

**To:** York Region Rapid Transit Corporation Board of Directors  
**From:** Mary-Frances Turner, President  
**Subject:** Rapidway Construction Communication Plan - 2012  
**Ref:** YORK-#4047878

### Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Board endorse the Rapidway Construction Communication Plan for 2012.

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an overview of the communication strategies, objectives and tactics related to the construction activity of the vivaNext rapidways in 2012 (see Attachment 1) and seek their endorsement.

### Background

***The rapidway segments are in different stages of preliminary engineering, property acquisition and construction in 2012***

- Yonge Street: Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie (Y2.1)
  - Acquiring property/easements
  - Award design-build contract
  - Relocate utilities
  - Conduct geotechnical testing
  - Remove/transplant trees

- Yonge Street: Major Mackenzie to 19th Avenue (Y2.2)
  - Acquiring property/easements
  - Design work continues
- Yonge Street: Mulock Drive to Davis Drive (Y3.2)
  - Acquiring property/easements
  - Design work continues
- Highway 7: Helen Street to Yonge Street (H2)
  - Acquiring property/easements
  - Design work continues
- Highway 7: Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (H2.VMC)
  - Acquiring property/easements
  - Award design-build contract
  - Relocate utilities
  - Conduct geotechnical testing
  - Remove/transplant trees
- Highway 7: Yonge Street to Warden Avenue (H3)
  - Building vivastations in median
  - Installing irrigation system (Markham)
  - Constructing Bayview towers
  - Widening roadway
  - Relocating utilities
  - Building retaining walls
- Davis Drive: Yonge Street to Roxborough Drive (D1)
  - Widening Keith Bridge (north side)
  - Relocating utilities and business signs
  - Constructing boulevard (south side)
  - Removing/transplanting trees
  - Building retaining walls

## Analysis

***Strategies have been formulated in response to the information needs of various stakeholders and general public perceptions regarding the construction activity***

- Provide frequent, timely, practical and accurate information about the construction activity and related impacts to all groups who will be affected.
- Develop proactive and personal communication approaches which will help the community and drivers cope with construction and its impacts.

- Strengthen relations with businesses and tenants, and quickly respond to their needs and concerns.
- Mitigate complaints and disruptions to people's routines and manage public's expectations.

***Communications will be responsive to changing public perceptions as each rapidway segment is built over a few years***

- Construction of each segment will take approximately three years.
- Communications will recognize and be responsive to where the public's perceptions are during these various project stages. For example:

|                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Green -Year 1</b>                                                  |
| ➤ heavy work and disruptions cause initial surprise                   |
| ➤ unsure what is being done, for how long and why                     |
| <b>Orange -Year 2</b>                                                 |
| ➤ more interested and scrutinizing activities                         |
| ➤ travel patterns change                                              |
| ➤ questioning progress                                                |
| ➤ hoping it ends soon                                                 |
| ➤ disruptions cause anxiety                                           |
| <b>Pink -Year 3</b>                                                   |
| ➤ construction fatigue leads to information gaps                      |
| ➤ when will it end                                                    |
| ➤ business owners less concerned                                      |
| ➤ questioning why it's taking so long                                 |
| <b>Blue -Commissioning</b>                                            |
| ➤ relief the segment is finished                                      |
| ➤ questioning why it's not operational yet                            |
| ➤ believes it looks great and welcomes the change                     |
| ➤ hopeful that rapid transit network is expanded to new key corridors |

***Goals have been set to measure the reach and effectiveness of the communication activities***

- This communication plan will be considered a success if:
  - Property expropriation program completed with minimal escalation
  - Public welcomed opening of the first stretch of rapidway
  - Reputation for on-time, on-budget project delivery was strengthened
  - Positive feedback received about the business support program
  - Localized concerns were addressed and not infiltrated into larger community
  - Online engagement increased 12% and mobile applications utilized
  - Subscribers to e-updates increased by 10,000
  - Awareness of vivaNext projects increased by 10%
  - Understanding of vivaNext benefits increased by 5%
  - Support for vivaNext projects increased by 4%

***Several tactics will be deployed to achieve the communication objectives and goals, including:***

- Construction materials for public distribution
  - Project newsletters, bulletins, brochures, fact sheets, illustrations
- Signage
  - Roadside, open for business, wayfinding, project funding
- Website and Social Media
  - Website redesign, online tools, mobile apps, open conversations
- Advertising
  - Newspapers, radio, directories, transit
- Community Engagement
  - Community events, open house events, on-site contacting
- Business Support
  - Business Support Program, Chamber & Board of Trade events

***Communication plans are implemented in consultation with Metrolinx under established protocols and procedures***

- Schedule G, entitled, *Communications Protocol* to the Master Agreement, contemplates a Joint Communications Working Group and defines roles and responsibilities of each of the parties.

- Project and communication activities are actively communicated through the Joint Communications Working Group, with updates provided to the Board through the quarterly reports.

## Financial Implications

- As per the Capital Cost Eligibility Criteria schedule to the Master Agreement with Metrolinx, communications related to rapidway construction is eligible for recovery within the \$1.7 billion funding envelope.

## Conclusion

- Comprehensive communication activities will be deployed and managed to help mitigate disruptions, anticipate and alleviate the inconvenience of construction on people's daily lives, and strengthen relations with impacted businesses, tenants and other stakeholders.

For more information on this report, please contact, Dale Albers, Chief Communications Officer, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation at 905-886-6767, Ext. 1020.

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Mary-Frances Turner  
President

February 16, 2012

Attachments (1)

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## *Rapidway Construction Communications Plan*

### *~ 2012 ~*

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#### INTRODUCTION

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To support the rapidway projects in Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham and Newmarket, this communication plan sets the overall strategy and objectives from which tactics will be deployed and measured in each community. It acknowledges that each segment is in a different stage of construction and each community may have localized concerns.

The main focus of this communication plan is to mitigate disruptions, anticipate and alleviate the inconvenience of construction on people's daily lives, and provide meaningful and beneficial communications to the public.

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#### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

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YRRTC's mission is to design and deliver an exceptional rapid transit system attracting, moving and connecting people to York Region's urban centres and destinations.

Our mission supports our vision where:

- People can move quickly, conveniently and reliably without a vehicle;
- Public transit is used extensively because it is attractive, easy to use, efficient and economical;
- People live, work, shop and play in close proximity to public transit;
- Employers locate in York Region because of its robust transit options for employees; and
- Development and public transit are planned together to shape communities, support a sustainable future and promote energy conservation.

VivaNext is the rapid transit plan that stands for transformation, modernization, city building and shaping communities through the investment in transit infrastructure. That means construction! VivaNext has an end; elements that live on or are permanent fixtures belong to the Viva brand.

Construction communication will continue to reflect the Viva brand, but use new positioning and messaging. Message emphasis will shift according to the different construction phases and changing public perceptions that typically occur during a construction project. The communication activities will target different audiences through multiple, personal and repeated tactics while including public engagement and quickly addressing complaints and concerns.

Construction communications will be:

- direct, simple and clear; specific to what is real on the ground;
- targeted to specific audiences with sensitivity towards their perception stage;
- respectful and acknowledge the impacts of construction; and
- using images that are mainly construction specific and balanced with some lifestyle (80% / 20%).

## POSITIONING

Messages need to be provided within an overall framework of mitigating disruption with a commitment to keeping stakeholders informed.

- Tell what's happening, when, where, why and for how long.
- Demonstrate competence in mitigating the disruption and keeping people informed.
- Elicit feedback from the public, businesses, commuters and other stakeholders.
- Show sensitivity related to the impacts being caused.

Corridor specifics that will shape positioning and messaging, based on our current understanding, are:

| H3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | H2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | H2-VMC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | D1/Y2.3                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Y2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Urbanizing</li> <li>- Mix-use; policies in place</li> <li>- Buy-in high on live/ work/ play concept with amenities catching up</li> </ul>                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industrial/ suburban</li> <li>- Commercial strip malls</li> <li>- Two 400-series highways</li> <li>- Long-time homeowners</li> <li>- Busiest road; noise and congestion</li> <li>- High usage by commercial vehicles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subway driven</li> <li>- Industrial/ suburban</li> <li>- Commercial strip malls</li> <li>- One of the Region's busiest intersections</li> <li>- Busiest road; noise and congestion</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suburban; single families</li> <li>- Local small businesses</li> <li>- Geographical impacts in a tight area</li> <li>- Regional hospital expanding</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key n/s corridor with heritage sections</li> <li>- Largest transit use</li> <li>- commuter flow to Finch</li> <li>- Restaurants/ shopping and professional mix with towers</li> <li>- Evolving small businesses and car dealerships</li> </ul> |
| <b>Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverse population</li> <li>- Commercial businesses and offices</li> <li>- Large developers/ landowners</li> <li>- Many Fortune 500 companies – Motorola, IBM, Honeywell, etc.</li> </ul> | <b>Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverse population</li> <li>- Commercial and small businesses</li> <li>- Suburban communities with various concerns</li> <li>- Residential fences in various condition</li> </ul>                           | <b>Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverse population; many seniors</li> <li>- Small businesses</li> <li>- Industrial</li> <li>- Suburban communities with various concerns</li> <li>- Residential driveways impacted</li> </ul> | <b>Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High local impact</li> <li>- Regional Hospital</li> <li>- Small businesses</li> <li>- Large senior population</li> <li>- Low ethnic mix</li> </ul> | <b>Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverse population</li> <li>- Mixed land use</li> <li>- Area under most development pressure</li> <li>- Large redevelopment projects may be happening at the same time</li> </ul>                                          |
| <b>Positioning:</b><br>Urbanization in motion                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Positioning:</b><br>Shaping our growing community                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Positioning:</b><br>Setting the stage for urbanization                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Positioning:</b><br>A major transformation                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Positioning:</b><br>City building – urban gateway forming                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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## CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

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Construction of each segment will take approximately three years. However, winter lulls may not show any progress to the public and the commissioning stage may be perceived as an opening delay. Communications must recognize and be responsive to where the public's perceptions are during these various project stages. For example:

| Green -Year 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Orange -Year 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Pink -Year 3                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Blue -Commissioning                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ heavy work and disruptions cause initial surprise</li> <li>➤ unsure what is being done, for how long and why</li> <li>➤ not expecting work continuing through/ after the winter</li> <li>➤ large degree of disinterest and apathy</li> <li>➤ business owners concerned</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ more interested and scrutinizing activities</li> <li>➤ travel patterns change</li> <li>➤ questioning progress</li> <li>➤ hoping it ends soon</li> <li>➤ disruptions cause anxiety</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ construction fatigue leads to information gaps</li> <li>➤ when will it end</li> <li>➤ business owners less concerned</li> <li>➤ questioning why it's taking so long</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ relief the segment is finished</li> <li>➤ questioning why it's not operational yet</li> <li>➤ believes it looks great and welcomes the change</li> <li>➤ hopeful that rapid transit network is expanded to new key corridors</li> </ul> |

The following pages highlight current conditions, scheduled construction activities and planned successes for 2012 in each segment, and includes the colour-coded perception stages noted above.

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## DAVIS DRIVE SEGMENT (D1)

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### Previous Construction Activity

- Acquired properties; demolished buildings
- Removed/transplanted trees
- Widened Keith Bridge (south side)
- Detoured Tom Taylor Trail
- Built five retaining walls
- Relocated utilities
- Graded and fenced vacant lots
- Conducted geotechnical testing

### Perception

- 
- Disruption was minimal – most of the work was done next to the roadway and had minimal impact on pedestrians and drivers
- Construction schedule is quite long – 2011 work was done as “early works” and heavy construction will start in 2012
- Heavy construction will be difficult to do without causing major disruptions – some disruption is inevitable as it is an old and narrow corridor to work in with many driveways
- Transformation and revitalization of this corridor is long overdue



### Localized Concerns

- Noise, vibrations and dust affecting surrounding properties due to pile driving at Keith Bridge
- Loss of business due to construction activity on the roadway
- Traffic and pedestrian movements at Southlake Hospital

### Construction Activities for 2012

- Widening Keith Bridge (north side)
- Relocating utilities and business signs
- Constructing boulevard (south side)
- Removing/transplanting trees
- Building retaining walls

### Success in 2012

- Oversight of construction activity schedule enabled changes to be made that further mitigated impacts to the community
- Business signs relocated with minimal complaints and business interruption
- Trees removed and relocated without interruption; transplantation leveraged to increase public awareness of the project
- Managed matters regarding utility relocation with individual property owners/tenants so concerns/issues were not escalated
- Southlake Hospital satisfied with changes to entry/exit points and the communications to the community that conveyed the changes

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## HIGHWAY 7 EAST SEGMENT (H3)

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### Previous Construction Activity

- Removed medians; widened roadway
- Installed temporary/new traffic signals
- Relocated YRT/Viva stations
- Installed watermain/irrigation system (RH)
- Relocated utilities
- Introduced 2-stage pedestrian crossing
- Started construction of boulevard
- Removed trees

### Perception

- 
- Initial surprise over for drivers – familiar with heavy construction activity and may start to influence travel patterns
- Broad public awareness and understanding is low
- Many excited for urbanization and increased property values



### Localized Concerns

- Don't block or close traffic lanes
- Keep noise levels down at night and prior to 9 a.m.
- Give as much notice as possible for nighttime and weekend work activities
- Impact on small businesses due to driveway restrictions

### Construction Activities for 2012

- Building vivastations in median
- Installing irrigation system (Markham)
- Constructing Bayview towers
- Widening roadway
- Relocating utilities
- Building retaining walls

### Success in 2012

- Managed concerns related to construction of the Bayview Towers with limited escalations
- Communicated transit station relocations effectively with few enquiries/complaints being received by YRT/Viva Customer Service
- Leveraged opening of rapidway segment for broader awareness and community pride
- Successful roll out of new traffic/pedestrian signal phases at more intersections
- Initiated on-site awareness campaign that focused on community and environmental benefits
- Oversight of construction activity schedule enabled changes to be made that further mitigated impacts to the community
- Managed matters regarding utility relocation with individual property owners/tenants so concerns/issues were not escalated

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## HIGHWAY 7 VMC SEGMENT (H2.VMC)

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### Previous Construction Activity

- None

### Perception

- 
- Broad public awareness is low
- Those that are aware are worried construction impacts will resemble Toronto's St. Clair project

### Localized Concerns

- Residential property impacts on the south side of Hwy. 7, east of Keele St.
- Loss of front-of-door parking for a few businesses
- Noise affecting hotel guests

### Construction Activities for 2012

- Acquire property/easements
- Relocate utilities
- Conduct geotechnical testing
- Remove/transplant trees

### Success in 2012

- Supported property acquisition efforts by issuing letters, arranging public information meeting and liaising with individual property owners and tenants
- Successfully worked through individual business concerns regarding lost parking
- Liaised effectively with Concord West-area residents/groups
- Deployed on-street signage to increase awareness and provide information
- Managed matters regarding utility relocation with individual property owners/tenants so concerns/issues were not escalated

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## HIGHWAY 7 WEST SEGMENT (H2)

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### Previous Construction Activity

- None

### Perception

- 
- Broad public awareness is low
- Those that are aware are worried construction impacts will resemble Toronto's St. Clair project

### Localized Concerns

- Viva Purple staying on Bathurst Avenue and Centre Street
- Residential fences of properties backing onto Hwy. 7

### Construction Activities for 2012

- Acquire property/easements
- Design work continues

### Success in 2012

- Supported property acquisition efforts by issuing letters and liaising with individual property owners and tenants
- Liaised effectively with Beverley Glen-area residents/groups
- Managed matters regarding utility relocation with individual property owners/tenants so concerns/issues were not escalated

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## YONGE STREET SEGMENT (Y2.1)

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### Previous Construction Activity

- None

### Perception

- 
- Broad public awareness is low
- Those that are aware are worried construction impacts will resemble Toronto's St. Clair project

### Localized Concerns

- Loss of parking
- Don't block or close traffic lanes
- Impact on businesses due to driveway restrictions

### Construction Activities for 2012

- Acquire property/easements
- Relocate utilities
- Conduct geotechnical testing
- Remove/transplant trees

### Success in 2012

- Supported property acquisition efforts by issuing letters, arranging public information meeting and liaising with individual property owners and tenants
- Successfully worked through individual business concerns regarding lost parking
- Deployed on-street signage to increase awareness and provide information
- Business signs relocated with minimal complaints and business interruption
- Trees removed and relocated without interruption; transplantation leveraged to increase public awareness of the project
- Managed matters regarding utility relocation with individual property owners/tenants so concerns/issues were not escalated

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## YONGE STEET SEGMENTS (Y2.2 AND Y3.2)

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### Previous Construction Activity

- None

### Perception

- 
- Broad public awareness is low
- Those that are aware are worried construction impacts will resemble Toronto's St. Clair project

### Localized Concerns

- Don't block or close traffic lanes
- Give as much notice as possible; describe what and why things are being done
- Impact on small businesses due to driveway restrictions
- Noise, vibrations and dust affecting surrounding properties

### Construction Activities for 2012

- Acquire property/easements
- Design work continues

### Success in 2012

- Supported property acquisition efforts by issuing letters and liaising with individual property owners and tenants
- Liaised effectively with area residents and continued community engagement

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## TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

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As outlined above, each segment is in a different stage of construction with unique localized concerns and communication needs. To be effective and successful in reaching our communication objectives, a number of tools need to be updated and/or made available, such as:

- Redesign the vivaNext website;
- Launch the Business Support Program;
- Conduct a communications audit to measure effectiveness and identify gaps;
- Open a public Project Information Centre in Newmarket and Vaughan;
- Launch the Customer Relationship Management application to record activities with individuals;
- Track public opinions, attitudes and awareness through formal research; and
- Utilize new photos and illustrations in printed collaterals, signage and online activities.

## 2012 TACTICS AT A GLANCE

| TACTIC                   | D1 | Y3.2 | Y2.1 | Y2.2 | H2 | H2.VMC | H3 |
|--------------------------|----|------|------|------|----|--------|----|
| Open Houses              | ✓  |      | ✓    |      | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| On-site Meetings         | ✓  |      | ✓    |      |    | ✓      | ✓  |
| Stakeholder Meetings     | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Project Newsletter       | ✓  |      | ✓    |      |    | ✓      | ✓  |
| Brochures/Fact Sheets    | ✓  |      | ✓    |      |    | ✓      | ✓  |
| Construction Bulletins   | ✓  |      | ✓    |      |    | ✓      | ✓  |
| Print Ads                | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Radio Ads                | ✓  |      |      |      |    |        | ✓  |
| Community Events         | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Media Events             | ✓  |      |      |      |    |        | ✓  |
| Project Signage/Banners  | ✓  |      | ✓    |      |    | ✓      | ✓  |
| Business Signage/Banners | ✓  |      |      |      |    |        | ✓  |
| Way-finding Signage      | ✓  |      |      |      |    |        | ✓  |
| <24-hour Response        | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Traffic Advisories       | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    |      |    | ✓      | ✓  |
| Public Project Office    | ✓  |      |      |      |    | ✓      |    |
| Community Liaison        |    |      | ✓    |      |    | ✓      |    |
| Mailings                 | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Electronic Updates       | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Website / Social Media   | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Business Support Program | ✓  | ✓    | ✓    | ✓    | ✓  | ✓      | ✓  |
| Information Boards       | ✓  |      |      |      |    |        | ✓  |
| Incident Protocol        |    |      | ✓    |      |    | ✓      |    |

## GOALS FOR SUCCESS

Overall, success at the end of 2012 would mean that:

- Localized concerns addressed and not infiltrated into larger community
- Property expropriation program completed with minimal escalation
- Public welcomed opening of the first stretch of rapidway in Richmond Hill
- Reputation for on-time, on-budget project delivery was strengthened
- Positive feedback received about the business support program
- Online engagement increased 12% and mobile applications utilized
- Subscribers to e-updates increased by 10,000
- Awareness of vivaNext projects increased by 10%
- Understanding of vivaNext benefits increased by 5%
- Support for vivaNext projects increased by 4%