



Marsden Point: A Planner's Journey in Cities: Skylines 2

Using the Digital Sandbox to Explore Real-World Urban Planning Principles.

The Planner's Philosophy: A Framework for City-Building

As a Senior Policy Planner, my approach to city-building, whether real or virtual, is guided by a core principle: the symbiotic relationship between how people move, where they live and work, and their overall experience. Every decision in Marsden Point is a test of this framework.

**Transport affects Land Use,
Land Use affects Transport,
Both affect the City User Experience**



Chapter 1: Laying the Foundation



The Geographic Challenge: Connecting a Peninsula

Marsden Point is a peninsula with a natural harbor and narrow internal waterways. The first strategic challenge is to establish robust connections for trade and movement from day one, without creating prohibitive costs or visual blight. How we enable access while respecting the landscape?

The Planner's Solution: Functional Bridges and an Economic Gateway

Smart Crossings

Instead of massive, expensive high-level bridges over narrow channels, functional drawbridges provide an efficient solution. They allow maritime traffic without the steep inclines and high cost of oversized structures, as noted: *"To build big arching bridges over such a narrow waterway would be a bit of a waste... this is where your draw bridges kick in."*



The First Economic Move

Establishing a functional port is the foundational step in creating an economic gateway. It connects Marsden Point to the outside world, enabling the import of necessary goods and the future export of its own production.



Chapter 2: Building the Economic Engine



The Economic Challenge: Beyond a Simple Town

With the city connected, the next challenge is to build a resilient, self-sufficient economy. How do we move beyond being just a place people live, to a place where complex industries thrive? This requires a strategic approach to vertical integration, from raw materials to consumer goods.

“So, am I the city booze baron, cereal king... OR the local City Planner who ensures that local City Plan actually enables those aforementioned industries?”

The Planner's Toolkit: Vertically Integrated Supply Chains

1. Raw Material



It starts with specialized Grain Facilities in the fertile agricultural zones.

2. Industrial Production



The grain is processed into convenience foods at a Cereal Plant.

3. Consumer Retail



The final product is sold to citizens at local Bakeries and retail stores.

4. Corporate Support



A Television Studio is even established to 'market all those wonderful "cereals" on prime time kids TV!'

Chapter 3: Growing Up, Not Out



The Housing Challenge: Accommodating Growth Sustainably

A thriving economy attracts tens of thousands of new residents. The critical planning challenge is to accommodate this growth without creating endless, car-dependent sprawl. The vision is for a dense, vibrant city core supported by diverse, livable neighborhoods.



The new skyscraper assets are powerful but demand careful planning. One residential tower can hold over 35,000 residents, meaning "you are going to get absolutely flogged as everyone tries and moves in" if your infrastructure isn't ready.

A Balanced Approach: From Towers to Townhouses



The Dense Core: Skyscrapers are a powerful tool for the city center, concentrating population where transit is most effective.



The “Missing Middle”: Sustainable growth isn’t just about extremes. Creating vibrant, **medium-density suburban neighborhoods** with a mix of housing types provides options for different lifestyles and prevents the city from becoming a monoculture of high-rises. These neighborhoods are designed to be walkable and well-serviced.



Chapter 4: The People's City

The Livability Challenge: Avoiding Gridlock Nightmare

The city is dense, the economy is complex, and the population is large. The final and most important challenge is ensuring Marsden Point is a pleasant and efficient place to live. Without a focus on the human-scale experience, density can quickly lead to a gridlocked, unpleasant environment. The solution is a robust, multimodal transit system that prioritizes people.



The Transit Solution: A City Connected by Trams

A network of efficient, accessible tram lines forms the backbone of Marsden Point's transit system. Trams run through the city center, along the waterfront, and connect residential neighborhoods, offering a reliable alternative to driving. This reduces traffic, activates the streetscape, and makes the city accessible to everyone.



The Active Transport Soluthsn: A Cycling Revolution

Retrofitting the city with a comprehensive network of separated bike lanes and shared paths has been transformative. By making cycling safe, convenient, and enjoyable, we've unlocked a powerful mode of transport. At any given time, 40% to 50% of the city is motivated by bike, drastically reducing car dependency and creating a healthier, more vibrant public realm.





The Synthesis: Does Cities: Skylines 2 Hit the Spot?

The Verdict: A Resounding Yes.

“With the slew of content and updates... the game hit the sweet spot for this in-real-life Planner.”

Why It Works: The new DLCs—Bridges & Ports, Supply Chains, Skyscrapers, and Cycling—are not just features; they are tools. They create a complex, challenging, and rewarding sandbox that allows for the genuine exploration of real-world planning trade-offs and principles.

The game successfully simulates the intricate dance between infrastructure, economic development, density, and human experience.

The Digital Sandbox as a Visionary Tool

The challenges faced in Marsden Point mirror those in cities around the world. Virtual worlds like **Cities: Skylines 2** are more than just games; they are powerful sandboxes where we can test ideas, visualize outcomes, and ultimately, learn how to design more resilient, equitable, and human-centric cities for the real world.

