

Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

Celebrating 10 Years of Working Together

SPECIAL REPORT: VARD Continues the Reshaping Development Patterns Project



VARD, PO Box 1164, Driggs, ID 83422

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Ever since the global economy and real estate market crash, all sorts of people have been asking: What can we do to try to rebuild our local economy? Moreover, how did we get to where we are today, and how can we learn from the past?

While there are varying opinions, we realize that there is no panacea to revitalize our economy, nor was there one event that led to the downturn. Shortly after the economy took a nosedive at the end of 2008, VARD began conceptualizing an innovative and collaborative process to help our community through our Reshaping Development Patterns project. By 2009, VARD recognized that the coming years in Teton Valley would prove to be both a challenge and an opportunity.

The cumulative impacts of past land-use decisions reached a critical point during the economic downturn. Today, over 75% of the platted lots in Teton Valley sit vacant – a constant reminder of the unfulfilled promises of the boom times. One challenge for the community is to address that oversupply of lots in a way that favors long-term prosperity over short-term speculation.

The Reshaping Development Patterns project is about exploring and creating solutions to the challenges faced by Teton Valley. It is clear that charting a path toward a sustainable economic recovery will require a change in course and a new way of thinking about development in Teton Valley. The opportunity for the community is to redirect growth toward the cities and preserve the wildlife habitat and open space that set Teton Valley apart from anywhere else on Earth. **VARD**

RESHAPING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS GOALS

- To preserve land values and the local economy.
- To foster land and critical habitat conservation.
- To improve the design and ecological sensitivity of existing subdivisions.
- To voluntarily reduce the density and impact of unfinished rural developments.
- To encourage a more rational growth pattern – taking into account the real cost for the county to provide services to new and existing subdivisions.

HOW COULD RESHAPING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS HELP ME?



Owning a home in rural Teton County is like living next to a ticking time bomb. Who knows when the vacant subdivision outside my front window will be completed? Motivating the developer to reduce the project's overall density and impact on wildlife habitat would boost my property values and help me sleep better at night.

—Karen Russell, rural homeowner



As a developer, I learned a lot of hard lessons in the past few years. Looking back, I can see the lasting value of reducing density and preserving open space and migration corridors. By participating as a pilot project in the Reshaping Development Patterns program, I hope that my Targhee Hill Estates project will not only become more marketable, but that it will also serve as a guide for other communities and developers that are committed to a more sustainable future.

—Mike Stewart, Land Equity Partners



As mayor of Driggs, I welcome the benefits of increased density in downtown. As a professional builder, I'd like to see a more sustainable pattern of growth that stabilizes the industry and preserves the natural assets that makes people want to move here and build houses.

—Dan Powers, Driggs Mayor



Encouraging growth in the cities means more locals who might visit my shop. Reducing our collective footprint on the local environment means more visitors who will be drawn to visit our beautiful valley, and spend a few bucks while they're at it!"

—Chuck Spray, owner and operator of Guchiebirds



We've been spending our vacations in Teton Valley for over 30 years because of the unparalleled combination of wildlife, open space and scenic beauty that we came across back in the '70s. We hope to see future growth in the valley that energizes the cities and protects the wildlife and vistas we've enjoyed for future generations to marvel at.

Sally Eagle, Teton Valley second homeowner

Celebrating 10 Years of Working Together

Since its establishment in 2001, Valley Advocates for Responsible Development has evolved into a unique advocacy group in Teton Valley. VARD's focus has been on solving problems rather than just pointing them out. Reshaping Development Patterns is just one example of VARD's forward-looking orientation and emphasis on long-term solutions. We're grateful that the generous support of citizens like you has kept us going for the past 10 years as we gear up to continue serving the community for the next decade and beyond. Thank you!

VARD



Teton Valley 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update

Late last year, Teton County, ID government began working on the Comprehensive Plan also known as Teton Valley 2020. A Plan 4 Planning ("P4P") steering committee was formed to help organize the general timeline of the process and strategize public education and outreach. The P4P's hard work is now done and the community surveys are complete. Six citizen committees have been formed in natural resources/outdoor recreation, transportation, community events and facilities, rural character/agricultural heritage, economic development, and the core committee. The County Commissioners selected Harmony Design and Engineering as the Comp Plan consultant team and appointed citizens to the six committees. Thus far, the consultant team has conducted on-the-ground stakeholder interviews of valley residents, and the six committees are identifying the valley's strengths, weaknesses and future opportunities. **VARD**

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Valley Advocates for Responsible Development

MISSION: To advocate for the private, public and civic actions that will result in the responsible development and sustainable use of natural resources (water, land, wildlife and air) in Teton Valley.

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M-TR 9:00am-4:00pm
Friday by appointment

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RESHAPING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS PILOT PROJECT CASE STUDY: Targhee Hill Estates



KEY FEATURES of the original Targhee Hill Estates (ABOVE - 2007)

- ⊗ No meaningful open space
- ⊗ High carrying costs for the developer
- ⊗ High infrastructure costs
- ⊗ High water consumption
- ⊗ Taking Teton Creek water to create artificial ponds

KEY CHANGES that have taken place in Teton County, Idaho, since Targhee Hill Estates was originally approved in 2007:

- County adopted an *impact fee ordinance* at the end of 2008.
- *New development ordinances* would no longer allow such high density with so little meaningful open space.
- *New faces* have been elected to city and county government.
- *New policies, processes, and ordinances* have been adopted to deal with the unprecedented number of distressed subdivisions.
- The *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* is in the process of being revised.
- VARD helped the county acquire a cutting-edge *Fiscal Impacts Planning System* to help calculate the true public cost of sprawling development.



VARD looks out for my backyard. Thank you RDP!

Y2Y Grant Will Fund GIS Maps of Important Ecological Areas in Teton Valley

This spring, VARD received a \$2,000 grant from Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) to continue work on the Reshaping Development Patterns project. Working with other regional nonprofits, the funds will be used to develop detailed GIS maps of identified ecologically important areas in Teton Valley. These maps will be valuable resources for making informed land-use decisions. Thank you Y2Y!



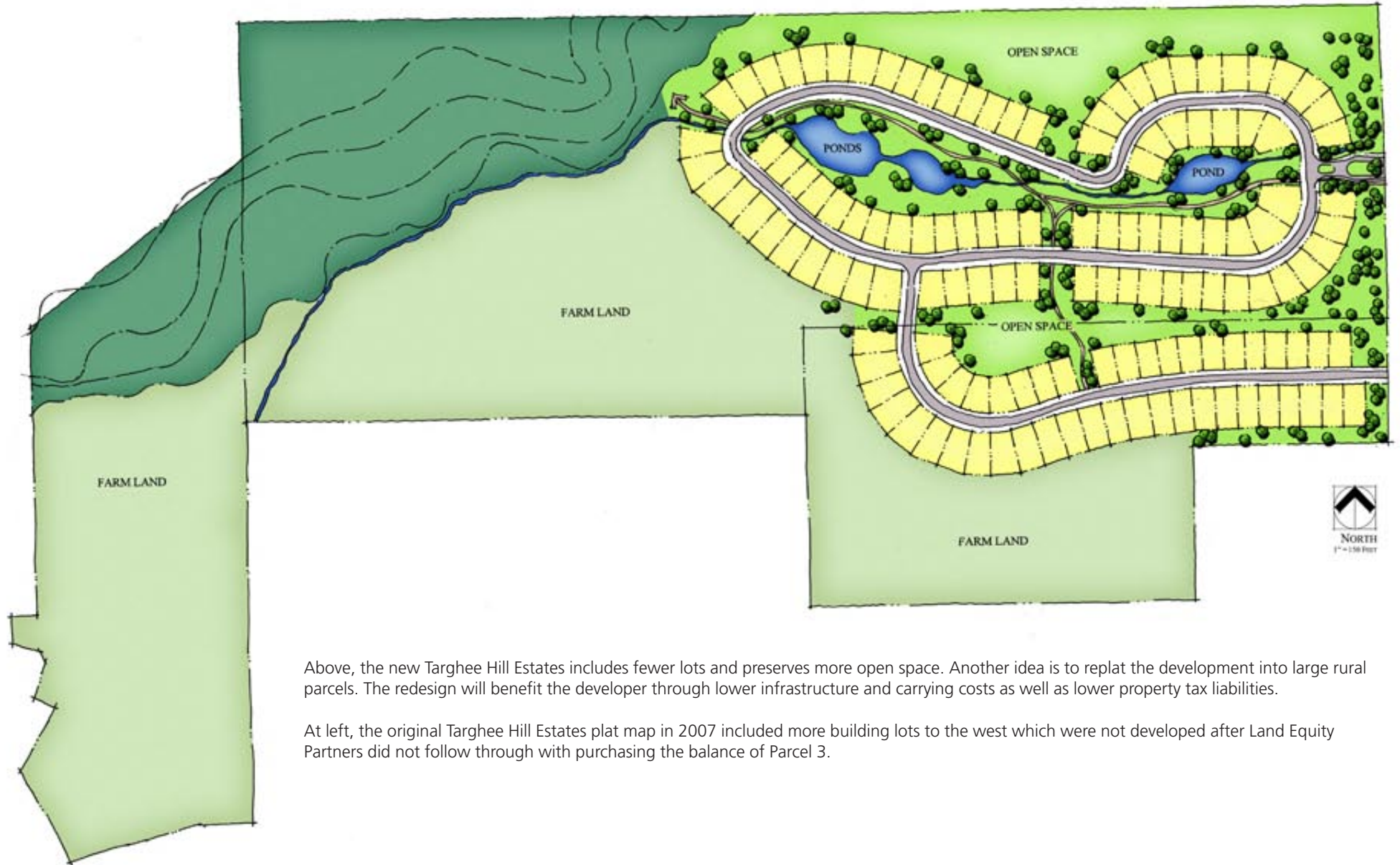
Targhee Hill Estates is a planned unit development (PUD) owned by Land Equity Partners (LEP) that was originally designed on 307 acres located between Teton Creek and Stateline Road. The original vision of Targhee Hill Estates was a higher-end gated community with 47% open space, a clubhouse, pool and 15 large artificial ponds using their water rights from Teton Creek. The project was approved by Teton County in phases, with phase 1 first being approved and platted back in 2007 under the old 2005 Teton County development ordinances. Phase 1 was platted with 101 lots, and phases 2 and 3 were planned to have a total of 182 lots. Eighteen lots were initially sold or transferred to six different owners. Financ-

ing and lot sales dried up, so LEP could not finish their infrastructure. The infrastructure that has been completed includes a sewer line, roughed-in roads and basic entrance-way landscaping.

What brought LEP into the fold of Reshaping Development Patterns was their long-standing, positive working relationship with VARD. They participated in our Reshaping Development Patterns conference at Teton Springs Resort last year, and their presentation on the challenges of their project was one of the most popular presentations at the conference. Last year, LEP approached VARD about becoming a pilot project for replatting derailed projects.

Shown below is a preliminary concept design, which

may change greatly in the future. Another potential idea is to replat Targhee Hill Estates as large rural parcels – which would be significantly different from the concept design shown here. This new potential concept shown here includes 75% open space, 132 lots (but this number may go down), a greatly protected Teton Creek corridor, large swaths of contiguous open space, and leased water rights into Teton Creek. This new concept is better for wildlife and our rural character as it would restore flows into Teton Creek, maintain the open space of the area, and also protect the sensitive creek corridor. The developer would also benefit from lower infrastructure and carrying costs as well as lower property tax liabilities.



Above, the new Targhee Hill Estates includes fewer lots and preserves more open space. Another idea is to replat the development into large rural parcels. The redesign will benefit the developer through lower infrastructure and carrying costs as well as lower property tax liabilities.

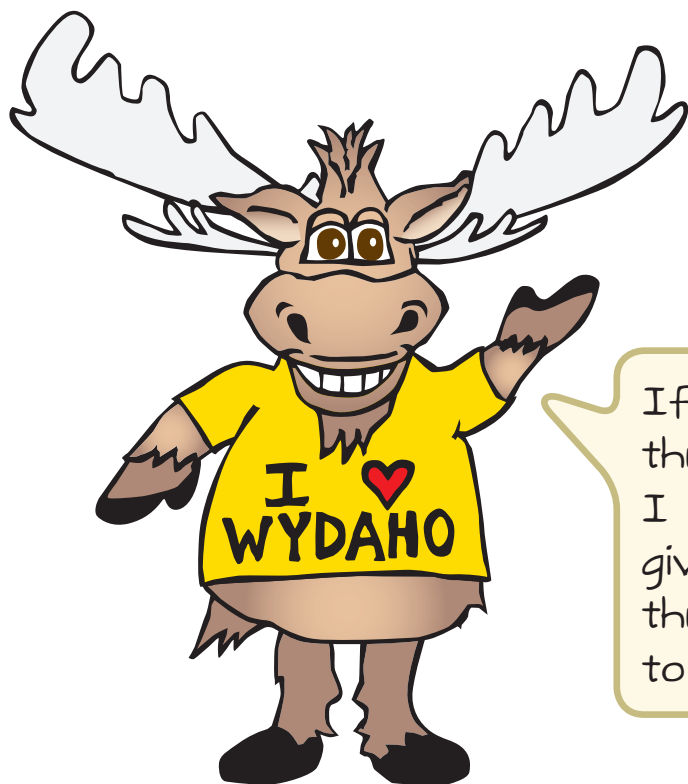
At left, the original Targhee Hill Estates plat map in 2007 included more building lots to the west which were not developed after Land Equity Partners did not follow through with purchasing the balance of Parcel 3.

KEY FEATURES of what could be the new Targhee Hill Estates (ABOVE - 2011)

- 😊 75% permanently protected open space
- 😊 Permanently protected corridor along Teton Creek
- 😊 Lower infrastructure costs
- 😊 Lower carrying costs for the developer
- 😊 Lease water rights into Teton Creek

KEY CHALLENGES faced in reshaping Targhee Hill Estates and other zombie subdivisions:

- Initially, the *lack of a clear process* for redesigning a subdivision presented a problem. Now the county has adopted a re-platting process that is slated for its first test during July of 2011.
- **Multiple lot owners.** Targhee Hill Estates had to work hard to satisfy multiple parties who purchased lots in the project as originally designed, but in the end, everyone has been willing to make the necessary adjustments. In a situation with multiple owners, other redesign efforts might not be so lucky.
- **Bank financing.** Lenders have been reluctant to authorize plat changes because of uncertainty in the markets and bureaucratic hurdles. In addition, stricter lending standards have made it more difficult to obtain new financing for distressed projects.
- **Marketability.** The research shows that sustainable community designs are more attractive to buyers than more traditional “Anywhere, USA” subdivisions. But that research is no guarantee that a project will succeed. Only time will tell if there truly is a market for better living options in Teton Valley.



If I had thumbs, I would give a big thumbs up to RDP!

Calendar of Events

Tin Cup Challenge
Saturday, July 16

Please support VARD in the Tin Cup Challenge and stop by our booth at the Driggs City Park!



The 4th Annual Tin Cup Challenge is our most important fundraiser of the year! Your generosity helps us to continue our education and outreach, as well as important programmatic work to promote responsible land-use decisions. Please visit the Community Foundation of Teton Valley's website at www.cftetonvalley.org/tin_cup to donate online and have your gift matched. Donations will be accepted through Monday, July 25, 5pm. Thank you!

2nd Annual VARD Golf Tournament & Evening Social at Huntsman Springs
Friday, September 2

Enjoy a wonderful day of golf, conversation and mingling with friends at Huntsman Springs!



Join us for a golf tournament and post-tournament party for VARD members and tournament participants. Tournament proceeds will be donated to VARD's Reshaping Development Patterns project.

- \$135 per person (includes green fee, range balls, cart, barbecue lunch, post-play party, and entry for prizes).
- Limited to 16 four-person teams (64 players). You can form your own team or sign up as an individual or pair to be teamed up with others based on ability.
- Post-Tournament Party for friends & VARD members (FREE for golf tournament participants or \$15 per person for non-golfers/community members).

Space is limited. Got to www.tetonvalleyadvocates.org to register or call 354-1707.

9th Annual Mad Hatter Party
Friday, September 30

Save the date for VARD's 9th Annual Mad Hatter Party!



Join VARD and your friends for a fall evening of revelry and a special celebration of VARD's 10 year anniversary. With our usual hat competition and live auction, this event is not to be missed! Stay tuned for location and event details.

l-r: Glenn Vitucci and Janet Reese got into the spirit of the 8th Annual Mad Hatter Party last fall.

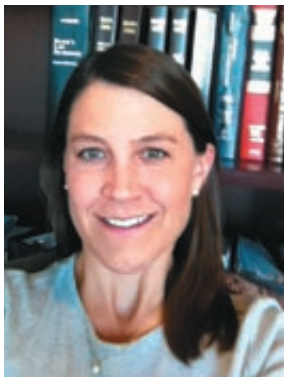
Conservation Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Seminar
Sunday, October 16 & Monday, October 17

Earn credits for Conservation Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Seminar to benefit VARD & Friends of the Teton River (FTR)!

All proceeds from this law seminar will directly benefit land and water conservation in the Tetons and the work of VARD and FTR. See www.creditsforconservation.wordpress.com for information.

VARD Welcomes Julie Stomper

We are happy to announce that over the winter, Julie Stomper was voted in as VARD's newest board of directors member. The following is a brief bio:



When Julie Stomper and her husband Derek came to the Tetons "to ski for a winter" over 15 years ago, they had no idea that they would wind up building a home, establishing careers and raising a family here. As a parent of two young girls, Julie has a vested interest in helping her community develop in a way that balances the needs of a growing population with the preservation of its historic and natural beauty. When Julie is not enjoying outdoor adventures with her family, she practices real estate and land-use law in the Driggs office of the firm of Thatcher, Beard, St. Clair, Gaffney, PA. Julie earned her BA in International Relations from Tufts University. She graduated from Gonzaga University School of Law with honors, where she was the managing editor of the *Gonzaga Journal of International Law*. **VARD**

Keypad Polling Software, Laptop, Projector Available

With generous funds from a Teton Springs Foundation grant, VARD purchased 100 Turning Point Technology keypad polls, which are available for free checkout to local government, schools and Teton Valley nonprofits interested in gathering public input. The Orton Family Foundation also provided funds used to purchase a laptop and projector for groups interested in using the software. Contact VARD at 354-1707 or e-mail info@tetonvalleyadvocates.org to reserve equipment. **VARD**

Thanks for Partying with VARD!

Thanks for coming out to VARD's Office Warming Party on June 3 and our Summer Music Party at the Knotty Pine on June 15! We had a wonderful turnout of people at both events and a jolly good time all around. Special thanks to the band "Last Call" for playing at our music party and to the Sonoran Institute for helping sponsor the event. **VARD**



Many thanks to our wonderful volunteers at our Summer Music Party! l-r: Susie Work (in back), Lynn Sandman, Bev Palm and Phyllis Anderson

Tetonia Voters Take Case to Idaho Supreme Court

In May of last year, the citizens of Tetonia held a referendum that de-annexed roughly 267 acres of wetlands and agricultural land on the south end of town. In August, the landowner filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn the referendum. At the request of the people of Tetonia, VARD's staff attorney Anna Trentadue and Board President David Axelrod moved to intervene in the lawsuit on behalf of four Tetonia residents who voted in the referendum election. After more than nine months of legal wrangling, Trentadue and Axelrod have now filed an appeal with the Idaho Supreme Court to ensure that the people of Tetonia will be allowed to defend their right to hold a referendum election.

The move to invalidate a referendum vote on an annexation is unprecedented in Idaho. On account of their commitment to the rights of Tetonia's citizens, Trentadue and Axelrod are providing their legal services in this matter free of charge. **VARD**

Get Involved • Become a Member • TETON VALLEY NEEDS YOU!

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address _____

city _____

state _____ zip _____

e-mail _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS	
Member.....	\$25-\$49/year <input type="checkbox"/>
Supporter.....	\$50-\$99/year <input type="checkbox"/>
Friend.....	\$100-\$249/year <input type="checkbox"/>
Patron.....	\$250-\$499/year <input type="checkbox"/>
Sponsor.....	\$500-\$999/year <input type="checkbox"/>
Benefactor.....	\$1000+/year <input type="checkbox"/>

Members will receive meeting invitations, regular newsletters and e-mail updates.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND YOUR CHECK TO: **VARD** P.O. Box 1164, Driggs, ID 83422

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