

BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION OF NEW ORLEANS

In 1923, the first City Planning & Zoning Commission was authorized and appointed. This Commission was composed of fifteen members. The Chamber of Commerce of the New Orleans area was, for the most part, the leader in the formation of the first Commission. This Commission functioned until 1927 when it was re-appointed in conformity with the new State Zoning Enabling Act. Again, there were fifteen members, some of whom were citizens-at-large and some representatives of various public agencies such as the Sewerage & Water Board, the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad, and other important public agencies.

In 1927, the City of New Orleans, realizing the need for planning, authorized the appropriation of money for the employment of a City Planning Consultant, Harland Bartholomew & Associates, of St. Louis. Over a period of about three years, this firm drew up the various parts of the City Plan, and presented them to the City Planning & Zoning Commission for review and adoption. The Major Street Plan was officially adopted, as was also the first Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. Public Hearings were held on the Zoning Ordinance by the City Planning & Zoning Commission and by the Commission Council, and all possible publicity was given the proposed zoning ordinance in order that the citizens of New Orleans would be acquainted with the proposed zoning. After about two years of consideration and publicity, the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance was adopted. This was the first time in the history of the City of New Orleans that the entire City area was zoned. There had been many "piecemeal" zoning ordinances prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, but since these covered only some areas of the City, they were not considered satisfactory.

In 1946, new State Enabling legislation was adopted, and the Commission was again authorized and re-appointed, this time consisting of nine members, all of whom were citizens-at-large. The Commission was then called the City Planning Commission. It has functioned under this legislation since 1946.

In 1948, in an effort to bring the City Plan up-to-date, Harland Bartholomew & Associates were again employed since it was considered that this firm, having worked in New Orleans before, would be more cognizant of its needs. This was under contract for three years.

All City Plans were reviewed and revised, including the Zoning Ordinance which due to changing conditions was almost obsolete. Again, citywide public hearings were held, first by the City Planning Commission and then by the Commission Council. In 1953, after intensive study and publicity the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance was revised and adopted.

Since city planning (including zoning) is not and can not be static, changes are always being considered and adopted and as time passes, more and more of the recommendations of the City Planning Commission are carried out for the betterment of the City of New Orleans.

To enable better understanding of the scope of the Commission's activities, extracts of the Enabling legislation under which the Commission operates are attached. This data together with a copy of the Decennial Report for the period 1950-1960 should furnish a fairly good picture of the work of this Commission.