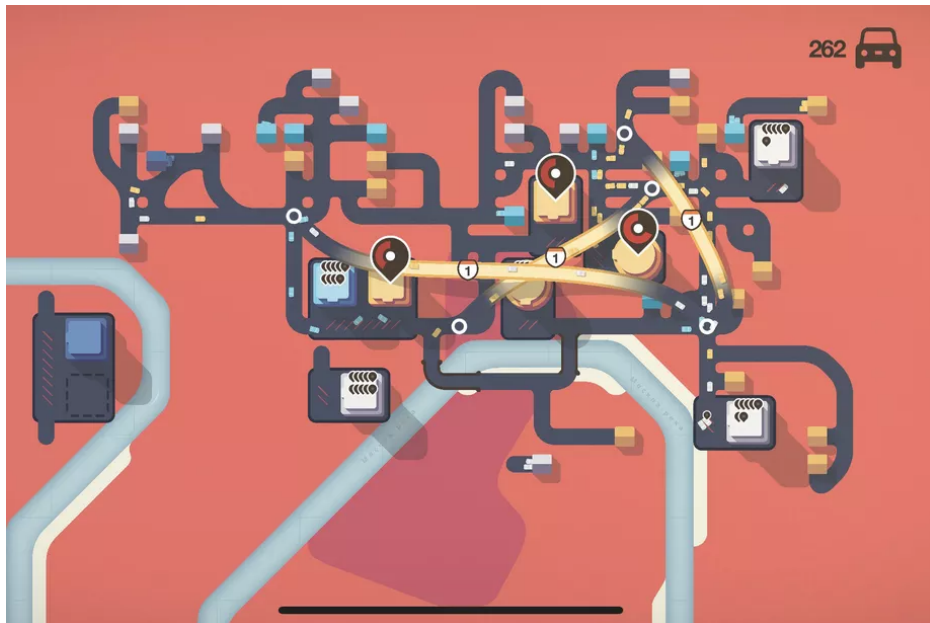




My Mini Motorways cities are horrible masterpieces

I am the city planner of my own nightmares

By [Nicole Carpenter](#) | [@sweetpotatoes](#) | Sep 26, 2019, 1:20pm EDT

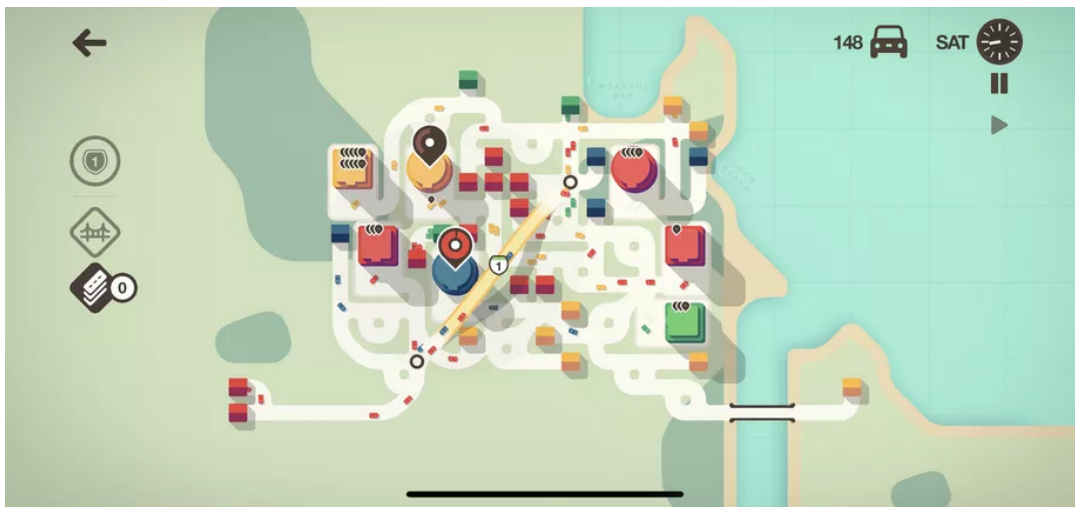


Dinosaur Polo Club via Polygon

I like to imagine the lives of drivers that travel through my *Mini Motorways* cities each day. But rather than thinking about where they're going or what they're doing, I think about what they're thinking about. Often, I imagine, it's this: *What monster designed these roads?*

The monster is me — an evil, terrible city planner who has no idea what she's doing.

Mini Motorways is developer Dinosaur Polo Club's follow-up to [Mini Metro](#), a strategy simulator game where players created public transit maps. *Mini Motorways* is an iteration on that, swapping train lines for roadways. The game was released on mobile with Apple Arcade, [Apple's mobile gaming subscription program](#); *Mini Motorways* is exclusively available on iOS devices for now, but [will eventually come to Steam](#), too. Cities in *Mini Motorways* have a Google Maps-esque aesthetic, except the roads are missing. Houses and car parks pop up, unconnected, across the game's map. It's up to me (or you) to connect them.



I'm so sorry | Dinosaur Polo Club via Polygon

Unfortunately for the imaginary citizens of my *Mini Motorways* cities (Los Angeles, Beijing, Tokyo, Dar es Salaam, Moscow, and Munch), I'm all they've got. City planning, first, starts slow, with a house or two and a single car park. You're given a limited number of resources to build with; road tiles, bridges, motorways, and stoplights are all intermittently available. Road tiles refresh seven days — in-game time — plus an extra, sometimes a motorway, other times a bridge or stoplight. With these resources, you're free to build the city however you choose, but it's got to keep running. If too many cars build up on the city's streets, the city will grind to a halt and the game will end.

My cities are averaging around 400 to 500 cars on the road before everything goes to chaos, which feels pretty good considering I'm prone to creating chaotic scenarios. I think this habit is because I live in Massachusetts, a state with notoriously bad drivers and absurdly designed roads. None of the cities available in *Mini Motorways* are Boston, but I'm putting a little Boston stamp on all of them. I don't drive often, but when I do, I find myself thinking the same thing I'm imagining my *Mini Motorway* drivers are: *Who designed this thing?*

Massachusetts, apparently, has more rotaries than any other state in the United States, [according to the Boston Globe](#). A rotary, sometimes called a traffic circle or a roundabout depending on where you're from, is an intersection wherein traffic flows around a center island, with roads connecting as "exits." Sometimes there are stop signs, lane lines, or stoplights (technically, the more organized ones are called roundabouts, but it's complex and I won't get into it here), but a lot of them feel like free-for-alls — you just go, and you don't stop. They're terrifying and I've never truly understood the logic behind them, but that may just be a product of driver confusion. They don't work here because no one *really* knows how to use them correctly.

So naturally, I am implementing them in all of my *Mini Motorways* cities. The unfortunate part, though, is that developer Dinosaur Polo Club doesn't support this feature. I can create something that looks like a rotary, but there's no way to tell the drivers they can only go in

one direction. And so my city's drivers drive the wrong way in the rotaries without any care, getting stuck in major traffic jams caused by my own careful and chaotic planning. Despite not working as I'd hoped, I still create them all over the city. I've spent the last few days playing *Mini Motorways*, cackling quietly to myself, as I draw roads in circles to create monstrous cities that will never work.

After all, *Mini Motorways* isn't built for the nonsense of rotaries — maybe one day! — but neither am I, either.

Eventually, I think I'll get sick of trying to make the rotaries work in *Mini Motorways* and will opt to play more traditionally, embracing more “zen” gameplay, moving from chaos to calm. I don't think there's a *right* way to play *Mini Motorways* or any game like even, even if there is a way to technically win, but there is a very real meditative quality to connecting the game's roads in a way that just works — it's how I enjoyed *Mini Metro*, after all, which I played when I commuted an hour each way on the train.

I think it might be my closeness to the train system, that I was a commuter, that drew me to creating calm in *Mini Metro*. But now I work from home, in a city where I can walk most places. I'm lucky that I don't have to drive, and I don't often take the train. I can revel in creating chaos in my own imaginary worlds, because I'm not experiencing the realities of Boston's deteriorating transit infrastructure every day.