THE FREEDOM CITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

The Freedom City Transit Authority, also known simply as "the T.A." to Freedomians, is a corporate and political subdivision of the Freedom City municipal government tasked with operating and maintaining the city's bus, subway, commuter rail, and ferry lines. The entire system averages over a million passenger trips each weekday, with half of those being on the subway system, making the FCTA one of the busiest subway systems in the nation. It is also one of the nation's oldest subway systems, and certainly the most reconstructed, having suffered damage on numerous occasions due to events in Freedom City.

LAYOUT

The present-day T.A. system has ten subway lines, each designated with a letter of the alphabet and referred to as such ("A-line," "B-line," and so forth). Trains on each line are also referred to by their letter code, such as "take the S-train to Riverside". The line(s) a station serves are listed with white letters inside colored circles on the station's signs, so travelers can easily discern them upon entering.

The vast majority of the system is underground, running through tunnels throughout the metro area, with the exception of some above-ground river crossings—where the tracks run down the middle of a bridge—and the downtown monorail, which is the only entirely above-ground public transit train in the city proper.

The main hub of the subway system was Centennial Station in downtown Freedom City, although some of the lines that formerly crossed into Centennial have been closed off due to damage or diversion of the line. Now nearby Freedom Station sees the meeting of five major lines and serves as the largest transfer point in the system. Central Station, the old crossing point of the underground, has been closed off with the re-routing of the G-line through Midtown.

STATION LAYOUT

The typical FCTA subway station is laid out on a two-level plan. Stairs, and often escalators, lead down from street level to an entry level for the station. Here are located ticket booths, turnstiles, and vending machines for tickets. Larger subway stations may also have merchants set up on the entry level, from small storefronts (usually for fast food or coffee) to small carts or kiosks for everything from cheap Freedom City souvenirs to jewelry, snacks, or fresh produce.

Larger stations have multiple ticket booths, while small stations have only one, which may not even be staffed during non-peak hours. These stations rely solely on automated vending machines to provide travel passes. Automatic teller machines are also common in FCTA stations, making them potential targets for criminals. Closed-circuit security cameras and the Freedom City Transit Police monitor stations.

The lower level of the station is the actual train platform(s) and tracks. The standard layout is a main platform running between two sets of tracks going in opposite directions, usually referred to as "inbound" (towards downtown) and "outbound" (away from downtown). Some stations have separate platforms for inbound and outbound trains, while larger hub stations have multiple platform levels, one for each line that enters and leaves the station.

USE

Transit fares on board the FCTA are $1.50 and current electronic turnstiles have card-readers for both monthly commuter passes and short-term tickets with magnetic strips. The older turnstiles, retired from use a few years ago, took metal tokens, purchased from vending machines and sales booths at the stations. Most FCTA ticket vending is now electronic, although some stations still have manned sales booths. The booths and vending machines still accept old FCTA tokens as payment, but the new turnstiles do not. On major holidays, riding the FCTA is free.

The subway's standard hours of operation are 5:00 A.M. to approximately 1:00 A.M., although first and last departures vary slightly from station to station along the different lines by as much as 45 minutes. "Rush hour" periods are from approximately 6:30 to 9:00 in the mornings and 3:30 to 6:30 in the afternoons. Trains arrive about every 10 to 15 minutes at a given station, depending on traffic and time of day. To randomly determine the arrival of a train at a station, roll the die: on a 15 or higher, a train is at the station. Roll again each minute, with a cumulative +1 modifier on the die, until a train appears.

HISTORY

Work on the first Freedom City subway tunnels began in the late 1800s, slowed somewhat by the disappearances of several tunnel workers. Local legend says Morlocks or Sub-Terrans abducted them, but that a band of adventurers investigated and safely recovered some of the missing workers, putting a stop to the trouble. This allowed completion of the first line by 1889, the city's Centennial, making Freedom City's subway the first in North America.

THE FREEDOM CITY ATLAS

Welcome to the Freedom City Atlas, a series of products intended to flesh-out and further detail the award-winning Freedom City setting for Mutants & Masterminds. In this series, we “zoom-in” to look at different facets of Freedom City in detail, providing you with all the information you need to know about them to make them centerpieces in one or more adventures set in the city.

Freedom City, like most comic book universes, is the work of many people who have contributed to it. While writers, editors, and artists have added their elements to the world, a big contributor is cartographer Phillip Lienau. He brought Freedom City to life never before in the Second Edition of the sourcebook with his comprehensive map, found on pages 26 and 31 of Freedom City, Second Edition, along with several other detail maps. Phillip's work transformed a fantastic and fanciful superhero setting into a place that seems extraordinarily real. Using his maps, you could easily navigate the streets of Freedom, envisioning its various landmarks and buildings.

Now we're finally able to bring you more of Phillip's extraordinary work, coupled with some adventure hooks and ideas for your own Freedom City games. Whether you're a first-time visitor to Freedom or a long-time resident, we know you'll enjoy this tour of some of the city's hotspots. Welcome to Freedom City, and enjoy your stay!
Work continued on expanding the subway system throughout the end of the 19th and most of the 20th centuries. Occasionally, subway expansion projects ran afoul of underground hazards, like bands of Sub-Terrans, Morlocks, or savage Serpent People, or uncovered things like Colonial or pre-Colonial burial sites, interred artifacts (some ancient, others left by time-travelers), or other things best left undisturbed. On each occasion, the city’s local heroes were able to deal with the problem.

Major damage to the subway system has nearly always been due to major invasions in Freedom City rather than natural causes like earthquakes or similar disasters. Even when they have occurred, it has usually been as a result of supervillain intervention rather than natural events. The first major Sub-Terran incursion into the city caused significant damage, resulting in the shutdown of some stations, but providing the city with an opportunity for a major overhaul of the system. Similarly, the Terminus Invasion resulted in significant damage, but much of this was repaired through the intervention of Dr. Metropolis.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The following is some interesting and useful trivia about the Freedom City Transit Authority you can use to add color to your Freedom City games or as hooks for adventures or encounters.

- The Transit Authority has its own police force, the Transit Police, who patrol all vehicles and areas used by the FCTA. The Transit Police conduct routine patrols of all trains and platforms, and have a K-9 division with dogs trained in sniffing out explosives and narcotics.

- A complex system of pumps serves to keep water out of the underground tunnels, which seeps in at such a rate that, if the pump system were ever disabled, the tunnels would flood in a matter of days. The pump system (often enhanced by superheroic assistance) has also been used to clear out the subway tunnels on the occasions when they have actually flooded.

- A local Freedom City legend says a witch once cursed a man, commonly called “Freddie” or sometimes “Eddie,” trapping him forever in the city’s subway system, where he’s condemned to ride the trains around and around, switching from line to line and station to station, but never leaving to see the sun above. The story has been around since the early 20th century, so long that Transit cops often refer to homeless people boarding or riding the trains as “Freddies” or “Freddie’s folks.”

- Foster’s Yard Station is where the first major aboveground incursion from Sub-Terra occurred in Freedom City, near the Goodman
FOSTER’S YARD STATION

FOSTER ST

FOSSTER’S YARD PARK

42ND AVE

HENRY ST

JAMESTOWN LANE

UPPER LEVEL

PLATFORM
FOSTER’S YARD STATION - DETAIL 2
FOSTER’S YARD STATION - DETAIL 3
FOSTER’S YARD STATION - DETAIL 4
Foster’s Yard Station - Detail 5
SecrEts of the undergroUnd

If Freedomians give any thought to the FCTA, it’s usually to wonder when the next train is arriving, or what the city is doing about this or that maintenance issue. Few consider the complexity of the city’s vast underground system, or what exactly is down there, just under the streets and sidewalks. The underground is out-of-sight, out-of-mind, which is advantageous for many of its hidden inhabitants and visitors.

Lost Stations

Over the years, the FCTA has suffered damage from underdwellers, Sub-Terrans, invasions, and disasters. While the damage is often quickly repaired, it has led to occasions when it has been easier or more efficient to simply write off the damaged portions of the underground system, setting up new lines that are sound and reliable. The damaged sections are closed off once it’s fairly certain they do not pose a threat or compromise the structural integrity of the system as a whole. This has led to various “lost” areas of the city’s underground, closed-off portions largely forgotten by everyone except some Freedom City administrators, bureaucrats, and the urban legends of subway travelers. Of course, in the world of Freedom City, a great many urban legends turn out to be true, or at least based in truth.

The five so-called “lost” stations run along an old, closed-off portion of the G-line nicknamed the “Z-line” (or sometimes the “X-line”) by FCTA workers. The closed line runs from Allen/Jamestown in the south to Wading Station on the northern edge of Midtown, and includes Central Station, Battlefield, Foster’s Yard, Adams Square, and Wading Market.

Central Station is the largest, followed by Foster’s Yard and Wading Market. Founder’s Circle is the only station along the line that remains open; the old G-line accesses are sealed off but the station still serves the A- and D-lines.

Central Station was turned into a base for the Foundry some time after it was closed down. Daedalus and other heroes have since forced the Foundry to abandon the installation there, although they have returned on at least two occasions, and others have also taken over the abandoned station for their use. It is kept sealed off, with remote monitoring systems put in place by AEGIS, although they’ve been overcome in the past.

A partially collapsed downward tunnel connects Foster’s Yard to the realm of Sub-Terra (Freedom City, page 95). The passage is still large enough for human-sized individuals, since it was originally dug by a giant Sub-Terran mole-monster. Underdwellers like Serpent People, Morlocks, and Sub-Terrans occasionally use it to access the surface world.

In addition to the stations themselves, there are miles of closed-off tunnels, including the unused portion of the old G-line and many of the tunnels that formerly led to and from Central and Centennial Stations. Although sealed off at either end—and sometimes by partial collapses along their lengths—these tunnels are otherwise open, with nothing but slowly rusting track and sometimes access crawlways and spaces. This makes them long artificial “caves” of sorts, also suitable for use as hideouts, lairs, and places to stow or hide things.

The fate and uses of the tunnels and other lost stations are left for the Gamemaster to develop. It is rumored that Dr. Metropolis maintains a “home” of sorts in one of the lost stations, a place of contemplation and solitude when he requires it, decorated in the late 19th Century style known in the original Freedom City Underground system. Whether or not this is the case is left for you to decide, based on the needs of your own series (and whether or not Dr. Metropolis is even an active character in it).

Game Uses

In addition to providing some local color and a backdrop for various encounters, there are a number of ways you can use the FCTA as an element in your Mutants & Masterminds adventures.

Threats From Below

The subway tunnels provide an ideal way for various underground threats like the Sub-Terrans or Morlocks (Freedom City, page 95) to find their way to the surface to threaten innocent people. It may start out with mysterious sightings or disappearances, or jump right to a full-fledged invasion as a force breaks through into a tunnel, disrupting commuter traffic and involving the heroes right away. Perhaps the underdwellers steal an entire train or kidnap the people on board, holding them for ransom or using them as bait to draw the heroes into a trap.

Other tunnel-dwelling monsters may include mutant alligators (use the crocodile archetype, M&M, page 230, perhaps with additional Growth or other powers), the roaches of the Collective (Freedom City, page 188), or a creature like Chud from Paragons (page 115 of that setting).

The Underground Hideout

The closed-down stations in the downtown area are intended for Gamemaster use as secret hideouts, villainous lairs, or even the secret headquarters for a hero or team. They may change hands from time to time as squatters are evicted and new “tenants” move in to take over. For example, an old Foundry base hidden in Central Station may be abandoned, only to have some criminal talents like the Thieves Guild (see Freedom’s Most Wanted) move in and take over. Supercriminals and underdwellers like the Sub-Terrans are notable scavengers, good at taking technology left behind by others and putting it to use for their own purposes.

As a headquarters (M&M, page 145), an old subway station is at least small (starting HQ size) and Toughness 5 (owing to some structural issues over time) and very likely has the Concealed feature. The Underground Lair sample HQ (M&M, page 148) provides examples of other likely features for such a headquarters.
THE UNDERDWELLERS
Abandoned parts of the underground are also suitable for refugees from the surface hiding out for one reason or another. Perhaps a persecuted group (freakish mutants, surviving users of substances like zombie powder and max, demonic half-breeds, or what have), seeks shelter from the sunlit world, where people fear and hate them. In a series with a fair amount of magic (perhaps using material from the Book of Magic sourcebook), there could be things like an underworld “goblin market” or connections to otherworldly realms in the underground. The inhabitants may not necessarily be hostile, wanting only to be left alone, but chances are good they’ll come into conflict with the surface dwellers sooner or later, requiring the heroes to intervene to put a stop to it before things get out of hand.

FIGHT ON THE A-TRAIN
A criminal might try to escape from a hero by jumping on-board a departing subway train. This can be a clean getaway if the hero is too slow (or you want to use GM Fiat and award the player a hero point), or it can result in a perilous fight in, on, or around the train as it hurtles through the tunnels, possibly causing the train to go out of control if the fight does enough damage (see the following for ideas on that score).

Heroes and villains might also fight it out on a subway station platform, using the map in this product as a guideline for setting up the conditions of the battle. If the platform is in-use, heroes can expect to deal with getting innocent bystanders out of the line of fire and worrying about the effects of collateral damage on the trains in addition to everything else.

“GET OFF THE TRACKS!”
Being thrown onto the tracks in front of an oncoming subway train is a common peril in the comics. There are two major hazards: being hit by the train itself, and contact with the electrically charged third rail:

TRAIN COLLISION
Getting hit by a moving subway train inflicts significant bludgeoning damage: +12 damage for a train unable to stop in time. You can make a Drive check for the train operator (DC 15, assuming a skill bonus of +6); every point the check exceeds the DC reduces the damage by 1, with a result of 27 meaning no damage (the train stops completely just in the nick of time). If someone is trying to stop the train from the outside (see “I’ve Got a Train to Catch!” following), then the margin of the operator’s Drive check—the amount it exceeds the DC—adds to the other character’s check result.

If the targeted character has sufficient Impervious Toughness that the impact inflicts no damage, then the train crumples upon impact, resulting in a spectacular crash.

THIRD RAIL
Contact with the charged third rail of a subway inflicts +9 electrical damage per round. The direct current also tends to cause the victim’s muscles to spasm and lock up; it requires a DC 19 Fortitude saving throw to pull away from rail, otherwise the victim continues to suffer damage each round. Those with electrical manipulation or absorption powers might use a charged third rail as a handy source of energy.

“I’VE GOT A TRAIN TO CATCH!”
A staple of comic book action is stopping a runaway train before it crashes. To do this in Mutants & Masterminds, use the following simple guidelines:

**Strength check DC = 10 + vehicle Str modifier + Speed rank**

The vehicle has a Strength bonus equal to its normal Str modifier +1 per rank of Speed. So a typical train (Str 50, Speed 4) has a +24 bonus. The character(s) trying to stop the train make a Strength check against a DC of 10 + the train’s bonus (typically 34). Success reduces the vehicle’s speed by 1 rank, with every additional 2 points of success reducing it another rank, so a result of 40 will stop the runaway train in one round. Otherwise, multiple checks may be required. Extra effort is good for a +2 bonus on the check, along with the normal use of hero points for rerolls or avoiding the fatigue of extra effort. At the Gamemaster’s discretion, characters can use the Flight Leverage option in Ultimate Power for additional stopping-power (since the vehicle is essentially using that guidelines for its forward momentum).

Characters can use powers other than sheer Strength to try and stop a moving train. Use the power’s effective Strength bonus (if any) or substitute a power rank check for the Strength check.

**Example:** Captain Thunder has only seconds (two rounds) to stop a runaway monorail train before it jumps the tracks and crashes! Catching up to it, he tries to slow and stop the train with his tremendous Strength. The monorail has an effective Str bonus of +24, for a DC 34. Captain Thunder has a +14 Strength bonus, and Super-Strength 6, for a +20 modifier. The GM also lets him 6 ranks of Flight apply to momentum, giving him an additional +6. His player rolls a 9, for a total of 35, just over the DC. The train loses a rank of Speed, but doesn’t stop. With only moments to go, Cap’s player decides to exert extra effort, for a +2 bonus, but rolls only a 4! That’s a result of 32, not enough. So his player spends a hero point and rolls again, getting a 13. That’s a result of 41, enough to reduce the train’s Speed to 0 and bring it to a halt.

**VITAL STATISTICS**
Here are some useful game statistics associated with Freedom City’s subway system:

- **Station Interior:** concrete walls and floor (Toughness 6), concrete support pillars (Toughness 7), ticket booths (weight 2,000 lbs., lifting Str 32, Toughness 8), turnstiles (weight 200 lbs., lifting Str 15, but anchored down — must be broken to lift, Toughness 6), vending machines (weight 800 lbs., lifting Str 25, Toughness 7).

- **Subway Car:** Gargantuan size, average weight 35 tons (lifting Str 58), Toughness 11, Defense 6. Interior materials Toughness 4 (plastics) and 1 (glass), doors Toughness 7 (light metals and glass), average Speed 2, top Speed 3. It’s approximately lifting Strength 90 to pick up an entire subway train as a heavy load.

- **Transit Police:** Use the Police Officer archetype (M&M, page 228) with K-9 units accompanied by one or more trained dogs (M&M, page 230).
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