

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2025-1061

TITLE: Resolution for Facilities of the Future – Volume VII (Comfort Paths)

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SPONSORS:

WHEREAS, the University of Florida (UF) is committed to providing a safe and efficient transportation system for its students, faculty, and staff [1]; and,

WHEREAS, "comfort paths" (also known as desire paths or social trails) are naturally formed walkways created by repeated foot traffic where paved pathways do not align with pedestrian movement patterns; and,

WHEREAS, dirt paths at other universities such as Virginia Tech have been paved to provide “a minor facelift” to “carry thousands of students daily [as they] often become muddy, which leads to a significant amount of dirt being tracked into buildings” [2]; and,

WHEREAS, UF students, faculty, and staff frequently utilize these dirt paths as the most direct, efficient, and convenient routes between campus buildings, bus stops, and common gathering spaces; and,

WHEREAS, unpaved comfort paths become hazardous during rainy conditions, leading to muddy, slippery, and uneven terrain that increases the risk of falls and injuries; and,

WHEREAS, the continued use of unstructured dirt paths leads to environmental degradation, including soil erosion, damage to adjacent landscaping, and potentially increased maintenance costs for UF Facilities; and,

WHEREAS, formalizing these paths into paved walkways enhances ADA accessibility by providing a level and stable surface for individuals using wheelchairs, mobility aids, bicycles, and strollers; and,

WHEREAS, comfort paths provide a sustainable and pedestrian-friendly alternative by reducing foot traffic on grassy areas, preserving green spaces, and promoting efficient campus movement; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate supports the formalization and paving of heavily utilized comfort paths on campus to improve pedestrian accessibility, safety, and environmental sustainability.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate encourages UF Facilities Services, UF Administration, and Transportation & Parking Services (TAPS) to collaborate in identifying and prioritizing high-traffic comfort paths for paving.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate recommends the use of permeable pavement or environmentally friendly materials in the construction of paved comfort paths to align with UF's sustainability goals.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate requests the Administration to provide regular updates on the progress of this project, including timelines, design drafts, and implementation plans.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the UF Student Senate recognizes this initiative be recognized as part of the larger "Facilities of the Future" plan, aiming to modernize and improve the infrastructure and facilities of the University of Florida for the benefit of current and future students.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Senior Director of Transportation and Parking Services William MacDonald, Director of Planning Linda Dixon, and Assistant Vice President of Facilities Services Mark Helms.

1] <https://taps.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/TransportationStrategicPlan.pdf>

[2] <https://news.vt.edu/articles/2014/08/080514-vpa-drillfieldpaths.html>