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Buzz building for Tour des Canadiens condo project

BY **BRENDA BRANSWELL, THE GAZETTE** OCTOBER 23, 2012

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Guy Lafleur, Montreal Canadiens hockey legend, views a 3 dimensional interactive display during a press conference to announce the details of the planned Tour des Canadiens condo tower, pictured in Montreal on Tuesday, October 23, 2012.

Photograph by: Allen McInnis, The Gazette

MONTREAL - The sales office hasn't opened yet, but thousands of people [have already signed up online](#) to learn more about the Tour des Canadiens condo project.

The 48-storey tower with 520 condo units will be built adjacent to the Bell Centre.

"We've built thousands of condominiums in Toronto, which was a very, very hot market. And we have never seen the number of registrations that we have here anywhere across the country," said Daniel Peritz, senior vice-president at Canderel, a developer involved in the project.

"It's really quite astounding."

The partners in the project, which include Cadillac Fairview Corporation Ltd. and the Canadiens, unveiled more details on Tuesday about the building's design features. They also announced Bell Centre perks for future owners like one two-hour skating session for two people every year and the chance to buy pre-sale tickets for concerts and events.

The people who registered online identified a price point at which they'd like to buy, Peritz said. They're being invited in groups to visit the sales office and model unit to decide if they want to buy.

The office opens next month and Peritz said they feel "quite confident"

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that construction could start as early as next spring. The completion date would be about 30 months after construction starts, he said.

The condos start at \$250,000 and go up to \$1.7 million, but the majority of units are under \$500,000, Peritz said. The small, sleek model unit unveiled Tuesday is 653 square feet, which would start at about \$350,000.

The units set aside to date for Canadiens season ticket-holders, have all found takers, Peritz said. The project consortium also includes the Quebec Federation of Labour's Fonds immobilier de solidarité.

The tower will be built where Centennial Plaza is presently located near the corner of de la Montagne and Avenue des Canadiens de Montréal, which means the plaza with its four statues and 12,000 bricks purchased by fans needs a new home.

The Canadiens hope to announce a new, permanent site for the plaza soon. It will be adjacent to the Bell Centre, Kevin Gilmore, the club's chief operating officer said. The statues and bricks will be removed when construction starts put in storage until the work is finished.

The emotional reaction to the impending plaza move — first announced in July — was understandable, Gilmore said.

"We made it clear back then that we would do everything to make sure that this is replicated and respected and that we honour the commitment that the brick-holders have made."

Former Habs great Guy Lafleur spoke briefly at the event and was inevitably quizzed by reporters afterward about the NHL lockout.

"What's amazed me is you have maybe 75 to 100 players that are making maybe over \$2.5-\$3 million a year," Lafleur said.

The rest, perhaps 450 players, earn salaries between \$1 million and \$2.5 or \$3 million, he added.

"And these guys they don't say a word," Lafleur said.

"They have confidence that they're going to solve the problems. But a lot of guys that are (among) the 450 players that are playing maybe their last year or they have two years left and that's going to hurt them a lot if they don't finalize (a deal).

"These guys they should stand up and talk about their future because they might lose a lot on money in the two years they're going to miss."

Lafleur said he believes that the season will start in January.

"But if they don't solve the problems in November/December, I don't know if they're going to have a season," the Hall of Famer said.

"And I don't think the NHL can afford not to have a season or any owners in the league."

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