

PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
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## OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

November 17, 2022

City of Albuquerque  
Parks and Recreation Department  
Open Space Division  
1801 4th St NW  
Albuquerque NM, 87102

**Project # PR-2022-007695**  
SI-2022-01882- Site Plan- Major Amendment

### **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

City of Albuquerque, Parks and Recreation Department, Open Space Division, requests a Site Plan-EPC for an Extraordinary Facility for all or a portion of Parcel A, Plat of Parcels A & B, Alameda Open Space, located at 1295 Alameda Blvd. NW, between Rio Grande Blvd. NW and the Rio Grande River, approximately 7.5 acres (B-14-Z)  
Staff Planner: Silvia Bolivar

On November 17, 2022, the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) voted to APPROVE Project # PR-2022-007695, SI-2022-01882 – (Site Plan- Major Amendment), based on the following Findings and subject to the following Conditions of Approval:

### ***FINDINGS – SI-2022-01882***

1. The request is for a Site Plan-EPC for an Extraordinary Facility for the Alameda Open Space trailhead. The site is legally described as Parcel A (City of Albuquerque), Plat of Parcels A & B, Alameda Open Space (the “subject site”). The subject property is owned by the City of Albuquerque and managed by the City’s Open Space Division.
2. The subject site is zoned County A-1 (Agricultural/Residential).
3. The EPC is hearing the request because the IDO states that any Extraordinary Facility shall be reviewed and decided upon pursuant to subsection 14-16-6-6(J).

To provide citizen oversight to the MPOS Program, the City established the Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB) in 1983. The OSAB makes recommendations regarding extraordinary facilities to the City’s Environmental Planning Commission (EPC).

On October 25, 2022, project was discussed and approved at the OSAB meeting.

4. The request requires Site Plan-EPC approval because the subject site is over 5 acres and adjacent to Major Public Open Space (MPOS). Compliance with IDO

5. Section 5-2 Site Design and Sensitive Lands is required.
6. The Bosque Action Plan-Rio Grande Valley State Park is a Rank II Plan developed by the Open Space Division of the City Parks and Recreation Department to provide guidance on how to manage and protect natural, historic, or cultural resources and/or scenic views. The Plan identifies specific environmental and recreational improvements for the RGVSP.
7. Uses and development standards specified in a Resource Management Plan or Master Plan approved or amended by the Open Space Division of the City Parks and Recreation Department for each facility or in the Facility Plan for Major Public Open Space prevail over IDO standards and may be reflected in Site Plans approved pursuant to this IDO.
8. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan, the Major Public Open Space Facility Plan, the Bosque Action Plan-Rio Grande Valley State Park, and the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) are incorporated herein by reference and made part of the record for all purposes.
9. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 4: Community Identity pertaining to character, natural resources and process.

A. Goal 4.1 – Character: Enhance, protect, and preserve distinct communities.

The Alameda Open Space is a prime location for preservation and protection due to its proximity to the Rio Grande Valley State Park, the Rio Grande, and the Paseo del Bosque trail which contribute to distinct communities. The area is mostly characterized by a rural character and the development made possible by the request will help protect and preserve the community by better defining circulation paths, improving wayfinding, and revegetating areas along the Bosque.

B. Policy 4.1.5 – Natural Resources: Encourage high-quality development and re-development that responds appropriately to the natural setting and ecosystem functions.

The request will allow for the circulation of the single, shared-use path to be better defined and the installation of extensive plantings will provide additional shade while enhancing the area's existing habitat. The shared-use path is a transportation trail that extends throughout the Bosque and serves the short-range and long-distance travel needs and interests of pedestrians, bicyclists and other users of the trail that contributes to the natural setting and ecosystem functions

C. Goal 4.2 – Process: Engage communities to identify and plan for their distinct character and needs.

The applicant worked with communities to determine concerns and character of the area so the development made possible by the request is consistent with this goal.

D. Policy 4.2.2 – Community Engagement: Facilitate meaningful engagement opportunities and respectful interactions in order to identify and address the needs of all residents

The request is consistent with this policy as the applicant had meaningful engagement opportunities with neighborhood associations and interested parties. The resulting site plan is a response to concerns and response to public comments.

10. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 5: Land Use.

- A. Goal 5.3 - Efficient Development Patterns: Promote development patterns that maximize the utility of existing infrastructure and public facilities and the efficient use of land to support the public good.

The request is consistent with this Goal because the development of Rural Areas in the County must follow Rural Area development policies which must identify and conserve environmental resources which this request complies with. The development made possible by the request takes into consideration the character and environmental conditions of the site and its surroundings so the development made possible by the request promotes development patterns and existing infrastructure.

- B. Policy 5.3.4 – Conservation Development: Encourage conservation development to promote private open space and preserve natural landscape, agricultural lands, and other features of the natural environment to encourage development that is sensitive to the open, natural character of the area and the geological and cultural conditions.

The request is consistent with this policy because the development of the trail will be of limited development, low impact uses that would conserve the environmentally sensitive area while supporting limited trail development and reducing multi-user conflicts.

11. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 10: Parks & Open Space pertaining to facilities and access, distribution, and universal design.

- A. Goal 10.1 – Facilities & Access: Provide parks, Open Space, and recreation facilities that meet the need of all residents and use natural resources responsibly.

The Alameda Open Space is open to the public but has limited parking which will help use natural resources responsibly while meeting the needs of residents. The trail will meet the needs and interests of pedestrians, bicyclists, and other trail users.

- B. Policy 10.1.1 – Distribution: Improve the community’s access to recreational opportunities by balancing the City and County’s parks and Open Space system within the built environment.

The development made possible by the request will improve the community’s access to recreational opportunities because the shared-use path will be better defined and will meet the short-range and long-distance travel needs of varying users of the trail. The request will balance the City and County’s parks and Open Space system within the built environment.

- C. Policy 10.1.2 – Universal Design: Plan, design program, and maintain parks, Open Space, and recreation facilities for use by people of all age groups and physical abilities.

One of the components of the request will be to reconfigure the shared-use trail that will enable people of varying levels of ability and skill to access and utilize the outdoor resources provided by the Alameda Open Space and Bosque system.

- D. Subpolicy 10.1.2(a): Design and maintain landscaping and park features appropriate to the location, function, public expectation, and intensity of use.

The request will help celebrate the natural landscape and native environment along the Bosque and will follow the natural contours of the land while taking advantage of the natural features found along the Paseo del Bosque trail. Furthermore, the proposed wayfinding features and shaded picnic tables will be appropriate to the location, function, and intensity of use of the area.

- E. Policy 10.1.4 – Water Conservation: Employ low-water use and reclamation strategies to conserve water.

The development made possible by the request will help employ low-water use and reclamation strategies that will help conserve water. One of the components of the request is

- F. Subpolicy 10.1.4(b): Integrate irrigation, water conservation, drainage and flood control functions within parks and Open Spaces with ecological preservation and recreational purpose.

The request is consistent with this subpolicy as a bioswale is being implemented that will intercept runoff within the Open Space.

12. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 10: Parks & Open Space pertaining to coordination and system planning.

- A. Goal 10.3 – Open Space: Protect the integrity and quality of the region’s natural features and environmental assets and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and education.

The request is consistent with this Goal because the development will be confined to the existing parking area for the solar panels and the existing shared use trail thereby protecting the region’s natural features and environmental assets and providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.

- B. Policy 10.3.2 – Preservation: Identify and manage sensitive lands within the Open Space network to protect their ecological functions.

The sensitive lands will be protected within the Open Space and will be further enhanced as the request will facilitate for extensive plantings to be installed along the Bosque that will provide additional shade while enhancing the area’s existing habitat.

- C. Policy 10.3.2(a): Manage public access to best protect natural resources.

The request is consistent with this policy because the existing parking lot has a set amount of parking that will not be expanded and the area is used more for passive recreational uses thereby protecting natural resources.

- D. Policy 10.3.2(b): Ensure that development within Open Space is compatible with its preservation purpose.

The request ensures that the development within the Open Space is compatible with its preservation purpose as users will come to the site primarily to experience nature. The trails and additional amenities will be designed to fit into the natural environment with preservation as its main purpose.

- E. Policy 10.3.3 - Use: Provide low-impact recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the carrying capacity of the Open Space resources.

The uses along the Rio Grande and Paseo del Bosque trail are low impact-recreational activities. Furthermore, the installation of the SMART flower will provide educational opportunities along the trail that will be consistent with the carrying capacity of the Open Space.

- F. Policy 10.3.4 – Bosque and Rio Grande: Carefully design access to the Rio Grande, the Bosque, and surrounding river lands to provide entry to those portions suitable for recreational, scientific, and educational purposes, while controlling access in other more sensitive areas to preserve the natural wildlife habitat and maintain essential watershed management and drainage.

Access to the Rio Grande, the Bosque, and surrounding river lands has been carefully designed as the program for the site does not function independently from the natural and physical environment. The main component of the request is to better delineate the shared use path in order to avoid user conflicts while preserving the natural wildlife habitat. The request will also allow for a viewing platform at the edge of the riverside drain that will be suitable for recreational, scientific and educational purposes.

- G. Subpolicy 10.3.4(a): Minimize disturbance or removal of existing natural vegetation from the Bosque.

Disturbance will be minimized as the improved definition of the shared use trail will occur in areas along the Bosque that has previously been disturbed. Furthermore, extensive plantings will be provided that will enhance the habitat value of the area that is currently unvegetated.

13. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 11: Heritage Conservation.

- A. Goal 11.3 – Cultural Landscapes: Protect, reuse, and/or enhance significant cultural landscapes as important contributors to our heritage and rich and complex identities.
- B. Policy 11.3.1 – Natural and Cultural Features: Preserve and enhance the natural and cultural characteristics and features that contribute to the distinct identity of communities, neighborhoods, and cultural landscapes.

The trailhead improvements will help preserve and enhance the natural and cultural characteristics of Alameda Open Space which is a prime location for preservation and protection due to its proximity to the Rio Grande Valley State Park, the Rio Grande, and the Paseo del Bosque trail which contribute to cultural landscapes. The area is mostly characterized by a rural character and the development made possible by the request will help protect and preserve the community by better defining features such as circulation paths, improving wayfinding, and revegetating areas along the Bosque.

- C. Policy 11.3.3 – Bosque: Regulate development on adjacent lands to preserve and enhance the Bosque as an important cultural landscape that contributes to the history and distinct identity of the region, as well as nearby neighborhoods.

The development made possible by the request will help regulate development on adjacent lands as the proposed improvements will occur over land that has already been disturbed. The proposed development will enhance the Bosque by providing additional amenities, by providing extensive plantings that will help revegetate the area, and will provide educational opportunities that contributes to the history and identity of the area.

- D. Subpolicy 11.3.3(a): Minimize grading, changes to natural topography, and land disturbance to preserve natural features.

Minimal grading changes are proposed that will affect the natural topography and land disturbance will be kept to a minimum. The majority of the grading will occur over the existing parking lot where the solar panels will be installed.

- E. Subpolicy 11.3.3(b): Encourage reconstruction and revegetation of a natural setting on lands adjacent to the Bosque.

Extensive plantings are proposed that will provide additional shade and enhance the habitat value of the area that is currently unvegetated.

- F. Subpolicy 11.3.3(d): Ensure appropriate edge treatments, transitions, and buffers through site design and development standards.

Appropriate edge treatments, transitions, and buffers will be provided along the Paseo del Bosque Trail and along the access route to and from the ABCWUA water treatment facility. The trailhead improvements have been designed to fit the site's topographic and drainage context that will ensure appropriate edge treatments through site design and development standards.

- G. Subpolicy 11.3.3(e): Encourage links to established public access points to the Bosque from adjacent development.

The proposed improvements will encourage links along the Bosque from established public access points while avoiding multi-user conflicts. The improvements will provide the means for activity and access along the Bosque while providing visitors with the opportunity to experience various environmental settings. Some of the design components include better definition of the trails, the addition of wayfinding features, and picnic tables that will help improve the access points and user experience to and from Alameda Boulevard and the Alameda & Bachechi Open Spaces.

14. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 12: Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services.

- A. Goal 12.1 – Infrastructure: Plan, coordinate, and provide for efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound infrastructure to support existing communities and the Comp Plan's vision for future growth.

The applicant is working in conjunction with Bernalillo County and ABCWUA in order to provide for efficient, equitable and environmentally sound infrastructure along the Alameda Open Space, Bosque and surrounding areas. The request will support existing communities and meets the Comp Plan's vision for future growth.

- B. Policy 12.1.5 – Irrigation System: Coordinate with MRGCD and other stakeholders to protect irrigation systems.

The City is coordinating with the MRGCD to ensure the maintenance access road along the drain is clear and protected.

- C. Policy 12.3 – Public Services: Plan, coordinate, and provide efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound services to best serve residents and protect their health, safety, and well-being.

The trailhead improvements will provide efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound services that will best serve residents. Because the request will allow for better delineating the shared use path, more residents will be able to use different paths while avoiding user conflicts that will protect their health, safety, and well-being.

- D. Policy 12.3.8 – Education: Complement programming provided by educational institutions to expand educational opportunities for residents in all cultural, age, economic, and educational groups.

Educational opportunities will be provided along the Alameda Open Space trailhead. Explora will arrange for interpretative signage and programming that will educate the public on the benefits of solar installations and water conservation.

- E. Goal 12.4 – Coordination: Coordinate with other providers to leverage resources, maximize efficiencies, bridge service gaps, and provide added value.

The request is a collaborative effort between the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) so the development made possible by the request is leveraging resources, maximizing efficiencies will providing added value.

15. The request is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies from Chapter 13: Resilience & Sustainability.

- A. Policy 13.2.2 – Water Conservation: Foster the efficient management and use of water in development and infrastructure.

The development made possible by the request will foster efficient management and use of water in development and infrastructure. One of the components of the request is for the installation of solar covered parking in conjunction with ABCWUA. The Juan-Chama station is a raw water pump station that draws water from the Rio Grande and is treated and used as drinking water which will allow for approximately 36% of raw water pump station electric usage to be offset.

- B. Policy 13.2.3 – Water Quality: Coordinate with the ABCWUA, state, and other agencies to maintain the quality of our groundwater and surface waters.

The applicant has coordinated with ABCWUA and Bernalillo County in order to maintain the quality of the groundwater and surface waters through the use of the Juan-Chama station that draws raw water from the Rio Grande.

- C. Goal 13.4 – Natural Resources: Protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources, habitat and ecosystems.

The development made possible by the request will conserve energy as solar powered systems drive clean energy from the sun. Renewable energy also improves public health.

- D. Policy 13.4.3 – Energy Resources: Conserve energy and capitalize on renewable energy resources that are plentiful in our region, especially solar and wind energy.

The development made possible by the request will conserve energy solar powered systems derive clean energy from the sun. The solar covered parking will help combat greenhouse gas emissions that will help protect the region.

16. The request meets the City's 1999 Major Public Open Space (MPOS) Rank II Facility Plan requirements:

- A. Existing trails shall be utilized whenever possible and new trails shall be developed and sited to meet the goals and requirements of this plan.

The request is consistent with Policy A.1.E as the request will allow for better definition of the circulation paths of existing trails that will help avoid user conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists.

- B. Open space trails link open space with the urban trail system and can provide linear open space which visually extends into developed areas.

The request is consistent with policy because the request will allow for a variety of unpaved and paved trails at varying levels of challenge to be improved within the MPOS. Interpretative signage will also be provided that will further enhance the user experience along the trail.

- C. The Open Space trail system shall accommodate a variety of users on single-and multi-purpose trails.

The request is consistent with Policy B.2.J. as the request will allow for the existing asphalt path to remain while new, 8' and 12' paths will be implemented. An all-inclusive approach has been taken in the trail design that will ensure that the needs of all potential users are addressed, including people with disabilities.

- D. The location of access points, parking and trailheads will be coordinated with the sidewalk system, existing and proposed trails identified in the Bikeways and Trails Facility Plan and on adjacent Federal lands.

The location of the access points, parking, and trailhead are coordinated with the existing sidewalk system along Alameda Boulevard.

- E. Trails shall be designed and managed to minimize environmental damage and to conform to the greatest degree possible to the materials and the topography of the natural landscape.

The request is consistent with Policy B.2.L. as the new trails have been designed in a way that will minimize environmental damage. The materials that are proposed will conform to the topography and natural landscape. Furthermore, improved parking access, picnic areas, and restrooms are proposed that will further this policy.

17. The Bosque Action Plan-Rio Grande Valley State Park, a Rank III plan identifies specific environmental and recreational improvements for the RGVSP. The improvements vary from area to area based on the existing conditions within the Bosque. The request meets several Goals and policies of this plan including protection and enhancement of the natural resources of the RGVSP, review by the OSAB, and location of improvements while providing educational opportunities.

- A. Protection and enhance of the natural resources of the Rio Grande Valley State Park.



The request will allow for the natural resources of the Rio Grande Valley State Park and for the Alameda Open Space to be protected and enhanced by providing improved circulation paths, wayfinding features and education components.

- B. All submittals for development, both private and public property located on or adjacent to the boundaries of the Rio Grande Valley State Park shall include a complete extraordinary facility form to be submitted to the Open Space Advisor Board for their action.

The applicant has submitted all necessary paperwork and appeared before the Open Space Advisory Board on October 25, 2022, where the project was unanimously supported.

- C. Protect and enhance the natural character by facilitating appropriate management practices and public uses.

This request is consistent with this Goal because the proposal calls for improved trails and viewing platforms that will help protect and enhance the natural character. The Alameda Open Space trailhead allows for low-impact recreation along the Paseo del Bosque trail. The natural character is protected and enhanced because there are areas that are adjacent to wildlife and agricultural preserves where low-impact recreation is not permitted.

- D. Improvements shall be located in non-sensitive areas that are appropriate for such developments, considering ecological sensitive as well as user satisfaction.

Improvements to the trailhead are located near sensitive areas but they will be protected while taking into consideration user satisfaction. These sensitive areas will be protected within the Open Space and will further enhance them as extensive plantings will be installed along the Rio Grande that will provide additional shade while also enhancing the habitat value of the area that is currently unvegetated.

- E. The goal is to enhance environmental education within the Rio Grande Valley State Park.

The request is consistent with this goal because the Water Authority will provide “Alameda Education/Interpretation Funds” to support conservation and water-related education and public use benefits at the Alameda Open Space and in the Bosque.

- F. Educational opportunities and improvements shall be identified in appropriate areas.

The applicant has worked with their consultant in order to identify educational opportunities and improvements that will be located in appropriate areas.

- G. Construction methods and materials shall be compatible with the preservation of the natural character of the Rio Grande Valley State Park.

The request is consistent with this policy because the applicant and their consultant have identified materials and construction methods that will be compatible with the natural character of the area. Minimal vegetation will be removed and if so, the vegetation removed shall be mitigated.

18. The request meets the Site Plan-EPC Review & Decision Criteria in IDO Section 14-16-6-6(J)(3) as follows:
- A. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(a) As demonstrated by the policy analysis of the Site Plan-EPC for an Extraordinary Facility is consistent with the ABC Comp Plan goals and policies because the project will protect and enhance the character of the surrounding area.
  - B. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(b) The subject site is zoned A-1; therefore, this criterion does not apply.
  - C. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(c) With the application of conditions of approval, the site plan would comply with all applicable provisions of the IDO.
  - D. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(d) The City's existing infrastructure has adequate capacity for the proposed development.
  - E. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(e) The site plan mitigates adverse impacts on the subject site and surrounding area. The intent of the improvements is to separate pedestrian and bicycle traffic to mitigate crowding at the entrance to the Paseo del Bosque Trail.
  - F. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(f) The subject property is not within an approved Master Development Plan and the Site Plan meets relevant standards in the Bosque Action Plan.
  - G. 14-16-6-6(J)(3)(g) The subject property is not within a Railroad and Spur Area therefore this criterion does not apply.
19. The subject site is adjacent to Major Public Open Space and is therefore subject to all of the regulations in IDO Section 5-2(J)(2), Lots Adjacent to Major Public Open Space.
- Pursuant to IDO Section 5-2(C)(1) both the subdivision and site design process shall begin with an analysis of the constraints related to sensitive lands.
20. There are no known archaeological sites on the subject site. A "Certificate of No Effect" from the City of Albuquerque was issued on October 4, 2022.
21. The affected, registered neighborhood organizations are the Alameda North Valley Association and Paradise Hills Civic Association. Property owners within 100 feet of the subject site were also notified, as required.
22. A pre-submittal neighborhood meeting was held on September 13, 2022. The Alameda Open Space Trailhead Community Workshop was held at the Bachechi Education Center.
23. As of this writing, Staff has not received any comments in support or opposition to the request.

***CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL – SI-2022-01882***

- 1. The EPC delegates final sign-off authority of this site development plan to the Site Plan-Administrative Process as per IDO Section 6-5(G)(1). The reviewer will be responsible for ensuring that the EPC Conditions have been satisfied and that other applicable City requirements have been met.
- 2. The applicant shall submit a grading and drainage plan at the time of permitting.

3. The applicant shall submit elevations/architecture at the time of permitting.
4. Conditions from the Transportation Development Services shall be addressed.
5. Conditions from the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) shall be addressed.

Any existing and/or new PNM easements and facilities need to be reflected on the Site Plan and any resulting Plat.

6. Conditions from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) shall be addressed.
  - A. We request that City of Albuquerque Open Space meet with the MRGCD's Albuquerque Division and Engineering department staff on site to discuss the improvements prior to, and to inform, the design phase.
  - B. A license application to construct improvements on, and/or utilize MRGCD right-of-way, must be submitted to the MRGCD's Licensing and Lands staff for review and approval, starting with 30% designs and plan sets. Plan sets will show surveyed property or easement boundaries.
  - C. Access to the riverside drain and levee for maintenance and operations must be maintained at a minimum 20 feet without obstructions, parallel recreation trails or landscaping unless otherwise approved in writing by the MRGCD.
  - D. Tree plantings will not inhibit the MRGCD's ability to use our larger equipment. The outer edge of any landscape tree canopy must be a minimum 25 feet from the top of drain bank.
  - E. Any trails crossing the MRGCD's maintenance access adjacent to the drain banks or the flood control levee should be basecourse or material such as thickened concrete that will not be damaged by heavy equipment.
  - F. Improvements must be designed and graded to avoid runoff and damage to drains and flood control infrastructure.

**APPEAL:** If you wish to appeal this decision, you must do so within 15 days of the EPC's decision or by **December 6, 2022**. The date of the EPC's decision is not included in the 15-day period for filing an appeal, and if the 15<sup>th</sup> day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, the next working day is considered as the deadline for filing the appeal.

For more information regarding the appeal process, please refer to Section 14-16-6-4(V) of the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO), Administration and Enforcement. A Non-Refundable filing fee will be calculated at the Land Development Coordination Counter and is required at the time the appeal is filed. It is not possible to appeal an EPC Recommendation to the City Council since this is not a final decision.

You will receive notification if any person files an appeal. If there is no appeal, you can receive Building Permits at any time after the appeal deadline quoted above, provided all conditions imposed at the time of approval have been met. Successful applicants are reminded that other regulations of the IDO must be complied with, even after approval of the referenced application(s).

Sincerely,

*Catalina Lehner*

for Alan M. Varela,  
Planning Director

AV/CL/SB

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