IPv4 to IPv6 modernization Journey

Note1: The intent of our journey is not to restructure the existing architecture; it is to enhance the current architecture to support IPv6 enablement.

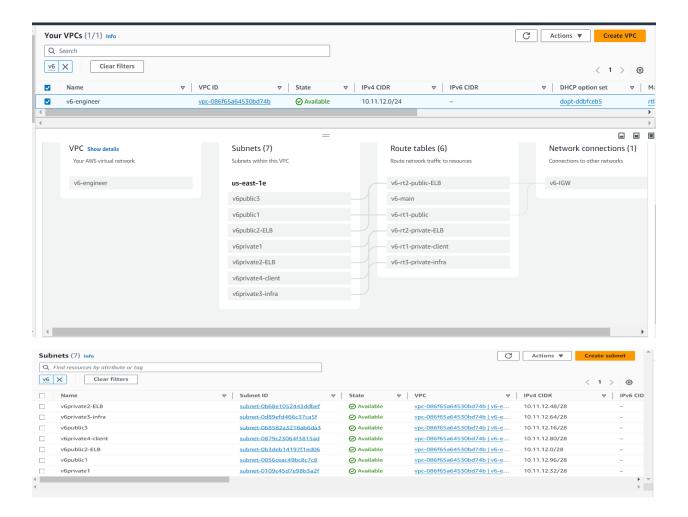
<u>Note2:</u> The M3 instance type does not support IPv6 connectivity. According to the AWS documentation, only the current generation instance types launched into IPv6-only subnets will have IPv6 addresses assigned. Some older instance types like M1, M2, M3, C1 and t1 do not support IPv6

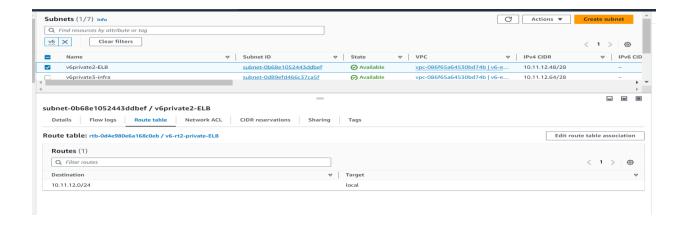
I would recommend testing with a newer t2.small or t3.micro instance type as those generally have better performance and are confirmed to support IPv6.

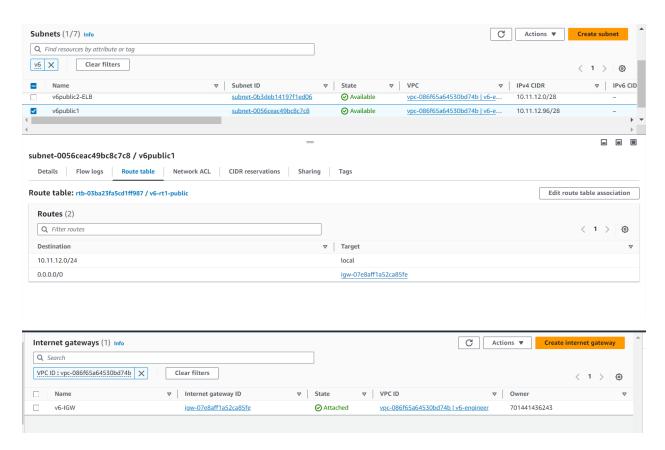
Link1: Which EC2 types support IPv6?

Link2: AWS services that support IPv6 - Amazon Virtual Private Cloud

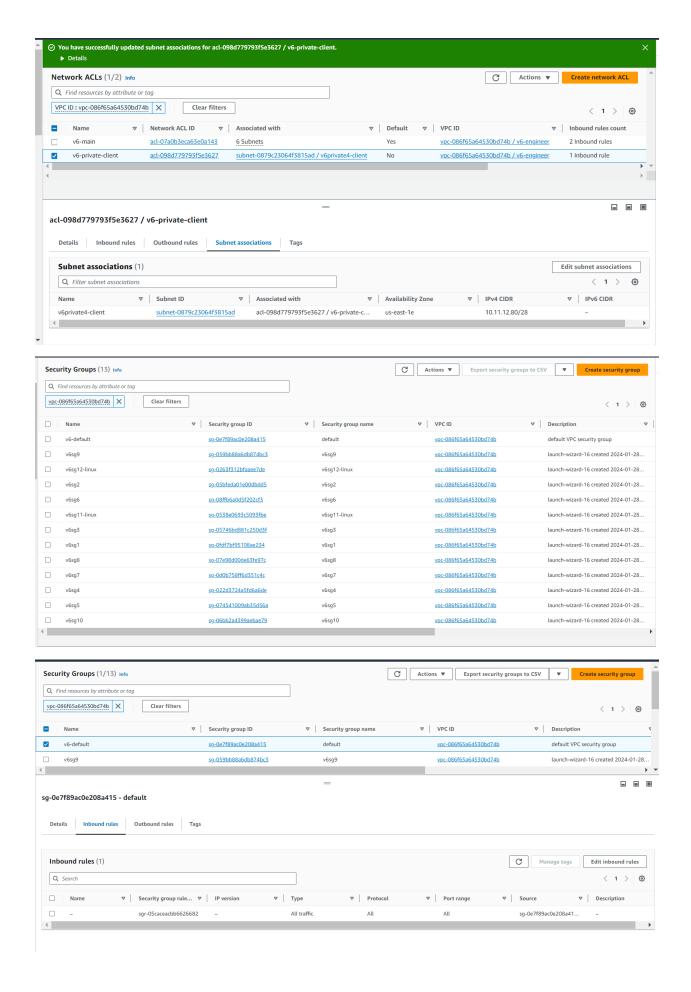
Link3: Instance types - Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud

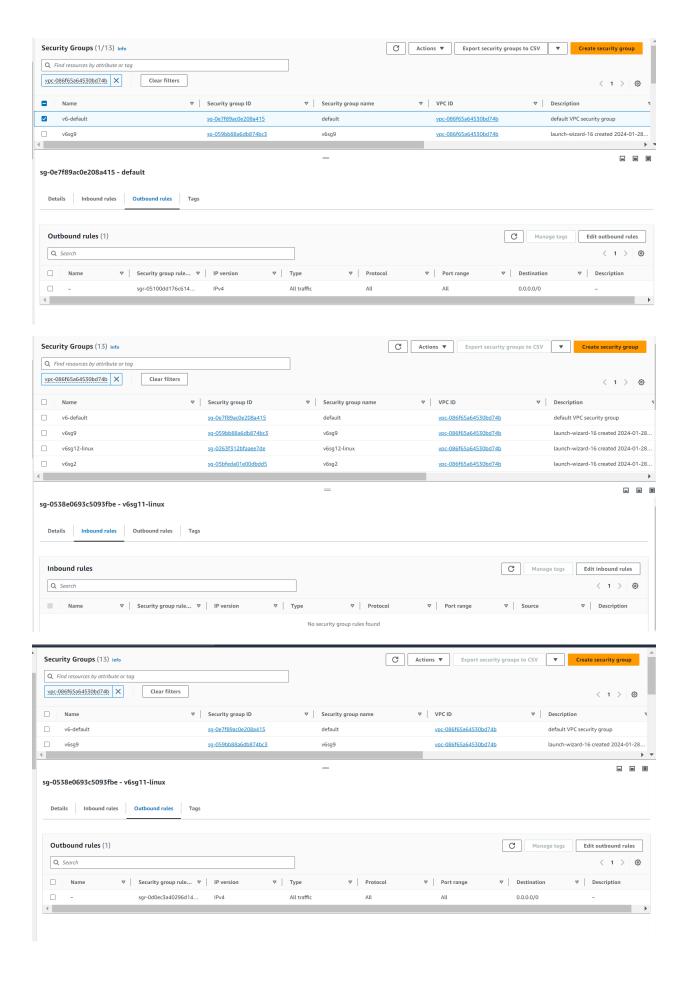






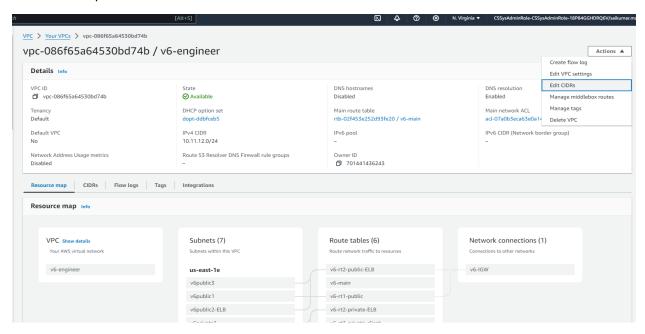
• The Internet Gateway (IGW) is not a focal point in this scenario. When your subnet consists solely of IPv6 addresses, the Egress-Only Internet Gateway must be used.

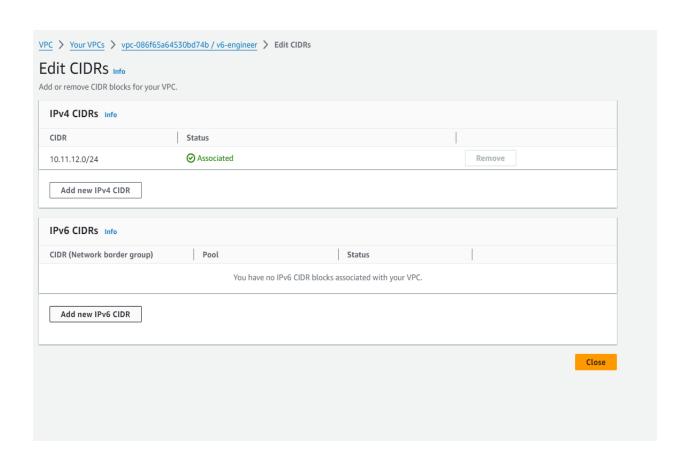


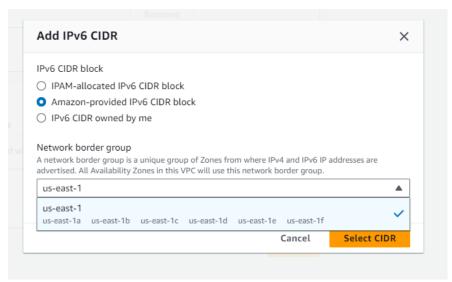


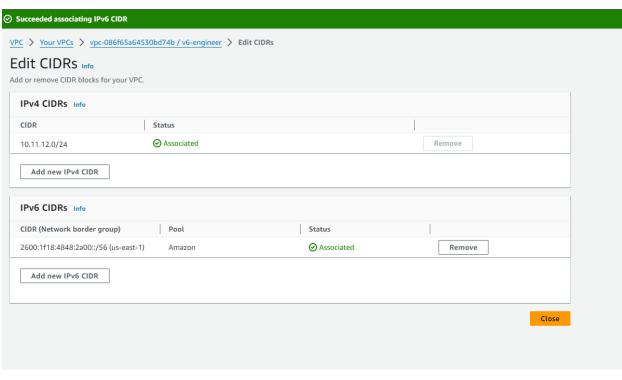
Note: Observe carefully: the default Security Group (created during VPC creation) has both inbound and outbound rules. In contrast, Security Groups created during instance creation will have rules only for outbound traffic, not for inbound traffic.

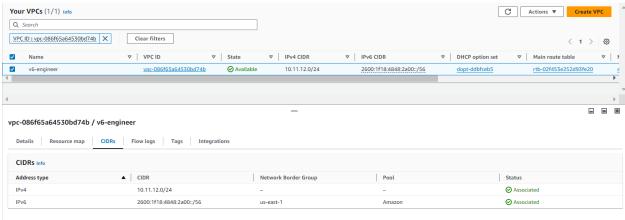
Above all, before IPv6 is enabled. Now, the changes below represent what will be observed after IPv6 is enabled on top of the VPC first.











The above screenshots represents the IPv6 enabled on VPC .. now lets enable at each subnet level.. lets try to do so math calculations for the IPv4 address ranges that we have assigned to VPC and subnet as per our test scenario.

IPv4 CIDR for VPC is /24 no of equal subnets that we can divide or no of IP address that are available for this range would be 32-24 = 8. Now, $2^{**}8 = 256$ (256 IP address are available for /24 CIDR)..

Similarly, each subnet we specified /28 as our CIDR. 32-28=4. Now, 2**4=16

With respect to AWS cloud provider if you are spinning up any resource within any of the created subnet the first 4 and the last one IP will be always reserved for AWS for its computational services. Let say, 10.11.12.48/28 is IP CIDR..

The CIDR notation "10.11.12.48/28" represents a subnet with a prefix length of 28 bits. In IPv4, a /28 subnet means that the first 28 bits are the network part, and the remaining 4 bits are used for host addresses.

The formula to calculate the number of available IP addresses in a subnet is 2^(32 - prefix length).

For "/28", the calculation is $2^{(32 - 28)} = 2^4 = 16$.

So, there are 16 IP addresses available in the subnet "10.11.12.48/28". The range of IP addresses can be determined by considering the increment of 1 for each host address within the subnet. The usable IP addresses typically range from the first address (network address) to the last address (broadcast address) in the subnet.

Here are the IP addresses in the subnet "10.11.12.48/28":

Network Address: 10.11.12.48

Usable IP addresses: 10.11.12.49 to 10.11.12.62

Broadcast Address: 10.11.12.63

So, there are 16 IP addresses in total, ranging from 10.11.12.48 to 10.11.12.63. but, (.48,.49,.50,.51 and .63) not available to get assigned to our resource and in between any one IP will get associated to our resource.

Let's revisit IPv6. The reason I mentioned IPv4 earlier is due to our IP address management practices, where we don't necessarily use contiguous ranges. Even though our VPC can accommodate 16 equal /28 subnets, we have currently created only 7 subnets with /28, reserving the possibility to create more in the future if needed. Similarly, we aim to calculate for IPv6. As we are aware, the IPv6 CIDR for our VPC is /56, providing approximately 4,722,366,482,869,645,213,696 IPs, nearly five quintillion, which is an immensely vast address space.

This is AWS given IPv6 (2600:1f18:4848:2a00::/56)

In simply let me try to explain you how IPv6 works before we enable it on subnet level.

Note: As per IPv6 architectural design, In IPv6, the minimum and maximum CIDR prefix lengths are determined by the available address space. Unlike IPv4, where subnets are often allocated in powers of 2, IPv6 subnets are typically allocated with a fixed prefix length of /64 due to the vast address space available.

The /64 prefix length is considered the standard and recommended for IPv6 subnets. This is because IPv6 was designed with a huge address space, and a /64 subnet provides an ample 2^64 addresses, which is more than enough for most purposes.

The /64 recommendation comes from considerations related to IPv6's Stateless Address Autoconfiguration (SLAAC) and Neighbor Discovery Protocol. Using a /64 allows for efficient address autoconfiguration and simplifies network operations.

While technically possible, using shorter or longer prefixes (e.g., /60, /56, /48) for subnets in IPv6 is not recommended and can lead to operational challenges. Allocating anything smaller than /64 subnets breaks some fundamental features of IPv6.

So, in IPv6, the standard practice is to use /64 as the minimum and maximum CIDR prefix length for subnets.

Question: Then considering minimum and maximum /64 for subnet, how many equal sized /64 subnets can we divide from /56 VPC?

Answer: In IPv6, a /56 is a 56-bit address block. To determine the number of /64 subnets you can have within a /56 VPC, you can use the formula:

Number of /64 subnets= $2^{(64-56)}$

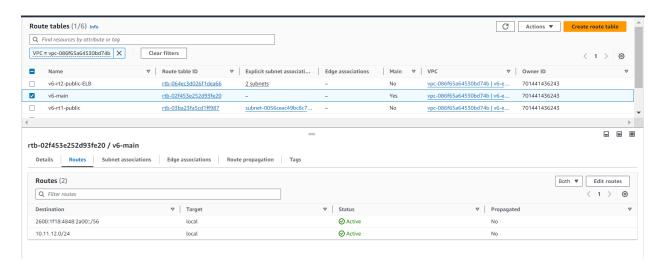
Here's the calculation:

Number of /64 subnets=28=256Number of /64 subnets=28=256

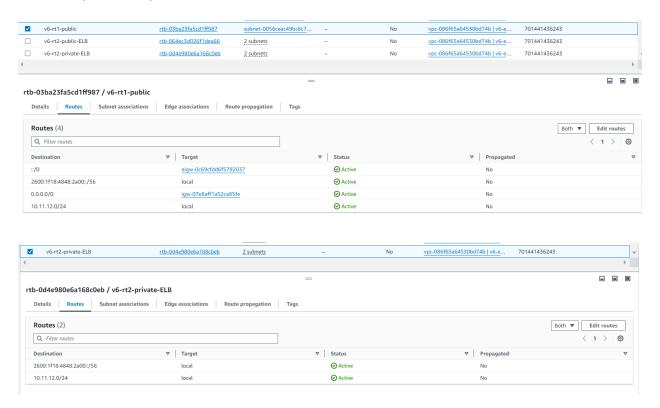
So, within a /56 VPC, you can have 256 equal-sized /64 subnets. Each /64 subnet within the /56 will have its own range of 2^64 IPv6 addresses, providing a vast number of addresses for each subnet.

This is important to notice, once the IPv6 is enabled on VPC, will see the first changes on default and Custom Route Table. Both default and custom route tables with inherit the IPv6 address as local route into the tables. Let's try to understand looking into below images:

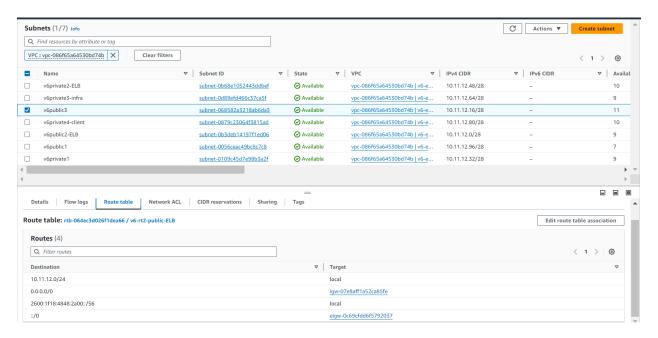
1: main/default route table provisioned with VPC

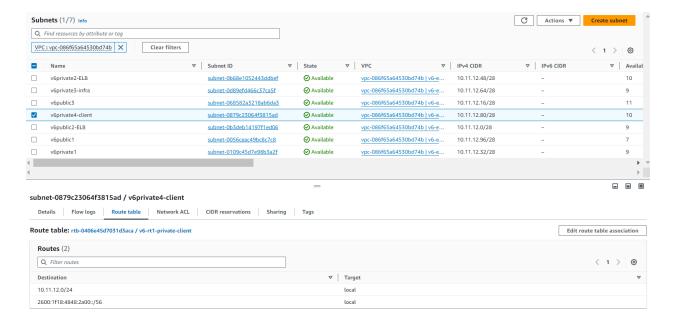


2: Custom public and private route tables



Public and Private Subnets with route tables association and this is how they look:

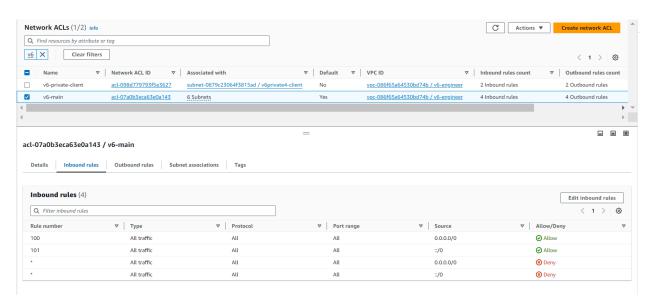




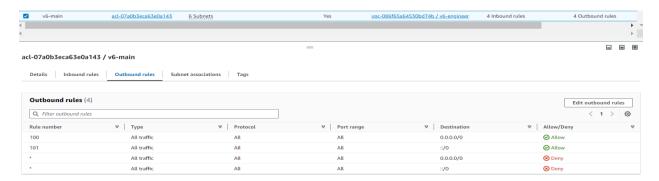
Changes on NACL after IPv6 enabled on VPC:

Main NACL:

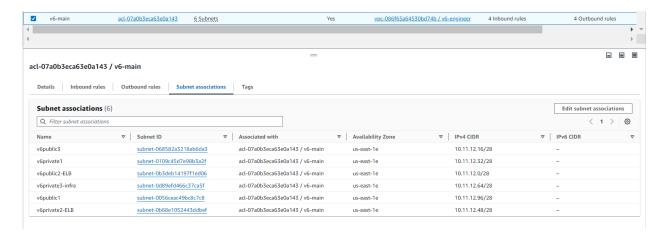
Inbound:



Outbound:

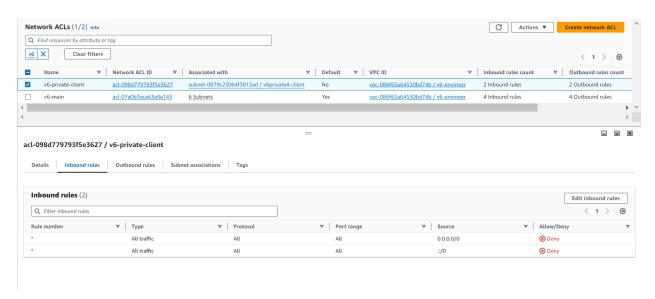


Subnet Associations on NACL before IPv6 enabled on subnet level:

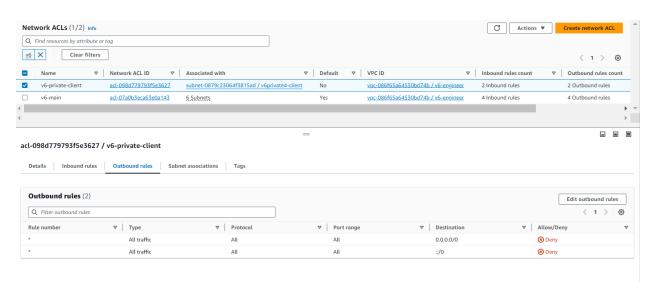


Custom NACL:

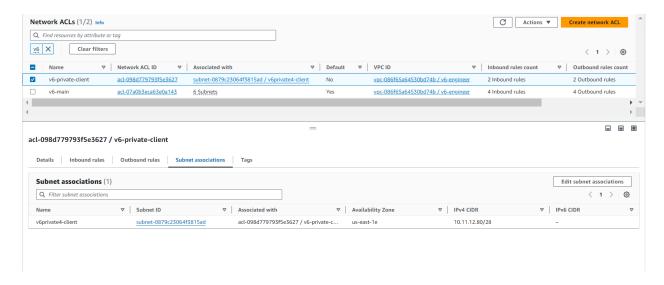
Inbound:



Outbound:

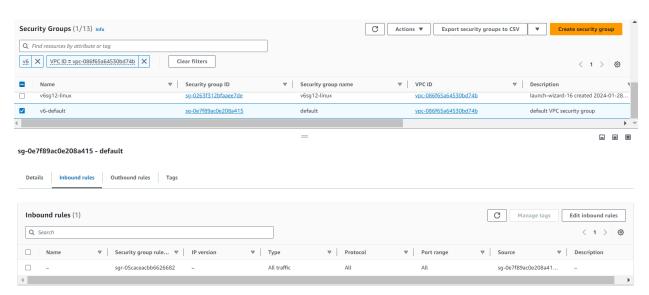


Subnet associations will see only IPv4 not IPv6 address.

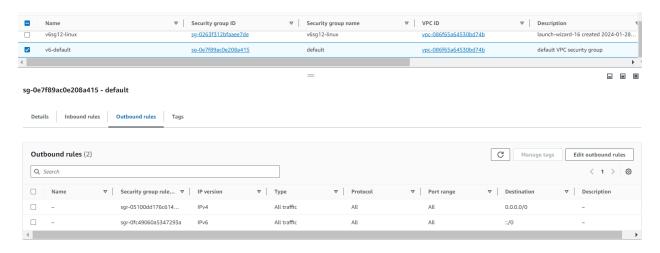


Changes on default security group of VPC and default security group of instance:

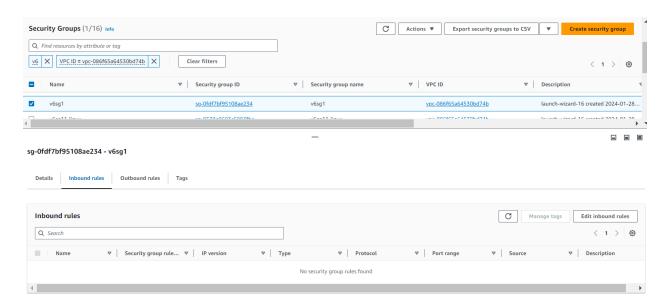
Inbound security group of VPC:



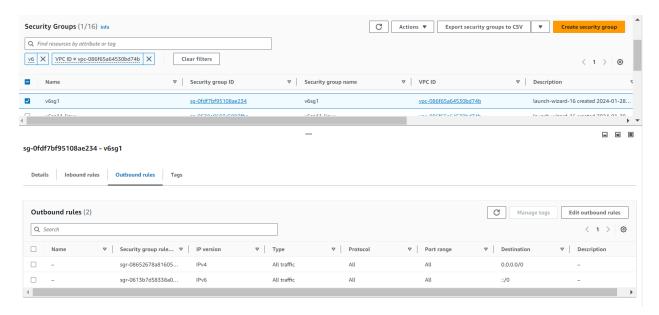
Outbound security group of VPC:



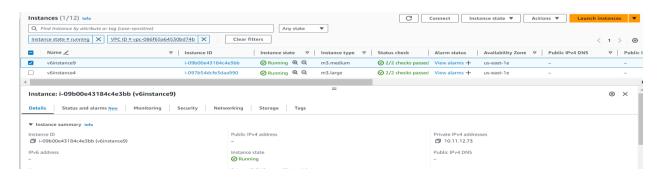
Inbound security group of instances: (No inbound rule)



Outbound security group of instances:

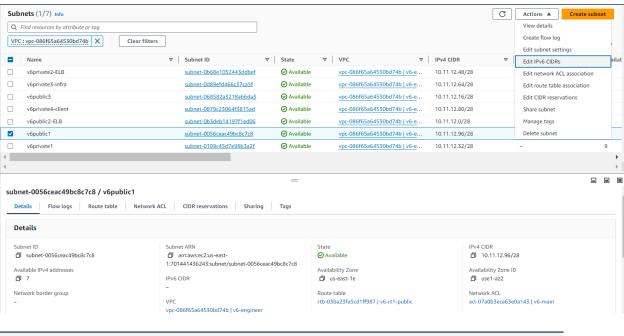


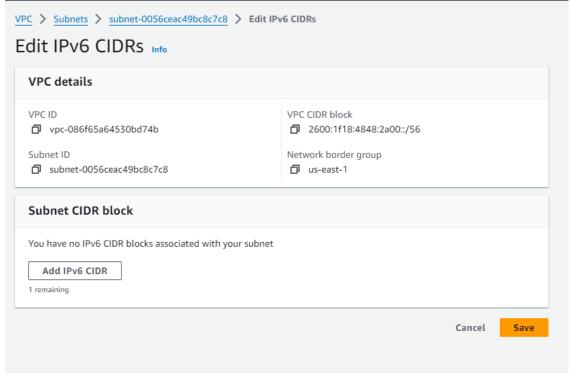
Instance:

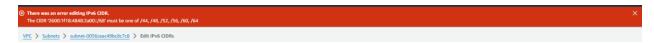


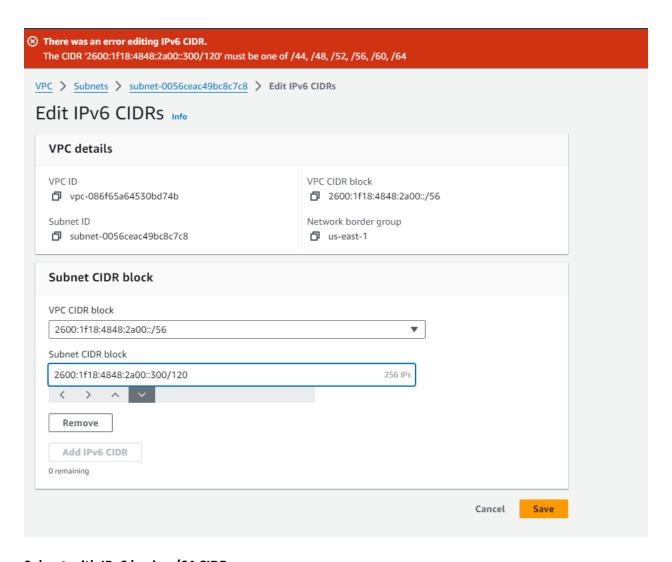
Section 2:

Now, let's enable IPv6 at each subnet level and observe the changes in the associated Security Groups and Instances within those specific subnets.

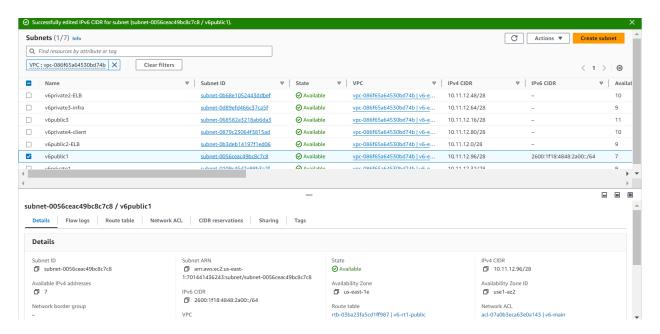




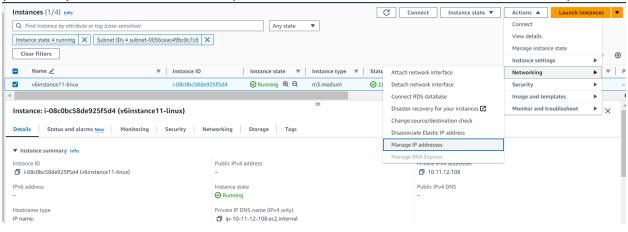




Subnet with IPv6 having /64 CIDR



Enabling IPv6 on a subnet will not automatically assign IPv6 addresses to resources inside the subnet. If you want your EC2 instance in that specific subnet to have an IPv6 address, follow the steps below:



i-0ef92da2d1ab59e80 (v6.t2)	
To assign additional public IPv4 addresses to this instance, you must <u>allocate</u> Elastic IP addresses and associate them with the instance or its network interfaces.	d
eth0: eni-06d4d6fd52c92455d - 10.11.12.96/28	
IPv4 addresses	
Private IP address Public IP address	
10.11.12.102 34.230.74.148 Unassign	
Assign new IP address	
IPv6 addresses	
IPv6 address	
Auto-assign Undo	
Assign new IP address	
Auto-assign Undo	

Assign primary IPv6 IP Info

Makes the first IPv6 address that is assigned to the network interface the primary IPv6. If this is a primary network interface, once a primary IPv6 address is assigned, it cannot be unassigned.

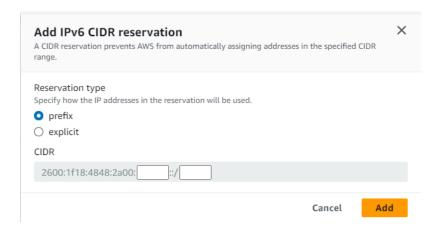
If you choose

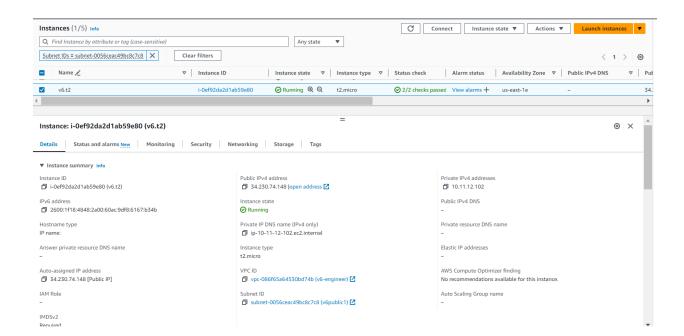
Enable

If you're modifying a network interface in a dual-stack or IPv6-only subnet, you have the option to Assign primary IPv6 IP. Enable a primary IPv6 address if you have instances or ENIs that rely on the IPv6 address not changing to avoid disrupting traffic to instances or ENIs.

When you enable an IPv6 GUA address to be a primary IPv6 address, you cannot disable it. Traffic will be routed to the primary IPv6 address until the instance is terminated or the ENI is detached.

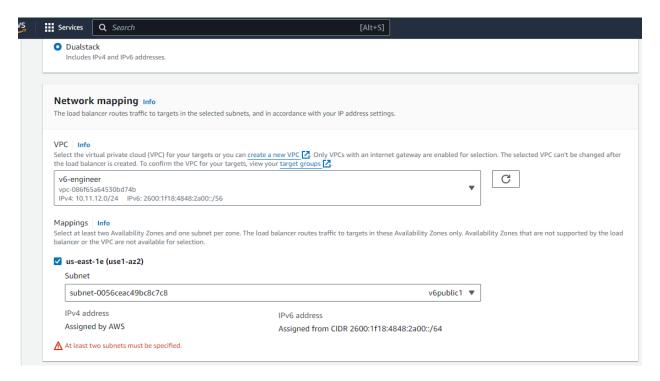
If you have multiple IPv6 addresses associated with an ENI and you enable a primary IPv6 address, the first IPv6 GUA address associated with the ENI becomes the primary IPv6 address.



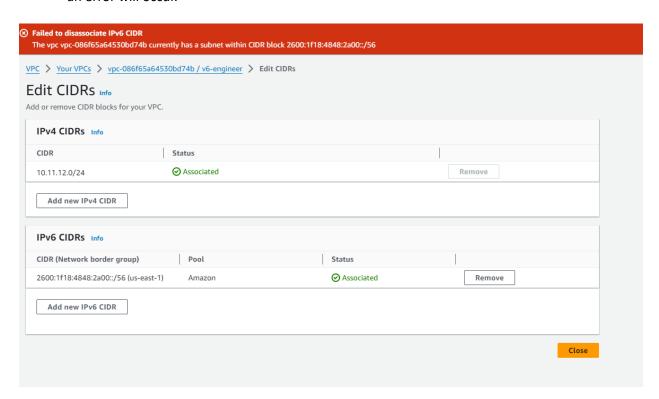


Just for the Information:

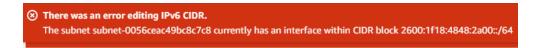
If, in the event that we are creating the load balancer within an existing IPv6 subnet, we will also observe the assigned IPv6 addresses for the load balancer.

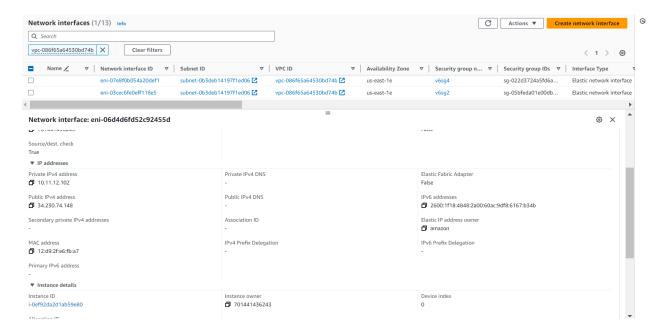


• If, in case, we attempt to remove IPv6 from the VPC level while IPv6 is still enabled on the subnet, an error will occur.

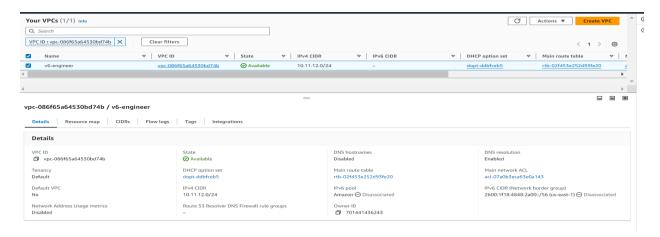


If you want to remove IPv6 on subnet directly:

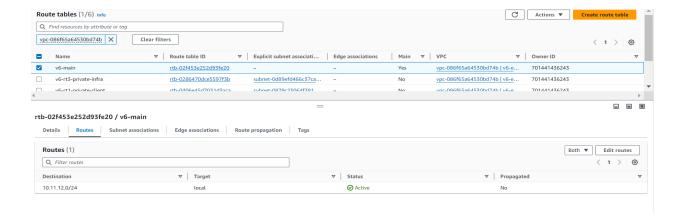




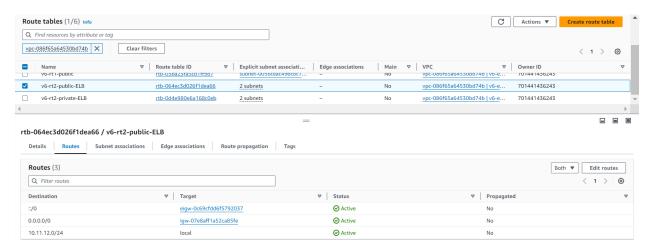
After detaching the ENI and removing IPv6 from subnet and VPC:



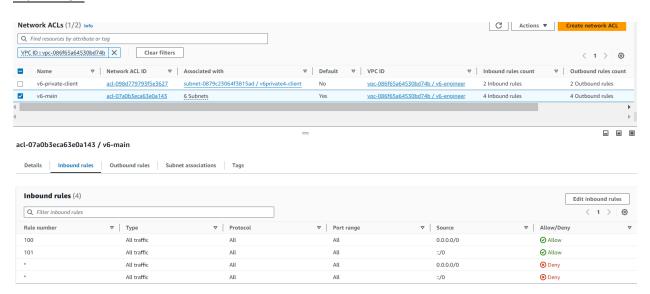
Main route table:



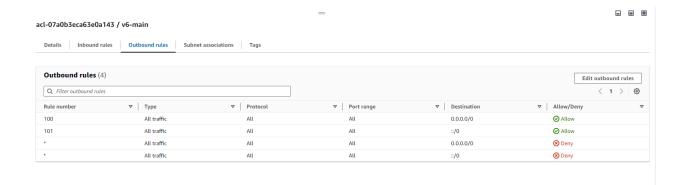
Custom route table:



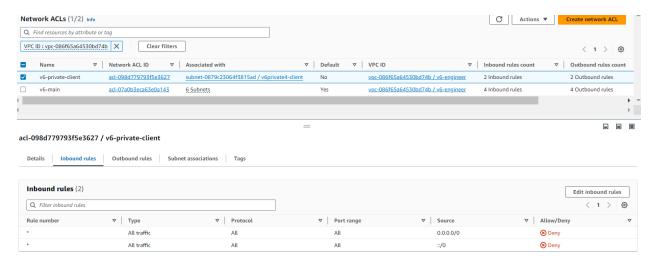
Main NACL:



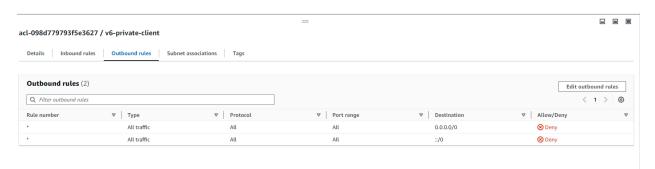
Outbound:



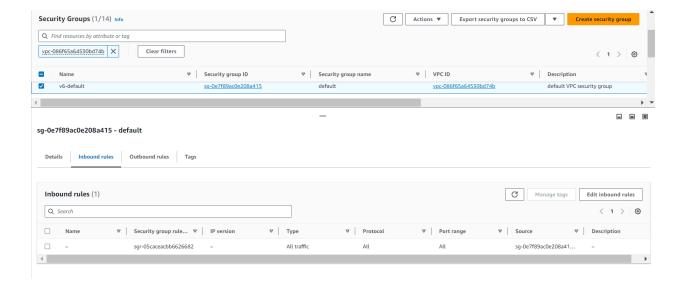
Custom NACL inbound:



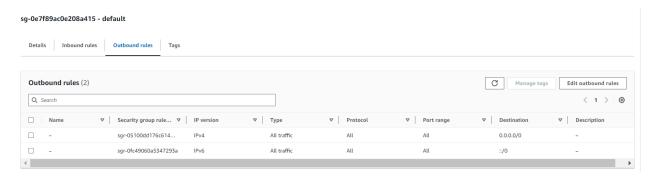
Custom NACL outbound:



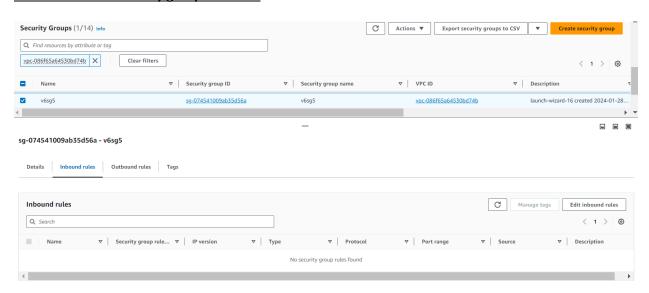
Default security group inbound:



Default security group outbound:



Instance default security group inbound:



Instance default security group outbound:

