

Jewish Community of Winnipeg Demographic Information – Fall 2014

The first reports on demographics of the Winnipeg Jewish community are now available. With thanks to Charles Shahr of Montreal who negotiates for data, works with advisors to refine definitions, analyzes results, and reports to the Jewish communities of Canada, the results are available in four initial reports in two parts.

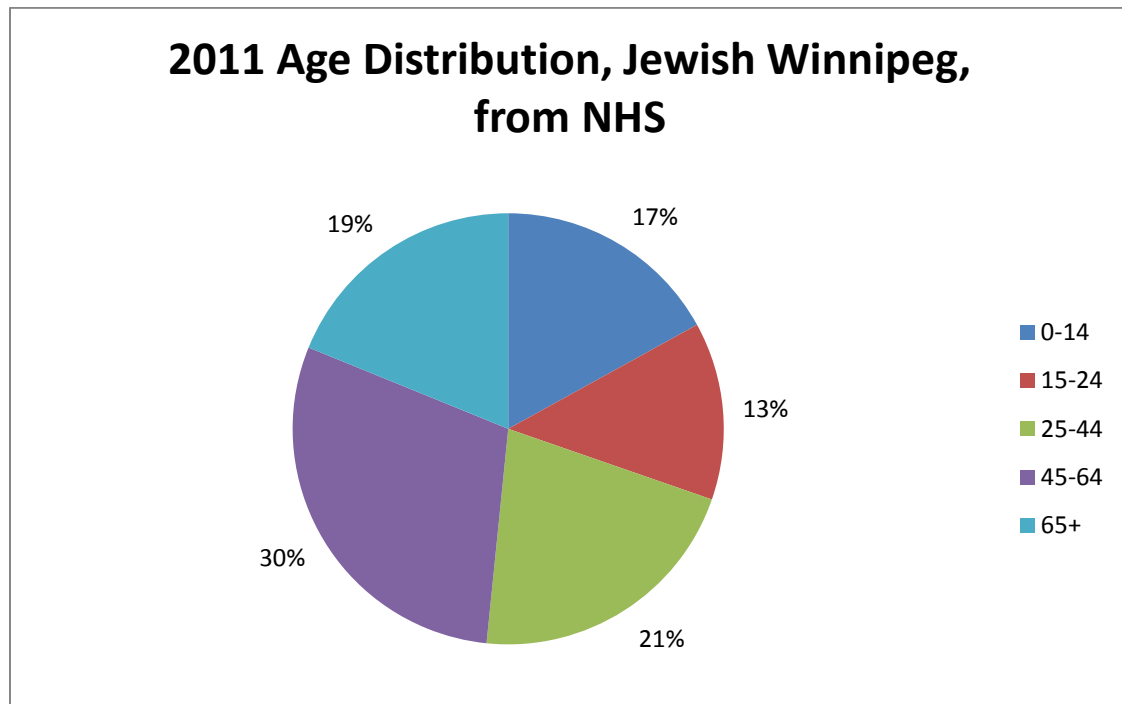
The 2011 National Household Survey provides a “demographic snapshot” of the Winnipeg Jewish community. The change in methodology from 2001 to 2011 limits our ability to compare data, and limits the value of the absolute numbers. We can't know who didn't respond to the optional survey, i.e. to what extent non-response biases are reflected in the results. But the broad brush trends are valuable for use in planning for the future of the community.

Highlights:

- Overall, Winnipeg has the fifth largest Jewish community in Canada, with the total Jewish population from the NHS numbering 13,690 in 2011, 1.9% of Winnipeg.

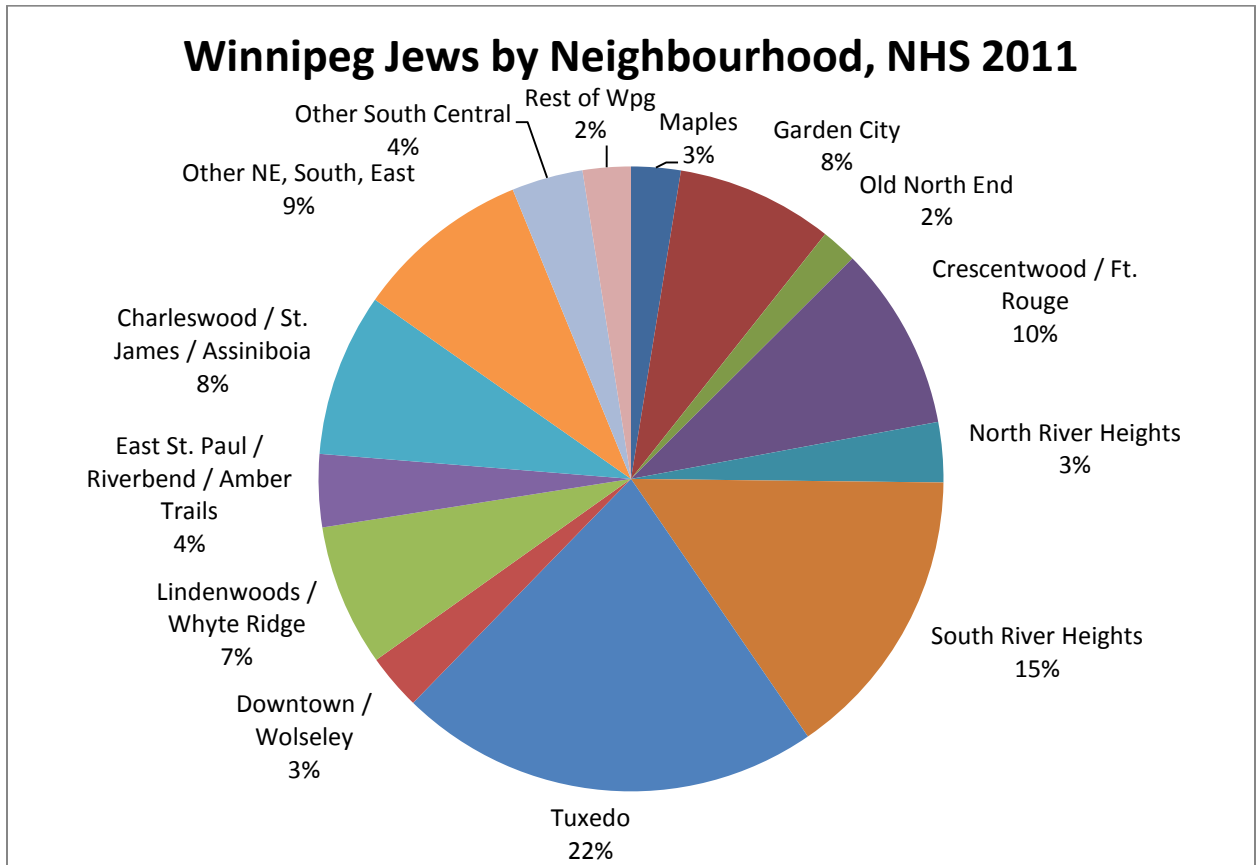
Age

- The median age of the Winnipeg Jewish community decreased slightly from 2001 to 2011. The percentage of 15-24 year olds in the community has increased slightly and the percentage of 65+ has decreased slightly to **43.1 years**.



Geography

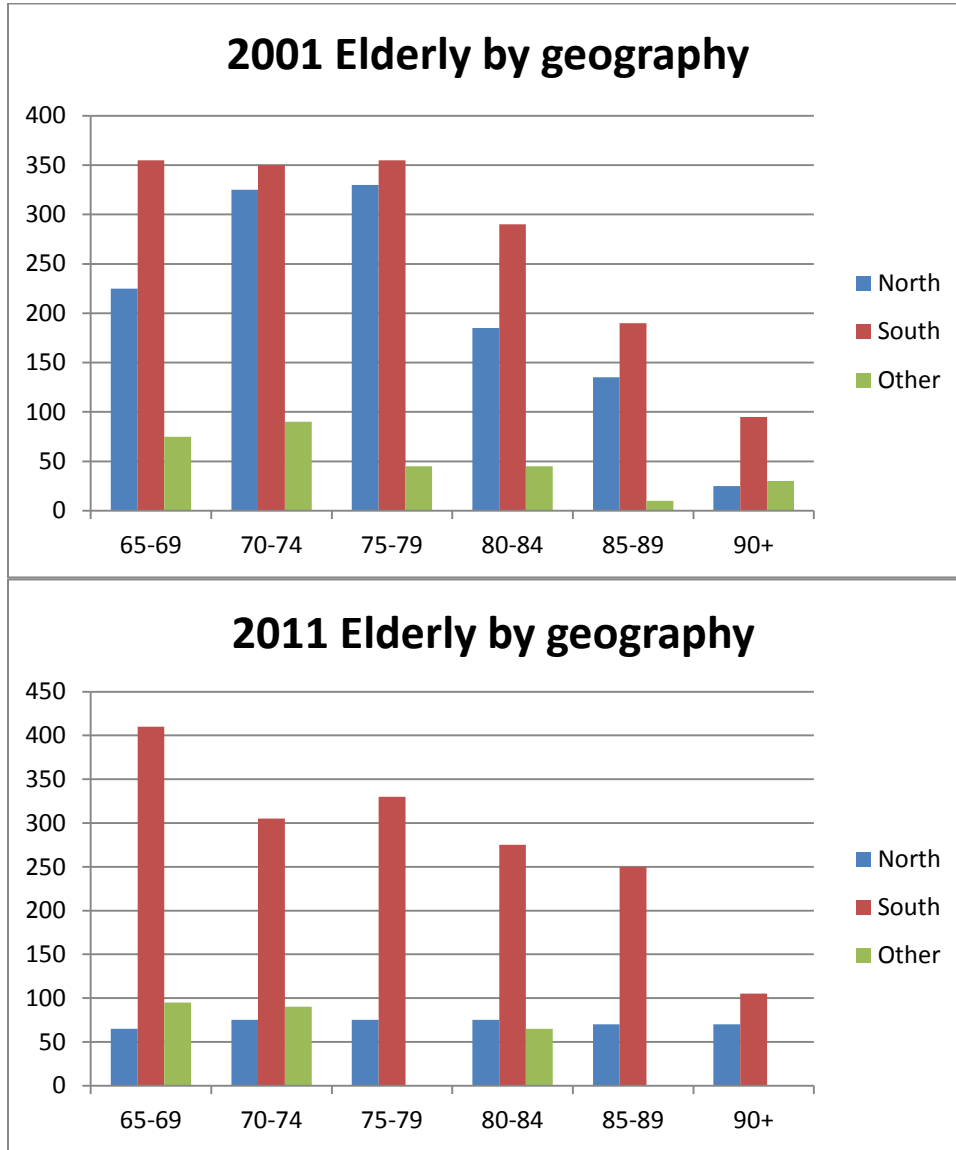
- Geographically the community continues to move farther south and become more dispersed than 40 years ago.
- Overall, 55% of the community lives in the broad southern area of the city (River Heights/Tuxedo/Lindenwoods & Whyte Ridge/Charleswood),, and another 17% in the northern part of Winnipeg (Garden City and the like). New population trends that are significant from the 2011 National Household Survey are the 9% of the population who live in areas of the city such as St. Vital, Transcona and East Kildonan, indicating a much more dispersed community than ever before.



- Tuxedo (14.7%) and South River Heights (13.2%) have the highest density of Jews. Six of fourteen geographic areas increased in Jewish population, the largest gain in Lindenwoods/Whyte Ridge. Garden City's Jewish population decreased by 1,420 individuals.
- Tuxedo has the highest number of children, of teens, of baby boomers and almost a third of Jewish seniors. South Rivers Heights has the largest number of Jews 25-44.

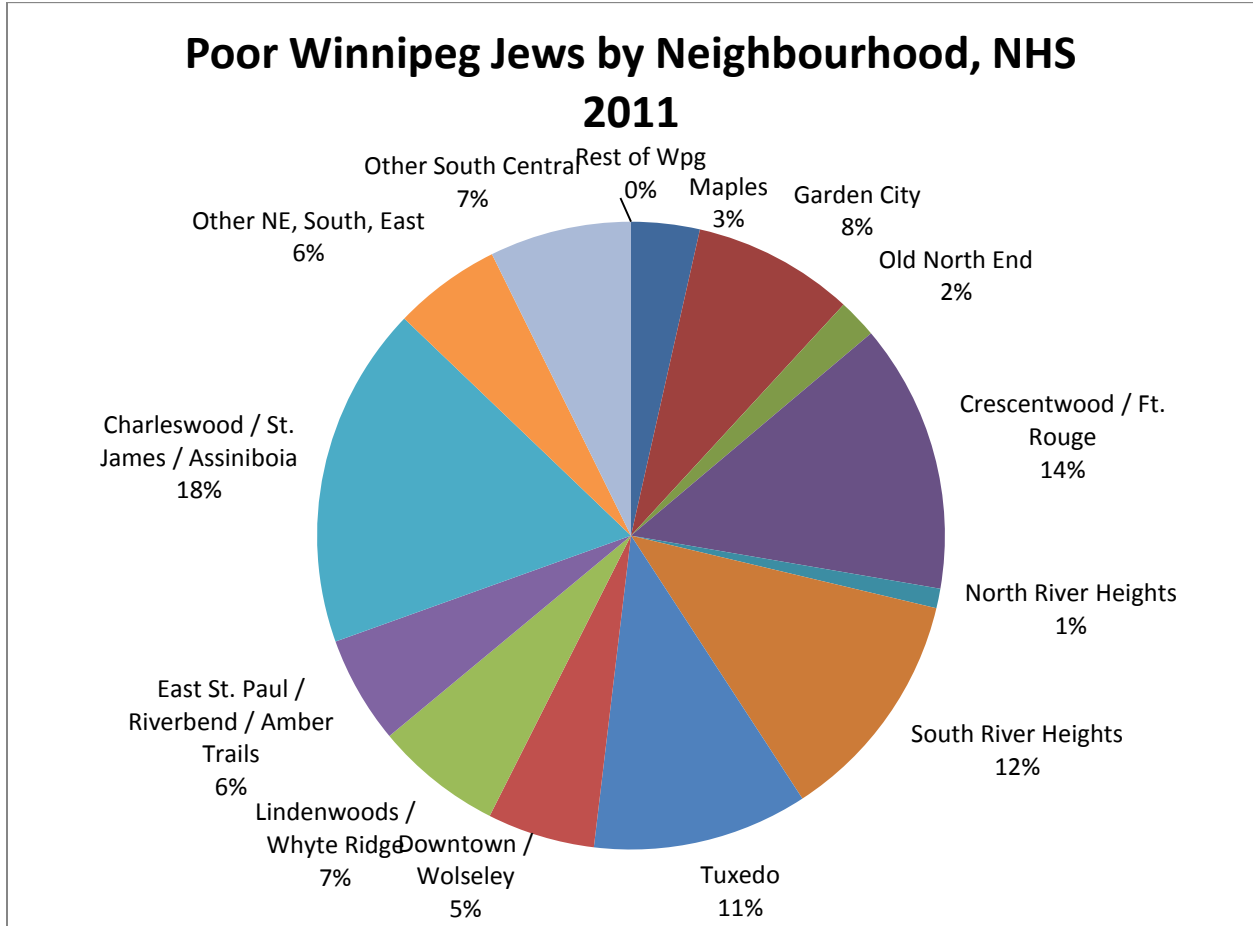
Senior Population

- The number of Jewish seniors has decreased, contrary to projections done a decade earlier. But as Baby Boomers come into the 65-74 age group, the number is again expected to increase. The shift from North End neighbourhoods is significant.



Poverty Issues

- The level of child poverty is 20.2%, almost double that of 2001. One in seven elderly Jews is poor, including 19.8% of those in the Crescentwood/Ft. Rouge area, 14.4% of those in Tuxedo, and 14.1% of elders in Garden City. These are all areas with concentrations of seniors in apartment building and condominiums.



Questions arising from the data:

From the above data, a number of questions arise with respect to demographics, the limitations of the National Household Survey, trends and community planning. Some of these, that we do not yet have answers for, are the following:

- What size is the community that we serve if we count non-Jewish family members?
- How many individuals participate in Jewish community activities who fill in "no religion" and ethnicity of "Canadian" on the NHS? The count excludes Jews who think of themselves as secular, but still identify and act in the Jewish community. This is a factor particularly among young Jews, though we have no estimate as to how many are excluded from the numbers.
- Where did all the seniors go? How many reside in Assisted Living facilities which were not counted in the NHS? How many are moving to other cities after retirement to follow their children? How many are living in non-Jewish Personal Care Homes (PCHs are also not counted in the NHS)?

Possible Responses and Further Research Project

Possible non-response biases and other limitations of the data:

- Vulnerable populations may be less likely to fill in the survey, e.g. those living with poverty, mental health challenges, cognitively challenged, those with less education, new immigrants whose first language is not English, and immigrant minorities generally.
- There was a marked decline in the number of Jews who identify as 'Jewish by Ethnic Origin'. There is some evidence that younger Canadians see themselves as more Canadian and less attached to a given ethnicity.
- Jewish community organizations serve families and households. A high rate of intermarriage means that many of these families and households include non-Jews who are not counted here. For the purpose of planning service, they most often should be counted in the numbers of people to be served. For instance, families are clients of Jewish Child and Family Service who count all the members of the family as clients regardless of whether they were born as Jews.

Concluding Thoughts

Given the results of the National Household Survey, the Jewish population of Winnipeg numbers **13,690**. While this is a decrease from the previous decade, there are a variety of questions raised by this decrease that suggest the comparable number might be higher. Further research is required to determine whether the absolute number is too low, or how much too low. The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, through its existing Community Planning committee, along with its partner agencies, other organizations and lay leadership, will investigate those questions that are crucial to understanding the near- and long-term needs of the community.