

# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

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Reviving Your Home's Curb Appeal  
**A Home Improvement Guide for the Twin Cities Metro**










**From new landscaping to a fresh coat of paint...** First Impressions features exterior improvement projects tackled by real homeowners in Blaine, Coon Rapids and Fridley.

Find ideas and actionable steps for many budgets and be inspired by your north metro neighbors to improve your home's curb appeal.

## Our “Why” Guide:

Look for these icons next to the projects on the following pages to get a snapshot of the value these types of improvements might bring to you and your home!

-  **Return on Investment (ROI):** The percentage of money spent on a project you expect to get back when selling the home. (National Association of Realtors and Zonda)
-  **Estimated Project Cost:**  
\$ = \$5,000 or less  
\$\$ = between \$5,000 and \$25,000  
\$\$\$ = \$25,000 or more
-  **Joy Score:** The average satisfaction rating homeowners gave similar improvement projects on a scale of one to ten. (National Association of Realtors)

Projects featured in this guide were completed using housing programs offered by the cities of Coon Rapids, Blaine and Fridley. The programs offer grants, rebates, low-interest loans and other incentives to eligible homeowners.



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# Why Improve Your Curb Appeal?

“Curb appeal improvements not only increase a home’s function and value, but also the satisfaction of living there. *WELL-KEPT HOMES INSPIRE NEIGHBORS* to make similar investments, which builds *STRONGER COMMUNITIES*.”

Patrick Maghrak, Fridley City Assessor

“The outside of the home is the **first impression**.”

Nancy Jorgensen, Coldwell Banker Realty

“There are two kinds of buyers: ones that want a project, and ones that do not. ... more buyers want to purchase a property that does not need work - and they are **willing to pay more** for it.”

Patty Jones, Gray Duck Realty





# Small Changes, Big Impact \$

## No-Cost to Low-Cost Projects

Refreshing the face of your home doesn't have to break the budget. Here are some no-cost and low-cost ideas to clean up the view from the curb.



### ✓ Clean It Up

- Wash windows.
- Clean the gutters.
- Power wash siding.

### ✓ Update the Entrance

- Paint or replace the existing front door.
- Paint or replace the storm door.
- Add a wreath or welcome sign.

### ✓ Improve the Landscape

- Replace mulch.
- Trim bushes and trees.
- Add new plants.

### ✓ Spruce Up Surfaces

- Repaint the siding (if wood or Masonite).
- Add accents (shutters, window boxes, modern light fixtures).
- Seal coat driveway.





# \$-\$\$\$ The Power of Landscaping



One of the best ways to increase curb appeal is to clean up the landscape. Fresh sod, new plants and neatly trimmed trees completely transform the look of this home.

“This is a great example of a low budget - but great - improvement.”

Maisa Olson, Red Carpet Agents



**100%**

Return on Investment



**\$-\$\$\$**

Cost



**9.7**

Joy Score





# The Power of Landscaping \$-\$\$

## Keep Safety in Mind

When designing or maintaining the landscape, it's important to think about sight lines both inside and outside. Follow these tips to keep eyes on your yard from any angle.



### Maintain a Clear View

- ✓ Trim plants to be two feet tall or shorter.
- ✓ Trim trees so branches are at least six feet off the ground.
- ✓ Don't let the plants in front of your house grow higher than your windows.

### Define Property Borders

- ✓ Landscaping and fences should create boundaries and guide people where you want them to be.





# \$ - \$\$\$ Front Doors and Accents

## Front Doors

Front doors are often a focal point of the home. Updating the entrance can make the home more inviting - and provide a fun opportunity to express your personal style!



## Design Tips



Make your front door pop by choosing a bold or contrasting color or stain.



Upgrade by adding sidelights to make a larger statement - and add more light to your entry.



Add a wreath or welcoming decoration to inexpensively dress up the doorway.





# Front Doors and Accents \$-\$\$

## Accents

Don't overlook opportunities like updating your porch light or house numbers. Little changes have a big impact on the look of your home, at a low cost.

## Accent Ideas



Update Exterior Lighting

1  
0  
1

Change House Number Plaque

**Tip:** There are options for every budget. Custom order a new stone plaque or create a do-it-yourself design.



Add or Update Shutters



Add Window Boxes



New Mailbox





# \$-\$\$\$ Garage Doors



## What Changed?

- New front door and garage door.
- New board and batten siding.
- New window trim.
- New roof trim and soffit.
- New lighting.



194%

Return on Investment



\$-\$\$

Cost



9.0

Joy Score



# Garage Doors \$-\$\$

Garage doors are often the most visible part of a home. Replacing the garage doors on this home had a big impact.

## What Changed?

- New garage doors.
- New front door.
- New paint.
- Replaced brick with updated accent stone.
- Refinished porch column.







# Next Level Improvements

## Mid-Cost to High-Cost Projects

Ready to make a major change? These design ideas make a big impact on curb appeal and increase property values.

### ✓ Update the Structure

Replace windows visible from the curb.

Replace the roof.

Install new garage doors.

Add or replace the front porch or patio.

Add decorative columns or a portico.

### ✓ Improve Exterior Finishes

Install walkways or patios with brick or stone pavers.

Replace the driveway.

Add stone, brick, board and batten, or shake accents.

Upgrade siding.

### ✓ Redesign Outdoor Living Spaces

Add or replace fencing.

Install or replace retaining walls.

Contract a landscaping company to implement a custom design for your yard.



### Yes, it's the same house!

This large front porch addition provides much needed living space for a small 1950s rambler while drastically improving the curb appeal.





# Columns and Stone \$\$



## Updating Columns and Stone

By changing the brick accent into stone and carrying that into new, more substantial columns, this home instantly looks more attractive and up-to-date.

## Design Tip

Updating the stone accent created an opportunity to change the house numbers into a permanent and classy stone accent.



Take care of any deferred maintenance first, then **look at breaking up the front facade** with some accent materials like brick or shakes. A front porch or covered opening can be a **fun addition** to increase appeal.

Jamie VonderHaar, Center for Energy and Environment



153%

Return on Investment



\$\$

Cost



9.4

Joy Score



# \$\$ Driveways



## Driveway Replacement

A new driveway does more than add curb appeal – easier snow and ice removal prevents slips and falls. It can also reduce salt usage, which keeps nearby water bodies clean.



**60%**

Return on Investment



**\$\$**

Cost



**8.5**

Joy Score



AFTER



# Save Energy, Save Money

\$\$-\$\$\$

## Home Improvement Tips for Energy Savings



### Replace Doors and Windows

Energy efficient doors and windows can improve the fit and seal around your home, keeping it warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

**Tip:** Look for an Energy Star label and higher values to save energy.



### Landscape for Shade

Plant tall trees on the south or west side of your home to shade it from the summer sun.



### Add Insulation

Add additional roof insulation when reroofing an older home.

**Tip:** If you struggle with ice dams, you could need more insulation and roof ventilation.





# \$\$\$ Siding



BEFORE

"It is the cutest Cape Cod! It was lost by being so plain and blending in. Now it pops and looks like a totally updated house."

Patty Jones, Gray Duck Realty

## Design Tip

When changing so many elements, it's important to keep the design simple with a consistent color palette and style. This remodel features three main colors for a clean and modern result.



88%

Return on Investment



\$\$\$

Cost



7.9

Joy Score



AFTER



# Siding \$\$\$

## Design Tip

Incorporate a variety of textures. The mix of shake and Dutch lap siding in this update adds visual appeal.

"Love it! Nice new landscaping, updated exterior and added walkway really **make it fresh.**"

Nancy Jorgensen, Coldwell Banker Realty

