



Better Housing by Design:

An update to Portland's Multi-Dwelling Zoning Code

Discussion Draft Zoning Code Amendments

Urban Forestry Commission

January 2018



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Project Purpose and Scope

- **Revise Zoning Code development and design standards** to improve outcomes in Portland's multi-dwelling zones outside the Central City.
 - *Better Housing by Design Project (BPS)*
- **Develop new approaches to creating street and pedestrian connections** in places that lack them.
 - *Connected Centers Street Plan (PBOT)*

Funded in part by a Metro Community
Planning and Development Grant



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What's the problem we're trying to solve?

- Policies guide us to make rules to encourage:
 - **Housing diversity**, including **affordable** and **accessible** housing
 - **Pedestrian-oriented street environments**
 - Respect for **neighborhood context**
 - Housing that supports residents' **health and active living**
 - **Nature and green infrastructure** in the urban environment
 - **Resource-efficient design and development**
 - **Street and pedestrian connections** that are safe and convenient
- Gap between these goals and what is being built.



Relationship to other Zoning Code projects

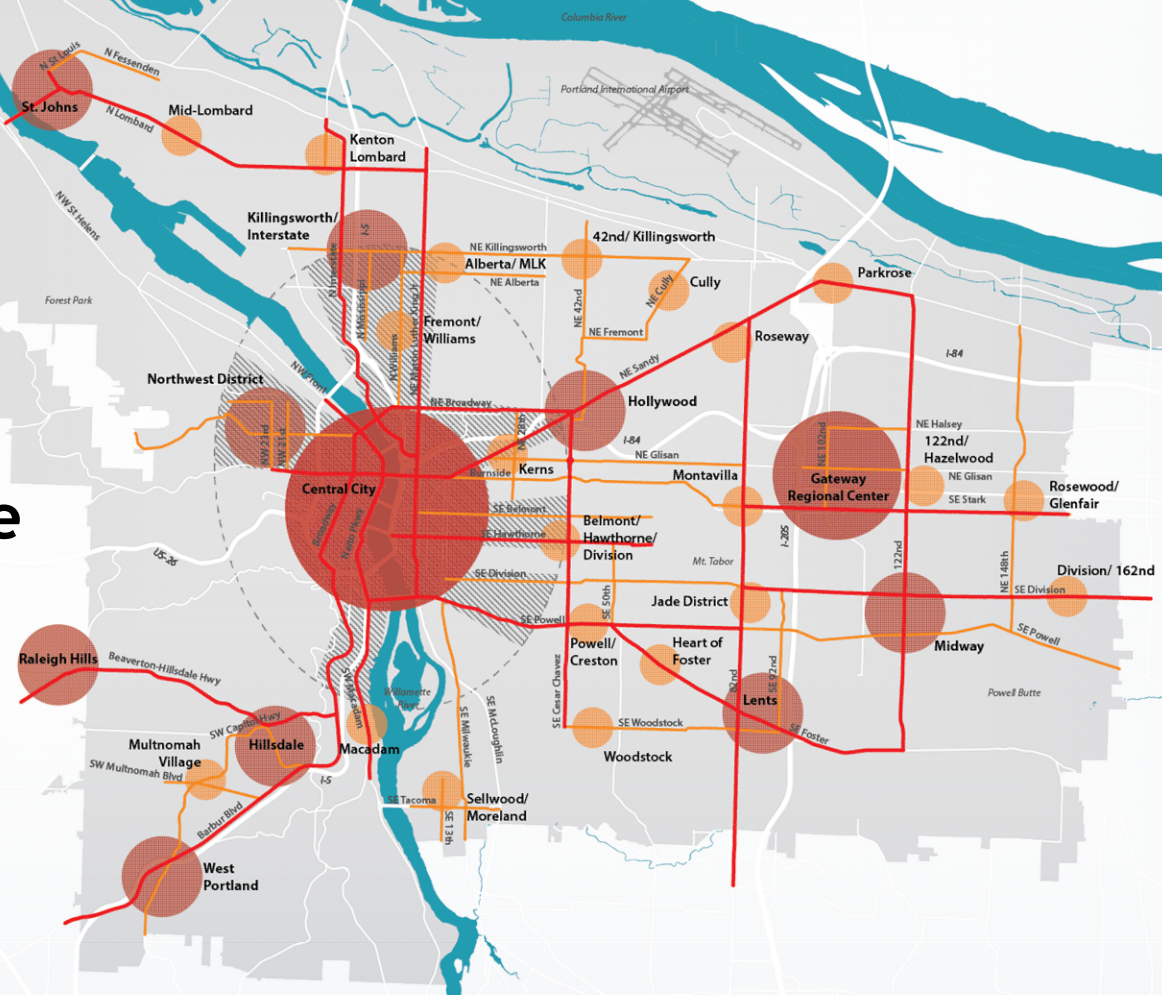


CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

CENTERS		CORRIDORS	
	Central City		Civic Corridors
	Gateway Regional Center		Neighborhood Corridors
	Town Centers		Inner Ring Districts
	Neighborhood Centers		

Comprehensive Plan

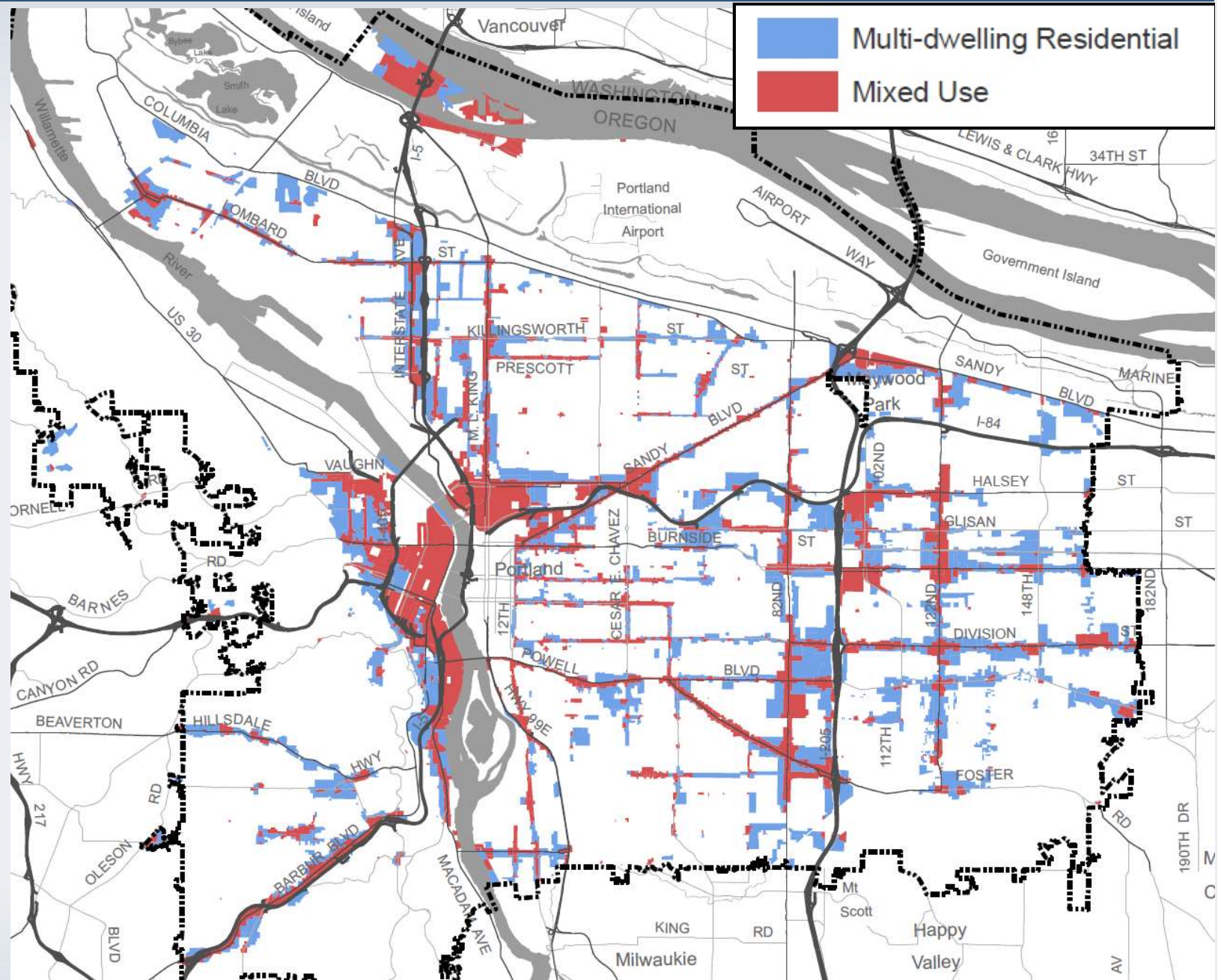
80% of growth focused in and around centers and corridors



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Zoning



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Project Topics

**Diverse Housing Options
and Affordability**



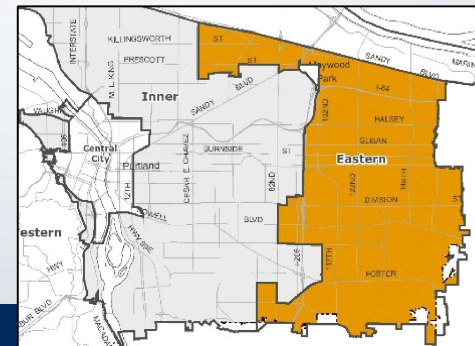
Outdoor Space and Green Elements



Building Design and Scale



**East Portland Standards and
Street Connections**

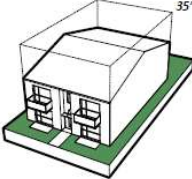
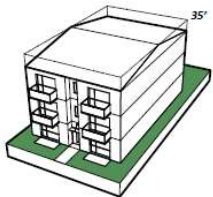


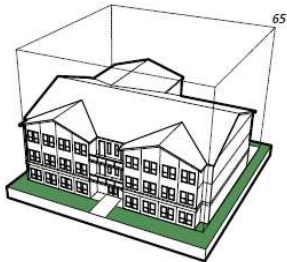

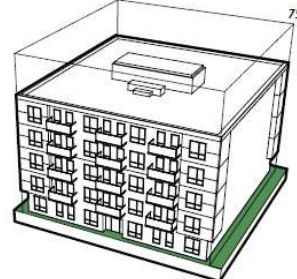
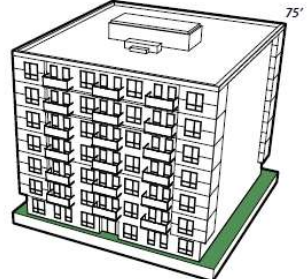


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Multi-Dwelling Zones

New Framework

	Base FAR	Bonus FAR
<p>New Zone: RM1 Former Zones: R2 and R3</p> <p>This is a low-scale zone that provides a transition to lower-density residential areas, often located edges of centers or along neighborhood corridors, or other areas intended to provide continuity with the scale of established residential areas.</p> <p>Maximum Height: 35 feet Maximum Building Coverage: 50%</p>	 <p>1 to 1</p>	 <p>1.5 to 1</p>
<p>New Zone: RM2 Former Zones: R1</p> <p>This zone is applied in and around a variety of centers and corridors and is intended to contribute to the intended urban scale of these locations, while providing transitions in scale and characteristics to lower-scale residential neighborhoods.</p> <p>Maximum Height: 45 feet Maximum Building Coverage: 60%</p>	 <p>1.5 to 1</p>	 <p>2.25 to 1</p>
<p>New Zone: RM3 Former Zones: RH [2:1 FAR]</p> <p>This is a high-density zone applied in locations close to the Central City and in centers and major corridors. It allows for a mid-rise scale of buildings (generally up to six stories), and calls for landscaped front setbacks to integrate with established residential neighborhoods.</p> <p>Maximum Height: 65 feet Maximum Building Coverage: 85%</p>	 <p>2 to 1</p>	 <p>3 to 1</p>
<p>New Zone: RM4 Former Zones: RH [4:1 FAR]</p> <p>This is a high-density, more intensely urban zone applied in locations close to the Central City and in centers and major corridors. It is intended to provide a more intensely urban mid-rise or high-rise scale of up to seven or more stories.</p> <p>Maximum Height: 75 - 100 feet Maximum Building Coverage: 85%</p>	 <p>4 to 1</p>	 <p>6 to 1</p>



Code Amendments



Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements

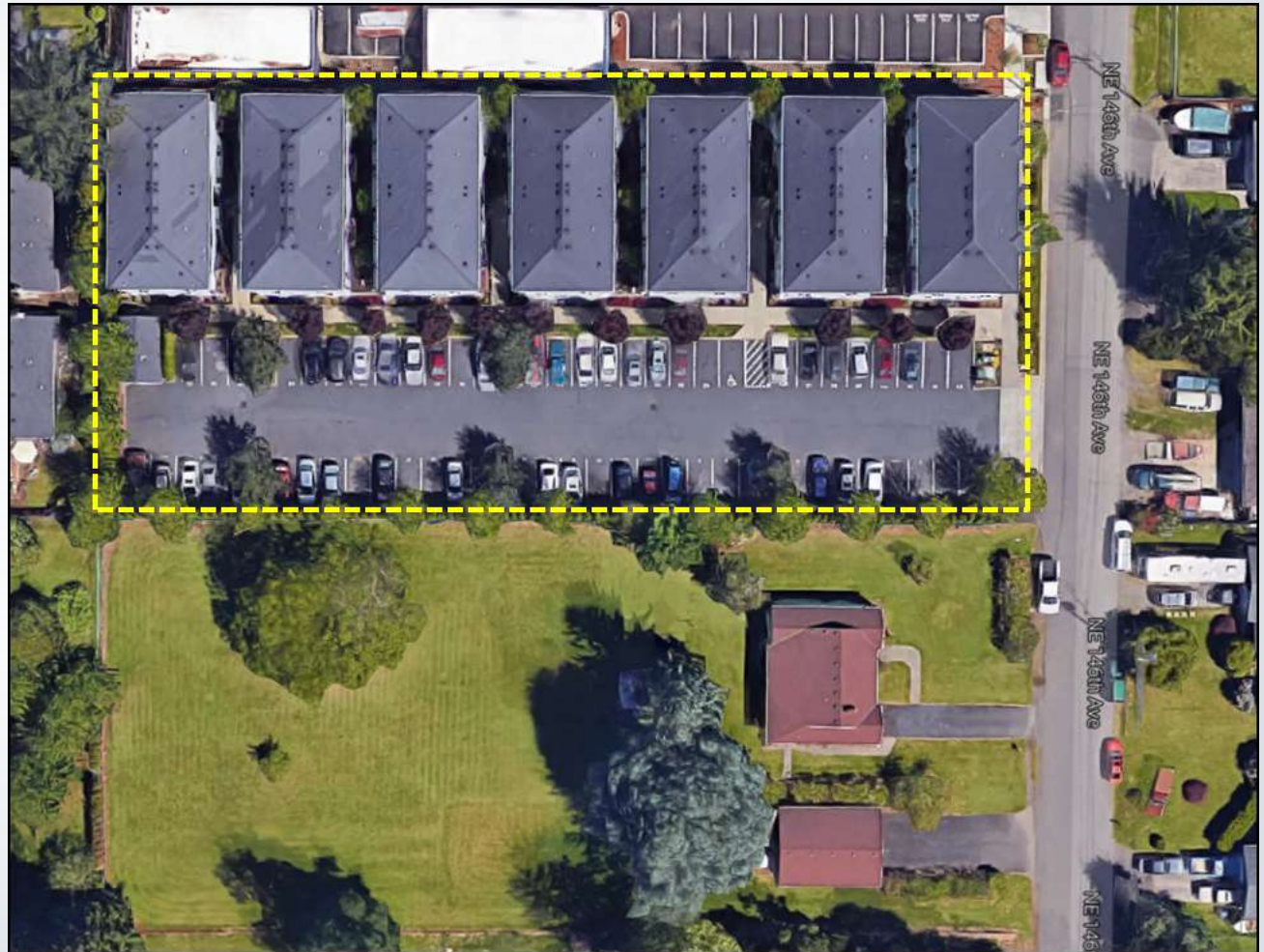


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Issues - especially in East Portland:

- Large amounts of paved vehicle areas
- Little substantial outdoor space



*Example with 36%
vehicle area coverage
(RH zone)*



Outdoor Spaces



High-Density Residential Zone (RH)

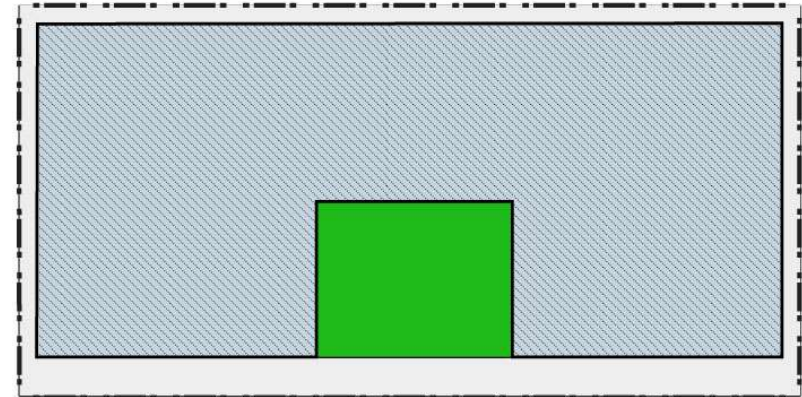
- No outdoor space currently required
- **New direction: require outdoor space in the RH zone**



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Outdoor Spaces



Shared outdoor space

- **Require common areas for large sites (more than 20,000 sq.ft.) - equivalent to 10% of total site area**



Outdoor Spaces



Examples with courtyards utilizing approximately 10% of site area.

Shared outdoor space

- **Require common areas for large sites (more than 20,000 sq.ft.) - equivalent to 10% of total site area**



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Site Design

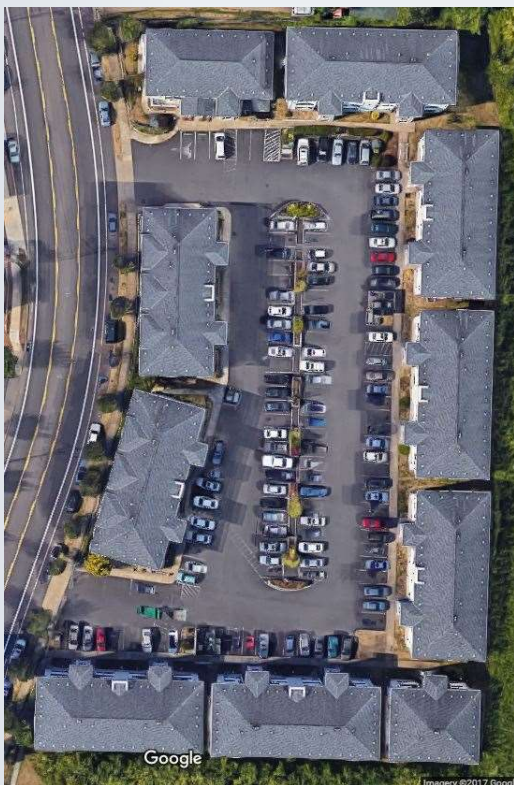


New Direction

- Allowances for urban green options (ecoroofs, raised courtyards, others) to meet landscaping requirements.
- At least 50% of required landscaping must be in ground.



Reduce Minimum Parking Requirements



Projects providing required 1 to 1 parking ratio

- Small sites (7,500 SF or smaller): no parking required for up to 30 units
- Other sites: require 1 space per 2 units (*when not close to transit*)



Limit Vehicle Areas to 30% of Site Area

Limit Asphalt Paving to 15% of Site Area



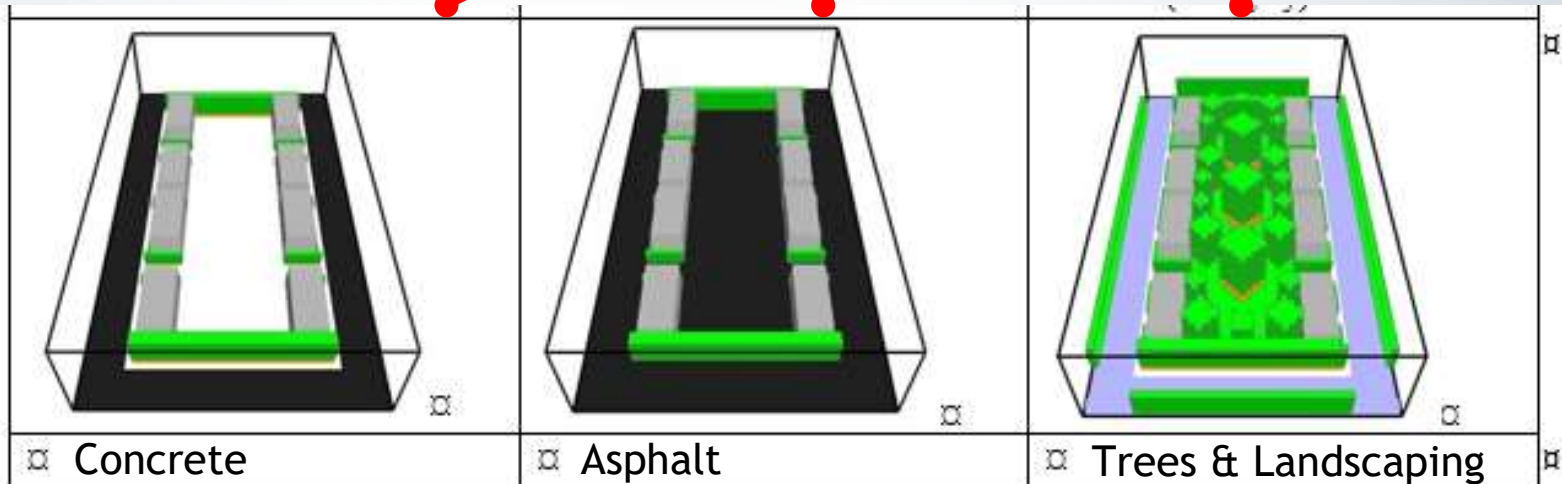
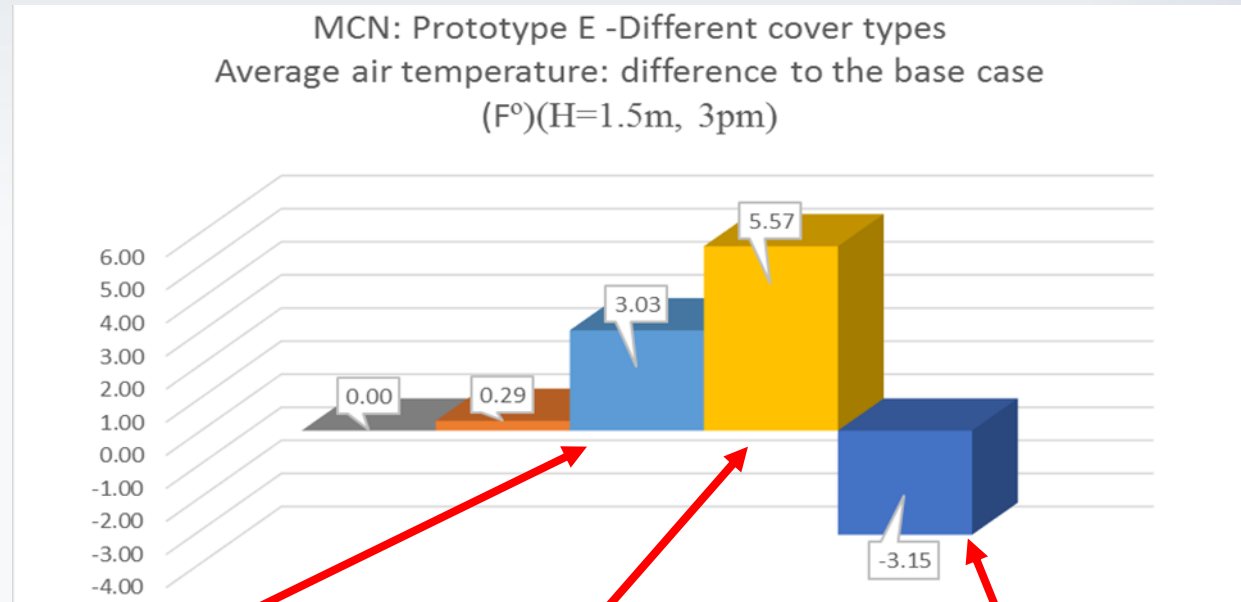
Other materials (concrete, paving blocks, etc.) needed for surfacing the rest of the allowed vehicle area (up to total of 30% of site)



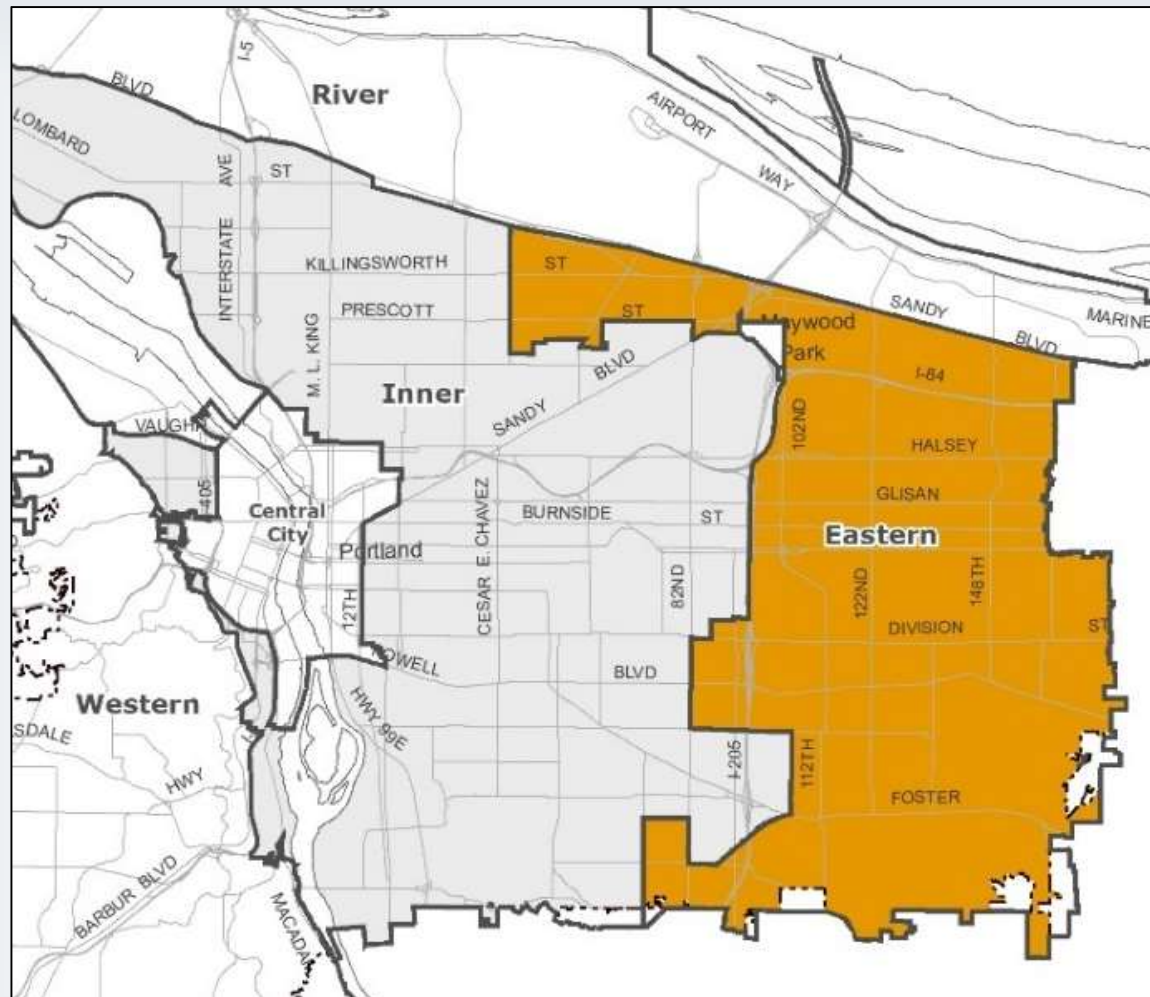
Limits on Paved Vehicle Areas and Asphalt

Implements policies related to limiting urban heat islands and paved areas

Different materials have different heat impacts. Asphalt results in greater heat.



Code Amendments



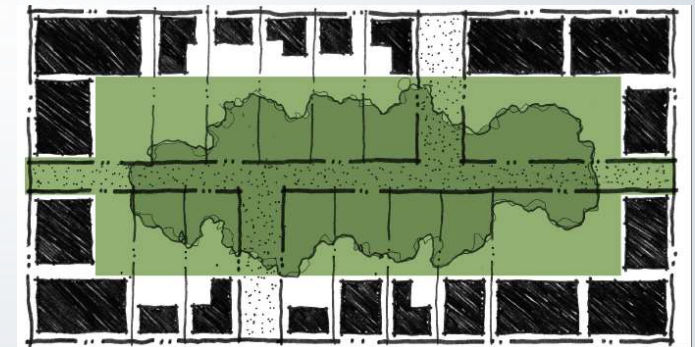
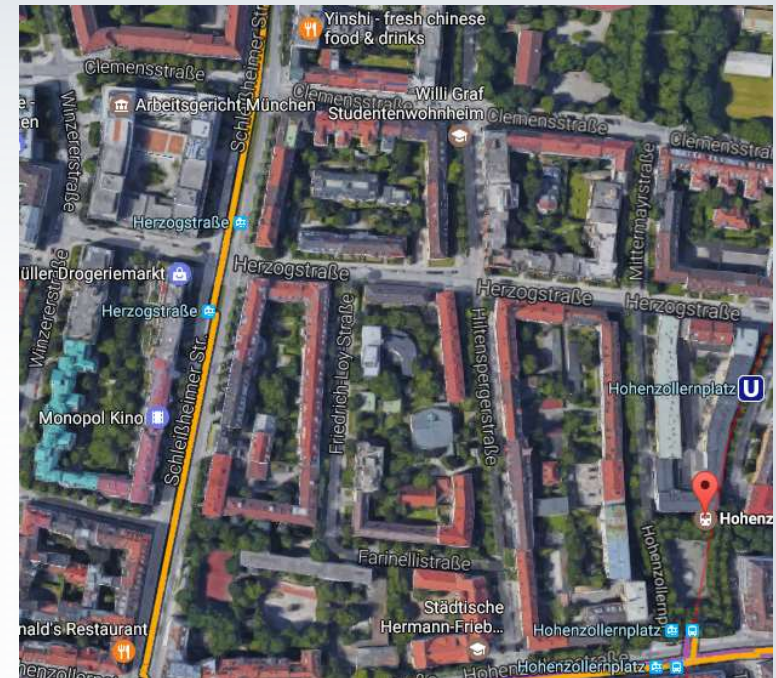
East Portland Standards and Street Connections



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Eastern Portland Rear Setbacks



New Direction

East Portland mid-block open areas - keep mid-block areas greener, less built up



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Eastern Portland Rear Setbacks

- Require rear setback equivalent to 25% of site depth



Example of recent development



Example of 25% depth-of-site setback



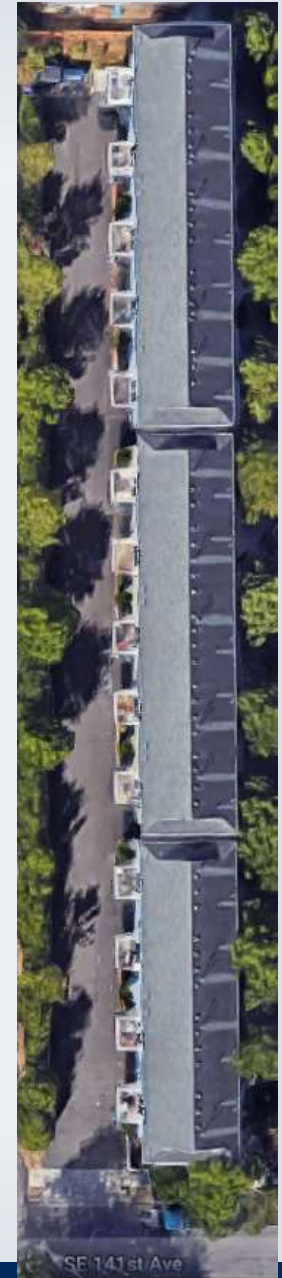
Narrow Sites - Issues

Problems with narrow sites

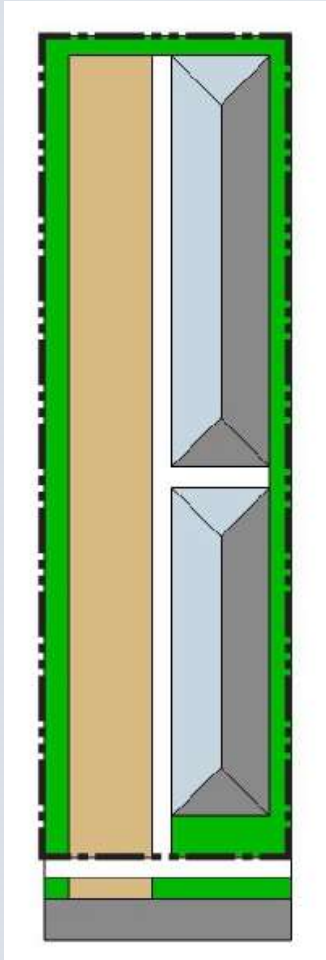
- Driveways/parking/paving often occupy a large portion of site area (when parking provided)
- Little opportunity for buildings to be oriented to public streets
- Limited space for shared outdoor space of usable dimension.
- Little space for trees (or tree preservation)
- Lack of space for street connections
- Lack of efficiencies of scale and infrastructure

Problems with preventing narrow site development / pushing lot aggregation

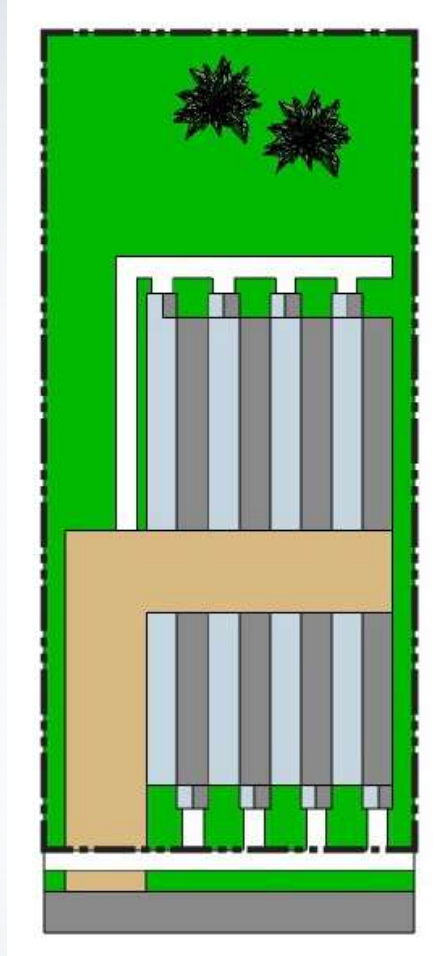
- Impacts on development - adds complexity, time, and cost
- Could especially impact small-scale builders, favor larger-scale developers



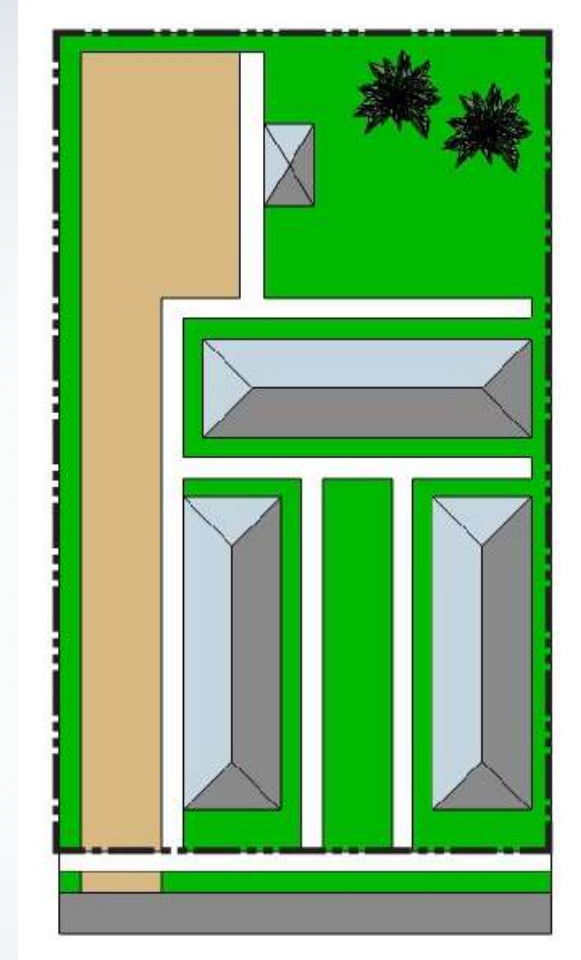
Limitations on Narrow Site Development in East Portland



60'-wide site



90'-wide site

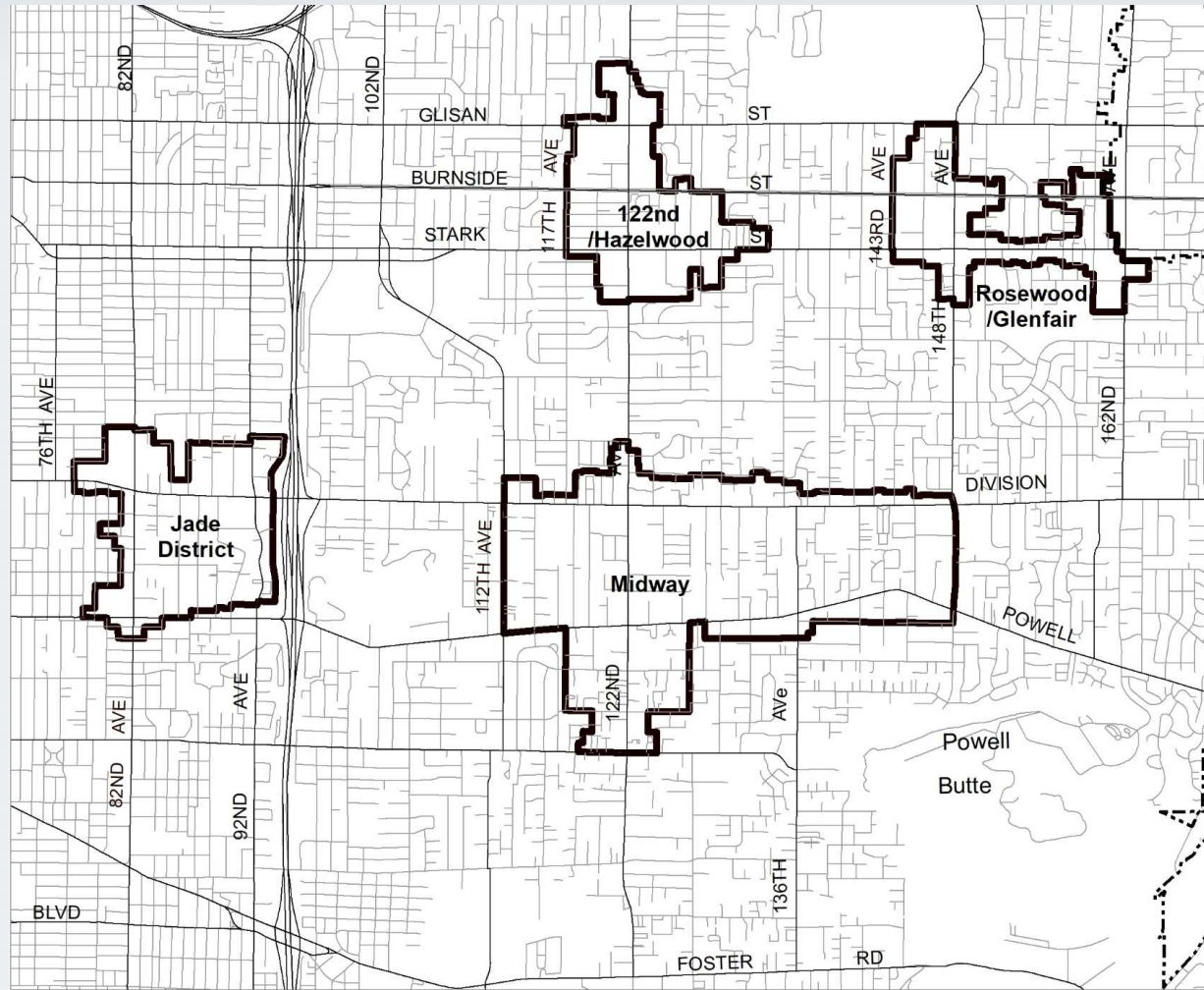


120'-wide site

- **New Direction.** For sites more than 160' deep within East Portland centers, require a minimum street frontage of 90' for new development.



Limitations on Narrow Site Development in East Portland



- **New Direction.** For sites more than 160' deep within East Portland centers, require a minimum street frontage of 90' for new development.



Code Amendments



Building Design and Scale

- Relationship of development to streets and context
- Focus on scale - with flexibility for diverse housing



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Street Frontages - Pedestrian Orientation



New Direction:

- Limit front garages and structured parking (maximum 50% of building frontage)
- Require parking access from alleys (where exist)



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Front Setbacks

(higher density zones)



Roles in providing privacy and continuing neighborhood characteristics.
(current requirements are 3' in R1 and zero in RH)

New direction: require 10' front setbacks in the R1 and RH zones

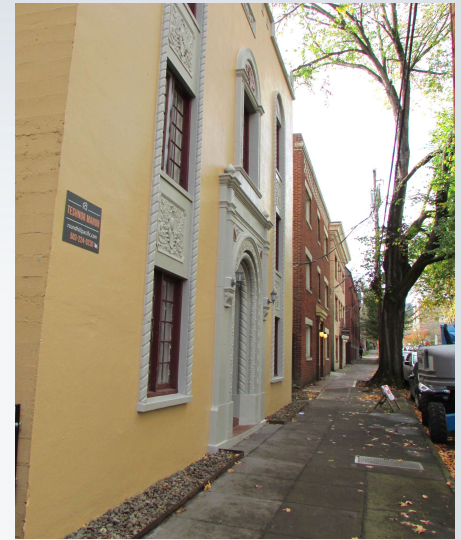


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Front Setbacks

(higher density zones)



- 10' setbacks - continuity with existing residential character
- Allowances for smaller setbacks based on adjacent properties



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Development Bonuses: Prioritize Affordable Housing

EXISTING BONUSES

- Affordable housing
- Three bedroom units
- Outdoor recreation facilities
- Children's play areas
- Storage areas
- Sound insulation
- Crime prevention
- Solar water heating
- Larger required outdoor areas
- Tree preservation

➡ New Direction:

- Discontinue all development bonuses, except for affordable housing (IH) and 3-bedrooms.
- Increase IH development bonus to 50%
(currently limited to 25%)

➡ Becomes Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) allowance
(along with historic preservation)



Tree Preservation Incentives

Existing development bonus for tree preservation:

- Provides allowance for more units in exchange for on-site tree preservation
- Rarely used
- Difficult to both preserve trees and fit additional units on the same site in higher-density zones.

Proposed transfer of development rights (TDR) for tree preservation:

- Allow density to be transferred to another site, in exchange for tree preservation.
- Amount of TDR will be based on the size and number of preserved trees.
- Similar approach used for historic preservation.





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