



Mr. Anthony J. Hood, Chairman
D.C. Zoning Commission
One Judiciary Square
441 4th Street, N.W., Second Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001

RE: Zoning Commission Case No. 23-08(1)

*Application of The Wesley Theological Seminary of the United Methodist Church
for a Campus Plan (2025–2035)*

Dear Chairman Hood,

I write to you in strong and urgent support of the Wesley Theological Seminary's Campus Plan application. As Dean of Washington National Cathedral, I can attest to Wesley's vital role in the spiritual, educational, and civic life of our city. Wesley is more than a seminary—it is an anchor institution whose presence enriches Ward 3 and the entire District.

The Cathedral and Wesley enjoy a long and meaningful partnership. Most recently, we collaborated—alongside the National Governors Association—on a national program to foster civil discourse during the presidential election. This is but one example of Wesley's ongoing commitment to public theology and civic engagement. In fact, as you meet on the day of your hearing, Wesley's commencement service will have just concluded—launching new graduates into lives of service and leadership.

Wesley's Campus Plan is not about expansion for expansion's sake. It is a thoughtful, restrained, and mission-driven effort to "thrive in place." Rather than relocate to a less expensive region, Wesley has made the intentional and courageous decision to remain rooted in Washington, D.C., believing that its proximity to the nation's capital is essential to forming ethical, engaged, and forward-thinking religious and nonprofit leaders. This project will enable Wesley to offer more affordable, flexible housing options to students and their families while maintaining and enhancing green space and open community areas, including a new playground for neighborhood children.

Wesley is among the most diverse theological seminaries in the nation, drawing students from over 26 denominations and dozens of countries. Its graduates go on to serve congregations, hospitals, military chaplaincies, and nonprofits across the city and globe. Many are called to ministries right here in the District, including at the Cathedral. Wesley's strategic investments in its campus are essential to sustaining this mission for the next generation.

Approving this Campus Plan is not only a vote of confidence in a historic educational institution; it is a commitment to the ongoing strength and diversity of D.C.'s nonprofit, faith-based, and civic leadership pipeline. In a time when these sectors are under increasing strain, supporting institutions like Wesley is more important than ever.

I urge you to give this proposal your full and favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

The Very Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith
Dean, Washington National Cathedral