

# Submit a Story Idea

If you have an idea for a story, send an e-mail briefly describing what you have in mind, why the topic is important, and how it is relevant to our audience. Include the sources of your information (personal involvement? interviews?) and about your present position and background.

The submission guidelines below will give you the information you will need to be sure that your work meets our expectations for tone, length, focus, and style. We look forward to your contribution.

Send all submissions and questions to Editor-in-Chief, [Liza Morehead](#).

## Writing Guidelines

Each issue of *Metroscape* contains feature articles, an interview, and an atlas.

Our readers come to *Metroscape*® seeking interesting, in-depth, and nuanced examinations of the issues affecting the region. They include public and private sector decision-makers whose success depends on an understanding of how these issues affect regional social, cultural, land-use, and economic policy in the region. The tone of a successful *Metroscape*® article reflects this readership. Like any other high-quality publication, we seek to be informative and clear.

In keeping with the IMS mission, *Metroscape*® is a neutral forum for the discussion of sometimes contentious issues. This means that the magazine must responsibly report stories from many different angles. Articles should be balanced, not argumentative or tendentious.

*Metroscape*® articles should be journalistic, not academic. Use engaging leads, telling anecdotes, and colorful details. Your

story will not be the first or last word on the topic; rather, it should be the story readers *want* to read. The easiest way to familiarize yourself with the tone we strive for is simply to read past issues which can be found on our website [www.pdx.edu/ims/metroscape](http://www.pdx.edu/ims/metroscape).

Use citations or suggested reading lists following your article if necessary, no footnotes or endnotes. Name experts or reliable sources for key assertions, somewhere in your text. Do not write, "Experts say..." without providing in the text or separately verification. We fact-check, but our resources are limited, so be sure that anything you say is readily verifiable.

In writing your story, think about whether any information could best be conveyed in a sidebar or separate section. We have found that this is another effective way to capture readers' attention and create interesting page layouts. Write captions for any supplementary art you submit. Accuracy is vital. All facts should be double-checked before a manuscript is submitted.

*Time value.* Because *Metroscape*® appears only twice a year, be aware of the timing of the information you present in your story and plan your prose accordingly. For example, don't present as breaking news information that will be well known by the time it appears in print. Our readers are more interested in analysis and perspective than in "scoop" journalism.

*Edits.* The editors respect each writer's voice, to the extent possible. We do not have a "house style," except in deference to our readers, as outlined above. We do, of course, correct for errors of grammar, syntax, diction, and spelling. We also fact check, as noted, and will query you when a fact is at issue or a statement is unclear. However, please note two exceptions to the previous statements: 1) The editors reserve the right to change an article title without consultation to

suit the imperatives of clarity and reader interest; 2) in the case of a submittal that arrives past our drop-dead date, we may be forced to put the article in print based on our best judgment without authorial consultation, assuming fact checking turns up no extraordinary problems. Conversely, we may not print a past-due article if it contains, in the editors' view, too many questionable assertions or is simply too late. We also reserve the right to change the position of any article in an issue, given unanticipated changes in the space budget, such as the availability of art, sidebars, length of other pieces, etc.

*A Note about "the Region."* When we refer to the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro metropolitan region or area we mean seven counties—Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington, and Yamhill in Oregon and Clark and Skamania in Washington – that compose the service area of the Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies and are thus the focus of everything we do. In writing for *Metroscape*, we don't ask that everything you discuss in your work encompass all of the counties. Instead, bear in mind that your major focus should be grounded in events and circumstances relevant to the region and that what you report should have significance for the area, even if you don't mention each county in your piece. An effort should be made in your work to draw out the significance of the topic to the region. Please do not write a "Portland-centric" article, which we define as one that discusses the topic solely as a Portland phenomenon and seems not to be conscious of related events or facts outside the city limits. Keep in mind that the primary intent of the magazine is to foster an awareness of the region's shared identity as well as its shared problems and shared solutions.

*Interviews.* *Metroscape* uses a "Q and A" format for its interviews, unless otherwise instructed. We ask that interviewers write a very brief introduction to head the piece which illuminates the interviewee's background and

credentials, the reason she or he is the subject of the interview (for example, expertise or involvement with a particularly compelling topic for the region), the author/interviewer's identity, and the place and date of the interview.

If there is sidebar material and art that should be run with the interview, please include it in the submission. We always need at least one photo of the interviewee, but also welcome other illustrative materials.

*Art.* *Metroscape*® uses a variety of photographs, line art, charts, and maps. Good art that complements your work's narrative is essential to making *Metroscape*® an engaging publication. We define art as any visual component of the layout—that includes, charts, graphs, maps, photos, illustrations, and more. Please identify appropriate sources for art, and think about getting art from the people or organizations you discuss in your story. These groups are often willing to supply art for free. Most important, notify your editor about available art or ideas for art as early in the preparation process as possible so it can be secured in a timely manner. All art needs to be high-quality and high-resolution.

*Due dates.* Authors must meet three submission deadlines per issue: a rough draft, a revised draft, and final content including any images, charts or other visuals to accompany the article.

*Note that if you are unable to meet an established deadline, your story may not run, especially if it can't be adequately fact-checked by press time.*

### **Content Specifications**

*Note: all imagery must be print resolution preferably at 300 dpi*

- Front cover: high resolution image, vertical orientation (usually related to the lead article)
- The Landscape
  - Page count: 2-pages (one page of text; one page of images)
  - Word count: 500 maximum
- Lead Article
  - Page count: 7 pages
  - Approximately 3,000
  - Additional content: images, sidebars, charts and tables
- Periodic Atlas
  - Page count: 7 pages
  - Word count: maximum 1,200 words
  - Map driven: at least one map per page
- Interview
  - Page count: 5
  - Word count: approximately 2,700
  - Additional content: One photo of interviewee(s)
- Back Anchor
  - Page count: 6
  - Word count: approximately 2,400
  - Additional content: images, sidebars, charts and tables
- Indicators
  - Page count: 1
  - Word count: 245 maximum
  - Additional content: chart or graph
- Back Cover:  $\frac{3}{4}$  page ad or announcement

### **Contributor's Information**

We ask for the following information from all contributing writers. It is imperative that we be able to contact you—especially in situations such as last-minute fact checking, when quick response times are of the essence. Please be sure to email all of the following contact information:

Full name; work, cell, and/or home phone numbers as appropriate; Email address; and street address. We run an author's identity line with each piece, so be sure to provide the information you would like to see with your story, including an email address; for example: *"Jane Doe is a Portland area freelance writer who teaches English at Portland Community College. She can be reached at jonesm@dotcom.com."*