

From sea to locked down sea: Most want US border to stay closed, reluctant to welcome interprovincial visitors

One-in-three say their provincial border should be closed, half say guidance from officials is enough

May 22, 2020 – With speculation over the future of travel and the viability of tourism as an economic driver in this country, Canadians themselves are expressing a hesitance to host visitors from south of the border – and even from other provinces.

Further, the latest study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds most Canadians say they are unwilling to travel to the United States for the near future.

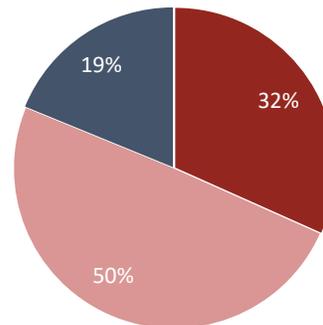
Indeed, in the case that the border were opened after June 21, the vast majority who live close to the Canada-U.S. border say they would definitely not (60%) or probably not (24%) take even a day trip south this summer.

It is perhaps, then, less surprising that Canadians would prefer to see that border remain closed in the coming months, despite the fact that American visitors to Canada spent approximately [\\$10.6 billion](#) in this country in 2018.

Just one-in-five (19%) say the border should open when the current deadline for closure expires (June 21), while most look to either September (42%) or the end of the year (26%) for their preferred opening window.

When it comes to borders within this country, a mere one-in-five Canadians believe there should be free, unrestricted travel between provinces. The consensus among half (50%) is to stop short of total interprovincial restrictions but strongly discourage people from outside their own province from coming in, while one-in-three would restrict movement entirely to their own province.

Which of the following do you think is the best option for YOUR OWN province?
(All respondents, n=1,777)



- Total travel restrictions – prohibit all non-residents from entering, including air, ground, and ferry travel
- Travel guidance – ask non-residents to avoid your province but stop short of prohibiting them
- No travel restrictions at all – allow everyone to travel to and from my province freely

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from May 18 – 19, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 1,777 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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More Key Findings:

- Among frequent travellers (those who went to the United States five or more times last year), 38 per cent would like to see the border opened after June 21. Just 16 per cent of those who did not travel to the U.S. last year agree.
- In Alberta, close to two-in-five residents say the period until June 21 is long enough (37%) for the border to remain sealed, the largest such proportion holding this view in the country. In BC (43%), Quebec (42%) and Atlantic Canada (45%) at least two-in-five say the border should remain closed at least until the end of the year, if not further
- Past Conservative voters are far more likely (35%) than those who supported the Liberal Party (9%) or NDP (7%) in last October's federal election to say that the border should be opened after June 21

About ARI

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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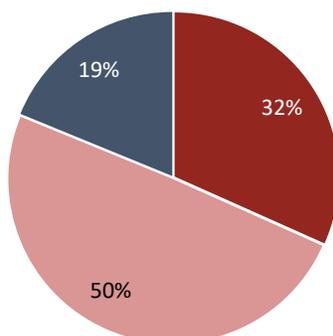
Part One: Interprovincial barriers

While tourism to and from the United States may take up headlines, travel within Canada by Canadians makes up far more of the economic activity from travel. Only 20 per cent of tourism dollars spent in Canadian communities across the country come from abroad, while 80 per cent are spent by Canadians in provinces other than their own.

The question of inter-provincial barriers has arisen as provinces have resorted to different tactics to reduce travel. In Atlantic Canadian provinces, anyone from another province has been required to self-isolate for 14 days upon entry. Checkpoints have been set up between Ontario and Quebec to monitor entry, while Premier Doug Ford asked Canadians on April 29 not to travel into or out of Ontario.

One-in-three Canadians (32%) say they would go a step further and ban travel to their own province entirely. Half (50%) say that these checkpoints and guidelines are the right route for their province to take and would not proceed with a full ban. Meanwhile, one-in-five (19%) say that there should be no guidance or restrictions at all and Canadians should move freely as normal:

**Which of the following do you think is the best option
for YOUR OWN province?
(All respondents, n=1,777)**



- Total travel restrictions – prohibit all non-residents from entering, including air, ground, and ferry travel
- Travel guidance – ask non-residents to avoid your province but stop short of prohibiting them
- No travel restrictions at all – allow everyone to travel to and from my province freely

Atlantic Canadians are most supportive of a prohibition on non-residents entering their province. Fully half (51%) would support this. Quebec (37%), B.C. (36%) and Manitoba (36%) residents are also relatively supportive of such measure. In every case outside of Atlantic Canada, however, travel guidance is the most popular approach:

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Which of the following do you think is the best option for YOUR OWN province? (All respondents)								
	Total (n=1,777)	Region						
		BC (n=244)	AB (n=161)	SK (n=113)	MB (n=122)	ON (n=525)	QC (n=351)	ATL (n=261)
Total travel restrictions – prohibit all non-residents from entering, including air, ground, and ferry travel	32%	36%	13%	21%	36%	29%	37%	51%
Travel guidance – ask non-residents to avoid your province but stop short of prohibiting them	50%	50%	54%	56%	48%	53%	46%	38%
No travel restrictions at all – allow everyone to travel to and from my province freely	19%	14%	33%	23%	16%	18%	18%	11%

Part Two: The United States Border

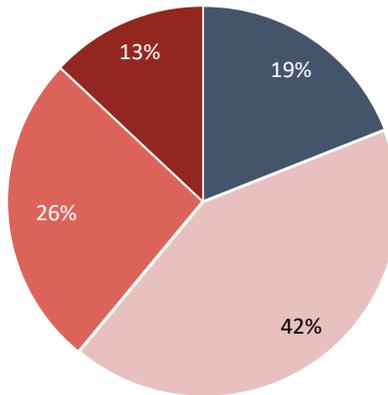
Canada and the United States share an immense trade relationship, the largest undefended border in the world, and billions of dollars in tourism revenue. They also share concerns about the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. On March 21, the US-Canada border was shut down to non-essential travellers, an arrangement that has since been extended until June 21. If Canadians had their way, further extensions would be forthcoming.

Asked what they would do with the border closure expiration just under one month away, only 19 per cent of Canadians would open the border at that time. Given the choice of three alternative timelines, two-in-five Canadians (42%) would keep the border closed until September, one-quarter would close it until the end of the year, and 13 per cent would extend the closure into 2021:

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**The current border closure is set to expire on June 21. After that, what should the governments of Canada and the U.S. decide to do?
(All respondents, n=1,777)**



- Open the border to non-essential travel between Canada and the U.S. after June 21
- Keep it closed to non-essential travel until September
- Keep it closed to non-essential travel until the end of 2020
- Keep it closed to non-essential travel well into 2021

While goods are still travelling between the two nation's the loss of tourism dollars is likely to be astronomical. In 2018, the value of tourism from American visitors to Canada was \$10.6 billion while Canadians spent \$20.2 billion in the States.

Nearly half of Canadians in this study stated that they had travelled to the United States last year. Notably, household income level is by far the most likely demographic factor in whether or not a person had crossed the border ([see detailed tables for more demographic information](#)):

Regional disagreement

In Alberta, close to two-in-five residents say June 21 is long enough (37%), the largest such proportion holding this view in the country. Meanwhile, in BC (43%), Quebec (42%) and Atlantic Canada (45%) at least two-in-five say the border should remain closed until the end of the year at the earliest, if not longer:

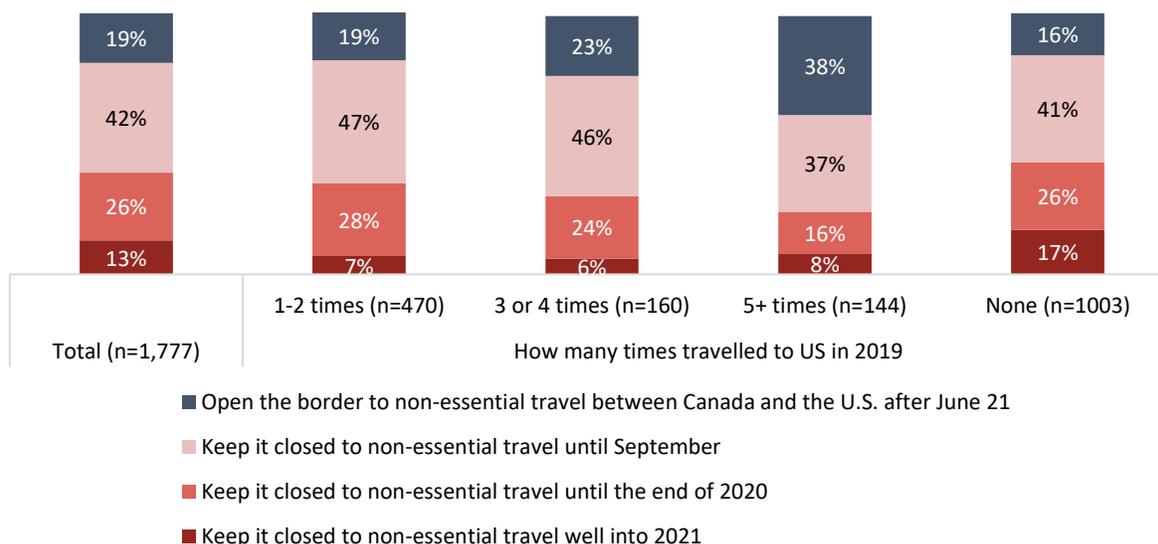
**The current border closure is set to expire on June 21. After that, what should the governments of Canada and the U.S. decide to do?
(All respondents)**

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Open to non-essential travel between Canada and U.S. after June 21	19%	18%	37%	26%	21%	17%	16%	12%
Keep it closed to non-essential travel until September	42%	39%	37%	40%	44%	46%	42%	43%
Keep it closed to non-essential travel until the end of 2020	26%	30%	19%	28%	25%	24%	26%	33%
Keep it closed to non-essential travel well into 2021	13%	13%	8%	6%	11%	13%	16%	12%

Frequent travellers much more likely to support opening

A person's 2019 travel habits also drive opinion about how long the border should be closed. Among those who took five or more trips to the States last year, two-in-five (38%) would like the border opened after June 21. The less a person traveled last year, the less likely they are to want the border opened more quickly:

**The current closure is set to expire on June 21. After that, what should the governments of Canada and the U.S. decide to do?
(All respondents)**



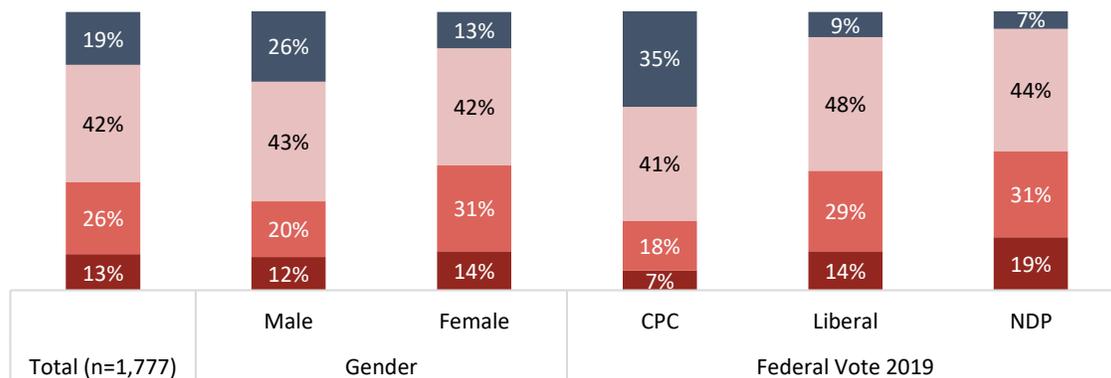
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Past Conservative voters, men lean toward opening sooner

There are two groups of people who are more likely than others to say the border should be opened after June 21 – men and those who voted for the Conservative Party in the last federal election. Men are twice as likely as women (26% to 13%) to say this, and CPC voters (35%) are at least four-times as likely to say this compared to past Liberal (9%) and NDP (7%) voters:

**The current closure is set to expire on June 21. After that, what should the governments of Canada and the U.S. decide to do?
(All respondents)**

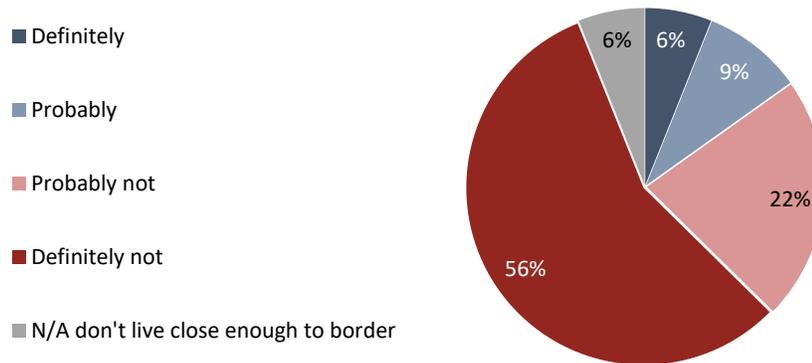


- Open the border to non-essential travel between Canada and the U.S. after June 21
- Keep it closed to non-essential travel until September
- Keep it closed to non-essential travel until the end of 2020
- Keep it closed to non-essential travel well into 2021

Part Three: Few would travel to the States this summer

The passage of citizens from country to country is an important factor in the economic well-being of many communities on each side of the border, as well as the enjoyment of residents taking a family vacation or quick business trips. In 2018, Canadians made more than [27 million trips](#) to the United States, primarily for holidays and leisure. How will the coronavirus impact summer travel plans? Quite simply, it has decimated them. Asked if they would take a trip over the border this summer for a day, without planning to stay overnight, more than half of Canadians (56%) say definitely not:

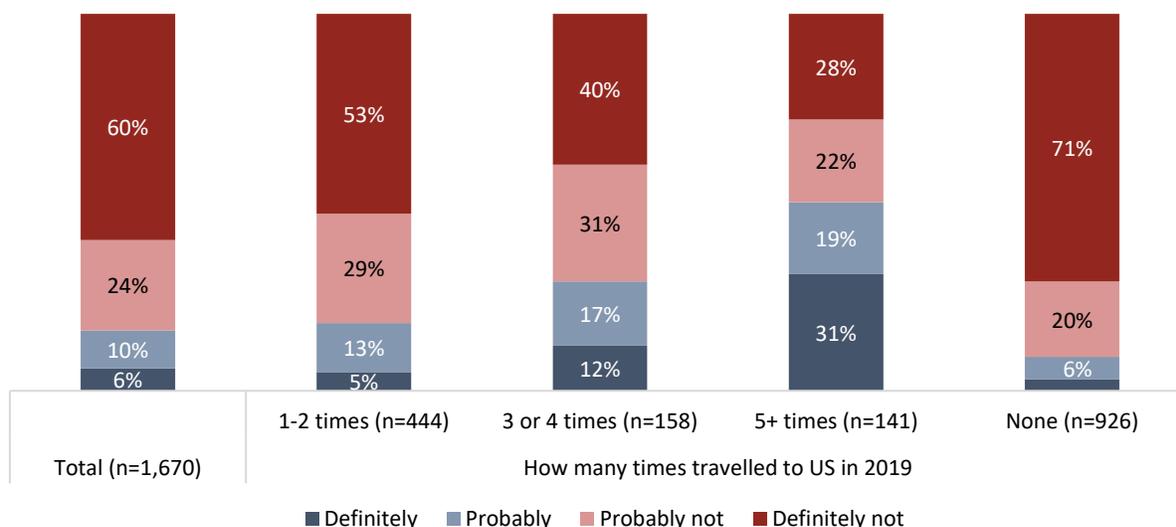
**Suppose the Canada-US border opened after June 21. Would you take a day trip this summer?
(All respondents, n=1,777)**



Frequent travellers divided about whether or not they'll go

Perhaps more importantly, what about those who travel to the U.S. regularly? Canadians who say they crossed the border at least five times last year are divided. But overall, 84 per cent of those who are within driving distance of the border say they will likely not be hopping across for groceries, shopping or visits this summer:

**Suppose the Canada-US border opened after June 21.
Would you take a day trip this summer?
(Among those who live close enough to the border)**



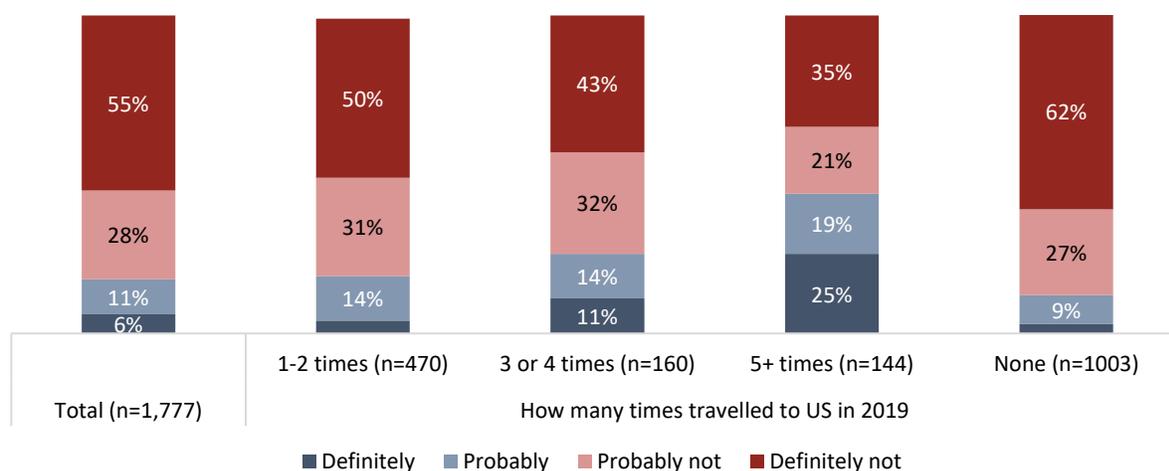
Regional responses

In 2018, Ontario (45.5% of all trips) and British Columbia (22.6% of trips) accounted for two-thirds of all trips to the United States from Canada. Those provinces, thus, carry significant weight in the travel conversation. Residents in both of those regions are not likely to travel this summer if borders were to open. In each case, at least half of residents say “absolutely not”:

Suppose the Canada-US border opened after June 21. Would you take a day trip this summer? (All respondents)								
	Total (n=1,777)	Region						
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Definitely	6%	8%	7%	8%	10%	6%	4%	3%
Probably	9%	8%	14%	9%	8%	9%	10%	5%
Probably not	22%	28%	19%	25%	25%	23%	22%	15%
Definitely not	56%	51%	44%	50%	56%	59%	61%	58%
Don't live close enough to the border	6%	4%	17%	8%	1%	4%	3%	19%

When it comes to longer trips for vacation or business, fewer than half of frequent travellers say they would go, while lighter travellers lean heavily toward staying home:

**OK, and what about a longer trip to the U.S.?
Would you take a longer trip this summer, staying for at least one night?
(All respondents)**



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For detailed results by travel, [click here](#).

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