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2 Tony Clements wants to be premier, but he doesn't want a two-tier health care system.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

EVENT: Internet job search lecture
WHEN: Wednesday, Jan. 16 (905-640-2856)
WHERE: Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library.



12 Dollars to donuts: Battle of the baked goods means extreme sales strategies.

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50 CENTS INCLUDING GST / 32 PAGES

SATURDAY, JAN. 12, 2002

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\$5 BILLION PLAN TO RELIEVE GRIDLOCK

A third of commuters to use public transit

BY JEFF MITCHELL
 Staff Writer

York Region councillors have endorsed a plan to spend up to \$5 billion over the next 30 years to upgrade its transit and roads system.

The transportation master plan called for heavy investment — a minimum of \$140 million a year from the region and other levels of government — to address gridlock and make public transit the choice of one-third of York's commuters.

GO trains, an expanded bus system and eventually subway links should be considered as the region attempts to alleviate traffic on a roads system that can only be expanded so far, consultant Dick Gordon told members of the transportation and works committee Wednesday.

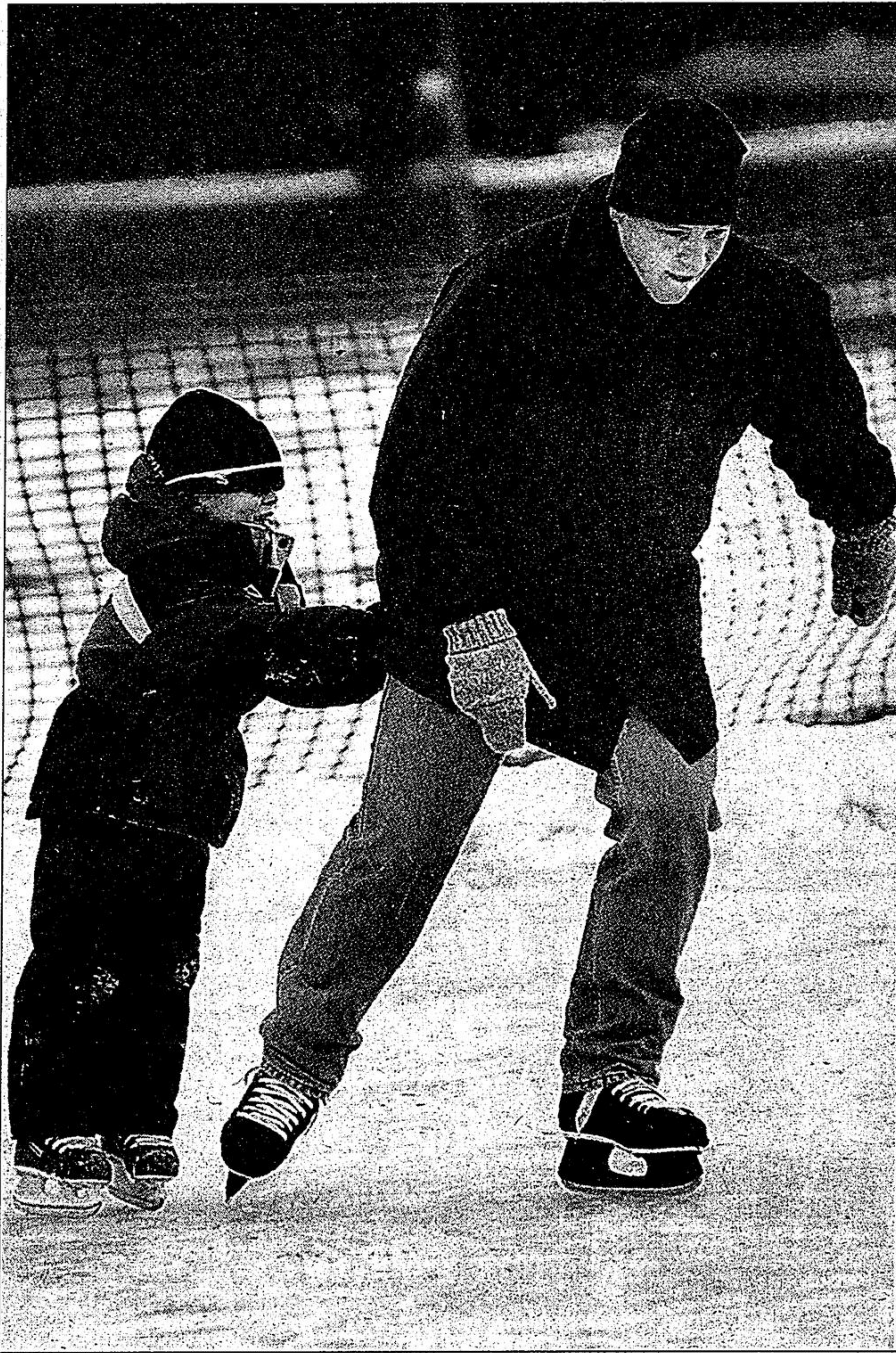
"This master plan we have developed is based on a significant increase in travel by transit," Mr. Gordon said. He called for efforts aimed at commuters travelling to Toronto and inside the region, to "make it easier for York Region drivers to park and take transit".

"We feel an aggressive transit campaign is required to change people's travel habits," he said.

Mr. Gordon said the massive improvements needed to keep the region moving will require significant spending.

See FEDS, page 4.

Before the thaw



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Joel Leuscher, 6, hangs on to his father's Dave coattails as they skate on the Stouffville Memorial Park ice rink — before warm temperatures late this week melted the ice. Skaters and skiers will be hoping for some more below-zero activity next week.

\$300,000 damage in chicken barn fire

60,000 birds set to move into barn day after Vandorf blaze

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
 Staff Writer

More than 60,000 chickens escaped an early death after fire swept through what was to be their new home in Vandorf, in northwestern Whitchurch-Stouffville, Wednesday night.

Damage is estimated at \$300,000 from the fire at the Vandorf Poultry farm. The building was insured. The cause is unknown, fire officials said.

Seven fire trucks and 31 firefighters from the Whitchurch-Stouffville and Aurora fire departments responded to the blaze on Slaters Road in Vandorf, in the Woodbine Avenue and Aurora Road area.

The fire destroyed a 300-foot-long, two-storey barn the chickens were to move into the next day.

"The fire was heavily involved prior to our arrival," said Whitchurch-Stouffville deputy fire chief Tim Beckett. "It was quite a job. It took us 90 minutes to bring the fire under control."

One Whitchurch-Stouffville firefighter sustained minor injuries after falling on ice while fighting the blaze. Because of the freezing weather, firefighters were forced to work in "ice build-up" conditions, said Beckett.

"The owners are busy getting 30,000 of the chickens settled into another barn," Beckett said, "and trying to find places for other 30,000 birds."

Representatives of the owners' insurance company were at the scene Friday surveying the damage.

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