Build a home away from home

THE CITY-BUILDER GETS A MUCH-NEEDED MOBILE UPGRADE

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Pocket City
ANDROID AND IOS

Since the release of the original *SimCity* in 1989, city builders have held a special place in many a gamer's heart. The *SimCity* franchise itself has seen no fewer than 13 versions, spawning other popular titles such as *The Sims*, while competitor games such as *Cities: Skylines* have built up loyal followings of their own.

In essence, every city builder is the same. Take an empty piece of land and build it into a sprawling metropolis, all while dealing with the headaches that come with managing an ever-growing urban jungle. Most are centred around balancing a basic residential, commercial and industrial (RCI) ratio, and all have a very demanding population, some of whom will object to living next to giant power plant, for example.

CELL CITY

Sadly, city builders have not thrived as mobile games. *SimCity BuildIt* is no doubt the most popular, with tens of millions of downloads, but it's more a timer-based loot-box machine than a city builder as most will remember it. Enter *Pocket City*, a mobile city builder that promises to go back to the genre's humble beginnings.

Created by Codebrew Games, a one-man studio in Canada, *Pocket City* has been a work in progress for about two years. At the time of writing, the game was still in closed alpha, but developer Bobby Li has set his sights on a mid-2018 launch date. There will be a free (ad-supported version) and a paid (R60) version. Oh, and there will be no micro-transactions or coin/gem currencies in the game at all. Hooray!

HOME RUN

Pocket City looks incredible. The art style is reminiscent of the classic city builders, and it begins with an excellent tutorial. As with some of my favourite city builders, I often found myself not actually playing the game so much as just scrolling around, watching the hustle and bustle of the city below. I had a good giggle when I saw the police foiling an attempted purse snatching outside a movie theatre I had just built.

You're free to create your city as you please, catering to the RCI demand, and gaining access to more sophisticated city services (fire stations, hospitals and stadiums) as you level up. It's basic, but it works, and it's truly a joy to watch your city grow and evolve. *Pocket City* will be a welcome addition to the home screen of any mobile gamer, and I can't think of a better way to while away a few minutes of my morning commute each day, carrying Jonathanville everywhere I go.

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