



The SFU Employer Transit Subsidy Study

**Building a Case for Public Transit: A Research Partnership
Exploring the Effects of Transit Subsidies on Commute
Choices**

Presentation for ACT Canada: Unified Mobility Summit 2019
October 21, 2019

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Our research question

What are the outcomes for transit riders, ridership patterns, employee choice mode, commuting patterns and quality of life, and workplace organization and performance, of different levels of worker transit subsidy among downtown Vancouver hotel workers?

Research design

- 7 downtown hotels – 3 pairs + 1
 - We paired based on similar proximity to public transit
 - Pre-study
 - 4 hotels had 15% subsidy
 - 3 had no subsidy.
 - Baseline survey: March 2018
 - After baseline survey
 - Subsidy increased at 2 hotels: 15 to 25%
 - Subsidy increased at 1 hotel: 0 to 15%
 - Subsidy increased at another hotel: 0 to 25%
 - Subsidy stayed same at 3 hotels: 15%, 15% and 0%
 - After survey round 2 in September 2018
 - Subsidies increased to 50% at 2 hotels (0-25-50 and 15-25-50)
 - Final survey – March 2019
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Overview of key data sources

Survey responses

- Representative survey of employees at 7 study hotels (23+ questions) conducted in March 2018, September and September 2019

Matched responses from three survey rounds (quasi-panel)

Compass Data

- Monthly from Jan 2018, Compass Card data for all enrolled cards at hotels (and random comparison group)

Organizational interviews

- Structured interviews conducted with HR managers and union representatives at hotels.

HR indicators

- Spreadsheet completed monthly by HR managers at 7 hotels.

Parking survey

- Parking availability and prices in 9-block radius of each study hotel
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Questionnaire



Employer Transit Subsidy Study - Survey of Hotel Employees

Hotel Name: _____ Survey ID Number: _____ [to be completed by SFU]

Thank you for agreeing to complete a questionnaire so that we can understand the factors, including transit subsidies, that may influence the travel patterns of downtown Vancouver hotel workers such as you. Because our travel patterns influence other aspects of our lives, we are going to ask you about three main topics: (1) your travel patterns, (2) your work at this hotel and in other jobs, and (3) your life, household and living conditions.

We hope that you will answer every question. However, as stated in the Consent Form, if you don't want to answer any question, you may skip over the question. Please be assured that only the SFU research team will be able to identify you from the information you provide - not your employer, not the union, not anyone else. At the end of the study some of the information you provide, which cannot be used to identify you, will become part of a dataset that can be shared.

If you have any questions as you complete the questionnaire, the SFU team is available to help you. Our contact email is: hotelsfu@sfu.ca

Date survey completed: _____

YOUR TRAVEL PATTERNS

1. Do you have a valid driver's license (including an 'N' license) to drive in Canada?

	Circle one
Yes	1
No	0

2. Do you own, lease or have regular access to use the following to travel to or from work?

	Tick all that apply
Motor vehicle (insured; not including carshare)	
Carshare (Evo, Modo, Car2Go, Zipcar, etc.)	
Motorcycle/Scooter/Moped	
Bicycle or bikeshare	

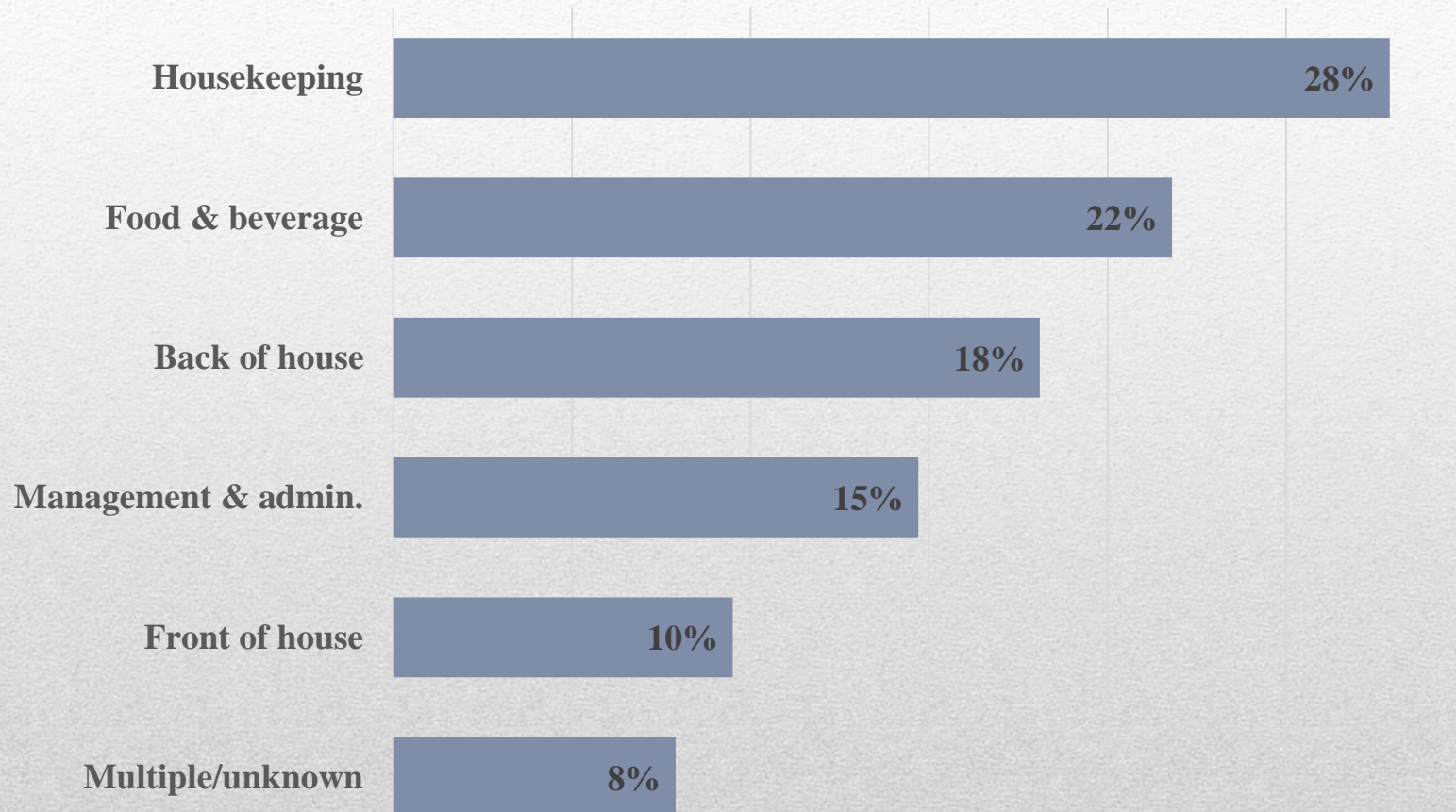
3. Do you regularly carpool to or from work? With who?

	Tick all that apply
I carpool with co-workers at this hotel	
I carpool with other people	
I do not regularly carpool	

4. Do you currently receive a subsidy from your employer for transit?

	Circle one
Yes, my employer offers a transit subsidy and I have taken it up	1
My employer offers a transit subsidy but I have not taken it up	2
No, my employer does not offer a transit subsidy	3

About our study population: occupation*



*baseline survey

Our study population* vs. CoV & Metro Van

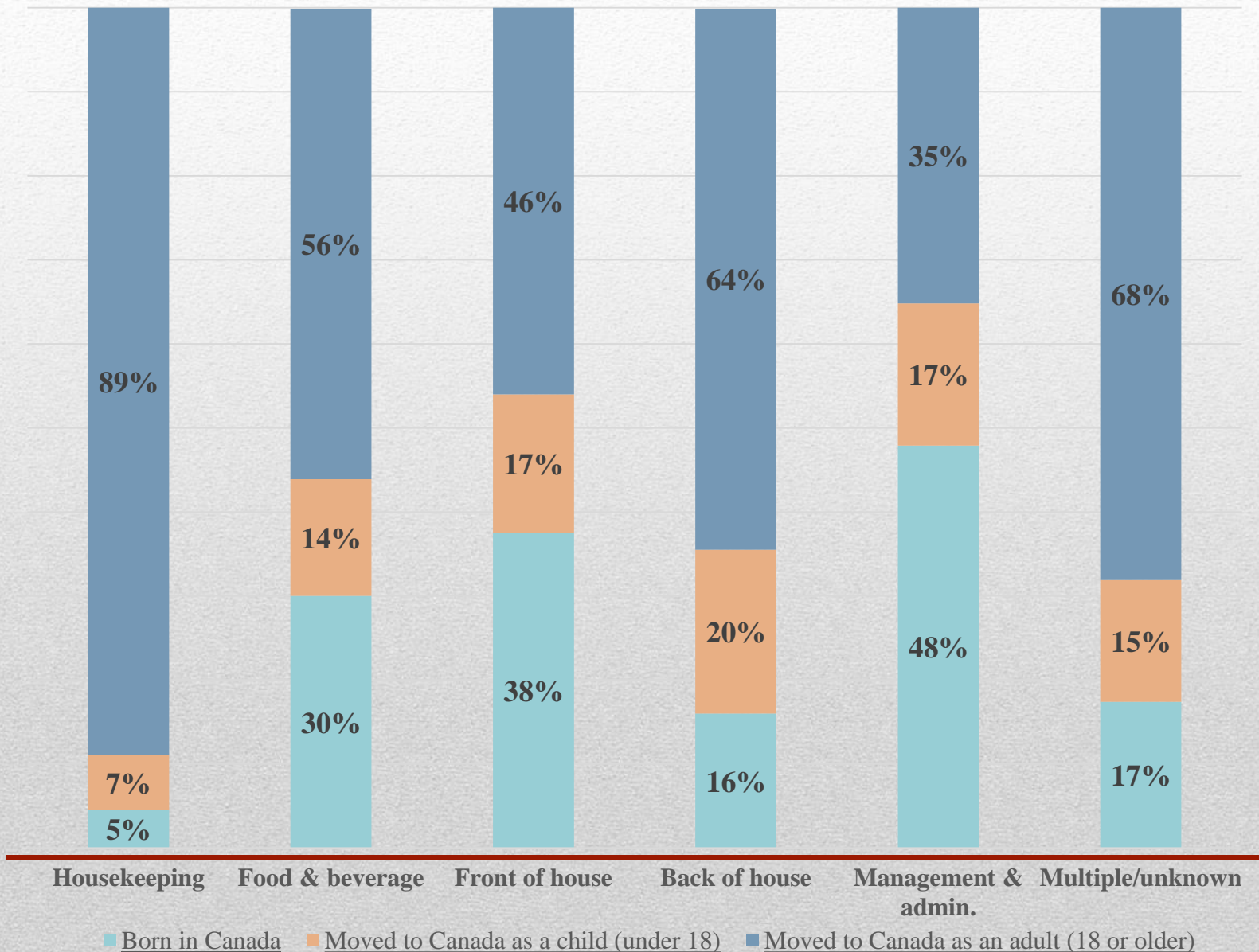


- Somewhat older
- More female
- More immigrant
- More “visible minority”
- Long time in job – 13 yrs.

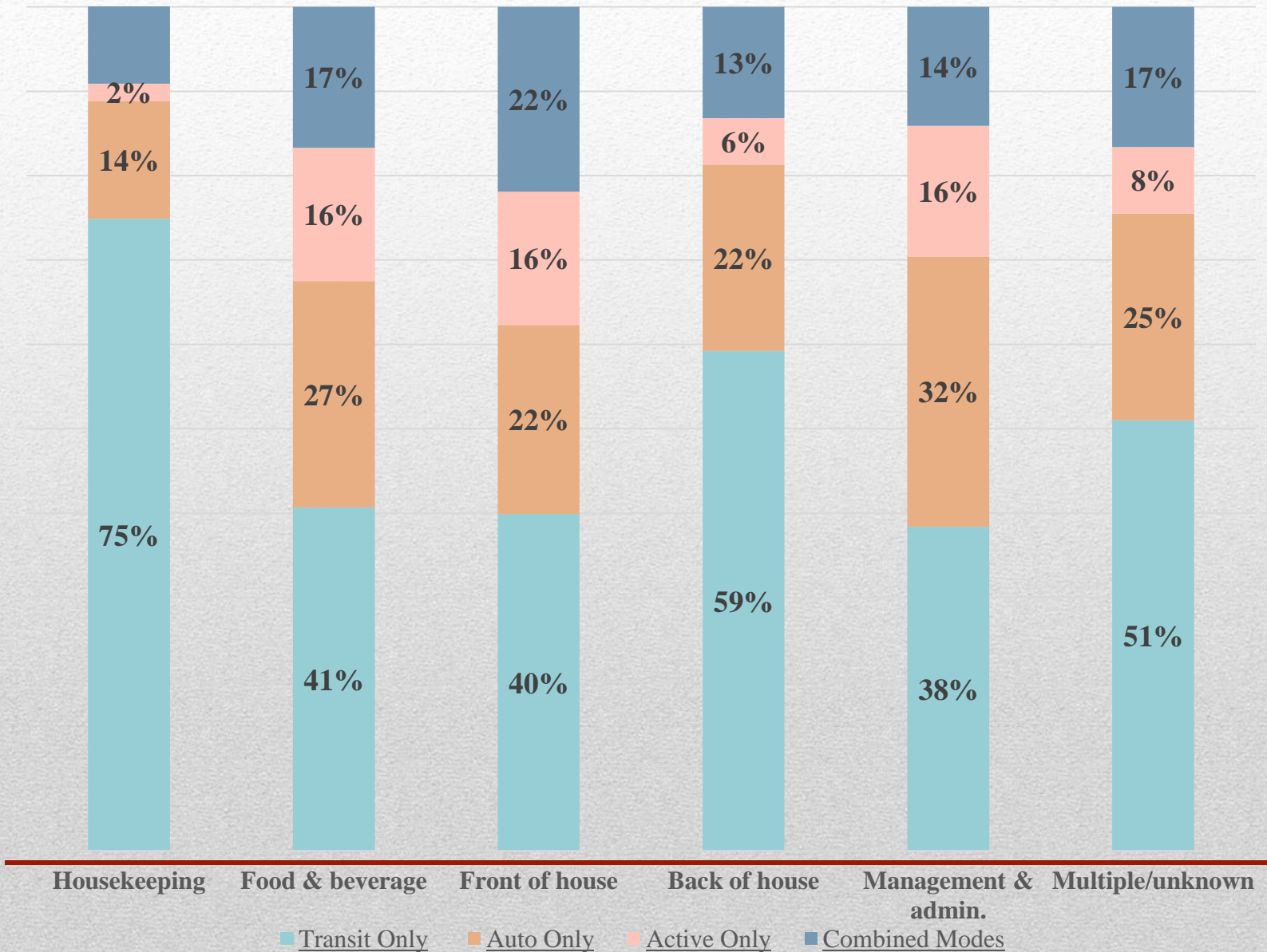
*baseline survey

Photo: UFCW Local 1006A

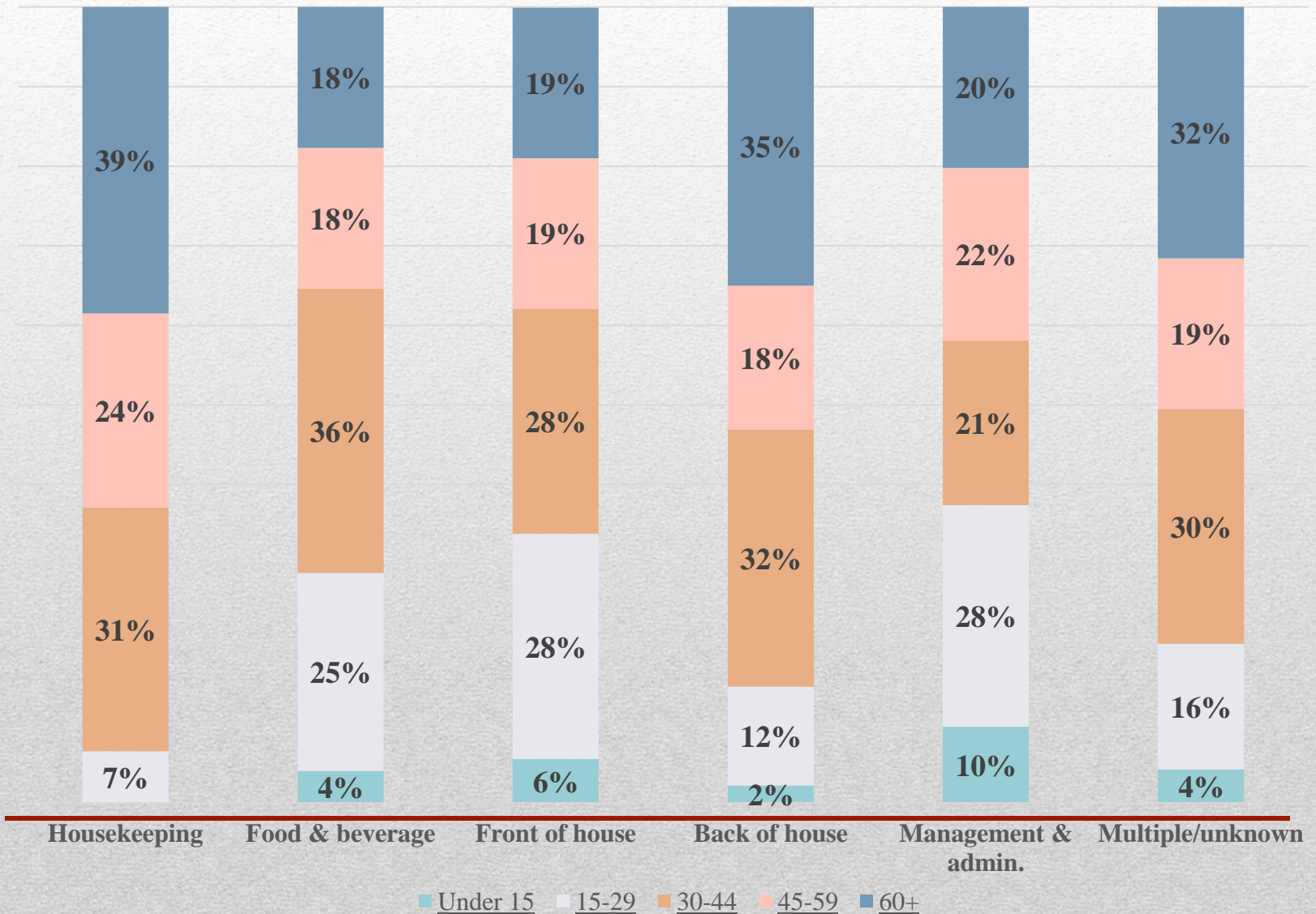
Born in % Canada* by job class



Commute mode % by job class*



Duration of commute to work (no stops) in minutes by job class*



TransLink's Compass for Organizations Program (CFO)

- Hotel HR managers reported that registration and administration was easy
 - No requirement for workers to submit proof of purchase, or for employers to audit transit expenses
 - CFO provided employers with a dedicated TransLink contact point
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Contributions of this study

- Example of community-academic research partnership, with multiple partners
 - Partnership with TransLink via data licensing agreement
 - Focuses on commute and transit experiences of workers in a specific industry (tourism)
 - Focuses on the commute and transit experiences of workers who respond to in-person customer demand on 24-7 basis
 - Contributes to an equity lens on transportation and climate change policy
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Thank you!

Contact: hotelsfu@sfu.ca
