



Final Public Hearing

SR 520 Bridge Toll Rate Setting

July 10, 2024



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BACKGROUND



Purpose of SR 520 Bridge Toll Rate Changes

- In December 2023, the Office of the State Treasurer projected that current SR 520 Bridge toll rates will not generate net revenues sufficient to meet annual financial requirements beginning in July 2025.
- Primary factors resulting in lower net revenue projections:
 - Construction effects west of the bridge are suppressing demand, lowering forecasts thru FY 2031.
 - Bridge insurance costs were projected to be \$83 million higher than expected through FY 2031.
- Remaining federal ARPA funds help shore up net revenues only through June 2024.
- Therefore, the **WSTC must adjust toll rates this summer**, in order to generate required net revenues.

Requirements for SR 520 Bridge Toll Rates

State law (*RCW 47.56.850 & RCW 47.56.870*) requires the following for SR 520 bridge toll rates:

- A variable schedule of toll rates must be set with the intent to:
 - Maintain travel time, speed, and reliability on the corridor; and
 - Generate the necessary revenue to meet funding obligations.
- Tolls may vary by multiple factors in support of improved system performance, including:
 - Type of vehicle, time of day, and traffic conditions
 - System performance includes managing congestion on the facility and minimizing impacts to alternative routes.
- Tolling may only be imposed on the floating bridge portion of the SR 520 corridor.

Considerations for SR 520 Bridge Toll Rates

State law (*RCW 47.56.830*) establishes the following considerations for state toll facilities:

- Toll rates must be set to meet anticipated funding obligations, and to the extent possible, optimize system performance
- In addition to being a source of project funding, tolling should:
 - Be fairly and equitably applied in the context of the statewide transportation system; and
 - Avoid increased traffic diversion to other routes.
- When deciding to toll a facility the following factors should also be considered:
 - Social equity, environmental, and economic issues; and
 - Supporting progress towards the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals.

TOLL RATE OPTIONS



Two Toll Rate Options Were Considered

On March 13, the full Commission advanced two toll rate options for public input:

- **Option A:** uniform 10% increase (rounded to nearest nickel)
- **Option B:** tailored increases averaging 10% overall (rounded to nearest nickel)

Weekday Rate Schedule

Existing Good To Go! Toll Rates

Option A

Option B

	12-5 am	5-6 am	6-7 am	7-10 am	10-11 am	11 am-2 pm	2-3 pm	3-7 pm	7-8 pm	8-9 pm	9-11 pm	11 pm-12 am
Existing Good To Go! Toll Rates	\$1.25	\$2.50	\$3.80	\$4.50	\$3.80	\$3.25	\$3.80	\$4.50	\$3.80	\$3.25	\$2.50	\$1.25
Option A	\$1.40	\$2.75	\$4.20	\$4.95	\$4.20	\$3.60	\$4.20	\$4.95	\$4.20	\$3.60	\$2.75	\$1.40
Option B	\$1.35	\$2.75	\$3.95	\$4.90	\$3.95	\$3.95	\$3.95	\$4.90	\$3.95	\$3.95	\$2.75	\$1.35

Weekend Rate Schedule

Existing Good To Go! Toll Rates

Option A

Option B

	11 pm-5 am	5-8 am	8-11 am	11 am-6 pm	6-9 pm	9-11 pm	11 pm-12 am
Existing Good To Go! Toll Rates	\$1.25	\$1.60	\$2.35	\$3.05	\$2.35	\$1.60	\$1.25
Option A	\$1.40	\$1.75	\$2.60	\$3.35	\$2.60	\$1.75	\$1.40
Option B	\$1.35	\$1.70	\$2.95	\$2.95	\$2.95	\$1.70	\$1.35

All toll rates are for 2-axle vehicles with Good to Go! pass

The Commission hosted an online public input forum survey from April 17 – May 1 to gather feedback on the two toll rate options.

OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT ONLINE FORUM SURVEY



Online Public Input Forum Survey Results

Open from April 17 - May 1, 2024

- Over 22,500 people engaged, with nearly 20,000 providing input on the two rate options

High-Level Results

- There was slightly more overall opposition and support for **Option B** than Option A

Option A

- 32% Support / Strongly Support
- 15% Neutral / Not Sure
- 53% Oppose / Strongly Oppose

Option B

- 33% Support / Strongly Support
- 12% Neutral / Not Sure
- 55% Oppose / Strongly Oppose

Additional Survey Takeaways

Most respondents did not indicate a strong preference for one option

- *Frequent users, weekend users, weekend midday users,* and respondents who identified as *People of Color* showed a stronger preference for **Option B**
- *Weekday midday users* was the only group that showed a stronger preference for **Option A**

7,465 comments were received. In summary*:

- The vast majority stated a dislike for tolls or toll increases altogether
- Most comments showed support for **Option B** and noted that it makes sense to charge higher prices when there are more users on the road.
- Comments in favor of **Option A** highlighted its simplicity.

* *Summary reflects of a sampling of 1,035 of the total comments received*

WSTC TOLL RATE PROPOSAL

WSTC's SR 520 Bridge Toll Rate Proposal

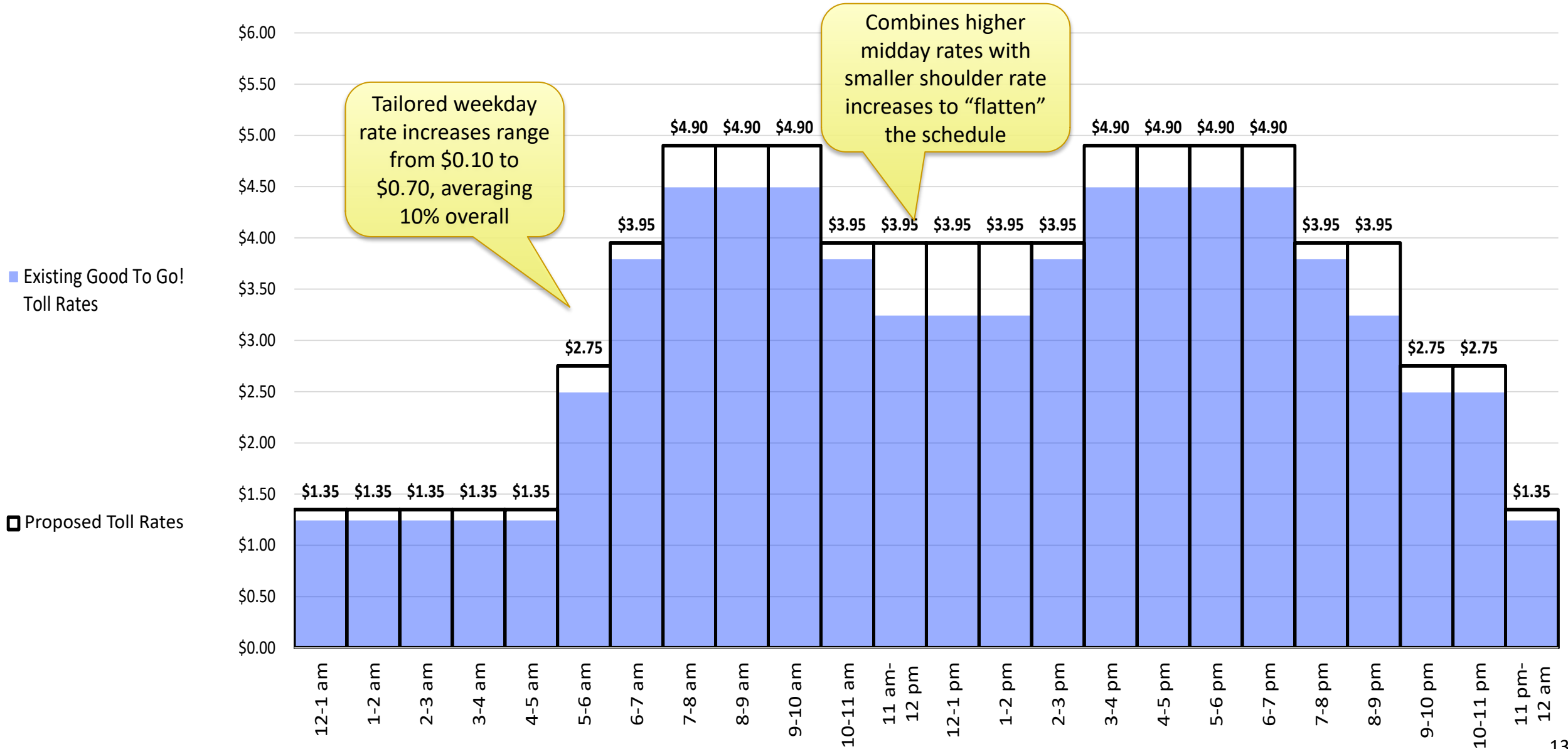
On May 15, the Commission advanced **Option B** as its toll rate proposal for further public comment. Option B addresses the following:

- Meets SR 520 Bridge annual financial requirements, as confirmed by the Office of the State Treasurer on July 8, 2024
- Provides an improved customer experience with fewer toll rate changes compared to existing schedule and Option A
- Minimizes the toll rate increase for the peak hours compared to Option A
 - Survey indicates frequent users most often use the bridge during peak hours
- Slightly preferred in survey by frequent users and by people of color
- Maintains capacity for tolls to support traffic management

NOTE: No further public input was received after the WSTC advanced its toll rate proposal

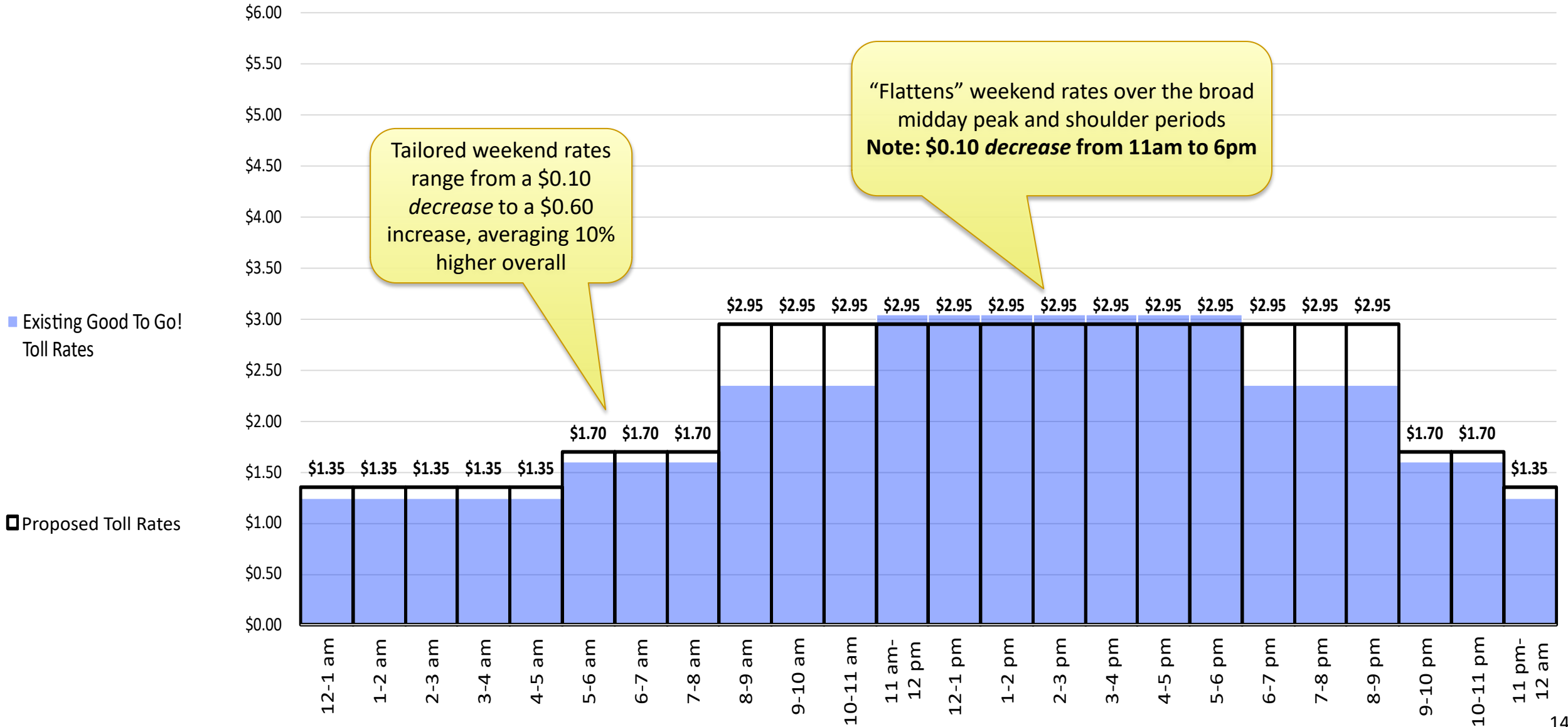
Weekday Toll Rates Under WSTC Proposal

All toll rates are for 2-axle vehicles with Good to Go! pass



Weekend Toll Rates Under WSTC Proposal

All toll rates are for 2-axle vehicles with Good to Go! pass



NEXT STEPS



Discussion & Next Steps

- Discuss and approve toll rates changes today
- File final CR-103P paperwork by July 15 (noon)
- New toll rates take effect on **August 15, 2024**



The WSTC will continue to monitor performance and revenues to ensure toll rates remain sufficient for meeting financial obligations.

Questions / Contact

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