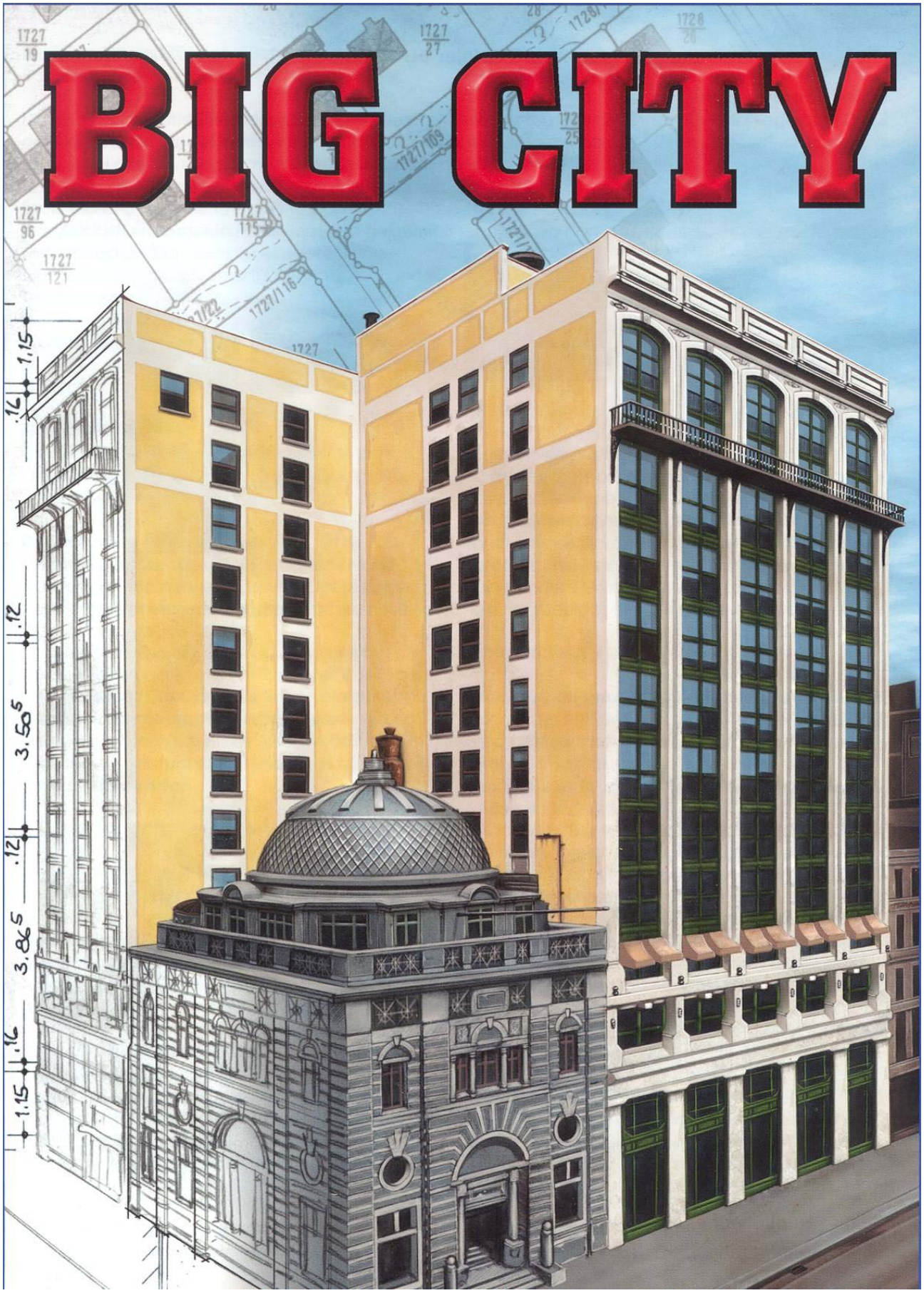

BIG CITY

Big City

For 2 to 5 players aged 10 and up

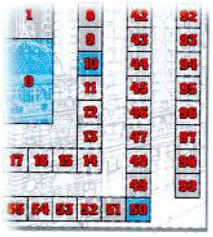
Game overview and goal

In Big City, players have the opportunity to build the city of their dreams. Of course, each player has a different dream and the resulting city will be a mixture of those dreams. The players begin with several pieces of property and will have the opportunity to exchange and acquire more property. On the property they have, players will build the city of their dreams, one building at a time. In the beginning, the city is small and building limited to residences and businesses. When the city has matured and built a city hall, the restrictions come down and players can build streetcar lines, banks and other exciting new buildings. Each building earns points for the builder and the player with the most points at the end is the winner.

Contents











72 property cards
52 buildings
17 streetcars
8 neighborhoods:4 each with 8 and 9 properties
5 colored player scoring markers
5 100 point tokens in the player's colors
5 summary sheets
1 scoring track
1 rule booklet
Before the first game, carefully remove the neighborhoods and 100 point tokens from their frame.

Preparation

Place the buildings and streetcars on the table within easy reach of all players. Place the scoring track on the table where all players can easily see it.
Separate the 72 property cards into eight stacks according to the eight neighborhoods as shown clearly on their backs. Shuffle each stack and place all eight stacks face down on the table within reach of all players.



Each player draws one card from each of the first five (numbered 1-5) stacks of property cards. With 5 players, each player receives additionally a card from the 6 stack. These are the starting hands for the players.
Each player selects a color and places the corresponding scoring marker on the scoring track in the space marked with the 0. The players also take their colored 100 point tokens and place them before themselves.
Each player takes a summary sheet.
Return unused scoring markers, 100 point tokens and summary sheets to the box.

Place the first neighborhood (with properties 11 to 19) in the middle of the table. Place the remaining neighborhoods nearby on the table.
Using any method that the players agree to, the players choose a starting player.
Note: Before the first game, the players should become familiar with the components and terms used in the game. Read the detailed description of the buildings at the end of these rules. Use the summary sheet when reading the rules and playing the game. It contains an overview of the buildings on one side and a snapshot from a game on the other.



Some definitions

Central to Big City are the neighborhoods and properties. They are described first to give you a good understanding of what they are and how they work in Big City.

Neighborhoods and properties

There are eight neighborhoods, four with eight properties in 2 x 4 grids and four with nine properties in 3 x 3 grids. The neighborhoods are numbered from 1-8. Within each neighborhood, the properties are numbered 1-8 or 1-9. Taking the two numbers together yields a unique number for each property. For example, the properties 11-19 are all in neighborhood 1 and 21-28 are in neighborhood 2 and so on.

Adjacent properties

Some of the more special buildings can only be built on properties that are adjacent to very specific things. In other situations a player may receive special bonuses for placing a building adjacent to specific things. Two properties are adjacent if they are on opposite sides of the same street. The properties need not be in the same neighborhood to be adjacent. However, two properties that are diagonal to each other are not adjacent.

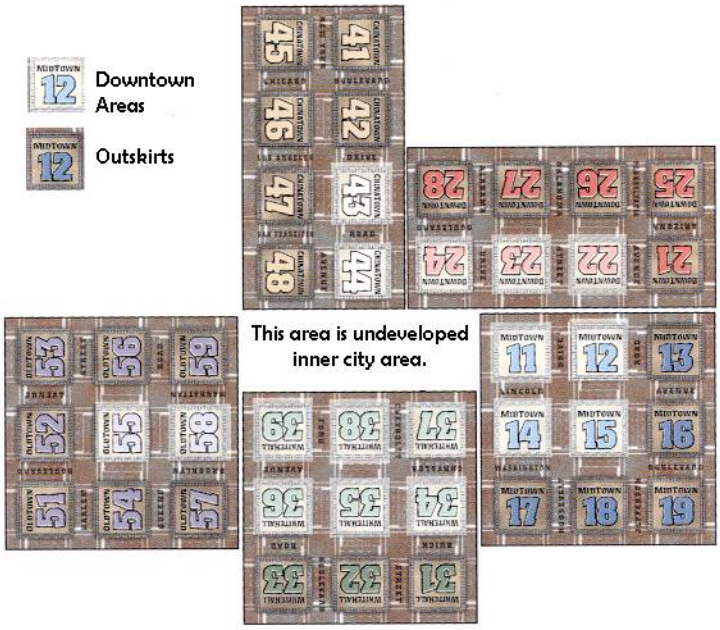
Property cards

Each property has an associated property card. The property cards have the number of the property on the face and the number of the neighborhood on the back. One card in each of the even numbered neighborhoods is special. It allows the placement of a park or factory.



The position of properties

The position of property relative to the outskirts of the city is a prerequisite for the placement of certain buildings and can change the value of others. A piece of property is always positioned on the outskirts of the city or in the center of the city.
If at least one side of the property is on the outside edge of the city, the property is on the outskirts of the city. Otherwise, it is considered to be in the center of the city.
It is possible that the players will position several neighborhoods such that there is an empty space in their midst as shown above. Properties on this inside edge in the city are in the center of the city and not the outskirts as an outside edge would be. Thus, property bordering on such a space can only be on the outskirts if another of its sides is on an outside edge of the city.



Playing the game

Placing the first neighborhoods

Before the first round, the players take turns placing neighborhoods to get the city started. The starting player begins and the other players follow in clockwise order. With 3 to 5 players, each player places one neighborhood and with 2 players, each player places 2 neighborhoods, alternating turns doing so. Thus, the starting city has the following neighborhoods:

2 players	neighborhoods 1-5
3 players	neighborhoods 1-4
4 players	neighborhoods 1-5
5 players	neighborhoods 1-6

Separate the neighborhoods that will be used to start the city from the others. Then the players create the initial city with these neighborhoods. On a player's turn, he chooses a neighborhood from this set and places it adjacent to another neighborhood already in the city. The first neighborhood (#1) was already placed. Each new neighborhood must be placed so that at least two properties on the new neighborhood are adjacent to two properties already in the city. Neighborhoods may not overlap.

The city is now ready for the players to begin the game. Place the neighborhoods not used in the initial setup of the city nearby. They will be added to the city later in the game.

A player's turn

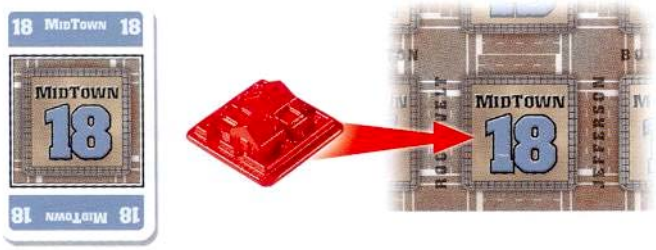
The starting player begins and players follow each other in clockwise order until the game ends. On a player's turn, he must take one of the following five actions.

A. Place a building, park or factory
B. Start/add to the streetcar line
C. Place a new neighborhood
D. Exchange card(s)
E. Pass

A. Place a building, park or factory

When a player wants to place a building, he does the following:

1. Verify that the building may be placed where he wants to place it. Some buildings require that other buildings or a streetcar be adjacent to the proposed location before the building may be placed. The adjacent properties need not be in the same neighborhood. Others may only be placed after certain conditions exist.
   For example, a bank may only be placed in a location that is adjacent to two businesses and may only be placed after city hall has been placed.



2. Play property cards from his hand face up on the table that correspond to the location where the building will be placed.
3. Select the building from those available and place it on the location represented by the property cards played. If there are no more buildings of the type desired, the building may not be placed. Again, verify that the building has been placed properly considering the rules controlling its placement. If it cannot be placed as intended, the player picks up the cards and must take a different action.
4. Score the building. Each building has a base value and possible bonuses and penalties. These values are also specified on the overview sheet. The bonuses and penalties are assessed based on the position of the building, what buildings are nearby and whether streetcars are adjacent to it.

Some bonuses and the penalties are additions to and subtractions from the base value. Other bonuses involve multipliers, which are applied after the additions and subtractions.

A residence or business need only have one side of one property on the outskirts to be considered on the outskirts of the city for that bonus (or loss of bonus).

Once a building is placed, it remains for the remainder of the game. It may not be upgraded or demolished to make room for something else. The value of a building is determined at the time it is placed. Later placements do not credit or debit the player who placed the building. Thus, if a factory is placed adjacent to a residence, no points are subtracted from the player who placed the residence.

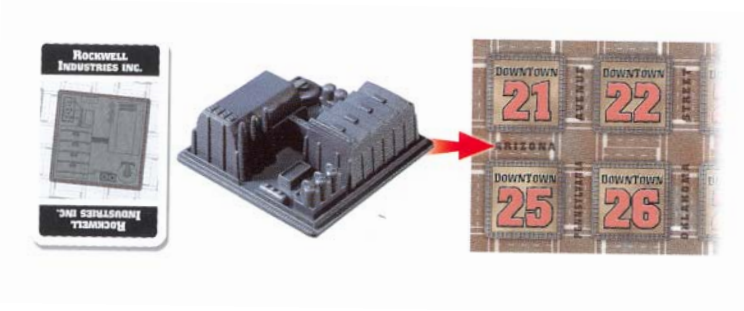
The player records his score by moving his scoring marker on the scoring track forward a number of spaces equal to his score for the building. If a player's score exceeds 99, the player puts his 100 point token on the 0 and moves his scoring marker past the 0, counting his points and adding 100 for his total score.

For example, a double residence is placed with both properties at the outskirts of the city and both properties are adjacent to streetcars. The base value of 6 is increased by 1 point for the outskirts (bonus applies once) and the result is multiplied by 2 for the streetcar (multiplier applies once). Thus, the residence scores 14 points. Similarly, only two points are subtracted if a residence is adjacent to both factories. Further, if a single residence or business is placed adjacent to a factory, the value could be 0, if there are no bonuses to add. Should this occur, the player receives 1 point total. He may not apply any multiplier that might otherwise be allowed.

5. Discard the cards used and draw cards to replace them. The new cards may be from any stack, but only two may come from any single stack. Players may draw cards from any of the stacks, even from neighborhoods that have not yet been placed in the city.

When a player wants to place a park or factory, he does the following:

1. Play the park or factory card.
2. Select the park or factory pictured on the card (there is just one of each of these four special pieces) and place it on any group of free spaces on the board where it will fit with the following restrictions: a factory must have two properties on the outskirts of the city and a park may have no more than one property on the outskirts. The player need not have any of the property cards for the location he chooses for the park or factory. The park or factory need not be placed in the neighborhood the card was drawn from. No buildings or streetcars may be removed to make room for a park or a factory.



Parks and factories do not score points for the player placing them. Both are often used as a defensive move to fill property that you suspect another player has plans for. Also, parks offer bonuses for residences and businesses built adjacent to them and factories penalize the subsequent placements of residences and businesses.

3. Discard the card used and draw a card to replace it. The new card may come from any stack.

Property cards, which refer to a property where a park or a factory has been placed are useless to the player holding them because they cannot be used. A player may discard them at the beginning of his turn and draw cards to replace them at the end of his turn. To discard them, a player places them on the table face up so all can verify them as legal discards. If they are found to not represent property used for a park or factory, the player must return them to his hand. When drawing cards to replace them, the player may draw cards from any stack, but no more than two cards from any single stack per turn, including replaced and exchanged cards.

B. Start/add to the streetcar line



The streetcar line can only be started after city hall has been placed. To start the streetcar line, a player may place only one streetcar. The first streetcar may, however, be placed on any street in the city, even a street on the outskirts of the city. After the first streetcar has been placed, two streetcars may be added each turn by players who select this action. Streetcars may not be placed across a property or a building. It is a streetcar line, not a subway or elevated train.

The new streetcars that are placed must extend the existing streetcar line. The player may choose to place each of the new streetcars at the same end, at different ends, or somewhere along the middle to create a branch or branches of the line.



A streetcar is adjacent to a building if it runs in one (or more) of the streets adjacent to the building. A street car that only runs into the side of a building is not adjacent to the building. Like the buildings, the 17 streetcars represent the maximum number that may be placed. After 17 have been placed, no more may be placed and players may not choose this action for the rest of the game.

C Place a new neighborhood

New neighborhoods may only be placed after city hall has been placed. The player takes the neighborhood of his choice from those not yet placed and places it on the table adjacent to the city. As in the initial setup, the neighborhoods need not be placed in number order and the player need not have property cards from the neighborhood to place it.

Each new neighborhood must be placed so that at least two properties on the new neighborhood are adjacent to two properties already in the city. Neighborhoods may not overlap. When all 8 neighborhoods have been placed, no more may be placed and players may not choose this action for the rest of the game.

D. Exchange cards

The player may exchange as many property cards from his hand as desired. The player places the cards he wants to exchange face down at the bottom of the stacks from which they came. Then he draws cards from any stack to replace them.

With less than 5 players, the player will draw to 5 cards. With 5 players, the player will draw to 6 cards. The new property cards may come from any stack, but only two may come from any single stack. Players may draw property cards from neighborhoods that have not yet been placed in the city.

E. Pass

The player does nothing and passes. The player may do this even if he has a legal move.

Game end

The game ends when all neighborhoods have been placed and buildings have been placed on all properties or all players pass in sequence. Near the end of a game it is possible that only one player has cards that may be played. In such a case, that player will continue to play, placing neighborhoods, streetcars, or buildings while the others pass until he no longer can or wants to do so.

Winning the game

The winner is the player with the most points at the end of the game.

Variants

Big City is a flexible game that has room for many options not covered in the preceding rules. The following are just a few options players may want to consider to add variety or new challenges to their games. Each should be considered separately, but they can be combined if the players wish.

Trade cards

As a new action, a player may choose to trade one or two cards with other players. The player may trade both cards with a single player or one each with two players. Other players may not trade with each other at this time.

The player announces that he has cards to trade and tells the others what neighborhood or neighborhoods the cards are from. He may also indicate which neighborhoods he is interested in. The player may not mention specific property numbers, however.

The other players may offer a card or cards from the neighborhood requested or from any other neighborhood they wish. They may also not mention specific property numbers. When two players agree to a trade, the players trade the cards to each other face down and then put them into their hands.

If the player cannot arrange for any trades, he may exchange up to two cards with those in the stacks. This is done as in the normal “exchange cards” action, except that the player is limited to a maximum of two cards. If the player was only able to trade one card, he may not exchange the other.

Useless cards must be exchanged.

Instead of allowing cards made useless by the playing of parks or factories to be discarded, you may want to require they be exchanged for new cards. This makes the effect of the placement even harsher as the affected players must choose between holding the useless cards in their hands or using an entire turn to exchange them for new cards.

It also adds the interesting effect that a player later drawing cards as part of an exchange may draw these useless cards. This adds this as a consideration for players wanting to exchange cards.

A single streetcar line

Instead of allowing the streetcar to branch, you may want to limit the placement of streetcars so that you create one continuous, non-branching, non-looping line. When using this variant, players may only add to one end or the other of the line. They may choose to place both on one end or one each on the two ends. Also, a player may not place a streetcar such that a closed loop is created.

The diagram shows the allowed and disallowed streetcar placements using this variant.

Limited streetcar line

Limit building of the streetcar line to inhabited areas of the city. In this variant, a streetcar may be placed only adjacent to a building already in the city. This will make the streetcar bonus and the building of the shopping center much more difficult to achieve.

Limiting card drawing

Limit card drawing (either when replacing cards used in building or for exchanges) to those neighborhoods in the city. This will force players to add the new neighborhoods before they can draw cards for them.

New buildings

Players may want to add new kinds buildings to Big City to give it even more dimension. Hospitals, parking structures, gas stations and restaurants are just a few of the new buildings that come to mind. Of course, each will have its own building requirements and scoring possibilities. You may create your own folded paper or cardboard models to represent these new buildings or borrow parts from other games to represent them.

Buildings, Their Characteristics And Prerequisites

Big City has 11 different things that can be built, each with different characteristics. These can all be placed into the following groups:

- residences and businesses,
- special buildings,
- parks and factories, and
- streetcars

Residences and businesses




The characteristics of the residences and businesses are very similar. They differ only in the effects of their location in the city (outskirts or center of the city) to their value. They each come in three sizes: the single needs one property, the double needs two adjacent properties, and the triple needs three properties in a line.

Prerequisites: Residences and businesses may be placed at any time in the game and at any place in the city. No special prerequisites must be met to place these buildings.

Worth: A single residence or business has a base value of 2, a double residence or business has a base value of 6 and a triple residence or business has a base value of 10. Both building types increase their value by 1 if they are built adjacent to a park. If built adjacent to a factory, both reduce their value by 2. When built adjacent to a streetcar line, both double their value.

In location they differ: residences increase their value by 1 when they are placed on the outskirts of a town.

Businesses increase their value by 1 when they are placed away from the outskirts in the center of the city. When a business is built adjacent to city hall, its value is doubled. Finally, the value of businesses are tripled when they are built adjacent to both city hall and the streetcar line. For example, a double business on the outskirts of the city, adjacent to a factory, city hall and the streetcar line scores 6 (base value) + 0 (outskirts location) - 2 (factory) = 4 (sub-total) x 3 (next to city hall and streetcar) = 12 points (total score).

A double residence in the same location would score 6 (base value) + 1 (outskirts location) - 2 (factory) = 5 (sub-total) x 2 (next to streetcar) = 10 points (total score). The streetcar doubles the residence, but city hall does not have influence on residences.

Influence on other buildings: Residences and businesses do not affect the value of other buildings. However, they are prerequisites in various combinations for several buildings: bank, cinema, post office, and shopping center.

Special buildings

The special buildings are: city hall, cinema, bank, post office, shopping center, and church.

City Hall



City hall needs only one property. It may be built at any time during the game.

Prerequisites: It must be built away from the outskirts on city center property.

Worth: The player who builds city hall receives no points for doing so.

Influences on other buildings: Other special buildings, parks, factories and the streetcar line may be placed only after city hall has been built. City hall doubles the value of businesses, banks, cinemas and post offices placed adjacent to it. If one of these buildings is both adjacent to city hall and the streetcar line, its value is tripled. City hall is a special building and can, thus, fulfill one of the prerequisites for the shopping center. Also, new neighborhoods may only be added after city hall has been built.

Church



The church needs only one property. It may be built only after city hall has been built.
Prerequisites: It may be built only as the last building in a neighborhood and only on a property with a double number (e.g. 11, 33, 88, etc.).
Worth: A church always scores 15 points when placed. It receives no bonuses and suffers no penalties from other buildings or the streetcar line.
Influences on other buildings: A church is a special building and can, thus, fulfill one of the prerequisites for the shopping center. It does not influence the value of other buildings.

Cinema, Post Office, and Bank





Each of these buildings needs only one property. They may only be placed after city hall has been built.
Prerequisites: To build a cinema, at least two residences must be on properties adjacent to the property where the cinema is to be placed. A double residence does not count as two residences for this prerequisite.
To build a post office, at least one business and one residence must be adjacent to the property where the cinema is to be placed. To build a bank, at least two businesses must be on properties adjacent to the property where the cinema is to be placed. A double business does not count as two businesses for this prerequisite.
Worth: Each of these buildings has a base value of 5 points. The value doubles when the building is placed adjacent to a streetcar line or city hall. If it is placed adjacent to both the streetcar line and city hall, the value is tripled.
Influences on other buildings: Cinema, post office and bank are special buildings and, thus, can fulfill one of the prerequisites for the shopping center. They do not influence the value of other buildings.

Shopping center



The shopping center needs two properties. It may be built only after city hall has been built.
Prerequisites: To build a shopping center, at least one residence, one business, one special building, and the streetcar line must be adjacent to the properties where the shopping center is to be placed. They need not be adjacent to both, but to either and not all need to be adjacent to the same property.Worth: A shopping center always scores 30 points when it is built. It receives no bonuses and suffers no penalties from other buildings or the streetcar line.
Influences on other buildings: The shopping center is a special building and can, thus, fulfill a prerequisite for the other shopping center. It does not influence the value of other buildings.

Parks and factories

Parks and factories may be built only after city hall has been built. To build a park or a factory, a player must play the property card with the picture corresponding to the park or factory being placed. Parks and factories can be built on any empty properties that they can fit on, but do have different location requirements specified below. Parks and factories need not be built in the neighborhood that corresponds to the stack from which their card was drawn.

Parks

Lincoln Park needs two properties. The card is in the stack for neighborhood 2 property cards.
Central Park needs three properties, all in a line. The card is in the stack for neighborhood 4 property cards.
Prerequisites: Of the 2 or 3 properties where a park is to be placed, at most one may be on the outskirts of the city.
Worth: The player receives no points for placing a park.
Influences on other buildings: A park increases the value of a residence or a business that is built on an adjacent property by 1 point. A park has no influence on special buildings.

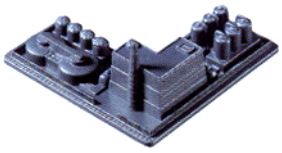


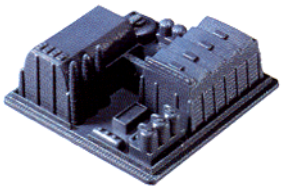


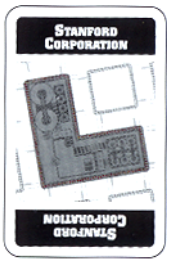




Factories









Stanford Corporation needs three properties in the shape of an "L". The card is in the stack for neighborhood 6 property cards.
Rockwell Industries needs four properties arranged in a square. The card is in the stack for neighborhood 8 property cards.
Prerequisites: A least two of the properties where a factory will be built must be on the outskirts of the city.
Worth: The player building a factory receives no points.
Influences on other buildings: A factory reduces the value of a residence or a business which is built on an adjacent property by 2 points. A factory has no influence on special buildings.

Streetcar line



The streetcar line may only be placed after city hall has been built. The player, who begins the building of the streetcar line may place only one streetcar, but may place it on any street in the city. After the first streetcar has been placed, players may place one or two streetcars on their turn. The player may choose to place each of the new streetcars at the same end, at different ends, or somewhere along the middle to create a branch or branches of the line.
Worth: The player building streetcars receives no points.
Influences on other buildings: The streetcar line has no influence on churches. Although it is required for shopping centers, it does not affect the score of the shopping center. When a residence, business, bank, post office or cinema is placed adjacent to a streetcar line, its value is doubled. The streetcar line bonus does not applied if the line runs into the property or merely touches at a corner. The streetcar line must run along one of the streets adjacent to the property to be considered adjacent.
When a business, cinema, bank or post office is adjacent to both the streetcar line and city hall, the value is tripled.

Tactical notes:

When you receive your property cards, you can begin planning your game strategy. When you place your initial neighborhood, it may be good strategy to place it so two of your properties are adjacent to each other. For example, if you hold properties 14 and 37, you should try to place neighborhood 3 next to neighborhood 1 so that 14 and 37 are adjacent. This will give you a pair of adjacent properties you may use to build a double-sized building either as your first building or to save for the high scoring shopping center later in the game.

Another opportunity that adjacent property provides is the possibility of placing city hall and then using its doubling power on a residence, bank, business, cinema or post office. Of course, building city hall yields no points, but controlling its location may give you large bonuses later on.

Early in the game it can be useful to spend a turn or two exchanging cards. By drawing 2 to 4 cards from one neighborhood, you increase your chances of getting 2 or more properties adjacent to each other. Once you have them, you can use them to plan for placing buildings next to each other to achieve the bonuses possible for such placements. Of course, holding several properties in a neighborhood will increase the negative effect on you if a park or factory is placed there.

Acquiring and placing the parks and factories gives you tremendous power to negatively impact the other players. Also, by building them away from properties you plan to use, you can increase the scores when you build on those properties. As the cards for parks and factories are in the stacks for neighborhoods 2, 4, 6 and 8, you increase your chances of drawing these important cards by selecting these stacks when replacing or exchanging cards.

Another valuable zero score placement is the streetcar line. By building it toward property you hold, you may be able to score the double bonus placing most buildings adjacent to the streetcar line gives. The player who starts the streetcar line can give himself a tremendous advantage if he starts it adjacent to property he holds.

You should also seriously consider drawing cards from unplaced neighborhoods. Then you can spend a turn to place the new neighborhood that you have property in. This gives you the opportunity to place it where you will have adjacent properties in two neighborhoods.

If you manage to draw a double-numbered property (e.g. 11. 33. 88, etc.), you should consider saving it until later in the game and placing a church there. Churches score 15 points and this can make the difference between winning and losing in a close game.

You should also keep track of how many buildings of each type remain available to be placed. Be ready to adjust your building plans to place the buildings before they run out and you lose out. If you will not be able to place them, you must change your plans and the sooner you do that the better off you will be. With the effort needed to place a shopping center, you do not want to see another player place the second one.

Near the end of the game, you may want to pass instead of building the second to last property in a neighborhood if it leaves the double-numbered space open. A single residence, even with all bonuses yields only 8 points while your opponent’s church, made possible by your play, is worth 15 points.

The author: Franz Benno Delonge has lived for 41 years in Munich and is a judge of an economic crimes court. He began developing games as a high school student as Christmas presents for his younger brothers and sisters. Over the years his group of the fellow gamers and testers has continued to increase. Big City is his first publication from a large publishing company.

Graphics: Franz Vohwinkel