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19 York politicians continue to juggle region's proposal to ban smoking in public places

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Walk for Life, Walk for Hope

WHEN: Saturday, 10 a.m.

WHERE: Brother Andre Catholic High School



15 Vanessa Anderson will compete in the Special Olympics swimming event.

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Rouge Park clears important hurdle

Whitchurch-Stouffville must give nod to plan

BY MIKE ADLER
 Staff Writer

After four years of work and a standoff lasting seven months, the partnership plan to preserve the entire Rouge River in York Region is almost ready.

The Rouge Alliance voted Friday to release the Rouge Park North Management Plan for final approvals this summer by its various member municipalities and agencies.

Those include York Region and the towns of Richmond Hill, Whitchurch-Stouffville and Markham, though Markham Mayor Don Cousens had been opposing changes to the plan proposed in October.

"The logjam is broken," Cousens declared yesterday.

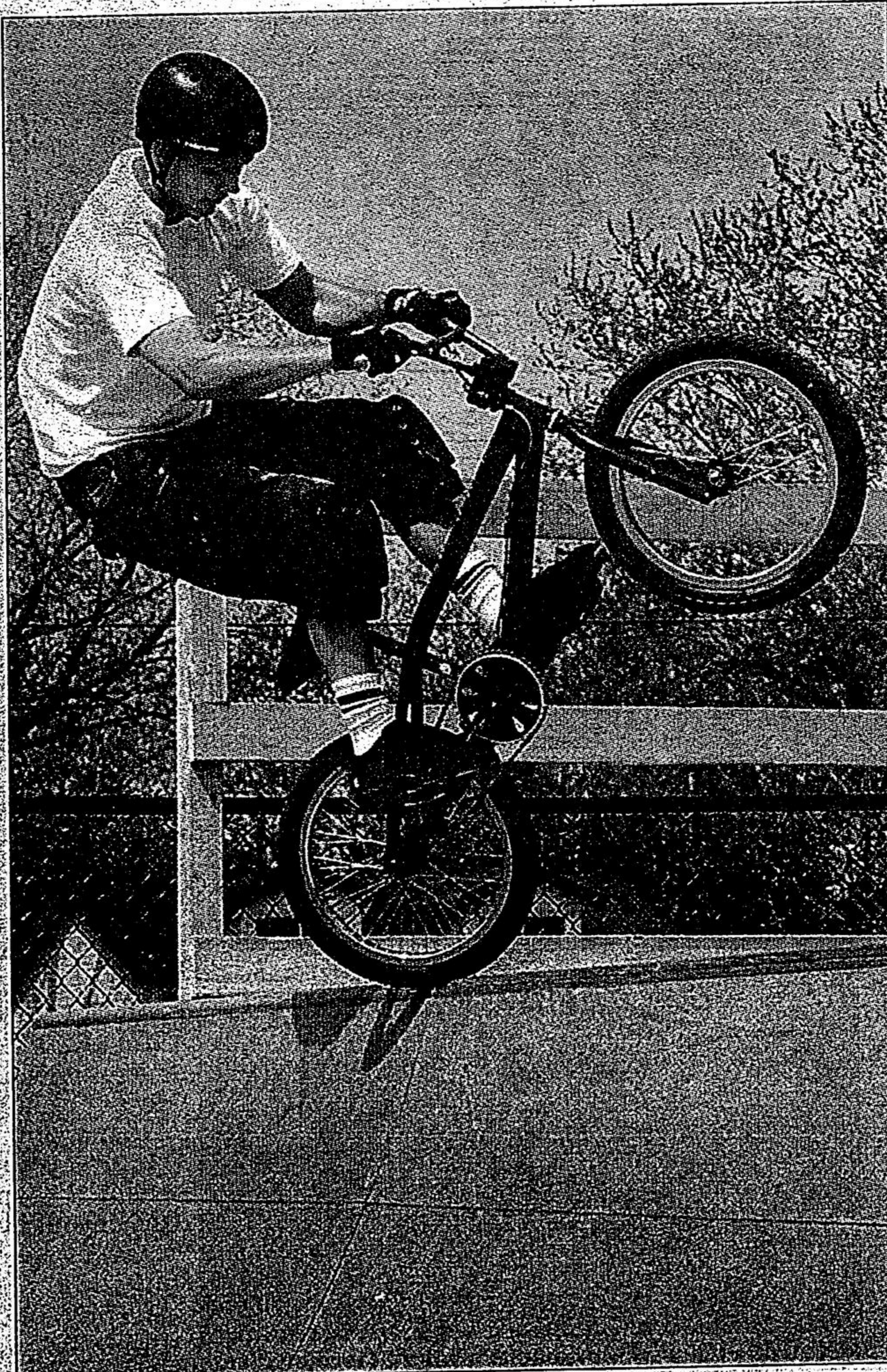
"The Town of Markham can not only live with this (plan), but sees it as a positive step."

Since October, Cousens, who led a steering committee overseeing the plan has repeatedly tried to stymie proposals that could protect more Rouge tributaries and encourage towns to seek more protection from landowners, whose developments were approved but a site plan or secondary plan had not passed.

But new wording for these contentious elements of the plan, agreed on during last week's alliance meeting in Scarborough, has cleared away the towns

See COMPROMISE, page 3.

On the edge



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Jamie Delaney struts his stuff at the town's skateboard park, which opened its runways in Thicketwood Park for a second year on Saturday. Delaney was one of the people instrumental in helping get the park built.

Transit plan needs cash

Federal funds needed to nix commuter chaos

BY PATRICK CASEY
 Staff Writer

The Greater Toronto Services Board will unveil a strategic transportation plan within two months, but the multi-billion-dollar policy will suffer a quick death if the provincial and federal governments refuse to help fund the project.

The GTSB has asked the 29 municipalities across Greater Toronto and Hamilton-Wentworth to comment on a draft plan by May 15. The board will then use the information to help analyse the transportation crisis facing commuters and businesses.

Money must come from three levels of government to end gridlock.

Warning the economy will begin to suffer, the policy is expected to offer a list of solutions to alleviate the road crunch.

However, York Region chairperson Bill Fisch, who also leads the GTSB's transportation committee, said money must come from three levels of government if there is any hope of ending the daily gridlock that leaves drivers clenching their teeth in anger.

"Unless we have the dollars to pay for this, the municipality will not do it alone. That's impossible," Fisch warned in an interview yesterday morning. "It will not get done. We have stressed the importance of that in meetings with MPs and MPPs from the GTA. We

See PROVINCE, page 7.

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