CityGen v1.5 Help

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New

Creates a new, blank workspace with default parameters.

Open

Opens a previously saved CityGen city.

Save

Saves your current CityGen city.

Save As...

Allows you to specify a new filename for your city.

Export to POV 3.0

Creates a POVRay script file to render your city from.

Recent File List

The last few files you've opened or saved with CityGen.

Exit

Quits CityGen.

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The Edit Menu

Edit Street Layout

Displays the Street Layout dialog, where you can edit various parameters.

Edit City Profiles

Displays the City Profiles dialog, where you can edit the basic profiles of the city.

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New Street Layout

Randomly generates a new street layout based on the parameters in the 'Street Layout' dialog.

New Buildings

Randomly generates new buildings based on the parameters in the 'City Profiles' dialog.

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The View Menu

Rotate Left

Allows you to rotate the view to the left by one step.

Rotate Right

Allows you to rotate the view to the right by one step.

Select View

Allows you to directly select which view to see.

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The Help Menu

Help Topics

Displays this help.   I think you must've figured that out by now.

About CityGen

Displays a screen with information about CityGen.

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Guide to Instant Cities

Creating a city with CityGen is as easy!   It takes as little as four clicks:

1.   Click on the 'Generate Streets' toolbar button.

2.   Click on the 'Generate Buildings' toolbar button.

3.   Click on the 'Export to POV' toolbar button.

4.   In the Export dialog,   enter the filename and click 'Save.'

Then simply use POVRay to render your file.

If you are not a 'toolbar person,' you can instead use the menus as follows:

1.   Pull down the Generate menu and select 'New Street Layout.'

2.   Pull down the Generate menu and select 'New Buildings.'

3.   Pull down the File menu and select 'Export to POVRay 3.0.'

4.   In the Export dialog,   enter the filename and click 'Save.'

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Editing the City Profiles

The City Profiles dialog can be opened by clicking the 'Edit Profiles' toolbar icon, or by pulling down the Edit menu and choosing the 'Edit City Profiles' option.

If you wish, you can keep this dialog open while you work.

The profile sliders represent a generalization of what the city might look like if viewed from the side.   For instance, the North-South Profile is a general profile that the city would follow (discounting randomness) if viewed from the East or the West. It is called North-South, meaning that the left-hand side is North and the right-hand side is South.   The West-East Profile is similar.

To change the profile, simply click on a slider and drag it up or down.

To see the effect that moving a slider has on your city, click on the large 'Generate Buildings' button in the middle of the dialog.   You may also choose the New Buildings option from the Generate menu or click on the toolbar button while the Profiles dialog is open.

The Shift Profiles arrows shift the profile to the right or left by one.   This is useful when you have shifted the city's center in the Street Layout Dialog.

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Editing the Street Layout

The street layout dialog can be opened by clicking the 'Edit Streets' toolbar icon, or by pulling down the Edit menu and choosing the 'Edit Street Layout' option.

If you wish, you can keep this dialog open while you work, however, it is quite large, so unless you have a very high resolution (1024x768 or higher), I don't recommend it.

The Street Layout Dialog represents an aerial view of the city.

The controls at the lower right of this dialog box allow you to edit certain parameters that define how your city is created.

The first box allows you to edit the total size of the city.   A good way to think of this is like city limits.   The longest streets will extend no further than this point.   The maximum size is 64 units by 64 units.

The second box allows you to edit the 'center size' of the city.   The center is like the main 'downtown' area, and everything around it is like the surrounding area.   For a perfectly square city, set the center size and the total size to be exactly the same.

The last box allows you to move the 'center' around, so that your cities don't always have to be symmetrical.

Press the 'Generate Streets' button to see the effects of your changes.   You can keep pressing the Generate Streets button until you get a layout you like.

At the top right corner of the dialog is the edit box.   Here, you can edit any square in your city.   Simply click on the square in the aerial view, and then click the appropriate button to change it.   For instance, if you want to add a building, click on a square, then click the 'Building' button.   To set (or reset) the height of a building, move the slider up or down, and then click the 'Set Building Height' button.

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1.   Work on the Street Layout first, THEN worry about buildings.   When you re-generate the streets, you lose your buildings.   Make sure you are happy with the Street Layout before you mess with the buildings, and you'll have a less frustrating time.

2. When you create a Street Layout or overall city that you particularly like, Save it (under the File menu).   If you don't, when you exit CityGen (EVEN if you Exported it), your city is gone.   For instance, I personally created a few cities of different sizes for testing.   That way, when I open CityGen, I merely have to click Open, choose my file, then export it.   I can also make similar cities by generating new streets or buildings, but the parameters I like (Profiles, Center Size, etc.) can be reused again and again.

3. Add a height field behind your city.   Or, create a height field with a flat spot, and put your city there.   Trust me, it looks cool.

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The Export Dialog lets you select a few last-minute options before exporting to POVRay.

The first option, in the upper left corner of the Export Dialog, is the texture option.   You can choose either Brick Textures, which will cover the buildings with brick and/or steel-n-glass, Solid Colors+Reflective Textures, which will cover the buildings with either solid colors (instead of bricks) or steel-n-glass, or Solid Colors Only, which will use only solid colors to cover the buildings.   This last choice is useful for speeding up test-renders.

The other option is the time of day, selectable by the slider in the upper left corner of the Export Dialog.   The time of day affects the position of the light source and the color of the sky and clouds.   The sun always rises in the east and sets in the west (like real life).

When finished, type a filename, and press Save.