

Darkpoint

A Persistent Small Town Setting for TTRPG

On the surface it looks like any other quiet company town: tidy streets, friendly faces, a diner, shops, maybe a church. But the longer you stay, the more things feel slightly off.

Darkpoint is a small, secluded town nestled deep within a North American forest - the kind of place that doesn't appear on most maps, and when it does, locals tend to notice. The smiles are a little too practiced. The questions you ask never quite get answered. And certain roads that lead toward the edge of town tend to be blocked for one reason or another. Darkpoint is a setting designed for ongoing mystery and conspiracy campaigns. Digging too deep is always hazardous here.

The Corporation

Darkpoint is owned and operated in all but name by a nameless corporation whose upper leadership remains deliberately obscured. They maintain a factory on the outskirts of town - publicly, it manufactures industrial components - but the real work happens in a secret laboratory complex concealed beneath or adjacent to it. Their headquarters building sits in town, officially listed as a regional administrative office. The corporation has funded and constructed most of Darkpoint's commercial buildings, creating the appearance of a normal small-town economy. The diner, the motel, the general store - many are corporation facades, staffed by loyal employees or family members of workers. This manufactured normalcy is intentional and carefully maintained. Workers and their families were relocated to Darkpoint under a formal agreement: the corporation provides housing, income, healthcare, and security in exchange for complete loyalty. Residents are not permitted to discuss internal town affairs with outsiders. They are watched. They know they are watched. Most have decided the arrangement is worth it - or have been in it long enough that leaving no longer feels like a real option. The town has its own police force, but it reports directly to the corporation rather than any higher authority. Attempting to contact outside law enforcement is discouraged, quietly intercepted, or simply handled by the local police before it goes anywhere. Outsiders are permitted to pass through or visit. They are treated with surface-level friendliness and low-grade deflection. Moving to Darkpoint permanently requires corporation approval and a signed agreement - though what exactly that agreement entails is not discussed openly.

The Experiments

The corporation's true purpose is research of an unusual and ethically unchained kind. They conduct studies on the local population - biological, psychological, and otherwise - under the guise of routine company health programs or quietly, without consent at all. They sometimes abduct outsiders who pass through and disappear them into the lab complex as involuntary test subjects. The nature of the

technology being developed is unclear, even to most corporation employees. Rumors circulate. Some of what the research produces is strange enough to suggest it may not be entirely human in origin - though this is never confirmed, and those who ask too loudly tend to stop asking. A handful of outsiders and former residents have reported witnessing technology that seemed decades or centuries ahead of anything known - and a few have described things they could only call magical, effects with no mechanical explanation they could identify. Strange occurrences in Darkpoint - unexplained lights near the factory, disappearances, animals behaving oddly, residents acting unlike themselves - may have mundane corporate explanations, may be side effects of experiments gone wrong, or may be something else entirely. The Game Master decides.

The Players

A small group of people - the player characters - are aware that something deeply wrong is happening in Darkpoint. Whether they are residents who have seen too much, outsiders who stumbled in and couldn't leave, or something else is up to the GM and players. Going to the police is not an option. Going to any authority is likely to make things worse, or make a character disappear. The challenge is uncovering the corporation's secrets, helping the people of Darkpoint, and surviving - all without tipping off the wrong people that you know what you know. Exposure doesn't mean safety. It usually means something worse.

Tone and Era

Darkpoint works best in a tone of creeping dread, quiet paranoia, and isolated community pressure - think rural conspiracy thriller with the occasional genuinely unexplainable event. It is not a horror setting by default, but it can go there. The GM should choose the era that best fits the campaign. The recommended range is the 1970s through the 1990s, when institutional cover-ups were harder to expose, information harder to obtain, and the isolation of a remote company town more plausible.

1970s - Cold War paranoia, government conspiracy undertones.

1980s - Rising corporate powers, early tech secrecy, a veneer of suburban optimism.

1990s - Pre-internet information isolation, early cell phones, X-Files-adjacent unease.

Darkpoint can also be adapted to a contemporary setting with appropriate adjustments to how the corporation maintains information control.

Locations in Darkpoint

Location names are purposefully kept generic and vague, to allow the GM the freedom of assigning names and making changes.

1. Conservation Area

A protected stretch of old-growth forest at the northern edge of town, officially preserved for ecological reasons. The hiking trails are well-maintained but certain paths have been quietly rerouted over the years, cutting off access to parts of the woods that no one in town will discuss. Locals don't go there after dark.

2. Waterfall

A scenic landmark a few miles into the conservation area, popular enough to appear on old postcards. The water source has been sampled regularly by corporation technicians for as long as anyone can remember, always described as routine testing. It runs the wrong color sometimes, very briefly, after heavy rain.

3. Metal Recyclers

An industrial yard at the edge of town that accepts scrap metal, old appliances, and equipment for processing. Deliveries arrive on unmarked flatbeds late at night, well beyond what a town this size would generate in scrap. Whatever comes in rarely seems to come back out.

4. Dump

The town landfill sits far enough out that most residents never visit it. There are sections cordoned off with chain-link and fading warning signs that predate the corporation's arrival, and sections with newer signs that don't explain what's being kept out - or in.

5. School

A rural elementary school, located outside of the core city area, caters to the many families living on the east side of the river that runs through Darkpoint. Kids who attend here like to explore the woods behind the school grounds but are told not to get too close to the river.

6. Gun Club

A members-only shooting range and social club that draws from a tight circle of long-term residents, mostly men who work in management roles at the factory. Membership is invitation only. The range is well-equipped in a way that suggests a budget beyond what dues alone would cover.

7. Mine

An old extraction site a few miles from town that officially closed years ago. The entrance is gated and posted as hazardous, but the access road shows regular tire tracks and the gates are on hinges that don't rust. What was being mined, and whether mining ever actually stopped, is not something locals are comfortable speculating about.

8. Quarry

A working stone quarry that employs a rotating crew of workers under strict confidentiality agreements. The blasting schedule is posted at the police station, but the hours don't always match the sounds that carry across town. The floor of the quarry, seen from the ridge above, appears deeper than the posted surveys indicate.

9. Cabins

A cluster of rental cabins in the woods north of town, used mostly by hunters and travelers passing through. The register at the front office has gaps in it - names crossed out, dates that don't line up. The caretaker is pleasant and says very little. Guests occasionally leave belongings behind.

10. Campground

A public campground that sits up by the river, one of the few places outsiders are genuinely welcomed and encouraged to stay. The facilities are unusually well-maintained for a public site. Rangers patrol it regularly, asking friendly questions and taking careful note of who is traveling alone.

11. Factory

The corporation's official face in Darkpoint - a large industrial building purposefully located away from the town center that reportedly manufactures components for agricultural and industrial equipment. Shift workers are bussed in and out on a schedule. The loading docks face away from the road, and the security perimeter has expanded twice in the past decade without public explanation.

12. Research Facility

Adjacent to the factory but not visible from the road, the facility is listed in town records as a corporate engineering annex. Access requires a separate badge, and the workers who enter it are not the same workers who run the factory floor. What little can be seen from the fence line suggests a building larger than its footprint should allow.

13. Wind Farm

A line of turbines installed near the factory, one of the first in the region. The power they generate is fed into a private grid rather than the municipal one. Residents who live nearby report unusual interference with radios and televisions, which the corporation attributes to electromagnetic conditions specific to the ridge.

14. Solar Farm

A fenced array of panels near the factory, positioned more precisely than the sun's path would seem to require. Some panels are angled in ways that don't correspond to any solar orientation. The facility is unstaffed during the day but has a guard posted overnight.

15. Military Base

Listed in old county records as a decommissioned training installation, the base sits behind a long perimeter of aging fencing that has recently been reinforced with newer materials. There is no signage indicating which branch of the military it belongs to, or belonged to. Helicopters depart from somewhere behind the tree line on irregular schedules.

16. Guard Station

A small outpost on the only road that leads to the factory and military base that is staffed around the clock. Only vehicles on official business at one of the buildings beyond this checkpoint are allowed to pass. The attendants record all plates and faces, and have been for years.

17. Golf Course

An eighteen-hole course maintained to a standard well above what the local membership would justify. It is used primarily by corporation management and their guests from out of town. Certain holes are closed on rotating days for private events, and caddies are required to sign agreements before their first shift.

18. Temple

A non-denominational spiritual community that has operated in Darkpoint for several decades, occupying a converted building west of the center of town. Services are closed to non-members, and membership requires a period of evaluation. Former members don't tend to speak about it.

19. Radio Station

A low-power AM station that broadcasts local programming - weather, community announcements, music. The signal carries farther than its license should allow, and late at night it broadcasts a second channel that can only be picked up on certain frequencies. Corporation employees don't seem to find this unusual.

20. Mobile Park

A trailer park on the west side of town housing the lower-income end of the workforce and their families. Residents here are subject to more frequent home visits from corporation health representatives than those in other neighborhoods. They are also the group that most often turns up in medical records as participants in voluntary health programs they have no memory of enrolling in.

21. School

This school serves older students and runs a standard curriculum, supplemented by corporation-sponsored extracurricular programs that parents are quietly encouraged to enroll their children in. Teachers are careful about what they say and equally careful about what questions they allow students to pursue.

22. Auto Dealership

The only place in Darkpoint to purchase or service a vehicle. The inventory is modest but the service bay is large and fully equipped. All vehicles owned by corporation employees were purchased here, and all receive mandatory annual inspections that are covered under the employment agreement. What those inspections include is not itemized.

23. Music Venue

A mid-sized hall that hosts touring acts, local bands, and community events. It is one of the few places in Darkpoint where outsiders mix freely with residents, and one of the few places that has genuine energy and noise. The booking calendar is managed through the corporation's community office.

24. Mansion

The largest private residence in Darkpoint sits behind a walled property at the south end of town. It is occupied, based on evidence of lights and maintained grounds, but its owner is rarely seen. Corporation employees at the senior level refer to whoever lives there obliquely and with a specific quality of deference that suggests the hierarchy extends beyond what the org chart shows.

25. Casino

A small gaming establishment that operates under a license whose legal basis residents are vague about. It draws visitors from surrounding areas and generates foot traffic that the corporation seems to welcome. The back offices are staffed separately from the floor, and the surveillance system is more sophisticated than the revenue would require.

26. Beach

A stretch of shoreline along the lake at the southern edge of town, popular in summer and deserted the rest of the year. The water has been posted as unsafe for swimming twice in the past decade, each time for a period of weeks with no further explanation.

27. Skate Park

A concrete skate facility built in the past decade, positioned near the beach and mini golf as a gesture toward youth recreation. It is well-used and genuinely popular. The corporation funded its construction and in exchange installed a camera system, framed as a safety measure, that covers not just the park but the surrounding area.

28. Playground

A neighborhood playground maintained in immaculate condition. The equipment is always freshly painted, the gravel raked, the benches unweathered. It sits near the main city park where children play under the eyes of parents who have learned not to let them wander. It is often empty long before dark.

29. City Park

The largest maintained public green space in Darkpoint, with walking paths, benches, and a small pond. Public events are held here regularly, organized by the corporation's community relations office. The park feels pleasant and normal until the scheduled hours end, at which point it empties with an efficiency that feels practiced.

30. Mini Golf

A small recreational course at the edge of the commercial district, open seasonally. It serves families and visiting groups, and the attendants are relentlessly cheerful in a way that outlasts any natural explanation. The course has been updated with new obstacles twice, each time incorporating a slightly different layout that no one remembers approving.

31. Amusement Park

A small amusement park at the boardwalk that operates on weekends and holidays. The rides are older than the maintenance logs suggest they should be. Staff turnover is extremely low. On nights when the park is closed, lights are sometimes visible from the main road, and music can be heard from a distance without any clear source.

32. Sports Arena

A multipurpose arena that hosts the town's recreational leagues as well as occasional regional competitions. Attendance at league games is quietly expected of residents, particularly those in management roles. The scoreboard was upgraded recently with equipment that has more processing capacity than sports statistics would require.

33. Arts Theater

A community theater and performance space that stages plays, recitals, and film screenings. The programming is curated by a committee that has not held a public meeting in years. Certain productions draw standing-room crowds; others are rescheduled without notice. The archive of past programs in the lobby has a gap of several years in the early run.

34. Marina

A small boat launch and dock facility on the river, used by residents for fishing and leisure. Access after dark requires a permit that is technically available but difficult to obtain. The harbormaster keeps meticulous logs of who comes and goes on the water and submits a copy to the corporation office each week as a matter of standard practice, he says.

35. Lighthouse

An operational lighthouse on the lake's northern shore that predates Darkpoint by several decades. The original keeper's logs are held in the library with several volumes missing. The light runs on a cycle that doesn't match any posted schedule, and on certain nights it sweeps in patterns that sailors have described as irregular.

36. Resort

A riverside resort that caters to business visitors and out-of-town guests affiliated with the corporation. It is clean, comfortable, and staffed with a level of attentiveness that feels less like hospitality and more like supervision. Guests who stay longer than a few nights sometimes mention that their room has been searched, politely and thoroughly, while they were at dinner.

37. Race Track

A dirt oval track used for regional racing events and weekend exhibitions. The noise from race days carries across the entire town and is one of the few occasions when loud, unexplained sounds from the factory or the ridge can go unremarked. Several of the track's organizers have long employment histories with the corporation in roles that don't obviously relate to motorsport.

38. Silos

A row of grain silos near the edge of the farming district, owned by the corporation but leased back to local farmers under agreements that include access provisions. The largest silo has not been used for grain storage in years, based on the absence of agricultural traffic, but it is consistently listed as occupied in the town's infrastructure reports.

39. Farms

The agricultural land surrounding Darkpoint is largely corporation-owned and farmed under contract by families who have worked the land for generations, now under terms that include residence requirements and confidentiality clauses. The crop yields are reported to a corporate office rather than any county agricultural body. Farmhands who work the outer fields occasionally see things they don't mention.

40. University

A small private institution with a handful of departments focused on sciences and engineering. It was established with a corporation endowment and its research output is proprietary rather than published. Students are drawn from a limited pool and graduate into positions within the corporation almost without exception. The library's special collections are not available to the public.

41. Observatory

A hilltop facility with a large dome that was described to the town as an astronomical research station. The telescope is real and occasionally used for its stated purpose. The other equipment in the building - the arrays of instruments in the lower floors, the hardened communication lines running underground - is not discussed in the facility's public literature.

42. Fitness Center

The town's primary gym and wellness facility, free to corporation employees as part of their benefits package. Regular health assessments are conducted on-site by corporation medical staff, framed as preventive care. The results of those assessments are stored in a file system separate from any external medical records and are not shared with participants.

43. Veterinarian

The only veterinary practice in Darkpoint, run by a quiet professional who has been in town for many years. Animals brought in for behavioral changes - aggression, disorientation, unusual fear responses - are logged in a separate ledger. The vet is thorough and says little. Several pets belonging to residents nearer the laboratory have been brought in and not returned home.

44. Library

The public library holds a decent collection for a town this size, with an unusually complete run of local newspapers and official records. Certain issues are missing from the stacks, removed for preservation according to a hand-typed note in the index. The reference librarian knows which books are checked out most often and by whom, and that information goes somewhere beyond the standard borrowing records.

45. School Playground

The outdoor recreation area behind the elementary school building, enclosed on all sides by fencing. During school hours it functions exactly as it appears. On weekends and after dark it is sometimes used for gatherings that involve adults arriving on foot without vehicles, staying briefly, and leaving without speaking to neighbors.

46. Elementary School

The town's primary school for younger children, newer than the other school buildings and notably well-equipped. The health and development screenings conducted here are more extensive than state requirements and are administered by personnel who arrive from offsite on a regular schedule. Parents who have asked about the program in detail are referred to a corporation community liaison.

47. Museum

A small local history museum that documents Darkpoint's founding and development through photographs, artifacts, and written displays. The timeline presented is coherent and detailed up to a certain point, after which the exhibits become general and sparse. Several photographs show buildings or landmarks that don't appear to exist. Staff cannot explain the discrepancy and seem to find the question unusual.

48. Pizza Shop

One of the few businesses in Darkpoint that feels genuinely ordinary. It is crowded on Friday nights and the food is unremarkable in a way that is almost comforting. The owner has been here for twenty years and hears everything that passes over those tables. Whether he reports any of it to anyone is a question that has crossed the minds of people who talk freely there.

49. City Hall

The official seat of town government, which operates with a full complement of elected and appointed officials. In practice, decisions of any significance are made in consultation with the corporation's administrative office, and most have been for as long as any current official can remember. The meeting minutes are available to the public, but they are summaries of summaries.

50. Bakery

One of the older businesses in town, predating the corporation's arrival and still independently owned. The current owner inherited it and has never signed a corporate agreement, a situation that is tolerated rather than welcomed. The bakery is a place where people sometimes say things they wouldn't say elsewhere, and the owner has become quietly expert at forgetting what she hears.

51. Computer Shop

A small retailer selling personal computers, peripherals, and related electronic equipment - an unusual amenity for a town this size. The inventory is current and reasonably priced. Equipment purchased here has, on at least a few occasions, behaved in ways inconsistent with its specifications. The technician on staff is thorough, friendly, and was hired directly through the corporation's employment office.

52. Coffee Shop

The social center of Darkpoint's commercial district, always occupied by someone. Conversations here are ambient and constant, which means anything said can be overheard by the next table without effort. The staff changes rarely. The music played is just loud enough to make it feel private, and just quiet enough that it isn't.

53. Hospital

The town's medical facility, staffed adequately for a community this size and unusually well-equipped for one. Medical records here are maintained in a dual-system: standard patient files, and a parallel set maintained by corporation health administration that patients are never shown. Referrals to outside specialists are processed through a corporation liaison who determines, on unspecified criteria, which cases require external review.

54. Fire Station

A fully staffed fire and emergency response station that serves the town reliably. Crew members are employed by the town but their command structure ties back to the corporation's safety division. Certain incident reports from the past decade have been classified under an internal review process and are not available through normal public records requests.

55. Club

A members-only social club operating out of a converted building near the commercial district, open in the evenings to a roster that overlaps heavily with mid-level corporation management. Alcohol is served and conversations relax. The club has no visible security, but former members describe an environment where it was always clear that discretion was expected and that indiscretion had consequences.

56. Department Store

The largest retail operation in Darkpoint, stocked with a range of goods broader than most comparable towns could support. Deliveries arrive on overnight trucks that come more frequently than the sales floor would explain. The basement stockroom is larger than the store above it. Employees in the back end of the operation are hired separately and tend not to interact with floor staff.

57. Court

The town courthouse handles local civil and criminal matters under the authority of a judge who has sat on the bench for many years without an election that anyone recalls clearly. Cases involving corporation employees or corporation property are routed through a separate administrative process that operates without public record. The courthouse is open during standard hours and feels unremarkable until you need something from it.

58. Music Shop

A narrow storefront selling instruments, sheet music, and used records, run by a man who arrived in Darkpoint as a traveler some years ago and stayed without ever clearly explaining why. He is knowledgeable and friendly and seems to have decided, for reasons he doesn't share, that leaving is no longer something he intends to do. His back room has a shortwave radio he doesn't advertise.

59. Hobby Store

A general hobby and craft shop that stocks model kits, radio components, maps, and related materials. It draws a particular kind of customer - people who like to build things, understand how things work, trace signals back to their origins. The owner notices what people are building and has strong opinions, offered quietly, about which projects are worth pursuing.

60. Police Station

The Darkpoint police department occupies a clean, modern building at the center of the civic district. Officers are professional and responsive. They are also employees of the corporation in all but official classification, hired through a process that runs parallel to any state credentialing. Calls made to the station from within town are logged; calls from outside requiring follow-up are handled before they require follow-up.

61. Plaza

The central commercial square where the main streets converge, lined with benches, a few trees, and the town fountain. It is the most public space in Darkpoint and consequently the most surveilled, with camera installations that have multiplied over the years in ways that blend into the architecture. People meet here in full view and say nothing they wouldn't want repeated.

62. Fashion Shop

A clothing boutique that stocks styles consistent with whatever era Darkpoint exists in, neither trendy nor dated, occupying a careful middle ground. Its clientele is small and loyal. The owner places special orders with specificity and efficiency that suggests a supply chain more organized than fashion retail typically requires.

63. Jewelry Shop

An independent jeweler that has operated in Darkpoint under the same family for generations, predating the corporation. The owner is among the oldest residents and one of the few with clear memories of what the town was before. He is careful about what he says and to whom, and the jewelry cases contain several pieces that were never for sale and have no price tags.

64. Movie Theater

A single-screen theater that shows commercial films on a delay from their wide release, which is normal for a town this size. The reels arrive by courier rather than through a standard distribution chain. On certain nights when no film is listed on the marquee, the theater is occupied anyway, with the windows blacked and vehicles parked around the back.

65. Mall

A small enclosed mall that is larger than the town's population would seem to justify. Not all of the storefronts are active; some are occupied by businesses with hours that don't align with customer traffic. Teens like to congregate at the small arcade located here. The lower level, accessible by a stairwell near the service corridor, is listed in the building plan as mechanical space, but the footprint doesn't match.

66. Apartment Skyrise

A modern residential tower built to house corporation employees in a centralized location. The building is clean, the units well-appointed, and the rent charged to residents is nominal under their employment agreements. The building management office maintains a log of entries and exits from each unit, framed as a security feature, that is submitted weekly to the corporation's residential division.

67. Church

The main congregation in Darkpoint draws from a broad cross-section of the community and holds services that are entirely conventional in form. The pastor arrived about fifteen years ago under circumstances that long-term residents remember differently from one another. The church receives a significant annual donation from the corporation, acknowledged in the bulletin without comment.

68. Cemetery

The town cemetery is well-maintained and its older sections include family plots going back generations. The newer section, added in the past two decades, contains a number of headstones for individuals who, according to other residents, moved away rather than died. When asked, the groundskeeper cites records he is willing to show but unwilling to discuss.

69. Walking Park

A linear park along the river that runs through a more secluded area of town, with a paved path and periodic benches. It is peaceful and pleasant, the kind of amenity that signals investment in community wellbeing.

70. Band Shell

An outdoor performance structure in the city park used for summer concerts, town meetings, and seasonal events. It amplifies well and carries sound across a wide area, which is one reason that public events here are structured and timed with care. Microphones that have been set up for events occasionally pick up transmissions that are edited out of any recordings before distribution.

71. Fountain

The ornamental fountain at the center of the plaza has been running continuously for as long as residents can recall. It is the visual center of the town's public space and features in most official photographs of Darkpoint. Locals don't drink from it by unspoken convention, a habit that began at some point no one can date precisely.

72. Bowling Alley

A twelve-lane bowling alley that has been operating since the early days of the corporation's presence. It is one of the louder indoor spaces in town, which makes it one of the few places where people feel comfortable raising their voices. Regulars have developed the habit of speaking at the lane, under the noise, and the bowling alley has inadvertently become one of the safer places to have a real conversation.

73. Restaurant

The town's most well-known sit-down restaurant occupies a large space with a main dining room and several private dining rooms in the back, used for business meetings and, occasionally, for gatherings that are not listed in any reservation log. The food is good. The waitstaff is attentive in a way that means they are always nearby. Private rooms are swept for recording devices by staff before each reservation.

74. Condominiums

A newer development of owner-occupied units housing corporation employees at the management and technical levels. The units are larger and better-furnished than the apartment tower, and the residents here operate with more autonomy - within visible limits. The homeowners association is run by the corporation's residential office, and its bylaws include provisions that residents discover only when they try to do something they assumed was permitted.

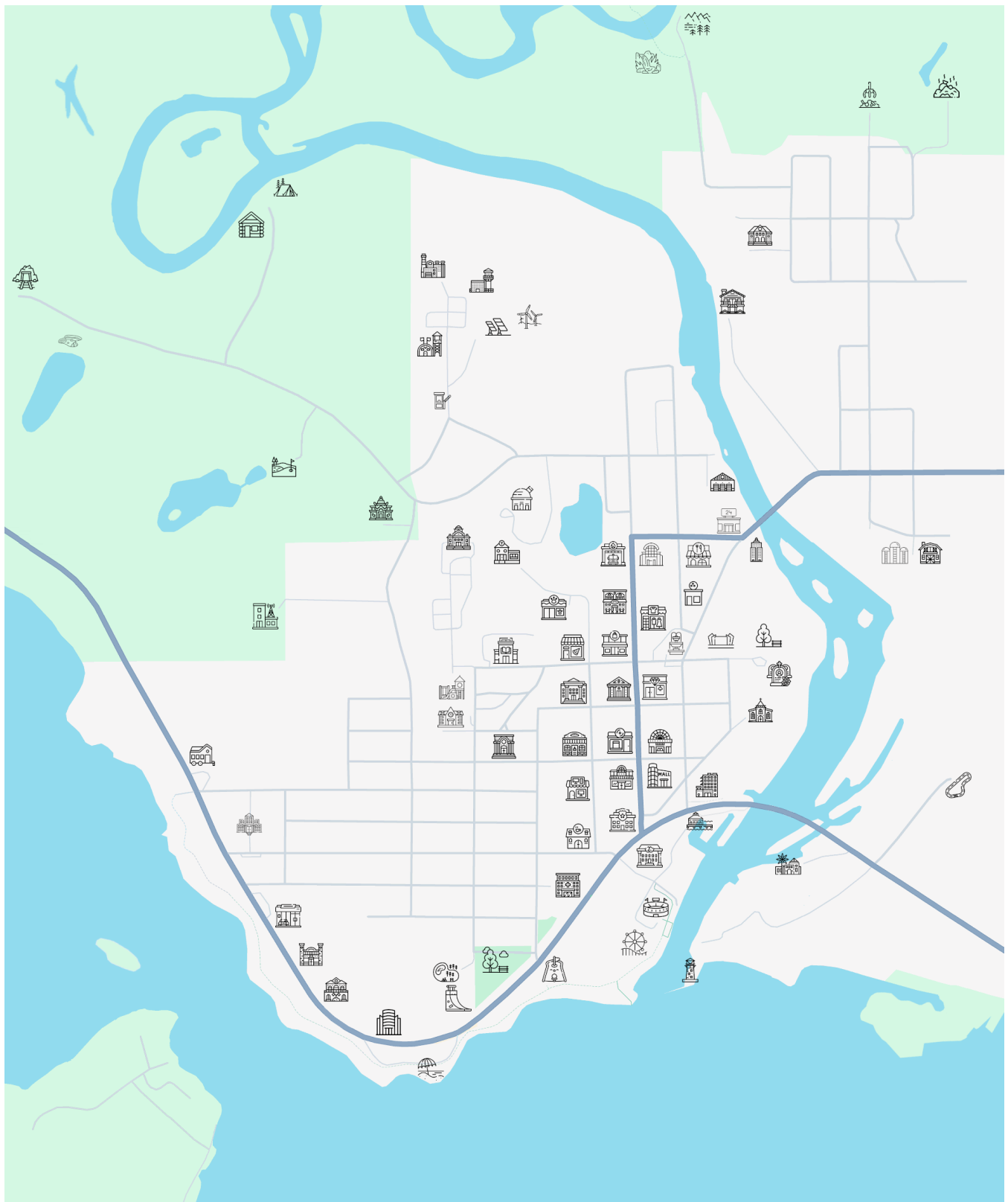
75. Corner Store

One of the oldest commercial buildings in Darkpoint, a small general store that has passed through several owners over the decades. The current owner is one of the few people in town who remembers a version of Darkpoint that predates the corporation's full consolidation. She is not talkative, but she is specific about what she remembers, and she remembers more than she says.

76. Storage Facility

A fenced facility of individual lockable units on the industrial edge of town. Most units are rented under names that don't correspond to current residents. Access is unrestricted during posted hours, and the facility operates without an on-site attendant for most of the day. The units at the far end of the lot, past the main building, are on a separate lease structure and have never been listed as available.







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