



## Staging for Street View

By Robert Freedman

No, you can't stage a listing for Street View, Google's street-level snapshots of communities around the country.

But you'd better believe that photos of your listings at *REALTOR.com* and other Web sites are a big factor in whether buyers choose to visit your listings offline. Curb appeal in today's market really means Web appeal, says Terry Camp, whose landscape design company Camp and Camp Associates is in Walnut Creek, Calif.

So how do you make your listings more photogenic? Start by taking a picture of the home. Then ask yourself what could be done to show off the property's best features. For example, is your listing dwarfed by overgrown bushes and trees? Simply trimming the greenery can make the home appear larger, says Barb Schwarz, president and founder of the International Association of Home Staging Professionals and a real estate licensee in La Quinta, Calif.

We photographed a middle-of-the-road house in Alexandria, Va., and asked Schwarz and Camp for their ideas on how to make the house really pop online. To get a feel for the transformation, we've illustrated some of the changes they recommended. Unless otherwise noted, each of the changes can typically be made for less than \$1,000.



### Relocate the green trash bin

to the back, sweep all the leaves in the yard and on the driveway, and trim the tree to the left of the driveway. **More than \$5,000:** Resurface the asphalt driveway with concrete (with a light stain), stamped concrete, or paving stones.

### Plant large bushes under the front windows

, but keep their height well below the bottom ledge. For a more finished look, add ground cover, such as red cedar bark, under the bushes. **Up to \$5,000:** Plant a boxwood-style hedge, about two feet high and 18 inches wide, on each side of the front walkway and running its full length to the sidewalk.

**Replace the lantern light**

to the right of the door with a much larger light that's black. **Up to \$5,000:** Add a second lantern light to the other side of the door for symmetry.

**Replace the house numbers** above the door with much larger black numbers to the left of the door to add drama.

**Drastically trim back the large bushes**

on the left and right sides of the house so that they're not covering the front windows. Trim each to about six feet wide and about 15 feet tall. They should be no higher than the first roof.

**Cut down the barren tree**

in the front yard and replace it with grass. Fertilize the entire yard to make the grass greener, and trim all lawn edges.

**Paint the steps**

**dark green** and the railing white, remove the white storm door, and install a brass kick door plate along the bottom of the door to give the entry a more elegant look. For color, place a large clay pot, planted with a small green fir and flowers, on each side of the front door. **Up to \$5,000:** Pave over the front porch and steps with bricks—or a brick veneer, which is thinner than brick—to match the house. **More than \$5,000:** Build an inverted-V roof over the front porch with rounded colonial-style pillars. Match shingles to those of the house. Paint the trim white to match the window trim.

**Add black window boxes** under the two front windows. They should extend the full length of the windows but not reach under the shutters. In season, fill the boxes with ivy, green plants, and red flowers.