TOWN CENTER

Congratulations! You have lobbied your local politicians, bribed the right people, threatened everyone else, et voila! You are now the mayor of your newly-chartered town. Now what?

Well, you're probably going to need a big shiny office, in a big shiny building. Then, you can start attracting some businesses, shops, and people to live in this soon-to-be metropolis.

You know, you'd think they would be here already – better check with your uncle at the government's Central Urban Bureau of Expansion (C.U.B.E.)... who knows who else may have pulled the same trick, and there can only be one city in this part of the country, or so the bureaucrats say.

Town Center is a game where players, as newly-minted mayors, try to build and grow their town by increasing its population and its value.

To do that, they have to compete with other towns to attract developers who will make investments in residential, commercial, retail and infrastructure projects – and there's only so many of them to go around! The players then need to zone those projects efficiently, guiding investment in specific parts of the city.

If zoned correctly, these newly-erected properties will develop and grow, as the new residents come looking for jobs, generating prestige for the town that they now call home. These residents and their disposable income will attract shops, which will be selling goods that they crave and can now afford, which will of course generate tax revenue for the town.

The winning mayor is the one who has created the town with the highest population and the most cash reserves at the end of the game. That town receives a city charter and the envy of its neighbors.
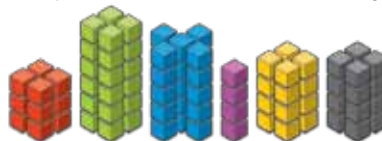
COMPONENTS

4 double-sided player boards

1 double-sided central / solo board

123 buildings cubes: 12 Offices / 42 Residential / 25 Commercial
4 City Hall / 20 Utilities / 20 Elevator/Parking

1 cloth bag

16 small wooden cubes, in 8 colors, two each for every player.

SETUP

The players each take a player board and the two smaller cubes in the color of their choice, placing one of them on their board to identify which color they are using, and one on the $3 spot of the income track on the central board.

Decide on which side (the easier "A" or more difficult "B") of the player boards to use. Alternatively, the players may choose to use different sides, especially if some are more experienced.

2. Place in the cloth bag the following number of cubes per player:
   3 x red Office 🟥 cubes
   6 x green Residential 🟩 cubes
   3 x blue Commercial 🟦 cubes
   4 x yellow Utilities 🟨 cubes
   4 x black Elevators/Parking ⬛ cubes
   Sort the remaining cubes by color and set them aside – these constitute the Reserve.

Example for 3 players:
• 9x 🟥
• 18x 🟩
• 9x 🟦
• 12x 🟨
• 12x ⬛

3. The players each take a large purple cube 🟪 and place it on any building spot on their player board to mark where their City Hall will be.
   Note: The **City Hall** cube also counts as an **Office** cube.
   The player who was born in the most populous town or city becomes the first player.
   The players may also use any other method to choose the first player.
   The first player takes the cloth bag and begins the game with **Phase I** of round 1.
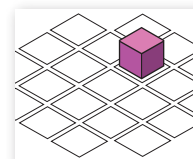
SEQUENCE OF PLAY

I. **INVESTMENT:** The players choose which types of buildings they would like to see built into their town.

II. **CONSTRUCTION:** The chosen buildings are placed in the building spots of the player boards, or on top of other cubes.

III. **DEVELOPMENT**: Residential and Commercial buildings grow.

IV. **INCOME:** Commercial buildings and Parking lots generate income for your town.

V. **PUBLIC WORKS:** Each town may spend some of its cash reserves for Utilities or Elevators.

PHASE I: INVESTMENT

At the beginning of each turn, there are a number of real estate developers approaching the towns with ideas for projects to develop. Each mayor will try to attract the best type of investment for their town.

The first player draws a number cubes from the bag equal to **twice the number of players.** If this is the first round, return any Office cubes 🟥 to the bag, replacing them with an equal number of non-Office cubes.

Then, in games with 2, 3 or 4 players, the first player forms **as many towers of cubes as the number of players (2, 3 or 4)**, with each tower consisting of 2 cubes.

In games with 5, 6, 7 or 8 players, the first player forms exactly **4 towers** of cubes, with each tower consisting of a **minimum of 2 cubes.** Note that two copies of Town Center are necessary for games with more than 4 players.

The player forming the towers decides which cubes go on the top and which ones at the bottom.

Then, starting with the first player and proceeding in clockwise order, each player must take the topmost cube from any one of the towers.

As soon as each player has chosen one cube, each player chooses a second cube, this time proceeding in the reverse (counter-clockwise) order. Thus, the last player to take their 1st cube will be also the first player to pick their 2nd.

At the end of this phase, each player will have two cubes ready to be built into their city.

Example for 3 players:
The first player draws 6 cubes, and forms 3 stacks of 2 cubes each.

Next, the first player takes a Residential cube, and the next player must choose between two Utilities and one Elevator/Parking cube.
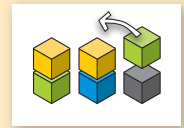
PHASE II: CONSTRUCTION

In this phase, the mayors issue zoning permits and direct the real estate developers to construct their buildings in the designated spaces. While it might be tempting to accept those envelopes and let the mob put some "foundations" anywhere they like in your town, there's rules, and rules are rules. For now.

In the Construction phase, the players place the two cubes that they received during Phase I on their player boards. Both cubes must be placed if possible, and may not be kept for future rounds. Players may decide in which order to place the cubes.

Players may perform their Construction actions simultaneously, although they are advised to check the construction of others. It is recommended that the first round's Phase II is performed one town at a time.

BUILDING REGULATIONS *(excerpt from C.U.B.E. Circular No. 42/1.10, resulting from the 617th plenary meeting of the Nominal Urban Transitional Expansion Legal Legislative Authority):*

Each town has a number of building sites, which can either be part of the Center, the main part of the town, or the Suburbs, which form the periphery of the town.

ADJACENCY

A cube is **adjacent** to another if:

it is located at the same height and **orthogonally** next to it.

if it is located on different heights, and directly **on top or below** it.

A Residential cube 🟩 may not be placed in a position adjacent to another Residential cube during the **Construction** phase.

A Commercial cube 🟦 may not be placed in a position adjacent to another Commercial cube during the **Construction** phase.

Example:
The blue Commercial cube on the ground floor is adjacent to the green Residential cube and to the yellow Utilities cube.
*The Residential cube above the purple City Hall is not adjacent to the other Residential cube on the ground floor.*
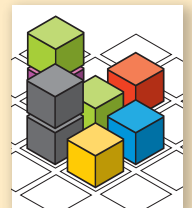
Example:
The player would like to build one green Residential cube and one blue Commercial cube.

The green cube may not be built on top or behind the green cube already built, and also not in positions E or A. It could be built in B or on top of the City Hall.

The blue cube may not be built in positions B, C, D, or on top of the existing blue cube. It could be placed on top of the yellow Utilities cube.
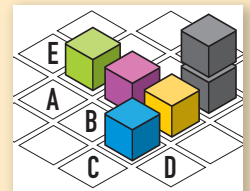
OFFICE BUILDINGS 🟥

· While it is free to build all other buildings during the Construction phase, governmental edicts stipulate that towns contribute incentives towards the cost of construction of office space. Therefore, when placing an Office cube, a player, if able, must spend $5.

· If a player does not have the required amount ($5 or $10, for one or two Office cubes), the player must forfeit the Office cube(s), and return them to the **Reserve** (not the bag).

· Note: The City Hall cube 🟪 also counts as an **Office** cube.

ELEVATOR/PARKING ⬛ AND HEIGHTS

· An Elevator/Parking cube may not be placed on top or below cubes of other colors.

· A black cube or group of cubes on the ground floor is considered a **Parking lot**, and earns income for the town during **Phase IV**.

· A tower of two or more black cubes is considered an Elevator, and allows the player to build on higher levels, and for the town to grow upwards. The height of the Elevator determines the **maximum height** of every other tower in the **Center** building sites.

· The maximum height restriction is ignored when building Elevators, since they define it.

· An Elevator is functional (i.e. enabling the construction of taller towers) only if it is powered, by being adjacent to a yellow **Utilities** cube. As it is not allowed to build higher than the ground floor without a powered Elevator, the yellow cube powering the Elevator must be on the ground floor.

· Towers may only be built in the building sites of the **Center**. A tower may **never exceed a height of 5** stacked cubes.

· Players may never build towers in the **Suburbs**. The maximum height for all suburban building sites is 1.

Example:
The black cubes A and D are Parking lots. They will earn money for the town during Phase IV. It is not allowed to place cubes of other colors on top of them.

The black cubes B and C form an Elevator, which is adjacent to a yellow Utilities cube, so it is active and allows towers of up to a maximum height of two cubes to be formed. Cube E is located in the suburbs, so no cube can ever be placed on top of it.
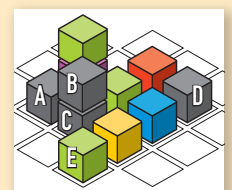
PHASE III: DEVELOPMENT

This is where the magic happens. There's nothing that satisfies a mayor more than seeing the hustle and bustle of young families moving in, along with their money, to work and shop in this shining city on the hill. Well, except for seeing one's re-election being announced on TV, of course.

During the Development phase, the towns take on a life of their own. If the players have played their cubes right, the green Residential cubes and the blue Commercial cubes will grow to become more valuable in points and money.

This growth happens simultaneously for all players, although players are advised to check the development of others, and even do the first round's Phase III one town at a time.

Some Basic Rules Of Development *by Gaul Soodman, Esq., lawyer and consultant to promising entrepreneurs.*

Development occurs by taking green Residential and/or blue Commercial cubes from the Reserve and placing them in positions adjacent to existing green and/or blue cubes, respectively. Cubes of other colors do not develop.

It is **not** necessary for green or blue cubes to be connected to a yellow **Utilities** cube in order to develop. New cubes placed during the Development phase may not exceed maximum height limits.

If there are several possible developments, then each player may choose which one to do first. If, after the initial development, additional opportunities for development still exist, then players must continue to add cubes from the reserve, until no further development is possible.

If at the start of a Phase III, the Reserve does not have sufficient cubes for everyone, then players develop one cube at a time, in reverse player order, until such time as there are no more cubes.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

To develop, a Residential unit must always be adjacent to a number of Office cubes that is at least one higher than the number of cubes that make up the unit

- A Residential unit of **one** cube that is adjacent (see **Adjacency** rules above) to **two or more** Office cubes is developed by taking another green cube from the **Reserve** and placing it in a position adjacent to the existing Residential unit.
- A Residential unit of two cubes must be adjacent to three Office cubes to develop, a Residential unit of three cubes must be adjacent to four Office cubes to develop, and so on.
- **Note:**
  - The City Hall cube also counts as an **Office** cube.
  - A large Residential unit becomes more and more difficult to develop, as it will need to be adjacent to more and more Offices, and cubes cannot be added to it during construction.
 - The larger a Residential unit is, the more points it scores at the end of the game.
  - Two Residential units can be merged through development to form one larger unit.

Example:

Residential unit A is adjacent to three Offices (Two Office cubes and one City Hall), so it can be developed by adding a new green cube stacked directly upon it, merging with unit B.

This development results in a larger Residential unit of 4 cubes, which will score more victory points at the end of the game.
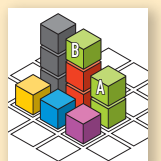
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

To develop, a Commercial unit must always be adjacent to a number of Residential units that is at least one higher than the number of cubes that make up the Commercial unit.

A Commercial unit of **one** cube that is adjacent (see Adjacency rules above) to **two** Residential units (**Note: not cubes!**) is developed by taking another blue cube from the **Reserve** and placing it in a position adjacent to the existing Commercial unit.

A Commercial unit of two cubes must be adjacent to three Residential units to develop, a Commercial unit of three cubes must be adjacent to four Residential units to develop, and so on.

Note:

A large Commercial unit becomes more and more difficult to develop, as it will need to be adjacent to more and more Residential units, and cubes cannot be added to it during construction.

The larger a Commercial unit is, the more income it generates at the end of each round.

Two Commercial units can be merged through development to form one larger unit.

Example:

The two-cube Commercial unit A is adjacent to only two different Residential units, B and C, so it cannot be developed. If a new Residential unit is built in D, then Commercial unit A will be adjacent to three different Residential units and can be developed.

The new blue cube could be added on the open space E, but it is probably a better move to stack it on top of one of the existing blue cubes (which is allowed since there is an active Elevator of height 2).
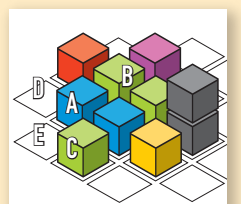
In summary: Offices and the City Hall stimulate the development of Residential units, and Residential units stimulate the development of Commercial units.

PHASE IV: TAX REVENUE

Nobody has said it better than Lawrence "Larry the Liquidator" Garfield:

"I love money. I love money more than I love the things it can buy. Does that surprise you? Money, it don't care whether I'm good or not. It don't care whether I snore or not. It don't care which god I pray to. There are only three things in this world with that kind of unconditional acceptance: dogs, doughnuts and money. Only money is better. You know why? Because it don't make you fat and it don't poop all over the living room floor. There's only one thing I like better. Other people's money."

In the Tax Revenue phase, the Commercial units in your town pay for the privilege of continuing to sell their goods and services to the good people living in it. The bigger they are, the more they contribute towards the common good and the continued development of the town. Also, Parking lots generate income, as do the general fees from City Hall operations (fees, permits, fines, etc.).

1. **Revenue from Commercial units** .

    Commercial units generate revenue, but only if they are **powered**, by being adjacent to a yellow Utilities cube (The town can't charge them taxes unless it provides services to them).

    A powered Commercial unit of one cube generates revenue of $1; a powered Commercial unit of 2 cubes generates revenue of $1 + $2 = $3, and so on.

    If the unit is located only on the ground floor there is no additional revenue.

    If the unit's highest cube reaches the second floor, add $1 to the revenue. If the unit's highest cube reaches the third floor, add $1 + $2, and so on.

    For example, a Commercial unit of 4 cubes that reaches the third floor earns $1 + $2 + $3 +$4 (for the size) + $1 + $2 (for the height) = $13. Refer to the chart on the central board to quickly calculate this.

    Note: A Commercial unit does not need to start at the ground floor in order to pay out the height premium, only the highest cube is considered.

2. Revenue from Parking lots ⬛

    Parking lots generate revenue according to the number of cubes adjacent to them.

    · **Each** cube adjacent to a parking lot generates **$1**.

    Thus, a Parking lot of only one cube generates a maximum of $4 since no cubes can be stacked upon it.

    Parking lots may be larger than one cube, but all cubes constituting a parking lot must be on the ground floor. They do not need to be powered to generate revenue.
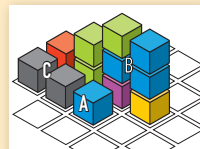
3. Revenue from town fees 🟪

    The town generates $1 for itself through fees, permits, fines and other such levies.

PHASE V: PUBLIC WORKS

There are two seasons in this town: Winter and Construction.

In the Public Works phase, each mayor may choose to invest some of their cash in building up the infrastructure of their town, to allow for more construction and development, by providing more Utilities or raising the height limits.

In **reverse** player order, each player may buy one yellow Utilities cube 🟨, or one black Elevator cube ⬛ from the **Reserve**, and place it in their town.

    If this would be the first yellow Utilities cube in the player's town, it costs **$5**. If it would be the second, it would cost $10. If it would be the third, it would cost $15, and so on.

    If this would be the first black Elevator/Parking cube in the player's town, it costs **$5**, and must be placed in the ground floor, becoming a Parking lot. If it would be the second, it would cost $10, and must be placed on top of an existing black cube to form an Elevator. If it would be the third, it would cost $15, and so on. All black cubes bought this way are to be Elevators.

END OF THE ROUND

As soon as every player has completed **Phase V**, the bag of cubes is passed to the player on the left, who now becomes the start player for the next round. At the end of the 10th round, the game is over, and it is time to see which town will become a city.

FINAL SCORING

The fancy big-city urban planners from the capital are here, and they have checklists, and shiny clicky-top pens, and nice shoes, and 2AS30 forms to complete. Your tax money at work!

At the end of the game, the central powers-that-be will evaluate your quaint little town, and give it a score according to how many people live there, how much money you have, and how have you controlled growth into the surrounding suburbs. To calculate these scores, the players use the income track, first converting their money into points.

    Points from cash in hand

        The town is awarded **1 point** for every **$5** remaining in its accounts at the end of the game.

2. Points from Residential units 🟩

    Residential units earn points for the town, but only if they are **powered**, by being adjacent to a yellow Utilities cube 🟨 at the end of the game (Most people like an apartment with heating and water).

    A powered Residential unit of one cube earns 1 point for the town a powered unit of 2 cubes earns 1 + 2 = 3 points, and so on.

    If the unit is located only on the ground floor, no additional points are awarded.

    If the unit's highest cube reaches the second floor, add 1 point. If the unit's highest cube reaches the third floor, add 1 + 2 points, and so on.

    For example, a Residential unit of 3 cubes that reaches the fourth floor earns 1 + 2 + 3 (for the size) + 1 + 2 + 3 (for the height) = 12 points. Refer to the chart on the central board to quickly calculate this.

    Note: A Residential unit does not need to start at the ground floor in order to earn the height points bonus.

3. Penalty points from building in the suburbs

    Each town receives a penalty of **–1 point** for each cube built in the suburbs, as they have not managed to control urban sprawl.

The player who has managed to gather the most points is the winner, and must now be called The Mayor by all other players. Having succeeded in a true test of managerial competence, that gifted individual is rewarded by those pencil-pushing desk monkeys with a City Charter.

In case of a tie, the player with most cubes on the 5th floor is the winner. If still tied, the player with the most cubes on the 4th floor is the winner, and so on.

SOLO VARIANT

In Phase I, draw 3 cubes and choose 1 of them to put back in the bag. In Scoring, calculate your score according to the rules, and compare it to the **Solo Score Level** table. You may use either side of the player boards.

When playing with the solo Central Park map on the back of the central board, randomly lay all 20 cubes in a row (with no red Office cubes in the first 3 spots). Each round, draw the first 3 cubes, choose 2 of them to build, and place the third in the back of the row. At the beginning of the 10th round, build the last 2 cubes.

SOLO SCORE LEVEL	
0–39	Homestead
40–49	Hamlet
50–59	Village
60–69	Neighborhood
70–79	Town
80–84	Suburb
85–89	City
90–94	Metropolis
95–99	Capital
≥100	Megalopolis

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