

# BID BULLETIN

Riverside Downtown Business Improvement District



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## RDP LUNCHEON

Join us for the RDP luncheon on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 At Loft.84, 3840 Lemon Street, featuring Desi Massei speaking on Economic Development Call the RDP office at 951-781-7335 for reservations



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## RDP's Downtown Awards and 2026 Board of Directors

RDP would like to congratulate those recognized at the 38th Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony held on February 19th at the Riverside Convention Center. Kathy Allavie was the recipient of the Roy Hord "Volunteer of the Year" Award while MBG Lifestyle Group was recognized with the RDP Chair's Award.



**Roy Hord Volunteer's Award: Kathy Allavie and Randy Hord**

Also recognized was the Riverside Community Arts Association with the Arts and Culture Award, Dr. J. Bullock and the Downtowne Bookstore with the Business Activity Award, Junior League of Riverside's Truck-a-Palooza with the Downtown Event Award, Riverside Arts and Culture District Banners and Signage with the Downtown Improvement Award, and the Riverside Police Department's Park Area Neighborhood Specialist Program with the Safety and Security Award.



**Chair's Award: MBG Lifestyle Group - Marco McGuire and Shalini Lockard**

The RDP Board of Directors for 2026 was also announced at the event. The Board of Directors of RDP consists of up to 33 voting members representing a cross-section of downtown stakeholders. Directors represent property owners, business owners, the healthcare sector, the entertainment and hospitality sector, the education sector, the arts, the public (government) sector including the County, the City and its departments, and downtown residents.

The Executive Committee consists of up to nine Directors, including the four officers

and the immediate Past Chair. Up to twenty-four Directors constitute the remainder of the Board. There are also five non-voting Ex-Officio positions. These include a representative of the Mayor's Office, the two City Council representatives of Ward One and Ward Two, a representative from the Arlington Business Partnership, and a Director Emeritus.

The four Officers of RDP serving on the Executive Committee are Andrew Walcker of Overland Development Company as Chair, Amy Hoyt of Best Best & Krieger as Vice-Chair, Nanci Larsen of the Downtown Area Neighborhood Alliance as Treasurer, and Brian Percy of Brian Percy Law Office as Secretary. Shalini Lockard of Riverside Professional and Legal Management serves as the immediate Past Chair.

Also on the Executive Committee are Joe Guzzetta of Parkview Realty, Joe Ramos of the Miracles and Dreams Foundation, Philip Makhoul of Diamond National Realty, and Randy Hord of Raincross Financial Partners. The full list of current Board members can be found on the back cover of the newsletter.

RDP would like to thank the sponsors of the event and those who donated items for the opportunity drawing. All proceeds raised are used to offset the costs of the Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony.

*continued on page 2*

**Roy Hord 'Volunteer of the Year' Award Sponsor**  
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**Riverside Convention and Visitors Bureau**



**Downtown Improvement Award Sponsor**  
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| Cheba Hut                        | Riverside City College                 |
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| Dave & Busters                   | Riverside Community Players            |
| Division 9 Gallery               | Riverside Convention & Visitors Bureau |
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| Lake Alice Trading Company       |  |



## Mayor's Message

*Contributed by Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson*

### Homeless – A Complex Issue

"Throw them in jail!"

"Round them up and send them all to the desert!"

"Build housing somewhere else, just not in my neighborhood"

These are among the many comments or "suggestions" I hear from our residents about addressing homelessness in Riverside. My favorite is the "you're doing NOTHING about the homeless situation".

So, I thought I would take some time this month to let you know exactly what we can and can't do under the law and what we are doing to address this complex issue.

But first let's start by addressing the above comments.

We cannot throw homeless people in jail for being on the street or for acting erratically. As much as some would like it to be, homelessness is not a crime. Additionally, being mentally compromised is also not a crime. If someone is behaving erratically, they must pose a danger to themselves or others in order to be placed on a 5150 hold, and only then can they be transported to an emergency treatment facility, but they typically cannot be held for more than 72 hours.

Usually, we see that there are three ways out of homelessness: housing, jail, or hospitalization/rehabilitation. And the reality is: we do not have enough of any of those options. We do not have enough housing, we do not have enough jail space, and we do not have enough behavioral health centers or mental health professionals to provide services.

*continued on page 3*

Homelessness is not driven by a single cause. It is the collision of so many challenges, including housing shortages, untreated mental illness, substance use disorders, and a policy framework that too often asks cities to solve problems without giving us the tools to do so. And I can assure you we are not "doing nothing."

**A Compounding Mental Health Crisis -** In California, homelessness is deeply intertwined with a behavioral health system stretched beyond capacity. We face a severe shortage of mental health treatment beds, insufficient behavioral health professionals, and laws that provide limited authority to compel treatment for individuals suffering from severe mental illness.

For decision makers, this creates an impossible situation: we are expected to resolve homelessness yet often lack the authority and clinical capacity to intervene when someone is clearly unwell but unwilling or unable to accept help. And CARE Court, which I advocated with my fellow Big City Mayors, is not being implemented as intended.

A 2021 RAND study found that California faces a shortfall of 4,767 psychiatric beds and 2,963 community residential beds for individuals with chronic behavioral health needs.

But help is coming. Thanks to more than \$300 million in Proposition 1 funding, Riverside County will move forward with construction of a 100-bed acute psychiatric facility, finally closing a critical gap in our regional behavioral health system. This will help move people off our streets and out of emergency rooms and into treatment, providing them the specialized care they need.

**Substance Use and the Limits of 'Housing First':**

Mental illness is only part of the picture. Substance use disorders are another painful reality on our streets fueling public frustration. The reality is that we have very few options or places to send people seeking treatment for their addiction.

I frequently hear that "Housing First has failed" or that people struggling with addiction should be required to be sober in order to remain housed. But cities that accept state funding to build housing cannot compel people to enter rehabilitation or stay sober.

California's homelessness funding programs are largely built around a Housing First framework, which prioritizes moving people indoors before addressing other underlying challenges. This approach has helped many individuals find stability, and that progress matters. At the same time, it also limits the flexibility cities need to respond to the complex realities on our streets. While cities may choose to forgo state funding if they wish to pursue a different model, doing so can mean walking away from millions of dollars dedicated to addressing homelessness – placing the full financial burden on local governments and, in some cases, making the creation of new housing simply unattainable.

And so, we are left with little choice but to accept those state dollars if we want to get people off the street.

**Accountability Without Capacity –** Proposition 36 increased penalties for repeat drug and theft offenses and in certain circumstances, allows courts to mandate substance use or mental health treatment in lieu of incarceration.

In theory, this approach offers accountability paired with care.

In practice, however, the system lacks the capacity to deliver on that promise. Proposition 36 did not include funding to expand the substance use treatment programs necessary to serve those referred by the courts. At the same time, jails in Riverside County are already operating at or near capacity. The result is a policy gap that leaves cities asking a fundamental question: if we are neither funded to treat nor able to incarcerate, where are people supposed to go?

**Riverside Keeps Moving Forward -** Despite these constraints, Riverside goes to work every day to address this problem. The 2024 Grants Pass Supreme Court decision gave local governments greater authority to enforce public camping ordinances. But enforcement alone is not a solution. Over the past several years, we have invested in rental assistance programs to prevent people from falling into homelessness. We have expanded shelter capacity. We have built housing by leveraging state and federal funds and forged strong public-private partnerships. We also offer people transportation back to their places of origin where they can get the support they need.

Today, we have 335 affordable, 43 transitional, and 24 permanent supportive housing units in the pipeline. And still – it is not enough. That is why we have brought together our faith community to help, including building homes on excess church land – projects like Crest Cottages and The Grove Village – turning compassion into tangible solutions.

**A Commitment to Keep Going-** Homelessness is not simple. And it is not solved with slogans or shortcuts. But it is solvable – if we are honest about the challenges, serious about the investments, and willing to give cities the tools to do the work.

As many of you know, city council recently voted not to move forward with the Quality Inn housing project which became a divisive issue in the community. At the end of the meeting I made a statement that "I don't want to do this again" meaning the process for this project was flawed from the beginning and it didn't have to be. Moving forward, the next project, and the process used to develop it, should be community led and community supported; one we can all agree on.

And we know this kind of unity works. When we focus on intervention and are targeted in our approaches to various population needs, we are successful. We've reached functional zero for both veterans and youth.

So as mayor, I will not be deterred. Because doing nothing is not an option, but neither is giving up.

# Council Corner

Contributed by Councilmember Philip Falcone



## Ward One Council Update America's 250th

As we approach a historic milestone, the 250th birthday of the United States, we are inviting Ward 1 businesses to help us celebrate by showcasing patriotic spirit throughout the summer 2026 season.

From May 1, 2026 through Labor Day, September 7, 2026, we encourage businesses to participate by incorporating red, white, and blue decor, patriotic displays, flags, lighting, or other creative elements that reflect pride in our nation and community. This is a great opportunity to create a festive atmosphere, attract visitors, and

contribute to a shared sense of celebration. For example, the City will be illuminating iconic buildings, underpasses, and the Main Street Mall in red, white, and blue lighting each night.

Participation is completely voluntary, and businesses are welcome to interpret the theme in a way that best fits their brand, space, and operations. Whether subtle or bold, every effort helps build a vibrant and welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

Thank you for being an essential part of our community and for helping us commemorate this once in a generation anniversary.

If you have any questions or would like to share how your business plans to participate, please don't hesitate to reach out to Ward1@RiversideCA.gov.

# Council Corner

Contributed by Councilmember Clarissa Cervantes



## Ward Two Council Update

Dear Community,

As winter comes to an end, we welcome the fresh promise of spring! Our community continues to grow and evolve, and I'm excited to share updates that shape the future of our beloved city.

### 46th Annual Black History Parade & Expo

On February 14th, I had the honor of participating in the 46th Annual Black History Parade & Expo, presented by the Adrian Dell & Carmen Roberts Foundation. This is one of my favorite community events each year, and it's always a joy to celebrate our rich history and culture with our neighbors!

Two years ago, we raised the Black History Month flag outside City Hall for the first time – which reflected a proud a moment of inclusivity and solidarity here in Riverside. I hope to see that flag raised outside City Hall again one day, continuing to honor the contributions of our diverse community. Until then, we will continue to do everything we can to uplift and celebrate the stories, impacts, legacies, and excellence of our Black community. Wishing you all a Happy Black History Month!

### Welcome Chancellor Hu!

On February 5th, I had the honor of attending the inauguration ceremony for UCR's new Chancellor, S. Jack Hu. I warmly welcome Chancellor Hu to our city and look forward to working together on the future of UCR.

### Ward 2 Investment Highlights

Construction is underway on several long-awaited projects in the Eastside, including:

- Cesar Chavez Community Center
- Eastside Library
- Patterson Park
- Bordwell Park Gymnasium

I'm thrilled to see these investments prioritize our Eastside community! My office will continue to provide updates as the projects progress.

## University Terrace Homes (Quality Inn Motel) Update

The proposed University Terrace Homes project – also known as the former Quality Inn motel on University Avenue – would have created 114 affordable and permanent supportive housing units for low-income seniors and individuals experiencing homelessness. This project would have prioritized housing veterans, seniors, and people with mobility disabilities. The gated property would also include 24-hour security, onsite case management, and wraparound supportive services all managed by the Riverside Housing Development Corporation.

The City of Riverside was awarded a \$20.1 million state grant to fund the project, one of only five cities within the state to have secured this funding. However, last month the City Council voted 4–3 to reject the funding. Since then, the city has received a legal letter mentioning concerns around the vote and why funding was not approved. The letter came from joint parties which included: the ACLU of Southern California, Inland County Legal Services, and the Public Interest Law Group. The matter is expected to return to the City Council at a future closed session.

If you'd like to learn more about any of the projects or events in Ward 2, please call my office at **951-826-5419** or email me at [ccervantes@riversideca.gov](mailto:ccervantes@riversideca.gov).

## RDP Welcomes New Businesses to Downtown

Café Oro Dos Aztecas, Inc

Garcia Jewelry 1

Independent Hair Stylist / Cosmetology Services

Marcia Lopez Medical Group

Nacho Ann's Fabrics (Arts, Crafts)

Riverside 25/10 LLC (Property Rental)

TASA (Café)

Viuda Negra Records (Misc. Retail)

# ARTS CORNER

## Mayor's Ball for the Arts

*Contributed by Rachael Dzikonski,  
Executive Director – Riverside Arts Council*

The Riverside Arts Council (RAC) announces the return of its annual Mayor's Ball for the Arts, a signature celebration honoring artists and arts organizations whose work strengthens the Riverside community. The public ballot is now open, and community voting will close on March 9th. The event will take place at The Box at the Fox Entertainment Plaza (3635 Market Street) in the heart of downtown Riverside – now officially recognized as a California State Designated Arts and Culture District. The designation underscores the district's growing creative energy and makes this year's celebration especially meaningful.

With a "Rock of the Ages" theme, the evening will combine artistic flair and civic pride, inviting guests to dress to theme or attend in cocktail attire. The program will feature a welcome from Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson, followed by a formal awards presentation honoring artists selected through a community nomination and voting process. The event runs from 6 pm to 9 pm, and tickets are \$100. Please note that this is an 18+ event.

Award categories include Public Artwork, Music Performance, Dance Performance, Literary Arts, Theatre Performance, Art Based Event, and Arts Facilities. By placing nominations and voting in the hands of residents, the event reflects the voices of the community while elevating artists whose work enhances quality of life in Riverside. Community members are encouraged to secure tickets early and cast their vote before March 9th. The celebration will also include live and silent auctions featuring artwork from local artists, curated packages from downtown businesses, and unique experiential offerings.

The Mayor's Ball for the Arts serves as an important annual fundraiser for RAC. Proceeds directly support free and low-cost arts programming for artists and the broader community, including professional development workshops, public events such as Riverside Artswalk, youth engagement initiatives, and community-based arts opportunities. Sponsorship opportunities are available for businesses and individuals who wish to support the arts while receiving recognition during the event and throughout promotional campaigns. Beginning next year, sponsorship options will also include award-category sponsorships, allowing partners to directly support specific artistic disciplines.

To vote, purchase tickets, or explore sponsorship opportunities, visit: <https://riversideartscouncil.com/mayors-ball>

For media inquiries or sponsorship information, please contact: Riverside Arts Council Rachael Dzikonski [Rachael@riversideartscouncil.com](mailto:Rachael@riversideartscouncil.com) 951.377.2852.

## Downtown Events in March

**The Inland Empire Strikes Back takes place on March 7th at North Park.** The event runs from 11 am to 6 pm and features Star Wars themed vendors, exhibits, photo ops, and special guests. Tickets are \$25 online and \$30 at the gate. Billed as more than a convention, it's a community-powered experience built for lifelong fans, families, cosplayers, and anyone who still feels the Force when the music swells. For more information and to purchase tickets online visit [www.theiestrikesback.com](http://www.theiestrikesback.com)

**The Spring Eggstravaganza takes place on March 21st at Ryan Bonaminio Park.** The event runs from 10 am to 1 pm and features a vibrant fun zone featuring spin art, balloon animals, jumpers and inflatables, a toddler play area, face painting, train rides, a petting zoo, and exciting game booths. The event is free but there is a fee for the Fun Zone. For more information, visit [https://riversideca.gov/park\\_rec/](https://riversideca.gov/park_rec/) or call 951-826-2000.

**The Miracles and Dreams Foundation's Annual Easter Egg Hunt takes place on March 28 at North Park.** The event runs from 10 am to 2 pm and features an Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Miracle the Polar Bear plus community partner booths and more. The event is free for kids up to 12 years old but children need to register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/miracle-the-polar-bears-annual-easter-egg-hunt-and-community-fair-tickets> and bring their own basket/bag for the easter egg hunt.

**Downtown Riverside Restaurant Week starts on March 28th and runs through April 5th.** The event is a promotional effort to attract visitors to the various dining options available in downtown Riverside. To participate, restaurants must offer either a three course menu or a unique item which is clearly identified as a Restaurant Week special and only available during the promotion. It's also an opportunity for restaurants to try out new menu items before adding them to their regular menu.

There is no cost for restaurants to participate in Restaurant Week. Social media posts will be developed by RDP's marketing partners and provided to participating restaurants to drive traffic to their Facebook and Instagram. Restaurant and diners will be encouraged to post pictures of their dining experiences on Instagram. RDP will have participating restaurants on Facebook and Instagram. Follow RDP's social media – QR codes on the back page of the BID Bulletin.



# Guest Column

## How Every Dollar Downtown Works Twice as Hard - The Multiplier Effect of Local Spending by Susan Freeman

When you buy a cup of coffee downtown, you're doing more than satisfying your caffeine craving. You're setting in motion a chain reaction that ripples through Riverside's economy — supporting jobs, funding community events, and strengthening the fabric of our city. Economists call this the “**multiplier effect.**” For residents and visitors alike, it's one of the most powerful reasons to choose local.

### What Is the Multiplier Effect?

The multiplier effect describes how money spent in local businesses doesn't just stop at the cash register. Instead, it circulates. A dollar spent at a downtown café might:

- Pay wages for the barista, who then spends her paycheck at a local grocery store.
- Cover rent to a Riverside property owner, who reinvests in building improvements.
- Fund a sponsorship for a neighborhood school event.

That single dollar gets used again and again, creating a ripple of economic activity that benefits the wider community.

In contrast, dollars spent at big-box stores or online retailers often leave the region immediately, flowing to distant headquarters and investors with little return to the local economy.

### Why Downtown Spending Matters More

Downtown is unique because it concentrates small, independent businesses in one place. That concentration creates **compounding benefits**:

- **Jobs:** Local restaurants, boutiques, and galleries employ Riversiders at every level, from entry-level staff to managers.
- **Services:** Business owners hire local accountants, designers, contractors, and printers, keeping professional services circulating nearby.
- **Culture:** Small businesses often sponsor festivals, sports teams, arts programs, and nonprofit causes — investing back into the same community that supports them.

This means that every dollar spent downtown does double duty: first to meet your needs, and then to strengthen Riverside itself.

### A Tale of Two Dollars

Let's imagine two scenarios:

#### Dollar #1 — Spent at a Downtown Restaurant

- You and a friend dine at a family-owned restaurant on Main Street.
- The owner uses your payment to pay staff wages, buy produce from a local distributor, and contribute to the monthly Artswalk sponsorship.
- The employees spend their earnings in Riverside — on housing, groceries, and local entertainment.
- Your dollar has circulated multiple times, touching many parts of the community.



#### Dollar #2 — Spent at a Chain Retailer

- You purchase the same dollar amount at a national chain.
- A portion goes to wages, but profits are routed to corporate headquarters in another state.
- Local reinvestment is limited to basic operating costs.
- The ripple stops quickly, with little impact beyond the store's walls.

The difference is clear: **local spending multiplies, chain spending leaks.**

### Numbers Behind the Impact

Studies of local economies consistently show that independent businesses return a much higher percentage of revenue back into the local economy compared to national chains. For example:

- Research from the American Independent Business Alliance has found that **local retailers recirculate more than 45% of their revenue locally, compared to just 14% for chain stores.**
- Local restaurants are even more impactful: **over 65% of their revenue stays nearby, versus about 30% for chains.**

In practice, this means a thriving downtown is not only good for culture and livability, but also a smart economic development strategy.

### The Human Side of the Multiplier

Beyond the numbers, there's a human dimension to local spending. When you choose to spend downtown, you're helping:

- A small business owner who took a leap of faith to invest in Riverside.
- Employees who rely on those jobs to support their families.
- Local kids who benefit from sponsorships of sports teams, school fundraisers, or arts programs.
- Neighborhood events like the **Festival of Lights** or **Riverside Artswalk**, which are powered by the support of local merchants.

That single cup of coffee or ticket purchase isn't just a transaction — it's a vote of confidence in your community.

### Downtown Riverside: A Living Example

Walk down the Main Street Pedestrian Mall on a Saturday, and you'll see the multiplier effect in action:

- Families dining outdoors create jobs for servers, chefs, and delivery drivers.
- Visitors buying handmade goods give local artisans a platform to grow.
- Shoppers carrying bags from boutiques are indirectly supporting nonprofit concerts and cultural events that those businesses help fund.

Each of these interactions makes downtown Riverside not only a place to gather, but also an engine of local prosperity.

*continued on page 7*

### Choosing Local Is Choosing Riverside

The beauty of the multiplier effect is that it empowers us as individuals. Every time you choose where to spend, you're also choosing the kind of community you want to live in.

- Buying local says: *I believe in Riverside's people and potential.*
- Supporting downtown says: *I want to see this city thrive for the long term.*

The next time you're deciding between a chain store and a

downtown merchant, remember: **your dollar can either vanish or multiply.**

### Closing Thought

Downtowns are more than physical places – they're ecosystems. When we spend locally, we feed that ecosystem. We keep dollars circulating, businesses flourishing, and the community thriving.

So, the next time you grab lunch, shop for gifts, or enjoy a night out, think of it this way: **every dollar you spend downtown works twice as hard – for you, and for Riverside.**

## BUSINESS BUZZ

### My Top CX Predictions for 2026 and How to Make Them Come True by Shep Hyken

***This article answers the question: What customer service and CX (Customer Experience) trends must organizations act on this year to meet rising expectations and stay competitive?***

It's that time of year when I write articles featuring my customer service and customer experience predictions and trends. This year's predictions were featured in two separate articles for my weekly Forbes column. For our subscribers and followers, I've combined the lists with actionable ideas for bringing the predictions to life.



*Customer's expectations continue to rise. Can your company keep up?*

1. Customers continue to be smarter than ever, with higher expectations about the experience they receive from the companies they do business with. This has been my opening trend for a number of years. Customers don't just compare you to your direct competition anymore. They compare you to the best service they've received from their favorite brands. Take action by looking outside of your industry to the favorite companies you enjoy doing business with for ideas you can add to your CX strategy.
2. Proactive service is your new competitive advantage. One way to describe proactive service is "no service." The customer doesn't need to reach out because you addressed the issue before they even knew about it or had to contact you. Take action by finding ways to fix problems or communicate with customers before they contact you.
3. Customers have higher expectations that you will value their time. Customers equate speed with respect. Take action by finding any friction points that waste time, such as long hold times, multiple transfers, and more. Work to eliminate or mitigate the friction.
4. Employees will expect the same experience as you give your customers. I've written many articles about treating employees like customers. This takes it to the next level. Just as you don't want customers to experience clunky websites and poor self-service options, you don't want employees to have to deal with broken systems and outdated technology. Take action by doing an internal journey map of the employee experience. Eliminate friction so they can better serve your customers.

5. Trust will be recognized as part of the overall customer experience. This really needs no explanation. If the customer doesn't trust you, it's "game over." Take action by simply doing what you promise you will do.
6. More customers will accept AI self-service solutions as a viable support channel. Customers are more comfortable with AI, and some even expect companies to offer it as a self-service option. Take action by expanding and improving your self-service options for sales and support.
7. AI will not replace live agents in the contact center. Regardless of the predictions that say AI will take away live customer support, it's not happening anytime soon. Customers still want and expect to talk to a live agent when they need to. Take action by giving customers the option to start with live agents, or if they choose to start with self-service, seamlessly move to a live agent if needed.
8. The personalized experience is now an expectation. Customers expect you to know who they are, their past purchases, and their buying behaviors. They want you to treat them like you know them. Take action by using customer data to provide better support, recommend products, and tailor marketing messages that remind customers you know them.
9. AI is not just for supporting the customer, but also the employee. This ties to No. 4 on this list. Take action by providing the front line with AI tools that empower them with a super-amazing ability to take care of customers.
10. AI may act like it cares about customers ... but it's just an act! While AI-fueled chatbots may use words that make the customer feel good, the customer knows they are interacting with a machine. Take action by being transparent about your use of AI. Don't try to make the customer think they are talking to a human if they aren't.

And those are my top predictions and trends for customer service and CX for the year ahead. Even with all the hype around AI and technology supporting the customer experience, the best companies and brands recognize the need to blend it with a human experience.

<https://hyken.com/customer-service-strategies/my-top-cx-predictions-for-2026-and-how-to-make-them-come-true/>



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