

SimCity Walkthrough

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Introduction

There are a lot of great guides out there, many of which I used for my latest playthrough. But none of them exactly matched my goals or had all of the information I wanted in one place, so this is my attempt to fill that gap. Those goals are:

- Reach a Megalopolis with a population of 500,000. There are guides that will get you to much higher populations through extremely efficient building methods if you want to mess around with that level of micromanagement. But this guide is just focused on building a Megalopolis and then declaring victory.
- Achieve this without using the Money Cheat. Many guides will assume that you are using the money cheat, but I wanted to play with the challenge of legitimately raising the money needed. This guide will focus on how to make enough money to build a Megalopolis.
- This guide will assume you are playing on Easy with disasters turned off and no Fire Department coverage. If you know what you are doing you could still use this guide to reach a Megalopolis under more difficult circumstances. You'll just have to modify your approach some and it would take longer to reach a Megalopolis.

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Getting Started

There are guides that will tell you the best map, but as long as you don't pick a map with too much water (like an island) you should have enough land to build a Megalopolis. I used the first map available.

Choose the Easy difficulty. This will start you with \$20,000, disable most disasters, and help in other subtle ways. If you are good enough to try a harder difficulty, then you probably don't need to be reading this guide.

Immediately pause the game, and go to your tax screen, and set taxes to 8%. Keep it there until most of the map is built up and you are no longer spending all of your income each year, at which point you can gradually lower it to 1%. You can also set your Fire funding to 0%.

General Strategy

- Build Nuclear Plants instead of Coal Plants. You would need to build three Coal Plants to power the same number of zones as one Nuclear Plant. That's three times as much space and pollution, and it costs \$4,000 more. If you are not playing on Easy though, you may need to build Coal Plants instead to avoid meltdown disasters.
- Build Rails instead of Roads. Roads are cheaper to build and maintain but they cause traffic and pollution which hurt your nearby Residential and Commercial Zones. In the long run Rails are a better investment. You could use Roads around Industrial Zones which are not affected by traffic and pollution, but since you will eventually need to build 2,000 squares of Rail to get the second Train Station gift it probably makes sense to just use Rails there too.
- Always have at least one Fire Department or Fire Headquarters to promote Residential Zone growth. You don't need to provide power, Road/Rail access, or funding, but you should always have at least one present on the map.
- After receiving your Bank Loan always have at least one Stadium to promote Residential Zone growth. Likewise you don't need to provide power or Road/Rail access, but make sure there's always at least one present on the map.
- Once you reach 50,000 population always have one Seaport and one Airport to promote Industrial Zone and Commercial Zone growth. Again you don't need to provide power or Road/Rail access, and in this case you are safer not providing power as it will prevent ships, helicopters, and airplanes from appearing on the map and causing crashes.

1900 - From Village to Town and then City

You'll start with \$20,000 and you want to use it to reach a population of 10,000 (City) and accomplish the following:

Spend \$5,000 to build a Nuclear Plant in the corner of the map.

You won't get anywhere without power for your zones, and you'd have to build 3 Coal Power Plants for \$9,000 to generate the same amount of power. You are going to eventually need several Nuclear Plants, so leave space (4x4) for two more on each side as you can see in the map below.

Spend \$500 to build a single Fire Station.

Since disasters are turned off, it doesn't matter if you provide power or Road/Rail, but you should have one to encourage Residential Zone growth. When you eventually build your 3 Fire Headquarters you can bulldoze this Fire Station. I typically place it diagonal from my Nuclear Plant as seen in the map below, but you can put it anywhere out of the way.

Spend ~\$5,150 to build 500 tiles of Road to be awarded 3 Amusement Park or Casino Gifts.

Find a spot far away from where you intend to start your city and start laying down rows and rows of Road. It can be helpful to build in 10x10 blocks to keep track of how much you have built but you can also check the Totals screen. Try to find a spot with few trees so you can avoid the \$1 bulldozing fee for each tree square, but it's not a big deal if you build over some trees.

This is a big upfront investment, but if you choose 3 Casinos (+\$300 each) it will provide \$900 per year in addition to boosting the growth of the surrounding zones. This means it will take about 6 years to earn the money back, after which it will provide needed income. Casinos do cause a small increase in crime across the map, but the impact is negligible, and it is not worth choosing the less productive Amusement Park (+\$200 each) to avoid that.

Spend \$1,500-\$2,000 to build 12-16 Industrial Zones along the edge of the map.

Industrial zones create pollution around them, so placing them on the edge will minimize their impact. Industrial Zones need access to power and to be next to at least one square of Road/Rail to grow, so you can stretch your money best by placing only one square of Road/Rail next to each zone. See the map below for an example.

Spend ~\$6,000 to build your first 4 Residential/Commercial city blocks.

A good city block should follow these rules:

- The map is covered by an invisible 4x4 grid. The map is 120x100, so that means 30 squares wide and 25 squares long. Your 3x3 Gifts should be placed so that they lie in 4 different squares instead of just 2 or 1. To put it another way, your Gift should be 2 or 3 spaces from each edge, or 6/7 spaces, or 10/11 spaces, or 14/15 spaces, etc. (If you are out of Gifts, you can use Parks instead.)
- Your Gift should be surrounded by 8 Residential or Commercial Zones to take advantage of the huge boost to land value from the Gift. When two adjacent Residential Zones or two adjacent Commercial Zones reach their potential they can merge into that largest structures. For that reason whenever possible Zones should also be paired with their own kind.
- All Zones will need power and Road/Rail access. Commercial Zones (like Industrial Zones) only need an adjacent Road/Rail square, but Residential Zones need an adjacent Road/Rail square or not too lengthy series of squares that leads to a non-Residential Zone (with some other exceptions). Commercial Zones qualify (and Police Stations), so your Residential and Commercial Zone pairs should alternate as much as possible to make sure your Residential Zones are not surrounded by other Residential Zones.
- You'll need a place for a Police Station to keep the crime down.
- You want your city block to have a length and width that is a multiple of 4 so that it repeats evenly across the 4x4 grid which will make sure each gift will be placed in the right place. If you have to break the city block because of water, make sure to count it off and resume the pattern at the right spot on the other side.
- So taking all of that into mind, I'd recommend using 12x12 city block pattern seen below in red. It will cost about \$2,170 to build each one plus some bulldozing costs depending on how many trees are present. You can save \$100-\$200 (and more at tax time) if you don't build every Road/Rail square and just the ones you need (you can replace them with Parks if you want). You can simply repeat the same pattern immediately south and east and your Gifts will always end up at the right spot.

Starting City Map

N = Nuclear Plant
 F = Fire Station
 p = Power Line
 r = Road/Rail
 pr = Power Line over Road/Rail
 I = Industrial Zone
 C = Commercial Zone
 R = Residential Zone
 G = Gift or Parks

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
1																							
2					p	p	p	p		I		I			I			I					
3																							
4					p						r	r					r	r					r
5		p		p																			
6		p				F		p															
7		p						pr	r	r	r	r	r	r	r					r	r	r	r
8		p				p	pr										r	r	r				
9							r		C		C				R								
10		I					r												C				
11					r																		
12					r				R		G				R			r	r	r			
13		I																					
14							r												R				
15							r		R		C				C								
16		I					r										r	pr	r				
17					r							r					r						
18					r				C			r		R		pr			P				
19		I					r					r											
20						r																	
21							r																
22		I					r																
23					r																		

- This example shows just one 12x12 city block in red from (8,8) to (19,19). You should repeat the pattern immediately to the south, east, and then southeast until you have four starting city blocks forming a large 24x24 square.

- There's Rail running along the north and west border which should continue to the south and east to make sure your edge zones all have Road/Rail access, but it should not be repeated internally.
- As mentioned above there are two 4x4 spaces available near the Nuclear Plant in the corner for future Nuclear Plants.
- When you have more cash you can build Police Stations along the border where the Rail indents (6,18) and (18,6) and so on.
- Likewise, when you have more cash you can fill the rest of the empty space between your Industrial Zones and your city blocks with Parks.

Make sure you have saved around \$1,000 and change the game speed to the fastest setting.

After a while you will get 3 Casinos from your Roads, and when your population reaches 2,000 (Town) you will receive Your House, and when your population reaches 10,000 (City) you receive the Bank (assuming you have less than \$2,000 left). Immediately build the 3 Casinos (\$300) for the income and the Bank (\$100) for the loan. You can now bulldoze all of your unused Roads (\$500) to avoid paying maintenance at the end of the year. You can save Your House for a future city block.

Wait for the Bank Loan message.

Let a little time pass after building the Bank and you will get a message that you can take out a loan for \$10,000. Pause the game again and go to the Bank screen and borrow the money. You will get \$10,000 immediately and be charged \$500 per year for the next 21 years. Having access to the cash now is well worth the extra \$500 you will pay 20 years from now.

Build a Stadium for \$3,000 and a 2nd Nuclear Plant for \$5,000.

The Stadium will increase growth in your Residential Zones, but it doesn't need to be powered or have Road/Rail access. For that reason you can just stick it out of the way in whatever corner of the map you think you will develop last or on some small island. The Nuclear Plant should go next to your first one. You don't technically need to build it until you start experiencing brown outs, but you will need it soon and you want to make sure you don't end up stuck without enough money. A little while after building your Stadium you will receive your first Zoo Gift. If you have a place ready build it right away as it will increase your yearly income by another \$100. At this point unpause the game and finish your first year.

1901-1905 - To Capitol

Over the next few years your yearly income will grow rapidly as your approach a population of 50,000 (Capitol). You'll want to continue spreading your Industrial Zones along the edge of the map, and build another 6-8 city blocks to the south and east, no more than 2 deep, leaving the center of the map open. See the following table, where the B is your starting city block:

B = One 12x12 city block

B	B	B	B	B	B
B	B	B	B	B	B
B	B				
B	B				
B	B				
B	B				

You'll also want to accomplish the following:

Spend \$5,000 to build a Seaport.

As you pass 50,000 population you will receive a message that you need a Seaport for Industrial Zone growth, and it's likely you won't have enough money unless you save up a little first. Like the Stadium it does not need power or Road/Rail access, nor does it even need to be placed by water. Giving it power will cause a boat to appear which can crash and start fires, so it's best to avoid powering it. It also produces pollution, so the best spot for it is the same corner you placed your Stadium or on some small island.

Spend \$10,000 to build an Airport.

As you pass 50,000 population you will receive a message that you need an Airport for Commercial Zone growth, and it's almost certain you won't have enough money unless you save up first, probably for more than one year. Like the Stadium it does not need power or Road/Rail access, and like the Seaport giving it power will bring aircraft to the map which can crash and start first, so it's best to avoid powering it. It also produces pollution, so the best spot is in another corner or on some small island.

Spend \$5,000 to build a 3rd Nuclear Plant.

Around this time you may start experiencing more brown outs and you will need to build a third Nuclear Plant in the corner you started in. By this time your yearly income may be enough to cover this expense, so you won't need to save up too much. This will complete your starting corner, and you should start to plan which corner your next 3 Nuclear Plants will go in.

Earn these other Gifts:

- After building your Seaport and Airport you will receive the Expo.
- After developing 150 zones you will receive the Windmill.
- After having a combined 6 Residential Zones turn into Schools or Hospitals you will receive a 4th Amusement Park or Casino (choose Casino!).
- After having 3 Residential Zones turn into Schools you will receive a Library.
- And after building 6 Police Stations you will receive a Police Headquarters.

1906-1910 - To Metropolis

Over these years you should approach a population of 100,000 (Metropolis). You should continue building around the edge of the map leaving the center empty. There are a total of 28 Gifts, though the Mario Statue comes after you reach a Megalopolis and the Fountain comes when you reach 1950. This means you'll want to build at least 26-28 city blocks around the perimeter to fill with these Gifts. If you end up with more city blocks than that you should try to place your Gifts in the city blocks closer to the corners, and fill city blocks closer to the center with Parks. As you run into water you'll need to break your pattern and creatively fit in as many Zones as possible. Make sure they are powered and have road access and fill in the remaining space with Parks.

Earn 3 Fire Headquarters Gifts.

When you reach the point that you have empty spaces for more gifts and lots of spare cash, you can spend \$2,500 to build 5 Fire Stations in addition to the one you already built in the first year for which you will receive your first Fire Headquarters (6 total). You don't need to power them, and build them far away from where you are currently building so they don't get in the way. Also make sure that you remembered to set the Fire funding on the tax screen to 0%. Later you can spend another \$3,000 to build 6 more (12 total) for another Fire Headquarters, and then another \$3,000 for 6 more (18 total) for your final Fire Headquarters. After receiving all 3 Fire Headquarters and placing at least one you can bulldoze all 18 Fire Stations, including the one you built your first year.

Earn 2nd Zoo Gift.

Likewise you should spend \$6,000 to build 2 Stadiums in addition to the one you already built the first year (3 total). After a while you will receive your 2nd Zoo gift, at which point you can bulldoze 2 of the Stadiums to free up space, but make sure you always keep at least one.

Earn 3 Large Park Gifts.

Finally, you should spend over \$10,000 to build up to 900 squares of Park to receive 3 Large Park gifts at 300, 600, and 900 parks. A lot of this will fit in the buffer spaces between your Industrial Zones and Residential/Commercial city blocks, as well as spaces around the water where nothing else will fit. But you will likely have to just build and bulldoze Parks the same way you did with Roads during your first year.

Earn these other Gifts:

- After having a combined 10 Residential Zones turn into Schools or Hospitals you will receive a 5th Amusement Park or Casino (choose Casino!).
- After having 6 Residential Zones turn into Schools you will receive a 2nd Library.
- After building 500 squares of Rails you will receive the Train Station.
- After building 12 and then 18 Police Stations you will receive a 2nd and then 3rd Police Headquarters.

1911-1937 - To Megalopolis

Over these years your population should approach 500,000 (Megalopolis). You should finish building around all four sides of the map and earn almost all of the Gifts which will be built within your city blocks. Eventually three of the map corners should have 3 Nuclear Plants each for a total of 9. Due to water you may find that one corner of the map doesn't lend itself well to building city blocks, and you may opt to fill it in with just Industrial Zones. You'll also want to accomplish the following:

Bulldoze Hospitals and Schools.

After receiving your 5th Amusement Park or Casino Gift you will no longer need Hospitals which do not provide population and income. Scan the map for them, bulldoze them, and replace them with a new Residential Zone. That Residential Zone may turn into another Hospital, so you may have to repeat several times. After you have received your 3rd Library you may do the same for Schools.

Earn 2nd Train Station Gift.

At some point you will need to find an empty spot to build up to 2,000 Rails the same way you built up to 500 Roads at the beginning of the game. You can check the Totals screen to see how many you already have, and chances are you will have to build quite a lot. Once you've reached 2,000 squares you will receive the 2nd Train Station gift and you can then bulldoze the extra Rails.

Use your Landfill Gifts.

As your population grows and the undeveloped land shrinks, you will start to periodically receive Landfill Gifts, up to a total of 9. Since you can only have 4 unused Gifts at once, you will need to make sure to use these so that you will always have spots available to earn new Gifts. Unlike other Gifts, Landfills are not buildings that increase the land value of surrounding Zones. Instead they convert water into land. You can use them to expand your shoreline or fill in small lakes.

Build into the center of the map.

Once you've finished the perimeter it will be time to build in the center of the map. You can check other guides for more optimum strategies, but to reach a Megalopolis it is sufficient to just build mixed columns of Commercial and Residential Zones sharing a line of Rail. See the example below and repeat from top to bottom and then column after column. You can add the occasional Police Station too if you want, but the land value in the center of the map should be high enough to overcome any issues with crime.

C = Commercial Zone

R = Residential Zone

r = Road/Rail

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1				r			
2		C		r		R	
3				r			
4				r			
5		C		r		R	
6				r			

Lower taxes

Your tax rate should still be at 8% to bring in the income you need to fill in the map. But as you start running out of places to build and the need for money you should gradually lower your taxes until they reach 1% which should be the minimum needed to cover your expenses. This will increase your growth rates and help you reach your population goal of 500,000.

Earn these other Gifts:

- After having 9 Residential Zones turn into Schools you will receive a 3rd Library.
- After developing 500 zones you will receive a 2nd Windmill.

- After reaching 500,000 population you will receive the Mario Statue.
- After reaching 1950 you will receive the Fountain.

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