

Miami Herald

March 16, 2017

UMV: 14,115,279

Ready or not, Miami's Omni Park opens Friday



Work is still under way at Omni Park, but the seven-acre green space opens Friday to the public. David Smiley / Miami Herald

By David Smiley

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Omni Park, Miami's newest experiment with guerrilla green spaces, is opening to the public Friday afternoon.

At least, some of it.

After three months of hustling, Miami's Omni Community Redevelopment Agency and the Pérez Art Museum Miami are holding a 5:30 p.m. grand opening to unveil [a \\$318,000 project](#) turning vacant state-owned property into seven temporarily bustling acres of grass, trees, eateries and event space. Friday's gathering includes live music, followed Saturday morning by the first in a weekly farmer's market series.

"[Omni Park](#) started with the simple idea of converting a blighted area into an active green space. It's amazing to see how fast it has come together with great community, government, and private partners," Ken Russell, Miami commissioner and chairman of the redevelopment agency, said in a statement.

The park, which stretches east-west over four city blocks immediately north of Interstate I-395, will include

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gravel paths, artsy chickee huts, and cafes operating out of shipping containers. The opening will be held on the westernmost block, where crews were still busy Thursday afternoon pouring and smoothing concrete for a skate park.

The park isn't entirely ready yet, obviously. But Brad Knoefler, whose Urban Implementation LLC was paid to design and construct the park, said he was scrambling Thursday to tie up as many loose ends as possible. He said "the sod won't be perfect," but the celebration will go off as planned.

"We're running around finalizing things, but it will be good and ready," he said.

The park is opening on the edge of a largely overlooked neighborhood on property owned by the Florida Department of Transportation, which plans to shift the interstate south as part of a massive redesign and signature bridge project. The redevelopment agency hopes a version of the park will exist under the expressway once it's built.