CITY OF ST. ALBERT

ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: DARP IMPLEMENTATION & PARKING STRATEGIES

Administration is providing an update on the status of the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP) Implementation Strategy and Downtown Parking Strategy. Administration is requesting that the February 6, 2017 Report entitled "DARP Implementation & Parking Strategies" be received as information.

BACKGROUND

Since 2011, the City has implemented elements of the current DARP, including capital projects, operational projects, and studies. In January 2016, Administration attended Council's Strategy Session to discuss Downtown Redevelopment. This meeting included Council's participation in a value rating workshop to shape Downtown Redevelopment Values and Principles to guide the DARP Implementation Strategy. The Implementation Strategy is intended to build upon the work already completed, and consider new information gathered through various studies and research conducted. The original intent was to return to Council in Q3 2016 with an updated draft of the Downtown Redevelopment Implementation Strategy. Due to delays in servicing modeling however, the Strategy is now scheduled to return to Council in Q3 2017.

Significant work has been completed since the January 2016 Council Strategy Session in updating the DARP Implementation Strategy. This includes:

- Completion of a visual preference survey conducted in the summer of 2016. The intent was to gather public opinion regarding the potential look and feel of various possible downtown development characteristics including public spaces, building designs, and parking facilities. The online survey received 414 responses (*Attachment 1*)
- Completion of the second summer parking study (*Attachment 2*). The previous study was conducted in the summer of 2014.
- A geotechnical assessment of seven sites downtown to provide a better high-level understanding of potential construction implications downtown.
- Downtown servicing studies (water, sanitary, and storm-water). Administration was made aware of final results in late January 2017.

Further work will take place prior to returning to Council with the Implementation Strategy and Downtown Parking Strategy. This includes:

- Winter 2017 parking study
- Finalization of the Downtown Parking Strategy
- Completion of Fiscal Impact Analysis for three possible redevelopment scenarios for the downtown
- Additional stakeholder engagement

Attachment(s)

1. *Downtown Visual Preference Survey Results*
2. *Downtown Parking Study 2016 Results*

Report Date: February 21, 2017
Author(s): Adryan Slaght, Director Planning & Development
Committee/Department: Planning & Development
General Manager: Gilles Prefontaine
City Manager: Kevin Scoble

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Downtown Visual Preference Survey Results

The Downtown Visual Preference Survey was conducted through the City of St. Albert website between July 1 and July 31, 2016. The survey presented respondents with a series of images showcasing different examples of urban spaces and asked them to rate these images on a scale of 3 to -3, with 3 being the most appealing and -3 being the least. These spaces were categorized into different types of urban development including Building Styles, Parking Options, Streetscapes, and Public Spaces. Some of the images included local examples from nearby municipalities, while others illustrated international examples of innovative and trendsetting treatments of urban space. The intent of the survey was to better understand how the look and style of different types of urban spaces are perceived throughout St. Albert. Furthermore, many of the images presented align with specific Downtown Redevelopment Principles. Therefore, the survey was an important exercise in providing insight on how the final product/outcome of some of these principles may be received by the general public.

There were 414 responses in total - a high response rate indicating a strong desire from the public to understand and participate in the Downtown Redevelopment Plan (DARP). The survey took approximately 10 minutes for participants to complete. It began by asking the respondents to confirm their relationship with the downtown region. (Are they an employee, resident, business owner, etc., how often do they frequent the region, etc.) These results can be found in Attachment 1 and 2.

The following question required the participants to list the importance of various redevelopment principles from one (1) through seven (7). The top results listed “Having things to do downtown” and “Supporting local business” as the most important principles, with “Walkability” and “Public Space” following closely after. The least valuable according to the survey, were “Short and long term parking solutions” and “Improving the tax base”. A table detailing the complete results has been provided as Attachment 3

The subsequent questions asked the respondents to rate the examples of downtown spaces. While these ratings were subjective in nature, there are some observations that can be made from the aggregated data. These observations are listed in the table below and are supported by the average weighted values of the subject image in green for an appealing rating or red for non-appealing.

The average weighted values were determined by calculating the frequency of each rating selection (-3, -2,-1, 0, 1, 2, 3) and averaging these totals.

Urban Form/Style	Appealing (High rating)	Not Appealing (Low rating)
Building Height	• 3 Storey buildings (1.92) • 6 Storey buildings (1.52)	• High-rises; over 10 stories (-1.52, -0.54) • One storey retail (-0.71)
Building Style	• Contemporary, mixed-use buildings (brick, glass, pitched roof, stone features) (1.73, 1.00) • Traditional, mixed-use buildings (colourful/contrasting facades, decorative entrances/windows) (1.89, 1.73) • Multi-level buildings with setbacks between levels (1.39, 0.67)	• Modern buildings, (steel, glass, uniform panels, modular design) (-0.19, -0.11)
Public Space	• Spaces with a balance of green and paved elements (1.56, 0.86) • Spaces which provided opportunity for recreational activities and active transportation (cycling, running, etc.) (1.56), opposed to spaces that simply provided seating. (0.48) • The spray park (0.95) and skating rink (1.62) • Winter activities and public art (0.91)	• Public spaces that were mostly or entirely paved (-0.33)
Landscaping	• Images with street trees (2.02, 1.03) • The high-rise with street trees, received a substantially higher rating than the low-rise (3 storeys) without street trees • Medians with landscaping received a very high rating (1.43)	• Images without street trees along the boulevards (-0.78, -1.85)
Streets	• Pedestrian-only streets without vehicular access (2.19, 2.10) or limited access (0.94) • Streets with a defined separation (landscaped boulevard) between cyclists and cars (1.57) • Narrow streets were slightly preferred over wide streets	• Streets with cycling lanes on the public roadway(-0.68)
Parking Options	• Parking lots with high quality landscaping received the highest rating (2.15) • Smaller integrated parking lots (1.04) were preferred over large surface lots (0.06) (However, note: the survey was based on aesthetics, not function or capacity) • Modern parking garages with a high standard in architecture (1.22), including those built into a mixed use façade (0.87) • Parallel parking (0.67) verses angled parking (0.64)received very similar ratings	• Unpaved parking lots without adequate drainage (-2.31)

Additional Note: While high-rises received very low ratings, the street view perspective of a three story podium (bottom floors of a high-rise), with a setback tower on top that is not visible from the street view, received an exceptionally high score. (Image 16B – 1.38)

Downtown Visual Preference Survey Results - Internal

In addition to the public Visual Preference Survey, an internal survey was concurrently performed, which received 57 responses. The internal survey was identical to the pubic survey, except for the addition of a question confirming the specific department the employee works for. A breakdown of these results is provided in Attachment 4.

A comparison of the public and internal survey results, indicates that City staff share a very similar visual preference with the general public. The data revealed that there were no polarizing differences between preferences, and in almost every case, what was believed to be appealing to the public was also appealing to City staff. The importance of different redevelopment principles was also quite similar with only one significant difference (see list below). The similarities in these responses suggests a mutual understanding of what types of urban development are considered visually appealing, while also providing a quantitative metric to a rather qualitative subject, which may be valuable when exploring some of the sensitivities relating to downtown redevelopment in the future.

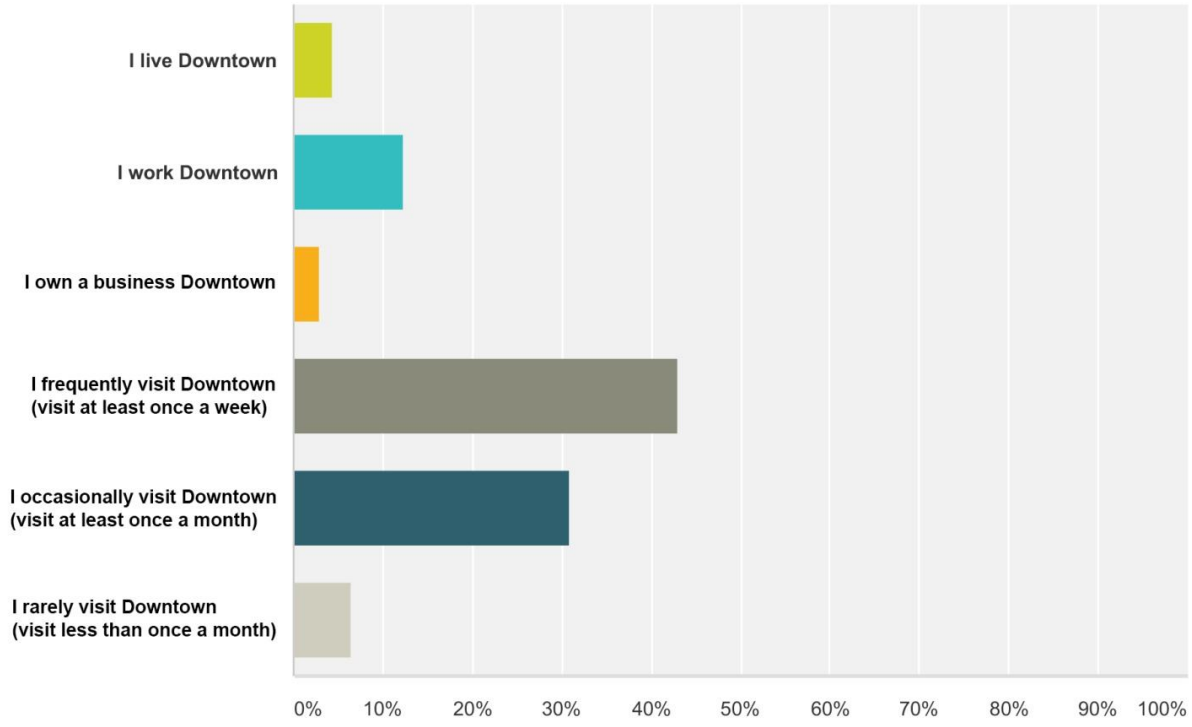
When comparing the internal survey results to the public, the main differences revealed that City staff:

- were more favorable towards high-rise development
- were more favorable towards one-storey retail development
- were more favorable towards parking structures
- put a much greater importance on long term parking solutions (Attachment 3 & 5)

Please, note that these statistics are not necessarily representative of the opinions of Administration, but simply observations made based on the comparative results.

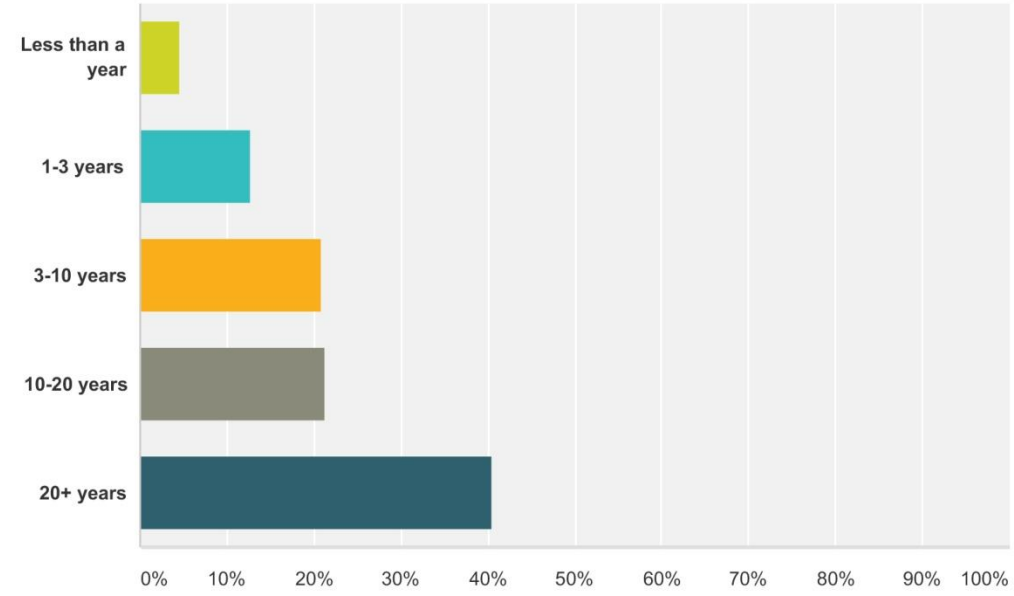
Attachment 1

Visual Preference Survey - Public: *Which of the following best describes you?*



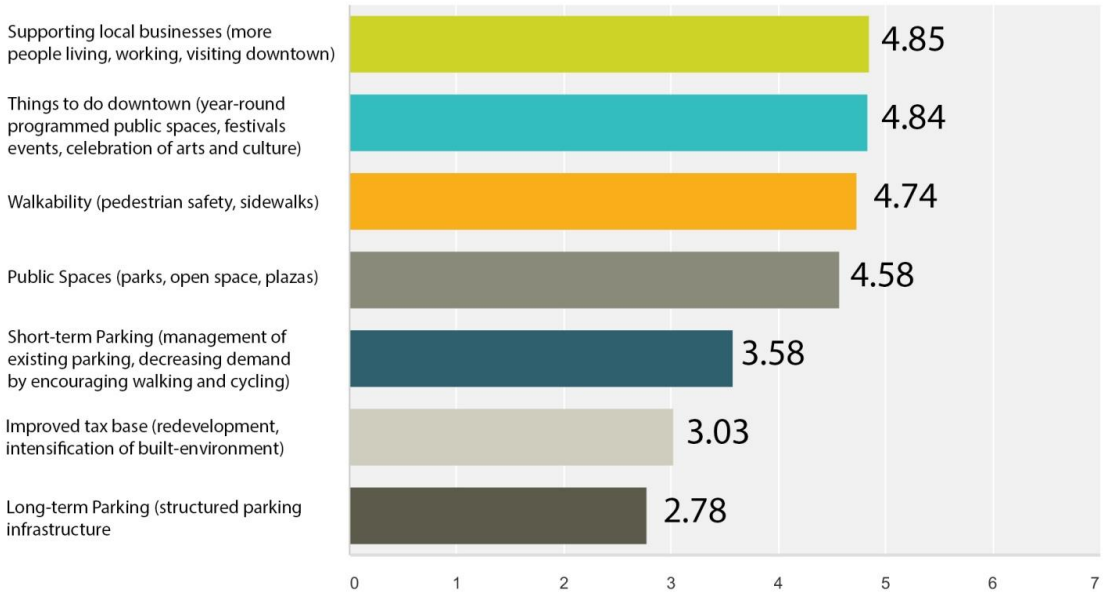
Attachment 2

Visual Preference Survey - Public: *How long have you lived in St. Albert?*



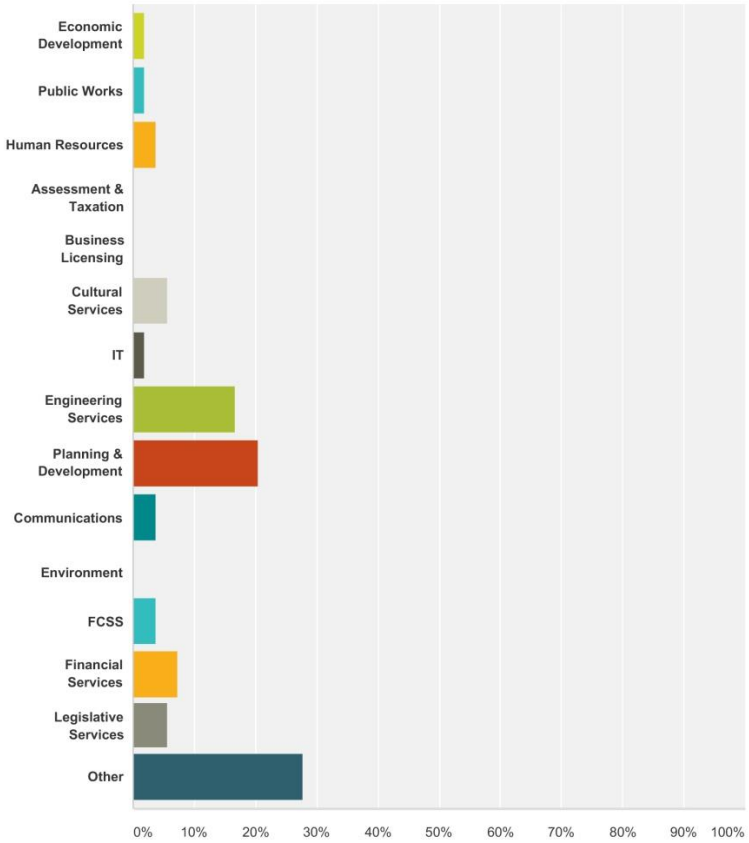
Attachment 3

Visual Preference Survey - Public: *Please rate the Redevelopment Principle. (A higher total indicates a greater importance)*



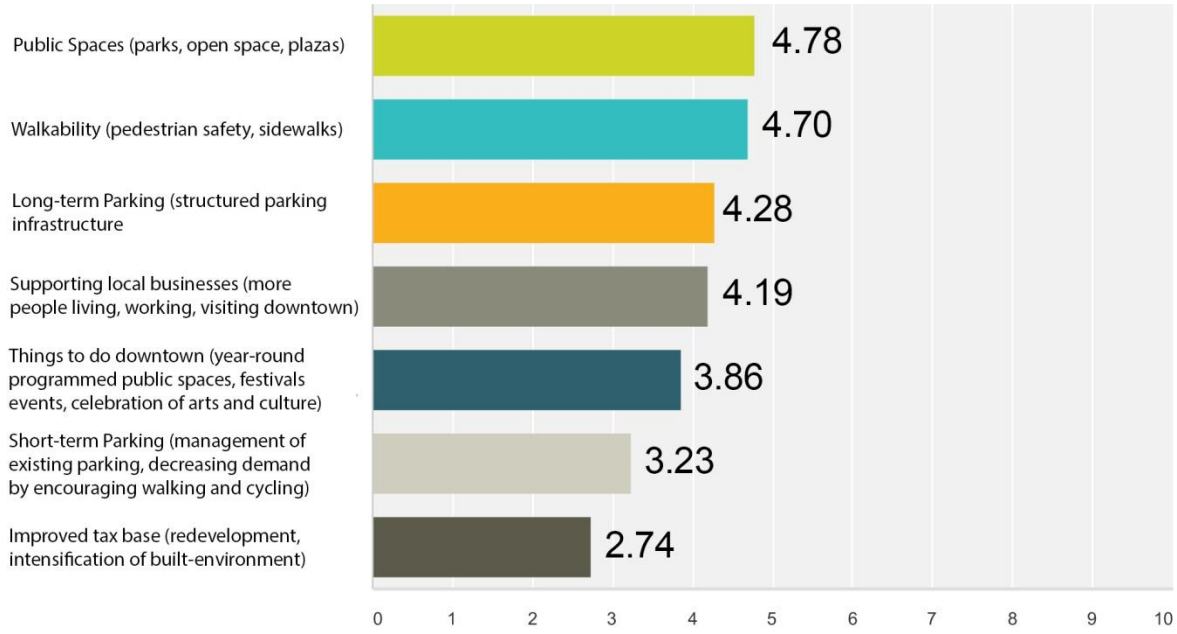
Attachment 4

Visual Preference Survey – Internal: *What department do you work for?*



Attachment 5

Visual Preference Survey - Internal**:** *Please rate the Redevelopment Principles (A higher total indicates a greater importance)*



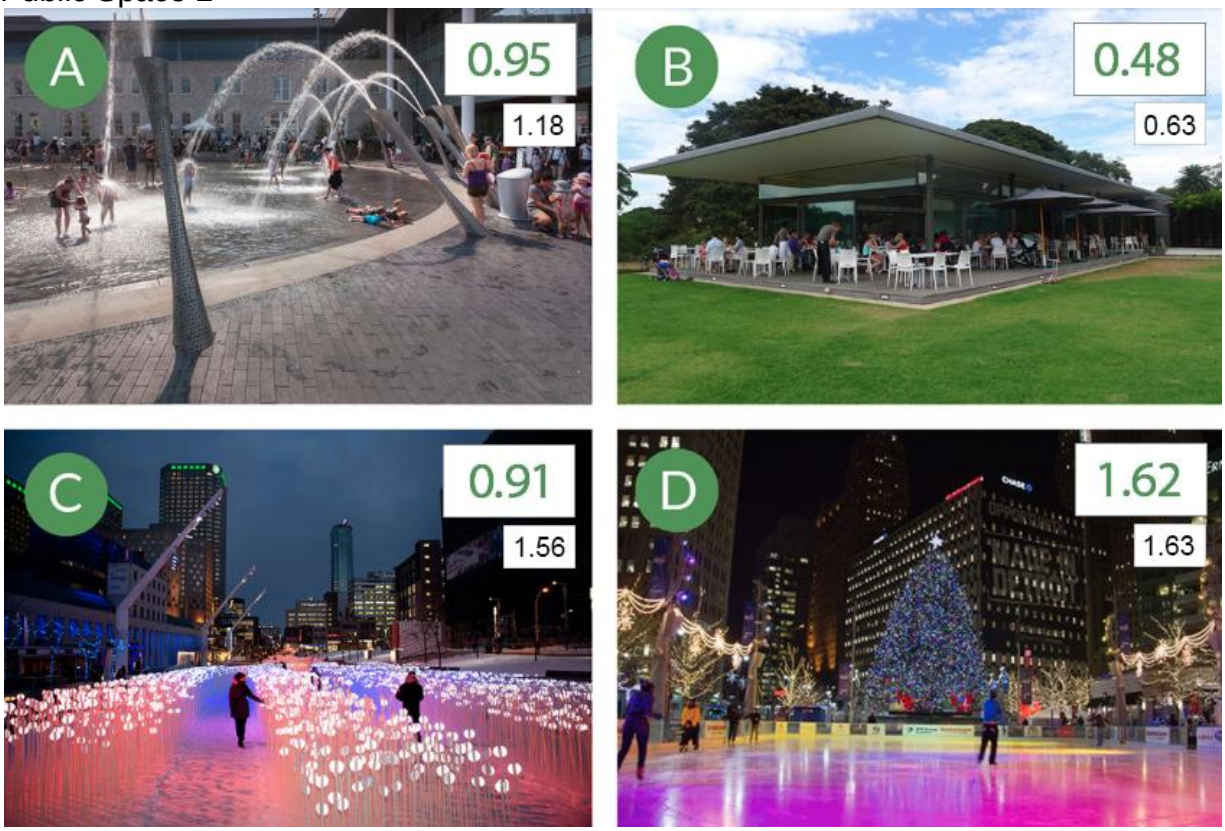
Appendix 1

The average weighted values for each image are listed in the white boxes. The public survey results are presented in the larger box in green or red, while the internal results are listed in the smaller box in black.

Building Height

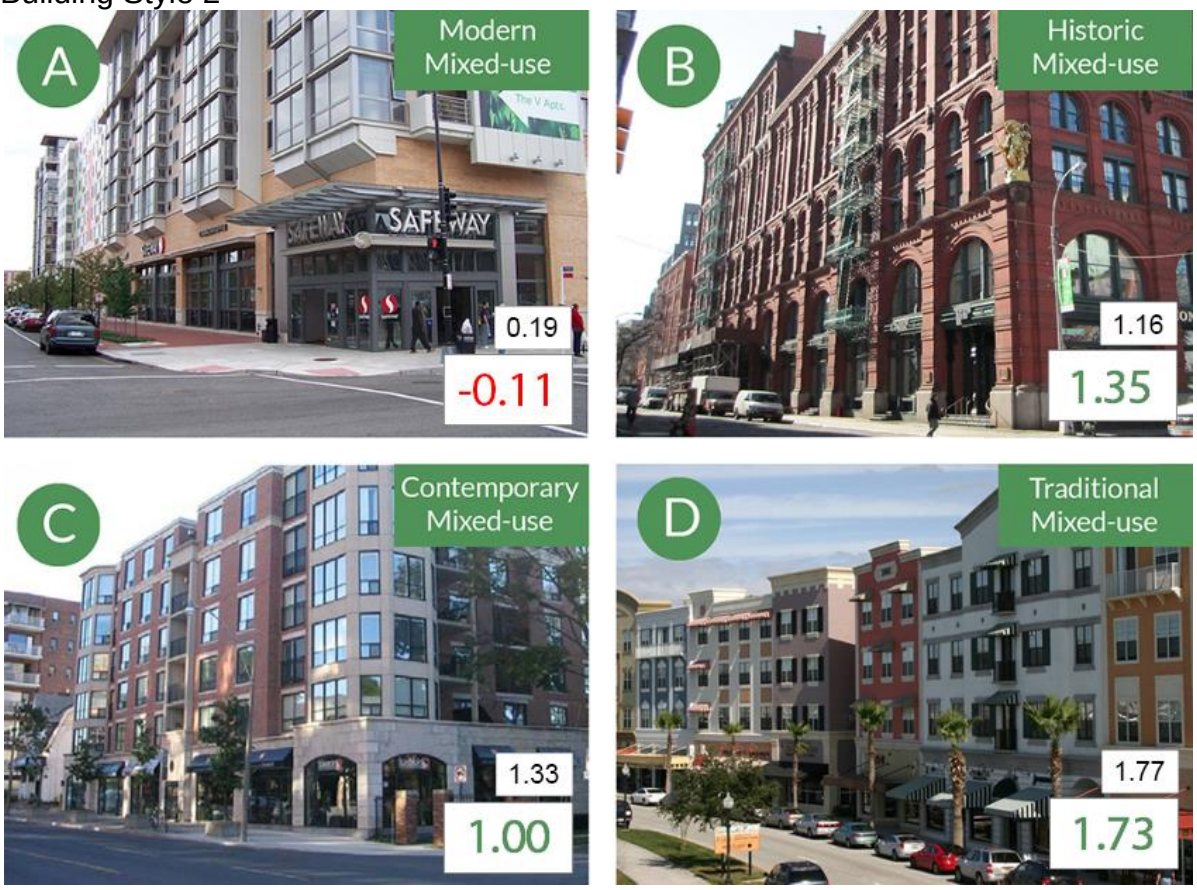
Public Space 1

Public Space 2

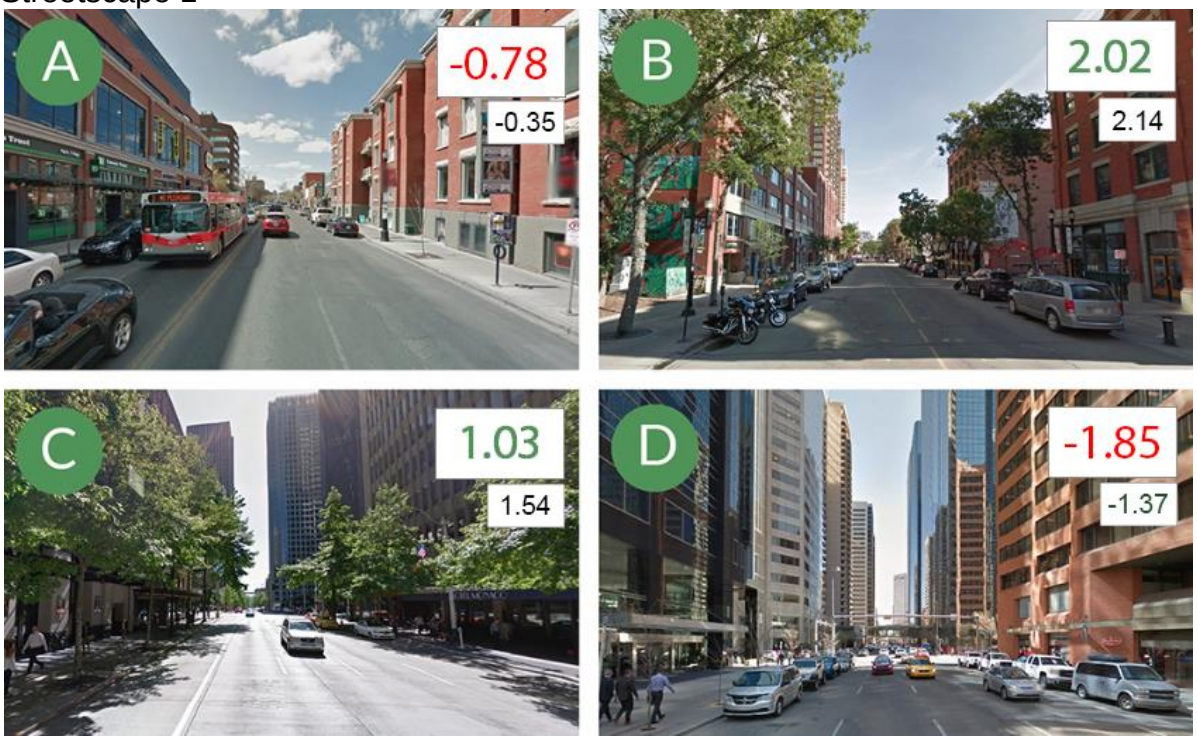


Building Style 1

Building Style 2



Streetscape 1

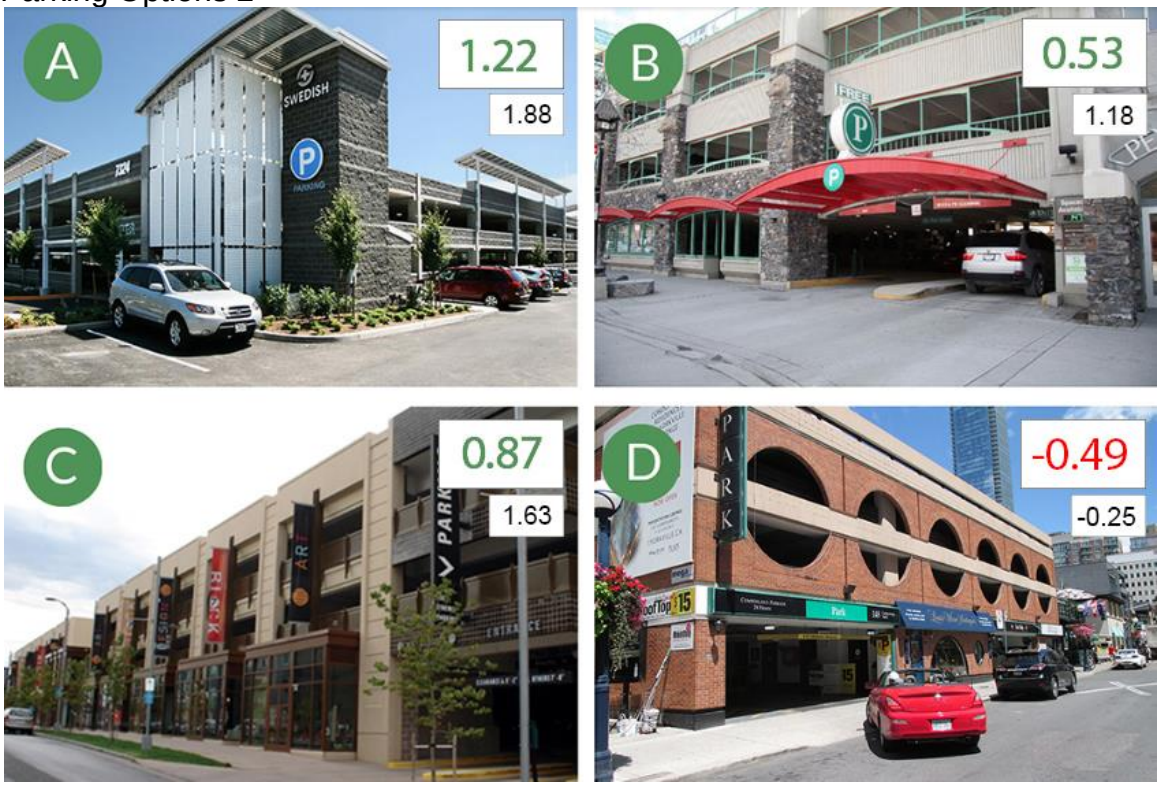


Streetscape 2

Integrated Street

Parking Options 1

Parking Options 2



Parking Options (Street)

Streetscape Design

Mixed-use Commercial and Residential Buildings

City of St. Albert
Cultivate Life

MEMORANDUM

FILE: A 21

DATE: August 2, 2016

TO: City Council

FROM: Adryan Slaght, Acting Chief Community Development Officer

SUBJECT: COUNCIL PLANNING ADVISORY NOTICE – 2016 DOWNTOWN PARKING UTILIZATION STUDY

In order to keep Council informed of the 2016 Downtown Parking Utilization Study, please see the attached "Council Planning Advisory Notice".

If you have any questions, please contact Adryan Slaght, Director of Planning and Development as noted at the bottom of the Council Advisory Notice.

Adryan Slaght

Attachment

cc: Chris Jardine, Acting City Manager

City of St. Albert
Planning & Development

Council Planning Advisory Notice

Project description	☒ Map attached

Downtown Parking Utilization Study 2016

From June 14 to June 23, 2016, planning staff collected data for its biennial Downtown Parking Utilization Study. The study examined lots on Tache Street and St. Anne Street, as well as the on-street parking on St. Michael Street, St. Thomas Street, and Perron Street. A map detailing the study area has been provided as Attachment 1.

Methodology

Partial license plate information and stall vacancy were tracked to allow staff to analyze overall occupancy, parking duration, and parking turnover. Counts were recorded in 30 minute intervals on week days between 8:00 am and 5:30 pm (20 counts per day total for each area). Subsequent data analysis compared the 2016 Downtown parking data with results of the prior study done in 2014. The summaries and tables included below provide a snapshot of key trends in each lot.

St. Michael Street, St. Thomas Street, and Perron Street: On-Street Parking

- Generally, an occupancy rate of 85% is considered desirable because spaces are well utilized but drivers can reliably find an open space
- There are approximately 115 parking stalls total on these three streets. Of these stalls, about 20 have a 4 hour limit and the remainder have a 2 hour limit. The stalls with a 4 hour limit appeared to have healthy turnover and good availability
- 2 hour stalls on these streets have a peak occupancy rate around 79% (Table 1)
- This indicates that these stalls are well used during peak hours, with some vacancy for new arrivals. Utilization was lowest in the early mornings, with peak occupancy between 1 pm and 4 pm
- For St. Michael Street, St. Thomas Street, and Perron Street turnover was approximately 5.5 to 6.5 vehicles per stall over the 9.5 hour day (Table 2)
- Average length of stay and average turnover can be found in Table 2

St. Anne: Public Parking

- 14 out of 16 rows of parking in the St. Anne lot are public parking (193 stalls)
- Public stalls with restrictions such as 30 minute only, and handicap parking appeared to have healthy turnover and good availability
- Public unrestricted stalls in the St. Anne lot were the most heavily utilized in the study area (Table 1). Turnover in these stalls improved slightly from 2014 to 2016 (Table 2)
- As shown in Table 1, the peak 3 hour utilization for 2 hour stalls (28 in total) was 93.5% in 2016 (up from 61.9% in 2014)
- There is a high demand for stalls in the St. Anne lot that sharply contrasts with the high availability of public stalls in the Tache lot

Distribution to: City Council, Corporate Communications, P&E front desk, P&D staff, EcDev

St. Anne: Staff Parking

- 2 out of 16 total rows of parking in the St. Anne lot are reserved for City of St. Albert employees (40 stalls). Only staff with red parking passes are permitted to park in these stalls
- Red parking passes are issued to:
    - Employees whose mobility is restricted,
    - Employees whose duties require them to travel frequently to and from St. Albert Place,
    - Employees who are required to respond on immediate notice from St. Albert Place to other locations, and
    - General Managers
- Utilization rates were relatively stable from 2014 to 2016 (Table 2)
- Stalls are consistently over 90% full based on the peak 3 hour occupancy rate
- Staff parking has a longer average duration of stay per stall (3.75 hours) than public parking stalls (3.15 hours)
- This study looked at occupancy, and did not examine parking pass enforcement. Vehicles with other passes, or no passes at all, may be contributing to the high occupancy rate

Tache Parking

- Approximately 26 stalls in the Tache lot are reserved for Curling Club Staff, handicap parking and City of St. Albert employees. Given the overall low occupancy of this lot, data analysis focused on the remaining 148 stalls, which are public unrestricted stalls.
- The peak occupancy rate for public, unrestricted stalls is consistently around 36% (Table 1)
- Construction at the 55+ Club site resulted in closure of some stalls in 2016. However, occupancy rates are near 36% in both 2014 and 2016. We suspect that this is because vehicles belonging to users of the 55+ Club building were replaced those belonging to construction workers parking close to work sites in the downtown area
- While the Tache lot is within 400 m of many downtown services and amenities, there may be a lack of awareness of availability of these stalls that contributes to the high occupancy at the St. Anne lot

Table 1:

Peak 3 Hour Utilization Percentage (2016): Lots Ranked Highest to Lowest	
St. Anne: No Parking Restrictions	**98.9%**
St. Anne: 2 Hour Parking	93.5%
St. Anne: Staff Parking	**90.2%**
St. Thomas Street: 2 Hour Parking	79.5%
Perron Street and St. Michael Street: 2 Hour Parking	**78.7%**
Tache: No Parking Restrictions	35.8%

*Peak 3 Hour Utilization Percentage is a statistic that captures the average occupancy of stalls in a lot over the busiest 3 hours of the day

Distribution to: City Council, Corporate Communications, P&E front desk, P&D staff, EcDev

Table 2:

Parking Utilization Data Summary (2014 and 2016)			
		Average Turnover/Day	Average Duration (hours)
St. Anne: No Parking Restrictions	2014	2.10	3.45
	2016	2.60	3.15
St. Anne: 2 Hour Parking	2014	3.95	0.90
	2016	5.15	1.20
St. Anne: Staff Parking	2014	1.70	4.60
	2016	1.95	3.75
St. Thomas Street: 2 Hour Parking	2014	4.45	0.95
	2016	5.40	0.80
Perron Street and St. Michael Street: 2 Hour Parking	2014	5.75	0.80
	2016	6.65	0.70
Tache: No Parking Restrictions	2014	1.10	1.80
	2016	1.05	2.55

Expected Project Timelines	Next Steps
• Fall 2016 - Draft Parking Study to be brought to Council • Summer 2018 - next Parking Utilization Study	Use results to guide the Draft Parking Strategy and DARP Implementation Plan

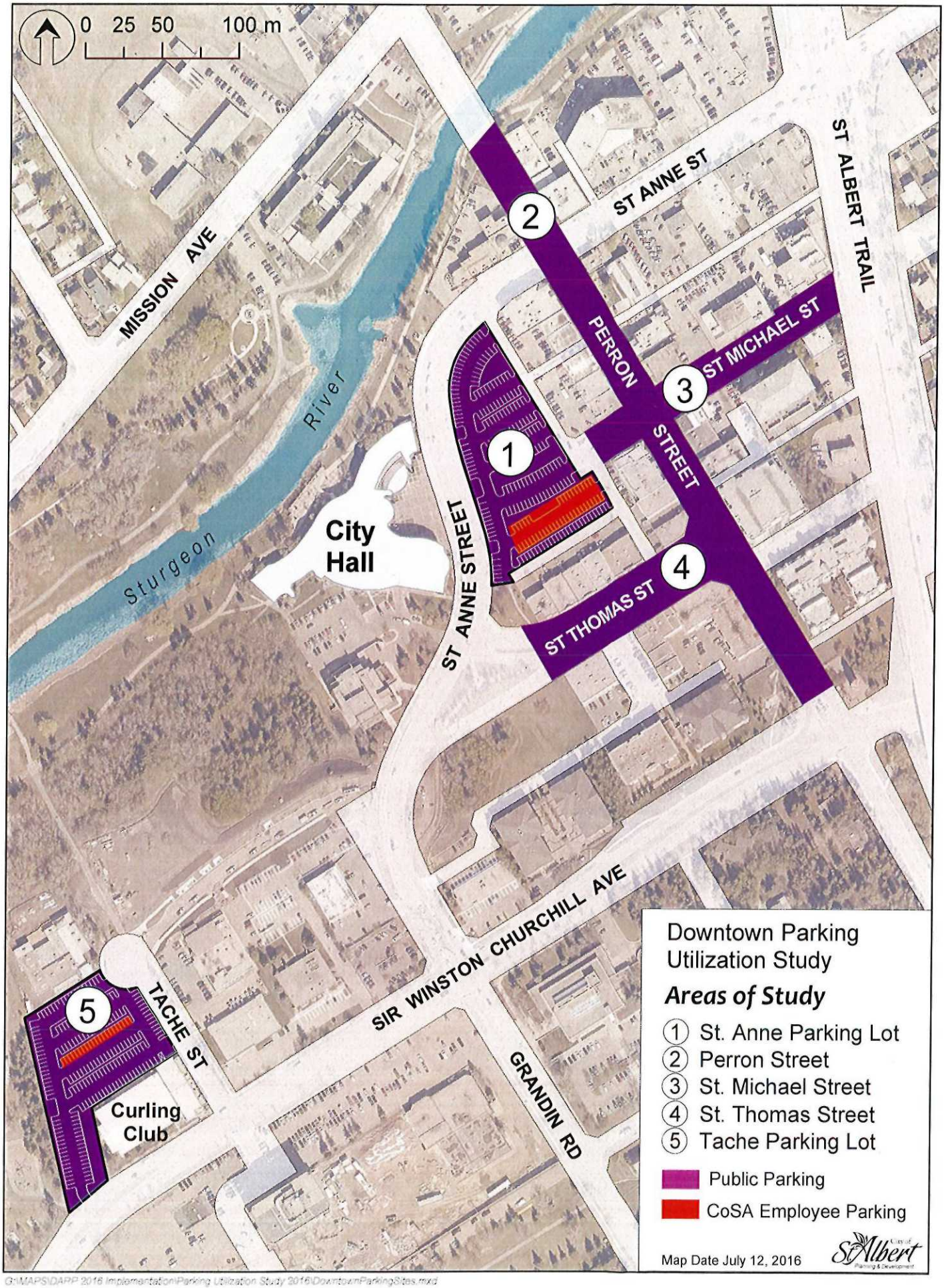
Key messages for public

- The Downtown Parking Utilization study was completed in June 2016
- Comparisons to the 2014 Parking Utilization Study have been provided
- The Draft Parking Strategy will be brought to Council in October and will utilize this information
- An additional count may be taken in the fall pursuant to the Council motion regarding opening up red zone parking spaces

Planner responsible: Jessi Fry
Planning Assistant responsible: Jarryd Csuti

Contact: Adryan Slaght, 780-418-6630	Date August 2, 2016

Distribution to: City Council, Corporate Communications, P&E front desk, P&D staff, EcDev



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