



# BRING THE WORLD TO OTTAWA



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Grassroots support plans to bring Major League Soccer and world-class stadium to Ottawa Melnyk prepares to deliver official bid to MLS selection committee**

**OTTAWA** – In the four weeks since Eugene Melnyk, owner of the National Hockey League’s Ottawa Senators and Senators Sports & Entertainment, launched his plan to bring a Major League Soccer (MLS) team to Ottawa and pursue the construction of a world-class, soccer-first stadium, support has been received from the grassroots soccer community, soccer associations, general public and market surveys. Today, Melnyk and Senators Sports & Entertainment will formally submit their bid to MLS for an expansion franchise for Ottawa for the 2011 MLS season.

“When we officially launched our bid on Sept. 16, I believed it was imperative that to bring an MLS team to Ottawa and build a stadium of this scope and calibre required, among other things, broad community support,” said Melnyk. “I know we have a strong operational management team and a solid business plan, and now we know the community is behind us.”

To help educate and rally the city to support his vision, Melnyk launched a *Bring the World to Ottawa* campaign as a way of calling upon the Ottawa-Gatineau communities for their collective support in helping make the stadium and MLS team a reality. Details on the campaign are available at [www.BringtheWorldtoOttawa.ca](http://www.BringtheWorldtoOttawa.ca).

“We’ve had 7,000 supporters alone register on our website,” added Melnyk. “Thirty one soccer clubs from the heart of our region have come on board, including Ottawa South United, one of the largest clubs in Canada. In addition, the Ontario Soccer Association and the Eastern Ontario Soccer Association, the governing bodies for soccer in Ottawa and the province, are giving us a vote of confidence.”

A survey conducted for Senators Sports & Entertainment indicated that one in seven adults in Ottawa were likely to buy season tickets, almost one-half would become a fan or supporter and one-half are likely to buy individual game tickets.

Participation registration for soccer has also proved shown it as the dominant sport in Canada with 44 per cent of children playing soccer, up from 32 per cent in 1998. Hockey is the second-best in terms of registration at 26 per cent. Ottawa’s participation rate alone has increased 34 per cent since 1999.

“We have also been in discussions with City of Ottawa officials in how we can assist in their process of reviewing how to rebuild their stadium infrastructure,” added Melnyk. “We believe soccer needs to be part of the long-term viability and solution to support a vibrant stadium.”

In July of this year, Ottawa was short-listed by MLS as one of nine North American cities that would be considered for two expansion teams to enter the league in 2011.