



TOWN OF DURHAM
8 NEWMARKET RD
DURHAM, NH 03824-2898
603/868-8064
www.ci.durham.nh.us

Town Planner's Review
Wednesday, July 8, 2026

- XI. **Single-Family Residences and Accessory Dwelling Units and Table of Uses.**
Discussion whether single-family residences should be permitted in the Office Research, MUDOR, and ORLI zoning districts and whether accessory dwelling units should be permitted in all zoning districts.

- I recommend that the Planning Board set a public hearing on the proposed amendment for July 22. This includes changing X to P for a single family residence in Office Research in the Table of Uses and possibly other changes.

Arts in Reach, a nonprofit organization, purchased 81 Dover Road (Map 209, Lot 7) several years ago for use by their organization. They obtained a conditional use from the Planning Board in November 2023 for a “community center.”

Later, Arts in Reach decided to not use the site and they are placing the property for sale. They saw that single-family residence is not allowed in their zone – Office Research, and they stated to me that this limitation would significantly hinder marketing the property.

The reason that OR does not allow single family residences is that the stated purpose of the district in the ordinance is to “provide an area for the development of high quality office and research uses in a rural business park environment...” However, the district includes mainly single-family residences and there is little opportunity for development. Therefore, in my view, it is logical to allow single-family residences by right rather than rendering all of these existing houses nonconforming.

As the Town Planner, I do not recommend making changes to the Zoning Ordinance to accommodate individual property owners except when I see what I consider a shortcoming in the ordinance which should be addressed. That is the case here, in my opinion.

The district is largely built out except for one single family residence on a 31.5 acre lot. Of the 28 or so parcels zoned OR:

- 17 are single family residences which appear to be owner occupied
- 1 is a single family residence that appears to be investor owned
- 1 is a church
- 1 is Riverwoods
- 1 is now being developed as Riverwoods II
- 1 is an office
- 1 is a commercial facility
- 1 is the Durham Police Station

1 is Durham Public Works

1 is the Arts and Reach property which includes a house and a large outbuilding (marked below with purple dot)

1 is a .9 acre vacant lot

1 is a small vacant parcel connected to a large lot in the RC district

Arts in Reach is marked with a purple dot.



Here is the current table of uses. It has also been recommended that the board change the CU to P in the MUDOR and ORLI districts. The board can discuss that as well. The situation in those two districts is very different from that in OR. MUDOR is almost entirely UNH land. ORLI contains only a few single-family residences, several large student housing developments, a large light industrial site, UNH land, and a good amount of vacant and agricultural land. See the map of MUDOR and ORLI below.

Another change worth making at this time is to allow accessory dwelling units in three zones where they are not allowed now. ADUs are not allowed in the Courthouse, Coe's Corner, and OR districts because single family residences are not allowed in those zones. However, there may be houses in those zones (most likely built before the ordinance that prohibited them) and ADU's should be allowed with any single family residence, even where it is nonconforming. I am not aware of any single-family residences in the CB1, CB2, or DBP zones, where they would be quite inappropriate anyway.

CATEGORY OF USES	RESIDENTIAL ZONES				COMMERCIAL CORE ZONES						RESEARCH-INDUSTRY ZONES			
	Rural (R)	Residence A (RA)	Residence B (RB)	Residence C (RC)	Central Business 1	Central Business 2	Professional Office (PO)	Church Hill (CH)	Courthouse (C)	Coe's Corner (CC)	Office Research - Route 108 (OR)	Mixed Use and Office Research (MUDOR)	Office Research Light Industry	Durham Business Park (DBP)
Manufactured Housing	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nursing Home	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	CU
Porkchop Subdivision (See Article XX)	P	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residence, single-family	P	P	P	P	X	X	P	P	X	X	X	CU	CU	X
Residence, duplex	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residence, multi-unit	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Residence, multi-unit complex	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Senior housing, single-family	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	P	X	P	CU	CU	CU	CU
Senior housing, duplex	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	P	X	CU	CU	CU	CU	CU
Senior housing, multi-unit	P	P	P	P	CU	CU	P	P	P	CU	CU	P	CU	CU
Senior Care facility	P	X	CU	P	X	X	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

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	Rural (R)	Residence A (RA)	Residence B (RB)	Residence C (RC)	Central Business 1	Central Business 2	Professional Office (PO)	Church Hill (CH)	Courthouse (C)	Coe's Corner (CC)	Office Research - Route 108 (OR)	Mixed Use and Office Research (MUDOR)	Office Research Light Industry	Durham Business Park (DBP)
Uses Accessory To a Single-family Residential Use														
Accessory dwelling unit - attached (See Article XX)	P	P	P	P	X	X	P	P	X	X	X	P	P	X
Accessory dwelling unit - detached (See Article XX)	P	P	P	P	X	X	P	P	X	X	X	P	P	X

