

## Appendix 4. Setting the Stage for the Think Tank

Scenarios for the Future:

***What is the future of a Jewish community if it doesn't have a Jewish future?***

What if:

- **There aren't enough people who can daven and make up a daily minyan to allow a mourner to say Kaddish**
- There is no one available to teach a child trope or prayer for bar/bat mitzvah or the meaning of the Torah portion
- **There aren't enough interested, connected kids to keep a high school open.** Or the school started taking non-Jews and made Hebrew/Judaics optional to help pay the bills?
- **The Hebrew Bilingual public school program is full, but there aren't enough children to keep an elementary school open. The public school and a few private teachers are the only sources for Hebrew language education, and the Province considers cutbacks to Heritage Language programs.**
- Traditional Jews won't move to Winnipeg because of a downward spiral of fewer families and less availability of kosher food, appropriate education, and other kids to play with who keep Shabbat.
- There aren't enough knowledgeable people to teach Jewish law,
- **The annual campaign was barely enough to keep the building and school open, and not enough to support any cultural or youth programs.**
- There aren't enough knowledgeable Jews to work as mashgichim for kosher food production and the Vaad Ha'ir has closed down. There is no kosher catering available locally, no kosher bakeries or kosher fresh meat. There are several providers who will profess to offer kosher meals, but as none are supervised observant visitors to Winnipeg will need to bring their own food or trust someone's home.
- **There aren't enough volunteers or paid religious men and women to continue the burial society, and Tahara, preparation for a Jewish burial is contracted out to a non-Jewish funeral chapel.**
- There are no Jewish youth groups or educational activities for children to learn about their Jewish values, history, and synagogue skills
- **The Jewish Foundation can't give away all its scholarship dollars to local Jewish kids, because there aren't enough applicants.**

Or...

What if we take advantage of our potential as a strong community and write good stories to tell...

***Bragging rights – How will we be describing our kids, our parents, our community 15-20 years from now?***

Jonathan was the top of his class in law school and he says it was easy compared to his high school Talmud teacher. He has offers from all the top firms in Winnipeg for articling. He's really happy with the joint synagogue young adult minyan and dinner club. We hardly ever see him for Friday night dinner anymore. They've got a bunch of new families who've moved here over the last few years. Jonathan is still dating Marianna. She's so beautiful. Her little cousins from Buenos Aires just moved here last year and Marianna is so good to them. Jonathan and Marianna take them along to the minyan so they can get to know the other kids.

Rachel is coming home from graduate school next week. I can hardly wait. She's got her Masters Degree in Jewish Education and she's got a position in Jewish Studies at U of M. But I'm really proud that she's going to teach the history of Jewish Thought, Intro to Talmud, and Hebrew Lit in the high school. I would never have believed that getting one inspired teacher ten years ago when she was in grade 12 could have made such an impact. But after 2 years studying in Israel and 6 years at Yeshiva University, she's going to put it all to work.

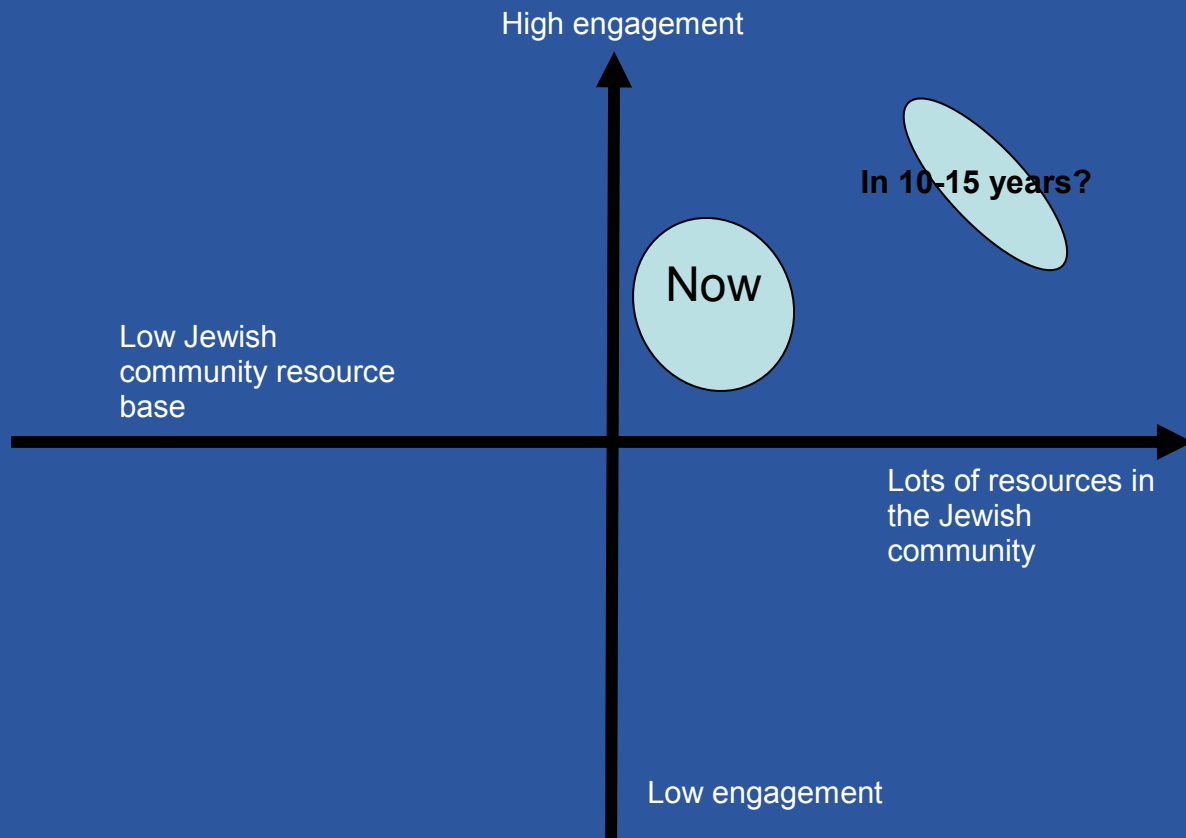
Thanks for asking. Mom is fine. She moved into the new Sharon Home complex after Dad died. We all join her for the great Shabbat lunch. They serve lots of her favorites – greek salad, sushi, sometimes they have this great Israeli buffet with shishlik and falafel and humus and pita. The kids love to hang out with her since they added the play structure with the new apartment building. There are cleaning services as well as two meals a day. Mom's got involved in this new peer counseling program with the Jewish Healing Centre. It feels really important to her and the rabbi and JCFS staff gave them some great training on how to help people who are grieving and going through terminal illness. It's like a new career. And there are lots of classes and programs and activities with the daycare kids on site. On Friday the babas and babies make challah together. My little guy thinks it's great that his Babba is one of the challah makers.

Jordan moved to Calgary after university and got a job as a systems consultant. He used to work 70 hours a week and go skiing every weekend. He married a lovely girl from Vancouver, he's a senior executive in his firm, and he has two beautiful kids in the Hebrew Day school. He's on the school board and they're having a tough time recruiting teachers, and enrollment is dropping. But the commute is a killer and they don't have enough Jewish friends for the kids. They're thinking of moving home to Winnipeg. Jordan even looked at job possibilities when he was here last month and he's optimistic. We're thrilled, we'd have all the children together again!

*Embracing Collaboration for a Vibrant, Connected, Winnipeg Jewish Community*  
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Results from the think tank:  
How engaged are we now?  
Where do we need to be in 10-15 years?

Our think tank clearly agreed that we were starting from a position of strength and had to do better.



Issues posed to Think Tank Part 2

## **2 BHAGs - big, hairy, audacious goals**

Engage and re-engage Jews in the community

- Create enough opportunities for everyone to find their place
- Instill Jewish identity factors in both gateways and doorways
- Foster Jewish pride

Retain our youth &/or invite them home – Winnipeg is a choice to live, not just to leave

- Give them reasons to identify as Jews
- Provide opportunities to connect to Jewish community and Jews
- Give them reasons to re-connect later

## **The Youth Think Tank Agenda**

1. Introduction – Abby 5:45 p.m.

The Jewish Federation is conducting a strategic review, looking at our community's needs for the next 20 years. We need your advice!

What do we have to do to have a great Jewish community 20 years from now?

(We could ask for general comments in the whole group if anyone wants to speak.)

2. Count off into groups with 7 assigned group "leaders"

3. 1000 great ideas exercise on the way to their groups. – 5 minutes

Brainstorming things to do!

What are some of the great program or service ideas that would make us a great community that we don't have yet?

What do we have to do more of?

What do we have to get rid of?

What are the programs or services or opportunities that Winnipeg should have?

4. Three questions in small groups, 15 minutes to discuss, one person recording on flip charts, 10-15 minutes for each group to report back. 6-7:25

a. What are the important things that would keep you here?

b. How do you see your lives 10-15 years from now? (what would keep you connected to the Jewish community?)

c. What do teenagers need?

5. Would you like to come back together after tonight to work on some of the ideas that we've discussed? – show of hands.

6. One more question before you go– Core Jewish Values, please put two stickers – one big, one small on what you think are the first and second most important core values that make you Jewish.