify one service that could be delivered elsewhere, with its actual staff cost, supervision needs, and capacity limits.

Safe Heart, IHJD, and H4AD organizers

Safe Heart: map one referral that currently loses continuity. IHJD: convene an exploratory host-property or funding conversation. H4AD: help organize an accessible learning session with paid lived-experience contributors. Bring existing partners into the discussion.

Neighbors, volunteers, and funders

Offer a defined shift, accessible meeting space, technical expertise, or funds for coordination and resident participation. Avoid making promises on behalf of organizations. Reliable small contributions make the next step possible.

> My contribution: _____ My capacity limit: _____ Who needs to agree: _____
> Check-back date: _____

Measure the experience of getting help.

Choose a small set of measures with residents. Establish a baseline before setting numerical targets.

Access and continuity

Track people reached, completed referrals, time to a useful response, reasons a referral did not work, and support continuing after a move. Count unsuccessful attempts as information about the system, not a person's failure.

Housing and daily life

Review sustained tenancies, involuntary exits and their reasons, access barriers resolved, residents' sense of safety and belonging, and whether people can influence decisions. Offer confidential ways to respond without staff present.

Trust and follow-through

Track concerns received, response times, corrective actions, and whether the person reports resolution. A rise in reports can reflect greater trust in reporting; interpret numbers alongside residents' accounts.

Capacity and financial health

Review staff workload, volunteer dependence, paid resident participation, repairs, unrestricted cash, and funding continuity. Publish aggregate findings at agreed intervals. Suppress small groups or details that could identify individuals.

> Success means people can reach suitable help, keep a home, exercise choice, and get problems addressed - while the organizations can sustain their commitments.

Resolve the commitments behind the vision.

These are planning decisions for a workable pilot and home, not reasons to postpone listening or relationship-building.

Authority and agreements

Which partners want to participate? Who can commit funds or staff? Which entity holds leases, employs workers, receives funds, and carries insurance? What can the council decide, and how can a partner exit without abandoning residents?

Housing and lawful access

What property is feasible? Which funding, zoning, occupancy, licensing, accessibility, fair-housing, and tenancy requirements apply? How will admissions, accommodations, and appeals work? Review targeted eligibility with qualified counsel before recruitment.

Capacity and continuity

Who responds to urgent needs and complaints? What support is available after hours? What happens if a subsidy ends, staff leave, a grant fails, or a resident needs more assistance? Define continuity and transition obligations in advance.

Expansion and existing services

Will the pilot add capacity or pull staff away from current commitments? What service-quality concerns need separate corrective work? How will existing residents help decide changes to their home? Keep growth tied to a credible operating plan.

> Do not open housing or announce services until the responsible operators confirm readiness. Keep low-risk planning and listening moving in the meantime.

One meeting. A bounded next step.

Proposed first gathering: 75 minutes, with accessible materials in advance and paid resident participation.

0-25 minutes / Ground the work

Confirm that the gathering is exploratory. Hear resident priorities and access needs without requiring personal disclosures. Name the people affected who are missing and how they will be included.

25-50 minutes / Make the offer concrete

Each organization states one possible contribution, one limit, and who can authorize involvement. Compare the proposed pilot with existing work. Identify a coordinator, an interim host, and the costs of meaningful participation.

50-75 minutes / Leave with decisions

Choose one small test, assign owners, identify the approvals and funding needed, and set a review date. Record unresolved issues and whose consent is still required. Circulate a short, accessible record for correction.

What participation can become

Over time, this community of action could connect safe rest, dependable support, accessible cooperative homes, and public commitment to housing justice. Each step should increase people's options and the community's ability to keep its promises.

> Start with the part you can hold. Build the connections that let others hold theirs.

Local foundations

Sources consulted October 28, 2026. Public descriptions are a starting point for direct confirmation. All new arrangements in this proposal remain unapproved.

01 / SCHA: Eligibility & Accessibility

Off-campus student and nonstudent eligibility. Confirm current income limits and site requirements directly.

schadavis.org/eligibility-accessibility

02 / SCHA: Founding Documents

Published founding purposes, including expanding nonprofit housing for people with low incomes.

schadavis.org/founding-docs

03 / SCHA: Our History

SCHA's account of Homestead's operating challenges and 2006 transfer.

schadavis.org/history

04 / HEART of Davis: Safe Heart

Program description and referrals to Turning Point or other providers. Confidential site location omitted.

heartofdavis.godaddysites.com/safe-heart

05 / DCMH: Permanent Supportive Housing

Three listed locations and published income criterion; verify program-specific eligibility.

daviscommunitymeals.org/permanent-supportive-housing

06 / DCMH: Meals Program

Community meals at St. Martin's Episcopal Church. This is distinct from food settings within Paul's Place.

daviscommunitymeals.org/meals-program

Rights, support & source notes

Sources consulted October 28, 2026. Public descriptions are a starting point for direct confirmation. All new arrangements in this proposal remain unapproved.

07 / IHJD: Support Housing Opportunity in Our Updated General Plan

June 18, 2025 opinion piece by IHJD co-chair Ellen Kolarik; includes cooperatives, cohousing, and village models.

davisvanguard.org/2025/06/sustainable-housing-in-davis

08 / Housing 4 All Davis: June 2026 forum announcement

Local reporting of H4AD's public forum and stated aims. Not verification of present legal status or capacity.

davisvanguard.org/2026/06/addressing-homelessness-in-davis

09 / California Civil Rights Department: Housing

Reasonable accommodations and requirements relevant to senior housing. Site-specific review remains necessary.

calcivilrights.ca.gov/housing

10 / HUD / DOJ: Reasonable Accommodations Under the Fair Housing Act

Joint guidance on individualized direct-threat assessment and reasonable accommodations.

www.justice.gov/crt/us-department-housing-and-urban-development

11 / Social Security Administration: People Experiencing Homelessness & Service Providers

Benefits application support and the SOAR approach. Local provider availability is not confirmed.

www.ssa.gov/homelessness

Editorial note

This discussion edition does not document or substantiate allegations about any provider. It proposes service standards and a process for investigating concerns. The design reflects Sahar Tai-Seale's initiating ideas; it is not an official statement from SCHA or any other named organization.

A small commitment, clearly held.

An optional planning page. Completing this page does not enroll anyone or commit an organization.

One action we can explore, and who needs to authorize it

The time, money, access support, or expertise it requires

The person responsible, and the date to check back

What we will look for before taking the next step

Start with the part you can hold.

Build the connections that let others hold theirs.



An invitation to co-design. No named organization has endorsed this proposal or committed funding, property, staff, or participation.

Developed from a proposal initiated by Sahar Tai-Seale
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