



**Transportation  
Alliance**

# **Are We Better Off?**

**A Look at BaltimoreLink and Where We Go From Here**

August 21, 2018

Transit Choices

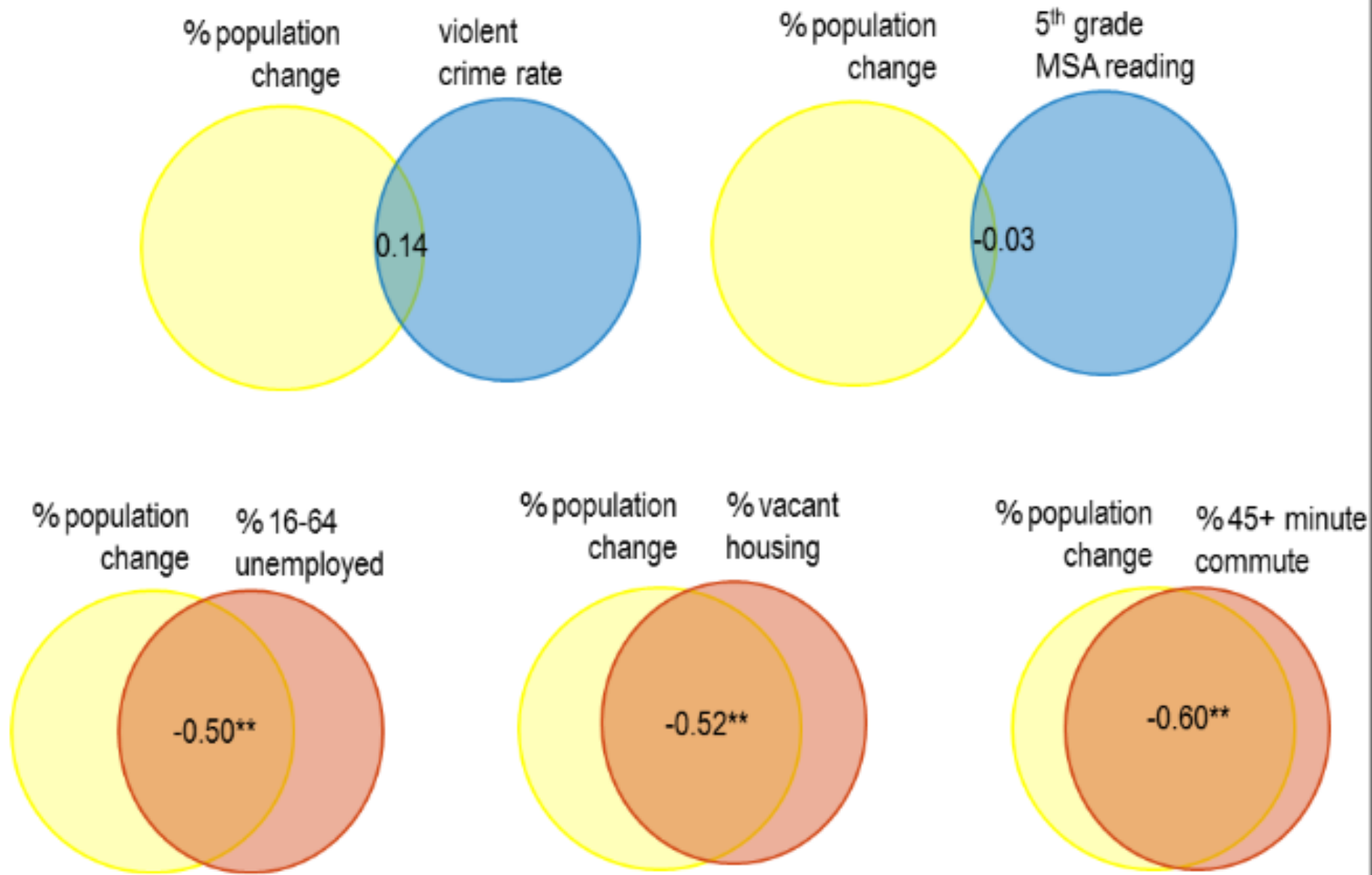
*“People like me are always frustrated and looking for something else. But there's only the Beltway. It's horrible, and there's no alternative.”*

Byron Haskins, quoted in the Baltimore Sun in June 2015, describes his commute between his home in Cockeysville and work at the Social Security Administration in Woodlawn.

*The relationship between transportation and social mobility is stronger than that between mobility and several other factors, like crime, elementary-school test scores or the percentage of two-parent families in a community, said Nathaniel Hendren, a Harvard economist and one of the researchers on the study.*

Mikayla Bouchard. "Transportation Emerges as Crucial to Escaping Poverty".  
*New York Times* 7 May 2015

Figure 1: Correlations between Percent Population Change and Key *Vital Signs* Indicators



Notes: % population change between 2000 and 2010; all other indicators are 2011 (*Vital Signs 11*).

\*\*Pearson correlation is statistically significant  $p < .001$ .



## What Does it Mean to Have Great Transportation?



*A well-functioning transportation system is important for workers, their employers and the area's economy.*

-- Gerald Grimes, Project Manager at the Northwest One-Stop Career Center

# What is being done to address this?

- Until 2015, the MTA was working on the Red Line and a re-design on of the bus network (BNIP)
- In June 2015 the Red Line was cancelled
- In October 2015 BaltimoreLink was announced
- Improving access to jobs, reliability, speed and the frequency of transit were key promises

*Surveys and studies of ridership trends make clear what Americans look for in public transportation: frequent, reliable, reasonably speedy service that stops within a comfortable walk of jobs, housing, retail and services. When Gov. Larry Hogan announced BaltimoreLink in October 2015 he promised “more reliable and timely transit experience” with “better connections to jobs”. The official BaltimoreLink website mentions “job centers,” “reliability” and “access to high-frequency transit” among the benefits. While saying that these aspects of the service will improve is encouraging, **riders want to see results.***

Op Ed in the Baltimore Sun, June 18, 2017 by Eric Norton and Brian O’Malley

# Are We Better Off?

*Assessing BaltimoreLink's  
Promises One Year Later*



## **ACCESS**

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**How many places does the ride go?**

## **RELIABILITY**

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**How dependable is the ride schedule?**

## **SPEED**

---

**How fast is the ride ?**

## **FREQUENCY**

---

**How soon is the next ride ?**

## **WALKABILITY**

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**How comfortable is the walk to and from the ride?**



**Transportation Alliance**

**The Five  
BASICS**

# Did BaltimoreLink Deliver?



- Using a tool called Sugar Access we conducted a before-after analysis to answer that question.
- We looked at MTA's core service area and ran a computer model to see how many jobs the average resident could get to in 45 minutes or less using transit and walking.

# Access to All Jobs Got Slightly Worse

<b>Change in Jobs Accessible within 45 Minutes by Transit for the Average Resident on a <u>Weekday</u> in the MTA Baltimore Service Area</b>				
	<b>Pre- Blink Service</b>	<b>BLink Service</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Average Regionwide</b>	<b>125,490</b>	<b>118,580</b>	<b>-6,910</b>	<b>-6%</b>

<b>Change in Jobs Accessible within 45 Minutes by Transit for the Average Resident on a <u>Sunday</u> in the MTA Baltimore Service Area</b>				
	<b>Pre- Blink Service</b>	<b>BLink Service</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Average Regionwide</b>	<b>105,206</b>	<b>96,021</b>	<b>-9,184</b>	<b>-9%</b>

# Access to High-Opportunity Jobs Got Slightly Better

**Change in High Opportunity Jobs Accessible within 45 Minutes by Transit for the Average Resident on a Weekday in the MTA Baltimore Service Area**

	<b>Pre- Blink Service</b>	<b>BLink Service</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Average Regionwide</b>	<b>41,570</b>	<b>44,757</b>	<b>3,187</b>	<b>8%</b>

**Change in High Opportunity Jobs Accessible within 45 Minutes by Transit for the Average Resident on a Sunday in the MTA Baltimore Service Area**

	<b>Pre- Blink Service</b>	<b>BLink Service</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Average Regionwide</b>	<b>34,948</b>	<b>35,933</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>3%</b>

# Access to Maryland Employment Centers Did Not Improve

- National Center for Smart Growth defines employment centers as dense clusters of jobs in the state where there are a minimum of 10,000 jobs and a density threshold of nine jobs per acre.
- There are 23 in the state, 10 of which are in the Baltimore region
- Of those, 6 saw improved access from BaltimoreLink but 4 experienced less access
- Overall, there was no net increase in the number of people who could reach these sites

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# Did BaltimoreLink Deliver?

## FREQUENCY

How soon is the next ride ?

- The MTA made the “frequent transit network” one of the selling points of BaltimoreLink.
- We found that BaltimoreLink resulted in more people living near buses or trains scheduled to run with high frequency between 7 am and 10 pm.

	Number of Residents Living Near High Frequency Transit	Total Regional Population (2016)	% of Residents Living Near High Frequency Transit
Around the Clock	144,987	2,801,028	5.2%
Full Day	372,683	2,801,028	13.3%
Rush Hour	762,880	2,801,028	27.2%

	Number of Residents Living Near High Frequency Transit	Total Regional Population (2017)	% of Residents Living Near High Frequency Transit
Around the Clock	87,849	2,808,175	3.1%
Full Day	548,959	2,808,175	19.5%
Rush Hour	893,512	2,808,175	31.8%



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# Did BaltimoreLink Deliver?

## RELIABILITY

How dependable is the ride schedule?

- MTA's claim of improved reliability can't be evaluated because MTA changed both its definition of on-time performance (OTP) and its method of measuring and calculating OTP.
- Our observational data does not indicate a reliability improvement.

# On Time Performance (OTP) of MTA Buses by Various Measures

## MTA CityLink Reported OTP



## MTA LocalLink Reported OTP



## Transportation Alliance Observed OTP May 2018

### LocalLink



### CityLink



80% MTA Bus On-Time Performance (OTP) Target

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- 1. Improve Transparency and Open Data (MTA):** report on the aspects of transit that matter most to riders; Fast, Frequent, Reliable, Connected, and Walkable; publish methodologies for measuring performance.
- 2. Prioritize Transit (Baltimore City and MTA):** openly evaluate bus priority lanes and TSP; develop a memorandum of understanding or other agreement document to prioritize moving people, coordinate implementation and enforcement, and create accountability.
- 3. Focus on Frequency (MTA):** maintain the headway levels promised in the high frequency network; identify corridors for expanding new or enhancing existing frequency; ensure that the entirety of each CityLink route provides high-frequency service.
- 4. Reverse MTA Budget Cuts (Governor Hogan and Maryland Department of Transportation):** restore capital funding to the MTA which is currently slated to see a 58% cut from FY19 to FY23.
- 5. Produce an Excellent Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan (MTA and Local Governments):** produce a goal-oriented and multi-modal plan through meaningful public involvement and stakeholder engagement; program it into regional transportation plans.

# In a Nutshell

- BaltimoreLink was
  - Overpromised
  - Flat funded
  - Not a gamechanger for riders
- To improve
  - Transparency and open data
  - Prioritize transit
  - Focus on frequency
  - Reverse MTA budget cuts
  - Produce an excellent transit plan

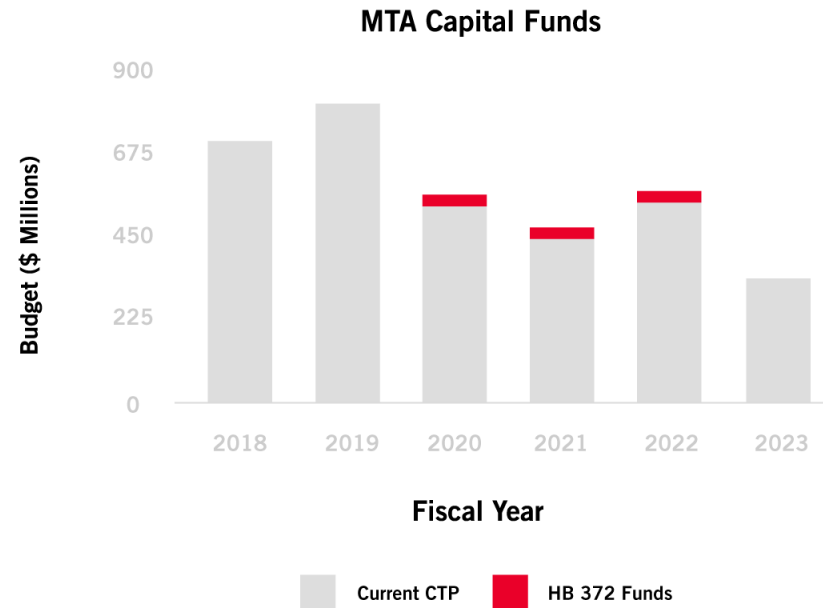
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## Maryland Transit Funding Act

Fiscal Years 2020 - 2022

The General Assembly mandated that MTA's capital budget receive an additional **\$29.1 million** each year.

Over the course of the current CTP, by FY 2023 MTA's total capital budget is projected to **decrease by 52%** compared to FY 2018.



# Are We Better Off? Coverage

## News Media

WMAR-2 News:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSd4FzU7oFU>

Washington Post:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2018/07/05/transportation-group-says-revamped-baltimore-bus-system-falls-well-short-of-promises/?utm\\_term=.4d8d1a1f6ab5](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/dr-gridlock/wp/2018/07/05/transportation-group-says-revamped-baltimore-bus-system-falls-well-short-of-promises/?utm_term=.4d8d1a1f6ab5)

Baltimore Fishbowl:

<https://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/transportation-focused-advocacy-group-calls-for-baltimorelink-improvements/>

Maryland Daily Record:

<https://thedailyrecord.com/2018/07/06/transit-advocates-slam-baltimorelink-again/>

Baltimore Sun:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-baltimorelink-report-20180705-story.html>

Baltimore Sun:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0709-baltimore-transit-20180706-story.html>

Mass Transit:

<http://www.masstransitmag.com/news/12419476/md-rider-advocate-report-says-baltimorelink-has-not-delivered-on-promises>

Maryland Reporter:

<http://marylandreporter.com/2018/07/06/state-roundup-july-6-2018/>

Future Structure:

<http://www.govtech.com/fs/transportation/Report-Finds-Fault-With-Baltimores-Regional-Transit-Overhaul.html>

Greater Greater Washington:

<https://ggwash.org/view/68293/dc-should-learn-from-baltimores-bus-system-redesign-mistakes>



# Are We Better Off? Coverage

## Twitter

@drgridlock: Transportation group says revamped Baltimore bus system 'falls well short' of promises (shared with Washington post article)

@baltcommfdn: Transportation group says revamped Baltimore bus system 'falls well short' of promises (shared with Baltimore sun article)

@Bmorejourno: Ground Up blog: [@CMTAlliance](#) remains unimpressed with BaltimoreLink (shared with Daily Record article)

@Baltimorefishbowl: [@CMTAlliance](#) calls for [@mtamaryland](#) to invest more in BaltimoreLink, as well as greater transparency about the bus system:

[https://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/transportation-focused-advocacy-group-calls-for-baltimorelink-improvements/ ...](https://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/transportation-focused-advocacy-group-calls-for-baltimorelink-improvements/)

@sierraclubmd: New study by [@CMTAlliance](#) shows the inadequacies of BaltimoreLink bus system after its 1 year anniversary! We need more connected, safe, reliable & frequent transit for everyone! [#CleanTransportation](#) (Retweet of Dr. Gridlock Post)

# Are We Better Off? Coverage

## Facebook

The Baltimore Sun: The transportation alliance criticized the MTA for changing the way it classifies “on-time.” (posted with article)

Adam Bednar: Ground Up blog: "The 42-page report, titled “Are We Better Off? Assessing BaltimoreLink’s Promises One Year Later” failed to find evidence the Maryland Transit Administration’s revamp has made a noticeable difference in terms of reliability, speed, or access to jobs. The report did find the revamped system improved the number of people living near high frequency routes."

Halethorpe: BaltimoreLink, Gov. Larry Hogan’s overhaul of the Maryland Transit Administration regional bus system, has fallen short of delivering the “transformational” transit he promised, according to an analysis released Thursday by a rider advocacy group. The route redesign gave slightly more residents...

Klaus Phillipson: CMTA doesn’t share MTA’s optimism about Link performance.

James Knighton: [Sun op-ed](#) (posted with sun article)

Glenn Smith: shared Klaus Phillipson’d post and Baltimore fishbowl article

## Sharing the Message

- Baltimore Data Day 2018, Federal Reserve on Thursday July 12
- Lunch with Labor, WOLB 1010 AM on Tuesday, July 29 at 12pm
- Transit Choices, at Impact Hub Baltimore on Tuesday, August 21 at 8am
- Silber Foundation Board of Directors, on Tuesday August 28

# Are We Better Off?

*Assessing BaltimoreLink's  
Promises One Year Later*



## Transportation 101

- 7 weeks
- 21 hours
- Turning concerned citizens into effective advocates





## Transportation 101

...is a series of 7-weekly workshops in which participants meet to learn from local experts and leaders, meet other interested citizens and ultimately put what they learn into action. Graduates have:

- A deeper understanding of regional transportation issues & the critical role transportation plays in our lives.
- Tools to educate fellow citizens about transportation and its important linkages to our quality of life.
- Ability to educate fellow citizens about the importance of investing in transportation service and infrastructure.
- Been empowered to advocate and implement their own action plans related to transportation or community building.

**Cost:** FREE (\$1000 value)

**Next Series:** October 4-November 15, Thursdays 6-9pm

**Location:** TBD

**FOR MORE INFO VISIT**  
<http://bit.ly/t101s2018d>

**Avery is now the  
Community Outreach  
Coordinator for the  
Rails-to-Trails  
Conservancy, an org  
focused on creating a  
network of trails**



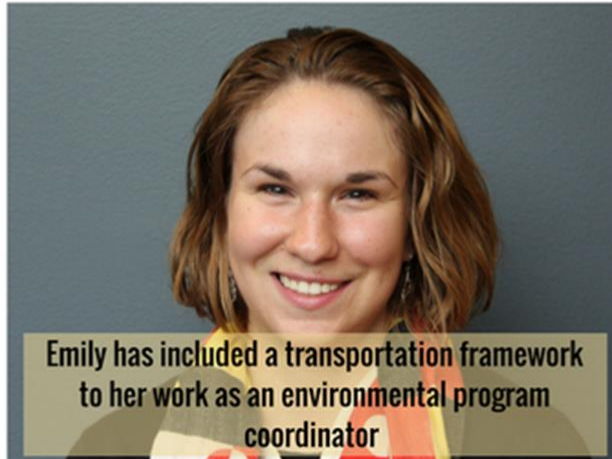
**Jacque is using her  
video production  
skills to help promote  
local advocacy groups,  
like us, through digital  
media**



**Michael is being an active voice by testifying  
during legislative hearings & responding to  
misguided public opinion on transit investment**

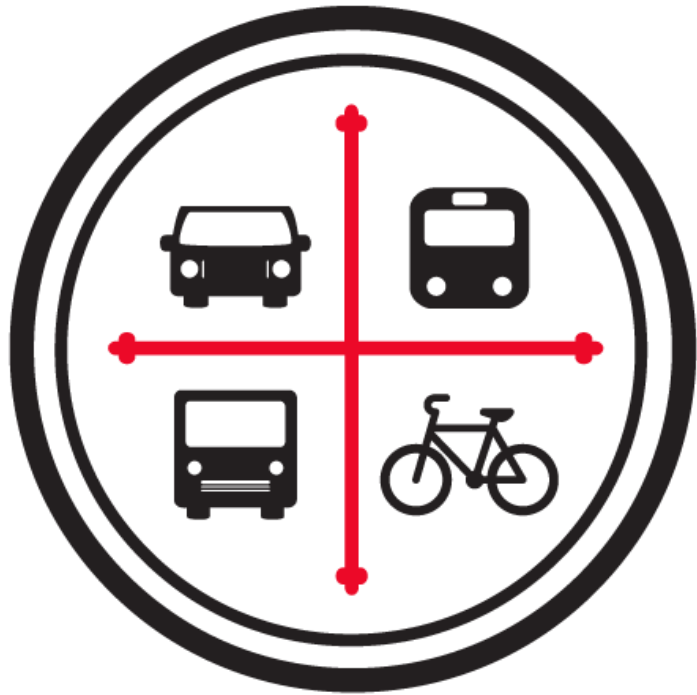


**Emily has included a transportation framework  
to her work as an environmental program  
coordinator**



**Lowell helped create a better user experience  
for (potential) light rail users by posting  
pictures of light stops on Google Maps**





# Transportation Alliance

**Brian O'Malley**

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