

# The Neighborhood Deserves a Better Building

## Testimony on the Valor-Mill Creek SuperFresh Development Case 19-10

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# Introduction: The neighborhood deserves a better building

- This neighborhood investment will last 30 or more years, so it is important to get it right. The neighborhood deserves a better building.
- I will illustrate some of the issues with Valor's project in pictures.

# Building is Too High for Neighborhood

Current View of Spring Valley Shopping Center



# Building is Too High for Neighborhood

## Future View of Spring Valley Shopping Center

Valor's proposed building  
with 6 residential floors



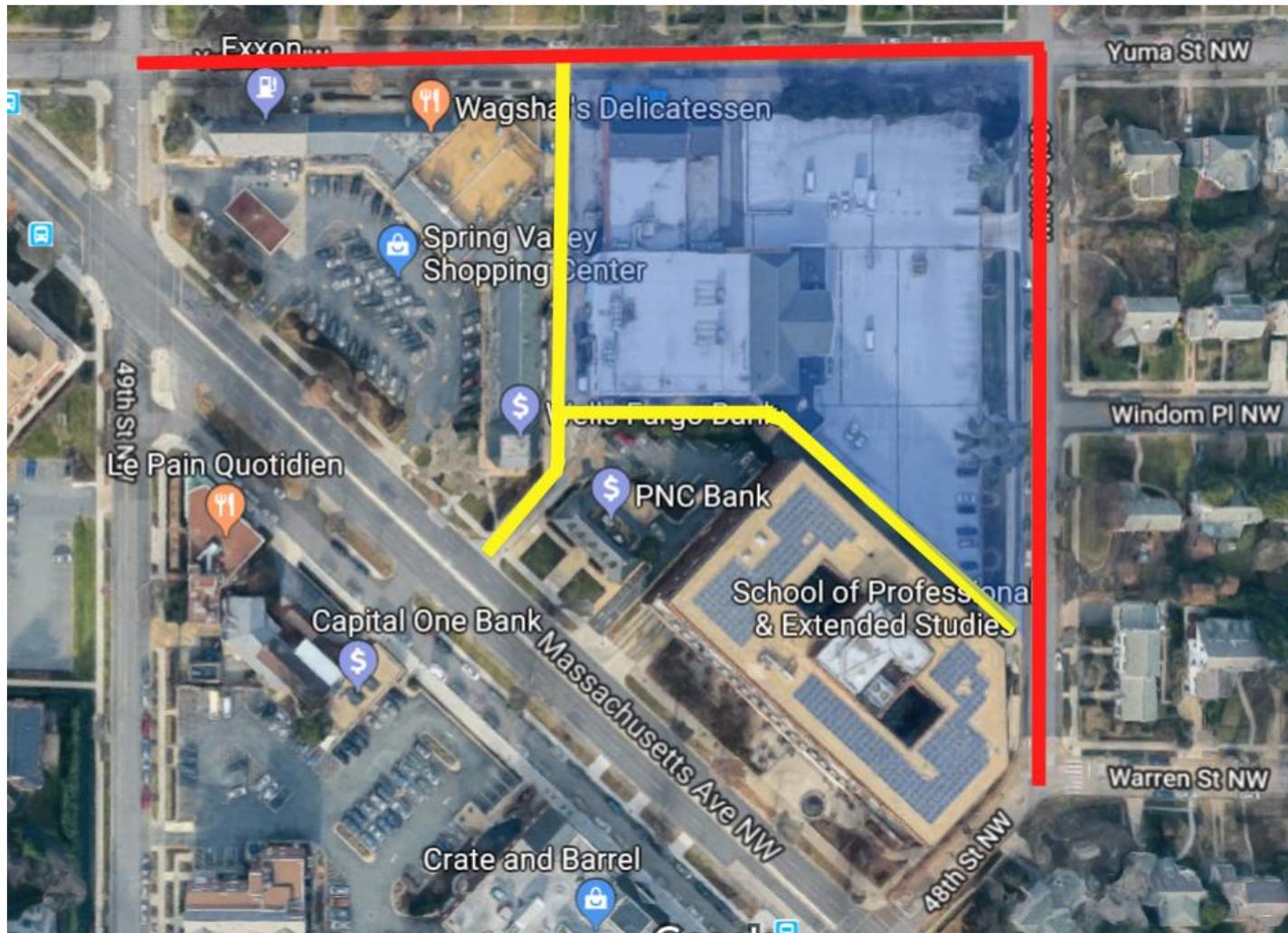
Photoshopped view  
with 4 residential floors



# Wide View: The building is out of scale for the neighborhood



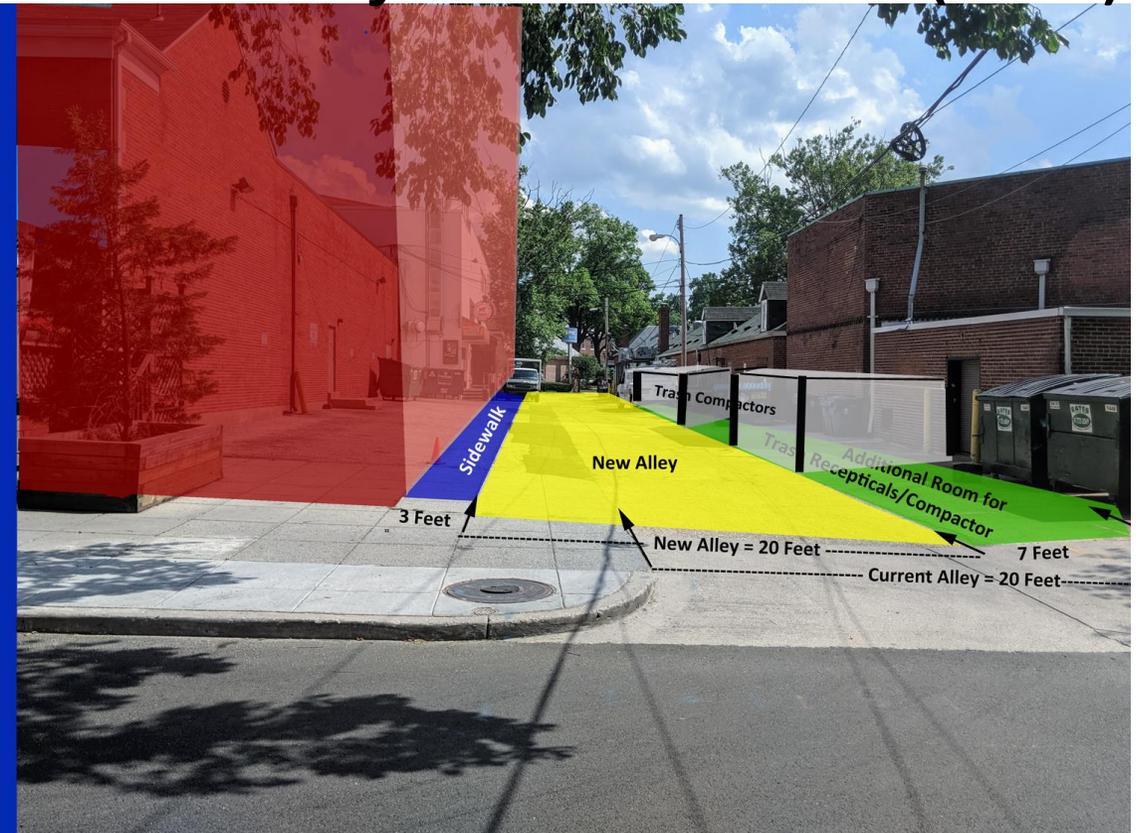
Alley traffic volume will be the same as nearby streets (red).  
Yet, the alley width is unchanged at 20 feet (yellow).



The new building wall to wall actually narrows rather than widens the alleys.

North-South Alley at Yuma Street  
Before Project

After Project with Wall (Red)



Pedestrian path is inadequate.  
Parked cars will compromise 3 foot pedestrian path

Wide Angle Rendering by Valor



# What does a 3 foot sidewalk look like? 3-foot sidewalk at nearby PNC Bank



It is doubtful anyone uses this sidewalk.  
NS Alley will have 1 pedestrian a minute.



With a little imagination...  
Alley space could come alive.



**Cady's Alley in Georgetown**  
**Vehicles are guests.**



**Bethesda Lane Alley & Apartments**  
**Pedestrians only**

# Wagshal's may have to move.

- **Wagshal's proposal for an urban market (like Union Market) was rejected**
- **Wagshal's will have to vacate it's kitchen, Back Alley Barbecue, catering business and offices.**
- **Wagshal's may have to move from Spring Valley Shopping Center**



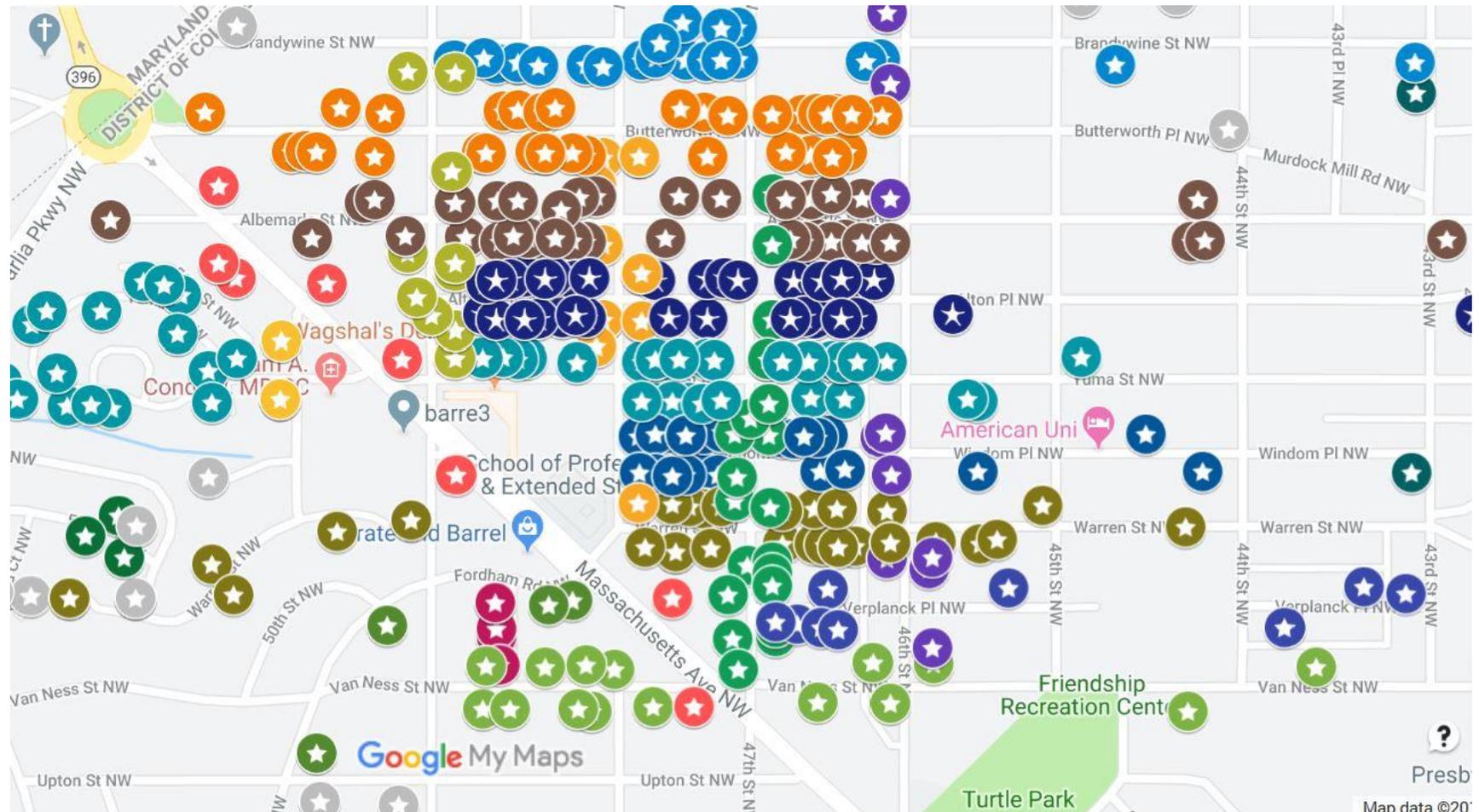
# Smaller building is economically viable.

- My estimate is that a smaller project would only have a 1% lower financial rate of return (145 versus 219 apartments).
- The loss of revenue due to the smaller building is offset by lower costs of construction, running the building and maintenance.



# Many neighbors are still against current project

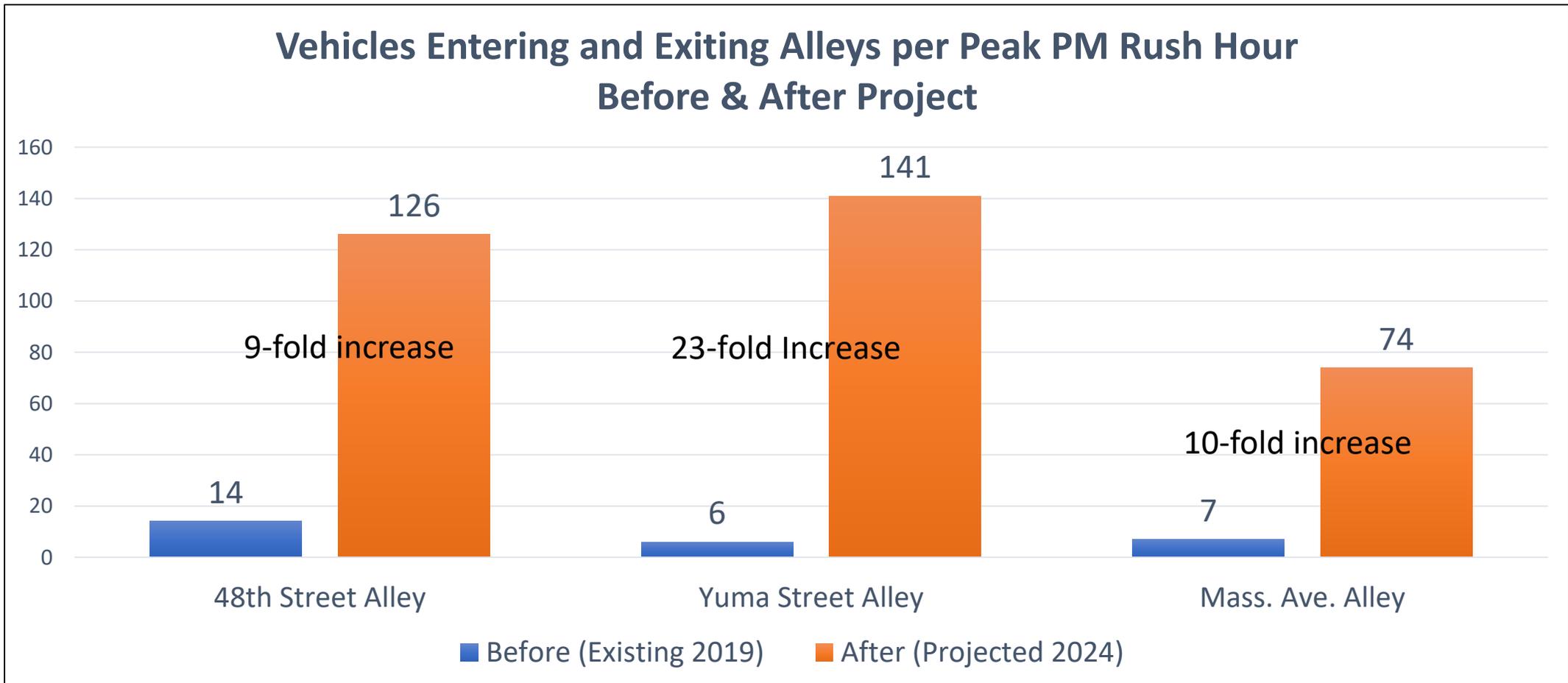
- Over 500 neighbors signed a petition against the project in 2016.
- In 2019, over 60 letters in opposition were sent to the Zoning Commission.
- Over 20 neighbors testified against the project before the Zoning Commission in 2019.



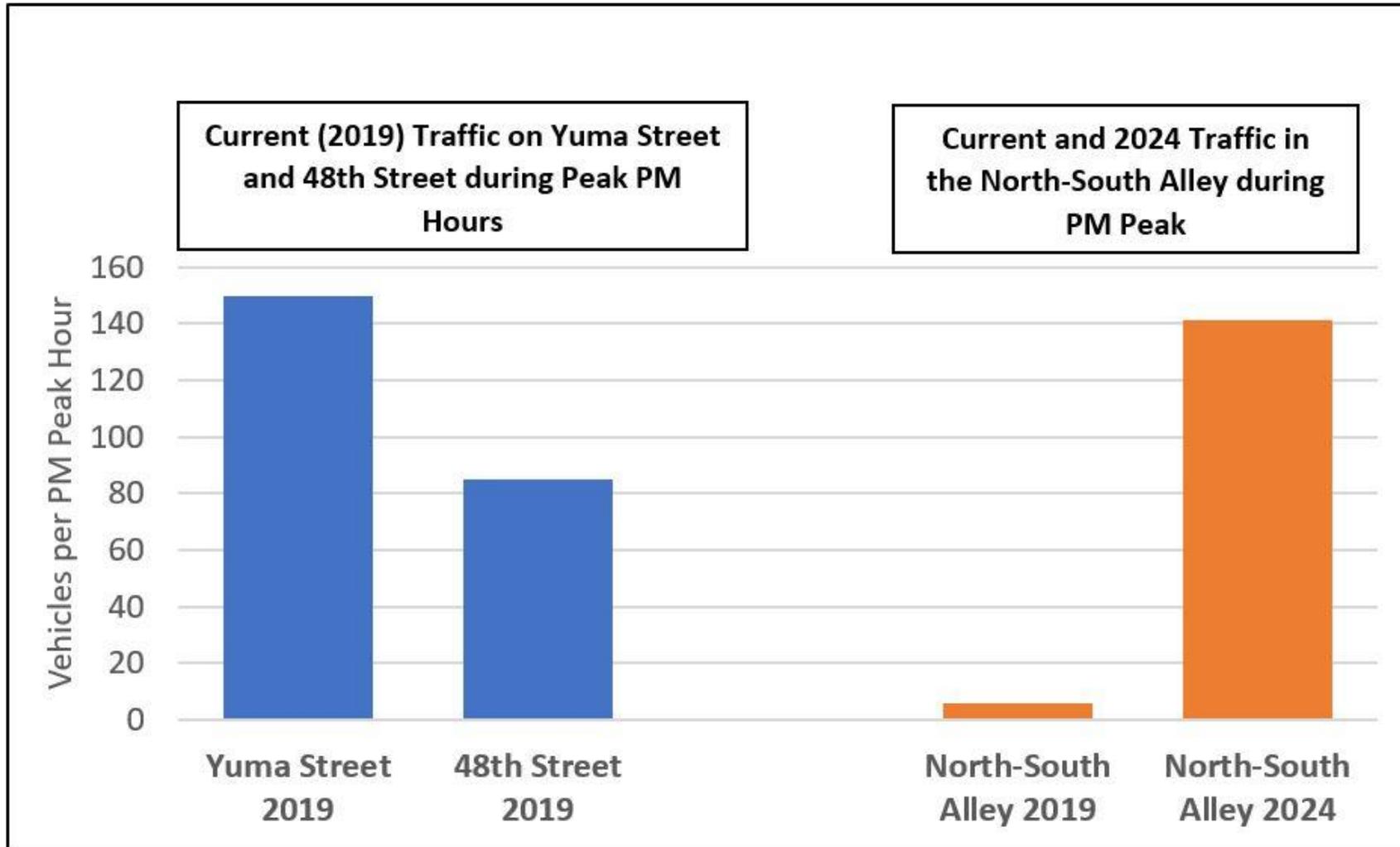
# The neighborhood deserves a better building.

- Building should be a win-win for the neighborhood meaning:
  - ✓ Lower height,
  - ✓ New more diverse retail and 150 apartments
  - ✓ Pedestrian-friendly alley network, and
  - ✓ Fit in better with neighborhood.
- *To conclude: The neighborhood deserves a better building.*

# Additional Slide: Alley traffic will increase by well over 9 times before and after building



# Additional Slide: After the project the alley traffic will be the same as nearby city streets



# Additional Slide: Large Buildings on other side of Ward Circle don't abut residential neighborhoods

- The nearest large buildings are on the other side of Ward Circle.
- They are set back from Massachusetts Avenue and do not abut nearby neighbors.

