

Transforming the Fruit Belt Neighborhood

Development of a Model Fronting-Block

Community Development Block Grant Proposal

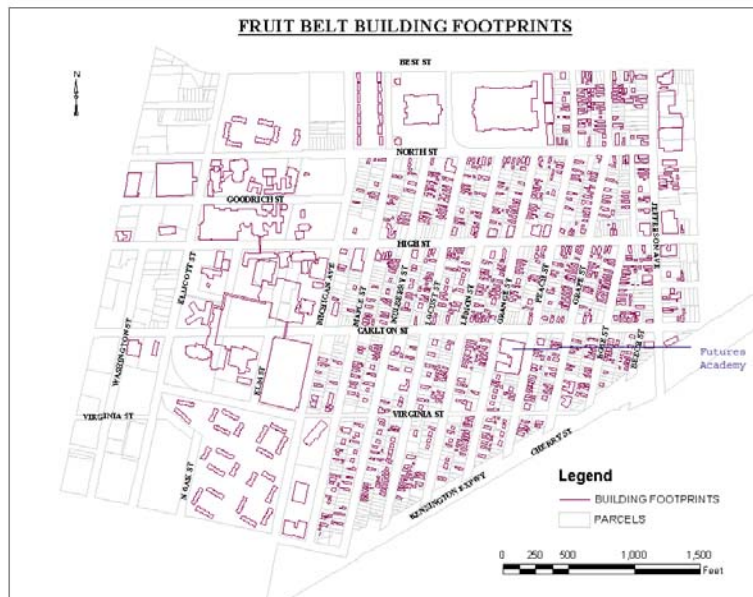
The Fruit Belt/Medical Campus Neighborhood Redevelopment Project

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The Problem

The Center for Urban Studies has developed a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the Fruit Belt/Medical Campus residential neighborhood (Figure One). The goal is to create a mixed-race, mixed-class neighborhood with clusters of new townhouses, condominiums, and rehabilitated single-family homes within a setting of landscaped streets and open space, commercial development, and other amenities that will make the neighborhood a great place to live and work. The idea is to retain the existing population, while simultaneously attracting new residents to the neighborhood. The new residents would primarily be younger workers from the Medical Campus and downtown businesses who currently commute from the suburbs. By retaining the current residents and by attracting a significant number of newcomers, the ideas envisaged in this proposal can be realized.

Figure 1: Fruit Belt/Medical Campus in Context



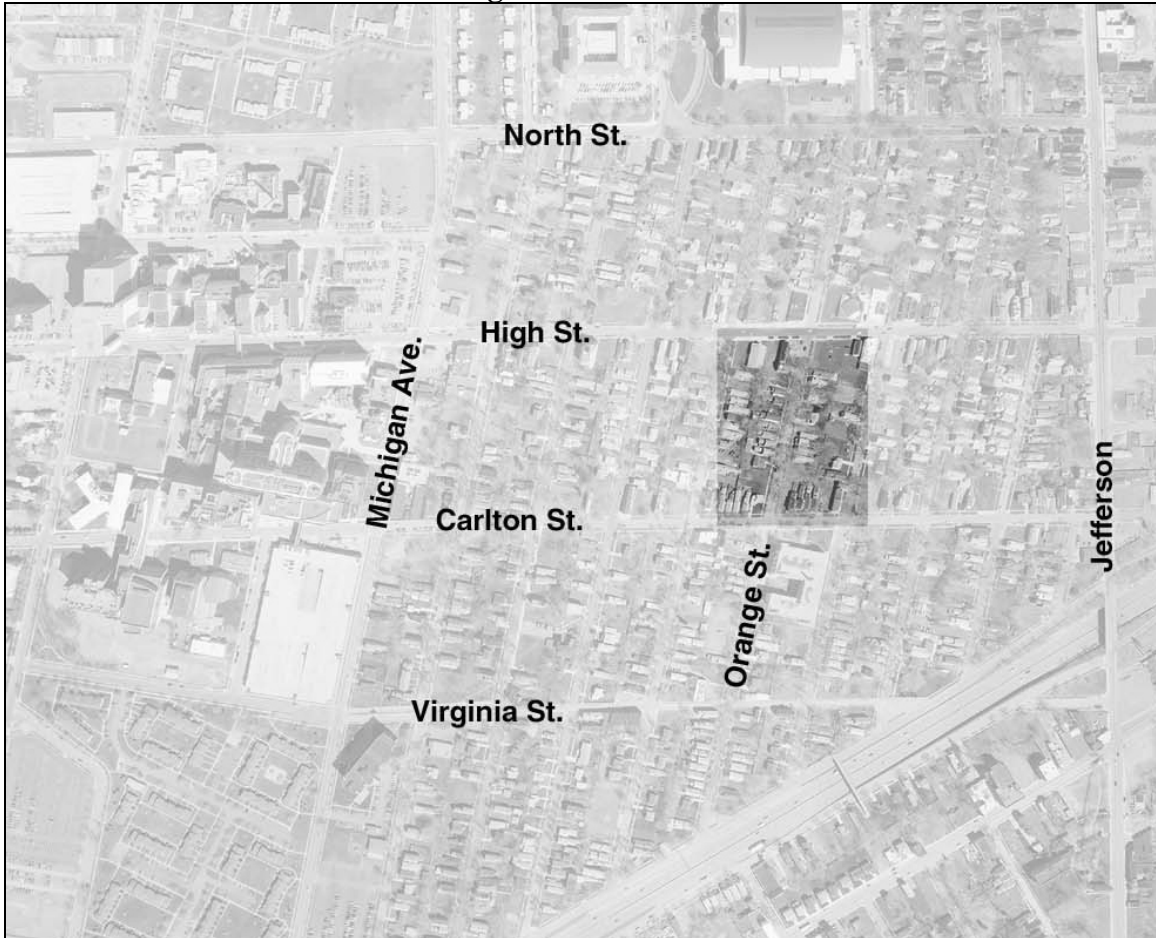
A key to making the project successful is to get existing and potential residents and developers to imagine what the neighborhood can be. This will not be an easy task. The neighborhood's dilapidated appearance combined with years of failed revitalization efforts discourage people and keep them from seeing the neighborhood's potential. To get residents, developers, and potential residents excited about the Fruit Belt/Medical Campus neighborhood, a model fronting block needs to be developed to demonstrate the neighborhood's potential for residential development.

Figure 2: House and Vacant Lot in Fruit Belt/Medical Campus



The Model Fronting Block will be located on Orange Street, between Carlton and High. The site takes advantage of a central position within the residential area of the neighborhood (see Fig. 3), within easy walking distance of the Medical Campus and across the street from Futures Academy. The site is also easily accessible by public transit served by busses on High Street and within walking distance of the Allen Hospital Station, and the Medical Campus.

Figure 2: Context



This site will make it possible to take full advantage of the planned community garden, which will be located on Carlton, between Orange and Peach streets directly across from Futures Academy. It will also provide a landscaped link between Futures Academy and the bus routes on High Street (see fig. 5).

Figure 5: Existing Conditions Site Plan



The proposal for the Model Fronting Block seeks to improve the appearance of the public realm on Orange Street. The current conditions of the infrastructure are an impediment to future development in the neighborhood (see fig. 6). Sidewalks, curbs and paving need replacing and the current street lighting is not adequate to provide a sense of safety for pedestrians at night. The street lighting is a particular concern to local residents who feel that the trees block light from fixtures.

Figure 6 Orange Street Existing Public Realm

(Photo credits: Michael Quinlan)

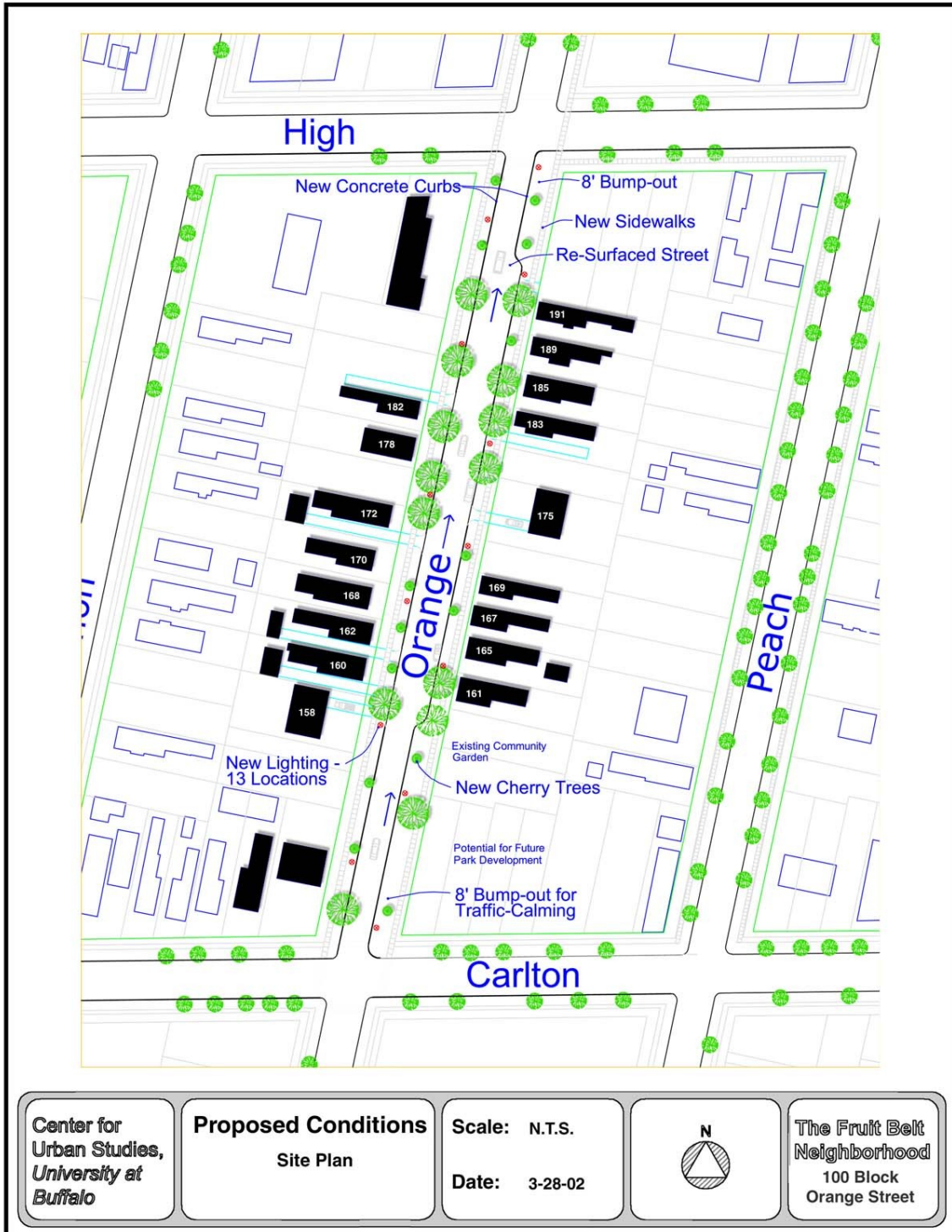


The plan calls for extensive streetscaping and landscaping on both sides of the street. The landscape will be designed to beautify the area and give existing and potential residents, as well as potential investors a positive impression of the neighborhood's potential. The Model Fronting Block development, therefore proposes that the following work be undertaken (see fig.7-10):

- Plant new trees to replace those that are missing, and those that should be removed because they are in bad health;
- Reconfigure the roadway to include bulb-outs at both ends as “street calming” measures;
- Provide new sidewalks on both sides of the street;
- Provide new curbs on both sides of the street;
- Provide new paving on the roadway;
- Provide new pedestrian scale lighting on both sides of the street. The light fixture itself should be below the canopy of the trees, and should provide character for the streetscape;
- Provide new sod for all verges;
- Provide new driveways for houses as required.

This work will be coordinated with the work of Brush Up Buffalo (BUB). BUB has focused its activities on the Fruit Belt this year. Although the houses on this block of Orange have not been designated for their attention, BUB will provide materials (paint and supplies), and the Center of Urban Studies will work to find volunteers to paint the houses that need attention on this block.

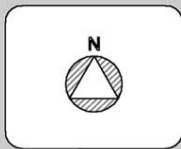
Figure 7 Proposed Site Plan



Center for
Urban Studies,
University at
Buffalo

Proposed Conditions
Site Plan

Scale: N.T.S.
Date: 3-28-02



The Fruit Belt
Neighborhood
100 Block
Orange Street

Figure 8 Proposed Section

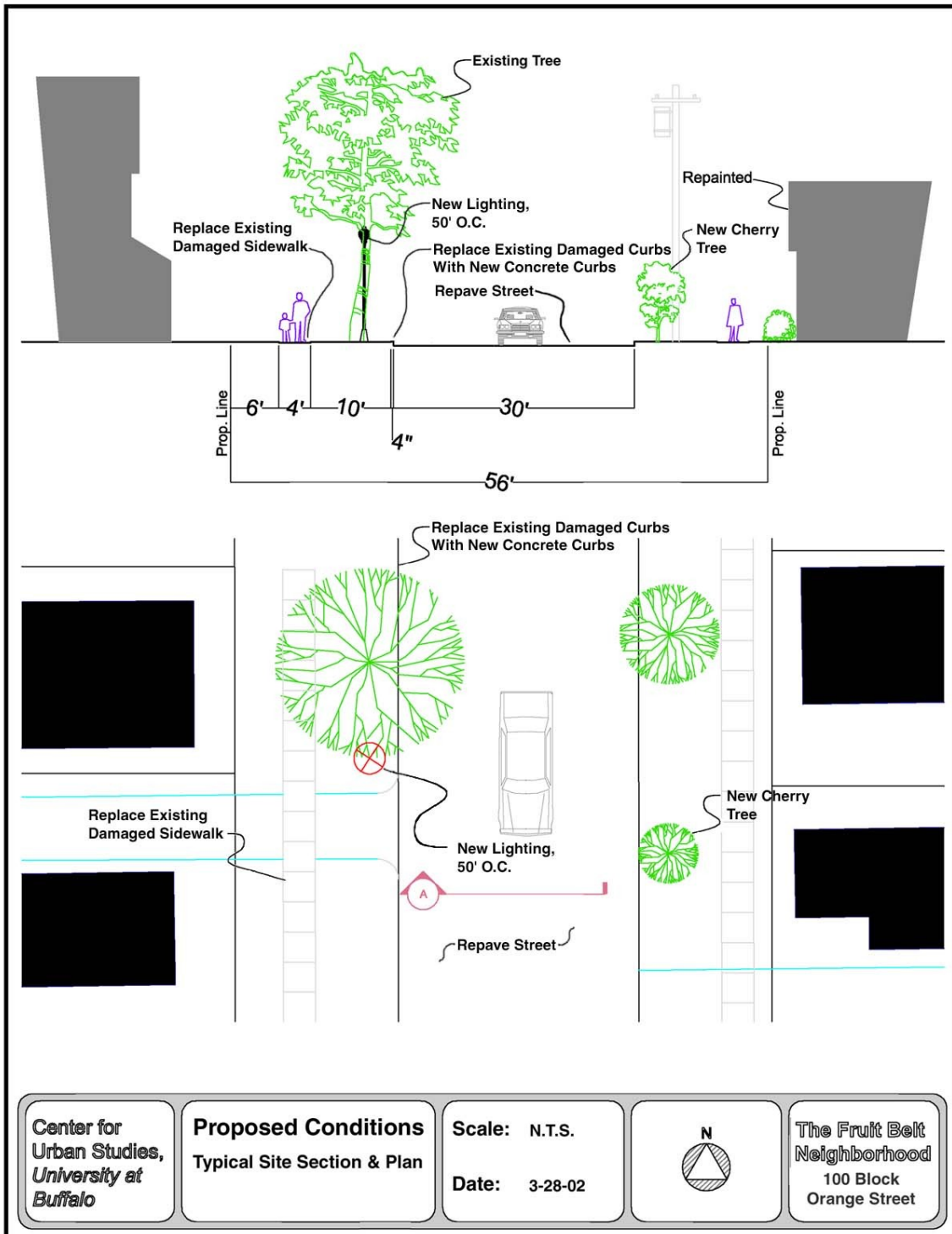


Figure 9: Existing and Proposed Conditions on East Side of Orange

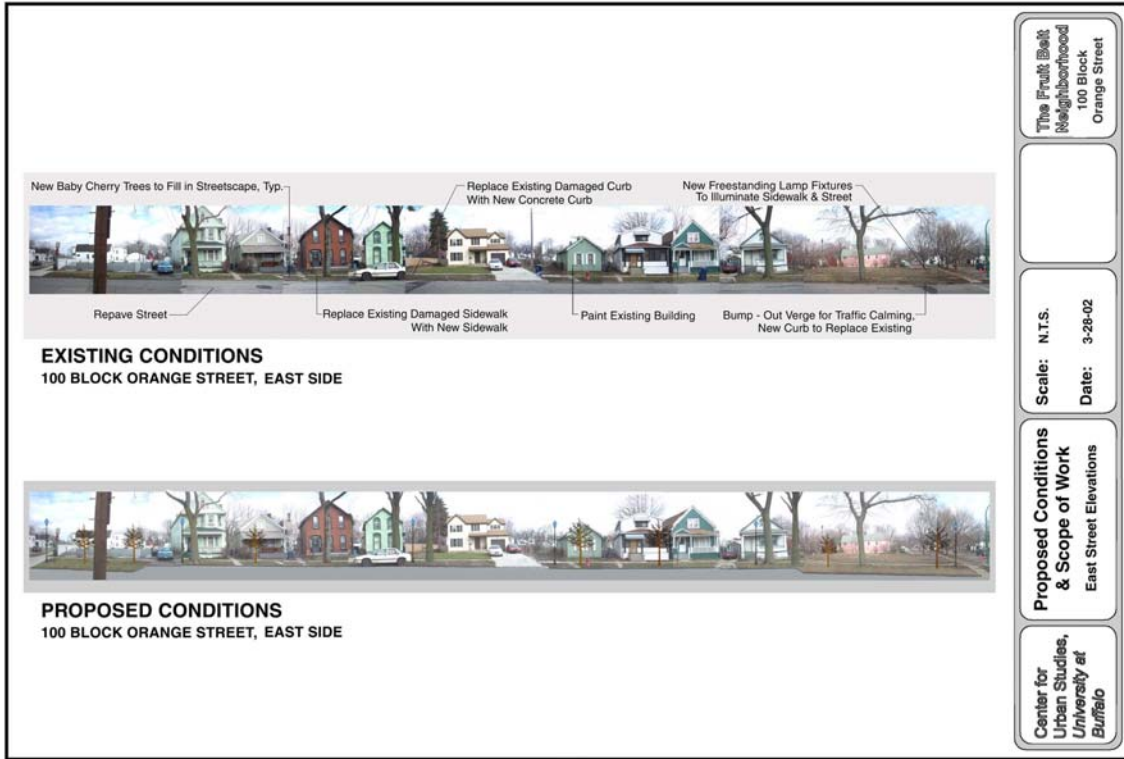
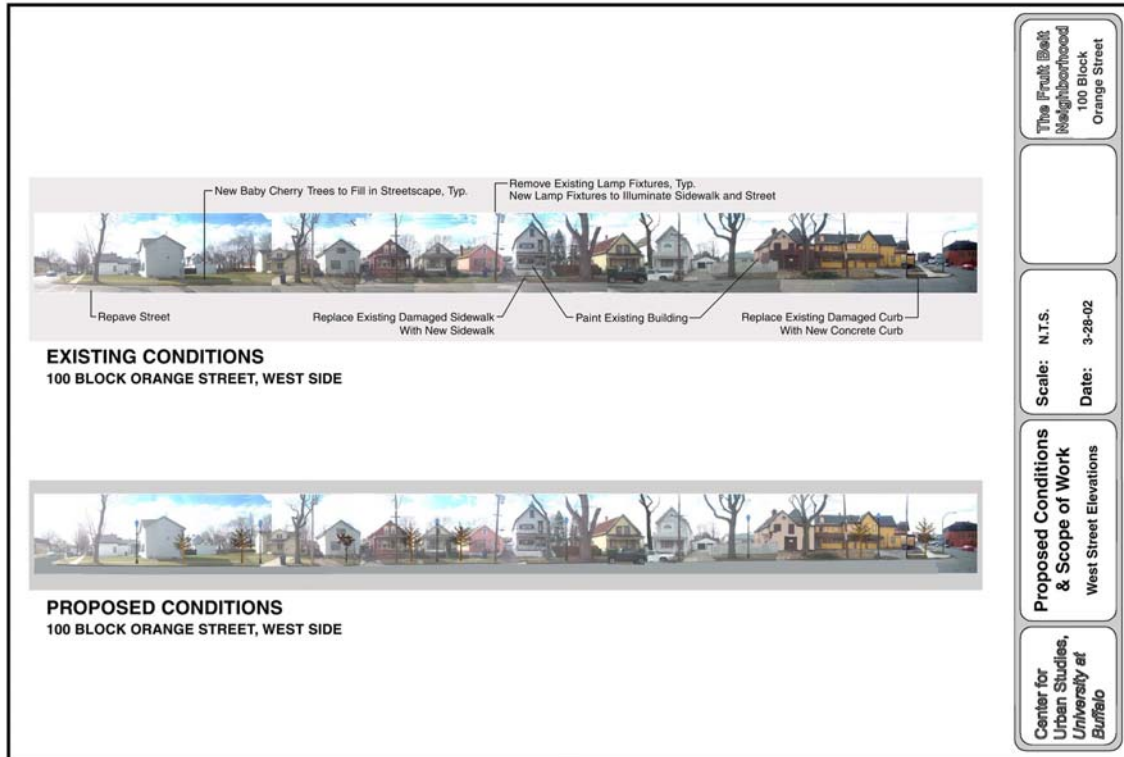


Figure 10: Existing and Proposed Conditions on West Side of Orange



Drawing credits: Steve Watchorn, Nate Wasnock, Leanne Johnston, Mike Quinlan

Conclusion

The dilapidated physical environment and years of failed redevelopment projects makes it difficult for current and potential residents and investors to imagine the Fruit Belt/Medical campus neighborhood as a charming, vibrant community that is a great place to live and raise a family. By developing a model fronting block in the neighborhood, we will be able to provide these groups with an example of what this neighborhood could be.

Budget

Planning and Development Oversight--	\$100,000
Sidewalks and Streets	\$200,000
Landscaping and Streetscaping	\$150,000
Lighting	\$ 50,000
Total	\$500,000