Finding aid to the San Francisco Department of Public Works Proposed San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridges Records 1916-1938 SFH 87

Finding aid prepared by Jordon Zorker
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2014
Title: San Francisco Department of Public Works Proposed San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridges Records

Date (inclusive): circa 1916-1938
Date (bulk): 1925-1928
Collection Identifier: SFH 87
Creator: San Francisco (Calif.). Dept. of Public Works.
Physical Description: 3 cartons (3.0 linear feet)
Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library

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Abstract: Materials collected and arranged by the San Francisco Department of Public Works documenting the planning of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Includes newspaper clippings, reports, hearings, correspondence, journals, construction proposals and engineering plans, legislative documents, agreements, applications, contracts, resumes, boring and other technical data, blueprints, and photographs. Bulk of the collection consists of proposals and engineering plans of bridge design, circa 1926, when over a dozen proposals were being considered by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, though none were chosen as the final plan. Documents were created by companies competing for construction of the bridge, their engineers, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors reviewing the proposals, and the San Francisco Department of Public Works as represented by City Engineer M. M. O’Shaughnessy.

Physical Location: The collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.

Access
The collection is available for use during San Francisco History Center hours, with photographs available during Photo Desk hours. Collections that are stored offsite should be requested 48 hours in advance.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], San Francisco Department of Public Works Proposed San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridges Records (SFH 87), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Provenance
Records given to the San Francisco History Center, of the San Francisco Public Library, on December 15, 1993 by Olga Arias, Dept. of Public Works, City and County of San Francisco.

Processing information
Processed by Jordon Zorker (intern), 2014.

Biographical/Historical
The San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW), launched in 1900, manages the design, building, and maintenance of city streets and infrastructure. During the years of planning for a Bay Bridge, their role, through City Engineer M. M. O’Shaughnessy, was collaborative with the Board of Supervisors, in selecting a site and plans. By 1926, over a dozen plans or proposals of differing routes, design, and cost had been filed with the San Francisco Board of Supervisors for review and selection. March 28, 1927, the Board of Supervisors created a board of independent engineers, with City Engineer M. M. O’Shaughnessy of the DPW - to study and report on the bridge issue. All applications were rejected by the Board of Supervisors at a meeting on July 31, 1928.

Momentum for realizing the bridge did not arrive until establishment at the state level of the California Bridge Toll Authority in 1929. Construction began on July 9, 1933 with Charles Henry Purcell as Chief Engineer, and the bridge opened to traffic on November 12, 1936.

Scope and Contents
Materials collected and arranged by the San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW) primarily documenting the planning of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, 1916-1938. Includes newspaper clippings, reports, hearings, correspondence, journals, construction proposals and engineering plans, legislative documents, agreements, applications, contracts, resumes, boring and other technical data, blueprints, and photographs. Bulk of the collection consists of
proposals and engineering plans of bridge design, circa 1926, when more than a dozen proposals for franchises were being considered by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Bulk of documents were created by companies competing for construction of the bridge, their engineers, the Board of Supervisors reviewing the proposals, and the San Francisco Department of Public Works as represented by City Engineer M. M. O'Shaughnessy. The collection preserves the original filing and code numbers used by the DPW. Individual files can contain multiple types of documents. Many file titles show DPW filing dates rather than content dates. Includes papers relating to the War Department’s restriction on bridge construction north of Hunters Point and use of Goat Island (now Yerba Buena Island). Journal articles from The Commonwealth (1925) and Western Construction News (1926, 1928) provide context. Momentum for realizing the bridge came with the creation in 1927 by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors of a board of three engineers working with the City Engineer, and in 1929 with the state level creation of the California Bridge Toll Authority. Bridge construction began in 1933 with Charles Henry Purcell as Chief Engineer, and was completed in 1936. Much less of the collection dates from the 1930s.

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged by San Francisco Department of Public Works filing numbers. Individual files can contain multiple types of documents. Many file titles show DPW filing dates rather than content dates.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Bridges--California--San Francisco Bay Area--Planning
- San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (Oakland and San Francisco, Calif.)

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