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### Christina Crespi: Aids growth at Miami Downtown Development Authority



As downtown Miami's skyline has risen and its population has swelled over the past six years, Christina Crespi has helped guide that transformation from the center of it all.

As executive director of the Miami Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Ms. Crespi oversees the agency responsible for driving economic development downtown, helping shape the urban core's growth while balancing the needs of a rapidly expanding residential and business community. Since stepping into the role in 2020 at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, she has led the agency through a period of accelerated change that has redefined downtown as both a major financial hub and a dense, live-work-play district.

In the last six years, downtown has attracted major companies including Citadel and Microsoft, while adding new residential towers, retail and cultural destinations. The area's population has climbed past 100,000 residents across neighborhoods spanning Brickell, the Central Business District, Edgewater and the Arts and Entertainment District, accounting for more than half of Miami's overall population growth over the past decade.

Ms. Crespi's path was shaped by a career rooted in public service. A Miami Beach native, she began working in local government after earning her master's degree in social policy and administration from Florida State University.

Early roles in community services and Miami-Dade County's management structure gave her experience in budgeting, operations and large-scale coordination, including work in the county's emergency operations center during multiple hurricane seasons. In 2015, she joined the DDA in government relations, rising to deputy director before being appointed executive director.

During her tenure, the agency has advanced major initiatives aimed at connectivity, mobility and quality of life, from progress on the long-planned Baywalk and Riverwalk to new transit options and business

incentive programs. It has also played a role in shaping downtown's identity as the "Wall Street of the South," with a focus on attracting financial and technology firms while also supporting local businesses, arts programming and public space improvements.

Looking ahead, Ms. Crespi is focused on guiding downtown's continued evolution through long-term planning efforts, including a 2050 master plan for the central business district. With new developments set to further reshape the skyline, she sees an opportunity to build a more connected, resilient and vibrant urban core, one that reflects both the city's rapid growth and its long-standing character. Ms. Crespi spoke with Miami Today reporter Genevieve Bowen.