

## Outreach Summary – Round One

### Overview

Input received during the first round of public outreach for the Sign Hill Master Plan provided insight into how the community perceives and engages with Sign Hill. Outreach was conducted in Spring 2023 via an online survey and an in-person pop-up event at the site. These community engagement activities included questions about general visiting habits at Sign Hill, current site features liked, desired improvements, important characteristics, and participant demographics.

Most outreach participants have visited Sign Hill and live in the area around the site or in another part of South San Francisco. Although they visit somewhat infrequently, most survey respondents view Sign Hill as an important landmark, historic feature, and source of pride for the South San Francisco community. The site is highly valued for its views, natural beauty, trails, plants, wildlife, and letter sign.

The community considers Sign Hill as a place to enjoy being outdoors in nature. According to outreach participants, the most important characteristics for the future of Sign Hill are natural beauty, sustainability and conservation, and opportunities for exercise. The consensus in the community is that Sign Hill is in most need of trail enhancements, signage (wayfinding and interpretive), and seating for visitors.

TOP COMMUNITY PREFERENCES FOR SIGN HILL		
<i>Current Features Liked</i>	<i>Improvement Features Desired</i>	<i>Most Important Characteristics</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Views and scenery</li> <li>2. Walking Trails</li> <li>3. Native flora and fauna</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trail enhancements</li> <li>2. Signage to identify habitats and plant/animal species</li> <li>3. More seating areas</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural beauty</li> <li>2. Sustainability and conservation</li> <li>3. Opportunities for exercise</li> </ol>

### Themes

#### Nature

Community participants voted natural beauty as the #1 most important characteristic for the future of Sign Hill, followed by sustainability and conservation as #2. Approximately 2/3 of participants visit Sign Hill specifically to connect with nature, and 1/3 of participants voted the site’s flora and fauna as the feature of Sign Hill they like the best. Other nature-oriented topics, e.g., trees, habitats, butterflies, coyotes, native plants, and preservation, were frequently mentioned in open comments by the community. “Leave it alone” was a common refrain in open comments on the survey, as respondents expressed support for maintaining Sign Hill’s “wild” or natural environment without too much intervention.

#### Activity

According to outreach results, trails were a highly popular feature of Sign Hill. Walking trails ranked as the #2 most like current feature of the site. The community frequently visits Sign Hill to enjoy the views,

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exercise, and pursue outdoor activities alone, with family/friends, and with pets. Participants love the walking/hiking paths at the site but recognized that trail conditions have deteriorated in many areas, which is likely why they voted trail enhancements as the #1 feature to improve the visitor experience at Sign Hill.

### Access & Accessibility

The community wants Sign Hill to be easier to learn about, get to, and experience. Participants who visit Sign Hill would like to see more interpretive signage identifying the site's natural features like plant and animal species (#2 most desired improvement feature), while those who have never heard of or visited Sign Hill would like better wayfinding signage. Non-visitors also cited better access/accessibility and more awareness/information about the site as the most important factors influencing the likelihood of their visiting in the future. Better maintenance of trails and making trails easier to use safely by a variety of visitors, including children and seniors, were important requests from the community mentioned in open comments on the survey and during in-person conversations at the pop-up event. Over 1/4 of outreach participants voted accessibility/inclusiveness as the most important characteristic for Sign Hill's future. According to outreach data, the community also desires more seating areas, which ranked as the #3 most desired feature to improve the visitor experience at Sign Hill. Other suggestions related to access and accessibility mentioned by the community were drinking fountains, lights, parking, and restrooms. The presence of dogs at the site was a source of debate—some respondents appreciated the ease of visiting with their dogs, while others felt that dogs on the trails, specifically off-leash dogs, created safety and trash/waste issues detrimental to the visitor experience and they suggested prohibiting dogs at Sign Hill.

### Legacy

Though not offered as options in the outreach questions, the history of Sign Hill and the sign letters were mentioned frequently in the survey's open comments as reasons for visiting and aspects of the site respondents liked best. These comments, made by participants who live and/or grew up in South San Francisco, suggested a strong emotional connection between Sign Hill and the community. Some respondents expressed concern that the character of Sign Hill would be changed, and they would lose the place they remember from their past.

## Methods & Results

### Online survey

March 13 to April 7, 2023

15 Questions

**428 total responses (422 English, 6 Spanish) Results may exceed 100% as they may choose multiple options, which are not mutually exclusive.**

Key stats:

- Q1: 87% have **visited Sign Hill**.
- Q2: 79% heard about Sign Hill because they **live in the neighborhood**.
- Q3: 62% visit Sign Hill **every few months or rarely**. Daily visitors were the least common among survey respondents, representing only 7% of respondents.
- Q4: 72% visit Sign Hill with **family members**. 44% visit alone. 26% visit with pets.
- Q5: 62% **walk** to Sign Hill. 51% visit by car.

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- Q6: 47% access Sign Hill **via Ridgeview Court**. 30+ respondents wrote that they access via alternate points, including their backyards, Rocca Court, Ash Avenue, Diamond Avenue, and Miller Avenue.
- Q7: 76% visit Sign Hill to **enjoy the views**. 64% visit to get individual exercise. 62% to connect with nature. 61% to do outdoor activities with family/friends.
- Q8: 76% felt that the **views and scenery** were the best features of Sign Hill. 44% liked the walking trails best. Seating received the least support (15%). Several respondents specified in the option for “Other” that the “sign” itself is their favorite feature and that Sign Hill is a way to experience nostalgia and remember or connect with the past. Some also mentioned that Sign Hill’s isolation and lack of visitors is appealing because it allows them more meditative quiet time.
- Q9: 65% voted for **trail enhancements** as the most desired improvement at Sign Hill. 44% of respondents voted for signage to identify habitats and plant/animal species. 33% voted for more seating areas. Environmental education programs received the least support (19%). Responses to the “Other” category suggested more parking, restrooms, restrictions on dog use, more maintenance, and better accessibility and safety. Several responses requested not making any changes, i.e., leaving Sign Hill alone.
- Q10: 12% (53 out of 428) said they have **never heard of or visited Sign Hill**. 60% of that group said they would be more likely to visit with **better access and accessibility**. 53% said they would also visit with more awareness and information about the site. Better wayfinding signage and improved trail network (49%) were each top reasons respondents would also be more likely to visit.
- Q11: 66% said that **natural beauty** was the most important characteristic for the future of Sign Hill. 54% voted for sustainability and conservation. Educational opportunities received the least amount of support (11%). Safety came up in several responses to the “Other” option, as did problems with dog use, a need for restrooms, and mitigating any negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
- Q12: 87% were **adults aged 35 and up**. Only 3 respondents were under age 18.
- Q13: 50% identified as Caucasian or White. 18% were Hispanic/Latino(a) and 17% Asian.
- Q14: 91% live in the **immediate Sign Hill neighborhood or another area of South San Francisco**. Several respondents who don’t currently live in South San Francisco grew up there.
- Q15: 34% included **write-in comments** at the end of the survey (Q15). 15% of these comments were related to **pathways, trails, and hiking/walking** at Sign Hill. 10% of the comments were about maintenance. 9% want to leave Sign Hill alone, don’t change it.

*Note: Percentages listed above are based on the number of people who answered that specific question, which is sometimes less than the total number of survey respondents since some questions are skipped).*

### Pop-Up Event at Sign Hill

Saturday, April 1, 2023

4 Questions on Dot Boards

**28 participants**

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### Key stats:

- 29% visit Sign hill for **individual exercise**. 18% visit to connect with nature or do an outdoor activity with family/friends. Note: Pop-up participants were restricted to only one choice for this question, but survey respondents were able to choose all that applied.
- 32% chose **walking trails** as the best feature of Sign Hill. **Native flora and fauna** also received 32% of the votes. Seating received the least support (7%).
- 26% felt that **better wayfinding signage** would improve the visitor experience at Sign Hill. 26% also supported **trail enhancements**. More seating was the next most supported improvement with 14% of votes.
- 22% voted equally for **natural beauty, sustainability and conservation, and opportunities for exercise** as the most important characteristics for the future of Sign Hill.
- Other responses provided at the pop-up event suggested more seating at the top, fire prevention and safety, parking, tree canopies, a nature center, a restroom, a slide, and solar lighting.
- Conversations with pop-up participants, who represented a variety of ages and were mostly from the surrounding neighborhood, included requests for trail enhancements, trail maintenance, improved safety, signage, restrooms, better entries, and dealing with coyotes.