

Neon Punk

Level Design and Quest Design Document

Document Type: Quest Design Document

Game: Neon Punk

Genre: Roguelike Rail Shooter / Action RPG / Narrative Survival

Structure: District → Point of Interest → Sector

Primary Quest Design Goal: Combine authored narrative objectives with procedural exploration, combat, faction interactions, and player-driven choices.

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Level Design

Overall Structure

The level design of Neon Punk is structured into three main layers — **District, Point of Interest, and Sector** — organizing player progression in a modular, dynamic, and highly replayable way. This structure balances authored content with procedural variation, ensuring thematic consistency while keeping each run unique.

The game is composed of **seven regions (Districts)**, each representing a distinct neighborhood of the city with its own visual identity, challenges, and factions. Within each district, there are **4 to 5 visitable locations (Points of Interest)**, which function as exploration and combat spaces. These areas are not all available from the start, being **progressively unlocked** as the player advances through the narrative, strengthens the gang, and expands their influence.



The only space that operates differently is the main hub, known as the **Gang Hideout**, which has its own unique functionality. In this environment, the player manages resources, interacts with characters, builds upgrades, and prepares for expeditions, serving as the strategic core of the game.

To complete a Point of Interest, the player must progress through a sequence of **10 sectors**, culminating in a **boss fight in the final sector**. Each sector represents a short, focused gameplay segment, which can take the form of either **combat, utility, or narrative events**.

Combat sectors are divided into three levels:

- **Normal**, featuring standard challenges and common enemies;
- **Elite**, with increased difficulty, stronger enemies, or special modifiers; Generally between the 4th and 6th room. There is never more than one per run.
- **Boss**, representing the climax of the area, requiring mastery of mechanics and strategic preparation. It's always the 10th and final room. There is never more than one per run.

Narrative sectors, on the other hand, function as structural pauses and contextual decision points, and can be:

- **Fixed encounters**, specific to a given area and tied to its narrative or worldbuilding;
- **Random events**, introducing variation, dilemmas, and emergent opportunities during the run.

Finally, **utility sectors** can be divided into:

- **Rest Site (Campfire)**: A safe space where the player can recover HP and prepare for the next encounters.
- **Black Market**: A trading space where the player can spend Neon Bits to acquire useful items, healing, or Mods (power-ups).
- **Treasure Room**: A high-reward sector focused on granting valuable items or upgrades without the need for combat.

The layout of each area, as well as sector distribution and rewards, is **procedurally generated** through combinations of **predefined segments**. This ensures varied paths, challenges, and decision-making opportunities in every run, keeping the experience fresh and unpredictable.

An area is only considered complete when the player defeats the boss in the tenth sector, consolidating progress in that location and unlocking new possibilities within the overall game map.

Sectors and Rewards

After completing each sector, the player receives a reward and must choose their next path, evaluating risks, benefits, and immediate needs. When choosing, the player knows the room and reward type that await them, allowing strategic decision-making.

Rewards vary depending on the sector type and may include:

- **Heart** (Increase max HP)
- **Health restoration**
- **Neon bits** (Temporary Currency)
- **Data fragments** (Permanent Currency)
- **Insight** (Permanent Currency)
- **Survival resources**: consumables and crafting materials
- **Mods** (temporary power-ups)

Sectors and Rewards							
Sector	Combat			Narrative		Utility	
Subtype	Normal	Elite	Boss	Fixed	Random	Rest Site	Treasure Room
Design Intent	Basic encounter, pacing	High risk, high reward	Area climax	Story-driven progression	Dynamic risk/reward events	Respite. Restore HP and plan	Respite. No fight, only rewards
Notes	Mods and one other reward type	Multiple rewards (Mods, Neon Bits, and another reward type)	Major and multiple rewards	Narrative progression, unlocks, characters, decisions with lasting impact	Risk-based outcomes with positive or negative consequences	No rewards, only HP restoration	Up to 3 reward types. Chance of rare rewards
Neon Bits	Small amount	High amount (Always)	—	—	Possible	—	High amount
Mods (Power-ups)	Common (Always)	Higher rarity (Always)	—	Possible	—	—	—
Hearts (HP)	Common	Rare	—	Rare or Common	Rare or Common	—	—
Crafting Materials / Consumables	Common	Chance of rare or higher quantity	High amount - Chance of high rarity	—	Possible (Common or Rare)	—	Possible (Common or Rare)
Insight	Small amount	High amount	High amount	—	Small or High amount	—	High amount
Data Fragments	Small amount	High amount	High amount	—	Small or High amount	—	High amount
Restore HP	—	—	—	Possible	Possible	Always	—
Rescued characters	—	—	—	Possible	—	—	—

Procedural Generation Rules Summary

The procedural generation system should follow these rules:

- Rule 1 — Bosses are always in Sector 10
- Rule 2 — Elite encounters are limited to one Elite sector per run.
- Rule 3 — Narrative objectives cannot be generated consecutively
- Rule 4 — Boss completion finalizes the run
 - A quest can be resolved before the boss, but the Point of Interest is only permanently completed after Sector 10.

Districts and Points of Interest

District 1 – Underworld (Outer Slums)

The starting area where the protagonist lives. Chaotic, dense, and improvised, it serves as the cultural heart of resistance and punk identity.

Tone: survival, community, resistance

Gameplay: introduction to core mechanics, simpler combat encounters

Points of Interest:

- **Gang Hideout:** Improvised shelter inside an abandoned building. Main hub for upgrades and narrative.
- **Neon Alley:** Narrow streets filled with graffiti and flickering lights. Residential ruins with empty buildings and improvised shelters.
- **Vertical Slums:** Stacked, improvised structures where the poorest population lives.
- **Abandoned Garage**
- **Graffiti Tunnels**

District 2 – Underground Market

An abandoned industrial port transformed into a smuggling hub, with stacked containers and partially functioning cranes.

Controlled by: smugglers and mercenary gangs

Points of Interest:

- **Abandoned Dock:** Rusted structures and cargo containers.
- **Black Market:** A lively area with NPCs, side missions, and rare items. Underground weapons trade hub.
- **Illegal Combat Arena**
- **Fortified Warehouses:** Highly protected weapon storage areas. Containers form narrow corridors.
- **Body Modification Workshop**

District 3 – Synthetic Paradise

An underground district dominated by hedonism, parties, and drugs.

Points of Interest:

- **Neon Avenue:** A large avenue with massive buildings connected by walkways. Neon lights reflecting on wet streets, filled with glitching billboards and screens.
- **Underground Club**
- **Lonely Overpass:** An abandoned overpass with improvised shelters where people use drugs.
- **Pleasure Houses:** A prostitution district with holograms and projections.
- **Abandoned Subway Station:** Smuggling tunnels used for drug distribution

District 4 – Old District

A decaying district controlled by a religious group that rejects technological advancement and believes the city must be “purified.”

Controlled by: religious extremists

Points of Interest:

- **Blackout Zone:** Area without electricity, lit by candles and firelight.
- **Abandoned Church**
- **Destroyed Square**
- **Clandestine Clinic:** Improvised surgical rooms inside an abandoned hospital

District 5 – Ruined Industrial Complex

Forgotten regions of the city dominated by technological ruins and obsolete systems. A mysterious area filled with abandoned factories, labs, and machines.

Controlled by: Scrappers — a faction of scavenger robots that repurpose old technology and despise humans

Points of Interest:

- **Industrial Ruins:** Factories and smokestacks
- **Abandoned Factory:** Still-active assembly lines
- **Dead Railway:** Elevated tracks and abandoned trains
- **Tech Junkyard:** Massive scrap deposits
- **Research Complex:** Former laboratory with test chambers (malfunctioning experiments), testing arenas (robots experimenting on humans), and abandoned data centers filled with corrupted data

District 6 – The Frontier

The boundary between poor and wealthy districts. A heavily policed and highly volatile area.

Controlled by: Police

Points of Interest:

- **Burning Avenue:** A chaotic avenue filled with tall buildings, barricades, fire, explosions, and low visibility
- **City Rooftops:** Antennas and sniper observation points
- **Radio Transmission Tower**
- **Military Outpost**
- **Energy Complex:** Power plant and generators supplying energy to the upper districts

District 7 – The Dome

The center of corporate control. A wealthy, technologically advanced, and heavily surveilled area.

Tone: oppression, surveillance, control

Points of Interest:

- **Surveillance Control Center**
- **Maximum Security Prison**
- **Data Library:** Data centers and archives of old technology
- **Government Tower (Final):** Administrative center and final area of the game

Districts and Narrative Objectives

Each district should answer one major question about the city.

District	Narrative Question
Underworld	Why does the gang resist?
Underground Market	Who profits from the city's suffering?
Synthetic Paradise	What happens when people escape reality?
Old District	Is technology actually the enemy?
Industrial Complex	What happened to the machines?
The Frontier	How does the city maintain control?
The Dome	Who truly controls the city?

Quest Design

Quest Design Philosophy

Quests in **Neon Punk** should reinforce the game's central themes:

- **Punk resistance** — challenging systems of oppression.
- **Paint the World** — physically and metaphorically reclaiming spaces.
- **Knowledge is Power** — discovering information and using it strategically.
- **Humanity vs. Technology** — questioning whether technology is the enemy or merely a tool.
- **Community and Survival** — decisions should affect the Gang Hideout and its members.

The quest system should not turn Neon Punk into a traditional linear RPG.

Instead, quests should be designed around the game's roguelike structure:

**Accept Objective → Prepare at Hideout → Enter Point of Interest →
Navigate Procedural Sectors → Make Decisions → Escape/Defeat Boss →
Complete Objective → Return to Hideout → Resolve Consequences**

Narrative objectives can therefore be completed through different combinations of sectors, encounters, resources, and player choices.

Quest Design Principles Summary:

- **Narrative gives the player a reason to explore:** The quest tells the player why they are entering a location.
- **Procedural generation determines how they get there:** The game determines the exact sequence of sectors.
- **Choices should affect the world:** Dialogue and decisions should influence factions, characters, rewards, and future encounters.
- **Failure should create consequences, not frustration:** A failed run should change the next attempt rather than simply erase progress.
- **Quests should interact with the core gameplay:** Quests should encourage combat and exploration, rather than functioning as disconnected dialogue objectives.

Quest Hierarchy

Quests in **Neon Punk** are divided into four major categories. Each category serves a different purpose within the game's progression, narrative, and roguelike gameplay loop.

Quest Type	Purpose
Main Quests	Advance the central storyline
Faction Quests	Build relationships with different factions
Gang Member Quests	Rescue and recruit new gang members, develop existing characters, and help them resolve personal problems
Side Quests	Provide optional stories, world exploration, additional challenges, and rewards.

Main Quests

Main Quests advance the central narrative of **Neon Punk** and guide the player's progression through the seven Districts.

These quests focus on the growing resistance against the systems controlling the city while gradually revealing the conflicts between its major factions.

Faction Quests

Faction Quests allow the player to interact directly with the major factions controlling different parts of the city.

The player has a **reputation value** with each faction, representing how the faction perceives the player and the gang.

The player's actions during quests can improve, damage, or otherwise change these relationships.

Gang Member Quests

Gang Member Quests focus on the people living and working at the **Gang Hideout**. These quests are used to introduce new characters, develop existing gang members, and explore their personal stories, motivations, and relationships with the resistance.

Some Gang Member Quests may also have branching outcomes. The player's choices can affect the relationship with the character and determine how their personal story develops.

Quest Generation Rules

Core Principle

The quest defines the rules of the run; procedural generation defines the variation within those rules.

The final result should make every quest run feel **different, while maintaining the requirements.**

Rule 1 — The procedural system must follow the active quest's requirements

When a quest is active, the procedural generation system must take the quest's requirements into account when generating a run within the quest's Point of Interest (POI).

A quest should **never assume that the player will experience a fixed sequence of sectors**. Instead, the quest defines the **objectives and requirements**, while the procedural system determines the specific sequence of sectors through which the player reaches them.

The generated run can vary from one attempt to another while still guaranteeing that all required quest objectives can be completed.

Rule 2 — An active quest must always be completable

Once a quest has been accepted and the player enters the quest's Point of Interest, the generated run must always contain everything necessary to complete the quest.

The player should **never fail a quest because the procedural generator failed to spawn a required sector, NPC, item, or interaction.**

Before generating the run, the system must evaluate the active quest's requirements and reserve the necessary content slots.

Rule 3 — Quest content takes priority over optional procedural content

When generating a quest run, **mandatory quest content has priority over optional procedural content**. The generator should first ensure that all quest requirements can be fulfilled and then populate the remaining sectors with standard procedural content.

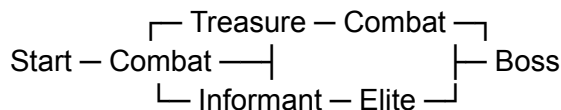
1. Determine quest requirements
↓
2. Reserve required sectors
↓
3. Place quest objectives
↓
4. Place mandatory Elite/Boss encounters
↓
5. Generate remaining sectors
↓
6. Generate rewards and branching paths

This prevents optional procedural content from occupying slots required by the quest.

Rule 4 — Quest objectives should not always appear on the optimal path

Although the objective must always be available, the generator should not necessarily place it directly on the safest or most rewarding path. The objective should be **guaranteed, but not necessarily convenient**.

For example:



The player knows that the Informant is available, but reaching them may require taking a more dangerous route. This preserves the game's strategic decision-making.

Rule 5 — Quest objectives must persist until completed

If a player encounters a quest objective but chooses not to complete it, the objective should remain available unless the quest explicitly specifies otherwise.

Example:

The player could meet the Informant but chooses to explore another path.

The quest should not disappear simply because the player chose not to complete it during the run.

Quest content should only become unavailable when:

- The player completes the objective.
- The quest explicitly allows the objective to fail.
- A deliberate player choice permanently changes the quest.

Rule 6 — Quest objectives have valid placement ranges

Each quest objective must define a valid sector range in which it can appear. This allows the procedural generator to maintain pacing and prevent important objectives from appearing too early or too late in the run.

Example:

- **Objective:** Find Informant
- **Valid Sectors:** 3–7

The generator can place the Informant in any valid sector within this range.

Rule 7 — Quests must spawn in their assigned sector type

Quest objectives must only be assigned to sectors capable of supporting their required interaction.

For example:

Quest Objective	Compatible Sector
Find Informant	Narrative
Defeat Elite Enemy	Elite Combat
Recover Shipment	Treasure / Narrative
Rescue NPC	Narrative / Combat
Defeat Quest Boss	Boss

If an objective requires a specific sector type, the generator must guarantee that at least one compatible sector exists within the objective's valid placement range.

Rule 8 — Quest completion and Point of Interest completion are separate states

Completing a quest objective does not necessarily mean that the Point of Interest has been completed.

For example:

The player may recover the shipment in Sector 6, but the Point of Interest is not considered complete until the player defeats the Boss in Sector 10.

Rule 9 — Procedural generation must account for all active quest objectives

A quest may contain multiple objectives, and the generator must consider all of them when constructing the run. The player may also have more than one quest in that same Point of Interest.

For example:

Quest: The Missing Shipment

1. Find the Informant — Sectors 3–5
2. Locate the Shipment — Sectors 5–8
3. Escape with the Shipment — Sector 9
4. Defeat the Smuggler Boss — Sector 10

The generator must create a valid sequence that satisfies all four requirements. The exact sectors may change between runs, but the **quest objectives must always remain valid**.

Rule 10 — Quest dependencies must be respected

Some objectives cannot be generated before another objective has been completed.

For example:

The player must find the Informant before receiving the location of the Medical Shipment.

Therefore:

Find Informant



Receive Shipment Location



Find Shipment



Escape



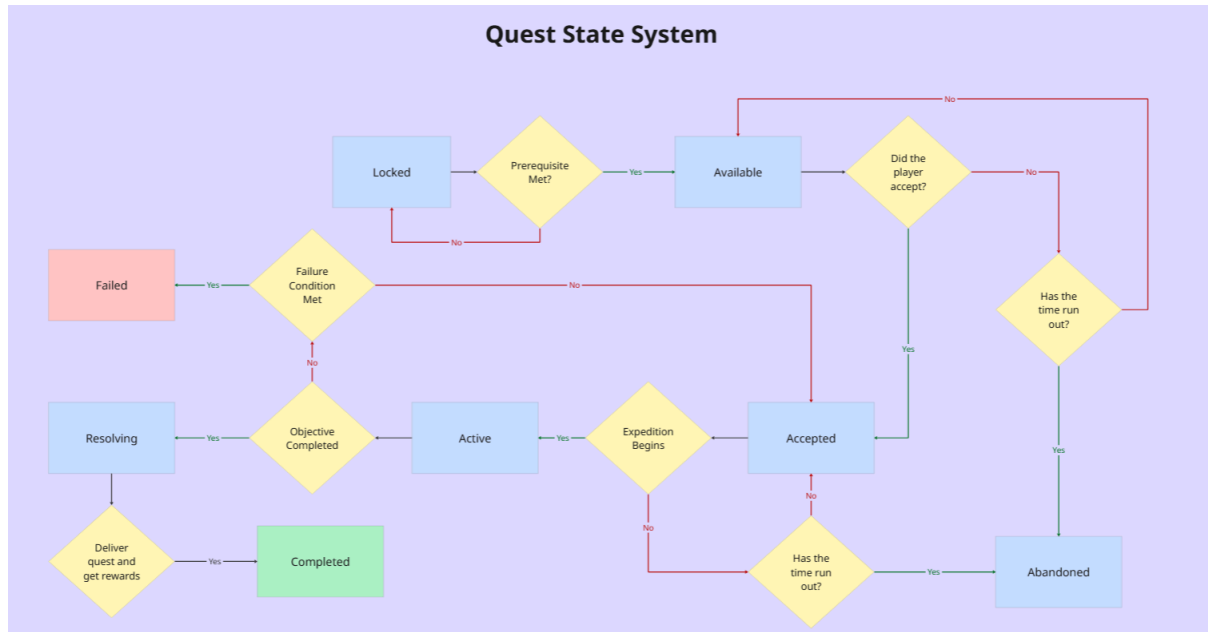
Defeat Boss

The procedural generator must ensure that dependent objectives are placed in an order that preserves these requirements.

Quest State System

The Quest State System represents the complete lifecycle of a quest in **Neon Punk**, from the moment it becomes available to the player until its final resolution. Each phase has specific conditions, gameplay behavior, and possible transitions.

Every quest follows five phases if successful, but it can also be abandoned or fail.



Phase 1 — Locked

A quest begins in the **Locked** state. At this stage, the quest is not yet visible or available to the player because its unlock conditions have not been met.

Quests can unlock based on one or more progression requirements, including:

- District progression
- Point of Interest (POI) completion
- Faction reputation
- Gang relationships
- Previous quest decisions
- Completion of another quest
- Discovery of specific information or narrative events

Once all required prerequisites are met, the quest transitions from **Locked** to **Available**.

Example:

The player cannot access a quest involving the Scrappers until they have reached the **Ruined Industrial Complex** and completed the quest that introduces the faction.

Phase 2 — Available

A quest enters the **Available** state when all of its prerequisites have been met and the player can choose whether to accept it.

The player may receive the quest through:

- The Quest Board at the Gang Hideout
- An NPC interaction (gang member, faction representative, etc)
- A narrative event
- An item or piece of information found during a previous expedition

When a quest becomes available, the player receives a **briefing** on the Quest Board containing the information necessary to understand the mission.

The briefing can communicate:

- Quest type
- Primary objective
- Target location
- Possible rewards
- Known dangers
- Relevant faction
- Optional objectives or information
- Recommended preparation

Example:

Quest Type: Gang Quest

Objective: Recover a stolen shipment of medical supplies from the Abandoned Dock.

Known Threat: Smuggler patrols.

Optional: Discover who ordered the theft.

Reward: Medical supplies + Gang Reputation.

The quest remains **Available** until the player accepts it.

Phase 3 — Accepted

A quest enters the **Accepted** state when the player confirms that they want to undertake it.

At this stage, the quest appears on the Quest Board, but the expedition has not yet started. The player can use this phase to prepare at the **Gang Hideout** before entering the quest's assigned Point of Interest.

When a quest is accepted, the player receives a **briefing** on the Quest Board containing the information necessary to understand the mission.

The briefing can communicate:

- Quest type
- Primary objective
- Target location
- Possible rewards
- Known dangers
- Relevant faction
- Optional objectives or information
- Recommended preparation

Example:

Quest Type: Gang Quest

Objective: Recover a stolen shipment of medical supplies from the Abandoned Dock.

Known Threat: Smuggler patrols.

Optional: Discover who ordered the theft.

Reward: Medical supplies + Gang Reputation.

The player may also receive additional dialogue or information after accepting a quest, allowing them to better understand the risks involved before beginning the run.

Important: The quest is not yet considered active during preparation. This allows the player to freely prepare without triggering quest-related failure conditions.

The quest becomes **Active** when the player enters the quest's designated Point of Interest, or is **Abandoned** if it is not completed before a specific time.

Phase 4 — Active

A quest enters the **Active** state when the player begins the expedition and enters the quest's Point of Interest.

During this phase, the procedural generation system must generate the run according to the requirements of the active quest. While sector layouts, rewards, encounters, and paths may vary, all mandatory quest objectives must remain completable.

The player progresses through the Point of Interest by navigating sectors, fighting enemies, interacting with NPCs, and completing quest-specific objectives.

Once the quest's required objectives have been fulfilled, the quest transitions to **Resolving**. However, the player may not succeed in the quest during exploration. If this happens, the quest may change into:

- **Failed** — If a specific failure condition has been met.
- **Active** — If the player doesn't succeed during that run but the quest allows them to try again

Phase 5 — Resolving

The **Resolving** phase occurs after the player has completed the quest's objectives, but has not yet talked to the NPC that delivered the quest in the Hideout. This phase is responsible for determining the final outcome of the quest and applying its consequences.

The system evaluates:

- Whether the primary objective was completed
- Whether optional objectives were completed
- Player choices
- Faction decisions
- Gang relationship changes
- NPC survival or status
- Information discovered during the quest
- Resources gained or lost
- Any special quest conditions

For example:

A player successfully recovers the Medical Shipment for an ally, as required by the quest, however, during the exploration, they discover that the smugglers were hired by a rival faction.

Before turning the quest in and completing it, the player can decide whether to:

- Expose the faction and give evidence to the ally that requested the quest
- Keep the information secret and bribe the rival faction

Although the main objective remains the same, each choice can produce different consequences. After all choices, rewards, and world-state changes have been processed, the quest transitions to **Completed**.

Phase 6 — Completed

A quest enters the **Completed** state when its final outcome has been resolved. At this stage, the system delivers the quest's rewards and permanently applies its consequences to the game world.

Possible consequences include:

- Increasing or decreasing faction reputation
- Improving or damaging relationships with gang members
- Unlocking new questlines
- Unlocking new dialogue
- Changing future random events
- Adding or removing NPCs
- Unlocking new districts or POIs
- Changing enemy types or encounters

Once completed, a quest normally cannot be repeated unless it is specifically designed as a repeatable quest.

Quest Failed

A quest enters the **Failed** state when the player meets a quest-specific failure condition before completing the required objectives.

Failure conditions should be used carefully. Because **Neon Punk** is built around a roguelike structure, player death during an expedition does **not automatically mean that the quest has failed**.

A quest should only enter the **Failed** state when failure is narratively or mechanically meaningful.

Possible failure conditions include:

- A required NPC dies
- The player makes an irreversible decision that ends the quest
- A required object is destroyed
- A target escapes
- A location becomes permanently inaccessible

Depending on the quest, death may instead cause the quest to return to the **Accepted** state after the player returns to the Gang Hideout, allowing the player to prepare and attempt the mission again while preserving some progress or changing the quest's conditions.

The next run may have:

- More elite enemies.
- A different route.
- A new security modifier.
- A new NPC offering assistance.

For example:

The player is defeated before recovering the Medical Shipment. Instead of permanently failing the quest:

The shipment has been moved. Smuggler security has increased.

Quest Abandoned

A quest enters the **Abandoned** state when the player accepts it but does not complete it within its designated time limit.

This state is primarily used for **time-sensitive quests**, where the situation continues to evolve even if the player does not take action.

The time limit may be based on:

- A specific number of days
- A specific number of runs
- A narrative deadline
- An event occurring in the world
- The availability of an NPC
- A faction operation progressing

Quest Board at the Gang Hideout

The Gang Hideout contains a **Quest Board** that displays:

Main Objective

Example: Reach the Underground Market

Available Gang Missions

Example: Help repair the generator.

Available Faction Missions

Example: Smugglers are offering work.

Available Side Missions

Example: Recover resources for the hideout.

Rumors

Example: Someone saw a corporate convoy near the Frontier.

Discovered Information

Example: Scrapper robots may know something about the Research Complex.

Rumors and discovered information can lead to new missions or help in ongoing missions. This makes the Hideout feel like the strategic center of the resistance.

Quest Design Template

Every new quest should be documented using the following template.

Quest Information

Quest ID:

Quest Name:

Quest Type:

District:

Point of Interest:

Recommended Difficulty:

Narrative

Briefing:

Main objectives:

Optional objectives:

Quest introduction:

NPCs:

Ends and consequences:

Gameplay

Requirements:

Time to complete:

Failure State:

Rewards:

Sector type:

Sector placement range:

- Min sector:
- Max sector: