

A scenic winter landscape featuring snow-covered mountains in the background, a dense forest of evergreen trees in the middle ground, and a partially frozen pond in the foreground. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

Context: Our Aging Population

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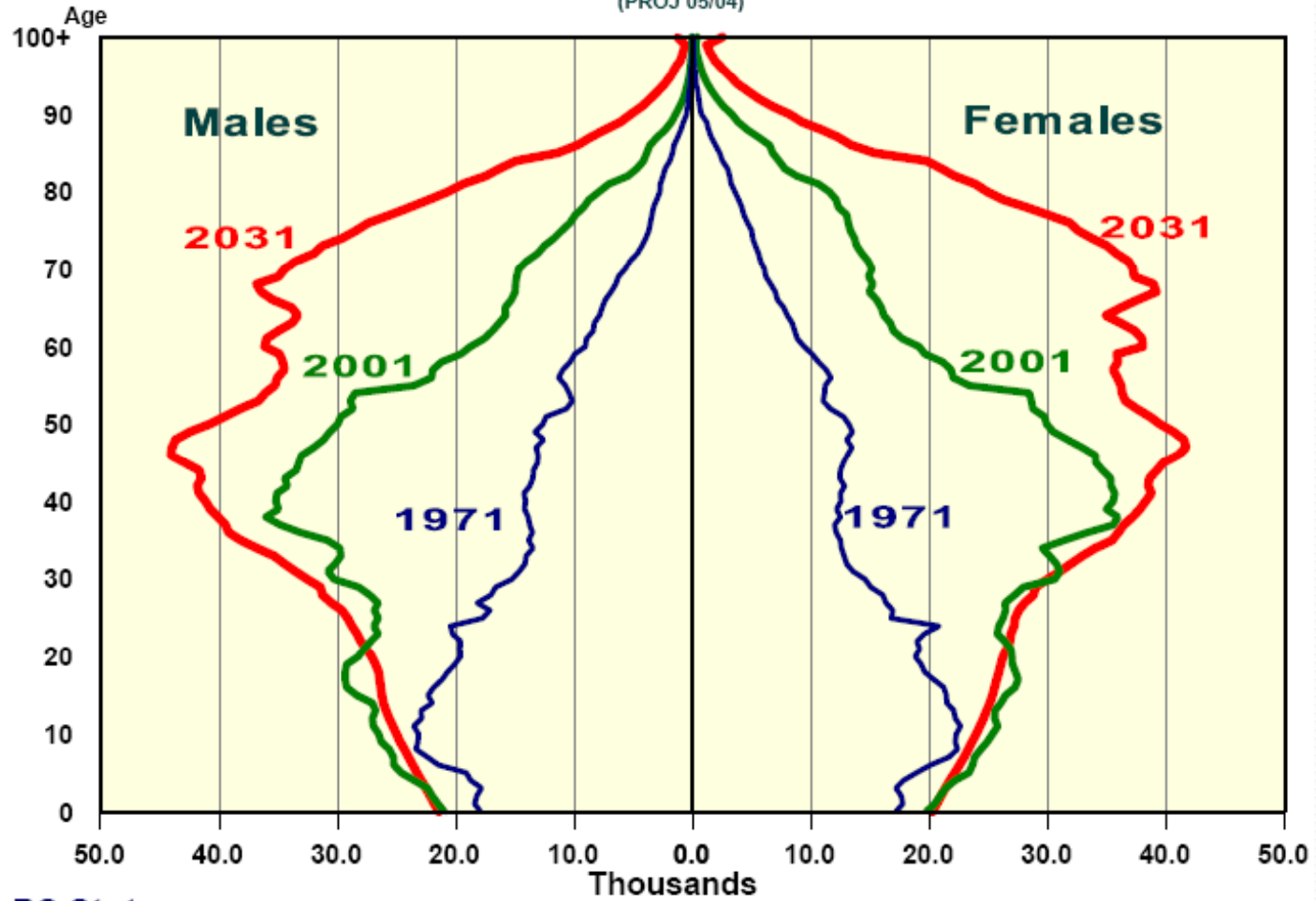


Outline

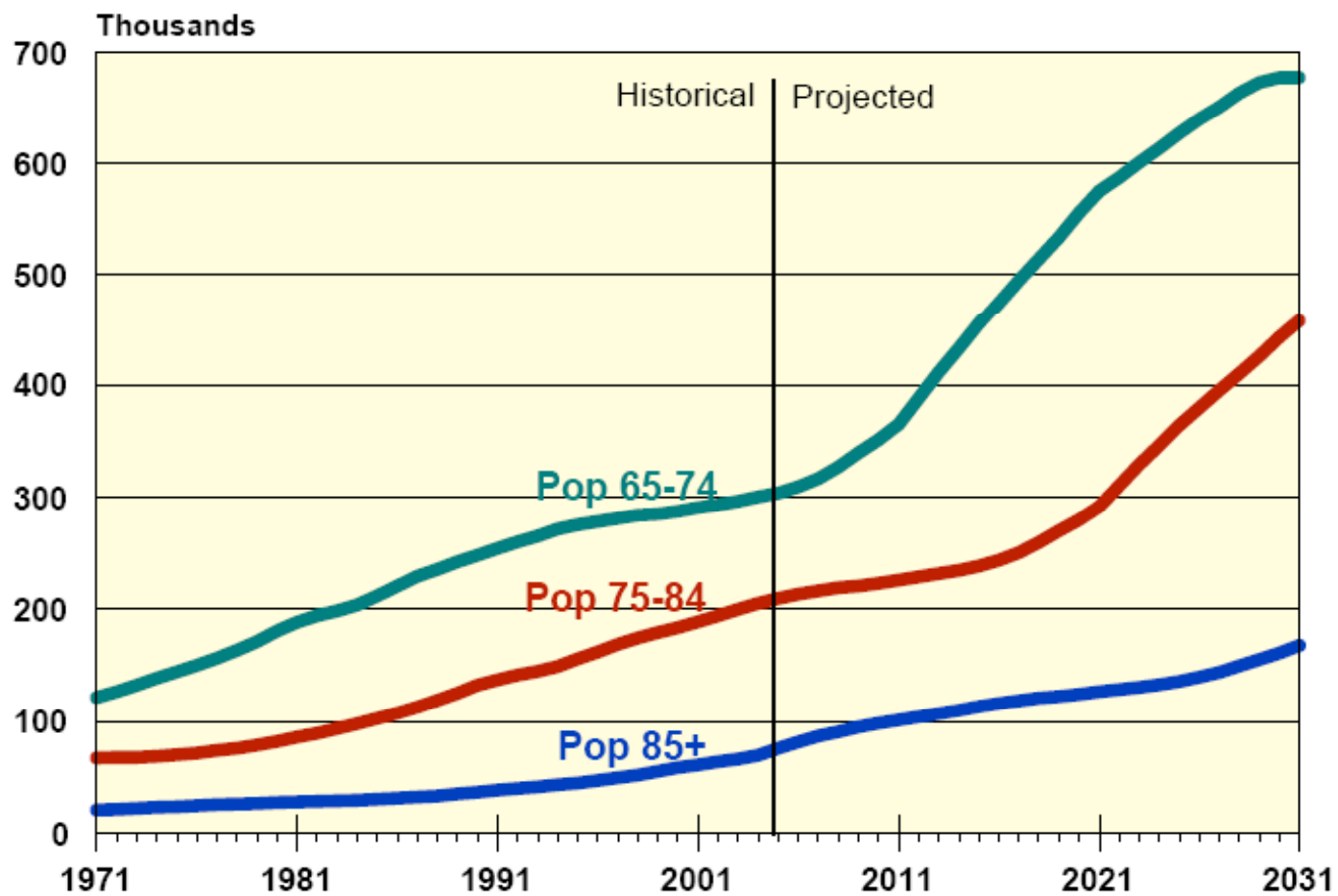
1. Changing demographics
2. Implications for society and government
3. What older adults say

British Columbia Population Pyramid - 1971, 2001, 2031

(PROJ 05/04)



Population of British Columbia by Select Age Groups



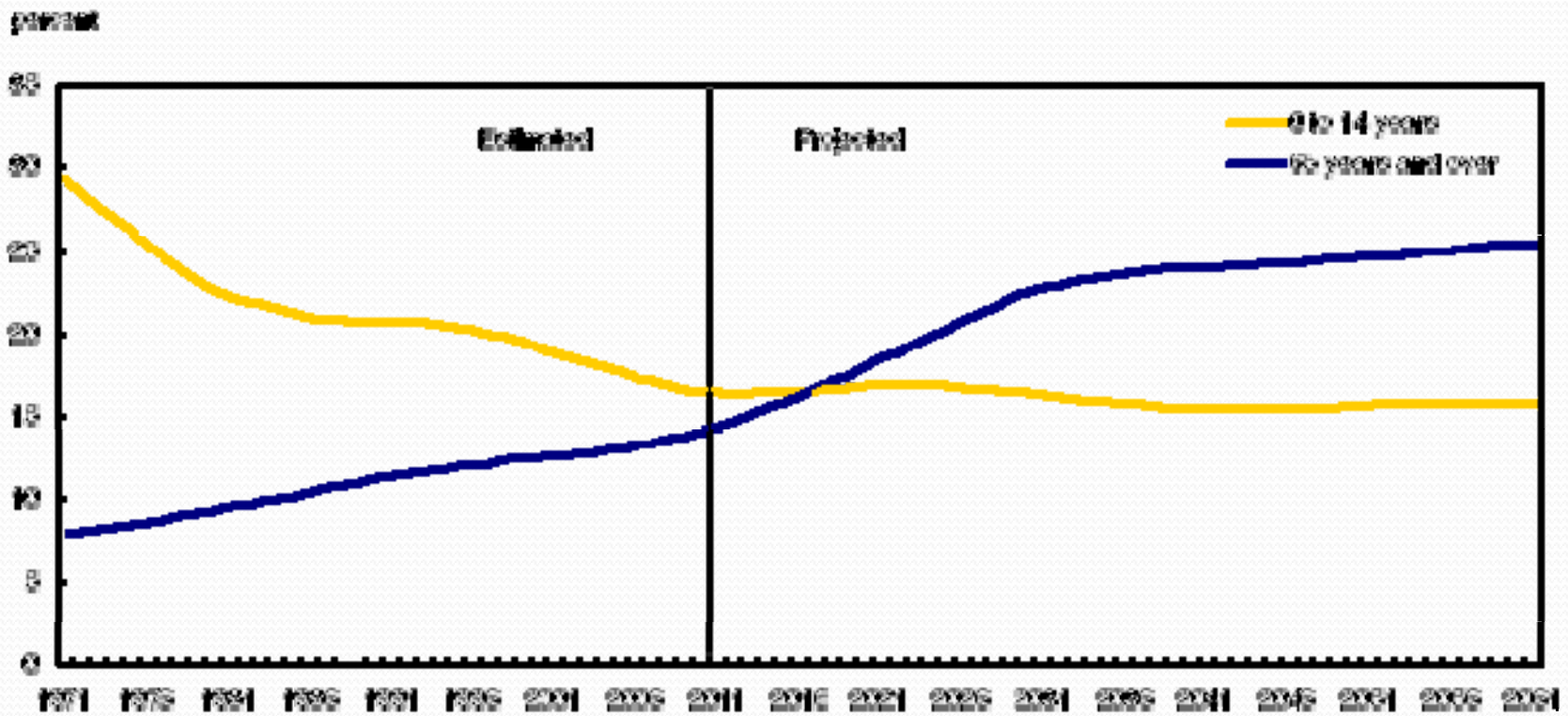
Sources: Historical - Statistics Canada; Projected - BC Stats Proj 05/04



Reasons for Aging Population

- Increasing life expectancy
- Decreasing fertility rate (4.3 to 2.6 worldwide since 1970)
- Increased births in the 20 years after World War II (the Boomers)

Proportion of seniors aged 65 and over and children aged 14 and under, 1971 to 2061, Canada





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Years of Life Expectancy at Birth in BC

	Total	Men	Women
1921	62.3	60.3	64.2
2009	82.1	79.9	84.3



Portrayal of Older People in Media

- Under-represented, older women even more
- Older = passive, peripheral, asexual, ill, forgetful
- Language is important

- OAP

- Elderly


- Senior

vs.

Older Adult



Baby boomers have
brought change all along.

- 
- People over 65 are NOT a homogeneous group
 - More very old
 - Treating over-65s as a group with common needs is a big mistake.



Two major consequences of population aging:

- Impact on Economic Productivity
 - In 20 years there will be 5 people working for 3 not in the workforce.
- Impact on Health Care
 - Increase in numbers per se not nearly so important as quantity and quality of services provided



What older adults say is important to aging well and staying healthy

- Staying connected and active
- Staying in the community
- Appropriate housing
- Transportation
- Income Security
- Caregiving support



Summary Comments

- Change is coming – a quarter of the population will be over 65 in 20 years.
- We haven't adjusted our attitudes and policies to this inevitable change.
- Older adults are NOT homogeneous: most are functioning well and contributing; some need help.
- Policies need to be tailored to this diversity.