

NewCities Contributor Guide

Thank you for your interest in contributing an op-ed or article to the NewCities' blog. Below you will find all the information you need for drafting (messaging, length), revising (style tips, tone), and submitting the first draft of your article.

OVERVIEW

The NewCities [blog](#) is read by a diverse audience of urban practitioners, decision-makers, researchers, students, along with general city enthusiasts. It is important that the writing style be adapted for a non-academic, non-technical audience.

NewCities does not accept promotional articles that explicitly promote a product or service. This means you cannot hyperlink to your company or personal website more than once within the body of the article.

The ideal length is between 800 – 1500 words.

CONSIDERATIONS WHILE WRITING

We are looking for articles that are informative, well referenced, and inspiring.

Referenced: where appropriate, reference data or factual claims by hyperlinking your source directly in the text.

Informative: use examples and anecdotes to illustrate interesting facts and figures.

Provocative: write to inspire, spark debate, and to encourage readers to think differently and learn something new.

Tips for writing an op-ed

- Craft a clear message – decide on your main point, point of view, and arguments before you begin writing.
- Start with a strong lead – whether you get right to the point or start with an anecdote, make sure the reader knows the 5 W'S (who, what, where, when, and why) before the end of your first paragraph.
- Write in an active voice (ie: “the citizens urged their mayors” vs “the mayors were urged”) – this will keep the piece more lively and give your story a sense of urgency.
- Use a descriptive and punchy title – it should entice the reader to want more.

- Know your audience - avoid using jargon and too many acronyms (see section on acronyms).
- End with recommendations or a call to action.
- To pick up on awkward phrasing or sections that might need rewording, we advise our contributors to read their articles aloud before submitting.

Style guide

Most rules are based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Abbreviations and acronyms

- Spell out the complete name of an organization or program the first time you reference it with the abbreviated form in parentheses.
Example: The United Nations (UN)

Capitalization

- Use [title case](#), meaning every major word in a title is capitalized.
- Capitalize formal names, and use lower case in subsequent partial and informal forms. Ex: The City of Montreal, the city.
- Global South and Global North are always capitalized.
- Indigenous and Black are always capitalized, while white is always lower-case.

Spelling

- NewCities uses American spelling, and not British-English.
For example, words end in *-or* as opposed to *-our* (labor, neighbor, etc.) and *-er* as opposed to *-re* (center, etc.), and often use a *-ze* as opposed to *-se* (organize, capitalize, etc.)

Gender-inclusive language

- Replace gendered nouns with gender neutral language ex: chairman becomes chairperson.
- Use plural nouns to replace the need for gendered pronouns ex: He/she becomes "the participant."
- Use they/their for singular pronouns when referring to a person ex: The urbanite must give their perspective on the project.

Punctuation

- We use the serial comma.
Example: "the streets, parks, and buildings" is proper use.
- We use double quotes (") rather than single quotes ('), except when you are using a quotation within a quotation.
- Commas and periods go within quotation marks when they are found at the end of a sentence. Example: "This is correct."

Dates and numbers

- Dates are written month, day, year. Example: On December 1, 2022, ...
- Do not use superscript on numbers like 1st, 11th, 22nd, etc.
- Write out numbers from one to nine. From 10 on, numbers can be numerical.

Additional preferences

- Wellbeing is always spelled as one word.
- Micro mobility is two.

SUBMITTING YOUR ARTICLE

Please submit your article as a word or google document to our Editorial & Content Strategist, Emily at emily.gribbin@newcities.org.

- In the email, please also include a short biography (~150 words), a headshot, and your social media handles (LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter).

We encourage authors to submit images along with their writing, as long as the images complement the story or messaging within the text.

- If submitting images, please send them as jpeg or png files with the proper accreditation.

Editing process

Our team will return your article to you within 7-10 days after copy editing. You will have one week to return a revised draft. Once both parties agree on a final draft, the NewCities team will suggest a publishing date.