

# Bonner County Planning Department

*"Protecting property rights and enhancing property value"*

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## BONNER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

COMPONENT: POPULATION

ADOPTED UPDATE: APRIL 12, 2023

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# Introduction

Accurate, up-to-date population data play an important role in Bonner County's land use decisions and policies. The timing, location, and sizing of public services, utilities and transportation systems are based upon Bonner County's unique population characteristics, growth patterns, distribution, and population forecasts. Demographic trends help community leaders become aware of potential demands on county resources. Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau assesses the nation's population and provides comprehensive details about each area's birth/death rate, socio-economic factors, housing, race profiles, people per household, people per square mile and other details. Between the decennial head counts, the Census Bureau, Idaho Department of Commerce and private enterprises provide estimates the county can use to determine growth rates.

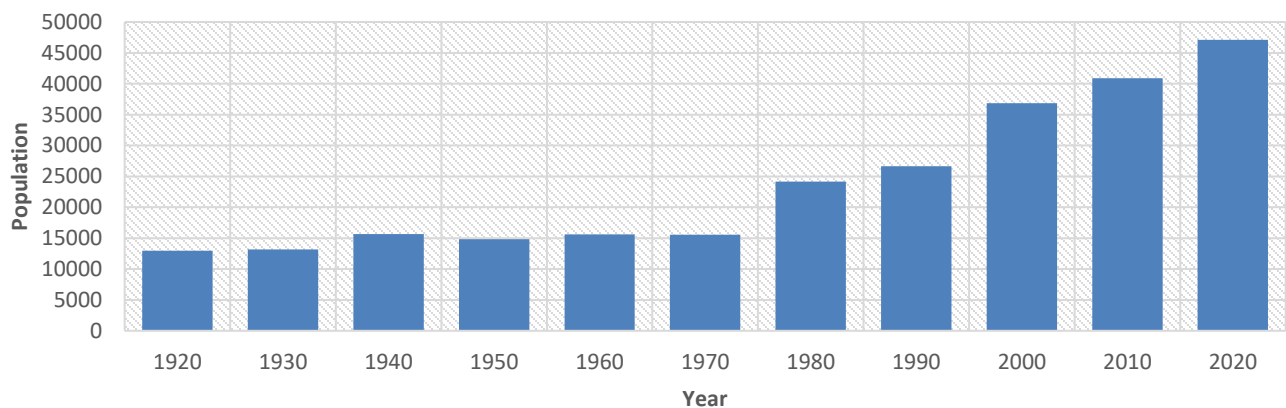
This Population Component includes an analysis of past, present, and future trends in population, and details such as total population, age, sex, and income. Charts, maps, and graphs are also used to provide a quick, visual summary of the county's population. The Housing and Economic Development components also contain census-based details more directly related to those topics.

# Chapter 1 - Bonner County's Population Overview

## Section 1.1 - Population Overview & Trends

The 2020 census placed Bonner County's population at 47,110. Bonner County, established in 1907, now has over 100 years of population data. The county grew by fewer than 2,000 people over the first 60 years of its existence. Rises and falls in population amounted to little more than 3 or 4 percent over each decade until 1970. But the 1980 census revealed Bonner County was experiencing a population boom. The population jumped 55 percent in 10 years from 1970 to 1980. In a 30-year span beginning in 1970, the population grew by 137 percent. Between 1990 and 2000, Bonner County increased in population by 38.4 percent, but by the 2010 census, the growth slowed to an 11 percent increase over 10 years. From 2010 to 2020 the population grew by 13 percent and the estimated increase from 2020 to 2021 was 3.4 percent or 49491.

**Bonner County 100 Year Population Trends  
(1920-2020)**



## Section 1.2 - Bonner County's Rank in State by Population

Bonner County ranked as the sixth fastest growing county in Idaho in 2000. With the slower growth pace, the county slipped to the 18th fastest growing county in 2010. Neighboring Kootenai and Boundary counties each outpaced Bonner County's growth rate in the 2010 census. To the south, Kootenai County grew at a rate of 27.4%, while Boundary County to the north increased at a slightly greater rate than Bonner County, with 11.2%. From 2010 to 2020 Bonner County grew by 13 percent while Kootenai County grew by 19 percent and the much smaller Boundary County grew by 9 percent. The state of Idaho grew by 14 percent for that same period. Bonner County was the ninth fastest growing in the last centennial period.

When compared with one decade earlier, Bonner County's population:

- Grew slower than the state's 17.3% pace. Bonner County grew by 15.2% from 2010 to 2020.
- Aged. In 2010, 18% of Bonner County's population was older than 65. By 2020, 25.9% were

older than 65, compared to the state's 12.8%.

- Remained nearly unchanged with the male to female ratio of 50.6%:49.4% and ethnic makeup of 95.4% white
- Saw improvement in the number of persons below the poverty line (15.5% in 2000; 15.2% in 2012 and 12.8 in 2020). The percentage of Idaho's population below the poverty line was 11%. Nationally the number was 11.6%.

The number of persons per square mile living in Bonner County in 2010 was 23.6 and in 2020 the number 27.2. In 2000 the persons per square mile was 21.2 10. The average number of people per square mile in all of Idaho is 22.3.

*Table 1 Bonner County Quickfacts Table including the State Of Idaho And Kootenai County*

	<b>Kootenai County</b>	<b>Bonner County</b>	<b>Idaho</b>
<b>Population</b>			
Population Estimates, July 1 2021, (V2021)	179,789	49,491	1,900,923
Population estimates base, April 1, 2020, (V2021)	171,362	47,110	1,839,106
Population, percent change - April 1, 2020 (estimates base) to July 1, 2021, (V2021)	4.90%	5.10%	3.40%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	171,362	47,110	1,839,106
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	138,494	40,877	1,567,582
<b>Age and Sex</b>			
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.60%	4.70%	6.00%
Persons under 18 years, percent	22.60%	19.50%	24.70%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	19.50%	25.90%	16.60%
Female persons, percent	50.20%	49.40%	49.60%
<b>Race and Hispanic Origin</b>			
White alone, percent	94.20%	95.40%	92.80%
Black or African American alone, percent(a)	0.50%	0.30%	0.90%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent(a)	1.30%	0.90%	1.70%
Asian alone, percent(a)	1.00%	0.70%	1.60%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent(a)	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%
Two or More Races, percent	2.80%	2.50%	2.70%
Hispanic or Latino, percent(b)	5.40%	3.90%	13.30%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	89.70%	92.10%	81.10%
<b>Population Characteristics</b>			
Veterans, 2016-2020	13,036	4,252	115,549
Foreign born persons, percent, 2016-2020	2.30%	2.60%	5.90%
<b>Housing</b>			
Housing units, July 1, 2021, (V2021)	78,262	26,557	775,267
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2016-2020	71.30%	76.20%	70.80%

Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2016-2020	\$294,100	\$275,700	\$235,600
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2016-2020	\$1,408	\$1,408	\$1,312
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2016-2020	\$428	\$363	\$388
Median gross rent, 2016-2020	\$1,037	\$913	\$887
Building permits, 2021	2,426	326	21,732
<b>Families &amp; Living Arrangements</b>			
Households, 2016-2020	64,475	17,998	649,299
Persons per household, 2016-2020	2.48	2.46	2.66
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2016-2020	84.30%	86.20%	83.20%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2016-2020	3.70%	2.70%	10.80%
<b>Computer and Internet Use</b>			
Households with a computer, percent, 2016-2020	93.60%	90.10%	93.20%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2016-2020	87.50%	80.30%	86.00%
<b>Education</b>			
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2016-2020	94.00%	91.50%	91.30%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2016-2020	26.60%	26.60%	28.70%
<b>Health</b>			
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2016-2020	9.60%	10.70%	9.50%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	11.10%	12.30%	10.50%
<b>Economy</b>			
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2016-2020	60.80%	52.40%	62.80%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2016-2020	56.60%	47.40%	57.00%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 (\$1,000)(c)	502,079	89,638	3,598,148
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)(c)	1,069,794	155,963	10,468,990
Total transportation and warehousing receipts/revenue, 2017 (\$1,000)(c)	100,618	49,058	3,057,829
Total retail sales, 2017 (\$1,000)(c)	2,942,500	585,906	24,936,131
Total retail sales per capita, 2017(c)	\$18,671	\$13,403	\$14,500

<b>Transportation</b>			
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2016-2020	22.1	23.5	21.2
<b>Income &amp; Poverty</b>			
Median household income (in 2020 dollars), 2016-2020	\$60,903	\$51,594	\$58,915
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2020 dollars), 2016-2020	\$30,912	\$28,527	\$29,494
Persons in poverty, percent	8.60%	12.60%	11.00%
<b>Businesses</b>			
Total employer establishments, 2020	5,372	1,733	51,957
Total employment, 2020	57,834	13,401	637,810
Total annual payroll, 2020 (\$1,000)	2,506,168	517,740	28,806,542
Total employment, percent change, 2019-2020	4.40%	2.60%	3.40%
Total non-employer establishments, 2019	14,546	4,498	142,798
All employer firms, Reference year 2017	4,230	1,506	38,479
Men-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	2,124	703	19,920
Women-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	587	226	5,706
Minority-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	182	S	2,023
Nonminority-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	3,510	1,323	33,035
Veteran-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	276	S	2,158
Nonveteran-owned employer firms, Reference year 2017	3,323	1,197	31,639
<b>Geography</b>			
Population per square mile, 2020	138.4	27.2	22.3
Population per square mile, 2010	111.3	23.6	19
Land area in square miles, 2020	1,237.78	1,733.22	82,645.14
Land area in square miles, 2010	1,244.13	1,734.57	82,643.12
FIPS Code	16055	16017	16

#### Fact Notes

- (a) Includes persons reporting only one race
- (c) Economic Census - Puerto Rico data are not comparable to U.S. Economic Census data
- (b) Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories

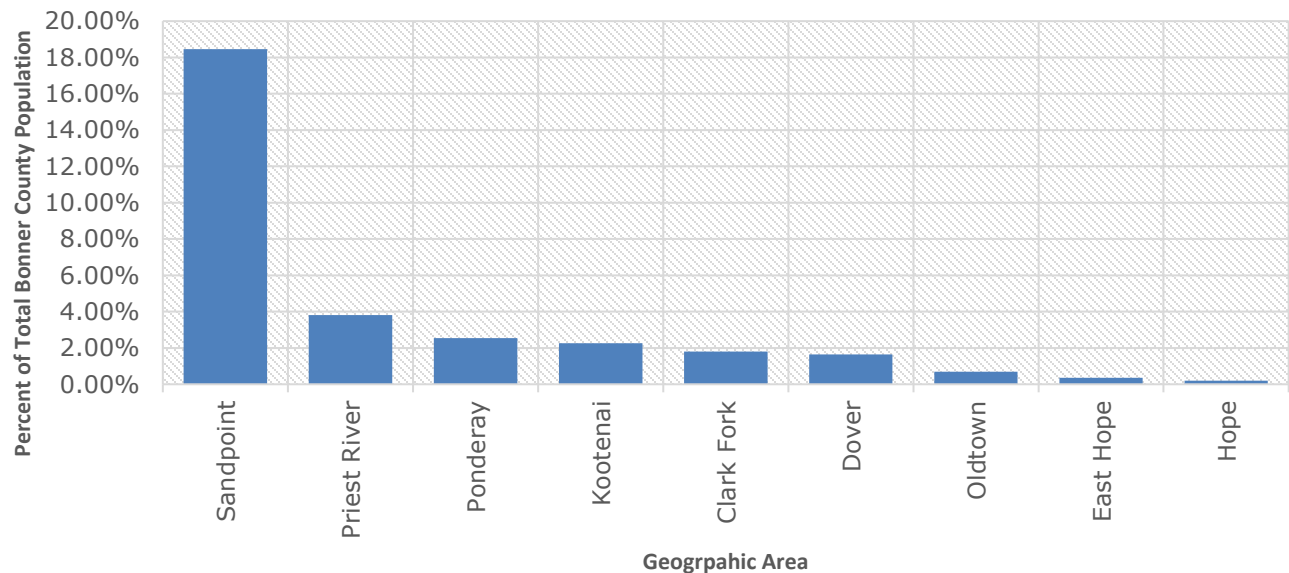
#### Value Flags

- Either no or too few sample observations were available to compute an estimate, or a ratio of medians cannot be calculated because one or both of the median estimates falls in the lowest or upper interval of an open ended distribution.
- S** Suppressed; does not meet publication standards

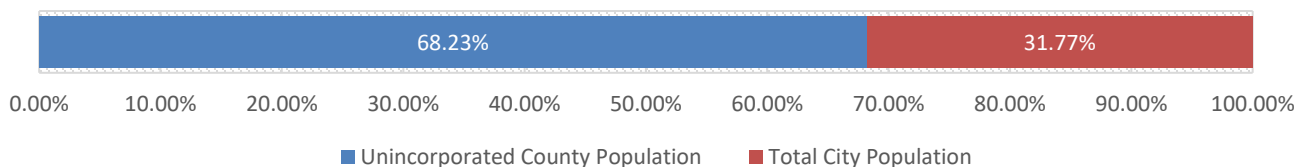
Table 2 Bonner County and Cities Population

2020 American Community Survey Estimated Population		
Region	Population Total	% of County Total
Bonner County	47110	
Sandpoint	8692	18.45%
Priest River	1799	3.82%
Ponderay	1195	2.54%
Kootenai	1063	2.26%
Clark Fork	849	1.80%
Dover	778	1.65%
Oldtown	325	0.69%
East Hope	168	0.36%
Hope	96	0.20%
<b>Total cities</b>	<b>14,966</b>	<b>31.77%</b>
<b>Net unincorporated</b>	<b>32,144</b>	<b>68.23%</b>

### Population by City, 2020



### Population City vs. County, 2020





## **BONNER COUNTY POPULATION DISTRIBUTION**

“Urban Clusters” (UCs) are defined as at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people. “Rural” encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). Sandpoint, with its surrounding vicinity, is the only area qualifying as an urban cluster in Bonner County. Sandpoint’s population represents 18% of the county’s population. If all incorporated areas are excluded from the county population, regardless of whether they are urban clusters, the Bonner County population is 32,144 (68 percent) and incorporated areas 14,968 (32 percent) as of the 2020 census.

## **PEOPLE PER SQUARE MILE**

Bonner County encompasses 1.12 million acres, or about 1,738 square miles. About 39.6% of the county’s land is privately owned. The remainder is owned by the state (15.2%), federal (44.4%) or local governments (0.8%). In the past five decades, the number of people per square mile has nearly tripled. In 1970, there were 9 people per square mile. The number jumped to 14.0 in 1980, eased up to 15.3 in 1990 it rose to 21.2 in 2000. By the 2010 census, there were 23.6 people per square mile and in 2020 it rose to 27.2 in Bonner County. This number represents all lands, including government-owned lands, where few if any people reside. If only the private lands are factored into the formula, the people per square mile would be approximately 67.

## **POPULATION MIGRATION**

Net migration is a population factor that reveals how many people moved in or moved out of a given area over a period of time. (Natural change, on the other hand, is the difference between births and deaths.)

In the period from 2010 to 2018, Bonner County experienced a net migration rate of 9.6%, compared to Idaho’s 6.5%. The natural (birth/death) change rate was -0.2% during this time frame for Bonner County; Idaho’s was 5.3%.

## **AGE AS FACTOR**

One of the most significant changes in Bonner County’s population is the rising number of people age 65 and older. By 2011, the U.S. Census estimated 18% of the county’s population was 65 years old or older, compared to the state 12.8%. The 2000 census revealed 13.1% of the county population had reached 65. In 2020 the largest demographic was 65 and older at 25%. Bonner County median age is one of the highest statewide.

## **HOUSING**

Population factors as related to housing statistics are contained in the county’s Housing Component of the Comprehensive Plan. Briefly, the average number of persons per household in Bonner County is listed at 2.37 with the 2010 Census count and in 2020 the average was 2.46. The average was 2.58 in 1990 and 2.49 in 2000. The 2020 average is lower than Idaho’s 2.66 people per household (U.S. Census Bureau 2012 and 2020).

## ECONOMIC FACTORS

Economic factors relating to population are covered in detail in the Economic Development Component of the Bonner County Comprehensive plan. The chart and graph below capture recent per capita income trends for Bonner County and comparisons to state and national trends.

*Table 3 Per Capita Income (2008-2011, 2020)*

Region	Per Capita Income				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2020
Bonner County	\$31,843	\$29,710	\$30,140	\$31,433	\$51,594
State of Idaho	\$33,110	\$30,809	\$31,556	\$32,881	\$58,915
Percentage of State Average	96.20%	96.40%	95.50%	95.60%	87.50%
United States	\$40,947	\$38,637	\$39,791	\$41,560	\$53,504
Percentage of National Average	77.80%	76.90%	75.70%	75.60%	96.40%

Source: Idaho Department of Labor

# Chapter 2 - Bonner County's Population Trends and Projections

## Section 2.1 - Population Trends & Projections

Bonner County grew by 2381 or 5.1 percent from 2020 to 2021 according to U.S. census estimates. Idaho grew by about 61,000 or 3.4 percent according to the census estimates for the same period. This is substantial estimated growth. The U.S. Census Bureau annually publishes population estimates for each state and county, and the nation as a whole, using birth and death rates, migration and risk of in- or out-migration.

Population projections from the Idaho Department of Labor anticipate Idaho will continue its record of rapid growth, with the total statewide population crossing over 2 million for the first time by 2031. The 2020 Census revealed the Gem State was the second-fastest growing state in the nation over the decade from 2010 to 2020, and single-year population estimates have ranked Idaho as the fastest-growing state for the past five years.

Idaho's Labor Department's latest projections anticipate a statewide growth rate of 1.1% per year over the 10-year period from 2021 to 2031, adding a total of 227,880 new residents to the state. This will raise Idaho's population from 1,888,533 in 2021 to 2,116,413 in 2031. All six of Idaho's sub-state regions are expected to grow over the coming decade, with southwestern Idaho leading at 16.3% projected growth, and followed by north Idaho at 13%. These two regions together are expected to account for more than three quarters of the state's total growth.

*Table 4 Projected Population Growth by Region*

Region	Population		Projected Growth		
	2021	2031	Number	Percentage	Annual
<b>Northern</b>	258,262	291,900	33,638	13%	1.2%
<b>North Central</b>	112,144	114,411	2,267	2%	0.2%
<b>Southwestern</b>	869,592	1,010,983	141,391	16%	1.5%
<b>South Central</b>	231,851	250,247	18,396	8%	0.8%
<b>Southeastern</b>	177,551	184,944	7,393	4%	0.4%
<b>East</b>	239,133	263,928	24,795	10%	1.0%
<b>Idaho Total</b>	1,888,533	2,116,413	227,880	12%	1.1%

Source: Idaho Department of Labor Population Projections

Although all six of Idaho's regions are projected to grow over the next decade, growth is expected to disproportionately concentrate in southwestern Idaho, specifically the Boise metropolitan statistical area (MSA). The region is projected to grow by 141,391 residents by 2031, accounting for 62% of the state's total population growth. The region currently accounts for 46% of the state's total population, but the concentration of growth is expected to raise this to 48% by 2031. This will continue an established trend in Idaho of urbanization and rapid agglomeration in the Boise metro area. In 2001, southwestern Idaho accounted for only 42% of the state's population but has steadily

increased its share over time. Correspondingly, the population in the north central and southeastern regions has declined as a share of the state total. The northern, south central and eastern regions have retained a consistent overall share of the population.

Over the past decade, Idaho has seen significant in-migration of older residents, with disproportionately rapid growth in the 65 and older age groups. That in-migration is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The 65 and older population statewide is projected to grow by 99,285 by 2031, or 30.7% – substantially faster than the age 15-to-64 population (10.1% projected growth) and the under age 15 population (a 2.5% projected growth). By far the three fastest-growing age cohorts are 85 and older (+73.9%), 80 to 84 (+62.4%) and 75 to 79 (43.4%).

This aging population has significant implications for the structure of growth in the state. As the population ages, the natural growth rate — deaths minus births — declines, both because an older population is expected to have a higher death rate and due to declining births. Over the next 10 years, a majority of Idaho counties are expected to have negative natural growth — more deaths than births. Although 26 counties have negative natural growth projections through 2031, 17 are still projected to experience overall population growth owing to high rates of in-migration.

Overall, most Idaho's counties are expected to grow through 2031. Thirty-four of the state's 44 counties have positive growth projections, and 23 counties are expected to grow more than 0.5% per year, which is the annual growth rate of the national population. However, given the continued urbanization of Idaho, it is not surprising that the highest growth projections by far belong to the four largest urban counties — Ada, Bonneville, Canyon and Kootenai. Collectively, these four counties are expected to grow by 177,740 through 2031, accounting for nearly 80% of the state's growth. As a result, by 2031 more than 72% of Idaho's population is expected to reside in urban counties, up from roughly 70% in 2021.

Overall, the demographic situation in the United States is in a state of flux. As the baby boomer generation retires, the economy is losing one of the largest and most productive generations of workers ever. At the same time, birth rates continue to steadily decline as millennials form families later in life and have fewer children on average than the generations before them. This has left the country (and by extension individual states) dependent on immigration to sustain population growth. In this environment, Idaho has gained a relative advantage as a desirable state that reliably attracts high in-migration year after year, which has consistently made Idaho one of the fastest-growing and most thriving states in the nation – an advantage that should continue into the foreseeable future.

## **Section 2.2 - Issues**

- Aging population – Census figures tell the story of an aging population. Bonner County's scenery, recreational opportunities and proximity to national park systems and urban centers have been attracting retirement-aged individuals for some time. Idaho ranked second nationwide in a recent AARP poll of best states to retire, thanks to low crime rates and favorable economic factors (American Association of Retired Persons 2012). An aging population brings many new challenges to the community, including the need for adequate medical facilities, emergency services, assisted living, public transportation systems, adult education opportunities and changing public school needs, to name a few.

- Increasing population density – The jump from 9 people per square mile to 27.2 people per square mile in five decades is a dramatic change for Bonner County. When coupled with the fact that 60% of the land is publicly owned and 9.5% of the county's 1.12 million acres is surface water, the loss of "elbow room" is even more dramatic. As the community continues to grow, there will be added challenges to find suitable, developable land while balancing the various goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan.
- Areas of city impact and migration to urban areas – Evidence of the move from rural areas to more urbanized communities can be found in Bonner County, as well as most of Idaho. Development in the cities and on the fringes of the incorporated areas places increasing pressures on city services that aren't always offset by property taxes or other funding sources. Bonner County's Area of City Impact (ACI) agreements with 10 cities rely on the county's regulations and comprehensive plan. Current agreements with Clark Fork, Hope, East Hope, Kootenai, Ponderay, Sandpoint, Dover, Oldtown, Priest River and Spirit Lake merely allow a review and comment period by the cities. These agreements were first written in 1978 and have been amended little since. The ACI agreements provide little in the way of thoughtful regional planning for even the immediate future, much less for any 10- or 20-year planning horizons. The county and cities should engage in further ACI discussions that will produce a coordinated plan for these areas most likely to be annexed into cities in the future.

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