

Notes of version 5_72 – Beacons Update

Please replace the section on settlements on page XXX with the section below.

Settlements

Many planets will have one or more Settlements on them. These were first introduced by a mission called “The Settlers” introduced as part of the Frontiers update, and overhauled and expanded with the “Beacons” update in 2025.

The Settlers Mission still exists and is triggered by completing a number of warps. Once you reach the indicated location, you will have to interact with the locals and kill some Sentinels for them, at which point they offer to make you their Overseer. If you pass over the chance to manage it, you can locate further opportunities by buying a map from the cartographer at any Space Station. The Settlements Chart costs 5 units of Navigation Data. Every inhabited planet should have at least one, but in crowded areas of a Galaxy those nearby may already be owned by other players.

Is there still a bug?

When I was researching Settlements after the Beacons update, I often found I could not find things that ought to be present – not least the settler that I needed to interact with to take control of the place! If you are struggling to progress – finding buildings that need your attention, for example – try quitting the game and reloading. I worked for me on a number of occasions.

What are Settlements?

Settlements consist of a collection of buildings with various purposes, all of which contribute to the well-being of the citizens, played by NPCs who roam the streets. Their actions can read in speech bubbles, or you can question them to find out their status. A well-developed settlement may include some useful features, such as Starship Outfitters or Scanning Towers

Most, if not all, of the available Settlements you encounter will be C-Class, with running expenses exceeding productivity and a debt that is increasing. Settlements on planets with dissonance may be inhabited by the Autophage, with a different appearance and set of features, but you won't be able to find these until you have revealed their presence in your current game.

Is it running a Settlement right for you?

If you are early on in your current game, you might want to delay taking on the role of Overseer. Consider a few things first. You will be required to defend the settlement from Sentinel attacks, so your fighting powers should be reasonably advanced. You may also need a supply of some of the more exotic items to grow the town – for example, Aronium. If you don't have a Frigate fleet bringing stuff like that back to your Freighter, or lack the necessary crafting recipes, you will spend a lot of time trying to acquire items that are hard to come by in the early stages of a game.

Getting a Settlement into a state where it is bringing in rewards is long process. Each development stage can take anything from a few minutes up to four hours, and it won't be apparent how long each wait will be until you have set it in motion. Fortunately, like growing crops, progress happens in real rather than game play time, so to don't actually need it to be running it for the clock to count down to the next stage.

However, this also means that the slower you are to reach the point where the settlement is running at a profit, the longer it will take to pay off the debt.

My advice is that you will find running a settlement less frustrating later in the game, rather than at the earliest opportunity you get to take one on.

Running multiple Settlements

You are now allowed to run up to four Settlements. Once you have one, you may encounter a visitor that invites you visit a new one, quite possibly inhabited by the Autophage.

A settlement on an extreme planet will be a lot more effort to develop because of the need to take shelter frequently. If there aren't a lot of resources lying around, you might find yourself having to make trips to harvest or buy what you need. There is also the question of how advanced the settlement is before you start running it. Most of the un-owned Settlements I have discovered are Class C, but there have been some Class B ones. I would suspect that the frequency of A and S Class opportunities is similar to finding a high-class Freighter.

Each Settlement will be inhabited by one of the three races, so if your vocabulary is better for a particular race, then that's another thing to take into account when you choose.

You cannot tell how a Settlement is fairing until you go to the centre and operate the panel attached to the **Settlement Hub Interface**. This information is available before you become the Overseer. If you decide you want to have a go at running the place, you can do so here, although if this isn't your first attempt you will have to provide some proof of suitability in the form of a quantity of products.

Fighting off the Sentinels

Your first task is likely to be the elimination of a bunch of Corrupted Sentinels. You can see on the Settlement Information display the current Alert Level, and when it reaches 100% you are guaranteed a visit. If you are well armed and shielded, you will be fine, but if not, you had better improve your fighting skills as this is going to be a regular occurrence.

Building the Overseer's Office

You need to do this as soon as you can, as it will provide you with a Teleport. Visit the construction site and opening the panel. This initial building task requires common items – 210 Silicate, 5 Metal Plating and 3 Microprocessors - and just a few minutes waiting time, so you soon will have access to your office and the **Settlement Administration Terminal**, an interface for managing the settlement properly.

Building Facilities

After that, you can often choose what you build next, with some facilities affecting the citizen's level of happiness, other bearing an ongoing maintenance cost, but most of them increasing the overall income of the settlement. Choose carefully, as each item you build can take many hours to complete and may require you to provide some exotic materials.

If you aren't offered any building opportunities, you can choose to upgrade the class of each building to maximise the profitability. The items you need now are harder to come by – for example

Nitrogen for most farming buildings. Once a building is above level C you will see it's Class symbol hovering above it.

Profit and Loss

At first your settlement will almost certainly running at a loss - **Productivity** is less than the cost of **Maintenance**. Your first priority is to address the balance by building features, upgrading buildings or making other choices presented to you. For example, a Starship Hub will increase trading opportunities, perhaps at the expense of Citizen happiness.

You will almost certainly have a **Debt** as well, and you can't use your own cash to put this right. Once the Settlement is running a surplus, you will begin to pay off the debt – it happens automatically. Once the debt is cleared, you will be able to reap the rewards of your work.

Once your Settlement has cleared its debt, production will restart, and you will be able to take the profits in the form of Raw Materials and Trading Items, but not currency. The Settlement isn't going to make you rich, at least not for a while, as the initial rewards are best described as underwhelming. What's more, there is no cash surplus, so any further expenditure will put you straight back into debt.

Running the Settlement

Putting profitability over everything else may be counterproductive. A visitor may be an expert in a particular field and should be encouraged to stay even though they will increase or put you back into debt. Visitors may turn up with offers to help you in some other way – you generally get enough information to know if this is going to be a good idea.

Citizens may ask you to authorise missions that will require you to make expenditure. These can cost you quite a lot of money, but the benefits may outweigh the cost. You will also be asked to mediate on their disputes with one another. The Settlement Status report shows you settlement features that are both good and bad, helping you make choices.