

# Future City<sup>®</sup> Competition

## SimCity 4 Tips for Success

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[www.dfwfuturecity.org](http://www.dfwfuturecity.org)

# Agenda

- Before you start
  - Downloading the default region
  - Terra-forming
- Starting your city
  - Tips for success
- Importance of transportation
- As your city grows
  - Addressing problems
- Rubric
- General comments
- Where to go for more info

# Download Medium Region

[www.futurecity.org](http://www.futurecity.org) – “Resources”

1. Download zip file
2. Unzip and store in:
  - Documents >
  - SimCity 4 >
  - Regions
3. Start SimCity 4
4. Load “Medium City” region
5. Start your new city



# Before playing...you should have a plan

(write it down)

- Where your city is located:
  - Geography, terrain, climate
  - Special city features
- Basic layout:
  - Downtown area, farms, industry
  - Features and services
  - Major roads, transportation
- City name

# Before playing...terraforming

- “God mode”
- Reconcile edges
  - Match region geography
  - Not necessary
- Add land features
  - Rivers, valleys
  - Hills, mesas
  - Trees, animals
- Smooth, erode



# Terraforming Tips

- Add land features, trees, animals now
  - Later it will cost money
  - And, may destroy development
- Caution – Don't add too much
  - Can't build on water, steep slopes
  - Might run out of space for development

# GETTING STARTED

# Mayor Mode

- Mayor Mode
- Choose name
  - This will be your FC team name
- Choose difficulty level
  - Easy (most money)



# Tips to Get Started

1. Pause simulation → Run → Pause
  - Pause, add zones & infrastructure
  - Run simulation, watch progress
  - Pause and add more
2. Start slow and add only what you need
  - Zone low density
  - Zone mostly residential, some industrial, a little commercial
  - Place industrial zones near edges



# Tips to Get Started

3. Add connections to neighbors
  - Roads from industrial zones
4. Put in power plant
  - Wind is clean, cheap, but low output
  - Coal is efficient, but dirty
  - Natural gas, less dirty and less efficient



# Tips to Get Started

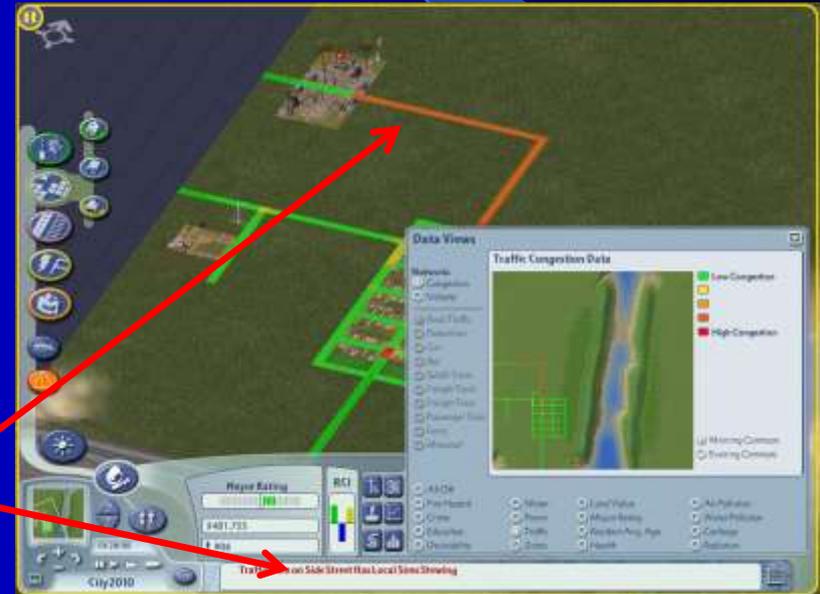
5. Continue to zone and build according to RCI demand
  - Residential (§, §§, §§§)
  - Commercial Service (§, §§, §§§) and Commercial Office (§§, §§§)
  - Industry (IA, ID, IM, IHT)
6. Add infrastructure only as needed (only as much as needed)
  - a. Utilities
  - b. Safety
  - c. Schools
  - d. Hospitals



# Tips to Get Started

Keep your Sims moving:

7. Place bus stations at strategic points
  - Residential areas
  - Industrial areas
  - Neighbor connections
8. Watch out for – and correct – problem areas
  - Advisor alerts (red)
  - Traffic congestion
  - Utility shortages



# Tips to Get Started

8. Add schools and libraries
  - Education is crucial for high-wealth jobs
  - Lowers crime rate
  - Place buildings in residential areas





**IT'S NOT CALLED "RUSH  
HOUR" FOR NOTHING ....**

# Transportation is Vital

## **Sims must get to/from work and home**

- Commute time
  - > 150 minutes = unemployed Sim = abandoned residence, degraded development

## **Industries must get freight to customers (neighbor cities)**

- Freight trips
  - Long trips = abandoned industry

# Transportation is Vital: Road Primer

- Roadway hierarchy:
  - Streets → Roads → Avenues → Highways
  - (cheap, low speed, few cars) → (expensive, high speed, many cars)
    - Streets – no bridges, no neighbor connections
- Funding too low = potholes, impassable roads



# Transportation is Vital: Passengers

- Mass transit:
  - Buses: cheap, easy to add/develop
  - Rail: moves many Sims, hard to add/develop, slow
    - Monorail: very fast, expensive, good for long distances with few stops
  - Subway: fast, moves many Sims, requires little land space, expensive
  - Ferries (passenger & car): hard to add/develop, terminals come in pairs, moves many Sims

# Transportation is Vital

- Mass transit notes:
  - Sims walk to, from and between stations
    - Except rail (has parking, car access)
    - Place bus stations every 4-5 blocks
    - Place stations at beginning and end of route (and along the way)
  - Integrate or connect various systems
    - Bus from suburbs to subway to downtown
    - Bus station within 1-2 blocks of subway station
  - Low & Medium-wealth Sims use public transportation
    - High-wealth Sims will drive
    - Concentrate mass transit facilities in lower wealth areas

# Transportation is Vital: Freight

- Freight transit: it's all about trip length
  - Trucks – short trips from industry to:
    - Neighbor city
    - Seaport
    - Freight rail station
  - Industry will use Seaports and Rail only if it's shorter than truck route to neighbor

# Transportation is Vital

## ● Airports

- Promote Commercial Office development (Co\$\$, Co\$\$\$)
  - Direct transportation connections
  - Airport usage is tied to Co population
- Landing strips, Municipal, International
  - Small, medium and large versions of each
  - Landing strips: less air traffic, require less space, less \$, pollute less, result in less benefit to Co
  - International: more air traffic, more space, more \$, more pollution, more benefit to Co



**AS YOUR CITY GROWS ....**

# Understanding Desirability Factors

(keeping your Sims happy)

- Residential
  - Desires: Education, health, low crime, low pollution, short commute times
- Commercial
  - Desires: High traffic, low crime, low pollution
- Industry
  - Desires: Short freight trips, flat land
  - Agriculture: desires low air pollution and low traffic
  - Manufacturing and High-Tech: desire low pollution and higher land values

# Understanding Demand Caps

(or what to do when building seems to stagnate)

- Residential
  - Add amenities: parks and recreation
  - Some rewards: private schools, stock exchange, stadiums, resorts, country club
- Commercial
  - Add neighbor connections, airport, seaport
  - Some rewards: convention center, tv studio, university
- Industrial
  - Successful freight trips (requires neighbor connections)
  - Some rewards, business deals: Army base, university, radio station, advanced research center

# Getting information about your city

- Opinion polls, news, alerts
- Advisors
- Data View
- Graph View
- Budget View
- Queries
- Route Queries



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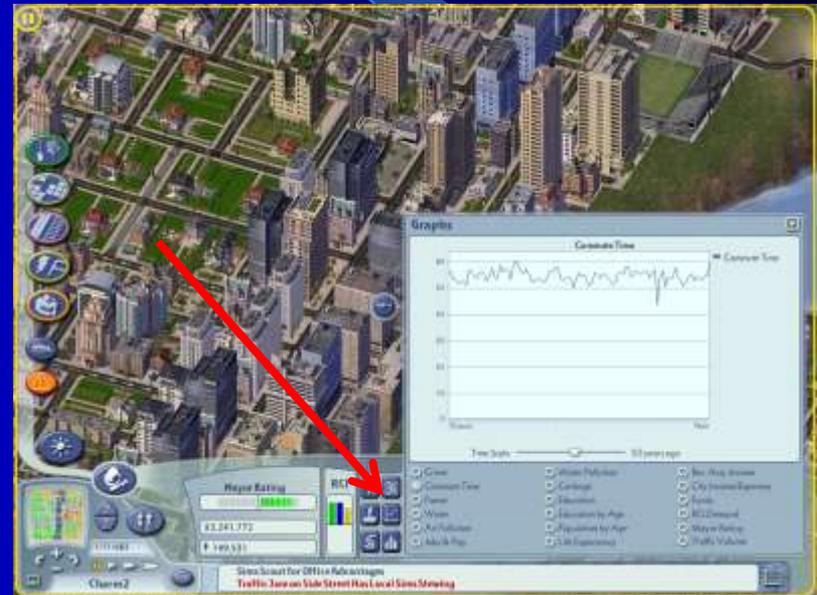
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# Addressing Problems - Budget

- Income

- Taxes rates for residential, commercial, industrial
  - 9% is neutral rate
  - Increasing taxes discourages development
  - Decreasing encourages development
- Neighbor deals, business deals
- Gambling ordinance

- Expenses

- Infrastructure: adding and maintaining
- Landmarks and (some) rewards: adding and maintaining
- City ordinances
- Neighbor deals

# Addressing Problems - Budget

- Neighbor deals (power, water, garbage)
  - Selling excess capacity
    - Tradeoff the cost of having excess capacity against the income
  - Buying service
    - Tradeoff cost of buying from neighbor against the cost (\$, pollution, land space) of providing it yourself
  - Requires appropriate neighbor connection
- Note: Neighbor deals can't be judged
  - Caution about excessive use

# Addressing Problems - Budget

- Business deals

- Triggered by low treasury
- Increase income, but have drawbacks
- In order of acceptability: Army base, Casino, Federal prison, Missile range, Toxic waste dump

- Loans

- Might be a good idea for funding a major capital investment
- Not a good idea to solve monthly deficit in city budget

# Addressing Problems – Passenger Traffic

- Sims going to/from work
- Upgrade roadways to handle increased volume
- Add mass transit and integrate the networks



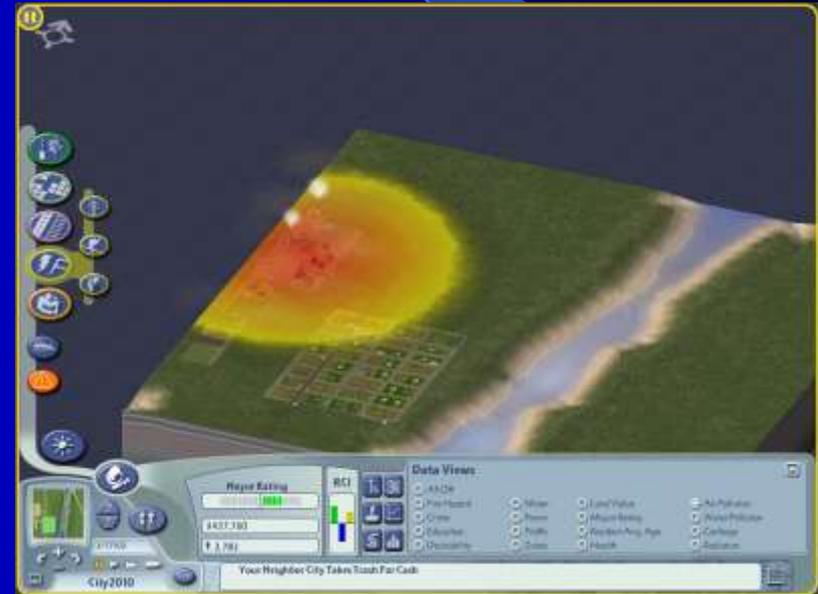
# Addressing Problems – Freight Traffic

- Industry shipping to neighboring cities
  - Will pick the shortest route
    - Truck
    - Rail
    - Seaport
  - Must have neighbor connections



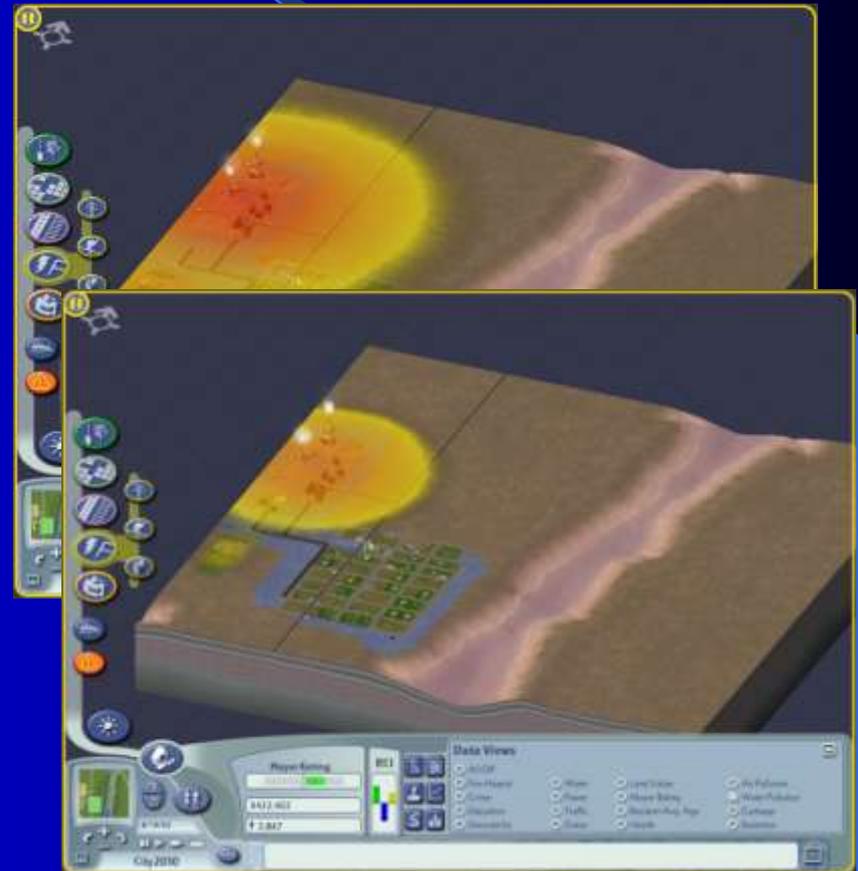
# Addressing Problems – Air Pollution

- Localize
  - Separate polluters from city
- Get rid of Dirty Industry (as soon as you can afford to)
  - Increase tax rates
  - Make freight trips long
  - Bulldoze
- Choose clean power generators
  - Wind
  - Solar (reward)
  - Hydrogen (reward)
- Reduce traffic
  - Mass transit
- City ordinances
  - Clean air, auto emission reduction
  - Carpool incentive, commuter shuttle



# Addressing Problems – Water Pollution

- Localize
  - Separate polluters from city
- Limit farms and Dirty Industry
- Water treatment plant



# Addressing Problems – Abandoned Buildings

- Lack of Power, Water
- Low Desirability
  - Residential: long commutes, noise
  - Commercial: no customers
  - Industry: long freight trips
- If remains abandoned
  - bulldoze



# RUBRIC

# Benchmark Score

- How well is your city progressing?

1. City age
2. Population
3. Balanced budget
4. High land values
5. Power and water
6. Life expectancy
7. Education Quotient
8. Traffic
9. Crime and fire
10. Pollution



- *Answer “Yes” to all and you have a good chance to ace the Virtual City Design judging.*

# Emphasis on City Planning Decisions

- City Management
  - Age, population
  - Mayor rating
  - Budget management
- City Layout
  - All levels of RCI development
  - Abandoned buildings
  - Planned development
- City Services
  - Police, fire, health, education
  - Coverage and effectiveness

# Emphasis on City Planning Decisions

- Energy and Pollution
  - Power and water coverage
  - Sustainable energy
  - Recycling
  - Air, water and garbage pollution
- Transportation
  - Public transportation systems in use
  - Integrated transportation networks
  - Efficient freight transportation

# CONCLUDING COMMENTS

# It Takes Time to Build a City

- Getting to 150 years (simulation running continuously):
  - Slow speed: 12-13 minutes for 1 year → 30 hours for 150 years
  - Medium speed: 6-7 minutes for 1 year → 15 hours for 150 years
  - Fast speed: 1.5 minutes for 1 year → 4 hours for 150 years

# U-Drive-It, MySims, and Disasters

## *Fun, but not necessary*

- U-Drive-It Missions
  - Open up rewards
  - Add money to treasury
  - But failure can cost you
- MySims
  - Information about city from citizen point-of-view
- Disasters – *Don't turn them on!!!*

# Cheats Codes

- **NOT ALLOWED!!!**
  - Except one: whererufrom (change city name)
- Won't really help your score
- Honor Statement
  - Signed by team members
- Judges know how to check for cheats
  - Will get you "0" score

# Backup Your City

- Use Explorer to find your city file:
  - Documents > SimCity 4 > Regions > Medium City > **cityname**
- Copy file to backup location
  - Flash drive
  - CD/DVD
- Don't use SimCity's "save as" function

# To Restore

- Copy file from backup storage
- Save in
  - Documents > SimCity 4 > Regions > Downloads
- Start SimCity 4
- Load Medium City Region
- Click on city square
- Import your city



- **Note: importing a city will delete any existing city.**

# Submitting Your Virtual (SimCity) City

- SimCity file
  - Due November 22
  - Submit only your city
  - Upload through the Team Center  
([www.dfwfuturecity.org/teamcenter.html](http://www.dfwfuturecity.org/teamcenter.html))
- Late submissions
  - Nov 23 thru Dec 2: minus 5 points
  - Dec 3 thru Dec 19: minus 10 points
  - No submissions after Dec 19

# Online Resources

1. Local Future City ([www.dfwfuturecity.org](http://www.dfwfuturecity.org))
  - Updates for Competitors
  - Orientation materials
  - Schedules, rules, resources, forms, Team Center
2. National Future City ([www.futurecity.org](http://www.futurecity.org))
  - Video tutorials, step-by-step guide
  - Manuals
  - SimCity Learning Block
3. SimCity ([www.simcity.com](http://www.simcity.com))
  - Tips, playing the game
4. Gaming sites
  - Simtopia

# Other Resources

- SimCity tutorials
  - Available with program
- Prima Strategy Guide
  - 500 pages of everything you want to know about SimCity 4 Deluxe
  - \$10 download