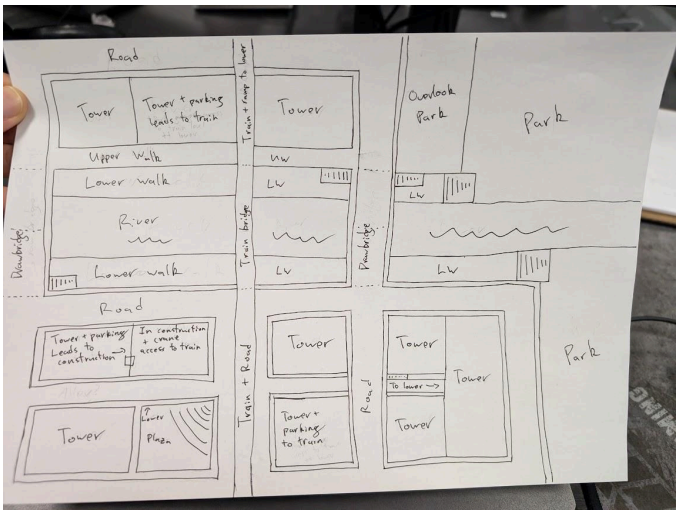
Shooty Cars: City Arena

An arena shooter where everyone gets to drive a car with a machine gun turret yay! This level has a focus on verticality and going off lots of jumps. It should be raining bullets and cars at any given time. Thematic inspiration comes from Death Race, Car Wars, Running Man, Twisted Metal, and of course our favorite dust punk shooty car Mad Max. It is intended to be a purpose built arena for people in the setting to televise and not a slice of an actual city. This allows features to be condensed and not always follow real world city logic.



Main Floor: The upper area of the city that is easiest to navigate. Players have good visibility and can shoot at each other from a distance.

Underground: Secondary road system that the upper floor was built on top of. This area has many support beams and a low ceiling to restrict visibility. However it has generally more navigable roads and is a great place to duck into when on the losing end of a battle on the main floor.

Parks: The east of the map has a park to the north and south. This gives players some offroading opportunities and trees to run into. Dirt ramps on either side of the river give a consistent and fun river crossing.

General feel: The player should always have movement options. This means choices between multiple paths as often as possible, limited ‘long straight paths’, and no dead ends. Goofy physics is part of the intended gameplay. Jumps are fun so there are to be many areas where the player can use geometry with the physics to fly into the air.

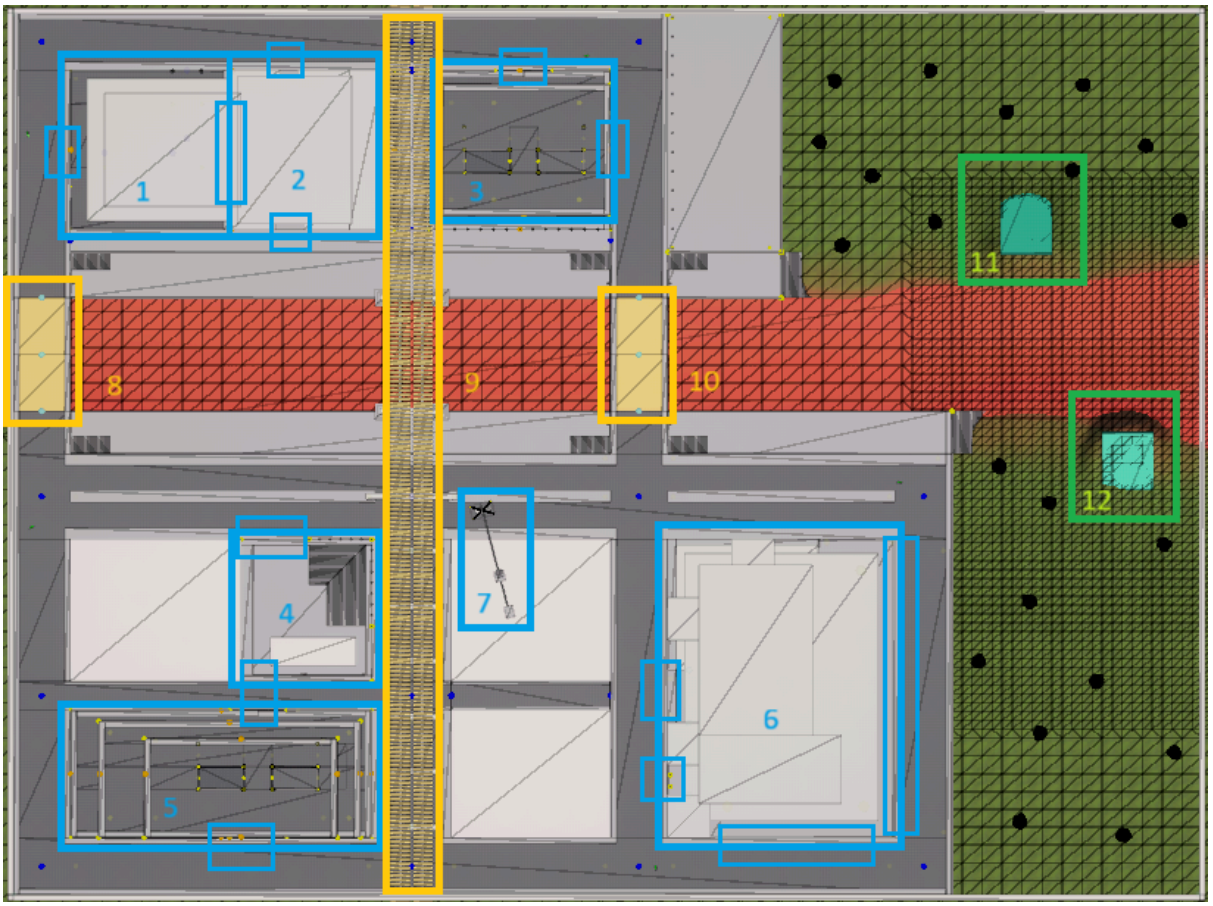
After a certain playtime many playtesters shift from shooting at each other to trying to get on top of buildings. I didn’t have time to add the full level of verticality I wanted to but the intention is to build more areas players can access with a bit of work. These areas can have tangible rewards such as powerups or more abstract ones such as giving a birds-eye view of an area you can drop down into or silly easter eggs.

Queen of the Hill

Requested by multiple playtesters, Queen of the Hill has become a core part of the gameplay. There are several Hills placed around the map. Each player has a pointer directing them to the currently active Hill. The active Hill changes on a timer (in a proper build the timer should start when at least one player has reached it).

Hills have 3 region identifiers: North/South, East/West, and Upper/Lower. When the Hill moves it must be different on two or more of these values. Because of this, players moving from the last Hill to the new have to broadly navigate the level and there’s always some sort of obstacle such as moving between layers of verticality or crossing the river.

Main Level Blockout



1: Courtyard Parking - Ramp between floors and quick access to multiple Hills.
2: Courtyard - Easily defendable Hills both on main and lower floors.
3 & 5: Parking Garages - Access between multiple floors and the train tracks. The tradeoff is ramps can't be navigated at speed so you sacrifice mobility for verticality choices.
4: Plaza - Multiple ways in and out and easy to navigate stairs. This is a centerhub for quickly getting between floors. Originally further south but playtesters requested it be more central due to how convenient it is for navigation.
6: Parkview - Hills on main and lower floors with wide open arenas. Lower area has more ways in than out since players can drop down from gaps in the upper roads.
7: Crane - Intended to be part of a (currently unmade) construction site. The crane is easily identifiable at a distance to help orient players.
8 & 10: Drawbridges - Go up and down on a timer to provide intermittent restriction on river crossings. They're the easiest way across the river but aren't always an option.
9: Train Tracks - Another way across the river. Requires navigating parking garages to access but are the most central. There are also trains that can knock the player off the tracks, potentially into the river.
11 & 12: Park Ramps - Jumps at the parks are always available and relatively safe compared to other river crossing options. The tradeoff here is they are out of the way from most Hills so there is a time sacrifice to using them.

Feedback

- **Queen of the Hill:** Previously mentioned. I did not think of this at all but several playtesters requested it. Improved the level pretty much across the board.
- **Too maze-like:** Several people mentioned the level being confusing. I replaced many buildings with more unique structures and tried to remove anywhere that ended up being a ‘hallway’ (featureless flat walls on either side).
- **Underground is cramped:** Main level was raised by 2 meters. Despite being changed about halfway through the level design this was easy to accomplish because of several design tools I had built to help working with roads.
- **Drawbridges can’t be crossed when raised:** A few playtesters requested the drawbridges be usable as ramps even when fully raised. I did not implement this because it went against the core drawbridge drawback and would make both the train tracks and park ramps unnecessary to consider using.
- **Move the plaza:** As mentioned, I originally had the plaza in a less central area. It proved to be a major point of travel for players so I moved it more centrally.
- **Crosshairs:** Requested by basically everyone. Originally ignored because it isn’t level design but after adding them it made it so much easier to get a feel for how shooting works when going around corners and obstacles.
- **Nametags or colored cars:** This was requested as a way to keep track of which players you have beef with. Not implemented because I was having enough of a time with multiplayer code already and did not consider this important to the level design.

Pipe Dreams

- **Construction site:** I want a construction site where the crane is that’s a primary path to get to building rooftops. Did not have time to implement.
- **Player health:** Due to networking weirdness, players don’t currently have health. However due to networking weirdness, bullets also rarely hit players. I want players to have health so shooting at each other is more consistent.
- **Mines:** Give players droppable mines to create dynamic hazards for each other.
- **Pickups:** Health pickups were intended to be in the lower areas to incentivize players to explore the underground more. Mine ammo pickups were intended to be on rooftops and in defendable locations to incentivize players to get onto rooftops or potentially turtle somewhere to prep for a Hill to spawn there.
- **In-game cameras following players:** To really sell the ‘televised arena battle’ feel I want to have little flying cameras that follow players around. I think it would be funny to be able to shoot them out of the sky.

Inspired by Chicago

Chicago has an in-use underground road and sidewalk system, a train above some of the roads, and a river running right through everything. This creates a lot of areas that are perfect for the arena's design goals. The river creates an environmental hazard, the train track can be used to travel across the river and creates another hazard, and the river has multiple drawbridges allowing for changing paths and sick jumps.



