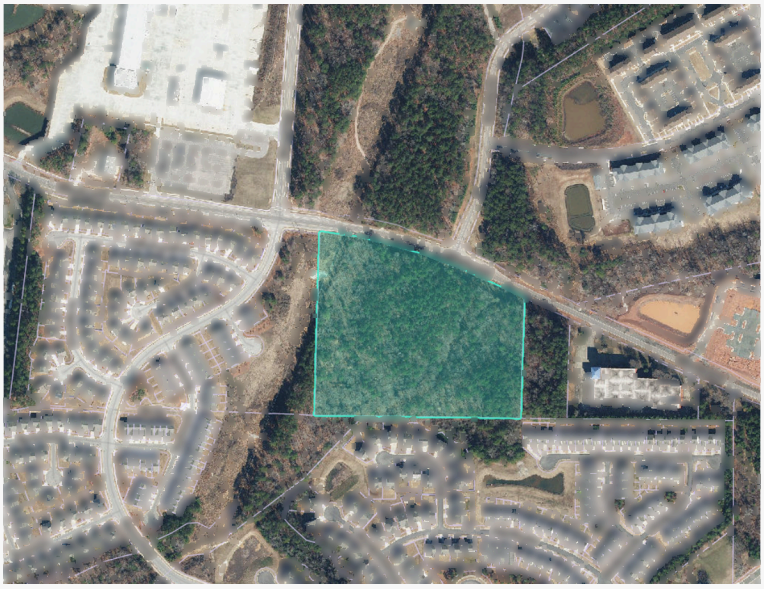
QUICKCHECK · PRE-ACQUISITION DUE DILIGENCE

Durham, NC

~14.0 Acres | Industrial Warehouse | IL Zoning / Apartment & Townhouse Place Type —

ACREAGE	CURRENT ZONING	PLACE TYPE
14.09 acres	IL, Industrial Light	Apartment & Townhouse Neighborhood

INTENDED USE	VERDICT	OVERALL RISK
Industrial warehouse	Conditional go	2 MODERATE



ENTITLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

QuickCheck. Durham, NC

This report is intended for preliminary due diligence purposes only. All conclusions are based on public data, available maps, and professional experience. On-site investigation is recommended to confirm all findings. Municipal record research powered by KnowToYes.

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01

Project Information

Property

[redacted] Durham, North Carolina. The site is a single parcel on the south side of Chin Page Road, immediately east of the Crown Parkway intersection, within the City of Durham planning jurisdiction and inside the corporate limits.

Parcel Record

ITEM	VALUE
REID	[redacted]
PIN	[redacted]
Deeded Acreage	14.09 acres (13.98 acres on the tax record)
Property Owner	[redacted]
Owner Address	[redacted]
Land Class	Vacant Industrial
Land Sale Date	[redacted]
Land Sale Price	[redacted]
Deed Book / Page	[redacted]
Plat Book / Page	[redacted]
Total Appraised Value	[redacted]
Planning Jurisdiction	Durham City
Township	Triangle (612)
Tax District	Durham

Regulatory Context

ITEM	VALUE
Current Zoning	IL, Industrial Light (entire parcel)
Place Type (Comprehensive Plan)	Apartment & Townhouse Neighborhood (74%), Recreation & Open Space (26%)

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ITEM	VALUE
Development Tier	Suburban
Stormwater Regulatory Basin	Lower Neuse
Watershed Protection Overlay	None (parcel does not fall within any overlay)
Flood Hazard Areas	Zone AE, 3.273 acres
National Wetland Inventory	No mapped NWI features on the parcel
Streets Impact Fee Zone	Zone 4
Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Zone	Zone 2
Open Space Land Impact Fee Zone	2B
Soils	WsE (47%), MfD (20%), Cc (19%), CrC (13%)

Intended Use

Industrial warehouse, developed under the existing IL zoning.

Overlays Confirmed Not Applicable

Durham County GIS reports no overlap with the Watershed Protection Overlay, National Wetland Inventory, Neighborhood Protection Overlay, Airport Overlay, Major Transportation Corridor, Research Triangle Park, Transitional Office Overlay, or any national or local historic district.

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02

Go / No-Go Summary

2 MODERATE

Risk scale: 1 LOW 2 MODERATE 3 HIGH

TOPIC	RISK (1-3)	RISK NOTES
Water / Sewer	1 LOW	Durham does not publish line locations, but the site is ringed by served apartments, townhomes, and a trucking terminal. Public water and sewer are in Chin Page Road across the frontage. Confirm size, fire flow, outfall inverts, and remaining basin capacity with Durham Water Management.
Environmental	3 HIGH	An unnamed Third Fork Creek tributary bisects the site diagonally. County GIS measures 3.273 acres of FEMA Zone AE, about 23% of the parcel. Add 50-ft Neuse riparian buffers plus a 10-ft setback each side, a 25% steep-slope grading cap within 200 ft of the corridor, and 25 to 30 ft of relief. The site splits into two lobes.
Zoning	1 LOW	IL across the entire parcel. Warehouse and Freight Movement is permitted by right. No rezoning, no development plan, no Council vote. Suburban Tier standards: 40-ft street yard, 30-ft side, 25-ft rear, 60% coverage, 50-ft height, plus a 50-ft natural buffer against the residential neighbors.
Land Use	2 MODERATE	Place Type is Apartment & Townhouse Neighborhood (74%) and Recreation & Open Space (26%), squarely inconsistent with a warehouse. No regulatory hook today because no legislative approval is required and NCGS 160D-605 does not attach. Real exposure is Durham's UDO rewrite and comprehensive remapping.
Approval Times	2 MODERATE	About 22 to 26 months to a fully approved, permit-ready project. Durham administrative site plan review runs 10 to 12 months, and construction drawings run another 10 to 12 months. By right buys certainty of outcome here, not speed. Add 6 to 8 months and a Board of Adjustment hearing if the layout encroaches into the regulated floodplain.
GO / NO-GO	2 MODERATE	Conditional go. The entitlement is already in hand and that is what the [redacted] purchase bought. The risk is not whether a warehouse can be approved here, it is how much warehouse the land will hold. Underwrite 50,000 to 100,000 sf of shallow-bay product across two buildings, not a bulk distribution box.

Summary

The Comprehensive Plan and the intended use do not match, and on paper that looks like the central problem with this site. It is not. Because Warehouse and Freight Movement is already permitted by right in the existing IL zoning, this project never goes to City Council, no plan-consistency statement is ever made, and the Place Type designation is never weighed by an elected body. Durham staff have said as much on the record in a comparable case.

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The item that actually governs is the stream and floodplain corridor. It does not clip the property, it cuts across it, and it takes with it the FEMA Zone AE area, riparian buffers on both sides, and the steep side slopes flanking it. Net developable land comes to roughly 5 to 7 acres out of 14.09, and it arrives in two separate pieces rather than one. That is a product decision, not an entitlement decision, and it needs to be made before the land is underwritten against a program.

Two things deserve early attention. First, define the corridor with real survey and delineation work before designing anything, because five field determinations set the entire buildable envelope. Second, keep the layout out of the regulated floodplain if the yield math allows it. Encroaching triggers a minor special use permit before the Board of Adjustment, which is a public quasi-judicial hearing on a site surrounded by residential neighbors holding a Comprehensive Plan that says this land should be housing. Durham has an active constituency on warehouse truck traffic, and there is no reason to give it a microphone in a project that otherwise never needs one.

Third, and more quietly, move. Durham's UDO rewrite carries a comprehensive remapping component, and a vacant IL parcel designated Apartment & Townhouse is exactly the kind of parcel a remap picks up. State downzoning protections give an owner real leverage, but a vested site plan is a better answer than a legal argument.

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03

Water and Sewer

1 LOW

Water	Durham does not publish the location or size of its public water mains on the public GIS viewer, so the exact line position cannot be confirmed from desktop sources. The development pattern along this stretch of Chin Page Road removes most of the doubt. The parcel is surrounded on three sides by served development: townhome subdivisions immediately west and south (Michelangelo Place, Raphael Place, Explorer Drive, King Arthur Court), garden apartments directly north across Chin Page Road along Crown Parkway and Chronicle Drive, more apartments to the northeast at First Edition Drive, and a large trucking terminal northwest of the Crown Parkway intersection. Every one of those is on City of Durham water. A main almost certainly runs in or along Chin Page Road across the entire site frontage, and the connection distance should be measured in tens of feet rather than thousands. The practical work is confirming size, pressure, and available capacity with Durham Water Management, and confirming whether the fire flow demand for a sprinklered warehouse can be met without an upsize. Warehouse domestic demand is low, but fire flow is not, and that is the number worth pinning down early.
Sewer	The same reasoning applies to sanitary sewer, with one added piece of physical evidence. The stream corridor that crosses the site drains northeast toward Third Fork Creek tributary and continues under Chin Page Road, and gravity sewer in this part of Durham follows those drainage ways. The adjacent apartment and townhome communities on both sides of the road are on public sewer, which means an outfall serves this drainage basin. Given the site falls roughly 25 to 30 feet from Chin Page Road down to the corridor, a gravity connection is likely achievable without a pump station, and the corridor itself is the natural route to reach it. Confirm the outfall location, invert elevations, and remaining basin capacity with Durham Water Management. If the connection has to be made through the stream corridor, note that utility crossings within the floodplain are expressly allowed under UDO 8.4.4C.4.c with Floodplain Administrator approval, provided the crossing is perpendicular to the facility within a 15 degree tolerance, so this is a permitting step rather than an obstacle.
Assessment	Utility availability is the least worrying item on this site. The parcel sits in the middle of a fully developed, fully served suburban corridor, and the cost exposure is a service extension and a fire flow verification rather than an offsite main extension. The one caveat is that available capacity, not availability, is what actually needs confirming, and that is a phone call and a will-serve inquiry rather than a study.

Risk Score: 1 (Green)

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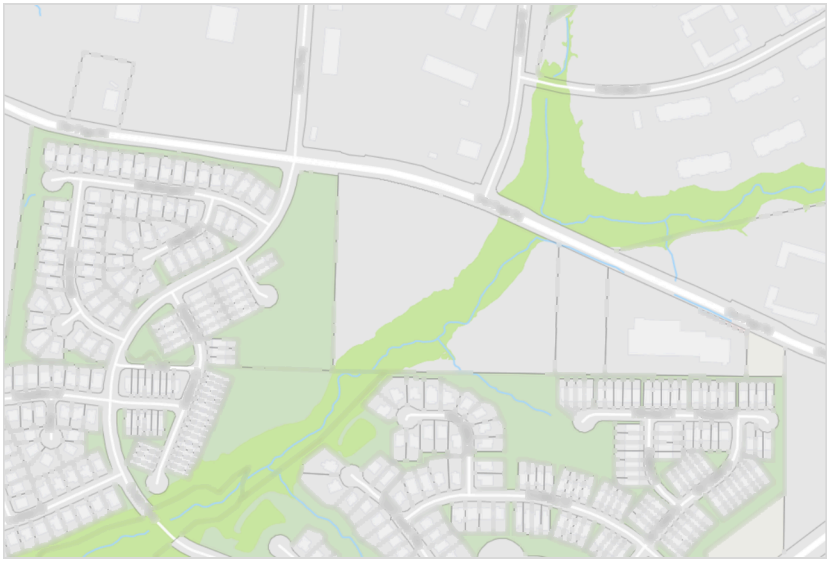

Surrounding Development Pattern, Chin Page Road Corridor

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04

Environmental Concerns

3 HIGH

FEATURE	FINDING	IMPACT
Stream	Unnamed tributary of Third Fork Creek crossing the parcel diagonally from southwest to northeast	Splits the site into two developable lobes; 50-ft Neuse riparian buffer plus 10-ft setback on each side
Floodplain	FEMA Zone AE, 3.273 acres measured by Durham County GIS (about 23% of the parcel), base flood elevations 335.9 to 338.4 in the immediate reach	Development prohibited except as allowed by UDO 8.4.4; any fill, pad, or parking in the fringe requires a minor special use permit
Wetlands	No National Wetland Inventory features mapped on the parcel. NWI shows a linear riverine feature (R4SBC) and a forested wetland run (PFO1A) tracking the same drainage off site to the northeast and southwest	Jurisdictional determination still required; the corridor should be assumed to carry waters of the US until surveyed
Topography	Roughly 25 to 30 feet of relief, falling from about 362 to 368 at Chin Page Road down to about 336 to 340 at the corridor, with tight two-foot contours on the side slopes	Significant cut and fill to build a level warehouse pad; retaining structures likely
Soils	WsE 47%, MfD 20%, Cc 19%, CrC 13%	WsE is a 15 to 25 percent slope phase, consistent with the observed side slopes. Cc is a bottomland series consistent with the floodplain reach
Steep Slopes	UDO 8.8 protects natural grades of 25% or more, in areas of 5,000 sf or greater, located within 200 ft of a floodway fringe or perennial stream	No more than 15% of the qualifying steep slope area on the tract may be graded
Watershed Overlay	None. Parcel is in the Lower Neuse stormwater basin with no Watershed Protection Overlay	No built-upon-area cap from a watershed overlay; Neuse nutrient and stormwater rules still apply

The Corridor Is the Deal

This is the item that drives the underwriting. An unnamed tributary of Third Fork Creek runs diagonally across the parcel from the southwest corner up to the northeast, where it crosses under Chin Page Road near the Chronicle Drive intersection. Durham County GIS measures 3.273 acres of FEMA Zone AE on the parcel, which is about 23% of the 14.09 acres. Durham's own Place Type Map independently confirms the same corridor: 26% of the parcel is mapped Recreation & Open Space, and the shape of that mapped area matches the floodplain and drainage way almost exactly. Two separate City data layers are telling the same story about the same ground.

The consequence is not just lost acreage, it is geometry. The corridor does not clip a corner,

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	it bisects the tract. What remains is a larger lobe on the west and northwest side, and a smaller lobe on the east and southeast side, each with its own frontage on Chin Page Road. Both pieces are usable, but they cannot be combined into a single large contiguous pad without crossing the corridor, and a crossing carries its own approval burden.
Buffers and What They Take	The parcel sits in the Lower Neuse basin, so the State Neuse riparian buffer rules apply and Durham enforces them through UDO 8.5. In the Suburban Tier with no watershed protection overlay, the required buffer is 50 feet on each side of the stream for both perennial and intermittent streams, measured horizontally from the top of bank. UDO 8.5.4B.1.b then adds a separate 10-foot setback under paragraph 8.5.9C, so the practical working number is 60 feet from top of bank on each side, or a 120-foot no-build swath before the floodplain limits are even considered. Where the AE zone is wider than the buffer, the AE limit governs; where the buffer reaches beyond the AE limit, the buffer governs. Assume the wider of the two along the whole run.
Floodplain Rules Are Strict Here	Durham's floodplain standards are more restrictive than the FEMA minimum, and this matters for a warehouse. UDO 8.4.4A states plainly that development and land disturbing activity within Special Flood Hazard Areas and Future Conditions Flood Hazard Areas is prohibited except as specifically provided. The short list of things allowed without special approval is agriculture, lawns, and gardens. Things that need only Floodplain Administrator sign-off include recreational facilities, buffer and wetland mitigation, utility crossings, and street or driveway crossings where no other option is available, all of which must run perpendicular to the corridor within a 15 degree tolerance. Everything else, including any fill or parking or floodproofed structure in the floodway fringe or in the Future Conditions Flood Hazard Area, requires a minor special use permit under UDO 3.9, heard by the Board of Adjustment. Also note that Durham regulates a Future Conditions Flood Hazard Area in addition to the FEMA AE zone, and the future conditions boundary is typically wider. The 3.273 acres reported by the County is the AE number, not the full regulated area, so treat it as a floor rather than a ceiling.
Steep Slopes Compound the Problem	UDO 8.8 defines a protected steep slope area as natural ground of 25% grade or more, at least 5,000 square feet in size, and located within 200 feet of a floodway fringe or perennial stream, or within 100 feet of an intermittent stream. Where those conditions coincide, no more than 15% of the total steep slope area on the tract may be graded. The provided topography shows tight two-foot contours falling from the road down to the corridor, and WsE, a 15 to 25 percent slope phase, covers 47% of the parcel. Some portion of the side slopes flanking the corridor will almost certainly qualify. That matters more here than it would on a residential site, because a warehouse needs a large flat pad and a truck court at a single elevation, and the grading needed to produce one is exactly what this section restricts. A field-surveyed slope analysis, keyed to the 200-foot influence line, should be one of the first items in due diligence.

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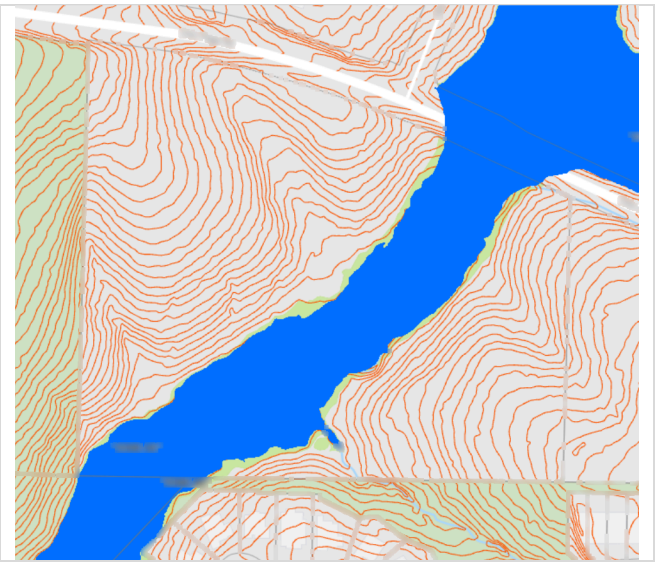
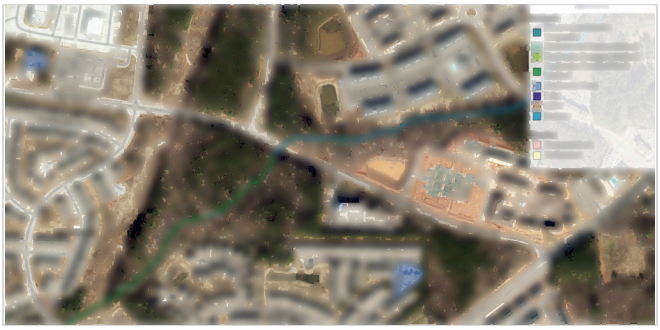
What This Means	The site does not have a fatal environmental flaw. It has a shape problem created by environmental features, and the shape problem is what limits the product. Nothing here prevents building. What it prevents is building the large contiguous single-pad distribution box that 14 acres would otherwise suggest.

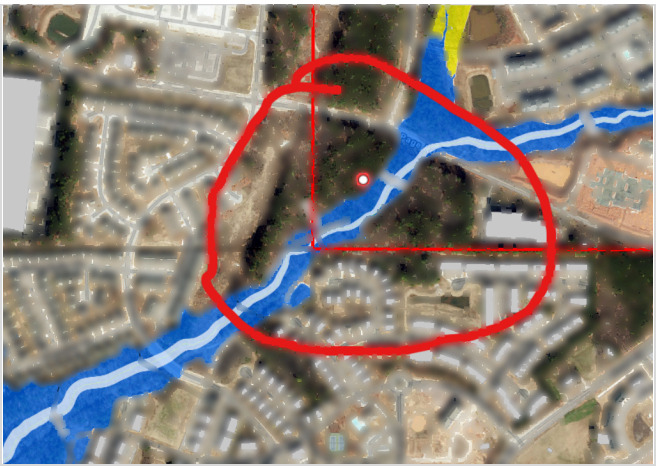
Risk Score: 3 (Red)



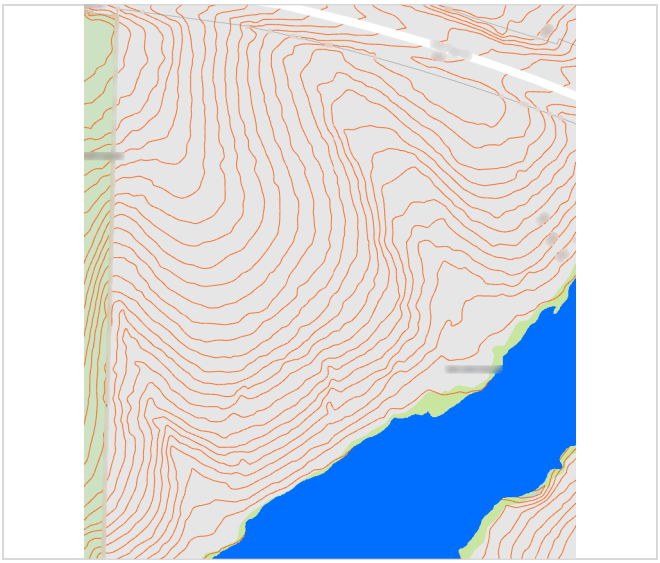
Contours and FEMA Zone AE Floodplain



NWI Wetlands Mapper



FEMA Flood Zones, Third Fork Creek Tributary



Topography, Two-Foot Contours

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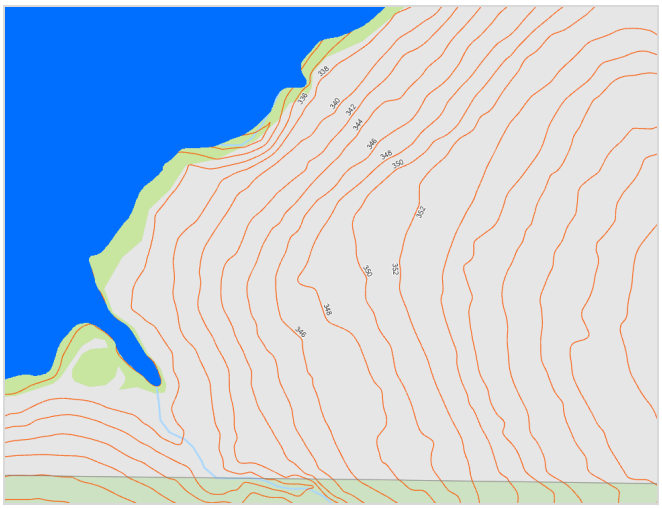

Side Slopes Falling to the Stream Corridor



Relief from Chin Page Road to the Corridor

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05

Zoning

1 LOW

The parcel is zoned IL, Industrial Light, in its entirety, and sits in Durham's Suburban Tier inside the City planning jurisdiction. The land class on the tax record is Vacant Industrial. Adjoining zoning is IL to the east, Office and Institutional across Chin Page Road to the north, and residential districts to the west and south where the townhome neighborhoods sit.

Is the Intended Use Allowed

Yes, and this is the single most important finding in the report. Under the Durham UDO use table, the use category Warehouse and Freight Movement is listed as permitted in IL, with the entry reading "All warehouse and freight movement." Wholesale Trades is likewise permitted, and all office uses and Research and Development are permitted, so an office or flex component in the same building carries no additional approval. The use requires no special use permit, no conditional zoning, no development plan, and no rezoning of any kind. Self-service storage is the one adjacent product that would be treated differently, since it is conditional rather than permitted, so if the program drifts toward self-storage the approval path changes.

Because no zoning map change is needed, there is no legislative hearing, no City Council vote, and no consistency statement under NCGS 160D-605. That has direct bearing on how the Comprehensive Plan designation is treated, and Section 6 takes it up.

IL Dimensional Standards, Suburban Tier

STANDARD	VALUE
Minimum Lot Area	25,000 square feet
Minimum Lot Width	100 feet
Street Yard	40 feet
Side Yard	30 feet
Rear Yard	25 feet
Maximum Building Coverage	60%
Maximum Height	50 feet

Side yards in IL may be reduced by 10 feet where the adjoining property is a nonresidential district or use, which helps on the east boundary against the neighboring IL parcel but not on the west or south where the neighbors are residential. Rear yards may be cut by up to half only where adjacent to a railroad right of way, which does not apply here. Additional height above 50 feet in IL is available through a minor special use permit, though a 50-foot limit is generally workable for a clear-height warehouse and is not expected to bind.

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Project Boundary Buffers

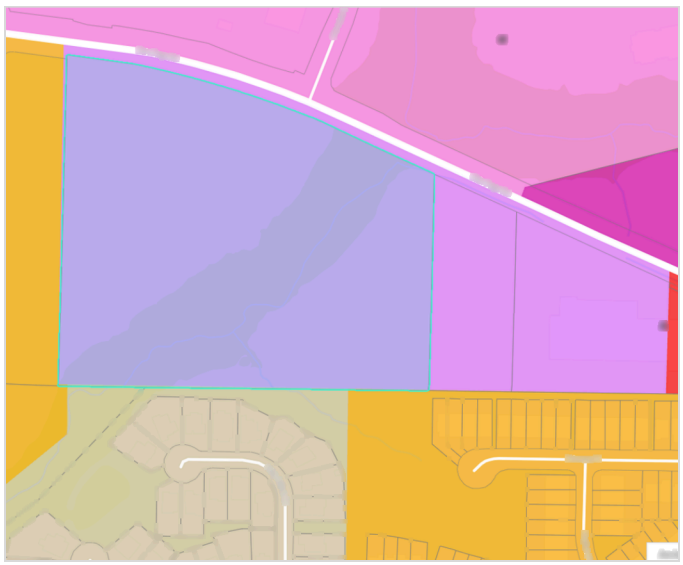
This is the dimensional standard that costs real land. Under the UDO 9.4.3B buffer table, a subject property zoned IL adjacent to residential districts in the Suburban Tier carries a 0.6/0.8 requirement, meaning 60 percent opacity against undeveloped land and 80 percent opacity against a developed neighbor with no buffer of its own. The townhome communities west and south are developed, so plan on 0.8. Under the Rural and Suburban Tier constructed buffer table, 0.8 opacity requires a minimum width of 50 feet. UDO 9.4.4A also requires that existing healthy natural forest cover be used to satisfy any buffer of 0.6 opacity or greater in the Suburban Tier where tree height exceeds 15 feet and canopy covers at least 25% of the buffer area. The site is wooded, so expect a natural buffer requirement rather than a planted one, which is cheaper to build but means the perimeter trees must be left standing and cannot be cleared for grading. That is a meaningful constraint when the pad needs cut and fill.

No project boundary buffer is required along the Chin Page Road frontage if that right of way exceeds 60 feet in width, which should be confirmed but is likely.

Assessment

Zoning is the strength of this deal, not the weakness. The site carries by-right industrial entitlement for exactly the use contemplated, in a jurisdiction where obtaining that entitlement today through a rezoning would be difficult given the surrounding residential. [redacted] or about [redacted] for a wooded 14-acre tract, and what that price bought was the zoning. The work now is engineering, not entitlement.

Risk Score: 1 (Green)



Current Zoning, IL Industrial Light

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06

Land Use Plan

2 MODERATE

Durham does not use a traditional future land use map. The Durham Comprehensive Plan uses a Place Type Map, and the parcel carries two designations: Apartment & Townhouse Neighborhood over 74% of its area, and Recreation & Open Space over the remaining 26%, which is the stream and floodplain corridor described in Section 4.

What the Plan Says	The Comprehensive Plan describes Apartment and Townhouse Neighborhood as "primarily residential areas that include existing multifamily communities or future infill sites suitable for multiple buildings," typically low- and mid-rise apartments or townhouses, with an express characteristic that "single-family housing should not be in these areas." The plan directs increased density on smaller sites of this place type, a mix of densities and housing types on larger ones, and a sensitive transition to nearby neighborhoods through building placement, design, massing, and step-down height. Policy 173 encourages more residential units on smaller Apartment and Townhouse sites. Recreation & Open Space is described as areas that "will remain free from development, with the exception of minimal buildings or structures to support recreational and cultural activities," and the plan states that open spaces not suitable for recreation, specifically including floodways and wetlands, "should have no development and be permanently protected." There is no reading of either designation that anticipates an industrial warehouse. The mismatch is real and it is unambiguous on the face of the plan.
Why the Mismatch Does Not Block This Project	The Place Type Map is a policy document, and under North Carolina law it is consulted when a governing board makes a legislative zoning decision. NCGS 160D-605 requires a plan-consistency statement when a board adopts or rejects a zoning map or text amendment. It does not attach to administrative approvals. Because Warehouse and Freight Movement is already permitted by right in IL, this project requires no map amendment, so no consistency finding is ever made and the Place Type designation is never weighed by an elected body. Durham staff have stated this on the record. In a September 3, 2024 City Council discussion of a comparable situation, staff confirmed that "the place type map doesn't change when a site plan gets approved, although it may be inconsistent with the place type, it's a by-right development," and that the place type "will stay the same under the approval of that site plan as long as it meets the technical elements of the unified development ordinance." That is precisely this fact pattern. It is also worth noting that the corridor portion of the site, mapped Recreation & Open Space, is already going to be preserved. The riparian buffers and floodplain restrictions in Section 4 will leave that ground undeveloped whether or not the plan asked for it. The 26% of the site that carries the more restrictive designation is the 26% that was never buildable.

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Where the Mismatch Does Create Exposure	Two places, and they are both worth taking seriously. The first is the UDO rewrite. Durham has a full Unified Development Ordinance rewrite underway with a comprehensive remapping component. In an August 4, 2025 Council discussion, a Council member described a scenario in which "an area like this would automatically get rezoned and remapped based upon the UDO rewrite and the comprehensive remapping process," and by August 2025 staff described the rewrite as more than a year into its engagement process, with the draft not yet final. A 14-acre IL parcel that carries an Apartment & Townhouse place type, is surrounded on three sides by apartments and townhomes, and sits vacant, is exactly the kind of parcel a comprehensive remap picks up. If the IL designation were replaced with a residential district before this project vests, the by-right path disappears. North Carolina's 2024 downzoning provision offers real protection here, since it generally requires the written consent of the affected property owners for a downzoning, but the safest answer is speed. Every month between now and a vested site plan is a month of exposure, and that argues for moving the site plan forward rather than sitting on the entitlement. The second is that the mismatch becomes a live issue the moment any part of this project needs a discretionary approval. If the pad, parking, or truck court encroaches into the floodplain fringe, the required minor special use permit puts the project in front of the Board of Adjustment in a public hearing, and the neighbors in those townhomes and apartments will arrive with the Place Type Map in hand. Durham neighbors already raise this, though the useful examples come from other parts of the city rather than from this corridor. At the August 18, 2025 Council hearing on an industrial rezoning at [redacted] closer in toward central Durham, a resident asked from the floor, "if you're gonna build a warehouse, what kind of warehouse is it gonna be, because the traffic is already ridiculous there." And on May 13, 2025, the Planning Board heard directly that [redacted] "is not built to handle large trucks, particularly the amount of truck traffic that they are now getting from those two huge freight distribution facilities." Neither site is comparable to this one in location or setting, but together they show that Durham has an active constituency on warehouse truck traffic. The way to keep that constituency out of this project is to design a plan that never needs a discretionary hearing.

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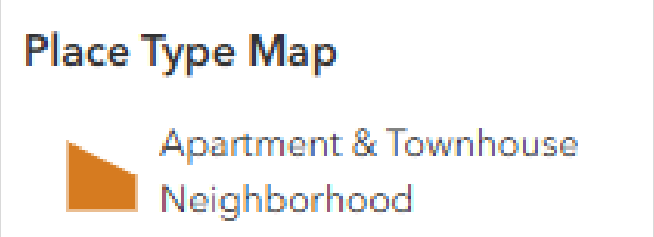
Transportation	Chin Page Road is the sole frontage and the sole access. There is useful recent evidence on its capacity. At the March 11, 2025 Planning Board hearing on [redacted] an affordable apartment development at Chin Page Road and Page Road roughly a mile east of this site, the applicant's team told the board that "Page Road is approximately at two-thirds of its capacity and Chin Page Road is only at one-third of its capacity," citing the City staff report. That project was subsequently approved by City Council on April 21, 2025. Chin Page Road at one-third capacity is a favorable starting point for a use that generates relatively few peak-hour trips. A traffic impact analysis is required under UDO 3.3.1 only where a project can be anticipated to generate at least 150 vehicle trips in the peak hour. Warehousing is among the lowest peak-hour trip generators in the ITE manual, and a building in the size range this site can physically support would not approach that threshold. Expect no TIA, which removes a common source of delay and of offsite improvement cost. Two qualifications: a fulfillment, last-mile delivery, or truck terminal operation generates far more trips than conventional warehousing and could change that answer, and UDO 3.3.3 allows the City Transportation Director to aggregate trips with nearby pending developments. Confirm the trip generation assumption against the actual end user before relying on it. The site is directly across the road from a large trucking terminal to the northwest, which is helpful context. Heavy truck movement on this segment of Chin Page Road is an existing condition, not a new one this project introduces.
Assessment	The plan says residential and the zoning says industrial, and on this site the zoning wins because no one has to choose. That will remain true so long as the project stays on the administrative path and gets there before the remapping does.

Risk Score: 2 (Yellow)



Place Type Map, Durham Comprehensive Plan



Place Type Legend

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07

Projected Yield

2 MODERATE

Land Budget

The following is a desktop estimate built from Durham County GIS measurements and the UDO standards cited in Sections 4 and 5. It is not a survey and it is not an engineered layout. Deductions are shown net of overlap, meaning each line removes only the area not already removed by a line above it.

LINE ITEM	LOW	HIGH
Gross parcel area	14.09 ac	14.09 ac
Less FEMA Zone AE floodplain (County GIS measured)	3.27 ac	3.27 ac
Less riparian buffer and 10-ft setback outside the AE limit	2.00 ac	1.00 ac
Less protected steep slope area not gradable under UDO 8.8.4	1.50 ac	0.50 ac
Less project boundary buffer, west and south boundaries, 50 ft	1.60 ac	1.20 ac
Less street yard along Chin Page Road, 40 ft	1.20 ac	0.80 ac
Net developable area	**4.5 ac**	**7.3 ac**

Call it 5 to 7 acres of workable ground, and understand that it does not come in one piece. The stream corridor divides it roughly 60/40 between a larger west and northwest lobe and a smaller east and southeast lobe, each with independent frontage and access on Chin Page Road.

Building Yield

Maximum building coverage in IL is 60% of the lot, which on 14.09 acres would allow about 368,000 square feet of building. That number is not the constraint and should be ignored. The constraint is buildable land, split in two, on a site that falls 25 to 30 feet from the road to the corridor.

For shallow-bay or small-bay industrial, building footprint typically lands between 28% and 35% of net site area once the truck court, drive aisles, car parking, stormwater control measures, and utility easements are accounted for. Splitting the site into two development areas costs efficiency, because each lobe needs its own access, circulation, and stormwater facility.

SCENARIO	ASSUMPTION	ESTIMATED BUILDING AREA
Downside	No floodplain encroachment of any kind, steep slope areas at the high end of the range, two small buildings	40,000 to 55,000 sf
Base	Administrative site plan, corridor fully avoided, two buildings on the two lobes	55,000 to 85,000 sf

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SCENARIO	ASSUMPTION	ESTIMATED BUILDING AREA
Upside	Minor special use permit obtained for truck court and parking in the floodplain fringe, single consolidated building on the west lobe with a smaller building east	90,000 to 110,000 sf

What This Site Is and Is Not

This is not a bulk distribution site. A modern single-tenant distribution building of 200,000 square feet or more needs roughly 12 to 15 contiguous, relatively flat acres for the pad, truck court, and trailer storage, and this parcel cannot produce a contiguous pad of even half that. Underwriting this deal against a big-box program will not work.

What it can be is a shallow-bay, small-bay, or flex industrial project, potentially condominium or multi-tenant, in the 50,000 to 100,000 square foot range across two buildings. That product suits the site geometry, suits the 50-foot height limit, suits the low trip generation that keeps the project below the TIA threshold, and suits the neighborhood context better than a truck-intensive use would. Office and Research and Development are both permitted by right in IL, so a flex component adds no approval risk.

Grading cost deserves specific attention in the pro forma. Producing level pads on side slopes of this pitch, while leaving perimeter natural buffers standing and honoring the steep slope grading cap, means retaining structures and an earthwork budget well above what a flat site would carry.

Qualifications

Actual yield will depend on a boundary and topographic survey, a field-delineated stream and buffer determination, a jurisdictional determination for waters of the US, a surveyed steep slope analysis keyed to the 200-foot influence line, confirmation of Durham's Future Conditions Flood Hazard Area boundary, and a stormwater concept that satisfies the Neuse basin nutrient requirements. Any one of those can move the number in either direction.

Risk Score: 2 (Yellow)

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Steps for Approval

The Path

No rezoning. No development plan. No City Council hearing. Warehouse and Freight Movement is permitted by right in IL, and the approval vehicle is an Administrative Site Plan under UDO 3.7.3A, for which the approving authority is the Planning Director or designee. This is the cheapest and most certain entitlement path Durham offers, and it is the reason this parcel is worth what was paid for it.

The Major Site Plan triggers under UDO 3.7.3B do not apply. A Major Site Plan, which goes to the governing body, is required only where a standard in the ordinance expressly requires governing body approval, where a major or transportation special use permit is required, or where the site is in a Watershed Protection Overlay Critical Area exceeding the low density impervious threshold. None of those is present. Durham County GIS confirms the parcel does not fall within any Watershed Protection Overlay.

STEP	APPROVING AUTHORITY	DURATION
Pre-application conference (required under UDO 3.7.5A)	Planning staff	1 to 2 months
Survey, delineation, jurisdictional determination, steep slope analysis	Consultants	3 to 4 months, run concurrently with the above
Administrative Site Plan review and approval	Planning Director	10 to 12 months
Construction drawings, stormwater, erosion control, utility approvals	City departments and NCDEQ	10 to 12 months
Building permit and construction	Inspections	Follows approvals

Estimated Timeline

Roughly 22 to 26 months from engagement to a permit-ready, fully approved project on the administrative path, assuming the layout stays entirely out of the regulated floodplain.

Durham is slow, and the by-right label is misleading about pace. Administrative site plan review in Durham runs 10 to 12 months in practice, and construction drawings run another 10 to 12 months behind it. Neither number is meaningfully compressible by having a clean case. What "by right" buys here is certainty of outcome, not speed: there is no hearing to lose, no vote to count, and no consistency finding to argue. Budget the carry accordingly, because the schedule looks a great deal like a discretionary case even though the risk profile does not.

If the layout requires floodplain encroachment, add 6 to 8 months and change the character of the process. Fill or development in the floodway fringe, the non-encroachment area fringe, or the Future Conditions Flood Hazard Area requires a minor special use permit under UDO 8.4.4D and UDO 3.9, decided by the Board of Adjustment in a quasi-judicial hearing with the additional review factors in UDO 3.9.8C. That converts a staff-level approval into a public hearing with standing, notice, and neighbors, on a site surrounded by apartments and townhomes whose

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Comprehensive Plan designation says the land should be residential. The cost of avoiding that hearing is some lost building area. In most versions of this deal, that trade is worth making.

Sequence and Priorities

The first dollars should go to defining the corridor, not to designing the building. A boundary and topographic survey, a field-run stream determination with the buffer staked, a Corps jurisdictional determination, a surveyed steep slope analysis tied to the 200-foot influence line, and confirmation of Durham's Future Conditions Flood Hazard Area boundary together define the entire developable envelope. Every layout decision follows from those five items, and each of them can move the yield materially.

Alongside that, open the utility conversation early. A will-serve inquiry to Durham Water Management covering domestic demand, fire flow for a sprinklered building, and sanitary outfall location and remaining basin capacity should go out in the first month. Section 3 explains why availability is not in question; capacity is the item to confirm.

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Precedent and Political Context

2 MODERATE

There is no rezoning here, so there is no political vote to handicap. Two pieces of the Durham record are still worth carrying into the deal.

The first is the Chin Page Road corridor itself. [redacted] an affordable apartment project at Chin Page Road and Page Road about a mile east, moved through the Planning Board on March 11, 2025 and was approved by City Council on April 21, 2025. In the course of that case the applicant's team told the board, citing the staff report, that Chin Page Road was operating at about one-third of its capacity. That is a helpful data point for a use that generates few peak-hour trips, and it supports the expectation that no TIA will be required.

The second is that Durham Council will approve industrial zoning over neighbor objection. On August 18, 2025, Council approved a rezoning at [redacted] consolidating a split RS-8 and IL parcel entirely to IL, on a vote of 6 to 0, after a resident asked from the floor what kind of warehouse was proposed and raised existing traffic conditions. That site is closer in toward central Durham and is not a corridor comparable to Chin Page Road, so treat it as evidence about how this Council behaves rather than as evidence about this submarket. The lesson is that neighbors object and the project still moves. This project does not even need that vote.

The one item to watch is not a hearing but a calendar. Durham's UDO rewrite with comprehensive remapping has been in engagement since roughly mid-2024 and the draft is not final. A vacant IL parcel carrying an Apartment & Townhouse place type is a natural candidate for a remap to residential. North Carolina's 2024 downzoning protections give an owner real leverage against an involuntary downzoning, but the cleanest defense is a vested, approved site plan. That argues for putting the site plan on file rather than holding the land.

Risk Score: 2 (Yellow)

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ENTITLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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