

## Melissa Ripley

---

**From:** Matthias Rudolf [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 25, 2024 10:48 AM  
**To:** Thomas Galligani; Daniel Bartman; Willie Burnley, Jr.; Wilfred Mbah; [REDACTED] Jake Wilson; Matthew McLaughlin; JT Scott; Ben Ewen-Campen; [REDACTED] Naima Sait; Lance Davis; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Mayor; All City Council; Public Comments; USNC Board; Gregory Cook; Ethan Dassault; Victoria Coleman  
**Subject:** USNC Concerns about Central Somerville Avenue Process re: Mobility Impacts and Massing

This email is from an external source. Use caution responding to it, opening attachments or clicking links.

---

Dear Tom Galligani, Dear Dan Bartman, Dear City Councilors,

We are writing to voice our ongoing concern about the City-sponsored Central Somerville Avenue Process, specifically with regard to the mobility and transportation impacts. In our November 14 email to Director Galligani and Deputy Director Bartman, we asked the city to redo the Tuesday, November 12 civic space and mobility workshops since these had not allowed the stakeholders to substantively wrangle with the challenges the proposed Central Somerville Avenue overlay raises for the community. We have not heard from the OSPCD on this matter. In the meantime, we learned from the SomerVoice website that the Dec 2 “Wrap-Up and Presentation of Drafts” session has been cancelled and rescheduled for December 16. We have yet to get a confirmation from the OSPCD about the schedule change.

If, as the title implies, we are to attend a “Presentation of Drafts” for an overlay zone, we would like to understand how the OSPCD and PPZ justifies submitting a zoning proposal without doing its due diligence on the transportation and mobility impacts a proposed overlay would cause. We understand that such analyses are usually conducted at the Master Plan Special Permit stage, but given that the Central Somerville Avenue process was explicitly called into existence to decide the appropriate scale of a development for which a master plan already exists and for which Rafi has already submitted mobility scoping documents, submitting a zoning proposal to the City Council without regard for the traffic and mobility consequences the overlay invites and instead delegating that work to the Planning Board asks the City Council to vote on a project without being able to understand, much less weigh in and vote on its potential merit.

The USNC cannot support such a procedure. To enable the USNC, the City Council, and the community at large to understand what an eventual overlay will entail, we ask that the OSPCD immediately conduct an analysis of Rafi’s submitted scoping documents and publish an evaluation within ten (10) days of this date. Secondly, given the impossibility of the city conducting a comprehensive study of the proposed overlay’s traffic and mobility impacts before a vote in the City Council, we ask that an overlay require a comprehensive traffic study (including the mobility impacts on the Somerville Avenue and Prospect Street intersections) to be conducted as a condition for the submission and permitting of all phases of a Master Plan Special Permit.

Finally, we ask that the city make available to SomerVoice and to all workshop attendees the promised renderings of a 1.4 million SF development in the “CentralSomervilleAve\_Workshop1\_EveningMeetingSlides1” deck. Currently, the deck only contains renderings of the new R&D base district, a 1.5 million SF variation, and numerous versions of Rafi’s proposed 1.6 million SF proposal. We also ask that the city update the latter group of slides to reflect the increased floor to ceiling dimensions Rafi announced — 25 feet for each of the first three floors and 18 feet for each of the additional 3 to 6 floors for all of their proposed four buildings — resulting in building heights well over 100 feet across the entire overlay. This is especially urgent because of Rafi’s failure to inform the public of these changes until the last minute, at

the workshop session of Nov 18. In its current form, the presentation is prejudicial and, by the city's own admission, does not allow the stakeholders to make an informed decision.

Thank you for your prompt reply to these asks.

Respectfully,  
Michèle Hansen and Matthias Rudolf  
Co-Chairs, Union Square Neighborhood Council