

POSTEDTORONTO.COM

Dionne Brand will serve as city's poet laureate for next three years

Dionne Brand, a renowned Toronto-based poet and novelist, has become the city's third poet laureate. City council formally approved Ms. Brand's appointment yesterday, with Mayor David Miller saying he was "thrilled" to see the prolific and distinguished author serving in the role. As poet laureate for the next three years, Ms. Brand, pictured, will receive an annual honorarium of \$10,000 while she serves as the city's literary



ambassador, championing poetry and the arts. Ms. Brand said it was an honour to be chosen. "I have a great passion for this city," she said. "In its multiplicity it is constantly rich and surprising ... that wild waiting at traffic lights off the end of the world, where nothing is simple, nothing. In the city there is no simple love or simple fidelity; the heart is slippery." *Megan O'Toole, National Post*



DANNY ROTH, BRANDON COMMUNICATIONS INC.

An artist's rendering of the World on Yonge development, which will feature landscaped roofs for use by residents.

Thornhill project will dominate Yonge St.

Development spurred by subway expansion

BY MEGAN O'TOOLE

A massive development that will transform a key stretch of Yonge Street in Thornhill has generated a flurry of buyer interest, as subway expansion and other transit improvements better connect the 905 to the downtown core.

Stretching along Yonge's east side between Steeles and Clark avenues — both proposed stops for a northbound extension of the Yonge subway line — the 10-acre site also benefits from expansions to the VIVA bus system.

The World on Yonge project, slated for completion in 2013, will consist of four residential high-rise towers, an office complex with hotel facilities, a retail centre, a park and landscaped courtyard. At 20 storeys, the office building will be the tallest in York Region, the developer says.

Some residential buyers camped out overnight in their cars to ensure a prime spot when the sales office opened this week.

"The response has been honestly overwhelming," Marco Filice, vice-president of Liberty Development, said yesterday, noting the project was designed to capitalize on the increased transit service in the region. Most units have only one underground parking spot, while some of the bachelor units lack parking entirely.

"By virtue of creating these developments ... people's behaviours naturally over time will have to accommodate either carpooling or regulating use of the automobile or using transit," Mr. Filice said.

The residential units at World on Yonge range from \$189,000 to \$660,000.

The Thornhill project may be just the first in a wave of new developments taking advantage of the transit extensions along Yonge.

Jason Mercer, an analyst with the Toronto Real Estate Board, said transportation alternatives play a key role in how much people are willing to pay for real estate — and the price rises in line with ease of access.

"If you look at any high-density development that's going up today, if they're in close proximity to some mode of public transit, whether on the ground or forthcoming, generally that's used as a selling feature," Mr. Mercer said.

A recent VIVA study suggested a rapid bus system in York Region could increase property values by 5% or more.

The World on Yonge was also designed with the recent trend toward "green" living in mind. A landscaped green roof, where residents can relax or grill some lunch on a barbecue, covers the retail complex, delivering an aesthetic boost and reduction of the "heat island" effect, Mr. Filice said.

It is a far cry from the site's current incarnation as a traditional retail plaza, he noted, "with hundreds of parking spots with tired asphalt and a plaza that has a roof with the traditional old pebble stone."

The new plan has a two-to-one ratio of residential to commercial space, with about one million square feet slated for the approximately 1,250 condo units and another half-million square feet for non-residential buildings.

National Post
motoole@nationalpost.com

City council behaviour unacceptable, Tory says

RADIO

Continued from Page A1

Mr. Tory, who is mulling a run for mayor of Toronto in 2010, said he accepts the apology, but finds the incident symptomatic of a "toxic environment" of personal attacks at City Hall.

"When you look at city council ... the standard of behaviour would not meet that required at any dinner table, would not meet that required in any classroom," Mr. Tory said yesterday.

CALL TRANSCRIPT

Transcript of "Sandra's" call last Friday to CFRB 1010's Strong Opinions, hosted by John Tory and Tarek Fatah:

John Tory Let's keep going. Sandra you're on the air of Newstalk 1010.

Sandra Ya, your co-host there is really messed up on statistics. And in terms of the sick benefit, it had been on the books for years and it isn't something that [was] going to go away, it's something that's still there. And what the Mayor did during negotiations is, for the first time tackled that with two of the unions and said it couldn't go on and actually got a really good deal for the city...

Tarek Fatah Sandra... **Sandra** The union was asking for 12%, plus more benefits... **Tarek Fatah** Sandra, do you work for the city?

Sandra ...but what they got was 5% and they got less benefits. And I bet, John, if you run for office, you

wouldn't be able to do what he accomplished. **Tarek Fatah** Sandra, do you work for the city? **Sandra** I don't work for the city, but I'm telling you the truth and you've had a lot of air time putting out the most ridiculous comments about a man who's probably the most brilliant politician municipally anywhere in the country, who leads all the other mayors across Canada and he's chosen by those mayors to speak on their behalf.

John Tory All right, well look, we just... OK. **Sandra** And good luck to you John because you're a three-time loser and I don't think you'll be successful unless people [incomprehensible]. **John Tory** Ya sure, go right ahead. Sure, sure. My résumé's fine and I'm happy with my life. Sandra? Goodbye Sandra.

ician municipally anywhere in the country."

Mr. Miller had announced earlier that day he would not seek a third term.

Identifying herself only as "Sandra," the caller then turned on Mr. Tory.

"Good luck to you John because you're a three-time loser," the caller said, alluding to Mr. Tory's string of political defeats when he ran against Mr. Miller in 2003, for premier of Ontario and in a byelection this year.

At least three times during the call, "Sandra" was asked if she worked for the city. She said she did not, fuelling days of speculation.

Some councillors found it laughable Ms. Bussin would try to remain anonymous.

"I've been tortured by that voice for 10 years, so I can recognize it," said Councillor Rob Ford (Etobicoke North), who is frequently reprimanded by Ms. Bussin in her role as Council Speaker. "I don't like how people are sneaky."

Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong (Don Valley East) wrote a letter asking the integrity commissioner to investigate Ms. Bussin's comportment.

"I believe that when city councillors make public statements, they should have the integrity to stand behind them," Mr. Minnan-Wong said. "In my opinion, her conduct reflects badly on her, and more importantly on city councillors as a whole."

Ms. Bussin went on air again yesterday to out herself as the mystery caller, saying Friday's announcement by the Mayor was "emotional" for her. She said she should have revealed her identity, but maintained she does not "technically" work for the city.

Later she explained she was so enraged by criticism of Mr. Miller, she picked up her cellphone while "in transit" and sounded off.

As for the below-the-belt insult, Ms. Bussin said: "That's true, is it not?... They were cutting me off and I felt I wasn't getting the time."

Mr. Tory said the irony was that if Ms. Bussin had simply identified herself, she would have been given all the air-time she wanted.

Ms. Bussin said yesterday she wants her own show.

"There was a suggestion I might not be as well known as John Tory, but obviously a lot of people knew who I was," she quipped.

National Post

Ban on drivers' cellphone use starts Oct. 26

HAND-HELD DEVICES

Three-month grace period before fines imposed

BY MATTHEW COUTTS

A new law making it illegal to use hand-held electronic devices while driving in Ontario will take effect in late October, with a grace period to allow drivers time to adjust extending to February, the province said yesterday.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation announced that a ban on talking, texting, dialing and emailing on hand-held cellphones would be enforced starting on Oct. 26. Also banned will be the use of communication and entertainment devices, such as iPods and GPS systems that are not firmly attached to the car dashboard.

"It's about keeping our roads safe and limited distractions that can be dangerous for the driver," said Nicole Lipa-Gasparro, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Transportation.

Ministry officials said traffic officers will comply with a three-month education period, meaning those are stopped on Ontario streets and highways will receive leniency until Feb. 1.

Fines of up to \$500 will be issued to drivers caught using a prohibited hand-held device after that. Those convicted of the offence will not be issued demerit points.

Ontario is the fourth region in Canada to issue a complete ban on phones while driving. Newfoundland and Labrador banned talking on hand-held phones in 2002. Quebec and Nova Scotia did so last year. Manitoba and Saskatchewan are considering similar legis-

lation.

Data released yesterday shows 5,800 people were killed and 515,000 others injured in car crashes caused by distracted driving in the United States last year. Canadian numbers were not available.

The Ontario law was passed in April, but was not enacted to give time to finalize some exemptions to the rule.

Police, paramedics and firefighters will continue to be allowed to use hand-held devices while performing their duties under the new regulations; all drivers will still be allowed to use phones to call 911.

When underlining the importance of a ban, the Ontario government pointed to studies showing a driver using a cellphone is four

It's about keeping our roads safe

times more likely to be in a crash than a driver focused on the road.

Evelyn Vingilis, an auto safety expert and professor at the University of Western Ontario's department of family medicine, said extensive research had been done on the subject, including one this year by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.

"The results do show ... that cellphone use does seem to affect driving behaviour and has been linked substantively with an increased risk of motor vehicle crash," Dr. Vingilis said.

The Transport Ministry also said yesterday that two-way radios used by those in the transport industry, including taxis and school buses, will be phased out within three years.

National Post



Councillor Sandra Bussin