

## Playing Tips for SimCity Success

- Review the in-game tutorials before starting to build your city. The following tips assume you understand the basic controls and operation of SimCity.
- Teams may build in any region. If you have multiple teams using the same Origin account and computer, each team should choose a different region, rather than creating multiple cities within one region.
- First things to do after claiming a city:
  - Check the wind direction. You will want to place your industry and dirty utilities on the edge of the city limits where the wind is blowing out of town.
  - Check for natural resources underground: water, coal, oil, and ore. If you plan on developing an industry using these resources, know where they are located before you start building your town. Land values will be much lower around mining and drilling operations.
- Before starting to build your City:
  - Open the SimCity Options Menu (three dots in the upper right corner). Select the “Settings” menu and click on the “Gameplay” tab. On this menu, you will want to turn off Random Disasters.
    - You can also enable or disable Auto Save – disabling Auto Save is useful if you are going to try out things in your city that you might not want to keep. You can open the Options menu at any time and save your city. And SimCity always asks if you want to save before you exit the city. You can also use the “Save As” function to generate a “backup” version that you can reload and restart whenever you want.
      - Future City recommends using the “Save As” function to save three versions of your city (one for each slideshow progress report). That way you can go back to an earlier version of your city to take a different screenshot or look at your statistics if you need.
    - So, if you want to test an idea (turn off auto-save), Save your city, try out your idea (or let giant lizards destroy half of it) – if it doesn’t work, exit without saving and you can start back where you left off. Of course you run the risk, if your computer crashes, you will have lost all city development since you last saved it.
- Start Building:
  - Now that you know the layout of your new city site and you have your preliminary city plan laid out, the first thing to do is connect a road to the highway that runs into or through your city plot. Start with low density roads. Place roads in a grid and begin zoning residential. Add a small amount of commercial (along one side of the highway). Add a small amount of industrial closer to the edge of town or at least downwind of the residential zones.
  - As homes and businesses start to build, you will need to add a power generator. Windmills are a good, cheap source of power early in the game. Continue adding roads and zones – mostly residential - and let things develop. Keep an eye on the budget. You should be making money with taxes. However, all the roads cost something to build.
  - Fairly early in the game, your citizens will start demanding water. Add a water tower where there is a good source of underground water.
  - Continue with roads and zoning. You might want to increase your tax rate to 10% as you get the city going. You will need to add several services to the city as it grows. If you can afford it, add a grade school early on. Education will lower crime rates (particularly arson) which will reduce the demand for fire and police services.

- Services you will need to add:
  - Power
  - Water
  - Education
  - Health clinic
  - Sewage
  - Trash collection
  - Fire
  - Police
  - Public transit
    - Wait until the citizens complain before adding services. They will let you know when they are unhappy! Then add the smallest, least expensive option. Remember to place the dirty utilities near the edge of town (sewage, trash, coal power generator), where the wind blows out of town and some distance from your water utility (you don't want ground pollution from trash and sewage treatment seeping into your water supply.)
- Make sure there is space around each utility or service for future expansion. It is much easier and cheaper to add to an existing facility (clinic, fire station, sewage treatment plant, power plant) than to add a completely new structure.
- Growing Your City:
  - After you've added power and water and your city begins to take off – when you achieve about 100 citizens – your city will be rewarded with the opportunity to build a town hall. Place this near your downtown area and give it plenty of room to grow – as your city grows, you will be adding departments to the town hall/city hall.
  - Keep adding roads and zones. Add 4-8 times more residential than either commercial or industrial. (The manual recommends a 2:1:1 ratio R:C:I, particularly initially, but I find more residential works better.) Also make sure to scatter your commercial zones throughout the residential areas. Consider your own neighborhood – how far is your home from the nearest store or gas station? The RCI indicator can help you decide what zones to add. However, use your own judgment as well.
  - The Population pop-up panel is a good indicator of what is going on in your city. Look for the number of unemployed and the number of available jobs. Also check the types of jobs (low, medium, high wealth) vs. the available workers. If there is a lot of unemployment, you need more businesses to provide jobs (or a better transportation network to get citizens to those jobs). Look at the number of shoppers satisfied and unsatisfied and the amount of unsold goods. If there are a lot of unsatisfied shoppers, you need more commercial. If you have a lot of unfulfilled freight orders, businesses aren't getting the goods they need and you should build more industry.
  - Another aspect of city growth is building density. Density is driven by demand and satisfaction. It is controlled by road type. As satisfaction increases and more Sims move into your city, the desire to increase the density of the buildings (move from single-family homes to apartments) increases. Query the buildings and upgrade the roads to the next larger/faster version when the Sims demand it. They will quickly start constructing larger buildings.
    - The opposite of upgrading is abandoning buildings. If the Sims become completely dissatisfied with their situation, they will move out and abandon the development. Sometimes, if the situation changes, residents or businesses will move back in. However, if the building remains abandoned, it will degrade to rubble. Rubble needs to be demolished with the Bulldozer tool before it can be redeveloped. Both abandoned buildings and rubble will lower surrounding land value. When the bulldozer tool turns yellow, you have rubble somewhere in your city. Click on the tool to locate the rubble and demolish it.

- Note on Sim Demands/Challenges:
  - You will frequently see comment bubbles pop up on buildings or the city hall. Some comments will be demands for more services. Before you add services, check to make sure your current service is lacking – sometimes these suggestions are merely suggestions. Don't spend the money to add or upgrade services until you need to!
  - There will also be the opportunity early on to have a fireworks show that will challenge your fire services. If your city is still fairly small, you can earn a quick \$50,000 by adding a fire truck or two and the fire alarm to the existing fire station. You need to be quick – fires will start erupting around the fire station almost immediately. Your goal is to put them out and have no more than five fires that burn down buildings.
  - There is also a “block party” mission that generates large amounts of trash. Add a couple of garbage trucks and an additional landfill site to your facility. Then watch them pick up all the trash around town.
  - Don't hesitate to decline any of these opportunities that don't fit in with your plans for the city.
- Upgrading (editing) Facilities and Services
  - All of the “placed” buildings in SimCity offer an “edit” button to add/increase the service. Simply click on the building to open the detail information view. The edit button is on the bottom of that panel. Click to see the range of additional facilities you can add to your facilities/services. You can also turn off (or back on) a building or service that is not needed.
- Upgrading City Hall:
  - As your city grows, you will have the opportunity to upgrade from a town hall to a city hall.
    - Upgrade to City Hall, add one department – 2500 population
    - Upgrade, add second department – 8000 population
    - Upgrade, add third department – 15,000 population
    - Upgrade, add fourth department – 37,000 population
    - Upgrade, add fifth department – 300,000 population
    - Upgrade, add sixth department – 542,000 population
  - Departments include: Education, Finance, Safety, Tourism, Transportation, and Utilities. The ones that will give you the greatest benefit early on: Education (unlocks high schools and universities), Safety (improved fire, health and police options), Transportation (unlocks trains, ferries, regional buses, and airports), and Utilities (unlocks water pumping, sewage treatment and recycling centers). The remaining two departments are useful later in the game, as the city grows very large. Finance gives you the ability to set tax rates by each wealth type within RCI. The Tourism department gives you access to landmarks and other cultural and tourist attractions.
    - NOTE: if you are playing more than one city within the region, adding a department to any city hall in the region gives all cities access to those services/facilities. So, there is no reason to have more than one department type in the region.
- Police, Fire & Health:
  - Safety services operate basically the same way. Add a facility (police, fire or health) to a central area of the city where the emergency vehicles can easily move around. Periodically monitor the service and crime/fire/death rates. As number of emergencies increase, use the edit button to add more response vehicles: police patrol cars, fire trucks, ambulances. When the facilities fill up, add more space (jail cells and patient treatment rooms).
  - As your city grows, you might want to add another facility (or two) in other areas of the city to expand coverage. With the Safety Department added to the City Hall, you can place a (large) Police Precinct, a Large Fire Station or a Hospital in the city. Study your needs before going to the expense

of adding the larger facility – you may be better served with 2-3 smaller facilities scattered around the city than with one large police/fire/health facility.

- Fire stations: You can improve the fire response time by upgrading the station with a fire alarm. This is a fairly inexpensive upgrade that you should add before adding (the more expensive) additional fire trucks.

- **Utilities:**

- Power: Place your power generation facilities where they can grow as the city power requirements grow. Increase generation capacity by adding to the existing facility (adding wind mills, solar arrays, etc.), before building a new power plant.
  - Wind power will keep a small city going. But, as the city grows, you will have to upgrade the power generation facilities. Unfortunately, the cleaner, greener power options are also the least efficient. From wind, you can go to solar. After a point, the space that the solar panels require will begin limiting city growth. The most efficient, cost effective power generators are the dirtiest: coal and oil burning power plants. If you choose one of these, place them near the city limits where the wind will take the pollution out of town.
  - University research projects can get you access to clean coal, clean oil, vertical wind turbine and a concentrated solar array. The “clean” coal and oil are cleaner, but not clean – you are still burning fuel to generate power. The wind turbine and concentrated solar array are more efficient than the generic facilities, but not as efficient as coal or oil. So, there is a tradeoff to be considered.
  - Nuclear power is clean – from an air pollution point-of-view. There is still the prospect of radiation. Nuclear power plants require a highly educated work force (college level at a minimum) or there is a risk of radiation pollution and meltdown. It also requires a huge amount of water – don’t put it in cities with limited water supplies. Note: Nuclear power is clean, but not sustainable.
- Water: Water towers will supply a small city, but the most efficient option will be a water pump that is only available after you add a Utilities Department to the City Hall. You will also have the option for adding a filter in case you get ground/water pollution affecting your water supply. (Note: the filtered water pump will also work to clean up ground pollution.) Place your facility where there is a good supply of underground water (look for the deep blue areas) and in an area with plenty of room for growth, so you can add pumps as needed to handle the increasing city needs.
- Sewage: Initially, sewage outlet pipes will carry waste out of the city and dump it. The sewage treatment plant becomes a more cost effective solution as the city grows. It is unlocked by the Utilities Department. Place sewage facilities on the edge of town (away from the water supply). Again, allow plenty of room to expand facilities.
- Waste: Place a garbage dump on the edge of town. The dump will create a large amount of ground pollution. You can increase the capacity of the facility by adding dump zones (connected by the dirt road option within the dump “edit” tools) and garbage collection trucks. When you run out of space or get tired of adding dump zones, you can bulldoze the full areas and place a new dump zone on the same spot. Bulldozed dumps become ground pollution. Another option is to add a garbage incinerator – but make sure it is downwind from your residential. It is a heavy polluter. You are basically trading ground pollution for air pollution.
  - With the Utilities Department, you can add a Recycling Center. As their education level increases, the Sims will begin to recycle. The basic Recycling Center has a plastic reclamation line. You can add alloy reclamation and metal reclamation lines as well. You can add collection trucks to keep up with the recycling pickups.
  - As the Recycling Center continues to function, it will generate plastic (and alloy and metal if

you have added the appropriate reclamation lines.) These products will go into a storage lot on the facility site. When the storage lot is full, you will need to do something with the plastic (and alloy and metal). To get handle this problem, you can add a trade depot to your city and sell the material on the global market. This will add income to your city budget (appears in the monthly transactions column.) Or you can use the material locally – for instance in a processor manufacturing plant (uses plastic and alloy – see City Specializations).

- Note about recycling: As education level increases, so does the recycling. I have some cities that have as many recycling bins as citizens. It doesn't happen in every city, but when it does, it is impossible to pick up all of those bins, no matter how many recycling centers you have. This is an apparent quirk/bug of the software.

- Education:

- The Town Hall unlocks the basic educational facilities: grade schools and public libraries. You want to add a grade school as early as you can afford to – an educated population will lower the crime rate, including arson, and reduce the need for police and fire protection. Educated Sims are also healthier, reducing the need for more health facilities. The higher-tech industries (that are also greener and cleaner) require educated workers. And, as the education level increases across the city, residential buildings reduce their power and water requirements until, at Level-5, you will see them add solar panel to the rooftops.
- In addition to placing the grade school, you will need to set up a school bus network to get the kids to the school. Add individual stops every few blocks throughout your residential areas. You can expand your facilities by adding classrooms and buses as needed. Maximum capacity of a grade school is 1750 desks and 10 buses carrying 20 students each. (Note: adding to a facility works well in the early stages of city growth, however as the city matures, getting kids to school becomes more of a problem. See discussion below.)
- Public libraries contribute a small amount to the education level of the population and serve all age groups. Like parks, they will have a positive effect on Sim satisfaction and land value.
- When the Department of Education is added to the City Hall, you will have access to higher education options: high schools, community colleges and universities. High schools use the same school bus network as the grade schools. They have a maximum capacity of 4500 desks and 8 buses carrying 60 students each. In a budget pinch, you can close down the grade school and send all the students to the high school.
- The Community College increases the education level and promotes the development of Tech Level-2 industry (clean industrial). The city bus system transports students to/from the college. With additional classroom expansion modules, a community college can handle thousands of students. You should get to at least this level in your city, but only after it has grown significantly.
- A University will trigger the highest Tech Level (3) industry. In addition, upgrades to the university (based on the number of students taught) will allow you to add specific schools (Business, Engineering, Law, Medicine, and Science) and undertake related research projects. The completion of the research project will give your city (and any city in the region) access to the results.
  - Examples include: Vertical Wind Turbine, Concentrated Solar Array, Clean Coal or Clean Oil generators, and Surgical Center. It's unusual to have more than two schools associated with a university – Engineering and Science have the most research opportunities. A university provides a lot of benefits to the city and the region, however, they are very costly to acquire and run and they require a lot of land/space.
- Education over time: I have noticed that when you first start up your education system, the Sims flock to school. The classrooms fill up and you keep adding more to handle the crowds. However, this behavior changes after several years. As the city grows, the density of the zones/buildings

increases and the education level of the citizens increases. You will start to notice that there are more and more unenrolled Sims. And, the Sims will begin to complain that they can't go to school, even though there are more than enough desks available. The problem usually lies in the school bus network. You can add buses to the schools and more stops along the streets, particularly near high-density residential buildings (capacity of a school bus stop is 20 students – it can fill multiple times, but requires multiple buses to stop and pick up riders). Use the Education Map to identify pockets of unenrolled Sims. When you've added the maximum number of buses at the schools, you should try adding more schools spaced around the city with more buses. Notice that the maximum capacity of the school's buses is much less than the maximum number of desks. You might also want to consider demolishing the extra classrooms you may have added and that are not being filled anymore – to save a little money in the budget. Use the edit button to isolate the extra classroom module and bulldoze it.

- Transportation:

- A perfect city might be one where you can work and shop within walking distance of your home. On the other hand, you don't want dirty industry right next door to your home.
- Transportation networks become a necessary service as the city buildings increase in density and the streets begin to get congested. You can check on the congestion of the streets by clicking on the "roadway" menu and watching during rush hour. The roads will change color as the traffic level increases: from green (low congestion) to yellow/orange (heavy traffic) to red (congested). Congestion is important to address because your emergency responders (police, fire, ambulances) won't be able to get to their destinations.
- First step is the shuttle bus system. This requires a shuttle bus station and bus stops. You can add buses to the station to handle higher volumes. There are also Park & Ride lots that can be useful if you have a lot of Sims commuting into your city on the highway connection. Place a Park & Ride on the highway near the city limit and capture the traffic before it enters the city.
- Next system is the streetcars – this network requires a high-density streetcar avenue. Most White Water Region city sites have a highway running through the site that is a medium density avenue. Upgrade the avenue to the streetcar avenue and add the streetcar depot and at least two stops. This system is not particularly useful unless you have added avenues throughout the city: Avenues are expensive to build in a young city and to upgrade a regular road to an avenue will require bulldozing roads and buildings to get the expanded right-of-way required for the larger roadway. Plan accordingly from the start if you want a streetcar network.
- With a Department of Transportation added to the City Hall, you have access to more sophisticated transportation options: Large bus stations, Trains, Ferries, and Municipal Airports.
- Large Bus stations add capacity to your shuttle bus network – each bus carries twice the number of passengers relative to the shuttle buses. And, the bus travels region-wide (shuttle buses are only within the city limits).
- Ferries and trains are also useful for inter-city transport of passengers, bringing in tourists, shoppers, and commuting workers. Be sure to connect your ferry and train stations to the bus network (place a bus stop as close as possible to the station).
- The Municipal Airport transports medium- and high-wealth tourists and commuters. It is expensive and takes a lot of land. Ferries and trains perform the same function for less money and land, so consider carefully before deciding you need an airport. However, if you do place an airport in your city, be sure to leave space to expand it with additional runways and terminals. And, add a bus stop so that tourists can get from the terminal into the city.
- NOTE: Low- and medium-wealth Sims use public transportation – high-wealth Sims will tend to drive. The exception are Cruise Ship docks (an upgrade to the Ferry dock) and Airports. These facilities tend to attract the higher-wealth passengers.

- Notes about Traffic in SimCity:
  - Unlike the previous version of SimCity (SimCity 4), this game does not have a specific emphasis on traffic. Citizens don't complain about traffic and there is very little data on the situation. However, traffic problems make themselves felt in other ways. Sims complain they can't find shops or parks or work. Or they "miss going to school" even though there are plenty of vacant desks and a good school bus network. Fire, police or health service vehicles complain of slow response times. Garbage and recycling trucks can't complete their runs to collect the garbage.
  - Address traffic problems by upgrading roads and adding public transportation in busy areas. Also, make sure there is a straight, high capacity route for traffic to move around the city: no jogs and few intersections (which will have traffic lights). If necessary, replace streets with avenues (requires bulldozing and a re-layout of streets and buildings/zones ... a significant investment in new infrastructure).
  
- City Specialization:
  - Having a city specialization (i.e., an industry specialization) is not required for the Future City deliverable. However, as your city grows in SimCity, it will become harder and harder to maintain a balanced budget. The demand for increased services and reasonable tax rates make it hard to keep the city going and the citizens happy. This is where the potential for specialization lies. By tapping into these opportunities, the city can make money to offset what it spends in infrastructure – but each specialization option has a downside. Weigh the risks and be prepared to deal with the consequences. Assess the tradeoffs.
  - Trading: When your city needs resources it can't produce for itself (example – coal for a coal power generator), you can place a Trade Depot and purchase the commodity on the global market. Alternatively, if you have an active recycling facility, you can produce enough plastic (and, possibly alloy and/or metal) to sell. Use the Trade Depot with the appropriate lots to access and manage the market.
    - An option that comes with trading on the global market is to establish a Trading Headquarters (specialization). With the online SimCity, it is possible to make a success of (and specialize in) trading – buy low and sell high. The prices fluctuate hourly with the players online and the commodities they make available. However, the prices are fixed for the offline/single-player mode, so simply playing the market will not be successful in generating income. Unless you have something to sell, don't accept the opportunity to become a trading master.
  - Mining, Metals: If there is coal or ore beneath the city, you can mine for them and trade on the open market. Of course, the mining operation is dirty and will impact surrounding land values. With a large enough mining volume, you can earn a Metals Headquarters. Increasing volume earns upgrades to the headquarters and the option to place a smelting factory to create alloy (which trades for even more money). For the downside: Smelting and mining operations create pollution (air and ground) which will impact the surrounding land. This industry also increases illness (due to pollution) and injuries in the workers (mining is dangerous). And the mines and factories have increased fire risk. You will end up spending a lot for additional (and advanced) health and fire services. Finally, coal and ore resources are not limitless – eventually, you will run out.
  - Drilling: Cash-in on the oil reserves under the city and you can generate even more money than you can with mining. Pump enough oil and you can earn a Petroleum Headquarters. Pump more and you can upgrade your facilities to add an oil refinery to turn the crude oil into plastics and fuel. All of these products can be sold on the global market. The downside: like mining, drilling is a dangerous business and will increase injuries among workers. And, there is pollution (air and ground) to increase illness – both require additional and advanced health facilities. Also, like

mining, there is increased risk of fires (and hazmat fires). On top of that, drilling requires a lot of land space. And, of course, the oil resources under the city are limited.

- Electronics: This specialization does not require any natural resources, however, it does require a highly educated workforce. Invest in education – a community college and/or university – and once your city has developed several clean industry buildings, you will have the opportunity to start a processor plant. The resources required, outside of the educated workforce, are plastic and alloy that can be obtained from your recycling plant (at least initially). These processors can be sold on the global market for more money than any mining- or oil-based product. Produce enough processors and you will earn an Electronics Headquarters. Produce even more and you can start a consumer electronics business, making TVs and computers (even more money). This specialization has the potential to make millions of dollars for the city. The tradeoff is that the electronics plants produce a large amount of pollution – particularly ground pollution (the processor plant is particularly bad). As the ground pollution spreads, all of the affected land will decrease in value. They also require alot of educated workers. Eventually, the demand for workers will constrain the growth of your city's high-tech industry base and most industry outside of the electronics will downgrade, further adding to the pollution problem. So, like mining and drilling, you will be investing in additional and advanced health and fire facilities.
- Tourism/Culture and Gambling: These specializations work together to generate money for your city. They don't have the pollution drawback of the mining, drilling and electronics industries, but they can be very expensive to start. They also require a large investment in public transit services and police (crime increases with the increase in visitors to the city). Begin small, with some tourist attractions – this requires a Department of Tourism associated with your City Hall and transportation facilities to bring in the tourists: large regional buses, ferries, cruise ships, and/or trains. Landmarks, correctly placed, will attract many tourists, but are very expensive to add.
  - You will have the opportunity to start a gambling specialization when the city has a large enough commercial business base. The gambling frequently goes hand-in-hand with the tourism specialization. The small gambling house is the entry-level to the casino business. Once you have made enough money in gambling, you earn a Gambling Headquarters and more casino options. Increasing gambling income earns additional options in lodging and entertainment to accompany your casinos.
  - The tradeoffs with tourism and gambling are the increased transportation infrastructure requirements. You will need high-speed trains, ferries and cruise ships to bring the tourists into town. The gambling business will require a municipal airport with several runways and passenger terminals. Once you get the tourists to your city, you will need a very robust and extensive bus network to move them around. Make sure you have an efficient roadway system connecting your tourist areas. And, count on adding several bus terminals to handle the traffic. Of course, the gambling industry also increases the crime rate city-wide (and region-wide). You will need several police stations and at least one police precinct to try and keep up. You will also need to carefully manage your commercial development to make sure there are sufficient number of the correct wealth-level of shops to keep the tourists happy and meet demand.
- Great Works:
  - Like City Specializations, successfully completing a Great Work will not benefit you in the FCC Virtual City rubric. If you want to try for one, though, understand that it is really a region-wide (not just one-city) effort. Probably the most practical one, in terms of FCC, is the Solar Farm great work which will, when completed, provide cheap, green, sustainable power for the cities in the region. Other great works are:

- Arcology – providing a residence for hundreds of thousands of Sims (workers, shoppers, and students)
  - International Airport – functioning as a hub for tourists and freight
  - Space Center – serving as a tourist attraction and an institution of higher-learning (like a university)
- All great works have several prerequisites that must be met (like a university research project for the Solar Farm or the Space Center) and resources that must be provided to complete construction. NOTE: a SimCity bug apparently prevents the Space Center Great Work from completing in the White Water Valley region.
- Second, Third, and Other Cities in the Region
  - You are only required to build and develop one city in the region. However, having multiple cities in the region allows them to exchange goods and services. Sims travel back and forth between cities (especially if you supply a good inter-city transportation system) for jobs, shopping and education. However, criminals can also travel back and forth. So if one of your cities specializes in gambling and tourism, it will raise the crime rate in all the cities in the region.
  - Also note: second, third and other cities develop differently than the first city as they import services from their more developed neighbors and send citizens to neighboring towns for jobs, shopping and schooling.