

Search Cities: Skylines



Beginner's guide

This page is intended as a list of tips that might not be entirely obvious to newer players of Cities: Skylines, but which once explained can make the game more enjoyable.

This article is timeless and should be accurate for any version of the game.

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Road building basics

Main article: [Roads](#)

1. Building a short segment of two lane road anywhere within city limits unlocks more roads, such as a one way road which is useful with the highway stubs you're provided at the start. You can bulldoze the two lane road piece and get a partial refund. (This is usually half of the original price. The price is usually determined by the amount of tiles the road segment has and then the price for that segment when building gets divided by 2.) The refund value will gradually decrease to zero over time.
2. You can build bridges and tunnels by adjusting the road's elevation with Page Up and Page Down keys. (D-Pad up and down for console players).
3. The blue line perpendicular to road direction while drawing denotes a measurement of 10 units, and it becomes visible at 5 units out. This is helpful with drawing precise curves such as building custom roundabouts.



Basic services and early budget management

Main article: Services

Main article: Budget



1. It is recommended to pause the simulation at the start until you have all necessary infrastructure laid down, so the upkeep costs do not redundantly drain your small treasury before citizens move in. However, keep in mind, citizen aren't moving in or paying taxes when the game is paused, and you can quickly run out of money by building too much.
2. You get a money bonus when you reach population milestones.
3. Once you unlock taxes, you can set the rates to 11-12% without making citizens and businesses unhappy.
4. Always have your water pumping station upstream of your drain pipe with a comfortable distance apart, otherwise you will pollute the drinking water and poison your citizens. If the body of water provided has no current, it's recommended to use water towers on non-polluted ground.
5. Electricity has an area of influence where it carries from one building to another, so power lines are only needed to carry electricity between longer distances.
6. A single water supply and single sewage building will be able to provide far more supply than required when first starting a new city. Reducing the water/sewage budget can save a significant amount of money. If you set it to 50% (cost) it will provide 25% service. This is fine as your fledgling city will not need even that much. As demand for water increases, gradually increase the budget. Once 100% demand is reached, place new pumps and sewers and drop the budget again. Once the city is large enough, it's no longer worth micromanaging the budget for water/sewer and you should simply leave it at 100%.

Transportation

Main article: Transportation

The main purpose of public transportation is to reduce traffic by offering your citizens an alternative to driving, and is essential for creating an effective city.

1. Start using public transportation as soon as possible, and try to keep the lines simple.
2. Buses can be quite inexpensive and effective, but too many buses overlapping can cause congestion.
3. Metro is the most effective transportation system, but it is also quite costly. A good mix of buses that complement a metro system is the most effective overall solution.
4. Passenger trains are currently not especially useful for transport within a city, though can be useful for bringing tourists to the city. They become more effective in large, sprawling cities that are widely dispersed. However, it can be a good idea to use dedicated passenger railways to prevent congestion of freight trains.
5. Increasing the funding of a particular type of public transportation will increase the number of vehicles used on every line of that type.
6. Longer lines with more stops will spawn more vehicles.
7. Public transportation stops are a type of service and can be used to increase happiness and building level.

Public transportation lines are most effective when their routes pass through all types of zoning (except office since they are not much burden in traffic).



commercial specialization.

11. Use cargo rail in industrial districts—they will greatly help develop the district and remove part of the traffic. Remember that a good road system is needed to serve the cargo station, as every time a train arrives, a lot of trucks are moving the goods to their destination. (One-way streets are one of the solutions here)

Services



Main article: Services

1. Note that services with vehicles can travel over the entire map (provided there are road connections), but there is a coverage range for the purposes of leveling up buildings. The associated infoviews will show you which parts of the city are within range. When placing a service building, green roads indicate the extent of that coverage. Insufficient coverage will result in buildings not leveling up, and therefore less tax income.
2. Most services rely on the roads to get to where they're needed. Heavy traffic congestion or poor road layout can heavily reduce or totally negate service effectiveness. Areas that are not accessible due to no road connection, or one-way roads that prevent access will not be able to be serviced. Service vehicles attempting to reach these areas may continually spawn and despawn. Road damage from disasters may also prevent access.
3. Certain service buildings, such as landfills and cemeteries, must be completely empty to relocate or be bulldozed. Garbage or dead bodies can be reallocated to other facilities by using its service vehicles for the tasking instead of normal collection duties.
4. Parks and services increase land value, increasing popularity of given land, as well as stimulating those areas to develop.
5. The optimal pipe coverage is \$440 worth of pipe between two parallel pipes, which will result in the smallest possible amount of overlap between the zones of coverage of the parallel pipes, whilst still ensuring everything gets served with water and sewage.

Planning

1. Try to split your truck traffic away from your commuter traffic. Having both loads of traffic on the same roads can quickly snarl even well-designed traffic systems. Creating a district with the Heavy Traffic Ban can help accomplish this.
2. Creating a highway that will be the "spine" of your city can be beneficial for the traffic flow; however, a proper road hierarchy is needed in order to maintain the flow in the city and on the highway.
3. Strategic roundabouts shouldn't be small (the smaller the roundabout, the more the cars have to slow down, thus causing a decrease in the flow of traffic).
4. Make use of districts and city policies. More here: [Dev Diary 8: Districts & policies](#)
5. Try to separate pollution-heavy buildings/industries from residential areas.
6. Agriculture and forestry specialized industry produce no pollution, and you can utilize them even if the area doesn't have natural resources of that type. (They'll just import what they need.) Forest Industry Area and Farming Industry Area also produce no pollution. Their natural resource can be artificially created and renewable. You can use these as buffer zones in between your industry and commercial zones. They do have significant noise pollution (as does all industry), but commercial is much more willing to put up with noise pollution than residential is.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths: Just because they are under the "decorations" section does not mean you should write them off as just decorative fluff. They are legitimately useful in cutting down your traffic. A resident walking or biking to work is one less car clogging your



each other happens by moving the mouse pointer towards the road that you want the building to face. So if you have a corner with a large road and small road and you want the shopping mall to face the large road, you can first move the mouse to the spot you want it in and then slightly move the mouse towards the larger road and the building will orient towards that.

9. Roads with decorative trees or sound barriers can reduce noise pollution.
10. Offices can be used as a barrier between commercial and residential areas to reduce noise in residential areas.
11. Zoning plays an important role in traffic. To isolate commuter and industrial traffic from each other, zone commercial area at the middle, residential and industrial on either side of commercial area. Offices can be zoned anywhere since they simply provide jobs only and are less burden on transportation system.
12. Railways can get congested, just like roadways. To help prevent railway congestion, it may be beneficial to segregate freight and passenger lines. Additionally, bypasses can be made to go around stations. When creating rail intersections, it's best to join them in such a way that a full train can fit on the interchange, which will allow following trains traveling to a different destination to continue unimpeded.
13. Great ideas for intersections can be found here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interchange_\(road\)#System_interchange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interchange_(road)#System_interchange). If you still have trouble, you can get out a piece of paper and draw some intersections you think are best. If you live near a highway or city, take a look at the interstate intersections. Most likely those will help out.



Other

1. DO NOT expand your city too quickly at the very beginning, because your budget will get drained earlier than expected; it is enough to start with a residential area, electricity, waterworks and sewer.
2. Save your city before you build a dam as sometimes the results might be different from your expectations. Dams are one of the most expensive buildings in the game.
3. Browse the Steam Workshop for cool mods, as well as fancy intersections that will, in general, improve the flow in some critical places.
4. You can use <http://terrain.party/> to obtain a height map of your city of choice and import it into C:S. Instructions are posted here (http://www.reddit.com/r/CitiesSkylines/comments/2y4r4/its_a_terrainparty_and_youre_invited_web_app_to/cp6t5zt).
5. Don't buy something until you need it—most things have an upkeep cost. If you can get by without it for a while, you will build more reserve money when you need it. The exception to this is the beginning of the game where you want to expand quickly to put your budget in the black (or green, as it were).

External resource

- "How to Traffic, V2 (<http://imgur.com/a/z1rM1>)" (discussion (http://www.reddit.com/r/CitiesSkylines/comments/2zv8ft/traffic_engineers_guide_to_traffic_version_2/)) by reddit user drushkey (<http://www.reddit.com/user/drushkey>).
 - Recomended mods for new mayors (https://www.reddit.com/r/CitiesSkylines/wiki/modlist#wiki_essential.2Fbeginner.2Fbasic) as recommended by /r/CitiesSkylines (<http://www.reddit.com/r/CitiesSkylines/>).
- [Importing Height Maps in to Cities: Skylines](http://www.skylinescity.com/2015/03/height-map-creation-tool-for-creating-real-world-location-maps/) (<http://www.skylinescity.com/2015/03/height-map-creation-tool-for-creating-real-world-location-maps/>) from Skylines City (<http://www.skylinescity.com/2015/03/height-map-creation-tool-for-creating-real-world-location-maps/>)



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