From Waterfront Regeneration to Fluid City Planning

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Planning the Gateway Cities in the age of crisis

In current global crisis the strong flows of financial, social and relational capitals that powered urban regeneration over the last fifteen years are no longer available to be tapped in an indiscriminate manner as was the case until just a few years ago. The most dynamic cities in the future will no longer be those that are able to attract urban projects and investors driven by the real estate market or leisure-based development,

but the cities that have deep and different cultural resources and that are able to use them as the basis for creating new urban cultures and for generating new economic values. Revitalising waterfront is no longer easy opportunity for long-term investments or for using the financial capital gains of corporation, hedge funds or sovereign funds, but a more creative-driven port city has to provide precious opportunities for real development — not only quantitative but more and more qualitative — that is able to produce

effects in both the domain of collective assets and that of private capitals.

Waterfront regeneration has to intercept in a proactive way the "creative city theory" (Landry, 2000). A few years ago, I identified the need for concrete evolution and pointed out the factors that make it possible for urban creativity to become a launch pad for new economies and a creative force for new cities and not simply an attractive force for intellectual resources. Today the paradigm of the creative city calls for a third evolutive leap forward because it is capable of producing multiplication and regeneration effects on urban development (Carta, 2009).

The Creative City is therefore no longer interpretative category economists and sociologists or an urban planning challenge, but rather calls on decisionmakers to take action and demands a vigorous commitment on the part of town planners and architects. Because the development of nations and wellbeing of the community will only be measured according to the cities that tackle the financial global change in a creative manner: reimagining urbanism (Carta, 2013). The City 600 Report demonstrates that urban century is not filled by only "hyper cities", but also shows the emergence of intermediate metropolises, widespread conurbations and networks of medium-sized cities, especially in Europe, the network of the global cities is supporting by middle cities, the "small capitals" that produce alternative visions - founded on quality and powered by culture – to that of the explosion of megalopolises (McKinsey Global Institute, 2011).

One commitment that cannot be ignored by governors and managers, planners and designers, promoters and communicators, entrepreneurs and investors, will be to create dynamic and vibrant cities that generate new urban values and

multiply the invested capital. These cities must be places people want to live and imagine, work and produce, and educate and train in and get to know, productive places that attract people and investments, ideas and finances.

In the Urban Age we are entered, the ambitions of men and women, desires of the young generations and their tensions, motivation of the productive class, imagination of the creative class, and knowledge-related activities are new structural factors in constructing development (Urban Age Group, 2006). However, the city is not merely the sub-stratum of a settlement, but in itself it promotes the creation of places of creativity, which produce more urban quality. A large number of cities are engaged in a process of creative self-stimulation (favouring the location of innovative activities that consolidate the selfcreativity of places) consciously and with great determination, putting themselves forward as powerful growth machine.

Accessibility, relationality, experience. connectivity and multiplicity are keywords for new urban dynamics: the third generation of Creative City no longer configures itself by means of the traditional categories of sectorality, property, and materiality, but asks for a new paradigm about knowledge, diagnosis and action. In this innovation scenario, waterfronts are the best test for applying the creative city concepts, because they are not only defined urban areas, but they are rather structural components of the city. The creative-based waterfront are "liquid geopolitical community" seeking strategic action of a wide area to put a value cultural, tourism and productive vocations. The port cities in Europe are the portal of a powerful network of global connections, and in particular the Mediterranean cities are often found in the geo-political conditions for being the nodes of major strategic platforms. They must be able to

install new functions that activate the values of the territorial capital they own (logistic, culture, research, commerce, etc.).

In a growing de-materialized development, the waterfronts of European cities are intersected by flows of Knowledge Society, they are subjects of experience economy and they are crossed by more powerful forces of regeneration and development. The exchange economies feed them and characterize the urban configuration. After the simple function of inter faces between sea and land, they are going to begin the gateways connecting the material and immaterial global flows. From production, commercial and functional areas the waterfronts appear as transformer of global and wide networked economies into powerful resources able to revitalise the local contexts.

The urban coastal areas are today interested by new production and commercial functions or by innovation of goods and cruise mobility. They are also subjects of environmental regeneration and conservation of architectural heritage, or are under pressure from real estate investments. But more often the waterfronts can seize the opportunities offered by cultural dynamics of experience economy. So administrators, planners, designers and entrepreneurs have to take opportunities for a "reflective planning practice" on regeneration of the waterfronts, that aims to innovate both their meaning in the urban identity and their contribute for urban redevelopment of port areas.

The most recent projects for urban coastal areas, however, are not oriented only on the restore of disused areas or on real estate development, but the projects open a period in which the theme of regeneration of the "port city" is strictly integrated with the evolution of the consolidated urban tissues, offering new opportunities for a complete transformation of

city quarters and acting in an active/creative manner on the urban quality. Today, after the bursting of the housing bubble we must defeat a "sub-prime planning": the waterfront are no longer new areas to build or densify, but must be the subject of a new planning vision, more creative and quality-oriented. Waterfronts are collective goods to plan and common ground to manage and as such must be interpreted, planned and designed.

The new creative, integrated and sustainable vision of the waterfronts has to look at the overall urban metabolism, and it asks us to change the analytical and design tools, able to integrate the "city of stone" and the "city of water", producing fertile synapses and critical questions also. Acting on that part of town that has a liquid interface is to set its effects to the entire local context, not only revitalizing the urban tissues, but also producing new development opportunities and connecting the waterfront to the territorial production system.

From the point of view of the dynamics of urban transformation, waterfronts are now one of the most fertile identity of the cities that are investing in the enhancement of local culture, talent and excellence. Waterfronts are places where dense and hybrid resources, opportunities, aspirations and ambitions of the city become vision, new relationships and projects. Not just real estate areas for aggressive capitalism, but nodes of a global network of flows of goods and people, places of cultural exchange, gateways of the "capitals of culture" increasingly competing to attract people, events, functions and investment and to produce quality, environmental sustainability and social cohesion.

Analyse and interpret the waterfront as complex environments means to plan them as "geo-community", that is as places of solidification of the identity of a social, cultural

and economic community. They are catalysts for cultural experiences and activators of urban values. Because they are generators of urban quality must be planned through a wide-scale and strategic approach able to improve their cultural, tourism and manufacturing vocations. In this way they can carry out their function of powerful "territorial switches" able to intercept the material energies (people and assets) and intangible (ideas and services) that travel along the global water corridors, and to transfer to the urban context translating them into local resources, helping to stimulate the quality of port city.

The waterfront is not only the part of the city surrounded by the sea or a river, but it's a new attitude of the city that interacts with the "liquidity", powerful contemporary category as Zygmunt Bauman (2000) argues: "today, fluidity and liquidity are relevant metaphors when seeking to understand the nature of current circumstances and in many respects represents a new phase in the history of modern times". Liquidity provides us with an important interpretative key to understanding many aspects of the contemporary city, its relationship with the dynamism and the rapid speed of its transformations.

Waterfront: fertile identities and regeneration opportunities

Urban waterfronts are today one of the most prolific variants of creative cities: dense, hybrid locations where the resources, opportunities, aspirations and ambitions of cities are translated into visions, new relations and designs. The creative port city is capable of generating new urban forms, of producing new landscapes and, through the permanent flow of urban culture, of fuelling the great relational networks, making them more dynamic, communicative and

competitive. The most important implication of waterfront regeneration is that this particular area should be addressed as a structural element of the city as a whole.

One of the inevitable consequences of tightly inter-woven relations between a city and its port is that tools of intervention used on urban waterfronts must be capable of intercepting, interpreting and transforming the entire city and not be restricted purely to areas along the coast. Rising to the challenge of the urban waterfront as a "spark of urban regeneration" demands targeted efforts to create the sensation of a waterfront not so much as a physical location but more in the form of a liquid aspect of the whole city: the "Fluid City" identity (Carta, 2012a).

In this scenario acts an international cooperation project between Italy and Malta named WATERFRONT (Water policiEs for integrRation Territorial oF multisectoRial develOpmeNT), promoted by the University of Palermo and the University of Malta as scientific responsibility, and by the Municipality of Palermo, and the Provinces of Palermo and Trapani as institutional actors . The Project investigates the plural identities of the fluid city extracting "seven criteria" as multiple viewpoints which provide us with an overall image characterized by seven types of ambiguities that characterized waterfronts (Carta, 2012b):

- 1. **Structure:** a fluid city is not comparable to a line that divides the sea from the land, but should be envisaged as a wide network of places, functions, junctions and seams between the coast and the city, between the port and urban activities.
- 2. **Uses:** a fluid city is not merely a harbour area, but rather a concentration of functions, productive, relational, cultural, leisure-related and residential.

- 3. **Permeability:** a fluid city it is not a protected area of restricted access, but an osmotic point of interface, a permeable boundary, rigid in some parts but spongelike in others.
- 4. **Mobility:** a fluid city is not a local hub, but rather a crossroads between bands of infrastructure (of land and sea) which cut through it and feed into it: the hub of an increasingly planetary network of relational energies.
- 5. **Settlement:** and yet it is more than just a hub; most importantly it is a place, an intersection of customs, functions and flows: the synthesis of space and community.
- 6. **Production:** the fluid city is not a place of recreation; it is not merely an entertainment machine but also a site of production and trade: a finely-tuned functional machine.
- 7. **Projects:** and lastly, the fluid city is neither purely history nor purely future, but a fertile synthesis of history and future prospective: a place where an aptly applied knowledge of history feeds into visions for the future, where implemented strategies produce an effective interpretation of the past.

Waterfronts, therefore, are more than straightforward urban contexts, they are better described as structural components of cities, frequently part of a harbour clusters and the focus of combined action: they are "fluid geocommunities" requiring wide-ranging strategic action so as to fully exploit cultural, tourist and productive capitals. European port cities are also important portals providing access to imposing production platforms between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, between the Americas and

Asia, and as a consequence must be capable of establishing new functions which go beyond the stereotypical images of marginalization and degradation, so often associated with ports, and aim to fully exploit the capital possessed by this particular territory.

The most interesting plans for urban waterfronts are capable, therefore, of interpreting their potential as powerful "territorial selector switches": transformers capable of intercepting the material and immaterial energies travelling along large-scale networks, transposing them into the urban context and translating them into resources for the territory, thus providing vital sustenance to the whole project. The creative cities of the near future will increasingly take the form of gateway cities, cities capable of connecting up with the network of hub-cities within the European-Mediterranean area, the ambitious protagonists of the urban century.

Waterfront 3.0: the Fluid City Manifesto

Today a new paradigm of knowledge/ action on urban waterfronts should guide us, and we could define it the Third Generation of waterfront planning, after the first leisure-based generation (i.e. Baltimora) and after the second one based on cultural and services investments (i.e. Barcelona). The "Waterfront 3.0" has to be creativity driven, able to produce a whole regeneration force for the city competitiveness, smartness and quality. From the Manifesto for the creative cities (Carta, 2007) we could extract some guidelines for the third generation urban waterfronts development. These guidelines are structured around seven principles that decline the creative action for urban innovation based on the relation with the seven criteria above defined.

The proposed principles define a "Fluid

City Manifesto", that acts as guidelines for the decision and guide the action planning on third generation urban waterfronts:

The identity principle, typically displaying deep cultural stratification of waterfront identity resources, coupled with the willingness and ability of institutions and technicians to optimize such resources, in addition to a population which is aware of the importance of interaction and its active role in the transformation process. These elements are most frequently encountered in historic waterfronts, places where a sense of belonging is rooted in both space and time, along with an increased awareness of cultural values.

The economic sustainability **principle**, which calls for a pre-existing, solid economic base - either internal or to be set up in financial partnerships - to activate and maintain waterfront regeneration within a context of policies and regulations aimed at facilitating their completion. In those areas we have to improve the use of public-private partnership tools by special programmes such as the French "projets de quartier" or those where policies of business improvement districts are in place for setting up some incentive to encourage new business into the area.

The potentiality principle appraises coastal area experiencing an imbalance between the top-level potential envisaged or recognized by analysts, planners, artists and entrepreneurs and sets this against its current circumstances and decision-making trends. This imbalance acts as a sort of transformer, converting "potential" energy into the "kinetic" one

needed for regeneration. Just think of the extraordinary reserves of both quality and opportunity for transformation possessed by port districts with large tracts of brownfield sites and factories, just waiting to be transformed into incubators of activity, into developer of smartness or to provide the necessary space for large-scale service facilities.

The dynamism principle hands back the know-how, competence and tools needed to set creative process in motion and produce future transformation in the fields of culture, science and technology. Think of the enormous contribution made by cultural associations or microenterprises which forge the very nerve centre of the new socio-economic framework of town planning: one of the reasons that urban projects have been so successful in many European cities. Another great, dynamic resource is the presence of communities of artists, creative and talents taking up residence in port disused areas; redefining functions, opening galleries, setting up theatre programmes and organizing cultural, educational and leisure activities.

The interaction principle allows us to test out opportunities for informal, spontaneous forms of communication as well as checking for the presence of suitable environments for diversity and variety, as is the case of waterfront linked with historic centres, home to a range of diverse ethnic groups, or neighbourhoods close to large ports, traditionally areas which excel in the ways of trade, transfer and the most lively sort of multicultural community.

The multisectorality principle

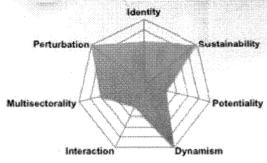
highlights the importance of a multifaceted, non-homogenous environment, comprising a combination of living accommodation, manufacturing and commercial businesses, high quality cultural activities and folklore. A dynamic, synergetic environment capable of bridging the development of both technique and art, production and housing, businesses and leisure.

And lastly. the perturbation principle provides us with a tool to recognize the creative milieu, an indication of the latent energy required to produce a disturbance within that context and the resultant imbalance between the current situation and a vision for the future. through positive tension experienced by the population in residence, moving it to be proactive and overcome the marginal role the area has been assigned. This sort of latent energy is often found in declined waterfront areas where marginalization has produced a certain social unity and widespread discontent generates positive tension, ripe to be guided in the right direction.

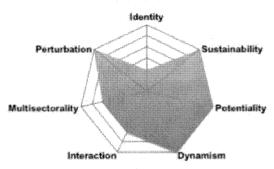
The seven principles described above contribute to the achievement of the key development factors: competitiveness, cohesion, innovation and conservation. The following figure shows the method and how much each principle contributes to the achievement of urban development.

The capacity of the Fluid City to pursue simultaneously the principles of competitiveness and cohesion and to ensure the paradigms of innovation and conservation requires a new governance of urban and peri-urban coastal areas. The metamorphosis of governance will have to move from conflict management and

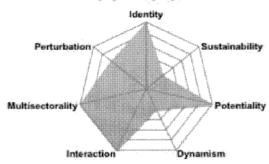
COMPETITIVENESS



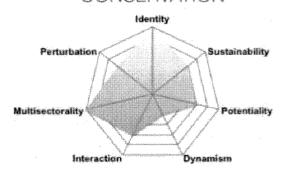
INNOVATION



COHESION



CONSERVATION



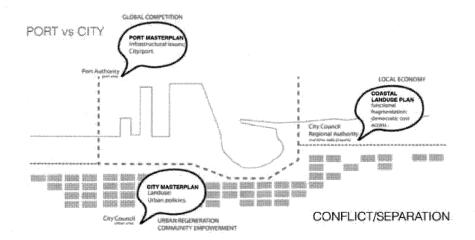
the separation of powers in which each actor speaks its own language and states a specified range, towards a permanent integration between the waterfront subjects which would enable any actor to act in a "common ground" and to express themselves within a new dialogue aimed at a permanent interaction between port and city, between land and sea, between places and flows.

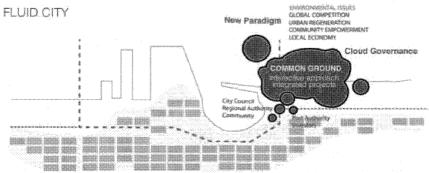
Palermo: the metamorphosis of a Fluid City

During the last seven years Palermo has set its sights on becoming a "Gateway City": a metropolitan hub within the Euro-Mediterranean urban framework, capable of intercepting the flows of long distance networks and transforming them into interests, investments, production and localization, feeding the city's development and

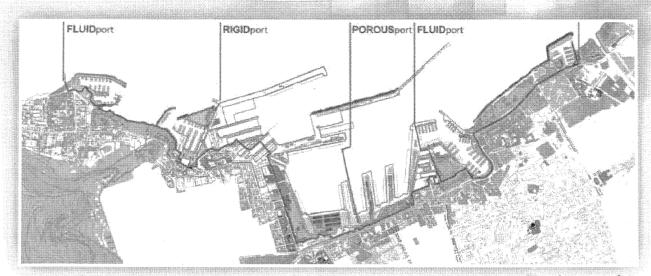
innovation as part of a new strategy focusing on recentralization within the Mediterranean scenario. Key location in the strategy is the waterfront: the first "swing power" to generate the new creative city (Bruttomesso, 2006).

In Palermo the identities, the complexities and the opportunities of the waterfront will condense and intertwine, presenting itself as powerful resource to engine the project for the metamorphosis towards the fluid city. The Central Waterfront offers itself as a pilot project on both to connect the gateway area to the historic centre and to offer the opportunities of linking cultural heritage to port area development. The Central Waterfront, tightly inter-linked with the historic centre, must be viewed as one of the city's most fertile areas of urban creativity, where strategies, plans, services and businesses come together in the name of quality and productivity.





INTEGRATION/INTERACTION



Palermo Waterfront

The waterfront does not merely imply a new port but also a new city: a fluid city mixed with a city of stone.

Starting with the vision of the Strategic Plan which re-imagines Palermo as a gateway city, the Central Waterfront has been identified as one of the Areas of Integrated Transformation, guided by a well-defined strategy organized into two operative fronts: the first addressing improvement to port functions and the second planning the waterfront as a creative city, capable of generating new potential and renewed urban economies, providing the city with new spaces but also, and more importantly, new modes of being and lifestyles. The waterfront will become the new "City of Exchange and Innovation", where port functions are integrated with largescale urban services and new neighbourhood housing and services will create an obvious city effect along the seafront.

The Central Waterfront Masterplan acts on 95 Ha and 1 million of Cbm, and puts into action an integrated strategy of infrastructural improvement, urban optimization and competitive development, acting primarily on the urban junctions between city and port, a structural plan for the section of the city interfacing with the sea. The powerhouse

behind the Masterplan was a planning office called "Officina del Porto" (set up by the Port Authority and the Municipality of Palermo in 2006 with a dozen of young architects directed by Flavio Albanese and Maurizio Carta) as an innovative atelier for analysing, interpreting, planning and communicating the waterfront regeneration ambitions.

The waterfront project does not only concern coastal areas but also examines and intervenes on other areas of interface defined as "target areas": piazza Kalsa as a vibrant creative and cultural district, the new commercial areas, cultural service and congress centre in the former Fruit and Vegetable Market and the recycle of the disused Sampolo Rail Station, used for new metropolitan services, and the whole area will be more accessible through improvements of the pedestrian, cycling, road and rail networks.

The Masterplan proposes three waterfront variants, two of which are strictly urban:

 the "fluid port" associated with sailing, cultural and leisure facilities and accommodation. The fluid port is immersed and intertwined with the urban structure, characterized by marinas and cultural and leisure services, and strictly connected to the city (tourism port of

Sant'Erasmo, park of Foro Italico, Old Port "Cala"). The functions provided for this section relate to the boating, recreational and cultural activities capable of being an integrated interface between city and port. The Archaeological Park of the "Castello a Mare" and the green areas represent important connectors of the urban ecological network;

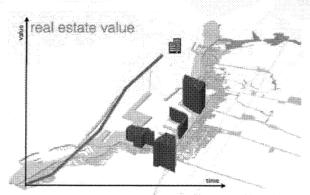
- second variant is the "porous port", namely an area for cruise-ships and passengers, enjoying close ties with the city and transport system, including facilities and buildings along the wharf to encourage the opening of the urban front onto the sea. This type of port is characterized by a large porous area of transformation that acts as a link between the port activities dedicated to passengers and new cultural, residential and commercial activities related to the quality of the waterfront, which manifest a high degree of interaction between the port and city;
- third variant foresees a "rigid port", inaccessible to the public and thus enabling the harbour to work to full capacity: the "port machine" able to guarantee security and safety. The operational port areas are designed for maximum efficiency in synergy with the docks of the Port of Termini Imerese, now governed by the same Palermo Port Authority.

The Waterfront Masterplan's main strategies are:

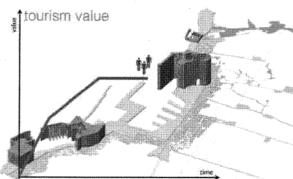
 strengthening of commercial port through an extension of the surfaces and a better rationalization of functional areas and service buildings;

- the identification of solutions to respond to the increase in cruise traffic and upgrading of tourist services for passengers;
- strengthening and improving the quality of activities for yachting and the sea-related tourism, with projects for improving the urban quality and connecting the leisure activities;
- the maintenance and improvement of the industrial port efficiency with particular attention to the medium size shipbuilding;
- creating an interface area of mixed-use port and city, where it can be implemented some iconic contemporary architecture projects that will become the landmarks of the new urban waterfront; this area will ensure stronger integration between urban spaces and port function;
- innovation through the concentration of the port building layout and terminal services along the banks in order to open the front on Via Crispi to clear the view of the sea and to bring some urban functions as close as possible to the water.

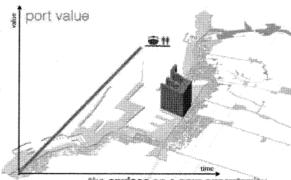
Finally, the Masterplan acts in synergy with the Strategic Plan in order to activate new urban projects in some adjacent areas subject at municipal planning: the Old Town as a large complex system in regeneration phase, the Mouth of Oreto River and the former Locomotive Depot of St. Erasmus, the former Gasometer, the historic district of Borgo Vecchio, the large area of the former Sampolo Station and Fruit and Vegetable Market, the former tobacco factory and the old fishing villages of Acquasanta and Arenella. These areas are identified by the Masterplan as valuable "transformation areas" integrated with the regeneration of the waterfront and, therefore, of the entire city. A Memorandum of Understanding with the



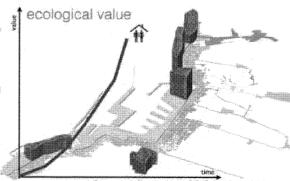
improve the city-port interface



Improve the services for the tourism port



the **cruises** as a new opportunity



plan new sport and leisure areas

Municipality of Palermo was crucial to identify general guidelines and intervention strategies to maximize the port-city interaction.

The Masterplan does not just define new uses and specialized port areas, but produces guidelines on urban renewal and development of the entire city. According to the 7 Principles, the areas dedicated to cruises, to recreational boating and leisure services contribute to increase four "urban values" (real estate, tourism, nautical and ecological). This improvement of urban values will generate economic rent that will ensure the sustainability of the plan and the attractiveness of the waterfront for private capitals.

In the creative waterfront scenario, the place which best sums up the fluid regeneration strategy is the "Molo Trapezoidale": a large pier near the Old Harbour that is the main interface between city and port, the real landmark of the fluid city which allows the urban uses to penetrate as far as the water and marine imagery to connate new housing styles. Main function of this area is characterised by the presence of the largest urban archaeological park around the site of the former Norman Castle: today a vibrant site of history and cultural events. The Waterfront District project provides for the renewal of existing buildings and the redevelopment of former industrial buildings to be used as venues for the creative class; artists, designers and musicians who will utilize loft spaces as houses, workshops and exhibition spaces for contemporary arts and dynamic forms of artistic expression. A canal and dockyard will provide the locations for new forms of socialization and waterfront living. And lastly, the outermost section, that closest to the sea and in perfect harmony with the new creative character of the district, will become the "City of contemporary arts and innovation": a complex system of public spaces and buildings acting as a powerhouse of artistic, musical and multimedia

production and integrated with waterfront services and facilities.

The project for Palermo Waterfront is not oriented by simply restoring disused areas or by real estate development, but it opens a planning process in which the theme of regeneration of the waterside is strictly integrated with the evolution of the consolidated urban tissues, offering new opportunities for a complete transformation of city quarters and acting in an active/creative manner on the urban quality. In ecological planning, the waterfronts are no longer new areas to build or densify, but must be the subject of a new planning vision, more creative and quality-oriented: waterfronts are "common goods" and as such must be interpreted, planned and designed.

New creative, integrated and ecological vision of waterfront has to look at the overall urban metabolism, and asks us to change both the analytical and design tools, and be able to mutate the "solid city" in a wider "fluid city", producing fertile synapses and critical questions also. Acting on that part of town that has a liquid interface sets its effects to the entire local context, not only revitalising the urban tissues, but also producing new development opportunities and connecting the waterfront to the new development model.

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