

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Office of Planning**



Public Hearing  
on  
Bill 23-670, the “Bloomingdale Historic District Targeted Historic Preservation Assistance  
Amendment Act of 2020”

Testimony of  
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Before the  
Committee of the Whole  
Chairman Phil Mendelson

Virtual Meeting Platform

July 8, 2020  
10:00 A.M.

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members and staff of the Committee  
of the Whole. I am Andrew Trueblood, Director of the DC Office of Planning.

Today, I am pleased to testify on Bill 23-670, the “Bloomingdale Historic District Targeted Historic Preservation Assistance Amendment Act of 2020,” which would expand eligibility for targeted homeowner preservation grants to the Bloomingdale Historic District.

Under the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act of 1978, the Historic Preservation Office within the Office of Planning manages a program of targeted historic preservation grants to qualified low- and moderate-income homeowners in 14 specified historic districts and the Wardman Flats Historic Landmark. The program helps keep housing affordable for these homeowners by making non-taxable grants available for home repairs that have sometimes been left unattended for years due to lack of resources. Regular maintenance is important for older buildings, and they often require such items as window replacement and repair of decorative elements, which can be costly for low- and moderate-income residents. These grants help prevent home deterioration, improve the physical condition of historic communities, and increase the ability of homeowners, many of whom are seniors and long-time residents, to remain in their communities.

The Bloomingdale Historic District, which the Historic Preservation Review Board designated in 2018, is not among the historic districts currently eligible for homeowner grant assistance. Bill 23-670 would give Bloomingdale homeowners the same opportunity as those in currently eligible districts with similar demographic profiles and building conditions. During public hearings on the Bloomingdale

Historic District designation, residents expressed concern about the potential impact of a historic district on low- and moderate-income residents, particularly seniors. This legislation would help address that concern consistent with Comprehensive Plan objectives to promote housing affordability, direct financial support programs to targeted income groups and areas of the city and protect and enhance the character of the District's historic neighborhoods.

Finally, as the Committee knows, the FY2021 Budget Support Act ("BSA"), introduced at the request of the Mayor in May, contained a subtitle that would similarly amend the preservation law to add the Bloomingdale Historic District to the list of districts eligible for targeted preservation grants. (Bill 23-670, Title II, Subtitle H). We understand that the Committee has recommended striking the BSA subtitle in favor of this standalone bill. The Office of Planning supports adding Bloomingdale to the list of eligible historic districts either way.

That concludes my testimony. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today and am happy to answer any questions you may have.