



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

W A S H I N G T O N , D C

November 8, 2024

Members of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, NW Suite 200S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Case Number: 24-09
Text Amendment to Subtitle C §1006.6(c) and Subtitle X §101 to allow new dorm on the
Wesley Campus for Wesley & American students

Dear Members of the Zoning Commission:

American University values its relationship and long collegial history with its neighbor, Wesley Theological Seminary. Wesley has been an excellent neighbor to AU and the surrounding community, and we appreciate its many contributions to the religious and cultural life of the District and our community in Ward 3.

We are cognizant of the enrollment and financial challenges Wesley and many seminaries across the nation are facing right now. Wesley's focus on its future viability through "Thriving In Place" contemplates new purpose-built student housing to be constructed by Landmark Properties, under a long-term ground lease with Wesley, exclusively for residents associated with Wesley and American University.

Over the past few months, AU and Wesley have had a number of collaborative, productive conversations about this proposal. We are committed to continued dialogue to ensure Wesley has the benefit of full information about our enrollment trends and student housing policies, patterns, preferences, and feedback. As with many universities, AU is addressing a rapidly changing enrollment environment, with evolving student demographics and educational preferences that demand new approaches.

We have shared that AU remains focused on fulfilling our educational mission and future vision as detailed in our 2021 Campus Plan, which includes maximizing on-campus housing for our students. We are working to create a vibrant, high-quality on-campus experience for our students that promotes access to academic opportunities, community building, student retention, and progress to graduation. We are making the largest investment in student thriving in the university's history through our \$100 million Student Thriving Complex, now under construction. Along with updates to our residence halls and Mary Graydon Center, this critical effort will strengthen and invigorate student-centered living and learning on our campus. Our approach also includes moving toward a



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two-year on-campus housing requirement for undergraduates so we are housing more of our students on our campus in a vibrant, engaged learning community.

We look forward to continuing our engagement with Wesley. AU appreciates this opportunity to share updates on this matter and thanks the Zoning Commission for their careful consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Matthew Bennett
Vice President and Chief Communications Officer