MultipliCITY Game Analysis

Name: Destiny Ajaye
Team Name: Peripatetic
Section: Tuesday 12:00P – 01:45P (TA: Emily Bronte)
Game Name: MultipliCITY

What about the world (how it is, was, or should be) does your game aim to represent? [20–50 words]

MultipliCITY attempts to model aspects of city planning that games like *SimCity* fall short in representing. Specifically, MultipliCITY models three different interest groups (Real Estate, Business, Community Organizers) and highlights systemic advantages and disadvantages each group faces in spatially organizing city districts according to unique agendas. The groups are purposefully unbalanced in favor of Business.

What what actions are available to players, with what potential responses from the game system (i.e., what "mechanics" in the MDA framework)? [100–150 words]

The central actions available to each interest group are placing and replacing city tiles. Each turn, an interest group can either place 3 city tiles (from a communal pool of 5), or use 2 "points" to replace an existing tile. Such choices may repeatedly affect the interest groups at the end of every turn when event cards are drawn. These random events may increment or decrement each group's points based on particular arrangements of tiles on the city map, which each interest group has sequentially modified. Points and tile placements are MultipliCITY's central resources, and actions and events which modify or convert such resources compose its core mechanics. While the rules specify that no winner is declared at the end of the game, the collection of "points," and their afforded conversion into corrective tile replacement actions implies a high value, which is generally accepted by players.

What patterns arise, during gameplay, from the actions and strategies of players and the responses and other events of the game system (i.e., what "dynamics" in the MDA framework)? [100–150 words]

As the game progresses, the tile placement choices that an interest group makes not only (positively or negatively) affect that group, but also others, when they each draw event cards. In fact, the interests of one group can be completely antithetical to the interests of another. For example, the Business interest group can lose points if there are Industrial tiles on the board that do not border an Affordable Housing tile; but the inverse condition may cause the Community Organizers to lose points instead. Further, the non-Business groups are not able to collect nearly as many points as they might like to spend, forcing them into forgoing actions they would like to take. Through this and other mechanisms, the imbalance of advantages between the groups quickly results in an imbalance of power as the game progresses.

Different interests, depending on how apparent this imbalance is, and the current stage of game progression, may chose to intentionally disrupt spatial arrangements advantageous to other groups, particularly if they are limited in points available for them to collect or actions they can afford.

What feelings do these patterns evoke, and how do the patterns and feelings change over time for different players (i.e., what "aesthetics" in the MDA framework)? [100–150 words]

The instances in which interest groups have opposing goals will invoke a sense of competition and rivalry among the groups. Likewise, when goals are aligned, the groups may feel a sense of comradery. The Real Estate and Community Organizers groups may feel more connected with each due to the fact that the Business group is so clearly overpowered. The Community Organizers group is so underpowered that they may feel helpless or even think that their actions are pointless. The Real Estate group has enough power that it might entertain the thought that due to randomness in the game they might have some hope of coming out on top.

What ideas are communicated through the relationship between these actions, patterns, and feelings — both ones you intended and ones you may not have (i.e., what is the "procedural rhetoric" of your game)? [100–150 words]

Each event makes some sort of value judgement. For example, the Concentrated Poverty event for the Community Organizers penalizes the group if there are Affordable Housing tiles bordering each other. Also, the imbalance of power among the groups models ideas about how we prioritize urban development in our capitalist society, wherein Business is given the most incentives to thrive while programs to aid the quality of life of people are harder to accomplish for the Community Organizers. Most broadly, the procedural rhetoric of the game portrays city planning as a contested activity among groups with starkly different goals and power — rather than the work of a solitary mastermind, trying to meet citizen demands without raising their taxes too high, as in the *SimCity* series.