

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Start planning for different Valley

Attitudes about climate change have finally begun to tip toward acceptance.

There are still arguments about why it's happening and what, if anything, can be done to reverse the trend. But the science of climate change has pretty much convinced skeptics that change is afoot.

It took about five years of warnings, studies, debates and research to confirm the science and, more importantly, convince politicians and citizens that we're heading for trouble. That's why a local initiative examining how growth in the Okanagan will affect our future needs is so important. We will need time to adjust our way of living, if we want to

conserve some semblance of it 40 years from now.

The Okanagan Partnership started work in 2001, bringing together business leaders, politicians and academics to look into our future and prepare us for the changes coming our way.

On Monday, the partnership's Our Okanagan series of workshops on the Valley's future released a study on local water consumption. The researchers say the demand for water will exceed the supply in this region by 2050.

At the pace human minds change their opinions, we might come up with ways to avoid a water shortage if we

start preparing for it today. It requires a lot of buy-in from regular folk who believe we have an endless supply of water.

Unless we want to suck the lake dry, other sources of water must be developed to meet demand as the Valley's population and commercial growth continues.

Our Okanagan has a number of thought-provoking studies, looking at transportation, land use and energy. This is a case where a business-led initiative is taking the lead on long-term planning.

They know building a strong bottom line requires planning.

— *Managing editor Tom Wilson*