

**April 27, 2009**

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## New Pocket Parks

The Miami Downtown Development Authority and the City of Miami will be inaugurating a new pocket park on Flager Street in Downtown Miami tomorrow, April 28, 2009. The re-opening of the new Paul S. Walker Urbanscape is the culmination of a DDA program that is bringing three new pocket parks with close to 23,000 square feet of green space to the downtown core.

Tomorrow the City of Miami and DDA will be holding festivities to celebrate the re-opening of the new park. Music and refreshments will be available for all to enjoy.

The three new parks in Downtown Miami:

Paul S. Walker Urbanscape (46 W. Flagler St.)

Thirty years ago, the original park space (named after former DDA board member and community leader) was leased by the City and replaced with a building that since became rundown and dilapidated.

Joan Lehman Sculpture Plaza (Flagler St. at SW 1st Ave)

Previously closed off to the public, the Joan Lehman Sculpture Plaza now features enhanced pedestrian access with park benches, meandering pathways, and newly planted trees.

Robert F. Clark Plaza (NW 1st Avenue and NW 1st Street)

Also once removed from the public right-of-way, this pocket park was restored and enhanced with pedestrian-friendly features.

Small urban pocket parks are important elements of a vibrant urban environment. It is not always feasible to build large parks — small parks offer quick and accessible rest and relaxation from hectic urban environments. They provide a release of pressure — a small space intertwined within the city fabric that provides a place to unwind for a few minutes. In New York City, San Francisco, and other cities throughout the world — small pocket parks in the forms of gardens, playgrounds, and green spaces provide a small amount of green in what is usually a concrete jungle. In some instances, pocket parks even end up replacing blighted lots within the city — just like what happened with the new Paul S. Walker Park.

Pocket parks are another component of vibrant and diverse cities — they provide quick relief in what can sometimes be an intense urban environment. It is good to see that the City of Miami and DDA are supporting the creation of these new public urban spaces.