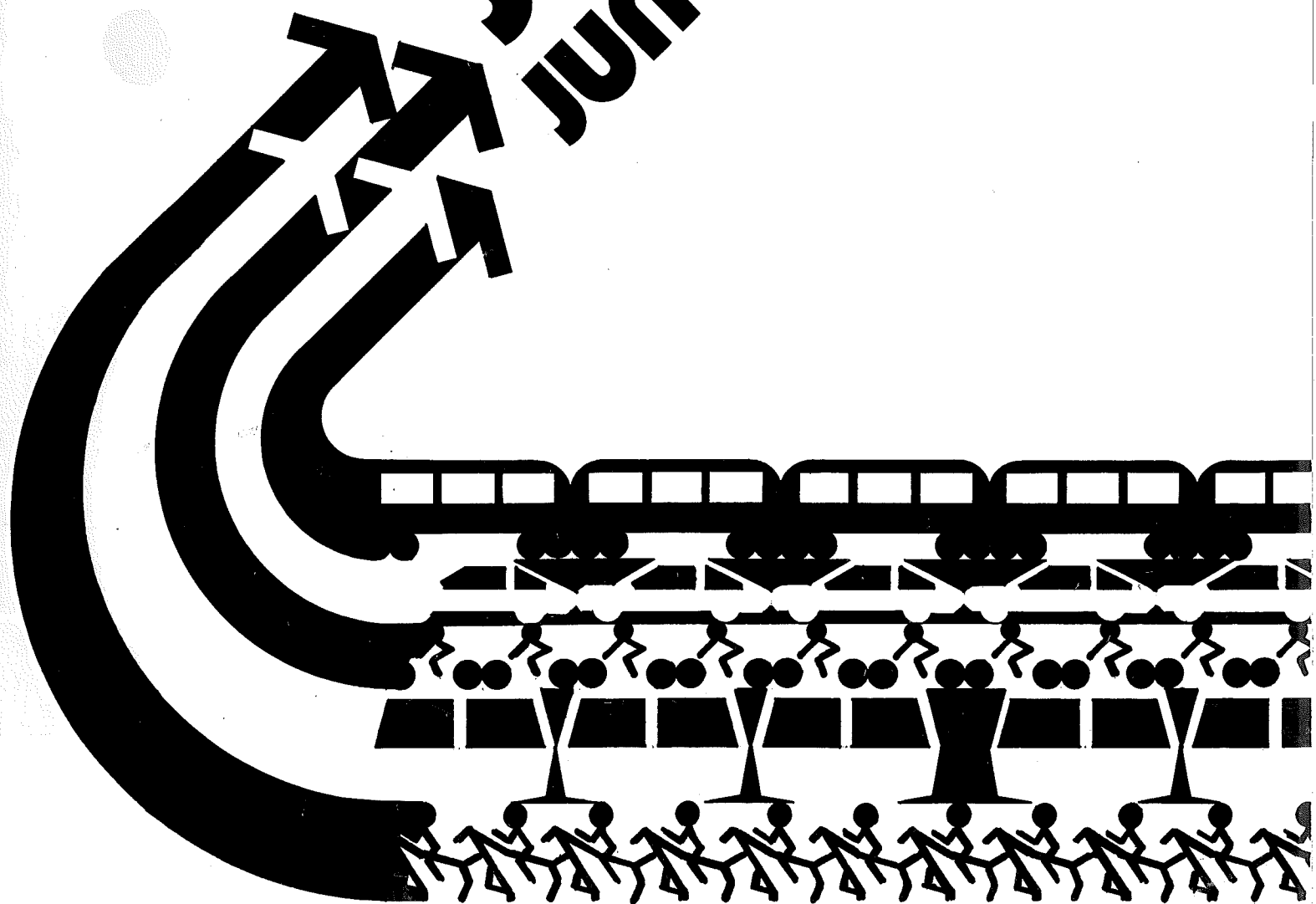


REPORT STEP FORUM JUNE 11, 1974



S T E P F o r u m I I I

R E P O R T

SCOTTSDALE TOWN ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FORUM

A Report and Digest
of STEP Forum III
June 11, 1974

Sponsored by the City Council

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INTRODUCTION

The third Scottsdale Town Enrichment Program Forum convened June 11, 1974, at the Safari Hotel with 44 citizens meeting in an all-day session with the Mayor and Council to discuss Transportation Planning. In an open atmosphere of informal round-table discussion four groups, each chaired by a member of the council, deliberated during the morning and afternoon work periods. All participants heard an overview presentation by Dr. Richard Bauman, Scottsdale City Planner, in the morning and a luncheon speech by Mr. Stuart Eurman, Regional Director for the Urban Mass Transit Administration.

Extensive background readings had been prepared and distributed to the participants by members of the City staff who also served as resource persons and recorders during the work sessions. This report is a compilation of the recorder's notes as reviewed by the citizen reporters and chairmen of each group.

Recurring themes which seemed to characterize the discussion as a whole were:

- A dual need exists. Scottsdale must solve immediate circulation difficulties as well as plan for long range (1980 + solutions).
- Regional coordination will be a key factor in solving the long range problems.
- The City has a responsibility to provide for groups with special needs, i.e., the elderly and handicapped.
- Preserving the downtown area as a thriving economic entity and enhancing the tourism industry are vital to the City's future.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The four discussion groups concentrated on certain key topics from the background readings. They were:

- Discouraging Through Traffic;
- Alternative Modes of Transportation; and
- Land Use Planning

DISCOURAGING THROUGH TRAFFIC

High Speed Border Beltway

While there was general agreement that through traffic should be routed away from the City's center, the specific suggestions ranged from a modest by-pass of the central business district to full-fledged freeways defining at least part of Scottsdale's border area.

One group reached a consensus that the development of a beltway, but not a freeway, on the north and at the eastern and southern boundaries of the community is a viable transportation policy. They agreed, in concept, that Scottsdale should:

- 1) discourage intensified development along these beltways, and
- 2) carefully weigh the psychological, social and economic effects of channeling heavy through traffic near those areas of the City which are already developed, i.e., the Pima Road residential areas.

Another group considered border beltways not only necessary and desirable but a "foregone conclusion." Despite one comment that it might "hurt business" and another that "discouraging travel hurts us as much as outsiders," the group agreed that "high speed, limited access arterials" were needed to carry through traffic as well as cross town local traffic.

A majority feeling, in that group, seemed to be that "freeways are not so bad. They generate less pollution and keep traffic off our streets." It was felt that the northern and southern east-west route might well be freeways eventually with the Pima link a six- to eight-lane limited access parkway. A southern crossing was given the first priority in terms of need, but a northern route should be acquired now before development makes it excessively difficult and costly, the group agreed.

On the other hand, a comment representative of opinion in another group held that, "A high capacity expressway or beltway like that used in Washington, D.C., would probably be too much for the City of Scottsdale, even in 1990." The same group did concur that a north-south beltway to draw traffic off of Scottsdale Road would be a viable solution to discourage "through" traffic. The group did not recommend a location for such a route.

Routing, was discussed at length in one group. They were enthusiastic about connecting Bell Road to Shea Boulevard via the Central Arizona Project right-of-way. Participants also saw a need for Shea to carry heavy volumes as far west as Pima. Pima should be high speed into Tempe to connect with a route coming from the west along Princess and the Salt River to connect with the Beeline Highway.

Even the group which was least committed to the beltway concept called for "through traffic to bypass Old Town Scottsdale" and saw the need for a north-south transportation corridor to tie into a metropolitan Valley east-west program.

Slow Traffic Zone in Downtown Shopping Area

The groups' conclusions regarding this topic revealed general concurrence with the concept along with some ambivalence about it. One group termed the slow traffic zone "acceptable." Another group agreed that we have a de facto slow-traffic zone through the center of the City at the present time.

While this may improve accessibility to stores and shoppes, it said the congestion also serves to discourage many people from going through the area unless they plan to shop. This group went on to suggest means of improving traffic flow on Scottsdale Road in the downtown area even though participants had earlier concluded that through traffic should be discouraged.

In a third group a similar concern was expressed by a participant who said that "some businessmen might need to be convinced that reduced congestion means more, not fewer, shoppers." This group felt that a more leisurely downtown traffic movement would be a rather automatic result of the beltways. One group member said that if Pima and Hayden are opened all the way, Scottsdale Road will take care of itself, he believed.

Pedestrian malls, wide sidewalks and fewer traffic lanes were the recommendations of the fourth group.

Emphasizing North-South Over East-West Traffic

Only two groups reported specifically on this issue. One expressed agreement with the policy of discouraging through east-west traffic and emphasizing north-south movement. Its suggestion was to implement the idea of synchronizing traffic signals. The other group definitely did not favor this proposal. The consensus was that since the east-west recreational traffic is a fact of life, the best thing to do is to get vehicles through as fast as possible.

Discouraging Traffic Through Neighborhoods

Two of the discussion groups considered the elimination of through traffic from neighborhoods a worthwhile City policy which should be continued. A third group expressed the view that discouraging traffic through neighborhoods wherever possible and desirable is a good theory, but its practical application may prove infeasible in existing neighborhoods. As a policy statement, this group concluded that the City should plan future land use to discourage traffic through neighborhoods. One group member expressed the view that if Scottsdale begins to close off existing roads, it should seriously consider the traffic impacts

imposed on other roads. Another expressed concern that traffic detours may hamper emergency services to residential areas. Still others concluded that the concept would reduce street congestion, limit the number of traffic hazards which school children would experience, and finally, encourage bicycle usage.

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

People Mover Corridor

The idea of a people mover corridor was more or less "derailed" by the question of adequate density. Such comments as "Downtown Scottsdale may have the density to warrant a transit system, but does the northern part of the City (Shea Road, Indian Bend Road, etc.) have that density?", and "Any people mover must have a destination at each end so that there is a reason to ride it (such as Scottsdale Community College, Los Arcos Mall, Fifth Avenue Shopping, Old Town Shopping, etc.)," from two different panels indicate the consensus which was echoed in the three groups which discussed people mover corridors. The conclusion, as summarized in a third group, was that Scottsdale has insufficient density to support a fixed route system except within the downtown area.

There was strong feeling against a roadway in the wash. A "people mover" in the sense of some of the innovative concepts discussed in the news media was considered a very long way into the future for Scottsdale.

Transit System for Commuters

There was an evident lack of enthusiasm for commuter transit in two groups and a qualified acceptance of some tie-in with a regional transit system in the other two. For instance, one group generally agreed that the majority of Scottsdale residents would be reluctant to use public transit for at least three reasons:

- a) The City is very spread out over a large area.

- b) It has a very automobile-oriented society, with over 97 percent of Scottsdale homes having at least one car. Residents consider their cars very convenient and comfortable.
- c) In Scottsdale's western atmosphere, its residents are accustomed to having a great amount of freedom and individual mobility, which cannot be attained in a public transit system.

In a second discussion group, the idea of a grid bus system was supported by only two or three members. Other comments ranged from "people won't walk two blocks" to "the elderly cannot use it" from "empty buses don't reduce congestion" to "Scottsdale doesn't want to end up like Phoenix with a huge subsidy and a very small percentage of usage."

Some expressed opinions that an express bus system to the airport and Phoenix could be useful, especially as the economic factors begin to outweigh the psychological ones. There was still some concern that "park and ride" may suffer from the reluctance of the commuter to leave the car once he starts in it.

Frequency and regularity of schedules were mentioned as very important to the user. A transit system should have qualities such as:

- a) convenient;
- b) economical;
- c) safe;
- d) comfortable;
- e) and minimum reasonable travel time.

There was acknowledgement that achieving these qualities would be expensive. One participant indicated being in favor of developing a transportation system in Scottsdale, but against subsidizing transportation. He noted that if Scottsdale is to consider other modes of transportation, there must be an economic base to support it; also consideration must be given to methods of financing the system. He also noted that we must determine whether people are willing to support and use the system. Another member countered by stating that the auto is the most highly subsidized mode of transportation.

A panel member in another group said, "Few, if any, transit systems in the U.S. now operate in the black." His group concluded that, "For the next 5-6 years, we should be able to get along by expanding our system of streets, since there is still sufficient right-of-way available. After 1980, we will need an alternate system of transportation, which we should be planning for in the near future.

Each group expressed the need for regional coordination. Two specifically mentioned MAG and one stressed the importance of Scottsdale's exerting maximum leadership in the valley-wide transportation planning process.

Congestion in the Downtown Shopping Area

One group concluded that there is an immediate need to develop transportation for those areas of Scottsdale within which significant development already has occurred. This system could possibly develop as a circular bus system south of Chaparral with some north-south feeder lines to service the north area of Scottsdale.

In a second group, the use of some kind of attractive and appropriate jitney service or small capacity downtown resort routed transit to serve primarily the tourists and shoppers was discussed at length. The success of the merchants' 5th Avenue bus service during the winter of 1974 was noted. One suggestion was that a privately owned system might operate here in the winter and move to San Diego for the summer. A trolley on Scottsdale Road from Lincoln to McDowell was considered as possibly a valid means to reduce congestion unless it reduced capacity by taking up one lane. It was concluded that transit here should be "specialized, convenient, and enticing."

Funding for such a downtown transit system, this group decided, should be shared jointly by the business community which benefits from it, from fares, and by the City, which would serve primarily as a catalyst.

Special Needs of the Elderly, the Handicapped and the Young

Every group considered special citizen needs a very high priority. One group said, "There are two extreme groups for whom the City provides no transportation services

at present:

- "elderly or infirm persons who should not drive automobiles for safety reasons but for whom there are no alternatives, and
- "young people not yet old enough to drive."

Another group agreed that the City has a definite responsibility to young persons, students, older persons and the infirm to provide some mode of public transit, realizing that it may not have wide general use, and that it will probably require a subsidy by the City. To implement fulfillment of this responsibility, the City should take two steps:

- The City should undertake a comprehensive research study of the short-run transit needs of these and other groups;
- The City should experiment, keeping an open mind, with one or more types of public transit systems. One possibility that should be investigated would be to use school buses for public transit during the day (9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) and on weekends and evenings when they are not being used by the school district.

A third group suggested that the most practical immediate alternative mode of transportation for Scottsdale should be either:

- A cooperative venture between existing taxi services and the City, subsidized possibly by the federal government. This system could result in reduced fares for senior citizens, or
- A Dial-a-ride system.

It concluded that if the City determines a dial-a-ride system is appropriate, then consideration should be given to public ownership. The group also agreed that if the City determines a taxi service is appropriate, then it should consider partial public subsidy of the system.

The fourth group also concluded that the transportation problems of the elderly and handicapped best could be met by either a publically subsidized taxi service or a dial-a-ride system. The idea was presented of a City fund to underwrite low cost scrip or coupons for taxi fares to

enable the elderly or disabled to have door-to-door service with some personal assistance. The group saw this as a valuable tool to meet the needs of such specialized groups. A dial-a-ride mini bus system was discussed as possibly useful in the higher densities south of Indian Bend. A good deal of concern was expressed regarding costs per passenger mile and level of subsidy. Serious study regarding cost-benefit ratios was recommended although it was pointed out that "street building is also a losing proposition."

Peripheral Parking Downtown

Fringe area parking tied into a localized tram or transit system for the central business district was endorsed by one group. They saw the possibility of strong business support existing for such a program. It was suggested that central business district employees might be encouraged to use fringe area parking by having reserved and shaded spaces. This will not eliminate automobiles from downtown, they believed, but a combination of transportation modes would reduce congestion.

A second group concurred, suggesting more pedestrian malls and the elimination of much on-street parking to expand use of existing and future fringe area parking lots.

Bikeways

Every group considered increased safety as a major factor in making bicycles a viable alternative transportation mode. Forcing bike riders to share streets with automobiles was considered dangerous, even where painted lanes exist. Grade separated paths were advocated along bicycle use easements. The problems of discomfort from heat and limited range were also cited as additional deterrents to consideration of bicycles as a serious means of transportation, except for the young.

"Bikes aren't going to take cars off the road," many agreed. However, there were several participants who maintained that many families could give up one car if solutions were found to solve the problems of safe separation

from vehicles and secure storage at destinations, as well as the development of dispersed employment centers with showering facilities.

LAND USE PLANNING TO MAXIMIZE ABILITY TO MOVE BUT MINIMIZE NEED TO MOVE

Balanced Multiple Use Development

The majority opinion on this issue was favorable to balance multiple use development. One group summed it up by saying, "There should be shopping centers built and other commercial areas developed where people live in order to minimize unnecessary trips and to eliminate unnecessary environmental, economic and aesthetic problems."

While another group agreed that neighborhood centers may reduce trip needs, concern was expressed for the future of the downtown area. "We don't want to evacuate our center" was the theme of several statements. It was decided that the present policy of limiting outlying shopping and office developments to be in scale with the immediate service area would not only protect the established business district, but could relieve many persons' dependancy on the automobile. Reduced congestion in the core area could serve as an incentive to hold enough close-in population to help maintain its economic health.

Endorsing the concept, a third group warned against its indiscriminate application. They came to a consensus that if one assumes the outer/maximum limits of multiple-use, multiple-intensity development is in line with, and similar to, the McCormick Ranch planned community, then the concept of encouraging balanced multiple-use, multiple-intensity developments is a good one. Conversely, one should discourage the type of outlying development which results in incompatible land uses, degradation of the environment, and which has little continuity to the planning process.

Established Maximum Street Capacity

Two groups concurred, in general, with the establishment of a maximum capacity for each street compatible with surrounding land uses and defined street function. The intersection of Scottsdale Road and Camelback was cited as an area where development was allowed to outstrip maximum capacity. Miller and Granite Reef were considered routes where the City still has the opportunity to "hold the line." The encouragement of a regional center at Pima and Shea in preference to Scottsdale and Shea also is based on this principle. A minority viewpoint held that the concept was too static in theory because it placed arbitrary limits and controls on the planning and development processes. The majority opinion was that the concept is an intricately involved aspect of those processes.

Dispersed Employment Centers

All groups who discussed this issue expressed concurrence with the principle of dispersed employment centers because of their positive impact on the street systems.

One group considered the question of "scale" and decided that nearby residential areas need not be in economic and social scale with the dispersed employment centers. The group observed that this type of residential-employment center relationship is often a difficult, if not impossible, policy to achieve, because different neighboring areas generate different economic and social scales. In addition, it felt that pursuing such a relationship would actually be a policy which determines where people will live.

Discourage Downtown Parking

Three groups considered this question and answered with a qualified yes. All were in favor of limited parking in the core area in conjunction with ample fringe parking linked to major activity areas by some kind of adequate transit. Again the comment was, "People won't and can't walk so much." However, with a frequent, convenient people mover as the transit option it would be considered excellent.

Traffic Impact as a Prime Factor in Development Review

The participants generally agreed that since developments

have a very definite impact on traffic, the principle of considering traffic impacts as a primary factor in the development review process is an "absolutely" valid criteria.

Reduce Pedestrian - Vehicle Conflict

This was considered to be a wise policy, already in operation, which all the groups supported. Suggested applications were malls, crossing closures, and sidewalks protected by landscaping.

Slow Traffic Compatible Development

One group endorsed this concept specifically and cited Fifth Avenue as an example of its application. All of the groups mentioned the need to maintain Scottsdale's western atmosphere and its healthy retail activity. To the extent that development in character with a slow traffic zone could be shown to implement these goals it could be expected to receive support.

Increasing Street Capacity

Concern was expressed that Scottsdale use its existing transportation program, such as the streets, as efficiently as possible. One group concluded that such things as medians, synchronized traffic signals, left turn bays, and left turn arrows be expanded on the main arterials of the City, wherever feasible.

Another group would prohibit some left turns and angle parking in the Central Business District. A consensus was reached by one group that medians have been an effective tool for alleviating traffic congestion, for reducing traffic hazards, and for improving the aesthetics of Scottsdale's street systems.

One-Way Streets

The group which discussed this issue concluded that one-way streets are feasible where practical. However, one-way streets would not be practical along north-south routes in Scottsdale for they would present too great an inconvenience. The automobile driver should not have to

go more than two blocks out of his way in order to reach his destination.

Equestrian Trails

Recognizing the desirability of keeping accessibility to such western oriented modes as horseback riding, one group recommended the development of horse trails wherever natural corridors exist as well as along such corridors as the CAP, the transmission lines and the canal banks. In addition, the participants suggested a series of mini-greenbelts be developed from the Indian Bend Wash Greenbelt into the business and civic areas of the City.

Another group, however, decided Equestrian Trails were a matter of culture, not a method of transportation.

Enabling Legislation

One group concluded that, as a first priority, Scottsdale must convince the legislature to enact legislation which will end the regulated monopoly status of common carriers. None of the ideas concerning taxis, jitneys, trolleys, or dial-a-ride services can be implemented in a practical way until this is done.

LUNCH SPEECH: TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

by Stuart Eurman

(A Summary)

Stuart Eurman, Regional Director, Urban Mass Transit Administration, in speaking to the Scottsdale citizens at the STEP Forum on Transportation, elaborated upon the potential role of the Federal government in solving transportation problems of this area. He stressed the need for coordination between local and regional transportation plans.

Mr. Eurman described the concern of the Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transit Administration regarding funding of local projects, noting that currently there are two types of grants available from UMTA. These are for technical studies and for building municipal transportation systems.

When considering capital grants, Eurman stressed that any municipality planning to buy hardware must have a short-range transportation program that identifies transit needs, patron projections, and kinds of equipment as well as the type and kind of upkeep the system will require. Additional items required are a sound organization, a comprehensive plan for the region, and a long-range transportation plan.

He emphasized that monies available for technical studies in the metropolitan area of the Valley probably will go to MAG. Within this regional organization, he said local governmental agencies can build a long-range transportation plan that will develop a unified work program showing who does what, when.

Eurman also expressed concern that at this time Scottsdale might not be identifying its relationship to Phoenix and its part in the total regional transportation system for the Valley as completely as his department would like it to do. He commented on the necessity of Scottsdale developing a means for justifying what is a "right" system through establishing the type of patronage a system would have and the cost of its operation.

In any system, Scottsdale will have to consider density in relationship to the proposed solution Eurman said. It is important that consideration be given to such factors as corridor needs, level of service desired and required, the regional system, the long-range solution, and the short-term (five-year) solutions, he continued.

Strongly urging that Scottsdale give consideration to some sort of bus system, Eurman indicated that he believes there would be federal monies available for some type of buses if the City would establish the need and a plan to meet that need.

He noted it was highly possible that before full solutions to any and all transportation problems were established a community should give attention to low and non-capital types of programs such as decreasing traffic volumes through carpools, or increasing street capacities through express lanes, off-street parking and perhaps even some type of gas rationing. He also said the Federal Highway Commission has matching funds available for bikeways and expressed belief that both bikeways and transportation systems benefiting the handicapped and elderly well might be investigated for funding at this time.

He closed his talk with the urgent request that no matter what the City decided to do, it should do so soon before inflation negated any action it might take.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

GROUP A

Discussion Leader: Paul Messinger
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