

## **Beltline leaders, council to discuss impact of tax ruling**

Ahead of the Curve; Your eye on community development

By Paul Donsky  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
March 3, 2008

Beltline leaders plan to conduct a work session with the Atlanta City Council on Tuesday to discuss the fallout from last month's Georgia Supreme Court decision, which prohibits school tax money from being used to help pay for the planned loop of transit, trails and parks.

The ruling effectively wiped out an expected \$850 million in funding, a big blow to the Beltline, which is estimated to cost \$2.8 billion during the next 25 years.

Many questions will be on the table, including whether the Beltline's five-year budget, already approved by the council, needs to be revised. Because of the court's decision, the expected \$427 million budget will be roughly cut in half.

Terri Montague, president of Beltline Inc., said she expects a bond issue by the end of the year. One of the lingering questions is how large the bond issue should be, Montague said.

The City Council approved a \$200 million bond issue in 2006, but without the school taxes the amount that can be issued based on that vote is about \$100 million.

Montague says the Beltline remains on track, with planning sessions taking place around the city and efforts under way to build walking trails and create the first new parks along the proposed path.