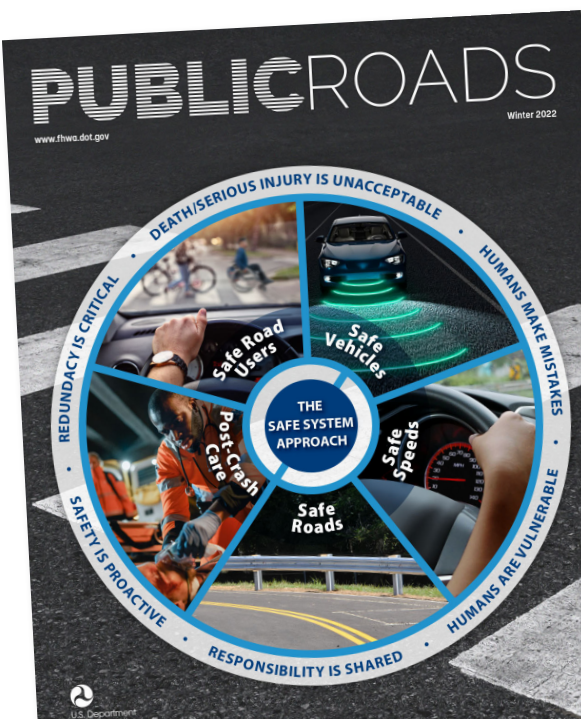# PUBLICROADS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the timeline for article submissions to *Public Roads*?

▶ All articles that appear in *Public Roads* begin with the submission of a story idea proposal for the Editorial Board to review. The Editorial Board is comprised of Federal Highway Administration senior leadership.

▶ Story ideas are submitted to the Editorial Board in batches approximately every 2 months. If a story idea is sent to the team immediately following a submission to the Editorial Board, it will be held for the next submission. The team will provide the author with that information and the anticipated submission date.

▶ Whenever possible, providing a brief problem/solution statement in the proposal helps the Editorial Board understand the purpose of the article better.

▶ Typical timeline from story idea to print is approximately 9–12 months, or 2 to 3 issues, out from time of approval.

What is the step-by-step process for article submission?

▶ Story idea proposals (approximately 1–2 pages) are sent to the *Public Roads* team for initial review.

▶ The team collects those ideas and submits them to the Editorial Board for their consideration, through the *Public Roads* Editor-in-Chief, approximately every 2 months.

▶ At the conclusion of their review period, the Editorial Board advises which articles are approved to advance to article development and what articles, if any, are not suitable for *Public Roads*.

▶ Upon receipt of that information, the team advises the authors of the Editorial Board's decision and noting any special comments the Board may have had for development of the article.

▶ If approved, the *Public Roads* team schedules the article for a future issue—bearing in mind that, on rare occasion, articles may get shifted to an issue not originally scheduled. The team will also schedule an article kick-off, if needed or for new authors, to discuss process and deadlines.

What documentation and publication guidelines are provided when story ideas are approved?

▶ When articles are approved, the *Public Roads* team sends a full package of materials for article development (Author Guidelines [which includes notes on formatting, style, photos and photo captions, and permissions], templates, etc.), as well as a calendar of deadlines and availability in future issues.

▶ Once the authors review the calendar, they respond with which issue they would like their article to appear. Again, that will be based on which issues have space available at the time of scheduling.

▶ Authors should be aware that, on occasion and at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief, articles may be moved to a later issue.

How are articles chosen for the magazine and each issue?

▶ The Editorial Board chooses which articles/topics are suitable for the magazine that align with FHWA goals and mission.

▶ In general, the Editorial Board selects articles on innovation/research, safety, infrastructure, operations, and FHWA's core values.

▶ The *Public Roads* team schedules articles to ensure each issue is diverse and does not cover the same topic or publish the same author/author team in the same issue in the event that authors have multiple-approved articles.

▶ Exception: A special themed issue—which takes approximately 14–16 months to plan—will cover multiple facets of the same topic. Special themed issues must also be approved by the Editorial Board in advance of scheduling.

What else should potential authors know about the process and *Public Roads*?

▶ Issues are published quarterly and released on the following schedule:
  – Winter: January
  – Spring: April
  – Summer: July
  – Autumn: October

▶ The Winter issue receives higher visibility, as it is shared at the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting in January.

▶ Articles are short to moderate in length, generally 2–4 pages, with minimum of 4–6 high-quality, high-resolution photos and graphics.

▶ On occasion, a feature article may run longer but ideally not exceeding 10 pages (which tends to be a rare occurrence or special feature).

▶ Articles should not be highly technical in nature (like a report or TechBrief) and should speak to a wide range of audiences.

▶ Photo and quote permissions are critical and a mandatory part of the editorial process. All permissions must be received by the *Public Roads* team prior to submission to the designer for layout but preferably before the article goes through Technical Review.

▶ Quotes used in articles must be attributed to an individual and not an office or department.

▶ If the story idea is approved, an outline needs to be submitted to the *Public Roads* team for their review/comments approximately 2 months before the first draft is due.

▶ If the story idea proposal submission was detailed and fleshed out, it may be used instead of an outline. At that time, an editor will be assigned to the article and will usher the author/author team through the editorial process until final layout.

▶ All feature articles go through a Technical Review process where FHWA subject matter experts, including those on the State level, examine each article for accuracy. All comments generated by the reviewers are shared with the authors anonymously at the completion of that phase to address prior to sending the final article to layout.

▶ All authors have multiple opportunities to review and respond to edits. They also have a final opportunity to review the article in layout to provide final, critical-only edits or approval to proceed.

▶ Authors and other interested parties can subscribe to the digital version of *Public Roads* through the website at U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration (govdelivery.com).

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