

## OCCUM PARK

NORWICH, CONNECTICUT



### Property Details

<b>Property Address:</b>	Taftville-Occum Road, Norwich, CT 06360
<b>Property Size:</b>	5 acres
<b>Former Uses:</b>	Textile mill
<b>Contaminants Found:</b>	Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), petroleum hydrocarbons, polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), asbestos and metals
<b>Current Use:</b>	Public park with a multi-use field, walking track, basketball court, picnic tables, playground, and river access for small boats and canoes
<b>Current Owner:</b>	City of Norwich

### Project Partners

EPA, City of Norwich, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Norwich Community Development Corporation, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), GEI Consultants, Inc.

**Drivers for Redevelopment:** Recreational park space in this area of Norwich was too limited to meet the needs of the local community. In an effort to address this problem, neighborhood and city residents designed Occum Park for passive and active outdoor recreation. Additionally, it was believed that a family-friendly park in this section of town would spur additional investment and community improvements.

**Property History:** Located on the Shetucket River within the Quinebaug Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, this five-acre property was utilized by the City Textile Corporation for a textile finishing business from 1967 to 1986. A fire destroyed the mill complex in 1986 leaving only the foundation and a concrete building, and subsequently the site was abandoned for 13 years. Because contamination was suspected, EPA committed \$84,903 through its Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) Program to assess environmental conditions at the site. The assessments revealed polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), petroleum hydrocarbons, polyaromatic hydrocarbons and metals, all of which have serious health risks.

**Project Results:** In 2001, the City of Norwich took ownership of the site and granted a use variance to develop Occum Park in a former industrial zone. Cleanup began in 2002 and involved removal and offsite disposal of 400 tons of solid waste, including wood, metal, cloth and other waste from the fire, as well as approximately 150 tons of PCB-contaminated soil. More than

### Funding Details

<b>EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment Funding</b>	\$84,903
<b>Connecticut DECD</b>	\$1,500,000
<b>City of Norwich</b>	\$300,000
<b>Connecticut DEP</b>	\$900,000

### Project Highlights

- Removed 400 tons of solid waste, including wood, metal, cloth, and other waste
- Disposed of approximately 150 tons of PCB-contaminated soil offsite
- Capped more than 10,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil

10,000 cubic yards of remaining contaminated soil were capped under a thick plastic geomembrane, with an additional two feet of clean sand and topsoil placed atop that. The cap's integrity is annually monitored by the city. The Connecticut DECD provided \$1.5 million for the Occum Park Neighborhood Redevelopment Project; additional funds were provided by Connecticut DEP and the City of Norwich, and administered by the Norwich Community Development Corporation. Completed in June 2005, the new riverfront park offers a large, multi-use field in the center of a walking track; a basketball court; picnic tables; and a playground. The design also includes bench seating convenient to the riverfront and river access for small boats and canoes. This project has already served as a catalyst for redevelopment activities in the Village of Occum.

### Project Timeline

<b>1967-1986</b>	Textile business in operation
<b>1986</b>	Fire destroys mill complex
<b>1997</b>	CT DEP begins testing for contaminants onsite
<b>1998</b>	CT Governor announces \$1.5 million to fund park redevelopment
<b>1999</b>	EPA commits \$75,000 in Targeted Brownfields Assessment funds
<b>2001</b>	City acquires the property
<b>2002-2004</b>	Cleanup activities conducted
<b>2004</b>	Construction begins
<b>June 2005</b>	Occum Park is completed and opened to the public