

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(3)

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

DATE: September 1, 2026

FROM: Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution directing the County Mayor to consider the recommendations in the agriculture Report and file an application to amend the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) to provide for or encourage, as appropriate, greater allowances inside the urbanized areas for high-intensity, closed agricultural production systems, such as vertical farming

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Roberto J. Gonzalez.


Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/uw

MDC001



MEMORANDUM (Revised)

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

DATE: September 1, 2026

FROM: 
Gen Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No. 11(A)(3)

Please note any items checked.

- _____ **“3-Day Rule” for committees applicable if raised**
- _____ **6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing**
- _____ **4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing**
- _____ **Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget**
- _____ **Budget required**
- _____ **Statement of fiscal impact required**
- _____ **Statement of social equity required**
- _____ **Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor’s report for public hearing**
- _____ **No committee review**
- _____ **Requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3’s present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5’s ____, unanimous ____, majority plus one ____, CDMP 7 votes (majority of membership) ____, CDMP 2/3 members present but not less than 7 votes (majority of membership) ____, CDMP 9 votes (2/3 membership) ____) to approve**
- _____ **Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required**

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(3)
9-1-26

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE AGRICULTURE REPORT AND FILE AN APPLICATION TO AMEND THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN (CDMP) TO PROVIDE FOR OR ENCOURAGE, AS APPROPRIATE, GREATER ALLOWANCES INSIDE THE URBANIZED AREAS FOR HIGH-INTENSITY, CLOSED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS, SUCH AS VERTICAL FARMING

WHEREAS, the County has long supported agriculture as a viable economic use of suitable lands through the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP), recognizing the importance of preserving agricultural land for sustainable production and economic viability, as reflected in Policy LU-1R. which provides in part that, "Miami-Dade County shall take steps to reserve the amount of land necessary to maintain an economically viable agricultural industry;" and

WHEREAS, Policy LU-8C directs the County to continue to protect and promote agriculture as a viable economic use through a comprehensive approach that includes planning, capital improvements, cooperative extension, economic development, regulatory actions, and intergovernmental coordination, ensuring that agriculture remains a cornerstone of the County's economy; and

WHEREAS, the CDMP Interpretive Text for Agriculture (I-70 of the Land Use Element) highlights that the areas designated as Agriculture on the CDMP Land Use Plan Map encompass the best remaining agricultural land, with a clear commitment to prevent incompatible land uses or urban development that would undermine agricultural production; and

WHEREAS, the County’s October 10, 2023 report, “Evaluation of Agricultural Land Use Trends and Outlook in Miami-Dade County, Florida” (the “Report”), which was accepted by the Board of County Commissioners on December 12, 2023 under Legistar No. 232254, projected that, to ensure a viable agricultural industry, a minimum of 64,800 acres will be needed for agricultural use by 2030, decreasing to 56,300 acres by 2050, while recognizing the challenges of land loss and the need for sustainable agricultural practices; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture reported that the County had 78,543 acres of farmland, but that agricultural land has declined by 6.2 percent over the previous 20 years, with a 10 percent reduction over the previous 6 years, underscoring the urgency to protect and innovate within the County’s agricultural sector; and

WHEREAS, according to the Report on page MDC018, 93 percent of the County’s farms are under 50 acres, and 73 percent are under 10 acres, underscoring the importance of space-efficient innovations such as vertical farming to ensure the economic survival of small agricultural operations; and

WHEREAS, the loss of unique agricultural soils and farmland is irreversible and would have significant long-term impacts on the viability of the agricultural industry in the County, particularly given the County’s role as one of the few tropical farming areas in the United States; and

WHEREAS, to support the future viability of agriculture, the Report made various recommendations, including the recommendation on page MDC044 to “[c]onsider changes to the County Comprehensive Plan to allow high intensity, closed agricultural production systems such as vertical farming, on properties inside the urbanized area designated or zoned residential, commercial, or industrial, where compatible with surrounding residential or commercial development;” and

WHEREAS, according to the Report on page MDC0319, vertical farming “refers to artificial indoor environments where crops grow on top of each other, in vertically stacked layers,” and “applies a variety of techniques, namely aquaponics, hydroponics, and aeroponics, minimizing the use of soil;” and

WHEREAS, the Report provides that, “[c]onsequently, vertical farming allows conservation of space, resulting in higher crop yields per square foot of land used, while drastically reducing water consumption by capturing and reusing drainage,” and “[f]urthermore, vertical farms can be integrated within urban areas, bringing production closer to consumers for local distribution, reducing transportation distances by truck or plane and leading to lower CO2 emissions;” and

WHEREAS, according to the Report on page MDC022, water use for agricultural irrigation is projected to decline, aligning with vertical farming’s anticipated capacity to conserve water and reduce agricultural stress on the Biscayne Aquifer; and

WHEREAS, according to the Report on page MDC009, rising sea levels and saltwater intrusion may threaten large areas of traditional farmland, while vertical farming may offer a resilient, indoor alternative less susceptible to these environmental pressures; and

WHEREAS, according to the Report on page MDC008 and in the section beginning on page MDC162, over 70 stakeholders interviewed for the Report expressed frustration with overlapping regulations and a lack of County support for agriculture, with many citing the need for more flexible policies—such as those enabling vertical agriculture in urbanized zones; and

WHEREAS, page MDC172 of the Report provides that, “[t]hose involved in the vertical agricultural sector in the County, mostly concentrated in the urban areas of Miami-Dade County, reported that this sector has grown substantially in the last few years to meet growing demand, especially in Miami’s growing restaurant scene;” and

WHEREAS, these advances in agricultural technology—specifically vertical farming and other high-intensity closed agricultural production systems—may present opportunities to enhance agricultural productivity while preserving agricultural land, reducing the County’s carbon footprint, and supporting regional food security; and

WHEREAS, section 2-116.1(2)(c) of the Code provides that this Board may “at any time initiate a request to amend, modify, add to, or change the [CDMP]” and that, thereafter, the County Mayor or designee “shall process the application for review and action” in a cycle of the Board’s choosing; and

WHEREAS, as such, this Board wishes to direct the County Mayor or County Mayor’s designee to consider the recommendations in the Report and file an application to amend the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) to allow or encourage, as appropriate, greater allowances inside the urbanized area for high intensity, closed agricultural production systems such as vertical farming, provided that such uses are compatible with surrounding residential or commercial development,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that:

Section 1. The foregoing recitals are hereby approved and incorporated herein.

Section 2. This Board directs the County Mayor or County Mayor’s designee to consider the recommendations in the Report and file, at the next available opportunity, an application to amend the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) to provide for or encourage, as appropriate, greater allowances inside the urbanized area for high intensity, closed agricultural production systems such as vertical farming, provided that such uses are compatible with surrounding residential or commercial development.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Roberto J. Gonzalez. It was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman	
Kionne L. McGhee, Vice Chairman	
Marleine Bastien	Juan Carlos Bermudez
Sen. René García	Oliver G. Gilbert, III
Roberto J. Gonzalez	Keon Hardemon
Danielle Cohen Higgins	Vicki L. Lopez
Natalie Milian Orbis	Raquel A. Regalado
Micky Steinberg	

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 1st day of September, 2026. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.



Narinah P. Jean-Baptiste
Abbie Schwaderer-Raurell