

Robber Baron Monopoly

Game Design Document

The Fighting Mongooses:

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1. Theme

Robber Baron Monopoly is a fast-paced multiplayer board game of trading, auctioning, and property control. Players compete as aspiring business tycoons to buy companies, develop offices, collect fees, and drive out their competition. Only the most wealthy, ruthless business owner can succeed in becoming a legendary Robber Baron.

1.1 Design Intent

From reading about the history of the game, it seems as though the intent of the early forms of game was to teach socialist economic theory. Our goal is to take the mechanics set out in the original game and tweak them to make a variant that celebrates the most skullduggierous behaviors and ruthless business tactics of an era rife with the monopolist behaviors of the Robber Barons.

When Monopoly was created in the early 1900s, Standard Oil, owned by John D. Rockefeller, was responsible for 90% of the oil production in the US. Carnegie had just sold to Morgan, creating the combined company of US Steel, which similarly dominated its industry. Nearly all shipping from the Northeast through the Great Lakes, by boat or rail, was owned by Vanderbilt. These topics are mostly overlooked in the original game, but they set the stage for the type of behavior that spawned the game and is the central theme of our variant.

The fun of the the original seems mostly derived from inflicting awful economic tactics on the other players. A rush of anticipation and release happens when another player is approaching your overpriced companies, and the opposite occurs when you are approaching someone else's with dread. This feature appears to be the entire intent for the version that sits on store shelves today, although it is an underplayed feature, taking a backseat to the “family fun” and fast-paced property dealing which dominate its messaging.

Another, distinct form of fun can be derived from the risk and reward of moving around the board. There is also a thrill from a successful deal, but this is primarily because it foreshadows improving property and being able to gouge the other players with high prices.

Finally, there is enjoyment derived from developing a game plan and bringing it to fruition, but this is significantly mitigated by the overall lack of meaningful choice in gameplay, as much of the game feels random and arbitrary.

Our redesign, and the intent behind it, comes from asking a simple question: “If the most fun aspects of the game come from being horrible to one another, why not celebrate that?” The game can still be fun for the whole family, and it can still be a fast-paced property trading game. But it can be faster, and it can be more fun, and it can be all of these things by leading the players to adopt the ethos of the Robber Barons of the Gilded Age, strengthening that theme and casting aside genteel deals for ruthless business tactics. It can be done by offering greater player choice and interactivity. And it can all be done in a denser, more neatly timed game that delivers all of the core fun without the lag times and delays that can come from the interminable length of the original.

1.2 The Core Fun

The core elements of Robber Baron Monopoly that make it enjoyable are risk, interactivity, and fast-paced gameplay. These three elements are present in all of the most adversarial mechanics of the original. We embraced these adversarial elements and amplified the mechanics to create a unique new experience for the mischievous at heart. Robber Baron Monopoly allows the player to embody the greats of the Gilded Age and enjoy the thrill of accumulating wealth and power through fast-paced wheeling and dealing. The Robber Baron theme plays off of the fun of risky play, and we amplify interactivity by increasing player choice. We make the play more fast-paced by adding choices, accelerating mechanics and limiting the duration of play.

1.2.1 Theme

Risk plays a central role in all of Monopoly’s mechanics. It is apparent in the foreboding a player feels as she approaches enemy territory, in the rush of anticipation and sense of greedy release when a player lands on an owned property, and the nervous excitement of spending money on development rather than holding cash as a buffer. Under the theme of the Robber Barons, players are encouraged to embrace risk and the underhanded business tactics of the men who inspired the game.

1.2.2 Interactivity & Social Interplay

Social interaction is essential to Monopoly. Players feel a thrill when completing a successful deal and winning a property at auction. Landlords feel a greedy satisfaction from collecting rent. Our variant is designed to embrace and amplify social interaction and the player’s interaction

with the board. We grant players far more choice, and present additional opportunities to interact with the game and their fellow Robber Barons through the introduction of several new mechanics.

1.2.3 Pacing

Games remain fun as long as things are happening and the players are engaged. Too short and a player can't get invested, too long and they lose interest. We have added mechanics to keep the game fast-paced and the players engaged. These include mechanics which offers players choices throughout the game, not just on his or her turn, making Robber Baron Monopoly exciting for all players throughout the duration of play. The addition of a game-ending mechanic makes playtime predictable and manageable.

2. Rules and Mechanics

Robber Baron Monopoly is a game for 3-6 players, with an expected play time of 2-3 hours. For players who want a shorter game, alternate “speed play” rules allow for a play time of 60-90 minutes.

The objective of the game is to become the wealthiest player through buying and selling properties (henceforth companies), collecting fees for the services they offer, and ensuring the retention of wealth through whatever means necessary before time runs out.

The game set consists of a board, two dice, 6 player tokens, 6 bidding cards with markers (or 6 pads of paper with pencils), 1 train for the Inflation Track, 32 offices, 12 headquarters, a deck of 26 Chance cards, a deck of 28 Trust cards, a Title Deed card for each of the 28 companies, and play money.

The design of this adaptation of Monopoly is intended to encourage mischief and fast-paced dealing in keeping with the theme and encouraging interaction and social interplay. The following rules and mechanics have been added or changed from the original rules of Monopoly to facilitate these aspects of gameplay.

2.1 Setup

Players place the board and put the Chance and Trust cards face down on their allotted spaces on the board. Each player chooses a token to represent him while traveling around the board.

Players then select as Banker a player who will keep his personal funds separate from those of the Bank. He must:

- Verify the results of each auction.
- Hold and distribute the Title Deed cards, as well as the offices and headquarters as they are purchased or otherwise brought into play.

- Pays salaries and bonuses from Chance and Trust cards.
- Collect all taxes, fines, loans, and interest, and the price of all companies which it sells and auctions.
- The Bank never goes “broke”. If the Bank runs out of money, the Banker may issue as much as needed by writing on any ordinary paper.

The Banker gives each player a single Chance card and starting capital:

- \$3500 each for 3 players, in 6x \$5's, 5x \$10's, 6x \$20's, 4x \$50's, 6x \$100's and 5x \$500's
- \$3000 each for 4 players, in 6x \$5's, 5x \$10's, 6x \$20's, 4x \$50's, 6x \$100's and 4x \$500's
- \$2500 each for 5 players, in 6x \$5's, 5x \$10's, 6x \$20's, 4x \$50's, 6x \$100's, or and 3x \$500's
- \$2000 each for 6 players. in 6x \$5's, 5x \$10's, 6x \$20's, 4x \$50's, 6x \$100's and 2x \$500's

These values have all been tested to ensure an even start to the game. These values also ensure that early company purchases and trading are fast-paced, and are not slowed or crippled in the late game by a depletion of system-wide money.

2.2 Play

To determine the order of play, each player, beginning with the Banker, rolls the dice. The player with the highest total starts play.

A player must place his token on the corner marked Go, throw the dice and move the token in the direction of the arrow according to the value of the dice.

According to the space his token reaches, the player may be able to:

- buy a company,
- pay service fees,
- pay taxes,
- draw a Chance or Trust card,
- play the Stock Market or
- be directed to Jail.

If the player rolls doubles for movement, he moves his token as usual, and is subject to any privileges or penalties pertaining to the space where he lands. Additionally, that player keeps the dice, and rolls again moving his token according to the value of the second roll. If he throws doubles three times in succession, the token is not moved the spaces indicated by the dice, but instead goes immediately to one of the three Jails (see Jail and Corner Spaces).

After a player completes his turn, the dice are passed to his left and the next player rolls the dice for his turn. The tokens remain on the spaces occupied and proceed from that point on the player's next turn. Two or more tokens may rest on the same space at the same time.

These rules and standards of play do not make any great departures from the original Monopoly game and will be familiar to anyone who has played the game in the past. There are variations on the actions that occur upon landing on a given space which are expanded upon later in this document.

2.3 Go

Each time a player's token lands on or passes over Go, whether by throwing the dice or drawing a card, the Banker pays him a salary. Salaries are paid once for each trip around the board wherein the player passes Go. However, if a player passes Go and then receives a card to advance to Go, he can collect a salary more than once in the same turn.

Salaries are paid in the amounts of \$200, \$250, \$300, \$350 or \$400, depending on the state of the inflation track. This gives players a sense of increasing power and wealth throughout the course of the game. This in turn leads to greater perceived fun by all players involved even those who are "losing" as their total net worth is likely to increase as they advance around the board, even if it is not in proportion to the rest of the players. It also lends itself to the sense of escalation that builds over the course of the game, deepening player immersion.

2.4 Purchasing Companies

Whenever the dice roll moves a token to an unowned company, the player may:

- Buy that company from the Bank at its printed price, receiving the Title Deed card showing ownership. He then places this card face up on the table in front of him.
- Not buy the company, which will put the company up for auction by default. Any player, including the one who declined the option to buy the company at its printed price, may bid in the auction.

When all but the last company in a group has been purchased, that final company is immediately put up for auction. This happens after the first company is bought in the Power Companies as well as the the two-company newspaper and oil company sets, after the second company is bought in all of the other industry sets, and after the third railroad is purchased.

The introduction of these "forced auctions" is designed to accelerate the property grab phase. This keeps the game moving and players engaged.

It is also intended to serve as a "rubber band" mechanic which allows players that are behind in the land grab phase to participate and have a real chance of getting companies and catching up. According to the rules of the original, companies only go up for auction when a player lands on a company and chooses not to buy it outright either because they do not want it or because they cannot afford it. In practice, however, very few companies go up for auction and it is not uncommon for a player to go without an opportunity to become a landlord for many turns. The "forced auction" rectifies this problem.

The “forced auction” also increases social interplay and engagement. Whereas standard company purchases are an interaction between a player and the Bank, auctions include all players in a social engagement that would otherwise have been an isolated and unengaging transaction involving only one player.

2.5 Auctions

Auctions are held according to Vickrey style, which is a closed-bid auction where each player writes down the most he is willing to pay, up to but no more than his total cash on hand. All bids must be made in multiples of \$5, the smallest denomination used in the game. Once all players have written down their bids, everyone reveals what they wrote. The player with the highest bid wins, but he pays a price equal to the second highest bid made. The Banker verifies the amount of all bids. If a player bids more than their available cash, his bid is nullified - he cannot correct the bid.

If two or more players tie for the winning bid, a second round of bidding takes place between the players who tied. All players must bid at least the amount from the previous round, with the same rules as before: the player with the highest bid pays the amount of the second highest bid. If players tie again for the winning bid, additional rounds of bidding are played until there is a single winner.

Vickrey auctions have been recognised by economists as an accurate way to capture the market value of an item. We selected this method of auction to make auctions speedier and more clean-cut. Although most people are familiar with auctioning in a traditional escalating-bid fashion, this is time-consuming and tangential to actual play. By focusing all players on bidding on a company, whether they actually are seeking to purchase it or as a strategic move, we up the level of social interplay without slowing gameplay.

2.6 Paying Service Fees

While running each of the companies they own, each player is “using” the services offered by the companies owned by the other players. What’s a Robber Baron without his furs, a bank to hold his gains and a newspaper in which to read about his recent industrial triumphs? However, when a player’s token lands on a company owned by another player, the bill is due. Service fees must be paid immediately in order to continue doing business or else the player simply cannot go on. If the company is mortgaged, however, no fees can be collected.

When one player holds the Title Deeds for all companies in the same color group, he has formed a monopoly in that industry. The service fees usually charged for any unmortgaged company without improvements are increased, even if another company in the color group is mortgaged. Improvements can be bought in the form of offices that increase the service fees on the corresponding company. Once a company has four offices, the final improvement is to replace the offices with a headquarters.

2.7 Railroads

There are four railroads on the board, each of which has a price of \$200. The railroads also have a ticket price for service fees, which increase according to how many railroads an owner has: \$25 if one railroad is owned, \$50 if two railroads are owned, \$100 if three railroads are owned, and \$200 if all four railroads are owned.

After the Inflation Track reaches the middle space on the third row, any player starting their turn on a railroad may “Ride the Rails.” If that player pays the ticket price to the owner of that railroad, he can trade the movement of either die to move to the next railroad on the board, then continue moving his token for the other die result. If a player passes Go by riding the rails, he collects a salary.

The addition of the “Ride the Rails” mechanic allows for a limited amount of circumstantial player choice that can be used strategically throughout the game. The addition of this particular mechanic also plays well with the mischievous ethos of “Robber Baron Monopoly” by providing an opportunity to avoid paying service fees in a pinch.

2.8 Power Companies

There are two power companies on the board which charge any player who lands on that space an electrical bill according to how many offices and headquarters that player owns. If one power company is owned, the fees for an electric bill are \$10 for every office and \$50 for every headquarters the visiting player has. If both power companies are owned, the fees for an electric bill are \$20 for every office and \$100 for every headquarters the visiting player has.

The redesign of these companies was intended to repair what was otherwise an underutilized monopoly. These companies, when fully owned by a single player, also act as an effective “rubber band” mechanic by charging the steepest fees to the players who own the most companies and the most improvements. This also gives the power companies efficacy in the late game as they now scale with the development of the board.

2.9 Chance and Trust

We saw an enormous opportunity to overhaul Chance and Community Chest from the original game. By consolidating and updating the outcomes included in the two original card sets into our new category, Trust, we created a singular pile of cards that effect simple outcomes on a player. Then, reimagining Chance cards as action cards, we drastically increased the interactivity of the game as a whole. Furthermore, we created a wealth of new player choices that were perfectly aligned with the ethos of our “Robber Baron” theme.

Obtaining or activating Chance and Trust cards is the same as it was in the original game. When a player lands on any space marked Chance or Trust, he takes the top card from the deck indicated. For a Trust card, it is drawn face up so everyone can see it. The instructions on the card are followed immediately and the card is returned face up to the bottom of the deck. The exception is the "Get out of Jail Free" card, which is held by the player until used and then returned face up to the bottom of the deck.

For a Chance card, the player draws it, reads the instructions, and keeps it face down amongst his companies and cash. That player may use it at anytime as an action card on any dice roll, his own or someone else's. Chance cards can be played on dice rolls that have been altered by other Chance cards, for as long as players have cards to play and are willing to play them. This creates opportunities for huge amounts of interactivity and player choice that is simply not present otherwise. Players are able to weigh the significance of their chance cards on each roll of the dice. This includes them in every turn of play rather than just their own.

Chance cards can also be played on Stock Market rolls. After all Chance cards have been played and a die result is final, all cards are returned face up to the bottom of the deck. This "market manipulation" plays on the cheeky and mischievous "Robber Baron" mindset the game embraces as its theme.

Chance cards and "Get out of Jail Free" cards can be sold or used as part of other negotiations, but Chance cards must be revealed to all players before they can be exchanged between players. This enhances the fast-paced company dealing that Monopoly touts as its theme and we include as a core gameplay objective.

When the end of a deck is reached, the card on top will be face-up. The Banker then shuffles the deck and places the cards face down in the space provided.

A player can only hold two Chance cards at a time. If a player has two Chance cards and makes a roll that will place him on Chance, he has two options. Either he can play a Chance card that changes the dice result, or he can land on Chance, draw a card, immediately decide which card to discard, and go back down to two cards. The player does not need to reveal the Chance card that he decided to discard. By limiting the number of cards that can be held at a given time we ensure that no individual interaction will be dominated by a large hand of Chance cards, balancing this mechanic against the essential randomness of the game.

A player cannot play a Chance card on any dice roll that lands a player on Chance or Trust after a card has been drawn and read. If a Chance card is played while a card is being drawn, but before it has been read by the player, the freshly drawn card must be discarded to the bottom of the appropriate deck unused and unearned. This rule is important in drawing the lines as to what can and cannot be manipulated by this mechanic. We do not want players using meta-knowledge about all the possible outcomes to determine whether to use a Chance card or

not. Chance cards create action and uncertainty, and allowing players to be certain of the outcome of their actions is outside the purpose of the Chance card mechanic.

The addition of the Chance card mechanic is one of the most engaging and fun parts of Robber Baron Monopoly. By creating additional choices for players that are inherently interactive we were able to up player engagement and social interaction. This mechanic specifically infuses a dose of tension and fun into every turn of Robber Baron Monopoly.

2.10 Property Tax

Monopoly originated as a variant of The Landlord's Game, originally designed by Elizabeth Magie Phillips as a way to teach the economic principles of Henry George, especially his Single Property Tax. To simplify these theories within the context of the Monopoly game, Property Tax is a fee of \$20 for each unmortgaged company and \$10 for each mortgaged company.

Again, the simplification of this mechanic has made the game cleaner and quicker. Furthermore, Property Tax is now a more straight-forward "rubber band" mechanic than it was in the original Monopoly game.

2.11 Jail and Corner Spaces

Each of the three non-Go corner spaces has a Jail. This is an effort to rebalance the inherent inequities caused by the placement of a single jail and the statistically heightened probability of landing on the orange companies in the original Monopoly.

Each of the jails included were prominent in the story of John Dillinger: Lima Jail, Crown Point Jail and Cook County Jail. Each corner is shared with another space, which is used when a player's token lands on that space. Lima Jail shares its space with Free Parking; when a player's token lands here, there is no reward or penalty. Crown Point Jail shares its space with Stock Market. After the Inflation Track reaches the middle space on the first row, the Stock Market is open. When a player lands on this space, they must invest at least \$50, although they can choose to invest more. Offices, headquarters and companies can be put up for collateral to the Bank, at their face value, if the player does not have \$50 or wishes to increase their investment. Mortgaged companies can be put up for collateral for their mortgage value. Any companies lost against Stock Market investments are immediately auctioned by the Bank. This serves as an opportunity for the player to use the stock market as a catch-up mechanic or "rubber band" mechanic. At the risk of losing half or even all of what what he puts up as collateral, a player can gamble all of his assets on doubling or even tripling the value of what he owns in a single roll of the dice.

What happens with the player's investment is determined by a roll of both dice:

- 2-5 = The entire investment is lost
- 6-8 = Half of the investment is lost
- 9-11 = The investment is doubled
- 12 = The investment is tripled

Chance cards can be played by the current player as well as by other players in the game to change the outcome of the stock market roll.

Cook County Jail shares its space with "Go to Jail". When a player's token lands here, he has two options. The player can choose to "buy a ticket to the Policeman's Ball" for \$100 in order to avoid going to Jail entirely. Otherwise, the result of the dice determines which Jail the player goes to:

- 2-5 = Go to Lima Jail
- 6-8 = Go to Crown Point Jail
- 9-12 = Go to Cook County Jail

The introduction of this mechanic provides added player choice and makes strategizing over when to go to Jail even more important, especially when considering which jail the player might be sent to.

Besides the Go to Jail space, there are two other ways to be sent to Jail. If, while moving, a player rolls doubles three times in a row on his turn, he does not move according to the third dice result, but immediately goes to Jail. Which Jail is determined by the number he rolled on each of the two dice, as per the Go to Jail space. If a player rolls doubles to land on the Stock Market, his roll for the fate of the investment does not count towards rolling three doubles in a row, and does not interrupt a streak towards rolling three doubles in a row. After rolling on the Stock Market, he rolls again and continues with his turn.

If a player lands on Trust and draws a Go to Jail card, or if a Chance card is played on a dice roll that sends a player to Jail, this happens immediately and ends that player's turn.

Any of these methods can be cancelled if any player uses a "Don't you know who I am?" card from the Trust Deck, which avoids going to Jail entirely. If this card is played after rolling doubles three times in a row, he moves according to the dice and then rolls again. If that player rolls doubles again, he goes to Jail. If a player is sent to Jail using a Chance card, this can be cancelled by playing "Undo the effect of a Chance card."

Once a player is in Jail, he can get out of Jail by playing a "Get out of Jail Free" card, rolling doubles on any of his next three turns, or paying bail. The first turn a player is in Jail, he can choose to pay bail of \$50, or roll the dice. If he rolls doubles, the player moves the number of

spaces according to their dice result. If not, the following turn the player can choose to pay bail of \$100, or roll the dice. Again, rolling doubles allows him to move out of Jail the number of spaces dictated by the dice result. Otherwise, the following turn the player can choose to pay bail of \$150, or roll the dice a third time. If doubles are rolled, he moves that many spaces. If, on this third turn, the player fails to roll doubles, he must pay \$150 and moves forward normally according to the dice result.

If a player gets out of Jail by rolling doubles, she does not take another turn after moving her token.

Our changes in this area of the game are intended to add more player choice, strategy, and interactivity to the game. Chance cards in general have added the ability to ensure a player gets his third set of doubles and is sent to jail, and the “Go to jail” Chance card can be played on oneself to avoid rents. Multiple jails and the option of paying to go to the policeman's ball increases the use of strategic board position in making decisions. The introduction of the stock market adds a fun sidebar to the game and introduces a new and exciting catch up mechanic that also invites interactivity when combined with Chance cards. Overall, the rebalancing of the corner spaces increases player choice, strategic options and interactivity of the game.

2.12 Offices and Headquarters

We made only minor changes to the ways that companies themselves function in the game. The development of companies is still a principal objective of the game and key to a successful outcome in most strategies.

When a player owns all the companies in a color group, she has a monopoly and can buy offices from the Bank and set them on those companies at any time. The price for each office is printed on the Title Deed card for the company. The owner still collects monopoly service fees from any other player who lands on an unimproved company. A player may buy and erect as many offices as her finances will allow, but the offices must be distributed evenly on the companies in any one monopoly. That is to say, all companies in the monopoly must each have an office before any company may have a second office. All companies in the monopoly must each have two offices before any company may have a third office, etc. Similarly, if a player needs to sell off offices, they must be sold evenly: for example, no company can have more than two offices before selling a company's offices down to one. This is a standard rule from the original game that we have chosen to retain. It prevents single spaces from becoming overly dangerous without a very large investment spread across all companies.

When a player has four offices on each company in a monopoly, he may buy a headquarters from the Bank and erect it on a company. The four offices for that company are returned to the Bank when paying the price for the headquarters. Once a company has a headquarters, it cannot be improved any further and it cannot hold more offices or headquarters.

There are 32 offices in the game. Once enough offices have been sold, so that two or more players wish to buy all that remain in the Bank, the Banker must sell the remaining offices at auction. The Banker will need to determine the lowest number of offices that multiple players wish to buy, and auction them together. Similarly, there are 12 headquarters, and if players wish to buy the remaining headquarters, they will be auctioned. Headquarters must be auctioned one at a time.

If all offices are in play on the board, and a player has a monopoly group that has at least one office on each company, that player can upgrade all companies to headquarters if he can afford the full price of buying each company up to four offices and upgrading those offices to headquarters in a single purchase. Other than this method, the only other method by which a player can acquire offices after all have been purchased from the bank is to buy or trade for them from another player (see Trading and Selling).

The values of all of the companies in the game as well as the service fees for each level of development are listed directly on the card in order to simplify math for the player. Furthermore, the service fees and the costs of the companies now have more linear scaling as the player travels the board. This makes their value more predictable and strategies more aligned with company costs (See 4.2 Scaling).

2.13 Trading and Selling

Players may trade or sell the following items at any time to another player: unimproved companies, railroads, power companies, Chance or "Get out of Jail free" cards, offices - not headquarters - and future considerations in the terms of loans and avoiding fees at companies. No company can be sold to another player if offices are standing on any companies in that monopoly/color group. Any offices must be sold to the Bank or another player before the owner can sell any company in that group. Offices may not be sold to another player for less than they would cost to buy from the Bank for the companies where they are being placed. This is in place to stop the possibility of a late game "kingmaker" as well as to encourage players to liquidate and remain in play rather than make a trade as part of a payment that is outside of the value of the companies.

Offices and Headquarters can be sold back to the Bank at any time for one-half the listed price for the company they are standing on. Alternatively, they can be sold to other players at the cost of development for the receiving player's companies. In other words, Player 1 can sell to Player 2 at the price Player 2 would have to pay the bank for developing his companies.

Any such deals can take the place of service fees owed from landing on a company. Future considerations are not enforced in any manner other than that player's reputation in the game (and future games) for trustworthy deals. If deals are expected to be kept, they should have a limited duration, such as for a particular number of turns, times around the board, or times a company (or selected group of companies) is landed on. The addition of deals that aren't

directly associated with the companies and that are not immediately carried out or even enforceable is aimed at capturing the Robber Baron mindset.

2.14 Inflation Track

Pace and duration were consistent problems detected across playtests of the original game and while analyzing the rules for our variant. Under the standard rules of Monopoly wherein the objective is to accumulate all the wealth in the game and control all of the companies, the game took at least four hours and often resulted in an incomplete game as players became fatigued with attempting to conquer the entire board. We addressed languishing play not only by upping the pace of play with some of the aforementioned mechanical changes, but also by giving a finite limit to the number of rounds to be played via the Inflation Track.

In the interior of the board is the Inflation Track, represented by a railroad. It consists of six spaces per row, running along the four rows of board movement, but instead of continuing back onto the first row, the fifth row stretches diagonally across the middle of the board for eight more spaces that culminate in the end of the game. The position of the Inflation Track is marked by a special token in the shape of a train engine. These choices are thematic and work well in conjunction with the “Ride the Rails” mechanic and the railroad spaces that have long been iconic parts of the Monopoly board.

At the beginning of his turn, the last player in the order of play moves the token and advances the Inflation Track one space. Additionally, there are cards in both the Trust deck and Chance deck that advance the track. Trust cards take effect immediately, as usual, while Chance cards allow a player to advance the track when it is beneficial to him. The intention of having the inflation track move at the beginning of the last player’s turn rather than the end is to offset the inherent disadvantage of being the last in turn order. The opportunity for the last player to be the first to face the changes brought on by the Inflation Track gives him a first shot at bigger salaries, hostile buyout and hostile takeover, as well as the opportunity to “Ride the Rails” -- the details of which are given below.

When the Inflation Track reaches the corner space at the end of each row, the salary from passing Go increases by \$50. At the start of the game, the salary is \$200, and this increments to \$250, \$300, \$350, and finally to \$400 at the end of the fourth row, before the train moves along the final row, inward across the board. When the last salary increase, up to \$400, takes effect, all service fees double, including for railroad tickets and electrical bills.

When the Inflation Track reaches the middle space of each row, a new element of the game is introduced.

On the middle space of the first row, the Stock Market opens and players who land on that space invest \$50 or more with a chance to win or lose money (see Jail and Corner Spaces). The stock market is one of our catch up or “rubber band” mechanics that allows a player to take

a risk to make up lost ground. The more risk averse players who have significant cash on hand or plenty of companies will be unlikely to risk it all on the stock market whereas those who perceive themselves to be behind can put it all on the line in an attempt to catch up.

On the middle space of the second row, the Hostile Takeover option is allowed. If a player owns most of the companies in a monopoly group (2 of 3 companies in most color groups or 3 of 4 railroads) when he lands on any company in that group, he can force the owner of the remaining company in that group to sell it for 3x the listed price. Hostile Takeover is allowed whether or not any companies in the monopoly group are mortgaged. This mechanic eliminates a common problem found in the original game, which is that players are often unwilling to make trades that create monopolies out of fear that they will be contributing to their own undoing. We took the old game's "holdouts" and made them into the new game's "buyouts." In practice, as the Inflation Track marker nears Hostile Buyout, players are aware of the impending buyouts and are likely to make a deal before hostile takeovers or buyouts are allowed. This mechanic leads to more wheeling and dealing, social interplay and interactivity. It also increases the pace of play by accelerating the pace of acquiring monopolies and by redistributing money to players for development or more company acquisitions.

On the middle space of the third row, the Ride the Rails option is allowed. Any player who starts on a railroad can choose to buy a ticket, paying the ticket price to the owner of that railroad. He can then move his token to the next railroad as the first space of movement on the white die, and continuing moving spaces normally after that. This movement cannot be interrupted with a Chance card after that player has paid for a ticket. If the player owns the railroad in question, this happens as soon as he announces "I'm going to ride the rails." This mechanic opens a new niche strategy for avoiding paying service fees, increasing player choice as well as interactivity. It is also a nod to the significance of the railroads in the Gilded Age and the iconic image of the railroads on classic Monopoly.

On the middle space of the fourth row, a Hostile Takeover no longer requires landing on the correct monopoly group in order to buy another player's company. At any time a player who owns most of a monopoly group and has enough money can force the player who owns the other company in that group to sell it for 3x the listed price. If any company set has not become a monopoly at this point, Hostile Takeover makes it likely that it soon will.

On the middle space of each row of the inflation track players are issued an additional Chance card. The infusion of Chance cards into the system ensures that players will be given ample opportunities to affect gameplay with their Chance cards and that no one player will be overpowered by Chance cards without the opportunity to play his own for defensive purposes.

The final market event doubles the cost of all service fees and releases everyone who is in Jail. The final 8 rounds that follow this market event are action packed. There is an additional Chance card issued to all players at this point which heightens the interactivity and spurs a great deal of action. Furthermore, the increased service fees separate the winners and losers as

those who were barely hanging on struggle even harder to survive and the most successful players reap the benefits of their empire. In the last row, bankruptcies are suffered and final fortunes are made.

When the Inflation Track reaches the last space, it is the last turn of the game. Play continues to the last player in turn, and the game ends after his turn is complete.

The introduction of the Inflation Track gives the player a fixed number of rounds to complete their objective. In the past, losing players have found themselves languishing in an unending game, desperately trying to preserve their fortune. The “end of the line,” the final stop on Inflation Track, gives them a light at the end of the tunnel.

The rule changes that happen along the Inflation Track accelerate play and freshen the play as the game progresses, keeping play engaging as dynamics shift and new stratagems become possible.

By adding the Inflation Track we improved the speed of play and the duration of the game, increased interactivity, and strengthened the Robber Baron theme!

2.15 Mortgages

There are no major changes to the mechanics of mortgages in the context of this variant.

Unimproved companies can be mortgaged through the Bank at any time. Before an improved company can be mortgaged, all the offices or headquarters on that company must be sold back to the Bank, or to another player. Since improvements must be bought and sold evenly for a monopoly, the other companies in the monopoly cannot have more than one office each before mortgaging a company.

No service fees can be collected on mortgaged companies, but fees can be collected on unmortgaged companies in the same group.

In order to lift the mortgage, the owner must pay the Bank the mortgage fees printed on the back of the Title Deed card. The owner may sell the mortgaged company to another player, at any price or as part of another deal. The company remains mortgaged until the new owner pays the Bank the mortgage fees.

2.16 Bankruptcy

Bankruptcy is a very important part of Robber Baron Monopoly. Our mechanics have made it less likely that a player becomes fully eliminated before the final few game rounds but it is still

possible. Eliminating a player accelerates the Inflation Track, ending the game sooner. Bankruptcy rules remain mechanically the same as in the original Monopoly.

A player is in danger of going bankrupt when he owes more than he can pay to another player or to the Bank. A player can make arrangements with any player to pay that debt in order to avoid bankruptcy.

Before going bankrupt, the player must sell all headquarters they own to the Bank, and then sell all offices they own, either to the Bank or to other players. All improvements sold to the Bank are sold for one-half of the listed price for the company they are standing on. Any offices sold to another player must be sold for at least the listed price for offices going onto the company they are being purchased for. Once this is done, if there are no other players willing to buy the unimproved companies, those companies must be mortgaged.

If the cash from these sales and mortgages are not sufficient to pay the creditor, the player is declared bankrupt. If the player going bankrupt owes another player, all remaining cash and companies are turned over to that player, who can keep those companies as mortgaged or pay to lift the mortgage at that time. If the player going bankrupt owes the Bank, all cash and remaining companies are returned, and are no longer mortgaged. In this case, the Banker immediately auctions each company in turn.

A bankrupt player immediately retires from the game.

2.17 Ending the Game

After the game ends, all players total the value of all their assets. Companies count for their listed price, mortgaged companies count for their mortgaged value, offices and headquarters count for the purchase price for the company where they are standing, and cash is counted normally. Chance and Trust cards are discarded, and have no value at the end of the game. The player with the greatest total assets wins.

This follows the true objective of the game, wealth accumulation, and celebrates those who survive while rewarding those who made the most with a victory. We felt this change enhanced the feel-good moments while making the feel-bad moments of elimination a less prominent part of the game. In the end, all of the players are Robber Barons and should be reveling in their wealth.

2.18 Theme, Interactivity and Pace

The changes we made to the mechanics of original Monopoly have served to enhance the game by strengthening the theme, improving interactivity and adjusting the pace of play. Every choice we added for the player and every change we made to the aesthetics and mechanics of

the game were made with theme in mind. Our variant improved interactivity throughout the game by increasing the amount of player choice and strategic options. We increased the pace of the game by packing more events and options for the player into a smaller timeframe. Allowing players to make real choices not only during their turn but also during other turns, as well as creating choices outside of company development and ownership, ensures that all players remain engaged for the duration of the game.

3. Story and Aesthetics

3.1 Story & Theme

Players are enterprising captains of industry in the Gilded Age (1865-1914), although detractors call them Robber Barons. The goal is the accumulation of as much wealth, power and influence as possible to dominate the economy and drive competitors to ruin. Players must compete against other businessmen or “barons” to gain control of as many companies as possible, ideally gaining control all of the companies that provide the same service so a player can form a monopoly. Once a player forms a monopoly, each company can open offices to collect more service fees; once players have maximised the number of offices a company can support, a baron can begin to build headquarters, the massive capitalist monoliths that empower the barons to charge as many service fees as the market can bear.

While traveling the world, barons might have to stop to use the services offered by the other players, but Robber Barons do not operate by the same rules as would normally befit an intrepid businessman. Through negotiation, bills can be ignored for months, even years at a time, and a baron’s empire will continue to operate. Sometimes past due amounts could be demanded on threat of discontinuing service when most inconvenient for a rival, and sometimes they are used as leverage during political disputes. When a player’s game piece lands on another player’s company, the bill has come due for those services. A player must settle a player’s accounts at that time, or arrange a deal with the person owed in order to continue operating their own businesses.

There are ten services, and between them twenty-eight companies offering those services:

Newspapers:

The World

Journal-American

Supply Companies:

Pacific Fur Co.

Southwest Fur Co.

American Fur Co.

Department Stores:

Abraham & Straus

McCreary's

A.T. Stewart & Co.

Shipping:

Pacific Mail Steamship Co.

Metropolitan Steamship Co.

Accessory Transit Co.

Telecommunications:

Western Union

Western Electric

Bell Telephone

Banks:

Jay Cooke & Co.

T. Mellon & Sons

J. & W. Seligman & Co.

Steel:

Federal Steel

National Steel

Carnegie Steel

Gas & Oil:

Consolidated Gas

Standard Oil

Railroads

Pennsylvania Railroad

Big Four Railroad

New York Central Railroad

Erie Railroad

Electricity

Westinghouse Electric

Thomas-Houston Electric

3.2 Visual Style

The style of Monopoly: Robber Baron Edition is set to match the aesthetics of the Gilded Age. Dominated by simple imagery, a muted color scheme, and thematically appropriate names, the board matches the era's aesthetic closely.

The gameboard is dominated by browns, oranges, and white, matching the common color themes popular in the gilded industrial age.

In keeping with the theme, the central track, which meters the movement of the Inflation Track, is designed to look like a railroad.

Cards and companies are color coded and include all pertinent information. Chance and Trust cards are denoted by easy-to-recognize images to make them easily identifiable.

We also have plans for a collector's edition printed on oilcloth with wooden pieces to match the materials used in game boards during the period of Monopoly's original popularity, the 1920s and '30s.



ROBBER BARON MONOPOLY

FREE PARKING (14-16)

COOK COUNTY JAIL (9-12)
GO TO JAIL OR BUY A TICKET TO THE POLICEMAN'S BALL \$100

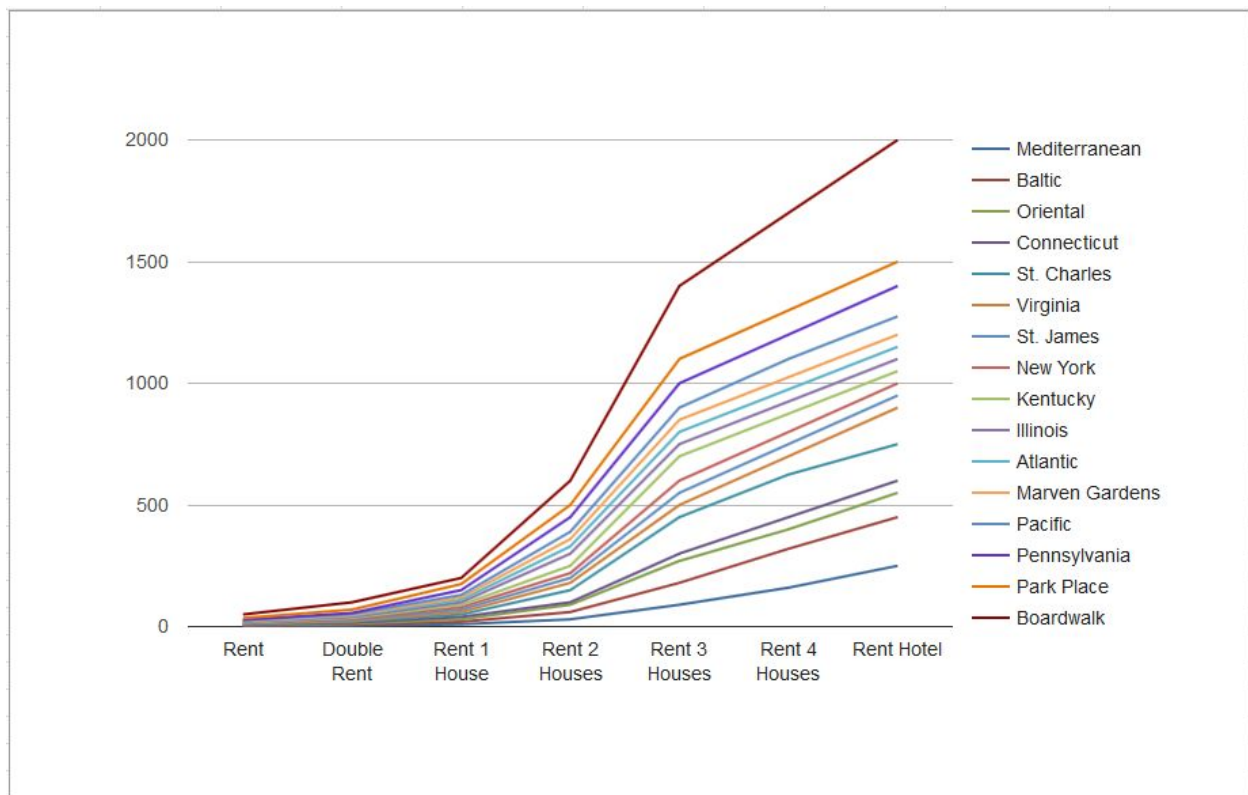
CROWN POINT JAIL (6-8)
STOCK MARKET
2 - STOCK MARKET
4 - RAILROAD INVESTMENT
11 - RAILROAD INVESTMENT
17 - RAILROAD INVESTMENT

Chance \$60	The World \$60	Chance \$80	Journal - American \$80	Property Tax	Big Four Railroad \$200	Pacific Fur Company \$100	Trust	Southwest Fur Company \$100	American Fur Company \$120
Standard Oil \$400	Trust \$350	Consolidated Gas \$350	Edison Illuminating Company \$200	Fire Railroad \$200	Carnegie Steel \$320	National Steel \$300	Chance \$300	Federal Steel \$300	Jay Cooke & Co. \$280
Abraham & Straus \$145	Thomas - Houston Electric \$200	McCreary's \$140	A. T. Stewart & Co. \$160	Pennsylvania Railroad \$200	Pacific Mail Steamship Co. \$180	Trust \$180	Metropolitan Steamship Co. \$180	Accessory Transit Co. \$0025	Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph \$220
Stock Market Opens	End of the Line	Jail Break	Ride the Rails	Hostile Buyout	Hostile Takeover	Hostile Takeover	Hostile Takeover	Hostile Takeover	Hostile Takeover
\$200 G _o	\$250 G _o	\$400 G _o & Service x2	\$350 G _o	\$300 G _o	\$350 G _o	\$300 G _o	\$350 G _o	\$300 G _o	\$350 G _o
J. & W. Seligman & Co. \$260	Trust \$260	T. Mellon & Sons \$260	Trust \$260	New York Central Railroad \$200	Bell Telephone \$240	Western Electric \$220	Chance \$220	Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph \$220	Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph \$220

4. Scaling

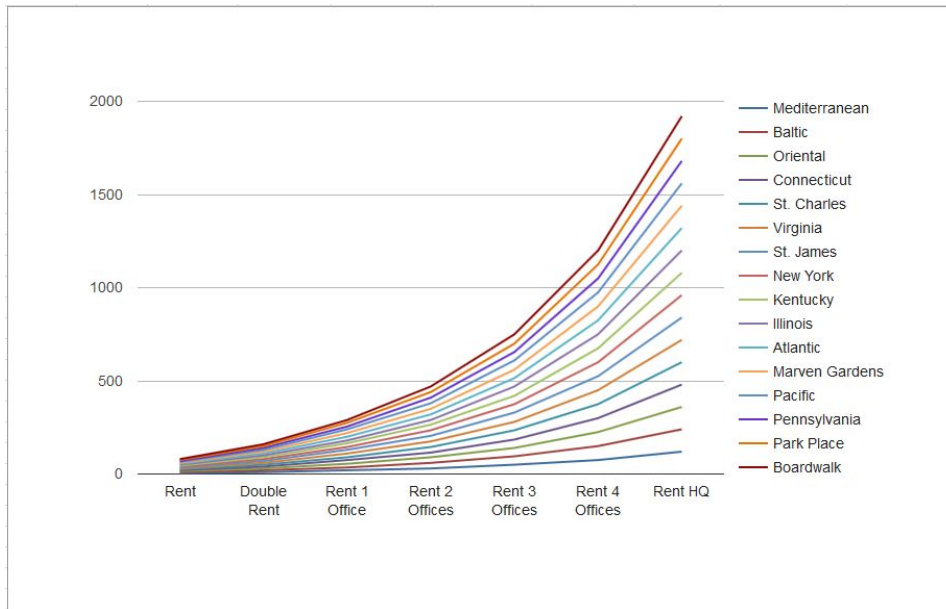
4.1 Traditional Monopoly Scaled Values

In traditional versions of Monopoly, the rent progression is erratic. Rents increase sharply with the third house, and do not increase proportionately afterwards with four houses or a hotel. The least and most valuable companies, Mediterranean Ave. and Boardwalk, are significantly undervalued and overvalued compared to the nearly steady progression for the rest of the companies between the two. However, that steady progression is interrupted by minor variations in some mid-valued companies: the ratios for increasing rent change from one color group to the next, and St. Charles Place does not match the ratios for the other companies in its group.

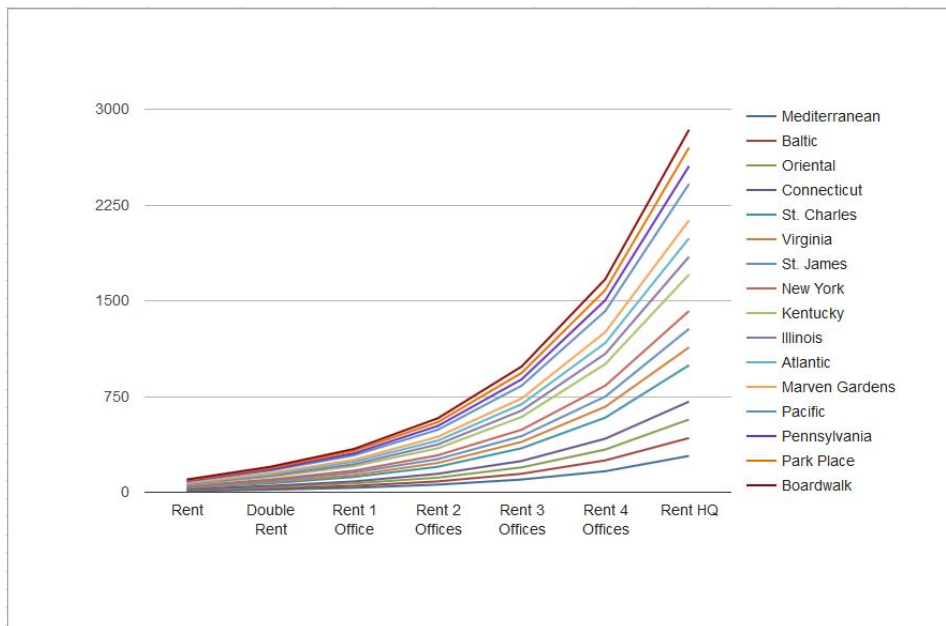


4.2 Early Adjustments and Playtesting

The first attempts to create more balanced values began with simply removing all variations, and creating a completely even ratio for all rent values:

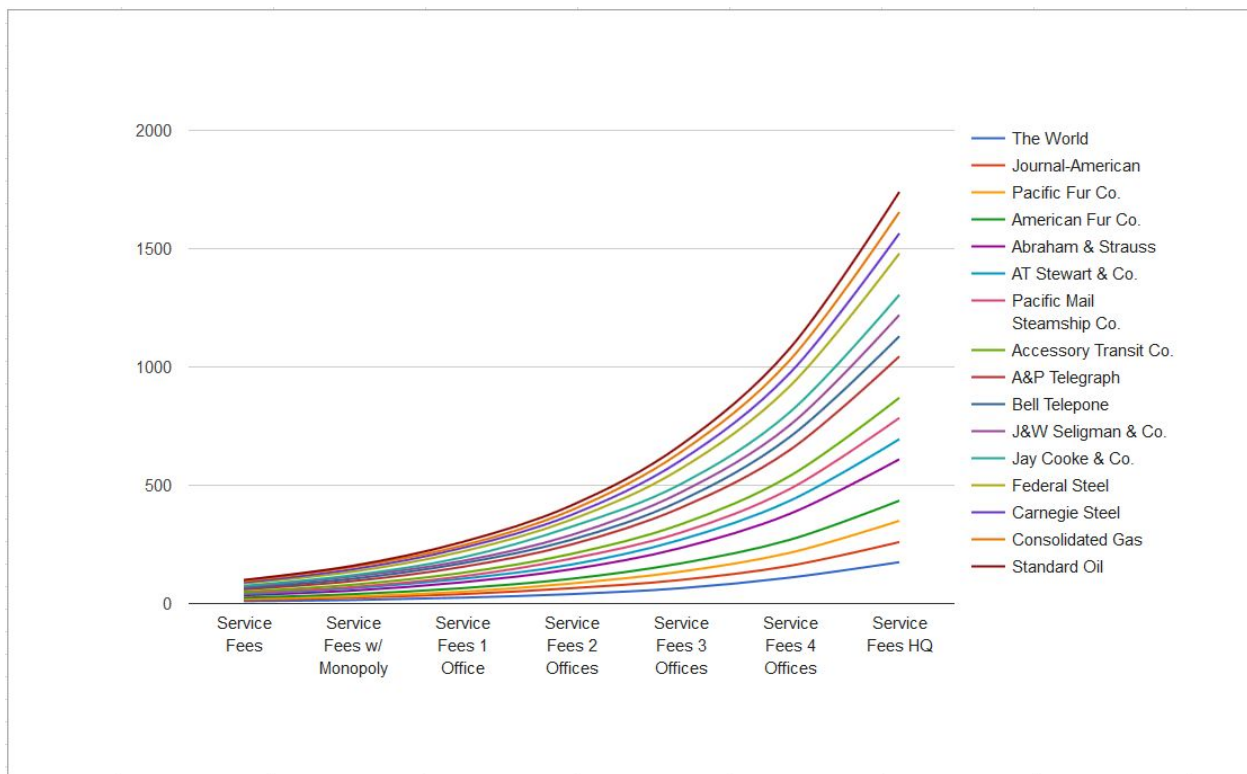


This produced a greater feeling of equality between the companies: Boardwalk was still the most valuable, but not disproportionately. However, given the difficulty of improving companies on the fourth row with higher prices on houses and hotels, those last two color groups never seemed worth the development. To address this, a slight adjustment was added, with a greater ratio for each house and a jump in rent for each row:



4.3 Final Adjustments

These newly scaled values were maintained through a majority of playtests, although one concern remained. While the ratio of rent increase with each successive house was reasonable, the fees when doubled on the final row of the Inflation Track were sometimes slightly too disruptive. In general, players appreciated that nearly anything can happen at the end of the game, but some rents were still too overwhelming. This was addressed by changing the very first increase in rent: doubling when forming a monopoly. By changing this to the same 1.6x multiplier used at every other increment, all subsequent values were adjusted, with an even curve throughout:



5. Appendix

5.1 Quick Start Rules

1. Setup Pick a Banker, who distributes money and a Chance card to each player. Everyone puts a token on Go and rolls the dice. The player with the highest result goes first, then play continues to the left.

2. Play On a player's turn, roll both dice. Move the number of spaces indicated by the dice then deal with the space a player landed on. A player may be in a position to draw a card, buy a company, pay service fees, or follow instructions. If a player roll doubles for movement, after moving the player's token and dealing with the player's results, roll again and move the player's token.

If a player roll doubles three times in a row, ignore the third result and go to Jail.

When it is the last player's turn, he advances the Inflation Track one space before the start of his turn, then proceeds as normal.

3. Companies If a player land on the space for an unowned company, he may choose to buy it for the listed price. If a player cannot or chooses not to buy it, the company is immediately auctioned.

All auctions are made by each player writing down a bid. The player with the highest bid wins, and pays the amount of the second-highest bid. When only one company in a set is unowned, it is immediately auctioned.

If a player owns an entire set, he has a monopoly and can charge higher service fees. If that monopoly is a color group, he can buy offices that let him charge even more. Once a player has four offices, he can replace them with a headquarters to charge the highest service fees.

If a player lands on the space for a company that another player owns, he must pay those service fees. If he doesn't have enough money, he may have to sell offices, mortgage his own companies, or go bankrupt and be knocked out of the game.

4. Other Spaces When a player lands on or passes Go, he collects a salary. The other three corners besides Go have a Jail on the inside, and another space on the outside. If a player lands on one of these corners from his movement, he follows the instructions for the outside space.

Free Parking is a space with no reward or penalty.

The Stock Market is where the player invests \$50 or more with a chance to win or lose some money.

Go to Jail will send the player to one of the three Jail spaces, unless he buys his way out of it.

If a player land on Chance or Trust, he draws a card from the appropriate deck. A Chance card is drawn face-down, examined and put in front of him. He can play it on any future die roll, whether his own or someone else's.

A Trust card is drawn face up, and the player immediately does what the card says.

If a player lands on Property Tax, he must pay the bank according to how many companies he owns.

5. The Inflation Track and Ending the Game

As the Inflation Track is advanced by the last player (or the few cards that move it forward) new conditions will come into play. The salary from passing Go increases by \$50 at the end of each row. In addition, the middle of each row introduces new game rules: opening the Stock Market, allowing Hostile Takeovers, and Riding the Rails.

When the Inflation Track reaches the final row that extends diagonally across the board, all service fees are doubled for the rest of the game. When the Inflation Track reaches the final space, the game will end after the last player's turn.

When the game ends, all players count up the total value of their assets. The richest player wins.