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# **osm2city Documentation**

***Release 1.0***

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While the article on FlightGear's [Wiki](#) presents in general terms what `osm2city` is and what features it has, this manual goes into depth with many aspects of generating scenery objects based on [OpenStreetMap](#) (OSM) data and deploying/using them in [FlightGear](#).

Before you generate your own sceneries, you might want to get familiar with the output of `osm2city` by first deploying some of the downloadable `osm2city` sceneries and have a look at chapter [Using Generated Scenery](#). The following list is not exhaustive and more sceneries are typically announced in the [Sceneries](#) part of the FlightGear Forums:

- [Areas populated with osm2city scenery](#)
- [LOWI city buildings](#)
- [EDDC city models](#)
- [OMDB & OMDW](#)

**Contents:**



## INSTALLATION

The following specifies software and data requirements as part of the installation. Please be aware that different steps in scenery generation (e.g. generating elevation data, generating scenery objects) might require a lot of memory and are CPU intensive. Either use decent hardware or experiment with the size of the sceneries. However it is more probable that your computer gets at limits when flying around in FlightGear with sceneries using `osm2city` than when generating the sceneries.

### 1.1 Pre-requisites

#### 1.1.1 Python

`osm2city` is written in Python and needs Python for execution. Python is available on all major desktop operating systems — including but not limited to Windows, Linux and Mac OS X. See <http://www.python.org>.

Currently Python version 2.7 is used for development and is therefore the recommended version.

#### 1.1.2 Python Extension Packages

`osm2city` uses the following Python extension packages, which must be installed on your system and be included in your `PYTHONPATH`:

- `curl`
- `matplotlib`
- `networkx`
- `numpy`
- `pil`
- `scipy`
- `shapely`

Please make sure to use Python 2.7 compatible extensions. Often Python 3 compatible packages have a “3” in their name. Most Linux distributions come by default with the necessary packages — often they are prefixed with `python-` (e.g. `python-numpy`). On Windows WinPython (<https://winpython.github.io/>) together with Christoph Gohlke’s unofficial Windows binaries for Python extension packages (<http://www.lfd.uci.edu/~gohlke/pythonlibs/>) works well.

## 1.2 Installation of osm2city

There is no installer package - neither on Windows nor Linux. `osm2city` consists of a set of Python programs “`osm2city`” and the related data in “`osm2city-data`”. You need both.

Do the following:

1. Download the packages either using [Git](#) or as a zip-package.
2. Add the `osm2city` directory to your `PYTHONPATH`. You can read more about this at <https://docs.python.org/2/using/cmdline.html#envvar-PYTHONPATH>.
3. Create soft links between as described in the following sub-chapter.

### 1.2.1 Creating Soft Links to Texture Data

Many of the `osm2city` programs must have access to texture data in `osm2city-data`. The following assumes that both the `osm2city` and `osm2city-data` are stored within the same directory.

On a Linux workstation do the following:

```
$ cd osm2city
$ ln -sf ../osm2city-data/tex
$ ln -sf ../osm2city-data/tex
```

On a Windows computer do the following (path may differ):

```
> mklink /J C:\development\osm2city\tex.src C:\development\osm2city-data\tex.src
> mklink /J C:\development\osm2city\tex C:\development\osm2city-data\tex
```



## PREPARATION

Before `osm2city` related programs can be run to generate FlightGear scenery objects, the following steps need to be done:

1. *Creating a Directory Structure*
2. *Getting OpenStreetMap Data*
3. *Setting Minimal Parameters*
4. *Generating Elevation Data*

It is recommended to start with generating scenery objects for a small area around a smaller airport outside of big cities, such that manual errors are found fast. Once you are acquainted with all process steps, you can experiment with larger and denser areas.

### 2.1 Creating a Directory Structure

The following shows a directory structure, which one of the developers is using — feel free to use any other structure.

```
HOME/
  flightgear/
    fgfs_terrasync/
      Airports/
      Models/
      Objects/
      Terrain/
      terrasync-cache.xml
  development
    osm2city/
    osm2city-data/
    ...
  fg_customscenery/
    LSZS/
      Objects/
        e000n0040/
          e009n46/
            3105315.btg
            LSZScity0418.ac
            LSZScity0418.xml
            ...
      LSMM/
        Objects/
        ...
  projects/
```

```
LSZS/
  lszs_narrow.osm
  params.ini
  elev.in           (not always present)
  elev.out          (not always present)
  elev.pkl          (not always present)
LSMM/
...
```

The directory `flightgear` contains folder `fgfs_terrasync`. This is where you have your default FlightGear scenery. The FlightGear Wiki has extensive information about [TerraSync](#) and how to get data. You need this data in folder, as `osm2city` only enhances the scenery with e.g. additional buildings or power pylons.

The directory `development` contains the `osm2city` programs and data after installation as explained in [Installation](#).

In the example directory structure above the directory `fg_customscenery` hosts the input and output information — here two sceneries for airports LSZS and LSMM (however there is no need to structure sceneries by airports). The output of `osm2city` scenery generation goes into e.g. `fg_customscenery/LSZS` while the input to the scenery generation is situated in e.g. `fg_customscenery/projects/LSZS` (how to get the input files in this folder is discussed in the following chapters).

The directory structure in the output folders (e.g. `fg_customscenery/LSZS`) is created by `osm2city` related programs, i.e. you do not need to create it manually.

The directory `.../fg_customscenery/projects` will be called `WORKING_DIRECTORY` in the following. This is important because `osm2city` related programs will have assumptions about this.

## 2.2 Getting OpenStreetMap Data

The OpenStreetMap Wiki has comprehensive [information](#) about how to get OSM data. An easy way to start is using Geofabrik's extracts (<http://download.geofabrik.de/>).

Be aware that `osm2city` only accepts OSM data in xml-format, i.e. `*.osm` files. Therefore you might need to translate data from the binary `*.pbf` format using e.g. [Osmosis](#). It is highly recommend to limit the area covered as much as possible: it leads to faster processing and it is easier to experiment with smaller areas until you found suitable parameters. If you use Osmosis to cut the area with `--bounding-box`, then you need to use `completeWays=yes`<sup>1</sup>. E.g. on Windows it could look as follows:

```
c:\> "C:\FlightGear\osmosis-latest\bin\osmosis.bat" --read-pbf file="C:\FlightGear\fg_customscenery\1
--bounding-box completeWays=yes top=46.7 left=9.75 bottom=46.4 right=10.0 --wx file="C:\FlightG
```

Please be aware of the [Tile Index Schema](#) in FlightGear. It is advised to set boundaries, which do not cross tiles. Otherwise the scenery objects can jitter and disappear / re-appear due to the clusters of facades crossing tiles. Another reason to keep within boundaries is the sheer amount of data that needs to be kept in memory.

## 2.3 Setting a Minimal Set of Parameters

`osm2city` has a large amount of parameters, by which the generation of scenery objects based on OSM data can be influenced. Chapter [Parameters](#) has detailed information about all these parameters. However to get started only a few parameters must be specified — actually it is generally recommended only to specify those parameters, which need to get a different value from the default values, so as to have a better understanding for which parameters you have taken an active decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Failing to do so might result in an exception, where the stack trace might contain something like `KeyError: 1227981870`.

Create a `params.ini` file with your favorite text editor. In our example it would get stored in `fg_customscenery/projects/LSZS` and the minimal content could be as follows:

```
PREFIX = "LSZS"
PATH_TO_SCENERY = "/home/flightgear/fgfs_terrasync"
PATH_TO_OUTPUT = "/home/fg_customscenery/LSZS"
OSM_FILE = "lszs_narrow.osm"

BOUNDARY_WEST = 9.81
BOUNDARY_SOUTH = 46.51
BOUNDARY_EAST = 9.90
BOUNDARY_NORTH = 46.54

NO_ELEV = False
ELEV_MODE = "Manual"
```

A few comments on the parameters:

**PREFIX** Needs to be the same as the specific folder below `fg_customscenery/projects/`. Do not use spaces in the name.

**PATH\_TO\_SCENERY** Full path to the scenery folder without trailing slash. This is where we will probe elevation and check for overlap with static objects. Most likely you'll want to use your TerraSync path here.

**PATH\_TO\_OUTPUT** The generated scenery (.stg, .ac, .xml) will be written to this path. If empty then the correct location in `PATH_TO_SCENERY` is used. Note that if you use TerraSync for `PATH_TO_SCENERY`, you **MUST** choose a different path here. Otherwise, TerraSync will overwrite the generated scenery. Unless you know what you are doing, there is no reason not to specify a dedicated path here. While not absolutely needed it is good practice to name the output folder the same as `PREFIX`.

**OSM\_FILE** The file containing OpenStreetMap data. See previous chapter [Getting OpenStreetMap Data](#).

**BOUNDARY\_\*** The longitude and latitude of the boundaries of the generated scenery. The boundaries should correspond to the boundaries in the `OSM_FILE` (open the \*.osm file in a text editor and check the data in ca. line 3). The boundaries can be different, but then you might either miss data (if the OSM boundaries are larger) or do more processing than necessary (if the OSM boundaries are more narrow).

**NO\_ELEV** Set this to `False`. The only reason to set this to `True` would be for developers to check generated scenery objects a bit faster not caring about the vertical position in the scenery.

**ELEV\_MODE** See chapter [Available Elevation Probing Mode](#).

## 2.4 Generating Elevation Data

### 2.4.1 TerraSync

osm2city uses existing scenery elevation data for two reasons:

- No need to get additional data from elsewhere.
- The elevation of the generated scenery objects need to be align with the underlying scenery data.

This comes at the cost that elevation data must be obtained by “flying” through the scenery, which can be a time consuming process for larger areas — especially if you need a good spatial resolution e.g. in mountain areas like Switzerland. The good part is that you only need to do this once and then only whenever the underlying scenery's elevation data changes (which is quite seldom in the case of scenery from [TerraSync](#)).

Please be aware that the scenery data needed for your area might not have been downloaded yet by TerraSync, e.g. if you have not yet “visited” a specific tile. An easy way to download large areas of data is by using [TerraMaster](#).

## 2.4.2 Available Elevation Probing Modes

There are a few different possibilities to generate elevation data, each of which is discussed in details in subchapters below. This is what is specified in parameter `ELEV_MODE` in the `params.ini` file:

- `ELEV_MODE = "FgelevCaching"`: most automated and convenient
- `ELEV_MODE = "Fgelev"`: use this instead of `FgelevCaching` if you have clear memory or speed limitations
- `ELEV_MODE = "Telnet"`: use this if you cannot compile C++ or use an older FlightGear version
- `ELEV_MODE = "Manual"`: fallback method — doing a lot of stuff manually

The two methods using `Fgelev` require a bit less manual setup and intervention, however you need to be able to compile a C++ class with dependencies. `FgelevCaching` might give the best accuracy, be fastest and most automated. However memory requirements, speed etc. might vary depending on your parameter settings (e.g. `ELEV_RASTER_*`) and the ratio between scenery area and the number of OSM objects.

All methods apart from `FgelevCaching` will generate a file `elev.out` to be put into your input folder. `FgelevCaching` can also keep data cached (in a file called `elev.pkl` in the input directory) — so from a caching perspective there is not much of a difference <sup>2</sup>.

The next chapters describe each elevation probing mode and link to a [detailed description of sub-tasks](#).

## 2.4.3 ELEV\_MODE = "FgelevCaching"

In this mode elevation probing happens while running `osm2city` related scenery generation — instead of a data preparation task. There are 2 pre-requisites:

1. *Compile a patched `fgelev` program*
2. *Setting parameter `FG_ELEV`*
3. *Setting environment variable `FG_ROOT`*

## 2.4.4 ELEV\_MODE = "Fgelev"

This elevation probing mode and the next modes generate a file `elev.out`, which is put or needs to be put into your input folder. Use the following steps:

1. *Compile a patched `fgelev` program*
2. *Setting parameter `FG_ELEV`*
3. *Setting parameters `ELEV_RASTER_*`*
4. *Setting environment variable `FG_ROOT`*
5. *Run `tools.py` to generate elevation data*

## 2.4.5 ELEV\_MODE = "Telnet"

This mode requires FlightGear to be running and uses a data connection to get elevation data.

1. *Hide scenery objects*
2. *Setting parameters `ELEV_RASTER_*`*

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<sup>2</sup> It is a bit more complicated than that. The three other methods keep data in a grid — and the grid stays the same across e.g. `osm2city` and `osm2pylon`. That is different for `FgelevCaching`, because it will get the position for every object, which by nature is different between e.g. `osm2city` and `osm2pylon`.

3. *Setting parameter TELNET\_PORT*
4. *Run setup.py to prepare elevation probing through Nasal*
5. *Start FlightGear*
6. *Run tools.py to generate elevation data*
7. Exit FlightGear
8. *Unhide scenery objects*

### 2.4.6 ELEV\_MODE = “Manual”

This mode can be used with older FlightGear versions and is save, but also needs a lot of manual steps, which might be error prone. The following steps are needed:

1. *Hide scenery Objects*
2. *Setting parameters ELEV\_RASTER\_\**
3. *Adapt file elev.nas*
4. *Run tools.py to generate elevation input data*
5. *Copy file elev.in*
6. *Start FlightGear*
7. Execute a Nasal script (see below)
8. Exit FlightGear
9. *Copy file elev.out*
10. *Unhide scenery objects*

While FlightGear is running, open menu Debug/Nasal Console in the FlightGear user interface. Write `elev.get_elevation()` and hit the “Execute” button. Be patient as it might seem as nothing is happening for many minutes. At the end you might get output like the following in the Nasal Console:

```
Checking if tile is loaded
Position 46.52710817536379 9.878004489017634
Reading file /home/pingu/.fgfs/elev.in
Splitting file /home/pingu/.fgfs/elev.in
Read 231130 records
Writing 231130 records
Wrote 231130 records
Signalled Success
```

### 2.4.7 Detailed Description of Sub-Tasks

(Note: you need to follow only those sub-tasks, which were specified for the specific elevation probing mode as described above.)

#### Compile Patched fgelev

osm2city comes with a patched version of fgelev, which by means of a parameter `expire` drastically can improve the speed and avoid hanging. The patched version can be found in `osm2city` subdirectory `fgelev` as source file `fgelev.cxx`. Before using it, you need to compile it and then replace the version, which comes with

your FlightGear installation in the same directory as `fgfs/fgfs.exe`. In Windows it might be in “D:/Program Files/FlightGear/bin/Win64/fgelev.exe”.

Compilation depends on your operating system and hardware. On a Linux Debian derivative you might use the following:

1. Download and compile according to [Scripted Compilation on Linux Debian/Ubuntu](#)
2. Replace `fgelev.cxx` in e.g. `./next/flightgear/utils/fgelev` with the one from `osm2city/fgelev`
3. Recompile e.g. using the following command:

```
./download_and_compile.sh -p n -d n -r n FGFS
```

### Setting Parameter FG\_ELEV

Set parameter `FG_ELEV` to point to the full path of the executable. On Linux it could be something like `FG_ELEV = '/home/pingu/bin/fgfs_git/next/install/flightgear/bin/fgelev'`. On Windows you might have to put quotes around the path due to whitespace e.g. `FG_ELEV = '"D:/Program Files/FlightGear/bin/Win64/fgelev.exe"'`.

### Setting Environment Variable \$FG\_ROOT

The environment variable `$FG_ROOT` must be set in your operating system or at least your current session, such that `fgelev` can work optimally. How you set environment variables is depending on your operating system and not described here. I.e. this is NOT something you set as a parameter in `params.ini`!

`$FG_ROOT` is typically a path ending with directories `data` or `fgdata` (e.g. on Linux it could be `/home/pingu/bin/fgfs_git/next/install/flightgear/fgdata`).

### Setting Parameters ELEV\_RASTER\_\*

The parameters `ELEV_RASTER_X` and `ELEV_RASTER_Y` control the spatial resolution of the generated elevation data for all other methods than `FgelevCaching`. Most of the times it is a good idea to keep the X/Y values aligned. The smaller the values, the better the vertical alignment of generated scenery objects with the underlying scenery, but the more memory and time is used during the generation of elevation data and when using the generated elevation data in `osm2city`. The smoother the scenery elevation is, the larger values can be chosen for `ELEV_RASTER_*`. In Switzerland 10 is sufficiently narrow. Keep in mind that the spatial resolution of typical FlightGear elevation data<sup>3</sup> is limited and therefore setting small values here will not noticeably improve the visual alignment.

### Setting Parameter TELNET\_PORT

You need to set parameter `TELNET_PORT` to the same value as specified in FlightGear parameter `--telnet` (e.g. 5501).

### Hide Scenery Objects

This step is necessary as otherwise the elevation probing might be on top of an existing static or shared object (like an airport hangar). In chapter [Setting a Minimal Set of Parameters](#) parameter `PATH_TO_SCENERY` is described. Below that path is a directory `Objects`. Rename that directory to e.g. `Objects_hidden`. Most of the time you might

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<sup>3</sup> See [Using TerraGear](#).

want to do the same for the `Objects` directory in `PATH_TO_OUTPUT` - unless the `Objects` directory does not yet exist.

In rare cases you might have more scenery object folders specified in the `FlightGear` parameter `--fg-scenery` — however you need only to take those into consideration, which place objects into the same area (which is very rare).

PS: this step is not necessary when using mode `FgelevCaching` or `Fgelev`, because data is read directly from scenery elevation information instead of “flying through the scenery”.

## Unhide Scenery Objects

Just do the reverse of what is specified in chapter *Hide Scenery Objects*

## Start FlightGear

Start `FlightGear` at an airport close to where you want to generate `osm2city` scenery objects. You might want to start up with an aircraft using few resources (e.g. `Ufo`) and a [minimal startup profile](#) in order to speed things up a bit.

If you use `ELEV_MODE = "Telnet"` then make sure to you specify command-line parameter `--telnet` in `FlightGear`.

## Run tools.py to Generate Elevation Data

Change the work directory to e.g. `fg_customscenery/projects` and then run `tools.py`. On Linux this might look like the following:

```
$ cd fg_customscenery/projects

$ ls LSZS
lszs_narrow.osm  params.ini

$ /usr/bin/python2.7 /home/pingu/development/osm2city/tools.py -f LSZS/params.ini
...

$ ls LSZS
elev.out lszs_narrow.osm  params.ini
```

At the end of the process there is a new file `elev.out` containing the elevation data. If you use command-line option `-o`, then existing data is not overwritten.

## Run setup.py to Prepare Elevation Probing through Nasal

Change the work directory to e.g. `fg_customscenery/projects` and then run `setup.py`. On Linux this might look like the following:

```
$ cd fg_customscenery/projects

$ /usr/bin/python2.7 /home/pingu/development/osm2city/setup.py --fg_root=/home/pingu/bin/fgfs_git/next
...
```

The command-line option `--fg_root` is essential and points to `$FG_ROOT` (see also *Setting environment variable \$FG\_ROOT*).

## Adapt File elev.nas

The root directory of `osm2city` contains a file `elev.nas`. First copy the file into the Nasal directory in `$FG_ROOT` (see also *Setting environment variable \$FG\_ROOT*).

Then open `elev.nas` in a text editor. Change the `in` variable as well as the `out` variable to a directory with write access (e.g. `$FG_HOME/Export`). See *IORules* and `$FG_HOME`.

`elev.nas` might look as follows BEFORE editing:

```
var get_elevation = func {
  #Set via setup.py
  setprop("/osm2city/tiles", 0);
  var in = "WILL_BE_SET_BY_SETUP.PY";
  var out = "WILL_BE_SET_BY_SETUP.PY";

  print( "Checking if tile is loaded");
  ...
}
```

AFTER editing `elev.nas` might look as follows on Windows:

```
...
var in = "C:/Users/Bill/AppData/Roaming/flightgear.org/elev.in";
var out = "C:/Users/Bill/AppData/Roaming/flightgear.org/Export/";
...
```

AFTER editing `elev.nas` might look as follows on Linux:

```
...
var in = "/home/pingu/.fgfs/elev.in";
var out = "/home/pingu/.fgfs/Export/";
...
```

(Note: the description in this sub-task is basically what *running setup.py* does automatically.)

## Run tools.py to Generate Elevation Input Data

Change the work directory to e.g. `fg_customscenery/projects` and then run `tools.py`. On Linux this might look like the following:

```
$ cd fg_customscenery/projects

$ ls LSZS
lszs_narrow.osm  params.ini

$ /usr/bin/python2.7 /home/pingu/development/osm2city/tools.py -f LSZS/params.ini
...

$ ls LSZS
elev.in  lszs_narrow.osm  params.ini
```

## Copy File elev.in

Copy file `elev.in` from the input directory to the path specified in the edited `elev.nas` file (see *Adapt File elev.nas*).



### Copy File elev.out

Finally copy file `elev.out` from the path specified in the edited `elev.nas` file (see *Adapt File elev.nas*) to the input directory (e.g. `fg_customscenery/projects/LSZS`).



## SCENERY GENERATION

### 3.1 Setting the Working Directory

`osm2city` needs to make some assumption about the absolute paths. Unfortunately there are still some residuals assuming the the information is processed relative to a specific directory (e.g. the root folder of `osm2city`). Please report if you cannot find generated or copied files (e.g. textures) respectively get file related exceptions.

It is recommended to make conscious decisions about the *directory structure* and choosing the `WORKING_DIRECTORY` accordingly.

Therefore before running `osm2city` related programs please either:

- set the working directory explicitly if you are using an integrated development environment (e.g. PyCharm)
- change into the working directory in your console, e.g.

```
:: $ cd /home/pingu/fg_customscenery/projects
```

### 3.2 Overview of Programs

`osm2city` contains the following programs to generate scenery objects based on OSM data:

- `osm2city.py`: generates buildings. See also the related [Wiki osm2city article](#).
- `osm2pylon.py`: generates pylons and cables between them for power lines, aerial ways, railway overhead lines as well as streetlamps. See also the related [Wiki osm2pylon article](#).
- `roads.py`: generates different types of roads. See also the related [Wiki roads article](#).
- `piers.py`: generates piers and boats. See also the related [Wiki piers article](#).
- `platforms.py`: generates (railway) platforms. See also the related [Wiki platforms article](#).

Calling one of these programs only with command line option `--help` or `-h` will present all available parameters. E.g.

```
/usr/bin/python2.7 /home/pingu/develop_vcs/osm2city/platforms.py --help
usage: platforms.py [-h] [-f FILE] [-l LOGLEVEL]
```

`platform.py` reads OSM data and creates platform models for use with FlightGear

optional arguments:

```
-h, --help            show this help message and exit
-f FILE, --file FILE  read parameters from FILE (e.g. params.ini)
-l LOGLEVEL, --loglevel LOGLEVEL
```

```
set loglevel. Valid levels are VERBOSE, DEBUG, INFO,  
WARNING, ERROR, CRITICAL
```

In most situations you may want to at least provide command line parameter `-f` and point to a `params.ini` file.  
E.g.

```
/usr/bin/python2.7 /home/pingu/develop_vcs/osm2city/osm2city.py -f LSZS/params.ini -l DEBUG -a
```

Remember that the paths are relative to the `WORKING_DIRECTORY`. Alternatively provide the full path to your `params.ini` <sup>1</sup> file.

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<sup>1</sup> ou can name this file whatever you want — “params.ini” is just a convenience / convention.

## USING GENERATED SCENERY

### 4.1 Adding to FG\_SCENERY Path

You need to add the directory containing the `Objects` folder (i.e. not the `Objects` folder itself) to the paths, where FlightGear searches for scenery. You can do this either through the command line option `--fg-scenery` or setting the `FG_SCENERY` environment variable. This is extensively described in the `README.scenery` and the `getstart.pdf`<sup>1</sup> documents found in `$FG_ROOT/Docs` as part of your FlightGear installation.

If you followed the *directory structure* presented in chapter *Preparation* and we take the example of `LSZS` then you would e.g. use the following command line option:

```
--fg-scenery=/home/pingu/fg_customscenery/LSZS
```

### 4.2 Copy Textures

If you are using `osm2city.py` to generate buildings or `roads.py` to generate roads, then you need to have the content of the `tex` linked from `osm2city-data` copied or linked into all scenery sub-folders, where there are `*.stg` files. There are two possibilities:

1. Do it manually. In this case you can choose whether to create links or hard copies. If you want to distribute the generated scenery objects, then you must copy the whole directory. E.g. `/home/pingu/fg_customscenery/LSZS/Objects/e000n40/e009n46/tex` in the example used previously.
2. Use `copy_texture_stuff.py` to do it automatically. E.g.

```
/usr/bin/python2.7 /home/pingu/development/osm2city/copy_texture_stuff.py -f LSZS/params.ini
```

There is also a third possibility of copying the `tex` directory into `$FG_ROOT`. However you would not be able to distribute the generated scenery objects and it might interfere with other scenery objects using a potentially different texture map.

### 4.3 Adjusting Visibility of Scenery Objects

The `osm2city` related programs and especially `osm2city.py` itself are using heuristics and parameters to determine at what level of detail (LOD) scenery objects should be visible. This is done by adding the objects to one of the three FlightGear LOD schemes: “bare”, “rough” and “detailed”.

---

<sup>1</sup> As of beginning of 2016: chapters 3.1, 4.1, 4.5

In `osm2city.py` you can influence into which of the three LOD ranges the objects are placed by using the following *Parameters*:

- LOD\_ALWAYS\_DETAIL\_BELOW\_AREA
- LOD\_ALWAYS\_ROUGH\_ABOVE\_AREA
- LOD\_ALWAYS\_ROUGH\_ABOVE\_LEVELS
- LOD\_ALWAYS\_BARE\_ABOVE\_LEVELS
- LOD\_ALWAYS\_DETAIL\_BELOW\_LEVELS
- LOD\_PERCENTAGE\_DETAIL

In FlightGear you can influence the actual distance (in meters) for the respective ranges by one of the following ways:

1. In The FlightGear user interface use menu View > menu item Adjust LOD Ranges and then change the values manually.
2. Include command line options into your `fgfsrc` file or *Properties in FGRun* like follows:

```
--prop:double:/sim/rendering/static-lod/detailed=5000
--prop:double:/sim/rendering/static-lod/rough=10000
--prop:double:/sim/rendering/static-lod/bare=15000
```

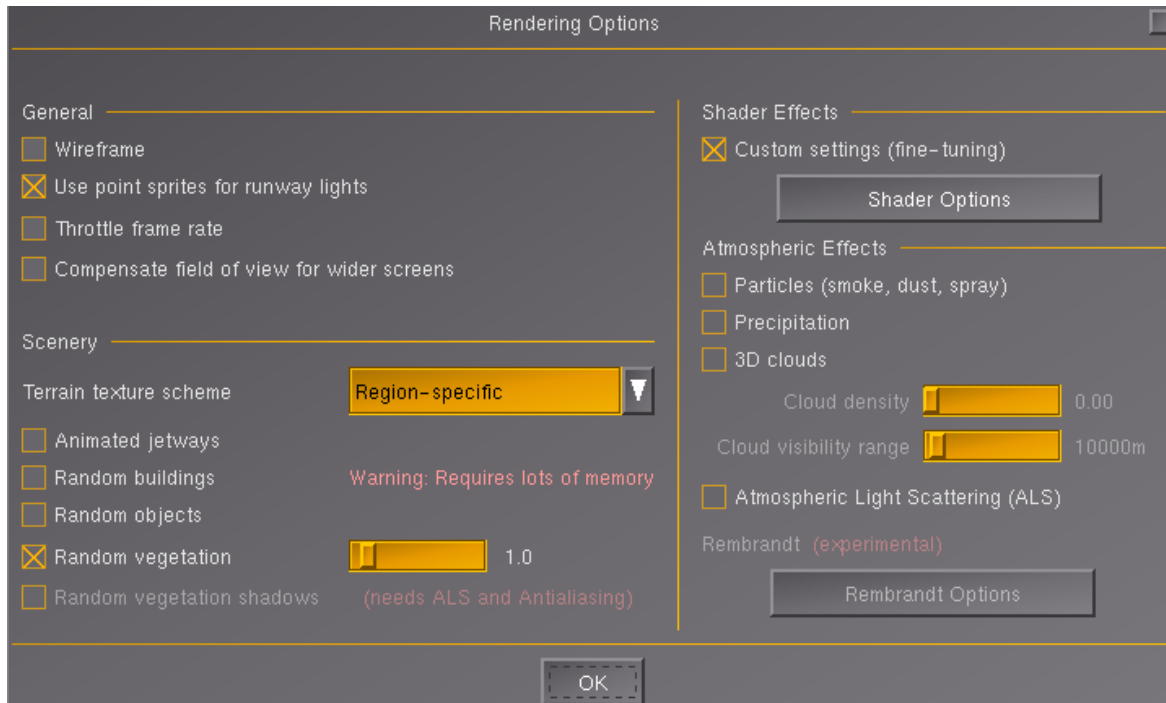
(Note: previously there was also a `osm2city` specific LOD range “roof”, however that has been abandoned since clustering was introduced. An therefore setting `--prop:double:/sim/rendering/static-lod/roof=2000` is not necessary anymore.)

## 4.4 Disable Urban Shader and Random Buildings

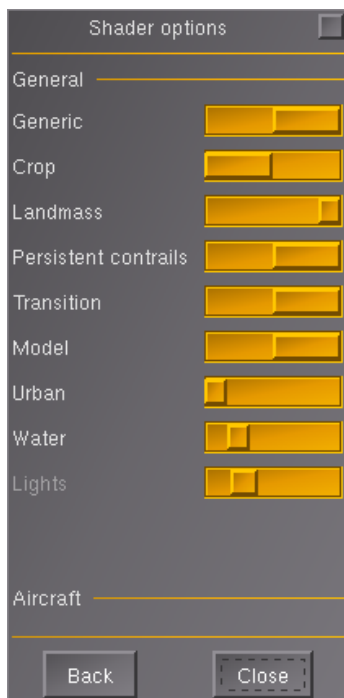
There is no point in having both OSM building scenery objects and dynamically generated buildings in FlightGear. Therefore it is recommended to turn off the random building and urban shader features in FlightGear. Please be aware that this will also affect those areas in FlightGear, where there are no generated scenery objects from OSM.

There are two possibilities to disable random buildings:

1. Use command line option `--disable-random-buildings` in your `fgfsrc` file — and while you are at it `--disable-random-objects`.
2. Use the FlightGear menu View, menu item Rendering Options. Tick off Random buildings and Random objects.



In the same dialog press the Shader Options button and set the slider for Urban to the far left in order to disable the urban shader.



## 4.5 Change Materials to Hide Urban Textures

FlightGear allows to change the texture used for a given land-class. More information is available in `$FG_ROOT/Docs/README.materials` as well as in the FlightGear Forum thread regarding [New Regional Tex-](#)

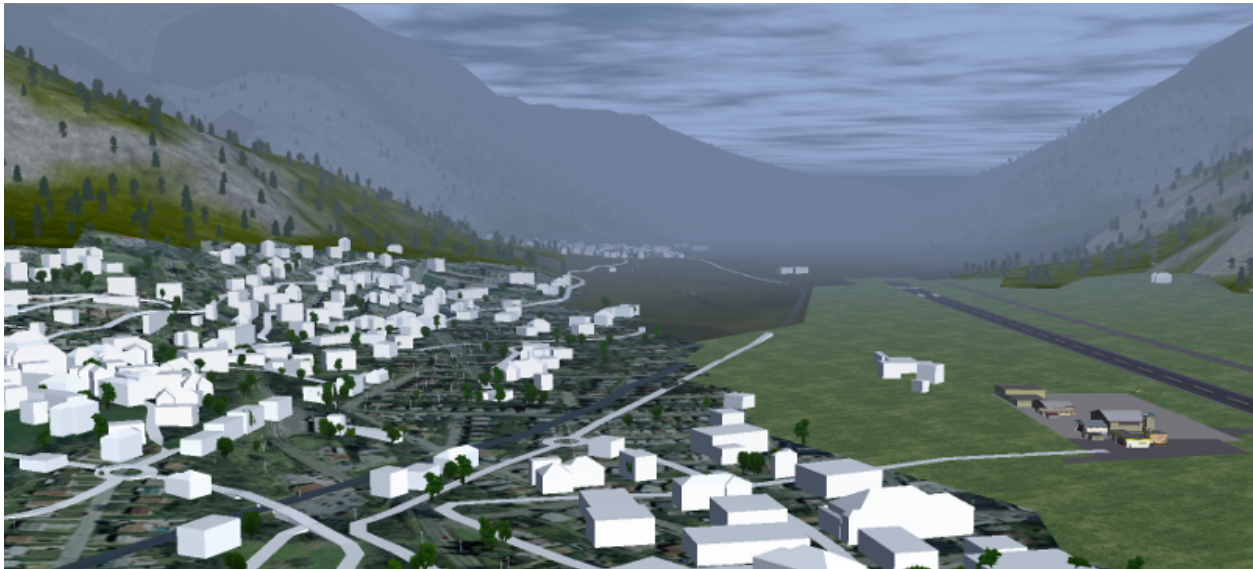
tures. There is not yet a good base texture replacing the urban textures. However many users find it more visually appealing to use a uniform texture like grass under the generated buildings etc. instead of urban textures (because urban textures interfere visually with ways, houses etc.). A drawback of using different textures is the absence of trees — however in many regions of the world there are lot of trees / vegetation in urban areas.

E.g. for the airport LSZS in Engadin in Switzerland you would have to go to \$FG\_ROOT/Materials/regions and edit file `europa.xml` in a text editor: add name-tags for e.g. `BuiltUpCover`, `Urban`, `Town`, `SubUrban` to a material as shown below and comment out the existing name-tags using `<!-- -->`. Basically all name-tags, which relate to a material using `<effect>Effects/urban</effect>`. The outcome before and after edit (you need to restart FlightGear in between!) can be seen in the screenshots below (for illustration purposes the buildings and roads do not have textures).

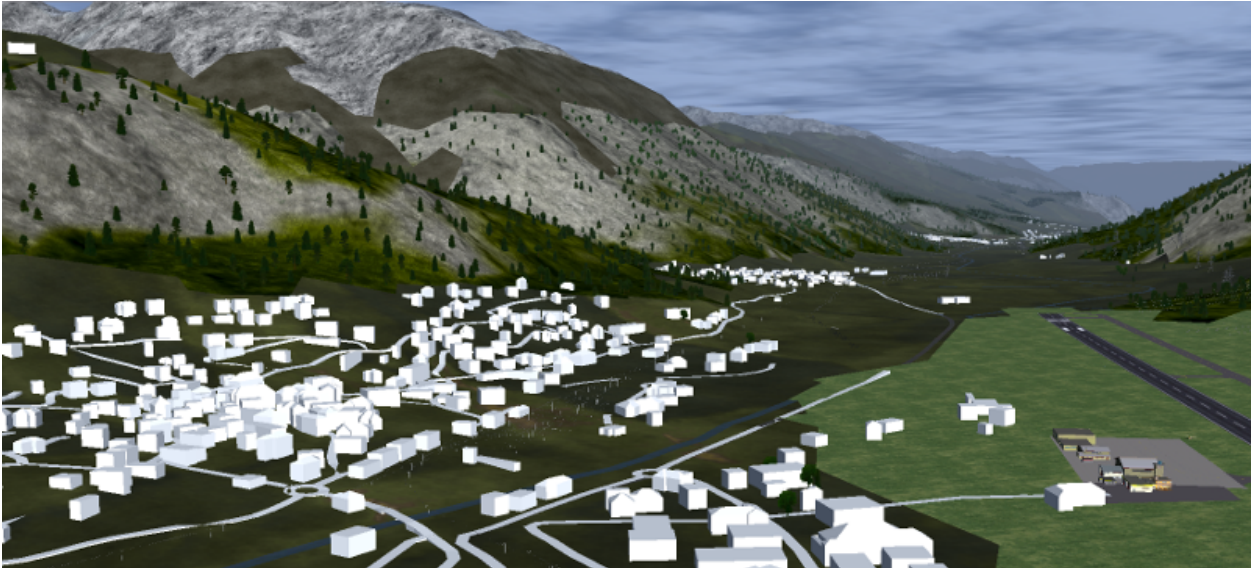
```
...
<material>
  <effect>Effects/cropgrass</effect>
  <tree-effect>Effects/tree-european-mixed</tree-effect>
  <name>CropGrassCover</name>
  <name>CropGrass</name>
  <name>BuiltUpCover</name>
  <name>Urban</name>
  <name>Town</name>
  <name>SubUrban</name>
  <texture>Terrain/cropgrass-hires-autumn.png</texture>
  <object-mask>Terrain/cropgrass-hires.mask.png</object-mask>
...

...
<material>
  <!-- <name>Town</name> -->
  <!-- <name>SubUrban</name> -->
  <effect>Effects/urban</effect>
  <texture-set>
...

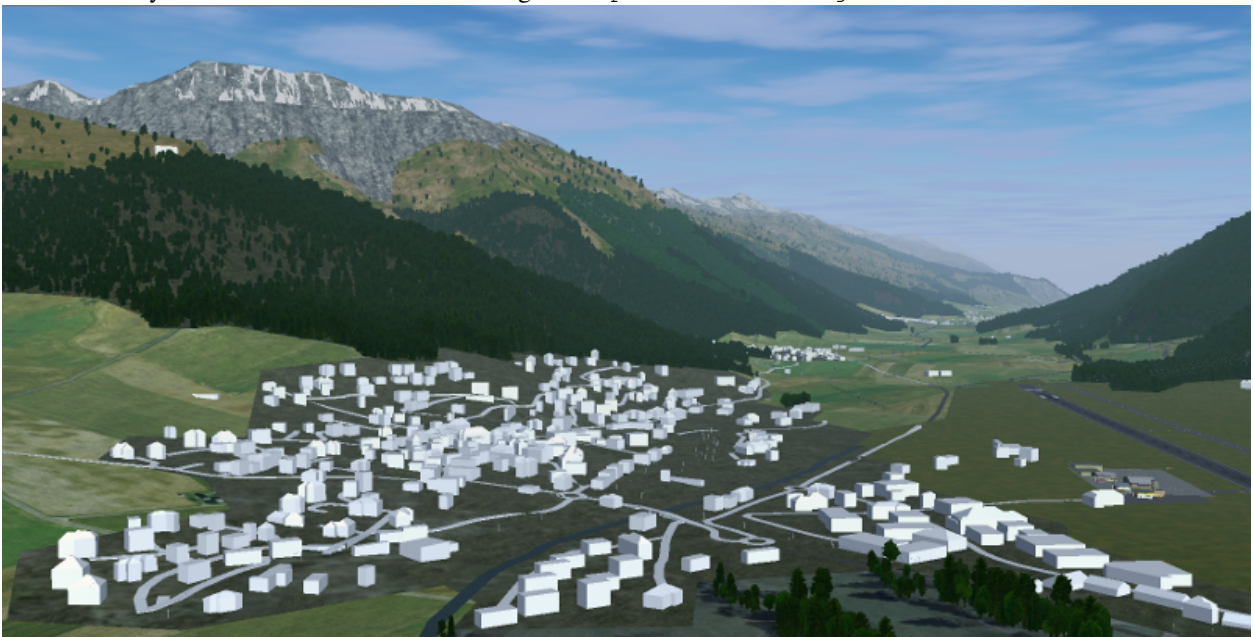
```







Depending on your region and your shader settings you might want to search for e.g. `GrassCover` in file `global-summer.xml` instead (shown in screenshot below with `ALS` and more random vegetation). However be aware that you still need to comment out in e.g. `europa.xml` and within `global-summer.xml`.



## 4.6 Consider Sharing Your Generated Scenery Objects

Although this guide hopefully helps, not everybody might be able to generate scenery objects with `osm2city` related programs. Therefore please consider sharing your generated scenery objects. You can do so by announcing it in the [Sceneries](#) part of the FlightGear Forums and linking from the bottom of the `osm2city` related [Wiki](#) article.



## PARAMETERS

Please consider the following:

- Python does not recognize operating system environment variables, please use full paths in the parameters file (no `$HOME` etc).
- These parameters determine how scenery objects are generated offline as described in chapter *Scenery Generation*. There are no runtime parameters in FlightGear, that influence which `osm2city` generated scenery objects are shown — or how and how many <sup>1</sup>.
- All decimals need to be with “.” - i.e. local specific decimal separators like “,” are not accepted.
- You do not have to specify all parameters in your `params.ini` file. Actually it is better only to specify those parameters, which you want to actively control — the rest just gets the defaults.

### 5.1 View a List of Parameters

The final truth about parameters is stored in `parameters.py` — unfortunately the content in this chapter might be out of date (including default values).

It might be easiest to read `parameters.py` directly. Python code is easy to read also for non-programmers. Otherwise you can run the following to see a listing:

```
/usr/bin/python2.7 /home/vanosten/develop_vcs/osm2city/parameters.py -d
```

If you want to see a listing of the actual parameters used during scenery generation (i.e. a combination of the defaults with the overridden values in your `params.ini` file, then you can run the following command:

```
/usr/bin/python2.7 --file /home/pingu/development/osm2city/parameters.py -f LSZS/params.ini
```

### 5.2 Detailed Description of Parameters

#### 5.2.1 Minimal Set

See also *Setting a Minimal Set of Parameters*

---

<sup>1</sup> The only exception to the rule is the possibility to adjust the *Actual Distance of LOD Ranges*.

Parameter	Type	De- fault	Description / Example
PREFIX	String	n/a	Name of the scenery project. Do not use spaces in the name.
PATH_TO_SCENERY	Path	n/a	Full path to the scenery folder without trailing slash. This is where we will probe elevation and check for overlap with static objects. Most likely you'll want to use your TerraSync path here.
PATH_TO_OUTPUT	Path	n/a	The generated scenery (.stg, .ac, .xml) will be written to this path. If empty then the correct location in PATH_TO_SCENERY is used. Note that if you use TerraSync for PATH_TO_SCENERY, you MUST choose a different path here. Otherwise, TerraSync will overwrite the generated scenery. Unless you know what you are doing, there is no reason not to specify a dedicated path here. While not absolutely needed it is good practice to name the output folder the same as PREFIX.
OSM_FILE	String	n/a	The file containing OpenStreetMap data. See chapter <a href="#">Getting OpenStreetMap Data</a> .
BOUND- ARY_NORTH, BOUND- ARY_EAST,  BOUND- ARY_SOUTH, BOUND- ARY_WEST	Deci- mal	n/a	The longitude and latitude in degrees of the boundaries of the generated scenery. The boundaries should correspond to the boundaries in the OSM_FILE (open the *.osm file in a text editor and check the data in ca. line 3). The boundaries can be different, but then you might either miss data (if the OSM boundaries are larger) or do more processing than necessary (if the OSM boundaries are more narrow).
NO_ELEV	Boolean	False	Set this to <code>False</code> . The only reason to set this to <code>True</code> would be for developers to check generated scenery objects a bit faster not caring about the vertical position in the scenery.
ELEV_MODE	String	n/a	Choose one of “FgelevCaching”, “Fgelev”, “Telnet”, “Manual”. See chapter <a href="#">Available Elevation Probing Mode</a> for more details.

### 5.2.2 Level of Details

The more buildings you have in LOD detailed, the less resources for rendering are used. However you might find it “irritating” the more buildings suddenly appear. Experiment with the settings in FlightGear, see also [Adjusting Visibility of Scenery Objects](#).

Parameter	Type	De- fault	Description / Example
LOD_ALWAYS_DETAIL_BELOW_AREA	Integer	50	Below this area, buildings will always be LOD detailed
LOD_ALWAYS_ROUGH_ABOVE_AREA	Integer	500	Above this area, buildings will always be LOD rough
LOD_ALWAYS_ROUGH_ABOVE_LEVEL	Integer	15	Above this number of levels, buildings will always be LOD rough
LOD_ALWAYS_BARE_ABOVE_LEVEL	Integer	50	Really tall buildings will be LOD bare
LOD_ALWAYS_DETAIL_BELOW_LEVEL	Integer	15	Below this number of levels, buildings will always be LOD detailed
LOD_PERCENTAGE_DETAIL	Decimal	0.5	Of the remaining buildings, this percentage will be LOD detailed, the rest will be LOD rough.

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