

**From:** Savanna Cheer <savanna.cheer@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2025 8:26 PM

**To:** Justin Long <jlong@alamedaca.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Please forward to Parks and Rec Commissioners

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Hello Parks and Recreation Commissioners:

I wanted to propose an idea that I'm hopeful you'll all support and see where I can be of help in making it happen. This message is a little long, but I hope you'll take the time to read what I'm sharing. I know that you're in volunteer roles as Commissioners and likely have busy schedules, thank you for the work you do! So, as an Alamedan with interest and willingness, I'd love to help usher a really important step forth in our city.

As you all likely know, nearly four years ago, a young man named Mario Gonzalez was tragically killed by three Alameda police officers in a public space, sometimes called a pocket park, or Scout Park, near the intersection of Otis and Park. Mario's mother and brothers have requested a memorial bench and some of Mario's favorite plants be placed in his memory at the site of his death. For the past few years, community members have provided ongoing support to an altar for Mario. Community gathers on special days and there is space for Mario's family to have a peaceful and beautiful space to gather, mourn, and remember Mario. At the end of February, Public Works abruptly, and with very short notice to only me and one other person (not Edith directly!), removed all the plants that were there. After some concern was raised, Edith and some of us in her family support group were able to meet with Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft and Jennifer Ott today regarding Edith's wishes for a more permanent memorial. and to address the removal of the plants Edith would like, at the very least, a bench facing Mario's altar so that she can have a restful experience when she visits the space.

We did not get a specific commitment from either Marilyn or Jennifer past simply "digesting" the information shared by Edith and our group. We are curious to see what progress we can make on some of the various elements of a memorial. They cited a policy around temporary memorials as the reason they removed the established planters. We will keep in communication with them on this part and next steps.

***Here's where you come in!*** One of the big obstacles that came up a few times during our meeting today was around the jurisdiction of the space. Per the City Manager, Jennifer Ott, that particular plot of land is not a part of Parks and Recreation and Public Works is responsible for any maintenance in that area. Because Public Works does not have a memorial bench or table program, according to Jennifer Ott, an exception cannot be made for this particular space to include a memorial item of any kind. I inquired about how we might then make the pocket park a part of Parks and Recreation and neither Marilyn or Jennifer could shed any light on that but did mention that your Commission would likely be involved. SO! Can you get involved? The ask is simply to start the process, whatever that might be, to fold that sliver of land into Parks and Rec in some way, so that we can formally put a memorial bench and perhaps a larger memorial to Mario in the space.

I would be more than happy to discuss this in more depth, I realize I'm providing a really generalized summary of the situation and there is a lot more background and details to share. Feel free to reach out to this email address, I'd be happy to chat on email or phone.

Thank you so very much for taking the time to read this and consider this proposal. I am here to support this process however I can. I'm optimistic that you all understand the weight of this situation and the critical importance of honoring Mario's family's wishes and memorializing a young life lost far too soon. Let's not let a procedural step get in the way of such a tremendous and important gift to our community and Mario's family.

Take good care,  
Savanna Cheer  
Alameda Resident