

here. The local neighborhood street is a space for which automobiles and pedestrians directly compete. Streets such as highways are constructed for large volumes of traffic and are clearly not spaces for use by pedestrians. In contrast, areas such as local streets, shopping centers, office parks, and public places must serve both pedestrians and vehicles. The concern of this discussion is with the negative impacts of local streets on environmental resources such as water and air and the social life of the neighborhood.

Preventing the negative effects of the typical street or parking lot might involve incorporating the methods of storm water management discussed in Chap. 6. By including carefully planned and larger uses of infiltration and vegetation, the physical impacts of paving and traffic can be reduced. Well-planned streets go beyond these concerns and also address the integration of both pedestrians and vehicles. In an urban neighborhood, the streetscape might represent as much as 35 percent of the total neighborhood area and all of the public or common space. In virtually all American urban neighborhoods, this common space is dedicated to the automobile, and its use by residents is incidental and at their own risk. However, the risks notwithstanding, pedestrians do try to use the streets. Neighborhood block parties and street festivals are a familiar activity in many cities. Other less obvious but more frequent uses are for recreation such as walking, bicycle riding, and playing games. Mitigating the negative environmental impacts of streets therefore includes issues of comfort, safety, access, and traffic control as well as concerns of physical impacts (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2).



Figure 5.1 Photograph of residential street.