

Memorandum



Date: June 18, 2026

Agenda Item No. 2(B)(10)
October 6, 2026

To: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Daniella Levine Cava *Daniella Levine Cava*
Mayor

Subject: Report on the Enactment and Implementation of Improved Design Standards for Solid Waste Management in Single-Family and Multi-Family Residential Establishments - Directive No. 251850

Executive Summary

This report is provided pursuant to Resolution No. R-876-25 sponsored by Commissioner Marleine Bastien and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners ("Board") on September 3, 2025. The Resolution directed the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to prepare a report within 180 days on the feasibility of enacting and implementing improved design standards for solid waste management in single-family and multi-family residential establishments.

Under my administration the Department of Solid Waste ("DSWM") is dedicated to maximizing waste diversion, increasing access to recycling services, and recovering as much recyclable material as possible. The implementation of clear, consistent design standards for both single-family and multi-family developments will represent an important step forward in these ongoing efforts by standardizing waste and recycling services, enabling communities that currently lack adequate space for proper recycling to increase participation.

This report provides an overview of current solid waste design standards in single-family and multi-family residential establishments and the possibility of improving those design standards to promote waste storage, recycling, and waste diversion. The report also highlights progress that the County has made towards promoting recycling, including the launch of new educational resources that help residents recycle correctly. The County is also working towards standardizing recycling across municipalities to mitigate recycling confusion, build trust in the recycling process, and ensure residents across the County are receiving excellent recycling services, regardless of municipality or housing type. Further, the Zero Waste Master Plan ("ZWMP") consultant has included a review of recycling design standards for multi-family establishments as part of plan development. This report outlines the potential implications that improved design standards could have on the building and development industry and on the County departments responsible for ensuring building design compliance. Recommendations on potential changes to building, waste, and zoning codes are outlined in the report, and upon the Board's acceptance of the report, DSWM will provide a draft ordinance outlining recommended Code changes to establish uniform standards across the County.

Background

The Miami-Dade County ("County") Department of Solid Waste Management ("DSWM") has provided curbside recycling services since 1990 and transitioned to a single-stream recycling system — defined as a system in which all recyclable materials are commingled in a single cart rather than being placed in multiple containers by residents — in 2008 to improve convenience and reduce collection costs. DSWM currently provides recycling collection to more than 360,000 households through three

contracted haulers, collecting approximately 60,000 tons of recyclable material annually. DSWM primarily provides service to single-family residences, including duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes.

Confusion about what can and can't be recycled is a common obstacle to proper recycling. My administration is committed to tackling this challenge through education launched two education resources to help residents recycle correctly: Recyclepedia and Scrapp. Recyclepedia is an online search tool for residents to learn what is recyclable within their municipality. Scrapp is a smart phone application that allows residents to scan barcodes on any item to learn if it can be recycled. The County is also working on efforts to expand access to recycling services by standardizing recycling services countywide—with the ultimate goal being that regardless of where a resident lives, they are able to recycle the same materials that are recyclable in DSWM's recycling program.

Florida Statute 403.706 requires counties to implement recycling programs to support the state's recycling goals. In Miami-Dade County, Chapter 15 of the Code of Miami-Dade County ("Code") establishes minimum recycling requirements. Section 15-2.6 requires residents to separate recyclable materials—including newspaper, glass, aluminum cans, steel cans, and plastics—from the solid waste stream. Section 15-2.2 further requires multi-family residential establishments to implement recycling programs that accept these materials.

Although recycling programs are required at multi-family residential properties, many developments lack sufficient space and infrastructure to accommodate recycling collection for all residents. Establishing building design standards that incorporate adequate space for recycling and solid waste storage in multi-family residential developments would help improve compliance with County recycling requirements and increase recycling participation. Incorporating such standards into the County's Zero Waste Master Plan would also support ongoing evaluation and improvement of recycling infrastructure in residential developments.

Design Standards for Single-Family Units

For the purposes of this report, single-family establishments will include all residential units serviced by DSWM (stand-alone homes, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, etc.). Section 15-4 of the Code requires that certain building plans provide sufficient space for solid waste and recyclable materials storage and collection. The Code does not define 'sufficient space' but outlines that the building plans "for storage and collection of recyclable materials must be approved by the Director as to location, accessibility, number, or adequacy." The Code allows for flexibility based on different building designs but does not specifically require a minimum standard for access to recycling infrastructure. The lack of a standard makes it challenging to provide consistent recycling services across some single-family households.

Other communities across the United States have outlined design standards for single-family units that ensure adequate recycling services while limiting the amount of space occupied by waste bins. For example, Columbus, Ohio requires all multiple dwelling units to abide by strict recycling standards. The [Columbus, Ohio Municipal Code](#) defines a multiple dwelling unit as two (2), three (3), or four (4) dwelling units contained within the same structure and under a common roof system which is not a part of a multiple dwelling development). Multiple dwelling units that receive city compactor service are required

to calculate how much space should be reserved for waste disposal by using a specific formula (number of units * 0.5 cubic yard/unit)/3) to determine the minimum curb yard compactor container capacity. Although the Columbus, Ohio Municipal Code does not explicitly outline minimum space requirements for recycling, the relevant codes provide examples of how the County could set minimum space and capacity standards for both garbage and recycling receptacles.

Some communities concentrate duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes in one area that may require dumpster services. Section 15-4 of the Code also requires such communities to provide their designs to DSWM for approval. However, Section 15-4 (2)(a) of the Code only requires areas in unincorporated Miami-Dade County to provide their waste disposal plans to DSWM. Establishing a standard for dumpster sizes and dumpster enclosures across the County would ensure that all County residents have adequate access to recycling services. It would be beneficial to have standards for waste storage for relevant residential areas serviced by DSWM, particularly to ensure waste vehicles can service the dumpsters and are adequately enclosed to minimize environmental and neighborhood impacts.

Modifications to the Code will be required to standardize the necessary amount of garbage and recycling services for single-family units. In an effort to maximize waste diversion while avoiding space constraints, DSWM will recommend changes to the Code upon acceptance of this report.

Design Standards for Multi-Family Establishments

As previously outlined in this report, Section 15-4 of the Code requires all multi-family building plans to be reviewed and approved by the DSWM director to ensure adequate space and that the number of recycling services is provided to multi-family residents. Accordingly, DSWM has the authority to deny building designs that do not have sufficient recycling services. However, DSWM does not have the authority to opine on or reject building design plans with inadequate waste service plans when a building is located outside unincorporated Miami-Dade County. A lack of a standard can lead to many multi-family establishments only providing enough recycling to comply with the recycling requirements outlined in Section 15-4 of the Code.

Several municipalities across the United States have outlined minimum recycling standards for multi-family establishments to guarantee all residents have access to adequate recycling services. Municipalities like Hennepin County, Minnesota, require a specific number of cubic yards of space be dedicated to recycling per residential unit, while other municipalities like Fort Collins, Colorado, require a minimum percentage of total waste capacity be dedicated to recycling. Having minimum recycling standards and educating property managers about such standards can significantly improve recycling rates in multi-family residential units. For example, communities that have engaged property managers and incorporated adequate recycling services into their waste service operations increased recycling capacity by up to 40% in some cases and reduced garbage-related service costs by \$20,000. As such, it is recommended that any policy changes for recycling standards align more closely with the policies in Hennepin County and Fort Collins to promote robust recycling in multi-family dwelling units.

Financial Impact

Standardizing recycling services would likely incur minimal administrative costs to DSWM and the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources ("RER") Zoning section (Zoning section).

Currently, DSWM enforces recycling services for commercial and multi-family establishments in unincorporated Miami-Dade County and in the municipalities that partner with DSWM for code enforcement services. DSWM Code Enforcement would continue to enforce the recycling services outlined in the Code; as such, DSWM Code Enforcement doesn't anticipate any additional indirect costs from standardized recycling services. The DSWM Business Development & Contract Management Division would help verify that single-family and multi-family establishments are meeting these recycling standards, similar to what is being done today. Accordingly, minimal impact is expected for the Business Development & Contract Management Division. Currently, RER is responsible for reviewing site plans in Unincorporated Miami-Dade County, including for commercial and multi-family establishments. Development and enforcement of these standards would require municipal enforcement beyond unincorporated Miami-Dade County. Although these standards could be helpful to DSWM, the Zoning section, and even building developers, there could be anticipated exceptions that are needed. As such, the Code would need to be modified to allow for modified recycling programs for building developers that can't meet these recycling standards.

Conclusion

The implementation of design standards for both single-family and multi-family developments represents a meaningful step forward in the County's ongoing efforts to standardize waste and recycling services. These standards will enable communities that currently lack adequate space for proper recycling to increase participation, directly supporting the County's goal of maximizing waste diversion and recovering valuable materials. They also address a critical gap in current development practices, where insufficient space is often allocated for waste services.

To fully advance this goal, and ensure all residents have adequate access to recycling services, it is essential that recycling infrastructure and waste services are standardized across the County. DSWM will provide a draft ordinance upon the Board's acceptance of this report, outlining recommended Code changes to establish uniform standards across Miami-Dade County.

These proposed amendments will set minimum service requirements for recycling collection in multi-family residential properties, ensure that single-family homes are designed with adequate space for both garbage and recycling services, and establish standards for communities utilizing dumpster containers to improve operational efficiency. Additionally, these standards will be incorporated into the Zero Waste Master Plan to formalize them and ensure they are periodically reviewed and updated as the County's needs evolve.

In accordance with Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda, without committee review. If additional information is needed, please contact Aneisha Daniel, PhD, Director, Department of Solid Waste Management, at Aneisha.Daniel@miamidade.gov.

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