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# Revitalization of the Marina City Batam Area Through the Development of Coastal Public Spaces Based on Sustainable Tourism

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#### Abstract

Marina City, initially developed as an integrated tourism complex, has declined into a dead zone due to land-use changes and poor management, causing economic decline, loss of Malay cultural identity, and environmental degradation. This study aims to formulate a revitalization strategy through coastal public space design that integrates cultural values, maritime architecture, and sustainable tourism principles. The research employed community preference surveys, literature review, and site analysis to generate a contextually adaptive design framework. Results indicate that 67% of respondents favored a Modern Vernacular approach, realized through the Solmera Obelia concept, which combines Malay cultural identity with modern elements in public open spaces, family recreation facilities, and eco-friendly materials. The proposed revitalization demonstrates how integrating cultural, social, and ecological dimensions can transform Marina City into an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable waterfront destination, while simultaneously strengthening cultural identity and supporting local socio-economic recovery. m for public spaces that are flexible, family-friendly, and environmentally adaptive. This design not only restores the area's image but also strengthens social connectivity and supports sustainable coastal tourism in Batam.

# **Keywords:**

Revitalization, Marina City, Public Space, Waterfront Architecture, Sustainability

## Introduction

Marina City Batam, located on Jl. KH Ahmad Dahlan, Tanjung Riau, Sekupang, is a coastal area with strategic potential as a tourist destination. According to the spatial planning outlined in Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2011 on the Spatial Plan for the Batam, Bintan, and Karimun Areas, this region falls under Zone B5, designated as a tourism zone. This classification presents a significant opportunity to develop environmentally friendly public coastal spaces that generate positive social impacts. However, following the government's ban on gambling in 2006, the area has faced severe physical, social, and economic decline. Once celebrated as the "Las Vegas of Indonesia," Marina City is now considered a ghost town, marked by the loss of its primary function, a tarnished regional image, and a rise in illegal activities and crime. This "ghost town" phenomenon not only affects the physical condition of the area but also severs the community's social connection to the space and diminishes economic activity. Various revitalization efforts have been undertaken, but most have focused solely on building commercial facilities without addressing the social and cultural roots of the local community.

One promising approach is the revitalization of coastal public spaces. Coastal public spaces have unique characteristics influenced by maritime conditions, such as tides, winds, and coastal ecosystems (Triatmoddjoo, 1999). Beyond serving as venues for social activities, these spaces act as intersections between humans, nature, and culture. Global trends in waterfront development demonstrate that the success of a coastal public space is



determined by public accessibility, integration with urban structures, and the flexible and inclusive use of space (Ragheb & EL-Ashmawy, 2020).

This study is crucial as no prior efforts explicitly integrate Malay cultural values into the development of Marina City's coastal spaces. While studies like Dharmawan & Halim (2022) emphasize tourist attractions and commercial strategies, they overlook experiential design, community engagement, and vernacular elements responsive to tropical coastal environments.

Additionally, such studies have not deeply examined the application of vernacular elements that respond to the tropical coastal environment. Therefore, this research offers an alternative approach by designing coastal public spaces rooted in maritime architecture and employing a research-by-design methodology. This approach emphasizes the principles of human-space-nature interconnectivity, spatial flexibility, and local nuances as the foundation for an inclusive and sustainable revitalization strategy.

## **Literature Review**

## A. Coastal Public Space

Coastal public spaces are strategic elements in the structure of waterfront cities, serving as bridges between human interaction and the natural environment, particularly the marine ecosystem. Generally, these spaces function not only as venues for social and economic activities but also as mediums for cultural and spiritual expression within coastal communities (H. Whyte, 2017). Several studies highlight the importance of natural elements (such as coastal vegetation and land contours), built elements (such as pedestrian pathways and urban furniture), socio-economic activities, and spatial connectivity as key pillars in designing inclusive and context-sensitive coastal public spaces (Egam et al., 2023).

In the context of sustainability, coastal public spaces must prioritize ecological functions. This involves designs that go beyond aesthetics to ensure resilience against coastal dynamics such as tides and seawater corrosion. Additionally, (Seamon & Sowers, 2008) emphasize the importance of a sense of place in designing public spaces to avoid placelessness or the absence of spatial meaning. Furthermore, the design should foster a sense of safety and comfort for its users while accommodating a variety of activities within it (Rangkuty et al., 2024). This is essential for building users' emotional and social attachment to the space.

#### B. Revitalization

Revitalization in an urban context is the process of rejuvenating degraded areas through physical, social, and economic approaches (Tiesdel, 1996; Danisworo, 2000). Beyond merely enhancing the city's appearance, revitalization must address community needs and foster a more inclusive environment. In coastal areas like Marina City, revitalization aims not only to improve physical infrastructure but also to restore social and economic functions through coastal public spaces. This includes enhancing accessibility, developing eco-friendly facilities, and creating areas that encourage social interaction and recreation.

Laretna (2002) emphasizes that successful revitalization goes beyond physical appearance to address local well-being and cultural preservation. This approach aligns with (Harvey, 2012) concept of the right to the city, which argues that urban spaces should be co-created by the community—not solely through government or corporate intervention.

Therefore, revitalization strategies that prioritize community participation, local identity, and sustainability are crucial to prevent socio-economic changes that displace local communities and cause social exclusion.

## C. Maritime Architecture

Maritime refers to anything related to the sea or marine environments (Indonesian Dictionary, 2008). Maritime Architecture, or waterscape architecture, is a planning and design concept that emphasizes the use of water elements (such as the sea, rivers, lakes, etc.) as a central feature of a structure or space. Frank Lloyd Wright's Waterfront Architecture concept highlights the design of mass and building form by embracing harmony between nature, the environment, and humans in architectural planning. The goal of this design principle is to develop both



the physical and non-physical potential of waterfront areas, while addressing existing and potential problems—without neglecting environmental and human needs—to achieve better spatial planning (Sastrawati, 2003).

In the context of Marina City's revitalization, maritime architecture utilizes the potential of water as a primary attraction in developing sustainable public spaces. The design principles for coastal areas are guided by the need to provide public space, pedestrian paths, scenic views, and highlight the area's unique features and local character.

- Waterfront Development refers to the planning of water-adjacent areas with consideration for public space connectivity, aquatic environments, and ecological sustainability in support of social, economic, and cultural functions.
- 2) Open Spaces, such as decks, plazas, and waterfront parks, serve as connections between people and water while supporting recreational activities.
- 3) Durable and Natural Materials, such as ironwood, bamboo, or corrosion-resistant concrete, are chosen for their aesthetics and resilience in coastal conditions.
- 4) Design Resilient to Wind and Saltwater involves architectural forms that account for strong winds and tides, using aerodynamic shapes, anti-corrosion technologies, and efficient drainage systems.

By applying these principles, Marina City can be revitalized into an attractive, functional, and environmentally friendly coastal area. Public spaces designed with this concept can enhance aesthetics and promote sustainable tourism by optimizing the natural potential of the coastal environment.

#### D. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism emphasizes the integration of ecological, socio-cultural, and economic pillars to ensure balanced and long-term development. Rather than focusing solely on economic outcomes, this approach underlines the importance of ecological preservation and cultural authenticity while promoting inclusive growth. As highlighted by Dangi and Jamal (2016), sustainability in tourism requires an integrated framework that strengthens community participation and resilience. In the context of Marina City, these principles provide a foundation for revitalization strategies that combine environmental protection, local cultural identity, and economic revitalization to create resilient and inclusive coastal public spaces.

# **Research Methods**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with research by design method, where the coastal recreational park design is developed to address the degradation issues in Marina City. This approach allows for the integration of contextual studies, community participation, and architectural design exploration simultaneously and reflectively. The focus of the design is the sustainable revitalization of coastal public spaces, aiming to restore the social, economic, and ecological functions that have declined due to regulatory changes and illegal activities.

The design strategy includes green spaces, small-scale commercial facilities, the use of environmentally friendly materials, coastal ecosystem protection, and the integration of local Malay cultural elements into the spatial structure. The case study focuses on a strategic site in Marina City selected based on three main criteria: visual potential (open sea views), accessibility from the city centre, and proximity to potential tourist routes. This site is considered representative ina addressing the area's core issues and has the capacity to initiate a gradual revitalization process both spatially and socially. (Location context is considered on three scales: Batam city, Marina City area, and the design site.)









Figure 2. Marina Map



Figure 3. Site Location

Primary data were collected through field observations, semi-structured interviews, and a preference survey of 30 respondents regarding two alternative design concepts. The survey aimed to understand community perceptions of public space needs and visual preferences between the two design options prepared by the research team. Each respondent was given an explanation of the characteristics of both concepts and asked to choose the one they found most suitable. Secondary data were obtained from literature, spatial planning regulations, and relevant precedent studies on coastal public space revitalization and marine architecture principles. A descriptive-qualitative analysis was then synthesized to develop a comprehensive design concept. The research by design approach was applied iteratively, starting from problem and potential identification, concept formulation, public validation, to the final design that integrates community aspirations and the local tropical coastal values of Batam. The resulting design is not only a spatial solution but also a reflection of local aspirations and context.



Figure 4. Research by Design Process Flow

#### **Results and Discussion**

1. Existing Site Conditions

Table 1. Existing Site Conditions			
No	Aspects	Information	Picture
1	Location and context of site	Based on Presidential Decree No. 87 of 2011, the Batam Marina area is included in Zone B5 (tourism zone) for domestic and international tourists.	Figure 5. Zoning Designation
2	Accessibility	Accessible via Jl. KH Ahmad Dahlan, Jl. Kartini, and Jl. Tanjung Uncang. There are public transportation stops and routes from the western and central areas of Batam with routes.	Figure 6 Valuelle A

Figure 6. Vehicle Access





Figure 7. Accessibility

3 Vegetation

Dominated by coconut trees and tall tropical trees that create natural shade and a cool microclimate, but have not been optimally managed with the potential of Visual Natural Landscape facing the sea and the harbor; the natural atmosphere supports the concept of sustainability-based development and outdoor recreation.



Figure 8. Highway View from Site



Figure 9. Right Side View

Based on physical observations in the field, several major issues were identified in the Marina City area, particularly concerning infrastructure, public facilities, and spatial usability. These problems create functional barriers that directly affect the comfort and use of public spaces by the community.





Figure 10. Road Conditions Around Site

Additionally, a perception survey was conducted to reinforce the observational findings and to obtain confirmation from the community regarding the problems they experience when visiting the area. A summary of these findings is presented in the following table:

**Table 2. Aspect Evaluation** 

No	Aspects	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Deficiencies			
1	Damaged road conditions	10	33.3%
2	Insufficient Lighting	15	50%
3	Lack of public facilities	17	56,7%



4	Lack of security	13	43,3%
5 Poorly organized social and		8	26,7%
	recreational activities		
		Advantages	
6	Beautiful sea view	25	83,3%
7	Natural and cool atmosphere	16	53,3%
8	Potential for local culinary	5	16,7%
	tourism		

From the data, the main issues most felt by the community are the lack of basic infrastructure and public facilities such as toilets, seating, lighting, and security. These shortcomings make the area uncomfortable and even unsafe, especially at night. As one respondent expressed: "The roads are often damaged, and lighting is insufficient, making this area uncomfortable to visit, particularly after dark."

Conceptually, this situation reflects a failure of the basic functions of public space, as explained by William (Whyte, 2017), who emphasized that an ideal public space should invite people to stay, move, and interact safely and comfortably. The absence of facilities and social management has left the area stagnant and isolated from the community's social dynamics.

Most respondents identified the sea view and natural atmosphere as the area's main strengths. This suggests that design interventions should not aim to create something entirely new but rather activate the latent potential that already exists through a contextual, ecological, and participatory approach. Thus, the main challenge lies not in the location or visual appeal but in the lack of adequate spatial structure, vibrant public programming, and adaptive management that meets user needs.

## 2. Social Activity Analysis and Community Perception

Field observations reveal that social activities currently occurring in Marina City are mostly passive and informal, such as fishing, relaxing, or walking. There are no organized social activities or facilities that actively and sustainably encourage interaction among residents. This condition contributes to the decline in public space quality and reinforces the perception of the area as a "dead city."

Survey data from 30 respondents show that 92% strongly express the urgent need for revitalizing the area by creating a safe, comfortable, and inclusive coastal public space. They want a space that supports diverse social, cultural, and recreational activities involving all community groups, especially families and local communities. In this context, the concept of the right to the city (Harvey, 2012) emphasizes the importance of community participation in urban space management so that these spaces reflect local aspirations and identities. The principles of placemaking and sense of place (Seamon & Sowers, 2008) also highlight that effective public spaces should foster emotional and social bonds through designs that are culturally and environmentally sensitive.

## a. Design Concept Formulation

The design concept for the coastal recreational park in Marina City was developed as part of the research by design approach, beginning with site analysis, identification of area problems, and literature review on coastal public spaces and relevant architectural approaches. Based on this analysis, two alternative concepts were created to accommodate the natural potential and the need for inclusive public spaces in the tropical coastal area.

Concept 1: Modern Vernacular





Figure 11. Concept 1

This concept is called Modern Vernacular because it combines local (vernacular) architectural elements with modern architectural styles and technologies that integrate sustainability systems. It emphasizes harmony with the environment and cultural identity. The color palette uses natural tones like earthy browns and creams, paired with local materials such as natural stone, wood, and rattan to create a warm, grounded space. The flexible open layout allows for organic circulation that blends seamlessly with the landscape.

#### Concept 2: Modern Mediterranean



Figure 12. Concept 2

Modern Mediterranean is a contemporary interpretation of architecture from Mediterranean countries, featuring a relaxed, warm, bright, and geometric aesthetic simplified in a modern way. It is characterized by a bright and neutral color palette using white, light cream, and pale gray, combined with materials such as exposed concrete and smooth plaster. Tropical vegetation is added as a visual accent, creating an elegant, fresh, and functionally flexible space.

To clarify the differences in character and approach between these two concepts, the following comparative table summarizes their main aspects. This comparison covers visual, spatial, material, and social potential dimensions to support the evaluation and selection process for the final design direction.



Table 3. Aspect Difference Between Concept 1 & Concept 2		
Aspect	Concept 1	Concept 2
Design Approach	Integration of modern design and tropical vernacular architecture	Minimalist modern style inspired by Mediterranean architecture
Color Palette	Earth tones: earthy brown, cream, stone gray	Light tones: white, light cream, soft gray
Dominant Materials	Wood, bamboo, natural stone, rattan (natural and local)	Exposed concrete, smooth plaster, light natural stone
Spatial Layout & Forrm	Organic, open, responsive to landscape	Symmetrical, soft geometry, curves as main elements
Landscape Strategy	Natural vegetative shading and landscape integration as part of the design	Tropical vegetation as contrasting accents against bright backdrop
Social character of Space	Family-friendly, inclusive, reinforcing local cultural ties	Aesthetic, contemporary, suited to young urban visitors

After designing the two concepts, a validation process was conducted through questionnaires distributed not only to direct users of Marina City—such as visitors, business owners, and local workers—but also to the general public in Batam City. This aimed to gather a broader perspective on community preferences for coastal public space development.

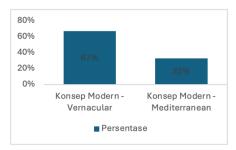


Figure 13. Interview Result Percentage

The survey results showed that most respondents (67%) favoured Concept 1, the Modern Vernacular approach, which emphasizes local cultural identity and a natural tropical atmosphere. This preference reflects the community's desire for recreational spaces that are not only aesthetic but also warm, familiar, and family-friendly. Several respondents mentioned that this concept aligns well with Marina City's coastal character and authentically reflects local culture. One respondent said, "I chose this concept because it highlights Marina's rich Malay culture."

Conversely, about 33% preferred Concept 2, the Modern Mediterranean style, known for its minimalist elegance. This concept appeals more to younger visitors and contemporary design enthusiasts who prioritize a fresh, modern visual appearance. Considering these validation results, Concept 1 (Modern Vernacular) was selected as the foundation for the final design development, as it best represents community needs, local character, and coastal sustainability principles.

#### b. Concept Development

Based on the evaluation results and community perception survey, Concept 1 with a Modern Vernacular approach was selected as the foundation for developing the coastal recreational park in Marina City. This choice reflects its strong alignment with the local context, social needs, and cultural aspirations of the community. Survey results indicate a preference for designs that integrate local identity and tropical sensibilities, consistent with the concept of sense of place (Seamon & Sowers, 2008) and Harvey's (2012) notion of the right to the city, which emphasize inclusivity and community participation in urban development.



The park is named Solmera Obelia, a combination of sol (sun), mere (sea), and Obelia (depth of time), reflecting the spirit of revitalizing the coastal area into an inclusive and meaningful public space. The spatial design of Solmera Obelia follows organic spatial principles, taking into account the natural land contours and preserving existing tropical vegetation. The zoning is arranged flexibly and connected through curved pedestrian paths that blend seamlessly with the landscape, creating an intuitive flow of movement that encourages exploration and supports social interaction. Integration with maritime architecture principles strengthens this connection through forms and materials that adapt to the coastal environment—such as open structures that respond to sea breezes, the use of waterfront views as key visual orientation, and water features that serve as spatial connectors. This approach not only enhances thermal comfort and local aesthetics, but also reinforces the area's identity as a vibrant and meaningful coastal public space.

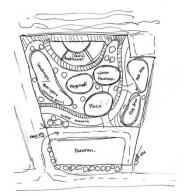


Figure 14. Zoning Concept



Figure 15. Conceptual Masterplan

The masterplan of the area integrates four main zones: (1) a service zone, which includes vehicle parking, a drop-off point, and a plaza; (2) an active and social zone, featuring an amphitheater, sitting areas, and pedestrian pathways; (3) an F&B (food and beverage) zone; and (4) a recreational zone, which includes a playground, floor fountain, and river stream. Circulation paths flow organically between vegetative elements and an artificial river stream, which serves not only as a thermal cooling element but also as a visual connector between different spaces. The parking area is strategically located at the edge of the site to maintain the comfort and integrity of the main activities without compromising accessibility. Through an approach that combines functionality, spatial comfort, and ecological sustainability, Solmera Obelia is envisioned to become a vibrant and purposeful coastal public space—a medium that not only rehabilitates the physical condition of the area but also reconstructs the social and cultural relationships of the Marina City coastal community.

## 3. Design Realization Details

## a. Service Zone



Figure 16. Plaza



Figure 17. Lobby



Figure 18. Drop-Off Point



The service zone in the Marina City recreational park design includes parking areas, a drop-off point, and a plaza that are seamlessly integrated as the main circulation hub for visitors. This zone is designed to address issues of accessibility and comfort upon arrival, which were previously hindered by damaged roads and unorganized spatial layouts. The parking lot is positioned conveniently near the main road, with clearly defined entry and exit routes. The drop-off area is designed to be spacious and safe for pedestrians, including families and the elderly. The plaza, located between the parking area and the main activity zones, serves as a welcoming and vibrant transitional space. It guides the flow of movement toward the park, food court, and community spaces while enhancing the overall visitor experience.

## b. Active and Social Zone



Figure 19. Amphiteather



Figure 21. Shelter



Figure 20. Seating Area



Figure 22. Pedestrian Ways

The active and social zone in the Marina City recreational park design includes an amphitheater, sitting areas, and pedestrian pathways, all thoughtfully integrated to encourage user interaction and revitalize the area's social function. This zone responds to the issue of a lack of organized social activities (26.7%) and the need for comfortable gathering spaces for all age groups. The amphitheater serves as an open-air venue for performances and community events, while the sitting areas are spread beneath the shade of tropical vegetation, creating informal and relaxing spots. The pedestrian pathways are wide, shaded, and seamlessly connected with other elements, allowing visitors to move around comfortably and safely. Altogether, this zone acts as the social heart of the park, fostering a vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive public space.

## c. Food and Beverage Zone



Figure 23. FnB Seating



Figure 24. FnB stall

The F&B zone in the Solmera Obelia park design is envisioned as a semi-open, relaxed space featuring a variety of mini bar-style food and beverage outlets, along with a dedicated area for live music performances. This zone is designed to activate the park during the late afternoon and evening, directly responding to the identified potential for local culinary tourism (16.7%) and the need for informal social gathering spaces.



Communal seating arrangements, warm evening lighting, and an open layout facing the main activity area make the F&B zone a hub for both economic and social activity. The inclusion of live music not only enhances the atmosphere but also provides a platform for local musicians and creative communities. As a result, this area serves not only as a dining destination but also as a vibrant cultural space that welcomes and engages people of all backgrounds.

## d. Recreation Zone







Figure 25. River

Figure 26. Playground

Figure 27. Floor Fountain

The recreational zone in the Marina City park design is a direct response to the lack of family-friendly public spaces and the limited availability of structured social activities (26.7%), as identified through surveys and field observations. Previously, the area lacked playground facilities or interactive features that could engage visitors across different age groups. To address this, the recreational zone includes a playground, an interactive floor fountain, and a man-made river stream—elements that are not only fun but also safe and educational. The presence of water features and open play areas brings a livelier atmosphere, enhances family engagement, and offers a more holistic and inclusive public space experience. This zone supports intergenerational social interaction and enriches the coastal area as a vibrant, community-centered destination.

#### 4. Indicators of Revitalization Success

To ensure the design truly addresses user needs, each success indicator identified through the community perception survey was translated into specific design decisions. The following table presents the direct relationship between community expectations and the design elements developed.

Although physical implementation has not yet occurred, these indicators can serve as evaluation tools to measure how well the design meets community needs. The table summarizes these Indicators based on a combination of respondent answer percentages and thematic analysis of open-ended responses:

Tabel 4. Indicators for Measuring the Effectiveness of Revitalization

Aspect	Survey Data (% Respondents)	Design Response/Solution
Public Facilities	56.7% complained about lack of facilities (toilets, seating, playground)	Added toilets, benches/seating areas, and children's playground
Lighting and Security	50% complained about poor lighting; 43.3% felt unsafe	Installed pedestrian path lighting, park illumination, and CCTV
Social and Community Spaces	26.7% noted lack of social and recreational activity spaces	Designed an open amphitheater for rehearsals, performances, community discussions, and open events
Local Character and Identity	67% chose Concept 1 for its alignment with local culture and tropical ambiance	Preserving the existing vegetation and integrating a tropical natural ambiance that aligns with the surrounding conditions.
Visual Comfort and Landscape	83.3% appreciated sea view; 53.3% liked natural, cool atmosphere	Amphitheater facing sea, preserved existing vegetation, used shade-giving tropical plants
Tourism Appeal	Family-friendly, inclusive, culturally engaging space; appeals to young urban visitors	Designed for inclusivity, cultural connection, and contemporary aesthetic



Local Economy	16.7% stressed importance of culinary	Added a semi-open culinary zone near the
	tourism and MSME spaces	plaza
Visitor Attraction	81% very likely to visit if area improved as expected	Created visually attractive spaces with seaside seating and family hangout areas
Urgency of Revitalization	92% emphasized revitalization is very important	Modular, phased design allowing functional partial completion

Based on these findings, the revitalization of Marina City has a high potential for success if the design aligns with community aspirations. The projected success rate could reach 80–90%, considering the significant public interest (81% of respondents stated they are "very likely" to visit) and the high level of urgency expressed (92% emphasized that revitalization is highly necessary).

#### Conclusions

The revitalization of Marina City is a crucial effort to restore the social, economic, and ecological functions of a coastal area that has undergone significant degradation. Using a research by design approach and supported by a survey of 30 respondents, the study identifies the community's desire for public spaces that are safe, inclusive, comfortable, and reflective of local cultural identity. The proposed coastal recreational park responds to these expectations by providing essential public amenities, adequate lighting, community zones, and areas for local culinary activities.

The final design, titled Solmera Obelia, serves not merely as a spatial solution but as a manifestation of the integration of ecological, social, and economic elements into a cohesive, flexible, family-friendly, and environmentally responsive public space. This concept is considered capable of not only restoring the image of Marina City as a "dead city" but also strengthening social connectivity and promoting sustainable coastal tourism.

To ensure sustainable implementation, long-term management involving public-private partnerships and active community participation is essential. Furthermore, ecological preservation through the conservation of vegetation and natural drainage systems must be prioritized to maintain environmental quality. This adaptive modular design may serve as a replicable model for revitalizing other stagnant coastal areas, while also supporting the growth of the local creative economy through designated zones for small businesses and community activities. Future research is recommended to evaluate post-implementation impacts and explore the integration of smart technologies in the management of coastal public spaces.

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