

2022 PCA Zone 7 Autocross Feedback Results

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Problem Statement

Throughout the 2022 PCA Zone 7 autocross season the participation in most Regions has declined. This trend affects the viability of regions hosting events in the future.

Approach

To explore the root causes of the decline a survey was sent to autocross participants from the Autocross Chairs of the five Zone 7 Regions that have autocross programs. The recipients included participants from the past few years. The survey consisted of seven questions and an optional open-ended request for suggestions to improve the program. Many respondents overlapped between participation across Regions, with a handful of duplicate responses. Nearly 300 responses were received, about half of which voluntarily included their names.

Executive Summary of Responses

The responses indicate insightful data and some suggestions to be considered.

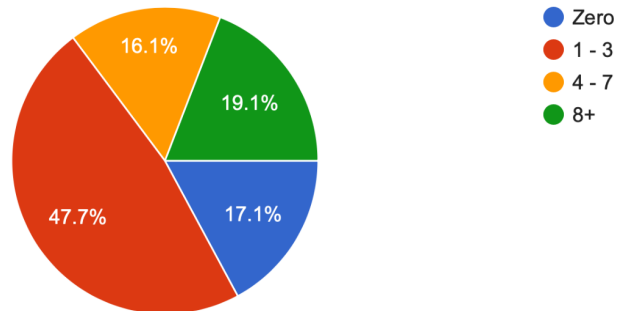
- 47% of the Regions' autocrossers only participate in one to three events per year.
- 51% have six or more years of experience.
- 72% do not attend an autocross school, likely due to their level of experience. Newer participants request schools and/or further instruction and find it helpful.
- 58% of respondents indicate that they attend all the events that their schedule allows.
- 38% note that inconvenient locations is a big factor in limiting the amount of event participation.
- 67% of respondents participate exclusively in events within their Region. The majority participated at the GGR/LPR venues, which may reflect a high number of respondents within those Regions, specifically GGR.
- Lastly, roughly 40% of suggestions to improve the autocross program focus primarily on locations, while recognizing the difficulty of finding and retaining venues.

Summary of responses to questions

Question 1:

How many PCA autocross events did you attend in 2022?

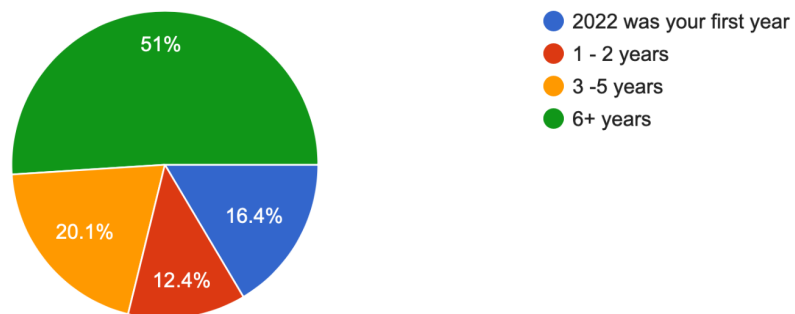
298 responses



Question 2:

How long have you been autocrossing?

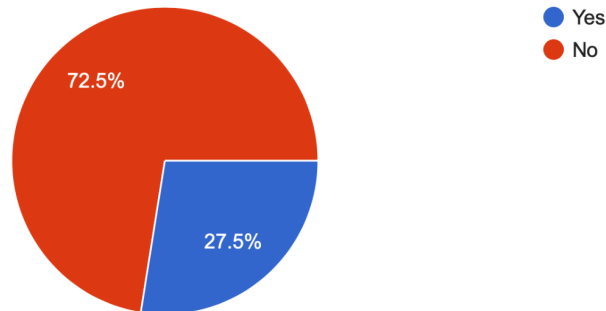
298 responses



Question 3:

Have you attended a PCA autocross school hosted by any of the Zone 7 Regions in 2022?

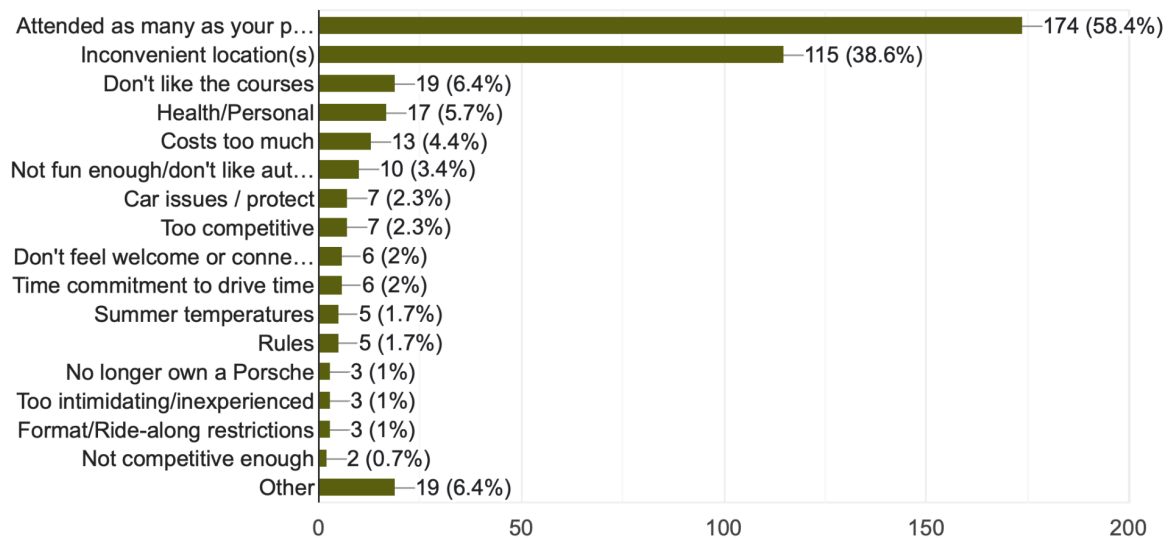
298 responses



Question 4:

What prevented you from attending more events in 2022?

298 responses

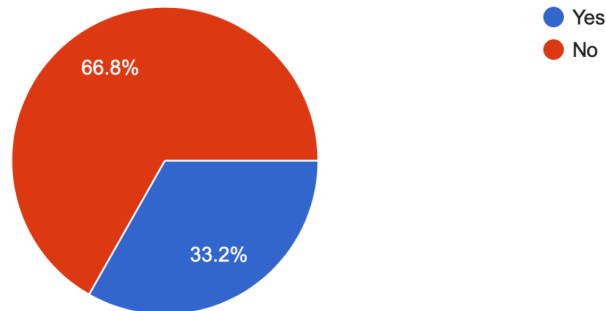


The initial question had a variety of open-ended responses in addition to the 10 pre-selected. The chart has consolidated those open-ended responses into an expanded list (i.e. Health/personal is a consolidated grouping of open-ended responses that were of that nature). The "Other" category includes miscellaneous items, such as: relocated out of state, insufficient notice to register, dislike of individuals, etc.

Question 5:

Have you attended an autocross event in another PCA Region other than your own in 2022?

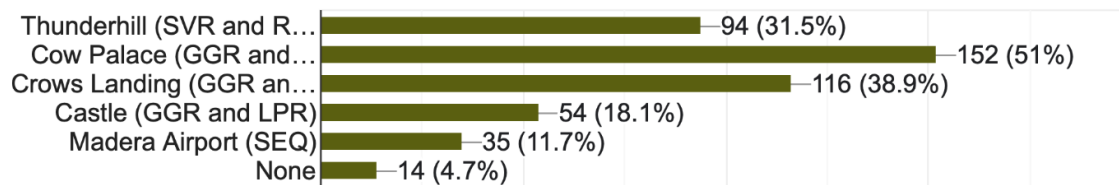
298 responses



Question 6:

At which location(s) have you autocrossed with PCA in 2022?

298 responses

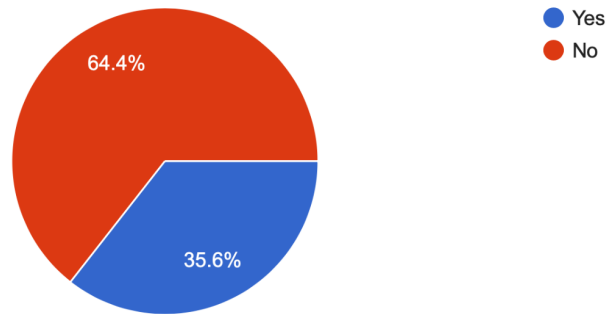


The responses to this question are truncated for presentation purposes. The data includes a long list of entered responses, including venues that are no longer viable (Alameda, Marina, Sonoma Airport, etc.). There are also several venues listed outside of Zone 7, including Riverside, Portland, and Northern Ohio.

Question 7:

Have you autocrossed in events hosted by other clubs/organizations (i.e. SCCA, AAS, BMW, Lotus, etc) in 2022?

298 responses



Question 8:

What would you suggest to improve PCA autocross?

About 40% of these responses are related to venue locations, specifically proximity to urban/metropolitan areas. Additionally, there are recurring requests for increased flexibility with passenger allowances. Comments are:

More convenient locations
I really liked the class and workshop which gave me the security to head up to thunderhill. It would be a lot of work, but having two workshops?? Also encouraging new drivers to have an instructor on board.
It might be impossible, but ideally, locations that are closer.
Events very well run but current my skills don't rise to needed level
Locations closer to Bay Area ,better surfaces
have a few sections where you can go 70 mph.
As a non-Porsche owner, I have felt welcomed with open arms! Your events are fun, with lots of runs! Great value for the money, challenging courses and wonderful people! Not sure how to top that! Thanks for many years of fun!
Nothing. Fun as it is
I would attend more PCA events if they allowed minor ride-alongs. I like to bring my 16yo son. Other organizations allow this. Thunderhill is also a little far for me. I prefer Crows Landing, Cow Palace or San Joaquin Fairgrounds. But the deal breaker is the prohibition against minors.
The PCA autocross community is awesome, very welcoming and supportive. I know it's becoming more difficult to find suitable venues, but I suspect the biggest factor limiting participation is the travel time to the venue

Closer options at good venues. New people don't want to travel 2+ hours to a not so good venue. It's a tough ask for someone that hasn't autocrossed before to leave their house at 6am to do something they might not like.
Hire course people. Feel too old to stand on hot tarmac for long periods
more convenient locations
In my case a closer location to Sacramento would be nice.
New sites would help, doing good with what we have available.
Unavoidable negative hot sun & the long drive from Folsom. Glad you left Stockton..
Create a different driving rotation so you have almost back to back course driving on warmed tires.
Clinic days that focus on certain driving skills, address car suspension setup?
Find locations closer to the Sacramento, Rocklin area. It should not be such a trek to drive out. Some want to use more AX forces tires and the drive and the day gets very long.
Nothing at this point. Felt welcome and having the ride-along instructors was so valuable.
Nothing it was a great experience
I like your events better
Nothing, but would be nice to be closer for some events! but still very much enjoy them , hopefully next season can hit a lot more !
I love PCA events. You get plenty of runs and the people are very friendly. Unlike some of the other organizations. My only suggestion is to have events closer to the Bay Area.
Just keep hosting events and do your best to make the next event better
Find location closer to greater Sacramento even if not quite as large/good as TH for at least a couple of the events.
Have better courses that use fewer cones
The event I attended was very well coordinated and executed. Unfortunately, tight back and forth turns induce motion sickness for me. I much prefer more sweeping curves like the roads around Lake Berryessa. But I understand that is not "autocross."
Keep the courses fast and flowing smoothly.
2 or 3 more acres of pavement at Thunderhill. Maybe 1 or 2 events at Crow's.
Make the rules not favor the top drivers
Have the autocross in the Sacramento area.
More events
Closer to Sacramento.
it is great, I wish I was faster!

More workshops
Absent a location closer than Thunderhill, I can't think of anything. I wish my schedule allowed me to attend more frequently.
It's really about having closer destinations which is a tall order.
Have cars in same class run at the same time
Keep it going as it is. Maybe, use SCCA PAX for the non Porsche category. The little grumbles I hear from people are unrealistic to implement if they were the ones who had to do the work.
Nothing comes to mind. I've only been to two events and the experience of the group had been extremely positive.
Local location in Sacramento. Why don't we buy a parking lot for Autocross? We could rent it out to offset expenses. Or buy land and build our own track and Autocross in the Sacramento Area?
The current program is fine.
You're the best
It's excellent as it is.
Assign cone chasers different positions in the morning and afternoon sessions so they can observe the better racers in different parts of the course
Closer venue than Crows
I liked the two-day events
I think it's pretty good as-is. Would love more driving time to practice.
If possible, closer locations within 1 hour of the South Bay Area/San Jose
Maximize track time, and closer track locations in Bay Area
Smaller run groups, longer runs, more sessions. Anything to get more time behind the wheel.
It's great as is. If we have a convenient location, I'll be there!
Perhaps a post-event critique of the course to help others learn how to handle different elements of the course. Thank you to all volunteers for putting on great events!
See if there a college SAE clubs interested in performing station duties such that a driver can have their shift covered by making a donation to the club.
Paid course workers like Riverside
More events close to central Bay Area ; annual AX clinic
Better coordination with other PCA events will be great!
Nothing new. Need a good location with space and good surface closer to where people live.
Running of events is good. Would be nice to have more venues in the bay area..
More locations closer to SF for GGR, or closer to weekend destinations for family like Marina (Monterey) was. Understandably shortage of sites. Food truck at site is nice too.
Something like a technical forum or a "gear buddy" would be great

While finding a suitable location is challenging, greater effort is needed to identify and procure reasonable sites e.g. Sonoma, Laguna Seca! Courses need to be laid out for runs lasting a minute or more. Need 8-12 runs per day to make it fun/worthwhile. Reduce the fee.
More events at Crows Landing
If we could find a venue in the Bay Area that would be ideal.
It's perfect, except it could start little later, like 8am or even 9am. Since the auto-cross locations are now far, being there at 7am requires leaving home at 4am, which is hard!
More local autocrosses. Crows landing, and Thunderhill are really far. Do one at Sonoma Valley Raceway.
Nothing. Events are perfect. I just did not have time to attend more
More hits
If we had a calendar of events locations it would help plan ahead. I usually get the announcements several weeks before the event but the calendar is usually booked by that time.
I know finding venues is very difficult. My biggest issue is driving 2 plus hours to get to event. Total of 5 plus hours to drive to crows landing - other thing is to include family cros is not ideal. Not much going on for a family member to enjoy while I'm at autocross. I've actually considered going to PCA autocrosses in Santa Maria for 23 as it's not much further for me and I can take family and have fun outside of autocross. Just wish we had a venue closer to South Bay Area.
Crows Landing has the best, long, winding courses, but it's so far away. I wish there was a closer option.
Try and keep the cow palace as a venue
I had a great time and hope to attend more next year
Really enjoyed past event. Just extremely busy in the last two years and unable to attend
Location, location, location
More technology to track live timing in each sector and show it on the board use of drones etc
Get events back in Alameda or somewhere else in east bay
Have another location closer to the South Bay
Improve the rules
Return to Marina
First, I have to say the folk running the events are doing a great job and are working very hard to make the events fun. I know locations are not something totally in their control, but the few events I would have been able to make this year were at Crows Landing and it was forecast to be in the 100s. It's not worth the discomfort and drive for me. Cow Palace, Marina, and Alameda were all much more comfortable to run at weather wise. Again I realize, not in your control.
More of them
Location location location.

Test and tune events
Very nice event. We'll run and organized. One thing I have seen is a three group format. That way there is a break between sessions, and can expedite the transition. There are pros and cons, but I'm throwing it out there.
Lower cost, closer to bay area
Events must be proximate to the town of sonoma for me to attend. Sonoma raceway is perfect, but basically anything within a 30 mile radius would be fine.
open to non-Porsche drivers(space permitting) to lower overall cost
Bay Area AX location
3 run group format instead of 2.
Closer to Bay Area or later in the day
Closer location
I would love a north bay venue! But you do a great job !
Closer venue to Sacramento/Tahoe
Crows is probably the best venue. I know it's super hard right now, but as much advance notice as possible on the schedule would help a lot. But, I appreciate any time you can organize one.
Let folks take (or be) a passenger without being an instructor. I think us "mid pack" folks would benefit a lot from that.
Get Thunderhill to increase the size of the AX pad.
Finding another location that is within a ~1 hour drive from the Peninsula - the convenience of Cow Palace made it a lot easier to find time for autocross events
Closer sites to the Bay Area (which I know is almost impossible nowadays)
Push tech, check inn, and first lap by 30 min. Allow PCA members to leave early if allowed (with a valid excuse) by the amount of course workers available. Have tents at worker stations.
More opportunities near Marin/Sonoma
1. Venues closer to bay area. 2. Expand instructor program (more instructors, more instructor training/perks, more opportunities for students). 3. Would like some tighter sections mixed into the longer, open courses to give those of us with older cars a chance to catch up. ;-)
Add locations such as Alameda and Cow Palace.
I know it is tough but location should be close to bay area, good pavement and allow for a long course.
If newcomers are joining, you need to have a way to connect with the people in a better way. I found the attitude of existing members kind of annoying given that this was my first ever auto-cross event.
Venues in home region (both LPR GGR). I know you're already working hard on it! (Though it's the single biggest challenge that drives time investment, costs, needing to stay away from home, and energy/fatigue)
Find locations closer to the Bay Area. Levi's Stadium Lot?

The days of Marina were a lot better. Not just the location, but the people. Less GGR, more LPR. Used to be a lot of fun. GGR I think took the fun out of it for us casual AXers. Not clear there is an answer for that, but I do miss those folks that called Marina home
A venue on the Bay Area
Better courses, longer courses, change z7 rules
Longer courses,
Locations within the greater Bay Area. Better foresight into future locations. Certain vehicles no classing well within the current system. Less need for it to be overly competitive.
For me - closer to the SF Bay Area. I don't want to drive to Crows Landing or beyond for an autocross.
earlier start time if possible, gets pretty hot at crows landing in the afternoon
To be less competitive and have a more fun atmosphere. Car not classing well in the current system. Cost increasing. Locations far from the immediate Bay Area.
Split into A & B days to reduce cars. Continue to use Cow Palace or similar local.
Pay more attention to the course design. Confusing, poorly flowing courses drive newcomers away, and not as much fun in general.
Events are too far away
MAKE IT LOCAL
Keep supporting beginners. Helmet loan was a big help for me
Thunderhill and Crows Landing are both a long drive.
I'd like more 2-day zone events!!
Closer track than crows if possible
The distant locations in the valley are too far. Four hours out and back plus all day. The system favors the most active so it's hard to meet to get in.
Have events at Sonoma Raceway or closer
Find a Bay Area location/location that's less than 1 hour drive from me
I have heard rumors that Sonoma Raceway is going to set up an autocross area.
Having a more local site
Passengers
Courses with a more open design layout that contain a reduced number of tight elements compared to some of the courses this year, as too many of those tight/slow elements could ultimately impact the flow of the course and also do not always showcase the handling characteristics of our Porsche cars or the driver's skills. Of course, a more open course design needs to have in mind the safety of the drivers and workers on the course and needs to be tailored to the available site.
Add Grudge Match Format
Let me slide my car through a turn! I don't care about lap times as I want to learn the limits of my car. I am a beginner and run in the middle of the pack and I am always told not to drift.

Was a fun event. No realistic improvements that I can think of. For me, Thunderhill is too distant for an autocross.
More emphasis on course safety. Instructions to floggers, and a manager of safety who watches what they are doing.
close venue
1min + courses, use z8 classes
Allow passengers.
Simplify the classing system, don't allow modifications in A, O, and P beyond those allowed by SCCA for stock street classes, and possibly reduce the number of classes.
Would be nice to have a closer location to the peninsula. It'll be nice too to have more auto-x schools scheduled for next year.
Closer location! Love everything else about AX team
A new location with better course set up.
It's perfect other than the gravelly surface.
Make the program more welcoming for Porsches and non-P-cars alike. The classing system has zero tie-in to others. A car built to any class in PCA would not be competitive in SCCA or even Lotus club. This makes actually competing more difficult. In addition, why do we not have a separate non-Porsche car classing system? Lotus does it and it incentivizes non-porsches to participate and is great even for members who may not want to stave the marque cars that day. It's a zero cost item that pays huge dividends for making others feel welcome. Also, if lack of participation is an issue, why is there a delayed entry for non P-cars?
Better venue??
More of them
Better locations
Golden Gate Region's autocrosses are very well organized. Suggestions would be 1) to make car classification simpler and consistent with other regions, and 2) it would be nice to know the measured course distances.
1) Simpler car classification that is consistent with other regions. 2) It would be nice to know the measured distance of each course.
Allow the option for people not to work. Find autox location closer to the bay area. Change the rules to allow cheaper/longer lasting tires to be competitive. Invite all of the attendees to the Bay Area Autox Facebook forum, this has created more sense of community. Provide lunch/food trucks.
The biggest issue the Porsche club has is not autocross. It is that new members cannot connect socially with existing members. They seem to be all in established small groups and are not open to engage new members. I have two Porsches and live part time in Germany and still cannot connect with members of the club. As far as autocross, the courses are always the same so it gets boring.
More autocrosses at Sonoma or other location if possible
More events would be great but not conflicting with SCCA dates
Location within an hour

Nothing. Sequoia Region does a great job
Closer in, permanent location. (not Thunderhill)
Doing a great job! Wonder if one could be done in the afternoon vs the morning. would be interesting to see if you get a higher attendance
Posting of times at the event and after
Have other locations in the region and have race hosts who are friendly and knowledgeable of the autocross experience
Have another event at Castle. I would be glad to arrange a tour of the museum. We just received an F18 that was in the blue angels flight team. We're working on restoring an F117 stealth fighter.
Events are very well run, locations are problematic since losing Marina
Love to see a site closer to SF Bay Area.
Keep AX at close local location
Solidified schedule, consistent course design, more schools/test and tune sessions
Work with your insurance to allow ride-alongs for non-instructors. I like to have my girlfriend as a passenger so that she can have fun at the event as well. I won't go to another PCA autocross as long as ride-alongs are not allowed
I like the larger amount of runs I can get with PCA vs SCCA. More CrowsLanding events would help me get to them. TH is 4+ hrs and hard to justify the drive unless its actually an HPDE.
Just getting started and it's been great. Looking forward to 2023!
1) I like the club's idea of getting a new timing system that is easier to run and has better reliability. 2) If we keep doing lunch, the club should have maybe two tables and approximately 15 chairs to allow at least some of the participants to sit and eat lunch. This would promote interaction and we would get to know the participants better, repeat customers. and 3) Replace some of the cones.
Different colored cones at turn entrances
Already good.
Events are perfect as they are
Include Castle events on the calendar. Maybe even be within an hour's drive.
Convince the cow palace to let the event return, or (longshot) find another bay area venue closer than crow's landing
Better timing/scoring; more closely aligned classes.
A venue closer to Sacramento once in a while. Hard to improve beyond that!!! :)
Not an improvement per se: I like the 2-day events at locations that require more distant travel. Only use Cow Palace if no alternatives. Would be great to get back to Alameda!
Low temp summer locations (hi temps too tough on air cooled porsches)
I don't know how to find out about them. My friends would tell me
Sponsorship of courses

Events I attended were well organized
I enjoy your autocrosses, no improvements needed
Two day events at Crows
Not familiar enough to suggest.
Two day events at Crows
More attention to course design
Have more AX school events.
Nothing. I had a great time. I hope to do more in 2023