



The Champs-Élysées of Paris is considered one of the great streets of the world.

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS AS BEAUTIFUL PUBLIC SPACES

Essential to creating a beautiful city is an understanding that highways, streets, and avenues should be viewed as an important part of the civic realm. Public spaces should be attractive regardless of the scale of street involved. Streets and avenues should be viewed as important public spaces that should be functional and comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclist, and drivers.

In order for a street to feel good and have a sense of place, the space occupied by the street and sidewalks must be delineated and defined by a fairly continuous liner of buildings. The buildings that line the street must pull up to the street and be of an appropriate scale. Wide streets should be lined with taller buildings; narrow streets should be lined with buildings of one or two stories. When buildings are pulled up to the street and form a continuous frontage of appropriate height, the space occupied by the street is defined and begins to feel like an outdoor room.

Equally important to the walls formed by buildings is a continuous system of wide sidewalks for pedes-



Beautiful commercial street.

Ideal neighborhood street

trians. In residential areas, sidewalks should be wide enough for two people to walk comfortably side by side (five to six feet). Within denser areas or commercial districts, sidewalks should be very wide (fifteen to twenty feet) and sufficient enough to provide outdoor seating at tables in front of cafes and restaurants.

Street trees provide further definition of space and shade for pedestrians. Within urban areas, the street trees should be planted with formality along a line with regular spacing along the edge of the street between pedestrians and traffic.

Attention should also be given to the way in which the outdoor room is furnished. Excessive signage should be avoided, and attention should be paid to the aesthetics and design of street lighting, benches, shelters, and other objects that may occur within the public space.

When traffic enters a space designed as an outdoor room, it instinctively slows. With cars moving more slowly and buildings pulled closer to the street, drivers can easily see stores and businesses. The economic energy provided by the street and its traffic can be more efficiently utilized. With buildings of the right scale pulled up to the street, proper street trees, wide sidewalks, and the right mix of uses, SR 7 could become an area of pedestrian congregation rather than a place to be avoided by pedestrians. As it currently exists, SR 7 divides and scars the study area rather than serve as a beautiful main street full of energy and activity. Traffic travels quickly along SR 7. There is nothing to draw interest and make a driver take note that they have arrived in a special place.

Many of the smaller residential and industrial streets within the study area also need attention. They lack street trees, sidewalks, and proper detailing. Failure to provide for on-street parking leaves some of the older neighborhoods with small lots cluttered with parked cars on their front lawns.