

# DEVELOP

## Transforming Shorelines in Time for an Ocean Race

The round-the-world Volvo Ocean Race, the world's biggest sailing event for professional race crews, lasts nine months and touches nearly a dozen port cities on five continents in both hemispheres. The 2008–2009 race, which began on October 4, will span more than 37,000 nautical miles and traverse the world by touching 11 port cities—Alicante, Spain; Cape Town, South Africa; Kochi, India; Singapore; Qingdao, China; Rio de Janeiro; Boston, Massachusetts; Galway, Ireland; Goteborg and Stockholm, Sweden; and St. Petersburg, Russia.

While the boats and accompanying crews spend little time at each port, the preparation by each city

begins years in advance. For example, Boston's Fan Pier, which has been a high-profile waterfront development site for years, will be the sole North American stopover. Another Volvo Ocean Race port-of-call, Kochi, redeveloped an industrial area for the event. Qingdao will repurpose its Olympic Games sailing venue to accommodate the boats.

The centerpiece of a Volvo Ocean Race port is a race village, which acts as a centralized collection of entertainment space, sponsorship displays, and office space for race participants and officials. Docking areas, the biggest public draw, are fully and easily accessible to pedestrians. The boat maintenance areas, while visually accessible to the public, are separated from the docks, with no physical public access.

The race village also acts as a venue for corporate sponsors, a place where companies like Puma,

the world's third-largest sports brand, invest millions of dollars to promote their brand. Puma City, the result of the company's \$20 million investment in the sailing team and hospitality center, is a traveling temporary redevelopment that is comprised of 27 reused shipping containers, originally made in China, that house Puma sales, hospitality, bar/entertainment, and corporate office space. Fully transportable, Puma City is scheduled to appear at the ports of Alicante, Qingdao, Boston, and Stockholm.

Much like the case with the Olympic Games, selection of a host city involves an intense competitive process followed worldwide by hopeful port cities. Also like the Olympics, a visit to a nation's port by the Volvo Ocean Race ensures a large influx of visitors—and their dollars—increased international exposure to both spectators and corporate sponsors, and investment in infrastructure and development. While considerably less extensive than the effects of the Olympics on a city, a Volvo Ocean Race provides the opportunity for a city to make considerable improvements to its waterfront.

The host port of Qingdao, for example, was a natural choice as one of the stopover points. The Chinese, as the hosts of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, have repurposed the Olympic sailing venue in Qingdao in preparation for the boats of the Volvo Ocean Race. Olympic hosts are chosen in part for their ability to reap a lasting legacy from the event; finding alternatives for venues to prolong their useful life and justify the initial investments is a goal. To help bring this

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about in Qingdao, a public/private partnership—perhaps somewhat of a misnomer in communist China—between the China Yachting Association and the China Water Sports Administration Center picked up on the Olympic momentum to further the city’s effort to become China’s “City of Sailing.”

In Kochi, the Volvo Ocean Race will be jointly hosted by the Cochin Port Trust and the state of Kerala’s tourism department—also constituting a unique partnership. The Kochi visit is viewed by local authorities as offering a boost to economic development for the city and the state of Kerala.

The venue is located on Willingdon Island, a manmade island created before World War II by the deposit of sediment from dredging to deepen the port’s waterway. Although currently an active port, local authorities saw an opportunity to change the land use of a portion of the port to diversify the economy and attract additional visitors. Known already as a regional destination for megayachts, the new



THE FALLON COMPANY

use is expected to attract an international audience of megayachts and cruise ships on their way to increasingly popular Indian Ocean destinations such as the Maldives. While such development is usually reserved for underused land, Kochi’s model of transforming existing uses offers a model of the coexistence of commonly segregated uses—industry and tourism/entertainment.

In Boston, the race venue will be Fan Pier, a six-acre (2.4-ha), 96-slip deep-water marina that can accom-

modate megayachts and deep-keeled sailboats, much like the boats in the Volvo Ocean Race. The marina, developed by the Boston-based Fallon Company, is part of a much larger luxury development that includes 21 acres (8.5 ha) and 3 million square feet (279,000 sq m) of mixed-use development, including office, residential, hotel, retail, cultural, and open space. The Volvo Ocean Race is viewed by the developer—and by city officials—as a way of celebrating the city’s waterfront and bringing international attention to both the site and Boston overall.

Although sailing as a spectator event is not the same draw as other large sporting events, it nonetheless is capable of attracting worldwide exposure and interest in host cities. In particular, playing host to the Volvo Ocean Race is seen as a landmark event for any city’s waterfront.

**The Volvo Ocean Race village in Alicante, Spain, was the launch for the ocean sailing marathon on October 4.**

**Fan Pier in Boston will be the only North American port stopover for the world’s premier global race for professional racing crews.**

A comprehensive approach to the technical requirements of holding such an event potentially can make the sailing race a large-scale component of a lasting public legacy for recreation, infrastructure, and economic development in host cities.

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## The Tide Turns for Beacon’s Waterfront

On a Sunday in early August, 200 residents of Beacon, New York, and the surrounding Hudson Valley gathered at the riverfront, just on the other side of the former industrial city’s Metro-North commuter train station. The morning’s throng—there to watch an equal number of swimmers participating in the fifth annual Great Newburgh to Beacon Hudson River Swim—overwhelmed the weekly farmers market pitched between the station and the public dock.

The summer event is organized every year by the nonprofit organization River Pool at Beacon to raise money for its namesake, a swimming pool that will *float* in the Hudson River. A prototype was moored off the north side of the city’s riverfront park this summer: Conceived by New York City-based architect Meta Brunzema, it was



RICK TOMLINSON/VOLVO OCEAN RACE