Planning Exchange

Thank you for your interest in OPPI's Planning Exchange blog. OPPI welcomes submissions and ideas for the blog at any time. Before submitting your article or idea, please review the information below. If you have any questions, please contact OPPI at education@ontarioplanners.ca.

OPPI's Planning Exchange blog targets the OPPI membership, planners and allied professions and stakeholders. The goal of the blog is to provide members with access to Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) opportunities, provide a respectful forum to discuss planning issues across Ontario, and to provide a platform for communication between OPPI and members. An over-arching objective is to feature many short blog posts so readers are aware of the depth and breadth of planning issues, events and activities across the province.

Publication dates (subject to change):
- The first weekday of the month.
- If a second blog post is received it is published on or near the 15th of the month.
- Any additional blog posts received will be published on the following Monday after it is received or scheduled for the following month if this day is the first weekday of the month or the 15th.

Editorial guidelines for member submissions:
- Ideas and draft articles must be submitted via email to education@ontarioplanners.ca.
- Articles must not be subject to copyright, previously published elsewhere, and approved for release to OPPI for its unrestricted and perpetual use (including photos, if applicable).
- Articles must include a title and any applicable subtitles.
- Author's name, photo and any relevant social media handles. OPPI asks authors to provide a recent headshot accompanying their article.
- Articles must be accompanied by a short bio, including OPPI membership status and any relevant credentials that relate to your professional practice.
- An article must feature at least one, maximum two authors, and authors cannot be anonymous.
- Articles should be 500 to 1500 words in length and written for the web – exceptions can be made in specific instances (ex. Interviews, "plant the flag" issues, and others.) but must be agreed upon prior to submission.
- Your submission must include at least one photo and no more than four photos, graphs, or charts.
- Relevant links to reports and articles. OPPI will not include links that are promotional in nature.
- An article should reference links (not within article copy) one, maximum two, where information relevant to the blog post can be found (OPPI reserves the right to add/remove links in the post as appropriate).
- OPPI reserves the right to edit the blog post and determine the publish date.

Content ideas:
It is a good idea to define the scope of your blog post. Here are some examples of content types that we have published in the past:

- Current affairs and planning-related news
- Lessons learned and thought-provoking ideas from events you have participated in
- How-to content (for example: step-by-step processes, best practices, LPAT experiences, etc.)
- Case studies
- Success stories or unsuccessful initiatives that impact planning
- Human interest stories and interviews
- Planning in other jurisdictions and how it compares/differs to planning in Ontario
- Indigenous planning perspectives
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion stories
- Natural infrastructure
- Urban and rural planning
- Academic research

Helpful blog post writing tips:
Join the conversation! We want our blog posts to engage our readers. In order to catch and keep their attention, we have some helpful writing tips:

- Your post does not need to be written in a first-person narrative.
- Use lists with bullet points. These are quickly scanned by readers, get your point across succinctly, and are easy to link to.
- Use short, declarative sentences, and keep your posts short. Stick to the point and make every word count!
- Use bolding, capitals, italics and underlining to emphasize key points. But don't overuse them. These can add to clutter and frustrate readers.
- Use headings and subheadings. These break up the copy and allow readers to find their interest points more easily.
- Use pictures. Blog posts benefit greatly from graphics. If done relevantly, relevant images can expand on your topic and actually add to your point.
- Use short paragraphs broken up with some of the above elements and white space. Clutter irritates readers and may turn them away from your post.
- As they say in journalism, don't bury the lead. Make your main points early and clearly.
- Make sure your titles describe exactly what the readers will get when they click on your post.

Please be advised there is a review and editing period following the date of your submission. If you have questions regarding the content of your article or editorial and posting matters, please contact OPPI.