



# **Sonoma Mission 200**

Virtual Meeting

Sonoma State Historic Park, Bay Area District

Meeting Summary

March 26, 2022



# **Sonoma Mission 200 Invited Stakeholder Meeting March 26, 2022 Meeting Summary**

## **Introduction**

This report summarizes a public virtual meeting to hear the perspectives on the Sonoma Mission 200 Project by the general public. The meeting was held via Zoom on March 26, 2022 at 10am and was attended by seven individuals who actively submitted input.

## **Project Overview**

As the Bay Area District begins planning the commemoration of the Sonoma Mission anniversary, the voices and perspectives of the community will be crucial in identifying appropriate, meaningful, and impactful ways to reflect on the past 200 years and to shape the future of interpretation at Sonoma State Historic Park. The Sonoma Mission 200 Project is a multi-phase project that will gather community input, develop a commemoration plan and provide event management. The first phase begins with formal Tribal government consultations, community engagement with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders, and an online public meeting. The second phase includes plan implementation and commemoration activities. The final phase will yield a written update to the Sonoma State Historic Park interpretation and education programming.

The Sonoma Mission 200 project is part of a larger effort within State Parks' Reexamining Our Past Initiative. Among its goals, the initiative seeks to address interpretive programs and exhibits in California's State Park System that fall short of fully contextualizing the state's history. The initiative was started in 2020 when State Parks joined with other California State Agencies to redress discriminatory names within the state park and transportation systems. This followed the national conversation about racist public memorials in 2019, as well as Governor

Newsom's formal apology to Native Americans and the creation of the California Truth and Healing Council that same year.

## **Meeting Format**

The meeting began with opening remarks from Bay Area District Superintendent Maria Mowrey, Interpretation & Education Program Manager Karen Barrett, and Historian III/Cultural Resources Program Manager Noah Stewart. An overview of the Sonoma Mission 200 Project was shared as was the objective of the meeting: to collect honest input and ideas from stakeholders. Project consultant, Dana Shew of the Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University was introduced and served as the meeting facilitator. Dana provided participants with an overview of the meeting format and instructions for how to engage and submit comments.

Participants were asked a series of questions using a polling application called Poll Everywhere. Attendees used their cell phones to text their answers directly to Poll Everywhere. Results were displayed live on the Zoom screen for everyone to see. The results were anonymous but the visual responses assured attendees that their answers were being received. A total of 14 questions were asked that were either multiple choice or required a short answer. Following the interactive poll, Dana opened the meeting up to a short discussion period during which some of the answers to the poll questions were addressed and guests were given a chance to share any additional thoughts. The results of each poll question as well as a brief summary of the discussion are presented below.

## **Conclusion**

Although the meeting attendance was small, the poll results indicated general trends and the facilitated discussion yielded new insights and a deeper exploration of certain topics. The ability to follow up on specific poll responses and hear relevant stories and explanations of these answers was an invaluable opportunity. In addition, the discussion let us delve deeper into the purpose and objectives of the Sonoma Mission 200 project. As with the input received from the other stakeholder meetings, the ideas and perspectives provided during the virtual meeting will play an important role in the development of the Sonoma Mission 200 plan.

## **Poll Results**

The topics addressed by the 14 poll questions covered a wide range of concepts in order to gauge the current attitudes towards the mission, gain insight about how to improve future interpretation, and collect specific input on the events and activities that will comprise the bicentennial commemoration. The questions posed in the poll were the same as those found in the Sonoma Mission 200 Project's online survey. The advantage of responding to these questions during the virtual meeting was the opportunity to give more detailed feedback during the discussion period and to instantly see the answers of other community members. Visual results of each question are provided on the following pages.

## How close do you live to the mission?

A) In the City of Sonoma

14%

B) Within 25 miles

71%

C) Within 50 miles

D) Within 100 miles

14%

E) MORE than 100 miles

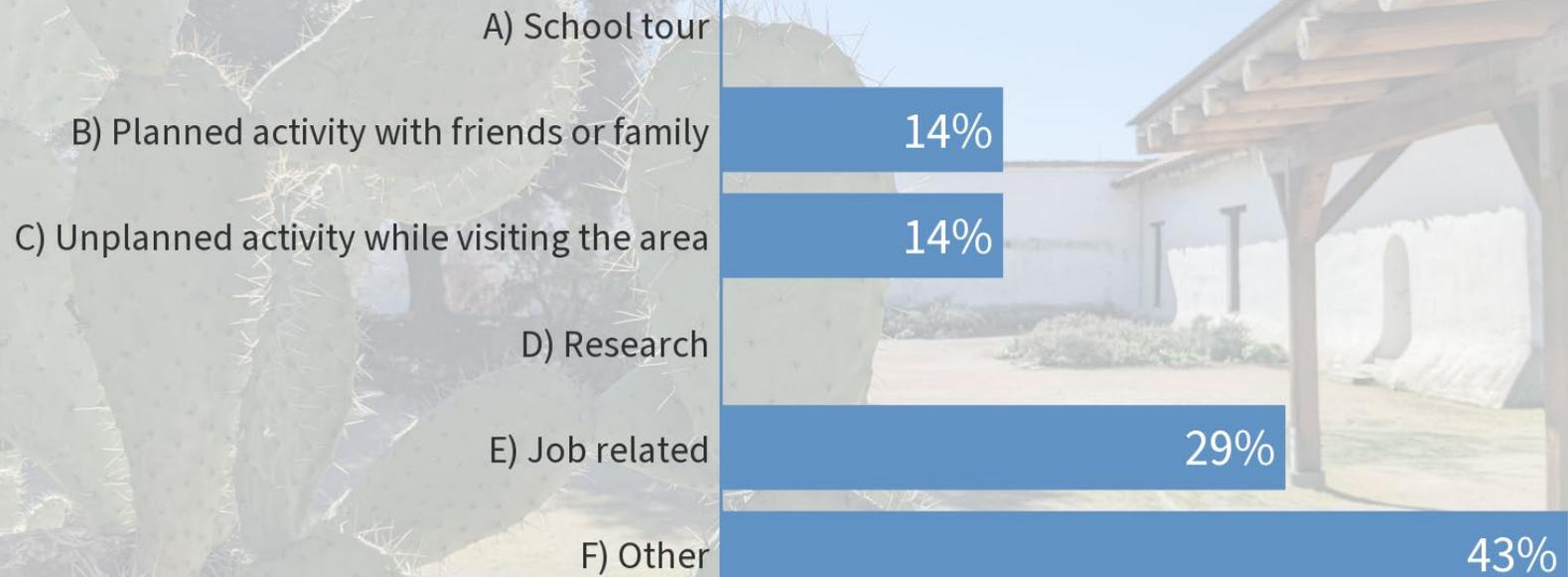
Powered by  Poll Everywhere

## When was the last time you visited the mission?



Powered by  Poll Everywhere

## What was the main reason for your visit?



Powered by  Poll Everywhere

# What do you remember most from your last visit to the mission? Was it an object, a concept, an interaction, an activity...?

“ Lecture in chapel ”

“ Lecture in chapel ”

“ Lecture ”

“ An interaction ”

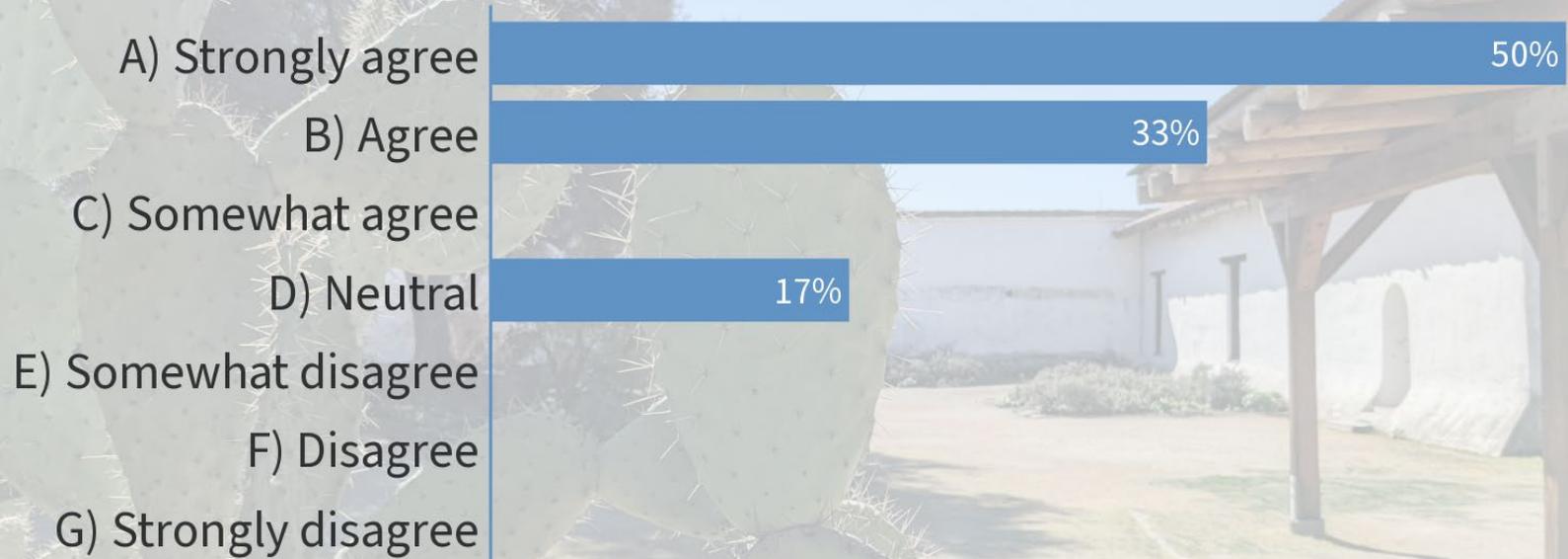
“ Welcoming park ranger ”

“ Interpreter talk ”

Total Results: 6

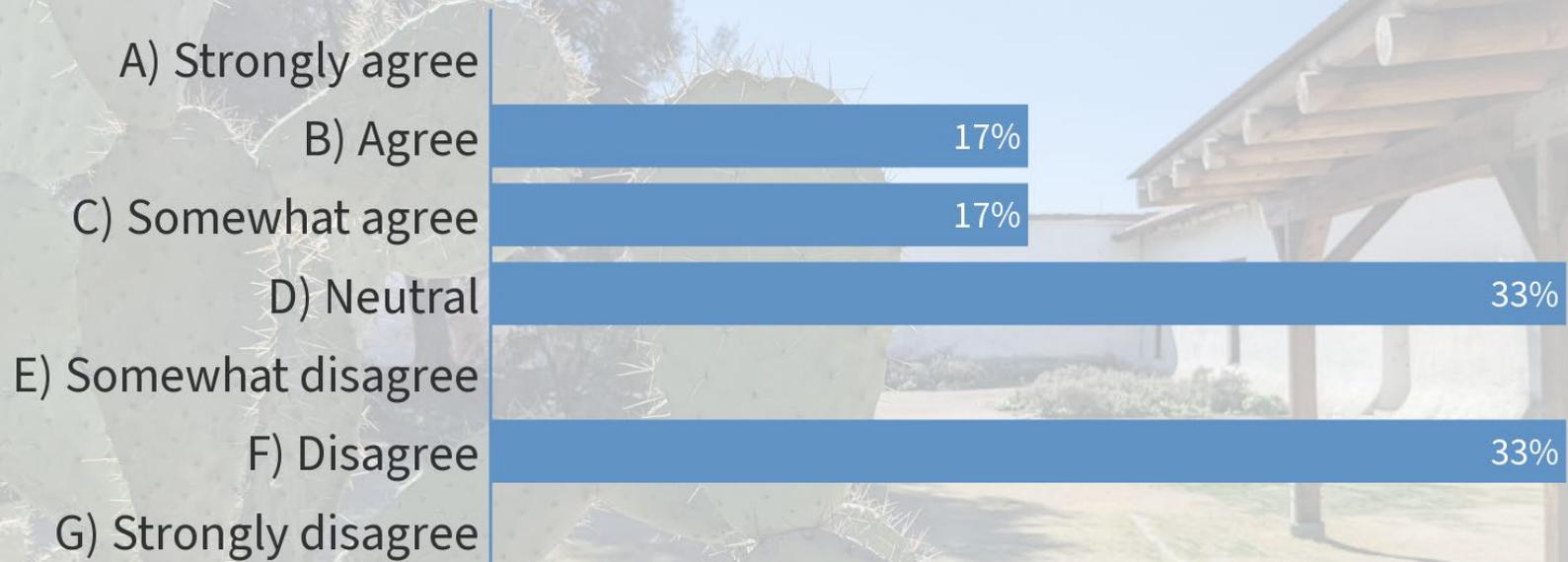
Powered by  Poll Everywhere

## During my last visit to the mission I felt WELCOME



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## During my last visit to the mission I felt IMPRESSED



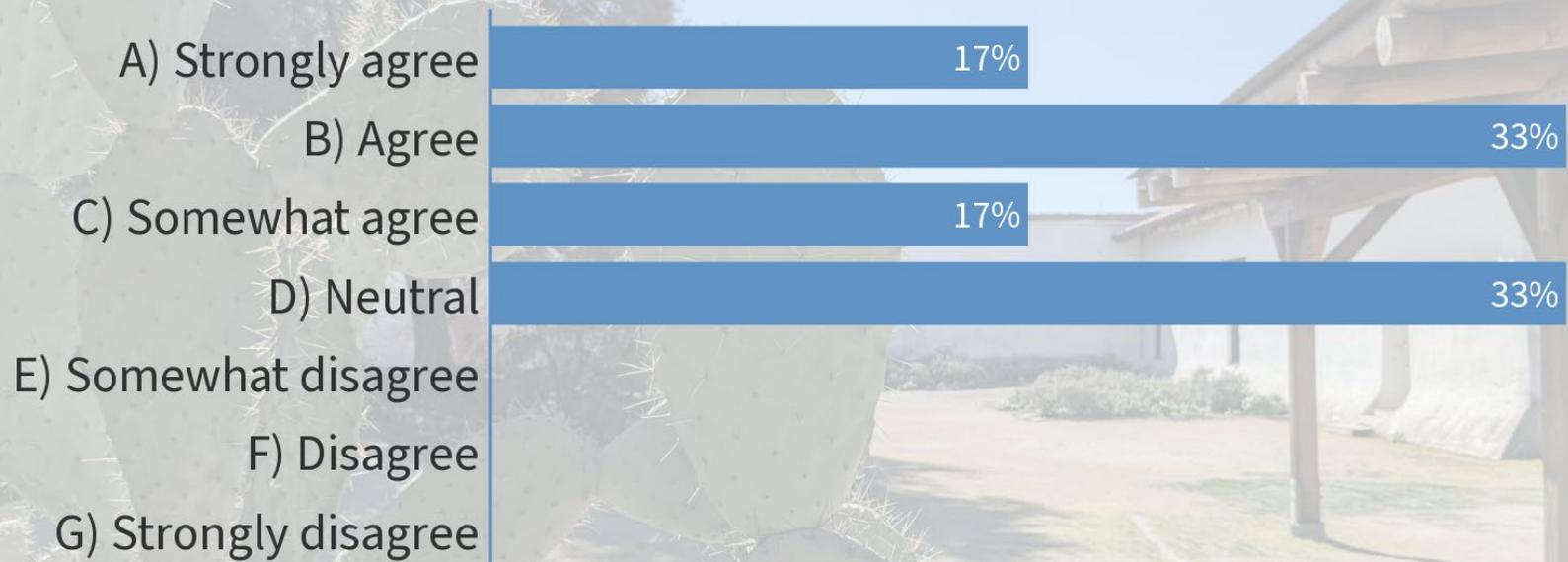
Powered by  Poll Everywhere

# During my last visit to the mission I felt SATISFIED



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## During my last visit to the mission I felt INTERESTED



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## During my last visit to the mission I felt **CONNECTED**



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## Why is the Sonoma Mission meaningful to you?



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## What do you think is the most difficult part of the mission's history?

“ Impact on Native Americans ”

“ Treatment of native Americans ”

“ Discussing it's role with indigenous people ”

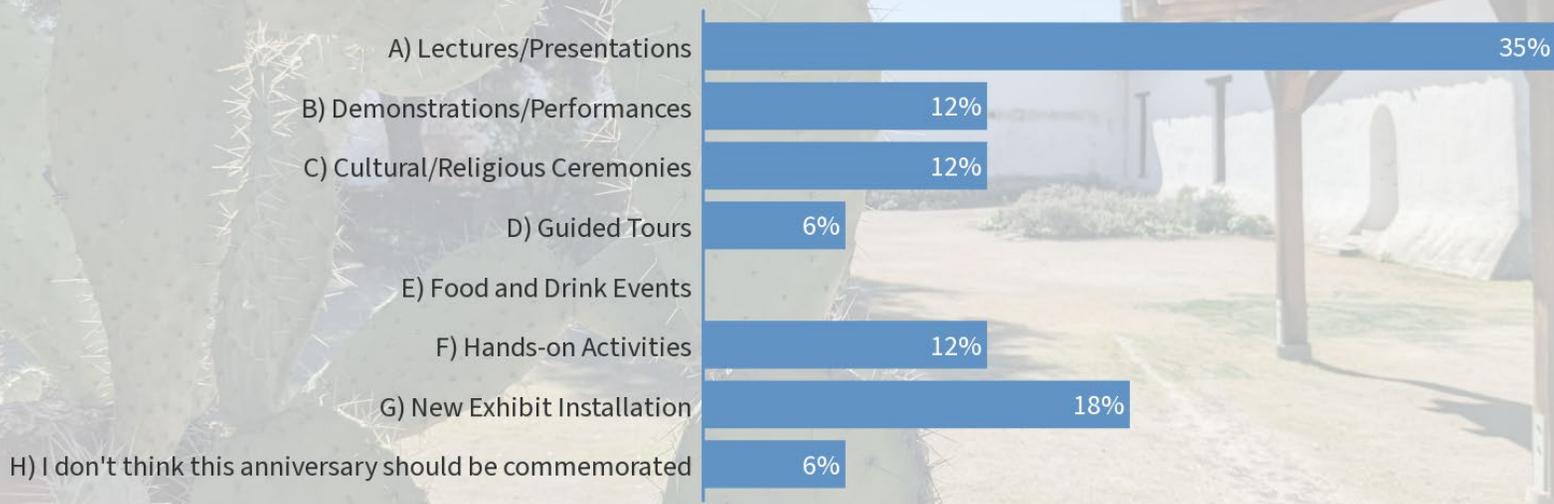
“ Transition period 1833-34 ”

“ Catholic colonialism ”

“ Ending of native culture ”

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# What types of events, activities, programs, and initiatives would you like to see take place to mark the mission's 200th anniversary?



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# What ideas do you have for events, activities, and programs to mark the mission's 200th anniversary?

“ Emphasis on Native American impact ”

“ Interaction of Neophytes & padre ”

“ Reimagine interpretation ”

“ Lectures classes ”

“ New technology for interpretation ”

“ Presentation by native representative ”

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**What one word would you use to describe the Sonoma Mission?**

historical  
**historic**  
shameful  
microcosm dated

Powered by  **Poll Everywhere**

## Discussion

During the discussion period that followed the live poll, attendees engaged in a conversation that covered several topics, clarified some of the poll answers, and led to discussions about the goals of the Sonoma Mission 200 project. Below are the topics that were shared:

- One of the respondents shared their experiences as a docent and that there has not been enough emphasis on the impact that the mission had on Native Americans.
- The updating and upgrading of interpretation at the park and the mission in particular was much needed and would be appreciated.
- Opportunities for refreshing and reimagining the interpretive exhibits and the visitor experience were discussed.
- The fact that the Sonoma Mission was the last mission was reiterated as an important value.
- Questions were raised about what exactly the 200th anniversary is commemorating. Is it the establishment of the mission by Father Altamira? Is it commemorating the mission system? Is it the impact on Native Americans? Is it the building of the actual mission? These questions were ones that illustrated one of the Sonoma Mission 200 project's main objectives. Finding out what people's answers to these questions in order to find out what they want to commemorate and how, are the main goals of this project's outreach efforts.
- One of the guests shared the opinion that there should not be any commemoration at all and was conflicted about how to best address and acknowledge this anniversary.
- Participants stressed the desire to hear from the Native American community, to find out what they would like and how they feel. State Parks shared with the group that Native American consultation was in process and that those discussions were mostly confidential but as much as possible will be shared with the public.
- One of the attendees suggested that the activities and efforts of other missions be looked at for ideas and lessons.

- One suggestion for how to approach the commemoration was to look at the building of the mission as an event in time, 200 years ago, and to look at the events in history that led to that happening and at the lasting impacts.
- Reenactments were suggested as a way to remember important parts of related history like the Bear Flag Revolt.