



Building Manhattan for Marvel's Spider-Man

It's Still Just Level Design



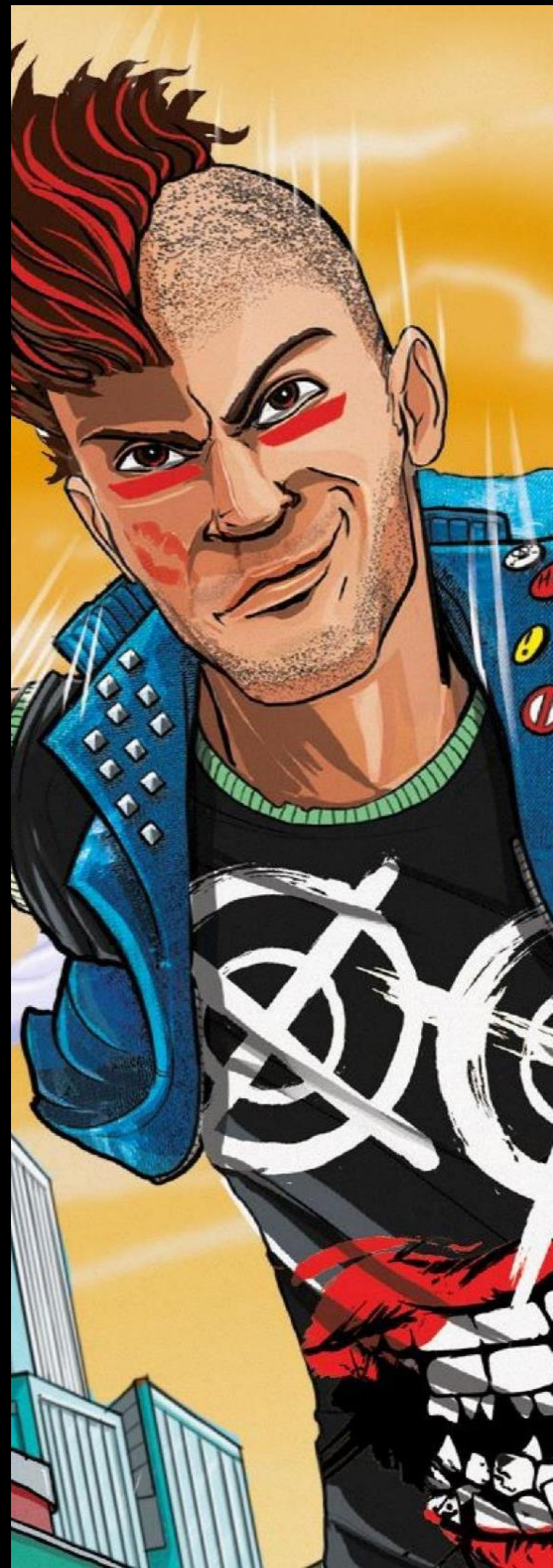
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RESISTANCE
FALL OF MAN

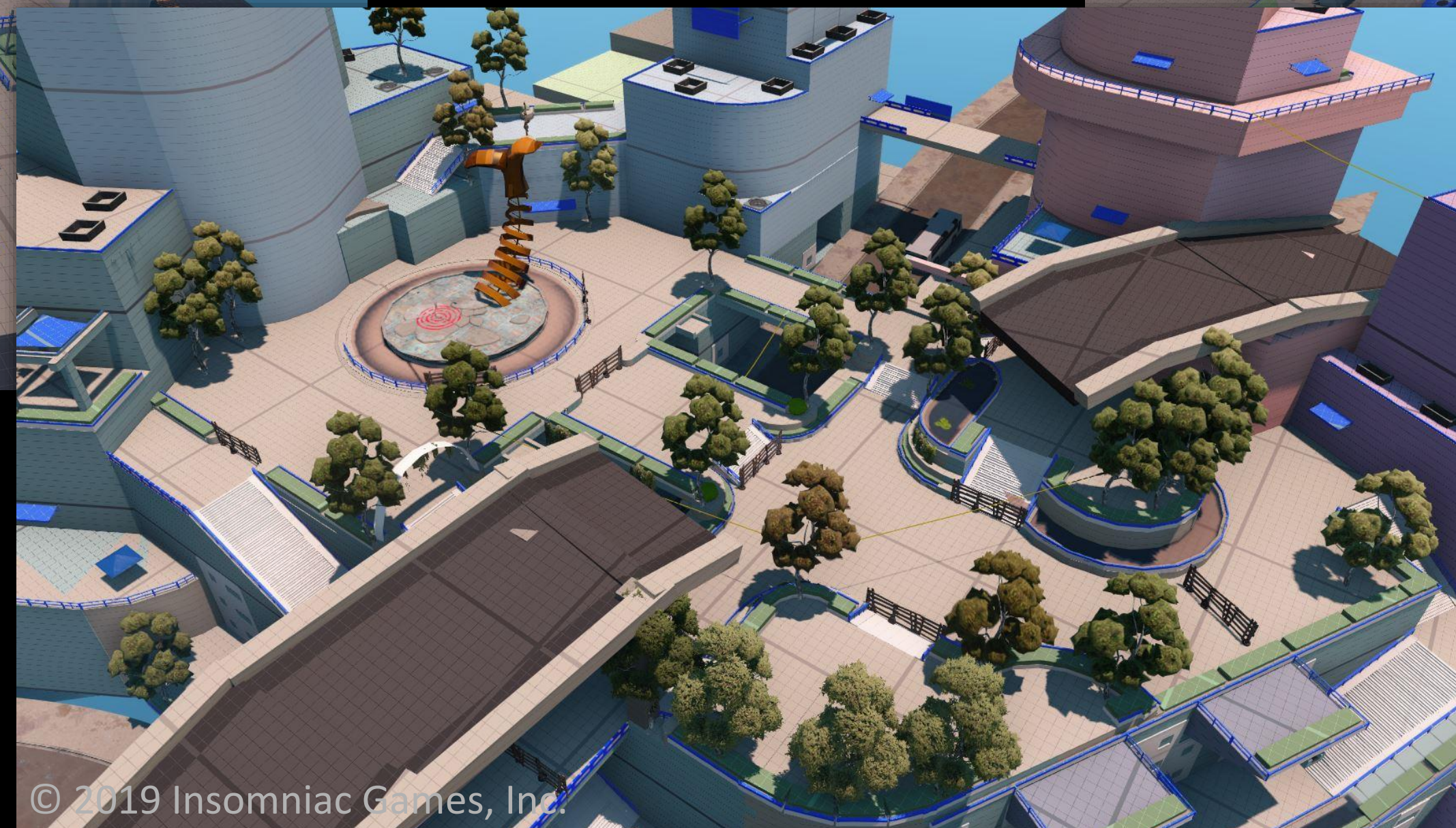
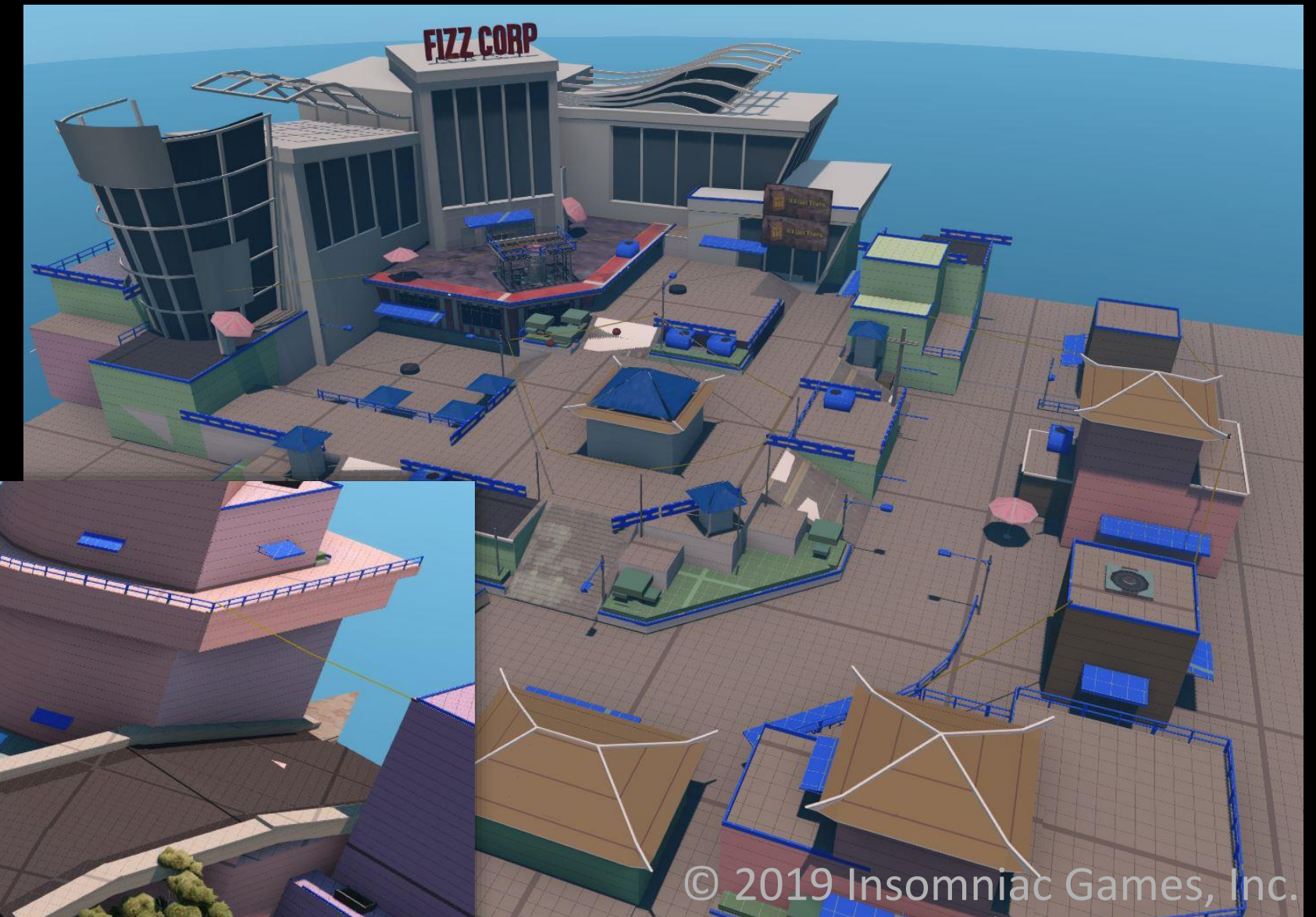
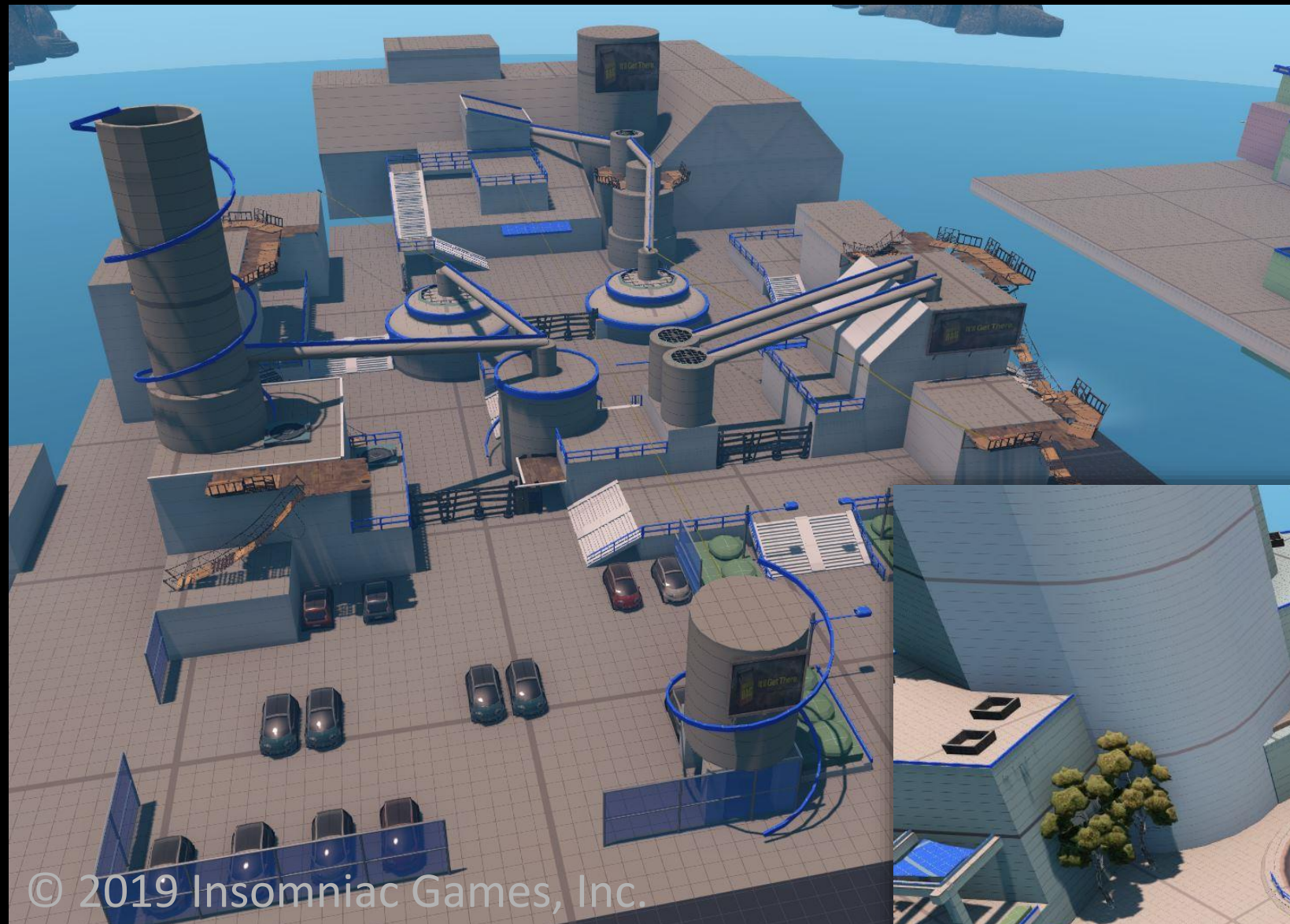


**SUNSET
OVERDRIVE**

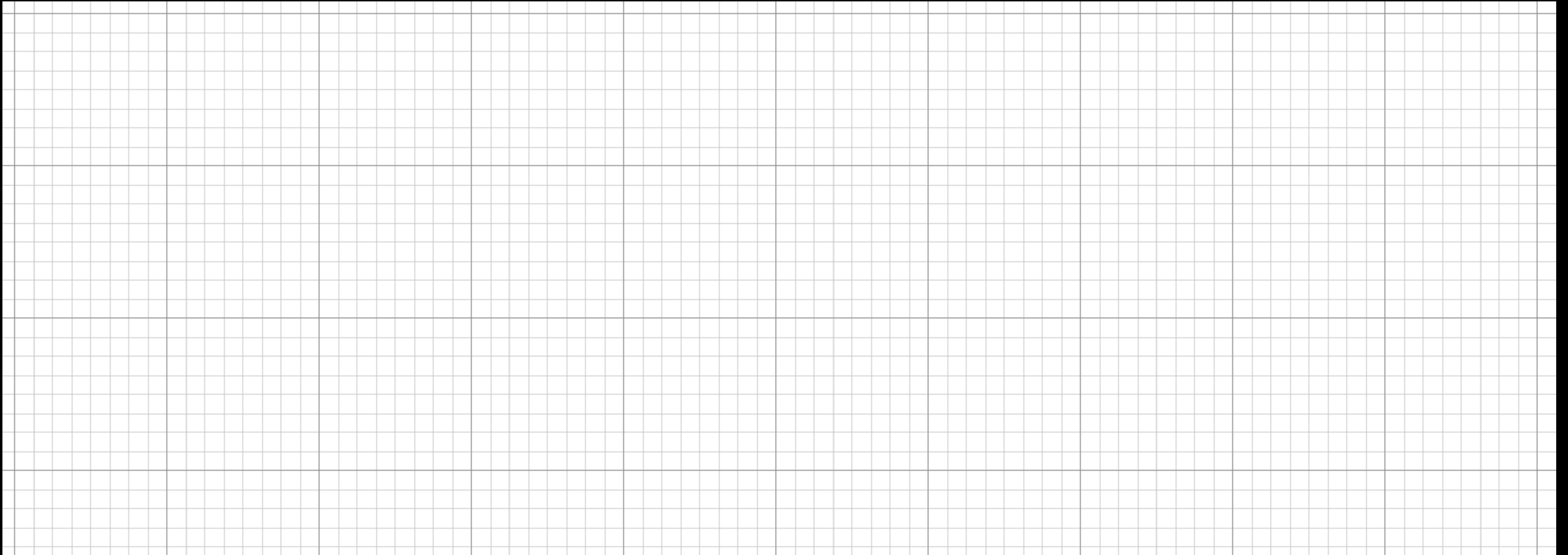


MARVEL
SPIDER-MAN

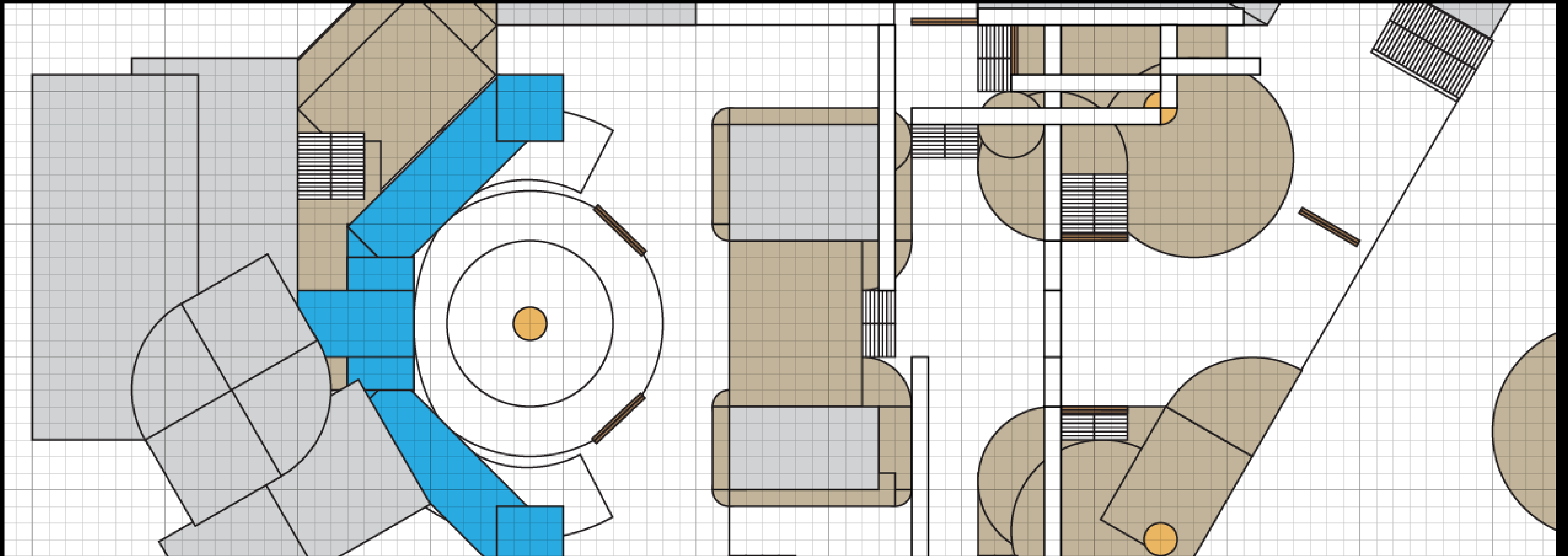
Pushed by Rapid Design



Step By Step Level Design



Step By Step Level Design



Step By Step Level Design



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Step By Step Level Design







The Level Design Process

How to Design a Level In 6 Easy Steps

1. Define

2. Research

3. Experiment

4. Confirm

5. Execute

6. Reflect

And 27 Sub Steps

1. Define

- a. Define High Level Goals
- b. Form goals around important questions
- c. When in doubt go big
- d. Align your goals
- e. Rank your goals

2. Research

- a. Do the obvious research
- b. Go beyond reference images
- c. Learn from the past
- d. Play the games
- e. Let the research work for you

3. Experiment

- a. Start by Sketching
- b. Identify what you need to prove
- c. Isolate ideas into controlled experiments
- d. Be agile
- e. Get in the space

4. Confirm

- a. Verify your goals
- b. Reality check your space
- c. Check technical constraints
- d. Share your vision
- e. Only move forward with confidence

5. Execute

- a. Build the level ;)
- b. Bring into metric
- c. Complete gameplay
- d. Test and Iterate
- e. Gather feedback

6. Reflect

- a. Acknowledge what you could do better next time
- b. It's never too late to do the right thing

An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely New York City, featuring several prominent skyscrapers. A semi-transparent dark blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, serving as a background for the text.

Step 1: Define

Define High Level Goals

- Thematic Goals
 - Presentation
 - Narrative Context
- Gameplay Goals
 - Function
 - Interactivity

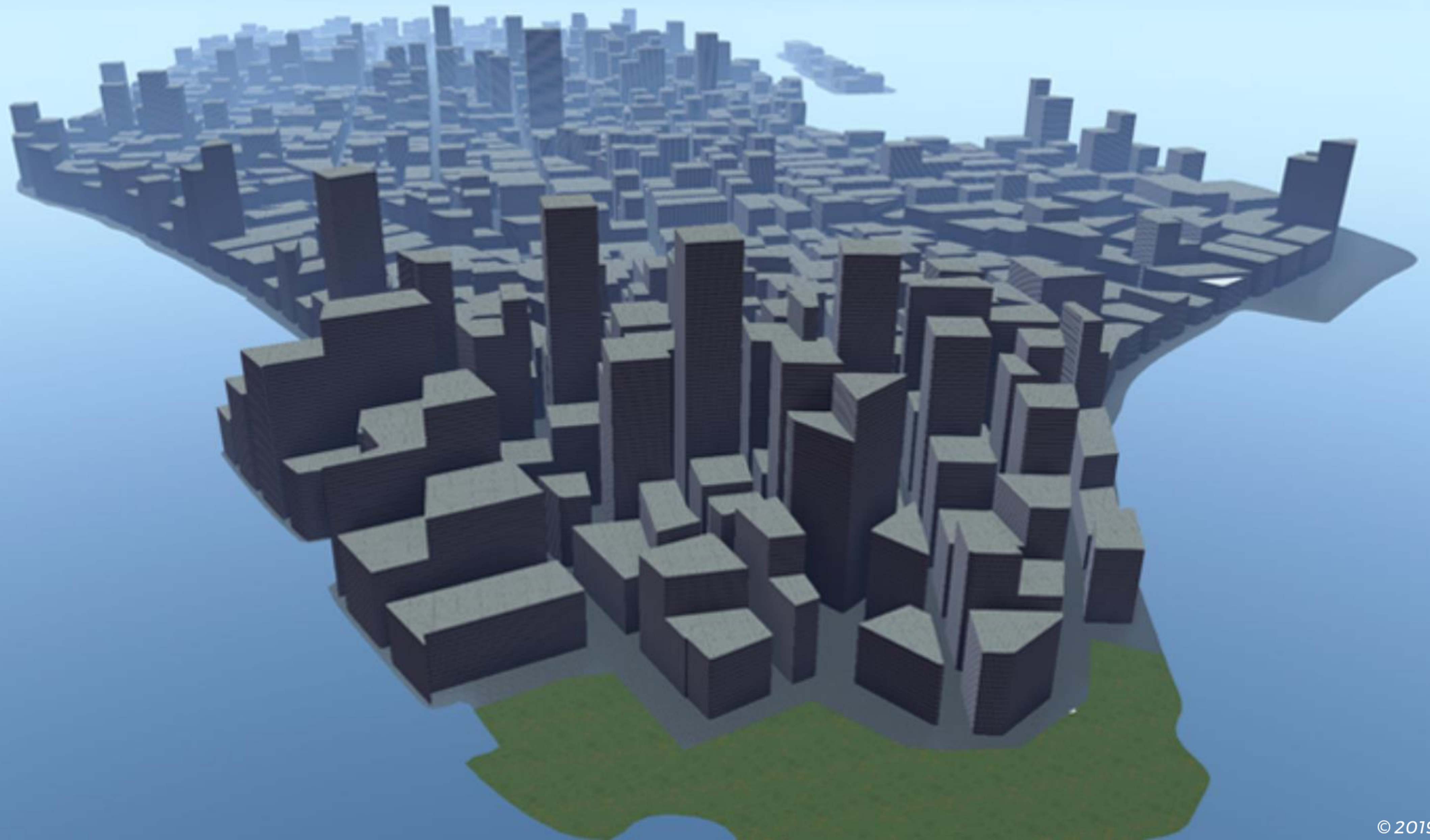


Build Goals Around Key Questions

- What story do you want to tell?
- What emotions do you want to feel?
- What surprises do you want to find?
- What challenges do you want to overcome?
- What makes this special?

When In Doubt Go Big







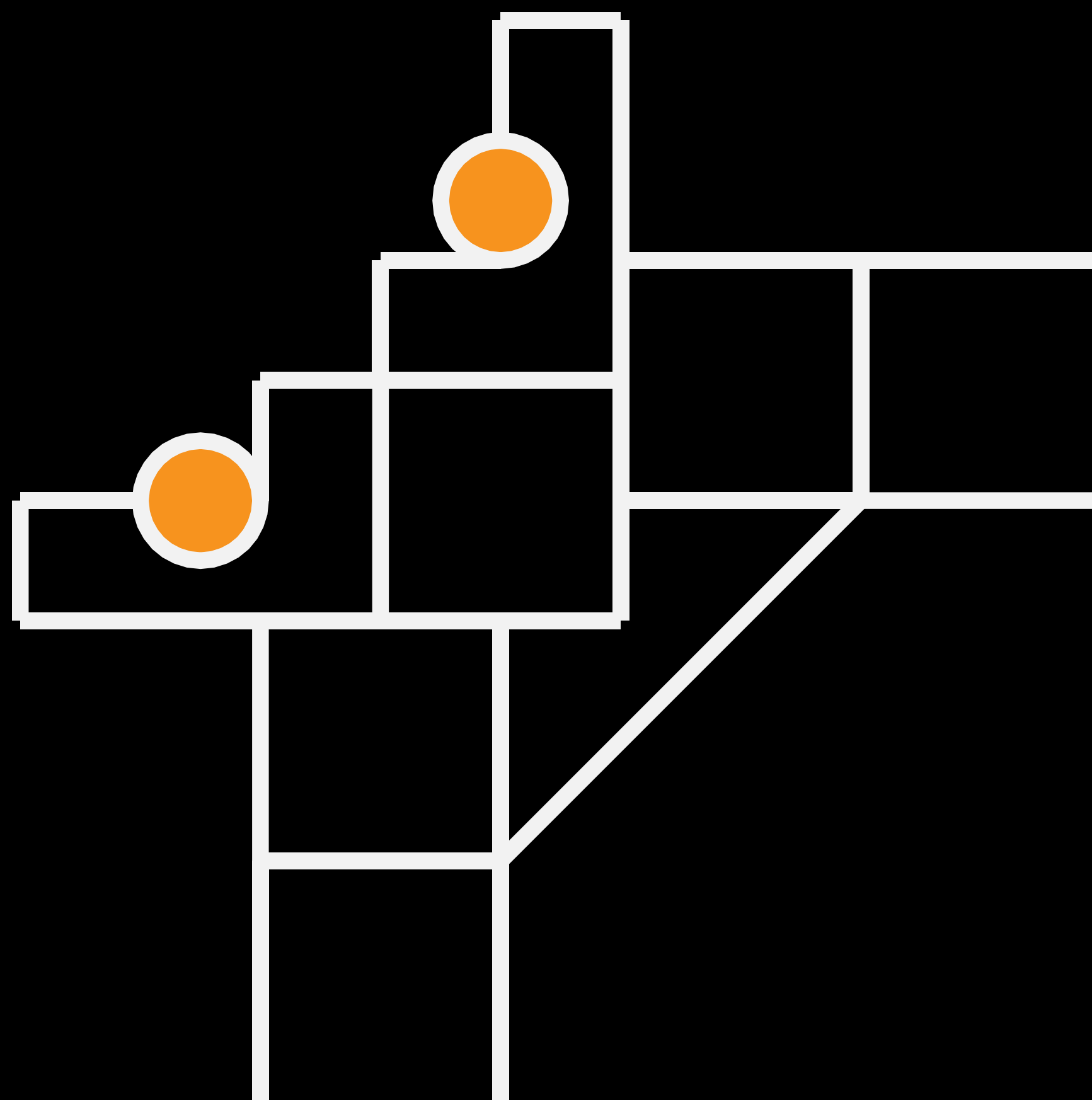
Align Your Goals

- Do thematic and gameplay goals support each other?
- Does theme guide the gameplay?
- Does gameplay invoke the theme?
- Unresolved conflicts between goals can be costly

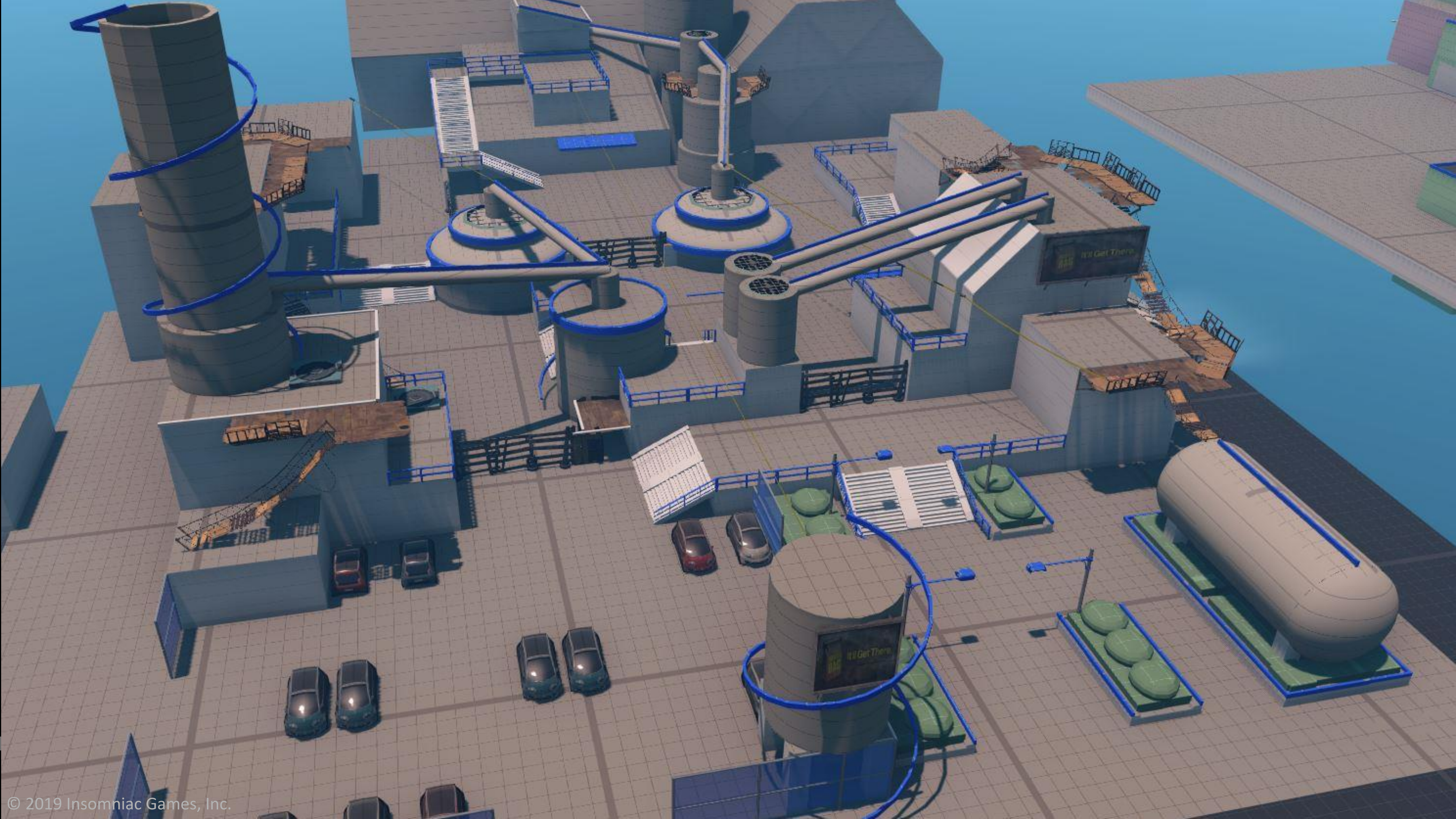


FIZZ CORP

100% TIPS
100% TIPS









StaticDecal allocation failed



Rank Your Goals

- Establish a hierarchy for goals
- Help focus on the most important elements
- Keep on track during iteration

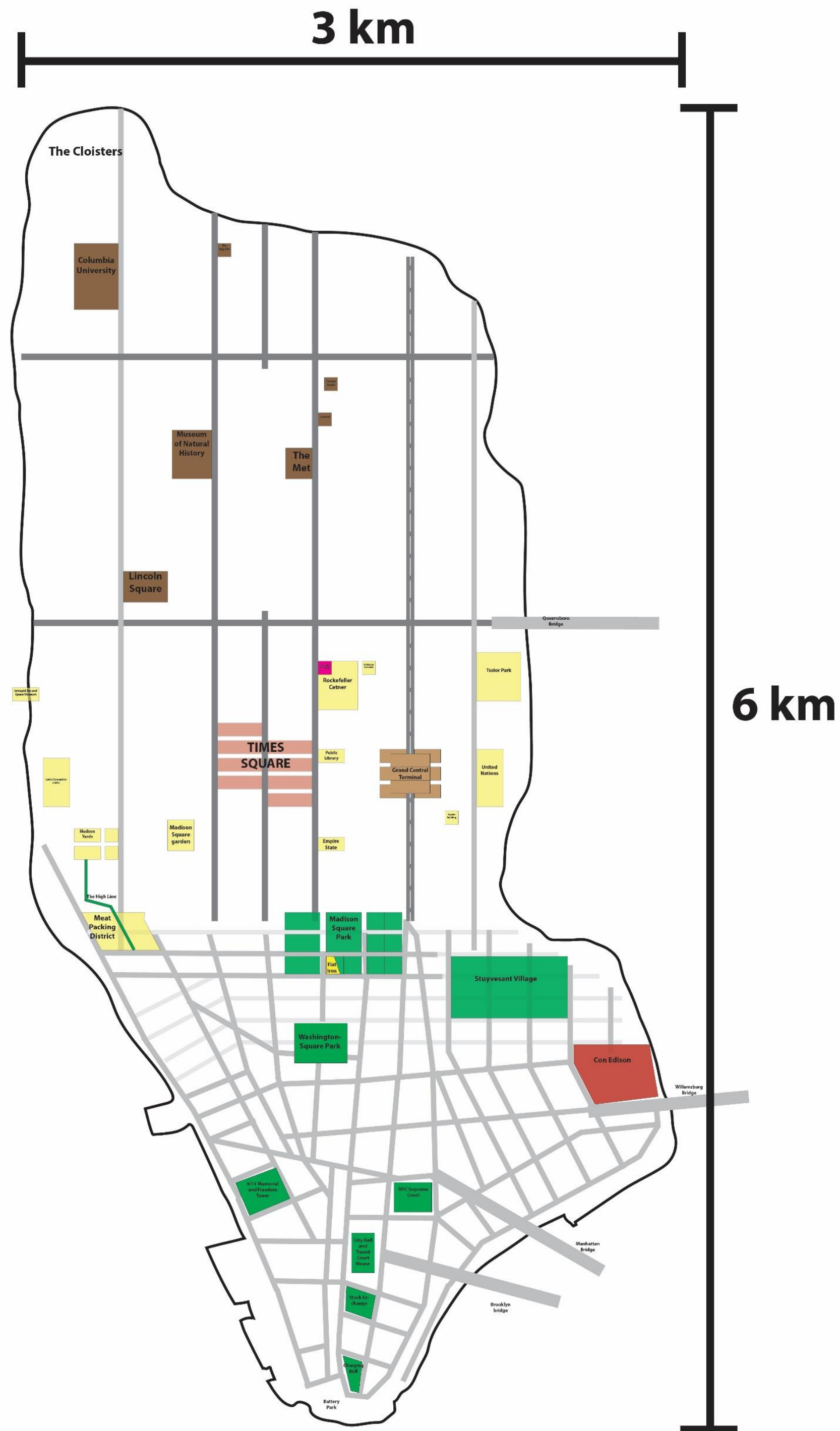


Defining Goals For Building Manhattan









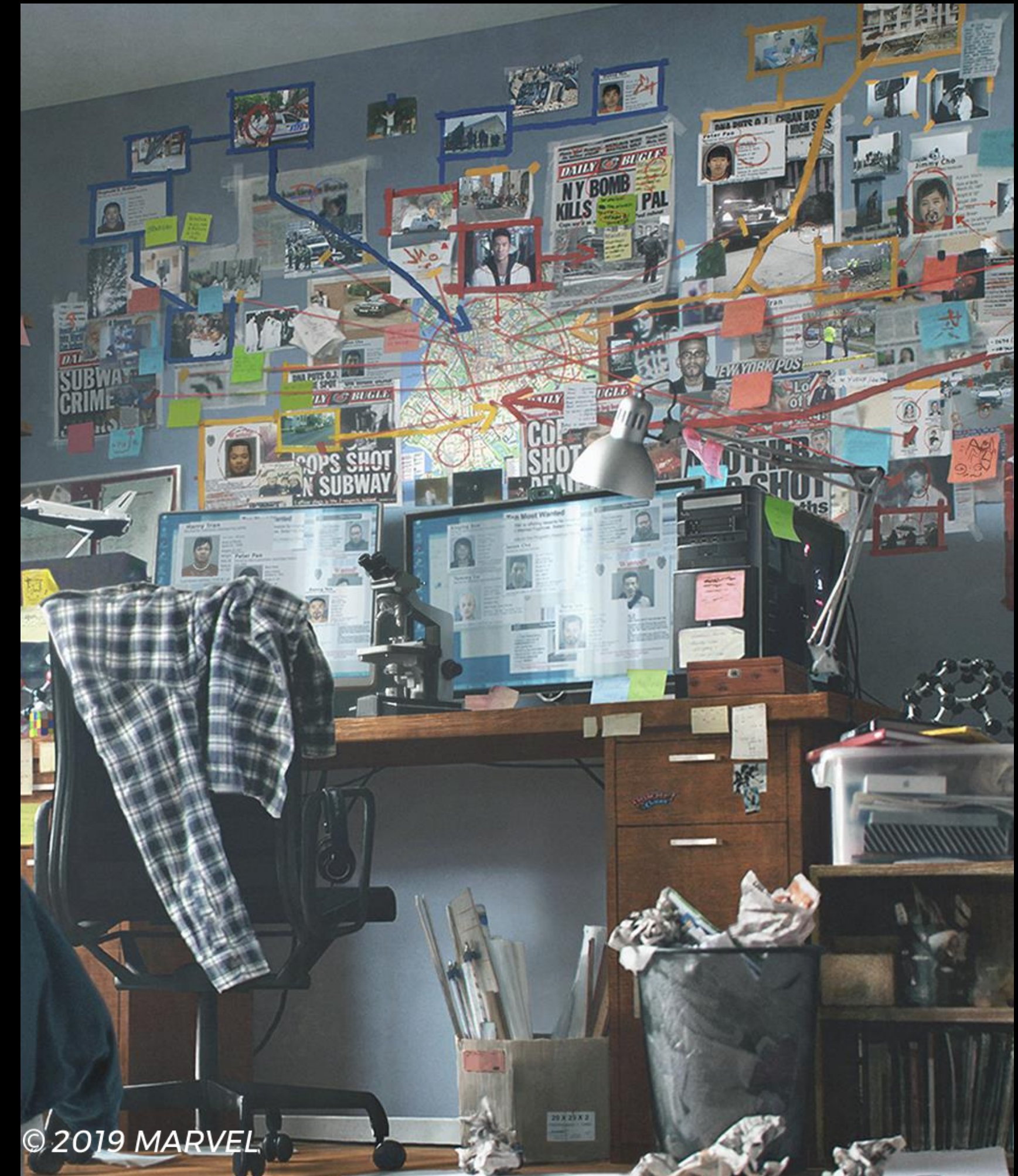


A cinematic still from the movie Iron Man showing Tony Stark in his Oscorp laboratory. He is standing in profile, looking at a large wall-mounted display of scientific data. The room is filled with high-tech equipment, including a large green bio-reactor on the right and various machines on the left. The lighting is dim, with a strong green glow from the bio-reactor and the wall display.

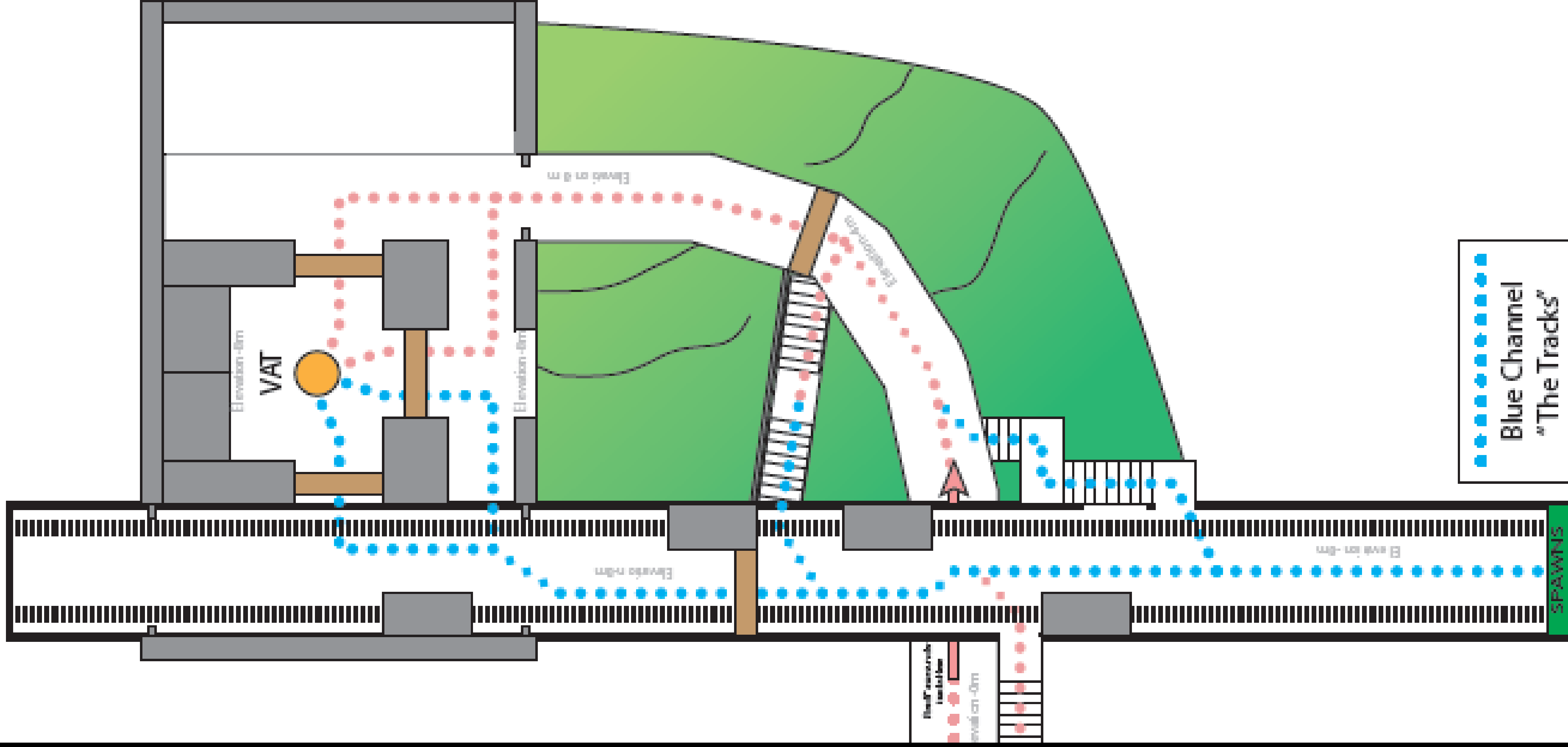
Step 2: Research

Well Obviously...

- Obvious step, until its not
- Important even with a familiar with a topic
- You don't know what you don't know

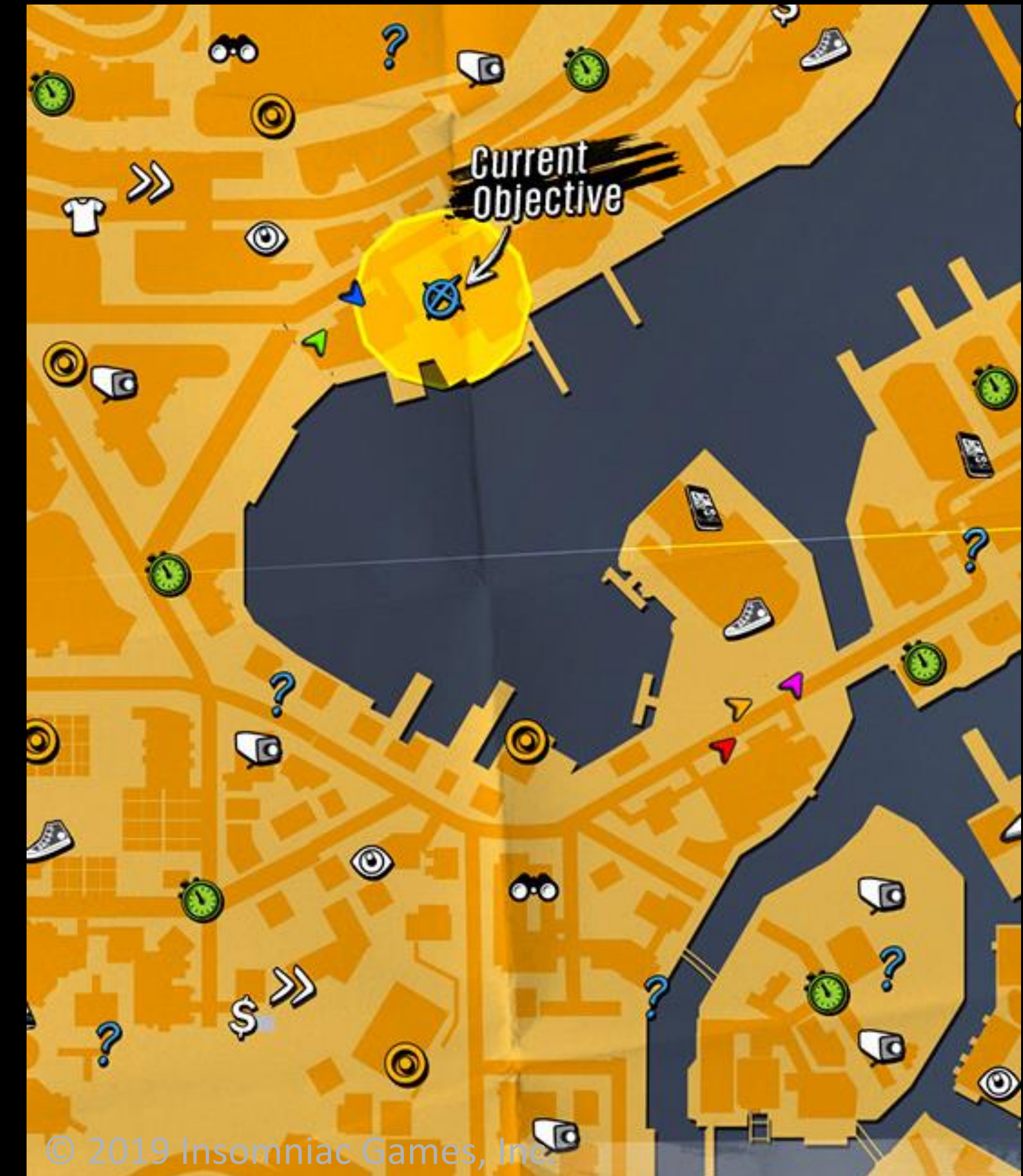


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Go Beyond Reference Images

- Understand the human experience
- Read travel guides
- Join online communities



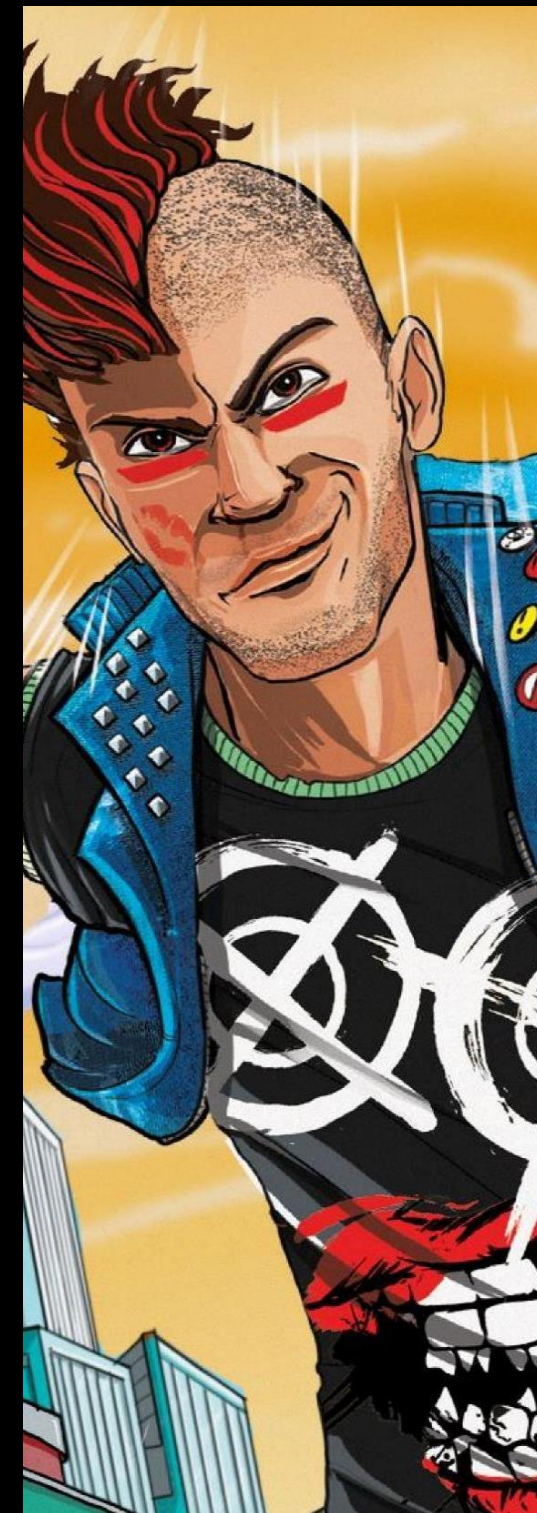


Learn From The Past





Play The Games



Researching for Spider-Man





Step 3: Experiment

Identify what you need to prove

- Use research as a starting point
- Only test what you need to prove
- Focus first on the bigger unknowns and risks

Isolate Ideas Into Controlled Experiments

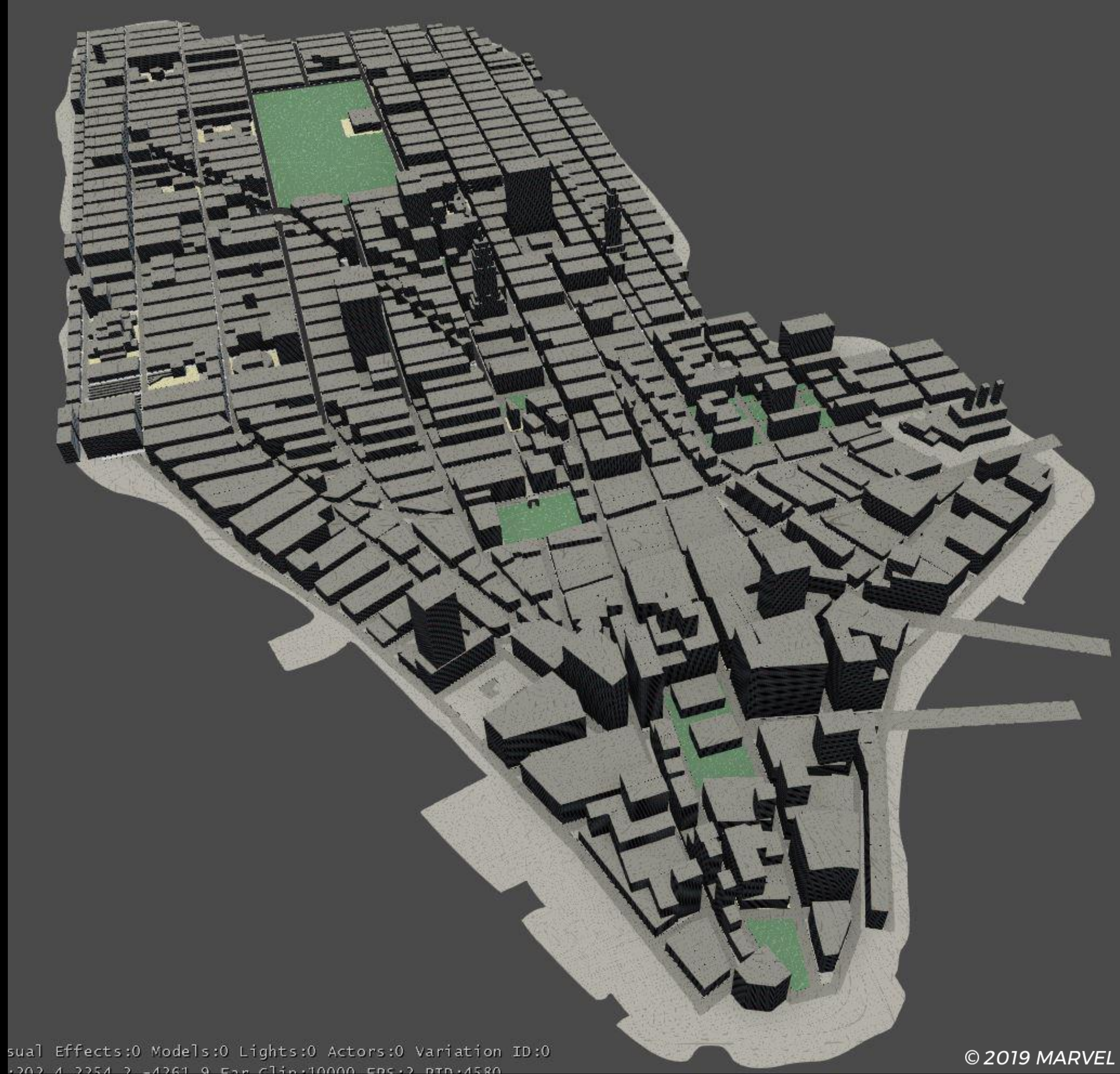
- Answer quantifiable questions:
 - How big?
 - How many?
 - For how long?



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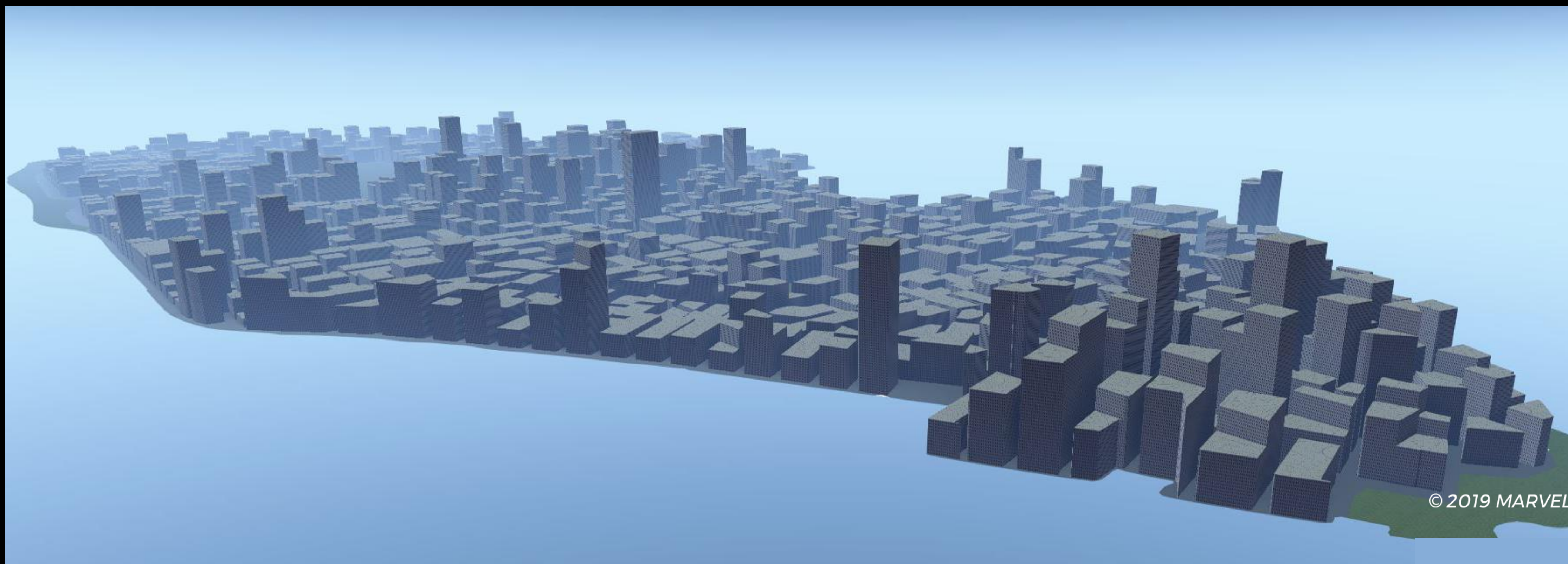
Different Than “Roughing” a Space Out

- Its really more like “sketching”
- Quicker and lower resolution than a “rough”
- Keep it fast and loose



Visual Effects:0 Models:0 Lights:0 Actors:0 Variation ID:0
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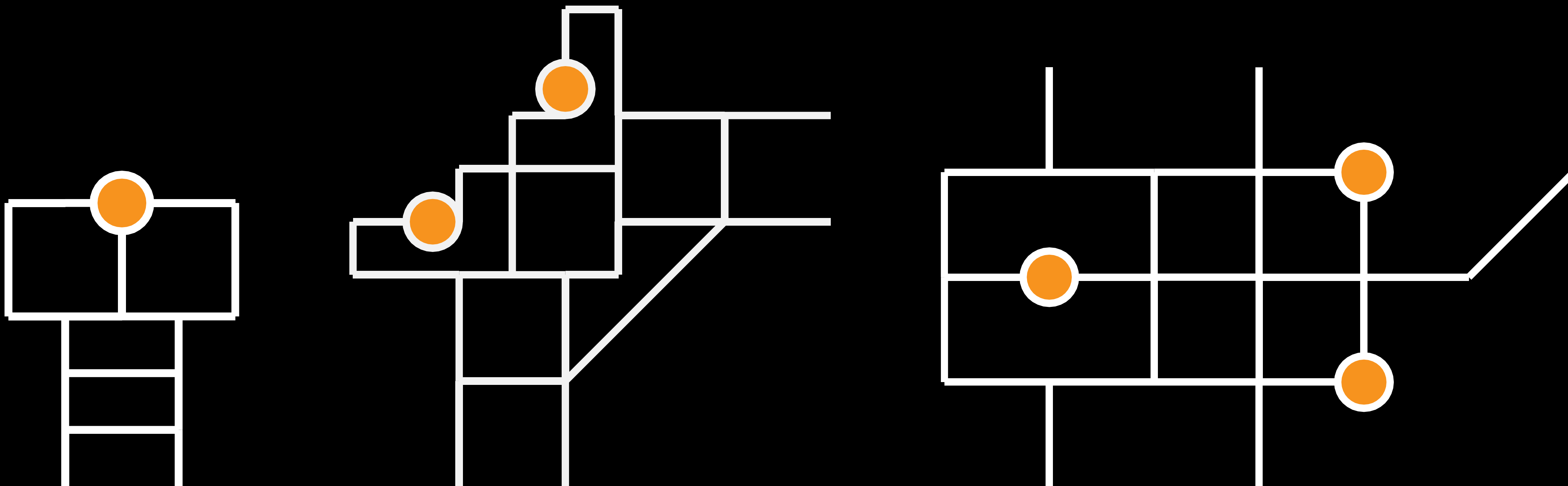


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Be Agile

- Try things quickly
- Don't be afraid to throw away
- Work in physical





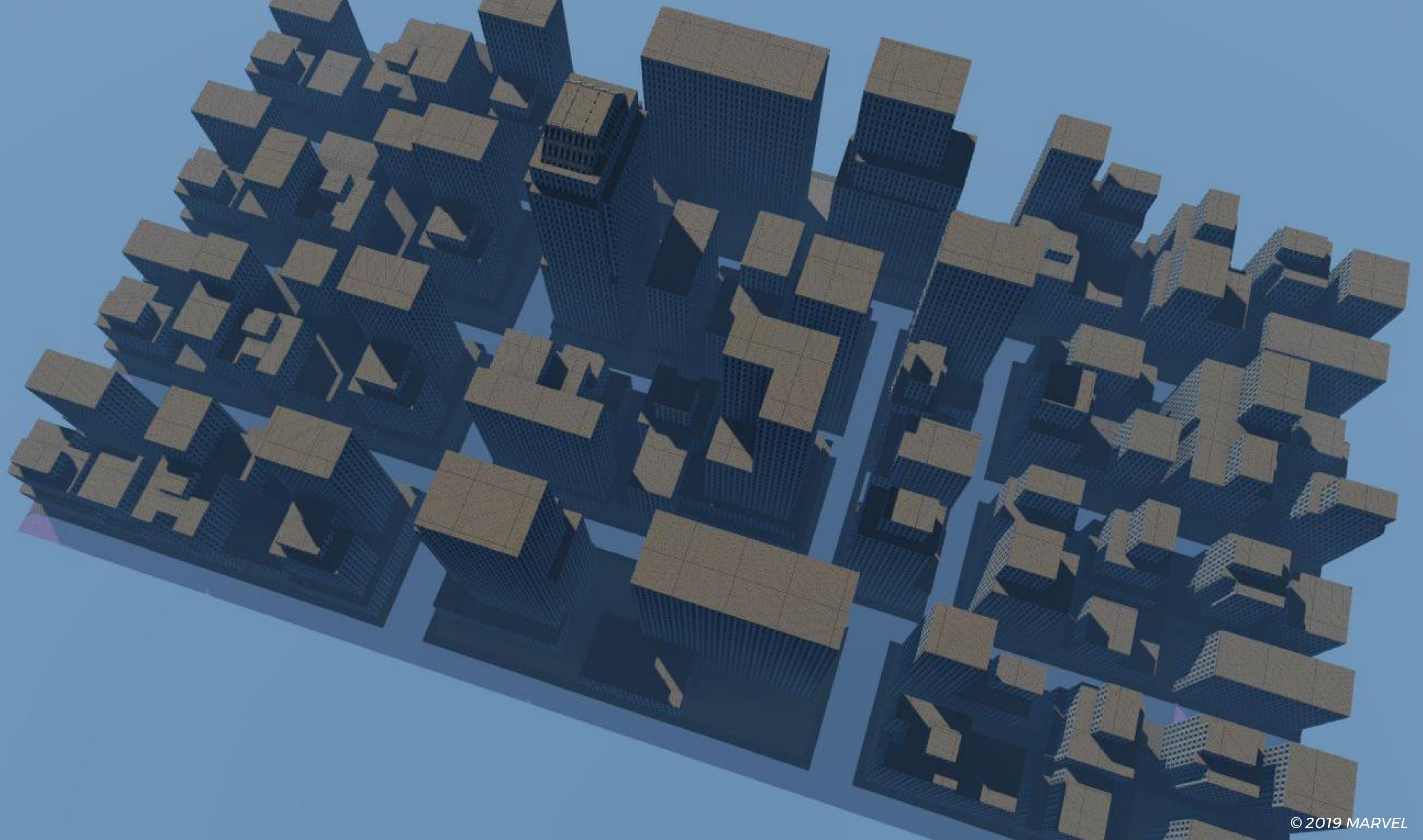
Get Into The Space

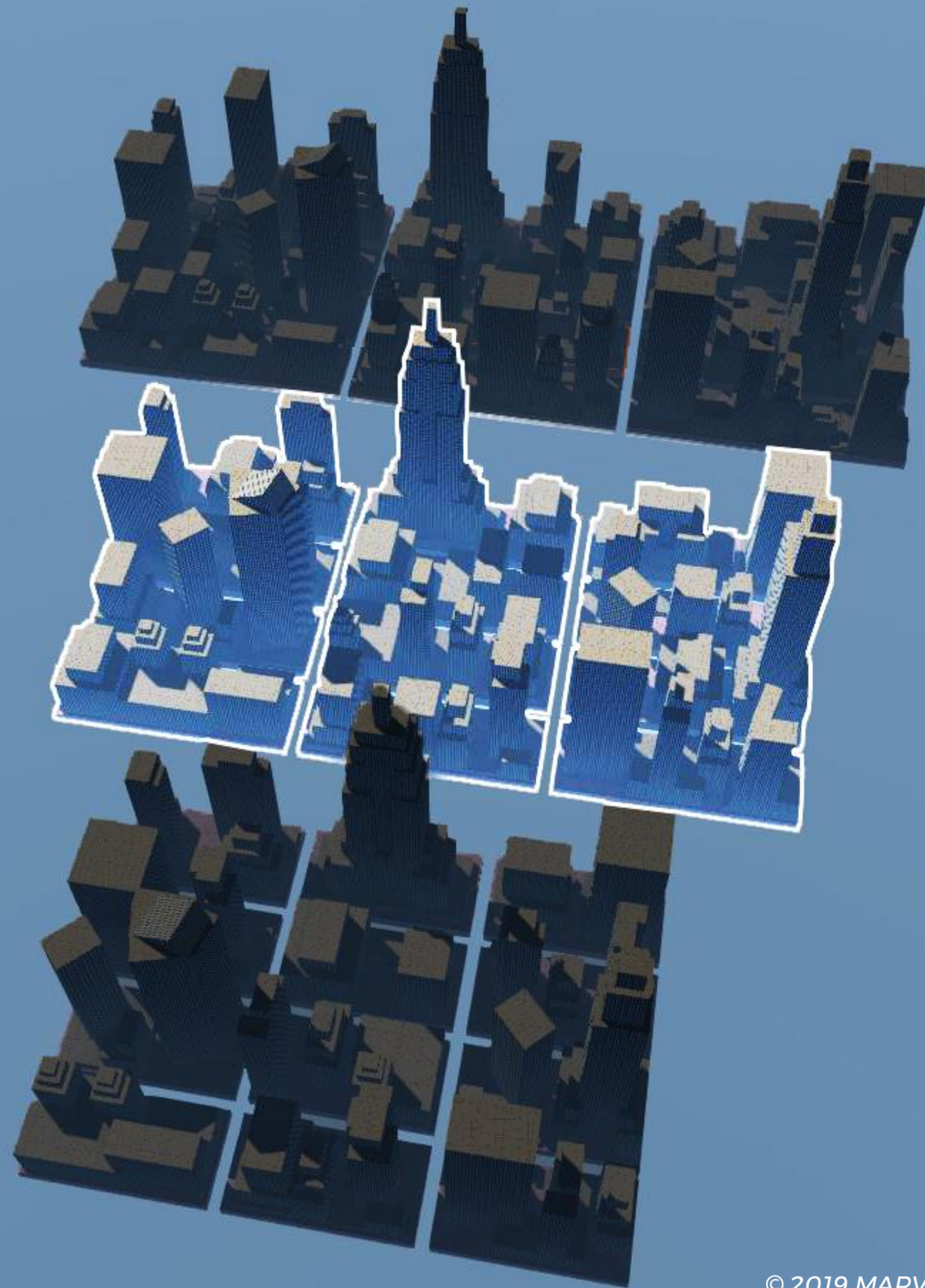
- Don't spend too long in “Editor”
- See space from player perspective
- Even if not playable



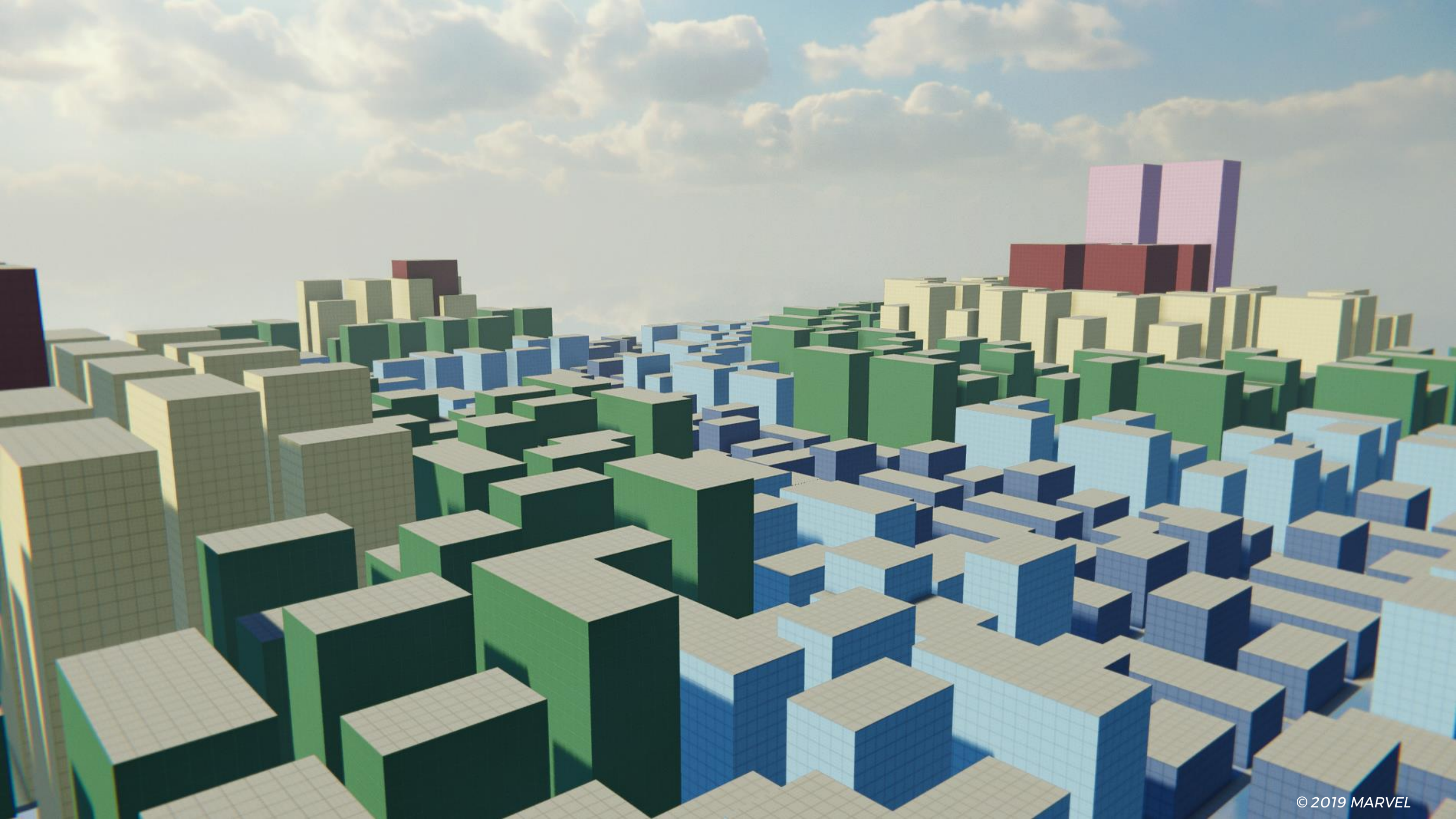
Experimentation in Prepro

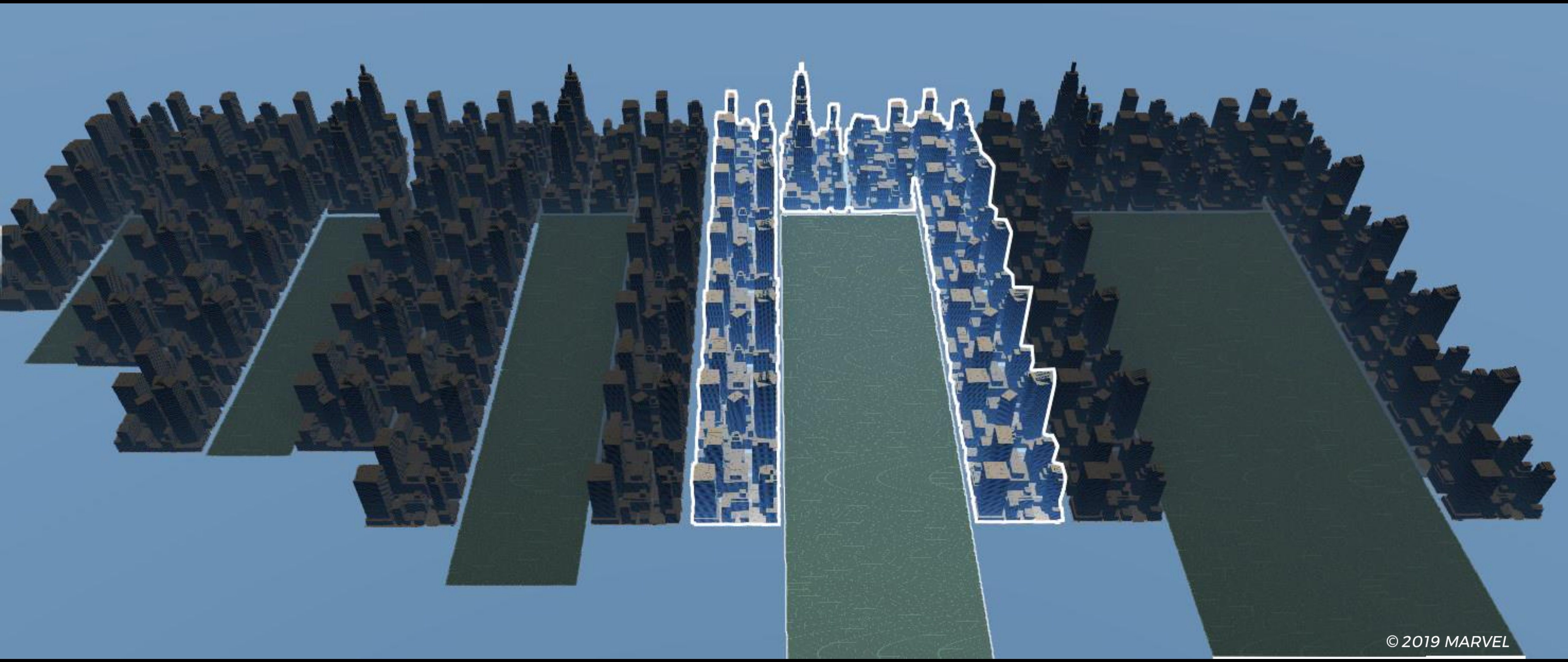














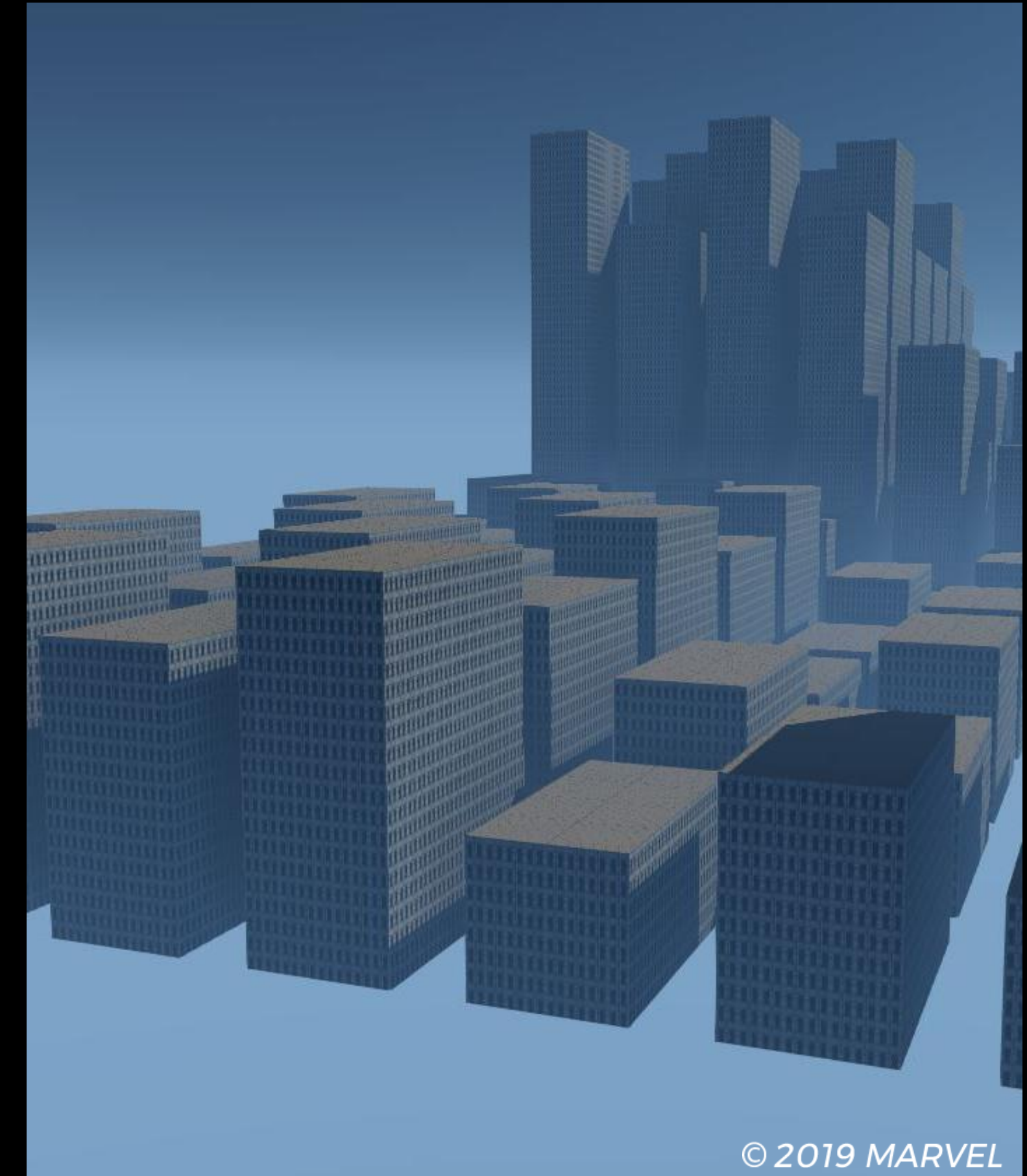
Step 4: Confirm

Goal Verification

- Which experiments actually achieved goals
- Are goals giving desired results
- Is this the best way to achieve goals

Reality Check

- Is the space “believable”
- Does the space have logical flow
- Double check scale



Technical Check

- Will it ever run
- What are the consequences to scaling back
- Do you need to build in any “safety nets”

Share Your Vision

- Share it now if you haven't already
- Share goals too
- Convey the “why”



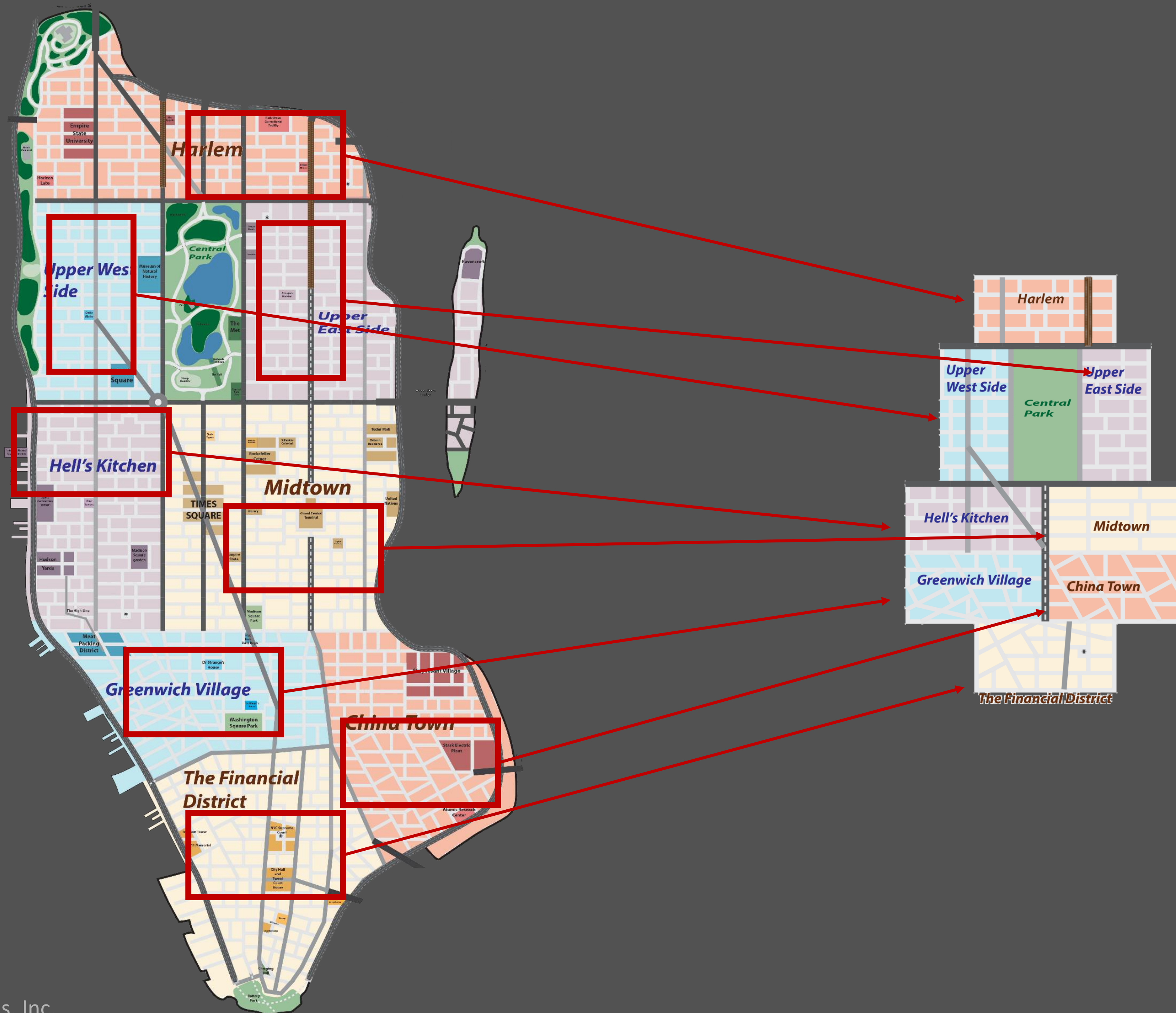
Only Move Forward with Confidence

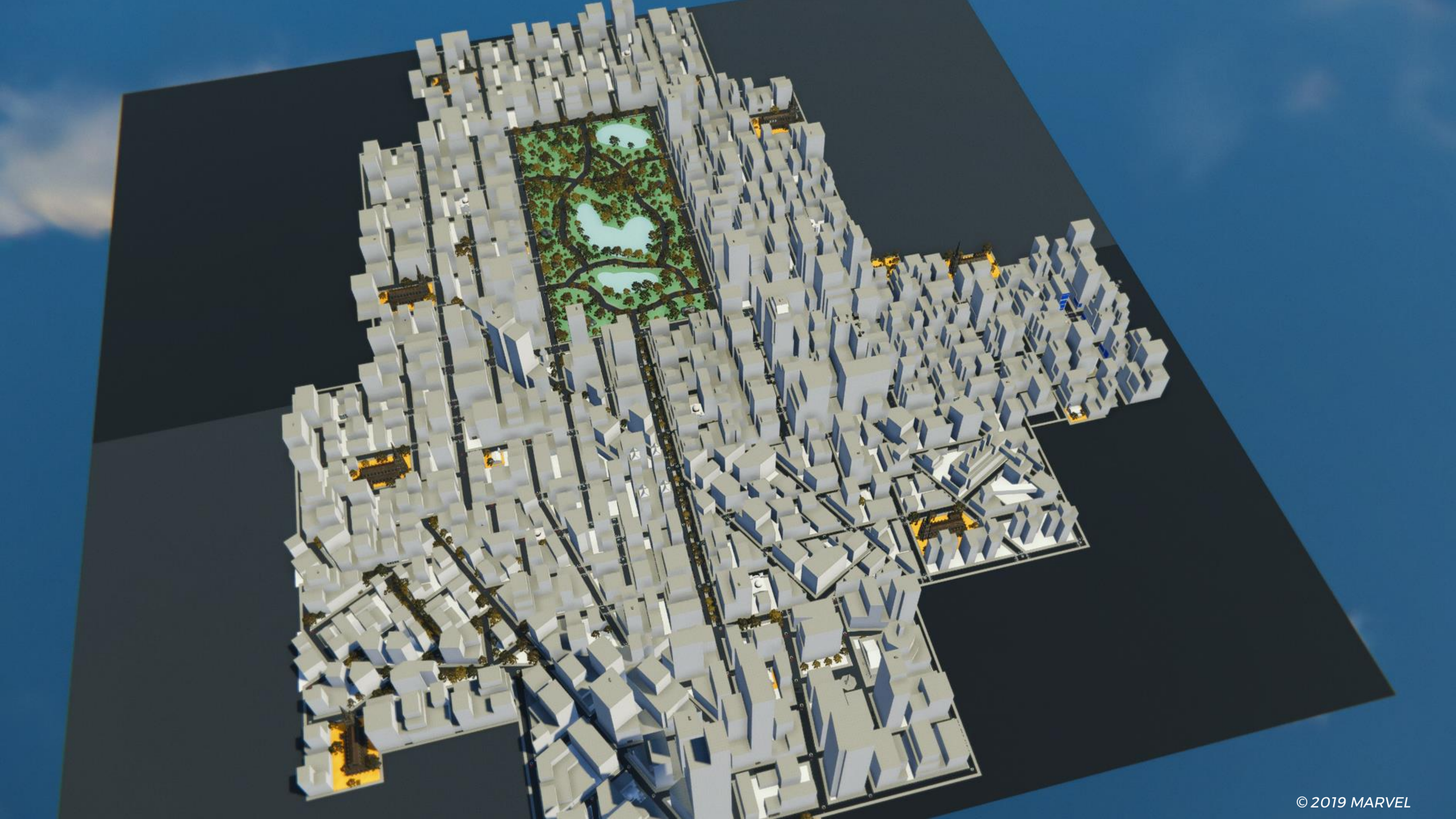
- Start over if you have too
- This is the gatekeeper step
- Mistakes are much more costly from here on out

Confirming Metrics and Scales











Step 5: Execute

Lock Down the Rough

- Snap to metrics
- Spaces should be clean and clear
- This is where the rough takes form

Integrate Gameplay

- Should have already experimented with gameplay
- This is where all the gameplay connects together
- The space should start to play the way you expect





Test and Iterate

- You'll still make changes even after you “lock down”
- This is where you playtest the most
- This goes on until you “ship”

Resolving feedback

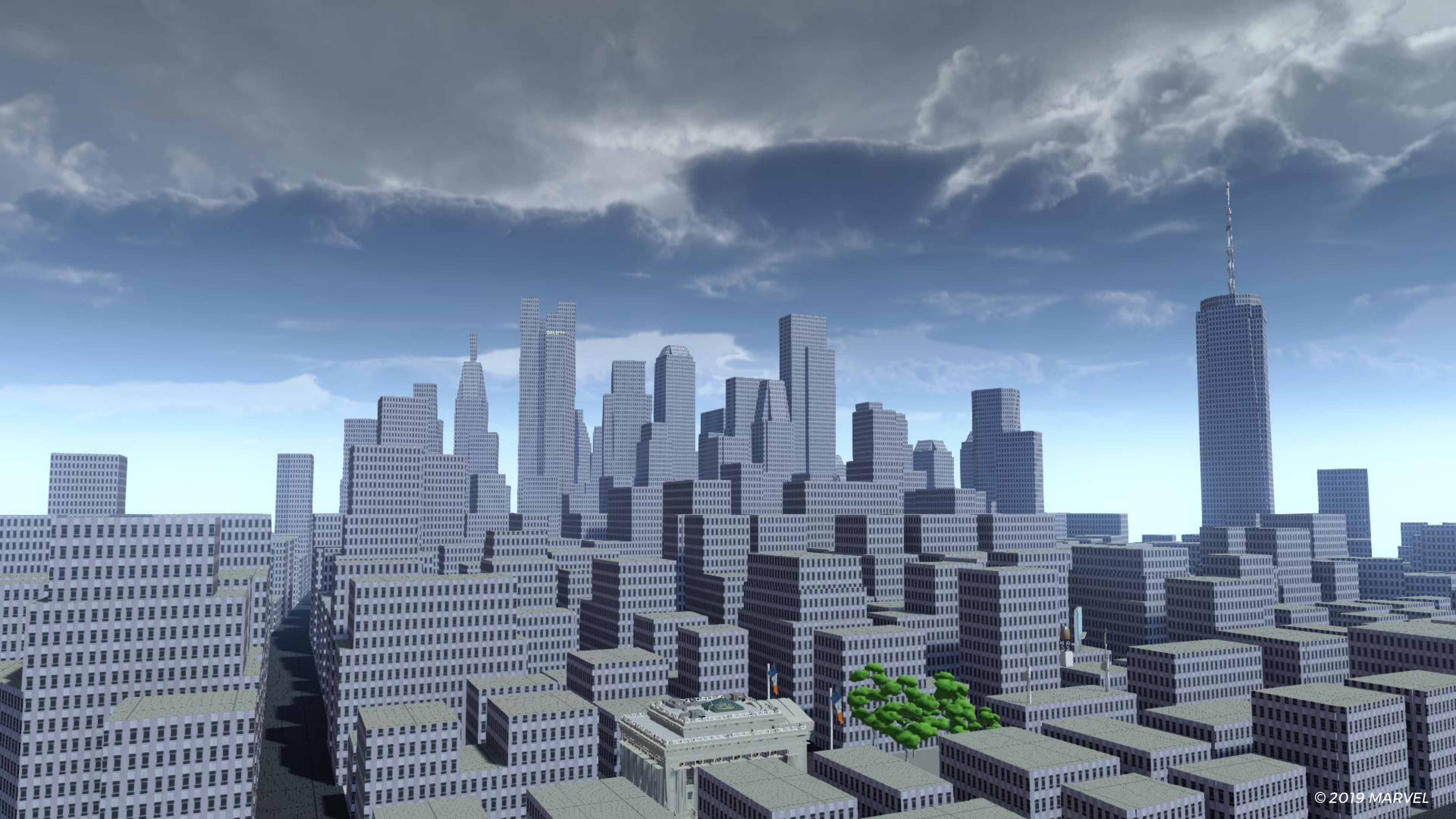
- Keep your goals in mind when considering feedback
- Don't be dismissive

Executing Across the City

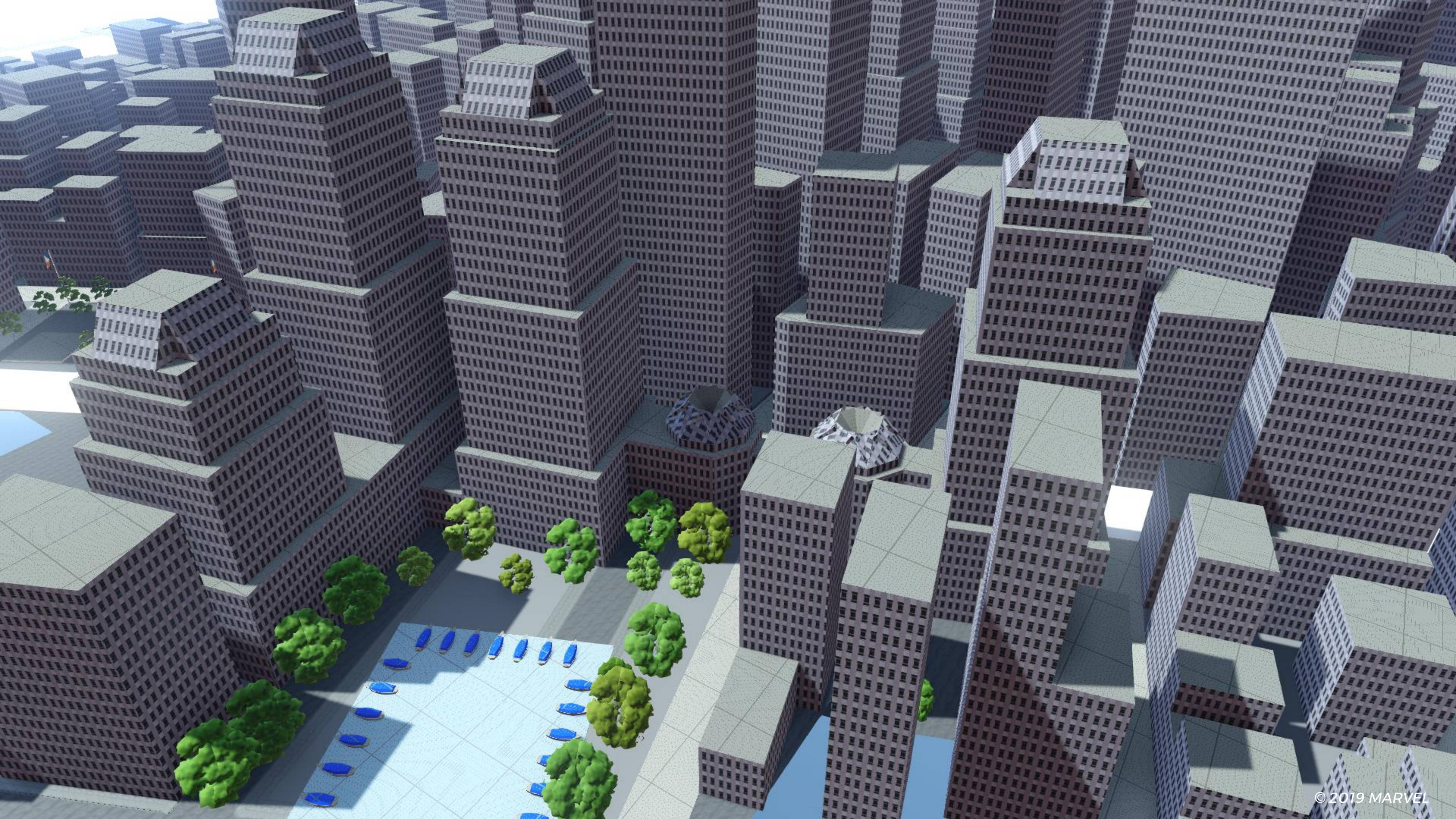


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Step 6: Reflect

Hindsight

- You'll know what to do when you're out of time
- Identify what lessons you can learn
- This was the first step in this whole process

It's never too late to do the right thing

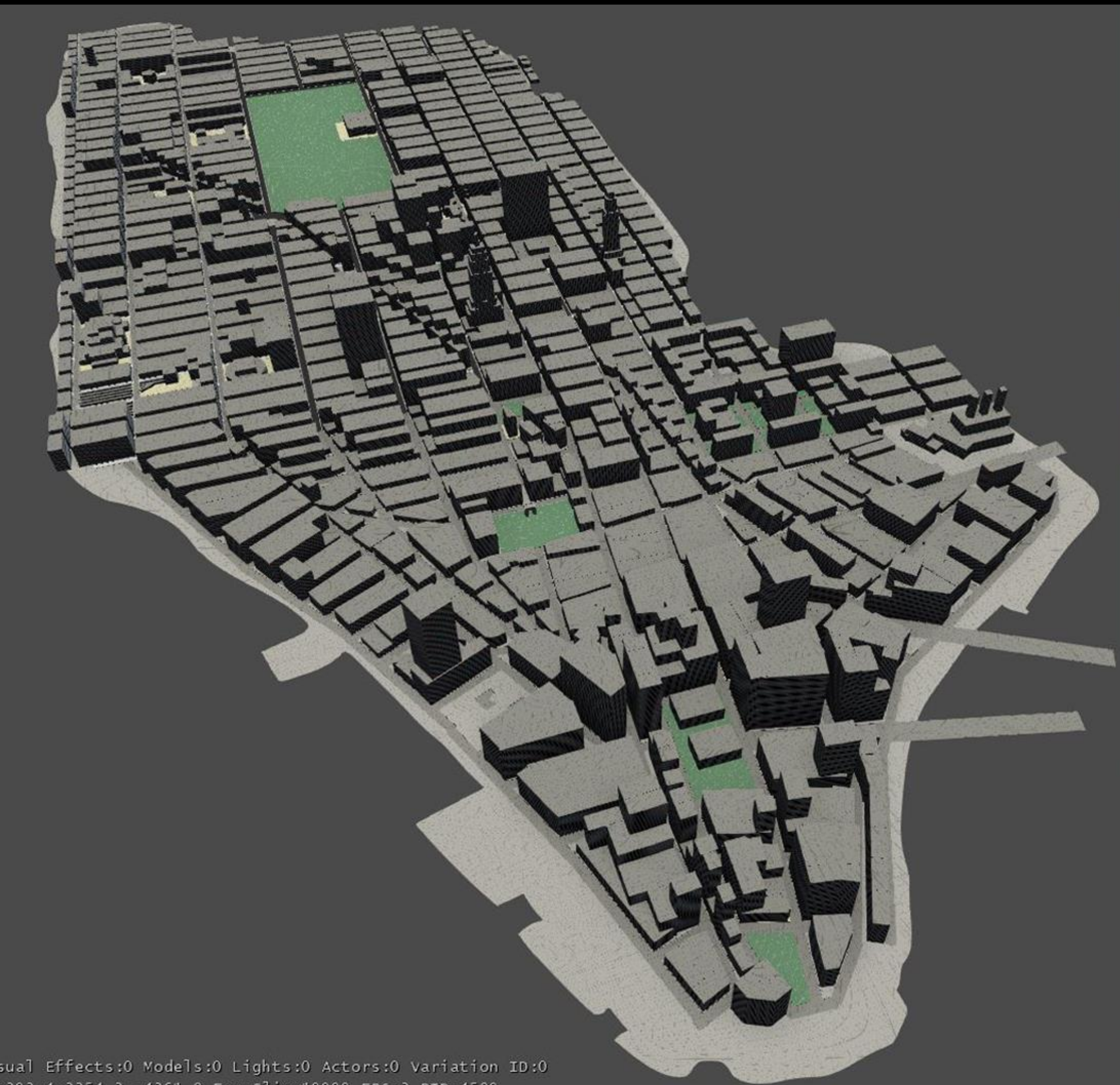
- Well... actually it usually is
- But not always
- Doesn't stop me from trying



Major Reflections Regarding the Project







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Reflecting on the process

- Experiment with intent
- Think of the process more scientifically
- Use “evidence” to support your vision

Summary

1. Define

2. Research

3. Experiment

4. Confirm

5. Execute

6. Reflect

- Define thematic and gameplay goals
- Form goals around important questions
- Resolve conflicts between goals

Summary

1. Define

2. Research

3. Experiment

4. Confirm

5. Execute

6. Reflect

- You don't know what you don't know
- Go beyond reference images
- Play the games, give them the time

Summary

1. Define

2. Research

3. Experiment

4. Confirm

5. Execute

6. Reflect

- Build controlled experiments
- Think of it as sketching
- Be ok with throwing away work

Summary

1. Define

2. Research

3. Experiment

4. Confirm

5. Execute

6. Reflect

- Verify your goals
- Scale, logic, and technical checks
- Only move forward with confidence

Summary

1. Define

2. Research

3. Experiment

4. Confirm

5. Execute

6. Reflect

- Lock down metrics
- Cleanup roughs
- Everything is connected

Summary

1. Define

2. Research

3. Experiment

4. Confirm

5. Execute

6. Reflect

- Consider what could have been better
- Try to improve the process
- Is it really too late



Thank You

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