
Town and City Readers Share Feedback and Ideas

By Eleanor Baron

In February, we invited readers of *New Hampshire Town and City* to respond to a survey in an effort to gather feedback and ideas about how the magazine is meeting member needs. With the option of responding to the survey either online or by mail, we heard from 481 of our 3,339 subscribers, a response rate of 14.5 percent. Although we'd love to have heard from more of you, we were encouraged by the thoughtful, detailed comments provided by those who did respond. Survey responses provided fuel for conversation over the past two months with staff and members of the LGC Board of Directors about ways to make the magazine better serve our members' needs.

General Survey Results

- 80 percent of respondents save each copy of *Town and City* for either a few months or indefinitely, as a resource
- 60 percent of respondents would like to see *Town and City* continue to be published ten times per year
- 47 percent of respondents share their copy of *Town and City* with someone else each month

Content-Related Feedback

According to survey questions asking which types of content readers refer to regularly, legal content and feature articles are the most popular items in *Town and City*. When asked what readers would like to see more of, respondents answered that they'd like to see even more legal content, additional legislative update information as well as finance information. Through open-ended comments, we heard several suggestions for more feature articles and more human interest articles. This presents somewhat of a conflict with the above-noted feedback suggesting even more legal content, so it's clear that both are valued. A few readers suggested that we include more profiles of local officials at work as well as detailed accounts of innovative community projects.

With these comments in mind, we'll be working toward incorporating more community-focused feature articles into the mix, and we'll need your help to do that. Please send your ideas and news releases to us at townandcity@nhlgc.org. We need to know about your stories to cover them!

Design-Related Feedback

A few readers had questions or comments about *Town and City* looking "too nice" or "too expensive," so we thought it might be timely to remind our readers how we pay for the magazine. Many others freely offered comments about being pleased with design improvements that we've made to the magazine over the years. *Town and City* advertising currently pays for at least 75 percent of the cost of printing the magazine and, of course, we earn some income from paid subscriptions as well. Our goal is to make the magazine pay for itself, and we're closer than ever to realizing that goal. LGC continues to enjoy the support of a local printer who provides us with excellent service at a truly unbeatable price. We have worked with our printer to select the lowest price appropriate paper available and will continue to look at other ways to keep printing costs down.

Summary

Survey comments were generally positive and it's apparent that survey respondents find the magazine to be a useful resource. Individual comments that are specifically relevant to various program areas have been discussed by appropriate staff. Although the survey is closed, we welcome your thoughts and comments at any time.

Eleanor Baron is director of communications with the New Hampshire Local Government Center and editor of New Hampshire Town and City. To share your thoughts, ideas and comments about the magazine or LGC's other communications initiatives, please contact her by phone at 603.224.7447, ext. 137 or by e-mail at ebaron@nhlgc.org.