



# DOWNTOWN MIAMI



## Manhattan revitalizer aims for new life in Bayfront Park

BY SUSAN STABLEY

The man behind restoration of Manhattan's Bryant Park is now working on ideas to make Miami's Bayfront Park more user-friendly.

Daniel Biederman of Biederman Re-development Ventures, co-founder of several New York City partnerships organized to revitalize and manage its downtown areas, is being paid \$50,000 to spearhead a plan to breathe new life into Bayfront Park. His goal is to make the park usable for more than weekend events but one that is active 12-plus hours a day, seven days a week.

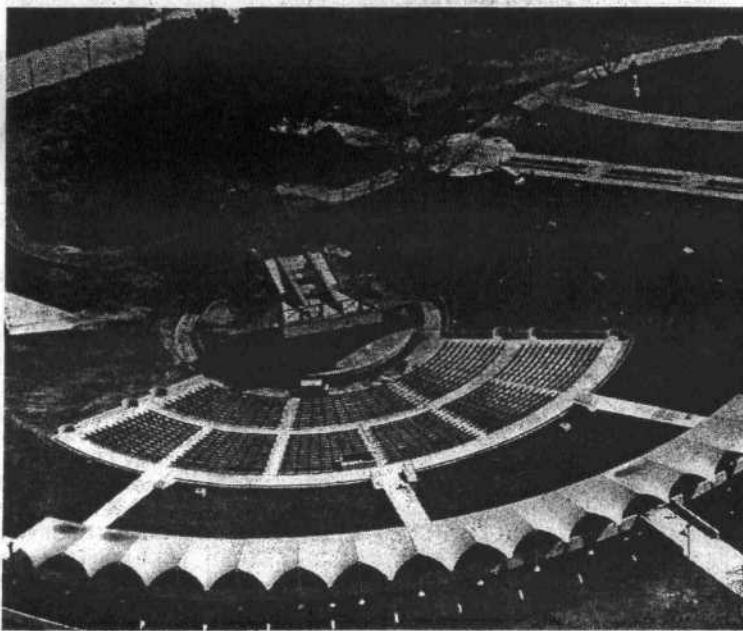
"As downtown Miami continues to evolve, so must Bayfront Park," said Timothy Schmand, executive director of Bayfront Park Management Trust.

Depending on the progress of a few projects near the Miami River, as many as 3,000 additional residents could be living in the downtown area in less than three years.

"We're going to have people fed to us," said trust member Elena Carpenter. "If we're not ready by then, then we really blew it."

During the 1980s, Mr. Biederman and Andrew Heiskell, former chairman of Time Inc. and the New York Public Library, took over operation of Bryant Park and transformed the crime-ridden, rundown public facility into a vibrant destination.

Among the honors it has received, Bryant Park - 8 acres behind the New York Public Library between 40th and 42nd streets and Fifth and Sixth avenues



Daniel Biederman will get \$50,000 to bring new life to amphitheater, rest of park.

- in 1996 was given the Urban Land Institute Excellence Award for public projects.

When he isn't running Bryant Park, Mr. Biederman is advising cities across the country on economic development and rehabilitation. Last Friday, he spent the day with officials and staff from Bayfront Park Management Trust.

The brainstorming has only just begun.

Mr. Schmand took Mr. Biederman on

a tour of the 30-plus-acre park. Already, key advantages such as stunning water views and design obstacles have been identified. What doesn't work shouldn't be a problem, Mr. Biederman said.

"There's no error that can't be reversed," he said, pointing out the park's unnecessary berms, unvisited monuments and rarely functioning fountain.

Biscayne Boulevard was noted as a deterrent to the park's ability to bring in more people, especially office workers

during their lunch breaks.

"The width is a disincentive," said Mr. Biederman.

Miami's climate is both a blessing and a burden. Sunny winter days are great for visiting parks, but as one trust member noted, the humidity can be awful.

Bayfront Park is visited by more than a million annually. The biggest crowds come during the winter - about 750,000 last year - to visit the free Downtown's Holiday Village. This year, the event will run from Nov. 8 to Jan. 11.

To give Bayfront a dual life as an event park and an "a la carte" park for local users, park management must work around many of the weekend events plus a few big ones - such as the Holiday Village, which lasts 38 days, and the Grand Prix Americas street race, which puts bleachers along Biscayne Boulevard.

Under consideration are a Frisbee-golf course, more shelters and installation of WiFi, which allows laptop users to connect to the Internet. Bryant Park was the first public space to add WiFi, Mr. Biederman said, at a cost of \$20,000 for three antennas.

Park promoters want new ideas about the park to flow as its potential uses are identified. More meetings with Mr. Biederman are to come - including a public forum.

A date is to be determined for a planning session, but interested parties should e-mail Valerie Sanchez at [vsanchez@ci.miami.fl.us](mailto:vsanchez@ci.miami.fl.us) by May 27 to be added to a contact list.