First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

**Community Visited: Arlington Date(s) Visited:** a) Feb. 16th

b) Feb. 7th

c) Feb. 16th

d) March 7th

e) Feb. 16th

f) March 7th

**Pre-visit web search: How easy was it to get information on the community you were visiting? Did it accurately reflect what you saw? Did you have difficulties obtaining information on the community through a web search?**

1. Therefore, I did do a brief web search before we went on our visit to Arlington. I found photos of the town that accurately depicted what I did see. I found another site and it was really a good site as it gave me some further historical information that I was looking for. I think Kansas hometown locator. There is quite a bit of information on the web if you look.
2. I did not do a web search.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. Found the website easily. Good information on the city offices and hours.
7. **The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted. The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)**
   1. We had to be detoured as the bridge is under renovation so the road we came in on we noticed that they too had a crumbling school house like we do in Florence. The homes we noticed right away did not have a lot of clutter and junk.  It seemed that everyone well most everyone was doing their part to keep their little piece of the planet clean and looking nice.  The downtown was clean and the sidewalks were in great shape.  The empty stores were tidy and well maintained for the most part.  The open business looked nice and inviting.  They appear to have a nice community board/sign however we didn't see it as we came in due to the bridge construction.  The saloon building has a nice mural on the wall that appears someone spent some time painting.  Street signs were very visible, although I did not see a sign directing us to the city building. However one of the ladies in our group knew where it was.
   2. Well-kept houses for the most part. All lawns mowed. Most houses had newer roofs.
   3. It appears that the town has pride in keeping their homes picked up. Good for them! Since the highway was closed, one couldn’t get the true effect coming into town. The first impression we got wasn’t the best, as we came in on highway 16. Seeing the old school in such disarray was not the best for first impressions.
   4. Very clean town, but no signs off of highway 50. However I noticed how most of the yard were kept clean.
   5. After taking a 5 minute drive through the community, my first impression of Arlington was quite truthfully, that this little town takes a lot of PRIDE in their community. Well maintained properties, new sidewalks and curbing on Main Street, vehicles coming and going up and down Main Street. Small town, not many business that I noticed on our first drive through. The mural on the side of the building on Main Street which I believe is the entrance into Arlington on Main Street, was very interesting.
   6. Smaller size-wise than expected. The yards seemed largely well maintained. The downtown area seemed busy. A lot of unpaved streets. Detour was necessary due to bridge out. Some confusion as to where to exit from highway 50. No sign for Arlington.

2. **Downtown Business Area**

**Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc. Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed. Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)**

1. The mural on the north side of the street was really nice.  I was impressed that all the buildings looked like they were in good shape.  There was one building that startled us as we walked the streets as it’s apparently someone’s residence and they had a large dog that barked at us.  The business that are active had nice signage and again the sidewalks were really nice.  It felt clean and uncluttered.  We made a point to go into every business that was open.  The business that were not open we looked in the windows.  Though some were not being used they didn't look all cluttered inside.  Some had items being stored but they looked like they had order to them.  There were two beauty shops.  One was not open but though the decor was dated inside it looked cool and vintage and clean.  The other beauty shop was just gorgeous.  The shop owner was so inviting and gracious.  She took time from her client to show us her shop and describe how she had renovated it.  She showed us pictures of what it looked like before and answered all of our questions.  She and her staff were really nice and sweet.  There was an antique store that we would have loved to have gone in, however the owners were not there and we didn't call them as they had offered with the note on their door.  It had many lovely items that seemed to be priced very reasonably.  The building looked super nice and in great shape.  There was a cabinet maker and we slipped in a door and startled the poor guy working.  However he stopped what he was doing and took us in the show room and offered us a tour.  We did go in the show room and just observed the woodworking area.  They did amazing work and he was really nice.  He too answered all our questions and never seemed rushed or in a hurry to move us along.  There were two restaurants and we did eat something at both of them.  The Mennonite ladies cafe is where we ate lunch.  It was very nice and bright and the service was good.  The locals that were in didn't stare too excessively and seemed very friendly.  After lunch we drove around the town some more and did drive out to the golf course to see it.
2. The buildings look to be in good repair and most of them appear to be occupied but some did not have signs indicating what they were. If they were a business or a private place.
3. The business district area gave the impression that they cared about the town, even though they were few in number. The cabinet shop, beauty shop and two cafés were extremely friendly. It appeared that they were trying to use unusual and great decorating ideas to give a good and clean first impression to any newcomer. We were greeted with a smile in all four of the businesses. I loved the beauty shop. It made me want to come to that shop!! It had darling ideas and items of interest. The cabinet shop seems very progressive as well. In both cases, they made me feel that they would like to have my business.
4. We noticed many downtown business, a cabinet shop, antique shop, two cafes (which one was pizza place.) we had had supper at Carolyn's. Very nice place. People were friendly and the food was spectacular
5. Walking along Main Street, and entering into any open business, we were greeted with the upmost respect by the employees. Very eager to show us around, tell us about their business and answer any questions we had. All were very welcoming, which made myself feel right at home. Some business that looked interesting we closed, however, there we more business downtown than what I originally thought on our drive through.
6. Seemed to have relatively few unused store fronts. A variety of businesses. Sidewalks were in good repair. Restaurant an pizza shop, hair salon, a couple of antique shops, post office Fire and ambulance station, cabinet shop, what may have been a motel or possibly apartments wasn’t sure as there was no signage. Very friendly, willing to talk about not only their businesses but their community too.

**What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.) Comment on appealing landscaping and streets aping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?**

1. I did not see any drinking fountains or benches downtown nor trash cans.  There were no public restrooms, however I suspect one could go inside any of these business and find relief if necessary.  I did not see any landscaping however we were there in February, it was 70 degrees but not the time of year to see many plantings or landscaping.  Parking was very accessible and they also had curb cuts for wheelchairs or strollers that were nice.  Downtown is not very large so getting around is very easy.
2. Being winter there was not much to notice about landscaping other than it was not overgrown or had trees needing removed.
3. Did not see any of the items mentioned. We did not have difficulty finding a parking and did not see any streetscaping. But, we did notice the nice sidewalks and clean gutters.
4. No trouble parking and we noticed one park downtown and then the old school had some playground equipment on it.
5. I did not notice drinking fountains, benches, or restrooms along Main Street. However, I believe that any business open would have been able to assist me if I needed something.
6. Didn’t see any fountains, benches or public restrooms. Parking was easy, other than detour, streets were accessible. No trees or planters downtown.

1. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

**Describe other retail shopping areas. Were the areas attractive and easy to access?**

1. There was a small store in the old hotel.  We were told you could get some ice, loaf of bread, pop, etc. there.  They did not have a grocery store presently.  We were told they used to.
2. Only thing I noticed was Eula’s (or however it was spelled). Very attractive business front in a residential neighborhood.
3. N/A
4. Yes very attractive. One thing that grabbed my eye were the dome houses. Three dome houses on the southwest side of town.
5. Did not note any.
6. No retail other than home based or downtown.

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

**Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand? If so, describe.**

1. I did not see a committed area for this however it may exist and we just missed it.  There is much farm land so perhaps one could acquire a large parcel of land in that way to put a business in?
2. I think there are plenty of locations available.
3. We did not notice that there was a definite industrial park.
4. Did not see any
5. N/A
6. None seen

5. **Health Care Services**

**Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services.**

1. I do not think there are any doctors or hospitals in this town.  I do not know where they go, that is a question I thought of after we left.
2. Noticed the EMS and Fire Stations. EMS went out while we were there. Very important part of a community. I understand they are both county services.
3. N/A
4. Did not see any.
5. Did not note any
6. Ambulance Station (County Funded) downtown

**Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers.**

1. I did see that someone there has an office for mental health/counseling services.
2. Did not notice.
3. N/A
4. Did not see any
5. I believe that most of the residents of Arlington go to Hutchinson for those facilities.
6. Didn’t see any healthcare providers other than ambulance.

**What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?**

1. It would seem that if someone desired to have an office there is space downtown to open up a place.  I did not see any long term care facilities in Arlington.
2. Did not notice any.
3. N/A
4. Did not see any
5. None noted.
6. Saw what looked like possibly HUD housing, not sure if they were assisted living.

6. **Housing**

**Give a brief description of the existing mix of housing stock. Does the local market have housing that would appeal to all income wages? What challenges do you see in regards to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)**

1. Now we were impressed by the houses that were for sale in that I mean they were nice houses.  Some seemed large and spacious and there were some smaller ones, but they all looked like they were in good shape.  It seemed that there were various income levels that live in Arlington, however it appeared and was later confirmed that the townspeople just have a sense of pride in community and thus keep things looking great, which is wonderful.  To me, if you wanted to live in town, you should be able to find a nice place relatively easily.
2. I think there is a good mix of housing for most income levels. Maybe not so much for the very high income bracket but there is room in most areas for them to build to suit.
3. It appeared to have a good mix of all incomes. Most homes seemed to be cared for and in good conditions with surrounding yards in a clean and picked up manor. There were just a couple blighted areas that were distasteful.
4. Looks like a lot of newer houses, not many for sell either, but all the properties are well maintained.
5. In my opinion, the housing stock in Arlington has housing that would appeal to all income wages. Even the older homes were very well kept and maintained. There were houses available for sale, not a whole lot that I saw, but some.
6. Houses appeared to be smaller 2-3 bedroom, post WWII area.

**What kind of rental properties did you observe for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?**

1. I saw one rental house and it looked like it was very nice.  There are a few trouble spots where there is massive junk collecting taking place that I'm guessing folks there aren't thrilled with.  However, most of them were not on the main roads we took, and seemed somewhat tucked in behind nice tidy homes.  There is one property as we headed out of town that had a lot of junk, however it was tucked behind a fence, but it’s apparent what is behind it.
2. The Dome Homes, we were able to see the inside of one of the units and they were spectacular and it is too bad there weren’t more of them. Not sure about other rentals. Did not see any signs for rent and very few real estate signs up for sale. Also noticed the Equal Opportunity Housing.
3. To be honest, I did not remember seeing more than a couple “for sale” signs. Most homes appeared to be occupied.
4. Very few rental properties.
5. I noticed what appeared to me as a low income housing complex along Main Street. There were lots available that would be very suitable for building new houses on. Although I didn’t not any available houses for rent, I’m sure if I were looking hard enough, I would be able to find one.
6. Noticed 1 house with for sale sign and 1 house with for rent sign plus motel/apartment and HUD type housing. (2 units).

7. **Schools**

**Do the following schools appear to be adequate in size or do you see the use of temporary classrooms? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?**

1. The schools are no longer in Arlington.  They were moved to Fairfield which apparently is about 8 miles away.  There is no daycare.  The old school is being used though for the City offices and library and a business and a community gym.  Debbie who is the secretary was more than helpful. She was super accommodating. She answered all our questions and gave us great information.  The community gym is small but really nice.  The equipment is in good shape and great suggestions on a bulletin board outside to help guide patrons.  The library was small, but very nice.  The librarian was super sweet and very helpful as was her helpers that were there that day.
2. No schools. Too bad the buildings seem to be in decent condition.
3. Not Applicable. But the use of the “old Grade School” as a city office and community center was great and well kept. It was a bit hard to find as there was not direction to it from the business district.
4. They had two grade schools, one in which was falling in and not in use anymore. The old grade school which was kept nicely and uses as a library.
5. There are no schools in Arlington, the students go to Fairfield. The former elementary school was purchased by the City of Arlington to house City Hall, the Library. The gymnasium is open to the public to use, they have a workout gym in the building, and allow local business to rent out rooms in the building to do business in. This set up was most impressive to me. The City/Library Staff was most helpful and very friendly. The City Clerk answered my 1000 questions, and was super pleasant. The Librarian was very informative, and both seemed to take real pride in their community.
6. All schools closed, old school buildings used as city offices, library and community center.

**Were you able to find print information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?**

1. The information on the schools is easily found online.  Debbie at the City office stated that they are thinking about putting in a childcare there in city building.  They are in the investigative stage at this point.
2. Sorry, didn’t check
3. NO
4. No , they are bused
5. Yes, City Hall was very informative.
6. N/A
7. **Childcare**

**Were you able to determine if childcare was affordable and available?**

1. No childcare is available at this time.
2. Didn’t check, I don’t have kids and that wouldn’t have been a factor for me if I were moving to town.
3. N/A
4. Not that I saw
5. None noted.
6. Didn’t see any signs for childcare.
7. **Faith/Religion**

**Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the churches represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of church-sponsored community services?**

1. There are two churches.  A Methodist and a Presbyterian church.  Both buildings were nice.  They are older but seem to be in good shape.  We did not observe any church-community services.
2. Noticed two church buildings thought one was probably closed and had been converted to a house but found out it was a church.
3. There are two churches that appear to be well kept.
4. They had two church in town, a Methodist church and a Lutheran church. Not that I saw.
5. There were 3 churches in the community. All were well kept and maintained, and looked very friendly to attend.
6. One Methodist church in a nice building. Told later that Presbyterian Church which we thought was closed was actually in use. (No signage)
7. **Civic**

**Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community.**

1. The Arlington Community Center has a Facebook page that seems to post the community happenings and the community events.
2. I did not notice any outward signs that any of the improvements were sponsored by any groups.
3. We were told that there aren’t any community organizations. But your library was great. The librarian seemed very caring and personable. I loved the historic displays that she has done among the stacks, honoring persons of interest in the community. It would be nice for the community to have a special place to preserve the history of town. Maybe it could be a room that was just dedicated to Arlington schools, with pictures of former students and etc.
4. No not that I saw, most town have Lions club, or Kiwanis, or masonic lodge, but did not see any.
5. When asked, I was told that there are no clubs, or organizations in the community. It was apparent to me that the community works well as a team, and doesn’t need committees to make things happen there, which was very impressive.
6. No evidence of any civic organization.
7. **Public Infrastructure**

**Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas other than downtown.**

1. The main streets are paved, however most of the side streets are dirt and small rock.  I did not see many sidewalks on the side streets.  The landscaping was just not something I can comment fairly as it's not the right time of year.  There was one park that had public restrooms.  They looked like they were freshly painted and open for use.
2. Streets were in good condition for a small town. Paved streets will be needing some resealing in the next few years. The unpaved streets were nice because they were sandy and not large gravel.
3. I did not notice the sidewalks in the residential area, nor the lighting, as we were there in the afternoon. As a whole, the main street in the residential area seemed to be very well kept.
4. N/A
5. The sidewalk and curbing looked very new on Main Street which made Main Street shine, and looked so nice.
6. A lot of the side streets were unpaved but well maintained.

**Comment on city/town hall (How were you received? Was there information about the town available?)**

1. N/A
2. City hall was closed at the time of our visit. I did find it interesting that it is only open in the mornings.
3. We were received very well at city hall. Debbie was very pleasant and a delight to talk with. We asked lots of questions and she seemed most helpful in answering all of them.
4. **Yes very well, nice people, very friendly**
5. The City Clerk was so helpful, and I loved the setup of City Hall, utilizing the gym, and classrooms.
6. Arrived too late to visit city hall. We did speak to the one full time city employee who was very courteous and had a wealth of information. (Saw him out on road grader)

**Police/fire protection:**

1. We were told that there was no local police. I honestly don't know about Fire.  I think it's a volunteer fire.
2. County provided. No visual presence.
3. N/A
4. **No police, but they do have a fire station**
5. There was a Fire Department on Main Street, that looked like it had the equipment to provide the community with good fire protection, however, I didn’t note a Police Department.
6. Mo police department, supplied by Reno County Sheriff’s Department. Fire Station (County Funded) in town

**Library:**

1. The library I discussed earlier.  They have five computers and we liked the display of the former class that they had up.  It was very nice and inviting.
2. Noticed the sign, it was not open.
3. The library was delightful as well as the librarian. I liked your historical displays among the stacks. She expressed a desire to have an historical society, which would be a nice idea for the town preservation.
4. **Yes, a nice library**
5. The Library had very nice displays. The Librarian was very helpful in answering our questions.
6. At old school/ city office not open when we were there

**City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sportsplex)**

1. We saw two parks.  One at the city building and one off the highway.   We saw one basketball court/tennis court that looked pretty rag tag.  I don't remember seeing any ball-fields or walking trails.  Although walking in the town would be a nice walk and you can make it as long or short as you wish.
2. Saw one park and a playground at the old school.
3. We saw your golf course. You are lucky to have one, for a town your size.
4. **One park**
5. The City Parks were well maintained and looked very nice.
6. One park in town and playground equipment at the old school.
7. **Recreation/Tourism**

**Is the community well-known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset?**

1. I asked this question specifically if they have an event that's annual, but I was told that no they don't.  I did not learn of any slogan that capitalizes on the town or event.
2. Not that I noticed.
3. We were told you do not have an annual community event. Finding a yearly historical event might be a draw.
4. **No not that I saw**
5. None noted
6. The downtown café is popular.

**Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents?**

1. On the Community Facebook page they post the events that are taking place or things ongoing.  Also outside the Library was little flyers about upcoming craft shows and we saw a flyer for a nearby event in Yoder.  I saw how they were bringing in a trailer that was a rolling grocery store that caught my eye.  What a great idea for folks who do not have a grocery store.
2. Didn’t see anything.
3. I would say that the beauty shop “The Village Place” is a draw. Do hope the locals know how lucky they are to have an up and coming beauty shop (that appears to be up on the latest of styles). At least that is one thing that the ladies of town do not have to drive a distance for. The cabinet shop would be another draw to Arlington. For people doing remodeling, their work appears to be lovely.
4. **no I didn't**
5. None noted.
6. No

**Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.**

1. There weren't any significant natural or manmade features other than if you lived in the city you would getting away from it all to enjoy the quiet and friendly people.
2. I always tend to notice if a community has good drainage. That comes from dealing with poor drainage where I have lived. This town seems to be well drained and have stable foundations.
3. Being able to see the stars at night, and the quiet area would be a draw for those in the city.
4. **I'm sorry, but I did not see any landmarks or significant things to draw people to this town**
5. A celebration on Arlington’s Main Street would certainly draw people to the community. A food cook-off would be a neat idea, along with an annual street dance.
6. Didn’t see any.

**Is there an obvious visitor’s center, chamber of commerce office, main street office, or other facility that serves the needs of visitors? Comment on the staff, facilities, signage, visibility, etc.**

1. The city building in the old school was a wonderful place to get information.  Debbie the front office secretary was warm and friendly and was more than willing to answer our questions or give us information about anything we requested about Arlington.  I would say that it would be nice for them to have some sort of historical society, which the librarian shared she would like to have started.  I would have liked to look at photos or read information on how the town got started, its early residents, why they town was started, what was the industry, etc.
2. I really couldn’t tell that the city hall was in the old school until someone told me, I noticed the Library sign.
3. Your city building is the prime place for a visitor’s center but there needs to be directions for finding it.
4. **Not that I saw**
5. City Hall, the restaurant’s staff, the hair salon staff and others in the community make visitors feel so welcome. City Hall is a little hard to locate, being that it is not on the main drag of town. Signage to where City Hall is would be an idea.
6. No.

**Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future?**

1. I would come back to visit the Village Place hair salon.  They were just outstanding in every way.  The food at both restaurants was great and I would love to try breakfast at both sometime.  The antique store is something too I would love to see what's inside.  If I needed cabinets made I would price Bontragers first.  I would like to find out what there farmers market is like in the summer as well.  We might have had trouble finding the City building if one of the ladies in our group did not already know where it was.  There was no signage for it and it is on the opposite end of Main Street.
2. Carolyn’s was great food, clean, nice salad bar and bakery items. Friendly and comfortable. The Pizza place looked inviting and smelled really good even though we were stuffed from just eating. Not much else really caught my eye.
3. As was mentioned earlier, the beauty and cabinet shops are both draws for bringing people back to your community.
4. **Yes two nice places. A cafe and a pizza place.**
5. Yes, the restaurants were delicious, and would bring me back to Arlington, along with the Hair Salon, and would love to come back when the consignment stores are open. If I was to ever be in need to upgrading my cabinets, Arlington would be the first business I would check into.
6. The restaurant was great and worth visiting again.
7. **Wrap-up**

**What are the most positive things you observed about the community?**

1. The most positive things I observed was that clearly there is a sense of real Pride in their Community.  We saw this in the way folks kept their homes, their businesses, sidewalks, streets, parks.  The people we met or came across in Arlington were all really nice and very helpful to us.  The food in both restaurants was very good and the staff at both places were friendly and accommodating.   Loved the local gym facilities!  The folks in the trenches meaning the workers we met have a hope and a vision for their town.  They want to see it continue on and thrive.  I do not know about the City leadership as we spoke with none of them.  They would be wise to visit with the people we spoke to.
2. Overall the residential areas are very well kept. Even if the owner or occupant may not have a lot of money, most of them try to keep their properties mowed, and free of trash and junk. With any town there are a few exceptions. What appeared to be a working junk yard was even orderly for a junk yard and was not overgrown with trees and weeds. The downtown was also in decent repair. Glad to see an operating Post Office still in town.
3. Your nice sidewalks in the business district were noticed first off. The well-kept city building with the library, conference room, community room, and etc. are all in a central location. But, there definitely needs to be signage in the business district for finding the community bldg.
4. **Friendliness of the town, and how clean it was kept**
5. It’s obvious to me that the community of Arlington takes Pride in their small town. The people are very friendly and welcoming, and property owners take time to keep their yards clean and well maintained. The City Crew does an outstanding job in keeping gutters clean, and streets maintained.
6. Nice retail downtown. Yards mostly seemed well maintained.

**What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?**

1. They need a bit more signage to direct you to the various places in Arlington, the City building, the motel with the little sundry shop in it the parks.  It would be great if they could figure out an event or two that would draw more folks to Arlington.  It doesn't appear to be a place you might just happen upon due to its location, you have to look for it.  They need better basketball courts/tennis courts, sport type facilities so the kids have a place to play and get exercise with friends.  The old school house that's falling down, needs to come down sadly and the junkie wholesalers need to clean up their mess.  Get rid of the majority of it at least.  They should think about a historical society and have a place where folks can really learn about its roots and history.
2. Lack of a school. Possibly a shortage of local employment.
3. Trying to get more business into the community, as well as residences, is the biggest challenge.
4. **Lack of housing and road signs to show where the place is.**
5. Support from locals. I felt that in talking to business owners, most of them lack local support. Surrounding areas support the business than locals.
6. Seems to be mostly a bedroom community.

**What will you remember most about this community six month from now (positive or negative)?**

1. I will remember them warmth and helpfulness of the people of Arlington six months from now and beyond.  I will remember that it is a nice little place to escape from the daily same ol’ same ol’.  It's just far enough away, yet not a huge drive and when I arrive I know I will be among friendly people.
2. Welcoming community. I loved meeting Eula. Restaurant was good. Most of the homes look to be well kept and in decent repair.
3. The friendly people are the best memories. They seemed so welcoming and hospitable.
4. The dome houses, that Florence has a café owned by Carolyn and Arlington has a café called Carolyn’s. I will always remember when we drove right past the road that leads into Arlington, because there were nil signs telling us, Arlington (5 miles)
5. The friendly, welcoming, home town feeling!!!
6. Carolyn’s Café, Eula Henderson’s 3 dome shaped rental houses and the city employee we talked to. (Al)

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