



Special Public Safety Advisory Committee Meeting
to be held via Zoom and in person, Council Chambers
Monday, March 10, 2025
at 3:00 p.m.

1. **Call Special Committee Meeting to Order**

We acknowledge that Penticton, where we live and work, is on the traditional lands of the Syilx People in the Okanagan Nation.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

3. **New Business**

Anderson 3.1 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Czeck 3.2 Temporary Winter Shelter Extension – Renewal of Temporary Use Permit 1-10
Re: 402 Warren Avenue East (441 Dawson Avenue)

Staff Recommendation:

THAT the Public Safety Advisory Committee recommend that Council support the extension of the Temporary Winter Shelter and approve the renewal of “Temporary Use Permit PL2024-9888”, located at 402 Warren Avenue East (441 Dawson Ave) with the same conditions and provincial funding until March 31, 2026.

4. **Adjournment**

Memo to Committee

penticton.ca

Date: March 10, 2025
To: Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC)
From: Julie Czeck, Director of Public Safety and Partnerships

Subject: Temporary Winter Shelter Extension – Renewal of the Temporary Use Permit Re: 402 Warren Ave East (441 Dawson Ave).

Staff Recommendation

THAT the Public Safety Advisory Committee recommend that Council support the extension of the Temporary Winter Shelter and approve the renewal of "Temporary Use Permit PL2024-9888", located at 402 Warren Avenue East (441 Dawson Ave) with the same conditions and provincial funding until March 31, 2026.

Executive Summary

On October 1, 2024, Council issued Temporary Use Permit PL2024-9888, a permit that allowed for the use 'emergency shelter and associated homelessness services' on a M1 (General Industrial) zoned property at 402 Warren Ave (441 Dawson Avenue) until March 31, 2025.

As the Temporary Use Permit (TUP) is expiring, consideration is being given to renew the Temporary Use Permit until March 31, 2026 with the same conditions, allowing the shelter to remain open, providing shelter beds through the next Spring, Summer and Fall seasons.

This report provides updated data on the outcomes of the Safety and Security Plan from November 2024 to February 28, 2025. Key findings include:

- Since opening, 89 unique individuals have stayed at the Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS), with 11 permanently housed in supportive, market, or assisted living.
- Interior Health reports positive outcomes for TWS guests, with over 60 primary care physician contacts, 30 mental health and substance use connections, and 267 wound care services since December 2024, preventing hospitalizations.
- Calls for service to the Bylaw Department have decreased by 60% at the TWS and 87% in the broader industrial area.
- Fire department calls to the TWS have been reduced by 47% compared to last year, with detailed data to be provided in the final report.

- RCMP calls in the industrial area have decreased by 2% (598 calls in 2024/25 vs. 608 in 2023/24). December 2024 data shows that only 6-12% of calls were for shelter guests, 25% for the unhoused, and 69% for housed individuals involved in criminal activity. This indicates that police calls were not driven by shelter stayers, rather by housed individuals.
- When RCMP calls involved the unhoused, factors such as seeking warmth by setting fires or sleeping in alcoves, using drugs in public spaces, and carrying weapons for personal safety and outdoor living all played a role in street survival. This is reflected in the nature of police calls for service in December 2024. A full analysis of all TWS operating months will be provided at the end of the season.
- Extending the shelter's operation would prevent 40 individuals from being discharged into the community, where they might camp in public spaces, business alcoves, or encampments. Keeping the shelter open supports continued progress towards better health and secure housing.
- Several projects are in planning stages to improve the local situation, including the Provincial Skaha Assembly site (500 units), a new supportive housing facility, three City-owned sites for social housing, and a new downtown Indigenous housing building. Until adequate housing is available, shelters remain necessary for the health, safety, and wellbeing of individuals and the community.

Background

On October 1, 2024, Council issued Temporary Use Permit PL2024-9888, a permit that allowed for the use 'emergency shelter and associated homelessness services' on a M1 (General Industrial) zoned property at 402 Warren Ave (441 Dawson Avenue) until March 31, 2025.

As the Temporary Use Permit is expiring, consideration is being given to renew the Temporary Use Permit until March 31, 2026 under the same conditions that applied to the original permit, which included an extensive safety and security plan being in place during operation. The shelter would remain open 24/7, regardless of outdoor temperature and offer other services to the unhoused population including minor health services, hygiene services, referrals to assistance programs and other such services offered by various governmental and non-governmental organizations. The safety and security plan will remain in place covering security 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the duration of the emergency shelter, for the property and surrounding neighbourhood. This model of shelter differs from previous winter responses which only opened if the temperature reached a certain threshold, with people exiting into the community every morning.

Council at their Regular Meeting held on March 4, 2025 passed the following resolution:

8.1 Temporary Winter Shelter Extension

63/2025 It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council direct staff to engage with the province for funding opportunities to extend the Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS) at 402 Warren Avenue East;

AND THAT Council refer discussions on the extended time for the TWS extension to the Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) should provincial funding become available.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

onsite medical and mental health services Food services are provided by Ask Wellness Society, a non-profit society.

While all operational aspects of the shelter are the responsibility of the operator, the City in partnership with 100 More Homes has been leading the implementation of a Safety and Security plan which includes responsibilities for the 24/7 oversight of the shelter operations, with the goal of the successful integration of this land use into the surrounding industrial neighborhood.

The Safety and Security Plan (the "Plan") is an integrated framework designed to ensure the safety and well-being of shelter stayers, staff and neighbors at/near the temporary winter shelter. The plan represents a collaborative commitment from all relevant organizations involved, including the RCMP, POPS, City of Penticton Bylaw and the Clean Team, Penticton Fire Department, 100 More Homes, BC Housing, Interior Health (IH), the Chamber of Commerce and the Penticton Industrial Development Association (PIDA).

This Plan takes a coordinated approach to managing risks, ensuring compliance with regulations, and maintaining a secure and clean environment in and around the shelter. Key elements of the Safety Plan include:

- A Safety Supervisor at the shelter who manages safety-related issues, liaises with law enforcement and neighbors during the day, and private security providing overnight patrols for 24/7 coverage.
- Proactive patrols by City Bylaw, and RCMP for continuous visibility.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and de-escalation training for businesses by the RCMP Community Policing Team.
- Weekly meetings with key partners (RCMP, Bylaw, Fire, 100 More Homes, business representatives, and Clean Team) to address emerging issues and trends. Meetings are co-chaired by 100MH and the City.
- Regular community forums (hosted by 100MH) that invite dialogue between residents, the operator and other partners involved in implementation of the Safety Plan.
- The shelter operator and City's Clean Team maintain neighborhood cleanliness initiatives through daily clean ups with the shelter operator and the City's Clean Team
- Interior Health provides complex care services, including overdose prevention, mental health support, wound care and primary health care.
- Regular data reporting on all components of the Plan, and the effectiveness of safety measures and community engagement.

The Plan aims to improve community safety, health outcomes, business relations, and cleanliness, ensuring the shelter integrates smoothly into the industrial neighborhood while addressing the complex needs of shelter stayers.

Data Findings To Date

On February 11, 2025 staff presented a mid-term report to Council on the early outcomes of the shelter operations. This report builds on those findings, and covers data from November 16 to February 28, 2025, as provided by all participating agencies. A comprehensive report with additional details, encompassing the entire operational period from November 16, 2024, to March 31, 2025, will be available as part of a final report to Council in April.

Firm conclusions should not be drawn from this data due to the short reporting period. However, it still offers valuable insights into the progress of the new 24/7 shelter model, which has been implemented in collaboration with multiple agencies.

Shelter Updates

The TWS is approved to operate 40 beds, but demand exceeds capacity. Since opening, 89 unique individuals have stayed at the shelter, and the operator has had to turn people away on 229 occasions due to being full. Approximately 66 beds have turned over (i.e. vacated by one person and filled by another) since opening– reasons for turnovers include:

- 11 individuals transitioned to permanent housing, either in market, assisted living or supportive housing;
- 1 individual was incarcerated;
- 3 individuals left to seek further treatment;
- 5 individuals self exited, meaning they chose to leave;
- 14 individuals experienced a temporary loss of service, meaning they were banned for a short period of time;
- 1 individual experienced a permanent loss of service, meaning they were banned for the rest of the winter season;
- 30 individuals missed their beds, meaning they did not return by curfew (11pm) two consecutive nights;
- 1 individual died at the hospital.

Under the TWS model, the province has funded case managers at the shelter. Case managers differ from standard shelter workers. A case manager focuses on coordinating services and creating long-term plans to help individuals access necessary support, while a shelter worker primarily provides immediate, on-site assistance like food, shelter, and basic necessities to shelter guests. This has resulted in deeper service connection for individuals wanting to pursue life skills, housing, or rehabilitative services. As noted above, since the shelter has opened 11 individuals have transitioned to permanent housing, either in market, assisted living or supportive housing. For clarity, these transitions into housing are not due to additional net new supportive/non-market housing units, but rather because of new connections for unhoused people to housing services who may not have supported while sleeping rough outside.

"When there was no hope left, no options, no one. When all other doors closed.... One remained open, the Temporary Winter Shelter. Where staff put understanding, compassion, human welfare first. That's what makes this place actually work. Their true passion for their work and efforts towards real overall change to such a broken system is innovative and truly inspiring. In such a short stay with them, their dedication, support and knowledge had a tremendous positive lasting turn around for my life." - Shelter resident -

Interior Health has also provided significant services, including:

- 1 wound care nurse and 1 Overdose Prevention Nurse (daily in-reach and as needed);
- 1 nurse from Substance Use Connections Team and 1 nurse-prescriber for Opioid Antagonist Treatment (i.e. treatment for addiction to opioid drugs);

- 2 Counsellors from Substance Use Connections Team;
- 2 Peers with Lived experience of homelessness (accompany/ assist clinicians);
- Dedicated physician time on Friday mornings at Martin St Clinic.

Interior Health is reporting positive outcomes for TWS shelter guests, with over 60 primary care physician contacts since December, 2024. The focus of connections with physicians continues with the theme of initiating or restarting Opioid Agonist Treatment, ensuring follow-up and case management. This includes escalation and attachment to primary care for interventions and wound care treatments, as well as connection to social work for the completion of forms and applications. Additionally, there were 30 mental health and substance use connections, and over 267 wound care services provided, preventing hospitalizations that would have been necessary if they were sheltering on the street.

The February 11, 2025 report to Council noted that of the 65 unique individuals that had stayed at the shelter from November 16 -December 31, 2024, 60% have reported living in Penticton for over 5 years, with most considering it their home community. Additionally, 18% of TWS residents reported coming from another province, 15% from other cities in BC, and the rest were either undisclosed or international. None reported coming from the Okanagan Correctional Facility. An updated analysis of home community will be provided in the final report to Council in April.

With approximately 40% of TWS residents having lived in Penticton for less than 5 years and coming from different BC communities and provinces, it underscores the need for more equitably distributed services to ensure people do not need to leave their home community to get help. This highlights the importance of regional and provincial collaboration to ensure equitable availability of services across all communities. Council has made a commitment to advocate for stronger regional responses to homelessness at the Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA)¹ at the end of April.

Law Enforcement Updates

Bylaw:

As of March 4, 2025, data analysis shows that the TWS shelter model has **reduced the bylaw calls for service to the shelter by nearly 60%** - from 41 calls under the old temperature-activated model that kicked people out in the mornings, to 14 calls with the new 24/7 TWS model. Specifically, calls for loitering or obstructing have decreased almost 5-fold. Additionally, from November 16, 2024, when the TWS opened, to the end of February 2025, bylaw services responded to 42 calls for service, compared to 298 calls during the same period in 2023/24. This represents an **85% reduction** in calls for service in the broader industrial area. This significant drop is likely due to the department's proactive patrols, which address issues before they escalate to calls for service. Additionally, the TWS model's approach of not discharging individuals into the

¹ SILGA represents the local governments of the Southern Interior of British Columbia. It aims to enhance service quality, support legislative changes, and coordinate communications among members and other governmental bodies. Additionally, it advocates to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and Provincial Ministries on behalf of its members, proposing changes in legislation, regulations, or government policy. It also educates and assists members in providing good governance for citizens.

community every morning has resulted in a substantial reduction in social disorder. The bylaw department conducted 1,561 proactive patrols within the industrial area from November 2024 – February 2025.

Penticton Fire Department:

Since the opening of the TWS, there have been 9 calls for service at the shelter, all of which were for medical reasons; 6 of these calls were cancelled due to the BC Ambulance (BCA) attending quicker. In the last model operated last year, there were a total of 17 calls (2 of which were cancelled by BCA) – **representing a 47% decrease** in calls for service to the Fire Department in this model. The final report will provide a broader analysis of fire trends and medical calls within the broader industrial area.

RCMP:

From November 2024 to the end of February 2025, the RCMP received 598 calls for service in the Industrial area (in contrast to 608, in 2023/2024) representing a **2% decrease overall**.

RCMP Calls for Service In Industrial Area		
	2024/2025	2023/24
November	173	153
December	154	163
January	143	131
February	128	161
	598	608
Shelter Calls	34	37
Total Calls	632	645

A full analysis of the call type, as well as a review of how many of the calls are generated by individuals at the shelters will be provided at the end of the season.

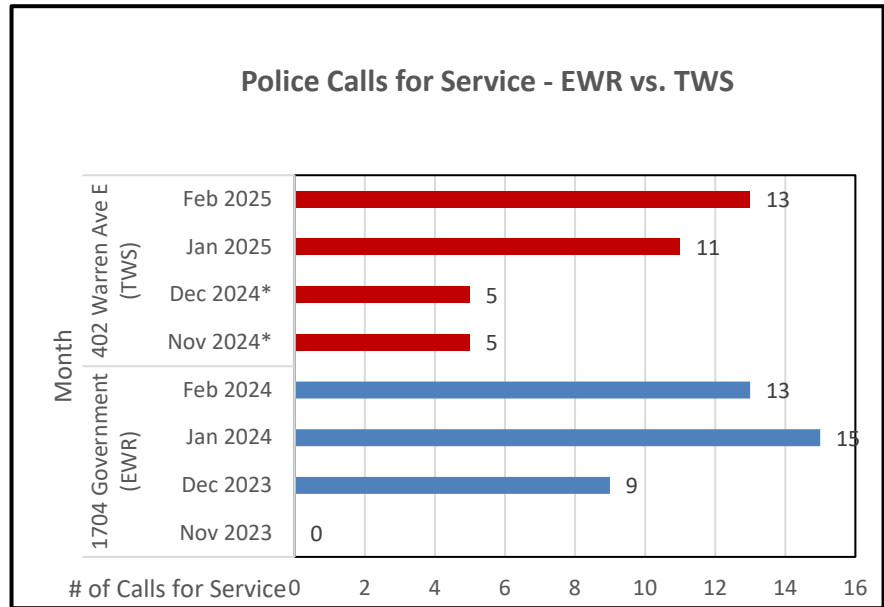
However, one month of review of this detail (December 2024 data) indicated that only 6-12% of the calls that month were generated by shelter guests at Compass Court and the TWS, approx. 25% were generated by those otherwise unhoused/unsheltered, and the majority (69% of the calls) were generated by individuals who were housed and engaged in criminal activity.

What this data indicates is that a quarter of the police calls for service were driven by homelessness or unmet housing needs not by shelters. Factors such as seeking warmth by setting fires or sleeping in alcoves, using drugs in public spaces, and carrying weapons for personal safety and urban outdoor living all play a role in street survival, and this is reflected the nature of calls for service by police in December 2024.

The TWS model is not seeing increased calls for service to the police department. The graph below shows that the 2024/25 TWS model saw 34 calls, versus 37 documented calls in the old model (2023/23). The shelter last year had a later start, which is why data for last year only started in December.

In the TWS model, the Integrated Crisis Response Team (ICRT) – which pairs a police officer with a nurse – is proactively engaging and building relationship with the operator and encouraging calls for service to ensure individuals are getting the support they need, whether or not there is a criminal element involved.

This indicates that not all calls to the police are for negative interactions. In fact, at the TWS, most interactions have been conducted in partnership and collaboration with the operator



Community Collaboration & Engagement

Maintaining cleanliness and a sense of pride in the TWS has been a key focus for shelter staff and peers to foster positive relationships with neighbors. To achieve this, they have conducted 353 cleanup activities nearby since opening. Additionally, the safety liaison and private security have performed perimeter patrols, supplementing the proactive patrols by Bylaw and Police, and acting as the first point of contact for businesses with concerns or questions. This cleaning effort is further supplemented by the City’s Clean team, who spent a total of 61 hours of proactive cleaning hours in the industrial area in December. The City’s Clean team has noted that the intensity of cleaning required in the Industrial area has decreased since POPs and peers have supplemented cleaning with their own activities.

“We have had 0 issues, 0 complaints from neighbors. One of the guys weeds our gardens and brooms the sidewalks 10 hours per day. All good so far.”

–Neighbouring Business –

Additionally, 100MH's Lived/Living Experience Table (i.e. people with past or current experience of homelessness) has continued spearheading their community-wide cleanup efforts. In November, over 60 people, including those with lived and living experience of homelessness, participated in the cleanup, just down the street from the TWS. Alongside weekly calls that bring together all partners for updates and triage, 100MH has hosted two neighbourhood forums. These forums are open for any neighbors and community members with an opportunity to ask questions of the shelter operator and other key agencies involved in the Safety Plan. Over 30 community members have attended in the past two sessions, and one more session is scheduled for April 10th at the end of the winter session. The goal is to formalize learnings to enhance future models.

“I am so happy with the information I have received from the meetings I have attended (100 More Home forums and City Council meetings) ... To my surprise, I was informed about the temporary winter shelter being opened roughly a block from my home on Nov 1, 2024. Automatic, instant panic

set it... The regular patrols done by RCMP and Bylaw – Bylaw especially, have not gone unnoticed. My neighbors and I see the continuous action taking place patrolling our street – a big thank you! ... I feel safe in my own home again.”

–Resident near the TWS –

Integration of the Business Community in the Model

Overall, from all parties involved in the safety plan there is shared consensus that this model of shelter is bearing positive outcomes due to each organization involved “bringing their best to the table”. This is not to say there are not challenges – but challenges are met with a quick response. Since the shelter’s opening, PIDA has addressed two formal complaints from businesses, and the operator has responded to five neighboring businesses. Some businesses have even shown their gratitude by bringing food to the shelter in appreciation of the operator’s support.

The specific outcomes being observed include improved safety, quicker response times to challenges, improved connection to housing and health services, and a deeper understanding of the shelter model’s impact through data analysis. These positive results are largely attributed to the collaborative efforts of all organizations involved.

New to this year’s operations was weekly involvement from the Chamber of Commerce and Penticton Industrial Development Association representatives, who served as liaisons for businesses that may be impacted by the shelter operations near their businesses.

“The shelter program is helping people and caring for the surrounding community. Everyone involved is committed to making it work. Weekly meetings of all agencies provide for open communication and sharing. The monthly forums are open to all and have proven to be an important means of hearing about and dealing with issues in a timely and effective manner. The task of rehabilitation and restoration is huge and this shelter is a very positive step forward. I offer my gratitude and congratulations to everybody involved in planning, organizing and operating the shelter. Your expertise, hard work and professionalism is just outstanding.”

– Frank Conci, President, Penticton Industrial Development Association –

Current Situation & Long-Term Solutions

Due to the early positive outcomes in housing transitions, improved health, and reduced strain on public safety resources from this 24/7 model, staff have asked Council for direction to seek funding from the province and bring back a proposal with a recommendation to extend the Temporary Use Permit to allow the shelter to continue to operate for an additional year, when additional options in the community will hopefully be available.

If successful, this funding would extend the current operational plan for another year. This extension would prevent 40 individuals from being discharged back into the community at the end of March, where they might otherwise camp in parks, business alcoves, parking lots, or other public spaces. Keeping the shelter open will also allow those who have engaged with services to continue their progress towards better health and, ultimately, secure housing.

Staff have made the request for a funding extension to BC Housing and are awaiting an outcome. In the meantime, as funding is not secured, the operator has started a transition or “wind down” of services – meaning that as beds turn over, they are not being re-filled, until there is confirmation of further funding. Shelter staff are also beginning to take jobs in other sectors, also adding to the urgency of securing a decision of whether the shelter should continue.

It is important to note that this extension is not the solution and should be temporary. Shelter stays should be rare, brief and non-reoccurring, but in recent years, this is all too often not the case. More housing program beds of all types in the community are needed to reach this long-term goal. There are a number of projects in the planning stages that will over the next few years, improve the situation locally. Some of these include the Provincial Skaha Assembly site (500 units), a new supporting housing facility, the three City-owned sites identified for social housing, and the new downtown Indigenous housing building currently under construction, among others. However, until there is enough adequate housing for unhoused people, shelters will remain necessary for the immediate health, safety and wellbeing of individuals and the overall community.

The City has also jointly advocated with the s̓n̓p̓iṅk̓t̓n Indian Band and the City of Penticton have sent a letter to the provincial government formally asking for a Heart and Hearth Agreement. Heart and Hearth is a provincial initiative by the Ministry of Housing and BC Housing to support priority communities to respond to encampments. The Province may sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with municipalities to implement the program, committing both governments to better support unhoused individuals in encampments. This includes coordinated outreach services through “Heart” and the creation of new shelter and/or transitional **housing spaces** through “Hearth.”

The program prioritizes the health, safety, and dignity of those sheltering outside. Despite the shelter beds made available by the TWS, as shared above, there is still an unacceptable level of individuals who are sheltering outdoors. Community selection for Heart and Health, is based on factors such as the presence of complex encampments, service gaps, coordination with other services, planned housing, homelessness trends, and the need to balance responses in rural and urban areas. To date, the Ministry of Housing has signed HEART & HEARTH MOUs with the cities of Prince George, Kelowna, Abbotsford, Nanaimo and Victoria.

The City is also advocating for ‘complex care housing’ and ‘secure care’ for individuals with brain injuries, mental illnesses, and severe addictions as well as more investments regionally. The Province is taking steps to ensure that people with long-term mental health and addiction challenges receive secure and dignified care by opening highly secure facilities under the Mental Health Act across the province, as well as providing secure treatment within BC Corrections. While further details of the Province’s plans are not yet available, the municipality will continue to monitor advancements in this area, as it remains a critical local need.

The municipality is doing everything it can support a complex social problem that primarily falls under the mandate of the Province. While shelter is not an ideal solution, it is preferable to the encampments and the associated nuisances of mass outdoor sheltering. It is important to underscore that extending the shelter for another year is intended as a temporary stopgap until the longer-term initiatives mentioned above materialize. Data thus far shows that a collaborative shelter model prioritized on the health and safety outcomes lends itself to better overall results, as opposed to managing homelessness outside through encampments and the associated social disorder.

Lastly, staff are also working to complete a Social Housing and Infrastructure Plan in the spring that will be a tactical plan that links social housing needs with potential operators, funders and locations to support the ongoing development of new social housing. The implementation of this Plan alongside 100 More Homes will be critical as the City works alongside the Province to manage the immediate impacts.

The Temporary Use Permit – Alternative Locations

The M1 (General Industrial) zoning of the existing shelter property does not list ‘emergency shelter’ as a permitted use. Therefore, this temporary use permit application is required to allow the use ‘emergency shelter and homelessness services’ as a permitted use on the subject property temporarily from March 31, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

As the leaseholder of the shelter location, the Council can direct staff to explore alternative options, such as discharging all shelter stayers outdoors until next winter, when the space could again be utilized as a temporary winter shelter or finding a different location. Currently, the only city-owned property that wouldn’t require a new lease or additional city funding is 199 Ellis Street. However, this location’s proximity to downtown and its current tenants would be significantly impacted by shelter services at that location.

Next Steps

The TWS model has shown promising preliminary results this season, providing essential support to the unhoused community while maintaining a safety plan for the surrounding neighborhood. As shown in this report the community has seen positive outcomes in comparison to previous winters. With the shelter set to close on March 31, 2025, staff are recommending that the Committee support the staff recommendation:

THAT the Public Safety Advisory Committee recommend that Council support the extension of the Temporary Winter Shelter and approve the renewal of “Temporary Use Permit PL2024-9888”, located at 402 Warren Avenue East (441 Dawson Ave) expiring March 31, 2026 with the same conditions and provincial funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Czeck, Director of Public Safety and Partnerships

Concurrence

City Manager <i>JH</i>	General Manager of Development Services <i>BL</i>
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