



Annual Concessions Report 2025

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Executive Summary

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) identifies Concessions Opportunities aimed at enhancing visitor engagement through access to recreational activities, amenities, and services. These opportunities also serve to generate non-tax revenue supporting the District's mission. In accordance with Title 6 - Business, License, and Permit Provisions, Chapter 2 – Concessions Permits and Contracts of the Forest Preserve District Code of Ordinances, this policy, alongside the Ordinance, outlines the criteria for awarding contracts or permits to concessionaires. The ordinance mandates an annual report submission to the Board of Commissioners detailing these permits and contracts. To provide context for the scale and impact of these concession opportunities, the following summarizes the recent financial performance and contractual structure of the District's Concession Program.

The FPDCC Concession Program generated \$1,008,571 of an estimated \$1,116,564 in total concession revenue, with over 90% derived from two major contracts: golf and the aerial adventure course & zipline. Concessions operate under five contractual types: Concession Permits, Concession Pilot, Classes/Tours Contracts, and Large and Small Contracts.

The program enhances visitor experiences by offering diverse food, retail, and recreational services aligned with the Forest Preserve's mission. In 2025, FPDCC engaged 170 business owners through outreach efforts including small business expos, presentations, webinars (bilingual English/Spanish), and social media campaigns. Concessionaires were also invited to major events such as Spring Fest, Insect Fest, Kids' Fest, Calumet Heritage Day, and programs at Nature Centers.

These strategies strengthened relationships with local businesses and organizations, resulting in 30 applications, 25 approved permits, and \$14,700 in revenue for 2025. While food and retail offerings remain strong, the program lacked recreational fitness and class tour options, limiting revenue growth. Post-pandemic trends and contract withdrawals by companies like L.L.Bean (2023) and REI (2025) further impacted this segment.

To address this, FPDCC will research recreational amenities in other forest preserves and park districts nationwide to pilot new outdoor fitness and class tour offerings in 2026.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of all concession permits and contracts granted in 2025.

Types of Concession Opportunities:

Type	Revenue To the District	Term	Competitive Bid	Publicly Posted	Board Approval
Concession Permits	Per 6-2-4	1 year or less	NO	YES	NO
Pilot Concession Contracts	\$25,000 or less	2 years or less	NO	NO	NO
Small Concession Contracts	\$25,000 or less	3 years or less	YES	YES	NO
Large Concession Contracts	Over \$25,000	Varies	YES	YES	YES
Classes/Tours Contracts	\$25,000 or less	5 years or less	NO	YES	NO

Classes/Tours

Non-Traditional/Innovative Outdoor Activity Vendors

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Service Provided</u>	<u>Contract Expiration Year</u>	<u>FPC Revenue Received</u>
*Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) (Multiple Locations)	Fitness & Recreational Classes	2024	\$94.80
Total Outdoor Activity Revenue			\$94.80

*Revenue generated from one final class.

Concession Permits

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Service Provided</u>	<u>Location(s)</u>	<u>FPCC Revenue Received</u>
*Alsome Honeywell	Organic Honey	Swallow Cliff	\$550
All Things Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Dan Ryan	\$500
Anis Bsiso Ice Cream Truck	Ice Cream Truck	Catherine Chevalier, Harms Woods, Linne Woods	\$1,500
Avocado Theory	Healthy Food Truck	Camp Bullfrog	\$500
*C-Snacks ACA Service	Snack and Crepe Truck	Busse Woods	\$550
Cha Cha Kitchens	Food Truck	Busse Woods	\$500
Chicago City Ice Cream Express	Ice Cream Truck	Wampum Lake	\$500
Chicagoland Kayak, LLC	Kayak Rental	Beck Lake	\$500
*Coffee Break 33 LLC	Coffee Truck	Schiller Woods	\$550
*I Love Grill and Lemonade	Food Truck	Schiller Woods	\$550
Ice Cream On The Go	Ice Cream Truck	Burr Oak, Sundown, Pulaski, Turtlehead, Tampier West	\$2,500
Poppin Dough	Donuts, Popcorn and Shaved Ice Truck	Dan Ryan Woods	\$500
Ruby's Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Schiller Woods	\$500
Scream Inc – Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Thatcher Woods, Bemis Woods, Miller Meadows	\$1,500
Sunny Ice Cream	Ice Cream Truck	Busse Woods, Bunker Hill, Labagh Woods, Miami Woods, Pulaski Woods	\$2,500
Sno Daze	Snow Cone Cart	Little Red School House	\$500
Zemi Coffee Cart	Coffee and Snack Cart	Thatcher Woods	\$500
Total Concessions Permit Revenue			\$14,700.00

*Non-Cook County Resident

Small/Large Concession Contracts

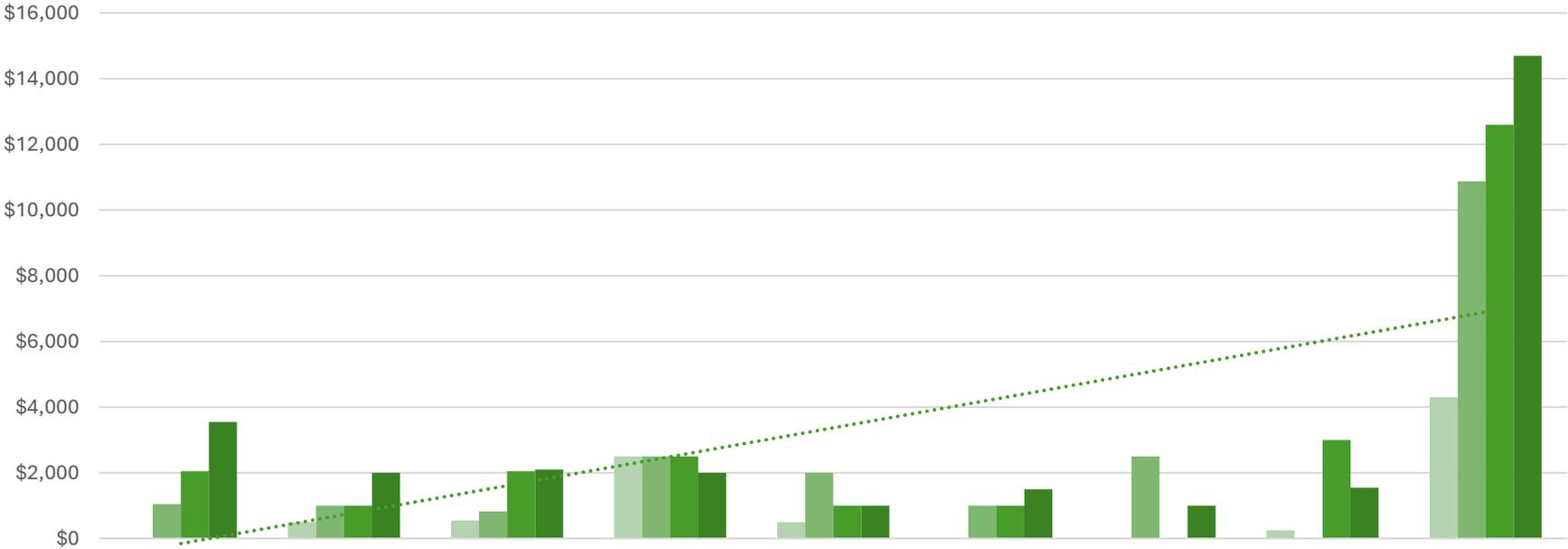
Current Small/Large Contract Portfolio

<u>Vendor Name</u>	<u>Contract Type</u>	<u>Service Provided</u>	<u>Contract Expiration Year</u>	<u>Estimated 2025 Revenue</u>
Go Ape Adventure (Western Springs)	Large Contract	Aerial Adventure Course and Zipline	2026	\$101,085.70
Chicago River Canoe and Kayak – Busse Woods (Elk Grove Village)	Large Contract	Kayak and Canoe Rental	2026	\$32,601.82
The Forge – Maple Lake (Willow Springs)	Large Contract	Kayak and Canoe Rental	2029	\$9,173.05
Chicago River Canoe and Kayak – Skokie Lagoons (Winnetka)	Large Contract	Kayak and Canoe Rental	2026	\$31,700.75
Chicago River Canoe and Kayak – Tampier Boat House (Palos Township)	Large Contract	Boat Rental	2026	\$18,645.60
*Indigo Golf (Various Locations)	Large Contract	Golf Course Management	2035	\$775,910.93 *
Oak Park Tennis Club (River Forest)	Large Contract	Tennis Court Management	2031	\$6,892.10
Juiced by Shic (Palos Park)	Small Contract	Food and Beverage	2026	\$17,766.10*
Recreation Concessions Revenue Total				\$993,776.05

* Approximately \$107,993.52 in Concession Revenue from 2025 will be realized in 2026 from Indigo Golf, Juiced by Shic and Pepsico.

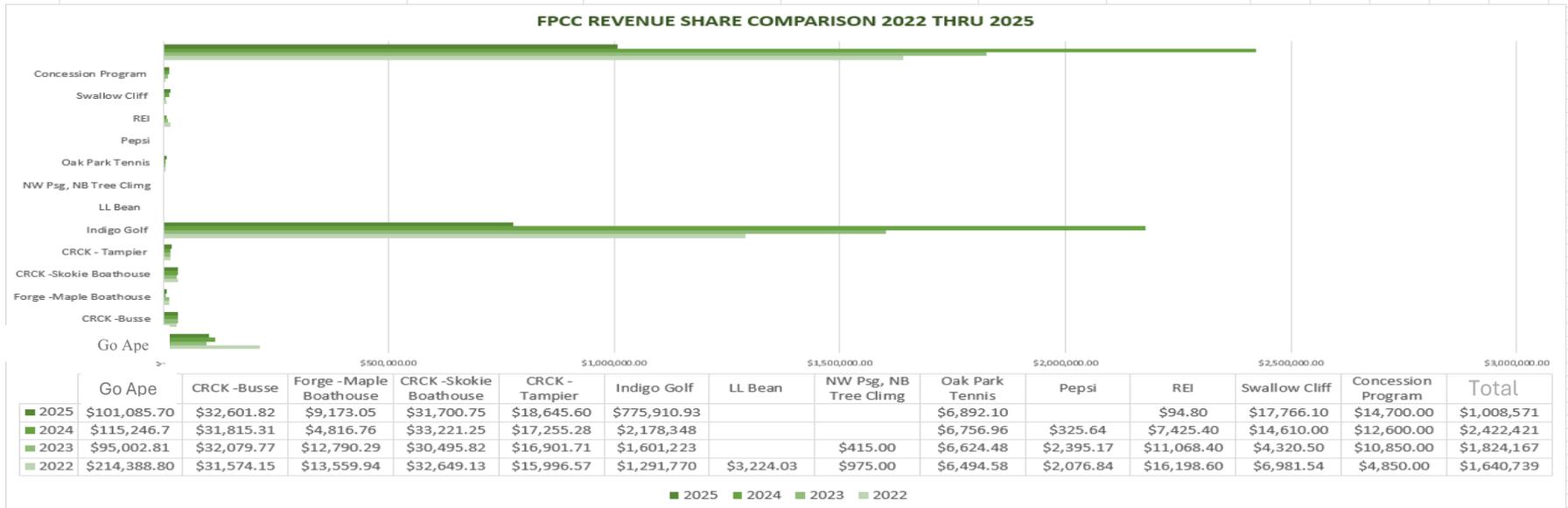
CONCESSIONS PERMIT REVENUE COMPARISON BY ZONES FY 2022-25

FPCC Concession Permit Program Revenue 2022-25YR



	SW Zone	S Zone	NW Zone	NW & SW. Zones	N Zone	Centr. and N Zones	Centr. and NW Zones	Centr. Zone	TOTAL
2022		\$500	\$550	\$2,500	\$500			\$250	\$4,300
2023	\$1,050	\$1,000	\$825	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$0	\$10,875
2024	\$2,050	\$1,000	\$2,050	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$1,000		\$3,000	\$12,600
2025	\$3,550	\$2,000	\$2,100	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,550	\$14,700

2022
 2023
 2024
 2025
 Linear (2024)



This segment presents statistical comparisons of concession program activities throughout Fiscal Year 2022-25. The count of concession operations, as indicated above, encompasses contracts that ended or expired within the reporting period and represents active contracts as of December 31st, 2025. Nevertheless, the revenue figures encompass all concessions that were operational during the reporting period.

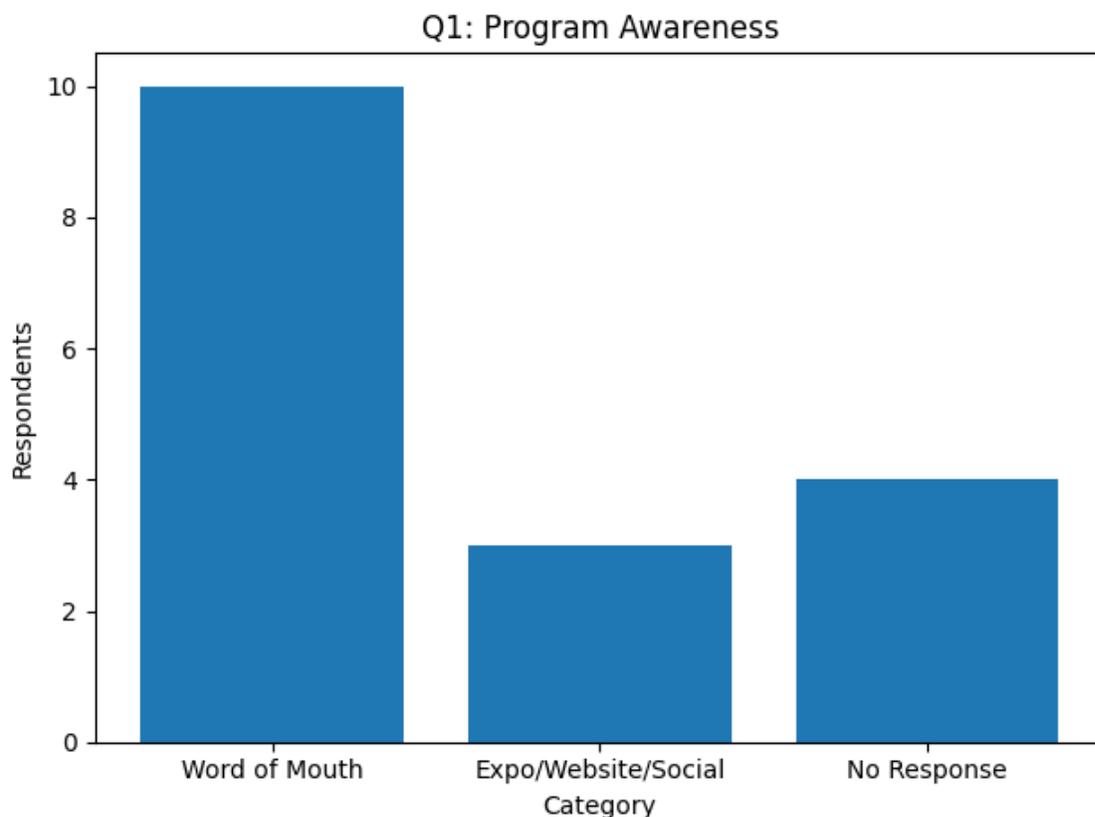
The Forest Preserves of Cook County’s golf-related revenues in 2025 decreased by approximately 54% due to the implementation of a new golf course management agreement that includes an \$11,000,000 upfront capital investment over the first three years of the contract. Under this new agreement, in addition to the upfront capital investment, 5% of all revenues are being directed to a dedicated capital improvement account, which is projected to generate nearly a 60% increase in annual capital funding compared to the previous agreement, resulting in a \$250,000 difference in annual capital contributions in 2025.

Beginning in Year 6, the revenue share allocated to the District is scheduled to increase from 5% to 10% of gross golf revenues, with projected revenue levels approaching those realized in 2024. Overall, this new agreement strategically positions the golf system for long-term sustainability by addressing deferred capital needs while establishing a stronger capital reinvestment structure.

2025 Concession Permit Survey Results

The Forest Preserves of Cook County surveyed concessions permit holders representing food vendors, ice cream truck operators, and retail businesses—via email and phone from September 30 to November 22, 2025. The feedback will enable staff to assess program effectiveness, pinpoint areas for improvement, and make informed decisions about whether to continue or modify the program based on input from the 2025 approved concessions permit holders. A summary of the responses from concessionaire permit holders is included below.

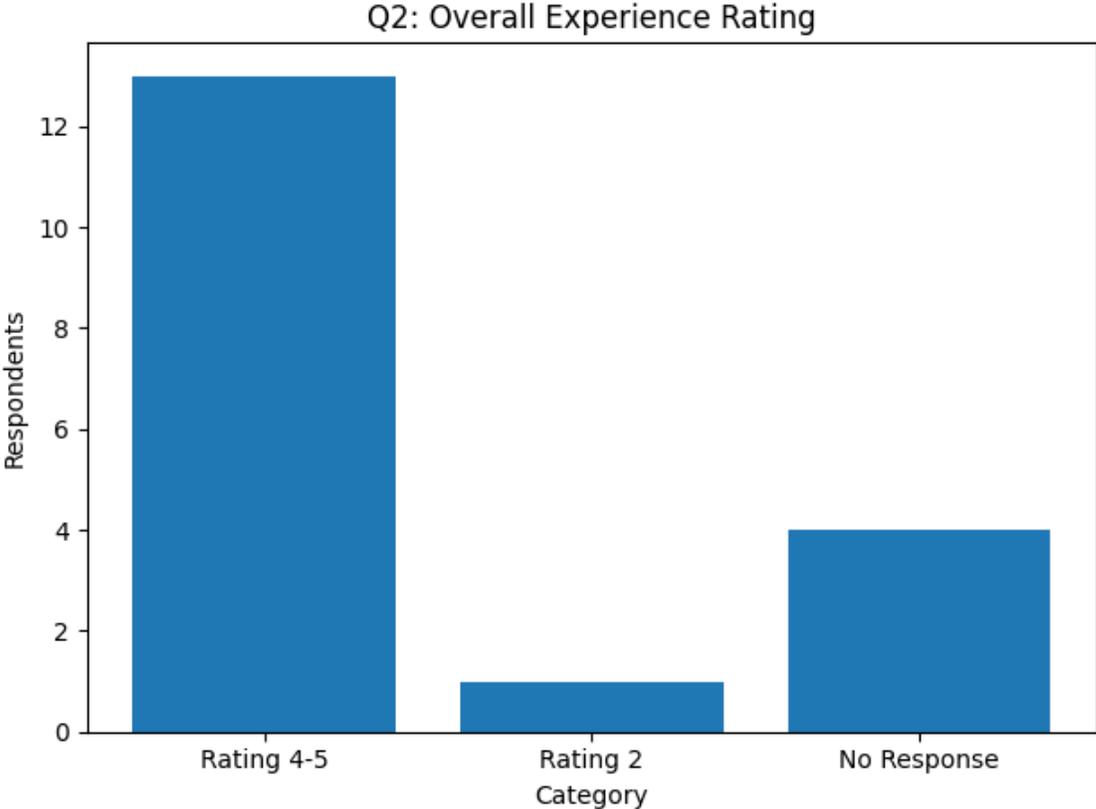
QUESTION 1: “How did they hear about the Forest Preserve of Cook County’s Concessions Permit Program?”



➤ **Survey Highlight**

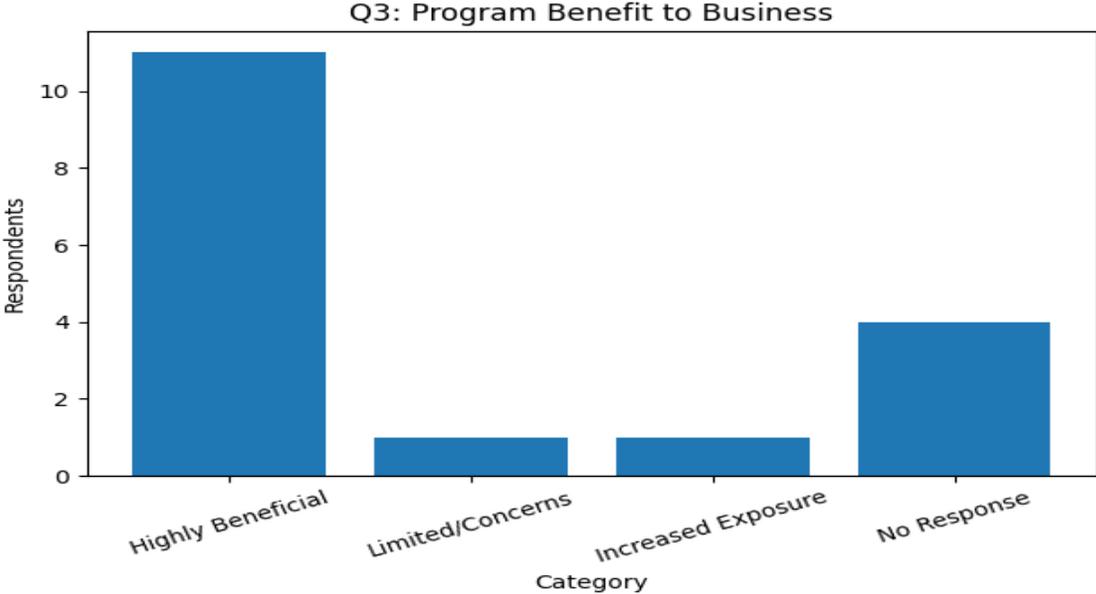
- 59% survey respondents (10 of 17) heard about the Permit Program through word-of-mouth and recommendations from other concessionaires or businesses.
- 18% of survey respondents (3 of 17) mentioned they saw information about the program at Expo, on FPCC Website or social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok).

QUESTION 2: “How was your overall experience?” (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest)



- **Survey Highlight:**
 - 82% of (13 of 17) concessionaires favorably rate their overall permit experience in Forest Preserves of Cook County

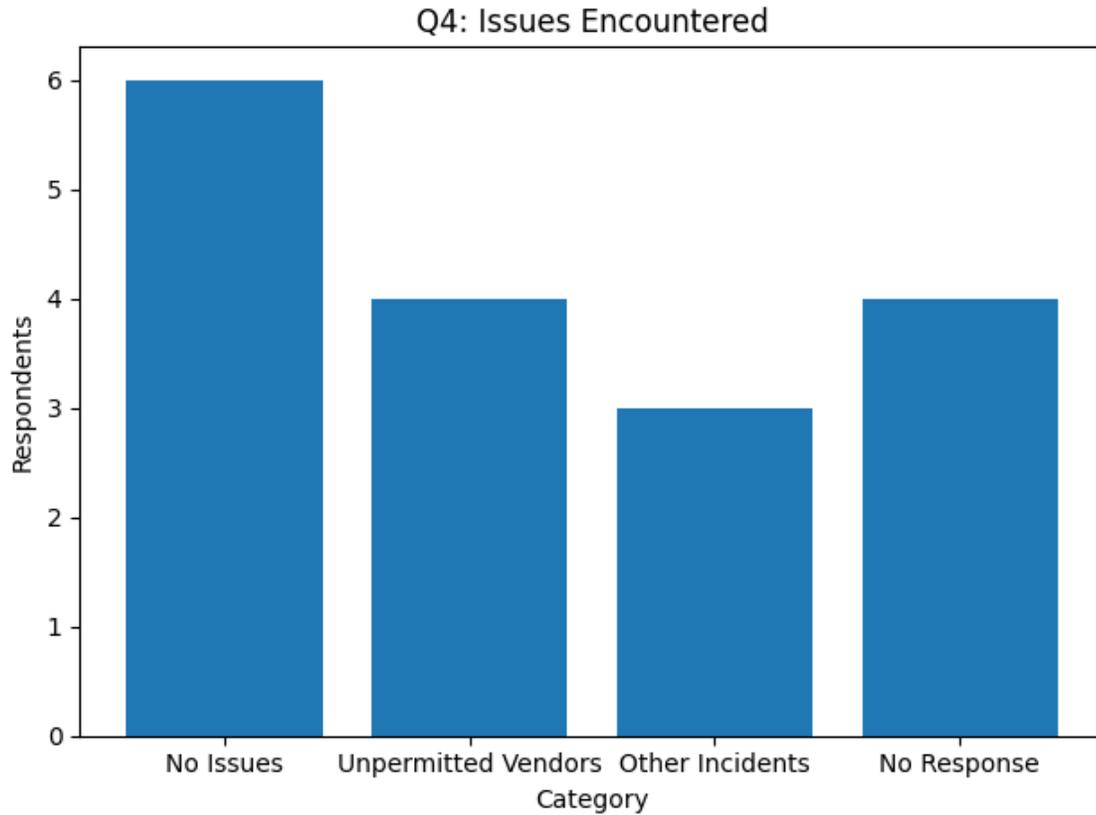
QUESTION 3: “How was this program beneficial to your business?” Did program help you grow your business?



➤ **Survey Highlight:**

- 65% of survey respondents (11 of 17) stated that the Forest Preserves' concession program was highly beneficial for growing their businesses, business better than last year, attracting new customers, gave a lot of business cards for events/booking for events in the Forest Preserve.
- One survey respondent mentioned their business had more exposure on social media from the Forest Preserves at Kid Fest and other FPDCC events.

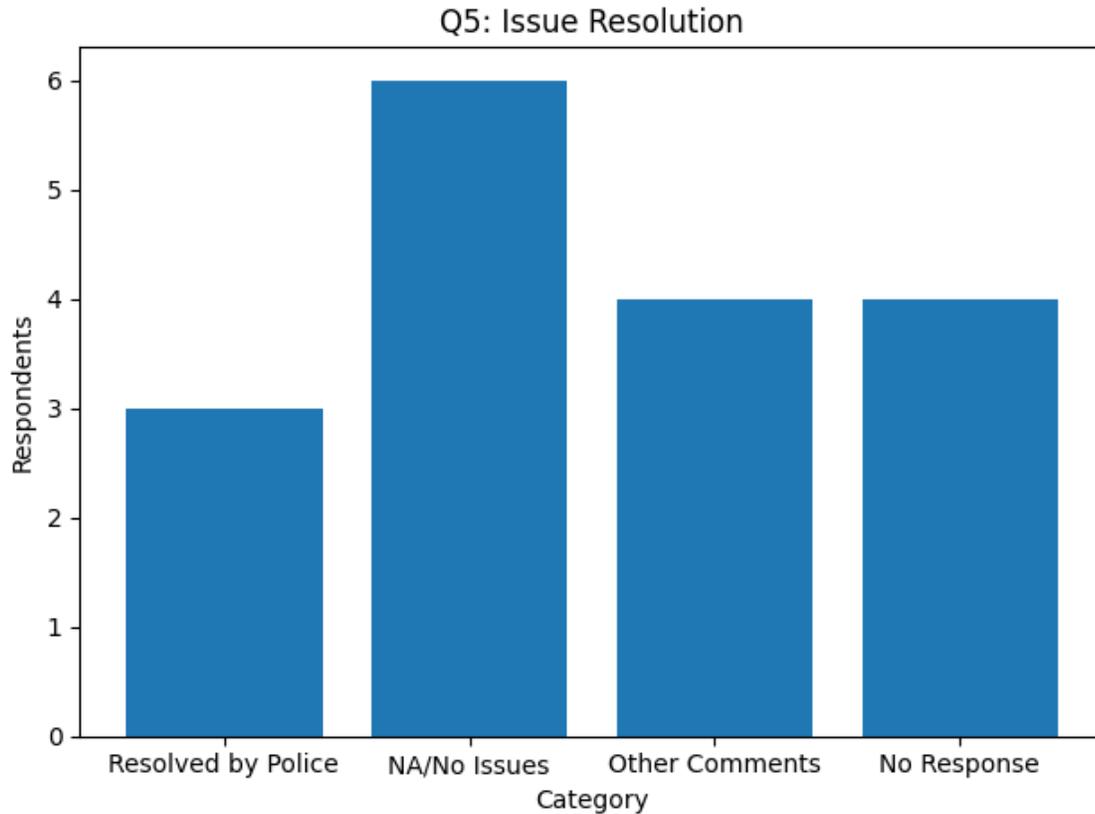
QUESTION 4: "Did you run into any issues this year? If yes, what?"



➤ **Survey Highlight:**

- 35% of survey respondents (6 of 17) reported to have not experienced any issues in 2025 and 41% of survey respondents (7 of 17) mentioned having issues with unpermitted vendors and other incidents.

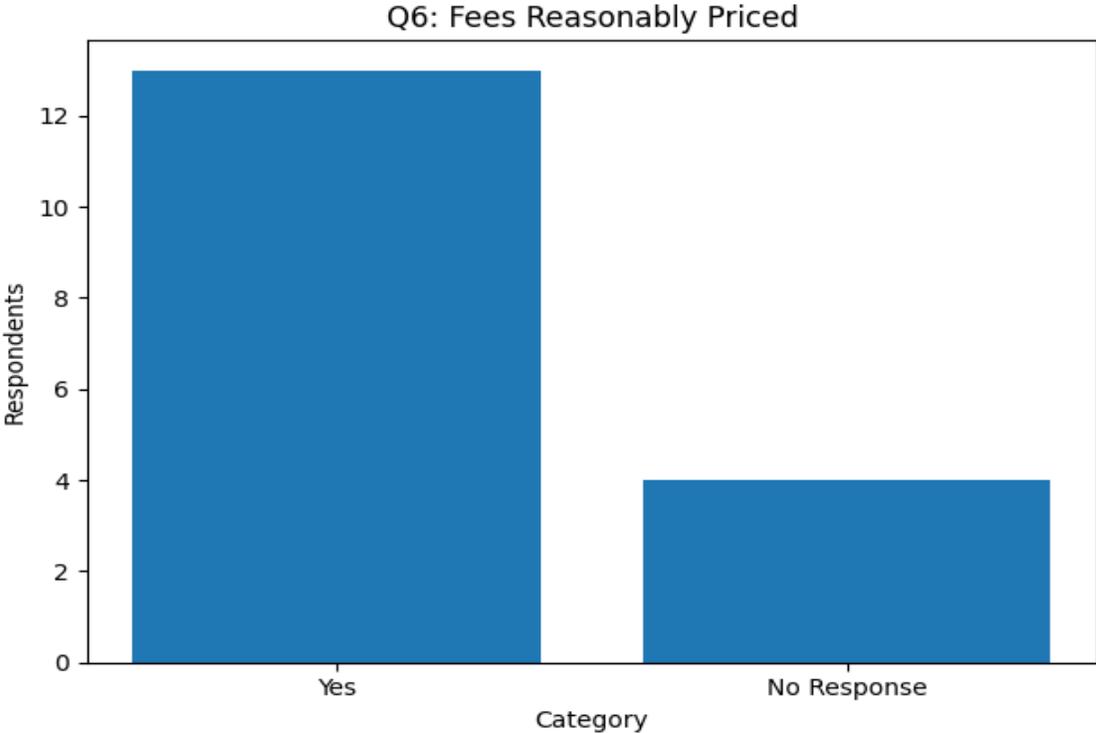
QUESTION 5: “If there were any issues, how were your issues resolved? Did you call Forest Preserve of Cook County’s Police or 911?”



➤ **Survey Highlight:**

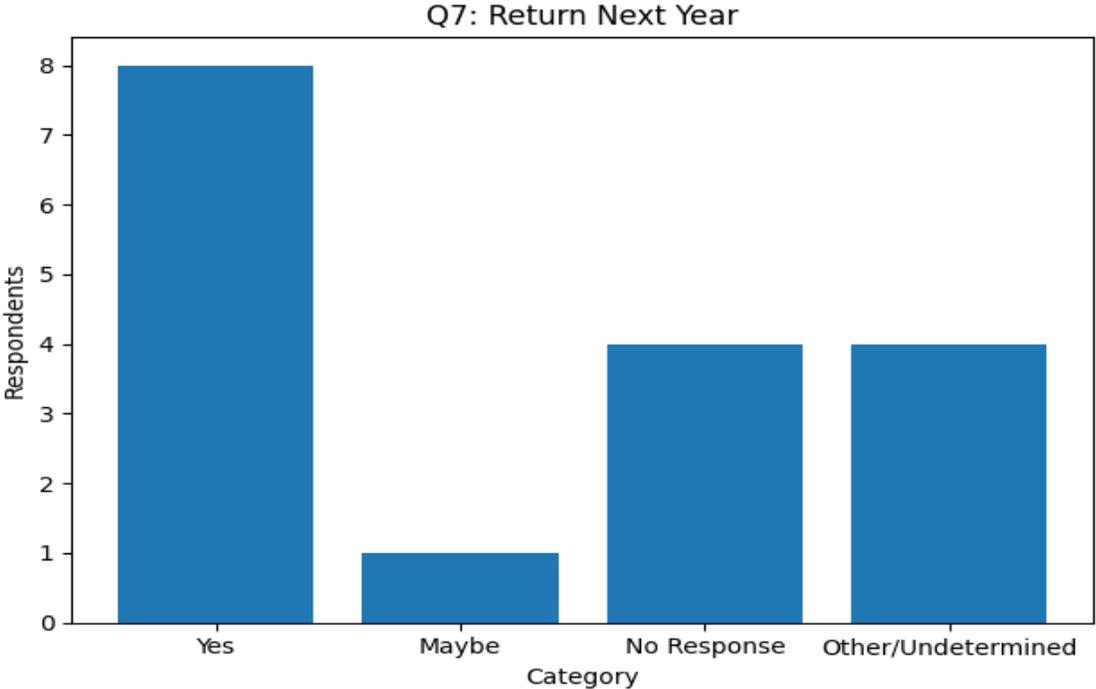
- 18% (3 of 17) of survey respondents reported their issues were resolved by Forest Preserves of Cook County Police Department (FPCCPD) with 35% of survey respondents (6 of 17) mentioning they had no issues. Survey respondents mentioned FPCCPD Police were very helpful asking unlicensed vendors to leave their locations in the Preserves and how quickly police responded to their 911 calls.
- Other survey responses mentioned if Forest Preserve of Cook County Police would increase patrols at high attendance sites such as Dan Ryan Woods and Swallow Cliff.

QUESTION 6: “Did you find the program fees reasonably priced?”



➤ **Survey Highlight:** 76% (13 of 17) of survey respondents found the annual fee reasonably priced.

QUESTION 7: “Would you return to the Forest Preserves as a Concessionaire next year?”

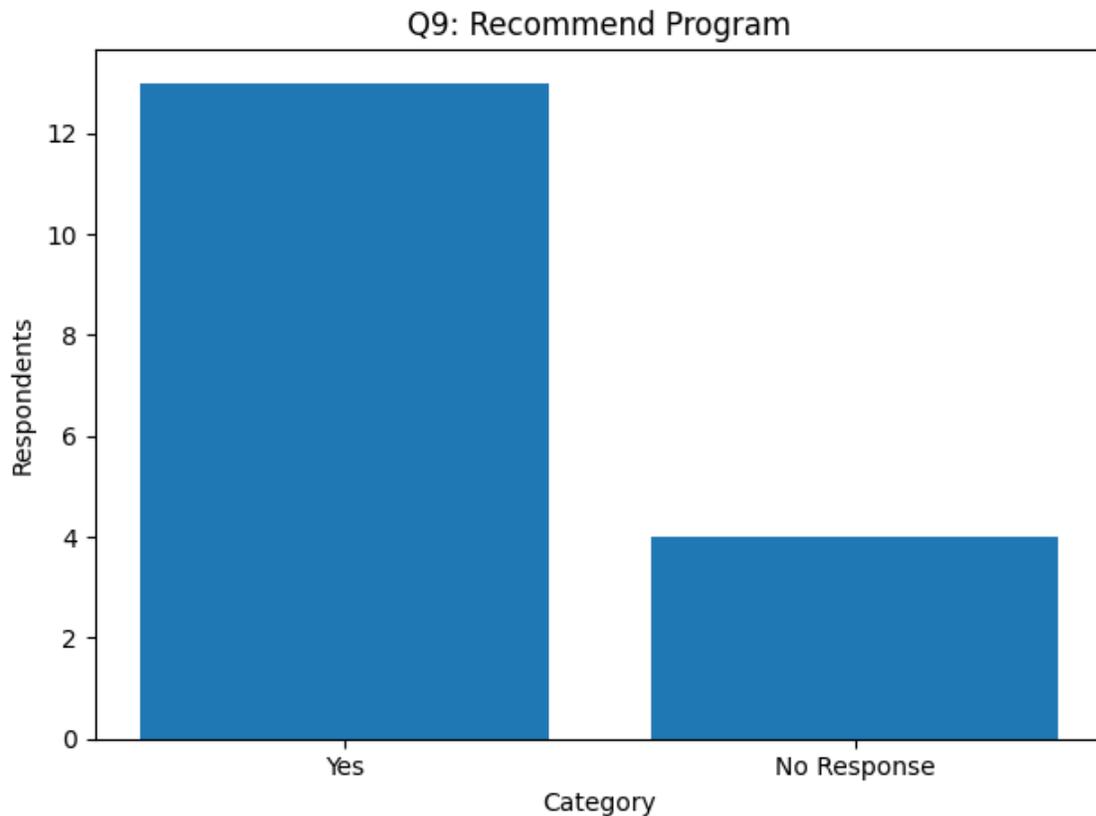


- **Survey Highlight:** 50% (8 of 17) of respondents mentioned they will return to Forest Preserves of Cook County in 2026.

QUESTION 8: If you are not planning to return next year please explain, why not?

- **Survey Highlight:** Some respondents indicated they were uncertain about returning to the Forest Preserves in 2026 if preferred locations, such as Camp Bullfrog or Schiller Woods, are not available.

QUESTION 9: Would you recommend the program to other small businesses in your industry?



- **Survey Highlight:** 76% (13 out of 17) of survey respondents mentioned they would recommend the concession permit program to other small businesses offering different foods, products, and services.

QUESTION 10: “What suggestions do you have to improve this program?”

- **Survey Highlight:**
 - 2 survey respondents recommend the Forest Preserves should have faster approval time for food truck and service vendors
 - 1 survey respondent requested if the business could have multiple trucks at different locations in the same preserve
 - 2 survey respondents recommend the Forest Preserves of Cook County should post information on social media of when food trucks and vendors come out to

your events. Provide marketing materials to food trucks vendors attending to push on social media for events or give us signage for events.

Definitions:

Applicant. Any person seeks the issuance or renewal of a Concessions Permit or Contract under this Ordinance.

Classes / Tours Contract. A contract with the District, no greater than five (5) years in length, for the provision of classes or tours conducted on District property for groups of more than five people, that will not generate more than \$25,000 in revenue to the District on an annual basis, and that otherwise meets the requirements of the District's Concessions Policy and this Ordinance.

Concessions Contract. Includes Pilot Concessions Contracts, Small Concessions Contracts, Large Concessions Contracts, and/or Classes/Tours Contracts.

Concession(s) Opportunity. The display or offer for sale of any articles, food, or tangible things; the collection of fees, admissions, or cover charges for a service; or conducting or soliciting any business, trade, occupation, or profession on District Property subject to the terms of a Concessions Permit or Contract.

Concessions Permit. A non-transferable permit, for a Concession Opportunity, issued by the General Superintendent or their designee, that authorizes the named holder to undertake a Concession Opportunity at a specified location on District property through non-permanent apparatuses including but not limited to push carts and food trucks subject to specific terms and conditions.

Concessionaire. Any Person issued a Concessions Permit or Contract by the District.

Food Truck. A motorized vehicle such as a truck, van, or mobile home licensed and insured to be legally operated on public roadways which is also equipped for preparing and vending foods, or for vending approved items or services.

Large Concessions Contracts. A contract for any Concession Opportunity that generates more than \$25,000 in revenue to the district on an annual basis. Large Concessions Contract availabilities must be posted on the district's website, competitively bid, and approved by the Board, per 1-8-2 (Contracts and Purchases) of the Code and otherwise meet the requirements of this District's Concessions Policy, the Code, and this Ordinance.

Non-Motorized Mobile Vending: A Concessionaire or their employee that personally transports and carries concession items for sale by hand without a pushcart.

Pushcart(s). A wheeled cart that transports concession items subject to the requirements and regulations of a Concessions Permit or Contract, this Ordinance, and the District's Concessions Policy.

Pilot Concessions Contract. A contract for a Concession Opportunity that is no longer than two (2) years in length, which will generate no more than \$25,000 in revenue to the District on an annual basis and otherwise meets the requirements of the District’s Concessions Policy and this Ordinance. All available Pilot Concessions Contract opportunities may be posted on the district’s website as available.

Small Concessions Contracts. A contract for a Concession Opportunity which is no longer than three years in duration, generates no more than \$25,000 in revenue to the District on an annual basis and otherwise meets the requirements of the District’s Concessions Policy and this Ordinance. A Small Concessions Contract must be selected via the District’s Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) or Request for Proposals (“RFP”) process in compliance with Section 1-8-2(N) of the Code.