

INDYCAR: Progress continues on Boston layout

Marshall Pruett
 Images courtesy of Tony Cotman

Boston street race course designer Tony Cotman has 319 days left to go before the Verizon IndyCar Series takes to his 10-turn circuit in anger. The New Zealander's NZR Consulting firm has been on-site and working through the layout since the event was announced last summer, and according to the longtime Indy car crew member and official, the 2.5-mile venue is close to being finalized.

Boston course "Despite what anybody else has said or written, operationally, we're moving forward just fine," Cotman told RACER. "It's a very complex city with many agencies to go through, which is absolutely normal and nothing unexpected. Approximately 25



Looking toward Turn 2 (yellow truck near center of image).

percent of the IndyCar schedule each year is on street courses, so working with city agencies to make them happen is the norm. And for a first-time event here, doing a street race in

on Labor Day weekend, and his team is presently focused on ingress and egress plans.



Boston involves learning the various processes and systems.

"A large crowd is expected and the last thing you want is people not being able to move around freely," he said. "It's down in the Seaport area, next to the harbor, and only a quarter-mile from downtown. The difficulty here is the footprint is quite large, and the track's only 2.5 miles long. To get from one side of the track to the other is quite simple, but with all of the businesses in between, there's a lot to consider on how to make that movement as simple as possible.

"From my end, it's been really positive, and the area we've chosen is spectacular. The track layout is pretty much finished. Now it's just a matter of working out the details on grandstand locations and how people are going to get around."

"So we're looking at how people would come in through mass transit, where they're likely to come in, and then to add bridges and flow points on where they can come in and out with ease and get around at will. We're looking at all those options."

Situated in the Boston Seaport district, Cotman believes the course's location will draw plenty of interested onlookers and race fans

Cotman expects the final Boston circuit layout to give IndyCar drivers a challenge with technical corners and a few chances to reach impressive top speeds on city streets. IndyCar fans will also see cars disappear into a tunnel (ABOVE) for the first time since the Las Vegas street course in 2007.



"I think the average speed for a lap will be around 115mph, and the top speed will be close to 170mph," Cotman revealed. "The minimum corner speed will be about 35mph, and it's not that the cars will be faster here than they are at Long Beach or Toronto, but I think the experience here will be very different.

"It's not a flat track like most are; it does go under a hotel, and when you have to work around businesses, hotels, residences, and in this case, public transportation, there's a bus route that pops up right in the middle of the track. It winds around and has a lot of character. Does it have a bunch of 90-degree corners like you'd normally find on a street course? No, not like you'd normally see. I think it will be really unique."

Boston's layout for pit lane could also become a trademark of the event. It's rumored NZR Consulting is looking to create dual pit lanes where half the field stops for service on one side, and the other pits directly across, leading to both sides launching away in a side-by-side dual to return to the track. Overhead viewing has also been suggested as a possibility where fans and corporate guests can watch the pit lane action from above.

"At this stage we can only say pit lane will be unique," a guarded Cotman said. "It will not have been seen at any other event. Due to the require-

ment of where it needs to go, something new and exciting has been required. You'll see different types of suites and grandstands, and structures that have not been seen before – that are new

and innovative – and provide a new viewing experience. Whether it's general admission, or corporate seating, it's about the experience."

Cotman says the Boston venue has been created with simplicity in mind for the IndyCar teams and support series that comprise the three-day event on Sept. 2-4.

"The paddock area is inside the convention area, and for the teams, there's no need to get rental cars," he noted.

"There's a bus service that drops you right from the airport every five minutes. There are tons of hotels right here that have agreements with the track so you can stay here and walk right into the track each morning.

Planning and building the inaugural Boston Grand Prix circuit is the central focus for NZR Consulting, but with ongoing development on the waterfront, Cotman is also working

with the city to understand how future construction may impact or influence the course design.

"Additionally, over the next five years, there are a lot of projects starting in this area – hotels going up and things like that – so we're trying to figure out how that will influence things far in advance," he said. "You have to be flexible to changes as they come, so the further we can look down the road and know what's coming, the better we can adjust to the city's needs. So we're working on 2016 and also keeping an eye on the races that follow each year after."

Having authored more than a few street course layouts, Cotman is bullish about the prospects for the Boston circuit and thinks it could rival Long Beach for attendance.



Straight between Turns 2-3.

"At the end of the day, I think it will be a fantastic event and we're in a brilliant area on the East Coast," he said. "I truly believe Boston has the potential to be the biggest street race IndyCar puts on all year."