Build a better city in three rounds

4-6 players | About 60 minutes including discussion | One shared team

1 What the game is about and what you will learn

You are a city policy team. Spend a shared budget on six districts whose needs are initially hidden. **Learning objectives:** use evidence, negotiate priorities and recognise unequal policy effects. **Learning outcome:** justify a policy choice and explain its trade-offs.

2 Your shared goal

At the end of **Round 3**, achieve **wellbeing (W) 6+, equity (E) 6+, trust (T) 6+, four districts revealed and at least one coin left**. Meet all five to win together. Even if you miss the target, explain what your decisions taught you.

3 Set up the board

Put all six district cards in their named places, **content face down**; the backs show public district names. Set W, E and T to **4**, round to **1** and shared money to **12 coins**. Shuffle policies and display **four face up**; shuffle events face down. Assign roles; **shuffle private priority cards and deal one randomly to each player**, independently of roles. Read privately; set extras aside. With four players, chair also handles evidence and finance handles enterprise; with five, chair also handles enterprise. Bring four small markers, coins or scrap paper for money, and a pen.

4 Know the five card sets

ROLE: your responsibility; everyone still has one vote.
DISTRICT: hidden local needs and tag bonuses or penalties.
POLICY: a possible purchase, its cost, tag and base effects.
EVENT: a surprise drawn at the start of each round.
PRIVATE PRIORITY: a confidential constraint, goal and red line. A red line requires your **NO vote**; others may outvote you. Bargain without showing the card. No veto or bonus points.

5 Play these steps in each of the three rounds

A. Money and event. Round 1 uses the starting 12. Add **5 coins** before Rounds 2 and 3. Draw one event and follow it.
B. Optional research. Pay **1 coin** to reveal one chosen hidden district; buy up to two actions. A majority approves; a tie means no purchase. You may skip research.
C. Discuss and vote. Choose one of the four displayed policies and one district. It must be affordable before voting. More than half of **all** players must say yes; ties and abstentions do not pass.
D. Resolve. If approved: pay, reveal its target if hidden, apply base effects, then matching district tag effects. Record the ID/tag on the board or paper; keep the adopted card. If rejected: pay nothing and discard it. After either result, refill the display while cards remain.
E. Repeat or close. Normally allow **two proposals per round**, including rejected ones; you may pass. Finish a vote already underway if time expires, then pass. Keep projects and unspent coins, discard the event and advance the round. Stop after Round 3.

6 Three ideas that make the rules clear

Research buys advance knowledge. Without it, you can still adopt a policy, but pay before revealing the target; you cannot cancel after seeing its needs.
Any district can receive a policy. If no district tag matches, apply only the base effects. A CARE health hub in South Gardens gets its CARE bonus; in Northbank it gets only the base benefit.
Effects happen once. Apply signed effects in order; keep W/E/T between 0 and 10. Projects stay for event checks but give no repeated benefits. Never reshuffle or remove projects. For a forced payment you cannot cover, pay all remaining money and lose one trust per unpaid coin. A proposal withdrawn before voting uses no slot. Cards can override normal rules.

7 Debrief together

Reveal private priorities. Use the debrief page: **What changed after evidence? Who benefited or was overlooked? What would you do differently?** Explain your reasoning, not just your final scores.

THE MISSING MAP

EVENT > OPTIONAL RESEARCH > DISCUSS AND VOTE > PAY AND APPLY > RECORD

3 ROUNDS | ONE CITY | SHARED DECISIONS

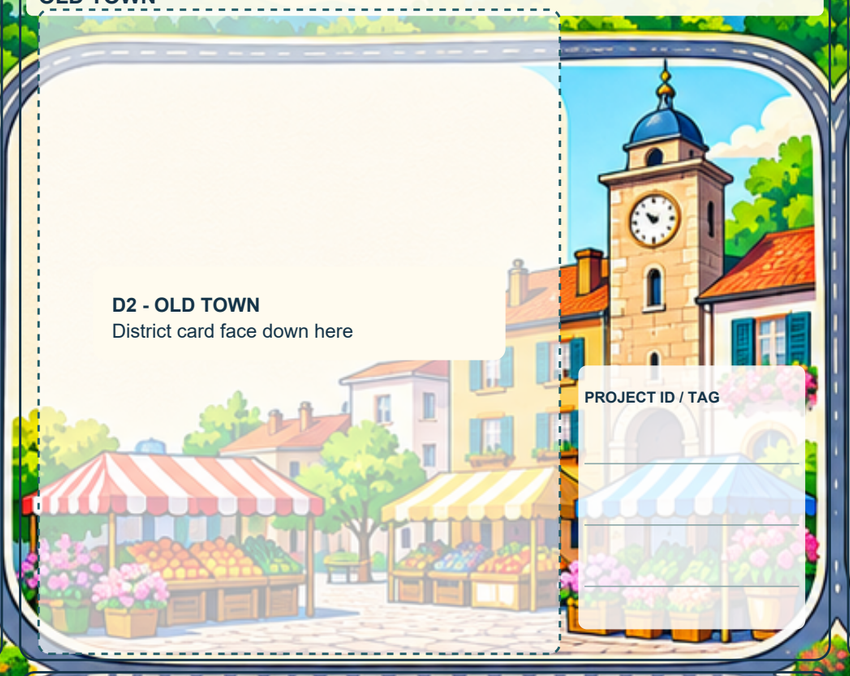
NORTHBANK



D1 - NORTHBANK
District card face down here

PROJECT ID / TAG

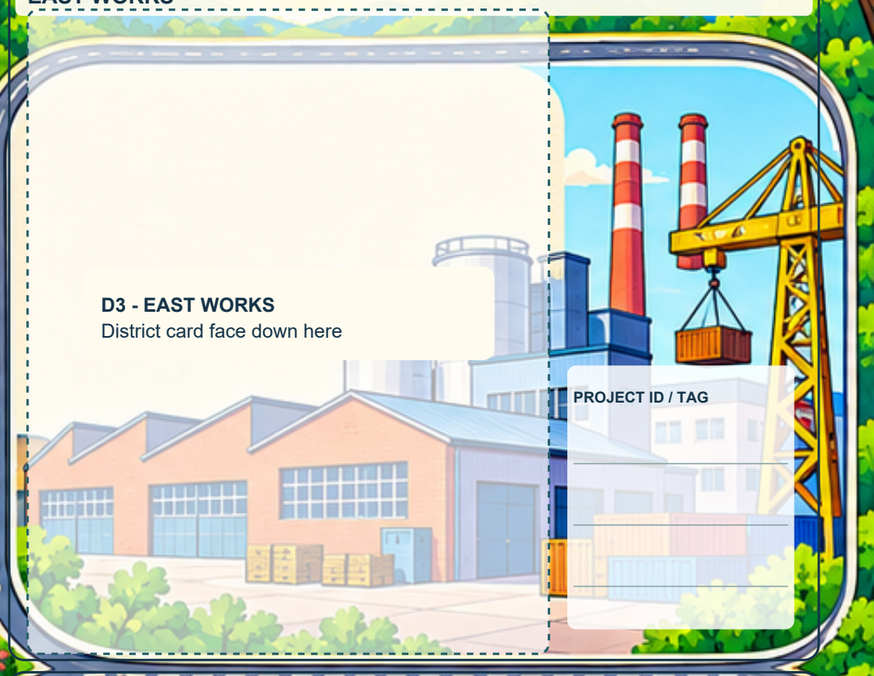
OLD TOWN



D2 - OLD TOWN
District card face down here

PROJECT ID / TAG

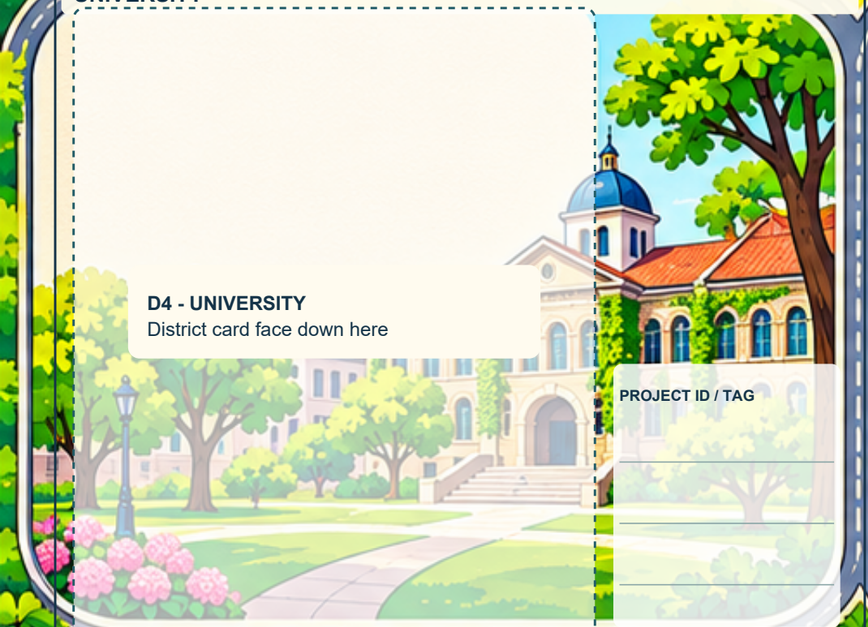
EAST WORKS



D3 - EAST WORKS
District card face down here

PROJECT ID / TAG

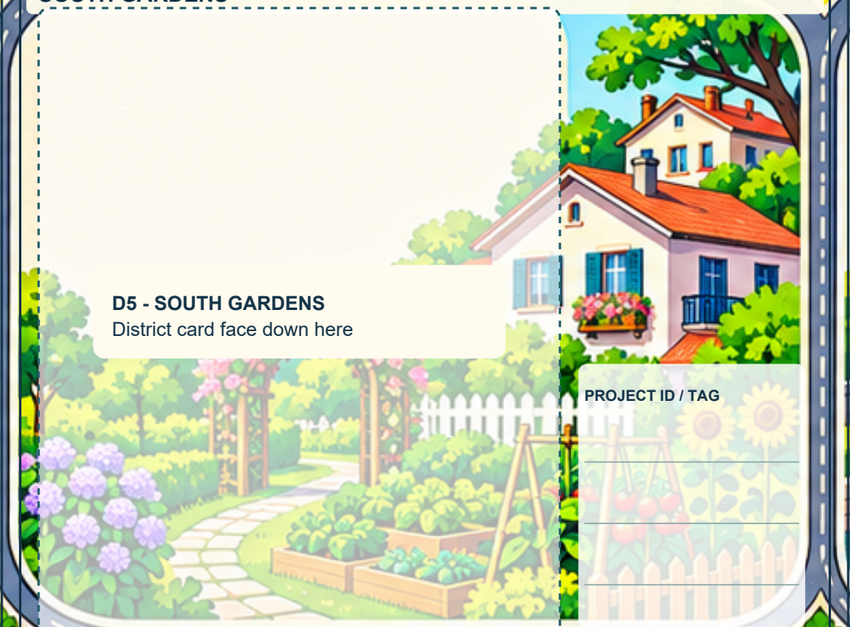
UNIVERSITY



D4 - UNIVERSITY
District card face down here

PROJECT ID / TAG

SOUTH GARDENS



D5 - SOUTH GARDENS
District card face down here

PROJECT ID / TAG

RIVERSIDE



D6 - RIVERSIDE
District card face down here

PROJECT ID / TAG

WELLBEING	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
EQUITY	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TRUST	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

ROUND

1 | 2 | 3

Stop after Round 3

SHARED TREASURY

Start 12 coins

Add 5 before Rounds 2 and 3

AFTER ROUND 3

W 6+ | E 6+ | T 6+

4+ districts revealed | 1+ coin left

ROLE R1

Council chair

Keep negotiations focused and call the vote. Rotate the first speaker each round. You have one vote, like everyone else.

Public role • No special power. Your private priority is a separate card.

THE MISSING MAP

ROLE R2

Community advocate

Ask whose needs are absent. Invite players to explain distributional effects. You have one vote.

Public role • No special power. Your private priority is a separate card.

THE MISSING MAP

ROLE R3

Finance officer

Track treasury and announce affordability before each vote. You have one vote; you cannot veto spending.

Public role • No special power. Your private priority is a separate card.

THE MISSING MAP

ROLE R4

Public services lead

Track wellbeing and explain service pressures. You have one vote.

Public role • No special power. Your private priority is a separate card.

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



ROLE CARDS

EVERY VOICE COUNTS

THE MISSING MAP



ROLE CARDS

EVERY VOICE COUNTS

THE MISSING MAP



ROLE CARDS

EVERY VOICE COUNTS

THE MISSING MAP



ROLE CARDS

EVERY VOICE COUNTS

ROLE R5

Local enterprise representative

Raise questions about jobs, delivery and local businesses. Track the round. You have one vote.

Public role • No special power. Your private priority is a separate card.

THE MISSING MAP 

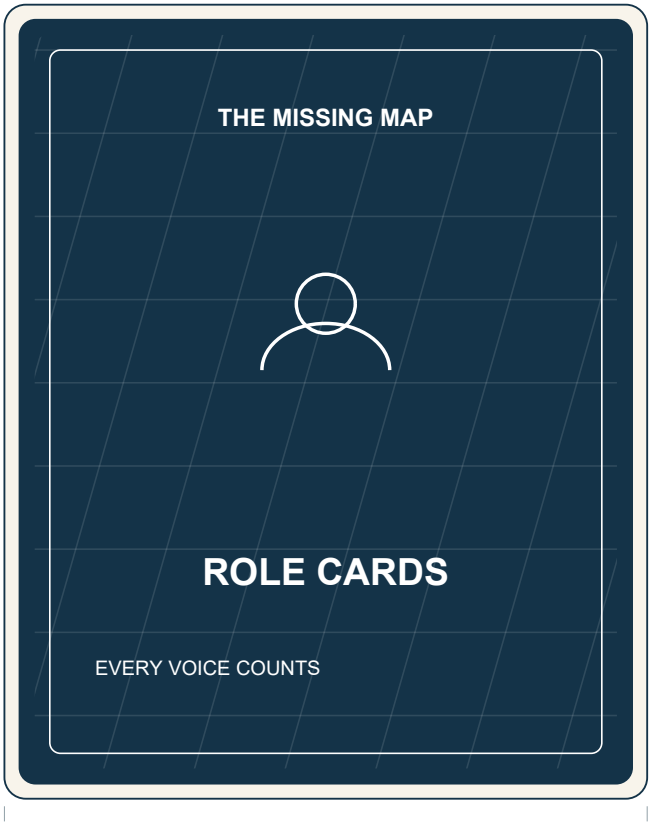
ROLE R6

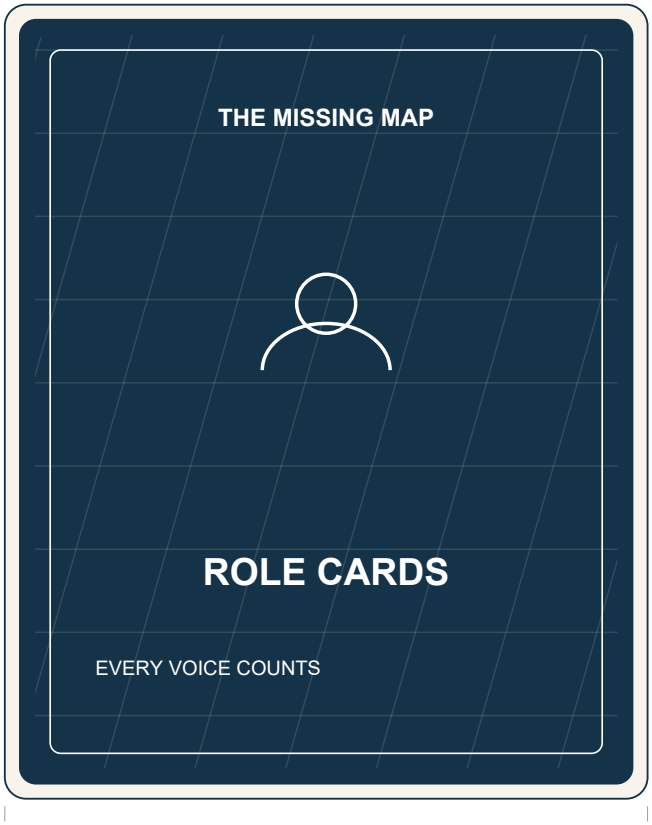
Evidence adviser

Manage the hidden district cards without reading them. Track equity and trust. You have one vote. No privileged access to evidence.

Public role • No special power. Your private priority is a separate card.

THE MISSING MAP 


THE MISSING MAP
ROLE CARDS
EVERY VOICE COUNTS


THE MISSING MAP
ROLE CARDS
EVERY VOICE COUNTS

DISTRICT D1

Northbank

Heat-exposed streets

When a GREEN policy is adopted here: gain an additional W +1 and E +1. When a BUILD policy is adopted here: T -1.

Older tenants face heat stress; construction disruption is costly.

Keep face down until researched or targeted by an adopted policy. Effects apply once to each new matching project.

THE MISSING MAP

DISTRICT D2

Old Town

Displacement pressure

When a BUILD policy is adopted here: E -2 and T -1. When a CARE policy is adopted here: gain an additional E +1.

Investment can raise rents; support networks are already stretched.

Keep face down until researched or targeted by an adopted policy. Effects apply once to each new matching project.

THE MISSING MAP

DISTRICT D3

East Works

Shift workers

When a MOVE policy is adopted here: gain an additional W +1 and E +1. When a GREEN policy is adopted here: treasury -1.

Late shifts need reliable travel; contaminated soil makes planting expensive.

Keep face down until researched or targeted by an adopted policy. Effects apply once to each new matching project.

THE MISSING MAP

DISTRICT D4

University

Digital exclusion

When a DIGITAL policy is adopted here: E -2. When a CARE policy is adopted here: gain an additional T +1.

The district includes low-income households without reliable internet access.

Keep face down until researched or targeted by an adopted policy. Effects apply once to each new matching project.

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



DISTRICT CARDS

Old Town

THE MISSING MAP



DISTRICT CARDS

Northbank

THE MISSING MAP



DISTRICT CARDS

University

THE MISSING MAP



DISTRICT CARDS

East Works

DISTRICT D5

South Gardens

Service shortage

When a CARE policy is adopted here: gain an additional W +1 and E +1. When a BUILD policy is adopted here: gain an additional W +1.

A growing population has outpaced services and affordable housing.

Keep face down until researched or targeted by an adopted policy. Effects apply once to each new matching project.

THE MISSING MAP

DISTRICT D6

Riverside

Flood exposure

When a GREEN policy is adopted here: gain an additional W +1 and T +1. When a BUILD policy is adopted here: W -2.

Flood risk is poorly recorded in the city's older planning data.

Keep face down until researched or targeted by an adopted policy. Effects apply once to each new matching project.

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



DISTRICT CARDS

Riverside

THE MISSING MAP



DISTRICT CARDS

South Gardens

POLICY P01

Frequent bus routes

Tag: MOVE | Upfront cost: 4 coins

Base effect: W +2; E +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Whose journeys become easier?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P02

Safe walking crossings

Tag: MOVE | Upfront cost: 2 coins

Base effect: W +1; E +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who feels safe using the street?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P03

Night shuttle pilot

Tag: MOVE | Upfront cost: 3 coins

Base effect: W +1; E +1; T +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Can shift workers reach essential services?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P04

Community health hub

Tag: CARE | Upfront cost: 4 coins

Base effect: W +2; E +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: How will residents influence opening hours?

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

POLICY P05

Mobile advice service

Tag: CARE | Upfront cost: 2 coins

Base effect: E +1; T +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who currently struggles to claim support?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P06

Youth and care centre

Tag: CARE | Upfront cost: 3 coins

Base effect: W +1; E +2.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who carries unpaid caring work?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P07

Affordable housing block

Tag: BUILD | Upfront cost: 5 coins

Base effect: W +2; E +2; T -1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who can stay in the area after development?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P08

Market redevelopment

Tag: BUILD | Upfront cost: 3 coins

Base effect: W +2; treasury +1; E -1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who gains from higher land values?

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

POLICY P09

Mixed-use infill

Tag: BUILD | Upfront cost: 4 coins

Base effect: W +2; E +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: What infrastructure must grow alongside housing?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P10

Shade and street trees

Tag: GREEN | Upfront cost: 2 coins

Base effect: W +1; T +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who has the least protection from extreme heat?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P11

Floodable park

Tag: GREEN | Upfront cost: 4 coins

Base effect: W +2; T +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Whose land or access is affected?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P12

Home insulation grants

Tag: GREEN | Upfront cost: 3 coins

Base effect: W +1; E +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Can renters access the scheme?

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

POLICY P13

Online services portal

Tag: DIGITAL | Upfront cost: 2 coins

Base effect: W +1; treasury +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: What alternatives exist for offline residents?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P14

Automated eligibility checks

Tag: DIGITAL | Upfront cost: 2 coins

Base effect: treasury +3; E -1; T -1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who can challenge a mistaken decision?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P15

Open spending dashboard

Tag: DIGITAL | Upfront cost: 1 coins

Base effect: T +2.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Does publishing data make it understandable?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P16

Resident assembly

Tag: VOICE | Upfront cost: 2 coins

Base effect: E +1; T +2.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who has time and support to attend?

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

THE MISSING MAP



POLICY CARDS

TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

POLICY P17

Small neighbourhood grants

Tag: VOICE | Upfront cost: 3 coins

Base effect: W +1; E +1; T +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Who decides what counts as a local priority?

THE MISSING MAP

POLICY P18

Participatory audit

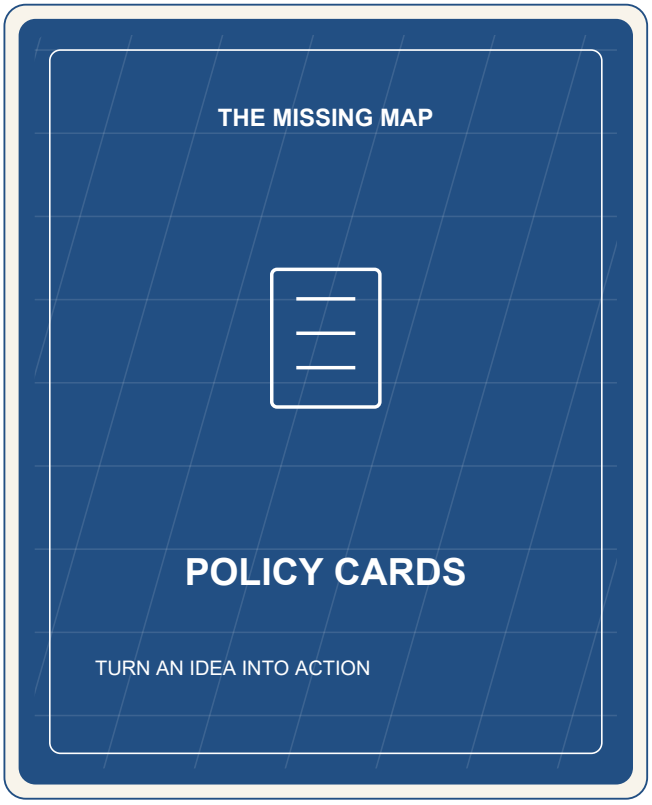
Tag: VOICE | Upfront cost: 1 coins

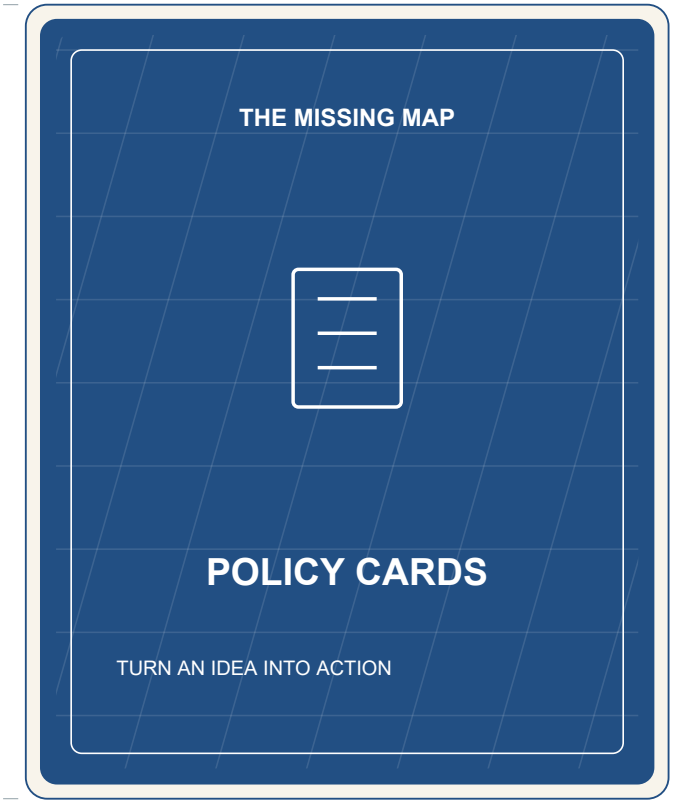
Base effect: T +1; treasury +1.

Choose one district. After paying, reveal it if hidden; apply base effects, then its matching tag effects.

Discuss: Can residents change a decision after reviewing it?

THE MISSING MAP


THE MISSING MAP
POLICY CARDS
TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION


THE MISSING MAP
POLICY CARDS
TURN AN IDEA INTO ACTION

EVENT E01

Heat alert

W -1. If at least one GREEN project is on the board, ignore this loss.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP

EVENT E02

Regional grant

Treasury +3. No conditions.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP

EVENT E03

Revenue shortfall

Pay treasury 2.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP

EVENT E04

Public frustration

T -1. If E is 6 or higher, ignore this loss.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

EVENT E05

Service pressure

W -1. If at least one CARE project is on the board, ignore this loss.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT E06

Information request

Reveal one hidden district for free, chosen by majority vote. A tied vote is decided by the chair. If all are revealed, T +1 instead.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT E07

Flash flooding

If Riverside has a GREEN project, T +1. Otherwise W -2.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT E08

Independent review

If at least four districts are revealed, T +1. Otherwise T -1.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

EVENT E09

Cost inflation

The first adopted policy this round costs 1 extra coin. Rejected proposals do not use this effect.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT E10

Community volunteers

W +1. If a VOICE project is on the board, also E +1.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT E11

Access complaint

If a DIGITAL project is on the board and no CARE project is on the board, E -1 and T -1. Otherwise no effect.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT E12

Delivery delay

Only one policy may be proposed this round. Research allowance stays the same.

Draw at the beginning of a round, after income. Payments use the unpaid-coin rule. Project checks refer to adopted policies. Discard at round end.

THE MISSING MAP



THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

THE MISSING MAP



EVENT CARDS

THE CITY DOES NOT STAND STILL

PRIVATE PRIORITY A1

Protect the emergency reserve

Constraint: You face pressure to keep emergency money available for unexpected costs.

Priority: Finish Round 3 with at least 5 coins in the shared treasury.

Red line: Vote NO to voluntary research or a policy if its upfront payment would leave fewer than 2 coins. Count the payment before any later refund or benefit.

Keep private. Your red line controls your vote, not the team. No veto or bonus points. Reveal after play.

THE MISSING MAP

PRIVATE PRIORITY A2

Spread investment fairly

Constraint: You represent residents worried that a few districts will receive all the investment.

Priority: Place projects in at least 4 different districts by the end of Round 3.

Red line: Vote NO to a policy in a district that already has 2 projects while any other district has none.

Keep private. Your red line controls your vote, not the team. No veto or bonus points. Reveal after play.

THE MISSING MAP

PRIVATE PRIORITY A3

Evidence before commitment

Constraint: You must defend your decisions to a review panel that expects local evidence before spending.

Priority: Research at least 2 districts before their first project is proposed.

Red line: Vote NO to any policy whose target district is still hidden when the vote begins. Other players may still approve it.

Keep private. Your red line controls your vote, not the team. No veto or bonus points. Reveal after play.

THE MISSING MAP

PRIVATE PRIORITY A4

Deliver something now

Constraint: Residents are demanding visible action rather than another round of studies.

Priority: Secure at least 1 adopted project in Round 1 and at least 3 projects by the end of Round 2.

Red line: Vote NO to a second paid research action in the same round. You may support the first; free reveals do not count.

Keep private. Your red line controls your vote, not the team. No veto or bonus points. Reveal after play.

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



PRIVATE
PRIORITY CARDS

WHAT WILL YOU ADVOCATE FOR

THE MISSING MAP



PRIVATE
PRIORITY CARDS

WHAT WILL YOU ADVOCATE FOR

THE MISSING MAP



PRIVATE
PRIORITY CARDS

WHAT WILL YOU ADVOCATE FOR

THE MISSING MAP



PRIVATE
PRIORITY CARDS

WHAT WILL YOU ADVOCATE FOR

PRIVATE PRIORITY A5

Protect public confidence

Constraint: A recent controversy has made your supporters sensitive to policies that openly reduce trust.

Priority: Adopt at least 1 VOICE policy and finish Round 3 with trust at least 7.

Red line: Vote NO to a policy whose printed base effects include a trust loss. Check base effects only, not unknown district effects.

Keep private. Your red line controls your vote, not the team. No veto or bonus points. Reveal after play.

THE MISSING MAP

PRIVATE PRIORITY A6

Services before construction

Constraint: You face pressure to show that essential services are in place before starting new construction.

Priority: Adopt at least 1 CARE policy and at least 1 MOVE policy by the end of Round 3.

Red line: Vote NO to any BUILD policy until at least 1 CARE project has been adopted anywhere on the board.

Keep private. Your red line controls your vote, not the team. No veto or bonus points. Reveal after play.

THE MISSING MAP

THE MISSING MAP



PRIVATE
PRIORITY CARDS

WHAT WILL YOU ADVOCATE FOR

THE MISSING MAP



PRIVATE
PRIORITY CARDS

WHAT WILL YOU ADVOCATE FOR

What did your city decisions teach you

Discuss for 15-20 minutes after Round 3. Reveal private priorities first.

Team _____ Date _____

FINAL W ____ E ____ T ____ TREASURY ____ COINS

Districts revealed ____ / 6 Projects in ____ / 6 districts Shared win? YES / NO

1 Evidence and uncertainty

Which decision changed after a district was revealed? If you skipped research, was the risk worth taking?

2 Winners and people left out

Who benefited most? Which district or group received little attention? Did a good citywide score hide an unequal outcome?

3 Policy and place

Give one example of a policy working differently because of its district. What does this suggest about copying a policy from another city?

4 Constraints priorities and red lines

What did your private constraint change? Did a red line require a NO vote? What compromise did you seek, and did the team approve something you opposed?

5 Money time and trade-offs

Which worthwhile choice did you postpone or reject? What would you change if you had one more round, and what would it cost?

6 From the game to real policy

Which numerical effect seemed too simple? What real evidence would you need before claiming a policy improves wellbeing, equity or trust?

ONE SENTENCE TO TAKE AWAY

Next time, our team would _____ because _____