



Transbay Transit Center

Transbay Newsletter - Spring 2012

TJPA Attends White House Celebration of Joining Forces Initiative to Support, Recognize and Honor Veterans

On April 11, 2012, Maria Ayerdi-Kaplan, Executive Director of the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA), and Webcor, General Contractor for the Transbay Transit Center Project, were invited by the White House to attend an event celebrating the First Anniversary of Joining Forces, the initiative to recognize, honor and support veterans and military families.



TJPA Executive Director Maria Ayerdi-Kaplan with First Lady Michelle Obama after Joining Forces event at the White House

Late last year, Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden launched an initiative to recognize and celebrate citizens, communities, and organizations who have demonstrated a deep commitment to service focused on improving the lives of military families and veterans. The TJPA has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Joining Forces Initiative since its inception.

Since the launch of the initiative, the TJPA has entered into an historic Project Labor Agreement (PLA), which includes a provision to assist National Guard, Reserve, and transitioning active-duty military members with career training and employment opportunities through the Helmets to Hardhats and Wounded Warrior organizations. To date, the Transbay Project's construction workforce includes nearly 2% of workers who are veterans. We are working with veteran organizations to continue to hire our service men and women.



Mayor Lee greets Transbay construction workers

“The Veterans Affairs Commission of the City and County of San Francisco extends its hearty congratulations to all parties to the Project Labor Agreement for the massive construction project which will, under the Transbay Joint Powers Authority bring a modern Transit Hub to reality;” said Raymond Wong, President of the Veterans Affairs Commission of San Francisco. “We are particularly gratified that all parties to the agreement have seen fit to insure that under the Community Outreach terms of the agreement, concrete efforts are made to insure that area veterans are afforded specially identified employment opportunities under the Helmets to Hardhats program...” said Wong.

The Transbay Project also accepts Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise certifications under its Small Business Enterprise Program (SBE), attends veteran focused job fairs, and reaches out to veterans’ assistance organizations and job placement services including:

- American Legion
- Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Services
- Helmets to Hardhats/Wounded Warrior Program
- Non-commissioned Officers Association
- Marines’ Memorial Association
- California Employment Development Department
- Department of Labor America’s Heroes at Work
- Hire Veterans
- Veterans 4 Heroes
- Swords to Plowshares

“It was a great honor to be at the White House supporting the Joining Forces initiative and celebrating its successes,” said Maria Ayerdi-Kaplan, Executive Director of the Transbay Joint Powers Authority. “We are proud to support our veterans with employment opportunities and new career paths as they transition back to civilian life. As we move forward into the second year of this initiative, the Transbay Project, along with Webcor, has made the commitment to increase our veterans program substantially.”

In an effort to continue to support and enhance our commitment to Joining Forces, the TJPA in conjunction with Webcor is dedicated to growing their veterans program as much as possible in the next year.

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The TJPA is gearing up for our High School Summer Internship Program, which begins in June. This six-week paid internship provides 20 hours per week of hands-on, real-life work experience in both the offices of TJPA and those of its Program Manager for the Transbay Transit Center Program. Since 2009, the TJPA has partnered with Enterprise for High School Students and the San Francisco Unified School District to offer this work-based career opportunity to qualified juniors and seniors. In order to be eligible, district students must be enrolled in one of the District's engineering academies or building trades pathway.



TJPA interns Darren Easterling and Victoria Lam learn about working on the Transbay construction site

Each year, one Enterprise and two District students who have demonstrated interest in pursuing the internship and the ability to work in a professional setting are selected. Underrepresented populations in the field of engineering, such as women and minorities, are encouraged to apply.

Interns are mentored by engineers, architects and TJPA management. Throughout the experience these professionals teach them about the varied skills needed to build a large-scale public works project like the Transbay Transit Center. At the end of the six weeks, the students share what they've learned with the Transbay team and how the experience relates to their educational and future career goals. The TJPA's internship program has proved to be a pivotal experience for many of our interns who have gone on to pursue college degrees in construction management, engineering, public policy and communications.

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As part of the Transbay project's buttress work, special drilling equipment known as a "rotator" is being utilized to drill 7 foot diameter shafts hundreds of feet below street level. Prior to the construction of the Transbay Transit Center, only two such rotators existed in North America. This project alone is using four.

Transbay's construction crews are spending so much time with these unique machines that they have given them each names. "Marilyn," named after Marilyn Monroe, is the oldest of the rotators and has up to 5.5 million pounds of torque. An identical back-up to Marilyn is "Alice", named after Alice Walton, one of the country's richest women. The crews hope Alice will bring them good fortune while working on the Transbay project.

Rotator technology is very advanced in Japan due to the foundation issues associated with frequent earthquakes. The third and fourth rotators purchased specifically for the Transbay project are from a Japanese manufacturer and have been dubbed "Ninja" and "Shogun" after ancient Japanese warriors. Ninja is the crew's favorite because it is very fast, easily moved to new shaft locations, and very operator-friendly.

Buttress work for the project will be completed in April 2013, and all four rigs will be utilized at different times. Alice and Marilyn will be retired at the end of the project, but Ninja and Shogun will continue to do battle against challenging soil conditions and obstructions.



"Ninja" at work on the Transbay site

Best Regards,
The Transbay Joint Powers Authority