

## HAVING A BALL WITH SCIENCE



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Rob Blanke, of Super Science Tours of Thornhill, makes a ball levitate with the help of hot air during a science demonstration at St. Justin Martyr Catholic School last week.

# Province must 'buy in' to GTA transportation plan

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have watched this problem get worse and worse, and governments have done nothing about it. There has been nobody dealing with the problems for the last 20 years.

The GTSB has only been in existence for 14 months, but we are moving as fast as we can to commit this plan to paper.

*It is more difficult getting the dollars than it is (identifying) the problems.*

Fisch added municipalities are the only level of government that have thrown money at the problem.

"Everyone is now recognizing we have to solve this problem, but it is more difficult getting the dollars than it is (identifying) the problems," he said.

The GTSB plan will look at a series of recommendations, including the development of a strategy that will help move goods and services on a north-south highway serving East Markham and West Durham, linking highways 407 and 401. A proposed bypass through East Gwillimbury and Bradford-West Gwillimbury would link Hwy. 400 and 404.

A 20-year transit plan would offer enhanced peak-period service to Newmarket, and two-way all-day service on all Go Transit lines.

New key transit stations in Concord and Green Lane would be necessary, as would extensions of the Yonge and Spadina subway lines and GO rail service.

Arterial road improvements and the formation of high occupancy vehicle lanes on highways and regional roads have also been identified as necessary.

In February, the federal government announced a \$2.6-billion national federal infrastructure program over six years, with the bulk of the money kicking in over the final four years of the agree-

ment.

However, Oak Ridges MP Bryon Wilfert said only \$150 million is available this year because the provincial government has not committed funding for transportation issues, while the GTSB has yet to place a pricetag on its strategic plan.

"The federal government has made it clear we are interested in transportation, and how we can improve it. We are not saying transit is purely a provincial issue. But it takes three to participate in this," said Wilfert, adding improved transportation networks are also required in the Montreal Urban Area and the Greater Vancouver District.

Priorities must be set out by the municipalities, but the province has to buy into it. At the moment, we do not have a buy-in from the province. When we launched our national infrastructure program in 1994, that's what the municipalities were telling us they wanted. But our dollars must be matched, and when you multiply it by three, you are talking very serious dollars.

"If I were to ask you to pay 33 cents instead of 100 cents, you would find the money," he said. "We have put some clear money on the table so people know we are not just talking."

Wilfert said Canada's 10 provinces and three territories have until the end of the year to enter infrastructure agreements, or funding could be pulled back.

Although Wilfert said the provincial Tories did not include additional funding for GO Transit in its budget last week, Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees countered the province has allocated \$1 billion to help facilitate improvements to Ontario's highways.

"I'm still waiting to hear anything specific from Ottawa for the GTA," Klees, Conservative party whip, said yesterday.

"I strongly urge Mr. Wilfert to demonstrate something specific that's going to happen in the GTA."

Last year, the province committed \$106.5 million in capital reserves for Go Transit, added Klees, plus another \$829 million to the Toronto Transit Commission for a five-year capital project.

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