

PROFILE: Harland Bartholomew

American urban planner

Harland Bartholomew is a well-known name in the planning profession. Until researching his history for this edition of CT.org did I realize the controversy surrounding the impact of his work. The articles quoted below give a range of reactions to his career, but more than the pluses and minuses, I offer his story as an object lesson for those currently practicing city planning.

Bartholomew thought he was doing good. A man of his times, practicing from 1918 to 1963, he knew of the reasons for Euclid, the 1918 influenza pandemic, the Great Depression, the ascension of the automobile and the pollution of factories in urban areas:

- “In 1995 [1995!!] the Monongahela River Valley’s air was among the most polluted in the United States.” **LINK:**
<https://www.theverge.com/2013/10/16/4748776/cleaning-up-one-of-americas-most-polluted-cities>
- Two months after the 1969 fire [1969!! in Cleveland], Time magazine ran an article about water pollution and famously declared that the Cuyahoga “oozes rather than flows.” **LINK:**
<https://www.americanrivers.org/cuyahoga50/index.html>

His career spanned 44 years, 1919-1963, and ranged from national to local projects amidst the dynamic 20th century. Likewise, the 21st century will see dramatic structural changes. As we develop new urban responses, be mindful that public participation, transparent decision-making and a global awareness can perhaps protect us from doing good while doing bad.



Born: September 14, 1889, [Stoneham, MA](#)

Died: December 2, 1989, [Clayton, MO](#)

Education: [Rutgers University](#)

From...The Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Born in Stonehaven, Massachusetts, near Boston, Bartholomew studied civil engineering at Rutgers University for two years but did not graduate. He worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and then for E.P. Goodrich, a civil engineer in New York, before being hired as a city planner for the City of St. Louis, Missouri, in 1918.

Bartholomew was appointed a member of the Interregional Highway Committee, and much of his work in that respect, published in a 1944 report, would have a significant impact on what would become the U.S. Interstate Highway System.

In 1953 President Dwight Eisenhower appointed Bartholomew as chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission in Washington, D.C. In 1959 he formed the St. Louis-based firm Harland Bartholomew & Associates, City Planners, Civil Engineers, and Landscape Architects.

Bartholomew worked on more than 6,000 projects during his prodigious career, producing 500 plans for cities, counties, regions, and states. His work also encompassed subdivisions, transportation plans, and plans for park systems, with examples of the latter in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and Dallas, Texas.

Often called the 'Dean of Comprehensive City Planning,' Bartholomew and his body of work were foundational in developing city planning as a discrete discipline of inquiry and study; among his publications are two important books, *Urban Land Use* (1932) and *Land Uses in American Cities* (1955). From 1918 to 1958, Bartholomew served as a nonresident professor of civic design at the University of Illinois.

In 1955 he received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Institute of Planners. He was named an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1958 and an honorary member of the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1962. Bartholomew resigned from Harland Bartholomew &

Associates in 1963 but consulted for the firm until his death. He died at his home in Clayton, Missouri, at the age of 100.

LINK: <https://tclf.org/pioneer/harland-bartholomew>

From...  Harland

Bartholomew: Destroyer of the Urban Fabric of St. Louis

April 10, 2021 [Nathan Jackson Featured](#), Policy & Commentary [38 comments](#)

Many people know of Robert Moses, the urban planner in New York who changed the city's landscape by razing historic neighborhoods and constructing urban highways and large monolithic apartment buildings in upper Manhattan, but many are unaware of his St. Louis contemporary. While Moses was clearing out the historic neighborhoods in New York, Bartholomew was at work in St. Louis, helping to shape the region as we see it today.

LINK: <https://nextstl.com/2021/04/harland-bartholomew-destroyer-of-the-urban-fabric-of-st-louis/>



From... The Washington, DC region is great >> and it can be greater.

One man zoned huge swaths of our region for sprawl, cars, and exclusion.

HISTORY By [Ben Ross](#) (Contributor) June 6, 2020

Harland Bartholomew's legacy demonstrates with particular clarity that planning is never truly neutral; value judgments are always embedded in the objectives engineers set for themselves. [Keep reading...](#)

LINK: <https://ggwash.org/view/70408/harland-bartholomew-the-man-who-zoned-washington-dc>

From... [UrbanReview](#) | SAINT LOUIS

Harland Bartholomew negatively impacted many cities

Steve Patterson, December 2, 2009

"There is no doubting Bartholomew's influence on both cities and the profession of urban planning. His considerable influence is why he had such a negative impact on cities. We are still dealing with problems created by his solutions to early 20th century problems."

Read more at:

<https://www.urbanreviewstl.com/2009/12/harland-bartholomew-negatively-impacted-many-cities/>