



COMMUNITY NOTICE

For Immediate Release:

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CBSA & MCA EXTEND DOMESTIC LANE PILOT

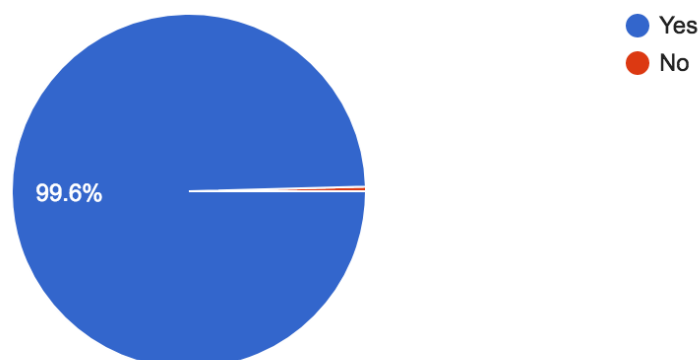
The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne have agreed to extend the Domestic Lane Pilot Project for an additional year, until April 2022. The lane was launched through collaboration within the MCA & CBSA Border Collaboration Initiative (BCI), intended to improve the border crossing experience. The initial pilot was for a six-month period from November 2020 to April 2021, but due to the U.S.-Canada border being closed to international travel, the pilot is being extended to gain accurate measures of the lane's usefulness.

An Akwesasne community survey was conducted near the end of the initial six-month pilot, asking for feedback on the lane's effectiveness and to gather any suggestions for improvement. The Domestic Lane Working Circle, which consists of CBSA and MCA representatives, has reviewed the survey results and poured over the many comments received. The community's input was greatly appreciated, and the working circle is determining what adjustments or changes might be possible to ensure the Domestic Lane continues to be a meaningful improvement for the border crossing experience. Nia:wenkowa to all who participated in the survey.

The following is a summary of the Domestic Lane Pilot Survey results:

1. Are you aware of the Domestic Lane Pilot Project and dedicated lane at the Cornwall Port of Entry?

241 responses

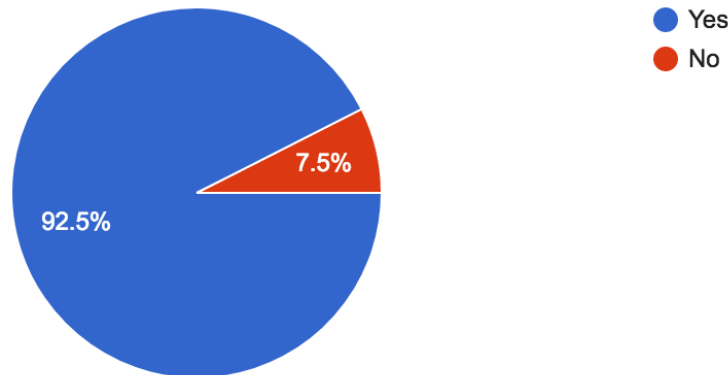


This question ensured that those completing the survey were actual users of the Cornwall Port of Entry or community members familiar with it. It was also a tool to gauge the community aware-ness of the pilot project. 99.6 percent of those surveyed, or 240 out of 241, said yes, they are aware of the project.



2. Have you used/transited through the Domestic Lane at the Cornwall Port of Entry?

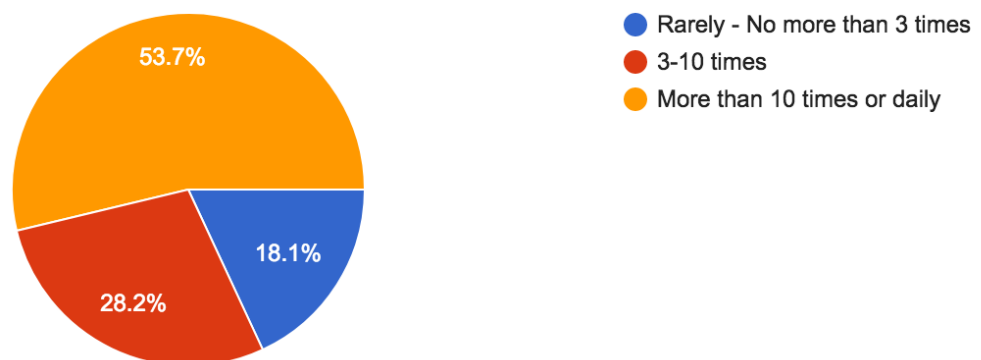
241 responses



This question helps us to determine if those completing the survey have actually used the pilot or are providing feedback from a non-users' point of view. 92.5 percent, or 223 out of 241 said that yes, they've used the domestic lane.

3. If you have used/transited through the Domestic Lane, how many times would you estimate you have done so?

227 responses

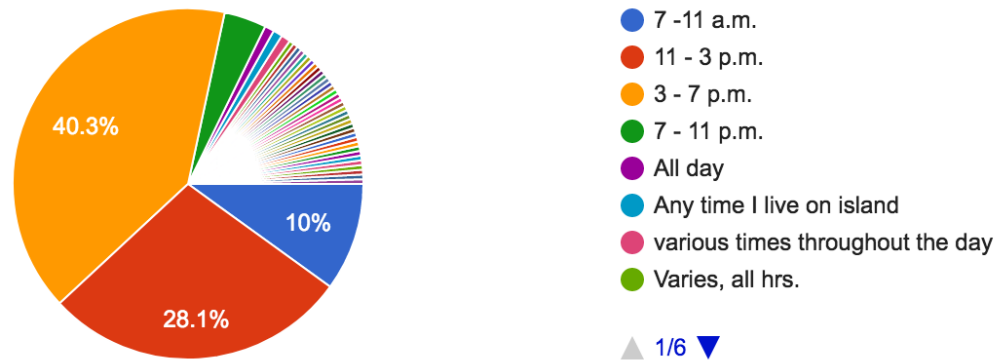


This question helps us to determine if the person providing responses uses the lane frequently or not frequently, and this is for semantics. 53 percent of those surveyed have used the lane more than 10 times. 28.1 percent have used it 3-10 times, and 18.1 percent have used the lane rarely or no more than three times.



4. What time of day do you/would you most use the Domestic Lane?

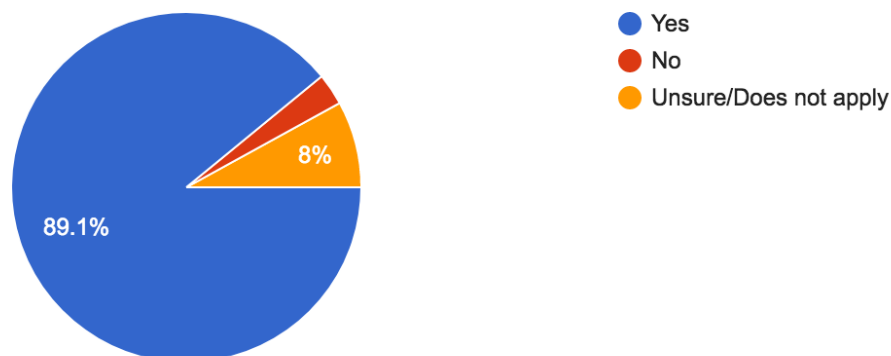
231 responses



We provided set timeframes for users to select but also allowed them to enter a more specific time if they wished. The result was that the majority of responses indicated 3-7 p.m. is the time frame the lane is most used, with 40.3 percent or 93 respondents choosing that option. 28.1 percent, or 65 respondents said 11 am to 3 pm is their most used time frame, and 10 percent or 23 respondents said 7-11 a.m. was their most utilized timeframe. The remaining respondents manually entered a variety of responses including: *Various times throughout the day; Anytime as I live on the Island; Mostly on weekends; Shift work so it varies; and All of the above.*

5. In your opinion, does the Domestic Lane reduce the time it takes to transit through the Cornwall Port of Entry as a domestic traveler?

238 responses

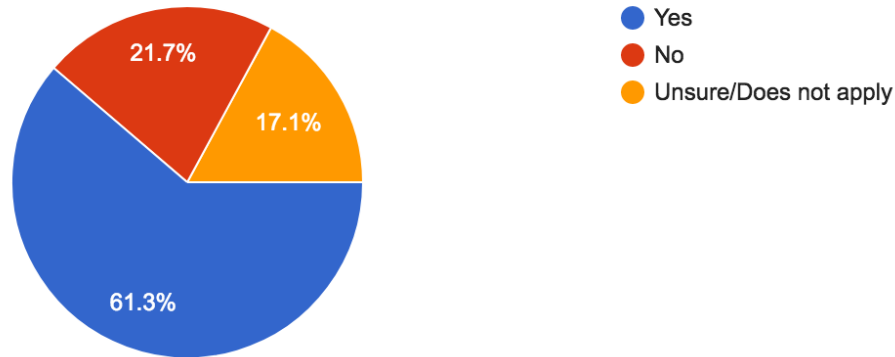


This question was asked to determine if people felt the lane made passing through the port quicker for those travelling domestically. 89.1 percent or 212 people said yes, 8 percent or 19 respondents said they were unsure or it didn't apply, and 2.9 percent or 7 respondents said no.



6. In your opinion, does the Domestic Lane reduce the time it takes to transit through the Cornwall Port of Entry as an international traveler?

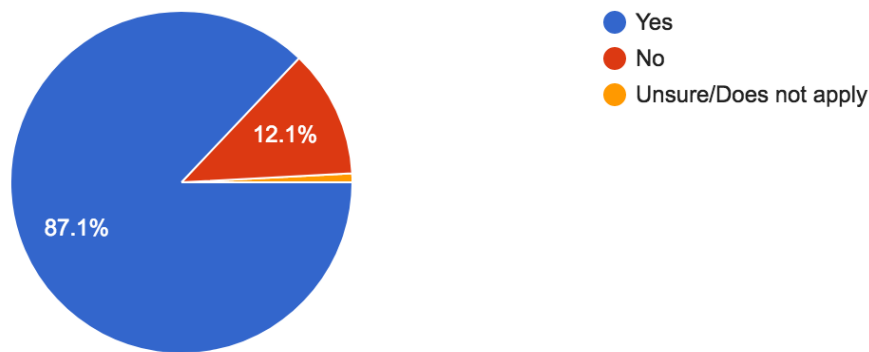
240 responses



We asked the same question but in reference to an international traveler, in order to gauge the opinion on whether or not the wait times were shorter for those in the non-domestic lane traveling internationally, as the intention of the Domestic Lane is to reduce wait times for all. 61.3 percent or 147 people said yes, 21.7 or 52 percent said no and 17.1 or 41 respondents said unsure/does not apply.

7. Is the Domestic Lane signage visible and clear?

240 responses



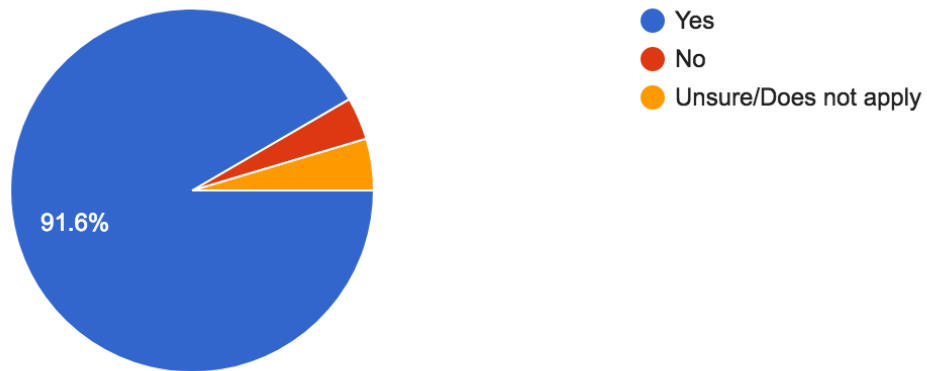
In our planning and implementation of the pilot project, signage was thoroughly discussed, and should the lane be implemented permanently the team wants to ensure proper and adequate signing is in place.

87.1 percent or 209 respondents said yes, the signage is visible and clear. 12.1 percent or 29 people said no it isn't, and 0.8 percent or two respondents said they were unsure or does not apply.



8. In your opinion, does the Domestic Lane provide a valuable service worthwhile to implement permanently?

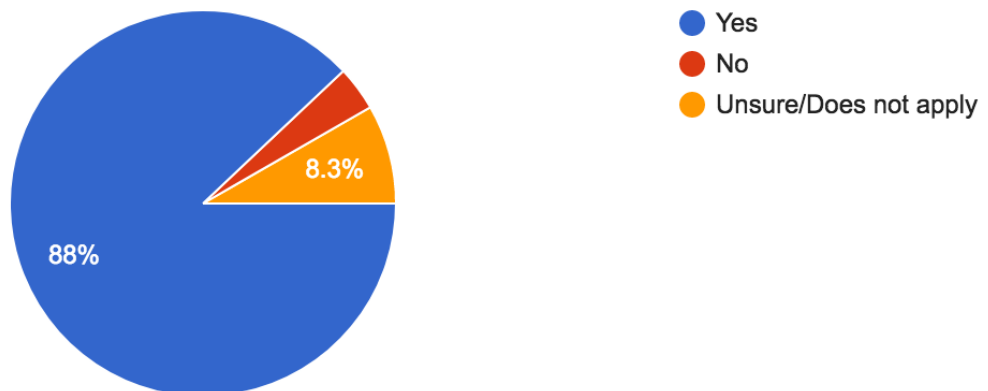
239 responses



Overall, regardless of any of the other questions and technical aspects we wanted to know if the project overall is one that is valued and that community members see as worthwhile. 91.6 percent, or 219 respondents said yes. 4.6 percent or 11 respondents said unsure/does not apply, and 3.8 percent of 9 respondents said no.

9. Was your experience using the Domestic Lane a positive one?

241 responses



In order to ensure that the border crossing experience continues to improve, we asked respondents if their use of the domestic lane was positive. 88 percent or 212 said yes, 8.3 percent or 20 said unsure/does not apply and 3.7 percent or 9 respondents said no.



Question 10: Do you have any comments you'd like to share about your experience using the Domestic Lane?

A sample of positive comments received:

- This is amazing, I use it daily!
- Make travelling for work much quicker.
- The agents seem to be more friendly.
- Great idea for this lane – love it! Please keep it in place.
- It's a major relief of congestion and frustration experienced daily.
- Demonstrates Canada's commitment to Indigenous rights to pass into and through this territory traditionally occupies by Akwesasne people; and recognizes the rights of residents of Canada to enter Canada unencumbered for essential goods and services.
- I hope this is implemented permanently, it's so much faster especially on holiday and weekends.
- The Domestic Lane has eased stress both in my and my tota's life by not having to wait long periods in line coming from the Canadian portion of Akwesasne, not having to rush to or miss multiple appointments weekly because of unexpected heavy traffic.
- It makes my trips to Cornwall a lot easier and timely, I don't have to sit in lines coming from the states. I don't have to leave for appointments an hour before because I NOW KNOW I can get through quicker. Niawen, it's a little less stressful.

A sample of suggestions and helpful feedback received:

- Change the sign to orange maybe so people pay attention and don't accidentally in it thinking it is a normal lane.
- I feel the domestic lane implementation was greatly needed and needs to be expanded to an Akwesasne Residents Lane.
- Move it to Lane 5.
- MCA employees, Snye and St. Regis residents, should have access to the Domestic Lane.
- I think it should be open to all Akwesasne band card holders.

A sample of negative comments/complaints received:

- The only downfall is if I'm driving my truck which has American plates, I get asked more questions vs when I drive my car with Canadian plates.
- Sometimes it's not as quick when they ask how many I have on board (when it's just me), where I'm coming from, and my license plate number.
- I don't like the inconsistency between customs agents, some want plate numbers some want to know where you're coming from, some let you pass with little to no delay.
- As a resident of Tsi Snaihne who travels to Cornwall for groceries and doctor appts, I feel I should also be able to use the Domestic Lane.
- I've seen so many vehicles coming from the states using the lane that it made no difference in wait times. Might be different if it was exclusively Akwesasne as they use the lane regardless if they come from Kawehno:ke or Wastonrononkeh.



Question 11: Please provide any additional feedback you wish to share regarding the Domestic Lane Pilot Project.

Positive Comments Received:

- I am so happy this project was finally implemented. It should have been done a long time ago.
- Overall a great project that I hope becomes permanent. Makes the residents of Akwesasne feel like we matter and our needs are being met. Have not experienced a long wait times since the project began.
- The domestic lane will help boost native business and properly accommodate the mixed traffic corridor.
- Love it and hope it continues.
- Very much appreciate the initiative and on behalf of the non-native employees and family members who come to Kawehno:ke – niawenkowa.
- Very good accessibility when there are long lines in all the lanes.
- Good to see the domestic lane implemented, it has been long overdue.

Suggestions and helpful feedback received:

- Please allow “I did not cross the border” as an acceptable one and not have your agents force another answer out of the domestic traveler. They should be trained to know what that means.
- Start a dedicated lane for people traveling from Snye or Saint.
- In busier times the CBSA should open up 3 international lanes plus Domestic.
- The six-month pilot project cannot be truly assessed at this time as the Canada US border has been closed to all except essential travelers.
- Keep 1 domestic lane open and at least 2 international at peak times. Truck lane should open at 6 am as well as there are morning truckers who slow up travel for domestic travelers trying to get moving to Ottawa or Cornwall in the mornings as the domestic lane does not open until 8 am.
- Maybe a bigger sign as vehicles drive up; they don’t know or understand what the meaning is – domestic lane, and they go through there holding us up.
- The First Nations traveling from the US portion should be allowed to go directly to the Island as opposed to checking in at the POE.

A sample of negative comments received:

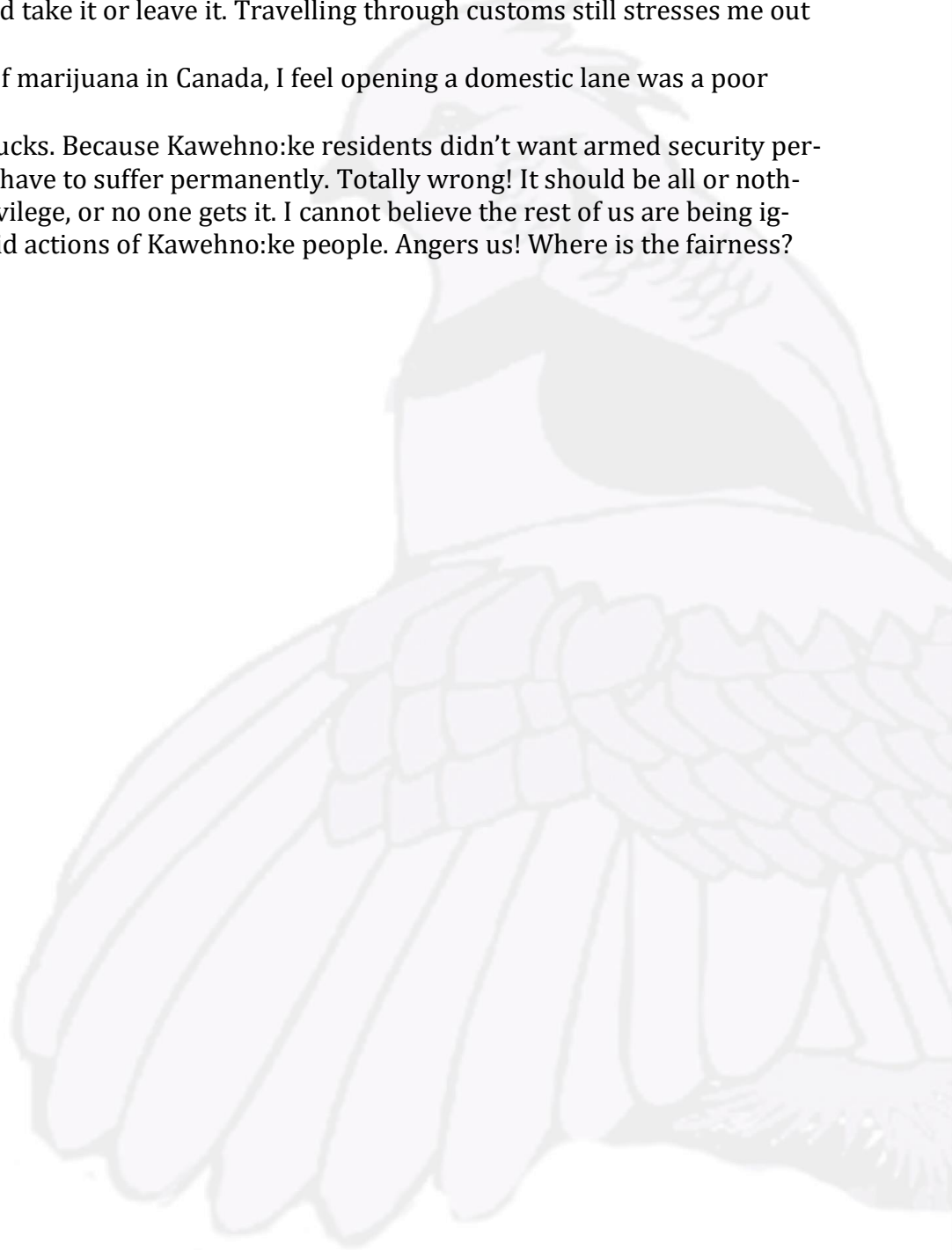
- While it is a good initiative and a positive one, it will not stop the lines that exist on the bridge prior to the toll booth when the border is fully opened, the whole configuration of the border and domestic lane and toll booth needs to be changed.

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

Sustaining our inherent rights, facing challenges together to build a strong and healthy future.



- It is a good concept to reduce wait times for domestic travelers but does not help those coming from St. Regis or Snye who have NOT made any stops in the US on their way to crossover to do essential things such as shop, bank, or go to work.
- Nice gesture but I could take it or leave it. Travelling through customs still stresses me out regardless.
- With the legalization of marijuana in Canada, I feel opening a domestic lane was a poor choice.
- This whole situation sucks. Because Kawehno:ke residents didn't want armed security personnel Saint and Snye have to suffer permanently. Totally wrong! It should be all or nothing. We all get that privilege, or no one gets it. I cannot believe the rest of us are being ignored because of stupid actions of Kawehno:ke people. Angers us! Where is the fairness?



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