



MIAMI

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Downtown Hopes to Clean Up Real Nice for Heat

Getting rid of litter and the homeless are tops on the list to make downtown fir for a king

By WILLARD SHEPARD

Downtown Miami businessmen and women, police, and workers from county and city agencies got an up-close look at the area around the American Airlines Arena Tuesday.

Their goal: to find out what needs to be fixed in the weeks before the worlds' now most famous basketball team attracts huge crowds, many of the them out of town visitors.

"Just a general pick me up of the area to make it more welcoming," said Alyce Robertson, with the Miami Downtown Development Association. "There are some long term issues where we want to make Biscayne blvd more pedestrian friendly."



The group noted big and small things, like litter, graffiti, storm drains, lighting, and trees.

"I just hope that what is good for our business is good for everbody else," Kim Stone, of the Miami Heat, said. "It would be great for someone to come to the game and go for a dinner or a drink nearby."

Solomon Mayberg, of M & M Parking, said he would like to see the city do more.

"We have been doing our part -- we have spent more than \$340,000 fixing up the fences and cleaning up the trash."

A representative from the agency working with the homeless is looking for a respectful way to reduce the number of the homeless.

"When they come downtown, are they going to want to be approached by people who are pan handling?" David Raymond, from the Homeless Trust, asked. "So we have a big part of our campaign focused on the homeless meters. We are really reaching out to assist the homeless find a real home and make it easier for those who wish to contribute."

Churchill's Barbershop owner Jose Goyanes sees the Heat season as an opportunity to turn downtown into a vibrant place.

"It's been neglected for many years, not just by the city but the property owners, and now it's time for the city to step up."