

M-LAB SUBMITTALS GUIDELINES

M-LAB

M-Group is interested in keeping our M-Lab webpage fresh and current with timely articles. If you have an idea for an article we encourage you to formulate a template and seek approval from your manager to proceed with research and writing. We anticipate articles taking no longer than 16 hours from start to finish for completion of research, writing and editing.

Intro

M-LAB is M-Group's Research & Innovation arm.

M-LAB is committed to sharing new approaches and solutions to issues facing California communities, residents and environment.

Local governments are facing an unprecedented period of change as they grapple with shrinking revenues and expanded demand for services. They must have access to a steady supply of ideas and innovations as they strive to provide for a rapidly increasing population.

New technologies must be adapted to the cause of improving the lives of all residents.

Research and modelling will allow **M-LAB** to increase the rate that innovation reaches our communities and change how we plan for the future.

M-LAB is open to collaboration with anyone or any group that shares a passion for improving our communities and environment for all residents.

We are focused on:

- Fostering original real-world research and observation;
- Developing new ways to solve problems in our communities;
- Reaching out to the next generation.

M-LAB is devoted to becoming a leading source of new these ideas for local governments.

PROTOCOL

Taking no longer than a half hour, provide an abstract of a paragraph in length of your proposed article to your manager that addresses the following: a:

1. **What is the significance of the topic?**
2. **Why is it important to planners?**
3. **Who will be interested in reading it?**

Once your manager agrees with the parameters of your article they will seek approval from one of the Principals for you to begin.

WRITING GUIDELINES

Topics	The topic of the article must address challenging planning related issues facing California communities, residents and environment. Articles and examples can be drawn from other places outside the state.
Word limits	Each piece shall be at least 500 words, but no longer than 1500 words.
Sources	Any references, quotes, and graphics need to be documented. Please utilize Chicago Manual of Style guidelines when writing down references.
Style	<p>M-LAB seeks to attract ideas from a diverse group of people, so no need to adhere to a specific writing style. The writer establishes the voice and style of the article. The Chicago Manual of Style is a useful resource.</p> <p>But remember that less is more. Keep the introduction short to draw in the reader.</p> <p>Keep paragraphs short, strong and precise. Edit out any non-essential words in your sentence to make your point.</p> <p>Focus on substance and content. Imagine the questions your readers will ask – then answer them.</p> <p>Show then tell – make your point then explain why it matters.</p>
Organization	<p>Introduction (lead) paragraph – provide the main talking points, grab the reader’s attention.</p> <p>Second paragraph – include quotes, give the story that connects the topic.</p> <p>Following paragraphs – provide additional detail, answer the questions the reader wants to know, dig deeper and provide explanations.</p> <p>Conclusion – sum up your article, what do you want the reader to remember, make another connection to your original point.</p>
Formatting	All the formatting work will take place during posting. No need to do any type of formatting.
Graphics	Graphics are encouraged but not required. Any graphics included must be referenced.

WHAT TO HAND IN

Please submit the following materials with your first draft:

Draft	Please save as a Word Document.
Tags	At the end of your draft, please list the tags you would like your article to have. Tags are a way to track themes and topics throughout a blog. You may find an example of a tag cloud on the M-LAB page, to the right of the "Read the latest..." column.
Graphics	JPEG and PNG are both acceptable.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING

Please follow these instructions when submitting an article:

1. On the subject line please write "Submission: [article's title] by [your name]"
2. In the body of the email, write a brief description of yourself, which will appear at the bottom of the article.
3. Submit to your manager or one of the Principals.

BOTTOM LINE

This is an opportunity to contribute to ongoing conversations about how better planning leads to better communities and a higher quality of life for all California residents. We encourage anyone to propose articles, but we reserve the right to choose which submissions we publish.