



Preliminary Participant Survey Results
Summer 2022

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Summary

L.A. Al Fresco is a temporary emergency response program created in 2020 to the COVID-19 pandemic that streamlined review and allowed for outdoor dining on sidewalks, parking lots, and streets. The program aimed to support local businesses to remain open and in compliance with public health requirements by increasing business' space for outdoor dining. The response to the program has been overwhelmingly positive, and over 2,500 participants have taken advantage of the program since its introduction. The success of the program has resulted in a desire and direction from the City Council to implement a comprehensive transition from a provisional to a permanent L.A. Al Fresco program.

In Summer of 2022, Los Angeles City Planning (LACP), in conjunction with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), released two surveys to the general public and current participants of the provisional L.A. Al Fresco program. A total of 308 unique business owners and 2,775 individual respondents of the general public participated in the surveys which provided guidance on the draft Ordinance. The summary report of the general survey is forthcoming, this report summarizes the results of the participant survey.

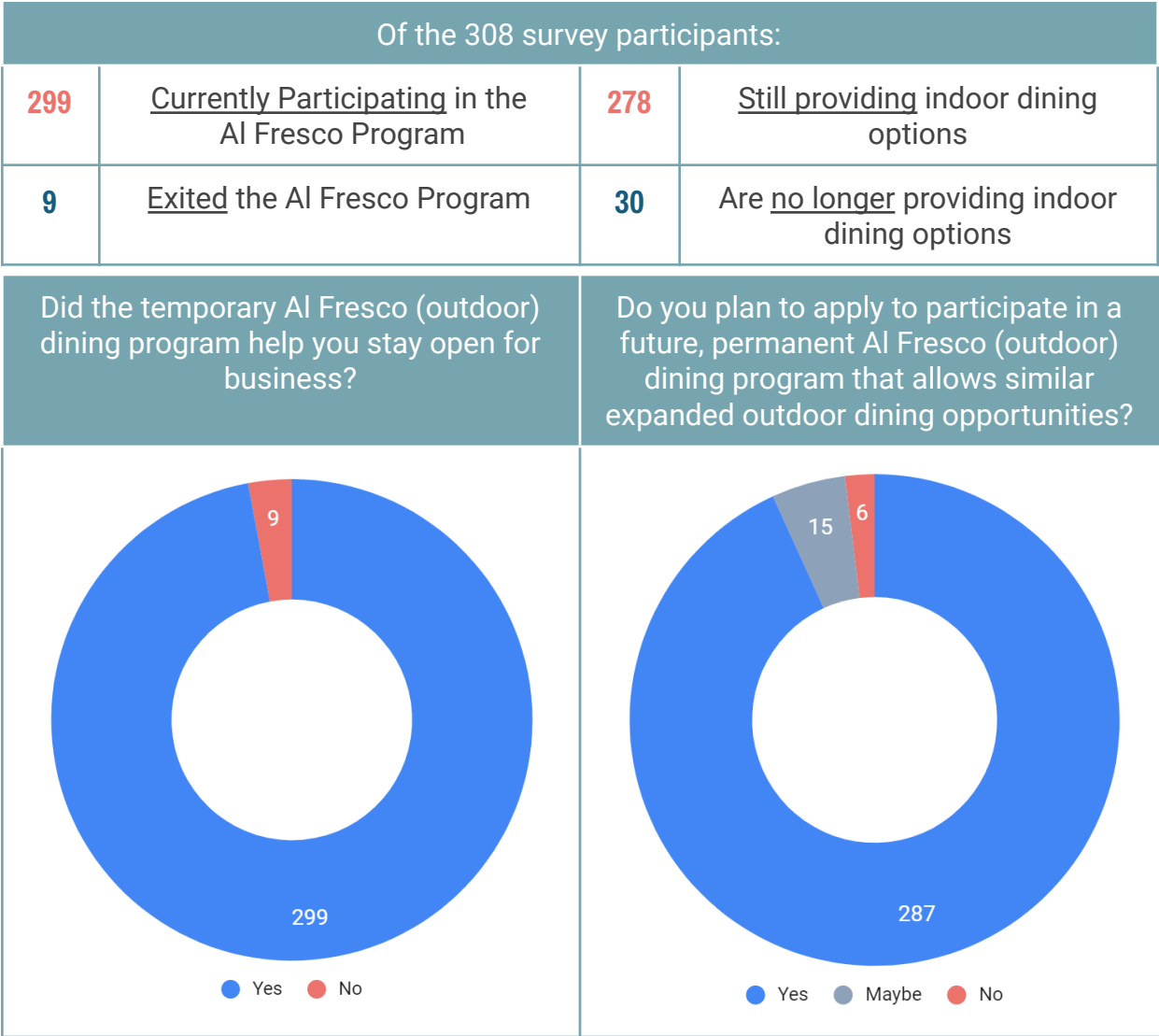
For more information about the transition of the L.A. Al Fresco program, visit <https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/outdoor-dining>

To provide comments or questions about the permanent L.A. Al Fresco program, email staff at alfresco.planning@lacity.org and follow us on Instagram at [@planning4LA](https://www.instagram.com/planning4LA)

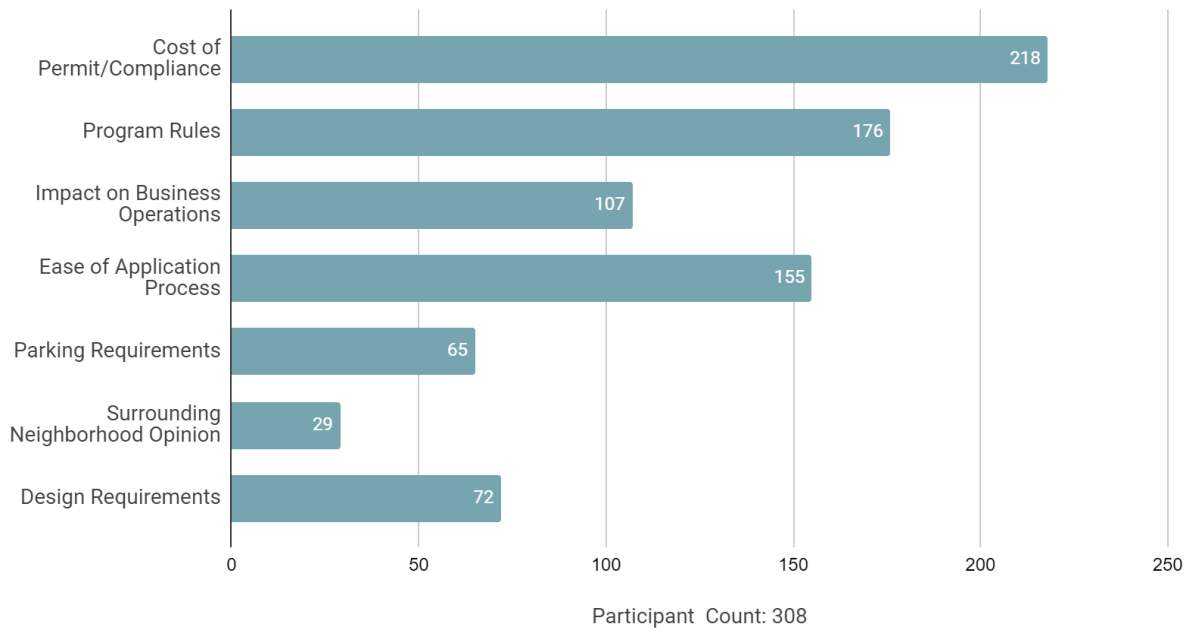
Participant Survey Results

Program Impact and Impressions

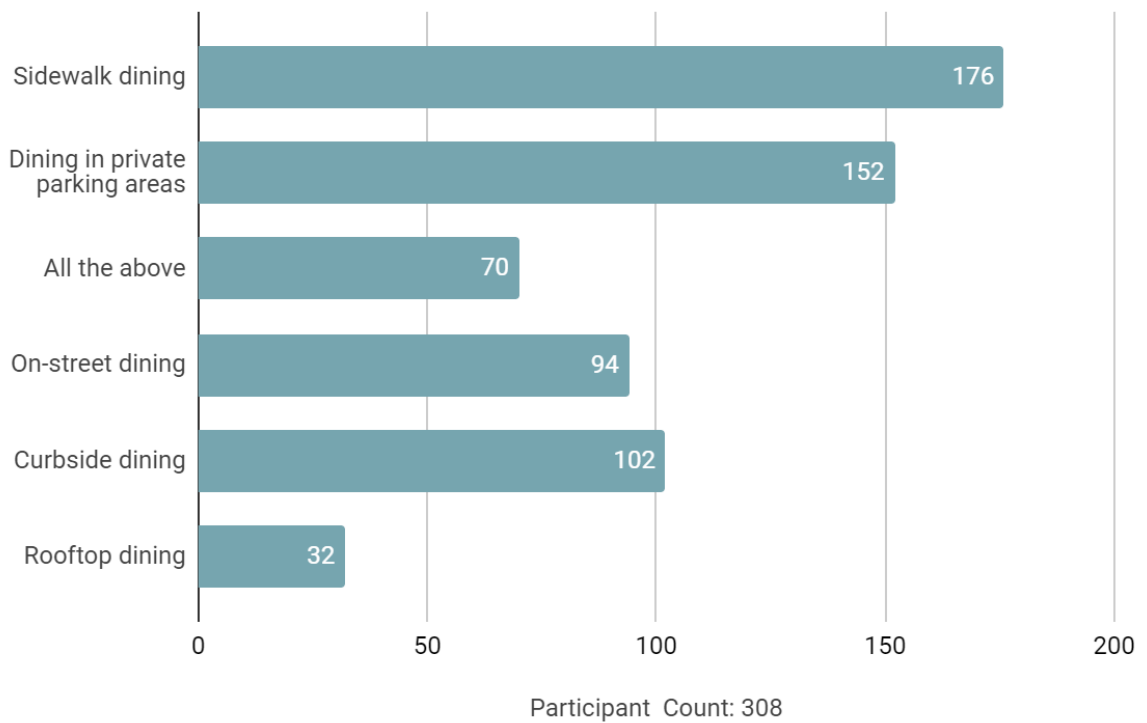
Overall, a majority of the survey respondents have reported a positive experience with the program and committed their participation in the permanent program. Below is a breakdown of the survey results regarding impact, impression, and considerations of the program. Please note that survey respondents were able to select more than one response in some questions. For example, many participants provided more than one type of dining. Additionally, not every survey participant answered every question.



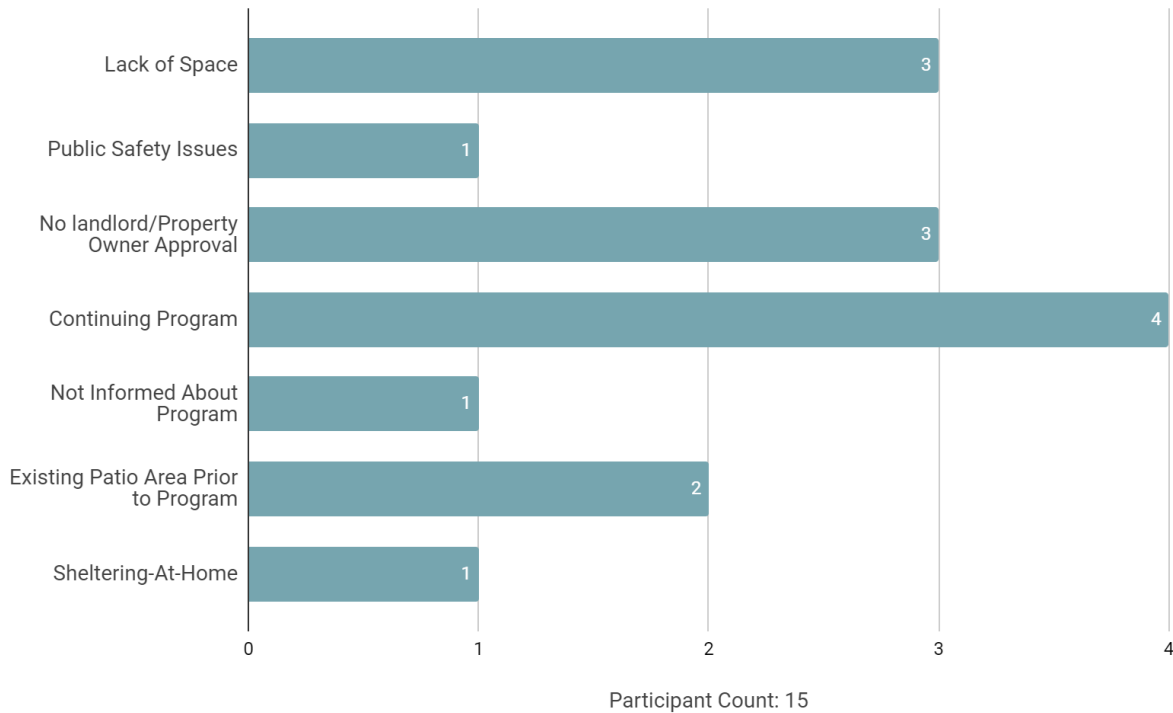
Considerations Determining Future Participation in Permanent Program



Al Fresco Dining Options Installation If Program Becomes Permanent



Reasons for Exiting and or Not Participating in the Program



Below is a contextualized understanding of why survey respondents exited the program due to lack of space and public safety issues.

LACK OF SPACE

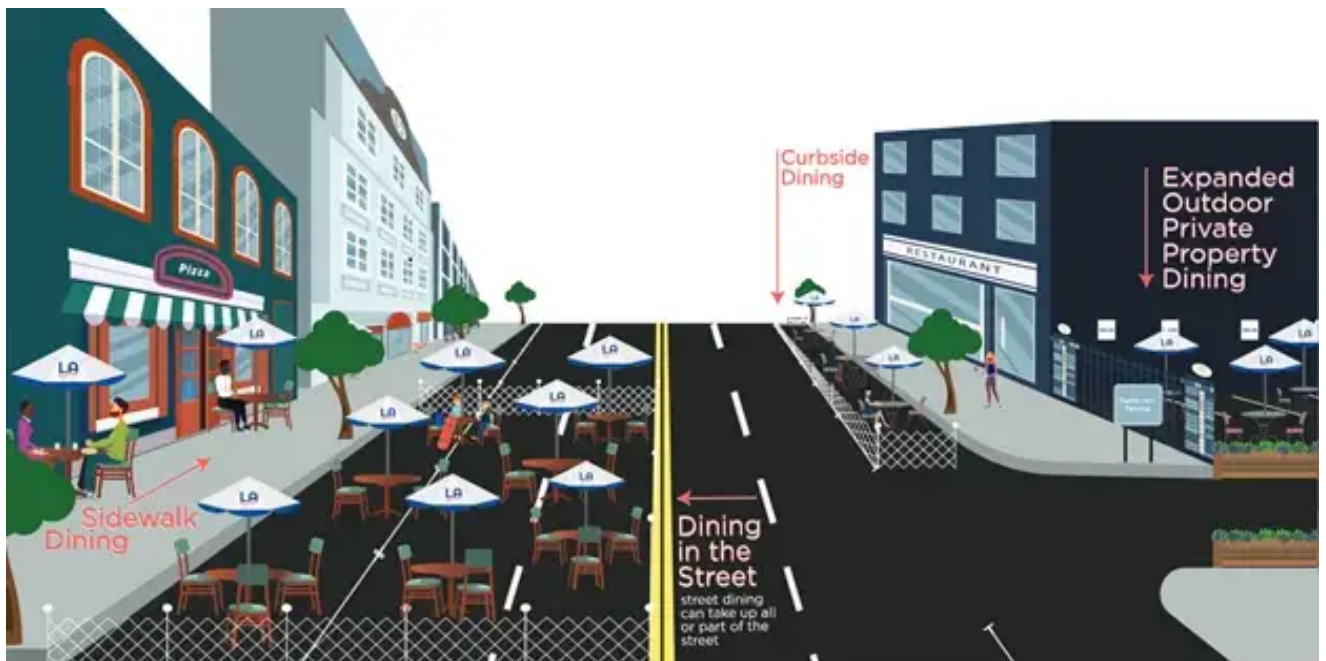
- Existing parking spots are needed for customers
- There is a lack of general space to expand outside dining area

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

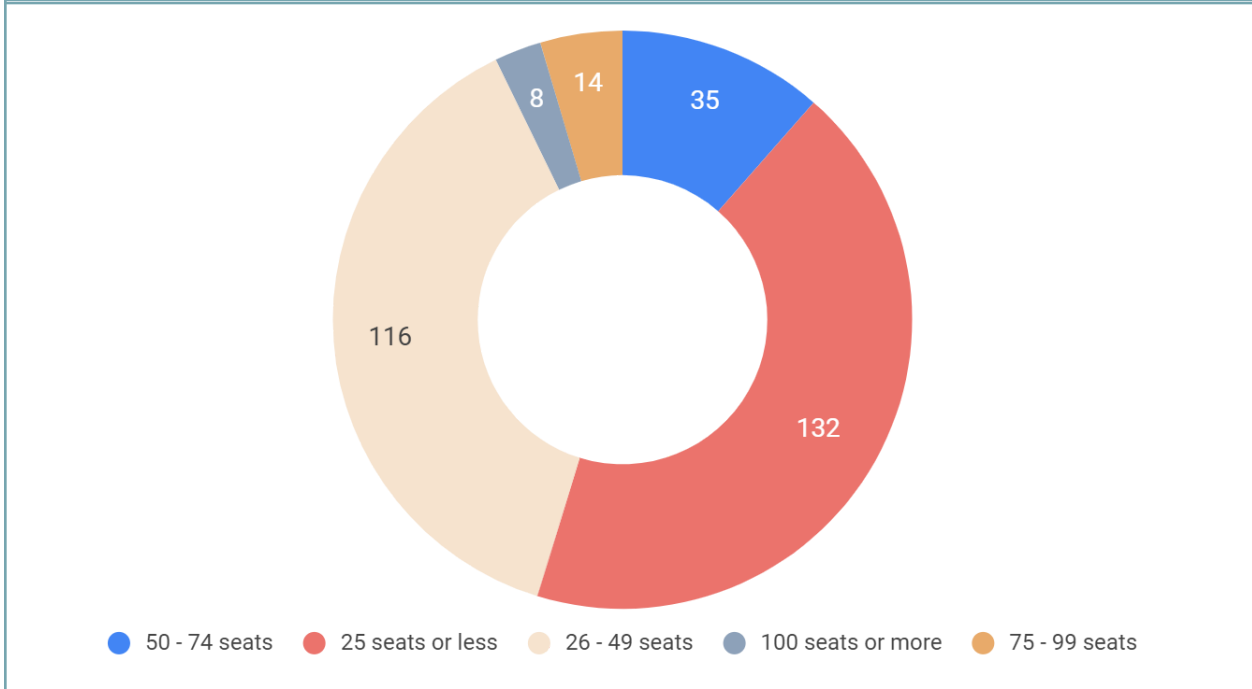
- Harassment by unhoused individuals is frequently experienced
- Moving vehicles are within dangerously close proximity to seated customers

Participating Site Details

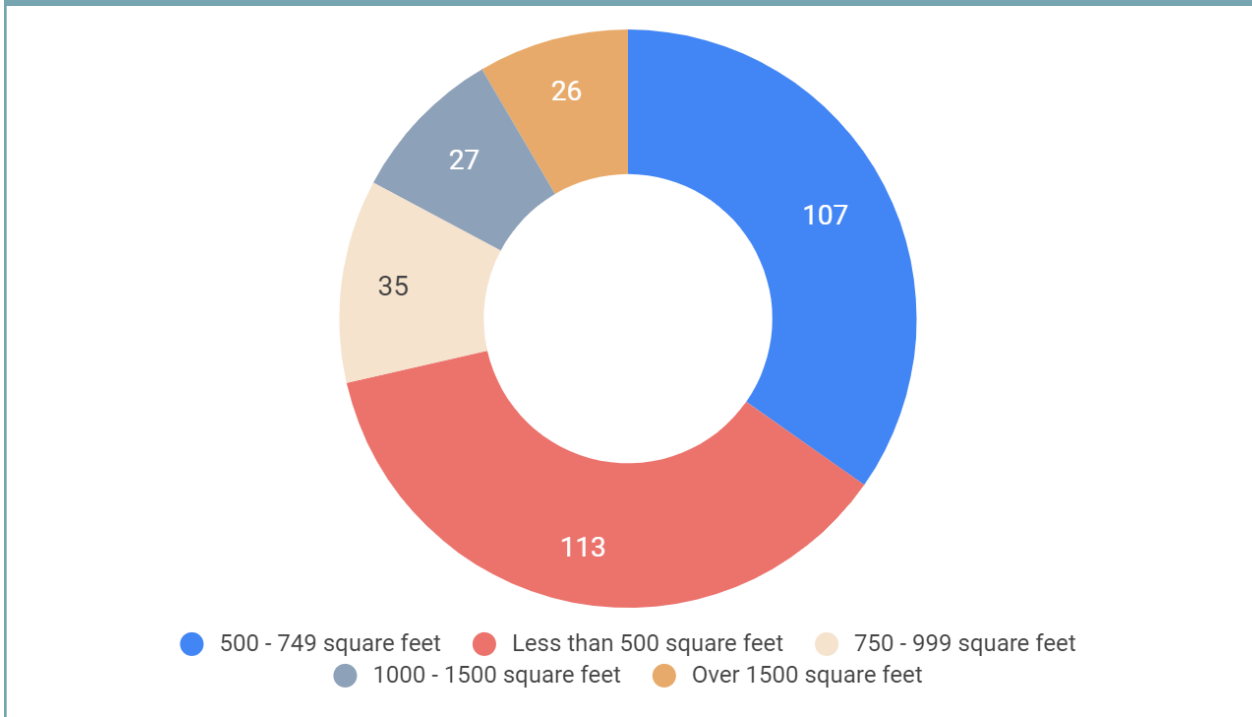
Type of AI Fresco Dining Provided:	Survey Participants Providing Dining:	Of the 308 participants, the following provided AI Fresco Outside Dining (%):
Expanded Private Property	189	61.4%
Sidewalk Dining	164	53.2%
Curbside Dining	68	22.1%
In-Street Dining	56	18.2%



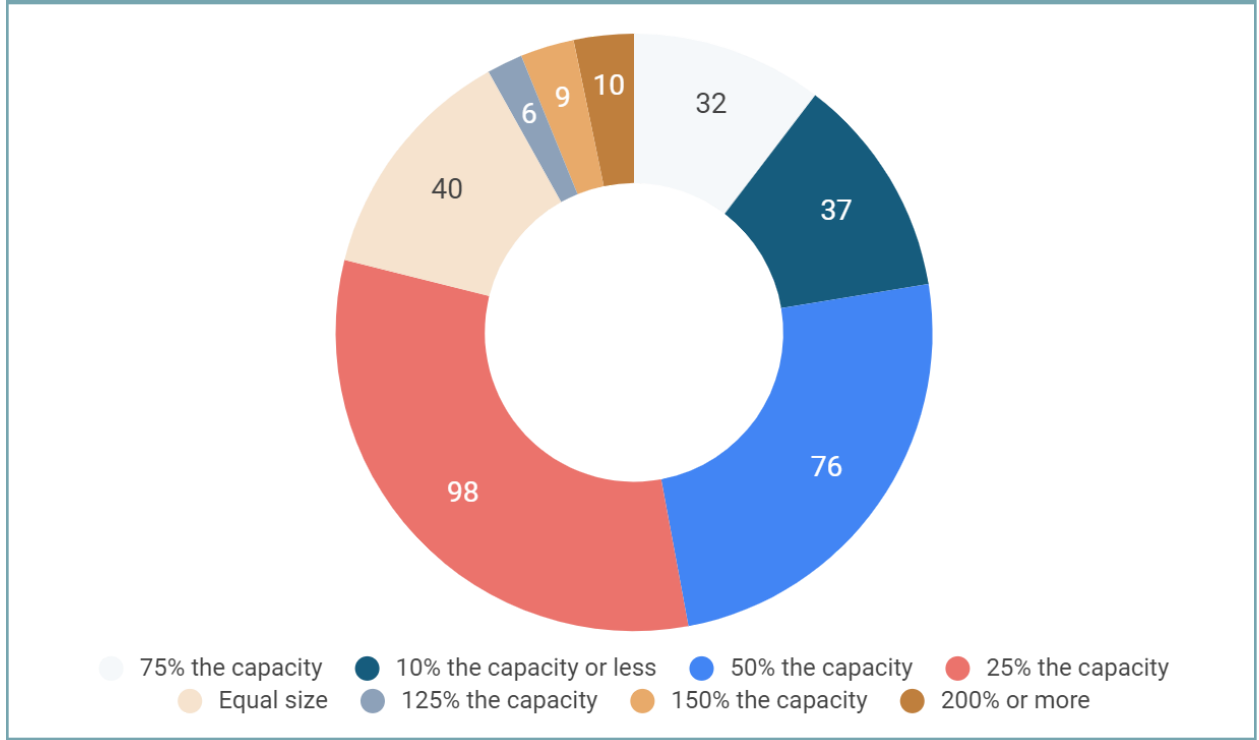
A total of 306 participants provided the following number of seats in their respective Al Fresco dining areas:



A total of 308 participants utilized the following square footage for their respective Al Fresco dining areas:



In comparison to their indoor dining area, 308 participants utilized the following capacity percentages for their Al Fresco (outdoor) dining area:



Dining Area Infrastructure

A total of 196 participants covered Al Fresco dining areas (not open to the sky) in the following ways:

Tent	Wooden Structure	Metal Structure	Canopy
36	20	5	45
Umbrellas	Shade Structure (attached to building)	Other	
56	26	8	

A total of 166 participants anchored or supported their Al Fresco dining area in the following ways:

Attached to a Building:	Attached to the ground (bolted or staked):	Weighted (barrels, sandbanks, etc.):
45	71	50

A total of 205 participants had the following number of enclosures for their covered Al Fresco dining areas (not open to the sky):

Not Enclosed	Enclosed on 1 side	Enclosed on 2 sides	Enclosed on 3 sides	Full Enclosed
109	29	25	23	19

Physical Space

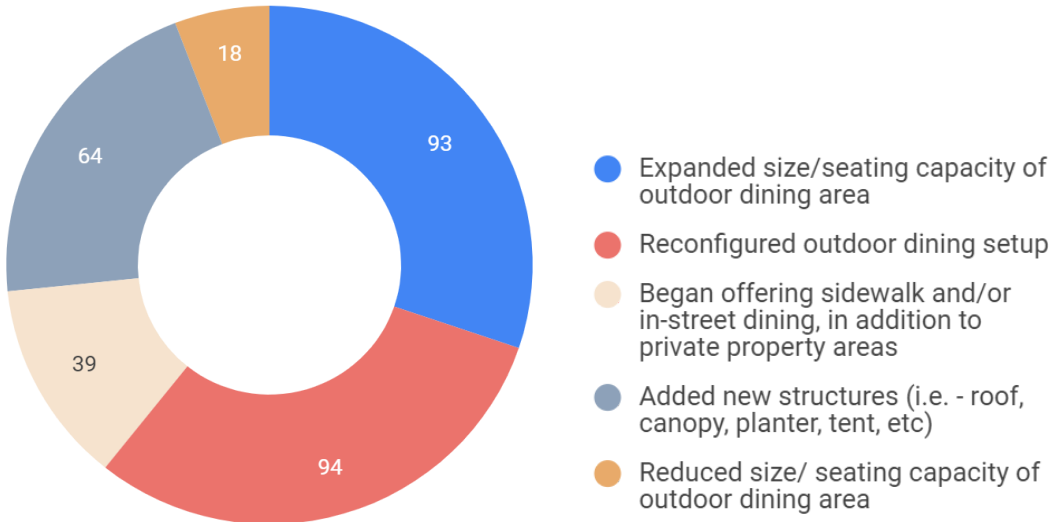
A total of 143 participants reported how parking is shared between other businesses:

Number of Respondents:	Shared Parking:
80	Parking lots or structure serving solely the food establishment
36	Shared parking lot (shared by 5 or less businesses)
20	Shared parking lot (shared by 6 or more businesses)
7	Shared parking structure

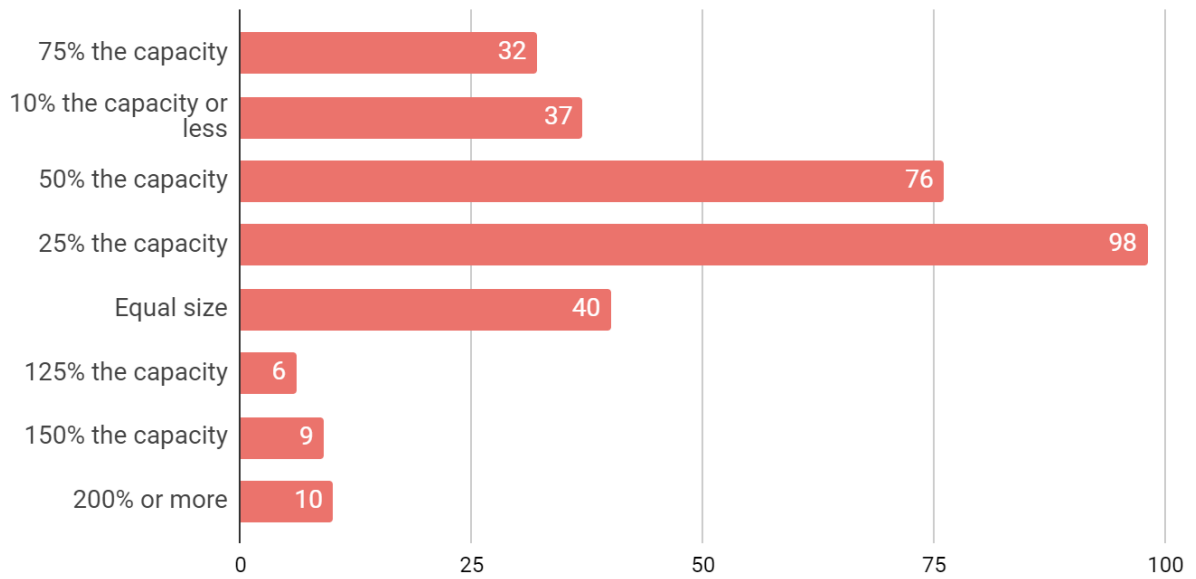
A total of 173 participants utilized the following number of parking spaces to operate the Al Fresco dining area:

Number of Respondents:	Number of Parking Spaces:
19	1 parking space
51	2 parking spaces
66	3-5 parking spaces
37	6 or more parking spaces

A total of 308 survey participants altered or expanded their (outdoor) dining offerings in the following ways:

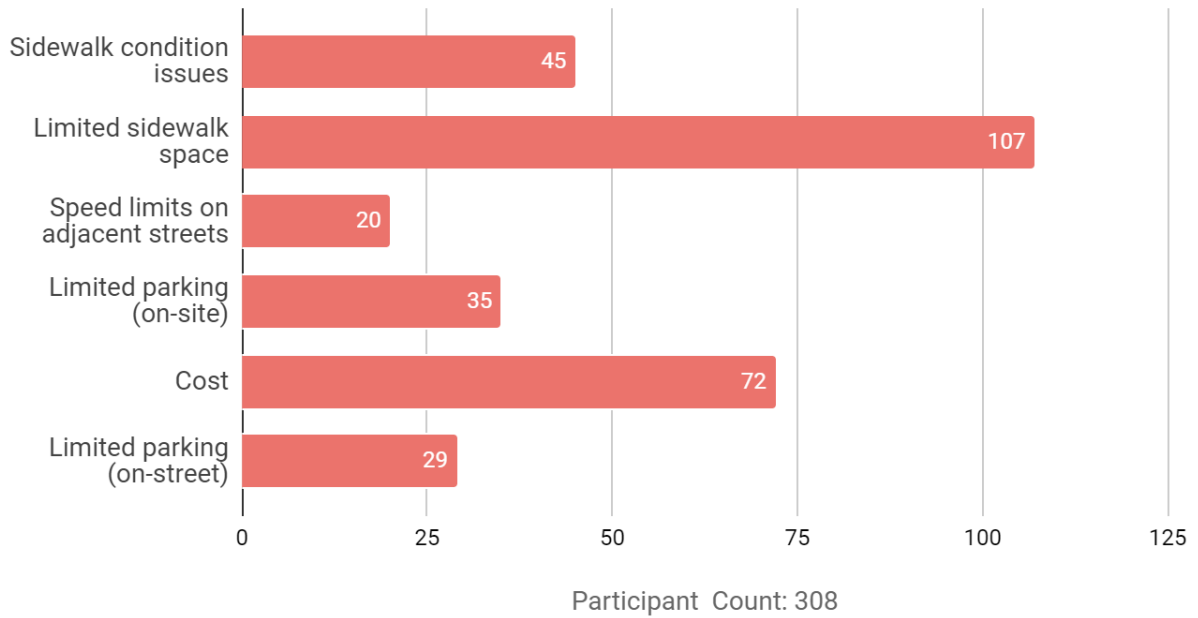


Approximation of Utilized Parking Spaces



Participant Count: 308

Limitations to Providing Al Fresco (outdoor) Dining Options

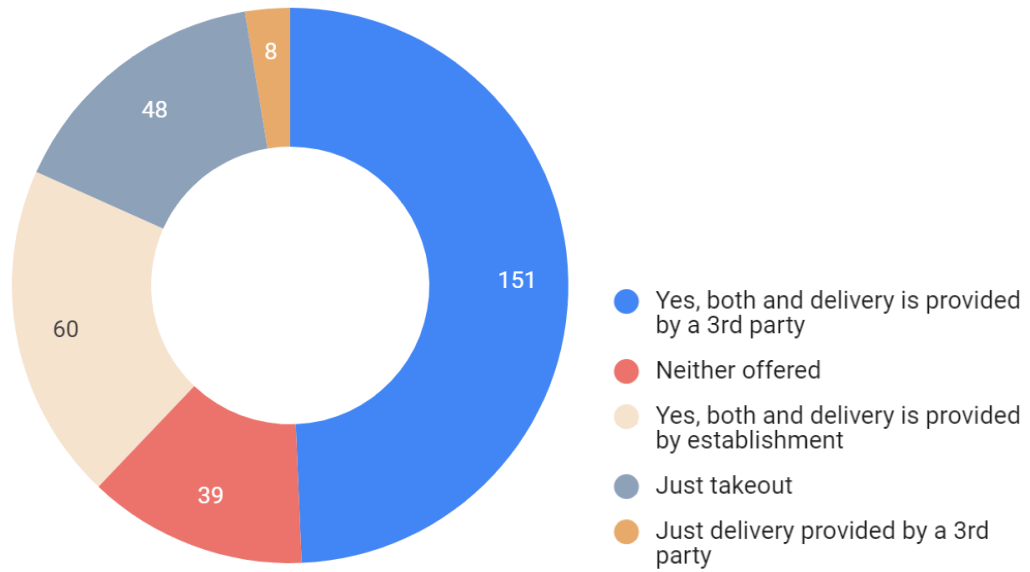


Amenities and Services

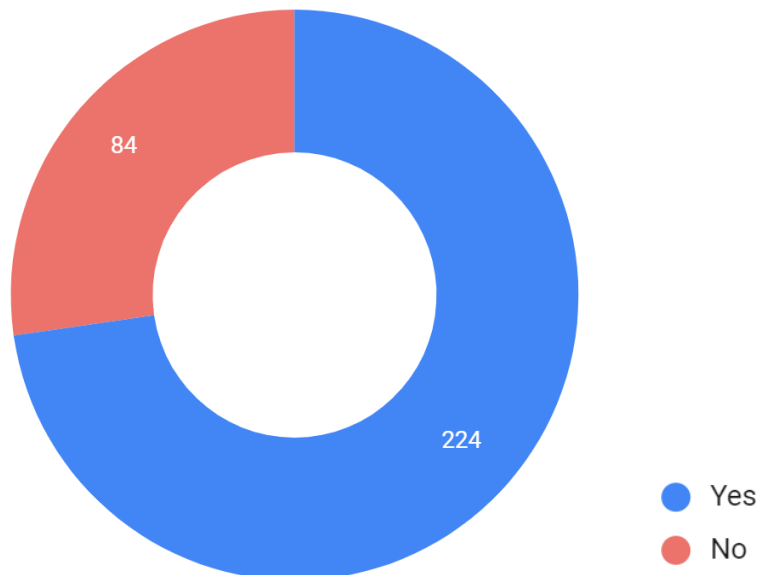
A total of 308 survey participants provided the following amenities in their respective Al Fresco (outdoor) dining area(s):

Portable Heaters	Lighting	Planters	Fencing
211	208	195	154
K-rails/similar barriers	Music and/or TV	Other	N/A
59	91	14	26

Of the 306 participants, the following offered takeout and/or delivery services:



Of the 308 participants, the following served alcoholic beverages in their Al Fresco (outdoor) dining area:



General Comments

The statements submitted for participant comments are centered around **seven general themes**. These themes and the respective comments are summarized in the table and in the narrative sections below. Additional comments regarding survey troubleshooting are also included in the narrative sections below.

Participant Comment Categories	Total Count	Community Comments
Variables Preventing Participation	7	"...For some (me, personally), crime, vandalism, theft and harassment from the houseless community has posed a problem for my al fresco diners..."
In Opposition to Program Permanence	1	"Depends on [the] type of business or condition of business, [but] this Al Fresco [Program] helps or hurts someone's business. As a business owner, I believe that this Al Fresco should not be permanent."
In Favor of Program Permanence	47	"Having Al Fresco dining saved my business. Please continue the program."
Opposition to Fees	12	"It would be considerably frustrating if the city decided to charge us for outdoor dining spaces that they forced us to build when they forced indoor mandates on us...Please don't start charging us now when we are still recovering."
Loosen Program Stringency	11	"... The fear... [is] the rules, the regs, the procedure of implementing permanently, all of which this city has proven to make difficult for our businesses in costs, time and rules."
Confirmation of Positive Impact	77	"LA Al Fresco [program] helped save our business."
Gratitude	25	"Thank you for supporting the Hospitality Industry and the cultural importance of the human connection through food."

Variables Preventing Participation

A total of seven participants reported variables preventing their participation in the Al Fresco Program. These variables include, but are not limited to, public safety issues such as crime, vandalism, and harassment from the unhoused community. For others, lack of workforce capacity prevented businesses from expanding their services to parking lots; thus, their business was rendered inoperable if inside seating was either not allowed or preferred by customers. The conditions of the physical environment prevented participation in the following ways: 1) neglected public infrastructure, such as uneven pavement, made it difficult to provide adequate outdoor dining or 2) business owners were denied approval of land use if, in one instance, the outdoor dining area was within proximity of a bus stop. In some instances, landlords have denied business owners' requests to use outside space to participate in the Al Fresco program.

Opposition to Program Permanence

Only one participant reported opposition to the program's transition to permanent status.

In Favor of Program Permanence

Over 46 participants pledged support for the program's permanence due to positive programmatic impacts in maintaining their business during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opposition to Fees

A recurring theme across the comments was support for the permanent Al Fresco Program to be free of charge or offered as a low-cost program, especially to small businesses still financially recovering from losses during the height of the pandemic. Moreover, expensive permit costs could prevent businesses from participating in the permanent program. Participants suggested the City offer financial assistance to small business owners to afford the permits if the program becomes permanent.

Loosen Program Stringency

Due to the relaxed nature of the temporary Al Fresco Program, 11 survey participants expressed an easy-to-complete application process with nominal to no assistance of permit expeditors or public counter staff. A convoluted application process and strict regulations would deem the permanent program unsupportive and frustrate the participants as they feel they have experienced enough hardship the past two years.

Confirmation of Positive Impacts

Nearly 80 survey participants conveyed various positive impacts of the L.A. Al Fresco Program. The most recurring impact in the comments was the provided safety net for businesses to remain open during the pandemic. The program encouraged employment

creation and retention as their service area expanded or remained the same when converted to outdoor dining. The alternative of safe outdoor dining increased customer confidence in COVID-19 safety dining measures. Thus resulting in a shift of patron preference to outdoor dining and patrons regularly refusing indoor dining. Lastly, participants reported a friendly ambiance and vibrancy in their neighborhoods since the implementation of the program. Outdoor dining has fostered a sense of community as the walkability has improved and open dialogue with neighbors has increased.

Participant Gratitude

Nearly 30 participants shared gratitude for the program in the comment section.

Survey Troubleshooting

Two participants suggested edits to the survey to allow for “no” as an option in required survey questions.