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**WITH \$3 MILLION SEED GRANT FROM
WEST ORANGE HEALTHCARE DISTRICT, CITY OF OCOEE TO BUILD
“HEALTHY WEST ORANGE WELLNESS PARK”**

– Five-acre public park includes shared trail and shaded fitness stations –

OCOEE, Fla. (August 24, 2021) – Ocoee residents will soon have an all-new wellness destination to walk, run, bike and train.

The Ocoee Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and the City of Ocoee are partnering with the West Orange Healthcare District to transform two existing stormwater ponds along Bluford Avenue and Ocoee Commerce Parkway to create the Healthy West Orange Wellness Park.

The five-acre park will include a half-mile, 10-foot-wide multipurpose trail around both ponds and four shaded wellness stations, two of which will feature suspension-fitness equipment for strength training. A shaded pavilion will be constructed in the middle of the pond, connected to both sides of the trail by a boardwalk. Throughout the year, the park will host regular health and wellness programming, from 5k races to mind-body wellness events.

“We’re so pleased to be part of this transformative project and excited to see it get off the ground,” said Tracy Swanson, CEO of the West Orange Healthcare District, which awarded the CRA a \$3 million seed grant toward the park’s construction. “The Healthy West Orange Wellness Park will become a beautiful space for community connectivity and wellness, where Ocoee residents can get healthy and stay active. This is exactly the type of opportunity we look for in our grant program.”

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In addition to looping the new park, the shared pathway will continue north along South Bluford Avenue, connecting with the city's downtown trail at Ocoee Middle School and creating a safe route for students to walk and bike to school each day. The trail will continue its northward progression to Bill Breeze Park and Silver Star Road, creating a total 2.5-mile path. When complete, the all-in cost of the project is estimated to be \$9.75 million.

"We greatly appreciate the West Orange Healthcare District's generous grant," said Ocoee City Manager Robert Frank. "Working in partnership with the District on this project supports the city's goal of providing exceptional and accessible green spaces that allow our citizens to lead healthy and active lifestyles."

The Healthy West Orange Wellness Park in Ocoee is expected to break ground later this year and open sometime in the fall of next year. The shared pathway north of the park is currently being engineered and is estimated to begin construction in late 2022 and completed in early 2024.

The Healthy West Orange Wellness Park in Ocoee is part of the District's strategy to create branded wellness destinations throughout west Orange County. The District recently announced partnerships to create the Healthy West Orange Heritage and Cultural Center at Winter Garden and the Healthy West Orange Pavilion in Windermere. Last year, the Healthy West Orange Arts & Heritage Center opened in downtown Oakland.

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About the West Orange Healthcare District

The West Orange Healthcare District (WOHD) is an independent special healthcare district created in 1949 by the Florida Legislature and governed by a 16-member, volunteer board appointed by the Governor of Florida. Since 2012, the District has awarded more than \$188 million in local community grants to enhance residents' health and wellness. For more, visit www.wohd1949.org.

About the City of Ocoee

Ideally situated at the heart of all of Central Florida's major highways and expressways, Ocoee is home to a vibrant residential and business community making it an ideal place to live, raise a family and grow a business. With a population of nearly 50,000, Ocoee is the third largest city in Orange County known for its exceptional quality of life, boat launches, fishing docks, nature trails, picnic areas, sports facilities and playgrounds. Visit www.ocoee.org.