



City of Allentown Staff Report

To: Allentown City Planning Commission
From: Bureau of Planning & Zoning
Meeting Date: June 10, 2025
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Location: 2851-2865 College Dr
Proposal: Rezone from R-L to I-G
Case Number: 25-02 (Z)
Property Owner/Applicant: Cedar Crest College



Description

1. The applicant petitions to change the zoning designation of the property at 2851-2865 College Drive as follows:

Parcel ID	Address	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning
548685625829-1	2851-2865 College Dr	R-L (Residential - Low Density)	I-G (Institutional and Governmental)

2. The petition is accompanied by a draft legislation to enable the proposed changes with a repealer clause.

Background

3. The subject property, shown in Figure A (next page), is zoned R-L and contains a 1-story, 3,090 sq ft, single-family detached dwelling. The land area of the parcel is approximately 16,585 sq ft. Its west boundary abuts the Cedar Crest College property. Figure B (also on page 2) shows an aerial view of the general area of the subject property overlaid with the existing zoning districts (as color-coded). The immediate area encompasses three zoning districts: R-L, I-G, and P (Parks).
4. According to the Applicant's Statement of Justification, the property was acquired with the intent to rehabilitate the residential structure into an academic center (the Harmon Center for Leadership in Technology), such that:
 - a. The bedrooms will be converted into offices
 - b. the living and dining room area would be converted into a seminar room, and
 - c. the basement would be converted into a conference and meeting room.

- d. Parking will be provided on the existing driveway and at the abutting Cedar Crest College campus. The Center would be open typical business hours.

Figure A: Cedar Crest College campus and subject property.

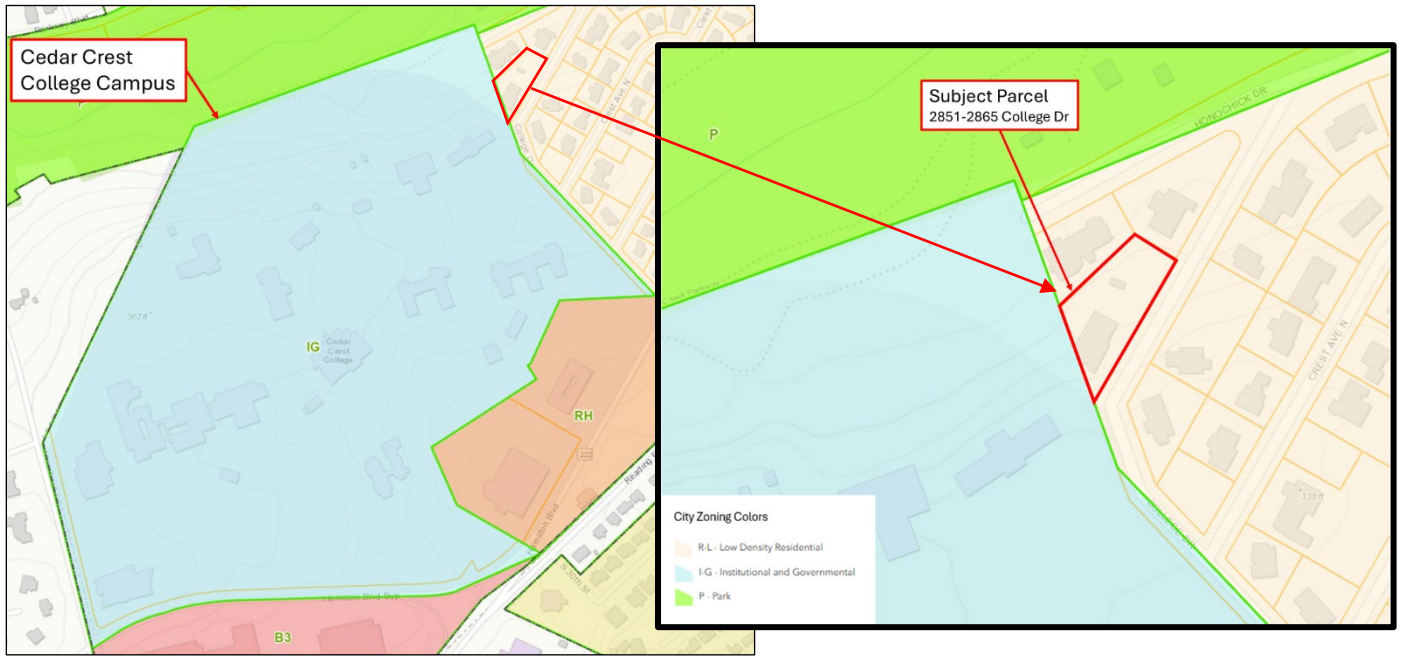


Figure B: Aerial view showing subject property and current zoning in the immediate area.



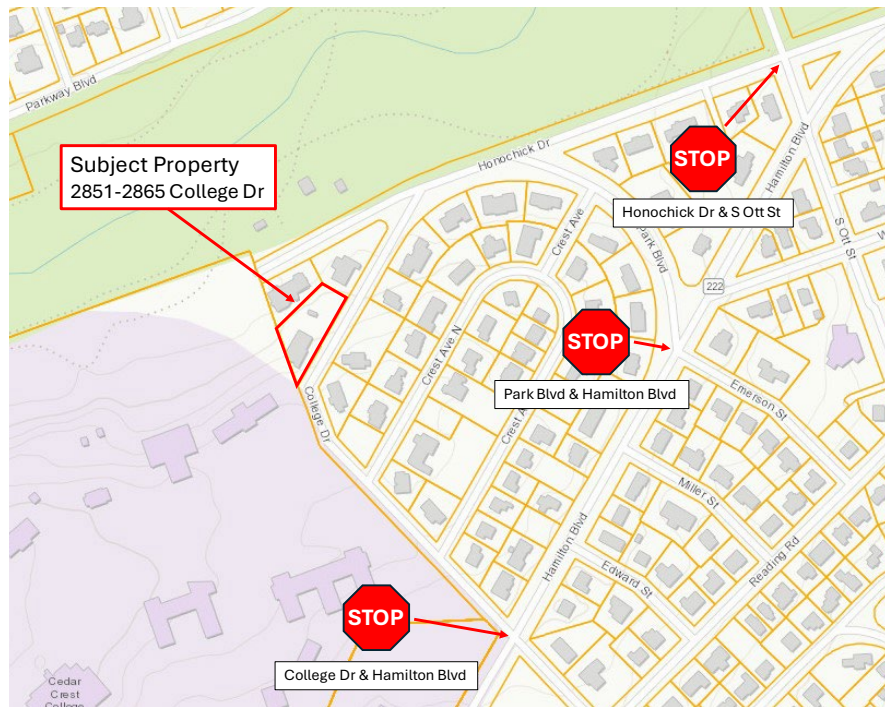
Findings /Comments

5. The purpose of the R-L zoning district is “to provide for residential neighborhoods at a low density with a generally suburban character”. In this case, the host neighborhood primarily involves single-family detached homes. Whereas the purpose of the I-G zoning district is “to provide for areas for major governmental and institutional uses”, such as colleges.
6. While R-L zoning permits a very limited number of uses other than single-family detached dwellings by special exception, the use of the property for college or university purposes is not permitted.
7. One should be mindful that if the property were rezoned to I-G, any uses allowed by-right in I-G could potentially locate in that property. Becoming part of the college campus would limit the intensity of use of the property compared to other uses permitted in the I-G, though any use would likely be more intense than a single-family detached dwelling.
8. Staff recommends the applicant consolidate this property with the overall college parcel, and construct a pedestrian walkway connecting it to the existing parking areas and dorms on campus. This will limit the intensity of the use and increased traffic in the neighborhood, specifically on the northern portion of College Dr. and Honochick Dr. See Figure C for street views of subject property. In addition, all intersections connecting to subject property to arterial and collector streets are managed by two-way stop signs. There are no traffic lights or four-way stop signs at the intersections of College Dr and Hamilton Blvd, Park Blvd and Hamilton Blvd, or Honochick Dr and S Ott St. See Figure D.
9. Typical business hours were not detailed in the Applicant’s Statement of Justification. Staff recommends the Commission request such information from the Applicant.

Figure C: Google Maps Streetview Images.



Figure D: Stop signs at intersections to arterial and collector streets.



Conclusions:

Staff does not object to the rezoning of 2851-2865 College Dr from R-L to I-G. Staff recommends the applicant consolidate this property with the main college parcel and construct a pedestrian walkway connecting it to the existing parking areas and dorms on campus, rather than parking directly on site. These measures could limit the potential intensity of use, limit increased traffic in the neighborhood and help preserve the residential character of the neighborhood. Staff also recommends the Commission inquire as to the typical business hours.