ATOMIC TOMORROW: FRONTIER HEXPLORATION SYSTEM

VISIBILITY TIERS & CARD DRAWING

Low Visibility Terrain (Jungle, Canyons, Fog)

- **Draw NO feature cards**
- Can only see current hex
- Must follow terrain features or make navigation checks
- Examples: Dense Venusian jungle, Martian dust storm areas, Mercury crevasse fields

Standard Visibility Terrain (Plains, Desert, Hills)

- **Draw ONE feature card**
- Card shows what's visible from current position
- Can make informed decisions about one direction
- Examples: Martian plains, Venus plateaus, Mercury flats

High Visibility Terrain (Mountains, Towers, Plateaus)

- **Draw ONE feature card in each "forward" direction**
- Can determine adjacent terrain with hex flower rolls before moving, but only roll if they announce they head in that direction.
- Strategic advantage in planning
- Examples: Mountain peaks, observation towers, elevated plateaus

STREAMLINED EXPLORATION PROCEDURE

1. ENTER NEW HEX

- GM rolls on appropriate hex flower for terrain type
- Places terrain index card on growing map
- Draws feature card ONLY if visibility permits

2. DETERMINE WHAT'S VISIBLE

Based on visibility tier:

- **Low** : Nothing beyond current hex
- **Standard** : Features on ONE direction card
- **High** : Features on ONE direction card in each adjacent terrain

3. PLAYER DECISIONS

- Choose which visible feature to move toward (if any)
- Explore current hex thoroughly or move on
- Navigate using visible features or planetary navigation aids

THE FEATURE CARD

Each feature card shows one visible feature, in the direction where the card is placed

- Position indicates relative direction from current hex
- Only drawn when visibility allows

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

GM : "You've landed in a Martian canyon. This is low visibility terrain, so you can only see what's in your immediate hex - red rock walls rising on either side, a dry riverbed beneath your feet, and some ancient carvings on the canyon wall."

Player 1 : "Let's follow the canyon and see where it leads. Seems like a natural path."

GM : "You follow the winding canyon for several hours. I'll roll on the hex flower to determine where it leads." *Rolls* "The canyon gradually widens and opens into a broad Martian plain. This is standard visibility terrain."

Places new blank terrain index card and marks it with the type and feature

Draws one new feature card for what's visible in the distance

"From this vantage point, you can see an abandoned outpost to the north, strange rock formations to the southeast, and what appears to be a dust storm on the horizon to the west."

Player 2 : "The outpost might have supplies or information. Let's head that way."

GM : "You travel north toward the outpost. I'll roll on the hex flower again." *Rolls* "As you approach, you find yourself in rocky badlands terrain with the outpost sitting atop a small rise."

Places new blank index card and marks it up

"This is still standard visibility terrain, so I'll draw one feature card again."

Draws one feature card

"From here, you can see a glinting object that might be a crashed ship to the northeast, a dried canal to the northwest, and a strange red haze to the east."

Player 3 : "Let's explore the outpost thoroughly before moving on."

GM : *Draws Opportunity Card* "Searching the outpost, you find an old solar-powered radio relay station. It's been abandoned for years, but some of the equipment might still be salvageable. You also discover a weathered map showing the locations of several other outposts in the region."

Player 1 : "After we finish here, I want to head up that rise to the south - it looks like it might give us better visibility of the surrounding area."

GM : "You climb the rocky hill south of the outpost. This elevated position counts as high visibility terrain."

Draws one feature card

"From this vantage point, you can see a massive crater to the south with what appears to be some kind of structure at its center, a dust canyon to the southeast, and the glint of water or ice to the southwest."

"Since this is high visibility terrain, you can also get a sense of the surrounding landscape. I'll roll on the hex flower for the adjacent hexes."

Rolls for adjacent hexes

"The area to the south appears to be impact crater terrain, to the southeast is dust canyon, to the southwest is a small oasis, and the other directions are various types of rocky plains.

VENUS: THE JUNGLE WORLD

Venusian Environmental Factors

- **Endural Treatment** : Players using Endural can operate in Venus pressure with minimal penalties
- **Weak Magnetosphere** : Compasses unreliable

- **Perpetual Cloud Cover** : Navigation by stars or satellites remains impossible
- **Lush Vegetation** : Thick jungle canopies limit visibility in many areas
- **Retro-Pulp Bio-hazards** : Focus on exotic flora/fauna rather than pressure/acid hazards

Venus Navigation Methods

- **Bio-Navigation** : Learning to read distinctive plant patterns and animal migration routes
- **Natural Landmarks** : Massive trees, crystal formations, and distinctive geographic features
- **Indigenous Guidance Systems** : Methods used by native Venusians to traverse the jungles
- **Water Current Mapping** : Following the planet's extensive river systems

This revised approach embraces the atomic-age pulp version of Venus as a lush jungle world where Endural allows exploration but still maintains the unique navigational challenges of a cloud-covered planet with no magnetic navigation.

PLANET-SPECIFIC HEX EXPLORATION TRAITS

Venus Exploration

- **Hex Size** : Smaller (dense foliage limits visibility)
- **Navigation Challenge** : Visual landmarks and bio-signs instead of technical instruments
- **Unique Advantage** : Abundant natural resources (food, water, medicinal plants)
- **Primary Hazard** : Exotic life forms and territorial species
- **Discovery Focus** : Biological specimens, ancient ruins, strange plant phenomena

Mars Exploration

- **Hex Size** : Medium (clear atmosphere but varied terrain)
- **Navigation Challenge** : Dust storms that reconfigure landmarks
- **Unique Advantage** : Ancient canal system provides reliable navigation framework
- **Primary Hazard** : Resource scarcity and ancient defense systems
- **Discovery Focus** : Forerunner technology, water sources, Red Martian artifacts

Mercury Exploration

- **Hex Size** : Large (excellent visibility but extreme range of conditions)
- **Navigation Challenge** : Day/night cycle creates drastically different landscapes
- **Unique Advantage** : Rich mineral deposits and unmatched solar power

- **Primary Hazard** : Extreme temperature fluctuations
- **Discovery Focus** : Rare metals, untouched geological formations, stellar observation points

The exploration system now embraces the retro-futuristic vision of the Solar System where Venus is a jungle paradise (with appropriate challenges), Mars is a dying world of ancient canals and lost civilizations, and Mercury is a world of extremes with valuable resources for those hardy enough to brave its conditions.

Is this more aligned with the Atomic Tomorrow vision of Venus you're creating?

ATOMIC TOMORROW: PLANETARY HEX SCALES & TRAVEL RATES

EARTH (BASELINE)

- **Standard Hex Size** : 2 miles (approximately 3.2 km) across
- **Standard Travel Rate** : 3-4 hexes per day on foot through average terrain
- **Vehicle Travel Rate** : 6-10 hexes per day with ground vehicles on established paths

Using these Earth values as our foundation, let's adjust for the different planetary conditions:

VENUS

- **Hex Size** : 1 mile (approximately 1.6 km)
- **Rationale** : Dense jungle and limited visibility require smaller-scale mapping
- **Travel Methods** :
- On Foot: 2-3 hexes per day (slower due to vegetation but standard gravity)
- River Travel: 4-6 hexes per day following waterways
- Hovercraft: 5-7 hexes per day in cleared areas
- **Special Considerations** :
- Endural allows normal human exertion despite atmospheric conditions
- Certain plant species can be used as natural paths (fungal highways, vine bridges)
- Standing water and mud increase travel difficulty in lowland areas

MARS

- **Hex Size** : 3 miles (approximately 4.8 km)
- **Rationale** : Lower gravity (38% of Earth) increases travel distance; clear air improves visibility
- **Travel Methods** :
- On Foot: 4-6 hexes per day (benefit of lower gravity)
- Canal Routes: 5-7 hexes per day following ancient waterways
- Ground Vehicle: 8-12 hexes per day on established paths
- Thoat (Martian mount): 6-9 hexes per day across open terrain
- **Special Considerations** :
- Dust storms can reduce travel to 0-1 hexes during peak conditions
- Ancient roads and canal paths provide established travel routes
- Thin atmosphere means less stamina despite lower gravity

MERCURY

- **Hex Size** : 4 miles (approximately 6.4 km)
- **Rationale** : Excellent visibility, lower gravity, but extreme conditions
- **Travel Methods** :
- On Foot: Variable by temperature conditions
    - Terminator Zone (dawn/dusk): 5-7 hexes per day
    - Day Side: 1-2 hexes per day (heat limitations)
    - Night Side: 2-3 hexes per day (energy consumption for heating)
- Skimmer: 10-15 hexes per day on smooth plains during optimal conditions
- **Special Considerations** :
- Day/night travel rates drastically different
- Must plan routes around thermal shelters
- Solar power abundance on day side can boost vehicle range