

# SIMCITY 4 TIPS

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For basic SimCity information and tips to playing the game, see the SimCity 4 tutorials (w/ SimCity) and the FC Learning Block on SimCity with its supplemental information, guides, and video on getting started.

The general concept of SimCity is to develop a city and make it successful. Future City dictates a medium-sized city and gives you a starter region for that city. In this way, players have all the advantages of region interaction without having to play/develop more than one city.

## Download the Starter Region

(Note – specific computer instructions below apply to PCs.)

Download the Medium City region from the Future City website: <http://www.futurecity.org/all-resources>. It comes as a zip file – unzip the folder and store the contents (a folder named “Medium City”) in Documents – SimCity 4 – Regions. Start SimCity 4 and load the Medium City Region. You will see several developed cities (Central Springs, Central Lakeview, Central Township, etc.) and a blank square in the center. This is where you will be building your city.

Pause your city. The first thing you want to do is any terraforming. Also, you may want to reconcile the edges of your city with its surroundings. That will carry over terrain features like rivers, mountain ranges, lakes, etc. from neighboring cities. You will also find neighbor connections (roads, highways, etc.) that neighboring cities have made with your city square.

## Important Notes – Transferring files and Backing up

Your city (once you have given it a name) will be stored on your PC in: Documents – SimCity 4 – Regions – Medium City. To backup your city-file, use Explorer to find the city file and copy that file to your backup media (CD, thumb drive, etc.). Don't use the “save as” function in SimCity – it will occasionally save a corrupt file.

To transfer your city file to another computer, reverse the backup procedure and save your city-file to: My Documents – SimCity 4 – Regions – Downloads (or Medium City). When you start SimCity, you will need to “import” the city into the region. In the Region View, click on the square where your city will be and then click on the “import city” icon in the lower left corner of the Start/Play city graphic.

## CAUTIONS:

1. The import will overwrite (and delete) any existing city in that region square. If you have an existing city in the square where you want to import another one and you don't want to lose the original city file, you will need to copy it to another folder before you perform the import.
2. The region contains neighbor connections (roads and highways) to the medium-city square. These connections will overlay onto your imported city and overwrite (destroy) any development (buildings, roads, etc.) existing in that location.

## Terraforming

Now is your best chance to make your terrain anything you like. Later on, after you've started playing the simulation (as Mayor), terraforming will be a large expense against your budget. Now, you can build hills, mountains, lakes, forests, deserts, etc. without charge.

Land value in SimCity is enhanced by the proximity to water and high ground (elevation). This is your opportunity to make some places that will be higher in land value, and make your place popular among your citizens. Keep in mind, though, if you fill up the square with too much water or too many steep hills – areas where you won't be able to build – you may find your city strapped for space later on. So, a word of caution: you will want to carefully consider adding landscape features that won't support development. For example:

- Industry wants flat terrain. Residential and some commercial will develop on slopes/hills.
- If the slope is too steep, nothing will develop (roads may not even be possible)
- Wide rivers with gently sloping banks consume a lot of area in a medium-size city
- Seaports (ferry ports, etc.) can only be placed on gently sloping banks (use the erosion tools)

One of the more important features to add at this point is trees. Trees look nice, they're easy to plant in large numbers, and they absorb the pollution put out by your city. As in real life, pollution is a terrible thing to have, so plant a lot of trees early on.

Using the “Reconcile Edges” tool will transfer regional terrain to the edges of your city square so that you can, for example, continue rivers across your city square. Reconciling terrain is not necessary – you may terraform your city in any way you please.

## Starting Your City

Now that you have the terrain the way you want it, click on the Mayor Mode button to establish your city. Choose a city and Mayor name. Give your city name some thought – this will become your team name. We recommend you keep the “Easy” skill level – you will have more money in the starting treasury (Easy: \$500,000, Medium: \$200,000, Hard: \$100,000).

**Plan first:** You should have some plans – before you start the simulation – of what you want your city to look like. Where will your downtown be in your finished city? That will be the major commercial area and traffic will be heavy – you will want to plan for transportation early otherwise you will be destroying a lot of development to widen the roads later.

Where will your industrial region(s) be? It needs to be close enough that the citizens can get to-from work, but not so close that the pollution the industry generates will affect the residential and commercial areas of the city. And, it's a good idea to place industry close to the city boundary where factories will have a short freight trip to their customers (industry ships freight to neighboring cities).

Where will the airport be? It will take up a lot of land, but it needs a good connection to the commercial office center.

**Then build slowly:** At the beginning, though, you will want pick a core area of your city and start with it. Preferably within an easy commute of one or more neighbor cities. Define a small residential area for your initial citizens, a very small commercial area, and the industry that will employ your citizens. Let the rest of the city develop over time from that core. Start with low-density zones.

You will need to make sure your zones are connected by roads. Business and industry won't develop unless workers can travel between home and business. All infrastructure (roads, power plants, police, schools, etc.) requires an investment (money), so it is critical at the beginning of the simulation to balance what you are spending on infrastructure with what you are receiving in taxes (income). You will also want to make sure you have connections to neighboring cities – extend your roads to the nearest neighbor to allow commuting and freight shipping.

One of the first major infrastructure components you will need is power. Select a power source. Coal is the most efficient, but pollutes. We recommend either Wind or Natural Gas power plants. Residential areas can develop with only wind power, but industrial areas will soon need more than just a windmill. Place coal or gas power plants where it can provide power to the area, but not too close to your residences. No one wants a power plant in their back yard (NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard). If necessary, extend power from one zone to the next with power lines (contiguous zones don't require power lines). Check the budget on the power plant and lower it so that you are not paying for more power than the city needs.

**CAUTION:** Always “Pause” the simulation (the game) when you are adding major development: zones, infrastructure, roads, etc. Pause – add the buildings, zones, roads, railways – then click “Run” and monitor the effect of your efforts (city growth, hopefully). Building without pausing the simulation can cause disruptions in growth and development from which it may be hard to recover (for instance, you could disrupt traffic or power leading to disgruntled citizens that move out of your city).

## Becoming Established

As your city grows, you will need to spend more and more on infrastructure: police and fire departments, garbage disposal, medical facilities, roads and schools. One of the first things to build is a school to educate your citizens and get

them smart enough to work at a factory. The school should be in the center of the residential zone. And, like the power plant, you should lower the budget to cover only what it needed at this time.

**Education Quotient** affects many areas of SimCity. As the citizens become more educated, they demand better jobs. Higher-wealth industry (manufacturing and high-tech) will begin to move into the city. As the citizens get better jobs, they increase their incomes, buy better residences, and demand better commercial businesses. All of which will help to increase the city’s tax base. Education also works to reduce the crime rate (including arson) which will keep your Fire and Police expenses lower. Education is a good thing. You can determine what type of educational institution to add by checking the graphs on “education level by age” and “population by age.” Younger Sims need elementary and high schools. Older Sims need Colleges, libraries and museums.

**Demand and Desirability** control development in SimCity. The RCI Meter (Demand Meter) will indicate what type of development to zone/build. Click on the small meter to get the expanded panel and use that information in planning new zones. Grow slowly. And, in the beginning, use primarily low density. The Desirability graph will show you where to zone the development.

Without demand, development won’t occur. There are ways, however, to increase demand – by making it more desirable for specific development to take place. The table shows what things can influence desirability, either positively or negatively.

**Desirability Factors**

DEVELOPMENT	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	NIMBY	YIMBY
Residential	Education Health		Crime Fire Air Pollution Garbage Commute Time	Toxic Waste Dump Missile Range Landfill Army Base Federal Prison Casino Advanced Research Ctr Convention Center Bureau of Bureaucracy Major League Stadium	Mayor’s House Mayor’s Statue Parks, Gardens Houses of Worship Beach Farmer’s Market Playground Country Club
Commercial Service	Traffic Volume		Crime Air Pollution Garbage Distance to Residences	Toxic Waste Dump Missile Range Landfill Federal Prison	Mayor’s House Colossal Mayor’s Statue Various landmark buildings Airport (Com Off)
Commercial Office	Traffic Volume		Crime Air Pollution Garbage		
Agricultural Industry • Causes high water pollution			Air Pollution Crime Land Value Traffic Volume Slope (flat land) Freight Trip Length		
Dirty Industry • Causes high air pollution • Doesn’t care about air pollution			Crime Garbage Slope Freight Trip Length		

Manufacturing Industry		Air Pollution Land Value	Crime Garbage Slope Freight Trip Length		
High-Tech Industry	Land Value Education Quotient		Air Pollution Crime Slope Freight Trip Length	Toxic Waste Dump Missile Range Landfill Army Base Federal Prison Casino Advanced Research Ctr Convention Center Bureau of Bureaucracy Major League Stadium	Mayor's House Mayor's Statue Parks, Gardens Houses of Worship Beach Farmer's Market Playground Country Club

NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard

YIMBY – Yes In My Back Yard

**Developer Types** – There are twelve distinctive developer types in SimCity 4:

**1-3. Residential** §, §§, §§§ (low, medium and high wealth)

The three residential wealth classes share the same likes and dislikes, but at different levels of importance or impact. Lower wealth Sims will tolerate more pollution, crime, etc. and higher wealth Sims appreciate more parks and land improvements.

Different Residential wealth levels also demand different Commercial and Industrial levels and in different proportions. High-wealth Residential Sims (R§§§), for example, demand a more high-level Commercial Office (Co§§§) and High-Tech Industry (IHT) for their employment.

The Sims education level (or EQ) also affects demand for Commercial Office (Co) and Industrial (employment). A low-EQ R§ requires employment in Dirty Industry (ID), low-wealth Commercial Service (Cs§), or Agriculture (IA). A medium-high EQ R§, on the other hand, demands more Manufacturing Industry (IM) and some medium-wealth Commercial Office (Co§§).

**4-8. Commercial Service** (Cs§, Cs§§, Cs§§§) and **Commercial Office** (Co§§, Co§§§)

Commercial Service includes retail and service businesses within your city. These can range in wealth level from the most basic to the high end (all three wealth levels). Commercial Office, on the other hand, comprises your city's white-collar and professional businesses which are higher wealth, so there are only two classes: medium-wealth and high-wealth.

Both varieties of the Commercial population create jobs for your Residential Sims. A low-wealth Commercial Service business employs low-wealth Residential Sims. A high-wealth Commercial Service business, on the other hand, requires predominately medium-wealth Residential Sims (professionals), some low-wealth (clerical and support staff), and a smattering of high-wealth (management).

**9-12. Industrial** (IA, ID, IM, IHT)

As you'll see, Industrial Sims are different. Industrial developer types aren't broken down in terms of wealth, but in terms of function and pollution level.

Agricultural (IA) is in a class by itself. It is, like ID, a low-wealth Industry. All jobs offered on a farm are R§, and the buildings never grow with population as they do in other industry.

Dirty Industry (ID) is traditional heavy smokestack industry and represents the lowest rung on the Industry scale. They tend to be demanded by low EQ/low-wealth Residential Sims and provide most of those jobs. Each also offers a small number of middle-wealth Residential jobs. They produce massive amounts of water and air pollution.

Manufacturing Industry (IM) is cleaner than ID and offers a slate of jobs balanced between low- and medium-wealth Sims. A few high-wealth Sims populate the management suites above the production floors.

Finally, High-Tech Industry (IHT) is the pinnacle of modern Industry: It's wealthy, it's clean, and it employs the cream-of-the-crop: mostly middle-wealth and small numbers of high-and low-wealth Residential Sims. High-Tech is demanded only by a population with a large and long-standing Mayoral commitment to education.

**Tax Rates** affect demand and desirability. Lower a tax rate for a specific developer type – for instance, High Tech – if you want to increase demand. Raise tax rates to decrease demand (for example, to discourage development of Dirty Industry). The neutral tax rate is 9%. A change in tax rate will not have an immediate effect – it will take 3-4 months to influence demand/desirability, and, generally speaking, the change needs to be fairly significant (3-4 percentage points).

## Transportation

Transportation plays a crucial role in SimCity 4. And, it's all about trip time. For residential areas that means commute time – getting Sims from home to work and back. Your citizens are only willing to travel so long before they start complaining and moving out of the city. For industry, that translates to freight shipping time. 2.5 hours is the max trip time. If it takes longer than that for a Sim to get to the nearest appropriate job, he won't work (the “no job” zot will appear over his residence).

Strategies to keep things moving:

1. Upgrade streets to roads and roads to avenues, one-way streets, or highways. Use the Traffic data view to locate congested streets and upgrade them. Capacities of various types of roads: street, 100; road, 1000; one-way road, 2000; avenue, 2500; highway, 4000. Note: streets, roads and one-way roads require the same amount of surface area, so the upgrade is easy (remember, though, that one-way roads have to be in pairs – if you build a road going one way, you will need to have another road going the opposite direction). Avenues and highways require twice the surface area of streets and roads. Upgrading to these types of thoroughfares may require demolishing buildings and infrastructure.
2. Add public or mass transportation systems. The easiest is buses. Place bus stops at congestion points and along routes that get Sims to-from work. For example: add bus stations at higher-density housing zones and higher-density commercial or industrial zones. For freight trips, add freight train stations and seaports.
3. Integrate (or interconnect) mass transit systems to move more people more efficiently. For example, put subways in densely populated, high-traffic areas. Then, from the subway stations on the edges of the network, set up a bus system leading out to the more remote areas of the city. You might also put parking garages near the end-of-the-line subway and/or bus stations for a park-and-ride service.

Factors to consider in planning an integrated transportation system:

- Higher wealth Sims (R\$\$\$) will choose to drive their personal cars 80% of the time no matter how convenient the mass transit system is. Lower wealth Sims (R\$) will choose mass transportation 80% of the time and the middle class group will opt for the fastest method.
- Except for rail, the only way to access a transit station (bus station, subway station, etc.) is on foot so stations must be within walking distance of the population they serve (about 2-3 blocks). Likewise, transferring between transportation modes (from bus to subway, for example) is on foot, so stations should be placed within walking distance of each other (1-2 blocks).
- SimCity calculates morning and evening commute trips, so mass transit stations are needed at each end of the commute (in Sim 3000, Sims would disembark a bus anywhere – there was no need for a station – now, you need a station for disembarkation).
- Place stations along the route (not just at the beginning and end) to increase the chances of Sims using the mass transit system.
- Freight rail and seaports are only used by industry for shipping if they are closer than the nearest neighbor connection.
- Pause the simulation when you work on roads and transit systems. SimCity recalculates trips every 4 months or so, however if a road is destroyed, the simulation will immediately re-route traffic (if possible) and the impact on transportation (and trip times) will be immediate.

- Streets can intersect roads and avenues. They can connect head-to-head with roads. Streets cannot make neighbor connections or bridges. Roads can transition into avenues and one-way roads. Roads can make neighbor connections and bridges. Avenues can transition to/from highways (so, to go from a highway to a road, transition first from the highway to an avenue, then from the avenue to a road).
- Subway systems are very efficient, speedy and conserve land/space. They are good for commuting within the city. They are also expensive to build. Rail systems (regular rail, elevated rail, and monorail) take up a lot of land/space with tracks and stations. They are hard to turn (form curves) and, in the case of regular rail, slow. Best used for transportation between cities. Note that subways can transition from underground to elevated rail and back (which can be handy in some areas – for instance in crossing rivers where a subway tunnel cannot be built).
- Highways are somewhat expensive to build and are somewhat inefficient in their land requirements (on-off ramps, cloverleaves, etc.), but they move a lot of cars. The trade-off, however, is more cars = more air pollution.

Airports are closely tied to commercial development, specifically Commercial Office development. Connect the airport to the commercial office center with roadways and mass transit facilities.

Airports come in three types: landing strips, municipal airports and international airports. Landing strips require less land, cost less, produce less air pollution, have lower capacity (handle fewer passengers and flights) and have a lesser effect on commercial office development/growth. International airports require more land, cost more, produce more air pollution, handle more flights/passengers and have a greater effect on commercial office development/growth.

## FAQs – General

### 1. How do I make the terrain match the region? Do I need to make the terrain match the region?

The first time you start your city, you have the opportunity to go into “God mode” and terraform (make terrain changes, plant forests, and add animals) to your city at no cost. After you have started the city simulation – after you have entered “Mayor mode” – any terrain changes will cost money and may destroy any development already in place in your city.

In God mode, you can reconcile the edges of your terrain to the surrounding cities. The beginnings of the river will show up on the edge of your city block, as well as any hills and valleys. If you want to complete the river through the city, use the valley carving tools to create the river. If you plan to have a seaport in your city, use the smoothing and erosion tools to get the gradual banks that are necessary for seaports. Also plant trees now, while they don’t cost anything.

Keep in mind, however, that terrain features like rivers and steep hills will limit the space you have for city development later.

### 2. How can I change orientation and turn off auto-streets?

To turn off the auto-street function, either put the streets in first or hold down the shift key while you click-drag the zones. To change the orientation of a building that you are placing (like a police station, school or reward), use the home and end keys.

### 3. Why can’t I put in a seaport or a marina?

Seaports, ferries, marinas, and beach-parks require gently sloped beaches (or river banks). If the slope is too steep or the elevation too high, the feature cannot be built.

### 4. Why is it taking so long? How long should I expect to spend on building my SimCity?

There are three speeds of the simulation, but you can’t (or shouldn’t) keep the simulation constantly running. When you are making major infrastructure changes, stop the simulation and restart. In particular, be sure to stop when you are replacing power plants, water pumps and roads. The run-stop-run method of playing the game is recommended.

But, getting to 150 years will take time – this is not an overnight assignment. Running the simulation continuously:

- Slow speed – takes about 12-13 minutes to progress one year. 30 hours to 150.

- Medium speed – takes about 6-7 minutes to get one year. 15 hours to 150.
- Fast speed – takes about 1.5 minutes to get one year. 4 hours to 150.

**5. Do I have to let the game reach 150 years and 50,000 population?**

It is not mandatory, but to get maximum points per the rubric, your city will need to be at least 150 years old and have at least 50,000 citizens. Cities have to develop to a certain point in order to get maximum points on most of the rubric categories, such as residential/commercial/industrial development, education quotient, and renewable energy.

**6. Should I do any of the U-Drive-It assignments?**

The U-Drive-It assignments can help win certain rewards and even add money to the treasury, but are not necessary to develop your city. The missions are fun and interactive, but you shouldn't spend a lot of time on them. Failure of a mission can cost you money and slow development.

**7. Should I use MySims?**

Like U-Drive-It, MySims can give you information about conditions in your city from the citizens' point of view, but it is not necessary for successful city development.

**8. Cheats**

There are several published cheat codes to SimCity – all but one are disallowed. The only code you can use is the “whererufrom” code to change the name of your city. For the most part, cheat codes will not help your score. Don't use them – if the judges believe you have used a cheat, they will deduct points.

**FAQs – City Management, Budget**

**1. How can I keep from running out of money?**

Make sure your monthly income covers expenses. Put in infrastructure only as needed. Don't get carried away with roads, schools, police stations, etc. In particular, don't add landmarks and rewards without reason if the budget is tight. For the infrastructure that is necessary to the growth/development of the city, make sure you are not paying for more than you need at the time. Use the query tool to open and adjust budgets for hospitals, schools, power stations. If necessary, go to the budget detail and adjust capacities for transportation items like bus stations, airports, and seaports. Also go through and make sure all your power and water facilities are functioning and efficient. Occasionally, these facilities will degrade to the point of being useless without you realizing it (no warning from the advisor) and you could be paying for something that is no longer functioning.

**2. Should I take all the rewards?**

Most of the rewards will boost demand and growth for some type of development (mayor statues help commercial and residential development, private schools help residential development only, convention center helps commercial development, but hurts residential development). But, most rewards come with a monthly cost that you need to factor into your budget planning. And, there is also the consideration of the footprint (size) of the reward: universities, country clubs, and zoos all consume a large number of tiles. In a medium-size city, that might be more space than you want to devote to a single item. And, generally speaking, the cost to bulldoze and remove rewards is very high.

**3. Should I build landmarks?**

Landmarks have a positive effect on commercial development and high-tech industry, but they also increase pollution and garbage output and, they cost money to build and maintain (monthly expense).

**4. How can I increase income? Should I accept some of the neighbor or business deals?**

Money comes into the city budget primarily through taxes, so one sure way to increase income is to increase tax rate. However, increasing taxes too much will decrease demand and the Sims will quit developing and building and move out of the city.

There is one income-producing city ordinance: legalized gambling. The downside of this is a 20% increase in crime (and possibly increase in police expense). Enacting this ordinance allows you to get a casino business deal.

Neighbor deals are agreements between cities to buy or sell power, water or garbage. An appropriate neighbor connection must exist: power lines, water pipes, or roadways. Paying a neighbor to take your garbage is a good way to reduce pollution in your city. On the other side, if your city has an excess of capacity in power generation, you can sell some to a neighbor and generate some income for your city. (Your neighbor must have enough money to pay for the deal and less of the resource than it needs, and your city must have enough excess resource to supply both cities.)

**CAUTION:** neighbor deals do not survive the city export/import process that we use to judge the SimCity deliverable. The judges will not be able to confirm that you are buying or selling power, water or garbage. So, if you are, for example, exporting all of your garbage to a neighbor, the judge will see “0” garbage handling capacity when they check your city. This could possibly affect your score on that criterion. Use caution when you decide to accept a neighbor deal – particularly for 100% of a resource.

Business deals come into play when your budget reserves decrease to specific levels. They generate income, but have specific downsides and all decrease your Mayor rating:

- Army base – probably the best of the deals, reduces residential desirability, and increases crime
- Casino – reduces residential desirability, increases crime, and consumes huge amounts of power and water
- Federal prison – reduces residential and commercial desirability and increases crime
- Missile Range – reduces residential and commercial desirability, increases air and water pollution and allows for Missile Misfire disasters
- Toxic Waste Dump – maybe the worst possible deal, reduces commercial and residential desirability, produces massive amounts of air and water pollution as well as local radiation pollution.

#### **5. Is taking out a loan a bad idea?**

Taking out a loan may be a good idea if you anticipate increasing revenue in the near future. For example, you might want to take out a loan to finance a major infrastructure investment like a subway system that will keep your Sims moving and will increase desirability for businesses and residences. Taking out a loan to solve a long-running deficit problem in the city budget is not a good idea. If your city cannot balance the budget month-to-month, then a loan will only put off the inevitable for a few years. The monthly cost of the loan repayment will further add to your deficit.

#### **6. How can I get rid of my dirty industry?**

The way to get rid of dirty industry is to make it undesirable for it to exist. You can cut off access to neighbors, freight stations, and seaports – making the freight trips longer than acceptable. This, of course, might have an impact on traffic flow in-general for your city. A second method might be to increase the tax-rate to the point where demand dies and industry stagnates. This doesn’t necessarily make existing industry disappear – so you might have to bulldoze at some point to get rid of the last vestiges of dirty industry. The advantage of this method is that it will increase your tax revenues (the disadvantage will be when you get rid of it and the revenue disappears as well).

## **FAQs – City Planning and Development**

### **1. How can I get high-tech industry to develop?**

It takes many years for High-Tech industry (IHT) to develop in a city. It employs the mostly middle-wealth Sims and they must be well-educated (high EQs). There needs to be a long-term commitment by the mayor (you) to educate the population. Once the EQ is high across all age groups (and has remained high for several years), you should begin to see demand for IHT. If not, try lowering the tax rate. Other desirability factors for IHT: high land value, low air pollution, low crime, flat land, and short freight trips. IHT also does not like garbage (particularly landfills).

### **2. How can I keep by buildings from being abandoned?**

Sims abandon buildings when they become “undesirable.” You can easily spot these buildings – they appear black. Prior to abandonment, as the desirability factors are dropping, you will notice the buildings turning dark gray. Using the query tool, you can usually find the reason for the low desirability: lack of power, water or jobs are indicated by a zot over the building. Power and water are easily remedied. Lack of job usually means that the commute time to the nearest appropriate job is too long and may mean you need to restructure your transportation system (mass transit or



roadways) in the area. Other desirability factors include: air, water, garbage and noise pollution. In the case of commercial development, it may be a lack of commercial traffic in the area. Again, restructuring the transportation system might be called for.

In some cases, as cities mature, the desirability of commercial or residential areas may change. As mayor, you might want to consider re-development of an area to accommodate new demand. And, once a building is abandoned and remains abandoned for several months, it is usually wise to go ahead and bulldoze it to make way for new development. Sometimes abandoned buildings will be re-inhabited, but not always.

### **3. What if I run out of space?**

Consider carefully before you put in large rewards like universities and zoos. Bulldozing them later can be very expensive. When free land becomes a problem in your city – which it might since you will be building a medium-sized city – you will have to look carefully at redevelopment. First step is to increase the density of your zones. But, increased building density means increased traffic which will mean higher capacity roads (like avenues and highways, which in themselves require more space) and more mass transit. The best solution to the transportation problem for crowded cities is a subway. They are expensive to build, but fast and require very little above-ground space.

## **FAQs – Transportation**

### **1. How can I get Sims to use my public transportation networks?**

Sims use transportation system to get to and from work, so place stations (bus, subway, elevated rail, etc.) where there is the highest concentration of residences and businesses. Lower wealth Sims will use public transportation if it is available. Higher wealth Sims will drive their cars most of the time and the middle-class will choose whichever is the fastest: personal car or public transportation. Sims also walk to get to/from the stations, so place them within walking distance (2-4 blocks). And, for integrated transportation systems – where you want Sims to transfer from bus to subway (for example) – place the stations within walking distance of each other (1-2 blocks). Finally, be sure to place stations along the route – not just at the beginning and end to make the system more useable.

### **2. How can I get my commute time down?**

The maximum commute time is 2.5 hours. To reduce the commute times, you can:

- Put in higher capacity roads (avenues, one-way streets, highways) along the route and make sure the roadways are well-maintained.
- Put in integrated mass-transit systems with stations in highly populated or congested areas.
- Make sure businesses are distributed throughout the city and not concentrated in one or two areas.

### **3. How can I get industry to use the seaport or train?**

Seaports and freight train stations are primarily used by industry. Industry, however, seems to be pre-disposed to using trucks and roadways for hauling their freight. To get them to use the seaports and train stations, these structures need to be closer and more convenient than the nearest neighbor connection.

### **4. Do I need to connect to the neighbor stubs already there?**

Connecting to the existing roadway stubs on the edges of your city will make your neighbor connections slightly more efficient in the near-term. However, making a new connection will serve as well and may better fit with your plan for the city development/design. Several of the existing connections (for the medium city region) are highways that you will not need until your city has matured significantly, so adding new neighbor connections is probably the best idea for a new city.

## **FAQs – Utilities, Pollution**

### **1. How can I get rid of air pollution?**

All buildings produce some level of air pollution, however, dirty industry and some power generators are the biggest culprits. One way to control pollution is to relegate the polluters to one area of your city, preferably separated from the rest by hills or areas of forest. Another option would be to transition your dirty industry to the cleaner manufacturing or high-tech. This requires that the citizens be better educated and middle-class. However, the

transition will not be automatic – High-Tech will not develop in high-pollution areas. Manufacturing will, if the air pollution is not too high.

To discourage dirty industry, you need to make it undesirable for it to develop: cut-off access to neighboring cities (long freight trips), or raise taxes significantly. Note: if you affect the freight trips, manufacturing won't develop in that location either.

For power generation, you have a few clean choices: wind (low efficiency, but clean), solar and hydrogen (rewards that come after you have reached a certain level of high-tech employment), and nuclear (clean from an air pollution standpoint). Of the power options offered at the beginning of a city, natural gas provides the most energy for the least amount of pollution.

Traffic is the third major contributor to air pollution. Any roadway that has high traffic will produce excess pollution. The solution is to design/develop an integrated mass-transit system throughout the city.

There are also a couple of ordinances you can pass to help eliminate air pollution: Automobile Emission Reduction Act, Carpool Incentive Program, Clean Air Act, and Commuter Shuttle Service.

## **2. How can I control water pollution?**

Farms are by far the major source of water pollution in SimCity. Dirty industry also contributes, but to a lesser extent. One of the consequences of water pollution is that any water pump or water tower in a polluted area will cease to operate. To help control water pollution, concentrate your farms and dirty in specific areas of the city square and add a water treatment plant.

## **3. What is the best way to handle garbage?**

Landfills and recycling centers are the best way to handle garbage. Locate the landfills in areas where garbage pollution is not a desirability deterrent: in areas with dirty or manufacturing industry. They require a road leading up to them. And, you will need to keep increasing the number of landfills as the city grows and its garbage output increases. But, also keep in mind that if you want to decommission a landfill, you must demolish the road leading to it. So, place it where you could cut off Roads without injuring any nearby developers. It takes a while to get rid of a Landfill after you have decommissioned it. You have to wait for all the garbage deposited in it to decompose (at a rate of about 7% per month up to 15 tons).

Recycling centers handle some of the garbage (one recycling center reduces the amount of garbage by 25% for every 25,000 Sims). And, together with the recycling center, enactment of the Trash Presort ordinance will reduce the garbage output even more.

Another way to handle garbage is a waste to energy plant which incinerates trash to produce energy. It may sound efficient, but it is a huge producer of air pollution.

A third option is to pay a neighbor (through a neighbor deal) to take your garbage. This is a somewhat expensive, but very clean solution to the trash problem.

## **4. Do I need power lines? Do I need water pipes?**

Nothing will develop if there is no power. You can place infrastructure buildings, landmarks and rewards in areas without power, however. Police and fire stations are self-powered. Power spreads across zones from a power plant without lines. Power will not travel across unzoned areas without power lines. If you construct power lines to the edge of the city square, you have an opportunity to buy or sell power to a neighboring city (neighbor deal).

Water is not as essential as power – some buildings will develop without water, but they will be limited. Some types of development, like high-tech industry, will not develop without water. Water is carried from water structures (pumps, towers, treatment plants) through pipes and it radiates 6 tiles beyond the pipe. Any RCI building that goes without water for more than 6 months will be abandoned.