

# Construction set to begin on Blackhawk Park

Construction on the much-anticipated Blackhawk Park is set to begin this summer, following approval by the Fox Valley Park District Board of Commissioners for a \$640,900 bid to R.C. Wegman Construction Company of Aurora.

Located alongside Galena Boulevard between Blackhawk and View streets, the 2.8-acre site is where the original West Aurora High School stood since 1905. After the building was torn down in 2015, the City of Aurora deeded the land over to the Park District late last year in a land conveyance agreement.

Park District residents played a prominent role in planning the park. A public open house last winter allowed residents to view concept plans and offer feedback.

Naming of the park was orchestrated through social media, allowing the public to vote, with Blackhawk resulting as the overwhelming favorite.



The park's highlight design feature will be a centralized, circular "great lawn" area that encourages unstructured play. The northeast section of the park will feature innovative playground equipment, splash pad and a unique shelter reminiscent of the old West Aurora High School that occupied the site for over a century.

An interpretive plaza will offer educational opportunities and environmental awareness, marked by a flagpole at the entrance – the same flagpole location as it was for the high school. The plan also provides an area for public art displays.

"While the focus of park development is on children's play, Blackhawk Park will be appealing to adults as well," said Jeff Palmquist, senior director of planning, research and grants.

Extensive landscaping – including a rain garden adjacent to the splash pad – will buffer the park from nearby traffic and provide natural beauty.

Completion of the park is expected in the fall of 2017.

**PHOTO CAPTION:** Site of the original West Aurora High School where the new Blackhawk Park will be constructed this summer.