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# Planning Exchange

## OPPI BLOG EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) welcomes submissions and ideas for the *Planning Exchange* blog. Before submitting your article or idea, please review the guidelines and criteria below.

### Approach

The *Planning Exchange* blog's goal is to provide OPPI Members with access to [Continuous Professional Learning \(CPL\)](#) opportunities, with a respectful forum to discuss planning issues across Ontario, and a platform for communication between OPPI and its members. The [Learning Strategy](#) is the foundation for the development of educational content, resources and best practices most important to planners. 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.

**Priority is given to posts supporting the twelve topics of OPPI's [Learning Strategy](#).** This ensures that the depth and breadth of experiences and offerings across the province are featured and also guarantees that blog content is related to the [Core Competencies](#), a national standard.

The *Planning Exchange's* target audience is OPPI Members, planners and stakeholders.

### Blog Features

- Each blog post has comment tools and can be shared via social media to engage readers and facilitate dialogue and discussion.
- The *Planning Exchange* blog will help to increase and leverage exposure and SEO as featured blog contributors can leverage exposure by creating reciprocal links and share this content on their respective sites/pages.
- Comments and dialogue are monitored by OPPI and responded to as appropriate.
- Blog contributors are encouraged to participate with their own comments and social media postings.

### Criteria

Submission of ideas or draft blog posts and/or images are welcome, subject to appropriate release. **Only submissions with relevance to the planning profession in Ontario will be considered.** Submissions which serve to promote a specific company, organization or service will not be considered.

- Each submitted post must contain:
  - Appropriate and relevant information
  - Title and subtitles, if applicable
  - Author's name, photo and short bio, including OPPI membership status and any credentials with relevance to your professional practice
  - 300 to 500 words, [written for the web](#)
  - Discussion points and opportunities for readers to leave comments and share ideas in an engaging manner
  - One to four photos
  - One to three links maximum (links should directly relate to the article, not be promotional in nature)
  - Suggested tags for your post

## Content Ideas

It is a good idea to define the scope of your blog post. Here are some examples of content types:

1. Lessons learned and thought-provoking ideas from events you have participated in
2. Current affairs and planning-related news
3. How-to content (step-by-step, best practices)
4. Case studies/success stories/human interest
5. Interviews

## Title and Keywords

You will want to include keywords within your blog post, as well as in your suggested list of tags for the post. If an article's topic is on, for example "Rural Ontario Planning", it is a good idea to include the words "Rural" and "Ontario" within the content, as this makes it more likely that when a visitor searches Google for "Housing best practices in rural Ontario", that your article will appear in the search.

## 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.
- Including important and relevant keywords in your article will positively affect the visibility of your post via search engines. (These keywords should also be included in your list of tags.)
- 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 boxes and block quotes to get attention.
- 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.
- Include helpful tags and keywords when submitting your blog post.

## Submissions

Draft blog posts, if accepted, are subject to editing by OPPI. Submitted blog posts:

1. Must be submitted via our [on-line submission form](#)
2. Must not be subject to copyright and approved for release to OPPI for its unrestricted and perpetual use (including photos, if applicable)
3. Must feature at least one, maximum two authors, and nothing anonymous
4. Should reference for links (not within story 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)
5. Must include the criteria above.

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 Us](#).

## [Submit Your Article Now](#)