

THE IMPACT OF GROUP HOMES ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY VALUES IN BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

A Study Prepared by:

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMUNITY HOUSING RESOURCE BOARD, INC.
P. O. Box 66180, Baltimore, Maryland 21239, (410)453-9500

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the impact of the placement of group homes for persons with disabilities upon property values in a stratified sample of neighborhoods in Baltimore County. It replicates the methodology of a 1988 Prince George's County study done by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Board. In this study, a group home is defined as an alternative living unit (ALU) supported either by the State of Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Administration or the Baltimore County Bureau of Mental Health.

This study analyzed over 1,000 transactions of residential properties in Baltimore County neighborhoods where there is a group home; this included neighborhoods where a group home opened and later closed. In addition, the study included the use of comparable neighborhoods as a control group. Sales prices of homes were analyzed for a two-year period before and a two-year period after the group home was established in the neighborhood.

It was found that approximately 50% of the neighborhoods' residential property values were impacted positively and 50% negatively by group home placement. Some 3 (42.9%) of the 7 neighborhoods with Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation group homes showed an increase in property value that was higher than the control neighborhoods; 4 (57.1%) of the 7 showed a decrease. Of the 28 neighborhoods with a Developmental Disabilities group home, 13 (46.4%) had property value changes higher than the control neighborhoods; 15 (53.6%) of the neighborhoods with group homes had property value change below that of the control neighborhoods.

These mixed results indicate that group home placement cannot be considered a certain predictor/cause of residential property decline or increase. These conclusions are similar to those of numerous studies that have been done in various communities in the United

States and Canada during the past 15 years.

It must be noted that there are many factors that influence neighborhood property values. Important factors may include prevailing neighborhood real estate valuation trends, economic recessionary forces, changes in the location of industrial sites or major transportation highways, deterioration/improvement of public services and facilities, public school closing/opening, nearby positive or negative occurrences, decrease/increase in crime, decrease/increase in vacancies, etc. During this period, several Baltimore County neighborhoods experienced negative property value change. This study also found that group home placement did not affect positively or negatively the direction of that change.

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I. INTRODUCTION

With the national shift from institutional care to community settings in group homes for persons with disabilities, there is concern among citizens that group homes will affect negatively their neighborhoods. Concern about the impact of group home placement upon property values causes some citizens to oppose group homes in general.

The purpose of this study is to identify the possible impacts of residential property values in those Baltimore County neighborhoods that have a group home. Initially, the methodology of the study is described. This is followed by a discussion of the findings of the study. The Appendices then contain statistics on group homes in the study, relevant findings from other studies, and bibliographies of other studies examined in the Community Residences Information Services Program's "There Goes the Neighborhood".

II. METHODOLOGY

A. DEFINITION OF "GROUP HOME"

The State of Maryland defines a "group home" as a residence in which four or more adults are living. An alternative living unit (ALU) is defined by the State as a residence where three or less adults are in residence. In this study, group homes are defined as alternative living units (ALUs) administered either by the State of Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration or the Baltimore County Bureau of Mental Health. There were a total of 8 Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation group homes and 45 Developmental Disabilities group homes in this study.

B. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study examines possible impact upon residential property values in three ways:

- (1) Sales prices of homes were analyzed for a two-year period before and a two-year period after the group home placement in the neighborhood.
- (2) Sale information from those neighborhoods that do not have an group home were used as a control for the studied neighborhoods. This was done by comparing the prices in the entire Zip Code with those in neighborhoods where group homes were placed.
- (3) Sale prices were compared to County-wide averages during the periods.

The date of occupancy of the group home was used as the causal event instead of the date of sale because it is possible that neighborhood residents may not have become aware of a home's use for persons with disabilities until after it is occupied. Sales indicators included:

- o Number of sales before and after occupancy of the group home.
- o Mean sales price before and after occupancy.

If available, the sales data was taken from residential property sales within a one-half mile radius around the group home. This radius was utilized under the assumption that areas beyond this distance could not be affected. If comparable residential sales data for a one-half radius was not available, data from the entire Zip Code was utilized. In order to examine the effect of group home placement on neighborhood property values for a two-year period, only group homes established in or before 1992 in predominantly residential neighborhoods were considered in this study - which began in 1992.

C. SOURCES OF DATA

Four sources of data were used. First, the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors' Central Maryland Multiple Listing Service (CMMLS) provided residential property sales data for the past 18 months. CMMLS is a reliable national database that is used by Realtors to

locate residential listings and recent sales for comparisons when determining a list price for residential sales. CMMLS data is available for a variety of distances, including a one-half mile radius of a residential property.

The second source of sales data was the Lusk Sales Directories for 1983 through 1991. The Lusk Sales Directories are a highly reliable source of sales data, and are the most commonly utilized source by real estate professionals in the Baltimore metropolitan area. The Lusk sales data was used to analyze the mean sales prices two years before and two years after the group home establishment. The earliest occupancy date of the group homes was 1985. Therefore, sales data begins in 1983. Because Lusk data is only available for entire Zip Codes, the effect of group homes that were established over 18 months ago (or having a post-test control time period including times over 18 months ago) is tested for the entire Zip Code rather than the one-half mile radius.

The other sources of data solely were utilized to compare changes in the relevant neighborhoods and control areas to Baltimore County as a whole. The third source of data was the Maryland Association of Realtors' Maryland Real Estate Facts and Forecasts between 1982 and 1989. Finally, the data also was compared to the Baltimore Regional Council of Governments' "Residential Property Sales in Maryland" reports. Analysis included data from this source for 1989 through 1991.

Because of the incompleteness of some of the data and the mixed availability of one-half mile radius data because of the time factor, exact data was not available for some of the individual neighborhood studies. In the absence of access to the best data source, the most appropriate data source was utilized to construct the best analysis for comparison. While one-half mile radius data is better for assessing neighborhood impact, Zip Code data is comparable.

III. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A. FINDINGS

It was found that approximately 50% of the neighborhoods' residential property values were impacted positively and 50% were impacted negatively by group home placement. Some 3 (42.9%) of the 7 neighborhoods with Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation group homes showed an increase in property values that was higher than that of the control neighborhoods. On the other hand, 4 (57.1%) of the 7 showed a decrease in property values.

Of the 28 neighborhoods with a Developmental Disabilities group home, 13 (46.4%) had property value change rates that were above those of the control neighborhoods. A total of 15 (53.6%) of the neighborhoods with group homes had property value change rates that were below those of the control neighborhoods.

This mixed result indicates that group home placement cannot be considered a certain predictor or cause of residential property decline or improvement. This conclusion is similar to those of the various other studies that have been done in the United States and Canada in the past 15 years.

B. DISCUSSION OF RELEVANT ISSUES

It must be noted that there are many factors that influence neighborhood property values. Important factors may include prevailing neighborhood real estate valuation trends, economic recessionary forces, the location of industrial sites or major transportation highways, public school closing/opening, nearby positive or negative occurrences, felt increases/decreases in crime, increases/decreases in vacancies, etc. By solely considering the total property value change, this study simplifies a complex reality. However, the use of control neighborhoods acts to improve the validity of this study's approach. During this period, several Baltimore County neighborhoods - including some included in this study - experienced negative property value changes. This was partially due to the persistent economic recession that occurred during this time. During a period of such negative housing value change, the houses that are sold would probably be sold for less than their true market value in a normal (i.e., not economically distressed) market. Therefore, it would be expected that group home placement in such neighborhoods would indicate a lower property value direction. This study also found that group home placement did not affect this change in either a positive or a negative direction. In conclusion, this study has found that group home placement cannot be said to have caused residential property value decline in Baltimore County. While some individual neighborhoods may have witnessed a decline in value, some experienced a positive value growth. Baltimore County's experience with group homes has been the same as many other communities across the country, in which hard data indicates no direct linkage between group home placement and property value. It is hoped that this objective study has helped ease the fears of neighborhood residents that group homes are linked to neighborhood decline.

STATISTICS ON GROUP HOMES IN THE STUDY

GROUP A: MENTAL HEALTH RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

1. **ALU in Catonsville 21228**

Established - July, 1990

Pre-Test - July 1988 - June 1990 169 \$87,554

Post-Test - July 1990 - June 1992 1 74,900

Change: -14.4%

Control Area

Pre-Test - 1990 median: \$117,600.

Post-Test - June 1992 154 121,000
Change: +2.9%

2. ALU in Baltimore 21236

Established - Nov., 1988

Pre-Test - Nov. 1986 - Oct. 1988 0 -
Post-Test - Nov. 1988 - Oct. 1990 0 -
Change: NA

Control Area

Pre-Test - Oct. 1988 1162 96,267
Post-Test - Oct. 1990 72 115,685
Change: +20.2%

3. ALU in Dundalk 21222

Established - Feb., 1991

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Pre-Test - Feb. 1989 - Jan. 1991 15 70,546
Post-Test - Feb. 1991 - Jan. 1993 1224 71,531
Change: +1.4%

Control Area

Pre-Test - Jan. 1991 26 69,200
Post-Test - Jan. 1993 42 73,000
Change: +5.5%

4. ALU in Dundalk 21222

Established - May, 1992

Pre-Test - May 1990 - Apr. 1992 6 76,650
Post-Test - May 1992 - May 1993 11 64,663
Change: -15.6%

Control Area

Pre-Test - Apr. 1992 38 73,500

Post-Test - Oct. 1993 29 76,000
Change: +3.4%

5. ALU in Reisterstown 21136

Established - Apr., 1991

Pre-Test - Apr. 1989 - Mar. 1991 1024 115,009
Post-Test - Apr. 1991 - Mar. 1993 345 140,750
Change: +22.4%

Average
Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Control Area

Mar. 1991 34 108,000
Mar. 1993 39 117,500
Change +8.8%

6. Catonsville 21228 Dec., 1991

Dec. 1989 - Nov. 1991 1704 119,054
Dec. 1991 - May 1993 116 149,356
Change +25.5%

Control Area

Nov. 1991 35 130,000
Oct. 1993 35 115,450
Change -11.2%

7. Rossville 21236 July, 1991

July 1989 - June 1991 1574 115,726
July 1991 - May 1993 42 99,277
Change -14.2%

Control Area

June 1991 69 115,100
June 1993 31 100,000
Change -13.1%

8. Fullerton 21236 Dec., 1992

Dec. 1990 - Nov. 1992 34 99,966

Dec. 1992 - May 1993 7 97,400

Change -2.6%

Control Area

Nov. 1992 67 118,500

Oct. 1993 30 105,000

Change -11.4%

GROUP B: DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION

Date of Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Establishment Sales Price

1. Woodlawn 21207 Nov., 1988

Nov. 1986 - Oct. 1988 0 0

Nov. 1988 - Oct. 1990 1776 \$97,980

Change NA

Control Area

Oct. 1988 1449 122,518

Oct. 1990 68 83,800

Change -31.6%

2. Woodlawn 21207 Nov., 1988

Nov. 1986 - Oct. 1988 0 0

Nov. 1988 - Oct. 1990 1776 97,980

Change NA

Control Area

Oct. 1988 1449 122,518

Oct. 1990 68 83,800

Change -31.6%

3. North Catonsville 21228 Mar., 1990

Mar. 1988 - Feb. 1990 967 95,706

Mar. 1990 - Feb. 1992 1570 128,888

Change +34.7%

Control Area

1990 median: \$117,600.

Feb. 1992 48 125,000
Change +6.3%

4. North Woodlawn 21208 Dec., 1988

Dec. 1986 - Nov. 1988 0 0
Dec. 1988 - Nov. 1990 634 140,518
Change NA

Control Area

Nov. 1988 690 131,190
Dec. 1990 29 112,900
Change -13.9%

5. Sparks 21152 Jan., 1991

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Jan. 1989 - Dec. 1990 449 153,056
Jan. 1991 - May 1993 7 446,414
Change +191.7%

Control Area

Jan. 1991 5 143,000
Dec. 1992 8 160,900
Change +12.5%

6. Baltimore 21209 Dec., 1989

Dec. 1987 - Nov. 1989 265 151,031
Dec. 1989 - Nov. 1991 553 158,678
Change +5.1%

Control Area

1990 median: \$164,772.
Nov. 1991 17 140,000
Change -15.0%

7. Baltimore 21209 Oct., 1990

Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 0 0

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 36 156,591
Change NA

Control Area

1990 median: \$164,772.
Sept. 1992 11 174,047
Change +5.6%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

8. Owings Mills 21117 Oct., 1988

Oct. 1986 - Sep. 1988 0 0
Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 1287 176,593
Change NA

Control Area

1990-1991 change: 0%.
1990 median: \$123,450.
Change NA

9. East Reisterstown 21136 June, 1989

June 1987 - May 1989 184 115,927
June 1989 - May 1991 1115 88,669
Change -23.5%

Control Area

1990 median: \$116,390.
Apr. 1991 34 108,000
Change -7.2%

10. North Catonsville 21228 Aug., 1989

Aug. 1987 - July 1989 416 117,342
Aug. 1989 - July 1991 (Oct. 1991) 1601 137,405
Change +17.1%

Control Area

June 1990 416 117,342
Oct. 1991 73 128,000

Change +9.1%

11. Cockeysville 21093 Aug., 1989

Aug. 1987 - July 1989 354 187,340

Aug. 1989 - July 1991 1299 193,513

Change +3.3%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Control Area

1990 median: \$163,350. 1990-1991 change: +1%.

Oct. 1991 47 175,000

Change +7.1%

12. Reisterstown 21136 Oct., 1990

Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 992 115,682

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 173 123,327

Change +6.6%

Control Area

Sep. 1990 23 107,990

Sep. 1992 31 125,000

Change +15.8%

13. Baynesville 21234 Nov., 1990

Nov. 1988 - Oct. 1990 1709 99,197

Nov. 1990 - Oct. 1992 84 86,566

Change -12.7%

Control Area

Nov. 1990 7 64,500

Oct. 1992 69 109,665

Change +70.0%

14. West Randallstown 21133 Nov., 1990

Nov. 1988 - Oct. 1990 771 \$107,020

Nov. 1990 - Oct. 1992 78 109,028

Change +1.9%

Control Area

Dec. 1990 40 \$117,900

Oct. 1992 32 107,300

Change -9.0%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

15. Randallstown 21133 Oct., 1990

Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 764 107,910

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 129 111,141

Change +3.0%

Control Area

Sep. 1990 34 112,000

Sep. 1992 32 107,000

Change -4.5%

16. Fullerton 21236 Oct., 1990

Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 1546 114,813

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 3 94,800

Change -17.4%

Control Area

Sep. 1990 23 107,990

Sep. 1992 49 106,940

Change -1.0%

17. Pikesville 21208 May, 1990

May 1988 - Apr. 1990 671 106,965

May 1990 - Apr. 1992 839 154,109

Change +44.1%

Control Area

1990 median: \$109,513.

Apr. 1992 18 112,100

Change +2.4%

18. Fullerton 21234 Feb., 1992

Feb. 1990 - Jan. 1992 1535 95,565

Feb. 1992 - May 1993 206 96,979

Change +1.5%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Control Area

Jan. 1992 52 97,000

May 1993 56 100,875

Change +4.0%

19. Owings Mills 21117 Nov., 1989

Nov. 1987 - Oct. 1989 526 170,491

Nov. 1989 - Oct. 1991 482 168,589

Change -1.1%

Control Area

1990 median: \$123,450.

Oct. 1991 66 130,203

Change +5.5%

20. North Woodlawn 21208 Dec., 1990

Dec. 1988 - Nov. 1990 1034 140,518

Dec. 1990 - Nov. 1992 227 105,138

Change -25.2%

Control Area

Nov. 1990 29 112,900

Nov. 1992 28 134,015

Change +18.7%

21. West Randallstown 21133 June, 1990

June 1988 - May 1990 586 107,443

June 1990 - May 1992 901 115,701

Change +7.7%

Control Area

1990 median: \$106,080.

May 1992 36 114,900

Change +8.4%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

22. Fullerton 21236 July, 1991

July 1989 - June 1991 1574 115,726

July 1991 - May 1993 91 83,193

Change -28.1%

Control Area

Jan. 1991 46 115,100

Dec. 1992 67 109,500

Change -4.9%

23. Rodgers Forge 21212 Feb., 1985

Feb. 1983 - Jan. 1985 0 0

Feb. 1985 - Jan. 1987 0 0

Change NA

Control Area

Jan. 1985 244 105,042

Jan. 1987 272 122,106

Change +16.2%

24. West Randallstown 21133 Mar., 1991

Mar. 1989 - Feb. 1991 844 109,921

Mar. 1991 - Feb. 1993 132 107,544

Change -2.2%

Control Area

Feb. 1991 32 99,000

Dec. 1992 35 119,000

Change +20.2%

25. Glenmont 21239 Aug., 1990

Aug. 1988 - July 1990 514 57,979

Aug. 1990 - July 1992 511 63,597

Change +9.7%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Control Area

1990 median: \$109,760

June 1992 46 68,000

Change -35.3%

26. North Woodlawn 21207 June, 1990

June 1988 - May 1990 1360 98,947

June 1990 - May 1992 2900 102,820

Change +3.9%

Control Area

1990 median: \$89,890.

May 1992 66 90,185

Change +0.4%

27. North Catonsville 21207 June, 1991

June 1989 - May 1991 1868 98,492

June 1991 - May 1993 158 116,937

Change +18.7%

Control Area

May 1991 52 90,000

May 1993 28 86,500

Change -3.9%

28. Rosedale 21206 July, 1986

July 1984 - June 1986 0 0

July 1986 - June 1988 0 0

Change NA

Control Area

June 1986 242 73,874

June 1988 243 66,449

Change -10.1%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

29. Rosedale 21206 Mar., 1990

Mar. 1988 - Feb. 1990 685 64,631

Mar. 1990 - Feb. 1992 1016 65,647

Change +1.6%

Control Area

1990 median: \$78,960.

Feb. 1992 5 74,000

Change -6.3%

30. Parkton 21053 Jan., 1991

Jan. 1989 - Dec. 1990 69 167,949

Jan. 1991 - Dec. 1992 15 176,428

Change +5.4%

Control Area

Dec. 1990 0 0

Dec. 1992 0 0

Change NA

31. Woodlawn 21207 Mar., 1990

Mar. 1988 - Feb. 1990 1110 96,977

Mar. 1990 - Feb. 1992 1601 107,960

Change +11.3%

Control Area

1990 median: \$89,890.

Feb. 1992 31 90,900

Change +1.1%

32. Rosedale 21206 June, 1990

June 1988 - May 1990 824 64,325

June 1990 - May 1992 960 66,077
Change +2.7%

Average
Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Control Area

May 1990 8 87,400
May 1992 11 94,500
Change +8.1%

33. Cub Hill 21234 July, 1989

July 1987 - June 1989 430 98,793
July 1989 - June 1991 1628 89,027
Change -9.9%

Control Area

1990 median: \$94,570.
Oct. 1991 65 94,750
Change +0.2%

34. Baltimore 21204 July, 1988

July 1986 - June 1988 0 0
July 1988 - June 1990 767 223,737
Change NA

Control Area

1990 median: \$165,750.
1991 median: \$162,500.
1990-1991 change: -2%.

35. Eudowood 21234 July, 1988

July 1986 - June 1988 0 0
July 1988 - June 1990 1380 98,690
Change NA

Control Area

1990 median: \$94,570.
1991 median: \$96,500.

1990-1991 change: +2%.

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

36. North Randallstown 21133 July, 1988

July 1986 - June 1988 0 0

July 1988 - June 1990 628 107,582

Change NA

Control Area

1990 median: \$106,080.

1991 median: \$110,500.

1990-1991 change: +4%.

37. North of Perry Hall 21236 Apr., 1989

Apr. 1987 - Mar. 1989 1259 115,818

Apr. 1989 - Mar. 1991 1661 116,699

Change +0.8%

Control Area

1990 median: \$107,573.

July 1991 69 115,100

Change +7.0%

38. Bird River 21162 Dec., 1990

Dec. 1988 - Nov. 1990 0 0

Dec. 1990 - Nov. 1992 14 114,126

Change NA

Control Area

Nov. 1990 1 90,000

Nov. 1992 20 102,000

Change +13.3%

39. Carney 21234 Oct., 1990

Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 1693 99,204

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 65 83,216

Change -16.1%

Average

Address and 2-Year Periods Sales Price

Control Area

Sep. 1990 73 95,490

Sep. 1992 58 109,500

Change +14.7%

40. Rossville 21237 Oct., 1990

Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 430 NA

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 68 91,642

Change NA

Control Area

1990 median: \$98,975.

Sep. 1992 19 87,000

Change -12.1%

41. Rosedale 21237 Oct., 1990

Oct. 1988 - Sep. 1990 430 NA

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 61 104,274

Change NA

Control Area

1990 median: \$92,500.

Oct. 1990 - Sep. 1992 19 87,000

Change -5.9%

42. Rossville 21221 July, 1989

July 1987 - June 1989 159 87,848

July 1989 - June 1991 982 84,066

Change -4.3%

Control Area

NA

RELEVANT FINDINGS FROM OTHER STUDIES

A. INTRODUCTION

All of the objective studies that have been conducted in the United States and Canada in the past 15 years concerning the effect of group home placement show no negative effects on property values, neighborhood safety, or quality of life. This section summarizes the studies that are the most relevant to this examination.

B. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT STUDIES

1. Review of 58 National Studies

"There Goes the Neighborhood..." - published by the Community Residences Information Services Program (CRISP) in 1990 - is a summary of the 58 studies that have been done of the effects of group homes and treatment facilities on the neighborhoods in which they are placed. A total of 25 studies consider the impact upon residential property values. Some 22 of these studies deal with facilities for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled, 5 with the mentally ill, and 9 with facilities serving both groups. There are 9 studies that are concerned with formerly institutionalized or service-dependent populations in general.

No studies were found to indicate a negative impact of group home placement upon any aspect of neighborhood life. The studies found that group home placement had not lowered property values or increased turnover, had not increased crime, and had not changed the neighborhood's character. The group homes had not deteriorated or become conspicuous institutional landmarks. The studies did find that all communities had come to accept group homes, and that group home residents have benefitted from the access to a wider community life (Community Residences Information Services Program, "There Goes the Neighborhood...", White Plains, New York: CRISP, 1990, p. 92).

The studies that evaluated the effect of group home placement on residential property values are listed in the next section of the Appendix, Bibliography of Other Studies Examined in CRISP's "There Goes the Neighborhood..."

2. Group Homes and Property Values: A Second Look

Authors Christopher and Christine M. Mitchell analyzed sales price as a percentage of list price, as well as the number of days the property was market-listed before and after the group home was occupied. Some 3 of the 5 homes showed no significant difference in both measures; 2 had measures post-occupancy that were more positive than the before measures.

3. Illinois State Crime Study

This State-wide study - Daniel Lauber, Impacts on the Surrounding Neighborhood of Group Homes for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Evanston, Illinois: Planning Communications, 1986 - found that the crime rate for persons with developmental disabilities who live in group homes is substantially lower than that for the general population.

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