

June 17th, 2022: Paralives Developer Weekly Chat

This weekly chat is held on Discord for Hero and Legend tier patrons. Every week, you can ask a few questions to any developer from Friday 1PM to Monday 1PM ET and they will get back to you with their answers the next Friday.

Visit www.patreon.com/alexmasse/ for details.

Community's choice question

This question got 6 votes from the Super Patrons on Discord!

Entirago:

I've noticed that in Sims (3 at least), it seems like the butler/babysitter/nanny/maid is omniscient. They know exactly where they need to be next. Now, not saying that Paralives will even have those roles, but if it did, it'd be neat if the service para did kind of a patrol, and if they spotted something in their job description, then they'd address it

Anna:

I agree it might be more realistic, but it's a bit less sandbox-y. The challenge with these roles in the Sims is mostly to have enough money to hire them in order to get rid of the chores yourself, but if you add the challenge of having to wait for them to come and things like that, it might be more annoying than the bonus it provides to the gameplay. We'd have to think more about this balance!

General questions

Red27:

This might have already been asked, but if we have been part of the patreon long enough, and paid enough, will we still need to purchase the game on release? I'm not certain what kind of price range you are looking at, but it would feel just a little sad to have to pay another 60\$. Not a deal breaker, but just curious if there is anything like that in the works.

Alex:

Hey there! We are looking into our options and we are considering the idea but can't confirm anything yet. Thank you for asking and for your generous support on Patreon!

lanearoo:

I've devsl!! I'm so excited to have thought of a question this week, even if you're not able to answer it at this time lol. I'm wondering if you can share any thoughts you have on the "edge of the map." If I zoom as far out from the Paralives town as possible, and/or scroll all the way in one direction, what might I see? Might the land/water expand beyond the limits of my screen, like in The Sims 2, or might it be an isometric chunk of terrain floating in space, like in the original Rollercoaster Tycoon? Or something else entirely?

Alex:

Hi! Good question. We are planning to test the cropped terrain chunks like in Rollercoaster Tycoon so see how it would look in our game. It's possible that it won't work in the end but it's something that we will be testing!

Sebastian's Pool Dive:

What would you say is the most difficult/time-consuming portion of live mode development? And do you think once you get past that stage, things will be smooth sailing for live mode?

Alex:

The pathfinding system, the interaction system and the animation system are technically complex to develop. Once we have that, characters will be able to do all sorts of actions around the house which will be a huge milestone. Then, the other systems like skills, relationships, needs and jobs might be less complex on the technical side but will require a lot of game design, testing and tweaks to make sure that they are fun so it's a different challenge!

Domon:

What's your next focus after you're done with the interaction menu and queue?

Alex:

Studying if and how we can do multitasking, adding a feature to our animation system so that a different animation can be played for a given interaction depending on the height of the character, adapting the walk and run animations so that it works regardless of the height of the character and making the characters do little side steps if they need to turn around while standing in place.

Devs questions

Gui

Time for the call roll! Hi Alex! How are you? How was your week?

Alex:

Great, thank you, hope you too!

Hi Léa! How are you? How was your week?

Léa:

Hello Gui! I'm doing great, I hope you do too. I've been parkskating a lot recently so I'm super sore and tired, but it makes me really happy!

Hi Anna! How are you? How was your week?

Anna:

Hi Alice! I'm good, the weather is perfect these days to go on walks! (if you don't account for the major storm from last week, oops) I hope it stays like this for most of the summer.

Hi Alice! How are you? how was your week?

Alice:

Hi Gui!!! I'm doing well thank you! I went to see the new Lightyear movie. I'm a big Toy Story fan so I was really looking forward to this one. I really liked it!

Hi Jérémie! How are you? How was your week?

Jérémie:

Hello Gui! I'm pretty good, thanks, last week was busy, as usual :)

Hi Sonia! How are you? How was your week?

Sonia:

Hey Gui! Im good thanks for asking! I had a super nice week, some of my friends are in Montreal so we hang out and I showed them some cool places :D

Hi Étienne! How are you? How was your week?

Étienne:

Hello Gui! I'm doing good!! Absolutely exhausted as I came back from LARPing! It rained a lot, but I had some silly fun!

Hi Andrei! How are you? How was your week?

Andrei:

What's up Gui! I've been doing well thank you! I finally got my driver's license and I did a bunch of shows this past few weeks. Hope you're doing good too

Hi Chloé! How are you? How was your week?

Chloé:

Hi Gui! My week was alright, but I've been plagued with awful allergies for the past month and well...that sucks a bit! I'm hoping it has reached its peak and that it'll calm down a bit! Hope you had a great week yourself :)

Hi Javiera! How are you? How was your week?

Javiera:

Hello! :D I'm doing great, Gui. I hope you're doing well too! I finally got the laptop I ordered a while ago and it's making me draw more hihi I'm excitedly preparing merch for a convention I'll soon be attending ✨💪 It's so fun going back to a hobby I've had to leave behind.

BusiestPolarBear:

Javi how are you setting in?

Javiera:

I think I'm doing well! :D I hope the other devs think so too 🥳👉👈 I love when we get to work in the office and chat >:3 I'm always a bit worried I'm working too slowly or not doing enough, but that's very much my own insecurities talking <:) First jobs are always going to be intimidating and I have to remind myself the whole point of the internship is for me to learn and become better 🍌

Entirago:

To any dev, what's a mischievous interaction you'd love to see in the game?

Léa:

Being able to surprise someone when they are not looking. I saw a dog do it in a video, it was the cutest thing ever!

Alice:

Hi Ent! I'd love it if we could have the ability to do pranks to other Paras, and have a mischief skill to develop :o Like ringing at one's door and going into hiding, opening someone's mail, listening at the door, peeking at one's window from outside... I have many ideas. 😊 Of course, getting caught would result in a malus in the relationships and a bad reputation! (if we ever have reputations hehe).

Possible Assassin (Ny):

To all the devs, if you could go back in time through the development cycle what's one thing you'd do?

It can be anything as long as its related to the game and the studio!

Léa:

I would start working full time earlier than I did for sure. At the beginning I was still a student, I already had another job, and it made my life really difficult, where I could have just drop everything and start full time right away to save time and energy!

Andrei:

Hey Ny! I'd probably tell myself to not overthink the music demos too much and not be afraid of spending more money on more instruments!

Alice:

Hello Ny, on my side I'm not sure. Maybe start learning Blender earlier. :)

Sebastian's Pool Dive:

To Alex: What's your favorite memory of your childhood dog whom Doggo is based on?

Alex:

I was a small child and in the winter, she was able to pull a sleigh in the snow with me on it!

BusiestPolarBear:

What is the dumbest thing your pet has ever done?

Anna:

One of my family's cats was sometimes really excited to go outside in our backyard, but when we finally let him (with supervision), he always got the instant zoomies and rushed on top of our big linden tree. Of course, he was too scared to go down and used to mew like crazy until we got him down. The dumbest thing in all of this was that he did that every single time we let him outside and never figured out it was a mistake.

Léa:

When I was little, I used to love moving my bedroom furnitures around, rearranging everything. One time I did it during the evening, and my dog didn't remembered the changes that I made. During the night she came to check on me and tried to jump on my bed, but I moved it to the other side of the room and she just slammed down against the floor. Thankfully, she didn't hurt herself! I was laughing so much that she refuses to cuddle for a few hours after that

Chloé:

My cat runs straight into my screen door when I try to let him in and out of the house half the time!

Javiera:

While my brown dog is happy kicking doors open and bursting through, my gray dog refuses to nudge open doors! It's always funny to go looking for him just to find him standing there quietly... Staring through a perfectly wide enough gap... Just nudge it bro... you can do it... You're a little slinky, I'm sure you can go through a 6inch space...

Andrei:

There's just so much to talk about...He crazy

Alice:

Honestly both of my pets are very smart haha. But I think my horse is afraid of chickens. Everything else is ok, but not chickens. I kind of get it, they make me uncomfortable too. 🐔

Étienne:

My pet frog kept eating my finger... multiple times a day. I swear that frog had one brain cell in its head bouncing around like a DVD logo.

ShadowRose:

I think I spent some time with my nieces, if you couldn't tell by my very family and children related contributions so far (even if I hid inside most the time because they were waaaaay too hyper), and it leads me to ask you what's the most memorable interaction you've had with a younger family member (or with a close friends younger family member)? And if you would like to see anything resembling those real life experiences in paralives?

Chloé:

At family gatherings, I would often play games on my portable consoles and without fail, my younger family members would climb onto my shoulders in the hopes of catching a glimpse of what I was playing, or try to snatch the console away from me to play it for themselves. As a teenager at the time, I kind of hated the experience, but I laugh at it now and look back on it fondly (maybe it's because now they are teenagers/young adults and I can have nice conversations with them, and now I feel old!). I think seeing the growth of a relationship as the parties grow older is nice, and would totally be cool and heartwarming to have in the game!

Léa:

I have a little brother and a little sister, they are both super cute and they used to love playing restaurant with me. I was supposed to order things and they would fakely prepare everything, being really serious and organized. I also loved cooking with them, they were always super happy to help make chocolate cake!

Étienne:

I frisebe'd a Lego baseplate across the living room to my brother and it hit him in the eye. Good times! XD

Andrei:

I have a lot of very fond memories with my younger cousin. Right before I left from Mexico to Montreal, we decided to make a sofa fort in the living room and stay the night there fooling around and playing with nerfs. I slept horribly but it was the last time I got to see him and one of my best memories. Nowadays, he's a teenager and probably barely remembers me.

Gui:

Can you share one peculiar thing about yourself?

Anna:

I can move my ears without my hands and ride an unicycle (sometimes at the same time).

Chloé:

I do a lot of voice acting for fun! I have to say my magnum opus are my Mickey Mouse and Toad impersonations, and my Vtuber/streamer voice.

Léa:

One of my leg is 3cm shorter than the other, one of my nostril is smaller than the other, and one of my earhole is so small I can't even put an earplug in it.

Étienne:

I... can't make eye contact. Like my brain just cannot process the stress from looking at someone directly in the eyes **

Javiera:

I. am a very vocal person :D There is not one day I spend without talking aloud to myself. Sometimes I am in a train of thought and then halfway through, I start thinking out loud instead. I just... make a lot of noise O_O Recently, my shtick has been to randomly begin beatboxing. PS. I have no rhythm or skills in beatboxing :D

Andrei:

I tend to be a very distracted and relaxed person, but whenever I hear mouth noises, I just get so triggered that I can't control it. I think the right term for it is Misophonia? I've had it since I was 9 years old and always felt weird about it. Up until now, I'm finding out that I'm not crazy and I can actually do something about it! Thank you Google 🙌

Alice:

I love toys and I love to watch cartoons. 🧸📺

Possible Assassin (Ny):

I know you guys don't have a CM right now so I'm curious, how are you guys making up for it? The steps you're taking to make sure the general public isn't in the dark about the game and the development, ideas for ways you can show things off without taking too much time from the development itself, ideas to get more people to donate to the patreon, etc

Alex:

We've split the work between us to reply to messages and comments on different platforms. I'm in charge of thinking of posts for social media and I'm already pretty busy so it's true that there might be fewer posts until we find a new community manager. The weekly Patreon posts every Friday will keep coming though, that's for sure!

Domon:

Since you said you're not planning to grow the team anymore (maybe apart from hiring a new CM), how do you decide on temporary positions like Javi's internship? Do you do it based on a "we've met a talented person and we'd like to work with them" or more "we need someone in xyz department"? And were there more people you've hired for a short period of time behind the scenes so far?

Alex:

We've not hired other people behind the scenes until now unless you count a few small contracts like for the postcard illustration. Our budget allows us to hire a defined number of people but there is some room for internships still. We thought it would be nice to hire an intern for the summer to help us and to give them some experience in the industry. We might repeat that in the future!

Entirago:

Anna, what's your favourite bear? This could be a species of bear, or a bear character.

Anna:

Black bears, but really I like them all (except for pandas). I can't wait to meet Hank from Bear & Breakfast!

Live mode

Zahlea:

This week, from Little dragon:

I know that kids are still on the to do list but I was curious if there would be accessibility and animations so that kids can essentially do/reach anything an adult para can.

-As an example, jumping up on a counter or using a step stool in order to reach overhead cupboards.

Furthermore, if it would be possible for us to make adult para that are extremely short would they be able to use those same animations?

Alice:

Yes, I think that's the goal to have kids being able to interact with as many "adult size" objects as possible, in addition to the ones that will only be usable by them. It will definitely be a challenge with our height slider. For your second question, we are thinking about that. Maybe some animations would be usable only by Parafolks a certain size, no matter the lifestage. But we will share more on that later. :)

Possible Assassin (Ny):

↪️ when should we start asking about genetics again cause I have QUESTIONS!

Anna:

Sadly we can't say when we will be back on the genetics to continue its implementation yet. Feel free to ask your questions anyway though, who knows!

BusiestPolarBear:

Have you gotten any thoughts on whether you'll add extreme weather(enormous hail , rain so high it floods the streets, tornados 🌀 etc.)to the game? definitely not based on yesterday's doomsday weather

Anna:

The thing that might be hard with extreme weather is that it might imply more than what we'd expect from a life sim game. Having big floods or tornados destroying the environment for example might not be in our goals for the game. However, maybe we could still have lots of rain or snow barring the streets or making school close, it could be fun events to spice up the daily gameplay!

buzz:

How much are you guys planning on letting the paras interact with the horse pets?

Alice:

Good question, I can't really address that because we aren't actively working on pets right now. But I'm excited to get started, I hope we'll be able to deliver fun and interesting game play (care, equipment, activities, relationships etc.).

mamafrancine1:

Once you create a family in PAM, are you considering having an option where you can mark a para as deceased and then once you enter the lot the family will remember losing that para but the para will no longer take up a household slot?

Anna:

Yes, we considered it! I can't confirm if we are going to do it yet but I agree it would be nice to build a more complex family tree and that would help the backstory feel more tangible.

mamafrancine1:

Will there be things for our paras to collect?

Anna:

There might be! For now it's not something I can reveal though but we're thinking about it 🤫

ShadowRose:

I would love it if para kids could have desires to see certain people who they bonded with when they were young, or specifically grandparents if they don't live in the same household, or for kids to be able to ask when they can next see their grandparents and/or get excited when they visit. It's a wholesome idea and would just be nice if little Cindy asked her mom if they could go see grandpa and when they went she got super happy, especially if she got little non-specific treats from her grandparents. Or if edgy teen Carmine was reluctant but she seems sort of happier to be around the people she's known since she was born.

In other words, how many cute cross-generational interactions have you thought about?

Anna:

We haven't thought a lot about specific interactions for now. We're designing the relationships from the base gameplay mechanics and even if we have some ideas of interactions, we're more focused on the very core of it. I agree that cross-generational interactions are very important though, we want our gameplay mechanics to mix to feel coherent and these ideas would definitely mix aging, family, relationships and emotions gameplay!

GracePrince:

Can vocals sing and make music together? e.g. form a band in which different instruments and vocals come together or sing in a duo, trio, quartet, choir,

Anna:

Not yet, but I'm hoping we can make it work!

LokiTheShadySpirit:

And related to GracePrince's question above: are there other activities paras can do together (like cooking (like in the sims))

Anna:

We're thinking about it during our current core live mode design! It's not confirmed for now but we're trying!

Gui:

Question from Lily: Do you have any plans to how marriage will work in game? Can Paras elope? Choose who gets invited? Do a big Vs small wedding? Use it as a chance to show off their riches or make it simple? Not even want anything special and just do a normal civil marriage? Maybe even choose to not get married and just live together without wanting to ever get married. Perhaps even having wants and dreams for their wedding and talking to their partner about it. Like "have wedding talk, say you want to get married one day" and even say no without ruining the relationship "say you are not ready".

Anna:

The wedding design is not complete yet so I can't really give you a lot of details sadly. Your ideas are very good though, I would definitely mean a lot to be able to customize all of the celebration's details!

Build mode

Zahlea:

In the roadmap, under Build Mode -> Done, there is a task called "Wall length indicator" and the image shows 3.2m. Now I'm very happy with the metric system, but will there be an option for feet and inches too for people using the imperial system?

Anna:

Yes, a setting to switch between imperial and metric is confirmed!

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||AmorFat||:

All the rabbit hole questions this week:

-How are you currently planning for rabbit holes to work; e.g. will there be premade buildings for them or will you be able to design your own places?

-Are there community lots that may be open rather than a rabbit hole at launch, and which kind of lot(s) is this most likely the case for?

-If there are off-map rabbit holes, how would our paras get to them? (would they for example go to the edge of the map and then disappear, or could there maybe be a train station or some other building like that that they could disappear into)

Jérémie:

Hello! These are all good questions that we have not set in stone at the moment, so I can't answer any of them with 100% certainty. It would make sense for the first town to have fixed rabbit holes, at least until players can create their own. I think it might take some time before you can demolish workplaces or schools and create buildings marked to take their place.

We might have some lots that are open when we launch in early access, and while I can't say for sure which one they would be, I feel that social spots or places with a lot of different interactions that do not require extremely specific new mechanics could be open.

As for off-map rabbit holes, if we have them, all options are still on the table. I would personally love to have Paras just leave through public transit, but that's just me. Thank you for the questions!

Paramaker

Zahlea:

In the roadmap, under Paramaker -> Done, there is a task called "Body and face slider interface" that states:

Modders can add their own sliders from existing deformations (part of the body that can change dynamically). They can also add or edit diagrams, change the style of icons and edit the properties of the sliders.

Would a modder have to copy the diagram and completely override it, or would they be able to add a slider icon at a certain place? What I'm thinking about is if a player wanted to add multiple slider mods, then would only one work, would only one show, or would it work out perfectly?

Anna:

A modder can add any slider with the appropriate icon at any place on the drawing of the body part. For example, you could keep all of the current nose sliders and add another one, all of the base + custom sliders will show up on the same diagram, on the same part of the UI (I hope it answers your question?)

mamafrancine1:

Can paras have vitiligo? How about birthmarks/stretch marks?

Anna:

We're considering it but we're not at the time where we produce a lot of skin details right now, so I can't confirm it yet!

Art

Domon:

Would you say your idea of environment artstyle is final and what you're doing now is just adding more assets?

Chloé:

Hello Domon! For the most part, we are pretty much set on the art style—a few things might still get tweaked as we progress, though. However, not every aspect of it is final, as we have to see a few things, for example how the style is adapted to large furniture items vs small clutter items, how it will look on landscaping elements like water and vegetation, how the different types of materials will look, etc!

For instance, one of the biggest challenges we have is ensuring we have a consistent texturing style through different materials. We have to ensure that the style translates well from more organic materials like wood planks to more rectilinear materials like bricks, and that those fit well with fully organic materials like the leaves. To test those, we usually create different assets to apply different types of materials, so that way not only do we progress on tests, we also get new items that will be usable in game. Two birds, one stone!

We are doing and wrapping up some of the main tests for furniture items, clutter items and vegetation currently, but there will still be some stuff that will need to be determined down the line! But, after the main tests have concluded, tests will be fewer and farther between and we will be able to focus more on asset creation.

So TLDR; The vision and artstyle we have for the environments is pretty much validated, but we are not done with tests just yet. We are however still creating a lot of different assets to be used in game as part of our tests!