

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO THE CITY 4

The low-down	5
Life: upgraded	5
The neon sprawl	7
Beyond the sprawl	9
Neon City slang	9

THE BASICS 10

What you need	10
What you do	11
How you do it	11
Fiction first	12
Playing safe	13
Glossary	13

CHARACTERS 14

Trademarks	15
Edges and Flaws	18
Drives	19
Gear	20
Round out	22

HIT THE STREETS 24

Game time	25
The job	25
Scenes	26
Distance and range	27
The check	28
Stunt points	31
Consequences	32
Harm	34
Healing	35
Combat	36
Interfacing	38

DOWNTIME 40

Experience points	40
Advancement	41
Leverage	41
Drives	42
Recovery	42
Retirement	43

RUNNING THE CITY 44

Mastering checks	46
Consequences	48
Running scenes	50
Timers	52
Rewards	53

THREATS 54

Attitudes and reactions	54
Harm	55
Street threats	56
Corp threats	58
Grid threats	59

JOBS 60

Rule of cool	60
Groups and people	62
Locations	63
The hook	64
Lock and load	64
The first scene	64
Planning scenes	65
The Block 13 Job	66
The Grind City Job	68

CHARACTER SHEET 70

WELCOME TO THE CITY

NEON CITY OVERDRIVE is a game of cyberpunks and the neon-lit sprawl they run jobs in. It is a game inspired by the attitude, style and action of classic fiction, films and other media of the genre. It is a world of gleaming sky scrapers and sprawling urban labyrinths where people eke out whatever existence they can claw from the next guy. It is a world of hard choices, high risks and limitless danger dressed in chrome and lit in neon.

AT A GLANCE

GENRE: Science fiction / cyberpunk

TONE: Grim and gritty

TOUCHSTONES: Akira (anime), Alita: Battle Angel (film), Altered Carbon (TV), Blade Runner & Blade Runner 2049 (film), Cyberpunk 2020 (RPG), Dredd (film), Eclipse Phase (RPG), Elysium (film), Ghost in the Shell (anime), John Wick trilogy (films), Judge Dredd (comic series), Max Headroom (TV), Total Recall (film), Mirrorshades (short story anthology), Neuromancer & the Sprawl trilogy (novels), RoboCop (film), Snow Crash (novel), Orphan Black (TV), The Matrix (film), Transmetropolitan (graphic novel)

THE LOW-DOWN

Not too many years from now the world's population is crushed into overpopulated pocket states sprinkled across a toxic wasteland. Despite dramatic advancements in science and technology, most people continue to eke out an existence as they have always done, as cogs in a machine much larger than themselves. They are distracted from their ineffectual lives by slick consumerism and invasive media that lulls them into a passive state of obedience, if not content.

But under the grimy veneer of civilisation, constant war is waged. War between the megacorporations, criminal syndicates, trillionaires who clutch at their wealth, anarchists seeking to bring the system down and a disillusioned few who think they can still change the world for the benefit of all. The pawns in these conflicts are the cyberpunks, desperate individuals with valuable skills willing to put their lives on the line in return for a little cash, reputation or leverage.

YOUR FUTURE

NEON CITY OVERDRIVE provides the broadstrokes of a sandbox setting for you to play in. There is enough here to get you started, but the details have been left for you to fill in. Draw on your favourite media and build a world that you want to play in.

LIFE: UPGRADED

Scientific advances have changed the way people live. Goods are 3D printed while you wait, entertainment is beamed directly to your brain, and drones and AI's assist in every facet of daily life. For those who can afford it, medical care can heal all but the most grievous of wounds, and the wealthy can live indefinitely.

CYBERTECH

Cyberware, drones, autonomous robots, AI assistants and nano-swarms are mainstream technologies that people use every day. Cyberware replaces limbs, eyes, bones and organs. It makes you tougher, faster, more durable. People upgrade their flesh out of necessity, for a competitive advantage, or simply for fashion. Body modification is common, cosmetic upgrades just a part of life. Many corporations will even pay for an employee's upgrades to enhance productivity, but the cyberware is always reclaimed should a contract be terminated.

The ghost chip allows an individual to upload and save their memory and consciousness. With such a modification they can be placed in an artificial body. These so-called skins are often gene-hacked clones of the individual's original body, but can also be cyber-enhanced or completely artificial. Skins are expensive, so some individuals engage in the highly illegal hijacking of someone else's ghost chip, allowing them to literally take their body.

THE GRID

The grid is everywhere, all the time. It is invasive, pervasive and impossible to avoid. It projects holograms into the streets, connects boardrooms and bedrooms alike and is the primary source of information for the world's population. Almost every device, from coffee machines and sneakers to hover cars and billboards are connected to the grid in one way or another. Many people are "chipped" with an interface chip that allows instant connection to the grid with just a thought. With increased connectivity comes increased surveillance, and every moment of a person's life is tracked, analysed and utilised for some megacorp's purpose.

GENE HACKING

Advances in medical science have made genetic modification, cloning and DNA splicing common. Corp employees will select the genes they want for their unborn child, the sick will edit unwanted cells, and the vain will undergo rejuvenation programs to keep themselves looking youthful. Gene hacking is also commonly used to enhance physical attributes as an alternative to cyberware and to regrow limbs or entire bodies. These processes are slower than cyber replacement, but are often far superior to the parts replaced.



THE NEON SPRAWL

The rain-slick streets gleam like silver on a circuit board and holographic signs paint the metroplexes in a river of neon. The city stretches as far as the eye can see, from the toxic coast to the city limits where the walls keep the wasteland from encroaching.

THE METROPLEXES

Huge conglomerations of urban highrises, built up, over and interconnected to form self contained towers spanning the equivalent of several city blocks. Streets, alleys, rooms and entire levels dedicated to living, home industry, commerce and pleasure mean a metroplexer can go their entire lives without leaving the block, should they so wish. This is rarely the case, though, as work can be hard to find in the metroplexes and most residents make the trek to trade or manufacturing centres that lay scattered about the city. Gangs often rule the metroplexes, some benevolently, most through fear and violence.

THE GRINDERS

The vast factory complexes, reclamation plants and vertical farms are called grinders because they grind out products and people 24-7. Menial labour that could be done faster with drones or robots is completed by metroplexers for a fraction of the cost. Organised crime is rife in grinders, where shift bosses and middle-managers make an extra buck working for the more powerful gangs and criminal syndicates. It is always noisy, dirty and dangerous in these districts, and life is as cheap as the synth-plastic trinkets the factories churn out.

THE STREETS

Stretched between the metroplexes, grinders and business districts are the sprawling streets filled with all the variety that humanity has to offer. They are a constantly changing labyrinth of activity and energy. Marketplaces and chop shops, steaming noodle houses, laundromats and ramshackle scaffolds of coffin hotels fill the spaces vacated by the rest of the city. It is always busy, the masses pressed shoulder to shoulder, hustling a third job, seeking cheap thrills or just trying to survive another day. Trouble is always just under the surface on the streets, whether it's a gang shaking down stall holders, a VR huckster preying on the unwary, or corp security sweeping for fugitives.