



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

January 21, 2016

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0598- City Streets – Closing – The Beds of Berlin Street, Ontario Avenue, West Hamburg Street, and 2 10-Foot Alleys

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Christina Hartsfield

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER: Brent Flickinger

PETITIONER: The Administration (Department of Transportation)

OWNER(S): Decker Salvage Co., Inc.

SITE AREA

Site Conditions: The subjects of this bill are six parcels, identified as Parcels 1-6 on the accompanying plat, that are improved as either a city street or an alley. These parcels include two portions of Ontario Avenue, portions of West Hamburg Street and Berlin Street, and two alleys. They are publicly accessible streets but in some areas are indistinguishable from the property and operations of Decker's Salvage Co., Inc., which is effectively a scrap recycling facility.

ANALYSIS

The subject parcels are sited among Decker's Salvage Co., Inc., which controls all of the properties abutting the street parcels. Since property lines were drawn to the centerline of the streets when the property plats were recorded, Decker's Salvage effectively already owns the street beds. However, the streets have remained open and publicly accessible.

Decker's Salvage has posed significant environmental dangers because of the nature of its operations and its location in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area and the Floodway. The company was also cited for illegal dumping. For these reasons, the City has been working with the owner to clean the site, remediate the environmental hazards, and relocate the operations out of the Critical Area and Floodway. On October 11, 2012, the City and Decker Salvage Co., Inc. entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate the improvement of the site.

The proposed street closings are consistent with agreements in the MOU, whereas the City agreed to initiate and seek approval for the closing of portions of Ontario, Hamburg and Berlin Streets that would result in conveyance of said streets to Decker and/or for any interim license agreement. Closing and conveying these parcels would allow the owner to consolidate the entire site and execute the development plan as outlined in the MOU. This action would also add the properties back to the City's tax roll.

It is staff's finding that since Decker's Salvage Co., Inc. is the owner of all of the properties abutting the subject streets and alleys, those parcels are no longer needed to provide public access or for public purposes. The City will maintain the right to service existing utilities beneath the street beds. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission support legislation for the street closures.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

Comprehensive Master Plan: This proposed street closing is compatible with the Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City, specifically:

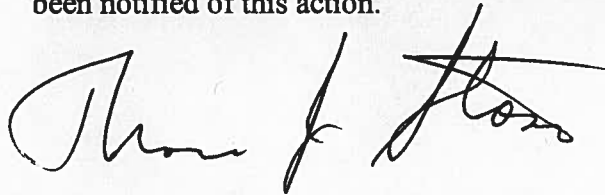
LIVE

Goal 2: Elevate the Design and Quality of the City's Built Environment

Objective 5: Improve Water Quality and the Environmental Sustainability of the Chesapeake Bay

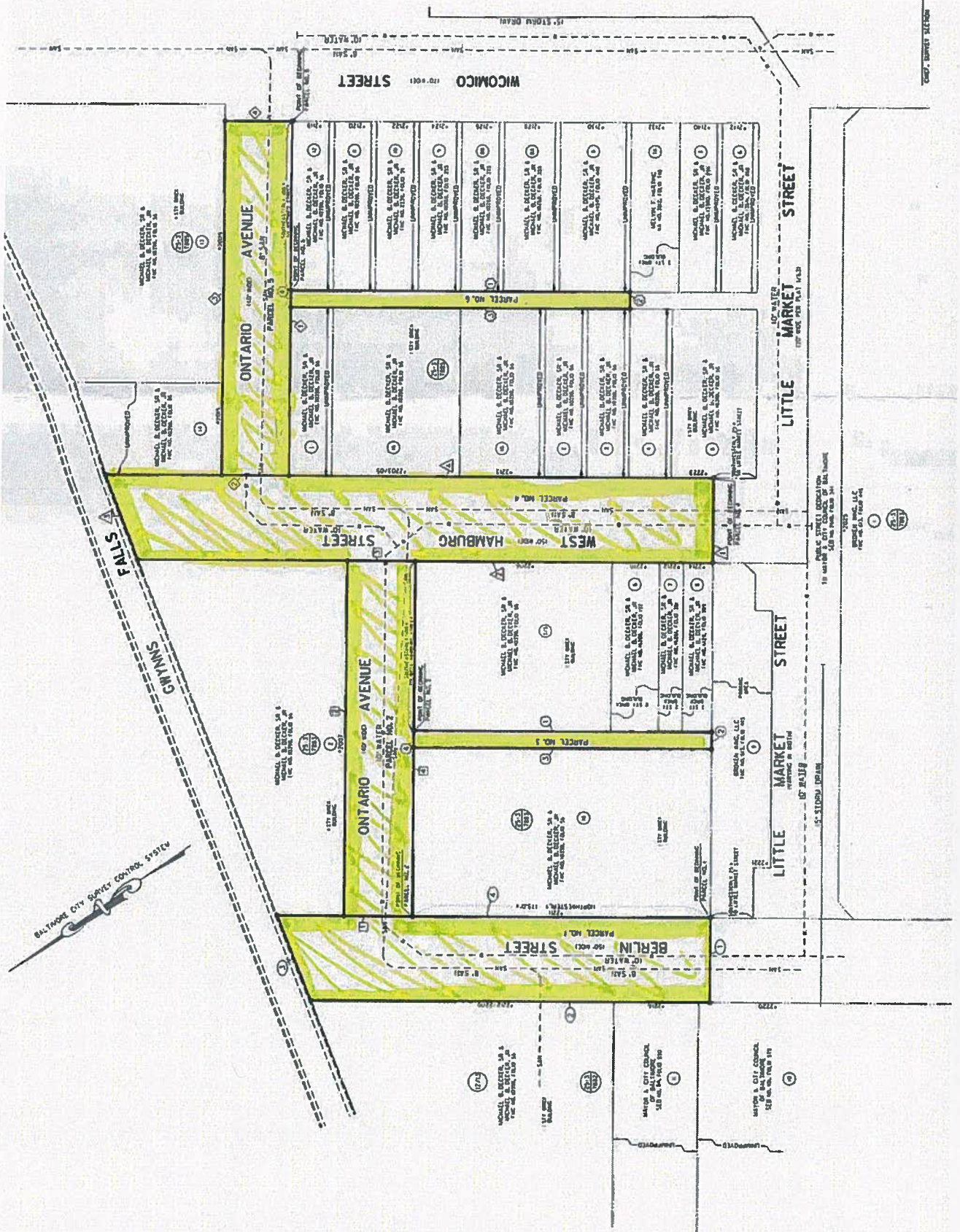
COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

The owners of 2132 Wicomico Street, 2121 Wicomico Street, and 2025 Little Market Street have been notified of this action.



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Figure 1. Plat Map with Street Parcels Highlighted



CCB #15-0598/ City Streets – Closing – The Beds of Berlin Street, Ontario Avenue, West Hamburg Street, and 2 10-Foot Alleys