



# City of Morgan Hill

## Legislation Text

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## **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

### **MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 16, 2015**

PREPARED BY: Jennie Tucker, Community Services Supervisor  
APPROVED BY: City Manager

## **LOCATION FOR “NEVER FORGOTTEN” THE TARA ALISH ROMERO SCULPTURE**

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the City Council

- 1) Approve the Morgan Hill Civic Center Demonstration Garden as the permanent location for “Never Forgotten” the Tara Alish Romero Sculpture; and
- 2) Adopt resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute and administer documents necessary to accept the donation of the Sculpture.

## **COUNCIL PRIORITIES, GOALS & STRATEGIES:**

### **Ongoing Priorities**

Supporting youth

Preserving and cultivating public trust

### **2015 Focus Areas**

Community Engagement Effectiveness

## **REPORT NARRATIVE:**

One of the Library, Culture and Arts Commission’s (LCAC) duties is to review and make recommendations to the City Council regarding all works of art to be acquired by the city through purchase, gift or other means, and exterior works of art installed in the city on public property.

On July 18, 2012, the City Council approved the recommendation from LCAC to move forward with the Tara Alish Romero Bronze Sculpture project. Over the last few years fundraising efforts have been made by the family of Romero to fund the sculpture. The sculpture is now in its final stages of completion and is anticipated by the end of January 2016.

The statue is intended to represent any child and to be a symbol of our community’s commitment to maintaining a non-violent environment in which to raise our children. The title of the sculpture is “Never Forgotten” and will be roughly 6 feet in height. The sculpture will potentially have a plaque with the following text:

*Peace, Love, Tara.*

*On November 4, 2011, there was an attack on 5 school kids that resulted in 2 wounded and 1 killed. EVERYONE'S CHILD, Tara Alish Romero died that night. This statue of her is a reminder to our community to live in Peace and Harmony longed for in the community of Morgan Hill, California. Tara Alish Romero. February 2, 1997 - November 4, 2011 (14 years old).*

At the December 1, 2015 LCAC meeting, two proposed locations for the sculpture were presented. The first location was at the new demonstration garden to be constructed at the Morgan Hill Civic Center; the other location was at the Community and Cultural Center. Joseph Romero, the father of Tara, had initially discussed and approved of both locations, but noted his preference was the CCC. That preference was communicated to the LCAC. After discussion, the LCAC chose to recommend the Civic Center demonstration garden as the permanent location for the "Never Forgotten" sculpture. The LCAC believes this location is a good choice due to its visible and safe location. The LCAC also feels the demonstration garden will be a good place for the sculpture, because it will provide a place for people to come and reflect. The new garden area is expected to be completed in January 2016, which will align with the completion of the sculpture.

On December 11, staff was contacted by Mr. Romero via email (Attachment 4). He expressed an even stronger desire for the statue to be placed at the Community and Cultural Center. Mr. Romero likes the proximity to downtown, the ample parking, and feels the statue will be better protected from the elements there. In his email, Mr. Romero refers to the installation by the "front doors" at the CCC. Staff clarified via phone conversation that he is referring to the area outside the doors to the interior hallway near the Diana Murphy Room (Attachment 5).

Staff is supportive of either location as the new sculpture will be a valued addition to the City's public art collection and a benefit for the community.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Empower**

The "Never Forgotten" piece of art was a funded and designed by the community members, including the family of Tara Romero. The LCAC has been involved and supportive of the project since its inception in 2012. The proposed art was discussed thoroughly at public meetings of the LCAC.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS:**

The Council could elect to approve the art installation at the Community and Cultural Center or an alternative location.

**PRIOR CITY COUNCIL AND COMMISSION ACTIONS:**

The City Council approved this sculpture at the July 18, 2012 City Council Meeting, following recommendation for approval by the LCAC. At that time the Council approved and directed the LCAC to continue supporting the project, return to Council with artist's renderings, and recommend a location for the sculpture.

**FISCAL AND RESOURCE IMPACT:**

The sculpture is fully funded by the Romero family. Exact ongoing maintenance expenses for a bronze sculpture are not estimated to be significant. The LCAC is currently reviewing maintenance needs for the City's sculptures with the intent to develop a formal maintenance plan. This statue will be included in this review.

**CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act):**

Categorical Exemption

This project is categorically exempt from CEQA per section 15301 (Existing Facilities) as a minor modification to an existing facility.

**LINKS/ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Resolution
2. Image of "Never Forgotten" Sculpture before the Bronze Coating
3. Proposed location for "Never Forgotten" Sculpture
4. Email from Joseph Romero
5. CCC Site Location Option